



Section 7: Constraints + Opportunities

Overview

Mattawan is a small, mostly undeveloped community that had a 2000 census population of 2,536. It is located in southwestern Michigan in the Kalamazoo-Portage metropolitan area. The Village flanks I-94 and has a full interchange at Main Street. A large combined school campus is located on the west side of the community, which serves parts of Van Buren and Kalamazoo counties.

Overall, the Village is in good physical condition and has a small-town, “wine country” character with rolling hills, extensive woodlands, and several orchards and vineyards. However, it does not have an attractive “front door” or gateway as large truck facilities, small commercial uses, parking lots, and driveways dominate the I-94 interchange corners.

Other than the recent expansion of the MPI Research campus and a few small commercial developments, the community has not experienced significant new housing or industrial development. Regional economic conditions have limited community growth to some extent in recent years.

The following is a more detailed summary of the constraints and issues affecting land use and development patterns in Mattawan. Also summarized are the significant positive features that can be considered “building blocks” for community improvement and development.

Constraints/Issues/Negatives

Physical Conditions

- The Village lacks strong gateway/identity features at the I-94 interchange and at other entrances.
- Main Street, which is the Village’s major central roadway, lacks attractive streetscape and gateway features.
- Some buildings are vacant or deteriorating, especially Downtown and near the I-94 interchange.
- Some commercial developments lack landscaping, sidewalks, and screening of utility/loading/storage areas.
- Some views into the community from I-94 are unattractive with exposed storage areas and truck parking, lack of landscaping, and billboards.

Residential

- Much of the market area's new residential development is taking place outside the Village, in Antwerp and Texas townships.
- The Village has a large number of single-family homes and manufactured homes and lacks a diversity of housing types. Residents, workers, and businesses seek a wider variety of housing types, including townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and senior housing.
- The Village does not have a significant supply of new housing, although three condominium projects recently have been proposed.
- A lack of housing choices forces many local workers to commute from Kalamazoo or farther away to employers in Mattawan.
- In some locations, older residential buildings are deteriorating.
- Some manufactured home parks have deteriorating structures, numerous vacant pads, a lack of open space, and/or crowded, outdated development patterns.
- Some residential areas lack sidewalks, curbs, storm sewers, street trees and street lights.

Commercial

- Mattawan's traditional Downtown, which is nearly a mile from I-94, does not have direct access to the interstate, putting it at a competitive disadvantage to other commercial areas in the region, closer to the interstate.
- Commercial activity has shifted away from Downtown to further north along Main Street and along the Red Arrow Highway.
- Downtown has deteriorating buildings, limited off-street parking, and a lack of interest from businesses and developers.

Mattawan Comprehensive Plan

Section 7: Constraints + Opportunities

- More activities are needed Downtown such as festivals, music, dances, and seasonal celebrations.
- Mattawan residents typically do much of their shopping in Kalamazoo or its suburbs.
- There are not a lot of commercial and recreational uses geared toward young people, and parents whose children attend school in Mattawan.
- MPI has numerous employees and visitors that tend to go elsewhere for shopping, dining, and hotels.

Industrial/Business Park

- Some industries have been negatively affected by the manufacturing slowdown in Michigan, particularly those related to the automotive industry.
- Besides MPI Research, development in the Mattawan Business Park has been slow. It has several vacant properties.
- The Business Park gateway signage could be more visible.

Open Space

- The Village has one park.
- The School District and Mattawan Little League operate most of the area's sports fields, playgrounds, and open space.
- Neighborhoods and subdivisions lack neighborhood parks and small pocket parks or "tot lots."
- The Mattawan Little League does not allow public use of its fields, which reduces the fields available in the Village.
- The "school forest" along Main Street is an overgrown, underutilized property in a key development zone near the I-94 interchange. It is not contiguous to other natural areas.

Transportation:

- The Main Street bridge over I-94 is narrow and experiences congestion that affects both Mattawan and the interchange ramps, and MDOT does not currently have plans to redo the bridge.
- Main Street needs signalization and capacity improvements.
- Signal operations at McGillen and Main are inefficient and could better accommodate school buses and parents dropping their children off at school.
- Delays occur in the afternoon when employees exit MPI Research's driveway onto Main Street as schools are letting out.
- Lane markings are confusing, absent, or faded at some intersections.
- Pedestrian crossings in certain locations lack pavement striping.
- Merge signs along Main Street are confusing and unnecessary.
- MPI Research's expansion could cause capacity issues at its access drive on Main Street.
- Commercial uses along Main Street have numerous curb cuts and lack shared access drives and shared parking.
- School expansion could add to road congestion as more vehicles travel to Mattawan from outside the community to the campus.
- The intersection of Front and Main Streets has visibility issues due to the railroad overpass.

Mattawan Comprehensive Plan

Section 7: Constraints + Opportunities

Utilities/Infrastructure:

- The Village will need to provide additional water treatment and may drill a new well to comply with new standards for drinking water.
- Power lines into the business park need additional capacity for future development.
- In the long term, Mattawan will need additional water and sewer capacity to accommodate potential growth.

Schools:

- The school campus lacks direct access to arterial roads, which causes some traffic congestion on local streets.
- A lack of sidewalks in many locations makes it difficult for children to walk to school.
- Schools are at capacity, although the District does have an expansion plan to deal with growth.

Other:

- The Village is “struggling with its image” as real estate sales people, developers, leaders, and residents do not seem to have a sense of what Mattawan is or wants to be: “What is the future vision?” “Is it a truck stop?” “Is it a bedroom community?”
- The overall “quality of life” for area residents is a concern regarding the condition of Downtown and future development goals.
- Some residents suggested better marketing of Mattawan, including revamping the Mattawan Days festival.
- Mattawan may still be perceived by developers as a “slow growth” or “no growth” community.
- The low property tax rate is attractive to property owners and businesses but limits the Village’s operational capacity.
- The Village and Antwerp Township have sometimes had different views over land-use and development issues. For example:

- Antwerp Township has opposed some past annexation attempts by the Village. The annexations were requested by developers seeking Village services.
- A property owner on the southern edge of the Mattawan “detached” and became part of Antwerp Township. (The Township and Village are discussing an intergovernmental agreement for serving this area.)
- Oshtemo and Texas Townships are growing rapidly.
- The Village, like all Michigan local governments, has not been getting as much revenue-sharing money from the state of Michigan in recent years.
- Wayfinding signage is lacking throughout the Village.

Opportunities/Strengths/Positives

Overall:

- Village has an attractive “slow-paced,” “quaint,” “small-town” atmosphere.

Physical Conditions:

- Mattawan has attractive surroundings with rolling hills, farmland, vineyards, and woodlands.
- Residents said they enjoy the “slow-paced,” “quaint,” “small-town” atmosphere.
- Front Street in Downtown has historic charm.
- Renovating and redeveloping Downtown may enhance the district as a charming shopping and dining location.
- An improved streetscape would help make Downtown a more attractive place to shop and would provide opportunities for outdoor dining.
- Part of Mattawan’s frontage along I-94 has an attractive, wooded character.

Transportation:

- I-94 expressway provides significant transportation access to the area and is an important connection to Kalamazoo, Michigan's "Harbor Country," Detroit, and Chicago.
- Transportation improvements will allow the Village to "get ahead" of growth.
- Additional capacity improvements are planned by the Village to provide a northbound right-turn lane on Main Street at the I-94 eastbound on-ramp.
- Improved signal operations at McGillen and Main could better accommodate peak school traffic. The Village is planning to replace/upgrade the signal equipment in 2007.
- Striping/restriping lane markings could improve traffic safety and flow at various intersections. The Village will be restriping and adding striping in 2007.
- Pavement striping at various pedestrian crossings could improve safety and walkability. The Village has completed some striping projects.
- The Mattawan Business Park is close to the I-94 interchange, and has good access and visibility.
- Access-management strategies, such as consolidated curb cuts and shared access drives, could help traffic flow along commercial corridors.
- Despite the number of trucking-related facilities along the interstate, truck traffic is minimal throughout the rest of the community.
- Mattawan's location on the Amtrak rail line could allow for possible passenger and freight service in the future.
- The Village has plans to restripe the east approach of Front Street at Main Street to improve the turning radius for the northbound to eastbound right-turn movement and shield the first parking space on the north side of Front Street by placing additional curb. This improvement is to be completed in 2007.

Residential

- Large undeveloped parcels are available for new housing.
- MPI's existing and future employees may provide a market for a variety of new housing types.

Commercial

- Area employers, the Mattawan schools, and I-94 access help bring traffic/activity to Mattawan.
- Downtown has antique/craft shops that attract visitors from the region.
- Residents have expressed a desire for new retail opportunities, such as:
 - Bakery
 - Pub
 - Restaurants
 - Full-service grocery store
 - Entertainment
 - A hotel, conference center, and banquet facilities
- Land is available for commercial development.
- MPI brings numerous visitors to its site who could possibly help support hotels, a conference center, banquet facilities and other businesses.

Open Space:

- Large farms, woodlands, and wetlands provide the community with an attractive, “green” character.
- Residents have access to the recreational facilities located on the school campus.
- Residents “take pride” in the Downtown park, which has recently been improved.
- The house on the south side of the Downtown park has potential has a community center.

Mattawan Comprehensive Plan

Section 7: Constraints + Opportunities

- Open spaces and natural areas could be linked with public walks and/or multi-use trails.
- Antwerp Township has a recreation plan underway and includes area greenways in its current plans.
- A regional trail 10 miles north of Mattawan connects the Kalamazoo region with the Lake Michigan coast.

Schools:

- The school system has an excellent reputation in the region, which is an attractive amenity to potential residents and employers.
- The area's schools are located on one campus, which facilitates drop-off/pick-up of students.
- The School District has capacity expansion plans that include a 60-acre elementary school site on the west side of Western Street.
- The District owns large sections of undeveloped acreage, including the “school forest” on Main Street and farmland west of Western Street.
- Circulation around the campus for student drop-off/pick-up works efficiently.

Economic Development:

- Mattawan has a full interchange and 2 miles of frontage on a major interstate expressway linking Chicago and Detroit.
- The Village has a small-town feeling and a green “wine country” character.
- The area has an excellent school system.
- Large, undeveloped or underdeveloped tracts of land exist around the interchange and in the Mattawan Business Park.
- MPI Research is expanding its operations from 1,000 employees to 3,500 employees.

- The pharmaceutical and life sciences industries are clustered in the region, and may have potential for the Mattawan Business Park.
- The Kalamazoo wastewater system can accommodate additional growth, including wastewater from the life sciences industry.
- MPI draws an average of 60 visitors per week to Mattawan from around the world who usually require overnight stays at area hotels and need access to local shopping and dining.
- The Kalamazoo/Portage metropolitan area is home to three colleges and universities.
- Village residents and leaders value the community's history and want to preserve where feasible the character of Downtown and the area's ruralscape.
- Mattawan is near Southwest Michigan's "Harbor Country" vacation/second home area.
- Red Arrow Highway, which is the main road serving Harbor Country, is located just north of the Village border.
- Antique shops on Front Street have a strong regional customer base.
- The Business Park has potential for direct rail access.
- A new high-speed, fiber optic line is being added to the Village's business park and may be able to be used by the Village and its residents.

Redevelopment/Development Sites

- Downtown (infill sites)
- Vacant or agricultural land along Front Avenue west of Downtown.
- Undeveloped areas within or adjacent to Mattawan Business Park.
- Along Main Street including:
 - Around the intersection of Main and McGillen.

Section 7: Constraints + Opportunities

- The Family Fun Park on the southwest corner of I-94 and Main.
 - Northwest corner of I-94 and Main, including parts of the Alcoa/EPS/Mol-Son complex.
 - Northeast corner of I-94 and Main, including land owned by Mol-Son and underutilized parcels.
 - South of French Road between the medical office building and small commercial center.
- Vacant or agricultural areas north of the school campus.

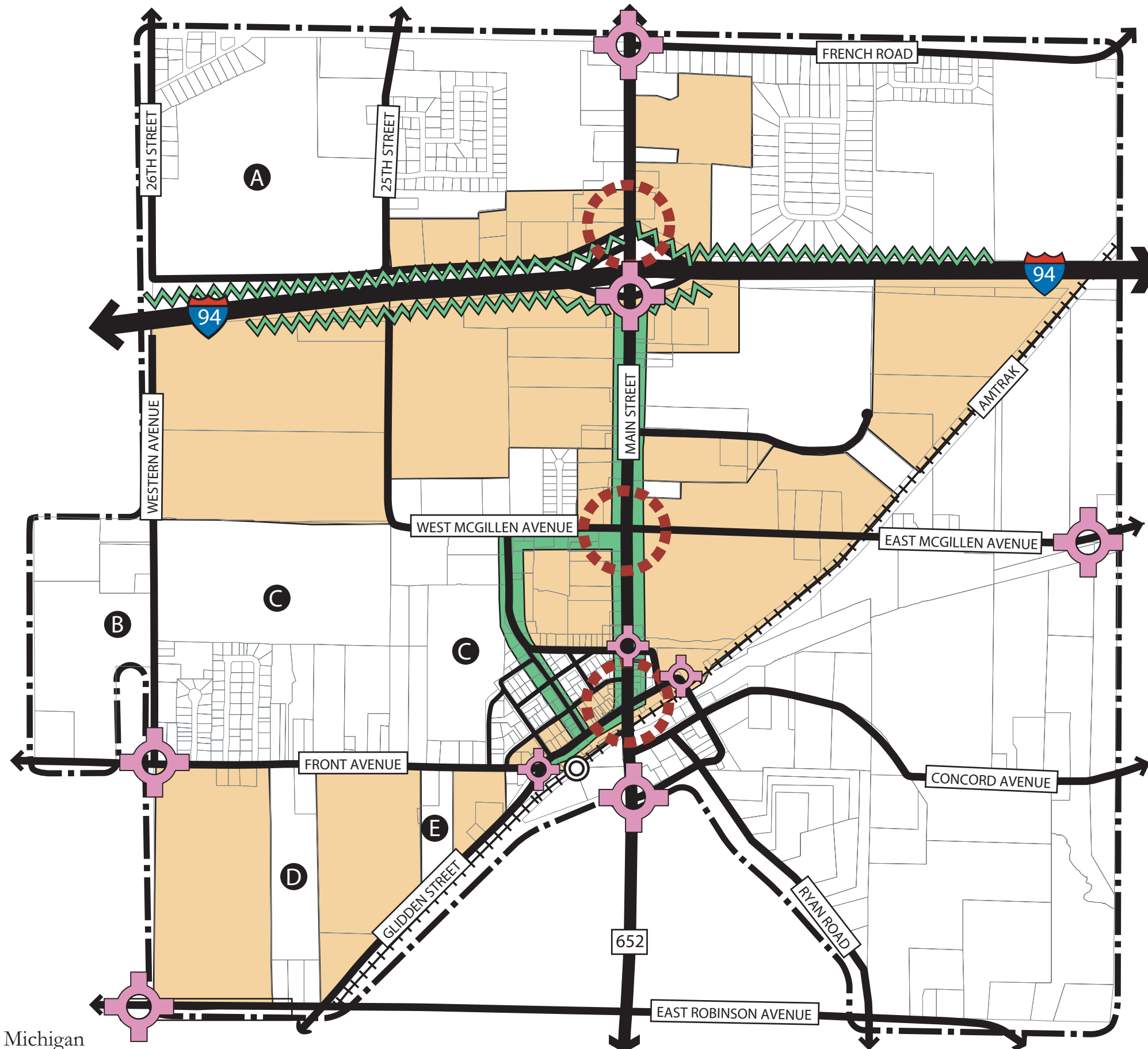
Development Ideas/Suggestions

- A Bakery.
- An additional coffee shop.
- Restaurants (cafes, family restaurants).
- Full-service grocery store (e.g. Meijer).
- Entertainment options (a cinema, a playhouse).
- Services (hair salon, barber shop, greeting card store, unique specialty shops).
- An art center.
- Hotel, conference center, and banquet facilities.
- Bed and breakfast/inn.
- Arts and crafts business.
- Banquet hall.
- Pubs.
- Bank.
- Recreation (ice skating arena, lacrosse/soccer fields)
- Multi-use trails.
- New housing products, including condos, apartments, and townhomes.

Village of Mattawan Constraints + Opportunities

Legend

- Village Hall
- Interstate
- Expressway
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- County Highway
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- Key Intersection
- Landscape Buffer Needed
- Streetscape Improvements Needed
- Development/Redevelopment Opportunities
- Potential Community Gateway/ Entrance
- Potential District Gateway/ Entrance
- Existing Manufactured Homes
- Campus Expansion Zone
- Combined School Campus
- Little League Complex
- Antwerp Township Hall Library/Community Center



Village of Mattawan, Michigan
Mattawan Comprehensive Plan

Figure 7.1: Constraints & Opportunities

