Another industrial need is land that can accommodate warehousing and automated distribution. Many companies are closing down older warehouses that rely primarily on non-automated inventory control.

Although the new distribution centers are not labor intensive, the automation equipment is expensive, providing an excellent property tax base. The most serious negative feature associated with warehousing and distribution centers is heavy truck traffic. Warehousing and distribution centers can be accommodated in the I-2 district.

- **Public Policies**. There is a strong relationship between public policies and the ability to successfully operate a business or industry. Public policies with the greatest impact on industry are reflected in adopted planning and zoning standards. Lyon Township's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance are supportive of quality industrial development.

  One measure of "quality industry" is based on consistency with the Township environmental policies. Residents place a high value on protection of the Township's natural resources, including wetlands, woods, and ground and surface water. Groundwater protection goals are of particular importance with respect to industrial development because of the following considerations:

  1. Studies have shown that urbanization typically increases pollutant export to surface and groundwater by at least an order of magnitude over pre-development levels.

  2. Groundwater contamination is typically related to the storage, use and disposal of hazardous substances, including solvents, petroleum based products, and chemicals.

  3. If a land use is in an unsewered or unpaved area, the number of pathways of contamination is greater than when sewers are available and storage and vehicle maneuvering areas are paved.

  4. Land use activities that typically pose the greatest threat to groundwater quality are classified as "industrial" or "commercial."

Grand River Avenue Industrial Corridor

An intensive examination of industrial development within the context of the Grand River Avenue corridor follows. For the purposes of this chapter, the corridor includes generally the area bounded by I-96 on the north and Twelve Mile Road on the south, from the Huron Valley trail to Napier Road (see Map 8). These boundaries also encompass a portion of the New Hudson hamlet.

There are two compelling reasons for this in-depth analysis. First, the Township's primary industrial district lies within the Grand River Avenue corridor. An analysis of most new industrial development in the Township can essentially be accomplished by focusing on the Grand River corridor. Second, there is a complex mix of industrial, commercial and residential

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.