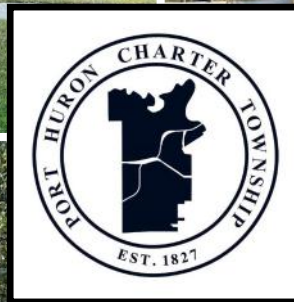


PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

INCLUDES 2023-2027 PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN



Adoption Date:
January 15, 2024

Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER 1:

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



In This Chapter:

- Population and Household Characteristics
- Housing Conditions and Trends
- Economic Influences and Trends
- Geography and Environmental Resources
- Community Facilities and Services

DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To meaningfully plan for Port Huron Township's future, it is important to consider the Township's history/past trends, current conditions, future projections, and the demographic and socioeconomic information for its surrounding jurisdictions. The Township's demographic and socioeconomic data is used to understand how the community has changed over time, determine factors that may influence goal development and future land use decisions. The Township's future projections are analyzed to assist with identifying emerging issues and to provide insights into where the Township may be heading in the future. This analysis provides a factual foundation to assist policy makers with decisions for the township. Township data is compared to its surrounding jurisdictions, St. Clair County, and the State of Michigan to provide perspective on where the Township stands in relation to these other entities.

EXISTING TRENDS AND COMPARATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

Port Huron Township's population profile compares its population, age, race, education, and household characteristics to the surrounding communities. Situated directly to the west of the City of Port Huron, Port Huron Township has the third largest population of all the communities within St. Clair County, trailing Fort Gratiot Township (11,242) and the City of Port Huron (28,983), and has the second largest population of the townships within the county. In 2010, most St. Clair County communities experienced a population loss.



The Township continues to grow, while most of St. Clair County declines.

Table 1-1 shows the population of Port Huron Township in comparison with its surrounding communities and St. Clair County. Port Huron Township by 138 people between 2010 and 2020, representing a 1.3% increase. During the same ten-year period, three of the Township's neighboring communities experienced growth: Kimball Township (2.7% increase), Fort Gratiot (1.2% increase) and the City of Marysville (0.4% increase); while, the City of Port Huron had a 4% decrease in its population and St. Clair County experienced a loss of 2,657 people (1.6% decrease).

POPULATION HISTORY

Historical population growth analysis is significant in providing an understanding of how a community has developed its present character. It helps to indicate the strength of the township in attracting future growth. Thus, by understanding the population expansion or contraction of the past, there is some basis for projecting the population growth in the future.

From 1910 to 2020, Port Huron Township experienced a steady increase in population with the exclusion of years 1980 to 1990 where it experienced a 3.4% decline (a loss of 265 people). Figure 1-1 depicts Port Huron Township having a population of 3,440 people in the 1940 Census. The 1960 Census revealed a township population of 7,047 persons, for a 160% increase over the course of three decades. Most of this growth occurred between the years of 1940-1950, when the Township had just over a 70% increase in population. The 1950-1960 decade witnessed the Port Huron Township's population increase by nearly 20% and between 1960 and 1970, population increased another 8.3%.

Despite the rapid and steady growth in previous decades, the growth began to slow and the Township's population was thought to have leveled off with the increases continuing to shrink with only a 3.3% rise between 1970-1980. This was followed by the previously mentioned decade (1980-1990) experiencing a loss of 3.4%.

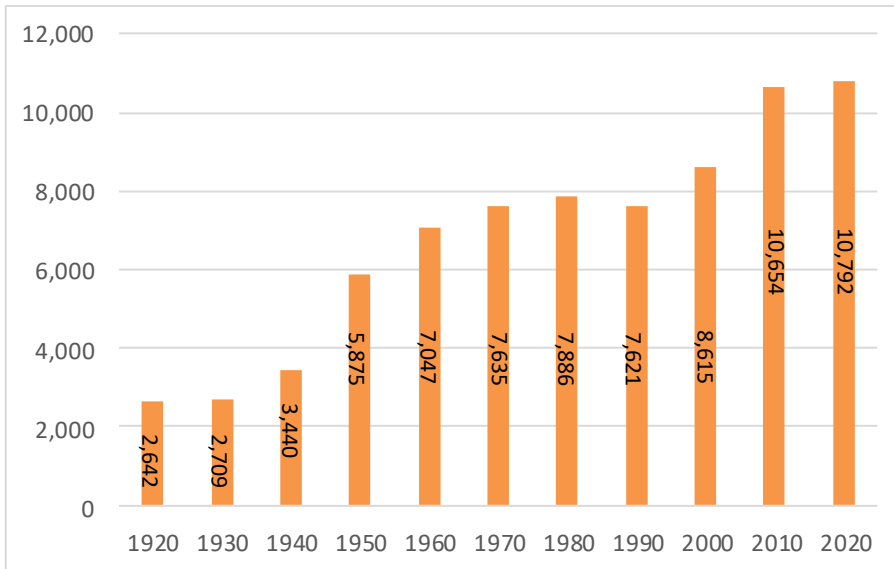
However, the decline was short lived as the Township began to experience steady growth from 1990 to the present. From a decade standpoint, during the course of the past three decades between 1990 to 2020, the Township experienced over a 41% increase in population. During this same period, most other communities in St. Clair County, (23/33) including the County itself, experienced a slight decline in population. Overall, the county lost nearly 4,000 people from 2000 to 2020.

Jurisdiction	2010 Census	2020 Census	Change 2010-2020	Growth Rate 2010-2020
Port Huron Township	10,654	10,792	138	1.3%
Clyde Township	5,579	5,523	-56	-1.0%
Fort Gratiot Township	11,108	11,242	134	1.2%
Kimball Township	9,358	9,609	251	2.7%
Marysville	9,959	9,997	38	0.4%
Port Huron	30,184	28,983	-1,201	-4.0%
St. Clair County	163,040	160,383	-2,657	-1.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

FIGURE 1-1: HISTORICAL POPULATION, 1920-2020



POPULATION

PROJECTIONS

While planning for a community requires historical population trends be taken into account, it is also essential for a community plan to be developed with a perspective of the projected future population. The Township’s historical growth provides a foundation for the calculation of future estimates. These forecasts are designed to assess the forthcoming requirements for various land and community facility uses. SEMCOG develops a regional forecast for 233 local communities in Southeast

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SEMCOG Community Profile, 2020

Michigan every five years. SEMCOG's forecast provides a long-range and comprehensive view of future demographic and economic changes, and also makes base data available for use in planning for infrastructure and development needs. The SEMCOG projections for Port Huron Township used in this master plan are based on data from SEMCOG’s 2045 Regional Forecast Projections. The Future Land Use Plan is directly related to the 2045 projections of Port Huron Township and St. Clair County.

As indicated earlier, the Township’s population growth continues to increase during the present decade. Port Huron Township is projected to gain 1,474 residents between 2020 and 2045 population forecast, an increase of nearly 14% from 2020.

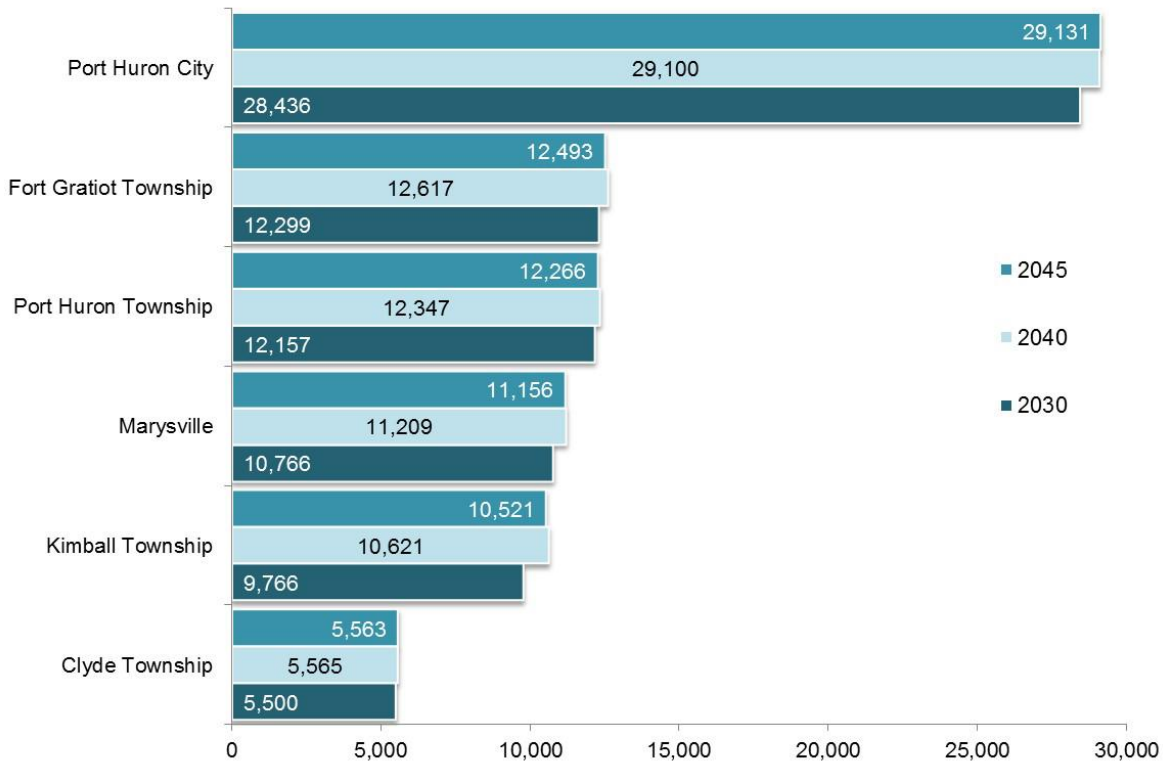
St. Clair County is also expected to experience slight, but steady growth over the next 25 years. To a large extent, growth in Port Huron Township depends on the total growth of the county. Certain regional factors that influence quality of life can influence the future growth of the Township, including the economy, lifestyle, commuting habits, and housing availability and affordability within the region. Many of these factors are beyond the Township’s control and others may only be slightly influenced by actions of the Township, but being aware of the trends and issues taking place throughout the region can be advantageous when planning for a community to support and complement the region as a whole. Thus, as Port Huron Township examines its trending and predicted population growth, along with that of its

TABLE 1-2: POPULATION CHANGE BY DECADE

Year	Count	Percent
1920 - 1930	67	2.5%
1930 - 1940	731	27.0%
1940 - 1950	2,435	70.8%
1950 - 1960	1,172	19.9%
1960 - 1970	588	8.3%
1970 - 1980	251	3.3%
1980 - 1990	-265	-3.4%
1990 - 2000	994	13.0%
2000 - 2010	2,039	23.7%
2010 - 2020	138	1.3%
Average Change per Decade	7,582	17.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SEMCOG Community Profile, 2020

FIGURE 1-2: POPULATION FORECASTED CHANGES, 2030 - 2045



Source: SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast

neighbors, the Future Land Use Plan for the community can be adjusted allowing the level of growth to help determine whether it may need to be accelerated or decelerated to meet the various transportation, facility and public service needs of the area’s population.

GENERATIONS AND GENDER

The age of township residents can serve as an indicator of future economic, housing, transportation, and other community needs. Throughout the United States, the median age of the population is increasing as the Baby Boomer generation ages. In addition, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has indicated that rural populations are slightly older than the American population as a whole; and, as younger individuals leave rural areas to pursue different economic opportunities, it is aging even faster. When compared on the larger geographical level, Port Huron Township falls into this older-aged category.

Port Huron Township’s population is slightly older than both the national and state populations and younger than that of St. Clair County. However, the Township is aging at a much slower rate than any of these three geographic locations. The median age of township residents is 40.6 years. Not only is it lower than the County, but it has been one of the youngest five communities within St. Clair County in both 2010 and 2019. With a median age of 38.5 in 2010; Port Huron Township had the lowest median age of all St. Clair County townships. This age only surpassed that of the villages of Capac and Emmett and the cities of Port Huron and Yale. By 2019, the Township’s median age increased by over two years (40.6); yet, it remains the youngest township within St. Clair County. During that time span, both the villages of Capac and Emmett grew at a faster rate, surpassing Port

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Huron Township's median age. This leaves only the cities of Memphis, Port Huron, and Yale having a younger age, on average, than Port Huron Township.

A population pyramid is a useful analysis tool that breaks down an area's total population to show the percent of males and females within each age group, and is often referred to as an age-sex pyramid. This is illustrated by a bar that extends from either side of the midpoint with each side of the graph representing a gender. The youngest age group is shown at the base of the pyramid with progressively older age groups building upon the base. A population pyramid is an important data visualization tool to help with forecasting social and economic change.

Overall, females are larger as a gender group. In comparison to age there is no large disparity in the male-to-female ratio, as portrayed in Figure 1-3, where the male and female bars appear to generally mirror each other amongst the majority of age ranges.

While the Township currently has a greater portion of residents under the age of 50 (61%) than those over (39%), this is the result of a five percent loss for those under 50 (66% in 2010) and a five percent gain for those ages over 50 (34% in 2010). Older portions of the population are growing at such a pace that younger age groups are unable to replenish the aging groups at a similar rate.

School-Age Population (5-19 years old)

The population that falls within this age group can often be viewed as a short range indicator of future school enrollment for the Port Huron Area School District and over this past decade it has experienced a 10.5% decline (-226 people). It is interesting to note that at only 8%, the Township doesn't have a very substantial number of children between the ages of 10 and 14 (502). If current trends continue, this suggests the number of 20 to 24 year olds in the township may drop further, but will more than likely remain marginal over the next ten years. This could be tricky to plan for potential needs as many of the youth currently in this cohort may leave for college and not return to the township; however, it will continue to require sufficient educational services and recreational opportunities for future demands.

Family Formation Population (20 - 44 years old)

The Township residents within this phase of life have only experienced a 3.2% growth rate with the addition of around one hundred residents. This is a significant stage of life because it is where families are typically creating and expanding. With this age cohort presently growing slowly alongside the decline in youth, it reveals the Township is experiencing and will likely continue to experience lower birth rates and a decrease in families and family size. For the community to increase its potential of replenishing the shrinking younger population, it will require growth among these younger ages.

Labor Force Population(15-64 years old)

Although not all persons in this group are actually employed or seeking employment, this age group is often referred to as the primary labor force age. There has been a slight increase in the labor force population over the past decade, growing by 4% in proportion to the entire population (2010: 66% and 2020: 70%). Looking within this working age group, it further emphasizes the population is aging in place as the largest cohort representation in 2010 was among those aged 45 to 54, still prime working age. In 2020, individuals in that group would have entered the 55 to 64 age group. As a result we now realize this has become the largest age cohort among the 2020 population; and at this age, many of these individuals will also be considering retirement or will have already retired.

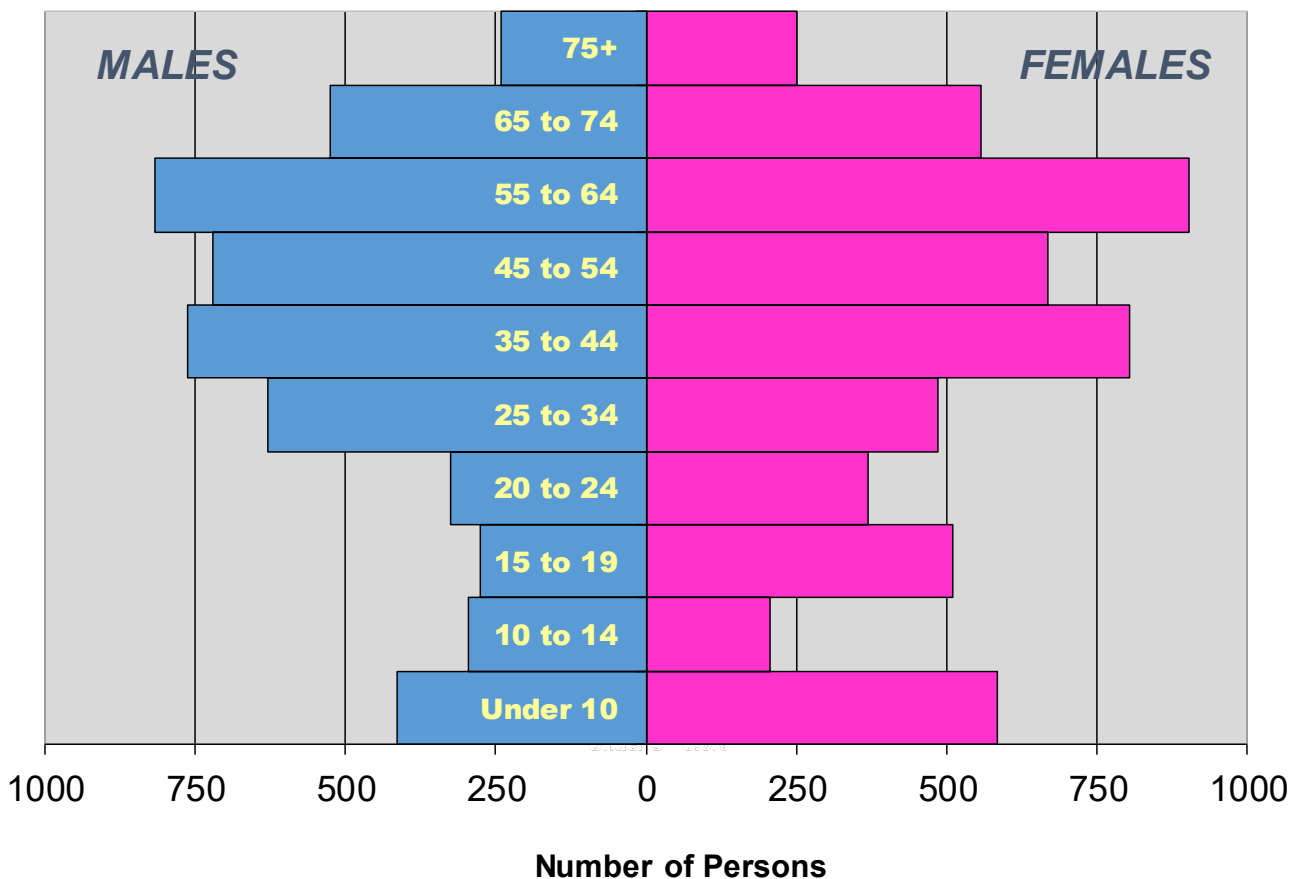
Senior Population (65 and older)

With the continued aging of the baby boomer generation, there will likely be a significant increase in the elderly population. According to SEMCOG’s 2045 Forecast, as depicted in Figure 1-4, the number of children under five years is anticipated to continue falling by about 10% and the senior citizens over age 85 will continue growing by 60% over the twenty year projection illustrated in the bar chart. Considering this is a national trend, Port Huron Township is not anticipated to be impacted quite as drastically as other areas that are expected to double or triple their older population.

Dependency Ratio

It is significant to note that as the elderly grow, they will still become a larger percentage of the Township’s dependency ratio. The dependency ratio measures the burden caused by non-working people on a community’s working-age population and is determined by dividing the total number of non-working dependents (people considered too young or too old to work - those under 15 or over 64), by those of working age (15-64 years old). A lower ratio means there are fewer dependent-age people relative to the size of the working-age population. In contrast, a higher ratio indicates there are more dependent-age people relative to those of working age. Therefore, the higher the dependency ratio, the greater the burden.

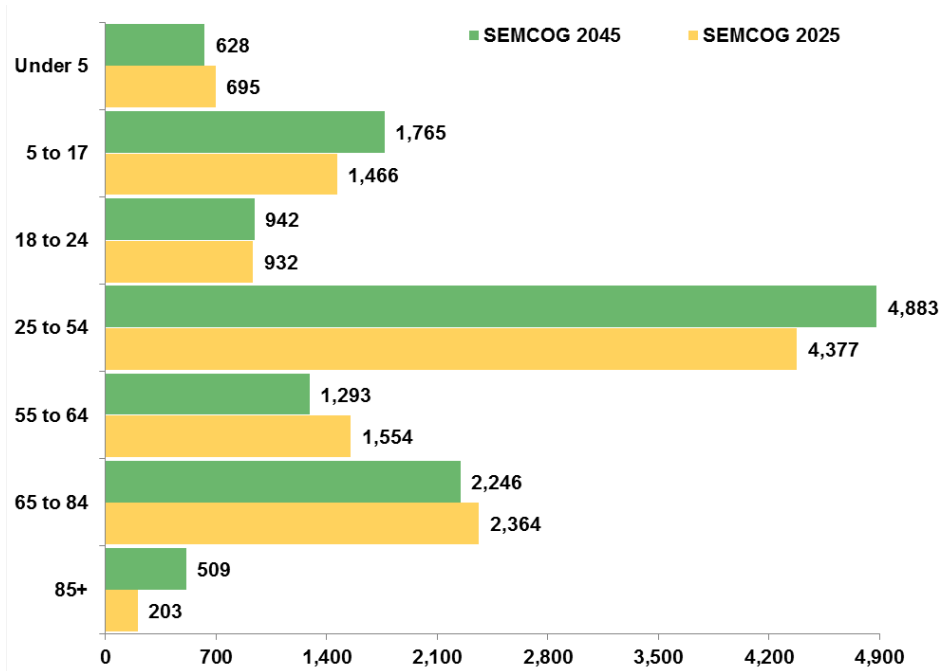
FIGURE 1-3: AGE-SEX PYRAMID, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

FIGURE 1-4: FORECASTED POPULATION CHANGE, 2025-2045



Source: SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast

To gain a more accurate dependency estimate, the labor force participation rate for each age group should also be factored in. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics estimates show the labor force participation rate is dropping overall in the United States because young people from ages 16 to 24 are choosing education and going to school instead of entering the labor force. That means the other age groups are picking up the slack. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the overall age dependency ratio in Port Huron Township has dropped to 57.0 in 2019, down from 62.1 in 2010. This is likely a

result from the decline in youth bringing the child dependency ratio down. However, it is the old-age dependency ratio that could become problematic, as it was estimated at 24.6 in 2019, up from the 22.2 estimated in 2010.

As more baby boomers retire, and fewer people replenish those leaving the workforce, the proportion of those in the labor force declines and the proportion of residents outside the labor force is likely to expand. This could consequently create further burden for those remaining in the workforce. Township officials should recognize that more residents will retire, and at earlier ages. People are also living longer, and are more active in lifestyle than ever before. While retirees could potentially boost the Township’s economy as they typically have more disposable income to spend on shopping and leisure activities, at the same time, an aging population has significant planning implications for housing, transportation, health care, recreation, and access to services.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Often misunderstood, the terms race and ethnicity tend to be used interchangeably, but their meanings are different. Race is viewed as biological, referring to the physical characteristics of a person while ethnicity is viewed as a person’s cultural identity. Therefore, a person who considers themselves white by race can also be Latino by ethnicity. Port Huron Township residents almost exclusively identify themselves as “one race” (96%). According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates, of this 96% that selected “one race,” 88% are “white,” which is a higher proportion than the nation (72%) and state (78%), but lower than the county (94%) populations. Compared to St. Clair County (2.3%), there is a slightly higher proportion of “Black or African American” residents in the township (7.3%).

It is notable that there has been a growing presence of “Hispanic or Latino” residents in Port Huron Township. The number of those who identified as Hispanic or Latino within Port Huron Township (3% in 2020) has grown by

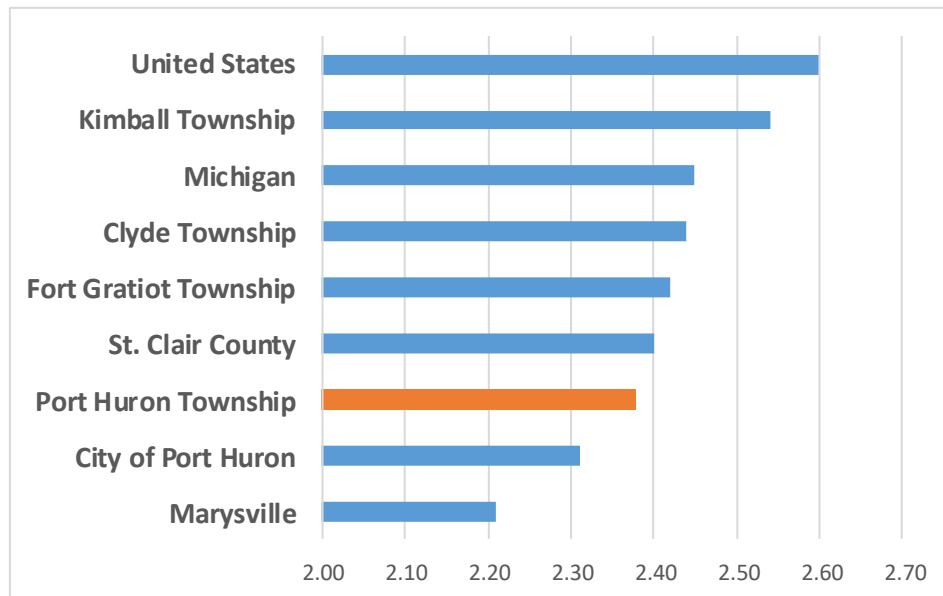
66% in the past decade, and by 50% in proportion to its makeup within the township. Whereas, the County's number has only risen by 15% and remains at the same proportional rate as it was in 2010.

HOUSEHOLDS

Elements of the housing component are based upon the population characteristics and projections previously detailed. The understanding of the relationship between housing and demographic trends is integral to creating a complete picture of the Township's past, present, and future. The following section provides an overview of household composition as well as the age, accessibility, affordability, and occupancy of housing units. This will play an important role in land use development and goal setting for the Township.

Consistent with the fact that Port Huron Township has an older population, we find a lower number of persons per household. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of households in Port Huron Township increased by 225, or 5.6%. The average household size is 2.38, which is slightly below the national, state and county averages. While still on the lower end, the average household size is much more consistent with those of its neighboring communities.

FIGURE 1-5: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 2020



The average family size found within Port Huron Township for 2020 has remained roughly the same 2.80 size from 2010. With no change, it's not surprising that the Township's average family size is also on the smaller end of both the county (2.89), state (3.05) and national levels.

The households in Port Huron Township are generally categorized as family units, with the majority being in married-couple families. Nonfamily households, which include people living alone or sharing a home with unrelated

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

persons, make up approximately 29% of the total households in the township, up 1% from 2010. Almost half of all households in the township are married couple families (51.6%). About one quarter (24.5%) of the householders live alone, and the remaining 76% are households with at least two individuals living in a home together.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

According to the American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates, there were 4,406 housing units in Port Huron Township in 2020. This is an increase of 54 units since 2010.

As shown in Table 1-3, the number of households (occupied housing units) in Port Huron Township increased by 94, or 3.8%, between 2010 and 2020. In 2020, there were 4,138 occupied units and the largest majority were owner occupied, which is expected in a more rural environment that primarily contains single-family residential homes. Of these occupied units, nearly 61% were owner occupied and the remaining 39% were renter occupied.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

TABLE 1-3: HOUSING UNITS BY OCCUPANCY, 2010 AND 2020

Occupancy Category	Total Units 2010	Percent of Total	Total Units 2020	Percent of Total	Unit Count Change	Percent Change
Total Housing Units	4,352	100%	4,406	100%	54	-5.4%
Occupied	4,044	93.0%	4,138	93.90%	94	3.8%
Percent Owner Occupied	2,785	68.7%	2,518	60.8%	-267	-9.6%
Percent Renter Occupied	1,259	31.1%	1,620	39.1%	361	28.7%
Vacant	308	7.0%	268	6.1%	-40	-13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2010 and 2020 5-Year Estimates

However, when you take a closer look at the contrasting numbers between the owner-occupied and the renter-occupied, you will notice that there was a 9.6% decrease in homeownership and a nearly 29% increase in rental occupied units since 2010. This suggests several formerly owner-occupied homes are now being utilized as rentals.

HOUSING STOCK

The percentage of housing units by type are indicated in in Figure 1-6 for Port Huron Township, its abutting communities and St. Clair County. Although the housing unit data presented in this chart reinforces the prevailing pattern of single family detached homes in Port Huron Township, they are less dominant today than in previous years. Like many communities throughout the region, state, and even country, the composition of Port Huron Township's housing stock between renter-occupied and owner-occupied housing has shifted dramatically.

This shift is likely in response to the financial downturn which generated numerous financially-motivated home sales that took place during the housing crisis. Consequently, many homeowners were pushed into the rental market. Numerous homes that went through foreclosure or short-sale were ultimately purchased and converted to rental units. This explains the shift, over time, from more owner occupied, to renter occupied homes, as well as the disappearing supply of single family detached homes and the expanding supply of single family attached homes. Nationwide, several million single-family homes converted to rental homes over the course of the recession. Typically, single-family home rent is higher than inflation-adjusted median rent for apartment units.

When reviewing the age of homes in Port Huron Township, trends are similar to those occurring statewide, where right up to the year 2009, the rate of growth significantly slowed and nearly came to a halt as the housing market experienced a downturn. In 1960, the Township had established 33% of today's housing stock; however, the first big surge was in the 1970's where the Township added 776 homes which brought them to 50% of today's housing stock. The building rate slowed in the 1980's, only to rebound in the 1990's with a rate of growth similar to the 1970's, as portrayed in Table 1-4. This pace continued into the early 2000's when another 21% (925) of homes were built. However, housing construction has decreased dramatically since 2010.

The median year for the housing built in Port Huron Township is 1981, making the majority of the homes at

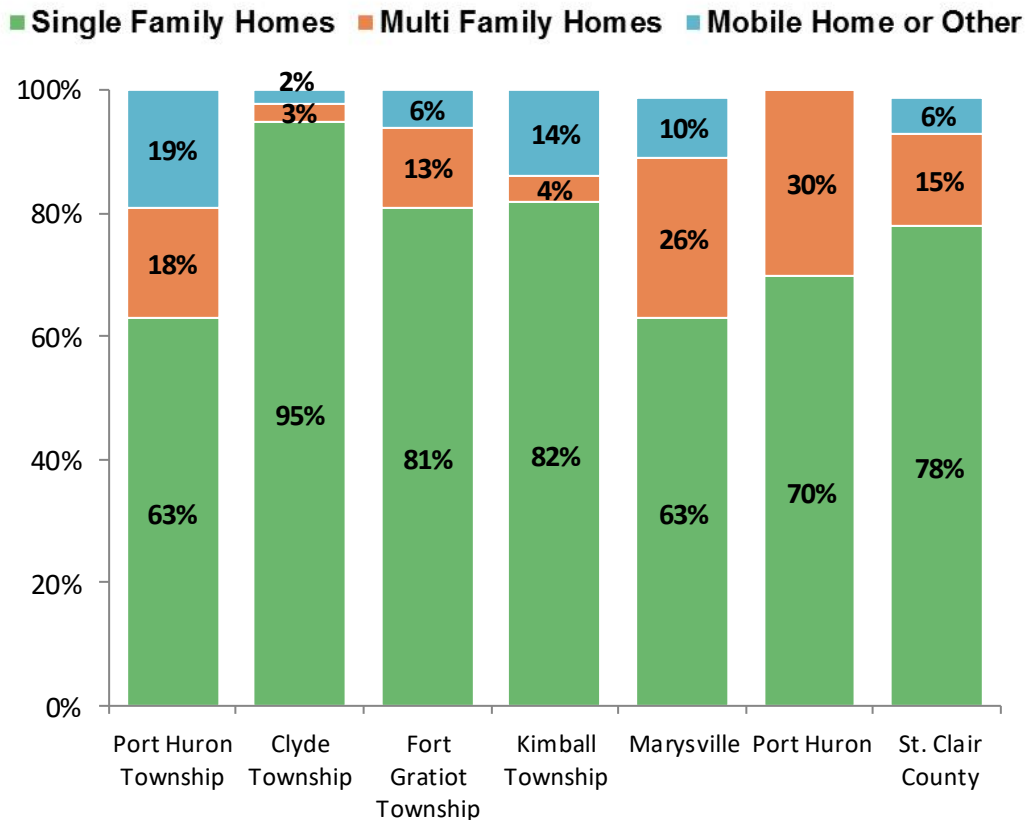
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

TABLE 1-4: AGE OF HOUSING STRUCTURES, 2020

Year Built	Michigan		St. Clair County		Port Huron Township	
	Number of Units	Percent of Total	Number of Units	Percent of Total	Number of Units	Percent of Total
2014 or later	82,985	1.8%	788	1.1%	40	0.9%
2010 to 2013	56,872	1.2%	371	0.5%	22	0.5%
2000 to 2009	454,659	9.9%	8,559	11.8%	925	21.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	611,539	13.3%	12,408	17.1%	774	17.6%
Built 1980 to 1989	454,857	9.9%	7,524	10.4%	507	11.5%
Built 1970 to 1979	708,551	15.4%	10,711	14.8%	776	17.6%
Built 1960 to 1969	544,231	11.8%	6,313	8.7%	291	6.6%
Built 1950 to 1959	679,715	14.7%	9,124	12.6%	431	9.8%
Built 1940 to 1949	344,608	7.5%	4,888	6.8%	224	5.1%
Built 1939 or earlier	673,896	14.6%	11,709	16.2%	416	9.4%
Total	4,611,913	100.0%	72,395	100.0%	4,406	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 1-6: HOUSING STOCK BY TYPE, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

TABLE 1-5: BUILDING PERMITS, 2017-2021

Year	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2017-2021
Permit Type	New	Demo	New	Demo	New	Demo	New	Demo	New	Demo	Net Total
Port Huron Twp	15	-1	7	-5	8	-6	12	-2	11	0	39
Clyde Twp	11	-1	8	-1	4	0	1	0	1	0	23
Fort Gratiot Twp	13	-3	19	-3	9	-2	9	-5	192	-2	227
Kimball Twp	30	-7	29	-6	24	-7	24	-5	19	-7	94
Marysville	8	0	10	0	5	0	4	0	11	0	38
Port Huron	33	-16	33	-11	3	-2	3	-1	4	-14	32
St. Clair County	347	-43	287	58	296	-39	188	42	399	-65	1,470

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022

least 40 years old. This aging stock in Port Huron Township indicates, at minimum, a need for continual maintenance to sustain the housing and possibly the need for replacement housing. The lifespan of a home depends largely on the initial construction and the investment in maintenance over time. Aging housing stock also provides some significant challenges for seniors in rural areas. They often have fewer residential options than their own homes, which due to age and design, are not as easily converted to allow for aging in place. In addition, the previously suggested ongoing single-family home maintenance can quickly become an added cost burden for seniors on fixed incomes, making the economics of staying in their home very difficult.

BUILDING PERMITS

The housing unit data presented in Table 1-5 identifies the housing units permitted in Port Huron Township and adjoining communities. A review of the Township building permit records shows a total of 53 new housing units were established between 2017 and 2021, all of which were single-family homes. However, during that same time period, there were 14 demolitions of residential units, giving the township a net gain of 39 units.

COST OF HOUSING

Just over 70% of the owner-occupied homes with a mortgage in Port Huron Township have an estimated value between \$100,000 and \$299,999. Approximately 14% of the township's homes are valued at \$50,000 to \$99,999 and roughly 9% of homes with mortgages are worth \$300,000 to \$499,999.

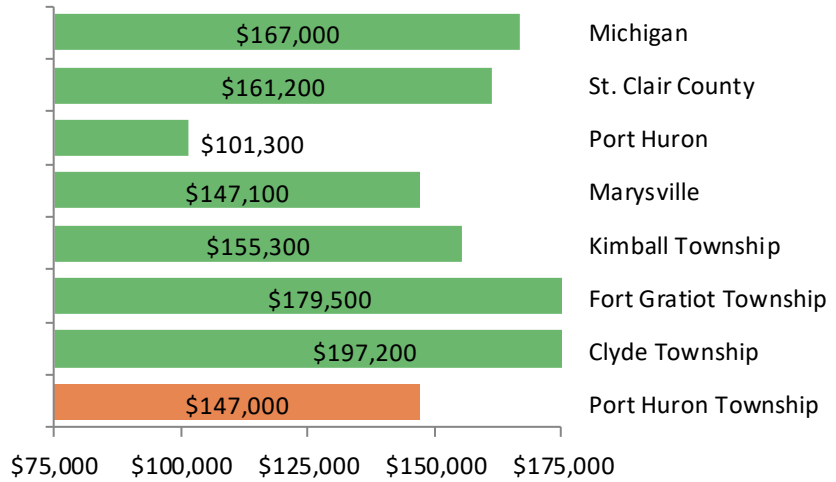
At \$147,000, Port Huron's estimated median home value is on the lower end, as it is exceeded in price by both the county, at \$161,200, the state, at \$167,000 and all neighboring communities with the exception of the City of Port Huron (\$101,300). The township's median home value is just about the same as the median home value in the City of Marysville. The comparison of median home values between Port Huron Township and neighboring communities is shown in Figure 1-7.

The comparison of median gross rent between Port Huron Township and adjoining communities is shown in Figure 1-8. All entities experienced an increase in median rent from 2010 to 2020, with the Township's median rent on the higher end of the rent scale compared with the surrounding jurisdictions and the State of Michigan. It is likely that the additional demand in the rental housing market has led to increased rents as more and more potential renters compete with each other for a limited number of available units.

Over the past decade, as home prices have fluctuated, household incomes, as well as household costs pertaining to owning or renting a home, have also undergone changes for Port Huron Township residents. It is thought that

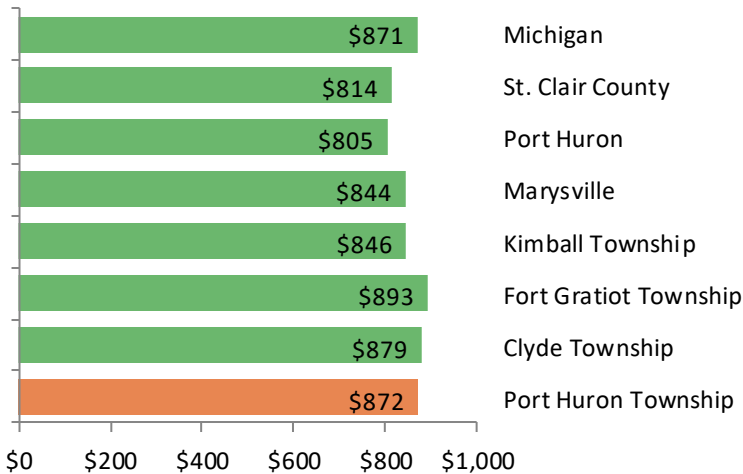
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

FIGURE 1-7: MEDIAN HOME VALUE, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2010 and 2019 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 1-8: MEDIAN GROSS RENT, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

for a home to be considered affordable, no more than 30% of a household’s income should be spent on housing expenses, otherwise it is considered cost burdened. Cost burden is the ratio of housing costs to household income. Differing for renters and owners, the home costs include gross rent, which is contract rent plus utilities, and for owners, housing costs include mortgage payment, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes. When considering all the households within the township, the median household income overall, declined by 10% from 2010 to 2020, while housing costs increased during the same timeframe.

INCOME

The median income is the income that falls directly in the middle of those reported, half of the incomes are lower, and half are higher. Whereas, the average income is the total of all incomes divided by the number of incomes reported. As detailed in Figure 1-9, the median value of Port Huron Township resident’s annual household income is significantly lower than the incomes of St. Clair County, and the State at large. This has been

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

FIGURE 1-9: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2020

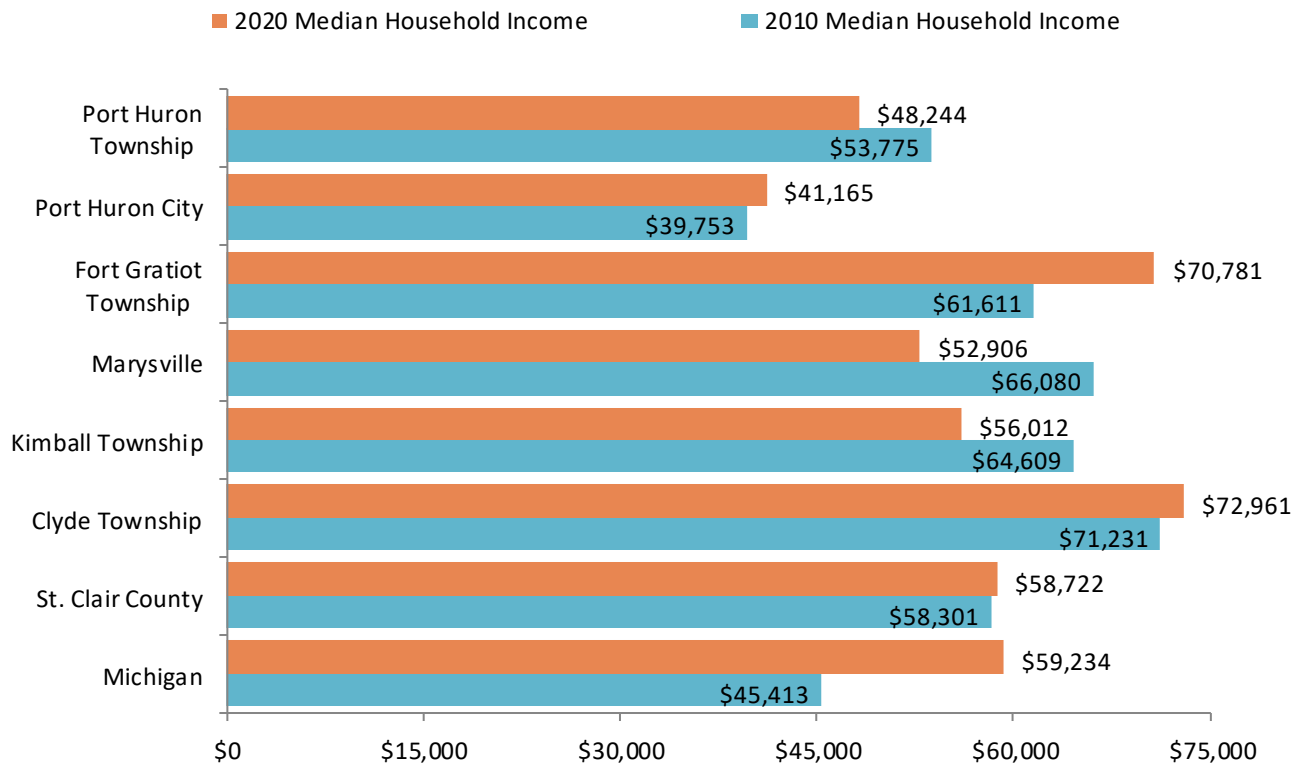
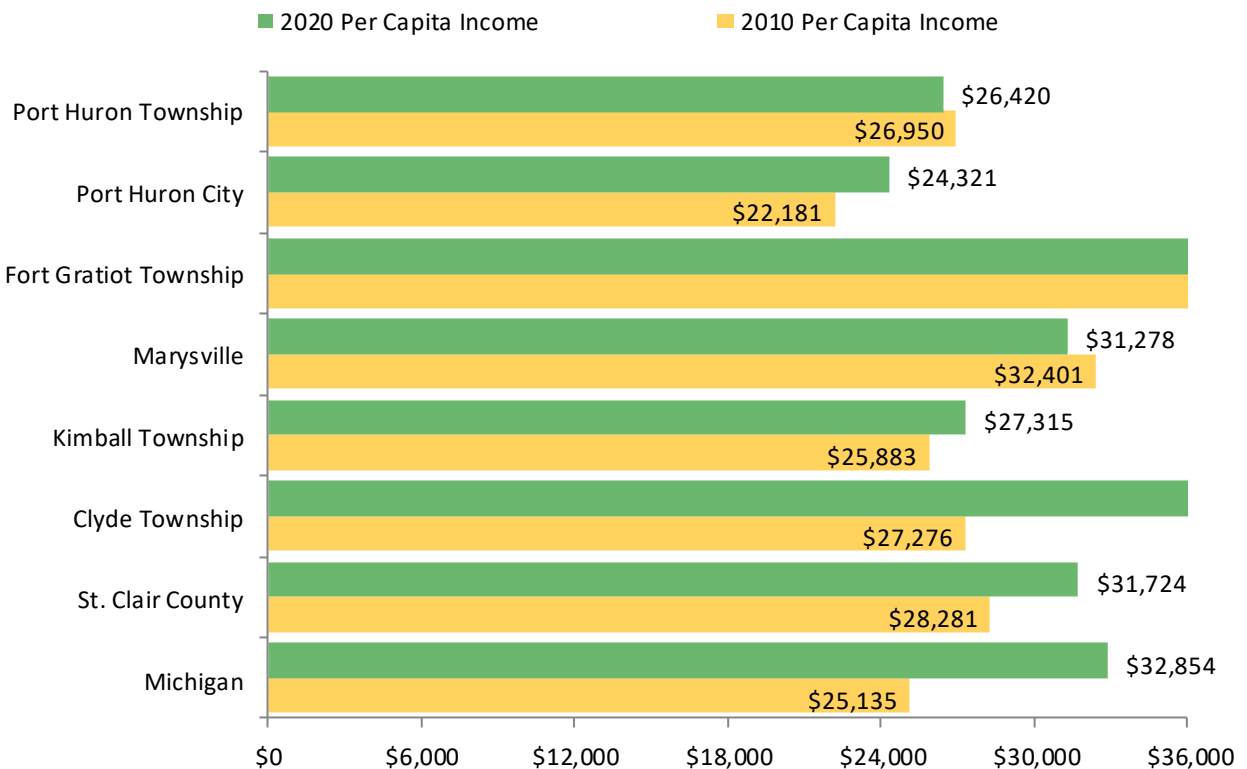


FIGURE 1-10: MEDIAN PER CAPITA INCOME, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

a continuous disparity throughout the past decade as they lagged behind both the County and the State. It is exceeded in price by both the County, at \$58,722, the State, at \$59,234 and all neighboring communities, with the exception of the City of Port Huron (\$41,165).

Per capita personal income is how much an individual person made within Port Huron Township, defined as total income divided by total population. It is a statistical measure of the potential relative cost of labor in the area. Changes in per capita income indicate trends in the township’s standard of living, or the availability of resources to an individual, family, or society. Per capita income tends to follow the business cycle, rising and falling accordingly. Personal income is often used as an indicator of financial well-being, but does not reflect income distribution. Per capita incomes can go up due to higher incomes for some persons while many are experiencing declining incomes.

Similar to the township’s household income trends, their per capita income is noticeably less than both the county and the state. With a reported median per capita income (PCI) of \$26,420 in 2020, Port Huron Township residents earn roughly 20% less than the county, with a reported PCI of \$31,724 and 24% lower than the state with a reported median PCI of \$32,854.

EDUCATION

Education is an important factor in analyzing the capabilities of the local work force and in the economic vitality of a community. Knowing the educational level of township residents helps determine the educational facilities and training required to meet both the current economic conditions as well as the desired economic growth. For the most part, the educational level attained by residents of Port Huron Township parallels that of residents of St. Clair County. See Table 1-6.

Educational attainment in Port Huron Township has seen a decrease in the percentage of the population completing their high school degree. Meanwhile, there has been about the same percentage of the population fulfilling an Associate’s degree or higher. The Township lags Michigan in the percentage of the population with Bachelor’s and Graduate degrees, and lags St. Clair County in all three postsecondary degree achievement levels. However, when focusing on the township alone, each of the reported 2020 postsecondary education attainment levels have experienced improvements from the township’s 2010 attainment levels. Slightly over 14% of Port Huron Township residents had a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2020, up nearly five percent (4.7%) from 2010.

One notable concern is the rate of individuals who have not achieved a high school diploma. The Township rate surpassed both St. Clair County and Michigan back in 2010. By 2020, a 3% or more reduction was reported at both the state and county levels. At the same time, the township’s rate of individuals lacking a high school diploma only decreased by 1.8%, remaining 3% higher than those at the county or the state level.

TABLE 1-6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR POPULATION AGE 25 AND OLDER, 2010 AND 2020

	No High School Diploma		High School Graduate		Some College, No Degree		Associate's Degree		Bachelor's Degree		Professional / Graduate Degree	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Port Huron Twp	13.4%	11.6%	38.1%	30.8%	26.8%	33.3%	9.2%	9.4%	7.5%	9.2%	5.0%	5.6%
St. Clair County	12.2%	8.6%	37.3%	33.6%	25.9%	26.4%	9.6%	12.4%	9.4%	11.9%	5.7%	7.2%
State of Michigan	11.9%	8.7%	31.5%	28.5%	23.4%	23.2%	8.1%	9.6%	15.5%	18.3%	9.6%	11.7%

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

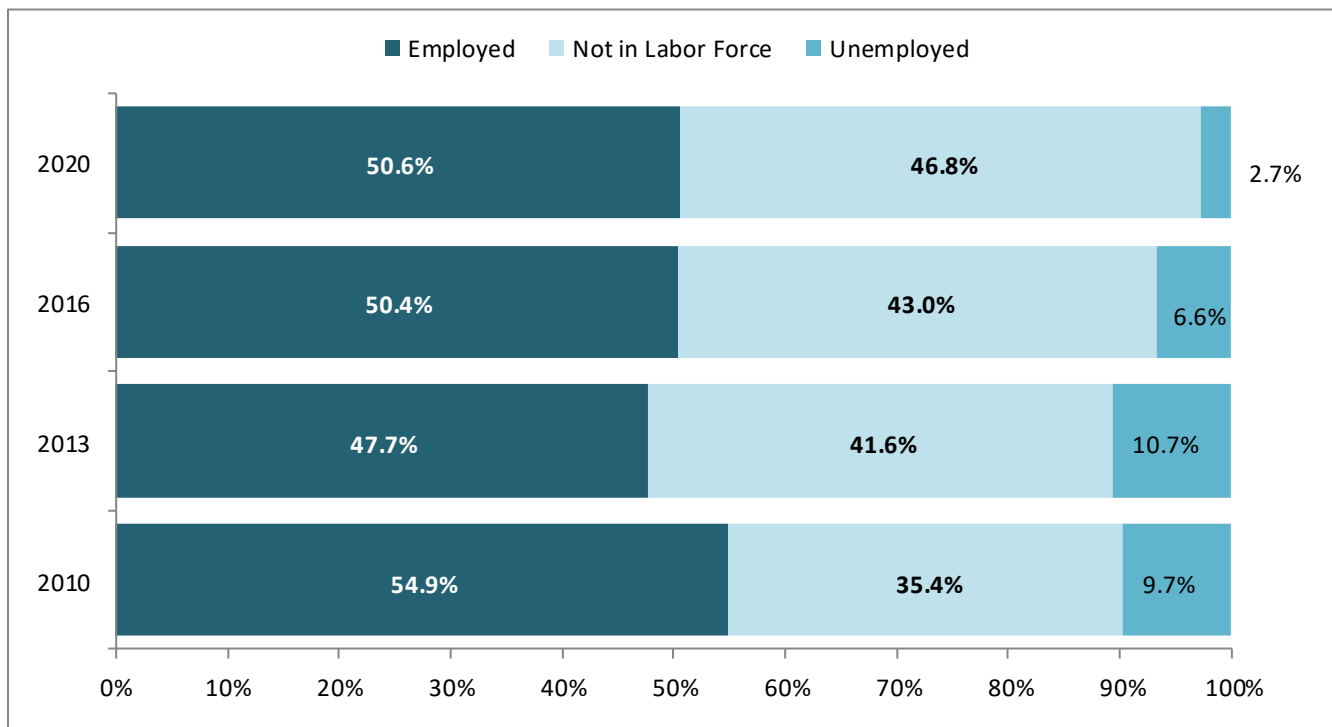
A population’s level of education often sheds light on the potential for workforce development within the community and the desire of businesses to locate within or near that community. Increasingly, a talented workforce is a major driver for economic development as jobs with higher incomes generally come with a need for higher educational attainment levels. Unfortunately, the township’s proportion of persons with a bachelor’s degree or higher level of educational achievement is lower than the averages at both the countywide and statewide levels. With the knowledge that lower education levels often result in jobs with lower incomes, it makes more sense when we see the notably lower household income levels mentioned previously. The lack of residents who have obtained a four-year college degree or any higher level of education, could very well account for the lower average incomes reported for the township.

LABOR FORCE

Educational attainment and workforce go hand in hand. This section addresses the employment distribution of Port Huron Township residents. This is not an assessment of what types of jobs are available or what businesses are located within the community, but rather in what occupations residents are employed, regardless of where they work. As shown in Figure 1-11, Port Huron Township had the highest percentage of their population participating in the labor force in 2010, whereas, in 2020, they had the lowest percent in the labor force, which was likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic that began in February 2020.

The unemployment rate has also transformed for the township over the past decade. According to the 2020 American Community Survey, the township’s unemployment rate was 2.7% in 2020.

FIGURE 1-11: PORT HURON TOWNSHIP LABOR FORCE, 2010-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

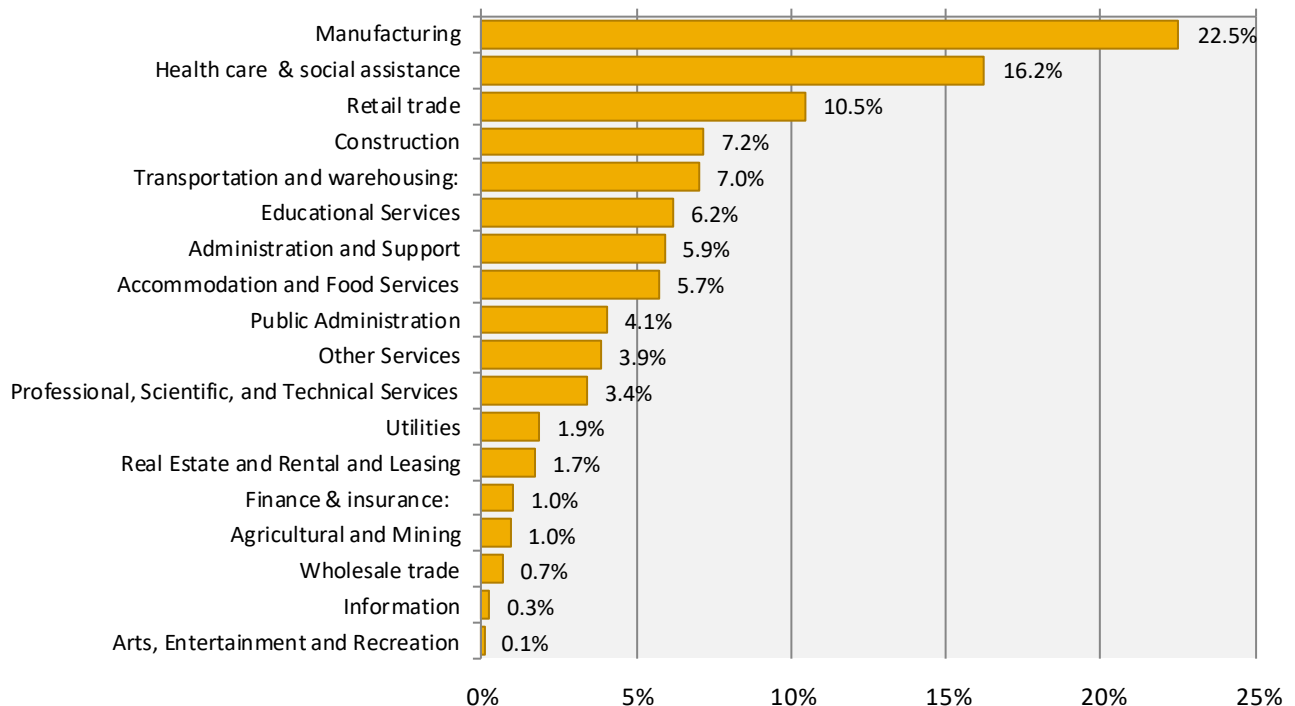
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Two aspects of employment in Port Huron Township are considered in this next analysis - employment by industry and employment by occupation. There are two standard classifications that are used throughout the federal government which are regularly updated to account for changes in the structure of the economy. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is used to measure employment by industry and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is the federal government’s own regularly-updated system used to measure employment by occupation. The SOC classifies occupations which are grouped according to the nature of the work performed. Employment by industry describes the sector that an employer falls into while occupation is a description of the type of work that an employee performs.

As portrayed in Figure 1-12, the most prevalent industries in Port Huron Township are: Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade. Since 2011, the manufacturing industry has been the Township’s largest employer, followed by the health care and social assistance industry. The health care and social assistance industry has steadily been adding jobs since 2016, resulting in a 64% increase in its employment from 2015 to 2019. The retail trade industry has fluctuated over the years, but has retained its long-term ranking as the third largest employer since the 2010 Census. The share of total employment for this sector was 12.8% in 2015, compared with 13.6% in 2010 and most recently, 10.5% in 2020.

In Port Huron Township, these three industries alone constituted almost half (49.2%) of the Township’s total employment in 2020. The chart in Figure 1-12 also enables us to see these three leading industries are the only sectors to contribute double digit employment levels within Port Huron Township. This has been the case for several years as no other industry has contributed over 10% of the township’s total employment since 2010. Of the 13 different industry sectors examined, these three have maintained the highest employment since the 2010 Census.

FIGURE 1-12: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Furthermore, both the State of Michigan and St. Clair County similarly share these same three sectors as their highest employed industries as well. These top three industries have each consistently remained the same top three employers for each, since 2010.

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

Looking out towards the next 5 to 25 years at the Township's forecasted employment by industry, much of the employment is expected to remain fairly consistent with current conditions. Most industries are expected to see an increase in employment over the entire period, with subtle shifts throughout the years. However, there are a few noteworthy changes calculated to take place among the Township's employment over the forecasted period.

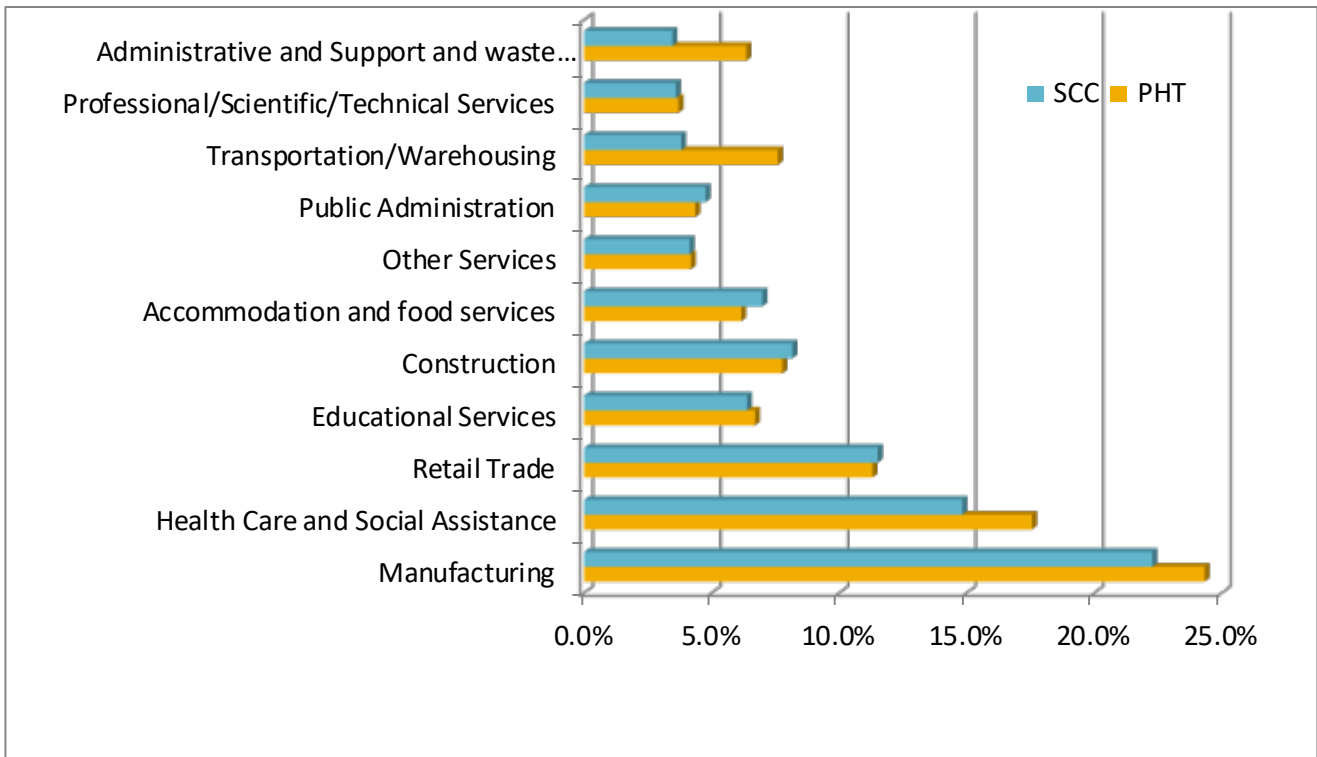
Only five industries are projected to result in an overall decline by 2045. One of these industries is thought to be the retail trade industry. While it is expected it will remain the leading industry among Township residents, as can be seen in Figure 1-14, it is also believed to undergo steady, but minimal loss over the course of the next 25 years, resulting in about an eight percent loss by the year 2045. There are only two industries anticipated to experience a significant decline. The wholesale trade industry, which has been one of the lesser employed industries and the lowest since 2016, is projected to maintain its descent, resulting in a loss of over 32% by 2045. In spite of this, the manufacturing industry is anticipated to undergo the greatest loss of all with an expected loss of nearly 300 employees, over a 52% decline.

The most noticeable change is projected to take place within the healthcare services industry. This already leading industry is anticipated to steadily grow over the next couple of decades and remain one of the top three leading industries. Additionally, it is expected to be the fastest growing industry as well as the industry to see the most growth with a predicted addition of nearly 300 positions, an increase of over 100%. With the mounting population of aging and elderly residents, comes an anticipated need for their additional care in the form of healthcare services.



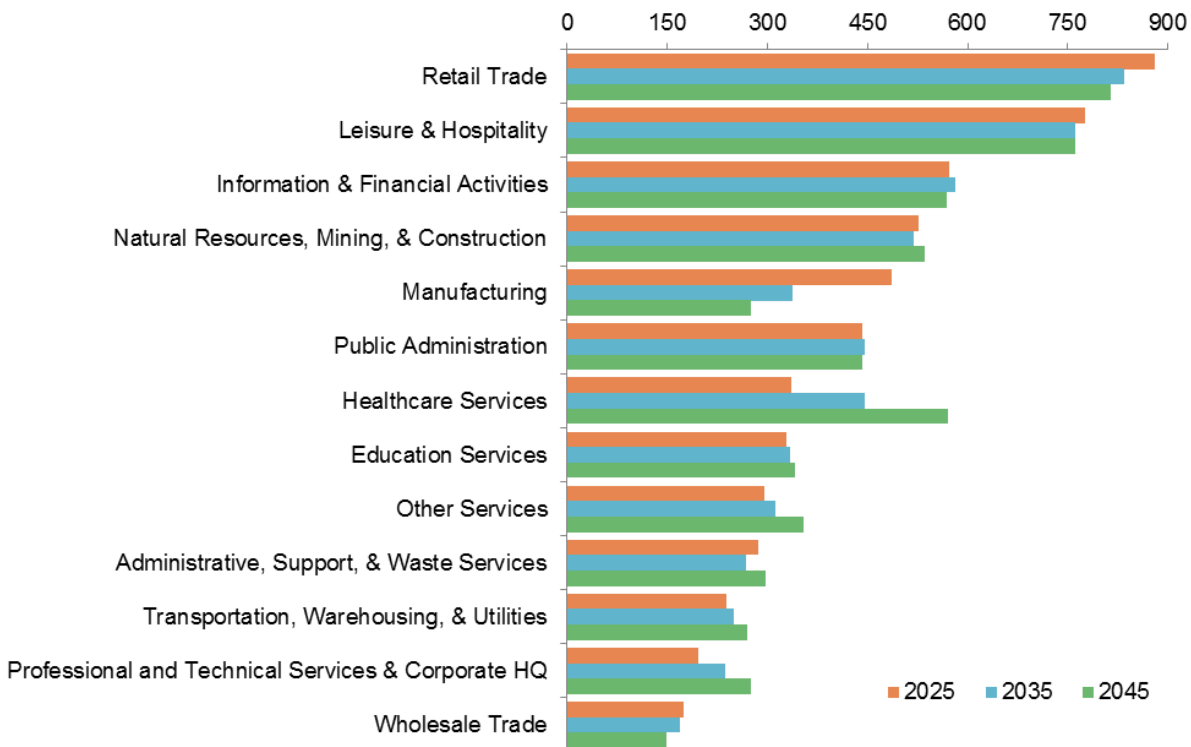
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

FIGURE 1-13: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP & ST. CLAIR COUNTY, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 1-14: FORECASTED EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTION, 2025, 2035 & 2045



Source: SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast

GEOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

SOILS

Soil refers to the portion of the earth's surface that consists of disintegrated rock or humus – the ground used for vegetation and for cultivating crops. Soils in St. Clair County are largely wet loam and clay. These are calcareous (non-acidic) at shallow depths, have low permeability, and generally require drainage for agricultural purposes.

The majority of St. Clair County has drainage problems and more than 95% of the soils are severely limited for development, especially near the shoreline and on farmland. The soils most suitable for development are away from the shoreline and in areas that are flatter and less susceptible to flooding, erosion, and fading or sinking.

The soil survey conducted in the township clearly indicates that very little of the township soils have good percolation. This poor drainage of soils is imperfectly adapted to septic tank systems. As a result, serious sewage problems existed in the township in the late 1980s, early 1990s. With a concentration of development along the east portion of the township, inadequate sewage disposal occurred and ditches and drains became polluted. This is the reason the court ordered the township to install sewers throughout the community.

According to the Soil Survey of St. Clair County (1974), the predominant soil types found in Port Huron Township are Allendale-Hoytville Complex (AhB), Wainola-Deford fine sands (WdA), and Rousseau fine sand (RuB). In general, the majority of the central portion of the township has AhB soils, with WdA soils marking the western, eastern and northern parts of the township.

The Allendale-Hoytville complex consists of somewhat poorly drained Allendale loamy fine sand and very poorly drained Hoytville silty clay loam. These soils generally have slopes of 0 to 6 percent. Wetness and the extreme difference in texture of the major soils are the main limitations to the use of this complex, as uniform drainage is difficult to obtain.

The Wainola-Deford complex is also a mix of somewhat poorly to very poorly drained sand. Most of these areas are nearly level, with very little slope. These soils are limited by wetness and low natural fertility.

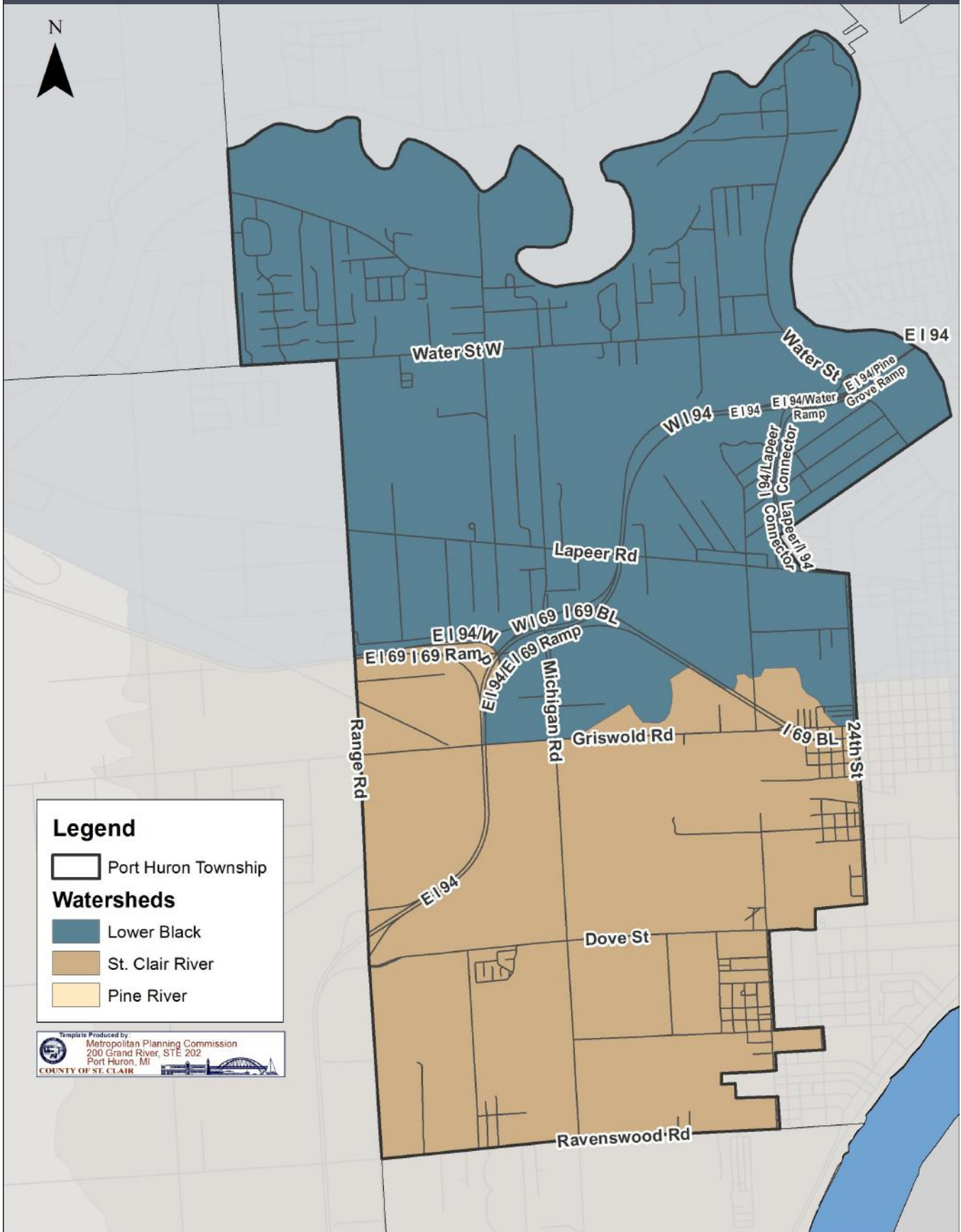
WATER RESOURCES

The Black River is the major tributary of the St. Clair River and marks the meandering northern border of the township. It flows south from the Minden Bog in Sanilac County, through Grant Township in northern St. Clair County, and ultimately into the St. Clair River in downtown Port Huron. Along with its major tributary, Mill Creek, the Black River drains almost all of the northern and western parts of St. Clair County. The river's watershed – 159,930 acres – is the largest in southeastern Michigan and is primarily a broad, flat plain bounded on three sides by hills ranging from 20 to 100 feet high.

Biological surveys conducted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) indicate diverse mussel and fish populations between the dams. Sedimentation is the greatest threat to the Black River.

According to MDNR officials, the river traditionally supported diverse and high-quality fish populations and sport fisheries. At present, fish populations have been degraded in numbers and species due primarily to man-made channelization, siltation and other poor land management practices. However, significant angling fisheries exist for smallmouth bass, channel catfish, panfish, and various members of the sucker family.

MAP 1-1: WATERSHEDS



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

WATERSHEDS

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. Port Huron Township sits on top of two primary subwatersheds. See Map 1-1. Generally, all of the land north of I-69 and the I-69 Business Loop is in the Lower Black River Subwatershed and all of the land in the southern half of the township is in the St. Clair River Direct Drainage Subwatershed. The township also has additional drainage subwatersheds such as Stocks Creek, Bunce Creek, and the Huffman Drain.

WETLANDS

Because wetlands are a valuable natural resource, they are protected by Part 303 Public Act 451 of 1994. Part 303 requires that permits be acquired from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) prior to altering or filling a regulated wetland. The Wetland Protection Act defines wetlands as characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support and that under normal circumstances does support wetland, vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh and is contiguous to the Great Lake, an inland lake or pond or a river or stream.

Regulated wetlands include all wetland areas greater than five acres or those contiguous to waterways. Wetlands which are hydrologically connected to waterways are also regulated. Activities exempted from the provisions of the Act include farming, grazing of animals, farm or stock ponds, lumbering, maintenance of existing nonconforming structures, maintenance or improvement of existing roads and streets within existing rights-of-way, maintenance or operation of pipelines less than six inches in diameter, and maintenance or operation of electric transmission and distribution power lines.

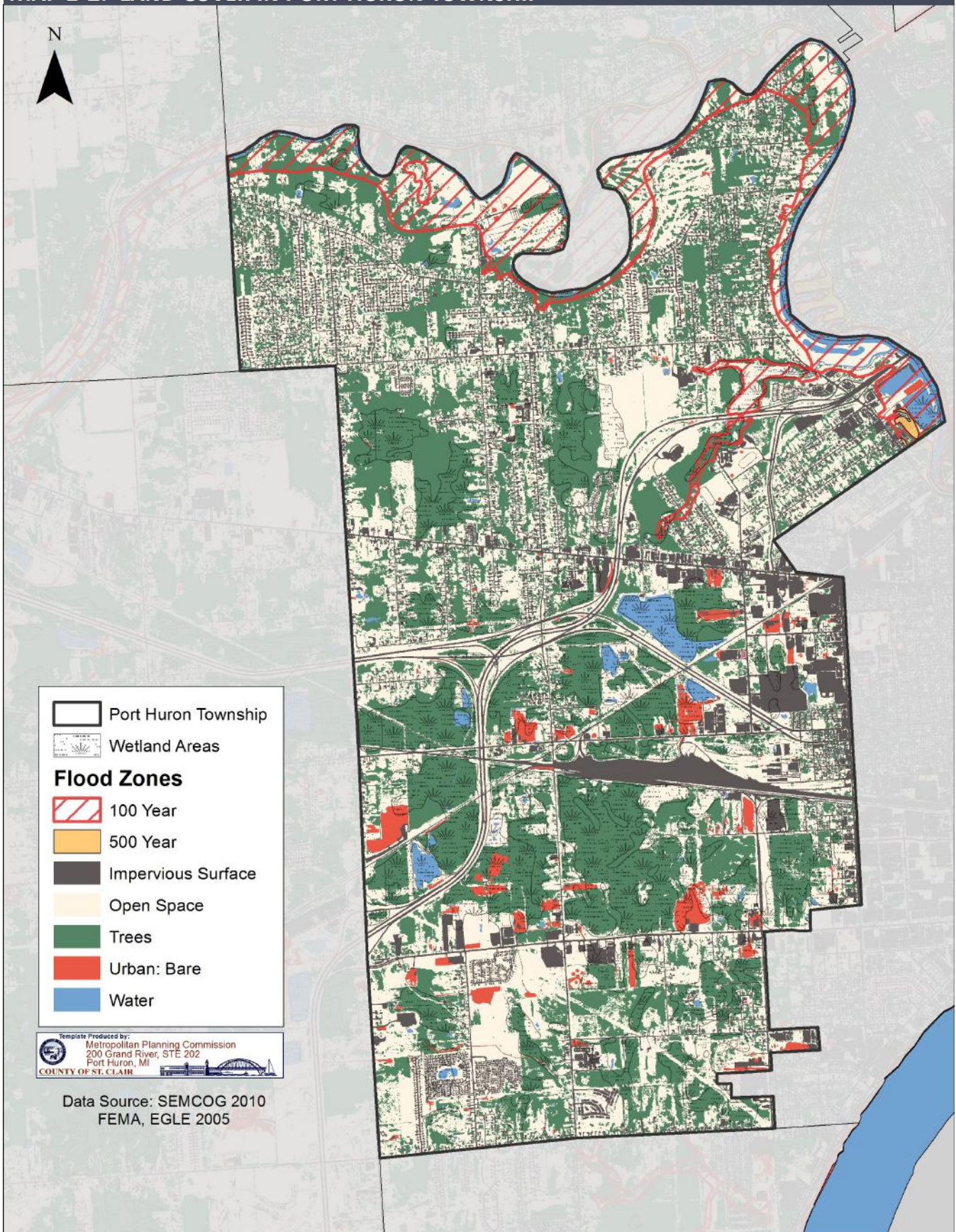
Port Huron Township has a total of 4,347 acres of wetland areas, which are located predominantly in the southern and central portions of the township, south of I-69. There is also a smaller pocket of wetlands north of the expressway in an area bounded by Lapeer Road to the south, Michigan Road to the east, West Water Street to the north, and Range Road to the west. Additionally, there are wetland areas along the riparian area of the Black River along the northern border of the township. In an effort to maintain the natural drainage network, it is important to protect the associated floodplains, wetlands, and vegetation from overdevelopment. Protecting floodplains and wetlands help prevent flooding, erosion, and pollution problems.

WOODLANDS

Woodlands refer to land covered with woods or trees. The township is fortunate in that it still has land in a wooded condition. This is an asset to the township, as it breaks the monotony of urban development on flat, open land. Also, large native trees in residential areas make it much more attractive for the potential homeowner. Mature trees represent a valuable resource in maintaining the aesthetic character of the area, not to mention their overall importance to wildlife and the natural environment. The township should make every effort to retain some of these areas in their natural state in order to provide amenities to the residential growth which continues to spread from the City of Port Huron.

The majority of woodlands in Port Huron Township are scattered in small pockets across the central and northern parts of the township. There is also a pocket of woodlands to the east of I-94, north of Dove Road. Other smaller patches of central hardwoods, lowland hardwoods and conifers are scattered throughout the township. Woodlands cover roughly 1,818 acres of Port Huron Township. See Map 1-2.

MAP 1-2: LAND COVER IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP



COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The facilities, services and programs offered by the township to its residents and businesses are essential to maintaining an adequate standard of living and are a key factor in determining whether a community can thrive and grow. Without quality recreation facilities, adequate sewer and water capacity, convenient refuse pick-up and sufficient police and fire protection, a community will find it difficult to attract new businesses and residents, let alone retain existing businesses and residents.

TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

The township's main office is located at 3800 Lapeer Road and houses the township's administrative offices. Township Board of Trustee meetings and planning commission meetings are held at the Township Hall.

The Township Board of Trustees is the elected policy makers for the township. There are seven members on the board, including the Township Supervisor, the Township Clerk, and the Treasurer. The board is charged with establishing laws and regulations within the township. Their policies and direction have a direct impact on the quality of life in the township. They are a visionary board that plans for the future needs of the citizens. They also ensure that the work of the township employees is accomplished. Their visions and insights are necessary in the establishment of the township budget. As a collective group, they create the blueprint for what the Township hopes to accomplish in a fiscal year. They are open to the public and the residents of the community.

The Township Supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of all township operations and serves as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The Supervisor is also the primary legal agent and negotiator for the township, manages all township departments (except those under the Clerk and Treasurer), prepares and administers the township budget, and appoints certain commission members.

The Treasurer is an elected position in the township, as is the Township Supervisor and Clerk. Most of the Treasurer's duties are regulated and dictated by the State of Michigan. Some of the duties of the Treasurer include receiving and taking charge of all funds belonging to the township or which are required by law to be paid into the township treasury; paying over and accounting for the funds according to law or Township Board decision; serving as the township's agent for collecting taxes; maintaining accurate records of all income, receipts and disbursements; and depositing all receipts in the township depository or depositories.

The Township clerk also has statutory duties, including maintenance of all township records; recording township meeting minutes, posting public notices, administering oaths of office, maintaining the general ledger, preparing financial statements, approving contracts and serving on various committees. The Clerk's office also administers all elections in the township, handles payroll, insurance and human resources for the township.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Port Huron Township Fire Department has been serving the community since 1960. The department is a combination fire department, which means that the township has both full-time and on-call fire personnel. This is the most common form of protection for communities the size of Port Huron Township. As first responders, on-call firefighters are alerted via pages and directed to the scene of an emergency. The average response time in the township is six minutes or less. All of the firefighters are Michigan State Certified firefighters, as well as licensed Emergency Medical Technicians.



The fire department is located at 3848 Lapeer Road, right next door to the Township Hall. At present, the department has 4 full-time staff and 24 on-call firefighters. The department's equipment includes 8 vehicles. In 2021, the fire department went on 1,256 calls for service.

POLICE PROTECTION

Police protection in Port Huron Township is provided under contract by the St. Clair County Sheriff's Office. The township has a dedicated Sheriff's deputy patrolling the community 24 hours a day and performing the same duties as general road personnel plus any tasks specifically assigned by the Township.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains water mains, water services up to the property line, booster stations, the water tower, sanitary sewer mains, sewer system and pump stations. They assist the Port Huron Township Park Commission with the maintenance of township parks and the Sexton with the maintenance of Woodland Cemetery.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is initiating and coordinating the downtown revitalization program for Port Huron Township. The program's purpose is to promote and encourage the economic development of the downtown district.

Projects have included the East Side Drain Project, street lighting and new light pole banners. Various sidewalk and paving projects have been implemented during the last several years. Building and maintaining working relationships with local business and property owners has been a high priority. In working with local businesses,

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



property owners, and the news media, the DDA is able to showcase the township to companies or their agents looking to start or expand their business. The DDA is also able to promote the township's goals, ideals and activities.

BUILDING/PLANNING/ZONING DEPARTMENT

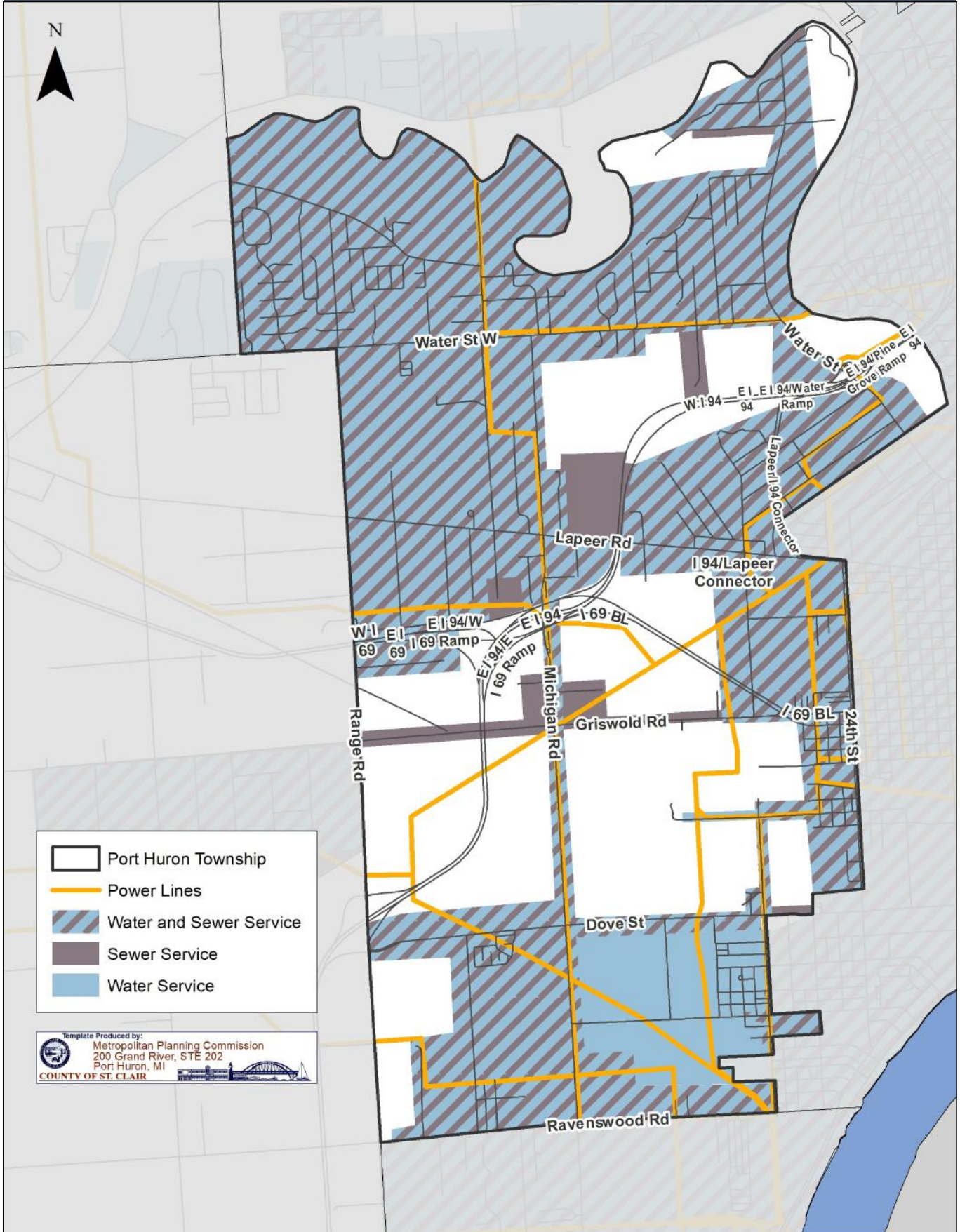
The township employs a full-time Building Official who also serves as the Planning/Zoning Administrator. Additionally, the department has an Administrative Assistant/Building Department Technician. This department is responsible for administering the State of Michigan Construction Code and local ordinances to ensure public health, safety, and welfare. Staff provides accurate and thorough plan reviews and inspections, enforces the zoning ordinance and other township ordinances, and works with existing landowners and potential developers looking to invest in the community.

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The Assessor's office in Port Huron Township is responsible for not only those responsibilities listed for assessors in the General Property Tax Act of the State of Michigan but also the maintaining of property descriptions and record cards, ownership updating and addressing, working with other governmental departments, and assisting citizens by answering questions they may have concerning properties in the township.

Based on the law, the Assessor's office is also responsible for placing an assessed value yearly on all taxable property not exempted by the law in the township; Using a state mandated formula to calculate the taxable value of all property; preparing for and handling all meetings and tax tribunal hearings dealing with assessments; preparing all reports necessary for county and state equalization; administering the Principal

MAP 1-3: WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREAS



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Residence Exemption program for property in the township; and administering the Property Transfer Affidavit Procedure, as required by state law.

UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

The Utilities Department handles all utility billings, service turn-on's/turn-off's, meter management, and fire hydrant use. Utility services for which the department bills include water, residential sewer, and refuse collection.

WATER AND SEWER

Port Huron Township is served by municipal water and sewer services from the City of Port Huron system. In 2005, the township's demand for water was low (1.5 million gallons per day) relative to capacity (5.7 million gallons per day). In terms of sanitary sewer, demand (2.1 million gallons per day) was higher than for water at roughly 50% of capacity (4.0 million gallons per day).

CHAPTER 2:

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY



In This Chapter:

- Regional Transportation Overview
- Road Network in Port Huron Township
- Traffic Volume
- Traffic Crash Assessment
- Pavement Conditions Overview
- Public Transportation
- Complete Streets
- Future Transportation Needs and Trends

INTRODUCTION

A transportation system is made up of a network of roads, highways, rail lines, waterways, airports, bikeways, and pedestrian ways. The purpose of a transportation network is to move goods and people from one location to another. Different land uses and the intensity of those uses will influence the performance and stability of that network. In much the same way, the type and size of the transportation network will affect the rate, pattern, and intensity of growth in a community.

This chapter provides an overview of local and regional circulation patterns on roads within the township. Traffic counts, crashes, and other transportation studies were studied to identify necessary future road improvements. Multi-modal transportation, public transit, and non-motorized transportation issues are also examined.

The transportation component of this plan has a number of critical functions:

- It serves as a reference guide regarding the transportation system within the township;
- It sets a vision for future motorized and non-motorized transportation needs within the township; and
- It promotes a better understanding of the land use/transportation interface and how comprehensive planning can be better integrated.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

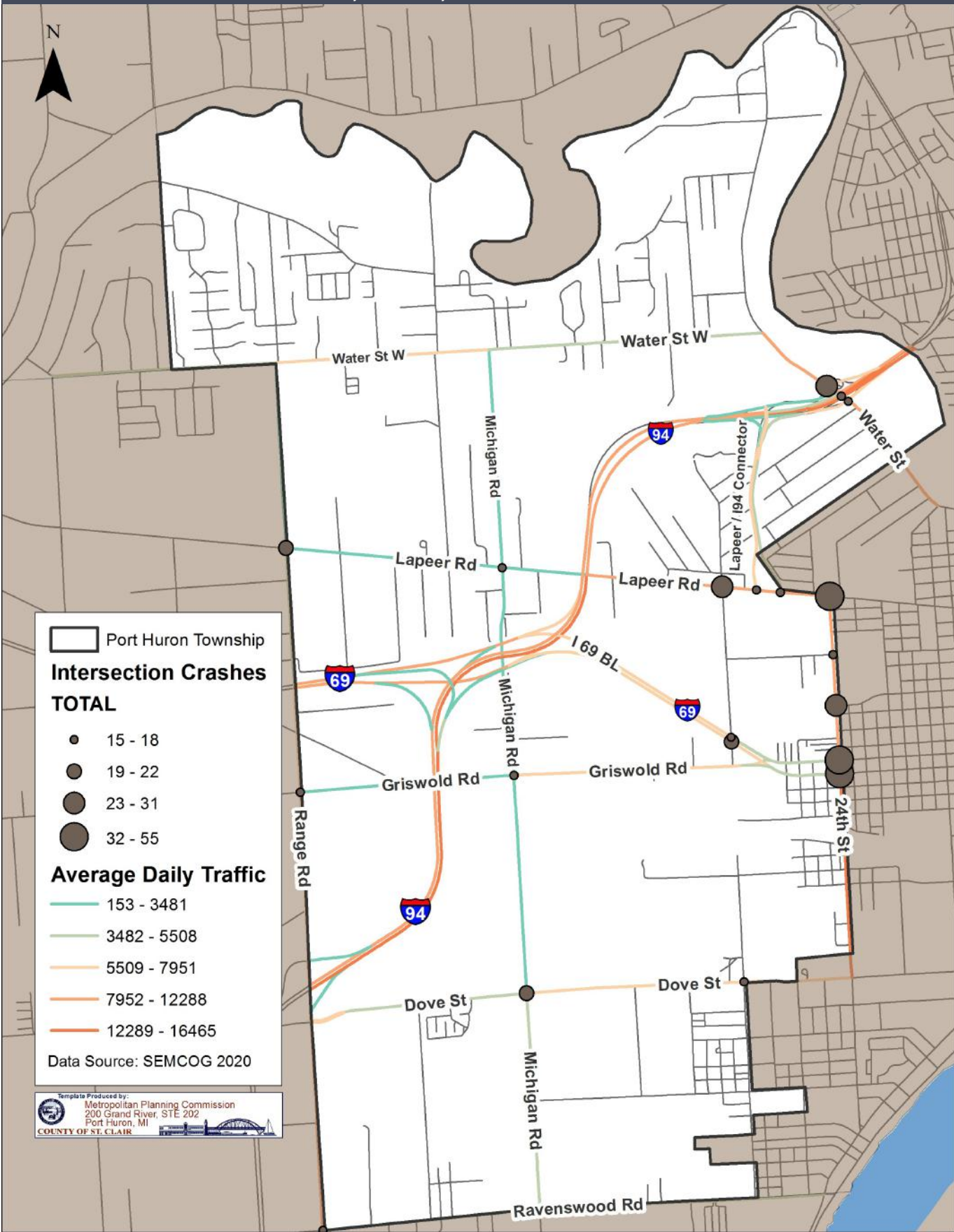
St. Clair County is one of seven counties surrounding the Detroit metropolitan area. The county encompasses an area of 724 square miles. The Port Huron-Marysville urban area stretches from the Village of Lexington, south along the shores of Lake Huron and the St. Clair River, ending just north of the City of Algonac.

The St. Clair County road network is comprised of 2,200 miles of roads. Of that total, 1,130 miles are paved and 1,070 miles are unpaved. There are 366 bridges in the county – the majority of which are owned and maintained by the St. Clair County Road Commission. More than 300 bridges cross lakes, rivers, and streams with one-to-two lanes.

Port Huron Township is located between Fort Gratiot Township, City of Port Huron, City of Marysville, Kimball Township, and Clyde Township. The Black River is the northern border of the township. The boundary for the township does not follow the typical 36 square mile land area. Instead, Port Huron Township covers a land area of 12.925 square miles and a water area of 0.176 square miles. The largest Michigan cities in close proximity are Flint and Detroit. Flint lies 69 miles directly west of Port Huron and Detroit is 59 miles southwest of Port Huron.

A significant amount of through traffic traverses the township. Residents of municipalities west of Port Huron Township typically pass through the township when traveling to the City of Port Huron. Regional traffic between the cities of Port Huron, Flint, and Detroit also passes through the township. The two freeways traversing Port Huron Township, Interstate 94 to Detroit and Interstate 69 to Flint, are the principal carriers of this regional traffic. A large interchange with the I-94 and I-69 freeways is centrally located in Port Huron Township and the I-69 Business Loop begins in the township and travels east into the City of Port Huron. Other primary roads are 24th Street - a major commercial corridor - and Lapeer Road, which is the major east-west corridor running through the center of the community. Some other major traffic generators include recreation facilities, Port Huron High School, St. Clair County facilities, and an increasing number of industrial establishments.

MAP 2-1: TRANSPORTATION NETWORK, CRASHES, AND AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC





ROAD NETWORK IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

Approximately 83 miles of public road and 26 bridges are located in Port Huron Township. I-94/I-69 dissects the township and is an important link in connecting communities within St. Clair County, as well as the Greater Detroit Metropolitan Area. Other main roads in the township are Lapeer Road and Griswold Road, both are east to west corridors, which connect the City of Port Huron to communities to the west. Michigan Road is a north-south corridor in the center of the township.

The township is located in the urbanized area and is located directly to the west of the City of Port Huron with 24th Street being the border; this is a commercial corridor with large variety of land uses and significant amount traffic. There are four major classifications which are described below. Based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) criteria, the functional classification system for communities, in ascending order, is as follows:

LOCAL STREETS AND ROADS

Local streets and roads serve primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land and to provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher systems. These streets generally have a right-of-way of 66 feet.

COLLECTORS

These roads collect traffic within residential neighborhoods or within areas of concentrated land use development such as industrial or multiple housing areas, and channel it to the arterial roadways. Local property access should be only a secondary function of collector streets. Collector streets generally have a right-of-way of 86 feet. Collector routes generally serve travel of primarily intra-county rather than statewide importance and constitute those routes on which predominant travel distances are shorter than on arterial routes. Consequently, more moderate speeds may be typical, on average.

MINOR ARTERIALS

Minor arterial roads in rural areas typically link cities and larger towns and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service. They move traffic on a countywide basis and act as principal feeder routes to the principal arterials. Their main function is to carry large volumes of traffic and to act as a secondary movement to provide access to adjacent properties. The right-of-way requirement is 120 feet, because as development occurs and traffic volumes increase, these roads will need to become wider in order to accommodate new growth and development.

PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

Principal arterial roads serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel. Interstates are generally part of a nationwide system of limited access highways designed to carry transient traffic around, through, or between urban centers with minimum conflict with local traffic. They carry a large amount of traffic at maximum speeds. These roads are multi-laned and do not provide access to adjacent properties. The right-of-way width requirements for an interstate is usually a minimum of 300 feet. State highways, business loops, and other major thoroughfares are in most cases classified as principal arterials as well. There is no parking allowed along these roadways, and it is common for such road classifications to have a right-of-way width of 120-150 feet, with four to five lanes depending on the need for an additional turning lane.

TRAFFIC VOLUME

Existing traffic volumes for roadways throughout Port Huron Township vary, depending upon the location of the segment studied or the date the study was conducted. It is critical to consider existing traffic volumes when considering future development within the township, planning for roadway improvements, or projecting future capacity. The Township should work with the St. Clair County Road Commission (SCCRC), as they own and maintain their roadways, and St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)/St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), to evaluate existing conditions and establish an action plan for review of specific traffic management issues.

Under optimum conditions, a two-lane road has a capacity for up to 12,000 vehicles per day. The majority of the roads in Port Huron Township have two lanes and carry less than 10,000 vehicles per day, aside from I-69 and I-94, which merge within the township. These expressways carry between 15,000-17,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT).

There are four roads that are classified as Minor Arterials with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) ranging from 4,500 to 7,900 AADT. There are two roads that are classified as Major Collectors with traffic volumes ranging from 3,200 to 4,100. See Table 2-1 for more details.

TRAFFIC CRASH ASSESSMENT

Traffic crash frequency is commonly used as a measure in identifying existing traffic safety issues. As shown in Table 2-2, there were 1,232 traffic crashes in Port Huron Township between 2016 and 2020. Of that total, approximately 79% of those crashes resulted in property damage only. During that time period, there were six fatal crashes. See Map 2-1 and Tables 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4 for crash information.

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TABLE 2-1: TRAFFIC COUNTS ON MAJOR ROADWAYS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

Road	Classification	Most Recent Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Count	Year
E I-94 <i>Griswold Rd to Range Rd</i>	Interstate	16,600	2017
E I-94/Pine Grove Ramp	Interstate	16,000	2017
E I-94 <i>Lapeer Connector to Lapeer Rd.</i>	Interstate	15,500	2019
E I-69 @ Range Rd	Interstate	15,200	2017
Range Road <i>Dove St to Ravenswood</i>	Minor Arterial	7,900	2019
Dove St <i>Michigan to 24th St</i>	Minor Arterial	5,700	2015
Griswold Rd <i>Michigan to I-69 BL</i>	Minor Arterial	5,500	2018
Lapeer Connector	Minor Arterial	4,500	2018
Michigan Rd <i>Dove St to Ravenswood</i>	Major Collector	4,100	2018
Ravenswood Rd <i>Michigan to 24th St</i>	Major Collector	3,200	2015

KEY CORRIDORS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

I-69 BUSINESS LOOP

This corridor is a connection from I-94/I-69 Interstates to downtown to Port Huron, but passes through the township. On the Business Loop at the corner of 32nd Street there is a gas station, a Sam’s Club, and the former Love’s Furniture.

GRISWOLD ROAD

This is a key corridor as it “begins” at the I-69 Business Loop and runs east to west. There is a mix of commercial, industrial, and vacant land

LAPEER CONNECTOR

This serves as a quick connector from Lapeer Road, a main east to west corridor in the township, to I-94 just west of the Blue Water Bridge. It simply allows a quick and easy way to get to the interstate and the northern end of the City of Port Huron by bypassing many traffic lights and congestion along the commercial corridors.

LAPEER ROAD

This is a main east-west corridor that dissects the township in half. It provides a vital connection to the communities to the west and the City of Port Huron to the east. It is a good alternative to the highway as it is a

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

TABLE 2-2: TRAFFIC CRASHES IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, 2016-2020

Crash Severity	# of Crashes	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% of crashes 2016-2020
Fatal	6	3	1	0	2	0	0.5%
Serious Injury	22	4	5	3	7	3	1.8%
Other Injury	237	54	62	45	36	40	19.2%
Property Damage Only	967	210	222	175	196	164	78.5%
Total Crashes	1,232	271	290	223	241	207	100%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, 2020

TABLE 2-3: HIGH CRASH INTERSECTIONS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, 2016-2020

Local Rank	County Rank	Intersection	Annual Average 2016-2020
1	12	I-69 BL (Oak St) @ 24 th Street	11
2	18	24 th Street @ Lapeer Road	8.6
3	19	I-69 BL (Griswold Rd) @ 24 th Street	8.2
4	27	24 th Street @ Court Street	6.2
5	27	Lapeer Road @ 32 nd Street	6.2

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, 2020

TABLE 2-4: HIGH CRASH ROAD SEGMENTS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, 2016-2020

Local Rank	County Rank	Segment	From Road- To Road	Annual Average 2014-2018
1	11	24 th Street	Court Street to Lapeer Road	18
2	34	24 th Street	Dove Road to I-69BL	11.8
3	38	Lapeer Rd	Range Road to Michigan Road	11
3	47	Water St.	17th Street to E I-94 Ramp	10.4
4	74	Lapeer Rd	E I-94 to I-94/Lapeer Connector	8.8

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, 2020

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

four-lane road on the east side of the township, goes down to 2-lane and a center turn lane, and then eventually turns to a 2-lane road at Beach Road. There is a large variety of commercial land uses, including banks, medical facilities, automotive repair shops, restaurants, and other commercial and office uses. This corridor is mainly built up, meaning there is no vacant land for future development, though there may be some redevelopment opportunities.

RANGE ROAD

This is a key corridor that runs north to south on the western border of the township. It is a two lane road with a variety of land uses, including commercial, residential, agricultural, and industrial. There is also some vacant land along this corridor as well.

MICHIGAN ROAD

This is a north-south, two-lane road dividing the township in half. The northern part is almost solely residential with an elementary school mixed in. Within the last 10 years, there was an overpass built over the expressway which provides an additional connector to the northern and southern parts of the county. There is also an overpass over the railroad. South of the railroad is vacant land, land used for storage, a virtual learning academy, the little league fields, and the St. Clair County Intervention Center at the south end of the township. Though this corridor is mostly built up, there is some vacant land for future development, including two parcels the township owns that could be utilized for future recreational uses.

PAVEMENT SURFACE EVALUATION AND RATING (PASER)

Each year, the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) performs a visual inspection to evaluate pavement surface conditions on 50% of the federal-aid roads in St. Clair County. The next year, the same pavement evaluation is performed for the other 50% of the county that was not done the previous year. Typically, PASER evaluates pavement distress in asphalt and concrete roads. For asphalt roads, the rating team looks at surface defects, surface deformation, cracks, patches, and potholes. For concrete roads, the rating team evaluates joints, pavement cracks, pavement deformation (such as settlement or heave, utility repairs, patching, etc.), and surface defects (such as polishing, spalling, shallow reinforcing, etc.). In reviewing various defects, it is important to consider both the severity and extent. Typically, a defect will begin slowly and gradually become more severe. Rating the roads helps communities and road agencies manage road maintenance in an effective and fiscally responsible manner. Map 2-2 shows the pavement conditions on federal-aid roads in the township in 2021.

PLANNED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS) develops and maintains a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - a list of upcoming transportation projects -covering a period of at least four years. The TIP must be developed in cooperation with the state and public transit providers. It also includes capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation enhancements, and safety projects countywide. Table 2-5 shows projects that are in the current St. Clair County TIP covering 2020 through 2023.

MAP 2-2: PAVEMENT CONDITIONS, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP 2021



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

TABLE 2-5: PLANNED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, 2021-2023

YEAR	PROJECT	PROJECT LIMITS	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED TOTAL COST
2021	Range Rd.	Griswold to Lapeer	Road Rehabilitation	\$937,500
2021	Lapeer Rd.	I-94 Overpass to 24 th St.	Road Resurfacing	\$287,791
2022	Griswold Rd.	I-94 Overpass to I-69 BL	Road Resurfacing	\$150,000
2023	24 th St.	Dove Rd to Lapeer Rd.	Road Resurfacing	\$460,000

ROUNDABOUTS

Roundabouts and intersection improvements are eligible Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects because they reduce congestion and improve traffic flow. The CMAQ program provides a flexible funding source for state and local governments to fund transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and its amendments. The first roundabout in St. Clair County was in Port Huron Township at Griswold and Range Road, this was completed in 2016. Another roundabout was constructed in the township in 2020 at the intersection of the Range Road/Dove Road/I-94 off ramp.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC) operates bus service in the greater Port Huron area. There are three routes that service Port Huron Township: Routes 1, 2, and 3.

ROUTE 1

This route services the border of the township at 24th and Griswold.

ROUTE 2

This route also services the border of the township along 24th St.

ROUTE 3

This route services the majority of Port Huron Township with stops at Port Huron High School, Goodwill, the Post Office, and businesses on Lapeer Road.

With the proximity to the City of Port Huron and the main bus transfer station, residents can access much of the BWATC service area easily and efficiently. There is also a dial-a-ride service available. More details on times and schedules on their website (www.bwbus.com) or by calling their dispatch for more information.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Non-motorized traffic refers to quiet modes of transportation, such as bicycles, in-line skates, riding horses, and pedestrians of all ages and physical abilities. Non-motorized transportation is an important alternative to the automobile as a source of recreation and as a means of commuting to work, school, and to shopping, social, and civic destinations.

COMPLETE STREETS

“Complete Streets” is a national movement with numerous states, local governments, and even the US Transportation Secretary espousing the concept for federal transportation projects. Governor Granholm signed the Complete Streets legislative package into law on August 1, 2010. The legislation does not mandate any local road agency adopt a Complete Streets policy or spend any additional dollars for non-motorized facilities. While adoption of a Complete Streets policy is purely optional for local governments, the changes in the law have the potential to benefit every community.

Streets and roadways represent the largest component of public space in every community. The Complete Streets concept attempts to make communities reconsider the intended function and/or use of a corridor. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a Complete Street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to stores, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from transit stops.

Creating complete streets means transportation agencies must change their approach to community roads. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists – making the community a better place to live. The National Complete Streets Coalition has identified the elements of an ideal Complete Streets policy to help local municipalities write their own policies or Complete Streets plans.

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets. Each one is unique and should respond to the individual community’s population and needs. A Complete Street may include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.



IMPLEMENTING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

A Complete Streets policy has the potential to end the project-to-project struggle to design better facilities by requiring all road and transportation improvement projects to begin with evaluating how the street serves all users— pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and passengers, trucks, and automobiles. Adopting a Complete Streets policy may require changing the existing policies and practices of the community and/or road/transit agencies. In some cases it may be difficult to adopt a new procedure or to modify design guidelines. Furthermore, adopting a Complete Streets policy may require additional training for township officials and engineers, which will take time and cost money.

Ultimately, the desired outcome of a Complete Streets policy is one in which a multi-modal street becomes the default design and only after a formal exception process is a non-compliant design allowed. The *U.S. Department of Transportation's design guidance for Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach*, names three exceptions where roadways can lack facilities for all users:

- Excessive Cost;
- Absence of need; and
- Roads where bicyclist and pedestrians are prohibited.

Some additional challenges for implementing a Complete Streets policy may include:

- Lack of right-of-way in cramped thoroughfares may make multi-modal improvements difficult, costly, or impossible; and
- Overcoming the misconception that Complete Streets cost more to build than traditional streets when, in fact, Complete Streets often cost less to construct. By fully considering the needs of all non-motorized travelers (pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) early in the life of a project, the costs associated with including non-motorized facilities are minimized.

Ensuring accurate transportation analysis as current methodologies for studying traffic may result in misleading results. For example, some current traffic methodologies may fail to consider how the presence of transit in a mixed-use corridor could potentially lower trip generation rates and thus reduce traffic volumes and congestion.

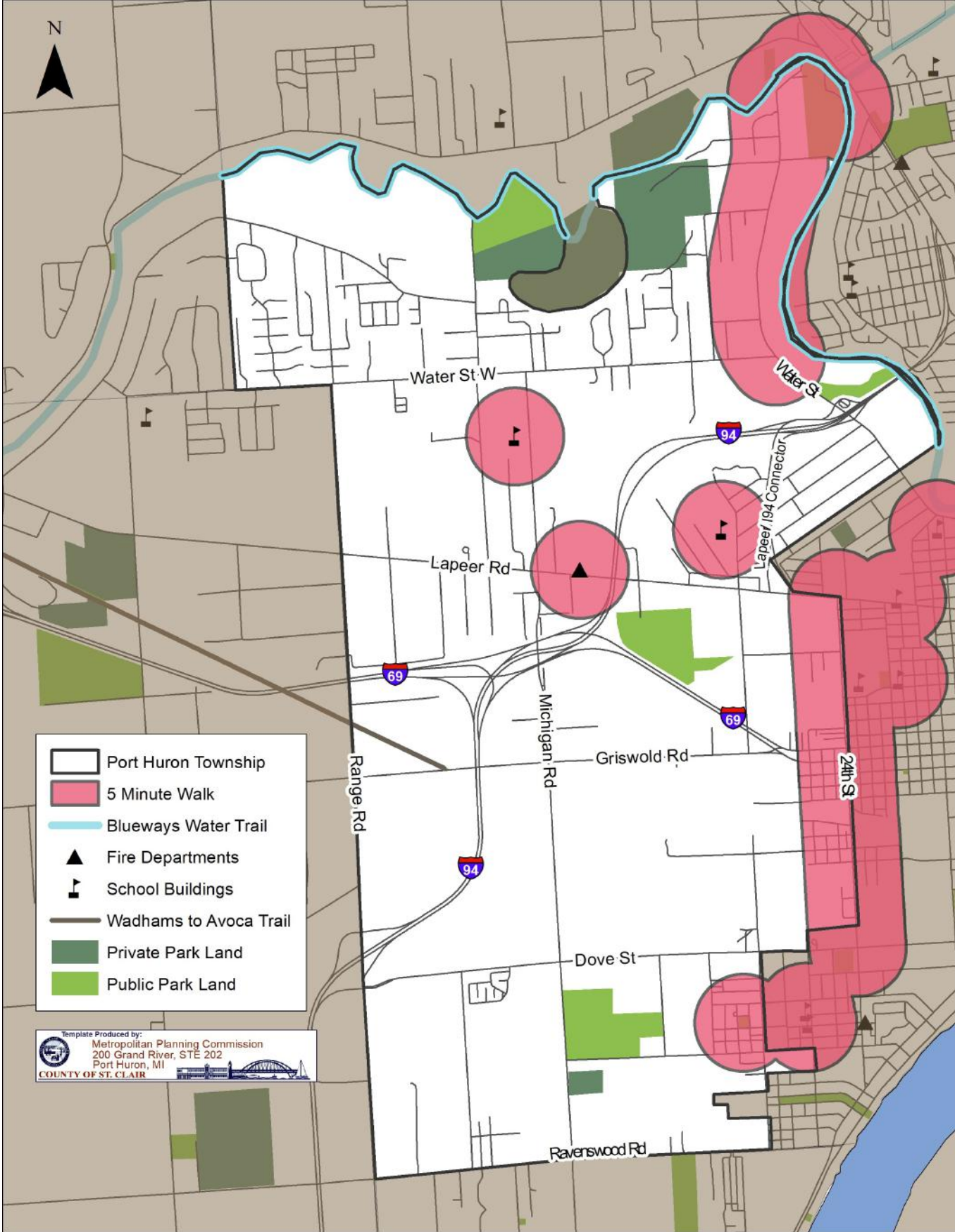
Map 2-3 shows a five-minute walkability map for the township. According to the Congress for the New Urbanism, the five-minute walk - known as the "pedestrian shed" - is the distance that can be covered in five minutes at normal walking pace. This is considered to be the threshold distance that people are willing to walk before considering driving. The map shows a five-minute walking radius from key community anchor points.

AN IDEAL COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Regardless of a policy's form, the National Complete Streets Coalition has identified important elements of a comprehensive Complete Streets policy. These elements could potentially be used in evaluating transportation projects within Port Huron Township. A Complete Streets policy should include the following:

1. Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets. Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles. Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes;
2. Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads;
3. Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way;
4. Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions;

MAP 2-3: 5-MINUTE WALKABILITY MAP, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

5. Directs the use of the latest and best design standards while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs;
6. Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community;
7. Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes; and
8. Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

GREEN STREETS

In addition to Complete Streets, the Township should consider opportunities to develop “Green Streets” that incorporate green infrastructure to manage stormwater and protect water resources by infiltrating, filtering, storing, and detaining runoff close to the source. SEMCOG outlines actions a community can take to be proactive in planning for and implementing green streets in its *Green Lakes Green Streets Guide* available on its website at www.semco.org. These actions include:

- Coordinating transportation and watershed planning.
- Considering green infrastructure techniques early in the planning process.
- Updating plans, guidelines, procedures, and manuals.
- Developing a local or regional Green Streets Management Plan.

As noted in the guidebook, *“once there is an understanding of the local and regional outcomes for green infrastructure along transportation corridors, then consideration may be given to identifying those types of techniques that work traditionally well in these constrained areas.”*

AIRPORTS

The St. Clair County International Airport, located in Kimball Township, is a “transport facility” with a 5,100-foot runway capable of accommodating some jet aircraft and a second 4,100-foot runway. The airport offers a year-round facility for the area and can accommodate larger jet planes, business and small passenger planes, as well as cargo planes.

Industrial facilities are now located in close proximity to the airport. It is a continuing trend that business executives owning facilities in many areas desire to be near airports. They are able to fly in, conduct business, and leave in a very short span of time. St. Clair County has an Air Industrial Park located at the airport.

Passenger air travel is primarily provided by Detroit-Wayne County Metropolitan Airport (70 miles away) in Romulus and Flint Bishop International Airport (80 miles away) in Flint. Both facilities also offer large-scale air freight service.

RAILROADS

The CSX (Chesapeake and Ohio) Railroad has a main line between Ludington, Michigan, on the Lake Michigan shoreline, and Port Huron. This line carries between three and five trains per day. Connections are made from Port Huron to Milwaukee and Buffalo. The CSX Railroad has a track that parallels 32nd Street in Port Huron Township. This line is a branch connecting the Port Huron area with the Marine City area in the southern part of the county, providing rail service for industries located along the St. Clair River including Cargill Salt in the City of St. Clair.

The CN North America Railroad (Grand Trunk-GTW) has an east-west line that connects with the Chicago region and passes under the St. Clair River via the Paul M. Tellier Tunnel, connecting with London and Toronto, Ontario



and Montreal, Quebec in Canada. This track usually carries two passenger trains per day. Currently, a passenger station for this track is located in the City of Port Huron on 16th Street. Amtrak operates this train and is looking to expand service sometime in the near future, as the ridership continues to increase every year. Another line connects the Port Huron area with the Detroit area; however, at this time this is strictly used for freight.

Amtrak Station Study

In 2017, the Blue Water Transportation Commission (BWATC) initiated a pre-feasibility study focusing on upgrading/replacing the existing Port Huron Amtrak Station located on 16th Street in the City of Port Huron. Input was sought from a steering committee, as well as through two public meetings. A report was produced outlining the findings and published in 2018. The report summarizes numerous sites that could be considered (including the existing site), established siting criteria, and weighed input from the public and various stakeholders to narrow down the list of options in preparation for continued study of viable replacement options.

In 2021, continuation of this study was initiated by BWATC in partnership with MDOT through a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant. This continuation study seeks to further refine the options identified earlier as well as entertain any newly discovered sites that may meet the needs of the community as well as the various stakeholders. Nine possible site locations for a new station have been identified in the study, including the existing site in the city and sites located in Port Huron Township. Sites being considered in the township include:

- The CN rail yard site (3563 Griswold Road);
- Township-owned property at 3750 Griswold Road; and
- A site located along the CSX spur near Dove Road and 32nd Street.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND TRENDS

As communities look to plan for population growth or commercial redevelopment, and to make the most out of their infrastructure, one of the first places on which they might focus is parking. An increasing number of communities have started to eliminate minimum parking requirements for developers, aiming to increase walkability and decrease car dependency.

This trend brings to light the problems with existing infrastructure. The need is to establish a highly functional and efficient parking management solution that ensures resident satisfaction and utilizes the existing parking lots and on-street parking throughout the community. Some examples of parking management strategies which influence travel demand include:

- Creating a greater opportunity for shared parking by encouraging compact mixed-use development and improving walking and cycling conditions;
- Pricing parking to reflect the cost of providing parking;
- Providing a parking “cash out” or other financial incentive to employees to use alternative modes;
- Renting or selling parking facilities separate from building space; and
- Providing better user information and marketing relating to parking availability and price

CONNECTED AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Connected and autonomous vehicle technology will transform transportation systems over the coming decades, with major implications for the planning and design of communities. Autonomous vehicles, also known as driverless or self-driving cars, have been sharing streets and roads for years.

According to the American Planning Association,

“The widespread deployment of autonomous vehicles for cities and metropolitan regions will change the way we design our public rights-of-way. Sensors will allow autonomous vehicles to travel closer together than human-controlled vehicles, reducing the necessary pavement width and freeing up space for wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and other amenities. Local zoning codes will need to address requirements for passenger loading and unloading, and parking needs will change drastically if a shared use model is employed. As cities transition away from ordinances that now require large amounts of land to be used for parking and circulation, they will need to determine how best to make use of that “extra” land through new approaches to land use and zoning.”

Connected and autonomous vehicles will require new infrastructure that will rely on sensors to be located on structures and other infrastructure. Sensors will allow vehicles to “talk” to one another, as well as to the surrounding infrastructure. This technology will feed into a larger ecosystem known as a “Smart City.” Large amounts of data will be transferred between vehicles and infrastructure and this data will be able to provide planners, engineers, and decision makers with new insight as to how a transportation network, and the overall community, is functioning.

From safety, cost, energy/fuel conservation, advancement of technology, and traffic efficiency to drivers who are informed of weather, road conditions, construction, and emergencies. Connectivity provides many opportunities to improve on-road, roadside, and planning activities that are all connected by the ability to collect, process, and manage big data. Using Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC), Wi-Fi, and satellite connections to connect vehicles to infrastructure, vehicles, and pedestrians will provide numerous opportunities for economic development and transportation improvements.

In addition to connected and autonomous vehicles, other innovations and technology will also impact how people travel and interact with the built environment, including:

Shared-Use Mobility Services

The Shared-Use Mobility Center defines shared-use mobility as transportation services and resources that are shared among users, either concurrently or one after another. This includes public transit, taxis and limos, bike sharing, car sharing, ride sharing, ride sourcing or ride-hailing, ride-splitting, scooter sharing (now often grouped with bike sharing under the heading of “micromobility”), shuttle services and “microtransit,” as well as other options. This includes services such as Lyft and Uber that can be accessed via smartphone. Advances in technology have made sharing transportation options efficient and easy. Automobile manufacturers, rental car companies, and transit agencies have developed new solutions and mobile applications designed to alter routes, fill empty seats, collect fares and share real-time arrival and departure information. These types of services provide people with additional transportation options, reduce traffic congestion, and provide first and last mile options.

Electric Vehicles

Community partners should look into creating an “Electric Avenue” along key corridors throughout the Port Huron area and connecting to the Blue Water Bridge. This would equip these corridors with electric vehicle charging infrastructure that leverages the smart grid and provides needed infrastructure and resources to drivers of electric vehicles coming into the country or leaving the country via the Blue Water Bridge, as well as our residents who already have or are considering an electric vehicle. Moreover, this would create additional economic development opportunities within the county.

Data and Technology

A data rich and connected “Smart City” provides the ideal opportunity to develop deep learning and automation alternatives to promote autonomous functionality, increased safety solutions, improved resource management and maximized energy efficiency in real world environments.

Connectivity must be secure, stable, and sufficient to support initial automation development phases. A connected automation environment will be established to provide the necessary infrastructure to support different sensing technologies that can collect, store, and support transfer of data.

Exploring different technology solutions at the infrastructure and vehicle levels will be among initial activities to support studies and develop tools that can be used to compare performance characteristics, limitations, quality, durability, and cost effectiveness comparisons. Consideration of acquisition, installation, maintenance, user reliability, processing, data handling, storage, and communication will be among other critical elements of evaluation.

LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Intelligent, sensor-based infrastructure will ultimately be deployed over time to collect data that will ultimately be used to improve system efficiencies, public safety, and overall mobility. Connected and autonomous vehicles and shared-mobility services will have a profound impact on how we plan our communities. According to Professor Jonathan Levine at the University of Michigan,

“If we do not address land use, there will be an ultimate impediment to access to transportation for consumers and constituents. Two examples of this impediment include parking and zoning. In many cities, when a new residential or commercial building is constructed, there must be a minimum number of parking spots attached. This requirement of parking increases housing costs in the area. Furthermore, when zoning

laws encourage low density development, that density is eventually capped and cannot increase.”

“What autonomous vehicles (AVs) could potentially do is encourage infill development in the cities, reducing their outward expansion making their per-capita environmental footprints smaller. The benefits are not restricted to cities; employing AVs to operate in coordination with public transit to encourage transit-oriented development can make suburbs more attractive to live in.”

According to a Florida State University Study (“*Envisioning Florida’s Future: Transportation and Land Use in an Automated Vehicle World*”) there are strong indicators that AVs will require narrower ROWs and travel lanes, influence the location, form, and amount of parking, impact the mobility of bicyclists and pedestrians, declutter urban environments through reduced signalization and signage, and provide redevelopment opportunities on now unnecessary parking lots and excess ROW.

CHAPTER 3:

PARKS AND RECREATION



In This Chapter:

- Administrative Structure for Parks and Recreation
- Parks and Recreation Inventory
- The Blueways of St. Clair
- Trails and Greenways

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

AUTHORITY

Port Huron Township has two major groups that oversee various aspects of parks and recreation in the township. The first group, the Parks Commission, consists of five members that are elected to four year terms and are accountable to the electorate. The commission is responsible for recreation planning, goal setting, park maintenance, and developing policies and budgets. The second group, the Recreation Board, initiates and manages most of the parks and recreation activities the public partakes in. These daily activities are funded by an annual budget allocation from the Township Board.

The basis for the operation of a Park Commission is found in the compiled laws of the State of Michigan. Port Huron Township operates under PA 359 of 1947 as amended. The Township has had recreation plans approved in 1999, 2006, and 2015 by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) per its recreation plan guidelines booklet: *Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans*.

PARK COMMISSION

The Park Commission has the authority to maintain and manage the Township's parks and recreational places. There are no formal requirements for the member's specific duties; however, each Park Commissioner is responsible for determining strengths and opportunities for Township parks, as well as monitoring, supervising, problem solving, and determining the needs for their designated parks. All of the parks' needs, bills, and problems are considered at the commission's monthly meetings.

The commission receives budget approval for the administration of their duties from the Township Board through the Township Clerk's Office. In the name of the Township, the Park Commission may accept gifts, grants, devise of suitable land for parks and recreational places, and bequests of money for the acquisition and improvement of land for parks and recreation purposes. Per the township attorney, the Township Board is the only board authorized to buy, own, and sell property, including the initiation of the condemnation of land for such purposes in accordance with the condemnation laws of the State.



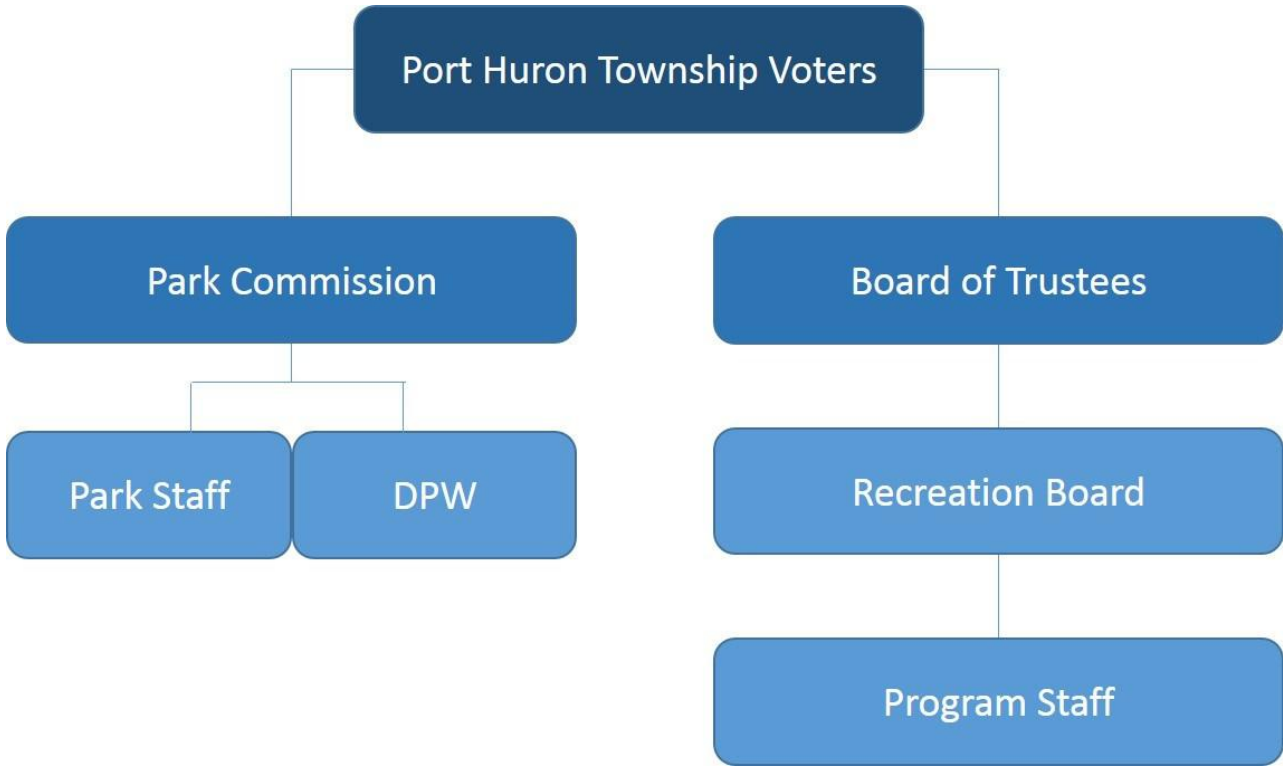
The Park Commission pays approximately \$15,000 (current cost) to the Department of Public Works (DPW) for some landscaping, maintenance, and repairs. In addition, the Park Commission works with the DPW to pay for equipment maintenance and the purchase of grounds and maintenance items.

The Park Manager handles minor repairs, locks gates, mows the parks, drags and lines the softball fields, and performs other miscellaneous maintenance tasks.

RECREATION BOARD

The nine member Recreation Board is appointed by the Township Board. Despite not adopting formal by-laws, the Chairman of the Recreation Board also acts as

FIGURE 3-1: PORT HURON TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, PARKS AND RECREATION



the Chairman of the Park Commission to maintain consistency between the board and the commission. The Recreation Board members’ salaries are paid from an annual budget allocation from the Township Board. The Recreation Board does not have any full-time staff due to a lack of funding.

PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET AND FUNDING

In 2021, the total revenue from the Park Fund was \$325,625 with \$295,000 from tourist accommodations and \$30,625 from facility rentals and leases. The majority of the revenue, currently and historically, has been brought in by the Port Huron Township RV Park, which was sold in June 2022.

The Township Board and Park Commission have a strong working relationship since the Park Commission oversees the maintenance and management of the parks and the Township Board approves the commissioner’s budgets.

Recreation Department expenditures for 2021 included:

- \$45,000 for the Recreation Department
- \$157,000 for Bakers Field Park
- \$322,405 for the Park Fund

ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION MILLAGE

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) has a countywide millage for parks and recreation in St. Clair County. PARC dedicates 75% of the millage revenues to parks and recreation facilities that serve a countywide audience and distributes the remaining 25% of the millage revenues to local governments for the enhancement or expansion of local parks and recreation programs and facilities.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

TABLE 3-1: PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, MNRTF GRANT HISTORY

PROJECT	YEAR	GRANT AMOUNT	PROJECT TYPE	PUBLIC ACT
Purchase of Bakers Field	2001	\$375,000	Acquisition	PA 81 of 2001
Bakers Field Park Development	2009	\$282,000	Development	PA 23 of 2009

Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, 2022

Since 1995, the amount of money distributed to local communities has totaled more than \$17 million and has had a positive impact on the delivery of local parks and recreation services. The amount of local distribution is based on the number of residents living in each municipality. From 1995 to 2021, a total of \$989,711 has been distributed to Port Huron Township for parks and recreation activities.

In order to receive these funds, communities must submit an annual report and show evidence of “maintenance of effort” to assure the funding is used to expand opportunities rather than to supplant existing local funding. Local governments must document their financial support for parks and recreation services has been maintained at a level equal to or greater than the amount they spent prior to the 1994 millage election.

St. Clair County PARC also donated the ADA-accessible kayak launch at both Bakers Field Park and the 40th Street Pond.

STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS

Since 1972, Port Huron Township has been awarded four MDNR grants, two of which were withdrawn. Grant funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) has been instrumental in assisting the township in making recreation investments. Table 3-1 presents a description of all MDNR grants received by Port Huron Township.

Additionally, the Hoover School Park was developed with an MDNR Clean Michigan Initiative grant and the Wm. P. Thompson Pond received grant funding assistance through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

RECREATION PROGRAMS, COLLABORATION, AND VOLUNTEERS

The Township collaborates with the County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Blueways of St. Clair, the members of the community, and other organizations to offer recreational programming and amenities.

The Township offers a six-week, drop-in Summer Recreation Program for children registered in kindergarten through the age of 14. The program includes special days with contests, parties, tournaments, and field trips. Two supervisors and a number of volunteers work at the program.

Each October, the Township holds a Fall Festival in one of the township parks. This family-oriented event offers hayrides, carnival games for kids, a magic show, fire truck tours, inflatables, and refreshments. Typically, a local orchard has a variety of fall items for sale. In addition, the Township holds a holiday decorating contest open to all residents and outdoor movie nights in the township parks.

RECREATION INVENTORY

INTRODUCTION

Port Huron Township’s residents are able to utilize a variety of recreational resources at the regional, county, and local levels, as well as through privately-owned facilities. This section describes those resources.

LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP PARKS AND FACILITIES

The Township owns and operates just over 216 acres of parkland, including the Lions Club Park, Memorial Park, the Wm. P. Thompson Pond, the Michigan Road Little League Park, the Hoover School Park, and Bakers Field Park. Additionally, the Township owns 70 acres of undeveloped land immediately south of the Little League Park at Michigan Road and Moak Street, as well as subsidizing the funding for the Port Huron Township Museum. The following pages include a profile of each park in Port Huron Township.

ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION

In accordance with the MDNR’s recreation plan guidelines booklet, an accessibility evaluation was completed for each park within the township. The evaluation was conducted by planners from the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission. In July 2022, each facility was compared to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and given a ranking from 1-5, where:

- 1 = none of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 2 = some site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 3 = most site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 4 = all site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 5 = the facility meets the Principals of Universal Design



LIONS CLUB PARK



HIGHLIGHTS:

- 10 Acres
- Black River Access
- Stocks Creek Access
- Public Service Building
- Playground
- Picnic/Shelter Facilities
- Sledding Hill
- Fishing Platforms
- In-Ground Stoves
- Picnic Tables
- Portable Restrooms

Accessibility Rating: 2

MEMORIAL PARK



HIGHLIGHTS:

- 58 Acres
- Black River Access/Frontage
- Picnic Tables
- Outdoor Pavilions
- Playground Equipment
- AYSO Soccer Fields
- Basketball Court
- Softball Diamonds
- Volleyball Court
- Bleachers
- Fishing
- Birding
- Walking Paths

Accessibility Rating: 3

WM. P. THOMPSON POND



HIGHLIGHTS:

- 65 Acres
- Spring-Fed Lake
- Six Gazebos
- Outdoor Pavilion
- Picnic Tables
- Two 124-foot Accessible Fishing Piers
- ADA-Accessible Kayak Launch
- Public Restrooms

Accessibility Rating: 3

MICHIGAN ROAD LITTLE LEAGUE PARK



HIGHLIGHTS:

The Port Huron Township Little League owns 10.6 acres of property along Michigan Road, north of Moak Street with three baseball diamonds. The Township owns the adjacent 9.4-acre parcel that has two additional diamonds.

The 20-acre park provides bleachers, a concession stand, and several out buildings.

Accessibility Rating: 2



THE HOOVER SCHOOL PARK



HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1.5-Acre Neighborhood Park
- Multi-Use Basketball Courts
- Outdoor Pavilions
- Playground
- Restrooms

Accessibility Rating: 2

BAKERS FIELD PARK



HIGHLIGHTS:

- 61.5 Acres
- Boat Ramp
- ADA-Accessible Kayak Launch
- ADA-Accessible Fishing Pier
- Trails
- Pickleball/Tennis Courts
- Picnic Areas

Accessibility Rating: 3



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MUSEUM



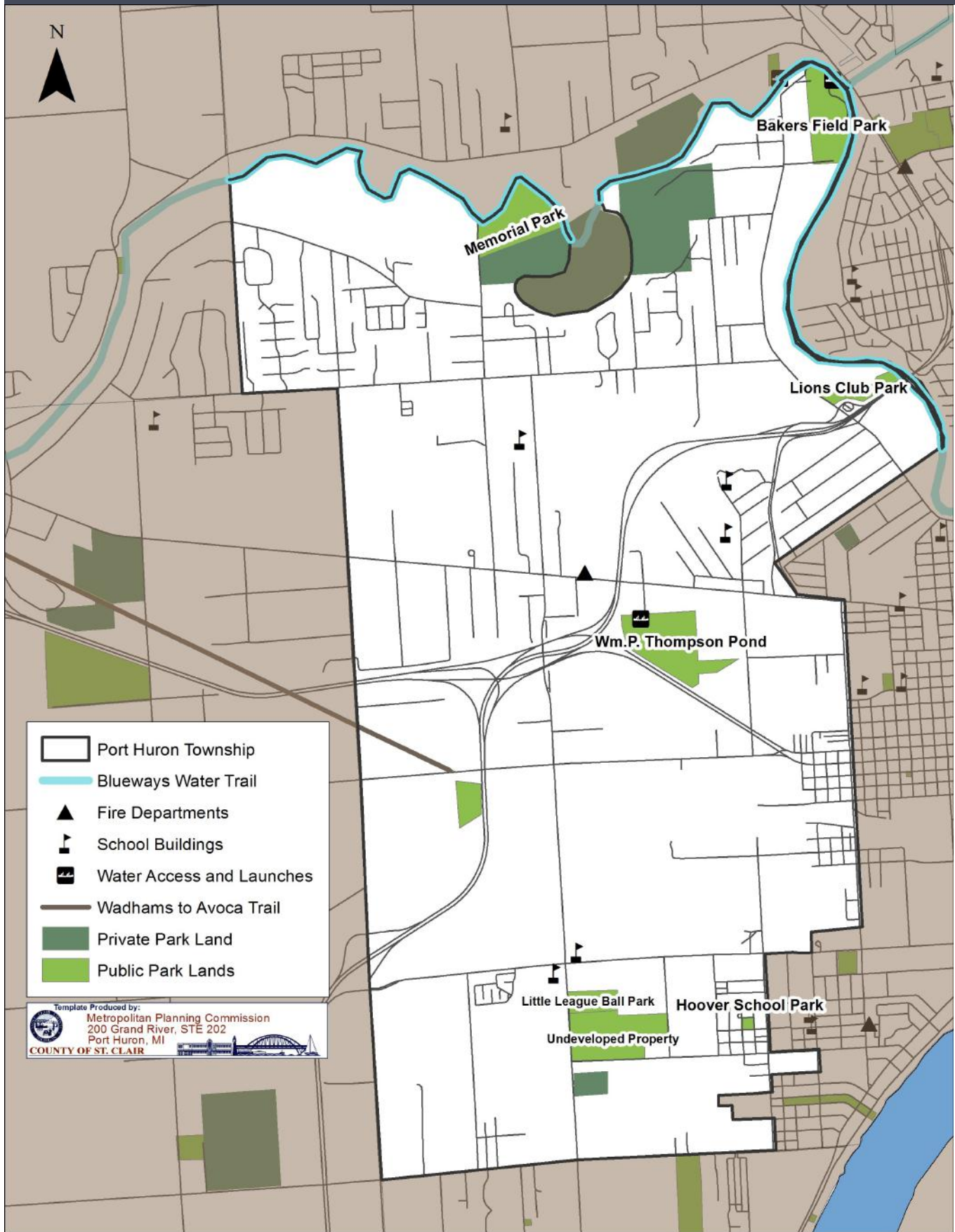
HIGHLIGHTS:

The Port Huron Township Board also subsidizes funding for the operation of a museum highlighting the Francis Malane Schoolhouse and restored train caboose located behind the Port Huron Township Hall.

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 2

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

MAP 3-1: PORT HURON TOWNSHIP PARKS



PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

There are numerous private recreation facilities within the township including:

- Black River Boat Club: Private modern club and boat slips.
- Black River Country Club: Privately-owned 18-hole golf course with a modern clubhouse. Public is welcome.
- Bridge Harbor Yacht Club: Privately-owned modern clubhouse with a swimming pool, tennis courts, and individually-owned boat slips.
- Elks Lodge Golf Club: Private 18-hole golf course with a modern clubhouse. Open to members and guests.
- Glacier Point Ice Skating Arena: Two ice skating rinks.
- The Port Huron and Detroit Historical Society Museum
- Soccer Association in Park #3: Multi-use courts and soccer fields.
- Riverside Sports Academy: Gym on Michigan Road south of Dove Road.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

There are numerous parks and recreation facilities in neighboring communities, including Clyde Township, Kimball Township, the City of Marysville, and the City of Port Huron. The tables below contain an inventory of facilities located within these communities.

TABLE 3-2: CLYDE TOWNSHIP		
Park	Acres	Amenities
Bills Bearss Park	20	Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, tennis courts, picnic areas, pavilion, basketball court, concessions, restrooms
Firefighters Park	1	Playground, ball diamond, basketball court, picnic facilities, ice skating
Clyde Township Hall Park	1	Playground, tennis courts, picnic areas, pavilion, restrooms
Jake Simpson Wilderness Park	17	Basketball courts, inline skating, playground, pickleball court
Riverfront Park	1.8	Undeveloped

TABLE 3-3: KIMBALL TOWNSHIP		
Park	Acres	Amenities
Township Park #1 - Sutherland	46	Playground, ballfields, basketball courts, pond access, fishing access, bathing beach, trails, tennis courts, picnic areas, restrooms
Township Park #2 - Smiths Creek Park	3	Playground, basketball courts, ice skating, trails, picnic areas

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

TABLE 3-4: CITY OF PORT HURON PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Park	Acres	Amenities
Lakeside Park	17.7	Playgrounds, volleyball courts, lake access, concessions, bathing beach, restrooms, splash pad, freighter watching
Lighthouse Park	7.9	Playgrounds, lake access, bathing beach, restrooms, freighter watching
Blue Water Bridge Park	3.7	River access, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Thomas Edison Park	9.0	River access, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Pine Grove Park	13.7	Playground, ballfields, river access, fishing access, rails, picnic areas, restrooms, concessions, pavilion, freighter watching
Lincoln Avenue Turnout	0.5	River access, fishing access, freighter watching
Keifer Park	0.9	River access, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Municipal Office Grounds	1.8	River access, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Wastewater Treatment Plant	1.1	River access, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Lincoln Park Turnout	0.6	River access, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Fort Street Dock	0.8	River access, marina, fishing access, trail, restrooms
Quay Street Dock	1.0	River access, marina, fishing access, ADA-accessible kayak launch, restrooms
Southside Dock & Park	1.25	River access, fishing access
River Street Dock	9.1	River access, marina, fishing access, restrooms
12 th Street Dock	1.8	River access, boat ramps, fishing access, restrooms
Riverside Boat Ramp	5.7	River access, boat ramps, fishing access, restrooms
Sanborn Park	41.7	Playground, ballfield, basketball court, swimming pool, trails, tennis courts, restrooms
Palmer Park	7.8	Playground, ice skating, trails, community center, restrooms
Gratiot Park	1.8	Playground, basketball courts
Mansfield Park	0.8	Playground
Optimist Park	3.2	Playground, ballfields, basketball courts, ice skating, picnic areas
White Park	3.4	Playground, ballfields, basketball courts, ice skating
20 th & Court Street Park	2.5	Swimming pool, restrooms
11 th & Division Tot Park	1.0	Playground
19 th & Division Tot Park	0.5	Playground
Knox Field	6.5	Ballfields, basketball courts, restrooms
Lincoln Park	9.8	Playground, ballfields, basketball courts, ice skating, picnic areas, freighter watching
16 th & Dove Park	14.5	Playground, ballfields, basketball courts, restrooms
Haynes Park	1.17	Playground, ice skating

PARKS AND RECREATION

TABLE 3-4: CITY OF PORT HURON PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES (CONTINUED)

12 th & Jenks Tot Park	0.44	Playground
Heritage Park on the Quay	0.21	River access, marina, fishing access
Flag Plaza Park	1.20	River access, fishing access, freighter watching
McMorran Place		Special events, performances, concessions, restrooms
Renaissance Tot Park	0.47	Playground

TABLE 3-5: CITY OF MARYSVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Park	Acres	Amenities
Marysville City Park	58	Playgrounds, soccer fields, basketball courts, trails, tennis courts, picnic areas, restrooms, amphitheater, picnic shelters, ballfields, sledding hill, freighter watching
Marysville Boardwalk	1.4	River access, boat ramp, bathing beach, fishing access, trail, freighter watching
Morton Park	10	Playground, soccer field, ice skating, inline skating, picnic table/areas, restrooms, picnic shelters, skate park, parking area, trails/walking track
Mermaid Park	0.7	River access, fishing access, freighter watching
4th Street Park	35	Trails
Chrysler Beach	2	Playground, bathing beach, river access, fish cleaning station, concessions, restrooms, charging stations, fishing pier, gazebo, trail, picnic areas, ADA accessible, boat launch, kayak launch
Ravenswood Road Park	39	Ice skating, trails
Washington Road Park	5.4	Native trees
Huron Road Park	1.4	Ice skating
New Hampshire/6th Street Park	1	Ice skating
Delaware Road Park	0.3	Ice skating
Connecticut Road Park	0.3	Ice skating
Municipal Golf Course	152.7	Golf course, restrooms, freighter watching

STATE OF MICHIGAN PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The State of Michigan owns and manages 22,178 acres of resource-based facilities in St. Clair County, including Algonac State Park, Lakeport State Park, the Port Huron State Game Area, the St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Refuge, the St. John’s Marsh Recreation Area, and a mini-game area in St. Clair Township.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Port Huron Area School District operates two school sites in Port Huron Township - Michigamme Elementary and Central Middle School. Numerous recreation facilities are available at these sites. Michigamme includes a full range of playground equipment, small baseball diamonds, and large open play areas. The middle school site includes an exercise station, basketball court, baseball diamond, practice football field, and open play area.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

St. Clair County currently owns eight properties committed to parks and recreation activities that total 1,010 acres.

- Goodells County Park 366 acres
- Columbus County Park 411 acres
- Fort Gratiot County Park 30 acres
- Woodsong County Park 33 acres
- Fort Gratiot Light Station 5 acres
- Blue Water River Walk County Park 5 acres
- North Channel County Park 10 acres
- Marine City Dredge Cut Access 0.34 acre
- Wadhams to Avoca Trail 160 acres (12 miles long)

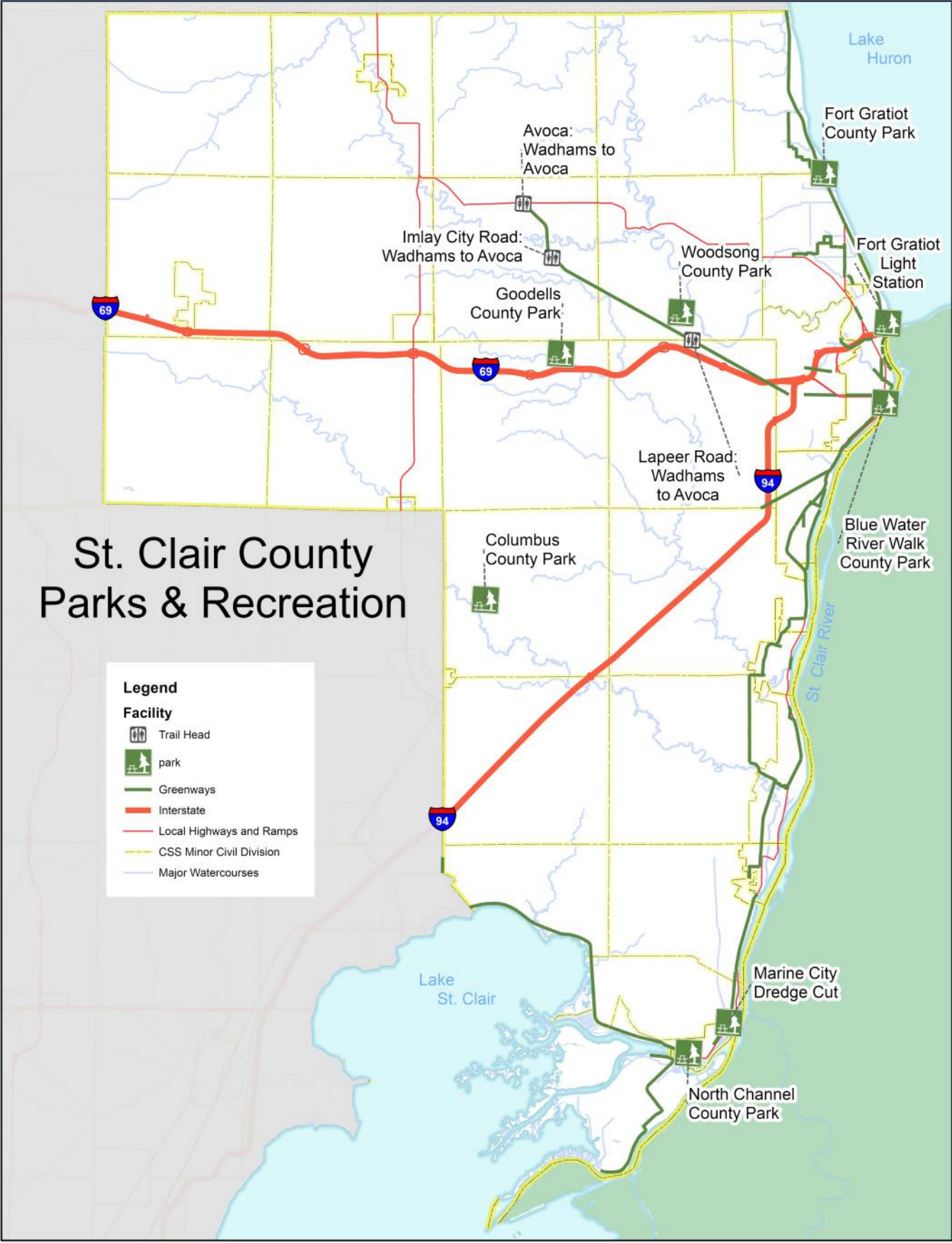
GOODELLS COUNTY PARK

The park’s facilities include a Visitor Center, two playgrounds, river and fishing access, a seasonal ice skating rink, trails, four picnic shelters, a community center, historic buildings, a BMX track, a radio-controlled model airplane airfield and truck track, a butterfly garden, five special events buildings, a Splashpad, equestrian facilities, and areas for outdoor events.

The Splashpad has 11 spray features that include two water cannons, five dumping buckets, ground geysers, and a rainbow water tunnel. The Splashpad is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and admission is free. In February 2006, the County received a Facility Design Award from the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) for the Goodells County Park Splashpad. This award recognized the Splashpad as the first water play facility in the state that uses and recycles water that is supplied by a well rather than a municipal water system.

The Historic Village at Goodells County Park contains the Lynn Township Schoolhouse (1885), and the C.C Peck and Company Bank (1908). Visitors will also see the Columbus Bible Church (1860), the Murphy/Ryan Farmhouse (1872) and the Mudge Log Cabin (1863). The latest addition to the Historic Village is the Columbus Bible Church. The Church was moved to the park and restored, complete with its twelve-foot tall windows and bell tower.

MAP 3-2: ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION



St. Clair County Parks & Recreation

Legend

Facility

- Trail Head
- park
- Greenways
- Interstate
- Local Highways and Ramps
- CSS Minor Civil Division
- Major Watercourses

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



FORT GRATIOT COUNTY PARK

COLUMBUS COUNTY PARK

Through five separate transactions, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) owns 411 acres of property in Columbus Township. In 2007, PARC used a \$1.4 million Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant to secure 291 acres for the park and used a \$65,800 MNRTF grant to secure the final 26 acres in 2016.

Phase 1 construction at the park was completed in early 2010, which included construction of the main entrance on Bauman Road, a park roadway, a 100 space parking lot, erosion control and drainage improvements, underground utilities, a water well, and development of a lighted sledding hill.

Other facilities at the park include mountain biking trails, walking trails, horse trails, fishing access, and permit only hunting. The Belle River provides 1.6 miles of water frontage in the park. A historic gambrel roof barn was restored by Columbus Township and is located at Columbus County Park near Bauman Road. The barn is used for maintenance and storage.

In 2012, an energy efficient park lodge was constructed with modern restrooms, a picnic pavilion, offices, and storage rooms. Activities at the lodge include picnics, weddings, educational programs, and meetings.

FORT GRATIOT COUNTY PARK

Fort Gratiot County Park is located off M-25 on Metcalf Road in the northeast part of St. Clair County. This 30-acre park offers breathtaking views of Lake Huron and 852 feet of shoreline and beach. It also includes picnic areas, restrooms, a children's playground, and paved walking trails. Other park improvements include the addition of ADA-accessible restrooms and a playscape in 2007, an overflow parking area in 2008 and two picnic pavilions and additional sections of boardwalk on the beach in 2009.

Fort Gratiot County Park is also home to the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial that was erected in 2007 to commemorate the construction accident that took the lives of 22 men working on the water intake tunnel located beneath the park. The 1971 Water Tunnel Explosion committee raised funds for the memorial. The Michigan Historic Commission dedicated a State Historical Marker at the site to mark the 40th anniversary of

the tragedy.

WOODSONG COUNTY PARK

In 2008, St. Clair County purchased the 33-acre Camp Woodsong site from the Michigan Waterways Council of the Girl Scouts of America. The property is located in Clyde Township off of Abbottsford Road at the east end of Rynn Road. Woodsong County Park is a passive park that provides opportunities for nature watching and studying, hiking, biking, and water activities on the Black River, such as canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.

The rustic trails follow the natural terrain by traversing along the scenic, steep slopes that travel down to 2,800 feet of Black River shoreline. Additionally, the Clinton River Area Mountain Bike Association (CRAMBA) continues to rapidly develop two-track and single-track mountain bike trails that follow the steep ridges next to the Black River. Currently, three of the proposed four miles of designated mountain bike trails have been completed.

In 2017, a canoe and kayak launch was added using a \$50,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). While the launch itself is fully accessible, the steep trail leading from the parking lot to the launch is not ADA accessible.

FORT GRATIOT LIGHT STATION

The Fort Gratiot Light Station is the oldest lighthouse in Michigan. As the shipping needs on the Great Lakes increased in the 1820's, there was a need for a navigational aid at the mouth of the St. Clair River. In August 1825, the first lighthouse was built in Port Huron, Michigan. The original tower was located near the base of the present day second span of the Blue Water Bridge. It was 32 feet high above ground level, 18 feet in diameter at the base, and tapered to nine feet across at the top.

The Coast Guard maintained the Fort Gratiot Light Station from the 1930's until they moved next door into the new station that was built in 2004. The property was officially transferred to St. Clair County in 2010.



FORT GRATIOT LIGHT STATION

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Restoration of the lighthouse was completed in 2013, and other property repairs and additions have been made using Michigan Coastal Zone Management Grant funding. The restoration of the tower was made possible by the “Save America’s Treasures” grant program and a match from the City of Port Huron. The tower reopened for tours in Summer 2012. The Port Huron Museum serves as a partner in leading site tours, programming, and private reservations. Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light Station raise funds for building restoration projects and provides volunteers.

BLUE WATER RIVER WALK COUNTY PARK

Blue Water River Walk County Park is a former railroad switch yard that has been partially restored to a coastal wetland. The wetland features three ponds, marshland, and native plants. The habitat is home to amphibians, such as frogs and toads, and is a popular nesting and feeding spot for migratory birds. A boardwalk with interpretive signs educate visitors about wetlands and allows them to get close to the wetland without disturbing its natural features. North of the wetland is a picnic pavilion, a shade trellis, walkways, landscaping, an artificial lawn activity area, picnic tables, grills, and benches. Future developments include a children’s playground, restrooms, and another pavilion.

The Blue Water River Walk is a paved pathway that travels through the park and is part of the Bridge to Bay Trail System. It begins at Desmond Landing to the north and travels southwest to 10th Street. The Blue Water River Walk is owned by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County. St. Clair County Parks leases and maintains the grounds.

PINE RIVER NATURE CENTER

The St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency’s Pine River Nature Center is an educational facility whose mission is to promote the awareness, understanding, and stewardship of the Blue Water Area’s natural and cultural heritage. The center provides programs for local schools to enhance their science and mathematics curricula with outdoor-based field studies correlated with the Michigan Curriculum Framework as well as offers outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities for area residents.

The Pine River Nature Center opened in May 2003 and sits on 111-acres of property with over 4,800 feet of the Pine River meandering through it. Since opening, over 21,900 students from around St. Clair County have visited the center for programs. Activities and events at the center include:

- Opportunities to hike over two miles of trails (open daily from dawn to dark).
- Browse the indoor displays and live animals.
- Read about nature or do research in the library.
- Attend public programs, including star gazing parties and nature walks.
- Volunteer to help with special events and school programs.
- Adopt-a-Trail.
- Visit the universally-accessible (ADA) tree house.

THE BLUEWAYS OF ST. CLAIR

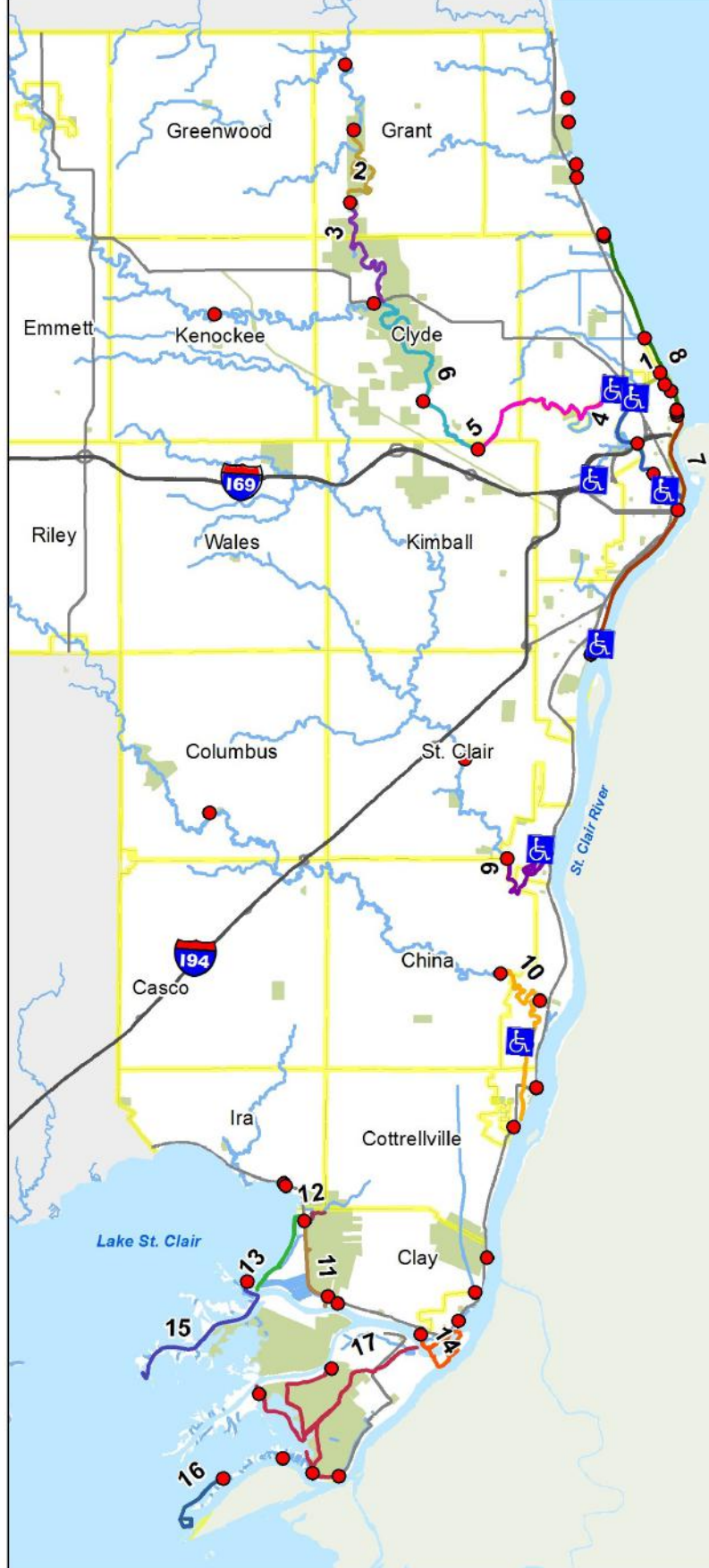
The Blueways of St. Clair is a system of 17 water trails, totaling 151 miles, in nine unique bodies of water. The Island Loop National Water Trail, the Fort Gratiot Sojourn, and the Lake Huron Paddle run within the township or along its border. More information can be found at www.BluewaysOfStClair.org.

ISLAND LOOP NATIONAL WATER TRAIL

MAP 3-3: BLUEWAYS OF ST. CLAIR



www.BluewaysOfStClair.org



- ADA Kayak/Canoe Launch
 - Public Land
 - Water Access Points
- Water Trails**
- 1, THE ISLAND LOOP ROUTE
 - 2, THE NORMAN BRIDGE PADDLE
 - 3, THE BLACK RIVER EXPERIENCE
 - 4, BLACK RIVER URBAN PADDLE
 - 5, THE FORT GRATIOT SOJOURN
 - 6, THE WADHAMS BRIDGE RUN
 - 7, BLUE WATER BRIDGE EXCURSION
 - 8, LAKE HURON PADDLE
 - 9, PINE RIVER PADDLE
 - 10, BELLE RIVER ROUTE
 - 11, ST JOHNS MARSH EXPLORER
 - 12, BEAUBIEN CREEK ROUTE
 - 13, THE BOUVIER BAY JOURNEY
 - 14, RUSSELL ISLAND LOOP
 - 15, THE SNY LOOP
 - 16, MUSCAMOOT BAY TO GULL ISLAND
 - 17, KRISPIN BLUEWAY

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The 10.2-mile Island Loop National Water Trail was the first national water trail to be designated in Michigan and the 14th in the United States. It navigates between the United States and Canada for 2.5 miles and meanders through Fort Gratiot Township, Port Huron Township, and the City of Port Huron. The trail makes a loop from the Black River to the Black River Canal to Lake Huron into the St. Clair River and back to the Black River. It also passes the oldest lighthouse in Michigan, the Thomas Edison Museum, the Huron Lightship Museum, and the Acheson Maritime Center.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

There are several significant multi-use paths in Port Huron Township and the region. A greenway refers to trails or pathways designed for non-motorized traffic that connect residential areas to other residential areas or commercial districts. Greenway resources refer to the total collection of trails and parks within a community or geographic area, including both land and water areas.

St. Clair County's countywide trails plan illustrates a system of trails and conservation corridors with significant natural features, such as soils, hills and valleys, drains, streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes, shoreline, woodlands, and wildlife habitat. The plan's objective is to maintain the natural features in a balanced ecological state, while allowing communities to grow in a controlled manner.

WADHAMS TO AVOCA TRAIL

The Wadhams to Avoca Trail is a 12-mile trail located on property owned and maintained by PARC, and is managed as if it is a county park. The trail starts at Avoca, travels east through Wadhams, and ends at Lapeer Road west of the I-94 overpass on the outskirts of the City of Port Huron. There are plans to extend this trail northwest to Yale, as well as to connect it to the Bridge to Bay Trail through Port Huron Township and heading east toward the St. Clair River.

BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL

The ad hoc Regional Trails Governing Board is working with St. Clair County and 13 local communities to develop a 54-mile long network of non-motorized recreational trails linking the shoreline communities of New Baltimore (Macomb County), Algonac, Marine City, St. Clair, Marysville, Port Huron, and Lakeport. Over 25 miles of paved trail have already been constructed in various sections utilizing funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and private grants. Future plans call for the Bridge to Bay Trail to connect with the Macomb Orchard Trail in Richmond and the Wadhams to Avoca Trail as part of the Great Lake to Lake Trail Route #1, which extends from South Haven to Port Huron.

TRAILS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

The Township has three primary non-motorized trails including:

- A separated side path along Water Street from I-94 to West Water.
- A separated side path along Lapeer Road, from 32nd Street to Michigan Road.
- A trailhead for the Wadhams to Avoca Trail located on Griswold.

There are additional plans for a separated side path along Strawberry Lane, from Water Street to Bakers Field Park.

PROPOSED TRAILS AND CONNECTORS IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

St. Clair County, along with the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and numerous local and regional partners, developed an updated countywide trails plan in 2019 that identifies existing gaps in countywide non-

MAP 3-4: BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL



The Bridge to Bay Trail is a diverse trail system of boardwalks, riverwalks, rail trails and bike paths that extends along 50 miles of shoreline across St. Clair County, Michigan. Experience picturesque views, charming towns, parks and beaches, freighter watching and the blue waters of Lake Huron, the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair.

Learn More at www.bridgetobaytrail.org

Legend



Amenities



Amenities subject to seasonal availability and to change.



BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

motorized trail networks, identifies preferred alternatives to eliminate those gaps, and prioritizes the timing and sequencing for completing needed connections. The overarching goal is to complete the Bridge to Bay Trail and Wadhams to Avoca trail networks, which includes connecting to the Macomb Orchard Trail and the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Route #1, which runs from South Haven in the western part of the state to Port Huron in the eastern part of the state.

There are two trail gaps identified in Port Huron Township:

The first gap proposes the following facilities:

- Griswold – protected bike lanes/side path from the trailhead to where Oak Street begins, about 1.8 miles.
- Oak Street - protected bike lane for about 1.8 miles.
- And then up 7th Street to the water via an advisory lane.
- Another option is a new off road facility connecting 27th to 10th Street on the north side of the rail corridor.

The second gap proposes the following facilities:

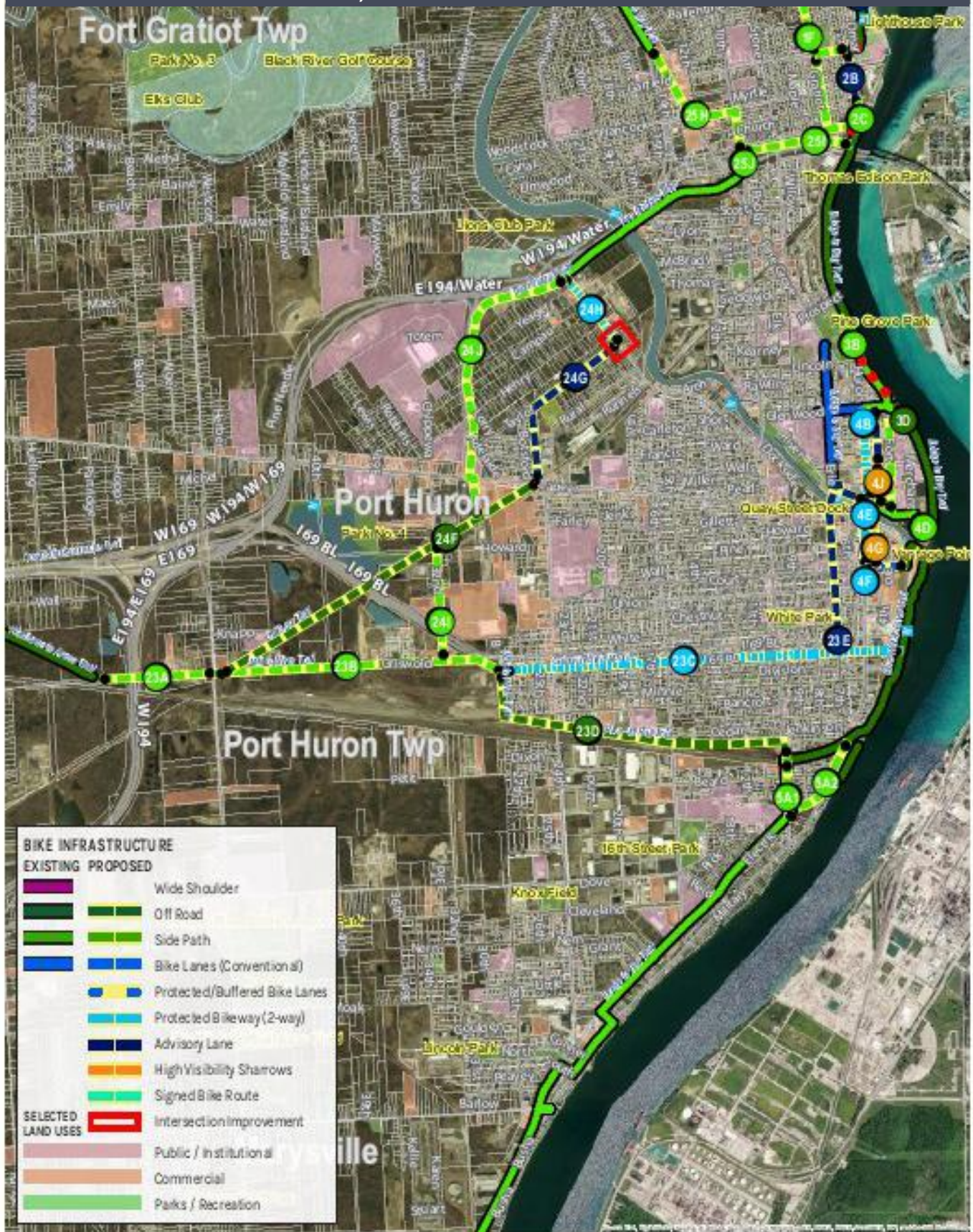
- Off-street path that connects Griswold to Lapeer diagonally along a CN rail spur.
- Protected bike lanes from Lapeer to Water Street
- Protected bike lanes on Water Street
- A side path on 32nd Street
- Side path on the Lapeer Connector

The Township should collaborate with partners, including the St. Clair County Road Commission, to implement



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

MAP 3-6: WADHAMS TO AVOCA TRAIL, PROPOSED CONNECTIONS



the St. Clair County Trails Plan and assist in developing a fully-connected regional trail network.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FACILITY COMPARISON

An essential task during the recreation planning process is to determine the needs of the township as a basis for an action plan. This task can be accomplished by asking township officials to provide insights into needed improvements, asking people what they desire, and by comparing the township to established recreation standards based on the size of the community and its service area.

PARK ACREAGE AND FACILITY COMPARISON

The Township’s existing recreation facilities were compared against the guidelines set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to determine if the existing facilities are adequate to meet residents’ needs in comparison to national standards. The analysis takes into account a variety of factors, including existing conditions, public input, programming desires, and site conditions.

Table 3-6 identifies the NRPA guideline for each facility type, the recommended and existing number of facilities, and the surplus or deficiency. The list of recreation uses in Table 3-6 is not exhaustive. The table

TABLE 3-6: PARK LAND ACREAGE AND FACILITY ANALYSIS, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP						
Park/Activity	Standard	Population (2020)	Population (2045)	Recommended Size/ Population 2020	Recommended Size/ Population 2045	Existing Acreage/ Facilities
Community Park	5-8 acres per 1,000 residents	10,792	12,266	54-87 acres	62-99 acres	216 acres
Children’s Play lot	1 lot per 3,000 residents	10,792	12,266	3	4	3
Basketball Court	1 court per 10,000 residents	10,792	12,266	1	1	3
Softball/Baseball Diamond	1 diamond per 5,000 residents	10,792	12,266	2	3	8
Nature Trails	1 trail per 20,000 residents	10,792	12,266	0	0	0
Golf Course	1 course per 25,000 residents	10,792	12,266	0	0	0
Tennis Court	1 court per 2,000 residents	10,792	12,266	5	6	1
Soccer Field	1 field per 10,000 residents	10,792	12,266	1	1	15
Ice Rink (Outdoor)	1 per 20,000 residents	10,792	12,266	0	0	0
Volleyball Court	1 court per 5,000 residents	10,792	12,266	2	2	1

Source: Lancaster, R.A., Ed. Recreation Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1983; Mertes, J.D. and J.R. Hall. Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1995.

shows the township has a deficiency in tennis and volleyball courts based on recommended standards. It is important to note recreation planning standards must be used in concert with other information, such as regional interests, parks and recreation trends, demographics, citizen mobility, unique natural areas, neighboring communities' parks and recreation opportunities, and tourism impacts, to fully understand actual public needs. Generally, these issues are mitigated when they are addressed through recommended standards and proactive updates to the Recreation Plan every five years to garner new citizen input and assess current trends.

CHAPTER 4:

LAND USE IN PORT HURON TOWNSHIP



In This Chapter:

- Existing Land Use Overview
- Alternatives for Future Land Use
- Future Land Use Plan
- Analysis of Planning in Adjacent Communities

EXISTING LAND USE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

How land is used influences our overall quality of life, the character of our community, and how neighboring land is used. Land use also affects our natural resources, our system of roads, and the potential for new development. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) updated land use data for the entire seven county Metro Detroit region in 2020 and is the data source for this section. Land use in Port Huron Township can be divided into nine principle categories. See Map 4-1.

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

There are approximately 1,869 acres of land being used for single-family residential uses in the township. Single-family residential is the predominant land use in the northern half of the township, from the Black River down to West Water Street, and continuing down along Beach and Michigan Roads down to the interstate. There is a break in residential use along the Lapeer Road commercial corridor. South of I-94/I-69, in the eastern portion of the township, near 32nd Street and Water Street, the pocket of single-family residential is undergoing some transition. This is a direct result of the transportation improvements being made to the freeway interchanges and the connector, as well as the addition of some newer commercial developments along that corridor.

Most of the larger lot subdivisions in the township are located in the northern portion of the township, near West Water Street and Atkins Road. Many of the residential areas in the northern township have been platted and are characterized by a curvilinear street pattern. There are also a few smaller areas of single-family residential neighborhoods near the southern boundary of the township, particularly where the township borders the City of Port Huron, south of Dove Road.

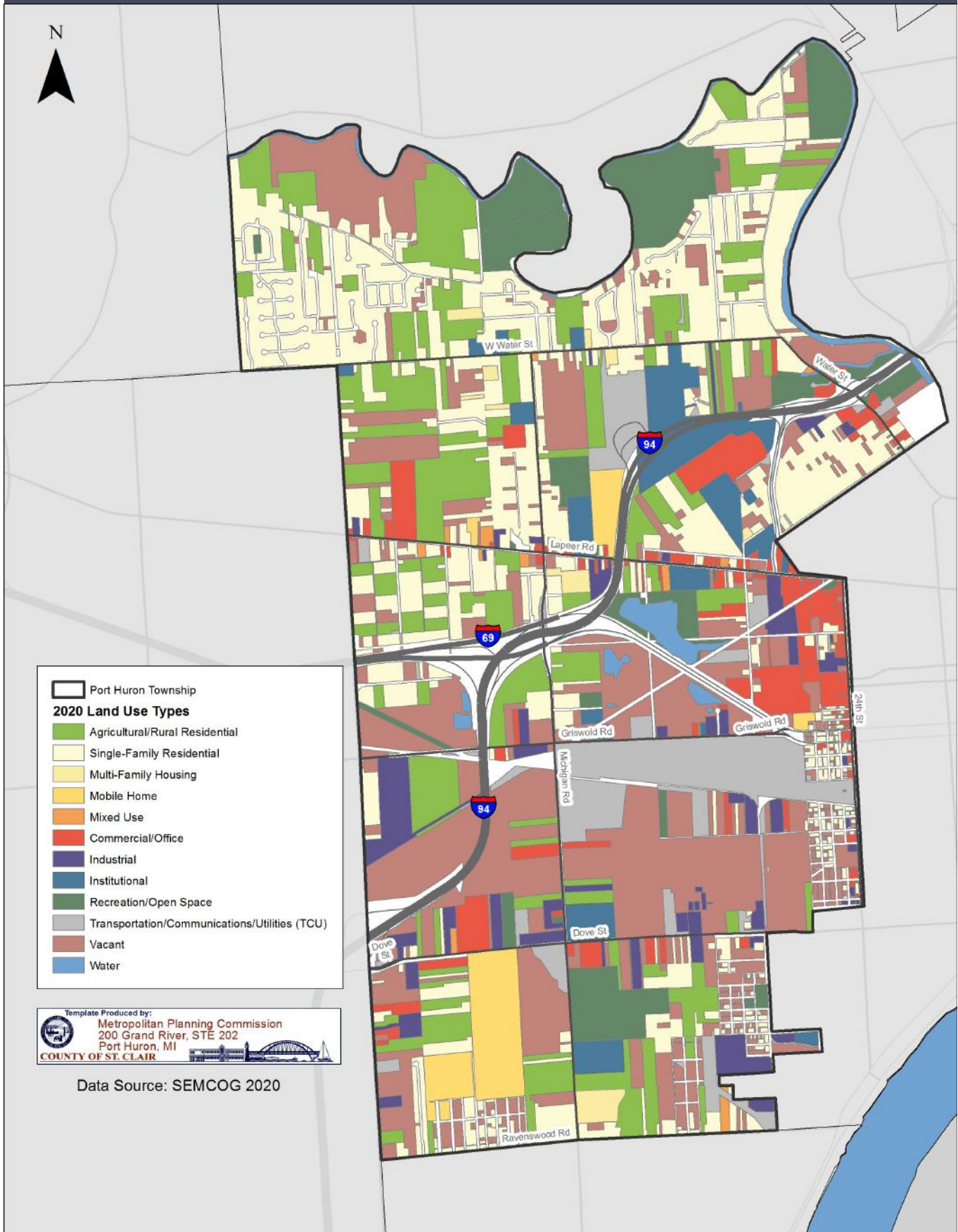
MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND MOBILE HOMES

The township is currently using 243 acres of land for multiple-family residential. Generally, this land use category includes mobile homes, apartments, and two-family dwellings such as duplexes. The larger manufactured homes are located in the manufactured home parks located along Lapeer Road, Griswold Road, and Dove Road. Other multiple-family residential areas are scattered throughout the township. Port Huron Township is also home to two apartment complexes. The Brookstone Place Apartments are located at the township's southern border along Michigan Road, north of Ravenswood Road, while the Dorchester Court Apartments are located south of Lapeer Road, east of Michigan Road.

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE

Commercial and office uses occupy approximately 404 acres of the township. There are three primary commercial corridors in the township: the Lapeer Road corridor, 24th Street, and the transitioning 32nd Street corridor. Lapeer Road is a commercial corridor that stretches from the township border at 24th Street on the east side of the township, all the way west to Range Road. The commercial development has located along Lapeer Road because it is a heavily traveled thoroughfare leading into the City of Port Huron. The commercial development along Lapeer Road is commonly called strip commercial. Such strip development generally creates a number of problems. For example, the scattering of commercial development creates numerous areas of vehicular traffic conflict as automobiles turn off or onto Lapeer Road.

MAP 4-1: EXISTING LAND USE, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP, 2020



PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



Strip commercial development has the potential to create numerous traffic hazards; consequently, it is regarded as an inefficient use of land. However, if this type of development is properly adapted to the township's traffic patterns, and land adjacent to the commercial strip is developed for residential purposes, the strip commercial will subsequently reduce traffic problems created by residential development abutting a major thoroughfare in the township, such as Lapeer Road.

Strip commercial uses are concentrated along 24th Street, between Griswold and Lapeer Roads. The commercial development of 24th Street was in response to several factors. Most of the area in the City of Port Huron is developed and the area along 24th Street was likely available for development at a lower price per acre than property within the city. Also, 24th Street is the boundary between the City of and Port Huron Township. Commercial locations can take advantage of the market existing in the city as well as in the township. The commercial uses along 24th Street are oriented more towards convenience and comparison shopping.

The commercial uses along 32nd Street, from Griswold to Lapeer Roads, have generally been big-box retail stores such as Sam's Club, or the former Super K-Mart and Love's Furniture stores, now both vacant. These types of stores commonly attract customers from the greater St. Clair County area, as well as drawing in traffic from the interstates. Menards, a large home improvement retailer, is located at the northern terminus of 32nd Street. This superstore has direct access to the Lapeer Connector and I-94/I-69. The 32nd Street corridor, north of Lapeer Road, is undergoing a transition from residential and institutional uses (churches), to additional commercial development. This transition can be attributed to the major improvements made on the interstate and the Lapeer Connector and interchange, as well as the already busy Lapeer Road Corridor.

Current development patterns have created impractical pedestrian traffic between stores. There is a need to improve the control of ingress and egress for motor vehicles to and from stores located along 24th Street and Lapeer Road. Better coordination of these access points could eliminate much of the present circulation induced traffic conflicts resulting from vehicles turning into and out of through traffic on 24th Street and Lapeer. As commercial uses continue to locate along 24th Street and Lapeer, enhancement of the area should be carefully considered to attract customers. These commercial corridors could benefit from improved access management, discussed in more detail in the Transportation Chapter of this Master Plan.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial development is very important to most communities. In Port Huron Township, 309 acres of land are used for industrial development. Industrial uses range from manufacturing firms, warehouses and utilities to outdoor storage areas.

Manufacturing uses are primarily on the east side, but do not represent a definite manufacturing area in the township. In fact, the manufacturing uses are strewn amongst adjacent residential and commercial uses. The township has two key prerequisites for a manufacturing area - flat land and access to excellent transportation amenities.

Warehousing and storage uses are primarily scattered along section line roads in the township rather than concentrated in any one area. With the two freeways, I-94 and I-69, and the railroad, it is most likely that warehousing will continue to locate in the township. Open storage of material, such as automobile junk yards, are considered under the industrial classification because of the nuisance factors associated with such uses. These uses are often unsightly, unhealthy (if vermin are not controlled) and can depreciate land values. Open storage areas within Port Huron Township are occasionally found within a residential area. These open storage uses are incompatible with the surrounding development. Efforts should be made to screen these areas, clean them up, and provide a more attractive environment. Future locations of open storage uses should only be allowed in areas zoned for heavy industrial uses.

The township has some areas devoted to public or private utilities. These uses are for an electrical power substation and radio towers. These facilities are located on various sites throughout the township.

GOVERNMENTAL/INSTITUTIONAL

Governmental and/or institutional land uses are approved land and facilities held in the public interest. They are usually exempt from real property taxation, plus any service drives or roads inside the actual parcel. This type of land use includes churches, governmental offices, hospitals, day care centers, assisted living facilities, and cemeteries. Current governmental and institutional uses are spread throughout 72 acres of the township.

The St. Clair County Intervention Center is located on Michigan Road near the southern boundary of the township. Further north, along the west side of Michigan Road, is a Port Huron Area School District maintenance facility. Michigamme Elementary School is located in the northern part of the township, near Michigan Road and West Water Street. Central Middle School is located on 32nd Street, near Menards and the Literacy Academy at Cleveland Elementary, is located on Vanness Street.

The former campus of Baker College of Port Huron is located in Port Huron Township, on Lapeer Road, west of 32nd Street. This campus is now home to a number of nonprofit agencies, including Blue Water Community Action, Community Enterprises, in addition to the home health and hospice service organization, also known as Visiting Nurse Association and Blue Water Hospice.

Churches in Port Huron Township include St. Stephen Catholic Church on 32nd Street, the Jehovah's Witness facility on Yeager Street near 32nd Street, Ross Bible Church on Maywood Drive, Westhaven Baptist Church on West Water Street, St. Paul Lutheran Church on West Water Street, and the United Christian Fellowship Church on Ravenswood Road.

Port Huron Township's main office is located on Lapeer Road right next to the fire station, and the Department of Public Works (DPW) facility is located at the corner of West Water Street and Beach Road.



PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

There are 555 acres of parks, recreation, and open space in Port Huron Township. There are also private recreational uses consisting mainly of golf courses, a golf driving range, the Port Huron Motorcycle Club and two marinas. The two golf courses, including the Black River Country Club and the Port Huron Elks Golf Club, attract golfers not only from the township's population, but also throughout the county and region. These types of land uses are located in natural flood hazard areas of the Black River., utilizing land that should not be developed with permanent buildings. These recreational uses are located in the northernmost sectors of the township.

Township parks include Bakers Field, which sits along a horseshoe bend of the Black River, accessible from Strawberry Lane; Memorial Park at the end of Beach Road, and the Wm. P. Thompson Pond on 40th Street. See Chapter 3 for more information about parks and recreation in the township.

Additionally, the Township has woodlands scattered in small pockets across the central and northern parts of the township. There is also a pocket of woodlands to the east of I-94, north of Dove Road. Other smaller patches of central hardwoods, lowland hardwoods and conifers are scattered throughout the township. Woodlands cover roughly 1,818 acres of Port Huron Township.

TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITY (TCU)

Land devoted to the movement of people and goods accounts for 510 acres of the township's total land area. In urban communities and developed suburban communities, the percentage of land devoted to transportation, particularly roadways, increases proportionately to the need created by new development. The percentage of land devoted to transportation can be decreased through use of proper subdivision techniques and planning policies, thus allowing land to be put to a more productive use.

The I-94 and I-69 freeways intersect in the center of Port Huron Township, accounting for much of the transportation land use in the township. These right-of way patterns, superimposed over the already existing residential road systems, have created isolated parcels of land. This condition has made for a costly road pattern to connect all of these small parcels into a workable system for future land development.

Even though a freeway system in the township is disruptive to the local road pattern, the freeways represent a valuable asset. Major freeway interchanges near an urban center generally attract a high value form of urban development. The intensity of land uses near the interchange are usually great because of the value of the property. Therefore, the I-94 and I-69 freeways must be considered as major generators of urban growth.

Other valuable transportation assets in the township are the railroad tracks and the Grand Trunk Western terminal yards. The Grand Trunk Western Railroad is centrally located in the township and provides a major link to the regional and national railroad network. The railroad should influence potential industrial development in the township. However, like the freeways, the railroad represents a disruptive effect on the local road patterns. Considerable attention will have to be given to the circulation system in the township. This is due to its potential for generating a large amount of urban development, especially as sidings are brought into an industrial park.

AGRICULTURAL/RURAL RESIDENTIAL

According to SEMCOG's 2020 land use data, the Port Huron Township had 1,181 acres of agricultural or rural residential land. This is mainly in the form of permanent pastures, fallow land, scrub areas, flood plain areas and platted, but not developed land. Much of the vacant land is in large tracts easily developed for land uses requiring large acreage, such as residential subdivisions or manufacturing uses. The Township will need to carry out appropriate planning measures and citizen engagement to determine if agricultural land should be preserved to protect character or whether certain areas make sense for future development.

VACANT

Approximately 1,963 acres of land are considered vacant or undeveloped in Port Huron Township. This is found predominantly in areas located in the southern half of the township, between I-94 and Ravenswood Road.



WATER

Surface water accounts for 152 acres of township land. This consists predominantly of the Black River, running along the township's northern border. The 40th Street Pond is also a significantly large water area, providing ample opportunity for activity and recreation. There are also a handful of private ponds scattered throughout Port Huron Township.

Port Huron Township has a total of 4,347 acres of wetland areas, which are located predominantly in the southern and central portions of the township, south of I-69. There is also a smaller pocket of wetlands north of the expressway in an area bounded by Lapeer Road to the south, Michigan Road to the east, West Water Street to the north, and Range Road to the west. Additionally, there are wetland areas along the riparian area of the Black River along the northern border of the township. In an effort to maintain the natural drainage network, it is important to protect the associated floodplains, wetlands, and vegetation from overdevelopment. Protecting floodplains and wetlands help prevent flooding, erosion, and pollution problems.

Stocks Creek, located just north of Lapeer Road, is also a significant watercourse that provides opportunities for fishing. Additionally, Bunce Creek meanders through the southern and central portions of the township.



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The goal of land use planning is improving the general welfare of the people living and working in the Charter Township of Port Huron. This is achieved primarily through the proper development of vacant land. Additionally, where necessary, this also incorporates the redevelopment of existing areas for new uses, creating a better community to live, work, and engage in recreation. In general, this land use plan is a guide for determining where to best locate private and public uses in the township.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to be long-range, comprehensive, generalized, flexible and regional, with the following broad objectives:

- Comprehensive planning to provide for a variety of land use types, bearing a relationship to the land capability and transportation systems.
- Generalized planning upon broad principles of land use allocations and relationships.
- Flexible planning that is able to adapt to changing conditions, yet not detract from the spirit and intent of the master plan.
- Regional planning transcending arbitrary boundaries which are an integrated part of the regional system.
- Short-range and long-range planning for land development up to the year 2035.

The Future Land Use Plan is more than just a graphic presentation. Behind the graphics on a map are spatial distributions and relationships, reflecting the community vision and planning objectives described in Chapter 5. The Future Land Use Plan is generalized in its scope. It is not intended to delineate exact parcels or defined boundaries for planned land uses. The Future Land Use Plan and its supporting text serve as a guide to community officials regarding day-to-day planning issues. The planning commission should consider this master plan as a whole, and as a guide for Future Land Use, zoning and site planning decisions. The master plan, along with a Future Land Use map or mapping objectives, are required to be reviewed and updated, every five years, if necessary. This helps to ensure they reflect community interests and relevant trends. The timing of a particular land use is dependent upon a number of factors, such as:

- Community input
- The community vision and planning objectives
- Existing land uses
- Current zoning of the township and surrounding area
- Demographic projections
- Economic trends and market forces
- Traffic circulation in each area
- Location of sensitive environment resource areas
- Capability of land and soils for development

The factors noted above, among others, must be given strong consideration when reviewing a request for rezoning a parcel of land. As a general policy, it is recommended that the rezoning of any land, to implement the Future Land Use plans, be delayed until the specific land use objectives of the area are met. Similarly, no rezoning should be made that is inconsistent with the Future Land Use objectives, map, and/or text of this plan, unless this plan is first amended after careful analysis to establish the appropriateness of the change in zoning.

CONCEPTS OF LOCAL LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Port Huron Township is in part an extension of the City of Port Huron. Growth and development attracted to the City of Port Huron naturally affects the township. Most developers attracted to the Port Huron area are generally forced to look towards suburban communities, since much of the city property is already developed. As a result, development should continue to overflow to the township. This impending growth and expansion into the township has become even more imminent through the introduction of new transportation patterns within the past few years,

A general land use pattern is developing in the township. There are a number of low density residential uses (single – family dwellings on large lots) in the northern areas of the township. The southern boundary for these land uses is generally the western portion of the I-69 freeway, and the northeastern portion of the I-94 corridor. These form a buffer between the residential uses and the industrial and the railroad facilities of the township, except for the extreme southern portion of the township between Dove Road and Ravenswood Road, which is zoned multi-family residential.

The high concentration of freeways, roadways, and railroads traversing back and forth through the center of the southern section of the township, create many odd shaped parcels of land, dictating intensive, non-residential uses. There are thousands of acres of vacant industrial sites and acreage that can be taken advantage of with frontage along major roadways and railroad tracks with easy access to the expressways. Dove Road provides suitable access to the freeways, and the completion of the bridge installations on Michigan, over the railroad tracks, will provide additional access to the other generally avoided areas of the township, due to the interruption of traffic flow by the number of trains at the numerous railroad crossings.

With so many potential job opportunities from the industrial and commercial areas in the center of the township, the extreme southern portion of the township lends itself to multi and single family residential development. This area is being developed with a higher density residential development than in the northern section of the township. This is a result of commercial areas needing to be made available to serve the township's potential population in those surrounding areas. These commercial uses have ample frontage on main roads and access to the freeways. Some convenient shopping area should be available, especially to the greater concentrations of people in the medium and high density residential areas.

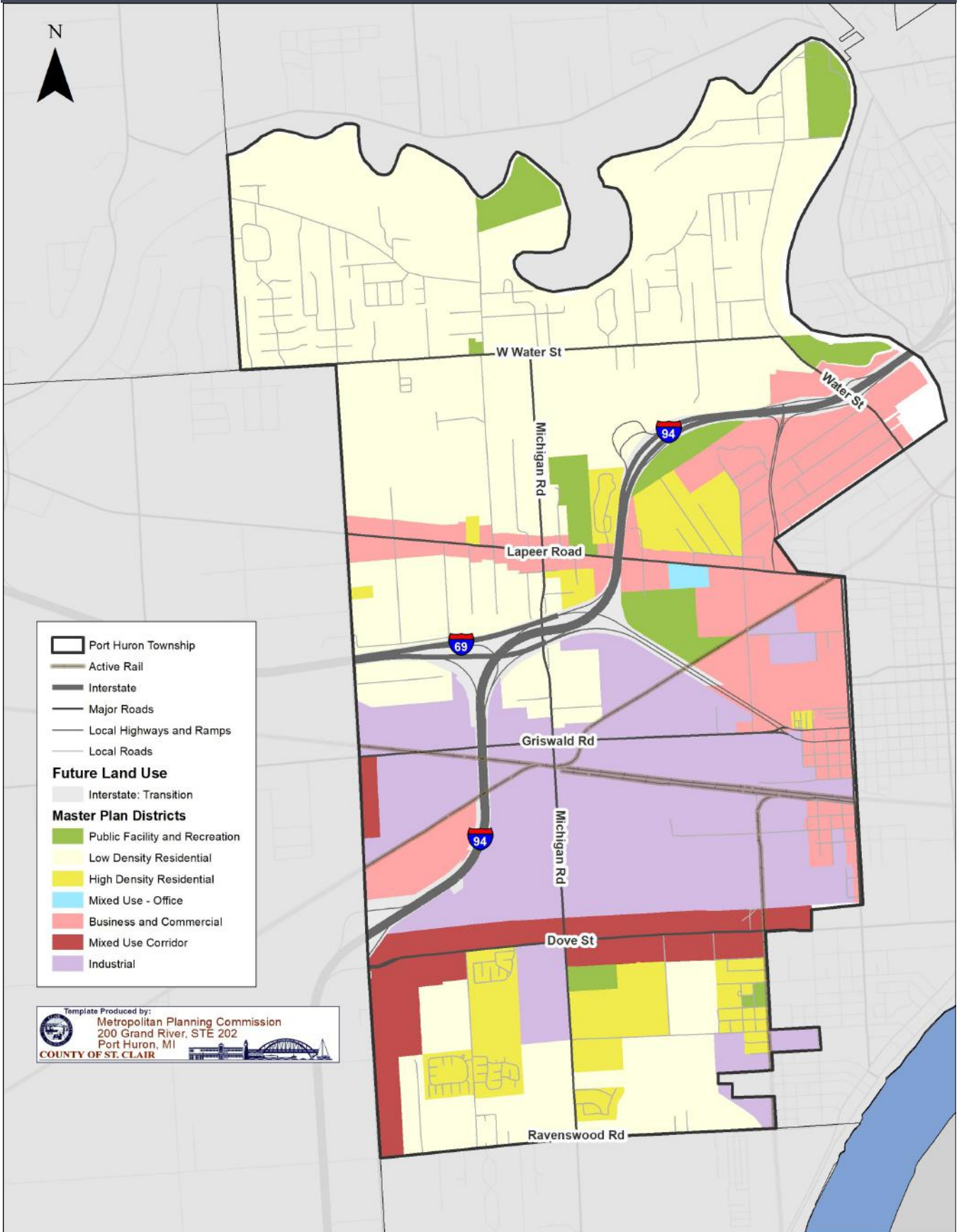
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN FOR PORT HURON TOWNSHIP

The land use plan for the Charter Township of Port Huron is based upon an analysis of the basic data and trends developing in the township and the surrounding communities. The various land uses have been allocated based upon the desirability, needs, and likelihood of development. The physical condition existing in the township and neighboring municipalities, greatly influence the plan.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

As mentioned previously, the long-range land use plan is based on the anticipated population for the year 2045 in the Charter Township of Port Huron. Residential areas have been delineated to accommodate this population in keeping with the community's goals to provide a full range of housing types in the township. As listed in Chapter 5, the basic intents of the different uses are described including high, medium, and low-density residential areas. The medium and low density categories are basically single-family areas. The high density areas would be for apartments, townhouses, or mobile homes located in mobile home parks.

MAP 4-2: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN, PORT HURON TOWNSHIP



Template Produced by:
 Metropolitan Planning Commission
 200 Grand River, STE 202
 Port Huron, MI
 COUNTY OF ST. CLAIR

LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

In the northern part of the Charter Township of Port Huron, there is already a low-density, single-family area developing. Lot sizes are large; however, since municipal sewer facilities are now available, lot sizes are being reduced. Since the character of the area is already established, low-density residential development is recommended for the northern area of the township, as shown on the comprehensive development plan map.

HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

This type of development allows for the highest concentration of residential units to be located in the designated land use area. Most intensive high-density residential land use includes apartment complexes and mobile home park developments. Several areas are proposed to be multiple-family development, as shown on the Future Land Use map. These areas are adjacent to concentrations of major commercial and employment centers. In addition, traffic generated from the multiple-family areas will be easily accessible to major thoroughfares and will not interfere with single-family areas.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Planning for commercial development must be based on an understanding of the different types of commercial establishments, their locational requirements and the varying needs of their customers. The location of commercial land uses is an important consideration in the land use plan because of their economic importance and their effect on traffic and neighboring land uses. Businesses should be grouped at planned locations in the township in order to control marginal strip commercial activities.

The land use plan recognized the township's need to distinguish between the characteristics of various commercial activities. Therefore, commercial land uses are located according to their function. Consideration is also given to existing development, with the intention of discouraging further strip commercial development. Commercial areas in the Charter Township of Port Huron are shown grouped in strategic locations in the township. The largest concentration of commercial development is proposed along 24th Street, between Griswold and Lapeer Roads. There is already a sizable commercial development in the area. A community shopping area was developed along 24th Street and 32nd Street. This serves residents in the city and the township, as well as outlying areas.

The I-94 and I-69 freeways also provide desirable sites for commercial development at interchanges. Motorist's wishing to locate gas, motel rooms, eating places, or other services, are attracted to such locations. Commercial areas are proposed at the interchanges with the I-94 freeway at Dove and West Water Roads. Also, along Lapeer Road, just west of the I-94 freeway interchange. Existing commercial uses are shown on the plan. These areas along Lapeer Road, serve not only passing motorists, but also residents with local shopping needs.

CORRIDOR MIXED USE

There are two corridors in the township designated as Corridor Mixed Use. The first is along Range Road, from the southern border of the township to the I-94 expressway. The second Corridor Mixed Use area is along Dove Road, from Range Road to 32nd Street. These corridors currently support both commercial and industrial uses and township leadership has expressed a desire to continue a mixed use pattern along Range and Dove Roads. It is recommended that the township develop a new mixed use zoning district for these corridors to provide clear regulations that can accommodate mixed uses in an appropriate manner that enhances community character and the overall function of the corridor.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

Two types of industrial areas are proposed in the Charter Township of Port Huron: heavy and light industrial development. For the most part, the proposed industrial areas lie within the very central portion of the

township. These corridors should be planned carefully to accommodate a mix of business and light industrial uses.

Light Industrial

Light industrial uses should not have the undesirable features associated with heavy industrial. Light industrial development often buffers heavy industrial plants from land uses such as residential. This is a primary function of the township's light industrial development. Such industries as warehouses, tool and die shops, fabricated metal plants, and other similar uses will locate within the light industrial areas. Light industrial development is proposed in several areas of the township where there are existing residential developments. One such existing residential area is located south of Griswold, to Dove Road, and West of 24 Street. The second area is between Dove, and Ravenswood Roads, and West of 32nd St. However, it is essential that a township regulatory ordinance have stringent performance standards to minimize conflicts between industrial and residential uses.

Heavy Industrial

Heavy industrial has nothing to do with the size of the industrial plant. Heavy industrial development represents those industries associated with greater degrees of noise, vibration, smoke, outdoor storage, or other nuisances. This type of industrial use is not compatible with residential development and should be isolated as much as possible. Many industrial uses have the need of rail service. As a result, the township's land use plan proposes nearly 2,000 acres of industrial development be located adjacent to rail lines. Due to these types of uses often being a nuisance in nature, tools should be put into place, such as performance standards and separate ordinances, to minimize potential damage.

PUBLIC AND OPEN LAND USE

Several areas within the land use plan are designated as open space. These include areas subject to flooding, such as the bottom lands of the Black River, and lands presently used for open space recreation, such as golf courses. This land use category accounts for approximately 649 acres, or 8.3% of the land area of the township. Through proper design, much of this open space could serve as a future recreation use. This would help the township meet the growing recreation needs of their population. Township officials should cooperate with Fort Gratiot Township to encourage a study along the Black River, performed by the Army Corps of Engineers, to determine the extent and frequency of flooding. Once this is established, open uses such as golf courses, riding trails and marinas could be developed. Not only would such uses be compatible with the land, but they would strengthen the position of the Port Huron area as a summer resort destination.

ANALYSIS OF PLANNING IN ADJOINING COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Much of the input the Planning Commission and the Township Board provide for the future master planning of the township is also based on the projections provided by others taking an active part in the actual development of the township. These can include other elected and appointed officials, the business community and planners. However, since projections may not be more than educated guesses, it is imperative the master plan be flexible and based on a "vision" or foreseeable "image" developed with the input of as many individuals or groups as possible, and not based on a set of ridged guidelines or un-flexible rules. It is also based on the projection of what specific and general funds will be available to build the infrastructure and should include partners who will be able to contribute to joint ventures. These partners will generally include other municipal jurisdictions who are able to contribute financially, such as St. Clair County, the State of Michigan and adjoining communities.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The master plans of the communities surrounding Port Huron Township, as well as St. Clair County, were examined for their potential to affect land use in the township. Plans were examined from the City of Port Huron, Fort Gratiot Township, Marysville, Kimball Township, Clyde Township and St. Clair County.

CITY OF PORT HURON

The City of Port Huron is Port Huron Township's neighbor to the east, sharing common borders along the Black River in the northern portion of the township, 24th Street on the northeastern border and a smaller stretch of 32nd Street at the southeastern end of the township. The city's master plan was updated in 2017. In the northern half of the city, the land adjacent to the Black River is predominately single family residential. Urban residential uses are also planned for the neighborhood along Taylor and Rural Streets, east of Water Street in the west central part of the city.

The city's Future Land Use Plan calls for the continuation of neighborhood residential uses in the northwest part of the city, adjacent to the Black River, as well as in the southern part of the city, along 32nd Street. Existing land use patterns along the city/township boundaries are generally complimentary uses creating a specific character for the immediate neighborhood, with the exception of the southern portions of 32nd Street.

Along the 24th Street corridor, the city's side of the road is a mix of commercial and institutional uses, such as Port Huron High School and Memorial Park. Additionally, the plan designates the city's portion of Lapeer Road for commercial uses. For the 24th Street corridor, from the high school south to Bancroft, the city's plan designates the eastern side of 24th street for urban and neighborhood residential, located across the street from the township's strip commercial development. The city's urban residential land use designation is of a sufficient density to remain compatible with commercial uses on the township side of the road. Further south, along 24th Street, the Port Huron Industrial Park is located on the city side, across from commercial and industrial uses in the township.

FORT GRATIOT TOWNSHIP

Fort Gratiot is bordered by Port Huron Township to the south. Fort Gratiot Township's Master Plan was adopted in February 2020. The existing land uses along the Port Huron Township border are a mixture of single-family residential, recreation and vacant land uses. The Fort Gratiot Township Future Land Use Plan designates the majority of land along the Black River as a Development Focus Area (DFA #3). The intent of this development focus area is for the township to have some future flexibility when the golf course properties seek to transition to other uses. Given its proximity to the Black River, much of the land in this development focus area will be limited by the floodplain. Allowing this focus area to be eligible for a planned unit development at some point in the future will open up opportunities for residential cluster development that preserves sensitive environmental areas and provides opportunities for open space to be mixed into the overall design. If floodplain issues prove too difficult for residential uses, the area will be well suited for additional recreational uses with direct access to the Black River. The influence of development activities in Port Huron Township to the south is limited by the Black River, which forms the common boundary between these two neighboring communities. The Port Huron Township Master Plan indicates that the area along the river's banks is planned for low density residential and recreational uses. Much of the land in this general area is designated for residential development of varying densities.



CITY OF MARYSVILLE

Marysville is Port Huron Township's neighbor to the south. The existing land use pattern along the Port Huron Township border is predominantly residential with some public and utility land uses to the south. The Marysville Master Plan of Future Land Use was amended in 2014. The Future Land Use Plan calls for the majority of land along the Port Huron Township border to be used as residential with a pocket of community facilities, mobile home and light industrial in the south. Planning objectives for the city include maintaining the quality of life for current and future Marysville residents by protecting the property value of their homes, assuring their safety and providing an environment aimed at increasing their general well being and encouraging homeownership.

CLYDE TOWNSHIP

Along the southeast corner of Clyde Township, the current land use is single family residential. This land use mix is consistent with the existing land use pattern in Port Huron Township.

The overarching goal of the 2004 Clyde Township Master Plan is to maintain and promote Clyde's rural and agricultural character. However, the plan also recommends the consideration of additional commercial, retail and service facilities that will meet the convenience needs of the community. It also advocates for the support of light industrial and research development in a concentrated location with no anticipated negative impact on the community.

The Clyde Township Future Land Use Plan calls for a "Low Density Residential" area designated at the southeast corner of the township. The areas called for low density residential are intended to accommodate primarily residential development and associated uses. The Clyde Township Master Plan poses no current incompatibilities along Clyde's border with Port Huron Township.

KIMBALL TOWNSHIP

Kimball Township is Port Huron Township's neighbor to the west, sharing a border along Range Road. Kimball Township is experiencing a rural-to-suburban transition along the area that abuts the urbanized area of Port Huron Township. Much of the agricultural and open space lands that lie along Range Road, the eastern boundary of Kimball Township, are quickly being converted to low-and medium-density, single-family residential units, as well as a variety of service-oriented commercial uses. Kimball Township's Future Land Use Plan calls for Range Road to transition to regional commercial uses, light industrial uses, and some office and local commercial uses.

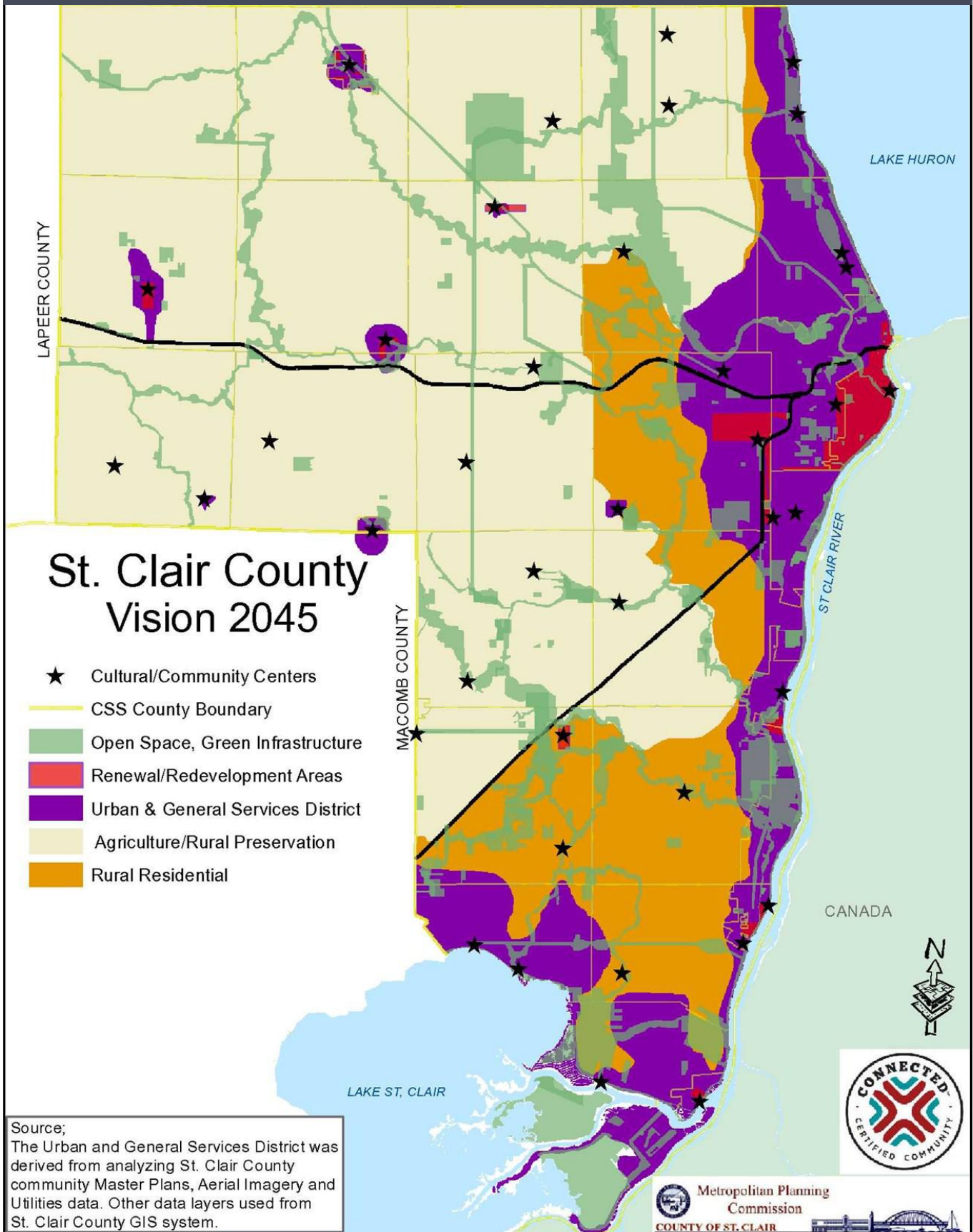
ST. CLAIR COUNTY MASTER PLAN

The St. Clair County Master Plan was adopted in November 2016 and the county is currently updating the plan with the intent to have it adopted at the end of 2022. The present plan contains a number of goals and strategies addressing five guiding values, including Quality of Life, Great Places, Prosperity, Sustainability, and Innovation. Some of the primary goals and strategies of the St. Clair County Master Plan include efficient mobility options, focused place making, economic diversity, community revitalization, smart growth, community resiliency, efficient public services, collaborative government, and quality affordable housing.

In conducting an alternatives analysis for the St. Clair County Master Plan, county planners developed a "Vision Based Policy" for the county, which divides the county into three main land use districts: the Urban and General Services District, the Rural Residential District, and the Rural and Agricultural Preservation District. The Urban

and General Services District generally follows the eastern and southern shore and in inland communities of Adair, Avoca, Capac, Goodells, Memphis, Rattle Run, and Yale. These are areas of existing higher residential, commercial, and industrial use densities. The Urban and General Services District is made up of areas with existing sewer and water services, or services planned within the next 10-20 years. Port Huron Township is generally located within the Urban and General Services District on the Vision Based Policy Map. The County Master Plan advocates for directing growth to the Urban and General Services District to areas with existing infrastructure.

MAP 4-3: ST. CLAIR COUNTY VISION BASED POLICY MAP



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CHAPTER 5:

ZONING PLAN



In This Chapter:

- The Definition of a Zoning Plan
- The Relationship Between the Master Plan and Zoning
- An overview of Zoning Districts and Dimensional Standards
- The Relationship Between Future Land Use and Zoning
- Recommended Changes to the Port Huron Township Zoning Ordinance

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The land use master plan, especially the future land use descriptions and map, is sometimes confused with the zoning district descriptions and map. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008), as amended, recognizes this disconnect and stresses preparation of a zoning plan to clarify differences. The role of the Zoning Plan chapter in the master plan, future land use plan and zoning ordinance are described as follows. Direct comparison of the zoning districts with the master plan's future land use categories are provided after. This chapter fulfills the MPEA requirement.

ZONING PLAN DEFINED

A "zoning plan" is another term for a "zone plan" which is used in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006) and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008). Section 33(2)(d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that a master plan include:

"...a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan shall include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map."

The zoning plan must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the township and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted, as described in Section 201(1) of the MZEA.

A zoning plan describes:

- The purpose, general location, and main uses allowed for each existing and proposed zoning district;
- The difference between the land use categories of the Future Land Use Map and those found on the zoning map;
- The recommended standards for the schedule of regulations concerning height, bulk, setback, yard, lot size and related features;
- The existing zoning map, along with proposed changes, and clearly details the circumstances under which those changes should be made; and
- Standards or criteria to be used to consider rezoning consistent with the master plan.



The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act contains the following provisions related to the regulation of land development and the establishment of zoning districts:

- **Section 201(1):** “A local unit of government may provide by zoning ordinance for the regulation of land development and the establishment of 1 or more districts within its zoning jurisdiction which regulate the use of land and structures.”
- **Section 201(4):** “A local unit of government may adopt land development regulations under the zoning ordinance designating or limiting the location, height, bulk, number of stories, uses, and size of dwellings, buildings, and structures that may be erected or altered, including tents and recreational vehicles.”
- **Section 202(1):** “The legislative body of a local government may provide by ordinance for the manner in which the regulations and boundaries of districts or zones shall be determined and enforced or amended, supplemented, or changed.”

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act also contains the following provisions relative to zoning regulations being based on a master plan and the adoption of a zoning plan:

- **Section 203(1):** “The zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare...”
- **Section 305(a):** “The planning commission shall adopt and file with the legislative body “a zoning plan for the areas subject to zoning of the local unit of government.”

RELATIONSHIP TO THE PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

This master plan sets forth the vision, goals, and planning objectives for growth and development in Port Huron Township for approximately the next twenty to thirty years. It includes recommendations for managing growth and change in land uses and services over this planning period, and will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once every five years. This chapter presenting the zoning plan, along with the rest of the relevant parts of the master plan, is intended to guide the administration of and direct future changes to the Township zoning ordinance. Existing permitted uses of land, including density, setbacks and other related standards are established in the zoning ordinance.

ZONING DISTRICTS AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

Following are the general purposes and characteristics of existing zoning within Port Huron Township. The specific purposes and permitted uses within each zoning district are listed in the district provisions of the Township zoning Ordinance. The section references indicate where detailed ordinance language for each district is located within the actual zoning ordinance. Article III of the township zoning ordinance establishes the zoning districts for Port Huron Township. Sections 40-196 through 40-550 provide the use regulations for each zoning district within the township.

RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

R-1 ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

SECTION 40-196

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the R-1 District is to provide areas of the township for the construction and continued use of single-family dwellings within stable neighborhoods with minimal incursion from nonresidential land uses. This district allows for residential lots that are larger than other residential districts.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The regulations in this zoning classification are intended to promote development that preserves the physical characteristics of the land and natural environment to the maximum extent possible. It is further the intent of this district to prohibit multiple family, office, business, commercial, or industrial uses of the land, and to prohibit any other land use which would substantially interfere with single family development or quality of life in this district.

Future Land Use Designation: Low Density Residential

R-2 ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT *SECTION 40-222*

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the R-2 One Family Residential District is to provide areas of the township for the construction and continued use of single family dwellings within stable neighborhoods that consist of density and lot sizes that provide a defined neighborhood environment within the township.

The regulations in this zoning classification are intended to promote development that preserves the physical characteristics of the land and natural environment to the maximum extent possible. It is further the intent of this district to prohibit multiple family, office, business, commercial, or industrial uses of the land, and to prohibit any other land use which would substantially interfere with single family development or quality of life in this district.

Future Land Use Designation: Low Density Residential, High Density Residential

R-3 ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT *SECTION 40-244*

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the R-3 One Family Residential District is to provide areas of the township for the use and improvement of one- and two-family dwellings. This district is designed to allow for moderate suburban densities that can accommodate a variety of housing types. This district is limited to land areas where existing public sewer and water services allow for the higher density of development.

It is further the intent of this district to prohibit multiple family, office, business, commercial, or industrial use of the land, and to prohibit any other use which would substantially interfere with development or quality of life in this district.

Future Land Use Designation: High Density Residential

RM-1 MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT *SECTION 40-273*

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the RM-1 Multiple-Family Residential District is to address the varied housing needs of the community by providing locations for development of multiple-family housing at a higher density than is permitted in the single family districts. In addressing these housing needs, multiple family housing in the RM-1 District should be designed in consideration of the following objectives:

- RM-1 developments are generally considered suitable transitional uses between single family detached housing and nonresidential development.
- Multiple family housing shall be provided with necessary services and utilities, including usable outdoor recreation space and a well-designed internal road network.
- Multiple family housing shall be designed to be compatible with surrounding or nearby single family housing. Accordingly, one and two-story housing is considered appropriate in the RM-1 District.



- Multiple family developments in the RM-1 District shall have direct access to a collector road or major thoroughfare.

Future Land Use Designation: High Density Residential

RM-2 MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

SECTION 40-301

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the RM-2 Multiple Family Residential District is to address the varied housing needs of the community by providing locations for development of multiple-family housing at a higher density than is permitted in the single family districts. In addressing these housing needs, multiple family housing in the RM-1 District should be designed in consideration of the following objectives:

- RM-2 developments are generally considered suitable transitional uses between single family detached housing and nonresidential development. RM-2 zoning allows for greater density than the RM-1 district.
- Multiple family housing shall be provided with necessary services and utilities, including usable outdoor recreation space and a well-designed internal road network.
- Multiple family housing shall be designed to be compatible with surrounding or nearby single family housing. Accordingly, one and two-story housing is considered appropriate in the RM-2 District.
- Multiple family developments in the RM-2 District shall have direct access to a collector road or major thoroughfare.

Future Land Use Designation: High Density Residential

RMH RESIDENTIAL MANUFACTURED HOUSING DISTRICT

SECTION 40-327

- **Statement of Purpose:** The Residential Manufactured Housing District (RMH) is intended to allow an alternate form of housing that provides the flexibility of moving living units from place to place. The district is further designed to provide sites for manufactured housing in limited areas to enhance stability, character and property values of the community; increase the possibility of good site planning through the creation of a pleasant residential environment by better facilities for health, sanitation and recreation; and provide the proper community monitoring of all these matters.

Future Land Use Designation: High Density Residential

NONRESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

O-1 OFFICE DISTRICT

SECTION 40-370

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the O-1 Office District is to accommodate various types of administrative and professional office uses between more intensive land uses and less intensive residential uses.

This district prohibits those types of retail and other uses that typically generate large volumes of traffic, traffic congestion, parking problems, require outside storage, or have other impacts that could negatively affect the use or enjoyment of adjoining properties. Accordingly, the low rise office buildings in landscaped settings with sufficient off-street parking are considered the most appropriate for this district.

Future Land Use Designation: Business and Commercial, Mixed Use - Office, Corridor Mixed Use

B-1 LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

SECTION 40-405

Statement of Purpose: The B-1 Local Business District is designed for the convenience of persons residing in adjacent residential areas, and is intended to permit only such uses as are necessary to satisfy the limited shopping and service needs of the residents in the immediate area. Commercial development in this district offers a less intensive range of goods and services than uses permitted in the B-2 and B-3 Districts. Because of the limited variety of business types permitted in the B-2 District, special attention must be focused on site layout, building design, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and coordination of site features between adjoining sites. Accordingly, B-1 Local Business District developments should be:

- Compatible in design and scale to adjacent development and adjacent residential districts;
- Designed with a pedestrian orientation;
- Buffered from or located away from residential areas; and
- Located with direct access to a major thoroughfare or indirect access to a major thoroughfare through a minor road or service drive.

Future Land Use Designation: Business and Commercial, Corridor Mixed Use

B-2 COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT

SECTION 40-430

Statement of Purpose: The B-1 Local Business District is designed for the convenience of persons residing in adjacent residential areas, and is intended to permit only such uses as are necessary to satisfy the limited shopping and service needs of the residents in the immediate area. Commercial development in this district offers a less intensive range of goods and services than uses permitted in the B-2 and B-3 Districts. Because of the limited variety of business types permitted in the B-2 District, special attention must be focused on site layout, building design, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and coordination of site features between adjoining sites. Accordingly, B-1 Local Business District developments should be:

- Compatible in design with adjacent commercial development;
- Designed as part of a planned shopping center or in coordination with development on adjoining nonresidential sites;
- Buffered and screened from or located away from residential areas; and
- Served by a major thoroughfare, service drive to a major thoroughfare or frontage road for a major thoroughfare.

Future Land Use Designation: Business and Commercial, Corridor Mixed Use

B-3 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

SECTION 40-465

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the B-3 General Business District is to provide for intensive commercial development. B-3 districts typically exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Permitted businesses offer a broad range of goods and services, including both comparison and convenience goods and services.
- The market for businesses in the B-3 District may include the general township population, residents in surrounding communities or region, and people in transit.
- Permitted businesses are frequently automobile-oriented, rather than pedestrian-oriented.
- Because of the negative impacts commonly generated by B-3 uses, these districts are generally not appropriate adjacent to residential uses unless extensive buffering is provided.

Because of the variety of business types permitted in the B-3 District, special attention must be focused on site layout, building design, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, spacing of uses, and coordination of site features between adjoining sites.

Future Land Use Designation: Business and Commercial

I-L LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

SECTION 40-490

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the I-L Light Industrial District is to provide locations for planned industrial development, including development within planned industrial park subdivisions and on independent parcels. It is intended that permitted activities or operations produce no external impacts that are detrimental in any way to other uses in the district or to properties in adjoining districts. Permitted uses should be compatible with nearby residential or commercial uses.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Accordingly, permitted manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, and light industrial uses permitted in this district should be fully contained within well-designed buildings on amply-landscaped sites, with adequate off-street parking and loading areas.

Future Land Use Designation: Industrial, Corridor Mixed Use

I-H HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT *SECTION 40-525*

Statement of Purpose: The Heavy Industrial District (I-H) is designed primarily for manufacturing, assembling, and fabrication activities including large-scale or specialized industrial operations, whose external physical effects will be felt to some degree by surrounding districts. The I-H District is so structured as to permit the manufacturing, processing, and compounding of semi-finished or finished products from raw materials as well as from previously prepared materials.

Future Land Use Designation: Industrial

PSP PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC PROPERTY DISTRICT *SECTION 40-550*

Statement of Purpose: The intent of the PSP Public/Semi-Public District is to accommodate public areas available to the residents and businesses of the township. This district provides areas for off-street parking as an incidental use to an abutting commercial, office, or industrial use and preserves areas of dedicated open space.

Future Land Use Designation: All FLU designations

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ZONING AND THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The future land use map is not the same as the zoning map, either in the legal sense or in its effect. A land use map is a graphic representation of how land is physically being used. Land use maps are highly visible within most master plans, usually highlighting both existing land use and plans for future land use. The future land use map is very general in nature and is an official description of where and to what level future zoning should be permitted.

A zoning map is a graphic depiction of the boundaries for which zoning standards and regulations have been adopted by a governmental entity, in this case Port Huron Township.

The future land use map, along with its associated descriptions for future land use classifications make up the Future Land Use Plan and can be found in Chapter 4. The future land use map should serve as a guide for making decisions on the rezoning of land. However, the planning commission and township board should consider the map to be one of many tools available to help them in making land use recommendations and decisions. The information contained on the map should be complemented by impact studies and other site-specific information as considered necessary by Township officials.

RECOMMENDED ZONING TEXT ACTIONS

- Evaluate the intent of each zoning district in relation to the vision of the comparable land use area.
- Review the Planned Development District provisions and consider updating it to align with planning goals.

- Review off-street parking regulations for non-residential zoning districts.
- Review minimum parking requirements throughout the township and determine appropriate policy changes to enhance development and mobility.
- Prepare complete streets and access management standards.
- Create a commercial/industrial mixed use zoning district for the Range Road and Dove Road corridors with appropriate provisions to allow for commercial and light industrial uses.
- Identify zoning applications that can improve pedestrian safety along township roads, including requiring sidewalks for future developments.
- Review and update signage and landscape regulations to ensure more consistency in character and aesthetics, particularly along key corridors and gateways into the township.

RECOMMENDED ZONING MAP ACTIONS

- Compare the Future Land Use and zoning maps to determine the properties that should be immediately rezoned.
- Maintain a current official zoning map.
- For those areas not requiring immediate amending, revise the zoning map to reflect the corresponding future land use designation when development proposals meeting the master plan's goals are met.
- Once provisions for a commercial/industrial mixed use zoning district are developed, rezone properties along the Range Road and Dove Road corridors accordingly.

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CHAPTER 6:

PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING GOALS



In This Chapter:

- Stakeholder Input Summary
- Community Vision Statement
- Planning Goals and Strategic Actions

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the planning process, the community must identify, understand, and work toward a long-term vision that is agreed upon by the township as a whole. The vision statement is intended to inspire and encourage community members, township organizations and stakeholders, private developers, and public officials to invest in Port Huron Township and to make it a great place to live for current residents and future generations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public input was gathered virtually through an online public survey that served to identify what stakeholders would like the community to become - how it may look, how it may function, how it may improve. Additionally, a local leaders survey provided additional direction and insight into the long-term vision and planning goals contained in this plan.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT SUMMARY

At the start of this planning process, members of the Township Board of Trustees, parks commission, planning commission, and key Township staff were given a survey to establish a framework on key planning issues related to growth and development and parks and recreation in Port Huron Township. Additionally, from February 2021 through April 2022, a community input survey was available online for residents and other stakeholders to provide input on specific questions, as well as ideas and suggestions on open-ended questions. Many of the survey questions were the same questions asked of local leadership.

Together, the survey tools garnered 52 responses from community stakeholders and provided important feedback on planning issues in Port Huron Township. A summary of stakeholder input can be found on the following pages.



What is the Most Unique Thing About Port Huron Township?

- The number and variety of parks and recreation amenities and opportunities.
- Access to parks and recreation in a quiet setting, but close to shopping and eateries.
- The train station.
- The township is close to everything.
- Location. Can easily access the water, close to shopping and entertainment.
- Has water and sewer, but is a “bedroom community.” Larger lots than a city.
- Proximity to I-94 and I-69.
- Ideally located in conjunction with access to business and industry and an international border.
- All the conveniences of the city, but with a more country feel.
- Small town atmosphere.

What are the top assets in Port Huron Township?

- Good infrastructure.
- Lower taxes.
- Great parks.
- Parks and recreation accessibility.
- Black River access - kayaking, boating, and fishing.
- Access to good transportation connections, including road, rail, and air.
- Safe area for raising a family.
- Good relations with neighboring communities.
- Proximity to major highways and Canada.
- Great location.
- Low crime.
- Police and fire services.
- The expanding network of hiking/biking/trails system.
- Commercial area on 24th Street.
- Affordable housing.
- Great services for low cost.

What are the most important issues or concerns facing the Township?

- Not enough bike paths and walking trails.
- A bike lane on West Water Street and Strawberry Lane. More bike safety needed.
- Bike/Pedestrian safety on West Water Street.
- Need more activities for younger people and families.
- Need for increasing mixed uses.
- Keeping retail businesses open and bringing in more businesses and job opportunities.

What are the most important issues or concerns facing the Township? (continued)

- Need more activities for younger people and families.
- Need for increasing mixed uses.
- Keeping retail businesses open and bringing in more businesses and job opportunities.
- Maintaining current infrastructure.
- Rising water and sewer costs.
- Increase in drug use in the area.
- Lack of exciting opportunities to attract young professionals.
- Lack of communication to residents about local issues.
- Need public transportation that is reliable and timely.
- Safety/sidewalks needed on West Water. The roads have become very busy.
- Marketing our area.
- Too many rental properties.
- Blight.
- No safe places to run/bike/walk dogs.

Where would you like to see development in Port Huron Township?

- Redevelopment along 32nd Street (more retail).
- Along Griswold, from 32nd Street to Range Road.
- Redevelop 24th Street from Division Street south to Dove Road with a mix of retail and light industrial.
- West side of the township has a lot of area that could potentially grow.
- Upgrade Lapeer Road corridor in a more uniform manner.
- More R-1 development in southern part of township.
- Development of commercial area west of 24th Street.
- Development of the industrial area south of the railroad track and west of 24th Street.
- More industrial south of the railroad.
- South end needs to be cleaned up.
- Range Road.
- The Griswold and Michigan Road area seems like it would attract new development.
- Would like to see something near Sam's Club that would attract more people to the area.
- Modernize businesses along Lapeer Road.
- South side of the township needs industry.
- The old Kmart building and the old Love's Furniture building.
- We badly need a market or department store out here.

The things I like best about parks and recreation in Port Huron Township:

- Well maintained and well run parks.
- Great locations and accessibility.
- Kayak launches.
- Access to water and water activities.
- Fishing access.
- Diversity of options for recreation.
- There is a good variety of parks in the township.
- Open areas for ball fields and other sports.
- Good, clean equipment and nice playgrounds.
- Access to local rivers and ponds.
- Walking path at Bakers Field.
- Water activities.
- Picnic options.

The biggest improvements I would like to see in parks and recreation in Port Huron Township:

- Additional boat ramps. Maybe one additional ramp at Bakers Field and the Lions Park.
- Connecting the City of Port Huron trails to the Wadhams to Avoca Trail.
- Need a trail from Strawberry Lane to Wadhams to Avoca Trail.
- Make something unique to visit.
- More bike paths and more connections to the parks.
- More walking paths.
- More organized activities.
- More locations.
- Paved roads in the parks.
- Lights at the ball diamonds.
- More historical attractions, railroad, etc.
- Add some nature trails.
- Need more equipment promoting physical activity.
- Outside workout equipment at Bakers Field.
- A splash pad.
- Park access by bicycle/foot traffic.
- Add some things for teens and young adults.
- More things for kids to do.
- Follow St. Clair's lead with fitness stations in parks.
- Improve Bakers Field - more activities for all ages.
- More boat/canoe access.
- A dog park would be fantastic.
- Update the pavilions at the 40th Street Pond.
- More handicapped accessibility.
- Connect Port Huron Township to Fort Gratiot with a pedestrian bridge across the Black River at Strawberry Lane.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Describe your vision for the future of the Township. Where would you like to see the Township in 15-20 years?

- More retail in 32nd Street area.
- More trails, paths for walkability.
- I would like the township to be more walkable to connect the community better.
- I would love to see connecting bike/walking trails. If not dedicated trails, at least build out road shoulders.
- Still a quiet and safe place to live.
- I would like it to be relatively the same.
- Access for all abilities and environmentally friendly.
- Still small and a nice place to live.
- Expanded trails system.
- A township recreation center.
- Revitalized commercial/industrial districts.
- More places to work = more tax base and more money in the area to support more things to do.
- Modern storefronts, more restaurants, and more tourism.
- Safe travel routes along West Water and Michigan Road to connect neighborhoods and shopping destinations.
- Sidewalks to make the township more walkable.
- Complete development of the industrial areas in the township. There is untouched potential.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

*Port Huron Township is a community that provides **an exceptional quality of life** for its residents; an active community with an interconnected system of beautiful parks, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and unparalleled access to both urbanized commerce and the more tranquil settings of nature.*

PLANNING GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement is an attempt to capture in words, what Port Huron Township will be like in 2045 if the goals of this master plan are achieved and various strategies or recommendations are implemented. When reading this vision, it is necessary to imagine that you are living in the future and describing what the community is like at that point in time, in 2045. This approach is intended to present a better sense of the desired future.

GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

In order for the long-term community vision to become a reality, Port Huron Township must utilize the guidance of this master plan and continually work to successfully achieve the Township's planning goals. Relying on input from township residents and local officials during the community visioning process, combined with a thorough analysis of demographic, economic and land use trends, a distinct set of planning goals and strategic actions was developed.

These goals should guide decision making relative to land use, transportation, growth management, and economic development. Township officials should be mindful of the community's long-term vision and should rely on these planning goals and objectives when examining development proposals, administering or amending the zoning ordinance, and considering public input. Each of those key terms is defined below to ensure clarity and understanding.

- **Goal:** Goals are broad-based statements of intent and establish the direction for the Port Huron Township Master Plan. Goals could generally be thought of as the desired "results" of successful implementation of this master plan.
- **Strategic Actions:** Strategic Actions are the stated "means" of achieving each goal, or the actionable items to be carried out in the process of successfully achieving goals.

GOAL 1: The Township considers placemaking and livability in all development decisions to ensure a high quality of life.

Strategic Actions:

- Maintain and promote Port Huron Township as a pleasant place to live, work and visit through a proper and thoughtful arrangement of land uses within the township.
- Identify the township's existing assets and promote those assets as unique quality of life drivers that differentiate Port Huron Township from other communities in the region.
- Continue to define and implement streetscape standards that transform commercial corridors into more walkable, vibrant, and safe places to frequent.
- Ensure that commercial corridors and community gathering areas are clean, safe, and welcoming.
- Ensure the street level of buildings relates to the pedestrian as a primary focus.
- Emphasize public art and integrate it with public buildings, community parks, and public works.
- Highlight the Black River as a unique natural asset that enhances recreation, tourism, and quality of life and provide amenities for accessing the river.
- Where appropriate, identify and pursue new opportunities for public transit, bicycling and other modes of transportation alternatives to automobiles.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

- Require sidewalks to be constructed in any new developments if none already exist.
- Create and encourage developments that promote community and make the township a more vibrant and interesting place to live, work and recreate.

GOAL 2: Port Huron Township is characterized as having sound, decent, and adequate housing for a broad cross section of society.

Strategic Actions:

- Allow for a variety of residential densities.
- Protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of incompatible land uses.
- Provide sufficient flexibility in development regulations to permit a variety of housing types serving a broad range of income levels and age groups.



PLACEMAKING

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value.

More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

— Project for Public Spaces

- Encourage the continued use of housing rehabilitation programs offered by St. Clair County, nonprofit agencies or other providers.
- Work with partners to provide public services and transportation for all types of housing.
- Encourage senior housing options to be located near service centers and transportation corridors.
- Ensure senior and special needs housing are dispersed throughout the township and not concentrated in one area.

GOAL 3: The township has stable neighborhoods that are well-maintained and have a character that is attractive to both existing and potential residents.

Strategic Actions:

- Encourage residential development in appropriate locations so as to provide an opportunity for those employed in the township and surrounding areas to become residents.
- Maintain the separation of incompatible land uses.
- Require buildings and open spaces that are aesthetically pleasing.
- Diligently administer and enforce the township zoning ordinance.
- Continue to administer a strong code enforcement program.
- Identify and participate in targeted neighborhood reinvestment and stabilization programs that improve the quality of the housing stock and overall neighborhood character.
- Ensure that the density of housing development is related to the carrying capacity of the land, roads and utility infrastructure.
- Require future housing to be of high quality design to give lasting value to the community.
- Identify opportunities for the Township to support and promote sustainable development practices in residential development, public facilities and operations, and transportation improvements.

GOAL 4: Township leadership will pursue economic development strategies that provide sustained and stable economic growth.

Strategic Actions:

- Implement policies that lead to the sustained economic health of Port Huron Township's assets and to the natural revitalization of vacant, low density, obsolescent and deteriorated property. When possible use existing amenities as the focus for the development.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

- Embrace the “Green Economy” and its focus on alternative energy.
- Promote and support entrepreneurship in the township. Create regulations and implement policies that are entrepreneur-friendly and work to connect entrepreneurs looking to start or expand a business to the organizations or resources that are required to be successful.
- Recognize the important role that placemaking strategies play in attracting talent and economic development.
- Ensure that Port Huron Township has a wide variety of amenities including recreation, shopping, cultural resources, entertainment options, and “third places,” all of which will help in attracting and retaining talented workers.
- Highlight the importance of post-secondary education and skills-development to all residents to help the community adapt to and compete in a globalized, knowledge-based economy.
- Communicate and collaborate with other local units of government across the region and leverage new and existing public-private partnerships to promote and implement regional strategic growth initiatives.
- Collaborate with and coordinate economic development activities with the Economic Development Alliance (EDA) of St. Clair County, county government, the township Downtown Development Authority, and other entities to create and capitalize on economic opportunities that lead to job retention and job creation.
- Encourage attraction of new businesses to Port Huron Township to provide the proper variety and mix that will attract shoppers.

Goal 5: The township has a diverse mix of thriving commercial land uses in appropriate locations to serve both residents and customers from outside the township.

Strategic Actions:

- Allocate land for commercial purposes based on spatial relationships and market forecasts.
- Provide for large-scale sales, service and other commercial uses near comparison-shopping centers and in planned linear commercial areas.
- Implement land use regulations that accommodate commercial growth along key transportation corridors, such as Lapeer Road, 24th Street, 32nd Street, Michigan Road, and Range Road.
- Allow for mixed use commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations along Range Road and Dove Road through the implementation of specific mixed use zoning language.
- Provide opportunities for larger-scale and regional commercial draws that can take advantage of the township’s transportation amenities, such as I-69/I-94 and the Lapeer Connector.
- Provide for less intense neighborhood convenience facilities and services.
- Promote enforcement of building codes and encourage commercial buildings, signs, parking areas, and landscaping to be renovated and/or repaired on a regular basis.
- Encourage use and/or redevelopment of existing, underutilized, vacant and dilapidated buildings whenever possible.
- Maintain and improve the public infrastructure on commercial corridors such as sidewalks, lighting, and other amenities.
- Encourage long-term growth of the commercial tax base in the township.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

“In a livable community, people of all ages can go for a walk, ride a bike, get around without a car, spend time outdoors, work or volunteer, participate in activities, enjoy public places, socialize, buy healthy food, access needed services, live safely, and make their community or neighborhood a lifelong home.”

— AARP

Goal 6: Transportation and mobility for all users are considered in planning and development decisions

Strategic Actions:

- Plan for a network of roads by type and function that will provide a complete road system including major, collector and local roads.
- Obtain necessary right-of-way dedications and reservations.
- Cooperate with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the St. Clair County Road Commission (SCCRC) to ensure that a proper relationship exists between planned road improvements and the Township’s desired future land use pattern.
- Increase pedestrian safety by providing opportunities for pedestrian circulation along existing and planned road systems through a coordinated program of sidewalk construction and maintenance.
- Provide a transportation system that recognizes the need for both auto and truck traffic and eliminates as many points of conflict between the two as possible.
- Improve the road system to better serve residences and businesses through a regular program of scheduled pavement maintenance, paving, repaving, curb and gutter construction, etc.
- Recognize the relationship between land use patterns and the availability and adequacy of the transportation system.
- Provide major traffic generators with proper and adequate feeder service, as well as ingress/egress.
- Require traffic impact studies for large-scale, high-intensity developments that will affect the surrounding community.
- Work with the SCCRC, MDOT, and other stakeholders to ensure the proper placement of signs and traffic signals.
- Collaborate with neighboring municipalities, the SCCRC, and other stakeholders on the development of corridor plans for key corridors as needed.

Goal 7: The township is considered to be bicycle and pedestrian friendly and residents have a variety of mobility options available to them

Strategic Actions:

- Provide sidewalks and pedestrian ways where needed.
- Investigate options for safety improvements along West Water Street and Dove Road and implement measures to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety along those corridors.

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- Work in concert with the community partners to expand the trail network in and around the township and assist in implementing the countywide trails plan.
- Work with the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), the St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS), the SCCRC, and other entities to support Complete Streets policies and integrate Complete Streets elements into future road improvement projects.
- Work with community partners and the SCCRC to develop nonmotorized amenities along the Lapeer Road corridor, Michigan Road, West Water Street, and Dove Road.
- Work with community partners to connect the Bridge to Bay Trail and the Wadhams to Avoca Trail along Griswold Rd.
- Incorporate bike lanes into township streets and roads that connect to the larger regional trail network.
- Work with the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission to ensure adequate public transit services are available to residents throughout the township.
- Provide opportunities for linear forms of outdoor recreation, such as hiking, jogging, bicycling, equestrian, and walking trails.
- Encourage safe pedestrian access to the primary community centers in Port Huron Township, including township facilities, school buildings, and community parks.

Goal 8: The township has a diverse mix of industrial development that provides local and regional employment opportunities

Strategic Actions:

- Work with partners to support a stable and diversified economy emphasizing an industrial mix minimally affected by economic fluctuations.
- Work with partners to support manufacturing and services capable of serving the needs of the residents and businesses in the area.
- Work with partners to market available cost-effective, adequately-sized industrial sites that are compatible with the surrounding area.
- Provide adequate roads, utilities and transportation facilities to service existing and planned industrial areas.
- Provide adequate buffering of industrial uses from adjacent residential uses and from less intensive land uses through the use of appropriate setback standards, landscaping, and by locating industrial uses adjacent to other intensive land uses.
- Require future industrial developments to provide adequate onsite off-street parking facilities.
- Ensure that future industrial development does not emit excessive amounts of noise, fumes, smoke, vibrations or other pollutants.
- Encourage the proper redevelopment/rehabilitation of abandoned industrial sites, so as to limit/mitigate the negative impacts on neighboring lands and assist in actively marketing these sites for re-use.

Goal 9: Port Huron Township offers high quality recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Strategic Actions:

- Provide parks and recreation opportunities and amenities for citizens of all ages and abilities.
- Ensure Port Huron Township has adequate financial resources for parks and recreation facilities and programs.



- Deliver outstanding recreation programming and quality public services to all stakeholders.
- Review and update the Township Master Plan/Recreation Plan every five years.
- Require adequate park and recreation space as an integral part of new residential developments.
- Utilize natural topographical features for recreational sites where possible.
- Provide spaces large enough for multiple use recreational activities.
- When opportunities arise, acquire and preserve land along the Black River to assure perpetual public access to the water.
- Support the continued development and utilization of an interconnected system of land and water trails in Port Huron Township and beyond.
- Provide neighborhood parks for those areas that are significantly developed in the township.
- Use recreation areas for conserving natural features of the township.
- Work with community partners to expand the township's system of nonmotorized trails.
- Develop nature trails in appropriate locations in the township.
- Continue to partner with the City of Port Huron Recreation Department to allow township residents to participate in city recreation programs at the same rate as city residents.
- Develop a dog park at an existing township park or identify a new location for potential development as a dog park.
- Continue to sponsor community programs such as the Easter Egg Hunt, the Michigamme Summer Recreation program, the Family Fall Festival, and the Holiday Decoration Contest.

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- Explore opportunities to partner with other local units of government, schools, or recreation stakeholders to provide recreation opportunities for citizens.
- Promote activities and events that provide social opportunities for members of the community to connect with one another.
- Consider adding new recreation amenities and programs for the growing senior citizen population.

Goal 10: Existing Township parks are well maintained and improvements are planned in a coordinated and proactive manner

Strategic Actions:

- All Parks: Continuously work to improve ADA-accessibility at Township-owned recreation facilities.
- Memorial Park:
 - ⇒ Add drainage between the pavilions and ball diamonds for cornhole games.
 - ⇒ Install cement cornhole games.
 - ⇒ Expand, pave, and mark parking area.
 - ⇒ Add lighting to parking area.
 - ⇒ Construct a walking path within the park.
- Hoover Park:
 - ⇒ Add new lighting.
 - ⇒ Add new playground equipment.
 - ⇒ Update the pavilions in the park.
 - ⇒ Add cooking grills.
- Wm. P. Thompson Pond:
 - ⇒ Install a new shed.
 - ⇒ Replace guardrails.
 - ⇒ Replace the boat dock.
 - ⇒ Move the kayak launch to the west end of the pond.
 - ⇒ Refurbish the dock.
 - ⇒ Pave the parking lot.
 - ⇒ Remove the bridge.
 - ⇒ Add sandy beach behind Blue Water Community Action and pavilions.
 - ⇒ Add playground equipment.
 - ⇒ Construct an accessible walking path around the pond with benches.
 - ⇒ Add parking off 32nd Street.
 - ⇒ Update the pavilions.
- Michigan Road Little League Park
 - ⇒ Pour concrete around the concession stand.
 - ⇒ Construct new restrooms.
 - ⇒ Add new storage.
 - ⇒ Install a new scoreboard and updated public address system.
 - ⇒ Improve the batting cages.
 - ⇒ Resurface the parking area and driveway.
 - ⇒ Add parking lot lighting.
 - ⇒ Improve electrical system in garage.
 - ⇒ Make drainage improvements across the property as needed.



Goal 11: The Township provides adequate and cost-efficient sewer, water, and storm drainage to all geographic areas of the community, consistent with the development of the area

Strategic Actions:

- Develop and maintain sewer, water, and storm drainage systems to accommodate the development of the township.
- Where appropriate, cooperate and partner with other agencies and governmental units to gain common benefits.
- Phase sewer and water installations to provide efficient growth and revenues to pay for the system.
- Extend future sewer and water service in an orderly manner, leaving no gaps or spaces in coverage.
- Implement the township's storm drainage plan to solve existing problems, in anticipation of future surface drainage needs.
- Install sewer and water facilities only where planning, zoning, and municipal boundary policies will not be compromised by their use.
- Encourage efficiencies in the design of new residential development that will minimize public service costs.

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Goal 12: The Township provides a range of public facilities and services consistent with the urban character of the community, which meets present and future needs, and supports the public health, safety, and welfare of residents.

Strategic Actions:

- Ensure police, fire and emergency services are consistent with public need and finance improvements in the most cost-efficient manner.
- Ensure solid waste, recyclable and hazardous materials are disposed of safely, effectively and efficiently.
- Investigate the means to enhance intercommunity cooperation and improve shared services.
- Work with other units of government to obtain grants and other project funding from state and federal government sources, as well as nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.
- Strategically plan for and acquire land that can be use used for public facilities and services.
- Develop and update a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on an annual basis.
- Plan public facilities and services to direct growth toward areas suitable for high-density development.
- Ensure that the township zoning ordinance is based upon this master plan. Update the Township Master Plan every five years.

Goal 13: The Township promotes sustainability in the delivery of public services in order to protect the environment, preserve natural resources, and reduce energy and water consumption.

Strategic Actions:

- Promote recycling and reuse programs in the township.
- Encourage responsible water conservation whenever possible.
- Adopt zoning regulations that will accommodate innovations in alternative energy, as long as they are appropriately sited.
- Promote sustainability and efficiency practices at township-owned facilities to the extent that it is feasible, cost-effective, and practical.
- Identify and eliminate sources of existing sewage contamination.
- Prevent contamination from new pollution sources in residential, commercial, and industrial developments.
- Establish leadership among Township officials and residents to get environmental messages to the general public.
- Encourage and educate citizens and businesses on the importance of waste reduction and reuse.
- Develop land in a manner consistent with local, county, and state water protection objectives.
- Support responsible recreational uses of Port Huron Township's natural resources.

CHAPTER 7:

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



In This Chapter:

- Master Plan Review and Amendments
- Master Plan Implementation Tools

INTRODUCTION

The overarching intent of this master plan is to protect and improve the quality of life in Port Huron Township. In order for the plan to be effective in guiding and managing change within the community, it will take continued commitment and support from the township board, the planning commission, administrative staff and citizens of the community. The vision, goals and strategies put forth in this plan will not implement themselves. Implementing the recommendations of the plan occurs through a number of methods including zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, funding programs and administrative procedures which are described in this chapter. The master plan itself has no legal authority to regulate development in order to implement the recommendations contained therein. Implementation stems from the decisions of the Township officials, including the planning commission, to provide necessary public improvements and to institute and administer regulations over the use of land.

Previous chapters provide background information and analysis on the key issues and trends in Port Huron Township at the time this plan was adopted in 2022. Goals and strategies throughout the plan provide a foundation to guide the resolution of issues and establish policies for decision-making in the future. Recommendations are listed throughout the plan; some are described in detail or shown on various maps, while others are more of a policy guide for the future. This format enables the plan to be flexible and applicable to new issues, opportunities, and alternatives that may arise. This implementation chapter should be used as a resource when the Township begins implementing the goals and strategies of this plan. Over time, the Township may discover new implementation approaches.

MASTER PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

The Township must commit to upholding the integrity of the goals and strategies of the document. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) requires that the plan be reviewed and revised or reaffirmed at least every five years. The plan should be used on a consistent basis and discussed annually to determine if any amendments need to be considered. In addition, new planning commission and township board members should be provided with a copy of the document before they take office to give them background on the Township and its adopted policies.

In accordance with the MPEA and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the Port Huron Township master plan and five-year parks and recreation plan will be reviewed every five years and, if necessary, will be updated to remain a viable document. There is constant change in the community's economic, demographic, and social character, which warrants revising the plan to reflect the latest trends relative to long-range goals. If circumstances necessitate a change to the plan prior the five-year review, then the plan will be amended as necessary.

This master plan is intended to be an adaptable document. Master plan amendments should not be made without thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration of long-range impacts of amendments to the plan. The township board and planning commission should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether it is consistent with the plan's goals and policies, and whether it will offer long-term benefits to the citizens of Port Huron Township.

Corrective measures and special initiatives are recommended to realize the Township's land use vision. All are important. Major efforts include:

- Modernizing and updating the zoning ordinance as needed;
- Preparing and annually updating a five-year capital improvement program;
- Conducting more detailed planning and design studies of special sub-areas;
- Strengthening planning, zoning and development knowledge of elected and appointed officials; and
- Exploring the use of partnerships to improve efficiency and service.

Actions fall into many timeframes. Some are ongoing or year-round such as zoning text and map amendments. Others are multi-year actions, such as nurturing leadership and providing knowledge for the public. Depending on the action, efforts may need to be enacted sequentially or simultaneously. An example of a sequential action may be the preparation of a sub-area plan prior to creating zoning regulations. A simultaneous action may be adopting changes to the Zoning Ordinance text and map.

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Bonding

Bonds are one of the primary sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for specific projects and are paid off by the general public through property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for the construction of projects that generate revenue. The bonds are then retired using income generated by the project.

Brownfield Redevelopment

Michigan has developed several incentives for redevelopment, including cost-effective cleanup options, causation-based liability, liability protection for new owners, and grants and loans available to local units of government. Innovative use of available federal, state, and local resources can be incorporated into redevelopment incentives to support expansion and to encourage new businesses to locate in Michigan.

In 2004, the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners established the St. Clair County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (SCCBRA) to assist in the revitalization of contaminated properties throughout the county. The SCCBRA is managed by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission. The SCCBRA can assist communities and



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private land owners in assessing the environmental conditions on sites suspected of being impacted by petroleum products or hazardous substances.

The SCCBRA supports projects throughout St. Clair County that require financial assistance with assessing potential environmental roadblocks or concerns. Michigan's Brownfield Redevelopment programs are some of the best in the nation, providing communities and developers of Brownfields with:

- Liability protection (for pre-existing environmental contamination)
- Opportunities for reimbursement of environmental expenditures
- Opportunities for low-cost loans
- Reimbursement of eligible redevelopment activities, including demolition and asbestos/lead abatement costs

Brownfield project funding is also made possible through the use of incremental taxes generated by redevelopment projects approved in a Brownfield Plan. For more information about St. Clair County's Brownfield Redevelopment program visit www.stclaircounty.org/Offices/metro/Brownfield.aspx.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Public Act 33 of 2008, also known as the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), requires all communities to prepare a CIP unless exempted by statute or the legislative body of the community. Specifically, Section 65 of MPEA states:

To further the desirable future development of the local unit of government under the master plan, a planning commission, after adoption of a master plan, shall annually prepare a capital improvements program of public structures and improvements, unless the planning commission is exempted from this requirement by charter or otherwise. If the planning commission is exempted, the legislative body either shall prepare and adopt a capital improvements program, separate from or as a part of the annual budget, or shall delegate the preparation of the capital improvements program to the chief elected official or a nonelected administrative official, subject to final approval by the legislative body. The capital improvements program shall show those public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, that in the commission's judgment will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the ensuing 6-year period. The capital improvements program shall be based upon the requirements of the local unit of government for all types of public structures and improvements. Consequently, each agency or department of the local unit of government with authority for public structures or improvements shall upon request furnish the planning commission with lists, plans, and estimates of time and cost of those public structures and improvements.

In its basic form, a CIP is a complete list of all proposed public improvements over the next six (6) years, including estimated costs and operation expenses. The CIP outlines the projects that will replace or improve existing facilities or that will be necessary to serve current and project land use development in the Township.

Proper management of communities today requires not only that a CIP be developed, but also that it be updated annually. Advanced planning for public works projects ensures more effective and cost-efficient capital expenditures, as well as the provision of public works in a timely manner. Since communities face ongoing expenses, the development of a CIP makes it possible to strike a balance between maintenance and operational expenses for the construction of public works.

Recommendations presented in the CIP can serve to guide the Township's investments in public facilities to provide necessary services to all land uses. Furthermore, with a CIP, the Township can monitor its balance of

borrowing power and municipal credit rating, which in turn affects the interest rates the Township must pay when it borrows for public works construction.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

CDBG funding through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) can be used for numerous community improvement projects in addition to housing rehabilitation. CDBG funds are required to be used primarily to improve housing opportunities and recreational and social opportunities for distressed portions of the community. CDBG funds can also be used for community and economic development. By using CDBG funds in distressed portions of the community, funds that would have been spent on completing those improvements are freed up to be used elsewhere. Therefore, while the residents of a distressed portion of the community benefit directly from the CDBG program, the township in general benefits by having funds that would have been spent available for other improvements. Often, the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission receives CDBG funding through the state for housing rehabilitation programs. Through those programs, eligible homeowners in Port Huron Township can benefit from receiving zero or low-interest loans to make needed repairs.

Complete Streets and Green Streets

Complete streets look at how all modes of transportation, including cars, bicycles, and pedestrians utilize the road network and provide a plan to create safe, efficient access for all users. The Township should work with community partners to develop a complete streets plan to be considered whenever transportation improvement projects are considered in the community.

Green streets incorporate green infrastructure elements into transportation projects in order to better manage stormwater runoff.

Coordination and Collaboration

Implementation will require cooperation between governmental units. Maximum impact will be achieved only if the Township is able to achieve cooperation from other units of government and agencies. Collaboration between local governments is a way to realize significant cost savings, while maintaining and expanding important services to residents and other stakeholders. Collaboration and coordination will also strengthen grant



applications for funding assistance from many state and federal agencies that often look to fund projects that have a more regional focus. On top of that, intergovernmental cooperation can provide opportunities for economies of scale for procurement and service delivery.

Economic Development

In general, building partnerships and distributing information through the internet are important activities to follow-through on. A strategy should be developed in conjunction with the Port Huron Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and partner stakeholders to coordinate rather than duplicate efforts. The Township should work closely with the Economic Development Alliance (EDA) of St. Clair County and other community partners to develop and implement an economic development strategy focused on business retention and attraction, among other efforts.

Green Building/Sustainable Design

Sustainable design identifies ecological, infrastructural, and cultural characteristics of a site and/or building with related open spaces which results in the integration of the environment. The intent is to promote sensitive infill development that relates well to both natural systems and existing infrastructure with an overall design and construction that reduces energy use.

The United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) provides the benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings and site design. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

A rating system has been developed and is continually updated through an open consensus based process which is the standard for environmentally healthy neighborhoods around the nation. New developments and revitalization of existing ones can be LEED-certified based on qualifying guidelines.

Township officials should incorporate sustainability and green building elements into future developments in the community. At a minimum, the Township should ensure that any new public facilities are designed and built with sustainability in mind, potentially seeking LEED-certification. Over the years, numerous studies have shown that LEED-certified buildings have lower operating costs, promote healthier neighborhoods, and conserve energy and natural resources, which lead to greater sustainability and benefits for the community.

Leadership

Leadership actions encourage elected and appointed officials to play a proactive role in redevelopment. Leadership in building regional partnerships is important in maintaining services without impacting the budget. Joint meetings between the township board, planning commission, zoning board of appeals, and development authorities are recommended to assure all boards and commissions follow a similar vision.

Other recommended tasks include:

- Maintaining strict code enforcement practice;
- Ensuring Township officials and staff regularly communicate with residents and businesses through newsletters, website and public meetings;
- Ensuring the township board convenes an annual planning and development meeting with the planning commission, ZBA, and the DDA; and

- Strengthening knowledge of development, planning and zoning through training for elected and appointed officials.

Parks and Recreation Plan

Each year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) offers recreation grants for the acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Recreation Passport Grant Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Any local unit of government that has a current recreation plan approved by the MDNR is eligible to apply for one of these recreation grants. In order to be approved by the MDNR, a recreation plan must determine the Township's recreation needs and develop a five-year action plan of proposed recreation projects to meet those needs. Only those recreation projects included in the five-year action plan are eligible for recreation grant financing.

A parks and recreation plan is intended to guide decision makers with the future development and improvement of the Township's parks, recreation facilities, and programs. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides communities with guidance on what components need to be included in a Parks and Recreation Plan and, ultimately, reviews local plans for state approval. In order for Port Huron Township to be eligible for potential grant funding through the MDNR, it has to have a parks and recreation master plan that has been adopted within the last five years. Communities typically review and update their plans on a five-year cycle.

Beginning with this master plan, the Port Huron Township five-year parks and recreation plan is now integrated within the overall master plan document and is now on the same five-year cycle. The MDNR-required components for a recreation plan are incorporated throughout this document. These components include:

- Community Profile
- Administrative Structure for Parks and Recreation
- Recreation Inventory



- Summary of Public Input
- Goals and Objectives
- Action Plan

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Planned unit development (PUD) is a zoning concept that allows modifications to the zoning requirements of a site to achieve a pattern of development that is suited to the unique site characteristics and allows for negotiation between the community and the developer to achieve a mutual benefit. The PUD option permits a single site to be planned as a unit with a variety of housing types, land uses, and densities. Design flexibility is granted in return for a comprehensively planned site, preserved open space, infrastructure improvements and significant site plan scrutiny.

PUDs are appropriate in all areas, but are most often applied on large parcels. PUDs are an attractive option for communities because they can preserve a portion of the site as protected open space, allow the requirement of off-site infrastructure improvements, provide an added level of regulatory scrutiny, and enable significant parcels to be developed comprehensively according to sound planning principles such as mixing of uses.

The Township does have PUD regulations in its zoning ordinance. This tool may be an ideal option for developing areas in the township that are currently undeveloped or in need of redevelopment in the future.

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program

According to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program measures and certifies communities that integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into their development practices with the goal of realizing a community-supported redevelopment vision that is inviting to investors. The RRC has developed a set of best practices for communities to follow to communities to build a clear and transparent development process. The six RRC best practices include:

- Community Plans and Public Outreach
- Zoning Regulations
- Development Review Process
- Recruitment and Education
- Redevelopment Ready Sites
- Community Prosperity

The Redevelopment Ready Communities program will make Port Huron Township more attractive for investors and may spur new economic development. Additionally, becoming engaged in the program and working toward RRC certification will allow development projects within the Township to be eligible for potential incentive programs through the MEDC and other state agencies. The program is open to any community in Michigan - at no cost. According to the MEDC, those who will benefit most are communities that either already have an area of concentrated development such as a traditional downtown or commercial corridor or are planning for such development.

Public Involvement

Township leadership should ensure that residents and business owners are kept abreast of what is happening in the community. The public should be apprised of new development plans that are submitted for review and approval. In many communities, all active development proposals or projects are kept on a list on the municipal website, along with initial submittal dates, a processing timeline, and public hearing dates. This practice helps the community to build trust and to educate citizens about decisions regarding future development and public

improvements. As technology changes, new methods of communication provide decision makers with low-cost, wide reaching ways of soliciting input. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can be utilized to seek meaningful input during the development phase of projects to identify potential issues and adjust plans accordingly.

Setting Priorities

The master plan contains a multitude of recommendations. There may be insufficient staff or volunteer support to implement all of the recommendations in a planned, systematic manner. As such, a process for establishing priorities must be developed as soon as the master plan is adopted. Participants involved in setting priorities should include Township department heads and appropriate staff, the planning commission, and the township board. The Township's planning consultant should facilitate this process.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax increment financing is authorized by the Downtown Development Authority Act, Neighborhood Authority Act, Corridor Improvement Act, and the Local Development Finance Authority Act. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a popular method of financing the public costs associated with development and redevelopment projects. TIF occurs when a local government freezes the tax base within a specific development district and uses the revenues generated by reassessment or new development to finance selected improvements within the district. The term "tax increment" refers to the additional taxes that will result from private development. This "increment" is earmarked or "captured" for the TIF or to other taxing units that otherwise would receive revenues.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is the process most often used to implement community master plans. Zoning is a legal means for the Township to regulate private property in order to achieve orderly and harmonious land use relationships. The zoning ordinance incorporates standards that promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public and property owners.

The official zoning map divides the community into different zones or districts within which certain uses are permitted and others are not. The zoning ordinance text notes the uses which are permitted and establishes regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setbacks, lot sizes and accessory uses.

In considering an application for the rezoning of property, it is critical to the success of this master plan that the planning commission reviews the Future Land Use Map AND the goals and intent of the existing/proposed land use categories before making any land use decisions. While the map serves a guide, the associated recommendations are found in the text. This relationship is described in more detail in the Zoning Plan chapter (Chapter 5). No zoning request which is inconsistent with this plan should be considered without first making an amendment to the plan.

Upon adopting this master plan, the Township should review its zoning ordinance and update the ordinance in accordance with the recommended changes laid forth in the Zoning Plan chapter (Chapter 5), the Land Use chapter (Chapter 4), and the goals and strategies outlined in Chapter 6. This will ensure that Port Huron Township's zoning ordinance is based upon the master plan, as required by law.

Community Resiliency

The draft St. Clair County Master Plan that is expected to be adopted in 2023 includes a section on Coastal Resiliency, which includes a detailed overview of the impacts of climate change on the Great Lakes, the variability of lake water levels, and building community resilience. As defined by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, community resilience is the ability of a community to anticipate, accommodate and positively adapt to or thrive amidst changing climate conditions or hazard events and enhance quality of life, reliable systems, economic vitality and conservation of resources for present and future generations. The Coastal Resiliency section in the County Master Plan was developed by the Land Information Access Association, in cooperation with researchers from the University of Michigan and Michigan Technological University. The project was funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Management Program.

According to the County Master Plan, and based on the most recent models, the climate of St. Clair County will continue to warm, with greater increases in average temperatures during the winter months and at night. There are a variety of weather impacts expected with this change in average temperatures. Some of the potential impacts of climate change in the county are listed below:

- Storms are expected to become more frequent and more severe;
- Increases in winter and spring precipitation;
- Less precipitation as snow and more as rain;
- Less winter ice on lakes;
- Extended growing season (earlier spring/late fall);
- More flooding events with risks of erosion;
- Increases in frequency and length of severe heat events (heat waves); and
- Increased risk of drought, particularly in summer.

The Township can become a more resilient community by utilizing green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate the environmental impacts of climate-related hazards. Additionally, the Township should participate in regional watershed planning efforts and work with community partners to implement innovative solutions to reduce paved and impervious surfaces in the community.

According to the Rockefeller Foundation, a Resilient Community has...

1. Minimal human vulnerability
2. Diverse livelihoods and employment
3. Effective safeguards to human life and health
4. A collective identity and mutual support
5. Comprehensive security and rule of law
6. A sustainable economy
7. Reduced exposure and fragility
8. Effective provision of critical services
9. Reliable mobility and communication
10. Effective leadership and management
11. Empowered stakeholders
12. Integrated development planning