



5 Year update to the
Vision 2025 Master Plan

Adopted: _____, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This update to the Vision 2025 Master Plan was undertaken by the Planning Commission in 2022 and 2023. The Township Community Development Director led the charge; the Township Board approved and adopted the amendments.

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION	5
VISION STATEMENT	5
CHAPTER TWO – COMMUNITY ELEMENTS	6
COMMUNITY.....	6
Existing Conditions	6
Population Growth Since 2010.....	8
Population Projections	8
Median Age Comparison	9
Population by Gender.....	9
Housing and Households	12
Median Home Value.....	12
Residential Buildings.....	13
Public Water Systems	14
Public Sanitary Sewer Systems	15
HOUSING.....	16
WORK.....	17
Existing Conditions.....	17
Education	17
Economic Development, Marketing & Branding Strategy – Redevelopment Ready Community.....	19
MOBILITY	20
CHAPTER THREE – FUTURE LAND USE	21
Review of Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map	21
Zoning Plan	21
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	22
Sustainability	22
Community	23
Recreation	24
Work	25
Mobility	26
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES	28

Residential Context	28
Commercial Context	29
Industrial Context	29
Horticulture / Prime Farmland Preservation Context	30
ZONING PLAN	31
EVALUATION	31
CHAPTER FOUR – IMPLEMENTATION	33
Overview	33
Responsibility	33
Appendix	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the Vision 2025 Master Plan has been frequently consulted by the Planning Commission since its adoption in 2016, including minor amendments in 2017, it is important to take a comprehensive look at the plan at the mid-point of the planning period it covers. A five-year review is also required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008). This five-year review has resulted in a series of updates to the Master Plan including renaming the document to Vision 2030 Master Plan.

This review was undertaken to confirm that the Vision, Goals and Objectives of the Master Plan reflect the direction that the community desires for its future and to account for any unanticipated changes in the community since 2016 when the plan was prepared. A new goal was prepared and existing goals and objectives have been updated to reflect a desire for a more sustainable and equitable future for Comstock. Additionally, since the plan was prepared, the 2020 Census was taken. Where information was available, the data in the Existing Conditions section of the report was updated.

New language speaking to sustainability, housing and water and sewer infrastructure are included in this document. The Comstock Township Economic Development, Marketing and Branding Strategy was completed while this update was underway. Highlights and key elements of that adopted strategy are also included in this document.

This update is considered a companion document to the Master Plan rather than a succeeding plan. As such, many areas not in need of a full update were left as originally adopted and will be addressed and revisited when a new Master Plan is prepared in the future. The Introduction section that follows identifies the sections of the Vision 2025 Master Plan that were updated and which sections were not addressed.

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, Community Elements, only the Existing Conditions data of the Community Elements and Work were updated utilizing 2020 Census data. Recreation and Mobility were not updated but will be addressed either with the next review, with preparation of a new master plan or in a separate planning process.

The Vision 2025 Master Plan used Texas Township as the comparison community throughout the document. This update does not reference Texas Township as the demographics and population growth rate of that community are even more dissimilar from Comstock Township in 2022 than they were in 2015 when the Steering Committee selected it as the comparison community.

Chapter 3 – Future Land Use – was updated after extensive study of the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map.

Chapter 4 – Implementation was also updated to reflect what has been accomplished since adoption of the Vision 2025 Master Plan and also to provide new implementation steps reflecting the changes identified in these Master Plan amendments.

VISION STATEMENT

An updated Vision Statement has been prepared for the Vision 2030 Master Plan.

As you arrive, whether by foot, bus, bicycle, or car, Comstock Township welcomes you with colorful gateways—an indication of the abundance of green spaces and recreation amenities within the community. Throughout the Township, multi-generational neighborhoods are safe, attractive, and connected to community assets via non-motorized pathways. A strong business climate, supported by excellent access to rail, roads, and an educated and skilled workforce, thrives. Complementary land uses offer a mixed and sustainable pattern of development that results in a strong jobs housing balance and high quality of life that balances present and future needs. A diverse mix of residents have choices about the types of housing available, the means of moving about the community, and where to shop, play, and recreate. This is our vision for Comstock Charter Township.

CHAPTER TWO – COMMUNITY ELEMENTS

The demographic data was updated using 2020 Census results and the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS).

COMMUNITY

Existing Conditions

While a modest growth rate of 7.2% occurred between 2000 and 2010, the 2020 Decennial Census revealed that Comstock Township experienced very modest population growth from 2010 to 2020—only 2.5%. Similar growth occurred in neighboring Townships with the exception of Richland Township which observed significant growth and Charleston Township where the population decreased.

Figure 2.1: Historic Population Trends

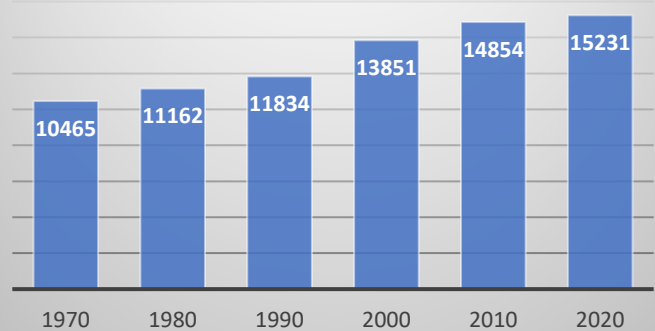
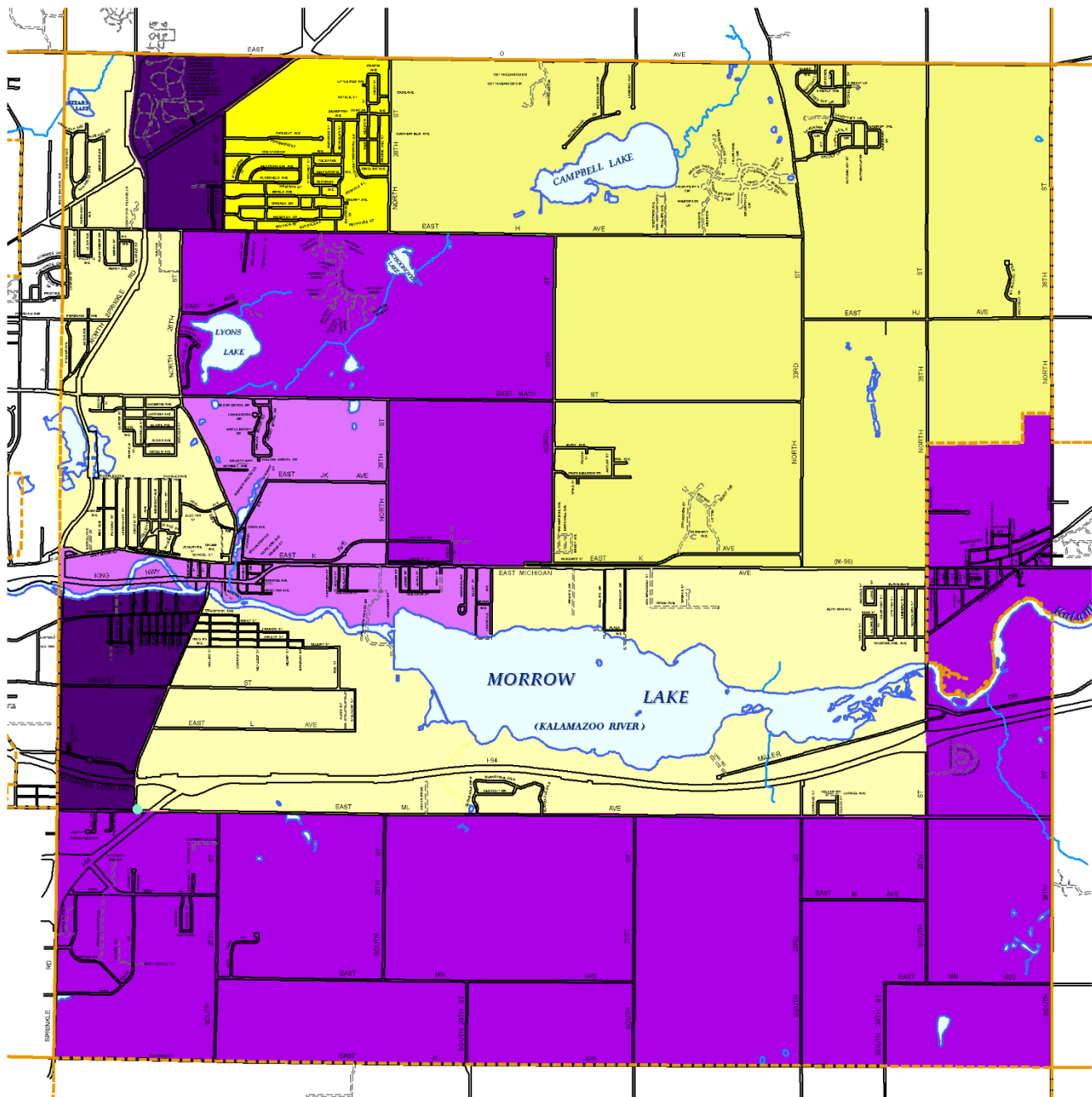


Table 2.1: Population Comparison

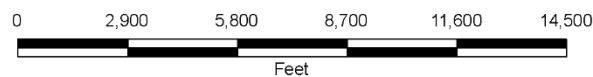
	2010	2020	Percent Change 2010 - 2020
Comstock Township	14,854	15,231	2.5%
Charleston Township	1,975	1,904	-3.6%
Kalamazoo Township	21,918	22,777	3.9%
Pavilion Township	6,222	6,387	2.7%
Richland Township	7,501	8,693	15.9%
Galesburg, City	2,009	2,049	2.0%
Kalamazoo, City	74,262	73,598	-0.9%
Kalamazoo County	250,331	261,108	4.3%
State of Michigan	9,883,640	10,077,331	2.0%

Figure 2.4

5 Year Master Plan Review Population Change 2010 - 2020



Population Change



April 2022

Population Growth Since 2010

Figure 2.4 on the preceding page shows where changes occurred since 2010. About half of the Township area grew while the other half, mostly the northern areas lost population with the exception of the multi-family developments. This could reflect an increase in empty nester households in established northern neighborhoods and turnover of homes in the south end to younger families. There has not been new residential development to explain the population increase in the southern areas of the Township other than the building out of the Castle Creek Ridge neighborhood.

Population Projections

While population projections are not exact, they give a general sense of growth trends. However, they have limitations, especially in areas of rapid growth or decline that may run counter to statistical trends. Averaging is typically used amongst a variety of population projection methods to provide a more balanced projection. In applying the average of the three methods reflected below, the Township should expect a population of approximately 16,160 in 2030 and a population of 17,130 in 2040 compared to the 2020 population of 15,231; an increase of 929 persons by 2030 and 1,899 persons in 2040 over 2020 population. The projections do not reflect the planned 189-dwelling unit Redwood Apartment Neighborhood off G Avenue. The impact of that project will be reflected in the next Master Plan.

Table 2.2: Population Projections: Growth Rate Method

Average Annual Growth Rate 2000-2020	2020	2030	2040
9%	15,231	16,602	18,096

Table 2.3: Population Projections: Arithmetic Method

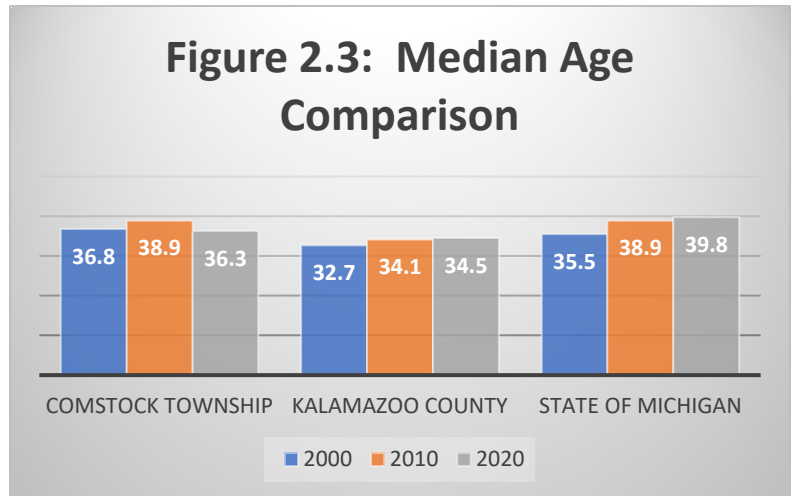
Average Annual Increase (No. of Persons)	2020	2030	2040
37.7	15,231	15,608	15,985

Table 2.4: Population Projections: Building Permit Method

Average Number Permits/Year	Persons per Household	2020	2030	2040
39.7	2.62	15,231	16,271	17,311

Median Age Comparison

The median age in the Township dropped by 2.6 years from 2010 to 2020 to 36.3 years. Prior to this drop, the median age of Comstock residents had been increasing with an approximate two-year increase between 2000 and 2010. Currently, the median age in the Township is less than the State of Michigan as a whole (39.8) but older than Kalamazoo County overall (34.5). It is unknown if this trend will continue through the 2020s.



Population by Gender

The diagram displays the population of the Township by gender and age group. Population pyramids help visualize the distribution of ages, particularly the contrast between older and younger populations. The largest statistical groups are the Baby Boomer generation and together the younger Millennials and older Gen Z members. There is a fairly even distribution of younger age groups that will naturally take the place of the older population over time. Accordingly, Comstock should not see any significant declines in population due to aging. However, the large Baby Boomer generation will likely look for alternative housing options as they retire and their children move out. Similarly, the large group of 20-somethings will be looking for their first home. It is pertinent that the Township prepare for this housing shift as part of Comstock Vision 2030. Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6 indicate where the majority of small children and seniors currently live, respectively.

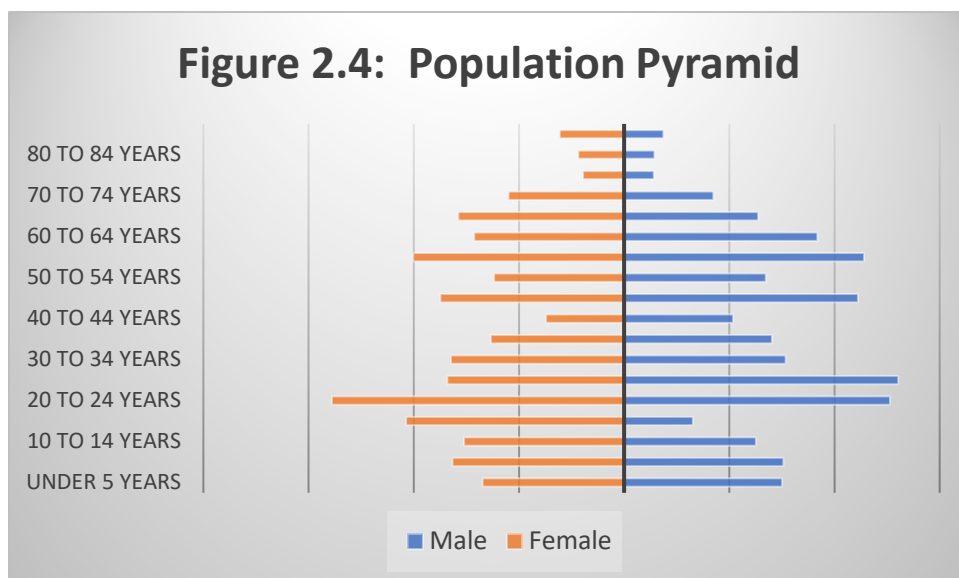
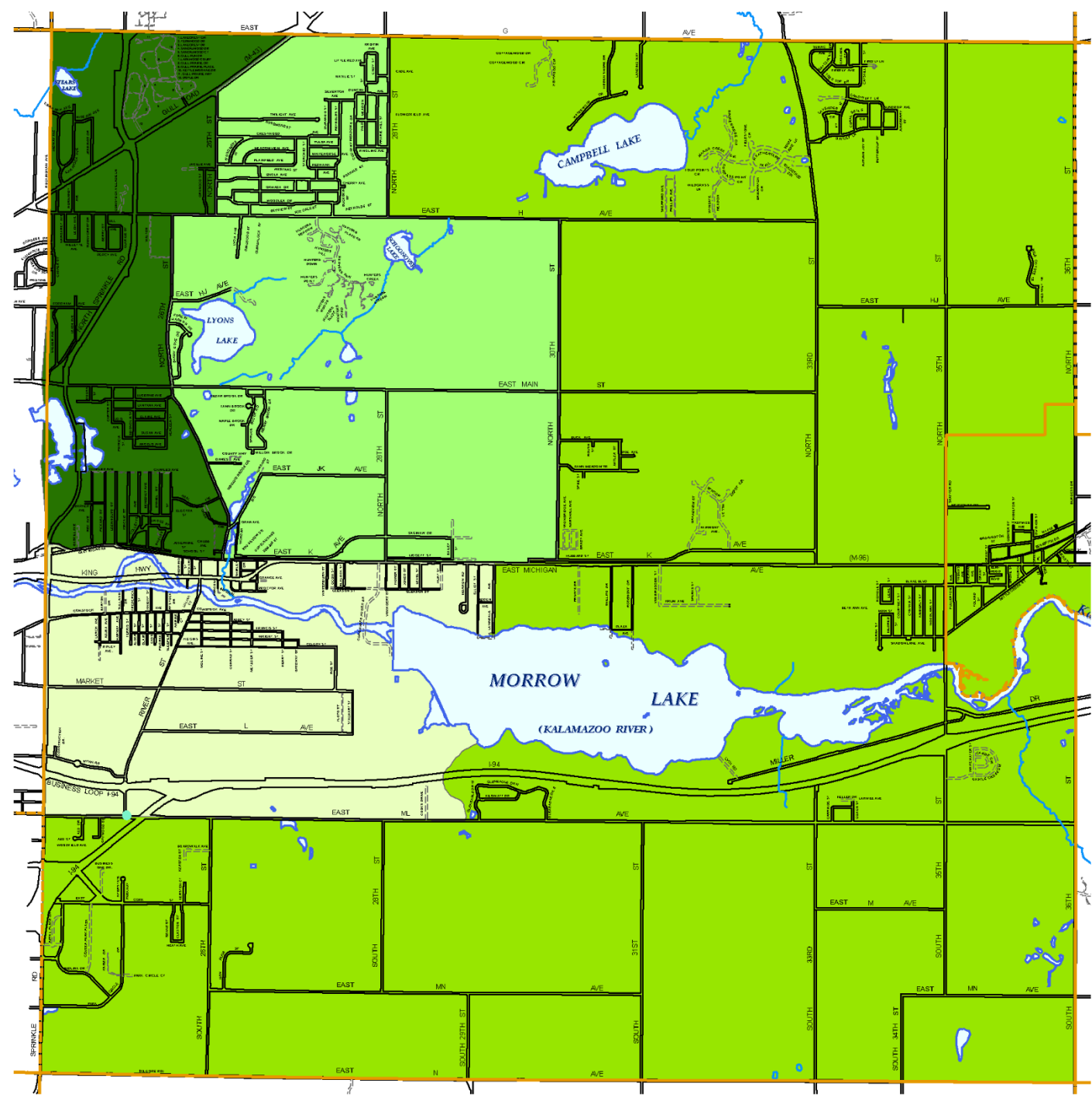


Figure 2.5

5 Year Master Plan Update

Age Concentration 5 and Under



Data Source: ACS 2020

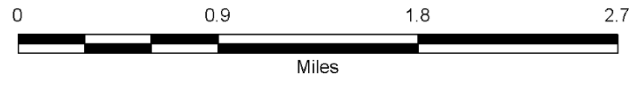
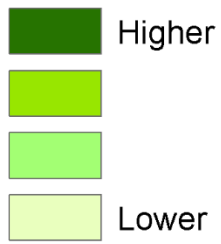
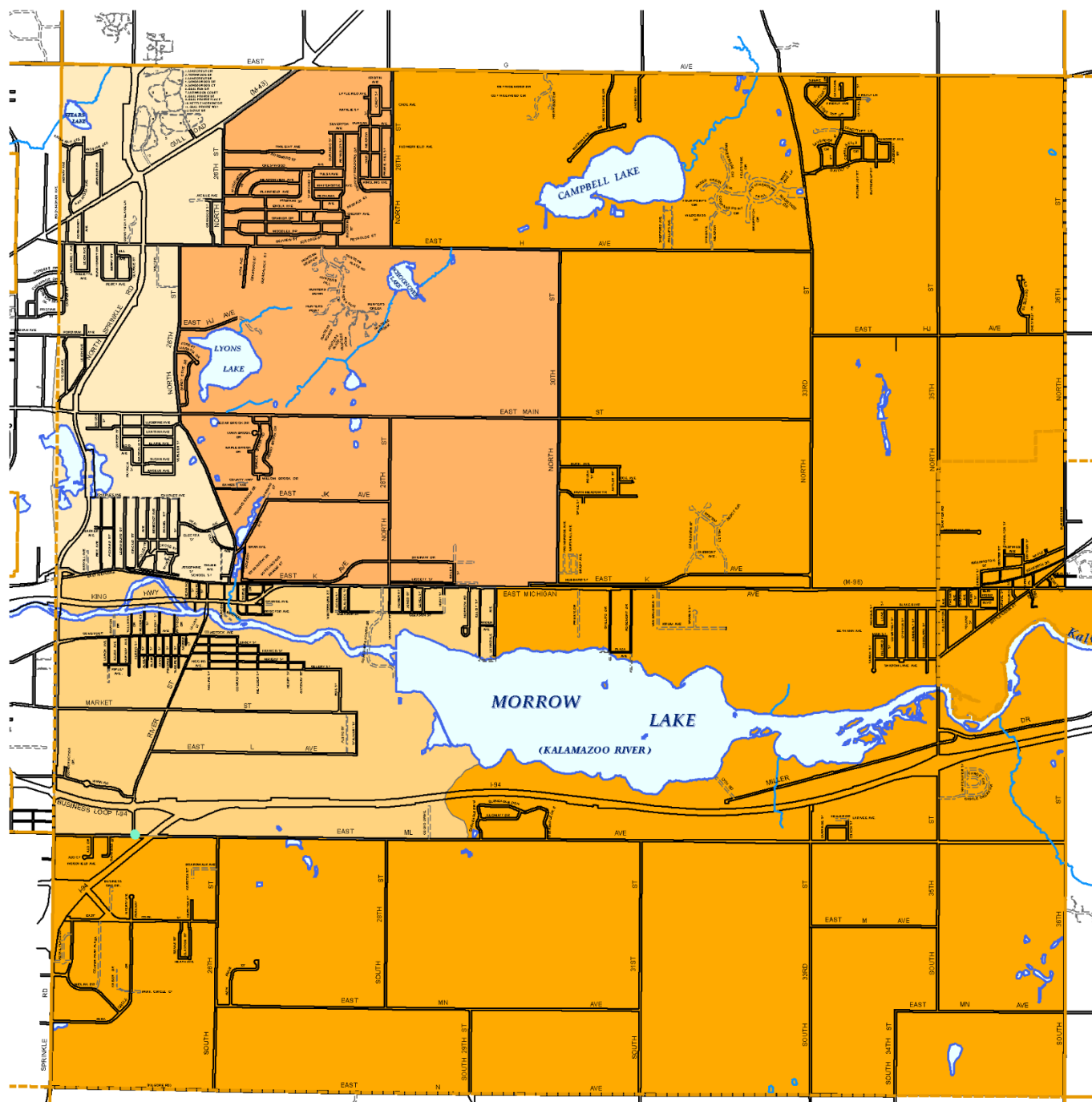


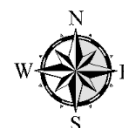
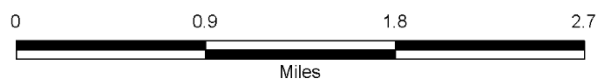
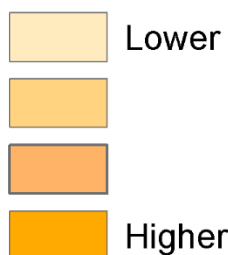
Figure 2.6

5 Year Master Plan Review

Age Concentration 65 and Above

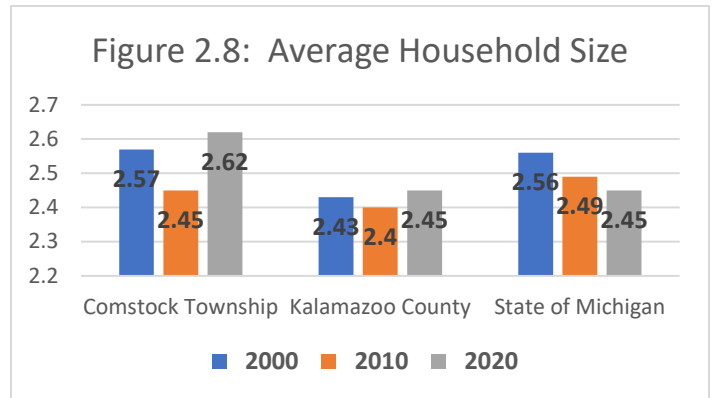


Source: ACS 2020



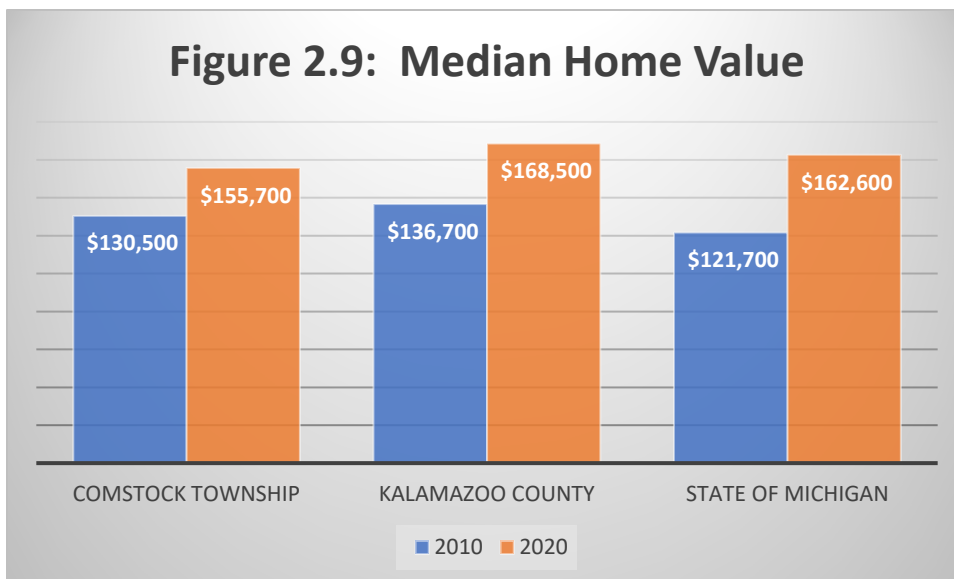
Housing and Households

There was a sizeable increase in average household size between 2010 and 2020 in Comstock. This differs from the decrease observed between 2000 and 2010 and reflects a larger average household size in 2020 than in 2000. Kalamazoo County overall had a minor increase in household size. There continues to be a decrease in the average household size in the State of Michigan. The increase in household size in Comstock Township relates to the decrease in the median age of the population depicted in Figure 2.3 – more households with a younger population – likely, families.



Median Home Value

The 2020 median home value in the Township is behind Kalamazoo County as a whole and the State of Michigan. In 2010, however, Comstock Township was similar to Kalamazoo County and ahead of the State of Michigan in median home value.



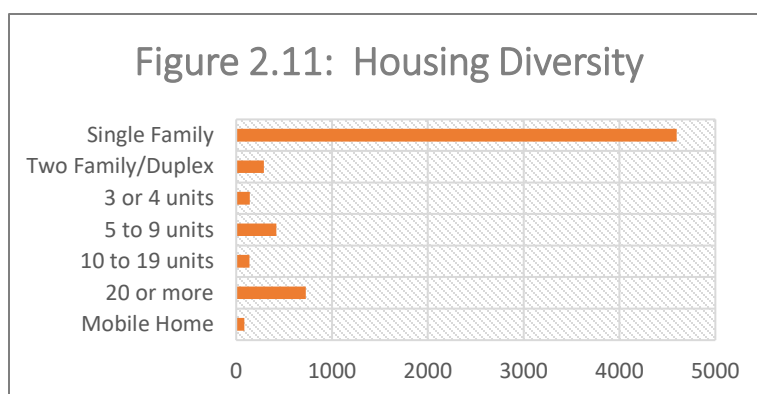
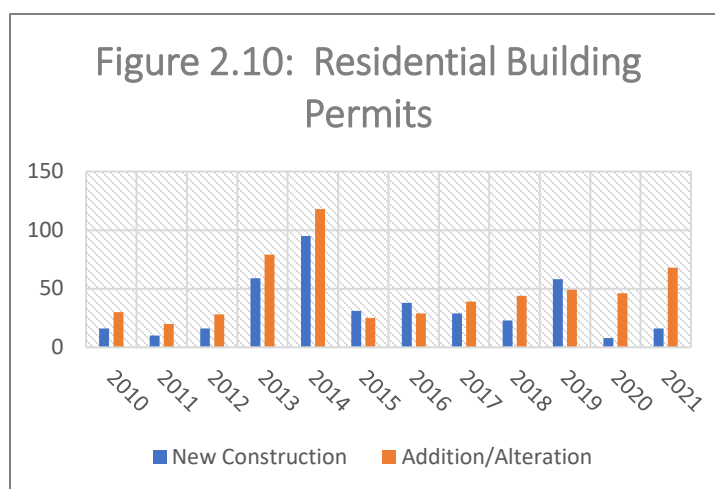
Residential Buildings

Residential building permits issued in Comstock Township are reflected in Table 2.5 below. The number of permits issued in recent years reflects absorption of vacant lots available for new homes. Existing neighborhoods are at or near build-out. Homes outside of formal plats/site condos will continue to be built along County roads, however, a measurable increase in the number of permits will not be realized without new neighborhoods being established. A 42-site residential neighborhood is just beginning to pull permits for single family homes in the east end of the Township. It has been nearly 20 years since new multi-family dwellings have been built. As this update is written, however, ground has been broken on a 189-unit 2-family/2-bathroom/2-car garage Redwood Apartment Neighborhood in Comstock.

Population projections predict a 2030 population of 16,160, or approximately 929 additional persons between 2020 and 2030. Provided dwellings are available, if the 2020 average household size is applied to the increase, the Township should expect 354 additional households by 2030, which will likely contribute to the addition of roughly the same number of additional dwelling units.

Single Family is the predominant housing type with over 72% of dwellings making up this designation. Multiple family dwellings with 5 to 9 or 20 or more units together comprise a notable proportion of the dwellings in the Township.

Year	Residential New Construction	Residential Addition/Alteration
2010	16	30
2011	10	20
2012	16	28
2013	59	79
2014	95	118
2015	31	25
2016	38	29
2017	29	39
2018	23	44
2019	58	49
2020	8	46
2021	16	68



Public Water System

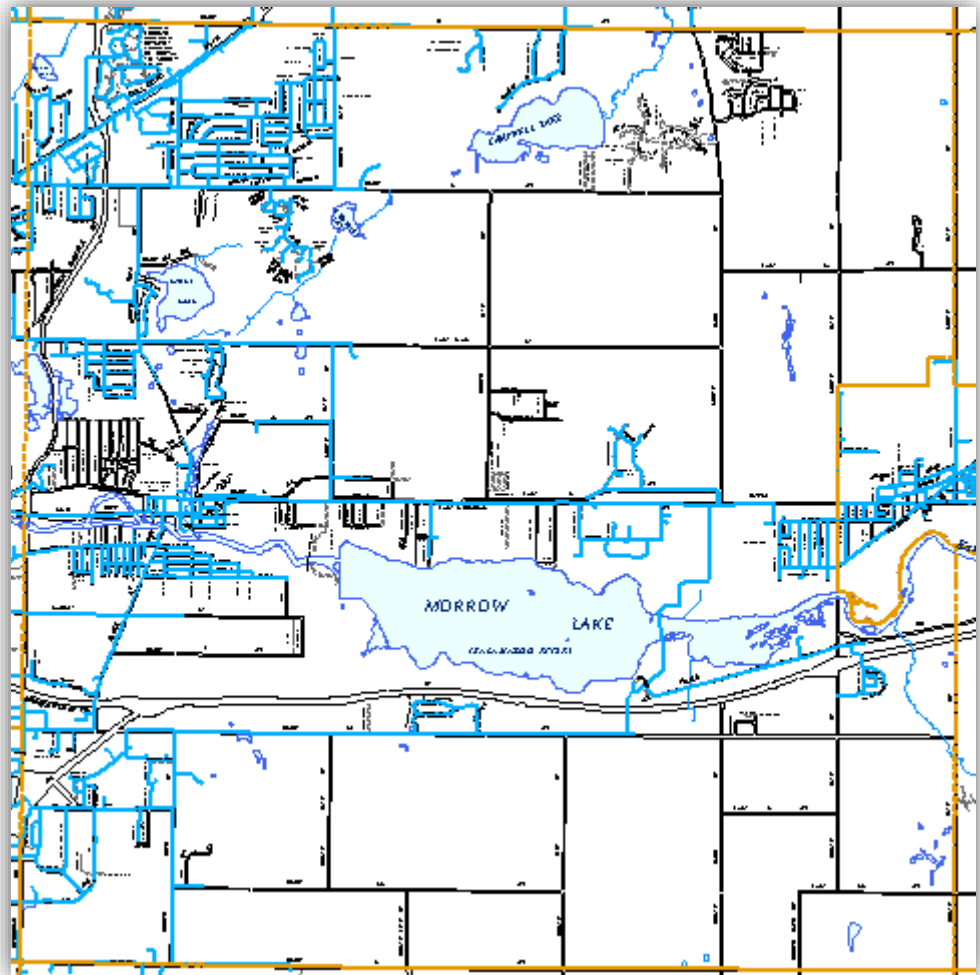
Similar to other townships in the area, public water service in Comstock is provided by the City of Kalamazoo. Public water service is concentrated in the western half of the Township, the area north and east of Campbell Lake, and surrounding Morrow Lake east to the City of Galesburg. Properties in and near the East Michigan Avenue and South 35th Street area are served by the City of Galesburg.

The City of Kalamazoo Water System is the second largest groundwater-based system in the State of Michigan with 101 production wells and 18 water-pumping stations. In addition to Comstock, the system currently serves the City of Kalamazoo, the City of Portage, the City of Parchment, the Village of Richland, Cooper Township, Kalamazoo Township, Oshtemo Township, Pavilion Township, Richland Township, and Texas Township.

The water system infrastructure is owned by Comstock Township while maintenance of the system is contracted with the City of Kalamazoo via a maintenance agreement. Future extensions of the public water system are addressed in detail in the Capital Improvement Program. Most of the planned system extensions are to loop existing mains and/or system improvements.

Figure 2.12: Public Water System

— Water Main



Public Sanitary Sewer System

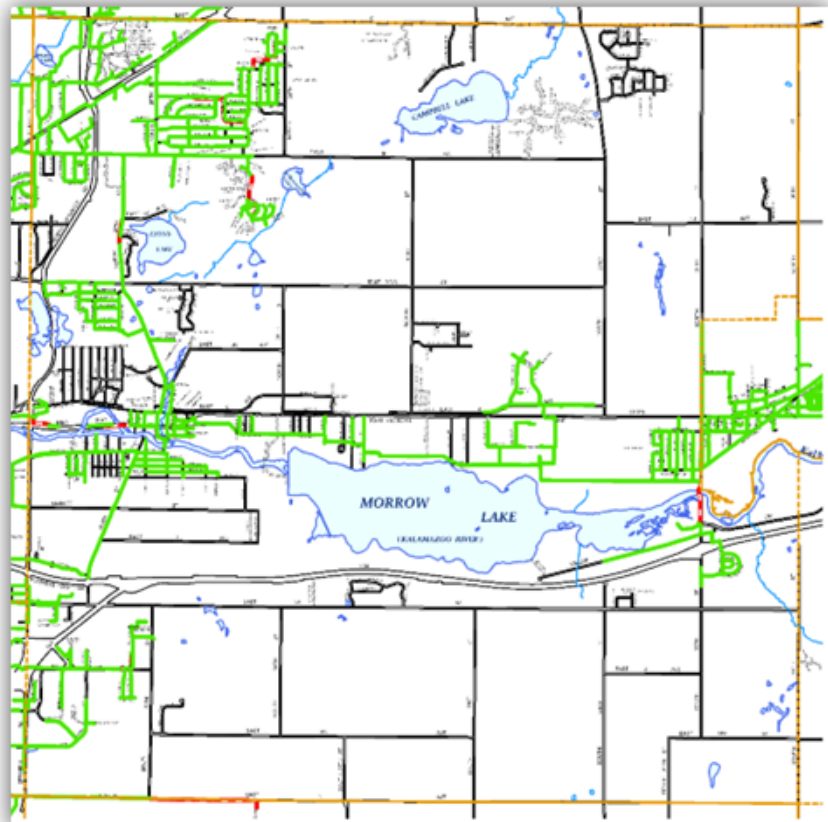
Properties in Comstock are served with sanitary sewer by the City of Kalamazoo. Sanitary sewer service is concentrated in the western half of the Township as well as the area of M-96/East Michigan Avenue near Morrow Lake, making a connection with the City of Galesburg.

Formally known as the City of Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant (KWRP), the plant currently provides treatment services to more than 180,000 residents in 18 Kalamazoo area municipal jurisdictions. City representatives indicate that the plant operates under capacity.

Similar to the public water system, the sewer infrastructure is owned by Comstock Township while maintenance of the system is contracted with the City of Kalamazoo. Significant extensions will be the result of development pressure with design intended to serve a greater area with cost sharing between the Township and developer. Other non-development extensions should be concentrated in presently unserved and dense areas and adjacent to existing development including along M-96/East Michigan Avenue east of Comstock Center. Particular consideration should be given to the older neighborhoods presently without sewer and experiencing failing septic systems.

Figure 2.13: Public Sanitary Sewer System

- Sanitary Sewer Line
- - - Sanitary Force Main



HOUSING

The five-year update presents an opportunity to address the need for housing – this is a new subsection of the Master Plan. There is a shortage of housing at attainable prices around the county, state and nation. While large lot single family homes appear to be adequate in supply, there is a lack of other housing types: smaller homes and lots, condominiums, duplexes, triplexes and garden apartments. The discussion of housing needs to be reframed around affordability and shortage and how to provide for future housing options for residents at all life stages and abilities – from young families to senior citizens.

A notable number of new single-family homes are not being realized as this update is written. A 189-dwelling unit Redwood Apartment Neighborhood is underway in the Township as is a 49-unit single family neighborhood. The former will provide both needed rental housing and the opportunity for existing residents to downsize from their homes to an apartment thereby making these homes available for new families – either new to the Township or already in the community in an apartment or a different home. The latter will supply in-demand single family homes on smaller lots in a neighborhood setting.

Presently, the data points tell us that the number of households in the Township is down from 2010 to 2022 (ACS), while household size and population increased:

- 1% decrease in number of households (2022 ACS estimate)
- 7% increase in household size (2.62 persons now vs. 2.45 persons in 2010)
- 2.5% increase in population growth (15,231 in 2020 vs. 14,854 in 2010)

Comstock is in a position it seems many communities in the region are not – household size is growing. There has not been an increase in the number of households, however, as noted. Kalamazoo County household size is 2.45 persons in 2022. Caution is needed in relying on the household size information as it based in part on ACS estimates for 2010 and 2020.

The Michigan Association of Planning is developing a Housing Needs Assessment Tool as this update is written. With the next Master Plan, a more in-depth housing needs assessment will be conducted and responding goals, objectives and policy statements prepared with accompanying Future Land Use Map amendments and ordinance change recommendations.

To be considered with the next Master Plan and the application of the Housing Needs Assessment Tool, is whether the lack of growth in households due to an inadequate supply of new housing units, a lack of demand or other factors.

WORK

Existing Conditions

Education

Three public school districts serve the children of Comstock Township. There is also a small charter school for kindergarten through 8th grade operating within the Comstock Public Schools enrollment area. Private schools are available although the school buildings are outside the Township. In Michigan and Kalamazoo County, like other areas of the country, public school enrollment dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically the 2020-2021 academic year.

The graph on the following page depicts enrollment for the three public school districts operating within Comstock Township with the arrow indicating the change in enrollment from the 2019-2020 school year to 2021-2022 and does not consider the pandemic year.

Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools continue to see a decrease in enrollment numbers that began before the pandemic. In the 2021-2022 academic year, enrollment in Comstock Public Schools and Gull Lake Community Schools recovered and are at or above pre-pandemic levels.

Area charter and private schools saw declines in enrollment in 2022 from pre-COVID years with the exception of small increases in 2022 over 2019 at Kazoo School and Kalamzoo Country Day.

The overall lower enrollment levels reflect the nationwide trend of declining birth rates shrinking the pool of school-age children. Other factors may be at play in certain districts experiencing declines that this township-level land use plan is not positioned to address.

The Age Concentration 5 and Under Map on an earlier page reflects that the area with the highest percentage of residents under age five (as of 2020 Census) live in an area served by Comstock Public Schools. It will be interesting to see when the next Master Plan is written if this has translated into an increase in enrollment in Comstock Public Schools.

Comstock Public Schools

Comstock Public Schools are seeing a small decline in enrollment. Five-year trends indicate an overall district loss of approximately 96 students between 2017 and 2022.

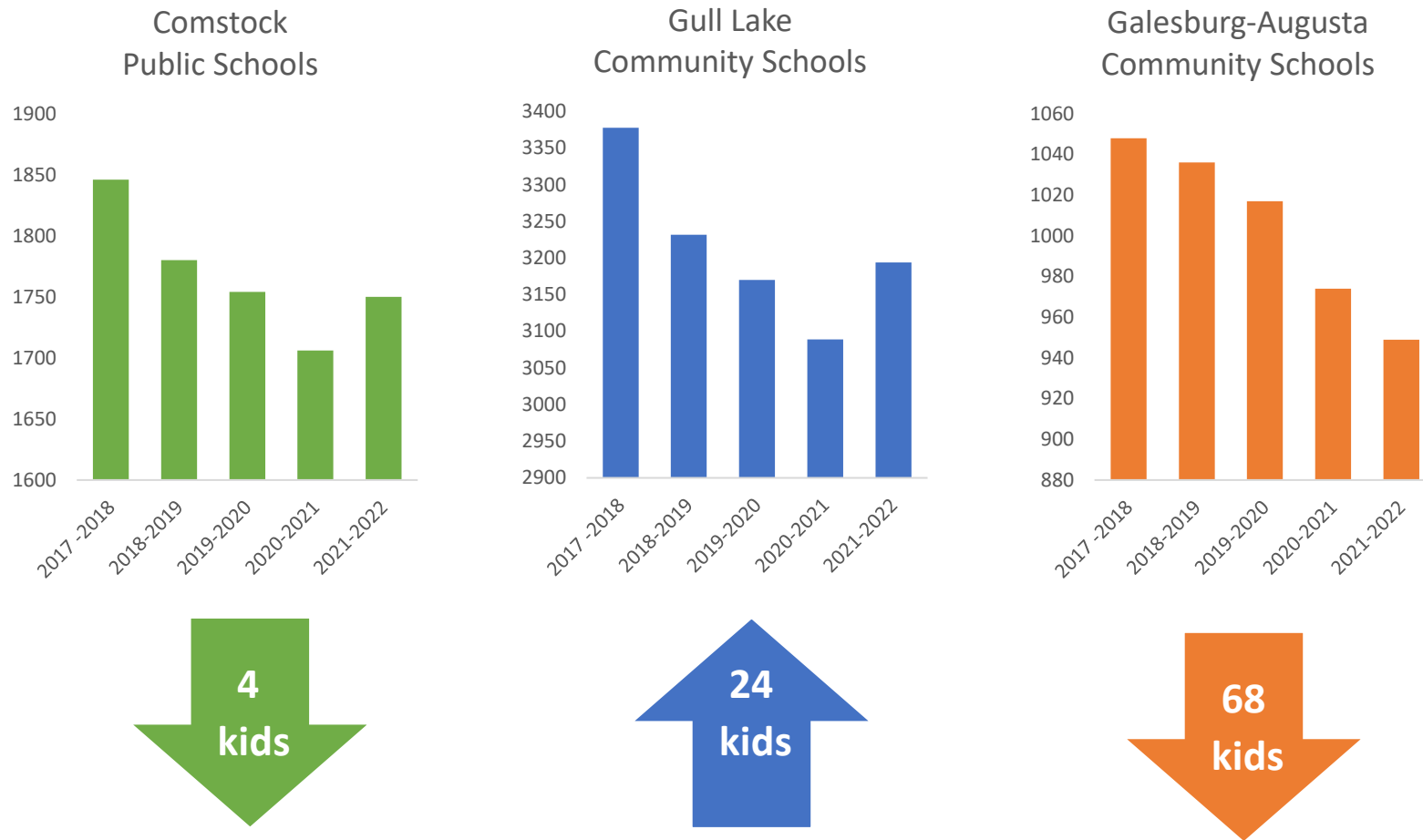
Gull Lake Community Schools

Gull Lake Community Schools are seeing an overall increase in enrollment in comparing recent school years, however, five-year trends indicate an overall district loss of approximately 184 students between 2017 and 2022.

Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools continues to see a decrease in enrollment which has been occurring since at least 2009. Five-year trends indicate an overall district loss of approximately 99 students between 2017 and 2022.

Figure 2.16: School District Enrollment



Note: Arrows indicate change in enrollment from the 2019-2020 to the 2021-2022 school years to discount impact the pandemic had on the 2020-2021 school year.

In 2022, the Township achieved Certification as a Redevelopment Ready Community. In working toward certification, a Steering Committee of local stakeholders prepared an Economic Development, Marketing & Branding Strategy for the Township. This comprehensive document provides the roadmap to assist with job creation, marketing and branding along with redevelopment and investment strategies for the Township. As a result, this Master Plan update does not address employment, major employers, occupations of residents, and household income as that information is available in the strategy.

Conclusions from the strategy include the following:

- The Township has a considerably higher labor force participation rate than the nation amongst individuals aged 16 to 64 years.
- The Township has a younger population than surrounding communities from which employers can draw their workforce.
- The largest age cluster is aged 18 to 44 years at nearly 42% of the population. This shows that numerous residents are of family age or have families.
- Of the approximately 6,200 households in the Township, 62% are made up of families.
- Median household income is approximately \$61,000 – higher than Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan.
- At least 72% of the adult population has completed some level of higher education.
- The Township is far out pacing the State of Michigan for number of bachelor's degrees attained and graduate degrees.

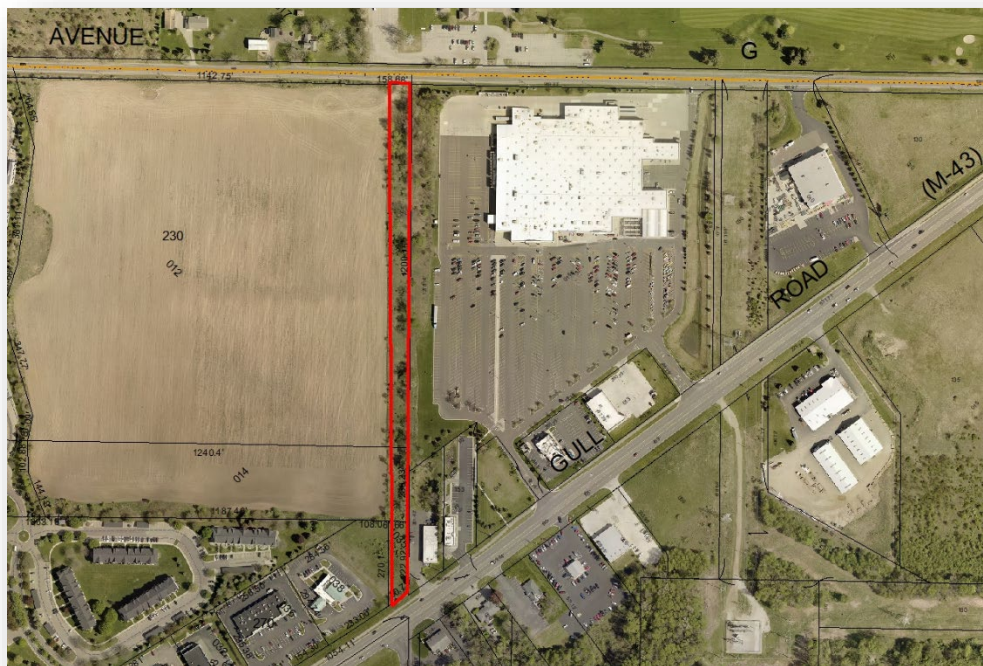
MOBILITY

The Mobility section of the Master Plan is not being revisited in its entirety with this update as there have not been changes to motorized or nonmotorized forms of mobility in the Township since the plan was adopted in 2016. There are intentions to prepare a formal nonmotorized plan for the entire Township in the next five years. The next master plan update or new master plan will reference that document.

26th Street Extension

The Vision 2025 Master Plan was silent on the extension of North 26th Street from Gull Road to G Avenue. However, this public road extension has been discussed with landowners and officials from the Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation for many years. This extension outlined in red below, remains a priority of Township Officials as it would create a safer intersection by allowing for placement of a traffic signal and safer movements from 26th Street to Gull Road in this busy corridor. As this update is written, the extension is receiving new attention by Michigan Department of Transportation officials.

Figure 2.23: North 26th Street Extension area



CHAPTER THREE – FUTURE LAND USE

Comstock Vision 2030 retains the established desirable land use patterns to guide growth in the Township for the next decade. The future land use plan is a compilation of descriptions and recommendations for future development and open space preservation. It serves as an overall framework for the management and regulation of future development and also serves as the basis for evaluating rezoning requests.

Ten future land use designations and one overlay were created and represent the future vision of land use in the Township. Each of the designations and overlay are described in detail and are organized into one of four land use contexts: RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, and HORTICULTURE/PRIME FARMLAND PRESERVATION.

The most recent aerial photography of the Township was used in combination with site visits and tours of the community to determine the most suitable future land use development pattern. Additionally, the locations of natural features were considered, along with the location of publicly owned lands, parks, and nature preserves.

Review of Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map

This Chapter has been updated after study of the differences between the Zoning Map and the Future Land Use Map. Fifteen areas of inconsistency were identified. In some areas, rezonings are suggested in other areas, changes to the Future Land Use Map have been made. In a couple areas, both rezoning and Future Land Use Map changes are suggested due to an in-depth review of the area and a finding that both changes are appropriate.

Zoning Plan

The Zoning Plan included with the Vision2025 Master Plan was evaluated. Minor updates were made to the Zoning Plan and descriptions of the Future Land Use classifications for Vision 2030.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Sustainability

- Comstock Township will create and maintain conditions under which residents and nature can exist in harmony so that the current needs of residents are supported in an equitable manner without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
1. To make it possible for households of different sizes and income levels to live in the Township, allow for a range of housing types to accommodate varying lifestyle choices, life stages, and affordability needs.
 2. To provide for equity in housing, develop flexible policies that integrate new housing types into neighborhoods.
 3. To promote economic growth, allow housing types by right that satisfy the current and future housing needs of the community.
 4. To discourage sprawl patterns of development and help protect greenspace and natural areas from growth pressures, concentrate development by providing housing and development opportunities where services exist. Low density or farmland designations in areas where natural features, wetlands, or prime farmland exist should be maintained.
 5. To protect groundwater and eliminate failing septic systems, expand public water and sewer systems into existing neighborhoods and adopt and enforce a policy to require utility hook ups for new construction when utilities are available at or near the subject site as well as a policy to require connection to public sewer within five years.
 6. To provide for renewable energy production, promote marginal lands, brownfields and gray fields for utility-scale solar energy systems in the agricultural and industrial districts near existing infrastructure and allow accessory solar energy systems in all districts while minimizing potential biological, agricultural, visual and other environmental impacts. And, encourage the continued operation and expansion of hydro power generation for nearby residences and businesses.
 7. To encourage local production of solar energy on new and existing residential and commercial properties allow accessory solar structures by right.
 8. To develop, maintain and reinvest in a strong infrastructure system, develop a Township-wide electric vehicle infrastructure plan, update zoning provisions to require and incentivize the placement of EV charging stations and work to install broadband to ensure access to the entire community.
 9. To promote, support, and invest in businesses that serve local needs and are compatible with the vision, character, and cultural values of the community, encourage community-based economic development and revitalization.
 10. To maximize use of underutilized improved lands, plan for the mitigation and redevelopment of brownfields for productive uses.
 11. To ensure that there is adequate space for commercial and industrial redevelopment/development, provide the physical capacity for economic growth.

Community

- Comstock Township will be a place of natural beauty, have a strong sense of community and high quality of life and its neighborhoods will provide a safe and attractive environment for residents of all ages through quality building stock, regular code enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and planned development where services (roads, utilities, transit, and schools) exist.
 1. To build a sense of community, undertake placemaking efforts that improve and promote the Comstock Center area to emotionally connect the residents to Comstock Center – their downtown – while improving the climate for the businesses there.
 2. To maintain community public health and welfare, consider a single Township-wide recycling and waste service to ensure that rental properties have regular waste management services.
 3. To reclaim scenic viewsheds, consider prominent views and vistas in the Township by recognizing the visual impact of the Consumer’s Energy smokestack.
 4. To improve community engagement, host a regular coffee talk or other face-to-face events with local officials rotating in attendance and meeting with community members to hear about concerns. These coffee talks will be one-on-one opportunities for community members to meet with a local official, for example a trustee, to answer questions and raise issues in a relaxed environment.
 5. To enhance Township identity and communication, update the Township logo, website and social media, on-line resources, signage and wayfinding per the Economic Development, Marketing & Branding Strategy adopted in 2022.
 6. Develop a consistent brand for the community and identify destinations and amenities for the traveling public by including wayfinding elements for Township navigation and recreation enthusiasts per the Economic Development, Marketing & Branding Strategy adopted in 2022.
 7. To beautify and celebrate the rich horticultural history of the Township, partner with the bedding plant industry to install plantings at all community gateways and in Comstock Center. Comstock Township will have colorful arrangements throughout the community as one of the identifying features of the Township.
 8. To create a safer community, enforce laws and codes which regulate dangerous buildings and hazardous materials and continue an aggressive approach to clean-up dilapidated and blighted properties.
 9. To create a safer rail corridor, work with the railroad and Michigan Department of Transportation to place fencing along the high-speed rail corridor.

Recreation

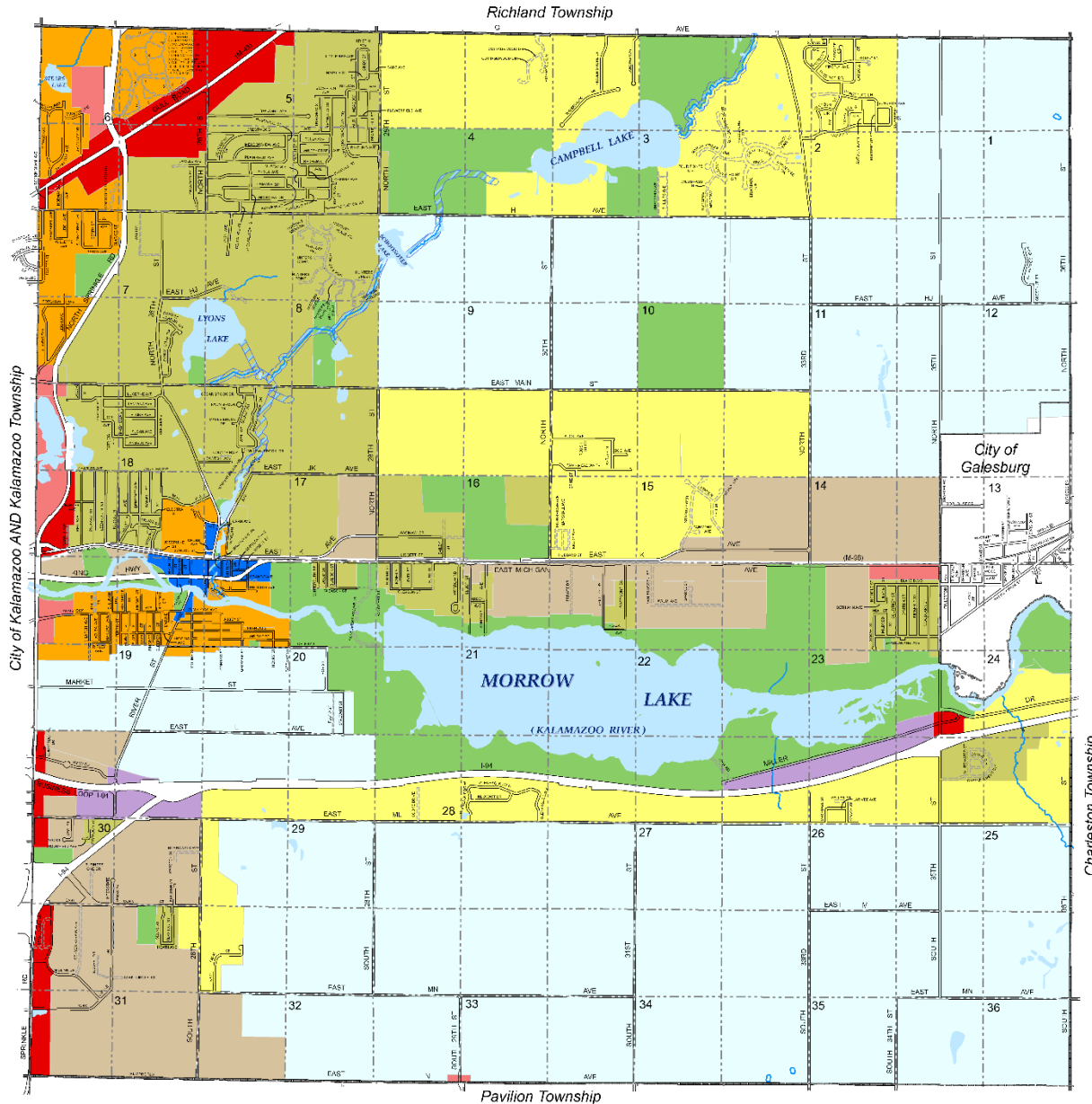
- Comstock Township will be a healthy community by ensuring that each resident has access to a public recreation facility that meets their recreational needs. Investing in parks and recreation is an economic development strategy. Healthy communities with robust place-based recreation features provide a desirable amenity to existing and prospective residents and employers.
 1. To ensure broad provision of park and open space facilities, acquire park or open spaces within the northeast quadrant of the Township where recreation amenities are lacking and where new housing starts and high concentrations of school-age children are living.
 2. To adequately fund parks and recreation facilities, commit to increasing funding for park and recreation facilities either through increased programming, strategic land acquisitions, or additional staff support.
 3. To engage local businesses, partner with employers, for example Landscape Forms, to sponsor recreation facilities or create an adopt-a- park program. Additionally, inquire whether Landscape Forms or the bedding plant industry may wish to test new products at community parks.
 4. To facilitate increased utilization, connect Township parks to community assets, including the Township Hall and Library, as well as schools and high-density neighborhoods via pathways and sidewalks.
 5. To diversify the mix of users, become a viable recreation hub for land and water trail users. Offer amenities such as bike repair, small watercraft storage, concessions, shelter, etc. at trailheads to encourage the use of these important linear trail resources, being the Kalamazoo River and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. Consider appropriate, complementary land uses around these trail heads, including retail and restaurants, which can become popular destinations along recreation routes.
 6. To provide additional recreation opportunities in developing areas of the Township, amend the subdivision and site condo ordinance to require open space and sidewalks.

Work

- Comstock Township residents will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth and complementary uses will support workforce needs.
 1. To support transit, designate areas in and around the Sprinkle Road/I-94 corridor for industrial, office, and mixed use to support a campus-style walkable work atmosphere where services are available to meet daily needs, such as childcare, eating and drinking establishments, financial institutions, etc.
 2. To heighten the quality of development, amend the zoning ordinance to include standards for site development of commercial and industrial properties that place a high value on sustainable site design that minimizes large expanses of pavement, requires areas for landscaping and screening, establishes standards for building appearance, and encourages interconnected motorized and non-motorized pathways for shared access to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflict and to centralize curb cuts.
 3. To encourage job growth, continue to support business development through tax incentive programs.
 4. To enhance communication between employers and Township residents and elected officials, consider organizing a local business group that could host job fairs, invite speakers, offer tours to local businesses, and provide an opportunity to share knowledge, lessons learned and other resources to foster a supportive business climate in the Township.
 5. To capture tax increment, study, and if beneficial, establish one or two corridor improvement districts (one on Gull Road, one at the Sprinkle/ I94 corridor and interchange area) to utilize tax increment financing to enhance and beautify the public realm along these main commercial corridors.
 6. To better connect the Township leadership with the school districts, convene regular meetings amongst the education institutions and development community to discuss matters such as student retention, land use policy, connectivity and mobility, recreation, etc. Inquire with leadership as to ways the Township can help support an environment of high expectation and achievement for youth in the community. Discuss ways for the Township to promote the quality education choices available to prospective employers and residents.
 7. To attract and retain businesses in the Township, develop a Township promotional brochure as a marketing tool per the Economic Development, Marketing & Branding Strategy adopted in 2022.
 8. To allow for economic growth, as turnover of ownership of long-held agricultural lands occurs near industrially developed areas, give appropriate and fair consideration to reclassifying those areas to industrial.

Mobility

- Comstock Township will have a variety of safe and affordable modes and means of travel choices available to its diverse population, which is considered a retention and attraction strategy. Transportation choices support local business, increase student performance outcomes, and result in better community health.
 1. To enhance connectivity, require grid patterns of development and sidewalks in all new residential developments. Additionally, work with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to minimize pavement width of streets in neighborhoods. These features will slow traffic within a neighborhood while providing safe spaces and connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 2. To support transit within a quarter mile of planned or existing transit and allow for transit oriented development, allow for mixed uses, buildings up to 3-4 stories, active ground floor uses, and a requirement for transit amenities, including shelters, bicycle parking, sidewalks or pathways, and a pedestrian-scale street space.
 3. To enhance walkability and healthy communities, require all new development and redevelopments to build a pathway if located in the pathway priority area. Pathways would be placed within the road right-of-way, and will include maintenance and repair clause to ensure the property owner maintains the public facility, which is customary throughout Michigan.
 4. To connect recreation amenities, expand the trail network in the Township by linking the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail north to Gull Road and Richland.
 5. To improve transit amenities and accessibility, support the addition of shelters, more transit routes, benches, bike racks and maintenance. Land use policies, zoning ordinance amendments, and form based code additions or replacements can support transit by allowing for mixed-uses, flexibility in form and function, and a reduction in parking.



FUTURE LAND USE MAP Charter Township of Comstock

Future Land Use Categories

- Agriculture
- Suburban Residential
- Compact Residential
- Core Residential
- Comstock Center
- Mixed Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Transitional Industrial
- General Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Comstock Creek Overlay

0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4 Miles



Adopted July 18, 2016
Amended December 4, 2017
Amended _____, 2023

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Ten future land use designations and one overlay were retained to represent the future vision of land use in the Township. Each of the designations and overlay are described in detail and are organized into one of four land use contexts: RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, and HORTICULTURE/PRIME FARMLAND PRESERVATION.

Residential Context

Suburban Residential (1-2 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the need and desire for single-family development in a low density suburban pattern. These areas are not intended to be served with public sewer systems and may be only served by water.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on half-acre or larger lots.

Compact Residential (3-8 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the need for denser housing options that help to protect open space by utilizing higher densities while providing a mix of housing in a pattern that currently exists in the Township. These areas are intended to be served with public water and sewer systems.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on 1/3 acre lots or smaller and duplexes.

Core Residential (4-12 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the need for walkable, mixed-density, and mixed-income neighborhoods adjacent to Comstock Center and existing commercial corridors. These areas are intended to be served with public water and sewer systems.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on quarter-acre lots or smaller, condominiums, duplexes, multi-family townhouses and small multi-plexes, and rowhouses.

Comstock Center (8-16 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation addresses the identifiable focal point of the Township. It is intended to provide a walkable mixed-use development pattern where residents within and from adjacent neighborhoods can obtain goods and services as well as provide for a place to attract those from outside the Township. This area is intended to be served with public water and sewer systems.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on 1/8 acre lots or smaller, condominiums, duplexes, multi-family townhouses, small and large multi-plexes, rowhouses, and mixed-use structures with retail, offices and residential.

Commercial Context

Corridor Commercial

This land use designation is intended to provide goods and services to meet the needs of the Greater Kalamazoo Area as well as those traversing Kalamazoo County for work or recreation along Gull Road, Sprinkle Road, and Interstate 94. Corridor Commercial uses may include large-scale retail, eating and drinking establishments, personal service establishments, professional and support offices, and medical facilities. Corridor Commercial areas that contain regional commercial and office facilities must accommodate considerable vehicular travel; however, the Township should stress shared access, enhanced pedestrian facilities and attractive landscaping to soften development and make these corridors more inviting and attractive. This may be accomplished with landscape standards, mandatory but rewarded shared access provisions, options for reduced or shared parking areas, and site and building design requirements that work to balance the vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns with aesthetics. Parking areas should be placed behind new development when possible and buildings should be built out to the street with limited setbacks to encourage the calming of traffic and pedestrian safety.

Mixed Commercial

This land use designation is intended to provide goods and services for adjacent neighborhoods and industrial areas as well as provide for additional housing opportunities via mixed-use buildings or mixed land use patterns. Mixed Commercial uses may include small-scale retail, small contractor's offices, eating and drinking establishments, personal service establishments, professional and support offices, and medical facilities. In Mixed Commercial areas adjacent to existing residential uses, a multiple-family residential component should be encouraged for new development. Mixed Commercial areas should support access by non-motorized transportation options as well as transit.

Industrial Context

General Industrial

This land use designation is intended to provide employment opportunities for area residents as well as manufactured goods for the Greater Kalamazoo Area and beyond. General Industrial uses may include warehousing, manufacturing and assembly, mini-storage, contractor's offices and yards and shipping facilities. Facilities will be developed with appropriate utility and transportation connections and in harmony with surrounding uses. Additionally, appropriate screening and landscaping should be present so as to properly separate potentially incompatible uses.

Transitional Industrial

This land use designation is intended to provide for small-scale industrial activities, research and development operations, shipping establishments, offices, business incubators, educational institutions, or other similar light industrial uses. Transitional Industrial areas may also include retail, eating and drinking establishments, hotels and motels, existing residential areas, apartments and rowhouses, or other such uses that may support employment and workers. Transitional Industrial areas should be walkable and include pedestrian facilities which connect places of work with retail, eating and drinking establishments, and residential areas. Additionally, appropriate screening and landscaping should be present so as to properly separate potentially incompatible uses.

Horticulture / Prime Farmland Preservation Context

Agriculture/Agri-Business/Horticulture/ Farmland

This land use designation is intended to protect the Township's existing agricultural land as well as support the bedding plant and greenhouse industry in the Township. Greenhouses are likely to continue to concentrate in the western half of the Township near existing greenhouse establishments. Additional greenhouses may be ideally centrally located in the Township south of Campbell Lake.

Comstock Creek Protection Overlay

This land use overlay is intended to protect the water quality of Comstock Creek and the Kalamazoo River. The purpose of this overlay is to protect the delicate ecosystems and water quality in the Township by providing a 100-foot shoreline buffer on each side of Comstock Creek, while permitting careful and low intensity development, where feasible.

Parks and Open Space

This land use designation is intended to protect existing parks and open space within the Township. This designation is established in recognition of natural assets within Comstock Township and the Kalamazoo River Watershed. Where appropriate, properties falling within this designation could be developed into very low-density, single-family residential (less than one dwelling unit per acre) using cluster style development patterns, cabins, boat/kayak rental establishments, sledding or tubing hills, cross-country ski trails, or other similar recreational uses.

ZONING PLAN

Section 33, (2), (d), of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires that Master Plans adopted after September 1, 2008 include a Zoning Plan that explains how future land use categories in a Plan relate to the zoning districts incorporated in a community's Zoning Ordinance. The following table relates Comstock Vision 2030's future land use categories with the Township's zoning districts.

EVALUATION

In considering a request to rezone property in Comstock Charter Township, the Planning Commission must consider the future land use map and the future land use descriptions provided in this plan. The Zoning Plan must be used to evaluate the degree to which the proposed rezoning is consistent with this plan, together with an evaluation of the specific request. The Planning Commission will also consider whether the proposed site may be reasonably used as it is currently zoned, whether the proposed site is an appropriate location for any and all of the land uses that may be permitted within the requested zoning district, and any potential detrimental impacts on the surrounding properties that could result from the proposed rezoning.

Due to the structure of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission and Township Board should pay particular attention to any and all uses permitted in a zoning district as well as any uses that may be permitted in a less restricted or intense zone. In all cases, the Zoning Plan must be applied as a guideline for the Planning Commission subject to the appropriate application of the discretionary authority permitted to the Planning Commission and the Township Board by statutory authority, case law, and good planning practice. Nothing in the Zoning Plan will preclude the Planning Commission and the Township Board from considering amendments to this Master Plan to better serve the public interests of the community.

ZONING PLAN

Future Land Use Designation	Primary Compatible Zoning District(s)	Potentially Compatible Zoning District
Suburban Residential	R1-A Single Family	Agriculture-Residential R1-B Single Family*
Compact Residential	R1-B Single Family R1-C Single Family Multiple-Family	R1-A Single Family Multiple Family Mobile Home Park District
Core Residential	R1-C Single Family Multiple Family Senior Citizen Multi-Story Residential	R1-B Single Family
Comstock Center	Comstock Center	None
Mixed Commercial	Neighborhood Business	Community Business
Corridor Commercial	Community Business General Business	Neighborhood Business Office
Transitional Industrial	Restricted Industrial Light Manufacturing Office	General Business Multiple Family
General Industrial	Manufacturing Light Manufacturing	Restricted Industrial Office
Agricultural/Agri-Business/ Horticulture/Farmland	Agriculture-Residential Agriculture- Horticulture	Open Wetlands
Parks and Open Space	Open Wetlands	Agriculture-Residential
Creek Protection Overlay	Any district	Any district

* Unplatted only

CHAPTER FOUR – IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

For Comstock Vision 2030 to have its intended impact on the Comstock Community, it must be implemented. This chapter includes general implementation steps and strategies. Items addressed in the Comstock Vision 2025 Master Plan that are not updated here include the three sub areas (COMSTOCK CENTER, GULL ROAD, AND SPRINKLE ROAD), Area Transportation and Trailways, as well as Floodplains, Water Resources, and Wetlands. The strategies provided for in each section were already established to implement the goals and objectives and future land use recommendations of this Plan and do not need attention with this update and they are not included.

The short term and long-term strategies, prepared with the Comstock Vision 2025 Master Plan and retained for the Comstock Vision 2030, follow.

Responsibility

Primary responsibility for implementing Comstock Vision 2030 rests with the Township Board, the Planning Commission, and Township staff. Many entities and organizations in addition to Comstock Charter Township will need to cooperate in order to fully implement the recommendations of this Plan. As implementation steps are completed, it will be important to modify the strategic elements of the Plan according to progress and changes in the dynamics of the community.

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Map

The Township Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory mechanism for implementing Comstock Vision 2030. The following action items outline the changes or modifications necessary to bring the Township Zoning Ordinance and General Township Ordinances into conformance with the vision of this plan:

- Modify or create new zoning districts that reflect the goals and Future Land Use Designations in Comstock Vision 2030.
- Identify and rezone properties which are clearly incompatible with the Future Land Use map.
- Create new land development regulations within each zoning district to reflect the density recommendations in the Future Land Use map and Text.

Other implementation strategies involving amending the Zoning Ordinance and Map can be found in each of the Sub Area Plans, the Area Transportation and Trailways Plan, and the Floodplain, Water Resources, and Wetlands Plan.

The above action items should be addressed primarily by the Township Planning Commission with support from Township staff and/or planning consultants.

2. *Business Recruitment and Retention*

The Township has an Economic Development, Marketing & Branding Strategy (EDMBS) that has specific economic development goals and objectives. It identifies strategies with priority and identifies the responsible parties to implement. Comstock should continue to work with Southwest Michigan First and other economic and community development organizations in the recruitment and retention of new and existing businesses. The Township may also wish to take the lead role in joining the regional chamber of commerce.

- The Township Superintendent and the Township Board should take the lead on implementing the EDMBS.
- The Township Superintendent should take the lead on joining the Southwest Michigan First Chamber of Commerce.
- The Community Development Director should be the lead contact with economic development organizations such as Southwest Michigan First.

3. *Develop a Public Utility Plan*

Public water and sewer are primarily located in the western half of the Township. Nonetheless, certain neighborhoods and plats in the western half of the Township are not served by public water and sewer despite being located adjacent to developments and neighborhoods which are served. A public utility plan or strategic plan should continue to be included in and expanded upon within the 6-year Capital Improvement Program which is updated each year, to correlate with the goals and objectives and Future Land Use map of Comstock Vision 2030.

- The Planning Commission and Township Board should annually work with the Township Engineer and Community Development Director on developing a public utility plan or strategy for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program.

4. *Cooperate with Neighboring Governments, Businesses, and School Districts* *The goals and objectives in Comstock Vision 2030 are not achievable without the direct cooperation of neighboring or affiliated government entities, businesses, and school districts. Monthly or quarterly meetings may be beneficial between certain groups to keep an open line of communication. The Township should facilitate collaboration between local employers and the school districts, and continue to support the community center, library and other resources that provide a safe and secure environment for afterschool programming.*

- The Township Board, Planning Commission, and Township staff should work to build and maintain alliances with Kalamazoo County, the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, Comstock Public Schools, as well as businesses and stakeholders.

5. Recreation Strategic Plan Implementation

In 2020, the Township adopted a five-year Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. The adoption of this plan enables the Township to apply for grants from several sources within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to improve recreation offerings in the Township. Goals and objectives of the plan have been included in the goals and objectives of Comstock Vision 2030. The Strategic Plan's recommendations should be implemented to ensure that recreation offerings match local needs, and it should be updated every five years to maintain DNR grant eligibility.

- The Planning Commission should work with the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission in recreation planning activities and should receive direction from the Township Board as the Board is the final authority on recreation expenditures.

6. Sub Areas and Implementation

Three sub areas were intently studied. Each sub area includes information about the area, existing conditions, existing land uses, and zoning. A vision and design drawings are included with a focused future land use overview that identifies each future land use category proposed for the sub area. Each sub area includes implementation strategies to guide the sub area toward meeting the goals and objectives of Comstock Vision 2030. An in-depth analysis of each sub area can be found later in this Chapter.

- The Planning Commission and Township Community Development Director should take the lead on the implementation of each sub area. The involvement of the Township Board will be necessary for any amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

7. Area Transportation and Trailways

The Area Transportation and Trailways Plan supports complete streets policy. Existing conditions of area transportation and trailways are outlined in the Mobility section of the Community Elements chapter. Multiple objectives were gleaned from public input data obtained from primary and secondary sources. Public and private rights of way were inventoried so that the Township may identify which areas should be targeted for a sidewalk installation program. It is evident that a large quantity of the Township is underserved by non-motorized transportation options such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Through data and public input, a recreational trailway and alternative trailway are proposed for the Township. Additionally, four sidewalk and pathway priority areas are identified. An in-depth overview of this Plan can be found later in the original chapter. A non-motorized plan is anticipated in the life of this plan to more specifically target areas for improvement and specific improvements for the context.

- The Planning Commission and Township Board should work with the Township Engineer and Township Community Development Director on implementing the Area Transportation and Trailways Plan.
- The Planning Commission should prepare a Non-Motorized Plan with the assistance of transportation planning professionals.

8. *Floodplain, Water Resources, and Wetlands* To achieve the goals and objectives of this plan and seek to utilize the Township's natural resources and open spaces as an economic development strategy, an inventory of natural and water features was conducted. This inventory includes mapping products of the Township's wetlands, watersheds, floodways, and topography. Additionally, an overlay to protect Comstock Creek is proposed as well as multiple implementation strategies for the protection of water resources in the Township. An in-depth overview of this Plan can be found later in the original chapter.

- The Planning Commission, Parks Commission, and Township Community Development Director should work together to implement the strategies identified in the Floodplain, Water Resources, and Wetlands Plan.

9. *Community Clean-Up and Image*

The image and character of Comstock Charter Township were identified as a point of contention for many community survey respondents in 2015. In particular, survey questions pinpointed increased enforcement and policing as a way to clean up the Township. The Township has continued to work with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department and hired two full-time ordinance enforcement officer to enforce the General and Zoning Ordinances and other Township codes. In addition, a Township marketing pamphlet should be produced which helps set forth an improved image of the Township. Township signage, logo, and wayfinding may also be a product of the improved image strategy of the Township set forth by the pamphlet.

- Township Superintendent should take the lead on ordinance enforcement and the development of a marketing pamphlet.

Appendix

INSERT RESOLUTIONS OF PC AND TB ADOPTING THIS UPDATE