Gratiot Regional Excellence & Transformation (GREAT) Plan

Great things in the Palm of your hand

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I. Introduction

Overview

This plan represents the collaborative efforts of all the local units of government in Gratiot County. This is a rare document in the state of Michigan. Seldom, if ever, in Michigan's history have this many jurisdictions joined together to develop a shared master plan that has been individually adopted by each local unit of government. However, Gratiot County leaders realize that the future of the community is in their hands and that multi-jurisdictional cooperation is essential to sustain the county as a whole. For instance, traffic doesn't stop at political boundaries and shoppers and commuters cross township, city and village lines every day. Air, water and wildlife also flow continuously past these dividing lines. From farmlands to downtown districts, shared cultural and natural resources need to be addressed from the perspective of the larger community. To accomplish this, the townships, cities, and villages of Gratiot County have joined together and with *Partnerships for Change - Sustainable Communities* to develop this plan, the *Gratiot Regional Excellence and Transformation (GREAT) Plan*.

Partnerships for Change - Sustainable Communities is a program that provides grants of professional planning support and technical assistance to townships, cities and villages for cooperative efforts that contribute to the preservation of cultural and natural resources. The *Partnerships for Change - Sustainable Communities* program is managed by LIAA and sponsored by the Michigan Townships Association, Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Association of Planning, and Michigan State University Extension.

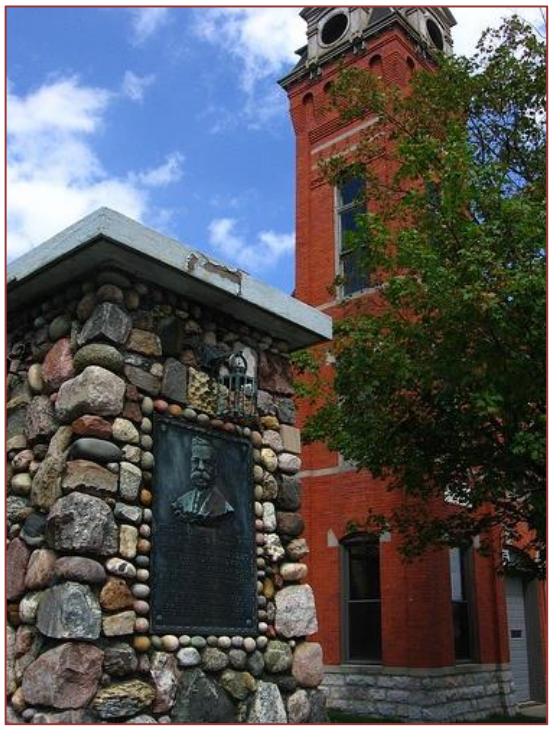
Gratiot County Courthouse

The local units of government of Gratiot County received a *Partnerships for Change – Sustainable Communities* grant because of their collaborative spirit. This community has a history of collaboration, including a countywide economic development agency, shared fire and police services, and a wind turbine ordinance (for a full listing of collaborative activities, see Appendix I). Furthermore, the *GREAT Plan* is a master plan developed from "the ground up" rather than from the "top down," meaning that it has been developed by the townships, villages, and cities of Gratiot County for countywide use. This wide-scale collaborative approach is extraordinary and helps ensure the master plan's usefulness and compatibility between jurisdictions.

Setting

Gratiot County is located at the center of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The County is comprised of 23 local units of government, including sixteen townships, three villages and three cities. As a whole, Gratiot County is primarily rural with a very active agricultural community. However, the cities and villages serve as commercial, industrial and residential hubs. For example, the City of Ithaca serves as the county seat and is recognized for its historic courthouse and the City of Alma is home to Alma College, one of the state's premier private colleges, and the Highland Festival, a nationally known annual celebration of Scottish arts, games, and food (to learn more about each jurisdiction, see Appendix II). People who live in or visit Gratiot County know the place as a friendly and welcoming community. As stated in the 2002 County Strategic plan,

> *People are drawn to Gratiot County because its small-town charm and rural ambiance make it a great place to raise a family. Each year there are a number of heartwarming stories about people helping people. Many times a group of farmers will band together to plant or harvest the crops of a neighbor who is ill or injured and can't do the job himself. Then there are those who initiate fund-raising campaigns to help pay the medical bills for a child or adult stricken with a life-threatening disease. Many of these good deeds occur without much publicity but they don't go unnoticed or unappreciated. After all, that's what a "community" is all about.*



Pattengill Monument

Project Process

This planning project was led by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the local jurisdictions and Greater Gratiot Economic Development, Inc. The Steering Committee held regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. In addition, the Steering Committee engaged in a number of special outreach efforts to help gather input from local residents and share information. These special efforts included:

1. ***A Project Website***
   Project partners developed a website that served as the community's resource for the Master Plan development process. Through this website, residents, business owners, local officials, and all

interested citizens had direct access to project news and the meeting calendar. The website address is: http://www.partnershipsforchange.cc/great/

2. ***Five Public Meetings***

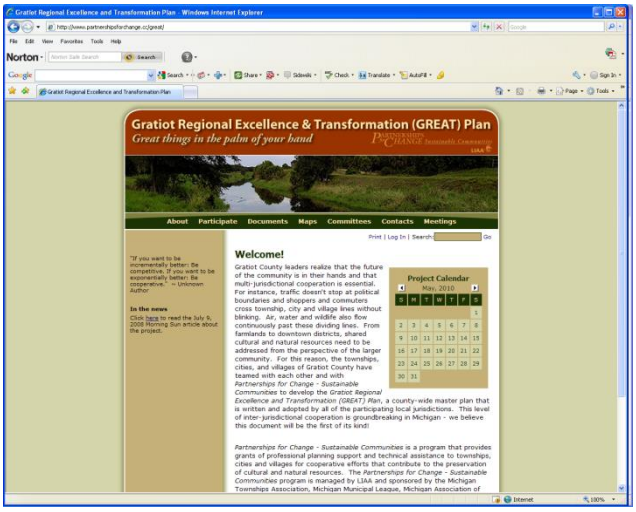
The public meetings were designed to solicit opinions about the plan's overarching goals and how to implement the goals. The meetings were held throughout the month of December in 2008 and were located at Alma Middle School, Sumner Township Community Center, Breckenridge High School, Fulton Township Community Center, and Ashley Community School. In total, about 130 community members participated in the meetings. Each participant was invited to help edit the goals, rank the goals, offer opinion on the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and vote on ideas that would help implement the goals. The results of these meetings are discussed in Chapter IV found in Appendix III.

3. ***A Community Survey***

A survey was developed to help verify the results of the five public meetings. The survey was available as a hard copy and online at the project's website. The hard copy surveys were distributed and retrieved at various businesses and community centers throughout the county. In total, about 120 residents responded to the survey. The survey results are discussed in Chapter IV and found in Appendix IV.

4. ***A Youth Survey***

Project partners felt that it was important to hear from Gratiot County youth to gain a perspective on their wishes for the community and what would inspire them to stay or return to Gratiot County. In addition, project partners wanted to help educate youth about planning processes and how they can become involved with shaping the future of the community. With this in mind, the group conducted a special youth survey that was administered at local high schools. The results of this survey are discussed in Chapter IV and found in Appendix V.



Project Website

5. ***An Informational Session Featuring Bob Dixson, Mayor of Greensburg Kansas***

Bob Dixson, Mayor of Greensburg, Kansas, was invited to share his community's innovation and experiences with rebuilding the city. In 2007 Greensburg was hit by a devastating tornado that destroyed the city. However, Greensburg turned the situation into an opportunity by passing a resolution stating that all city buildings would be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) – Platinum standards. Greensburg is the first city in the nation to pass such a resolution and gaining the attention and praise of developers, planners, and community leaders across the nation. Greensburg provides an example of a city that can overcome disaster and successfully adjust to our changing economy. The visit from Bob Dixson was sponsored by and held at Alma College on March 18, 2009.

6. ***Committee Working Session***

At the committee working session, committee members were invited to enjoy a chili dinner (prepared by Gratiot's own "Dave the Chili Guy") while gathering and discussing community-wide data. Topics included historical context, physical characteristics, housing, demographics, roadway and transportation, education, economy, and

community collaboration. This meeting was held April 16, 2009 at the Ithaca Community Center.

7. ***Objectives and Strategy Review***
   Local officials, planning commission members, and the public were invited to review and provide comment on a draft set of objectives and strategies. All of the objectives and strategies were printed on poster size boards and meeting participants used sticky notes to post their comments and questions on the boards. The comments and questions were reviewed by the Steering Committee and then used to refine the plan's objectives and strategies. This meeting was held on June 18, 2009 at the Ithaca Community Center.

8. ***Future Land Use Mapping Meeting***
   At a Gratiot County Townships Association meeting, representatives worked on developing a draft of the plan's *future land use map*. Each participating jurisdiction colored a map of their municipality based on the future land use categories developed by the Steering Committee for this plan. This meeting was held on September 17, 2009.

What to Expect from this Plan

The Plan is divided into 8 chapters. The next chapter, *Gratiot County Then and Now* provides an overview of the county's history and current conditions. The information in this chapter establishes the factual basis on which planning decisions are made. The third chapter, *Statewide Concerns*, explores several key topics that are currently being discussed at a statewide level that have relevance to Gratiot County. The fourth chapter, *Community Opinions,* reviews public feedback that was obtained through public meetings and surveys, which helps provide deeper insight into community conditions, concerns, and the experiences of Gratiot County residents. The fifth chapter, *Goals, Objectives, and Strategies* integrates the information presented in the previous chapters into a set of values and action steps that will help enhance and improve the Gratiot County Community. The sixth chapter, *Future Land Use*, translates the goals, objectives and strategies into a set of land use descriptions and future land use map. The future land use description and map set the direction of the zoning ordinance. The seventh chapter, *Zoning Plans*, provide steps on how the Plan and local zoning ordinances will be linked to help ensure the implementation of this Plan. The final chapter, *Review & Update Procedures*, outlines how the Plan will be collaboratively reviewed, amended, and updated.

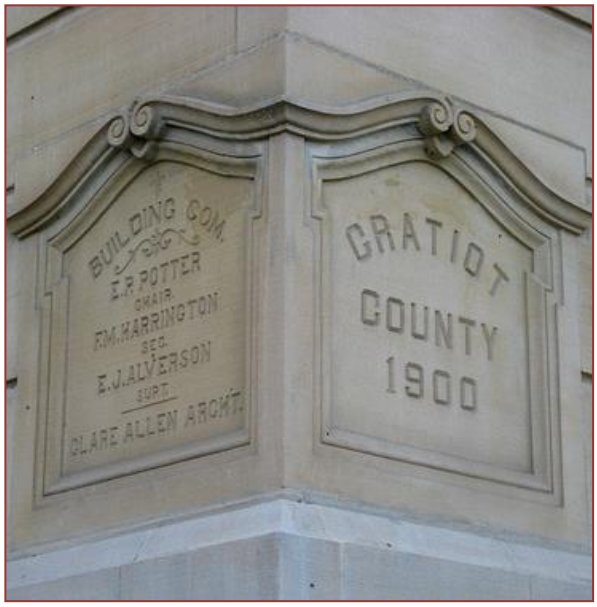
Overall, this Plan is designed to serve as:

1. A general statement of the community's goals and polices. The plan provides a single, comprehensive view of the community's desire for the future.
2. An aid in daily decision-making. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the Plan will help direct local jurisdictions in their deliberations on zoning, subdivision, capital improvements and other matters. This document is intended to provide a stable, long-term guide for decision-making.
3. A statutory basis for zoning decisions. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006) requires that the zoning ordinance be in accordance with the plan.
4. A growth management strategy. This Plan will help coordinate public improvements and private development through a well-managed and thought-out growth strategy.
5. An educational tool. The Plan offers citizens, property owners, developers, and adjacent communities a clear indication of the community's direction for the future.

II. Gratiot County Then and Now

Introduction

This chapter presents both historical and current information on Gratiot County. The historical information was researched and written by the project's historical committee. This information provides an important perspective on the county's heritage and how these early days play a role in making Gratiot County what it is today. Meanwhile, the information on the county's current conditions presented in this chapter offers insight into how things are now and future trends that may be experienced by the county. The "then and now" information was taken into consideration during the development of the goals, objectives, and strategies included in this Plan.



Gratiot County Courthouse Cornerstone

Settlement, Population, and Housing

Then – Settlement

Gratiot County, Michigan, with several other counties, was formed by the state legislature in 1831. It was named for General Charles Gratiot, a hero of the War of 1812. In the mid-1830s surveyors tramped into the wilderness and laid out the county in square miles. The earliest white settlement occurred in the 1840s in the southern tier of townships adjoining Clinton County. Although located in Clinton County, the frontier settlement of Maple Rapids served as the supply post and portal into Gratiot County for the earliest settlers. Mass settlement in other townships did not occur until the government began selling land at $1.25 per acre or less in 1854. A flood of settlers arrived in the mid-1850s as land-hungry pioneers infiltrated the heavily-forested county and bought acreage. Settlement of Gratiot County had begun.

Two Chippewa tribe communities lived in Gratiot County during this early settlement time—one at the south side of the county on the Maple River and one at the north side of the county on the Pine River. In addition, early settlers found burial mounds and other evidence of Native-American societies that had previously existed in the county. By the 1850s, local tribes had entered into land treaties and by 1860 most of the local tribal members were living on the reservation near Mt. Pleasant.

In 1856 unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances plunged the several hundred pioneering families into the "Starving Time," which lasted for three years. Many settlers were ill-prepared for the demands of the pioneering life, and without needed skills, money, or food—and with unfavorable weather for farming—they suddenly found themselves destitute and on the verge of starvation. Charitable contributions from Detroit and other cities staved off disaster in "Starving Gratiot."

Following the Starving Time, the optimism prompted by good harvests in 1859 and 1860 was dampened when the Civil War erupted and two companies of men and youths went off to fight for the Union in 1861 and 1862, bringing pioneering progress in the county to a halt.

Upon the end of the war, the returning men took up their work with enthusiasm, and the county experienced a time of great development during the 1870s. Farms expanded, settlements grew, and industry began. Gratiot County took on a personality of its own.

Townships were organized as soon as their populations grew to meet state requirements. The southern townships, until they held enough settlers to organize, were under the jurisdiction of Clinton County townships. The same held true for eastern townships, which were controlled by neighboring townships in Saginaw County. By 1861 all of the county's sixteen townships had been organized and named.

Locating the county seat was a contentious process, as the villages of St. Louis, Alma, and Ithaca all jockeyed for position to win the coveted designation which would guarantee a degree of prosperity. Finally, after much political maneuvering, Ithaca, advantageously located at the county's center, was chosen in 1856.

In the earliest days several settlements requested to be incorporated as villages: St. Louis in 1853, Ithaca in 1855, and Alma in 1856. Elm Hall was one of the first settlements in the county, dating from the 1850s. Breckenridge was started on the Saginaw Valley and St. Louis Railroad in 1872. Wheeler had been started before the arrival of the railroad, but, upon the railroad's arrival, clustered its buildings near the railroad station. Elwell and Riverdale formed with arrival of the Chicago, Saginaw, and Canada Railroad in 1874. Bannister Ashley, and North Star were established when the Ann Arbor Railroad arrived in the mid-1880s. Pompeii, Perrinton, and Middleton came into

Pine River Township Hall

being because of the Toledo, Saginaw, and Muskegon Railroad in the late 1880s. Forest Hill, while located on the Ann Arbor Railroad, had been established before those rails arrived. Located on the Pine River, Sumner, known variously as Belltown, Stoverville, and Estella, was a center of lumbering activity. Many other small settlements with general stores, blacksmith shops, churches, and post offices were scattered throughout the county, and most have vanished.

The following list provides an overview of the settlement and/or general character of Gratiot County's local jurisdictions (from the 2010 Gratiot County Hazard Mitigation Plan):

- Arcada Township: Includes parts of Alma - the airport and the Old Mill Pond behind the Alma dam.
- Bethany Township: Bethany was named after a Lutheran Mission in 1874.
- Elba Township: First settled in 1856, the village of Ashley was formed in 1887.
- Emerson Township: Organized in 1855, Emerson is home to a circa 1879 Methodist Church.
- Fulton Township: Fulton is part of the Maple River State Game Area.
- Hamilton Township: Hamilton is part of the Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area.
- Lafayette Township: A highly rural, fertile agricultural area.
- New Haven Township: Organized in 1863, Joseph Wiles was its first postmaster.
- Newark Township: Organized in 1857, it contains a fourth of the city of Ithaca.
- North Shade Township: An entirely agricultural area near Carson City.
- North Star Township: Originally called Douglas the name was changed to North Star in 1884.
- Pine River Township: The area was first settled in 1855 by Joseph Clapp.
- Seville Township: Organized in 1856 as a station of the Pere Marquette RR.
- Sumner Township: Named for Charles Sumner who settled in 1855.
- Washington Township: Began in 1854 with the formation of the village of Pompeii.
- Wheeler Township: separated from Lafayette Township in 1861.
- City of Alma: Established in 1872 as a village, Alma is the largest city in Gratiot County with a population of 9,275. It is the home of Alma College, Gratiot Medical Center and the Masonic Pathways Home.
- City of Ithaca: Established in1855, Ithaca has a population of 3,098 with a State Historic Courthouse and is the county seat.
- City of St. Louis: Established in 1853. St Louis is the geographic center of Lower Michigan.
- Village of Breckenridge: Incorporated in 1908, is the fourth largest community in Gratiot County.
- Village of Perrinton: A substantial Mennonite community molds the character of Perrinton.
- Village of Ashley: Established in 1887, Ashley was named after railroad owner John Ashley.

Gratiot County Youth Fair

Figure 2.1 Population 1980-2010

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	Percent Change 1980-1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
Alma City	9,652	9,034	-6%	9,275	3%	9,383	1%
Arcada Township	1,784	1,660	-7%	1,708	3%	1,681	-2%
Bethany Township	1,526	1,814	19%	3,492 (see notes)	93% (see notes)	1,407 (see notes)	-60% (see notes)
Elba Township	967	859	-11%	868	1%	833	-4%
Ashley Village	570	519	-9%	526	1%	563	7%
Emerson Township	1,092	1,003	-8%	966	-4%	952	-1%
Fulton Township	1,717	1,741	1%	1,974	13%	2,115	7%
Perrinton Village	448	373	-17%	439	18%	406	-8%
Hamilton Township	530	496	-6%	491	-1%	465	-5%
Ithaca City	2,950	3,009	2%	3,098	3%	2,910	-6%
Lafayette Township	776	693	-11%	656	-5%	591	-10%
Newark Township	1,097	1,138	4%	1,149	1%	1,093	-5%
New Haven Township	1,021	948	-7%	1,016	7%	1,004	-1%
North Shade Township	815	782	-4%	706	-10%	665	-6%
North Star Township	1,171	1,068	-9%	996	-7%	888	-11%
Pine River Township	1,939	2,064	6%	2,451	19%	2,279	-7%
St. Louis City	4,107	3,828	-7%	4,494	17%	7,482 (see notes)	66% (see notes)
Seville Township	2,091	2,217	6%	2,375	7%	2,173	-9%
Sumner Township	1,897	1,799	-5%	1,911	6%	1,930	1%
Washington Township	1,079	1,021	-5%	909	-11%	870	-4%
Wheeler Township	1,724	1,608	-7%	1,446	-10%	1,458	1%
Breckenridge Village	1,495	1,308	-13%	1,339	2%	1,328	-1%
Total:	40,448	38,982	-4%	42,285	8%	42,476	0%

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget 2010 Census, U.S. Census 2000, Gratiot County Master Plan 1998

Note 1: The populations of Elba, Fulton, and Wheeler Townships in the above table differ from Census numbers due to the exclusion of Ashley, Perrinton, and Breckenridge populations in the total township number.

Note 2: Bethany Township housed 2 of the 3 correctional facilities, which accounted for the significant population increase between 1990-2000

Note: The Census Bureau adjusted the count for Bethany Township and the City of St. Louis to reflect of the shift of two correctional facilities from the Township to the City for the 2010 Census data

Now – Population Growth

Population growth within Gratiot County has been modest but steady, with an average increase of 4% increase per decade. However, the county population had less than a 1% increase between 2000 and 2010.

According to the 2010 census figures, Gratiot County has a population of 42,476 and ranks as the 41st largest out of Michigan's 83 counties for population size. Figure 2.1 shows population growth from 1980 to 2010 for the county as a whole and by local jurisdictions. Not surprisingly, the cities in the county have the highest number of people. Specifically, the City of Alma has the most people in the county, followed by the City of St. Louis, and the City of Ithaca. However, some townships, like Pine River, Seville, and Fulton have higher populations. The Village of Perrinton has the fewest number of people in the county, followed by Hamilton Township, and the Village of Ashley.

Figure 2.2 - Linear Population Projection

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	Growth Rate
Gratiot County	38,982	42,285	44,667	48,240	52,099	1.08
Townships						
Arcada	1,660	1,708	1,759	1,811	1,865	1.03
Bethany*	1,814	3,494*	5,342	7,988	10,547	1.93
Elba	1,390	1,394	1,407	1,421	1,435	1.01
Emerson	1,003	966	927	889	853	0.96
Fulton	2,114	2,413	2,698	3,075	3,476	1.14
Hamilton	489	491	495	499	503	1.01
Lafayette	683	656	629	603	578	0.96
Newark	1,138	1,149	1,160	1,171	1,182	1.01
New Haven	972	1,016	1,066	1,117	1,178	1.05
North Shade	758	706	656	612	587	0.93
North Star	1,055	996	937	880	823	0.94
Pine River	2,064	2,451	2,876	3,422	4,072	1.19
Seville	2,217	2,375	2,487	2,661	2,847	1.07
Sumner	1,799	1,911	2,017	2,134	2,262	1.06
Washington	1,029	909	867	823	798	0.88
Wheeler	2,926	2,785	2,645	2,512	2,386	0.95
Villages						
Ashley	518	526	536	544	556	1.02
Perrinton	393	439	465	520	551	1.12
Breckenridge	1,301	1,339	1,379	1,420	1,462	1.03
Cities						
Alma	9,034	9,275	9,491	9,776	10,069	1.03
Ithaca	3,009	3,098	3,190	3,285	3,383	1.03
St. Louis	3,828	4,494	5,175	5,822	6,347	1.17

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000 and East Central Michigan Planning and Development Region

***Residents at the correctional facilities are included in the population count, which skews the population projection for this township**

According to the population projection developed by the East Central Michigan Planning and Development Region (Figure 2.2), the county will have 52,099 people by 2030. Jurisdictions in the St. Louis area, which includes Bethany Township,* Pine River Township, and the City of St. Louis, are expected to grow at the fastest rate. In addition, Fulton Township is expected to grow at a higher rate presumably due to attractions such as Rainbow Lake, the Maple River, and the township's proximity to US-127 and M-57.

The areas that are expected to grow at the slowest rate are primarily in the southern portion of the county and mostly contain agriculture and state owned lands. Among these jurisdictions, Washington Township, North Shade Township, and North Star Township, have the slowest expected growth rates.

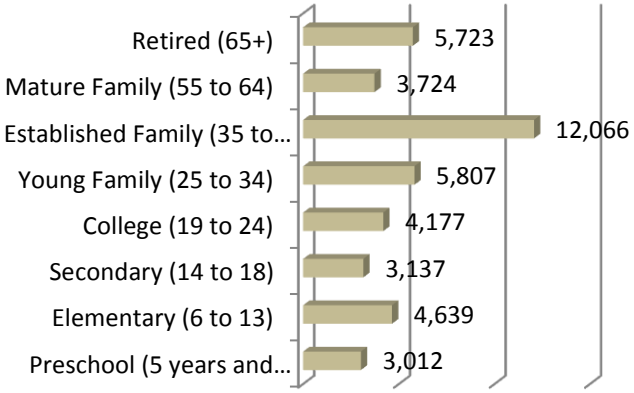
**note: residents at the correctional facilities are included in the 2000 population count for Bethany Township which skew both the count the population projection for this township.*

Now – Age

According to the 2000 census, the median age within Gratiot County is 35.6, which is similar to the state's median age of 35.5. However, residents in the county's three correctional facilities are included in this census data, which increase the numbers of individual generally between 25 and 55 up to about 3,000. This remains a caveat in for Figure 2.3, which shows Gratiot County's population distributed among several life stages. Each stage has its own predominant needs, which impact the type of retail goods and services offered and public or institutional programs sought by residents.

The state of Michigan and the Nation as a whole is generally experiencing an "aging population," meaning that the number of individuals in the older age groups is becoming proportionally larger than the number of individuals in the younger age groups. However, Gratiot County has only experienced a slight shift in the proportion of older residents. In 1990 members of the Established Family and older age groups comprised 46% of the population and in 2000 members of these age groups comprised 51% of the total population.

Figure 2.3 - Age Distribution by Life Stages



Now – Households and Housing

The average household size within the county is 2.57 people and the average family size is 3.02. A household may consist of a married couple with or without children, a single parent with children, two or more unrelated people in a dwelling or a person living alone. Figure 2.4 shows the composition of Gratiot County households in 2000.

While the number of households has increased since 1990, which had a total of 13,692 compared to the 14,501 households in 2000, the average household size has decreased from 2.85 to 2.57, which follows national trends. In addition, the percentage of married couple households has decreased (from 64% to 58%), a trend that is also being experienced nation-wide.

During the 2000 Census, Gratiot County had 15,516 housing units. The largest percentage (31.7%) of these structures were built 1939 or earlier. Other decades that experienced

relatively higher percentages of residential growth include 1940 to 1959 at 18.8%, 1970 to 1979 at 15.9%, and 1960 to 1969 at 11.4%. Of the total 15,516 housing units in the county in 2000, 93.5% were reported as occupied. Of these occupied units, 77.7% units were owner occupied and 22.3% were renter occupied. The vast majority (75.6%) of all housing units were detached homes. At 11.9% the next most common type of housing structure were mobile homes. Multiple unit dwellings comprised 12.5% of all housing structures.

It may be noteworthy that Gratiot County has a higher percentage of residents living in group quarters (12%) then to the national and state averages, both around 3%. Alma College and the Masonic Pathways, both located in the City of Alma, and the Mid-Michigan Correctional Facilities account for this high percentage of group quarter residents. Alma College enrolls about 1,400 students, the Masonic Pathways has between 425 and 450 residents, and the St. Louis East and West Correctional Facilities, a minimal security prison, can house up to 3,000 people.

Lumbering & Agriculture

Then – Lumbering

The earliest settlers were greeted by a goldmine of timber of many varieties. There were beech, maple, birch, several types of oaks and ash trees and stands of cedar in the swamps and matchless pines on the sand hills. Lumbering by outside interests occurred mainly in the 1870s, for the timber was needed by a growing nation for homes and other buildings, mine shaft supports, railroad ties, and multitude of other uses. The settlers themselves used the lumber for homes, furniture, fences, heating and cooking, and plank roads. Sawmills were established across the county, and factories that specialized in items such as barrel staves, shingles, and oars later came into being. Once the timber was harvested, the pioneers rejoiced in the rich soil which would become the basis of the agricultural community that was emerging.

Then – Agriculture

By 1880, agriculture had replaced lumbering as the major occupation of the pioneers. They cleared the land and changed the landscape from forests to fields. The early farmers plowed and planted around stumps, but later removed the stumps by hard labor, utilizing digging, stump pullers, and dynamite. Trenches and tile were used to drain the wet areas and make them tillable, and horses began working larger areas of farmland.

Humm Farm

Horses pulling one-bottom plows would eventually give way to various kinds of tractors pulling two or three-bottom plows which in turn would be replaced by huge tractors pulling eight or ten-bottom plows. The 40 or 80-acre family homestead farmed by one man evolved into 800 to 1,000 acres or more farmed by one man using large equipment. Neighborhoods have changed from a situation where everyone had a small farm and shared the work, to a dynamic one where most people who live “in the country” do not farm. However, agriculture attracted the pioneers to the county, and it remains the central focus of the county’s economic base.

Now – Agriculture

By almost any standard, agriculture continues to play a central role in Gratiot County's economy, landscape, and way of life. Active farms can be found in most parts of the county offering a fairly broad array of products, with an emphasis on corn, beans, and sugar beets.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Census of Agriculture* reported that there were 1,036 farms in Gratiot County during 2007, which is a 2% increase from the number of farms in the County during 2002 (1,018). However, the average size of acres per farm was at 277 acres in 2007, which is down from an average of 284 acres in 2002. Typically, farms within Gratiot County are between 10 and 179 acres, though there are several 1,000+ large acre farms operating in the county. In total, the number of acres used for farming in 2007 was 286,937 compared to 288,932 acres in 2002.

In economic terms, according to the *Census of Agriculture*, the market value of products sold by Gratiot County farms was $189,913,000 in 2007, which ranks Gratiot County as 7th in the state. Of the total value of agriculture products sold by Gratiot County, crop sales equaled 45% and livestock sales equaled 55%. The average market value of products sold per farm in 2007 was $183,313 compared to an average of $112,697 in 2002. The top crops and livestock inventory in Gratiot County are shown in Figure 2.5.

Gratiot County is also home to two of the largest farm implement dealers in the state. Bader and Sons, selling the John Deere brand, is located near St. Louis, and Janson Equipment, one of the largest Case IH dealers in Michigan, is located in Wheeler Township. In addition, the present Michigan Agricultural Commodities, in the Village of Breckenridge and Wheeler Township (MAC) elevator is one of the largest in the state.

Economics

Then – Industry and Farming

Sawmills, blacksmith shops, gristmills, and foundries were among the earliest manufacturers in the county. Buggies, sleighs, and a variety of wood products were needed by Gratiot citizens. Flour and corn meal, ground locally, were staples in the kitchen. Once local markets were satisfied, some surplus products, such as flour, were shipped and sold beyond the county. Once rail transportation became available, such shipments became commonplace.

Figure 2.5 – Top Crops and Livestock Inventory

Crop Items	Quantity (acres)	Rank (MI Counties)
Corn for Grain	92,171	7
Soybeans for beans	77,177	4
Wheat for grain	16,879	10
Forage - land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage and greenchop	15,054	28
Sugarbeets for sugar	10,446	6
Livestock Inventory (number)		
Pullets for laying flock replacement	Not Disclosed	4
Turkeys	Not Disclosed	5
Hogs and pigs	61,061	4
Cattle and calves	38,800	6
Layers	1,601	45

Source: United States Department of Agriculture 2007 Census of Agriculture

Before 1900 manufacturing was not a major part of the county's economy. That changed with the development of the Republic Truck Company in Alma. From 1913 to 1920 the company mushroomed into the largest exclusive manufacturer of motor trucks in the nation and employed more than 2,000 workers. It fulfilled government contracts for thousands of "Liberty Trucks" during World War I. Because of competition and poor business practices, the company went into a long, slow decline during the '20s, and through consolidations ceased to exist in the '30s.

The Central Michigan Produce Company of Alma provided a market for cream from area farms as it became a major producer of butter—churning thousands of pounds each week. Later, as Swift and Company, it raised and marketed thousands of ducklings annually.

To encourage farmers to grow sugar beets, investors built the Alma Sugar Company in 1899. It ran each fall for more than 50 years, producing beet sugar and providing seasonal employment to area men. St. Louis also built and ran a sugar plant. Today, many Gratiot County farmers are members of the Michigan Sugar Company Co-op, which processes beet sugar and operates piling grounds in Wheeler and Arcada Township.

The Lobdell-Emery Company came to Alma in 1926 manufacturing bicycle rims and wooden steering wheels. It functioned for 70 years turning out a variety of wood products and metal stampings for the auto industry.

The discovery of oil in the Porter and Crystal fields in the '30s was a stroke of good fortune for Alma and St. Louis. Because of advantageous rail and highway connections, the two cities saw the development of several oil refineries. The McClanahan Refinery in St. Louis, and the Midwest and Leonard Refineries in Alma produced a variety of petroleum products which were shipped by underground pipeline along with tanker trucks or rail tank cars. McClanahan and Midwest were consolidated with the Leonard Refinery which was bought by Total Petroleum. This refinery was later bought by UltraMar Diamond Shamrock and was closed and dismantled in 1999.

Merrill Fabrications

Alma Piston Company was started in 1943 manufacturing service parts for the Ford Motor Company. Changing its name to Alma Products Company, it continues to produce a variety of manufactured and remanufactured parts for the auto industry.

House trailers made their appearance in the early '30s when the Redman Brothers and Alan Hathaway began building small trailers in Alma. The Silver Moon Trailer was very successful. A

change in management resulted in the Redmans moving to a new location to build the New Moon trailer. Both companies flourished. The U.S. government purchased large numbers of mobile homes to meet housing needs at military installations during World War II. After the war, mobile homes proved to be useful as long-term living quarters for many baby-boomers. Detroiter Coach of Wayne, Michigan, relocated to St. Louis and began manufacturing mobile homes. The mobile home industry in the area peaked in the late '50s as the companies began moving their operations into areas of the nation closer to the major markets.

Now – Economic Base

Thirty years of concerted multi community public-private economic development effort has successfully diversified the Gratiot area economy. Gone are the larger tier one and tier two auto parts suppliers, mobile home manufacturers, and refineries. Smaller businesses and smaller and medium sized manufacturers are now the norm. These companies work in a variety of materials from plastics to all types of metals making products of a very diverse range and size. Products manufactured in the County are used in the manufacturing of other parts or products including molds, dies, specialty carbide cutting tools and die sets. Most manufactured parts become part of other finished assemblies including parts for: automobiles, motorcycles, trucks, jet engines, agricultural, and construction equipment. The county also has companies specializing in manufacturing complex machinery for: planting and cleaning crops and manufacturing base chemicals. Interestingly, while the County does not have any true natural lakes the County is now home to two high quality pontoon boat manufacturing companies. Additionally, the international import and export of products is now normal business operation for many firms in Gratiot County.

Now- Industrial Parks & Providing Room for Future Business / Industry

A significant part of the multi decade diversification effort included providing places for industrial businesses to locate. Gratiot County's four industrial parks are State of Michigan Certified Business Parks (CBP). The parks located in Alma, St. Louis and two in Ithaca, are active and have welcomed several new businesses in recent years. There is still some room available in these parks for incoming businesses. The South Ithaca Industrial Park is the newest and has the most available room. Currently (October, 2010) the Village of Breckenridge has acquired land and is now in the initial stage of constructing what will become Gratiot County's fifth Certified Business Park. Figure 2.6 lists the existing industrial parks, their total acres, and the acreage available in 2010. Only the State's largest counties offer as many Certified Industrial Park location choices.

Figure 2.6 - Gratiot County Industrial Parks

Park	Total Acres	Acres Available
Alma Industrial Park North	68.86	3
Ithaca Certified Business Park	62.5	9
South Ithaca Certified Business Park	150	91
Woodside Industrial Parks	89.6	25

Source: Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., 2010

In 1996 Gratiot County through Greater Gratiot Development, Inc. successfully competed for the right to designate Renaissance Sub Zones under a State of Michigan program. Five areas in the County were chosen for this special tax incentive designation. A substantial reason for selecting the locations was that they were logical places to develop new / future industrial parks. One of the locations has since become the County owned South Ithaca Industrial Park

CBP. Another in Breckenridge, as mentioned above, is underway to become a CBP. Greater Gratiot Development, Inc. provides more detail on Gratiot County's industrial parks, Renaissance Sub Zones, and other manufacturing / industrial areas at the following web address, www.gratiot.org

Now – Commercial

The commercial (retail, service, and financial) business mix in Gratiot County has undergone significant change over the past two decades. The Gratiot community like everywhere has and is experiencing the economics of changing markets and customer preferences. This has changed how the county looks, how people interact, and how we do every aspect of our daily personal and business lives.
Evolutionary retail market changes have fostered the development of the "shopping corridor". Shopping corridors in rural areas evolve in a regional manner. Gratiot County's primary shopping corridor has grown from the north side of the City of Alma and extends into Pine River Township. The corridor has a blend of both locally owned and managed businesses as well as businesses with national and international presence and brands including franchises. In late 2010, Wal-Mart began construction of a new Supercenter store. The new store will replace an existing smaller Wal-Mart and will offer a full selection of groceries. It is anticipated this development will result in additional commercial development in the area.

As in all municipal areas and very noticeably in smaller communities the most significant change has occurred in the traditional downtowns. The Gratiot community's downtown areas are in the cities of Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis and the Villages of Ashley, Breckenridge, Middleton, and Riverdale, once almost exclusive centers of local and regional commercial activity, they are increasingly challenged to compete with changing shopping habits. Customers' ability and routine willingness to drive longer distances, utilize catalog and on-line shopping options has pushed the transformation of the downtowns to be places now centered more on businesses offering personal and professional services of all types, unique products, small cafes and restaurants, specialty items requiring personal service, and entertainment options including theaters, pubs and bars.

Throughout the County independently owned, full-service hardware stores remain in most of the downtowns. Grocery options, once a central part of downtowns still exist in Breckenridge and St. Louis but – largely for space considerations, have moved away from the downtown in the balance of the county. Some of the unique "niche" commercial businesses that are recent additions to the county commercial mix include a winery/microbrewery, candy confectioners, specialty bakeries, tattoo/body art, quilting, and antiques/collectibles.

Upper-story downtown living is becoming more of a trend but much undeveloped vacant space remains. Effective utilization of this space provides both challenge and opportunity. Downtown Development Authorities in Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis are working to maintain and expand core downtown business districts. It is believed that through the development of flexible living spaces the increasing numbers of people downtown will naturally lead to increased business activity.

Given Gratiot's significant agricultural production base economy the county supports and is experiencing growth in a variety of support businesses including two large farm equipment dealerships, significant elevator storage and service, several seed and fertilizer dealers, animal feed stores, farm clothing & supply stores and more. The growing addition of value added agricultural and related businesses includes companies engaged in genetics and hybrid research, manufacturing of agricultural equipment, financial services,

insurance, professional consulting as well as companies making products from and offering services for production crops. Many of the office businesses are in the downtowns while the industrial oriented businesses are located in industrial parks or on industrially zoned property throughout the county.

Five automobile dealerships representing the "Big Three" automakers – General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, remain in the county, each with full service and collision departments. Many independent used car establishments, as well as small independent auto service and repair facilities including tire and light mechanical service dot the landscape. An abundance of fueling stations are located in the highly-populated areas, but are somewhat scarce in the southern end of the county.

There are eight independent hotels and motels, two bed & breakfasts. An abundance of fast food establishments line heavily traveled commercial districts in each city, but "sit down" restaurants are somewhat limited with independent family restaurants, cafes, and ethnic food offerings. Surprisingly to some, the only national chain "sit down" restaurants in Gratiot County include Ponderosa Steakhouse, Pizza Hut, and Big Boy.

Other retail and service sub sectors with a Gratiot presence include but are not limited to:

Independent pharmacies, national chains, as well as in-store pharmacies at Wal-Mart and Kmart.

Clothing offerings with general lines offered at J.C. Penney, Wal-Mart, Kmart, and smaller selections available at the Dollar stores now in the cities in the county.

Home furnishing stores are limited to a few independent furniture stores.

There are handful of home improvement supply and lumber stores.

Many businesses offer therapeutic or cosmetic services such as massage, physical therapy, chiropractics, hair care, tanning, etc. Dental and optical clinics also meet the specialized healthcare needs of residents.

Dollar stores, in addition to the notation above, offer many basic necessities that may otherwise be found only at the big box retailers.

Real estate offices both independent and with national affiliation serve the residential and commercial markets.

The Gratiot community is fortunate to be the headquarters of two regional community banks, Commercial Bank with six local offices and Firstbank with six local offices. The Gratiot community is served by two additional Michigan regional banks as Chemical Bank has two offices and Isabella Bank has two offices. Two credit unions headquartered in Gratiot County; Graco with one office and the Gratiot Community Credit Union with two offices. Specifically addressing agriculture and land financing is Greenstone Farm Credit Services with one office in the county. The county also has a national banking presence through Bank of America having one office.

Now –Employment

In addition to manufacturing, education, health care, and correctional industries are key contributors to Gratiot County's economy.

Gratiot Medical Center, Masonic Pathways, St. Louis East and West Correctional Facilities, Alma College, Alma Public Schools, and Ithaca Public Schools are among Gratiot County's top ten employers, as shown in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7 - Top 10 Employers

Company	Location	Employees*	Product/Service
Correctional Facilities	St. Louis	906	3 state correctional facilities
Gratiot Medical Center	Alma	858	regional medical center
International Automotive Components	Alma	386	automotive parts
Masonic Pathways	Alma	381	retirement community
Alma College	Alma	377	education
Cartridges Are Us	Ithaca	325	inkjet cartridge remanufacturing
Alma Public Schools	Alma	319	education
Alma Products	Alma	270	automotive parts
Wal-Mart	Pine River Twp.	200	retail
Ithaca Public Schools	Ithaca	154	education

Source: 2010 Gratiot County Employment Profile – Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.
***Full Time Equivalent**

In 2000, Gratiot County's unemployment rate was at 3.2%. However, unemployment rates have risen since the time of the 2000 Census due to the national recession. Fortunately, diversification across employment sectors, especially within the manufacturing sector, has helped absorb extremely negative shocks to the local economy.

Figure 2.8 - Unemployment Trends

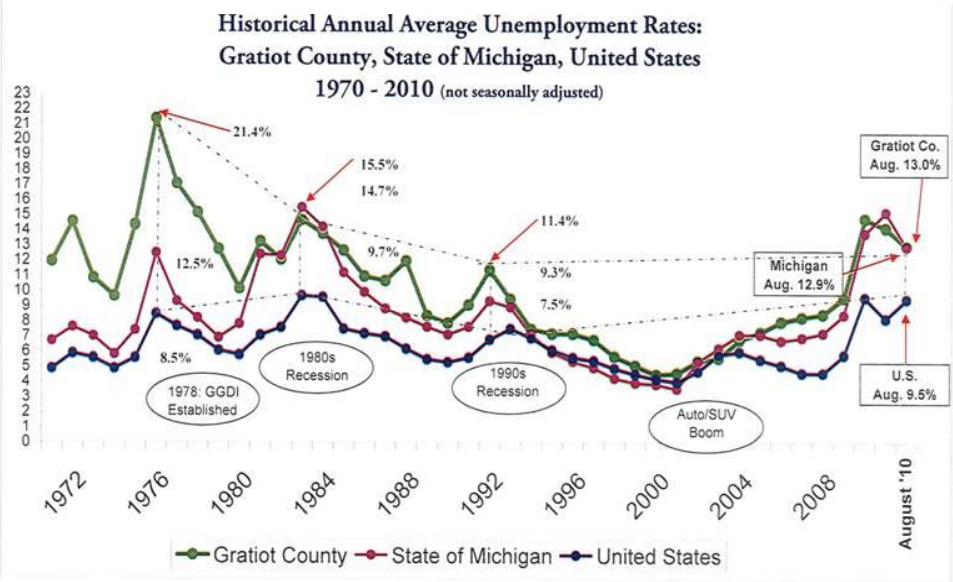


Figure 2.8 shows unemployment trends from 1970 to 2008 for the county in comparison to the state and the country

Now – Commute

In 1990, approximately 26.7% of the 15,975 work force worked outside the county. In 2006, approximately 30.5% of the 19,294 work force worked outside the county, showing that a significant and increasing proportion of Gratiot County residents are finding employment outside of the county. The commute time for employed Gratiot County residents averages 23 minutes.

Now – Income & Poverty

The median household income in Gratiot County was $37,262 in 2000. This is less than the median household income of Michigan at

$44,667. The percent of families at or below the poverty level is 7.3%, which is comparable to the state's figure of 7.4%.

Now – Housing Affordability

The median value for owner occupied units in 2000 was $75,300, with almost half the housing values falling in the range of $50,000 to $99,000. The median housing value by census block group is shown in Map A.

Of all the home owners, 63.9% mortgaged their homes. The median monthly cost of a mortgage across the county was $720. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers housing costs exceeding 30% of income as unaffordable. In 1999, about 13.8% of homeowner costs exceeded this level, suggesting that there is a need for more affordable housing options in the county. Further, since the time of the 2000 Census the country has experienced a housing crisis due to bad lending practices and an inflated housing market. The result has been an unprecedented rate of foreclosures throughout the United States, with Michigan being one of the hardest hit states. In 2009, Gratiot ranked 46 out of Michigan's 83 counties for the number of foreclosures with 185 foreclosure filings for that year.

Transportation

Then – Roads

The early settlers traveled on narrow Native-American trails, enlarged to accommodate ox-drawn wagons. As settlers bought more land, circuitous trails were moved to section lines to become roads. Most were muddy and very rough for travel. Even in the villages the streets were often full of ruts.

State-financed roads were established offering better roadbeds and bridges. These encouraged travel and trade. Stagecoaches traveled into Gratiot County from St. Johns and Saginaw.

Old 27 Car Cruise

Trails became dirt roads, and some of these became plank or corduroy roads, a definite improvement over the typical rough thoroughfares. Gravel roads gradually developed across the county. With the advent of the gasoline-powered vehicle, there was a push for further improvements, and several state highways were designated. Paving these roads proved to be a milestone in convenient travel. US-127 was completed as a divided highway from St. Johns to south of Ithaca in 1957. From Ithaca north it became a limited-access freeway in the early 1960s. M-46 and M-57 are major east-west highways that touch a number of villages.

Then – Rivers

Rivers offered transportation, especially the Pine River in the northern part of the county. Simple barges and various dug-out canoes moved up and down the river carrying settlers and supplies. Villages sprang up along the Pine: St. Louis, Alma, Sumner, and Elm Hall.

Then – Railroad

When railroads arrived in the 1870s and 1880s, commerce and travel to and from the county increased. One east/west railroad traversed the north part of the county. A north/south railroad allowed a greater choice of connections. Finally, in the southern part of the county, a line ran from Ashley to Carson City en route to Muskegon.

Then & Now – Airport

The first airport in the county was Sharrar Field, located northeast of Alma. It developed into an area airport in the 1930s, and was used for pleasure and business flights. When it outgrew its location, a new county airport was established south of Alma. The Gratiot Community Airport houses local planes and can handle small jet aircraft. The airport receives business traffic from all over the Midwest.

Now – Roads

Gratiot County has several significant corridors. US-127 moves north/south automobile traffic through the center of the county while M-46 serves east/west traffic in the north and M-57 serves east/west traffic in the south. The county's urban hubs are situated along these corridors. US-127, beginning south of Ithaca 16 miles to north of St. Johns, remains a divided highway. It is absolutely in the best interest of Gratiot County to advocate completion of the road as a limited access highway. Public safety and regional economy will be improved when this is completed.

In total, Gratiot County has 1,466 miles of roads. State and federal funds for these roads are allocated through two different classification systems. State funding is provided through Michigan Public Act 51 of 1951 (Act 51) and Federal funding is designated through the National Functional Classification System.

Map B shows the Act 51 Classification of Gratiot County roads. Figure 2.9 explains the classification categories and the number of miles in each category. Map C shows the National Functional Classification of roads. Figure 2.10 explains the classification categories and the number of miles in each category.

Federal Aid eligible roads are rated for surface conditions under Michigan's Asset Management Program. The process of rating roads involves a windshield survey performed by a team of representatives from MDOT, Road Commissions, Municipalities, and Regional Council. The rating a road receives sheds light on possible improvement measures that might be required in the near future. Maps showing the road ratings for Gratiot County can be found at the East Michigan Council of Government's website: http://www.emcog.org/SiteDoc.asp?doc=Asset%20Management.htm

Now – Mass and Non-Motorized Modes of Transportation

Within the City of Alma there is a dial-a-ride transportation system (DART). Currently DART

Figure 2.9 - Act 51 Road Classifications by Miles

Act 51	Miles
State Trunklines **–** Roads, streets, and highways assigned to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The primary purpose of these roads is to facilitate through-traffic movements in conjunction with the state-wide highway system.	118
County Primary **–** Roads that serve longer distance trips between major destination points within the county. Primary roads are planned to facilitate through-traffic movement while allowing access to homes and businesses.	373
County Local **–** Roads and streets that provide access to homes and businesses and are designed for short to medium length trips.	854
City Major and Local **–** City Major routes are roads within a city's jurisdiction that provide for longer distance trips and higher capacity traffic. City local roads provide access to homes and businesses and are designed for short to medium length trips.	121

Figure 2.10 - NFC Road Classifications by Miles

National Functional Classification	Miles
Arterial **–** Roads that are relatively high capacity corridors.	157
Collector **–** Roads that are relatively low speed/low volume streets, typically two lanes for circulation within and between neighborhoods.	360
Local **–** Roads that are low speed/low volume streets, which provide direct access to abutting land uses and are not conducive to through traffic.	949

has a new transportation facility on Willow Run and is expanding their services by offer a gold cart, which provides a discount to seniors 75 years and older, and the DART, "E-Link" that keeps riders electronically informed about DART special events, discounts, coupons and other services.

Other transportation services in the county include the Great Lakes Central rail lines in addition to the Gratiot Community Airport, which maintains charter and freight runways. The main non-motorized facility in Gratiot County is the Fred Meijer Hartland Trail. This trail is a paved hiking/biking path that extends approximately 30 miles along abandoned CSX railroad right-of-way going east of Elwell in Gratiot County, west through Riverdale, Vestaburg, Cedar Lake and Edmore. At Edmore, the trail turns south and runs through McBride, Stanton, Sidney and ends at Lake Road in Montcalm Township just north of Greenville.

Education

Then - Establishing Schools

From the days when the county was first settled, parents had a deep concern for the education of their children. The Payne school near the southern edge of the county was the

first "country" school, and many of the students were from the Payne family. In both village and country families established ways to educate their children. Most areas built one-room schools of logs or framing until more than 100 rural schools were dotted across the county.

Looking beyond the typical "eighth-grade" education, provided by country schools, some municipalities provided high schools. In 1886 Alma businessman Ammi Wright established the Central Michigan Normal School. This teacher-training school transitioned into Alma College the following year, giving the county a true four-year liberal arts college. In 1890

Figure 2.11 - Gratiot County Schools

Jurisdiction	School	Number of Students	Teacher to Student Ratio
Gratiot County High Schools			
Alma	Alma Adult/alternative Education High School	104	1:21
Alma	Alma Senior High School	715	1:17
Ashley	Ashley High School	238	1:24
Breckenridge	Breckenridge High School	324	1:23
Ithaca	Ithaca Alternative Education High School	20	1:20
Ithaca	Ithaca High School	670	1:18
Middleton	Fulton Adult/alternative Education High School	224	1:45
Middleton	Fulton High School	263	1:19
St. Louis	Horizons High School	32	1:32
St. Louis	St. Louis High School	353	1:18
Gratiot County Middle Schools			
Jurisdiction	**School**	Number of Students	Teacher to Student Ratio
Alma	Alma Middle School	502	1:15
Alma	Pine Avenue Elementary School	335	1:20
Breckenridge	Breckenridge Middle School	198	1:17
Middleton	Fulton Middle School	126	1:17
St. Louis	T.S. Nurnberger Middle School	253	1:16
Gratiot County Elementary Schools			
Jurisdiction	**School**	Number of Students	Teacher to Student Ratio
Alma	Hillcrest Elementary School	301	1:16
Alma	Luce Road Elementary School	370	1:16
Alma	Pine Avenue Elementary School	335	1:20
Ashley	Ashley Elementary School	162	1:16
Breckenridge	Breckenridge Elementary School	438	1:17
Ithaca	North Elementary School	438	1:17
Ithaca	South Elementary School	309	1:17
Middleton	Fulton Elementary School	418	1:16
St. Louis	Carrie Knause Early Childhood Learning Center	308	1:21
St. Louis	Eugene M. Nikkari Elementary School	276	1:19

Source: www.publicschoolreview.com

Charles Yerington founded Yerington's College in the old Disciples of Christ school building in St. Louis. He offered courses in business, music, and foreign language until his death in 1932.

Northwood Institute had its beginnings in Alma in 1959 in the old Ammi Wright mansion. Started by Art Turner and R. Gary Stauffer, it helped students prepare for the world of business. Later it became Northwood University and moved its campus to Midland, Michigan.

Figure 2.12 - Libraries in Gratiot County

	Alma	Ashley District	Cutler Memorial	Howe Memorial	Seville	Thompson Home
Location	351 N. Court Alma	104 New Street Ashley	312 Michigan Saint Louis	128 E. Saginaw Breckenridge	6734 Lumberjack Riverdale	125 W. Center Ithaca
Class	IV	I	III	II	I	III
Cooperative	White Pine Library	White Pine Library	White Pine Library	White Pine Library	Mid-Michigan	White Pine Library
Service Population	12,178	3,233	9,450	5,892	2,948	8,691
Open Hours	3,137	1,112	2,678	2,330	1,472	2,209
Internet Access	512Kb DSL	1.5 Mb Wireless	>1.5 Mb Cable	768 Kb Wireless	56Kb Dial-Up	128 Kb DSL
Staff	6	2	6	3	3	5
Total Collection	74,171	7,321	32,710	20,546	17,195	26,294
Books	67,865	7,069	30,897	16,784	14,080	23,322
Audio	2,061	20	840	1,342	1,280	917
Video	4,056	216	905	2,398	1,800	982
Subscriptions	181	16	68	22	35	73
Automation System	TLC					
Square Footage	25,965	434	5,800	2,382	1,556	4,500

Now – Educational Attainment

In 2000, 83.5% of Gratiot County residents 25 years and over had a high school diploma or higher, comparable to the state's average of 83.4%. The rate for Gratiot County residents 25 years and over who have attained a bachelor's degree is 12.9%, which is lower than the state's figure of 21.8%.

Now – Schools

Most rural school districts consolidated with municipal schools in the 1950s and 1960s. Currently, there are six school districts serving Gratiot County. These include Alma Public School, Ashley Community Schools, Breckenridge Community Schools, Ithaca Public Schools, Fulton Schools, and St. Louis Public Schools. The school districts are shown in Map D and the Gratiot County schools that are members of these districts are shown in Figure 2.11.

Gratiot County is also home to Gratiot Technical Education Center (GTEC) and Alma College. GTEC is located in the City of Alma and the GTEC Training Center provides a full range of technical professional skills training for employers and their employees. GTEC offers schools, industry and businesses with targeted learning based upon client needs.

Alma College is a four-year liberal arts private college also located in the City of Alma. Alma College was founded in 1886 by Presbyterians and maintains a Scottish heritage. Among other Scottish expressions, the college has a kilted marching band, a Scottish dance troupe, and hosts the annual Alma Highland Festival. The school enrolls about 1,400 students each year and has a teacher to student ratio of 1:13.

Now – Libraries

There are six library locations in Gratiot County. Each of these locations offers book lending services along with a variety of other services. Figure 2.12 provides statistics on each library location.

Religion

Then – Missionary Settlement

In 1848 German Lutheran missionaries from Frankenmuth, Michigan, began the Bethany Lutheran Mission at the Chippewa settlement on the Pine River in the northern part of the county. This mission was a pioneering effort to bring Christianity to the Native Americans. Once the Native-Americans moved to the reservation, the mission was closed officially in 1869. Several Lutheran churches resulted from this mission.

The white settlers brought their religious beliefs with them. The earliest congregations were Baptist and Methodist, and they met in homes. The first church buildings were not built until the 1870s because the parishioners were so poor. The Seventh-Day Adventists were another early denomination in the county as were the Disciples of Christ.

Congregationalists and Presbyterians established congregations in the 1870s and 1880s. The founding of Alma College, a Presbyterian school, sparked growth in that denomination in Alma. Episcopalian churches were built in Alma and St. Louis. The Catholic Church had a late start in the county primarily because few early settlers were of that faith.

Many of the earliest clergymen were self-trained, and most had other regular employment such as Rev. Lafayette Church, who was a farmer and a Baptist minister, and Elias Sowers, whose dual occupations included being a physician and Methodist pastor. Some early ministers traveled the circuit, caring for several small flocks of followers.

Dunning Memorial Chapel
Source: CMU Chem Prof, Flickr

Sunday Schools were often the foundation in establishing a church. Sunday School picnics, revivals, and camp meetings provided opportunities for religious involvement beyond the regular services, and these meetings offered social events attracting neighbors from various religious persuasions.

Now – Practices & Culture

Presently there are more than 100 churches in the county that represent a variety of denominations. In addition, the members of the Mennonite community play a notable role in the culture and economy of Gratiot County. For example, the Middleton Diner is a well-loved Mennonite restaurant that is located in Newark Township.

Health Care

Then – Health Care Facilities

The pioneers were a fairly healthy lot when families lived in isolation in the forest. As more people arrived, so did more diseases. Some early settlers were also physicians and traveled through the woods ministering to the ill. Little could be done to treat most diseases and epidemics of measles or diphtheria in a community could result in numerous fatalities, especially among children.

Establishment of the County Poor Farm, a facility for the ill and indigent, was a major concern of the County Supervisors from the earliest days of settlement. Funding it and seeing that it provided needed services occupied a great deal of the supervisors' time. Development of a more generous welfare system eventually eliminated need for the County Poor Farm.

Discovery of the Magnetic Mineral Springs in St. Louis in 1869 opened a new chapter in health care as hundreds of sick folks descended upon the village to seek help from the waters that supposedly cured many diseases. A spa developed, and in a few years, a competing spa,

Gratiot Medical Center
Source: CMU Chem Prof, Flickr

the Alma Springs Sanitarium, was established in Alma. It also promoted the "mineral water" cure. By 1900 newly discovered treatments diminished the claims of the mineral water. The Alma spa was donated to the Masonic Lodge in 1911 and became the Michigan Masonic Home for the elderly. In its present facility it is now a sprawling health-care institution serving around 450 residents. The McLachlan Sanitarium in Elwell flourished for a number of years serving the rural community. Nearly every small town or settlement had its own physician who often visited patients at home because at that time there were few doctors' offices and no hospitals.

The first true hospital in the county was built over many years by Dr. Ira Brainerd in Alma. He did much of the framing and brick-laying himself. He was despised by other Alma physicians for his scientific rather than traditional approach to medicine. Carney-Wilcox Hospital and R. B. Smith Memorial Hospital, located in Alma, provided health care from the 1930s to the 1950s. Their successor, Gratiot Community Hospital, opened in 1956. It has become a major health provider in the area and is known as Gratiot Medical Center, an affiliate of MidMichigan Health of Midland. The

Carson City Hospital in Carson City, near the southwest area of the county, has provided health care in that region of Gratiot County for many years. For specialized treatment, Gratiot residents are generally referred to larger hospitals in Midland, Lansing, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, or Ann Arbor.

Now – Health Care Facilities

The City of Alma is home to the Gratiot Medical Center, an affiliate of MidMichigan Health. The Gratiot Medical Center is a 142 bed acute care facility in addition to clinics and specialty offices located throughout the county. The medical center provides a full range of services in specialty areas, including bariatric surgery, cancer, cardiovascular services, dialysis, orthopedics, maternity, mental health, pain management, rehabilitation services, and sleep disorders.

In addition to the Gratiot Medical Center, the Carson City Hospital is located just outside the southwestern corner of Gratiot County and has 77 licensed beds and a staff of 43 active physicians, 62 consulting physicians, and 31 courtesy staff. Clinic services are provided at the Ashley Family Care Center and the Ithaca Family Care Center.

Public Safety & Utilities

Then – Police Services

The earliest crimes in the county were handled by the sheriff, the justices of the peace, and the county prosecutor. The court house was located in Ithaca, first in a log building, then in a two-story frame building. The current splendid court house was opened in 1902. Early judges usually handled several jurisdictions and traveled the circuit. Thievery was one of the most common early crimes. For more serious crimes, Gratiot criminals were sent to the Detroit House of Correction or the state penitentiary in Jackson. When the need finally arose, villages built jails to house criminals until their court dates.

Ithaca Fire Station
Source: CMU Chem Prof, Flickr

Eventually, the county jail housed criminals serving shorter sentences.

Villages appointed officers or constables to deal with criminal acts, and these were supplanted by policemen who may have walked a beat or watchmen who checked doors at night. Villages added policemen until full departments resulted. As needed, the sheriff's department through the years added numbers of deputies, and finally the Michigan State Police post was established.

Then – Fire Services

Fire protection was non-existent in pioneer times. If a building caught fire, whether private home or business house, it usually was completely destroyed. Ithaca, St. Louis, and Alma all suffered major downtown fires that burned several businesses or entire areas of the village. Volunteer fire fighters, with their

primitive fire engines could do little but try to save neighboring buildings. These "fire companies" were virtual brotherhoods, and the firemen enthusiastically did their best with the equipment they had. Once water systems were installed in towns, fire protection improved. Horse-drawn fire engines were replaced by fire trucks, and after telephones allowed help to be summoned, the townships made agreements with the cities to provide fire protection. These agreements remain today. Volunteer rescue or first responder units also aid residents in health and safety areas, providing emergency care alongside fire departments.

Now – Police Services

The Cities of Alma and St. Louis have signed an inter-local agreement for their police departments to support each other. These two police department work closely with the public schools. The departments have each assigned school liaison officers to provide a regular police presence in the schools to work on selected issues and mentoring.

The Gratiot County Sherriff's Office has about 17 full-time deputies, 5 part-time deputies, 6 reserve officers, and 1 DARE officer. This office provides 24-hour road patrol.

Now – Fire Services

All the fire departments within Gratiot County have mutual aid agreements to back each other up. The departments work very closely with each other to cover multiple municipalities. The Alma Fire Department provides fire services for the City of Alma, and Arcada, Pine River, Seville, and Sumner townships. The costs are shared by a three part formula based on SEV, population and department runs.

The Ashley Fire Department provides fire services to the Village of Ashley, Elba Township, Hamilton Township, and Washington Township.

The Village of Breckenridge/Wheeler Township Fire Department provides fire services for the Village of Breckenridge, Bethany Township, Emerson Township, Lafayette Township, Wheeler Township, and Porter Township.

The Ithaca Fire Department provides fire services to the City of Ithaca, Arcada Township, Emerson Township, Lafayette Township, New Haven Township, Newark Township, and North Star Township.

Figure 2.13 - Water Services

Community	Source	Capacity (gallons x 100,000)	Use (gallons x 100,000)	Pressure (lb./sq. inch)
Alma	River/Well	40	12	48-82
Ashely	Wells	.648	.5	42-49
Breckenridge	Wells	5	2	52-54
Ithaca	Wells	20	3	68-80
St. Louis	Wells	26	9	55-65

Source: Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

Figure 2.14 - Sewer

Community	Type	Capacity (gallons x 100,000)	Load (gallons x 100,000)
Alma	Act. Sludge	25	20
Ashley	Lagoon	7.49	.458
Breckinridge	Lagoons	8.64	1.25
Ithaca	Lagoons	17	4.38
St. Louis	Tertiary Class C	16	9

Source: Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

The Mid-Michigan Community Fire Department (MMCFD) provides fire service for the City of St. Louis, Bethany Township, Pine River Township, and Jasper Township.

The Perrinton Fire Department provides services for the Village of Perrinton, Fulton Township, New Haven Township, Newark Township, and North Shade Township.

Two other fire departments, not based in Gratiot County, also provide fire protection services in Gratiot County. They are the Maple Rapids Fire Department and the Carson City Fire Department.

Now – Water & Sewer

The cities of Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis, and the Villages of Breckenridge and Ashley provide water and sewer services. Figure 2.13 shows the source, capacity, use, pressure of water and Figure 2.14 provides the type, capacity, and load of sewer.

In addition, a public sanitary sewer system is being proposed for Elwell and Riverdale in Seville Township. Several alternatives have been considered. Currently, a gravity collection system and a treatment lagoon are being recommended.

Now – Telecommunications

Phone service is available in all areas of the county. Frontier, Winn Telecom, and Charter provide these services. Cable modem service is offered in all municipal areas and wireless internet is available in most areas. Digital switching and fiber optic is also available.

Media

Then – Newspapers

When scattered pioneer families gathered at someone's log cabin, their thirst for news was evident. Any word from the outside world was demanded and shared. This desire for news prompted the establishment of newspapers from the earliest days of the county. The *Gratiot News*, the first newspaper in the county was established in Ithaca in 1858, only four years after the first influx of settlers. Over the years, there have been a multitude of local newspapers with a multitude of names in each small town reporting on births, deaths, tragedies, and mundane news such as who visited who on such and such a day, or who was starring in the local school play.

Then – Radio

The first county radio station was WFYC opened in Alma in the late 1940s. It was an AM station broadcasting during daytime hours only. Local entertainers were brought in to perform live when the station first opened. When FM was developed, WFYC added an FM band with the new call letters WQBX. Later another FM station, WMLM, came into being in St. Louis. Offices and towers for both stations now are located on State Road between St. Louis and Ithaca.

Now – Newspapers

Today, the *Gratiot County Herald* located in Ithaca is a weekly newspaper that serves the county as it has for more than 150 years. The *Morning Sun* is a daily newspaper with Alma offices and headquarters in Mt. Pleasant. The Saginaw Valley Shopper has served Gratiot Community with a weekly publication for the past 62 years.

Now – Television

Charter Communications is the only cable company. However, viewers also have the option of satellite television.

In 1997, 12 Gratiot Counties formed the Mid Michigan Area Cable Consortium to create the first cable franchise agreement with the existing cable television provider. The members of the consortium include the City of Ithaca, the City of St. Louis, the City of Breckenridge, Pine River Township, Arcada Township, the City of Alma, the Village of Shepherd, The Charter Township

of Union, the City of Mt. Pleasant, the City of Clare the City of Harrison, and the City of Evart.

In December of 2003, the Mid Michigan Area Cable Consortium completed the construction of the MAC 3 TV Central Office facility. This facility provides communities users and volunteers a 900 square foot, fully digital video studio for the production and recording of programs, a digital editing suite, 10 field camera kits, and four Mac laptop computers for editing.

Leisure & Recreation

Then – Fairs & Festivals

Getting together for games and conversation was a reward for the pioneers of Gratiot County. The Fourth of July was the banner holiday of the year and everyone from country and village alike gathered in the villages to celebrate.

The County Fair, which was started in 1866 in Ithaca, was an annual major event in the social lives of many county residents. Besides the first County Fair, another was started in St. Louis in 1875. Horse racing was a staple of both fairs, with a well-attended track in St. Louis drawing horses from neighboring counties.

Then – Sports

Playing baseball, roller-skating at the rink, enjoying picnics in pleasant groves, and taking an occasional excursion by train to parks in Wenona (Bay City) or Petoskey, as well as trips to Detroit to attend ball games were among the choices Gratiot folks had for fun. Sometimes they went to Bass Lake, a few miles west of Gratiot County, for a pleasant day's excursion. The train dropped them off right at the lake. Sometimes they took excursions by horse and buggy to Crystal Lake, regarded from the start as a very beautiful place to spend a day or two. Village and area parks provided opportunities for eating, socializing, playing ball, and participating in contests.

Figure 2.15 - Fairs and Festivals in Gratiot County

Month	Fair/Festival	Location
May	Highland Festival	Alma
	Old Car Dust Off	Ithaca
June	Gratiot County Agricultural Expo	Ithaca
	Evenings in the Park	Gratiot Area Parks
	Fishing Derby	St. Louis
	Cops & Rodders	Alma
July	Gratiot Community Fair for Youth	Alma
	Rural Urban Day	St. Louis
	Community Day	St. Louis
	4th of July Fireworks Celebrations	
	Evenings in the Park	Gratiot Area Parks
August	Harvest Festival	Bannister
	Family Fun Fest	Ithaca
	Evenings in the Park	Gratiot Area Parks
	Gratiot County Airshow	Alma
September	Fall Fun Days	Breckenridge
	Fallfest Car Show	Alma
	Herman Hoffer Harvest Adventure	Bicycle road riding event
	Lucky MacDuck Day	Alma
	Founders Day	Alma

Source: 2007 Gratiot County Economic Profile, Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

Now – Fairs & Festivals

Gratiot County celebrates its community through a number of fairs and festivals. The most well known of these celebrations is the Highland Festival, where thousands of people from the United States and Canada gather over Memorial Weekend to enjoy Scottish traditions. This and other fairs and festivals are listed in Figure 2.15.

Now – Organizations

For those who enjoy volunteerism and brotherhood, fraternal organizations and service clubs function in the county. Many fraternal orders have existed throughout the history of the county. The Masonic Lodge has been active in the county from the early days. Other fraternal orders such as the Moose, the Elks, and the Gleaners are occupied with charitable activities. Service clubs such as the Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Optimist also offer opportunities for fellowship and charitable activities. For years, chapters of the Grange, the farmers' organization, advocated politically and socially for farmers. Gratiot County had several Grange Halls where farmers met for fellowship and instruction. Three historical societies with museums are located in Breckenridge, Ithaca, and St. Louis.

Now – Sports

The W. T. Morris swimming pool in St. Louis and the Alma College and Alma High School swimming pools offer opportunities for swimming, competitive and otherwise.

Gratiot County has many opportunities for youth in the densely populated areas of the county. There are two county owned parks supported by a county millage. There are organized sports groups such as soccer, football and softball leagues, as well as specialized groups such as 4-H, sponsored by Michigan State University, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Playgrounds, winter sled hills and ice skating rinks are natural playgrounds for youth

Alma Highland Festival

activities. There are adult organized sports clubs as well, with golf courses catering to all levels of golfing skills. Numerous parks are available for groups to meet for biking and hiking.

The county maintains Reed Park and Hubscher Park, both providing picnicking and swimming areas. Ball fields encourage Little League play, and school sporting events bring out many spectators. Lumberjack Park in western Gratiot County is the scene of many family reunions and other activities. This park was founded in the 1930s by former lumberjacks who built a replica lumber camp in a grove of old pines. Figure 2.16 provides a list of community recreational opportunities.

Figure 2.16 - Recreational Opportunities in Gratiot County

Activity/Destination	Facilities	Location
Golf	Overbrook Golf Course	Middleton
	Gratiot Country Club	Ithaca
	North Star Golf Course	North Star
	The Ridge	Breckenridge
	Pine River Country Club	Alma
	Hidden Oaks Golf Club	St. Louis
Swimming	Alma College	Alma
	Ithaca High School	Ithaca
	Alma High School	Alma
	W.T. Morris Community Pool	St. Louis
Water Recreation	Pine River Outfitters	St. Louis-Alma
	Half Moon Lake	
	Rainbow Lake	
	Maple River	
Bowling	300 Bowl	Alma
	Town and Country Recreation	Ithaca
Outdoor Recreation	Broken Lock Trading Company	Alma
	Pine River Paintball	St. Louis
	A.P. Goodrich Rifle Range	Ithaca
League Sports	Offered on a community basis	
Spectator Sports	Alma College (Division III)	Alma
Movie Theaters	Alma Cinema	Alma
Live Theater and Arts	Gratiot County Players	Alma
	Heritage Center	Alma College
	Evenings in the Park	Gratiot Area Parks
	GEM Theater	St. Louis
Parks	Leppien	St. Louis
	Clapp	St. Louis
	Wright	Alma
	Woodland	Ithaca
	Hubscher	Sumner
	Reed	North Star
	Riverside	Alma

Source: 2007 Gratiot County Economic Profile, Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

Natural Features and Resources

Then – Geology

Gratiot County was completely covered by giant ice sheets during the Pleistocene Epoch. The series of glaciers in this period left deposits of 50 to 500 feet thick on the original bedrock of limestone and sandstone. The present topography and soil material resulted mainly from glacial deposits and lake formations of the Wisconsin Glacier, which was the last glacier to cover this area and which melted 10,000 to 12,000 years ago.

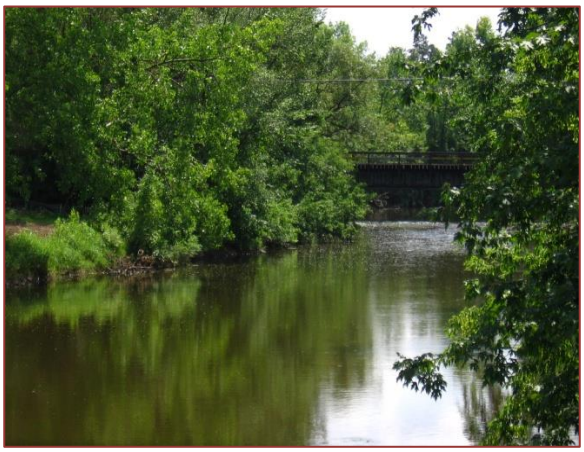
As a result of glaciations, two general physiographic areas are in the county. The western half of the county consists of a series of glacial moraines, till and outwash plains, and channels. These were formed directly by glacial action and deposition. The eastern half of the county is a level lake plain that was formed by and at one time covered by the waters of Lake Saginaw, a glacial lake.

Now – Climate

Gratiot County experiences some lake effect weather, especially in western sections of the county as a result of the prevailing westerly winds. However, seasonal snowfall attributed to lake effect is typically light and impacts are mostly limited to increased cloudiness during the late fall and early winter. The average seasonal snowfall is 40.5 inches. Summers have moderately warm temperatures with an average of 15 days exceeding the 90ºF mark. The average date of the last freeze is May 6, while the average date of the first freeze is October 6. The freeze-free period, or growing season, averages 153 days annually.

Now – Soils

Most of the soils of the county have a good or fair potential for woodland, except in some areas where trees would not grow naturally or produce poor wood crops. Commercially valuable trees are less common and generally do not grow so rapidly on the wetter soils. Soils that have a good potential for woodland are shown in Map E.



Pine River

Many of the soils in the county have a wetness limitation for urban development and some have a poor potential for urban development because of the shrink-swell potential. Soils that have urban development limitations are shown in Map F.

The hilly portions of the county are excellent for parks and extensive recreation areas, nature study areas, and wilderness uses. All of these areas provide habitat for many important species of wildlife. Soils that have a good potential for recreation, nature study, and wilderness uses are shown in Map G.

Now – Lakes and Rivers

Gratiot County has two natural lakes, Half Moon and Madison. They are small and privately owned and are in Seville Township.
Rainbow Lake, a human-made reservoir on Pine Creek, is in Fulton Township. It is also privately owned and is a residential community.
There are two major rivers in the County, the Pine River, in the northern part of the county, which flows northeasterly, and the Maple River, in the southern part, which flows westerly.

Now – Contamination

According to the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, "the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority of the County of Gratiot has documented over

100 Brownfield sites, the vast majority related to underground storage tanks (i.e. fueling/service stations). Some of the more serious sites are in the federal Superfund program and/or encompass relatively large tracts of land." Significant contamination sites are listed in Figure 2.17.

Among the contaminated sites listed in Figure 2.16, the Velsicol Plant in St. Louis has presented the community with the most notable contamination issues. Contaminants have been released on that site since the 1930's when the plant was owned by Michigan Chemical Corporation. In the 1970's, under Velsicol's ownership, the plant was closed by the DNR after the company accidently shipped PBB pellets, a fire retardant, as cattle feed. Since the closing of the plant, contaminants from the Velsicol site continue to be released into the community due to poor closing procedures and despite extensive clean-up efforts by the EPA. The City of St. Louis continues to work with the EPA to contain and remove the contaminants.

Land Use

Now – 1997 Land Use Analysis

The most recent land use update occurred in 1997 and is presented in the 1998 County Master Plan. Language in the following paragraphs is excerpted from that plan. Gratiot County has not experienced a drastic change in the landscape since that time. However, the existing land use information from the 1998 plan has been summarized and edited for this plan to help reflect current conditions.

Background

During the summer of 1997, a field inventory of existing land use was conducted by Langworthy LeBlanc, Inc. throughout the unincorporated areas of Gratiot County. This survey provided an up-to-date snap shot of uses, development patterns, and relationships.

Residential

Single family homes within Gratiot County were scattered through the rural, agricultural areas of the county. The placement of more than one residence on a lot was not uncommon, particularly if one, both, or more residences placed on one lot were a trailer or mobile home. Farm residences were usually associated with lots where more than one residence was identified.

Concentrations of single family homes were found within and around the cities and villages of Gratiot County. As would be expected, the greatest concentration of high density development was in the cities of Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis. However, a considerable amount of residential development was also present in Breckenridge, Wheeler, Middleton, Perrinton,

Figure 2.17 - Contamination Sites

Name	Known Contaminants	Acres	Location
Velsicol Chemical	PBB, PCB, TCE, p-CBSA, DDT, NAPL	53	St. Louis
Smith Farm	PBB, DDT, Mercury, radioactive waste, others	40	Bethany Twp.
Gratiot County Landfill	PBB, DDT, Mercury, others		Bethany Twp.
Hidden Oaks	PBB, DDT, Mercury, others	5	St. Louis
Total Petroleum/UDS	Petroleum fueling byproducts		Alma

Source: 2010 Gratiot County Hazard Mitigation Plan (with edits)

Sumner and Ashley. Multiple family units were only present within the cities and several villages, with the exception being to migrant housing developments for farm workers, one located in Newark Township and other in Lafayette Township.

Agricultural
In 1997, agriculture purposes were by far the largest land use (80%) in Gratiot County. More farmland was identified than land with no use at all; that is land that was determined to be vacant. Crop production was the most frequently encountered agricultural activity in the county, with farmers raising crops such as beans, corns, sugar beets, and wheat.
The raising of cattle for beef and dairy production was identified as another wide-spread agricultural use.

Since 1997, agriculture has continued as a major land use in the county and is expected to be in the future. However, Gratiot County may soon see wind turbine farms as a common part of the county's agricultural landscape.

Beginning in 2007 wind energy development companies began exploring the idea of developing commercial grade wind energy in Gratiot County. This power would be generated and sold wholesale and not for direct distribution to retail customers. Initial testing for wind adequacy determined the potential for areas in Gratiot County to be sufficient for the development and ultimate erection of dozens, even hundreds of tall wind turbines up to 300 or more feet at the hub. The wind energy development activity was due to the anticipation of the passage of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) law by the Michigan legislature. The State did pass an RPS, which states that there is a requirement for utility companies – regulated and municipal to have 15% of their generation portfolio derived from "alternative" generation by 2015. This means power generation from other than a coal or nuclear source.

Agriculture Land Use

As a consequence of the law, several companies explored the leasing of hundreds to thousands of acres of agriculturally zoned property for the erection of turbines otherwise known as wind farms. At that time the companies were working with general wind data which demonstrated to the companies the potential for commercial development. Given the very substantial cost to develop a wind farm the companies needed two major issues to be resolved. First, each company had to satisfy certain requirements that the wind velocity, density, and constancy were indeed sufficient to support an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars. This would be determined by gathering meteorological data over a minimum of a year and done with the erection of tall "met towers" on which is mounted sophisticated equipment. Second, the companies needed a local governmental / regulatory framework which would provide a reasonable format for planning, siting, permitting, and operation. This was accomplished when interested local citizens and multiple area planning commissions worked together to draft a model ordinance. The model ordinance adopted by the County and then the effected townships enabled all jurisdictions to treat wind development in the same manner. Thus the ordinance became the framework within which multi jurisdictional

wind development projects could be developed successfully.

Coincidentally the initiation of the county wide master planning concept (early 2008) occurred at the same time the wind companies were exploring for development. While all the units of government began working on the master plan initiation it was identified that the best thing that could be done to assist in the potential development process was to work together to make a clear and succinct local ordinance. The ordinance had to protect the Gratiot community, the local municipal area, landowners, and individual citizens while facilitating as best as possible large wind development projects. It was collectively determined that making the regulations the same across jurisdictions while streamlining the legal process for all local units of government would be the best way to encourage the desired development.

Ultimately the strategy proved successful as the Gratiot County Wind LLC project was approved by Michigan's Public Service Commission in September, 2010. To date this is Michigan's largest wind farm. The project is slated to begin construction in November, 2010. The 125 turbine project will stretch across the four townships of Wheeler, Bethany, Emerson, and Lafayette. As of October, 2010 the County is anticipating the submittal for permitting of a second project. This project will encompass parts of Emerson, Lafayette, Hamilton, and North Star Townships. Additionally, a third project is contemplated to be located in New Haven, Newark, North Shade, and Fulton townships. Each project is anticipated to have a construction value of over $400 million dollars.

The development of commercial grade wind farms will have a significant positive effect on the future of Gratiot County as the projects assure three major things: 1. land which has wind development will most assuredly remain as agricultural land, 2. development of commercial projects as they have / are being done guarantees significant long term escalating income to the hundreds of landowners participating in the development, 3. tax revenue from the projects assures steady and predictable revenue supporting schools and local governments particularly the townships and County. Wind farm developments are in concordance with several of the major stated goals of the Master Plan.

Commercial

Commercial development within Gratiot County was essentially limited to the following areas: the cities of Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis and major transportation routes of US-127 and M-46. State route M-57 has experienced some commercial development; however, it has been on a much smaller scale.

Downtown Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis remain the commercial centers of Gratiot County. However, development North of Alma between the city and the US-127 interchange provides additional shopping, dining, and employment opportunities, including two General Motors dealers, a Wal-Mart Supercenter, Ponderosa, Big Boy, and Garr Tool, a specialized manufacturer of carbide tools.

Existing US-127, prior to turning into a limited access freeway north of Roggy Road, has experienced limited development. Commercial uses which have access from US-127 or connecting streets have taken advantage of the visibility the highway offers. Such uses include antique stores, an auto repair shop, golf course, horse auction, bridal store, and propane sales.

Industrial

There are four industrial parks in Gratiot County; Alma Industrial Park, Ithaca Business Park, South Ithaca Certified Business Park, and the Woodside Industrial Centre in St. Louis. Together, 372 acres are dedicated to these parks. Approximately 1,000 acres were added to the industrial land inventory in 1997 through the creation of several Renaissance Zones

throughout the county. The Village of Breckenridge is currently in the process of developing the county's fifth certified business park within some of the designated Renaissance Zone.

Nearly the entire industrial base of Gratiot County is located within Alma, Ithaca and St. Louis, although not necessarily within any of the industrial parks. Industrial uses outside of the cities of Alma, Ithaca, and St. Louis include Garr Tool in Pine River Township, Powell Fabrication in Bethany Township, and businesses associated with the agricultural and natural resource base of the county.

Gratiot County is also home to large grain handling and merchandising operations of Michigan Agricultural Commodities in the Breckenridge/Wheeler and Middleton Areas and JBT Grain in Middleton. In addition, there are a number of agriculture support businesses in the Breckenridge/Wheeler area that supply chemicals, fertilizers, bulk fuels, and other agriculture related products.

Public/Quasi Public Uses

State-owned public lands were primarily located in Gratiot County's southeast corner. Hamilton, Elba, Washington and Fulton Townships contained the largest amount of public lands in the county, with the greatest concentration located in Hamilton Township. These lands have been dedicated for public use primarily as areas for hunting and fishing. On several state-owned parcels, particularly in Hamilton Township, agricultural activities were occurring. Part of the Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area is located in Hamilton and Elba Townships, while a portion of the Maple River State Game Area can be found in southern Fulton Township.

Masonic Pathways

Other public/quasi-public uses included community parks, public water and sewer areas, schools, churches, semi-public meeting places (such as VFW halls), cemeteries, and private utilities.

Currently, there are 34 cemeteries in the county. Appendix VI provides a listing of these cemeteries.

There were several different types of private stations, brine monitoring wells, and natural gas and petroleum valves at the time of the land use survey that were identified as industrial uses. Similarly, such as gravel extraction activities in north New Haven Township along Washington Road, and the processing and storage of fuel at the Total Petroleum site outside of Alma were categorized as industrial land uses.

The Gratiot Community Airport, located between Ely Highway and Alger Road in Arcada Township and a race track located in the south west side of Ithaca, near the Newark Township boundary, were facilities in Gratiot County that identified as "public use."

III. Statewide Concerns

Introduction

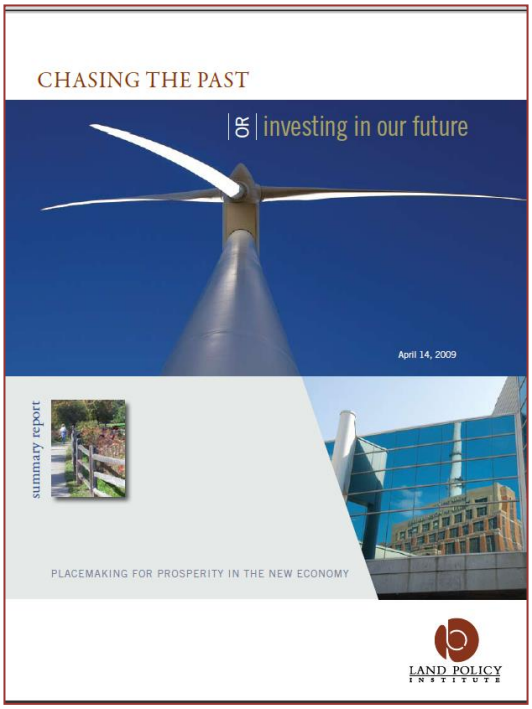
This chapter examines several of the statewide issues that have particular relevance in Gratiot County. The information presented in this section is derived from various reports and studies and was considered during the development of the goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan.

Economy

The 2009 Land Policy Institute (LPI) report, *Chasing the Past or Investing in Our Future* characterizes current economic conditions as "dark economic times." Communities across the nation are facing a difficult transition from what is known as the "old economy" to the "new economy." This is especially true for communities in Michigan, one of the states hit hardest by the recession.

As explained in the report, the old economy is based on industrial activity that emerged in the mid-1800's. At one time, this economic model produced a great amount of wealth for communities. For example, in the automobile industry's heyday, Detroit was one of the country's wealthiest cities and this wealth was reflected in city's population growth and extensive development of infrastructure, such as roads, museums, and hospitals.

In contrast, the "new economy refers to a global, entrepreneurial and knowledge-based economy where business success comes increasingly from the ability to incorporate knowledge, technology, creativity and innovation into their products and services." This departs from old economic principles, such as "economies of scale" and instead relies on creativity and knowledge. This means that the job market is now geared towards people with increased technological skills, higher education,



and vast social connections rather than skilled laborers.

The shift from the old economy to the new economy has implications for all aspects of Michigan communities. In relation to planning, the new economy requires communities to examine their "placemaking" attributes, which will attract, retain, inspire, and educate new economy workers, otherwise known as "knowledge workers," as explained below:

> Knowledge workers, the talented and entrepreneurs are said to be attracted to quality of life features, which include green infrastructure assets, leisure amenities, cultural amenities and other amenities (Benedict and McMahon, 2002). Venture capital and private equity are expected to follow knowledge workers to these quality places. Therefore, the natural, environmental and social assets of a place may well be important levers for economic developers to pull to position

their communities for prosperity in the New Economy.

Land Use

In 2003, the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council published a report titled *Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future* that explains some of the consequences of unmanaged growth occurring in rural areas. The report asserted that the conversion of agricultural land, forestland and open space to urban uses can decrease both the visual appeal and the land-based economy of communities. These qualities are often associated with "rural character." At the same time, this pattern of development may result in a decline in urban populations as people move out to suburban and rural residences. The loss of population can decrease the tax base and property values in cities and villages, leaving the existing infrastructure without adequate funding for proper maintenance. The outcome can be a diminished "rural character" and suffering urban centers. Meanwhile, the infrastructure that is needed to support new growth along the urban fringe adds costs that strain local government resources.

The paving, maintenance, expansion, or construction of roads is an example of infrastructure costs that increase as low-density suburban and rural development continues. As the road network expands, fewer funds would be available to address maintenance and improvement of existing roads. Likewise, the extension of water and sewer services can become costly if it were to continue alongside new developments in the townships and the taxes that pay for these services would be stretched to maintain the expanded infrastructure.

In connection with the impact that unmanaged growth can have on the costs of infrastructure are the negative impacts that it could have on the natural resources of the community. For instance, if more intense urban development occurs in rural areas without access to water and sewer services, the impact on ground water could be harmful. This is particularly a problem in areas that have high soil permeability. The expansion of the road network would also affect water quality by creating more impervious surfaces, which prevent natural filtration processes from occurring and allow oils, fertilizers and other contaminants to flow directly into the area's valued rivers and lakes. Excessive impervious surfaces (10% or more) also result in increased water temperatures. Anglers, boaters, swimmers, and wildlife, would all be affected by pollutants entering the area's waterways.

Agriculture

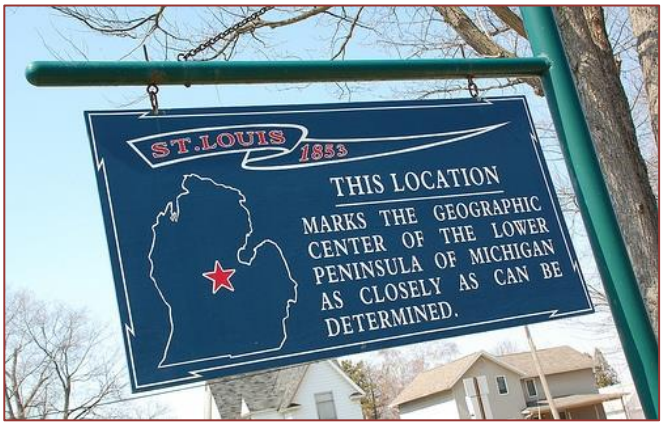
Agriculture is a major component of Michigan's identity, character and economy. Unfortunately, the ability to keep farms economically viable is not an easy task. Farmers face a difficult dilemma when it comes to retirement. The financial assets that would allow a farmer to retire are typically tied up in the land that is being farmed. Often, the only option is to sell the land. Many farmers would like to see the land continued in agricultural use. However, there are few younger farmers who can afford to purchase the farm. In addition, the most lucrative land sale may be to a developer. Yet, once agricultural land is developed, it is unlikely that it will ever be farmed again. Furthermore, as rising transportation costs become a growing concern for the state and nation, communities may need to rely more heavily on local food sources in the future. As local farms decrease, so does the opportunity to access local food sources.

As one solution to this problem, wind turbine development is being encouraged in the county. Agritourism is another tool being widely discussed as playing an important role in Michigan's new economy. Agritrourism can be defined as "the act of visiting a working farm or

any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation." (University of California).

Data on agritourism suggests that it has substantial economic impacts on local economies and has the potential to substantially strengthen the local agricultural industry. Nationwide, the USDA reports that rural tourism grew at a six percent annual rate and that 63 million Americans visited farms between 2000 and 2003. Concurrently, the Census of Agriculture reported that direct sales from farms to consumers had increased by 37 percent between 1997 and 2003.

In Michigan, agritourism is gaining attention as a growth industry that links two of Michigan's largest sectors – tourism and agriculture. Researchers at Western Michigan University in 2003 examined the phenomenon of agritourism across Michigan. The work concluded that agritourism operations across the state averaged 11,647 visitors per operation with $141,334 in gross sales and 7.87 employees. The study also found that agritourism played a key role in maintaining farm income, allowing participating farmers to retain the family farm and the farming way of life. Among consumers, it provided a personal experience with agriculture and a source of fresh agricultural products.
By strengthening the economics of individual farms, agritourism has the potential to help maintain the viability of Michigan agriculture, increase public understanding of agriculture, create brand identity for Michigan agricultural products, and keep land in agricultural use.



Location Sign in St. Louis

Other studies have reached similar conclusions. A survey of agribusinesses and their customers in New York State found that over half of the customers came from the county of the business or an adjacent county. Most customers were also planning to participate in another recreational activity in the area during their trip. An agritourism study in Massachusetts in 2004 concluded that agritourism was driving economic development in western Massachusetts. Farm family members who had previously supplemented their income with off-farm employment were now working full time on the farm. Agritourism was helping to sustain the agricultural economy, and retain the open space and rural character of the countryside. Agritourism has also helped civic leaders recognize that farmers are now in the land management business, not just farming, and should be supported in much the same way as a business in the heart of a city.

IV. Community Opinions

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the feedback received by Gratiot County residents during public meetings and surveys. A series of five public meetings were held during December, 2008 and surveys included a community drop-off survey, a youth survey, and an online survey. The information in this chapter was considered during the development of the goals, objectives, and strategies in this Plan.

Public Meetings

The public meetings were designed to solicit opinions about the Plan's overarching goals and how to implement the goals. The Steering Committee developed the goals based on county-wide data in addition to their knowledge of the community. The goals are as follows:

> Goal 1: Preserve the County's quality rural character, which includes productive farms, healthy natural features, and vibrant downtowns that maintain "small town" charm.
>
> Goal 2: Strengthen the existing cities, villages, and hamlets to serve as quality community centers for living, working, recreating, and learning.
>
> Goal 3: Provide quality public services, such as water, sewer, public safety, and the transportation network, in the most cost effective manner.
>
> Goal 4: Provide and sustain economic opportunities by retaining, attracting and growing quality employers, including those within the agriculture, industrial, service, and commercial sectors.
>
> Goal 5: Provide high quality of life opportunities, such as premier cultural and recreational resources, for the enjoyment of people from all generations.
>
> Goal 6: Provide quality educational opportunities that prepare residents for careers, local jobs and cutting edge industries.
>
> Goal 7: Continue and strengthen quality community collaboration to promote sustainable planning practices and elevate Gratiot County as a whole.

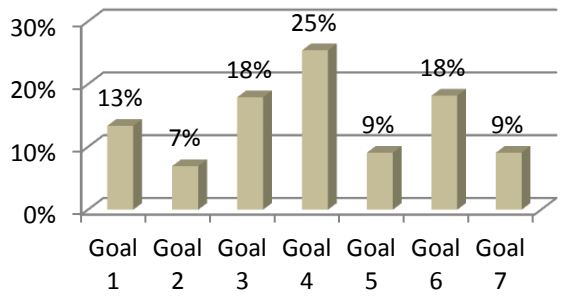
The meetings were held throughout the month of December in 2008 and were located at Alma Middle School, Sumner Township Community Center, Breckenridge High School, Fulton Township Community Center, and Ashley Community School. In total, about 130 community members participated in the meetings. Each participant was invited to help edit the goals, rank the goals, offer opinion on the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis), and vote on ideas that would help implement the goals.

To rank the goals, participants were asked to vote on their top three goals using orange sticky dots. At 25%, Goal 4 received the most votes followed by a tie between Goal 3 and Goal 6,

Public Meeting

which both receive 18% of the total votes. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of votes for all the goals.

Figure 4.1 – Goals by Percentage of Votes



Once the goals were ranked, participants were asked to vote on their top six strategies, which were ideas generated by meeting participants during the SWOT analysis portion of the meeting. The ideas that received the most votes are shown in Figure 4.2. A detailed listing of all ideas and feedback from the public meetings can be found in Appendix III.

Community Survey

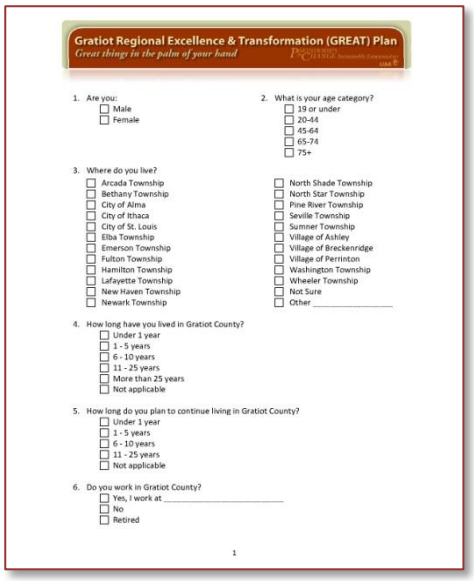
A survey was developed to help verify the results of the five public meetings. The survey was available as a hard copy and online at the project's website. The hard copy surveys were distributed and retrieved at various businesses and community centers throughout the county.

In total, about 120 residents responded to the survey. Of those that responded, 59% were male and 41% were female. 48% of the respondents were in the 45-64 year old category followed by 32% in the 20-44 age category.

The majority (68%) of the respondents have lived in Gratiot County more than 25 years and 63% of the respondents intend to continue living in Gratiot County for the next 11-25 years. We received the most responses (26%) from residents living in the City of Alma, followed by Sumner Township (12%), the Village of Breckenridge (9%) and the City of Ithaca (9%). We received at least one completed survey from every Gratiot County jurisdiction. 71% of the respondents work in Gratiot County.

Overall survey responses were consistent with the feedback that was received during the public meetings. Appendix IV provides a detailed listing of all the survey responses. Figure 4.3 provides a summary of the common responses to the survey questions.

In addition to the questions listed in Figure 4.3, the survey asked respondents to provide their level of agreement with common statements heard at the public meeting. Figure 4.4 shows these statements and their average score on a scale of one (1) to five (5), with five representing strongly agree. Based on the survey responses, all of the issues listed have similar value to Gratiot County residents. However, the desire to have vocational programs, alternative energy sources, an energy park, and businesses that sell locally produced farm products received the highest average scores.



Gratiot Regional Excellence & Transformation (GREAT) Plan
Great things in the palm of your hand

1. Are you:
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

2. What is your age category?
   - ☐ 19 or under
   - ☐ 20-44
   - ☐ 45-64
   - ☐ 65-74
   - ☐ 75+

3. Where do you live?
   - ☐ Arcada Township
   - ☐ Bethany Township
   - ☐ City of Alma
   - ☐ City of Ithaca
   - ☐ City of St. Louis
   - ☐ Elba Township
   - ☐ Emerson Township
   - ☐ Fulton Township
   - ☐ Hamilton Township
   - ☐ Lafayette Township
   - ☐ New Haven Township
   - ☐ Newark Township
   - ☐ North Shade Township
   - ☐ North Star Township
   - ☐ Pine River Township
   - ☐ Seville Township
   - ☐ Sumner Township
   - ☐ Village of Ashley
   - ☐ Village of Breckenridge
   - ☐ Village of Perrinton
   - ☐ Washington Township
   - ☐ Wheeler Township
   - ☐ Not Sure
   - ☐ Other _____

4. How long have you lived in Gratiot County?
   - ☐ Under 1 year
   - ☐ 1 - 5 years
   - ☐ 6 - 10 years
   - ☐ 11 - 25 years
   - ☐ More than 25 years
   - ☐ Not applicable

5. How long do you plan to continue living in Gratiot County?
   - ☐ Under 1 year
   - ☐ 1 - 5 years
   - ☐ 6 - 10 years
   - ☐ 11 - 25 years
   - ☐ Not applicable

6. Do you work in Gratiot County?
   - ☐ Yes, I work at _____
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Retired

1

Survey Form

Figure 4.2 - Top Votes for Strategy Ideas (Opportunities)
Goal 1: Preserve the County's quality rural character, which includes productive farms, healthy natural features, and vibrant downtowns that maintain "small town" charm.
Become an entrepreneurial community/magnet
Improve river quality/tie into parks/recreation
Promote commercial local opportunities for small farm products
Strategize how to be entrepreneurial within the community
Outlets for locally grown food
Maintain buildings in downtown
Goal 2: Strengthen the existing cities, villages, and hamlets to serve as quality community centers for living, working, recreating, and learning.
Technical/trade school education
Start "Friends of the Pine River"
Opportunity to more integrate quality schools and municipalities
Goal 3: Provide quality public services, such as water, sewer, public safety, and the transportation network, in the most cost effective manner.
More collaboration
Complete US-127
County-wide purchasing system
More preventative maintenance
Goal 4: Provide and sustain economic opportunities by retaining, attracting and growing quality employers, including those within the agriculture, industrial, service, and commercial sectors.
Energy technology enticement
Riverfront development
Energy park
New industrial parks
Wind power/solar
More vocational training
Attracting large industrial project (i.e. energy-related)
Entrepreneurial education
Value-added agriculture businesses
Goal 5: Provide high quality of life opportunities, such as premier cultural and recreational resources, for the enjoyment of people from all generations.
Use existing facilities better, i.e. college facilities, parks, schools, etc.
Coordinated recreational activities
Stronger collaborative marketing
Winter recreation trails (i.e. cross country skiing, snowmobiling, ice skating rink)
Public transportation between north/south Gratiot for events (i.e. Alma College)
Goal 6: Provide quality educational opportunities that prepare residents for careers, local jobs and cutting edge industries.
Stronger collaboration between local school districts
Job training/apprentice/internship programs
Vocational courses
Flexibility in curriculum for students
Jointly owned Vocational Center in Gratiot
Bring business leaders into the classroom to make kids aware of opportunities locally (mentor program)

Goal 7: Continue and strengthen quality community collaboration to promote sustainable planning practices and elevate Gratiot County as a whole.
Compete against larger urban cities/demographic areas
Competitive advantage in business development and retention
County-wide recycling
Get more citizens involved in local government decision-making

Figure 4.3 - Common Survey Responses

Question	Common Responses
Why did you decide to move to Gratiot County or remain in the community?	born here, raised here, job, friendly place, rural atmosphere, good place to raise children
What are you most proud of in the community?	Alma College, community events, caring people, rural atmosphere, schools
What local places would you recommend that new people to the community visit?	Alma College, natural areas, court house, parks, downtowns, historical museum, library, trails, fairs and festivals,
If you could preserve anything in the community, what would it be?	Alma College, parks, downtowns, historical buildings, jobs, rivers, small town feel, natural areas
If you could develop something in the community, what would it be?	a place for youth to spend time, community meeting centers, businesses and jobs, energy park, more recreational opportunities, riverfront

Figure 4.4 - Survey Respondents Average Agreement Level with Public Meeting Comments (5 = Strongly Agree)

Topic	Average
Making vocational programs available to students	4.00
Utilizing alternative energy sources	3.98
Developing an energy park	3.84
Businesses that sell locally produced farm products	3.76
Expanding industrial parks	3.75
More county-wide recreational opportunities	3.70
Cleaning and protecting the Pine River	3.69
Maintaining and improving downtowns	3.67
More local government, school and agency cooperation	3.64
Preserving open spaces (e.g. farmlands & fields)	3.63
Collaborative marketing efforts	3.58
Improved and well-maintained infrastructure	3.56
A county-wide recycling program	3.56
Preserving natural areas (e.g. woodlands & wetlands)	3.54
More citizen involvement in local government decisions	3.50
Completing U.S.-127	3.47
Redeveloping empty lots and contaminated sites	3.43
Developing non-motorized pathways	3.41
Entrepreneurship/business mentoring programs	3.35
More public transportation options	3.30
Developing riverfronts	3.28
Expanded internet service	3.16
An improved community calendar	3.11
A Gratiot County community college	3.10

Youth Survey

Project partners felt that it was important to hear from Gratiot County youth to gain a perspective on their wishes for the community and what would inspire them to stay or return to Gratiot County. In addition, project partners wanted to help educate youth about planning processes and how they can become involved with shaping the future of the community.

With this in mind, the group conducted a special youth survey that was administered at local high schools.

Figure 4.5 provides a very general summary of the common responses to the survey questions. A full listing of the survey responses can be found in Appendix V.

Figure 4.5 - Common Youth Survey Responses

Question	Common Responses
Do you plan to live in Gratiot County after high school and/or college graduation/what are your plans?	attend CMU, attend Alma College, attend college elsewhere, move for a job, work in Gratiot County
What are you most proud of in the community?	nice people, clean and safe community, school extracurricular activities, farming/farms, Middleton Diner, movie theater, nothing
If you could add something new in the community, what would it be?	mall, more recreational opportunities, jobs and businesses, fast food restaurants like Taco Bell and McDonalds
Is there another goal that you would add?	job opportunities, more places to go and things to do

Gratiot County Fair for Youth

V. Goals, Objectives, & Strategies

Introduction

The goals, objectives, and strategies presented in this Plan were originally developed by compiling individual master plans, the county master plan, contemporary planning principles, county data, and feedback from the project's first set of public meetings and community surveys. The Steering Committee then refined the goals, objectives, and strategies through a review process that took into account information presented in the previous chapters of this Plan and along with additional public feedback.

Goal 1: Preserve the County's quality rural character, which includes productive farms, healthy natural features, and vibrant downtowns that maintain "small town" charm

Objective 1.1: Direct residential growth in a way that minimizes the negative impact on the County's rural character and natural resources.

Strategies

1. Adopt planned unit development and cluster housing provisions to permit harmonious development with important natural features
2. Through zoning, discourage strip frontage residential development along major roads and encourage medium to high density housing development in areas where it will fit with the existing residential character, and where infrastructure exists to support these uses
3. Require that suitable and adequate transition areas or buffers be established between high intensity and low intensity development areas to maintain property values and physical attractiveness

Objective 1.2: Preserve lands that are best suited to productive agriculture and protect the ability of farmers to continue to actively engage in farming

Strategies

1. Revise zoning ordinances to discourage new residential and other non-farm related development in prime farmland areas
2. Develop a water and sewer expansion plan that will limit the expansion of these services into productive agriculture areas
3. Explore the feasibility of farmland protection programs, such as Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), and the potential for implementing such programs in the County
4. Create and continue farmers' markets throughout the County to provide a venue for local agricultural product sales
5. Develop a shelter for the Farmers' Market and Arts and Crafts display area in the Alma downtown area.
6. Coordinate market efforts among community farmers' markets
7. Coordinate with farming groups and agencies to promote an understanding and appreciation of the importance of farming to the State's population and the Gratiot County economy

8. Work with farming groups to recruit agribusinesses and encourage them to locate in the County.
9. Develop a program that encourages business to carry locally produced farm products

Objective 1.3: Protect features that comprise the natural character of Gratiot County, including: woods, water, open space, views, and wildlife habitats

Strategies

1. Identify key and unique natural areas that should be preserved
2. Adopt regulations to uniformly provide preservation guidelines for future use of land throughout the County
3. Create buffer zones around sensitive features to minimize negative impacts of future development
4. Discourage development within the 100 year flood plain of the Pine, Maple and Bad Rivers
5. Seek ways to have new or expanded businesses contribute to the cost of mitigating impacts created by those businesses
6. Work with local conservation organizations and/or Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment to preserve and enhance those resources for public observation or use
7. Provide and encourage input to state's Right to Farm Committee to modify high intensity farming regulations

State Street, Alma

Objective 1.4: Protect the quality and quantity of the County's ground water and surface water

Strategies

1. Work with the County Health Department to determine appropriate locations for on-site sewage disposal systems and minimum acceptable lot sizes to reduce the potential impact on ground water supplies
2. Do not permit uses and activities which might contribute pollution to rivers, to locate nearby, or require developers to take measures to prevent point or non-point source pollution from entering the river
3. Seek opportunities to improve the water quality of the community rivers and reclaim it as a recreational resource and natural amenity
4. Continue special efforts to clean the Pine River
5. Develop a regional approach to storm water management.
6. Develop a wellhead protection plan.

Objective 1.5: Remove existing blighted conditions and prevent the creation of new ones

Strategies

1. Adopt a uniform blight ordinance to address the aesthetic, health, and safety considerations associated with such conditions
2. Develop a multi-jurisdictional blight ordinance enforcement program

Objective 1.6: Increase energy conservation practices among government, businesses and residents

Strategies

1. Institute, evaluate and upgrade any necessary, energy conservation measures with government facilities and equipment
2. Promote energy conservation among commercial and industrial businesses

Goal 2: Strengthen the existing cities, villages and hamlets to serve as quality community centers for living, working, and recreating

Objective 2.1: Improve the physical appearance of the Gratiot County downtowns and business districts to enhance community image.

Strategies

1. Establish gateway districts at all major entrances to the cities and shopping districts to improve the visitor's first visual impression of the cities, especially the east and north entrances to Alma
2. Update municipal signage to be aesthetically pleasing, uniform, and in character of each city
3. Enhance the waterfront and central business districts, including the Riverfront Brownfield redevelopment project
4. Commission an updated market analysis for the riverfront project
5. Pursue additional funding and tax programs to encourage Brownfield mitigation along riverfront

6. Develop or revise local downtown plans to address specific improvements (e.g. streetscaping, landscaping, façade enhancement, etc.) and follow the plan's recommendations
7. Develop ideas to preserve and enhance the historic character of the downtown buildings
8. Through the zoning ordinance and incentive programs, encourage the creation of second floor loft apartments in the downtown
9. Work with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., local DDA's, and Chambers of Commerce to market and promote County-wide downtowns to shoppers and potential developers/new businesses
10. Work with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., local DDA's, and Chambers of Commerce to recruit of small businesses into the County's downtowns
11. Work with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., local DDA's, Chambers of Commerce, and volunteer professionals to develop and implement a professional design assistance program to downtown property owners/retailers that helps identify specific cost-effective building improvements that fit within the community's character
12. Clean and redevelop former Velsicol plant site for reuse

Objective 2.2: Maintain and enhance existing neighborhoods

Strategies

1. Provide adequate areas in the vicinity of the Alma College campus for multiple family and student housing while minimizing the encroachment of multiple-family and student housing units into established one and two-family neighborhoods
2. Prohibit the encroachment of large commercial and industrial development into established one and two-family neighborhoods through the zoning ordinance and the requirement of adequate buffers
3. Install sidewalks, street trees, parks and other amenities in neighborhoods, as needed, with a sidewalk on at least one side of every street
4. Identify historic structures in the community and consider the establishment of historic districts
5. Identify redevelopment areas within neighborhoods and take appropriate actions to remove and replace dilapidated housing
6. Work with local housing agencies to identify and implement appropriate housing programs for rehabilitation of single-family homes
7. Through zoning and incentive programs, encourage infill development of vacant lots within neighborhoods that fit well with the existing character
8. Ensure that infrastructure to support existing neighborhoods is maintained and improved, especially by paving residential streets and continuing the sidewalk replacement program
9. Continue and enhance local tree planting and landscaping programs
10. Continue MDOT Enhancement Grant program to connect key areas of cities, including downtown, parks, Historical Society, library, etc.

11. Develop additional residential areas to provide a mix of housing types that addresses the housing needs of all residents, with respect to size, expense and location.
12. Employ neo-traditional neighborhood design concepts in new housing development, emphasizing pedestrian circulation, public open spaces, quality architectural design, etc.
13. Develop new housing only where it can be adequately served by schools, parks and open space, streets, emergency services, storm drainage and utilities.
14. Work with neighboring townships to annex or enter into P.A. 425 Agreements for additional residential areas.
15. Coordinate new senior housing with Masonic Pathways.
16. Consider riverfront locations for new residential development, as available.
17. Develop former airport on Bridge Avenue in Alma into residential sites with full city services.
18. Develop parcel on M-46 in St. Louis south of Hidden Oaks Golf Course with mixed uses.

Objective 2.3: Provide more recreation options and places of interest within cities

Strategies

1. Encourage further development and construction of the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail and develop a trail head for the trail in downtown Alma
2. Include the Pine River in recreational plans
3. Explore opportunities to partner with other groups, such as libraries, schools, and local recreation groups to find ways to program activities and

Woodland Wonderland, Ithaca

entertainment for residents of all ages
4. Create pedestrian and non-motorized linkages from the neighborhoods to recreational facilities
5. Develop a teen recreation park featuring a skate park.

Objective 2.4: Encourage the development of a variety of housing types

Strategies

1. Through zoning and incentive programs, promote residential development that includes a mix of new homes that are affordable to all income levels and household types
2. Through zoning and incentive programs, encourage the development of suitable housing for the elderly population near the downtowns

Objective 2.5: Concentrate intense development such as residential subdivisions, commerce, and industry in and around urban centers where similar activities are available and/or the infrastructure (public water and sewer, roads, and other services) is already in place or can be expanded cost effectively

Strategies

1. Do not establish commercial, industrial, and intense residential zoning districts in areas where public water and sanitary sewer are unavailable or cannot be reasonably extended from an existing source

Tower House, St. Louis

Goal 3: Provide quality public services, such as water, sewer, public safety, and transportation network, in the most cost effective manner

Objective 3.1: Provide utilities adequate to service existing and future development

Strategies

1. Develop a plan to begin replacing or repairing aging sewer infrastructure
2. Develop a plan that outlines if, when, and where water and sewer infrastructure will be extended and how the ongoing costs of these services will be covered (e.g. tax sharing agreement)
3. Encourage developers to place all power, telephone, cable, and broadband lines underground where physically and financially feasible
4. Survey residents and businesses about existing local public facilities and services and develop a capital improvements program that reflects the most desired facilities and public's willingness to pay for them
5. Reduce infiltration and inflow into the sanitary sewer system
6. Improve water systems in the city of Alma and the City of St. Louis with potential for a combined Water Authority
7. Encourage the use of alternative energy sources

Objective 3.2: Maintain and expand the road network for safe and effective vehicular circulation

Strategies

1. Work with the County Road Commission to prevent through traffic on local roads with designated truck routes
2. Encourage developers to employ access management techniques, wherever possible, to improve vehicular circulation
3. Expand DART services, with emphasis on DART vehicular needs in new commercial, office and medical developments
4. Cooperate with the Gratiot County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation to ensure that a proper relationship exists between planned road improvements and the jurisdiction's desired future land use pattern
5. Provide a transportation system that recognizes the need for both auto and truck traffic and eliminates as many points of conflict between the two as possible
6. Increase safety by providing opportunities for non-motorized circulation along existing and planned road systems
7. Encourage the development of service drives along significant commercial corridors such as Alger Road in order to facilitate safe and efficient vehicular turning movements
8. Require that private roads be built to public road standards
9. Work with MDOT to complete US-127
10. Reconstruct bridges as necessary, such as the bridge near the intersection of Riverview Drive & Ennis Road
11. Pave roads as necessary, such as Harrison Road from Alger to State

Objective 3.3: Provide high quality public safety services throughout Gratiot County

Strategies

1. Maintain the current mutual aid agreements for firefighting and police while researching ways to improve current mutual aid agreements
2. Maintain the current private emergency medical service
3. Continuously upgrade emergency medical services within a cost-effective framework that focuses on local needs
4. Encourage, through local health care providers, preventative health programs (dietary education, exercise) to local residents

Objective 3.4: Provide public transit services within and connecting to the County

Strategies

1. Seek opportunities to improve transportation access to those sectors of the population in need, such as the elderly and handicapped, as technology advances and funding becomes available
2. Support opportunities to improve rail transportation service as technology advances and funding becomes available
3. Work with bus companies to increase bus service that connects Gratiot County to Lansing, Grand Rapids, Saginaw, and other significant hubs

Objective 3.5: Ensure that adequate land is reserved for public facilities such as fire stations and other facilities

Strategies

1. Plan for possible relocation of Police Department in cooperation with the needs of Fire Department
2. Zone all sites appropriately
3. Reevaluate needs on a regular basis
4. Plan for a new fire station for Mid-Michigan Community Fire Department in St. Louis

Objective 3.7: Provide non-motorized facilities to increase transportation opportunities

Strategies

1. Install sidewalks on at least one side of all city streets
2. Establish a sidewalk replacement/repair policy that is cost-effective to both the cities and residents
3. Develop non-motorized paths to connect the communities in Gratiot County.

Objective 3.8: Develop a county-wide recycling program

Objective 3.9: Work with high-speed internet carriers to provide service throughout the County

Objective 3.10: Improve and maintain the Gratiot Community Airport

Strategies

1. Expand membership of the airport authority.
2. Develop a stable funding source for the airport.

Goal 4: Provide and sustain economic opportunities by retaining, attracting and growing quality employers, including those within the agriculture, industrial and commercial sectors

Objective 4.1: Promote the well-planned development and redevelopment of vacant commercial property with high-quality uses that expand the commercial options

Strategies

1. Collaborate with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., DDAs and the Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce to assists in the marketing of vacant commercial properties
2. Develop electronic marketing brochure to entice retail and professional services to the downtown area
3. Through zoning and the site plan review process institute measures that promote effective circulation in commercial areas, such as: minimizing the number and spacing of access points, maximizing curb radii, parallel access drives, landscaping, control of sign size and number, pedestrian facilities, and careful placement of traffic control devices
4. Encourage the establishment of additional restaurants, with an emphasis on providing more upscale dining opportunities
5. Promote the development of an energy park on the former oil refinery site
6. Install new planting system for the Alma downtown and north town area.
7. Develop common zoning district terminology within Gratiot County.
8. Work with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc. to promote the Renaissance Zone as an ideal place for additional commercial development

Middleton Diner

Objective 4.2: Retain and enhance existing commercial development

Strategies

1. Improve the image of key commercial corridors through signage controls, landscaping, and streetscaping
2. Work with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth to access any incentive programs that can strengthen local commercial and industrial operations and help retain local jobs
3. Review zoning parking requirements for commercial and industrial districts.
4. Review height restrictions in zoning ordinance with an eye towards permitting more intensive development in select areas.
5. Develop a more secure and stable funding source for the economic development efforts in Gratiot County.

Objective 4.3: Preserve and enhance the vitality of the County's downtowns

Strategies

1. Limit commercial zoning outside of the downtowns while allowing for some home-based business incubator opportunities
2. Encourage the development of additional residential units in the downtowns, such as second-story loft apartments
3. Encourage the establishment of additional restaurants in the downtowns
4. Complete a market study to determine what businesses can be supported in the downtown areas
5. Work with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc. to recruit business that will be supported and fit into the downtown areas
6. Identify and establish a mechanism for financing recruitment efforts
7. Establish community-wide and downtown events and promotional campaigns
8. Institute a close working relationship between DDAs, merchants and Police Departments to establish a long-range comprehensive program to deter crime within the DDA district
9. Develop advertising and promotional campaigns that emphasize the downtown

Downtown Ithaca

as a safe, comfortable and leisurely place to shop
10. Add bicycle racks to more locations in the downtown.
11. Make better interconnections between the downtown, the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail, and the Riverwalk through paths and signage.
12. Seek funding through federal grant programs for transportation and streetscape improvements
13. Install landscaping, street furniture, way-finding signage, and other amenities where necessary to enhance the downtown streetscape

Objective 4.4: Retain and promote the expansion of the industrial tax base with a variety of small, clean, high-tech industries

Strategies

1. Continue efforts to work with eligible businesses and industries to take advantage of available tax abatement programs
2. Maintain and consider additional incentives to desired industrial firms wishing to locate with the community, such as tax abatements for clean high-tech industry
3. Provide the technological infrastructure necessary for modern, high-tech industry, such as broadband and wireless connectivity. To further this effort, continue participation in the multi-county Link Michigan Telecommunications Planning Effort.
4. Utilize state and federal grants to assist in the development of infrastructure needed for new or expanded businesses in the industrial parks
5. Investigate and utilize available grant programs aimed at industry retention and attraction
6. Identify optimal locations and assemble land for future industrial development and establish additional industrial parks
7. Solicit high-tech/medical research users to establish a technology park or "smart park"
8. Redevelop existing Brownfield sites, such as Alma Iron & Metal site and the former Midwest Refinery site on Bridge Avenue
9. Redevelop the former Total/UDS refinery property north of Superior for industrial uses. Market the community's industrial properties with the assistance of the Greater Gratiot Development
10. Encourage the development of new types of industries, especially those that are economically associated with the existing industrial base and compatible with the environment and existing land use pattern
11. Provide industry at locations which can be readily serviced by public utilities and which are easily accessible to the existing transportation network
12. Preserve and rehabilitate appropriate industrial areas by removing incompatible uses, consolidating land, and removing vacant and substandard buildings, as well as giving particular attention to landscaping, buffer strips, off-street parking, and other design matters
13. Seek a means of attracting and assisting existing industries to expand their operations to enhance the community

Objective 4.5: Minimize and/or mitigate the impact of existing and future industrial land uses on the environment and non-compatible uses

Strategies

1. Consider the development of new industrial parks in designated areas away from the waterfront and other incompatible uses, but with access to highways, adequate utilities, and technological infrastructure. Support the relocation of any remaining industries away from the waterfront to industrially-zoned properties
2. Continue mitigation efforts on existing Brownfield areas
3. Tailor zoning regulations to promote clean industrial uses, and discourage large, heavy industrial uses in inappropriate locations such as adjacent to residential uses, schools, the downtown, and the waterfront
4. Revise or improve regulation when necessary to help lessen the impact of industrial nuisances such as noise, odor, dust, vibration, outdoor storage, and intensive truck operations.
5. Separate industrial development from residential uses by open space and landscaped buffers and/or other transitional land use
6. Promote well-designed and landscaped industrial buildings with adequate environmental performance standards
7. Promote the development of and encourage of the use of alternative energy sources

Objective 4.6: Establish visitor and recreation-oriented businesses where appropriate

Strategies

1. Encourage and promote agri-tourism type businesses, such as the development of a Historic Farmstead
2. Encourage businesses that help people enjoy and connect to area-wide natural resources, such as rivers

Goal 5: Provide high quality of life opportunities, such as premier cultural and recreational resources, for the enjoyment of people of all generations

Objective 5.1: Provide public access to the waterfront

Strategies

1. Acquire additional land to expand the Riverwalk, including potential extensions westward into Arcada Township and eastward into Pine River Township and the City of St. Louis
2. Preserve an area for public access to the river in future riverfront developments

Objective 5.2: Provide a system of parks and recreational opportunities that meets the needs of all segments of the population

Strategies

1. Develop a community recreational center to offer recreation activities for all ages
2. Consider the development of an art center for youth and adult art activities
3. Consider the creation of a Gratiot Area Recreational Authority to coordinate and improve county-wide recreational assets and programming
4. Work with existing groups or the proposed Gratiot Area Recreational Authority to provide more recreational activities for youth and teens, especially after school
5. Continue to expand the technology available at library facilities
6. Develop recreational opportunities and programming on the Pine and Maple rivers
7. Coordinate parks and recreation facilities and programming with Alma College and public schools, and possibly through the proposed Gratiot Area Recreation Authority
8. Maintain a current Parks and Recreation Plan, with approval from the MDNR to qualify the Gratiot County communities for recreation grant funding
9. Apply for public and private grants to purchase open space and recreational land along rivers and within cities
10. Cooperate with the State of Michigan and adjoining communities in the development of recreation and community facilities
11. Increase and improve recreational resources, such as camping at Reeds Park, a nature center, and an expanded non-motorized trail system

Objective 5.3: Enhance the walkability of the cities

Strategies

1. Provide pedestrian and non-motorized transportation facilities throughout the county and cities to link homes, schools, recreation areas, and downtown and other shopping areas
2. Strengthen pedestrian access to the riverfront
3. Maintain sidewalks to provide a safe and convenient pedestrian and non-motorized transportation
4. Within the cities, provide sidewalks on both sides of the street in all new developments

Objective 5.4: Ensure that adequate land is reserved for parks, open space and connecting trails

Strategies

1. Work with existing recreation plans and implement the plans
2. Include the development or improvement of specific recreational sites, such as the W.T. Morris Memorial Swimming Pool, the proposed St. Louis Historic Park, and a Michigan Avenue boat launch, in local recreation plans
3. Create a specific plan for the trail system, including connections to cities and other community hubs
4. Encourage developers to include parks in the overall development plan

5. Progress with replacing and adding trees and improving landscaping in all park areas

Objective 5.5: Develop a Countywide Community Center

Strategies

1. Work collaboratively to determine the site, uses, design, and raise funds for the proposed Community Center

Goal 6: Provide quality educational opportunities and experiences for all residents of Gratiot County from birth through adulthood

Objective 6.1: Maintain and enhance the quality of the Public Schools for the continued success of the community

Strategies

1. Hold semi-annual meetings with the School Board to discuss community issues of mutual interest
2. Investigate educational opportunities that jurisdictions and community organizations could offer to supplement school curriculum
3. Keep the school district abreast of development plans that may impact school enrollment
4. Recognize increasing age of existing school facilities and plan for replacement

Objective 6.2: Ensure that adequate land is reserved for public facilities such as schools, libraries, fire stations, community centers and other facilities

Strategies

1. Work closely with the schools and the Department Heads of municipalities to determine future public space requirements
2. Acquire land needed for public facilities
3. Work with schools to identify school sites

Alma Riverwalk

Objective 6.3: Develop the skills and knowledge area residents need for employment opportunities that include retraining for cutting edge industries.

Objective 6.4: Provide a world class education for children to develop into lifelong contributing adults.

Strategies

1. Develop and implement rich curricular opportunities to meet the needs of all learners.
2. Support early childhood initiatives to build literacy and math skills in preparation for entering kindergarten.
3. Identify students early in their school experience at-risk of dropping out and organize and implement an advocate program.

Strategies

1. Form a coalition among local industries, educational institutions and to a limited extent the Jobs Commission or other state agency to provide state-of-the-art technical training for existing and potential employees
2. Develop a community college in Gratiot County
3. Increase vocational educational opportunities
4. Promote the involvement of citizens in continuous education programs
5. Develop a program that helps support and mentor new entrepreneurs

Goal 7: Continue and strengthen quality community collaboration to promote sustainable planning practices and elevate Gratiot County as a whole

Objective 7.1: Develop and nurture community involvement, community pride and community awareness

Strategies

1. Continue to celebrate the Annual Highland Festival and Games
2. In coordination with Alma College and the Public Schools, organize and publicize cultural, civic, and educational events open to the public
3. Encourage quality local attractions and community events that will promote citizen and business participation
4. Work with service groups to fix-up and clean-up residential, commercial and industrial areas to increase community pride
5. Encourage coordinated community and nonprofit volunteer programs and ensure volunteers are rewarded and/or appreciated
6. Redesign and promote the community calendar

Objective 7.2: Enhance the relationship with educational systems to maximize the quality and efficiency of recreational facilities and services provided

Strategies

1. Coordinate parks and recreation facilities and programming through the proposed Gratiot Area Recreation Authority

2. Hold quarterly meetings strictly to monitor recreational activities and goals from both parties concerned
3. Include in quarterly newsletter information about recreational objectives and goals
4. Design and send out a follow-up community survey on the recreational status of the area

Objective 7.3: Coordinate facilities, services, and land use decisions with adjacent governmental units and on a county-wide basis

Strategies

1. Participate in environmental initiatives at the watershed level
2. Establish an Urban Growth Area in coordination with adjacent jurisdictions to determine the most appropriate locations for future development and potential P.A. 425 agreements along common borders
3. Coordinate provision of emergency services with adjacent communities
4. Coordinate planning and zoning between adjacent communities and on a county-wide basis

Objective 7.4: Foster a positive relationship with local institutions and businesses for the economic and social benefit of all

Strategies

1. Coordinate cultural and civic events with Alma College and local businesses
2. Collaborate with local business on commercial and industrial marketing efforts
3. Collaborate with the hospital, Masonic Pathways, and Alma College to develop a regional medical center
4. Capitalize on off-season conferences and meetings held at Alma College, for the benefit of area businesses
5. Establish community improvement programs that facilitate and utilize public and private sector partnerships

VI. Future Land Use

Introduction

The future land use categories for this Plan were originally developed by compiling language from individual master plans and concepts presented in the *Goals, Objectives, & Strategies* chapter of this Plan. The Steering Committee then refined the language through a review process along with additional public feedback. The Future Land Use Maps show where these land uses are preferred.

Sparks Pickle Company

Agriculture

The *Agriculture* category includes farming, livestock, farming related business, wind farms, and related farmsteads. Residential development within this category will be limited to preserve the overall rural character and prevent the fragmentation of farmland.

Rural Residential

The *Rural Residential* category is an intermediate land use between agricultural and urban areas. In general, *Rural Residential* units are low-density residential developments. However, cluster design is encouraged as a design option in this category for the creation of common open space that helps preserve natural areas and agricultural lands. For example, a clustered residential development with committed open space for recreation, trails, or a unique environmental feature would be compatible with this category. In addition, cluster design is encouraged to allow for the most cost effective expansion of urban services if these services are deemed necessary within a *Rural Residential* area.

Neighborhood Residential

The *Neighborhood Residential* category includes primarily single-family residential developments that generally have the characteristics of traditional urban neighborhoods, such as a grid street system, sidewalks, small lots, and shallow setbacks. In-fill housing and integrated expansion at the edges is encouraged in existing *Neighborhood Residential* areas. In addition, a modest mix of non-residential uses is allowed in these areas to address the needs of neighborhood residents.

Multi-Family Residential

The *Multi-Family Residential* category provides for existing and future duplexes, attached single-family townhomes, and multi-family apartments. In addition, a modest mix of non-residential uses is allowed in these areas to address the needs of neighborhood residents.

Manufactured Housing Community

The *Manufactured Housing Community* land use category provides for existing and future manufactured housing communities.

Public/Quasi-Public

Public and quasi-public land uses include facilities that are designed to serve the public interest, such as education (with the exception of Alma College, which is under the campus category), cultural, government, religious, health, correction, military, cemeteries, airports, senior care centers, utilities, and public safety.

Campus

The *Campus* land use category includes campus style facilities, such as Alma College, the Masonic Home, and the Sisters of Mercy. Residential and commercial uses associated with the facility are permitted in the *Campus* land use area.

Downtown /Mixed Use

The *Downtown/Mixed Use* category provides for areas where combinations of employment, housing, shopping, and services are integrated in a compact, pedestrian oriented, urban form, which encourages community interaction. Small shops, offices, restaurants, entertainment establishments, second story apartments and condominiums, and public areas are characteristic uses of this land use category.

General Mixed Use

The *General Mixed Use* category provides for areas outside of the downtowns where combinations of employment, housing, shopping, and services are integrated. In some cases, these areas may serve as the basis of a hamlet-style hub. In these instances, compact, pedestrian oriented development is desired.

General Commercial

The *General Commercial* land use designation includes large-scale businesses that provide shopping and services at a regional level. New and renovated buildings within this district will be subject to standards that support current access management techniques, environmentally sensitive landscaping, and quality design standards.

Waterfront Development

The *Waterfront Development* category provides for redevelopment opportunities along the Pine River. This category allows for a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational land uses and emphasizes pedestrian circulation, environmental protection, and both private and public waterfront access.

Pine River Dam

Office/Research/Technical

The *Office/Research/Technical* category provides for industrial uses oriented toward research, design, prototype development, and technical training. Ideally, these areas will be of a campus-style character, with pedestrian amenities, attention to landscaping, and environmental protection.

Office Park

The *Professional Office Park* provides for office clusters that solely offer professional services, including, but not limited to, executive, administrative, clerical, accounting, engineering, architecture and medical functions.

Light Industrial

The *Light Industrial* category provides for industrial activities that pose minimal environmental impacts upon surrounding areas and uses, such as warehousing and storage; wholesale establishments; tool, die and machine shops; manufacturing; and limited processing of materials. Screening of outside storage in these areas is encouraged.

Heavy Industrial

The *Heavy Industrial* category provides for general or heavy industrial activities such as those which involve the use of heavy machinery, regular traffic by larger trucks, extensive amounts of contiguous land, service by railroad lines or major thoroughfares, processing of chemical or raw materials, assembly, generation of industrial waste, noise, odor, or traffic problems. Given their potential environmental impacts, screening and buffering of heavy industrial uses is encouraged.

Excavation

The excavation category provides for lands that are or will be commercially excavated.

Natural & Open Space

Forested – This category includes lands that serve as wildlife habitat or that are used for timber harvesting. Other uses may include forest related recreational activities, such as hunting, fishing, skiing and hiking.

Open Space/Conservation Area – This category includes undeveloped land that contributes ecological, scenic or recreational value. Due to potential problems associated with flooding and water quality, lands adjacent to existing watercourses are particularly important. This category may also include open space buffers between various land uses.

Recreational

Neighborhood Park – This category includes lands that provide recreational opportunities at the neighborhood level, as opposed to large, more specialized parks meant for community-wide use.

Community-Wide Park – This category includes lands that provide large-scale or specialized recreational opportunities designed for use by the broader community. These facilities may be either public or private.

Urban Growth Areas

The *Urban Growth Area* are not specifically a land use, but are areas where the community would like to direct more intense development and where the potential extension of services, such as water and sewer, would be the most cost effective. *Urban Growth Areas* are determined by the affected jurisdictions and often involve a written agreement to appropriately manage the expansion of services. Typically, these agreement are "425" agreements, based on Act 425 of 1984 which is also known by the title *Intergovernmental Conditional Transfer of Property by Contract Act.*

At the time of this Plan, all the cities in Gratiot County have negotiated 425 agreements with many of their neighboring townships. The agreements provide for the transfer of land to the cities in turn for sharing the increased tax revenue received from intensive development of the property. Alma has agreements with Arcada Township, Pine River Township and one with the City of St. Louis and Pine River Township. Ithaca has 425 agreements with Newark Township and North Star Township. St. Louis has agreements with Bethany Township and the City of Alma and Pine River Township.

VII. Zoning Plan

Introduction

The Zoning Plan portion of the Master Plan helps ensure the Plan's effectiveness by linking the Plan to county and local zoning ordinances. The Plan provides a documented statement of the community's wishes while the zoning ordinance provides the regulatory tool to achieve these wishes.

Relationship of Zoning to the Master Plan

The requirement for a zoning plan has a long legal history in Michigan as the requirement has existed in every zoning-enabling act since the City-Village Zoning Act, PA 201 of 1921. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA), PA 110 of 2006 requires in Sec. 203 (1) that zoning be based on a plan and includes a long list of things that such a plan is designed to promote. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, as amended in 2008 (MPEA) includes specific zoning plan requirements in Sec. 33 (2)(d).

Originally, zoning was intended to promote harmonious uses within surrounding areas. Today it also serves the following purposes:

1. To promote orderly growth in a manner consistent with land use policies and the Master Plan.
2. To promote attractiveness in the jurisdiction's physical environment by providing for appropriate land uses and lot regulations.
3. To accommodate special, complex or unique uses through such mechanisms as planned unit developments, overlay districts, or special use permits.
4. To guide development in a way that helps prevent future conflicting land uses (e.g. industrial uses adjacent to residential areas).
5. To preserve and protect existing land uses until such time as they may change in accordance with the Master Plan.

Relationship of Zoning to the Master Plan

Aside from six townships, which are under county zoning, each jurisdiction has individual zoning ordinances. Therefore, this section presents a Zoning Plan tailored to each jurisdiction in addition to the six county zoned jurisdictions. Each of the Zoning Plans addresses:

1. Existing dimensional standards
2. The relationship between existing zoning districts and the proposed future land use categories
3. Proposed changes to the zoning ordinance

Dimensional Standards

The following tables in Figure 7.1 reflect the existing development requirements for each jurisdiction.

Figure 7.1 - Dimensional Standards

City of Alma

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot per Dwelling Unit		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides: Least One	Sides: Total of Two	Rear	Floors: 1	Floors: 2		
R1 Single Family Residential	6,000	60	2.5	35	30	5	15	30	700	900	30	Notes: 1,2,3,4
R1A Single Family Residential	4,000	40	2.5	35	25	5	15	30	500	700	30	Notes: 1,2,3,4,5
R2- Two-family Residential	7,500	60	2.5	35	25	5	15	30	500	700	30	Notes: 1,2,3,4,5
R3- Multi-family Residential	12,000		4	45	30	10	20	40	500	700	40	Notes 3,4
C Campus	6,000	60	4	45	30	10	20	40	700	900		Notes: 2,3,4
MHP Mobile Home Park												Section 60-157
PUD Planned Unit Development												Article 5
BMR Business & Multi-residential	5,000	50	4	45	30	5	15	20	500	700	40	
OS Office Service Commercial	5,000	50	4	45	30	5	15	20			40	Note: 6
WF Waterfront			4	45								
B1 Central Business			6	75								
B2 General Business	10,000	80	4	45	35	5	10	30			40	Note: 6

City of Alma									
ORT Office Research Industrial	12,000	100	4	45	35	10	20	35	40
LI Limited Industrial	12,000	100	4	45	35	10	20	35	40
GI General Industrial	20,000	100	4	45	40	20	40	50	40
SR Storage Restricted	12,000	80	2.5	35	35	10	20	35	40

1) Accessory building shall not exceed a height of 15 feet
2) For corner lots, the width of the side yard abutting the street shall be no less than ten feet.
3) The entrance to residential garages shall be no less than twenty feet from the street line.
4) See accessory building Section 60-154
5) See non-conforming lots Section 60-129
6) The sideyard setback shall not be required in cases of multiple ownership when the owners of adjoining lots propose to erect a building (or buildings) which shall abut or occupy the common property line of such adjoining lots; provided, however, that no such building erection shall take place without prior site plan review by the Planning Commission

Arcada Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures	Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Rear	Floors 1	2		
A-1 General Agricultural	1 acre	200	35	50	20	50			20%	
RR Rural Residential	2 acre	295	35	50	20	50			20%	
R-1 Suburban Residential	30,000' single family; 1 acre two-family	90' Single Family; 150 two-family	35	35	20	40			30%	
R-2 Manufactured Housing										
C-1 Local Commercial	1 acre	200	35	75	10	25			40%	
C-2 General Commercial	2 acre	200	35	75	20	25			50%	
C-3 Airport Commercial	1 acre	200	35	75	10	25			35%	
I-1 Light Industrial	1 acre	200	35	50	20	25			40%	
I-2 Heavy Industrial	2 acre	200	35	75	20	25			50%	

Footnotes for Arcada
Site Development Requirements

1. All uses shall comply with the site development requirements in Table 7.2, unless otherwise specified by Article 11 – Standards for Specific Special Land Uses or Article 20 – General Provisions. In addition, all uses shall comply with all other applicable site development provisions of this Ordinance, including, but not limited to, the following Articles: .Article 15 - Signs; Article 16 - Off-Street Parking and Loading; Article 17 - Landscaping and Screening; and Article 18 - Environmental Standards.
2. The depth of a lot shall not exceed 4 times its width.
3. The front yard setback shall be measured from the road right-of way line.
4. The minimum parcel size shall be one (1) acre in the A-1 District and the overall density permitted for any parcel or parcels existing as of March 31, 1997 shall be restricted to the following,:
   a. For the first ten (10) acres or any fraction thereof, four (4) dwelling units.
   b. For each whole ten (10) acres in excess of the first ten (10) acres, up to and including one hundred twenty (120) acres, one (1) additional dwelling unit up to a maximum of eleven (11) additional dwellings.

c. For each whole forty (40) acres in excess of the first one hundred twenty (120) acres, one (1) additional dwelling.
d. For a parcel of not less than twenty (20) acres, two (2) additional dwellings may be permitted if one of the following conditions apply:
    1) Because of the establishment of one (1) or more new roads, no new driveway accesses to an existing public road for any of the resulting parcels or dwelling units under subsections (a), (b), or (c) above, or this subsection are created or required.
    2) One (1) of the resulting parcels or dwelling units permitted under subsections (a), (b), or (c) above and this subsection comprise not less than sixty percent (60%) of the area of the parcel existing as of March 31, 1997.

5. The maximum height of farm buildings and structures shall be one hundred thirty (130) feet. All farm buildings and structures over eighty (80) feet shall be set back from a lot line a distance at least equal to one half the height of the building.
6. A new residential structure shall maintain a minimum 150 feet setback from all lot lines of an existing intensive livestock operation.
7. Minimum setback shall be increased to 75 feet in the case where the yard abuts a Conservation (Agriculture) or Residential District.

Village of Ashley

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback					Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides		Rear	Floors	1	2	
RA- Residential & Agriculture	5000			50	40	20		70				No Regulations
C- Commercial & Warehouse	None		2	20	None	None		None				No Regulations
D- Industrial	None		4	40	None	None		None				50%

Bethany Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Housing Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Rear			
AG-Agricultural	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	20	25	960		
R1 Residential-Single Family	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	20	25	960		
R2 Residential-Multiple Family	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	20	25	960		
R3 Residential-Manufactured Housing	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	20	25	960		
C1-Commercial	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	20	25			
I-Industrial	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	20	25			

1) Where C1 or I abut AG, the side yard shall be 50 feet in the C1 or I district.

2) Corner yard minimum- Fifty feet for both the front and side yards

Village of Breckenridge

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum housing unit	
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Lot Size	Front	Sides At Least	Rear	Families 1	Families 2
A1- Agricultural					≥12,000sf	35	10	35		
					8,400-12,000 sf	18	10	35		
	43,560	80	2.5	35	<8,400 sf	10	10	35	1,000	
R1- Residential and Two Family					≥12,000sf	35	10	35		
					8,400-12,000 sf	18	10	35		
	12,000	80	2.5	35	<8,400 sf	10	10	35	1,000	1500
R2- Multiple Family					≥12,000sf	35	10	35		
					8,400-12,000 sf	18	10	35		
	12,000	80	2.5	35	<8,400 sf	10	10	35	1,000	1500
R3- Manufactured Home	See Section 306 for Mobile Home Park District Regulations									
C1-Business District	None	None	3	40		None	None	None		
C2- Business District					≥12,000sf	25	15	25		
					8,400-12,000 sf	25	None	25		
	21,780	None	3	40	<8,400 sf	10	None	25		
I-Industrial					≥12,000sf	50	30	25		
					8,400-12,000 sf	10	None	25		
	None	None			<8,400 sf	10	None	25		

1) Accessory structures in A1,R1 R2 may be set back 6 feet from side yards and rear yards.

2) In A1, R1 and R2, require a minimum 25 feet setbacks for the outside yard on corner lots. The interior side yard is 4 feet.

Elba Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Lot Width	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At Least	Rear			
AG- Agricultural	40 acres	660			50	20	50	960	20%	
RP Rural Preservation	2 acres	200	2.5	25	100	25	50	960	20%	
RR- Rural Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	60	10	30	960	30%	
R1- Low Density Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	40	10	30	960	30%	
R2-Medium Density Residential	1/2 acres	100	2	30	30	10	30	960	30%	
MHP Manufactured Home										
B1-Local Business	1/2 acres	100	2	30	20	20	40		35%	
B2- Highway Business District	2 acres	150	2	30	100	30	30		35%	
I1- Industrial	1.5 acres	150	3	45	50	30	30		35%	

Emerson Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot per Family		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides	Rear	Overall	1.5 & 2 Story		
AR-Agriculture-Residential	43,560	150	2	30	50	25	50	720	600/first floor		720 for mobile home
R-Residential	43,560	150	2	30	50	25	50	1200	1000/first floor		Barns must be 200 feet from house
B-Business	43,560	150	2	30	50						Other than dwelling minimum 35 feet; 720' for mobile home
RE-Recreational			2	30	50						
I-Industrial					50						

1) Minimum floor area for other permitted (besides homes) buildings shall be determined by the Board of Appeals

2) Sideyard set back for lots at intersections shall be at least 50 from edge of the right-of-way

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Sides Total of Both	Rear			
Agricultural	15000	100	2.5	50	50	30	60	50	720 Residential		Junk yard at least 100 feet from road w/ 8' fence
Residential	8000		2.5	35	10	6	12	10	720		
Commercial			3	60	50	30	100	100	720		
Industrial											
Recreational											

Hamilton Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Lot Width	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Rear			
AG- Agricultural	40 acres	660			50	20	50	960	20%	
RP Rural Preservation	2 acres	200	2.5	25	100	25	50	960	20%	
RR- Rural Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	60	10	30	960	30%	
R1- Low Density Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	40	10	30	960	30%	
R2-Medium Density Residential	1/2 acres	100	2	30	30	10	30	960	30%	
MHP Manufactured Home										
B1-Local Business	1/2 acres	100	2	30	20	20	40		35%	
B2- Highway Business District	2 acres	150	2	30	100	30	30		35%	
I1- Industrial	1.5 acres	150	3	45	50	30	30		35%	

City of Ithaca

Zoning District		Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures	Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings		Additional Regulations
		Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Feet	Front	Sides At Least	Sides Corner-by street	Rear	Floors First floor	Floors Overall	Dwelling	All Other	
R-1 Rural residential		22,000	120	35	40	20		25	960	1,400	15%	40%	
R-2 Suburban residential		20,000	100	35	35	15	27	25	960	1,200	15%	40%	
R-3 Community residential		12,000	80	35	30	15	20	30	960	1,000	20%	40%	
R-4 Multiple-family residential	Two-family			35	30	20		30					Notes: 1, 2 & 3
	Multiple-family			40	25	20		30					
	Commercial/institutional	.5 acres per unit	90	25	9	9		15					
MH Mobile home park													Article 10
	Single& Two family	7,000	80	35	25	15	20	25	960	1,000			
	Three & four family	Note 2	90	35	25	15	20	25	Note 4				
RO Restricted office commercial	Commercial	5,000	80	35	10	15	20	25					
C-1 Central Business				40									
C-2 General Commercial		10,000	100	30	40	20		25					
I-1 Industrial		1 acre	150	30	20	20	20	25					
PIP Planned industrial park													Article 15

1) For each duplex building minimum lot size of 7,000 s.f.

2) For each multiple-family dwelling unit, the minimum lot size is: 3,000 for each efficiency or one-bedroom unit; 4,200 s.f. for each two-bedroom unit; 5,100 for each three-bedroom unit; and 5,700 s.f. for each four or more bedroom unit.

3) Minimum floor area for each dwelling unit is: 720 s.f. for each Two-family unit; 350 s.f. for each efficiency; 400s.f. for each one bedroom; 600 s.f. for each two-bedroom; 720 s.f. for each three-bedroom; and 800 s.f. for each four or more bedroom unit.

4) For each multiple-family dwelling unit, the minimum floor area is: 380 for each efficiency ; 400 one-bedroom unit; 600 s.f. for each two-bedroom unit; 720 for each three-bedroom unit; and 800 s.f. for each four or more bedroom unit plus 80 s.f. for each additional bedroom.

Lafayette Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Lot Width	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides	Rear	Floors 1	Floors 2		
AG- Agricultural	40 acres	660			50	20	50	960		20%	
RP Rural Preservation	2 acres	200	2.5	25	100	25	50	960		20%	
RR- Rural Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	60	10	30	960		30%	
R1- Low Density Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	40	10	30	960		30%	
R2-Medium Density Residential	1/2 acres	100	2	30	30	10	30	960		30%	
MHP Manufactured Home											
B1-Local Business	1/2 acres	100	2	30	20	20	40			35%	
B2- Highway Business District	2 acres	150	2	30	100	30	30			35%	
I1- Industrial	1.5 acres	150	3	45	50	30	30			35%	

Newark Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Lot Width	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Rear			
AG- Agricultural	40 acres	660			50	20	50	960	20%	
RP Rural Preservation	2 acres	200	2.5	25	100	25	50	960	20%	
RR- Rural Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	60	10	30	960	30%	
R1- Low Density Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	40	10	30	960	30%	
R2-Medium Density Residential	1/2 acres	100	2	30	30	10	30	960	30%	
MHP Manufactured Home										
B1-Local Business	1/2 acres	100	2	30	20	20	40		35%	
B2- Highway Business District	2 acres	150	2	30	100	30	30		35%	
I1- Industrial	1.5 acres	150	3	45	50	30	30		35%	

North Shade Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Sides Total of Both	Rear			
Agriculture	43,560	200	2.5	50	50	60	30	50	980		
Residential	43,560	200	2.5	35	50	60	30	50	980		
Commercial	43,560		3	60	50	100	30	100	980		

North Star Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Lot Width	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Rear			
AG- Agricultural	40 acres	660			50	20	50	960	20%	
RP Rural Preservation	2 acres	200	2.5	25	100	25	50	960	20%	
RR- Rural Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	60	10	30	960	30%	
R1- Low Density Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	40	10	30	960	30%	
R2-Medium Density Residential	1/2 acres	100	2	30	30	10	30	960	30%	
MHP Manufactured Home										
B1-Local Business	1/2 acres	100	2	30	20	20	40		35%	
B2- Highway Business District	2 acres	150	2	30	100	30	30		35%	
I1- Industrial	1.5 acres	150	3	45	50	30	30		35%	

Pine River Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures	Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit		Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Sides Where abut ROW	Rear	Single Story	Multi-story		
AG Agricultural	43,560	150	35	80	15	80	50	1000	720	None	
LDR Low Density Residential	30,000	100	35	80	20	50	50	1000	720	50%	
HDR High Density Residential		200	35	80	10	30	40	1000	720	8 units/acre	Note: 1
OFFICE Office Service Business	21,780	150	35	80	20	50	40			None	
LC Light Commercial	43,560 w/o sewer & water; 10,000 w/sewer & water	150 w/o water & sewer; 80 w/ water or sewer	35	80	10	25	50			None	
HC Heavy Commercial	43,560 w/o sewer & water; 10,000 w/sewer & water	200 w/o sewer; 120 w/sewer	35	80	25	50	50			None	
I Industrial	43,560 w/o sewer & water; 10,000 w/sewer & water	200 w/o water & sewer; 120 w/water or sewer	40	80	20	50	50			None	

1) 400 s.f/eff.; 550 s.f./one bedroom; 640 s.f. /two bedroom; 900 s.f./three bedroom; 1,000 s.f. > 4 bedrooms

City of Saint Louis

Zoning District		Minimum Size Lot per Dwelling Unit		Maximum Height of Structures	Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
		Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Sides Total of Two	Rear			
R-1 Suburban Residential		12,000	100	35	30	10	25	25	1,200	25%	Note: 1
R-2 One & Two Family Residential		8,500	66	35	20	8	20	25	1,000	25%	Notes: 2,3
R-3 Multiple Dwelling Residential	Multi-Family	4,000	66	35	20	10	25	25	600	N/A	Notes: 4, 5
	Single Family	8,500	66	35	20	10	25	25	800	N/A	Note: 6
R-4 Mobile Home Park		4,400	50	35						N/A	Note: 7
C-1 Central Business		None	None	40	None	None		24	None	N/A	
C-2 General Business		None	None	35	25	7		20	None	N/A	Note: 8
I-1 General Industrial		15,000	100	35	25	15		25	None	N/A	Notes: 9, 10
I-2 Industrial Park		1 Acre	150	35	40	20		25	None	N/A	Notes: 9, 10
C-3 Cultural		None	None	35	10	10		5	None	N/A	Note: 11

1) Minimum combined side yard setbacks 25'; 27' when side yard abuts adjoining street; minimum setback on side yard that abuts an alley- 15'

2) Minimum combined sideyard setbacks 22' when side yard abuts adjoining street; minimum setback on sideyard that abuts an alley- 10'

3) Represents 50 sq. feet for a dwelling having more than one story, 600 sq. feet per dwelling in a 2-family dwelling.

4) In multi-family dwelling, area occupied may be total site area exclusive of any dedicated public right-of-way either interior or bounding roads, utility easements or dedicated open space.

5) Minimum combined sideyard setback 20' when a side yard abuts adjoining street; minimum sideyard setback on a side yard that abuts an alley- 10'.

City of Saint Louis

6) Minimum floor area per multiple family unit; Efficient: 350 SF; One Bedroom: 400 SF; Two Bedroom: 600 SF.; Three Bedroom: 720 SF; Four+ Bedroom: 800 SF +80 SF for each additional bedroom.

7) Average of mobile home sites shall equal a minimum of 5,500 sq. feet. This may be reduced for each site up to 20%' to a minimum of 4,00 sq. feet for each sq. foot of reduction below 5,500 sq. feet. One sq. foot shall be dedicated as open space within the mobile home park.

8) Where existing commercial buildings occupy 40% or more of the frontage within the same block, the established front yard setback of those buildings shall apply.

9) Excluding antennas, water towers, chimneys, elevator, housing and similar structure.

10) Where side yard is adjacent to a side street, front yard provisions shall apply.

11) On lot lines adjacent to a residentially zoned parcel, the setbacks shall be the same as required for that residentially zoned parcel.

Seville Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Sides Total of Both	Rear			
A- Agricultural, Residential	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	25	50	25	980		
B- Recreational, Residential	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	25	50	25	980		
C- Commercial											
D- Industrial											
E- Recreational	43,560	165	2.5	35	50	25	50	25	980		

Sumner Township

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback			Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Lot Width	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Rear			
AG- Agricultural	40 acres	660			50	20	50	960	20%	
RP Rural Preservation	2 acres	200	2.5	25	100	25	50	960	20%	
RR- Rural Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	60	10	30	960	30%	
R1- Low Density Residential	2 acres	200	2	30	40	10	30	960	30%	
R2-Medium Density Residential	1/2 acres	100	2	30	30	10	30	960	30%	
MHP Manufactured Home										
B1-Local Business	1/2 acres	100	2	30	20	20	40		35%	
B2- Highway Business District	2 acres	150	2	30	100	30	30		35%	
I1- Industrial	1.5 acres	150	3	45	50	30	30		35%	

Wheeler

Zoning District	Minimum Size Lot		Maximum Height of Structures		Minimum Yard Setback				Minimum Floor Area per Unit	Maximum % Lot Area Covered by All Buildings	Additional Regulations
	Area in sq. ft.	Width at bldg. site	In Stories	In Feet	Front	Sides At least	Sides Total of Both	Rear			
A-1 Agricultural	One acre for residence; 3 acres for religious; 10 acres for all other	165	2	25 feet for residences	40	20	40	40	720		
R-1 Low Density Residential	21,780	125	2	25 feet for residences	40	20	40	40	720		Depth of lot 150 feet
R-2 Medium Density Residential	20,000 minimum or 3,000 per family	80	2	25	40	15	30	30	720		
C-1 Commercial	21,780	125	2	35	20	20	40	20	720		
I-1 Light Industrial	One acre	165		40	50	25	50	20	500		
PUD Planned Unit Development	Five acres		2	25	25	10	20	25	720		
RZ Renaissance Zone											

1) Commercial sideyard set backs may be reduced to 10 feet if next to another business or industrial use

2) Industrial sideyard set back may be reduced to 10 feet if next to another business or industrial use

The Relationship between Existing Zoning Districts and the Proposed Future Land Use Categories

The following tables in Figure 7.2 depict the existing zoning districts for each jurisdiction and they correspond with the proposed future land use designations.

Alma Proposed Land Uses & Corresponding Zoning	
Proposed Land Use Designation	Corresponding Zoning Districts
Agriculture	Not Applicable
Rural Residential	Not Applicable
Neighborhood Residential	R-1, R-1a, R-2
Multi-Family Residential	R-3
Manufactured Housing Community	MHP
Public/Quasi-Public	R-1, R-1a, R-2, R-3, BMR, B-2, LI, GI
Campus	C
Downtown/Mixed Use	B-1
General Mixed Use	BMR
General Commercial	B-2
Waterfront Development	WF
Office/Research/Technology	ORT
Office Park	OS
Light Industrial	LI
Heavy Industrial	GI
Excavation	Not Applicable
Natural & Open Space – Forested	Not Applicable
Natural & Open Space – Open Space/Conservation Area	Not Applicable
Recreational – Neighborhood Park	R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3, MHP, BMR
Recreational – Community-Wide Park	R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3, MHP, BMR
Urban Growth Areas	Included- not any one district.

Figure 7.2 - Alma Proposed Land Uses & Corresponding Zoning	
Proposed Land Use Designation	Corresponding Zoning Districts
Agriculture	Not Applicable
Rural Residential	Not Applicable
Neighborhood Residential	R-1, R-1a, R-2
Multi-Family Residential	R-3
Manufactured Housing Community	MHP
Public/Quasi-Public	R-1, R-1a, R-2, R-3, BMR, B-2, LI, GI
Campus	C
Downtown/Mixed Use	B-1
General Mixed Use	BMR
General Commercial	B-2
Waterfront Development	WF
Office/Research/Technology	ORT
Office Park	OS

Light Industrial	LI
Heavy Industrial	GI
Excavation	Not Applicable
Natural & Open Space – Forested	Not Applicable
Natural & Open Space – Open Space/Conservation Area	Not Applicable
Recreational – Neighborhood Park	R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3, MHP, BMR
Recreational – Community-Wide Park	R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3, MHP, BMR
Urban Growth Areas	Included- not any one district.

Arcada Township Proposed Land Uses & Corresponding Zoning	
Proposed Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning Districts
Agriculture	A-1
Rural Residential	RR
Neighborhood Residential	R-1
Multi-Family Residential	Not Applicable
Manufactured Housing Community	R-2
Public/Quasi-Public	Not Applicable
Campus	Not Applicable
Downtown/Mixed Use	Not Applicable
General Mixed Use	C-3
General Commercial	C-1, C-2, C-3
Waterfront Development	Not Applicable
Office/Research/Technology	Not Applicable
Office Park	Not Applicable
Light Industrial	I-1
Heavy Industrial	I-2
Excavation	Not Applicable
Natural & Open Space – Forested	Not Applicable
Natural & Open Space – Open Space/Conservation Area	Not Applicable
Recreational – Neighborhood Park	R-1, A-1, RR
Recreational – Community-Wide Park	R-1, A-1, RR
Urban Growth Areas	No corresponding zoning districts

Proposed Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

In reviewing the Land Use Plan versus existing zoning maps, certain inconsistencies can be identified. Part of the implementation program of the Master Plan will be for local Planning Commissions to analyze areas of inconsistency and determine if re-zonings would be appropriate. Below are some changes proposed by specific local units of government.

City of Alma

The updating of the Land Use Designations will also lead to a review and potential updating of the text of the Zoning Ordinance. One area that will need to be reviewed is the Campus (C) Zoning District. Currently, the intent of this district is for colleges, universities and their related facilities. The Future Land Use category of Campus envisions this use as well as other campus style facilities such as retirement communities (Masonic Pathways) and religious facilities (Religious Sisters of Mercy). These additional uses will need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and the ordinance amendment process started if the City of Alma wishes to include these uses within their Campus Zoning District.

Another area of the Zoning Ordinance that the Planning Commission has expressed interest in reviewing and potentially updating is the section dealing with the Off-Street Parking, Loading and Unloading Requirements. These requirements have a direct impact on future land use in that it dictates how much land must be put into a hard surface to provide the appropriate amount of off-street parking for the proposed use. These requirements have not been reviewed in some time and environmental concerns, stormwater issues, availability of land, cost, etc… necessitates the need to review and possibly amend the text of the Zoning Ordinance to update these requirements.

Arcada Township

The zoning throughout the township is predominantly zoned for Agriculture. For example, the area shown as General Mixed Use along the Lincoln Road and State Road corridors is currently a mix of Commercial and Agriculture. With this road being a major trunk line and thoroughfare, a mix of Commercial, Light Industrial, as well as Heavy Industrial would likely fit well with the area especially where it abuts the City of Alma's Industrial boundaries as to prevent a conflict of uses amongst borders. In addition to areas of potential commercial/industrial development, the areas to the south of the City of Alma's boarders will likely see residential development continue to move southward into Arcada Township. That same pattern may also exist along the City of Ithaca's northwest boarders. These areas have an elevated likelihood of development because of their close proximity to city boundaries and because of that, there is potential for infrastructure extensions into the township. Following the pattern of development with Arcada Township and Alma's 425 agreement with the Gemstone Development, there is potential for neighborhood residential to develop south along Alger road immediately south of Alma's south most boundaries. The same scenario of neighborhood residential expansion may occur west-southwest of the Arcada subdivision.

Various areas of the Township's Zoning Ordinance are currently being and are a goal of the Planning Commission to amend. As the Township evolves, as do the needs, requirements, and regulations for Zoning and thus Zoning should change to accommodate the Township's needs. The example being, what was good for the township as little as 10 years ago may not necessarily be what is in its best interests today.

VIII. Review & Update Procedures

Introduction

This Plan has been individually adopted by Gratiot County's local jurisdictions. Therefore, each jurisdiction has the authority to amend and update the Plan on an independent basis. However, given the unique and collaborative efforts that went into developing this Plan, it is a valuable measure for the participating jurisdictions to continue working together for the implementation, maintenance, a revision of this Plan. This chapter outlines the steps that the Gratiot County Community intends to take to continue as a partnership.

Continuing Steps for Collaborative Planning

To help continue the collaborative nature of this Plan, Gratiot County jurisdictions intend to:

- Research, record, and share additional information that they would like included in future editions of the Plan
- Keep each other informed on local news, such as economic development, land use development, capital improvements, concerns, initiatives, and areas of pride.
- Identify a "keeper" of relevant information to help keep track of data and serve as a quick, easy resource.
- Determine where they can collaborate to accomplish the goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan (Appendix VII provides a tool to help foster collaborative initiatives).

Future Land Use Mapping

- Record and share all accomplishments, especially when completing the goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan.
- Notify all other Gratiot County jurisdictions and discuss, as necessary, amendments that you would like to make to the Plan.
- Notify all other Gratiot County jurisdictions and discuss, as necessary, significant zoning changes.
- Collaborate through the County GIS Authority to develop and revise maps that they would like to include in future editions of the Plan.
- Maintain an ongoing communication mechanism, such as a website, to share information and updates.
- Meet regularly, at least once a year, to review information and ideas pertinent to the Plan.
- Identify a committee that will collaboratively update the Plan to satisfy the statutory five year review requirement outline in Michigan's Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008)

Gratiot County Collaborations

1. Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.- Countywide economic development
2. Mid-Michigan Area Cable Communications Consortium- three county cable consortium includes five cities, two villages, and three townships
3. Gratiot Central Dispatch Authority- countywide dispatch
4. Gratiot Community Airport- Joint venture with City of Alma and Gratiot County
5. Fire Departments
    a. Alma Rural Urban Fire Board- City and four townships
    b. St. Louis Mid-Michigan Fire Department- City and four townships
    c. Ithaca Fire Department- City and seven townships
    d. Mutual Aid agreements
    e. Dive team- countywide team
6. Police
    a. Drug Enforcement- Three cities and two countries
    b. Hazmat- Countywide
    c. CERT- Alma and Ashley applied for grant jointly
    d. Training- Countywide
7. Gratiot Brownfield Authority- countywide run by Greater Gratiot
8. GTEC- educational & training
9. Sewage Treatment
    a. Alma with Pine River and Arcada Townships
    b. St. Louis with Pine River Township
10. Evening in the Parks- Alma, Breckenridge, St. Louis and Ithaca
11. Dial-A-Ride Transportation- Alma & St. Louis
12. Negotiated annexations- 425 agreements
13. Surplus Equipment Auctions- All cities and villages in county
14. Rails to Trails- - City, two townships and road commission
15. GIS System- Three Cities, one village, two townships, county, Dispatch, public health, drain commission, road commission, Greater Gratiot,
16. Alma Community Center – City and School District
17. Water- Alma, Saint Louis and Pine River Township
18. Land Use Planning- Alma, Saint Louis, and Pine River Township
19. Strategic Planning- Countywide effort includes more than government
20. Equipment sharing- All Cities
21. Merging County fairs
22. Exploring combined assessing- Greenville, Ithaca, Clare

City of Alma Community Profile

The City of Alma was founded in 1854 by Ralph Ely along the banks of the Pine River. By 1872, the community had grown to 425 people and was able to be incorporated as a village. General Ralph Ely was elected the first village president. With more growth, the village was incorporated as a city in 1905. In 1919, Alma adopted the Council-Manager form of government. Alma currently has a population of 9,275.

Alma has a history of adapting and meeting its challenges. The early economy depended upon lumber, mills and agriculture. As time progress, the community became home to the Michigan Masonic Home, Alma College, food processing, and manufacturing. Alma was home to the Republic Truck Corporation which was the largest truck manufacturer during World War I. In the 1930's, Leonard Petroleum and Mid-West Refining began operating refineries in Alma. The oil industry continued to be a major economic force within Alma until 2000.

Alma currently has a diversified economic base of industry, retail, and service industries. Some of the major employers in Alma currently include: Gratiot Medical Center, Michigan Masonic Pathways, Alma College, IAC, Contech, Consumers Energy, and Alma Public Schools. We have a historic downtown, a shopping district with national chain stores, and a high quality full-service medical district. We have several living options for senior citizens wanting to retire in Alma that with provide quality living at all stages of their life. This makes Alma an excellent place to raise a family, work, retire and enjoy life.

The City of Alma is a full service city which includes: police, fire, streets, water, sewer, bus service, library, code enforcement, airport, and low-income housing. The major municipal facilities include the Alma Municipal Building, the Alma Public Library, the Dial-A-Ride Transportation center, water plant, wastewater plant, public works garage, parks/cemetery facilities, the Post Chapel, Riverside Cemetery, the trailhead and trail for the Fredrick Meijer Heartland Trail, and over 100 acres of park land.

Alma has educational opportunities. We have a high performing public school district, a private grade school, Alma College, Davenport University and technical training from GTEC.

Major capital improvements in the near future include: street improvements, water system upgrades (the City is moving towards leaving surface water a source of drinking water.), reducing the infiltration and inflow into the sanitary sewer system, and replacing Bridge Avenue bridge. Longer term, the City of Alma envisions extending the Riverwalk to Saint Louis, increasing the residential housing options, and improving the park system and farmers' market. One of the goals of the City Commission is to rehabilitate the parking lots and alleys in the downtown. Longer term, the City of Alma is working towards a major mixed use redevelopment of the river front. Our goal is to develop commercial, residential and professional space along the Pine River.

Alma is home to the Alma Highland Festival which is one of the finest Scottish festivals in the world. The City also hosts the Lucky MacDuck derby, the Come Home for the Holidays celebration, the Gratiot Fair for Youth and Tartan Days.

Arcada Township Community Profile

Arcada Township located near the center of Gratiot County and contains two cities within its 32.7 square mile boarders. The City of Alma is along its northern border and the City of Ithaca is near the southeast corner. School Districts are also shared between the Alma and Ithaca. Main Corridors within the township are Business Route 127, State Road, as well as Washington Road. Unique features of the township include Bailey Cemetery, multiple developed residential sub-divisions, along with many businesses. Gratiot Community Airport also calls Arcada Township home.

Early history of Arcada Township tells us that the first election was held at the house of Lucius C. Knapp on April 2, 1855. A total of 38 votes were cast and the decision was made to elect Francis Nelson the Supervisor, Lemuel C. Cole the Clerk, and Lafayette Church the Treasurer. Other notable positions filled were for Highway Commissioners, Justices of the Peace, School Inspectors, Overseers of the Poor, and Constables.

As to the 2000 Census, Arcada Township has over 1,700 residents with 495 families living in over 650 households. The median income for an Arcada Township household is $44,097, median family income is $50,161, and per capita income is $20,781. The people of the township have careers ranging from Family Farming and small business owners to Doctors and Lawyers as it seems everyone from all walks of life have a place within Arcada Township. Diversity and understanding as well as respect for individual rights are what keep a community strong.

Description By: David A. Ringle

Village of Breckenridge / Wheeler Township Community Profile

Physical Profile / Regional Setting

Wheeler Township is located in the Northeast corner of Gratiot County in a predominantly an agricultural area. The Township is bordered on the North by Porter Township, Midland County, on the South by Lafayette Township, on the West by Bethany Township, and on the East by Jonesfield Township, Saginaw County.

The Village of Breckenridge is located in the Western Portion of the Township and is the nearest Business District. Breckenridge is located on M-46, the main highway and connecting route to larger cities like Saginaw (30 miles East) and Alma (10 miles West). Lansing is 60 miles South of the Village and Mt. Pleasant, home of Central Michigan University, is 25 miles North of the Village.

Wheeler Township consists of 36 sections of land and covers an area of 22,967 acres. The major land use in the Township is Agricultural Production, defining its rural and agricultural character.

Economic Profile / Infrastructure

The major presence of Agriculture in the community has spawned the development of a major Agricultural Support Network of Businesses in the Village of Breckenridge and along M-46 connecting the Unincorporated Village of Wheeler. This area is home to Michigan Agricultural Commodities, a Major Grain Handling and Merchandising Business, Janson Equipment / Case IH Ag Equipment Dealer, Boland Tire, Crop Production Services, Stoneman Pro-Services / Pioneer Seed Sales, Miles Petroleum / Bulk Fuel Storage, Northwest Energy / Propane Supplier, Cross Frame and Axle, Kenny Brother's / Pickle Receiving Station and the Michigan Sugar / Sugar Beet Receiving Station. Lying between Breckenridge and Wheeler is a Commercial Industrial Park owned by the Village of Breckenridge and carrying the Renaissance Zone Designation. The Park is served by a City Sewer System that links Breckenridge and Wheeler along M-46 and there are future plans to add City Water and a new water tower to the Park. A Railroad Line runs East and West just North of M-46, serving the Township. The Downtown District of Breckenridge offers an active Main street Scene comprised of a grocery store and meat market, a local library, banking services, insurance agencies, lawn and garden equipment dealer, newspaper, several eating choices, gas and repair stations, postal service, hair salons, and investment services. The Village and Township are also home to two cemeteries, public parks, ball diamonds, a funeral home, several churches, a historical society, a Fire Department, and the Breckenridge Chamber of Commerce. Breckenridge is the recipient of the "Tree City USA" designation.

Newark Township Community Profile

Newark Township located in the Southern Part of Gratiot County, organized in 1857. This Township had a Post Office from 1857-1902. The Newark Township Hall located in the center of the 34 square mile Township, at the corners of Buchanan Rd. and Alger Rd. has a population of 1149. Many Family Farms both cash crop and dairy are located in this rich agriculture land. Crops grown in this Township include: corn, edible and soy beans, hay, sugar beets and cucumbers. Newark Township hosts one of the largest cucumber receiving and salt tank storage locations in Michigan. Newark also hosts one of the largest Dairy Farms in Gratiot County.

Seville Township Community Profile

Seville Township is located in the northwest corner of Gratiot County. The location of the township is T.12N.-R.4W. There are thirty-six square miles in the township. Seville Township has Montcalm County on its west side and Isabella County on its north side. The closest urban areas are Alma and Mt. Pleasant.

Settlers were establishing communities in Seville Township in the middle 1800's. The township ended up with two prominent settlements in Elwell and Riverdale. These settlements were, and still arc, a mix of people and businesses. At the present time, Elwell has approximately eighty-five homes and businesses, and Riverdale has approximately one hundred sixty-eight homes and businesses. The top three employers in Seville Township arc Riverdale Feed & Grain, Riverdale Tavern, and the United States Post Office. Agriculture has been significant in the development of Seville Township. Generations of fanners have relied on the land for their livelihood.

As time passed, other more densely populated areas formed. These areas evolved through the development of Smith's Shoreacres, Half Moon Lake Development Subdivision No. 1, Schnepp Subdivision, Lincoln Manor Estates, Timber Country Mobile Home Park, and Deer Trail. Seville Township became a zoned township in May of 1965. A blight ordinance was adopted in February of 1996.

Seville Township has several natural waters within its boundaries. The Pine River runs through the western edge of the township, flowing on the east side of Riverdale. Half Moon Lake is a sizable lake located in the northwest corner of the township. A fairly large campground was developed at Half Moon Lake. Madison Lake and Peterman Lake are smaller lakes located toward the eastern edge of the township.

Lumberjack Park is a nice attraction with a baseball diamond, picnic tables, shelters, playground equipment, and huge pine trees. The Pine River flows through Lumberjack Park. Elwell Park is a great place for a gathering with open space, picnic tables, a shelter, and playground equipment. The Gratiot Isabella Regional Education Service District utilized a ninety acre farm in the northeast corner of the township for the development of the Forest Hill Nature Center. This tract serves many students and others by providing an environment that nurtures awareness and appreciation regarding nature. The Fred Meijer Heartland Trail runs through Seville Township. Tine trail provides people the opportunity to see the township scenery while they enjoy walking or cycling.

The A.C.T. group, a local service organization, developed the Riverdale Museum. The museum is located adjacent to the Heartland Trail at the northern edge of Riverdale. The Seville Township Library serves the community from its location in Riverdale. It is also near the Heartland Trail. There are four churches and six cemeteries in Seville Township to serve people's needs.

Sumner Township Community Profile

Sumner Township is located on the western edge of Gratiot County in the central part of Michigan. Picturesque fields and forests cover the majority of the rural area that is home to almost 2,000 residents. Agriculture is the primary industry in the township, but there are also many other types of privately owned businesses in the area. The township contains two villages within its borders, Elm Hall and Sumner.

The first settlers in Sumner Township began arriving in the fall of 1854, when the hills were covered with pine forests that ranked among the best in the state. Logging played the major portion of activity in the early days of the township. A saw mill located in downtown Sumner produced lumber for many other parts of the county until 1948. Other pioneer businesses included a millinery, a wagon store, and even a harness shop. A local hotspot of the time was the Sumner Hotel, which offered guests a large ballroom, saloon, and family restaurant. Today, both Sumner and Elm Hall still have general stores that offer many amenities for local residents.

Sumner Township is fortunate to have a variety of parks and recreational opportunities available for the public. Hubsher Park, a large county park with a lake, beachfront, covered picnic area, and walking trails, is located on the southern edge of the township and is a popular place for reunions and family day trips. Centennial Park, near downtown Sumner, offers visitors a covered picnic area, playground, soccer field, and a sand volleyball court as well as frontage on the Pine River that is a haven for local fisherman. There is also a park in downtown Elm Hall that has been recently updated with new playground equipment. In addition to all the outdoor recreation opportunities, the village of Sumner also has a large Community Center with several rooms and a gymnasium available for rent for social or sporting events year round.

The Sumner Daze festival, held in downtown Sumner the third weekend of August each year, is a popular three-day family friendly celebration. This community event offers many different activities such as a parade, pancake breakfast, country and gospel music event, horse and pony pulls, a classic car show and much more. Sumner Daze started out as a one day event in 1986 and continues to draw in visitors from all over the area each year!

Other community events include the biannual “Clean Up Day” where on the third Saturday of each May and September residents can dispose of large trash items in dumpsters provided by the township. Recycling is also offered on the third Saturday of each month at the Recycle Barn located near the Sumner Community center for township residents.

Many changes have taken place in the area since those first settlers came through, but Sumner Township continues to be a wonderful place for community and fun!

What should be the future of your community?

Share your opinion!

Public Meetings!

Where & When?

A series of public meetings are occurring during the first two weeks of December:

Monday, December 1, 2008
Alma Middle School
7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 2, 2008
Sumner Township Community Center
7:00 p.m.

Monday, December 8, 2008
Breckenridge High School Media Room
7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 11, 2008
Fulton Township Community Center
2:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 11, 2008
Ashley Community School Cafeteria
7:00 p.m.

All are welcome!!!
Light refreshments will be served.

What & Why?

The townships, cities and villages of Gratiot County have teamed together to develop a single community-wide comprehensive plan. This is a unique effort that has never been done before in the state of Michigan! Through this plan, each community may strengthen its own local planning efforts while improving Gratiot County as a whole.

Who & How?

You and any other resident of the county are invited to participate in this one-of-a-kind initiative. Please spread the word and join us at any of the meeting locations. This plan will help determine the future of your community. ***Your input is needed!!!***

To find out more about the project, please visit the website:
www.partnershipsforchange.cc/great/

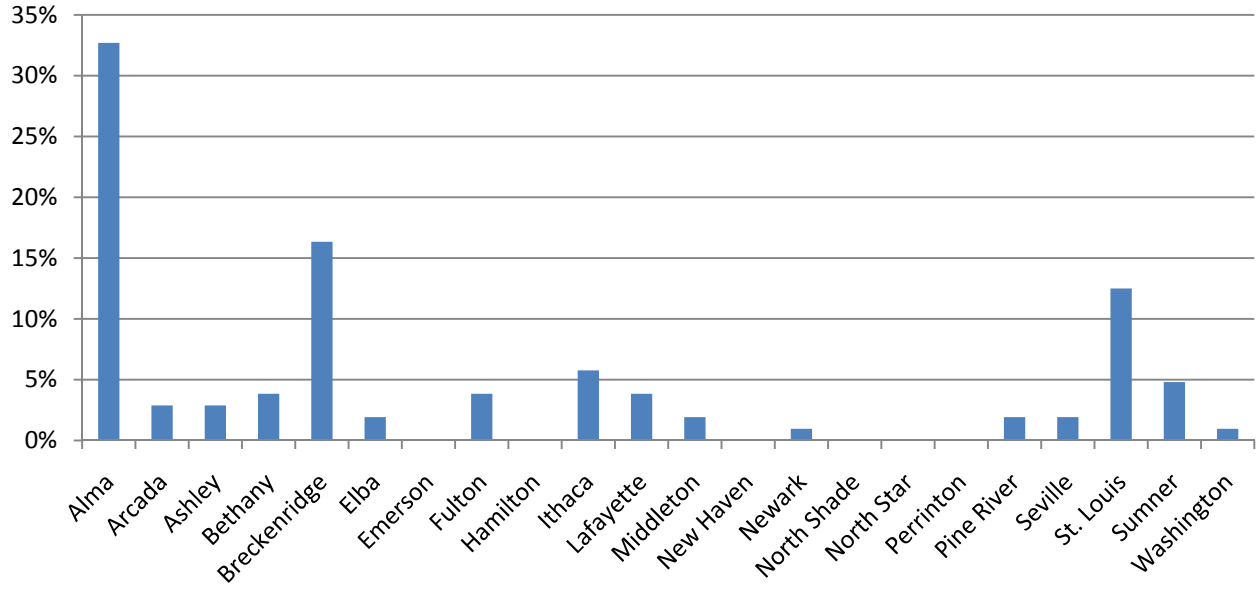
Gratiot County Master Plan
December Public Meeting Results

Number of Meetings: 5

Meeting Locations: City of Alma, Sumner Township, Village of Breckenridge, Fulton Township, Ashley Township

Estimated Number of Attendees: [1] Alma Meeting 40, Sumner Meeting 18, Breckenridge Meeting 36, Fulton Meeting 19, Ashley Meeting 17
Total: 130

Representation by Jurisdiction: [2]



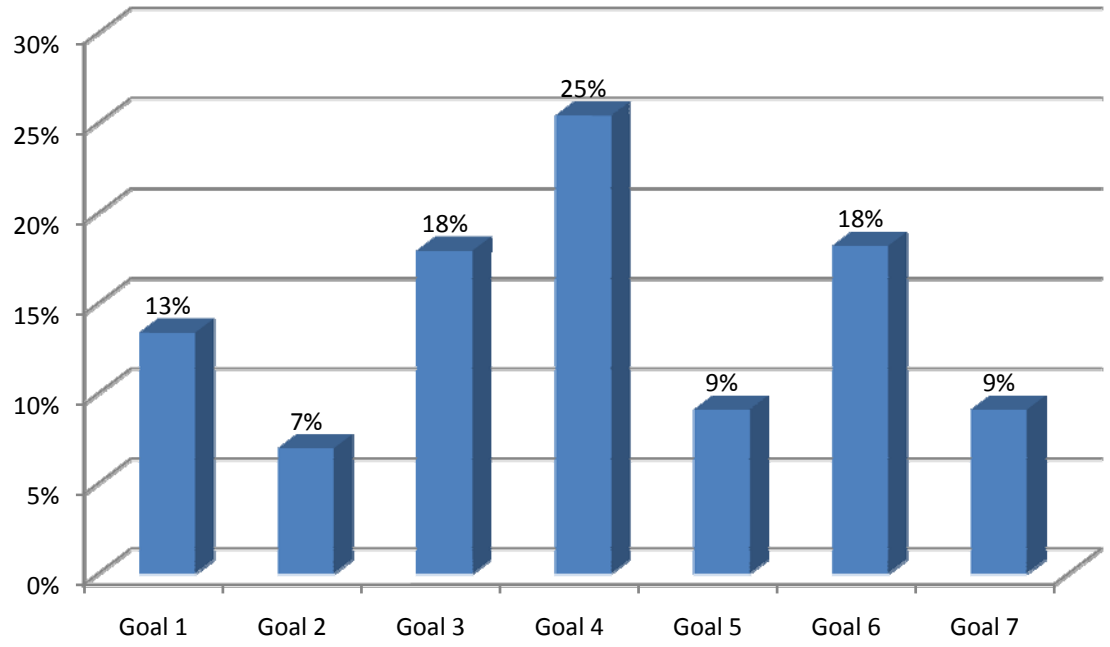
Agencies Represented: Gratiot County Herald, MDOT, MMDHD, MDEQ, USDA-RD

[1] The estimated number of attendees is based on the number of people who signed-in or the number of people who voted (whichever number was greater).
[2] Representation by Jurisdiction percentages are based on the number of people who signed-in. Please note, several meeting attendees did not sign-in and of those who did sign-in, fourteen people left the "Jurisdiction" category blank or indicated that they represented something other than a local jurisdiction.

Gratiot County Master Plan
December Public Meeting Results – Goals

1. Preserve the County's **quality** rural character, which includes productive farms, healthy natural features, and vibrant downtowns that maintain "small town" charm.
2. Strengthen the existing cities, villages, and hamlets to serve as **quality** community centers for living, working, and recreating.
3. Provide **quality** public services, such as water, sewer, public safety, and the transportation network, in the most cost effective manner.
4. Provide and sustain economic opportunities by retaining, attracting and growing **quality** employers, including those within the agriculture, industrial, and commercial sectors.
5. Provide high **quality** of life opportunities, such as premier cultural and recreational resources, for the enjoyment of people from all generations.
6. Provide **quality** educational opportunities that prepare residents for local jobs and cutting edge industries.
7. Continue and strengthen **quality** community collaboration to promote sustainable planning practices and elevate Gratiot County as a whole.

Goals by Percentage of Total Votes (all meetings)



Gratiot County Master Plan
December Public Meeting Results – Goals (Continued)

Alma

Goal	Number of Dots	Percentage
1	11	9%
2	9	8%
3	17	14%
4	31	26%
5	17	14%
6	21	18%
7	13	11%
Total	119	100%

Sumner

Goal	Number of Dots	Percentage
1	8	15%
2	2	4%
3	13	24%
4	15	28%
5	6	11%
6	6	11%
7	4	7%
Total	54	100%

Breckenridge

Goal	Number of Dots	Percentage
1	21	20%
2	10	10%
3	18	17%
4	20	19%
5	6	6%
6	19	18%
7	10	10%
Total	104	100%

Fulton

Goal	Number of Dots	Percentage
1	4	7%
2	5	9%
3	10	18%
4	17	30%
5	4	7%
6	13	23%
7	3	5%
Total	56	100%

Ashley

Goal	Number of Dots	Percentage
1	6	15%
2	0	0%
3	9	22%
4	12	29%
5	1	2%
6	9	22%
7	4	10%
Total	41	100%

Gratiot County Master Plan
December Public Meeting Results – Opportunities

Goal 1	
Preserve the County's quality rural character, which includes productive farms, healthy natural features, and vibrant downtowns that maintain "small town" charm.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. Become an entrepreneurial community/magnet	Alma
2. Communicate local product offerings through multiple medias (online/broadband)	
3. Engage churches, youth groups in volunteer opportunities	
4. Year-round farmers markets/wares/outlet	
5. Improve river quality/tie into parks/recreation	
6. Market ourselves to outside investment/tourism	
7. Educate community on value of supporting local businesses	
8. Retain current businesses	
1. Expand opportunities for different types of housing	Sumner
2. Promote commercial local opportunities for small farm products	
3. Strategize how to be entrepreneurial within the community	
1. Ability to keep community infrastructure good because there is a desire	Breckenridge
2. Allow for development without messing up agriculture productivity capacity	
3. Recognition that we can plan ahead to keep the attributes we like	
4. River recreation development	
5. Hunting for tourists	
1. Offer entrepreneurial education - start more small businesses	Fulton
2. Outlets for locally grown food	
3. Encourage more businesses related to recreation (rail-trail, river)	
1. Still have open space, not sprawl	Ashley
2. Maintain buildings in downtown	

Yellow = Opportunity received 5-9% of the total opportunity votes from that meeting
Orange = Opportunity received 10% or more of the total opportunity votes from that meeting

Goal 2	
Strengthen the existing cities, villages, and hamlets to serve as quality community centers for living, working, recreating, and learning.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. We have many varieties of housing to build upon - to begin to meet needs	Alma
2. The different nature of communities provides choices for people	
3. Market existing recreation opportunities better to us (ourselves)	
4. Open to "new" sustainable concepts	
5. Use our individual "brands" to positively promote a diverse larger community	
6. Create opportunities for local entrepreneurs	
7. Working collaboratively we can afford one top class recreation center	
1. Make river available for recreation paddle and camp	Sumner
2. Start "Friends of the Pine River"	
3. Create a collaborative super public works department with prioritized work and maintenance	
1. Many Brownfield sites available - infrastructure	Breckenridge
2. Youth will change old attitudes	
3. Technical/trade school education	
4. Countywide organized sports/recreation	
5. Better promote activities/festivals statewide - michigan.org	
6. Create high-tech corridor to attract/retain bright minds	
7. Value-added agriculture opportunities	
8. Have more shovel-ready sites or spec. buildings available	
1. Communicate within community about assets already available	Fulton
2. Redevelopment of Brownfield's	
1. Prioritize for different budget categories	Ashley
2. County-wide recreation organization/ not entity can do it alone	
3. Opportunity to more integrate quality schools and municipalities	

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Goal 3	
Provide quality public services, such as water, sewer, public safety, and the transportation network, in the most cost effective manner.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. More collaboration (from all agencies to have more clout)	Alma
2. Become state-wide model	
3. Streamline services/gain efficiency	
3. Improve quality	
5. Consolidation of public safety (building, police, fire, code enforcement)	
6. Alternative energy	
7. County-wide recycling	
1. More collaboration	Sumner
2. Finish US-127	
3. County-wide Public Transit	
4. More local presence Fire/Police	
5. Broadband internet	
1. Share utilities	Breckenridge
2. Joint purchasing	
3. Recycling Center	
4. Greening communities	
5. More collaboration	
6. County-wide water conservation	
1. Public awareness - millage/fees	Fulton
2. More collaboration - centralized services	
3. Complete US-127	
4. More non-motorized connect communities	
5. Preserve railroads	
1. County-wide purchasing system	Ashley
2. Address completion of 127	
3. More preventative maintenance	
4. Integrate public safety	

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Goal 4	
Provide and sustain economic opportunities by retaining, attracting and growing quality employers, including those within the agriculture, industrial, service, and commercial sectors.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. Business incubator	Alma
2. Promoting NCRC (National Career Readiness Certificate)	
3. Entice value added agriculture projects	
4. Energy technology enticement	
5. Downtown center	
1. More industrial parks	Sumner
2. Local media	
3. Riverfront development	
4. Energy park	
5. Build on medical industry	
6. More agriculture industry (organic, processing)	
7. Better/more use of river	
1. Value added agriculture	Breckenridge
2. Methane digesters	
3. Energy Park	
4. labor force	
5. Education/Community College	
6. Healthcare	
1. Niche businesses in downtown	Fulton
2. New industrial parks	
3. Airport expansion/industrial	
4. Riverfront development - Pine & Maple	
5. Wind power/solar	
6. More vocational training	
1. Attracting large industrial project (i.e. energy-related)	Ashley
2. Entrepreneurial education	
3. Value-added agriculture businesses	

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Goal 5	
Provide high quality of life opportunities, such as premier cultural and recreational resources, for the enjoyment of people from all generations.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. Use existing facilities better, i.e. college facilities, parks, schools, etc.	Alma
2. Pine River - expanding the use	
3. Rails to Trails - expanding the opportunity	
4. Create/Utilize/Expand community centers	
5. Coordinated recreational activities	
6. Community Calendar	
1. Riverfront development (picnics, open space, boating, canoeing, volleyball)	Sumner
2. Inspire more community involvement (volunteerism)	
3. Community center for learning/diversified activities (classes, crafts, etc.	
4. Trailhead for rail-trail (bathrooms, parking, picnic area)	
5. Promoting what we have to residents (correct negativity)	
6. Better community calendar and promote current one (flyers at banks, stores)	
7. Be more open to change	
1. Get youth interested in the community activities and programs to insure the long-term health of these cultural activities	Breckenridge
2. Create a master community (county) activities calendar in multiple media formats/marketing	
3. Create recreational programs and enrichments classes at county-level. Centralize programming to utilize all county/municipal (i.e. school facilities/marketing)	
4. Recreation opportunities on the rivers/Pine-Maple	
1. Acquire public access to lakes	Fulton
2. Pine River development	
3. Space availability	
4. Agri-entertainment	
5. Them/niche areas	
6. Stronger collaborative marketing	
1. Winter recreation trails (i.e. cross country skiing, snowmobiling, ice skating rink)	Ashley
2. Indoor recreation center	
3. Public transportation between north/south Gratiot for events (i.e. Alma College)	
4. Public transit for employees to commute to other cities/areas	
5. Passenger train to other parts of state	
6. Senior Activities Center in south Gratiot	

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Goal 6	
Provide quality educational opportunities that prepare residents for careers, local jobs and cutting edge industries.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. Post secondary (better coordination) - GTEC, Alma College, Davenport	Alma
2. Better collaboration with human service agencies	
3. Better communication with business industry leaders	
4. Stronger collaboration between local school districts	
1. Inspire entrepreneurship (new programs in schools)	Sumner
2. Job training/apprentice/internship programs	
3. More life skills in school (balancing checkbook, budgeting, credit, communication, responsibility, etc.)	
4. More parent involvement in students lives (parenting program)	
5. Better trades/Voc. Ed program (not all must be college grads.)	
1. Schools of choice	Breckenridge
2. Vocational courses	
3. Distance learning and technology	
4. Collaboration with ISD	
5. Agriculture classes and programs	
6. Leadership programs	
1. Employment opportunities to meet area demands, i.e. healthcare, agriculture, agri-entertainment, industrial	Fulton
2. Collaboration between business/industry and schools	
3. Alternative energy technology training	
4. Small business training	
5. Expand accessibility to voc. Ed.	
6. Flexibility in curriculum for students	
1. Working together with other schools to create a critical mass of students so certain programs can be offered that one school alone could not	Ashley
2. Jointly owned Vocational Center in Gratiot	
3. A Gratiot Community College	
4. Bring business leaders into the classroom to make kids aware of opportunities locally (mentor program)	
5. Joint sport programs that are not offered in one school or another (i.e. swimming, golf)	

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Orange = Opportunity received 10% or more of the total opportunity votes from that meeting

Goal 7	
Continue and strengthen quality community collaboration to promote sustainable planning practices and elevate Gratiot County as a whole.	
Opportunity	**Meeting**
1. More broad base for problem solving	Alma
2. More funding resources	
3. Save money	
4. Offer broader range of services and increase efficiency	
5. Compete against larger urban cities/demographic areas	
1. More trust among us	Sumner
2. More service for tax dollars. Better public services	
3. Competitive advantage in business development and retention	
4. Chance to grow, but with control	
5. Collaboration can cause peer-pressure effect across the board. Government, schools, re-training, etc.	
1. No borders in terms of getting something done	Breckenridge
2. Make it easier to attract economic growth	
3. County-wide recycling	
4. Use resources better	
5. Share knowledge/experience among commissions, committees, etc.	
6. Sense of what neighbor is doing	
7. Using each other's strengths to compensate for each other's weaknesses	
8. Getting grants	
1. Get more citizens involved in local government decision-making	Fulton
2. Hold more joint meetings	
1. The buy-in of the county-wide master plan	Ashley
2. Good planning increase operation efficiency in multiple communities, know each other's future projects	
3. Increase the level of service to smaller communities	
4. Increase partnerships - share ideas, equipment, people	

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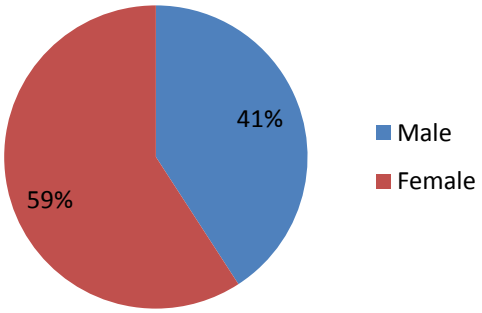
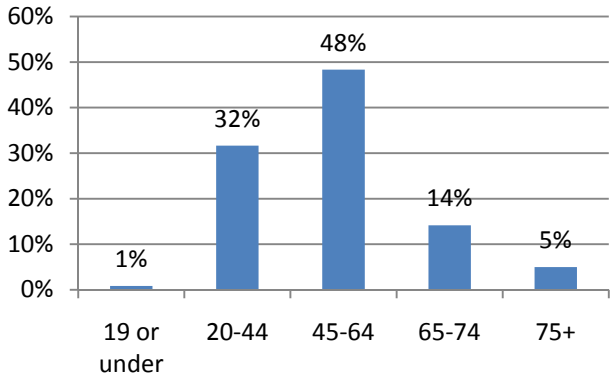
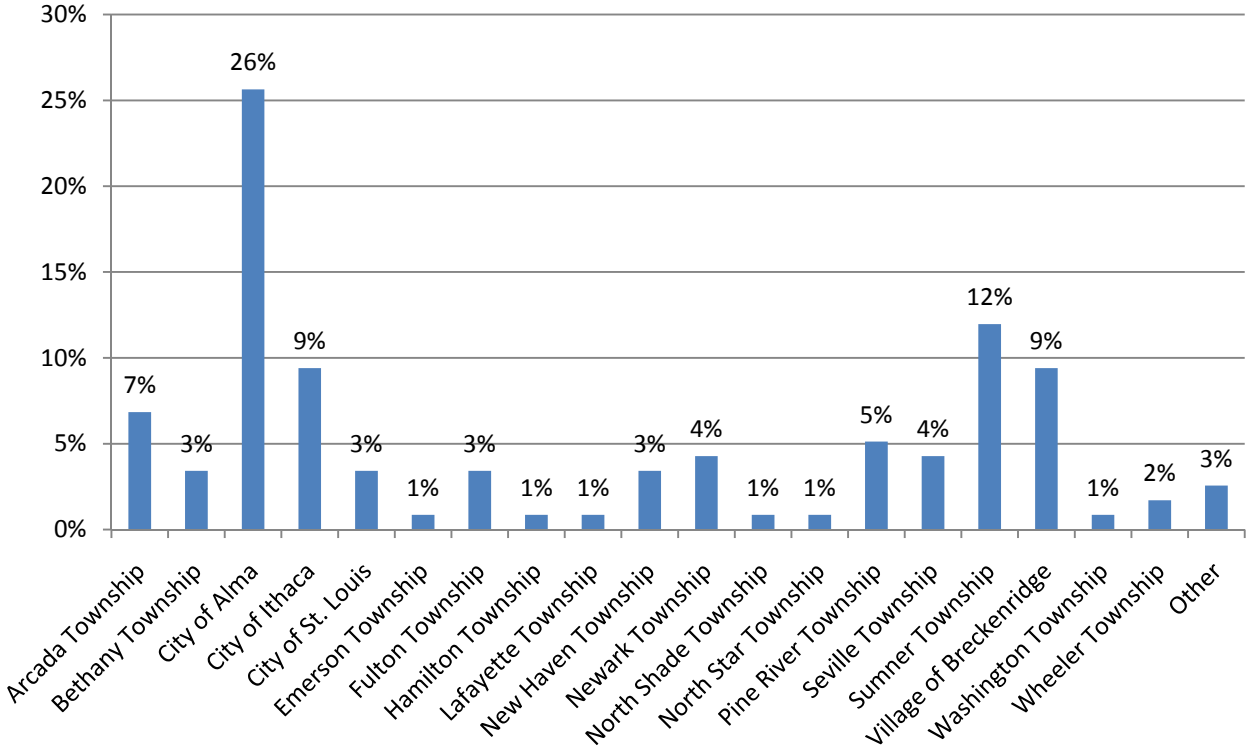
1. Are you:



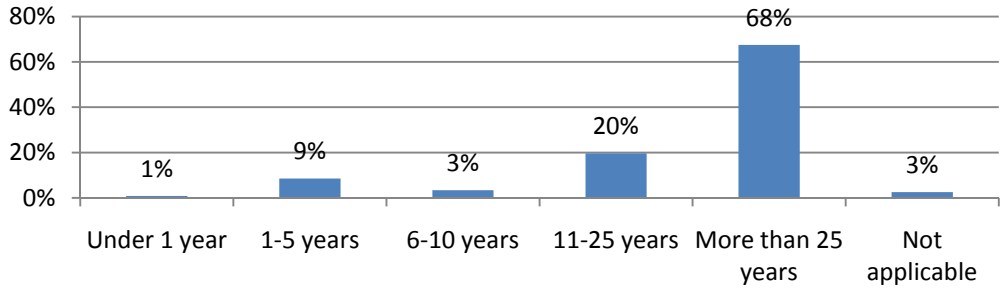
2. What is your age category?



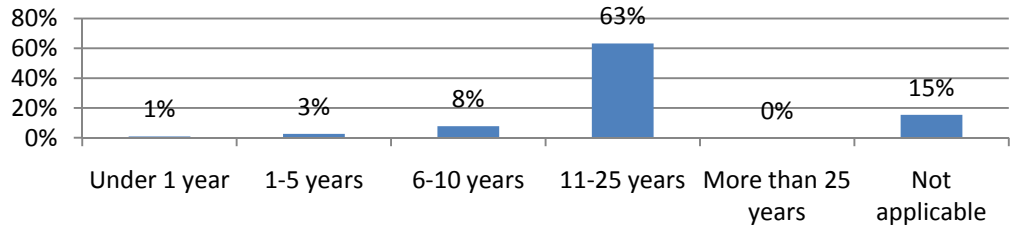
3. Where do you live?



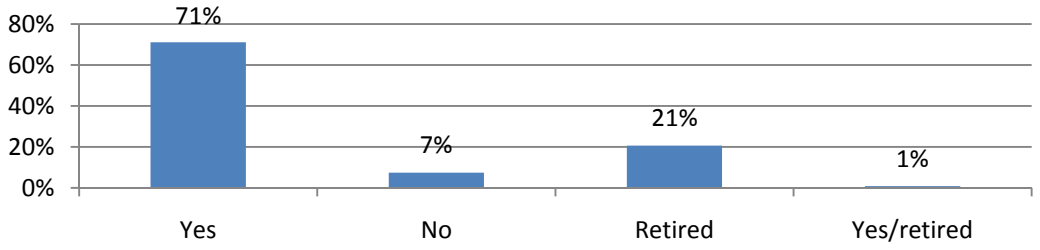
4. How long have you lived in Gratiot County?



5. How long do you plan to continue living in Gratiot County?



6. Do you work in Gratiot County?



6.a Where do you work?

Aircraft Precison Products Inc.
Alma College
Alma Container
Alma Products
America's Choice Realty
Anesthesia Associates of Alma
APPI
Bovee Farms
Carson City Hospital
Chemical Bank
City of Ithaca
City of St. Louis
CMH
Commercial Bank
Consumers Energy
Courthouse
from my home
Fulton Elementary School
Fulton Twp.
Government
Gratiot Community Mental Health
Gratiot Isabella RESD
Gratiot Medical Center
Expressions
Hospital
I own Leisure Lake Family Campground
Isabella Bank
Isabella Bank- Breckinridge
Ithaca Mgmt. Co.
Mike Davis Electric part-time
Municipality
Needham's Home Center
Non profit organization
Own business
Pine River Township
Pine river Twp.
Raymond James
Rosland, Prestage & Company
self employed
self employed transcriptionist
Sumner Township
United Way of Gratiot County
Varied locations
Village of Breckenridge
Worwick Living Center

7. Why did you decide to move to Gratiot County or remain in the community?

Gratiot Co. has been good to us and our business.
A good job.
A wonderful friendly community with lots to offer.
Availability of work; close to family and friends; church availability; opportunities to volunteer.
Because it is a centrally located area in Michigan that is a safe place to raise a family.
Because the job is here and I grew up here.
Born and raised here and just feel at home. Lots of friendly people here.
Born and raised here.
Born and raised, family lives here.
Born here, full time employment for 35 years.
Born here, work in area, like the collaboration of all of the communities, everyone is family.
Born here.
Born in Gratiot County, family stayed here.
Born in Gratiot County, liked small town living.
Bought Aunt's home so she could move
Business owner (partner).
Children in schools
Close-knit community, good place to live.
didn't want to move kids school to school-remarried at that time
Employment
Employment
Employment opportunity
family
Family
Family here, good place to raise kids.
Family residence.
Family, friends
Family, friends. Also, it's my home.
Family, work, hunting, fishing.
Family.
Family.
Family.
Good place to live, businesses in Gratiot Co.
Got a job here. All basic amenities are within a short drive. It is centrally located if I happen to get a different job in one of the surrounding metropolitan areas.
Gratiot County possesses a wonderful atmosphere to raise families and a wonderful place to visit the more quality things in life.
Great neighborhood for families
Home boy.
Home town boy.

Hometown atmosphere, know lots of people.
Husband got a job at one of the prisons
Husband is from Gratiot County
I enjoy living and enjoyed raising my children in a rural area. Have lived here all my life.
I feel at home in this community, I feel hope in this community, and this is where I want to raise my children
I grew up in Breckenridge, moved to Maine for a year and I came back to MI because I missed the area and family.
I have lived and worked here and married a local guy and are raising 2 kids here
I have lived here my entire life.
I have not moved to Gratiot County yet.
I love it.
I love the rural small town atmosphere. It is close enough to home we can get there in a hurry and far enough away to prevent potential problems.
I wanted to be near family.
I was able to find a good job and affordable housing.
I was born and raised in Gratiot County, family and friends live in Gratiot County. It's a great community to raise a family.
I was born here and although I have lived in two other states this is my home. My family and friends live here. I also love having four seasons as we do here in Michigan.
In 1929 my parents moved to Breckenridge to service. They lived in Saginaw. We moved in with reluctance.
Involvement with Alma College
It is my home. I know and love the people here.
Job
Job
Job availability
job relocation
Job relocation
like country living
Like the area. Good variety of activities and opportunities.
Lived here all my life.
Looking for house where taxes were fair.
married resident of Gratiot County
Married, moved from Montcalm County to Gratiot in 1957, remained.
moved because of job
Moved by company
Moved here with my parents and stayed.
Moved here with parents and like it here.
Moved once, wasn't enough job opportunities available had to move back. Come back because my family is here.
Moved to Gratiot County because of job location and plan remaining in the community because I like living here.

My husband was born and raised here.

My husband works for Dept. of corrections, so we came here for the job. We also have family here and an excellent church family.

My husband's job as a farmer.

My job and my family are all here.

Need a place to live.

Nowhere to go/nothing to do

Of related and the close knit community.

Originally for a job....and just decided to stay as it was a great place to raise a family.

Originally we moved to Gratiot County to be closer to work and family. We stay because of the wonderful people.

Quiet area, friends and family near.

raised here

Ran out of money passing through. Got a job. Got stuck here.

Relatives first, now enjoy the area.

Size of community, job opportunity, comfortable atmosphere

Small town friendly communities. Good reasonable quality of life and living.

Small town values, good education system, inviting community.

The College

The job at Alma College

This is home, and I plan to die here.

This is my home.

This is where I grew up and my family is from.

This is where I was born, and my family is here.

This is where my family and friends live have their whole lives. This is home. Where ever you go there is someone who knows you and your great grandparents. That to me is a place I never want to leave. There is always someone who will be there in the good and bad times.

This is where our family is.

To be closer to family.

to be near aging parents

To open a specialty store - business last 44 years

Was born here.

We came to work in St. Louis at the Baptist Children's Home and when we left there, we enjoyed the area so much we stayed.

We farm and have our business in Alma. As a whole the community has been good to us. We have made a good living in Gratiot Co.

We grew up and graduated here. We wanted our children to graduate from high school here. We liked the small community.

We were impressed with the downtown area of Alma and the fact that the College is located here.

When I was 16, my dad was transferred here as a minister.

Where all my family lives

Where I was raised and my job was here.

Wonderful place to raise a child.

Work
Work and family.
Work- job.
Work, family, schools.
Work.

8. What are you most proud of in the community?

All in all people are friendly.
All of the different events in Alma.
Alma
Alma College
Alma College
Alma College, highland festival
Alma College.
Alma College, Alma Highland Festival
Area volunteer agencies.
Beautiful countryside, small town atmosphere yet culture offered through college, family values, safe living
Bike path, Riverwalk, parks (swings, slides, etc.), recycling program
Caring people, nice community support.
Charming small cities, communities working together to improve growth, level of education.
City of St. Louis.
Close knit and friendly.
close-knit, caring people
Community events.
Community leaders working together to make Gratiot County a better place to live and work.
Community participation.
community responsibility
Community support for each other. Good people, people that help people, give back to their community.
Cooperation between communities
Ethics.
Farm community atmosphere.
Fire dept. and Police dept., library, local hospital, Masonic Home, Alma College
Friendliness
friendly neighbors, country living
Friendly, close knit, parks, and mostly agriculture.
Good neighbors and small town atmosphere.
Good schools, low crime.
Gratiot Medical Center
Highland Festival

Hometown pride

How much we have in downtown Ithaca, how we have groups who work together in the county.

I am most proud of our municipal leaders who do the best they can with the limited resources available to provide a high quality of life for residents. The fact they are working together across jurisdictional boundaries makes a lot of sense and should continue and be encouraged by citizens.

I am most proud of the people in this community. There are amazing people living here.

I am proud of the way we value children and community through the expression of summer library programs, the summer youth workshop at the theater, St. Louis Fishing Derby, the Gratiot County Fair for Youth and the Highland Festival Parade that incorporates local groups.

I own my own place.

I think that the collaborative efforts of the county are commendable. I also think that healthcare in this area is impressive considering the size of the community. Others include family atmosphere, closeness and safety of the community.

If there is an issue people work together to solve it.

I'm proud of our beautiful and newly expanded public library in Alma as well as the recent hospital patient tower expansion at GMS. I'm also proud of the two newer buildings on the Alma College campus - the Heritage Center and the energy-efficient Wright Hall. These nice newer buildings all add a lot to the vitality of our community.

It has provided work for me, for over 30 years.

It's closest of friends and family.

Lots of people pulling in the same direction in regards to development.

Low crime rate.

low crime. Friendly and caring people

museum, library, sr. citizan center

Neighbors helping neighbors. Knowing who your neighbor is and what car he drives. Knowing when a stranger is in the neighborhood and taking responsible action to keep your eyes open.

Not letting the towns and cities get run-down.

Nothing to be proud of

NY.

Our Parks and Schools

Our schools.

Our Twp. (Sumner) Schools, and

local parks, Hubscher

Parks we have.

People working together.

People.

Progress (like building up the community by bringing new businesses.) Also, I feel protected by the police and fire departments.

Recreational activities.

Rural charm.

Safe atmosphere, clean communities, small schools.

Safety

Schools.

Schools.
sense of community
Small and quiet.
small town charm - although at times I feel that we try hard to portray that to others to cover up our pollution/environmental problems
Small town charm and we know everyone
Small town charm, good schools, family.
Small town living - safety, pleasant people
Small village.
Sr.
St. Louis has made some great strides towards beautification and improvements. I which Alma would step it up as well.
The activities that we provide for families that are often free of charge.
The agricultural community.
The clean, safe, friendly environment.
The closeness
The closeness of the residents.
The collaboration of the governmental units within the County
The College, Masonic Pathways, the hospital, shops, parks, safe community.
The Community Spirit and Friendly ambience.
The family felt environment. Someone always there that you know.
The Gratiot Community Players Theater
the hometown closeness of people.
the involvement as a community
The Ithaca public school system.
the library and historical society
The members of the community work together to achieve their goals
The network of resources and support provided by the community and especially our local non-profit organizations (Community Cafe, Mentor PLUS, Big Brothers Big Sisters, United Way, 8Cap, etc...). I don't think that their stories or ideas are heard throughout the community. Especially when it comes to planning and development of the community.
The people in this community are amazing...spiritual support, and cultural opportunities, as well as fitness choices.
The people living in Gratiot County.
The people of the community, how they come together when needed.
The people who help each other out.
The people, schools, cultural events given small community.
The people.
the people.
The people.
The resiliency of the people. How we don't give up even though we have lost a large number of companies in our area.
The school system. The rural area.

the schools and the close community.

The way everyone pulls together when someone needs help or has and issue. The way everyone works together for things like Sumner Daze.

The way everyone works together.

The way the communities pull together to keep Gratiot County alive, on the map, safe and yet prospering

The working people.

There are many upstanding, community minded individuals living in Gratiot County.

This is a caring community dedicated to helping one another to improve the quality of life for all.

Tradition.

We feel that there is a great sense of community throughout the county.

When in need everybody always helps you out in one way or another.

9. What local places would you recommend that new people to the community visit?

All the small town in Gratiot County.

Alma College - St. Louis Historical Society - Gratiot County Fair for Youth

Alma College Heritage Center, City and County parks (all), Hometown Cellars, Weller Dairy farm

Alma College, Gratiot County Players, Alma Symphony, Saravilla B and B St. Louis swimming pool, the river walk and the rail trail

Alma College, and surrounding area.

Alma College, Gratiot Medical Center

Alma College, Highland Festival, the bike trail.

Alma College, Libraries, and Parks

Alma College, library

Alma College, Local schools, hospital, downtown area of area communities, Alma Library, Area golf courses.

Alma College, Rainbow Lake, Weller Dairy, Ithaca Industrial Parks, St. Louis downtown

Alma College, Library, Masonic Home

Alma locations, Pine River scenery.

Anschutz-Gena's museum, dairy farm.

Any local church. The new hospital. Masonic Home. Mackinac Bridge on 46. MAC grain elevator. The Velsicol site and headstones. Rail Trail. The local coffee shop in any community. Alma College.

Anything along the river!

Anywhere wildlife

Bike path, Riverwalks, Wright Ave. Park

Braveheart Pub

Riverwalk

Alma College

Cemetery.

Churches, parks, local businesses, their neighbors.

College

College

College, Highland festival

College, schools, Masonic Pathways, Riverwalk

County parks.

Court house and the downtowns.

Court house, parks and schools, and Alma College, industrial parks, downtown business, historical sites, airport and friendly people.

Downtown

Downtown Alma, The Gem in St. Louis, Hometown Cellars in Ithaca, The Middleton Dinner, Reeds Park, and the Riverdale Tavern

Downtown Ithaca, courthouse, area parks.

Downtown stores.

Downtowns, eating places, Saravilla, Alma College

Drake memorial house and museum.

Francesco's- they have the best cheesecake!

Gratiot County historical museum in Ithaca, Alma College, St. Louis historical train depot.

Gratiot County parks, downtown communities

Gratiot County Players Our Parks

Gratiot Medical Center, Alma College, Industrial Parks, Heartland Trail, Breckenridge Historical Society Museum, Quaint downtown shopping areas.

Heartland trail, Ithaca, St. Louis, Alma downtown shops, Lima Library, Highland Festival, sledding hill in Ithaca, parks, college events, Gratiot County players.

Heritage Center at Alma College

Highland Festival

HIS Place family enrichment center in Alma and Alma First Church of God.

Historical museum.

Historical sites like old houses and buildings. Alma parks especially the conservation which is called something else now. The libraries.

Historical society.

Hospitals, schools, and recreational areas.

Hubscher Park, Reed Park, Alma college, The Highland Festival Parade, Sumner Daze Festival,

I'd recommend all of our local parks, our newer rails to trails pathway, a canoe livery in St. Louis, MI, and Alma College for the cultural opportunities that are offered there.

In Gratiot County? Are you kidding me????

IPS- parks.

Ithaca, Hometown Cellars, Campgrounds, Alma College

Kristophers, JJ ruby's, the hearthstone oven, the College, the railtrail

Library, Drake house, and local churches.

Library, Masonic Home, hospital, Alma College, Rails to Trails

Library.

Local Parks, Alma Collage, Rails to trails, local parks.

Local downtowns.

local parks

Local Places

Lumberjack park, Alma College

Main Street Pizza, Gena's, Isabella Bank.

Masonic Home, Alma College, Hometown Cellars, Hearthstone Restaurant, Ithaca Park, Harrier's Flowers, Downtown Alma, Rainbow Lake.

Not sure.

Only place you can.

Our courthouse and historical attractions.

Our libraries for one and Alma College

Park out West of Ithaca.

Parks.

Parks.

performing Arts center, parks, downtowns

Plank Road museum, school system, library, village offices.

Rail Trail, Parks, Stucchi's.

Reeds Park, campgrounds, winery, and Christophers.

River Rock Bar and Grill.

Riverwalk, Alma College, rails to trails, Gratiot County Players performers

Save-a-lot, movies and more, church, Reeds Park.

School systems, churches, Alma College, area volunteer agencies, Hearthstone bakery

see above

Seville Twp. Library; Elm Hall Post Office; One of our many churches; Gratiot County Court House

Small towns.

Sr. Ctn.

St. Louis Train Depot Hometown Cellars in Ithaca

Stores in Ithaca and old downtown Alma- they are old and historic.

Take a canoe ride down the Pine River with friends and family. If you haven't your missing out. There has been many laughs going down that river.

The Alma College campus, Masonic Pathways, all of the downtown districts, the county parks, the GEM or Strand Theater for performances, Bravehearts Pub, Middleton Diner, Kristopher's Restaurant.

The Alma Public Library

The Alma, Ithaca and St. Louis Libraries; Woodland Park, Conservation Park; The Middle of the Mitten Park

The bars.

The friendly restaurants

The Gratiot Community Players Theater, the Gratiot County Fair For Youth,

the library

The local fairs and festivals, great way to meet people around the community.

The local restaurants JJ Rubys River Rock Middleton Diner We have some nice parks the mini mac bridge is cool

The park in Alma, Woody's Music in St Louis, the theater in Alma, River Rock in St Louis, the St Louis dam, St Louis Church of Christ

The parks, library, herb garden

The parks, schools, and special events in the county. Not much shopping specialty shops to visit.

The Rail Trail and Stuchii's.
The rural countryside, camping and enjoying the outdoors. Hubscher park, Sumner Daze, the Fair fireworks in Alma. The signing hands performance every spring presented by the GIRESD Deaf / HOH program. It is AWESOME!
Things to see and do in Alma. The small friendly town of Ithaca. Both places have lots of history. St Louis does too. Also the new bike trails
United Way, Community Cafe, Stucchi's, Pizza Sam's, El Vaquero (sp?), Mancinos, His Place, Alma College Stone Recreation Center, and local parks.
Velsicol site; Alma College; Highland Festival
Woodland Park in Ithaca, state land East of Ithaca.

10. If you could preserve anything in the community, what would it be?

4-H.
A small-town rural environment with all of the necessary modern amenities.
Above
All the trees.
Alma College
Alma College
Building on corner of State and Donnie
Cemetery, museum, and old markers.
community events, festivals
country life style
County parks.
Courthouse
Down town.
downtown and the college and the rail trail
Downtown area.
Downtown, College, open spaces
Downtowns as core of community - commercial, gathering places, etc.
Drake house.
Fairgrounds in Ithaca.
Farm Land; Small Farms; Elm Hall Post Office; Gratiot County Court House; Live community theatre
Farming territory.
Gratiot County court house, Ithaca fire house.
Heritage.
historical buildings
historical buildings
Historical downtown sites.
Historical landmarks.
Historical society buildings.
Homes to attract people to stay and move in.

house on State and Dawnie
I would preserve the desire to gather the communities together for yearly events. I remember as a child attending a celebration in downtown St. Louis. We lived in Breckenridge then and it was a big deal to go.
I'd like to see at least part of the Brownfield riverfront in downtown Alma (near the dam) preserved in a natural state, as a park, for everyone to enjoy.
Indian cemetery.
I've only been a resident here for 1.5 years, so my experience is limited.
Jobs
jobs
Jobs, bringing jobs to our community will keep the community growing.
Jobs.
Jobs.
Keeping it small.
Keeping the courthouse in good condition.
Libraries, schools, businesses.
Library
Local business.
Lumberjack Park-What a piece of history!
Museum, cemetery.
Not sure.
Old building.
Old buildings and the courthouse.
Old buildings, Conservation Park
Old houses, I hate to see houses rot away.
old houses/stores - our history
Our family farms.
Our libraries.
Our never say die" attitude. Whether it's Total
Our Parks, Hubscher and Reed
Our Parks, We have Hubscher and Reed Park, wonderful parks to take your family, especially now as we are developing the Parks to serve the community in a more safe environment.
Our rural atmosphere with our look to bettering the future.
Parks
Pine River.
Pine River. The quiet country roads with their views, watch deer, turkeys, birds pretty yards and woods
Proud to be an American who works hard for what they have and appreciates what they have.
River
Riverfront
Schools
Sense of community and safety
Small town atmosphere.

Small town caring about others.
Small town feel
Small town hospitality.
The Ami Wright House and downtown Ashley
The atmosphere of friendliness and support.
The closeness of the community.
The community's commitment to investing in the future through endowment. Agricultural industry on which this community was based.
The country living
The County Courthouse.
The friendliness of the citizens here.
The Gratiot Community Players Theater
The great people that make Gratiot County what it is.
The hard working people.
The historic buildings
The historic buildings that are still standing and the St. Louis Bathhouse.
the library
The non-profits that provide so much to the community. Also the parks.
The older buildings downtown.
The older buildings.
The parks.
The point.
the rail trail.
the rivers
The rural areas
The small town atmospheres of the 3 major towns in Gratiot County. Alma, St. Louis, and Ithaca.
The small town feel.
The support for each other.
to keep it ag
To keep trying to better the schools. More sports opportunities with less cost to the parents. Also to improve on reaching teens to drive. Offer local residents a discount to attend Alma College.
War memorial.
What little nature is left. Trees, meadows, etc.
Youth.

11. If you could develop something in the community, what would it be?

A business that would employee many people.
A center where children could simply hang out. Nothing for children to do in this community. Lack of culture.
A hang out for younger teens to be able to enjoy themselves with out wondering around and getting into trouble, some place where they can have fun and have opportunity to learn.

A place where families can come together for recreation, interaction, and sharing ideas to preserve and protect our communities.

A place where people could go and talk, play games, relax, and be open 24 hours a day

A Promise Zone guaranteeing college education to local students-thereby attract new residents who value education. Diverse industries offering white and blue collar employment opportunities.

Activities.

An Arcade or somewhere children can go to.

areas around Pine River. And Please lets keep our road sides clean

Attempt to get our old depot back into the community- possibly put on museum property.

Better transportation for seniors and shut-ins.

Businesses related to agriculture, Jr. college.

Businesses.

Camping at the pits.

Change the Ethanol plant into a distillery.

community centers with activities for all ages, especially teens and singles

Definitely a place for the kids to go for safe, fun entertainment.

Dog park

Downtown

Employment; Parks;

Energy Park

Energy park and river walk development.

Energy windmills.

Entertainment activities for young professionals that have not started families yet.

Entertainment venue

Explaining recycling (Styrofoam). Training for lower income families in making money stretch, job training, mentoring

extending the railtrail south to connect Ithaca and Alma.

Fitness center for ages 4-100. Similar to Morey center in Mt. Pleasant.

Free fun night for low income children.

Hemp products inc…

Honesty

I would develop an outreach/learning center for students and individuals socio-economically excluded from common extra curricular and enriching programs. With the 2000 census indicating that 13% of Gratiot County lives in poverty, I would love to see a center focusing on lifeskills training and sustainable living in limited situations.

I would like more places to eat in the Breckenridge area.

If I could develop something in the community it would be a community rec. center that would offer a daycare, low cost activities for kids, community enrichment programs for adults. I think we have these activities in the community already, but they are far apart and too costly. The other very import thing is a county wide transportation system

Industries for employment

Industry.

Jobs and more recreational opportunities.

Jobs.

Larger Business; factory, retail, etc.

leadership group , community forum for discussion and study of various issues

less polluted land!

Local business

Make 127 a limited access freeway from S. Ithaca to St. Johns.

Make it more for people to enjoy.

Make the park in Sumner more handicap accessible. High speed internet access in all areas of the community instead of having little pockets with it available and big pockets with nothing available. Improve the 911 system. A good friend of mine died because although the person driving her to the hospital called 911 last Oct. The call was not routed correctly (Talk to Mark Duflo) and no help was given to the driver. People need to be aware that if they call 911 on a cell phone they need to ask for the county they are in and NOT depend on the system to work correctly. If the call had been routed correctly and a police escort or ambulance had been sent to meet them, this person may have lived. It was very tragic and may have been prevented - this system needs fixed so that it does not happen again. Make 911 equally accessible to those of us who live on the outer edges of the county. Waiting 30+ minutes for an ambulance is unacceptable and forces us to choose to drive our loved ones in (risking lives on the road) to the hospital in order to insure that they have a fighting chance.

Medical care industry. Bring in more hospital support.

More activities for the young people.

More activities for young people. More jobs for recent high school and college graduates to keep them in the area.

More better working class housing not more rental units.

More close shopping opportunities

More collaboration between all governmental entities and the population in general where the public would be a more integrated part of the actions taking place.

more community recreation opportunities

More employment opportunities. Better college/community relations. Can do attitude.

More industry.

More jobs in manufacturing.

More jobs that would stay here not move to another country.

More jobs.

More jobs.

More local businesses.

More opportunity along m-57 corridor.

More programs for children.

more programs for kids, variety of restaurants and stores

More recreation areas.

More recreation.

More recreational activities

more recreational activities

More recreational activity areas.

More teen places to go: skate board parks, campgrounds, museums, aquarium would be great for kids

and adults, dog park, bring the drive-in back, also a drive-in A&W.

More things for the youth.

More unique businesses to attract visitors

My first choice would be the Brownfield riverfront in Alma. I'd develop part of it as a park. This could be a real asset for downtown Alma, and draw people into the area.
*The rest of it could be developed with some *much-needed**
restaurants, additional shopping, and possibly some type of a residential development (perhaps upscale condos). I'd really like to see some type of a mixed-use type of development there.
My second choice for development would be the long-awaited Great Lakes Energy Park, even though I'm beginning to lose hope that it will ever actually come to
fruition here. First, I would definitely want to make sure that the capture of CO2 gasses underground is actually feasible - for the long term. I have some doubts about this aspect of it. I'd want to talk to many experts in this field before I'd be willing to sell out" this area
nicer places to eat downtown

Our own energy source.

Park.

Pine River, clean out the log jams and junk.

Pool Hall.

Property at State St. and Mechanic St.
Public Transportation, Recreation Center, Recycling Center

Raise education levels of all students
Rec center soccer fields walking park

Rec. center for all ages.

Rivererfront

Riverfront Art Walk

Riverfront in Alma, more successful businesses in Riverdale, Sumner
Safe drinking water in St. Louis

Slow pitch softball night games.

Small industry, good restaurant.

Something for the kids to do -skate park, pool/gaming area-teens have nothing to do in this area other than hang out in the parks and get into trouble-they need stuff that is interesting to them
Sports shop.

that there be more funding for libraries in the county.

The City of Alma needs to develop more and get a stronger theme" for the city. They need a stronger sense of community."
The library.

The western side of the county, particularly Seville Township.

There is a shortage of healthy restaurants, but most of all, a shortage of work opportunities.

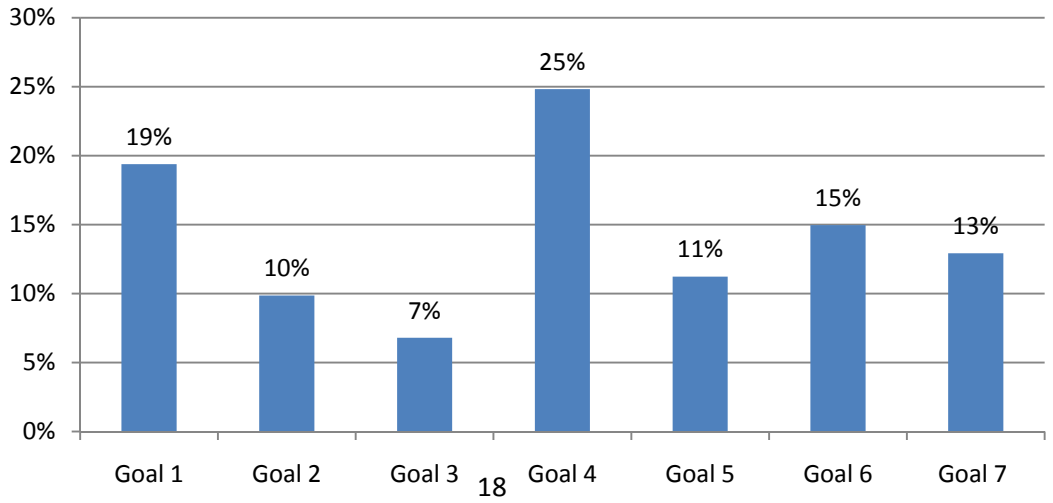
To have a true and lasting passion for Jesus Christ . To be like him, loving, serving, and encouraging each other.
United Way needs a lot of support with their new building. I would suggest helping them develop that into the non-profit center of their dreams (and for that matter the dreams of the community members those agencies serve).

Velsicol
We need to be able to better encourage and accommodate budding entrepreneurs with a dedicated facility and mentoring staff. We need to build upon our strong agricultural base with innovative spin-off business opportunities, possibly becoming an agricultural research center of the midwest.
Wind power, organic products with outlet.

Year round recreational center not associated with Alma College
Youth activity.

12. At the December Public Meetings, the Gratiot County Master Plan Steering Committee requested feedback on the following set of master plan goals. Please mark the three (3) goals that you think are the most important to the Gratiot Community.

1. **Preserve the County's quality rural character, which includes productive farms, healthy natural features, and vibrant downtowns that maintain "small town" charm.**
2. **Strengthen the existing cities, villages, and hamlets to serve as quality community centers for living, working, and recreating.**
3. **Provide quality public services, such as water, sewer, public safety, and the transportation network, in the most cost effective manner.**
4. **Provide and sustain economic opportunities by retaining, attracting and growing quality employers, including those within the agriculture, industrial, and commercial sectors.**
5. **Provide high quality of life opportunities, such as premier cultural and recreational resources, for the enjoyment of people from all generations.**
6. **Provide quality educational opportunities that prepare residents for local jobs and cutting edge industries.**
7. **Continue and strengthen quality community collaboration to promote sustainable planning practices and elevate Gratiot County as a whole.**



13. Is there another goal that you would add?

A project that could clean up the road sides, such as the deer that have been killed by car accidents

A resource to clean our road sides of debris. Such as the deer left from the winter, and trash or GTE that's leaving town taking jobs with them

1. More programs, transportation, housing, opportunities and services for those with special needs and abilities. 2. Affordable wireless or high speed internet that is available ALL over the county. Although there is a tower in Sumner - it does not work, even when you can see it out your window. Too many places w/o phone lines that are capable, no cable access and no wireless access. Satellite is too expensive and does not work for those who would like to continue their educational opportunities on-line (Too long of a latency period). Companies who want to dig to replace existing services should be told they must upgrade when applying for zoning permits, etc. 3. Improve the 911 system and educate the public to ask for the county they are in when they call 911. See the question above.

Make the 911 system just as accessible for those on the perimeter of the county as it is for those in towns. Those who chose to live in the rural areas pay the same taxes and should have equal access - not ambulances that take 31 minutes to respond when called as it has for several people in the area when they called. It is actually faster and safer for our family members if we take them in to the hospital - even though it requires us to speed. Waiting for the ambulance can and does cost lives for those of us on the outer edges of the county.

A county wide school system? Would it make better use of teachers? 1 school board for the entire county as in other states.

Broader economic development outside of the county's current east M-46 and Ithaca" orientation."

Clean up the mobile home park.

Develop riverfront

Eliminate the smell on US 127 north of Alma

Finish 127 south of Ithaca to St. Johns.

Focus on and improve educational and cultural opportunities for our next generation and encourage our children, grand children, and great grand children in growth and development.

Get rid of the corruption at the courthouse and the sheriff.

I think we should focus on something other than sports.

I would like to see the county work together to form a resource for those increasing numbers of individuals that need temporary help. A homeless shelter, perhaps. The greatest county is only as strong as its weakest members.

If Gratiot County could go green, that would provide quality of life.

If you bring some of my ideas to the county it will put more money into other ideas and progress into the community

Jr. college.

Keep our law enforcements strong.

More recognition from state government!

See question 11. More of it.

Small business incentives.

Staying the course in finding avenues to clean up all pollution and finally being able to put this issue to rest...if that is a possibility.

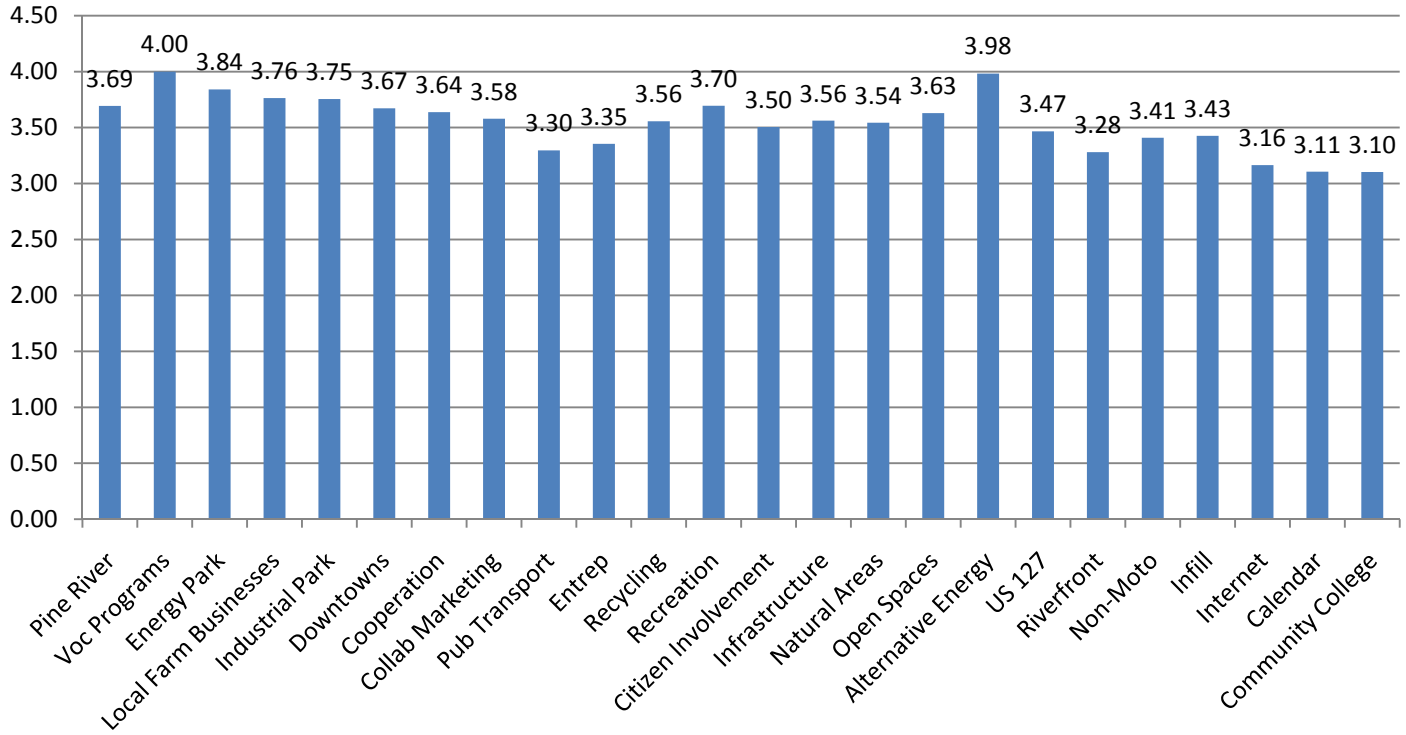
Strengthen local non-profits to help provide services and aid to community members and show

everyone around the country what amazing things our non-profits are doing in this economy.
That employees in the area do everything possible to stay in the area and retain the employees that they have and provide for them and their families.
Utilize community service for there that owe the community for incarceration for penalties/fines.
We need to have a share of parks money raised through millage here in Breck.

14. At the December public meetings, participants identified a number of community issues and opportunities. The following list reflects common participant responses (presented in no particular order). Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by ranking it on a scale of one (1) to five (5), with five (5) representing strongly agree.

The Gratiot County Community would benefit from……	**Strongly Disagree**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**
Cleaning and protecting the Pine River……	1	2	3	4	5
Making vocational programs available to students……	1	2	3	4	5
Developing an energy park……	1	2	3	4	5
Businesses that sell locally produced farm products……	1	2	3	4	5
Expanding industrial parks……	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining and improving downtowns……	1	2	3	4	5
More local government, school and agency cooperation….	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborative marketing efforts……	1	2	3	4	5
More public transportation options……	1	2	3	4	5
Entrepreneurship/business mentoring programs……	1	2	3	4	5
A county-wide recycling program……	1	2	3	4	5
More county-wide recreational opportunities……	1	2	3	4	5
More citizen involvement in local government decisions…..	1	2	3	4	5
Improved and well-maintained infrastructure……	1	2	3	4	5
Preserving natural areas (e.g. woodlands & wetlands)……	1	2	3	4	5
Preserving open spaces (e.g. farmlands & fields)……	1	2	3	4	5
Utilizing alternative energy sources……	1	2	3	4	5
Completing US-127……	1	2	3	4	5
Developing riverfronts……	1	2	3	4	5
Developing non-motorized pathways……	1	2	3	4	5
Redeveloping empty lots and contaminated sites……	1	2	3	4	5
Expanded internet service……	1	2	3	4	5
An improved community calendar……	1	2	3	4	5
A Gratiot County community college……	1	2	3	4	5

Question 14 – Average Score



15. Please provide any further comments on the backside of this page.

It may seem from my point of view that I may be asking for the moon, but this programming is sooooo important to our youth, to make a better community for all.

It may sound like I am asking for the moon, but we must think about our youth for future development

(Summarized): Community college at least 30 miles away, and nonresidents pay greater tuition. Difficult for working older adults to get degree due to time constraint. Would like a community college in Gratiot Co. Would like to further her nursing education, have better access to community college, and be able to give to the community.

A Gratiot Community College would be a marvelous thing. Think of the opportunity to grant scholarships to those most in need of them. To educate and send into the workforce our own!

CAFO operations need to find another home.

Figure out a way to keep our children from leaving Gratiot County after high school and never coming back.

For riverfront development, Alma should consider looking at the Riverwalk in Downtown Gladwin. It includes thriving shops and a bar/restaurant on the first level. Banquet Center for parties, weddings, etc and condos on additional levels. Beautiful building that has greatly enhanced that small community.

Gratiot Community College? Great idea!

Having 1 county fair. Making it for the kids again, not money. Ithaca has the ideal location to grow

with their fair. Some members of the G.C.F. for Youth have forgotten who and how and why their fair was started. The kids without the financial support are being pushed aside. This must stop. And no, my children never had animals at the fair. This is just my opinion. Thank you.

I LOVE the idea of a community college in our area!!!!!

I think it would be sinful to develop on a spot that still has contamination issues. Why take the chance of causing future health issues.

I would like the community (especially Alma) to be more ethical, have more morals, respect and values for themselves, the children, the elderly and the community. Maybe bringing back some of the "old ways" will make this a better community and a better place to live. Provide opportunities for the community to volunteer like: keeping the towns clean (pick up trash, etc), planting of trees, start walking groups, bicycling groups, bird watching, whatever, free parenting classes to keep children safe, low cost CPR classes or free, get a YMCA started up, any activity to keep kids and adults active and out of trouble. Have city meetings at morning and night for all people to be able to come. Have more job fairs at Michigan Works. Get the businesses involved to make that an option. Make it easier for someone to start a new small business. Offer small businesses that are already here some advice or tips to keep their business here. Start neighborhood watches. Super Wal-Mart to begin.

The city should put more effort and emphasis on economic development. We must provide jobs for our citizens and community growth. Great parks and culture events won't prosper without people with jobs. We continually lose young people because lack of jobs. A strong local economy would solve many problems.

Use local high school or college to search the internet for businesses and industries that would be compatible and/or interested in moving to our area. This might be use of co-op students supervised by adults.

We desperately need to upgrade the services to those with special needs and improve high speed internet access to all of our residents.

Would benefit the community to have a dog park. A place where animal lovers could socialize while their dogs mingle and get exercise. People would be expected to clean up after their dogs.

GRATIOT REGIONAL EXCELLENCE AND TRANSFORMATION (GREAT) PLAN
YOUTH SURVEY INITIATIVE

Do you plan to live in Gratiot County after high school and/or college graduation?

If yes or no, what are your plans?
Moving out of state for my career
Moving to Mt. Pleasant
I joined the USMC so I will be in California
Go to CMU for bachelors in accounting with minor in coaching and then move to NY
Go to MTU then move out of state to be an engineer
Get far away from Gratiot County
Find a job where possible
Go to CMU
I am attending college up North (LSSU)
Going to MCC
MSU
CMU
I plan to be a photographer and travel, but I also plan to come back
Go to college
It depends on what college I go to
After high school I plan to go to college
Live in Wheeler Twp, work in Alma or Saginaw
Yes, teach and live in Gratiot County
I plan to go to college and find a job in medicine and live near my work
Move to Davidson
Go to college, live here for a few then move
After college, move to a more business oriented part of Michigan
Stay in Saginaw Twp and go to college
Go to MIT for computer engineering
Good jobs
I would like to go maybe to Bay City
College, get a job
To make it to bigger places
Go somewhere better
I plan to move close to the west coast/gulf
I plan to get a good job somewhere else
Rural area, Breckenridge
I plan to go to Alma College and become a teacher
To get a shop opened
I plan to have a decent paying job and live in a normal sized house
No, I plan to move out of Michigan
Move to Florida
I might go to college in a different county

Do you plan to <u>work</u> in Gratiot County after high school and/or college graduation?

If yes or no, what are your plans?
Moving out west to study biology (DNR)
Go to CMU
Work in Mt. Pleasant
Work in an accounting firm in NY
Work as an engineer out west
Get a good job somewhere
There are no means for me to work here after college
I am going to work at McDonalds in Ithaca
I plan to work at a hospital
I plan to travel far away
Get a job
Become an ob/gyn
Work at Gratiot Community Hospital
To work
I plan to work in medicine and I'll work wherever I end up
Move to Davidson
Work in a bigger city with more opportunity
Wherever jobs are available
Work in Bay City
Get a good job
To make it to a quality job
Go somewhere bigger
I plan to work where I plan to live
I plan to get a higher job then what's offered in Gratiot County
No, I want to go to a bigger city for a variety of employment opportunities
Engineer
I will be a teacher at Breckenridge High School
So I can save up money
It depends on where jobs are
Depends on where I go to college

What are you most proud of in the community?

Farms
Schools
The support for our sporting events
The people that come out to the football games
The cleanliness of the community
Middleton Diner
Nothing
HS sports, extra-curriculars
The Middleton Diner and Bakery
Our Football team
The friendships between everyone
There is little polluting
The friendliness
Everybody knows everybody, so when someone needs help, everyone pitches in
Nothing
The people are very nice
Alma college, movie theater
Alma fair grounds, movie theater, food
How for some events we really come together
Cheerleaders going to state 4 years in a row
Drama and music departments
I'm proud that there isn't a lot of crime. I like that we have lots of recreation centers
Schools
The scenery
"Small Town" charm, feel safe in community
Low crime level
Being a part of the community
Drama Club
The school and the people in the community
There's nothing here
Nothing
How nice everyone is to everyone
The input of public opinion
Our tractors
Our music program
The community members
It's a very safe place to live
The movie theater
The welcoming people
I'm proud that we get a good education
Main Street Pizza
Nothing
Everyone knows and looks out for each other
The success of our sports
I am not proud of anything in this community
The kind people in the area
In Breckenridge everybody knows each other and they are great friends
Has nice people
Farming is a big part
The school teachers
It's nice people
Our sports, they are kind of a big deal for me
It's not a violent community
The people that live in Breckenridge are nice
Farms
It's small and everyone knows everyone
The school that I go to and my friends

If you could add something new in the community, what would it be?

Mall
More parks and outdoor activities for kids to have
A theme park
Recreation center
Shopping mall
A gamestop
Fast food
Things to do, entertainment
New, nice, well maintained golf courses
Roller rink
Jobs
More businesses
Most restaurants
An inside and outside pool
A mall
I'd add a recreation center
Taco Bell
Movie theater, fast food restaurant, bowling alley, anything
McDonalds
More places for fun and social gatherings for kids
I would add a sports center and a McDonalds
Things to do
A public pond and river site
I would put a community center where people can have fun at. With a pool, basketball and tennis courts, etc.
More mechanic shops and car places so people have jobs
A subway
A sports center like the SAC in Mt. Pleasant
Places where teenage kids can go and hang out with other teenagers
A center to play
A recreational center for people of all ages
A new baseball field
Fast food restaurant
I would add a mall or something like that so there was a place to go hang out with your friends, etc.
A rec center
Fast food and a nice ball diamond
Dirt bike tracks
Better basketball courts
A new bowling alley or movie theater
More places that sell food

Is there another goal that you would add?

Develop economically and industrially as a whole
Would add safety as a goal
Diversity the job opportunities so it doesn't mostly deal with agriculture
Getting more jobs
We should get more businesses in our community
Improve sporting locations
To open a place where kids can go and hang out, shoot hoops, play video games
Improve sporting playing fields
Add nicer things to the towns but keep some places rural
People in "power" of Breckenridge need to be nice and fair
Fix the roads
Work to make this community more exciting and get people to feel more pride for the community
More places for kids to go
Make Gratiot County bigger

GRATIOT COUNTY CEMETERY LISTING

CITY OR TOWNSHIP	NAME OF CEMETERY	ADDRESS	SEXTON NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
Alma	Riverside	620 S. Lincoln Ave.	Bob Albrecht	City Of Alma, 525 E. Superior St, Alma, MI 48801	(989)463-8901
Breckenridge	Ridgelawn	Breckenridge	Village of Breckenridge	104 S. Saginaw, PO Box 276, Breckenrige, MI 48615	(989)842-3109
Ithaca	Ithaca	Spring Street	City of Ithaca	129 W. Emerson St, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-3200
St. Louis	Oak Grove	St. Louis	Steven Mepham	108 W. Saginaw St, St. Louis, MI 48880	(989)681-3567
Arcada	Bailey	4990 N. Jerome Rd	Alfred Silhavy	2893 W. Harrison Rd, Alma, MI 48801	(989)463-3628
Bethany	Indian Cemetery Only	Riverside Drive	Greg Mikek	4850 E. Jefferson Rd, St. Louis, MI 48880	(989)842-1099
Elba	Ford	11183 E. So. Gratiot Co. Line, Elsie	Angie Morris	PO Box 182, Ashley, MI 48806	(989)847-4132
Emerson	Emerson Twp Association	3851 Bagley Rd.	Kory Edgar	2455 N. Baldwin Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-4609
Emerson	Pine Grove	779 Tyler Rd.	Kory Edgar	2455 N. Baldwin Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-4609
Fulton	Fulton Center	9100 S. Alger Rd.	Phillip Foster	3425 W. Cleveland Rd, Perrinton, MI 48871	(989)236-5102
Fulton	Payne	11365 S. Ely Hwy.	Phillip Foster	3425 W. Cleveland Rd, Perrinton, MI 48871	(989)236-5102
Fulton	Danley/Hill/Phillips	818/900 S. Gratiot County Line Rd	Phillip Foster	3425 W. Cleveland Rd, Perrinton, MI 48871	(989)236-5102
Fulton	Old Fulton	3000 W. Ranger Rd (West of Alger Rd)	Phillip Foster	3425 W. Cleveland Rd, Perrinton, MI 48871	(989)236-5102
Hamilton	Hamilton	3855 S. Barry Road	Bill Rocheleau	5949 S. Wisner Rd, Ashley, MI 48806	(989)847-2166
Lafayette	Lafayette	St. Charles Road	Teresa Bushre	8942 E. Lincoln Rd, Wheeler, MI 48662	(989)842-5529
Newark	Greenwood	5551 Ely Hwy. (S.)	Margaret Roth	4691 S. Alger Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-5056
Newark	Fritz	751 Hayes Rd.	Margaret Roth	4691 S. Alger Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-5056
Newark	Naldrett	5553 Ely Hwy. (S)	Margaret Roth	4691 S. Alger Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-5056
Newark	Beacher	2493 Buchanan Rd.	Margaret Roth	4691 S. Alger Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-5056
New Haven	New Haven	9251 W. Buchannan Rd.	Robert Barnes	54 S. Warner Rd, Sumner, MI 48889	(989)875-4097
North Shade	NONE				
North Star	Brady	845 Crapo Rd.	Linda Reeves	345 S. Crapo Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-4077
North Star	North Star	3123 Johnson Rd.	Ron McPherson	4532 S. Crapo Rd, Ithaca, MI 48847	(989)875-4325
Pine River	Wright	8500 Winans Rd.	Joseph Dickman	8605 N. Winans Rd, Alma, MI 48801	(989)463-6468
Seville	Brady Cemetary	N. Rich Rd.	Todd Horrocks	7640 N. Birch Drive, Vestaburg, MI 48891	(989)268-5437
Seville	Seville Center (formerly French)	8143 Madison Rd.	Todd Horrocks	7640 N. Birch Drive, Vestaburg, MI 48891	(989)268-5437
Seville	Riverdale	Jackson Rd.	Todd Horrocks	7640 N. Birch Drive, Vestaburg, MI 48891	(989)268-5437
Seville	Sibley	11401 W. Madison Rd.	Todd Horrocks	7640 N. Birch Drive, Vestaburg, MI 48891	(989)268-5437
Sumner	Elm Hall	N. Ferris Rd.	Carlene McGill	8644 W. Polk Rd, Sumner, MI 48889	(989)463-4531
Sumner	Sumner	1500 Ferris Rd.	Carlene McGill	8644 W. Polk Rd, Sumner, MI 48889	(989)463-4531
Sumner	Pritchard	5247 N. Pingree Rd.	Carlene McGill	8644 W. Polk Rd, Sumner, MI 48889	(989)463-4531
Washington	Collier	Ranger Rd.	Leslie Whitford	3654 E. Cleveland Rd, Ashley, MI 48806	(989)838-4494
Washington	Keller	State & Taft Rd.	Leslie Whitford	3654 E. Cleveland Rd, Ashley, MI 48806	(989)838-4494
Wheeler	Wheeler Twp.	Wheeler Rd.	Thomas Vine	7884 N. Wheeler Rd, Wheeler, MI 48662	(989)842-1501

Collaboration Worksheet

Name of Agency/Group/Jurisdiction_____

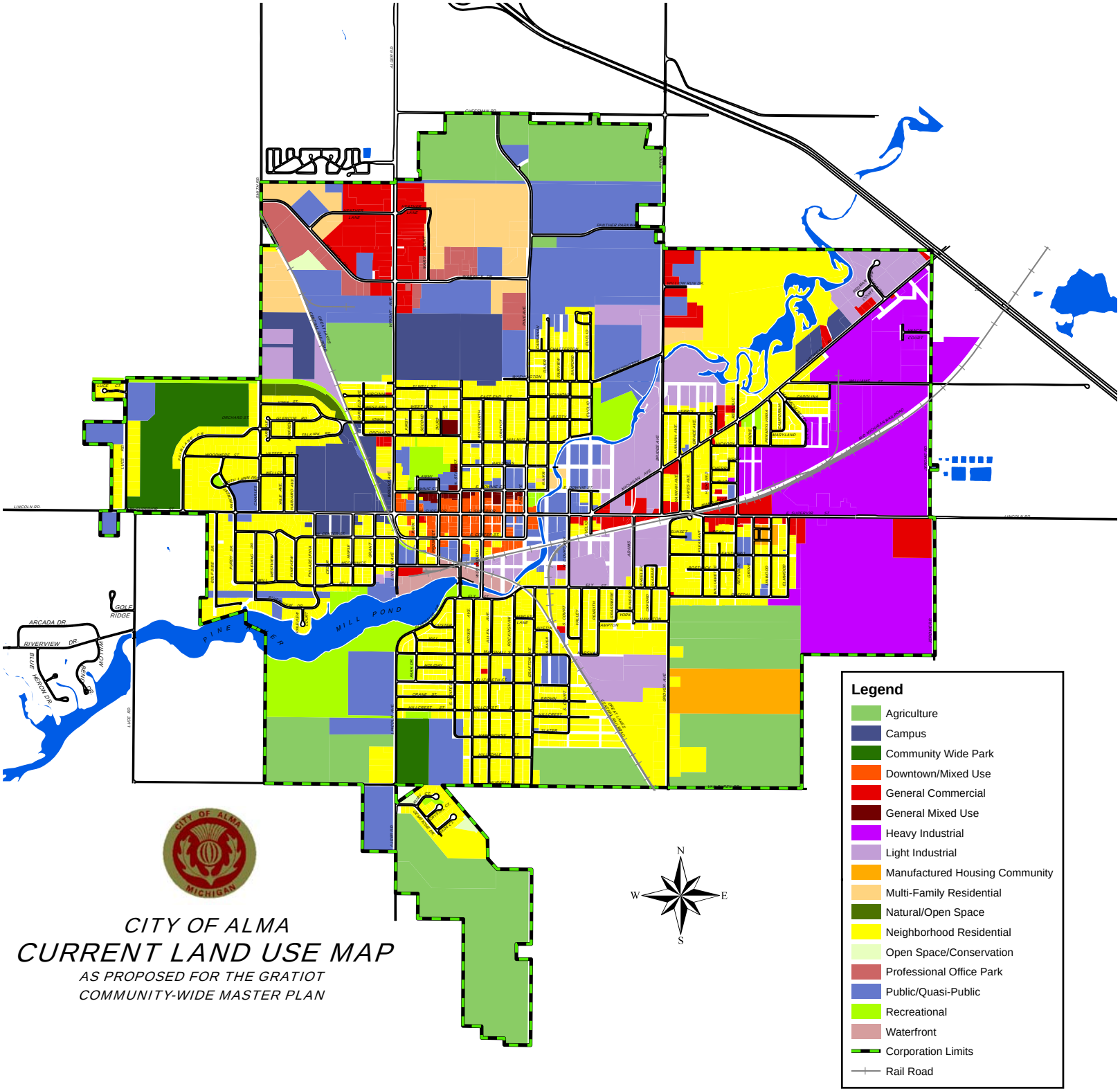
Which of the Plan's goals are especially important to your agency/group/jurisdiction?

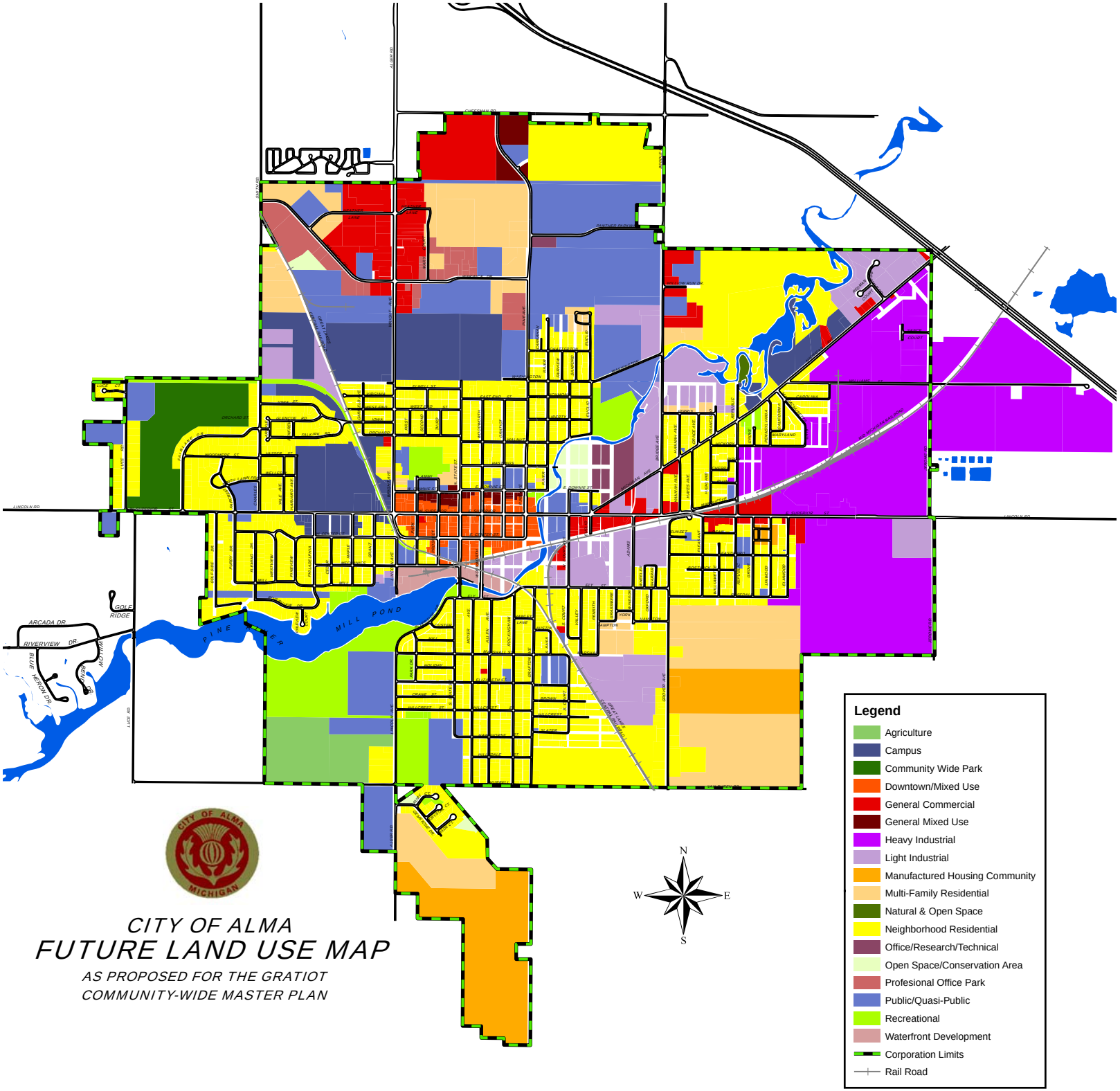
What other agencies/groups/jurisdictions support these same goals? Who are the key contacts?

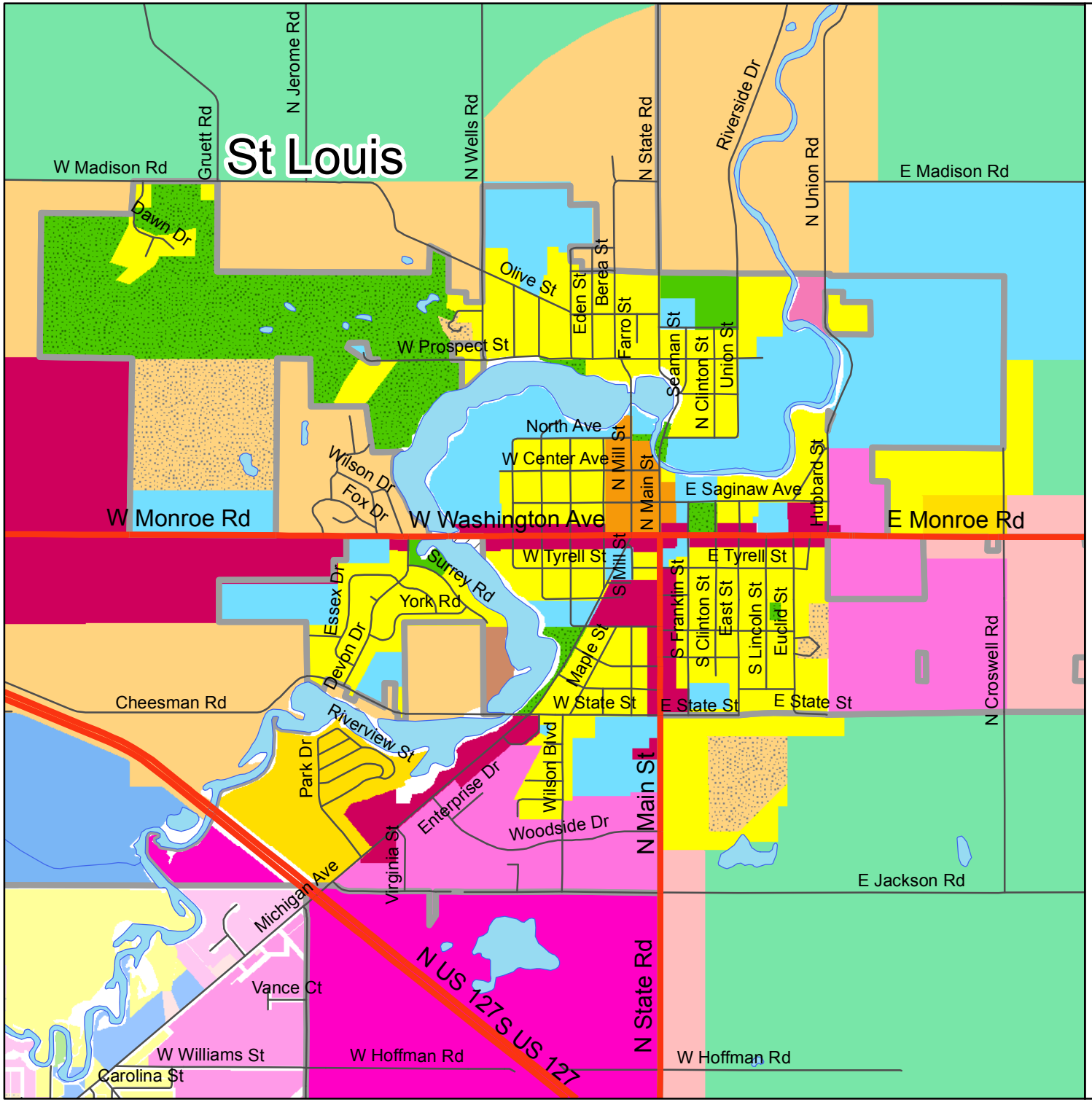
Which of the Plan's objectives and strategies might you be able to pursue with each of the agencies/groups/jurisdictions listed above?

What are the resources that you could contribute to each collaboration?

Who in your agency/group/jurisdiction will contact potential partners and when?


CITY OF ALMA
CURRENT LAND USE MAP
AS PROPOSED FOR THE GRATIOT
COMMUNITY-WIDE MASTER PLAN
CITY OF ALMA
MICHIGAN
PINE RIVER
MILL POND
GOLF RIDGE
ARCADA DR
RIVERVIEW DR
BLUE HERON DR
LINCOLN RD
N
S
E
W
Legend
Agriculture
Campus
Community Wide Park
Downtown/Mixed Use
General Commercial
General Mixed Use
Heavy Industrial
Light Industrial
Manufactured Housing Community
Multi-Family Residential
Natural/Open Space
Neighborhood Residential
Open Space/Conservation
Professional Office Park
Public/Quasi-Public
Recreational
Waterfront
Corporation Limits
Rail Road


CITY OF ALMA
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
AS PROPOSED FOR THE GRATIOT
COMMUNITY-WIDE MASTER PLAN
CITY OF ALMA
MICHIGAN
PINE RIVER
MILL POND
ARCADA DR.
RIVERVIEW DR.
BLUE HERON DR.
GOLF RIDGE
LINCOLN RD.
N
S
E
W
Legend
Agriculture
Campus
Community Wide Park
Downtown/Mixed Use
General Commercial
General Mixed Use
Heavy Industrial
Light Industrial
Manufactured Housing Community
Multi-Family Residential
Natural & Open Space
Neighborhood Residential
Office/Research/Technical
Open Space/Conservation Area
Profesional Office Park
Public/Quasi-Public
Recreational
Waterfront Development
Corporation Limits
Rail Road



G.R.E.A.T. Project

Future Land Use (DRAFT)

- Agriculture
- Campus
- Community-Wide Park
- Downtown/Mixed Use
- Excavation
- General Commercial
- General Mixed Use
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Manufactured Housing Community
- Multi-Family Residential
- Natural and Open Space
- Neighborhood Park
- Neighborhood Residential
- Office/Research/Technical
- Open Space/Conservation Area
- Professional Office Park
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Recreational
- Renaissance Zone
- Rural Residential
- Unknown
- WF
- Jurisdictions
- Highways
- Roads
- Lakes
- Streams

Miles
0 0.75

PARTNERSHIPS for CHANGE
Sustainable Communities

LIAA

Sources:
Michigan Center for Geographic Information,
Department of Information Technology

Map Produced July 2010

Map #