

4.0 Existing Land Use

Pattern of Land Divisions

As development occurs, larger tracts of land are generally broken down into smaller parcels. Therefore, studying the existing pattern of land divisions is one way to analyze the status of land use and development. Land division patterns for the Village of Bellaire are discussed below.

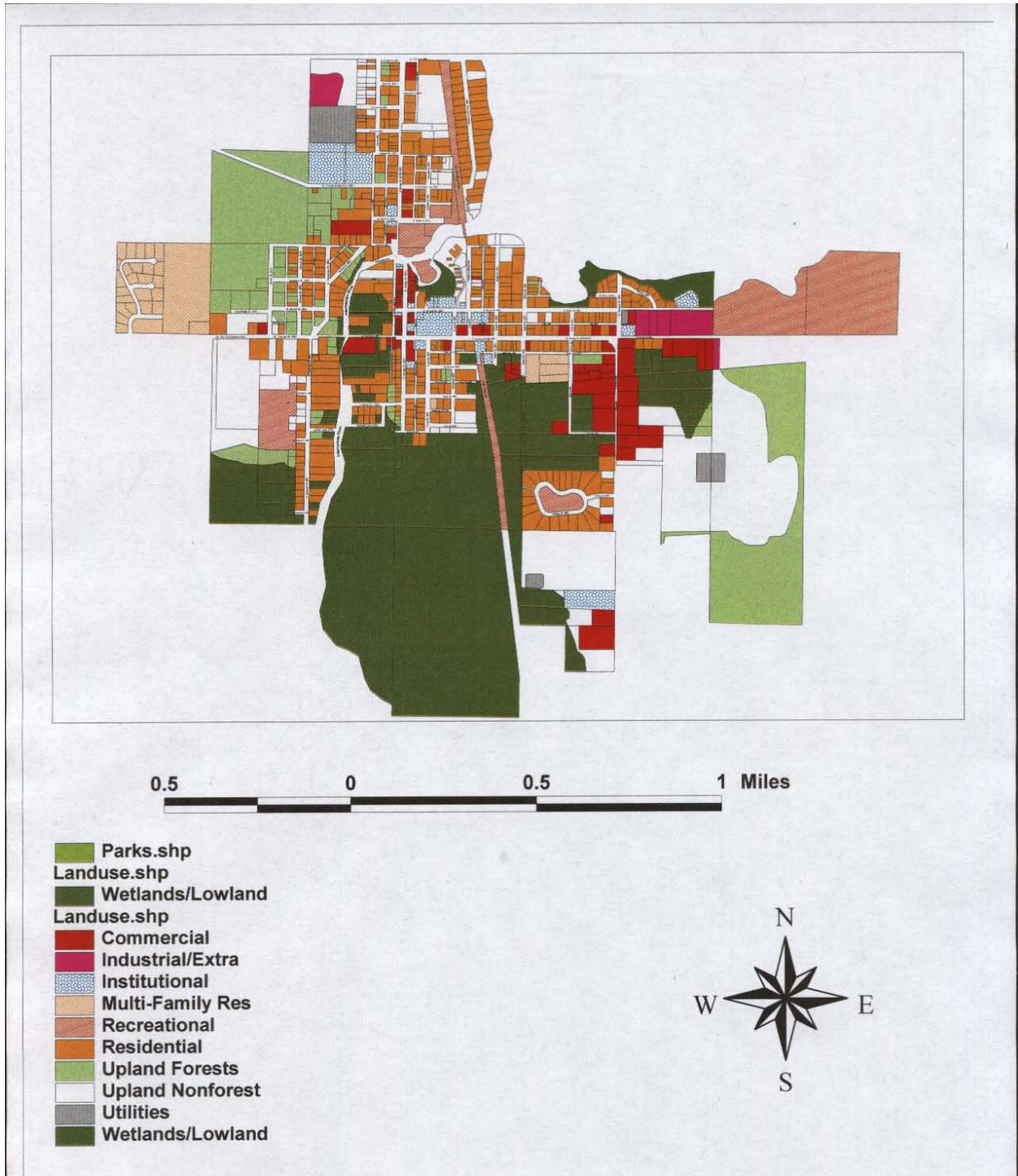
The larger undivided parcels are primarily located in the southern and eastern portions of the Village. The remaining large tracts of undivided land in the Village are typically nonforested open fields, upland forest, or wetlands with construction limitations. Slightly more than one third of the Village remains undeveloped. The category of nonforested land is simply open field, grassland or shrub land, not being used for agriculture or any other active use. No agricultural land was identified within the Village limits.

The Village's downtown commercial area combined with the surrounding smaller lot residential properties provide Bellaire with a strong small town community identity.

Existing Land Use Statistics and Characteristics

The Planning Commission for the Village of Bellaire in 2005-06 spent 18 months redoing the current zoning ordinance and looking at existing and future land use for the Village. The map of existing land use, shown as **Figure 4-1**, illustrates the distribution of land uses within the Village. Michigan Resource Information Systems (MIRIS) land cover/use classification categories were used to map the existing land use. Using a parcel map as the basis, the existing land use was mapped with 1992 aerial photographs in combination with extensive field checking. The updated information was then computerized to produce the existing land use map and statistics. **Table 4-1** presents the land use in current rank order percent of the Village in each of the land use categories. Each of the land use categories is discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 4-1
Existing Land Use Map



Wetlands

Wetlands include land that has sufficient water at, or near, the surface to support wetland or aquatic vegetation. These areas are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes and bogs. The identified wetland areas include areas, which support lowland hardwoods and conifers, such as northern white cedar, willow and aspen species, as well as lowland brush and grasses. Wetlands comprise 29.1 percent of the Village area, and are the community's most prevalent land use/cover. Large wetland areas can be noted on the Existing Land Use Map in the southern and eastern portions of the Village.

| Table 4-1 Existing Land Use Statistics Village of Bellaire | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Land Use Category | Percent of Village |
| Wetlands | 29.1 |
| Residential | 13.6 |
| Nonforested/Undeveloped | 13.0 |
| Upland Forest | 11.8 |
| Street and Road Corridors | 9.0 |
| Recreation | 7.1 |
| Water | 6.9 |
| Commercial | 3.2 |
| Utilities | 3.2 |
| Institutional | 2.0 |
| Industrial/Extractive | 1.1 |
| TOTAL | 100.00 |
| Source: Michigan Resource Inventory System, field verification and map updating. | |

Residential

As can be seen both on the Existing Use Map and the graph below, residential is the second most predominant land use within the Village. Residential use occupies more than 13 percent (176.4 acres) of the land in the Village. Residential use is distributed throughout the Village where subdivisions have been created, with smaller lots concentrated in proximity to the downtown commercial area. This category also includes multiple family housing, which covers slightly more than four acres of land.

Nonforested

The nonforested land category consists of undeveloped city lots and herbaceous open and shrub land. As shown in **Table 4-1**, more than 13 percent of the Village is in the nonforested category. Nonforested vacant lots are scattered throughout the Village, with larger land areas located in the southeast region of the Village and at the western Village boundary.

Upland Forest

The forested lands account for 11.8 percent, or 152.9 acres, of the Village. Large forested areas are found on the northwest and southeast portions of town. Smaller wooded areas are scattered through the Village. These forests include upland hardwoods and conifers, such as beech, maple, white pine and red pine.

Street and Road Corridors

The public street and road corridors were separated from the adjacent land uses, because they occupy such a large percent of the Village property, more than 117.1 acres, or 9.0 percent of the Village. Private roads are not shown on the Existing Land Use Map, nor are their associated land area included in the land area acreage for this category.

Recreation

The recreation land category covers 7.1 percent of the Village's land area. It includes the Richardi and Woodenware Parks on the north side of the Intermediate River near the center of town, Craven Park on the east side of town, the soccer fields on the west side, the open space in the center of Holiday Acres, and the Bellaire Walking Path along the former railroad grade now used as a multi-purpose pathway. The Village-owned park and open space sites are shown on the Public Property Map, Figure 4-2.

Water

Open water comprises nearly seven percent of the Village. Included in this category are Blair Lake, Cedar River, Intermediate River and Bellaire Pond.

Commercial

The majority of the commercial businesses are located in the two commercial areas, the downtown and the commercial strip on M-88/South Division. However, there are also assorted commercial establishments scattered throughout the Village. The entire length of the M-88 corridor is becoming more of a mixed commercial use. Many commercial businesses are renovating the existing homes into business bringing a nice easy transition. The downtown area of the Village is comprised primarily of commercial, residential and institutional uses. In the heart of the downtown business area, some of the buildings have commercial uses on the ground floor and residential apartments above. These are mapped as commercial. Lands used for commercial purposes comprise 3.2 percent of the Village area.

Utilities

The utilities category includes the wastewater treatment facility, the water system facilities, and a power utility substation. A detailed discussion of the Village utilities is provided in Chapter 5 - Community Services, Facilities and Transportation. Additionally, the wellheads and lift stations are considered utilities, but due to the physical size in any one location they typically do not show on the land use map. The Village-owned public service/facilities sites are shown on the Public Property Map, Figure 4-2.

Institutional

This land use category was separated from the recreational land use category to more accurately depict both the recreational and other institutional facilities currently available. The institutional lands, which include the school, churches, and governmental (federal, state, county and local) facilities, comprise two percent of the Village. The school district property is shown on the Public Property Map, Figure 4-2.

Industrial/Extractive

Industrial land use covers only 1.1 percent, approximately 14.6 acres, of the Village. The industrial uses are located primarily on Cayuga on the east side of the Village. A gravel pit is found at the extreme northwest corner of town.

Public Property Map

Figure 4-2

