



# CHAPTER 3 EXISTING LAND USE



*Many of the residential areas in Algonac include large yards and numerous, mature trees.*

## INTRODUCTION

Prior to establishing goals and determining future land uses, a community must have an accurate assessment of existing land uses. This chapter presents information on both the types and location of existing land uses. An updated existing land use inventory provides a base from which current and long-range planning recommendations and decisions can be made.

For the purposes of this analysis, seven major categories of land use have been established. These are described briefly as follows:

- **Single-Family Residential:** Improved land having one unit per building in predominately residential use. This includes a single manufactured home on a parcel.
- **Multiple-Family Residential:** Improved land having two or more units per building in predominately residential use,

including apartments, condominiums, row houses, senior living facilities without skilled nursing care, and terraces plus any streets, service drives, and community areas such as yards, clubhouses, and pools. Hotels, motels, campgrounds, and mobile home parks are not included in this category.

- **Commercial:** Improved land used for wholesale, retail, office, entertainment, or services, including those uses predominately at street level on multi-functional structures, plus related contiguous accessory uses such as parking areas and service drives.
- **Civic/Institutional:** Improved land and facilities that are held in the public interest and are usually exempt from real property taxation, plus any service drives or roads inside the actual parcel. Examples of this category are churches, educational facilities, governmental offices, health services, assisted living and skilled nursing care facilities, municipal parking facilities, day care centers, and cemeteries.
- **Industrial:** Improved land used predominately for manufacturing or on which materials or articles are processed or semi-processed, but not retailed, including related storage areas and warehousing.
- **Parks, Recreation and Open Space:** Land for which the primary purpose is for outdoor recreation or natural area conservation. This may include public or private-owned parks, outdoor sporting clubs, golf courses, marinas, campgrounds, or areas for which the primary purpose is preservation and conservation of undeveloped natural areas.
- **Transportation, Communication and Utilities (TCU):** Improved land containing above or below-ground utility or communication facilities, including electric and gas generating plants, transmission lines, booster and transformer stations, related storage yards, county drains, detention/retention

basins etc. In addition, airports, railroad yards, buildings related to utility companies, such as Detroit Edison, Consumer's Energy, and telecommunications companies, plus wastewater treatment plants and water works, are also included in this category.

## EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

A field survey of existing use was conducted in July 2013. Prior to the commencement of the field survey, the Algonac Planning Commission and municipal staff evaluated the 2008 Land Use dataset compiled by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) for accuracy. Several changes were noted during this initial review of existing land use.

Utilizing the enhanced SEMCOG land use data as a starting point, a survey team drove along every street in the city to “ground-truth” land uses and identify any necessary changes on the applicable parcel maps. Both vacant lands and developed properties were evaluated. Business locations were also confirmed and noted. Missing businesses were added to the list and closed or abandoned businesses were noted. Once the land uses for all of the parcels in the city were identified, a color-coded base map of the city was completed. As a result, Map 3-1 illustrates the land use of each individual parcel as well as the overall land use patterns throughout the city.

Existing land use patterns are significant when considering their impact on recreational, business and housing needs for the city. Table 3-1 above provides a tabulation of acreage for each of the generalized land use classifications.

## SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Single-family home sites occupy 697 acres of land in Algonac, representing about 80% of the city's total area. In 1973, there were

**Table 3-1: Existing Land Use in Algonac, 2013**

Land Use Category	Number of Acres	% of Total Land Area
Single-Family Residential	697	79.8%
Multiple-Family Residential	35	4.0%
Commercial	74	8.5%
Civic/Institutional	27	3.0%
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	14	1.7%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities (TCU)	26	3.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: SEMCOG 2008 Land Use Data for Algonac; Ground validation by Algonac Planning Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Commission, 2013.*

321.5 acres of residential land in the city, meaning that over a 40 year span, the number of residential uses in Algonac has more than doubled. As the predominate land use in the city, the majority of the single-family residential areas are located in traditional neighborhood settings, with homes located along a grid-like street pattern in much of the central and western parts of the city.

In the far western part of the city, along Amy St. and Scout Dr. there are a number of available, serviced, undeveloped lots. New home construction is ongoing in this area. East of Michigan St. in the northeast corner of the city are several, large undeveloped parcels in areas that are predominantly single-family residential.

There are also large swaths of single-family homes located along the eastern and southern shorelines of the city, between M-29 and the St. Clair River, where the traditional grid street pattern gives way to a system of canals and stub streets. In those neighborhoods, homes and other structures are arranged in patterns that maximize the use of the



*Algonac's unique system of canals connecting people to the St. Clair River has given rise to the city being nicknamed "The Venice of Michigan."*

land while at the same time providing access to and enjoyment of the water.

Minimum lot sizes in Algonac range from 6,000 square feet in the R-3 One and Two-family Residential zoning district, to 7,200 square feet in the R-2 One-family Residential zoning district and 9,600 square feet in the R-1 One-family Residential zoning district.

## **MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL**

There are 35 acres of multiple-family residential uses in Algonac, which accounts for just over 4% of the city's total land area. These uses are scattered throughout the city and are typically found adjacent to commercial or government/institutional uses.

In the north central part of the city, near Scout Drive, Summer Street



*Among the multiple-family residential areas in Algonac are the Algonquin Place apartments operated by the Algonac Housing Commission and this older apartment complex on Henrietta Street.*

and Fruit Street, are a number of a multiple-family developments including Summergrove Townhouses and the Algonac Manor apartment complex located at the corner of Fruit and Scout Drive, across from industrial uses in Clay Township. Further east down Fruit Street is the Rolling Brook apartment complex, which serves as a buffer between the Oaklawn Cemetery across the street and lower-density residential neighborhoods to the south.

Located along St. Clair River Drive between Fruit and Clay Streets is the Algonac Housing Commission facility consisting of the Algonquin Place apartments and townhouses, which are buffered from the interior single-family neighborhoods behind them by Algonac Elementary School along St. Clair Boulevard.

Another small pocket of multiple-family residential is located in the southwest part of the city near Worfolk Drive and Henrietta Street, which includes a number of two-family duplexes and an apartment complex on Henrietta. The southern part of the city is also home to the Anchorage condominium complex, which is south of M-29 near the Algonac Harbour Club.

## **COMMERCIAL**

The city's principal commercial uses are found along the M-29/St.



*The Seafarers International Union has a hall located in Algonac on St. Clair River Drive. The SIU is the largest North American union representing merchant mariners.*

Clair River Drive corridor, from the southern city limits to Smith Street to the north. This business area reflects a typical pattern of buildings set back from the public right-of-way with no on-street parking. The business district is vehicular in nature and is not pedestrian oriented. Commercial properties are typically part of strip developments with on-site parking lots.

Commercial uses in Algonac account for roughly 8.5% of the total land area in the city - about 74 acres in total. The commercial corridor along M-29 begins as you enter the city traveling east along Pointe Tremble from the townships to the west and the 23 Mile Road corridor in Macomb County. On the south side of Pointe Tremble Road is the Algonac Harbour Club, a large marina and restaurant facility. Across the street from the Harbour Club is a Northstar Bank branch office and a fast food restaurant. As one continues to head east along M-29 past State Street, there is additional free-standing convenience retail and fast food, a gas station and an auto repair facility. Just east of Market Street along M-29 begins a series of strip-developments with a mix of shopping and office uses.

As M-29 bends around into St. Clair River Drive, there is a mix of commercial/office and government and institutional uses on the west side of the street. On the east side of the street is the large Russell



*Algonac City Hall is located on St. Clair River Drive, across from the Algonac City Park on the river.*

Island Ferry parking site located just south of the Seafarers International Union (SIU) facility. The SIU represents professional merchant mariners sailing aboard U.S.-flag vessels in the deep sea, Great Lakes and inland trades.

The St. Clair River and the Riverfront Park stretch along the east side of the street. North of city hall are more shopping plazas in a strip development pattern. These commercial developments were put in as a replacement for the traditional downtown that was eliminated during urban renewal.

There are also some commercial uses in spot locations along St. Clair River Drive in the northeast section of the city, Azar's Market and Snoopy's Dog House, which is a bar/restaurant, and Ed Minnich Boats and Bait across from the Algonac-Clay Library.

## **CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL**

Civic and institutional uses occupy 27 acres in Algonac and are primarily improved land and facilities that are held in the public interest and are usually exempt from real property taxation. These include properties owned by the City of Algonac, St. Clair County or some other governmental entity. They also include schools, churches

and Downriver Community Services, a large medical clinic and social services facility located across from the Russell Island Ferry parking lot. In 1973, the city had about 16 acres of civic and institutional uses.

Over time, as the city developed based on the principles of its planned Neighborhood Unit Concept, civic and institutional uses were commonly located within residential neighborhoods to be able to provide residents with services that are self-contained amidst living areas. As such, many of the churches, schools and community parks are situated right across the street from homes and are within walking distance for their constituents.

There are six churches located throughout the City of Algonac:

- Lighthouse Baptist Church - 949 Fruit Street
- Algonac Restoration Branch Church - 818 Market Street
- Algonac Baptist Church - 1003 Washington Street
- St. Catherine Church - 1103 Washington Street
- Trinity United Methodist Church - 424 Smith Street
- Church of Christ - 1601 St. Clair River Drive
- First Evangelical Lutheran Church - 1623 Washington Street

Algonac Public Schools has facilities located along St. Clair Boulevard, including the Board of Education office at 1216 St. Clair



*The Algonac-Clay Library on St. Clair River Drive is one of 11 library branches of the St. Clair County Library System*

Boulevard and Algonac Elementary School at 1300 St. Clair Boulevard.

In the northeast section of the city, the Algonac-Clay Library - part of the St. Clair County Library System - is located on St. Clair River Drive.

The Algonac Community Center located at the corner of Golfview Avenue and Washington Street is planned for demolition, which will create a good sized parcel that could be ripe for infill development.

Oaklawn Cemetery, owned by Clay Township, is located in both Algonac and Clay Township along Fruit Street in the north central part of the city.

## INDUSTRIAL

There are no existing industrial areas in the City of Algonac. However, there are a number of industrial uses located just across the border in Clay Township in two primary areas:

- The area near the intersection of Scout and Fruit Streets in the north central part of the city, near Oaklawn Cemetery. Industrial uses here include tooling shops and light manufacturing facilities related to automotive and boating.
- The southwest border of Algonac and Clay Township along Dyke Road (M-29), just west of the border across from the Algonac Harbour Club, has property being used for automotive/truck/marine repair and parts storage.

These industrial areas in Clay Township are located along the Algonac border on shared roads. As such, the City of Algonac will need to consider the intensity of these uses when planning future land use in adjacent areas. At present, these areas are appropriately buffered from less intense, lower-density residential areas by multiple-family developments, commercial uses, or larger properties that have open space to help with the land use transition.

## PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

There are approximately 14 acres of parks, recreation and open space uses in Algonac, including five parks (See Chapter 8):

- *Smith Field* - Located on Smith and Michigan Streets behind Algonac Elementary School.
- *Riverfront Park (Algonac City Park)* - Located along the St. Clair River on the east side of M-29.
- *Scout Drive Tot Lot* - Located on Scout Drive at Columbia Street.
- *Columbia Street Playground* - Located at the corner of Columbia and Market Streets, near the water tower.
- *Lions Field* - Located on Michigan Street near Dixie Boulevard.

## TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITIES (TCU)

Transportation, communications and utilities (TCU) uses occupy about 27 acres of land in the City of Algonac. There has been no significant change in the location of utilities since the last survey. Uses include electrical substations and above-ground water and sewer infrastructure. TCU areas also include transportation corridors and roads. The primary transportation corridor in Algonac is M-29, which



The Algonac Substation is located at the intersection of State and Liberty Streets.

is a state trunkline. The Algonac Wastewater Treatment Plant is located in the southwest part of the city, off State Street. Further up State Street near Liberty Street is a Detroit Edison electrical substation.

## VACANT LAND ANALYSIS

The development patterns identified on the Algonac Existing Land Use map (Map 3-1) provide a base from which to begin the process of developing a master plan. While much of Algonac is developed, there are opportunities for redevelopment, infill development and even new development within the city. An analysis of vacant land was performed during the land use field survey and the results indicate there are areas throughout the city that could provide the city with growth opportunities. In fact, there are roughly 132 acres of vacant land throughout the city. Table 3-2 provides a breakdown of vacant land by land use type. Map 3-2 shows where vacant land is located in the city.

While much of the vacant property is single, vacant lots intermixed throughout various types of land use, there are also clusters of serviced and unserviced undeveloped lots in parts of the city.

**Table 3-2: Vacant Land in Algonac, 2013**

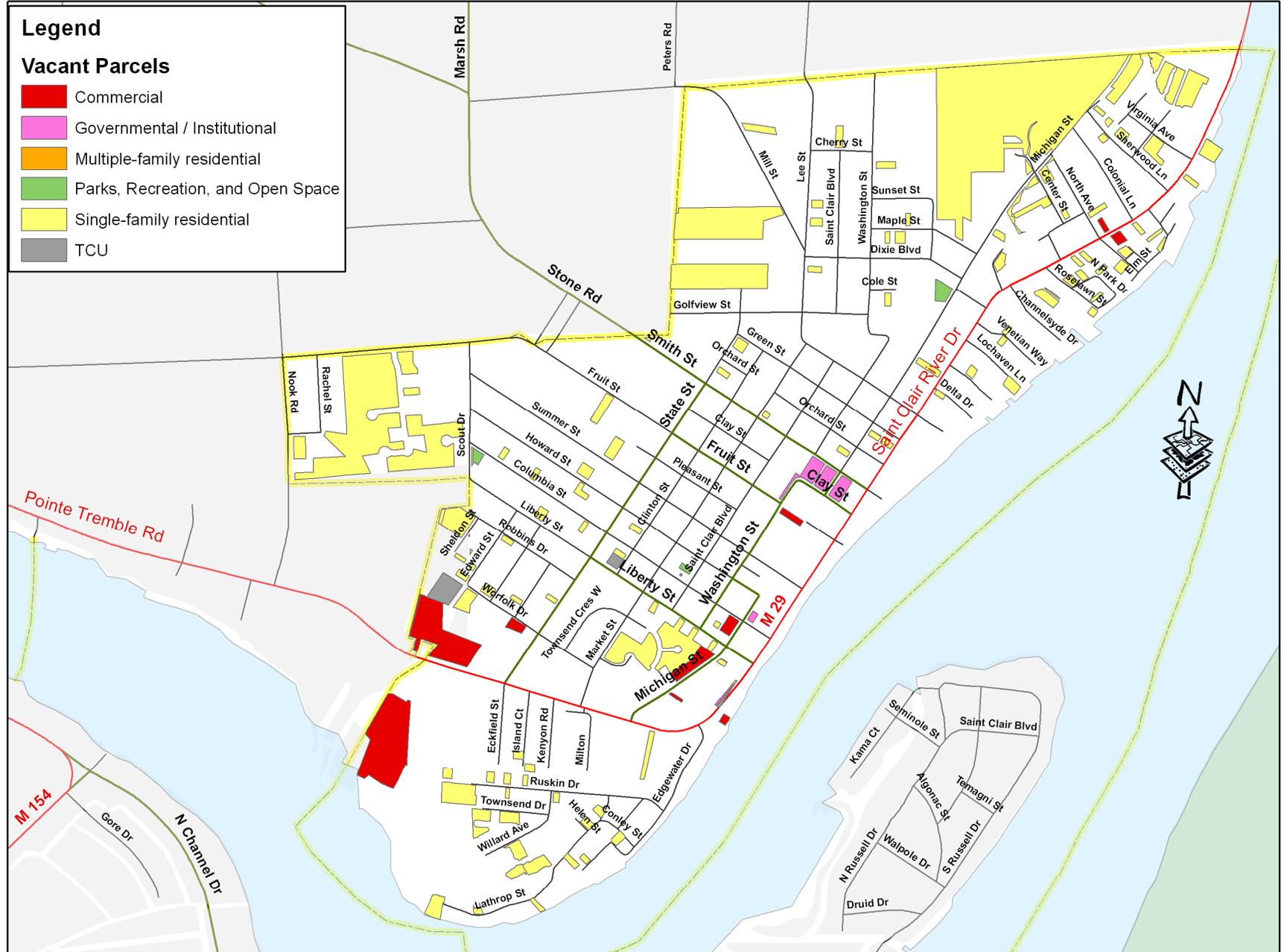
Land Use Category	Number of Acres	% of Total Land Area
Single-Family Residential	111.5	12.8%
Commercial	16.2	1.85%
Government/Institutional	2.6	0.29%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities (TCU)	1.9	0.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>132.2</b>	<b>15.2%</b>

Source: St. Clair County Parcels and Assessing Data in combination with SEMCOG's 2010 Land Use/Land Cover; St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission, 2013.



# Algonac Vacant Land, with Land Use Category

Algonac Master Plan



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