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2022

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# MASTER PLAN LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP

KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN



**VERIFICATION OF ADOPTION  
BY THE LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD**

I hereby certify that the 2022 Master Plan for Lowell Charter Township was duly adopted by the Lowell Charter Township Board on January 17, 2022

*Monica Burt, Clerk*

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Monica Burt, Clerk  
Lowell Charter Township



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## 2022

### Lowell Charter Township Master Plan

The preparation of the Lowell Township Master Plan involved the contributions of community leaders and residents. In particular, the efforts of the following individuals is acknowledged and greatly appreciated:

#### TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS

Supervisor, Jerry Hale  
Clerk, Monica Burt  
Treasurer, Ronda Benedict  
Trustees, Carlton Blough  
Steve Vander Ziel  
Mark Anderson  
William Thompson

#### PLANNING COMMISSION

Dave Simmonds, Chairman  
Mark Batchelor, Vice Chairman  
Scott Edwards, Secretary  
Ronda Benedict, Board Representative  
Greg Forde, Member  
Timothy Clements, former Member  
Carlton Blough, former Member

**Plan Adopted by the Lowell Charter Township Board on  
January 17, 2022**

*Prepared with the assistance of:  
Timothy J. Johnson, PCP  
MainStreet Planning Company*

*Maps prepared by LRE*



**RESOLUTION 2022-01  
TO ADOPT THE 2022 MASTER PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Lowell Charter Township Board has determined that it was necessary to update the 2014 Master Plan and that a new master plan was needed to guide the future development of the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, a new Master Plan must be prepared in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, being Act 33 of 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission has been charged with the responsibility to prepare the new Master Plan and has applied its knowledge and understanding of the Township to prepare a new Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Master Plan contains information describing the Township, goals and policies to guide the future growth of the Township, an analysis of land use issues, recommendations to implement the Plan, and a map setting forth the future use of lands in the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 10, 2022 on the proposed 2022 Master Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Enabling Act and recommended to the Lowell Charter Township Board approval of the 2022 Master Plan subject to certain revisions;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Lowell Charter Township Board does hereby adopt the 2022 Master Plan as recommended by the Lowell Charter Planning Commission.

At a regular meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Board held on Monday, January 17, 2022 a motion was offered by Thompson and supported by Vanderziel to approve the foregoing motion.

AYES: Hale, Burt, Anderson, Blough, Thompson, Vanderziel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Benedict



Monica Burt, Clerk  
Lowell Charter Township



**PLANNING COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2022 MASTER PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Lowell Charter Township Board has determined that it was necessary to update the 2014 Master Plan and that a new master plan was needed to guide the future development of the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, a new Master Plan must be prepared in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, being Act 33 of 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission has been charged with the responsibility to prepare the new Master Plan and has applied its knowledge and understanding of the Township to prepare a new Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Master Plan contains information describing the Township, goals and policies to guide the future growth of the Township, an analysis of land use issues, recommendations to implement the Plan, and a map setting forth the future use of lands in the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 10, 2022 on the proposed 2022 Master Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Enabling Act.

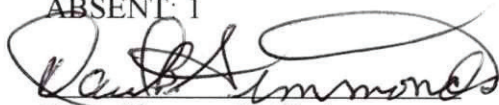
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission does hereby recommend to the Lowell Charter Township Board approval of the 2022 Master Plan subject to revising the Plan to designate on the Future Land Use Map and in the Plan narrative the three parcels at the southeast corner of Cascade Road and Timpson Avenue as being within the I-96 Planning Area and to illustrate on the Map additional Kent County parkland.

At a regular meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission held on Monday, January 10, 2022 a motion was offered by Chairman Simmonds and supported by Commissioner Forde to approve the foregoing motion.

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1



Dave Simmonds, Chairman  
Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission



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# INTRODUCTION

## AUTHORITY TO CREATE THE PLAN

The Lowell Township Master Plan has been prepared by the Township Planning Commission under the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. **The 2022 Plan replaces the 2014 Plan.** The Planning Act authorizes municipalities to prepare and adopt a plan for the following general purposes:

- To promote the public health, safety, and general welfare;
- To encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability;
- To avoid overcrowding of the land by buildings and people;
- To lessen congestion on public roads and streets;
- To facilitate a transportation system, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and,
- To consider the character and suitability of land for particular uses.

The Lowell Master Plan specifically addresses:

- The promotion of the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Lowell Charter Township;
- The preservation of active farms and farmland;
- The preservation of non-farm rural views and valuable natural resources;
- The zoning laws, subdivision design, and land division policies that create and preserve the character of Lowell Township;
- The types of residential land use that will be provided within the Township, such as rural residential, traditional subdivisions, open space neighborhoods, multi-family homes, and senior citizen housing;
- Commercial and industrial location and design;
- Provisions for public and private utilities;
- Capacity of existing roadways, as well as location of future roadways;
- The relationship of Lowell Township's plans to the plans of surrounding communities.

Although the Master Plan has no regulatory power, it contains specific land development and preservation goals. These goals are intended to guide both the Planning Commission and the Township Board in making both day-to-day and long-range land use decisions.

This Master Plan has been developed based upon several factors: the existing natural and cultural resources of the Township; current land use trends; the need for different types of land use including industrial and commercial uses; and the desired community character as expressed through work sessions with local officials and a community public hearing.

Public Act 33 of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, requires that each community review its Master Plan every five years, and determine whether the plan should be amended or a new plan adopted.

## REVIEW OF PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

With preparation of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission has the responsibility and authority to review public improvements projects. Article 4 Section 61 of the Planning Enabling Act states:



*“A street; square, park, playground, public way, ground, or other open space; or public building or other structure shall not be constructed or authorized for construction in an area covered by a municipal master plan unless the location, character, and extent of the street, public way, open space, structure, or utility have been submitted to the planning commission by the legislative body or other body having jurisdiction over the authorization or financing of the project and has been approved by the planning commission. The planning commission shall submit its reasons for approval or disapproval to the body having jurisdiction. If the planning commission disapproves, the body having jurisdiction may overrule the planning commission by a vote of not less than 2/3 of its entire membership for a township that on the enactment date of this act had a planning commission created under former 1931 PA 285, or for a city or village, or by a vote of not less than a majority of its membership for any other township. If the planning commission fails to act within 35 days after submission of the proposal to the planning commission, the project shall be considered to be approved by the planning commission.*

**HOW IS THE PLAN USED?**

The Master Plan serves as a tool for decision making by providing information and rationale for land use decisions. The Master Plan does not contain a specific time frame or timetable for the development of Township lands as recommended on the Future Land Use Map. Development takes place as land owners seek rezoning and as developers request approval of plans for residential, commercial, and industrial projects in response to market demands.

The Master Plan does not dictate the timing of development but rather the Plan sets forth recommendations for the types of land uses which can be established in the Township, where they can be established and under what conditions they can be established.

***The Master Plan  
does not dictate the  
timing of development.***

In particular, the Plan will assist local officials in the following:

- ***Review of rezoning requests and special use permits.*** Applications for rezoning requests and special use permits should be evaluated not only in terms of specific ordinance standards but also in terms of how well the proposed action will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.
- ***Review of public improvement projects.*** All future public improvement projects, including the construction of new facilities, utilities, or buildings must first be reviewed by the Planning Commission for consistency with the Master Plan, according to PA 33 of 2008. In particular, any public improvement project must be reviewed to determine consistency with the planned future land use pattern in the Township. Public improvements projects include roads, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, utilities, and any other public space, building, or structure.
- ***Review of plats and site condominiums.*** Site condominium divisions and traditional land divisions have a profound impact upon the character of a community and future public service needs. The Master Plan provides policies to assist the Planning Commission with decisions as to location and design of subdivisions, and the adequacy of public services to meet the increase in demand placed upon the community by the land use intensity of site condominiums and platted subdivisions. Policies for subdivision of land apply not only to residential land use, but to commercial and industrial land use as well.



- ***Maintaining community character while managing growth.*** Each community has a vision for its future, and a sense for the desired character. However, growth is inevitable in a thriving community. The Master Plan, more than any other document, provides direction for Township officials in managing growth while retaining the desired community character, and providing the best quality of life possible for current and future residents.
- ***Providing a legal framework for zoning actions.*** The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that zoning regulations be “based upon a plan.” (MCL 125.3203) A Township’s zoning actions and regulations are generally viewed favorably by the courts provided that such actions and regulations are not deemed to be “arbitrary and capricious.” By providing adequate support for zoning decisions, the Master Plan therefore serves as the legal backbone of the zoning ordinances and helps to protect zoning decisions made by the Planning Commission, the Township Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals
- ***Providing consistency of process.*** This Plan is a very strong and visible statement by Township officials and residents regarding the intended future character of the community and strategies to assure that character. As a formal and tangible document this Plan instills a sense of stability and direction for Township officials, activities, and residents, and helps assure that each application for development is reviewed according to the same set of criteria.

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN LOWELL TOWNSHIP**

Lowell Charter Township formed its first Planning Commission in 1975 in response to a decade of a high rate of growth, and in 1978, the first Land Use Plan was completed. Another decade of significant growth followed, during which changes in public attitudes, economic conditions and the overall appearance of the Township necessitated revisions to the Land Use Plan, resulting in the 1986 Lowell Charter Township Land Use Plan.

Continued growth prompted the Township to prepare the 1995 Lowell Charter Township Land Use Plan. This plan resulted in a Future Land Use and Road Location Map for Section 4, specifically. This map would serve to guide commercial development and access along the M-21 corridor, as well as development north of M-21 to the Township boundary and west to Cumberland Avenue. The existing Meijer store on M-21, Boulder Drive and Birmingham Drive which serves the Whispering Hills subdivision were developed based on the recommendations set forth in the 1995 Master Plan.

In 2002 the Planning Commission prepared and adopted a new Master Plan. One of the major purposes of the 2002 Lowell Township Master Plan was to seek the opinions of Lowell Township residents. This was done through a short survey which was made available at the Lowell Expo in March of 2001. This survey addressed issues such as residential development options, commercial opportunities, methods to address urban sprawl, preservation of open space, sidewalks, public water and sewer, and recreational opportunities.

Two public workshops were held on September 6 and 12, 2001 with over 150 people in total attending which provided additional direction from Township residents in the preparation of the Plan. The Planning Commission also sought the opinion of Township farmers through a separate survey. Surveys were delivered personally by Planning Commissioner and Trustee Carlton Blough to 54 landowners in areas zoned AG-1 and 38 surveys were returned.



Based on public involvement and its own analysis of Township resources and growth trends the Planning Commission determined to generally “stay the course” that it charted in previous Master Plans. Consequently, there were only a few changes to the 1995 Future Land Use Map.

**2002-2008**

Commercial development continued along M-21 with the construction of a number of new buildings: a multiple tenant retail building; a Goodwill store; a self-serve vehicle wash and oil change; a retail beverage store; Apple Tree Learning Center; and the Flat River Ministries Thrift Shop which occupied the former Cumberland Village Retirement Center. A gas station/convenience store/sandwich shop was constructed on Alden Nash between Cascade Road and I-96 in 2004.

Between 2001 and the end of 2007, 239 new dwellings were added in Lowell Township for an average of 34 new dwellings per year. A number of these new dwellings were constructed in Whispering Hills Subdivision. In March of 2005 the Township Board approved the Cumberland Ridge Open Space Planned Unit Development in Section 5. This project consisted of 100 duplex condominium units on a private road.

In early 2008 the development rights for approximately 57 acres of land owned by Merriman Farms at the south east corner of 52<sup>nd</sup> Street and Bancroft Avenue were purchased under the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. This action permanently protects the land from future development and preserves it for farming.

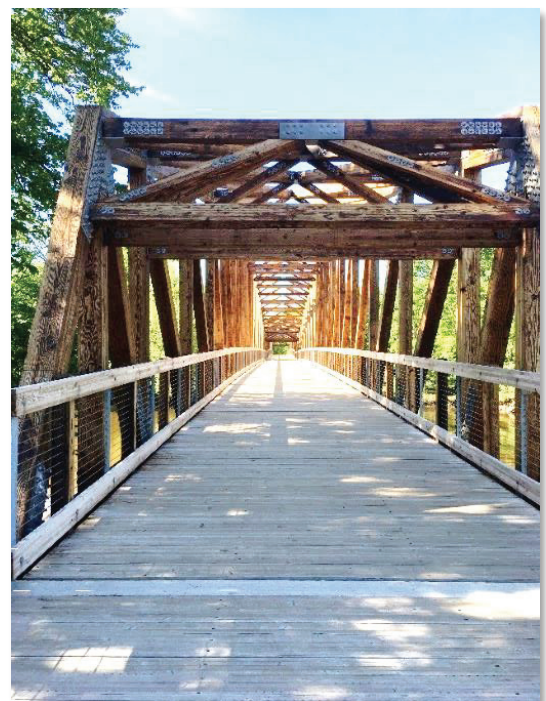
**2008 -2014**

Development in the Township slowed due to the nationwide recession which began in 2008 but a number of projects were still approved and built between 2008 and 2014 including: Walgreens on the corner of Alden Nash and M-21; Green Acres, a 27 unit assisted living facility constructed on the south side of M-21 just west of Birmingham Drive; a new office building on Birmingham Drive north of M-21; a Subway restaurant and adjoining Biggby coffee shop on the south side of M-21 constructed in 2014 just west of Noon's Equipment Sales; (now Impact Church) a self-storage facility on Alden Nash just north of 60th Avenue; expansion of Heidi's farm market at Alden Nash and Cascade Road; a major expansion of the Michigan Department of Transportation's park and ride lot on Alden Nash and I-96 and in 2014 the Alden Nash bridge over the I-96 expressway was re-constructed and widened from two to four lanes.

In the six-year period 2008 to the end of 2013 the Township issued 113 permits for new single-family dwellings – an average of 18.8 new dwellings per year. The majority of these houses were constructed in the Whispering Hills Subdivision.

**Since 2014**

A number of significant projects were approved and constructed, began or were completed in the six-year period from January 2014 to the end of December 2019 including four Open Space Planned Unit Development projects: Alden Ridge with 15 single family lots on the former DenHouter sand



mine on Alden Nash Avenue; the Stony Bluff plat with 216 single family lots built on the former Qua-Ke- Zik Gun Club on Foreman Avenue; Twin Oaks plat with 73 single family lots and; the Townhomes at Two Rivers, 80 multi-family dwelling units on Boulder Drive west of Meijer. These residential developments constituted the majority of the 233 new dwelling units constructed in this time period- an average of 39 new dwellings per year.

Other significant developments included: an expansion of the Green Acres assisted living facility from 27 units to 47 units on East Fulton Street; Maple Ridge Manor, a 54-unit home for the aged at the southeast corner of Alden Nash and Foreman; Impact Church on the site of the former Noon Equipment Sales business on East Fulton and; a 13-lot site condominium development, Kissing Rock Condominiums on the east side of Kissing Rock Avenue.

Grand River Riverfront Park expanded to the north side of the Grand River behind Walgreens in 2019 to include a parking lot, concession stand and restrooms, pickle ball courts, a picnic shelter and play structure, a replica of a fur trader cabin, an 18-hole disc golf course and walking trails. A walking bridge was also constructed over the Grand River to connect the north and south sides of the Park. At almost 650 feet in length, it is one of the longest timber framed bridges in the country.

Based on the changes since 2014 and in consideration of the Township Planning Act requirement that a Township review its Master Plan every five years the Township Board authorized an update of the 2014 Plan in 2019.

**PREPARATION OF THE MASTER PLAN**

The Planning Commission began the process in the fall of 2019 by reviewing the 2014 Plan to determine the focus of their update efforts. Additional meetings were held throughout 2020 and 2021 with a Draft Plan reviewed with the Township Board on October 18, 2021. The Plan was subsequently distributed to adjacent municipalities in accordance with the Planning Enabling Act.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Draft Master Plan on January 10, 2022 and recommended adoption to the Board which adopted the 2022 Master Plan on January 17, 2022.



# CHAPTER 1

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A community's planning goals are statements that express both long- and short-range desires and serve to provide direction for related activities such as zoning, site plan review, development of infrastructure, economic development, and protection of natural resources. Goals are intended to provide a basic framework upon which long term development decisions and day to day decisions may be made by public and private agencies.

The Goals below are listed by topic areas; following the Goals are Objectives which give more specific means of reaching the desired overall Goals.

### GENERAL TOWNSHIP GOALS

1. To preserve productive farmlands and maintain the agricultural sector of the Township's economy.
2. To preserve wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, flood plains and other natural resources which define the rural character of Lowell Township.
3. To provide locations, services and regulations for industrial and commercial land uses to ensure compatibility with nearby land uses, strengthen the tax base and provide employment opportunities for Township residents.
4. Through proper land use planning and orderly requirements provide opportunities for attractive convenience shopping and service facilities to serve the present and future needs of the community.
5. Ensure that residential communities are attractive, safe, adequately served by utilities, roadways, stormwater drainage facilities, and sidewalks and are designed to promote a sense of neighborhood.
6. To provide for a street system which will result in safe distribution of traffic on existing and future streets.
7. To maintain a continuing program of reviewing and evaluating the planning needs and goals of the community.
8. To allow wind and solar renewable energy facilities in locations which do not detract from the preservation of prime farmland and protect the health, safety and welfare of Township residents and property owners.

### FARMLAND PRESERVATION GOALS

1. Preserve the prime agricultural land in Lowell Township for present and future generations.
2. Protect the agricultural industry from the effects of residential development near farms by minimizing the conflicts between farming operations and residential areas.

#### *Objectives*

- A. Provide locations and opportunities for housing in a more dense but livable arrangement on non-prime farmland to direct development away from and thereby preserve **prime** farmland.
- B. Limit the number of lot splits allowed for new dwellings on prime farmland.

### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Ensure the creative design and livability of neighborhoods by requiring sidewalks, bike paths, pedestrian ways, civic open spaces, parks, and playgrounds, and street design that results in safe pedestrian movement and equal distribution of traffic on public streets.



2. Strengthen and protect the viability of existing neighborhoods by controlling the expansion of incompatible land uses on adjacent properties and protecting neighborhoods through open space, buffers, and landscaping.
3. Provide zoning districts and locations which offer a range of housing types and densities.
4. **Ensure** that housing for senior citizens is located close to shopping facilities, pedestrian walkways, and parks and recreation facilities.

**Objectives**

- A. Promote new residential development patterns that utilize cluster techniques in conjunction with open space or conservation easements.
- B. Require the construction and maintenance of sidewalks and street lighting in all residential developments and in other areas to provide access to schools, parks, or shopping areas.

**PRESERVATION OF RURAL CHARACTER GOALS**

Protect those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, streams, existing roadway vegetation farms and farmlands, open views and the dark night sky.

**Objectives**

- A. Encourage planned unit developments that cluster dwellings to create open space or conservation easements that may be retained in agricultural use or simply for the enjoyment of the associated residents.
- B. Continue to require a four-acre minimum lot size for single family dwellings outside of planned unit developments in those portions of the Township which are characterized by woods, wetlands and hilly terrain.
- C. Maintain Township lighting ordinance requirements which provide practical and effective measures to control light pollution.

**NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION GOALS**

Ensure that development takes place in a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for soil erosion, for disturbances to the natural drainage network that protects the quality of surface and ground waters, woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

**COMMERCIAL GOALS**

1. Direct commercial development to M-21 west of the City of Lowell where such uses can be served by public utilities and which offer shopping opportunities to adjacent neighborhoods and highway traffic.
2. Allow commercial and service uses of an appropriate size within the I-96 Planning Area at the M-50 and I-96 interchange to serve future industrial uses and highway traffic.

**INDUSTRIAL GOALS**

1. Allow for industrial land uses to be established at M-50 and 60<sup>th</sup> Street and on land at the northwest intersection of I-96 and M-50 as a continuation of previous Master Plan recommendations.
2. By Planned Unit Developments and site plan review regulations, ensure that industrial developments are designed and operated to protect ground and surface waters, and to provide safe traffic circulation and aesthetically pleasing buildings and landscaping.



## CHAPTER 2

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter presents factual information and data about Lowell Township. Location, natural features, community facilities, utility information, Township services, as well as the social and economic make-up of the Township all contribute to formation of philosophies that will guide future land use. In addition, roadways traffic volumes, and road improvement plans will be discussed in this chapter.

### LOCATION

Lowell Township is located in the southeast corner of Kent County, Michigan (T6N, R9W). The western boundary of the Township is located six miles from the eastern boundary of the City of Kentwood, which is a primary component of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. The eastern boundary of Lowell Township is approximately 35 miles from the City of Lansing the capital of Michigan.

Interstate 96 traverses the southern portion of the Township in an east-west direction, linking Lowell Township to the Grand Rapids Metro area to the west. State of Michigan Highway 21 is an additional major east-west roadway that traverses the northern portion of the Township providing an additional link to the Grand Rapids metro area.

The City of Lowell is adjacent to the northeastern portion of the Township, and contributes to a sense of community for Township residents. While suburban and commercial development occurs north of the Grand River, most of the Township is of a rural and agricultural nature.

The combination of access to the Grand Rapids metro area, excellent school system, a small-town atmosphere, and rural living opportunities have resulted in a community that will continue to attract residents.

### NATURAL FEATURES

#### *Topography*

The terrain in the Township varies from primarily gently rolling in the southern portion to more rugged terrain and steeper slopes in the northern portion. The Grand River traverses the Township in an east-west direction. The lowest elevation in the Township is 630 feet and occurs at the intersection of the Grand River and Timpson Roads. The highest point in the Township is 890 feet, and occurs at the center line of Cascade and Timpson Road. Slopes are indicated on **Map 1**.

#### *Vegetation*

Surface vegetation consists of large stands of predominately oak, birch, maple, pine, and aspen forests. Along low-lying areas, one can spot stag-horn sumac, witch hazel, and other closely related species of brush which contribute to wildlife habitat and rural views.

#### *Surface Water*

There are numerous sources of surface water in the Township. The Grand River bisects the northern half and flows in an east-west direction. In the south half of the Township is Pratt Lake Drain which drains **Pratt Lake** and flows in the same general east-west direction as the Grand River. Three lakes are situated in Lowell Township. The largest, Pratt Lake, is approximately 175 acres and is surrounded by a considerable amount of





wetland. This makes the lake unsuitable for public beaches, however, it provides habitat for waterfowl. Public access exists on Pratt Lake. **McEwen Lake**, consisting of 25 acres, has considerably fewer wetlands surrounding the lake, making it more accessible to Township residents. **Morse Lake**, smallest of the three at 12 acres, does not have public access sites. Other smaller bodies of water are present in the Township.

***Drainage***

Surface waters within the Township drain into two watersheds. The northern two-thirds of the Township drain into the Grand River. The topography of this area is generally quite steep and runoff water is quickly carried away by small streams and valleys into the river. Soil types in this area drain more readily than those in the southern one-third of the Township.

The southern one-third of the Township drains into the Coldwater River basin. Here topography is relatively flat. Runoff water is not carried away quickly, causing this portion of the Township to be wet during certain periods of the year.

As shown on **Map 7**, the 100-year flood plain boundary runs parallel to the Grand River and into the City of Lowell along the Flat River. Development within the flood plain is regulated by the State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

***Soils***

The northern half of the Township is characterized by Chelsea Loams, Boyer Sandy Loams, and Oshtemo series of soils, all of which have low water retention qualities and good to fair percolation rates.

The soils of the southern half of the Township are composed of predominantly Capac, Marlette, and Parkhill Loams, which are noted for their slow percolation and ponding characteristics. The southern half of the Township is well suited to agricultural production. Prime agricultural soils are shown on **Map 2**.

***Wetlands***

**Map 3** illustrates the various types of wetlands within the Township. Large wetland areas exist around Pratt Lake, within the Grand River Flood Plain and south of I-96 in Sections 29 and 32.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Population**

The population and housing characteristics of the people of Lowell Charter Township influence the future development of the Community. The following information presents data from the US Census and is updated for the most recent data available in 2019.



**Table 1: Population Change 1980-2019**

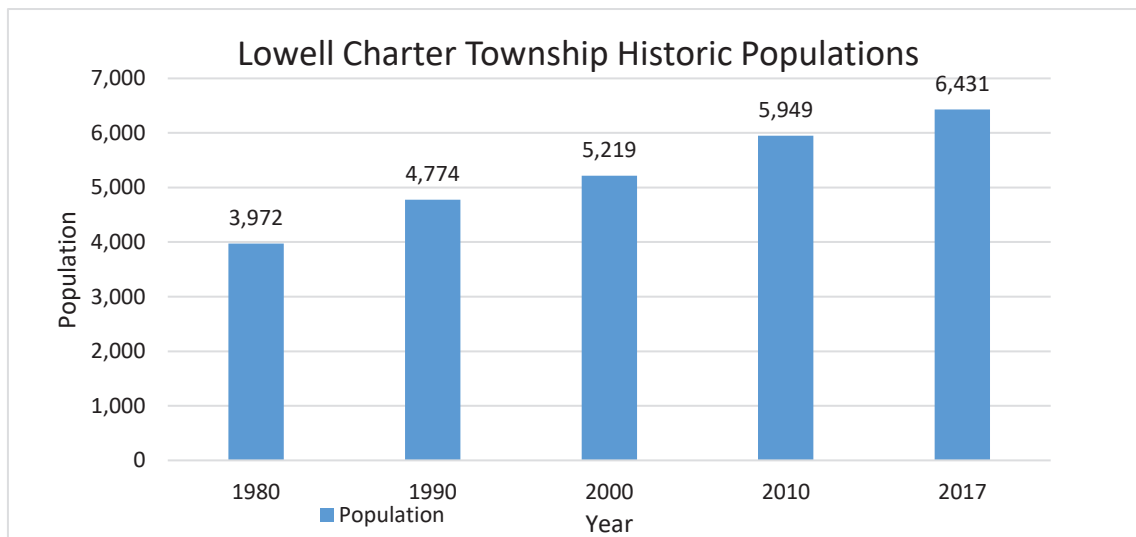
Community	1980	1990	Change 1980-1990	Percent Change	2000	Change 90-2000	Percent Change	2010	Change 2000-2010	Percent Change	2017	Change 2010-2017	Percent Change
Lowell Charter Township	3,972	4,774	802	20.2%	5,219	445	9.3%	5,949	730	13.9	6,431	482	8.1%
City of Lowell	3,707	3,983	276	7.4%	4,013	30	0.8%	3,783	-230	-5.7%	3,996	213	5.6%
Bowne Township	1,719	1,907	188	10.9%	2,742	836	44.0%	3084	341	12.4%	3,322	238	7.7%
Vergennes Township	1,822	2,492	670	37.0%	3,611	1,119	45.0%	4,189	578	16.0%	4,541	352	8.4%
Cascade Township	10,120	12,869	2,749	27.0%	15,107	2,238	17.0%	17,134	2,027	13.0%	18,522	1,388	8.1%
Boston Township	3,681	4,313	632	17.2%	4,961	648	15.0%	5,709	748	15.0%	5,765	56	1.0%

Source: US Census Bureau 1980-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS

Since the rapid growth of the 1980s (a 20.2% gain), Lowell Charter Township has grown at a rate of around 1% per year (slightly faster between 2000 and 2010). While other Townships grew more quickly in the 1990s, since 2000 Lowell Charter Township’s growth has been similar to its neighbors. From a raw population standpoint, it remains one-third the size of Cascade, and larger than Vergennes, Bowne, and Boston.

Notably, the City of Lowell has returned to population growth in the past decade after losing population from 2000 to 2010. Growth in the City is positive for the Township, as it indicates high desirability for the entire Lowell area.

**Figure 1: Historic Population**



Source: US Census Bureau 1980-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS



**AGE**

**Table 2: Median Age Comparison – Neighboring Communities**

	2000	2010	2017	Percent Change 2000-2017
Lowell Charter Township	35.4	38.4	45.9	30%
City of Lowell	34	37.1	38.4	13%
Bowne Township	34.1	38.5	39.8	17%
Vergennes Township	34.4	39.2	37	8%
Cascade Township	41.1	43.3	42.5	3%
Boston Township	36.1	38.5	40.9	13%
Kent County	32.5	34.3	35	8%
State of Michigan	32.5	38.9	39.6	22%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000-2010, 2017 5 Year AC

**Table 3: Median Age Comparison – Change Since 1980**

1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
26.8	30.6	35.4	38.4	45.9

Source: US Census Bureau 1980-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS

The median age in the Township has been steadily rising since 1980. The rate of increase has quickened slightly, from approximately 0.3 to 0.4 years per year, to around a full year since 2017. While the median age of the population has increased statewide, Lowell Charter Township’s has increased at a faster rate. The data suggests that families moved into the Township in the 1980s and 1990s, and that those residents have remained in their homes even as their children have moved out. While this trend is visible in the data for surrounding Townships, it is more pronounced in Lowell Township.



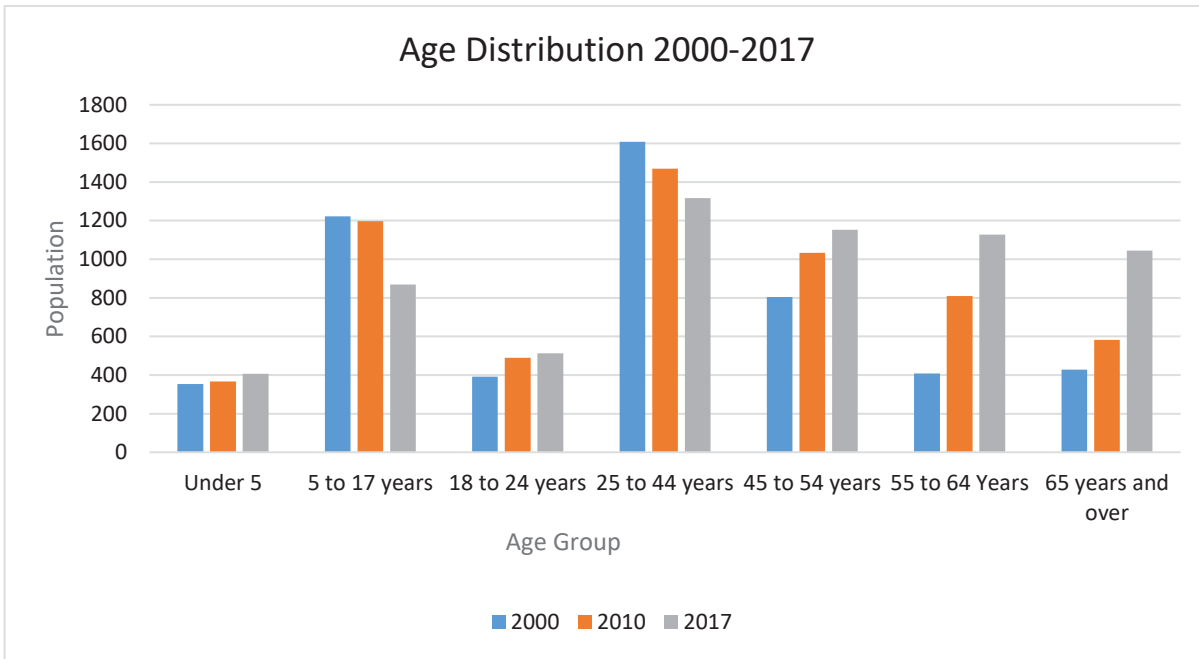
**Table 4: Age Distribution**

Lowell Charter Township Distribution	2000	Percent of Total Population	2010	Percent of Total Population	2017	Percent of Total Population	Percent Change 2000-2017
Under 5	354	6.8%	367	6.2%	407	6.3%	15%
5 to 17 years	1222	23.4%	1198	20.1%	869	13.5%	-29%
18 to 24 years	392	7.5%	489	8.2%	512	8.0%	31%
25 to 44 years	1609	30.8%	1469	24.7%	1317	20.5%	-18%
45 to 54 years	804	15.4%	1033	17.4%	1153	17.9%	43%
55 to 64 Years	409	7.9%	810	13.6%	1128	17.5%	176%
65 years and over	429	8.2%	583	9.8%	1045	16.2%	144%
	5219	100.0%	5949	100.0%	6431	100.0%	

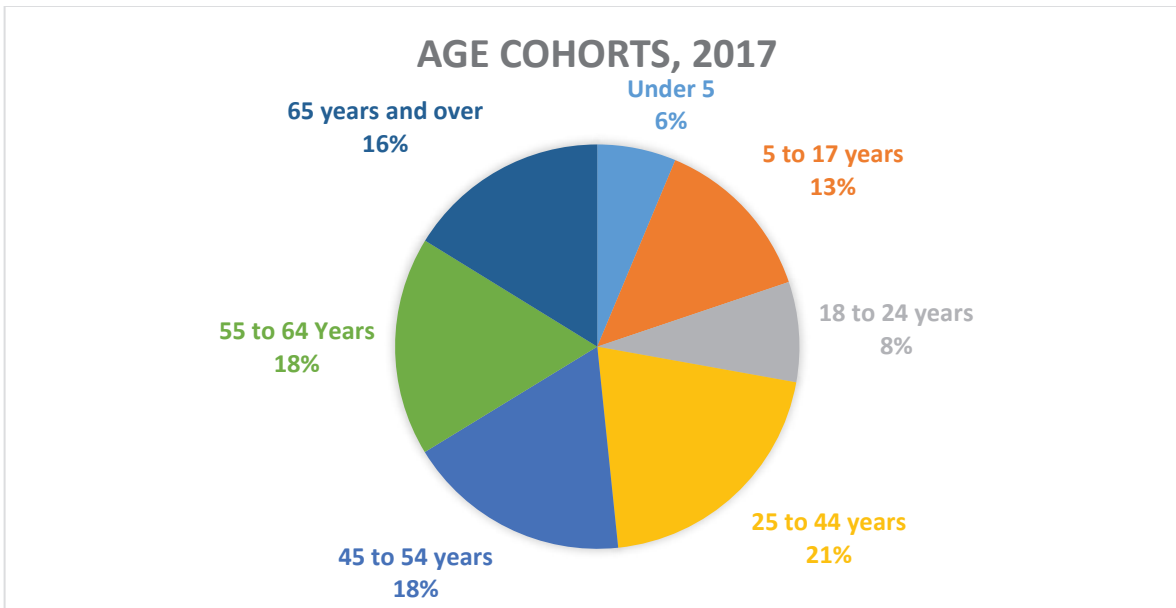
Source: US Census Bureau 2000-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS



**Figure 2: Age Distribution**



Source: US Census Bureau 2000-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS



Source: US Census Bureau 2000-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS

The age distribution data reinforces the trends shown in the median age data. The 55-64 and 65+ cohorts have both jumped to over 1,000 residents, while the number of school-aged children has dropped. As noted above, Baby Boomers aging in place after their children leave the house could be the reason for the shift.



**Table 5: Age Distribution – Lowell Charter Township vs Kent County/State of Michigan**

	Lowell Charter Township	Kent	Michigan
Under 5	6%	7%	6%
5 to 17 years	14%	18%	16%
18 to 24 years	8%	10%	10%
25 to 44 years	20%	28%	24%
45 to 54 years	18%	13%	14%
55 to 64 Years	18%	12%	14%
65 years and over	16%	13%	16%

Source: US Census Bureau 2017 5 Year ACS

Lowell Charter Township’s population is older than the County and State populations, with a higher proportion of its population aged 45 to 64, and a lower proportion of school-aged children and their parents (the 25 to 44 group). This further reinforces the aging in place trend.

**Table 6: Proportion of “Millennials” (Born 1981-1995)**

	2010	2015	% Change 2010-2015	Numerical Change
Millennials (Born 1981 to 1995)	963	484	-49.7%	-479
Percent of Total Population	16%	8%		
Total Population	5,841	6,235	-	

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The total population of millennials decreased by half with in the Township between 2010 and 2015, even as the population increased. This is further evidence of the “aging in place” trend – families who moved to the Township in the 1990s and 2000s have stayed in their homes even as their children grow up, leaving few homes available for new families.



**HOUSEHOLD DATA**

**Table 7: Average Persons Per Household**

Lowell Charter Township	3.08	2.93	2.72	2.56	-17%
City of Lowell	2.63	2.59	2.50	2.63	0%
Bowne Township	3.14	3.11	3.04	2.97	-5%
Vergennes Township	3.12	3.13	2.97	3.12	0%
Cascade Township	2.91	2.8	2.72	2.68	-8%
Boston Township	2.74	2.61	2.62	2.63	-4%
Kent County	2.69	2.64	2.60	2.64	-2%
State of Michigan	2.66	2.6	2.49	2.49	-6%

Source: US Census Bureau 1990-2010, 2017 5 Year ACS

Household sizes are decreasing nationally, but, as with the increasing median age, the trend is more dramatic in Lowell Charter Township. While the Township’s average household size remains above the State average, it is below its neighbors. Aging in place can contribute to a rapidly decreasing average household size, as adult children moving away are not replaced by new families.

**Table 8: Family and Non-Family Households**

	2010 Family Households	2010 Non-Family Households	Total Households	2017 Family Households	2017 Non-Family Households	Total
Lowell Charter Township	1,632	421	2,053	1,843	663	2,506
Kent County	152,710	77,467	227,177	157,224	79,685	236,929
Michigan	2,553,979	1,290,018	3,843,997	2,509,610	1,379,036	3,888,646

Source: 2010 and 2017 5 Year ACS

The Township is mostly family households. It appears that in 2010, for every four family households in the township, there was one non-family household – that ratio has dropped to 1 in 3 since 2010, but is still lower than the County and State. The County and State have two family households for every one non-family household.



**HOUSING AND INCOME**

**Table 9: Total Housing Units**

	1980	2000	2010	2020	Total Increase 1980-2020	Average Increase per year 1980 - 2020
Total Housing Units	1212	1764	2178	2509	1297	32.4

Source: US Census Bureau 1980-2000, 2010 and 2017 5 Year ACS

The number of new housing units constructed from 2011 through 2020 was 331. Of these 251 were single family dwellings and 80 were multi-family dwellings. This is an average of 33.1 new dwellings per year. In 2020 alone 47 new houses were constructed in the Township.

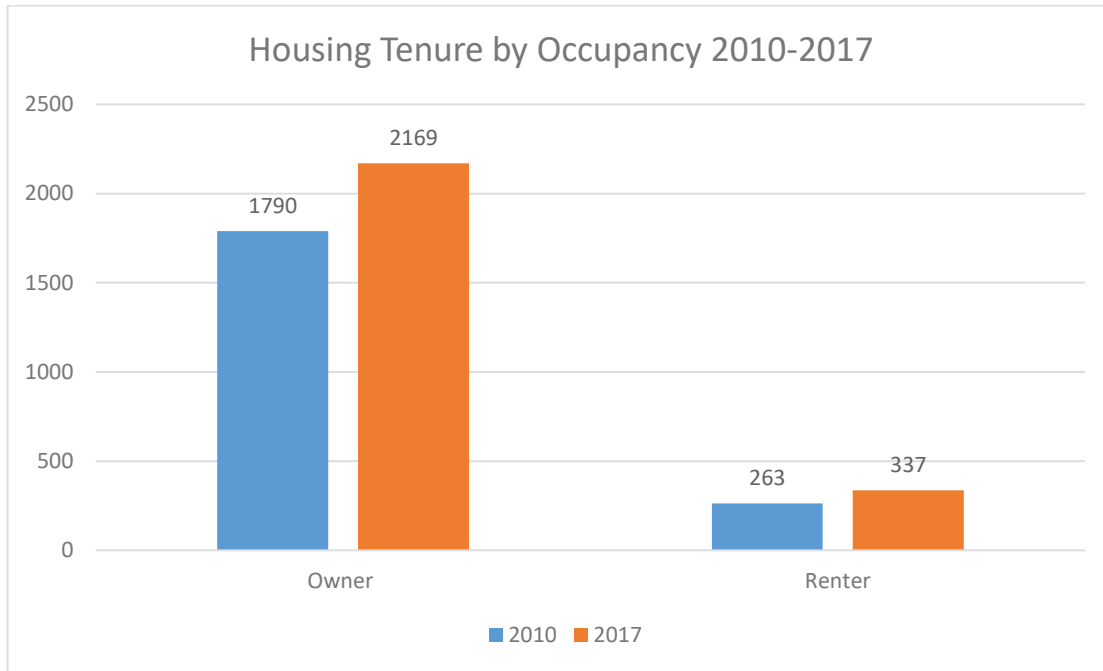
The 2011 to 2020 data is from actual building permits issued by Lowell Township. Most of these new housing starts were located in the Whispering Hills, Stony Bluff and Twin Oaks plats in Sections 4 and 5. In 2019 the Townhomes at Two Rivers with 80 apartment units was constructed on Boulder Drive next to the Meijer store.

While housing growth has been steady, population growth has fluctuated – indicating in some decades (such as the 1980s and 2000s), there were more children being born than in recent years. This may be evidence of “aging in place”.





**Figure 3: Housing Tenure by Occupancy 2010-2017**



Source: 2010 and 2017 5-year ACS data

The number of renters and owners both slightly increased from 2010 to 2017. However, the amount of increase in ownership is larger than the amount of increase in renters.

**Table 10: Median Value of Occupied Housing Unit - 2019 Dollars**

	2000	2010	2017	Change 2000-2017 Decreases
Lowell Charter Township	\$178,329.71	\$195,228.02	\$162,674.09	\$15,655.62
City of Lowell	\$146,868.53	\$141,769.93	\$119,203.55	\$27,664.98
Bowne Township	\$245,874.33	\$264,229.00	\$226,780.04	\$19,094.29
Vergennes Township	\$236,629.81	\$239,619.44	\$232,541.20	\$4,088.61
Cascade Township	\$328,180.35	\$286,601.33	\$303,874.78	\$24,305.57
Boston Township	\$169,234.30	\$186,985.59	\$163,197.83	\$6,036.47

Source: US Census Bureau 2000, 2010 and 2017 5 Year ACS



When taking inflation into account, the median home value in Lowell Charter Township has not recovered to the pre-Great Recession value. The median home value is still higher than in the City of Lowell, but not as high as in Cascade, Bowne, or Vergennes Townships.

**Table 11: Median Household Income - 2019 Dollars**

	2000	2010	2017	Percent change 2010-2017
<b>Lowell Charter Township</b>				
Median Household Income	\$87,633.63	\$72,577.72	\$75,232.13	-14%
Households>50,000/year	1083	1349	1611	49%
Households<50,000/year	636	704	821	29%
<b>City of Lowell</b>				
Median Household Income				
Median Household Income	\$65,396.16	\$42,459.45	\$64,896.08	-1%
Households>50,000/year	562	528	881	57%
Households<50,000/year	886	1078	589	-34%
<b>Bowne Township</b>				
Median Household Income				
Median Household Income	\$94,085.76	\$88,577.46	\$81,890.45	-13%
Households>50,000/year	551	653	827	50%
Households<50,000/year	333	310	283	-15%
<b>Vergennes Township</b>				
Median Household Income	\$94,998.67	\$81,669.85	\$97,113.68	2%
Households>50,000/year	780	974	276	-65%
Households<50,000/year	396	405	1176	197%
<b>Cascade Township</b>				
Median Household Income	N/A	\$111,306.61	\$107,311.14	-4%
Households>50,000/year	N/A	4442	5543	25%
Households<50,000/year	N/A	1738	1373	-21%
<b>Boston Township</b>				
Median Household Income	\$66,687.52	\$67,888.85	\$64,129.67	-4%
Households>50,000/year	733	1166	1274	74%
Households<50,000/year	1148	850	913	-20%

Source: DP-3 -2000, 2010 and 2017 5 Year ACS

Median incomes have recovered from the Great Recession, and are now above 2010 levels when adjusted for inflation. However, they have not returned to pre-recession levels in most communities, including Lowell Charter Township.



**Table 12: Educational Attainment - >25 Years Old with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher**

	2000	Percentage of Total Population in Target Area	2010	Percentage of Total Population in Target Area	2017	Percentage of Total Population in Target Area	Percent Change 2000-2017
Lowell Charter Township	673	21%	1,111	29%	1021	16%	52%
City of Lowell	376	15%	478	18%	601	15%	60%
Bowne Township	492	28%	574	30%	673	20%	37%
Vergennes Township	635	27%	919	33%	1004	22%	58%
Cascade Township	5,440	54%	6,414	57%	8,042	43%	48%
Boston Township	375	11%	650	17%	1057	18%	182%
Kent County	90,383	15%	112,730	18%	94,426	15%	4%
State of Michigan	1,396,259	21%	1,641,383	25%	1,887,041	19%	35%

The proportion of individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher has dropped in Lowell Charter Township since 2010. This trend is visible in neighboring communities as well.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

*Water Service*

Lowell Township has negotiated with the City of Lowell to create the Lowell Township Water District which serves a portion of Lowell and Vergennes Townships. (See Map 4) A 500,000-gallon water storage tank serving these townships was constructed in 1994 in Vergennes Township on the north side of Foreman Street just west of Cumberland Avenue in Section 32.

A private water well serves Key Heights Mobile Home Park on M-21. Other dwellings and businesses in the Township are served by individual wells.



**Sanitary Sewer Service**

The City of Lowell provides sanitary sewer service to an area west of the City limits. Lowell Township has a contractual agreement with the City which reserves 18 percent of the capacity of the City’s treatment plant. This amount equals 252,000 gallons per day (18 percent of 1.4 million gallons). At the end of 2007, the Township was using approximately 96,000 gallons per day which is 38 percent of its designated capacity. 156,000 gallons per day remains available.

In 2013 the City of Lowell verified that the City could meet its contractual obligation to provide up to the 252,000 gallons per day of treatment at the wastewater treatment plant.

In 2001, Lowell Township established Special Assessment Districts to extend public sanitary sewer along M-21 about 1,900 feet west of Bowes Road with water being extended about 600 feet further west. Construction was completed in 2002. This project provides public water and sanitary sewer to a number of existing businesses and vacant properties along M-21 particularly on the south side.

Maps 5 and 6 illustrate the location of water and sanitary sewer lines which serve the commercial and residential developments north of the Grand River.

Along the southern edge of the Township, sanitary sewer is provided to some residents on the north side of 60th Street from the sanitary sewer treatment system in Bowne Township. This system was expanded in 2002 to serve a manufactured housing community built on the southwest corner of 64th and Alden Nash. This expansion however, was not designed to serve any more properties in Lowell Township beyond those properties on 60th Avenue.

**Utilities**

Electricity is supplied to Township residents from two sources: Lowell Light and Power and Consumers Energy. Lowell Light and Power supplies less than ten percent of the average daily energy demand with Consumers supplying the bulk of the electrical services for the Township. In day-to-day situations, the power that Lowell Light and Power supplies is purchased from Wolverine. Consumers Energy also supplies natural gas to parts of the Township.

**Recreation**

In 1997, the Township acquired a 70.7-acre parcel on the south side of the Grand River between Grand River Drive in Section 10 which is called Grand River Riverfront Park. In 2007 the Township acquired approximately eight more acres on the west side of the park. Two islands within the Grand River are also part of the park.

The Township has used a combination of general funds and State of Michigan and Federal grants to construct a canoe launch, a lacrosse field, eight soccer fields, eight volleyball pits, and a playground with equipment designed for ages 4 to 12. Other amenities include a mile-long paved nature/walking path, a scenic overlook and fishing pier on the Grand River, one large picnic shelter with restroom facilities and one smaller one without.



In 2013 the Township acquired 11 acres in Section 9 south of Walgreens with frontage on the Grand River directly across from and north of Grand River Riverfront Park which became Grand River Riverfront Park North. Construction of “North Park” took place in 2018 and 2019 to create a parking lot, concession stand and restrooms, pickle ball courts, a picnic shelter and play structure, and a replica of a fur trader cabin.

An 18-hole disc golf course and walking trails will be constructed in 2021.



A walking bridge was also constructed over the Grand River to connect the north and south sides of the Park. At almost 650 feet in length, it is one of the longest timber framed bridges in the country.

Pratt Lake has a public access site making it available for fishing. There are parking spaces for five vehicles. McEwen Lake has public access and is also available for fishing and swimming.

In 2019 the Kent County Youth Agricultural Association purchased the former Deer Run Golf Course to construct a new fairground. The golf course ceased operations at the end of 2020. The site consists of 141 acres and is located in Section 24 in the southeast quadrant of the Township on Cascade Road.

The North East Sportsman’s Club is located in the northwest corner of the Township on Grand River Drive.

The Kent County Parks Department is proposing to develop a 700-acre county park in Sections 22 and 23 (northeast corner of Alden Nash and Cascade Road). A number of parcels totaling 518 acres have already been purchased by the County Parks Department. These lands are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map as Public use.

In 2005 the Planning Commission approved a Special Use permit for the BD White Nature Preserve. This 44-acre parcel is located between 36th Street and Alden Nash with a small parking lot on 36th Street. The Preserve is owned by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and the land is available to the public for walking.



Complete information regarding recreation in Lowell Township may be found in the 2021 Township Community Parks and Recreation Plan.

**Schools**

The majority of the Township lies within the Lowell School District. The southwest corner of the Township is served by the Caledonia School District. No Lowell school district buildings are actually located within the Township boundaries, but are located within the City of Lowell, in the neighboring community of Alto and in Vergennes Township to the north, where the Lowell High School complex is located. No Caledonia School facilities are located within Lowell Township.

**Police**

Police services are provided by the Kent County Sherriff’s Department. No sheriff department outposts are located in the Township.

**Fire**

The Lowell Area Fire and Emergency Services Authority governs the Lowell Area Fire Department through a cooperative agreement among the City of Lowell, Lowell Charter Township and Vergennes Township. The Authority was established in 2008 and provides services to the City of Lowell, Lowell Township north of Cascade Road and Vergennes Township. South of Cascade Road, services are provided through an agreement with Bowne Township.

**Ambulance**

Ambulance services are provided through the Rockford/Lowell Ambulance Service to which the Township contributes support.

**Roads**

I-96, a limited access expressway, runs east to west in the southern portion of the Township, and M-21, a two-lane state highway, runs east to west in the northern portion. Alden Nash Avenue is a county primary road which connects state highway M-21 on the north with the expressway, and also with state highway M-50 to the south.

Other county primary roads in the Township include Parnell Avenue, Snow Avenue, Grand River Drive, Cascade Road, 52nd Street, Morse Lake Avenue and parts of Segwun and Pratt Lake Avenue. These roads are maintained and improved by the Kent County Road Commission, while county local road improvements are funded in part by Lowell Township.

Several local roads in Lowell Township have obtained “Natural Beauty Road” designations. These roads include Timpson Avenue, Hilton Avenue, Court Drive, Bewell Avenue, 40th Street, and Kissing Rock Road. The Township has 15.3 miles of gravel roads.



**Traffic Counts**

Table 13 illustrates 24-hour two-way traffic counts for the major roads in the Township.

**TABLE 13  
24-Hour Two-Way Traffic Counts**

Road	Year	24 Hour Count
<b>Grand River Ave. East of Kissing Rock Road</b>	2005	1,663
	2008	1,626
	2012	1,520
	<b>2016</b>	<b>1479</b>
<b>Alden Nash North of 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>	2013	10,698
	<b>2016</b>	<b>11,642</b>
<b>Alden Nash South of Cascade</b>	2005	13,353
	2008	15,243
	2011	12,992
	2015	13,151
<b>Alden Nash North of Cascade</b>	2006	10,484
	2009	10,874
	2012	10,055
	2015	11,632
<b>Alden Nash North of M-21</b>	2003	5,681
	2008	11,043
	2012	11,264
<b>Cascade East of Alden Nash</b>	2005	2,689
	2008	2,442
	2011	2,247
	2017	2,268
<b>Cascade West of Alden Nash</b>	2006	2,829
	2007	2,906
	2011	2,522
	2017	2,927
<b>M-21 West of Alden Nash</b>	2003	14,635
	2008	12,373
	2009	11,798
	2017	12,953

Source: Grand Valley  
Metropolitan Council



All of the above roads except M-21 are two lane paved roads which have a 24-hour capacity of 10,000 - 12,000 vehicles per day. Only Alden Nash north and south of Cascade Road and M-21 west of Alden Nash are approaching their designed capacity. All other Township roads are well below their designed capacity.

In February of 2008 a traffic signal was installed at the intersection of Cascade Road and Alden Nash (M-21). Other traffic signals are located at the intersection of Segwun and Grand River Avenue and the intersection of Alden Nash and M-21. In 2013 Cascade Road was re-paved for its length through the Township. The reconstruction and widening of the Alden Nash bridge over I-96 to four lanes was completed in 2014.





# CHAPTER 3

## LAND USE PLANNING ANALYSIS

### EXISTING LAND USE

#### ***AGRICULTURE***

Map 2 illustrates the location of prime farmland soils as defined by the US Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Survey of Kent County.

It is important to monitor this valuable resource as part of the ongoing planning efforts in Lowell Township. One method to do this which began in 2013 and which was continued in the 2022 Master Plan is to quantify the active agricultural lands in the Township. Active agricultural lands include lands used for growing crops, including trees, pasture land and for raising and keeping of horses.

*The lands devoted to active agricultural use in 2021 totaled approximately 6905 acres.*

In late 2013 a survey of active agriculture lands in Lowell Township was conducted by Township Trustee and Planning Commissioner Carlton Blough who found that 7100 acres was devoted to active agricultural use or about 1/3 of the 21,312 acres which make up Lowell Charter Township.

In October of 2020 this same survey was conducted by Mr. Blough who determined that there was approximately 195 fewer acres being used for active agriculture for a total of 6905 acres.

This same survey should be done for future updates of the Master Plan in order to monitor agricultural activities in the Township.

Another method used to monitor agricultural lands was to use assessment records to determine the number of acres classified as agricultural. This information is presented here.

2007	7,280 acres
2013	7,116 acres
2020	7,210 acres

The total acres have varied only slightly over the years.

The Zoning Ordinance regulations adopted in 2009 for AG-1 zoned lands have contributed to the preservation of farmland.

#### ***RESIDENTIAL***

Residential land use in Lowell Township is primarily divided into two distinct types; single family lots on large parcels south of the Grand River and subdivision size lots north of the Grand River.

Houses south of the Grand River have been built on lots which are mainly 2-10 acres in size fronting on Township roads although a number of houses have also been built on lots served by private roads. Zoning regulations south of the Grand River require a two-acre minimum lot size in the R-1 Zone and a four-acre minimum lot size in the AG-2 Zone which provides for more buildable area given the hilly and wooded terrain and wetlands which make up the land between Cascade Road and the Grand River.



Many houses are located so they are not visible from the road which provides a very rural and natural view along Township roadways.

North of the Grand River single family lots are typically 10,000-12,000 sq. ft. and are served by public water and sanitary sewer on public streets with sidewalks.

The major subdivisions are: Eastgate Woods, constructed in the 1960's and 1970's, located north of Fulton Street, between Cumberland and Parnell Roads consisting of 280 lots; Whispering Hills Subdivision located directly east across Cumberland Avenue and north of M-21 and the Meijer store, built after 2000 containing 183 lots- all occupied; Stony Bluff with 216 lots north of Whispering Hills on the former Qua-Ke- Zik Gun Club property with approximately one third of the lots constructed at the end of 2020; and Twin Oaks with 73 total lots located south of Foreman Street north of and connected to Eastgate Woods. Construction of streets and utilities began in 2019 with completion in 2020.

Two multi-family developments exist in the Township and both are located on Boulder Drive west of the Meijer store; Stone Ridge Apartments with 96 units was completed in 2002 while the Townhomes on Two Rivers development with 80 units was completed in 2019.

An assisted and memory care facility, Green Acres, with 47 units is located on the south side of M-21 just west of Birmingham Drive. Fountain View is a nursing home located on the north side of Fulton Street approximately one-half mile east of Cumberland Road. Maple Ridge Manor, a 54-unit home for the aged located at the southeast corner of Alden Nash and Foreman Street began construction in 2019 and was completed in 2020.

Lowell Township contains one mobile home park; Key Heights Mobile Home Park, located north of Fulton Street and east of Cumberland Road has 286 sites which comprise 12 percent of all dwelling units in the Township.

Cumberland Ridge Condominiums, located in Section 5 on the west side of Cumberland Avenue opposite Barnsley Street, was approved for 100 dwelling units in 2005. As of the end of 2019 37 dwelling units have been built on the south portion consisting of 18 two family units and one single family unit.

The north portion of this development was sold, however, and in 2020, was approved by the Township Board for 54 condominium units to be called the Highlands at Cumberland Ridge Condominiums. This project, which began construction in 2020, is connected to streets within the Cumberland Ridge Condominiums.

***RESIDENTIAL PLANNING ISSUES***

***North of the Grand River.***

The growth potential for new dwellings north of the Grand River is diminishing. The residential developments located in Sections 4 and 5 as listed in the previous paragraphs, are served by public water and sanitary sewer and are steadily being built out. These subdivision developments include the Highlands, Stony Bluff, and Twin Oaks with a combined 247 lots available for new houses in early 2020. Based on the number of building permits issued in 2018 to 2020 for these developments, all of the vacant lots may be built on within 10 years or perhaps sooner if current building trends continue.

Sections 4 and 5 are the logical areas for continued subdivision type development due to the presence of public utilities. Only a few large vacant parcels remain in these Sections which are or which can be served by public water and sanitary sewer and which could be developed for single family subdivisions or attached housing. Other parcels in this area which could be developed may not be suitable for public utilities. In particular, in Section 5, between Parnell Avenue and the Eastgate Subdivision, the size and shape of larger existing parcels,



some with houses, make it unlikely that public utilities would be extended to this area.

Section 6 west of Parnell Avenue contains several large parcels including the Tip Top mining operation of almost 200 acres which, when completed and reclaimed, will provide new housing opportunities. Extending public utilities to Section 6, however, may not be economically feasible given the steep terrain and the distance from existing utility lines. The 2022 Master Plan and the current AG-2 zoning of Section 6 call for four-acre minimum lot sizes. Active farms do not exist in this Section.

Although new housing opportunities in Lowell Township can be increased by allowing for a minimum two-acre lot size instead of the current four-acre minimum in Section 6 the Master Plan designation is to maintain the four-acre lot size in this area as there are sufficient opportunities for new houses to be built in existing subdivisions during the current planning period and this matter can be reviewed again when the Plan is next updated.

Consideration should also be given to providing for housing styles to meet the needs of the Townships aging population and decreasing household size which are evidenced in the demographic tables in Chapter 2. Several assisted living and homes for the aged facilities have been established in recent years in the Township (Green Acres, Maple Ridge Manor and Fountain View) but the need for additional facilities will continue to grow as residents age.

Developments for independent living for seniors will also be needed to allow older and longtime Township residents the ability to leave their houses, often larger than their needs and costly to maintain, but still remain in the Lowell community. Current zoning regulations for these facilities should be analyzed so they are appropriate for this land use and not a hinderance as to these residential land uses which are generally compatible with adjacent uses.

**South of the Grand River.**

The lands south of the Grand River to a distance of approximately one-half mile, one mile in Section 11, are zoned R-1, Rural Low Density Residential. This district requires a minimum lot size of two acres and 165 feet of road frontage and allows farming. The land is characterized by steep hills and woods south of Grand River Avenue. A number of private streets have been carved into the terrain to access buildable lots. Land within the 100-year floodplain in Sections 7, 8, and 9 are used for crops and pasture. This area has historically served as a transition to the AG-2 zoned lands further south.

A review of aerial photograph parcel maps in the Kent County Geographic Information System found that most parcels outside the flood plain in this R-1 Zone contain a single-family dwelling. The 2022 Master Plan does not propose any new R-1 zoned land be proposed within this five-year planning period to allow for existing R-1 zoned vacant parcels to be developed.

The AG-2 zoned lands extend south to I-96 across much of the Township and all the way to 60<sup>th</sup> Street in Sections 32 and 33. This zoning district requires a minimum lot size of four acres with 200 feet of road frontage. Farming is a permitted use. These AG-2 zoned lands are designated in the 2022 Plan as Rural Residential land use with this specific purpose:

“The RR classification is intended to serve as a transition or buffer zone between the prime agricultural classification and areas devoted primarily to residential use on smaller lots. This classification promotes and supports one of the primary goals of the Township Master Plan which is to preserve productive farmlands from urban encroachment and maintain the agricultural economy



of the Township. The Rural Residential classification is intended to divert development pressure away from the prime and unique farmland in the Township.”

**Private Streets**

Growth has accelerated in Lowell Township in recent years as people are seeking a small town and rural atmosphere with good schools in proximity to a metropolitan center with good access. This growth should be expected to continue as Lowell Township offers all these elements.

As part of this Plan update, Township land use regulations were reviewed in regards to their impact on future growth and demand for housing. In particular, the requirements for private streets were discussed and how these rules affected growth.

Private streets are allowed only in the R-1, AG-2, and Open Space Planned Unit Development Zoning Districts but only when they provide access to a minimum of five lots, principal buildings or dwelling units or combination thereof. A private street which provides or is intended to provide access to less than five lots, principal buildings or dwelling units is not permitted.

The minimum lot size in the R1 Zone is two acres and in the AG-2 Zone, the minimum lot size is four acres. Based on these lot size minimums, a private street could only be developed in the R-1 Zone on a parcel with at least 10 acres and in the AG-2 Zone, 20 acres.

The availability of vacant parcels of these sizes which could contain a private street is small which limits the opportunity for new housing projects. Also, the hilly terrain in the R-1 and AG-2 Zones also places limits on the construction of a five-lot private street. The five-lot private street rule does appear to have an impact on the development of new houses in the R-1 and AG-2 Zones.

However, there are many more parcels less than 10 acres in R-1 and 20 acres in AG-2 which may or may not contain a single-family house. If the private street regulations were revised to allow a private street to be developed with only two or three lots then such parcels could be split to create one or two more parcels on a private street thereby increasing new housing opportunities.

The Commission discussed the following issues which could arise if the rules were changed to allow a private street with two or three lots:

- Existing parcels with less than 20 acres in AG-2 and 10 acres in R-1 could be developed creating more opportunities to meet the demand for new housing in areas with an established residential character and perhaps preserve or forestall the development of larger vacant parcels;
- More private streets would be established which could create access issues for emergency services;
- Would allow landowners who live on sub-20- acre and 10-acres parcels to divide their land for private road development as a source of retirement income;
- Growth would occur faster;
- Adjacent landowners would likely be concerned about traffic and the effect on the natural environment.

The Commission determined that the five-lot private street rule should remain in place but housing growth in these two zoning districts should continue to be monitored for discussion during future Master Plan updates.



**Commercial**

Commercial land uses are concentrated on both sides of M-21 west of Alden Nash Avenue with a small commercial development at the southwest and northwest corners of Alden Nash Avenue and Cascade Road. Major commercial uses on M-21 include the Meijer retail store and gas station, Walgreens, a Goodwill retail store, Stoneridge Retail Center, a carwash/oil change, and a Biggby’s coffee shop and Subway restaurant.

A gas station/convenience store/sandwich shop began operation in 2005 on the southwest corner of Alden Nash Avenue and Cascade Road. Heidi’s Farm Market at the northwest corner of Alden Nash and Cascade Road was established in 2007 and expanded in 2009. In 2017 a conditional commercial rezoning was approved for a small parcel on the north side of M-21 adjacent to the eastern boundary of the City of Lowell.

In 2020 an analysis of commercial zoned land on M-21 found 13.31 acres of vacant commercial zoned land. This analysis only included useable commercial zoned areas and not those lands within the 100-year flood plain on the south side of M-21 which are zoned commercial but are considered undevelopable.

Assuming that an average commercial building covers 15-20 percent of a parcel then 13.31 acres of commercial zoned property could be developed with between 87,000 to 116,000 square feet of retail, office, service uses and restaurant space. For comparison purposes the Goodwill Store on M-21 contains approximately 9600 sq. ft., the Stone Ridge strip retail center contains 13,000 sq. ft., the Walgreens building contains 13,800 sq. ft. and the Biggby’s / Subway building contains 3600 sq. ft. The Meijer store contains 194,000 sq. ft.

The vacant commercial zoned lands on M-21 consist of small parcels ranging in size from .62 acres to 2.3 acres so large retail or office buildings are not anticipated unless adjoining vacant parcels are combined. Assuming 5,000 square feet of commercial building space is constructed per year then the available supply of vacant, commercial zoned land will be sufficient for 17 to 23 years.

Greater annual growth, of course, will use land at a faster rate. These numbers are quite broad but for master planning purposes they can be useful in helping to determine if more commercial land is needed. Other factors will need to be considered such as abutting land uses, traffic patterns and volumes, availability of utilities, projected population growth and growth in neighboring Lowell city.

***INDUSTRIAL***

Industrial land uses exist in various locations in the Township; Several industrial uses operate on the north side of Grand River Drive at Oberly Drive. a concrete crushing and truck repair operation is located at the southwest corner of Alden Nash Avenue and Cascade Road and a self-storage facility and solid waste processing business on Alden Nash Avenue operate just north of 60<sup>th</sup> Street. Several other parcels comprising just over 17 acres south of the self-storage facility on Alden Nash Avenue are vacant and zoned for industrial use.

The 2014 Plan designated a number of parcels comprising 62 acres on the northwest corner of Alden Nash and 60<sup>th</sup> Street for future industrial use. In 2021 these lands were zoned AG-1 and were in agricultural use with one single family dwelling fronting on Alden Nash Avenue.

Since the early 1990’s 238 acres of primarily active farmland between Cascade Road and I-96 and west of Alden Nash Avenue have been zoned for industrial use. Both the 2014 and 2022 Master Plans recommend that this land be used primarily for industrial purposes as described in Chapter 5.



### **Renewable Energy**

The Planning Commission supports the concept of allowing wind and solar facilities to provide renewable energy sources in Lowell Charter Township. Current zoning regulations allow both individual and commercial wind energy facilities. Individual systems are allowed in all zoning districts as a permitted use if they are less than 65 feet in height. Systems over this height require a Special Land Use Permit in all zones except the R-2 and R-3 zones.

Solar energy panels are considered an accessory use in all districts but commercial or utility scale solar energy systems are not addressed in the Zoning Ordinance. The Plan recognizes that this is an acceptable land use if properly located.

Utility scale solar systems which can cover many acres of land are not appropriate for prime farmland given the Township's long commitment to preserving this limited natural resource. Such systems therefore should not be allowed on land zoned AG-1. Such systems also would not be suitable on much of the AG-2 zoned lands south of the Grand River due to the hilly terrain and the large wooded areas which would need to be cleared to accommodate a utility scale solar energy system.

Allowing such systems in the AG-1 and AG-2 zones would also be contrary to the goal of preserving rural character noted in Chapter 2. R-1 lands south of the Grand River are fairly well populated and located on hilly terrain. It is the objective of this Master Plan to protect those residents and the natural environment from the encroachment of non-residential uses such as large solar energy systems.

A logical location for utility scale solar systems however does exist in Lowell Township within the 100-year flood plain of the Grand River. This location would allow for an economical use of these lands, allow for the continued preservation of prime farmland and woodlands and the preservation of the Township's rural character while achieving the goals of supporting renewable energy.

The Plan has identified those flood plain lands most appropriate for utility scale solar energy systems as being located in the flood plain along the south side of the Grand River in Sections 7 and 8 between the Grand River Riverfront Park and the west Township boundary. Zoning regulations should be adopted to permit this land use.



## CHAPTER 4

# PLANNING IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

### **BOWNE TOWNSHIP**

Bowne Township which borders Lowell Township on the south side of 60<sup>th</sup> Street re-affirmed its 2012 Master Plan in 2017. A number of future land uses are planned in Bowne Township along the common border.

The Bowne Plan calls for Country Residential between Montcalm Avenue and Wingeier Avenue. This category would permit 2.5-acre minimum lot sizes with farming permitted as well. Industrial uses are planned westward from Wingeier Avenue to Bancroft although the Bancroft frontage is reserved for commercial uses. The community of Alto is located between Bancroft and Timpson Avenue. Land uses in Alto itself are planned for Neighborhood Residential with minimum lot sizes at 30,000 sq. ft. without sanitary sewer and 10,000 sq. ft. with sewer. Alto also includes a Central Business District which contains a number of small-scale retail and service businesses and the Alto Branch of the Kent District Library and a U.S. Post Office.

To the west of Timpson Avenue, the Bowne Plan proposes Low Density Residential which allows farming and requires a two-acre minimum lot size for single family houses. Sanitary sewer service is located within the 60<sup>th</sup> Street right of way between Bancroft Street and Timpson Avenue. The sanitary sewer is part of the Bowne Township sewer system which is located south of 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue west of Bancroft.

The above future land uses in Bowne Township would be considered compatible with uses in adjoining Lowell Township.

### **VERGENNES TOWNSHIP**

Vergennes Township is located to the north of Lowell Township with Foreman Street serving as the common border. The 2018 Vergennes Township Master Plan proposes long term farming for the lands east and west of Parnell Road.

The area along Foreman Street between Cumberland and Alden Nash is proposed for Medium Density Residential use with lot sizes of one acre without public utilities to three units per acre with utilities. These proposed densities would be compatible with lands to the south in Lowell Township.

### **CITY OF LOWELL**

The 2007 City of Lowell Master Plan calls for Low Density Residential use along the west, east and north border with Lowell Township. This land use category proposes single family dwellings at a density of two units per acre which is compatible with the residential uses proposed and existing in Lowell Township.



The area south of the river on the eastern edge of the City is included in a Flood Plain District and is intended for open space uses.

On the western edge of the City along Alden Nash Avenue the City lands are zoned and planned for industrial use except for the area at the intersection of Alden Nash and M-21. This area in the City Plan proposes Mixed Use at the intersection of Alden Nash and M-21. This category allows a mixture of residential, office and commercial uses with buildings located closer to the street and parking behind the building. Industrial uses are proposed along the south side of Bowes Road and along Alden Nash north of the commercial uses fronting on M-21.

**CASCADE TOWNSHIP**

Cascade Township abuts the west boundary of Lowell Township south of the Grand River with Snow Avenue serving as the common boundary. The 2019 Cascade Future Land Use Plan proposes agricultural uses and two-acre minimum lot sizes for dwelling units. This is compatible with uses and zoning in Lowell Township.

**ADA TOWNSHIP**

A small portion of Ada Township abuts Section 6 in Lowell Township, north of M-21. The 2016 Ada Township Plan calls for residential land use with minimum lot sizes of three acres to five acres.

**BOSTON TOWNSHIP**

Boston Township in Ionia County to the east of Montcalm Avenue does not have a zoning ordinance in effect at this time. The land is presently being used for agricultural and also for low density residential use which comports with the land use within Lowell Township.

**COOPERATIVE PLANNING EFFORTS**

In June of 2012 a Steering Committee with representatives from the City of Lowell, Lowell Charter Township, Vergennes Township, the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce and Lowell Area Schools embarked on a collaborative effort to answer the question:

*“What do we want the Greater Lowell Community to be like in the future?”*

A six-month effort presented that question to the citizens of the Greater Lowell Community in a variety of ways through a citizen survey, Community Café workshops, mobile workshops with area service groups and students from Lowell High School and interviews with community stakeholders. The answer to that question is contained in the Vision Report which was adopted by the Steering Committee on January 14, 2013.

As part of this effort a Current Reality report was also prepared which described the Greater Lowell Community (GLC) in 2012. The Report presented a common foundation for the broader discussion among policy leaders who joined together to form a common vision for the Greater Lowell Community and a framework to achieve it.



The Current Reality Report was drawn from existing data sources and policy statements readily available in the area and served to crystallize an impression of the GLC founded on objective observation and on the policy statements that were articulated by the participants in this effort, including Lowell Charter





Township, the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Lowell, Vergennes Township and the Lowell Area Public Schools.

This Final Vision Report was made part of the 2014 Lowell Township Master Plan as an appendix.



## CHAPTER 5

# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This chapter contains the recommendations which will guide the development of Lowell Charter Township in the coming years. These recommendations were influenced by a number of factors:

- ◆ The recommendations contained in the 2014 Master Plan.
- ◆ The location and availability of public utilities.
- ◆ An analysis of existing circumstances and future needs.
- ◆ The influences of nearby municipalities.

### MASTER PLAN CONCEPTS

The Future Land Use Map is based upon several major concepts for the general development of Lowell Township. These concepts are derived from the goals and objectives stated in Chapter Two and the desires of Lowell Township citizens and are intended to guide the growth of Lowell Township.

These major land use concepts include the following:

- The need to preserve the prime farmland which makes up much of Lowell Township and to protect the economic stability of the farming community by limiting the intrusion of non-farm uses.
- Development should be concentrated in those areas served or planned to be served by public utilities.
- Land use in Lowell Township should respect and compliment land uses planned in bordering communities.
- The rural views of agricultural and wooded lands in the Township are important elements in the quality of life of all Township residents and need to be preserved and enhanced.
- A mix of land use types and density within the same area is desirable to provide for variety in daily living and to allow opportunity for a development pattern compatible with the natural features of the land.
- The development along M-21 should be designed to maintain traffic safety, provide for pedestrian access from nearby neighborhoods and result in pleasant and aesthetic shopping opportunities.



**FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS**

The Future Land Use Map recommends a number of different future land use classifications. The following descriptions of these classifications explain the type, intensity and location of the proposed uses.

These future land use classifications will not automatically change the zoning for that area. The property owner will still need to apply to the Township for a zoning change if the Future Land Use designation does not match the current zoning.

*A property owner is still permitted to use the land as it is currently zoned even if the zoning is different from the Future Land Use designation.*

**PRIME AGRICULTURE  
PA**

The purpose of this category is the long-term preservation of farmland in Lowell Township. Principal land uses are agriculture and agriculture support services which help to enhance and stabilize the farming industry. Prime Agricultural is analogous to the AG-1 Zoning District.

Support uses would include farm markets, hayrides, demonstration farms and petting farms.

Other agriculture support services are farm implement repair, chemical sales and storage, and packing and storage facilities for agricultural products.

The 2022 Master Plan also recommends, as did the 2014 Plan, the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights Program as a method to preserve farmland. This preservation tool was successfully utilized in January of 2008 when 57 acres of the Merriman Farm in Section 33 on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street was preserved by the PDR Program.

The intent of the current AG-1 zoning regulations is to limit the number of dwellings (and land) occupied by non-farmers in the Prime Agricultural (PA) areas in order to preserve the farmers ability to perform his or her occupation without undue interference from non-farm residents.

The areas planned for PA use were first established in the 1986 Plan and remained much the same in the 1995, 2002, 2008 and 2014 Master Plans.

Factors considered in recommending long term agricultural areas in 1986 were the size and number of parcels devoted to agricultural use, the proximity to non-farm land uses and the number of parcels enrolled in PA 116, the State of Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program.

Most of these factors are unchanged and therefore the 2022 Plan recommends the Prime Agricultural designation for all of the land proposed in the previous Plans.

The 2008 Plan strongly recommended that changes be made to the regulations in the Zoning Ordinance to clarify the rules and to balance the objective of farmland preservation with the economic and age-related needs of farmers and other AG-1 land owners whose major asset is often the land itself.

In December of 2009 following many months of careful analysis and public hearings the Lowell Township Board adopted the following amendments to the AG-1 Zoning District:



- All vacant parcels zoned AG-1 would be eligible for a building permit for a single-family dwelling;
- Parcels with 80 acres or more would be allowed one more building permit for a total of two permits. A new lot is required to be a minimum of two acres with 200 feet of width. The new lot can be created without public street frontage but must have access to the public street via an easement. Such lot is subject to approval by the Planning Commission.
- The definitions of agricultural and non-agricultural dwelling were deleted from the Ordinance.

Based on these new requirements it was determined that it would be possible for 89 new dwelling units to be built on lands zoned and planned for AG-1 use. Adding these 89 new possible dwellings to the 156 dwelling units which were in existence in the AG-1 Zone at the time of Ordinance adoption in 2009 meant that no more than 245 dwellings would be located in the AG-1 Zone.

A monitoring system to track the number and location of building permits issued was also established by the Township to ensure that the total dwelling units would not be exceeded thereby ensuring the future preservation of agricultural lands in Lowell Township.

Since 2010 only one house, on 52<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Section 30, has been constructed in the AG-1 Zone.

**RURAL RESIDENTIAL  
RR**

This classification is intended to provide for residential development in a rural setting adjacent to prime agricultural land use areas. The RR category is analogous to the AG-2 zoning district. In order to preserve the natural features of this area lot sizes in the RR areas are required to be a minimum of four acres with 200 feet of road frontage for single family dwellings.

Certain areas in Sections 1 and 12 which were illustrated as Rural Residential in the 2014 Plan are now shown as Low Density Residential on the Future land Use Map as these lands are zoned and have been zoned R-1 which is the equivalent of Low Density Residential.

Although primarily a residential area, agricultural activities are permitted in the RR classification. The lot size and agricultural activities recommended for this land use classification are intended to satisfy a demand for a rural lifestyle without using up prime agricultural land.

The RR classification is intended to serve as a transition or buffer zone between the prime agricultural classification and areas devoted primarily to residential use on smaller lots. This classification promotes and supports one of the primary goals of the Township Master Plan which is to preserve productive farmlands from urban encroachment and maintain the agricultural economy of the Township.

The Rural Residential classification is intended to divert development pressure away from the prime and unique farmland in the Township.

RR planned areas are encouraged to be developed under the Open Space Planned Unit Development (OS-PUD) regulations.

Under the OS-PUD rules, the density (number of dwellings per acre) would be controlled by the density recommended in the Master Plan for RR areas. The dwelling units permitted, however, would be clustered in a few selected areas on the parcel while the remainder of the land would be set aside as permanent open space for use by residents.



The premise of the Open Space PUD is that developments focus first on those areas which are to be preserved and then design the house sites and roads around these preserved areas.

Lot sizes would not need to adhere to the minimums required by a particular zoning district, but could vary depending upon the availability of public utilities and County Health Department requirements for private well and septic systems. This open space, if large enough, could also be used or kept as active farmland. This open space is protected by legal mechanisms such as deed restrictions or conservation easements to ensure that it remains undeveloped.

**LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
LDR**

This future land use category is proposed for single family dwellings on lot sizes of at least two acres with 165 feet of road frontage. The LDR category is analogous to the R-1 zoning district noted in the Lowell Township Zoning Ordinance. Farming is also a permitted use.

Because of this large lot size, public water and sanitary sewer are not envisioned for LDR areas. Duplexes would be a permitted use but only on lots with a minimum of four acres.

LDR areas proposed in the 2014 Plan remain essentially the same in the 2022 Plan except that parcels in Sections 1 and 12 which are zoned R-1 are now shown on the Future Land Use Map as Low Density Residential.

**MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
MDR**

The Medium Density Residential classification is analogous to the R-2 zoning district. This category would permit single family dwellings without sanitary sewer to have minimum lot sizes of 40,000 square feet with 165 feet of road frontage. With sanitary sewer, lot sizes would be permitted to be a minimum of 14,000 square feet with 100 feet of road frontage for a density of 3.11 dwelling units per acre.

Since 2014 several large MDR planned parcels have developed as Stony Bluff and Twin Oaks subdivisions in Sections 4 and 5 although. Other vacant MDR lands also exist in Sections 4 and 5 due to the availability of public utilities. Senior housing facilities are also recommended for these Sections due to the availability of public utilities and proximity to shopping services on M-21. Existing zoning regulations should be reviewed and revised to accommodate these facilities.

The Plan recognizes as MDR the R-2 zoned parcels located along the north side of 60th east of Bancroft which is in the community of Alto and Eastgate subdivision.

**HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
HDR**

The High-Density Residential classification for the 2022 Plan is the same as proposed in previous Plan’s dating back to the 1995 Plan. These HDR areas have developed over the years as Stone Ridge apartments and Townhomes at Two Rivers apartments on Boulder Drive. Single family dwellings with sanitary sewer are permitted in this area with 10,000 square feet minimum lot sizes and 80 feet of lot frontage. The HDR classification is analogous to the R3 Zoning District.



Multiple family dwellings are also permitted as a Special land Use at a density of eight units per acre. Office uses are also permitted as Special Land Use.

The land north of Meijer between Whispering Hills subdivision and Alden Nash Avenue would be suitable for a variety of land uses allowed by the R-3 Zoning District including apartments, duplexes, offices, medical clinics, assisted living, churches and even single-family dwellings with proper design.

The Plan recommends an extension of Trent Street within the Whispering Hills subdivision through this area to connect to Alden Nash Avenue and align with Gee Street in Lowell City. This will provide an alternate route for Whispering Hills residents to travel to Lowell High School to the north and the City of Lowell to the east thereby avoiding the intersection of Alden Nash and M-21.

The intent of the Lowell Township Master Plan is to concentrate higher density developments north of the Grand River and north of M-21 where such developments can be served by public utilities and services and are closer to employment and shopping opportunities.

**MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY  
MHC**

This future land use category permits a manufactured housing community. The Plan recognizes the existing Key Heights mobile home park development on M-21 in Section 4. A mobile home park typically has a density of six to eight dwelling units per acre which is the same as a High-Density Residential land use.

The Key Heights Mobile Home Park makes up approximately 12% of the total dwelling units in the Township which is a significant percentage of this type of dwelling unit.

The hilly terrain in the northern part of the Township would make it difficult to locate another mobile home park north of the Grand River. The Plan does not recommend providing for another mobile home park in the area south of the Grand River as public utilities are not available.

The Plan recognizes that larger mobile home park developments can provide community well and septic systems. However, such developments would be out of character with the future land uses recommended south of the Grand River.

**COMMERCIAL  
C**

Commercial and office development is proposed to be located primarily along both sides of M-21 west of Alden Nash. This continues the land use recommendation set forth in previous Master Plans. This area is a logical extension of the commercial uses at the west end of the City of Lowell.

The Plan does not propose any more commercial land to the west along M-21 than the limits of the current commercial zoning as the flood plain and steep slopes make development impractical and there is sufficient vacant commercial zoned land to meet the shopping needs for the foreseeable future.

In 2020 an analysis of commercial zoned land on M-21 found 13.31 acres of vacant commercial zoned land. This analysis only included useable commercial zoned areas and not those lands within the 100-year flood plain on the south side of M-21 which are zoned commercial but are considered undevelopable. Based on the analysis in Chapter 3 it was determined that the amount of land planned for future commercial use was sufficient for this planning period.



The Plan still recommends that access be provided in the front or rear of future commercial uses along M-21 through parking lots or access lanes to ensure that vehicles safely and effectively reach Bowes Road.

**Alden Nash / Cascade Road / I-96**

The 2022 Plan recommends commercial land use for the parcels on the south side of Cascade Road between Bancroft Avenue and Alden Nash as was recommended in the 2014 Plan due to the existing commercial uses at this intersection and the confluence of three major roadways, Alden Nash, (M-50) Cascade Road and the I-96 interchange which carry a significant volume of traffic. These parcels are also recommended for Industrial use for the same reasons.

**INDUSTRIAL  
I**

The 2022 Plan retains the recommendation of the 2008 and 2014 Plans which designates the lands on both sides of Alden Nash at the intersection with 60<sup>th</sup> Street for future industrial use. Reasons for this include:

- The Township Board in 2005 rezoned a 10-acre parcel at the northeast corner of Alden Nash and 60<sup>th</sup> to Light Industrial and in 2007 rezoned the adjacent 30-acre parcel to Light Industrial upon which mini-storage buildings were constructed;
- The land to the south of 60<sup>th</sup> Street in Bowne Township is planned and zoned for industrial use with a number of industrial uses in operation;
- Grouping future industrial uses at the intersection will allow for sanitary sewer to be more easily extended from the Bowne Township sewer system should the opportunity arise for this extension;
- The location is on a State of Michigan highway, M-50, and close to the I-96 interchange to facilitate truck traffic.

The total available average for industrial users is almost 80 acres which is deemed sufficient for this planning period.

The Plan recognizes the existing industrial uses and industrial zoning on Grand River Drive at Jackson Street just south of the bridge crossing the Grand River. Additional industrial uses are also designated between Cascade Road and I-96 west of Alden Nash as further explained in the following section called the I-96 Planning Area.

**I-96 PLANNING AREA**

The 2022 (and 2014) Master Plans have designated the 238 acres located west of Alden Nash between Cascade Road and I-96 for industrial use with a limited portion for commercial and service uses. The 2022 Plan designation is the I-96 Planning Area given its highly visible and accessible location along the I-96 highway. The 2014 Plan designation was Mixed Use Area.

This land has been zoned for industrial use since the early 1990’s and was rezoned from Light Industrial to Industrial Planned Unit Development by the Township Board in October of 2005 and was recognized on the 2008 Future land Use Map as Industrial. No industrial uses have been established on this land for over 20 years despite it being zoned for industrial use.

Master Plans for 2008 and 2014 also designated three parcels at the southeast corner of Cascade Road and Timpson Avenue for either Industrial or Mixed-Use development. These parcels, which are zoned AG-2, are occupied by a landscape contractor business and several single-family dwellings. Because these parcels are adjacent to the 238 acres under single ownership which are zoned and planned for industrial



use and because these parcels will likely be significantly impacted by the adjacent future industrial uses and because of the past recommendations of previous Master Plans, the 2022 Master Plan recommends that these three parcels be included in the I-96 Planning Area designation.

Other changes have taken place on nearby lands, however, which have called into question the Industrial future land use designation for this area. These changes include the construction of the gas station/ convenience store on Alden Nash just south of Cascade Road, the establishment of Heidi’s farm market on the northwest corner of Alden Nash and Cascade Road, the expansion of the State of Michigan park & ride lot on Alden Nash north of I-96, the re-paving of Cascade Road, and the re-construction and widening of the Alden Nash bridge over I-96 to four lanes completed in 2014. All of these changes have and will result in increased traffic on Alden Nash and Cascade Road.

Another significant land use change 2.5 miles to the east on Cascade Road is the conversion of the Deer Run Golf Course by the Kent County Youth Agricultural Association, (KCYAA) for a new and expanded Kent County fairground. This project will be constructed beginning in 2021. The new fairgrounds will have facilities for year-round use such as horse shows and other events in addition to a campground all of which will increase vehicle traffic at the I-96 / Alden Nash interchange.

As part of the Plan update process, it was determined that 238 acres zoned for industrial use was excessive and that all of this acreage would not likely be utilized for industrial use for many years if ever. A different designation was needed which recognized the changes in nearby land uses and roadways, the regional economy and the unique location of this land at the junction of the expressway interchange (I-96) with a State of Michigan highway (M-50).

The I-96 Planning Area envisions several land use types for this site designed so the uses complement and support each other within a planned setting. Industrial would remain as the predominant use. Commercial and service uses would also be allowed as these would serve I-96 travelers as well as those traveling on M-50 (Alden Nash) and Cascade Road, the employees of the industrial businesses also planned for this site. Attendees of fairground events would also benefit from commercial and service uses.

Such commercial uses could include restaurants, lodging facilities, gas stations, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, personal service business, banks, retail uses and similar uses. Commercial uses should be positioned for visibility from I-96.

Office uses are also appropriate for this site and should be located along the I-96 frontage. Industrial uses should be of a type that would benefit from proximity to the I-96 interchange such as light manufacturing, warehouses and research and development. Industrial uses should be located to ensure that the buildings and other site improvements such as lighting and truck movements have minimal impact on residential uses to the north and west.

The future uses of this site should be developed in conjunction with an overall site plan for the property, ideally as a cohesive Planned Unit Development, and not as individual parcels by separate owners. While the Plan allows for a wide range of uses and flexibility in design standards the Plan also anticipates that as development occurs over time the original plans will likely change. The goal of Township decision makers, however, should be to achieve a development which can blend different uses to be compatible with each other in function and design and of overall benefit to the Township.

Discussions between the City of Lowell and Lowell Charter Township to extend public sanitary sewer and water to this site will influence the timing and the extent of property development.





**PUBLIC  
P**

This future land use category recognizes those lands and facilities that are owned or operated by a government agency or are supported by public funds and include government buildings and parks, cemeteries and public schools. In Lowell Township these include: the Lowell Charter Township Offices on Alden Nash; Grand River Riverfront Park North and South owned by Lowell Township; the approximately 518 acres of Kent County owned land in Sections 22 and 23 intended for public park use; the County wetland preserve in Sections 34 & 35; four Township cemeteries; and a public boat launch on Pratt Lake in Section 25.

**SOCIAL/CULTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL  
S**

The land in this classification includes places and buildings which are used for private or non-profit recreation and religious purposes, such as the Christian Life Center on Alden Nash, the Evergreen Missionary Church on Settlewood, the Veterans Center on Alden Nash, the B.D. White Nature Preserve on 36th Street, the Northeastern Sportsman’s Club on Grand River Drive at the west end of the Township and the Veen Observatory on Kissing Rock Avenue. This category also includes the Consumers Energy right of way which extends north to south close to the western border of Lowell Township.

The Kent County Youth Agricultural Association fairgrounds is also designated on the Future Land Use map under this land use category.

In November of 2020 the Township Planning Commission approved a Special Use Permit to allow the Kent County Youth Agricultural Association to re-locate the Kent County Fairgrounds from the City of Lowell to the former Deer Run Golf Course on Cascade Road in Section 24. The new fairground operation will have facilities intended for year-round operation and will include a 60-unit campground.

The consequences of such a new facility will be an increase in the amount of vehicle traffic on Cascade Road, and an increase in noise, lights and people in this portion of the Township as well as a significant change in the rural landscape. However, the Plan does not recommend any change for the adjacent active AG-1 zoned farmland as the fair activities and farming activities can be compatible based on the conditions of approval for the fair operation.

**FLOODPLAIN**

**F**

This category illustrates the 100-year floodplain along the Grand River. In order to preserve the ability of this area to discharge a flood of this magnitude building of structures and alteration of the terrain should be prohibited or allowed only if there is no change in the flood carrying capacity.

According to the report entitled The Flood Insurance Study, Kent County, Michigan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency the limits of the 100-year floodplain within Lowell Charter Township range from an elevation of 734 at the east end of the Township to 732 at the west end. Map 7 illustrates the floodplain along the south side of M-21 just west of Alden Nash. Lowell Township participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.



**TOWNSHIP TRAILS**

Lowell Township historically has taken an active role in the development of trails in the Lowell area. The Township is committed to long term development of community trails in the Lowell Township/Lowell City/Vergennes Township region and shows this commitment by actively participating in the Lowell Area Recreational Authority (LARA).

This is a separate legal entity which was established in November of 2004 by a mutual agreement between Vergennes Township, Lowell Charter Township and the City of Lowell. The three municipalities are working together "for the purpose of developing, acquiring, constructing, operating and maintaining one or more trails for the use and enjoyment of the residents of the Townships and the City."

In 2013 the Township proposed a trail over the Grand River to connect Grand River Riverfront Park with Township owned lands on the north side of the Grand River. This would be a part of the Lowell Area Trailway. This concept moved toward reality when in 2013 the Township acquired 11 acres in Section 9 south of Walgreens with frontage on the Grand River.

This land is directly across the Grand River from Riverfront Park and allowed for the proposed trail to be incorporated across the foot bridge constructed in 2019 connecting the north and south portions of Grand River Riverfront Park. From this point the trail proceeds north to connect with the existing LARA trail along Alden Nash north of M-21.

The Township also cooperates in the development of a non-motorized trail along railroad tracks that are either abandoned or scheduled to be abandoned by the Mid-Michigan Railroad that connects Lowell, Greenville, and Ionia. Lowell Township also intends to encourage and cooperate with the development of a North Country Trail leg in Lowell Township that follows the abandoned Mid-Michigan Railroad track along the eastern border of the Township from the City of Lowell to the Township boundary as illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

In April of 2021 LARA submitted a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund for a grant for the construction of non-motorized trail improvements. The proposed improvements include the installation of new paved non-motorized trails, pedestrian bridges, benches, picnic shelters and signage. This project will go through the Lowell community and will connect to the existing Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail network which extends to Belding, Saranac and points beyond.

The Appendix contains the Lowell Area Trailways Map and a map illustrating the proposed connector to the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail.

**TOWNSHIP 2022 MASTER PLAN  
COMPLETE STREETS ANALYSIS**

In August of 2010, PA 33 of 2008 (the Michigan Planning Enabling Act) was amended to require that local master plans include consideration of additional elements related to transportation. These elements incl



ude safe and efficient movement of people and goods by not only motor vehicles but also by bicycles, pedestrian, and other legal users including handicapper users. Additionally, the amended Act defines street as “a street, avenue, boulevard, highway, road, lane, alley, viaduct, or other public way intended for use by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users.”

In December of 2010, PA 33 was further amended to require that local master plans also take into consideration the location, character, and extent of public transit routes and public transportation facilities in the preparation of the master plan, and to coordinate with public transportation agencies in the planning process.

In Lowell Township, an analysis was done of existing street transportation facilities, particularly along the primary roads and in the major subdivisions of Whispering Hills and Eastgate. Recommendations were developed to insure adequate transportation for all users.

***Bicycle Lanes***

Striped bicycle lanes exist within the road right of way for the following streets in Lowell Township:

- M-21 (East Fulton Street) from Alden Nash Avenue west to Ada Township and continuing through Ada Township;
- Alden Nash Avenue north from M-21 to Foreman Street then continuing north into Vergennes Township;
- Alden Nash south from the Grand River through the Township and continuing into Bowne Township. Alden Nash is also State highway M-50;
- Grand River Avenue from Oberley Drive west through the length of the Township and continuing into Ada Township;
- Cascade Road from the east Township boundary west through the Township and continuing into Cascade Township.

These streets are under the jurisdiction the Kent County Road Commission and are County Primary roads. There are no other bike paths along the public street system elsewhere in the Township. The paths on the above roads are used frequently by the biking community as these paths are part of a much larger bike path system in Kent County.

***Sidewalks***

Sidewalks are an important component of complete streets. In Lowell Township, which is largely rural, sidewalks exist along the north side of M-21 which is the commercial district extending from Alden Nash to the Key Heights mobile home park. The south side of M-21 has sidewalks across the frontage of those parcels where new businesses have been built in recent years.

As development continues to occur the sidewalk system on the south side will be completed to match the system on the north side. The sidewalks connect to the existing system in the City of Lowell on the east side of Alden Nash which is the boundary between the two communities.

A sidewalk was built along the west side of Bowes Road adjacent to the Walgreen store which could be extended to connect to the existing sidewalk on the north side of Bowes Road further the east. Crossing signals and curb ramps exist at the intersection of Alden Nash and M-21.

Sidewalks also exist along all streets in the Whispering Hills subdivision which connect to the Stony Bluff subdivision to the north. Twin Oaks subdivision constructed in 2019 will also have sidewalks as houses are built per the Township’s subdivision requirements.



The sidewalks along Birmingham Street allow pedestrians and children on bicycles from the Whispering Hills and Stony Bluff subdivision to safely access the commercial uses along M-21. Boulder Drive which runs parallel to and north of M-21 also has sidewalks on both sides. These sidewalks serving are five feet wide, and provide accessible curb ramp connections to the street surface.

Sidewalks are lacking in the Eastgate subdivision on the east side of Cumberland Avenue which was constructed in the 1970's with larger lots. Construction of sidewalks may not be practical given the width of the lots, trees planted in the right of way and how residents have chosen to utilize their front yards. The lack of sidewalks means that residents use the local streets for walking and bicycling. Safety is not a major concern due to low traffic volumes.

Residents wishing to walk or bicycle from the Eastgate subdivision through the Whispering Hills subdivision to the commercial district on M-21 do face some safety risks in crossing Cumberland Avenue due to the lack of a sidewalk on Cumberland.

***Public and Private Transportation***

While no public bus routes exist in Lowell Township, private and non-profit agencies offer a variety of methods of transportation for the disabled and the elderly, as well as for other persons that may qualify depending upon the agency offering transportation. More information is available through the Kent County Health Department.

***Recommendations***

A recommendation to assist Lowell Township in moving toward the goal of increased use of transportation facilities for all users is to construct a sidewalk along the west side of Cumberland Avenue from Woodbushe Street in Eastgate to Barnsley Street in the Whispering Hills subdivision to provide a safer route to the commercial district on M-21 for the residents of Eastgate subdivision



## CHAPTER 6

# IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide to the continued development of Lowell Township, it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Board, the Planning Commission and the Township staff. This is done through a number of methods. These include ordinances, programs, and administrative procedures which are described in this chapter.

It is important to note that the Master Plan itself has no legal authority to regulate development in order to implement the recommendations of the Plan. This implementation must come from the decisions of the Board and Planning Commission to provide needed public improvements and to administer and establish regulatory measures relative to the use of the land.

The private sector, which includes individual land owners as well as developers, is also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan by the actual physical development of land and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the Township. Cooperation and coordination among individuals, private developers, and public agencies is, therefore, important in successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Chapter 2 of the Plan sets forth goals and objectives which serve to guide the future development of Lowell Township. Many of the specific implementation recommendations of this chapter are taken from these objectives, while others are taken from the land use recommendations made in Chapter 5.

The following sections identify the major activities which the Lowell Township Planning Commission should pursue in order to be pro-active in the implementation of the Master Plan.

### ZONING

Zoning represents a legal means for the Township to regulate private property to achieve orderly land use relationships. It is the process most commonly used to implement community Master Plans. The zoning ordinance consists of an official zoning map and zoning ordinance text.

The official zoning map divides the community into different zones or districts within which certain uses are permitted and others are not. The zoning ordinance text notes the uses which are permitted and establishes regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setback, lot sizes, and accessory uses.

The zoning ordinance also sets forth procedures for site plan review, conditional uses, and sign controls. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as the type of development.

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006, requires that zoning be based on a plan. A Master Plan provides the basis for the range and spatial location of zone districts. The zoning ordinance, in turn, is the primary plan implementation tool.

Local control of land use, as provided for by zoning, is an accepted legal practice. The principles on which zoning is based include the need to:

- balance the interests of all landowners and residents with the rights of individual landowners;
- help provide a long-term vision for the community;



- protect the environment;
- ensure development is adequately served by roads and utilities;
- achieve the quality of life desired by residents;
- provide fair and consistent review of development needs; and,
- protect the public health, safety and welfare.

In considering a request to rezone property the Planning Commission and Township Board should evaluate the request according to the following factors:

**REZONING EVALUATION FACTORS**

- Does the request comply with the recommendation of the Master Plan?
- Are all of the uses allowed in the requested district appropriate for the proposed location?
- Have any conditions changed in the area since the Plan was adopted which might justify this change?
- Can the proposed development be adequately served by public utilities and services, including roads?
- Will there be any community impacts which should be considered, such as increased traffic, or others which might create a need for additional services or improvements?
- Are there any potential environmental considerations which will be contrary to the intent of the existing or proposed classification of land use?
- Will there be any adverse effects on adjacent properties as a result of the proposed land use change?
- Will granting the rezoning request likely lead to significant changes contained in the Master Plan for the area where the rezoning is requested?
- Could this use be accommodated in some other location or in the proposed location by some other zoning measure such as a special land use or a planned unit development?

**ZONING PLAN**

The 2008 Planning Enabling Act requires that a Master Plan contain a zoning plan which outlines the development requirements for the various zoning districts and an explanation of how the future land use categories relate to the districts on the zoning map.

Regarding this latter requirement the Future Land Use Categories in Chapter 5 describe how each of these categories relates to the various zoning districts in the Lowell Charter Township. A Zoning Map is contained in the Appendix of this Plan and the development requirements for each zone are set forth in the Township Zoning Ordinance which is too large to be included in this 2022 Master Plan but which is available on the Township website.

**ZONING ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2021 Plan recommends that the Zoning Ordinance continue to be updated as necessary to address land use issues as they arise and to address changes in Michigan zoning laws. In particular, the Plan recommends that zoning regulations be prepared and adopted to permit utility scale solar energy



systems to be allowed in the 100 -year flood plain of the Grand River as described in Chapter 3 of the Plan.

**PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM**

The Plan recommends that the Planning Commission prepare an annual work program in the beginning of each year. This work program would set forth the tasks of goals which the Planning Commission determines to accomplish for the upcoming year. This will allow the Commission to stay focused on important tasks, in order to develop and implement goals and strategies identified within this Plan.

**PLANNING EDUCATION**

Planning Commissioners should be kept informed of planning seminars to learn how to better carry out their duties and responsibilities as Planning Commissioners. These seminars are regularly sponsored by the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) and are a valuable resource for Planning Commissions.

There are also several planning publications which are useful information tools for Planning Commissions. The main publications are Planning and Zoning News and Michigan Planner Magazine. The Michigan Citizen Planner Program which is administered by the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service is also an important education program for Planning Commissioners.

**REVISIONS TO MASTER PLAN**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requires municipalities to review their Master Plans every five years and determine whether to amend the plan or adopt a new plan. This review allows planning commission to be responsive to new growth trends and current citizen attitudes.

As growth occurs over the years, the Plan’s goals, land use information, population projections, and other pertinent data can then be reviewed and revised as necessary so the Plan can continue to serve as a valid guide to the growth of the Township.



# APPENDICES





# City of Lowell, Michigan



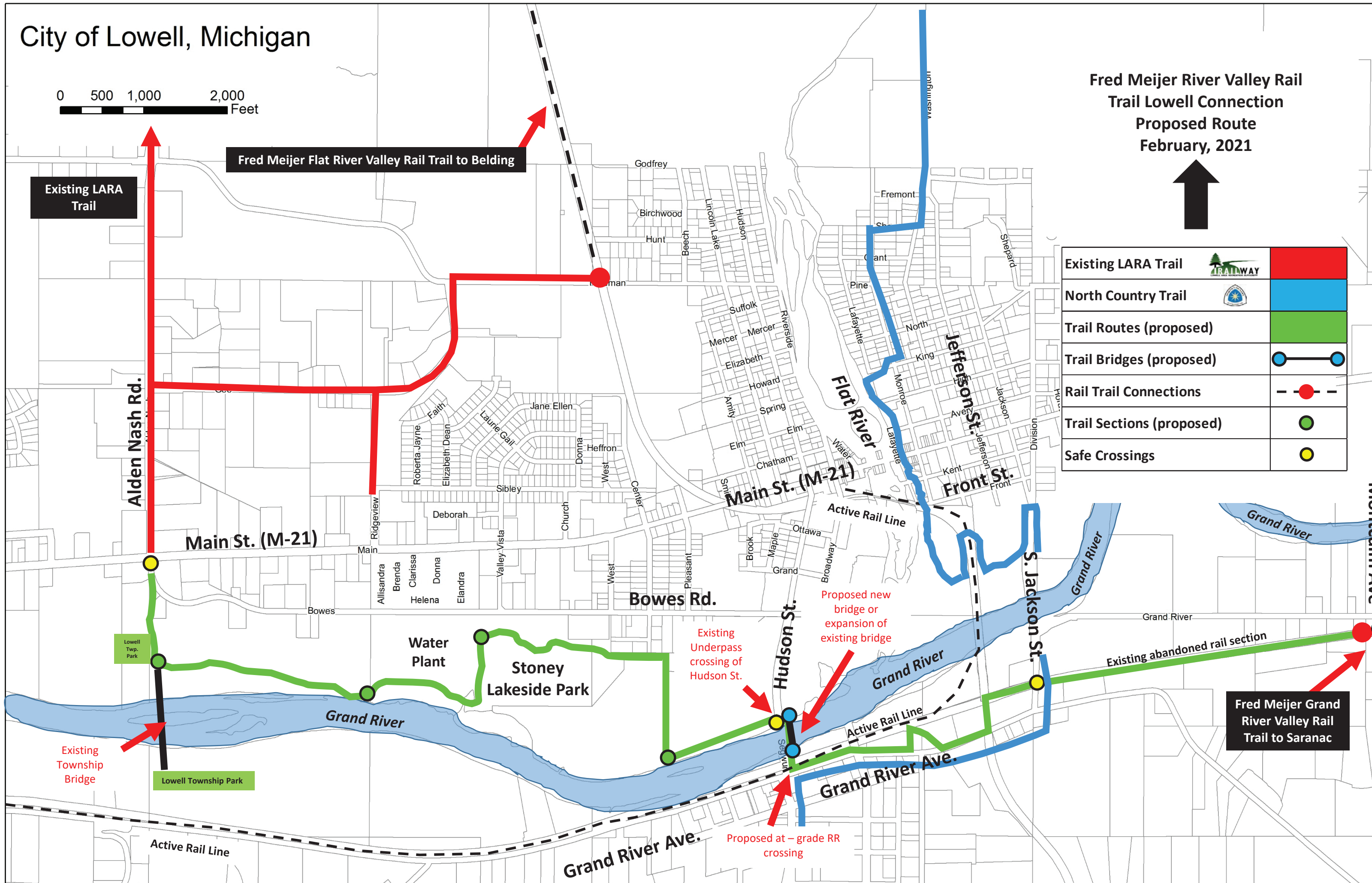
**Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail Lowell Connection**  
**Proposed Route**  
**February, 2021**



**Existing LARA Trail**

**Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Rail Trail to Belding**

Existing LARA Trail		
North Country Trail		
Trail Routes (proposed)		
Trail Bridges (proposed)		
Rail Trail Connections		
Trail Sections (proposed)		
Safe Crossings		



**Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail to Saranac**

Existing Township Bridge

Lowell Township Park

Water Plant

Stoney Lakeside Park

Existing Underpass crossing of Hudson St.

Proposed new bridge or expansion of existing bridge

Proposed at - grade RR crossing

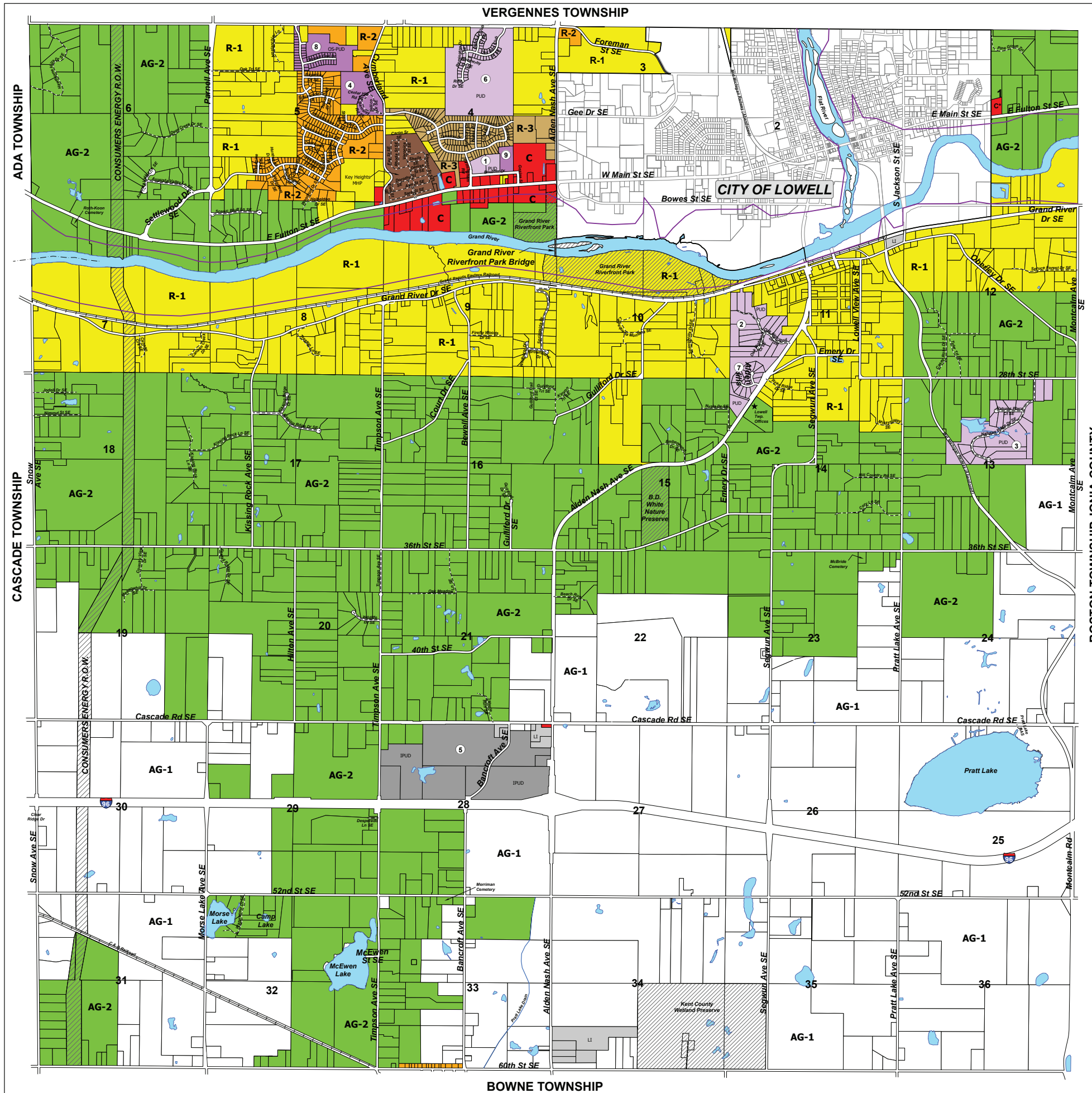


# OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF LOWELL TOWNSHIP














KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

T 6 N, R 9 W

Latest Revision: July 2019



## ZONING DISTRICTS

-  AG-1, PRIME AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
-  AG-2, RURAL AGRICULTURAL
-  R-1, RURAL LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
-  R-2, MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
-  R-3, HIGH DENSITY MULTIPLE FAMILY
-  MH, HIGH DENSITY MOBILE HOME PARK
-  C, GENERAL COMMERCIAL
-  LI, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
-  OS-PUD, OPEN SPACE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
-  IPUD, INDUSTRIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
-  PUD, PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
-  FH, FLOOD HAZARD (100 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN)
-  PRIVATE ROADS

\* CONDITIONAL ZONING ORDINANCE 2017 - 02Z  
14043 FULTON STREET SE

## Planned Unit Developments:

- ① Stone Ridge Apartments PUD
- ② Oak Hill Estates Site Condominium
- ③ Nature's Place Site Condominium
- ④ Cumberland Ridge Condominiums
- ⑤ Grooters Industrial PUD
- ⑥ Stony Bluff OS-PUD
- ⑦ Alden Ridge OS-PUD
- ⑧ Twin Oaks OS-PUD
- ⑨ Townhomes at Two Rivers OS-PUD



0 3,000  
Feet

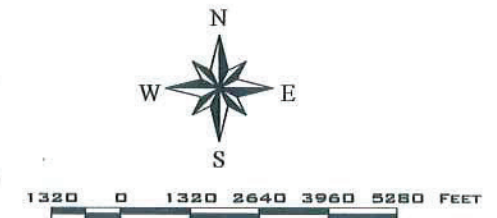
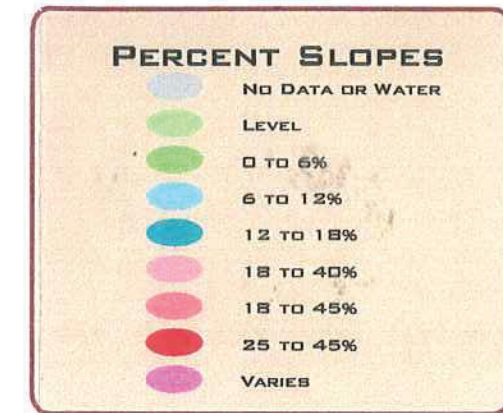
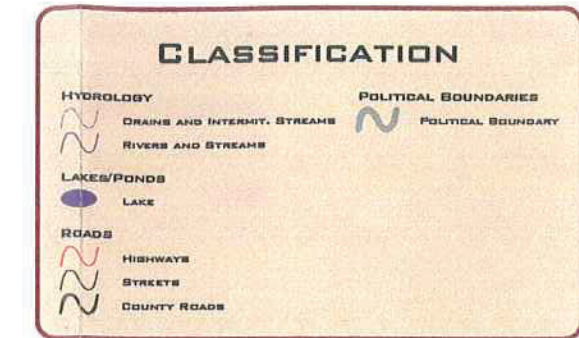
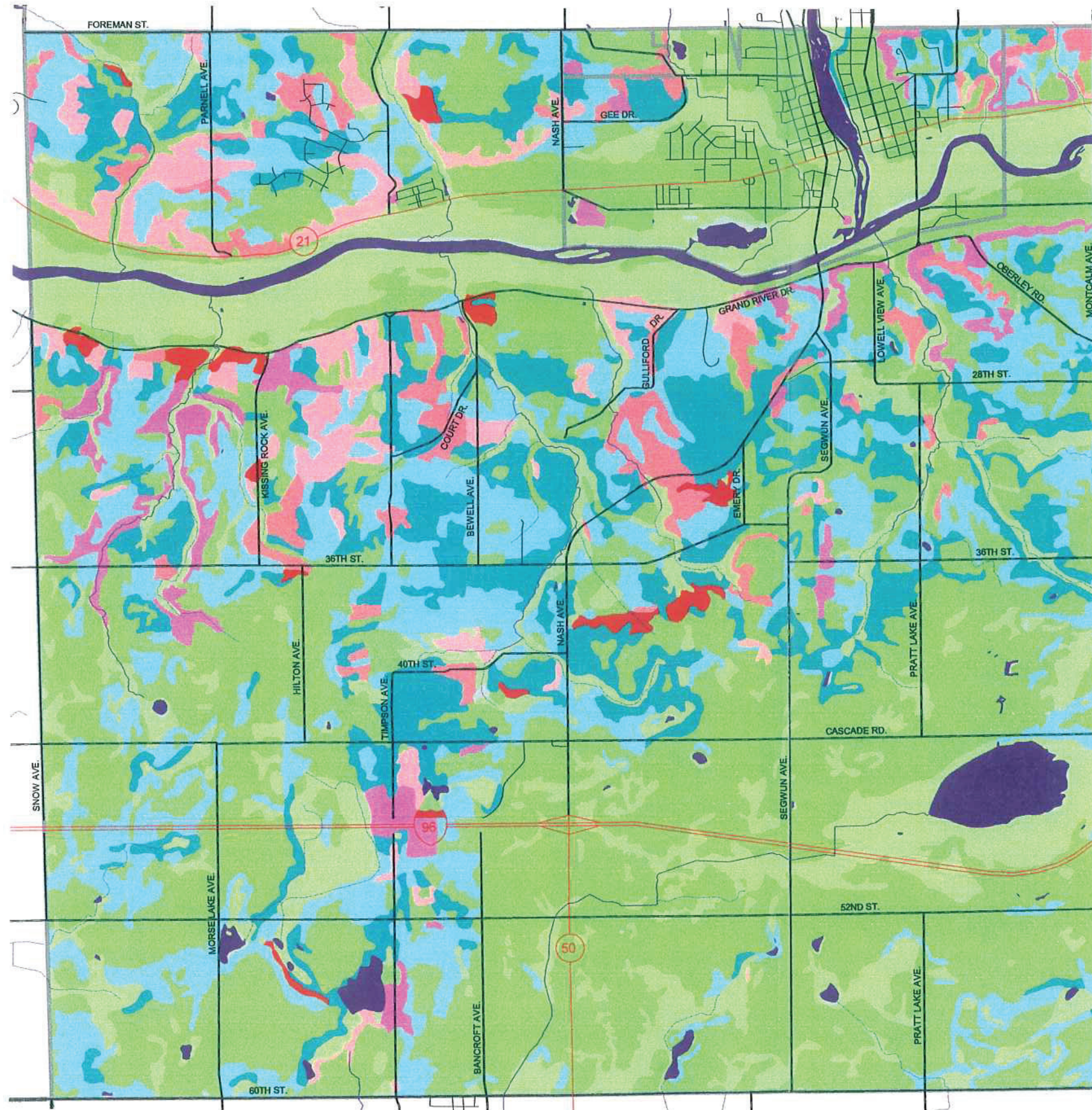
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		DRAWN BY: TRM
		DATE: 07-12-2019
		QA/QC: MPB

# MAPS



# MAP 1 TOPOGRAPHIC SLOPES

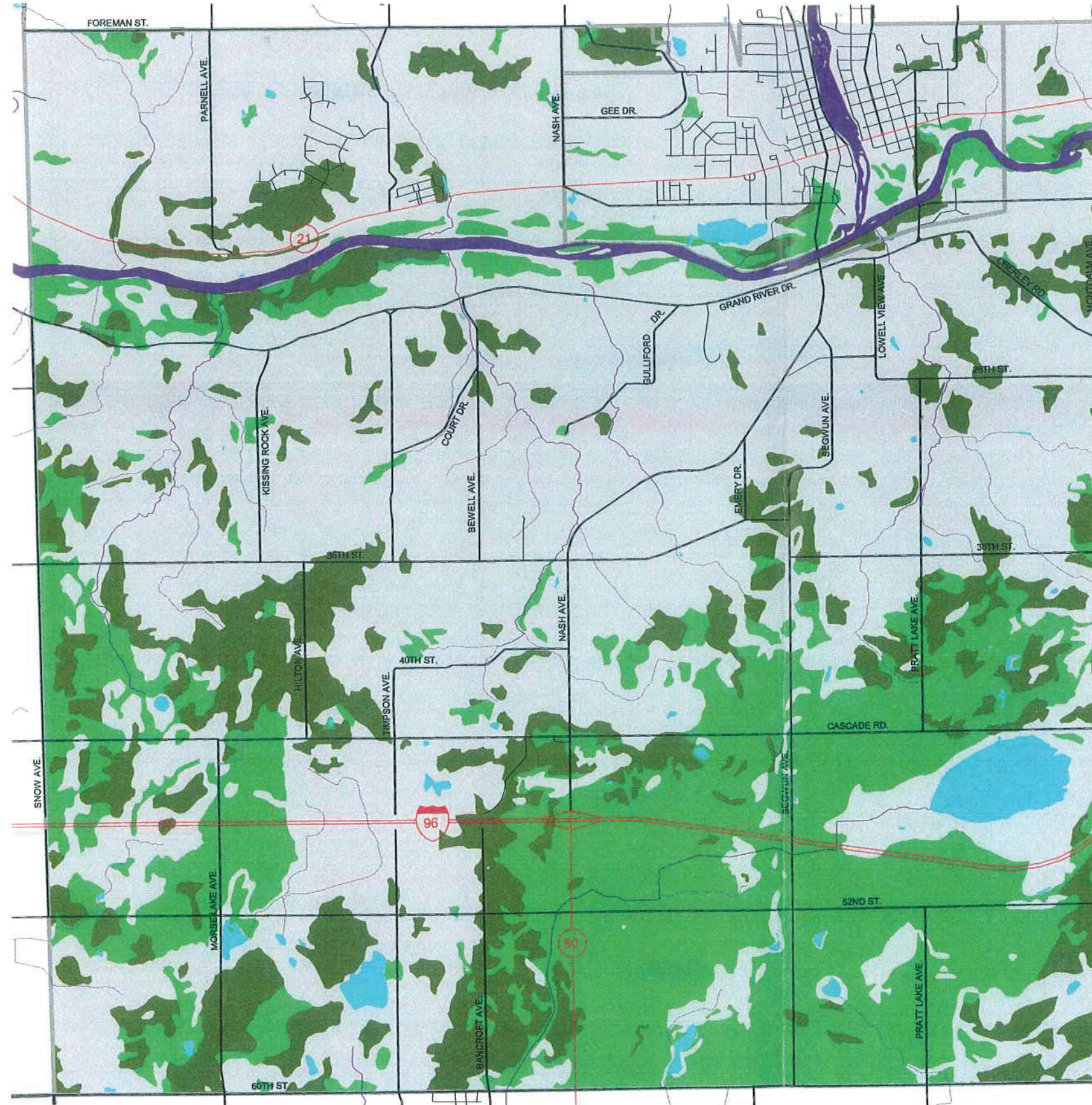
LOWELL TOWNSHIP  
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN



**DATA SOURCES:**  
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LAND AND MINERAL SERVICES DIVISION,  
RESOURCE MAPPING AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SECTION,  
SPATIAL DATA LIBRARY, 2001.  
SOILS INFORMATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, KENT COUNTY  
SOIL SURVEY, 1986.



MAP 2  
**PRIME FARMLAND SOILS**  
 LOWELL TOWNSHIP  
 KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN



**CLASSIFICATION**

<b>HYDROLOGY</b>	<b>POLITICAL BOUNDARIES</b>
DRAINS AND INTERMITTENT STREAMS	POLITICAL BOUNDARY
RIVERS AND STREAMS	
<b>LAKES/PONDS</b>	
LAKE	
<b>ROADS</b>	
HIGHWAYS	
STREETS	
COUNTY ROADS	

**PRIME FARMLAND SOILS**

	NOT PRIME
	PRIME, IF DRAINED
	PRIME



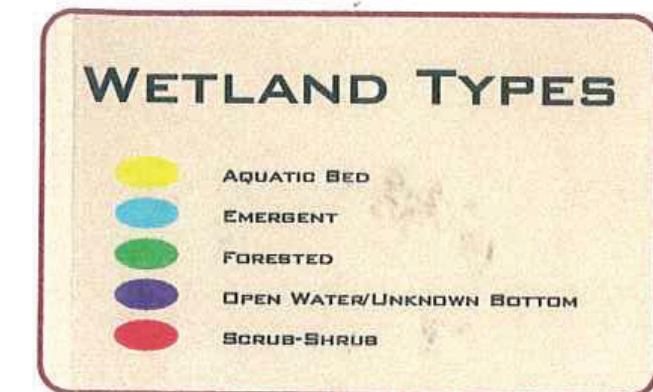
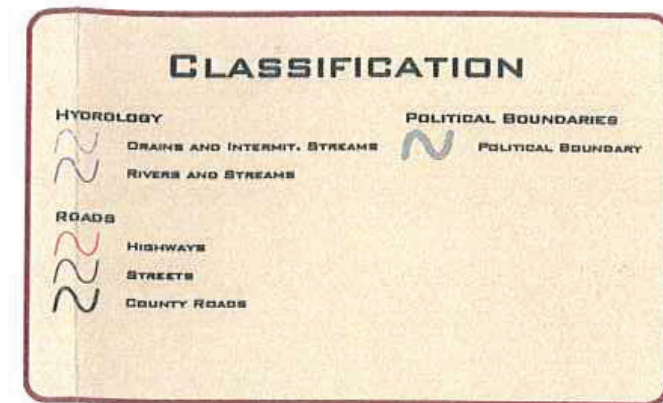
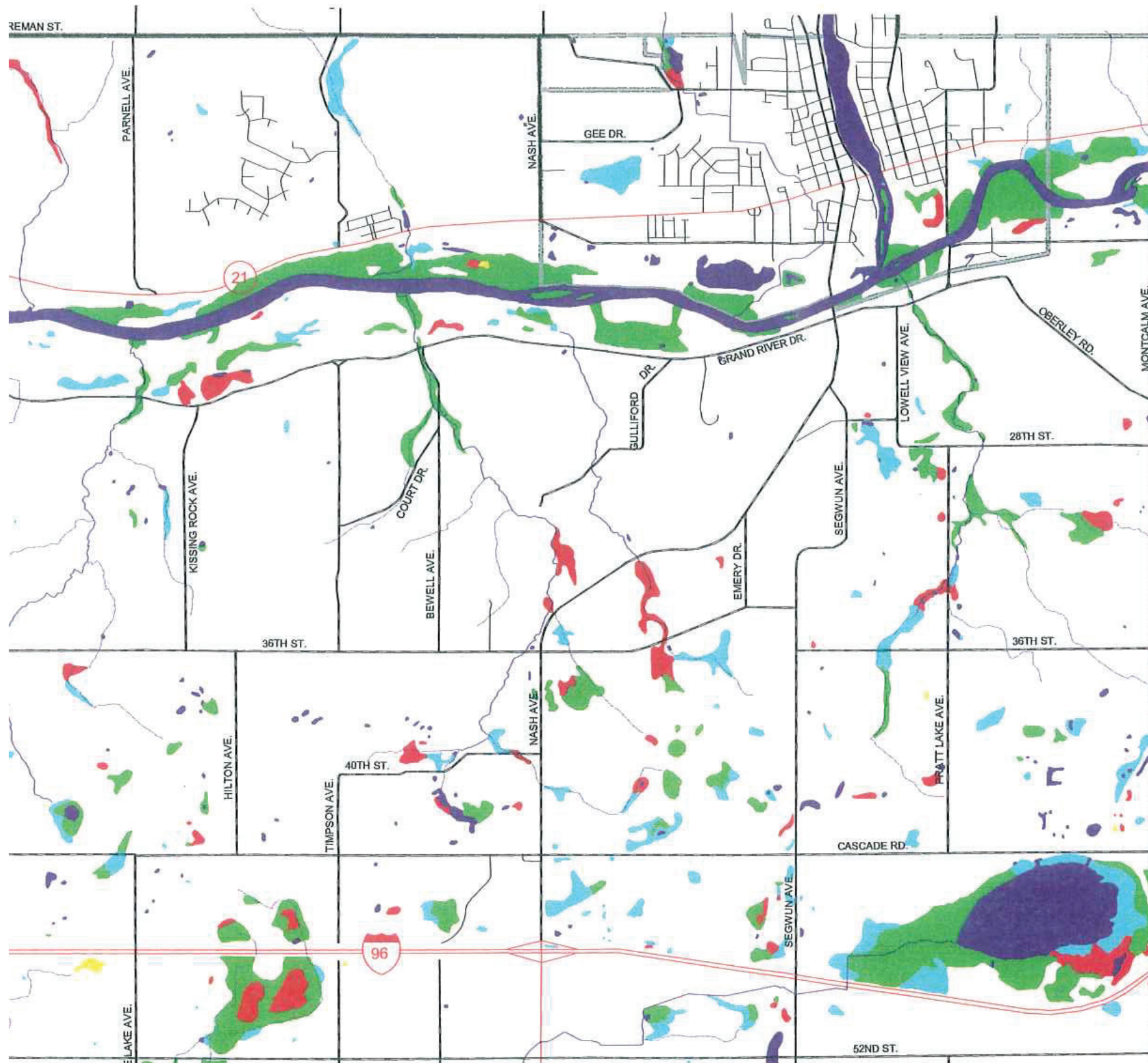
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**DATA SOURCES:**  
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 RESOURCE MAPPING AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SECTION,  
 SPATIAL DATA LIBRARY, 2001.  
 SOILS INFORMATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
 NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, KENT COUNTY  
 SOIL SURVEY, 1986.



# MAP 3 NATIONAL WETLANDS

## INVENTORY LOWELL TOWNSHIP KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN



DATA SOURCES:  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES,  
LAND AND MINERAL SERVICES DIVISION,  
RESOURCE MAPPING AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SECTION,

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS MAP

## MAP 4

By Section  
 Issued for New Dwelling Units  
 2011 - 2020  
 Lowell Township

Kent County, Michigan  
 T6N, R9W

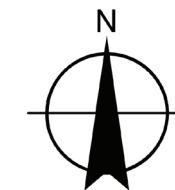
# = Number of Building Permits per Section

5 = Section Number

TOTAL Permits = 331

**Planned Unit Developments:**

- ① Stone Ridge Apartments PUD
- ② Oak Hill Estates Site Condominium
- ③ Nature's Place Site Condominium
- ④ Cumberland Ridge Condominiums
- ⑤ Grooters Industrial PUD
- ⑥ Stony Bluffs OS-PUD
- ⑦ Alden Ridge OS-PUD
- ⑧ Twin Oaks OS-PUD
- ⑨ Townhomes at Two Rivers OS-PUD



0 1,500 3,000



Horizontal Scale In Feet

NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM (NAVD 88)  
 NAD 1983 (2011) STATEPLANE MICHIGAN SOUTH FIPS 2113 (INTL. FEET)

**\*RESOURCE INFORMATION:**  
 Imagery.....ESRI IMAGERY BASEMAP  
 Roads.....MICHIGAN GIS OPEN DATA PORTAL  
 Parcels.....COUNTY EQUALIZATION DEPT.  
 Names.....ESRI WORLD BOUNDARIES & PLACES  
 Hydrography.....MICHIGAN GIS OPEN DATA PORTAL  
 Elevation.....USGS THE NATIONAL MAP - 2017 LIDAR  
 Boundaries.....ESRI WORLD BOUNDARIES & PLACES  
 Public Land Survey System.....MICHIGAN GIS OPEN DATA PORTAL  
 Wetlands.....FWS NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY - 2005

	2121 3 Mile Rd. NW Walker, MI 49544 Ph: 616-301-7888 www.LREMI.com	PROJECT#: 20-062 DRAWN BY: TRM DATE: 07-26-2021 QAQC: MPB





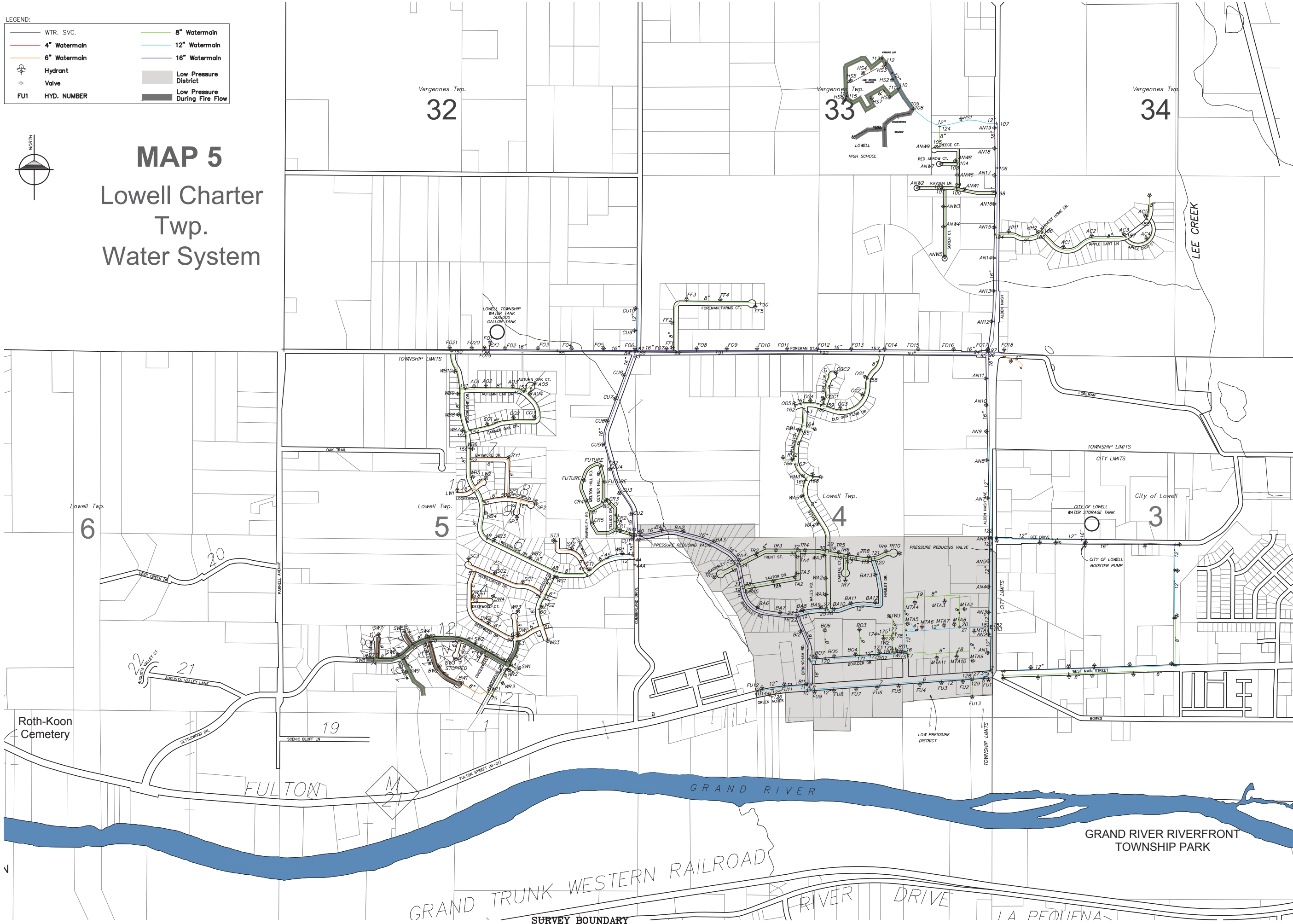
LEGEND:

	WTR. SVC.		8" Watermain
	4" Watermain		12" Watermain
	6" Watermain		16" Watermain
	Hydrant		Low Pressure District
	Valve		Low Pressure During Fire Flow
	FU1 HYD. NUMBER		



# MAP 5

## Lowell Charter Twp. Water System



**INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES, INC.**  
 CLEAN WATER SOLUTIONS  
 7700 Chippewa Dr. | Lowell, MI 49349 | Phone: (517) 664-1100 | www.iaia.com

NO.	REVISIONS	DATE	BY
1	REVISED PER AS-BUILTS AND FIELD VERIFIED	8/9/11	S
2	REVISED PER M.D.E.C. REVIEW	10/15/11	S
3	REVISED FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS	10/15/11	T
4			
NO.			

**LOWELL, TWP. WATER SYSTEM**  
 LOWELL, KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TOWNSHIP MAP

DESIGNED BY	DATE
KST/SJK	9/09
DRAWN BY	DATE
SJK	9/09
CHECKED BY	DATE
SJK	9/09
FILE	EDIT
WMATLAS	
SCALE	1"=600'
DRAWING	1:1
PLOT	
PROJECT	LOW101
SHEET NO.	1

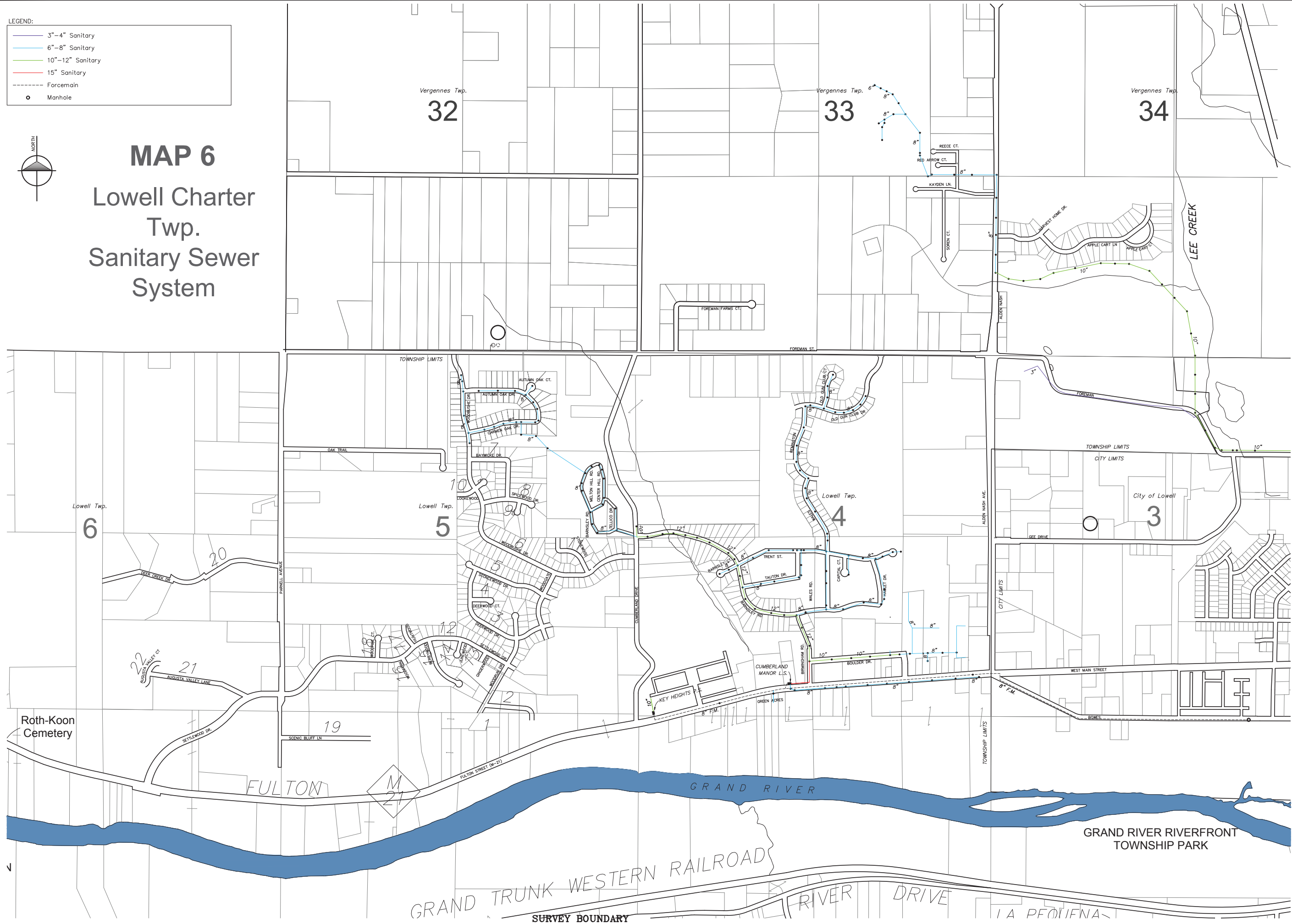
LEGEND:

	3"-4" Sanitary
	6"-8" Sanitary
	10"-12" Sanitary
	15" Sanitary
	Forcemain
	Manhole



# MAP 6

## Lowell Charter Twp. Sanitary Sewer System



1	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
2	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
3	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
4	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
5	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
6	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
7	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
8	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
9	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV
10	NOV	NOV	NOV	NOV

LOWELL TWP. SEWER SYSTEM  
LOWELL, KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

DESIGNED BY	KST/SJK	DATE	9/09
DRAWN BY	SJK	DATE	9/09
CHECKED BY	SJK	DATE	9/09
FILE	WMATLAS	EDIT	
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PLOT			
PROJECT	LOW101		
SHEET NO.	1		

TOWNSHIP MAP

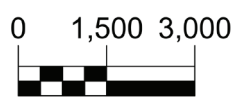
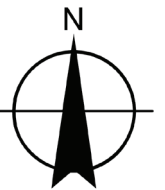
# ROAD CLASSIFICATION MAP

## MAP 7

Lowell Township  
Kent County, Michigan  
T6N, R9W

**LEGEND**

-  STATE HIGHWAY
-  COUNTY PRIMARY ROAD
-  COUNTY LOCAL ROAD
-  NATURAL BEAUTY ROAD
-  PRIVATE ROAD
-  SECTION LINE

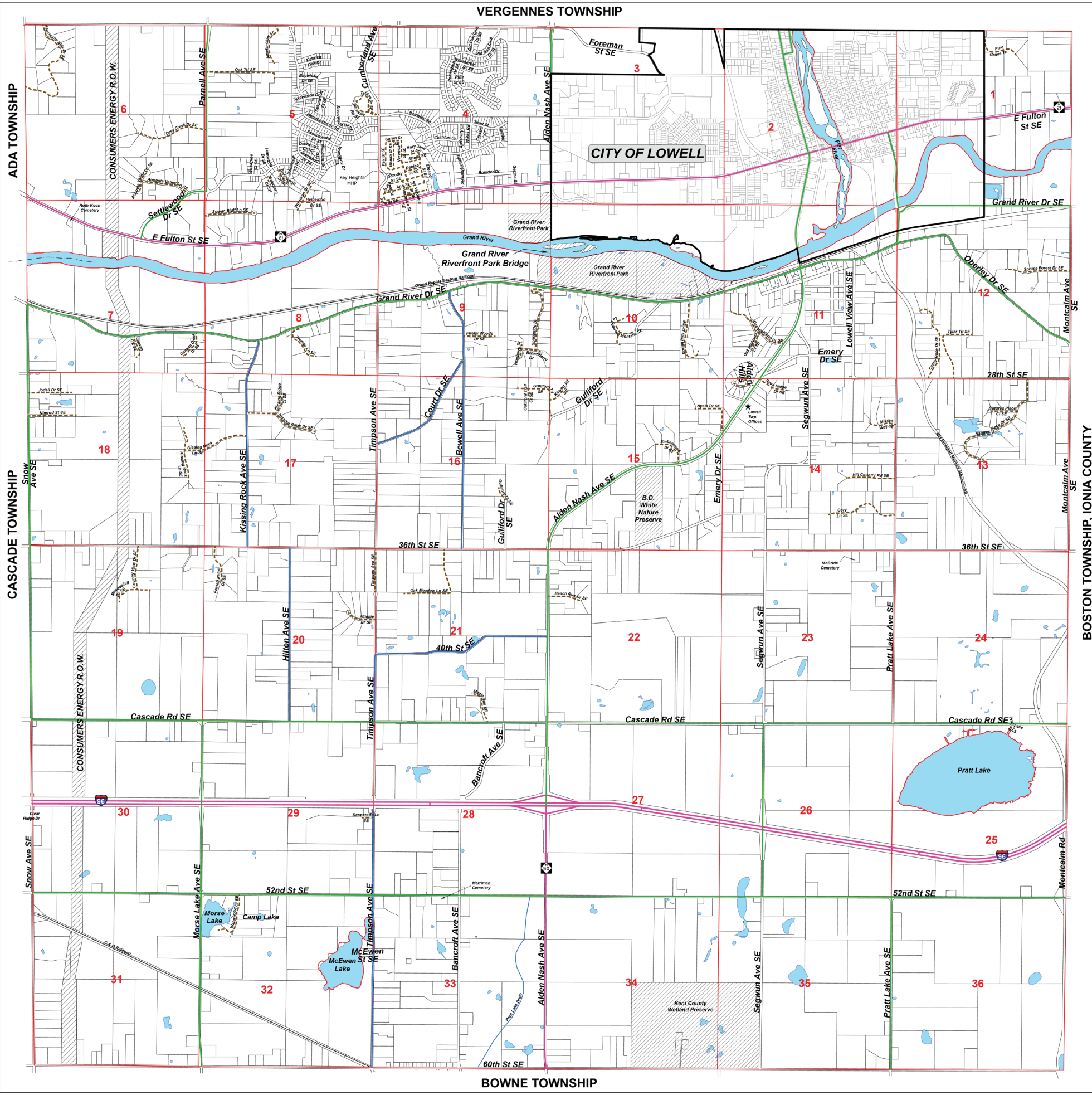


Horizontal Scale In Feet

NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM (NAVD 88)  
NAD 1983 (2011) STATEPLANE MICHIGAN SOUTH FIPS 2113 (INTL. FEET)

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 Wetlands.....FWS NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY - 2005

	2121 3 Mile Rd. NW Walker, MI 49544 Ph: 616-301-7888 www.LREMI.com	PROJECT#: 20-062
		DRAWN BY: TRM
		DATE: 09-03-2021
		QA/QC: MPB

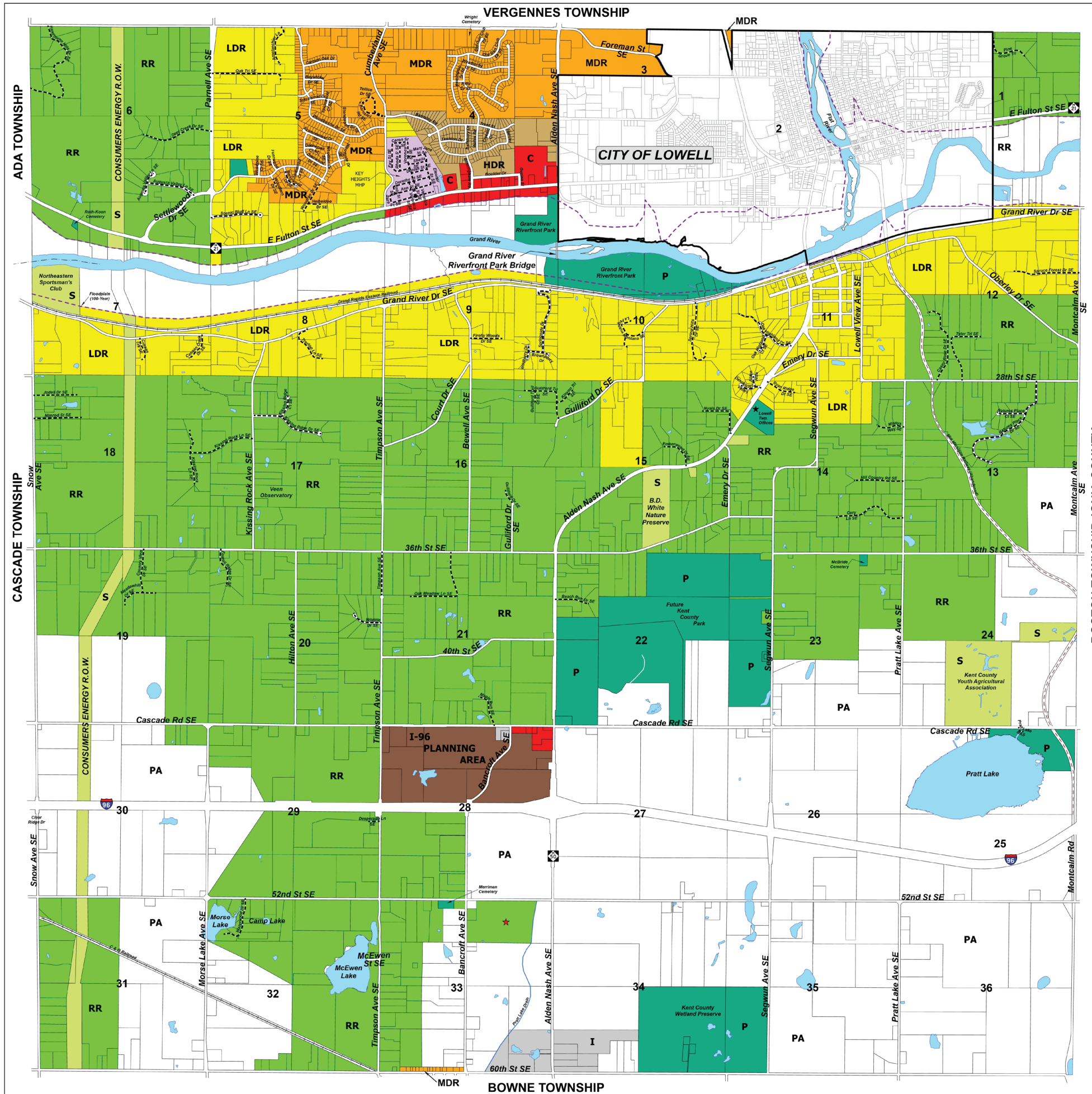


# 2022 LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN FUTURE LAND USE MAP

I hereby certify that the 2022 Master Plan and Future Land Use Map for Lowell Charter Township was duly adopted by the Lowell Charter Township Board on January 17, 2022.

*Monica Burt, Clerk*

Monica Burt, Clerk, Lowell Charter Township



BOSTON TOWNSHIP, IONIA COUNTY

### PRIME AGRICULTURE PA

The purpose of this category is the long-term preservation of farmland. Principal land uses are agriculture and agriculture support services which help to enhance and stabilize the farming industry. Prime Agricultural is analogous to the AG-1 Zoning District. Minimum lot size is two acres with 200 feet of road frontage. Support uses would include farm markets, hayrides, demonstration farms and petting farms.

### RURAL RESIDENTIAL RR

This classification is intended to provide for residential development in a rural setting adjacent to prime agricultural land use areas. Farming is a permitted use. The RR category is analogous to the AG-2 zoning district. In order to preserve the natural features of this area lot sizes in the RR areas are required to be a minimum of four acres with 200 feet of road frontage for single family dwellings.

### LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LDR

This future land use category is proposed for single family dwellings on lot sizes of at least two acres with 165 feet of road frontage. Duplexes would be a permitted use but only on lots with a minimum of four acres. Because of this large lot size, public water and sanitary sewer are not envisioned for LDR areas. The LDR category is analogous to the R-1 zoning district noted in the Lowell Township Zoning Ordinance. Farming is also permitted use.

### MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL MDR

The Medium Density Residential classification is analogous to the R-2 zoning district. This category would permit single family dwellings without sanitary sewer to have minimum lot sizes of 40,000 square feet with 165 feet of road frontage. With sanitary sewer, lot sizes would be permitted to be a minimum of 14,000 square feet with 100 feet of road frontage for a density of 3.11 dwelling units per acre.

### HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL HDR

The HDR classification corresponds to the R3 Zoning District. Single family dwellings with sanitary sewer are permitted in this area with 10,000 square feet minimum lot sizes and 80 feet of lot frontage. Multiple family dwellings are also permitted as a Special Land Use at a density of eight units per acre. Office uses are also permitted as Special Land Use.

### MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY MHC

This future land use category permits a manufactured housing community. The Plan recognizes the existing Key Heights mobile home park development on M-21 in Section 4. A mobile home park typically has a density of six to eight dwelling units per acre which is the same as a High-Density Residential land use.

### COMMERCIAL C

The Commercial designation corresponds to the GC, General Commercial Zoning District. This category is intended to allow generally recognized retail, service and office uses to serve local residents and passing traffic. Commercial development is proposed to be located primarily along both sides of M-21 west of Alden Nash. The 2022 Plan also recommends commercial land use for the parcels on the south side of Cascade Road between Bancroft Avenue and Alden Nash.

--- FUTURE TRAILS  
★ ENROLLED IN PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAM



**\*RESOURCE INFORMATION:**  
 Imagery.....ESRI IMAGERY BASEMAP  
 Roads.....MICHIGAN GIS OPEN DATA PORTAL  
 Parcels.....COUNTY EQUALIZATION DEPT.  
 Names.....ESRI WORLD BOUNDARIES & PLACES  
 Hydrography.....MICHIGAN GIS OPEN DATA PORTAL  
 Elevation.....USGS THE NATIONAL MAP - 2017 LIDAR  
 Boundaries.....ESRI WORLD BOUNDARIES & PLACES  
 Public Land Survey System.....MICHIGAN GIS OPEN DATA PORTAL  
 Wetlands.....FWS NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY - 2005

### INDUSTRIAL I

The 2022 Plan retains the recommendation of the 2008 and 2014 Plans which designates the lands on both sides of Alden Nash at the intersection with 60th Street for future industrial use. The total available acreage for industrial users is almost 80 acres which is deemed sufficient for this planning period. The Plan recognizes the existing industrial uses and industrial zoning on Grand River Drive at Jackson Street just south of the bridge crossing the Grand River.

### I-96 PLANNING AREA

The 2022 (and 2014) Master Plans have designated the 257 acres located west of Alden Nash between Cascade Road and I-96 for industrial use with a limited portion for commercial and service uses. The 2022 Plan designation is the I-96 Planning Area given its highly visible and accessible location along the I-96 highway. Industrial uses should be of a type that would benefit from proximity to the I-96 interchange such as light manufacturing, warehouses and research and development. Industrial uses should be located to ensure that the buildings and other site improvements such as lighting and truck movements have minimal impact on residential uses to the north and west. Commercial uses should be positioned for visibility from I-96. Office uses are also appropriate for this site and should be located along the I-96 frontage.

### PUBLIC P

This future land use category recognizes those lands and facilities that are owned or operated by a government agency or are supported by public funds and include government buildings and parks, cemeteries and public schools. In Lowell Township these include: the Lowell Charter Township Offices on Alden Nash; Grand River Riverfront Park North and South owned by Lowell Township; the approximately 518 acres of Kent County owned land in Sections 22 and 23 intended for public park use; the County wetland preserve in Sections 34 & 35; four Township cemeteries; and a public boat launch on Pratt Lake in Section 25.

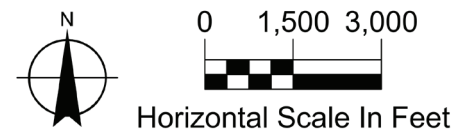
### SOCIAL / CULTURAL / INSTITUTIONAL S

The land in this classification includes places and buildings which are used for private or non-profit recreation and religious purposes, such as the Christian Life Center on Alden Nash, the Evergreen Missionary Church on Settlemore, the Veterans Center on Alden Nash, the B.D. White Nature Preserve on 36th Street, the Northeastern Sportsman's Club on Grand River Drive at the west end of the Township and the Veen Observatory on Kissing Rock Avenue. This category also includes the Consumers Energy right of way which extends north to south close to the western border of Lowell Township.

The Kent County Youth Agricultural Association fairgrounds is also designated on the Future Land Use map under this land use category.

### FLOOD PLAIN 100-YEAR

This category illustrates the 100-year floodplain along the Grand River. According to the report entitled The Flood Insurance Study, Kent County, Michigan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency the limits of the 100-year floodplain within Lowell Charter Township range from an elevation of 734 at the east end of the Township to 732 at the west end. No future land use is planned for the flood plain.



NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM (NAVD 88)  
 NAD 1983 (2011) STATEPLANE MICHIGAN SOUTH FIPS 2113 (INTL. FEET)

<b>LRE</b> ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS	2121 3 Mile Rd. NW Walker, MI 49544 Ph: 616-301-7888 www.LREMI.com	PROJECT#: 20-062
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