



# CITY OF ST. CLAIR MASTER PLAN

**DRAFT**

ADOPTED: JANUARY \_\_, 2021



## **St. Clair Mayor and City Council**

Bill Cedar - Mayor  
Butch Kindsvater and Mitch Kuffa (Ward 1)  
Mike LaPorte and Tom McCartney (Ward 2)  
Steve Ellery and Jon Watt (Ward 3)

## **City of St. Clair Planning Commission**

Terry Beier, Chairperson  
Nancy Beaudua  
Steve Grates  
Matthew Griffor  
Mike Laporte, Council Representative  
Daniel McCartney  
Paul Wade

## **City Administration**

Warren Rothe, City Superintendent  
Annette Sturdy, City Clerk

Developed with Assistance from the  
St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission  
200 Grand River Avenue, Suite 202  
Port Huron, MI 48060

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction/Community Context .....</b>	<b>Page 1-1</b>
Overview .....	1-2
Why Plan?.....	1-3
What Does the Plan Contain? .....	1-3
How to Use this Plan.....	1-4
Stakeholder Engagement .....	1-5
Regional Context .....	1-9
Population Trends.....	1-12
Economic Overview .....	1-14
Geographic Characteristics .....	1-25
Public Facilities and Services .....	1-29
St. Clair County Master Plan.....	1-34
<b>Chapter 2: Land Use .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
Existing Land Use and Community Assets .....	2-2
Future Land Use Plan.....	2-6
<b>Chapter 3: Community Prosperity.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
Introduction .....	3-2
Placemaking .....	3-4
First Impressions Tourism Assessment.....	3-4
An Active Healthy Community .....	3-5
COVID-19 Pandemic .....	3-6
Evolving the City – Community Prosperity Goals .....	3-7
Placemaking Goals .....	3-8
<b>Chapter 4: Transportation &amp; Mobility.....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
Introduction .....	4-2
Regional Transportation Overview .....	4-2
Road Network in St. Clair .....	4-3
Traffic Volume.....	4-5
Traffic Crash Assessment.....	4-7
Key Corridors in St. Clair .....	4-7

Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) .....	4-9
Non-Motorized Transportation.....	4-10
Complete Streets .....	4-10
Trails and Greenways .....	4-12
Proposed Trails and Connectors.....	4-13
Airports.....	4-15
Rail and Water Freight.....	4-15
Future Transportation Needs and Trends.....	4-15
Transportation and Mobility Goals .....	4-17

**Chapter 5: Parks, Recreation, History & Culture ..... 5-2**

Introduction .....	5-2
Recreation Programming .....	5-4
Culture and History .....	5-5
Trails and Greenways .....	5-5
The Blueways of St. Clair .....	5-5
Parks, Recreation, History and Culture Goals .....	5-7
Strategic Action Program: Parks, Recreation, History and Culture.....	5-10

**Chapter 6: City Services & Leadership..... 6-1**

Introduction .....	6-2
City Services and Capital Improvements .....	6-2
City Administration .....	6-2
Police Department .....	6-2
Department of Public Services .....	6-4
St. Clair Boat Harbor.....	6-4
Pine Shores Golf Course.....	6-5
Recreation Department.....	6-5
Long Range Capital Improvements .....	6-6
City Services and Leadership Goals .....	6-6

**Chapter 7: Zoning Plan..... 7-1**

Introduction .....	7-2
Zoning Plan Defined .....	7-2

Relationship to the St. Clair Master Plan ..... 7-3  
Zoning District Standards ..... 7-3  
Relationship between Zoning and the Future Land Use Plan.....7-10  
Recommended Zoning Text Actions .....7-10  
Recommended Zoning Map Changes..... 7-11

**Chapter 8: Implementation ..... 8-1**

Master Plan Review and Amendments ..... 8-2  
Master Plan Implementation Tools.....8-2  
Implementation Matrix..... 8-10

*This page intentionally left blank.*



**DRAFT**

# **1. INTRODUCTION/ COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT



## IDENTITY:

The City of St. Clair is a charming community characterized by its historic downtown and welcoming small town atmosphere. History is infused throughout the city in the downtown and the adjacent St. Clair River, and it is often recognized for its unique features and landmarks.

Often the perception of community identity and feel of a city are the reason people choose places to live and spend their time. A sense of community is characterized by an emotional connection to a place and its residents. Where a sense of community exists, residents value their connection to the area, care about the city's well-being and its people, and are invested in its future.

## OVERVIEW

St. Clair, Michigan has been claimed by many different groups of people, and has gone through many changes, before becoming the city it is now. It is a vibrant, small city featuring a full array of amenities that provide a picturesque and idyllic location on the St. Clair River offering once-in-a-lifetime views of the river and surrounding landscape.

With the adoption of the 2012 City of St. Clair Master Plan eight years ago, the City has experienced numerous changes since the previous plan. This plan seeks to continue this critical momentum heading into the future by articulating a vision for growth and the preservation of community character.

Once adopted, the master plan becomes the official policy document for the City of St. Clair and the planning commission to guide land use decisions. It is not only a vision statement towards future development of growth areas and the preservation of character, but also a document that allows continuity in development policies as the city changes and evolves over the years.

## WHY PLAN?

Municipalities have a vested interest in developing master plans. The master planning process provides an opportunity for municipalities to develop an overall vision for the next 20 years and to conduct a comprehensive review of their facilities and services. A successful plan also contributes to the public understanding of the planning process and describes how its goals are to be achieved.

The master plan is a policy framework for decisions that affect the physical, social and economic environment of the city. The plan represents goals and strategies to guide the future of St. Clair. It provides vision, direction and a defined, achievable future for St. Clair by establishing specific goals and strategies for land use, community appearance and design, housing and neighborhoods, jobs and economic vitality, transportation, public services and facilities, natural resource protection, open space and recreation, arts and culture, and regional coordination.

## WHAT DOES THE PLAN CONTAIN?

The St. Clair Master Plan begins with an overview of St. Clair's current state of affairs, including the social, economic and physical characteristics of the community as well as a description of the planning process and public engagement process used to develop the plan. The plan outlines the community vision, goals, policies as well as the planning priorities by each of the following five themes:

- ◆ Regional Context
- ◆ Community Prosperity
- ◆ Transportation and Mobility
- ◆ Parks, Recreation, History and Culture
- ◆ City Services and Leadership



# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The master plan is a long-range statement of general goals and policies aimed to unify land preservation and coordinate development of the city. It is a leading policy tool that provides the framework to guide the City in evaluating its present conditions and developing a shared community vision for the future. More specifically, the master plan is to be used in the following ways:

- ◆ To be a broad and flexible document that changes to meet the community's needs, conditions and direction of change. It can be amended and updated through City-initiated amendments or through citizen/ landowner initiated amendments.
- ◆ As a guide to shape the City of St. Clair. The goals and policies outlined in the plan guide City bodies in their deliberations on zoning, development proposals, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development.
- ◆ To provide direction in daily decision-making with regard to development and referenced to justify actions, as needed. Following the goals and strategies are intended to help solve current and future issues and needs, as well as determine all land use decisions by the goals and strategies outlined in the plan.
- ◆ As a long-range guide for community development and regulations that shape the physical and social development of the city, taking into consideration existing development and reflecting the planned use of land. The master plan and zoning map are intended to be in reasonable harmony; however, zoning is not a substitute for the master plan. The plan should not depict a new zoning district map; however, it is likely that future zoning districts will take the shape of the plan as rezoning requests are received and reviewed by the community.
- ◆ To coordinate public improvements and private development supported by the capital improvements plan, resulting in the greatest benefit to the city and its residents.
- ◆ To serve as an educational tool and gives citizens, property owners, developers and adjacent communities a clear indication of the city's direction for the future.
- ◆ To aid public understanding and participation in the planning process, help and encourage citizens and local leaders to work together more efficiently when guiding future growth and development.

St. Clair's first Community Comprehensive Master Plan was completed in 1965. It included an economic development program, a parks and recreation plan, a central business district plan, a six-year capital improvement program, and a land use plan. The 1987 update to the plan addressed issues such as future commercial expansion, industrial growth and anticipated single-family and multi-family residential development. The 1994 master plan update included a waterfront development plan, an industrial development plan and a capital improvement plan, along with the results from a citizen survey.

Michigan legislation requires a planning commission create and approve a master plan as a guide for development that reflects a community's desired direction for the future. The City's current master plan was adopted in 2012 and the City commenced its review process and began preparing for an update in 2018.

The City is going through the Redevelopment Ready Certified Community (RRC) process which positions it for an improved plan through the use of more effective redevelopment strategies and best practices. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 outlines the legal requirements of a master plan and the RRC program offers recommendations specific to a community's future development and redevelopment desires. for a more streamlined process.

The Zoning Plan and Implementation chapters provide the strategies by which this master plan can be achieved. There is an implementation matrix at the end of the document that identifies a number of strategies

or initiatives in which the City could engage during the five-year planning period.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Public input was essential for the development of the St. Clair Master Plan. The process kicked off with a community leadership survey, which was distributed to elected officials, planning commissioners, zoning board of appeals members, and member of other board and commissions in the City. The City also hosted a community visioning open house on October 3, 2019 to provide citizens with an opportunity to share their concerns and their ideas on the type of community they envision St. Clair to be in the future.

### Summary of Input from the Community Leadership Survey

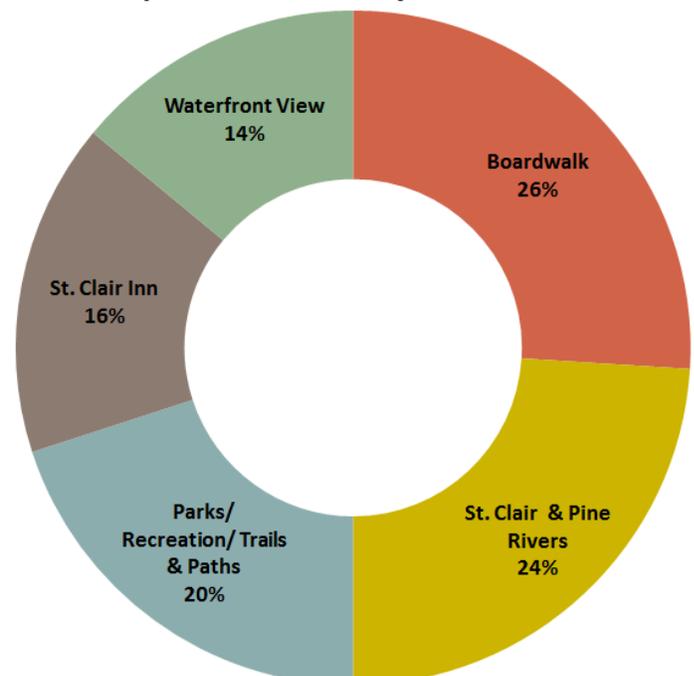
- ◆ The St. Clair River waterfront and the City Boardwalk are major assets for the community and help make St. Clair a unique place.
- ◆ Key issues or concerns for the City included:
  - ⇒ The need to create more foot traffic downtown.
  - ⇒ Besides the St. Clair Inn, St. Clair needs to improve its mix of businesses and retail variety.
  - ⇒ Keeping Downtown St. Clair up-to-date and continuing to enhance Riverview Plaza.
  - ⇒ Ongoing infrastructure maintenance: roads, water, and sewer.
  - ⇒ Improving the parking lot at Riverview Plaza.
  - ⇒ The need for safe pedestrian crossings on M-29 in Downtown St. Clair.
  - ⇒ The need for development in the St. Clair Industrial Park.
  - ⇒ Redeveloping obsolete properties, such as the closed school buildings.
  - ⇒ Need to make gateways into town more attractive.
  - ⇒ Continuous need to improved road conditions.
  - ⇒ Neighboring towns are drawing St. Clair residents to their restaurants, theaters, and businesses.
- ◆ The City should explore further collaboration and coordination with neighboring communities for recreation programs and community events.
- ◆ The community needs to coordinate with existing businesses to leverage the newly redeveloped St. Clair Inn.
- ◆ Recreation, bike trails, and walkability are important for supporting tourism and maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

### Summary of Input from the Community Visioning Open House

#### What Makes St. Clair Great?

- ◆ The revitalized court yard at the plaza.
- ◆ It is a small, beautiful community.
- ◆ The Boardwalk and the waterfront.
- ◆ It is a walkable community, but could use improvement.
- ◆ Strong community voluntarism.
- ◆ The Boat Harbor and kayak launch.
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ Strong sense of home.
- ◆ Small businesses.
- ◆ It is a safe community.

**Top Assets in the City of St. Clair**







## What's next for the City of St. Clair?



### Who Should Attend:

The City is updating its Master Plan and this is your opportunity to have a say in the growth and development of your community. Business owners, elected officials, organizations, educators and residents are encouraged to attend.

## Community Visioning Workshop

October 3rd, 5:30-7:30PM

St. Clair City Hall

## City of St. Clair Master Plan

### Cost:

- This event is free.
- Light refreshments will be served.

### Questions/Comments:

- Metropolitan Planning Commission  
810-989-6950

Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting the City at 810- 328-7121 within two weeks of the event to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be fulfilled when possible.





## REGIONAL CONTEXT

In planning for the future of any community, it is essential to understand both the community of people who live there and the physical resources which the community has to offer. Identifying the needs of St. Clair's residents, property owners, and businesses will help define an appropriate action plan. Existing resources will help shape where and how the plan is implemented. The purpose of the following section of the master plan is to provide an overview of the human and physical resources within St. Clair with a goal of understanding the unique features and opportunities the city has to offer.

### Location

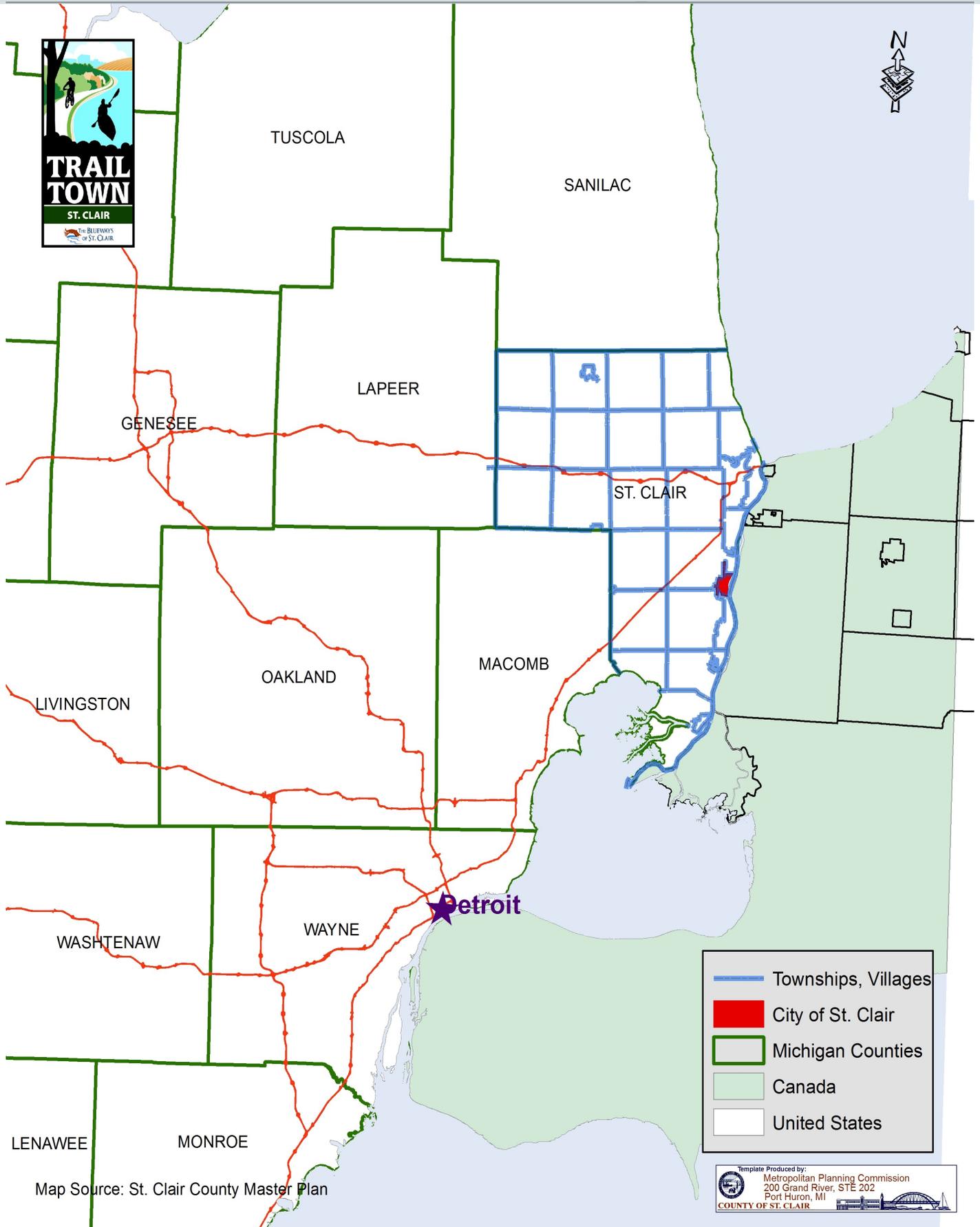
Located in the southeast portion of St. Clair County, directly across from Canada, the City of St. Clair has a land area of 2.8 square miles and is situated along the convergence of the St. Clair River and the Pine River. Situated at the outlet of the Pine River into the larger Saint Clair River, makes this an ideal riverfront setting. The St. Clair River is an eleven-mile "strait" that flows south from Lake Huron to Lake Saint Clair, eventually linking south to the Detroit River and Lake Erie.

The City of St. Clair lies within the southeast portion of St. Clair Township, forming the city's northwestern border. To the southwest, St. Clair is bordered by China and East China townships and to the east, the city abuts the St. Clair River.

The City of St. Clair has always been linked to the fresh waters that inspired its growth and have maintained its quality of life. The St. Clair River has played a significant role in the development of both the city and the county. Bordering the St. Clair River, the city benefits economically from its riverfront setting, and attached housing choices along the Pine River, not to mention the number of households and boating enthusiasts drawn to the municipal marina. With a swelling summer population due to tourism, the city has an advantageous opportunity to attract even more visitors by building upon its assets.



# MAP 1-1: REGIONAL LOCATION



## History of St. Clair

In 1815, the first recorded settlement in the area around St. Clair was established in East China Township. The Village of St. Clair was incorporated in 1850 and the city was officially founded in 1858. The St. Clair River played a significant role in the city and much of the community's history and very existence can be traced to how the river contributed to the settlement, growth and development of St. Clair. Early settlers used the river as a means of transportation to and from the settlement. The sawmill industry began to flourish due to the area's large supply of pine and oak. Clay from the Pine River's banks provided the material for several brickyards that operated into the twentieth century.

Shipbuilding began in the 1820's and continued for a hundred years. Many of the town's men became sailors on the Great Lakes and numerous captains built homes in the city. During these early years of the city, ship building was a major source of employment. With the construction and repair of vessels to transport people and products, St. Clair prospered through its use of the St. Clair River for waterborne commerce. However, by the 1920's and 30's, the increased reliance on rail and automobiles and changing economic needs caused a shift away from the St. Clair River's use for water transportation. In 1887, the Diamond Crystal Salt Company began tapping the area's vast underground salt deposits. Salt products and plastics became and remain the City's major employment source of tax revenue. Although the St. Clair River is no longer a major source of local transportation and industry, it remains an important asset for its water related recreation and tourism potential.



# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

## POPULATION TRENDS

Growth and change within a community are directly related to population and land use patterns. The identification of trends in population growth and other demographic data is an essential part of the master planning process. Whether a community's population has experienced growth or decline, identifying any patterns provide the ability to influence land use decisions and provide clues to future growth patterns. An aspect of planning for the future of a community requires an understanding of its population characteristics. These are such aspects like whether residents value their connection to the area, care about the city's well-being and its people, and are invested in the future.

Total population is the number of people who consider the area their primary residence. It does not include persons who are here temporarily, unless they consider this area their primary residence and it does not include incarcerated individuals. The City of St. Clair has a total population of approximately 5,520 residents according to the SEMCOG estimates for July of 2019. The City's population grew in some shape or form throughout each decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The years between 1970 and 1980 experienced the least growth; and, at a rate of 0.21%, was the only decade to grow at a rate of less than 1% within the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The decades having the most significant growth during the 20<sup>th</sup> century were during the years of 1910 through 1920 (21.7%) and 1940 to 1950 (18.1%).

The last notable increase the city experienced was at the turn of the century when it added nearly 690 people to the 5,116 residents reported in the 1990 Census. Swelling by 13.4%, the city's population, reported at 5,802 people in the year 2000, was the largest recorded population among both historical records and forecasted projections, (depicted in Figure 1) Between 2000 and 2010, the city lost almost half of what it gained the previous decade when the population shrunk by about 320 people, or -5.5%. St. Clair The city experienced

## 2019 POPULATION

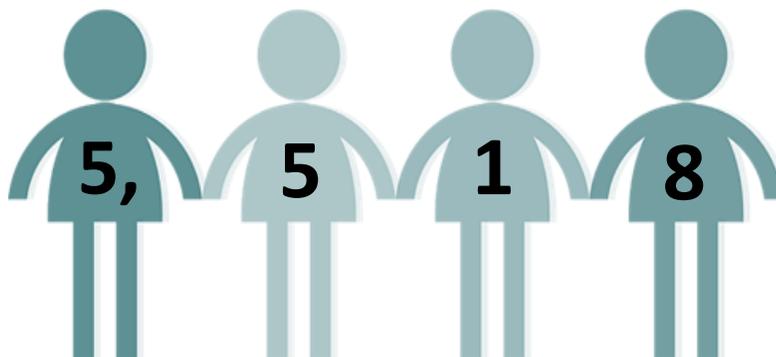
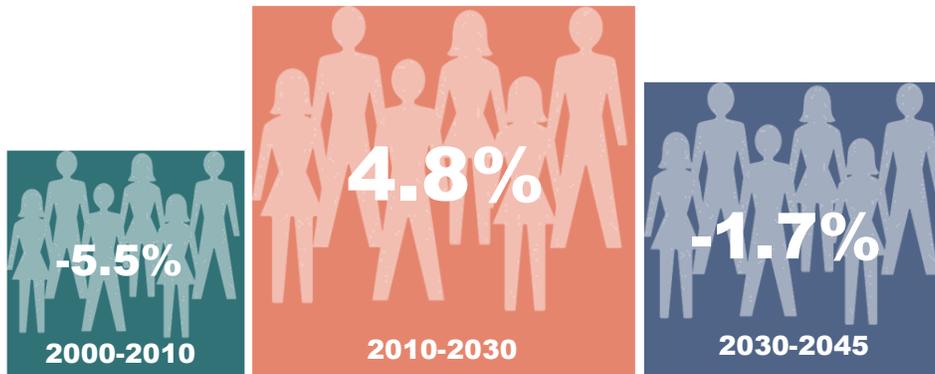
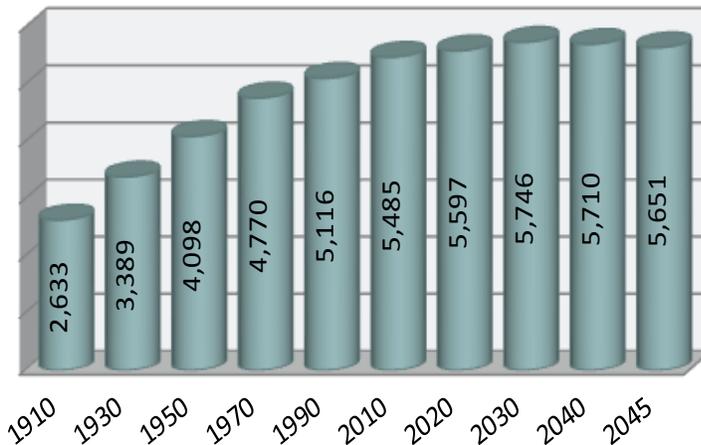


CHART 1-1: HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION



minimal growth over the past decade, and according to the SEMCOG 2045 Forecast, is expected to continue growing at a minimal rate for the next decade, for an total anticipated growth of 4.8% during the span of 2010 to 2030. Looking further out, from 2030 to 2045, future modeling expects the count to level off again and begin to slowly decline over the following 15 years. This is illustrated in both Chart 1 and Table 1-1.

## Aging Population

The more significant aspect of population change from 2000 on is the rapid aging of the city's population. While the median age seems relatively low at 42.2, it is an entire five years older than 37.2, the median age reported by census data in 2000. Table 1-2 shows changes among key age groups in both the city and the county. Like most communities in America, the population is aging. The aging of the baby boom generation, accompanied by increases in life expectancy is a trend occurring both locally and nationally. There are over 900 residents currently over the age of 65 in the city, this equates to nearly one in six residents being age 65 or older.

SEMCOG's Regional Development Forecast provides population projections by age group (depicted in Table 1-2). From 2015 to 2045, the 85 and over age group is expected to more than triple (202.2%), which is nearly 54 times the projected 30-year growth rate for the total population (3.74%). With the exception of the second oldest aged bracket, the 65 to 84 age group, who are anticipated to increase by 47.2%, the remaining younger age groups are all likely to see a decrease in population. Throughout the fifteen year prediction period, the 25 to 54 year old residents have continually encompassed the largest portioned age group within the city.

Though this group is not experiencing the highest growth rate, it is expected to remain the largest share of their population in its entirety. With an estimate of 2,105 individuals by 2045, 25 to 54 year old residents are predicted to comprise 37% of the city's total population. However, if the three oldest age groups (55 and over) were combined, their population estimates would be nearly the same to the individual estimate of the 25 to 54 year old group. At 37.9% of the city's total population, the population 55 and older is expected to represent a slightly greater portion than the 25 to 54 age, with an estimated count of 4,750 individuals by 2045.

**TABLE 1-1: POPULATION ACROSS ALL AGE GROUPS**

	2010	Percent Total	2018	Percent Total	Percent Change
City of St. Clair 0-19	1,427	26.0%	1,218	22.4%	-14.6%
St. Clair County 0-19	42,876	26.3%	37,402	23.2%	-12.8%
City of St. Clair 20-39	1,141	20.8%	1,261	23.2%	10.5%
St. Clair County 20-39	35,567	21.8%	36,753	22.8%	3.3%
City of St. Clair 40-59	1,734	31.6%	1,495	27.5%	-13.8%
St. Clair County 40-59	50,856	31.2%	45,859	28.5%	-9.8%
City of St. Clair 60-79	908	16.6%	1,187	21.8%	30.7%
St. Clair County 60-79	27,146	16.6%	34,475	21.4%	27.0%
City of St. Clair 80+	275	5.0%	278	5.1%	1.1%
St. Clair County 80+	6,595	4.0%	6,632	4.1%	0.6%
City of St. Clair Total	5,485	100.0%	5,439	100.0%	-0.8%
St. Clair County Total	163,040	100.0%	161,121	100.0%	-1.2%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

**TABLE 1-2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP**

Age Group	2015	2025	2035	2045	Percent Change 2015-2045
Age 0 to 4	283	320	297	258	-8.83%
Age 5 to 17	886	742	840	798	-9.93%
Age 18 to 24	376	373	309	369	-1.86%
Age 25 to 54	2,184	2,093	2,131	2,104	-3.66%
Age 55 to 64	828	840	617	621	-25.00%
Age 65 to 84	833	1,295	1,422	1,226	47.18%
Age 85+	91	107	149	275	202.20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,481</b>	<b>5,770</b>	<b>5,765</b>	<b>5,651</b>	<b>3.10%</b>

SOURCE: Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments 2045 Forecast

## Need for Replacement Workers

Those St. Clair residents aged 65 and older are anticipated to increase more than one half (64%) by 2045, while the number of working age people under age 65 will shrink by nearly ten percent (-9.8%). The economic effects of this demographic change include a slowing of the growth of the labor force, an increase in the demand for healthcare services, and an increase in the percent of the federal budget dedicated to Social Security and Medicare. Baby boomers are expecting to work longer than previous generations. An increasing proportion of people in their early to mid-50s expect to work full-time after age 65.

As aging baby-boomers begin retiring, the effects on certain occupations and industries, as well as on the overall economy will be substantial, creating a need for younger workers to fill the vacated jobs. Add the fact that many of these jobs will require relatively high levels of skill, the need for workers to replace retiring baby boomers will outpace job growth. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, net replacement needs will be 33.7 million job openings over the 2010-2020 period, compared with growth in employment of 21.1 million jobs. The occupations with the greatest need for replacement workers includes: retail sales, food service, registered nurses, office workers and teachers. these jobs will require relatively high levels of skill, the need for workers to replace retiring baby boomers will outpace job growth. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, net replacement needs will be 33.7 million job openings over the 2010-2020 period, compared with growth in employment of 21.1 million jobs. The occupations with the greatest need for replacement workers includes: retail sales, food service, registered nurses, office workers and teachers.

## ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

### Labor Force

The labor force is the total number of all people (16 years or older) living in the area who are willing and able to work. This takes into account the sum of both the employed (people currently working) and unemployed (people actively seeking work). Therefore, changes in both employment and unemployment can affect the labor force. As of the 2018 American Community Survey, over 65% of St. Clair's residents aged 16 years or older were in the workforce. Of these, nearly 95% (2,682 residents) were currently employed and about 150 residents or 5.3% were unemployed, but actively seeking work. Individuals who are unemployed and are no longer actively seeking work are considered discouraged workers and are not included in the labor force estimates.

St. Clair is a job generator as during the day, the city welcomes a population of 2,601 workers, but only 535 of these jobs just shy of 21% are held by those who work and live in the city. A total of 2,147 St. Clair residents are then employed elsewhere, working outside of the city limits. This reveals an influx of 2,066 workers into the city who reside outside St. Clair city limits. These non-resident workers make up nearly 80 % of the city’s employed population. An increasing labor force would appear to indicate a growing economy; however, it must result from an increasing employment. An increase in the labor force without a subsequent increase in employment could be the result of discouraged workers reentering the labor force or it could be due to increasing unemployment, resulting in the population growth occurring at a faster pace than the economy’s expansion and ability to provide jobs for new workforce entrants. an accommodate.

## Employment

Employment is a reliable gauge of the economic situation of workers living in an area. Increasing employment means more jobs for workers, and workers have an easier time finding work. Between 2012 and 2018, St. Clair’s total employment has experienced consistent growth, from 2,265 workers in 2012 to 2,682 workers in 2018. During this span, the percent of employed workers within the labor force grew from 87.4% in 2012 to 94.7% in 2018, an 18.4% increase in overall employment. With their labor force and employment rate experiencing growth in unison, this signifies St. Clair’s economy is indeed growing at a healthy pace of increasing employment.

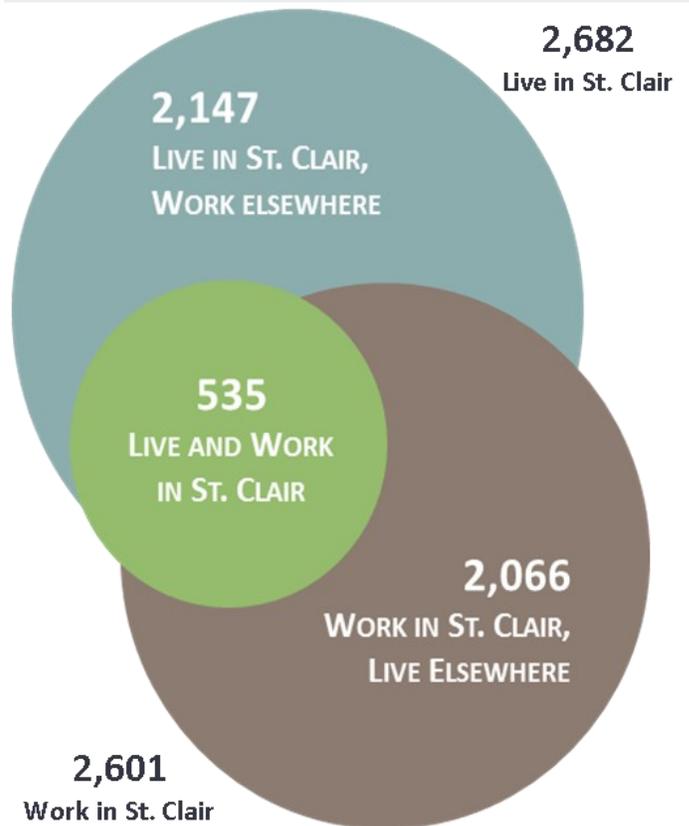
## Unemployment

The unemployment rate is also affected by labor force shifts. Unemployment is the estimated number of people who are actively seeking work, are not working at least one hour per week for pay, and who are not self-employed. Unemployment is another dependable measure of economic health and can also indicate a change in potentially qualified workers available in the community. As unemployment falls, employers tend to have a more difficult time attracting qualified employees at the same rates of pay. As both St. Clair’s workforce and employment levels experienced steady growth since the 2012 comprehensive plan, the unemployment levels have experienced a steady decline during the same period. Likely still recovering from the recession, St. Clair’s unemployment was approximately 330, a rate of 12.6% in 2012. This number consistently decreased over the years and has shrunk by over one half for a total of 149 unemployed workers in 2018, a rate of 5.3%. As of the 2018 American Community Survey, over 65% of St. Clair’s residents aged 16 years or older were in the workforce. Of these, nearly 95% (2,682 residents) were currently employed and about 150 residents or 5.3% were unemployed, but actively seeking work.

## Employment By Industry

While the city’s workforce has steadily increased overall since the 2012 comprehensive plan, changes among the numerous sectors have varied. Illustrated in Table 1-3, are the top three industries of employment among St. Clair workers during 2012 and 2015. Just below are listed the leading industries with reported employment

FIGURE 2: INFLOW/OUTFLOW OF WORKERS, 2018



# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

in St. Clair during 2018, ranked in order from the industry employing the largest to the smallest percentage of workers within the city. When combined, the three leading sectors of 2018, educational services and health care, manufacturing and construction industries, employ nearly 60% of the city's workforce.

The city's leading occupation falls within the educational services and health care industry. This industry employs over one-quarter, nearly 30% (28.5%) of St. Clair residents. Since 2012, the educational services and health care industry has consistently remained the city's leading industry, providing the most employment opportunities. Additionally, the manufacturing industry has steadily remained the second highest industry supplier of jobs during that same time span. These two industries account for nearly half of all city jobs, comprising anywhere between 43% and 47% during the years since the previous adoption of the master plan in 2012.

However, we see much more variation when looking at the industries following these top two leaders. Retail trade has been a pretty consistent industry, contributing significantly to the workforce over the years, always ranking in the top third to fifth employers and growing nearly 40% (39%) from 2012 to 2018.

The arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation services is another strong industry, also ranking within the top third to fifth employers. Although it is currently ranked the fifth largest, at 234 workers employed, this number has increased by more than half, (53.6%) from the 151 workers reported in 2012.

Another industry that stands out is the construction industry. While it never ranked in the top five until it began growing in 2015 and has nearly tripled (183% increase) in employment by 2018, earning it the top third highest ranking employer for the past couple of years. The final industry worth following is the professional, scientific and management industry which ranked third in 2012, then fell to the fourth and then the fifth in the following two years, and has continued to lose employment since, for a nearly 80% (78%) loss from the 273 workers employed in 2012 to the most recent count of 60

**TABLE 1-3: PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**

2012 LEADING INDUSTRIES	
30%	EDUCATION SERVICES/ HEALTH CARE
17%	MANUFACTURING
12%	PROFESSIONAL / SCIENTIFIC / MANAGEMENT
2015 LEADING INDUSTRIES	
24%	EDUCATION SERVICES / HEALTH CARE
18%	MANUFACTURING
10%	ARTS / ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION / ACCOMMODATION
2018 WORKERS EMPLOYED PER INDUSTRY	
28.5%	EDUCATION SERVICES / HEALTH CARE
17.9%	MANUFACTURING
12.3%	CONSTRUCTION
10.9%	RETAIL TRADE
8.7%	ARTS / ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION / ACCOMMODATION
6.3%	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
3.5%	TRANSPORTATION / UTILITIES
3.5%	FINANCE / INSURANCE / REAL ESTATE
3.5%	OTHER SERVICES
2.2%	PROFESSIONAL / SCIENTIFIC / MANAGEMENT
1.4%	AGRICULTURE / MINING
0.8%	WHOLESALE TRADE
0.6%	INFORMATION

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

workers in 2018. This is one of only three industries, to experience an overall loss from 2012 to 2018 and by far the largest loss.

This is another reason why employment by industry is an important indicator to understanding the industries that are driving the local economy. If too many jobs are concentrated in one sector, a downturn in that sector

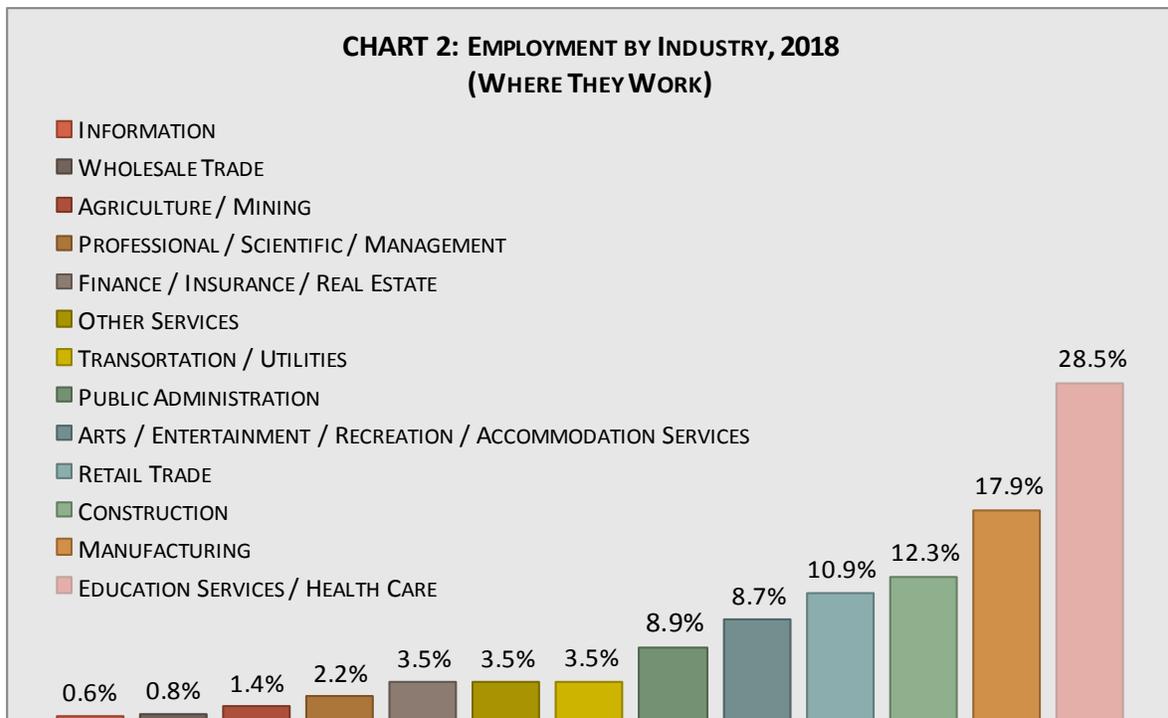
**TABLE 1-4: TOP THREE DECLINING INDUSTRIES, 2012-2018**

Industry	2012-2018 Percent Change
Professional, Scientific & Administrative & Waste Management	-213.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	-37.0%
Wholesale Trade	-11.0%

**TABLE 1-5: TOP FIVE GROWING INDUSTRIES, 2012-2018**

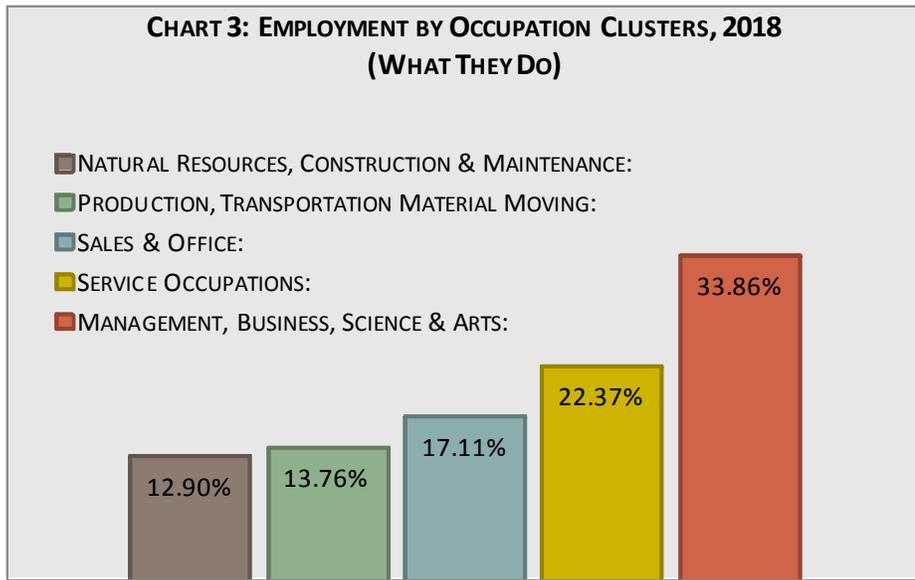
Industry	2012-2018 Percent Change
Construction	214.0%
Manufacturing	98.0%
Education Services & Health Care & Social Assistance	84.0%
Retail Trade	82.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Accommodation & Food Services	81.0%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT



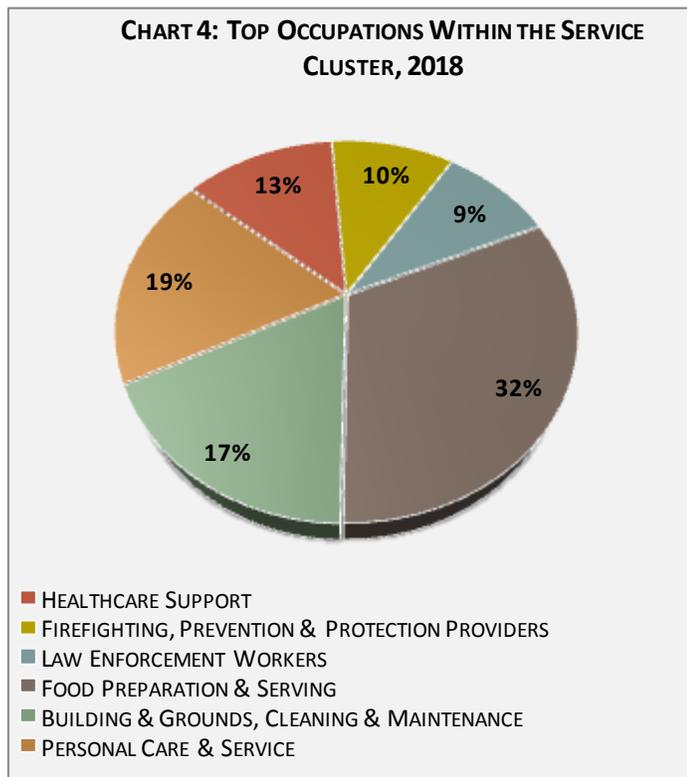
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

could easily and rapidly weaken the economy. In addition, jobs by industry is a valuable indicator for business and government planning, allowing for a better understanding of which sectors are the major generators of jobs in the area. The city has a relatively diverse make up of jobs based on industry, but as previously mentioned, by far, the largest sector is the education services and health care. Two out of every seven jobs in the city are within this industry sector.

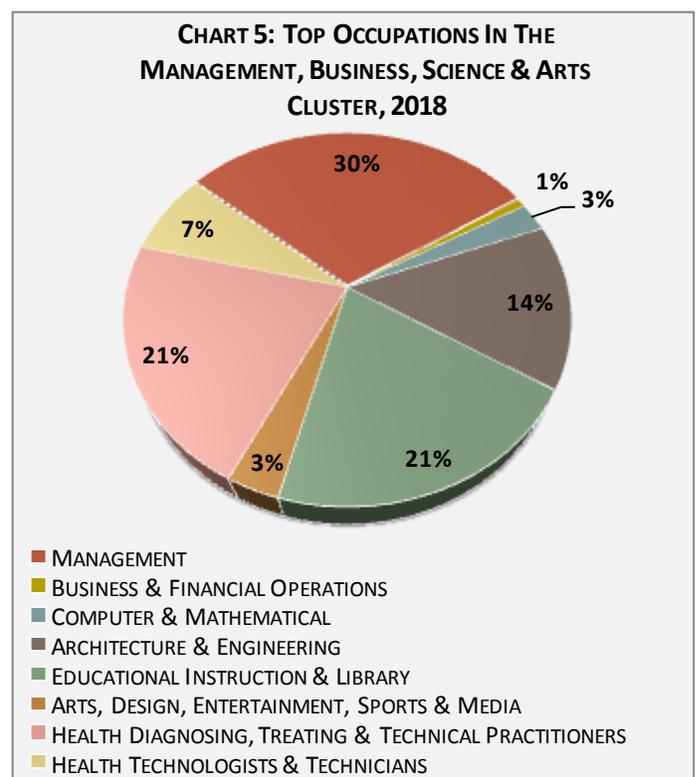
## Employment By Occupation

Employment change within specific occupation clusters illustrate how the City of St. Clair's economy is evolving. This indicator presents

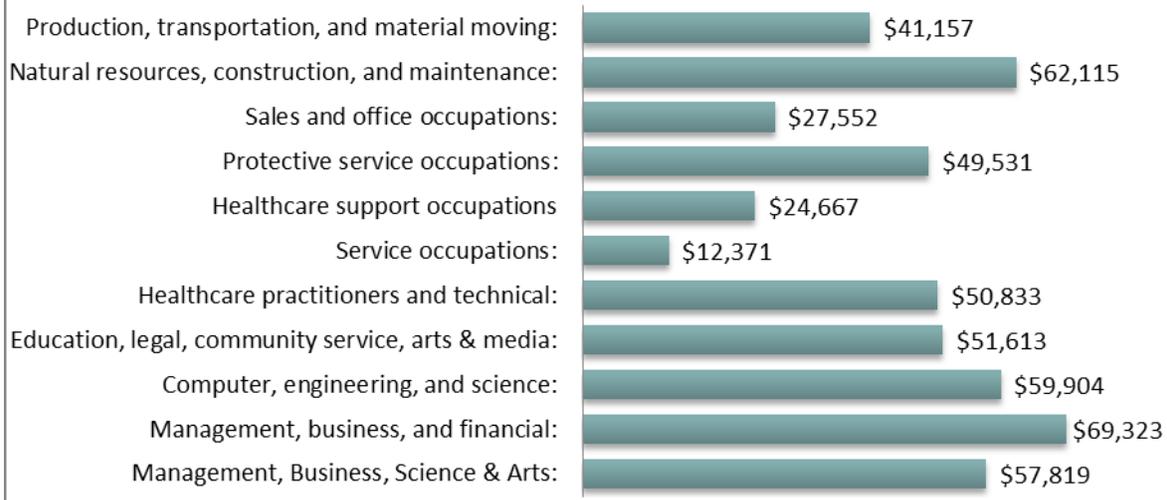
employment and salaries in five occupation clusters chosen to reflect the diversity of St. Clair's employment and the major economic drivers within the city. Over half, 56% of all St. Clair jobs can be found in the top two job clusters: Management/Business/Science/Arts and Service Occupations.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



**CHART 6: MEDIAN EARNINGS BY OCCUPATION, 2018**



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Earnings By Industry/ Occupation

Tracking salary levels in these clusters shows whether these jobs can provide a wage high enough for workers to afford living in the city. Chart 6 shows the median salary per employee in the City of St. Clair, for the years 2012 through 2018. The city's annual average wages have been consistently higher than both the state and county whereas the county's average wage has been consistently lower than both those of the state and the city. St. Clair County's lower wages are anywhere from 4%-6% less than Michigan's and 5% to 13% less than the City of St. Clair. Despite the difference between wage amounts between the state and the county, they follow a similar trend pattern. Their wages both remained somewhat steady, with very little movement and progressively increased at about the same momentum from 2010 forward. However, the fluctuations are much more turbulent within the city. The city has had more drastic increases and decreases throughout the past eight years, but with an overall 6.6% rate of change, it has only grown half as much as the state and the county which experienced an overall change at the rates of 13% and 12%, respectively. Median earnings for full-time year-round workers was \$50,562, where the male workers had median earnings of \$59,363 and female workers had median earnings of \$35,586, a nearly 67% gap difference between the two sexes.

## Educational Attainment

Overall, the levels of educational attainment continue to rise in the City of St. Clair. The proportion of residents 25 and above has fallen decrease in the number of those earning their high school diplomas. However, approximately 94% of the St. Clair population has earned a high school diploma or higher, compared with a 90% state and county average. The number of graduates with associate and bachelor degrees have risen, with the number of associate degree earners surpassing both the state and St. Clair County, by about 4% and 2%, respectively. Those that have gone on to earn a degree beyond a bachelors level have dropped by slightly over 1%. However the city surpasses the number of advanced graduate degrees at both the state and county level surpassing St. Clair County by nearly 5%.

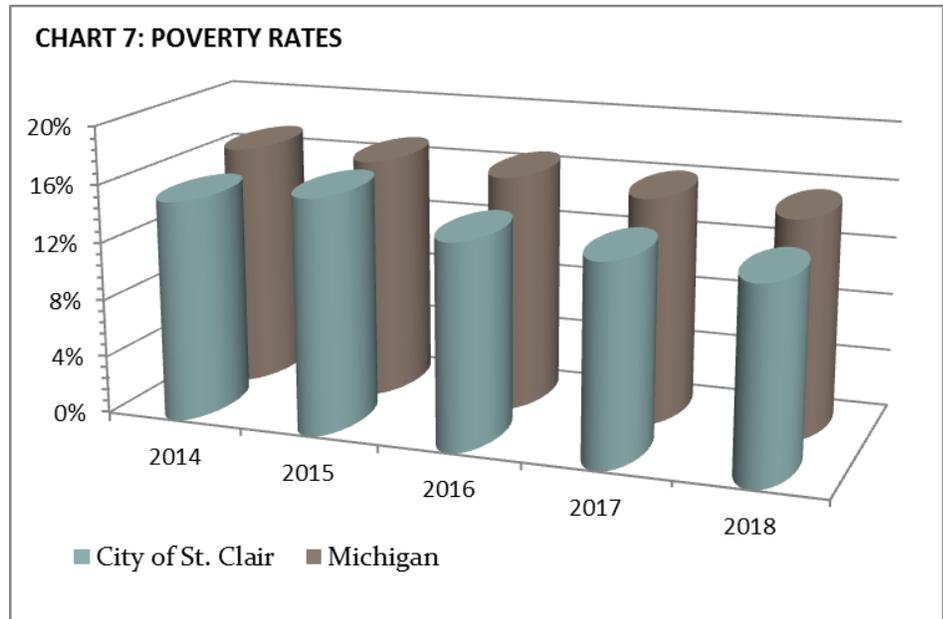
This indicates that St. Clair has an increased job pool with a higher education. A high school diploma or college degree opens many career opportunities that are typically closed to those without these achievements. The education level of residents is evidence of the quality and diversity of the labor pool which is an important factor for businesses looking to locate or expand in the region.

# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The link between poverty and educational attainment is real. For those with less than a high school diploma the poverty rate is 71.3%, compared to 2% for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is also exceptionally high for the area as the poverty rate for those lacking a high school education in both Michigan and St. Clair County are both under 30%. However, this higher number could be due to the lesser amount of individuals who didn't earn a high school degree and therefore a smaller number in poverty could result in a higher proportion. It should be noted that a bachelor's degree does not guarantee gainful employment, however the rates of poverty are significantly lower with a post-secondary degree.

## Poverty

In 2018, 13.2% of people were reported to be living at the poverty level in the City of St. Clair. An estimated 19.9% of children under 18 were below the poverty level, compared with 3% of people 65 years old and over. Those who fall in between these two age groups, people ages 18 to 64, had an estimated 13.8% below the poverty level. In 2018, 8.2% of households received SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). An estimated 35.6% of households that received SNAP had children under 18, and 33.5% of households had one or more people 60 years and over. An estimated 23.6% of all households receiving SNAP were families with a female householder and no husband present. The households having two or more workers in the past 12 months, while receiving SNAP, was estimated to be 5.3%. A high poverty rate in an area can indicate economic and social issues among persons living in the community. However, between 2014 and 2018, the city's poverty rate remained between 0.5% to over 2% lower than the statewide rate.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Per Capita Income

Per capita income is calculated by dividing the Bureau of Economic Analysis's estimate of total personal income by the U.S. Census Bureau's estimate of total population. It is one of the primary measures of economic well-being in a community as changes can indicate trends in a community's standard of living, or the availability of resources to an individual, family, or society.

Per capita income tends to follow the business cycle, rising during expansions and falling during recessions. The city's per capita income saw both growth and decline during the 10-year span of 2009 and 2019. The declines, were experienced from 2009 to 2011, 2013 to 2014 and again between 2016 and 2017, all of which were between a 2.2% and 4.3% loss. From 2018 to 2019, the per capita income increased by nearly \$ 5,400 (17.2%) and when looking at the entire ten-year span, the city's per capita income increased \$8,500, over 30%, from 2009's \$28,150 to 2019's \$36,649. Throughout this same time period, the City of St. Clair's per capita personal income was consistently higher than the average of both St. Clair County and the state of Michigan.

## Median Household Income

Median household income is often a better measure of average income than per capita income when evaluating income growth among all economic classes. This is because per capital income changes may be driven by growth increases in solely the high income ranges, whereas growth in median household income usually indicates expansion across the full range of incomes. The median household income is determined to be the income level at which half of the city's households (the combined incomes of all people sharing a residence), earn more and the other half earn less. It is often considered the midpoint. The median income of households in St. Clair was \$63,343 in 2018. An estimated 8% of households had an income below \$10,000 a year and 3.4% had an income of \$200,000 or more. From 2014 to 2018, it was reported that over 72% of households received earnings, nearly 32% of households received Social Security, and approximately 28% of households received retirement income other than Social Security. These incomes do overlap as some households received incomes from more than one source.



## Median Family Income

Another notable observation is how the median incomes vary between family households where the head of the household is a male with no female present, versus the households having a female head with no male present. In contrast with male householder family incomes, female householder incomes have historically earned significantly less. During the years 2012 through 2017, this income disparity ranged from \$40,000 to an over \$63,000 difference in the city, equating to an approximately 41% to 63% gap between incomes.

Female headed household incomes have swelled from \$38,700 in 2012 to \$61,070 in 2018, a nearly 58% increase. Male headed households have also experienced growth over the years. Most recently however, only the female headed households experienced an increase whereas the median income for male headed families experienced a 42% drop from just over \$99,000 in 2017 to less than \$54,000 in 2018. This not only closed the gap between the households headed by the two different sexes, but female householders surpassed median incomes reported for those families with male householders by nearly 14%. This may be due in part to the shrinking number of male headed households. While each have experienced a decline, the female headed households declined by about 20% from 2012 to 2018, whereas the male headed households shrunk by nearly 80%. Both Michigan and St. Clair County's male headed households comprise between 6.5% and 7.5% of their total family households while the city only followed this pattern during 2013 through 2015. The male headed share dropped to comprise under 5% in 2015, under 4% in 2017 and under 2% in the most recent 2018 count. This seems to be unique to the city, as well as their consistently higher median family incomes in comparison to both the state and the county.

## Housing Affordability

Affordable housing is directly related to income. Selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income (SMOCAPI) is used to determine the affordability. A household spending less than 30% of its income on housing costs (including mortgage, rents, utilities, taxes, and heating fuels), is considered to be affordable and households spending greater than 30% of its income on housing costs are considered unaffordable.

Of St. Clair's 1,796 owner occupied households reported in 2018, just over 29% spent more than 30% of their income on housing costs, which is only slightly higher than the St. Clair County average of 26%. Among the houses considered unaffordable, 59.6% were owner occupied and 40.4% were renter occupied. St. Clair's renter occupied households reported in 2018, saw just over 45% of their renters spending more than 30% of their household income towards rent. This excludes units where gross rent as a percentage of household

# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

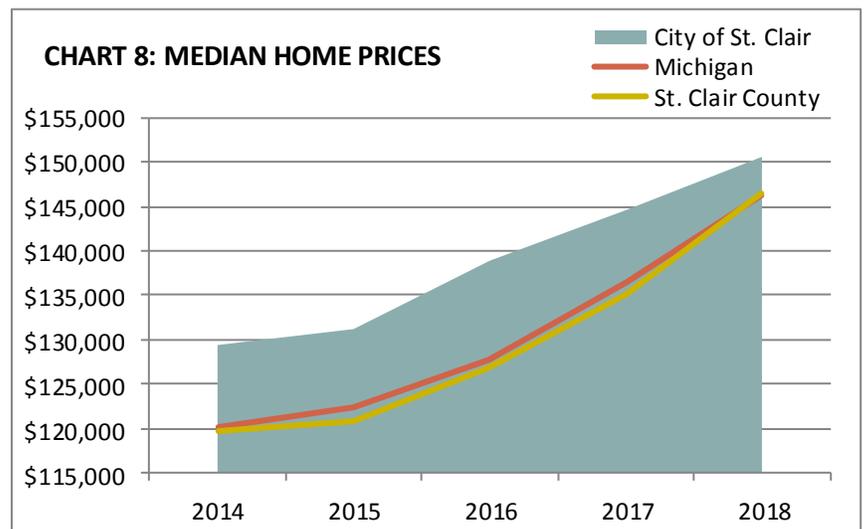
income (GRAPI) cannot be computed. When looking at the city's gross rent, the occupied units paying rent, the median gross rent is \$681 per month.

Home ownership is a definite priority for social prosperity and financial stability among families. Currently, over 77% of the occupied housing units are owned while 23% are rented. Among those owner occupied homes, 66.1% have a mortgage and 33.9% own their home free and clear, excluding those for which SMOCAPI cannot be calculated. Of the housing units with a mortgage, 19% of owners spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs and 14% of homeowners with a mortgage spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs. More significantly, however, nearly 80% of the city's unaffordable households are making less than \$35,000 per year. The large majority of housing in the city is affordable, but the trend of lower-income households having higher housing costs suggests that some less expensive housing may be needed in St. Clair.

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, cottage housing and apartments above storefronts. Other households may choose to rent to maintain mobility. When renter-occupied single-family homes begins trending upwards, the city should monitor housing quality to ensure neighborhood stability.

## Median Home Price

This indicator can be used to track the health of a community's real estate market as a whole, important information for both the home buyers as well as investors deciding on their buying or selling of residential real estate. Unlike the average price of homes sold, which can be skewed by extremely high sales or very low sales, median home price indicates the price which separates the larger half of median home values from the lower half. This is usually a more reliable indicator compared to others. Between 2014 and 2018, the median home price in the City of St. Clair remained consistently higher (priced between \$4,000 to \$12,000 greater) than both the countywide and the statewide median home price.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Existing Housing Stock

St. Clair's existing housing stock contains nearly 2,500 housing units and 2,354 households (occupied housing units) based on 2018 Census estimates. The majority of U.S. homes are single-family, detached houses that are often well-suited for families with children. There is a trending need, not just in St. Clair, but throughout the country, to provide for a different yet distinct housing type that will attract young professionals and young families.. However, the other trending need is to retain and accommodate the empty nesters and the increasing elderly population. This housing type is being referred to as the "Missing Middle." Missing Middle is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible with single-family.

**TABLE 1-6: HOUSING UNITS**

	2010		2018		2010-2018 Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Housing Units	2,523	100.0%	2523	100.0%	0.0%
Occupied	2,306	91.4%	2,325	92.2%	-0.6%
Owner-Occupied	1,661	65.8%	1,470	58.3%	-11.5%
Renter-Occupied	645	25.6%	855	33.9%	32.6%
Vacant	217	8.6%	198	7.8%	-8.8%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT



The housing stock consists primarily of detached single-family homes (73%) and the remaining 27% consist of multiple-unit apartment buildings (18%), townhouse/attached condominium-style residences (7%), and duplexes (3%). There are just a little over 550 units within multiunit/apartment buildings, and even fewer condominiums, duplexes and townhomes. The stock of single-family homes in St. Clair is generally well-maintained and has traditional style neighborhoods. Throughout the city there are a variety of ages, styles, and sizes. Single-family homes have characteristically been the backbone of the community and historically the preferred housing type for small towns. This does not

create much diversity in the cost or choice of housing for potential new residents or existing residents who may be transitioning to a new station in life.

St. Clair experienced an 8% decline in the number of housing units from 2010 to 2018, as shown in Table 1-6. The city's vacancy rate saw a significant drop of nearly 44%. Within homeownership, the owner-occupied homes rose slightly (2.5%) and the renter-owned homes shrank by almost 21%. This is somewhat of a unique situation as a substantial drop in vacant homes can often be tied to a rise in the rate of renting as rental properties are far more likely to be vacant than non-rentals. However, St. Clair experienced the opposite as they underwent an increase in their rentals, but an even greater decrease in their vacancy rate.

## Housing Needs

For many, housing is the single most important component that defines a community and the quality of life attached to it. It provides a visual indicator of the community's character, it determines the land uses and city services, it is a significant base for local taxes and having a clear understanding of current housing inventory along with the current and future population projections, will assist St. Clair in providing ample housing units to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Safe and affordable housing must be available to all members of the community. Families are often looking for single-family residential neighborhoods, with a traditional neighborhood design that has access to schools, parks, or other public facilities, such as pools or libraries. Young adults and empty nesters are interested in housing such as apartments, condos, duplexes, townhomes, or second-story flats in mixed use areas. The location of housing for seniors is equally essential, as it will dictate their access to community amenities. When driving is no longer an option, housing not located within a walkable area can quite often become the determining factor in how long aging residents are able to remain in their home. Across the U.S., average household size has been declining for decades. Michigan saw a 0.8% drop in household size from 2000 to 2010. The decline in St. Clair's household size over this same period was much sharper: 5.5%, from 2.53 residents per household to 2.39, substantially lower than the statewide average.

There are roughly 2,500 housing units in the City of St. Clair, 72% of which are single family homes. There are just a little over 550 units within multi-unit/apartment buildings, and even fewer condominiums, duplexes and townhomes. The stock of single family homes in St. Clair is generally well-maintained, and although relatively homogeneous by neighborhood, throughout the City there are a variety of ages, styles, and sizes. Single-family homes have traditionally been the backbone of the community and historically the preferred housing type for small towns. This does not create much diversity in the cost or choice of housing for potential new residents or existing residents who may be transitioning to a new station in life. In order to accommodate new demand and provide housing choices, the city must diversify its housing.

St. Clair participated in a “Residential Target Market Analysis,” completed in 2016, which identified a number of target markets, or demographic groups, that might potentially move to St. Clair if the appropriate housing stock was available. Generally, the study identified the potential for these groups to absorb 250 to 675 new moderate to upscale housing units over the next five years. The full report provides specifics about each market type, the specific housing type they would be seeking, and specific numbers for each year.

For the City of St. Clair, this may include a combination of triplexes and fourplexes; townhouses and row houses; other multiplexes like courtyard apartments; flats/lofts above street-front retail; and low-rise and mid-rise buildings.

## GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Natural Features

The natural features of the City of St. Clair have played a major role in influencing and attracting growth and development. Like much of Michigan’s southern lower peninsula, the city’s landscape was formed through glacial action. The glaciers movement shaped the topography and created many different types of soils. Plant communities, in turn, developed in response to soil conditions.

### Topography

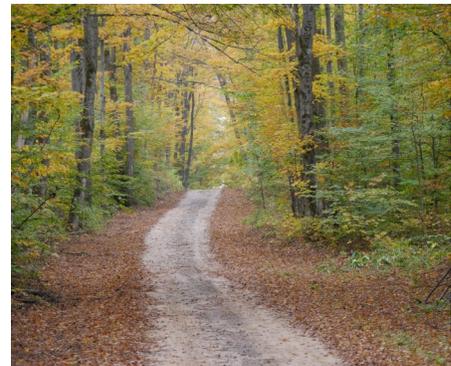
St. Clair is located in an area which is characterized by relatively flat to gently undulating topography. The land surface consists of a broad, clay-based glacial lake plain with several end moraines that are one to three miles wide and which have been reshaped by water and runoff. Elevations throughout the city range from approximately 580 feet to 605 feet above sea level. The highest natural point is located northwest of the city and the lowest area is located along the St. Clair River shoreline. The land is gently sloping from the northwest to the southeast.

### Soils and Vegetation

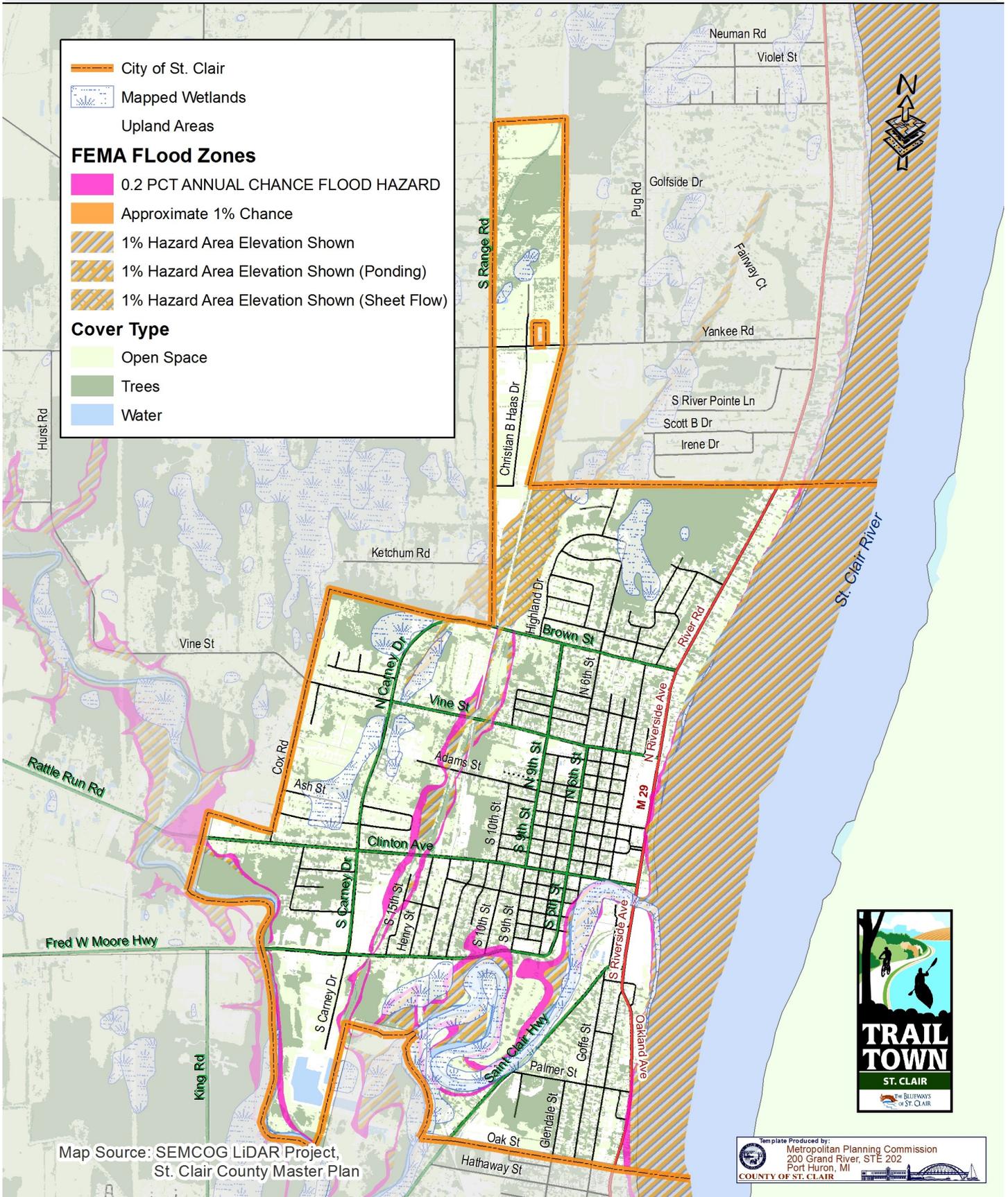
Soil types found in the city are composed of clays and loamy sand over clay which exhibit poor drainage, according to the U.S. Conservation Service. Old beach ridges and dunes run parallel to the Lake Huron and the St. Clair River shores. Evidence of this type of terrain can be seen at Greig Park. The city also contains a number of wetland and woodland areas, largely preserved, along the waterways and within the city’s parks and open spaces.

### Water Resources

The most important water feature of the community is the St. Clair River. It extends from Lake Huron to Lake St. Clair for a distance of about 34 miles. The St. Clair River provides fishing opportunities for anglers



# MAP 1-2: NATURAL FEATURES



# MAP 1-3: LAND COVER



Surface Type	Acres	Percent of city
Impervious Surface	545	28%
Tree Canopy	605	32%
Open Space	644	34%
Urban, bare earth	36	2%
Water	81	4%

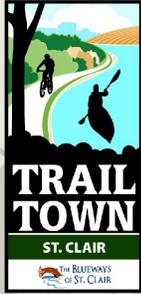


City of St. Clair

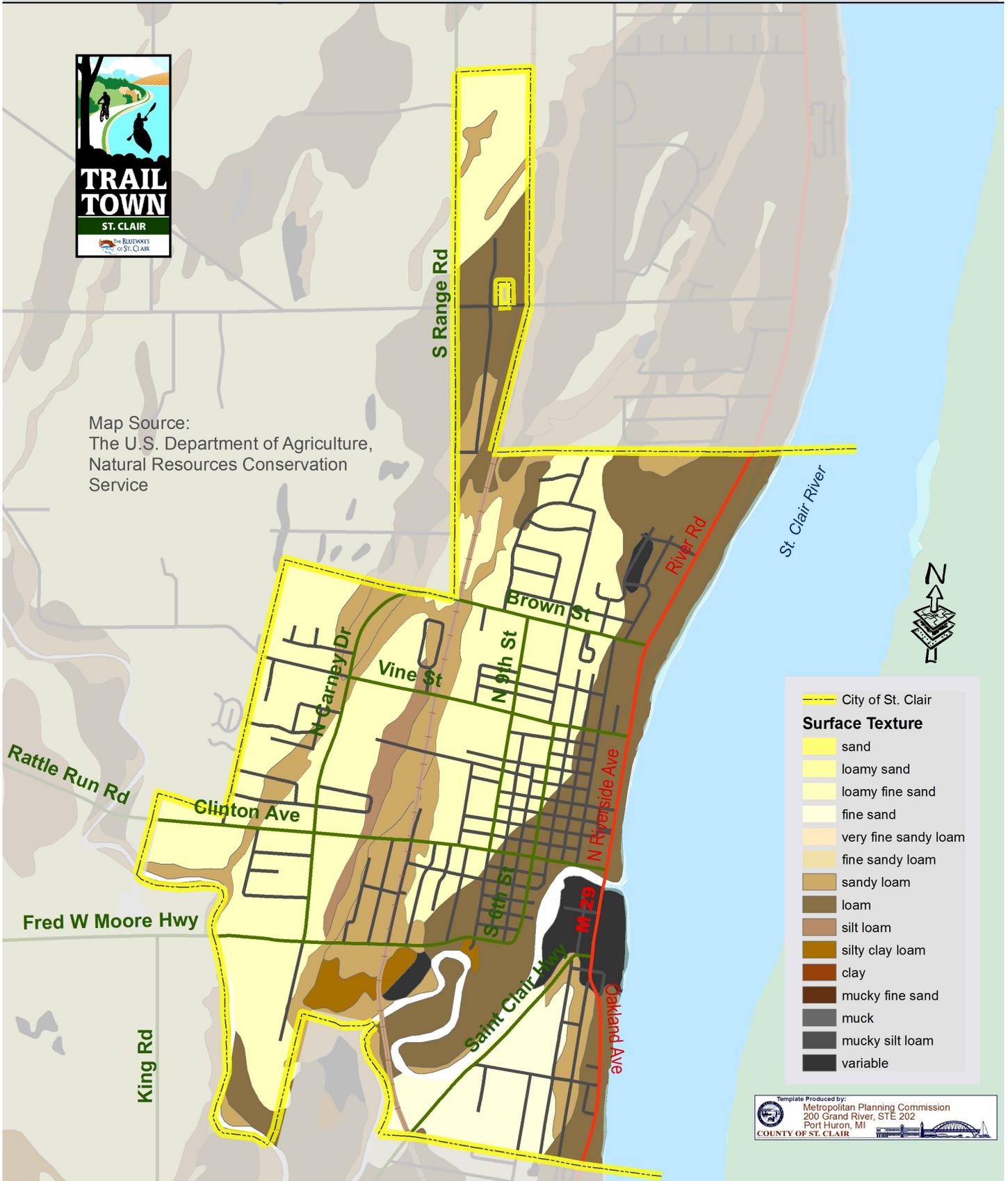
**Category**

- Impervious Surface
- Open Space
- Trees
- Urban: Bare
- Water

# MAP 1-4: SOILS



Map Source:  
The U.S. Department of Agriculture,  
Natural Resources Conservation  
Service

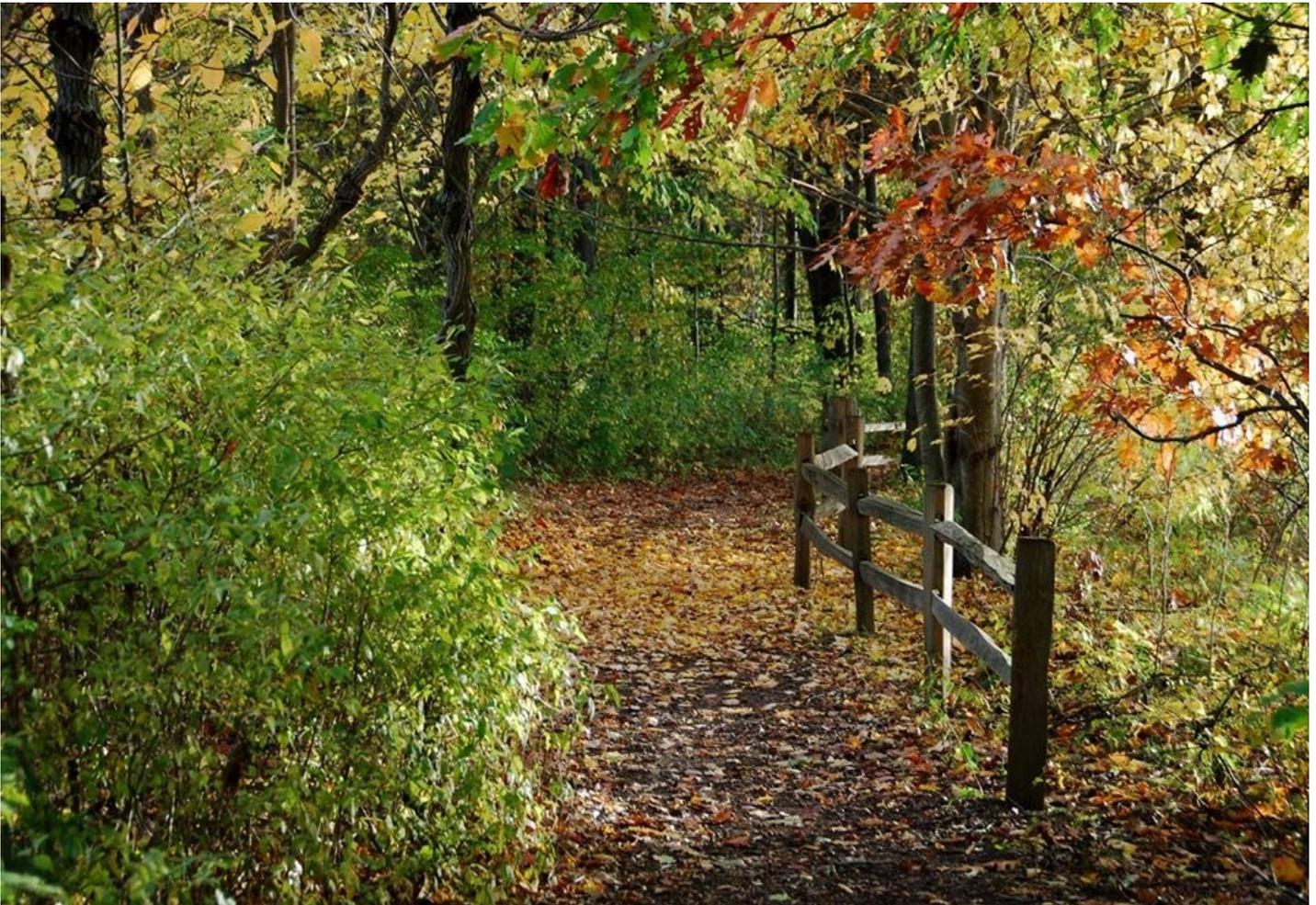


--- City of St. Clair

**Surface Texture**

- sand
- loamy sand
- loamy fine sand
- fine sand
- very fine sandy loam
- fine sandy loam
- sandy loam
- loam
- silt loam
- silty clay loam
- clay
- mucky fine sand
- muck
- mucky silt loam
- variable

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



and a great location for sailboarders when the winds are strong. It is lined by some parkland and older buildings which provide a pleasant place for people to stroll and enjoy a close look at Great Lakes freighters that pass along the waterway. The Pine River, a tributary of the St. Clair River, also runs through the City of St. Clair and includes the county's largest watershed at about 126,000 acres.

Both the St. Clair and Pine Rivers are good fishing areas for brown trout, lake trout, steelhead, salmon, smelt, walleye, perch, bass, pike, muskellunge, carp, catfish, and pan fish. These open waters and varied ecosystems support a wide variety of wildlife resources. The Great Lakes Basin is also a major flyway for thousands of North American waterfowl and bird species. Bird watching is an extremely popular recreational activity in St. Clair County.

Small forested wetlands can be found west of Carney Drive, in Greig Park, and in the Alice Woods Nature Sanctuary. Generally, floodplains identified for St. Clair are associated with Jordan Creek and the Pine River. Protecting these environmentally sensitive areas is important to maintaining a healthy community.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Public facilities and services are those buildings, land, equipment, and activities owned and operated by the public for the benefit of the community. They include schools, parks and recreation facilities, water and

# MAP 1-5: WOODLANDS & WETLANDS



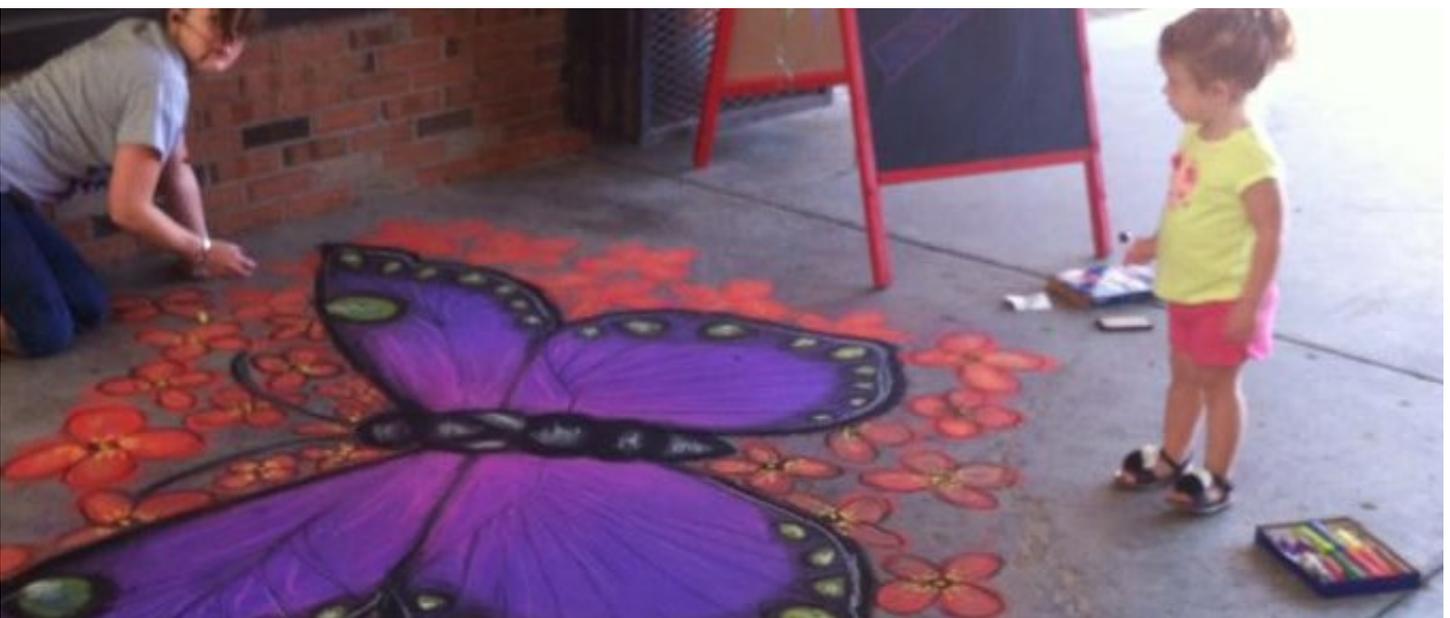
Map Source:  
National Wetland Inventory,  
and SEMCOG

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

wastewater systems, and other facilities such as the library, police stations, fire stations, and government buildings (Map 1-6).

The City of St. Clair is served by the East China School District which operates a High School and Middle School located just outside city limits in St. Clair Township.

The City's park system encompasses 210 acres of park land which extends outside city limits into St. Clair Township. It also includes almost two miles of a paved multi-use pathway along Carney Drive and Fred Moore



# MAP 1-6: COMMUNITY FACILITIES





Highway. This is part of the Bridge to Bay Trail regional network of planned trails for St. Clair County. Connecting these facilities into a continuous interconnected system of greenways and open spaces is an important priority for the city and county. While recreation programming has kept pace with residents' recreation needs, the demand for a family aquatic facility is not being met by the current municipal pool and will need to be considered in the future.

Providing a clean potable water supply and disposing of storm water and sanitary sewage are major responsibilities of the City. The community water filtration plant has extra capacity to serve the city's current and future needs. A large elevated water tank is needed in the city's north end to increase pressure. In addition, the water distribution system is in good condition. The treatment of sanitary sewage is adequate for a foreseeable future. Descriptions of capital improvements are described in the City Services and Leadership chapter.

The city's police and fire services are adequate to protect the city as currently developed. Expansion may be required if a partnership opportunity with a surrounding community takes place.

In addition, the City needs to move ahead in promoting methods of development and conservation that improve the long-term health of human and ecological systems. This should include sustainability efforts such as energy conservation, recycling, solid waste management, and environmentally sensitive building and development practices such as green buildings and low-impact development.



# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT

## ST. CLAIR COUNTY MASTER PLAN

The St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (SCCMPC) carries out regional planning functions, which include:

- ◆ Coordinating local planning and zoning efforts;
- ◆ Providing planning assistance to local units of government;
- ◆ Directing transportation planning and programming for the county;
- ◆ Implementing the St. Clair County Master Plan; and
- ◆ Working collaboratively with other entities in the region to facilitate sustainable economic development.

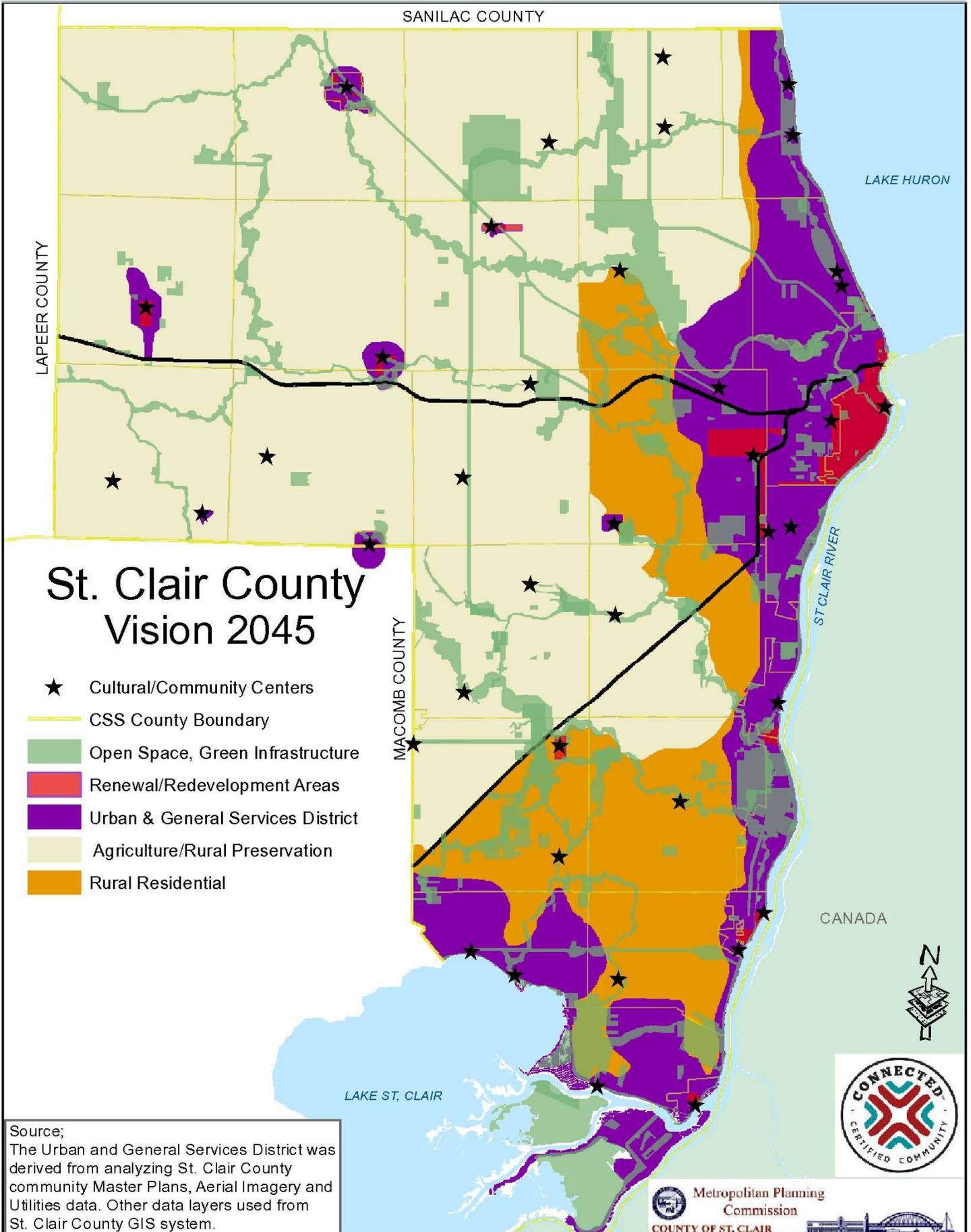
To fulfill its coordination function, the SCCMPC adopted the St. Clair County Master Plan in November 2016. The plan addresses certain planning concerns in St. Clair County as a whole through 2035. These concerns include land use and change management, the environment, the economy, transportation, and public facilities and services. The SCCMPC began updating the County Master Plan in 2020.

The St. Clair County Master Plan includes the “St. Clair County Vision 2045 Map” that indicates that the City of St. Clair is located within the County’s designated Urban and General Services District (UGS). Key characteristics of the UGS district are:

- ◆ The highest density development within the next 20 or so years occurs within a proposed Urban and General Services Districts (UGSDs). This district is located primarily along the shoreline in a band of about one to three miles wide. Sewer, water, and other services are not extended beyond the district boundary, except in, or adjacent to small cities and villages.
- ◆ The UGSD represents target areas for directing new growth needing a full range of public services in a managed, phased, incremental manner.
- ◆ The UGSD is comprised of higher density areas, with existing water/sewer service or planned water/sewer service within the next 20 years.

The St. Clair County Vision 2045 Map (Map 1-7) depicts the City of St. Clair as a cultural/community center within the Urban and General Services District and shows planned open space corridors along the St. Clair River.

# MAP 1-7: ST. CLAIR COUNTY VISION 2045



# INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY CONTEXT



*This page intentionally left blank.*



## 2. LAND USE

**DRAFT**

# LAND USE

The way in which a community chooses to utilize their land should be a reflection of the goals and values of that community. Land uses can impact physical environments, visual impressions and transportation systems. By influencing the way land is utilized throughout the city, such as the location and density of various uses, a community can help shape its desired character.

## Smart Growth America

A national non-profit organization promoting strong neighborhoods, set forth 10 tenets for creating great places, although many organizations promote similar lists. St. Clair has engaged in many of these tenets:

1. Range of housing opportunities & choices
2. Walkable neighborhoods
3. Open stakeholder collaboration in development decisions
4. Distinctive & attractive communities
5. Predictable, fair, & cost-effective development decisions
6. Integrated mix of land uses
7. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, & critical environmental areas
8. Variety of transportation options
9. Direct development towards existing communities
10. Compact building design

It is essential to examine the current land uses within the city. An existing land use inventory is the first step in determining which uses are in concert with community goals and values. It provides a record of how land areas are used to help in evaluating strengths, needs, and future development patterns.

Land use policy shapes the urban form, creating memorable places and amenities that help compete for businesses and residents. A community should be poised with a strategy to react to planned and unplanned changes in land use due to natural or man-made disasters, economic changes, or other events.

The land use strategy of this plan starts with maintaining the existing assets that attract families and a strong workforce. These assets are the neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, parks, businesses, volunteer organizations, and City services. They are in very good condition and simply need maintenance and continued commitment from the elected and appointed officials to consider different viewpoints. For businesses, this commitment includes assisting entrepreneurs and business types not seen to date. For neighborhoods, it is inspection, code enforcement, and maintaining strong customer service at the counter. It is not a glamorous strategy but a vital one.

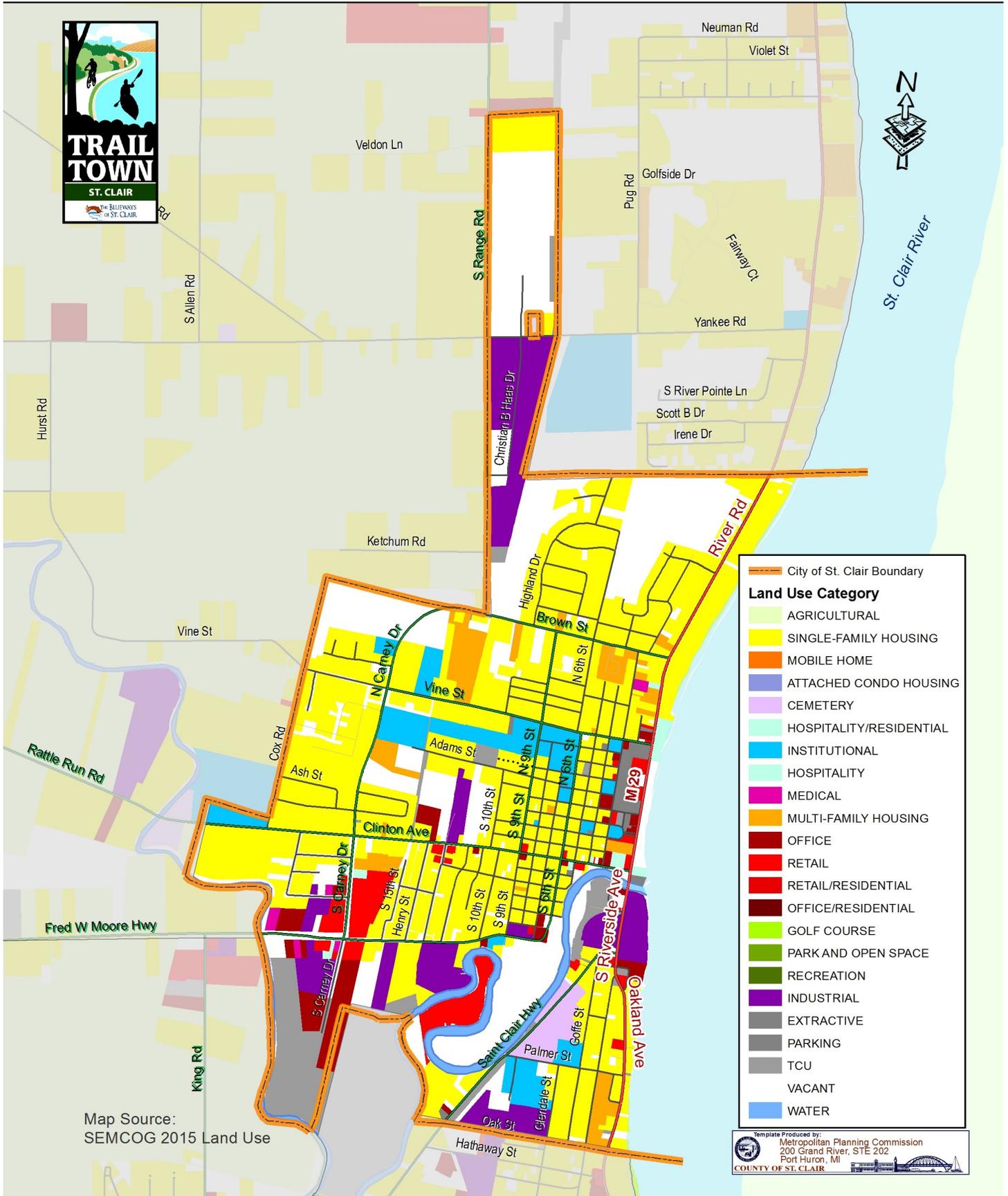
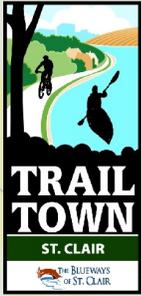
Effective actions, cost, and service delivery are vital. Exploring creative partnerships with cities, townships, St. Clair County, non-profit groups, and the schools is one method. A second action is initiating a marketing and promotional campaign.

Another follow-up action is to plan in greater detail for high-impact redevelopment sites. This is a longer-range endeavor but one that needs to have early community support. Downtown, the Pine River/Fred Moore Highway frontage, and the mixed-use node at Clinton and Whiting streets are the most apparent target areas.

## EXISTING LAND USE AND COMMUNITY ASSETS

The predominant land uses in St. Clair are residential, comprising almost half of the City's land area. According to 2015 SEMCOG data, nearly 44% of the city's acreage is encompassed in single-family residential homes, while multi-family homes make up an additional 3%. The next largest land use, consisting of about 250 acres or 13.3% of the land use appears to be vacant, followed by recreation and open space with over 160 acres or 8.5% of the city's total land area. According to SEMCOG, there is no longer any land dedicated to agriculture.

# MAP 2-1: EXISTING LAND USE



City of St. Clair Boundary	
Land Use Category	
[Light Green Box]	AGRICULTURAL
[Yellow Box]	SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING
[Orange Box]	MOBILE HOME
[Purple Box]	ATTACHED CONDO HOUSING
[Light Purple Box]	CEMETERY
[Light Blue Box]	HOSPITALITY/RESIDENTIAL
[Blue Box]	INSTITUTIONAL
[Light Blue Box]	HOSPITALITY
[Pink Box]	MEDICAL
[Orange Box]	MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING
[Red Box]	OFFICE
[Red Box]	RETAIL
[Red Box]	RETAIL/RESIDENTIAL
[Red Box]	OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL
[Light Green Box]	GOLF COURSE
[Green Box]	PARK AND OPEN SPACE
[Green Box]	RECREATION
[Purple Box]	INDUSTRIAL
[Grey Box]	EXTRACTIVE
[Grey Box]	PARKING
[Grey Box]	TCU
[White Box]	VACANT
[Blue Box]	WATER

Map Source:  
SEMCOG 2015 Land Use

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

# LAND USE

The City of St. Clair's assets are the residential neighborhoods, local businesses, cultural amenities, the St. Clair and Pine rivers, the downtown and the St. Clair Inn, and its close proximity to Ontario, Canada. Opportunities abound to stimulate redevelopment, reuse vacant buildings and properties, and prepare for future populations. A comprehensive strategy for promoting these assets is a primary goal of this plan.

The city is a community of many outstanding residential neighborhoods (see Map 2-2) with well-maintained homes and properties. The diversity of architectural styles, many of which are historic, is a resource along with mature tree-lined streets with sidewalks. The residents inhabiting these homes come from a mix of backgrounds, which contributes to the interesting flavor of the city.

Stores, shops, offices, industries, and manufactures are found in many sizes and locations. The downtown was once a walkable grid pattern of stores and shops. It was transformed in the 1960's through urban renewal with construction of the Riverview Plaza shopping mall. The St. Clair Inn, north of the downtown, provided a destination for tourists and visitors for decades and is now in the finishing stages of being redeveloped.

A concentration of businesses emphasizing drivable shopping is centered at the intersection of Fred Moore Highway and Carney Drive. Single businesses or modest concentrations of businesses are also located within neighborhoods and service local needs.

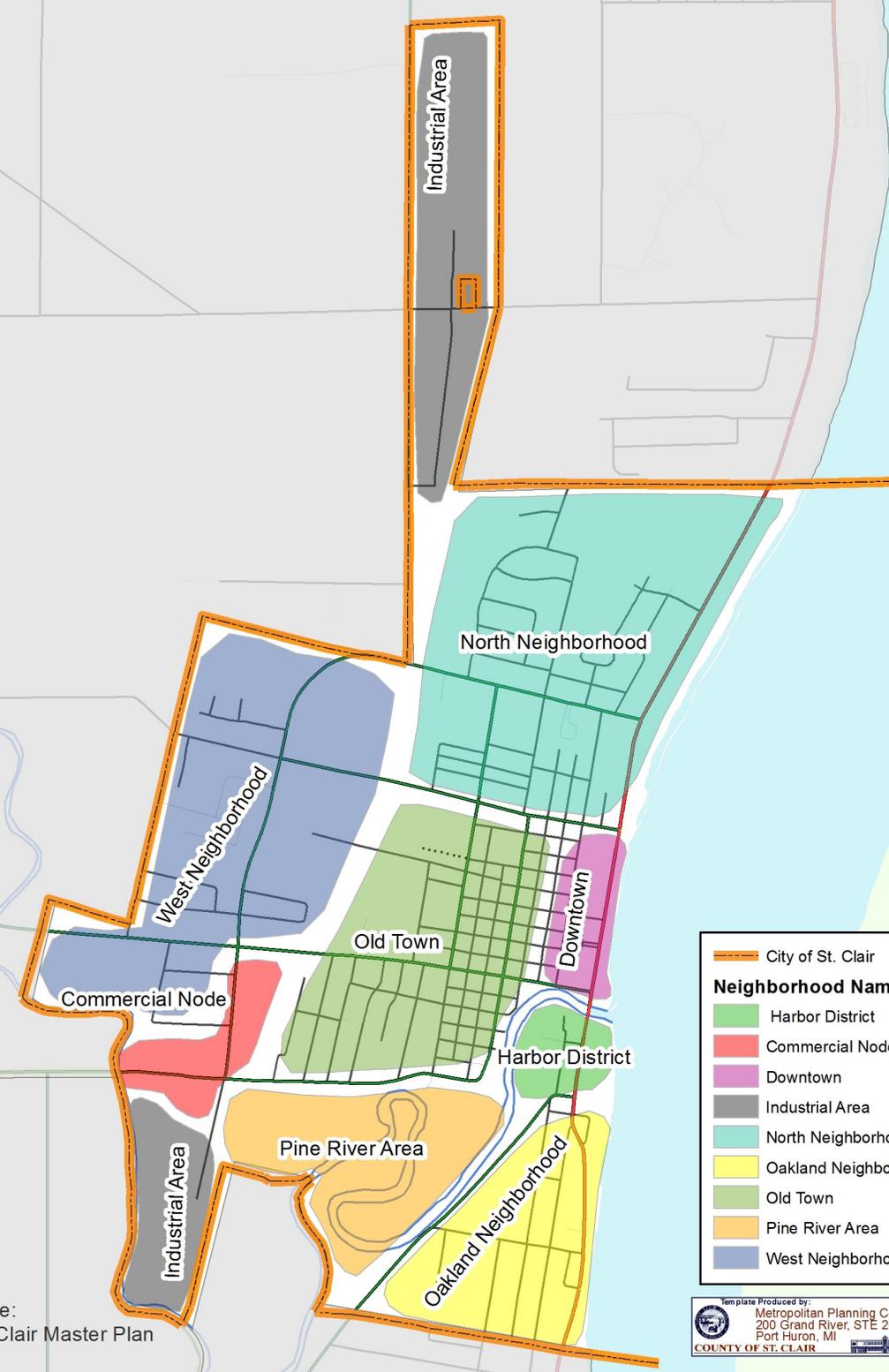
The massive Cargill salt operation is a long-standing stalwart that employs many workers, is reinvesting in its plant, occupies both St. Clair and Pine River frontages, and is a dominant visual feature. BP Dome Petroleum Corporation has a natural gas liquid storage facility occupying a large property in the southwest corner of the City. A large and linear protrusion of city also extends along Range Road north into St. Clair Township. It is occupied by industry but also retains significant vacant land prime for industrial development.



# MAP 2-2: ST. CLAIR NEIGHBORHOODS



St. Clair River



	City of St. Clair
<b>Neighborhood Name</b>	
	Harbor District
	Commercial Node
	Downtown
	Industrial Area
	North Neighborhood
	Oakland Neighborhood
	Old Town
	Pine River Area
	West Neighborhood

Map Source:  
City of St. Clair Master Plan

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

# LAND USE

**Table 2-1: Existing Land Use in St. Clair**

SEMCOG 2015 Land Use	Acres	Percent
Single-Family Residential	828.3	43.9%
Multi-Family Residential	59.1	3.1%
Retail	56.1	3.0%
Office	47.1	2.5%
Hospitality	10	0.5%
Medical	4.8	0.3%
Institutional	86.5	4.6%
Industrial	151.6	8.0%
Agricultural	0	0.0%
Recreation/Open Space	160.4	8.5%
Cemetery	21.4	1.1%
Parking	13.7	0.7%
TCU	132.5	7.0%
Vacant	250.6	13.3%
Water	63.8	3.4%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>1885.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The St. Clair and Pine Rivers are two of the greatest city assets. These waterways gave St. Clair its origins as a water transportation center. The St. Clair River is lined with the Downtown, Palmer Park, St. Clair Inn, Cargill Salt plant, and several large homes. The Pine River frontage has the Pine Shores Golf Course, marinas, the south edge of the downtown, as well as opportunities for redevelopment. The city has a rich history and a solid reputation as a place to live, work, or visit. A regional bike path along N. Carney Drive has been constructed with plans to connect the system through parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and the region. The East China School District provides a magnet for families. The City and the schools partner for the use of facilities and programs that enable more participants and cost efficiency. An art society, beautification commission, athletic groups, historical society, chamber of commerce, and many other volunteer and philanthropic organizations flourish.

The government is responsive. It looks for new ways to conduct business and has engaged in a land transference agreement with St. Clair Township to jointly seek development of new industry. This attitude is the leadership needed to allow the city and its surrounding communities to prosper as a whole.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan is just that, a plan, and one that requires regular review and updating. The plan identifies areas not simply by land use, but as districts with emphasis on how it functions. Direct comparison between existing and future land use allocation is not possible with this approach. However, when planning for integration rather than segregation of uses, comparative acreages become less important.

Overall, the vision retains much of the land use pattern as it exists in 2020. Single-family neighborhoods remain as the physical and social anchor of the city. The downtown continues as the regional destination focus. Commercial, office, and industrial areas do not expand, but the plan does not preclude expansion of existing businesses provided their impact on surrounding areas are minimized.

Changes in the pattern are also important to the vision. Land zoned for industry along Fred Moore Highway and Clinton Avenue is planned as mixed-use. Changes in these areas allow different uses to co-exist in a positive way such as a local business serving customers within a walkable distance.

Parks, sidewalks, paths, and street trees lend visual character, soften the environment, and enhance the neighborhoods. Rights-of-way are more than movers of vehicles. They act as park connectors and contribute as an informal social catalyst. A priority is the enhancement of Clinton Avenue as a “complete street” (see Chapter 4). It is an urban design spine connecting downtown, several residential neighborhoods, a potential mixed-use node, regional path connector on N. Carney Drive, St. Clair High School, and Legacy Park.

Five land use categories emphasize residential neighborhoods. These include two single-family categories (Low Density Residential and Traditional Neighborhood), a two-family residential category (Moderate Density Neighborhood), a Multiple-Family Residential category, the Downtown district, and a mixed-use category (Development Focus Area). Commerce, office, industry, parks, and public uses have descriptions pertaining to their specific intents. The following future land use map and descriptions provide the location and details of all the planned future land use designations.

## Low Density Residential Neighborhood

**Location:** Low-density residential neighborhoods are located north of Brown Street, along Riverside Avenue north of downtown, and west of the rail line.

**Existing Development Pattern:** The styles of existing homes are varied with ranches, bungalows, and two-story structures. The lots are generally greater in area than in the traditional neighborhoods. Sidewalks are often lacking. These neighborhoods are served by the non-motorized multi-use path along N. Carney Drive and Brown Street. City hall, police station, and the St. Clair High School are located in this area. Isolated small apartment complexes or attached single-family townhomes are mixed in with the neighborhoods.

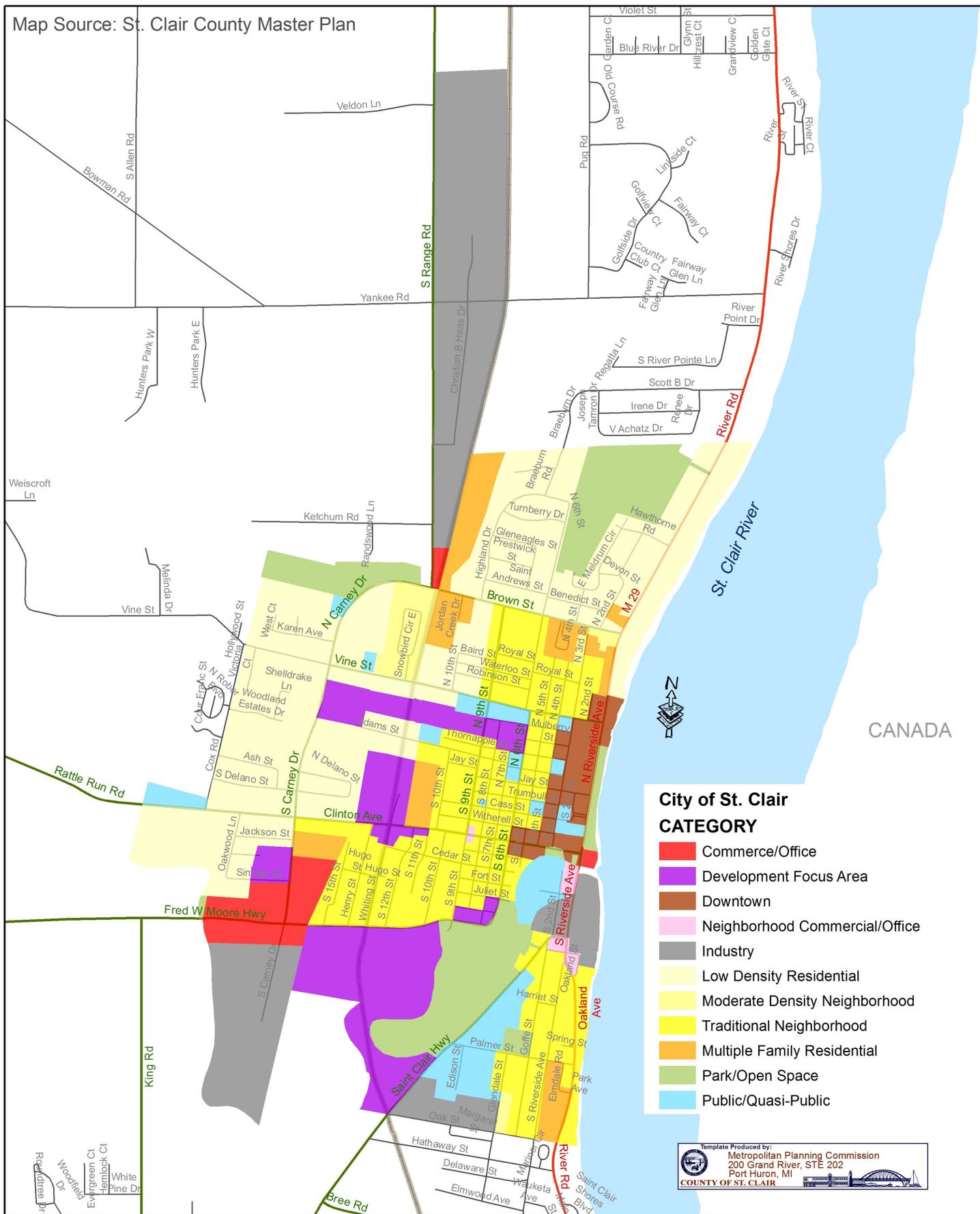
**Land Use Intent:** The intent of this category is maintaining the low density detached single-family development pattern. Multiple-family housing should be constrained to existing locations. Churches, schools, and public facilities typically found in these areas are allowable, but should be constrained to areas offering thoroughfare or collector street frontages. Features found in the majority of St. Clair homes such as prominent front entries and porches, street trees, and internal and external sidewalks are important and should be encouraged.

### Planning Considerations

- ◆ Adopt design and performance criteria for development proposals involving reuse of church sites, attached single-family, and multiple-family residential uses;
- ◆ Connect missing sidewalks at the time of development or through the City Capital Improvement Plan;
- ◆ Allow neighborhood convenience stores but strictly regulate impact on surrounding properties;
- ◆ Maintain dimensional requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance;
- ◆ Adopt requirements to include a community park or open space within large-scale development;

# MAP 2-3: FUTURE LAND USE

Map Source: St. Clair County Master Plan



**City of St. Clair**  
**CATEGORY**

- Commerce/Office
- Development Focus Area
- Downtown
- Neighborhood Commercial/Office
- Industry
- Low Density Residential
- Moderate Density Neighborhood
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Multiple Family Residential
- Park/Open Space
- Public/Quasi-Public

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

**Table 2-2: Future Land Use in St. Clair**

Future Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Commercial/Office	53.7	2.8%
Development Focus Area	183.9	9.8%
Downtown	48.5	2.5%
Neighborhood Commercial/Office	8.2	0.4%
Industry	322.4	17.3%
Low Density Residential	531.0	28.4%
Moderate Density Residential	34.7	1.8%
Traditional Neighborhood	327.2	17.5%
Multiple Family Residential	84.6	4.5%
Park/Open Space	184.9	9.9%
Public/Quasi-Public	89.5	4.7%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>1,868.6</b>	<b>100%</b>

- ◆ Adopt design standards for infill and conversion construction;
- ◆ Include right-of-way maintenance for walks tree plantings in the Capital Improvement Plan; and
- ◆ Connect new development to adjacent neighborhoods through the use of bike/walkways and streets.

## Traditional Neighborhood

**Location:** Traditional single-family neighborhoods are located in the Old Town and Oakland neighborhoods. The Old Town neighborhood is bounded by Brown Street, Fourth Street, Fred Moore Highway, and the rail line, and extends west of the rail line between Clinton Avenue and Fred Moore Highway. The Oakland neighborhood, south of the Pine River, is located between St. Clair Highway, Goffe Street, Glendale Street, the southern city limits, and the St. Clair River.

**Existing Development Pattern:** These neighborhoods are primarily characterized by detached single-family residences on modest sized lots (averaging 50' X 120') but lot sizes fluctuate. The street pattern is primarily a rectilinear grid. They accommodate a range of housing styles: one-story ranches, 1-1/2 story bungalows, two-story colonial and farmhouse styles, as well as a host of other architectural types. A common theme is the use of prominent front entries with porches or stoops, sidewalks, street trees, and detached rear yard garages. Several schools and churches are part of the traditional neighborhoods.

**Land Use Intent:** Traditional neighborhoods should continue to function with detached single-family residences in a grid street pattern. New residential development should front public streets, create a grid street pattern, and include sidewalks linking to the citywide bike/walkway system. Schools, churches, and parks are acceptable, provided design and performance planning criteria are considered. Conversion of the ground level floors of large historic homes to professional office uses may be considered in keeping with design standards. Conversion of large homes to more than two living units is not acceptable. Construction of two-family and multiple-family residences is also not acceptable. Public parks, either individually or as part of a school property, are important enhancements and should remain.

# LAND USE

## Planning Considerations:

- ◆ Adopt performance planning and design criteria for development proposals involving reuse of church sites, and large home conversion and infill construction;
- ◆ Connect missing sidewalks at time of development or through the City's Capital Improvement Plan;
- ◆ Maintain dimensional requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance;
- ◆ Adopt requirements to include a community park or open space within large-scale developments;
- ◆ Include right-of-way maintenance for sidewalks and tree plantings in the Capital Improvement Plan; and
- ◆ Connect new development to adjacent neighborhoods with walkways and streets.

## Moderate Density Residential Neighborhood

**Location:** Moderate density residential designations are concentrated in two locations:

- ◆ Attached site condominiums on Snow Bird Circle, off of Vine Street west of the rail line; and
- ◆ Glendale Street near Oak Street at the city's south end.

**Existing Development Pattern:** This neighborhood partners with the traditional neighborhood as the core of the community. The housing scale and character is similar to the traditional neighborhoods but home conversions to two- and three-family structures are more prevalent. The primary street pattern is a rectilinear grid street pattern. A common theme is the use of prominent front entries with porches or stoops, sidewalks, street trees and detached rear yard garages. The residences on Snow Bird Circle are part of an attached site condominium development.

**Land Use Intent:** Neighborhoods continue to function with detached single-family residences. The classic grid street pattern with sidewalks is preferred. New residential development is encouraged to front existing public streets, create an internal grid street pattern and install walkable sidewalks linking to the public system. Schools, churches, parks and home conversions are acceptable provided design considerations are considered. Conversion of large homes to more than two living units is not preferred.

## Planning Considerations:

- ◆ Adopt design and performance criteria for conversion of single-family homes;
- ◆ Connect missing public sidewalks at the time of development or as part of the City's Capital Improvement Plan;
- ◆ Dimensional requirements as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance remain valid; and
- ◆ Adopt design standards for infill and conversion construction.

## Multi-Family Residential

**Location:** Multiple-family complexes are scattered throughout the city. They are located on Riverside Drive, Brown Street, Carney Drive, Vine Street and Oakland Street. A mid-rise public senior housing building is located on Third Street in the downtown area. Some of the large older single-family homes in the neighborhood west of downtown have been converted to three or four units.

**Existing Development Pattern:** The primary pattern is low-rise, one or two story structures. The two-story units are of style commonly known as garden apartments where a single entry provides access to four to eight apartments. The one-story complexes have an individual front door for each unit.



**Land Use Intent:** New multiple-family development is confined to areas currently zoned for multiple-family. Expansion of multiple-family housing will be permitted but strictly regulated in the Downtown Redevelopment Zoning District or in the Clinton Avenue or Pine River Development Target areas following the specific criteria. Existing apartment communities should maintain their structures and property. Planning considerations are as follows.

**Planning Considerations:**

- ◆ Traffic generated by any multiple-family use will not negatively impact single-family neighborhoods; and
- ◆ A framework for site and building design criteria should be developed and followed.

**Downtown St. Clair**

**Location:** The Downtown is bounded by the St. Clair River, Pine River, Fred Moore Highway, Sixth, Witherell, Fourth, and Vine streets, and includes the St. Clair Inn property. This area generally correlates to the Downtown Redevelopment District in the City’s zoning ordinance.

**Existing Development Pattern:** St. Clair’s Downtown has evolved into a suburban pattern of semi-isolated buildings and land uses since the 1970’s. Prior to 1970, the building pattern included shoulder to shoulder structures housing a range of retail businesses. The periphery of the Downtown still embodies remnants the pre-1970’s pattern. The building height does not exceed two stories except for the St. Clair Inn and the Third Street churches. The street pattern remains in the typical grid pattern except for the shopping mall superblock. Public facilities include three parks, the library, a senior housing tower, and the fire station.

**Land Use Intent:** The intent is to promote and support the Downtown as a regional destination for shopping, arts, events, commerce, and housing. A form-sensitive district permitting a tightly woven network of buildings, sidewalks, and a flexible fabric of mixed land uses is important. Uses that are isolated and do not promote social interactions, as well as drive-through windows and vehicle-dominated customer businesses are discouraged. The Downtown Redevelopment Zoning District places regulations that meet this intent.

**Planning Considerations:**

- ◆ Follow building and site design criteria established in the Downtown Redevelopment District;
- ◆ Encourage public art;

# LAND USE



- ◆ Permit on-street parking.
- ◆ Redesign Riverside Avenue (M-29) as a complete street with convenient and safe access between the Downtown buildings and Palmer Park;
- ◆ Develop bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as part of the Bridge to Bay Trail along M-29 through Downtown St. Clair and connect to existing trails to the north and south;
- ◆ Discourage drive-through windows or vehicle-dominated businesses; and
- ◆ Consider extending the Social District Ordinance and implement policies that provide efficient and convenient parking for curbside pickups and carry-out service during long-term emergency situations.

## Development Focus Areas

**Location:** Four areas are specifically planned as redevelopment areas:

- ◆ The Pine River area located south of Fred Moore and north of St. Clair highways;
- ◆ A central area near the intersection of Clinton Avenue and Whiting Street;
- ◆ A small group of undeveloped parcels focused on the unimproved Hugo Street between Jackson Street, N. Carney Drive, and Sinclair Street; and
- ◆ A linear strip of property extending from N. 6th Street west toward Carney, encompassing a number of closed school buildings, including the Riverview East High School, Eddy Elementary, and Gearing Elementary School.

**Existing Development Pattern:** The Pine River and Clinton Avenue areas exhibit a pre-existing mix of uses, large vacant or underutilized parcels of land, river or creek frontage, the ability to knit the Downtown to Carney Drive, and the ability to use planned development design criteria to a full extent.



The south shore of the Pine River area includes a marina, active rail line, private boathouses, residences, and a lodge. It has an industrial image with the marina operations and the rail line. Single-family homes front St. Clair Highway. The north shore of the Pine River is bordered and accessed by Fred Moore Highway and includes Pine Shores Golf Course, light industries, a private school, a barge operation, offices, and scattered residences.

The Clinton Avenue corridor has a concentration of commercial and industrial uses near the intersection with the rail line. These uses are modest in scale with buildings not exceeding two stories in height. Large vacant parcels are located north of Clinton Avenue.

The Hugo Street area includes vacant properties that are surrounded by commercial and office uses facing Sinclair Street and Carney Drive. Single-family homes are to the north facing Jackson Street and to the west.

**Land Use Intent (Pine River and Clinton Avenue):** The intent of these areas is to create a vibrant, high quality environment of detached single-family, attached single-family, or low-density multiple-family homes. Local businesses targeting nearby residents and businesses as customers are acceptable. Businesses competing with the downtown or the Carney Drive commerce are not acceptable. Public access to the Pine River should be provided by new development.

**Planning Considerations (Pine River and Clinton Avenue):**

- ◆ Encourage a mixed-use environment with a range of housing types and local businesses;
- ◆ Use walks and landscaping to improve public connectivity and enhance the mixed use areas;
- ◆ Allow flexibility with vacant building reuse provided impacts are not experienced in the surrounding areas;
- ◆ Adhere to screening and performance criteria for sites in near proximity to residences;
- ◆ Allow of maximum of three stories for building height;
- ◆ Develop guidelines and performance standards, including 'green' building techniques;

# LAND USE

- ◆ Adopt a complete streets ordinance and attempt to secure enhancement grants for establishing trees and walks;
- ◆ Encourage eco-friendly site design practice;
- ◆ Reserve the Pine River riverfront for public access;
- ◆ Create a sub-area concept plan for the Pine River mixed use area to understand the extent of the flood plain and other sensitive natural areas, property ownership, preferred density and to stimulate development interest;
- ◆ Consider alternative types of small-scale business uses, including community gardens, for the industrial property when the redevelopment opportunity presents itself. Any use should serve the surrounding neighborhoods and not compete with the downtown or the Fred Moore Highway/Carney Drive business area. The extent of soil contamination is a consideration; and
- ◆ Create a sub-area concept plan for the Clinton Avenue corridor as a residential community of mixed-housing types. Design should encourage residents with an active lifestyle with pedestrian connection to the citywide bike/walkway system. Alternative types of housing including cottage style homes should be considered.

**Land Use Intent (Hugo Street):** The intent of the Hugo Street Development Focus Area is to allow off-street parking for Sinclair Street offices, single-family homes, or be left in a natural state as a park or open space.

**Land Use Intent (Former School Properties):** The intent of this redevelopment focus area is to develop new residential living opportunities through adaptive reuse or the implementation of a planned unit development (PUD). As for residential development in these focus areas, west of the rail line should be developed as moderate density residential to serve as a transition area to lower-density residential uses to the west and south. East of the rail line to N. 6th Street, the focus should be on traditional neighborhood development. Using the PUD tool, appropriately-sized neighborhood commercial could be included to serve nearby residential areas.

## Commercial/Office

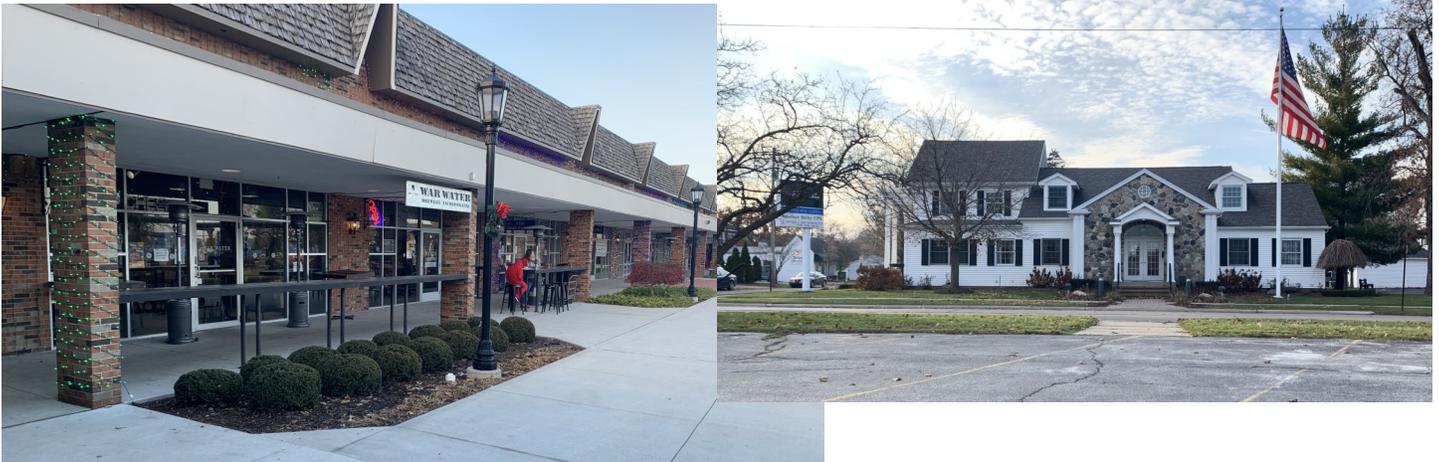
**Location:** Commercial and office uses are located throughout the city, including the areas designated as Downtown or mixed-use. The greatest concentration outside of Downtown is centered on the Fred Moore Highway and Carney Drive intersection. Smaller concentrations are found on Clinton Avenue and Riverside Avenue south of the Pine River.

**Existing Land Use Pattern:** Overall, commercial uses throughout the city are one-story in height and have large parking lots serving the motorized customer. Local businesses serving neighborhoods are scattered on Clinton Avenue, Fred Moore Highway, Third Street, and South Riverside Avenue.

**Land Use Intent:** Businesses serving a large portion of customer base from surrounding communities concentrate on Fred Moore Highway, adjacent Carney Drive, and the triangular land area on Range Road at Brown Street. Businesses in other locations should primarily meet the needs of adjacent neighborhoods or businesses. Businesses in the downtown and Mixed-Use districts follow the intents of those specific land use designations. Industry is phased out.

### Planning Considerations:

- ◆ Incorporate design and access management standards as code.
- ◆ Encourage eco-friendly site design practice.



- ◆ Adhere to screening and performance criteria for sites in near proximity to residences and mixed-use districts.
- ◆ Implement policies that provide efficient and convenient parking for curbside pickups and carry-out service during emergency or other similar situations.

## Industry

**Location:** Industrial land uses are located throughout the city. Cargill Salt is on the St. Clair Riverfront (Pine River Mixed-Use District). BP Dome Petroleum Corporation and other industry occupy a large area on the south at the end of Carney Drive. Biewer Lumber is located on St. Clair Highway and Oak Street adjacent to East China Township. The Range Road corridor is a northern extension of city dedicated to industrial uses, including the St. Clair Industrial Park. Isolated industrial businesses are also located on Fred Moore Highway and Clinton Avenue.

**Existing Development Pattern:** Cargill Salt (S. Riverside Drive), Biewer Lumber (Oak Street), and BP Dome Petroleum (S. Carney Drive) are large single-use sites. These uses have been operating for decades. The Range Road corridor is the focus for more recent industrial development. Modest sized industrial businesses are found on Fred Moore Highway and Clinton Avenue with a noticeable number of building vacancies on Fred Moore Highway east of Carney Drive.

**Land Use Intent:** The intent is to continue industrial uses on property as they exist. Retaining existing businesses is imperative for economic and workforce development. The St. Clair Industrial Park is a shovel-ready, 105-acre industrial park located on Range Road. The site has foreign trade zone and HUB zone status, direct rail and highway access to Canada. Land is cleared for development and fully serviced with utilities in place, including heavy power.

The site is adjacent to 3,400 feet of CSX railway with established easements to install active spurs. It is also located in close proximity to many tier one automotive suppliers and manufacturers. Environmental studies and wetland delineation are complete.

# LAND USE



## Park/Open Space

**Land Use Intent:** Parks and open spaces remain unchanged as mapped. However, the master plan promotes park expansion and the inclusion of dedicated public and private open spaces in new residential developments. The Pine River mixed-use area encourages development of a continuous linear park and nature area along the Pine River shore. The goals and actions adopted in the City of St. Clair Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2018-2022 (adopted in 2018) are incorporated into this plan.

### Planning Considerations:

- ◆ Use the five-year Parks and Recreation Plan as a guide for land use decisions.
- ◆ Connect parks, open spaces, bike trails/walking paths, and water trails into an interconnected system.
- ◆ Require community open spaces or gathering places such as plazas as part of residential development proposals.
- ◆ Require development along the Pine River to dedicate the river frontage as a public linear park.
- ◆ Work with community partners and stakeholders to complete existing gaps in the Bridge to Bay Trail.

## Public and Quasi-Public

**Location:** Public and quasi-public uses are located throughout the city.

**Existing Development Pattern:** City buildings, utilities, schools, churches and Hillside Cemetery are captured in this category of uses. In general, a concentration of public facilities, schools, and churches occurs in the core of the city south of Vine Street. City offices, recreation rooms, and police station are located on Carney Drive. St. Clair High School is on Clinton Avenue west of Carney, and the DPS office and yard are located on Palmer Street at St. Clair Highway.

**Land Use Intent:** Schools, religious, and civic uses are important to St. Clair. They contribute to the high quality of life. Some public uses, such as the DPS facilities and water plant, City storage yards and others, may not directly support neighborhood or business development, but are essential. The land use intent is to continue as these uses currently exist, but use design and performance considerations when expansion or new locations are proposed.

### Planning Considerations:

- ◆ Reuse or conversion of these sites must consider the surrounding land use context.
- ◆ Reuse of a school or religious facility in a single-family neighborhood continues as exists or converted to a residential community with a similar density, scale, and visual character.

- ◆ Public policy and design criteria guide development of traffic, building scale and density, and yard privacy.

## **FUTURE LAND USE GOALS**

The City of St. Clair has experienced changes in land use since the 2012 Community Comprehensive Plan:

- ◆ The St. Clair Inn is undergoing a massive redevelopment on both sides of M-29;
- ◆ School buildings within the city have been closed and, in some cases, are being redeveloped;
- ◆ M-29 has undergone a road diet, transforming from a four-lane road to a two-lane road with a left turn lane;
- ◆ The population is aging;
- ◆ The economy has shifted from a manufacturing to knowledge base; and
- ◆ Residents are increasingly using technology for education, employment, and services - which is impacting bricks and mortar retail, service industries, and education facilities.

The city is resilient and continues to grow into a high-quality place to live, shop, and work. This plan recognizes that St. Clair never has had a single land use; it is a “place” that will continue to be a home for residents and businesses alike. It intends to retain the delicate balance between alternative forms of new development and maintaining single-family residential neighborhoods that are its foundation.

### **Goal 1: Preserve the viability and character of existing neighborhoods.**

The residential neighborhoods are a key link in maintaining St. Clair’s social and economic health. The diversity of housing types and sizes, interesting architectural features, tree-lined streets and sidewalks are found in most of the city. Challenges are present. Continual upkeep and the financial ability to do so present the greatest threats. Another item worthy of consideration is the design of infill homes. The following actions are recommended to support Goal 1:

- ◆ Stimulate greater care in home maintenance and improvement through the availability of design guidelines and educational materials.
- ◆ Program appropriate street lighting, reforestation and other physical improvements into the City’s Capital Improvement Plan.
- ◆ Maintain a housing registration and inspection program.
- ◆ Enforce building codes and blight ordinances.
- ◆ Adopt design standards for infill development.
- ◆ Connect the sidewalk/path system.
- ◆ Enhance wayfinding and signage, particularly at gateways into the city.

### **Goal 2: Provide sufficient housing alternatives for future populations**

Projections indicate that the preference for rental housing will increase. Young adults are more mobile than ever and job locations are often moved or remote in the global economy. Active mature adults no longer with children in the house are selecting to lessen the maintenance costs and responsibilities associated with a large home and property. The senior population is projected to increase to 25 percent of the city’s population by 2045. The following actions are recommended:

- ◆ Permit moderate-density home ownership opportunities, such as pocket neighborhoods, cottage-style

# LAND USE

housing, and condominiums in strategic locations.

- ◆ Permit senior housing developments with independent, semi-dependent, and dependent care options to occupy a single site.
- ◆ Adopt Zoning Ordinance provisions that adapt to changing housing typologies.
- ◆ Adopt Zoning Ordinance provisions allowing the repurposing of non-residential vacant and underutilized buildings for residential living.

### **Goal 3: Provide for mixed-use developments in strategic locations.**

The master plan allows mixed-use development in a planned, integrated manner. The intent is not to permit isolated development in these areas. The mixing of uses is not a new concept for St. Clair. Residential and business mixed uses are found on Third and Fourth streets, Clinton Avenue, and Fred Moore and St. Clair highways. They are intermittent and have occurred over time in an unintended fashion. They are often home conversions. Zoning regulations currently permit mixed-uses in the downtown and on Fourth Street. The following actions are recommended:

- ◆ Allow and promote redevelopment in the downtown area as a dense walkable destination of shops, offices, restaurants, and parks.
- ◆ Prepare more specific sub-area redevelopment studies for the Pine River frontage and Clinton Avenue corridor development focus areas.
- ◆ Consider artist studios or communities as acceptable parts of a mixed-use composite.

### **Goal 4: Limit proposed industrial and large-scale commercial development to properties currently zoned for such uses.**

The City currently has vacant property available for manufacturing uses along the Range Road corridor. In contrast, industrial businesses have vacated and left unoccupied or underutilized buildings in the Fred Moore Highway corridor and north of the Pine River. General commercial uses should remain concentrated to the Downtown and Fred Moore Highway/Carney Drive areas. The following actions are recommended:

- ◆ Focus industrial development efforts to the Range Road corridor.
- ◆ Eliminate industrial zoning on properties fronting Fred Moore Highway as businesses vacate.
- ◆ Consider rezoning property to industrial or commercial districts only when proposed development cannot locate on appropriately zoned properties as mapped.

### **Goal 5: Provide a balanced mix of land uses promoting the values and lifestyles unique to St. Clair.**

The future land use pattern provides a balance between preserving much of the current property usage while projecting a need for moderate-density mixed-use districts in strategic locations on the Pine River and Clinton Avenue. The future land use pattern is based on how neighborhoods and districts function as much as the type of uses occupying property. This integrated approach to development is preferred as the city meets the expected demand of workers in the knowledge-based economy. The following actions are recommended:

- ◆ Maintain and continually review the master plan.
- ◆ Use the future land use plan when considering Zoning Ordinance amendments, capital improvement projects, or the merits of a development proposal.
- ◆ Enact Zoning Ordinance revisions as identified in the zoning plan chapter.
- ◆ Seek public participation early in the process of preparing development plans and ordinance changes.



**DRAFT**



### 3. COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

# COMMUNITY PROSPERITY



## Introduction

Economic development, growth and sustainability are important components of the welfare and prosperity of the City of St. Clair; however, the facilitation is often a constantly changing and complex challenge. In order to establish a strong foundation for economic prosperity, it is often the assistance of investments that a community relies on that help attract new business, retain and expand jobs, support life-long learning, build a strong tax base and support the amenities that make St. Clair an attractive and exciting place to live and work.

Economic investment is a task that the City can contribute to, but ultimately it requires the cooperation and investments from local and regional institutions, citizens, business leaders, government agencies, private companies as well as non-profit organizations and other community stakeholders. Partnerships of a type and magnitude not often previously seen are necessary. If done well, these investments can also work to attract the entrepreneurs that create jobs in the new economy and build greater economic resilience.

Economic investment is often dependent on the physical and social assets that a place provides. The city is projected to grow older like other cities in Michigan. Families have been raised and the children have moved someplace else for job opportunities in many instances. The City must look to retain the long-term parents as they provide leadership, history and volunteerism. However, the City should equally strive to capture young singles and families.

Inventoring, maintaining, and enhancing the city's unique assets is an important component that the City can prepare on its own. The City and economic organizations cannot create jobs and tax base but they create a dynamic climate and remove barriers for private and non-profit employers.

Economic prosperity is a result of generating ideas, nurturing partnerships, and attracting talented people. This thinking is reversed from economic development during the industrial age of the 20th century where equipment, capital appreciation, and basic employment skills were the priority. In the 1990's, communication technology gave most places around the globe an equal chance to compete.

The foremost assets of a region are its people and talent. As the national and regional economies have shifted to depend on knowledge-based industries, a skilled and trained workforce has become essential for new businesses to compete successfully. Providing all residents with good jobs is dependent on helping them prepare themselves with the full range of necessary skills, starting with basic literacy and life skills and



# COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

extending through college and post-graduate training. St. Clair's many assets and attributes must be recognized, built on, and actively promoted.

"Placemaking" is important to attracting a skilled workforce. Features such as trails, parks, bike paths, green amenities, along with opportunities for professional and personal growth, and dynamic energetic thinking among its leaders are a necessity. Michigan Futures, Inc. estimates that 45% of the young millennial generation search for a high density urban neighborhoods mixing housing types, commercial uses, arts and entertainment activity, and a walkable environment.

"Clustering" similar economic activity in close proximity to one another to combine assets and services is a technique. This approach is not new for St. Clair as it has an agreement with St. Clair Township for development of industrial land along Range Road.

## Placemaking

The term "placemaking" can mean many different things. When it comes to community planning, it often means simply creating better community spaces in our cities, villages, and townships. As Al Zelinka and Susan Jackson Harden note in *Placemaking on a Budget* (American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 536), placemaking can be defined as *"the process of adding value and meaning to the public realm through community-based revitalization projects rooted in local values, history, culture, and natural environment."*

Stressing the belief that cities flourish on well-managed community places, placemaking involves walkable streets, welcoming public spaces, and lively neighborhoods. For most people, specific places can invoke a whole host of emotions, including nostalgia, belonging, and exhilaration. The City must work to create places that will draw people in – places that make residents and visitors alike feel as though St. Clair is *the* place to be. By creating more functional, interesting places, shops, and businesses in our downtown, areas can thrive, jobs can be created and sustained, and the already high quality of life in the community will increase.

The City of St. Clair holds a rich history and unique character. The task for City officials and their partners is to create new connections to that history and uniqueness. Effective placemaking calls for creating a framework that responds to the scale of the immediate environment; consideration of the emotional impact it will have on its users; and a comprehension and love of the history of the built world. The condition of the community's sidewalks, plazas, parks, streets, and storefronts serve as a barometer of its vitality, social cohesion, public health, sense of place, and identity.

## First Impressions : Tourism (FIT) Assessment Program

The City of St. Clair participated in Michigan State University Extension's First Impressions: Tourism Assessment (FIT) program in the spring of 2019. MSU Extension developed a summary report based on the observations of five visitors who served as "assessors." Before beginning an unannounced visit to the city, each assessor conducted online research of the community. Each then traveled individually to the City of St. Clair between May 11 and June 23, 2019. Assessors recorded their experiences conducting visitor research, maneuvering through and around St. Clair, and visiting stores, restaurants, trails, museums, and other tourism-related sites. Key findings of the assessment were presented to the public in September 2019. A summary of the FIT report follows.

## Strengths Identified by Assessors:

- ◆ “A great waterfront area/park with several established businesses to build off of.”
- ◆ “Having the marina in town as an entry point for people to access the St. Clair River and Great Lakes brings a lot of people to the town.”
- ◆ “The river, water access, and the special boutiques.”
- ◆ “Free parking, walkability, community gathering and green space between mall and Palmer Park”
- ◆ “Positive efforts regarding special events.”
- ◆ “Bike trails, proximity to Detroit and Canada and other coastal towns.”
- ◆ “Supportive of entrepreneurship in the plaza.”
- ◆ “The boardwalk, the river, Palmer Park, the restaurant quality and small town feel and friendliness.”
- ◆ “The value for the dollar was very affordable.”



## Challenges Identified by Assessors:

- ◆ “A lack of a defined ‘Main Street’ or traditional downtown area. The area along the waterfront seems disjointed with large gaps between buildings and businesses.”
- ◆ “The mall area has an interesting layout and makes it a little bit difficult to find businesses.”
- ◆ “Poor roads/infrastructure”
- ◆ “High water levels currently.”
- ◆ “Potential for traffic problems (and conflicts between cars/pedestrians along Riverside Ave).”
- ◆ “Very ‘white’ and wealthy-feeling area. May make those of minority groups and lower economic status feel unwelcome or uncomfortable.”
- ◆ “Lack of accommodation for visitors.”
- ◆ “Attracting visitors south of the bridge.”
- ◆ “Attracting youth and ethnic diversity.”
- ◆ “Digital challenges, such as four different website representing St. Clair.”
- ◆ “The most useful websites are buried in other websites.”
- ◆ “St. Clair Shores auto filling issue when googling St. Clair.”

To see the full assessment, including the list of recommendations, refer to the complete First Impressions Tourism Summary Report for St. Clair by MSU Extension from September 2019.

## An Active Healthy Community

A prosperous community is also a healthy community. There are many steps a person can take to live a healthy lifestyle including, among other things, exercising regularly, eating healthy foods, visiting the doctor, and taking needed medications. Additionally, there are steps that communities can take to help promote healthier, active lifestyles. Roughly 20% of health outcomes are related to health care. The other 80% are a result of “social determinants” of health that include in part: the economy, environment, education, social capital (relationships and community engagement), and childhood trauma.

# COMMUNITY PROSPERITY



This means that the health of the community is dependent upon a far greater number of stakeholders. Many public, private, and voluntary organizations contribute to the health and well being of St. Clair County. This includes emergency responders, schools and higher education, businesses, nonprofit organizations, civic groups, local municipalities, recreation providers, and many more.

Through plans and ordinances, the City can develop policies and regulations that help to preserve environmental resources, enhance recreational opportunities, and improve walkability and mobility options for people. These actions go hand-in-hand in furthering placemaking initiatives.

## COVID-19 Pandemic

In early 2020, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted the world and continues to be an ongoing public health crisis for the state and the country until a vaccine is developed. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

As a result of the virus, communities, businesses, and individuals have had to adapt and take special precautions to limit community spread, including social distancing, wearing masks, and avoiding large gatherings. This has changed the way that government, business, and employees operate. There are a number of things that City officials can do to adapt to the “new normal” and continue to be resilient in the face of the pandemic and other emergency situations:

- ◆ Realize that many people are now working from home and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future - or even permanently. This will require that people have access to strong Broadband Internet resources. Additionally, with more people working remotely, there may be noticeable changes in traffic and parking. Depending on how long the pandemic lasts, commuting patterns and consumer behavior could be changed forever. The City will need to closely monitor these impacts going forward. A review of the city’s parking requirements should be performed.

- ◆ The growth of remote work also provides the City with an opportunity to market the beauty and uniqueness of St. Clair to people who no longer need to live close to their employer. Tapping into those people who may wish to live in a quaint community like St. Clair and can work from anywhere can help to drive growth and prosperity in the community.
- ◆ The St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has a multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan that covers all municipalities in the County. City officials should actively participate in the development and update of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is often required when going after emergency mitigation funds and programs.
- ◆ Multiple stakeholders in the County are partnering to create an effective economic response and recovery plan to deal with the long-term economic impacts of the pandemic. Small businesses were hit hard during state-mandated "stay-at-home" orders. City officials should stay abreast of the ongoing economic recovery efforts and participate when appropriate.
- ◆ Construction also fell behind in many areas. The City should ensure it is well-equipped to be responsive to developers as they submit development applications, site plans, permit applications, and other requests.
- ◆ The City created an emergency "Social District Ordinance" to help businesses in the downtown adapt during difficult times. That is the kind of thinking that should continue to be employed as the pandemic situation evolves. Being able to respond quickly and coming up with innovative policies to help businesses and employees continue to be successful is a key component of a community's response in such times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a number of risks and impacts to communities and businesses. In some communities, businesses have permanently shut down. City leaders need to be aware of the potential domino effect that business closures can have in downtowns and business districts. Increased vacancies can lead to deterioration and decrease property values. Events and public spaces have had to be cancelled or closed, which can impact businesses that benefit from events and public spaces. Loss of employment and/or income can cause people to lose their homes and have deeper impacts on the neighborhood as a whole.

## **Evolving the City - Community Prosperity Goals**

The goals of economic development are summed up in the ideals of building on the internal strengths, partnerships, and creating a welcoming ambience.

### **Goal 1: Create and maintain an economic development vision and strategy.**

The economic investment vision is to build off the city's proud history and strong assets. It will lead and vocalize the need for a regional economic development approach. It will engage in positive and inclusive partnerships. The City will stand in support of entrepreneurship, education and knowledge, collaboration, resident safety, health and wellness, energy efficiency, healthy communities, diverse culture, and new ideas and innovation.

### **Goal 2: Catalyze new investment and be development ready.**

To be vibrant and competitive, St. Clair must be ready for redevelopment. This involves planning for new

# COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

investment and reinvestment, identifying assets and opportunities, and focusing limited resources. New development needs to be enticed in the competitive marketplace. Businesses have many options open. It is equally important to retain existing businesses, maintaining the residential neighborhoods, and providing access to the water, parks, and bike/walkway systems. Public enhancement of streets, walks, parks, plazas, and similar public places serving areas prime for investment is a strong partnering approach that enhances the environment. With the redevelopment of the St. Clair Inn, additional opportunities for spin-off retail and service developments at the mall and throughout the city should be pursued and service developments at the mall and throughout the city should be pursued and welcomed.

## **Goal 3: Retain the city's strong assets.**

St. Clair will remain in a healthy state if it focuses on maintaining its neighborhoods and existing businesses. Those that reside in St. Clair, including business owners, have staked a good portion of their lives in the city and will volunteer and support improvement.

## **Goal 4: Increase economic development capacity.**

As economic development becomes increasingly regional and global in scope, the capacity of one local government unit to reach out becomes constricted. Three avenues to increasing promotional capacity are present. The first is to retain additional staff but this can be costly and does not guarantee that markets outside of the Blue Water area are reached. A second avenue is to partner with a county or regional economic development agency, a business organization, and other local governments. A third is to use technology to increase the range of exposure. Some combination of all three options will provide the largest impact for the City; however, collaborating with the Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County at a minimum will help the City promote itself and pursue economic development opportunities.

## **Goal 5: Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health.**

The City needs to proactively build up its resiliency - the ability to quickly adapt to sudden changes or "shocks" to the system. Unforeseen events can occur at any time and negatively impact the local economy, employment opportunities, and the community's overall quality of life. These events can come in the form of a sudden business closure, natural hazards such as ice storms and flooding, or public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Resilient communities have the necessary social and economic infrastructure in place to be able to adapt to such events.

## **Placemaking Goals**

The goals of placemaking are summed up in the ideals of adding value and meaning to the public realm through community-based revitalization projects rooted in local values, history, culture, and natural environment.

## **Goal 1: Preserve the inherent architectural character of individual historical architecture resources throughout the city.**

There are a number of historic sites identified in St. Clair County. These include homes, churches, schools, lighthouses, and museums. The City of St. Clair has a number of historical sites, including First Congregational Church, First Baptist Church, Fort Sinclair, the George F. McIntyre House, and St. Mary's



Catholic Church and Rectory - all of which are on the State Historic Register. Additionally, the St. Clair Inn is listed on both the State and National Historic Registers.

## **Goal 2: Highlight the quality of place in all developments throughout the city.**

Good urban form and design is one factor that can influence the creation of a quality place. Whether it is designing streets and sidewalks that encourage pedestrian and bicycling activity or providing a mix of uses that offer residents options for entertainment or recreation, the outcome of placemaking efforts is providing opportunities for interaction between people and fostering healthier, more vibrant, and economically viable communities.

## **Goal 3: Protect and promote the City of St. Clair's unique identity.**

Building and maintaining a unique identity is the very essence of placemaking. Residents and visitors alike should feel a sense of place when in St. Clair. Special places throughout the community should be connected by streets and public spaces that are well-designed, beautified, and complimented by arts and culture. People need to be enticed to walk, bike, paddle and enjoy their time in the city.

## **Goal 4: Continue to develop and promote St. Clair as an active, healthy community.**

According to the Project for Public Spaces, *“a growing body of research over the last several decades has shown the connections between “place” and health, and it is well documented that a person’s zip code can be a more reliable determinant of health than their genetic code.”* It is important the City provide a variety of options for living, shopping, and recreating. While low-density subdivisions serve a clear market demand, millennials and baby boomers increasingly seek housing in walkable and diverse communities that also provide access to services. Creating active, walkable places will help the community attract people seeking an alternative to conventional residential neighborhoods.

# COMMUNITY PROSPERITY



*This page intentionally left blank.*



**DRAFT**



## **4. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY**

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

## Regional Transportation Overview

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

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

The City of St. Clair is located on the east edge of the county, bordering the St. Clair River. It is south of Marysville, north of Marine City, and St. Clair Township and China Township are just to the west of it. The City of St. Clair covers a land area of 2.93 square miles and 0.68 square miles of water. The largest Michigan cities in close proximity are Flint and Detroit. Flint lies 69 miles directly west of Port Huron and Detroit is 59 miles southwest of Port Huron.

A significant amount of traffic travels north and south through the city on M-29 along the St. Clair River as it is a main corridor in the southern portion of the county. Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, and Lake Huron are big points of interest to people in all parts of Southeast Michigan and many take M-29 to get there.



The redeveloped St. Clair Inn is expected to be a major traffic generator in the city as it will be bringing guests in for tourism, weddings, and other events from all over the region and state.

## Road Network in St. Clair

Approximately 34 miles of public road and two bridges are located in the City of St. Clair. Fred Moore Highway provides a link to I-94 and to the City of Richmond. Local residents are able to access the greater Detroit Metropolitan Area by traveling west on Interstate 94. Nearby cities of Marysville and Port Huron to the north and Marine City to the south are connected by Riverside Avenue/River Road (M-29). Within St. Clair, M-29 has a drawbridge connecting the north and south sides of the Pine River. There are four major classifications which are described below. Based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) criteria, the functional classification system for rural communities, in ascending order, is as follows. See Map 4-1.

### Local Streets and Roads

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

### Collectors

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

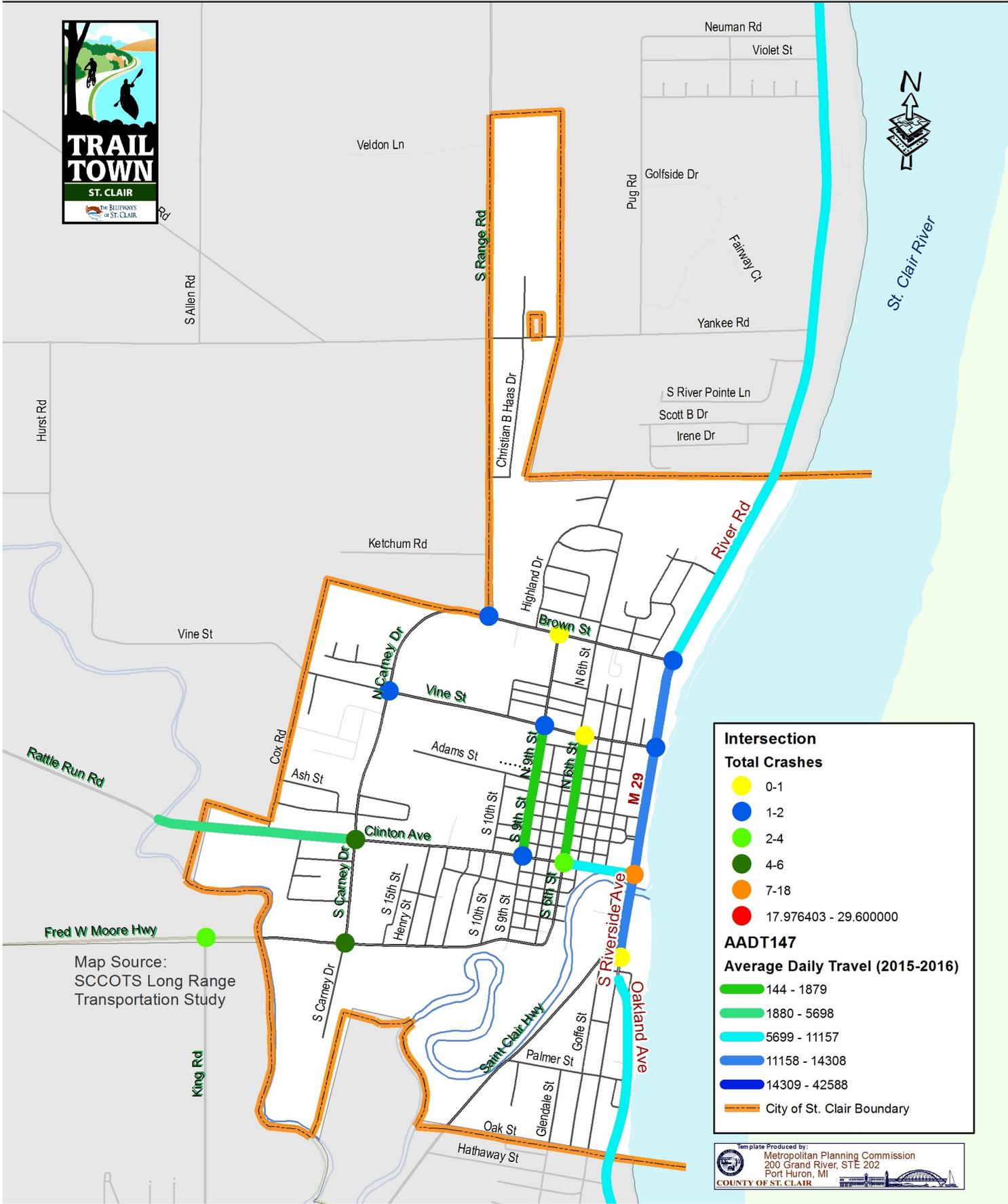
### Minor Arterials

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

### Principal Arterials

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

# MAP 4-1: TRAFFIC VOLUME & CRASHES



**Intersection**

**Total Crashes**

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-4
- 4-6
- 7-18
- 17.976403 - 29.600000

**AADT147**

**Average Daily Travel (2015-2016)**

- 144 - 1879
- 1880 - 5698
- 5699 - 11157
- 11158 - 14308
- 14309 - 42588
- City of St. Clair Boundary

Map Source:  
SCCOTS Long Range  
Transportation Study

## Traffic Volume

Existing traffic volumes for roadways throughout the City of St. Clair vary, depending upon the location of the segment studied or the date the study was conducted. It is critical to consider existing traffic volumes when considering future development within the city, plans for roadway improvements or projecting future capacity. With the redevelopment of the St. Clair Inn, a traffic impact study was done where engineers looked at existing traffic counts and used the latest version ITE Trip Generation for proposed mixed-use hotel developments to determine future traffic impacts in the area.

The City should work with the St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS), the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), and the St. Clair County Road Commission (SCCRC) to evaluate existing conditions and establish an action plan for review of specific traffic management issues.

Under optimum conditions, a two-lane road has a capacity for up to 12,000 vehicles per day. The majority of the roads in St. Clair have two lanes and carry less than 10,000 vehicles per day, aside from M-29 which carries just over 12,000 vehicles a day on average. The five roads that are classified as Minor Arterials have an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) ranging from 5,200 to 12,300 AADT. There are four roads that are classified as Major Collectors and their AADT ranges from 900 to 3,900. See Table 4-1 for more details.

## Traffic Crash Assessment

Traffic crash frequency is commonly used as a measure in identifying existing traffic safety issues. As shown in Table 4-2, there were 467 traffic crashes in the City of St. Clair between 2014 and 2018. Of that total, approximately 76% of those crashes resulted in property damage only. During that time period, there were three fatal crashes. See Map 4-1.

**TABLE 4-1: TRAFFIC COUNTS ON MAJOR ROADWAYS**

Road	Classification	Most Recent Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Count	Year
River Road (M-29)/ Riverside Drive	Minor Arterial	12,300	2016
Range Rd	Minor Arterial	6,700	2018
Brown St/Carney Dr	Minor Arterial	6,000	2016
Clinton Ave	Minor Arterial	9,600	2016
Fred Moore Highway	Minor Arterial	5,200	2016
9th Street	Major Collector	1,700	2016
Vine Street	Major Collector	3,900	2016
6th Street	Major Collector	900	2016
St. Clair Highway	Major Collector	1,400	2009

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

**TABLE 4-2: TRAFFIC CRASHES IN ST. CLAIR, 2014-2018**

Crash Severity	# of Crashes	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% of Crashes
Fatal	3	0	1	0	1	1	0.6%
Serious Injury	8	1	1	3	1	2	1.7%
Other Injury	99	20	27	17	19	16	21.2%
Property Damage Only	357	83	75	60	72	67	76.4%
<b>Total Crashes</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 4-3: HIGH CRASH INTERSECTIONS IN ST. CLAIR, 2014-2018**

Local Rank	County Rank	Intersection	Annual Average 2014-2018
1	26	Clinton Ave @ Riverside Dr	6.8
2	61	Carney Drive @ Fred W. Moore Hwy	4.6
3	65	Carney Drive @ Clinton Ave	4.4
4	92	6 <sup>th</sup> St @ Clinton Ave	3.6
5	107	Range @Yankee	3.2

**TABLE 4-4: HIGH CRASH ROAD SEGMENTS IN ST. CLAIR, 2014-2018**

Local Rank	County Rank	Segment	From Road- To Road	Annual Average 2014-2018
1	28	Range Rd	Brown St to Davis Rd.	14.2
2	35	River Rd	Brown St to River Rd	12.8
3	107	Riverside Dr	St. Clair Hwy to Clinton Ave	7.4
4	145	Carney Dr	Fred Moore Hwy to Clinton Ave	6.2
5	145	Oakland Ave	Bree Rd to Riverside Dr	6.2



## Key Corridors in St. Clair

### Riverside Drive

Also known as M-29, the state trunkline travels along the St. Clair River, or the eastern border of the city, from Marysville to the north, down to the I-94 and 23 Mile Rd interchange in Macomb County. Within the city limits of St. Clair it's referred to as River Road to the north, Riverside Drive, and Oakland Avenue to the south. It is classified as a minor arterial and has the highest traffic counts than any other road in the city.

Riverside Drive was a busy four lane road in the city limits for many years; however, MDOT completed a “road diet” in July 2019, taking the four lanes down to two lanes with a dedicated center turn lane from the north city limit to Palmer Road. The work included adjusting pavement markings to accommodate a dedicated center left-turn lane, marked shoulders for non-motorized traffic, and signal timing improvements. While a number of previous studies had pointed to the need address safety through the downtown, this change was further driven by the redevelopment of the St. Clair Inn to help calm traffic and create a safer pedestrian environment near the Inn.

### Range Road

This is a key corridor that runs north to south into the city, about one mile west of the waterfront. It is a two lane road with all types of land uses - commercial, residential, agricultural and industrial. There is some vacant land along this corridor.

### Brown St/Carney Drive

This corridor acts as a ring around the city, intersecting M-29 and going west and then south to connect to Fred Moore Highway, a major east-west artery to I-94. It is a two lane road with a variety of land uses along this corridor including; residential, commercial, the city municipal offices, elementary school, skate park, and new playground. This corridor is mainly built up, meaning there is no vacant land for future development, though there may be some redevelopment opportunities.

### Clinton Avenue

This is an east-west two lane corridor that brings traffic to the waterfront and the St. Clair City Boat Harbor. The majority of this corridor is residential use with some commercial uses. St. Clair High School is on Clinton Ave on the western border of the city limits. This corridor is mainly built up, meaning there is no vacant land for future development, though there may be some redevelopment opportunities.

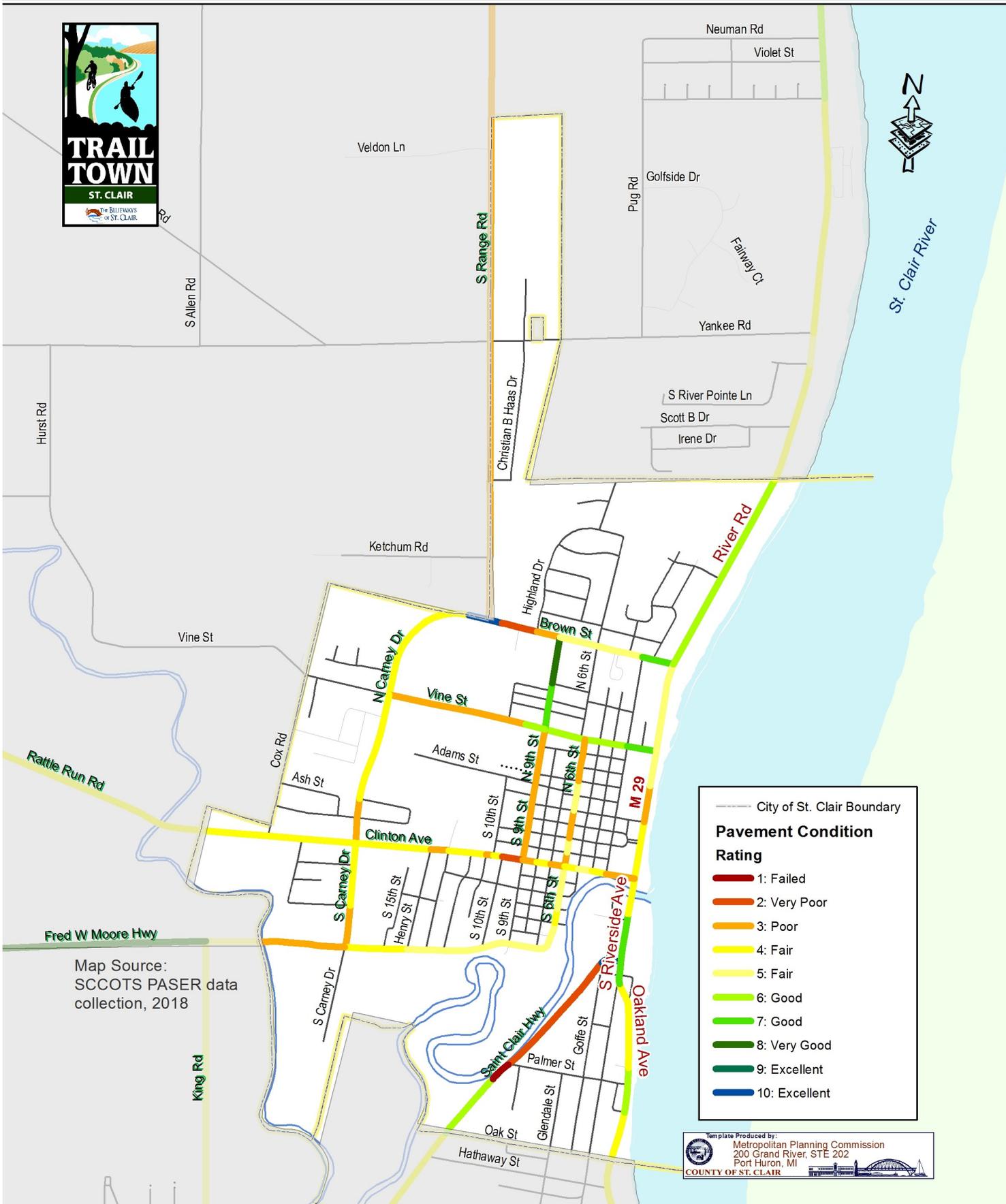
### Fred Moore Highway

This is a major east west two lane corridor that connects the City of St. Clair to I-94. It is in the southern portion of the city. It is mostly residential in the eastern portion of the city limits and then commercial in the western portion. This corridor is mainly built up, meaning there is no vacant land for future development, though there may be some redevelopment opportunities.

## Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating

Each year, the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) performs a visual inspection to evaluate pavement surface conditions on 50% of the federal-aid roads in St. Clair County. The next year, the

# MAP 4-2: ST. CLAIR PASER RATING, 2018



same pavement evaluation is performed for the other 50% that was not done the previous year. Typically, PASER evaluates pavement distress in asphalt and concrete roads. For asphalt roads, the rating team looks at surface defects, surface deformation, cracks, patches, and potholes. For concrete roads, the rating team evaluates joints, pavement cracks, pavement deformation (such as settlement or heave, utility repairs, patching, etc.), and surface defects (such as polishing, spalling, shallow reinforcing, etc.). In reviewing various defects, it is important to consider both the severity and extent. Typically, a defect will begin slowly and gradually become more severe. Rating the roads helps communities and road agencies manage road maintenance in an effective and fiscally responsible manner.

In 2018, the City of St. Clair hired Anderson, Eckstein, & Westrick, Inc to rate the roads in the City of St. Clair. The average rating is a 4.49, which is considered to be in “Poor” condition. However, this is improved from 2015 where city roads had an average rating of 4.00.

## Proposed Road Improvements

The City has one project in the County’s 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- ◆ Fred Moore Highway: Carney Dr to 15th St - Road Rehabilitation

The City has a road millage with plan to spend the following amounts in the coming years.

- ◆ 2019-2020: \$293,550 on major roads, \$416,650 on local roads
- ◆ 2020-2021: \$302,357 on major roads, \$429,150 on local roads
- ◆ 2021-2022: \$311,427 on major roads, \$442,024 on local roads
- ◆ 2022-2023: \$320,770 on major roads, \$455,285 on local roads
- ◆ 2023-2024: \$311,427 on major roads, \$442,024 on local roads

## Public Transportation

The Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC) operates bus service in the greater Port Huron area. There is one route, the M-29 North & South, and it makes a stop in St. Clair at the corner of Jay Street and Riverside Dr (M-29). This route is a fixed commuter route that connects the greater Port Huron area with employment centers in Macomb County and Metro Detroit through the SMART transportation system at 23 Mile Road and Gratiot Avenue in Chesterfield Township.

The route operates Monday through Friday only and has a northbound and a southbound route in the Morning and in the evening. The Northbound route leaves 23 Mile and Gratiot at 8:10 am, makes it to the St. Clair stop at 9:25 am and back to Port Huron at 9:35 am. In the evening, the route leaves at 5:50 pm, makes it to the St. Clair stop at 7:05 pm and back to Port Huron at 7:20 pm. The Southbound route leaves Port Huron at 7:10 am, makes it to the St. Clair Stop at 7:45 am and ends at 23 Mile and Gratiot at 9:05 am. In the evening, the route leaves at 4:10 pm, makes it to the St. Clair at 4:45 pm and ends at the 23 Mile Road and Gratiot at 6:05 pm.

## Non-Motorized Transportation

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

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY



## Complete Streets

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

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

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

There is no singular design prescription for complete streets. Each one is unique and should respond to the individual community's population and needs. A complete street may include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide

paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

## Implementing a Complete Streets Policy

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

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

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

Some additional challenges for implementing a complete streets policy may include:

- ◆ Lack of right-of-way in cramped thoroughfares may make multi-modal improvements difficult, costly, or impossible;
- ◆ Overcoming the misconception that complete streets cost more to build than traditional streets when in fact complete streets often cost less to construct. By fully considering the needs of all non-motorized travelers (pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) early in the life of a project, the costs associated with including non-motorized facilities are minimized; and
- ◆ Ensuring accurate transportation analysis as current methodologies for studying traffic may result in misleading results. For example, some current traffic methodologies may fail to consider how the presence of transit in a mixed-use corridor could potentially lower trip generation rates and thus reduce traffic volumes and congestion.

## An Ideal Complete Streets Policy

Regardless of a policy’s form, the National Complete Streets Coalition has identified important elements of a comprehensive complete streets policy. These elements could potentially be used in evaluating transportation projects within St. Clair County. A complete streets policy should include the following:

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

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

balancing user needs.

- 6) Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- 7) Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
- 8) Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

## Trails/Greenways

There are several significant multi-use paths in the region and in the City of St. Clair. A “greenway” refers to trails or pathways, designed for non-motorized traffic, that connect residential areas to other residential areas or commercial districts. Greenway resources refers to the total collection of trails and parks within a community or geographic area. Greenway resources include land and water areas, all of which function as an integrated system that provides more value than the sum of its individual parts.



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

### Wadhams to Avoca Trail

The Wadhams to Avoca Trail which is located on property that is owned and maintained by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) and managed as if it is a county park. The trail is 12 miles long now, as it starts at Avoca and travels east through Wadhams and ends at Lapeer Road, just west of the I-94 overpass at the outskirts of the City of Port Huron. There are plans to extend this trail to Yale.

### Bridge to Bay Trail

St. Clair County is working with 13 local communities to develop a 54-mile long network of non-motorized recreational trails linking the shoreline communities of New Baltimore (Macomb County), Algonac, Marine City, St. Clair, Marysville, Port Huron, and Lakeport. Over 25 miles of paved trail have already been constructed in various sections utilizing funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE) and private grants. Future plans call for the Bridge to Bay Trail to connect with the Macomb Orchard Trail in Richmond and the Wadhams to Avoca Trail.

The Bridge to Bay Trail extends beyond the Blue Water Bridge in the City of Port Huron, with additional extensions of the trail in Fort Gratiot Township.

### Trails in St. Clair

The City of St. Clair has an eastern (waterfront) Bridge to Bay trail along M-29 and a western Bridge to Bay trail that is mostly separated path, along less busy roads. The western path is mainly through residential areas and is heavily used by families it is a safe and protected from automobiles.

## Proposed Trails and Connectors

St. Clair County, along with the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and numerous local and regional partners, developed an updated countywide Trails Plan in 2019 that identifies existing gaps in countywide non-motorized trail networks, identifies preferred alternatives to eliminate those gaps, and prioritizes the timing and sequencing for completing needed connections. The overarching goal was to complete the Bridge to Bay Trail and Wadhams to Avoca trail networks, which includes connecting to the Macomb Orchard Trail and the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Route #1, which runs from South Haven in the western part of the state to Port Huron in the eastern part of the state.

There were three gaps identified in St. Clair; River Road Improvements, St. Clair South Connector, and Clinton Street Bikeway. For the River Road Improvements it includes the Road Diet described earlier in the plan. For the St. Clair South Connector it is proposed for an on-road route utilizing conventional bike lanes and short segments of buffered bike lanes where feasible. The existing side path on King Road provides a higher level facility and is used as the main connection south of St. Clair. The Clinton Street Bikeway is critical for providing an east-west connection from the existing Fred Moore side path trail and other existing trails and the waterfront. See Map 4-3.

### River Road Improvements

Planned improvements in St. Clair along portions of Riverside Drive and extending into River Road include a road diet and establishing bike lanes. Road diet plans indicate adequate width for creating buffered/protected bike lanes, and/or consolidating bike lanes into a protected two-way bikeway, especially in the commercial sections (9C). Section 9A is a priority for a side path continuation or buffered bikeway via shoulder widening.

### Clinton Street Bikeway

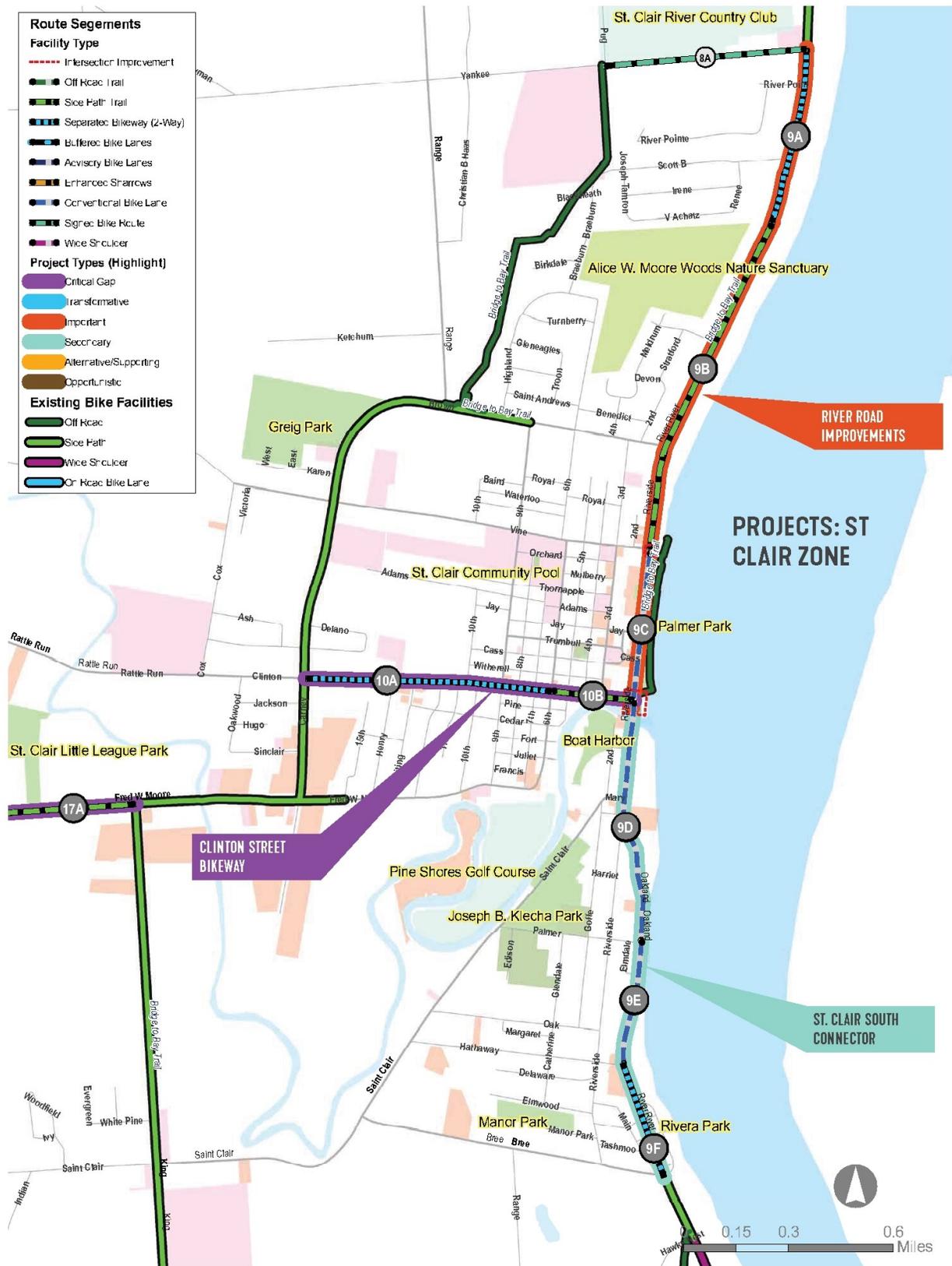
The Clinton Street Bikeway is critical for providing an east-west connection from the existing Fred Moore side path trail and connected trails/side paths through the center of town east into the downtown commercial area. Section 10A in the residential zone is relatively straightforward given the lack of on-street parking and overly wide travel lanes with unused pavement areas. Section 10B, going through a more commercial area, will be trickier to construct but provides a connection.

### St. Clair South Connector

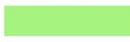
The St. Clair South Connector is an on-road route utilizing conventional bike lanes and short segments of buffered bike lanes where feasible. The right-of-way is narrow and of limited width for more extensive facilities. The side path on King Road provides a higher level facility (and is already built) and should be used as the main connection south from St. Clair.

The City should collaborate with countywide partners to implement the St. Clair County Trails Plan, as it represents the best opportunity to have a fully-connected regional trail network throughout St. Clair County.

# MAP 4-3: ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRAILS PLAN



# MAP 4-4: 5-MINUTE WALKABILITY

	School Buildings		Private Park Land
	Libraries		Public Land
	Blueways Water Trail		5 minute walk*
	Bridge To Bay Trail		City of St. Clair
	US Bike Route 20		

## Walkable St. Clair



# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

## Airports

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

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

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

## Rail and Water Freight

Rail and water are also important to moving people and goods. An active rail line travels through the City and connects to the BP Dome Petroleum liquid natural gas storage and distribution operation and continues south to the St. Clair power station. A deep water port on the St. Clair River owned by Cargill Salt Company can dock freighters. The Pine River provides access to the City harbor and boat launch, a private marina, and a tug and barge operation. The Blue Water Bridge in Port Huron offers an entry point to Canada.

## Future Transportation Needs and Trends

### Parking

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

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

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

### Connected and Autonomous Vehicles

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

According to the American Planning Association,

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

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



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

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

### **Shared-Use Mobility Services**

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

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

## Land Use and Infrastructure

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

*“if we do not address land use, there will be an ultimate impediment to access to transportation for consumers and constituents. Two examples of this impediment include parking and zoning. In many cities, when a new residential or commercial building is constructed, there must be a minimum number of parking spots attached. This requirement of parking increases housing costs in the area. Furthermore, when zoning laws encourage low density development, that density is eventually capped and cannot increase.”*

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

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

## Transportation and Mobility Goals

The goals of economic development are summed up in the ideals of building on the internal strengths, partnerships, and creating a welcoming ambience.

**Goal 1: Through investment strategies and innovation, preserve and improve the condition of the City’s transportation network so that all modes are reliable, resilient, and adaptable.**

Traditionally, transportation planning focused on the problem of roadway congestion and building new roads. Transportation engineers and planners were trained to accommodate rising traffic demands and a desire to support a suburban development pattern by building new and wider roads. Over time, transportation planning has taken on a wider range of issues and strategies. Transportation facilities need to be considered in relation to traffic volumes and roadway congestion, safety, nonmotorized transportation, land use relationship and intensities, impact to community character, environmental impacts, air quality, noise and fiscal constraints.

A key goal in the planning process is to provide an integrated system of transportation improvements, rather than a series of standalone, isolated improvements. A growing and aging community requires additional transportation choices in order to meet the mobility needs of residents. In addition to providing adequate capacity on existing facilities, nonmotorized connections between communities and public transportation options will be needed to help solve future mobility and connectivity issues.

## **Goal 2: Enhance mobility choices for all users of the transportation network through efficient and effective operations and reliable multimodal opportunities.**

In a 2012, Federal Highways Administration publication, the FHWA indicates that walking and bicycling are central to sustainability and livability. These forms of mobility are general inexpensive and easy to implement. Walking and bicycling also provide a variety of community benefits: they contribute to the health of individuals, encourage social interaction that strengthens communities, and support the vitality of retail districts and neighborhoods. It is also important for a community's transportation network to support choices to allow residents and visitors to make better decisions about when or if to travel, which routes to take, and which mode to choose. This provides for more predictability in travel modes, more options for avoiding delays, increased safety, and a better overall user experience.

## **Goal 3: Enhance quality of life for all communities and users of the transportation network.**

Transportation is a critical piece in a person's quality of life and plays a large role in placemaking activities. Transportation is commonly associated with simply moving people and goods. However, a transportation system as a whole can greatly impact the quality of life for residents. Roadway conditions can improve or degrade ones safety and traffic can lead to increased stress. Traffic congestion increases air pollution, so efficient transportation systems are needed to reduce air pollution and allow system users to reach their destination. Property values can also be affected by the quality of the transportation system in a surrounding neighborhood. People want reliable infrastructure with the option to choose whether to drive, ride, walk, or bike to all of their destinations. According to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), *"Placemaking emphasizes the connections between land use and transportation, as well as urban design and operations. Rather than just building roads to provide access and mobility, this approach to transportation planning, design, and operations emphasizes context-sensitive solutions that integrate transportation, building, and landscape design to create a sense of place."*

*This page intentionally left blank.*



**DRAFT**



## **5. PARKS, RECREATION, HISTORY & CULTURE**

# PARKS, RECREATION, HISTORY & CULTURE

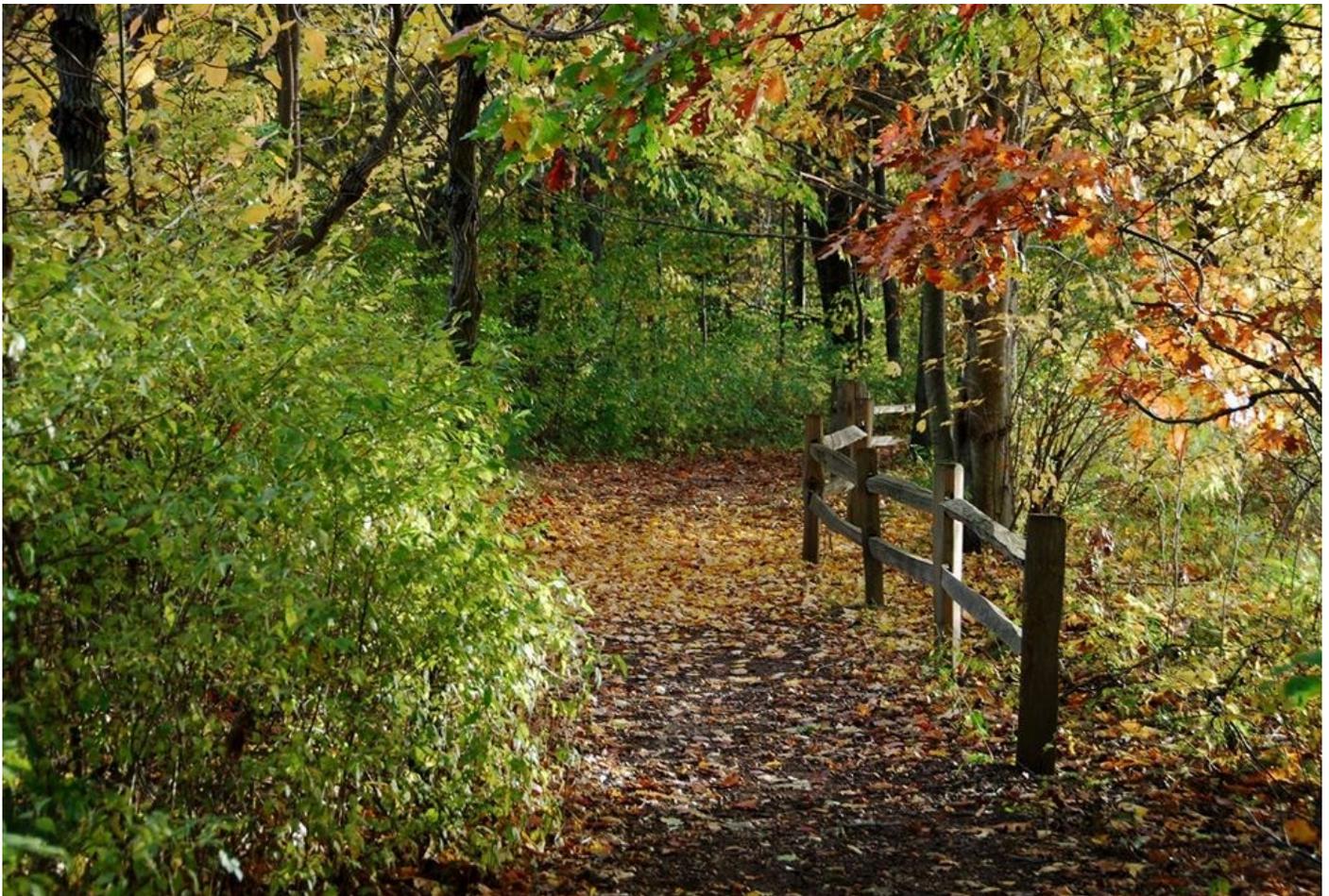
## Introduction

The City of St. Clair operates a park and open space system encompassing 210 acres of park land which extends outside City limits into St. Clair Township. The City operates four community parks, a multi-use path along Carney Drive, a community center, a public outdoor pool, a municipal golf course, and a boat harbor. The schools provide additional recreation facilities and a few private recreation facilities include a nature preserve, marina, and nature trails (Map 5-1).

St. Clair is responsible for four community parks: Greig, Klecha, Palmer, and Fred Moore Highway/St. Clair Little League parks. Greig Park, located on Carney Drive, includes both active and passive activities. Klecha Park, on the south part of the City, includes the former Little League ball fields. Palmer Park is a passive riverfront park on the St. Clair River. The newest community park on Fred Moore Highway includes the new Little League ball fields. This property has access to the Pine River and includes about 26 acres of undeveloped park land. The City also owns 1.7 acres of undeveloped park land along the Pine River.

The City also maintains three small parks: Diamond Point, Patrick Sinclair, and Rotary Club Park which include walking paths, landscaped, and seating areas. In addition, the City maintains a multi-use path along Carney Drive and Fred Moore Highway, and a pathway segment which connects to St. Clair Middle School.

The Community Center includes a multi-purpose room used for senior and youth programs, and available for public or private use. The Historical Museum, located on the upper floor, occupies most of the building for



# MAP 5-1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES



# PARKS, RECREATION, HISTORY & CULTURE



display and storage. An annex and customs house is also on-site. The outdoor pool provides swim lessons, competitive, and synchronized team, open, and family swim for City residents during the summer. Year-round aquatic programs are offered by the Recreation Department at the schools' indoor pool.

The East China School District includes a High School and Middle School located on the outskirts of the City. Riverview East High School, two public elementary schools, and other private or parochial schools are located within St. Clair. These schools provide recreation facilities for City residents and include playgrounds, athletic fields, open space, and indoor facilities for both students and residents.

Private recreational facilities in St. Clair include a marina, BP Dome Petroleum Corporation nature trails, and Alice Woods Nature Sanctuary, a Michigan Nature Association (MNA) property.

## **Recreation Programming**

The City is one of the largest providers of recreation programs in St. Clair County. The Recreation Department offers outstanding youth and adult team and individual sports opportunities, as well as special events to city residents and non-residents.

Other community events are sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Chamber of Commerce, Riverview Mall Association, and service groups. They include craft shows, 5K running races, the St. Clair Art Fair, farmers' market, fireworks, concerts at Riverview Plaza, and the offshore boat races.

City walking routes have been mapped out. They include the Pine River Trail, the Riverview Run, Joellyn's Stroll Around Town, the St. Clair Loop, and the Historical Home Walk.

## Culture and History

St. Clair is home to a thriving arts, culture, and history community. Several organizations are active and include a Beautification Commission, an Arts Association, the Alice W. Moore Center for the Arts, many local artists, a gallery, theater, and museum. These organizations in addition to many concerned citizens are stimulating an interest in the arts, history, and culture of St. Clair.

The annual International St. Clair Art Fair features artists with varied creative talents displayed on the shores of the St. Clair River. The arts gallery provides a showcase for artists to display their creations. There are also classes, designed for all ages and abilities, with other programs including lectures, demonstrations, tours, and trips. St. Clair parks exhibit many statues that were commissioned by the Moore family, who founded the Diamond Crystal Salt Company in 1886.

## Trails and Greenways

Greenways are corridors of land recognized for their ability to connect people and places together. According to the EPA, greenways promote outdoor recreation, catalyze economic development, increase adjacent property values, celebrate historical and cultural assets, promote conservation and environmental education and improve quality of life.

Greenways have multiple purposes, but from a recreation perspective they have two major functions:

- 1) To link and facilitate hiking and biking access between residential areas and parks.
- 2) To provide opportunities for the linear forms of outdoor recreation (i.e. hiking, jogging, bicycling, equestrian riding, and walking) in which many St. Clair County residents engage today. These recreation activities require the development of trails along the greenways.

There are two primary trail systems within St. Clair County: the Wadhams to Avoca Trail and the Bridge to Bay Trail. Trails and greenways are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

## The Blueways of St. Clair

In 2009, the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), in partnership with the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) applied for and was granted a Michigan Coastal Zone Management Grant to create a water trail system and website for the shoreline of St. Clair County.

The Blueways website lists 17 different paddling routes, totaling 151 miles, in nine unique bodies of water and lots of valuable information related to paddling and shoreline recreation. The website is dynamic, with driving directions between favorite points, aerial imagery maps, weather report links, and a “Birds Along the Blueway” section for birding enthusiasts. For more information, the Blueways of St. Clair website can be accessed at [www.BluewaysOfStClair.org](http://www.BluewaysOfStClair.org).

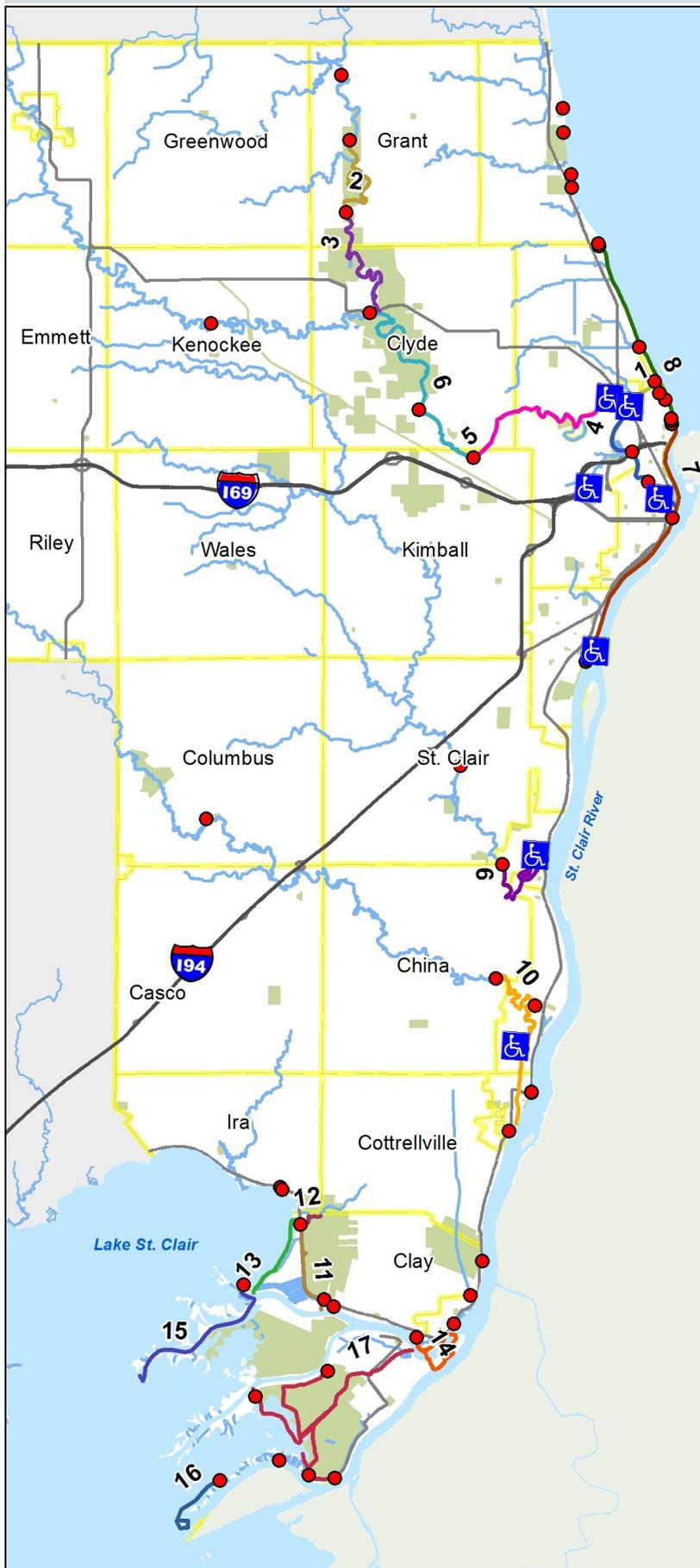
# MAP 5-2: BLUEWAYS OF ST. CLAIR



[www.BluewaysOfStClair.org](http://www.BluewaysOfStClair.org)

Lake Huron

The Island Loop  
National Water Trail



ADA Kayak/Canoe Launch

Public Land

Water Access Points

### Water Trails

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



## Parks, Recreation, History and Culture Goals

The focus of parks, recreation, cultural, and historical amenities should focus on the maintenance and improvement of existing parks, the establishment of a community-wide bike/walkway system, and maintaining and improving the city's cultural and historical amenities. The following goals and actions will add greatly to a vibrant urban experience, stimulate development, and maintain and attract families to St. Clair.

### Goal 1: Maintain a current Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

The recently adopted parks and recreation plan needs to be updated every five years. There is a need to keep this plan as well as any other special purpose parks and recreation planning document current through a regular schedule of updates and re-examinations, including the five-year updates to the recreation plan:

- ◆ Monitor residents' needs.
- ◆ Remain current with State of Michigan guidelines for community recreation planning.
- ◆ Maintain and update the five year capital improvement program for facilities, buildings, and equipment.
- ◆ Capitalize on grant opportunities that become available.



## **Goal 2: Maintain and improve existing parks**

The continued maintenance and update of park facilities is important to the quality of parks and recreation in St. Clair. Park facilities should be safe, functional, and well-maintained. This includes upgrading aging facilities, removing barriers to accessibility, and maintaining the parks. There is also a desire to continue improving park facilities to respond to the changing needs of residents, such as renovating or relocating the City pool, renovating Klecha Park, updating Greig Park, and improvements at other existing parks and the boat harbor.

## **Goal 3: Establish a continuous citywide bike/walkway system**

The establishment of a network of bike and walk ways to form a continuous system tying parks, schools, neighborhoods, businesses, and community facilities is a continued priority for the City. This system should be tied to the regional trail system planned for the area and to a complete streets policy for the City of St. Clair. Coordination with City Council, the Planning Commission, and the Downtown Development Authority will be necessary to develop and implement the system.

## **Goal 4: Acquire and develop new parks**

Potential land acquisition and parkland dedication should focus on providing areas for active recreation use and community gathering. Coordination with City Council and the Planning Commission will be necessary to acquire new parkland.

## **Goal 5: Continue to improve recreation services and partnerships**

The Recreation Department strives to provide quality and diverse recreation programs which respond to residents' desires and interests. The Recreation Department has maintained a high level of services that is well-appreciated by residents.

The continued coordination with area recreation providers including adjacent townships and the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as the schools, civic groups, and business organizations, is important to maximize the City's recreation potential. The Recreation Commission should play a role in the coordination of such services by focusing on increasing public awareness and support for park development projects and meeting community recreational needs for recreation programs.

The City should also encourage and participate in discussions with neighboring jurisdictions and St. Clair County on a potential regional community recreation center in an appropriate location to serve residents.

## **Goal 6: Provide for the efficient administration and funding of parks and recreation**

A quality parks and recreation system is dependent on available funding. Park improvements and operations have been funded through the City's general fund, the County's parks and recreation millage, and grants. A means of generating revenues through grants and fundraising where possible must continue to be a priority to implement capital improvement projects.

# PARKS, RECREATION, HISTORY & CULTURE

## Goal 7: Strengthen the City as a regional arts and cultural destination

- ◆ Promote the City as a regional destination for arts, music, history, theater, entertainment, and literary events.
- ◆ Support the efforts of public, private, and non-profit organizations dedicated to arts, culture, and history.

## Goal 8: Preserve the unique history of St. Clair.

- ◆ Adopt reasonable measures in the Zoning Ordinance that support preservation of historic structures and sites.
- ◆ Assist interested persons with cost effective design suggestions to preserve structures.
- ◆ Publish and distribute guides to historic resources.
- ◆ Conduct events focusing on St. Clair's history.
- ◆ Locate the history museum to a larger space in a convenient pedestrian accessible place.

## Strategic Action Program: Parks, Recreation, History and Culture

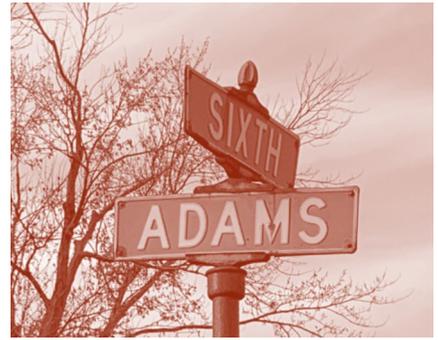
The City's five-year parks and recreation plan was adopted in 2017. The plan includes an action program detailing the manner in which the goals and objectives of that plan will be met. It includes a list of specific improvement projects, as well as strategies for implementation.

The following outlines a list of specific projects and strategic actions which are recommended for accomplishment during the five-year planning period of the parks and recreation plan.

- 1) **Maintaining and upgrading existing park facilities:** This action includes replacing or repairing old equipment and facilities that are in a state of disrepair, are outdated, or dangerous. It also includes improving the appearance of the City parks through appropriate landscaping and maintenance. All upgrades must meet safety and accessibility standards.
- 2) **Improving Palmer Park:** Because of its primary location along the St. Clair River, Palmer Park is a high priority for future park improvements.
- 3) **Improving Greig Park:** Greig Park is the main active park in the City of St. Clair.
- 4) **Developing the Legacy Park property:** Legacy Park is an important addition to the City's park system, providing ball fields for the area's baseball and softball leagues. Additional land acreage remains undeveloped.
- 5) **Renovating Klecha Park:** With Legacy Park housing the Little League ball fields, Klecha Park can be transformed into a neighborhood park by implementing the Klecha Park Master Plan.
- 6) **Improving and adding small parks and open spaces:** Diamond Point, Patrick Sinclair, and Rotary Club parks should be maintained and improved by providing walkway connections to the citywide walkway system. Other small public open spaces could also be added on vacant or underutilized lots.
- 7) **Acquiring parkland and open space:** Work to acquire and dedicate new parkland and open spaces as significant parcels and acquisition opportunities occur.

- 8) **Maintaining high quality recreation services and providing efficient/effective administration:** Financing the development of new facilities will have to be supported by grants, donations, and other funding sources. Recreation Department staff should continue to provide outstanding customer service and recreational opportunities for citizens.
- 9) **Actively supporting and participating in the continued development of bicycle and walking trails:** Work with City Council, the Planning Commission, and other partners to continue developing the multi-use pathway system by developing missing links, providing connections in and outside of the City, and adding complete streets features.
- 10) **Maintaining partnerships to enhance parks and recreation opportunities for citizens:** Facilitate and promote the use of City parks and recreation facilities by community groups including seniors, sports leagues, and public schools. Parks and Recreation Commissioners must continue to advocate and promote the social, economic, and environmental values and benefits of parks and recreation by reaching to the community and the region.
- 11) **Working with community partners to improve and promote water trails:** The City of St. Clair is fortunate to be located in an area that offers phenomenal opportunities for water-based recreation and enjoyment. Paddling sports have seen enormous growth in popularity in St. Clair County due in large part to the establishment of the Blueways of St. Clair, a countywide system of water trails. With the Pine and St. Clair Rivers, there are tremendous opportunities for water trail recreation in the City.
- 12) **Improving the St. Clair Boat Harbor:** The St. Clair Boat Harbor is an asset to the City of St. Clair and the larger region. Pleasure boating is hugely popular throughout the Metro Detroit area and the Boat Harbor provides excellent amenities for boaters looking to take advantage of the area's beautiful water resources.
- 13) **Improving the City's community pool and developing a splash pad:** Two important takeaways from the community survey during the parks and recreation planning process are that residents love the community pool and wish for it to remain - whether renovated in its current location or constructed new at another location. They also have a strong desire for a splash pad to be developed somewhere in the City.
- 14) **Continuing to maintain and promote Pine Shores Golf Course as a recreational destination:** The City operates the Pine Shores Golf Course, a nine-hole course that offers lessons, league play, and banquet facilities. The community survey revealed that many residents are not aware of the various services the golf course offers.

*This page intentionally left blank.*



**DRAFT**

## **6. CITY SERVICES & LEADERSHIP**

# CITY SERVICES & LEADERSHIP

## INTRODUCTION

Any city needs to take an aggressive and strong leadership role in the physical and social planning of their community. As public and private partnerships are becoming the norm to providing service, the City should maintain a strong leadership position and control its destiny.

St. Clair can be an environmental leader, demonstrating to others how to grow while embracing its natural resources and making wise use of energy resources. It is a vibrant and engaging place to live and work, where environmental and ecological resources can play a role in creating a community that draws the best workforce in the region. The city's natural environment is a large part of its enviable image. It borders the St. Clair River, and includes portions of the Pine River and Jordan Creek. Natural settings and habitat are integrated with these water systems such as the large natural wooded areas that are preserved in Greig Park and the Alice W. Moore Woods Nature Sanctuary.

## CITY SERVICES AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The quality of the community facilities directly reflects the quality of life that a city can provide. As community facilities age, continual improvements and updates are required to stay current with changing demands and needs. A Capital Improvement Plan is a guide for planning a community's expenditures.

Capital planning identifies purchase of physical assets or construction, major repair, reconstruction or replacement of capital items, such as buildings, utility systems, roadways, bridges, parks, heavy equipment, and extensive internal office needs which are of high cost and have a longer useful life. This section is one of the implementing measures prescribed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008).

## CITY ADMINISTRATION

City Administration operates from its offices at 547 N. Carney Drive. It includes the offices of city superintendent, clerk, assessing, treasury, accounting, building, recreation, CTV, and code enforcement.

### Five Year Capital Improvements - City Administration

- ◆ Continue to modernize technology and software
- ◆ Look into vehicle storage/overhead protection feasibility
- ◆ Improve the roof, mechanical infrastructure, flooring, and other facilities at City Hall

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department operates at 547 N. Carney Drive. It provides public safety, crime prevention, and emergency response within the boundaries of the city. The Department currently responds to the needs of nearby communities based on a mutual assistance agreement. However, it is prepared to expand its service area to surrounding townships if an agreement or authority is created.



# CITY SERVICES & LEADERSHIP

## Five Year Capital Improvements - Police Department

- ◆ Continuously maintain the vehicle fleet and equipment and replace/repair as needed
- ◆ No need for expanding or relocating to a larger site
- ◆ Continue to update technology and computer equipment

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The Department of Public Services (DPS) is located at 505 Palmer Avenue. The wastewater treatment facility is located on Second Street north of St. Clair Highway. The water treatment facility and elevated water tank is on Adams.

DPS is responsible for maintaining city streets and sidewalks, water and sewer lines, drinking water supply, sewage treatment, and public buildings and facilities. It coordinates with private utilities for electrical and gas transmission and maintenance projects. The St. Clair County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation coordinate street construction and maintenance for non-local streets. A consulting civil engineer provides guidance. The City has programmed street rehabilitation over the next 5 years for both major and local streets.

## Five Year Capital Improvements - Waste Water Operations

- ◆ Improve significantly the plant buildings, lift stations, and pumps and HVAC equipment
- ◆ Research long-term capacity capability to ensure ability to meet increasing plant demand
- ◆ Upgrade, as a longer-range action, the digester, replacing filter media, and increase the capacity of the sludge tank

## Five Year Capital Improvements - Water Operations

- ◆ Research system capacity and need for additional storage, transmission, and treatment plant upgrades
- ◆ Improve equipment efficiency, pave the parking lot, and replace the chlorine tanks
- ◆ Look into adding an additional filter at the plant

## Five Year Capital Improvements - Streets

The evaluation and rating of roads and streets in the city are detailed in Chapter 4. From 2020-2024 the City has budgeted \$3,014,465 for major and local street repair. The extent and timing of improvements is dependent of budgets, grants, and other sources of funding.

- ◆ Mill and resurface several other streets scattered throughout the city
- ◆ Routinely maintain the primary traffic carrying streets in the City's jurisdiction that are in good condition
- ◆ Work with MDOT and St. Clair County Road Commission to maintain and improve M-29/Riverside Avenue, Range Road, Yankee Road, and Cox Road
- ◆ Rehabilitate Fred Moore Highway from Carney to 15th Street

## ST. CLAIR BOAT HARBOR

The Boat Harbor is located on the south shore of the Pine River and accessed from Second Street. It accommodates seasonal warm weather use with docks and 120 boat wells and two launch ramps. A bathhouse, pavilion, and sand volleyball area provide support.



## Five Year Capital Improvements - Boat Harbor

- ◆ Painting and maintenance of seawall caps
- ◆ Complete harbor pavilions side curtains and roof replacement
- ◆ Renovate harbor office and landscaping
- ◆ Complete harbor wireless and security camera project
- ◆ Increase fleet of kayaks available for rent
- ◆ Dock decking replacement, including on North Wall

## PINE SHORES GOLF COURSE

The 90-year old municipal golf course is located on the north shore of the Pine River near downtown. It is an executive nine-hole facility with a small banquet facility.

## Five Year Capital Improvements - Pine Shores Golf Course

Severe or extended wet weather causes closure because of standing water and poor drainage. Improvements can extend the playing season.

- ◆ Install detention ponds and rain gardens to drain the grass areas
- ◆ Raise the cart path to allow passage in wet conditions
- ◆ Maintain and replace golf course equipment on an ongoing basis
- ◆ Maintain the clubhouse facility and improve the parking lot as necessary
- ◆ Repave and landscape the main and auxiliary parking lots
- ◆ Install a well-lit crosswalk across Fred Moore Highway from the auxiliary lot to the main parking lot to alleviate hazards
- ◆ Install a new roof on the clubhouse

## RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Recreation Department is administered from the City administration offices at 547 N. Carney Drive. It coordinates with the Department of Public Services to maintain parks, buildings, and equipment. A distinct five-year parks and recreation plan, incorporated into this master plan by reference, describes the five-year capital improvements in detail.

# CITY SERVICES & LEADERSHIP

## LONG RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A recommendation of the master plan is to prepare a formal five-year Capital Improvement Plan. The improvements described above were recorded through department interviews. A more extensive Capital Improvement Plan has a number of advantages including:

- ◆ Facilitates coordination between capital needs and operational budgets
- ◆ Allows for better scheduling of public improvements and coordination of construction
- ◆ Enhances the community's credit rating, control of its tax rate, and avoids sudden changes in its debt service requirements

## CITY SERVICES AND LEADERSHIP GOALS

**Goal 1: Strengthen collaborative partnerships between public and private sectors and leverage diverse investment.**

Intergovernmental cooperation is defined as an arrangement between two or more governments for accomplishing common goals, providing a service or solving a mutual problem. Cooperation can take many forms, including simple mutual aid benefits between two community fire departments, a multi-jurisdictional fire authority, or a joint planning commission. Depending on the situation, collaboration among governments can improve service delivery and is often a cost-efficient solution to a complex problem. The City of St. Clair should embrace cooperation and coordination between the City, neighboring communities, County agencies, and private/nonprofit organizations on subjects of mutual interest and mutual benefit in an effort to improve the well being and quality of life for present and future city residents.

**Goal 2: Embrace opportunities for infrastructure improvements and investments that support new technologies, broadband enhancements, and connected and autonomous vehicles.**

According to the American Planning Association (APA), the concept of a "Smart City" has been around since the 1990s, and while definitions and applications vary, common characteristics among them are that Smart Cities use information and technology to engage citizens, deliver City services, and enhance community systems. The use of Smart City technologies results in cost efficiencies, resilient and sustainable infrastructure, and an improved community experience. These infrastructure improvements will support enhanced resources and services for residents and businesses. Additionally, Smart City infrastructure typically provides City officials with an abundance of new data that can be analyzed to assist in resource allocation and decision making.

Aside from newer Smart City infrastructure, the community still has existing infrastructure on the ground today that will continue to need maintenance and improvements. Roads, water and sewer systems, lighting, recreational amenities, and other City assets should be included in an asset management plan and maintained through a comprehensive capital improvement program.



**DRAFT**



# 7. ZONING PLAN

# ZONING PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

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

## ZONING PLAN DEFINED

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

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

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

A zoning plan describes:

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

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

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

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

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

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE ST. CLAIR MASTER PLAN

This master plan sets forth the vision, goals, and planning objectives for growth and development in the City of St. Clair for the ensuing 20 years. It includes a specific strategy for managing change in land use and infrastructure during the planning period, and will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once every five years. This chapter presenting the zoning plan, along with the rest of the relevant parts of the master plan, is intended to guide the administration of and direct future changes to the City of St. Clair Zoning Ordinance. The plan emphasizes an integrated land use vision whereby minor mixing of mutually beneficial uses can occur in the city. Existing permitted uses of land, including density, setbacks and other related standards are established in the zoning ordinance.

## ZONING DISTRICT STANDARDS

The master plan has eleven land use designations. The Downtown and Development Focus designations are intended for mixed-use development and supported by a design framework. The balance of designations defines a primary land use.

The zoning ordinance has 14 districts and a planned unit development (PUD) option. All districts, except for the DRD Downtown Redevelopment District, MD-1 and MD-2 Mixed-Use Development, regulate a more segregated land use pattern; although a minor mixing of compatible uses is permitted. The DRD and MD-1 districts are concentrated in an area bounded by Riverside Drive (M-29), Clinton Avenue, Fourth Street and Vine Street. The MD-2 district is not designated on the zoning map.



# ZONING PLAN



The format of the zoning plan compares primary locations of zoning districts, summary of zoning intent and comparative future land use designations. One future land use category may be listed in multiple zoning districts due to the transition from the segregated to integrated development pattern. Since more than one designation of land use is cited, refer to the Future Land Use Plan chapter of this plan for specific intents.

The plan recognizes that the current height, bulk, location and use of buildings are acceptable in the short-term. The plan establishes specific actions in the implementation chapter to evaluate and prioritize changes to current design standards.

## *Residential Zoning Districts*

### **R-1 (Low Density) and R1-A (Medium Density) Single-Family Residential**

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** Single-family residential districts are located throughout the City but primarily concentrated along the St. Clair Riverfront; north of Brown Street; west of Ninth Street; and, south of Palme Avenue. R1 districts have a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet and are generally located north of Brown Street and west of Jordan Creek, although east of Jordan Creek and south of Vine Street. R1-A single-family districts have a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet and are generally found on the outer periphery of the R-2 Two-Family Residential Districts.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide districts in which the main use is single-family residential, plus its normal accessory and compatible supportive uses. A reasonable range of lot sizes is envisioned which will provide a choice of desirable and economically feasible development opportunities for all members of the general public. Certain other private and public uses are

permitted but subject to conditions which will insure their compatibility with the main use and character of these districts.

- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Low Density Residential and Traditional Neighborhood.

## R-2 Two-Family Residential

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** This district is directly north and west of the downtown; south of the Cargill Facility to Palmer Street; and between the Pine River and St. Clair Highway.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide a district in which the main uses include both single-family and two-family residential development, plus normal accessory and compatible supportive uses.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Moderate Density Residential.

## R-3 Multiple-Family Residential

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** R-3 districts are localized in six areas that include Riverside Drive and Brown Street north of downtown; north and south of Brown Street at Jordan Creek; Vine Street east of Carney Drive; Carney Drive south of Clinton Avenue; north of Clinton Avenue at Tenth Street; and east of Riverside Drive south of Palmer Street.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The R-3 Multiple-Family Residential district is designated to provide sites for multiple-family dwelling structures and related uses which will generally serve as zones of transition between non-residential districts and lower density single-family districts. Also, the R-3 district is further provided to serve the limited needs for the apartment type of unit in an otherwise low density single-family community. Due to its buffering characteristic between residential and non-residential uses, the R-3 district is intended to provide a residential area which is low rise in character, yet providing greater density by allowing increased building coverage in the most intense single-family residential district.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Multiple-Family Residential.

## MHP Mobile Home Park

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** The MHP district is based on design and property criteria for locating and is not mapped.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide districts of such size and location as will encourage good mobile home residential development, adjacent to essential community services, and otherwise protecting the health, safety and welfare of mobile home residents. In addition to the requirements of this Ordinance, all mobile home parks shall comply with the Mobile Home Commission Act (PA 419 of 1976) and the current Mobile Home Code adopted by the Michigan Mobile Home Commission.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** No designation - location based on zoning ordinance criteria.

# ZONING PLAN



## *Mixed-Use Zoning Districts*

### **DRD Downtown Redevelopment District**

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** The Downtown Redevelopment District is primarily located between Vine Street, St. Clair River, Pine River and the Third Street frontage. It also includes the St. Clair Inn Planned Unit Development property north of the downtown; the Clinton Street frontage between Third and Sixth Streets; and the south side of Witherell Street between Third and Sixth Streets.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent of this ordinance is to facilitate the implementation of the *Downtown Vision Plan* through visually and functionally strengthening the public right-of-way space; creating an orderly and cohesive visual image; fostering a business friendly redevelopment climate; and encouraging public use and social harmony. Regulations established within this ordinance set clear provisions and controls on building form and site design and the submission review process. Broader limits on land usage allow flexibility in determining the proper mix of residence and business types.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Downtown.

### **MD-1 Mixed-Use (Residential/Office)**

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** The MD-1 district is located on the properties fronting the east side of Fourth Street and on one property on Fred Moore Highway near the south end of Tenth Street.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** It is the intent of the MD district to preserve residential uses, while at the same time, allowing a mixture of business uses which will improve property values and the local economy. The MD district is designed to permit certain business and residential uses as a matter of right, while allowing certain public service uses that are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods to be considered as special approval uses.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Downtown and Development Focus Areas.



## MD-2 Mixed-Use (Residential/Local Commercial)

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** The MD-2 district is based on design and property criteria for locating and is not mapped.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** It is the intent of the MD district to preserve residential uses, while at the same time, allowing a mixture of business uses which will improve property values and the local economy. The MD district is designed to permit certain business and residential uses as a matter of right, while allowing certain public service uses that are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods to be considered as special approval uses.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Development Focus Areas and Commercial/Office.

## Planned Unit Development (PUD)

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** The St. Clair Inn property (north of the downtown); and the northeast corner of Vine and Fourth Streets are zoned Planned Unit Development. The PUD district is based on design and property criteria for locating and is not mapped prior to approval.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The provisions of this article provide enabling authority and standards for the submission, review, and approval of applications for planned unit developments. It is the intent of this article to authorize the use of planned unit development regulations for the purposes of: encouraging the use of land in accordance with its character and adaptability; conserving natural resources and energy; encouraging innovation in land use planning; providing enhanced housing, employment, shopping, traffic circulation and recreational opportunities for the people of the city; and bringing about a greater compatibility of design and use.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Downtown, Development Focus Areas, and Moderate Density Residential for the mapped locations.

# ZONING PLAN



## *Non-Residential Zoning Districts*

### OS Office Service

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** The OS district is not mapped.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide for research, service, and office uses in a planned development. When located in this district, such uses are to be developed in a manner which will complement neighboring land uses and the community, while at the same time providing for the necessary non-manufacturing uses such as corporate office, service, and research facilities.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Development Focus Areas and Commercial/Office.

### C-1 Local Commercial

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** Scattered properties on Clinton Avenue from Ninth to Henry Streets and on Riverside Avenue south of the Pine River.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide a district for commercial, office, and business uses which are located in the central part of the city and neighborhood areas. When located in this district, such uses are prevented from encroaching into other districts where they would be deemed incompatible. Development in this district is permitted under special approval and subject to conditions which are designed to promote homogenous and desirable patterns of usage.

- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Development Focus Area and Commerce/Office.

## C-2 General Commercial

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** A large concentration of C-2 zoning happens on Fred Moore Highway and Carney Drive centered on the intersection. The marina and abutting property south of the Pine River are included as are scattered properties on St. Clair Highway, Riverside Avenue and Range Road.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide a district in which the community's overall commercial and business facilities can be centralized to most efficiently and effectively serve the general community and adjacent areas. Other uses are permitted which are generally compatible with the character and requirements of these commercial and business uses. These regulations are designed to reduce possible conflicts with adjacent land uses and to provide conditions which encourage proper development within the district.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Pine River Development Focus Area, Commerce/Office, and Industry.

## M-1 Light Industrial

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** This district is generally located along Range Road, Fred Moore Highway, south Carney Drive and north side of Clinton Avenue at the rail line.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide the resources and services available and essential to good industrial development, while also guarding against the encroachment of these uses into districts where they would be considered incompatible.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Industry.

## M-2 Heavy Industrial

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** Heavy industry occurs in four places. Three of the areas are associated with single company property: Cargill Salt Operations on the St. Clair River; Biewer Lumber processing on Oak Street near St. Clair Highway; and, Dome/BP Petroleum propane storage facility at the south end of Carney Drive. The fourth area is property along the north shore of the Pine River.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The intent here is to provide a district whose location will permit heavy manufacturing types of use to best utilize essential public and private facilities and utilities.
- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Industry.

## PR & PF Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities

- ◆ **Zoning Map Locations:** This district is scattered throughout the city and civic, parks, recreation and utility facilities.
- ◆ **Zoning District Intent:** The district is designed to reserve needed and desirable lands for governmental and other public uses.



- ◆ **Future Land Use Designations:** Public/Quasi-Public and Park/Open Space.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ZONING AND THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

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

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

The future land use map, along with its associated descriptions for future land use classifications make up the Future Land Use Plan and can be found in Chapter 2. The future land use map should serve as a guide for making decisions on the rezoning of land. However, the planning commission and city council should consider the map to be one of many tools available to help them in making land use recommendations and decisions. The information contained on the map should be complemented by impact studies and other site-specific information as considered necessary by City officials.

## **RECOMMENDED ZONING TEXT ACTIONS**

- ◆ Evaluate the intent of each zoning district in relation to the vision of the comparable land use area.
- ◆ Prepare design standards for neighborhood infill development and single-family conversion to apartment units.

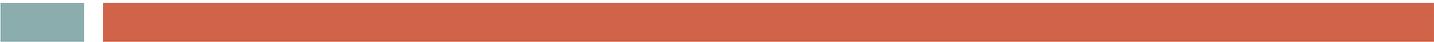
- ◆ Prepare design standards for development focus areas based on the framework adopted in the master plan.
- ◆ Modify the Planned Unit Development option to include mixed-use, greater residential densities, and urban features with the objective of using it in the Development Focus Areas.
- ◆ Review off-street parking regulations for non-residential zoning districts.
- ◆ Prepare complete streets and access management standards.

## RECOMMENDED ZONING MAP ACTIONS

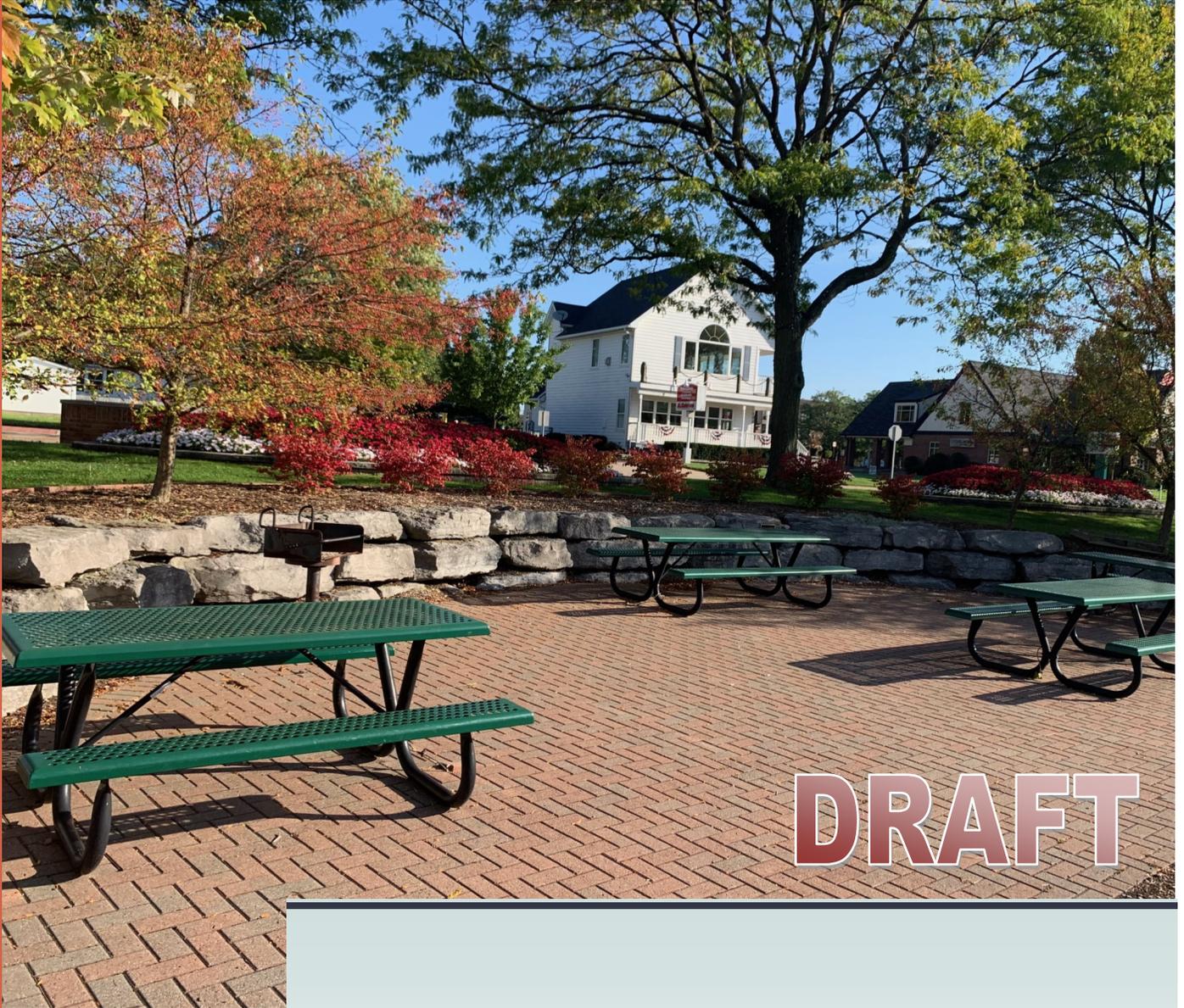
- ◆ Compare the Future Land Use and zoning maps to determine the properties that should be immediately rezoned.
- ◆ Maintain a current zoning map.
- ◆ For those areas not requiring immediate amending, revise the zoning map to reflect the corresponding future land use designation when development proposals meeting the master plan's goals are met.



# ZONING PLAN



*This page intentionally left blank.*



## 8. IMPLEMENTATION

# IMPLEMENTATION

## MASTER PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

The City of St. Clair Master Plan is a policy statement constructed of goals and actions intended to guide reasonable and realistic development decisions. The recommended actions are comprehensive in that a spectrum of zoning, physical planning, economic development and leadership actions is set forth in a manageable framework spread over a five year period.

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

In accordance with the MPEA, the City of St. Clair Master Plan will be reviewed every five years and, if necessary, will be updated to remain a viable document. There is constant change in the city's economic, demographic, and social character, which warrants revising the plan to reflect the latest trends relative to long-range goals. If circumstances necessitate a change to the plan prior the five-year review, then the plan will be amended as necessary.

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

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

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

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

## MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

### The Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is the process most often used to implement community master plans. Zoning is a legal means for the City to regulate private property in order to achieve orderly and harmonious land use relationships. The



zoning ordinance incorporates standards that promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public and property owners.

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

In considering an application for the rezoning of property, it is critical to the success of this master plan that the planning commission reviews the future land use map AND the goals and intent of the existing/proposed land use categories before making any land use decisions. While the map serves a guide, the associated recommendations are found in the text. No zoning request which is inconsistent with this plan should be considered without first making an amendment to the plan.

Evaluating the Zoning Ordinance is the priority action that the planning commission should undertake. Standards and regulations supporting a compact and walkable community (placemaking) will maintain the value often attributed for living in St. Clair. The schedule of actions describes separate ordinances but, optimally, the entire zoning ordinance should be comprehensively redrafted as a single action.

Recommendations for more thorough planning for the designated Development Focus Areas (see the future land use section in Chapter 2) should be completed prior to enacting zoning text and map amendments.

## **Physical Planning**

Physical planning recommendations cover a range of activities from conceptual design to construction activities. The most critical recommendation is the preparation and maintenance of a Capital Improvement Plan meeting a requirement of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. It provides the City with an opportunity to structure public improvements with master plan recommendations. Preparing sub-area plans for the Development Focus Areas is an important first step to making zoning changes.

## **Complete Streets**

Complete streets look at how all modes of transportation, including cars, bicycles, and pedestrians utilize the road network and provide a plan to create safe, efficient access for all users. The City should work with

# IMPLEMENTATION

community partners to develop a complete streets plan to be considered whenever transportation improvement projects are considered in the community.

## Economic Development

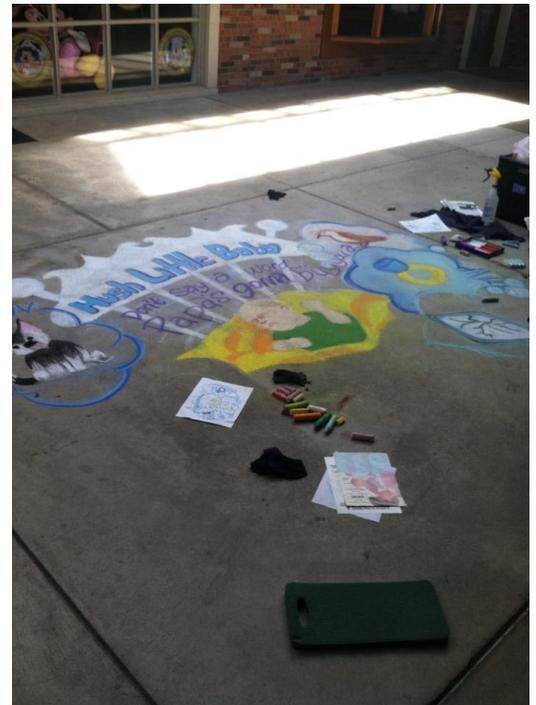
In general, building partnerships and distributing information through the internet are important activities to follow-through on. A strategy should be developed in conjunction with partner stakeholders to coordinate rather than duplicate efforts. The City should work closely with the Economic Development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

## Coordination and Collaboration

Implementation will require cooperation between governmental units. Maximum impact will be achieved only if the City is able to achieve cooperation from other units of government and agencies. Collaboration between local governments is a way to realize significant cost savings, while maintaining and expanding important services to residents and other stakeholders. Collaboration and coordination will also strengthen grant applications for funding assistance from many state and federal agencies that often look to fund projects that have a more regional focus. On top of that, intergovernmental cooperation can provide opportunities for economies of scale for procurement and service delivery.

## Setting Priorities

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



## Public Involvement

City leadership should ensure that residents and business owners are kept abreast of what is happening in the community. The public should be apprised of new development plans that are submitted for review and approval. In many communities, all active development proposals or projects are kept on a list on the municipal website, along with initial submittal dates, a processing timeline, and public hearing dates. This practice helps the community to build trust and to educate citizens about decisions regarding future development and public improvements. As technology changes, new methods of communication provide decision makers with low-cost, wide reaching ways of soliciting input. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can be utilized to seek meaningful input during the development phase of projects to identify potential issues and adjust plans accordingly.

## Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program

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

- 1) Community Plans and Public Outreach
- 2) Zoning Regulations
- 3) Development Review Process
- 4) Recruitment and Education
- 5) Redevelopment Ready Sites
- 6) Community Prosperity

The Redevelopment Ready Communities program will make the City of St. Clair more attractive for investors and may spur new economic development. Additionally, becoming engaged in the program and working toward RRC certification will allow development projects within the City to be eligible for potential incentive programs through the MEDC and other state agencies.

City leaders have been actively engaged with the RRC program to ultimately become a certified community. That participation and effort should be continued.



## RRC Baseline Report

City of St. Clair

August 2019

# IMPLEMENTATION

## **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**

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

## **Recreation Grant Programs**

As mentioned earlier, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) offers a variety of grant programs for park development and land acquisition, including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF), the Recreation Passport Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Each of these grants has different eligibility requirements and funding thresholds. All of the MDNR recreation grants require the City to have a five-year recreation plan that has been adopted within the past five years.

## **Bonding**

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

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

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

## **Brownfield Redevelopment**

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

In 2004, the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners established the St. Clair County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (SCCBRA) to assist in the revitalization of contaminated properties throughout the county. The SCCBRA is managed by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission. In 2017, the SCCBRA was awarded its second EPA Brownfield Coalition Assessment Grant (its first grant was awarded



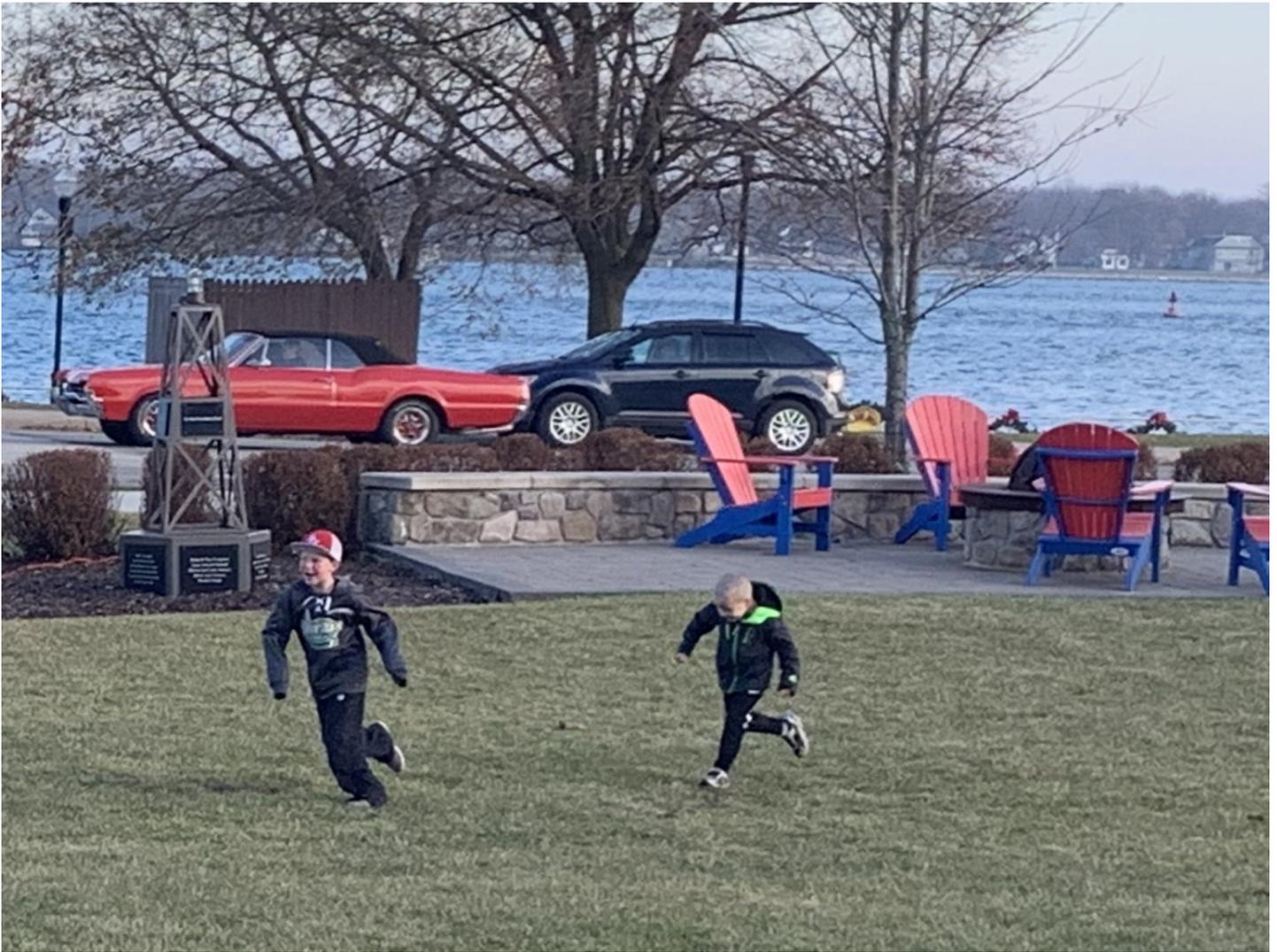
in 2010). This grant can be used to assess the environmental conditions on sites suspected of being impacted by petroleum products or hazardous substances. The St. Clair Inn redevelopment is one example of a local project that benefited from this grant program.

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

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

Beyond the use of the assessment grant, Brownfield project funding is also made possible through the use of incremental taxes generated by redevelopment projects approved in a Brownfield Plan. For more information about the County's Brownfield program visit <http://www.stclaircounty.org/Offices/metro/Brownfield.aspx>.

# IMPLEMENTATION



## Capital Improvement Programming

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

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

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

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

Recommendations presented in the CIP can serve to guide City investments in public facilities to provide necessary services to all land uses. Furthermore, with a CIP, the City can monitor its balance of borrowing power and municipal credit rating, which in turn affects the interest rates the City must pay when it borrows for public works construction.

## Leadership

Leadership actions encourage elected and appointed officials to play a proactive role in redevelopment. Leadership in building regional partnerships is important in maintaining services without impacting the budget. Joint meetings between the City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and development authorities are recommended to assure all boards and commissions follow a similar vision.

Other recommended tasks include:

- ◆ Maintaining strict code enforcement practice;
- ◆ Ensuring City officials and staff regularly communicate with residents and businesses through newsletters, website and town hall meetings;
- ◆ Ensuring City Council convenes annual planning and development meeting with Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and development authorities; and
- ◆ Strengthening knowledge of development, planning and zoning through training for elected and appointed officials.

#	PLANNING GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS	ACTION REQUIRED	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS/RESOURCES	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Housing and Livability</b>					
<b>Goal 1: Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all residents and groups.</b>					
	Strengthen community engagement and open decision-making processes offered through a combination of inclusive traditional and innovative methods.	planning, marketing	Ongoing	SCCMPC, EDA, MSUE, SEMCOG	<b>DRAFT</b>
	Actively involve older adults and engage the aging perspective in the planning process.	planning, marketing	Ongoing	Council on Aging	
	Ensure a range of affordable housing options is available for older adults.	planning, policy change	Ongoing	MSHDA, MEDC, EDA	
	Review AARP's Livability Index to determine areas for improvement and develop an action plan towards implementation.	planning, policy change	1-2 years		
	Provide quality public and private facilities and services that continue to meet the needs of City residents.	planning, coordination	Ongoing	SCC, EDA, MDOT, SEMCOG, MEDC	
<b>Goal 2: Ensure the long term stability of St. Clair's neighborhoods.</b>					
	Encourage quality infill development and renovations that reflect the character of the existing homes.	planning, policy change	Ongoing	MSHDA, MEDC, EDA, SCCMPC	
	Promote housing rehabilitation programs to facilitate use of existing quality housing as an alternative to new construction.	planning, marketing, fundraising, coordination	Ongoing	MSHDA, SCCMPC	MSHDA, philanthropy
	Provide for a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of existing and future residents of all ages, needs and abilities.	planning, coordination, policy change	Ongoing	Private developers	
	Promote residential development that reflects the existing character of St. Clair's neighborhoods, including interconnected walkable streets and context sensitive housing styles.	planning, policy change, code enforcement	Ongoing		
	Review the City's enforcement policies and procedures to identify ways in which to improve regulatory enforcement of and compliance with existing laws.	policy change, code enforcement	Ongoing		
	Consistently enforce zoning, building code & property maintenance regulations to ensure that rental units do not become a blighting influence on the community.	code enforcement	Ongoing		
	Develop regulations for short term rental properties.	planning, code enforcement	1-2 years	SCCMPC, MSUE, MAP	
<b>Transportation and Mobility</b>					
<b>Goal 1: Through investment strategies and innovation, preserve and improve the condition of the City's transportation network so that all modes are reliable, resilient, and adaptable.</b>					
	Increase safety for all travelers, regardless of travel mode.	design, coordination	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS	FHWA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Educate road users on their role and responsibilities in traffic safety, including distracted driving.	coordination, education	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS	MDOT, SEMCOG
	Cost-effectively maintain, operate and upgrade assets to maximize the useful life.	planning, budgeting	Ongoing		
	Integrate resilience and adaptability in network and systems management practices.	planning, coordination	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS	FHWA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Leverage technology, communications, and management strategies to maximize safety and operational efficiency of existing systems.	planning, coordination	Ongoing		
<b>Goal 2: Enhance mobility choices for all users of the transportation network through efficient and effective operations and reliable multimodal opportunities.</b>					
	Adopt a complete streets policy. Provide complete streets serving multiple functions.	policy change, design	1-2 years	SEMCOG, SCCOTS	FHWA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Promote and educate residents on safe walking and bicycling in St. Clair as a means to improve the health of residents, reduce traffic congestion, and provide viable alternatives to driving.	marketing, education	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS	MDOT, SEMCOG, philanthropy
	Link destinations that promote health, such as schools, parks, grocery stores, and work places, via a transportation network that facilitates safe travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, and automobile occupants.	design, planning, coordination, marketing	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, BWATC	
	Keep in mind the needs of children as well as elderly and disabled residents when planning for facilities and infrastructure.	planning, policy change	Ongoing		
	Plan for and invest in transportation infrastructure improvements to accommodate electric vehicles, connected vehicles, and other emerging technologies.	planning, budgeting, coordination, installation	3-6 years	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS	FHWA, MDOT, SEMCOG
<b>Goal 3: Enhance quality of life for all communities and users of the transportation network.</b>					
	Create opportunities for safe physical activity, equitable transportation choice, and community engagement.	planning, programming, education	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC, BWATC	FHWA, FTA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Plan, develop, and maintain transportation facilities in a manner that protects the natural, historic, and cultural environment and avoids or minimizes adverse impacts.	planning, design, coordination, policy change	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC, BWATC	FHWA, FTA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Strive for cleaner, more efficient and sustainable energy sources for transportation operations and facilities.	research, education, budgeting	3-6 years	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC, BWATC	FHWA, FTA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Improve transportation connectivity to established and emerging activity centers and tourist destinations.	planning, design, coordination, policy change	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC, BWATC	FHWA, FTA, MDOT, SEMCOG
	Coordinate transportation systems with land use for efficient and sustainable use of resources.	planning, coordination	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC, BWATC	
<b>Community Prosperity and Economic Development</b>					
<b>Goal 1: Create and maintain an economic development vision and strategy.</b>					
	Prepare an economic development vision and statement that guides elected officials and staff.	planning, coordination	1-2 years	EDA, MEDC, County	US EDA, MEDC, philanthropy
	Identify and promote the assets upon which to build future investments.	research, marketing	1-2 years	EDA, County, community partners	
	Partner with the EDA of St. Clair County, County government, and the surrounding communities to enhance the strategy into a regional approach.	coordination, marketing, policy change	1-2 years	EDA, County, community partners	US EDA, MEDC, philanthropy
	Target "growth" sectors and build a marketing campaign.	coordination, marketing	1-2 years	EDA, MEDC, County	
<b>Goal 2: Catalyze new investment and be development ready.</b>					
	At least every 5 years after adoption of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission and City Council shall review the master plan and determine whether to amend the Master Plan or adopt a new master plan.	planning, public engagement	3-6 years	SCCMPC, EDA	
	Update and formally adopt a 6-year CIP on an annual basis.	planning, coordination	Ongoing		
	Align the Zoning Ordinance with the goals of the Master Plan.	planning, policy change	Ongoing		
	Streamline the Site Plan Review process, where feasible.	coordination, policy change	Ongoing	EDA, SCCMPC, Developers	
	Update the City's Economic Development Strategy on a regular basis.	planning, coordination	1-2 years	EDA, MEDC, County, community partners	US EDA, MEDC, philanthropy
	Repair, renovate, contaminated, blighted, or functionally obsolete properties.	planning, coordination	Ongoing	EDA, SCCMPC, Brownfield Authority	US EDA, US EPA, MEDC, philanthropy
	Work to streamline and modernize the City's regulatory documents and internal processes, making it easy and efficient to develop in the City of St. Clair.	policy change	Ongoing	EDA, SCCMPC	
	Seek to continually advance the community by promoting "smart growth" principles, embracing cutting edge reinvestment tools, and making the redevelopment process more effective.	research, planning, policy change	Ongoing	SCCMPC, EDA, MSUE, SEMCOG	
<b>Goal 3: Retain the City's strong assets.</b>					
	Conduct an inventory of physical, social, and economic assets.	research, coordination	1-2 years	SCCMPC, EDA, community partners	
	Conduct an opinion survey of businesses to note their current and future needs to remain fiscally healthy.	coordination, business engagement	1-2 years	EDA, chambers of commerce, local businesses, community partners	
	Promote the positive conclusions as part of a business or tourism attraction campaign.	coordination, marketing	1-2 years	EDA, BWCVB, chambers of commerce	
<b>Goal 4: Increase economic development capacity.</b>					
	Inventory and evaluate the successes of similar cities.	research, coordination	1-2 years	EDA, SCCMPC, SEMCOG	
	Partner with other organizations and agencies to increase capacity.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing	EDA, County, community partners	
	Actively collaborate with the EDA of St. Clair County to increase economic development capacity.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing	EDA	
	Review the current use of technology and improve the hardware and software systems as budget permits.	research, budgeting	Ongoing	EDA, RESA, County, community partners	
<b>Goal 5: Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and implement negative changes in its economic health and implement strategies that build resilience in local assets.</b>					
	Plan for post-disaster economic recovery.	planning, coordination	Ongoing	EDA, SCC HSEM, SCCMPC, community partners	FEMA, EGGLE, MEDC
	Plan for the mitigation and redevelopment of brownfields for productive uses.	planning, coordination	1-2 years	EDA, SCCMPC, Brownfield Authority	US EPA, EGGLE
	Focus on business attraction, business retention, creating jobs and growing the City's revenue base.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing	EDA	
	Cultivate entrepreneurship in St. Clair.	coordination, marketing	Ongoing	EDA, chambers of commerce, local businesses, community partners, SC4, RESA	
	Understand and implement "Placemaking" as a vital part of economic development.	planning, engaging public	Ongoing	EDA, SCCMPC, BWCVB, chambers of commerce	
	Help existing St. Clair business employers become more competitive, enabling them to expand and grow in the City.	coordination, collaboration, policy change	Ongoing	EDA, chambers of commerce	
	Leverage economic development tools to attract and retain business.	research, coordination	Ongoing	EDA, MEDC, community partners	
	Ensure that residents and businesses have access to quality high speed Broadband.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing	EDA, MEDC, Connect Michigan, SCCMPC, RESA	US EDA, Connected Nation, MEDC
<b>Placemaking</b>					
<b>Goal 1: Preserve the inherent architectural character of individual historical architecture resources throughout the City.</b>					
	Recognize the need to seek alternate uses for structures that are no longer suitable for their original purpose.	planning, coordination, engaging public	Ongoing		
	Monitor historical and architectural resources and promote methods to ensure their preservation.	research, collaboration	Ongoing	Community partners	
	Work with local historic preservation groups, including the Historic Commission, to identify pressing issues and resources.	research, collaboration, engaging public	Ongoing	Community partners	
	Inventory and map heritage buildings in the City and highlight a tour route.	research, mapping, marketing	1-2 years	SHPO, BWCVB, community partners	
<b>Goal 2: Highlight the quality of place in all developments throughout the City.</b>					
	Consider accessibility and walkability in all development proposals.	coordination, policy change	Ongoing	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS	
	Focus on building a community centered on people first.	planning, engaging public	Ongoing		
	Identify opportunities to leverage and connect community events and activities.	coordination, marketing	Ongoing	BWCVB, chambers of commerce, community partners	
	Continually provide opportunities for social interaction.	coordination, marketing	Ongoing		
	Improve the City of St. Clair website and the City's overall online presence and keep it updated.	budgeting, design	1-2 years		
	Ensure that local businesses are well-versed on things to do in St. Clair.	research, education, marketing	Ongoing		

CITY OF ST. CLAIR MASTER PLAN | IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

#	PLANNING GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS	ACTION REQUIRED	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS/RESOURCES	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	
<b>Placemaking (continued)</b>						
<b>Goal 3: Protect and promote the City of St. Clair's unique identity.</b>						
	Implement the recommendations of the First Impressions Tourism Assessment conducted by Michigan State University Extension.	planning, coordination, collaboration, policy change	1-2 years	MSUE, EDA, SCCMPC, BWCVB, chambers of commerce, community partners	MEDC, MDNR, MNRTF, philanthropy	
	Ensure that social vibrancy is fostered and strengthened through human-scale design of buildings, streetscapes, and public spaces.	planning, policy change, code enforcement	Ongoing			
	Preserve and promote the St. Clair River waterfront as a destination.	planning, marketing	Ongoing	BWCVB, FOSCR, chambers of commerce	EGLE, MDNR	
	Continue to animate the public realm through community events, celebrations, and special events.	planning, marketing	Ongoing	BWCVB, chambers of commerce		
	Preserve the views from the public realm of existing landmarks and ensure that new landmarks enhance the visual identity and appearance of the City of St. Clair.	planning, design, code enforcement	Ongoing			
	Promote the City as a regional destination for arts, music, history, theater, entertainment, and literary events.	coordination, marketing	Ongoing	BWCVB, chambers of commerce, community partners	MCACA, MEDC, philanthropy	
	Support the efforts of public, private, and non-profit organizations dedicated to arts, culture, and history.	coordination, collaboration, budgeting	Ongoing	BWCVB, nonprofit organizations, community partners	MCACA, philanthropy	
	Improve wayfinding throughout the City.	planning, design, coordination	1-2 years	MDOT, SCCOTS, PARC, community partners	MDOT, SEMCOG, PARC Millage	
<b>Goal 4: Continue to develop and promote St. Clair as an active, healthy community.</b>						
	Reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants in the natural and built environments.	coordination, policy change	Ongoing	SCCHD, EGLE	EGLE, FEMA	
	Provide accessible parks, recreation facilities, greenways, and open space near all neighborhoods.	planning, budgeting	Ongoing	PARC, community partners	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF, MDOT	
	Plan for access to healthy, locally-grown foods for all neighborhoods.	planning, coordination	Ongoing	SCCHD, MSUE, MEDC	MDARD, MEDC, MSHDA	
	Expand pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks and bike paths that are safely removed from automobile traffic, as well as good Rights-Of-Way (ROW) laws and clear, easy-to-follow signage.	planning, coordination, design, installation, policy change	1-2 years	MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF, MDOT, SEMCOG, philanthropy	
	Promote healthy and active lifestyle challenges at the City's parks, recreational facilities, and civic buildings	coordination, education, marketing	Ongoing	SCCHD, PARC, community partners	<b>DRAFT</b>	
	Integrate a public health checklist into the site plan review process to promote and encourage a healthy and active lifestyle.	coordination, policy change	1-2 years	SCCMPC, SCCHD		
	Promote active living by making it safer to walk or bike to daily activities like shopping, work, school, and recreation.	coordination, education, marketing	Ongoing	SCCHD, MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC		
	Promote easy and accessible options for routine physical activity, such as walking to and from schools, parks, recreational facilities, retail centers and religious facilities.	planning, design, marketing, coordination	Ongoing	SCCHD, MDOT, SEMCOG, SCCOTS, PARC		
	Consider the health impact of land use decisions by seeking advice from public health professionals on the potential health effects of a project or policy before it is built or implemented.	planning, coordination, policy change	Ongoing	SCCHD, SCCMPC		
<b>City Services and Leadership</b>						
<b>Goal 1: Strengthen collaborative partnerships between public and private sectors and leverage diverse investment</b>						
	Encourage dialogue and collaboration with neighboring townships regarding land use and development issues.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing	Community partners		
	Work to establish common or compatible development standards for uses near the City's boundaries that are palatable to both the City and its neighbors.	coordination, collaboration, policy change	3-6 years	Community partners		
	Work with neighboring communities and other stakeholders to explore development of a regional recreation center.	coordination, collaboration, engaging public, fundraising	3-6 years	PARC, community partners		
	Continue to coordinate activities with the Blue Water Convention and Visitors Bureau as an agent for increasing the economic and quality-of-life contributions derived from travel and tourism activities in the City of St. Clair.	coordination, collaboration, marketing	Ongoing	BWCVB, community partners		
	Build partnerships with private sector players and community stakeholder groups to capitalize on significant development opportunities.	coordination, collaboration, engaging public	Ongoing	EDA, County, community partners, nonprofit organizations		
<b>Goal 2: Embrace opportunities for infrastructure improvements and investments that support new technologies, broadband enhancements, and connected and autonomous vehicles.</b>						
	Work to bring faster broadband service to the City for the convenience of residents and the competitiveness of businesses.	coordination, fundraising, private/public partnering	Ongoing	EDA, SCCMPC, Connect Michigan, RESA	MEDC, US EDA, Connected Nation	
	Continually seek improved communication and engagement options with the public.	coordination, engaging public	Ongoing			
	Modernize the City's website to promote services, events, parks, and other community information.	design, budgeting, marketing	1-2 years			
	Explore mutually beneficial service sharing options.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing	Community partners		
	Continue to develop a capital improvement program that sets forth a long-term plan for improving services in the community.	planning, budgeting, coordination	Ongoing			
	Pursue funding opportunities to develop new infrastructure that will support connected and autonomous vehicles.	planning, coordination, research, fundraising	3-6 years	MDOT, MEDC, SEMCOG, EDA, SCCOTS	FHWA, MDOT, MEDC	
	Work with state, regional, and local partners to share data related to "smart city" infrastructure.	coordination, collaboration	3-6 years	MDOT, MEDC, SEMCOG, EDA, SCCOTS	FHWA, MDOT, SEMCOG	
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>						
<b>Goal 1: Implement the Strategic Action Program in the City of St. Clair Parks and Recreation Plan 2018-2022</b>						
	Maintain and upgrade existing park facilities.	budgeting, fundraising	Ongoing	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Improve Palmer Park.	budgeting, fundraising	3-6 years	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Improve Greig Park.	budgeting, fundraising	3-6 years	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Develop the Legacy Park property.	budgeting, fundraising	3-6 years	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Renovate Klecha Park.	budgeting, fundraising	1-2 years	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Improve and add small parks and open spaces in the City.	planning, budgeting, fundraising	Ongoing	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Acquire parkland and open space as significant parcels and acquisition opportunities occur.	planning, budgeting, fundraising	Ongoing	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Maintain high quality recreation services and provide efficient administration.	coordination, collaboration	Ongoing			
	Actively support and participate in the development of bicycle and walking trails.	collaboration, fundraising	Ongoing	PARC, FOSCR, regional trail partners	MDNR, MNRTF, MDOT, SEMCOG	
	Maintain partnerships to enhance parks and recreation opportunities for citizens.	collaboration, engaging public	Ongoing	PARC, FOSCR, regional trail partners		
	Work with community partners to improve and promote the Blueways of St. Clair.	collaboration, marketing	Ongoing	Blueways of St. Clair, FOSCR, PARC		
	Improve the St. Clair Boat Harbor.	budgeting, fundraising	3-6 years	Community partners, MDNR Waterways Commission	MDNR	
	Improve the City's community pool and develop a splash pad.	planning, budgeting, fundraising	3-6 years	Community partners, PARC	PARC Millage, MDNR, MNRTF	
	Continue to maintain and promote Pine Shores Golf Course as a recreational destination.	budgeting, fundraising, marketing	Ongoing	Community partners, BWCVB	PARC Millage	
<b>Future Land Use</b>						
<b>Goal 1: Preserve the viability and character of existing neighborhoods.</b>						
	Stimulate greater care in home maintenance and improvement through the availability of design guidelines and educational materials.	planning, education, engaging public	Ongoing	SCCMPC, MSHDA	MSHDA, MEDC	
	Program appropriate street lighting, reforestation and other physical improvements into the City's Capital Improvement Plan.	planning, policy change, budgeting	Ongoing	Community partners		
	Maintain a housing registration and inspection program.	planning, policy change	Ongoing			
	Enforce building codes and blight ordinances.	planning, enforcement	Ongoing			
	Enhance wayfinding and signage, particularly at gateways into the city.	planning, collaboration, budgeting, marketing	1-2 years	Community partners, nonprofit organizations, MDOT	MDOT, MDNR, philanthropy	
<b>Goal 2: Provide sufficient housing alternatives for future populations</b>						
	Permit moderate-density home ownership opportunities, such as pocket neighborhoods, cottage-style housing, and condominiums in strategic locations.	planning, policy change	1-2 years	Community partners, MSHDA	MSHDA, MEDC	
	Permit senior housing developments with independent, semi-dependent, and dependent care options to occupy a single site.	planning, policy change	1-2 years	EDA, private developers, community partners	MSHDA, MEDC	
	Adopt Zoning Ordinance provisions that adapt to changing housing typologies.	planning, policy change	Ongoing	SCCMPC		
	Adopt Zoning Ordinance provisions allowing the repurposing of non-residential vacant and underutilized buildings for residential living.	planning, policy change	1-2 years	SCCMPC		
<b>Goal 3: Provide for mixed-use developments in strategic locations.</b>						
	Allow and promote redevelopment in the downtown area as a dense walkable destination of shops, offices, restaurants, and parks.	planning, policy change, marketing	Ongoing	EDA, BWCVB, chambers of commerce		
	Prepare more specific sub-area redevelopment studies for the Pine River frontage and Clinton Avenue corridor development focus areas.	planning, policy change	1-2 years	SCCMPC, EDA, MEDC, nonprofit organizations, community partners		
	Consider artist studios or communities as acceptable parts of a mixed-use composite.	planning, policy change	Ongoing			
<b>Goal 4: Limit proposed industrial and large-scale commercial development to properties currently zoned for such uses.</b>						
	Focus industrial development efforts to the Range Road corridor.	planning, collaboration	Ongoing	EDA, MEDC	MEDC, US EDA	
	Eliminate industrial zoning on properties fronting Fred Moore Highway as businesses vacate.	planning, policy change	Ongoing			
	Consider rezoning property to industrial or commercial districts only when proposed development cannot locate on appropriately zoned properties as mapped.	planning, policy change	Ongoing			
<b>Goal 5: Provide a balanced mix of land uses promoting the values and lifestyles unique to St. Clair.</b>						
	Maintain and continually review the master plan.	planning, engaging public	Ongoing	SCCMPC, EDA, community partners	EGLE	
	Use the future land use plan when considering Zoning Ordinance amendments, capital improvement projects, or the merits of a development proposal.	planning, policy change, engaging public	Ongoing			
	Enact Zoning Ordinance revisions as identified in the zoning plan chapter.	planning, policy change	Ongoing	SCC, EDA, community partners		
	Seek public participation early in the process of preparing development plans and ordinance changes.	planning, engaging public	Ongoing	Community partners, general public		