

VILLAGE OF VERNON

MASTER PLAN

2020-2040

ADOPTED

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# **Village of Vernon Master Plan 2020-2040**

**Prepare by the Village of Vernon Village Council**

**Prepared by the Village of Vernon Planning Commission**

**Planning Assistance Provided by:**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
<b>Chapter 2. Existing Land Use .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
Residential .....	2-1
Commercial.....	2-2
Public/Semi-Public .....	2-2
Right-of-Way (includes local streets, highway and railroad).....	2-3
Agricultural .....	2-3
Open Space/Vacant .....	2-3
<b>Chapter 3. Natural Features.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
Geology.....	3-1
Soils .....	3-1
Conover-Brookston Soil Association .....	3-2
Soil Series.....	3-2
<b>Chapter 4. Population, Households, and Housing .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
Population Change .....	4-1
Population Age.....	4-1
Household Size .....	4-3
Composition of Household .....	4-3
Place or Residence .....	4-4
Commuting Characteristics .....	4-4
Employment and Income .....	4-5
Population Projection .....	4-5
Housing.....	4-6
Summary.....	4-7
<b>Chapter 5. Public Facilities .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
Streets .....	5-1
Complete Street Concepts .....	5-1
Recreation Facilities.....	5-5
Capital Improvement Plan.....	5-7

Sanitary Sewer.....	5-7
Ground Water Quality and Quantity .....	5-8
Community Survey.....	5-9
Stakeholder Interviews.....	5-15
Open House.....	5-16
<b>Chapter 6. Goals, Policies, and Strategies.....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
Introduction to Goals, Policies, and Strategies.....	6-1
General .....	6-2
Residential .....	6-3
Commercial.....	6-4
Natural Resources .....	6-6
Community Facilities .....	6-6
Industrial .....	6-7
<b>Chapter 7. Economic Development .....</b>	<b>7-1</b>
Project Tim.....	7-1
Downtown Vernon Strategy .....	7-1
DDA Development Plan .....	7-2
<b>Chapter 8. Future Land Use.....</b>	<b>8-1</b>
One-Family Low-Density Residential .....	8-1
Medium Density Residential.....	8-1
Multiple-Family Residential .....	8-2
Downtown Business.....	8-2
Highway Service .....	8-3
Agricultural .....	8-3
Public/Semi-Public/Park.....	8-3
Industrial .....	8-3
Mobile Home Park Analysis .....	8-3
<b>Chapter 9. Zoning Plan .....</b>	<b>9-1</b>
Future Land Use Classifications Comparison to Zoning Districts.....	9-1
Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Text.....	9-1

<b>Chapter 10. Implementation Plan.....</b>	<b>10-1</b>
Implementation Tools.....	10-1
Implementation Table .....	10-2
Strategic Plan.....	10-4
Plan Maintenance and Update.....	10-5
Using the Land Use Plan for Zoning Review.....	10-6

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1: Current Land Use .....	2-1
Table 3-1: Limitations of Soils for Development .....	3-3
Table 4-1: Population 1970 – 2017* .....	4-1
Table 4-2: Population Percent Change .....	4-1
Table 4-3: Age Breakdown .....	4-2
Table 4-4: Age by Five-Year Increments for the Village of Vernon (2010) .....	4-2
Table 4-5: Avg. Persons Per Household .....	4-3
Table 4-6: Composition of Households (2010) .....	4-3
Table 4-7: Change in Place of Residence from 1990-2010 .....	4-4
Table 4-8: Commuting to Work (2010) .....	4-4
Table 4-9: Travel Time to Work .....	4-5
Table 4-10: Place of Work - 2017 .....	4-5
Table 4-11: Income Distribution (2017) .....	4-5
Table 4-12: Population Projection .....	4-6
Table 4-13: Housing Types (2010) .....	4-7
Table 5-1: Years Residents Have Lived in the Village .....	5-9
Table 5-2: Years Business Owners Have been in the Village .....	5-9
Table 5-3: Age of Respondents .....	5-10
Table 5-4: Reasons Respondents Live in the Village .....	5-10
Table 8-1: Mobile Home Park Analysis .....	8-5
Table 9-1: Future Land Use Classification and Zoning District Correlation .....	9-1

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Household Size .....	4-3
Figure 2: Age of Housing Stock .....	4-7
Figure 3: Building Permits for Single-Family Homes .....	4-7
Figure 4: Commercial Corridor Complete Street Concept .....	5-2
Figure 5: Primary Street Concept .....	5-2
Figure 6: Residential Street Concept .....	5-3
Figure 7: Connection to the Village of Vernon .....	5-9
Figure 8: Opinions on Residential Issues .....	5-11
Figure 9: Opinions on Non-Residential Issues .....	5-12
Figure 10: Commercial Preferences .....	5-12
Figure 11: Opinions on Environmental Issues .....	5-13
Figure 12: Opinions on Sidewalks .....	5-13
Figure 13: Opinions on Community Services .....	5-14
Figure 14: Attitudes .....	5-15
Figure 15: Important Themes That Stakeholders Loved About the Village of Vernon .....	5-15
Figure 16: Existing Mobile Home Parks Within 10 Miles of the Village of Vernon .....	8-4
Figure 17: Northwoods Community Mobile Home Park .....	8-5



## LIST OF MAPS

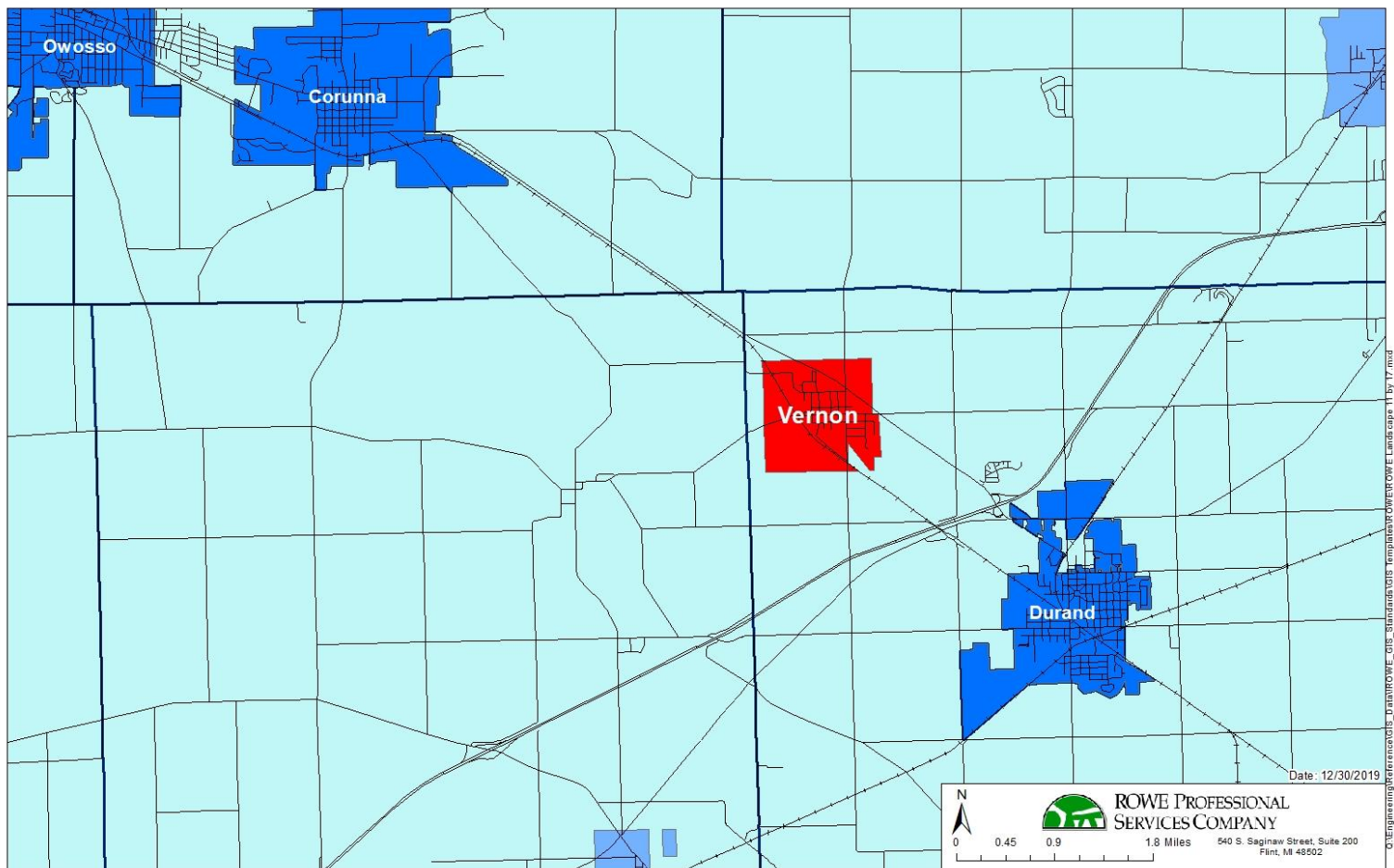
Map 1 - Location Map.....	1-1
Map 2 - Current Land Use Map.....	2-4
Map 3 - Soils Map .....	3-6
Map 4 - Wetlands .....	3-9
Map 5 - Floodplains.....	3-11
Map 6 - Steep Slopes.....	3-13
Map 7 - Village of Vernon Sewer System.....	5-8
Map 8 - Future Land Use .....	8-7



## Chapter 1. Introduction

The Village of Vernon is a small community located in the southeastern quadrant of Shiawassee County in the Township of Vernon (Map 1). The village is located along M-71 between the cities of Corunna and Durand. Both of these communities act as service centers for the village, with both the Lansing and Flint Metropolitan Areas serving as its major centers for employment and durable goods.

Map 1 - Location Map





## Chapter 2. Existing Land Use

The pattern of existing land use is important to analyze in development of a plan for several reasons. These include the fact that existing uses are often long-term and will remain as the use of the property over the course of the planning period. Another reason is the fact that existing land uses often limit the use that surrounding property can be put to (i.e. normally it would be inappropriate to locate an industrial facility next to a residential area).

ROWE staff used the previous land use plan from 2000, aerial photography, and the results from a windshield survey to create the updated existing land use map for 2019 (see Table 2-1). This information was then mapped using ROWE's AutoCAD computer drafting program (see Map 2). The following list illustrates the land use categories found within the Village.

- A. Residential
- B. Commercial
- C. Public/Semi-Public
- D. Right-of-Way (includes local streets, highway, and railroad)
- E. Agricultural
- F. Open Space/Vacant

Table 2-1: Current Land Use				
	2000		2019	
Use	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent
<b>Residential</b>	154.6	36	141.88	33
<b>Commercial</b>	18.7	4	18.7	4.3
<b>Public/Semi-Public</b>	37.9	9	54.24	12.6
<b>Right-of-Way</b>				
- Roads, Streets & Highways	59.4	14	59.4	13.8
- Railroad	21.1	5	21.1	4.9
<b>Agricultural</b>	91.5	21	87.34	20.3
<b>Open Space/Vacant</b>	46.8	11	46.8	10.8

It should be noted that some of the land uses listed in the earlier survey have been broken down into more specific uses in this plan.

### Residential

Residential land uses cover the largest area in the Village. The category includes single-family, duplex, and multi-family residential structures, as well as the residential half of buildings used for residential and commercial purposes. The large percentage of developed land used for residential purposes is normal, especially since the Village could be classified as a "bedroom" community.

The heart of the residential district is in a portion of the Village north of the business district. The area developed slowly over time on irregularly-sized lots as the originally platted parcels were split and combined to fit the needs of the homeowner. Recent residential development has been confined to splits of existing parcels fronting major roadways. Since 2000, the amount of residential land has declined from 154.6 acres to 141.88 acres. Some of the previously residential land has been repurposed for public/semi-public use while the majority was repurposed for agriculture.

### **Commercial**

Commercial development centers on the central business district located on both sides of Main Street between Walnut and Church Streets. The downtown district is compact and well-defined with only one vacant lot interrupting the line of storefronts. Just outside of the well-defined commercial center is a bank and a flower shop. Both are located at the southwest corner of Main and Walnut Street. The downtown area has a beautiful streetscape that consists of brick paved accents to the high quality sidewalks, benches, and decorative lighting. These assets in the downtown area add to its sense of identity.

The major commercial land use in the Village in terms of size is the lumber yard south of Elm Street. There is some question as to whether this use should even be classified as commercial since the scale and intensity is more in keeping with an industrial use. It is, however, a commercial establishment and so it is classified as one in this survey.

There are several remaining commercial parcels on M-71. One is located at the corner of Vernon Road (Maple Street) and M-71. Along M-71, there is also one large parcel east of Maple Street in addition to Matthews Towing just east of the large parcel. Since 2000, the amount of commercial space has remained constant.

### **Public/Semi-Public**

Public and semi-public lands are classified as those that are owned and/or operated by a unit of government or by an organization whose membership is open to the public, such as a church.

The largest single parcel of land under this classification is the cemetery north of Washington Avenue. The next two largest parcels are the village parks, which are located at opposite ends of the village, providing residents with easy access to one facility or the other. The parks, with almost 8 acres combined, provide the village with an abundance of recreational land.

Other public/semi-public land in the village includes the Village Hall, the Township Fire Hall/Library, and the three local churches. Since 2000, the amount of public/semi-public space has increased from 37.9 acres to 54.4 acres. This is due to the newly identified Baptist church along M-71 and the conversion of a residential parcel along Washington Avenue to parking for the elementary school.

**Right-of-Way (includes local streets, highway and railroad)**

Right-of-ways include local streets, State highways and railroads. Local streets and State highways make up 14 percent and railroads account for 5 percent of the total land area within the Village. Besides the local streets, M-71 bisects the Village across the northeast corner. More on the local streets is contained under the Public Facilities section. The Grand Trunk Railroad nearly parallels M-71 but is in the southeastern/northeastern part of the Village.

**Agricultural**

This classification accounts for all the land currently being utilized for farming. It includes land that is currently actively farmed or has been in the recent past.

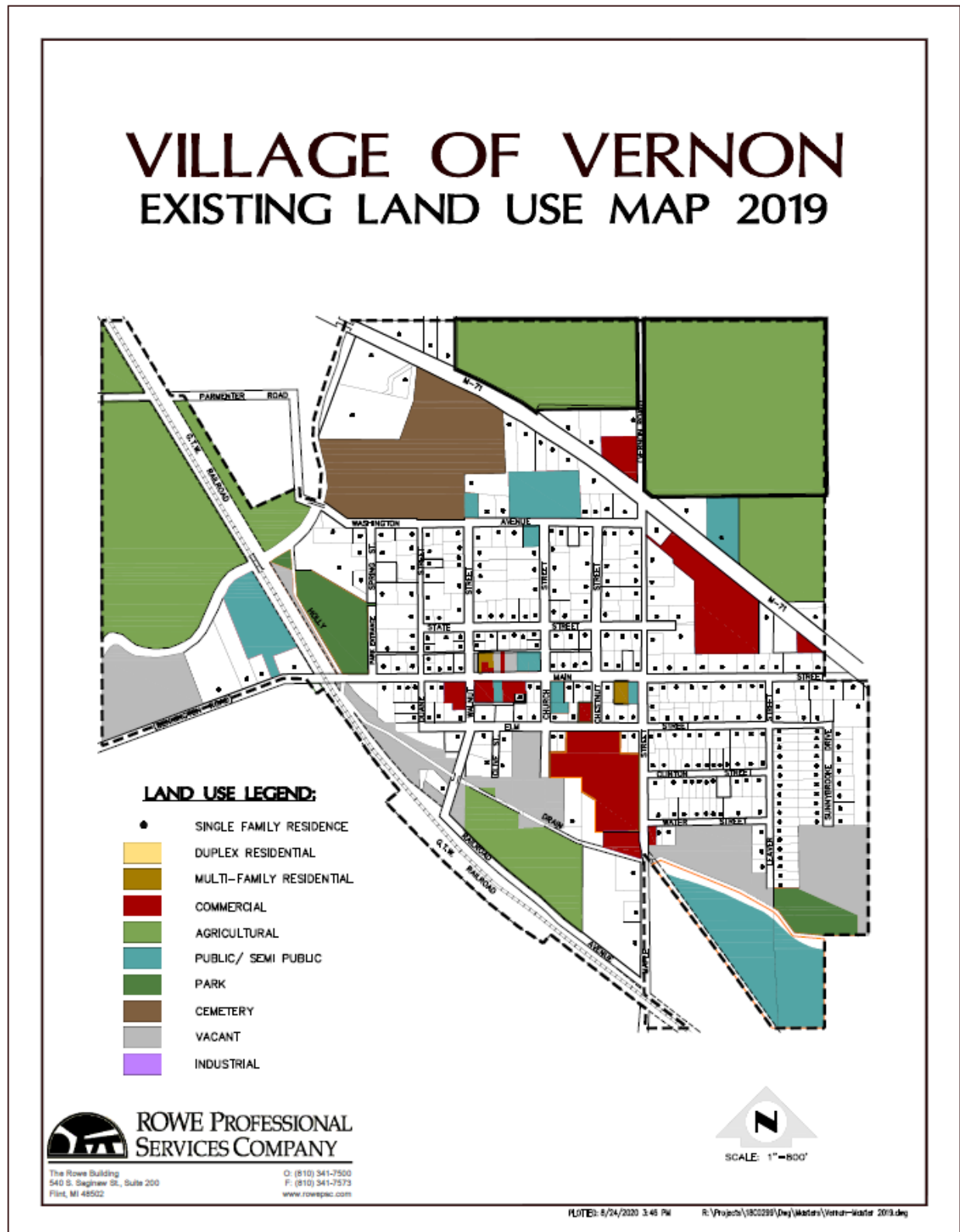
Most of the land currently under cultivation is located north of M-71. There is some land south of Parmenter Road and west of the railroad tracks also classified as agricultural.

The balance of the undeveloped land lies between a spur of the Grand Trunk/Western Railroad and the main line, west of Maple Street. Because of its location between two rail lines, the land does not appear suitable for residential, recreational, or convenience-type commercial uses. Since 2000, the amount of agricultural land has declined from about 91 acres to 87 acres due to the conversion of agricultural land east of S. Maple Street and south of the Shiawassee River to a public/semi-public property.

**Open Space/Vacant**

This land use category includes small vacant residential lots, large undeveloped parcels, and waste land that, because of its site characteristics or location, may never be developed and buildings that have been vacant for a long period of time. This plan update has identified almost 48 acres or 11 percent of the total land within the Village as being in this land use category. The majority of land in this category is located in the southern part of the Village near the Village boundaries. The largest tract of land is found in the southeastern part of the Village near the Holly Drain south of Water Street. This land is currently owned by the Village. The other areas of undeveloped land border Bennington Road south of the Shiawassee River, northwest of Railroad Avenue and northeast of the Grand Trunk Railroad, east and south of Olive Street, and south of Sunnybrooke Drive (Map 2).

Map 2 - Current Land Use Map





## Chapter 3. Natural Features

This section discusses the physical properties of the geology, soils, wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes that are located within the Village of Vernon. These characteristics are important when considering land use decisions and determining appropriate locations for a given land use type.

### Geology

Michigan's topography has, for the most part, been shaped by glacial processes. The following is a list of glacial structures found in the Village:

Ground Moraines (Till Plains) – Usually develop between end moraines; consist of unsorted glacial till.<sup>1</sup>

Lake Beds – Deposits of ancestral lakes typically composed of clay and silt.<sup>1</sup>

Moraines – Ridges composed of glacial till material; a mixture of clay, sand, and boulders.<sup>1</sup>

Outwash and Glacial Channels – Channels composed of sand and gravel deposited by meltwater streams.<sup>1</sup>

In Vernon, upper glacial drift in the immediate Village limits is predominately clay. The top layer of bedrock (Middle Pennsylvanian Saginaw Formation) is characterized by a mixture of shales, sandstones, and some coal. Below this layer is the Marshall Sandstone. Below the Marshall Sandstone, over 400 feet deep, is Coldwater Shale.

### Soils

In order to minimize construction costs and risks to the environment, future development should occur on sites with suitable soils. Poor soils present problems such as poor foundation stability and septic field failure. The three major soil characteristics considered in the analysis of soil conditions are drainage, foundation stability, and septic suitability characteristics.

Drainage is an important property of soils when considering development in rural areas that do not have a public sewer system because soils that have somewhat poor or poor drainage do not allow the "grey water" or effluent fluid that drains from drain fields to properly filter downward to the water table.

Foundation stability is governed by frost heave, depth to water table, compressibility, shrink-swell potential, and shear strength. Frost heave occurs during the winter months when water, which expands by 9 percent when frozen, in the soil freezes. Depth to water table can cause problems with leakage in basements and can exacerbate a soil's

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<sup>1</sup> Map of Surface Formations of Southern Peninsula of Michigan, Department of Conservation Geological Survey Division.

potential for frost heave if the water table is close to the ground surface. Compressibility of soils can cause a downward progression of foundations when a soil is not properly compacted during the building process. Shrink-swell potential is the relative change in volume to be expected with changes in the moisture content of the soil material, that is, the extent to which the soil shrinks as it dries out and swells when it becomes wet. Shear strength is the ability of a soil to remain consolidated and in place. Typically, shear strength can be exceeded in areas where steep slopes are present, and the soil is saturated.

The terms slight, moderate, and severe are used to describe limitations of soils for construction of septic facilities and other developments. Slight limitations indicate that site features are generally favorable for the indicated use and limitations are minor and easily overcome. Moderate limitations indicate that planning, design, or maintenance is needed to overcome or minimize the limitations. Severe limitations indicate that site features are so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increases in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance may be required. Severe limitations for septic systems are found in areas that have an 18 to 25 percent slope. Slope is important to consider for septic suitability because the “grey water” may have a tendency to drain laterally in the direction of the downward slope opposed to the preferred downward drainage of a septic drainfield. Any slope greater than 12 percent makes proper drainage of a septic system difficult. Other important characteristics of the soils that are important to consider for a drainfield are soil permeability, seep areas, and wet depressions.

### **Conover-Brookston Soil Association**

In general, the soils located in the Village of Vernon are members of the Conover-Brookston Soil Association. Soil associations are broad categories that contain many types of soils at various percentages.

This soil association is poorly drained and has a seasonally high water table of less than 1 foot from the ground surface. The soils have low to moderate shrink-swell potential. A low to moderate rating for shrink-swell indicates that a site should be looked at individually to determine if shrink-swell is a potential hazard. These soils have medium to high compressibility so, prior to developing an area, the soils should be well compacted. Brookston soils have poor to fair shear strength. Use of Conover-Brookston soils for sewage drain fields is difficult due to severe limitations including poor drainage, high water table, and moderate to slow permeability.

### **Soil Series**

Looking at the soil series reveals a more detailed description of the soils. These are the soils that have been located on the aerial photos, which were produced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service and are found in the Shiawassee County Soil Survey.

The following is a list of soils and land altered by man located within the Village limits (Map 3 and Table 3-1).

Table 3-1 illustrates the various limitations of these soils for development:

<b>Table 3-1: Limitations of Soils for Development</b>		
<b>Soils Series Symbol and Name</b>	<b>Foundation for low buildings</b>	<b>Limitations for use as a sewage disposal field</b>
<b>Brookston, Bw</b>	Poor drainage, high water table; low to moderate shrink-swell potential; medium to high compressibility; poor to fair shear strength.	Severe: poor drainage; high water table; moderately slow permeability.
<b>Cohoctah, Cn</b>	Poor drainage; high water table; slight compressibility; fair shear strength	Severe: poor drainage; high water table; flood hazard; moderately rapid permeability
<b>Conover loam, CtA CtB</b>	Somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; low to moderate shrink-swell potential; medium compressibility; low to moderate shear strength	Severe: somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; moderately slow permeability.
<b>Gilford Sandy Loam, Gg</b>	Poor drainage; high water table; slight compressibility; good shear strength.	Severe: poor drainage; high water table; moderately rapid permeability.
<b>Gravel Pit, Gp</b>	Properties variable; on-site investigation needed.	
<b>Linwood Muck, Lo</b>	Very poor drainage; high water table; moderate shrink-swell potential; medium compressibility; fair shear strength	Severe: very poor drainage; high water table; moderately rapid permeability in organic material; moderate permeability in underlying material; unstable organic material.
<b>Made Land, Md</b>	Properties variable; on-sight investigation needed.	
<b>Matherton Sandy Loam, MmA</b>	Somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; slight compressibility; good shear strength.	Severe: somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; moderate permeability in subsoil; very rapid permeability in underlying material.

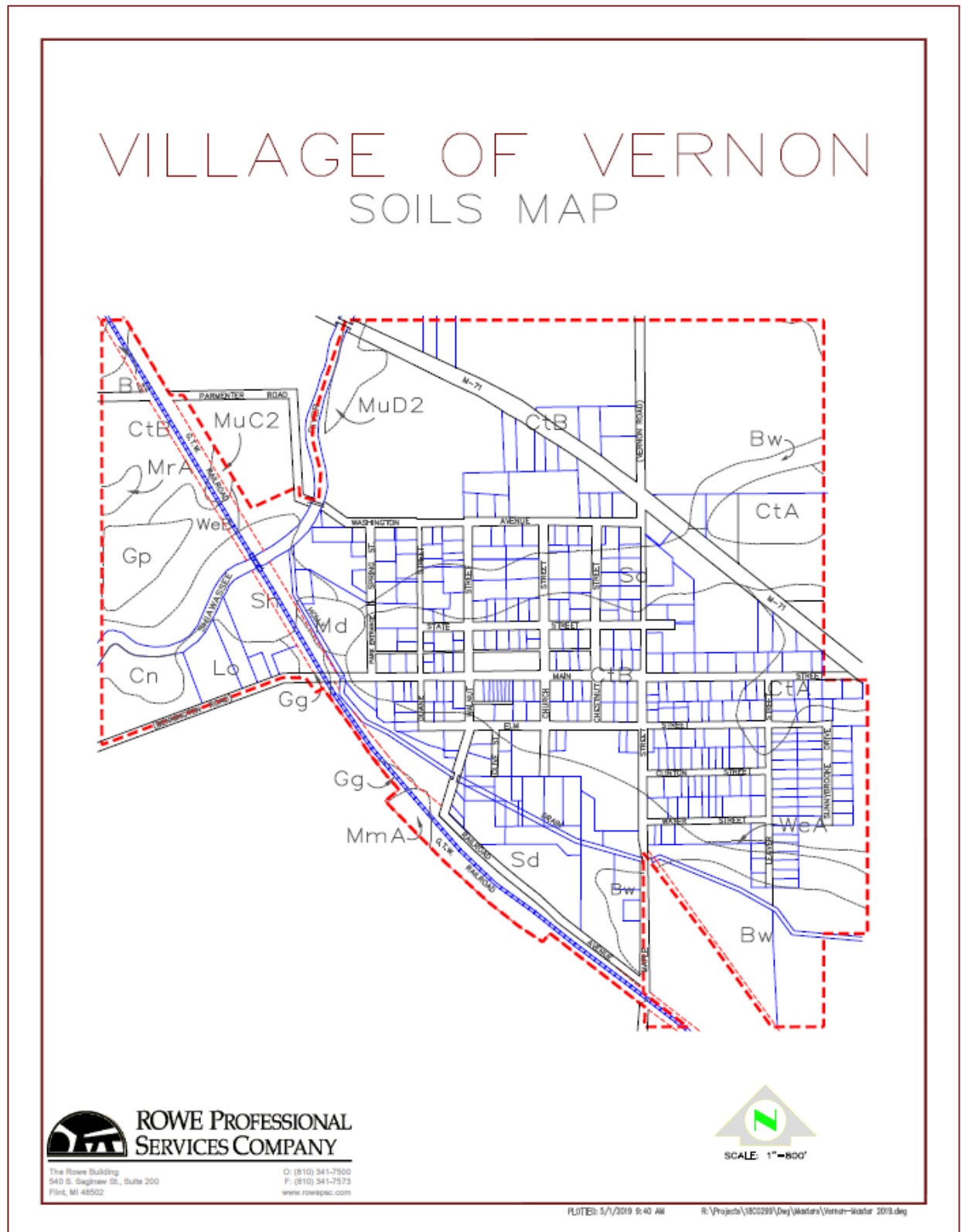
<b>Metamora Sandy Loam, MrA</b>	Somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table, low to moderate shrink-swell potential; medium compressibility; poor to fair shear strength.	Severe: somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; moderately rapid permeability in upper subsoil; moderately slow permeability in lower part of subsoil and underlying material
<b>Miami Loam, MuC2, MuD2</b>	Good drainage; low to moderate shrink-swell potential; medium to high compressibility; poor to fair shear strength	Slight on 2 to 12 percent slope (MuC2), Moderate on 12 to 18 percent slopes (MuD2), installation and operation of disposal fields are difficult on slopes of more than 12 percent.
<b>Sebewa Loam, Sd</b>	Poor drainage; high water table; slight compressibility; good shear strength	Severe: poor drainage; high water table; moderate permeability in subsoil; very rapid permeability in the underlying material.
<b>Shoals Loam, Sh</b>	Somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; medium compressibility; poor shear strength; high susceptibility to frost action.	Severe: somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; flood hazard; moderately permeability.
<b>Wasepi; WeA, WeB</b>	Somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; slight compressibility; fair to good shear strength.	Severe: somewhat poor drainage; seasonal high water table; moderately rapid permeability.
<b>Source: USDA Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Shiawassee County, Michigan, 1974.</b>		

The most suitable soil found within the Village for sewage disposal, building, and foundation construction is the Miami Loam soil series. The biggest concern when developing land where this series is located is slope. The MuD2 soil series has a slope of 12 to 18 percent, which may require engineering to assure that problems do not arise when development occurs. Both Miami Loam soils are located in the northwestern portion of the Village. Other soils can be developed, but the limitations in Table 3-1 should be taken into account. Before new development occurs, the site-specific characteristics of the soils should be determined. Although some of the soils listed in Table 3-1 present

limitations for development, it is possible to overcome these limitations by sound engineering.

It should also be noted that data found within the Soil Survey of Shiawassee County was created by review of aerial photography, therefore possibility of error does exist. With the data being created in 1974, it is possible for even more error and this is the reason for determining site-specific characteristics of soil when development decisions are made.

## Map 3 - Soils Map



## Wetlands

Wetlands are areas of land where groundwater is found on the surface or close to the surface, either permanently or seasonally. They serve many functions, including the preservation of groundwater quality by trapping sediments, absorbing nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, and trapping and/or detoxifying many heavy metals, pesticides, and hydrocarbons. Wetlands often serve as groundwater recharge areas, replenishing groundwater supplies. Wetlands within Michigan serve as a storage area for excess surface water, decreasing the severity of floods, and are the habitats for fish, fowl, and other wildlife, including several endangered species and wildlife associated with recreation hunting and fishing.<sup>2</sup> Also, many threatened and endangered species are typically found in and around wetlands.

The amended Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act 1994 PA 451 is Michigan's wetland statute. The act was designed to provide for the "preservation, management, protection, and use of wetlands".<sup>3</sup> The act outlines what is considered a wetland, uses permitted in regulated wetlands, and uses requiring permits. The act also permits some local control of wetland regulations, but only in the case of communities with adopted wetland maps.

The act defines a wetland as:

*"Wetland" means land characterized by the presence of water at frequency and duration sufficient to support and that under normal circumstances does support wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh and which is any of the following:*

- *Contiguous to the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream.*
- *Not contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream; and more than 5 acres in size; except this subdivision shall not be of effect, except for the purpose of inventorying, in counties of less than 100,000 population until the department certifies to the commission of natural resources it has substantially completed its inventory of wetlands in that county.*
- *Not contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream; and 5 acres or less in size if the department determines that protection of the area is essential to the preservation of the natural resources of the state from pollution, impairment, or destruction and the department has so notified the owner; except this subdivision may be utilized regardless of wetland size in a county in which the paragraph above is of no effect; except for the purpose of inventorying at the time.*

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<sup>2</sup> Michigan Wetlands: Yours to Protect, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Pg. 3

<sup>3</sup> Act 451 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1994

There are no official State wetland maps that will conclusively identify which areas are wetlands and those that are not. One of two types of maps that are commonly used as references in determining wetlands are the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Michigan Resource Inventory System's (MIRIS) Land Use/Land Cover Maps, which show wetlands mapped using 1978 infra-red aerial photography. The program normally did not map land uses/cover under 5 acres in size, which means that small wetlands contiguous to a lake stream or pond, which are regulated, do not show up. The other program is the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which also produces wetland maps. Although these maps are not based on Michigan's definition of a wetland, they do identify small wetlands that do not show up on the MIRIS maps. Map 4 was prepared using the USFWS maps.

The presence of wetlands places constraints on future land development within the village. The wetlands create an environment unsuitable for septic drainfields and, if greater than 5 acres or contiguous to a body of water, regulatory concerns will factor into the decision to approve development of a site.

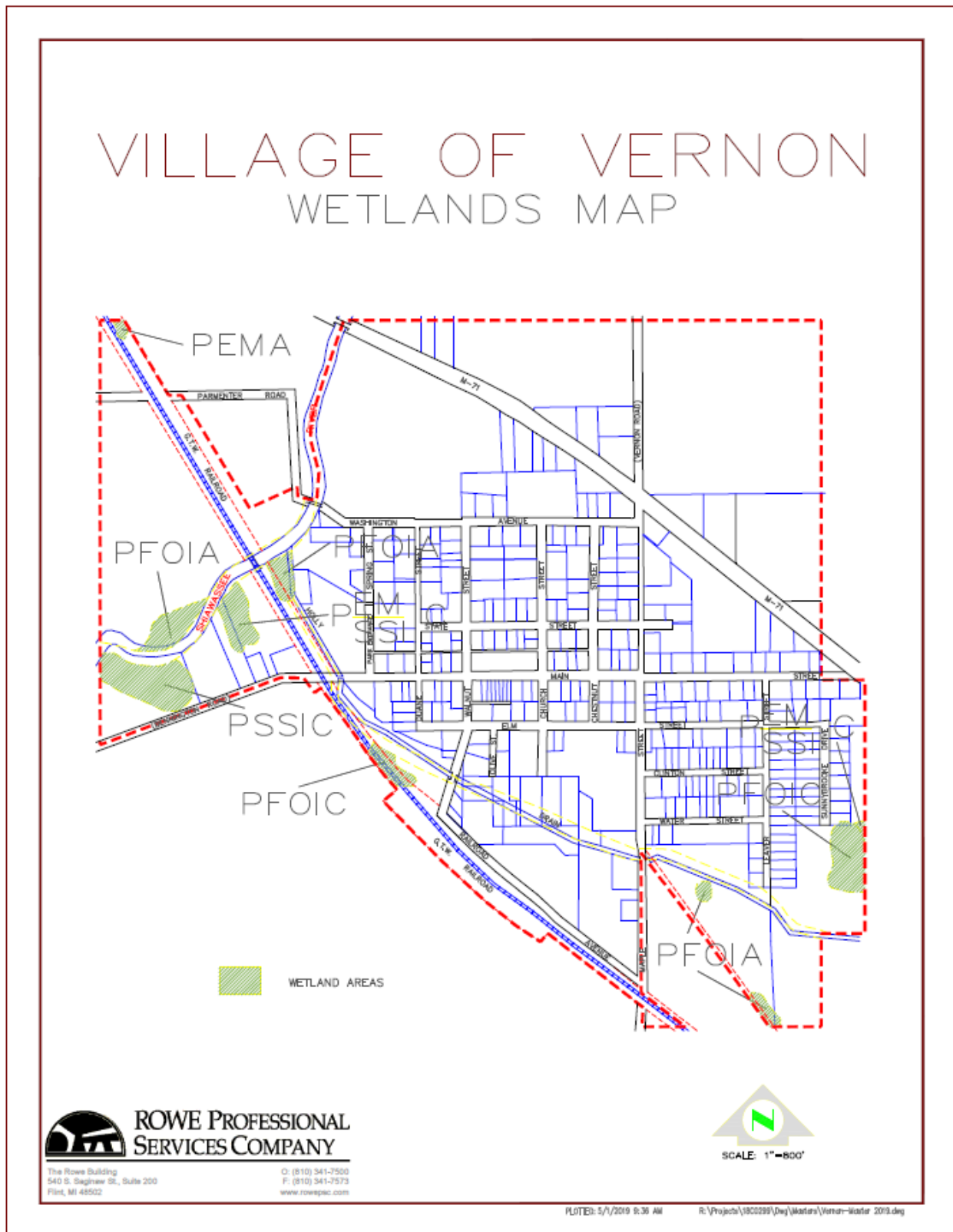
The village should consider the location and extent of wetlands in establishing land use classifications as part of this plan and in reviewing site plans, special use permits, and rezoning requests. Generally, development of a site should occur in such a way that the wetlands and any land directly adjacent to them is not disturbed. Agricultural and very low-density residential development is the best use in most cases. Clustering of residences is one approach that can be used to protect wetlands while allowing residential or commercial development.

In the Village of Vernon, the wetlands are primarily located in the east and west sides (Map 4). The largest wetlands are located adjacent to the Shiawassee River. There is also a wetland bordering the village, which is located within the railroad right-of-way. Wetlands are also located in the southeastern side of the village. There is one large wetland located just southeast of Sunnybrooke Drive.

Before developing a parcel where these wetlands are located, it may be advantageous to delineate the wetlands to determine their actual location and extent.



## Map 4 - Wetlands



**Floodplains**

Floodplains are areas that can be regularly expected to be inundated with flood waters and are normally associated with rivers, streams, and lakes. The Federal Emergency Management Agencies (FEMA) defines a flood plain as “an area with a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year (i.e. the 100-year flood plain).” In most areas, the boundaries of this zone are delineated by relating discharge data and flow elevations to the topography of the stream valley. In the United States, most regulation of floodplains is directly or indirectly handled by FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In Michigan, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) assists FEMA in determining if a community meets the requirements for participation in the NFIP. Under the program, local communities must adopt regulations to limit development within FEMA-identified floodplains. In return, property owners in the community are eligible to purchase flood insurance through FEMA.

In the United States, flooding ranks near the top of the National environmental agenda. About 7 percent of the country lies within a 100-year floodplain. Floodplains have been favorite places for development throughout this century. In 1980, between 3.5 and 5.5 million acres of floodplain had been developed for urban land uses, including more than 6,000 communities with populations of 2,500 or more<sup>4</sup>. Avoiding these areas for development should be a priority for any community. The cost of flood damage warrants action to avoid building in an area that may flood, destroying or damaging the building and its contents.

Besides FEMA’s NFIP, other actions can be taken to restrict and avoid development in areas that are in danger of flooding. Zoning restrictions against vulnerable land uses and educational programs to inform prospective settlers of the hazards posed by river and stream valleys can be used. Flood-prone areas should be utilized as recreational areas or left alone altogether. These approaches can avoid the high costs of rebuilding and/or repairing flood-damaged buildings and the sociological problems associated with relocation of residences.

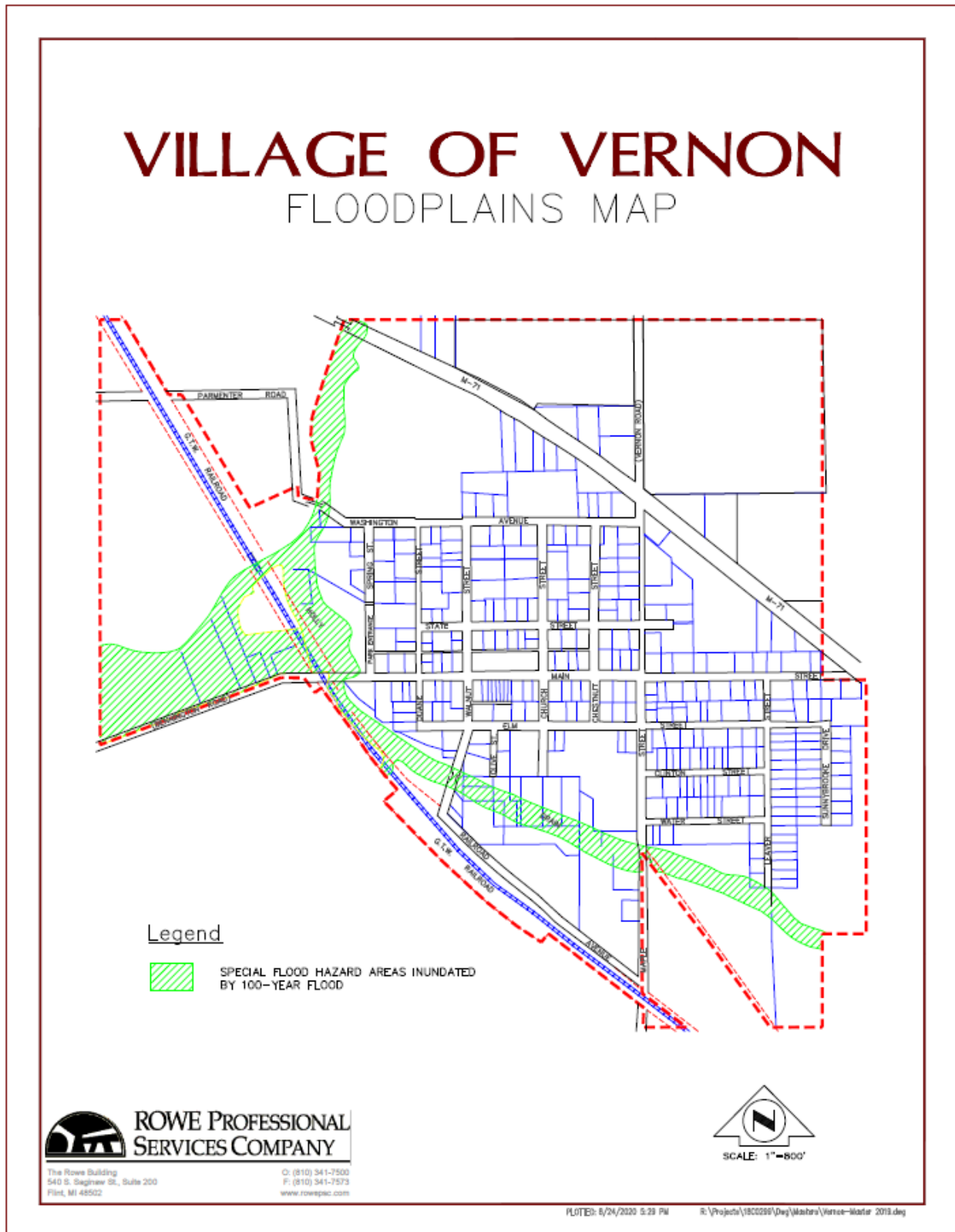
EGLE records show that the Village of Vernon entered into the regular NFIP on May 17, 1988 and adopted a map on the same date. In 2009 a new map was prepared by FEMA and adopted by the Village.

In the Village of Vernon, the floodplain follows along the meanders of the Shiawassee River and the Holly Drain. Since 2000, the floodplain area increased in size on the southwest side of the Village to be closer to Main Street. See Map 5 for the floodplain location.

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<sup>4</sup> Marsh, W., Landscape Planning Environmental Applications, 1997, Pg. 194

Map 5 - Floodplains

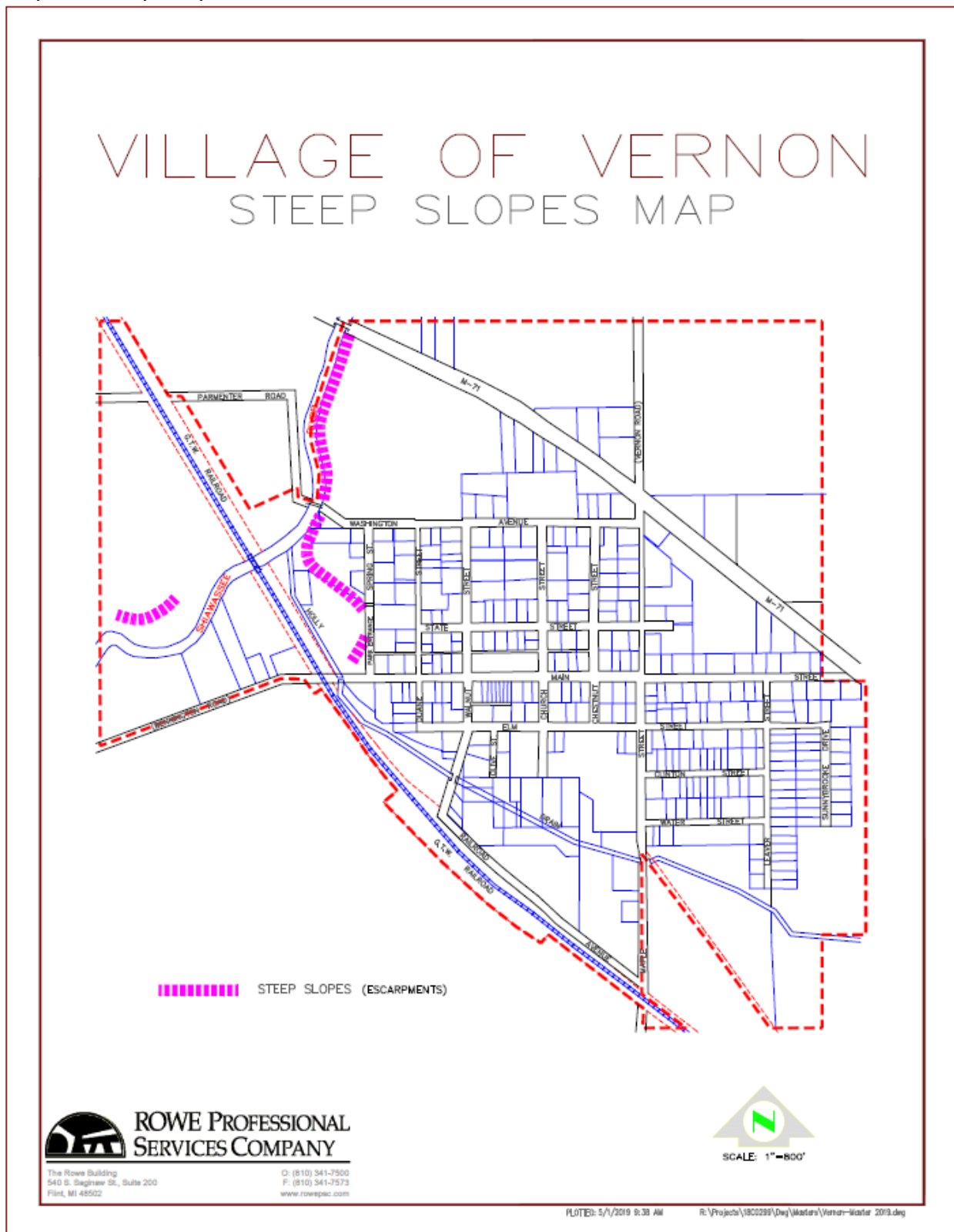


**Steep Slopes**

Slope is an important development consideration associated with topographic features. Steep roadway grades, septic field failures, soil erosion, and excavation costs are some of the difficulties associated with severe grades. See Map 6 for locations of steep slope within the Village.

Areas that have severe slopes should remain undisturbed. These areas should be viewed as natural and aesthetic open space areas. If these areas are developed, sensitive site planning is required along these steep slopes to prevent soil erosion. Care must be taken to ensure that extensive grading is minimized and to ensure that other natural features such as vegetation and topsoil are retained.

Map 6 - Steep Slopes





## Chapter 4. Population, Households, and Housing

Population information is important to review when trying to understand a community. When considering population for the village, it must be kept in mind that residents of a Village are also residents of the County and State. The comparison to larger jurisdictions provides context. The information collected includes population changes over time, age breakdown, household size, household composition, migration of population, commuting characteristics, employment, income, population projections, and housing.

There are two specific sources that were used to collect the population data. First, The U.S. census, which provides a real count of the population every ten years. Second, the American Community Survey, which provides estimates based on data collected over a five-year period.

### Population Change

The Village of Vernon's census population has declined from a peak in 1980 of 1,008 persons. Since 1980, the population has declined to 747 in 2017 as shown in Table 4-1. This population change is consistent with similar communities across the State and with the general decrease in population seen in Vernon Township, as well as Shiawassee County as a whole, as can be seen in Table 4-2.

**Table 4-1: Population 1970 – 2017\***

Census Year	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017*
<b>Village of Vernon</b>	818	1,008	913	847	799	747
<b>Vernon Township</b>	4,422	5,003	4,989	4,980	4,614	4,503
<b>Shiawassee County</b>	63,075	71,140	69,770	71,687	70,648	68,617
<b>State of Michigan</b>	8,881,826	9,262,078	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	9,925,568

Source: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, \*American Community Survey 2013-2017\*

**Table 4-2: Population Percent Change**

	1960 - 1970	1970 - 1980	1980 - 1990	1990-2000	2000-2010
<b>Village of Vernon</b>	8.4	23.2	-9.4	-7.2	-5.7
<b>Vernon Township</b>	40.9	13.1	-0.2	-0.2	-7.4
<b>Shiawassee County</b>	18.0	12.7	-1.9	2.9	-1.5

Source: U.S. Census, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010

### Population Age

Table 4-3 identifies the shift in age of the population of the Village of Vernon. Between 2010 and 2019, the percent of individuals under the age of 17 has declined while the percent of individuals over 18 has increased. This shift in age towards an older population is consistent with what is occurring in Vernon Township and Shiawassee County. This trend is caused by the aging “baby-boom” generation and is expected to continue unless the Village can attract younger persons. Table 4-4 demonstrates that the largest age category in the Village is those in their prime working years with 42 percent of the population; 14 percent of the population is of retirement age.

**Table 4-3: Age Breakdown**

	Village of Vernon				Township of Vernon				County of Shiawassee			
	2010		2017		2010		2017		2010		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Less than 5</b>	89	8.8	58	6.4	350	8.8	306	7.5	5,995	8.4	5134	7.4
<b>5-17</b>	286	28.4	215	23.5	987	24.7	818	20.1	18,005	25.3	14,801	21.2
<b>18-64</b>	557	55.3	567	62.1	2,403	60.1	2,571	63.1	40,962	57.6	42,067	60.3
<b>Greater than 65</b>	76	7.5	73	8.0	255	6.4	381	9.3	6,178	8.7	7,768	11.1
<b>Total</b>	1,008	100	913	100	3,995	100	4,076	100	71,140	100	69,770	100
<b>Median Age</b>	–	–	32.3		–	–	32.2		–	–	32.5	

Source: U.S. Census 2010 and American Community Survey 2013 - 2017

**Table 4-4: Age by Five-Year Increments for the Village of Vernon (2010)**

Age Category	Age	Percentage of People	Total in each age category	% in each age group
School Age	0-4	4.9	229	29%
	5-9	7.8		
	10-14	8.6		
	15-19	8.0		
Child Bearing	20-24	2.9	115	15%
	25-29	4.9		
	30-34	6.9		
Working Years/Support Children	35-39	7.8	332	42%
	40-44	6.9		
	45-49	8.2		
	50-54	6.8		
	55-59	7.5		
	60-64	5.2		
Retirement Years	65-69	5.0	107	14%
	70-74	2.6		
	75-79	3.6		
	80-84	1.7		
	85 and older	0.9		

Source: US Census, 2010.



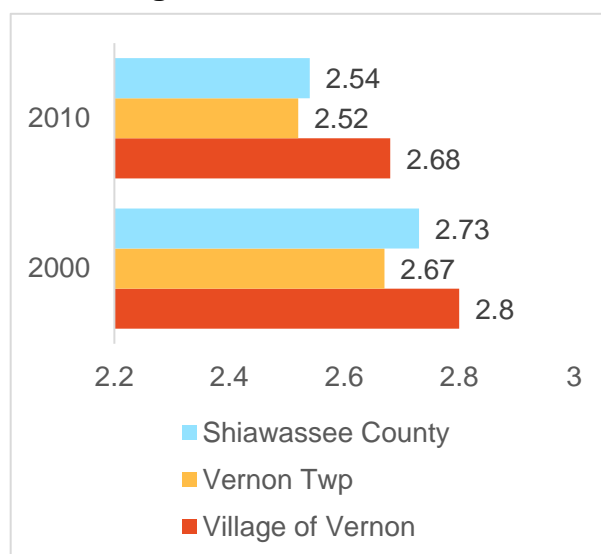
### Household Size

The average household size for the Village, Township, and County is similar to one another as shown in Table 4-5. Comparison with the 2000 data shows a drop in household size. This is a National trend due to the aging population. As nuclear families age, single households split into several as the children reach adulthood and form new households. Increases in the rate of divorce over the past 50 years have also increased the number of households and caused a reduction in average household. A significant impact of this trend is that a population that does not increase may still require additional housing units. It also impacts the demand for smaller dwelling units.

Table 4-5: Avg. Persons Per Household		
	2000	2010
<b>Village of Vernon</b>	2.8	2.68
<b>Vernon Township</b>	2.67	2.52
<b>Shiawassee County</b>	2.73	2.54

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

**Figure 1: Household Size**



### Composition of Household

Table 4-6 shows the breakdown of households by types. A household is one or more persons functioning as a household unit. It is different from a family by the fact that it includes individuals living alone and two or more unrelated people living together. The household composition in the Village is similar to Vernon Township and Shiawassee County.

Table 4-6: Composition of Households (2010)						
	Village of Vernon		Vernon Township		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Total households</b>	292	100	1,831	100	27,481	100
<i>Family households</i>	223	76.4	1,356	74.1	19,398	70.6
With own children under 18 years	95	32.5	495	27	8,170	29.7
<i>Married couple family</i>	171	58.6	1,068	58.3	14,779	53.8
With own children under 18 years	68	23.3	346	18.9	5,491	20
<i>Male householder, no wife present</i>	17	5.8	103	5.6	1,429	5.2
With own children under 18 years	9	3.1	53	2.9	808	2.9
<i>Female householder, no husband present</i>	35	12	185	10.1	3,189	11.6

With own children under 18 years	18	6.2	96	5.2	1,871	6.8
<i>Nonfamily households</i>	69	23.6	475	25.9	8,084	29.4
Householder living alone	60	20.5	406	22.2	6,648	24.2
Householder 65 years and over	78	26.7	536	29.3	7,196	26.2

Source: U.S. Census, 2010

### Place of Residence

Table 4-7 outlines the movement of residents out of the community in 2010. Within the year 2010, the overwhelming majority of residents remained in the same house. One hundred forty-one (141) residents moved out of the village but stayed in the same county. Only ten (10) residents left the county. This signifies a relatively stable economy that offers enough job opportunities for the village residents so that they do not need to look outside of the county.

**Table 4-7: Change in Place of Residence from 1990-2010**

	Village of Vernon				Township of Vernon				Shiawassee County			
	1990		2010		1990		2010		1990		2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Same House</b>	562	65.7	646	81	2,433	64.5	2,187	60.5	40,914	63.6	39,040	60.2
<b>Same County</b>	167	19.5	141	17.6	746	19.8	790	21.9	13,634	21.2	14,225	21.9
<b>Same State</b>	107	12.5	10	1.2	456	12.1	535	14.8	7,232	11.2	9,567	14.8
<b>Different State</b>	19	2.2	0	0	135	3.6	102	2.8	2,580	4.0	2,020	3.1

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2010

### Commuting Characteristics

The commuting characteristics of a community say a lot about its lifestyle and economy. Most people in the village commute alone by car, truck, or van (93 percent) shown in Table 4-8. About 3 percent of residents walk to work. The village primarily operates as a bedroom community, with most employment opportunities existing outside the village.

**Table 4-8: Commuting to Work (2010)**

Village of Vernon	#	%
<b>Car, truck, or van – drove alone</b>	338	93.4
<b>Car, truck, or van – carpooled</b>	12	3.3
<b>Public transportation (excluding taxi cab)</b>	0	0
<b>Walked</b>	12	3.3
<b>Other means</b>	0	0
<b>Worked at home</b>	0	0

Source: American Community Survey, 2013 - 2017

Table 4 9 illustrates the amount of time it takes residents to commute to work. The majority of working residents commute more than 15 minutes, and 41.5 percent of working residents commute over 30 minutes to their job.

<b>Table 4-9: Travel Time to Work</b>				
	2009		2017	
<b>Minutes</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Less than 5</b>	14	4.5	26	7.1
<b>5-14</b>	70	22.9	45	12.4
<b>15-29</b>	94	30.8	100	27.6
<b>30-59</b>	95	31.1	147	40.6
<b>More than 60</b>	32	10.4	44	12.1

Source: American Community Survey, 2013 - 2017

As Table 4-10 demonstrates, these long commutes are due to the fact that most employed residents travel outside the County to get to their job.

### Employment and Income

The median income in the village is \$59,167 which is higher than Vernon Township and the county as a whole (Table 4-11). Most households in the Village earn between \$50,000 and \$74,999. About 18 percent of households earn less than \$24,999.

<b>Table 4-10: Place of Work - 2017</b>	
<b>Worked in County of residence</b>	139
<b>Worked outside County of residence</b>	223
<b>Worked outside State of residence</b>	0
<b>Source: American Community Survey, 2017</b>	

<b>Table 4-11: Income Distribution (2017)</b>						
	Village of Vernon		Vernon Township		Shiawassee County	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	0	0.0	148	7.5	1,488	5.4
<b>\$10,000-\$14,999</b>	8	2.5	113	5.8	1,188	4.3
<b>\$15,000-\$24,999</b>	48	15.3	258	13.1	3,490	12.6
<b>\$25,000-\$34,999</b>	40	12.7	169	8.6	3,096	11.2
<b>\$35,000-\$49,999</b>	38	12.1	216	11.0	4,249	15.4
<b>\$50,000-\$74,999</b>	88	28.0	472	24.1	5,880	21.3
<b>\$75,000-\$99,999</b>	35	11.1	280	14.3	3,633	13.2
<b>\$100,000-\$149,999</b>	42	13.4	246	12.5	3,314	12.0
<b>\$150,000-\$199,999</b>	6	1.9	51	2.6	862	3.1
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	9	2.9	9	0.5	423	1.5
<b>Median Income</b>	\$59,167		\$52,857		\$50,967	

Source: American Community Survey 2013 – 2017

### Population Projection

Population projections provide a base from which to estimate demands for future housing and land. Projecting future population is an inexact science, particularly when the projections involve a relatively small existing population base. It should be noted that population projections for a village the size of Vernon has a limited value, as the actions of only a small number of property owners can impact the overall growth rate. Just one new subdivision development could significantly expand the population and distort the long-term trend. For this reason, population projections should be monitored for unexpected trends.

This projection was generated by looking at the historic trend of new home construction in the village and then assuming that trend continues. The number of homes is multiplied by the average household size in the village. It is assumed that the average household size will continue to decrease.

The rate of new home construction has declined over the years from 12 new homes in the 1990s, 4 new homes in the 2000s, and finally 1 one in the 2010s. For this population estimate, we are projecting the rate of new home construction to remain at one per decade due to the fact the village is nearly fully built out. We also assume an average occupancy rate of 93.5 percent (2017 American Community Survey) and a reduction of 0.12 from the average household size every ten years.

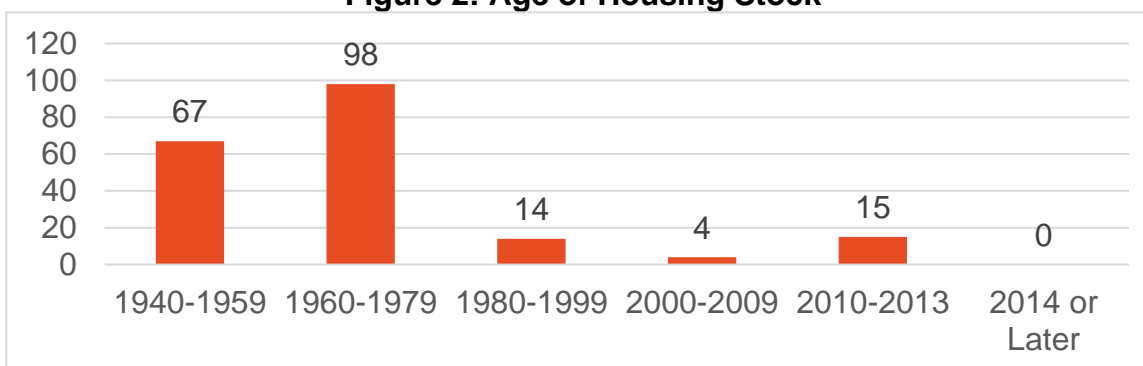
The result of this analysis is in Table 4-12. It shows a small increase in population into the 2020s followed by a gradual decline for the next 20 years with an estimate 2040 population of 735. The primary driver of this population loss is the continued decline in average household size and the limited capacity for new housing. This projection does not take into account regional or economic trends, all of which can have a large impact on population changes. For example, Project Tim has the potential to attract hundreds of new people to the area and the Village of Vernon could expect to see an increase in population rather than decline.

<b>Table 4-12: Population Projection</b>				
	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>2020 Projection</b>	<b>2030 Projection</b>	<b>2040 Projection</b>
Household Size	2.68	2.56	2.44	2.32
Dwelling Units (DU)	336	337	338	339
Occupied DU	314	315	316	317
Population	783	806	771	735

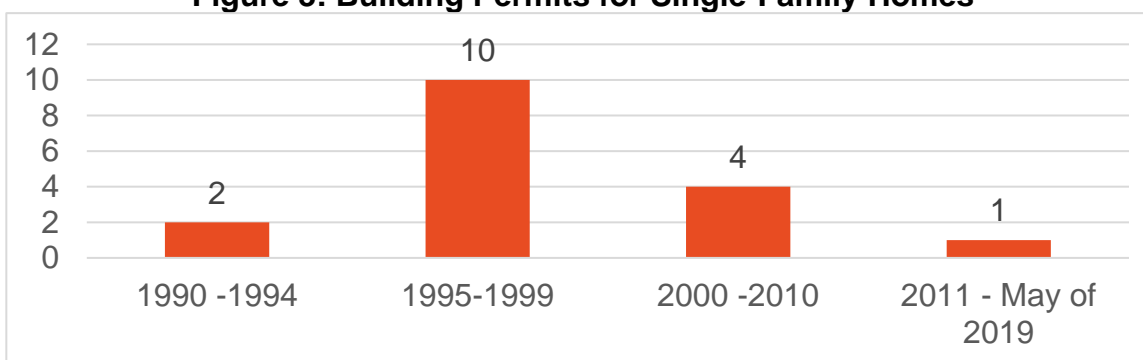
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

## Housing

Part of what attracts people to live in the community is the type of housing that is located within the municipality. The characteristics measured by the census includes information regarding the residents as well as information about the structures themselves, demonstrating that most houses in the Village were built between 1960 and 1979, with a significant reduction in new construction occurring after 1980.

**Figure 2: Age of Housing Stock**

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

**Figure 3: Building Permits for Single-Family Homes**

Source: Village of Vernon

Table 4-13 identifies the majority of houses in the village as single-family detached structures. This is consistent with the housing stock in Vernon Township and Shiawassee County. However, the Village differs significantly from the Township and County in its low number of mobile homes. Mobile homes constitute less than 1 percent of the Village's housing stock, while it constitutes 5.8 percent of the County's housing stock and 20.3 percent of the Township's housing stock.

<b>Table 4-13: Housing Types (2010)</b>			
	Village of Vernon	Vernon Township	Shiawassee County
<b>Single Family Detached</b>	326	1,892	24,217
<b>Single Family Attached</b>	0	8	372
<b>2 - 4 Units</b>	0	13	1,687
<b>5 - 9 Units</b>	7	21	709
<b>10+ Units</b>	0	0	1,502
<b>Mobile Home</b>	3	493	1,753
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	336	2,427	30,240

Source: U.S. Census, 2010.

### Summary

The main key points from looking at the demographic, economic, and housing information are listed below:

- The village's population has been steadily declining since 1980.
- The age of the residents in the village continue to increase. This is a county, state, and national trend due to technology improvements that help people live longer and cultural trends that have decreased the number of people having children.
- Most of the village's population is of working age (42 percent).
- The number of persons per household continue to decrease. This is a county, state, and national trend.
- The village is a bedroom community with most working individuals commuting alone in a car, truck, or van.
- Most employed residents commute more than 15 minutes to their job, and most employed residents work outside of the county.
- The median income in the Village is higher than Vernon Township and higher than Shiawassee County.
- Most of the housing was built between 1960 and 1979.
- The majority of housing options in the Village are single-family homes.

## Chapter 5. Public Facilities

### Streets

The Shiawassee County Road Commission maintains Bennington Road, Maple Street/Vernon Road, and portions of Elm Street, Church Street, Walnut Street, Chestnut Street, and Washington Avenue. The remaining streets or sections of streets within the village are maintained by the village, with the exception of M-71 which is a state trunkline highway maintained by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). M-71 connects the village to I-69 and the City of Durand to the southeast and the City of Corunna to the northwest.

In addition to M-71, there are several major streets in the Village of Vernon including Bennington Road, Vernon Road/Maple Street, Elm Street, Walnut Street, Church Street, and Chestnut Street. These streets converge at the commercial area along Bennington Road. Maple Street/Vernon Road serve to provide regional access to the north and south, while Bennington Street provides regional access to the east and west.

The street system is important to land use for two reasons. First, the existence of streets in one area will encourage development in that area while the lack of streets in another will often preclude development there. Street construction costs money and developers are going to try to reduce or eliminate that portion of their development costs by using the existing street network when possible. Second, commercial and industrial uses tend to develop on or have access to major streets because of the ease of movement along them. This is a tendency that should be encouraged in order to prevent thru traffic in residential areas.

### Complete Street Concepts

Complete Streets is a street design concept that enables safe access for all users, regardless of mode of transport. Motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities are taken into consideration when designing streets for people to shop, get to work, and move around with ease. There is no “one size fits all” design for a complete street. Instead, the unique characteristics of the village and the needs of the residents must be taken into consideration when designing a successful complete street concept. The key to a successful complete street is to maximize the use of the existing right-of-way. Every part of the right-of-way should be used to enhance the mobility of village residents and visitors. One key feature of Complete Streets is the use of sidewalks to encourage the mobility of residents beyond the use of cars.



Figure 4: Commercial Corridor Complete Street Concept

The complete streets concept displayed in Figure 4 is ideal for commercial streets such as Main Street between Walnut Street and Church Street. The generous 80-foot right-of-way permits a diverse range of street features. Angled parking provides a safe and easy way for people to access the shops. Wide sidewalks with trees and flowers enhance the experience of pedestrians by providing shade in the summer and aesthetic value to the nearby real estate. Attractive lighting accents the historic nature of the downtown and enhances the safety for pedestrians.



Figure 5: Primary Street Concept

The complete streets concept displayed in Figure 5 is ideal for primary streets such as Washington Avenue, Maple Street, and Main Street. These streets have a mixture of residential, public, commercial, and religious uses with a 66-foot right-of-way. Streets of this type are ideal for multimodal transit concepts that incorporate alternative modes of transport, such as biking, due to the diverse range of uses they serve. Adequate street lighting provides safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Planting buffers and trees along the road provide aesthetic value to the village and shade for pedestrians.



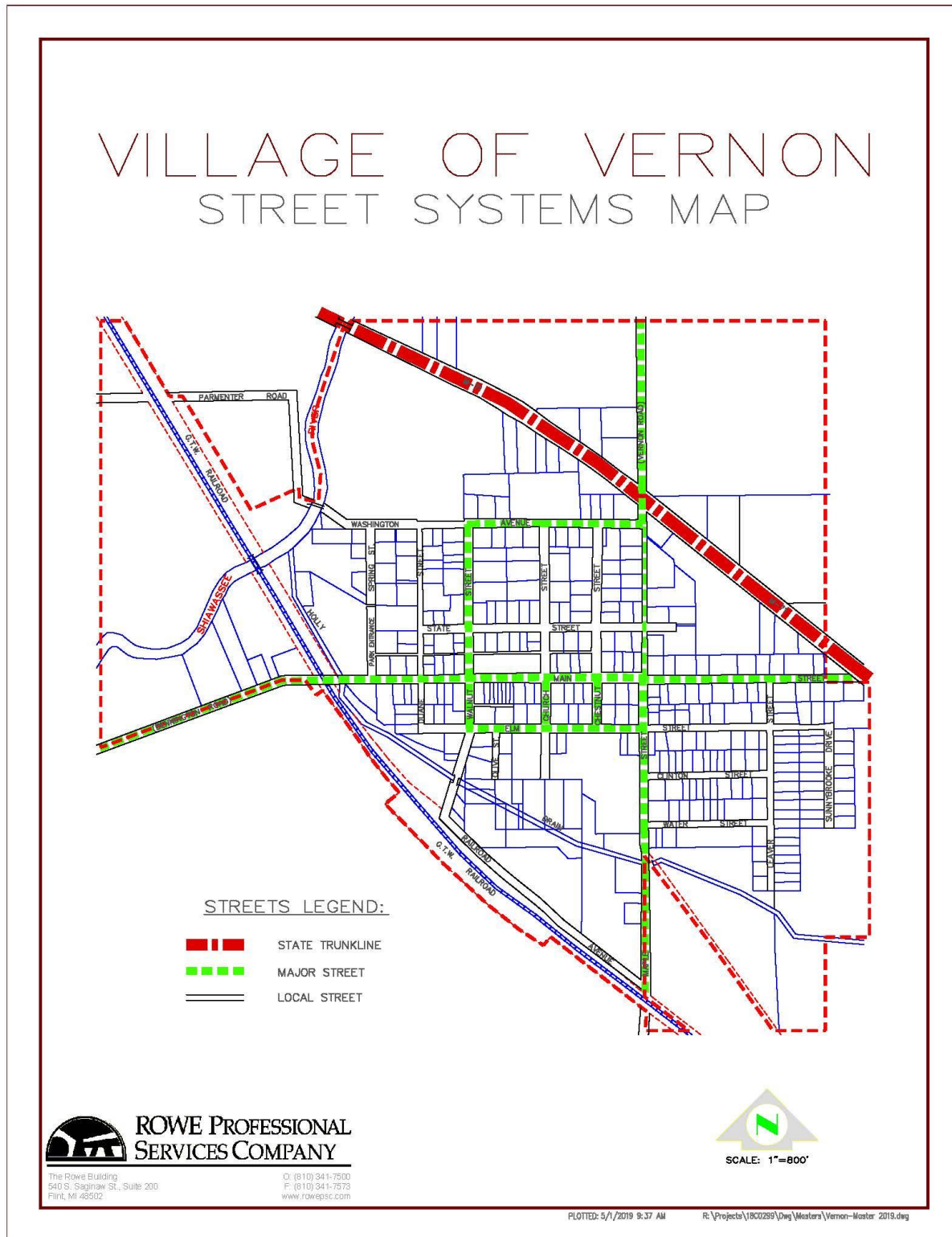


Figure 6: Residential Street Concept

The complete streets concept displayed in Figure 6 is ideal for residential streets such as Walnut Street, Sunnybrooke Drive, or Water Street. These streets generate less traffic than primary streets and they should be designed to reflect the residential character of the neighborhoods they are located in. Sidewalks on both sides of the road create a complete and comprehensive pedestrian network that connects residences to shops, schools, and places of business. This allows village residents to move around the village with ease on foot without relying solely on the use of an automobile. Flower beds, grass buffers, and trees enhance the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Street lighting is not necessary due to the residential character of these streets.

Complete streets design concepts can be implemented in a variety of ways. The village could adopt a complete streets resolution. There are several resources available to assist with drafting a complete streets resolution such as the National Complete Streets Coalition or the U.S. Department of Transportation Guidance on Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel. Elements to include in a complete streets policy include: a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets, encouragement of street connectivity, applicability to both new and retrofit projects, and clear next steps for implementation. In addition to a local resolution, the State of Michigan passed complete streets legislation on August 1, 2010. State trunklines such as M-71 are subject to this legislation and the village can work with MDOT to implement complete streets ideas along M-71.

## Map 8 - Village of Vernon Street Systems



**Recreation Facilities**

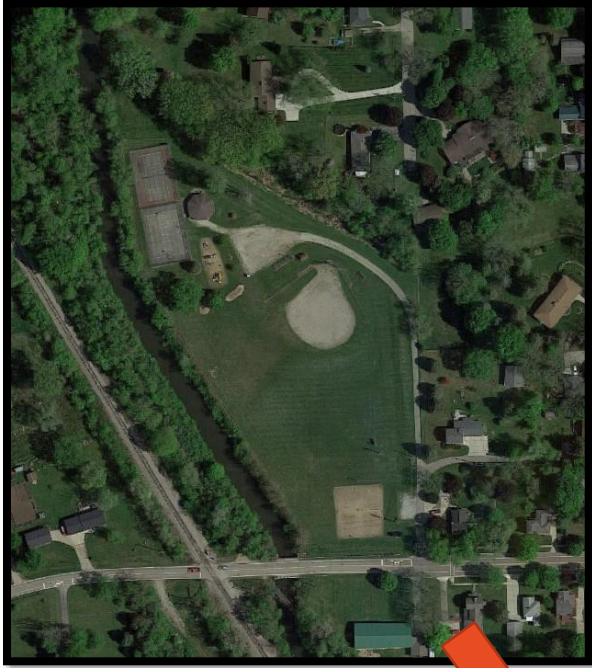
The Village of Vernon's most recent parks and recreation plan was developed by ROWE Incorporated and adopted by the village in 1999. The plan outlines regional parks and addresses two village parks; Sexton Park and Crawford Memorial Park.

Regionally, there are several nearby parks accessible to village residents. The largest park is Kerby Road Park which offers baseball diamonds, restrooms, a pavilion, and picnic tables. The City of Durand, 3 miles from Vernon, has four school parks and four city parks. There is fishing access to the Shiawassee River near the Shiatown Dam.

The Village of Vernon has two parks. Sexton Park offers a lighted pavilion, baseball diamond, pavilion, picnic tables, and playground equipment. Crawford Memorial Park is slightly larger, at 8 acres, and offers a playground, baseball diamond, a lighted pavilion, water fountain, volleyball, basketball, and a tennis court. In addition to these two parks, the Nellie Reed Elementary School offers a playground and there is a canoe and kayak launch along the Shiawassee River.

The Village of Vernon was largely successful in implementing the parks and recreation plan from 1999. Crawford Memorial Park was expanded and some of the proposed facilities identified in the parks and recreation plan, such as a tennis court, basketball court, and playground equipment, were successfully completed. The park still lacks a walking path. Sexton Park was less successful in implementing the proposed facilities outlined in the parks and recreation plan. It is missing a soccer field, paved parking area, and volleyball court. The incomplete implementation of the 1999 parks and recreation plan highlights the need for the Village of Vernon to complete an update. There are opportunities to improve the facilities at both parks as well as integrate Crawford Memorial Park better with the nearby downtown.

## Crawford Memorial Park



Sexton Park

**Capital Improvement Plan**

Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) are required under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The most recent CIP adopted by the village is the 2017-2023 Capital Improvement Plan. The plan is updated annually and is an inventory of projects being conducted or that need to be conducted in the village. These projects are ranked, and a funding plan for the following five years is outlined. Plans are reviewed by the Planning Commission and updated by the Village Administration.

The 2017-2023 Capital Improvement Plan ranks projects by priority. High-priority projects are projects that must be done and include improvements that are needed to address an emergency or remedy a problem that is harmful to the public health, safety, and welfare. Medium-priority projects are desirable projects that should be considered when funding is available. Low-priority projects are projects that are desirable but not essential. Funding sources outlined in the plan include enterprise (reserve) funds, bonds, weight and gas tax, tax increment financing, federal and state funds, and special assessments.

High-priority projects outlined in the plan include village-wide wastewater inflow and infiltration repairs, sanitary sewer replacements, inflow and infiltration improvements to various streets, drain crossing repairs, and several bridge replacements. Medium-priority projects include acquiring a backup generator for the village hall, replacement of a police vehicle, repairs to the tennis and basketball court, streetscape improvements to Main Street, miscellaneous storm sewer repairs, and annual sidewalk replacement and repair. Low-priority projects include a new salt shed and 250-gallon diesel tank, dugouts for the ballfield, canoe and kayak launch, pavilion roof replacements, and an arch over Main Street.

**Sanitary Sewer**

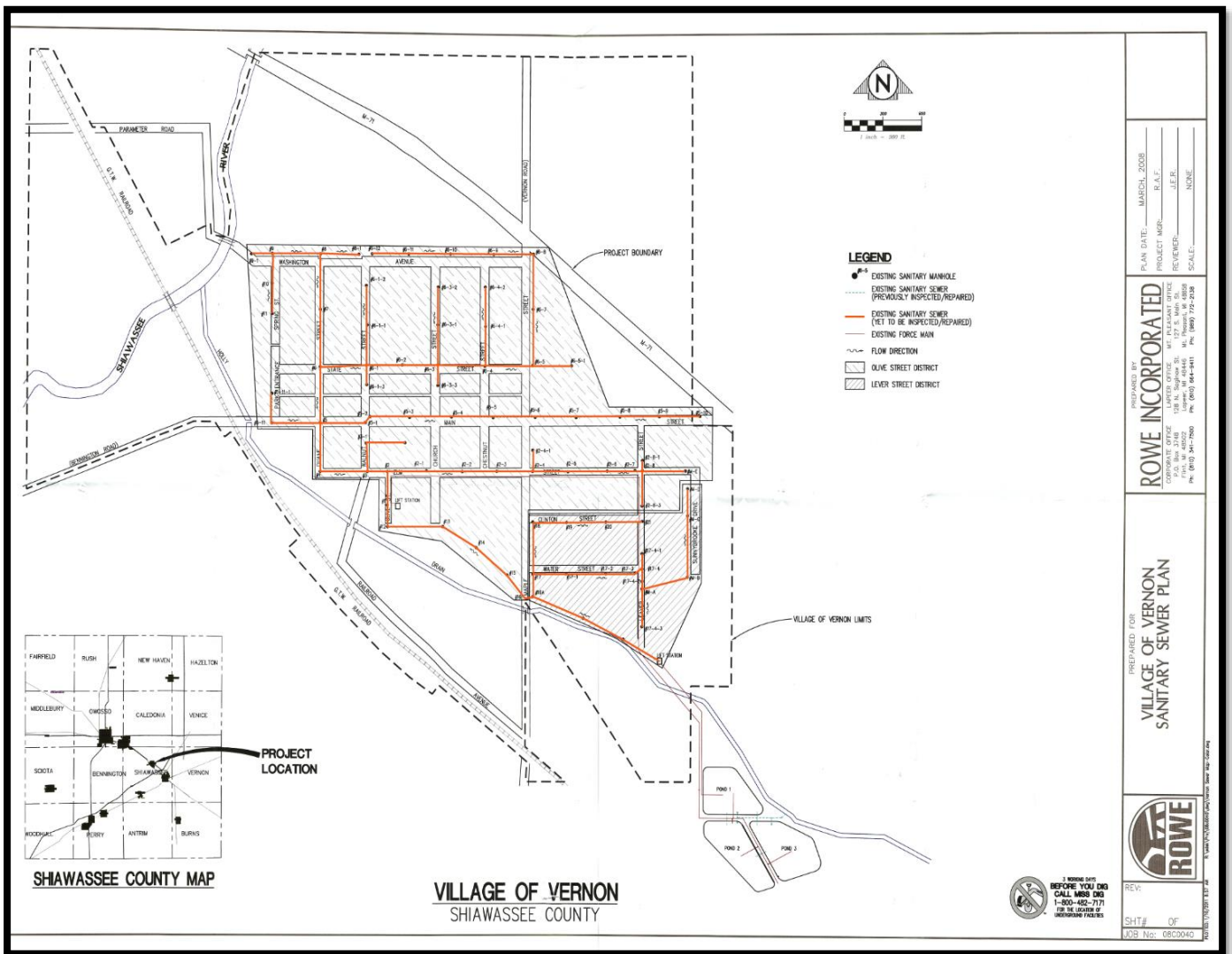
The village sewer system currently services an area of the village bounded on the south and west by Holly Drain and the Shiawassee River on the north by M-71 and on the east by the village boundary. The system's current design capacity is 1,380 persons, giving it a current capacity surplus of approximately 236 households based on the 2010 census average household size of 2.68 persons per household. The Village of Vernon has a wastewater stabilization lagoon treatment system in the southeast section of the village. The fact that the village maintains its own treatment system means the city has greater freedom to increase capacity than other municipalities.

As with the street network, areas that are currently serviced by the sewer service have an advantage for development over those areas without if there is a need for sewer service. Based on the generally poor quality of soils in the village for placement of a septic field system, availability of sewer service would have to be considered an advantage. This would indicate that any intensive residential development would probably occur in the vacant land in the service area prior to the land outside the current service area, all things being equal.

### Ground Water Quality and Quantity

In 1999, Gove Associates produced a test wells report for the Village of Vernon. They concluded that drinking water in Vernon is typically limited to poor quality water produced from low yielding bedrock wells. Although there are locally drift wells that produce good volumes of quality water, most of the wells are too shallow to develop into a municipal well field.

Map 7 - Village of Vernon Sewer System





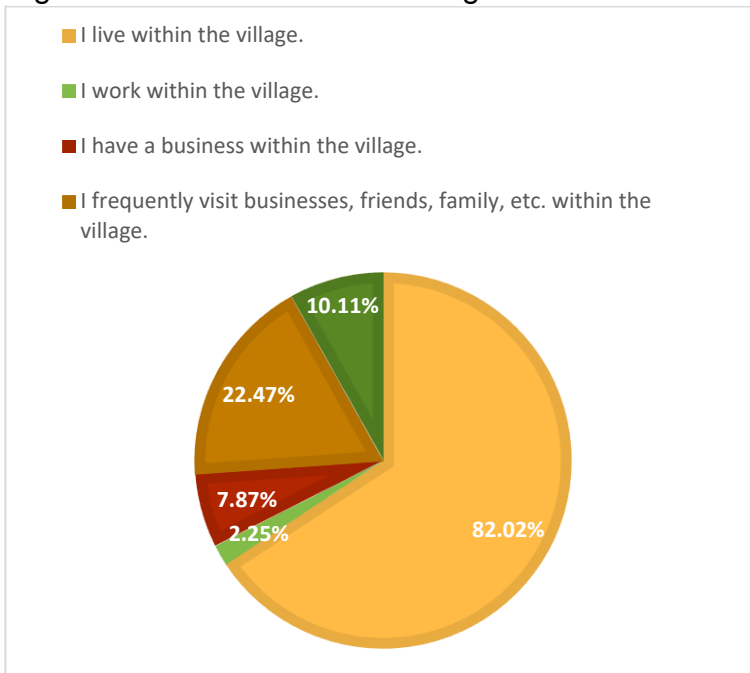
## Community Survey

### *Survey Response Characteristics*

The 89 respondents could pick between five different possible connections to the Village of Vernon. Of the respondents, 82.02 percent live within the village. The next largest are those who frequently visit businesses, friends, and family within the Village, accounting for 22.47 percent of the responses (Figure 7).

We then asked those who live within the village how long they have lived here. Over half of respondents (60.92 percent) have lived within the Village of Vernon for fewer than 10 years (Table 5-1).

Figure 7: Connection to the Village of Vernon



**Table 5-1: Years Residents Have Lived in the Village**

Years	%	#
Less than 1 year	9.20%	8
1-2 years	11.49%	10
3-5 years	25.29%	22
6-9 years	14.94%	13
10-14 years	1.15%	1
15-19 years	6.90%	6
20-29 years	9.20%	8
30-39 years	2.30%	2
40 or more years	6.90%	6
Does not apply	12.64%	11

We also asked business owners how long they have been operating their business in the village. Most respondents (87.50 percent) did not apply, but of the people who own businesses most have been in the village for two or less years.

**Table 5-2: Years Business Owners Have been in the Village**

Years	%	#
Less than 1 year	0.00%	0
1-2 years	5.00%	4
3-5 years	1.25%	1
6-9 years	1.25%	1
10-14 years	0.00%	0
15-19 years	0.00%	0
20-29 years	1.25%	1
30-39 years	1.25%	1
40 or more years	2.50%	2
Does not apply	87.50%	70

Next we asked the age range of the different respondents and found that the majority (42.70 percent) were middle age adults defined as those between 40 and 64. There was only one response from someone under the age of 19.

**Table 5-3: Age of Respondents**

Age	%	#
<b>Child under 12</b>	0.00%	0
<b>Teenager 13-19</b>	1.12%	1
<b>Young Adult 20-29</b>	20.22%	18
<b>Adult 30-39</b>	24.72%	22
<b>Middle-Age Adults 40-64</b>	42.70%	38
<b>Senior Citizen 65 and up</b>	11.24%	10

Finally, we asked respondents what their various reasons are for choosing to live in the Village of Vernon. The majority of respondents (75.31 percent) said they choose the Village of Vernon because of its small town feel. This is followed closely (64.20 percent) by those who like the Village's safe environment (Table 5-4).

**Table 5-4: Reasons Respondents Live in the Village**

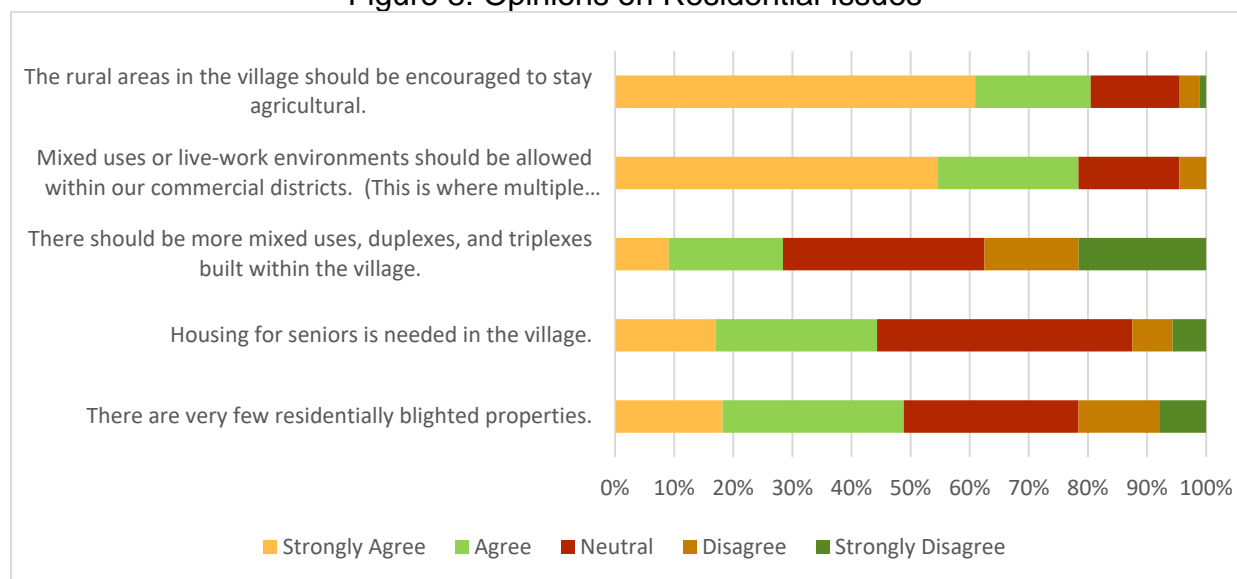
Reasons	%	#
<b>Available Housing</b>	39.51%	32
<b>Safe Environment</b>	64.20%	52
<b>Public Services</b>	11.11%	9
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>	2.47%	2
<b>Low Taxes</b>	13.58%	11
<b>Fun Environment</b>	17.28%	14
<b>Small Town Feel</b>	75.31%	61
<b>I Grew Up Here/My Family Is From The Area</b>	28.40%	23
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	14.81%	12

### *Residential Questions*

There were five questions asked in this section. Respondents were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with certain statements. The first statement was, "rural areas in the village should be encouraged to stay agricultural." With this statement, 60.92 percent strongly agreed and 19.54 percent agreed. The second statement was, "mixed uses or live-work environments should be allowed within our commercial districts." To this statement, 54.44 percent strongly agreed and 23.86 percent agreed. The third statement, "There should be more mixed uses, duplexes, and triplexes built within the village." For this statement, responses were more mixed with 34.09 percent neutral and 21.59 percent strongly disagreeing compared to only 9.09 percent strongly agreeing. The fourth statement was, "housing for seniors is needed in the village." Responses trended towards agreement but with most people remaining neutral at 43.18 percent. Finally, the last statement was, "there are very few residentially blighted properties"; 18.18 percent of people strongly agreed and 30.68 percent agreed (Figure 8).



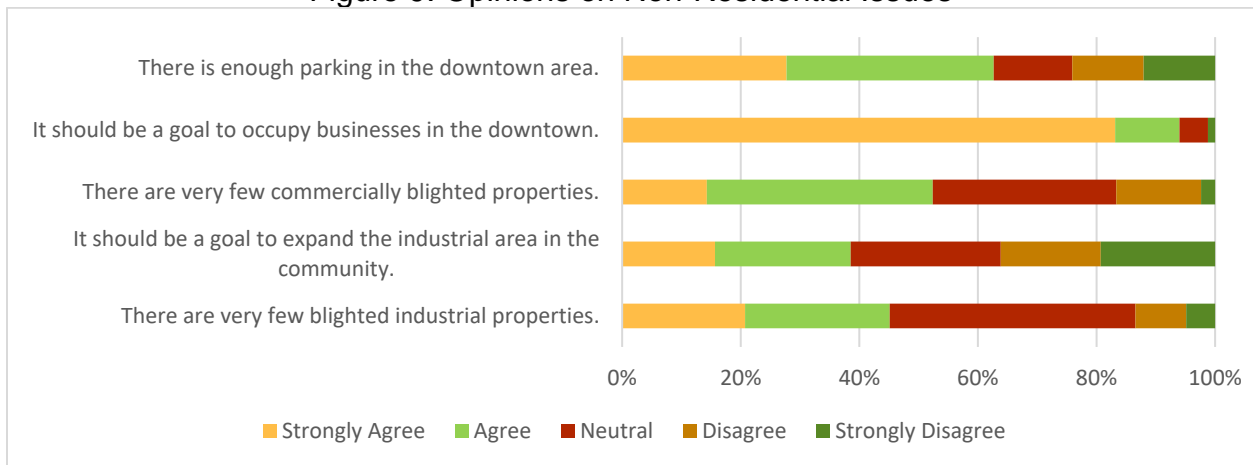
Figure 8: Opinions on Residential Issues



### *Non-Residential Questions*

There were five questions asked in this section. Questions primarily focused on the Village's downtown but also encompassed more general concerns. The first statement was, "there is enough parking in the downtown area." This statement was strongly agreed with by 27.71 percent of the population and 34.94 percent agreed. The second statement was, "it should be a goal to occupy businesses in the downtown." This statement received overwhelming agreement with 83.13 percent strongly agreeing and 10.84 percent agreeing. Only 1.2 percent disagreed. The third statement, "there should be a goal to expand the industrial area in the community", received mixed responses with 38.1 percent agreeing and 30.95 remaining neutral. The fourth statement was "it should be a goal to expand the industrial area in the community." This statement also received mixed responses with an almost even distribution across the spectrum; 22.89 agreed with the statement and 25.3 remained neutral while 19.28 strongly disagreed. Finally, the last statement was "there are very few blighted industrial properties." Most people remained neutral at 41.46 percent while the remaining responses trended towards agreement; 20.73 percent strongly agreed and 24.39 percent agreed (Figure 9).

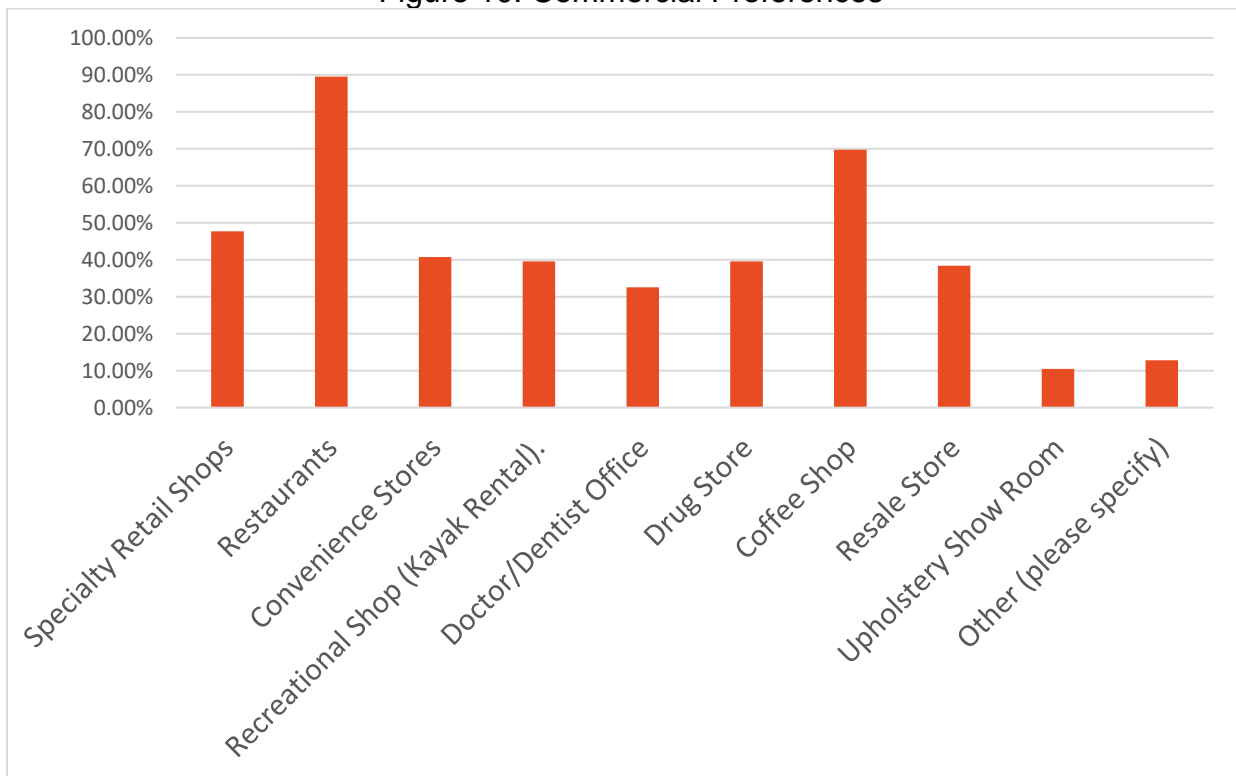
Figure 9: Opinions on Non-Residential Issues



### Commercial Questions

The absence of amenities in the downtown area was a major concern brought up by the Planning Commission as well as stakeholders. In the community survey, we asked respondents to identify those businesses they would like to see in their community. The overwhelming majority (89.53 percent) would like to see more restaurants in the Village. This was followed by 69.77 percent of respondents who would like a coffee shop. The rest of the responses were more evenly distributed between specialty retail shops, convenience stores, recreational shops, drug stores, and resale stores (Figure 10).

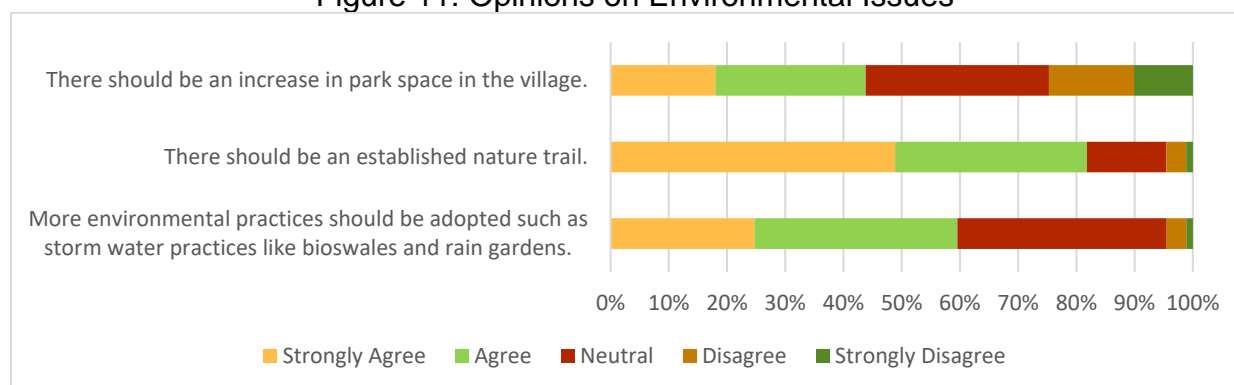
Figure 10: Commercial Preferences



### Environmental Questions

There were three statements posed to respondents regarding the environment. The first statement was, “there should be an increase in park space in the village.” Most people were neutral on this statement but 17.98 strongly agreed and 25.84 agreed. The second statement was, “there should be an established nature trail.” Nearly half of those surveyed strongly agreed with this statement followed by 32.95 percent agreeing. The last statement was, “more environmental practices should be adopted such as storm water practices like bioswales and rain gardens.” The majority of respondents agreed with this statement with 24.72 percent strongly agreeing and 34.83 agreeing (Figure 11).

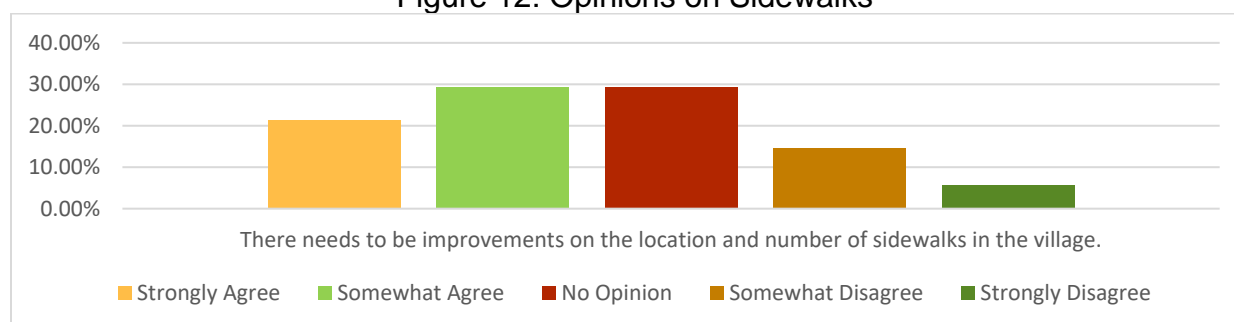
Figure 11: Opinions on Environmental Issues



### Transportation

Respondents were asked one question on the topic of transportation. They were asked to identify how much they agreed with the following statement, “There needs to be improvements on the location and number of sidewalks in the village.” The state of the sidewalk network in the village was identified by the Planning Commission and stakeholders as a concern and the survey responses indicate the community has similar concerns; 21.35 percent strongly agreed and 29.21 agreed compared to only 14.61 percent who disagreed and 5.62 percent who strongly disagreed (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Opinions on Sidewalks

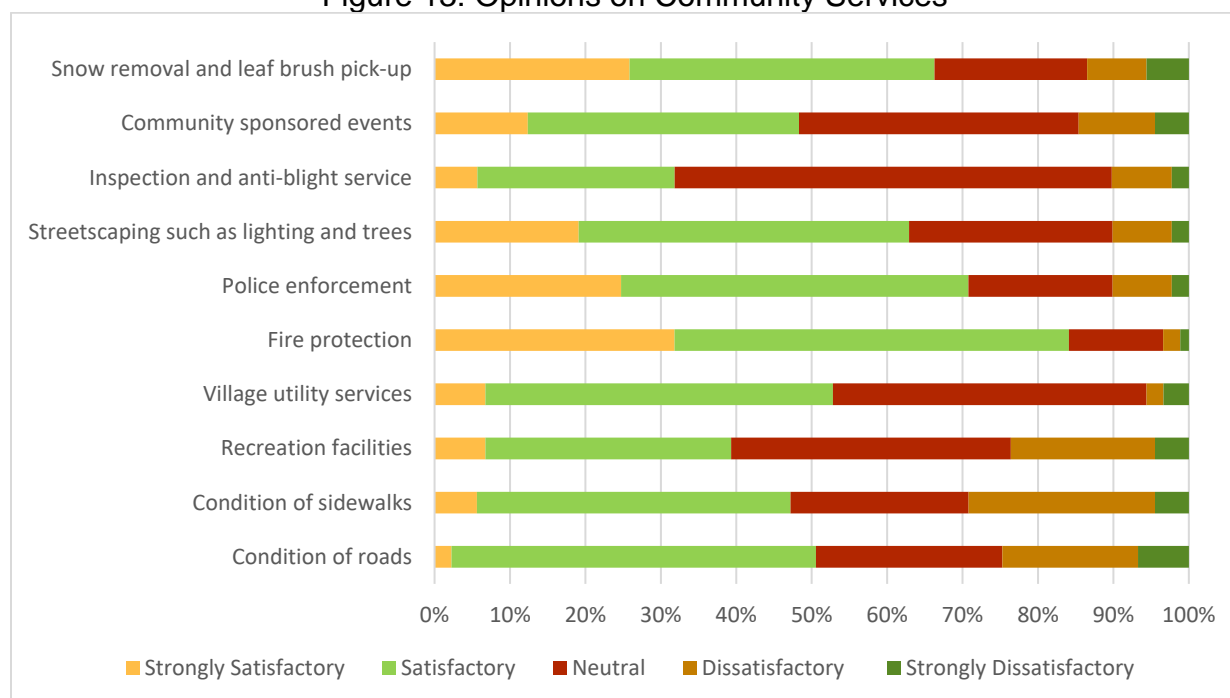


### Community Services

The community services section asked respondents to rank the performance of ten different items ranging from streetscaping to city services. The top three services with the highest satisfaction (ranking of strongly satisfactory or satisfactory) in the Village of

Vernon were fire protection (31.82 percent strongly satisfactory and 52.27 percent satisfactory), snow removal and leaf brush pick-up (25.84 percent strongly satisfactory and 40.45 percent satisfactory), and police enforcement (24.72 percent strongly satisfactory and 46.07 percent satisfactory). The top three lowest satisfaction (ranking of dissatisfactory or strongly dissatisfactory) were the condition of sidewalks (24.72 percent dissatisfactory and 4.49 percent strongly dissatisfactory), recreation facilities (19.10 percent dissatisfactory and 4.49 percent strongly dissatisfactory), and the condition of roads (17.98 percent dissatisfactory and 6.74 percent strongly dissatisfactory) (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Opinions on Community Services

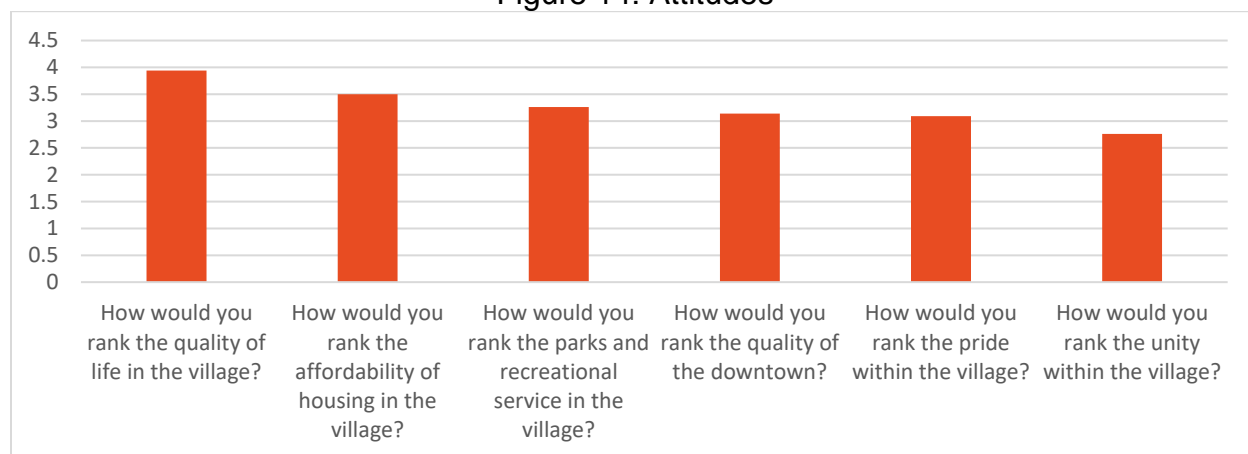


### Attitudes

For this section, respondents were asked to rank their attitudes towards different aspects of the Village of Vernon. The first question was, “how would you rank the quality of life in the Village?”; 45.45 percent responded good and 30.68 percent responded excellent indicating a positive perception of the quality of life in the Village. The second question was, “how would you rank the affordability of housing in the village?”; 40.91 percent responded good and 29.55 responded adequate. The third question was, “how would you rank the parks and recreational service in the Village?” Most respondents replied adequate (36.36 percent) followed by 31.82 percent who replied good. The fourth question was, “how would you rank the quality of the downtown?”; 43.18 percent replied adequate and notably only 5.68 percent replied excellent. The fifth question was, “how would you rank the pride within the village?”; 12.5 percent replied excellent and 34.09 replied good, while 11.36 percent were unsure how they felt on this. The last question was, “how would you rank the unity within the village?” This question received the highest number of people replying poor compared to the other questions; 9.09 percent said poor and 12.5 percent said inadequate compared to 38.64 percent who replied adequate. The

responses to each question were weighted with “excellent” being a five and “poor” being a one. The weighted average is indicated in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Attitudes



### Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews were a set of face-to-face interviews with six community members, some residents, and some business owners within the Village of Vernon. The interviewees were asked a series of six questions that were used to promote discussions with the interviewees; those six questions were:

1. What is your connection to the Village of Vernon?
2. What are some things that you like about the Village of Vernon?
3. What are some things that could change in the Village of Vernon?
4. What is your vision for the Village of Vernon in the next 20 years?
5. Do you have any comments/concerns regarding infrastructure, downtown, housing, or parks and recreation?
6. Do you have any additional comments or concerns?

After analyzing the responses that the stakeholder community shared, we developed two primary categories for responses; those being what do you like about Vernon and what would you improve or look for Vernon to have in the future?

Regarding questions asking what the stakeholders currently enjoyed about the Village of Vernon, many of those interviewed had similar responses; small town “feel”, low crime, quiet setting, etc. for example. It could therefore be interpreted that those who live in and those who own businesses within the



Figure 15: Important Themes That Stakeholders Loved About the Village of Vernon

Village of Vernon were satisfied with the conditions of the Village and felt comfortable living and working in the Village.

Analyzing the questions regarding what these stakeholders would like to see within or change about the Village of Vernon, the respondents' answers focused on the Downtown. Answers included the need for more growth downtown, the need for more amenities downtown such as a restaurant or grocery store, the need for more community involvement, the need for a more "vibrant" downtown, and the need for different businesses and amenities. Many pointed out the need to rehabilitate or clean up underutilized properties along Main Street. Many felt that a strong downtown would lift the entire community.

The fourth question asked the interviewee what their vision was for the Village of Vernon in the next 20 years. Some of the responses that were received included a more "vibrant" downtown, a retention of small businesses and expanded amenities including clothing stores, a grocery store, and another restaurant, better parking, and one respondent referenced the Village of Holly as what they wanted Vernon to resemble.

ROWE Professional Services Company then asked the interviewees if they had any comments or concerns to be specifically addressed regarding the Village of Vernon. A few of these comments included:

- Would like to see the sidewalks updated and the network expanded.
- Would like to see parking options expanded, especially after Sherman's Irish Pub opens.
- Would like to see expanded housing options, especially if Operation Tim occurs.
- Would like to see more inclusive playground equipment.
- Would like to see more bike paths. Not just on the side of the road but dedicated bike trails.
- Would like to see the parks used more.
- Is concerned that the housing stock is old, "historic," and feels there needs to be more options.

### **Open House**

The Master Plan Open House offered the public an opportunity to provide input on various development options that the Planning Commission is considering which involve future land use, proposed capital improvements, goals and objectives, and implementation strategies. Informational boards were set up for participants (copies of the boards are included in the appendices). Each board focused on a different development topic and provided participants with an explanation of the issue, its relevance to the Village of Vernon, and some relevant goals and strategies that the Planning Commission is considering to address the issue. Participants were invited to read the boards, ask questions, and then fill out a questionnaire.

The Open House took place on October 22, 2019 at the North Fire Station in the Village of Vernon (316 E. Main Street). Two sessions were held, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. There was a total of 13 participants, with 13 completed questionnaires.



The questionnaires were divided into six sections: residential, re-development, green infrastructure, community facilities, transportation, and recreation. Each section had one or more related goals and several strategies. Participants were asked to identify how important they felt each goal is and to rank the appropriateness/effectiveness of each strategy on a scale of 1 (not appropriate/effective) to 10 (appropriate/effective). Overall, the goals with the highest percent marked as “very important” by the participants were “protecting the residential neighborhood from the intrusion of non-compatible uses,” (100 percent very important) and “have safe and effective movement of people and vehicles throughout the community,” (76.9 percent very important).

### Residential

Below are the highest scoring strategies for each residential goal:

1. Have quality places to live.
  - Provide and encourage more "missing middle housing" options (5.46 out of 10).
2. Protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of non-compatible uses.
  - A 10-foot greenbelt that requires evergreen trees, deciduous trees, and shrubs (6.62 out of 10).
  - A 10-foot greenbelt that requires deciduous trees and shrubs (5.08 out of 10).

There were two comments written about this topic. One comment expressed support for housing in and on the outskirts of the village but would like it to be carefully planned so as not to be “ad hoc”. The second comment agreed with the need for more housing but is opposed to apartment developments.

### Re-development

Below are the highest scoring strategies for each re-development goal:

1. Redevelop industrial and commercial property as well as develop new industrial and commercial properties.
  - Increase public input when new development is coming in (8.62 out of 10).
  - Annually review the site plan review process to look for improvements (8.77 out of 10).

2. Promote continued development of a compact, pedestrian-oriented downtown as the Village's core of commercial businesses.

- Allow residential dwelling units on the 2nd floor in the downtown (8.85 out of 10).
- Work to require a historic character is kept in the downtown (7.31 out of 10).

There were two comments written about this topic. Both comments expressed concern for the downtown, with historic preservation and façade improvements identified as key strategies.

### Green Infrastructure

Below are the highest scoring strategies for the green infrastructure goal:

1. Encourage green infrastructure to be used.
  - Continue to incorporate a schedule for sanitary sewer system replacement in a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (9.08 out of 10).
  - Development and adoption of stormwater management best practices into infrastructure standards and zoning ordinance (Score both this and subcategories below) (8.27 out of 10).

### Community Facilities

Below are the highest scoring strategies for the community infrastructure goal:

1. Address the replacement and repair of aged stormwater systems, provide adequate service to manage stormwater, and expand the sewer system to the northeast corner of the Village.
  - Preserve the northeast corner to be agricultural (5.92 out of 10).
  - Encourage single-family housing in the northeast corner (5.83 out of 10).

### Transportation

Below are the highest scoring strategies for the transportation goal:

1. Have safe and effective movement of people throughout the community by improving the sidewalks.
  - Continue the sidewalk improvement program (8.75 out of 10).
  - Continue to incorporate in the Capital Improvement Plan the replacing of sidewalks (8.54 out of 10).

There were two comments written about this topic. One comment identified the need for a flashing yellow light at Main Street and M-71. Both comments stressed the need for the repaving and repair of streets.

### Recreation

Below are the highest scoring strategies for the recreation goal:

1. Provide a range of recreational facilities to benefit Village residents and promote economic development.
  - Readopt and maintain a parks and recreation master plan that qualifies for grant funding (9 out of 10).
  - Establish an "adopt a park" program to encourage local service or school groups to volunteer their time to maintain and enhance the park (8.23 out of 10).



## Chapter 6. Goals, Policies, and Strategies

### Introduction to Goals, Policies, and Strategies

One of the most important parts in a master plan is the Goals, Policies, and Strategies section. This section will be referred to during the next 20 years to guide the Village of Vernon in decisions concerning the future development of the community. Understanding goals and policies is important in utilizing a master plan. It should also be noted that although the approach toward attaining a goal may change over time, the goal itself should be relatively constant unless the community agrees on a “change in direction”. The association between goals and policies is defined as:

A **goal** is a destination that has been established by community input. It is the vision established by the community of where we see the Village of Vernon in 20 years. Goals provide basis for future policies. Goals are only general statements that do not define how to specifically obtain the desired goal. Policies guide the community in its effort to reach a desired goal.

A **policy** statement is a guide that lays out the way in which a goal may be obtained. A policy statement serves the governing body as a guide that will direct their decision making to obtain the goal selected by the community.

A **strategy** is a proposed action designed to implement the policy. In the Implementation Plan, these will be refined to include the person that lays out the way in which a goal may be obtained. Policy statements serve the governing body as a guide that will direct their decision making to obtain the goal selected by the community.

Data collected during the land use planning process (population, housing, natural features, agriculture, etc.) have been analyzed and discussed. The Village Planning Commission has determined that the following are appropriate categories for the Goals, Policies, and Strategies section of this plan:

- A. General
- B. Residential
- B. Commercial
- C. Natural Resources
- D. Community Facilities
- E. Industrial

The policy statements formed in these categories can be used to:

1. Update the current land use map;
2. Coordinate government programs;
3. Support public relations for community programs; and
4. Make area-wide programs consistent and stable.

Although the goals and policies reflect the input of the residents provided through the on-line survey, stakeholder interviews, and Master Plan Open House, the village recognizes that there is no such thing as total gratification for every village citizen or development interest in all areas of the village. This Land Use Plan is an effort to outline a development scheme that is at least reasonable to the individuals' preferences, yet very attentive to the maintenance of the health, safety, general welfare, and morals of the total community.

## General

- 1) Goal - The Village of Vernon has a well-educated set of governing bodies, boards, commissions, and staff.

### Policy

- a) The community has a dedicated source of funding for training.
    - i) Establish a source of funding in the village budget to support training opportunities for staff and officials.
  - b) The community identifies training needs and tracks attendance of the governing body, boards, commissions, and staff.
    - i) Identify priority events or topics for training.
    - ii) Create a mechanism to track training attendance.
  - c) The community encourages the governing body, boards, commissions, and staff to attend trainings.
    - i) Create a strategy for consistently encouraging training.
- 2) Goal - The community encourages economic vitality and promotes the marketing of the Village as a whole.

### Policy

- a) Create a unified marketing/branding strategy.
  - b) Create an economic development strategy.
    - i) Establish joint meeting of the Village Council and DDA to review the development strategy annually.
- 3) Goal - The Village of Vernon promotes the creation and use of redevelopment ready sites.

### Policy

- a) The community identifies and prioritizes redevelopment sites.
  - i) Develop a vision for prioritized redevelopment sites.
- b) A property information package for redevelopment ready sites is assembled.
  - i) Gather basic information for prioritized sites as outlined in the RRC Best Practices.
- c) Prioritized redevelopment sites are actively marketed.
  - i) Market at least three priority redevelopment sites online.
  - ii) Identify financial or other incentives for each site.

- d) The community identifies and prioritizes redevelopment sites.
  - i) Using a multi-stakeholder approach, identify and prioritize at least three redevelopment sites.
- 4) Goal - The Village of Vernon encourages public engagement throughout the community.

#### Policy

- a) The community has a public participation plan for engaging a diverse set of community stakeholder.
  - i) Implement the recently adopted public participation strategy.
- b) The Village of Vernon encourages a developer to seek input from neighboring residents and businesses at the onset of the application process.
  - i) Design a plan for assisting with outreach on potentially controversial projects.
- c) The Village of Vernon annually reviews the successes and challenges with the site plan review and approval procedures.
  - i) Develop a mechanism/process for obtaining customer feedback.
  - ii) Implement recently adopted process for reviewing feedback at least annually.

### Residential

- 1) Goal - The Village of Vernon provides a range of housing types to meet the housing needs of village residents of all economic and social groups while maintaining small town charm.

#### Policy

- a) Medium- and high-density development will provide sewer services where they are not provided. Prior to development, it must be proven that these needs will be adequately met without negatively impacting surrounding development.
  - b) Ground water availability and quality must be determined prior to all residential development, especially multi-family developments, to assure that there are no negative impacts to preexisting developments.
  - c) Promote the development of missing middle housing rather than apartment complexes to provide multi-family houses.
    - i) Modify the zoning ordinance to permit “missing middle” style housing by right in the R-M1 zoning district but requiring apartment buildings over a certain size only by Special Use Permit.
- 2) Goal - The Village of Vernon protects its residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of noncompatible uses.

#### Policy

- a) Medium- and high-density development will be permitted only in those areas provided with public sewer.

- b) All non-residential development adjacent to a residential area will be buffered to reduce noise, dirt, odor, and other nuisances to a level acceptable with residential areas.
    - i) Amend the zoning ordinance to establish landscape buffering requirements to address all non-residential development adjacent to a residential area.
  - c) Thru traffic in residential areas will be kept to a minimum.
- 3) Goal - The Village of Vernon promotes the orderly growth of residential areas to maximize the effectiveness of municipal services.

Policy

- a) Access to all high-density developments will be via major streets.
    - i) Amend the zoning ordinance to require direct access to major streets or M-71 as a condition of site plan approval and rezoning review.
    - ii) Establish a future land use locational criterion for medium- and high-density residential uses requiring direct access to major streets or M-71.
  - b) Residential development will be encouraged in areas where public sewer is available.
- 4) Goal - The Village of Vernon actively works to prevent the premature decay of the residential housing stock.

Policy

- a) The village will assist in providing residents with information regarding programs available for housing rehabilitation assistance.
    - i) Provide information to the Village Building Inspector and for display at the Village Hall.
- 5) Goal - The Village of Vernon retains a greenbelt of agricultural land around the perimeter of the village.

Policy

- a) Property on the edges of the village will be retained as agricultural zoned.

## Commercial

- 1) Goal - The Village of Vernon promotes commercial development as part of an overall balanced land use pattern.

Policy

- a) Excess speculation in commercial development resulting in the abandonment of commercial buildings will be discouraged.
  - i) Establish a future land use locational criterion for commercial development to consider the availability of existing unused commercial development.
- b) Incompatible primary uses in the downtown area will be eliminated where possible.

- 2) Goal - The Village of Vernon promotes continued development of a compact, pedestrian-oriented downtown as the village commercial core.

Policy

- a) General business-type development will be limited to the current downtown area.
    - i) Prioritize CIP investment decisions based on its impact on the downtown.
  - b) All resources will be invested and, where appropriate, used to stimulate the revitalization of the downtown area.
    - i) Establish a future land use locational criterion for downtown commercial development that discourages spot zoning of downtown commercial.
  - c) Expansion of the downtown area will be contiguous with existing area.
  - d) Amend the zoning ordinance to allow residential dwelling units on the 2nd floor in the downtown.
  - e) Require a historic character is kept in the downtown with priority given to façade improvements.
- 3) Goal - The Village of Vernon prevents the development of traffic hazards and unnecessary traffic conflict points along M-71.

Policy

- a) Commercial development along M-71 should be designed so that they will not alter the ease of thru traffic.
    - i) Amend the zoning ordinance to establish access management best practices.
  - b) The strip development of convenience-level facilities will be discouraged.
    - i) Establish a future land use locational criterion for commercial development to limit strip commercial development.
- 4) Goal - The Village of Vernon provides neighborhood convenience commercial developments where necessary.

Policy

- a) Commercial development along M-71 should be designed so that they will not alter the ease of thru traffic.
- 5) Goal - The Village of Vernon promotes cooperation between the Planning Commission, Village Council, and Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Policy

- a) The three boards should schedule at least one joint meeting a year to discuss strategies for strengthening and promoting the downtown.
- b) All resources will be invested and, where appropriate, will be used to stimulate the revitalization of the downtown area.

**Natural Resources**

- 1) Goal - The Village of Vernon works to prevent degradation of the area's natural resources.

Policy

- a) Developments which adversely affect surrounding area's supply of groundwater will be prevented when possible.
- 2) Goal - The Village of Vernon works to preserve existing natural features where possible.

Policy

- a) All developments will be required to provide adequate drainage facilities. Where developments will result in run-off greater than the amount the existing drain facilities can handle, on-site retention facilities will be required when possible.
    - i) Establish storm water guidelines for evaluation of proposed developments and tie them to the site plan review process.
- 3) Goal - The Village of Vernon encourages development that is sensitive to existing environmental conditions.

Policy

- a) Development in identified floodplains will be in accordance with the national Flood Insurance Program.
  - i) Promote the use of green infrastructure to address storm water and other utility issues.
  - ii) Investigate participation in the Community Rating System to reduce floodplain insurance costs.
- b) Flexibility in development regulation will be provided when possible to permit development sensitive to existing natural features provided compliance with all other goals and objectives can be maintained.
  - i) Amend the zoning ordinance to permit cluster development to protect natural features.
- c) Promote the use of green infrastructure to address storm water and other utility issues.
  - i) Amend the zoning ordinance to provide incentives for the use of green infrastructure facilities for development.

**Community Facilities**

- 1) Goal - The Village of Vernon works provides public facilities and services that respond to the needs of the village residents.

**Policy**

- a) Ensure the maximum effectiveness possible of those public facilities.
    - i) Maintain a CIP that is based on prioritized maintenance and replacement of public infrastructure and facilities.
    - ii) Identify and implement potential cost sharing arrangement for facilities and services with the City of Durand, Vernon Township, and Shiawassee County.
  - b) Maintain a sewer system that provides all of its residents with public sewers.
    - i) Prepare preliminary plans and cost estimates for extension of sewer to unserved portions of the village as well as cost benefit analysis to address long term maintenance cost.
    - ii) Identify potential strategies for cost sharing and grant funding to cover the cost of extending sewer lines.
  - c) Maintain and extend sidewalks throughout the village.
    - i) Prepare a non-motorized transportation plan tied to a CIP.
- 2) Goal - The Village of Vernon works assures the maximum effectiveness possible of those public facilities and services provided.

**Policy**

- a) Discourage development that would require the premature extension or expansion of public facilities and services.
    - i) Establish zoning standards to review proposed developments for their effect the cost and efficiency of providing public facilities and services.
- 3) Goal - The Village of Vernon provides a range of recreational facilities to benefit its residents and promote economic developments.

**Policy**

- a) The village will work to promote and maintain the village parks and expand or update the park facilities based on public feedback.
  - i) Establish an “adopt a park” program to encourage local service or school groups to volunteer their time to maintain and enhance the park.
  - ii) Readopt and maintain a park plan consistent with the MDNR recreation grant guidelines.
- b) The village will work to promote a trail connecting Corunna to Durand.
  - i) Establish a multi-jurisdictional committee to study the feasibility of extending the rail trail from Corunna to Durand.

**Industrial**

- 1) Goal - Encourage industrial development and operations compatible with existing land uses and the surrounding environment.

## Policy

- a) Industrial development adjacent to residential areas will be discouraged.
    - i) Establish a future land use locational criterion for industrial uses requiring adequate physical separation from residences is provided.
  - b) Industrial development adjacent to railroads will be encouraged as long as no negative impacts are experienced by the surrounding residences or preexisting businesses.
    - i) Establish a future land use locational criterion for industrial uses encouraging location near the railroad, if adequate buffering from residences is provided.
- 2) Goal - Exploit potential for high-tech industrial development within the village that will not negatively impact surrounding areas.

## Policy

- a) Buffering between industrial and non-industrial areas will be encouraged to reduce noise, dust, odors, and other nuisances to a level compatible with the adjacent non-industrial area.
- b) Industrial development will be designed to ensure that off-site impacts such as truck traffic will not negatively affect other areas of the village.
  - i) Amend the zoning ordinance to require consideration of traffic impact on site plan approval of industrial facilities.



## Chapter 7. Economic Development

Every municipality is responsible for guiding future growth. The intellectual challenge is in creating an appropriate mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses in the community. One pivotal factor in this process is a solid understanding of the current pattern of land uses and deficiencies within the municipal boundaries. Knowing what uses exist and what services are needed to resolve land use deficiencies can help determine the economic development that a community should plan for.

### **Project Tim**

In 2017, plans emerged for a large high-tech industrial development dubbed Project Tim in the City of Durand, 4 miles southeast of the Village of Vernon. The development, if undertaken, will have a significant impact on nearby communities. Currently, it is projected to provide employment for 800 people in Phase 1. The development is backed by a small group of globally leading companies and experts whose plan is to build a 24 million square foot facility on 850 acres of land.

The development has not been approved at this time; however, the developers are in the later stages of due diligence and financial review. Before construction can begin, there will be significant public considerations/approvals. Projects of this magnitude always have the potential to significantly impact the communities they are in as well as nearby communities, such as the Village of Vernon. Eight hundred (800) direct new jobs in the region means new opportunities for the residents of the village and has the potential to attract new residents to the area. Beyond the 800 direct new jobs at the facility, this development is projected to create 4,000 temporary construction jobs.

### **Downtown Vernon Strategy**

The Vernon Downtown Development Authority (DDA) hired Place & Main Advisors, LLC in 2016 to assess Vernon's downtown and develop a redevelopment strategy. Some of the issues the plan identifies include a local consumer preference for discount retailers, economic competition from nearby cities, vacant and inactive storefronts, ineffective gateway signage, and infrastructure concerns.

The downtown strategy for downtown Vernon outlines four key goals and identifies short-, mid-, and long-term objectives for each. Below are all four goals with some of the different objectives that correlate with each:

*Goal #1) Improve the DDA's organization by spearheading projects and working with village residents.*

- Increase the number of residents volunteering to at least 10 percent of the village over a five-year period. Reach out to individuals and ask them what tasks interest them. Recognize and thank volunteers for their contribution.

- Invest in training for Board Members and volunteers by taking advantage of Michigan Main Street's Associate Level.
- Improve tracking systems to keep a thorough record of what people are doing and when things are done.

*Goal #2) Promote the downtown by attracting foot traffic.*

- Organize events that bring people to the downtown. Survey residents to identify what types of events people are interested in and organize two, but no more than three, additional events in the first year.
- Improve gateway signage to pull traffic off M-71 and into the downtown by adding a landscaped welcome sign.
- Partner with downtown businesses to take advantage of the nearby Crawford Memorial Park by encouraging people to visit the downtown after/during their trip to the park.

*Goal #3) Address aesthetic and infrastructure issues to improve the downtown experience.*

- Work closely with property and business owners to improve the streetscape. Persuade building owners to take advantage of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's façade grant program. Activate the sidewalk by encouraging restaurant owners to add outdoor seating.

*Goal #4) Improve the economic vitality of the downtown.*

- Inventory existing buildings and identify all vacant and/or for sale properties. Make this list as accessible as possible to potential buyers.
- Prioritize the reopening of Vernon Pub to serve as an anchor for the downtown while simultaneously encouraging new businesses. The village should focus on attracting niche, specialty, and resale shops that offer goods not available at the big box stores in Corunna and Durand.

### **DDA Development Plan**

The current Development Plan was adopted in June 2006 and proposes several projects funded with Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The DDA district is centered on Main Street between Duane Street and Church Street but it extends as far south as Railroad Avenue. The district encompasses a diverse range of uses including: residential, commercial, industrial, and public. The following are some of the proposed projects identified in the Development Plan.

*Annual Projects*

- DDA training
- Downtown advertising and promotion

*Proposed Long-Term Project Prioritization*

- Off-street parking
- Street tree replacement
- Maintenance, improvement, addition, or replacement of streetlights
- Replace the street trash receptacles
- Launch the Vernon façade improvement program
- Barrier-free access improvements
- Purchasing and sales of property within the Development District
- Develop a pocket park



## Chapter 8. Future Land Use

If the future need for land for development were based solely on the population projections contained in the Population, Households, and Housing section of this plan, then there would not be much difference between the future land use plan and the current land use map. After all, it is not hard to plan for a decrease in population and housing. However, the fact remains that some growth in the Vernon Township area is anticipated over the next twenty (20) years and, even if the village hasn't grown recently, there is a possibility that it could capture some of that area-wide growth.

Some factors that favor growth for the village over the next twenty (20) years include:

- The village has sewer service available to some of the currently vacant land, making it the only land outside of the City of Durand that can offer sewer service. This is especially important because of the severe limitations most of the soils in the area pose for the development of on-site septic systems.
- The village has an attractive, functioning business district with convenience-level commercial businesses.
- The village provides community services such as police, recreation, and maintenance departments.
- The close proximity to the Flint area and the charming setting of the village makes the village an attractive place to live outside of the fast-paced life of the city.

Based on these factors, there is a possibility of the village experiencing some growth during the planning period. This growth is taken into account in Map 8.

### **One-Family Low-Density Residential**

The low-density residential land use classification is reserved primarily for single-family residences at a density of approximately three units per acre and associated accessory uses. Other uses allowed include a range of adult foster care facilities and institutional uses such as schools, churches, and public buildings.

The areas identified as low-density residential on the Future Land Use Map are those areas already developed at that density and undeveloped areas along M-71 that are surrounded by such low-density residential homes and appear ripe for similar development. The property located at the far northeast corner of the village is currently agricultural but has a future land use classification of low-density residential to permit the owner to redevelop as residential in the future.

The future land use classification corresponds with the R-1A Low-Density Residential zoning district.

### **Medium Density Residential**

The medium density residential land use classification is reserved primarily for single-family and duplex residences at a density of approximately five units per acre and

associated accessory uses. Other uses allowed include a range of adult foster care facilities and institutional uses such as schools, churches, and public buildings.

The areas identified as medium density residential are those areas currently developed at that density as well as the vacant areas in the village sewer service area already platted and/or adjacent to current medium density development.

The future land use classification corresponds with the R-1B Medium Density Residential zoning district.

### **Multiple-Family Residential**

The multiple-family residential land use classification is reserved primarily for the full range of residential uses from single-family and duplex residences to multiple-family developments with a maximum density of 12 units per acre. Associated accessory uses are also permitted along with a range of adult foster care facilities and institutional uses such as schools, churches, and public buildings.

The areas identified as high density residential on the Future Land Use Map include currently undeveloped vacant land within the sewer service area and which is adjacent to a major street. The area has already been proposed to be developed as a high-density residential complex. A parcel to the south of Water Street has been reclassified as multiple-family residential.

The future land use classification corresponds with the R-M1 Multiple Family Residential zoning district.

### **Downtown Business**

The downtown business district land use classification is intended to promote the vitality of the village's downtown. The range of uses allowed include a full assortment of commercial and office uses. It also includes the Glasers Lumber yard, even though that property is not part of, or the character of the downtown.

The areas identified as commercial include those areas currently used as commercial property, as well as the balance of the block of Main Street, from Walnut to Church, that is not currently commercial (excluding the post office). This provides for any commercial expansion needed due to additional growth in the village of the surrounding trade area. New businesses are encouraged to locate in the already established downtown commercial area. Expansion of the commercial district must consider the availability of existing unused commercial development. Incompatible primary uses in the downtown area should be eliminated where possible. Spot zoning of non-commercial uses within the downtown is discouraged, although some mixed uses, including residences above the first floor is permitted.

The future land use classification corresponds with the B-1 General Business zoning district.

**Highway Service**

The highway service land use classification is intended to allow for uses with large footprints, that have extensive outdoor display, or which provide services to highway travelers.

This land use classification is located along M-71. Typically, these businesses are similar to convenience stores, fast food restaurants, gas stations, or automobile parts stores. By no means is this a complete list of land uses found in this category. It will be up to the Village Council to ultimately determine what is considered to be highway service. Development along M-71 should be limited and strip commercial development is discouraged. It should be noted that no additional development is anticipated along M-71. While there may be pressure to develop along the highway, only highway service-type development should be permitted in order to prevent competition that could weaken the general business district.

The future land use classification corresponds with the B-2 Highway Service zoning district.

**Agricultural**

The agricultural land use classification is reserved primarily for farm uses as well as single-family residences at a density of one unit per 5 acres and associated accessory uses. Other uses allowed include a range of adult foster care facilities and institutional uses such as schools, churches, and public buildings.

Agricultural land uses are shown on the Future Land Use Map in already established farming areas along the edge of the village. This land use will remain agricultural when possible to maintain the rural character of the Village of Vernon.

**Public/Semi-Public/Park**

This classification is given to land which is currently used for a public or semi-public purpose and is expected to continue in that location. The uses are allowed in several zoning districts. Sexton Park, which is located at the south east corner of the village, could possibly be redeveloped as senior housing in the future.

**Industrial**

This classification is intended to provide for uses of an industrial or heavy commercial use that is characterized by high off-site impacts.

The area shown on the Future Land Use Map as industrial is not usable for much else. This is because of its location between two rail lines. Industrial uses are appropriate in areas where adequate physical separation from residences is available. Development in this area should be closely controlled because much of it is in the floodplain.

**Mobile Home Park Analysis**

The establishment of a mobile home park future land use classification and a mobile home park zoning district is justified if there is a demonstrated need for this type of housing and

if there is an appropriate location for it within the village. If these preconditions are not met, it becomes unnecessarily burdensome on property owners to limit the potential future use of any particular property to just mobile homes when the land could be put to more productive use with another classification. In order to determine the need for a mobile home park within the Village of Vernon, an analysis of the region's mobile home market was conducted. Every mobile home park within a 10-mile radius of the village was identified and the total number of units in each park was calculated. We then reviewed the Future Land Use Maps and zoning maps of nearby municipalities and identified every parcel within 10 miles of the village that is zoned for or planned for a mobile home park. Next, we estimated the total number of units that could be placed on each of these parcels to determine the maximum number of mobile homes that could hypothetically be built within 10 miles of the village. The difference between these two numbers is the amount of additional mobile homes that can be built under current conditions. A low number indicates the need for more land to be made available for mobile homes and a high number indicates there is already more land than is needed.

As shown in Figure 16 and Table 8-1, there are a total of 12 mobile home parks within a 10-mile radius of the Village of Vernon. Owosso Charter Township hosts the largest number of units with 234 spread across two mobile home parks. This is followed by Clayton Township with 176 units spread across four mobile home parks. Caledonia Township, Venice Township, the Village of Morrice, the City of Owosso, and the City of Swartz Creek each have one mobile home park, each with 68 units, 162 units, 74 units, 135 units, 165 units,. The total number of units within 10 miles of the Village of Vernon is 1,325.

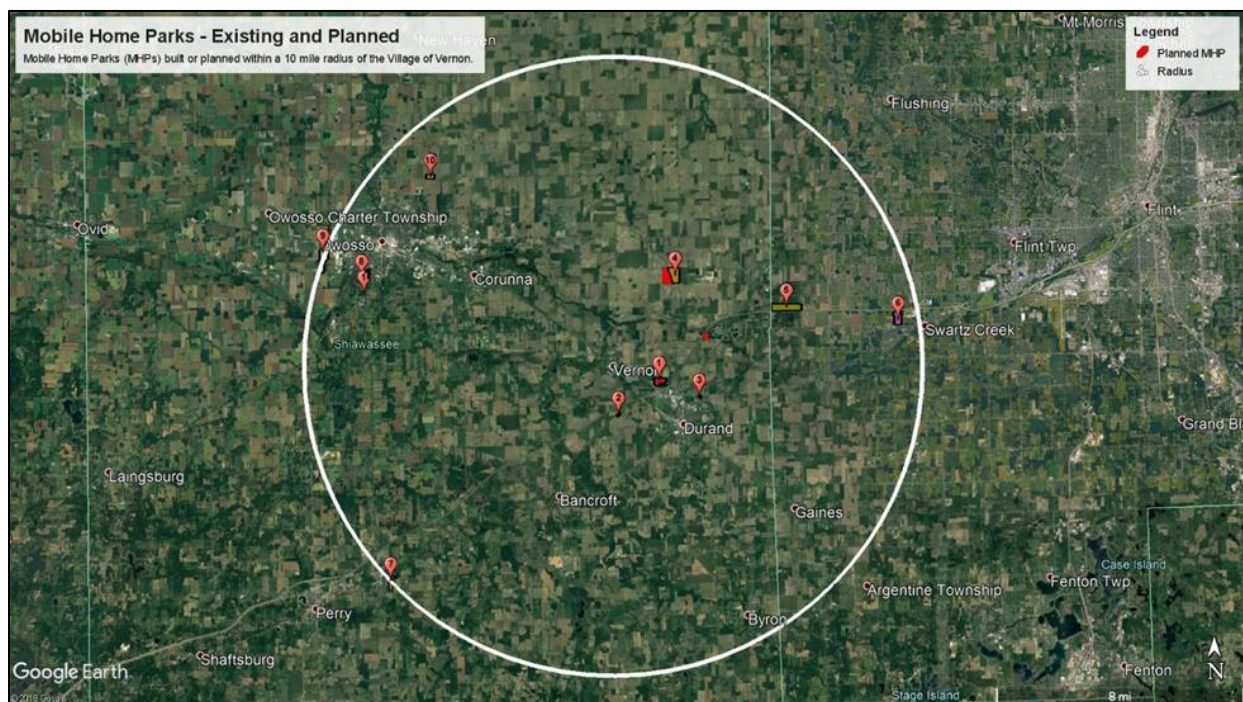


Figure 16: Existing Mobile Home Parks Within 10 Miles of the Village of Vernon



There are two parcels in this same area that are either zoned for mobile homes or have a mobile home future land use classification but have not been developed yet. One is in Vernon Township and has enough space to accommodate 50 units and the other is in Venice Township and has space to accommodate 100 units.

These numbers indicate there is not a need to plan for a mobile home park in the Village of Vernon. There is enough land available nearby to accommodate two additional mobile



Figure 17: Northwoods Community Mobile Home Park

home parks totaling 150 units before any new land is needed. In addition, these numbers don't take into consideration the number of empty lots that are in existing mobile home parks. Many of the mobile home parks referenced in this analysis have ample room to accommodate more units. Figure 17 demonstrates a mobile home park in Caledonia Township that has several concrete foundations visible where a mobile home could go. In total, there are 695 vacant spaces that could hold a mobile home within 10 miles of the Village of Vernon. The need to provide

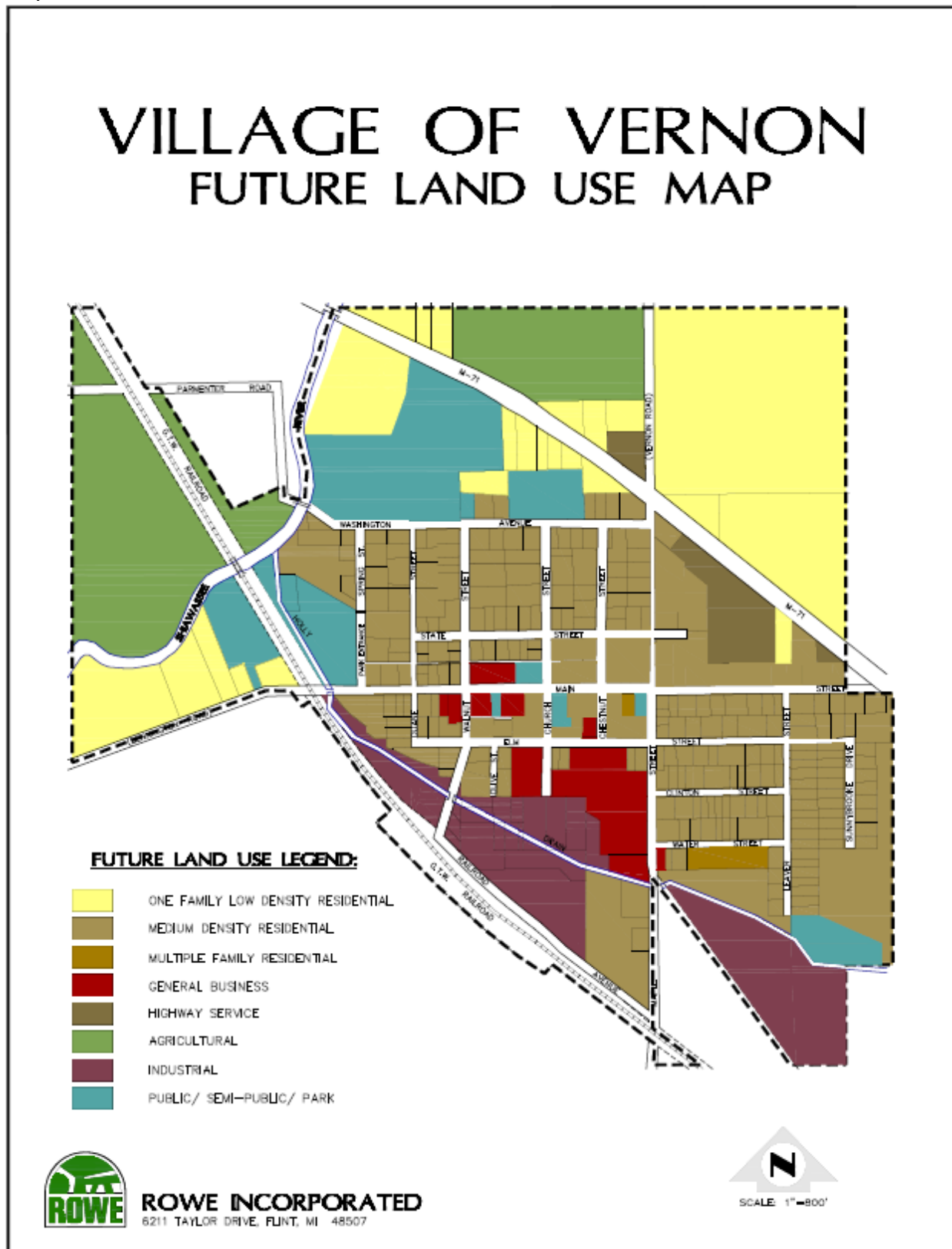
zoning for mobile homes in the village should be reviewed regularly by the Planning Commission. Conditions can change rapidly and if Project Tim is developed in Durand, there will be a significant increase in demand for all types of housing, including mobile homes.

Table 8-1: Mobile Home Park Analysis

Community Name	MHP Name	Number of Total Lots	Number of Occupied Units	Number of Vacant Lots	Total Units in Area
<b>Caledonia Township</b>	Northwoods Community	94	68	26	94
<b>Clayton Township</b>	Swartz Creek Meadows	560	176	384	560
<b>Village of Morrice</b>	Morrice Meadows	81	74	7	81
<b>City of Owosso</b>	Candlewick Court	200	135	65	200
<b>Owosso Charter Township**</b>	Woods & Fields Communities	323	234	89	386

	Pleasant Valley*	63	63	0	
<b>City of Swartz Creek</b>	Swartz Creek Estates	176	165	11	176
<b>Venice Township**</b>	Unknown	165	162	3	165
<b>Vernon Township**</b>	Alans Park	63	25	38	358
	Lakeview Estates	216	155	61	
	Country Manor Mobile Home Park	45	45	0	
	Vans	34	23	11	
*Not all units are visible, figures given are approximate. **Community has land designated for MHP development.					

Map 8 - Future Land Use





## Chapter 9. Zoning Plan

The purpose of the zoning plan is to clarify the relationship between the zoning ordinance and future land use plan and identify proposed changes to the zoning ordinance necessary to implement the envisioned future depicted in the plan.

### Future Land Use Classifications Comparison to Zoning Districts

In general, each of the future land use classifications match a zoning district to better coordinate changes that are recommended to be made or assist in rezoning cases (Table 9-1). The primary changes to the zoning districts illustrated are the removal of the Mobile Home zoning district. There is currently no “mobile home” land use classification associated with the zoning district and no apparent location for such a use. The Public / Semi-Public land use classification does not correspond with a particular zoning district but is intended to acknowledge the current location of such uses, which are permitted in several zoning districts.

<b>Table 9-1: Future Land Use Classification and Zoning District Correlation</b>	
<b>Future Land Use Classifications</b>	<b>Zoning Districts</b>
Low-Density Residential	Low-Density Residential
Medium Density Residential	Medium Density Residential
High Density Residential	Multiple Family Residential
Commercial or General Business	General Business
Highway Service	Highway Service
Agricultural	Agricultural
Public / Semi-Public	No Zoning District
Industrial	Industrial
No Future Land Use Classification	Mobile Home

### Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Text

In addition to the changes to the zoning district, there are some changes to the zoning ordinance text that is proposed. These generally flow from action items included in the Goals, Policies, and Strategies chapter of the plan.

- Modify the zoning ordinance to continue to permit “missing middle” style housing by right in the R-M1 zoning district but requiring apartment buildings over a certain size only by Special Use Permit.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to establish landscape buffering requirements to address all non-residential development adjacent to a residential area.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to require direct access to major streets or M-71 as a condition of site plan approval and rezoning review for large multi-family developments.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to establish access management best practices.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to provide incentives for the use of green infrastructure facilities for development.

- Amend the zoning ordinance to permit cluster development to protect natural features.
- Establish zoning standards to review proposed developments for their effect on the cost and efficiency of providing public facilities and services.
- Buffering between industrial and non-industrial areas should be required to reduce noise, dust, odors, and other nuisances to a level compatible with the adjacent non-industrial area.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to require consideration of traffic impact on site plan approval of industrial facilities as well as other uses that are expected to generate high levels of traffic.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to remove the R-MH zoning district.

## Chapter 10. Implementation Plan

The master plan identifies the vision for the next 20 years for the city; however, that vision will not be realized unless the village takes steps to make it happen. The purpose of the implementation plan is to identify the steps to implement the plan. The following section attempts to identify each specific plan recommendation with appropriate implementation techniques and the parties involved to facilitate that recommendation.

### **Implementation Tools**

The following is a brief discussion of several key implementation tools available to the village.

#### *Zoning Ordinance*

The most effective tool for accomplishing the vision of the master plan is the zoning ordinance. Zoning standards and zoning districts are defined regulations that guide development in the village. The zoning ordinance should be reviewed periodically for its effectiveness and updated as needed to be consistent with the goals of the Master Plan. The Master Plan does note several specific changes to the zoning ordinance that are needed to implement the plan. These changes are outlined in Chapter 9.

#### *Capital Improvement Plans*

The state, with the passage of Act 33 of 2008, requires each community which operates a public sewer and water system to develop a capital improvement plan (CIP) to help in the implementation of the community's Master Plan. The CIP is a rolling five-year budget for improvement projects such as sewer and water lines, parks, public facilities, etc. The village has prepared a CIP and reviews it annually.

#### *Site Plan, Special Land Use, Planned Development, and Rezoning Approval*

As part of the implementation of the Master Plan, the village's site plan and Special Land Use approval processes and standards should be reviewed. Once these standards are updated, the Village Council and the Planning Commission must adhere to them consistently when reviewing development proposals. In order to maintain the vision of the plan, consistent application of the ordinance standards is essential.

#### *Re-Evaluation and Adjustment of the Plan*

The final step in the planning process is reevaluation and adjustment. The process of community planning is never finished. A community's population, economic status, goals, land uses, land use problems, and political climate are constantly changing. The plan must be regularly assessed for its effectiveness at addressing the present land use issues in the community, and whether amendments should be made to keep the plan relevant and make it the most appropriate guide for the village's future land use. Based on State Statute, the plan must be reviewed at least every five (5) years to ensure the plan is up to date and reflects current policy.

### Implementation Table

The following table outlines the strategies identified in Chapter 6. Each strategy is sorted by category and assigned a timeframe and responsible party. Responsible parties include: the Village Council, which is the legislative body responsible for making decisions necessary for the operation of the village; the Planning Commission, which is the appointed body acting as an advisory group to the Village Council on issues and policies related to planning, land use regulation, and community development; the DDA, which is the body tasked with catalyzing development in the village's downtown district; and the Administration, which are the village officials tasked with executing the government's duties.

Category	Recommendation	Responsible Party	Timeframe
General	Establish a source of funding in the village budget to support training opportunities for staff and officials.	Village Council	Ongoing
General	Identify priority events or topics for training.	Planning Commission and Administration	Ongoing
General	Create a mechanism to track training attendance.	Administration	Short-Term
General	Create a strategy for consistently encouraging training.	Administration	Short-Term
General	Establish joint meeting of the Village Council and DDA to review the development strategy annually.	Village Council and DDA	Ongoing
Redevelopment Sites	Develop a vision for prioritized redevelopment sites.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
Redevelopment Sites	Gather basic information for prioritized sites as outlined in the RRC Best Practices.	Administration	Ongoing
Redevelopment Sites	Market at least three priority redevelopment sites online.	Administration	Ongoing
Redevelopment Sites	Identify financial or other incentives for each site.	Planning Commission and Administration	Ongoing
Redevelopment Sites	Using a multi-stakeholder approach, identify and prioritize at least three redevelopment sites.	Planning Commission and Administration	Short-Term
Public Engagement	Implement recently adopted public participation strategy.	Village Council and Planning Commission	Short-Term
Public Engagement	Design a plan for assisting with outreach on potentially controversial projects.	Planning Commission	Short-Term



Category	Recommendation	Responsible Party	Timeframe
Public Engagement	Develop a mechanism/process for obtained customer feedback.	Administration	Short-Term
Public Engagement	Implement the recently adopted process for reviewing feedback at least annually.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
FLU Plan	Establish a future land use locational criterion for medium- and high-density residential uses requiring direct access to major streets or M-71.	Planning Commission	Short-Term
Residential	Provide information to the Village Building Inspector for display at the Village Hall.	Administration	Ongoing
FLU Plan	Establish a future land use locational criterion for commercial development to consider the availability of existing unused commercial development.	Planning Commission	Short-Term
Commercial	Prioritize CIP investment decisions based on its impact on the downtown.	Village Council	Ongoing
FLU Plan	Establish a future land use locational criterion for downtown commercial development that discourages spot zoning of downtown commercial.	Planning Commission	Short-Term
FLU Plan	Establish a future land use locational criterion for commercial development to limit strip commercial development.	Planning Commission	Short-Term
Natural Resources	Establish storm water guidelines for evaluation of proposed developments and tie them to the site plan review process.	Planning Commission	Short-Term
Zoning	Promote the use of green infrastructure to address storm water and other utility issue.	Planning Commission	Long-Term
Natural Resources	Investigate participation in the Community Rating System to reduce floodplain insurance costs.	Administration	Long-Term
Community Facilities	Maintain a CIP that is based on prioritized maintenance and replacement of public infrastructure and facilities.	Planning Commission and Village Council	Ongoing
Community Facilities	Identify and implement potential cost sharing arrangement for facilities and services with the City of Durand, Vernon Township, and Shiawassee County.	Village Council	Long-Term

Category	Recommendation	Responsible Party	Timeframe
Community Facilities	Prepare preliminary plans and cost estimates for extension of sewer to unserved portions of the village as well as cost benefit analysis to address long-term maintenance cost.	Village Council	Long-Term
Community Facilities	Identify potential strategies for cost sharing and grant funding to cover the cost of extending sewer lines.	Village Council	Long-Term
Community Facilities	Prepare a non-motorized transportation plan tied to a CIP.	Planning Commission	Long-Term
Community Facilities	Establish an “adopt a park” program to encourage local service or school groups to volunteer their time to maintain and enhance the park.	Administration	Short-Term
Community Facilities	Readopt and maintain a park plan consistent with the MDNR recreation grant guidelines.	Planning Commission	Long-Term
Community Facilities	Establish a multi-jurisdictional committee to study the feasibility of extending the rail trail from Corunna to Durand.	Village Council	Long-Term
FLU Plan	Establish a future land use locational criterion for industrial uses requiring adequate physical separation from residences is provided.	Planning Commission	Short-Term
FLU Plan	Establish a future land use locational criterion for industrial uses encouraging location near the railroad provided adequate buffering from residences is provided	Planning Commission	Short-Term

### Strategic Plan

Outlined above in Chapter 9 and 10 is a group of strategies to implement the plan. The strategic implementation plan identifies those strategies that are to be the priority over the next five years

Strategic Implementation Plan		
Strategy	Responsible Party	Year
Establish joint meeting of the Village Council and DDA to review the development strategy annually.	Village Council and DDA	2020

Strategic Implementation Plan		
Strategy	Responsible Party	Year
Market at least three priority redevelopment sites online.	Administration	2020
Maintain a CIP that is based on prioritized maintenance and replacement of public infrastructure and facilities.	Planning Commission and Village Council	2021
Prepare a non-motorized transportation plan tied to a CIP	Planning Commission	2022
Readopt and maintain a park plan consistent with the MDNR recreation grant guidelines.	Planning Commission	2023
5 Year Review	Planning Commission	2025

### Plan Maintenance and Update

A plan is not a static document. It must be continuously maintained and updated if it is to remain a valid document. Following are key indicators the village can monitor to determine the need for updating the plan.

- A. Updating the Database — This plan is based on certain assumptions concerning the growth of the village. These assumptions are contained primarily in the plan's database. It is important for the village to regularly monitor these assumptions to determine if they are still valid. If they become invalid, the village must determine what the changes in circumstances mean for the plan goals and objectives. Project Tim is an example of a change that could radically alter the population and characteristics of the village. If Project Tim happens, this would be a good reason to revisit the plan.
- B. Population Growth — The plan is based on the projection growth contained in the population section of the data base. As noted in the narrative following the projections, there is always a certain amount of guessing that goes into population projections which should be continuously monitored.
- C. Housing Growth and Mix — The plan makes assumptions on the growth of housing in the village over the planning period and the mix of single-family and multi-family units. The village should monitor housing growth and mix to determine if it is following the projections. Differences in demand for different housing types between what was projected and what is built may mean certain assumptions on market demand for various housing types was incorrect. This could impact the population projections and also the land use need estimates contained in the plan.

- D. Adjacent Planning and Zoning — Changes in the land use plans or zoning maps of Vernon Township and the City of Durand should be reviewed to consider their impact on the village's plan, preferably before that community makes a decision regarding the matter.
- E. Utilities — In order to permit development, the plan anticipates the expansion and extension of utilities into areas not currently served. As these improvements occur, the effect on the development potential of the property should be considered.
- F. Reviewing the Plan Goals and Policies — After reviewing the updated information on the database, the village should review the goals and objectives. Specifically, the village is looking for goals or objectives that are no longer relevant due to changes in conditions or objectives that have proven ineffective in addressing goals. Those items that are identified should be deleted or modified considering the new information. The plan should be officially amended to incorporate the changes in the goals or objectives and the basis for the changes should be reflected in a public hearing record.
- G. Incorporating Plan Review into Rezoning Request Review — Although an annual review is necessary for a comprehensive examination of the plan, many problems with a Land Use Plan will become obvious during consideration of a rezoning or special land use permit request. It is important to incorporate review and amendment of the land use plan as part of the village's consideration of such requests. This is covered in more detail in the subsection on using the land use plan for zoning reviews.

### **Using the Land Use Plan for Zoning Review**

As noted earlier, the primary method of enforcing a land use plan is the zoning ordinance. In order for that to be done effectively, the community's rezoning and special land use permit request and site plan review procedure should be structured so land use goals and objectives are considered.

**Rezoning Requests** — In considering a rezoning request, the primary question to ask is: "Does this request conform to our land use plan?" Three subsidiary questions follow that; "Was there an error in the plan?", "Have there been relevant changes in conditions since the plan was approved?", and "Have there been changes in the goals and objectives of the Plan?". Answering these questions should answer the question whether or not a rezoning request is appropriate and that should frame the reason within the context of the plan.

This method of analyzing a request rests on the assumption that a request that complies with a valid plan should be approved and that one that does not comply with a valid plan should not be approved. Further, it assumes that the three circumstances that would invalidate a plan are a mistake in the plan, a change in condition that invalidates the assumptions that the plan was built on, or a change in the goals and priorities that the community set for itself.

In considering whether or not a rezoning complies with the plan requires more detailed study than simply looking at how a piece of land is designated on the Future Land Use Map. The plan's goals and objectives and the intent and locational criteria of the various land use classifications should also be considered. The Future Land Use Map is simply one arrangement of land use within the village and is not intended to be an unalterable blueprint for the future zoning map. In some cases, a particular area may be appropriate for more than one land use type. For example, a use may be equally suitable for local commercial or multi-family development. The map may designate it for local commercial, but that does not mean it should be excluded from consideration for multi-family as well. By considering the goals, objectives, and land use classifications in the plan in addition to the map, the Planning Commission is more accurately weighing the conformance of a request to the intent of the plan.

- A. Mistake — A mistake in a plan can be an assumption made based on incorrect data, an area on the land use map that is incorrectly labeled, or other factors that is known at the time of the plan adoption would have been corrected.
- B. Changes in Conditions — A plan is based on the assumption that certain conditions will exist during the planning period. If those conditions change, then goals, objectives and land use decisions that made sense when the plan was adopted may no longer be valid and a rezoning that was not appropriate before is appropriate now.
- C. Change in Policy — In the end, a plan is based on the future vision of the community held by the Planning Commission/Village Board. When that vision changes, the plan should change. When a zoning issue results in a change in vision, a decision can be made that is contrary to the current plan, as long as that changed vision is explicitly incorporated into the plan.

Two points should be made. First of all, the three factors for consideration (mistake, change in conditions, change in goals or objectives) can work in reverse, making a proposal that otherwise seems appropriate, inappropriate. Secondly, these factors should not be used to create excuses for justifying a decision to violate the land use plan, or to change it so often that it loses its meaning.