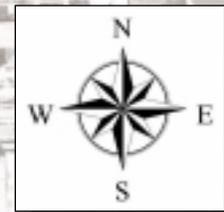


CITY OF PORT HURON COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN



DECEMBER 2002



GRAND RAPIDS ♦ ROYAL OAK
&
THE CHESAPEAKE GROUP, INC.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The residents, business owners and leaders of the city of Port Huron have a shared vision for the city’s future. The contents of this Comprehensive Master Plan have articulated this vision. In the coming years, this document will be used as a guide that recommends the policies, tools, and strategies needed to make this vision a reality. The plan also establishes a reasonable expectation for the future that can be universally understood by residents, business owners, developers, and others that have a vested interest in the city.

The plan directs the intensity and arrangement of various types of land uses and promotes a design which complements the character of the city. The plan will strive to provide a complementary mix of land uses within traditional neighborhoods to create a sustainable, livable community. The main components of the plan are divided into the following chapters:

- Population and Housing Characteristics
- Land Use
- Neighborhoods
- Commercial Districts
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Public Facilities



Each chapter provides an overview of important conditions and findings established at the time of plan preparation. These findings are followed by a list of goals and



objectives which set a framework for the city's vision relative to that subject. Following the goals and objectives, specific policies, tools, and strategies needed to accomplish the goals and objectives are summarized. For additional information and a more detailed discussion about each chapter, refer to the appendices of this plan.

The Port Huron Comprehensive Master Plan was prepared by the city of Port Huron Planning Commission under the authority of the Municipal Planning Act (Act 285 of 1931, as amended). This process included a number of public meetings in order to solicit ideas from the public and obtain responses to drafts of the plan. Once a final draft was prepared, a public hearing was held for formal public comments. The Planning Commission adopted the plan and the City Council will offer its approval through a resolution of support.

During the plan preparation process, the following items were identified as important issues to be addressed in the plan:

- Integrate the various plan subjects (listed on the previous page) so they work together toward a common vision.
- Provide a future land use map that illustrates a new land use pattern over time.
- Provide a legal basis for zoning and other regulations.
- Ensure that as development occurs, the desired character of the community and various neighborhoods are not disrupted.
- Recommend improvements to intersections and roadway sections needing attention due to rapidly increasing traffic volumes and other factors.
- Provide a sustainable community and land use pattern which translates into a diversified tax base to support the desired facilities and services.
- Provide recommendations for improvements and redevelopment within downtown.
- Provide specific recommendations for economic development that will revitalize the community and the region.



HISTORY OF PORT HURON

The city of Port Huron and the Blue Water area have a long history that dates back to 1686 when DeL'Hut built Fort St. Joseph under orders from Louis XV to protect the French fur trade. This fort was occupied by the French until it burned in 1688.

The first permanent settlement was along the Black River in 1790. During the War of 1812 the St. Clair River was the site of a naval battle between H.M.S. Nancy and Territorial Militia in 1813.

In 1814 the U.S. Government built Fort Gratiot along the St. Clair River near the current landing of the Blue Water Bridge. The first area school was established at Fort Gratiot in 1821. In 1829 the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse was built and is still in operation today.

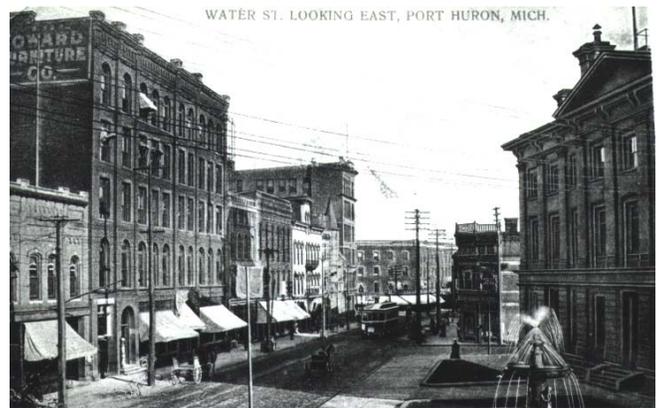
The town was organized as Desmond in 1828 and given a post office on April 30, 1833, with Jonathan Burtch as its first postmaster. In 1837 the town was renamed Port Huron. In 1849 Port Huron was incorporated as a village and in 1857 Port Huron became a city.

Prior to the Civil War, Port Huron was a principal stop of the Underground Railroad, which helped slaves escape to Canada. About that same time Thomas Edison, the great American inventor, spent his youth in Port Huron.

With its location as a port along the St. Clair River and next to Canada, Port Huron became an important transportation hub. The first railroad into Port Huron was built



Old Port Huron City Hall



Water Street near the turn of the 20th Century



Military Street near the turn of the 20th Century



by Grand Trunk in 1859. In 1891 the world's first electrified underwater international train tunnel was completed beneath the St. Clair River between Port Huron and Sarnia, Canada. And in 1866 the third electric powered streetcar in the United States began operation in Port Huron.

Port Huron has also been an important location for boating. In 1925 the first Port Huron to Mackinac Island Yacht Race was run; an annual event that continues to this day. The Huron Lightship was stationed on the Corsica Shoals in Lake Huron from

1935 to 1971, to guide mariners into the narrow dredged channel of lower Lake Huron leading to the St. Clair River. The Huron Lightship is now permanently moored on the bank of the St. Clair River as the Huron Lightship Museum.



Completion of Blue Water Bridge in 1938

In 1938 the Blue Water Bridge opened to traffic between Port Huron, and Point Edward/Sarnia, Canada. In 1997 the second span of the Blue Water Bridge was opened.

With its long, rich history Port Huron is a unique and interesting place that has numerous amenities which can be built upon; with this plan, the community provides the vision to continue into the future.



CHAPTER 2: POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines demographic and socio-economic information for the city of Port Huron. This includes information about the city's population, housing and economic characteristics. Current characteristics of the city are the result of a long community history that begins with the first settlement of residents followed by multiple cycles of out-migration and in-migration. This chapter looks at past trends that have influenced some of these current characteristics. Where possible, it also includes projections of how the city's population, housing and labor force might change in the future.



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population Trends

Table 1 illustrates changes in population for St. Clair County and the city of Port Huron between 1970 and 2000. The city's population has been slowly declining over the past 20 years. This trend is typical for many city centers in Michigan and is due, in part, to the popularity of out-migration to abutting townships for larger lot sizes, lower taxes and a quieter lifestyle. Other factors that may be partially attributed to the population's slight decline include the reduction in household size and the conversion of residential land uses to non-residential uses.

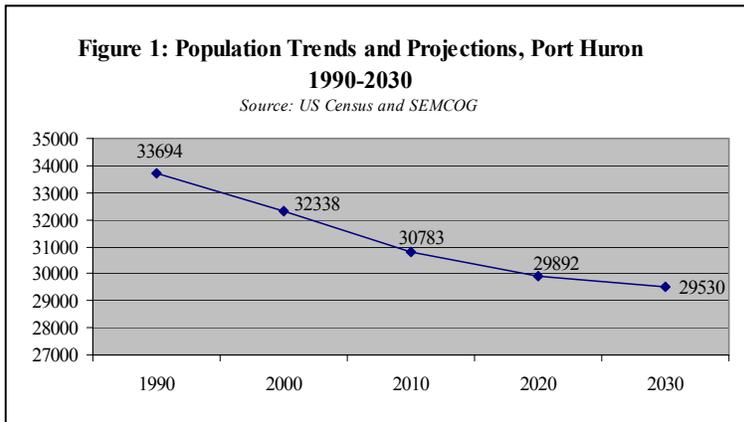


Table 1: Population Trends				
Community	1980	1990	2000	90-00 Change
City of Port Huron	33,981	33,694	32,338	-4.0%
St. Clair County	138,802	145,607	164,235	12.8%

Source: 1980-2000 US Census Bureau

Population Projections

Contrary to past trends, living in a downtown, city center environment is becoming increasingly popular in many areas of the country. This movement is a result of various factors, including a renewed desire to be part of a traditional, unified community where residents are offered the convenience of services within walking distance or within a short drive. The aging of our society, especially the baby boomers, will be another factor that contributes to the attractiveness of city living to some individuals and couples. Fortunately, Port Huron is already beginning to



experience the benefits of these trends. Therefore, although SEMCOG is projecting a continued decline in Port Huron’s population (see *Figure 1*), it is possible that the city will experience an increase in population. *Table 2* shows Port Huron’s population trends compared to St. Clair County.

Table 2: Population Projections					
Community	2000	2010	2020	2030	00-30 Change
City of Port Huron	32,338	30,783	29,892	29,530	-8.7%
St. Clair County	164,235	176,137	191,436	203,255	23.8%

Source: SEMCOG

Table 3 compares Port Huron’s population changes between 1990 and 2000 with population change experienced by other ‘comparable’ communities. A slight

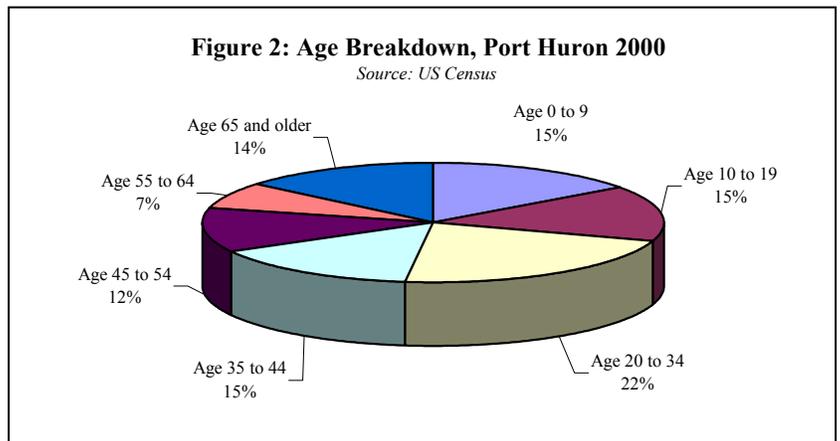


decline is seen in communities with a built-out urban character and bordered by developed communities.

Table 3: Population Change – Port Huron & Comparable Communities			
Community	1990	2000	% Change
Port Huron	33,694	32,338	-4.0%
Bay City	38,936	36,817	-5.4%
Holland	30,745	35,048	14.0%
Midland	38,053	41,685	9.5%
Muskegon	40,283	40,105	-0.4%
<i>Source: 1990 & 2000 Census Bureau</i>			

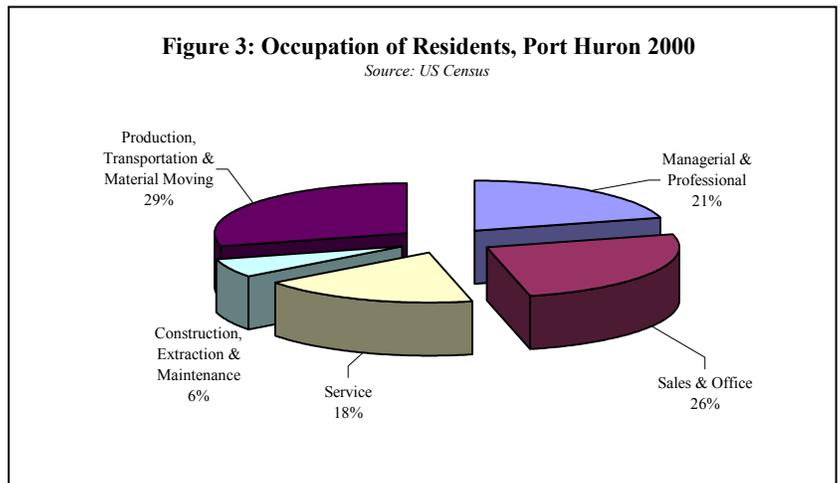
Age Characteristics

Age characteristics of the city assist in indicating economic, transportation, recreational, education and other community needs. As indicated in *Figure 2*, the largest population segment is comprised of those that are in the labor force between the ages of 20 and 64. Within this group, the majority falls between the ages of 25 and 54.



Occupation

Figure 3 illustrates the occupations of Port Huron’s residents. The highest-ranking categories are Production, Transportation and Material Moving and Sales and Office. This indicates that the city has a balance of both skilled laborers and professionals.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Household Trends and Projections

Population change is only one of the factors that affect whether development will occur in a community and how much it will occur; household size is also considered. Referring to *Table 4*, the average household size in Port Huron has generally declined in the past ten years. This has resulted in an increased number of households, relative to the size of the population, and a need for more housing. In the future, the number of households is projected to increase, in part because of continued reductions in household size.

Table 4: City of Port Huron Household Trends and Projections								
	1980	1990	2000	90-00 % Change	2010	2020	2030	00-30 Change
Number of Households	12,782	13,158	12,961	-1.4%	13,096	13,418	13,939	7.5%
Average Household Size		2.51	2.43	-3.2%	2.28	2.16	2.04	-16.1%

Source: SEMCOG

Housing Units

As of March 2000, there were 14,003 housing units (including occupied seasonal and vacant) in the city of Port Huron. This is an increase from 1980 and a decrease from 1990. The initial increase in housing can be attributed to new apartment complexes and new subdivisions in the city. There have also been conversions from single-family to multiple-family dwellings and a few adaptive re-use projects that have increased housing units in the city.

In 2000, 53% of the housing units were owner-occupied, which is a lower percentage than the St. Clair County average. The city has a comparable percentage of vacant units.



CITY OF PORT HURON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 5: Housing Characteristics								
	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Vacant		Median Value	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Port Huron	52%	53%	42%	39%	6%	8%	\$40,600	\$84,400
St. Clair County	69%	84%	23%	19%	8%	7%	\$59,400	\$125,200

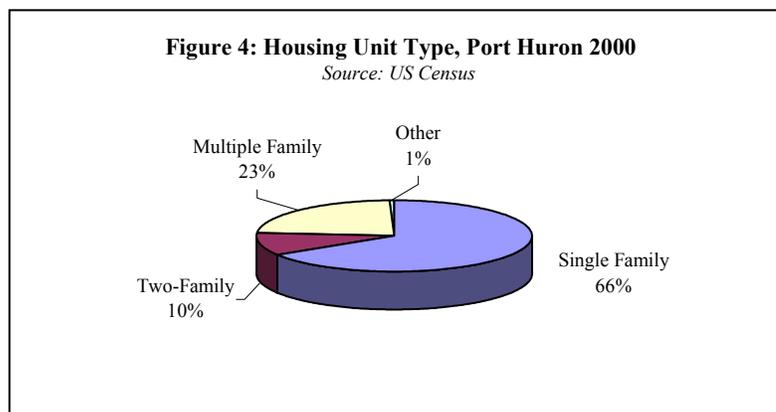
Source: 1990 & 2000 US Census Bureau

Table 6 is a testament to the historical importance of the city’s neighborhoods. Of the current housing stock, 36.4% were built in or before 1939. Port Huron, like many midwest cities, had a post-World War II growth spurt in the 1950’s. The past twenty years have been the slowest periods of growth for the city. This is largely due to the decline in available land and out-migration.

Table 6: City of Port Huron Year Structure Built		
Year Cohort	Number	Percentage
1990-March 2000	1,053	7.6%
1980 - 1989	870	6.2%
1970 – 1979	1,382	9.9%
1960 – 1969	1,651	11.8%
1940 – 1959	3,940	28.2%
1939 or earlier	5,099	36.4%

Source: 2000 US Census Bureau

As shown in *Figure 4*, the majority of Port Huron’s housing units in 2000 are single-family homes. The high percentage of multiple-family housing is to be expected since the city serves as the urban core of the county that lends itself to higher density development.





CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land use patterns and densities are major factors in decisions on the type, location and densities of future land uses. This chapter describes the existing land use pattern in Port Huron. Existing land use will influence the future land use in Port Huron, as well as other planning recommendations this Comprehensive Master Plan.

A survey of land uses in the city of Port Huron was undertaken in August 2001. Every parcel of land was observed to identify their use.

The existing land use map was prepared based upon a review of existing planning documents and updating the information with aerial photographs and on-site observations.



Distribution of Land Uses

A useful facet of existing land use is comparing dwelling unit numbers and acreage percentages of specific uses to similar communities. By no means should comparisons dictate the community's vision for the future and the type of environment it desires. However, comparisons can shed light on other development patterns and potential excesses and deficiencies in land use types.



Table 7: Existing Land Use Acreage Calculations		
Existing Land Use Category	Total Acres	Percentage of Total
Downtown	75.3	1.8%
Commercial	307.8	7.4%
Industrial	396.8	9.6%
Institutional	557.7	13.5%
Multiple-Family Residential	300.2	7.3%
Parks and Recreation	289.7	7.0%
Single and Two-Family Residential	1978.7	47.8%
Vacant	232.9	5.6%
Total	4139.1	100%
<i>Source: LSL Planning 2002, based on Existing Land Use Map</i>		

Existing Land Use Inventory

The following inventory of existing land uses is intended to describe how the city appears today and indicate where land uses need to change or sites need to be improved over time to meet the goals of the plan. (Refer to *Appendix 3* for detailed existing land use information.)

- Single and Two-Family Residential. Single and two-family residential uses are the most dominant in the city. Housing densities are moderately dense compared to surrounding areas due, in part, to the availability of public utilities.

- Multiple-Family Residential. This category includes buildings that contain more than two dwelling units including converted homes, apartment buildings, town houses and senior housing. Examples of multiple-family development are found near the St. Clair River and the Blue Water Bridge, Krafft Road and Holland Avenue, and along the Black River. There is also a concentration of town houses in the southern part of the city.

- Commercial and Office. Commercial and office development occurs in two concentrations. First, downtown is the historic center and spans both sides of the Black River. A wide spectrum of uses include civic buildings, banks, convenience and comparison shopping, restaurants, specialty shops, churches, offices, and other businesses. Second, a variety of commercial uses are found in the area of the Blue Water Bridge and Pine Grove Avenue. Uses in this area include gas stations, fast food restaurants, a duty-free store, and convenience stores. In addition to the major commercial areas, there are a number of smaller



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commercial areas and individual commercial uses scattered around the city that serve nearby neighborhoods.

- Industrial. Many of the industrial sites in the city have existed for many years. These include sites north of the Blue Water Bridge, on Lapeer Avenue and along the riverfront. A 315 acre industrial park is located in the south part of the city and has attracted many businesses to Port Huron.
- Institutional. This category includes city, state and federal buildings, schools, churches and other public or quasi-public buildings. city offices, police and fire departments, the St. Clair County Library, the U.S. Post Office, the U.S. Federal Building, St. Clair County Community College, St. Clair County Administration Offices, Port Huron Chamber of Commerce, and several churches are directly adjacent to or located within downtown.
- Parks and Open Space. This category includes parks, school playgrounds, and cemeteries. These uses provide important social, recreation and greenspace needs for residents.
- Vacant. There are some vacant parcels of land in the city, including lands at the south-end. South-end waterfront land along the St. Clair River is being cleared of industrial uses and is being considered for a major mixed use redevelopment.



LAND USE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1 Land use activity throughout Port Huron will form a mixed use development pattern that provides a variety of uses while creating a unique character for different areas of the city.

Objectives

- a. Promote land use decisions consistent with this plan's *Future Land Use Map* and development guidelines.
- b. Maintain the presence of residential neighborhoods consistent with the *Neighborhoods chapter*.
- c. Create individual commercial nodes that serve specific market areas and niches rather than strip commercial development.
- d. Maintain pockets of neighborhood commercial development that are located to conveniently serve nearby neighborhoods.
- e. Establish separate identities for the downtown consistent with the *Commercial Districts chapter* which emphasize downtown shopping and services on the north side of the river and waterfront, and entertainment and shopping opportunities on the south side of the river, with both offering new areas for housing.
- f. Promote industrial development between 24th Street and 16th Street as the city's light industrial and center business park area.
- g. Unify the development areas of the city by overcoming perceived physical barriers created by the Black River, railroad tracks, and industrial parks.

Goal #2 Future development and redevelopment in Port Huron will create compatible land use relationships that support the city's long-term growth and stability.

Objectives

- a. Eliminate spot zoning, sporadic, and incompatible land use patterns.
- b. Phase out small pockets of declining residential uses surrounded by industrial or heavy commercial operations.



- c. Prevent land use expansion into residential neighborhoods by defining boundaries of regional institutional uses such as the hospital and college and commercial and industrial centers.
- d. Limit the size and scale of local commercial business areas to maintain compatibility with surrounding residential.

Goal #3 Port Huron will continue to serve as one of St. Clair County’s thriving urban cores and a center for innovative approaches to residential and business development.

Objectives

- a. Incorporate regional land uses that are not commonly offered elsewhere in the county such as colleges, hospitals, regional government offices, business headquarters, high-density and high-rise residential, and mixed use development projects of an urban character.
- b. Support planning and zoning efforts of rural townships in the county in favor of agricultural preservation, low density development and sound planning principles.
- c. Coordinate with adjacent communities to ensure land use policies and decisions throughout the county coincide rather than compete with each other.
- d. Offer site development incentives for projects employing high-quality enhancements such as exceptional landscaping, building design, and public spaces.

Goal #4 Port Huron will continue to have a strong residential land use presence and development orientation.

Objectives

- a. Identify vacant sites in predominantly residential areas, such as in the southeast side of the city, and promote residential development.
- b. Promote conversion of obsolete non-residential buildings to high-density housing as identified on the *Future Land Use Map*.



- c. Integrate a range of housing types and densities including single-family detached, townhouses, accessory dwelling units, two-family, low rise multiple-family, and high rise multiple-family residential.
- d. Integrate new residential waterfront development into the aggressive revitalization efforts of downtown.
- e. Continue to allow local institutional uses, such as local schools and churches, to develop within neighborhoods provided they maintain a scale and intensity compatible with residential development.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Based on the above goals and objectives, a *Future Land Use Map* was created. This map provides a basic guide for future land use and development in the city. This plan is intended to be implemented over time. *Table 8* provides the total acreage of each of future land use categories and a detailed discussion of each category is provided in the proceeding section. Exact geographic boundaries of each category are found on the *Future Land Use Map*. (Refer to *Appendix 3* for detailed future land use plan recommendations.)

Table 8: Future Land Use Acreage Calculations		
Future Land Use Category	Total Acres	Percentage of Total
Neighborhood Residential	1876.3	45.2%
Downtown Residential	172.1	4.2%
Urban Residential	308.1	7.4%
High-Density Residential	168.8	4.1%
Neighborhood Business	36.6	0.9%
Pine Grove Mixed Use	28.4	0.7%
Blue Water Gateway Business	84.5	2.2%
Regional Business	80.3	1.9%
Downtown	126.6	3.0%
Regional Office and Institution	132.4	3.3%
Light Industrial and Research	290.3	3.5%
General Industrial	143.8	7.0%
Local Institutional	418.2	10.1%
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	272.7	6.5%
<i>Source: LSL Planning 2002, based on Future Land Use Map</i>		



- Neighborhood Residential. The *Neighborhood Residential* land use designation is intended to accommodate traditional single-family neighborhoods. Accessory and support uses may be permitted such as churches, parks, and schools.
- Downtown Residential. Single-family residential is intended to be the dominant land use in this category at a higher density than *Neighborhood Residential*. Some conversions of existing single-family homes to multiple and duplex units can be appropriate along with accessory apartments. In certain locations multiple-family and mixed use will be allowed as designated on the *Future Land Use Plan Map*.
- Urban Residential. Residential development within these areas should maintain some of the characteristics of single-family dwellings through conversions of the whole house or main floor while allowing new construction of town houses and attached condominiums that are of compatible scale. In certain areas neighborhood businesses are permitted within this category as part of a mixed use project, such as the neighborhood on the north side of downtown (north of Glenwood Avenue and east of 10th Street).
- High-Density Residential. Permitted land uses within *High-Density Residential* areas include multiple-family structures and attached single-family developments. Accessory and support uses are also permitted.
- Neighborhood Business. *Neighborhood Business* development is planned in small pockets integrated into neighborhoods. Businesses considered appropriate include small-scale retail and service establishments.
- Pine Grove Avenue Mixed Use. This category seeks to improve upon the existing mixed use pattern. Desired uses include small-scale retail and service establishments, offices, and residential uses.
- Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business. The *Blue Water Gateway Business* area serves motorists entering and exiting the expressways and the bridge border crossing. Uses would be more auto-oriented including drive-through and sit-



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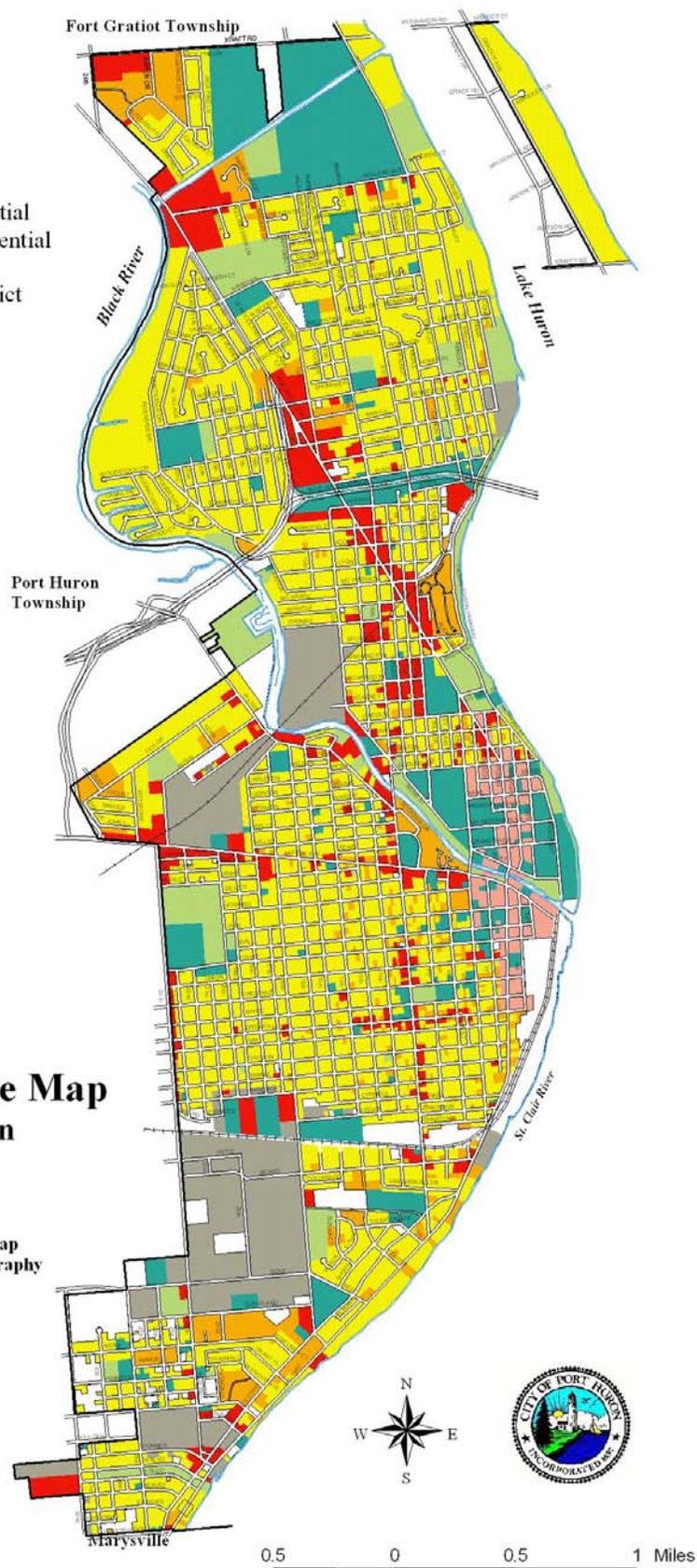
down restaurants, gas stations, car washes, groceries, convenience stores, and lodging.

- Regional Business. *Regional Business* uses would be commercial operations that serve the overall community and consumers beyond the city's boundary such as shopping centers, large grocery stores, and support uses such as restaurants and gas stations.
- Downtown. *Downtown* supports retail establishments, services, and cultural and entertainment facilities. In the upper stories of buildings, offices and residential units are encouraged. New development should emulate, and improve upon, the current pedestrian-oriented, historic character, of downtown.
- Regional Office, Institution and Cultural. This designation includes college facilities, hospitals, high rise offices, and governmental offices. This land use designation seeks to create an integrated campus setting at the city's center.
- Light Industrial and Research. Industrial operations intended for this district include warehousing, light assembly, research facilities, associated business offices and technology and testing centers. Development and redevelopment of these areas should minimize impacts and create attractive businesses.
- General Industrial. *General Industrial* operations permitted include manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and processing of goods. Because of nearby neighborhoods, off-site impacts must be minimized.
- Local Institution. *Local Institutional* uses include places of worship and schools both public and private schools that serve the immediate community. *Local Institutional* uses should promote a neighborhood scale and character.
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space. Land uses included in this category are public and private recreation facilities, marinas, and open space areas. Existing areas should be preserved and new facilities encouraged in residential areas, downtown, and along the waterfront wherever possible.



Existing Land Use

-  Single Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Commercial
-  Central Business District
-  Industrial
-  Vacant
-  Institutional/Civic
-  Parks & Recreation
-  Roads
-  Water
-  City Limits



Existing Land Use Map

The City of Port Huron

Comprehensive Plan

December 2002

Source: 1995 Port Huron Land Use Map
SEMCOG 2000 Aerial Photography
2001 Field Analysis

LSL
LANGRISH
STRAYER
LEBLANC &
ASSOCIATES, INC.



0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles

Future Land Use Categories

Residential

-  Neighborhood Residential
-  Downtown Residential
-  Urban Residential
-  High Density Residential

Commercial

-  Neighborhood Business
-  Bluewater Gateway Business
-  Pine Grove Mixed Use
-  Regional Business
-  Downtown

Office/Institutional

-  Regional Office
Institutional & Cultural
-  Local Institutional
-  Parks & Recreation

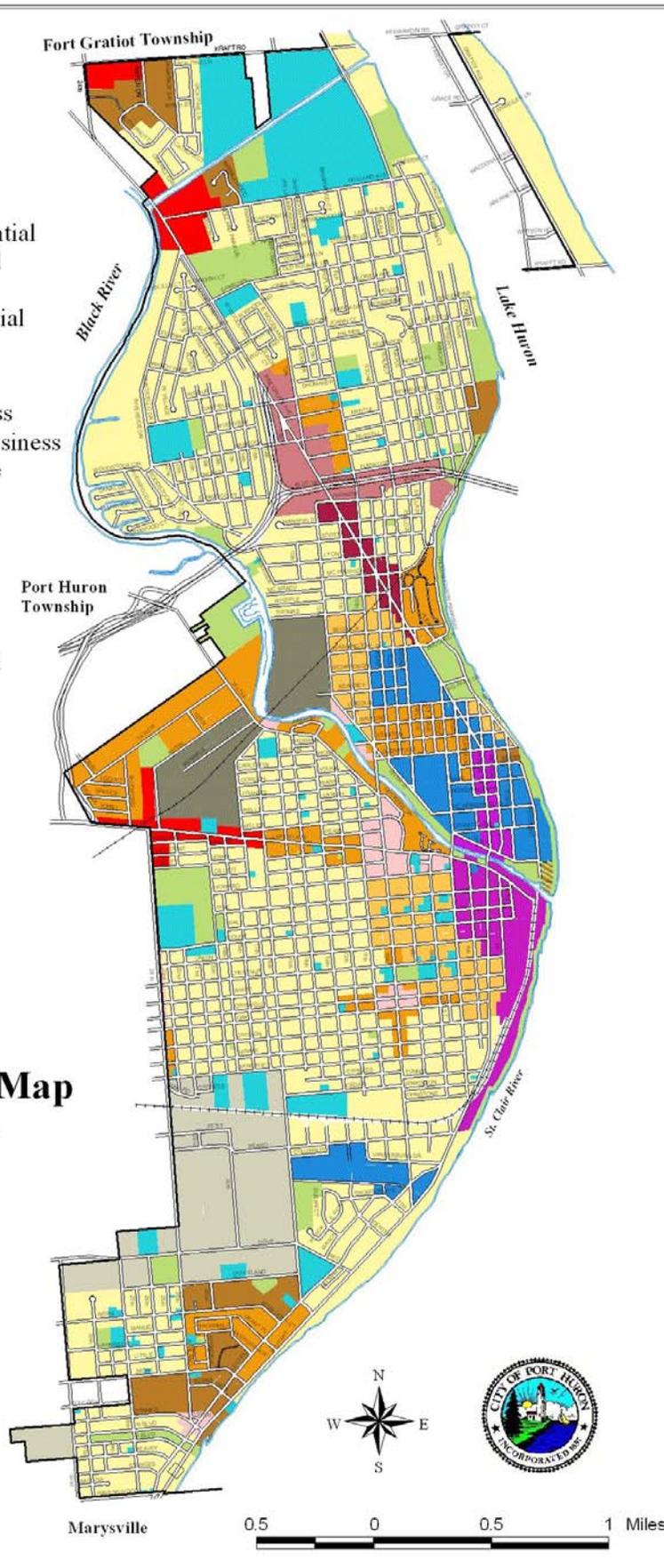
Industrial

-  Light Industrial
& Research
-  General Industrial

Future Land Use Map
The City of Port Huron
Comprehensive Plan

December 2002

Source: 2001 Field Analysis



CHAPTER 4: NEIGHBORHOODS

INTRODUCTION

To a very significant extent, the city of Port Huron is a residential community. This becomes apparent as one travels through the city and/or examines such instruments as the *Existing Land Use Map* accompanying the plan. As a residential community, Port Huron is comprised of neighborhoods which define and characterize the cultural and historical qualities of the city, an important component to this plan. This chapter evaluates the conditions of these areas and provides a foundation for improvements that are needed and identifies assets to be preserved.



EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

An analysis of the existing neighborhoods includes three main components. To begin, an understanding of common characteristics of a great neighborhood are established. Next, a field survey of exterior appearance conditions is provided for each neighborhood block front. Finally, the neighborhoods of the city are delineated and evaluated based on overall neighborhood elements.

Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood

- A neighborhood should have a center and an edge.
- The neighborhood should be of a walkable scale.
- The neighborhood should have a balanced mix of uses and activities.
- The neighborhood should have an interconnected street and pathway system.



CITY OF PORT HURON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- 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 resources.
- The neighborhood should have a formal organization.

Neighborhood Condition Survey

A visual survey was completed of the city’s single and two-family residential neighborhoods in order to identify and assess neighborhood condition based on a series of visual conditions referred to as ‘site factors.’ The survey was conducted on a ‘block-by-block’ basis with site factors recorded as observed. Observations were limited to the front and side yards (sites and building facades) of individual housing units. For purposes of examination and discussion, residential blocks were classified and mapped on the *Neighborhood Condition Map*. *Table 9* indicates the level of frequency of observed site factors.

Table 9: Neighborhood Condition Survey - August, 2001		
Rank	Site Factor	Percent of Total (Rounded)
1	Dilapidated Porches	28
2	Peeling Paint	24
3	Litter/Debris in Front/Side Yards	16
4	Junk Vehicles	10
5	Miscellaneous Factors	9
6	Tall Grass/Weeds	4
7	Litter/Debris on Front Porch	4
8	Boarded/Fire Guttred Homes (Full/Part)	3
9	Vehicle Undergoing Repair (Extended Period)	1
10	Front Yard Fence	1



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Based on the survey, the following general observations were noted:

- The majority of observed site factors relate to basic housing rehabilitation needs.
- A majority of neighborhoods are in good condition with low levels of site factors.
- In general, observed site factors were limited to individual block, typically located on the city’s most highly traveled streets.

Neighborhood Delineation and Overall Conditions

For the purposes of evaluation, the city was divided into 21 neighborhoods. The boundaries were developed based on existing associations, physical boundaries such as a river or railroad tracks, and the land use pattern. The following list includes a brief description of the existing characteristics of these neighborhoods and ties in the results of the Neighborhood Condition Survey discussed on the previous page. (Refer to the *Neighborhood Planning Areas Map* for the exact geographical boundaries.) *Table 10* lists each neighborhood, their condition survey rating, and a description of neighborhood conditions and issues.

Table 10: Neighborhoods Evaluation		
#	Survey Rating *	Overall Conditions
1	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family and multiple-family • No parks • Commercial services nearby • Older home styles are 1970s or 1980s w/ranch and colonial styles • Newer homes are 1990s ranches. • No sidewalks • Cobra head street lighting
2	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakefront single-family homes • Sidewalk along east side of road • Street lighting attached to utility poles • Housing styles vary from historic styles to new construction • Lacks unified streetscape
3	A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of homes styles • Larger lots than other neighborhoods • Some Black River frontage • Heavily wooded and secluded from others • Commercial nearby • Elementary school, playground and boat ramp • No sidewalks with some street lighting
4	A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large neighborhood with different personalities • Mix of housing styles and sizes • Inconsistent sidewalk, street tree, and lighting network



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Table 10: Neighborhoods Evaluation		
#	Survey Rating *	Overall Conditions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1950s-1970s architecture, mostly ranches • Homes at waterfront are ‘cottage style’ colonials • Most areas removed from convenient commercial • Sanborn Park, Palmer Park, Recreation Center, and Lighthouse Park
5	A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1940s-1950s architecture, many bungalows • More traditional neighborhood with street trees and sidewalks throughout • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting • Nearby commercial • School playground and Palmer Park and Recreation Center nearby • Lower housing rating found along Stone Street – a busy road in the neighborhoods • A few mixed in non-residential uses
6	A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1930s-1940s home styles with peaked roofs, siding, high concrete base, and prominent front porches • Maintenance problems near the Bridge • Gratiot Park • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting • Commercial nearby • Visible negative effects of commercial encroachment between Pine Grove and 10th Street
7	A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home styles with peaked roofs, siding, high concrete base, and prominent front porches • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting • Visible negative effects of commercial encroachment along Pine Grove and from the Bridge • Residential in-fill development opportunities • Visible signs of housing rehabilitation projects • No parks or open space • Commercial nearby
8	A Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixture of housing styles, but most with peaked roofs, siding, high concrete base, and prominent front porches • Visible signs of housing rehabilitation projects • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting • Residential in-fill development opportunities • Future problems may arise with industrial uses, need to improve buffer • Residential in-fill development opportunities • Optimist Park
9	A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many larger homes with historic qualities • Neighborhood lacks unity • Some waterfront parks on south end, but no centralized neighborhood park • Strong encroachment pressures from industrial, institutions and downtown that result in neighborhood quality problems but would benefit from local services • Residential in-fill development opportunities • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting
10	A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited housing in this neighborhood • Waterfront homes, some with historic qualities • Pine Grove Park and Thomas Edison Park • Need to define line between businesses along Pine Grove and the abutting neighborhood



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Table 10: Neighborhoods Evaluation		
#	Survey Rating *	Overall Conditions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit cut-through traffic through road closures • Some residential in-fill development opportunities
11	A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixture of older housing styles • Limited impacts from abutting industrial and commercial, but a future concern near Lapeer Ave • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting • Isolated from other neighborhoods • Nearby commercial • No parks or other unifying elements • Residential in-fill development opportunities
12	C Some A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite low condition rating, neighborhood possesses key components • Maintenance needed of sidewalk, street trees and lighting • Buffers needed between industrial to the west • Lacks unifying elements • Not a definitive transition from commercial to neighborhood along Lapeer Ave and Water St
13	Some A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of neighborhood is downtown non-residential uses • Residential blocks at Huron and Glenwood are suffering from poor transition to downtown • Homes along Military are in good condition • Residential in-fill development opportunities
14	A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area possesses traditional neighborhood qualities • Housing styles vary, mostly small bungalows and 1950s to 1970s architecture • School and park sites • Would benefit from unifying elements • Sidewalks, street trees and lighting in good condition • Commercial encroachment along Lapeer
15	A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area possesses traditional neighborhood qualities • Housing styles vary, mostly small bungalows and 1950s to 1970s architecture • Sidewalks, street trees and lighting in good condition • Commercial encroachment along Lapeer requires focus to create a defined boundary • Lowest ratings found along 10th Street and at Lapeer • Some residential in-fill opportunities • Has a totlot, but needs a neighborhood park and would benefit from this type of unifying element
16	Some A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many older, historic homes as part of first neighborhood areas for preservation • Greater mixture of uses than other neighborhoods with less defined land use boundaries • Lowest ratings along 10th Street and 6th Street • Residential in-fill opportunities • White Park, but needs more unity • Improved connections to the downtown are needed • Sidewalks, street trees and lighting in good condition
17	A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little B and C, lowest ratings found along Bancroft which abuts industrial • Has a totlot, but needs a neighborhood park or some other unifying element • Maintenance of sidewalks, street trees and lighting • Housing styles vary, mostly small bungalows and some older ‘farmhouse’ style homes with prominent porches, some historic qualities



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Table 10: Neighborhoods Evaluation		
#	Survey Rating *	Overall Conditions
18	Some A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest ratings along 10th St • Has a totlot, but needs a neighborhood park or some other unifying element • Maintenance of sidewalks, street trees and lighting • Housing styles vary, mostly small bungalows and some older ‘farmhouse’ style homes with prominent porches, some historic qualities
19	A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest ratings along Beard abutting railroad track • Haynes Park • Residential in-fill opportunities • Lack of unity due to mix of land uses • Isolated from quality convenience commercial uses • Improve connection to downtown and other neighborhoods
20	Some A Some B Some C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most properties were either A or C, little in between • Residential in-fill opportunities • Knox Field and Renaissance South Park • Neighborhoods are negatively impacted by industrial operations • Isolated from quality convenience commercial uses • Improve connection to downtown and other neighborhoods • Large, older home styles with prominent front porches
21	C Some A Some B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential in-fill opportunities • Lincoln Park and Turnout • Neighborhoods are negatively impacted by industrial operations • Isolated from quality convenience commercial uses • Improve connection to downtown and other neighborhoods • Large, older home styles with prominent front porches
<p>* Footnote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Rating A: neighborhoods that had 0 to 1 site actors • Survey Rating B: neighborhoods that had 2 to 3 site factors • Survey Rating C: neighborhoods that had 4 or more site factors 		

NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1 The city of Port Huron will continue to offer unified, well-organized residential neighborhoods that provide a traditional, livable environment for the city’s residents.

Objectives

- a. Establish defined neighborhoods based on their character, history, and orientation, and develop specific improvement and organization strategies that apply to those areas.



- b. Offer conveniently located supportive land uses consistent with the *Land Use chapter* such as small scale retail, parks, and schools.
- c. Target property maintenance code enforcement and rehabilitation efforts in those neighborhoods experiencing declines in residential building and site maintenance; in the residential locations contiguous to downtown; and along primary (residential) streets leading into downtown.
- d. Require non-residential facilities within neighborhoods to comply with property maintenance codes, design guidelines, and performance standards that are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
- e. Continue to offer and expand housing improvement programs that support maintenance and ownership of housing in the city.
- f. Further develop the city's historic preservation regulations to protect the heritage of its neighborhoods.
- g. Evaluate traffic speeds and patterns in residential areas and address problems where needed.
- h. Develop design standards for in-fill housing sites within existing residential neighborhoods.

Goal #2 New residential development in the city will be compatible and integrated with the character of Port Huron.

Objectives

- a. Require neighborhood enhancements such as parks, open space, linked street and sidewalk systems, street trees, lighting, and other neighborhood amenities.
- b. Develop street design standards that ensure new streets are consistent with existing neighborhoods.
- c. Integrate affordable housing while retaining the traditional character of the city.
- d. Link new residential areas to commercial and other destinations in a manner that promotes a safe and walkable environment for pedestrian travel.



NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT

As described in the beginning of this chapter, the plan delineates 21 residential neighborhoods (*Neighborhood Planning Areas Map*). Each neighborhood was examined pursuant to the specific enhancement needs. These are shown on *Table 11*. A priority rating was also assigned. Neighborhoods with zero to three enhancement concerns were given a low priority rank of three. Those experiencing four to five needs were assigned a moderate priority rank of two. Neighborhoods with six or more needs were classified as high-priority rank of one.

Table 11: Neighborhood Improvement Program

Neighborhood	Property Maintenance Needs			Neighborhood Development Needs						Priority Ranking
	Junk/Debris Removal	Exterior Building Maintenance	Targeted (Block) Rehabilitation	Streetscape Enhancement	Land Use Buffers	Historic Preservation	Development Opportunities	Neighborhood Park or Landmark	Downtown Linkage	
1					•			•		3
2						•				3
3			•							3
4	•	•								3
5		•		•						3
6			•	•	•	•				2
7	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		1
8	•	•	•		•		•			2
9			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1
10				•	•	•	•		•	2
11	•				•		•	•		3
12	•	•	•	•	•					2
13		•	•			•	•		•	2
14	•	•	•	•	•					2
15	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		1
16		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1
17		•	•	•	•			•		2
18		•	•	•	•			•		2
19	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		1
20	•	•	•	•	•		•			1
21	•	•	•	•		•	•			1



Property Maintenance Improvement Recommendations

Several basic strategies/programs may be employed to address issues that are related to property maintenance.

- Codes and Ordinances. Where regulatory deficiencies exist in current codes and ordinances, the city should consider adopting appropriate property maintenance codes. Efforts should be extended to both owner and renter-occupied properties.
- Enforcement Practices. In the event sufficient regulations exist, the city should review its enforcement policies and procedures to identify ways in which to improve regulatory enforcement of existing laws.
- Municipal Civil Infraction Ordinance. The city should investigate the implementation of its municipal civil infraction ordinance.
- Annual Neighborhood Beautification Programs. The city should continue to host annual or bi-annual beautification efforts providing for the ‘free’ curbside removal of trash, debris, appliances, etc.
- Removal of Junk Vehicles. Given the presence of a relatively large number of junk vehicles, the city should (on a one-time basis) consider coordinating efforts with a local salvage dealer to provide for the on-site pick-up of junk vehicles at limited or no cost to the home owner or tenant.
- Housing Rehabilitation. The city should continue to target funds to specific ‘paint-up, fix-up, and clean-up’ efforts focusing on exterior painting and porch repair.
- Community Newsletter. As part of a city newsletter and web site, the city should continue to provide information on existing codes and ordinances, clean-up efforts, rehabilitation and other housing assistance programs.
- Infrastructure Maintenance. It is imperative that ‘surface infrastructure,’ such as streets and sidewalks, be regularly inspected and, as necessary, improved.



- Protective Services. Historically, the city has made significant efforts to increase the levels of positive exposure and interaction of members of the Police and Fire Departments with city residents. The city must continue to support interaction between public safety officers and its citizens.
- Traffic Calming. The perception of “neighborhood livability” is strongly influenced by such factors as traffic volumes and speeds. Refer to *Appendix 7* for strategies on how to calm traffic in the city’s neighborhoods.
- Community/Neighborhood Reinvestment Programs. Continue to work in coordination with local lending institutions and realtors and explore the availability and application of neighborhood investment/reinvestment programs.
- Maintenance of Anchor Facilities. Anchor facilities in a neighborhood with schools, parks, and religious institutions must be well-maintained.

Neighborhood Development Recommendations

In order to address issues raised related to Neighborhood Development Needs included in *Table 11*, the following are recommended:

- Land Use Buffers. Where identified issues in a neighborhood relate to encroachment of businesses into the residential area, greater emphasis is needed on providing buffers between such uses. These include any combination of treatment such as a wall, landscaping, or decorative fencing.
- Neighborhood Parks or Landmarks. Some of the neighborhoods lack a central gathering place for residents. These are important to encourage interaction between neighbors and create a greater sense of community. This is typically provided in the form of a neighborhood park or some other type of landmark.
- Downtown Linkage. Careful attention should be given to stringent property and building maintenance code enforcement for neighborhoods near downtown. Conversely, commercial properties within downtown abutting residential sites



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should adhere to high-quality site beautification and maintenance standards as developed by the city in the form of code and ordinance regulations.

- Streetscape Enhancements. The public streetscape within neighborhoods consists of a number of elements: the roadway, sidewalks, street trees and street lighting. Where streetscape enhancements are needed, the following elements are important:

- ✓ Local residential streets should be of sufficient width for on-street parking.
- ✓ Streets that carry higher volumes than local streets may need to be wider.
- ✓ Street trees must be within a five to eight foot boulevard and spaced every 40 feet.
- ✓ Sidewalks are needed along all streets and at least five feet wide.

- Housing In-Fill. Where in-fill development or redevelopment is proposed, the physical composition and orientation of the

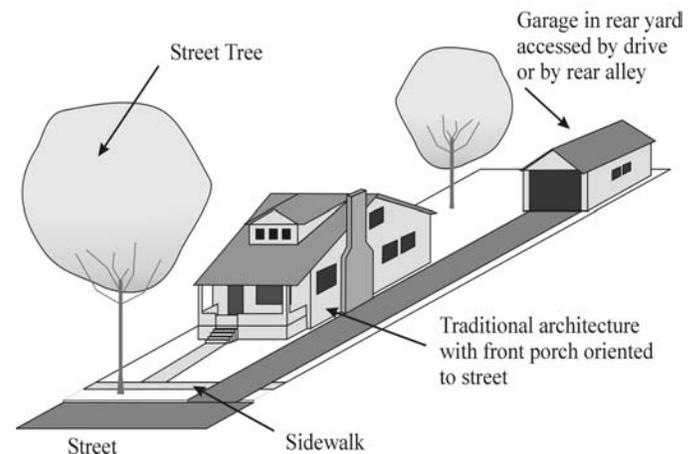
homes must be compatible with nearby homes.

This should include the following home design elements:

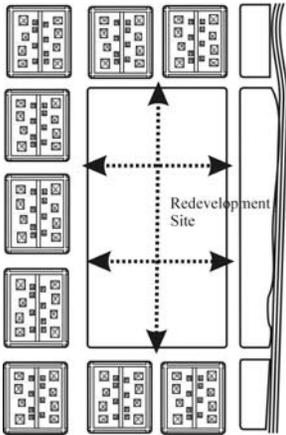
- ✓ Architecture and scale
- ✓ Window proportions and design
- ✓ Façade articulation
- ✓ Building and site details
- ✓ Building materials and color
- ✓ Building orientation and setbacks
- ✓ Minimized appearance of garage doors



Traditional Lot Configuration



Create new block structure that provides linkages with existing.



- Street System Extensions. Neighborhoods need an integrated circulation system that conveniently links with surrounding neighborhoods. When new street extensions are proposed in neighborhoods the following must be considered:

- ✓ Create reasonable walking distances.
- ✓ Connect with existing road network.
- ✓ Create small residential blocks.
- ✓ Avoid cul-de-sacs.

- Historic Preservation. The city of Port Huron has a wealth of historic resources, including a number of historic residential areas. Preserving these resources within downtown and various neighborhoods provides numerous benefits. The plan supports the following strategies for ensuring city wide historic preservation:

- ✓ Provide information, guidelines, and technical assistance to homeowners.
- ✓ Offer local funding for home improvements and rehabilitation.
- ✓ Raise public awareness about the importance of the city’s historic resources.
- ✓ Expand the role of the Historic District Commission to accomplish objectives.
- ✓ Prepare a complete inventory of historic resources in the city.



- Proper Placement of Neighborhood Businesses. Allowing businesses in neighborhoods can be a positive component to a neighborhood by providing conveniently located services. It can also negatively impact neighborhoods through improper screening and encroachment. Regulations are needed to ensure negative impacts do not occur and address the following:

- ✓ Sufficient site size
- ✓ Residential style architecture
- ✓ Access management
- ✓ Screening between uses



Neighborhood Condition Survey

- A= 0-1 Site Factors
- B= 2-3 Site Factors
- C= 4 or more Site Factors
- Roads
- Water
- City Limits

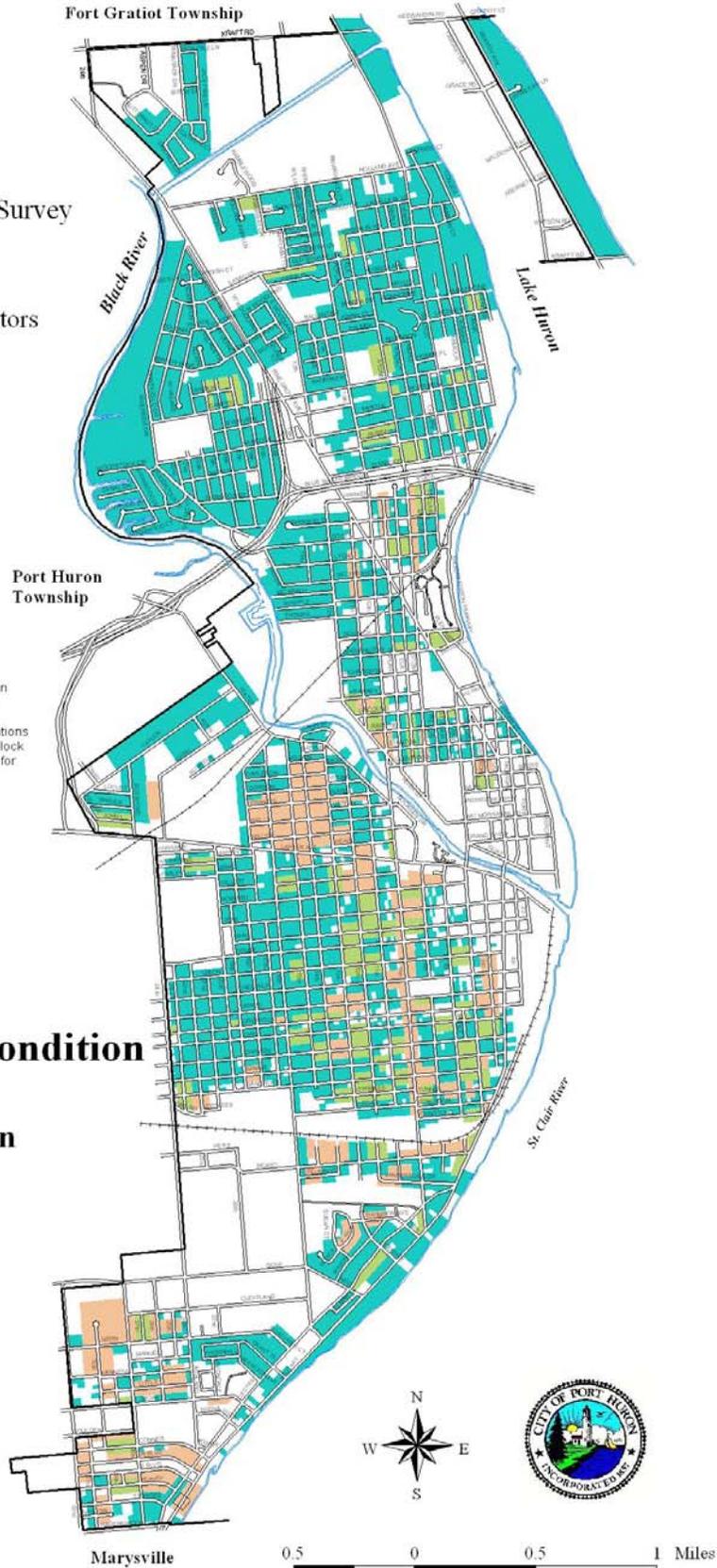
Note:
 This survey was conducted on a block by block basis and does not specifically identify the condition of a particular home on the block. Each block was given an overall rating based on the frequency of observed site factors for the entire block. Observations were limited to the front and side yards along the block as seen from the street. Please refer to chapter 4 for a more specific discussion of the site factors and conclusions.

Neighborhood Condition Survey Map

The City of Port Huron Comprehensive Plan

December 2002

Source: 2001 Field Analysis

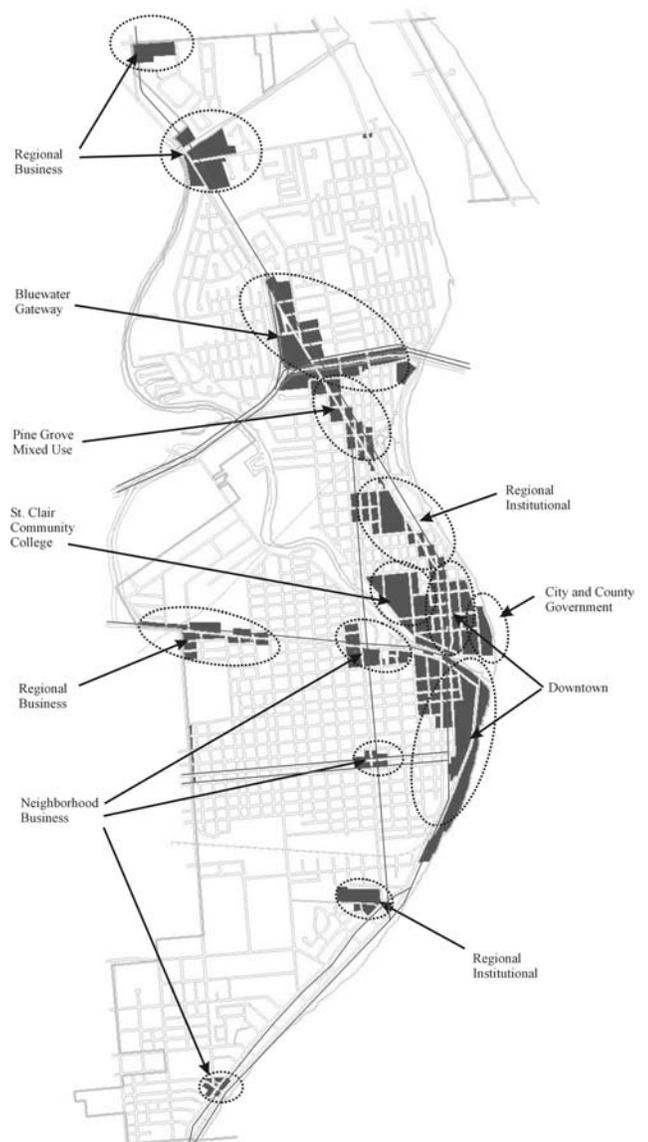


CHAPTER 5: COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER FRAMEWORK

The various business districts in the city provide a range of services that meet specialized needs. This is a result of the time period each area developed, the types of uses in each area, and the relationship of each area to the transportation system and the city overall. Conversely, there are unifying elements that tie the business districts together: the major street system and downtown. The presence of these two elements makes it easy to plan the commercial districts as one defined system. This system is illustrated in the attached graphic. Each area is labeled with different categories consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as follows:

- *Downtown*
- *Regional Business*
- *Blue Water Gateway Business*
- *Pine Grove Avenue Mixed Use*
- *Neighborhood Business*



COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1 Port Huron will offer distinct commercial business districts separate from the downtown at key locations along the city’s major transportation routes that serve the commercial needs of adjacent neighborhoods and create distinct character.

Objectives

- a. Maintain a strong general commercial base to serve city residents, tourists, visitors, and nearby communities.
- b. Integrate small scale neighborhood businesses near residential areas to offer convenient shopping for residents.
- c. Provide a high-quality entrance to the community at the Blue Water Bridge.
- d. Create a *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business* district that encourages businesses to serve travelers crossing the USA/Canada border.
- e. Develop a proper development plan for the mixed-use area along Pine Grove Avenue between the Blue Water Bridge gateway and downtown.
- f. Promote development of an overall marketing plan for all commercial districts.

Goal #2 All commercial development sites will promote the character of Port Huron and offer a pedestrian-friendly environment for residents.

Objectives

- a. Adopt design guidelines tailored to the different business districts possessing themes that unify/link with the city as a whole.
- b. Include site design elements in development guidelines such as landscape enhancement, screening, building design, lighting, and signs.



- c. Develop an effective review system and guidelines for upgrades to existing sites.
- d. Promote site design that is safe for on-site pedestrian circulation and access.
- e. Follow multi-modal improvement recommendations as outlined in the *Transportation chapter*.
- f. Require efficient parking design that is safe and minimizes the amount of paved surface.
- g. Promote the application of barrier-free features to commercial sites and buildings as a means of encouraging greater site use.

Goal #3 Downtown Port Huron will continue to develop and thrive as the focal point for city development and activity.

Objectives

- a. Determine the types of businesses that can be supported in downtown and enhance the synergy of uses.
- b. Maintain “anchor” services in downtown, including financial, governmental, cultural, and similar facilities and operations.
- c. Accommodate the greatest range of small-scale retail and service businesses, including specialty retail and services.
- d. Concentrate retail and entertainment opportunities in defined sectors.
- e. Integrate public/institutional areas for events and people to gather.
- f. Allow residential development downtown to create ‘around the clock’ activity.
- g. Meet parking needs in conveniently located, concentrated areas.
- h. Support economic development efforts as recommended in the *Economic Development chapter*.
- i. Support a full promotions calendar, utilizing water assets and the character of the area.
- j. Support a marketing theme and promotional activity for downtown.
- k. Encourage collective marketing and advertising and develop a cooperative marketing and advertising program.



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- l. Recruit appropriate businesses for which there is a market that will enhance the area's ability to attract local and visitor trade.
- m. Develop a policy toward capital budgeting that promotes reuse of downtown dollars drawn for downtown development.

Goal #4 Downtown Port Huron will offer a walkable, livable environment that is a desirable place to shop, work, live, and play.

Objectives

- a. Maintain the boundaries of downtown at a walkable scale.
- b. Encourage residential dwellings within and abutting downtown.
- c. Maintain sidewalk widths along the street front to accommodate pedestrian activity and other uses such as sidewalk cafes.
- d. Provide sidewalk connections between business, residential, and parking areas.
- e. Promote the application of barrier-free features to commercial sites and buildings as a means of encouraging greater site use.
- f. Maintain and expand the enhanced streetscape throughout downtown.

Goal #5 All other key areas of the city will be linked to the downtown area to unify key assets and to generate more activity where desired.

Objectives

- a. Improve the physical link between downtown and waterfront.
- b. Create a marina/entertainment district as a subarea of downtown.
- c. Connect pathways and green space to neighborhoods and associated neighborhood businesses and civic uses.
- d. Link downtown with the recommended *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business* area.
- e. Improve way finding signs to direct visitors to downtown, historic neighborhoods and other areas of interest.



DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

Downtown Port Huron is home to a variety of uses that make up a range of activity centers. The entire downtown should be developed and maintained to be mutually supportive of each other.

- Huron Avenue. Huron Avenue should be maintained with specialty retail and other commercial uses such as restaurants on the ground floor along the Huron Avenue frontage. It is important to maintain the continuity of commercial uses along the street frontage to maintain a high degree of pedestrian activity and interest. Off-street parking lots should not be allowed along Huron Avenue and non-retail uses such as office or residential should be directed to upper stories.



- McMorran Boulevard. 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 Complex. The existing center landscape median should be continued the entire length of the road, thereby creating a landscaped corridor.



South of the McMorran Complex there are two city blocks occupied by a large surface parking lot. This open lot creates a void in the ‘building wall’ that lines McMorran Boulevard. This parking lot should be evaluated for redevelopment opportunities that will complete the ‘building wall’ and address the potential for additional parking, retail and/or residential uses.



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- Black River/Quay/Water Street. This area of downtown should capitalize on the Black River. A continuous pedestrian walkway and open space system should be maintained to allow the public to walk the length of the river through downtown. Waterfront uses such as marinas should be maintained and expanded to further support the area.
- Military Street. Military Street is the shopping and entertainment district south of the Black River and should be closely tied to the north side of the Black River. This area will continue to have a diverse mixture of uses, which should be strengthened by the redevelopment of the southside waterfront. It is important that the Military Street corridor develop as a distinct area that serves a unique function, while complementing activities on Huron Avenue. Streetscape improvements and way-finding signage are needed along routes leading into downtown.
- Southside Waterfront. The southside waterfront area is proposed for major redevelopment by Acheson Ventures. Redevelopment plans for this area include low, mid, and high-rise residential, a new harbor off the St. Clair River, a new YMCA, office and open space, and recreational uses including botanical gardens, parks, an amphitheater and maritime center. Development should be supported and connections to downtown improved.



- St. Clair River Waterfront. The St Clair River Waterfront is one of the key defining features of the city. As a principal amenity to the city, the waterfront should be maintained with public access and pathways and open space should be enhanced. “The Bridge to Bay Trail” is planned as a pathway that would stretch along the St. Clair River through the county linking communities along the river by a regional recreational pathway. Efforts to complete the Port Huron segment of this pathway must be supported and enhanced for improved access.



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- Parking. Parking is provided in downtown by on-street parallel parking and off street parking lots. Public parking demands in relation to the number of parking spaces provided in the downtown should be studied to establish feasible improvement and redevelopment opportunities.
- Downtown Residential Development. Additional residential development should be encouraged in the downtown to increase and diversify activity. Housing types should include town houses, high rise apartments and loft apartments above first floor retail space. Another option for developing additional residential use in downtown would be the development of student apartments to replace the current practice of converting older homes to rental units.

REGIONAL BUSINESS

Although somewhat isolated from the commercial districts in the city, these areas serve an important regional shopping function for both the city and nearby communities. It is an important objective to link this commercial district with the city's other commercial areas. In addition to improved overall design, this area should be distinguishable as a 'Port Huron' commercial district and should entice visitors to continue south along Pine Grove Avenue to explore all the city has to offer. The *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business* area is located along Pine Grove Avenue and could easily be connected to other nearby districts through signs and streetscape features.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE GATEWAY

Located at the entrance to the city for those traveling from the expressway, the *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business* area plays an important role as a 'front door' to the community. Its importance takes an even higher level when considering it is also a gateway to the State of Michigan and the United States for those entering from Canada. Site enhancements, building design and entry signs should be used to create a welcoming environment for visitors provide a positive, lasting impression of their experience in Port Huron. In addition, way-finding features are important to entice visitors to other points of interest in the city.



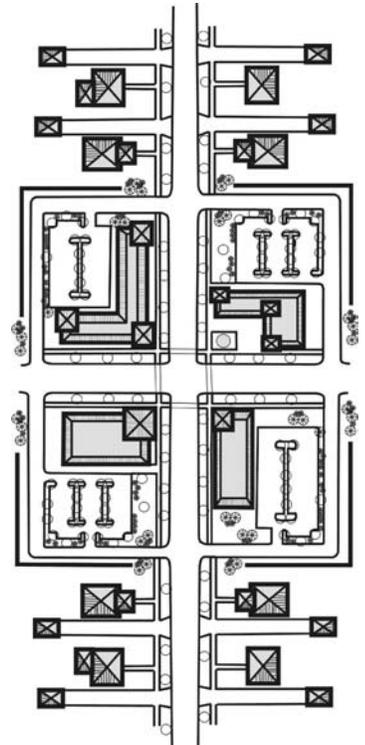
PINE GROVE AVENUE MIXED-USE

A separate land use category has been established to guide development along Pine Grove Avenue between I-94 and Washington Avenue. As described in the *Land Use chapter*, this area is a transition between the *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business* and downtown. Enhancements and treatment of these sites should attract visitors into the nearby downtown. It is important to promote high-quality development that begins to stimulate activity and interest leading into downtown. Uses are encouraged to include neighborhood commercial, office, and medium and high-density residential.

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS

Dispersed into four different areas of the city on the south side, *Neighborhood Businesses* provide shopping opportunities for surrounding residential areas. Important development considerations for neighborhood businesses are:

- Street Network. *Neighborhood Business* areas need to be tied into the grid street network of the neighborhood so that they can be integrated and accessible by residents.
- Streetscape Improvements. Improvements to neighborhood businesses should focus on the streetscape including building entrances situated at the street front, wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and decorative lighting.
- Pedestrian Friendly Environment. The buildings need to be set close to the sidewalk with parking to the side or rear. The façade of the building facing the street needs to include pedestrian entrances, windows and high quality architecture.



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- Intersection Design. The design of the intersection, the orientation and placement of buildings, and the treatment of building corners can strengthen an intersection and contain and support increased activity. Pedestrian paths cross at intersections where options for travel routes increase.
- Neighborhood Identity. Neighborhood businesses should use unifying features that create an identity for each particular business district.
- Building Size and Placement. The size of buildings needs to be limited to reduce negative impacts on the neighborhood. Buildings need to be set back further from adjacent residential lots to allow more sunlight into residences.
- Building and Site Design. Building forms and materials should be used that respect the character of the surrounding area. Rear parking and loading areas need to be screened from adjacent residential zones by screening walls or dense landscaping.
- Lighting. Lighting must be designed to ensure minimal impact on adjacent residential areas as a result of glare or light spillage. Lighting needs to be directed downward and shielded to confine light to the site.



GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES – COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

There are several elements of site design that work together to achieve the desired character. Design guidelines begin with a general framework that can be applied to all commercial districts in the city. Consistent application of design guidelines will ensure continuity throughout the community and establish a clear sense of identity. These standards should apply to all new construction projects seeking approval from the city, and some redevelopment and expansion projects,



depending on the level of site improvements proposed. There may also be opportunities for private developers to work together with the city to accomplish these improvements when work involves both public and private land. Among the four commercial district types, there are specific design issues relative to the unique conditions that exists in those areas. These are summarized below:

Streetscape

A ‘streetscape’ is the overall view and impression of a road corridor that is defined by improvements such as buildings, landscaping, and sidewalks located along the immediate edge of both sides of the roadway, and the design of the road itself. The impression of the streetscape often defines the character of a commercial district and is the ‘seam’ that ties the area together. Thus, each streetscape area should be consistent and create a unique ‘sense of place,’ or indication of arrival to a commercial district.

Building and Site Design

To achieve continuity in the commercial system, certain basic standards should be adopted that reflect the desired impressions of the city. These include quality and type of building materials, scale of building, and detail of architecture. The architecture should also respond to context, the surrounding landscape, and use. These features should be more detailed in buildings within the *Pine Grove Avenue Mixed-Use* and *Neighborhood Business* districts to reflect a high-quality residential character. In the *Regional* and *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business*,



site design should focus on minimizing the mass of buildings and emphasize the entrance to buildings.

Landscaping

Site landscaping should be consistently developed to maximize the amount of green space. The landscape plan should provide planting areas that will enhance the site and provide ample internal green space. Within the *Regional Business* and *Blue Water Bridge Gateway Business* districts, sites are larger and can accommodate large planting areas and more often need those enhancements. Within *Downtown*, *Pine Grove Avenue Mixed-Use* and *Neighborhood Business* areas, sites are smaller with buildings being predominant, therefore less landscaping, if any at all, is needed to maintain the residential character.

Buffering and Compatibility

Because of the compact mixed use urban land use pattern, measures to ensure compatibility between uses are vital. Landscape plantings should be incorporated to screen and buffer incompatible uses and activities. Where parking and loading areas adjoin residential uses, screening walls should be provided. Commercial site lighting also needs to be evaluated to ensure that all light fixtures are directed downward and prevent the spill of light onto adjoining properties.

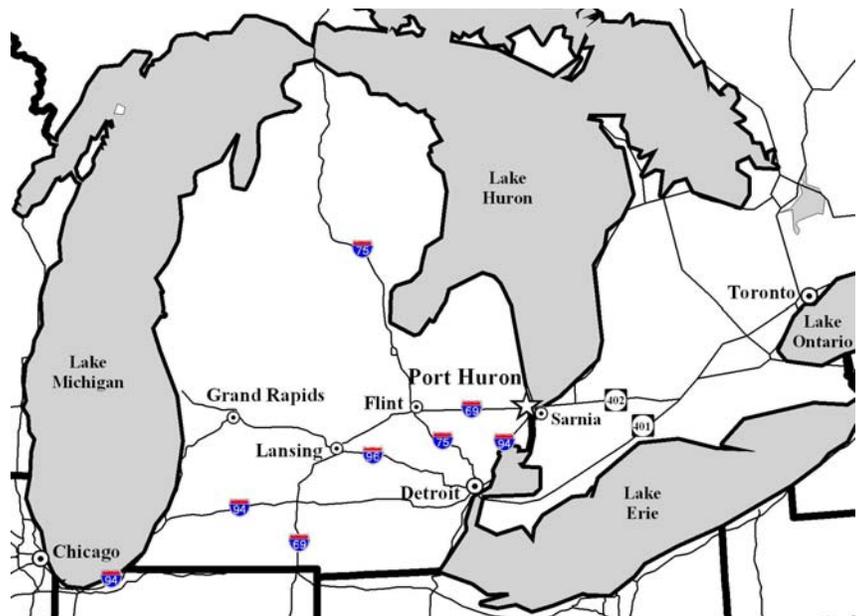




CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Economic development is a fundamental component of a community. Much activity and land use is associated with the purchase of goods and services or the importation and exportation of goods, services, and jobs from the community. Non-residential development is also very much part of the backbone and cornerstone of tax revenues in a system largely dependent upon real estate.



Port Huron can take advantage of its key location in the overall region for economic development. The Blue Water Bridge is the second busiest border crossing between the United States and Canada. The border crossing through Port Huron is a key link in the I-94/I-69/401/402 corridors between Chicago and Toronto. Also, Port Huron's close proximity to the metropolitan Detroit area plays an important role in economic development and tourism. With the many amenities of the Port Huron area, it is a good weekend get-away for visitors from Detroit.



As part of the economic development component of the plan, two types of analysis were performed in order to understand the composition of the Port Huron economy and to identify business “gaps” and opportunities for the city of Port Huron. To begin, a comparative assessment was completed that compares economic attributes of similar communities to Port Huron. Secondly, demand forecasting was conducted for retail and services based on the markets’ ability to purchase goods and services. *Appendix 6* of this plan includes the economic development analysis that describes these methods in more detail and provides the results of the analysis.

Due to its size and because, like many other communities, Port Huron is surrounded by other developed areas and the regional market has a direct relationship with the economic development of the city, the overall county business structure was analyzed. Based upon an understanding of the growth of the economy for the county, the market share of this growth for the city of Port Huron was then estimated. Conclusions were drawn that identified trends within the county, which represent potential opportunities for economic development within the city.

Summary of Findings

The city is perceived by some as not taking full advantage of assets that could create new economic niches. This is believed to be particularly true of the waterfront areas that were once industrial in nature, but today are void of significant concentrated activity. The quality of many structures within and adjacent to downtown are also concerns; historic and architectural characters have not been fully complemented.

The perception that visitor/tourism potential of Port Huron has not been totally tapped is an additional concern and that downtown has not aggressively sought or capitalized on the visitor trade.

It is also known that technology is changing the face of the economy in the country. It has become and will continue to be increasingly important that there be sufficient communications infrastructure and sustainable energy supplies to maintain and increase economic activity from both a practical and competitive perspective.

The results of the two economic development related analyses indicate the following:



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- The number of manufacturing businesses in St. Clair County was comparable to other comparison communities.
- There are a sizeable number of under-represented retail and related service establishments in Port Huron and the county when compared to other communities. There tended to be relatively fewer furniture stores, pharmacies, antique dealers, sporting goods stores, florists, art galleries and appliance stores within St. Clair County than the other comparison communities. These are appropriate for being situated in either a downtown or neighborhood-based commercial areas.
- A number of professional services and FIRE (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate) services that can create demand for office space are also under-represented.
- St. Clair County had relatively fewer restaurants and bars than the other comparison communities. Future demand is expected to result in significant additional growth that can be captured within the city. Concentrations of food service and entertainment are often focuses in successful downtowns.
- Automobile and related vehicle activity, such as auto dealerships, auto parts stores, gasoline service stations and auto repair uses, are under-represented in St. Clair County compared to like communities. However, due to the city being built-out with limited large general commercial areas available for development, space for auto-related uses within the city will be limited.
- Based upon growth in demand for both the county and city, there is the potential for the city of Port Huron and the immediate area to expand by about 290,000 square feet of retail and related services space. Port Huron's downtown and neighborhoods could potentially capture a significant portion of this additional space over the next few years. The largest amount of space would be associated with general merchandise. The city needs to work to attract as much of this space as possible to the downtown and surrounding neighborhood business areas.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following are the goals and objectives that will guide the city in developing a strong and complementary economic base. Some of the objectives are followed by more specific recommendations.

Goal # 1 Port Huron will use innovative resources for targeted redevelopment/revitalization areas to increase the desirability of business sites and recruit new businesses.

Objectives

- a. Support development of a business recruitment plan.
- b. Establish and maintain a data bank for vacant commercial properties for referrals to and from private commercial realtors and property interests.
- c. Utilize the resources of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and St. Clair County to assist with economic development.
- d. Utilize the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to assist with funding for redevelopment.
- e. Bring together a group of community business leaders (e.g. financial, real estate, industrial, commercial, etc.) on an annual basis for the purpose of offering constructive advice to the City on matters of economic development.
- f. Support and participate in the goals and activities of the I-94 International Trade Alliance and capitalize on the Blue Water Bridge border crossing.
- g. Implement the downtown development strategies of the *Commercial Districts chapter* of this plan and the Downtown Development Authority Plan to promote an economically viable and dynamic central business area.
- h. Enhance commercial corridors, through public-private partnership arrangements, the addition of quality streetscape elements, private reinvestment in appropriate design for private



property and development, other physical efforts, and marketing and promotion.

- i. Beautify major ingress and egress roadways in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation by enhanced landscaping, improved signage and improved quality of design.
- j. Focus business recruitment efforts on industries in which the city and county has an abundance of resources and favorable market position.
- k. Expand and maintain an aggressive recruitment effort for new businesses in complementary and compatible niches and areas of business activity, including those identified in this plan.

Goal #2 Port Huron will continue aggressive efforts to retain businesses within the city through a variety of methods that will support their needs and provide benefits that will enrich their investment.

Objectives

- a. Establish a cooperative effort between entities to contact business ownership to identify opportunities for reinvestment and needs of technical, financial and other such assistance.
- b. Provide information with respect to city business trends, possible incentives, assistance, new businesses recruited, expansion plans, etc. to all existing businesses through direct mail, the internet and other forms of communication.
- c. Redevelop areas near the waterfront for public and private sector use, while maintaining public access along the waterfront.
- d. Promote the formation of a cooperative buying group through which independent operations can obtain affordable building and renter related insurance, enhanced purchase prices for other commodities, to assist with maintaining or diminishing the cost of operation.
- e. Support efforts to encourage “in city” consumer spending and business to business spending.



Goal #3 **Port Huron will have a strong industrial presence for the city and region that also protects and promotes its heritage and character.**

Objectives

- a. Work with the Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County to recruit businesses.
- b. Designate areas for standard manufacturing, processing, and distribution businesses that could be developed as business parks and designed to be more integrated with the city, provided truck traffic and other impacts are mitigated.
- c. Enhance and slightly expand the existing business park in the south and limit to light industrial uses such as warehousing, light assembly, distribution, and research and development.
- d. Target an area for research/technology/large-scale office development near the downtown to accommodate higher employment and higher wage based businesses.
- e. Adopt design guidelines that are tailored to the different industrial districts, but which possess themes that unify/link with the city as a whole along with an effective review system and guidelines for upgrades to existing sites.
- f. Control truck routes to industrial areas, through traffic in the city and at the border to offer a direct route for businesses and at the same time protect residential and other development areas of the city.



Goal # 4 Year round tourism activities and destinations in Port Huron will continue to be an important component of the city's economy.

Objectives

- a. Encourage and expand convention facilities and hotels to attract additional conferences to the city.
- b. Encourage the development of additional hotels and bed and breakfasts inns.
- c. Preserve and enhance access/awareness of historical and cultural resources.
- d. Maintain and enhance views and access to Lake Huron, the St. Clair River and Black River for tourism, recreation and boating.
- e. Support festivals and weekend events to attract visitors to the city.
- f. Enhance linkages to key destinations for visitors such as the waterfront, museums, and cultural destinations.
- g. Support development of a marketing plan to increase awareness of the cultural, historic, and recreational amenities of the city and to attract additional visitors.
- h. Utilize the strength of the Blue Water Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and link with city boards and commissions, such as the Downtown Development Authority, to create a promotion council partnership.

Goal # 5 Economic opportunities will be created in order to attract and retain youth to live and work in Port Huron.

Objectives

- a. Maintain a student population to support businesses and services.
- b. Work with St. Clair County Community College to offer student housing.
- c. Promote student internships and job placement with the city and local businesses.
- d. Recruit and retain businesses that will provide local employment opportunities to local youth following college.



Goal #6 **New entrepreneurship opportunities and resources will be created in Port Huron to further generate an active business climate in the city.**

Objectives

- a. Support a high level of entrepreneurship activity focused on existing industries and others needed as identified in the economic development analysis.
- b. Support the establishment of an entrepreneurial development program that assists in guiding the development of quality business plans for people wanting to start businesses.
- c. Establish relationships and partnerships, (and promote new programs) through community colleges and universities represented in the area with existing entrepreneur programs.
- d. Support the development of a retail apprenticeship program to facilitate ownership changes for existing businesses and to promote new independently owned operations. Develop relationships with culinary institutions to recruit newly trained chefs to the area.

Goal #7 **Port Huron will support other economic development efforts and mechanisms that contribute to achieving the recommendations of this plan.**

Objectives

- a. Encourage partnerships between schools and businesses that raise technical and technology skills of residents through training and education.
- b. Expand partnership relationships with existing specialized education, federal, and state government institutions in and near Port Huron to encourage fostering expansion of private sector technology and related spin-off activity.
- c. Encourage development of internal on-site energy production systems for key areas, such as industrial parks and downtown.



- d. Encourage reuse of existing structures with character along the waterfront and downtown.
- e. Establish a set of city-wide design guidelines intended to promote efficient sustainable development.
- f. Develop and deploy emerging communications technology throughout the city.
- g. Develop and offer public/private incentives that are competitive within the region and nation to assist with recruitment of emerging technology based industries, entrepreneurial development, heritage tourism and specific industrial activity.
- h. Work in cooperation with St. Clair County and adjacent communities to encourage economic development for the region.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

The following discussion provides supportive information, recommendations, and resources that will be helpful in accomplishing the goals and objectives of this chapter. A more specific description of these tools is included in *Appendix 6*.

Recruitment

A business recruitment plan should be developed by the city, DDA, chamber of commerce, or other organization. The plan should include outreach to and through: trade organizations; trade publications; visibility at appropriate conferences (in partnership with others when necessary); cooperation with state, multi-state, and in-state regional efforts; web site linkages and materials dissemination; direct marketing to prospects via mail, the internet, other emerging technologies, and telephone; partnerships with complementary and compatible industry trade organizations; and promotion of the city as an ‘opportunity in waiting’ for entrepreneurs.

The recruitment plan should focus on area assets, including:

- Waterfront views and access
- Historic small town character of the central core of downtown
- Growth in demand for goods and services



- Proximity to Canada, Detroit, and other areas of Michigan
- Canadian crossing
- Quality of commercial corridors, highlighting select neighborhoods
- Specific downtown restaurants and retail establishments
- Quality of life opportunities, including nearby educational institutions; recreational facilities, such as beaches, marinas, golf courses; and other ‘perks’
- Close to major metropolitan area to gain access to major sports, entertainment and culture, but far enough from its issues and problems
- Limited availability of specific buildings and sites
- Community’s desire for enhancement through quality planning
- New waterfront development and other waterfront development opportunities
- Availability of infrastructure, including DTE Energy’s advanced sustainable energy development systems

The City can offer public/private incentives that are competitive within the region and nation to assist with recruitment of emerging technology based industries, entrepreneurial development, heritage tourism and specific industrial activity.

Tools

- Public Relations. Public relations (PR) awareness created within Detroit and Michigan professional communities will increase the effectiveness of direct marketing solicitations. PR activity includes submitting articles and “news stories” to appropriate organizational trade journals, local and regional press, etc.
- Advertising. Advertising selectively timed after the “news stories” have been received, reinforces the business advantages and availabilities.
- Targeted Publications. Targeted publications will be the same for both the public relations and advertising, including the major metropolitan daily newspaper’s business sections, the regional business journals and statewide business magazines.
- Direct Marketing. Direct marketing selects each sector individually and allows for strategic messages answering the top question for each businesses concerns:



What's in it for them? Regional and local real estate organizations are also qualified lead generators for recruiting business.

- Cooperative Partnerships. Cooperative partnership arrangements and strategic alliances provide the opportunity for reaching a greater number of customers through sharing of proprietary client lists as well as expenses.

- Community Outreach. Community outreach can be accomplished through the establishment of an 'Ambassadors Club.' This 10-minute presentation at local civic and professional organizations and county/city meetings promotes awareness and builds support for Port Huron's multi-faceted expansion plans, recruiting all attendees as potential business referrals and building goodwill among the residents and business community.

- Entrepreneurial Development Program. An entrepreneurial development program can be established that includes but is not limited to:
 - ✓ Identifying individuals with basic entrepreneurial skills and enhancing those skills through education and training
 - ✓ Assisting and guiding the development of quality business plans for those that are involved with the program
 - ✓ Forming a cooperative venture capital financing pool from commercial lending institutions
 - ✓ Assisting with identifying appropriate locations and space for the specific entrepreneurial endeavors.



Obtaining Leads

- Recruiting Manufacturers. Thomas Register is the ‘rule book’ of the manufacturing industry and provides a plethora of opportunities to reach potential manufacturing businesses.
- Recruiting ‘White Collar’ Activity. Finance, insurance, real estate, (FIRE) and technology driven entities have been identified as opportunity areas. Soliciting potential new business tenants, investors, owners and developers can be accomplished by inserting public relations articles as well as paid advertising into the publications, direct mailings and providing a promotional booth at trade shows.
- Recruiting Restaurants. Recruiting restaurants involves the same process as that used for recruiting ‘white collar’ activity. Use of existing organizations for marketing is the most cost-effective means available.
- Recruiting Other Retail. There are a number of effective ways to recruit retail. Probably the most cost effective though is to employ the identical process, using other organizations, to recruit activity to Port Huron.



Promotions and Attractions

Marketing, beyond recruiting businesses, also involves enhancement in sales and revenues for existing operations. In the broader Port Huron sense, this involves increasing critical mass of activity through recruitment and other activity. To select areas, such as downtown, it most often involves increased promotion and events or attractions to draw additional patronage or increased patronage. For downtown Port Huron, there is much potential associated with attraction of the larger regional market defined as visitors to the area from Detroit, Canada, or elsewhere. One event that currently draws a large number of visitors to Port Huron is the Port Huron to Mackinaw Boat Race. The following are other concepts that should be examined to enhance existing business through expansion of the patron base, market penetration, etc.

- Events with restaurants such as ‘taste-fests’
- Art shows
- Athletic or sports events
- Street performers and entertainers
- Special shopping and dining packages
- Events tied to local historic sites
- Music festival on the river front



With both summer and winter season ‘outdoor’ adventure and sports activities, Port Huron is an ideal family ‘getaway’ or ‘escape.’ The most advantageous marketing would be the development of a ‘monthly calendar of events’ used in advertising sent to media representatives for public relations and calendar listings as well as promotion through newsletters to identified social, civic and church organizations. Developing a family sports entertainment theme, with family restaurants, and family education and experiences, is a welcome ‘escape from Detroit’ at affordable rates.





CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

The provision of an integrated transportation system is intended to contribute to both a quality of life for residents and a desirable business climate. While the automobile is the dominant mode of transportation, Port Huron has progressed toward providing a balanced and coordinated “multi-modal” transportation system to accommodate ongoing change and development. Refer to *Appendix 7* for detailed information related to transportation conditions and recommendations.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS

To establish an efficient transportation system that incorporates all modes of travel, an understanding of existing conditions and types of facilities available is important. The following describes these elements and assists in formulating a multi-modal transportation plan.

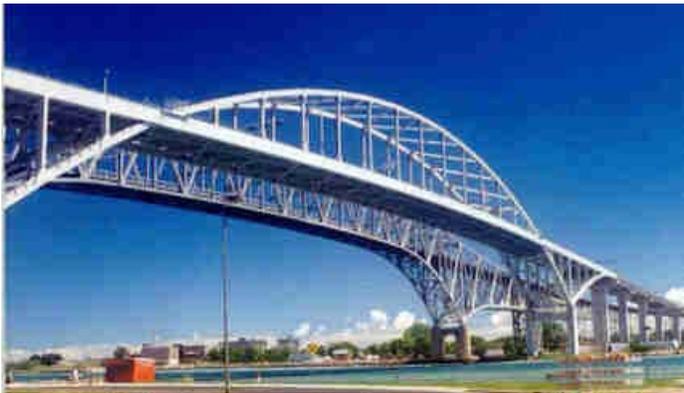
Public Streets. Public streets have two basic roles in the transportation system: providing a conduit for efficient movement of traffic and providing access to land uses that front on the streets. The majority of the street system is characterized by the traditional grid pattern found in many core communities. Both natural and physical features, including the rail lines, the Black River and I-94, have limited



the connectivity of the system to some extent. These conditions have created a few isolated segments of the city, however most land uses throughout the city are easily accessible from all areas. Elements that affect street improvement recommendations are listed below and some are illustrated on the *Transportation Conditions Map*:

- Jurisdiction
- National functional classification
- Traffic counts
- Crash statistics
- Community gateways

Blue Water Bridge and Border Crossing. The Blue Water Bridge is a major international crossing over the St. Clair River at the southern end of Lake Huron. The bridge links Port Huron, Michigan and Point Edward, Ontario and is one of the quickest routes between the Midwest and Ontario. The Blue Water Bridge



crossing is a large complex consisting of toll and inspection plazas at each border. Interaction with federal agencies such as Border Patrol, Customs and Immigration is part of routine border crossing procedures. As an important gateway, Port Huron should contribute to enhancing the efficiency and beauty of this important transportation element.

Transit Service. The Blue Water Area Transportation Commission offers bus service in the area, referred to as Blue Water Area Transit (BWAT). There are currently seven regularly scheduled fixed-routes within the City of Port Huron and Fort Gratiot Township. In addition to fixed-route services, BWAT offers a variety of accessory services to further support the use of public transportation in the area. These include on-call services, a shopper shuttle, and the Blue Water Trolley. Greyhound bus service is provided from the Greyhound station in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada.



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Air. The city is situated near a few major airports including St. Clair County International Airport, Detroit City Airport, Detroit Metro Wayne County Airport, and Bishop International Airport in Flint. This access is an important asset to the economic development plan for the city. Transportation links to the county airport should be considered to improve convenient to access for trucking and other services.



Water. Waterway connections listed below have greatly influenced and facilitated Port Huron's growth and success with industry, recreation and tourism and are an important asset in the city. Direct accessibility to these waterways includes boat docks, boat launches, marinas, and beaches.



- St. Clair River
- Lake Huron
- Black River

Rail. There are two active main rail lines in the city. The northern line runs northeast and southwest across the Black River. This line runs diagonally with the city's grid street pattern and can cause traffic congestion at rail crossings. The second line is on the south side of the city, running east and west just south of Bancroft Street. Industrial land uses are also served by this line. The rail line follows parallel with the street system with limited crossings. The Amtrak Station is located at the south side of this rail line on 16th Street.

Non-Motorized Transportation. This category includes sidewalks and pathways, and offers a method for transportation and recreation. Currently, non-motorized transportation facilities consist of a comprehensive sidewalk system



and a well-used walkway along a segment of the St. Clair River and the Black River. There are gaps in the system so an important focus for the city should be to maintain its existing system and complete gaps to expand accessibility.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following policies address the above factors and issues, and form the framework for the specific recommendations that follow these policies.

Goal #1 Port Huron will offer vehicular transportation design and function integrated with its surroundings and complements the city's development goals.

Objectives

- a. Plan for a road system that meets the demand of existing and future traffic while still maintaining the desired community character along major roadways.
- b. Upgrade the entryways to the city along with streetscape enhancements.
- c. Apply access management (driveway) standards to improve safety and efficiency of the road network.
- d. Maintain a connected street network between new development areas and the existing system.
- e. Slow traffic in residential areas and at the core of the various commercial districts as needed.
- f. Coordinate with multi-jurisdictional agencies such as the St. Clair County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- g. Develop a comprehensive approach to alley design, enhancement, and vacation that preserves this important transportation element yet protects the quality of the neighborhood.



Goal #2 An interconnected non-motorized pathway/greenway system will be integrated throughout Port Huron.

Objectives

- a. Prepare a pathway plan that identifies implementation priorities.
- b. Create pathway categories that define the type and location of pathway improvement such as on-street bike lanes, off-road pathways and greenway corridors.
- c. Develop a system that links together key areas of the community including: the entire waterfront (the Bridge-to-Bay Trail), downtown, neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, schools, civic and institutional uses, and other public activity nodes.
- d. Coordinate the pathway system with other elements of the city's transportation system including the bus route, trolley route, streets and waterways.
- e. Seek various funding opportunities for development of the system.

Goal #3 The city's multi-modal transportation system will be unified throughout the city to offer residents and visitors safe and enjoyable transportation alternatives.

Objectives

- a. Facilitate coordination between different transportation agencies.
- b. Create a transportation systems plan that illustrates the links between pathways, buses, train, automobile and watercraft.
- c. Provide stations for modal transfers to other regional modes of transportation such as bus, passenger rail or watercraft.
- d. Link all key areas of the city with all modes of transportation and improved signs.
- e. Incorporate regional connections to the system.
- f. Increase and improve efforts towards waterway transportation.
- g. Continue to offer an efficient and comprehensive public transportation system.



TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The options of vehicular, water, non-motorized and bus travel have been unified in the *Transportation Enhancement Plan Map*. This plan identifies a linked system so that visitors, residents and workers can conveniently access all areas of the city. Each of the various components are summarized below.

Street Improvement Recommendations

Transportation Plan. The city should consider preparing a complete transportation plan for the city. Based on analysis of this data, more specific road improvements should be considered including road widening or narrowing based on traffic volumes and function, intersection improvements based on traffic volumes and crash data, opportunities to utilize new transportation technology, and a complete study of one-way pairs in the city.

Oak Street/Griswold Street. If it is determined that a one-way pair is not necessary, the streetscape should be widened to accommodate a wider sidewalk on both sides of the road, a boulevard and street trees. The feasibility of on-street parking and bike lanes should be considered and the remaining portion of the cross section should be preserved for two or three lanes of traffic.

Black River. Beginning in 1991, the St. Clair County Transportation Study studied the options, feasibility and ramifications of a new bridge crossing. The study completed in 1994 indicated eight alternatives. The majority of the alternatives are proposed in other communities within the county primarily because that is where growth is occurring and where there is less infrastructure to contend with. The city should assist the county in finalizing this analysis and determining the optimal route.

Primary Gateway Enhancements. Primary and secondary gateways into the City are indicated on the *Transportation Conditions Map*. These gateways are in need of significant enhancement to make a dramatic statement that one has arrived in the City of Port Huron. Such enhancements include:



- A “Welcome to Port Huron” sign
- Enhanced landscaping including street trees and flowerbeds
- Ornamental features such as lighting, benches and banners
- Extended gateway treatment along the roadways for one or two blocks
- Military Street enhancement features should incorporate a waterfront or maritime theme
- Oak Street enhancement features should reflect the historic neighborhoods and lead people to the downtown
- The gateway features of the Pine Grove at 24th Avenue and the I-94 connector need to grab attention and reflect Port Huron as a high quality community
- Signs and enhancements should showcase the city’s assets including the history, culture, waterfront, and downtown

Secondary Gateway Enhancements. Secondary gateways are not as commonly utilized to enter the city. They do, however, require enhancement of a less dramatic scale than the primary gateways but are consistent in design and character.

Access Management. Access management is defined as comprehensive controls over all aspects of roadway access for the purposes of minimizing conflict points and preserving the roadway’s ability to carry traffic. The lack of these types of regulations and standards increases the potential for traffic congestion and crashes. Access management involves a series of tools to reduce traffic conflict points including:

- Number of driveways
- Service drives
- Shared driveways
- Parking lot connections
- Location and spacing of driveways



Speed Control in Neighborhoods. An important concern expressed at the various public meetings was high traffic speeds within residential neighborhoods. The most effective method applied in other communities began and ended with community involvement. Neighborhood associations should work together identifying speed problems in neighborhoods and putting forth recommendations to the city of Port Huron Traffic Study Committee (TSC). Where traffic calming is determined to be the appropriate solution, a variety of physical measures can be considered:



- Speed humps, dips and tables
- Street narrowing, slow points, chokers and channelization
- Landscaping features
- Angle points or chicanes
- Medians, landscapes islands and traffic circles
- Intersection diverters
- Street closures
- Entry signage or perimeter treatments

With any traffic calming program it is important that the system-wide cause of traffic problems be fully assessed so that traffic calming measures are not simply addressing symptoms or relocating the problem to another street.

Alley Vacation. Within many of the city's neighborhoods, there has been a recent increase in requests to vacate alleys. Alleys are a valuable circulation component for neighborhoods and for public services. They are also an important component to the historic, traditional design character of Port Huron's neighborhoods. In general, alley vacation should not be encouraged in order to protect this character. It is important however for the city to assist in meeting the modern needs and concerns of residents. A multi-faceted program is recommended and generally includes the following elements:

- Establish review criteria for alley vacation requests.
- Develop design solutions to resolve alley problems.
- Initiate city organized alley planning and improvement efforts.
- Develop associated alley regulations.



Multi-Modal System Improvement Recommendations

Refer to the *Transportation Enhancement Map* for the proposed unified multi-modal system for the city of Port Huron. The following is a brief description of its components.

Sidewalks and Pathways. The sidewalk and pathway segment of the plan includes three different cross sections to serve their intended function. These cross sections are described below along with their relationship to other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Sidewalks – five foot wide or greater sidewalks
- Multi-Modal Paths – six to eight foot wide sidewalk
- Greenway Pathway - eight-10 foot wide pathway

Bus Routes. The plan indicates a linkage between established routes and the other modes of travel offered in the city. The city should continue to work in collaboration with the transit authority so the system can respond to changing needs and new development projects.

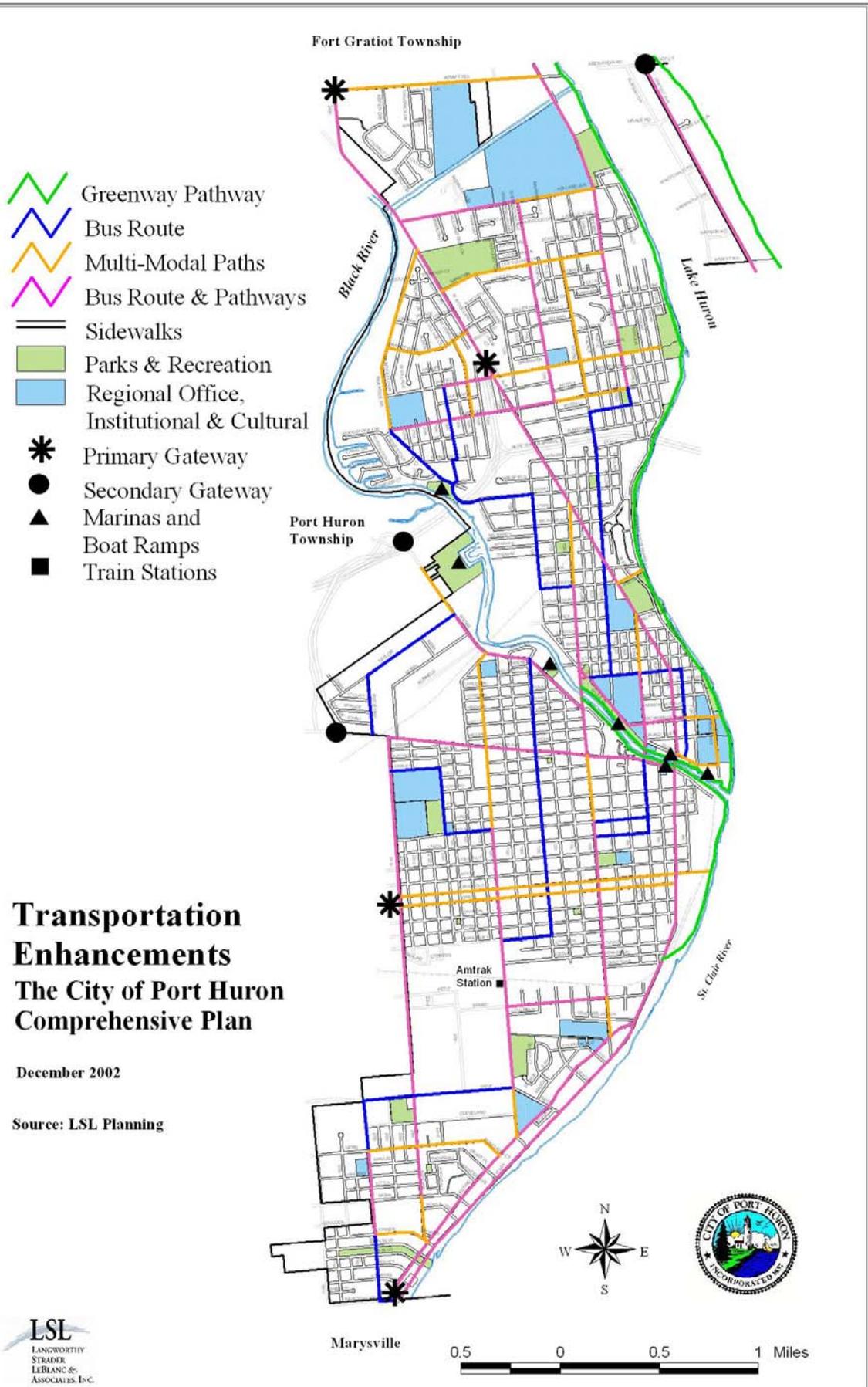
Bus Routes and Multi-Modal Pathways. In instances where there is an important link to a community facility, connection to an additional transportation mode, or along key transportation routes, the bus route and multi-modal pathway routes overlap.

Water Access. The pathway and bus routes ensure multi-modal links to key water features and access points. The plan incorporates connections to boat launches, beaches, marinas, important views, and open spaces.

Rail. The multi-modal plan links sidewalks, pathways, and bus routes to the train station. Although near the middle of the city, the train station serves as a gateway to the city and enhancements at the train station are encouraged.







Transportation Enhancements

The City of Port Huron Comprehensive Plan

December 2002

Source: LSL Planning



CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The city of Port Huron offers a range of public facilities to its residents and businesses. 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.

EXISTING PUBLIC FACILITIES

The following is a listing of the public facilities and services that are crucial to the continual operation and success of the city of Port Huron:

- City departments: e.g. Planning, Recreation, Assessor and Public Works
- Elected City Council
- Appointed city boards and commissions: e.g. Planning Commission, Housing Commission, Traffic Study Committee
- Transportation: e.g. Michigan Department of Transportation, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission and St. Clair County Transportation Study
- Public Utilities: e.g. water, sewer and storm water treatment systems



- Public Safety: e.g. police department, fire department and emergency management division
- Schools: e.g. Port Huron Area School District, St. Clair County Community College, satellite classrooms for Baker College and Michigan State University
- St. Clair County: e.g. department offices, court house and library
- Hospitals and Medical Services: e.g. Port Huron Hospital and Mercy Hospital
- Recreation: e.g. parks, marinas recreation centers and programs.
- Cultural and Historic Resources: e.g. McMorran Place, The Port Huron Museum, Huron Lightship, Fort Gratiot Lighthouse and Edison Depot Museum



PUBLIC FACILITIES GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Upon analyzing the various factors and the detailed existing condition information, a framework is established for a number of goals and objectives on public facilities in Port Huron.

Goal #1 Port Huron will offer high quality and efficient public services for the city and region.

Objectives

- a. Expand budgets for public safety (e.g. more manpower, equipment).
- b. Increase visibility of public safety through beat and/or bike police officer and neighborhood patrolling.
- c. Develop infrastructure capacity plans based on future land use/development plans.
- d. Keep pace with technology with regular upgrades to equipment and services.
- e. Develop a geographical information system for all aspects of the City including individual property information, utilities and transportation networks.



- f. Increase website services for the city.
- g. Increase signage and accessibility to public services and public safety resources.

Goal #2 The city will initiate efforts and improvements that will increase its desirability for new residents and businesses to stimulate new growth and development.

Objectives

- a. Utilize the Comprehensive Master Plan as a marketing tool.
- b. Prepare marketing plan/campaign for the city.
- c. Recruit developers for (re)development sites.
- d. Continue the streamline review and permit process allowing quicker review and approvals.

Goal #3 Existing park and recreation facilities will be enhanced and expanded as needed to meet the evolving interests and needs of Port Huron residents.

Objectives

- a. Follow and review the current Parks and Recreation Plan with regular updates every five years.
- b. Incorporate five-year Capital Improvements Plan into the city's budget.
- c. Explore funding opportunities for park improvements.
- d. Encourage volunteerism, neighborhood and garden club involvement for park clean-ups and for the maintenance of public areas containing landscaping (e.g. flower beds, etc.).



Goal #4 **Port Huron will have a unified community-based open space system that provides scenic access throughout the city and offers valuable opportunities for personal interaction.**

Objectives

- a. Link neighborhoods, cultural, historical, civic facilities, parks, pathways and other destinations and facilities through open space.
- b. Offer larger parks and public open space along the entire waterfront.
- c. Organize civic events in all areas of the open space system.
- d. Require and plan open space areas for new development sites and redevelopment projects.
- e. Focus on acquiring public waterfront access to link the regional Bridge-to-Bay Trail.
- f. Capitalize on utility and abandoned railroad corridors to create a linear open space system.

PUBLIC FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

- Administrative Structure. In the years following adoption of the Comprehensive Master Plan, it is important that all city departments coordinate, on a regular basis, the evaluation of the implementation status of this plan. It will also be helpful to designate one body to oversee plan implementation so there is one consistent resource. Regular “training” sessions should be held to ensure consistent interpretation of plan objectives, brainstorming, implementation strategies, and conflict resolution.
- Public Utilities. The city must continue to evaluate and assess the capacity and quality of the water and wastewater facilities. Planned land uses and economic development efforts should be incorporated into these assessments.
- Public Safety. The police and fire departments should continue to use their current programs and services to pro-actively increase the feeling of safety in neighborhoods and for local businesses. For all public safety elements, it is



important to remember that the more open and visible these departments and efforts are to the public, the more at ease citizens will feel.

- Parks and Recreation. The city prepared a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in February of 2001. This document guides future improvements, investments and changes to parks and recreation in the city. Future planning efforts must support the recommendations of this document.



- Institutional and Cultural Resources. Institutional and cultural resources are important in attracting businesses and residents to the region. Institutional and cultural resources should be showcased consistently as this plan is implemented. The Transportation Enhancement Plan in *Chapter 7* incorporates these facilities into the multi-modal transportation system to ensure convenient access.





Waterfront Parks & Recreation Facilities

- 1. Lakeside Park
- 2. Lighthouse Park
- 3. Thomas Edison Park
- 4. Pine Grove Park
- 5. Lincoln Avenue Turnout
- 6. Kiefer Park
- 7. Municipal Services Building
- 8. Sewage Treatment Plant
- 9. Lincoln Park Turnout
- 10. Fort Street Marina
- 11. Quay Street Dock
- 12. Southside Marina & Park
- 13. River Street Marina
- 14. 12th Street Boat Ramp
- 15. Waterstreet Marina
- 16. Riverside Boat Ramp

Other Parks & Recreation Facilities

- 17. Sanborn Park
- 18. Palmer Park
- 19. Gratiot Park
- 20. Mansfield Tot Lot
- 21. Optimist Park
- 22. White Park
- 23. 20th & Court Streets Park
- 24. 11th & Division Streets Tot Lot
- 25. 19th & Division Streets Tot Lot
- 26. Knox Field
- 27. Lincoln Park
- 28. 16th & Dove Park
- 29. Haynes Park
- 30. 12th & Jenks Tot Lot
- 31. Renaissance South Park

Schools

- 32. Cleveland Elementary School
- 33. Roosevelt Elementary School
- 34. Woodrow Wilson Elementary School
- 35. Harrison Elementary School
- 36. Garfield Elementary School
- 37. Crull/McKinley Elementary School
- 38. Port Huron South High School
- 39. Holland Woods Intermediate School
- 40. Port Huron Northern High School
- 41. Port Huron South High School & Athletic Facilities
- 42. St. Clair County Community College

Other Facilities

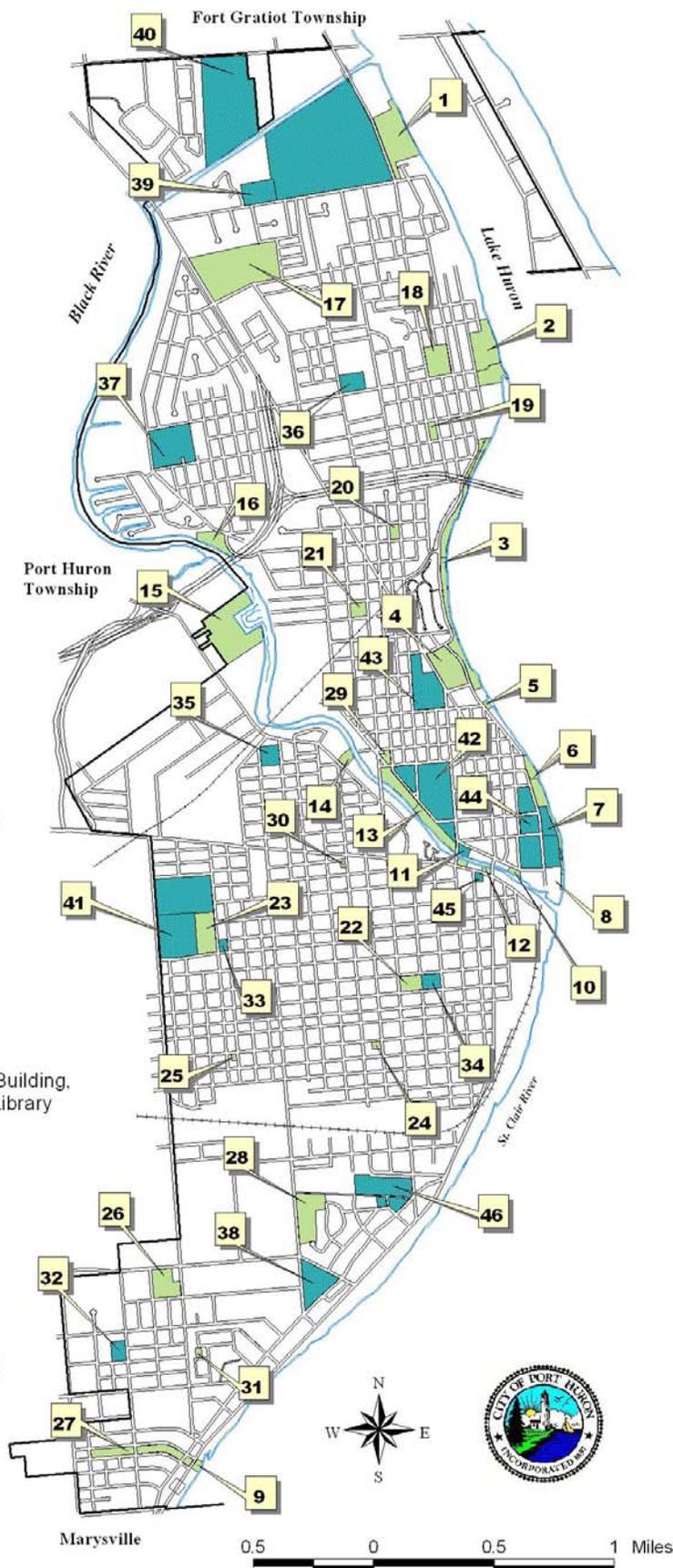
- 43. Port Huron Hospital
- 44. St. Clair County Administrative Building, County Court, County Jail, County Library
- 45. Federal Building
- 46. Mercy Hospital

-  Institutional
-  Parks & Recreation

Community Facilities
The City of Port Huron
Comprehensive Plan

December 2002

Source: City of Port Huron



CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION

Each chapter contained in this document provides information and analysis on the key issues facing the city of Port Huron. These areas include land use, neighborhoods and housing, business districts, economic development, transportation, municipal facilities, and services.

Following the analysis of each subject, goals and objectives were established as a foundation to guide the resolution of issues, implementation of ideas and to establish policies for decision-making. An important part in the development of these goals and objectives is that they all support each other, are inter-related and most of all, work together to achieve the needs and demands of the city.

The final chapter should be utilized as a resource to the city when they begin the implementation of the goals and objectives of this plan. Over time, the city may discover new approaches and opportunities that may alter this implementation plan. Changes are to be expected, however, the city must remain committed to upholding the integrity of the goals and objectives of the plan.

Zoning Map

A primary means of implementing the Comprehensive Master Plan is through amendments to the zoning ordinance and the official zoning map. This plan and the *Future Land Use Map* should be utilized for decisions on rezonings. In addition to the map, goals and objectives and other general recommendations related to land use should also be considered in all rezonings.



Zoning Districts

In addition to changes to the *Zoning Map*, amendments should be made to the various zoning districts, which may include the establishment of new districts, to implement the recommendations of this plan.

Design Standards

The plan recommends establishing a set of city-wide design guidelines intended to promote efficient sustainable development. The zoning ordinance should be amended to incorporate the design recommendations. Site design development guidelines or standards should address building design, landscape, screening, lighting, signs, pedestrian circulation and access management (driveway) standards. For residential development the ordinance should provide design standards for in-fill housing. New residential developments should be required to provide amenities to serve future residents such as parks, open space, linked streets and sidewalks system, street trees, lighting, and other neighborhood amenities.

Historic Preservation Ordinance

The city should further develop the historic preservation regulations to protect the heritage of its neighborhoods. Local neighborhood initiatives for formation of new historic districts should be supported where the criteria are met. The city may also provide information and guidelines for homeowners to assist owners of historic properties when making changes to their buildings.

Capital Improvements Plan

The city maintains and annually updates a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that provides prioritization of funding for capital projects. The CIP authorizes and provides the basis for control of expenditures for the acquisition of significant city assets and construction of all capital facilities. The CIP needs to be continually reviewed, with implementation monitored, and the plan updated for review and adoption on an annual basis as part of the city budgeting process.



Transportation Plan

This plan provides general recommendations to managing and enhancing the city's multi-modal transportation system. Additional planning by the Traffic Study Committee and the Department of Public Works should be conducted for specific transportation improvements, neighborhood traffic calming and non-motorized transportation. The city should continue to coordinate with the St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS), St. Clair County Road Commission, and the Michigan Department of Transportation on transportation improvements.

Parking Plan

This plan provides general recommendations on parking in downtown area. Certain underutilized surface parking lots in the downtown may be more appropriate for redevelopment with business, residential or office uses with parking consolidated in other locations or perhaps into parking structures. A specific parking study should be conducted for the downtown that ensures that municipal parking is efficiently provided to meet parking needs in conveniently located, concentrated areas.

Sign and Way Finding Plan

The city should consider developing a signage and way finding plan that recommends improvements to signage to direct visitors to the downtown, historic neighborhoods, and other areas of interest.

Property Maintenance Code

The city should continue to enforce the property maintenance code rehabilitation efforts in those neighborhoods experiencing declines in residential building and site maintenance in the residential locations contiguous to downtown and, along primary (residential) streets leading into downtown. Non-residential facilities within neighborhoods should also be required to comply with property maintenance codes, design guidelines and performance standards that are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.



Neighborhood Organizations

This plan recommends encouraging the establishment of neighborhood organizations and developing improvement and organization strategies that apply to those various neighborhood areas. The city should offer a variety of incentives to reward the neighborhood revitalization efforts.

Home Ownership Assistance Programs

The city should continue to offer and expand housing improvement programs that support maintenance and ownership of housing in the city.

Pathways Plan

This plan provides general recommendations regarding non-motorized transportation. The city should consider developing a detailed pathway plan that identifies specific projects and implementation priorities.

Parks & Recreation Plan

The city maintains a separate Parks and Recreation Plan that is updated every five years following Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requirements. This plan includes a five-year capital improvement plan that is incorporated into the city's budget.



Downtown Development Authority

The Port Huron Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was formed under the Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1974) for the purpose of revitalizing a business district. The law was drafted for renovating declining business areas, but there is no prohibition on additional land uses, such as residential or industrial, being included within a DDA district. The DDA, as a separate entity, creates a new source of financing for public improvement projects.

The city's Downtown Development Authority should continue to implement improvements to downtown. Projects may include improvements to sidewalks and other streetscape amenities. The existing Huron Avenue streetscape improvements may be expanded to other streets as funding becomes available.

Brownfield Redevelopment

The city currently has a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to assist with funding for redevelopment. The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority was formed under the Brownfield Act (PA381 of 1996) to facilitate the implementation of plans and to treat brownfield redevelopment zones. The authority may issue bonds, use tax increment financing to revitalize environmentally distressed areas, and authorize property acquisition and disposal.

Economic Development

The Comprehensive Master Plan includes recommendations for economic development, which includes preparing a marketing plan/campaign for the city, a business recruitment plan, and programs for assistance to new/small businesses. Recommendations for these plans are outlined in the *Economic Development Chapter* of this plan. These plans should be developed through a cooperative effort by the city, DDA, Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County.

