

9th Street Sub-Area Plan

In the 1990's, when the Township prepared the last Master Plan, the 9th Street corridor was studied as part of a larger 9th Street Focus Area that included the West Main Street Sub-Area. Since that time, significant development has occurred along 9th Street. The intersection of West Main Street and 9th Street has become a major commercial node for the western Kalamazoo market, and new residential neighborhoods have been developed along 9th Street and in the area surrounding that node.

Despite the drop-off in development between 2007 and 2011, traffic levels and development interest has remained steady along 9th Street and West Main Street. There remain several large vacant parcels within the area prime for development. Due to the large undeveloped parcels, the proximity of the new residential neighborhoods, and the important rural corridor that connects them all, the 9th Street Sub-Area deserved its own analysis separate from West Main Street.

Previous plans have called for low density, residential development and preservation of the rural character and natural features captured by these large parcels. However, as times and conditions change, it is reasonable to ask whether this is still practical, or whether the limit of commercial development at the 9th Street and West Main Street intersection should be allowed to expand. Exploring this issue, among others, was the purpose of the sub-area study.

What is a Sub-Area Plan?

A Sub-Area Plan is an individual component of the overall Township Master Plan. A Sub-Area is an area with unique circumstances that requires a deeper evaluation and further public input before establishing a plan for future development. This Sub-Area Plan includes a vision, goals, principles of development, and a future land use map just like the overall Master Plan, although in more detail than the Township-wide Plan. Completed after adoption of the Master Plan, the Township has amended the Plan to add this Sub-Area Plan as an appendix.

Existing Conditions

Regional Location

The 9th Street Sub-Area is located in the eastern portion of the Township. The Sub-Area is located along 9th Street extending from just north of Meijer and Menards south to KL Avenue. The Sub-Area extends from 8th Street to the parcels east of 9th Street but also includes parcels fronting on KL Avenue from 9th Street to the existing apartment developments.

The 9th Street Sub-Area is also influenced by the development that has occurred on the land surrounding it:

- To the north, in addition to the intense commercial development occurring at West Main Street and 9th Street, significant residential development has occurred in the Westport neighborhoods.

- To the east, West Main Street and Drake Road have become major commercial and high density residential corridors, particularly east of US-131, providing services and conveniences to residents in the Township and region.
- To the south, the Oshtemo Village area has plans for redevelopment, a new elementary school has been constructed, and 9th Street has been improved (and will continue to be improved as discussed later) providing a better link to growing residential centers in the County and I-94.

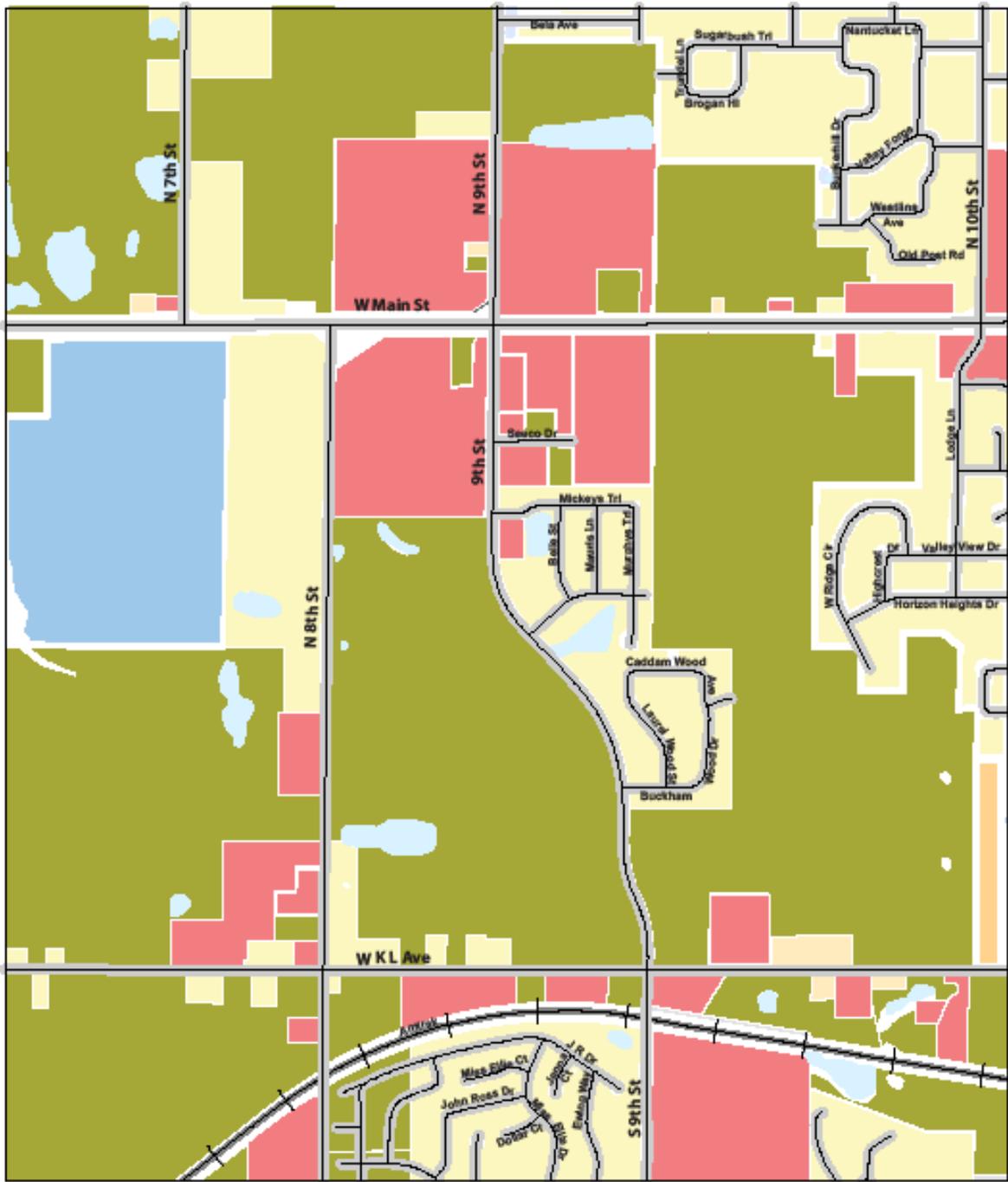
In the past decade, Oshtemo Township and Texas Township have seen the highest levels of growth in the County showing that the centers of population growth and development are in the west side of the region. With the new commercial development and the infrastructure improvements that have been made, 9th Street has become a significant link in the regional transportation network.

Existing Land Uses

Unlike some of the previous Sub-Areas that have been studied, the 9th Street Sub-Area contains a significant amount of development in addition to large undeveloped areas.

- The commercial development at West Main Street and 9th Street is nearly built-out and has a strong influence on the Sub-Area. The intersection contains a combination of retail, service, and office development, including a few big box retailers.
- South of this area and on the east side of 9th Street are two single-family residential neighborhoods. The northernmost was developed through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, which allows limited commercial development along the 9th Street frontage. One such unit has already been developed (Hannapel Home Center).
- Uses along the south side of KL Avenue are a mixture of heavy commercial and light industrial uses. Similar uses are also found at the northwest corner of 8th Street and KL Avenue.
- There are a few rural residential homes fronting on KL Avenue east of 8th Street.
- The character on 8th Street is primarily residential / rural residential with several homes of various styles and ages located along the road.
- The large vacant parcels are predominately located between 8th Street and 9th Street north of KL Avenue. The parcels include rolling hills, woodlands, a few open water areas, and fields.

(Insert Existing Land Use Map)

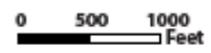


Existing Land Use

Oshtemo Charter Township, Kalamazoo County, Michigan

- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial/Industrial
- Public/Semi Public
- Infrastructure
- Undeveloped

Base Map Source: MIGDL v6b & v7b
 Data Source: Oshtemo Township, 2008;
 McKenna Associates, 2008



Draft
McKenna
 ASSOCIATES

10/18/11



Zoning

The sub-area is divided primarily between the R-2 Residence district, the C Local Business district, and the I-1 Industrial District Manufacturing & Service district. The 9th Street Focus Area Overlay Zone is also within the sub-area. The C district is located at the corner of 9th Street and West Main Street and is inclusive of the existing commercial development at that location. (A small strip of C zoning also exists on the north side of KL Avenue east of 8th Street.) The I-1 district is located on the south side of KL Avenue extending from west of 8th Street east to 11th Street. It also includes several parcels on the west side of 8th Street north of KL Avenue.

The remainder of the sub-area is in the R-2 district. The R-2 district is a single and two family residential district. However, use of the PUD development process within this area does allow for limited commercial development. The Sky King Meadows development was developed as a PUD and allows limited nonresidential uses along the 9th Street frontage. One use has been developed and was consistently used as an example of the type of development envisioned on the vacant land within the Sub-Area.

The parcels on the north side of KL Avenue east of 9th Street are also included in the 9th Street Overlay Zone in addition to being zoned R-2. This overlay also allows for office development as a special exception use under certain conditions, in addition to the uses permitted in the underlying zoning district.

Public Services / Infrastructure

Transportation

The 9th Street Sub-Area includes several key transportation routes for this immediate area and the Township in general. 9th Street is a two-lane road at the northern border of the Sub-Area. Travelling south and approaching the West Main Street intersection, the roadway expands to five lanes wide with the addition of access lanes for the shopping centers and turn lanes at the intersection. South of the intersection, the roadway is five lanes wide before reducing back to two-lanes south of the commercial development. A turn-lane is provided at the Buckham Wood Drive access point. Limited transit service is available along 9th Street (based at the commercial centers). There are no sidewalks or non-motorized facilities along 9th Street although there are some facilities provided within the neighborhoods and some commercial developments. Signalized intersections are located at both KL Avenue and West Main Street as well as at Seeco Drive.

The Kalamazoo County Road Commission (KCRC) is planning to improve 9th Street in 2012. Although the design plans are not finalized, the plans tentatively include widening the two-lane portion of the roadway from KL Avenue north to three lanes with curb and gutter and drainage improvements. An extended shoulder (five feet) is anticipated to provide some space for pedestrian or non-motorized use. The Township Non-motorized Pathway Plan calls for a separated pathway (10' asphalt) along 9th Street in this area. It is unlikely that this will be installed at this time during this project due to lack of funding.

Both 8th Street and KL Avenue are two lane roads with large trees and tree canopies along the roads. Neither road has transit access or any pedestrian or non-motorized facilities. Although anecdotes and comments from the public input session indicate that traffic levels are increasing along these roadways, the KCRC has no plans at this time for major improvements to either roadway. 8th Street is a designated collector road, and any improvements would rely heavily on local funds. Therefore, KCRC has focused its efforts and federal funding on 9th Street, an arterial. KL Avenue likely has a sufficient amount of non-residential development and access points as well as existing traffic to warrant improvement and redevelopment. However, due to the sharp topography to the south, significant underground utility lines that exist there, and groundwater in the area, it would be very challenging and likely cost prohibitive to undertake an expansion of KL Avenue to three lanes.

Because KL Avenue and 9th Street are key transportation corridors in the Township, not only in the Sub-Area but for transportation throughout the Township, the capacity and efficiency along these corridors must be protected as the vacant parcels are developed. Access points to these roadways will be limited and strategically located based upon existing access points across the road and the topography and natural features. Internal roadways will be developed to provide access to developed parcels and parking facilities and minimize drives and access points onto the adjacent roadways. These internal roadways will also improve the local street network in this area between neighborhoods and provide opportunities for interconnectivity to residents allowing for more efficient movement and travel. Use of stub streets and connection to existing development will create a seamless network throughout the Sub-Area. Through proper design, routing, and traffic calming mechanisms, the network will limit use of the local street network by outside vehicles as a shortcut opportunity.

During the Design Workshop, several comments were made by members of the public attending the session about the transportation system and specifically the 9th Street corridor. Concerns included the speed and amount of traffic on 9th Street, delays at the intersections at both KL Avenue and West Main Street, the lack of pedestrian and non-motorized facilities, and challenges posed by the curves and hills along the roadway. Workshop participants identified the importance of the corridor and emphasized the existing character and rural / natural aesthetic that exists along 9th Street (as well as KL Avenue and 8th Street). Ensuring these issues are addressed as the roadway is improved is a primary goal of this Sub-Area Plan. As development occurs and the roads are improved, the existing vistas and character of the roadway should be maintained.

Utilities

Currently, only public water service is available throughout the entire 9th Street Sub-Area. Development in this area would be able to tap into the water supply and access public water.

Public sanitary sewer service is available in portions of the Sub-Area. A public sewer main is located along 9th Street and provides public sewer service to the development along 9th Street. The sewer extends east of 9th Street south of KL Avenue along the existing Amtrak right of way.

There is currently no public sewer service west of 9th Street (other than at the intersection of West Main Street). As development occurs, it can be extended from 9th Street.

All other utilities are available to the property as well.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater management is a concern in any rapidly developing area. However, this area has developed particularly quickly, especially at the intersection of West Main Street and 9th Street, and this development has included a significant amount of impervious surface. Although all development has included stormwater provisions, surrounding property owners discussed rising groundwater levels and increasing water levels within retention ponds, particularly during rain events.

The Plan encourages the use of natural, low-impact mitigation techniques, such as swales and rain gardens, designed to provide for effective management of stormwater. Shared systems are encouraged, particularly in areas where existing topographic conditions encourage stormwater flow to continue its natural pattern or where other aspects of the development are already being coordinated. See the Physical Character and Environment chapter of the Master Plan (Chapter 4) for a more detailed discussion of stormwater management techniques. The KCRC will be utilizing similar techniques when improving 9th Street and addressing drainage issues along this corridor and associated with the widened roadway.

Public Input

Township-Wide Public Input

Township-wide public input was gathered for the Master Plan in general. Because this comprehensive effort was well-received and involved the entire Township, the results still carry weight for the sub-areas, too. A review of these results provides some guidance for this particular area as well.

In the fall of 2008, Oshtemo Township conducted a visioning workshop consisting of several different exercises. This was followed in the spring of 2009 with an opinion survey of randomly selected residents throughout the Township. The opinion survey had a response rate of 34 percent, well above the typical response rate for similar surveys. The Master Plan provides an overall description of the process and results; a detailed summary of the full results is provided in the Appendix. Below are some specific items that are relevant to the 9th Street Sub-Area:

- On the Township survey, when asked to select terms that describe the portion of the Township between Drake Road and 8th Street, the top four terms selected by respondents were “commercial”, “congested”, “high density,” and “open spaces threatened.”
- When asked whether expanding commercial development was important, respondents were split. About one quarter (26.6%) indicated it was “not important” (1 on a 1-5 scale)

while 35.6% indicated it was “somewhat important” or “important” (4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale).

- When asked what they liked about living in the Township, the most often indicated items were “shopping, services, convenience, close to city” (60%); “rural, open, small town” (38.8%); and “roads, freeways, convenient access to...” (17.7%). When asked for items they would improve, respondents most often indicated “roads (snow removal, maintenance, signals, etc.)” (23.1%); “sidewalks, pathways” (12.5%); and “growth, development, control and management of...” (11.7%).
- The survey asked respondents where future commercial development should occur and indicated that they could select two choices from a list of six (including “other”). “West Main Street, East of 9th Street” (44.4%) and “9th Street, South of West Main Street” (34.4%) were two of the top three choices.

Design Workshop

To focus on the vision for the 9th Street Sub-Area, a design workshop was held in October 2011. The workshop included four focus group stakeholder meetings. The sessions were held with the following groups of stakeholders:

- Property Owners
- Transportation and Utilities
- Neighbors and Natural Resources
- Government

Attendees engaged in a thorough discussion of the Sub-Area, past and current use of the area and surrounding property, and their vision for the future of the Sub-Area. Attendees identified the positive attributes of the area, the challenges that exist there, and the principles the Township should apply to future development. The results of these discussions are provided in the appendix.

In the next exercise, land owners, neighbors, and residents allocated future land uses on a map of the sub-area in accordance with their vision for the future. Working in small groups, the participants discussed the best layout for future uses and illustrated their ideas on individual maps. This allowed them to understand the challenges faced by the Township and the Planning Commission and also gave them direct input in the planning process.

All of the information gathered was used by the design team to formulate a preliminary draft plan for the Sub-Area. The preliminary plan included principles for development and a draft land use map.

Vision, Goals, and Principles

The Master Plan contains Goals and Objectives to describe the vision for the Township as a whole and how to achieve them. (See the Goals and Objectives Chapter of the Master Plan – Chapter 7). These overall goals and objectives also apply to the 9th Street Sub-Area and will help shape the development that occurs along this corridor.

However, due to the unique circumstances in this Sub-Area, a specific vision and set of goals developed for the Sub-Area will further guide development in this area.

Vision for the Sub-Area

The 9th Street Sub-Area is very much representative of Oshtemo Township. Primarily a rural corridor, much of the corridor is flanked by open spaces, wild flowers, and large trees. An important corridor for transportation in the Township, many residents and visitors pass this area on a daily basis, and it is therefore important that the corridor not only continue to function efficiently in this role, but that it also presents the appropriate image and character for the Township. As market conditions improve and interest in developing the large vacant parcels grows, the form and intensity of the development must be such to maintain the capacity and function of the corridor as well as maintain the existing, rural character of the area.

Goals for the Sub-Area

Goals for this Sub-Area describe how the vision for future development will be accomplished in greater detail. Principles have also been established that will guide future land use and development of the 9th Street Sub-Area. The development principles have been sorted and placed under the appropriate goal.

Future market conditions may change, development trends may evolve, and new ideas may emerge that were not anticipated. Regardless, the following goals and objectives will apply irrespective of the type of development that is proposed in the future.

GOAL ONE

Corridor: Future development in the 9th Street Sub-Area will recognize its location along a significant rural corridor in the Township and shall ensure future development presents the appropriate character for the Township.

- A green corridor with enhanced building and parking setbacks must be provided along 9th Street, the north side of KL Avenue and the east side of 8th Street to maintain the rural character of these roads and this area as development occurs.
- Uses within the Sub-Area will utilize quality design and materials consistent with the character of the Township and be coordinated throughout the larger development area.

- Form and character standards will be established so that appearance becomes as important as the specific uses established in this area.
- Use of Planned Unit Development will be promoted to ensure development is coordinated and consistent across large parcels, particularly in regards to access, parking, and design.
- Development will incorporate existing landscape and topography into site layout and design to provide screening and natural setbacks and enhance the rural character of the development.
- Low intensity office and commercial developments will be allowed along the frontage of 9th Street and along KL Avenue.

GOAL TWO

Transportation / Infrastructure: Future development within the 9th Street Sub-Area will maintain the efficiency of the existing transportation system and provide a safe and efficient local transportation network within new development along with other necessary infrastructure and utility improvements.

- Ensure future development complies with the Township's Access Management Plan.
- Require interconnections between developments where reasonable and efficient.
- Coordinate with MDOT and KCRC to ensure future road improvements are consistent with Complete Streets policies, this sub-area plan and other plans of the Township, including the Non-Motorized Facilities Plan.
- Complete or install non-motorized facilities on 9th Street and KL Avenue.
- Direct access points for new development to strategic, coordinated locations aligned with existing access points across the street with the potential for a signalized intersection at Buckham Wood Drive.
- As development occurs, provide Sub-Area with public water and sanitary sewer utility service.

GOAL THREE

Quality of Life: Future development in the 9th Street Sub-Area will provide for a high quality of life for residents in and around the Sub-Area, including the protection of existing natural features.

- Protect the integrity and quality of life of existing and future neighborhoods and surrounding residential areas through buffers, location of land uses, dedication of open / green space, and incorporation of institutional uses.

- Provide trails and connections within the Sub-Area and with existing networks and activity centers outside the Sub-area, including a connection to the Township Park and the Library.
- Include a natural setback / buffer from 9th Street and KL Avenue to match the character of the Township.
- Integrate stormwater best management practices into development to limit off-site impacts of development.

Future Land Use

The following map illustrates the desired future land use for the 9th Street Sub-Area. It is a supplement to the Township-wide Future Land Use Map. Also illustrated on the Sub-Area Map are a variety of transportation improvements that would be consistent with the Plan. These are not mandates, but as development occurs and road networks are developed, these should be used to guide the development and approval of such plans.

Note that this Sub-Area map is generalized and the exact location of features on it will not necessarily dictate where development and infrastructure improvements will be implemented. This map is a guideline to be consulted when future development occurs. [PUT THIS PARAGRAPH INTO TEXT BOX.]

Opportunities & Constraints

Several characteristics of the Sub-Area and the facilities and properties surrounding the area will ultimately guide the development of the land. The opportunities and constraints identified here summarize several of the important issues that will factor into future development decisions.

- There are several large, vacant parcels in the Sub-Area that create an opportunity for development. These parcels contain a variety of different vegetation along with unique topography, which create an amenity for residential development.
- Future development will require creation of an internal circulation system, including the necessary access points on the adjacent roads.
- The area has limited transit service and there are no pedestrian or non-motorized facilities along the corridor. Non-motorized facilities will be needed in the future, particularly along 9th Street, and a transit stop should be added with new development.
- 9th Street will be widened to three lanes in 2012 along with improvements to the 9th Street / KL Avenue intersections. Western Michigan University (WMU) owns a large, vacant parcel in the Sub-Area with a significant amount of frontage on 9th Street. However, University officials indicate that the future use of this land is undetermined at this time.

Sub-Area Plan Designations

9th Street Commercial

The majority of the 9th Street and KL Avenue frontage has been designated as 9th Street Commercial. This designation reflects a commercial and non-residential vision along 9th Street that complements the rural nature of the Township as a whole.

Uses in this land use designation may consist of office buildings and low intensity commercial, similar to the use and intensity of the commercial development existing as part of the Sky King Meadows PUD (Hannapel Home Center). Auto-oriented and big box type retail are not envisioned in this land use designation. The Planned Unit Development tool will be promoted in this land use designation as a means to effectively and efficiently accommodate limited commercial development while keeping with the goals of this Sub-Area Plan.

To maintain the function and capacity of 9th Street and KL Avenue, uses will front on and gain access via an internal road network and shared access system. An enhanced setback from 9th Street is included as well with existing landscaping protected or other greenbelt plantings provided to further maintain the current rural character of the community.

ZONING IMPLEMENTATION

The 9th Street Commercial designation may be implemented in the following ways:

- Creation of a 9th Street Commercial zoning district with form based code standards.
- Amendment of existing 9th Street overlay district.
- Review and potential amendment of PUD standards, particularly provisions regarding allowance for non-residential uses.
- Compliance with Township Access Management Plan.
- Inclusion of transportation and infrastructure improvements in Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Transitional Residential

Areas designated Transitional Residential will allow for residential development primarily through PUD or cluster development processes in order to allow for innovative neighborhoods while protecting existing natural resources and open space areas. Where the development is adjacent to the 9th Street Commercial designation, medium density residential uses such as condominiums, senior housing, and 2-4 family units would be appropriate. As the development area transitions away from the adjacent commercial use towards existing residential neighborhoods (either along 8th Street or to the north), the density and intensity of development shall decrease. Uses here shall include low density, single-family uses as well as parks and institutional uses. Through a coordinated plan, the overall development area shall provide a smooth transition from the non-residential development allowed along 9th Street and KL Avenue to the existing rural and low density residential neighborhoods.

Development should incorporate the existing natural resources and elements of the natural landscape (such as the topography and vistas) into the site layout and development design. The existing topography and open spaces create natural areas for development. As this is done, natural corridors will be created throughout the development creating habitat areas for wildlife and providing means for wildlife to navigate through the development. This will also provide trail, pathway, and recreation opportunities for residents.

Clearly, preservation of open space will be important in the Transitional Residential designation. There are a variety of ways open space preservation can be achieved, including:

- Purchase of land by the community, a foundation, or a conservancy.
- Conservation easements placed on the land by the owner limiting development.
- Purchase of development rights from property owners, their transfer to another area where development is intended, and their use to increase the allowable density in the receiving area.
- Clustered development onto a portion of a site with the remainder of the property set aside as permanent open space.

These tools are anticipated to allow future residential development while protecting the character of the nearby land and natural resources. The density of the future development shall be the same as would be otherwise permitted under conventional low to medium density residential development with provisions made to encourage clustering of these lots or otherwise setting aside open space and natural features. Formal policies implementing these tools and policies will be necessary.

Transportation improvements to support additional vehicles, non-motorized users, and residents will be critical as development occurs. Interconnection of the local street network needs to be established as limited access points will be permitted on 8th or 9th Streets. With additional residents along the corridor, bicycle and pedestrian amenities are needed on 9th Street and KL Avenue to reduce potential for accidents and improve the quality of life for residents and their mobility options.

ZONING / IMPLEMENTATION

The Transitional Residential designation may be implemented in the following ways:

- Creation of a new Transitional Residential zoning district
- Creation of a Transitional Residential overlay district requiring use of open space preservation development
- Establishment of proper mechanisms and incentives to protect open space and natural features
- Coordination with property owners
- Inclusion of transportation and infrastructure improvements in Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

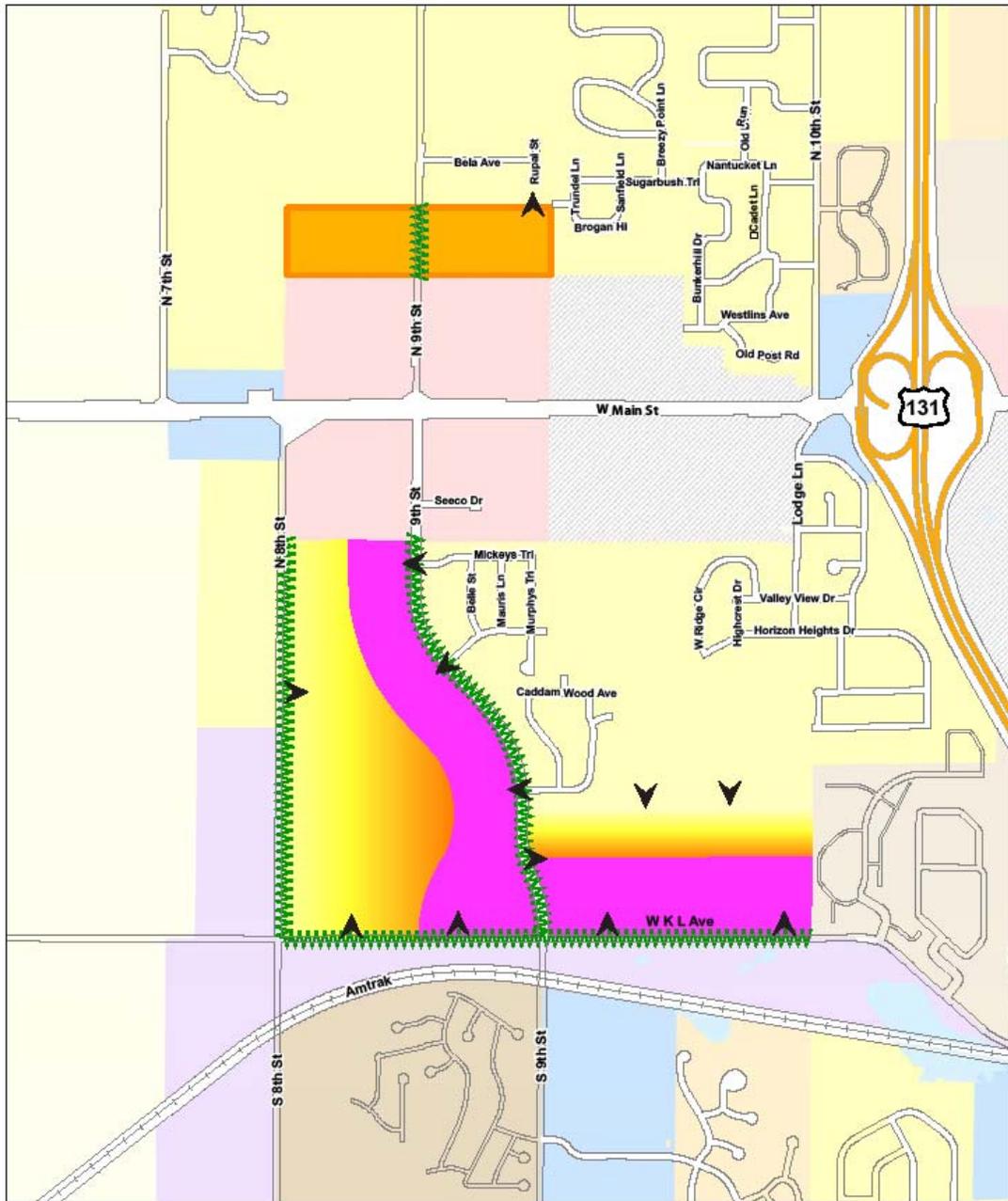
Medium Density Residential

The northern portion of the Sub-Area quickly changes from a commercial character to a suburban / rural residential character. Nonetheless, the lands immediately to the north of the commercial development are adjacent to the large, unattractive stormwater retention ponds for Meijer and Menards and face the rear of these facilities and their loading docks. This is not a good neighbor for single-family or rural residential development. Water and sewer are available in this area. Therefore, the plan calls for a thin band of a transitional use – medium density residential – to provide a buffer between the intense commercial development to the south and the existing residential development to the north.

The medium density residential category includes single, double, and four-family dwelling units as well as senior-oriented housing. Due to increased density, development should include open space and proper stormwater management techniques. Circulation between adjacent developments must be provided, as applicable.

ZONING / IMPLEMENTATION

- Review and update / amendment of current R-3 zoning district standards
- Establishment of overlay standards consistent with the intent of this area
- Compliance with Township Access Management Plan



DRAFT November 01, 2011

9th Street Sub Area Plan

Oshtemo Charter Township, Kalamazoo County, Michigan



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|--|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Transitional Residential | | Low Density Residential |
| | Medium Density Residential | | Medium Density Residential |
| | 9th Street Commercial | | High Density Residential |
| | Green Corridor | | Transitional Mixed Use |
| | Access Points | | General Commercial |
| | | | Sub Area |

Data Source: Michigan Geographic Framework, Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 10s.
Aerial Source: Kalamazoo County, 2010
Data Source: Osherno Township, 2008; McKenna Associates, 2011