City of Alma
Michigan
January 28, 2020
6:00 p.m.

City Commission Meeting Agenda

Mayor Mapes will ask City Commissioners for additions and deletions to the agenda. All Commissioners will be given an opportunity to review late arriving supporting materials prior to roll call.

Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Approval of the Minutes of the January 14, 2020 regular meeting.
A. Petitions:
B. Communications:
C. Hearings:

1. Public Hearing for the purpose of determining whether the following described premises shall be designated and established as an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District under P.A. 146 of 2000: 110 E. Superior (also known as 29-51-031-254-00).

a. Adopt a resolution authorizing the establishment of an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District for the parcel located at 110 E. Superior Street.

Approve

D. Consent Agenda:
E. Request for Purchase:
F. Recommendation on Bids:

1. Receipt and award of bids for the annual chemical procurement for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The following bids were received on January 22, 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIDDER</th>
<th>Chlorine 16 tons</th>
<th>Ferric Chloride 26 dry tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kemira Water Solutions, Lawrence, KS</td>
<td>No Bid</td>
<td>$16,874.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCI Jones Chemicals, Riverview, MI</td>
<td>$10,400.00</td>
<td>$649.00/Dry Ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Chemical Corporation, LaPorte, IN</td>
<td>$23,648.00</td>
<td>$1478.00/Ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVS Technologies, Inc., Detroit, MI</td>
<td>No Bid</td>
<td>$15,496.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Recommended bidder

Approve

G. Resolutions:
H. Ordinances:
I. Agreements:

1. Consideration of a resolution to enter into a grant agreement with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in the amount of $50,000 to support the remaining environmental study and demolition of abandoned buildings and other structures located 465 and 675 Hoffman Road, and to authorize City Manager, Matt Schooley to sign the agreement. 
   (Subject: The project will remove the final residential components and allow the land to be marketed as a “Vetted Site” for an industrial development.)
   Approve

J. Reports:
   The City Commission may receive the following reports by one resolution. A City Commissioner may remove any item within this section for individual discussion and vote.

   1. Planning Commission Minutes of January 6, 2020
   2. Finance Director’s Monthly Report
   3. Finance Committee Minutes of January 14, 2020
   4. City Manager’s Report

K. Appointments:

L. Unfinished Business:

M. New Business:

Appropriations

Commissioner's Comments

Invitation to Public
   (Subject: Pursuant to Article II of the City Code, individuals requesting to address the City Commission may do so by moving to the podium and being recognized by the Mayor, following which they should state their name and address for the record. Individuals should address their comments to the Mayor. Comments are limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes per person, unless the Commission grants furthertime.)

Adjournment
Mayor Greg Mapes called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building. A quorum of the Commission was present.

Roll Call
Present: Roger Allman, Roxann Harrington, Greg Mapes, Larry Mott, Nick Piccolo, Michelle Pitts, and Audra Stahl.
Absent: none.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Commissioner Allman, seconded by Commissioner Piccolo, to approve the minutes of the December 26, 2019 regular meeting, as presented.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

Hearings
2020-00001 Motion by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Piccolo, to approve a resolution setting a public hearing for Tuesday, January 28, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of determining whether the following described premises shall be designated and established as an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District under P.A. 146 of 2000: 110 E. Superior (also known as 29-51-031-254-00).
Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

Resolutions
2020-00002 Resolution of Appreciation
The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Pitts, and seconded by Commissioner Allman:

Whereas, certain individuals give unsparingly and unselfishly of their time and talents to the City of Alma and its citizens and
Whereas, Bryan Dinwoody is one such individual who retired on December 20, 2019, after 43 years and 3 months of service with the Alma Public Library; and
Whereas, Bryan has been a hardworking, dedicated employee who has been very valuable at the Alma Public Library. Bryan’s dedication, cooperative attitude and ability to get the job done, defined him, through his career with the City. Bryan hired in as the Director of the Alma Public Library on September 15, 1976, at the age of 26.
Bryan attended Macomb County Community College where he earned his Associates Degree, Wayne State University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and then earned his MSLS—Master of Science in Library Science from Wayne State University and
Whereas, Bryan has, during his tenure as the Director of the Alma Public Library, exemplified what it means to be a community leader and a 21st Century librarian through his service to his patrons and his involvement in community organizations; and Bryan made an impressive list of accomplishments, including:

- The acquisition of the Library’s first automated circulation and cataloging system (Dynix 1997)
- The acquisition of the Library’s first Integrated Library System (ILS, The Library Corporation (TLC 2006)
- The Library public computing access grants (first award through the Gates Foundation, 2006); second award (2007-upgrade); round two, computer award (2010, State of Michigan/MSU)
- The County-wide Library microfilming program which began in 1977; Alma became the depository for local and reference film reels; The acquisition of the Gratiot County Journal project in 1978 which David McMacken was the lead negotiator. Most recently the purchase of a computer-assisted microfilm reader in 2017.
- Implementation of the Library’s publishing programs. The Library has published four titles under the Alma Public Library imprint and has brokered three other titles through its bookstore.
- Establishment of the Alma Public Library Endowment fund created through Library Board initiative and municipal statute in 1982.
- He was instrumental in the successful outcome of the 2013/2014 Gratiot County tax levy and associated ballot issue.; and

Whereas, through Bryan’s direction the Library has seen two major renovation and expansion projects. The first was to add a new meeting room in 1985. The second expansion and renovation project took our library from 7,800 square feet to 26,000 square feet in 2005. The new Library is equipped with the most up to date technology needs. The new Library’s design incorporates open children’s spaces and provides separate quiet reading spaces for adults.; and

Whereas, Bryan’s guidance and vision have equipped the Library to implement new technologies and have allowed patrons and staff to conduct more and better research. The new Library has been a huge hit with the community and will offer a unique, comfortable community space for many years to come.; and

Whereas, Now, Therefore Be It Resolved that Mayor Mapes, members of the City Commission, City staff and Alma citizens commend Bryan Dinwoody for a “job well done” and express their heartfelt gratitude and extend best wishes for an enjoyable, well-deserved retirement.; and

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be presented to Bryan Dinwoody and that it be entered into the official minutes of the City Commission.

Resolution declared adopted.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.
The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Pitts, and seconded by Commissioner Piccolo:

**Whereas**, the City of Alma has been and is fortunate to have dedicated and exemplary employees who give unselfishly of their time and talents to Alma and its citizens, **Whereas**, Sheila Letourneau is one such individual that has conscientiously served our citizens, City Commission, and City Departments of Alma since July 12, 1994; and **Whereas**, Sheila began her career working as a part time clerk/typist in the Building and Grounds Department where her abilities and commitment led to her being hired full-time on September 11, 1995; and **Whereas**, Sheila’s dedication, commitment, and cooperative attitude led to her promotion as the Finance/Public Services Secretary on April 6, 1998; and **Whereas**, Sheila continued to prove herself as one of the City’s indispensable employees when she was promoted to the City Clerk/Human Resource Manager on January 6, 2016; and **Whereas**, Sheila, as City Clerk, consistently provided timely and accurate minutes of over 70 City Commission meetings, as well as meetings of the Rural Urban Fire Board, and the Gratiot Area Water Authority; and **Whereas**, Sheila has assisted hundreds of customers and residents during the course of her tenure, calmly answering any and all questions regarding any City issue and many non-city issues, such as “what are the hours at the Farm Market?” and “what time does the parade start?” **Whereas**, Sheila was instrumental in the hiring of many of the current employees of City; and **Whereas**, Sheila’s calm, cool and collected manner has provided peace amidst many storms; and **Whereas**, the residents and employees of the City of Alma have benefited greatly from the foresight, services, counsel, and guidance of Sheila Letourneau. **Now therefore be it resolved** that Mayor Mapes, members of the City Commission, City staff and Alma citizens commend Sheila for her time spent serving so many and express their heartfelt gratitude and extend best wishes for a well-deserved retirement. **Be it further resolved** that this resolution be presented to Sheila Letourneau and that it be entered in to the official minutes of the City Commission.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

**2020-00004 Proclamation of African American History Month**

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Allman, and seconded by Commissioner Piccolo:

**WHEREAS**: Carter G. Woodson as a trained historian from Harvard, knew like W. E. B. Du Bois did previously, that reason would prevail over prejudice and that the truth of African American’s contributions to civilization and the United States would come to fruition. He hoped to raise awareness of African American’s contributions to the United States and civilization was realized when he and the organization that he founded, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), conceived and announced Negro History Week
in 1925. February 7, 2019, marks the Ninety-third anniversary of Negro History Week; created by Carter G. Woodson and which became celebrated among African Americans and honored their American heritage. In 1976 on the Bicentennial of the United States of America President Gerald R. Ford honored African American history further by dedicating an entire month to the history and culture of African Americans.¹

**WHEREAS:** Public Law 99-244 designated February 1986 as "National Black (Afro-American) History Month." This law noted that February 1, 1986 would “mark the beginning of the sixtieth annual public and private salute to Black History.” The law further called upon the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe February 1986 as Black History Month with the appropriate ceremonies and activities.

**WHEREAS:** It is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to the many African American citizens of the United States and their sacrifices and contributions to our great nation. Therefore, we honor this memorable anniversary; and the African American people whose culture, sacrifices, and honor defended and shaped our great Nation.

**NOW, THEREFORE** I, Gregory S. Mapes by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of City of Alma, Michigan do hereby proclaim the Month of February 1st through 29th as African American History Month AND ask our citizens to honor the ideals, sacrifices, culture, and contributions of the African Americans who helped build and shape our nation. May these citizens and all they have done for the United States of America never be forgotten. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City to be affixed this 14th day of January 2020.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

**2020-00005 Resolution Authorizing Participation in Michigan CLASS for Investment Purposes**

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Harrington, and seconded by Commissioner Piccolo:

**Whereas,** certain governmental units have entered into an interlocal government agreement also known as the “THE PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT” for the purposes of pooling together and investing surplus funds under the appropriate statutes of the State of Michigan and;

**Whereas,** the PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT that has been entered into has been reviewed as to content and legality and;

**Whereas,** the investment policy of the City of Alma includes investment in this type of pool and;

**Whereas,** the City of Alma acknowledges that the current CLASS Board of Trustees, existing custodian and participants may change in accordance with the participating agreement,

**Now, Therefore, It Is Hereby Resolved,** that the City of Alma shall enter into the interlocal agreement for pooling of investment resources under the participation agreement and that the Treasurer shall cause to be delivered to MBIA Asset Management (as administrators of Michigan CLASS), the required documentation to establish participation in Michigan CLASS.

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the Treasurer may invest surplus funds pursuant to state law under said participation agreement.
Be It Further Resolved, that the City of Alma recognizes the appointments of the Board of Trustees, custodian and participants to the extent that they may be changed during the life of the PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT and that such appointments shall not affect the City participation under such agreement.

Be It Further Resolved, that the City of Alma authorizes Kathrine Phillips, Matthew Schooley, Sara Anderson, and Brooke Siefka as designated signatories.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

2020-00006 Motion by Commissioner Allman, seconded by Commissioner Harrington to approve a resolution for release of securities pledged to collateralize Mercantile Bank deposits with the following CUSIP numbers and amounts pledged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUSIP</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Maturity</th>
<th>Pledgee</th>
<th>Orig. Face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3130A9WW7</td>
<td>MER2-FAMCA Agency</td>
<td>11/17/2036</td>
<td>CITY OF ALMA</td>
<td>1,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3128MCP25</td>
<td>MER2-FHLMC 15 YR</td>
<td>05/01/2020</td>
<td>CITY OF ALMA</td>
<td>2,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313381Z57</td>
<td>FHLB AGENCY – QTRLY</td>
<td>02/11/2021</td>
<td>CITY OF ALMA</td>
<td>1,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CITY OF ALMA Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

2020-00007 FY 2021 Resolution of Intent

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Mott, and seconded by Commissioner Pitts:

Whereas, pursuant to Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended (Act 51), it is necessary for the Alma Transit Center (hereby known as THE APPLICANT) established under Act 279 to provide a local transportation program for the state fiscal year of 2021 and, therefore, apply for state financial assistance under provision of Act 51; and

Whereas, it is necessary for the governing body, to name an official representative for all public transportation matters, who is authorized to provide such information as deemed necessary by the State Transportation Commission or department for its administration of Act 51; and

Whereas, it is necessary to certify that no changes in eligibility documentation have occurred during the past state fiscal year; and

Whereas, the performance indicators have been reviewed and approved by the governing body.

Whereas, the application, has reviewed and approved the proposed balance (surplus) budget, and funding sources of estimated federal funds $564,482, estimated state funds $1,196,033, estimated local funds $1,290,739, with total estimated expenses of $3,051,254. (Note: local funds include fare box and any other local revenue)
Now Therefore, be it resolved, that the Applicant hereby makes its intentions known to provide public transportation services and to apply for state financial assistance with this annual plan, in accordance with Act 51; and

Hereby, appoints Brett Baublitz as the Transportation Coordinator, for all transportation matters, who is authorized to provide such information as deemed necessary by the State Transportation Commission or department for its administration of Act 51 for 2021.

Resolution declared adopted.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.

2020-0008 Resolution to Set the Maximum Asset Standards to be Eligible for a Poverty Exemption

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Pitts, and seconded by Commissioner Harrington:

WHEREAS, the adoption of the Maximum Asset Standards is required of the City Commission; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to PA 390 of 1994 the City of Alma, Gratiot County states that the poverty exemption guidelines established by the governing body of the local assessing unit shall include an asset level test; and

WHEREAS, the City of Alma adopts the following Maximum Asset Standards for a household to be eligible for a POVERTY EXEMPTION. The below asset levels DO NOT include the value of your homestead. (Per Tribunal ruling 08-13-97, Docket #236230, and the equity of the homestead should not be included within the asset test to be valid).

Combined assets to the total household may not exceed $5,000.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Assessor and Board of Review shall follow the above stated Maximum Asset Standards in granting or denying an exemption and that if your household assets exceed the above stated Maximum Asset Standards you are NOT eligible for a POVERTY EXEMPTION.

Resolution declared adopted.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.

2020-00009 Resolution for Poverty Exemption

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Harrington, and seconded by Commissioner Pitts:

WHEREAS, the adoption of guidelines for poverty exemptions is required of the City Commission; and

WHEREAS, the principal residence of persons, who the Assessor and Board of Review determines by reason of poverty to be unable to contribute to the public charge, is eligible for exemption in whole or in part from taxation under Public Act 390 of 1994 (MCL 211.7u); and


WHEREAS, pursuant to PA 390 of 1994, the City of Alma, Gratiot County adopts the following guidelines for the Board of Review to implement. The guidelines shall include but not be limited to the specific income and asset levels of the claimant and all persons residing in the household, including any property tax credit returns, filed in the current or immediately preceding year;
To be eligible, a person shall do all the following on an annual basis:

1) Be an owner of and occupy as a principal residence the property for which an exemption is requested.
2) File a claim with the assessor or Board of Review, accompanied by federal and state income tax returns for all persons residing in the principal residence, including any property tax credit returns filed in the immediately preceding year or in the current year or a signed State Tax Commission form 4988, Poverty Exemption Affidavit.
3) File a claim reporting that the combined assets of all persons do not exceed $5,000. Assets include but are not limited to, real estate other than the principal residence, personal property, motor vehicles, recreational vehicles and equipment, certificates of deposit, savings accounts, checking accounts, stocks, bonds, life insurance, retirement funds, etc.
4) Produce a valid driver’s license or other form of identification if requested.
5) Produce, if requested, a deed, land contract, or other evidence of ownership of the property for which an exemption is requested.
6) Meet the federal poverty income guidelines as defined and determined annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or alternative guidelines adopted by the governing body providing the alternative guidelines do not provide eligibility requirements less than the federal guidelines.
7) The application for an exemption shall be filed after January 1, but by 5:00pm, one day prior to the last day of the December Board of Review. The filing of this claim constitutes an appearance before the Board of Review for the purpose of preserving the right of appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.
8) It is recommended that the applicant appear before the board of review for purpose of answering questions the board may have to make a proper determination.

The following are the 2020 federal poverty income guidelines which are updated annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The annual allowable income includes income for all persons residing in the principal residence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Family Unit</th>
<th>2020 Poverty Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$12,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$16,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$21,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$25,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$30,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$34,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$39,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$43,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each additional person</td>
<td>$4,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the assessor and Board of Review shall follow the above stated policy and federal guidelines in granting or denying an exemption, unless the Board of Review determines there are substantial and compelling reasons why there should be a deviation from the policy and federal guidelines and these reasons are communicated in writing to the claimant.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

Ordinances
2020-00010 Motion by Commissioner Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Piccolo, to approve a resolution introducing Ordinance #815, an ordinance to amend the Zoning Map of the City of Alma as it appears in Section 32-32 of the ordinances of the City of Alma. This Ordinance is to rezone the property at 270 Purdy Drive from R1 Single Family Residential District to CI Campus Institutional District, subject to the conditions set forth in the Conditional Rezoning Agreement.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

Agreements
2020-00011 Motion by Commissioner Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Piccolo, to approve a resolution to enter into a lease agreement with Dalton Properties LLC for the lease of cold storage space at property owned by the City of Alma, commonly known as 6524 N. Jerome Road, for the term of one year.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

Reports
2020-00012 Motion by Commissioner Piccolo, seconded by Commissioner Allman to approve a resolution to receive the following reports and place them on file: Alma Transit December 2019 Report, Buildings Permits-December and Annual Reports, Police Department December 2019 Report.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

Appointments
2020-00013 Motion by Commissioner Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Piccolo, to approve a resolution to re-appoint Roxann Harrington to the Gratiot Area Water Authority Board for a two year term.
Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

**Appropriations**

**2020-00014**  
Motion by Commissioner Allman, seconded by Commissioner Piccolo, for a resolution approving Warrant No. 20-13 and authorizing the City Treasurer to issue checks in payment of all claims.

Resolution declared adopted.
Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

**Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Stahl noted there is a Family Carnival & Expo fundraiser scheduled for January 25, 2020 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to support Child Advocacy. The carnival will be held at the YFC Campus Life building on Cheesman Road.

Commissioner Mott also offered thanks to Aeric Ripley and Jeff Naessens for their kind comments about him during the Come Home for the Holidays celebration in December.

All of the commissioners offered good wishes to Sheila Letourneau and Bryan Dinwoodie and thanked them for many years of dedicated service. City Manager, Matt Schooley, also offered heartfelt thanks, as well as the City Attorney, Tony Costanzo.

**Invitation to Public**

No public comment was offered.

**Motion by Commissioner Piccolo, seconded by Commissioner Stahl, to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.**

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.
No: none.

______________________________  ______________________________
Gregory S. Mapes, Mayor, City of Alma  Sara Anderson, City Clerk, City of Alma
General Overview

Obsolete Property Tax Rehabilitation Tax Abatement (OPRA)

• The Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA), Public Act 146 of 2000, provides for a tax incentive to encourage the redevelopment of obsolete buildings.

  a. Designed to assist in the redevelopment of older buildings which maybe contaminated, blighted or functionally obsolete.

    i. The goal is to rehabilitate older buildings into vibrant commercial and commercial housing projects.
How Does it Work

a. Essentially the existing taxable value on a designated building is frozen for up to 12 years. By freezing the taxable value, it provides an incentive for the developer to make significant improvements to the building without significantly increasing the property taxes on the building.

i. This provides an opportunity for the developer to recoup some of the costs of investing in a more distressed property.
What is the Process

a. The local unit of government must hold a public hearing first to establish an OPRA district consisting of one or more parcels or tracts of land characterized by obsolete commercial or commercial housing property.

b. A resolution must be passed that determines the district to be an area characterized by obsolete properties.
   - The District is established.

c. Second, with the establishment of the district, the owner of Obsolete property can submit an application to the local unit of government for the OPRA exemption certificate.

d. Another public hearing is required to review the application, the City Commission can determine and recommend the number of years to apply to the incentive, up to 12 years.

e. Once approved locally, the recommended application and resolution must be sent to the State Tax Commission. The State Tax Commission has 60 days to approve or disapprove the request. The State Tax Commission has the final say on the approval of the OPRA exemption.
AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION
2125 Butterfield Dr, Suite 102N • Troy MI 48084

City Of Alma
525 E Superior St

Alma, MI 48801-1943
Attention:

STATE OF MICHIGAN,
COUNTY OF ISABELLA

The undersigned, being duly sworn the he/she is the principal clerk of Morning Sun, themorningsun.com, published in the English language for the dissemination of local or transmitted news and intelligence of a general character, which are duly qualified newspapers, and the annexed hereto is a copy of certain order, notice, publication or advertisement of:

City Of Alma
Published in the following edition(s):
Morning Sun 01/13/20
themorningsun.com 01/13/20

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Notice is hereby given that the City of Alma proposes an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District. A Public Hearing will be held in the Alma Municipal Building, 525 E. Superior Street on the 28th day of January 2020 at 6:00 p.m., for the purpose of determining whether the following described premises shall be designated and established as an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District under P.A. 146 of 2000.
OT COM 67'E OF NW COR OF BLK 22, TH S 70'E 27' N 4' W 1' N 68' W 28' TO POB. 29-51-031-254-00 (110 E Superior Street)
The owner of all real property within the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District and any other resident or taxpayer of the City of Alma shall have the right to appear and be heard.
Sara Anderson, City Clerk
PUBLISH: Monday, January 13, 2020

Sworn to the subscribed before me this 21st January, 2020

Notary Public, State of Michigan
Acting in Oakland County

Advertisement Information
Client Id: 531973 Ad Id: 1942355 PO: Sales Person: 208112
Resolution

Resolution Approving the Establishment of an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District Pursuant to and in Accordance with the Provisions of Act 146 of the Public Acts of the State of Michigan of 2000, as Amended.

Present:
Absent:

At a regular meeting of the City of Alma, Gratiot County, Michigan, held in the Commission Chambers of said City on the 28th day of January 2020, the following preamble and resolution was offered by___________________ and supported by____________________.

Whereas, the City of Alma has been deemed a Qualified Local Governmental Unit, according to Section 2(k) of PA 146 of 2000, and

Whereas, a request to establish an obsolete property rehabilitation district was made by the Tkbennett LLC, with the City Clerk, and

Whereas, the property located at 110 E Superior Street, Alma, Michigan is found to be obsolete property for the following reasons:

   a) It is functionally obsolete for the reasons that the electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems are inadequate for the highest and best use of the property.

Whereas, the City of Alma is authorized under the provisions of PA 146 of 2000 to establish obsolete property rehabilitation districts by resolution, and

Whereas, The City Commission of the City of Alma scheduled a Public Hearing on January 28, 2020 at 6:05 p.m. in the Commission Chambers in regard to this matter and the owner of all real property within the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District and any other resident or taxpayer of the City of Alma shall have the right to appear and be heard, and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the City Commission of the City of Alma does hereby establish an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District for the property located at 110 E Superior Street, Alma Michigan, further described as:

OT COM 87' E OF NW COR OF BLK 22, TH S 70' E 27' N 4' W 1' N 66' W 26' TO POB.

Parcel ID Numbers: 29-51-031-254-00 (110 E Superior Street)

Yes:
No:
Resolution Declared Adopted. Certificate

I, Sara Anderson, Clerk of the City of Alma, do hereby certify that the above resolution is a true and exact copy adopted at a regular meeting of the City Commission held on Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 6:05 p.m.

_______________________________
Sara Anderson, City Clerk
## ALMA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
### ANNUAL CHEMICAL PROCUREMENT
**BID OPENING: January 20, 2020 3:00 p.m.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bidder</th>
<th>Chlorine</th>
<th>Ferric Chloride</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kemira Water Solutions, Inc. Lawrence, KS</td>
<td></td>
<td>$16,874.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$649.00/Dry Ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*****JCI Jones Chemicals, Inc. Riverview, MI</td>
<td>$10,400.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Chemical Corporation LaPorte, IN</td>
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<td>$750.00+$1.00/Day Rental Fee after 30 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>*****PVS Technologies, Inc. Detroit, MI</td>
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*****Recommended Bidder
MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
GRANT WITH
CITY OF ALMA

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (the “MEDC”) enters into a binding agreement (the “Agreement”) with City of Alma (the “Grantee”). As used in this Agreement, the MEDC and Grantee are sometimes individually referred to as a “Party” and collectively as “Parties.”

Grantee: City of Alma
525 East Superior Street
PO Box 278
Alma, Michigan 48801-0278

I. NATURE OF SERVICES. The purpose of this Agreement is to provide funding to the Grantee to support the demolition of abandoned buildings and other structures on the property (the “Grant Activities”).

II. PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE.
Starting Date: August 30, 2019
Ending Date: August 29, 2021

III. INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE. The following documents are incorporated by reference as binding obligations of the Agreement.

   Exhibit A: Grantee’s Budget
   Exhibit B: Grantee’s Proposal

IV. PAYMENT SCHEDULE INFORMATION.

   A. The MEDC agrees to pay the Grantee a sum not to exceed $50,000 (the “Grant”).

   B. MEDC requires that payments under this Agreement be processed by electronic funds transfer (EFT). Grantee is required to register to receive payments by EFT at the State Integrated Governmental Management Applications (SIGMA) Vendor Self Service (VSS) website (www.michigan.gov/VSSLogin).

V. MEDC GRANT ADMINISTRATOR. The Grantee must communicate with the MEDC representative named below or his or her designee regarding this Agreement (the “Grant Administrator”).

   Beth Colosimo, MSRP Grant Administrator
   Michigan Economic Development Corporation
   300 North Washington Square
   Lansing, Michigan 48913
   colosimob1@michigan.org

VI. GRANTEE DUTIES. The Grantee agrees to undertake, perform, and complete the activities fully described in Exhibit B.
VII. **RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTIES.**

A. Neither Grantee nor any of its employees or agents is or shall become an employee of the MEDC due to this Agreement.

B. Grantee will provide the services and achieve the results specified in this Agreement free from the direction or control of the MEDC as to means and methods of performance.

C. The MEDC is not responsible for any insurance or other fringe benefits, including, but not limited to, Social Security, Worker's Compensation, income tax withholdings, retirement or leave benefits, for Grantee or its employees. Grantee assumes full responsibility for the provision of all such insurance coverage and fringe benefits for its employees.

VIII. **TERMINATION.** This Agreement shall terminate upon the earlier of the following:

A. The Ending Date.

B. Termination by the MEDC, by giving thirty (30) calendar days prior written notice to the Grantee. In the event that the Legislature of the State of Michigan (the “State”), the State Government, or any State official, commission, authority, body, or employee or the federal government (a) takes any legislative or administrative action which fails to provide, terminates or reduces the funding necessary for this Agreement, or (b) takes any legislative or administrative action, which is unrelated to the source of funding for the Grant, but which affects the MEDC’s ability to fund and administer this Agreement and other MEDC programs, provided, however, that in the event such action results in an immediate absence or termination of funding, cancellation may be made effective immediately upon delivery of notice to the Grantee.

C. Termination by the MEDC pursuant to Section XII of this Agreement.

IX. **INDEMNIFICATION AND GRANTEE LIABILITY INSURANCE.** The Grantee shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the MEDC, its corporate board of directors, executive committee members including its participants, its officers, agents, and employees (the “Indemnified Persons”) from any damages that it may sustain through the negligence of the Grantee pertaining to the performance of this Agreement.

The Grantee shall maintain such insurance to protect the Indemnified Persons from claims that might arise out of or as a result of the Grantee's operations; however, Grantee's indemnification obligation shall not be limited to the limits of liability imposed under the Grantee's insurance policies. The Grantee will provide and maintain its own general liability, property damage, and workers compensation insurance. The insurance shall be written for not less than any limits of liability required by law for the Grantee's obligation for indemnification under this Agreement.

X. **TOTAL AGREEMENT.** This Agreement, including the exhibits incorporated herein, is the entire agreement between the Parties. This Agreement may not be changed except by the written mutual agreement of the Parties.
XI. **ASSIGNMENT/TRANSFER/SUBCONTRACTING.** Except as contemplated by this Agreement, the Grantee shall not assign, transfer, convey, subcontract, or otherwise dispose of any duties or rights under this Agreement without the prior specific written consent of the MEDC.

XII. **DEFAULT.** The occurrence of any one or more of the following events or conditions shall constitute an “Event of Default” under this Agreement, unless a written waiver of the Event of Default is signed by the MEDC: (a) any representation, covenant, certification or warranty made by the Grantee shall prove incorrect at the time that such representation, covenant, certification or warranty was made in any material respect; (b) the Grantees failure to comply with any obligations or duties, including reporting requirements, contained herein; or (c) Grantee’s use of the Grant funds for any purpose not contemplated under this Agreement. Upon the occurrence of any one or more of the Events of Default, the MEDC may terminate this Agreement immediately upon notice to the Grantee. The termination of this Agreement is not intended to be the sole and exclusive remedy in case any Event of Default shall occur and each remedy shall be cumulative and in addition to every other provision or remedy given herein or now or hereafter existing at law or equity.

XIII. **NOTICES.** Any notice or other communication under this Agreement shall be in writing and e-mailed, or faxed, or mailed by first class mail, postage prepaid, or sent by express, overnight courier to the respective Party at the address listed at the beginning of this Agreement or such other last known addresses or e-mail accounts, and shall be deemed delivered one business day after the delivery or mailing date.

XIV. **COUNTERPARTS AND COPIES.** This Agreement may be signed in counterparts and delivered by facsimile or by pdf, and in any such circumstances, shall be considered one document and an original for all purposes.

XV. **SEVERABILITY.** All of the clauses of this Agreement are distinct and severable and, if any clause shall be deemed illegal, void or unenforceable, it shall not affect the validity, legality or enforceability of any other clause or provision of this Agreement. To the extent possible, the illegal, void or unenforceable provision shall be revised to the extent required to render the Agreement enforceable and valid, and to the fullest extent possible, the rights and responsibilities of the Parties shall be interpreted and enforced to preserve the Agreement and the intent of the Parties. Provided, if application of this section should materially and adversely alter or affect a Party’s rights or obligations under this Agreement, the Parties agree to negotiate in good faith to develop a structure that is as nearly the same structure as the original Agreement (as may be amended from time to time) without regard to such invalidity, illegality or unenforceability.

XVI. **PUBLICITY.** At the request and expense of the MEDC, the Grantee will cooperate with the MEDC to promote the Grant Activities through one or more of the placement of a sign, plaque, media coverage or other public presentation at the project or other location acceptable to the Parties.

XVII. **SURVIVAL.** The terms and conditions of sections VII, IX, XI, and XV shall survive termination of this Agreement.
The signatories below warrant that they are empowered to enter into this Agreement.

**GRANTEE ACCEPTANCE:**

City of Alma Michigan

Dated: _____________

By: Matthew Schooley

Its: City Manager

**MEDC ACCEPTANCE:**

Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Dated: _____________

By: Christin Armstrong

Its: Secretary
# EXHIBIT A
City of Alma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>MEDC Grant Amount</th>
<th>Local Contribution</th>
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EXHIBIT B

GRANTEE’S PROPOSAL

The Hoffman Road site in Alma, Michigan has been prioritized for development by the rural City of Alma (population: 9,400) for a number of years. The majority of the vacant land was donated to the City in 2006 by a company no longer in the area. Since then, the City has invested in acquiring the residential properties within the site footprint in order to secure a municipally owned cohesive parcel for future industrial development. The current site footprint is 163 acres, and surrounding land can be explored for future expansion, if needed. Although the land is in Pine River Township, there is a 425 Agreement between the Township and the City so that when development occurs, it will be considered within city limits. The land is zoned industrial and developing it was identified as a primary goal in the citizen-supported Gratiot Countywide Master Plan. The site is ideal for an industrial use due to its numerous assets. It is an ideal location with the Alma Industrial Park to the north, US Highway-127 to the east, agricultural land to the south, and a former petroleum refinery to the west. The land is within one mile of US Highway-127 and Michigan Highway 46. Mid-Michigan Railroad borders the northwest edge of the site. Municipal water extends to the site boundary, municipal sewer is approximately 500 ft. away, and fiber is within a quarter mile. The site has been designated by Consumers Energy, the area’s utility provider, as “Energy Ready,” meaning it offers infrastructure to meet up to 100 MW electric demand and 200 psig and up to 500 MCHF natural gas demand. In terms of labor force, the site has a 60-mile radius of over 1 million, and its central location is within the 50-mile radius of several community colleges and universities for training purposes. As a result of these assets, targeted industries include: automotive parts manufacturing, agricultural processing, plastic products manufacturing, and logistics/warehousing.

In regard to community readiness, Greater Gratiot Development submits applicable sites on behalf of local municipalities in responding to Requests for Information (RFI) sent out by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The information provided during this process is complete and accurate. The Hoffman Road site is often submitted during RFIs because of its great assets, and Greater Gratiot Development and the City of Alma have hosted site visits on the property numerous times. Additionally, the City of Alma is currently working through the Redevelopment Ready Community Certification process, and their evaluation has been completed.

A wide range of data is available for this site via its listing on Zoom Prospector: http://www.greatlakesbaysites.com/sites.html?ictool=ZPE-Sites&zpeDID=SITES_54e0be15-190d-412d-bf74-c1eb455a72fd&zpeSST=MIGREATLAKESBAY

With the site’s significant assets, it is on its way to becoming a vetted site for business attraction and expansion projects. To become a vetted site, Greater Gratiot Development is requesting $87,820 to conduct a Phase II Environmental Study on a portion of the property and to demolish existing structures in order to make the property more attractive for development. This would allow Greater Gratiot Development to market the site as a vacant, shovel-ready parcel. The buildings and storage tanks have proved to be a disadvantage as interested parties have trouble seeing past the existing structures, potential environmental concern of the storage tanks, and the increased time and monetary commitment it would take to remove the buildings.

Statement of Need: Greater Gratiot Development and the City of Alma have identified the Hoffman Road site as the most suitable site to become vetted for industrial development due to its zoning, convenient location, and close proximity to utilities (water, sewer, electric, gas, and fiber). Despite its assets, the site lacks the ability to be designated as “shovel-ready” due to the vacant buildings and storage tanks on the property that remain from former residences. Once demolished, the vacant land will be promoted widely as available and shovel-ready for industrial
development by the City of Alma, Greater Gratiot Development, and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Redevelopment Ready Sites program.

**Project Justification**: The City of Alma accepted the majority of this land as a donation in 2006 with the intent of developing it for industrial use. The parcels not donated were once residences that the City purchased in order to make a cohesive industrial land area. The City has invested over $200,000 into acquiring these parcels, conducting a Phase I and II Environmental Study on 465 Hoffman Road, and conducting a Phase I Environmental Study on 675 Hoffman Road. The grant funds would be used to conduct a Phase II Environmental Study on 675 Hoffman Road, demolish existing buildings on both 465 and 675 Hoffman Road, and remove storage tanks on 675 Hoffman Road. This particular site has been visited multiple times by site selectors and interested businesses, and the existing structures can impede their vision of future development, delay their project timeline, and increase project costs. In demolishing the structures, the land can be marketed as a “Vetted Site” for an industrial project. The City of Alma and Greater Gratiot Development are committed to the development of the Hoffman Road site and will work together to manage the grant process, continue to work toward all of the qualifications of a vetted site, and market the site to interested parties.

**Timeline**: Timeline (24 months from award date): • July 2019: Grant is awarded • August 5-August 30, 2019: Conduct Phase II ESA on 675 Hoffman Road, pre-demolition asbestos and hazardous material surveys on both properties (Three weeks to complete) • September 3, 2019: Bid out demolition and abatement • October 7, 2019-October 28, 2019: Complete demolition and abatement (Three weeks to complete)
City of Alma  
Planning Commission Minutes  
January 6, 2020

Commissioner Ayers called the regular meeting of the Alma Planning Commission to order at 6:01 PM on January 6th, 2020 in the Alma City Commission Room.

Absent: None

Others Present: Aeric Ripley, City of Alma Zoning Administrator  
David Ringle, Public Services Director  
Ryan Smith, Gemini Capitol Management  
Mike Powers, 158 E Front St  
Tim Pulliam, 158 E Front St  
Deepak Gupta, D&M Site, Carrolton MI  
Stacey Grube, GraCo Federal Credit Union, 305 W Downie  
Ryan Stoudt, Alma College  
Douglas Dice, Alma College  
Honda Joe Fuente, St. Louis  
Adam Cronkite, Breckenridge  
Randy Brandon, 139 Carolina St  
Joni McLeod, 595 Heather Lane

A motion was offered by Mapes, and supported by Therrien, to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Commission meeting held on December 2, 2019.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling  
No: None

Public Hearing: 1951 Michigan Ave

Adam Cronkite has submitted a request for a special use permit for a Auto Body Shop/Used Car Dealer at 1951 Michigan Ave (#29-51-352-768-00). Body Shops and Vehicle Sales are permitted in Section 60-60 (k) B2, General Business District (3) Special Uses (n) Body Shops and (r) Used Vehicle Sales. Special uses require a public hearing before the planning commission.

The public hearing was opened at 6:02 PM

A presentation was given by Ripley. Outdoor sales in the B2, General Business District are permitted with the issuance of a special use permit.

- Interior of Space
  - Office Space – 200 sq. ft.
  - Work area and paint booth – 1,536 sq. ft.
- Outdoor Sales Areas
Staff Comments:

1. The approval of the special use permit is required for Mr. Cronkite to apply for his licenses through the State of Michigan. Once licenses have been received a copy must be provided to City Hall.
2. A building permit will be required for the change of use.
3. A sign permit is required for the ground or wall signage.

No comments were given from the public. The public hearing was closed at 6:04 PM.

A motion was offered at 6:04 PM by Pitts, and supported by Gilkins, to approve the requested special use permit for a Body Shop and Used Vehicle Sales at 1951 Michigan Ave.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None

Public Hearing: Community Baptist Church, 270 Purdy Dr.

Community Baptist Church of Alma has submitted a Conditional Rezoning Request for their former location at 270 Purdy Drive. The requested use is for a Child Care Center (Eight Cap Program), which is currently located on the Alma College Campus and move it to 270 Purdy Drive, and offer additional education opportunities for students. An informal meeting was held for the neighborhood on December 30, 2019; to review the Conditional Rezoning proposal before the public hearing.

The public hearing was opened at 6:05 PM.

A presentation was given by Ripley.

On December 30, 2019, the informal meeting with the neighborhood surrounding the conditional rezoning request was held. One property owner was in attendance. The property owner was supportive of the proposed conditional rezoning for the proposed project/reuse of the property.

1. Conditions running with the property. This Statement of Conditions covers the Property described in property owner letter of voluntary conditions. This Statement of Conditions shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the Owners, neighborhood, and the City of Alma, and their heirs, successors, and assigns, and shall run with the property.

2. List of Conditions. The conditional rezoning potentially granted to the owner is based upon conditions which were voluntarily offered by the Owners. The conditions and
limitations on use of the Property is by which the City would grant the conditional rezoning, the voluntary conditions are as follows:

The following additional conditions will be applied to the Conditional Rezoning Agreement under the CI, Campus Institutional permitted and special use requirements.

**Primary Use Restrictions**

a. Eight Cap Program, Pre-K, Kindergarten and general early child care.
b. Student Instruction, general education, college and public meeting space, and worship services.
c. Hours of operation 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
d. Overnight parking is restricted to students, staff and faculty of Alma College.

**Addition Staff Comments**

1. If the conditional rezoning is approved by City Commission, the Owner shall apply for and receive all required permits for building, electrical, plumbing needed for the change in use.
2. A sign permit required for any change in signage. Ripley commented that no additional public comments were received by staff prior to this hearing. Ayers commented that this offers a great opportunity to repurpose the church property.

Pitts asked if this replaces the proposed child care facility to be located at the corner of Prospect and Center.

Dice replied that it would replace the proposed facility at Prospect and Center.

The public hearing was closed at 6:08 PM

A motion was offered at 6:09 PM by Mapes, and supported by Wheeler, to approve the requested special use permit for a Child Care Center with the conditions outlined above at 270 Purdy Drive.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None

**Public Hearing: 3one3 Boutique Hotel, 313 N State**

The 3one3 Boutique Hotel, LLC has submitted a request for a special use permit for a 9-room hotel on the ground floor of 313 N State Street. Motels and Hotels are permitted in Section 60-60 (j) B1, Central Business District (4) Special Uses (j) Motels and Hotels. Special uses require a public hearing before the Planning Commission.

The public hearing was opened at 6:10 PM.
A presentation was given by Ripley.

- Hotels/Motels are permitted as a special use in the B1, Central Business District.
- Guestrooms, Lobby, and Laundry/Staff rooms are located on the ground floor of the building – Nine (9) guest rooms are provided:
  - Guestroom 1: 480 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 2: 320 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 3: 320 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 4: 350 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 5: 450 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 6: 530 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 7: 540 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 8: 530 sq. ft.
  - Guestroom 9: 540 sq. ft.
  - Lobby 800 sq. ft.
  - Laundry 240 sq. ft.

- Parking will be provided in the overnight permit sections of Parking Lot #3.
- Trash removal will utilize the shared dumpster enclosures in Parking Lot #3.

**Staff Comments:**

1. Hotel to be completed in conjunction with the residential units to be developed on the second floor, and the one conditional use ground floor unit in the annex building.

Ayers commented that he was disappointed that an existing business was lost to St. Louis to make way for this project.

Richter asked for clarification that three of guest rooms detailed in the project lacked windows.

Smith replied that this was correct and was due to the fact that his design had to make the best use of the existing building layout, which presented some challenges.

Ayers inquired if the fire egress was approved for this project.

Smith replied that it had and that windows in the sleeping area were not required as the building will be equipped with a fire suppression system. The design professional is responsible for a proposed project meeting all code requirements and is not approved for construction until the plan reviews are finalized.

A public comment was received by staff via e-mail prior to the meeting with concerns over the proposed parking arrangement utilizing the public lot to the rear of the building vs. street side parking.

No additional comments were received from the public.

The public hearing was closed at 6:16 PM
A motion was offered at 6:17 PM by Pitts, and supported by Therrien, to approve the requested special use permit for a Hotel with the conditions outlined above at 313 N State Street.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None
Site Plan Review: 835 W. Warwick Drive

835 W. Warwick Drive, Parcel #29-51-332-265-00 – GraCo Federal Credit Union is proposing to construct a new 3,180 sq. ft. commercial office building for use by the credit union. The property is zoned OS, Office Services, the proposed project requires site plan approval by the Planning Commission.

A presentation was given by Ripley.

Lot Coverage with Structures (Maximum Lot Coverage: 40%)

Lot Size: 1.1 acres (47,916 sq. ft.)

New Structures: 3,180 sq. ft. Office Building, 672 sq. ft. Drive-Thru Canopy

Percentage of Structures Covering Lot After Construction: 8%

Setbacks (Building to Property Line)

Front Setback – Northeast property line (West Warwick Drive): 97’ to property line. (30’ required)

Rear Setback – Southwest property line: 43’ to property line. (20’ required)

Side Setback – West property line: 63’ to property line. (at least one 5’ – total of 15’ for both sides required)

Side Setback – East property line: 51’ to property line. (at least one 5’ – total of 15’ for both sides required).

Parking & Trash Removal

Required for Credit Unions: 1 space for each 200 sq. ft of Useable Floor Area (UFA), plus 4 stacking spaces per drive-through service lane: 16 standard spaces required, 8 stacking lanes and 2 ADA spaces.

Provided in Plan: 28 total parking spaces, 26 standard spaces, 2 ADA spaces, and 8 stacking spaces shown for drive thru.

90° and angled parking spaces: Required parking space length 18.5’: proposed parking spaces are 20’ long.

90° and angled parking spaces: Required parking space width 9’: proposed parking spaces are 10’ wide.

90° parking spaces: Required maneuvering lane width 24’: proposed maneuvering lane is 24’ wide.

Angled parking spaces: Required maneuvering lane with 12’: proposed maneuvering lane is 14’.

Trash Removal: no detail provided on plan.
Landscaping & Lighting

Landscape plan has provided for multiple trees, evergreens and shrubs around the parking and building.

Lighting plan has provided for 7 light poles 20’, maximum height allowed 20’. There are 4 lights at the main entrance and exit point. 9 light fixtures at the drive-thru. The lighting plan shows all light cast off is less the 1 candle light at the property lines near residential and streets. Project is not adjacent to any residential.

Staff Comments:

1. Approval of Site Plan is based on the drainage plan approved by the Gratiot County Drain office, and any required permits from Gratiot County.
2. City of Alma Public Service Director has provided comments for driveways, storm sewer, water, and sanitary sewer, connections and permits.
3. A sign permit will be required for the new building sign.
4. Submission of a waste removal plan to staff before construction.

A presentation was given by Ringle. I appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plans for the new GRACO Federal Credit Union building. Please find herein comments concerning the new building project located on Parcel #29-51-332-265-00 (W. Warwick Drive). The plans dated December 2, 2019 issued for “site plan submittal” had been reviewed by the City of Alma Public Services Department.

1. The proposed driveways located along W. Warwick Drive as shown have no dimensions. The drive approach at the northwest corner of the property appears to be 26 feet wide, but the southeast drive approach appears to be 18 feet in width. Per City of Alma drive approach standards, commercial drive approaches are to be built to MDOT ‘Type M’ standards and shall be no less than 24 feet wide and no more than 30 feet in width from face-of-curb to face-of-curb at the property line. The drive approaches appear to cut through the existing sidewalk along W. Warwick, while that its acceptable, the drive approach portion that crosses through the sidewalk must not have a cross slope of more than 2%. A drive approach permit is required. The location is acceptable.

2. The proposed building is shown to have a 1-inch water connection to the Public 12-inch water main that is within the north-east curb of W. Warwick Drive. The west-bound lane and curb of W. Warwick will need to be excavated to make this connection. As W. Warwick Drive will need to be excavated to connect the water service line, a barricading detail is required to re-route traffic along an alternate route while the road is excavated due to Warwick Drive being a city major street. The water shutoff valve for the building is to be placed within the City right-of-way and must be placed in a manor such that it is accessible at all
times to City of Alma Water Distribution staff (free of obstruction and no landscaping placed over or above it). A barricading and detour detail must be submitted to and approved by the Public Services Department prior to the issuance of the street opening permit. A minimum of 3-days notice is required prior to closure of the street. The permittee is responsible to notify Central Dispatch (3) business days prior to the closure of W. Warwick Drive. A 1-inch Water Connection permit, 1-inch Meter permit, and a Major Street Opening permit is required.

3. Site drainage looks to be contained on site and storm water is either diverted to storm catch basins within the paved parking/driving surfaces or diverted to drainage swales along the north and south edges of the property. Regardless of the path the water takes, ultimately the water will be directed to an existing storm water retention pond that is located immediately to the southwest of the proposed project limits/property. It should be noted that this region has recently had two observed flooding/standing water events. One event was in the Spring of 2019 and the other was in October of 2019. City Public Services crews observed the event in the Spring, and site engineer for this project told me about the event in October of 2019. At this time, it is unknown what caused the standing water situation, but it likely had very much to do with heavy rain falls and substantially over-saturated ground that we had during the spring and fall seasons that occurred in 2019.

The project is shown to be within an existing Gratiot County Drain right-of-way and also ultimately discharges into one of their drain lines, therefore, the owner/developer must attain approval, as well as necessary and proper permitting, from the Gratiot County Drain Commission prior to issuing a City Storm Sewer permit. The 12-inch underground storm line discharging into the retention area must have a minimum of a 6-inch restrictor placed on it or lower if a smaller restrictor is required by the Gratiot County Drain Commissioner. A City of Alma Storm Sewer permit will be required.

4. The drawings show a 6-inch sanitary sewer connection to be made within the existing lateral stub that is located in the south-west terrace area of W. Warwick Drive. The existing 4-inch thick public sidewalk will need to be excavated as part of this work and the contractor is responsible for its replacement. A Sanitary Sewer Connection permit is required.

5. Soil erosion permit, if required, must be obtained from the Gratiot County Permits office.

A summary of all the required Public Services Permits is listed below and may be acquired either all at the same time or near the time needed by each associated trade that will be performing the work. However, permits must be acquired no later than a minimum of (3) business days in advance of any of the work within the City right-of-way but may be applied for much further in advance if desired. Because W. Warwick Drive must be excavated to make the necessary water connection as well as it being a major street, the contractor will need a road closure/detour route approved by the Public Services Department prior to any road/right-of-way excavations.
Public Services Permits Required:
- Drive Approach Permit
- Sanitary Sewer Connection Permit
- 1-inch Water Connection Permit
- Major Street Opening Permit
- 1-inch Water Meter Permit
- City Storm Sewer Connection Permit and County Drain office permit/approval.
- Sidewalk and curb restoration permit if owner requests that the City of Alma crews perform this work, otherwise the contractor may perform these restorations at their own cost. However, inspections still need to be made by the Public Services Department when forms have been placed and prior to the placement of any concrete.

Mapes commented that the proposed plan was a nice one.

Pitts noted that the credit union had likely been in their current location since 1989.

Grube add that it has been at least since 1985.

Gupta inquired if he could appeal the requirement of widening the existing drive approach from 18 to 24 feet in width.

Ringle replied that ordinance offers no provision for an appeal, but he could work with Gupta to taper the approach so that it is 24 feet in width at the street edge but narrows to 18 feet at the property line.

A motion was offered at 6:25 PM by Wheeler, and supported by Pitts, to approve the requested site plan as presented with the stipulations listed above for commercial office building to be constructed at 765 W. Warwick Drive.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None

**Site Plan Review: 595 Heather Lane**

595 Heather Lane, Parcel #29-51-283-505-01 – Oak Flint LLC is proposing to construct a new 5,112 sq. ft. new commercial building to be used as a Medical Marijuana Provisioning Center. The property is zoned B-2, General Business, the proposed project requires site plan approval by the Planning Commission.
Lot Coverage with Structures (Maximum Lot Coverage: 40%)

Lot Size: 3.3 acres (143,748 sq. ft.)

New Structures: 5,125 sq. ft. Commercial Building

Percentage of Structures Covering Lot After Construction: 3.5%

Setbacks (Building to Property Line)

Front Setback – North property line (Heather Lane): 35’ to property line. (35’ required)

Rear Setback- Southwest property line: 43’ to property line. (20’ required)

Side Setback – West property line: 430’ to property line. (at least one 5’ – total of 10’ for both sides required)

Side Setback – East property line: 142’ to property line. (at least one 5’ – total of 10’ for both sides required).

Parking & Trash Removal

Required General retail sales and service establishments: 1 space for each 200 sq. ft of Gross Floor Area (GFA), 1 per each 3 employees: 25 standard spaces, 2 employee spaces, and 2 accessible spaces required.

Provided in Plan: 29 total parking spaces, 27 standard spaces, and 2 accessible spaces.

Required parking space length 18.5’: proposed parking spaces are 18.5’ long.

Required parking space width 9’: proposed parking spaces are 10’ wide.

Required maneuvering lane width 24’: proposed maneuvering lane is 24’ wide.

Trash Removal: 12’ x 15’ Dumpster Enclosure provided on Site.

Landscaping & Lighting

No details provided for landscaping and lighting.

Staff Comments:

1. Approval of Site Plan is based on the drainage plan approved by the Gratiot County Drain office, and any required permits from Gratiot County.
2. City of Alma Public Service Director has provided comments for driveways, storm sewer, water, and sanitary sewer, connections and permits.
3. A sign permit will be required for the new building signs.
4. Submission of landscaping and lighting details before construction.
Alma Planning Commission
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Page #10

5. The plans show the removal of one City tree for the driveway, the tree must be replaced by developer in new location determined by City staff.

A presentation was given by Ringle.
I appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plans for the new Michigan Supply and Provisions building. Please find herein comments concerning the new building project located at 595 Heather Lane. The plans dated November 26, 2019 issued for “site plan approval” have been reviewed by the City of Alma Public Services Department.

1. The proposed driveway located along Heather Lane is approved as shown. Per City of Alma drive approach standards, commercial drive approaches are to be built to MDOT ‘Type M’ standards and shall be no less than 24 feet wide and no more than 30 feet in width from face-of-curb to face-of-curb at the property line. A drive approach permit is required.
2. The water for the new building is shown to be fed from a proposed 1-inch water connection made to the 8-inch Public Water Main that is located in the terrace area that is just north of the north curb line of Heather Lane. The drawings do not state if this is to be a bored service line or if this will be open-trenched. If the line is to be open-trenched across Heather Lane or if any lane of the lanes within Heather Lane are closed, a Major Street Opening permit will be required. A barricading and detour detail must be submitted to and approved by the Public Services Department prior to the issuance of the street opening permit. A minimum of 3-days notice is required prior to closure of the street. The permittee is responsible to notify Central Dispatch (3) business days prior to the closure of Heather Lane. The site drawings show the water shutoff valve to be placed in the terrace near the property line and must be placed in a manor such that it is accessible at all times to City of Alma Water Distribution staff (free of obstruction and no landscaping placed over or above it). A 1-inch Water Connection permit, 1-inch Meter permit, and a Major Street Opening permit may be required if Heather Lane is excavated as a part of water connection activities.
3. Surface water looks to remain on site. Any water that falls onto the parking surface area looks to be contained within the parking lot via concrete curb and gutter. Once directed into the curb, the water then drains into storm catch basins within the parking lot which then lead to an underground retention system. The Public Services Department requests that the 12” storm line that connects to the proposed 48-inch City Storm Catch basin have a 6-inch restrictor placed on the property owner side of this proposed structure restricting the 12-inch storm line to a 6-inch or lower if a smaller restrictor is required by the Gratiot County Drain Commissioner. Care should be taken when constructing the dumpster concrete pad at the southeast corner of the proposed parking lot to prevent any parking lot surface water from draining out of the parking area and flowing to the lot to the east and south. The road will be excavated as a part of the proposed storm sewer connection to the City storm system and will need a Major Street Opening permit. The asphalt must be of two separate 2inch lifts (leveling & wearing) of MDOT mix 1300-20AAA. The gravel sub-base must be 22A aggregate. A barricading and detour detail must be submitted to and approved by the Public Services Department prior to the issuance of the street opening.
permit. A minimum of 3-days notice is required prior to closure of the street. The permittee is responsible to notify Central Dispatch (3) business days prior to the closure of Heather Lane. Storm pipe as well as backfill must be to City of Alma standards as the 12-inch storm sewer connecting the proposed 48-inch catch basin to the existing manhole in Heather Lane will be part of the City of Alma’s storm water collection system once constructed and completed. City Storm Sewer Connection Permit as well as Major Street Opening permit is required.

4. The owner/developer is proposing to extend the City Sanitary Sewer approximately 361 feet so that the new structure is connected by the Public Sewer. However, the drawings show the invert for the proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer headed to the east at an elevation of 761.5 and the existing west invert of that structure is 760.98. I would like these inverts to match and thus lowering the proposed east sanitary as much as possible, matching the existing west invert at east invert to both be at 760.98. The slope of the proposed east 8-inch sanitary sewer must be the same slope as the existing west sanitary sewer. The sanitary sewer pipe material, manhole, and castings must be of the same material and match City of Alma Specifications. All excavations for the manholes and sewer main must be backfilled with MDOT Class II sand and must be City of Alma standards for compaction. Excavation must meet requirements because once this main is constructed, it will be turned over to and owned by the City of Alma and must be maintained as a part of the City of Alma’s sanitary sewer collection system. Care must be taken so as to prevent any damage or material undermining of the adjacent south Heather Lane concrete curb and gutter. This proposal qualifies as a new Public Sanitary Sewer construction and must have necessary and proper permitting obtained through Michigan’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) prior to commencement of any work being performed. Because owner is constructing a new Public Sanitary Sewer to extend to their location, no City of Alma Sanitary Sewer Connection permit is required because they will be connecting a sanitary sewer lateral to the main that they are constructing. However, EGLE permits are required and may be required to have City of Alma Authorization as a part of their permitting requirements.

5. Soil erosion permit, if required, must be obtained from the Gratiot County Permits office.

A summary of all the required Public Services Permits is listed below and permits may be acquired either all at the same time or near the time needed by each associated trade that will be performing the work. Permits must be acquired no later than a minimum of (3) business days in advance of any of the work within the City right-of-way but may be applied for much further in advance if desired. Because Heather Lane must be excavated to make the necessary storm sewer and likely water connections as well as it being a major street, the contractor will need a road closure/detour route approved by the Public Services Department prior to any road/right-of-way excavations.

Public Services Permits Required:
- Drive Approach Permit
- 1-inch Water Connection Permit
- Major Street Opening
- 1-inch Water Meter Permit
Kulling inquired if this company has opened other locations?

McLeod replied that they have several other locations located in Morenci, Ann Arbor, Lansing, Detroit, Grand Rapids, and in other states including Illinois, Ohio, and Massachusetts.

A motion was offered at 6:36 PM by Mapes and supported by Kulling to approve the site plan review for the proposed provisioning center at 595 Heather Lane as presented with the stipulations outlined above.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None

**PUD Eligibility 319 Downie**

A Planned Unit Development Request has been received from Gemini Capital Management IX, LLC for the property at 319 Downie (#29-51-344-577-00). The Procedure for Review requires a Pre-Application Conference, which has taken place. The next step is for the Planning Commission to evaluate the preliminary plan for compliance with the PUD Eligibility outlined in Section 60-110. The Planning Commission will convey comments to the applicant regarding the PUD eligibility and instruct the applicant to schedule a neighborhood meeting to review the plan.

A presentation was given by Smith.

Smith explained that this project was previously presented to the planning commission a couple of years ago. At that time, the neighborhood disapproved of the project as submitted. This plan takes those comments into account. It provides for 40 residential dwelling units and the possibility of two commercial buildings. It proposes a density that is lower than the maximum allowed by the PUD ordinance and offers a wide range of homes from 400 to 1300 sq. ft. It aims to offer affordable housing and attainable housing with rents targeted at 30% of Gratiot County’s median income. All parking is on site in either garages or an interior parking lot. All garages face the interior of the lot. No curb cuts are being proposed for the garages. A road is to be added where the current city alley is located on the block running North and South across the property. A secondary drive will be added running East and West but primary access to the development will be from the North and South via Downie and Hastings. Each home will be equipped with a full concrete crawlspace, built with 2x6 framing, equipped with high efficiency furnaces and rooftop solar systems. A sidewalk is to be constructed leading to each unit creating walking access to downtown. Once commercial building will exist on site to accommodate maintenance staff and storage and a second commercial building may be possible for use as an on-site child care center.

Ayers inquired if Smith would be selling any of these homes?

Smith replied that all of these homes are to be rental dwellings.
Ripley commented that the density presented is lower than that of the original PUD maximums provided in the PUD pre-amendments were made to allow for increased density in 2019.

Mapes commented that this project has a great feel.

Ayers thanked Smith for listening to the neighborhood.

Smith thanked Ayers for the comment. He noted that the plan was changed according to the comments previously received and that the proposed building all match the heights of the homes in the existing neighborhood.

Schooley noted that the project meets all of the requirements outlined in the PUD process to date.

Therrien inquired if the units would be listed at market rate?

Smith replied that he would be receiving no grants from the state or federal government requiring the units be rented based income, the units will be market rate. He added that these units would not be part of the Section 8 or HUD Housing programs.

Richter inquired if there is a demand for 400 sq. ft. dwelling units?

Smith replied that his company has done a marketing analysis and concluded that there is a demand for units of that size and that the variety of sizes offered will encourage diversity of residents.

Ayers commented that small homes on the market have been selling quickly.

Schooley commented that this project has already attracted public interested in renting the 400 sq. ft. units.

Smith commented that the market study conducted determined the size and number of homes presented.

Mapes commented that he wouldn’t want a city full of small homes, but it has a need in limited quantity.

Ayers noted that this is a great location for that type of housing considering the easy access to downtown.

Richter inquired if this plan will create multigenerational housing?

Smith replied that his studies indicate that would be the case.

A motion was offered at 6:49 PM by Schooley and supported by Kulling to approve the current stage of the PUD process for the project proposed at 319 Downie.
PUD Eligibility: 1425 Michigan Avenue

A Planned Unit Development Request has been received from Gemini Capital Management IX, LLC for the property at 1425 Michigan Avenue (#29-51-354-269-00). The Procedure for Review requires a Pre-Application Conference, which has taken place. The next step is for the Planning Commission to evaluate the preliminary plan for compliance with the PUD Eligibility outlined in Section 60-110. The Planning Commission will convey comments to the applicant regarding the PUD eligibility and instruct the applicant to schedule a neighborhood meeting to review the plan.

A presentation was given by Ripley. The proposed lot borders with the Sisters of Mercy religious campus and is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential, but contains a pre-existing duplex dwelling on the property. The property is in the vicinity of industrial property and other property that has recently been re-zoned to R-3, Multi-Family Residential, making this a feasible idea.

Smith commented that this project is similar to the project proposed at 319 Downie. He feels that Planned Unit Development is a good fit for this project. He feels this will be a test run for the Downie project and will be developed first.

Pitts inquired as to why this location was chosen.

Smith replied that this land is currently under utilized and a PUD is a better fit than a rezoning of the property.

Ripley commented that the rear area of this parcel lies within the flood plain.

Smith commented that the completed project will include 2 two-bedroom duplex units and 2 one bedroom duplex units. The existing duplex will be renovated to match the newly proposed duplex. The plan will increase and improve the existing parking lot. Three existing diseased trees on the property will be removed and replaced as part of this project. These units will also be equipped with rooftop solar systems.

Pitts inquired as to the start date of the project.

Smith replied at an exact date has not been set but will likely begin in the Spring.

A motion was offered at 6:56 PM by Pitts and supported by Gilkins to approve the current stage of the PUD process for the project proposed at 1425 Michigan Avenue.

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None
A motion was offered by Wheeler and supported by Schooley to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 PM

Yes: Ayers, Richter, Gilkins, Pitts, Schooley, Mapes, Wheeler, Therrien, and Kulling
No: None

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron K. Hale
Planning Commission Recording Secretary
FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
4TH Tuesday of the month
5:00pm, Conference Room

Meeting Date: January 21, 2020

Members Present: Greg Mapes, Mayor
Nick Piccolo, Commission Member
Roxann Harrington, Vice Mayor
Matt Schooley, City Manager
Kathrine Phillips, Finance Director/Treasurer

Guests: Tony Costanzo, City Attorney

The January 21, 2020 City Finance Committee meeting was called to order at 5:00pm at City Hall

Retirement Plans

Recent funding requirements for pension plans, changes in projected rates of return and inflation rates have modified the contribution rate the city must pay dramatically resulting in unfunded liabilities for the pension plan. Without action, the amount required to pay down the liability and maintain current contribution rates is unsustainable. Extensive analysis has been to determine the best path forward to reduce future retirement obligations and honor the current benefits promised to employees.

The following requirements are stated in the City of Alma’s Code of Ordinances and must be resolved before moving forward with retirement plan resolutions.

Part 1- Charter, Chapter 2- City Commission, Section 2.20 Special Requirements of Commission

In addition to other acts required by Law or by specific provision of this Charter to be done by ordinance or resolution, the Commission shall enact ordinances or resolutions as hereinafter set out.

(d) The Commission shall, by ordinance, make available to the regular administrative officers and employees of the City, a sound pension and retirement plan. Upon the adoption of this Charter, such plan shall be a statewide pension and retirement plan for municipal employees, which is established by State Law. If, at some future date, the City shall elect to withdraw from said plan, under the provisions of State Law, the same shall be replaced by a plan with substantially similar provisions, which plan shall provide for current and adequate funding.
(e) The Commission shall, by ordinance, make available to the administrative officers and employees of the City, any recognized standard plan of group life, hospital, health, or accident insurance, either independently of, or as a supplement to, the pension and retirement plan provided by the City for its employees.

With the consent of the committee, Mr. Costanzo will review the language and provide the committee with a determination on how to move forward with the following proposed resolutions:

1. Closing the defined benefit plan to new hires without changing any factors for current employees
2. Establish a Defined Contribution plan for new hires.

Approved  X
Greg Mapes
Nick Piccolo

Denied

Other Retirement Related Topics discussed.

1. Creation of new policy whereas employees with more than 120 hours of vacation will no longer be able to roll that time over without written authorization from the City Manager. If an employee chooses not to take their vacation time and no roll over authorization is given, there are two options.
   a. Lose the hours accrued
   b. The City will contribute the value of those vacation hours based on the current wage of the employee to a Retirement Health Savings Plan with Mers

2. Transfer the City's 457 Supplemental Plan from ICMA to Mers.

Approved  X
Greg Mapes
Nick Piccolo

Denied

Minutes prepared by Kathrine Phillips, Finance Director/Treasury for the City of Alma and submitted to the City Manager and City Clerk to entered into the City Commission record.
January 24, 2020

Transit Plan
The transit expansion to a countywide service has been in various stages of discussion for nearly 20 years. Over the past few years the ATC has contracted with neighboring municipalities to provide them varying levels of service. Recently talks have become more focused and the concept of a countywide millage has been discussed. The Alma Transit system is currently funded by a city millage (.96 mil) and through state and federal grants, along with fares and contracts. While the idea of a countywide millage for transit is still worth further exploration, it does not appear to be achievable at this time. There is doubt in some areas of local governments about the need, as well as the actual process it would take to form such an agency.

Transit Director Baublitz has recently partnered with Dr. Ben Perterson from Alma College and his Public Policy class. They have agreed to provide a study of the transit needs in the Cities of Alma, St. Louis, Ithaca, and the Township of Pine River. Students will be split into work groups in each of those jurisdictions as well as the medical, industrial, and small business communities where they will conduct interviews with political leaders, major community leaders, major employers, and social service agencies. A Transit Survey will also be sent out to 4000 random residences in the defined jurisdictions. The survey will ask the following questions:

1. Would you use transportation services to any of the following destinations?
   a. Medical Appointments
   b. To Work/School
   c. Shopping
   d. Entertainment
   e. County/State Services
   f. Other: Specify
   g. I will not be using public transportation services for any travel needs
2. Do you support new public transportation in your area?
3. Would you be willing to contribute up to 1 millage point on your property taxes to have public transportation in your area?
4. Where do you currently reside?

Students will utilize the data from the surveys and the information gathered from their interviews to present to the individual entities along with a recommendation.
This information will be made available to the individual communities so that their commissions and councils can make an informed decision about placing the transportation issue on their local ballots in the August 2020 elections. If the individual municipalities decide they do not want to put the issue on the ballot we will make arrangements to cease any service to the area. If the item is placed on the ballot, we will continue to provide the service based on current contracts until the election.

I understand this has been a long-time issue in the county. If countywide transportation is truly a need, it must develop slowly and planned. Ridership with Alma Transit has grown from 41,000 in 2014 to over 75,000 in 2019. That amount of growth has stretched the current resources and changed the way the product is delivered to the public. The City of Alma, nor the transit department are attempting to impose any type of pressure on the other jurisdictions. Under this plan they will be allowed to make their own decisions in regard to their transit needs.

Connecting Entrepreneurial Conference Update
On January 21st the planning team for the Connecting Entrepreneurial Conference through MSU Extension came to Alma to tour the city. They walked away very impressed and let us know that we should hear from them by early next week. Thank so much to Commissioner Allman who opened up the Strand Theater, Diane Clise who gave a great talk on the Alma Community Arts Center, Ashley Tupper for the tour of the Opera House, Damien Sanderson for the look at Highland Blush, Ryan Smith for stopping by to talk PUDs, and Kelly and Rochelle for the unbelievable tour of Saravilla. I believe our local planning committee was able to show off a community that embraces their rich heritage yet understands the need to evolve with time. By the end of the day I believe we put our best foot forward and anxiously await word on our application to host the conference this coming October here in Alma.

Alma Aspires
I am attaching the Alma Aspires Plan for you to read over prior to the breakfast meeting on Monday January 27th. As of today, 75 of the nearly 100 attendees from the October meeting have RSVP’d. That is a great number! The purpose of this meeting is to present the plan to the attendees and then form work groups that will address the following topics:

People
- Enhance Capacity for Career-Based Education
- Expand Early Childhood Support and Services
- Launch Career Awareness Campaign
- Grow New Leaders

Place
- Launch New Community Brand and Marketing Campaign
- Develop Affordable Inter-Generational Housing
- Enhance Alma’s Parks and Recreation Offerings
- Offer Expanded Entertainment Opportunities

Prosperity
- Grow High Wage Jobs and Capital-Intensive Investment
• Accelerate Technology and Innovation Development
• Establish Alternative Access to Transportation
• Increase Downtown’s Appeal to Developers and Entrepreneurs

I have asked the administrative staff to take a look at the different opportunities that may be available to them in this plan. We realize that some of these areas will require our expertise and I fully expect them to weigh in and become involved. I did ask that they also see if there is a topic that they would be interested in assisting with development that was not connected to their work. I welcome the opportunity for our employees to branch out and enjoy the experience of working on something a little different. I look forward to the commission’s input and assistance with this plan moving forward.

EGLE Recycling Quality Improvement Grant
A couple of you asked about the possibility of the Gratiot Solid Waste Authority a proposal to them for a Recycling Quality Improvement Grant Opportunity. Any Michigan municipality, township, county or regional authority representing a group of communities currently operating a curbside and/or drop-off recycling program is eligible for up to $150,000 per grant application. Funding may be used for cart tagging, education and communication, social media, signage, and other tactics aimed at reducing contamination. Aeric was able to watch the webinar for the grant and one of the major criteria was the partnership with your recycling vendor. I had the opportunity to speak with Matt Biolette from Republic Services. I asked Matt to review the grant and give me his opinion.

Thank you for making some time to sit down with me yesterday. During our time together you inquired about a recent grant opportunity announced by the State of Michigan EGLE, the artist formerly known as DEQ. This grant is intended to provide funding for improving material quality in residential curbside and drop-off recycling programs.

While this is a wonderful opportunity for some communities, I believe this is not a good fit for the City of Alma and the larger Gratiot Solid Waste Authority because:

• GSWA utilizes 18-gallon open recycling bins which allow the driver to reject non-acceptable materials right at the curb.

• The Materials Recovery Facility utilized for your area, Isabella Co, continues to closely recycling monitor all materials coming from GSWA area which includes City of Alma & City of St. Louis.

• Republic Services already identifies and communicates any issues at each home that is determined has contaminated recycling and educate them on how to recycle properly.

• I personally believe a passive educational approach vs. a disruptive educational as the grant is calling for.

• The high (20% +) contamination level is not found in your City’s recycling stream and the typically a problem when the service is offered in a tote style collection program without a educational program attached.

Based on the information above I would recommending letting this grant opportunity pass as the results will not provide a significant change within the City of Alma recycling program. If you have any questions or would like to watch the grant introduction webinar yourself, please give me a call or reach out.

At this time, we will not be seeking funding through this grant.
Planned Unit Development Community Meetings
A special Planned Unit Development Community Meeting has been set for Monday January 27th for the following properties at the Alma Public Library:

- 6:00 pm - A Planned Unit Development Request has been received from Gemini Capital Management IX, LLC for the property at 1425 Michigan Avenue. The Procedure for Review requires a Preapplication Conference, which has taken place. The next step is for the Planning Commission to evaluate the preliminary plan for compliance with the PUD Eligibility outlined in Section 60-110 (this was approved on January 6th). The Planning Commission conveyed comments to the applicant regarding the PUD eligibility and instruct the applicant to schedule a neighborhood meeting to review the plan.

- 6:30 pm - A Planned Unit Development Request has been received from Gemini Capital Management IX, LLC for the property at 319 Downie. The Procedure for Review requires a Pre-Application Conference, which has taken place. The next step is for the Planning Commission to evaluate the preliminary plan for compliance with the PUD Eligibility outlined in Section 60-110 (this was approved on January 6th). The Planning Commission conveyed comments to the applicant regarding the PUD eligibility and instruct the applicant to schedule a neighborhood meeting to review the plan.

A more detailed look at the request for the consideration of the Planned Unit Development agreement can be viewed on the planning commission page of myalma.org or at this link: PUD Request

All are welcome to attend the Community Meeting.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to give me a call or stop in.

M. Schooley
Alma aspires to be the best small city within Michigan’s shoreline.

From the days of its founding, Alma has benefited from thoughtful strategic planning. To this day, Alma is strengthened by the bold decisions by the community’s early leaders. Alma College, MidMichigan Medical Center-Gratiot, Masonic Pathways, the Opera House, historic downtown, strong public schools, and globally-relevant employer base are all a result of forward-thinking civic action.

Building upon these strengths, Alma today takes another leap forward. Alma aspires to be a community of choice, where families, seniors, students, employers, and tourists all choose Alma for its unique charm and community connectedness. Where, through a quality education and training system, economically diverse employer base and proximity to additional employment centers, everyone reaches their full potential.

Visualize Alma’s downtown alive with people enjoying an array of shops and restaurants; music filling the streets as a community festival delights the crowd; neighborhood parks buzzing with activity, from kids’ soccer games to the new adult kickball league. Winter is appealing too, as the community embraces the season with a community skating rink and a new snowman competition that attracts visitors from across the Midwest.

This wave of community spirit results in more high school and college graduates staying in Alma and new families moving here as well. New housing developments - houses and apartments - sprout up across the community. Importantly, the downtown events and activities bring the community together - the entire community. With Alma’s growing diversity, greater emphasis is placed on the delivery of programs and opportunities that appeal to all. As a result, cultural activities connect the entire community in ways few places can accomplish.

Alma experiences growing jobs, wages, and investment. Existing companies add jobs and increase wages as they find more trained workers locally and more receptivity from those considering relocating to Alma. The growth of current employers complements the addition of a wave of startup companies, everything from new local restaurant operators to high-flying technology firms. These entrepreneurs benefit from a supportive community, with Alma now delivering an abundance of startup services and co-working spaces to accelerate the launch of successful home-grown companies.

Through a series of bold actions first taken in 2020, an aspirational Alma has solidified itself as a leading community in Michigan for the benefit of all of its citizens.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Alma Aspires is the result of extensive hard work and collaboration among a range of stakeholders, community and business leaders, elected officials, and members of the public who care deeply about the future of Alma. In particular, the following people are recognized for their contributions to this effort.

STEERING COMMITTEE
Bob Conley | Michigan Masons
Donalynn Ingersoll | Alma Public Schools
Jeff Abernathy | Alma College
Jim Wheeler | Greater Gratiot Development
Mike Logan | Michigan Masonic Homes
Marita Hattem-Schiffman | MidMichigan Medical Center-Gratiot
Matt Schooley | City of Alma

STAKEHOLDER GROUP
Bob Albrecht | City of Alma
Dayna Alton | Michigan Masonic Home
Garth Anderson | Commercial Bank
Sara Anderson | City of Alma
Cindy Austin | Studio on State
Ali Barnes | Yes & Yea
Kevin Brown | The Cobbler Shop Shoes and Pedorthics
Bobbie Brown | Alma Abstract
JoNeil Conley
Tracey Condes | Gratiot County Administrator
Anthony Costanzo
Rory Douglas | Alma Vineyard Church
Mary Douglas | Alma Vineyard Church
Carol Fried | Freed Construction Company, Inc
Bill Gilbert | Oncore AI
Jessica Gilkens | City of Alma Planning Commission
Aaron Hale | City of Alma Planning Commission
Tammy Halfmann | Mercantile Bank of Michigan
Ell Hall | United Way of Gratiot & Isabella Counties
Greg Hatcher | Hatcher Agency
Bill Henderson | Aircraft Precision Products
Dancy Hodges
Jim Holton | Alma Brewing Company
Garret Johnson | Triterra
Daren Johnson | City of Alma
Brendan Kelley | Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce
Lori Krierim | Mercantile Bank
Tim Lambrecht | County Commissioner District 4
Diane Longenbach | MSU Extension
Ed Lorenz | Alma College
Greg Mazes | City of Alma Mayor
Art McClintic | Alma Public Schools Board of Education
Todd Moegenborg | Michigan Masonic Home
Lori Neeb | Edward Jones
Harmony Nawin | Consumers Energy
Joy O’Neill | Mercantile Bank
Kelly O’Shay | Saravilla Bed & Breakfast
Rochelle O’Shay | Saravilla Bed & Breakfast
Kendra Overta | City of Alma
Nick Piccolo | City of Alma Planning Commission
Bill Pilkore | City of Alma
Michelle Pitts | City of Alma Planning Commission
Ellen Richter | City of Alma Planning Commission
David Ringle | City of Alma
Aeric Ripley | City of Alma
Vicki Ritz | Michigan Masonic Home
Damian Sanderson | Highland Blush
Andy Shaffey | Commercial Bank
Ryan Smith | Gemini Capital Management, LLC
Sue Stack | Alma Church of God
Austra Stahl | City of Alma Planning Commission
Jayson Sumerix | Century 21 Lee-Mac Realty
Lorrie Taylor | City of Alma
Erin Taylor | Alma Church of God
Heather Therrien | City of Alma Planning Commission
Katie Tobias | Katie Tobias State Farm
Tina Travis | Gratiot County Community Foundation
Ashley Tupper | Alma College
Adam Vibber | Century 21 Lee-Mac Realty
Wes Wickes | Central Michigan Youth For Christ
Mark Williams | City of Alma
Jim Wolf | Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing
Kasey Zehner | Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.
Alma holds a unique position within Michigan and the Upper Midwest. Thanks to the foresight and bold action of earlier generations, Alma is home to a nationally-recognized college; exceptional healthcare and supporting senior services; a strong public education system, including career tech education; a collection of strong, internationally relevant employers; and a family-oriented culture that offers unparalleled quality of life to those who call Alma home.

Alma has exhibited remarkable resilience as it progressed through an ever-changing economic landscape. This can-do culture is what drew the civic leadership together to develop and execute a visionary strategy to position Alma for renewed success. Building upon strengths frees the community to move forward in a bold new way.

Alma certainly has many legacy assets that serve as the foundation of this plan. Few peer cities can equal the collective advantages that Alma offers. In more recent years, the community has moved forward on a series of big moves that have continued the advance forward, including:

- $7.5MM renovation of the Opera House
- 16 new businesses in downtown, including Alma Brewing Co., Highland Blush, and Starbucks
- New downtown apartments and boutique, Airbnb-style hotel recently announced
- New state-of-the-art 190,000 SF Meijer supercenter
- Recent upgrades to Wright Park
- Mountain bike trail open and enjoying strong ridership
- Alma Grand Prix of Cyclocross bike course and annual event
- Regional Education Service District (RESD) awarded a $1.3MM Marshall Plan for Talent grant
- Linking to the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail, which helped Alma rank #2 out of 571 communities nationwide for bike network connectivity
- $50MM invested into facilities at Alma College
- New birth wing and catheter lab at MidMichigan Medical Center—Gratiot
- Masonic Pathways announcing nearly $20MM in upcoming investments which includes over $750,000 to enhance the Doig Chapel & Performance Arts Center
- Passage of the $10MM Alma Public Schools Bond Issue for school renovations
- Garr Tool expanded manufacturing to 200,000 SF and is now producing more than 14,000 tools per day to serve a global customer base

These recent projects provide Alma and this Plan the momentum to become a leading, winning small city. Additional momentum may come as a result of shifting demographic trends as more people consider small cities as their preferred place to live:

“Small and mid-size downtowns can anchor the emergence of new ‘opportunity cities.' Increasing numbers of Millennials are moving from top tier ‘superstar cities' to smaller markets in search of affordable living, quality of life, and civic involvement.”

- 2020 Global Trends Report, PUMA

Alma can satisfy these emerging trends; housing affordability, quality of life, and civic connectedness are core strengths for the community. With intentional execution of the Alma Aspires Plan, the city is poised to fully capitalize on this new demographic wave.
ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Like much of Michigan, long-time Alma residents know their town, too, has absorbed several economic shocks. The losses of Lobdell-Emery Manufacturing and Total Petroleum Refinery were particularly painful as hundreds of good-paying jobs were lost. And like many other Michigan cities, Alma has not fully recovered from the Great Recession as jobs and income remain below pre-recession levels.

Unlike many other Michigan cities, Alma has maintained a strong economic position as an employment center. An economic cluster analysis conducted by Dr. Michael Porter, who led Harvard Business School’s Cluster Mapping Project, found Alma excels in several areas, including education, agriculture, automotive, metalworking, and water transport. Porter’s work focuses largely on traded clusters, which considers the percentage of the goods or services sold outside the local economy.

Importantly, Alma outperforms the nation with 43% of the local jobs within traded clusters, compared to 36% nationally. Simply put, Alma’s companies and workers are more globally relevant than the balance of the nation. This global economic relevance bodes well for Alma’s economic future.

Within Alma’s local traded sectors, healthcare, which is rapidly transforming into a traded cluster, employs over 2,500 people and is clearly an economic strength of Alma.

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EMPLOYMENT BY TRADED CLUSTER

ALMA, MI - Rank in the US
Private, Non-Agricultural Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Rank in the US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education and Knowledge Creation</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metallurgy Technology</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Inputs and Services</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Transportation</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution and Electronic Commerce</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Logistics</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulcanized and Fixed Materials</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Products</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Processing and Manufacturing</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


CLUSTER LINKAGES AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

ALMA, MI
MICROPOLITICAL AREA

EMPLOYMENT BY LOCAL CLUSTER

ALMA, MI - Rank in the US
Private, Non-Agricultural Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Sector</th>
<th>Rank in the US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Health Services</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Hospital Establishments</td>
<td>781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Retailing of Clothing and General Merchandise</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Motor Vehicle Products and Services</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community and Civic Organizations</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Financial Services</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Utilities</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Commercial Services</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Food and Beverage Processing and Distribution</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Alma also enjoys proximity to major employment centers, including Mount Pleasant (20 miles), Midland (35 miles), and Lansing (45 miles). As Alma furthers its position as a family-oriented community, Alma can serve as a home-base for people working throughout the greater region. And by providing high-speed internet connectivity, cultural and recreational opportunities, and a connected community that provides the human interaction often lost in a home office environment, Alma can tap into this growing teleworking market.
PEOPLE
Alma aspires to be a community where everyone can achieve their highest potential.

1. Enhance Capacity For Career-Based Training
2. Expand Early Childhood Support and Services
3. Launch Career Awareness Campaign
4. Grow New Leaders

PLACE
Alma aspires to be a community of choice, where people choose to visit, locate, and stay.

1. Launch New Community Brand and Marketing Campaign
2. Develop Affordable Inter-Generational Housing
3. Enhance Alma's Parks and Recreation Offerings
4. Offer Expanded Entertainment Activities

PROSPERITY
Alma aspires to be a vibrant, diversified economy that provides good careers and opportunities for all.

1. Grow High Wage Jobs and Capital Intensive Investment
2. Accelerate Technology and Innovation Development
3. Establish Alternative Access to Transportation
4. Increase Downtown's Appeal to Developers and Entrepreneurs
Alma aspires to be a community where everyone can achieve their highest potential.

Jobs of tomorrow require greater education and training than ever before. To compete in this new economic environment requires an even stronger commitment to developing young talent and refreshing the skills of existing talent. Alma has several competitive advantages as it pursues this goal, including Alma College, collaborative industry-education relationships through the Alma Public School’s Career Technical Education (CTE) program and RESD, and a strong healthcare system that includes a high concentration of senior support services and facilities.

Tomorrow’s economy will look different than today’s economy, not only in the business mix, but also in the mix of people filling the jobs. Alma has already realized a rapidly changing demographic profile, with demographers forecasting this trend to continue. Communities that actively embrace this change will excel. In particular, Alma will see a rapidly aging population, as more seniors live longer than ever before, and continued growth within the Hispanic population.

Alma can achieve the People strategy as follows:
1. Enhance Capacity For Career-Based Training
2. Expand Early Childhood Support and Services
3. Launch Career Awareness Campaign
4. Grow New Leaders
Recent program launches, including mechatronics and the grant-funded programs on healthcare and manufacturing, highlight the community’s commitment to staying current with industry needs. Short term, increasing program participation requires renewed industry partners to grow student participation. Adding five more active company partners will provide greater incentives for students to participate in career-based training. The most successful programs—for students, schools, and employers—are ones where a student is provided a part-time job at the company while they go through their training. With greater company participation, a goal of 50 Alma students annually can be achieved. Further, Alma’s Gratiot-Isabella Technical Education Center (GI-TEC) Campus is fully subscribed to Welding and Auto Repair programs, suggesting an opportunity for new investment to expand these programs.

According to research conducted by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska, at-risk children who do not receive a quality early childhood education are 25% more likely to drop out of school, 40% more likely to be a teen parent, 60% more likely to never attend college and 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime. Public-private partnerships dotting the country are seeking to address this situation and provide their youngest people the best opportunity for lifelong success. Gratiot County has already engaged in this process to a degree, launching the Great Start Collaborative. For Alma, there is more to be accomplished, including:

a. Grow the Current Great Start Collaborative Efforts at RESD
Model after the successful Ready for School initiative in Holland, Michigan, where the community has realized a 23% increase in school preparedness for those entering Kindergarten. The Ready for School model is a public-private partnership that is focused on evidence-based initiatives that produce measurable outcomes. A benchmarking exercise should be undertaken to evaluate Alma’s efforts relative to Holland’s.

b. Enhance Childcare Options
Currently, Alma has 22 childcare facilities (18 in-home; 4 commercial) serving as many as 282 children. As state regulatory demands have intensified, there has been a growing trend away from home-based childcare to commercial facilities. Given the relatively few commercial service providers currently in Alma, this trend requires careful attention going forward.

c. Host a “Day of the Young Child” Event
Each year, the State of Michigan designates April as the “Month of the Young Child,” to bring attention to the special opportunity everyone has to make a difference in the life of a child. In Zeeland, Michigan, they expanded upon this concept to create the “Day of the Young Child” event. Filling the Middle School gym with child-focused vendors and service providers and closing the streets to bounce houses and fire trucks, hundreds of families and thousands of people enjoy a day together learning and having fun. This program should be modeled in Alma as a way to bring the community and schools together for an annual celebration.
LAUNCH CAREER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Having clear visibility into future career opportunities is critical to affording every Alma resident—young and old—the opportunity to achieve their full potential. This can be achieved as follows:

a. Experiential Program for High School Students
   This program will have a goal that all Alma high school age students experience no less than 5 career opportunities before graduation. To achieve this goal requires a new approach and a commitment from area employers like never before. Modeled after Omaha, Nebraska’s highly successful CareeRockit program, Alma schools and employers will team up to deliver an annual career exploration day, where students are given immersive experiences at employers throughout the community. From freshman year through graduation, students will be able to learn firsthand the exciting careers available within Alma and the skills required to attain those careers. This will help students focus their studies, help employers develop a pipeline of talent, and increase the retention of young people in the community.

b. Youth Employment
   With just over 1,000 teenagers between the ages of 16-19 in Alma, only 350 are currently employed. In fact, only 50.1% of Alma teenagers are looking for work and of those, 31.6% are unemployed. The dramatic decline in teenage employment has been a growing national trend since 2000. Though the problem is not unique to Alma, the solution can be. For many, teenage employment is an introduction to the world of work, learning what it means to earn a paycheck, and understanding workplace norms. Employers can make a marked improvement to the future workforce quality by increasing the volume of teenage hiring. Whether two hours or twenty hours, every teenager seeking their first job should be able to find work in Alma. By committing to creating 150 new jobs for teenagers, Alma would then be providing an opportunity for virtually every teenager seeking work. Greater Gratiot Development, Inc. (GGDI), Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Michigan Manufacturers Association, and other partner organizations should organize a youth employment program, getting area employers to commit to hiring one or more teenagers each summer. By adding 50 new teenage positions over each of the next three years, the goal of providing employment opportunities for all teenagers seeking work can be achieved.

c. Factory/Business Tours
   Many a Michigander will recall the days of touring the auto assembly line or, if so lucky, grabbing a box of Frosted Flakes after a tour of the Kellogg’s cereal plant in Battle Creek. Unfortunately, for a host of reasons, factory tours have largely become extinct. Alma can step forward to restart this American tradition, inviting their neighbors to look inside to see the amazing work taking place around the community. This community-pride boosting initiative will also serve as a talent retention and recruitment tool for area companies. Existing employees will be invigorated as they showcase their skills and their company, and area residents may find themselves drawn to work for companies they previously knew only by the sign on the building. Alma should select one week each year where several companies open their doors each night of the week, inviting the public into their facilities. This could be done in conjunction with the CareeRockit program discussed elsewhere in this Plan.

d. Healthcare Talent Initiative
   Alma enjoys an incredible, growing healthcare sector. This industry is labor-intensive, requiring a large number of compassionate, skilled people to serve the community’s most in-need residents. With over 2,500 employees currently employed within this sector, job growth and natural turnover suggest over 500 open positions require new hires each year. To meet this volume of job opportunities, Alma’s health care system must partner with education and training providers at all levels to form a Healthcare Talent Taskforce designed to create a sustainable talent pipeline.
GROW NEW LEADERS

While Alma’s overall population has remained relatively flat, the makeup of the community’s population has evolved. In general, the population is growing older while also realizing an increasing Hispanic population. At the same time, Millennials are rapidly growing into key leadership roles across the community. These changing demographics are in line with national trends and represent an opportunity for Alma to adapt to this new dynamic.

a. Young Professionals

The recent launch of the Gratiot Young Professionals Network (YPN) was a bold move to develop the community’s next leaders. To be successful, YPN must be embraced by the current civic leadership. The business community can be supportive of the initiative by hosting events, sponsoring activities, and empowering employees to be active leaders in the program. For the broader community, being quick to embrace the new ideas brought forward and providing ‘seats at the table’ for representatives of YPN to serve on broader community efforts will serve to further integrate new leaders. Civic groups like the Chamber, GGDI, Alma Action, and City Council should find ways to integrate YPN leadership into their Board functions, whether as ex-officio board members or invited reports to Council. Finally, when planning long-standing community events and in developing new programs, extra effort should be put forth to recruit new volunteers from the YPN group.

b. Senior Workforce

In a tight labor market, extending the working years of an aging labor force can help to expand the available pool of labor. This requires employers to be flexible, balancing the need for experienced talent with the desire of many seniors to downsize their work schedule. This can include reduced work week (by number of hours and/or days), job share programs where two people share one full-time position, increased vacation time (paid and unpaid), and health insurance for part-time work.

c. Leadership Initiative

Rural communities often struggle to develop and retain young talent. One community, Ord, Nebraska, implemented a youth leadership program that combats this challenge. All 8th-grade students participate in a formal leadership development program. The same model is provided to adults throughout the community. Combined, the program is credited with increasing retention of young graduates. Alma should consider a comparable program, seeking to provide professional leadership development available throughout the community.

d. Spanish Translation

As the population continues to shift, embracing this change is paramount to long-term growth and prosperity. The simple act of having key community communications translated into Spanish can be a strong signal to the Hispanic community that they are welcomed and invited to fully participate in civic leadership.

e. Diversity & Inclusivity Speaker Series

As major employers in Alma host their own staff training on diversity and inclusivity, providing speakers and trainers to the community for a broader audience on the topic would help advance the conversation locally. Whether a formal program with the Chamber or more general public outreach through library programming, bringing this conversation to the community will be a good step forward as the community continues to embrace a shifting demographic environment.
Alma aspires to be a community of choice, where people choose to locate and stay.

A strong sense of community is vital to a thriving residential community. A deep connectedness to the larger neighborhood makes for a more deeply rooted community. In today’s fast-paced economy, a city that intentionally slows down to meet in the street will find its residents will be more engaged, more fulfilled. This activation can take the form of organized public events, Farmers Markets, new bars and restaurants, live music, community competitions, and more.

Alma offers much today and can provide more tomorrow through the following strategies:

1. Launch New Community Brand and Marketing Campaign
2. Develop Affordable Inter-Generational Housing
3. Enhance Alma’s Parks and Recreation Offerings
4. Offer Expanded Entertainment Activities
LAUNCH NEW COMMUNITY BRAND AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN

As demographics have evolved, many communities with cultural heritage brands have begun to reposition their community marketing strategy. Alma should do the same, leveraging the Scottish heritage while moving Alma forward. This brand can be a significant spark in starting a new, forward-looking movement in Alma. Zeeland, Michigan’s award-winning and highly successful Feel the Zeel campaign can offer inspiration.

a. Contract with a Professional Marketing Firm
   Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy, creating a new brand, including a logo and design standards, for Alma.

b. Hire a Part-time Downtown Marketing Director
   Or consider partnering with Alma College marketing students to execute the new marketing strategy. Ideally, this effort is a coordinated one, linking the City of Alma, Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce, and Alma Action. Each group should commit to adhering to a new, higher design standard in all community marketing.

c. Replace All Community Signage
   As part of the marketing strategy, updating existing marketing collateral, including signage, is imperative. This helps establish a fresh start. An example, Zeeland started by repainting the water tower. For Alma, all signage and marketing collateral should be updated over a period of two years to reflect the new logo, brand, and color scheme selected with the marketing firm.

d. Launch an Aggressive Social Marketing Campaign
   This can become the new “What’s Happening” section that was lost with the downsizing of the local newspaper. This social media effort should be kept strictly to fun community events, activities, and opportunities.

e. Apply For, and Win, Community Awards
   Community branding goes well beyond a new logo. A new community brand can be amplified by creating a winning culture. It is time to regain a competitive, winning attitude by applying for a series of awards and recognitions. This serves to boost community pride and encourage continued advancement of community goals.

DEVELOP AFFORDABLE INTER-GENERATIONAL HOUSING

For all its strengths, Alma has not seen much in the way of new housing since the Great Recession. There are bright spots, including a number of new downtown loft apartments and a recent proposal to provide new housing options on the former school property near downtown. Alma can build on this recent momentum by focusing on the following:

a. Continue to Support New Infill Housing
   Opportunities include downtown apartments and the former school site, as well as accelerating the completion of the Gemstone Subdivision. These sites, within the existing housing fabric of Alma, provide quality infill opportunities to grow new housing options.

b. Long-Term, Renewed Focus on the City-Owned Parcel along the Pine River
   The location at State Street, with views of the river and proximity to downtown, is the exact type of location that is seeing new development in cities across the country. A public-private task force should be established to oversee and determine the brownfield remediation requirements and market potential of this effort.

ENHANCE ALMA’S PARKS AND RECREATION OFFERINGS

Alma offers a robust parks system. With nine city parks complemented by a number of school park facilities, the Alma Mountain Bike Trail and the trail head of the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail, all Alma residents are afforded easy access to outdoor spaces. With great green spaces already established, Alma would do well to refresh the Parks and Recreation Plan, focusing on existing facility enhancements, program activation, and linkages between the various parks and green spaces. Program activation should be a key point of emphasis, as youth sports and adult recreation leagues often serve as a link between the city and its residents while providing terrific public health benefits. Additional parks opportunities to explore include expansion of the successful mountain bike trail, groomed cross-country ski trails, and the addition of modern playscape equipment. In doing so, understanding which parks serve as primary parks and those that are secondary parks will be important in determining where investments are made.
OFFER EXPANDED ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES

Beyond home and work, people seek out interesting third places to connect with their friends and family. Alma has seen an uptick in these venues of late, with Alma Brewing Co., Main Cafe, and Highland Blush joining long-time anchors Pizza Sam’s, Terry’s Cycle, and the True Value Hardware store. These community gathering places can be expanded upon as follows:

a. Food
In 2018, for the first time, Americans spent more at restaurants than at grocery stores. Building on this trend, Alma must continue to grow its food options, including:

• More Restaurants. Alma can become a dining destination with the addition of two new quality restaurants downtown. This concentration of restaurants provides the customer confidence, knowing that if one restaurant is too busy they will have several options upon arrival to Alma. To achieve this goal, Alma should market aggressively in nearby markets noting the opportunity for new restaurants and targeting existing chefs who seek to start their own operation. Zeeland, Michigan successfully recruited a Grand Rapids-based chef who went on to open two restaurants in downtown Zeeland and two more in nearby Holland.

• Food Hall. As people blend food and entertainment, new venues across the country are popping up to meet this growing demand. The food hall concept is a modern twist on the traditional mall food court, bringing new flavors and often new entrepreneurs together under one roof. Denver has seen a rise in this offering, with Avanti, Stanley Marketplace, and Punch Bowl Social all new to the scene. This large city trend will soon adapt to smaller markets - Alma can be the first.

• Food Trucks. There is a tendency to believe that food trucks take away business from brick and mortar storefronts. More often than not, food trucks attract a different, new clientele that likely would not be dining out that particular evening. In fact, food trucks tend to expand the base of dining customers. Alma should consider hosting food trucks for special events. Food trucks from Mount Pleasant, Lansing, and Midland should be targeted with the goal of recruiting some of those truck operators to open restaurants in Alma over time.

b. Live Music
While mountains and beaches are not replicable, music is universally available. And with local college and high school performing arts and music programs in Alma, there is a nearby source of talent to feed a local live music scene. Whether as informal street performers or hired by local bars and restaurants, live music can be a great addition to the downtown scene. This does not always need to be a rock ‘n roll show or dance party each time but could include a simple instrumental or an acapella act in the corner of the restaurant.

c. Street Performers
A simple, low-cost way to bring consistent energy to the downtown scene is a street performer program. Holland’s successful street performer series has evolved from a one-night offering to a weekly program that runs all summer long. Some cities, including Holland, St. Joseph, and Grand Rapids, have taken the street performer concept inside, working with storefront owners to do live mannequin displays that attract thousands of people.

d. Community Events
Alma is already the proud home of the major Highland Festival and produces a series of local events, including Come Home for the Holidays that draws great crowds. The Grand Prix of Cyclocross proved that Alma is fully capable of hosting great new events that attract people from all over. This energy should continue, seeking ways to bring additional event opportunities to market:
Alma aspires to be a vibrant, diversified economy that provides good careers and opportunities for all. In a reversal from long-standing economic development practice, economic prosperity now follows people and place. That is, talent is the ultimate economic development strategy and talent is first drawn to a dynamic place. Millennials have voted with their feet, choosing first where they want to live before deciding where they want to work. As a result, companies are now following the talent, rather than choosing a location and hoping talent will move to the new business location.

This Plan places great emphasis on Alma’s People and Place. While Prosperity occurs with little recognition to local municipal boundaries, Alma can play a stronger role within this regional context. By offering a better product - people and place - Alma can expect to gain in Prosperity. With that renewed focus, Alma can reinforce the long-standing economic development strategy in partnership with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

Alma can increase Prosperity through these strategies:
1. Grow High Wage Jobs and Capital Intensive Investment
2. Accelerate Technology and Innovation Development
3. Establish Alternative Access to Transportation
4. Increase Downtown’s Appeal to Developers and Entrepreneurs
Through the work of GGDI, Alma has been able to move forward throughout an otherwise turbulent economic environment. New major employers have arisen in the aftermath of difficult plant closings. Today, Alma’s industrial base is more diversified than ever before, both from a product and market-reach standpoint. Thanks to the strong manufacturing strength, Alma is a globally relevant city. To build on this position requires careful attention to supporting and retaining the existing industry base and intentional recruitment of new employers. Several opportunities exist:

a. **Formal Business Retention Visits**
   Certainly, GGDI and the city have consistent communication with key employers. At least once a year, GGDI should visit the top 25 employers in Alma to learn firsthand of how the business is doing and seek ways to support their growth. As appropriate, GGDI should be encouraged to include other stakeholders in these visits, including the city, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Michigan Works, etc., who can be helpful in addressing company needs. These visits should include at least 10 specific questions that can be tracked over time to observe how the company, and the community, is performing. Lakeshore Advantage has been conducting formal business surveys for 10 years and has a deep understanding of the local business market. Needs identified by the employers should be addressed immediately, removing any barriers to growth. Further, the companies should be invited to participate in community efforts, including enhanced career-based training, student career exploration, and new business recruitment. These visits offer the opportunity to inform business leaders on how they can best be involved in the city.

b. **East End Opportunity**
   The east entrance to Alma had long been a major employment center. Today, with the closing of the refinery, Alma must determine what the future holds. It should be noted that industrial-zoned parcels that are large in size, rail-served, and have all utilities in place are increasingly difficult to find across the country. As the community considers what is next, having the patience to wait for the right opportunity will be critical.

c. **Business Attraction**
   The growing number of Spanish-speaking residents and a base of college students offers Alma an opportunity to attract a contact center-type operation to the market. These facilities have become more sophisticated in recent years, with employees commanding better salaries and benefits. A 50 person contact center would do well in a market like Alma and a targeted outreach effort should be undertaken.

GROW HIGH WAGE JOBS AND CAPITAL INTENSIVE INVESTMENT

ACCELERATE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT

The fastest-growing markets - by jobs and wages - are those markets with the highest concentration of technology and innovation activity. Alma can capitalize on this shift in the economy in two ways - directly, through increased investment in technology and innovation efforts; and indirectly, by supporting greater telecommuting employees who choose Alma as a place to live. To do so requires the following:

a. **Technology Analysis**
   Currently, Alma’s connectivity is uncertain, with conflicting reports on the community’s telecom infrastructure capacity. A careful review is necessary to fully understand the opportunities and challenges. This effort will look both at capacity and cost to determine Alma’s competitive position and the need for improvements to the system.

b. **Business Accelerator Program**
   Working with Alma College business faculty and students, Alma can offer a virtual incubator to increase the number of entrepreneurs and increase their rate of success. The CO.Starters program in Denver offers a model to consider. The program is open to all entrepreneurs across all industries. This 9-session program walks an entrepreneur through a series of modules that help position them for success. This program could be replicated in Alma, with coordination from GGDI and volunteer instructors from the community.

c. **Startup Competitions**
   With a growing number of entrepreneurs attracted to the accelerator program, offering an annual business startup competition would round out the startup programming. An annual business plan competition with a $10K cash prize, complemented by additional in-kind support offered by area businesses, would help to grow the pool of entrepreneurs and startup businesses. This could be an open competition or targeted toward a specific community need.

d. **Tech Company Recruitment**
   The collective purchasing power of the major businesses and institutions should be explored as a way to recruit a tech firm to Alma. For example, if the major businesses and institutions share a common IT support firm, that firm should be asked to open an Alma office to support the local contracts. Beyond tech, there may be other similar opportunities where leveraging the buying power of these major institutions can bring new businesses to town.
ESTABLISH ALTERNATIVE ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

Cities with under 25,000 people struggle to provide quality, reliable transportation services. It is a math problem - with relatively few people to serve, the costs per person become unjustifiable. Alma has seen this over the years as services have started and stopped repeatedly. However, there remain several opportunities to pursue:

a. Social Services Route
   With many of the social services centered in the county seat of Ithaca, residents of Alma requiring those supportive services often face challenges traveling that distance. A scheduled route would allow those residents to plan to utilize the bus route to access those services.

b. Bike Friendly Designation
   As noted earlier, Alma has earned the #2 ranking as a bike-friendly community by People for Bikes. The city should leverage this strength further by having the city and area employers (Alma College, in particular) apply to gain additional bike-friendly status. By doing so, the community will be committed to enhancing bike facilities around the community, including additional dedicated bike lanes, bike parking and hosting bike-friendly events. This action will help position Alma as an active, healthy community.

INCREASE DOWNTOWN’S APPEAL TO DEVELOPERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Downtowns have long been the center of every thriving community. In fact, a thriving economy depends upon a healthy, dynamic downtown environment. Alma’s downtown is in the midst of a great renaissance, with new housing, new restaurants, new shops, and, of course, the transformative Opera House renovation. Alma College’s recent introduction of student housing into the heart of downtown promises to build on the energy and excitement in the area. In addition, the announcement of a new Airbnb-type hotel downtown promises to further add to the mix. This momentum must be maintained and built upon.

a. Civic Investment Fund
   Create a $2MM civic investment fund to accelerate and support the redevelopment activity in and around the core of downtown Alma. Major benefactors and institutions in Zeeland, Holland, and Grand Rapids quietly invested in key development projects in the core of their respective home city. This patient capital - often investment, sometimes philanthropic - proved to be the spark that ignited a wave of new development. Alma offers a similar opportunity for those leaders who seek to be part of Alma’s next chapter as a growing, dynamic community.

b. Hotel Market Study
   The past four years has produced near-record level hotel construction as the hospitality industry addresses a shortage that resulted from the 9/11 and Great Recession-induced hospitality pullback. This wave of hotel construction has not bypassed small cities, as many have witnessed new highway hotels and an occasional downtown hotel. To date, Alma has not enjoyed new hotel investment to match the national trend. A careful analysis, including review of the Albion, Michigan, Courtyard by Marriott project, is required to determine the market feasibility of a new Alma hotel offering.

c. Opportunity Zones
   The new federal tax incentive program signed into law in late 2017, which provides investors an avenue to reduce and eliminate certain capital gains taxes, is only now beginning to be utilized across the country. In Alma, the Opportunity Zone covers virtually all of the city north of Superior Street. Though maybe not an immediate opportunity, this program warrants monitoring as it begins to take hold nationwide.

d. Peer City Exploration Visits
   Modeled after Denver’s successful Urban Exploration program, Alma leaders should explore peer and aspirational cities once a year to learn firsthand what is happening in like markets. This can start as a one day visit, departing early morning and returning early evening, though the power of the program is maximized when local leaders spend two days in the selected city, allowing for leaders to deepen relationships with the extended stay. Key markets to consider in the first few years: Zeeland/Holland, Hillsdale, Tecumseh, and Coldwater.
## IMPLEMENTATION

### ALMA ASPIRES

**Enhance Capacity For Career-Based Training**
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Add 5 new company partners to area career-based education programs
- **Mid-term**: $$$  
  - Invest to grow Welding and Auto Repair programs

**Expand Early Childhood Support and Services**
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Benchmark Ready For School Program in Holland
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Assist current child care services' dependence on home-based care
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Host Day of the Young Child event

**Launch Career Awareness Campaign**
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Through Careercast-type program, provide every high school student 2 or more career experiences each year
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Host annual "Fun Fair" day, opening area businesses to visit employer facilities
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Grow Young Professionals Network by engaging 10 new employers and growing participation by 25 individuals

**Grow New Leaders**
- **Long-term**: $$$  
  - Develop toolkit for employers considering expanding their hiring of veterans
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Develop comprehensive community leadership development program
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Key employers and civic institutions commit to translate key materials and websites to Spanish
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Launch a Diversity & Inclusivity Speaker Series, with 3 or more sessions per year

**PLACE**

**Launch New Community Brand and Marketing Campaign**
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Hire professional marketing firm to develop new brand and marketing strategy
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Hire a part-time person to market downtown
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Replace all community signage to align with new design standards
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Launch new social media marketing campaign
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Seek out and win community recognition awards
- **Near-term**: $$$  
  - Gain approval and begin construction of new Inland housing development
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Study feasibility of housing development along the Pine River at State Street

**Develop Affordable Inter-Generational Housing**
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Locate existing Alpine Mountain Ski Trail
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Provide groomed cross-country ski trails
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Attract 2 new restaurants
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Bring food trucks to 3 events each year
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Offer more live music throughout the community, seeking to increase by 30%
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Institute a consistent, high quality street performer series during summer months
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Host one additional traveling event each year
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Add two new family-oriented events each year for next three years
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Offer more Winter activities, including a community skating rink

**PROSPERITY**

**Grow High Wage Jobs and Capital Intensive Investments**
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Conduct a formal business retention survey process to better track business performance
- **Long-term**: $$$  
  - Patently pursue big opportunities for Fast End development site
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Pursue business attraction opportunities that fit with existing infrastructure

**Accelerate Technology and Innovation Development**
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Form TechCology Taskforce and analyze current technology capabilities and prospects for enhanced service
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Launch virtual business accelerator, leveraging existing community assets and resource
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Host annual Startup Competition
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Analyze tech consulting contracts of key employers to determine if tech firm can be induced to locate in Alma

**Establish Alternative Access to Transportation**
- **Long-term**: $$$  
  - Deploy a once-a-week bus service to social services in Ithaca
- **Mid-term**: $  
  - Create a $1 million Civic Investment Fund
- **Long-term**: $  
  - Monitor Opportunity Zones across country, seeking to model successful deployment
- **Near-term**: $  
  - Visit one peer city per year with 30+ Alma leaders
WARRANT NO. 20-14          CITY OF ALMA          JANUARY 28, 2020

The attached claims have been allowed by the City Commission and you are hereby authorized

to release payment for each of the claims as covered by the checks listed.

Internal service fund transfers for the period January 10, 2020, through January 23, 2020 are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund/Account</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Water Usage Charge</td>
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<td>Equipment Rental Charges</td>
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<td>Garage Services</td>
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Payroll of January 23, 2020 totaling $216,495.68 in gross wages and in employer taxes and benefit costs.

SIGNED: __________________________________________
       Sara Anderson, City Clerk

COUNTERSIGNED: __________________________
                 Matthew Schooley, City Manager
## INVOICE REGISTER FOR CITY OF ALMA

**EXP CHECK RUN DATES 01/01/2018 - 02/12/2020**  
***BOTH JOURNALIZED AND UNJOURNALIZED***  
OPEN AND PARTIALLY PAID - CHECK TYPE: PAPER CHECK

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<th>Vendor</th>
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INVOICE REGISTER FOR CITY OF ALMA
EXP CHECK RUN DATES 01/01/2018 - 02/12/2020
BOTH JOURNALIZED AND UNJOURNALIZED
OPEN AND PARTIALLY PAID - CHECK TYPE: PAPER CHECK

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Total: 877,739.80
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<td>Gratiot Isabella Regn Ed D</td>
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13 TOTALS:
Total of 2 Checks: 1,882,740.34
Less 0 Void Checks: 0.00
Total of 2 Disbursements: 1,882,740.34