



City of Otsego

Come to Work, Come to Play, Come to Stay

Master Plan

Adopted February 17th, 2014



City of Otsego
Allegan County, Michigan
2014 Master Plan
Adopted February 17th, 2014

**City
Commission**

Tom Gilmer, Mayor
Kathy Misner, Mayor Pro-Tem
Ryan Wieber
Cyndi Trobeck
Matt Shankle

**Planning
Commission**

Mark Aldrich, Chair
Ric Saucedo, Vice Chair
Tom Gilmer, Mayor
Ryan Wieber, City Commissioner
Thad Beard, City Manager
Maryln Langeance
Sue Cornell
Robert Alway
Paul Mitchell

with assistance from:



15 Ionia Southwest, Suite 450
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-336-7750
www.lslplanning.com



City of Otsego

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City of Otsego Master Plan 2014

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Executive Summary

This Master Plan is an update of the 2007 plan and is developed under the Authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008. This document represents a vision for how the City of Otsego will develop and redevelop in the future. This document was developed through an investigation of demographic and land use trends and the vision local citizens have for the City. The basic purpose of the Plan is to manage the intensity and configuration of land use in a manner that supports economically viable, environmentally sound, and visually pleasing growth for current and future residents.

The Plan will help ensure that the City of Otsego remains a highly desirable community by enabling residents, business owners and developers to make investments with a reasonable expectation of the future. In essence, the Plan balances the sometimes competing interests of individual land ownership and overall community interests.

This Master Plan consists of several components, including:

- Public input, which is an essential part of the planning process. It is critical to have an understanding of what City stakeholders think of the issues.
- Background research regarding housing, population and other current conditions within the City.
- Development of goals, objectives and strategies that define how the City will address identified concerns and trends.
- The Land Use section that describes which types of development would be most appropriate within the community and suitable locations for that development.



- The Future Land Use map which is an illustration of the long-range land use pattern proposed for the City.

When the above components are combined, a picture is created that will serve as a guide for the City as it faces important decisions now and years from now. These decisions may include policy changes, budget allocations and the more day-to-day issues such as site plan reviews, special land use approvals, and rezoning requests.

Vision Statement

The master plan reflects the desires of Otsego's citizens for the future of their community. Through a public process of focus groups, online surveys and public meetings, citizens made known their desires for the coming decades.

Based on that input, a *vision* was crafted to establish a foundation for goals, strategies and the future land use plan. The guiding vision for the plan is:

"The City of Otsego will be a family friendly, aesthetically pleasing riverfront community offering quality education, varied religious opportunities and excellent recreational activities supported by economically sound and diverse businesses and industries."

Chapter 1

The Master Plan

What is a Master Plan?

Every community has a responsibility to look beyond day-to-day issues and focus on the long-range consequences of its land use and zoning decisions. Therefore, the community needs a document that provides guidance for land use and development by considering a wide range of possible futures. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) empowers each municipality to create this document: the community master plan.

In truth, no community can solve every problem or answer all of the contrasting concerns about growth and land development. But advocates for both development and preservation have common goals; each wants “better planning.” Decision makers, then, must balance the interests of landowners wishing to develop their properties with maintaining the features that attracted people to the community in the first place.

Those “quality of life” features – rural atmosphere, friendly neighbors, scenic vistas, small lakes, the Kalamazoo River valley, quality schools – are among the elements that make Otsego special. A successful master plan must consider these elements, along with consideration for the economy and the environment, and take steps to ensure that development “fits.” Accordingly, use of the right planning tools is needed to ensure that the City continues to be a special place.

This master plan is a look into the next 20 years, based on the desires of the citizens and the realities of the economy and surrounding influences for the use of land within the City of Otsego.



How Will the Plan Be Used?

The Master Plan can be used in a number of ways, but above all it should be consulted prior to making a land use decision. A Master Plan for land use can also include supplemental reports such as a Capital Improvement Plan, a Housing Plan and/or a Recreation Plan. Often these are stand alone documents, but when supplemental to the Master Plan they act to fortify the City’s ability to defend land use decisions.

Lawful Zoning Ordinances Need a Master Plan

According to the Zoning Act, legal Zoning Ordinances must be established on certain prescribed reasons. The Master Plan provides the backbone to establishing a legal zoning ordinance. The Master Plan has several important aspects that promote a sound zoning ordinance, including promotion of the public health, safety, and general welfare; encouragement of the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability; and to limit the improper use of land.

Refer to the Master Plan in All Zoning Decisions

Use of the Master Plan ensures that the City’s desires regarding future development are translated into action. It is the action today for each rezoning, site plan review, special land use approval, planned unit development, and

variance that, when added up together, will create the future land use pattern for Otsego.

Keep the Plan Current

The Planning Commission should conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure that the Plan is kept current. Any amendments to the Plan can be done at that time to keep it up to date and consistent with community philosophies and needs. Technically, prior to the Planning Commission recommending approval of a rezoning that is contrary to the Master Plan, the Master Plan should be amended. Minimally, the Planning Act requires a review of the Master Plan at least every five years.

Developing a Master Plan

A Master Plan is made up of a number of different components, including a Community Profile, Community Vision, Goals and Policies, and Future Land Use. The Community Profile discusses current trends and conditions in the City, while the Community Vision provides an overall focus to the Plan. Goals and Policies are used in combination with the Future Land Use section to improve and strengthen those aspects of the community that citizens are proud of, and to change those areas and issues that have been identified as problems.

Throughout the process of developing a Master Plan, public input and participation is very valuable and important. Public participation not only provides a forum for City leaders to hear what citizens value in the City, but it is an effective tool to determine current and potential problems, including some valuable solutions.

Communities have a responsibility to develop a Master Plan by looking beyond the day-to-day zoning issues and providing guidance for the community's future land use and development. A properly developed, well thought-out Master Plan can be of great value to the City. The Master Plan can help preserve the quaint residential atmosphere that citizens value and encourage quality, sustainable growth that will allow the City to prosper well into the future.

However, the effectiveness of the Master Plan is directly related to the willingness of the Planning Commission and of the citizens to follow the plan and keep it current. It is a time consuming process, but the rewards will make the effort well worth while.

Relationship to Zoning

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006) states that the "zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, (and) to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability..." The master plan is the long range planning document upon which zoning decisions are based, including creating and amending the Otsego zoning ordinance. Although the master plan is a policy document and does not have the force of law, it is the basis of the Zoning Ordinance and zoning map, and zoning decisions that are inconsistent with the master plan may be found to be improper by the courts.

The master plan is the document that lays out the City's future, while the zoning ordinance provides the day-to-day regulations for land use. Therefore, the land use designations on the future land use map may not directly correlate with the zoning districts or existing uses. However, the master plan reflects the community's long range desires for land development, so as land uses and market demands change, it is expected that future zoning decisions will conform to the master plan.

The areas delineated on the future land use map are called "land use designations" and are different from zoning districts on the zoning map. It is important to remember the differences between a land use designation and a zoning district. The land use designation is the desired long range land use, whereas the zoning district dictates what can happen now.

Chapter 5 includes a "zoning plan" that describes how the land use designations on the future land use map correlate to the zoning districts on the zoning map. The zoning plan

can be used as a guide to determine how the zoning ordinance should be amended to implement the recommendations of this master plan.

Previous Planning Efforts

Master Plans

The City of Otsego updated the 1980 Master Plan in 2002 to help redirect and focus their efforts on creating a sustainable community. As a community, Otsego realized that surrounding Township development pressures could have potential negative effects on their downtown and community, including increased traffic problems, loss of downtown retail and industry, and a loss of community security. The plan was subsequently revised in 2007 and again in 2013 and 2014 with revised goals, objectives, future land use plan and implementation strategy.

The Otsego Master Plan Process

Community Issues

As a part of the Master Plan process in 2007, focus group meetings were held. The Planning Commission, City Staff and area residents representing diverse ages, socioeconomic standings and professions attended the first focus group meeting. The focus of this meeting involved issue identification through a S.W.O.T. analysis. The term S.W.O.T. represents Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The analysis procedure involved randomly splitting individuals into groups and having them determine and write down Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the City. These issues were then discussed in a combined group session, where participants helped to rank the top issues facing the community.

The next step involved sending the Planning Commission members out into the community to look through the lens of a disposable camera to help identify, in picture form, ten positive and ten negative elements of the community. The pictures were developed and put together

on two separate montages. These pictures become a historical catalog identifying concepts that were considered at the time of this Master Plan development.

Data Collection

The purpose of data collection is to form a picture of the community as it is now, compared to the past. The data collected and included in the Plan relates directly to the character of the area. The Plan incorporates U.S. Census data about the population, economic, and social status of the community. Another part of the data collection process included a Land Use Survey. Through the Land Use Survey, individual properties in the City were inspected to determine existing uses of land and to form a picture of land use development over the past several decades.

Existing land use can speak volumes about past development policies and how effectively they were implemented. Even a cursory look at mapped land uses will present an interesting picture of how the community has developed. For example, incompatible land uses in close proximity to residential uses may be a reflection on past indiscriminate zoning and land use decisions, and could complicate planning of those mixed areas.

Another important part of the character of Otsego is embodied in its proximity to US-131 and the City's relationship with surrounding Otsego Township. These two areas impact the Otsego community in numerous ways and are further explained in this Master Plan. Much of the information collected as part of this analysis is contained in **Chapter 2**, Community Profile.

Community Vision and Goals

Determining the overall direction of the Plan, and that of the community, took place during a goal setting process. During a second focus group meeting, participants of the original focus group worked to create a Vision Statement and to develop a set of goals. The participants spent a great deal of time to develop the Vision Statement. The goals for

the Plan were structured around the major issues developed through the S.W.O.T. process. These statements and ideas were later formed into a Community Vision and a set of Goals. These are contained in **Chapter 4**.

Future Land Use

When developing Future Land Use policies and the Future Land Use Map, it is important to review the collected land use information. This information is used to help determine broad land use patterns including residential and commercial concentrations and the influence of public land uses on development.

Future land use planning also involves considering environmental conditions. Environmentally sensitive areas are determined and appropriate development limitations are established for these areas.

The establishment of a Community Vision, along with the Goals and Policies played an important part in determining future land use patterns. The Future Land Use map reflects these elements. The future land use map reflects:

- Environmental constraints;
- Locations of proposed and needed Land Uses in the community;
- Watershed management; and
- Effects on existing land uses.

A description of existing and future land uses is contained in **Chapter 5**.

2007 Master Plan Amendments

After the closing of the Rock-Tenn paper plant in 2005 and the closing, sale and reopening of the Menasha Paper Plant (now Otsego Paper), it was realized that an update to the Master Plan was needed. In addition, the 2002 amendments to the Municipal Planning Act require the Planning Commission to review the Master Plan at least once every five years to determine if the plan should be revised or replaced with a new plan.

The Planning Commission and City staff reviewed the Goals and Objectives that were

adopted in 2002 and determined that, although some goals had been met and were being implemented, overall the Goals and Objectives continue to meet the long term development needs of the City. Therefore, an update to the 2002 Plan was considered all that was necessary. This Master Plan amendment takes into account the desired changes in land use in the Rock-Tenn area and proposes some new land use designations to better serve the City's future land use needs.

2013 Master Plan Updates

Through multiple Planning Commission meetings and an open public workshop, the City reviewed the Master Plan and worked through a SWOT community assessment and analysis, goals, objectives and a revised future land use map. Also included in the revision were updates to all City demographic data and existing land use mapping. To ensure the plan remains dynamic and relevant, an implementation strategy with specific actions, responsible parties, priorities and timeframes is also included in the Master Plan.

The Planning Commission and City Council and City Staff have assumed their responsibility to look beyond today's zoning issues and provide long term guidance for the City's land use and future development through the adoption of this Master Plan. The Plan, properly developed and well thought-out, can provide tangible benefits in improved quality of life, efficient use of financial and other resources, a cleaner environment, and an economically healthy community. However, those benefits are directly related to the willingness of the City's citizens to follow the plan, and to keep the plan current. It is hard work; but the rewards will make the effort well worth while.

Chapter 2

Community Profile

Understanding the past decisions of a community helps provide a direction to the future. By analyzing existing trends and conditions, we can begin to learn how and why, and use patterns have changed over time. This analysis of the issues can offer alternatives to the City to more efficiently service its residents. The following trends and conditions are generally considered:

- Demographic data helps in determining the social and physical needs of the community.
- Inventorying community land uses, the types of development including their densities, are necessary to determine build-out potential under current conditions.
- Identifying environmental conditions helps to establish limitations on the extent that some areas of the City will develop.
- Existing land use patterns reveal past decisions, good and otherwise, regarding the development of the City.
- Public involvement allows citizens an opportunity to voice their opinion about concerns they have about their community. It also provides a chance for the public to offer suggestions, provide insight, and through their involvement they help to strengthen the position of a community Master Plan.
- The issue identification process is essential to the formation of a sound vision for the future of the City of Otsego. Unless problems are accurately identified, and the proper solutions sought, the Plan will not achieve its full potential as a policy guide that can make Otsego a better place to live, work, and play.

Demographics

Demographics help paint a picture of the community's diversity (age, ethnicity, occupations, etc.) and establish trends which provide rationale for land use decisions. Since the last update to the Master Plan in 2007, the US Census Bureau has released 2010 Census data and conducted an additional American Community Survey providing data as current as 2012.

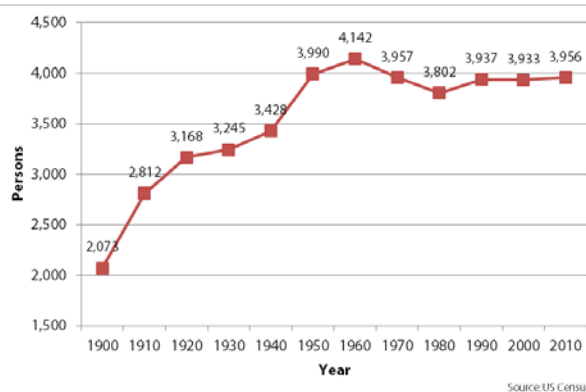
Location

The City of Otsego is located in Southwest Michigan in Allegan County. Just a mile from US Highway 131, Otsego is within 15 miles of Kalamazoo and less than 40 miles from Grand Rapids. Michigan Highway 89 traverses east-west through the city's downtown carrying just over 26,000 vehicles a day through Otsego's 1.8 square mile area.

Population Characteristics

Since the 2000 Census, Otsego has gained a total of 23 residents, or an increase of 0.6%. Historically, Otsego's population has steadily increased to its historic high mark of 4,142 residents in 1960. Since that point, the city's population has remained quite stable hovering just under 4,000.

Figure 1: Historic Population



According to the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, Otsego's population is not expected to change by any significant margin. Low projections place the 2020 population at 3,960 (an increase of four residents) and a population of 3,964 by 2030. High projections predict the city's population to increase to just over 4,000 residents in 2030. It is reasonable to expect Otsego's current population figures, given current economic conditions, will not change significantly in the near future.

Neighboring Populations

When formulating the goals and strategies for the Master Plan, it is important to understand the various trends that are occurring in neighboring cities and townships within Allegan County. Figure 3 to the right illustrates the change in population since the 1970 US Census. While the City of Otsego has stayed relatively level and stable, other cities within the county have either gained or lost population. The City of Wayland has more than doubled its population since 1980, currently with over 4,000 residents. Gunplain Township, the adjacent township to the east, has experienced the greatest increase with over 2,600 additional residents over the last 50 years. Otsego Township recently experienced a major increase in population adding an additional 700 residents (15%) to its total population.

Age

Like most communities throughout the country, Otsego's population is aging. The median age of all residents in the city according to the 2000 US Census was 34.1 years. By 2010, the Census reported the median age had risen to 36.1 years. Figure 4 illustrates this same trend showing the greater percentage of residents in the 45 year to 74 year range. Notably, there are fewer residents of parenting age in the 35-44 year range (approximately 4.1% of the population or 160 persons). One trend similar between the two sets of years is the drop off of 20-29 year olds.

Figure 2: Population projections (WMRPC)

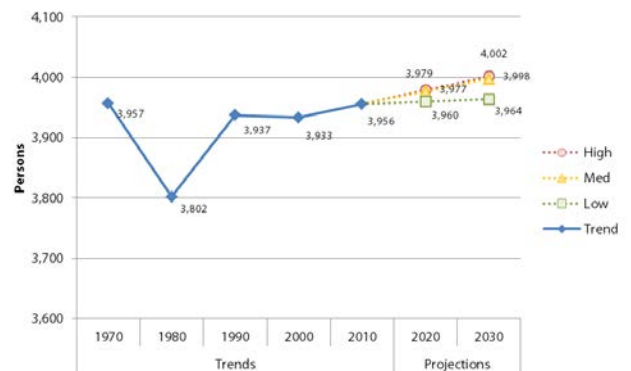


Figure 3: Population trends of neighboring communities

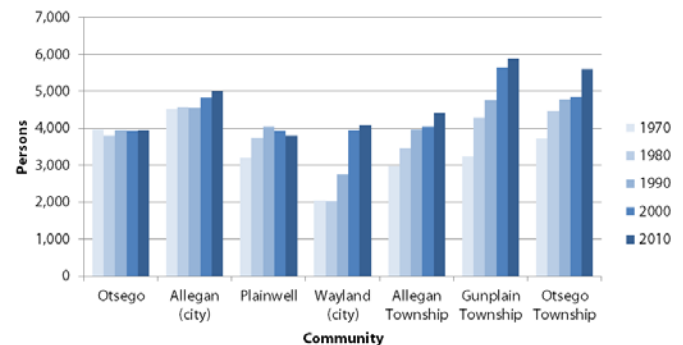
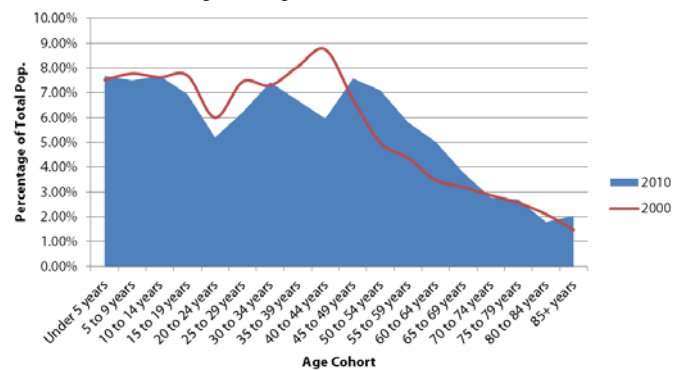


Figure 4: Age cohorts (2000-2010)



Social Characteristics

Table 1 to the right indicates a breakdown of the two main types of households in the community as defined by the Census Bureau. Family households “consist of a householder and one or more people living together in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption—it may also include people unrelated to the householder. A non-family household “consists of a person living alone or a householder who shares the home with non-relatives only; for example, with roommates or an unmarried partner.”

The City of Otsego, along with the Township and Allegan County, has experienced increases in non-family households over the last decade. One-third of Otsego residents currently live in a non-family household.

Over the course of the last decade, Otsego’s education attainment has increased. More students in the community have completed high school (or received equivalency) and have gone on to enroll in college programs currently than in years prior. However, Otsego’s rate of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher is significantly lower than the State of Michigan and Allegan County.

Income and Employment

Incomes were slow to increase for many Michigan communities and across the nation as well through the recent recessionary period. Otsego’s median household income saw a modest 6.4% increase between 2000 and 2010. In comparison, neighboring Otsego Township was hit particularly hard during this period dropping by 4%. The county as a whole enjoyed nearly a 10% increase in incomes between the two censuses.

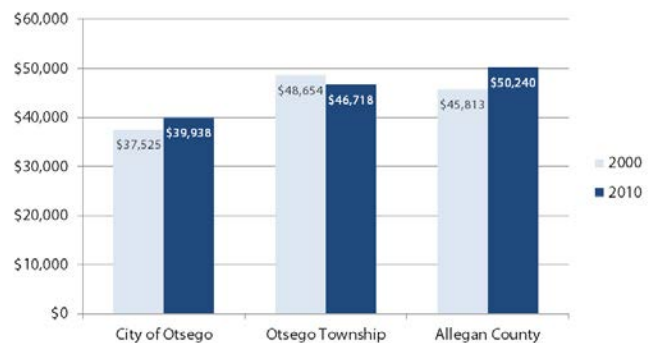
Table 1: Households by Type

Community	Household Types	Number of Households		Percentage of Households	
		2000	2010	2000	2010
City of Otsego	Family Households	1,063	1,064	68.4%	66.6%
	Non-Family Households	490	533	31.6%	33.4%
Otsego Township	Family Households	1,390	1,573	78.4%	73.1%
	Non-Family Households	381	579	21.6%	26.9%
Allegan County	Family Households	28,405	30,450	74.4%	72.5%
	Non-Family Households	9,760	11,568	25.6%	27.5%

Table 2: Education Attainment

Population 25 years and over	2000	2010
High School or higher	84.3%	89.4%
Bachelor's Degree or higher	9.2%	11.5%

Figure 5: Median Household Income



The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes monthly unemployment figures at the county, state, and national level as well as for major cities. According to the BLS, unemployment rates have decreased between August of 2012 and August of 2013 for the county, state, and nation. Rates sat around 7% in August 2012 in Allegan County and were reported around 6.7% by August 2013. While at a much lower rate, Allegan County nearly mimics the State of Michigan's unemployment rate trend line over this time period experiencing identical increases and decreases. Allegan County is also fortunate to have rebounded through the recession performing better than the national figures for unemployment. Unfortunately, the State of Michigan still maintains one of the higher unemployment rates in the country at around 8.8%.

Given Otsego's location along M-89 and proximity to US-131, Otsego's commute times are relatively lower than most other communities in Allegan County. Figure 7 to the right indicates the commute times in comparison to neighboring communities. Additionally, Table 3 lists where Otsego residents travel to work. Approximately 16% of employed Otsego residents work in the city of Kalamazoo. Another 12% work within the city limits and 10% travel to the city of Allegan.

Figure 6: Unemployment Rate

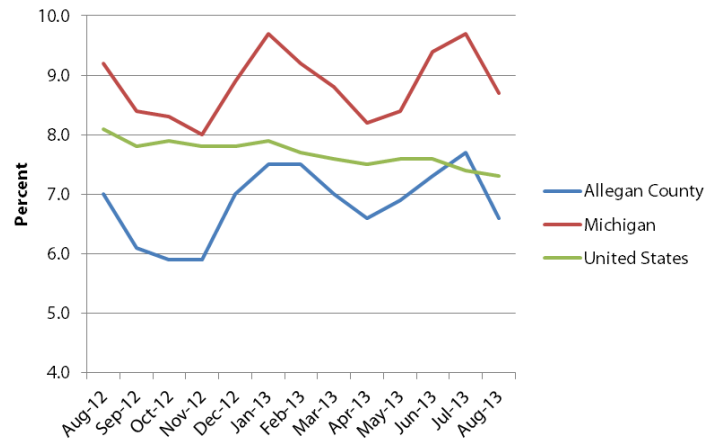


Figure 7: Average Commute Time (2010)

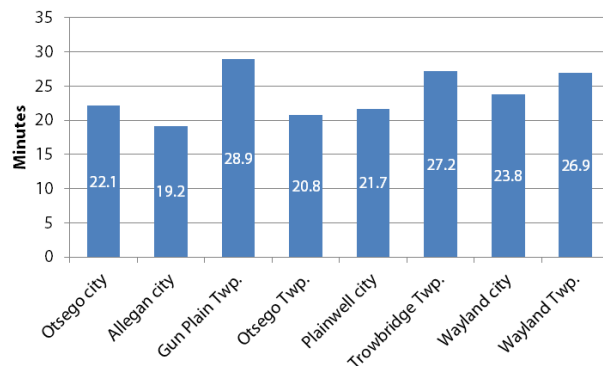


Table 3: Employment Centers (2011)

Location of Employment	Number of Otsego Residents*	Percent of Otsego Residents
Kalamazoo city	248	15.9%
Otsego city	187	12.0%
Allegan city	159	10.2%
Portage city	72	4.6%
Grand Rapids city	52	3.3%
All Other Locations	845	54.1%

*Number of works ages 18 and up

While historically on the decline for several decades in the city, manufacturing-related industries still comprise of a very significant number of employment opportunities in the city. Nearly one-third employed Otsego residents work in some type of manufacturing-related industry. This figure has declined since the last census in 2000 due to the closing of the Rock-Tenn paper mill in 2005. However, education and health care services are on the rise along with entertainment, accommodation, and food services.

As seen earlier in Table 3, only 12% (or 187 persons) of Otsego residents find their employment within the city. Compared to Table 4, it can be reasonably assumed that the majority of Otsego residents employed in manufacturing, education and health care services, and other professional services are finding these employment opportunities elsewhere.

Housing

Compared to other communities throughout Allegan County, Otsego has an average number of owner-occupied housing units indicating a stable housing market (60%). The City of Plainwell, for example, contains only 56% owner-occupied housing with 34% available to those seeking to rent than own. Only 8.5% of housing units in Otsego are vacant indicating foreclosures did not have a significant detrimental impact during the recent recession.

While median incomes were slow to increase between the two Census periods, median home values were not. Otsego's median home value increased over 24% during the ten-year period between 2000 and 2010, more than neighboring Otsego Township and very similar to the State.

Table 4: Major Employment Sectors

Industry	Number	Percent
Manufacturing	563	32.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	319	18.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	260	15.0%
Retail trade	164	9.5%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	100	5.8%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	67	3.9%

Figure 8: Housing Occupancy (2010)

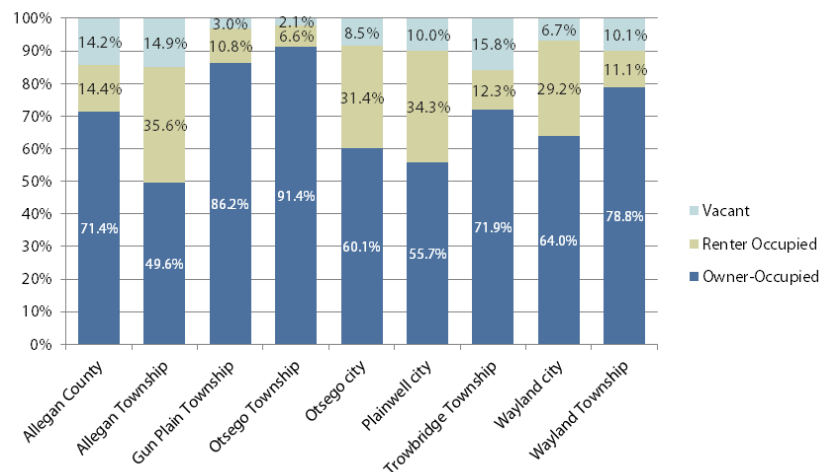


Table 5: Median Home Value

	2000	2010	% Change
Otsego city	\$88,200	\$109,600	24.26%
Otsego Township	\$112,500	\$135,600	20.53%
Allegan County	\$115,500	\$149,400	29.35%
State of Michigan	\$115,600	\$144,200	24.74%

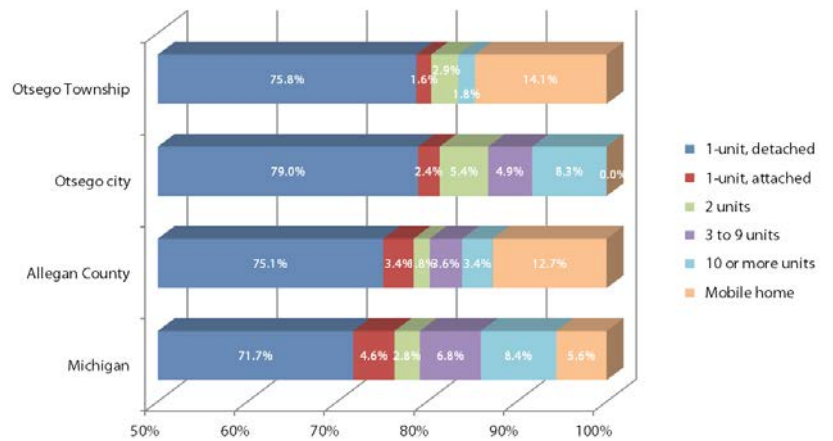
The majority of housing units within the city were constructed prior to 1950 as indicated in Table 6 to the right. Only 14% of the city's housing stock has been built since 1990. With such a large portion of the housing stock beginning to age, it is important to monitor housing conditions as time goes on. This is exacerbated by the fact so many of the city's housing units are traditional detached single-family owner-occupied housing units. Figure 9 below indicates nearly 80% of housing units in Otsego are 1-unit detached homes. Another 5% are 2 unit homes, typically a former single-family home split into two rental units.

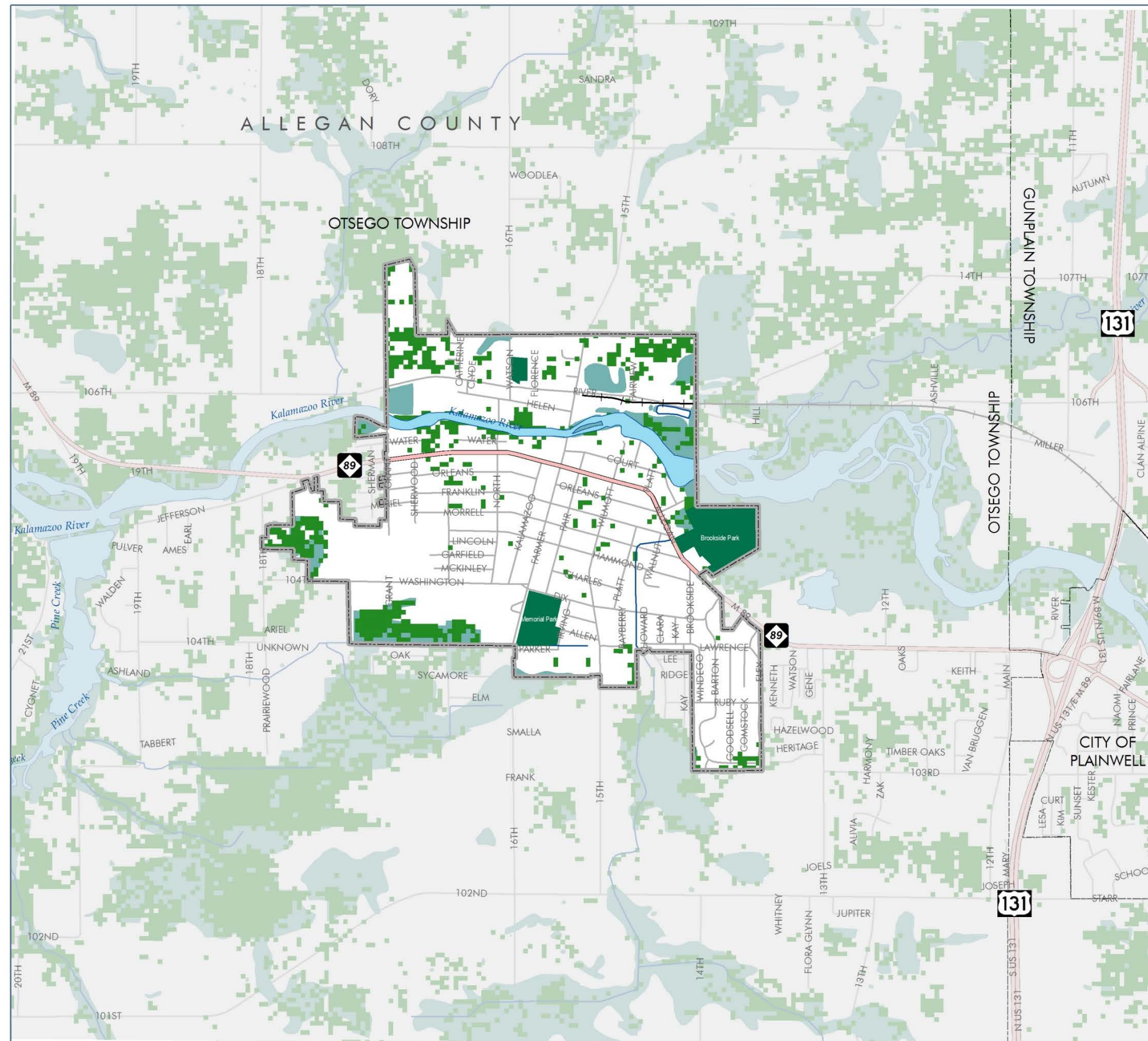
Table 6: Year Housing Unit Built

Period	Number	Percent
Built 1939 or earlier	696	43.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	143	9.0%
Built 1950 to 1959	135	8.5%
Built 1960 to 1969	91	5.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	166	10.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	128	8.1%
Built 1990 to 1999	97	6.1%
Built 2000 to 2005	68	4.3%
Built 2005 to 2011	60	3.8%
Total Housing Units	1,584	100.0%

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Figure 9: Housing Mixture





MAP 1 NATURAL FEATURES

Master Plan
City of Otsego
Allegan County, MI

- City of Otsego Boundary
- Rivers
- Streams
- Woodlands
- Parks
- Wetlands

November 27, 2013

0 750 1,500 3,000 4,500 Feet

Sources: Michigan Geographic Data Library
Allegan County Equalization Department

LSL Planning
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Existing Land Use and Natural Features

Land use and natural features information is essential in the formation of a Master Plan. This information provides much of the background that will be used in the creation of community goals and objectives. These goals and objectives will be the framework that determines the type and general location for city developments or activities.



The land use pattern seen in the City of Otsego is typical of those found in many older river front communities (see Existing Land Use Map, page 19). The river front has been home to the majority of industrial uses. Nearby, the downtown commercial district is the focal point of the community. Radiating outward from the downtown commercial district is a progression in densities of residential uses. This pattern of development is common from the days when much of the residential land was built close to the downtown, railroad lines, and employment at the local industries. The local industries relied upon the local labor force, the railroad and the resources that the river provided including cargo shipping, electricity and operating water.

Residential Land Uses

The largest land use category in the City of Otsego is residential. Much of the residential land use is south of the Kalamazoo River. A majority of this land use is single family residential. There is some medium density residential near and within the downtown business district. As is also typical to many communities, several high and medium density residential projects are located near the city limits. The City has several large developments in the south, especially the southeast.

Commercial Land Uses

Commercial land use has historically, and continues, to be centered around the M-89 corridor and its closest junction to the Kalamazoo River in the city limits. The commercial development along M-89 is primarily retail and service oriented. New commercial activities in the city have been slow in arriving. Regardless the City and several area merchants are doing their part to aggressively improve the streetscape and existing commercial exterior facades within the Central Business District (CBD). While the CBD is generally not considered a destination point, in comparison to the commercial development to the east and along US-131, it does offer convenient services to local residents as well as transient traffic.

Industrial Land Uses

Industrial land use is concentrated mainly along the northern shores of the Kalamazoo River with a couple of industrial sites located in the southeast portion of the city. In 2000 there were an estimated 1,500 industrial jobs currently in Otsego, with Parker Hannifin providing the majority of those jobs.

Since then Rock-Tenn has closed and according to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, in 2004 Parker Hannifin employed only 850 people. Overall, this represents a 21% loss in the number of industrial jobs.

Public/Quasi-Public Land Uses

There is a significant amount of public or quasi-public land in the City. The Otsego Public School system has two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. There are three parochial schools located in the city limits to complement the public school system. City owned properties include: City Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, Public Library, Department of Public Works, City Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Community Center/Scout House. There are four public parks that have varying degrees of amenities. Some of these parks allow more active recreation, such as ball fields, and playground equipment, while others are more passive in design using natural amenities such as the Kalamazoo River as the backdrop for dreamy relaxation. It is important for communities to provide different levels of public recreation that allows opportunities to relax, educate, socialize, and participate in passive and active exercise.

The City has numerous opportunities to improve the quality of recreation along the Kalamazoo River. Several properties along the River could be developed improving river walkways and other recreational opportunities. The City's Recreation Plan identifies extensions of the river trail system including wetland walks near Brookside Park, river and dam overlooks.

Vacant Lands and Mixed Use

There are only a few major parcels of developable vacant land currently in the city limits. These parcels are concentrated at the perimeter of the city in the northwest and southwest corners. These major parcels had been surrounded by industrial uses, though the Rock-Tenn property in the northwest quadrant is no longer in industrial use. The remaining smaller vacant parcels can provide opportunities for infill development that complement the surrounding neighborhood.

The former Rock-Tenn site is shown on the existing land use map as mixed use, dovetailing with both the future land use designation and the zoning of the property. While approval has

been given to allow the site to be reused as a flea market and indoor greenhouse and possible improvements have been identified, the long term vision for this site is full redevelopment with both residential and non-



residential uses.

Transportation Network

M-89/Allegan Street is a major state trunk line that traverses the city from east to west. M-89 is also classified as a Federal National Truck Network (NHS) route. The local roads that carry a majority of the traffic throughout the city include:

- River Street
- Franklin Street
- Farmer Street
- Morrell Street
- Orleans Street
- Dix Street

There is an abandoned railroad line that is located on the north side of the Kalamazoo River. There is a network of sidewalks around most city blocks allowing residents to walk from their homes to the CBD, down to the river, or to any of the several city parks.

Public Utilities

The City of Otsego provides public water and sanitary sewer services to its residents. These provisions significantly impact the community's ability to develop and expand. Commercial and Industrial development require a substantial

amount of utility service. The ability of the city to provide quality and demand oriented water and sewer services will allow existing and potential businesses to provide a supportive tax base along with local employment opportunities. The further extension of services should be given consideration within the context of the Master Plan, with regard to the planned intensity of development and subsequent extension of services. The largest City water users are, not surprisingly, industrial customers, with Otsego Paper being the largest customer.

A recent water feasibility study prepared for the City identified a concern that future growth will result in a water carrying-capacity deficiency given the current water carrying capacity. The City system contains a significant amount of undersized water mains. In addition, commercial and industrial areas are generally not provided with recommended fire flows. The City effectively operates and maintains their water system and as funding sources become available, the City will continue to improve their system.

The City of Otsego has a Wastewater Treatment Plant that meets current community demands. As new development occurs in the city or as expansion of the wastewater service district occurs, careful monitoring will be necessary to ensure the carrying capacity of the facility is maintained at manageable levels.

Natural Features

The City of Otsego is fortunate to be situated next to the Kalamazoo River that offers wetland areas, abundant mature bank vegetation and natural scenic views. The City Mature tree cover can be found along most City streets and throughout City parks. The City's pathway system winds through many residential areas and provides access to the riverbank.

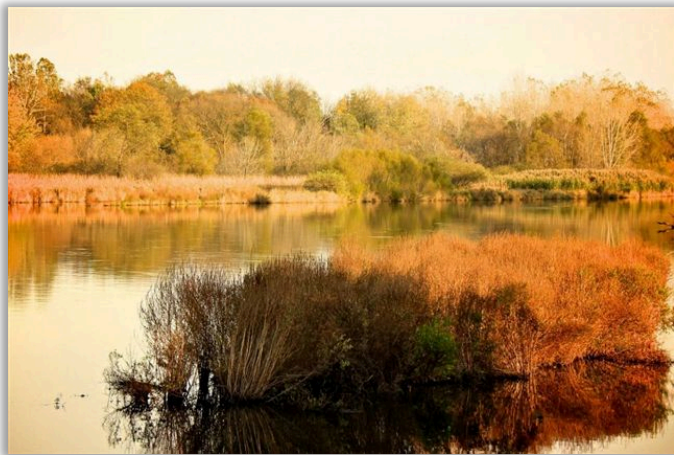
Wetlands

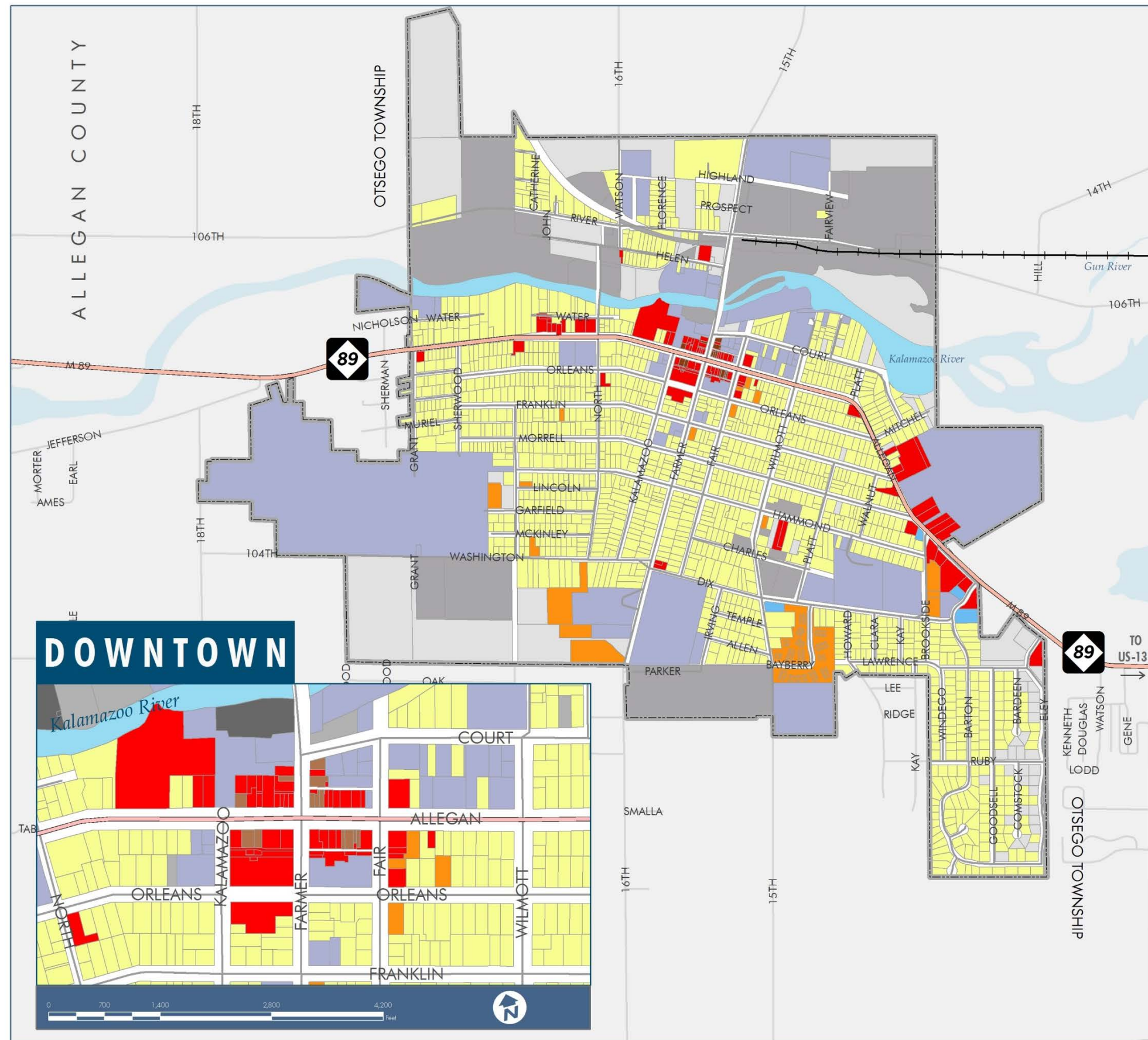
There are several areas along the Kalamazoo River within the City limits that are classified as

wetlands. There is a large wetland area located around the perimeter of Brookside Park at the eastern boundary of the city. The FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency shows the locations of the wetlands in relationship to Brookside Park and the Kalamazoo River. Within the current City boundaries, there is little development space available near these wetland areas. Industrial users (Otsego Paper in particular) in close proximity to wetlands are highly regulated and discharges are monitored for proper river water quality. The river flows into the city near Brookside Park and after flowing past the wetlands, passes the City's major industrial properties. Wetland protection is vital to the sustainability of the local watershed.

Forested lands

The forested lands occur in pockets throughout the city. Much of the concentration is located along the banks of the Kalamazoo River. Pockets of forested land can be found around the perimeter of the city limits. Most of the remaining vacant parcels include dense forestation.





MAP 2 EXISTING LAND USE

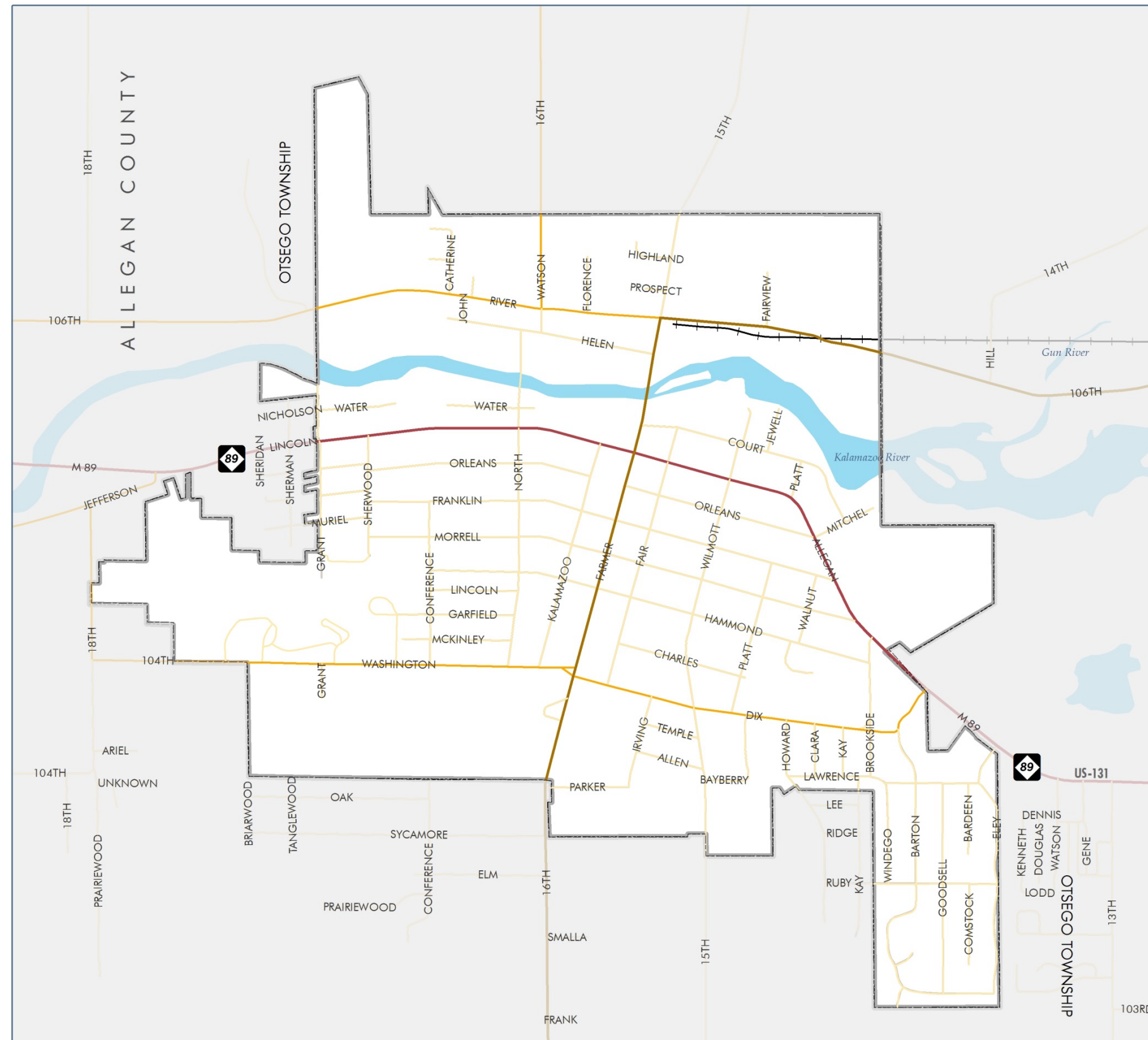
Master Plan
City of Otsego
Allegan County, MI

- City of Otsego boundary
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Vacant

November 27, 2013

0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 Feet
Sources: Michigan Geographic Data Library
Allegan County Equalization Department





MAP 3 TRANSPORTATION

Master Plan
City of Otsego
Allegan County, MI

- City of Otsego boundary
- Road Classification (MDOT)
 - Principal Arterial/NHS
 - Minor Arterial
 - Collector
 - Local & Private

November 27, 2013



Chapter 3 Community Issues and Vision

SWOT

A SWOT analysis is a method of community assessment; specifically, a process to gain insights into the assets and liabilities of the City. The analysis allows us to develop our vision and goals for the future.



Strengths

- Riverwalk, Park System, Recreation, Bike Access;
- Industry;
- School System;
- Kalamazoo River;
- Downtown;
- Water/Sewer Capacity;
- Library
- Family-Friendly, Small Town Atmosphere;
- Historical Society;
- Main Street and Downtown as a Core Gathering Area (Identity);
- Community Support and Pride;
- Parking (Space);
- High Traffic Volume;
- Young Families;
- City Government;
- Mix of Affordable Housing.



Weaknesses

- Downtown Business Mix, Vacancies;
- Land Use Conflicts;
- Poor Housing Conditions;
- M-89;
- Lack of Rec. Facilities;
- Lack of Traffic Calming Measures and Bike Lanes;
- Rock – Tenn;
- Limited Safe Crossing across M-89.;
- Lack of Diversity in Downtown Business Mix;
- Lack of Second Floor Downtown Residential;
- Dam on Kalamazoo River.

Opportunities

- Vacant land, Industrial Development;
- Downtown Identity & Development;
- Historic Preservation, Adaptive Reuse, Redevelopment & Infill;
- Kalamazoo River Development;
- Residential Growth;
- Redevelopment of Rock – Tenn;
- Second Floor Residential;
- Traffic Count (If Managed);
- Parking (If Redesigned);
- Retail Benefit with Slowed Traffic;
- Parks, Recreational Activities and Programs;
- Nearby Communities (Plainwell);
- Geographic Location Between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo;
- Skilled Workforce;
- Entrepreneurial opportunities.

Threats

- Loss of Industry;
- Loss of Downtown Businesses;
- Lack of Developable Land;
- Heavy Traffic on M-89;
- Maintenance of Public Facilities / Properties;
- Fear of Losing Historic Structures;
- Loss of State Revenues;
- Kalamazoo Dam;
- M-89 Strip Development (Poor Gateway to City);
- Older Housing Rentals and Poor Maintenance;
- Land-Locked;
- Age of Residents (Lack of Housing Options and Poor Housing Conditions);
- Lack of Opportunity for Younger Generation.

Chapter 4

Goals & Objectives

Goals, Policies & Strategies

Through identifying planning values, obtaining public input and articulating planning issues, the goals, policies and strategies can be formulated. These are the foundation of the future land use plan and provide the basis for implementation of the plan.

The goals, objectives and strategies found in the 2007 master plan needed to be confirmed and revised if necessary. Through public meetings and an open workshop, city officials and the public developed a revised list of goals and objectives for the 2013-2013 update.

A **goal** is a general statement of a desired outcome. To be effective, a goal must be realistic and achievable. The goals take the issues identified by the public and focus them into specific outcomes, enabling us to paint a picture of the future as the residents of Otsego would like to see it.

An **objective** narrows the focus of the goal and provides a “jumping-off” point for determining implementation actions. Each goal is narrowed by objectives. The objectives of the plan include both policy and action-oriented items:

- Policies: Protocol to guide decisions and achieve desired outcomes. Description of the intent of the Township regarding land use related issues.
- Actions: A statement of a specific task or series of tasks that must be accomplished.

#1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation

Goal: The City will work to preserve its environmental and scenic quality and protect the Kalamazoo River as a scenic and recreational resource.

1. Establish guidelines to protect the Kalamazoo River through zoning and growth management policies. Develop cooperative agreements between the City and the landowners along the River. Increase recreational opportunities, limit man-made river engineering structures, clean-up river and improve wildlife habitat.

2. Ensure sound land development practices and minimize impact to the natural environment through the City Zoning and Land Development Ordinances.

3. Discourage practices that would alter the natural, valuable function of wetlands through site plan review, including those not protected under the State of Michigan Wetlands Protection Act (P.A. 203 of 1979 [now Part 303 of Act 451, as amended]).

4. Maintain landscape guidelines for inclusion in the City Zoning Ordinance providing for the introduction, preservation and maintenance of trees and other woody vegetation as sites are developed or redeveloped. Require development to provide landscape plans as a part of the site plan review process.

5. Encourage City residents to use approved methods of solid waste disposal, such as waste stream reduction, recycling, and composting through education and the cooperation of residents, area waste haulers, landfill operators, and local governmental agencies. Encourage residents to participate in community clean-up programs.

6. Explore modifying the existing zoning ordinance to encourage and require greater retention of open space as a component of an overall project design in new developments.

7. Through appropriate watershed management planning, promote the highest feasible water quality of the City's groundwater.

#2- Parks and Recreation

Goal: The City will actively work to improve and maintain recreational opportunities that serve residents of all ages.

1. Promote bicycle and pedestrian facilities and accommodations to ensure safe non-motorized transportation options and opportunities for physical activity and recreation.
2. Secure funds to develop a refined Parks and Recreation Plan identifying recreational enhancement opportunities.
3. Collaborate with the School District and Township.

#3- Residential Development

Goal: The City will provide its residents with a variety of housing opportunities by encouraging a wide range of quality residential developments that provide a number of amenities and that contribute to the quality of life in the community.

1. Seek methods to encourage housing rehabilitation in the City. Develop programs and identify funding sources, property owner educational opportunities and encourage maintenance of areas identified by the City.
2. Provide affordable housing for residents of diverse socio-economic and demographic backgrounds.
3. Encourage a balanced housing stock to accommodate all segments of the City's population.
4. Encourage creative design of neighborhoods to enhance desirability by including sidewalks, bike paths, pedestrian paths, open space, parks and playgrounds, and related site amenities.

5. Encourage residential development patterns that utilize small lot, cluster, development in conjunction with the establishment of open space areas and/or conservation easements dedicated to the preservation of unique natural features.

6. Strengthen and protect the viability of neighborhoods by controlling the expansion of incompatible land uses on adjacent properties and protecting neighborhoods by open space and other buffers.

7. Research the viability of creating a historic overlay district in areas where significant historical elements exist and areas where there is a community desire for preservation.

8. Encourage and incentivize second floor residential development over downtown businesses.

9. Investigate a rental code enforcement and inspection program and determine the appropriate level of regulation.

#4- Downtown Enhancement and Commercial Development

Goal: The City will provide opportunity for a mix of commercial uses at planned locations that are developed in an aesthetically pleasing fashion and which provide for safe and efficient patterns of pedestrian and vehicular circulation while preserving the downtown character.

1. Prepare and implement site development standards in order to minimize traffic congestion and pedestrian and vehicular hazards.

2. Incorporate design and performance standards into the City Zoning Ordinance that will achieve commercial development which is aesthetically appealing, and which operates in a safe and efficient manner.

3. Provide neighborhood commercial opportunities near higher densities of

residential development through zoning. Encourage development in the downtown district to ensure economic vitality.

4. Ensure that new commercial development is supported by infrastructure (e.g. water, sanitary sewer, roads, etc.) and services (e.g. police and fire services, etc.) adequate to meet the needs of said development without adding undue financial burden to the City.

5. Work with Main Street, DDA, developers, etc. to enhance aesthetics and to promote downtown identity. Actively recruit and acquire quality anchor stores for the downtown core.

6. Manage commercial development outside the downtown district in order to preserve its economic vitality.

7. Identify, promote and preserve for present and future generations, historic sites, architectural items, and buildings determined to have significant historic value within the City.

8. Encourage the placement of historic signs and/or markers designating historic areas and cultural resources.

9. Encourage and incentivize redevelopment of vacant commercial structures and sites.

10. Work cooperatively to assist with implementation of the Main Street 4-Point Program.

#5- Industrial Development

Goal: The City will work to retain industry and promote additional expansion in planned locations. New development will be environmentally and aesthetically sensitive to the small town character and meet the employment needs of the Otsego community.

1. Encourage the placement and/or extension of public utilities and services to those areas identified as desirable for industrial development.

2. Work with Otsego Township to promote the future development of well-planned industrial plats (e.g. parks) rather than scattered site, single lot, development.

3. Prevent site related problems often encountered with industrial uses, such as noise, odor, glare, vibration, etc., by: a. implementing regulatory controls, and b. separate industrial uses from less intense land uses such as residential through appropriate use of buffer strips, open space or transitional land uses.

4. Encourage and incentivize redevelopment of vacant industrial structures and brownfield sites.

#6- Infrastructure - Roads, Private Roads and Utilities

Goal: The City will provide for adequate infrastructure that will ensure balanced, orderly growth and ensure the safety, well-being and quality of life for the community.

1. Seek to implement access management strategies along M-89 throughout the City in order to identify and eliminate conflicting and deteriorating land uses, enhance vehicular efficiency and safety, and provide safe, convenient pedestrian areas. Review street standards and prepare and implement site development standards in order to minimize traffic congestion and pedestrian and vehicular hazards, prepare and implement site development standards that address this issue.

2. Work with the Otsego Public Works Department, Otsego Township, Allegan County Road Commission (where appropriate) and the Michigan Department of Transportation to design and construct non-motorized paths/lanes on newly constructed or reconstructed roads, linking population centers (e.g. subdivisions, etc.) with recreational, commercial, and other local amenities.

3. Coordinate with the Otsego Public Works Department and Michigan Department of

Transportation to ensure that local roads in the City are properly maintained and that the natural beauty (e.g. resulting from topography, contiguous trees, etc.) of many of the City's roads are preserved.

4. Identify the intersections along M-89 that are the highest priority for safety improvements and develop strategies to correct the traffic issues at those intersections. Explore funding mechanisms to finance these infrastructure upgrades.

Chapter 5

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is a guide for the growth and development patterns of the city and is intended to guide development decisions throughout the life of this plan. The Plan is not rigid in its application, rather a basis by which all future development decisions should be compared against. Periodic review and adjustments generally keep the Master Plan a current and usable policy document.

Most of the City is fully developed and therefore the attention in the future should turn to redevelopment of the existing city fabric. Planning for the city's future land uses, both in narrative and map forms, is perhaps the most critical aspect of the Master Planning process. The elements laid out in the future land use chapter and map will guide future Zoning Ordinance decisions and changes.

Areas of future development and redevelopment within the City are identified on the Future Land Use Map on page 37. A description of the respective land use categories follows:

The following pages provide a description of the land use designations shown on the future land use map.

Future Land Use Designations

Central Business District

This district represents approximately a three block section adjacent to the Kalamazoo River. In recent years, the district's image has improved considerably with extensive streetscape improvements along M-89, better defining the downtown and making it more inviting. The intersection of M-89 and Farmer Street establishes the central point of this district.

The types of land uses intended for this district include the pedestrian scale, walk-up businesses typically found in a traditional

downtown setting, along with offices and second floor residential uses. Several governmental service buildings add to the strength of this area, including the post office, police station, public works buildings, city hall, fire department and chamber of commerce. A quaint convenient grocery store just south of M-89 on Farmer Street provides a solid anchor to the community and district.

District uses should continue to focus on small, unique specialty shops, entertainment facilities, sit down restaurants and community service buildings. Inviting features along the riverfront should be enhanced, including riverfront bike paths, viewing areas and the continued redevelopment of the former public works area. The riverfront features offer inviting spaces and activities for community events and group activities with spin-off benefits for the business community.

There is little evidence of a parking shortage in the downtown. Parking for community events, shopping or relaxation activities is abundantly available. Efforts should focus on better identification of available parking and upgrading the appearance of existing parking lots.

The downtown's close proximity to the Township's commercial development around M-89 and U.S. 131 causes competing interests. Recent commercial developments in the Township include many "big box" type developments. These stores can easily hamper retail activity in the downtown. Regardless, the downtown should focus on being a retail center. Some office uses may seem appropriate, but often have a negative impact by taking prime, street-level, retail space in highly visible locations. It is strongly recommended that efforts be made to retain street-level space for retail and similar uses, while encouraging the use of upper stories of downtown buildings as either residential or office. This may require the modification of some existing codes to permit the needed renovations to occur in a cost effective manner.

Walkability and traffic calming issues are important for the downtown. The wide expanse of M-89 divides the downtown and provides an uncertain pedestrian environment. Traffic calming and/or “pedestrian friendly” techniques could be utilized to create a more conducive business and community atmosphere. Pedestrian crossings should be enhanced, including improved striping (large wide striping) and identification (overhead crossing and or lit signs), “bulbed” out raised, concrete areas could include landscaping (street trees and low plantings), providing safer pedestrian street crossings, traffic calming and on-street parking protection. Cooperative efforts with the Michigan Department of Transportation could prove effective in establishing landscape medians on M-89 or other favorable traffic calming devices.

While it is desirable for the downtown to remain compact, thus creating synergy and walkability among the businesses, there may be a future need for expansion of the district’s boundaries. The District’s surrounding residential uses should be strengthened and caution should be used when considering any future commercial expansions. If any expansion occurs, it should be along M-89 between North Street and Farmer. In fact, to help with the CBD’s uniformity of parking, signage, setbacks, image, etc., the C-1 properties directly adjacent and to the west of the CBD, should be developed into the CBD zoning classification. The downtown should not expand southerly towards Franklin.

The types of land uses intended for this district include the pedestrian scale, walk-up businesses typically found in a traditional downtown setting, along with offices and second floor residential uses. This area does not support auto oriented, drive through businesses and other land intensive commercial operations. Buildings in the downtown should be limited in terms of size, as well as the location and area devoted to signs and off-street parking, and should help visually define and unify the street space.

Waterfront property just east of Farmer Street presents an excellent opportunity for redevelopment in a festive retail/museum, open space recreation manner. For instance, the former waterworks building was vacated by the public works department and has been redeveloped for museum or festive retail type purposes. The property further to the east, also owned by the City, could contain a small amount of festive retail, attractive parking and quality public spaces, including a waterfront boardwalk/bike path.

The waterfront property to the west of Farmer Street contains several structures that could be redeveloped in a commercial manner, enhancing downtown and waterfront properties. According to the City’s zoning ordinance, adult use activities would be better suited at this location, although sensitivity to building colors, signs and other physical displays or representations is necessary. Behind these existing structures lies some vacant property that, due to its topography, appears to be undevelopable. This area presents an opportunity for additional public open space activities. The North Farmer Street Bridge provides additional opportunities to improve pedestrian elements across the bridge, while adding to the strength of the industrial districts.

As shown on the future land use map, there are only a few mapped areas in the downtown district representing additional commercial/office use activities. Before allowing the district to encroach into current residential uses, the existing downtown commercial buildings and uses should be strengthened, renovated and fostered for infill activities. The commercial uses should not be allowed outside of the future land use map areas.

Through the continued progressive efforts of the DDA (Downtown Development Authority), the Otsego Chamber of Commerce and the City of Otsego, the City will be sure to see further improvements to the CBD.

Low Density Residential

This designation includes the newer residential areas on the southeast side of the City, and now also includes some vacant parcels north of the Kalamazoo River. On the southeast side, most of the homes are located south of Dix Street and east of Wilmott Street, while on the northwest side this category includes vacant land predominantly north of River Street and west of the Catherine Street neighborhood.

By and large, the homes in the southeast consist of single family dwellings on relatively larger lots in comparison with the older homes in the City. It may be possible to develop similar efforts to the west and south of the current new subdivision, as well as in the northwest area. In time, the City should update the Zoning Ordinance and map so that the R-A District represents the Low Density Residential classification in the northwest and southeast residential areas. Land uses in these areas will continue to be limited to single-family, detached homes on medium sized lots with a maximum density of less than 4 units per acre.

Otsego is known as a stable residential community that provides a safe and comfortable place to raise a family. When this plan was first completed in 2001, it became clear that despite the stability of the community, there are several neighborhoods that are in need of community attention and assistance. The residential neighborhood just north of the river along Helen Avenue is surrounded by heavy industrial uses. Most of the homes are located quite close to the street, where intense industrial traffic conflicts with safe neighborhood development. The lots are quite small and many of the homes are not in good condition.

However, with the closing of the Rock-Tenn plant and the possibility of a mixed use redevelopment of that site, this neighborhood may again be viable. The shallow setbacks and street orientation of these homes form a unique character that could be attractive if area

redevelopment and reinvestment occurs. The 2007 amendment to this Plan recommends that this neighborhood become part of the Planned Redevelopment Area that also includes the Rock-Tenn site. This new designation is described in more detail below.

Medium Density Residential

This designation includes the vast majority of developed residential areas located in the City. It is intended to accommodate higher density single family dwellings, with limited amounts of two family dwellings, and represents much of the older housing stock. Currently, most of the City's parks and schools are included in this designation. Densities in this designation should be between 3 and 5 units per acre, and the overall character should maintain a "traditional neighborhood" look and feel.

While there are several properties south of M-89 that have converted to two-family or multiple family use, future conversions should be discouraged through stronger special land use standards and by updating the Zoning Ordinance so that the R-B District represents the Medium Density Residential classification as a single family district. Though there may still be a need for two-family homes in the community, the City should encourage development of new townhouse style housing options and discourage conversion of existing homes or the development of housing that lacks the appropriate design and character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

High Density Residential

The high density residential designation currently includes scattered properties on the south of M-89. The largest area within this designation includes property south of Washington Street and west of South Farmer Street. This designation provides for the highest density of housing alternatives, and may serve as a buffer between single family and non-residential land uses. Developments will

contain dwellings at densities up to 10 units per acre.

Property to the east of North Street and just south of M-89 is zoned for multiple family uses. Although currently being used in a lower density residential state, the concept is great. The high density designation makes a great buffer between commercial and residential uses yet could also provide for a strong pedestrian base for the CBD. The single family homes in this area are zoned multiple family, and due to their historic character, are master planned single family. The point here is concept. Conceptually, a high density designation helps provide an alternative and necessary housing form, buffers area land uses, and when appropriately clustered, can add strength to other area land uses (i.e., downtowns, schools, etc.). Architectural design is paramount to a successful and complementary development in this area.

Office and Commercial

Outside of the CBD, the amount of office and commercially zoned properties is limited. For the most part, these properties are found east along M-89 near the City limits.

The newly annexed properties on the east end of the City should be developed in a planned unit development fashion, ensuring aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian and traffic sensitive developments. As a major gateway to the City, the east City limits side of M-89 should be a strong welcome and township delineation point.

Commercial and office parking areas should be well landscaped and signage should be given careful consideration. Building orientations should take into consideration their street presentation and every effort should be made to create shared drive access arrangements. Since the focus of commercial development is on the CBD, the following standards are necessary to help foster a favorable CBD environment, yet allow for other commercially zoned areas:

A. Development outside of the CBD may be appropriate and land zoned accordingly, if the following criteria are satisfied:

- Necessary land or buildings are not available within the downtown that would accommodate the use.
- The site is located where residential development will not be impaired or negatively affected.
- The development provides goods or services that are not, cannot, or should not be provided in the downtown.

B. Commercial development outside the CBD will meet the following criteria:

- Not be developed in a strip commercial fashion.
- Be located on M-89.
- Provide adequate building and parking setbacks, buffering for adjacent residential uses, have limited access points to the main street, be sensitive to natural features (woods, etc.), have moderate sized signs, and connected to public utilities.

Besides the current commercial and office designations, the only new locations for this type of development are on the east side of the City. The commercial property on the west side of the City, along M-89, should not be allowed to expand any further into the residential neighborhood.

Industrial

Otsego's industrial base brings diversified job opportunities, a strong tax base, and positive corporate civic support, although it is not immune to the overall decline seen in many communities throughout Michigan. While Parker, Otsego Paper, and Safari Technologies provide job opportunities to about one third of the total City population, the closing of Rock-Tenn resulted in loss of roughly 250 jobs. When the remaining industrial and commercial businesses, along with the school system are factored into the job base, one can easily see

why Otsego has such a balanced local economy. Some communities are predominately residential; some are predominately commercial with little industrial; some have more multi-family housing than single family housing; and then there are some, like Otsego, that seem to have the right mix of single to multi-family housing, commercial, and industrial activities.

Studies show that 80% of all community economic development activity comes in the form of existing industrial and commercial businesses expanding. This importance on Retention and Expansion should be key in the minds of City Officials. Efforts should be undertaken to focus on maintaining a diversified industrial base and on helping retain existing industries. Fostering a strong economic development base can be tricky. There may be some community members who would hate to see any City efforts towards helping local industry. After all, local industries have “all the money” and shouldn’t need any help. Successful communities realize the importance in fostering a healthy industrial relationship that is responsive to industrial needs, but that still maintains the balance in community quality of life issues. To this end, the City has since 2002 revised the Zoning Ordinance to provide additional flexibility, through special land uses and Planned Unit Developments, that is intended to encourage industrial development and reinvestment. Industrial development may include a variety of complementary uses that can be an asset to the developer and employer when attracting and retaining quality employees. The City itself has taken the steps to lead the way in this area by rezoning the former Rock-Tenn site to PUD. The Rock-Tenn area is now within the Planned Redevelopment area, which will be described below.

The Future Land Use Map shows several small areas of industrial growth for the City. Otsego Township has roughly 500 acres devoted to industrial development. If a market study were performed for the City of Otsego, it would show

the City’s percentage “hold” on the local and regional industrial base. Interestingly, what these studies show is if over a period of 5 or 10 years, during a regional economic growing period, that if the City held its own and had no gain and no loss in local jobs or industrial activity, that statistically, the community would have declined. In other words, due to surrounding communities adding to their industrial base, over a period of 5 to 10 years, they actually consume a larger percentage share of the local economy, thus weakening the City’s hold on the market. This statistical phenomenon is very important to commercial development, when a community wants to show what percentage they are capturing of the local market. Similarly, it is important to maintaining a healthy industrial economy. Certainly, the likelihood of declining industrial market share is greater now because Rock-Tenn has closed, but at the same time loss of industrial base is all too common throughout the state, and any amount of change is going to be to very dependent upon the sector of industry in comparative communities.

Lessons from all of this in order to maintain a healthy economy:

- 1) Retain existing industries through various means (this can be as simple as opening up the doors of communication);
- 2) Encourage expansion of local industry;
- 3) Prepare for local expansion through providing suitable and appropriate developable land; and
- 4) Inventory check local industrial utility and other support needs (trained workforce, quality schools, affordable and available housing, other supportive industries, appropriately sized water and sewer mains/capacity, appropriate truck routes, nearby commercial support and importantly community pride).

Otsego’s proximity to US-131 adds to the City’s ability to provide quality and ample industrial support. In addition to the City, Otsego Township’s industrial activities are primarily

focused on the east side of the City, both north and south of the Kalamazoo River. They also have one small pocket on the west side of town between 106th Avenue and M -89, with a major area of industrial land situated southeast of the City, just south of 102nd Avenue.

Several future land use objectives regarding industrial land use are as follows:

- 1) Nonconforming residential properties in the Industrial Districts should not be allowed variances or other provisions to encourage or enhance their sustenance. There are currently land conflicts between property on Helen Avenue that need to be addressed by making sure that the proper zoning conforms to the intended future use. All of the property south of River Street up to the Kalamazoo River is slated for Industrial, Public/Quasi Public or Planned Redevelopment activity. However, the City should not refrain from exploring other options that may come along given the downturn in the industrial economy of late.
- 2) Create a Planned Industrial Park - As a part of the Retention / Expansion efforts of the City, a Planned (possibly Certified) Industrial Park should be established. Properties should be identified that could be included in the Industrial Park.

Cautiously look at enhancing (not necessarily expanding) the industry east of Wilmott Street. These older industrial sites do not appear to be a problem, but future encroachments into the residential neighborhoods should not be allowed. In time, it maybe that the new Industrial Park could add to the opportunities of these east Wilmott Street industries.

Coordinate industrial activity with the Township, the County and other adjacent municipalities. The impact of losing another major industrial player to the area can have devastating effects on the City and surrounding community's economies.

Planned Redevelopment

The planned redevelopment area is a new designation intended to address the unique challenges of revitalizing the former Rock-Tenn industrial site and the neighborhoods surrounding it. While ownership changed numerous times throughout the history of the property, it had always been utilized as a production facility for various types of paper products. Due to the specific use of the premises and a decline in paper production facilities in the United States, the property has little chance for reuse in its current state.

The planned redevelopment area is currently zoned MPUD (Mixed Use Planned Unit Development). The MPUD district is designed to promote creative developments that contain a mix of uses in a layout that is pedestrian friendly and self-sustaining. MPUDs are primarily intended for reuse and redevelopment projects, and the former Rock-Tenn site is the perfect opportunity to show that the mixed-use concept can serve as a transitional land use and enhance both the economic and environmental vitality of the area. The goal is to attract high activity uses, including residential, commercial, and low-intensity industrial uses with high numbers of employees, that when put together will reinvigorate the neighborhood and provide substantial overall benefits to the community at large.

The existing neighborhoods east of the Rock-Tenn site within the PRA area are also prime locations for redevelopment. The PRA designation is broad enough to include rehabilitation of the existing neighborhood for single family use, or redevelopment to more intensive uses, such as multi-family, commercial, light-industrial, or mixed-use buildings.

Semi-Public and Public Facilities

Otsego's strength lies not merely in its residential, commercial and industrial development, but structurally by many of the

public and semi-public services, programs, sites and facilities:

Schools

The Otsego Public Schools System has two elementary schools, a middle and a high school within the City limits. Other area schools include a third Otsego Public elementary school, St. Margaret's School (Catholic), Peace Lutheran School and Otsego Baptist Academy. Although public schools are currently exempted by the State from local zoning controls, cooperative efforts and relationships should continue to jointly work for a high quality of life and public safety. School properties generally have a heavy impact on local streets at certain hours of the day. As industrial and school developments continue on the southwest side of town, the local road system should be carefully considered.

Library

The public library is located on the corner of Franklin and Farmer, but is hopeful to relocate due to site constraints. The existing site should remain for some other public or quasi public purpose.

Parks

The City's Recreation Plan provides extensive plans for the City's park system. Brookside, Memorial and Northside parks together have received over \$600,000 worth of updates over the past decade. As a supplement to the City's Recreation Plan, the City's original Riverfront Walkway Master Plan should be completed. A Riverfront walk connection should be made from North Side Park to Brookside Park. Now that the City has relocated their Department of Public Works to the north side of the Kalamazoo River, a portion of the property should be used for a pathway from Farmer Street to North Street, linking the bridges. The abandoned railway extending northwesterly out of town should also add to this pathway system. The linkages should not stop at the City limits. Future interlinking of the pathway system to the Township should also be fostered and

encouraged. The City should foster solid and well planned linkages between public/semi public facilities/services to commercial, industrial and residential uses.

Parks should be regularly checked for system improvements and updates. Local and state baseball/softball tournaments could be encouraged at Memorial Park by providing ball field lighting and through the lengthening of current ballfield diamonds. Skate park equipment should be considered at Northside Park.

Public Services

The completed relocation of the City's DPW building on the north side of the river has allowed the former site to be redeveloped as an area museum. Continued improvements to the museum site to add public amenities to the area should be encouraged.

Public service buildings and structures should fit into the character of the neighborhood. Buildings that are frequently accessed by the public should be attractive and inviting and contribute to the character of their surroundings. Public buildings near the CBD should especially contribute to the pedestrian character of that neighborhood and be public landmarks. Lift stations and equipment structures should be effectively screened, yet placed where they can be effectively policed and maintained.

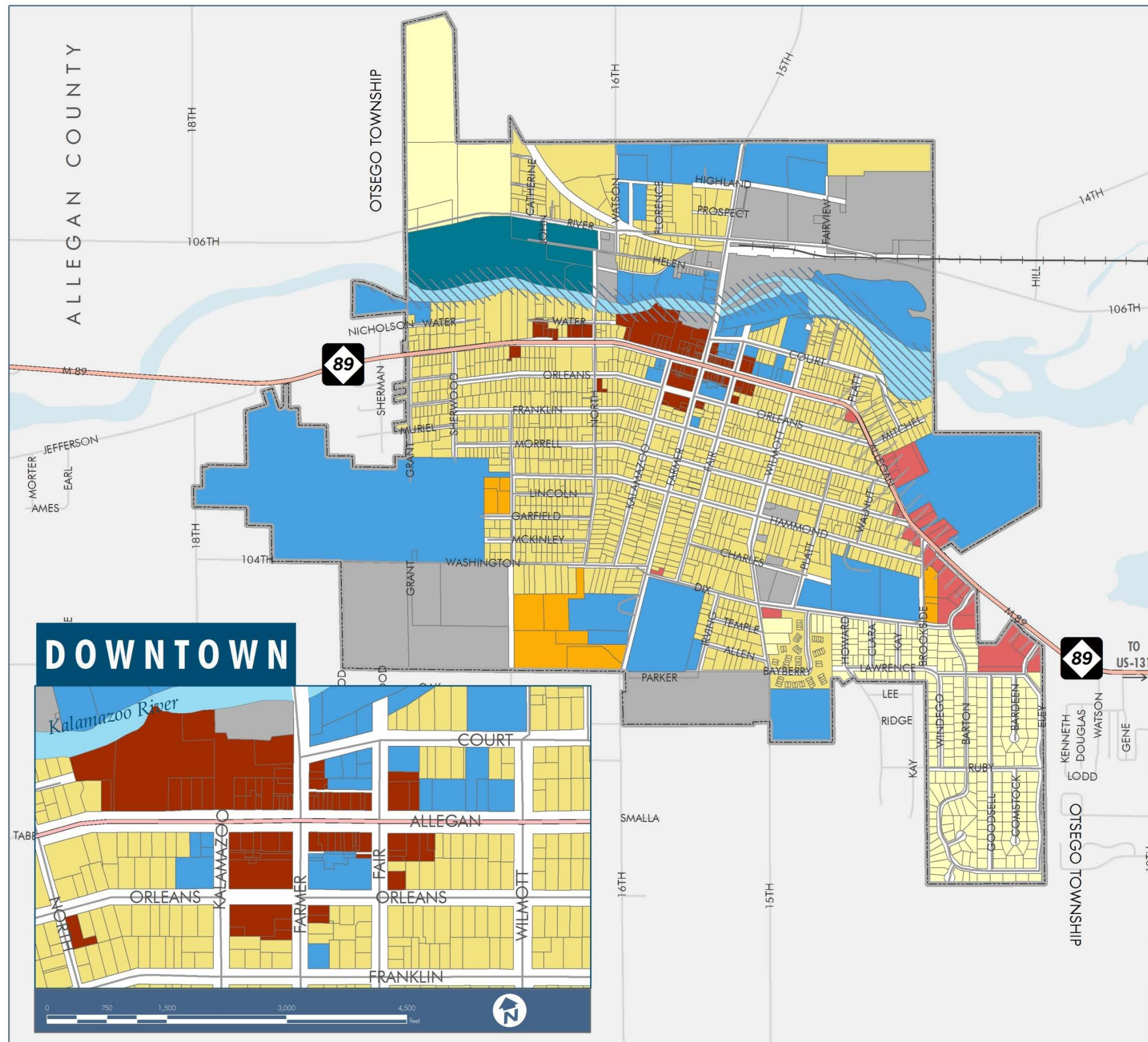
River Protection Overlay

The Kalamazoo River is an important resource to preserve and protect. A river protection overlay has been placed over the river and land immediately adjacent to the resource. The land areas immediately adjacent to the river may be regulated by a future riparian buffer zone or other zoning and land development restrictions or regulations to preserve the resource.

Commercial Corridor Overlay

Many issues and needs have been identified and associated with M-89. This overlay has

been placed on the segment of the roadway which serves as the entry to the City. Within this area, the City may consider revised sign regulations, access management standards, or architectural and design guidelines.



MAP 4 **FUTURE LAND USE** Master Plan City of Otsego Allegan County, MI

- City of Otsego boundary
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Central Business District
- Commercial
- Planned Redevelopment
- Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Commercial Corridor Overlay
- River Protection Overlay

November 27, 2013

0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 Feet

Sources: Michigan Geographic Data Library
Allegan County Equalization Department

LSL Planning
A SAFEbuilt Company

Zoning Plan

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) requires that a master plan include a “zoning plan” with an “explanation of how the land use categories on the further land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map” (MCL 125.3833).

The City is divided into 9 zoning districts and also includes one overlay zone, to regulate in a consistent and predictable manner. An

implementation element of this master plan includes amendments to the zoning ordinance to eliminate both redundancies and procedural issues that have been noted through application and review by the city.

The following table summarizes the land use designations and indicates how they relate to each of the zoning districts, with recommendations for zoning changes where appropriate.

Zoning Plan

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION	CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS
Low Density Residential	R-A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT. This Zoning District is characteristically a single-family housing area. While most of the city is serviced with utilities, the low density status is designed to preserve and protect those areas which have developed strictly as single-family detached units on separate lots. No further subdividing of single-family lots below the lot area specified herein shall be deemed desirable or contributory to the existing residential character. The dwelling unit density, however, shall still be at a sufficient scale to support utility system operation and maintenance costs.
Medium Density Residential	R-A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT. This Zoning District is characteristically a single-family housing area. While most of the city is serviced with utilities, the low density status is designed to preserve and protect those areas which have developed strictly as single-family detached units on separate lots. No further subdividing of single-family lots below the lot area specified herein shall be deemed desirable or contributory to the existing residential character. The dwelling unit density, however, shall still be at a sufficient scale to support utility system operation and maintenance costs.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION	CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS
	<p>R-B SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT SECTION. This zoning district encompasses some of the older localities of the city. The residential character is mainly urban, single-family homes of earlier construction on individual lots. Two-family homes and new duplexes are permitted here, but with controls as to location, site and density. The R-B District provides for some conversion of older, larger homes to two-family dwellings provided certain conditions for the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood are met.</p>
<p>High Density Residential</p>	<p>R-C TWO FAMILY AND MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT. The R-C District is intended for two family and multiple-family residential uses. The character of the District is urban in appearance with moderate multiple-family densities as found in single-family semi-attached (row housing), garden apartments and townhouse apartments. Specialized or group housing and senior citizens housing is also permitted by special land use permit. All use in this District shall meet site design standards and requirements, as provided herein, in order to relieve any and all potentially adverse impacts.</p>
	<p>MHP MANUFACTURED HOME PARK DISTRICT. For the preservation of the interests of various types of residential developments which should be permitted in every community and for the protection of the residents of any manufactured home park development, these regulations are considered to be minimum standards to be applied to all manufactured home park developments in the City of Otsego. All manufactured home parks shall comply with the applicable requirements of Act 419, P.A. 1987 as amended, provided further that said developments meet the standards and conditions and all other provisions as herein established.</p>
<p>Office and Commercial</p>	<p>PO PROFESSIONAL OFFICE DISTRICT. The Professional Office District is designed to accommodate various types of office uses performing administrative, professional, and personal services. These are typically small office buildings which can serve as a transitional use between the more intensive uses of land such as major thoroughfares or commercial districts and the less intensive uses of land use as single- or two-family residential.</p>

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION	CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS
	C-1 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SECTION 10.1 PURPOSE This District is a general retail business and service district designed for the purpose of providing comparison and convenience shopping to meet the needs of the community. Specialty uses are not encouraged in this District, but suggested for the CBD District.
Central Business District	CBD CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT. This District refers to the central part of the city where downtown shopping, government offices, general services, civic and cultural uses are located. The CBD is characterized by its "downtown" appearance and pedestrian scale (people walking from place to place, storefront windows displays, etc.). It is the intent of the City to promote, preserve and enhance this central character and its viability in accordance with the development goals and policies of the City's comprehensive planning program.
Industrial	GI GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT. Industry is intended to include light manufacturing, assembling and finishing activities which have minimal or no nuisance potential to the surrounding nonindustrial areas. The preferred form of future industrial development is the industrial park concept. Within such a development the overall character may be a combination of light industrial uses supplemented by research and office facilities. In all cases, however, local, state, and federal environmental regulations and constraints must be observed.
Planned Redevelopment	Planned Unit Development District
Semi-Public and Public Facilities	Not applicable.
River Protection Overlay	FH FLOOD HAZARD AREA (OVERLAY). It is the intent of this Chapter to significantly reduce hazards to persons and damage to property as a result of flood conditions and to comply with the provisions and requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.
Commercial Corridor Overlay	None at present time.

Conclusions

One of the principal benefits of having an adopted Master Plan is the foundation it

provides for zoning, land use and policy decisions. Just as the Master Plan is the policy guide for land use, zoning is the principal legal enforcement tool. The two should work in

conjunction with one another. The Master Plan is not an ordinance which is meant to replace zoning.

The future land use map should not look like the existing land use map or zoning map, nor should they be used in the same manner. The future land use map is an illustration of long-range land use patterns of the City based on the goals and strategies outlined in the Plan. Zoning districts should ideally facilitate the goals and strategies of the Plan to create the City's desired objectives.

As the Planning Commission and City Council are faced with making zoning and land development decisions (e.g., rezoning, site plan review, special use permit, planned unit development, plat reviews, etc.) the relationship of those requests to the Master Plan recommendations should be a primary consideration. A request to construct a commercial use in an area planned for residential development, for example, would be contrary to the Plan and should not be approved, unless the Plan is determined to be in error for that particular location or conditions having changed significantly since the Plan was adopted. It is essential to keep the plan up-to-date and relevant to current conditions by reviewing the plan frequently. If so, the Plan can remain a reliable planning tool.

Chapter 6

Implementation

This chapter outlines the actions needed to implement the recommendations of this master plan.

Project Priorities

The actions within the implementation strategy are listed with a “priority number” as follows:

Priority 1

Projects are those that should be given immediate and concentrated effort. These are the first projects that should be commenced after this master plan has been adopted. Any preliminary steps that must be taken to implement the action (such as seeking funding, changes in local ordinances, etc.) should be commenced immediately. Those Priority 1 projects that have a longer time horizon should be revisited on an as-needed basis and should be incorporated into other applicable long-term planning programs, such as a capital improvements plan.

Priority 2

Projects are those that are necessary to implement the plan, but either depend upon commencement or completion of Priority 1 projects, or do not have the same urgency of Priority 1 projects. Once commenced, however, these projects should be considered important and should be pursued until completion.

Priority 3

Projects are those that implement elements of this plan, but are not urgent and can be delayed for a longer period of time. These projects are more susceptible to budgetary constraints.

Some projects within the strategy do not have a specified timing period because they are based on less predictable factors such as land availability, etc.

All of the recommended projects are subject to established Township policies and plans, budget issues and priorities, or other City policies.

Implementation Strategy

Action/Goal Addressed	Responsibility	Timing	Priority
1. Create a river area management plan to consider land use adjacent to the Kalamazoo River to determine best development practices, including a river protection buffer (overlay district), to maintain water quality after environmental remediation efforts are completed and recreational opportunities. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
2. Continue coordination with state and federal agencies for dam removal and the resulting recreational activities. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	City Commission, Administration	Year 1	1
3. Assess potential low impact development regulations and ensure development of land carried out in a sensitive manner. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
4. Include open space requirements that focus on the protection of wetlands, drainage network, valuable woodland areas and usable open space. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation, Goal #3- Residential Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
5. Investigate a wetland buffer ordinance requiring protection and buffering. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
6. Investigate a tree protection, buffering and landscaping ordinance. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation, Goal #3 Residential	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2

Action/Goal Addressed	Responsibility	Timing	Priority
7. Create literature, posters and implement City-wide recycling events. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
8. Create a conservation subdivision ordinance that allows a density bonus or other incentives for open space preservation. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
9. Identify and protect groundwater recharge areas. Goal #1- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
10. Secure funds to develop a refined Parks and Recreation Plan identifying recreational enhancement opportunities. Include the school district in the planning effort. Goal #2- Parks and Recreation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
11. Work with residential developers to set aside suitable portions of land for neighborhood parks and road easements for pedestrian/bicycle paths/sidewalks and amenities. Review and revise Zoning and Land Development Regulations as they relate to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connectivity. Goal #2- Parks and Recreation, Goal #3- Residential Development	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
12. Encourage rural neighbors to develop reciprocal agreements for cross-country skiing and hiking trails along the River and throughout the City. Goal #2- Parks and Recreation	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
13. Prepare a pathways master plan to identify key routes, connections and other non-motorized accommodations. Goal #2- Parks and Recreation	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2

Action/Goal Addressed	Responsibility	Timing	Priority
14. Provide linkages to recreational trail networks and expand the system to connect recreational areas throughout the City. Investigate key linkages on public and private land. Acquire land or easements to provide linkages. Goal #2- Parks and Recreation	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
15. Seek methods to encourage housing rehabilitation in the City. Develop programs and identify funding sources, property owner educational opportunities and encourage maintenance of areas identified by the City. Goal #3- Residential Development	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
16. Review ordinance as it pertains to buffers and revise as necessary. Goal #3- Residential Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
17. Research the viability of creating a historic overlay district in areas where significant historical elements exist and areas where there is a community desire for preservation. Goal #3- Residential Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 4-5	3
18. Encourage and incentivize second floor residential development over downtown businesses. Review zoning ordinance and revise as necessary. Goal #3- Residential Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 1	1
19. Investigate a rental code enforcement and inspection program and determine the appropriate level of regulation. Goal #3- Residential Development	City Commission, Administration,	Year 1	1
20. Prepare an access management plan and highway commercial overlay district to address access management, better commercial design and aesthetically pleasing development. Goal #4 Downtown Enhancement and Commercial Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2

Action/Goal Addressed	Responsibility	Timing	Priority
21. Prepare an infrastructure assessment for future planned commercial and industrial areas. Goal #4 Downtown Enhancement and Commercial Development, Goal #5 Industrial Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
22. Work with Main Street, DDA, developers, etc. to enhance aesthetics and to promote downtown identity. Actively recruit and acquire quality anchor stores for the downtown core. Goal #4 Downtown Enhancement and Commercial Development	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 1	1
23. Identify, promote and preserve for present and future generations, historic sites, architectural items, and buildings determined to have significant historic value within the City and encourage the placement of historic signs and/or markers designating historic areas and cultural resources. Goal #4 Downtown Enhancement and Commercial Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
24. Assess industrial performance standards to prevent site related problems often encountered with industrial uses. Goal #5 Industrial Development	Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2

Action/Goal Addressed	Responsibility	Timing	Priority
<p>25. Prepare an access management plan and implement access management strategies along M-89 throughout the City in order to identify and eliminate conflicting and deteriorating land uses, enhance vehicular efficiency and safety, and provide safe, convenient pedestrian areas. Review street standards and prepare and implement site development standards in order to minimize traffic congestion and pedestrian and vehicular hazards, prepare and implement site development standards that address this issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic control measures such as turning lanes, traffic signalization, service drives, curb cut design and location standards. • Increased building and parking setbacks along major roadways. • Functional classification of roadways. • The relationship of land use to road capacity and function. • The interconnection/upgrading of existing and future public roads. • The need and feasibility for alternate routes to reduce local traffic on major arterials and on other local roads. • Require the shared use of commercial driveways and access roads. • Limit the number and spacing of driveways along principal arterials. • Encourage or require if critical to public safety, the use of alleys or rear service drives. <p>#6- Infrastructure - Roads, Private Roads and Utilities</p>	<p>City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p>1</p>

Action/Goal Addressed	Responsibility	Timing	Priority
26. Work with the Otsego Public Works Department, Otsego Township, Allegan County Road Commission (where appropriate) and the Michigan Department of Transportation to design and construct non-motorized paths/lanes on newly constructed or reconstructed roads, linking population centers (e.g. subdivisions, etc.) with recreational, commercial, and other local amenities. Goal #2- Parks and Recreation, #6- Infrastructure - Roads, Private Roads and Utilities	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 2-3	2
27. Coordinate with the Otsego Public Works Department and Michigan Department of Transportation on priority road maintenance issues. #6- Infrastructure - Roads, Private Roads and Utilities	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 1	1
28. Identify the intersections along M-89 that are the highest priority for safety improvements and develop strategies to correct the traffic issues at those intersections. Explore funding mechanisms to finance these infrastructure upgrades. #6- Infrastructure - Roads, Private Roads and Utilities	City Commission, Planning Commission, Administration	Year 1	1