

uses in the corridor. Rather than focusing on a single land use for study, examining industrial development as it relates to the land and to other uses in the area will render a more valuable picture of the situation.

### **Corridor Overview**

In the earlier half of this century, Grand River Avenue was the main route linking Detroit and Lansing. Several small towns and settlements were established along this major transportation corridor including the New Hudson hamlet. New Hudson served both travelers on the Detroit-Lansing route, as well as residents of the Township. Aside from development along Grand River Avenue and in South Lyon, the remainder of the Township remained predominantly agricultural or vacant.

The construction of Interstate 96 in the late 1950's replaced Grand River Avenue as the main link between Lansing and Detroit while simultaneously making the Township more easily accessible and attractive for developers.

The freeway produced some unexpected impacts along Grand River Avenue because of inadequate drainage. Certain parcels that were at one time farmed became wetlands.

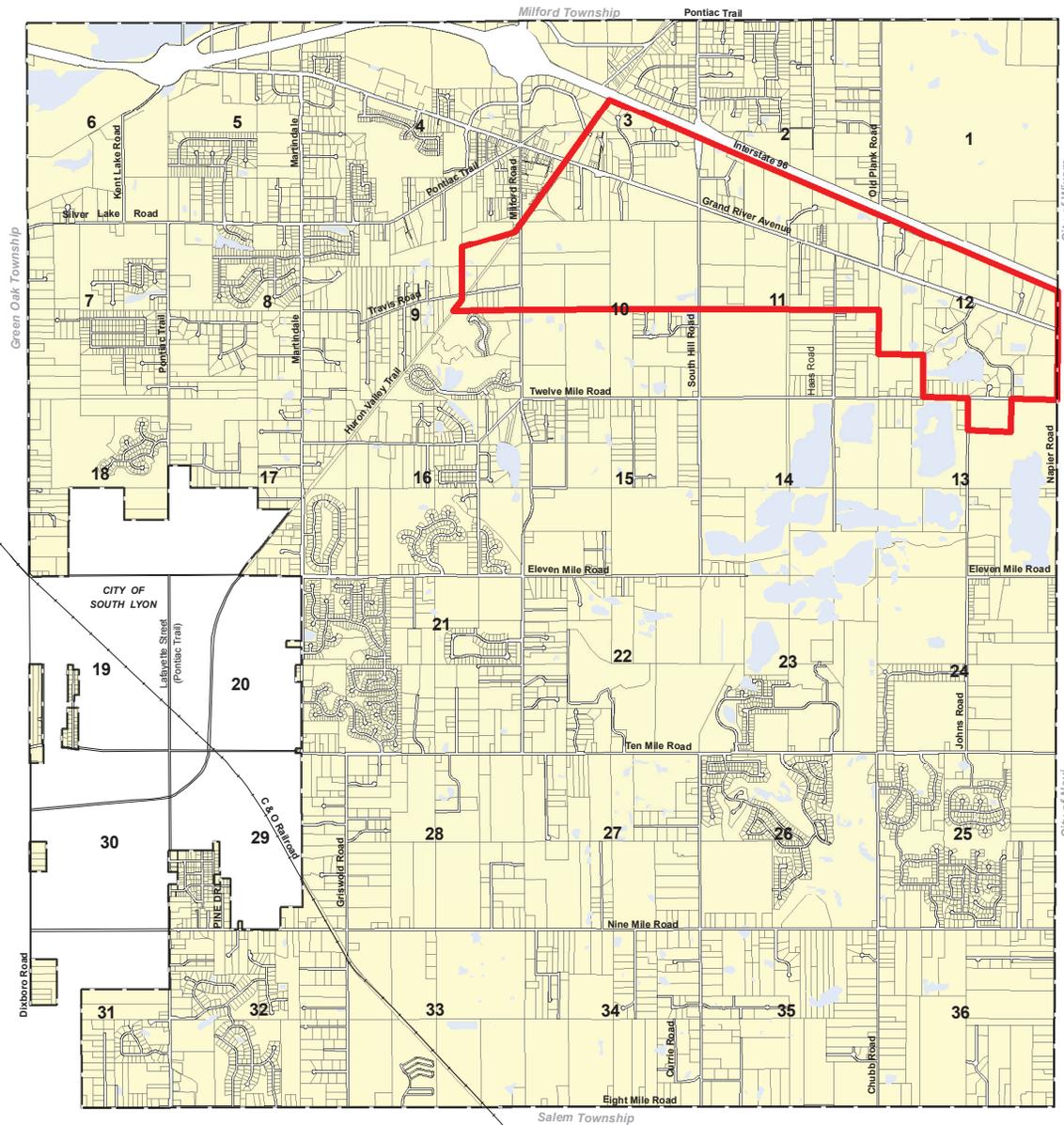
From a regional perspective, Lyon Township is located at the western edge of a regional growth pattern in southeastern Michigan. The leading edge of westward growth in the metropolitan area has reached Lyon Township, as evidenced by a 26.0 percent increase in population in Lyon Township between 2000 and 2009. The Grand River corridor is certain to experience continuous change as the leading edge of regional development continues to move west.

### **General Land Use Patterns**

The general pattern of land use in the Grand River Avenue corridor has been molded by several key parameters: the predominance of agriculture, the early development of the corridor as a major transportation route, patterns of regional growth, and the introduction of public water and sanitary sewer utilities.

Agricultural land use once was a dominant land use in the corridor, occupying large tracts of land. Agricultural parcels still exist on the Walbridge-Aldinger site, but a mix of new uses developed over the years as Grand River Avenue emerged as a major transportation corridor. The mixed use development along Grand River Avenue was accomplished by dividing the larger parcels, producing a fragmented land use pattern in some areas.

More recently, as a result of regional growth, industrial land use has emerged as the prevailing land use along Grand River, east of New Hudson. Most of the new industrial uses are located within industrial parks that have been developed due to the availability of municipal water and sanitary sewer.



# Map 8 Grand River Avenue Industrial Corridor

Charter Township of Lyon,  
Oakland County, Michigan

Base Map Source: Oakland County, GIS Utility, 2003



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Today, the Grand River corridor is characterized by a mixture of land uses, including vacant, residential, industrial, agricultural, and commercial uses (see Map 9). Table 6-2 summarizes existing land use in the Grand River corridor. A description of each of the land use categories follows the table.

**Table 6-2**  
**EXISTING LAND USE – GRAND RIVER AVE.**  
**CORRIDOR (2010)**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area (acres)</u>	<u>Area (percent)</u>
Agriculture	551.5	28.3
Single Family Residential	122.6	6.3
Commercial & Office	77.3	4.0
Industrial	661.4	34.0
Public/Quasi-Public	11.0	0.6
Vacant	376.9	19.4
Open Water	33.9	1.7
Right-of-Way	112.1	5.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,946.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: McKenna Associates

- **Agricultural and Vacant Land.** As indicated in Table 6-2, agricultural and vacant lands are still prevalent, occupying over 28.3 percent of the total land area. The largest concentration of agricultural and vacant lands is on property owned by Waldbridge-Aldinger, on the south side of Grand River Avenue, east of Milford Road.
- **Residential Land Use.** Residential is no longer the predominant "developed" land use in the Grand River corridor. Whereas residential once occupied 350 acres (1990 plan), single family residential land uses now account for 122.6 acres, or about 6.3 percent of the total land area. Most of the residential uses are on Haas Road, although there are a couple of single family uses remaining on Grand River Avenue.
- **Industrial Land Use.** The 1990 land use survey revealed that 257 acres of land in the Grand River corridor was used for industrial. Industrial uses now account for 661.4 acres, or 34.0 percent of the total land area. There are three types of industrial operations along Grand River Avenue:
  1. Older industrial operations are located on small parcels, primarily in the vicinity of New Hudson. Many of these operations suffer from cramped site conditions, inadequate site design, and deteriorated buildings.
  2. In the 1990's, modern industrial facilities were constructed on more spacious parcels. These modern facilities, such as Pure-Pak, Inc., raised the level of industrial development in the corridor. Due to a lack of public utilities at the time of their

construction, these individual businesses located on separate parcels rather than in industrial parks.

3. Since water and sanitary sewer facilities have been made available in the Grand River corridor, industrial parks have been developed in Lyon Township. New industrial uses in these parks account for a large amount of new industrial development in the Township since 2000 but industrial entities continue to locate on large, vacant parcels with frontage on Grand River.

- **Commercial and Office Land Use.** The commercial and office land use category includes retail, service, office and restaurant uses. These uses occupy 77.3 acres, or 4.0 percent of the total land area in the corridor. There are two concentrations of commercial use along the corridor, at the extreme west end, and at the east end (Brainer's Greenhouse). The primary office use is Blue Crosse Blue Shield.
- **Public and Quasi-Public Land Use.** Public and quasi-public uses occupy 11 acres of land along the corridor. The primary such use is the Township well site, on the east side of South Hill Road, South of Grand River Avenue.
- **Road Right-of-Way.** Road right-of-way accounts for 5.7 percent of the total land area. Grand River Avenue is included, but I-96 is not included in the right-of-way tabulation.

In summary, the predominant trend in the Grand River corridor is the emergence of industrial development and the corresponding decrease in the amount of residential, vacant, and agricultural land use. There remains large amounts of agricultural and vacant lands, on which industrial development is planned.

### Land Use Issues

There are certain key issues that have had, and will continue to have, a substantial impact on development of the Grand River corridor. These issues include zoning, wetlands, soils, and obsolescence of older uses.

**Existing Zoning.** The zoning classification of land -- particularly vacant land -- within the corridor will determine the land use patterns that emerge. Table 6-3 indicates the amount of available vacant acreage within each zoning district in the Grand River corridor.

Three zoning districts account for over 95 percent of the vacant land in the Grand River Avenue corridor: I-1 Light, I-2 General Industrial and R-1.0 Residential-Agricultural. The zoning classification of vacant land contrasts with the existing land use summary. Whereas only 34 percent of the total land is currently used for industrial purposes, over 78 percent of the vacant land in the corridor is zoned for industrial use.