

Master Plan

Village of Sanford, Michigan



Updated April, 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Sanford is a small village on the banks of Midland County's only lake and the Tittabawassee River. It offers the charm and serenity of rural living within a short drive of employment and shopping opportunities in the much larger Midland urban area.

Despite the community's obvious attractions, Sanford has not been faced with the growth pressures that confront so many similar communities across the State. This very likely can be attributed to the lack of public sanitary sewer within the Village. Despite excellent access, bountiful recreation amenities, and the rural atmosphere so prized by so many, its inadequate infrastructure has resulted in a very modest growth rate over the years.

This Plan provides a profile of Sanford and examines issues such as the lack of sewer. It charts a course for the future of the community based on certain assumptions and goals. The Plan is intended to serve as a policy guide for the Village officials to use in making future land use decisions.

The original Plan was a community effort. According to the 2006 Plan, there were several well attended meetings to discuss issues, concerns, assets, and needs. The results reflect the direction set by the 2006 Village Council and a committed group of citizens who actively participated in the planning process for several months.

2014PROGRAM UPDATE

The Sanford Village Council, recognizing the changing needs of the community as well as the accomplishments of various portions of the previous Master Plan, saw the need to update the 2006 village of Sanford Master Plan. During the early part of 2014 the Council re-visited many of the steps outlines in the previous plan, verifying the appropriateness of the outlines Goals and Policies (page) and developed a Specific Action Program of Capitol Improvements (page) for the near future. Upon incorporation of these

actions and the updating of general information the Village Council was able to re-adopt the revised Sanford Master Plan for use in the future.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Community Character

Population

Sanford Village has the smallest population of any community in Midland County. Between 2000 and 2010, Sanford's population declined by 8.9% and Midland County's average population declined 0.5% for the same period. Lincoln Township, Sanford's neighbor to the east, experienced the largest numerical and percent increase in population of all neighboring municipalities between 2000 and 2010 at 8.7%.

TABLE 1 Population Comparison with Neighboring Jurisdictions

COMMUNITY	2010(3)	% Change 2000-2010	2000(2)	% CHANGE 1990-2000	1990	%CHANGE 1980-1990
Sanford Village	859	-8.9%	943	6.1	889	2.9
Coleman City	1,243	-4.1%	1,296	4.8	1,237	-13.1
Midland City	41,863	0.4%	41,685	10.2	37,819	2.1
Edenville Twp.	2,551	0.9%	2,528	6.8	2,367	16.8
Homer Twp.	4,009	2.2%	3,924	-7.3	4,235	-5.4
Hope Twp.	1,361	5.8%	1,286	5.4	1,220	-2.3
Jerome Twp.(1)	4,796	-1.9%	4,888	4.5	4,470	7.2
Lee Twp.	4,315	-2.2%	4,411	9.8	4,017	20.8
Lincoln Twp.	2,474	8.7%	2,277	26	1,807	10
Midland County	83,629	-0.5%	84,039	9.6	75,651	2.8
(1) Includes the Village of Sanford						
(2) U.S. Census and 2003 Midland County Comprehensive Plan						
(3) Source: http://www.Michigan.gov/						

Age

Overall, age distribution of Sanford Village's population is consistent with that of Midland County. The proportion of seniors (65+) living in the Village (16.2%) yet is consistent with Midland County's average (14.8%). The Village has a median age of 43.6. Lincoln has the largest proportion of persons age 65 and over 18.9%, while Home Township has the lowest (14.7%).

Table 2 AGE GROUP COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS

2010

Community	Age Groups (Number and %)					
	Under 5	5-19	20-44	45-64	65 & Over	Median Age
Sanford Village	29 (3.4)	183 (21.3)	238 (27.6)	270 (31.5)	139 (16.2)	43.6
Coleman City	85 (6.8)	269 (21.6)	385 (30.9)	289 (23.1)	215 (17.4)	36.4
Midland City	2,493 (6.0)	8,651 (20.7)	13,195 (31.6)	10,979 (26.2)	6,545 (15.5)	38.3
Edenville Twp.	122 (4.8)	482 (18.9)	660 (25.9)	898 (35.2)	389 (15.3)	45.3
Homer Twp.	201 (5.0)	819 (20.4)	1,155 (28.9)	1,237 (30.9)	597 (14.7)	42.3
Hope Twp.	67 (4.9)	238 (17.5)	348 (25.7)	472 (34.7)	236 (17.3)	46.2
Jerome Twp.(1)	209 (4.4)	964 (20.1)	1,283 (26.8)	1,557 (32.4)	783 (16.3)	44.3
Lee Twp.	267 (6.2)	935 (21.6)	1,388 (32.2)	1250 (28.9)	475 (11.1)	38.6

Lincoln Twp.	110 (4.4)	502 (20.2)	645 (26.1)	751 (30.4)	466 (18.9)	44.4
Midland County	4,684 (5.6)	17,590 (21.0)	24,925 (29.8)	24,046 (28.8)	12,384 (14.8)	40.4

(1) Includes the Village of Sanford.

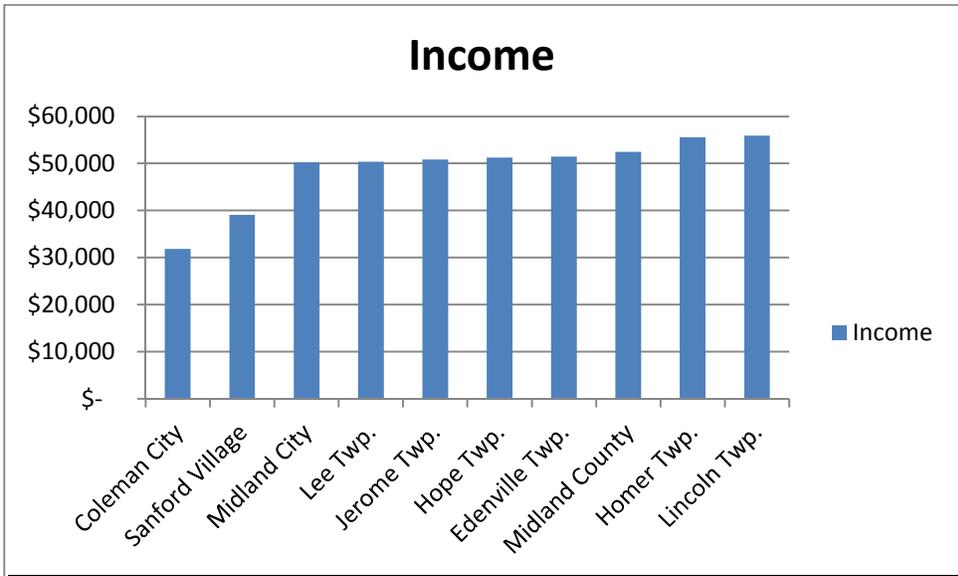
Source: <http://www.uscensus.gov/>

Income

Sanford’s median household income (\$39,063) is lower than that of Midland County (\$44,181). Nonetheless, Sanford’s median household income is lower than neighboring townships of Edenville, Hope, Jerome, and Lincoln. Lincoln Township has the largest median household income (\$55,938) and Coleman City has the lowest (\$31,875).

Figure 1: Median Household Income Comparison with Neighboring Jurisdictions 2010

(source: <http://www.Michigan.gov/>)



Employment

The largest single occupation for the village's residents is in the managerial and professional category. Sanford has 1.2% more of its working residents employed in sales and office than Midland County's average.

TABLE 3

OCCUPATION COMPARISON OF SANFORD VILLAGE AND MIDLAND COUNTY 2010

(source: <http://www.Michigan.gov/>)

Govt. Unit	Managerial & Professional	Sales and Office	Service	Natural Resources Construction and Maintenance	Production, Transportation & Material Moving
Sanford Village	28.6%	23.9%	26.5%	8.8%	12.2%
Midland County	38.6%	22.7%	17.3%	10%	11.4%

Housing

Housing values in Sanford are relatively low in comparison with Midland County. The median value in village was median that was nearly \$111,800 in 2010 census while the county median is \$130,200. While nearly 68% of all homes in the County were valued over \$100,000 in 2010, only about 55% of Sanford's homes fell into this category.

FIGURE 3

SANFORD VILLAGE AND MIDLAND COUNTY HOUSING VALUE COMPARISON

Sanford's relatively low housing value can be explained, at least in part, by the age of the housing stock. Over 51% of Sanford's homes were built between 1940 and 1969. New residential construction (since 1970) totals 159 units (over 38%). The completion of a village sewer system should positively affect the building program.

Edenville Township has the newest housing stock, with approximately 67% of its units having been constructed between 1970 and 2000. Coleman, on the other hand, has the oldest housing stock. Twenty-eight percent of its units were constructed prior to 1940 and nearly sixty-four percent were built prior to 1970.

TABLE 5

HOUSING AGE COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS

COMMUNITY	YEAR CONSTRUCTED		
	1939 or EARLIER	1940-1969	1970-MARCH 2000
Sanford Village	10.4%	51.4%	38.2%
Coleman City	28.5%	34.4%	37.1%
Midland City	8.6%	45.4%	46.0%
Edenville Twp.	4.1%	28.2%	66.7%
Homer Twp.	11.4%	40.5%	51.9%
Hope Twp.	12.0%	37.5%	51.9%
Jerome Twp.	4.8%	40.9%	54.3%
Lee Twp.	5.1%	21.4%	73.5%
Lincoln Twp.	5.0%	26.6%	68.4%
Midland County	9.3%	38.4%	52.3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and Midland County Comprehensive Plan

PHYSICAL PROFILE

Land Use

The Village of Sanford is a compact community which rims the southern end of Sanford Lake. It not only enjoys the many unique recreational opportunities previously described in this document, but has great transportation access, as well.

Sanford is primarily a residential community. Single family homes are found in two concentrations — south/southeast of Sanford Lake and west of Sanford Lake. Industrial development, which might be expected as a result of excellent freeway access, is almost non-existent. There is a single industrial facility located in the northwest corner of the Village adjacent to an interchange. Beyond this one industry, other businesses in the community are small commercial enterprises spread out along Saginaw Road and Meridian Road.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Public/quasi-public and recreation account for the largest category of developed land use in the Village. More acreage is devoted to these uses than any other form of land use. However, of the approximate 1.5 sq. miles of area within the Village boundaries, about 56% of the total area is either water or vacant land.

Access

The northern boundary of the Village is Peterson Drive, one street above U.S.10, which links Sanford with the City of Midland and provides direct connections to two major north/south highways — U.S. 27 and I-75. Access to U.S.10 is available from two interchanges, one on the northeast corner of the Village and the other on the northwest.

Two major surface streets provide access through and within the Village. Saginaw Road is a major east/west arterial and Meridian Road which becomes M-30 on the north side of U.S.10 is a north/south arterial.

Topography

Topographic elevations for the Village and surrounding area range from a high of approximately 650 feet above sea level in the northwest to a low point of 605 feet, along the Tittabawassee River just south of the Village. The Tittabawassee River flows southerly through the south section of the Village. The Salt River flows west to east, parallel to U.S. 10 and empties into the Tittabawassee at the southwest corner of Sanford's municipal boundary.

Sanford Lake was created by damming the Tittabawassee River within the Village. The lake has a surface area of about 1,250 acres and is about 10 miles long. Normal surface elevation for the lake is 631 feet above sea level.

Geology

The effects of the last glacial period can be seen in the Village and surrounding areas. Surface erosion agents have altered the area to some extent. General slopes are from west to east with drainage flowing to the Tittabawassee River. Most of the south part of the Village, lying between Saginaw Road and the Tittabawassee River is within the flood plain and generally unsuited to development.

Soils

Soils in Sanford, like much of Midland County, are the result of sedimentation of a glacial lake which once covered the area. The majority of soil is classified as either Kingsville or Bellville-Wixom, and are loamy and silty with veins of sand. There are some pockets of Plainfield sand along the edges of Sanford Lake. The underlying subsoils are primarily clay layers, resulting in a very high water table. Percolation and drainage is prevented by

this high water table. The overall classification of the soil is “poorly” and “somewhat poorly” drained with the exception of some “well” to “moderately well” drained sands, according to the county soil survey.

The soil survey indicates that soils in the Village are not well suited for on-site sewage treatment systems. They are classified as having “severe” limitations in all areas except for scattered pockets of Plainfield sand which present “slight” limitations for development of on-site sewage treatment systems.

ISSUES

A process of active involvement with the community has been followed in the preparation of the Village Plan. An initial work session was attended by forty or so people who offered their thoughts about what was right and wrong with the Village and what they would like the Village to be in the future. Similar community forums were held periodically during the course of preparing the Plan. A summary of the community input is included in the appendix to this document.

Overall, the comments presented at these work sessions by the Council and residents provided excellent insights into the Village’s strengths and weaknesses. Many of the comments related to very specific concerns, but all could be organized into six categories.

1. community character/image
2. recreation/activity
3. services
4. transportation
5. business district
6. environment

A great deal of overlap was found among the items within each of the categories. The top-rated issues that emerged were repeated frequently in several contexts. These include:

Small Town Character

Perhaps the most prized quality of Sanford Village is its character. Quaint, picturesque, friendly, local pride, and other words and phrases were used to describe those qualities valued most by the residents. It is these assets that many people want to retain and build upon for the future.

While the majority of those who participated in the many discussions and work sessions wanted to protect this character, they were not advocating a no-growth philosophy. The tone of the meetings was one of wanting to strike a balance between protecting the Village assets and encouraging future growth and development opportunities.

This will be the critical challenge for the Village in the years to come.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Bordered by two separate townships, Sanford is subject to a variety of outside influences with respect to land use patterns and services. Three separate municipal jurisdictions share common borders and streets. Efforts are underway to formalize communication and cooperation with Lincoln and Jerome Townships in the areas of planning, zoning, transportation, and utilities.

Coordination among these jurisdictions can ensure more compatible, higher quality development in the future, along with more cost effective provision of community services.

Business District

Sanford contains a variety of businesses in several locations along Saginaw Street and Meridian Road. Each of these areas serves a purpose. However, one area has been identified as the “central business district” for the community.

This area is comprised of several blocks of establishments on both sides of Saginaw Street generally between N. Maple and N. Oak. Most of the businesses are located in relatively old buildings with minimal setbacks from the street, allowing enough room for a single row of parking in front.

The streetscape that was complete in 2012 at a cost of \$1,106,000.00 consisted of new street lighting, wider sidewalks, stamed concrete crosswalks, benches and planters. This streetscape included additional parking for the businesses located in the area.

The health of this district and its appearance to those who live in and drive through the community is a major concern to the Council and the residents. Improving the district is a goal of this Plan. This will involve aesthetic improvements to building facades, streetscape improvements along Saginaw Street, upgrading signs, and providing additional and conveniently located parking.

Recreational Amenities

Opportunities for leisure and recreation abound in Sanford. It borders the only lake in Midland County, is traversed by the Tittabawassee River and Pere Marquette non-motorized trail, and contains two large parks with water access. Sanford Lake Park has a spray park, Frisbee golf, cross country skiing, access from the Rail Trail, a boat launch and a kayak launch which is handicap accessible. The Village Park has 5 well maintained baseball/softball fields, horseshoe pits, soccer nets and a "beach" volleyball area. The Village park also has updated playground equipment and an exercise area. The Village has a public fishing platform on the main part of the lake.

The residents of the community recognize the wealth represented by these amenities. Preservation and enhancement of these assets is a major priority and will provide a lure to many future residents.

It is the task of the Plan to address these issues within the context of the community's vision for itself and the long-range goals it has established. These are described on the following pages.

VISION AND GOALS

An attractive community with moderate but steady growth where people value the small town character, the Village of Sanford will be a desirable place to live and raise a family; offering a range of excellent community facilities and services, a defined central business district, high quality natural amenities, and easy pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

GOALS & POLICIES

Land Use

To create a balance of residential and non-residential uses to serve the living, working, shopping, and relaxation needs of the community.

- Closely follow the recommendations of the Village Master Plan.
- Establish a Village Planning Commission to advise Council regarding land use decisions and capital improvements.
- Promote mutual cooperation among all neighboring communities with regard to land use and zoning decisions along common boundaries.
- Create an identifiable "downtown business district" distinct from other commercial areas of the Village.

Character/Image

To maintain and enhance Sanford's small town character.

- Provide sidewalks or pathways throughout the residential areas of the community.
- Improve the streetscape (overhead wires, curbing, landscaping, lighting, signs, etc.) along N. Saginaw.
- Create a greater sense of "community" through events and promotions.

Recreation

To take full advantage of the social and economic opportunities presented by the Village's many recreational amenities.

- Expand the range of facilities and activities available at the Village Park.
- Upgrade the existing facilities within the Village Park.
- Provide more programs and other forms of recreation for the youth of the village.
- Work with the County Parks Department and Sanford Area Chamber of Commerce to promote Sanford as the "recreation destination."

Services

- City water through Water District #1.
- Weekly trash pickup
- Monthly recycling pickup
- Twice yearly yard waste pickup

Transportation

To improve traffic movement along Meridian Road and along Saginaw Road:

- Consider the traffic impacts of future development requests along the Village's major streets.
- Use site plan review and other zoning techniques to control the number and location of driveways to minimize traffic conflicts.

- Establish minimum right-of-way standards for all street classifications within the Village.
- Meridian Road was extended across the Tittabawassee River with a bridge that was completed in 2008. Update bridge lighting to LED fixtures for improved lighting and better cost efficiency.

To construct pathways in all areas of the village and replace existing walks in need of repair.

- Establish a formal program of annual repair, replacement, and installation of pathways throughout the Village.

Business District

To establish and maintain strong relations between the Village and the business community.

- Work with the business owners and Chamber of Commerce to identify needed improvements.
- Sponsor and participate in community events.
- Continue to sponsor and encourage parades and other community events including the Memorial Day Parade, Founders Day Parade and events, and the Homecoming Parade.
- Continue to work with and support the Sanford Historical Society and the Sanford Museum.

To improve the appearance of the downtown business district:

- 2013 completed downtown streetscape for \$1.2MM. This project delivered up-to-date LED lighting and beautification. The project was financially supported by Village of Sanford, MDOT, and three foundations (Gerstacker, Herbert & Grace Dow and Midland Area Community Foundation).
- Encourage business owners to upgrade the building facades and parking areas.

- Establish a program to finance common improvements.
- Acquire adjacent lots for public parking.

Environment

To protect the community's natural assets (lake, river, trees, and topography).

- Adopt site plan review and similar regulatory techniques which will encourage new development to respect the natural environment.
- Continue to treat the ash trees in the Village Park to ensure their survival for future generations.
- Improve and expand the facilities at the Village Park to enhance the passive recreational opportunities for area residents.
- Adopt a storm water management ordinance to control runoff from newly developed properties.

SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM CAPITOL IMPROVEMENTS & GOALS

1. 2014 - Continue Down Town Improvement Program: Update streetscape, general concept, lighting, signage, curbing, etc..
2. 2014 - Amend Village Charter
3. 2014 - Ordinance Officer hired in 2013. Implement blight reduction program. Ordinances revised to reflect current needs.
4. 2014 Investigate combining office space with Jerome Township.
5. 2014 - Continue sidewalk/walkway program (ongoing program)
6. 2014- Capitalize on improvements to County Park.
7. 2014 - Pave sections of local streets (on going program).
8. 2014 - Pave (seal coat) major streets (on going program).
9. 2014 - Trim overhanging trees (on going program).

10. 2014- Update and distribute Village Handbook with vision to have an electronic copy.

LAND PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The map on page 25 provides a graphic illustration of recommended future land use patterns and relationship throughout the Village to be achieved during the planning period. By itself, however, the map does not present the entire picture of the Village's future direction. It must be viewed in conjunction with the text of the Plan, especially the Vision, Goals, Policies, and Issues described in the previous sections.

It is these statements that provide the contextual framework for the actual land use designations. Likewise, the words in the document need the map to illustrate their intent. Several land use designations are shown on the Plan map. These are defined on the following pages.

Low Density Residential

Sanford is now and will continue to be primarily a residential community. Therefore, the largest future land use designation is Low Density Residential.

Areas designated for Low Density Residential are found west and southeast of Sanford Lake. These locations already contain considerable residential development, primarily single family homes, but significant amounts of undeveloped land are also found here.

The Low Density designation is intended to accommodate traditional suburban residential development on platted lots. Densities should not exceed three units per acre. Such density will only be possible with the provision of public water and sanitary sewer systems.

Medium Density Residential

Permitting slightly higher densities than the previous category, the Medium Density Residential designation is applied mainly to those areas containing homes on very small lots, two-family dwellings, and manufactured home parks.

Three areas of the community have been identified for this type of development. These are a linear strip on the north side of U.S. 10, along the south shore of Sanford Lake; an area just south of U.S. 10, between Meridian Road and Sanford Lake; and an area immediately south of Sanford Lake, north of the central business district and east of the Village Park.

Densities within these areas should not exceed six units per acre. Typical uses could include single family detached dwellings, two-family dwellings, manufactured home parks, and townhouses. Such development, however, should only be permitted with public utilities or an approved engineered system capable of accommodating a large development. Individual septic systems and wells are not appropriate.

High Density Residential

One location in the Village has been designated for High Density Residential development. This is an area in the northeast quadrant of the U.S. 10/West River Road interchange.

Densities up to ten units per acre may be permitted here, but only with public water and sewer or an equivalent private system. Likely uses would include garden apartments and other forms of multiple family housing, as well as townhouses, senior citizen housing and apartments.

Category	Dwellings/Acre	Public Utilities
Low Density Residential	up to 3	not required
Medium Density Residential	3.1 to 6	Required
High Density Residential	6.1 to 10	Required

Office

One area of the Village, along Meridian Road between Saginaw Road and Birchview Drive, is designated for Office development. The area is primarily residential now, but gradual change to offices would provide a suitable transition between the existing and proposed general commercial development to the south and east and the existing and proposed residential to the north and west.

Small business offices, medical clinics, banks, and similar uses would be appropriate in this location.

Business Center Commercial

The concentration of businesses located along Saginaw Street generally between North Maple and North Oak Streets is designated as Business Center Commercial. This area is considered to be the Village's "downtown" as distinguished from other commercial locations stretched out along the major streets.

Desired uses within the district should be oriented to the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the abutting recreational areas (parks and rail trail).

Appropriate uses in this location could include:

gas stations, restaurants, offices, convenience stores, hardware, clothing, bike shops, athletic apparel, etc.

Equally important as the types of uses allowed within this area is the appearance of the district. The Business Center Commercial area should be easily distinguished from any other commercial development in the Village. Building facades, lighting, signs, parking, and landscaping should be designed to ensure a consistent and harmonious look. The district should be visually recognizable as a “business center” rather than a random assortment of individual buildings.

General Commercial

Much of the frontage along Saginaw Road and the area near the intersection of Saginaw and Meridian Roads is designated for General Commercial. This is intended to allow for more intensive commercial uses than desired within the Business Center and to accommodate those uses (shopping centers, grocery stores, etc.) that require more land area than can be provided within the core commercial area.

Even though this classification provides wide latitude in terms of the types of commercial uses that may be permitted, actual zoning decisions should consider the relationship of the commercial property to surrounding uses. Less intense uses may be desirable in locations adjacent to residential areas.

Industrial

There is very little land suited to Industrial development within the Village. The only existing location is on the east side of West River Road, south of U.S.10, with sanitary sewers annexation can occur.

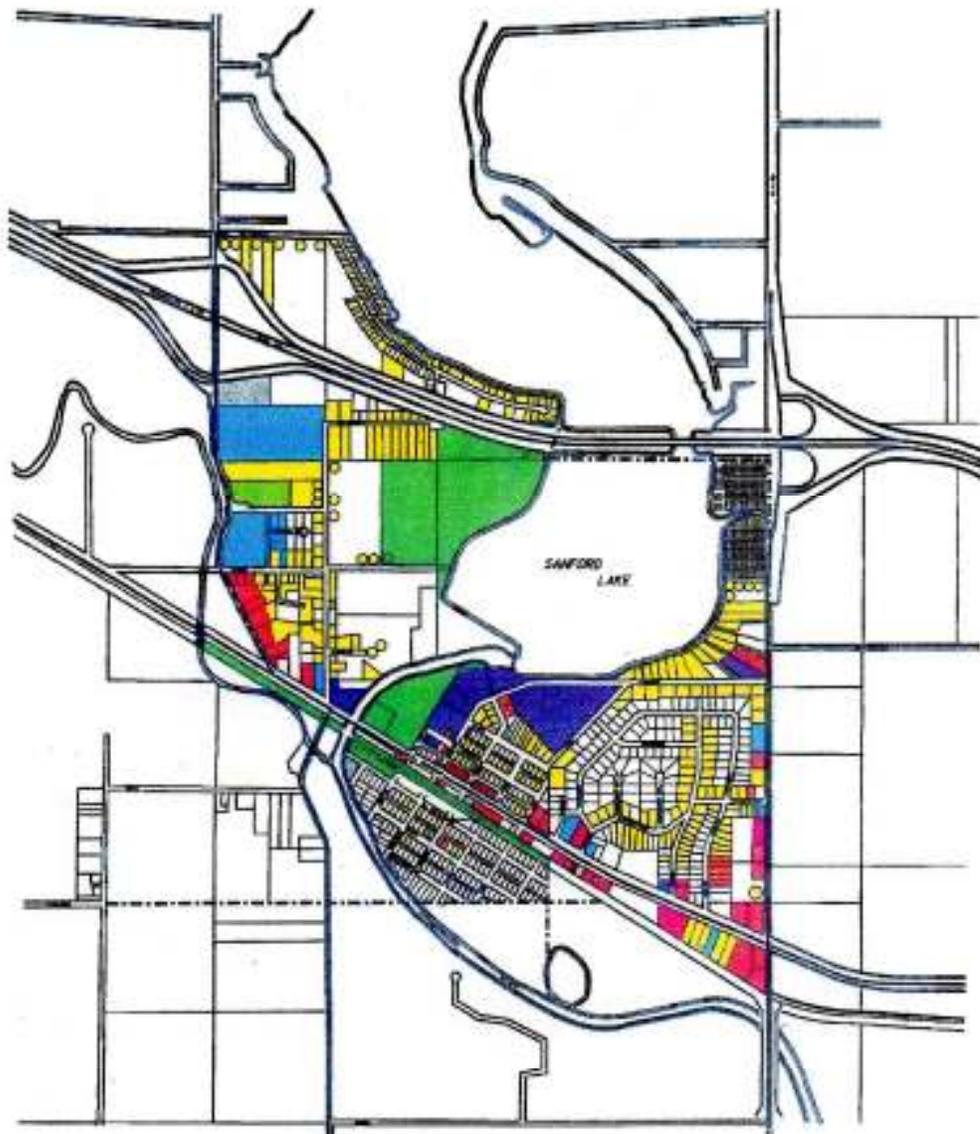
The lack of public utilities severely inhibits the potential for more industry in the community. In addition, there is a lack of suitable land in appropriate locations even if utilities were available.

Public/Quasi-Public

These lands are the current and proposed sites of Village facilities, churches, and schools. As might be expected, they are scattered throughout the community.

Parks & Recreation

Public parks and the rail trail are designated for Parks & Recreation. The two large parks are located adjacent to the Village's water features, while the trail cuts diagonally across the southern part of the Village.



EXISTING LAND USE

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  SINGLE FAMILY |  INDUSTRIAL |
|  TWO FAMILY & MULTIFAMILY |  PUBLIC |
|  TRAILER HOMES & HOME PARKS |  QUASI-PUBLIC |
|  OFFICES |  SCHOOLS |
|  COMMERCIAL |  RECREATION |
| |  VACANT |



Wilcox Associates
 400 Exchange Plaza SE
 Atlanta, GA 30338
 Tel: 404/525-1100

Langstaff & Latham, Inc.
 10000 N. State St. #100
 Detroit, MI 48221

VILLAGE OF SANFORD, MIDLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

USING THE PLAN

To conclude, some explanation is appropriate regarding how the Master Plan should be used. First, it is essential to understand that the Plan is a **policy guide**. It is not an ordinance and does not replace zoning. The Plan is supposed to work hand-in-hand with zoning and other Village development tools. A few important things to know about the Plan are:

Let It Be Your Land Use Guide

Remember that the Master Plan is a guide for future land use. The Plan Map may not look like the zoning map or the existing land use map. It really shouldn't. The Plan Map is an illustration of the long-range land use pattern of the Village, based on the goals and strategies adopted as part of the Master Plan.

The Plan is land use policy. Village decisions, as well as those of the private sector, should follow the Plan. New streets, parks, public improvements, etc. should be consistent with the land use policies adopted as part of the Master Plan.

Refer To It In All Zoning Decisions

One of the principal benefits of having an adopted Master Plan is the foundation it provides for zoning 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.

As the Village Council is faced with making zoning and land development decisions — 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.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to initiate a change to existing zoning boundaries so they more closely conform to the Plan recommendations. This could help avoid conflicts at a later date.

Be Flexible

As important as it is to use the Plan as a guide, it is equally important to recognize that the Plan must be flexible. Changing circumstances, unanticipated opportunities, and unforeseen problems can require a shift in direction. Such mid-course adjustments are not unusual, though they should not be a frequent nor an easy occurrence.

However, because a deviation from the Plan may be appropriate in a specific instance, doesn't mean that the Plan is no longer relevant and should be ignored from that point on. When these conflicts arise, the Plan should be amended to reflect the change. That way it will remain an up-to-date policy guide over time.

Another practice the Village is encouraged to adopt is to conduct a regularly scheduled (typically annual) review of the Plan. Even if no changes have been warranted during the course of the prior year, it is wise to take time to consider the continued relevance of the Master Plan. This is a good time to make amendments to keep the Plan current and consistent with local philosophies.

Keep It Current

The most often heard reasons for not following a Plan are that it is out of date or is no longer relevant. It seems many communities undertake a master planning effort with the idea that once the plan is completed the job is done for twenty years until it's time to do a new plan. With this philosophy, the community's plan will become obsolete very quickly.

As noted previously in this document, it is essential to keep the Master Plan current. On an annual basis, one meeting should set aside just for the purpose of reflecting on the past year and considering possible amendments to the Plan.

It is unrealistic to expect the Plan to remain unchanged for its 20 year life. Neither the Council or its professional advisors can predict the future. While the Plan provides a broad framework for land use decisions, site-specific issues may arise that were unanticipated and deserve close scrutiny. Where uses are approved contrary to the Plan, the plan should be amended to reflect the change. By routinely following this procedure, the Plan will continue to be an up-to-date, reliable planning tool.

Use It As A Management Tool

“[N]o street, square, park, or other public way, ground, or open space, or public building or structure, shall be constructed or authorized in the municipality... until the location, character, and extent thereof shall have been submitted to and approved by the planning commission...” This provision, taken from Section 9 of the Municipal Planning Act, requires the Planning Commission to review all public improvements for conformance to the Master Plan prior to their final authorization. In the event the Planning Commission disapproves such a project, a majority vote of the Village Council is required to override that action. If the Planning Commission does not act in 60 days, approval is automatic.

This provision is not intended to give the Planning Commission veto authority over public improvements, but to ensure that formal consideration is given to the relationship of such improvements to the Village’s Master Plan. In evaluating that relationship, the Planning Commission should look at consistency with land use, as well as the impact of the proposed improvement on other Plan recommendations.

Along the same lines, the Planning Commission may also participate in the preparation of a Capital Improvements Program (CIP). This is an annual process conducted in many communities to prepare a continuing list of needed improvements, identify funding sources, and set priorities. The CIP can be an invaluable tool for implementing the direction set by the Master Plan.

APPENDIX

Strengths/Likes/Attributes/Assets

- Small town atmosphere
- Parks, lake & river
- Lots of youth activity
- Easy access to interstate
- Access to elected officials
- Rail trail
- Close to shopping
- New entry signs
- Friendly neighbors
- Museum, historical society, & founders day
- New sidewalks
- Senior center
- Pretty churches
- 911 response time
- City water
- Fire dept.
- City/Natural gas
- Fishing Platform

Weaknesses/Dislikes/Negatives/Liabilities

- Lack of sidewalks/pathways
- Ugly overhead wires
- Lack of sewer
- Speed on Meridian, Saginaw, Center

- Downtown streetscape
- Community pride
- Cleanliness in front of businesses
- Improved relations between Chamber of Commerce & Village
- Lack of Village theme
- Take greater advantage of recreation opportunities (camping, year round activities)
- Flooding & storm water
- Village responsiveness/sensitivity to business needs (parking)
- More youth activities
- Enforcement

Strengths & Weaknesses by Category

Character/Image

- Small town character (+)
- New entry signs (+)
- Friendly neighbors (+)
- Museum, historical society, founders day (+)
- Sidewalks (+)
- Pretty churches (+)
- Lack of sidewalks (-)
- Overhead wires (-)
- Downtown streetscape (-)
- Community pride (-)
- Cleanliness in front of businesses (-)
- Village theme (-)

Recreation/Activity

- Parks, lake & river (+)
- Rail trail (+)
- Youth activity (+)
- Museum, historical society, founders day (+)
- Sidewalks/Pathways (+)
- Senior center (+)
- Lack of sidewalks/Pathways (-)
- Not using recreation opportunities to fullest (-)
- More youth activities (-)

Services

- 911 response (+)
- Water (+)
- Fire (+)
- Gas & elec. (+)
- Need sewer (-)
- Not using recreation opportunities to fullest (-)
- Flooding/stormwater (-)
- Enforcement (-)

Transportation

- Freeway access (+)
- Sidewalks/Pathways (+)

Lack of sidewalks/Pathways (-)

Speed on Meridian, Saginaw, and Center (-)

Repair old sidewalks (-)

Business District

Downtown streetscape (-)

Relations between Chamber & Village (-)

Village responsiveness (-)

Environment

Parks, lake & river (+)

Fishing platform (+)