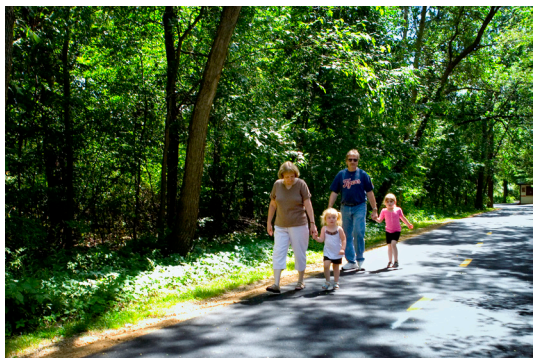
PORTAGE
2014 Comprehensive Plan







June 2014

PORTAGE
A Natural Place to Move

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY THE PORTAGE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

At a meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Portage, Michigan, held on the 19th day of June, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. local time at the Portage City Hall in the City of Portage, Michigan.

PRESENT: Patterson, Stoffer, Welch, Felicijan, Schimmel, Somers and Richmond.

ABSENT: Dargitz and Bosch.

The motion to adopt the resolution was offered by Commissioner Felicijan and supported by Commissioner Patterson.

WHEREAS, Act No. 33 of the Public Acts of the State of Michigan for 2008, as amended, mandates that the Planning Commission of a municipality prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of the municipality and fringe areas;

WHEREAS, the Portage City Planning Commission has prepared such a plan for the territory of the City of Portage; and

WHEREAS, after causing such notice to be given in the manner prescribed by law, and a public hearing having been held on June 19, 2014 in order to give the citizens of the City of Portage and surrounding areas an opportunity to be heard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, including the text together with Future Land Use Map and all other related maps, charts and graphic information, is hereby adopted in accordance with Act 33 of the Public Acts of 2008, as amended.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this action be recorded on the map and plan and descriptive matter by the identifying signature of the Chairman of the City of Portage Planning Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an attached copy of the plan be certified to the Portage City Council.

AYES: Patterson, Stoffer, Welch, Felicijan, Schimmel, Somers and Richmond.

NAYS: None.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

This plan is hereby approved and adopted by the City of Portage Planning Commission.

Paul Welch, Chairman

CERTIFICATION

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
)ss
COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO)

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting City Clerk of the City of Portage, Kalamazoo County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of said City, held on the 19th day of June 2014, the original of which resolution is on file in my office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 20th day of June, 2014.

JAMES R. HUDSON, City Clerk

Prepared by:
RANDALL L. BROWN
City Attorney
1662 East Centre Avenue
Portage, MI 49002

APPROVED AS TO FORM
DATE 5/27/14
CITY ATTORNEY

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Acknowledgements

This plan is the result of collaboration between city staff, city officials, planning consultants, and the public.

Planning Commission

Paul Welch, Chairman
David Felicijan, Vice-chairman
Wayne Stoffer, Secretary
Bill Patterson
Rick Bosch
Allan Reiff
Miko Dargitz
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Appendices

The following documents are published separately as appendices to this plan:

- *Community Snapshot Existing Conditions Report*
- *Public Participation Summary*
- *Lake Center Market Strategy*

1 INTRODUCTION

A. What is the Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan?

The comprehensive plan is a policy document created by the City of Portage Planning Commission to guide the future growth and development of the city. A sound master plan helps ensure that Portage remains a highly desirable place to live, work, or visit. This can be accomplished by preserving and enhancing the qualities of the city that the residents, businesses, and property owners consider important. The plan also allows the city to respond to new trends and approaches.

The comprehensive plan identifies and analyzes the city's physical elements to create a set of goals, objectives, and recommendations to direct decisions regarding future land use, neighborhood and transportation improvements, and special strategies for key areas in the city. Because the plan offers a balance between the interests and rights of private property owners with those of the entire community, it effectively assists city leaders in making substantive, thoughtful decisions for the community while considering long-term implications.

The authority to adopt a new Comprehensive Plan or amend an existing Plan is permitted under Michigan law, PA 33 of 2008, as amended. This law authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan which best promotes health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare. The Plan considers efficiency and economy in the process of development; including providing for the following:

- Adequate provisions for traffic
- Healthful and convenient distribution of population
- Good civic design and arrangement
- Wise and efficient expenditure of public funds
- Adequate provisions for public utilities and other public services

Public Act 33 also requires the Planning Commission to review the Plan every five years and determine whether to a) amend the plan, b) adopt a new plan, or c) leave the plan as is. In 2008, the Planning Commission concluded that each chapter of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and amended, where necessary, to address new issues, consider new ideas and confirm or revise existing goals and objectives. Changes included technical details such as updated demographics, public infrastructure, existing land use patterns and future land use. This update includes similar amendments, however this plan reorganizes the 2008 Plan into more concise chapters with the separately published Community Snapshot Existing Conditions and Public Involvement summaries.

The Differences between a Comprehensive Plan and a Zoning Ordinance

The comprehensive plan provides a general direction for future development, and while it does not change the zoning map or text applying to any property, one way the plan is implemented may be through zoning ordinance and/or map amendments. A comprehensive plan is flexible in order to respond to changing conditions and it is not a binding legal document. The Comprehensive Plan shows how land is to be used in the future; while the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land at a particular point in time.

This plan updates the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and uses City Council's Vision 2025 as its foundation for goals and recommendations.

The Zoning Plan (required by state law and included in the Implementation chapter) ties the Comprehensive Plan to the zoning ordinance by outlining how future land use categories relate to zoning districts.

Some of the differences between the master plan and the zoning ordinance are listed below.

Comprehensive Plan	Zoning Ordinance
Provides general policies, a guide	Provides specific regulations, the law
Describes what should happen in the future – recommended land use for the next 20 years, not necessarily the recommended use for today	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups	Deals only with development-related issues under City control
Flexible to respond to changing conditions	Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change

B. Overview of Process

Involvement of city officials and the public was obtained through a series of meetings with the Planning Commission and public input sessions. A public open house was held on October 2, 2013 to gain opinions and ideas related to the existing goals and objectives, the three Plan topic areas (Community and Quality of Life, Transportation, and Land Use and Character), and the Lake Center subarea. An additional input opportunity for the Lake Center area was given at a December 12, 2013 focus group meeting. Several opportunities were provided to react to the draft plan at Planning Commission meetings as well. These public input sessions allowed those interested to share their ideas and reaction to information presented in the Plan before the official public hearing was conducted. Public input was documented, and all comments were considered before the Plan was adopted. A complete summary of public involvement is included in the separately published appendix.

C. How to use the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding tool and provides the framework for land use decisions in the City of Portage. It should also serve as a basis for capital improvement decisions and programming, as funds are allocated for yearly work programs and tasks with outside sources of funds, such as grants, are sought for local enhancement and development activities. The following guidelines should be followed consistently for the best use of the Comprehensive Plan:

Refer to the Comprehensive Plan in all zoning decisions

Use of the Comprehensive Plan ensures that the desires of the community regarding future development are translated into action…one special land use permit, site plan approval, variance, or rezoning at a time. Those everyday decisions, collectively dictate the future of Portage. Specifically, Development Guidelines in Chapter 7: Implementation should be utilized when evaluating development proposals.

New in 2014:

- *Reorganized document with concise, forward-thinking plan document and separate appendix of existing conditions*
- *Revised transportation chapter reinforcing the City's commitment to Complete Streets*
- *Lake Center District subarea plan*
- *Zoning Plan in the Implementation chapter*
- *Updated Future Land Use map*
- *Revised goals, objectives, and recommendations*





Recent Accomplishments since the last plan:

- *Adoption of the City Centre Area Plan*
- *Construction activity rebounding since the recession*
- *Portage Public Schools bond millage resulted in several new school buildings*
- *South Westnedge/I-94 interchange improvements*
- *New Eliason Nature Reserve*
- *Several ordinance amendments to address issues from the last set of planning efforts*

2014 Community-wide Issues and Opportunities

The following list of community wide issues were identified through the public input process, including a public open house and Youth Advisory Committee meeting, as well as through city staff and consultant analysis. These issues are addressed in the following plan chapters as identified below.

	Plan Chapters		
	Community	Transportation	Land Use
Continue the investment to expand and/or enhance city parks, bikeways and multi-use trails with emphasis on connecting areas not served to the central/ existing system.	✓	✓	
Utilize Eliason Nature Reserve to its fullest potential and create connecting non-motorized links.	✓	✓	
Enhance gateways to the city, fully utilizing the new city brand "A Natural Place to Move" to contribute to a strong sense of community.	✓		
Create a complete streets policy that addresses multi-modal transportation elements including sidewalks, shared shoulder bike lanes, multi-use trails and connections to public transit.		✓	
Continue to improve non-motorized connections throughout the city that appeal to varied skill levels of existing and potential bicyclists through additional bike ways and trail connections.		✓	
Retain South Westnedge as a regional business anchor but continue efforts to improve traffic flow and safety.		✓	✓
Provide transportation guidance for locations identified as challenging such as intersections/crossings at Centre/Old Centre, Vincent/Oakland, among others.		✓	
Encourage more mixed-use developments, especially in the City Centre Area.			✓
Focus on maintaining and/or improving residential neighborhoods, especially older areas, by addressing vacant/foreclosed housing, property maintenance and building code compliance.			✓
Lake Center Area: Enhance Portage Road to be a vibrant, commercial corridor.		✓	✓
Define boundaries of the core South Westnedge commercial area and develop strategies to buffer from adjacent residences.			✓
Create aging in place opportunities to ensure Portage residents can maintain an active lifestyle throughout their lifecycle and by providing a variety of housing types to accommodate a variety of age groups, with a special focus on seniors.	✓		✓
Identify opportunities for commercial and industrial development at vacant parcels along Portage Road and Shaver Road.			✓
Form a strategy for conversion of greenhouses if transition to other uses occur.			✓

Encourage other decision-making bodies to use the Comprehensive Plan

Decision-making efforts of other agencies and adjacent communities can also be influenced through the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation policies and recommendations in this Plan can be used by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) during evaluation of potential changes along state highways. The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS), the agency designated by the state and federal government for area-wide long range transportation planning, can use the findings to help project future traffic, needs and funding. Other agencies, such as the school district, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and economic development groups, can reference this Plan during their planning and funding decisions. These agencies, to varying degrees, all have a role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Keep the Comprehensive Plan current

Comprehensive Plan recommendations and policies should be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Planning Commission to determine the level of program achievement. Appropriate amendments to the Comprehensive Plan should be made if circumstances in the community change.

Amend the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map and other city codes to implement the Plan

Recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented through amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map and other city codes. Care must be taken, however, to fully review and consider all ramifications of such actions. In some cases, recommendations in this Plan are long range, with the idea that implementation will be gradual. In other cases, recommendations focus on issues today and change may be more immediate.

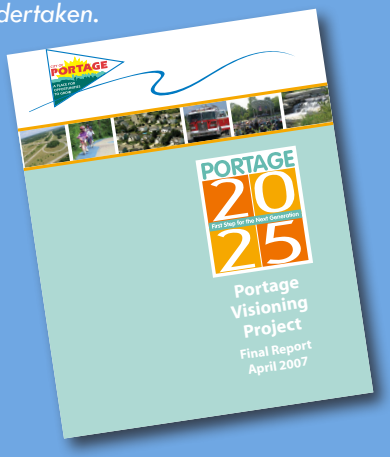
This plan is used by the City to guide policy related to the following:

- *Zoning Ordinance*
- *Zoning Map*
- *Reviewing development proposals*
- *Capital Improvements Plans*

Vision
Why?
↓
Goal/Objective
What?
↓
Tool
How?
↓
Implementation Strategy
Who? When?

Vision 2025

The vision and goals of this plan were guided by the City's Vision 2025 project, first completed in 2007. City Council and the City Administration review this document as short-term and long-term planning efforts are undertaken.



Goal
Throughout the plan, goals are highlighted in green.

Implementation strategies are highlighted in purple. For a complete list of implementation tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7.

D. Plan Vision

The City of Portage will be a world class community providing high quality city facilities and services, a range of housing options for all ages and incomes, a strong employment base, and vibrant commercial centers building on current assets for a sustainable future.

The following statements provide a vision for each of this plan's topic chapters. These statements provide a long-term overall vision that are further supported by more specific goals and objectives. The vision statements, goals, and objectives are meant to be used together, collectively outlining Portage's future guiding principles. Each of the following chapters elaborates on each topic, providing the tools and strategies to achieve the vision.

Community and Quality of Life Vision:

Provide for the health, safety and welfare of Portage residents, employees, and visitors and maintain high quality community facilities to meet projected changing needs, demographics and life styles, enhance the quality of life and promote a strong community identity.

Transportation Vision:

Create a safe, balanced, coordinated, and efficient multi-modal transportation system adequate to accommodate current and future needs in Portage.

Land Use Vision:

Maintain a well organized, balanced and efficient use of land at densities that

- *meets the current and future needs of the public,*
- *ensures compatibility and harmony among land uses,*
- *protects key natural and historic resources,*
- *complements the existing and planned capacity of streets and infrastructure, and*
- *sustains prosperity to support desired public facilities and services.*

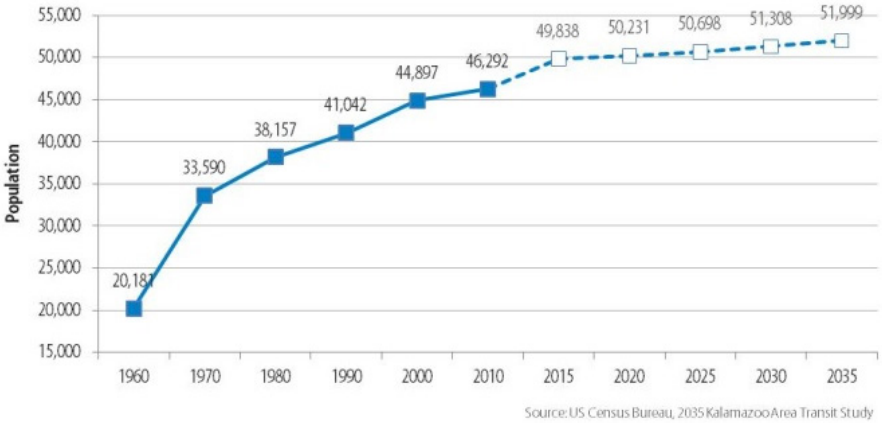
E. About Portage

Portage is located in southwest Michigan in the County of Kalamazoo, approximately half way between Chicago and Detroit. The City of Portage contains almost 36 square miles and is bordered by the City of Kalamazoo to the north, Pavilion Township to the east, Schoolcraft Township to the south, and Texas Township to the west. Regional accessibility to the community is provided by several interchanges along the US-131 and I-94 expressways.



The community is known to have a growing population, desirable housing, excellent schools, numerous shopping and recreation areas, proximity to a variety of post-secondary education opportunities, and an educated workforce.

Population Growth Trends: Historic and Projections



Source: US Census Bureau, 2035 Kalamazoo Area Transit Study

The city has also taken a progressive approach to economic development by providing unique opportunities for industries to grow and is the location of the largest manufacturing facility for Pfizer, Inc., a global pharmaceutical company, as well as several Stryker facilities, a leading medical instruments company. These characteristics, coupled with one of the largest employment bases in the region, make Portage a very attractive place in which to live, work and learn.

2 Community + Quality of Life





A. Introduction

There are many factors that support Portage's goal toward policies and practices that reinforce a healthy and desirable community. Some of those factors are influenced at the national or state level like the economy, while others are affected by the strength of the Kalamazoo/Portage region including quality education, stable or increasing property values, access to high quality healthcare, and employment opportunities. At the city level, there are additional factors such as quality police and fire protection, public infrastructure and city services, healthy and attractive neighborhoods, a variety of housing choices, recreation and cultural opportunities and non-motorized transportation networks that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

All of the above factors significantly influence quality of life and are covered in this chapter. These types of indicators are also important to the future and sustainability of Portage. A high quality of life in Portage will help retain and attract businesses and residents to sustain the vitality and diversity of its economy.

While the Transportation and Land Use + Character chapters also address topics that help achieve a high quality of life, this chapter focuses primarily on natural resources, parks and recreation, public infrastructure and services, and community placemaking.

Other important quality of life factors are undertaken by the city which are also detailed in the Community Snapshot Existing Conditions Report and other planning documents.

- *Parks and Recreation*
- *Capital Improvement Plan*
- *Housing and Community Development Needs*

Community + Quality of Life-related Opportunities

As noted in the Introduction Chapter, varied comments on community quality and life were garnered through the Open House and other public input. The following opportunities were identified relevant to the topics covered in this chapter:

- *Continue the investment to expand and/or enhance city parks, bikeways and multi-use trails with emphasis on connecting areas not served to the central/ existing system.*
- *Utilize Eliason Nature Reserve to its fullest potential and create connecting non-motorized links*
- *Enhance gateways to the city, fully utilizing the new city brand "A Natural Place to Move" to contribute to a strong sense of community.*
- *Create aging in place opportunities to ensure Portage residents can maintain an active lifestyle throughout their lifecycle and by providing a variety of housing types to accommodate a variety of age groups, with a special focus on seniors.*

As noted in the Community Snapshot Report, various trends and findings were presented. The following relate to community quality and life issues within the community:

Did you know?

- The City was originally known for its fertile farmland and agricultural production, but Portage is now known as a community of excellent residential neighborhoods, a regional retail trade center and a community with a substantial industrial base.
- In 2013, concurrent with the 50th anniversary, the City undertook a placemaking initiative to recognize community investments in parks, bikeways and trailways that distinguish the city of Portage as a "Natural Place to Move".
- The City experienced more than half of its population increase in the 1960's, but the population is expected to continue to grow, albeit at a slower pace, for the next 20 years.
- Like most other communities, the city has a growing senior population that will demand services, housing and transportation options.
- The City has a highly educated population: 95.4% of residents have a high school diploma and 38.9% or residents have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Portage has seven lakes that account for 1,732 acres or 7.9% of the geographic area of the city.
- As the newest addition to the Portage Park system, the Eliason Nature Reserve property donated in 2011 adds 123 acres to the City's extensive parks and open space land holdings. In 2013 an additional 18-acre parcel was acquired for inclusion in the Eliason Nature Reserve that provides access to Osterhout Road.
- The City's utility system includes 247 miles of water main and 231 miles of sewer main, covering approximately 95% of the city with public water and sewer.

In this Chapter:



Recreation and Natural Features



Cultural, Historic, + Educational Resources



Public Services



Community Identity

A complete documentation of existing conditions is included in the Community Snapshot Report.

Based on the Community Snapshot Report, public input and prior Comprehensive Plans, these Vision, Goals and Objectives were established related to community quality and life.

Vision: Provide for the health, safety and welfare of Portage residents, employees, and visitors and maintain high quality community facilities to meet projected changing needs, demographics and life styles, enhance the quality of life and promote a strong community identity.

Community + Quality of Life Goals and Objectives:

Goal C1: Preserve and provide natural, historic and cultural resources for the benefit, enjoyment and quality of life of existing and future residents.

- C1.1: Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and key natural and historic resources.
- C1.2: Link natural areas through greenways where appropriate, to maximize environmental, recreational benefits and non-motorized transportation alternatives.
- C1.3: Provide recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities by maintaining high quality parks and trails.

Goal C2: Efficiently provide, maintain and improve public services necessary to support the needs of existing and future residents and businesses.

- C2.1: Continue to be a leader and active participant in local and regional government leadership, seeking opportunities for cooperation to deliver better services to the community.
- C2.2: Provide safe and efficient public utilities, public facilities and public safety services.
- C2.3: Follow best management practices concerning storm water facilities to avoid flooding and protect/preserve surface and groundwater supplies.

Goal C3: Strengthen community identity so residents and businesses realize an enhanced sense of Portage as a distinct community.

- C3.1: Promote a sense of community through the "Natural Place to Move" brand to improve and encourage active and passive recreational opportunities fully utilizing cultural and recreational amenities.
- C3.2: Create friendly walkable business centers with inviting streetscape and quality site design that integrate with the existing commercial/retail district.
- C3.3: Promote the City Center Area's unique characteristics and potential as a walkable area and business center that connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues to the city's non-motorized system.
- C3.4: Enhance communication between local government, citizens, the business community, and the local educational institutions on city projects and services.
- C3.5: Encourage Portage neighborhoods to celebrate and reinforce the sense of their neighborhood as a distinct place in the city.

B. Community Resources

Natural Features

The natural environment is an important element that continues to shape the physical development and quality of life in the city. The importance of protecting and preserving valuable natural resources has been a community-wide goal since the city was established. The various components of the natural environment interact as part of an overall ecosystem. Natural elements such as streams, lakes, open spaces, woodlands and wetlands are a community resource that should be celebrated and preserved. In some cases, natural resources are protected by being on public lands or regulated by federal or state laws. Others can be conserved by directing development to areas on a site that can best sustain the physical changes to the landscape while minimizing impacts to the most sensitive natural resources. The **Natural Features Map** identifies lands within the city where there are unique or otherwise important resources, or where human activities could adversely impact resources on adjacent lands.

Goal C1:
Preserve and provide natural, historic and cultural resources for the benefit, enjoyment and quality of life of existing and future residents.

Land Resources and Greenways

Portage contains significant public land areas that have remained relatively undisturbed. Collectively, these areas are not only significant in size but also demonstrate a wide variety of natural habitats. Several kinds of grassland, woodlands, and wetland environments are found. Such environmental diversification results in a wide array of wildlife including a number of rare plants and animals, and significant populations of game animals such as deer and turkey. These natural areas provide educational, recreational, aesthetic, and wildlife preservation benefits with minimal maintenance costs.



Natural areas are primarily located in the southern half of the city. Lands in the vicinity of Hampton and Sugarloaf lakes are primarily under State ownership and are used as game areas. The Portage South Central Greenway includes Bishop's Bog, the West Lake Nature Preserve and the newly established Eliason Nature Reserve, which include large and wooded wetland areas under city ownership that preserve unique natural resources. In the southeast quadrant, Mandigo Marsh, also owned by the City, provides additional wetland areas and unique features.

Greenways also provide opportunities to protect natural resources and wildlife habitat by offering interconnected green space throughout a community. As noted above, the Portage South Central Greenway is an excellent example of a greenway, that together with connections to Schrier Park and South Westnedge Park, provides 450 acres of connected greenspace. In addition, Portage Creek Bicentennial Park highlights the creeks and related wetland areas along a three mile green corridor, also owned by the City. In this area, Portage has been a leader in developing trails and connecting its parks and natural areas, and should continue to plan for green connections in the future.

Best "Green Development" Management Practices

- *Reduces storm water runoff volume and improves storm water quality.*
- *Protects community character/ aesthetics.*
- *Reduces salt usage and snow removal on paved surfaces.*
- *Improves urban wildlife and habitat opportunities.*
- *Provides additional storm water capacity for nonconforming sites without modern detention facilities.*

Green Development: Best Practices

As a way of protecting natural resources and promoting overall sustainability, green development practices can contribute towards sustainability by ensuring that site and building projects minimize environmental impacts, resource consumption, and energy use, while simultaneously providing healthier living and working environments for people. Healthier environments not only attract residents and businesses, but have been shown to increase worker productivity, encourage healthy lifestyles that reduce medical costs, and build community stewardship. Portage can promote a green philosophy through education and promotion to encourage their use across the city:

- Native species used in landscaping
- Recycling/composting to reduce waste
- Water conservation and reuse
- Low-Impact Development (discussed below)
- Appropriately scaled and placed accessory wind or solar energy units (discussed below)
- Adaptive reuse of buildings
- LEED or other green building practices
- Encourage use of alternative fuel vehicles through parking priorities and charging stations
- Vehicle trip reduction programs such as encouraging use of carpools, transit, or telecommuting
- Providing non-motorized transportation opportunities
- Requiring bike racks on public and private development sites

In some cases, the City could provide incentives for projects that provide a high level of green development. For example, providing bicycle parking could require fewer parking spaces; adaptively reusing a building could provide more flexibility in use; or using Low-Impact Development tools and native species could reduce the amount of landscaping required.

Low Impact Development/Storm Water Management

Each (re)development site is required to manage storm water on-site in accordance with City of Portage Storm Water Master Plan and Design Criteria Manual. Connection to the municipal storm water systems located in the public road rights-of-way by adjacent private property is not permitted due to capacity and storm water runoff impacts. Traditionally, on-site

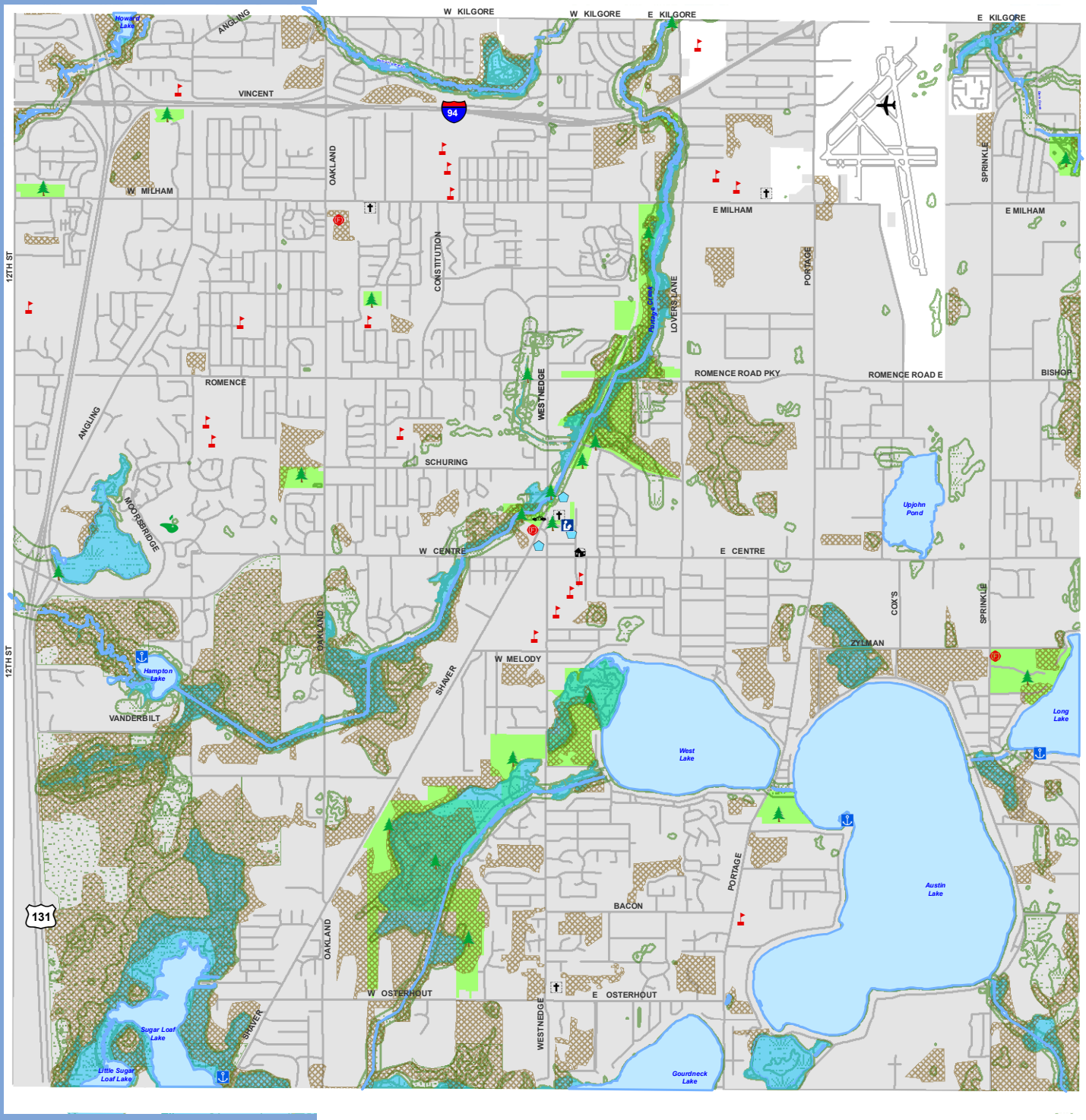


Example of bioswales treat runoff



Example of porous pavement and a rain garden

PORTAGE
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Natural Features Map

March 2014

Legend

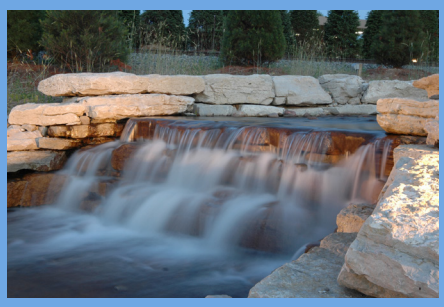
- City Parks
- Woodlots (> 10 acres)
- 100 Year Floodplain
- Wetlands, National Wetland Inventory (NWI)
- State Game Area
- City Boundary
- Water Feature
- Airport
- Public Access
- Golf Course
- Cemetery
- Fire Station
- Library
- City Park
- Public School
- Police
- Municipal
- P.C.O.C.

0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile

Sources: City of Portage, MCGI

storm water collection/retention systems have been designed utilizing a comprehensive underground collection system and pre-treatment facilities (when necessary) and infiltration by means of an above ground retention basin. Another more environmentally responsive strategy used to manage storm water collection and disposal involving both private development sites and municipal projects is through the use of Low Impact Development (LID) methods. LID is an alternative approach to development aimed at conserving natural resources and protecting the environment by strategically managing rainfall close to its source, minimizing impervious coverage, using native plant species, and conserving and restoring natural areas during site development or redevelopment. Design techniques are focused on the use of applications that are modeled after nature, rather than building costly infrastructure and water quality restoration systems.

While low impact design is encouraged wherever it can be applied, it is specifically warranted in areas where vegetation may be installed in lieu of impervious surfaces (i.e. pavement). It can be applied to open spaces, rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, and medians. In many cases, these beneficial design alternatives offer a significant long-term cost savings, even when factoring in some additional maintenance costs. Design options to consider include use of rain gardens, native plant species, street trees (i.e. Planter Boxes, Tree Pits), bioswales and pervious pavement.



Alternative Energy

Alternative energy refers to energy sources that are not based on the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas. The renewed interest in alternative energy resources is the result of undesirable effects of fossil fuel consumption including pollution and increasing cost of these non-renewable resources. While there are many alternative energy resources, three in particular are the subject of discussion in terms of application in southwest Michigan:

- Wind Power: Wind turbines can be utilized as small, stand-alone applications for residential homes or individual businesses, or they can be utilized in larger applications connected to a utility power grid. The City adopted a Wind Energy Ordinance to regulate placement and use of wind turbines.
- Solar Power: Solar heat and light provide an abundant source of energy that can be harnessed in many ways. A variety of technologies have been developed to take advantage of solar energy, both in large-scale commercial and industrial applications and in small-scale residential applications.
- Geothermal Energy: Geothermal energy sources include heat, hot water or steam reservoirs from beneath the earth surface. Geothermal pumps are relatively inexpensive and use much less energy than conventional heating/cooling systems while reducing air pollution. Larger scale use of geothermal energy accessed by drilling into hot water or steam reservoirs situated deep beneath the ground can also be utilized by power generation plants to drive generators and produce electricity.







Celery Flats Interpretive and Historical Center. A quaint, picturesque slice of the past is hidden in the heart of the city. The center features an 1856, one-room schoolhouse, a 1931 grain elevator, playground facilities, a picnic area, hiking trails and the Hayloft Barn Theatre.

Recreational Facilities

Parks and natural systems, such as stream corridors, woodlands, and wetlands, play a vital role in defining the city's quality of life. Public parks, nature preserves, greenways and other open spaces provide access to the outdoors for passive or active recreation. These recreational amenities encourage healthy active lifestyles and help retain and attract residents. High quality and healthy natural systems also help protect public health with clean water, uncontaminated soils, and diverse wildlife and plant communities.

Parks and Recreation

Numerous and diverse recreational opportunities are provided throughout the community. As noted in the Community Snapshot Report and shown on the **Community Facilities Map**, there are several different types of recreational areas/facilities including neighborhood, community and regional parks, nature preserves and cultural event facilities. The City currently owns and maintains 17 park facilities within city boundaries. In addition, Portage provides an extensive network of over 55 miles of paved shoulder bikeways and non-motorized multi-use trails. Such amenities are a valuable resource and contribute to the quality of life in Portage.

Community parks and open space account for the majority of the public land dedicated to recreational uses in Portage. Passive recreational areas not formally dedicated as parklands are classified as open space areas. The City's extensive parks and open space system is planned by the Parks, Recreation and Public Services department, and further addressed in the City of Portage 2013 Recreation and Open Space Plan. The complete Recreation and Open Space Plan is an element to the Comprehensive Plan and is updated, as needed, to 1) fulfill the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requirements for grant funding and 2) to ensure project priority as part of the annual Capital Improvement Program process.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Culture and entertainment is an important part of a community's quality of life and contributes toward Portage's unique identity. Cultural amenities include museums, historic resources, and access to the arts. Cultural resources shape the character of the city and a shared understanding of the past and future reinforces a sense of community.

The City of Portage is a distinctive city with a rich history. As provided on the Historical Sites Map included in the Community Snapshot Report, the city contains 40 historic district homes and/or sites. These homes and sites not only serve as monuments to the past, but enrich the aesthetic quality of the city today and offer unique contributions to the architectural quality and diversity of the community. The non-renewable nature of these cultural resources, however, reflects the need to ensure their preservation. The sites should be carefully taken into consideration when future planning decisions are made within these areas.

Resources Implementation Strategies

- *Consider incentives to encourage green development practices such as density bonuses, flexibility in uses, or reduced parking or landscaping requirements.*
- *Continue public awareness campaign for homeowners through ongoing promotion and working with neighborhoods and other organizations on what they can do to protect the quality of the lakes and other natural features.*
- *Continue the best management practices associated with site design to protect, lakes, streams, groundwater and well-head facilities, including low-impact design techniques.*
- *Continue to support the Environmental Board in their efforts and programs to protect and improve environmentally sensitive areas in Portage.*
- *Encourage planned development and/or cluster development to preserve key natural features on sites and link open space with adjacent open space, via greenways when and where appropriate.*
- *Continue to support the Historic District Commission in the effort to preserve historic structures and sites in the City of Portage.*
- *Protect water resources through management practices covering discharges into streams and lakes, storm water infiltration, and hazardous material spill prevention programs.*
- *Conserve key natural and historic resources through public acquisition, flexible zoning or tax incentives that encourage private preservation, public dedication, or adaptive reuse.*

C. Public Services

The availability of high quality public services influences the development and redevelopment of land, protection of natural features, recreational opportunities and enhances the quality of life in the community. The City of Portage continues to invest in the provision of public services and in partnering with other public entities to meet current and future demands. Public services offered in the community include:

- Public Utilities (sanitary sewer, storm sewer, public water and drainage improvement)
- Public Safety Facilities (police and fire services)
- Recreational Facilities (parks and recreational programming)
- General Government (City Hall, Public Services, and Senior Center)
- Library Facilities (operated separately from municipal services)
- Educational Facilities (operated separately from municipal services)

More detailed aspects of the above public services are addressed in the Community Snapshot Report and the location of key facilities, including parks, are shown on the **Community Facilities Map**.

Goal C2:
Efficiently provide, maintain and improve public services necessary to support the needs of existing and future residents and businesses.

Public Utilities

From a land use planning perspective, the location and type of public sewer and water systems influence the location and type of development within a community. For example, high density or more intense land uses require public water and sanitary sewer service. Certain types of projects have special demands for high capacity utility lines or high pressure water systems or even specialized electrical service. Decisions concerning the expansion of public utilities must be made in order to accommodate service demands, as well as development and redevelopment activities. Importantly, for Portage, connection to the public sanitary sewer system helps protect valuable ground and surface water resources in the city.

A long-standing goal of the City has been to extend public sewer and public water service throughout the city – approximately 95% of the city is served by public utilities. Programming for sanitary sewer, water and drainage improvements to meet needs is provided through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP is annually updated and includes ten years for planning/budgeting purposes.

Regionalism and Partnerships

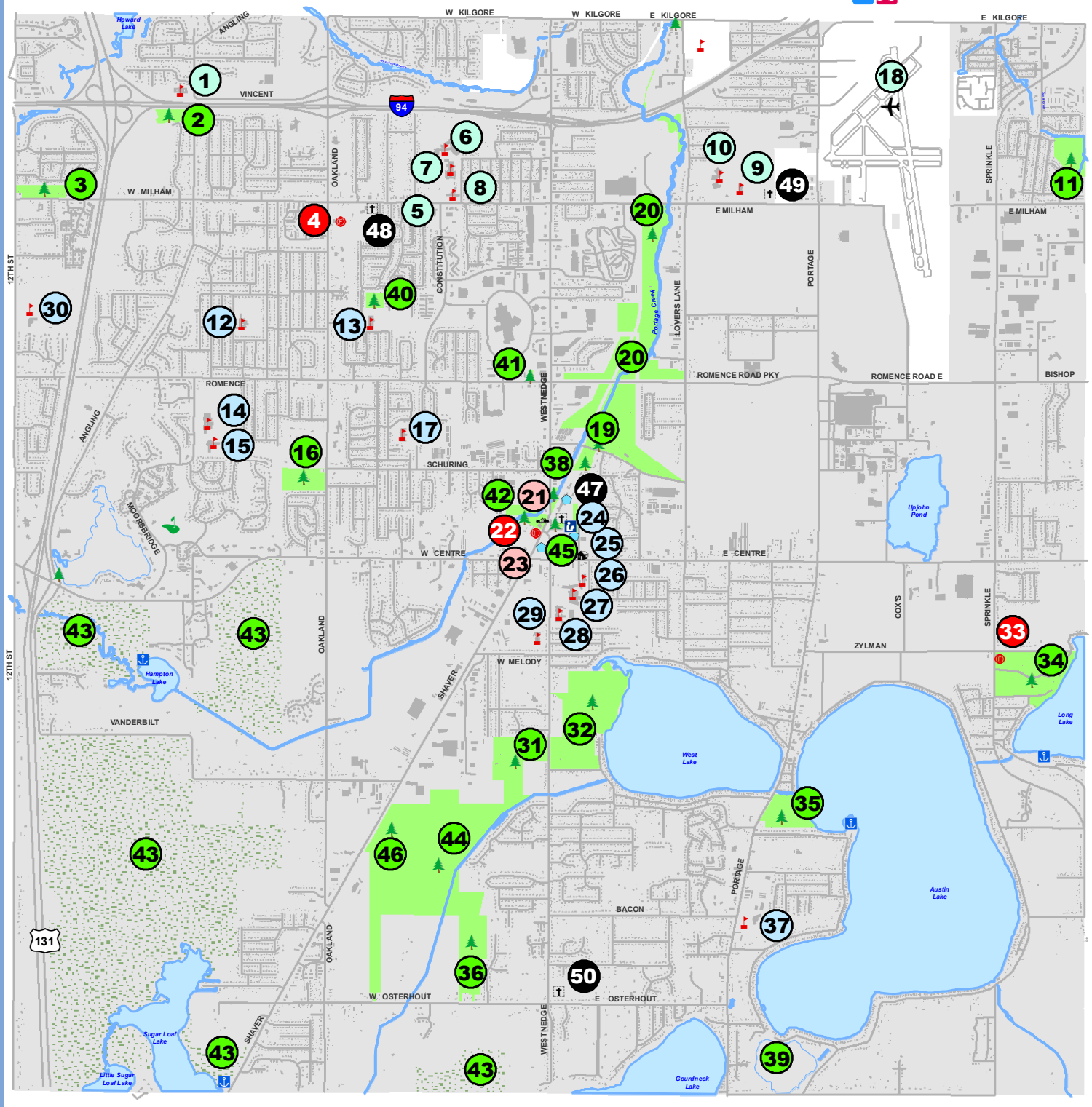
Along with Kalamazoo, Portage is the heart of the region's economy. Portage and its neighboring communities are all dependent on each other as a region so cooperation is essential. The proximity to Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University creates opportunities for partnerships between the communities, their educational institutions, and the diversifying technology, medical, and information industries to both leverage economic development and attract residents. Portage should continue to participate in regional environmental, transportation, economic, and social services coordination.

Public Services/Facilities Implementation Strategies



- *Consider the use of pervious pavement for appropriate uses and locations by raising awareness on long-term benefits, practical applications, and how to maintain it.*
- *Continue sidewalk and public utility (water, sanitary sewers and drainage) improvements in neighborhoods throughout the community.*
- *Encourage innovative storm water treatment options consistent with the Storm Water Master Plan and Design Criteria that are environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing.*
- *Ensure that municipal infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the demands necessitated by a proposed development project. This may require participation by the developer to fund improvements to meet the demands associated with a proposed project.*
- *Promote underground utilities (electric, telecommunications, etc.).*
- *Consider low impact design and other green development practices for city-funded capital projects where appropriate.*
- *Maintain and improve essential public services including police protection, fire and emergency services*
- *Modify or expand community facilities based on applicable standards and the changing needs of the city such as changes to demographics and types of land uses. This may include land acquisition when key parcels become available.*

PORTAGE
A Natural Place to Move



Community Facilities Map

March 2014

- Cemeteries
- Fire Stations
- Municipal Buildings
- Public/Institutional
- Recreation/State Game Area
- State Game Area Boundaries
- City Recreation Boundaries

0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile

Sources: City of Portage, MCGI

1 Angling Road Elementary School
2 Harbors West Park
3 Westfield Park
4 Fire Station #2
5 Post Office
6 Portage Northern High School
7 Portage North Middle School
8 Portage Community Education Center
9 Kalamazoo Regional Education Service Agency (KRESA)
10 WoodsEdge Learning Center (KRESA)
11 Lexington Green Park
12 Amberly Elementary School
13 Haverhill Elementary School
14 Portage West Middle School
15 Moorsbridge Elementary School
16 Oakland Drive Park
17 Woodland Elementary School
18 Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport
19 Celery Flats Interpretive Center
20 Portage Creek Bicentenial Park
21 Police Station
22 Fire Station #1
23 City Hall
24 Library
25 Senior Center
26 Portage School Administration
27 Portage Central High School
28 Portage Central Middle School
29 Portage Central Elementary School
30 12th Street Elementary School
31 South Westnedge Park
32 West Lake Nature Preserve
33 Fire Station #3
34 Ramona Park
35 Lakeview Park
36 Schrier Park
37 Lake Central Elementary School
38 Liberty Park
39 Mandigo Marsh
40 Haverhill Park
41 Millennium Park
42 Central Park/Bandshell
43 State Game Area
44 Bishops Bog
45 Veterans Memorial Park
46 Eliason Nature Reserve
47 Portage Central Cemetery
48 Day Prarie Cemetery
49 Indian Fields Cemetery
50 South Cemetery

D. Community Identity

There are many factors that can contribute to a community's sense of place as a distinct and unique community. The following touch upon recent best practices in regard to community identity.

Placemaking

The concept of "placemaking" is woven throughout this plan and supports a greater initiative statewide to promote healthy, sustainable, attractive communities where people can live, work, shop, and recreate across the state. Portage has re-branded the community as "A Natural Place to Move", and this recent effort supports the principles of placemaking by celebrating not only the city's desirable recreation and trailway systems, but also the community's balanced economy and local employment options, variety of housing choice and attractive neighborhoods and overall positive quality of life.

In this plan in particular, the City Centre and Lake Center subarea chapters delve more deeply into creating stronger "places" to help contribute to Portage's unique identity. These subarea plans draw from recommendations made in this, the Transportation, and Land Use + Character chapters to show how all these strategies can work together.

In addition to the above referenced subarea plans, a continued focus on preserving and enhancing Portage neighborhoods is paramount to community and quality of life. As discussed in more detail in the Land Use + Character chapter, providing a range of housing choices, including affordable housing and options for seniors to "age in place" will be important to the long term sustainability of the community. In addition, ensuring that the city has a well maintained housing stock and attractive neighborhoods to live and play will require continued focus as the community overall matures.

Public Art and Entertainment

Many cities throughout the country have supported and/or encouraged public arts programs recognizing the need for public support and contribution to the arts. Public art programs promote life-long participation and learning in the arts and integrate art into the urban environment. They provide opportunities for local and national, established and emerging artists in the area to celebrate the city's diversity. Other cities nationwide have held design competitions for unique streetscape features, public works projects, and other "functional art," including custom bike racks, tree grates, storm drains, benches, garbage bins, light posts, and newspaper stands. Such efforts may assist Portage in developing a stronger sense of community.

Related to public art are entertainment resources like performance venues, restaurants, night-life, and other attractions help bring people together, contribute to vibrant and successful city districts, and attract outside visitors and investment. These uses should particularly be encouraged in the City Centre, which is consistent with the goals of the City Centre subarea plan. In addition, park facilities such as Central Park, the Celery Flats, and the nearby Millennium Park have already been developed to provide outdoor performance venues. Finally, existing entertainment and cultural institutions like the AirZoo can spur tourism and provide unique opportunities for local dining and shopping, especially along Portage Road.

Goal C3:
Strengthen community identity so residents and businesses realize an enhanced sense of Portage as a distinct community.





local businesses can sponsor custom bike racks for outside their business



this bike rack is whimsical and functional



Eliason recycled art bike rack



Bandshell music concert

Fresh and Local Food

Communities across the country are rediscovering the health, financial, and environmental benefits of local food production and consumption. An increasing number of consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. "Local food" includes food grown in community gardens, sold at farmers markets, or grown in close proximity to the community, as well as animal sources such as meat, dairy, and honey production.

There is a growing interest to continue expanding opportunities for local food production. This includes removing barriers to food production such as ordinance restrictions and improving the City's process to identify potential sites for new community gardens and supporting their development. In response to broad citizen interest, the city adopted a Keeping of Chickens ordinance as a residential accessory use. In addition, there are several community gardens in the city which are located on properties where there is a principal permitted use on the property, which is permitted by the Zoning Code. Finally, the Zoning Code permits specialized agriculture on unplatted land with a minimum of 5 acres and general agriculture on unplatted land on a minimum of 10 acres. While the city has become a primarily urbanized community, the above mechanisms provide opportunities for small scale local food production.



Lifelong Learning

Creating a culture of education is more than just supporting formal education. Partnerships with non-profits, nature centers, foundations, and other agencies can be sought to support educational programs and activities for all ages. These programs can have wide appeal across jurisdictional boundaries, appeal to a broad audience, and increase a shared sense of community. Increased collaboration, support and promotion of "K through Grey" lifelong learning systems will strengthen the city's academic performance, improve workforce skills, and enhance quality of life for all ages. In this regard, continued partnerships with the Portage District Library, Portage Public Schools and the Senior Center are recommended.

For a complete listing of implementation strategies, tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7: Implementation

Community Identity Implementation Strategies

- *Partner with the public schools and library to promote a high quality school system and lifelong learning.*
- *Continue to pursue the long and short term goals identified in the Recreation and Open Space Plan consistent with the "Natural Place to Move" placemaking effort, and update the Plan as needed to maintain eligibility for state funding.*
- *Continue to communicate with regional partners to deliver quality and cost-effective services to the city's residents, businesses, and employees.*
- *Utilize the City's website, social media, PMN Cable Access, newsletter and emerging technologies to educate residents and keep them informed of community development-related issues.*

A. Introduction

Investment in the transportation network is intended to ensure a comprehensive motorized and non-motorized system that preserves the quality of life for residents and also facilitates a successful business climate. Over the years, the City of Portage has invested heavily in the transportation network to meet changing needs. Many planned improvements to address street capacity, traffic operations and safety have been accomplished. The City also monitors traffic volumes, crashes, and other statistics and on annual basis and the data are evaluated to develop further improvement projects for inclusion in the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Past Comprehensive Plans and Capital Improvement Plans focused on increasing traffic volumes through roadway widening and intersection improvements. Though there remain some congested roadway segments and intersections, many critical capacity and safety needs have been addressed. In this regard, transportation needs within the community have shifted from expansion to preservation. Transportation funding has also changed, with less money available for capacity improvements and more local competition for limited resources. In response to these changes, this Plan has refined the City's approach as follows:

- A focus on preservation of the existing roadway system rather than capacity expansions.
- Attention to improvements to intersections or street segments with congestion or crash problems, rather than entire corridors. Improvements may involve use of new types of intersection or road design.
- Continue an emphasis on safety, but with increased consideration of safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. This is consistent with Michigan's new "Complete Streets" legislation.
- Consider a reduction in the number of lanes for certain streets where the current and projected daily traffic volumes are below the design capacity and expected to remain so in the future. A reduction in travel lanes may be appropriate where the city desires to slow down vehicle speeds to make a street more pedestrian and/or bicycle friendly.
- Planning for streets in consideration of both their transportation purpose, but also to complement the current or desired character of the immediate area.
- Meeting the needs for people of all ages and abilities, including senior drivers, a growing segment of the population.
- The relationship between transportation and community health – communities that promote walking and biking often have less obesity, chronic illness, and healthcare costs.
- Greater fiscal consideration to long term "return on investment" of transportation improvements.

Did you know?

As noted in the Community Snapshot Report and as presented at the Open House, the following information is notable in regard to transportation within the community.

- The I-94/South Westnedge Avenue interchange reconstruction, completed in 2011, was the first "shovel-ready" project in Michigan through the

In this Chapter:



Complete Streets



Context Sensitive Streets



Corridor Management



Operation Improvements

A complete documentation of existing conditions is included in the Community Snapshot Report.

Transportation-related Opportunities

- *Continue the investment to expand and/or enhance city parks, bikeways and multi-use trails with emphasis on connecting areas not served to the central/existing system.*
- *Utilize Eliason Nature Reserve to its fullest potential and create connecting non-motorized links*
- *Enhance gateways to the city, fully utilizing the new brand "A Natural Place to Move" to contribute to a strong sense of community*
- *Create a complete streets policy that addresses multi-modal transportation elements including sidewalks, shared shoulder bike lanes, multi-use trails and connections to public transit*
- *Continue to improve non-motorized connections throughout the city that appeal to varied skill levels of existing and potential bicyclists through additional bike ways and trail connections*
- *Retain South Westnedge as a regional business anchor but continue efforts to improve traffic flow and safety*
- *Provide transportation guidance for locations identified as problematic such as intersections/crossings at Centre, Old Centre, Vincent, Oakland, among others*
- *Lake Center Area: Enhance Portage Road to be a vibrant, commercial corridor that is walkable and safe.*

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

- Over $26 million in major street improvements and over $8 million in local street improvements are planned over the next 10 years.
- Major and local street projects will incorporate where feasible "complete street" components including pedestrian refuge islands, sidewalks, crosswalk sign and pavement markings, improved lighting.
- Over the next 10 years, nearly $1 million of bikeway and sidewalk improvements are scheduled.
- Portage has over 17 miles of non-motorized multi-use trails and over 38 miles of paved shoulder bikeways are available throughout the community.
- The most recent project involved a 1.5 mile extension of the Northwest Portage Bikeway funded by a federal grant in 2010.
- Portage was one of only 21 cities nationwide to receive the Bicycle Friendly Bronze Award in 2010 League of American Bicyclists.
- All city streets are considered "urban" within the Kalamazoo/Portage metropolitan area for purposes of planning and funding street improvements. These streets are also classified by function and include the following categories: Interstates/Expressways; Major Arterials; Minor Arterials; Collector Streets; and Local Streets. The Community Snapshot Report provides a detailed description of these street categories and includes a Transportation Existing Conditions map illustrating streets by classification, including traffic volumes and other data.

Vision: Create a safe, balanced and coordinated multi-modal transportation system adequate to accommodate the ongoing growth and (re)development of Portage.

Transportation Goals and Objectives:

Goal T1: Support a "Complete Streets" approach: transportation for all types of travelers of all ages and abilities

- T1.1: Provide a transportation network that meets the needs of and promotes safety for people that drive, walk, bicycle, or use transit. Give greater priority to pedestrians and bicyclists as a way to improve residents' health, mobility, and vitality.
- T1.2: Provide a network with different types of facilities to meet the needs of bicyclists from beginners to advanced users.

Goal T2: Maintain context sensitive streets that are designed to complement the desired character of a district or neighborhood or as a catalyst for change

- T2.1: Improve aesthetics within the right-of-way and in the private property along it to emphasize the city's image as a vibrant place. This also includes views from I-94.
- T2.2: Use appropriate traffic calming measures so traffic speeds fit the character of the surroundings.

Goal T3: Provide effective corridor management optimizing the existing system through management of access, coordinated traffic signals, and intelligent traffic systems.

- T3.1: Use access management standards to improve safety and traffic flow. This includes techniques to reduce the number of access points, regulate their design and placement and require shared access through easements to help preserve capacity and improve safety along arterial roads.
- T3.2: Maximize the lifespan of roadways through transportation system management techniques (such as intersection signalization, intersection improvements, and access control), transportation demand management techniques (such as ride-sharing, preferential parking for multiple-occupancy vehicles, and removal of physical access barriers to alternative modes), and technology (such as traffic signal coordination, information sharing, and wayfinding).

Goal T4: Prioritize new transportation projects to ensure preparedness for future needs and innovative means to meet them

- T4.1: Set aside adequate financial resources to preserve transportation facilities as a priority before funds are allocated for capacity expansion.
- T4.2: Evaluate capital investments on the basis of capacity needs, safety, pavement condition, relationship to other transportation improvements, planned land use and impacts on the environment and community character.

Based on the Community Snapshot Report, public input and prior Comprehensive Plans, these Vision, Goals and Objectives were established related to transportation.

While Portage has control over most streets within the city, cooperation from other agencies is needed.

- *Sections of Kilgore Road are under the jurisdiction of the City of Kalamazoo.*
- *South 12th Street and Sprinkle Road are under the jurisdiction of the Kalamazoo County Road Commission (KCRC).*
- *US-131 and I-94 are under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).*
- *Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) coordinates federal and state funds in the Kalamazoo/Portage metro area and develops an annual list of transportation projects eligible for funding. KATS also maintains a simulation model that projects future traffic volumes based on land use.*
- *Public transportation is provided by Kalamazoo Metro Transit and the Kalamazoo County Transit Authority, which provides fixed-route and demand-response bus service within the community.*

Goal T1:
Support a "Complete Streets" approach: transportation for all types of travelers of all ages and abilities



sidewalk


path


multi-use trail


bike lane


sharrow: remind motorists bikes are permitted to "share the road"

B. Complete Streets

Planning the city transportation system involves more than just moving vehicles efficiently and safely. A transportation system needs to meet the needs of all types of users – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. In some cases, this can be accomplished with lower vehicle speeds to be more supportive of bicycles and pedestrians, while in other places, wider vehicle lanes and higher speeds may be needed to for vehicle and goods movement. The design of the transportation system also needs to reflect the context of adjacent land uses. Nationally, this approach is often referred to as "complete streets", harmonizing streets with their surroundings while interlacing transportation networks to meet the mobility needs of all users.

Portage has an extensive non-motorized transportation system that is a leading example in Michigan. The facilities associated with the non-motorized transportation system within Portage include those noted in side bar.

Continuing to provide and invest in a non-motorized transportation system is a priority for residents and city leaders, and includes many benefits, such as:

- Provides connections between homes, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations.
- Improves pedestrian and cyclist safety by reducing potential crashes between motorized and non-motorized users.
- Encourages walking and bicycling that improves health and fitness.
- Provides options to make fewer driving trips, saving money.
- Research demonstrates pedestrian and bike-friendly cities have more economic vitality.

The following text provides guiding principles for the non-motorized transportation system within the community.

Non-Motorized Facility Types

- **Sidewalks.** *Five-foot wide concrete surfaces on both sides of a major thoroughfare for the purpose of providing pedestrian circulation. Four-foot wide concrete sidewalks on both sides of all local residential streets. Sidewalks are normally separated from the curb of a street or paved road shoulder by several feet of grass or brick pavers.*
- **Paths.** *A path generally a minimum of four-foot wide and constructed of bark/wood chips, crushed stone or floating platform and used within environmentally sensitive and wooded areas.*
- **Multi-Use Trails.** *An 8-12 foot wide asphalt or concrete surface within a park, public space or along a public street for the purpose of providing both pedestrian travel and for use by people with non-motorized wheeled equipment/gear.*
- **Bikeways.** *A bikeway includes a paved facility specifically for bicycle travel. Such facilities consist of a variety of design types including 1) an on-road bicycle lane, 2) a paved shoulder where bikes share use of the shoulder with pedestrians, 3) a lane in a street where bikes "share the road" with vehicles (and may be designated with a "sharrow" symbol), or 4) a bike route, which is a street designed as part of the bike system but with no special design features (often a local neighborhood street).*

Pedestrians

Sidewalks have many benefits. When sidewalks exist, people walk more frequently which contributes to public health and neighborhood cohesion. In addition, sidewalks provide an alternative mode of transportation. Finally, while experienced bicyclists prefer to ride in the street, sidewalks may be used as a bike route by children and less confident bicyclists. Recent studies have also demonstrated that subdivisions with sidewalks tend to better sustain higher property values. Connections between neighborhoods and nearby activity nodes like schools, parks and commercial nodes also contribute to the city's quality of life. The **Non-Motorized Transportation map** illustrates the location of existing sidewalks. While many areas of the community have a complete sidewalk network, there are many developed areas that lack a complete sidewalk network or lack sidewalks in general. As new development and redevelopment occurs, opportunities to construct sidewalks should be pursued, especially in close proximity to schools, parks and activity nodes and along major thoroughfares as indicated on the **Non-Motorized Transportation map**.



Sidewalks within new residential subdivisions.

Sidewalks are required within all new residential subdivisions. This practice should continue and exceptions should be granted only in unique circumstances. Where exceptions may be granted, internal path systems and/or pedestrian connections to schools, parks or other activity nodes that are known to generate pedestrian traffic should be otherwise be provided.



Sidewalks within existing residential subdivisions

As noted above, in many developed neighborhoods, sidewalk installation is inconsistent (i.e. no sidewalks, sidewalks on only one side of the street or installed in one phase of development and not the next adjacent phase). In such areas, the following efforts should be made:

- Fill gaps in the sidewalk system where they exist as redevelopment may occur.
- Concurrent with capital improvement planning, construction of sidewalks along primary pedestrian routes to schools, parks or other activity nodes should be evaluated and implemented where feasible.
- Where concerns regarding pedestrian safety exist and have been documented (such as pedestrian and vehicular accidents and/or re-occurring vehicular speeding) construction of sidewalks and other appropriate safety improvements should also be considered.



Sidewalks along major thoroughfares

Sidewalks should be required along both sides of major thoroughfares concurrent with new development and redevelopment projects. Exceptions should be limited to sites with unique circumstances. Where exceptions may be granted, one or more of the following public facilities should be in existence adjacent to the site, which are listed in order of preference as an alternative route for pedestrians:

- Existing multi-use trail(s) in the immediate vicinity that provides an alternative route for non-motorized transportation;
- A widened shared-shoulder bikeway for bicycle and pedestrian use; or
- A shared-shoulder bikeway adjacent to the roadway.

In addition to the above efforts, pedestrian enhancement planning is also recommended concurrent with (re)development and/or capital improvement

Different Classes of Bicyclists

The non-motorized system in Portage needs to be designed for a variety of bicyclists:

A - "Advanced" riders include the more experienced or commuter bicyclists who often travel where those with less confidence or experience will not travel, such as streets with higher vehicle volumes and speeds.



B – "Basic" bicyclists comprise the highest percentage of bicyclists or potential bicyclists. This group may choose to use a bicycle if there is a convenient and comfortable route available, but generally avoid bad weather and perceived unsafe conditions.



C – "Children and families" and the least confident bicyclists that typically use sidewalks but may travel in the street where volumes and speeds are low.



planning to provide improvements such as: 1) pedestrian refuge islands at key intersections where practical with collector and/or major thoroughfares, 2) pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and/or to schools, parks and other activity nodes; and 3) improved crosswalk pavement marking, signage and street lighting at local and/or major street intersections.

Bicyclists

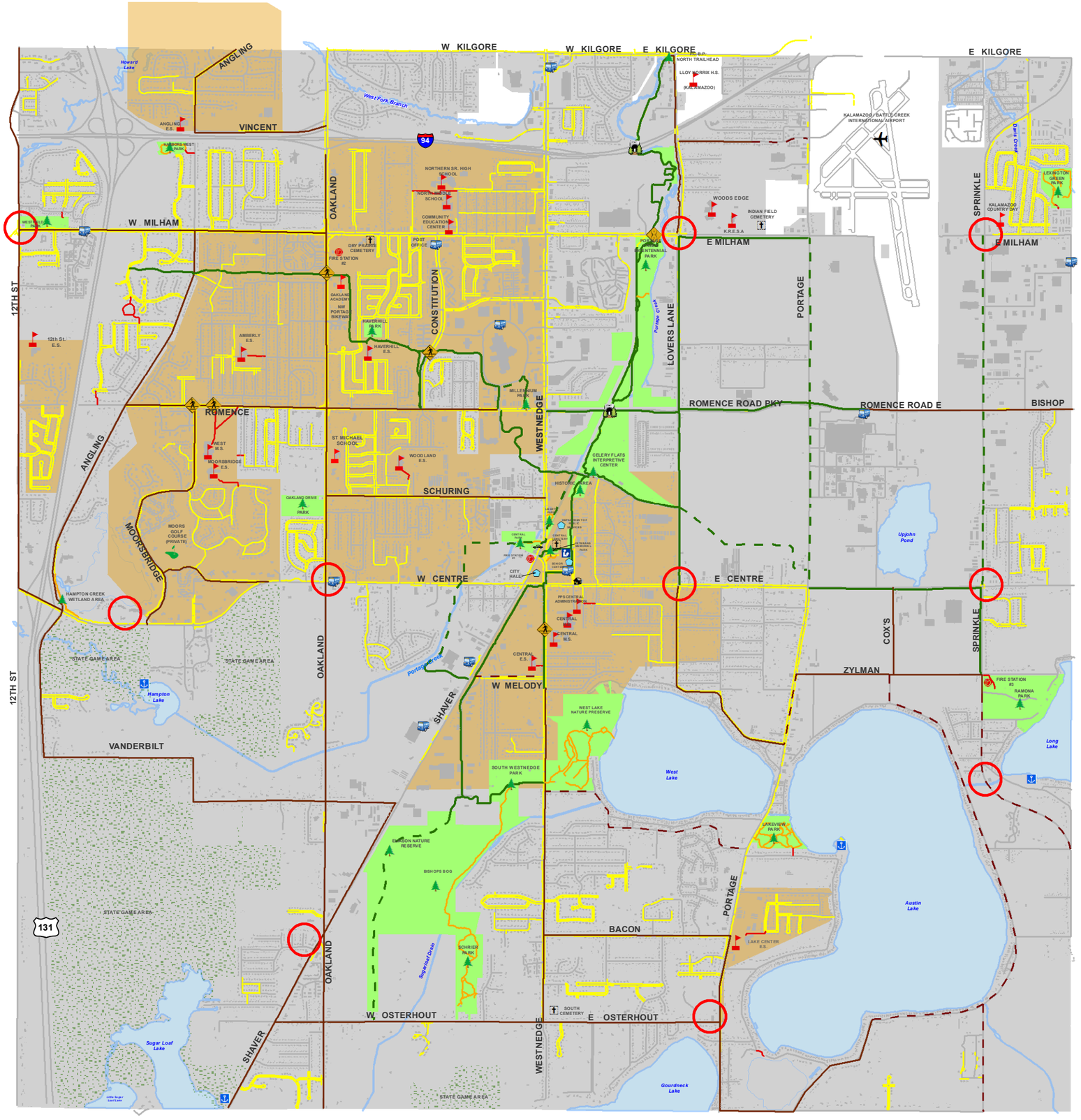
Designing bicyclist infrastructure to meet the mobility and safety needs of people using non-motorized, wheeled equipment needs to be multi-faceted in order to adequately address the skill levels and interests of a diverse population. No single type of "bicycle" facility will meet all user-type needs (see sidebar).

As noted above, the non-motorized transportation system includes sidewalks, paths, multi-use trails, and bikeways. Advanced and basic bicyclists tend to utilize shared road bikeways, which are safer than sidewalks because motorists are more aware of riders at intersections. The more casual, recreational bicyclist usually prefers riding on multi-use trails, sidewalks and local neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes.

Since having bikeways on every street is not practical given cost, right-of-way limitations, and other factors, a priority is to provide connections between key destinations like schools, parks, cultural institutions, and activity nodes. Another priority is to link existing non-motorized facilities inside the city with trails and linkages outside the city. Given the diversity of street characteristics and land use densities in the city, a variety of non-motorized bikeway facilities exist and are planned to meet the various user needs and situations in the city. In this regard, the **Non-Motorized Transportation Map** shows existing and future planned bikeways and multi-use trails.

Complete Streets Implementation Strategies

- *Pursue local, state and federal funding to continue implementation of the Non-Motorized Transportation system.*
- *Pursue the installation of planned walkway and bikeway facilities in conjunction with scheduled road improvements projects.*
- *Work with organizations and advocacy groups such as bicycle users, seniors, and schools to develop Safe Routes to School Programs, identify priority needs for walking and bicycling.*
- *Adopt a Complete Streets policy/plan consistent with the MDOT program for continued nonmotorized transportation planning efforts to provide alternative modes of transportation to promote sustainability, ensure all modes are considered for MDOT projects, and provide consistency with the Natural Place to Move placemaking effort.*
- *Ensure transit-friendly features such as sidewalks to bus stops, pads or shelters in areas that are currently, or have the potential to be served by public transit.*
- *Encourage safe and efficient non-motorized circulation between public sidewalks and businesses, between businesses and also between businesses and residential neighborhoods during site plan review and City capital projects.*
- *Complete gaps in the sidewalk system and work towards a non-motorized system espeically around parks and schools.*
- *Promote walking, bicycling, and use of alternative fuel vehicles through appropriate site design techniques, such as allowing for bike amenities to replace a required parking space.*



PORTAGE
A Natural Place to Move

Non-Motorized Transportation Map

Date: 6/27/2014

Legend

- Pedestrian Refuge Island
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Pedestrian Tunnel
- Metro Bus Shelters
- Airport
- Public Access
- Golf Course
- Cemetery
- Fire Station
- Library
- City Park
- School
- Police
- Municipal
- P.C.C.
- Paved Shoulder Bikeway
- Paved Shoulder Bikeway Proposed
- Multi-Use Trail
- Multi-Use Trail Proposed
- Other Pedestrian Trails
- Sidewalk/Trail Connectors
- Sidewalks
- City Parks
- School Walk Zone
- State Game Area
- City Boundary
- Commercial Node

1 inch = 3,200 feet

Path: R:\GISADMIN\karl\projects\DEPTS\COM DEV\comp plan update 2012\document maps\MAP - Non Motorized.mxd

C. Context Sensitive Streets

Historically streets were designed to meet expected traffic volumes at a selected speed. Streets or intersections were widened to meet needs provided right-of-way was available. That traditional process has been modified in recent years in response to emerging "best practices" in street design, which recognize that many factors along the street influence the speed of traffic, accidents, and how a street can be in harmony, or in conflict with its surroundings. The city has made a concerted effort in past plans to consider the impact a street has on surrounding land uses within various areas of the community. A continued focus on context sensitive streets is again recommended as part of this Plan.

Goal T2:
Maintain context sensitive streets that are designed to complement the desired character of a district or neighborhood or as a catalyst for change

Street and Corridor Character

Street width, presence of on-street parking and sidewalks, block length, building setbacks, design speed, street trees and even pavement markings and signs all contribute to how the street functions. Driver perceptions can affect vehicle speed and care used in driving. These elements can also affect how people view a corridor and their impression of Portage in general. A street designed in tandem with its surroundings can foster an inviting place to live, work and visit.



Successful commercial corridors should be free of unsightly clutter and easy to navigate. Streets in residential areas should intuitively encourage a lower speed. In some cases, the road design elements in the city reinforce the desired image: In other cases, improvements need to be considered. This Plan relies on a wide range of concepts to help ensure the future transportation system operates safely and efficiently, but also in context with the character of the city.



Expressway Corridor Views

Nearly 120,000 vehicles a day pass through Portage along U.S. 131 and I-94 (refer to **Corridor Character Map**). Motorist perceptions of Portage are largely created from views along these expressways or from their experience exiting at interchanges. A number of techniques are recommended to help promote a quality image for the city:

- Within the right-of-way, continue to work with the MDOT to ensure ongoing widening and improvements to I-94 and U.S. 131, including the use of diverse materials for bridges and medians (not just standard concrete), landscaping and appropriate lighting.
- Adjacent to the right-of-way, treat uses located along the expressway as a "front door" to the community. Sites and buildings should be designed to project a quality image. This may involve special setbacks, requirements for building wall design, and specific expressway frontage landscaping. Loading, storage, and parking areas should only be permitted within this front door area if well screened or landscaped.

Entryways

Entryway features are used to announce key gateways into the city. Key gateways include the expressway interchanges and entrance points at select major streets near the city corporate limits. Entryway features may also be associated with certain natural features such as Portage Creek or the lake areas. Centers of activity in the city such as Portage Commerce Square, City Centre Area, the Lake Center business area, or the industrial corridors could also incorporate entryway features for those districts. Current entryway

features include welcome to Portage signs with landscaping and/or sculptures or other structural elements. The standard design has been developed and is used consistently, though not every element must be used at every entryway. The existing entryway feature network should be continued and enhanced and, when appropriate, expanded to include other gateways into the city.

Major Street Corridors

Using the "character" approach, the major corridors were classified into five categories, (refer to the **Corridor Character map**) which may vary as a street runs through different parts of the city.



- **"Residential Conservation Corridors"** are streets which are generally lower-intensity and residential in character, even though there may be some non-residential uses along the street. The quality and capacity of these streets need to be conserved through regular maintenance. Improvements to these corridors should include aesthetic features to complement the adjoining residential area such as landscaping, streetscape amenities, and pedestrian crossings at key locations. Land use or other changes which would alter the current balance of activity and/or physical characteristics by increasing the intensity of use should be discouraged.

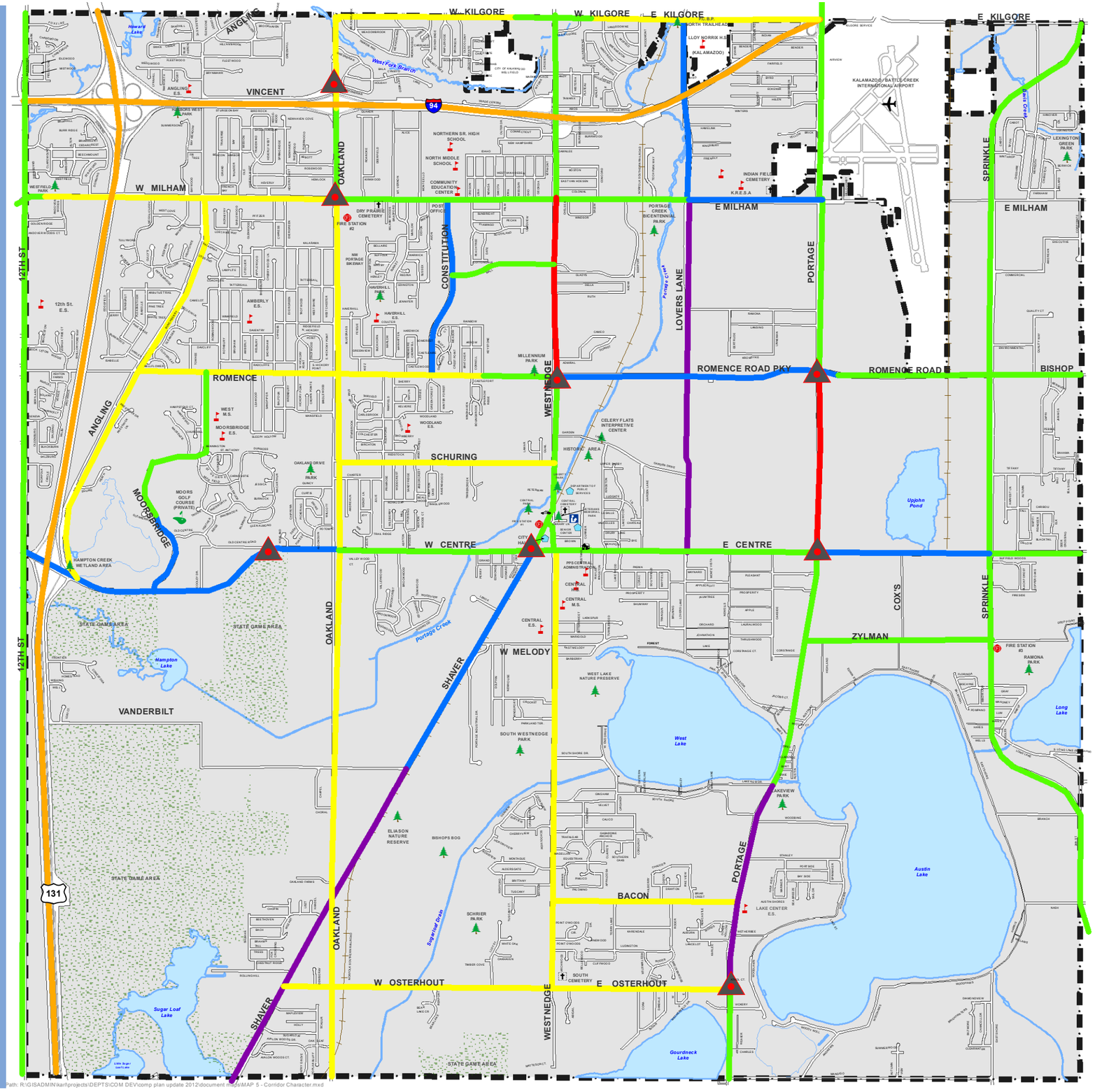
  Residential Conservation Corridors typically should have two travel lanes with a left-turn lane at major intersections and higher volume access points. These streets should have some type of bikeway and at a minimum five foot wide walkways along both sides, wider at locations that warrant more activity such as schools or parks. Where traffic volumes or turning movements support more lanes, three lanes are preferred.

- **"Preservation Corridors"** are streets which pass through areas not yet fully developed, or where potential for significant redevelopment or conversions from one land use to another exists or is expected. These parcels should be reviewed with an eye toward preventing land use and thoroughfare conflicts through application of zoning and access management standards. These corridors are in need of minor improvements to preserve existing capacity and improve safety, such as access management, intersection improvements or installation of pedestrian refuge islands at certain crossings.



- **"Limited Access Boulevards"** are designed to ease through traffic capabilities with some limited access medians within residential, commercial or industrial areas. A boulevard design provides the capability to enhance traffic safety by separating opposing traffic through the use of raised median islands, provide controlled turning movements at designated locations and eliminate the crash potential associated with a continuous left turn lane. In addition, limited access boulevards encourage higher quality development activities such as technology/business park type uses.

- **"Correction Corridors"** are streets bounded primarily by non-residential uses. These street segments and/or intersections are complex, may exhibit peak-hour traffic congestion, a higher incidence of, or potential for, crashes due to traffic volumes and/or design, and may lack desired multi-modal transportation features. Corrective actions may include select street segment widening, intersection improvements, or replacement of center turn lanes with median islands at key locations. Attention to road design elements also needs to be considered with construction projects



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PORTAGE
A Natural Place to Move

Corridor Character Map

Date: 4/14/2014

Corridors

Residential Conservation Corridor

Residential in character and appropriate for moderate improvements consistent with predominant residential neighborhood features.

Preservation Corridor

Corridors in need of minor improvements to preserve existing capacity, such as access management, intersection improvements or installation of medians.

Limited Access Boulevards

Limited Access Boulevards are roadways through traffic capabilities and/or limited access within residential, commercial or industrial areas or a combination thereof. Limited Access Boulevards are also designated as Preservation Corridors.

Correction Corridor

Correction Corridors are streets bounded primarily by non-residential uses. These street segments and/or intersections are complex, and may exhibit traffic congestion, intensive activity or lack a complete multi-modal transportation network. These areas may be in need of multiple actions to correct problems that resulted from cumulative change over time.

Correction Intersections:

Includes top 5 crash rate intersections, intersections with alignment challenges and/or planned for potentential roundabouts.

Transformation Corridor

Corridors with current and projected traffic volumes below street capacity. Transformation corridors may have a reduction in lanes to reduce speeds, and an addition of a center turn lane, and/or improved non-motorized transportation options.

Expressway Corridor

Interstate corridors to be treated as a "Front Door" for the community to create more aesthetic views by utilitzing high quality road design and materials.

City Boundary

1 inch = 3,200 feet

to improve the appearance of these corridors such as mast arm traffic signals, street trees, wayfinding signs, ornamental lighting, an improved environment for pedestrians and bicyclists and attractive public signs.

Corrective actions also include improvements to sites that line the street. These may include access management such as closure or redesign of driveways and connection of uses through service drives, addition of landscaping, replacement of signs and lighting, on-site pedestrian improvements, screening of waste receptacles and loading areas and so forth. Some of these corrective actions will occur gradually over time as land uses change. The zoning ordinance should assure site plans are reviewed when uses change or expand so that upgrades to the site features can be applied.

- **"Transformation Corridors"** have current and projected traffic volumes that are below the street's capacity. A reduction in lanes (e.g. four travel lanes to three) to reduce speeds and improve safety with the addition of a center turn lane and/or to provide non-motorized transportation options may be considered. Re-purposed roadway space could be used for bike lanes, on-street parking, wider sidewalks, and/or low-impact storm water design features.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming

Related to corridor character and context sensitive streets, traffic calming, particularly within residential neighborhoods is also an important factor for consideration. Residents expect low volumes of traffic and low speeds within neighborhoods. The width of streets, the existence or absence of street trees, on-street parking, sidewalks and other factors influence how fast people drive through neighborhoods. Traffic calming is a way to visually and physically impede speeding in residential areas.

Traffic calming measures may be appropriate where there is a demonstrated need, such as when traffic speeds are five or more miles per hour over the design speed or posted speed limits. In those cases, changes to the local street may include new pavement markings, narrowing lanes or using curb bump-outs at pedestrian crossings, medians, pedestrian refuge islands, traffic circles, or speed tables/humps.

Residential developers should be encouraged to incorporate traffic calming measures during the planning and design phases of new residential areas. Where appropriate, these concepts greatly reduce future problems and will help maintain the value of the neighborhood. With regard to existing neighborhoods, "retrofitting" traffic calming measures may also be appropriate.

Context Sensitive Streets Implementation Strategies

- *Ensure all transportation projects, including expressways and city streets, are designed in consideration of the defined corridor or area character and the needs and safety for all types of expected travelers.*

For a complete listing of implementation strategies, tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7: Implementation

Goal T3:
Provide effective corridor management optimizing the existing system through management of access, coordinated traffic signals, and intelligent traffic systems

D. Corridor Management

Driveway/Access Management

Widening and intersection improvements are not the only way to improve traffic operations along a street. One technique to help preserve capacity and promote safety while delaying or avoiding the need for widening is access management. Access management involves comprehensive controls to minimize conflict points, reduce the potential for crashes and help preserve the street's ability to carry traffic.

Portage has adopted an access management ordinance that applies to new development projects, but is also used concurrent with road improvements and to correct existing access that does not meet the current requirements. A general review of access management concepts is provided below, which serves as a foundation for the ordinance.

Number of Access Points

The number of driveways allowed along major streets affects traffic flow, ease of driving and crash potential. Reasonable access will be provided for each site and the number of access points should be limited to one where possible. Certain developments may generate enough traffic or have sufficient frontage to consider allowing more than one driveway where traffic volumes warrant such access. Where possible, these second access points should be located on a side street or shared with adjacent uses.

Alternative Access

Alternative access should be encouraged along arterials, such as shared driveways, rear service drives or frontage roads. Commercial developments and parking lots should be connected through front or rear service drives.

In areas within one-quarter mile of existing or future signal locations, access to individual properties should be provided via these alternative access methods rather than by direct connection to a major arterial.

In areas where frontage roads or service drives are proposed or recommended but adjacent properties have not yet developed, the site should be designed to accommodate a future drive, with access easements provided.

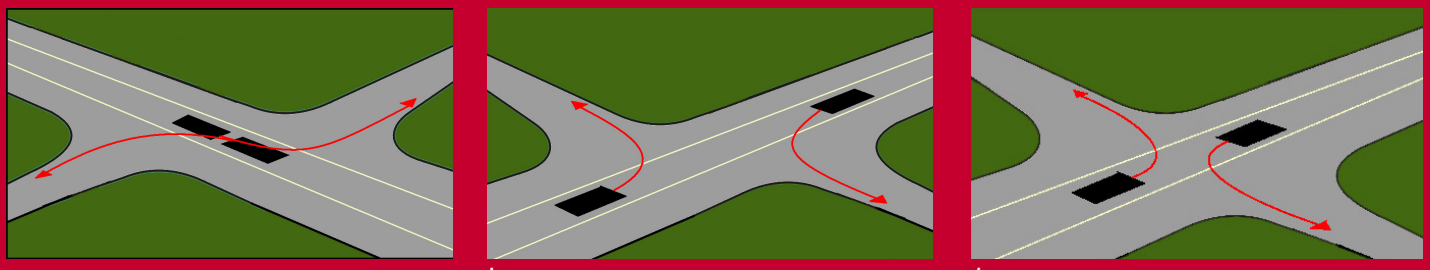
Basic Principles of Access Management

Six basic principles are used to achieve the benefits of access management:

- *Limit the number of conflict points,*
- *Separate conflict points,*
- *Separate turning volumes from through movements,*
- *Locate traffic signals to facilitate traffic movement,*
- *Maintain a hierarchy of roadways by function, and*
- *Limit direct access on higher speed roads.*

Source: MDOT

Access Offsets



worst *better* *best*

Driveway Spacing from Expressway Ramps, Public Street Intersections and Other Driveways

The latest edition of Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets published by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Transportation and Traffic Engineering Handbook published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and/or the Access Management Guidebook published by the Planning and Zoning Center and Michigan Department of Transportation should be consulted for the applicable standards and guidelines.

Medians

Medians can also be used to restrict left turns into and from driveways or side streets. That, combined with the separation of opposing traffic flow, results in a significant reduction in crashes when comparing a median to a non-median roadway. There are several variables that need to be considered in median design, especially along corridors with heavy truck volumes, many individual driveways, and limited right-of-way. Circulation and special needs (i.e. lack of alternate routes) for emergency vehicles is also a consideration in determining if a median is appropriate and what specific design elements should be incorporated.

Transportation Management Techniques

Transportation management techniques provide another method to improve roadway function. There are many tools available which are focused on reducing the number and length of trips, or managing the flow of traffic through the community. Certain land use arrangements in close proximity to each other can shorten the length of vehicle trips, while alternative transportation choices such as transit, walking or biking can reduce vehicle trips. Another tool to reduce vehicle trips, especially during peak travel hours when congestion is most prevalent, is called demand management. This method may involve working with major employers to revise shifts or offer flexible hours to reduce peak demands. Other ideas could be to encourage use of transit for employees by working with the transit agency on scheduling and to ensure site plans are designed in a "transit friendly" way.

With regard to managing the flow of traffic through the community, current streets can operate more optimally with new technology, such as interconnected signalized intersections, and signals that respond to actual traffic conditions and/or informing motorists of alternate routes when there is congestion or a crash. All of these ideas collectively can help address the city's transportation needs in the future.

Transportation Impact Analysis

Another tool to help ensure that traffic impacts are properly evaluated is to require a traffic impact study concurrent with development project review. A well prepared traffic impact study will also address site access issues, such as the potential to share access or use service drives. The study should analyze options to mitigate traffic impacts, such as changes to access or improvements to the roadway. Such a study should also evaluate how a site or the management of an operation can improve the system for pedestrians and bicyclists. In some cases, the developer may assist in funding improvements to help offset the impacts of the project.

Benefits of Access Management

- *Reduce crashes and crash potential,*
- *Preserve roadway capacity and the useful life of roads,*
- *Decrease travel time and congestion,*
- *Improve access to properties*
- *Coordinate land use and transportation decisions,*
- *Improve air quality, and*
- *Maintain travel efficiency and related economic prosperity.*

Source: MDOT

Roundabout Pros:

- *More capacity and fewer crashes than signalized intersections*

Roundabout Cons:

- *Needs more room, not considered bike- or pedestrian-friendly for a high volume location where two lanes are needed, public not accustomed to them*



Roundabouts

One option for challenging signalized intersections or four-way stops is a modern roundabout. Roundabouts have been shown to reduce delay and the number and severity of crashes by replacing traffic signals and turn lanes with a constant-flow circular intersection. Roundabouts may also be a suitable option where intersections are too close for both to be signalized. Incoming traffic yields to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the street and to vehicles already in the roundabout before proceeding around to the desired street. Because of the many benefits, dozens of modern roundabouts have been constructed in Michigan in just the last few years and hundreds nationally.

Portage's first roundabout was recently installed at 12th Street and West Milham Avenue. As part of the Lake Center subarea plan, another possible location for a roundabout may be the East Osterhout Avenue and Portage Road intersection. Any potential future roundabouts will be dependent upon further study of intersections identified as needing improvements in the CIP.

Corridor Management Implementation Strategies

- *For new development, ensure roadway capacity can accommodate site-generated traffic at the time of occupancy. This may require participation by the developer to fund improvements to address impacts of a proposed project.*
- *Pursue access management techniques (restricting the number of access points, regulating placement, promoting driveway consolidation, using raised medians, etc.) along major thoroughfares to improve traffic flow and safety. Where appropriate, encourage joint access and parking opportunities.*
- *Consider landscaped medians on three- or five-lane roads where possible to improve traffic safety by controlling left-turn lanes or using refuge for pedestrians crossing the street.*
- *Consider roundabouts as an intersection design alternative or an alternative to traffic signals to improve traffic flow and reduce the severity of crashes.*

Goal T4:
Prioritize new transportation projects to ensure preparedness for future needs and innovative means to meet them

E. Street Capacity and Operation Improvements

Street capacity refers to the capability of a roadway to accommodate the expected traffic flow with an acceptable amount of delay, i.e. minimal congestion. Traffic engineers measure this capacity through a comparison of the volumes, usually during the peak hour, to the designed capacity. This determines the amount of average delay per vehicle. This statistical analysis is then translated into a "level-of-service" from A-F or a "volume-to-capacity ratio" (V/C).

A V/C ratio of 0.90 to 0.99 indicates the facility is approaching capacity and improvements should be examined in the immediate future. A V/C ratio of 1.00 to 1.20 means that the facility is operating at capacity, has little capability of handling future traffic growth, is highly congested during the peak hours, and should be considered for capacity improvement. A V/C ratio over 1.20 indicates that the facility will likely break down during peak hours and capacity improvements should be in the planning or later stages.

Streets with current or projected poor traffic operations are designated for improvements. Actual traffic conditions, including crashes, will also need to be frequently monitored to adjust the list of recommended projects in the Capital Improvement Program. Data for V/C ratios and crashes is included in the Community Snapshot Report.

Based on the statistical analysis, street improvement projects fall into three major categories: Capacity Expansion Projects, Capacity Preservation Projects, and Transformation Enhancements. As indicated in the Introduction and discussion of Corridor Character above, there remain few capacity expansion projects within the Capital Improvement Plan, but there are roadway segment and intersections that require corrective action to improve roadway function. Capacity Preservation Projects include reconstruction without addition of lanes, but include access management, median island installation, signal improvements and/or enhancement actions such as bikeways, walkways and landscaping. Pavement management, bridge maintenance and many types of safety improvements are included in the Preservation category. The final category, Transformation Enhancements, is where the street may be modified to reduce the number of lanes to improve safety and/or to provide non-motorized transportation options. For example, a four lane road may be converted to a three lane roadway with a center turn lane, which improves left turn vehicle movement, provides the same level of capacity and adds non-motorized transportation such as a bikeway and/or sidewalk.

Projects that need federal or state funding must be included in the KATS Long Range Plan. Eligible projects must meet certain physical or traffic criteria, and also demonstrate there is funding available for the local match. Major planned transportation improvements are included in the Capital Improvement Plan and new or revised projects are evaluated on an annual basis.

Operations Improvements Implementation Strategies



- *Coordinate transportation planning, project priorities, and funding for streets and non-motorized systems that extend into other municipalities with area communities and road agencies through the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) organization.*
- *Require traffic impact studies for intensive use projects to determine direct impacts, improvements needed and data for future planning.*
- *Continue to monitor traffic counts, pedestrian and bicycle use, and crash data in conjunction with proposed transportation improvement projects.*
- *Annually prepare the Transportation/Major Thoroughfare Plan Status Report using the recommendations of this plan as a foundation.*
- *Continue to pursue alternatives for improved traffic flow and safety such as new signal technology, "real time" traffic monitoring and reporting. Embrace emerging communication media to provide instantaneous traffic information.*

Street Capacity

Capacity is primarily measured at intersections.

V/C Ratio	Design
below .50	*may be eligible for lane reduction*
.50-.90	*volumes match capacity*
.90-.99	*approaching capacity, improvements should be examined*
1.00-1.20	*operating at capacity, highly congested during peak hours*
over 1.20	*will likely break down during peak hours, needs capacity improvements*

04 Land Use + Character

A. Introduction

Although most land in the City of Portage is privately owned, the entire community has a stake on how it is arranged and used. The health, safety and welfare of all citizens is affected by the use of the land. Access to property for emergency vehicles, energy conservation, traffic movement, neighborhood preservation/protection, employment, air and water quality, housing costs, shopping and recreation and many other factors relate to the use and arrangement of land.

This chapter considers *Housing*, an essential resource in any community; *Business + Employment Centers*, an important element involving the continued efforts to maintain a strong economic base in order to meet future growth and development challenges; and *Future Land Use*, which reflect the translation of the goals, objectives and guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan into recommendations for the future use of the land resources.

Land Use + Character-related Opportunities

- *Retain South Westnedge as a regional business anchor but continue efforts to improve traffic flow and safety*
- *Encourage more mixed-use developments, especially in the City Centre Area.*
- *Focus on maintaining and/or improving residential neighborhoods, especially older areas, by addressing vacant/foreclosed housing, property maintenance and building code compliance.*
- *Lake Center Area: Enhance Portage Road to be a vibrant, commercial corridor.*
- *Define boundaries of the core South Westnedge commercial area and develop strategies to buffer from adjacent residences.*
- *Create aging in place opportunities to ensure Portage residents can maintain an active lifestyle throughout their lifecycle and by providing a variety of housing types to accommodate a variety of age groups, with a special focus on seniors.*
- *Identify opportunities for commercial and industrial development at vacant parcels along Portage Road and Shaver Road.*
- *Form a strategy for conversion of greenhouses if transition to other uses occur.*

Did you know?

Housing + Neighborhoods

- The number of households (family and non-family) is expected to continue to increase as population growth occurs. The rate of increase for non-family households is expected to exceed family households due to more non-traditional arrangements.
- Nearly one-half of Portage's housing units were built during the 1960's and 70's

Year Housing Built

Year	Number	Percent
Built 1939 or earlier	625	3.1%
Built 1940 to 1949	686	3.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	2,684	13.3%
Built 1960 to 1969	3,867	19.1%
Built 1970 to 1979	4,858	24.0%
Built 1980 to 1989	2,870	14.2%
Built 1990 to 1999	2,774	13.7%
Built 2000 to 2005	1,407	7.0%
Built 2005 to 2011	450	2.2%
Total Housing Units	20,221	100.0%

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey

- Median 2010 housing value in Portage was $155,900, compared to Kalamazoo County median value of $144,200.
- Approximately 69% of Portage's housing units are owner-occupied, a comparable rate to Kalamazoo County (65%) and the State of Michigan (73%).
- Foreclosures are decreasing, signaling a recovery in the housing market.
- Since 2000, average family size decreased slightly and average household size increased slightly, a much more stable change than in previous decades.

Business + Employment

- Portage's median income is estimated at $56,330, the second highest in Kalamazoo County.
- The poverty level nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010 (10.7%) for families with children. A similar trend occurred in Kalamazoo County; however, nearly one-fifth of families with children were below the poverty level.
- Over 25% of the people who live in Portage work in Portage with nearly one-quarter employed in educational services, health care and social assistance (see table at right).
- Manufacturing remains an important employment sector with nearly 4,000 jobs. Major corporations including Stryker, Pfizer and many smaller ones contribute to the continued success.

Top 6 Employment Sectors

Industry	Number	Percent
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	5,169	23.9%
Manufacturing	3,917	18.1%
Retail trade	2,919	13.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	2,088	9.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2,067	9.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	1,633	7.5%

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey Estimates

- Portage maintains a diverse employment base – similar to national recent trends, the shift in dominance has been from manufacturing to the service sector including education, health care, retail, food services, and professional services. Despite modest declines, manufacturing and retail remain strong employment bases for Portage.
- The cities of Portage and Kalamazoo are the primary employment center for Kalamazoo County.
- Changes in the marketplace appear to be impacting certain long-term uses in Portage, such as greenhouses and nurseries. Planning strategies for these sites are needed to accommodate new uses.
- Growth of internet shopping is impacting the commercial sector, and may result in fewer square feet of commercial needed per resident in the market area than in the past. As shopping patterns change, commercial areas may need to offer more amenities like events, dining, and entertainment that make shopping more of a recreational and social event.

In this Chapter:



Housing + Neighborhoods



Business + Employment Centers



Future Land Use

A complete documentation of existing conditions is included in the Community Snapshot Report.

Based on the Community Snapshot Report, public input and prior Comprehensive Plans, these Vision, Goals and Objectives were established related to land use and character.

Vision: Maintain a well organized, balanced and efficient use of land at densities that:

- *meets the current and future needs of the public*
- *ensures compatibility and harmony among land uses*
- *protects key natural and historic resources*
- *complements the existing and planned capacity of streets and infrastructure*
- *sustains prosperity to support desired public facilities and services*
- *provides an effective land use transition from more intense to less intense uses*

Land Use + Character Goals and Objectives:

Goal LU1: Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs and income levels for current and future residents.

- LU1.1: Encourage reinvestment in mature single-family neighborhoods through rehabilitation, modernization, and retrofitting older housing types to meet the needs of aging seniors and the next generation of homeowners.
- LU1.2: Provide appropriate buffers and transitions between residential neighborhoods and adjacent commercial or industrial areas.
- LU1.3: Reinforce neighborhood character by providing sidewalks or pathways especially as connections to activity centers, such as parks and schools.
- LU1.4: Provide assistance and incentives to local nonprofit housing organizations, housing providers and other groups to expand housing opportunities for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low- to moderate-income families.

Goal LU2: Encourage sensible, sustainable, diverse, high-quality office, commercial and industrial development in designated areas to maintain Portage's employment opportunities supportable by the community's existing and reasonably anticipated future infrastructure

- LU2.1: Continue to lead and partner with other local and state agencies to stimulate environmentally responsible commercial and industrial growth in Portage and the region.
- LU2.2: Encourage (re)development activities that ensure the continued strength of the Portage Commerce Square, (the central business area), the City Centre Area, (the geographic center of the city), and the Lake Center Area.

- LU2.3: Support appropriate future development and redevelopment of identified prime and marginal commercial and industrial areas (including obsolete sites, brownfields or isolated industries).
- LU2.4: Develop a balanced commercial base that meets the daily convenience needs of residents, employees and visitors/travelers that maintains Portage as a regional retail center for Southwest Michigan.
- LU2.5: Create mixed-use developments, including residential uses located within or adjacent to nonresidential uses, that may become community gathering areas and provide convenient neighborhood services.
- LU2.6: Promote the "Natural Place to Move" brand that encourages personal wellness as an economic development tool to attract and retain businesses to achieve a balanced economy and a skilled workforce.

B. Housing + Neighborhoods

The creation, preservation and enhancement of residential neighborhoods is essential to the success of the community. Intrinsic to the success of Portage neighborhoods and to a stable and attractive quality of life for all citizens is an emphasis on preservation and rehabilitation of the housing stock, the availability of home ownership, the proximity to community facilities and services, and housing options for all segments of the population.

People looking for a place to live, or deciding whether to stay within a geographic area, typically focus on several factors. These factors include the character of the neighborhood/immediate area, quality of the public school system, distance from the workplace, perceptions of home value appreciation, the diversity of housing available to meet changing needs and income levels, among other issues.

This section serves as a basis for future land use plan strategies regarding housing and public improvements to support residential land uses that are further detailed later in the chapter.

Goal LU1:
Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs and income levels for current and future residents.





Housing Best Practices and Character

Portage offers a range of housing opportunities including single-family residential, manufactured home communities, multi-family residential (low to high density apartment or condominium developments) and mixed-use developments that offer a variety of housing choices within a single development. Retention of high quality residential areas and creation of new housing opportunities for various income and age groups is a goal of this Plan.

Housing Options for Changing Demographics

In order for housing to be affordable for multiple income levels and family types, a balance of owner and renter-occupied units for a variety of incomes should continue to be provided. Smaller families and couples may desire alternatives to single-family detached, owner-occupied housing, such as townhomes, flats, and apartments above storefronts. Other households may choose to rent to maintain mobility. In cases where there may be a trend in renter-occupied single-family homes, the city should monitor housing quality to ensure neighborhood stability. Finally, for households looking to purchase a home, the City's housing assistance programs can make homeownership affordable and accessible for lower-income families as an alternative to renting.

Like many other communities, Portage has a growing senior population and



other demographic indicators are changing. The housing needs of seniors is an important part of the commitment to provide appropriate housing choices for all of its residents. Viable housing options should include remaining at home as long as possible and is especially important to residents who want to stay in the neighborhoods they are most familiar with and be near family and friends. Retrofitting existing homes to be accessible for seniors desiring to "age in place" could include ramps, wider doorways, and first floor bedrooms and accessible bathrooms. Where "aging in place" is not feasible, special facilities, such as senior independent living, assisted living and congregate care is another important housing option to be provided within the community

Housing Preservation and Maintenance

Residents who take pride in their homes, whether rented or owned, can contribute positively to a neighborhood's image and reinvestment opportunities. Therefore, home stewardship should be supported broadly, beyond owner-occupied residences to include rental home and apartment maintenance.



To ensure neighborhood preservation, the City of Portage will continue to use a variety of strategies that include assistance to low and moderate income families to rehabilitate existing dwellings. Current city programs include the following:

- Neighborhood Support Program that includes education on community quality codes and ongoing/daily code compliance efforts;
- Housing Assistance Programs funded by the city's CDBG Program and other grant sources for owner-occupied housing rehabilitation and home buyer assistance;
- Grants to non-profit housing developers to provide affordable owner and renter occupied housing;
- Payment in Lieu of Taxes to facilitate affordable rental housing developments;
- Public infrastructure and public safety services, amongst others to provide/ensure a stable housing stock and protect neighborhood quality of life.
- Partnering with area non-profits that provide home buyer counseling, foreclosure and eviction diversion; and educational programs for home repair skills.
- Development plan review of non-residential projects adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods. Careful consideration is given to preventing or minimizing encroachment of non-residential projects into residential neighborhoods and the associated of negative impacts.



Expanding outside current City programs may include efforts to support home stewardship by encouraging partnerships with non-profits, agencies, or local home improvement stores to provide community training in home repair skills, mortgage assistance, and providing needed resources, such as tools and materials for physical renovations.

Rehabilitation in Existing Neighborhoods

Portage can provide greater choices and support opportunities for new or rehabilitated homes within the existing neighborhood fabric. As neighborhoods age, continued investment in existing structures or quality replacement housing is key to maintaining a strong residential base.

Replacement housing built to fit the character of its surroundings could have a positive impact on the neighborhood as a whole.

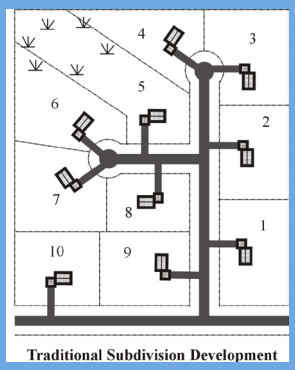
To support such opportunities, the City may consider developing educational materials and/or guidelines for infill development and rehabilitation that define and are consistent with desired neighborhood character, and provide rehabilitation prototypes for retrofitting aging housing stock with modern amenities and features. Developing simple renovation concepts for typical homes in the community can provide property owners with renovation ideas that might allow them to renovate, reinvest and stay in their current home.



Residential Character Types

The following neighborhood and housing character types are identified to target recommendations for new development and redevelopment that fits with the existing patterns and strengthens one of Portage's greatest assets, its neighborhoods.

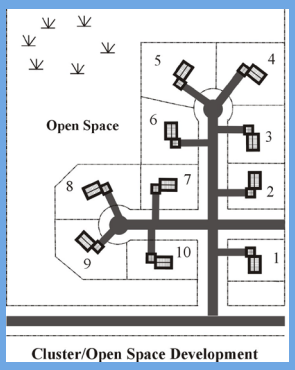
Small Sized Lots. Older residential areas in the northern sections of the city predominantly exhibit a traditional grid street pattern with small- to moderate-sized lots. Smaller lots and smaller dwelling unit size tend to be more affordable than larger lot subdivision development while still offering the opportunity for home ownership. As these older neighborhoods continue to age, it will be increasingly important to encourage rehabilitation and identify opportunities for reconstruction of new, smaller housing types.



Traditional Subdivision Development

Moderate to Large Lots. Much of the subdivision growth over the last 50 years accounts for this type of development. These neighborhoods are generally stable, largely because the housing stock is newer than in the smaller lot neighborhoods. While the homes are generally well maintained, some neighborhoods could be made more walkable with sidewalks, street trees, or traffic calming measures (see Transportation Chapter for more information).

Cluster or Open Space Development. A "cluster housing" district typically establishes an average density for the project area and allows a reduction in lot size if open space is preserved while maintaining an appropriate density level. This approach can be used to attract high value housing and/or preserve key natural areas on the balance of the site. The City could encourage this type of development where key natural features would be preserved and developer incentives are perceived, such as flexibility to develop difficult parcels or a density bonus is available.



Cluster/Open Space Development

Multiple-Family Residential. Multiple-family residential dwelling units help to improve the choice of housing types and to provide housing opportunities. Several areas have been classified for medium- and high-density residential use throughout the city and provide opportunities for development. Multi-family residential also provides opportunities for an older population (empty-nesters, retirees and those in need of care). Multi-family housing types extend beyond the typical multi-family apartment building. Single-family attached condominium units as part of planned development projects have been a fast growing housing choice for empty-nesters and retirees.

A duplex/fourplex is a 2- or 4-unit house with a garage – either attached or detached. Each unit typically has its own entry or shares an entry with one other unit. Duplexes and fourplexes are ideally placed in a corner location, allowing units to have frontage on either the main or side street. Duplexes and fourplexes could be appropriate as infill units in medium-low density residential neighborhoods – at major intersections, at the edges of the


Corner Lot Duplex example

neighborhoods, and adjacent to non-residential uses.



maisonette example

Maisonettes are three- or four-story buildings with elevations that resemble a row of townhouses. The interior, however, combines single-level and two-level apartments. Each unit has its own street entrance and attached garage, accessed from the rear of the building. This housing type would work well in the City Centre or as infill on former greenhouse sites.

Mixed Residential. Mixed residential is preferred near commercial and office centers, often near major corridors, serving as a transition between lower intensity single-family neighborhoods and higher intensity commercial or mixed-use areas. The goal is to provide a mix of housing types to accommodate a wider range of household types and people in different stages of life and to promote high quality, more dense housing types that respect the character of existing neighborhoods.



mixed residential example

Lakefront Residential. Portage has seven lakes that include Austin, West and Hampton, as well as portions of Long, Gourdneck, Sugarloaf and Little Sugarloaf. Most of the residential lots around the lakes were developed during the early part of the 1900's as summer cottages on small, narrow lots with water well and septic systems. The cottages that were constructed were typically small in scale and could be accommodated on a smaller lot, including the water well and septic system.

As Portage continued to grow and develop as a suburban community within a short commute to places of employment, shopping and cultural/recreational opportunities, many of these seasonal homes have been replaced over time with year-round often much larger residences. In response to this lakefront development growth, roads were improved and the majority of water/sanitary sewer mains were installed during the 1970's to protect lake water quality. Redevelopment of these lots continues today by property owners who desire to construct new dwellings or additions to existing dwellings, often on the same size lot originally intended for smaller seasonal cottages. As a result, there are site design issues unique to lakefront lots and include:



lakefront residential

- Lakefront homeowners value the views to the lake, but there can be conflicts when new construction on neighboring lots disrupts the view.
- Small lots present challenges to property owners who desire to build new or expand an existing dwelling or accessory building within the setbacks and maximum heights prescribed in the zoning ordinance.
- The smaller lakefront lots often lack the open yard space of larger lots in the city which leads to higher storm water runoff rates that can impact adjacent property and lake water quality. A combination of best management practices, such as soil erosion and sedimentation control, and public education can help limit adverse impacts from storm water runoff.
- Many lakefront plats in Portage include walkways that extend from the street to the lake, and road ends that were not constructed but these land areas also extend to the lake. These walkways and road ends were dedicated to the public but were not accepted by the city. Therefore, while the walkways and road ends provide lake access to non-waterfront property owners, the use and maintenance of such areas has been determined a matter between private property owners. Nevertheless, property owners and citizens are encouraged to consider a balance between the right to access lakes within the city with the rights of waterfront property owners.

Given the unique characteristics of lakefront lots, standards could be considered to address these characteristics yet at the same time preserve and protect the character of the lakes and adjacent or nearby properties.

Housing + Neighborhoods Implementation Strategies

- *Continue to offer and strengthen programs to encourage home ownership and maintenance for low and moderate income groups.*
- *Encourage cluster housing on parcels with important natural features to preserve and encourage additional single-family homeownership on smaller lots consistent with the single-family detached - medium density residential description and locations identified in the plan.*
- *Partner with local non-profits to provide assistance in retrofitting mature homes for seniors to have universal or barrier-free design to allow people to remain in their homes.*
- *Review lake front property zoning regulations in consideration of the unique characteristics associated with site and building construction activities and the surrounding neighborhood character.*

For a complete listing of implementation strategies, tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7: Implementation

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development is a development or building that blends a combination of residential uses, or that combines residential and non-residential uses, and where those functions are physically and functionally integrated. By locating places where people live, work and shop in close proximity to one another, alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, become more viable. Mixed-use developments can offer a variety of residential opportunities so that younger and older people, singles and families of varying income levels may find places to live. A more diverse and sizable population and commercial base can also better support public transportation. Mixed-use developments facilitate pedestrian oriented, nonresidential, which creates gathering places.

Subarea Plans

Two subareas of Portage in particular have been planned for mixed-use redevelopment. See the following City Centre and Lake Center chapters for further descriptions of their planned land uses and character.

Former Greenhouse Sites

While some mixtures of uses occur within a building, an opportunity to promote mixed-use within a planned development may be at former greenhouse sites. Many of these businesses are located adjacent to residential neighborhoods but with commercial frontages. These deep lots could be prime areas to redevelop with office uses fronting the street and new housing types behind. The current Planned Development zoning district could be applied to encourage these sites to develop in a cohesive manner with multiple uses.

Mixed-Use Benefits

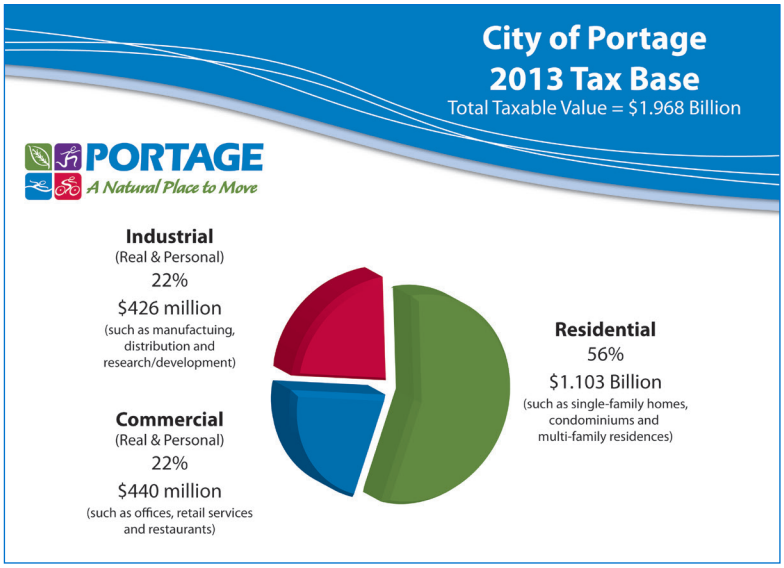
- *Greater housing variety and density provides more affordable housing and options for those seeking lower maintenance or urban living options*
- *Reduced distances between housing, workplaces, retail businesses, and other amenities and destinations reduces travel time and improves convenience*
- *More compact development makes more efficient use of public services, utilities and infrastructure*
- *Stronger neighborhood character and sense of place result when citizens and businesses interact*
- *Walkable, bikeable neighborhoods increase accessibility, which results in improved travel options, reduced transportation costs and improved community health*

Read more about mixed-use opportunities in Chapters 5: City Centre and 6: Lake Center Subarea Plans

Goal LU2:
Encourage sensible, sustainable, diverse, high-quality office, commercial and industrial development in designated areas to maintain Portage's employment opportunities supportable by the community's existing and reasonably anticipated future infrastructure

C. Business + Employment Centers

A strong economic base is viewed as vital to the continued ability of the City of Portage to meet future growth and development challenges. Although the state, regional and local economies are still rebounding from the 2008 economic downturn, the City of Portage has made significant progress to balance and diversify the local economy as shown in the chart below. A balanced and diverse economy is essential to maintain community stability and provides the economic foundation from which essential public services can be financed. While the City of Portage is a primary retail shopping destination, home to one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturing plants in the world and has high quality residential character, a commitment to a balanced and diverse economy can further Portage's growth and development.



Office

Office development generally offers stable employment and sound tax base (with a limited demand on public services). Office development is also often considered more visually appealing than other types of higher intensity land uses. Consequently, office uses have successfully served as an important "transitional" use between higher intensity uses and major streets and interior residential neighborhoods.

Office Development Strategies

- Continue to support development in the primary office corridors, including zoning changes where appropriate.
- As office uses are intended to be transitional uses between higher intensity nonresidential uses/major thoroughfares and residential neighborhoods, protection of abutting residential areas should be given careful consideration during the zoning process.

Milham Avenue Office Corridor Character

(Oakland Drive to Lovers Lane).

- *Close proximity to I-94 and US-131.*
- *Located adjacent to the South Westnedge Avenue Commercial Corridor and Portage Commerce Square.*
- *A continuous sidewalk exists on both sides of Milham Avenue.*
- *Linkages to planned and/or available industrial sites and existing recreational facilities.*
- *Ability to accommodate a range of office site demands.*
- *Periodically separated by small enclaves of residential, retail uses and industrial uses.*





Local Neighborhood Business Nodes

Local business areas provide uses capable of serving the day-to-day needs of area neighborhoods. These areas are generally located at secondary intersections and are developed as small clusters of retail and service establishments. The economic vitality of these business nodes is a direct result of patronization by local customer traffic. Generally, as local neighborhoods remain healthy, so do these small centers.

Local Neighborhood Business Strategies

- Continue to encourage a range of uses associated with day-to-day neighborhood needs. The selective mixing of uses (e.g. convenience store, coffee shop, ice cream shop, and other similar uses) should be encouraged.
- Confine neighborhood centers to small nodes. Avoid allowing nearby parcels, such as those occupied by existing dwellings, to be converted to commercial use. This often leads to the decentralization of the small business node ultimately resulting in a strip commercial area.





Centre Avenue Office Corridor Character

(South 12th Street to Portage Road)

- *Mix of offices, banks, churches, scattered residential and retail at major street intersections.*
- *A continuous sidewalk exists on the north side of Centre Avenue but inconsistent on south side.*
- *Off-street parking is located in front, side, or rear yard areas*
- *West Centre Avenue between South 12th Street and Oakland Drive is a four lane, limited access boulevard. Between Oakland Drive and Portage Road, West/East Centre Avenue is a 5-lane roadway.*
- *Extends through the City Centre Area of the community*
- *Many remaining residences that are subject to conversion into office uses.*

Existing retail nodes along Centre Avenue at Angling Road, Oakland Drive, Lovers Lane, and Portage Road should be maintained as neighborhood commercial.

Example General Business Character - Portage Road from I-94 to Yellowbrick

Many general business areas exist in Portage. One in particular is highlighted here to demonstrate how character can be enhanced for this key city gateway.

- *Key opportunity to improve gateway development that relates to airport and AirZoo*
- *Improvements to the I-94 interchange contributes positively to gateway character*
- *Newer businesses have good landscape buffering from the street*
- *Opportunities for additional restaurants and aviation or family-themed destinations*
- *Several aging strip centers could benefit from façade improvements and improved landscaping*

General Business

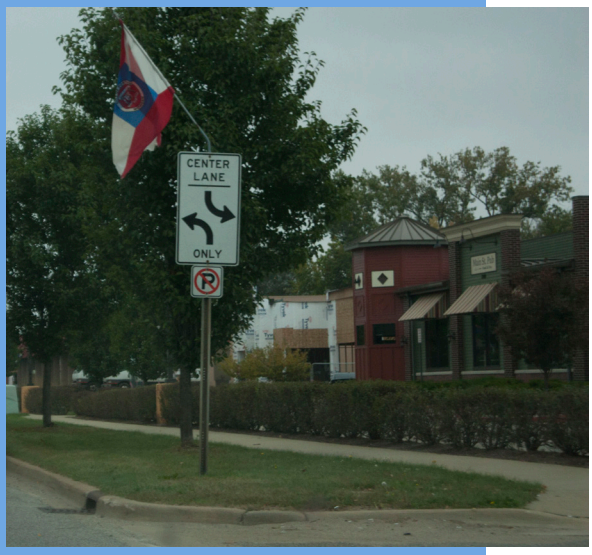
General business areas provide full-service retail and other more high-intensity commercial uses. Patrons originate from area neighborhoods, surrounding communities, through travelers, and employees of the numerous businesses and industries.

The character and/or quality of adjacent development often influence the economic health of general business areas. Therefore, it is important that nearby residential and nonresidential areas maintain community quality standards. Likewise, it is important that general business areas are well maintained and provide appropriate buffers to adjacent nonresidential uses.

General Business Strategies

- Continue to encourage a range of uses encompassing the full-service and specialty retail and service activities attractive to a wide population base.
- Due to the linear development character along major streets, general business areas will likely continue to experience development pressures to expand. Appropriate locations to provide expansion opportunities should be identified and the impacts of expansion should be carefully measured. Decentralization of a business district has the potential to diminish the synergistic qualities of the district.







Regional Business Centers

The prime regional business center of Portage resides along South Westnedge Avenue commercial corridor and has been known as Portage Commerce Square, which includes Crossroads Mall, southwest Michigan's only regional mall. Many newer commercial developments exist in this area with substantial green buffers, attractive facades, and coordinated access management. Some of the older commercial areas can be targeted for redevelopment to match the newer high quality development rather than continued expansion into adjacent residential neighborhoods. Pockets of residential neighborhoods remain where the commercial has grown around them. Some of these areas have been impacted by continued commercial growth.

Regional Business Strategies

- Continue to provide appropriate opportunities for expansion within the regional business center to ensure (re)development needed to attract the population/consumers from the regional market.
- Due to the size and character of Portage Commerce Square, identify opportunities to improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow for future planning and development purposes.
- The regional business center (from point of entry into the City of Portage to the respective Regional Business Center) should reflect a high quality, aesthetically attractive, image. Motorists should view movement into and through this area of the city as a pleasant experience.

Regional Business Character

- *The regional business center area includes shopping malls, national and regional retailers, and locally-owned and operated stores.*
- *Generally auto-oriented/ significant off-street parking.*
- *The South Westnedge Avenue Commercial Corridor has an approximately 95% occupancy rate.*
- *Alternative routes to South Westnedge Avenue exist to conveniently and safely move people and goods into and out of the area.*
- *Sidewalks exist on at least one and in many situations on both sides of most major thoroughfares.*





Portage Road and Sprinkle Road Industrial Corridors

The industrial corridors near the airport and Pfizer and Stryker land holdings have a distinct industrial/R&D feel that can be strengthened. Small commercial nodes can be better defined at Milham/Portage, Centre/Portage, Sprinkle/Milham, and Centre/Sprinkle. Large industrial buildings are often set far back from the road with considerable green space buffering from the street. Parking is usually well landscaped in the side or rear yards. Much of the Pfizer land near Portage Road is vacant.

Industrial + Research/Development

Significant and numerous industrial businesses located in the city are a key aspect of the strong employment base. The proximity to US-131, I-94 and the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport; the availability of industrial zoned property and public infrastructure; the existing industrial base; and residential, health, education, and cultural amenities are all attractive draws for further industrial development.

Industrial Development Strategies

- Encourage development of industrial parks and technology centers and similar developments.
- Within industrial settings, provide opportunities for a range of site sizes including smaller sites of 1-2 acres to accommodate smaller companies and the financial capabilities of new entrepreneurs.
- Improve the compatibility of industrial areas with other use districts through transitional zoning and/or the use of increased setbacks, landscape buffers, and architectural screening.





Business + Employment Implementation Strategies

The following strategies apply to all the Commercial/Industrial areas of Portage. Individual strategies targeted at specific business types are highlighted in the above sections:

- *Continue to plan and implement infrastructure improvements to support existing businesses and encourage new investment.*
- *Maintain competitive millage, water and sewer utility rates.*
- *Encourage non-motorized transportation alternatives between business establishments and between business establishments and residential neighborhoods.*
- *Continue appropriate commercial and industrial incentives to strengthen and diversify the tax base of the community.*
- *Employ appropriate economic development tools to facilitate investment opportunities available through the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA), Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Brownfield Redevelopment Authority or Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA).*
- *Expansion into existing residential neighborhoods needs to be carefully considered to balance the needs of the business community with the need to protect and preserve stable residential neighborhoods.*
- *Consider the implementation of "aesthetic" site and building design standards and/or landscaping and screening standards to ensure compatibility of the commercial facilities with nearby neighborhoods.*
- *Pursue access management principles to combine/coordinate access and parking.*
- *Enforce property and building maintenance codes.*

D. Future Land Use Plan

It is necessary to plan for future land use and development in a manner consistent with community goals and objectives. The City of Portage is a community with quality residential neighborhoods, strong commercial and industrial areas to provide tax base and employment, with quality municipal services and an abundance of recreational opportunities. The future land use plan provides a long-range focus to help continue this balance. The future land use recommendations in this section are revisions of the future land use information and map from previously adopted plans. The map has been revised and updated based on changing development conditions, emerging planning trends, as well as input from city staff, planning commissioners and public input. The product of this effort is shown on the **Future Land Use map** and is further detailed in the following pages in this chapter.

New land use and community character challenges arise as Portage continues to mature: Competition for desirable land uses from surrounding communities will increase; redevelopment of aging sites will increase in importance; management of traffic on an existing roadway network will continue to be a priority; and public infrastructure systems will continue to age. As a result, land use decisions involving vacant or under utilized property to provide for quality redevelopment become more important.

The Future Land Use Plan is a representation of general physical features/ land use activities in the city when fully developed and does not imply that all of the changes will or should occur in the near term. Development and redevelopment will proceed in a manner consistent with policies on the environment, transportation and infrastructure capacity, as examples, and other matters which help determine the appropriate timeframe. Also, zoning decisions should, over time, produce changes that gradually establish greater conformity between the Zoning Map and the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Map should be carefully considered to ensure consistency is maintained when making decisions on planning and development matters: Community changes which directly conflict with the Future Land Use Map could undermine the long-term objectives of the city and should be avoided.

Importantly, deviations from the Future Land Use Map and the Comprehensive Plan may be appropriate when justified by more detailed information, changes to conditions, or in cases where a deviation is not contrary to the overall intent and purpose of the Plan. The Future Land Use Map or the Comprehensive Plan may require update in cases where proposed deviations would significantly alter the general direction or vision as depicted by the Plan. An amendment to the Future Land Use map and/or the policies should be required in the case where a development, because of its scale or intensity, has a potential to create significant impact on surrounding uses, services or traffic and most be carefully considered in the context of community goals and objectives.

Factors Considered

Remaining consistent with previous comprehensive planning processes, this five-year update of the Future Land Use Map and the Comprehensive Plan incorporates input received during the public participation process, acknowledges existing land use patterns, and reflects planning best practices. More specifically, the following factors were taken into consideration in preparing the Future Land Use Map:

- **Existing Land Use.** Locations of most existing commercial and industrial

developments are appropriate and will continue to serve as the primary business centers. Residential areas have developed throughout many sections of the city. The community land use patterns have evolved in an orderly manner and will be built upon, with slight modification, rather than altered in a significant manner.

- **Existing Zoning.** There is no "vested interest" that guarantees zoning will not change: In fact changes are suggested by this Comprehensive Plan. However, such changes were carefully considered to ensure the general development arrangement remains consistent and landowners will be ensured a reasonable use of their land.
- **Relationship of Incompatible Uses.** The Future Land Use Plan provides important guidance in the ongoing effort to reduce or eliminate incompatible land use relationships. Providing a transition between land uses, such as the introduction of office or multiple-family residential between light industrial and single family residential areas, is one approach that can accomplish such a transition. In other cases natural features, such as Portage Creek, or landscaping and setback buffering strategies can help facilitate such a transition, as discussed in the Development Guidelines in Chapter 7: Implementation. Importantly, the Plan designates general land use patterns for uses considered most appropriate to fulfill the long-term objectives of the community.



- **Natural Features.** The types of development and allowable densities were determined, in part, by the location and extent of natural features. Natural rolling topography, stream corridors, woodlots and lakes provide highly attractive and marketable property for certain types of development. Lower overall development densities are proposed for properties containing significant natural features, although the use of clustered developments in buildable areas of properties, while conserving features, can provide a balance between the environment and development potential of the property.
- **Capacity of Streets, Infrastructure and Facilities/Services.** The density of residential uses and the designation of land for industrial and commercial development are dependent on the availability and capacity of the infrastructure. Accessibility to and the capacity of the street network help establish the types and intensity of uses that may be served in an area without adversely impacting traffic operations. The availability of community facilities such as schools and recreational facilities affects the areas that are especially attractive for residential development, while police and fire protection also assist with the quality of life provided to all land uses.
- **Market Conditions.** The nature of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses are evolving, with aging development types often becoming less desirable or obsolete. This can result in an oversupply of certain types of development, especially commercial, which has a tendency to sprawl outwards. Redevelopment of existing uses is encouraged, and the future land use designations reflect a balance of uses targeted to key areas.
- **Land Use Patterns in the Kalamazoo/Portage Area and Other Communities.** Land use patterns for surrounding communities and the region, including the City of Kalamazoo, were also considered.
- **Previous Comprehensive Plan.** Recommendations from the previous

Future Land Use Planning Guiding Principles

- *Provide an attractive business environment and opportunities for businesses to expand the economic diversity of Portage and contribute to the overall economic strength. In particular, encourage businesses that will be sensitive to the environment.*
- *Continue to sustain the overall residential character of the city.*
- *Accommodate appropriate non-residential uses adjacent to and in some situations within residential areas when the location is essential or supports the neighborhoods, provided such uses and site design are compatible.*
- *Ensure the transition from one use or grouping of uses to another is compatible with surrounding uses through screening and buffering.*
- *Foster the revitalization and redevelopment of existing uses or areas which have deteriorated or have become obsolete.*
- *Promote systematic development of residential, commercial and industrial uses in specific areas and corridors as recommended to take advantage of existing infrastructure and future improvements.*
- *Promote compatibility between existing and future uses along the city's boundaries with other communities.*

Comprehensive Plans formed the foundation of this Plan update. Those recommendations were refined based on analysis of new data, recent development trends and other factors. While the previous recommendations were largely based on statistical analysis and population projections, this Plan provides a broader perspective for land use recommendations and incorporates appropriate and important aspects of all of these factors.

- **Public Input.** While by no means last in importance, public input is valuable in the Comprehensive Plan process. Comments and opinion about land use patterns and related community planning issues as conveyed at various public forums, informal meetings and discussions with property owners, people and officials were also considered.

Future Land Use Category Descriptions

Future Land Use Classifications were developed to implement the vision set forth in this Comprehensive Plan, as supported by the Goals, Objectives, and Development Guidelines. For the most part, the classifications are representative of the Existing Land Use classifications, but have been generalized in order to provide greater development flexibility for future growth. In addition, several classifications have been added within the Lake Center subarea, which may lead to amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

Low Density Residential

Purpose – To establish areas for future low density, single family development, and protect existing established neighborhoods from the intrusion of incompatible land uses. An additional purpose is to encourage new housing development to take advantage of available attractive natural features and other amenities.

Description – This land use classification includes areas planned for future low density (1 to 4 units per acre) residential development, as well as areas of existing low density residential development and is typical for traditional

This table indicates the total acreage for each of the 15 land use category. Low Density Residential comprises 45.6% of the total acreage, the largest land use in Portage.

Land Use Categories	2014 Acreage	2014 % of total
Low Density Residential	9,182	45.6%
Single-Family Detached-Medium Density Residential	1,001	5.0%
Medium Density Residential	807	4.0%
High Density Residential	609	3.0%
Office	713	3.5%
Local Business	102	0.5%
General Business	460	2.3%
Regional Business	500	2.5%
General Industrial	2,027	10.1%
Shaver Road Business Corridor	406	2.0%
Research, Development & Technology	1,112	5.5%
Park / Recreation	1,004	5.0%
Gourdneck State Game Area	1,555	7.7%
Public	342	1.7%
City Centre	302	1.5%
TOTALS	20,122	100.0%

single-family detached dwelling unit subdivisions. Low Density Residential (LDR) uses primarily constitute the majority of numerous neighborhood areas in Portage. Creating and maintaining neighborhoods will help form a stronger, more vibrant community. Connection to a municipal sanitary system is a requirement for LDR uses.

Under the Zoning Ordinance, this designation generally corresponds to the R-1B, R-1C, R-1D, R-1E and PD zoning districts.

Locations – Low-density residential uses are planned throughout the city.

Single-Family Detached - Medium Density Residential

Purpose – To establish areas for future single family development at higher densities than those allowed in LDR areas in order to provide greater opportunities for affordable single family home ownership within Portage while maintaining the integrity of the housing stock.

Description – The Single-Family Detached - Medium Density Residential (SFD-MDR) classification is intended to provide for a greater diversity in single-family housing development within the city. This land use classification includes areas planned for future medium-density (up to 6 units per acre) residential development. SFD-MDR uses include single-family detached housing units. Connection to a municipal sanitary system is a requirement for all SFD-MDR uses. Under the Zoning Ordinance, this designation generally corresponds to the R-1A and PD zoning districts.

Locations – SFD-MDR uses are planned in a number of areas throughout the city. As illustrated on the map, in most cases these uses are adjacent or near to areas planned for LDR development. SFD-MDR and LDR uses are compatible with one another, and can therefore be co-located. Also, because SFD-MDR uses allow for higher densities, they are also planned adjacent to some of Portage's higher-intensity uses, such as the areas surrounding the

Regional Business area.

Medium Density Residential

Purpose – To establish appropriate areas for quality, medium-density residential development that contributes to the diversity and stability of Portage's housing stock.

Description – This land use classification covers the transition from detached to attached dwelling units and includes areas planned for future medium density (4 to 8 units per acre) residential development such as duplexes, attached condominiums and townhomes, and certain apartment buildings. Under the Zoning Ordinance this designation corresponds to the R-1T, RM-2 and PD zoning districts.

Locations – As illustrated on the Future Land Use Map, many MDR uses are adjacent or near to areas planned for LDR development. Some MDR areas are also planned adjacent to some of Portage's higher-intensity uses, such as the areas surrounding the Regional Business area.

High Density Residential

Purpose – To allow for a limited amount of quality, high-density residential development in appropriate areas to ensure the choice of housing types to provide a more dispersed pattern of multi-family sites.

Description – This land use classification covers a variety of attached dwelling units and includes areas planned for future multi-family, high-density (8 to 15 units per acre) residential development such as triplexes, fourplexes, maisonettes, apartment complexes, and manufactured home parks. Under the Zoning Ordinance this designation generally corresponds to the RM-1, MHC and PD zoning districts.

Locations – Similar to MDR uses, areas planned for HDR uses are limited to locations which provide access to major thoroughfares and have compatible surrounding land uses. HDR uses are planned along Sprinkle Road and East Centre Avenue, in areas surrounding the Regional Business and other select locations. In some cases, with appropriate screening or buffering, HDR uses can be located adjacent to lower density residential areas. However adjacency to Portage's higher intensity commercial, office and industrial uses is usually preferred to minimize land use conflicts.

Local Business Nodes

Purpose – Local business nodes are intended to encourage and support low intensity local business uses and service establishments (i.e., convenience store, small sit-down style restaurant, pharmacy, bank, offices, etc.) which provide convenience goods and services to residents and employees in the immediate neighborhood, generally within a two mile radius, while maintaining a compatible neighborhood scale.

Description – The local business classification includes commercial uses that cater primarily to nearby residents and employees. These uses include small grocery, convenience and drug stores, dry-cleaners, smaller dining establishments and may include personal service and office establishments. The local business designation generally corresponds to the permitted uses in the B-1 zoning district.

Locations – These uses are typically located near single-family neighborhoods and can be often accessed by walkway or bikeway connections in addition to automobile access. Local business uses are typically found in small secondary

commercial nodes at intersections throughout the city.

General Business

Purpose – To provide for the full range of retail uses, for hotel and other highway services, for recreation facilities and for personal service establishments, and may include general offices.

Description – Unlike local businesses, which cater primarily to nearby residents and can often be accessed by non-motorized transportation, general business operations tend to cater more to automobile traffic from a broader market area, up to a ten mile radius, including surrounding communities. General business uses include retail stores, hotels and motels, fast food restaurants, and highway service establishments. This designation adds the land extensive and large durable goods retail and service uses such as garden centers, home materials, automobile sales and services, furniture stores and appliance stores. Thus, the full range of retail goods and services are provided to the community and travelers in this commercial designation. The general business designation generally corresponds to the permitted uses in B-3 zoning district.

Locations – General business areas are concentrated in primary commercial nodes, along major thoroughfares and at major intersections in a manner that prevents a sprawling commercial corridor. Major thoroughfares of general business development include areas along Westnedge Avenue north of Schuring and a select area of Portage Road and Shaver Road.

Regional Business Centers

Purpose – To provide shopping goods and services to residents, employees and visitors throughout southwest Michigan.

Description – South Westnedge Avenue commercial corridor and Portage Commerce Square represent the heart of the commercial activity in the city, offering conveniently located commercial services that draw patrons from the Kalamazoo County area and beyond, with easy access via US-131 and I-94. Typical uses include large shopping centers, home improvement centers, hotels/motels, movie theaters and other regional/national retailers. Also permitted are accessory commercial uses that serve shoppers and nearby employers such as restaurants and gas stations. This designation generally corresponds to the permitted uses in B-2 and CPD zoning districts.

Locations – South Westnedge Avenue between Kilgore Road and Centre Avenue; Portage Commerce Square is centered around the South Westnedge corridor between Milham and Romence Roads. Business uses should be planned with sufficient site size to accommodate off-street parking, on-site storm water, landscaping and buffer areas. However, such uses should not encroach into residential areas, especially adjacent to South Westnedge Avenue, beyond what is necessary for viable development sites.

Office Corridors

Purpose – To provide a variety of high quality, stable employment opportunities for residents, to help maintain a well-balanced tax base and to provide an effective transition between higher intensity uses and major streets and interior residential neighborhoods.

Description – The office category includes professional and medical offices such as doctors, dentists, lawyers, engineers, accountants; real estate and insurance; banks and other financial institutions; art and photographic studios; and community research facilities. General office use and community research

facilities require larger sites than the typical pre-existing residential uses along arterials and compatibility with the abutting residential area will be important in the selection of the appropriate type and intensity of office use. This designation generally corresponds to the permitted uses in the OS-1 and OTR zoning districts.

Locations – Office uses are concentrated along two evolving corridors (Centre Avenue Office Corridor and Milham Avenue Office Corridor), as well as located where appropriate to create a mixture of business types including areas along Lovers Lane, Oakland Drive, Moorsbridge Road and Old Centre Avenue.

Research/Development/Technology

Purpose – To provide a location for certain industrial-related uses distinct from other types of industrial or commercial businesses. This classification responds to essential diversification in the region's economic base away from dependence on heavier industrial uses to a broader range of emerging uses. Such uses help expand the employment base and can help achieve many of the objectives referenced throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

Description – While the definition of Research & Development/Technology is somewhat broad, the intent is to concentrate certain compatible uses in a planned, campus-like setting with more extensive landscaping, higher quality architecture and more site amenities than typically found in general industrial areas. Outdoor storage of materials and equipment is limited, with screening required where it is to occur. Representative uses include: Research facilities and centers, technology or pilot testing facilities, micro-electronic and biotechnology uses, certain industrial operations that are compatible with others uses envisioned within the Research, Development and Technology designation and large-scale corporate or professional offices. Other types of uses may also be appropriate such as, pharmaceutical production in the Portage Road area between East Milham and East Centre Avenue. Certain types of supporting businesses such as accommodation/motels, conference facilities and service oriented businesses that cater to other businesses rather than the general public may also be appropriate.

Locations – Research & Development/Technology uses have locational requirements distinct from other types of industrial uses. These more specialized uses typically desire a concentrated location, separate from other industrial uses. Preferred locations offer proximity to expressway interchanges, airports and universities. Based on these factors, research & development/technology land uses are identified in the central portion of the city generally south of Milham Avenue and north of Centre Avenue, between Lovers Lane and Portage Road.

Industrial

Purpose – To serve as an employment generator and as a source of production of a variety of products and services that benefit the region and beyond.

Description – General industrial operations encompass manufacturing activities involving raw materials, assembly operations, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and medical equipment development, among others. Due to more intense operations, the guidelines should focus on minimizing impacts by aggregating industrial activities and also through the use of architectural and landscaping enhancements and appropriate screening. These uses are generally

associated with the I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.

Locations – General industrial operations are primarily located within the Sprinkle Road Industrial Corridor and the east side of Shaver Road. The Sprinkle Road Industrial Corridor is the primary industrial corridor in the City of Portage and also Kalamazoo County. It is the principle location for more than 75 industries, including Stryker Corporation, Pfizer, Inc., Mann+Hummel, Summit Polymers, Bowers Manufacturing, among others, that provide several thousand job opportunities for area residents.

Public Land Uses

Purpose – To provide high quality facilities for residents and visitors of the city.

Description – Public uses encompass all community facilities under public ownership other than public parks and public nature preserves. Examples of public facilities include government offices, library, police/fire stations, schools cemeteries and public wellhead sites. Public uses are permitted in all zoning districts; however, most are found in residential zoning districts.

(Because of private land ownership, there is no designation for quasi-public land uses such as churches, nonprofit organizations, utilities and private recreation facilities and such existing land uses are designated according to the predominant surrounding land use.)

Locations – Public uses are identified throughout the city to best serve residents in a variety of geographic locations. Public uses such as government offices and library are concentrated primarily within the City Centre Area.

Recreation and Open Space

Purpose – To provide locations for both active and passive recreational opportunities to enhance the quality of life for residents as well as provide natural greenspace areas.

Description – The recreation and open space designation includes public parks, public nature preserves, public/quasi-public greenways and state recreation/game areas. Privately owned property designated for recreation and open space facilities are not included in this category. Under the Zoning Ordinance public recreation and open space is permitted in all zoning districts; however, most areas are found in single residential zoning districts.

Locations – Recreation and open space areas are distributed throughout the community to provide convenient access to residents. Examples of some of the larger areas include Portage Creek Bicentennial Park and Celery Flats Interpretive Center within the central portion of the city adjacent Portage Creek; South Central Portage Greenway that includes Schrier Park, Bishops Bog, Eliason Nature Reserve, South Westnedge Park and West Lake Nature Preserve; Ramona Park near Sprinkle Road and Zylman Road; Mandigo Marsh along the south end of Austin Lake; and several other smaller parks and facilities across the city. In addition to these local facilities, the State of Michigan maintains the Gourdneck State Game Area, which encompasses 1,555 acres generally located in the southwest portion of the city. These facilities have a strong presence in the community and are an important the quality of life component.

City Centre Mixed-Use

Purpose – To encourage an area in the geographic center of Portage that can be easily identified by residents and visitors as the “downtown” and which

provides a core activity area for public facilities and a destination for the general public.

Description – The common desire to develop a centralized "city center" identified as the heart of Portage was an important goal of the Vision 2025 project and planned as part of the 2008 City Centre Subarea Plan (summarized as Chapter 5 in this Plan). These elements include:

- *Common design* – Signs/wayfinding, lighting, streetscaping, building design and landscaping features should be coordinated throughout the City Centre to enhance its identity. Also, in order to promote activity in the City Centre, it must be a pedestrian friendly environment. Perhaps the most important design element of the Centre would be a well-connected walkway and bikeway system that connects various destinations.
- *Pedestrian Linkages* – The City Centre is also identified to be the "hub" from which pedestrian-friendly linkages connect parks, pedestrian/bicycle trails, cultural venues, municipal facilities, education facilities and also business centers. While the City Centre should be designed to promote pedestrian activity, it should also be easily accessible by vehicle, providing ample-parking areas that do not conflict with pedestrian activity.
- *Complementary Land Uses* – The City Centre is primarily intended to provide a concentrated area of municipal facilities, such as City Hall, District Library, the Public Works facilities, the Donald E. Overlander Community bandshell and other similar public uses. Additionally, the City Centre should also provide for a variety of mixed land uses in an effort to make the area a multi-purpose destination for residents and visitors alike. Such complementary uses include, but are not limited to, local and specialty retail and eateries (sidewalk cafes and coffee shops), bookstores, music stores, museums, flower shops, personal service establishments, secondary educational facilities, banks, offices and other similar ancillary uses. The City Centre should also permit high quality single and/or multiple family residential uses.
- This mixture of uses would allow the land situated at a prime location in the city to be utilized to its maximum potential. It would also help create an area of concentrated development easily accessible by both vehicles and pedestrians. While the proposed range of land uses are generally compatible, care will be needed during the (re)development process. Each use will need to be of a scale, density, and design that results in benefit to the general area and minimizes negative impacts on other uses.

Location – The designated City Centre area is centered near the intersection of South Westnedge Avenue, Centre Avenue, and Shaver Road.

Shaver Road Business Corridor

Purpose – To serve as an employment generator as a source of production of a variety of products and commercial needs that benefit the city.

Description – The Shaver Road Business Corridor is a developing corridor and, as a result, consists of a mixture of land uses. Uses located on the east side of the corridor, east of the Grand Elk railroad line, are primarily growing or stable industrial uses with some vacant land available for further development. This area is designated for General Industrial uses. The land uses located along the west side of the corridor consist of a mixture

For more information, please see Chapter 5: City Centre Subarea Plan

of light industrial uses, commercial uses and some nonconforming single-family dwellings. The west side of the corridor has experienced significant (re)development activity during the past several years involving both light industrial and commercial uses. Vacant land also exists for further commercial and/or industrial development. As a result of the mixed uses, the west side is designated as the Shaver Road Business Corridor. This (re)development activity is expected to continue which will further strengthen this important community corridor and provide additional job opportunities.

Location – Industrial and commercial uses are located along Shaver Road south of Centre Avenue. This is the area where the city should direct uses with the characteristics noted above.

Lake Center nodes and retrofit areas:

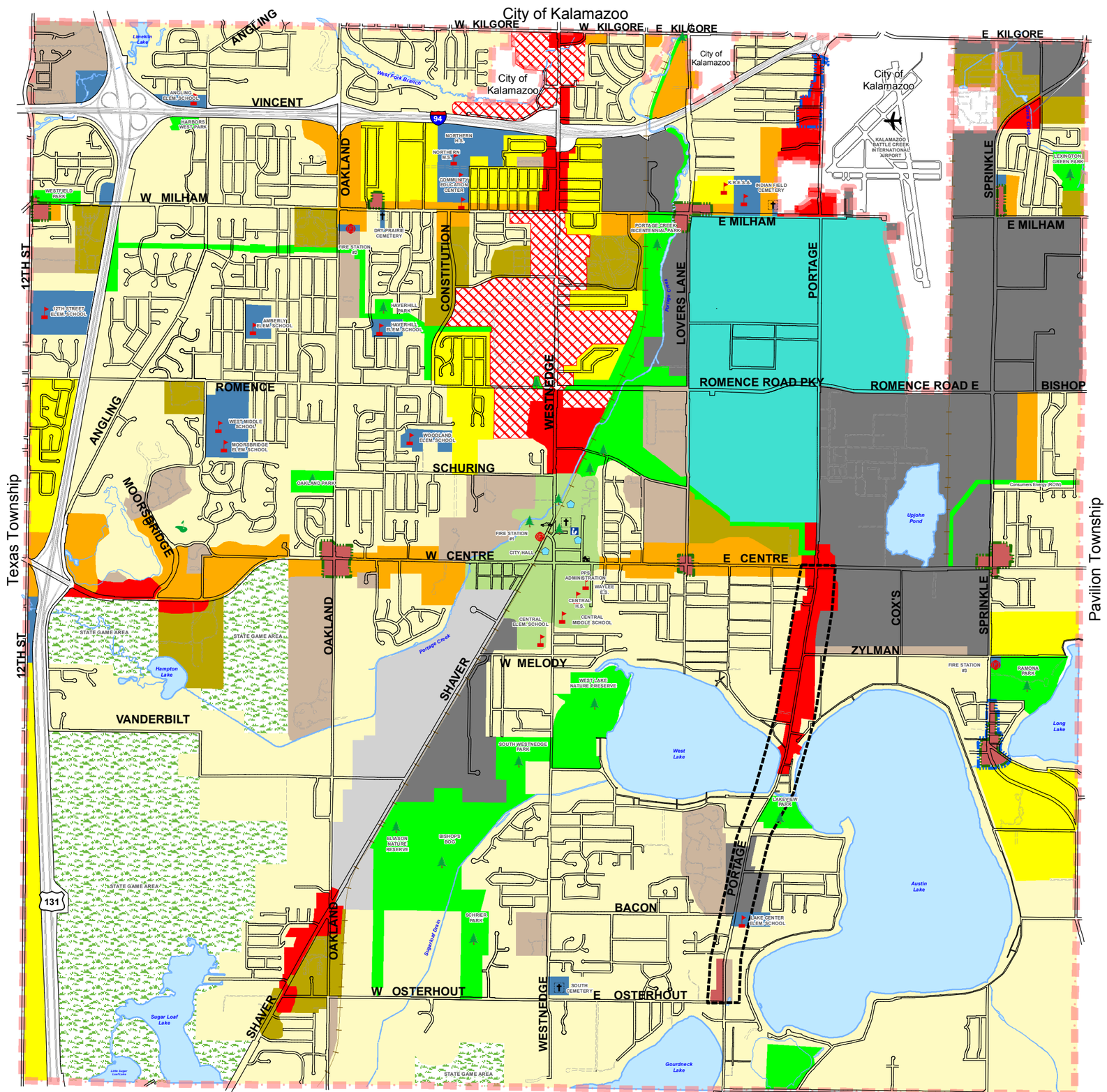
The 2014 Comprehensive Plan includes a new subarea plan for the Lake Center area along Portage Road from East Centre Avenue to East Osterhout Road. The Future Land Use map has a notation regarding the general subarea boundary while the Lake Centre subarea plan provides recommendations regarding modifications to specific land uses. In general, there are three target areas included in the subarea plan: a) a Lake Center Core Node at the isthmus of Austin and West lakes that recommends mixed land uses; b) a Commercial Connector Retrofit District that recommends smaller-scale, lower intensity uses between East Centre Avenue and the lakes; and c) a Light Industrial Node north of Bacon Avenue that also promotes lower intensity uses with enhanced neighborhood protection measures.

For more information, please see Chapter 6: Lake Center Subarea Plan

For a complete listing of implementation strategies, tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7: Implementation

Land Use Implementation Strategies

- *Encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites through the use of Brownfield Act financing as a method to remediate environmental contamination.*
- *Initiate rezonings for certain sites that may be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Utilize the Development Review Guidelines during the evaluation of land use development proposals to assess the compatibility of the proposed land use with the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Monitor changes to the state zoning act and other land use laws, along with key federal and state case law, and evaluate applicable city regulations to determine if changes are needed.*
- *Review the entire Comprehensive Plan every five years and update as needed consistent with the state statute.*
- *Annually review these strategies and set priorities for implementation for the coming year.*



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PORTAGE
A Natural Place to Move

Future Land Use Map

Legend

- Low Density Residential
- Single-Family Detached-Medium Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Local Business
- Regional Business
- General Business
- General Industrial
- Shaver Road Business Corridor
- Research, Development & Technology
- Office
- Park / Recreation
- Gourdneck State Game Area
- Public
- City Centre
- Secondary Commercial Node
- Commercial Revitalization Area
- Lake Center Subarea
- Airport
- Cemetery
- City Park
- Court
- Fire Station
- Golf Course
- Library
- Municipal
- P.C.O.C.
- Police
- Public School
- CITY BOUNDARY

1 inch = 3,200 feet

CITY CENTRE SUBAREA 5

This subarea plan was created after the adoption of the last Comprehensive Plan in 2008. It was adopted as an amendment to that plan and is incorporated in summary form as a chapter of this plan. A complete copy of the City Centre Subarea Plan adopted in 2008 is available in the Department of Community Development.

A. Introduction

The Portage City Centre Area is the geographic area that best serves as the "identifying" center and "heart" of the City of Portage. The long-standing importance of the City Centre Area has been documented over nearly 30 years and in some of the earliest planning efforts undertaken by the City of Portage. The vision to establish an "identity" and a "downtown" has extended from the early focus of centralizing "civic" activities in the geographic center of the community in the 1981 Comprehensive Plan and the subsequent 1982 City Center Plan. Establishing the geographic center of the city as the "city centre" has been emphasized in other planning documents including the Portage 2000 Report, Portage 2020 Plan, the 1996 and 2002 Comprehensive Plans and the 2008 Comprehensive Plan update. Additionally, the citizen-based Portage 2025 visioning project that occurred in early 2007 established the organizing concept statement to create a "world class community", with a distinct and vibrant city center.

Two geographic areas delineated in the adopted 1982 City Centre Area Plan continue to be used and are defined as the following:

- City Centre Study Area: Bounded by Garden Lane to the north and east, Melody Avenue to the south and Perry Street/Timbercreek Court to the west. This geographically central area encompasses existing city facilities and Portage Public Schools education and administrative facilities as well as immediately adjacent residential neighborhoods and business areas, and is an estimated 700 acres in size.
- Detailed Plan Area: Situated wholly within the City Centre Study Area and bounded by Schuring Road to the north, Currier Drive to the east, extending to approximately 700 feet south of Centre Avenue, with the west boundary situated just west of Oak Street.

As proposed in this City Centre Area Plan, there are many elements that can serve as "building blocks" to establish and strengthen the City Centre as a "place" including the existing quality community facilities and distinctive public features, environmental elements including Portage Creek, municipal recreational amenities, the Portage Public School/Administrative complex and the diverse businesses, business centers and neighborhoods within and adjacent to the geographic center of the community.

Did You Know?

Since adoption of the 2008 City Centre Area plan, the following has been accomplished:

- City Centre Area (CCA) zoning provisions were adopted that envisions an urban, small-scale and pedestrian-friendly governmental/business center with enhanced residential opportunities through the encouragement of mixed use developments.
- Work/Live accommodations were adopted that allows an on-site accessory residential dwelling unit in commercial areas for the business owner or employee.
- The old Portage Central High School was razed and a new high school and related pedestrian improvements were constructed.
- 123 acres of natural/wooded area was donated to the City and created the Eliason Nature Reserve and another contiguous 18 acres was acquired by the City and has been added to the Portage Park system.

City Centre Area-related Opportunities

- *Several civic buildings including City Hall, Portage District Library and the Senior Center.*
- *Several recreational facilities including Central Park, Veterans Memorial Park, Liberty Park and the Shaver Road Bikeway Trail, Bicentennial Trail and Millennium Trail.*
- *Portage Central high school, middle school and elementary school campuses and sports complex.*
- *Encourage mixed use developments in the City Centre Area.*
- *Promote cultural and recreational activities in City Centre Area.*
- *Increase residential opportunities for more people to live in the City Centre Area.*
- *Continue efforts to make the City Centre Area more user-friendly for non-motorized forms of transportation into and out of the area and between existing land uses.*
- *Continue to encourage the use of municipal facilities, businesses and institutions located in the City Centre Area as gathering places.*
- *Preserve/protect Portage Creek and adjacent environmentally sensitive areas.*
- *Leverage the views and use of Portage Creek and adjacent environmentally sensitive areas to encourage quality development and passive recreation opportunities.*

When recreational improvements have been completed, a multi-use trail will extend from the City Centre Area via the Shaver Road Bikeway trail south to West Osterhout Avenue.

Vision: A "world class community" that includes establishment of a distinct, identifiable and vibrant City Center that is walkable and connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues and is connected to trailways and transportation.

Goals and Objectives

In addition to the overall goals and objectives identified earlier in this plan, more specific sub area planning objectives are defined for the City Centre Area. Also, the 2025 Vision Project identified goals associated with the City Centre. Specific City Centre Goals and Objectives from the 2025 Vision Project 2014 Plan and include the following:

- To encourage an area in the geographic center of Portage that can be easily identified by residents and visitors as the "downtown" and which provides a core activity area for public facilities and a destination for the general public.
- Encourage use of the City Center Area zoning provisions that nurture the unique characteristic and potential of this area and ensure walkable community and business centers that connects entertainment, restaurants

and retail venues and is connected to trailways and transportation.

- Encourage (re)development activities which ensure the continued strength of the Portage Commerce Square, the central business area, and the City Centre Area, the geographic center of the city.
- Nurture a small town feel and sense of community while facilitating access to cultural and recreational amenities.
- Create mixed-use developments, including residential uses located within or adjacent to nonresidential uses, that will become community gathering areas.

B. Concepts and Recommendations

The City Centre Area Plan proposes future land use concepts and suggests placemaking concepts that can be considered as means to foster a multi-faceted, vibrant, walkable and identifiable center. Implementation strategies intended to enhance civic features, protect natural resources, encourage private sector investment and create a "place" for citizens and visitors known as the Portage City Centre Area conclude the Plan.



City Centre Future Land Use Concepts

The City Centre provides a concentrated area of business activities, civic and recreational facilities and opportunities surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The **City Centre Future Land Use Plan Map**, shows the future land use patterns projected for the City Centre Area (refer to Table 6 in the 2008 Plan for a list of each future land use category, acreage and the percent of total for each category). This information reflects the City Centre Area as developed in a final, built-out condition.

As shown on the **City Centre Future Land Use Plan Map**, the following general land use observations, with recommendations, can serve to focus plan implementation through zoning and other development-oriented actions to strengthen the center of the community and, over time, with a more urban, central city character, particularly within the boundaries of the Detailed Plan Area.

General Land Use

Although there exists a mixture of uses in the City Centre Area, the amount and type of land uses could be further expanded and diversified in an effort to facilitate a multi-faceted destination with an urban character for residents and visitors alike, easily accessible by motorists and pedestrians. Such complementary urban/central city uses include local and specialty retail and eateries (sidewalk cafes and coffee shops), bookstores, flower shops, personal service establishments, secondary educational facilities, banks, offices and other ancillary uses. City Centre Area (CCA) zoning standards that permit this type of expansion and diversification were adopted in 2011 and should be encouraged through the rezoning and (re)development review process to ensure success.

Residential Land Uses

High quality low-density (single-family) to higher density (multi-family) residential uses are desirable within the City Centre Area. People living in the City Centre Area help support the products and services offered by the local businesses, which contribute to a strong business sector. An increase in the City Centre population can be accommodated through residential and mixed-use

developments. The mixed-use developments could involve residential units located above commercial establishments or integrated into the development as freestanding units. This residential concept is best suited in the Detailed Plan Area, as it presents a more urban character.

The areas designated for low-density residential use are existing neighborhoods with the exception of an area located along the north side of Schuring Road. These stable neighborhoods offer a range of housing choices. Protection of these neighborhoods from impacts associated with non-residential uses is an important component of the City Centre Area Plan.

Two primary areas are designated for medium/higher density residential use: The first area is located between Currier and Kingston Drives and is currently occupied by the Hearthside retirement village and Tendercare Nursing Home. The second area is located between Centre Avenue and Schuring Road. Existing land uses include apartment units, greenhouse operation and a concrete operation. There is also vacant land located north and east of the existing greenhouse and commercial concrete operations. The southern portion is vacant and partially encumbered by environmentally sensitive lands.



Commercial/Retail/Office Land Uses

There are several vacant areas along Brown Avenue, the northwest corner of Centre and Shaver Road (Portage Creek Landings – City Centre) and along South Westnedge near Schuring Road. Other areas that could be considered underutilized include the west side of South Westnedge Avenue south of Schuring Road, East Centre Avenue between South Westnedge Avenue and Currier Drive and the west side of Shaver Road south of Centre Avenue. These areas, which encompass approximately 42 acres, would most likely be candidates for redevelopment in the near future. The CCA zoning standards can also be applied to guide private sector development decisions and would be particularly suited in the Detailed Plan Area.

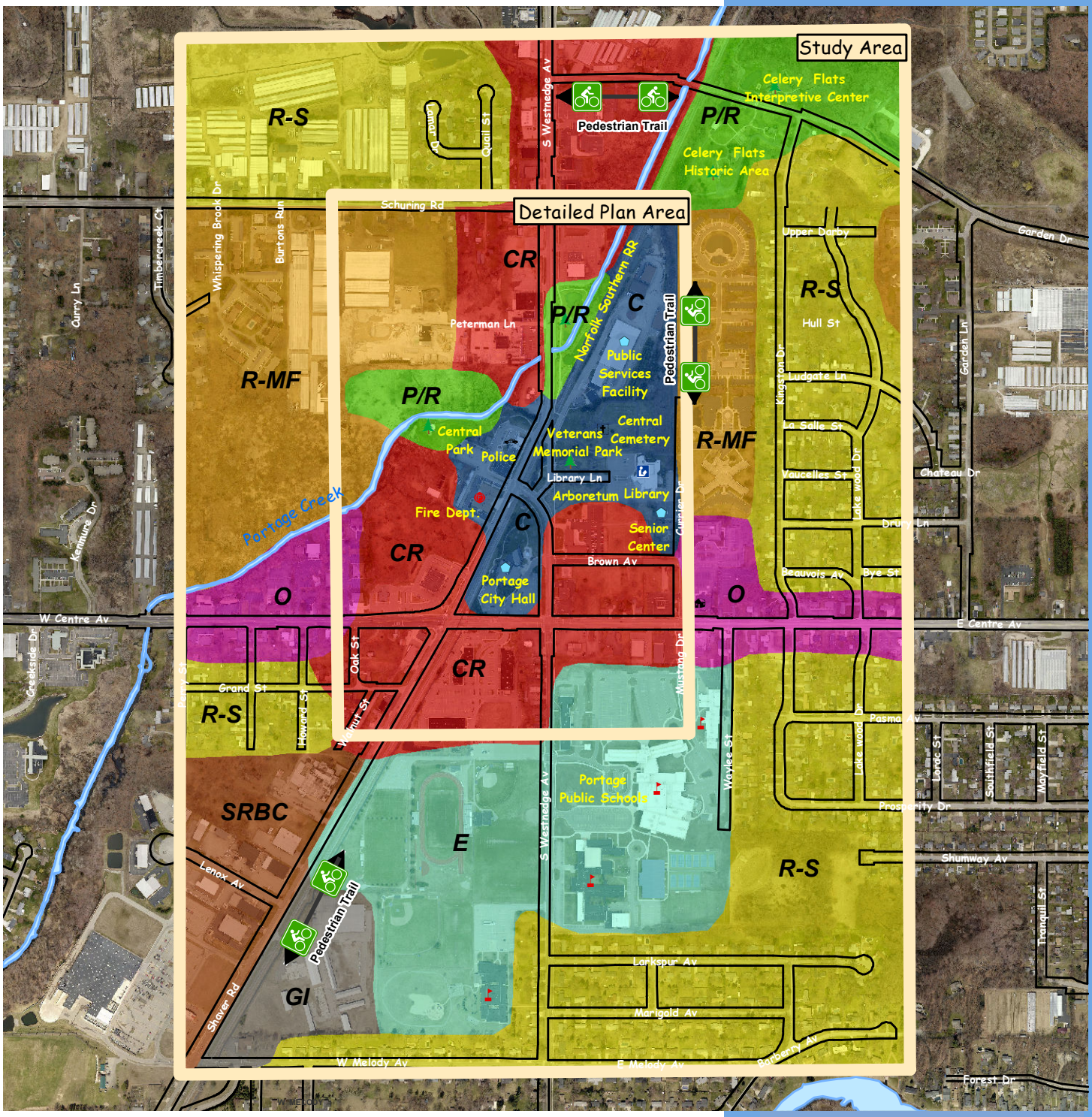
In the City Centre Study Area, two other areas are designated for commercial use. The first area is located north of Schuring Road and Garden Lane. It is anticipated that the area located near the northeast corner of Garden Lane and South Westnedge could redevelop in the near future. The second area is located along Shaver Road south of Centre Avenue. This section of Shaver Road is generally developed with light industrial uses and redevelopment potential exists.

Two areas are designated for office use: The first area is located along West Centre Avenue west of Oak Street. The second area is located along East Centre Avenue east of Currier Drive. Both areas are located outside of the Detailed Study Area and are developed with a mix of residential and office uses.

Continued implementation of landscaping, tree planting, green space standards in the Zoning Code during project review and approval is also important to the appearance and function of the City Centre. These landscape and design features can help connect the larger, overall Study Area to the central part of the city with more urban characteristics to be established in the Detailed Plan Area.

Shaver Road Business Corridor

Although only the north end of the Shaver Road Business Corridor is located in the City Centre Area, the corridor serves as an important employment



- Civic (C)
- Commercial / Retail (C/R)
- Education (E)
- Office (O)
- Parks / Recreation (P/R)
- Residential - Single (R-S)
- Residential - Multi-family (R-MF)
- Shaver Road Business Corridor (SRBC)
- General Industrial (GI)

City Centre Area Future Land Use

April 2014

Feet
0 250 500 1,000

Sources: City of Portage, MCGI

generator where a variety of products and commercial needs that benefit the city are produced/provided. A mixture of land uses exist along the west side of the corridor consisting of light industrial uses, commercial uses and some nonconforming single-family dwellings. Uses located on the east side of the Shaver Road, east of the Grand Elk railroad line, are primarily growing or stable industrial uses.



City Hall

Public Facilities

The Civic Facilities represent anchor activities (municipal buildings, Portage District Library, Central Cemetery, Central Park and Donald E. Overlander Band Shell, Liberty Park, Veterans Memorial Park and other venues and facilities) and are all located within the Detailed Study Area. Maintaining and enhancing these facilities and fostering further activities that are compatible with the residential and business land uses in and adjacent to the geographic center are essential to ensure the continued success and to strengthen the identity of the City Centre Area. Pedestrian linkages are essential between civic functions and the commercial/residential uses, including pedestrian street crossings at appropriate locations along South Westnedge Avenue and Centre Avenue to enhance safety within a more urban, central city area.



Portage Central High School

With regard to Educational Facilities, Portage Central High School, Central Middle, Central Elementary, McCamley Field, the Technology and Training Center, and the Portage Public Schools Administrative offices are present. Future school-related improvements/enhancements should be coordinated with the public sector and private sector. A partnership effort between the city and the schools should be fostered in the interests of creating complimentary complexes for municipal government and for public school education purposes. Interconnections between the school campus and the City Centre Area through the Bicentennial Trail, Shaver Road Bikeway Trail and/or public sidewalks as examples, would be very appropriate.

As conveyed above, this mixture of land uses would allow existing business centers, school campus areas, local government facilities that are situated at visible and convenient locations to be utilized to the maximum potential, creating an unique City Centre Area, beginning within the overall Study Area and extending into the Detailed Plan Area, where there would be concentrated, urban/central city development characteristics accessible by pedestrians and motorists. Care will be needed when considering zoning changes, use of zoning regulations, accomplishing public improvement projects and other activities as means to implement the recommendations of this sub-area plan to provide a scale, density, and design that is beneficial to the center of the city while minimizing impacts on other uses/activities.

City Centre Placemaking Concepts

In an effort to create a sense of identity and arrival as residents and visitors enter into the City Centre Area, several enhancements can be considered and implemented over time. The following observations, with recommendations, can serve to further enhance the City Centre Area as a "place":

Creating/Strengthening the City Centre Identity

Combinations of elements can be significant and can serve to establish an "entry" statement into the community. Elements can be utilized to create a sense of "arrival" into a city center that with appropriate "dock and wayfinding" features help to create an "experience". The "economic theme"

in the geographic center can create a "destination" to which residents and guests wish to regularly visit and participate. Enhancements include the following possible elements:

- Unified public street/business - landscaping/green space
- Facilitate business development/ redevelopment
- Unified public street/business site lighting
- Turning circles/roundabouts - business centers
- Residential/Mixed-use development
- City centre gateway signage
- City centre and wayfinding signage/banners
- Recreation/cultural programming
- Pedestrian linkages between activities - civic, business and other uses
- South Westnedge/East Centre intersection improvements
- Encourage public art forms
- Gathering place - civic/business/ religious
- Portage sports/recreation complex
- Pedestrian islands/safety refuge points
- Brick-paver pedestrian crosswalks/signals
- Natural/environmental protection/enhancement
- Enhanced public transit facilities

These elements can be considered by the public and/or private sectors for individual properties/projects or in conjunction with business/office centers, as examples. Implementation can occur in the immediate future or over the long-term.

These placemaking concepts/ideas are shown and labeled on the **City Centre Area Placemaking Concepts Map**.

As for opportunities to consider and implement these elements that foster "placemaking", the following sections discuss potential approaches that can be considered. Other approaches summarized in this chapter's implementation strategies are also possible and the following are suggestions to foster creativity on placemaking.

Site/Building Design Considerations.

Development and redevelopment activities can utilize common characteristics to enhance the appearance and function of the City Centre. Consistent with the City Centre Area (CCA) zoning provisions, a common thematic approach can present a cohesive or unifying statement, but still allow for "signature" building styles and elevations that are sought by businesses. Such approaches include, among others:

- Parking lots should be placed behind or along the side of buildings, so buildings can be located proximate to public sidewalks.
- Increased landscaping, consistent with the established standards as properties are developed.
- Facility lighting that is consistent with the "shepherds hook"-style light fixture that is now used along the public streets and in municipal facilities can be encouraged.
- Building materials, mass and style alternatives that are complementary with existing City Centre buildings and facilities.

- Advertising/identification signage that is complementary and, perhaps, with uniform "City Centre Area" design components.
- While a regulatory approach by rezoning property to the CCA district could be initiated that incorporates architectural design controls, voluntary efforts that recognize the creative possibilities of various property, business and office owner, tenants and others is encouraged.

City Centre Walkability.

Sidewalks exist on both sides of nearly every public street and multi-use trails (Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail, Millennium Trail and Shaver Road Bikeway Trail) are located in and around the City Centre Area to facilitate pedestrian movement between civic facilities, businesses centers, educational facilities and other points of interest.



Liberty Park

- Infrastructure improvements that encourages "walkability" should be maintained and enhanced, when possible, as part of public sector and private sector activities.
- The City of Portage can consider appropriate pedestrian improvements including unique City Centre crosswalk designs and crosswalk signals during annual capital improvement programming. Consider pedestrian "refuge islands" at various locations.

City Centre Activity/Gathering Places.

Each of the activity centers – civic, business, educational and others – can involve and become gathering places. These gathering places can be park and recreation facilities where events are held, restaurant locations, and business centers in which the variety of business tenants attract consumers. Institutional uses including churches can also serve as gathering places. Gathering places and linkages should be identified and strengthened, or created and made attractive and functional in the City Centre, particularly by businesses and institutions in this area, which complement the existing and planned "links" by the educational sector and by the City of Portage, as appropriate.



Memorial Day Parade

City Centre Cultural/Recreation Programming and Sports Complex.

A showcase for cultural/recreational programming and community events would be invaluable to establish the City Centre. Additionally, recreational activities, including active recreation opportunities and sports events can be beneficial in the center of the city. While the City of Portage maintains park facilities, historic venues for cultural programs, biking/walking trails, Portage Public Schools has formal sports facilities including gymnasium space, indoor swimming pool facilities, McCamley Field, where high school football, baseball, softball, soccer and other sporting events and activities are held. These City Centre Area facilities attract large numbers of people throughout the year. The following suggestions can be of benefit:

- Explore sponsors to reinstate the Summer Entertainment Series of cultural and entertainment events.
- Explore a public-private partnership to initiate a "festival site", perhaps using Central Park and abutting public land that is located adjacent to commercial centers, where the Summer Entertainment Series and commercial center business activities/events can be staged.
- Maintain existing facilities at a high quality, as expected by the



City centre / gateway signage

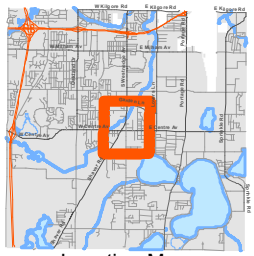
Pedestrian Island / safety refuge point

Proposed Connector Trail

Municipal Facilities

Recent Construction

Planned Private Construction



Location Map

City Centre Area Placemaking

April 2014

Feet

0 250 500 1,000

Sources: City of Portage, MCGI

community and program enhancements as funds permit on an annual basis.

- Explore a partnership between the City of Portage and Portage Public Schools to facilitate use and enhancement of existing sports/active recreation facilities that will serve the needs of the schools and the greater community.

City Centre Area Transportation Activities.

The width of roadways and the speed and volume of vehicles on the roadways that interconnect the City Centre Area each day are significant. Metro Transit also provides bus services through the geographic center of the community. In an effort to promote all modes of transportation and enhance safety and aesthetics, the following proposals should be considered:

- Install unique pedestrian crossing facilities (that can also serve as traffic calming devices) at grade level at primary public street and other "entrances" to the City Centre Area. With other types of "gateway" devices, perhaps spanning overhead, these facilities/devices can also serve to create an identifying element within the area.
- Continue to encourage developers of business centers to incorporate traffic calming techniques such as turning circles/roundabouts as included in the Portage Creek Landing – City Center project concept plan

City Centre Area – Business Interests.

Private sector owners/interests can interact as a collective association of members that have a common set of interests. Businesses can separately, or as business centers, advertise and strengthen the identity of adjacent businesses and reinforce each other:

- Streetscape enhancements could be coordinated by business interests including the use of civic "banners" and other artistic forms.
- Joint marketing efforts, special business events and other types of information and activities by diverse business interests can enhance the center of Portage as a successful business location.

Businesses can be a tremendous asset in developing and utilizing ideas from a business perspective and particularly with their customers, which can serve to enhance the City Centre Area as a destination point to which residents, shoppers and other guests and visitors wish to return.

C. Implementation Strategies

The City Centre Area Plan is intended to provide more specific land use recommendations involving the physical development or redevelopment of the geographic center of the city. There are various development-related "tools" available to implement plan recommendations/actions. A more detailed discussion of these "tools" can be found in Chapter 7.

Placemaking activities can be directly related to development-oriented methods to achieve desired outcomes. The following Implementation Strategies suggests methods that can guide activities, actions and programming to implement the City Centre Area Future Land Use Plan concepts and the placemaking concepts, and the related concepts discussed above.

For a complete listing of implementation strategies, tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7: Implementation

City Centre Implementation Strategies



- *Install public street and business site lighting consistent or compatible with the "shepherds hook" style located in Liberty Park and along the South Westnedge Avenue bridge over Portage Creek.*
- *Develop public street landscaping/green space plan for implementation that would include consistent plant materials and locations.*
- *Consider improvements to facilitate safe pedestrian travel at appropriate public street crossings:*
  - *Installation of stamped, brick paver pedestrian crosswalks.*
  - *Installation of pedestrian crosswalk signals that incorporate audible sounds and a countdown timer.*
  - *Installation of pedestrian islands/safety refuge points*
- *Develop a unique City Centre logo that can be used by businesses and also incorporated into gateway signs, street/ wayfinding signs and banners.*
- *Continue recreation/cultural/entertainment programming that establishes the City Centre Area as a destination in the community.*
  - *Coordinate with private partners to offer various community events and activities*
- *Continue efforts to protect and preserve the natural/environmental features located in the City Centre Area.*
- *Identify locations and consider gateway signage at the primary entrances into the City Centre (East/West Centre and at the north and south ends of South Westnedge Avenue)*
- *Identify traffic calming techniques at appropriate locations for implementation along Centre Avenue, South Westnedge Avenue and Shaver Road.*
- *Promote locations in the City Centre Area as gathering places for community residents and visitors including civic facilities and business and religious establishments.*
- *Continue to maintain and construct new pedestrian linkages in the City Centre Area to increase walkability and interconnection between land uses.*
- *Encourage the public display of art through collaboration with local artist groups, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts and other related organizations.*
- *Encourage a Portage sports/recreation complex through a collaborative effort with the Portage Public Schools Central Campus located in the City Centre Area.*
- *Continue efforts to protect residential neighborhoods by :*
  - *Conducting analyses of potential impacts on residential neighborhoods for any non-residential development that is constructed adjacent to or near residential areas.*
  - *Require adequate buffering and transitions between residential and non-residential uses.*
- *Continue to facilitate business development/redevelopment through low tax and utility rates, public infrastructure.*
- *Encourage organization of City Centre business owner interests to take the lead and mobilize City Centre enhancement efforts, including implementation of the CCA zoning district.*

Input for this subarea plan was obtained through a focus group meeting with business owner/ operators and residents on April 23, a public open house on October 2, and a focus group meeting on December 12, 2013 which included a presentation of draft recommendations and discussion of next steps to implement this plan.

6 LAKE CENTER SUBAREA

A. Introduction

The previous chapters of this plan outline a variety of opportunities and concepts that are pulled together in this subarea plan. This Lake Center District subarea plan demonstrates how those land use, quality of life, and transportation recommendations can be applied together.

Preparation of this subarea plan included public input, a review of market opportunities, urban design evaluation, land use analysis, and transportation evaluation resulting in the development of a vision for the corridor. Careful attention was given to evaluate existing conditions and future opportunities in the context of current City and business association efforts, including the upcoming Portage Road reconstruction from East Centre Avenue to Lakeview Drive scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Why Portage Road?

The Lake Center business district runs along Portage Road from East Centre Avenue to Clarence Drive, with additional commercial nodes between Lakeview Park and Bacon Avenue and north of East Osterhout Road. Many businesses are locally-owned and have been in existence for more than 50 years. The area between East Centre Avenue and Lakeview Drive is the primary business district, identified as a commercial revitalization corridor in prior plans. This subarea plan was created to provide more detailed guidance for improvements along the corridor.

The corridor's character is different from other commercial corridors in Portage, such as South Westnedge Avenue which has higher traffic volumes, larger stores, and many "chain" retail and restaurants. Lake Center has a smaller scale, locally-owned business character that can be enhanced to promote existing businesses and to recruit complementary ones.

The Lake Center Business Association was reestablished in the spring of 2013 after an initial Lake Center Informational Planning meeting was hosted by the City of Portage. Efforts to date include the following:

- Formed an LLC;
- Began grass roots place making with boats along corridor;
- Developed a concept for district banners along the roadway;
- Organized a "garage sale" event in summer 2013;
- Submitted formal input regarding sub-area priorities to the city in January 2014.

As the result of public input and feedback from the business association, many ideas have been generated, and this plan seeks to prioritize efforts to provide the most impact for future collaboration and action.

Based on the public input and consultant and city staff evaluation, the following strengths, issues, and opportunities were identified for the Lake Center district:

Strengths

- *Many locally owned and operated businesses*
- *Interest of business owners to improve character*
- *Proximity to lakes and Lakeview Park*
- *Several eclectic mid-20th century buildings*
- *Unique commercial corridor in Portage*

Issues and Opportunities

- *Lack of architectural and site cohesion*
- *Inconsistent streetscape, sidewalks, and landscape buffers*
- *Lack of consistent identity*
- *Lakefront commercial properties are underutilized*
- *Brownfield redevelopment sites*
- *Narrow lot sizes*
- *Narrow right-of-way*
- *Multiple owners makes larger-scale redevelopment difficult*
- *Nonconformities related to front yard building setbacks, off-street parking, billboards, sign setbacks, green strip, site access, and older single-family homes*



The Lake Center subarea extends from East Centre Avenue to East Osterhout Road.

Goal: A vibrant commercial corridor with a unified attractive visual character that builds upon the history of the Lake Center District

Objectives:

- Promote consistent building placement and character for existing building/site improvements and redevelopment sites
- Refine zoning to achieve a more cohesive built environment different from other commercial corridors in Portage
- Promote local business atmosphere through strengthened business organization efforts
- Create and implement a Lake Center "brand" to attract future complementary businesses and patrons
- Identify key sites for catalytic redevelopment to spur future, long-term redevelopment
- Provide balanced and safe means of travel for bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles

The complete Market Strategy and Analysis are included in the separately published appendix.

Key Market Strategies:

- *Create a destination development that leverages current strengths at the West Lake waterfront area and views of West and Austin Lakes*
- *Bolster the small business atmosphere through complimentary businesses, enhancing Portage Road's unique commercial flavor*
- *Reinforce key market niches of locally-owned restaurants, family recreation and entertainment, adventure and sport themed businesses, nautical/marine theme and businesses*

B. Market Strategy Summary

The following retail recommendations reflect considerable retail competition in the City that pivots around the Crossroads Mall and big-box clusters along South Westnedge Avenue and Shaver Road. Retailers and businesses in the Lake Center District should focus on differentiating from national chain stores with: 1) unique merchandise; 2) convenience; 3) high levels of customer service; and 4) an enjoyable shopping environment enhanced by placemaking amenities.

The strategy reflects the district's economic benefits from proximity to the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, and the campuses of major employers like the Stryker and Pfizer corporations.

The strategy also gives positive consideration for the city's diverse recreational choices and ways that they match with the lifestyle clusters (population segments with characteristic retail habits). Amenities include sports facilities; open space and trails; and public lake access.

Area Amenities

Complementary attractions exist along the Portage and Sprinkle Road corridors, including restaurants and eating establishments and family fun centers. Dining out has grown into favorite pastime and primary source of entertainment for many households. Locally-owned restaurants offering themes, entertainment, and unique settings – like waterfront views on a boardwalk – may be most able to compete against the redundancy of national chains.

Family Adventure Sports – The AirZoo is a significant regional attraction that helps attract visiting families seeking entertainment, recreation, and adventure. The regional draw of this facility is being leveraged by other establishments like Airway Lanes and Jungle Joes, and they collectively help generate a critical mass and variety of venues needed to generate repeat visitors.

Retail establishments like Hobby Sports, Racewear, Kalamazoo Choppers, and L & J Hobbies are leveraging and help reinforce the theme of attractions focused on adventure and sports. In the marine category, Boat City Marine, The Edge, and Docks Unlimited are important anchors that bridge the theme of adventure sports over to watersports.

Incubated Small Businesses

A number of home-based businesses in Portage are currently occupying space in residential neighborhoods. These businesses have already been incubated in the local market by proprietors that seem interested in operating a business, but have not chosen conventional commercial space. Outreach to home-based businesses and helping them find better locations with exposure to commercial traffic may assist with growth and redevelopment within the Lake Center business area by helping small business grow and prosper, while filling commercial vacancies.

Such outreach efforts may be an appropriate activity of the Lake Center Business Association. In particular, small business marketing efforts may include promoting live/work opportunities as a viable re-use of non conforming houses, outreach to home-based businesses, and outreach to complimentary businesses such as restaurants, family adventure/fun, hobby shops, motor sports, and marine-focused businesses as noted in the market study.

Leveraging the Lakefront - Lake Center Core Node

Based on public input sessions a clear theme has emerged as most likely for the Portage Road corridor and Lake Center District that focuses on West and Austin Lakes. Lakes and other water bodies are valuable resources that are absent from the vast majority of business districts. In the Lake Center District, West and Austin Lakes converge between Forest and Lakeview drives.

This isthmus area includes long-established stores that serve as important anchors for the district, including Nelson Hardware (Do-It Center) and H & B Market grocery store. The West Lake shoreline along the west side of Portage Road includes two significant lakefront properties that appear to be available for sale and/or are ripe for redevelopment. Existing uses on the West Lake waterfront include the Mavcon facility, which could be redeveloped as a restaurant or other active complementary uses, and also include the vintage West Lake Drive-In, which is a seasonal business. Reinforced by the hardware and grocery store anchors, this area represents the district's center of gravity, and is the focus of the strategy recommendations of the subarea plan.

The optimal market strategy calls for leveraging the West Lake waterfront and views of both West and Austin lakes, which would most likely occur concurrent with redevelopment projects in the Lake Center Core Node. Depending on project proposals and related planning considerations, future uses could be passive or have some higher level of intensity. In addition, adjacent uses suggest that it could be feasible to add docks extending into the water to take advantage of the waterfront.

There are several additional opportunities to leverage the lakeshore and expand redevelopment activity to include nearby properties. For example, the parking area between Nelson Hardware and the H & B Grocery store could be redeveloped to create a more compact district with mixed uses. Additional planning strategies could also involve improving and creating new pedestrian linkages with the Lakeview Park on Austin Lake; and integrating other adjacent properties into a larger redevelopment project. Concepts for these strategies are noted on the **Lake Center Core Node map** on page 88.

Secondary Opportunities:

Several other commercial nodes have also been identified as secondary redevelopment project areas. Redevelopment of these secondary areas will be more feasible and viable after redevelopment within the Lake Center Core Node is successfully underway and/or accomplished.

- Development of district gateways:
  - » North Gateway - Continue to facilitate development of Centre Port Commons, a brownfield redevelopment site at Portage Road and East Centre Avenue;
  - » South Gateway – Encourage renovation of the Great Skate and Chicago Style Pizza buildings to reinforce the mid-century revival theme.
- Other under-utilized/vacant sites:
  - » Facilitate redevelopment of the vacant Burger King and former impound lot to east
  - » Former mini-golf site
  - » Renovating the Nickles Bakery and CNT's Racing and Production Screen Printing to reinforce the cluster with West Michigan TV Repair, among other sites.



The for-sale Mavcon building is a prime opportunity to capitalize on the lakefront.



Docks could provide lake residents convenient access to a redeveloped Lake Center core business district.





A renovated Nickles Bakery could be combined with the nearby West Michigan TV repair to create a secondary commercial cluster.

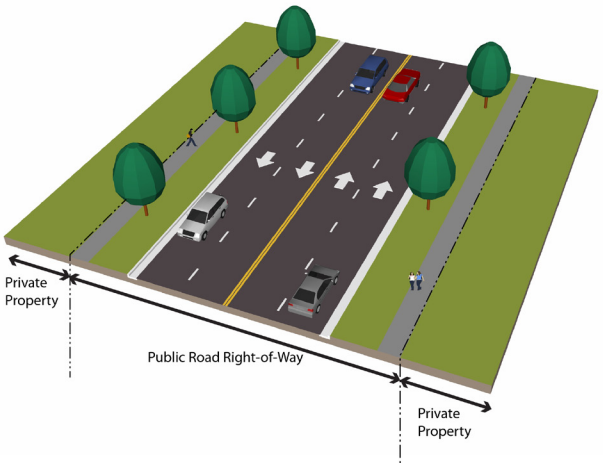
C. Design Guidelines

Based on the feedback obtained through public involvement, these design guidelines were developed to outline specific changes that can be made along Portage Road to strengthen its visual character and potential for redevelopment. These are intended as recommendations to solidify the Lake Center District as a unique, cohesive commercial district that has a distinct sense of place. These guidelines, when applied throughout the corridor, will help the district achieve the goal and objectives identified above.

Current zoning standards provide a minimum amount of regulation that can be strengthened and are described in the Implementation section of this chapter. These design guidelines seek to compliment zoning by providing a set of recommended practices that the city can take in the right-of-way and that property owners can apply to their individual sites, contributing to the overall character of the district.

Right-of-Way Design

As the primary means of experiencing the corridor, Portage Road's design within the right-of-way influences the perception, character, and vitality of the district.



Portage Road today:

- 4-5 lanes typical
- Some wide shoulders that can accommodate bicycles
- Lack of sidewalks, primarily on west side of road, few crossings of Portage Road
- Limited street right-of-way
- Limited or no landscaping and streetscape elements to soften the environment and visually buffer pedestrians from cars; combined with high speeds, this can combine to make pedestrians feel exposed and unsafe

Walkability

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable travelers on Portage Road, and their needs are quite basic: comfortable, safe and interesting places to walk, and destinations within walking distance. A pedestrian-friendly corridor includes a range of ingredients – places to walk to (destinations), comfortable places to walk within, and ease of crossing Portage Road. There are some blocks that are fairly walkable, but need some enhancement. Much of the lack of sidewalks is due to the narrow right-of-way. Most of the blocks need a transformative change to be an inviting and safe place to walk. Some of the features that can improve the environment for pedestrians, include the following:

- A land use pattern that is compatible with walking. Trips are short, and can be made on foot. This can be accomplished with buildings close to the street and businesses in close proximity to encourage walking between them.
- Continuous sidewalks of appropriate width

Right-of-Way Design Approach

- *Safely accommodate motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists of all abilities (complete streets).*
- *Maximize efficiency of right-of-way.*
- *Identify key locations to prioritize walkability.*
- *Street designed to meet traffic needs, but at speeds and design that complement the character of the area.*
- *As roadways are redesigned, bury or relocate power lines, as resources permit.*

For specific locations of roadway recommendations, see the Lake Center map on page 89.

- Safe crossings
- Buffering from traffic with landscaping or just separation
- Interesting and inviting streetscape and buildings which address the street with doors and windows
- Comfortable places to sit
- Streetscape of trees and lighting that provide shade, security and help define the pedestrian realm.

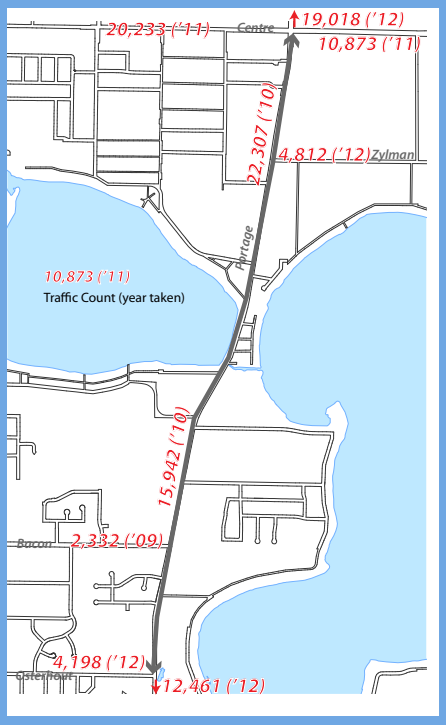
Traffic calming

One goal is to design the street and private sites so that traffic speeds are appropriate for the area. A five-lane road often can lead to fairly high speeds. To help mitigate high speeds, traffic calming techniques can include narrowing the lane widths, special pavement colors or raised pavement for pedestrian crossings. Traffic calming at intersections can also include use of narrower curb radii and curb bump outs to reduce the width that pedestrians must cross. This can actually benefit vehicular traffic too, since shorter crossing paths require less time for pedestrians to cross the roadway. Another option is a roundabout as a gateway feature, welcoming travelers to the district. Roundabouts also can move more traffic with less delay than a traditional signalized intersection with much lower crash rates. A single-lane roundabout may be an option at the Osterhout Avenue/Portage Road intersections.

Reclaim right-of-way for Complete Street improvements

Given the traffic volumes, segments of Portage Road's four- and five-lane sections could be reduced to provide one travel lane in each direction and a center left turn lane. This would free up space in the existing pavement width for on-street bicycle lanes, widened sidewalks or landscaped areas, and other streetscape enhancements.

This would not only provide room for pedestrians and bicyclists, but can improve safety too. Studies show that for streets with daily traffic volumes of 15,000 or less, a change from four lanes to three lanes can reduce crashes on average by 30% and injuries associated with crashes by almost 70%. Reducing the number of lanes tends to reduce speeds slightly, but most of the benefit is due to reduction in the number of rear-end collisions.



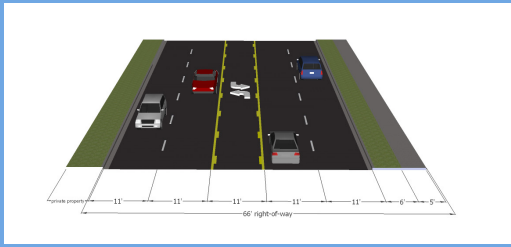
4 Lanes to 3 Lanes

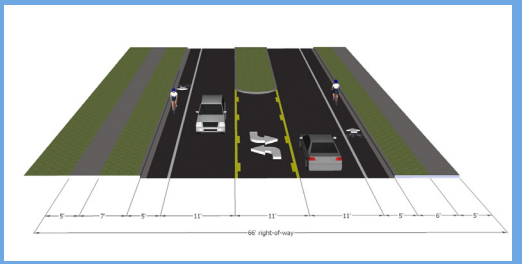


- *Only slightly more capacity than 3 lanes because inner lanes are used for left turns*
- *Typically more crashes than 3 or 5 lanes due to conflicts with left turns*



- *Slight drop in capacity compared to 4 lanes*
- *Fewer crashes*
- *Usually lowers speed 3-5 mph*
- *Additional room for bicycles, pedestrians, landscaping*





Reducing 5 lanes at the Lake Center core node to 3 lanes could allow sidewalks to be constructed on the west side and the addition of some short median segments or pedestrian refuge islands and bike lanes. This area needs more study to develop the feasibility of the reduction and impact on roadway capacity.



Overhead crossing signals and speed radar signs can help improve visibility and safety of pedestrian crossings.



Refuge islands help signal drivers to slow down and give pedestrians and bicyclists a safe place to cross.

A reduction from four lanes to three should be explored, particularly for segments with daily volumes of 15,000 vehicles or less. Portage Road south of Lakeview Drive should be converted from four to three lanes (except for the Bacon intersection near Lake Center Elementary School). For segments with daily traffic volumes of 15,000-20,000 a detailed evaluation is needed to determine if three lanes will provide sufficient capacity, particularly at intersections. Additional traffic counts should be taken along Portage Road prior to the summer 2014 reconstruction, particularly from Forest Drive south. Speeds should be recorded before and after reconstruction to continue to assess possibilities for future reconfiguration from Forest to Lakeview Drives.

Median and Pedestrian Refuge Islands

Installing and maintaining a short median in the center of the roadway at key locations can have a number of benefits including calming traffic (reduced speeds), increasing green space, and providing a mid-street refuge for crossing pedestrians and bicyclists. Medians also can restrict left turns into and from driveways or side streets. That, combined with the separation of opposing traffic flow, results in a significant reduction in crashes when comparing a median to a non-median roadway. Refuge islands are recommended at Zylman and in the vicinity of Forest Drive and Ames Drive intersections among other future locations as shown on page 89.

Guidelines for pedestrian crossings include design and visual cues to slow motorists down, whether physically changing the roadway itself or adding signs or beacons indicating crossings and bold pavement markings. Crossings are preferable where convenient for pedestrians and where close to signalized intersections.

Intersections

When intersection improvements are made, the focus should be on improving the level of service for all users (i.e. pedestrians and bicyclists, not just cars and trucks) or reducing vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian/bicyclist crashes. The following are key considerations in designing a new or reconfigured intersection:

- Need for additional vehicle lanes
- Sight distance limitations
- Provision for bicycles
- Signal coordination and spacing
- Pedestrian crossings and related curb radii

In some cases, there may be a desire for a pedestrian crossing but at an unsignalized intersection. Pedestrian-activated warning beacons at pedestrian crossings allow a pedestrian to activate a warning beacon in mid-block locations.

Connections to existing bicycle routes

Parts of Portage Road currently have wide shoulders to accommodate bicyclists. Should segments of Portage Road be reconfigured to fewer lanes, portions of the right-of-way could be converted to bike lanes. Current and planned routes are identified on the map on page 89 and a few particular connections are detailed below:

- Formalize right-of-way connection at Austin Court near Highland, creating a non-motorized connection to East Shore. Work with business owners

to informally reconnect Austin and Austin Court with a non-motorized connection at the rear of these properties.

- Explore possibility of a non-motorized easement to cross the channel from Lakeview Park to Austin Court to complete the non-motorized "loop" around Austin Lake. Alternatively, the pedestrian crossing parallel to Portage Road could be improved along with a safer sidewalk route between the park and Burt Drive.
- Connect future bike route at South Shore Drive across Portage Road to Lakeview Park and provide a pedestrian crossing with refuge island.

Building and Site Design

Depending on the context, the form and character of buildings can have a significant impact on the function and activity within an area. Furthermore, the quality of buildings impact the local economy, as declining commercial districts with dilapidated buildings can have a compounding negative effect on the perceptions of safety and property value. By encouraging high-quality buildings that contribute to local character, each building that is built or improved can begin to reverse those trends and positively impact local markets.

Today, the building patterns along Portage Road are not cohesive and do not contribute to a distinct sense of "place." As described above in the Market Strategy Summary, a number of 20th century retro buildings exist along the corridor, but not in enough of a critical mass to apply that style corridor-wide. Instead, where those pockets of nostalgia exist, they can be retained and strengthened. Other areas of the corridor are recommended to embrace the Lake Center character: welcoming design with a nod to the nautical. The design goal is to embrace the history and uniqueness of the corridor as a local, inviting shopping destination.

Implementing these Guidelines

The design standards below are a set of guiding principles for development that act as a suggested best practice for (re)development. While some of the guidelines can be incorporated into the zoning ordinance, the goal is to allow an eclectic business district and not overly regulate architecture and creativity, but create a cohesive, attractive district.

Façade Improvements

- Buildings should be welcoming to pedestrians, with clear entrances, outdoor furniture and landscaping.
- Long or expansive building walls should include variations in the building wall, varied roof lines, archways or other architectural features.
- Rear elevations visible from roadways (both public and internal drives) and/or residential areas should have a finished quality compatible with the front elevation of the building.
- Durable building materials which provide an attractive, quality appearance should be chosen. Earth-toned brick, masonry block or other building materials typical in the area are appropriate.
- Building colors should consider and blend with local surroundings. Bright, colors should be used strategically, not as the primary color of the building but as accents to an eclectic nautical area vibe.
- Walls near building entrances should include windows, canopies and awnings to attract customers and contribute to a sense of place.

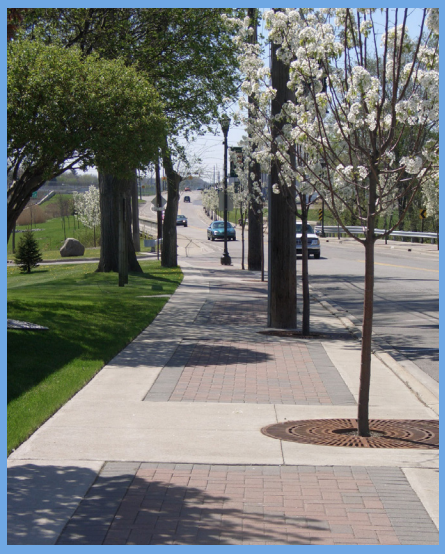
Site Design Approach

- *Improve attractiveness of buildings and sites.*
- *Make it more comfortable for people to walk along and between businesses.*
- *Strengthen Lake Center character and branding.*
- *Better delineate parking areas.*
- *Improve visibility of existing businesses.*
- *Promote uses that will be successful to fit the character of the area.*
- *Promote successful uncluttered signs.*

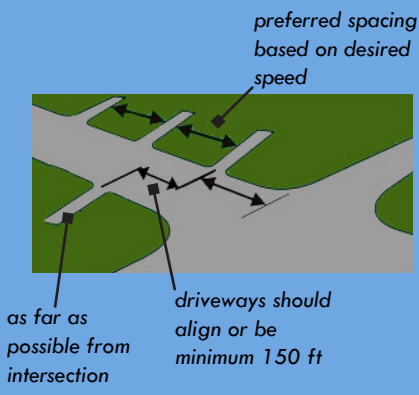












Access Management improves flow and reduces crash potential by placing driveways to minimize conflicts.



Streetscape & Site Design

- Streetscape treatment should be used to signify an entrance and contribute to a sense of place.
- Community amenities such as patio/seating areas, water features, art work or sculpture, pedestrian plazas with park benches or other features located adjacent to the primary entrance to the building(s) are highly encouraged and as an incentive, such areas should be calculated as part of the landscaping requirement.
- Include amenities for bicyclists and pedestrians, including wider sidewalks, bike storage facilities, lighting and landscaping in the standards for site plan review.

Parking and Access

- Off-street parking should typically be located in the side and rear yards. This will contribute to the appearance of a walkable streetscape with a "front door" for pedestrians with an additional entrance oriented to the parking lot. There should be a maximum of one row of front-yard parking with an appropriate buffer from the sidewalk.
- Parking lots adjacent to the roadway should provide a setback and landscape greenbelt. A knee-wall or hedge may also be appropriate where there is not sufficient room for a significant greenbelt.
- Driveways should be designed and located according to the Access Management standards in Chapter 66 of the Portage Code of Ordinances. Driveways closest to intersections or poorly offset from driveways across the street are the greatest problem. By reducing the number and width of driveways, traffic operations and safety will be improved, pedestrian crossings eased, and greenspace opportunities increased.
- Parking lot landscaping is especially important in minimizing negative views associated with large or often empty parking lots. Parking lot islands that incorporate pedestrian access to storefronts may be appropriate for larger lots or high traffic sites (for example the anchor uses in the Core Node). Landscaping is especially important to help delineate the driveways and sidewalks from the parking areas and can be used to help treat stormwater runoff (see Low-impact design below).
- Internal pedestrian walkways should be included for persons who need access to the building(s) from internal parking areas. Walkways shall be designed to separate people from moving vehicles as much as possible, vehicle drive aisles or parking spaces should not be used for this purpose.
- Crosswalks should be distinguished from the parking and driving areas by use of any of the following materials: special pavers, bricks, raised elevation or scored concrete.
- The amount of available parking can be maximized through shared parking agreements. Different uses have different peak hours throughout the day, which require varying amounts of parking. Offices, retail, services, and restaurants are encouraged to examine their parking needs throughout the day and look for ways to share parking with other users.

Landscaping, Buffers & Screening

- Development abutting residential should be screened with a mixture of treatment such as landscaping, walls, and fences.

- Low-impact design: Bioretention (Rain Gardens) & Bioswales manages stormwater runoff locally, providing natural filtration to protect lake water quality. Low-impact design can be applied on private sites and in the right-of-way and should be considered in areas between the new or existing sidewalk where driveways are removed and in areas where the road median is installed. Plant species should be salt tolerant, provide aesthetic benefits and be low maintenance. Sidewalks should be designed to direct runoff into these areas, and maintenance agreements should be included as part of any approval.

Lighting

- Site lighting should be regulated so it does not spill into non-commercial areas or the public road, except where needed to illuminate driveways.
- Fixtures should be chosen that shield light from projecting upward, thereby reducing light pollution into the night sky.
- Light poles should be located so they do not obstruct pedestrian movement.
- Fixtures may be outfitted with decorative banners that, in some cases highlight civic events and activities of community-wide appeal.
- Wall mounted lights should be used to the greatest extent possible to minimize the total number of freestanding light fixtures.
- Lighting fixtures should be attractively designed to complement the architecture of the corridor, signify building entry locations, and improve visual identification of residences and businesses.

Signs

- Lower-level ground signs are preferred over taller pole signs.
- Signs should include a durable base constructed of materials compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Sign locations should respect clear-vision areas and traffic safety.
- Signs should be proportional and consistent in character with the material, color and detail of the building.
- Pedestrian-oriented signs enhance the pedestrian experience and lower vehicle speeds.

D. Lake Center Implementation

Implementation of this subarea plan will be accomplished gradually and through a variety of means. Some will be private sector initiatives such as redevelopment or strengthening the business association. Some of the changes are city initiatives such as improvements in the street right-of-way. Many of these recommendations can be more easily accomplished through public/private partnerships as redevelopment of the district occurs.

Right-of-way Improvements

Improvements in the right-of-way (the streets and area along them) are usually completed by the city as part of its Capital Improvement Plan. The city can use transportation or other funds for right-of-way projects. In some cases, property owners may participate through special assessments or programs that direct a portion of taxes to public improvements with a special district (see "CIP" and "BID" below). In addition, there are frequently special funds available from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for safety or certain types of projects.









Concept banners prepared by the business association

For a complete listing of implementation strategies, tools, and timeframes, see Chapter 7: Implementation

- At the time this plan was prepared, there was a new MDOT program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). TAP is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as non-motorized paths, streetscapes, low impact development, and stormwater improvements that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options.
- Continue sidewalk installation/repair/replacement program funded through the Capital Improvement Program.
- When improvements are made to Portage Road, changes in the right-of-way design could be incorporated, including bike lanes, enhanced crossings, medians, improved buffers, and sidewalks



Branding/Business Association

Key to implementing these recommendations will be public/private partnerships, which may be assisted through state funding available through MDOT, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and other sources related to place making, brownfield redevelopment, and/or the creation of an official business improvement district, such as a Corridor Improvement Authority or Business Improvement District.

Efforts of the business association should include the following:

- Embrace Lake Center identity through development of gateway features, banners, wayfinding signs, gathering spaces with lake access and views.
- Build a district-wide brand including businesses, the park, residences, churches, and Lake Center Elementary.
- Preserve mid-century character where it exists but avoid reproductions and incorporate nautical elements. These character elements should be tasteful and complement existing mass and scale.
- Strengthen Lake Center brand through promotional events, public art installations, common retail hours, shared beautification efforts.
- Support neighborly site maintenance and upkeep.

Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)

One mechanism for implementing this plan could be to form a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). The Corridor Improvement Authority Act (P.A. 280 of 2005) allows the City to develop a plan and financing strategies with the objective of stimulating and encouraging economic development activities within the established corridor. CIAs promote improvements within a designated district, both on private property or within the public road right-of-way or lands owned by the public or other authorities. A CIA has the capability to capture tax increment financing (TIF) from private development projects, utilize public funding opportunities, and collect fees for rent, or other allowed charges. The success of a CIA and funding mechanisms such as TIF is contingent on private sector investment.

Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID, like a CIA, is a program that ties a plan to funding. A BID is a special assessment wherein the property owners assess themselves to create a sustainable funding source for beautification, streetscape maintenance, and marketing/branding efforts. The primary revenue source for a BID is by annual special assessment of participating properties in a predetermined

formula. Whereas TIF is limited to an increase or decrease in property values, a BID allows greater flexibility and control.

When the business association and City determine the best means for implementing a CIA or a BID, City Council may initiate the process to officially form the district.

Zoning Recommendations

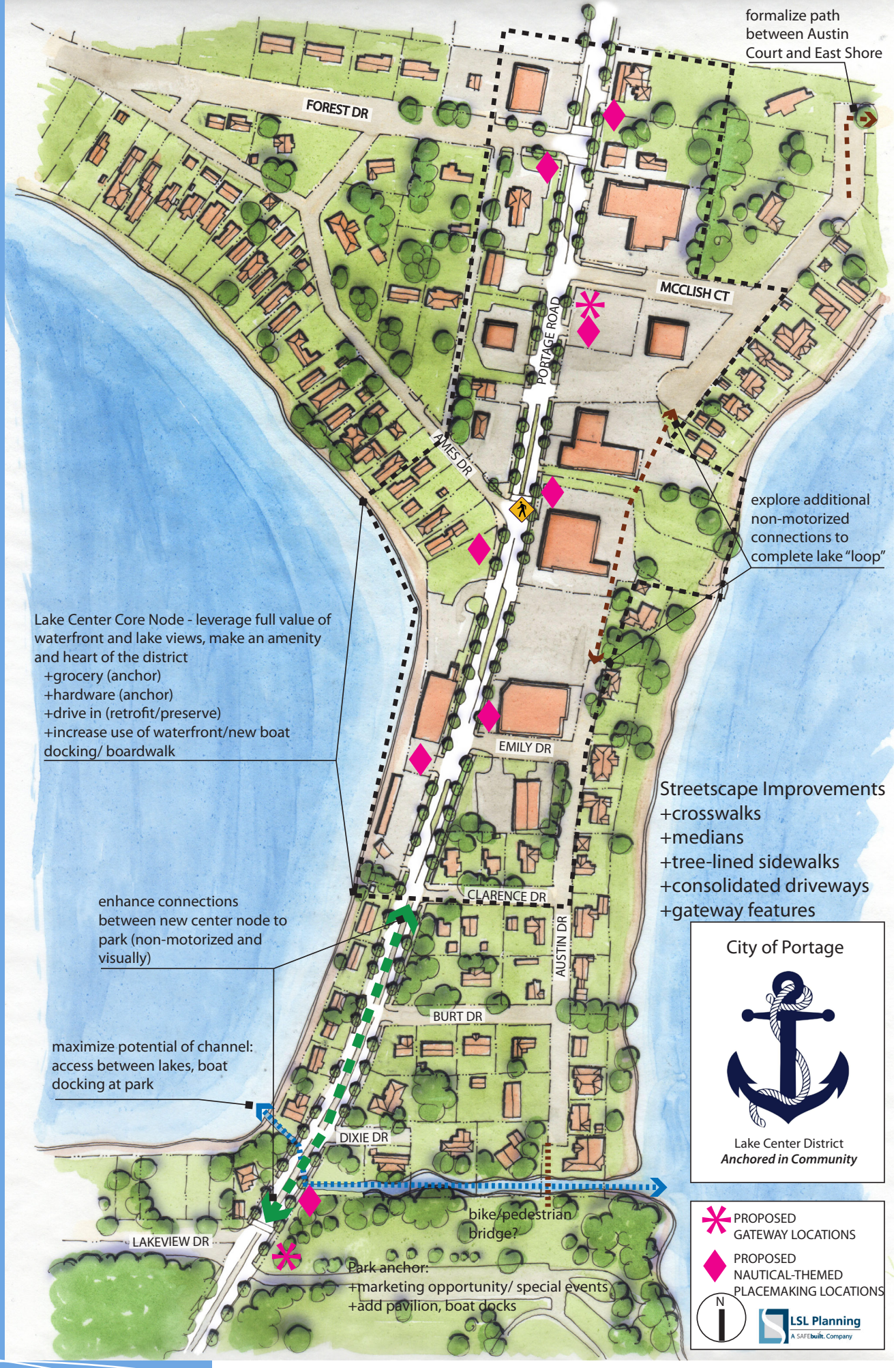
To implement the land use and design recommendations in this subarea plan, creating a new overlay district in the zoning ordinance for the corridor could allow more flexibility in uses and updated site design standards to reflect the desired corridor. Recommended components of the overlay district include, but are not limited to the following:

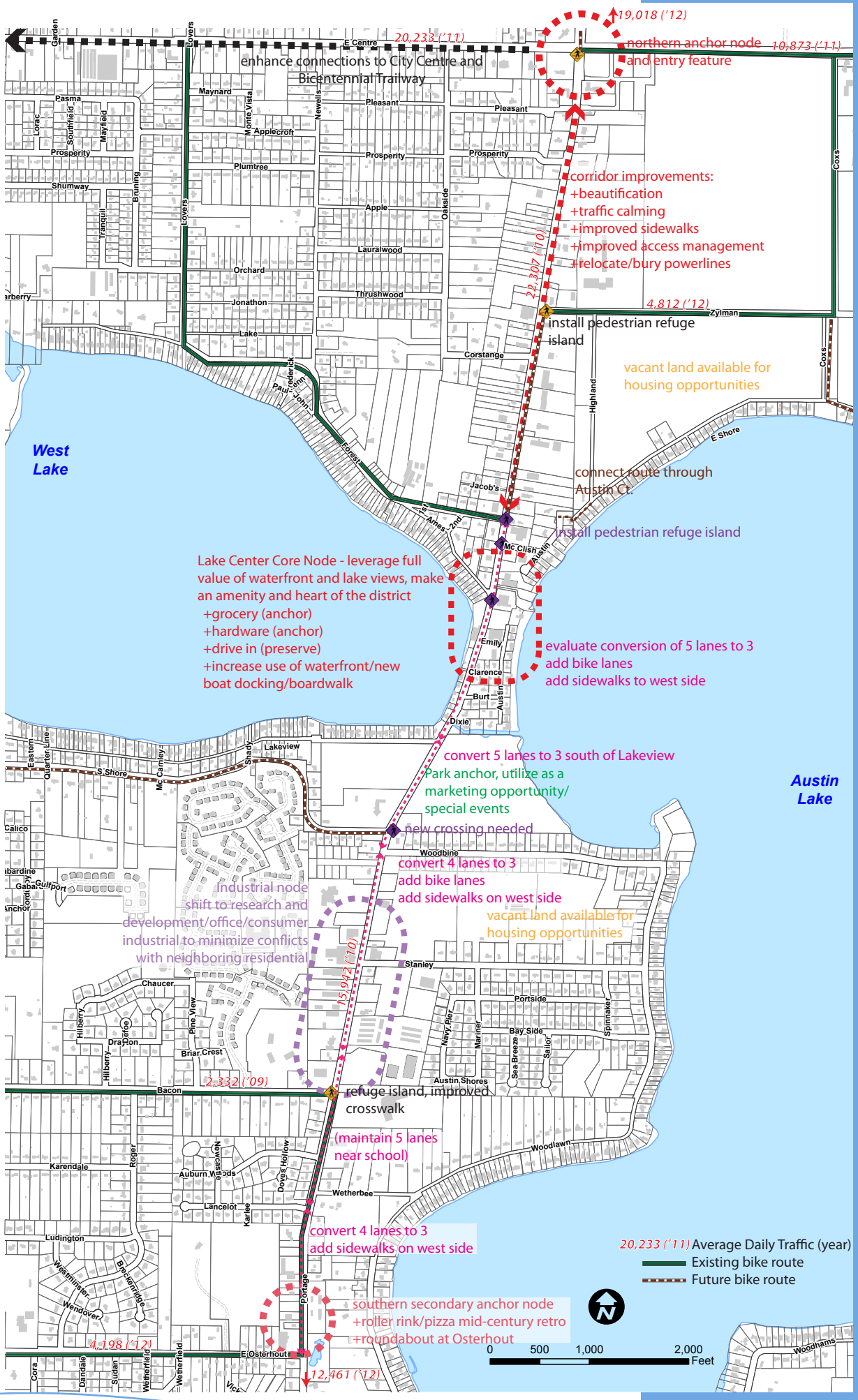
- Promote uses that fit the corridor based on different target areas:
  - » Lake Center Core Node (Forest to Clarence): mixed-use buildings (i.e. retail, restaurants, residential, boutique hotel, senior living) to optimize views of the lakes but no more than two stories at the lakefront to preserve views
  - » Commercial connector retrofit district (between Centre and the Lake Center Core Node): promote and target smaller-scale, lower intensity uses than currently allowed in General Business zoning with improved site design and reduced front-yard parking
  - » Light Industrial node (north of Bacon): promote and target lower-intensity, consumer-oriented uses than currently allowed in the Light Industrial zoning district with improved front-yard site design and increased provisions for neighborhood protection.
- Reduced front yard setbacks throughout the subarea to encourage buildings fronting the street and minimal front yard parking
- Revised parking standards for uses in the subarea in recognition of smaller-scale uses, where appropriate
- Reduced parking lot greenstrip width requirements where alternative treatments such as a low-profile wall and/or dense hedge are provided.
- Incentivize driveway access consolidation:
  - » Reduced parking requirements where shared access results in shared parking arrangements. In such circumstances, the city could provide technical assistance on development of shared access and parking agreements
  - » Driveway consolidation and redesign could be incorporated into repaving or reconstruction projects completed by the city through the Capital Improvement Program.

Several of the above implementation strategies are also illustrated on the **Lake Center Corridor Recommendations map** on page page 89.



Buildings along the waterfront should be no more than two stories to preserve views. This example includes a boardwalk connected to boat docks.


formalize path between Austin Court and East Shore
FOREST DR
MCCLISH CT
PORTAGE ROAD
AMES DR
explore additional non-motorized connections to complete lake "loop"
Lake Center Core Node - leverage full value of waterfront and lake views, make an amenity and heart of the district
+grocery (anchor)
+hardware (anchor)
+drive in (retrofit/preserve)
+increase use of waterfront/new boat docking/ boardwalk
EMILY DR
Streetscape Improvements
+crosswalks
+medians
+tree-lined sidewalks
+consolidated driveways
+gateway features
CLARENCE DR
AUSTIN DR
enhance connections between new center node to park (non-motorized and visually)
BURT DR
maximize potential of channel: access between lakes, boat docking at park
DIXIE DR
bike/pedestrian bridge?
LAKEVIEW DR
Park anchor:
+marketing opportunity/ special events
+add pavilion, boat docks
City of Portage
Lake Center District
Anchored in Community
PROPOSED GATEWAY LOCATIONS
PROPOSED NAUTICAL-THEMED PLACEMAKING LOCATIONS
N
LSL Planning
A SAFEbuilt. Company


19,018 ('12)
northern anchor node and entry feature
10,873 ('11)
20,233 ('11)
enhance connections to City Centre and Bicentennial Trailway
corridor improvements:
+beautification
+traffic calming
+improved sidewalks
+improved access management
+relocate/bury powerlines
22,307 ('10)
4,812 ('12)
install pedestrian refuge island
vacant land available for housing opportunities
West Lake
connect route through Austin Ct.
install pedestrian refuge island
Lake Center Core Node - leverage full value of waterfront and lake views, make an amenity and heart of the district
+grocery (anchor)
+hardware (anchor)
+drive in (preserve)
+increase use of waterfront/new boat docking/boardwalk
evaluate conversion of 5 lanes to 3
add bike lanes
add sidewalks to west side
convert 5 lanes to 3 south of Lakeview
Park anchor, utilize as a marketing opportunity/ special events
new crossing needed
Austin Lake
convert 4 lanes to 3
add bike lanes
add sidewalks on west side
vacant land available for housing opportunities
Industrial node shift to research and development/office/consumer industrial to minimize conflicts with neighboring residential
15,942 ('10)
2,332 ('09)
refuge island, improved crosswalk
(maintain 5 lanes near school)
convert 4 lanes to 3
add sidewalks on west side
southern secondary anchor node
+roller rink/pizza mid-century retro
+roundabout at Osterhout
4,198 ('12)
12,461 ('12)
20,233 ('11) Average Daily Traffic (year)
Existing bike route
Future bike route
0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

7 IMPLEMENTATION

A. Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use and physical development or redevelopment. Goals, objectives and strategies noted throughout the Plan should be carefully considered during decisions on rezonings, zoning text amendments, other regulations, capital investments for improvements to streets, "complete streets" bikeways/walkways, utilities, public facilities, land acquisition, and development proposals. Recommendations in this Plan apply to both public land (parks, sites, and right-of-way) and guidance for development and redevelopment of privately owned property. Some Plan recommendations may involve the need for changes to land use regulations and/or potential new programs. Others may involve partnerships with other municipalities, agencies, organizations, or groups. Since the Plan is a long range guide, refinements or additional studies may also be appropriate in the future to reflect new information, respond to unanticipated factors or to address changes in city policies.

The Comprehensive Plan is only valuable if used consistently. This chapter has been prepared to summarize the various recommendations into a checklist to outline actions and responsibilities for implementation. A cumulative listing of implementation recommendations is included in this chapter. Where appropriate, a timetable is suggested for execution of these strategies and actions consistent with available staff and financial resources of the City of Portage.

Also included in this chapter is a zoning plan that compares consistency between zoning classifications and future land use map designations and development guidelines used to evaluate land use proposals

Evaluation and Monitoring

This plan has been developed with a degree of flexibility, allowing nimble responses to emerging conditions, challenges, and opportunities. To help ensure the plan stays current and useful, periodic reviews are required and amendments may be necessary. This will ensure plan goals, objectives, and recommendations reflect changing community needs, expectations, and financial realities.

The plan should be reviewed at least every five years consistent with state statute. Detailed subarea plans should be adopted as comprehensive plan amendments. Updates should reflect changing conditions, unanticipated opportunities, and acknowledge the implementation to date. Yearly workplans should be prepared to assess what has been accomplished in the implementation table and what should be achieved in the coming year.

Planning Commission as Facilitators

The Planning Commission is charged with overseeing plan implementation and is empowered to make ongoing land use decisions. As such, it has a great influence on how sustainable the City of Portage will be. As an example, the Planning Commission is charged with preparing studies, ordinances, and certain programmatic initiatives before they are submitted to the City Council. In other instances, the Planning Commission plays a strong role as a "Plan Facilitator" overseeing the process and monitoring its progress and results. Together, City staff and the Planning Commission must be held accountable, ensuring the City's comprehensive plan impacts daily decisions and actions by its many stakeholders.

Roles of the City Council

The City Council should be engaged in the process to implement the plan. In this regard, Council should assist with implementation strategies and consider and weigh the funding commitments necessary to realize the city's vision, whether involving capital improvements, facility design, municipal services, targeted studies, or changes to development regulations, such as municipal codes, the zoning ordinance and procedures.

B. Implementation Tools

Tools to implement the Comprehensive Plan generally fall into six categories and some strategies may include more than one:

- Land use regulations
- Capital improvement programs, such as streets, city buildings, or other major purchases
- Property acquisition programs
- Special Funding Programs
- Programs or additional studies
- Partnerships, such as working with other organizations on planning, education, funding, or delivery of cost-efficient services.

Each tool has a different purpose toward Plan implementation and may suggest specific immediate changes, long-term policies and others involve ongoing activities.

1. Land Use Regulations

The primary tool for Plan implementation, which includes the Zoning Ordinance and other land use regulations, is summarized below. The city also has a number of other codes and ordinances to ensure that activities remain compatible with the surrounding area, such as noise, blight and nuisance ordinances.

Zoning Regulations

Zoning regulations control the intensity and arrangement of land development through standards on lot size or units per acre, setbacks from property lines, building dimensions and similar minimum requirements. Various site design elements discussed in this Plan are also regulated through site plan review and address landscaping, lighting, driveways, parking and circulation, pedestrian systems and signs. Zoning can also be used to help assure performance in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, state regulated wetlands, woodlands and wellhead areas.

Zoning Map

Over time, changes to the zoning map should become more consistent with the land use pattern identified on the Future Land Use Map. In some cases, the city may wish to initiate certain rezonings as part of an overall zoning map amendment. Other changes to the zoning map can be made in response to requests by landowners or developers. In those cases, city officials will need to determine if the time is proper for a change. It is important that the future land use plan be understood as a long range blueprint: Implementation is expected, but gradually in response to needs, conditions and availability of infrastructure. The Zoning Plan section of this chapter outlines how the Future Land Use Plan relates to current zoning. The Development Guidelines later in this chapter contain rezoning guidelines.

Construction Codes

The City of Portage is required to administer the State of Michigan Construction Codes (building, mechanical, plumbing and electrical). The City of Portage has also adopted the International Fire Code. These construction codes are intended to protect the public health, safety and welfare related to building construction and occupancy. Administration of one set of standardized state construction codes ensures consistency and uniformity during building plan preparation/review and construction.

Subdivision, Land Division and Condominium Regulations

Subdivision, land division and condominium regulations control the manner in which property is subdivided in the city and the public improvements required to support the development. The distinctions are not always apparent once a project is built, but the approval procedures are different due to separate state statutes that govern these types of land development approaches in Michigan.

Access Management Ordinance

Access Management Ordinance governs the number, location, placement and design of access points. The foundation for this ordinance has been established through the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation element updates and findings from national studies. The provisions of the Access Management Ordinance are applied to development proposals, street improvement projects and other opportunities to improve traffic flow and enhance safety through modifications to driveways or interconnection of properties.

Public Infrastructure Standards

Public infrastructure refers to the basic facilities and services needed for the functioning of the city such as city streets, water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, among others. Standards to ensure consistency and uniformity have been adopted so that each facility is designed and constructed to support existing and future development.

Most land use regulations are applied when new construction or substantial redevelopment is proposed. The City of Portage has a comprehensive development review process from development conceptualization to building occupancy. This process is explained in the various public information materials available at City Hall. Once proper zoning is in place, a site plan must be approved followed by approval of building and site engineering, construction plans and then permits for construction. Buildings and sites are inspected and then occupancy permits are issued. The subdivision and subsequent development of land is also carefully reviewed. Regulations are administered and enforced through monitoring by city staff and in response to complaints.

2. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Since 1985, the City of Portage has had an annual multi-year CIP that contains recommended capital projects, timing, estimated costs and funding for public infrastructure (streets, bikeways, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, waterlines, storm sewers and drainage) and community facilities (public buildings, fire, police and parks). Capital projects have been identified and constructed to help support and promote desired development, and to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the city. The number of projects and project timing are influenced by several factors, in particular, the cost, need for environmental clearance or approval by other agencies, and funds

available. For example, the amount of funding available from outside sources varies as new programs are established.

3. Property Acquisition Programs

Like all municipalities, Portage has the authority to acquire private property for a public purpose. This may include outright purchase acceptance of land donated by another party or acquisition through eminent domain. In addition to the ability to acquire private property for public infrastructure or facilities such as roads, sewers, public buildings and parks, the city may acquire private property to facilitate redevelopment and to eliminate nonconforming uses or structures. Land may also be acquired or managed through conservation easements for historic and environmental preservation purposes or easements to allow non-motorized connections.

4. Funding Programs

Some of the recommendations may be funded locally, some through outside funds, and many through a combination. The City monitors new federal and state funding programs that may be available to assist in implementation. In addition, foundations and other organizations may provide contributions. In addition to traditional sources, the city has the ability to raise revenues within a specific geographic area for specific purposes, or to capture the new increment of tax revenues in a specific geographic area for specific purposes. One example is the Downtown Development Authority. Another tax-based program is the Brownfield Act that provides funding for reuse of eligible sites. The City of Portage has used special assessment districts for several public improvement projects. In cooperation with other governmental agencies with taxing authority, the City has effectively used tax increment finance programs to capture the new increment of tax revenue for a specific area and use those funds for public improvements within that area.

5. Other Programs

A variety of housing, economic development, informational and other programs may be used by the City to assist with implementation of recommendations in this Plan. Many of these are through state programs as identified in the preceding chapters such as the following:

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
- MSHDA MiPlace
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Complete Streets Coalition
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources

6. Partnerships

While the City is in a position to coordinate many of the plan's implementation tasks, responsibility should not solely rest on the government. Instead, the vast array of stakeholders having key roles in either the city or region should all participate. Partnerships with the public and private sector, including Portage Public Schools, Kalamazoo County, neighborhood associations, the nearby higher education institutions, neighboring municipalities, KCTA, major employers, and business will also lead to success implementing the plan's initiatives. Partnerships may range from sharing information to funding and shared promotions or services. The spirit of cooperation through alliances

and partnerships will be sustained to benefit everyone in the region. City government cannot and should not do it all. Only through public/private collaboration can the plan's vision be realized.

C. Implementation Strategies

The implementation tools outlined above are available and should be used to achieve the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive implementation strategies have been developed to organize and apply these tools. Under each implementation tool, specific actions and a timeframe for implementation should be identified. The details of the strategies to implement the Comprehensive Plan are specified in the accompanying table.

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Community + Quality of Life								
Partner with the public schools and library to promote a high quality school system and lifelong learning.	community identity				✓			✓
Continue to pursue the long and short term goals identified in the Recreation and Open Space Plan consistent with the "Natural Place to Move" placemaking effort, and update the Plan as needed to maintain eligibility for state funding.	community identity		✓	✓				✓
Continue to communicate with regional partners to deliver quality and cost-effective services to the city's residents, businesses, and employees.	community identity				✓			✓
Utilize the City's website, social media, PMN Cable Access, newsletter and emerging technologies to educate residents and keep them informed of community development-related issues.	community identity	✓		✓				✓
Consider the use of pervious pavement for appropriate uses and locations by raising awareness on long-term benefits, practical applications, and how to maintain it.	public services/ facilities			✓				✓
Continue sidewalk and public utility (water, sanitary sewers and drainage) improvements in neighborhoods throughout the community.	public services/ facilities		✓					✓
Encourage innovative storm water treatment options consistent with the Storm Water Master Plan and Design Criteria that are environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing.	public services/ facilities	✓		✓				✓
Ensure that municipal infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the demands necessitated by a proposed development project. This may require participation by the developer to fund improvements to meet the demands associated with a proposed project.	public services/ facilities		✓	✓				✓
Promote underground utilities (electric, telecommunications, etc.).	public services/ facilities	✓		✓	✓			✓

*An action marked under more than one time frame may be a short- or long-term priority, but once initiated it becomes part of the ongoing implementation effort

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Consider low impact design and other green development practices for city-funded capital projects where appropriate.	public services/ facilities		✓					✓
Maintain and improve essential public services including police protection, fire and emergency services	public services/ facilities		✓					✓
Modify or expand community facilities based on applicable standards and the changing needs of the city such as changes to demographics and types of land uses. This may include land acquisition when key parcels become available.	public services/ facilities		✓		✓			✓
Consider incentives to encourage green development practices such as density bonuses, flexibility in uses, or reduced parking or landscaping requirements.	resources	✓				✓		
Continue public awareness campaign for homeowners through ongoing promotion and working with neighborhoods and other organizations on what they can do to protect the quality of the lakes and other natural features.	resources			✓	✓			✓
Continue the best management practices associated with site design to protect, lakes, streams, groundwater and well-head facilities, including low-impact design techniques.	resources	✓						✓
Continue to support the Environmental Board in their efforts and programs to protect and improve environmentally sensitive areas in Portage.	resources			✓				✓
Encourage planned development and/or cluster development to preserve key natural features on sites and link open space with adjacent open space, via greenways when and where appropriate.	resources	✓				✓		
Continue to support the Historic District Commission in the effort to preserve historic structures and sites in the City of Portage.	resources			✓	✓			✓
Protect water resources through management practices covering discharges into streams and lakes, storm water infiltration, and hazardous material spill prevention programs.	resources			✓	✓			✓
Conserve key natural and historic resources through public acquisition, flexible zoning or tax incentives that encourage private preservation, public dedication, or adaptive reuse.	resources	✓		✓	✓			✓
Transportation								
Pursue local, state and federal funding to continue implementation of the Non-Motorized Transportation system.	complete streets			✓	✓			✓
Pursue the installation of planned walkway and bikeway facilities in conjunction with scheduled road improvements projects.	complete streets		✓	✓				✓

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Work with organizations and advocacy groups such as bicycle users, seniors, and schools to develop Safe Routes to School Programs, identify priority needs for walking and bicycling.	complete streets			✓	✓			✓
Adopt a Complete Streets policy/plan consistent with the MDOT program for continued nonmotorized transportation planning efforts to provide alternative modes of transportation to promote sustainability, ensure all modes are considered for MDOT projects, and provide consistency with the Natural Place to Move placemaking effort.	complete streets			✓		✓		✓
Ensure transit-friendly features such as sidewalks to bus stops, pads or shelters in areas that are currently, or have the potential to be served by public transit.	complete streets	✓		✓	✓			✓
Encourage safe and efficient non-motorized circulation between public sidewalks and businesses, between businesses and also between businesses and residential neighborhoods during site plan review and City capital projects.	complete streets	✓	✓					✓
Complete gaps in the sidewalk system and work towards a non-motorized system especially around parks and schools.	complete streets							✓
Promote walking, bicycling, and use of alternative fuel vehicles through appropriate site design techniques, such as allowing for bike amenities to replace a required parking space.	complete streets	✓						✓
Ensure all transportation projects, including expressways and city streets, are designed in consideration of the defined corridor or area character and the needs and safety for all types of expected travelers.	context sensitive streets			✓				✓
For new development, ensure roadway capacity can accommodate site-generated traffic at the time of occupancy. This may require participation by the developer to fund improvements to address impacts of a proposed project.	corridor management	✓		✓				✓
Pursue access management techniques (restricting the number of access points, regulating placement, promoting driveway consolidation, using raised medians, etc.) along major thoroughfares to improve traffic flow and safety. Where appropriate, encourage joint access and parking opportunities.	corridor management	✓		✓				✓
Consider landscaped medians on three- or five-lane roads where possible to improve traffic safety by controlling left-turn lanes or using refuge for pedestrians crossing the street.	corridor management		✓					✓
Consider roundabouts as an intersection design alternative or an alternative to traffic signals to improve traffic flow and reduce the severity of crashes.	corridor management		✓	✓			✓	✓

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Coordinate transportation planning, project priorities, and funding for streets and non-motorized systems that extend into other municipalities with area communities and road agencies through the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) organization.	Operation Improvements			✓	✓		✓	✓
Require traffic impact studies for intensive use projects to determine direct impacts, improvements needed and data for future planning.	Operation Improvements	✓						✓
Continue to monitor traffic counts, pedestrian and bicycle use, and crash data in conjunction with proposed transportation improvement projects.	Operation Improvements		✓	✓				✓
Annually prepare the Transportation/Major Thoroughfare Plan Status Report using the recommendations of this plan as a foundation.	Operation Improvements			✓			✓	
Continue to pursue alternatives for improved traffic flow and safety such as new signal technology, "real time" traffic monitoring and reporting. Embrace emerging communication media to provide instantaneous traffic information.	Operation Improvements			✓				✓
Land Use + Character								
Continue to offer and strengthen programs to encourage home ownership and maintenance for low and moderate income groups.	housing			✓				✓
Encourage cluster housing on parcels with important natural features to preserve and encourage additional single-family homeownership on smaller lots consistent with the single-family detached - medium density residential description and locations identified in the plan.	housing	✓				✓		✓
Partner with local non-profits to provide assistance in retrofitting mature homes for seniors to have universal or barrier-free design to allow people to remain in their homes.	housing				✓		✓	
Review lake front property zoning regulations in consideration of the unique characteristics associated with site and building construction activities and the surrounding neighborhood character.	housing	✓				✓		
Promote opportunities for live/work accommodations and mixed-use development, especially in the City Centre, in the Lake Center Core node, and as redevelopment of greenhouse sites may occur.	mixed-use	✓					✓	✓
Continue to implement the recommendations contained in the City Center Area plan that focuses on the unique mixed-use attributes of the geographic center of the city. (see Chapter 5)	mixed-use	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Implement key recommendations of the Lake Center Subarea plan to improve safety, aesthetics, and to encourage redevelopment at the Lake Center Core Node and other areas of the district. (see Chapter 6)	mixed-use	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Continue efforts to achieve the success of major office corridors as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan, consider corridor-wide rezoning plans and capital improvement projects within office corridors to support new development and reinvestment.	business/ employment	✓	✓	✓				
Continue to evaluate (re)development opportunities involving the South Westnedge Avenue Commercial Corridor so this remains a magnet in the regional market.	business/ employment	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Enhance the appearance/functionality of the South Westnedge Commercial Corridor, including the Portage Commerce Square and Downtown Development District, by working with property owners to improve site and building design and attract new uses that respond to changing markets.	business/ employment	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Encourage planned commercial development in designated areas and corridors for business expansion as nodes rather than strip commercial development.	business/ employment	✓						✓
Partner with local economic development organizations such as Southwest Michigan First to promote the expansion of existing industries and the attraction of new manufacturing and high technology businesses.	business/ employment			✓	✓		✓	
Continue to monitor the primary routes to each business area (from point of entry into the city) to ensure a high quality, aesthetically attractive, image. Motorists and pedestrians should view movement into and through the city as a pleasant experience.	business/ employment	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Continue to evaluate programs to provide financial assistance or incentives to landowners to upgrade their buildings and sites.	business/ employment			✓			✓	
During site plan review, conduct a careful analysis of potential impacts on residential neighborhoods for non-residential development constructed adjacent to or near residential areas and require adequate buffering and transitions where appropriate.	business/ employment	✓						✓
Review site design through the zoning regulations to ensure specific standards governing landscape, signs, exterior lighting and access are fulfilled.	business/ employment	✓						✓
Where appropriate, encourage non-motorized pedestrian circulation systems and features (e.g. sidewalks, bike paths, cross-walks, etc.) to encourage the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians between business establishments and between business establishments and residential neighborhoods.	business/ employment	✓						✓
Improve the compatibility of industrial areas with other use districts through transitional zoning and/or the use of increased setbacks, landscape buffers, and architectural screening.	business/ employment	✓						✓

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Continue community awareness programs on blighting influences, annual refuse collections, and comprehensive code enforcement efforts throughout residential neighborhoods.	land use			✓				✓
Encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites through the use of Brownfield Act financing as a method to remediate environmental contamination.	land use			✓				✓
Initiate rezonings for certain sites that may be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.	land use	✓		✓				✓
Utilize the Development Review Guidelines during the evaluation of land use development proposals to assess the compatibility of the proposed land use with the Comprehensive Plan.	land use	✓						✓
Monitor changes to the state zoning act and other land use laws, along with key federal and state case law, and evaluate applicable city regulations to determine if changes are needed.	land use	✓		✓				✓
Review the entire Comprehensive Plan every five years and update as needed consistent with the state statute.	land use			✓			✓	
Annually review these strategies and set priorities for implementation for the coming year.	land use			✓		✓		
City Centre								
Install public street and business site lighting consistent or compatible with the "shepherds hook" style located in Liberty Park and along the South Westnedge Avenue bridge over Portage Creek.	placemaking		✓		✓	✓		
Develop public street landscaping/green space plan for implementation that would include consistent plant materials and locations.	placemaking				✓	✓		
Develop a unique City Centre logo that can be used by businesses and also incorporated into gateway signs, street/wayfinding signs and banners.	placemaking					✓		
Continue recreation/cultural/entertainment programming that establishes the City Centre Area as a destination in the community. Coordinate with private partners to offer various community events and activities	placemaking				✓			✓
Continue efforts to protect and preserve the natural/environmental features located in the City Centre Area.	placemaking	✓	✓					✓
Identify locations and consider gateway signage at the primary entrances into the City Centre (East/West Centre and at the north and south ends of South Westnedge Avenue)	placemaking		✓			✓		
Promote locations in the City Centre Area as gathering places for community residents and visitors including civic facilities and business and religious establishments.	placemaking			✓		✓		✓

Implementation Strategy	Topic	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Programs or Studies	Partnerships	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Consider improvements to facilitate safe pedestrian travel at appropriate public street crossings: · Installation of stamped, brick paver pedestrian crosswalks. · Installation of pedestrian crosswalk signals that incorporate audible sounds and a countdown timer. · Installation of pedestrian islands/safety refuge points	transportation		✓		✓	✓		
Identify traffic calming techniques at appropriate locations for implementation along Centre Avenue, South Westnedge Avenue and Shaver Road.	transportation		✓			✓		✓
Continue to maintain and construct new pedestrian linkages in the City Centre Area to increase walkability and interconnection between land uses.	transportation	✓	✓				✓	
Lake Center								
Explore MDOT TAP grant program to fund projects such as non-motorized paths, streetscapes, low impact development, and stormwater improvements.	street improvements		✓		✓	✓		
Continue sidewalk installation/repair/replacement program funded through the Capital Improvement Program.	street improvements		✓					✓
When improvements are made to Portage Road, changes in the right-of-way design could be incorporated, including bike lanes, enhanced crossings, medians, improved buffers, and sidewalks	street improvements		✓			✓	✓	✓
Embrace Lake Center identity through development of gateway features, banners, wayfinding signs, gathering spaces with lake access and views.	Business Association				✓			✓
Build a district-wide brand including businesses, the park, residences, churches, and Lake Center Elementary.	Business Association				✓			✓
Strengthen Lake Center brand through promotional events, public art installations, common retail hours, shared beautification efforts.	Business Association				✓			✓
Support neighborly site maintenance and upkeep.	Business Association				✓			✓
Explore the possibility of forming a CIA or BID for the Portage Road businesses	Business Association			✓	✓	✓		
Create a new overlay district for the Portage Road corridor	zoning	✓				✓		

D. Zoning Plan

Zoning is a key mechanism for achieving the desired land use pattern and quality of development advocated in the plan. This section provides a useful guide relative to the inconsistencies between current zoning patterns and proposed future land use designations.

Because the Future Land Use Plan is a long range vision of how land uses should evolve over time, it should not be confused with the City's zoning map, which is a current (short-term) mechanism for regulating development. Therefore not all properties should be immediately rezoned to correspond with the plan. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use decisions over a longer period of time (5+ years).

Review of the Existing Land Use map in comparison to the Future Land Use map reveals a gradual transition to the planned land use pattern. Achievement of this goal will be gradual particularly where established businesses and homes are located in areas intended for other types of uses in the long term.

In addition, the Future Land Use map is generalized. Any rezoning request by the City or property owner should consider the recommendations in this plan in tandem with the Development Guidelines included below. Zoning changes in accordance with the plan should be made gradually so that change can be managed. The Future Land Use map as well as the plan's goals and strategies should be consulted to judge the merits of a rezoning request.

The plan categories correspond to zoning districts, but there is some generalization. The following table provides a zoning plan indicating how the future land use categories in this comprehensive plan relate to the zoning districts in the zoning ordinance. In certain instances, more than one zoning district may be applicable to a future land use category. Other recommendations in the plan and the Development Guidelines can help guide the Planning Commission in determining the appropriate zoning district based upon the context of the surrounding area.

	Low Density Residential	Single-Family Detached - Medium Density Residential	Medium-Density Residential	High-Density Residential	Office	Local Business Node	General Business	Regional Business	Research/Development/ Technology	General Industrial	City Centre Mixed-Use Subarea
R-1A		■									
R-1B	■										
R-1C	■										
R-1D	■										
R-1E	■										
R-1T			■								
RM-1				■							
RM-2			■								
MHC				■							
PD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
OS-1					■						
B-1						■					
B-2								■			
B-3							■				
CPD						■	■	■			
OTR					■				■		
I-1										■	
I-2										■	
P-1*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
CCA			■	■	■	■		■			■
CCMU	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			

*P-1 Vehicular Parking must be contiguous to the districts noted in the corresponding row/land use category

E. Development Guidelines

The Development Guidelines are intended to be used by city officials and staff in the review of development proposals (rezonings, special land uses, site plans, subdivisions, condominiums, and variances). In addition property owners, developers and their design professionals should refer to the guidelines to gain an understanding of the community goals and polices prior to application submittal. For mixed-use, institutional, and quasi-public projects, the guidelines for the most similar types of project should be used.

Rezoning Requests

Z-1 Rezoning Requests.

Intent. To provide guidance on use of the Plan for requests to rezone land. Land uses should be arranged consistent with the policies and recommendations of this Plan.

Guideline Z-1 Consider the following factors during a rezoning process:

a) Is the request consistent with the future land use plan, applicable policies, and related recommendations of the Plan?

- If yes, is the timing for a change appropriate in relation to adjacent land uses, demand, infrastructure capacity, and similar factors?
- If no, have conditions changed since Plan adoption that supports a change in zoning or have all sites within a designated area been developed or redeveloped?

b) Are the uses allowed in the requested zoning district appropriate given the size and character of the site and surrounding land uses?

c) Can the traffic associated with the project be accommodated by the existing transportation network (Note: a traffic impact study may be required).

d) Can the impacts of the uses allowed in the requested zoning district be accommodated by the existing utility infrastructure and services? Development should be in areas that are or will be served, rather than where premature publicly funded improvements are required.

e) Is there a lack of available land zoned the same or similar to the requested zoning district, including land that could be redeveloped?

f) Is the rezoning request consistent with the applicable guidelines listed below?

- **Residential Guidelines -** R-1, R-2, R-3, R-6 (for manufactured housing park), M-1, M-2
- **Office/Commercial Guidelines –** C-1, C-2, C-3 (for regional and general commercial), C-4 (for local business), C-5 (for Portage Commerce Square), M-1, M-2
- **Research/Technology/Industrial Guidelines –** I-1, I-2, I-3, M-1, M-2

Residential (Housing & Neighborhoods)

R-1 Protection of Residential Neighborhoods.

Intent. To protect people's living environment.

This guideline does not mean that new or expanded non-residential land uses are automatically inappropriate on the perimeter of residential neighborhoods. Rather, it states a primary emphasis of the Plan -- preservation of the residential character of Portage.

Guideline R-1: Recognize the vulnerability of residential areas and protect these neighborhood areas through the following:

a) Eliminate/Minimize traffic, noise and light from existing non-residential uses.

b) Ensure that new or expanded non-residential land uses are not detrimental to existing or future residential areas.

c) Prevent the conversion of stable residential uses within the neighborhood to non-residential uses.

d) Maintain and/or strengthen the stability of neighborhoods.

R-2 Residential Development along Arterial Roadways.

Intent. To permit residential uses to locate along arterial streets when appropriate design is used for compatibility and for arterial capacity preservation. Strip residential development along arterial streets where lot depth is insufficient to sustain the use in the future is discouraged.

Guideline R-2: Ensure appropriate residential lot and subdivision design when new residential uses abut arterial roadways to ensure compatibility and roadway capacity through:

a) Establishment of reverse frontage lots which front on local streets rather on the arterial;

b) Shared driveway entrances with an appropriately designed turn-around if access to a major thoroughfare is necessary; or

c) Increased the front yard setbacks, providing a continuous hedge or earthen berm (or combination thereof) to screen the residential use, and an appropriately designed turn around in the driveway so that all vehicles face forward when entering the arterial if access to a major thoroughfare is necessary.

R-3 Locational Criteria for Residential Uses According to Density, Environmental and Traffic Factors.

Intent. To limit residential densities when sensitive environmental conditions exist on the development site. To prevent severe soil erosion and sedimentation problems, foundation failures, drainage problems, and associated water pollution problems. Medium and high density residential development should have both a public centralized sanitary sewer and public potable water supply.

To create desirable land use relationships by locating higher residential densities on higher street classes, thereby making residential and non-

residential uses more compatible and promoting complementary land uses. To ensure that development of this density has streets with adequate capacity to handle the traffic volumes generated. The appropriate street class must exist at the time the development is proposed or at the time the development will be occupied. Higher densities should be on higher street classes to prevent disruption to significantly lower density or intensity areas from excessive through-traffic.

Guideline R-3a: Limit residential development to the "low density" category when:

d) The development does not have a collector or higher street type for major access; or

e) The development does not have both a public centralized sanitary and public potable water supply.

Guideline R-3b: Limit residential development to the "medium density" category or "low density" category when:

a) The development site has soils characterized as wet; or

b) A collector street is the highest available major access point for the development.

c) There is public water/sanitary sewer systems; and

d) No floodplains or wetlands are affected by site development.

Guideline R-3c: Locate residential developments of the high density category only where:

a) There is a major access point on or very near an arterial street;

b) There is adequate water pressure and quantity for domestic use and internal fire protection systems;

c) There is public water/sanitary sewer systems; and

d) No floodplains or wetlands are affected by site development.

R-4 Compatibility with Adjacent Land Uses.

Intent. To encourage gradual, rather than abrupt, changes in size, height, mass and scale of abutting residential development and between residential and non-residential development to create harmonious neighborhoods that are visually compatible.

Significant changes in scale and size between adjacent developments may be undesirable or incompatible. Residential development of significantly different size, height or mass to adjacent areas may require special site design, careful building placement, or extensive buffering and screening. Likewise, low-density residential development may be inappropriate next to higher intensity non-residential uses without special site design for appropriate visual transition, and higher density residential development may be more appropriate where limitations exist to appropriate separation, screening and buffering. Appropriate transitions between types (single-family detached, townhouses, quadraplex, apartments, etc.) and densities of residential uses internal to a development or abutting the development should be provided. Clustering of dwelling units at higher densities, buffering and screening may be used to create a visual transition between residential areas of differing

intensities or densities, and to provide appropriate buffers for environmentally sensitive areas.

Guideline R-4a: Ensure new residential development is compatible with existing, abutting residential or non-residential development in size, height, mass, and scale.

Guideline R-4b: Provide landscaping to serve as a buffer from adjacent land use, where appropriate.

Guideline R-4c: Encourage innovative residential design such that a development may target a variety of markets, preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and integrate different types and densities of housing while providing for appropriate transitions internal to the development.

R-5 Open Space and Natural Resource Protection.

Intent. To encourage innovative design of residential developments that provide for functional requirements of buildings and minimize the disruption of the natural site.

Guideline R-5: Encourage the design of residential development to:

a) Provide planned, usable open spaces of adequate size to serve the needs of residents;

b) Use, where possible, the natural drainage patterns;

c) Save, to the extent possible, the natural vegetation;

d) Provide vegetation that complements the natural environment, especially where existing vegetation must be removed;

e) Use natural areas to act as a buffer from adjacent land uses or to soften views along roadways; and

f) Incorporate natural areas and large open spaces as recreational amenities within a project.

R-6 Streets and Pedestrian Systems.

Intent. To ensure traffic flows at appropriate speeds for the neighborhood. To reduce the number of vehicle trips. To encourage travel by walking and bicycle. To improve views along streets.

Guideline R-6: Ensure streets and pedestrian systems achieve the following:

a) Street width, alignment, and geometric design should encourage travel at 25 miles per hour;

b) Street width should be reduced where densities are low and natural features can be preserved, provided utility and service needs can be accomplished;

c) Subdivisions should be interconnected;

d) Street design should respect the natural terrain to the extent practical;

e) Sidewalks, walkways, or bikepaths must be provided along all streets to encourage non-motorized travel; and

f) Street trees can be used to help reduce speeds and improve appearance.

R-7 Manufactured Housing.

Intent. To provide quality manufactured housing living environments to community residents. To recognize that manufactured housing can help satisfy the need for affordable, sound housing.

Guideline R-7 Safety and compatibility objectives should be met by:

a) Locating manufactured housing as a transitional use between lower and higher density uses;

b) Providing lots of adequate size for fire protection and public safety;

c) Providing adequate open space; and

d) Ensure manufactured housing parks are designed and maintained to the minimum standards established by the state.

R-8 Neighborhood Quality in Established Areas.

Intent. To promote neighborhoods and to preserve housing redevelopment rather than demolition.

Guideline R-8: Create housing development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and reinvestment opportunities in older neighborhoods by encouraging or providing:

a) Innovative building design to fit oddly shaped or narrow lots;

b) Adaptive reuse of existing buildings and underutilized land;

c) Quality housing and property maintenance;

d) Appropriate public services;

e) Incentives through zoning and other land use regulations;

f) Financial assistance through public and private institutions;

g) Land assembly and improvement for new construction; and

h) Historical designation.

R-9 Residential Planned Unit Developments.

Intent. To facilitate the supply of housing available to all income and age groups. To create convenient living environments where shopping and other services are included in the development. To take advantage of innovative design techniques such as housing clusters, types and designs, and common open space as part of an overall design for unique living environments.

Guideline R-9 Encourage the mixture of housing types and land uses within planned developments to:

a) Utilize cost-efficient site layout and design techniques;

b) Create new, self-contained neighborhoods and areas; and

c) Allow clustering or mixture of lot sizes when there is a clear benefit to the public overall and the environment.

Other Applicable Guidelines.

In addition to the above, the following guidelines may also be applicable for residential projects.

N-1 Environmental Protection
N-2 Floodplain
N-3 Water Quality
N-4 Noise
N-5 Historic Resource Preservation
N-6 Open Space Protection
T-1 Transportation Systems in General
T-2 Street Design
T-3 Access Management
T-4 Non Motorized Travel
T-5 Right-of-Way Preservation
M-2 Sanitary Sewer
M-3 Underground Utilities

Commercial & Office Uses

C-1 Coordinated Development.

Intent. To promote the development of compact groupings of commercial/office uses with a coordinated design, even if on separate parcels, to:

- share vehicular access points and circulation patterns;
- cluster commercial uses together;
- share utility hook-ups, service entrances, and other building systems; and
- provide common pedestrian circulation.

To utilize land in an economical manner and limit the number of access points to major streets, reduce traffic congestion, and promote pedestrian safety. To restrict individual or isolated commercial uses from developing along streets or in non-commercial areas. To allow commercial/office uses in older or redeveloping areas. To allow single-lot development when a commercial/office use is appropriate and planned center development is not possible.

Guideline C-1 Locate commercial/office uses only in existing or proposed planned commercial/office areas, as illustrated on the future land use map, and when the following situations exist (as applicable):

a) for any "outlots" the future access and site design shall be compatible with the primary lot;

b) a conversion from an existing non-commercial/office building to a commercial/office use is compatible with adjacent buildings and uses;

c) an existing commercial/office use proposes to expand and the expansion is compatible to adjacent uses;

d) a proposed use is of an intensity and size to be comparable to a planned commercial/office center;

e) a proposed use requires a location in or near an existing specific land use or activity center; and/or

f) single lot development shall only be considered when ownership patterns, existing land use conditions or other circumstances prohibit coordinated development.

C-2 Commercial/Office Uses in General.

Intent. To prevent undesirable strip commercial/office development. To restrict linear and isolated development of single commercial/office uses along streets. To encourage commercial/office revitalization in redeveloping areas. To allow some commercial/office uses in mixed land use areas. To restrict commercial/office developments that do not share common access points, parking lots or other facilities. To prevent vehicular traffic problems and congestion. To utilize land in a more economical manner and prevent visually unpleasant and confusing environments along streets.

Guideline C-2 Allow commercial/office uses:

a) that limit strip commercial development

b) where there is direct access to a major or minor arterial;

c) when traffic impacts are addressed through access design or improvements such as passing lanes, signals, or deceleration lanes;

d) when the size, intensity, and character of the proposed use is compatible with adjacent areas;

e) within new residential developments where the commercial/office use mainly serves residents of the development (planned unit development), is buffered from or properly integrated into the residential area, and is similar in design and intensity to the residential uses;

f) adjacent to older or redeveloping residential areas where the commercial/office use does not create nuisances and is compatible with the surroundings;

g) within recreational and public areas where the commercial/office use is an ancillary use such as a concession business.

C-3 Local Business Uses.

Intent. To allow the development of small "local" business uses or centers that primarily serve nearby neighborhoods or uses. To provide convenience shopping close to residential areas that is accessible by pedestrians or short vehicle trips.

Examples of commercial uses serving areas or neighborhoods or providing convenience goods, include neighborhood shopping centers, grocery, drugstores, convenience stores, small restaurants or take-out food service, barbers, laundromats, dry cleaners, and video rental.

Guideline C-3 Local or neighborhood commercial uses should meet the following standards:

a) location is preferably within an identified node and/or at the intersection of two major thoroughfares and provides convenience shopping facilities;

b) safe pedestrian access should be provided within the site and with connections to the public walkway system;

c) the intensity, size and hours of operation will not adversely affect existing residential areas;

d) a good transition between adjacent uses must be provided that reflects existing architectural and residential character; and

e) site design shall be consistent with the **Guideline C-8**

C-4 Regional and General Commercial Uses.

Intent. Certain general and regional commercial uses are of such size and intensity that their potential for creating adverse impacts on surrounding areas can be significant. These guidelines are intended to ensure such uses are located in appropriate areas and designed to complement city policies.

Guideline C-4 Locate and design commercial uses attracting large numbers of people or generating large volumes of traffic (200+ trips in peak hour or 1000+ daily) in accordance with the following:

a) the use must be located on a major arterial street;

b) access to a traffic signal may be necessary;

c) the use should be sufficiently spaced or buffered from residential or institutional uses; and

d) the design standards of **Guideline C-8** should be met.

C-5 Portage Commerce Square.

Intent. To ensure there is sufficient land for new development and redevelopment that would be appropriate within and near Portage Commerce Square.

Guideline C-5 Allow the expansion of Portage Commerce Square when:

a) there are no longer sites of appropriate size for development or redevelopment;

b) neighboring sites not within the Square would be appropriate for the type of development proposed and compatible with existing uses;

c) stable residential uses within adjacent neighborhood are not jeopardized by expansion; and/or

d) all sites within the Square with obsolete uses have been redeveloped.

C-6 City Centre Area.

Intent. To establish a distinct, identifiable, vibrant area within the geographic center of Portage that provides an urban, small-scale, pedestrian-friendly land use pattern with enhanced residential opportunities and mixed-uses.

Guideline C-6 New development and redevelopment activities within the City Centre Area should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the City Centre Area plan. The plan and the City Centre Area-Mixed Use Floating District zoning regulations should be utilized during the review and consideration of rezoning, special land use and site plan review. In addition, the City Centre Area Plan should be referenced during the development of capital improvement projects by the City of Portage.

C-7 Lake Center Business Area

Intent. To create a vibrant commercial corridor along Portage Road, from East Centre Avenue south to East Osterhout Avenue, with a unified and attractive visual character that builds upon the history of the Lake Center District.

Guideline C-7 New development and redevelopment within the Lake Center should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Lake Center Subarea plan. The subarea plan should be referenced during review and consideration of rezoning, special land use and site plan review. In addition, the Lake Center Subarea plan should be referenced during the development of capital improvement projects by the City of Portage.

C-8 Office/Commercial Site Design.

Intent. To encourage the provision of pedestrian circulation and site amenities. To ensure compatibility between adjacent uses and to provide buffering for adjacent areas where necessary. To reduce the affects of stormwater runoff. To improve aesthetics through site and building design. To improve traffic circulation and safety and still provide reasonable access to businesses. To ensure that signs are not a nuisance, but are simple so businesses can be easily located.

Guideline C-8 Encourage innovative commercial/office design to:

a) preserve and protect quality significant trees and environmentally sensitive areas;

b) to create a desirable transition in the type and intensity of uses through buffering, setbacks, and building/site design;

c) provide clear, on-site circulation patterns for pedestrians, bicycles, and disabled persons;

d) provide trees and landscaping along the street and within the site;

e) where appropriate, include benches, bus stops, bicycle storage facilities, and other site amenities;

f) promote a good transition between adjacent buildings and land uses in terms of building size, height, scale, and materials;

g) provide access design consistent with the recommendations of the Plan;

h) locate and screen waste receptacles to improve views and avoid nuisance;

i) use properly designed lighting at appropriate footcandles to avoid glare and light pollution while still providing adequate lighting for safety;

j) ensure sign base and materials complement the principal building and have a landscaped base; and

k) prevent signs from being a visual nuisance or a safety hazard to vehicular traffic.

Other Applicable Guidelines.

In addition to the above, the following guidelines may also be applicable for commercial and office projects.

N-1 Environmental Protection
N-2 Floodplain

N-3 Water Quality
N-4 Noise
N-5 Historic Resource Preservation
T-1 Transportation Systems in General
T-2 Street Design
T-3 Access Management
T-4 Non Motorized Travel
T-5 Right-of-Way Preservation
T-6 Parking
M-2 Sanitary Sewer
M-3 Underground Utilities

Industrial Uses

I-1 Industrial Uses in General.

Intent. To promote clustering of industrial and related uses to minimize conflicts with non-industrial land uses. To ensure more economical construction and a more effective use of roads and utilities. To promote effective screening, buffering and site planning.

Guideline I-1: Locate, to the extent possible, in the Shaver Road Business Corridor and Sprinkle Road Industrial Corridor, areas near the airport, and other designated areas of the Future Land Use Map, industries and industrial developments adjacent to an existing industry to form clusters.

I-2 Environmental Standards.

Intent. To minimize risks to human life, property and the environment associated with hazardous materials. To prevent the effects of offensive industrial land uses on residential areas.

Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, flammable liquids, gases, corrosives, poisons, explosives, toxins, and other materials used in such hazardous industrial operations as oil refineries and chemical plants.

Guideline I-2 Locate industries which handle hazardous or flammable materials or are potentially offensive such as junkyards, landfills, and quarries away from residential areas, population concentrations, and outside of well head protection zones.

I-3 Industrial Expansion.

Intent. To allow industry to expand at existing locations, rather than having to relocate. To retain jobs and the economic base, when such expansion can be compatible with the area.

Guideline I-3 Allow the expansion of existing industries which are adjacent to non-industrial development in a manner that meets the needs of the industry and protects surrounding development from nuisances. Where adjacent to residential uses, expansion may be considered if the site can be redesigned to improve buffering and compatibility with adjacent uses and operations are contained to limit adverse off-site impacts such as noise, odors, and truck routing.

I-4 Research and Technology Parks.

Intent. To ensure adequate zoned land, up-to-date development regulations and infrastructure consistent with the creation of specialized business parks for heavy industry, corporate offices and high technology and small to medium sized enterprises.

Guideline I-4 Facilitate the preservation of land for and the development of specialized research and technology business parks.

I-5 Retention and Recruitment.

Intent. To retain existing industries and to attract new industries which can meet environmental standards, expand the diversity of the economic base and provide jobs. Methods for increasing industrial employment include:

Guideline I-5 Provide incentives to expand industrial employment, giving special attention to industries which are environmentally sensitive, expand the economic diversity of Portage and provide employment opportunities for community and area residents.

a) providing reasonable flexibility through zoning and other regulations;

b) assisting in the redevelopment of brownfield sites;

c) partnering with local and state economic development agencies to offer incentives consistent with city policies;

d) participating in job training programs to increase job skills; and

e) providing public service and facility improvements--e.g., utilities and transportation.

I-6 Building and Site Design.

Intent. To ensure site design that provides adequate space for a safe, efficient site layout that is compatible with surrounding land uses.

Guideline I-6 Design industrial development to:

a) be compatible with adjacent development in terms of size, height, mass, and scale;

b) provide, where appropriate, adequate lot sizes for buffering and screening adjacent development;

c) provide sufficient space for on-site parking and service areas;

d) use, where possible, the natural drainage patterns;

e) preserve, to the extent possible, the natural vegetation;

f) provide landscaping to improve aesthetics within a site, along street frontage, and as a buffer from other land uses;

g) ensure access meets city standards, especially along arterial and collector streets;

h) ensure site design promotes use for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Other Applicable Guidelines.

In addition to the above, the following guidelines may also be applicable for industrial projects.

N-1 Environmental Protection
N-2 Floodplain
N-3 Water Quality
N-4 Noise
N-5 Historic Resource Preservation
T-1 Transportation Systems in General
T-2 Street Design
T-3 Access Management
T-4 Non Motorized Travel
M-2 Sanitary Sewer
M-3 Underground Utilities

Natural & Historic Resources

N-1 Environmental Protection.

Intent. To ensure that new or expanded development will not cause the pollution of groundwater, streams, land, and air. To minimize the risk associated with hazardous wastes. To minimize measures required to mitigate environmental hazards. To reduce the potential for environmental degradation.

To direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, wetlands, natural groundwater recharge areas, steep slopes, unstable soils, lakes/streams and areas with archeological artifacts.

Guideline N-1 Provide assurances that air emissions and the disposal of industrial waste water and solid wastes will meet environmental standards and that the storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials will be done in a safe and environmentally sound manner. In particular, locate certain uses away from environmentally sensitive areas.

N-2 Floodplain.

Intent. To protect persons and property from the hazards of flooding. To discourage the placement of structures in the floodplain and to prevent development which would increase flooding pursuant to applicable state and federal requirements.

Examples of land uses suitable for the floodplain include private and public recreational uses—golf courses, parks, wildlife preserves, hiking trails and horseback riding trails; agricultural uses managed to prevent excessive soil loss—sod farming, pasture, orchards, horticulture and truck farming; and accessory uses to residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Guideline N-2 Restrict development in the 100-year floodplain by:

a) prohibit the location or expansion of structures and storage areas in the floodplain, except for instances when it is conclusively demonstrated that no increase in floodwater elevation and velocity will result and that no public hazards will be created and applicable flood resistant construction techniques utilized; and

b) allow the modification or restoration of existing structures located in the floodplain only if the structural alterations do not increase the level or velocity of the 100-year flood and applicable flood resistant construction techniques utilized.

N-3 Water Quality.

Intent. To prevent increased flooding and erosion from causing property damage and environmental problems. To prolong the useful life of man-made drainage improvements. To protect water quality in streams from pollution caused by stormwater runoff. To help achieve quality standards for lakes, streams, watersheds, and drinking water sources. To minimize adverse impacts on wetlands.

Adequate means to convey stormwater drainage, both on-site and off-site, are necessary for all development. Where existing on-site or off-site facilities are inadequate, the developer must provide all drainage improvements required by the proposed development. In some instances, correcting past drainage deficiencies may be the only way to properly develop an area. In those cases, developers may be required to improve on-site or off-site drainage conditions to remedy existing drainage problems if the proposed development would add to on-site or off-site drainage problems.

Guideline N-3 Provide adequate stormwater design and avoid significant modifications to natural stream channels so that:

a) water quality is preserved within the watershed and natural groundwater recharge areas;

b) natural or man-made filtration of sediment is provided through retention basins, traps, or secondary containment ponds;

c) natural systems are used or enhanced;

d) flooding is significantly reduced;

e) only minor impacts will occur to any wetlands or endangered species, and any such impact will be mitigated; and

f) best management practices will be followed during and after construction; and

g) spill prevention and response programs are included for any operations that involve potentially hazardous materials.

N-4 Noise.

Intent. To prevent health hazards and nuisances caused by locating noise-sensitive development in areas which already have excessive noise levels such as the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport and major freeway arteries.

Guideline N-4 Discourage noise-sensitive land uses in areas where accepted noise standards may be exceeded, unless adequate abatement measures are provided.

The most common noise-sensitive land uses are residences, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and churches. Noise-abatement measures include vegetative buffers, structural barriers, distance, and soundproofing of structures.

N-5 Historic Resource Preservation.

Intent. To preserve the community's heritage. Historically significant buildings, sites or districts are those listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office list, listed in the National Landmarks' records, or places which are locally significant and are designated under a city ordinance.

Guideline N-5 Preserve buildings, sites and districts that are recognized as having historic, cultural or architectural value.

N-6 Open Space Protection.

Intent. To maintain the open space, vegetation and wildlife resources in Portage for future generations. To preserve significant natural areas from negative impacts due to intense development.

In some cases, when publicly owned open space is the site for the location or expansion of a necessary community facility, utility, highway, land use,

etc., replacement in kind of the open space resource would be acceptable under this guideline. Privately owned open space, unique natural areas and significant environmental features such as natural stream corridors, which are of proven significance to the public may be preserved through public acquisition, conservation easements, or protection as private open space. In some cases, a buffer area may be needed to maintain the quality of these resources.

Guideline N-6: Protect wildlife and endangered species areas, wetlands, publicly owned parks, unique natural areas, and other areas with significant landscape features.

Transportation

T-1 Transportation Systems in General.

Intent. To ensure that all parcels proposed for development have access to established facilities for deliveries, service, maintenance, emergency vehicles and parking. To ensure that access points are adequate in number and design to prevent both on and off-site traffic congestion. To prevent discontinuous travel movements that would increase the length of trips, local trips on the thoroughfare system, public facility costs, travel costs, energy costs and air pollution.

Guideline T-1 Provide adequate access to, from and through all development for the proper functioning of the streets, walkways, bikeways and transit systems and for emergency vehicles by linking the interior roadway, walkway, bikeway and transit systems with systems already built or planned in the surrounding area.

T-2 Street Design.

Intent. To ensure streets are constructed with adequate pavement materials, width, grade, and curvature to accommodate existing and anticipated vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle movements and the mix of vehicle types. To ensure that public expenditures are not necessary in the immediate future to correct deficiencies that could be reasonably anticipated at the time of initial development. To ensure that the internal circulation system of a development is designed to separate motor vehicle and pedestrian conflicts as needed and to provide continuous roadway, walkway and bikeway systems. To ensure street design is appropriate for the character of the development in terms of design, speed, streetscape, and protection of natural features.

Guideline T-2 Streets should be designed for use by all modes of travel and in consideration of the desired character of the project and surrounding environment.

T-3 Access Management.

Intent. To preserve the traffic carrying capability of the streets and promote safety. To promote reasonable through, not always direct access to

properties. To promote shared access among property whenever possible.

Where property access on major arterials by way of local roads or frontage roads is impractical, appropriate design measures should be taken to control the frequency and manner of access such as driveway entrances, turnaround driveways, rear access to the property or right-in/right-out driveway entrances.

Guideline T-3 Preserve the through traffic capacity of the thoroughfare system by:

a) providing reasonable access to abutting property.

b) placing access points a sufficient distance from interchange ramps, intersections, and other driveways as noted in **Chapter 3**;

c) using, to the extent possible, local streets, frontage roads, rear service drives, or other types of shared access for access to property along arterials;

d) providing improvements at access locations to minimize negative impacts on traffic flow and safety such as turning lanes, deceleration lanes or traffic signals when warranted.

T-4 Non Motorized Travel.

Intent. To encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel as an alternative to the private automobile between closely related land uses in the neighborhood. To improve pedestrian access to public transit routes from places of residence and employment in order to encourage the use of public transit as an alternative to the car. To encourage the provision of walkways between retail facilities and major concentrations of pedestrian activity. To reduce major conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian movements for improved safety.

Guideline T-4: Provide for non-motorized travel through the provision of:

a) walkways/sidewalks and clear pedestrian routes throughout all types of projects

b) walkways/bikeways from residential areas to recreation areas, schools, and nearby shopping facilities;

c) walkways for access to transit stops;

d) walkways where heavy pedestrian movements may be anticipated between land uses;

e) pedestrian overpasses/underpasses when street closings are impractical and vehicular and pedestrian volumes warrant such separation;

f) bicycle storage facilities at major bicycle destinations such as parks, shopping centers and schools; and

g) walkways through expressway interchange areas where appropriate.

T-5 Right-of-Way Preservation.

Intent. To ensure adequate rights-of-way for streets and walkways are

required or used by the proposed development and that pass through or abut the development to maintain system continuity. The developer may be required to dedicate rights-of-way and/or easements for street, bikeway and walkway facilities within or abutting the development as set forth in the subdivision and other land use regulations and the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Guideline T-5 Provide adequate rights-of-way and/or easements to accommodate required and anticipated roadway, walkway and bikeway improvements, utilities and landscaping through dedication.

T-6 Parking.

Intent. To ensure that off-street parking and loading facilities are adequate in quantity and design for efficient and safe traffic movement on public streets to and from the site and within the site. To vary parking and loading requirements with the type and intensity of land use, the type of access to the site and the characteristics of the users.

The amount of off-street parking should be adequate to accommodate peak hour volumes by the automobile. If it can be demonstrated that a portion of the residents, clients or employees use other types of transportation than the automobile or that parking can be shared with adjacent uses, off-street parking requirements may be reduced. Off-street parking should be convenient (but not excessive) and not separated by heavy traffic volumes from the principal use.

Guideline T-6 Provide off-street parking and loading of sufficient quantity and adequate design for the type and intensity of development.

Municipal Facilities & Services

M-1 Sound Fiscal Growth.

Intent. To guarantee that new growth can be accommodated and does not result in an undue financial burden on the community.

Guideline M-1: Ensure that public infrastructure expenditures are adequate for future growth.

M-2 Sanitary Sewer.

Intent. To prevent health hazards due to contamination of ground and surface waters. To achieve and maintain water quality standards.

Adequate treatment and disposal of sewage wastes should be achieved through connection to the public sewer system. If public sanitary sewers are available, development must connect to the public sanitary sewer system. On-site sewage treatment systems may be approved for low intensity uses in areas where public sanitary sewers are not anticipated within the next ten years and in areas where environmentally sensitive lands do not exist.

Guideline M-2: Provide that all development has adequate means of sewage treatment and disposal to protect public health and protect water quality in lakes, streams, and water table. All future developments must be connected to the public sewer system.

M-3 Underground Utilities.

Intent. To improve the compatibility of traditional overhead utilities with surrounding land uses by placing them underground. This should be practical in new developments regardless of use and planned industrial, office and commercial areas. Exceptions may be appropriate for infill development on small lots.

Guideline M-3 Require all new development to locate electric and telecommunications utilities underground.

M-4 Utility Installation and Wireless Communication Towers.

Intent. To ensure that utility installations are compatible with surrounding land uses. To include proper design measures in utility installations to reduce visual intrusion, odor, air pollution, noise, vibration, through traffic, siltation, erosion and disruption of drainage facilities. To facilitate the flow of automobile and truck traffic generated by large-scale utility facilities. To protect residential neighborhoods from increased volumes of through traffic, siltation, erosion, and flooding. For purposes of this guideline, "utility installations" are:

- power generation plants and electric substations,
- natural gas processing and storage facilities and pumping substations (above six feet in height),
- sewage pumping stations (above six feet in height),
- water treatment plants, water storage tanks and pumping stations (above six feet in height),
- telecommunications main switching facilities and substations, but exclude overhead and underground transmission lines, and
- wireless communication towers.

Guideline M-4 Take all feasible measures to prevent utility installations from creating nuisances to the surrounding area. Where location within a residential area is the only practical one, landscaping and site design should be used to improve compatibility. Wireless communication facilities should utilize public land or locations where their visual impact can be reduced, sufficiently spaced from residential areas.

M-5 Public Facilities in General.

Intent. To ensure that community facilities and services are provided in a manner that satisfies area-specific and community-wide needs. To ensure that facility sites are located and designed to be physically accessible to their intended users.

Guideline M-5: Locate or expand community facilities:

a) in areas with a demonstrated need for the facility;

b) to avoid duplication of services;

c) with convenient access to the area that the facility is intended to serve;

d) where access into and within the facility is provided for elderly and handicapped persons;

e) to improve response times and public safety;

f) with design sensitivity to surrounding land uses and the environment;

g) locate, where possible, on a shared site with compatible public uses or facilities;

h) larger facilities should be located in the City Centre or along arterial streets; and

i) reuse of existing buildings should be considered as an alternative to new construction.

M-6 Regional Cooperation.

Intent. To ensure the compatibility between existing and proposed uses on the boundaries of the City of Portage. To establish a mechanism for referral between abutting planning jurisdictions when major development projects with significant impacts (such as traffic) on other jurisdictions are being reviewed for approval. To coordinate area-wide transportation issues with the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study and other area-wide infrastructure issues through appropriate regional forums.

Guideline M-6 Coordinate the review of major developments and major infrastructure investments that have major regional impacts or significant impacts on abutting jurisdictions.