

- The Walbridge-Aldinger site is one of the largest vacant parcels of industrially-zoned land in the region. This parcel will become increasingly valuable as other industrial properties in adjoining communities are built upon.
- The transition from an industrially-based to a service-based economy provides an opportunity to develop high tech research, industry-service-office, or other quasi-industrial districts, instead of plain “light industry” or “general industry” districts. The service segment of the regional economy will experience the greatest level of growth future.
- By broadening the definition of “industry,” the opportunity exists to tap into the growth of the service-oriented and knowledge-intensive economy. Communities that have already focused attention on this part of the economy have generated high paying professional/technical jobs in occupations that require a college education or specialized post-secondary technical training. The benefits of these jobs in the local economy is felt in residential neighborhoods and schools. High-tech infrastructure such as broadband or DSL help to attract these types of industries.

### Industrial Development Potential

Broad shifts in the economy will affect industrial development in the Township. The outlook for industrial growth is affected by other market demand for industrial sites, residents’ opinions regarding industrial growth, zoning patterns, vacant land availability, adequacy of the public infrastructure, and so forth. An examination of these considerations follows:

- **Relationship to Other Industrial Districts.** Since development has occurred near the major interchanges at I-275 and US-23, the leading edge of development has pushed closer to Lyon Township’s borders. As land closest to the major interchanges gets used, land that is farther away -- including industrial land in Lyon Township -- will be in greater demand.
- **Support Services.** With the development of Lyon Towne Center, Lyon Township offers a range of commercial and support services near the industrial district. Accessibility to the Towne Center from the industrial district has been improved with the opening of the Lyon Center Drive – East extension in late 2009.
- **Transportation.** The primary industrial location determinant is convenient access to freeway transportation. Lyon Township is located in a strategic location with good access to I-96. The Township is midway between the I-275/I-96 and US-23/I-96 interchanges, providing excellent access to the rest of Oakland County, Ann Arbor, Lansing, and Flint.

The lack of air cargo services, rail, or water transportation along Grand River Avenue is not considered an impediment since competing industrial land in nearby communities lacks the same transportation services. In the long term, the inadequacies of the local road network, which was designed to serve a rural population, may impede continued development. For example, south Hill and Hass Roads could serve as collector roads to feed industrial or research-oriented traffic to Grand River but are not in a condition to do so today.

Traffic impact is one drawback to service-oriented businesses. In contrast with manufacturing, high-tech and research type operations are labor intensive. Thus, they generate much more automobile traffic. Light industry generates about 52.4 vehicle trips per acre per day; in contrast, research businesses housed in an office environment may generate up to 276 trips per acre per day.

If all of the developable industrially-zoned land in the Grand River corridor was developed for light industry or research-office use, Lyon Township roads would have to accommodate more than 50,000 more trips per day.

The opening of the Lyon Center Drive – East extension and roundabout in late 2009 will go a long way toward accommodating this traffic. Future planned improvements to the Grand River/Pontiac Trail/Milford Road intersection will also improve traffic conditions.

- **Housing.** At one time in the recent past, Lyon Township was viewed as lacking a variety of housing. This is no longer viewed as an impediment to industrial growth, because of the housing construction that has taken place in the last several years. There are now several housing choices for prospective residents of the Township.
- **Land Use Relationships.** Industries generally prefer locations where land uses are segregated. There is concern when residential development is nearby because residents may object to noise, trucks and other industrial impacts. Corporations hesitate to locate on sites where longevity on the site or opportunities for growth are limited.

In the past, the Township has strived to incorporate “transitional land use planning” in the industrial corridor. This concept provides for intermediate-intensive land uses as a buffer between industrial districts and residential districts. In the Grand River Avenue corridor, this could be accomplished by separating the industry from nearby residential districts by office, research, or other less intensive land uses.

- **Utilities.** The Township has developed public water and sanitary sewer utilities to service the Grand River corridor and other portions of the Township. The sanitary sewer master plan calls for all areas of the Township to eventually be serviced by sanitary sewer. One of the most significant impediments to development previously in Lyon Township was the inability to find land that could support a septic system. Clay soils and a high water table are prevalent throughout the industrial corridor. The utilities for the Grand River corridor were financed through special assessment districts.
- **Industrial Needs.** Two industrial needs that are difficult to meet in most communities are outdoor storage and warehousing. It is increasingly difficult to find sites where outdoor storage is permitted. Construction companies, landscape contractors, mechanical contractors, and other industrial concerns need sites in convenient locations where outside storage is permitted. Due to a 2010 zoning amendment, outside storage can be accommodated in both the I-1 and I-2 districts.

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