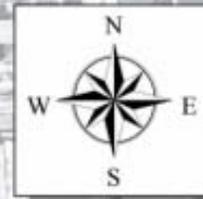


CITY OF PORT HURON COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN Plan Summary



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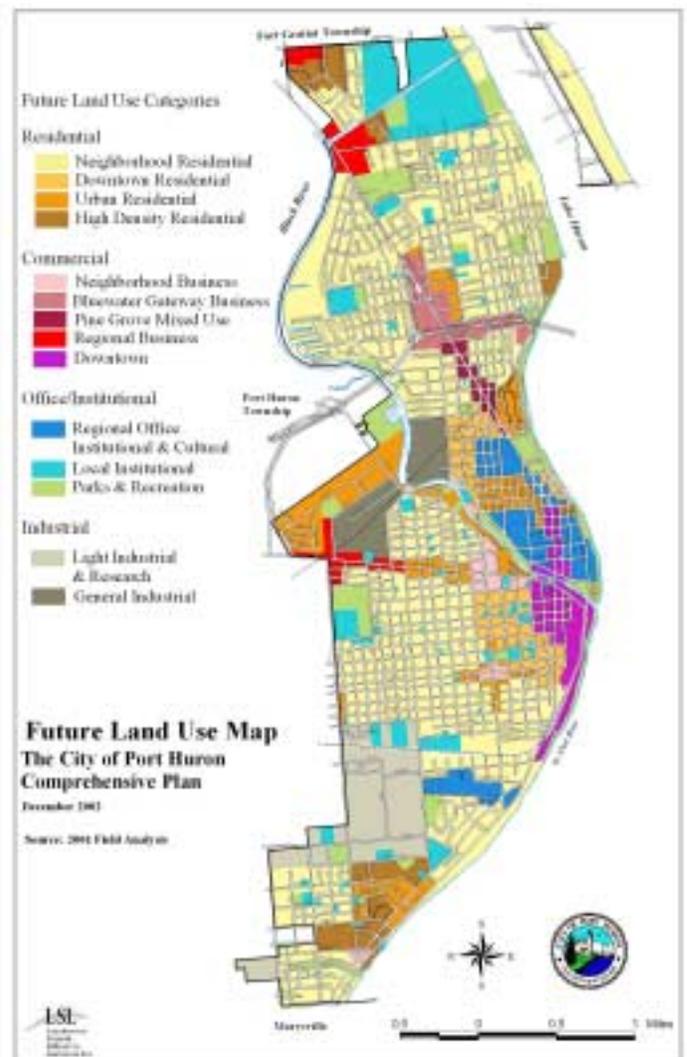
COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

SUMMARY

CITY OF PORT HURON

The Port Huron Comprehensive Master Plan provides a vision for the future of the city that builds upon the long history and the assets that make Port Huron a truly unique place. Numerous factors contribute to the continued growth of Port Huron. While certain major projects, such as the south-side waterfront redevelopment, will be major stimulus for change, other improvements will be made to the city through small incremental changes. This plan takes a holistic approach at examining the many elements that make up the city and provides strategies for enhancements and improvements to residential neighborhoods, neighborhood businesses, and downtown.

Based upon this overall vision for the city, specific recommendations are set forth in this plan for land use, neighborhoods, and the various business districts. It provides not only recommendations for land use arrangements but also design recommendations on how to manage growth and retain or enhance the unique characteristics of the city. In addition there are recommendations for economic development, and for managing the city's public facilities, and multi-modal transportation system.



CITY OF PORT HURON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The foundation of this plan is based on achieving the following goals:

Land Use and Neighborhoods

- Create a balanced land use pattern that offers a mixture of uses in an organized, compatible manner.
- Support Port Huron as a thriving urban core for St. Clair County.
- Continue a strong residential presence and offer unified, traditional, and livable neighborhoods.
- Support development of neighborhoods and housing compatible with existing character.

Commercial Districts and Economic Development

- Offer a unified system of distinct commercial business nodes.
- Ensure commercial development will promote the city's character.
- Encourage an active, successful downtown that is walkable and livable.
- Increase the desirability of the city for economic development.
- Continue efforts to retain existing businesses.
- Support a strong industrial development presence.
- Strengthen the city's appeal for tourism.
- Attract and retain the younger population to live and work in Port Huron.
- Create new entrepreneurial opportunities and resources.

Transportation and Community Facilities

- Offer a vehicular transportation system that is integrated with the city's character.
- Integrate a non-motorized pathway and greenway system throughout the city.
- Unify the multiple modes of transportation and offer safe and enjoyable circulation options.
- Offer high-quality and efficient public services to residents and the region.
- Increase the desirability of the city for new residents and businesses.
- Expand and diversify the city's park and recreation system.
- Provide a unified open space system throughout the city.



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The distribution of land uses will provide for a variety of development and in-fill development within the city. The city is centered on the waterfronts and downtown, which should be enhanced as follows:

- Centered along Huron Avenue and Military Street is downtown, which is the core of the city. This mixed-use district encourages retail along Huron Avenue and Military Street with residential and office uses in the upper floors of buildings. The many historic buildings along this corridor should be preserved and restored, and any new in-fill development should be compatible with the traditional main street character of this historic district.



- Extending from the Municipal Office Center on the St. Clair River waterfront to the St. Clair County Community College on the Black River, McMorran Boulevard is the “civic” boulevard of downtown. The streetscape for this boulevard should be designed to tie together the various civic uses along its length including the county court, library and McMorran Center.

- The Black River passes southeasterly through the center of downtown to the St. Clair River and should be a focus of activity to tie together the two halves of downtown. A continuous waterfront walkway should be maintained along the Black River to maximize access to the river and capitalize on this asset as a major defining element of downtown. Active uses such as restaurants, bars and coffee houses should be encouraged along both sides of the river to create an activity center that will stimulate additional activity in downtown.



- The formerly industrial St. Clair River waterfront south of the Black River is proposed for a major mixed-use redevelopment by Acheson Ventures. This will include residential use, a new harbor, a new YMCA, office and



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recreational uses. Development of this area should be integrated with the surrounding areas of downtown and plans for the Black River waterfront.

- The St. Clair River waterfront is a key element of the city that should remain as public open space. The planned Bridge to Bay Trail that passes through the city should be integrated into the public waterfront.
- In-fill residential development should be encouraged within and surrounding downtown. Additional residential development will create more activity within downtown and help support downtown businesses.

In addition to downtown, there are several other business districts that are vital elements of the overall community. Each serves a specialized role.

- There are three regional business areas along Lapeer Avenue and Pine Grove Avenue. These include larger scale commercial uses. As these businesses improve and expand, design elements should be incorporated such as quality architecture, street trees, parking lot landscaping, screening from adjacent uses and minimizing the impact of outdoor lighting.
- Centered at the convergence of I-94, Pine Grove Avenue and the Blue Water Bridge border crossing is a commercial area referred to as the Blue Water gateway. Businesses in this area tend to be oriented toward serving motorists



using these major transportation corridors. This area is important as a major gateway to the city and should be enhanced to provide a high-quality first impression of the city. Enhancements can be made to the streetscape including landscaping, ornamental street lights and welcoming signage. As businesses

redevelop in this area improvements should be made to sites and building architecture to maintain a quality appearance for this gateway to the community.



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- The area along Pine Grove between the Blue Water gateway and downtown is an important corridor. This route to downtown should be enhanced through streetscape enhancements to strengthen this linkage between the Blue Water gateway area and downtown. Uses along the corridor should be mixed, including office, neighborhood businesses and residential.
- Dispersed throughout the city are a number of neighborhood business districts. These tend to be smaller-scale businesses that serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods. These neighborhood business districts need to remain at a defined scale, centered around key intersections and tied into the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods through a pedestrian-friendly environment. In these areas buildings will be situated near the front sidewalk with parking at the side or rear. Appropriate screening needs to be maintained between the parking areas and surrounding residential property through brick walls or landscaping.

Neighborhoods are a key element of this plan and maintaining and enhancing the quality of neighborhoods are critical to the long term health of the city. There are certain elements that make up a great neighborhood, including:



- A neighborhood should be of a walkable scale.
- A neighborhood should have a balanced mix of uses and activities.
- A neighborhood should have an interconnected street and pathway system.
- The street system should create a comfortable, safe environment.
- Living areas and front entries should be the prominent home feature.
- Unifying elements should be utilized as a ‘neighborhood identifier.’
- The neighborhood should embrace its historic, cultural, and civic heritage.



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The following polices should be considered for all neighborhoods:

- In-fill housing needs to be compatible and consistent with the character of the neighborhood.
- New residential developments need to be integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods with street and pedestrian connections.
- Strategies and programs for property maintenance should be continued including code enforcement, neighborhood beautification programs, housing rehabilitation programs, neighborhood reinvestment programs and sidewalk replacement.
- Historic preservation should be encouraged within neighborhoods with historic homes and resources.
- Pedestrian safety and the livability of the neighborhoods should be improved through traffic calming in areas where high vehicle speeds are a problem.
- Screening and buffering needs to be maintained between businesses and residences.

In addition to quality neighborhoods and vibrant business districts, the plan reflects strategies for economic development to strengthen and increase the local economy, income levels, employment opportunities, and local businesses. Growth in the Port Huron and St Clair County economy is projected to create additional demand for retail, professional services, food service, and entertainment within the city of Port Huron and the immediate area. Strategies for capitalizing on this growth include:

- Develop a business recruitment plan to attract new businesses to the city.



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- Developing a marketing program for the city of Port Huron that will feature all of the amenities that the Blue Water Area has to offer and attract visitors and new businesses to the city.
- Enhancing activity within the city by sponsoring special events that will attract visitors to the city, similar to the Port Huron to Mackinaw Boat Race.

Transportation focuses on maintaining and enhancing the existing multi-modal transportation system for the city, which includes automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, rail, and water transportation. Streetscape enhancements such as landscaping, signage, and lighting are recommended to entrances to the city.

Neighborhood traffic calming studies should be conducted for neighborhoods that have problems with high traffic speeds. Where appropriate, traffic calming measures may include speed humps, street narrowing, medians, traffic circles, intersection diverters or as a last resort, street closures.



The city of Port Huron offers a range of public facilities and services to its residents and businesses, such as sewer, and water, police, and fire protection, parks, marinas and other services. The quality, availability and cost of these elements are among the factors influencing growth and redevelopment in Port Huron. Residential, commercial and especially industrial users make location decisions based, in part, upon the ability of a municipality to meet their present and future needs cost-effectively. As competition between communities grows and as technology advances, citizens and business owners will expect more from local governments. In order to keep pace with this dynamic trend, Port Huron must continually upgrade and diversify facilities and services.

