

FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN (DRAFT)

City of Albion

Adopted by Albion Planning Commission: Adopted by Albion City Council:

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the City of Albion, the Albion Planning Commission, and the Albion City Council rewrote the City's Comprehensive Plan under the guidance of consultant, Rosalyn Jones. The Comprehensive Plan was divided into two phases, the first being the goals and objectives of the city and the second being this plan, the Future Land Use and Zoning Plan. The first phase was finished in December of 2016 and the second phase was started in June of 2017. Throughout 2016, the City of Albion worked extensively to gather as much public input as possible on the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plans as well as future land use.

The intent of a Future Land Use and Zoning Plan is to give a graphic representation of how land *should* be used to best serve the public good in the coming years. Land use categories tend to be more general than zoning classifications. For example, all of the zoning classifications for residential properties (Albion has 5 separate zoning classifications for residential properties) would all fit under the future land use category of "residential."

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act

Albion is required by the State of Michigan to have Comprehensive Plan that is updated every 5 years. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires in Sec. 203 (1) that zoning be based on a plan. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act outlines the purposes for which a comprehensive or master plan must be developed. The Comprehensive Plan must include a Future Land Use and Zoning Plan. Section 33 (2)(b) states, "For a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan shall include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map."

Public Input

The City of Albion was responsible for gathering public input on the future land use plan and redevelopment sites for this document. This document reflects the desires of the nearly 150 residents that participated in the Community Visioning Celebration held on June 28th 2017. The City's public engagement efforts are directed by its Public Participation Statement which was adopted by the Planning Commission on August 15, 2017.

Zoning Ordinance Update

The City of Albion is in a unique position to rewrite its current zoning ordinance with technical assistance funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The "wish list" or outcomes for the zoning ordinance rewrite are described in more detail in the Zoning Plan section of this document on page (insert page number). The zoning rewrite will be done by a professional firm and will determine the specifics of the new zoning classifications. The City of Albion does not currently have the staffing capacity to do this coding work in-house. The City will issue an RFP in the fall of 2017 and from there, select a firm to rewrite the City's zoning ordinance based on what is outlined in this plan.

Updating the Future Land Use and Zoning Plan

This document shall be reviewed annually with the Comprehensive Plan by Planning Commission to track progress and make any necessary edits to the document. Given that the zoning ordinance will be rewritten within the next year, the Future Land Use and Zoning Plan should be revisited in 2018 and updated to reflect the new zoning classifications and zoning map. Revisiting this document in 2018 will be critical to shaping Albion’s future land use with a zoning code that is much easier to use and understand for both professionals and laymen than the current code.

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Existing Land Use Categories

Current Zoning Classifications

R-1 Single Family Residence District

This district is composed of low- to medium-density residential areas plus certain open areas where similar residential development should be encouraged. The regulations are intended to stabilize, protect and encourage the residential character of the district and prohibit all activities of a commercial nature. The R-1 district zoning is further subdivided into R-1A zones, R-1B zones, and R-1C zones. Such zones are based upon lot sizes, minimum square footage of dwelling structure, maximum height and minimum setbacks from parcel lines.

R-2 One- and Two-Family Residence District

This district is composed of certain medium-density areas representing a compatible co-mingling of one- and two-family dwellings, plus certain open areas where similar residential development appears likely to occur. The regulations are intended to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district and to prohibit all activities of a commercial nature. The R-2 district zoning is further subdivided into R-2A and R-2B zones. Such zones are based upon lot sizes, minimum square footage of dwelling structure, maximum height and minimum setbacks from parcel lines.

R-3 Multiple-Family Residence and Office District

This district is composed of certain high density residential areas and within which are certain neighborhoods where rehabilitation for similar development should be encouraged. The regulations are designed to protect the essential characteristics of the district and encourage, insofar as compatible with the intensity of land use, a good environment for family life, composed predominantly of an adult population and to prohibit all activities of a commercial nature except certain enumerated and controlled "Home Occupations." The R-3 district zoning is further subdivided into R-3A, R-3B and R-3C zones. Such zones are based on lot sizes, minimum square footage of dwelling structure, maximum height and minimum setbacks from parcel lines.

R-4 Mobile Homes Residence District

The mobile home park district is intended to encourage the appropriate location and suitable development of mobile home parks. In keeping with the occupancy characteristics of contemporary mobile homes, this Division establishes density standards and permitted uses that reflect the basic needs of potential residents.

O-1 Transitional Office District

The O-1 Transitional Office District is established in order to buffer commercial and industrial zones from less intensive residential areas by allowing limited professional office and institutional uses in existing structures, when located on or near major streets.

B-1 Neighborhood Business District

This district is composed of certain land and structures used primarily to provide the retailing of commodities classed by merchants "convenience goods," such as groceries and drugs, and the

furnishing of certain personal services, such as beauty shops, barber shops, and "pick-up" stations for laundry or dry cleaning, thus satisfying the daily and weekly household or personal needs of abutting residential neighborhoods. This district is small, usually located at the intersection of two (2) streets or highways, and almost always entirely surrounded by residential districts.

B-2 Central Business District

The B-2 Central Business District is intended to provide for a variety of retail and office services which serve the needs of a consumer trade area. This district is characterized by intense pedestrian activity and a unified architectural scale. Existing apartment units and/or multiple-family residences are allowed on upper story floors, but are not allowed on the first floor or basement. Conversion of existing space on the second or third floors for the new residential use shall be subject to special use approval.

B-3 Highway Service Business District

This district is intended to provide for retail business and services in areas which abut federal and state highways, and major arterial streets designated as such on the "street plan" of the City of Albion of current adoption.

B-4 Central Fringe Business District

The B-4 Central Fringe Business District is designed to provide sites for more diversified business types which would often be incompatible with the pedestrian movement in the Central Business District. The intent is to provide services which are more dependent upon direct automobile access to establishments within this district, which are in close proximity to the pedestrian scale services of the Central Business District. Residential uses are permitted provided: The unit is a single family or two-family dwelling and used exclusively for that purpose, or the unit is secondary to a principle permitted use in the district and that permitted use is located on the main floor of the building.

M-1 Light Industrial District

This district is composed of certain land so situated as to be suitable for light industrial development, but where the modes of operations of the industry may directly affect nearby nonindustrial development. The regulations are so designed as to permit the normal operations of almost all light industries, subject only to those needed for their mutual protection and the equitable preservation of nearby nonindustrial uses of land.

M-1 (P) Light Industrial Park District

Light industrial parks shall conform to all the requirements of the light industrial district. The difference between M-1 and M-1-P primarily is that a great distance is required for setbacks in the M-1-P district.

M-2 Heavy Industrial District

This district is composed of certain land so situated as to be suitable for industrial development, but where the modes of operation of the industry may directly affect nearby nonindustrial development. The regulations are so designed as to permit the normal operations of almost all industries, subject only to those needed for their mutual protection and the equitable preservation of nearby nonindustrial uses of land.

M-2 (P) Heavy Industrial Park District

Heavy industrial parks shall permit all uses allowed in light industrial districts, light industrial parks and heavy industrial districts. Difference between M-2 and M-2-P primarily is that a great distance is required for setbacks in the M-2-P district.

CD Campus Development District

Campus development district is comprised of academic buildings, administrative buildings, student housing and athletic facilities. The Campus Development District encompasses a specific territory owned by Albion College and excludes other properties within the territory owned by others.

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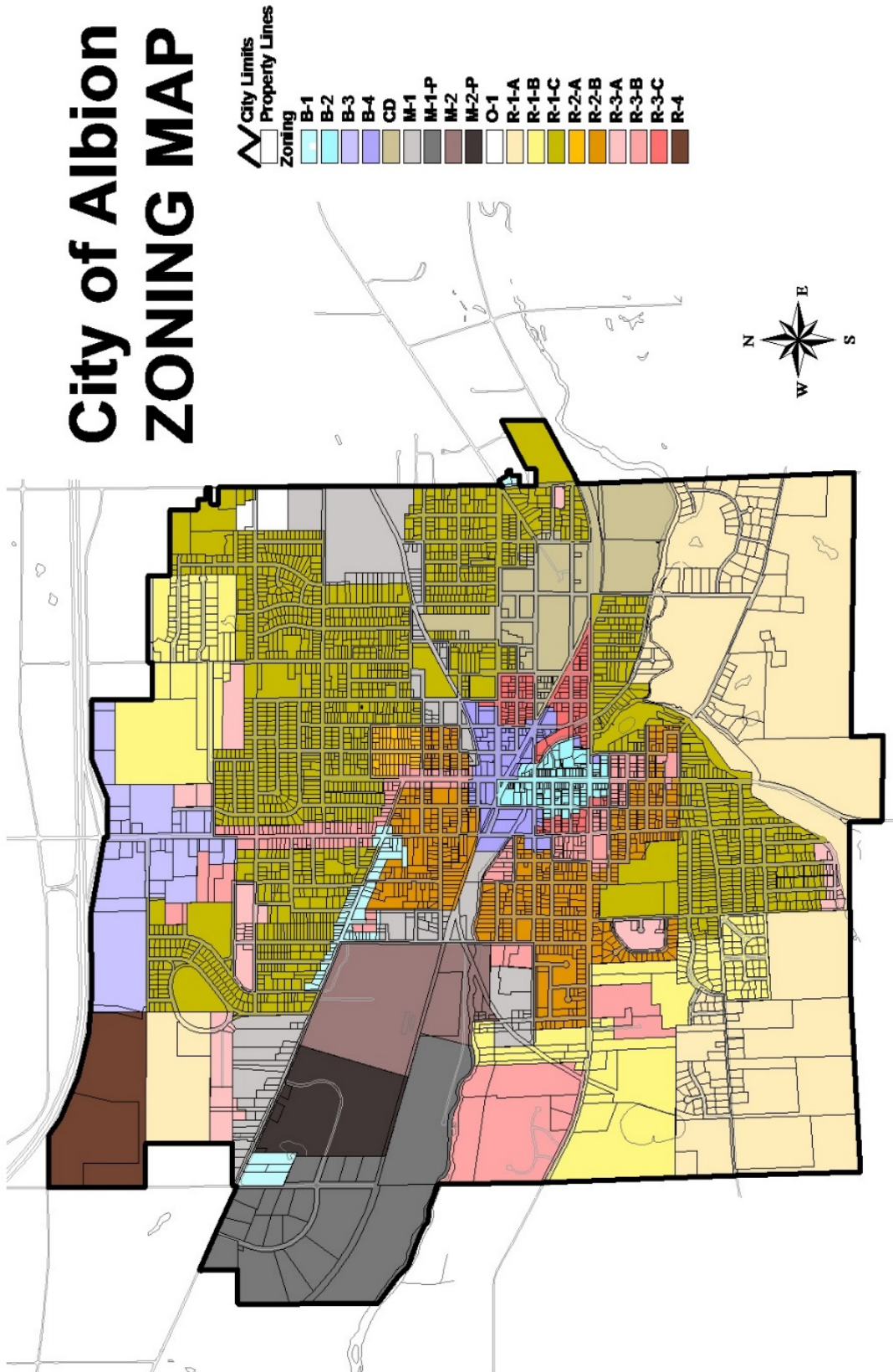
Zoning Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, the zoning ordinance will be rewritten and updated within the next year. The City will leverage funding from the MEDC to cover the cost of this project. Through workshops and recommendations from the City's previous consultant for the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan, a number of changes to the zoning have been identified. It has been recommended that Albion not pursue form-based code at this time. A few of the high priority areas include: parking management, "missing middle" housing designs, collapsing zoning classifications, and evaluating the possibility of an RFQ (Request for Quote) instead of an RFP (Request for Proposal) process. Other, more specific changes that need to be made to the zoning ordinance that have been identified so far include but are not limited to:

- **Format**
 - Generally cleaning up the language of the zoning ordinance
 - Adding graphics and diagrams
 - Using tables instead of lists to show uses allowed in each zoning district
 - Create a separate chapter for nonconformities and clean up the language describing nonconformities
- **Zoning Classifications**
 - Collapsing zoning districts into fewer categories
 - Create GIS zoning map to reflect new zoning classifications
 - Combine the specific use standards that are repeated in each zoning district (this will be made easier by collapsing the number of zoning districts)
- **Parking**
 - Allow for shared parking among businesses and include parking maximums instead of minimums for businesses
 - Bike parking standards
- **Commercial**
 - Allow for mixed use developments
 - Outdoor seating standards
- **Residential**
 - Increase residential opportunities by allowing for denser housing developments and "Missing Middle" housing and other "nontraditional" housing types
- Update language for Planned Unit Development Districts
- Landscaping and native plant regulations
- Determine if RFP and/or RFQ process is more suitable to the City's needs
- Removing and clarifying sign regulations to match the sign ordinance

Current Zoning Map

City of Albion ZONING MAP



Zoning and the Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Map is not a Zoning Map in its purpose or in a legal sense. A land use map is more general in nature but specifies which types of zoning will be allowed in each area. A zoning map is a visual representation of the boundaries for which zoning regulations have been adopted by the City of Albion. The Future Land Use Plan and Map is intended to guide the decisions of the Planning Commission and direct developments into the appropriate areas.

Future Land Use Categories

Albion is currently zoned under 19 different zoning classifications. For a city this size, it was recommended during the comprehensive planning process and by professionals at a Congress for New Urbanism Workshop that the zoning classifications be condensed. Condensing the zoning classifications would help to create for a more user-friendly zoning ordinance. The 5 main future land use categories that the new zoning classifications will fall under after the zoning update are:

Mixed Use District

“Mixed use” refers to a type of development that harmoniously places different types of uses close to one another. For example, a mixed use property in a downtown could have apartments on the upper floors while the ground floor is occupied by retail or commercial space. The blending of residential, commercial, cultural, industrial, and institutional uses should not create conflict but instead create for liveliness and foot traffic at all times of day and is useful for those that live and work in the area.

Albion residents, City staff, and elected and appointed officials have identified a few key areas that could benefit from mixed use zoning classifications. These key areas include: Eaton Street, Austin Avenue/West Michigan Avenue, Superior Street/M-99, and near these major corridors.

Residential District

The Residential District is established and maintained to accommodate and regulate dense residential properties where setbacks and other restrictions will help to promote safety and preserve quality of life for Albion’s residents. Residential zoning classifications will specify the proper setbacks, size requirements, and regulations for all residential units. After the zoning rewrite, there will likely be 2 to 3 residential categories instead of the 9 that the City has now. Albion is in need of a diversified and improved housing stock to meet the needs of existing and future residents and improve the quality of life. Improving and simplifying the zoning for residential properties will help to spur development and reinvestment.

Missing Middle Housing

The “missing middle” housing mentioned in this plan refers to a category of housing that accommodates the needs of the “middle” of the housing market that would like to see denser, easier to maintain, urban residential developments. Missingmiddlehousing.com defines the “missing middle” as, “[...] a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living.” Missing middle housing can be very appealing to senior populations that want to “age in place,” young urban professionals, couples without kids, and families that do not want large homes to

maintain. Albion is an ideal location for this missing middle housing. Concept drawings of missing middle housing can be found at www.missingmiddlehousing.com.

Commercial District

Commercial zoning classifications will specify the proper setbacks, build-to lines, and other regulations where the primary land use is for commercial activity. Specific commercial uses that cannot be included in the Mixed Use District will be outlined in the zoning rewrite such as commercial strip malls.

Manufacturing District

The Manufacturing District is established for industrial and compatible commercial development that may require larger parcels, larger setbacks, and buffers from other uses. This district is in the 425 Property, the Albion Industrial Park, and some of the surrounding areas. The zoning classifications for the zoning district will need to be rewritten and condensed so that they are clear and flexible. Currently in several cases, M-1-P and M-2-P setbacks are too large, severely restricting the size of new industrial development and expansion of existing industry and structures. The existing industrial/manufacturing classifications are very repetitive and text heavy. Given the relatively small amount of heavy industrial facilities in Albion, this zoning classification can be tightened up and if allowed, condensed from four to possibly two zoning categories.

College District

The College District is an existing zoning classification that denotes the properties that Albion College owns and allows for more uses within the district (such as student housing) and prohibits some other uses (such as heavy industrial). In the zoning ordinance update, this zoning classification will become an overlay district meaning that the district “lays over” the zoning classifications underneath. For example, a residential property may be owned by Albion College and this will be denoted by the College Overlay District while the residential zoning classification restrictions apply to that property. Some specific uses may be allowed under the College District that would not be allowed in others such as dormitory buildings.

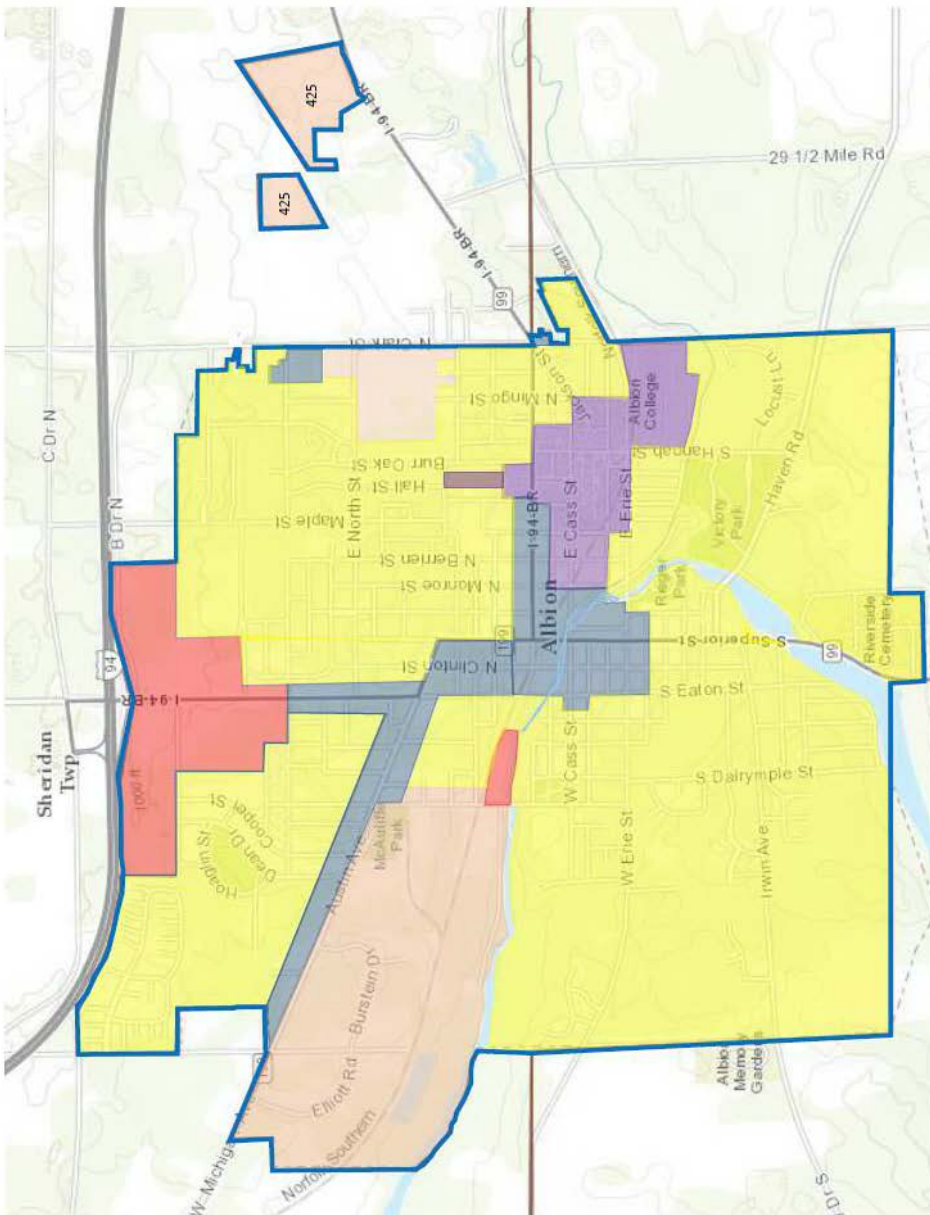
Future Land Use Category	Corresponding Existing Zoning Classifications
Mixed Use District	B-2, B-4
Residential District	R-1 (R1A, R1B, R1C); R-2 (R2A, R2B); R-3 (R3A, R3C, R3B); R-4
Commercial District	B-1, B-3, O-1
Manufacturing District	M-1, M-1-P, M-2, M-2-P
College District	CD

Future Land Use Map

CITY OF ALBION FUTURE LAND USE



- DISTRICT CATEGORIES**
- COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
 - COLLEGE DISTRICT
 - MANUFACTURING DISTRICT
 - MIXED USE DISTRICT
 - RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
 - CITY LIMIT



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Development in Albion

Residential Development

Albion was ranked 16th best city in the state for first-time homebuyers. Albion has many large, affordable homes. At the same time, Albion has an inadequate housing stock for today's population. More people would like to see residences located closer to walkable urban areas, apartments, townhomes, duplexes, and barrier-free homes. Albion's aging housing stock can be expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to renovate. In the neighborhood between the Albion College campus and downtown, significant renovations are being made to college-owned houses and others are being demolished through the "Harrington Gift" – a donation from Albion College alum that is funding the project. Other areas of the city and county are having homes that are beyond repair demolished by the Calhoun County Land Bank Authority through a grant from the Michigan Homeowners Assistance Nonprofit Housing Corporation and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

Nearly every neighborhood in Albion has vacant, blighted, and demolished residential properties that could benefit from new housing developments and renovations to existing structures. Albion's brownfield sites that are located in neighborhoods such as the Dalrymple School property, Union Steel, and the Caldwell School property were all identified by residents as places where they would like to see new housing developments. With the zoning rewrite, the requirements for renovating or building new homes will be much clearer for homeowners and developers.

Utilities

Albion maintains its own wastewater treatment and water treatment facility. A Capital Improvements Plan was adopted on April 3, 2017 and is available on the City's website. Trash hauling services are provided by Granger. The local internet and cable provider is WOW! Cable. Electricity and gas are provided by Consumers Energy. The City is exploring the option of bringing fiber optic cable internet.

Commercial Development

Albion's downtown and Eaton Street Corridor are seeing investment and interest from developers and current business owners. Residents have expressed their demand for retail stores, restaurants, and other commercial developments along Eaton Street, Austin Avenue, and Superior Street. The City of Albion and the Albion Economic Development Corporation are working to better accommodate new commercial developments through streamlining their processes and meeting the requirements of the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Through meeting this requirement, Albion's redevelopment ready sites will be marketed nationally through the MEDC so that Albion can see a quick but sustainable economic revitalization. Several new businesses have been opened in Albion's downtown and along the Eaton Street Corridor such as: O'Reilly's Auto Parts, Taco Bell, Label Shopper, Sterling Books and Brew, Brown's Home Furnishings, and others. The AEDC, the City of Albion, the DDA, and the Chamber of Commerce will work to retain these businesses and attract more to create vibrant and successful commercial nodes in Albion.

Mixed Use Development

Mixed use developments have been referred to as “recession proof” by professional planners. These properties tend to be easier to redevelop than most. Mixed use properties are most commonly recognized as buildings with both apartments and retail/commercial spaces inside them. They create for a sense of life and vibrancy by generating foot traffic at all times of day.

Albion is now accommodating more mixed use developments. The first building to be renovated is the “Dickerson Building” which is home to Sterling Books and Brew, the Barbell Club, and second-floor apartments. The “Peabody Project” secured a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the MEDC in **month** 2017. This will also be a mixed use development in the Downtown Development District that will have apartments on the upper floors and commercial space on the ground floor.

Through the public input that was gathered, mixed use developments should be pursued along Eaton Street, Austin Avenue, and of course the downtown. This will help to strengthen, revitalize, and beautify these areas of Albion.

Industrial Development

Albion’s Industrial Park which is maintained by the Albion Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), the City’s lead economic development organization, is home to 30 businesses that range from plastic injection molding to bee keeping supplies. The AEDC works to retain and grow existing businesses, support new businesses and entrepreneurs, and attract new companies to the greater Albion area. The zoning update with clear and simplified language regarding manufacturing and industrial properties will be attractive to new businesses and hopefully incentivize existing businesses to improve and expand.

Recreational Development

The City’s recreational development is guided by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The 2016 – 2020 Recreation Master Plan was adopted in the fall of 2015. It focuses on: maintenance and improvement of the current parks and recreation system; ensuring that there are sufficient recreational opportunities within walking distance of low-income neighborhoods; enhancing recreational opportunities associated with the Kalamazoo River and the parks along the river and associated with the Albion River Trail; addressing access to and safety within the park system; and ensuring that all applicable policies and environments promote physical activity.

The intersection of three major state-wide and national trails – the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail, the Iron Belle Trail, and the North Country National Scenic Trail – is located in Albion’s Victory Park. Construction on a DNR-funded project to expand Albion’s River Trail and make upgrades to Victory Park began in summer 2017 to capitalize on this unique aspect of the City. The City will continue to leverage funding to become a “trail town” which will further promote physical activity and spark tourism.

Transportation

The 2017-2021 Comprehensive Plan defines the City’s goal for transportation as improving Albion’s transportation network to accommodate and promote various modes, including walking, biking, automobiles, passenger rail, and public transportation. Transportation within and outside of Albion is a challenge for those without personal vehicles, differently-abled persons, and those under the legal

driving age. Calhoun County is pursuing a study to implement a county-wide transportation system. In order to be a part of this system, Albion needs to find a solution for the short term that could connect within Albion to the potential future county-wide system.

Major Corridors

Albion has important gateways that lead into the community – the Downtown Commercial District, Michigan Avenue, Austin Avenue, M-99, and the I-94 Business Corridor/Eaton Street. Enhancing these gateways will require collaboration among the City’s elected and appointed officials and community partners. Stabilizing these corridors by removing blight, rehabilitating existing buildings, redesigning/improving the streetscape, adding wayfinding signage, and adding attractive landscaping will help to improve access for walking and biking, draw business towards commercial nodes, and attract new residents and businesses.

Alternative Energy Sources

Albion hopes to foster the growth of new businesses by providing renewable and affordable energy sources. Through working with Consumers Energy and private developers, Albion could redevelop large brownfield sites with alternative energy sources such as solar or wind fields.

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