

Master Plan 2017

City of Flat Rock, Michigan

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Goals and Objectives

Overview

This chapter summarizes the goals and objectives for the Flat Rock Master Plan. These goals resulted from discussion with the Planning Commission, City staff, and a Master Plan survey and Flat Rock Community Schools survey, conducted in 2016. These goals pertain to general land use, residential, commercial, industrial, environmental, economic development, transportation, community facilities, and recreation. Collectively, these goals and objectives reflect a general consensus or shared vision by the citizenry of Flat Rock.

Goal statements are general in nature and are ideals toward which the City wishes to strive. They represent the ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is broad and immeasurable. Goals express a consensus of community direction to public and private agencies, groups and individuals as determined throughout the Master Plan update process.

General Goals

Neighborhoods: Foster strong, vital neighborhoods, with a variety of housing types, to ensure that Flat Rock continues to be recognized as a quality community where families and individuals live, work, and play.

Master Physical Planning: Maintain complementary land use relationships that promote a harmonious, attractive community; preserve natural resources; promote a sound tax base; and provide for manageable traffic volumes.

Property Maintenance: Recognize that the City and its physical resources are dynamic, and aggressively encourage property maintenance and reinvestment.

Fiscal Stability: Promote the development of a financially secure community, which can continue to provide all necessary services to its residents and businesses in an efficient manner.

Land Use: Promote efficient use of the land and encourage assembly and orderly redevelopment:

- Preserve open space and natural features;
- Promote pedestrian connections;
- Permit complementary land uses; and,
- Recognize historic assets in the community.

Planning Innovation and Flexibility: Encourage innovation in land use planning (e.g. Planned Unit Developments (PUD's), conditional zoning, overlay districts, etc.), where innovation would:

- More efficiently implement the goals set forth in the Master Plan;
- Achieve a higher quality of development than would be possible under conventional regulations;
- Result in better use of land in accordance with its character and adaptability;
- Result in development that is compatible with surrounding uses;
- Preserve open space and natural features;
- Produce recognizable and substantial benefits for the community; and
- Strive to be a catalyst for city planning in all realms, including the Recreation Master Plan, Huron River Water Trail, Trail Town Blueprint, and Flat Rock, Our Hometown Design Committee (Associate Level Michigan Main Street program).



Residential

Housing Balance: Strive for housing that enhances the City’s image as a high quality community. Provide housing options (e.g. brownstones, townhouses, row houses, loft units, etc.) to meet the needs of young professionals and empty nesters – the “missing middle”.

Single-Family Neighborhoods: Preserve and enhance neighborhoods through the promotion of safe and efficient internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, creation of open space, maintenance of city-wide public services, and protection from incompatible non-residential encroachment.

Housing Choice:

- Seek a balanced housing stock consisting of a range of housing types and price ranges, to include low-density, high-quality, upscale single-family housing in conventional subdivisions, and high quality townhomes and condominiums for which there is an existing need, especially near or in the downtown or Central Business District.
- Provide a sufficient supply of affordable and alternative housing opportunities for elderly residents which will encourage them to remain in the community. Examples include small, single story detached and attached residential units, high-rise apartment buildings and assisted care facilities.
- Attract young professionals by providing varied housing options, located within walking distance of parks, pathways, entertainment, and retail.
- Promote a range of housing options, including: ranches, cape cods, brownstones, and loft units.

Residential Design Standards: Create residential design standards to ensure that all future residential development is of the highest quality, creating living environments that are attractive and enjoyable to City residents. In order to accomplish this, encourage the use of PUD’s.

Examples of design considerations include: architectural guidelines, pathways, open space and other on-site amenities such as walking trails, tot-lots, picnic areas, naturalized ponds, and street trees. New homes should be constructed with the highest quality materials. Housing units and other improvements (e.g. clubhouses) should be placed on the site with sensitivity to natural features and the need to create a stable and secure living environment.

Density Relationships: Higher density residential developments should be encouraged in neighborhoods that have access to transportation, public facilities (schools), commercial and services uses. In the downtown, new medium-scale mixed-use buildings, with a dominant residential component and constructed to their frontage lines, should be inserted between existing commercial development and lower-density residential development and/or between existing downtown commercial buildings.

Multiple-Family Development:

- Multiple-family uses should be carefully integrated into well planned neighborhoods.
- High and medium-density housing may be used to create a broader mix of uses along the City’s major corridors such as Telegraph Road.
- Future multiple-family housing should be constructed of the highest quality materials. Buildings and other improvements should be placed on the site with sensitivity to natural features and the need to create a stable and secure living environment.
- Maintain the quality of existing multiple-family developments through strict enforcement of City ordinances, security, housing inspections, and beautification promotion. Encourage higher density development within walking distance of the downtown.
- In the downtown, encourage medium-density, mixed-use developments with a dominant residential component and retail or office uses located along their frontage lines. See exhibit below.



Exhibit A

Mobile Home Park Expansions or New Development: Limit the number of mobile home parks and mobile home park units to a level commensurate with that of surrounding communities.

- Create opportunities for developers to build high density, affordable housing through Planned Unit Development standards.
- Analyze and inventory existing mobile home developments in and around the City to better defend a conservative mobile home park policy. The City has multiple manufactured home parks to give residents options for this type of affordable housing.
- Provide pedestrian amenities within mobile home parks, including open space, tot-lots, clubhouses, and walking paths.
- Any new or expanded manufactured home park shall be located on or near a major thoroughfare for access to community services and facilities.
- Any new or expanded manufactured home park shall be located to minimize the negative impacts on single family residential development, a vital component of the City's tax base.
- The City encourages manufactured home parks to locate near existing manufactured home parks where adequate access, services, screening, and buffering are already provided.
- Any new or expanded manufactured home park shall be located to minimize the impact on environmentally sensitive areas.
- The City will base its decision to accept manufactured home parks on a fair-share and balanced allocation of affordable housing for the community.

Housing Maintenance: Encourage housing rehabilitation and require a high standard of property maintenance to perpetuate a high quality of housing among residents. Participate in the Wayne County Housing Rehabilitation Program if the need for home maintenance becomes noticeable.

Economic Development

Economic Development Initiatives: Continue to develop and apply economic development tools (such as formation of Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities, business improvement districts, conditional zoning options, tax increment financing, tax abatements, sharing in the cost of utilities, and special assessment districts) in a prudent and efficient fashion to enhance and maintain a balanced, healthy mixture of business and industry, provided that such programs are consistent with the overall development and financial goals of the City.

Economic Development Incentives: Economic development incentives should be used primarily to promote development of light manufacturing, research firms, and types of development that:

- Are compatible with the City's goals concerning protection of residential areas and the environment;
- Generate new employment opportunities, particularly for residents;
- Increase the tax base; and
- Support existing industries and business.

Gateway Commerce Center: Encourage high quality, mixed-use development (including restaurants), in the Gateway Commerce Center to complement existing businesses.

Hall Road: Encourage future development along Hall Road by making improvements to the existing infrastructure (e.g. shared stormwater detention).

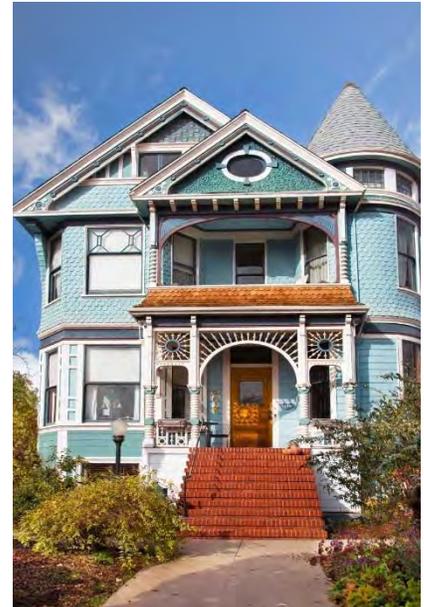
Commercial Development

Downtown Flat Rock: Support the development of Downtown Flat Rock as a district with a diverse mix of office, specialty retail activity, entertainment, and walkable housing.

- Regularly review the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority and make adjustments as necessary. Address the business area on Gibraltar Road that is not located in the DDA or TIFA district.
- Develop the Downtown by providing business with incentives such as streetscape improvements, low interest rate loans for façade improvements, creative (public) parking, and annual events.
- Study the feasibility of creating a Gibraltar Road mixed-use district between Telegraph Road (US 24) and Division Street that is traditional in design and promotes pedestrian friendly shopping.
- Promote the tourism resources of the Huron River Water Trail (Designated National Water Trail), Huroc Park, DNR boat launch, and Downriver Linked Greenways to create economic development opportunities.
- Integrate the Huron River Water Trail and Trail Town Blueprint into community planning.
- Promote Flat Rock as part of the Iron Belle Trail.
- Encourage placement of kayak lockers and bike racks in locations within the commercial district.
- Work with business community to promote tourism opportunities.
- Maintain and enhance a viable mix of complementary retail uses and discourage domination of the Downtown by any single category of use.
- Preserve and enhance the Downtown as a community asset that contributes positively to property values, community identity, and a sense of place.
- Encourage a lively social environment and economically viable downtown with a wide variety of uses in a pedestrian oriented unified setting.

- Extend opportunities for traditional downtown living. This includes providing housing with nearby employment and recreational opportunities, and can be achieved through combining architecture and permitting mixed uses that are compatible with one another.
- Discourage the development of separate off-street parking facilities for each individual use, and encourage the development of off-street parking facilities designed to accommodate the needs of several individual uses with access from side streets only.
- Promote the creation of urban spaces such as plazas which are oriented to the pedestrian thereby promoting citizen security and social interaction.
- Promote developments where the physical, visual and spatial characteristics are established and reinforced through the consistent use of traditional urban design and architectural design elements. Such elements shall relate to the design characteristics of an individual structure or development based on usage of traditional Early American and late 1800s to early 1900s architectural style influences, ranging from Colonial styles of Georgian and Williamsburg; Victorian styles of Italianate, Gothic and Queen Anne; and later Romanticized styles of Tudor and French Country, used in a harmonious manner, resulting in coherent development patterns and streetscape for the downtown as well as surrounding areas.

Architectural Examples (clockwise from top right): Italianate, Georgian, French Country, Queen Anne.



- Promote uses that support and complement the retail focus of the downtown, such as office and residential uses above the first floor.
- Provide incentives (density bonuses, parking waivers) for developments that include a combination of office, retail, entertainment, residential, recreation, and/or public uses.
- Encourage a mix of uses in large, multi-parcel development projects.
- Allow the expansion of the Downtown in a manner that takes advantage of opportunities in the areas between Huron River Road and Gibraltar Road, between Garden Boulevard and Huroc Park.
- Concentrate redevelopment on those sites that do not currently match the character of the Downtown and have access to or opportunities to provide parking.
- Require new buildings to be built to the same setback line as the core buildings in the Downtown.
- Provide sidewalks and other open space in front of new or existing developments dedicated to public activities such as outdoor cafes or events.
- Require new developments to be oriented to the street with large windows with displays and direct access onto the sidewalk.
- Locate off-street parking to the rear of the buildings
- Avoid excessive parking beyond that necessary to support a successful mixed use business district by establishing parking requirements that reflect shared parking and mixed uses.
- Provide attractive landscaping within and around the Downtown parking lots.
- Develop shared refuse collection points for businesses within the Downtown.
- Carefully manage the relationship between parking activities and loading activities with an emphasis on separating pedestrian traffic and vehicle traffic.
- Provide incentives, such as reduced parking requirements, for uses that are open past 5:00 p.m. such as restaurants, cafes, book stores, etc.
- Review no-fee parking in harmony with Flat Rock, Our Hometown (Main Street Associate Level) and DDA.
- Continue to support events and other activities that bring people to the Downtown.
- Based on results of target market analysis, encourage desirable uses that are currently marketable.
- Continue to provide safe, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, plazas, and public open spaces through the use of landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, and delineation of human space.
- Eliminate vehicle intensive uses such as gas stations and similar uses within the Downtown.
- Maintain existing streetscape improvements along all roads within the Downtown and ensure that private development complements streetscape improvements by providing pedestrian oriented storefronts and storefront activities such as outdoor eating.
- Minimize barriers such as grade changes and stairs.
- Incorporate safe bicycle connections through the CBD that connect to larger trails, as well as supporting infrastructure such as bike parking.
- Encourage shops to provide enhanced rear entrances with window displays, lighting, and signage, as it relates to the new wayfinding and signage program. Promote bike friendly store fronts.
- Recognize the relationship between downtown commercial uses and regional commercial uses and use each to promote the other.
- Maintain architectural design standards that are compatible with the character of the Downtown, allowing more flexibility in terms of architectural style. The historic architecture in the Downtown is varied and interesting. The architectural standards should promote compatibility of materials, scale, and pedestrian orientation.
- Promote the identity of the Downtown as a fun, attractive, vibrant place to shop.

- Enhance this identity with a constantly well-maintained and attractive appearance. Parking areas must be clean, well landscaped and lighted.
- Create a five-year capital improvement plan (CIP) to aggressively update water, sewer, and other infrastructure within the Downtown.
- Provide highly visible and attractive connections to the Huron River south of Huron River Drive on both sides of Telegraph, such as a boardwalk west of the road adjacent to Huroc Park.

Promote Active Commercial Uses/Family Entertainment: Promote the development of active commercial sites and centers that act as meeting places for Flat Rock residents to prevent commuting to commercial centers outside of Flat Rock. Promote commercial uses such as restaurants, theaters, art, clothing, furniture, indoor recreation, produce markets, coffee shops, bakeries, health clubs, and book stores, which create spin-off spending for adjacent businesses.

Telegraph Road (US-24): Recognize that Telegraph Road (US-24), north of the railroad tracks, is the center of vehicular retail activity in the City. Recognize also that Telegraph Road (US-24), north of the tracks, and particularly north of Vreeland Road, is the center of service-type businesses in Flat Rock. Enhance the visibility of these businesses through streetscape improvements and special events. Work is underway on the Flat Rock Plaza to welcome Family Farm & Home as an anchor tenant.

Vreeland Road: Recognize Meijer as a draw for the community, and evaluate strategies for the surrounding commercial areas to capitalize on the increase in activity in the area.

Gibraltar Road: Establish a consistent image/character for Gibraltar Road from I-75 to the Civic Center including a compatible mix of land uses and a consistent streetscape design that includes pedestrian facilities and amenities.



Gateway Commerce Center: Develop the Gateway Commerce Center as a regional office/business center consisting of business, industry, lodging, and other regional-oriented commercial uses, including restaurants (e.g. Applebee's, Qdoba, etc.).

Neighborhood Commercial Districts: Promote mixed use retail within walking distance of neighborhoods and on major thoroughfares.

Revitalization of Aging Commercial Districts: Aggressively maintain, upgrade, expand, and redevelop aging business structures and sites, anticipating deteriorating conditions and the aging cycle. Provide tax breaks/abatements and other innovative financing to attract new businesses to the City and retain them.

Planned Development vs. Linear Shopping Districts: The development of planned multi-tenant shopping centers or office buildings should be encouraged along commercial corridors, instead of unplanned strip development. This may help introduce a broader mix of uses on Telegraph that is more in line with market realities.

Appearance: The design of commercial uses in Flat Rock should reflect thorough and careful analysis of the historic character and traditional design of the City.

- Architecture should be clean and uncluttered, and excessively large or garish signs should be prohibited. Do not permit long blank facades. Signs should be architecturally compatible with building facades.
- The City should continue its wayfinding program to ensure information is relevant and convenient for all modes of transportation. This program should receive a yearly review to ensure goals are being met.
- Loading and storage areas should be screened, preferably with landscaped screening or a combination of landscaping and walls.
- Parking areas should be landscaped to provide visual relief to large paved areas.
- Landscaping and setbacks should generally convey a sense of spaciousness and compatibility with the underlying natural features.
- Lighting should enhance the appearance of the commercial district. Lighting fixtures should be designed to complement the design of adjoining buildings. Glaring high-intensity lights should not be used in areas where pedestrian activity is desired.
- Storefronts should be pedestrian-oriented.

Office Development: Encourage the assembly of desirable sites in Gateway Commerce Center and along Gibraltar Road for both large- and smaller-scale office uses, which will enhance the City's tax base, be attractively developed, and create employment. In the downtown area, encourage the development of mixed-use buildings as a transition between more intensive retail development and single-family homes. Office uses should be allowable on all floors of such buildings (to the extent permitted by the adopted building code in force at the time), particularly at grade along corresponding frontage lines.

Internet Access: The City should encourage and promote high speed, wireless internet access in downtown businesses (e.g. coffee houses).

Industrial Development

Industrial Diversity: Continue to promote diversity in the City's industrial base through recruitment of high-tech, research, light manufacturing, and warehouse uses, as well as the commercial transportation that supports industrial activity.

Industrial Design Standards: Promote the location of new high-tech, research, and light industrial parks in attractive settings that will coexist harmoniously with the rest of the community. Future industrial development within planned industrial parks should be encouraged. Planned industrial parks should include an internal circulation system, needed supporting facilities, and adequate land use transitions to other parts of the City.

Allocation of Industrial Land: Confine future industrial uses to designated areas on the east side of the City, where an industrial base has already been established. Since most industries are oriented toward metropolitan Detroit or Toledo, industrial development on the east would minimize the impact on the rest of the City. The only exception to this policy would be where expansion of an existing industry in another part of the City (such as in proximity to Telegraph Road) would provide recognizable benefits, such as new employment opportunities and increased tax base, but would not have a detrimental impact on nearby residential and commercial areas or the natural environment.

Utilities and Public Services: Future industrial development should be permitted only in accordance with the ability to provide required utilities and public services, including public water and sewer services, adequate road construction and maintenance, police and fire protection, and general municipal administrative and regulatory services. The ongoing costs of providing such services should be considered, as well as the costs related to initial construction.

Obsolete Industrial Uses: Phase out older industrial uses in the center of the City that are incompatible with surrounding residential and retail uses and the development goals for the area.

Railroad R.O.W: Encourage further development along the railroad right(s)-of-way by constructing a parallel service road to provide access to existing land-locked parcels.

Environmental

Huron River: Recognize the Huron River as the most significant natural feature in Flat Rock and that the Huron River Water Trail is a nationally designated water trail. Promote development that will preserve the natural riverfront environment, and maximize visual and physical access to the river for all residents. River trailways should be developed to provide river access and to provide a path and linkage to other open space and recreation areas. Promote recreational tourism through blueways and greenways.

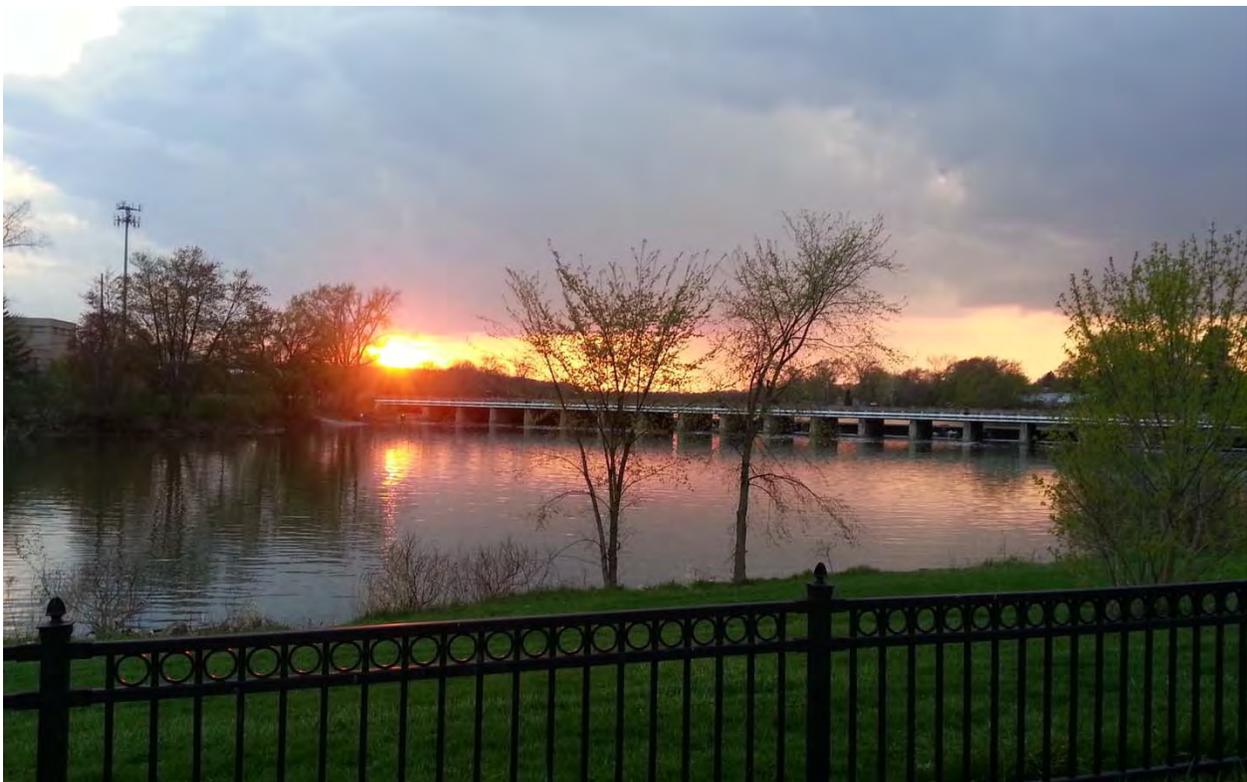
Protection of Natural Features: Promote the preservation of significant wooded areas, wetlands, and floodplains through the review of development plans, public acquisition of floodplain and other sensitive lands, and utilization of environmentally sensitive areas for stormwater control and low intensity uses, such as recreation.

Pollution Control: Continue to encourage land planning, development patterns and effluent treatment techniques that promote energy conservation and minimize noise and pollution of the air, soil, and water. Strive for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified architecture.

Toxic Waste Sites: Work with the Department of Environmental Quality and other appropriate agencies to determine potential uses for remediation of contaminated sites identified in Flat Rock. Establish a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA).

Recycling: Promote and encourage a state-of-the-art recycling program and facilities. Advertise and provide access to yard waste and compost sites.

Pedestrian Friendly: Encourage stewardship of the natural environment by encouraging responsible and non-obtrusive use through the development of the Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan.



Transportation

Transportation Planning: Promote transportation improvements consistent with efficient access to community goods and services, public safety and convenience. Consider the capability of the transportation system to accommodate increased traffic produced by development. Review road engineering and improve safety at the Will Carlton and Telegraph (M-24) intersection.

Reduce Detrimental Traffic in the Downtown: Identify and strategize to provide alternative routes for heavy truck traffic that currently utilize Huron River Drive and Gibraltar Road through downtown as a connection between I-75 and Telegraph. The ongoing presence of these large vehicles presents challenges for safe pedestrian road crossings, puts additional physical strain on the roads, and is harmful to the downtown character the City is attempting to achieve.

The Need for New Roads: Identify locations and work toward installation of new roads where needed to make vacant land accessible for development in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan. Make improvements to the road system that will encourage economic development within the City.

Right-of-Way Widths:

- Limit development within the existing or planned rights-of-way as indicated on the Master Thoroughfare Plan. Develop flexible guidelines to restrict development within such “long-range” rights-of-way where the estimated implementation is more than 10 to 15 years in the future.
- Allow parallel parking in the downtown where it is currently not permitted.

Road Hierarchy: Develop a road system that provides access to all parts of the City, yet restricts the use of neighborhood streets by trucks and extraneous through traffic.

Road Aesthetics: Roadways should be visually pleasing to motorists, pedestrians, and persons who view the roads from adjoining land. Frontage along roads should be adequately landscaped. The construction of boulevards or parkways should be encouraged.

Road Maintenance: A PASER study has been completed, which took inventory of the condition and effectiveness of the current road infrastructure in Flat Rock. This information from the study is used to determine the most effective and economical maintenance schedule possible to keep the roads up to standards and inform infrastructure expansion when necessary.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Non-motorized Pathways: Sidewalks and shared-use pathways shall be required in conjunction with all new construction, pursuant to the adopted Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan, as amended. Sidewalks shall link residential areas with other residential subdivisions, schools, recreation areas, commercial districts, and other attractions throughout the City to reduce unnecessary vehicle trips and promote healthy living. Link the City’s non-motorized system to regional pathways and Downriver Linked Greenways.

Advisory Group: Form a non-motorized transportation advisory group to increase, improve and/or promote opportunities for active living such as walking, biking, boating, and other forms of recreation in the City.

Staff Designation: Designate a department head or staff person to be specifically responsible for pedestrian and/or bicycle transportation options in the City.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan: Prepare a pedestrian and bicycle master plan, which expands on the existing non-motorized master plan, to establish ways to include pedestrian and biking facilities. The master plan should cover ways to plan and design bicycle route networks, create bicycle parking, provide bicycling amenities such as showers and clothing lockers, maintain the route network, offer bicycle safety programs, promote bicycling in the City, and obtain funds to implement these items. In addition, the plan should inventory existing pedestrian facilities and conditions, create a priority list of public investment in infrastructure improvements, and implement the plan through a capital improvements program and pedestrian oriented design guidelines.

Safe Routes to School: Encourage cooperative participation by the City and schools in the Safe Routes to School program. Collaboration between the two entities for this program will provide for opportunities for State grants for infrastructure upgrades to increase safety for children walking to schools. Upgrades may include traffic lights, sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and road improvements.

Encourage Active Lifestyle: Enhance mobility and physical activity for persons of all age and socioeconomic groups, increase the use of non-motorized forms of transportation, and improve the overall health of the community by promoting and encouraging an active lifestyle through walking, hiking, biking, canoeing, and kayaking.

Establish Non-Motorized Network: Create and maintain a comprehensive network of safe walking routes, bike routes, shared-use paths and trails, parks and greenways in the City.



Community Facilities

Municipal Services: Develop a system of quality, responsive municipal services that are necessary to maintain the attractiveness and vitality of the City’s residential, business, and industrial districts.

Maintenance and Replacement: Provide for system completion, ongoing maintenance, and replacement programs based on a continually updated capital improvement program for roads, street lights, sewers, water mains, and other infrastructure elements. The capital improvement program should plan for up to six (6) years in the future, prioritizing the projects and guiding infrastructure decisions.

Community Center: Continue to provide first class facilities and programs at the Community Center. Develop a teen center and teen programs in conjunction with the Community Center. Promote the Community Center as a regional asset along the Downriver Linked Greenways. Create a cycling hub.

Government Services: Encourage and maintain government services (i.e. post offices, libraries, etc.) in the downtown and core areas of the City.



Recreation

Level of Service: Provide the maximum level of neighborhood and community-oriented recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of all residents, within the physical and financial capabilities of the City. The parks plan should be updated regularly and the recreation committee should be revived.

Multiple-Use Concept: Develop the City's recreation system in accordance with the multiple-use concept, whereby the City's main parks provide a total recreation experience for the entire family. Under this concept, each community park serves a large section of the City with facilities for active and passive recreation, competitive sports, facilities for children and adolescents, and picnic and nature study.

Neighborhood Parks: Assure that adequate land is set aside for recreational purposes as part of new developments or redevelopment project. Promote development through Planned Unit Developments, which can set aside parkland and open space for residents. The use of City-owned properties and school properties as neighborhood parks should also be encouraged.

River Access: Increase public access to the Huron River through acquisition and enhancement of riverfront properties. River trailways should be developed to provide river access and to provide a path and linkage to local businesses, other open space, and recreation areas (Huroc Park). Construct a soft shore access launch and attract a canoe/kayak livery business. Huron River Water Trail is a very robust trail that has designated Flat Rock as a Trail Town. Continue to build capacity with the community to capitalize on resources from the Huron River Watershed.

Park Design and Landscaping: Enhance the design and aesthetic quality of all local parks, through landscaping, ornamental features, sculpture, and signage, recognizing the significance of parkland to the overall character and public image of the City.

Coordination with Other Agencies: Continue to cooperate with other public and private organizations, such as the school district, Downriver Linked Greenways, Detroit Heritage River Trail, and Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority in providing recreation services and facilities to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Privately-Owned Recreation Facilities: Encourage privately owned and commercial recreation facilities to locate in the City, provided the type and location of such facilities is consistent with the City's recreation goals.

Recreation Facilities Outside of the City: Provide expanded access to important recreation resources outside of the City to increase recreation opportunities for City residents.



Historic Preservation

Public Awareness: Increase public awareness of Flat Rock’s history and historic assets through programs, brochures, historic markers and special events.

Promote Historic Areas: Promote and enhance historic areas to add charm and value to the City.

Provide Tax Credits: Establish a program that provides tax credits for historic preservation/restoration.

Regional Cooperation: Coordinate Flat Rock’s historic assets with those of adjacent communities and surrounding region (e.g. Huron River Watershed, Motor Cities Heritage area, Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, blueways trail, Huron River Water Trail, Iron Belle Trail, etc.).

Establish a Historic District Study Committee: Establish a Historic District Study Committee, per State Historic Preservation Office guidelines, to survey the City’s historic assets (e.g. buildings, houses, and sites).

Capital Improvement

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, provides direction on the preparation of an annual capital improvement program (CIP) upon adoption of a master plan. The CIP is a recommendation of potential public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, that in the Commission’s judgement will be needed or desired in the six (6) years after the CIP is submitted.

1. To further the desirable future development of Flat Rock under the Master Plan, the Planning Commission, after adoption of a master plan, shall annually prepare a capital improvements program of public structures and improvements.
2. 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.
3. The capital improvements program shall be based upon the requirements of the local unit of government for all types of public structures and improvements.
4. 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.



Introduction

Regional Setting

The City of Flat Rock is located in Southeast Michigan in the southern section of Wayne County, Michigan (see Map 1). Flat Rock is considered part of the Detroit metropolitan region, which collectively contains approximately five million people. The City is also considered a “Downriver” community, which is a smaller sub-region of the southern Detroit metropolitan area. Adjacent Downriver communities include the City of Woodhaven to the northeast, Brownstown Township to the north and east, Berlin Township and Ash Township to the southwest, Huron Township to the west, and the City of Rockwood and Village of South Rockwood (Monroe County) to the south. Major urban centers less than a one-hour drive from Flat Rock include the cities of Ann Arbor, Detroit, Monroe, Romulus, Toledo (Ohio), Windsor (Ontario), and Ypsilanti. The Huron River also flows from the west along the City’s southern boundary, eventually emptying into Lake Erie to the east.

Located along the I-75 corridor, Flat Rock is nestled in the heart of another geographic region commonly called “Automation Alley.” Automation Alley began in 1997 with the intention of creating a regional technology cluster in Oakland County. This has since expanded to include Wayne County and the City of Detroit, among the other southeast Michigan counties. Flat Rock’s inclusion in “Automation Alley” is influenced by the presence of the Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant.

Flat Rock is located adjacent to I-75 and US-24 (Telegraph Road), within 15 minutes of Detroit Metro Airport and a well-developed rail infrastructure. This unique transportation infrastructure allows the community to be accessible for commerce, business and residential development. The City’s location relative to the Interstate highway system and industry has allowed it to continue to attract new residences and industry alike. Despite Flat Rock’s location in the Detroit metropolitan region, the City has maintained its small town character and charm.

History and Evolution of Flat Rock

Michael Vreeland of New York State settled present day Flat Rock around 1817. This settlement was originally named after Mr. Vreeland until it was renamed to Smooth Rock in 1826 and then to Flat Rock in 1838 because of the flat rocks found in the riverbed.

Early inhabitants found the land wild with dense forests, plentiful wildlife and clean running water. Encounters with bears, wolves and wild cats were not uncommon. Game animals abounded and many hunters and trappers made their livelihood around the settlement. The forest produced large quantities of lumber that supported one of Flat Rock’s first primary industries: lumber mills. Unfortunately, malaria and ague (fever) ran rampant in the early days due to a lack of drains and stagnant surface water. Numerous inhabitants and livestock were lost to the dreadful disease.

The original platted village consisted of eight blocks extending north to south from Ypsilanti Street to the river. Several commercial enterprises could be found in or close to this area, including three general stores, two saw mills and tailors, one shoe shop, brickyard, blacksmith, flour mill, hotel, furniture store, lawyer and doctor offices. Many farmers lived around the outskirts of the village. The first church, the Methodist Church, was built in 1833, followed by the Congregational Church in 1855.

In 1836, the Gibraltar and Flat Rock Company was formed to dig a canal, planned to open up navigation across southern Michigan counties to Lake Michigan. Several sections were partially dug between Flat Rock and Gibraltar. The work was never finished, but evidence of the canal can still be seen today, south of Woodruff Road and East Huron River Drive.

Early in the 20th century, transportation became the dominant industry in Southeast Michigan. Henry Ford, the father of modern transportation, built a large lamp plant in Flat Rock in 1929. The plant produced up to 16,000 lamps per day for Ford cars that were being sent around the world. At one time, this plant employed 1,400 people, clearly the largest employer in Flat Rock. The plant remains at its original location, near the Huron Dam, but has been closed for some time.





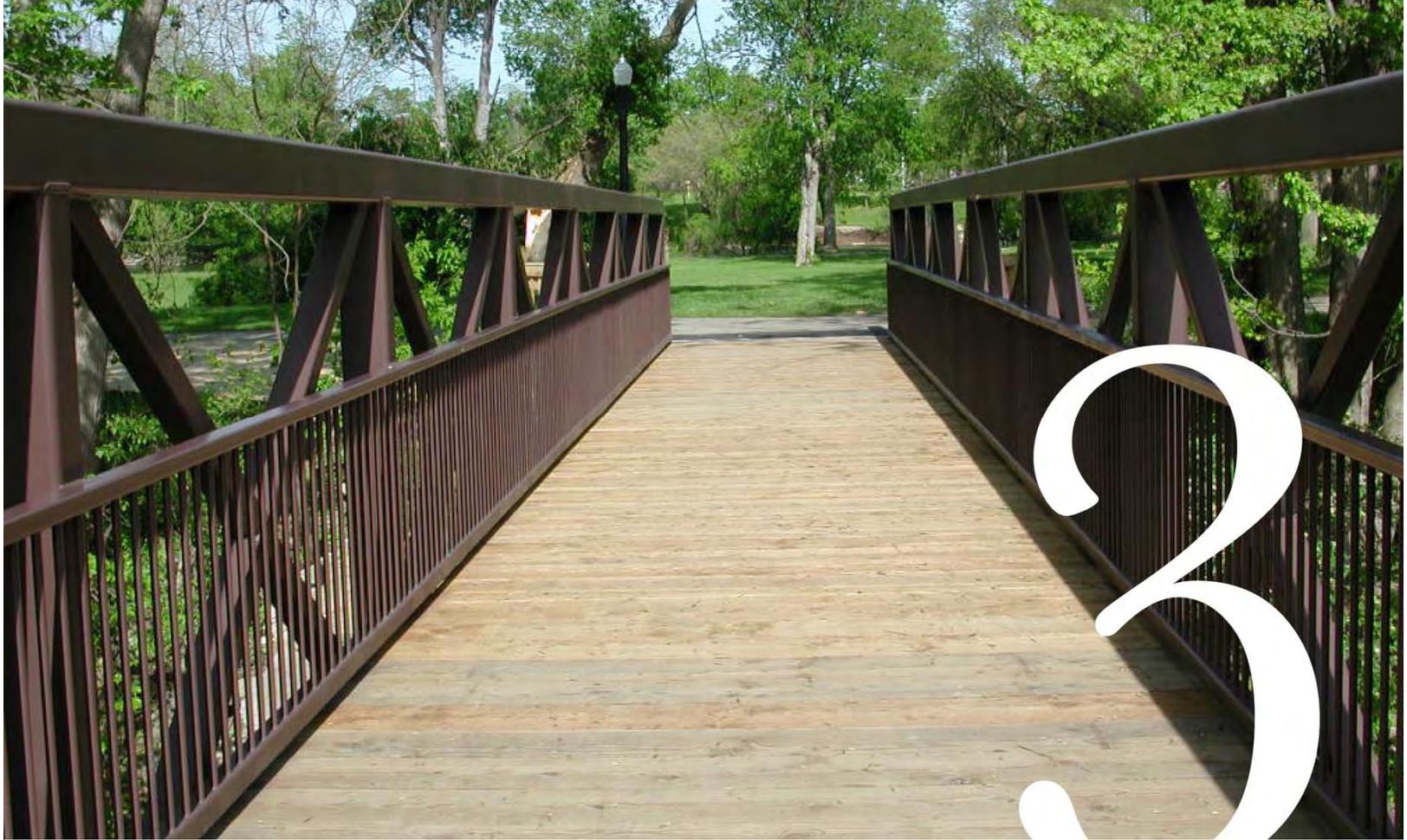
August 10, 2016

Map 1 Regional Location

Data Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, 2006

City of Flat Rock, Michigan





Existing Conditions

This section of the Master Plan analyzes existing conditions, based primarily on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). Flat Rock’s demographic and housing characteristics are analyzed and compared with those of surrounding communities, Wayne County, and the Southeast Michigan region to gain better insight into the community of Flat Rock.

Existing conditions analysis is a fundamental element of master plans. Not only does this analysis paint a present-day picture of the City, it also allows comparison with nearby communities, the County, and the State. Planning for future growth and development requires some consideration of “how much” – how much of a City service will residents require, how much housing is “affordable”, or how much housing stock should be built based on population increases and land availability. This analysis is intended to help the City plan to meet those needs.

Population

Total Population

Growth of a community's population is a primary force driving new development and redevelopment. Decline of a community's population can lead to abandoned buildings and blight. Understanding the community's population trend and regional context are necessary to develop an effective future land use plan. This section describes the City's historical population trend, analyzes the regional population growth context, and compares the City's population growth to that of surrounding communities.

Historical Population Trend

The City's historic population trend, based on the decennial census, is presented below in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Historic Population Trend – Flat Rock, 1930-2014

Year	Population	Population Change	Percent Change
1930	1,231	--	--
1940	1,467	236	19.2%
1950	1,931	464	31.6%
1960	4,696	2,765	143.2%
1970	5,643	947	20.2%
1980	6,853	1,210	21.4%
1990	7,290	437	6.4%
2000	8,488	1,198	16.4%
2010	9,878	1,390	16.4%
2014 ¹	9,854	-24	-0.2%

Note: Data from 1930 through 1960 is the population for Flat Rock Village (incorporated in 1923 from Brownstown Township). City of Flat Rock was incorporated in 1965 from Flat Rock Village, reflected by numbers in years 1970 through 2000.

¹: Census July 2014 estimated population.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

The City's largest numerical and percentage increase in population occurred from 1950 to 1960. The growth rate from 2000 to 2010 increased 16.4 percent from the previous period, capping a steady increase close to 20 percent each decade as seen in previous years before the drop in the population growth rate between 1980 and 1990. Today's (July 2014) estimated population is 9,854, which is a 0.2% percent decrease in four years. The City's population trend should be considered in the regional context, which is presented in the next section.

POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISONS

Population and population growth trends for Flat Rock, surrounding communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan are presented in

Table 3.2. Over the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010, Flat Rock's population growth was in the middle of the pack in comparison to neighboring communities. During this time, Wayne County experienced an 11.7 percent decrease in population, and the Southeast Michigan region as a whole experienced a modest 2.7 percent decrease.

The 2010 population of Flat Rock was 9,878, for an increase of 16.4 percent from the 2000 population. This positive growth trend has occurred since the 1930s. The City has experienced continued population increase since 1990

due to the steady out-migration of people from the larger urban core areas, such as Detroit. The increase in new and affordable housing, easy access to transportation corridors, and a strong, growing local and regional economy have all played a part in the population increase. However, the minor estimated population drop between 2010 and 2014 may be a sign that Flat Rock’s population, at least temporarily, has peaked. According to SEMCOG, the July 2014 population estimate was 9,854, and the 2040 Forecast is for a population of 9,702. The projected decrease in population represents a 1.8 percent decrease from 2010 to 2040 and a 1.5 percent decrease from 2014 to 2040.

Table 3.2: Total Population and Population Growth Rates – Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2000-2010

	2000	2010	Change 2000 to 2010	Percent Change	2040 ²
Flat Rock	8,488	9,878	1,390	16.4	9,702
Ash Township	5,048	5,438	390	7.7	5,902
Berlin Township	5,154	7,206	2,052	39.8	8,624
Brownstown Township	22,989	30,627	7,638	33.2	32,124
Gibraltar	4,264	4,656	392	9.2	4,831
Rockwood	3,442	3,289	-153	-4.4	3,246
South Rockwood	1,284	1,675	391	30.5	1,953
Trenton	19,584	18,853	-731	-3.7	18,647
Woodhaven	12,530	12,875	345	2.8	12,476
Wayne County excluding Detroit	1,109,892	1,106,788	-3,104	-0.3	1,041,962
Wayne County	2,061,162	1,820,650	-240,512	-11.7	1,656,931
Southeast Michigan ¹	4,833,368	4,704,809	-128,559	-2.7	4,742,083

¹Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

²SEMCOG 2040 Population Forecast.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

The City of Flat Rock experienced large real and percentage increases in population for almost the entire 20th century. The City’s rate of population growth has generally been steady since the 1950s. Even during the 1980s, when the population change slowed, Flat Rock continued to grow. Since the 2000s, the City’s rate of growth has continued to increase at a higher rate than most of the surrounding communities, particularly Rockwood and Trenton, who have lost population during this time. The differential growth rates since 2000 suggests economic and housing factors that affect the Southeast Michigan region. Increased local population growth, paired with stagnant countywide rates, indicates development pressures will be increasingly moving towards Flat Rock and that a review of past land use policies is warranted in order to best position the city for growth, potentially reversing the projected decline in population by 2040.

Age

The age of a community’s population has very real implications for planning and development, whether it be schools for population under the age of 18, or housing alternatives for empty nesters and elderly residents. This section analyzes the age of the City’s population – based on age structure, median age, and percentage of population under 18 and over 65 – and assesses the implications of the population’s age on land use and development.

Common Measures of Age

The age analysis begins with three common measures of the age of a population. The first measure is the median age at which one-half of the population is older and one-half of the population is younger. Median age is the most often used measure of age because it can be used to compare populations of different sizes. The second measure is the percentage of the total population that is under the age of 18. Individuals under the age of 18 are usually enrolled in the school system, or preparing to enter school, and thus require services not provided for the general population. The third measure is the percentage of the total population that is aged 65 and over. Many individuals approaching retirement age seek alternative housing. As individuals age, they may lose their ability to drive and public transportation can become a new and important issue. These three measures of community age are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Median Age and Percentage of Total Population Under 18 and Over 65 – Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, Southeast Michigan, Michigan, and U.S. – 2010

	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²	Michigan	U.S.
Median Age	36.9	37.0	37.3	35.2	38.9	37.2
Under 18 (% of total population)	27.4	23.9	25.4	24.0	23.7	24.0
65 and older (% of total population)	10.4	12.9	12.7	13.0	13.8	13.0

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the US Census Bureau.

The City’s median age, 36.9 years, is similar to that of the surrounding communities (37.0 years) and Wayne County (37.3 years), but older than the Southeast Michigan region (35.2 years). The slightly lower median age than nearby communities suggests that the City’s population is younger. This is reflected in the higher percentage of individuals under the age of 18 than the population of the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. Thus, the need for school and recreational facilities and services may be greater in the City than in adjacent communities. The City’s population also includes fewer individuals over the age of 65 than the surrounding communities, county and the region.

Age Structure

Age structure refers to the portion of the community’s population in each age group. This section compares the City’s age structure to that of the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. Subsequently, the change in the City’s age structure from 2000 to 2010 is analyzed.

Age Structure and Lifestyle Categories Comparison

To compare the age structure and lifestyle categories of various communities, the population is divided into the following basic groupings:

Age	Lifestyle Category
Under 5:	Pre-school
5 to 17:	School age
18 to 44:	Family forming
45 to 64:	Mature families
65 and older:	Retirement

Table 3.4: Comparison of Age Groups by Percentage of Total Population – Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, Southeast Michigan, Michigan, and U.S., 2010

Age	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²	Michigan	U.S.
Under 5 Pre-School	7.1	5.5	6.5	6.0	6.0	6.5
5 to 17 School age	20.3	18.4	18.9	18.0	17.7	17.5
18 to 44 Family forming	35.1	33.3	35.2	34.9	34.6	36.5
45 to 64 Mature families	27.1	30.0	26.8	28.0	27.9	26.4
Over 65 Retirement	10.4	12.9	12.7	13.0	13.8	13.0

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the US Census Bureau.

Flat Rock has more individuals in the *pre-school* and *school age* groups relative to the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. On a related note, the City also has slightly more individuals in the *family forming* group relative to the surrounding communities and region. The City has fewer individuals in the *mature families* group in comparison to the surrounding communities. Finally, the City has a smaller proportion of individuals in the *retirement* group as the surrounding communities, county, and the region.

The age structure of Flat Rock has several implications for planning and land use. First, the greater proportion of individuals in the *pre-school* group suggests that long-term demand for school and recreation facilities will be the same or greater than the demand by the current school age population. Secondly, as individuals in the *mature families* group move towards retirement, their housing choices could have implications for the demand for new and different housing types. Finally, as the *retirement* group increases in size, demand for services for senior citizens and elderly residents are likely to grow.

Change in Age Structure

The change in age structure is assessed by comparing the population in five-year age cohorts in 2000 to 2010. For example, those individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort in 2000 would be in the 30 to 34 age cohort in 2010. If the size of the age cohort is smaller in 2010, then the cohort experienced some combination of mortality and out-

migration. If the size of the cohort is larger in 2010, then the cohort experienced in-migration. The City's population by 5-year age cohorts in 2000 and 2010 is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Change in 5-year Age Cohorts – Flat Rock, 2000-2010

Age	2000 Population	2010 Population	2000 to 2010 Change in Cohort Size ¹	2000 to 2010 Percent Change in Cohort Size ¹
Under 5	698	704	6	0.9
5 to 9	726	752	26	3.6
10 to 14	663	793	130	19.6
15 to 19	650	707	57	8.8
20 to 24	607	586	-21	-3.5
25 to 29	547	518	-29	-5.3
30 to 34	622	584	-38	-6.1
35 to 39	664	772	108	16.3
40 to 44	738	761	23	3.1
45 to 49	661	695	34	5.1
50 to 54	518	768	250	48.3
55 to 59	340	684	344	101.2
60 to 64	245	529	284	115.9
65 to 69	216	355	139	64.4
70 to 74	216	245	29	13.4
75 to 79	196	173	-23	-11.7
80 to 84	120	146	26	21.7
85 and older	61	106	45	73.8

¹Change in cohort size is difference between the population in each group in 2010 and the population in the 10-year younger cohort in 2000.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the US Census Bureau.

The cohorts that were age 10 to 19 in 2010 (under 5 to 9 in 2000) *increased* by 187 individuals, suggesting a small in-migration of young families.

The cohorts that were age 20 to 29 in 2010 (10 to 19 in 2000) *decreased* by 50 individuals. A decrease in these age cohorts corresponds to children leaving their parent's homes for college or moving out to get their first jobs. Within these age groups, the net *decrease* was 3.5 percent for the 20 to 24 age cohort and 5.3 percent for the 25 to 29 age cohort. The 75 to 79 age cohort was the only other cohort to exhibit a new decrease. However, the mortality rate begins to increase for individuals age 40 and over, making detailed findings difficult for this age group.

The cohorts that were age 30 to 39 in 2010 (20 to 29 in 2000) *increased* by 70 individuals, or 5.4 percent. The significant increase in this age cohort suggests that the City provided housing opportunities for young adults and young families.

The cohorts that were age 40 to 49 in 2010 (30 to 39 in 2000) *increased* by 57 individuals, or 4.1 percent. While this is a smaller increase than the previous cohorts, the increase suggests that the City attracted a small population of individuals moving into the mature family age group.

The 55 to 64 age cohort exhibited the largest net *increase* in population from 2000 to 2010, or 107.4 percent. The aging and retirement of the baby boomer generation will have significant impacts across the U.S. In 2006, the first of the baby boomers turned 60 years old, contributing to an ever-increasing senior citizen population. At the state and national levels, paying for social security and Medicare for retiring boomers are major policy issues. At the local level, the future decisions of boomers about where to live in the US when they retire, what types of housing to live in, and what to do with leisure time, will have profound impacts on local land use and development, as well as local services. Long term issues such as access to medical facilities and public transportation, taxation, and cemetery space will be affected by the baby boomer generation.

The analysis of the change in age structure from 2000 to 2010 suggests that the City may lack adequate housing opportunities for young adults when first moving out on their own, but that there are ample housing opportunities for those in the family forming and mature family groups. The Housing Market Study in the Housing Review and Analysis chapter of the Master Plan provides more insight into housing availability in Flat Rock.

Income

The annual household income or median household income of a community has very real effects for planning and development, whether it be for new homes, economic development, or attracting new businesses. This section analyzes the household income of the City, compares the City to Wayne County, and discusses its implications on land use and development.

Table 3.6: Annual Household Income – Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2013

Income Range	Flat Rock Number of Households	Flat Rock Percent of Households	Wayne County Number of Households	Wayne County Percent of Households
Less than \$10,000	335	9.3	84,806	12.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	185	5.1	46,664	7.0
\$15,000 to \$24,999	396	11.0	87,462	13.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	304	8.4	75,606	11.3
\$35,000 to \$49,999	569	15.8	93,108	13.9
\$50,000 to \$74,999	727	20.1	109,497	16.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	456	12.6	69,507	10.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	418	11.6	65,506	9.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	153	4.2	22,702	3.4
\$200,000 or more	67	1.9	16,129	2.4
Total Households	3,610	100.0	670,987	100.0
Median Household Income	\$50,494	--	\$41,184	--

Source: US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2009-2013.

Table 3.6 shows the distribution of median household income levels for the City Flat Rock and Wayne County. Flat Rock generally has a higher percentage of residents with incomes between \$50,000 to \$74,999 than the county, with 20.1 percent for the City and 16.3 percent for the county. Flat Rock also outpaces the county with incomes of \$75,000 and higher, as the distribution is a few percentage points above the county in all brackets except \$200,000 or more. Higher incomes are potentially attributable to the increase in mature and established families who reside in the community or have moved to Flat Rock, as well as increased educational attainment.

The median household income in 2013 for the City of Flat Rock was \$50,494, which is \$9,310 more than the median household income for Wayne County. The median household income decreased \$11,149 or 18.1 percent between 1999 and 2013. The 1999 income amount has been adjusted for inflation, thus reflecting true present-day numbers.

Occupational Characteristics

Table 3.7 compares the occupational characteristics of Flat Rock to the County. The table generally shows that the population in both the City and the County has shifted away from the blue collar occupations of the past, such as production, transportation, and material moving toward white collar jobs. Management, business, science, and arts occupations are the largest occupation sector in Flat Rock at 33.1 percent, as well as for Wayne County at 31.5 percent. The second largest occupation sector in the City is sales and office occupations, also the second largest in the County.

Table 3.7: Occupation of Population 16 Years and Older – Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2013

Occupation	Flat Rock		Wayne County	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	1,317	33.1	213,696	31.5
Service occupations	728	18.3	143,894	21.2
Sales and office occupations	960	24.2	169,303	24.9
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	205	5.2	46,769	6.9
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	764	19.2	105,395	15.5
Total Employed	3,974	100.0	679,057	100.0

Source: US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2009-2013.

According to the 2000 Census, 20.7% people in the City were employed in management or professional occupations. This represents a 59.3 percent increase in ten years. Evidence suggests that the City's occupational characteristics will gradually become even more white collar as the City's educational attainment increases and more people move into the community. Educational attainment of the population 25 years and over is presented in Table 3.8.

Educational Attainment

According to the 2013 American Community Survey, 89.9 percent of the City's population had a high school diploma or higher, and 16.3 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Flat Rock has 5.8 percent higher rate of high school graduates or higher than Wayne County, but 5.0 percent lower rate of those with a bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison to the State of Michigan, the City has a very similar percentage of high school graduates or higher, but 9.6 percent less with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 3.8: Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years and Over – Flat Rock, Wayne County, and Michigan, 2013

Occupation	Flat Rock		Wayne County		Michigan	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Less than 9th grade	228	3.5	57,693	4.9	224,216	3.4
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	430	6.6	129,515	11.0	507,783	7.7
High school graduate	2,376	36.4	359,111	30.5	2,004,754	30.4
Some college, no degree	1,886	28.9	294,353	25.0	1,582,701	24.0
Associate degree	548	8.4	85,951	7.3	567,134	8.6
Bachelor's degree	606	9.3	153,064	13.0	1,048,539	15.9
Graduate or professional degree	456	7.0	97,725	8.3	659,459	10.0
Population 25 years and over	6,530	100.0	1,177,412	100.0	6,594,586	100.0
Percent high school graduate or higher	--	89.9	--	84.1	--	88.9
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	--	16.3	--	21.3	--	25.9

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2009-2013.

The percentage of the population in the City that obtained a high school degree or higher increased from 2000 - 2013 from 83.5 percent to 89.9 percent, an increase of 6.4 percent during the thirteen-year period. This is similar to the 6.0 percent increase from 1990 to 2000. The percentage of the population who obtained bachelor's degrees or higher also increased during this time period from 12.0 percent to 16.3 percent, an increase of 4.3 percent. From 1990 to 2000, the percent of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 3.3 percent. Given this long-term trend, it is likely that the percentage of high school and college graduates will continue to increase.

Household Growth and Composition

This section of the demographic analysis assesses the growth and composition of households in the City. Households are an important consideration because changes in the number of households drive the demand for increased (or decreased) housing.

Number of Households

The number of households in Flat Rock increased from 3,181 in 2000 to 3,754 in 2010, an increase of 573 or 18.0 percent. The growth rate in households exceeds the population growth rate of 16.4 percent due to a decrease in the average household size, which is discussed in the following section.

Household Composition

Household composition is made up of a variety of demographic attributes, including age and gender of the self-identified householder, the number of children, and the number of seniors. Household composition information for Flat Rock, surrounding communities, Wayne County, and the Southeast Michigan region is presented in Table 3.9.

Married couple households constitute a relatively larger portion of the City's households, 49.8 percent, than that of the county's households (37.4 percent). However, the surrounding communities have a higher overall percentage at 53.5 percent. Female headed households, with no husband present, constitute a smaller portion of the City's households (16.6 percent) than that of the county's households (20.7 percent), but greater than both the surrounding communities (11.4 percent) and region (14.9 percent).

The City's proportion of householders living alone is close to that of the surrounding communities, with 23.6 percent and 25.7 respectively. Similarly, households with an individual age 65 and older living alone, at 8.2 percent of the City's total households in comparison to 9.4 percent for surrounding communities, is closer than in comparison to the rest of the region.

The City has a higher proportion of households with one or more individuals under the age of 18 (38.9 percent) than the surrounding communities (33.3 percent), the county (33.5 percent), and the region (32.4 percent). Conversely, the City has a smaller percentage of households with an individual age 65 or older (20.8 percent) than the rest of region.

The household composition data in Table 3.9 suggest that the City faces no out of the ordinary demographic issues. Typical demographic concerns, such as the needs of single-parent female-headed households and senior citizens living alone, are relevant to the City.

Household Size

Information for the average sizes of households and families is presented in Table 3.9. The City's average household size, 2.62 persons per household, is higher than surrounding communities, the county and the region. The City's average family size, 3.10 persons per family, is similar to the region, higher than the surrounding communities, and lower than the county. The average sizes of the City's households and families do not suggest any out of the ordinary planning issues.

Table 3.9: Household Composition — Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2010

	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan²
Total Number of Households	3,754	34,865	702,749	1,844,758
Married Couple Households	1,868 (49.8%)	18,636 (53.5%)	262,559 (37.4%)	841,993 (45.6%)
Female Headed Households with No Husband Present	624 (16.6%)	3,986 (11.4%)	145,630 (20.7%)	274,369 (14.9%)
Householder Living Alone	886 (23.6%)	8,951 (25.7%)	215,710 (30.7%)	532,680 (28.9%)
Householder 65 and Over Living Alone	307 (8.2%)	3,279 (9.4%)	75,206 (10.7%)	190,879 (10.3%)
Households with an Individual Under 18	1,460 (38.9%)	11,612 (33.3%)	235,717 (33.5%)	597,477 (32.4%)
Households with an Individual 65 and Over	779 (20.8%)	8,283 (23.8%)	178,194 (25.4%)	455,559 (24.7%)
Average Household Size	2.62	2.52	2.56	2.51
Average Family Size	3.10	3.03	3.22	3.08

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from US Census Bureau.

Housing

Understanding housing issues is important because the need for housing, and the development of houses, mark much of the urban landscape and provides much of the focus for master plans. According to SEMCOG's analysis, land area developed represents 44.7 percent of the City's total land area.

Number of Housing Units

The total number of housing units in the City increased from 3,291 in 2000 to 3,995 in 2010. The comparison among growth rates for population, households, and housing is presented in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10: Growth in Population, Households, and Housing Units — Flat Rock, 2000 - 2010

	2000	2010	Change 2000 to 2010	Percent Change
Population	8,488	9,878	1,390	16.4
Households	3,181	3,754	573	18.0
Housing Units	3,291	3,995	704	21.4

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from US Census Bureau.

The growth of housing units, at 21.4 percent, has slightly outpaced that of households. This indicates potential empty housing units that can be advertised to help the City grow in population.

Housing Type

The first housing characteristic under consideration is the type of housing. The available census data on housing is categorized into the following types:

- One-family, detached
- One-family, attached
- Two-family / duplex
- Multi-unit apartment
- Mobile homes
- Other units (includes boats, RVs, etc.)

To understand the City's housing stock, the change in housing type is analyzed. Secondly, the types of housing in the City are compared to those in the region and the surrounding area.

Change in Housing Type

The types of housing in the City in 2000 and 2010 are described Table 3.11. From 2000 to 2010, the total number of housing units in the City increased by 12.0 percent. The number of one-family detached homes increased at a higher rate than the total number of housing units. The City added housing units in townhouse/attached condo and multi-unit apartments, but at a lower rate than total housing growth.

Table 3.11: Changes in Housing Type — Flat Rock, 2000, 2010 and 2013

	Number of Housing Units			Change 2000 to 2013	Percent Change 2000 to 2013	Percent of Total Housing Growth
	2000	2010	2013			
Total	3,291	3,686	4041	750	12.0	100.0
One-family, detached	1,773	2,296	2549	776	43.8	103.4
Duplex	71	53	65	-6	-8.4	-8
Townhouse / attached condo	57	61	83	26	45.6	3.5
Multi-unit apartment	670	681	740	70	10.4	9.3
Mobile homes / manufactured home	720	595	604	-116	-16.1	-15.5
Other units	0	0		0	0.0	0.0

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG & US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2009-2013

From 2000 to 2010, new one-family detached housing constituted 132.4 percent of total housing growth in the City, due to net losses in duplex and mobile/manufactured homes. The data shows that the City’s housing stock and the trend in housing development is almost entirely one-family detached, as there was a relatively small increase in townhouse, condo, and apartment housing. These trends may change between 2010 – 2020, based upon the number of mixed-use and multi-family units proposed and approved since 2010.

Housing Type Comparison

The types of housing in the City are compared to housing types in the region and the surrounding area in Table 3.12. In 2010, one-family detached housing constituted 62.3 percent of the total housing in the City, which is less than the surrounding communities, the county, and the entire region. Nonetheless, one-family detached housing units constitute the majority of the housing units in the City.

Apartments and mobile homes account for 18.5 percent and 16.1 percent of the City’s total housing respectively. The percentage of apartments is similar to the surrounding communities, the county and the region. The mobile home parks are clustered in Flat Rock in two parks. One park is Deerfield Estates and the other is Arthur’s Mobile Home Park. Some of the homes in these parks are located in neighboring communities.

Table 3.12: Comparison of Housing Types as a Percentage of Total Housing Units — Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2010

	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²
One-family, detached	62.3	67.8	68.9	68.7
Duplex	1.4	0.7	5.4	3.1
Townhouse / attached condo	1.7	7.3	6.1	6.5
Multi-unit apartment	18.5	18.3	17.9	18.6
Mobile home / manufactured home	16.1	5.9	1.7	3.1
Other units	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

Housing Value

Housing value assessment considers the value of owner-occupied homes and the rent asked for renter occupied dwellings. The data is based on responses to the 5-year American Community Survey from 2006 to 2010.

Median Housing Value

The data for median housing value represent “specified owner occupied housing units,” which are defined by the Census Bureau as “owner occupied housing units described as either a one-family detached from any other house or a one-family house attached to one or more houses on less than 10 acres with no business on the property.” The median housing value in the City, the surrounding communities, the county, and the region is presented in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13: Median Value of Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units — Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2010

Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²
\$139,400	\$166,125	\$121,100	\$160,544

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

The median value of owner occupied housing in Flat Rock is 14.0 percent higher than that in the county, but 14.1 percent lower than the median housing in the region. The City’s median housing value is 17.5 percent lower than the median housing in the surrounding communities.

Demographic Analysis: Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The preceding sections have identified demographic characteristics of the City that differ from those of the surrounding communities, Wayne County and the Southeast Michigan region. The primary findings of the demographic analysis are:

- The City experienced large real and percentage increases in population for almost the entire 20th century, but was estimated to have shrunk for the first time ever between 2010 and 2014.
- The City's rate of population growth was generally steady since the 1950s, until the population went from 16.4 percent growth to 0.2 percent loss between 2000 - 2010 and 2010 - 2014.
- Since the 2000s, though, the City's overall rate of growth has continued to increase at a higher rate than most of the surrounding communities, particularly Rockwood and Trenton, who have lost population during this time. Berlin and Brownstown townships are the only surrounding communities to outpace Flat Rock's population growth from 2000 to 2010.
- The City's median age, 36.9 years, is very similar to that of the surrounding communities, Wayne County, and the Southeast Michigan region, but below the state and national median.
- The City has a higher percentage of individuals under the age of 18 and fewer individuals over the age of 65 than the population of the surrounding communities, County, and the region.
- The City has more individuals in the preschool, school age, and family-forming age groups relative to the surrounding communities, County, and the region, and fewer individuals in the mature families group, particularly in comparison to the surrounding communities. The City has a smaller proportion of individuals in the retirement age group as the surrounding communities, County and the region.
- Flat Rock generally has a higher percentage of residents with incomes between \$50,000 to \$199,999 than the County. Within the City of Flat Rock, median household incomes are fairly evenly distributed along a large spectrum of incomes, ranging between \$15,000 and \$149,999.
- The City has shifted employment away from traditional blue collar professions, such as construction, production, and transportation, and moved more towards white collar professions, such as management and business services.
- The largest occupation sector in Flat Rock is management, business services, science and arts occupations, with the second largest being sales and office occupations.
- The percentage of the population in the City who obtained a high school degree or higher and the percentage of the population who obtained bachelor's degrees or higher increased from 2000 to 2013. The City of Flat Rock has a higher percentage of residents with at least a high school degree than Wayne County, but lags behind the county in the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Household composition and average household and family size do not present any out of the ordinary planning issues for the City.
- The increase in housing units has exceeded the increase in households, leading to a slight increase in vacancies.

Public Input

A number of public outreach techniques were used to engage residents in the planning process. The techniques and the results are summarized on the following pages.

Riverfest

At Riverfest, the question of “What is your BIG idea for Flat Rock” was posted in the Flat Rock, Our Hometown booth during the duration of the Riverfest celebration in Fall 2015. The following summary represents the comments collected at that time:

- Fix the roads
- Need a new traffic study
- Ability to ride scooters in the park
- Fill the K-mart building
- Get a senior bus that runs all the time
- Like the historical buildings
- LED signs for City Hall to inform residents of events
- Create a dog park
- Need signs for bikers to find their way through town
- Pave Peters Road
- More art festivals
- Dave & Busters, skate park, Funtastic



Flat Rock, Our Hometown Website

The survey link was posted to the Flat Rock, Our Hometown website and afterwards there was a comment regarding a dog park at Huroc Park that a resident wished to include in the comments.

School Survey

The school survey was completed in February 2016 by 8-12th graders in the Flat Rock Community Schools. We all know how important youth participation is to the planning process, especially since they are the ones who are likely to want to return to their hometown. One of the things we were hoping to gain by asking open-ended questions were honest answers, especially about where kids like to spend their time. This could be at businesses in the City or outside the City. This question is intended to help guide Economic Development in attracting businesses that cater to the needs of this age group. Specific mentions of businesses and cities that young people visit are listed after each question, if applicable.

The survey consisted of ten, open-ended questions (results are included in the appendix) to which the top ten answers have been given below:

1. When you hang out with your friends, what do you do?

- Play games
- Eat
- Watch movies
- Play video games
- Hang out
- Listen to music
- Chill
- Play basketball
- Play games on phones/text with friends
- Play sports

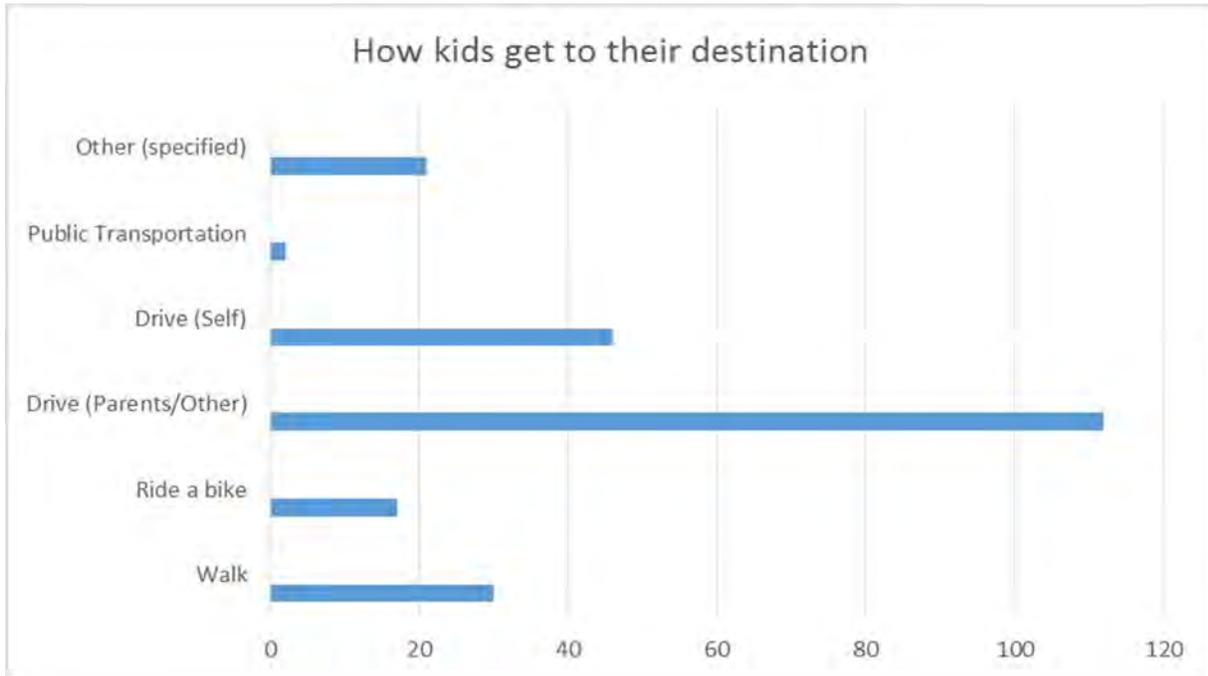
The Flat Rock Community Center (referred to as the “Rec Center”) was mentioned often as a place to hang out and play games and sports. Taco Bell was referenced as a place to eat and Woodhaven was noted for movies and food.

2. When you hang out with friends, where do you like to go?

- House
- Mall
- Movies
- Park
- Eat/Restaurants

Specifically mentioned places where young people like to go included Huroc Park, Target, Zap Zone, Taco Bell, McDonald’s, Buffalo Wild Wings, MOD Pizza, Starbuck’s, Steak & Shake, Stevie B’s, Simpler Times, Five Guys, Downtown Detroit, Wendy’s, hookah bars, bowling alley, drop-in cheer, Kalahari, Las Vegas, Myrtle Beach, Chicago, Emagine Movie Theater, Ann Arbor, Somerset Mall, Panera, Downriver Gymnastics, Sky Zone, Cedar Point, Dairy Queen, Flat Rock Community Center, Pointe Mouillee, Applebee’s, Kroger, McDonald’s and Skateland.

3. How do you get there?



Nearly 70% of respondents drive, either by themselves or with their parents/others. Among the responses for “Other” were a combination of all of the categories above.

4. Name three things you like about living in Flat Rock.

- Friends
- School
- Living close to friends/stores
- Small town
- Flat Rock and amenities
- Quiet
- Safe
- Nice people
- Sports
- Flat Rock Recreation Center

Among the businesses that were specifically mentioned in response to this question were: Flat Rock Recreation Center, Dollar General, Gas Stations, Flat Rock Library, Kroger, Taco Bell, Tim Horton’s, Flat Rock Public Library, the Flat Rock Ice Rink, Hines Park, Huroc Park, Bowling Alley, Dairy Queen, Meijer, Biggby, Flat Rock Speedway, Flat Rock Museum.

5. What are some things Flat Rock doesn’t have?

- Mall
- Movie Theater
- Places to go
- Parks
- Restaurants
- Schools
- Stores
- Starbucks
- Sky Zone
- Cedar Point

The following businesses, either existing or not in Flat Rock, were mentioned in the responses to this question: Buffalo Wild Wings, Kroger, Five Below, Skateland, Leo’s, Dollar General, Starbucks, Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s, Walmart, Toys R Us, Applebees, Golden Corral, Target, Michael’s on the River, Captain Nemo’s, Sky Zone, Zap Zone, Meijer, KFC, Panera, PF Chang’s, Wendy’s, Tim Horton’s, Southern Scentsations, Skate Park, Hardee’s, Cedar

Point, Water Park, Qdoba, Jimmy John's, Coldstone, Pump It Up, Chipotle, Lazer Tag, Mini Golf, Chick-Fil-A, Steak and Shake, and White Castle.

Cities mentioned included Taylor and Woodhaven. Also quoted were a city bus system, airport, micro center, and Orlando movie studios.

6. What do you leave Flat Rock to do?

- Shopping
- Visit Family
- Eat
- Movies
- Visit Friends
- Vacation
- Sports
- Fun
- Live (in another community)
- Soccer

Specifically mentioned businesses and cities include: Five Below, Woodhaven, Buffalo Wild Wings, Skateland, Kroger, Safety Town in Woodhaven/Brownstown, Florida, Church, Dearborn, Target, Sky Zone, Jackson, Melvindale, Canada, Up North, 4 Lakes Family Campground, Downtown/Midtown Detroit, Ferndale, Royal Oak, Troy, Novi, Canton, Southland Mall, Grosse Ile, Oxford, Starbucks, Zap Zone, Lazer Tag, Mexican Town Detroit, Cedar Point, Yogurt Town, and Meijer.

7. What challenges do you face that the City of Flat Rock might be able to address or help with?

- Roads
- Schools
- Places for kids and teens
- Cleaner parks
- Sidewalks
- Jobs
- Sports

Sports

- More teams for school: tennis, soccer, ping pong
- Big soccer field
- Clubs for athletes

Downriver Linked Greenways System

- Some parts are "dirty"
- More bathrooms
- Safety

Environmental

- Loud trains
- Ducks being hit by cars, pooping everywhere
- Dogs not on leashes
- Make parks cleaner
- Need calm and quiet place
- Littering
- Bury the power lines

Social

- Worried about someone breaking in, family not protected enough
- Keep drugs out of Flat Rock
- Stop being “boring”
- House fires
- Police work
- More art and music
- Money for me and my family to live in a better home
- Bullies outside of school, at parks
- Teen friendly places to hang out
- Underage smoking
- Illegal vandalism in parks, make parks safer, language at the park
- Drugs
- The poor and homeless

School

- Better school lunches
- Better Wi-Fi
- Working digital clocks in the high school
- Bigger schools
- Invest in computers for high school
- Less spending on unnecessary items for middle/elementary (iPhones/iPads)
- Crowded hallways
- Basic needs class in high school (kids need to learn how to cook, clean and sew)
- “Better judgement calls” when cancelling school due to bad weather

Economic Development

- Big stores
- More jobs
- Dog park
- Encourage new, mixed-use development
- Develop Downtown Flat Rock into a walkable, small “village” like neighborhood based around New Urbanism principles
- Small business should be placed above chain stores in order to create a mom-and-pop atmosphere
- Chick-Fil-A
- Cupcake shop

Transportation

- Lower the age to drive
- Public transportation, end the opt-out on SMART bus service
- Bus around town and adjacent towns
- Dirt roads, pave roads
- Lower the weight limit of trucks on Gibraltar to reduce the deterioration of the road
- Nowhere to park on the street, can only park on one side
- Really slow speed limits
- No sidewalks on Telegraph

- Bad roads, pot holes, bumpy
- Make it easier to cross Telegraph (“right now you have to run for your life across the car canyon”)

8. What are some of the words you would use to describe Flat Rock to someone your age who doesn’t live in Flat Rock?

- Nice
- Friendly
- Boring
- Fun
- Place
- Community
- Small Town/City
- Chill

Specific quotes:

- “Small, but almost everyone knows each other from many events that take place in Flat Rock”
- “It is a safe, small city with a nice, helpful community”
- “Nice, friendly, things to do, good education programs, some teenagers who do drugs”
- “Flat Rock is a small community that is supportive of its citizens and family friendly”
- “It’s a beautiful place with a good nature connection mixed with City”

9. When you are older, do you want to live in Flat Rock? Why or why not?

YES	NO	MAYBE/UNDECIDED
50	131	47
22%	57%	21%

Interestingly, many of the respondents who say that they want to live in Flat Rock when they get older cite some of the same reasons they did for how they describe Flat Rock to those their age that don’t live here: that it is a nice, quiet town and that it would be a good, safe place to raise a family. Many comment on the ties they have to the community and their friends and family in particular.

Of the respondents that do not want to live here, many complain about the weather in Michigan and want to live somewhere warm. Many want to travel and experience life before deciding and many tie where they are going to live to their future job opportunities or those of the people they choose to live with in the future. Specific places mentioned include New York, London, France, Las Vegas, California or the “West Coast”, Rome, Alabama, Tennessee, New Jersey, Florida, Australia, Washington, D.C. and England.

Those who are undecided struggle in leaving a place where they have lived since childhood, their families and friends. Many said if they did not live in Flat Rock, they would want to live in a community “like” Flat Rock because it is small, safe and a good place to raise a family.

10. Finally, we asked how old respondents were and how long they have lived in Flat Rock.

42% of respondents were between the ages of 12 and 13, 24% between the ages of 14 and 15 and 34% were over the age of 16. Of all the respondents, 25% have lived in Flat Rock for 1-5 years; 26% have lived here 6-10 years; 36% have lived here 11-15 years and 7% have lived here for more than 16 years. Only 6% of respondents don’t live within the City boundaries.

It is apparent that the largest group of respondents (75%) have lived in Flat Rock for more than 10 years.

Master Plan Survey

The Master Plan Public Survey was available on the City website from January through to February, 2016. There was a total of 78 respondents.

Nearly 60% of respondents were between the ages of 45 and 64, followed by the 25 to 44 age group at nearly 35% and those under 18 and over 65 less than 5%. In the next update, it will be important to try to include more feedback from our senior citizenry by reaching out to them in ways that will encourage them to participate.

Nearly 60% of respondents were female and the other 40% male. Almost 50% had an annual household income range of above \$100,000. Nearly 30% had an annual income of over \$60,000 and the remaining 30% made less than \$59,999.

70% of respondents own their home. 3% either rent or own a house or apartment that they rent. 5% own a business in Flat Rock. 2% own commercial, industrial or vacant property within the City. The remaining 17% do not live in Flat Rock or have moved.

30% have lived in Flat Rock for more than 21 years. 15% have been here less than 10 years and 35% between 11 and 15 years. Only 9% of respondents don't live in Flat Rock. 89% live in a single family dwelling, 7% in apartments and 1% each in attached condos/duplexes or mobile homes.

In terms of the number of people living in the household: 7% have 1 person, 35% have 2 people, 45% have 3-4 people and 13% have 5 or more.

The next question dealt with categories that asked how much new development is needed in Flat Rock in the next 5-10 years. In order by weighted average are: affordable, single family housing; high-end single family housing; independent senior living facilities; assisted senior living facilities; detached townhomes/condos; duplexes; low-income housing options and apartments.

Sense of community was the most positive aspect of living in Flat Rock followed by parks and recreation, the Huron River; the bike trails; public safety (police and fire); the proximity to Detroit/Toledo; the school system; culture, history and festivals; affordable housing; proximity to work; quality housing stock; Downtown Flat Rock; and transportation and accessibility.

The aspects of living in Flat Rock that needed the most improvement were, in order: Downtown vibrancy; road maintenance; local employment opportunities; non-motorized transportation (sidewalks, bike lanes, paths); community events and entertainment options; parks and recreation facilities; cost of living; high tax rates compared to surrounding communities; housing options (apartments, live/work space, new single family); and public safety (police and fire).

In asking what aspect of living in Flat Rock is the most important in securing our future, of the choices given, the order was as follows: Downtown vibrancy; school system; road maintenance; greater variety in commercial businesses; more entertainment, dining and nightlife options; sense of community; more recreational access to the Huron River; quality of housing (neighborhood clean-up, general home improvements); the condition of parks and recreation facilities; public safety services (police and fire); more transportation options (public transit, walking, biking); and variety of housing.

Talking about goals for transportation, maintain existing roads and sidewalks; Downtown design improvements; improve, repair, add neighborhood sidewalks; provide bike lanes on roads; improving access to the Huron River; add bike parking racks; wind sidewalks along commercial corridors; add off street parking; add on street parking; add wayfinding signage; traffic calming; and traffic congestion.

Out of potential priorities for Flat Rock in the next 15 years, the following were ranked in order:

- Maintain existing roads
- Improve the Downtown
- Occupy vacant retail spaces
- Redevelop vacant commercial properties
- Improve Telegraph commercial corridor
- Preserve natural features, open space, trees, etc.
- Improve appearance of residential neighborhoods
- Establish pedestrian sidewalks
- Provide housing opportunities for young families
- Improve access to parks
- Incorporate art into public places (statues, murals, etc.)
- Establish bicycle paths and lanes
- Coordinate with adjacent communities to achieve shared objectives
- Provide more live/work space
- Provide more housing opportunities for seniors
- Provide more affordable housing.

Of the economic development goals, the following were rated in order of importance:

- Encourage additional retail businesses
- Business community revitalization
- Increase the number of jobs
- Attract additional office businesses
- Restrict development of commercial and industrial areas
- Attract additional industrial businesses.

The next question gave participants the opportunity to share their opinions on rating the types of business categories in Flat Rock. Respondents had the choices of: no opinion, not needed, too many already, just enough, some need and desperate need. The following table summarizes the results.

	NO OPINION / NOT ANSWERED	NOT NEEDED	TOO MANY ALREADY	JUST ENOUGH	SOME NEED	DESPERATE NEED
Auto Repair Garage	7	14	21	27	7	0
Auto Sales/Dealership	7	20	15	26	8	0
Bank/Financial Institutions	4	14	18	37	2	1
Bar/Tavern	4	8	4	25	25	10
Big Box Commercial (General Merchandise)	4	4	5	14	35	14
Café/Coffee Shop/Bakery	2	2	5	20	32	15
Car Wash	3	14	12	40	6	1
Clothing Store	4	11	2	2	33	24
Electronic Store	8	20	3	7	29	9
Entertainment	6	7	1	9	26	27
Fast Food/Drive Thru	4	14	24	26	7	1
Furniture Store	10	23	4	6	29	4

Gas Station	4	15	21	34	2	0
Grocery Store	6	6	2	13	24	25
Hardware Store	7	12	4	41	12	0
Medical Office (Doctor/Dentist)	12	8	4	26	25	1
Pharmacy	7	10	10	42	6	1
Professional Office (Lawyer, Architect)	13	11	5	29	17	1
Service Commercial (Dry Cleaner)	9	12	6	33	14	2
Sit Down Restaurant	4	4	3	8	29	28
Small Scale Commercial (Flowers/Bakery)	6	4	6	11	31	18
Canoe/Kayak Rentals	8	11	0	1	26	30

When looking at the “Desperate Need” column, participants felt that Canoe and Kayak Rentals, Sit Down Restaurants, Entertainment, Grocery Stores and Clothing Stores were the highest priority. When combining the Some Need and Desperate Need columns, the top five changes a bit to reflect what participants feel is needed most in Flat Rock:

- Sit Down Restaurants and Clothing Stores (57)
- Canoe/Kayak Rentals (56)
- Entertainment (53)
- Small Scale Commercial, Grocery and Big Box Stores (49)
- Café/Coffee Shop/Bakery (47)

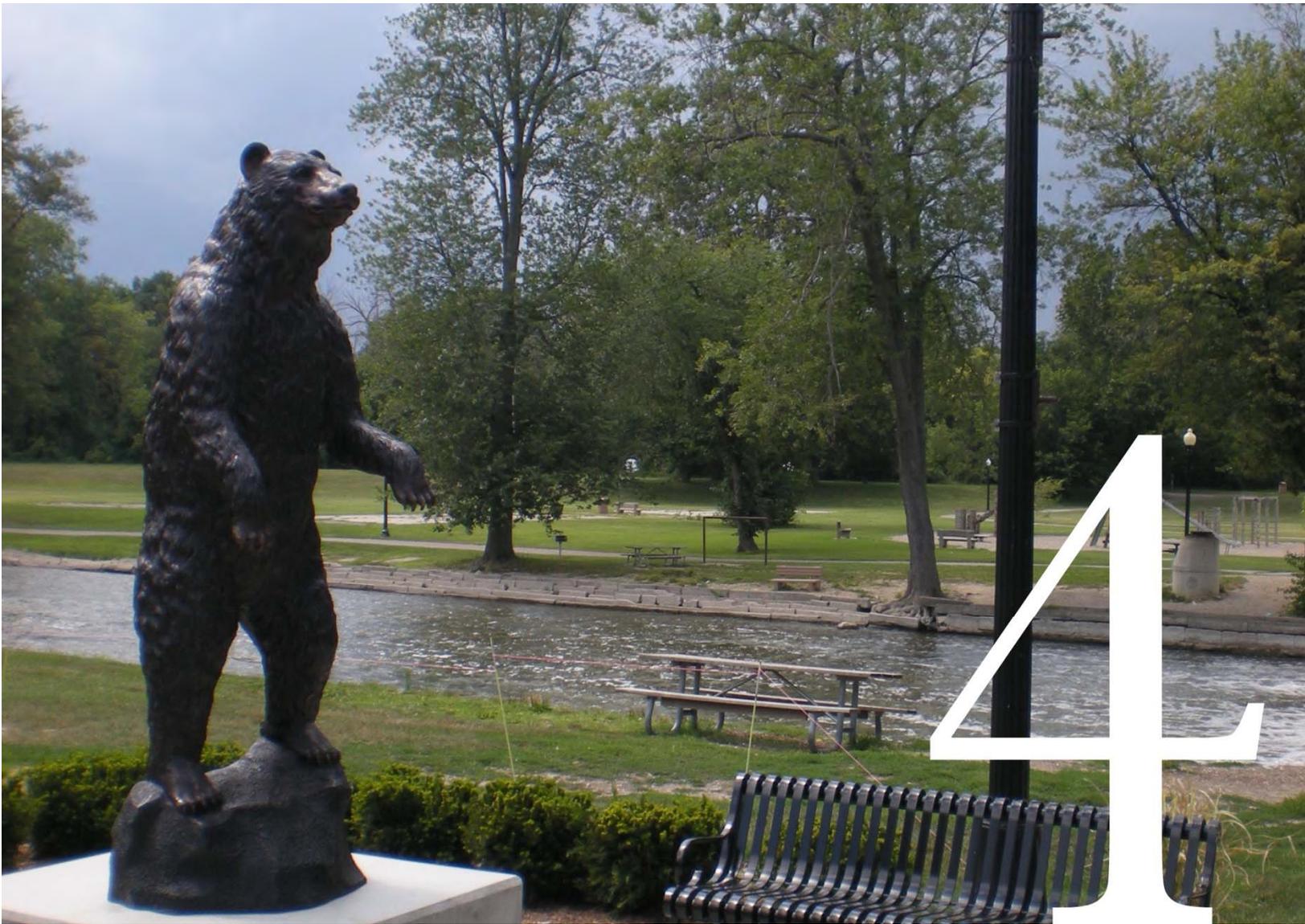
While nearly the same number of participants felt there was some need for Furniture and Electronic stores, almost an equal number felt that those types of stores are not needed in Flat Rock.

The categories that were considered not needed in Flat Rock were: Furniture, Electronic, Auto Sales, Gas Stations, Auto Repair, Banks, Car Washes, and Fast Food.

When considering factors that would entice participants to start a business in Flat Rock, streetscape and Downtown vibrancy were the most appealing followed by a convenient location and safe environment, both of which were tied with “None, I don’t want to own a business”. Tied for fourth place were financial incentives and surrounding businesses, followed by access to target market, proximity to home, availability of skilled employees and good roads.

Some of the obstacles, perceived or actual, to conducting business in Flat Rock were appearance of commercial areas, attracting customers, lack of parking, and competition with commercial areas outside the City. Nearly 50% of respondents had no opinion on this question.

The responses to the final two questions (18 and 19) are included in the Appendix. Question #20 will be left out of the Appendix as it contains personal information from the respondents. All of the information received will assist the City in moving forward to meet the goals that are important to residents and business owners alike.



Existing Land Use

Overview

Early development in Flat Rock was oriented in relation to three primary transportation axes: Telegraph Road (US-24), Gibraltar Road, and Huron River Drive. At one time, Telegraph Road was the major north-south transportation route in Southeast Michigan, linking Detroit and communities farther to the north with Toledo, Ohio. The heavy volume of traffic on Telegraph Road provided a healthy market for an assortment of retail and service businesses that were developed in a random pattern along the corridor.

In Flat Rock, Telegraph Road north of the Huron River became the “main street” of the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD eventually expanded to encompass about twelve to fifteen blocks, generally east of Telegraph Road. Telegraph Road consisted primarily of retail uses, whereas the rest of the CBD contained a mixture of service, institutional, and residential uses. Some of the oldest housing in the City is interspersed with the commercial and institutional uses in the CBD. A small neighborhood of older single family homes also exists adjacent to and east of the CBD.

The other two primary routes noted above, Gibraltar Road and Huron River Drive, prescribed patterns of additional early residential growth. The largest single family neighborhood in the City developed in a large triangular area bounded by Gibraltar Road to the north and Huron River Drive to the south. Residents who desired more substantial, custom-built homes on large lots in a semi-rural setting settled northwest of the CBD. This second concentration of early residential growth occurred mainly along Huron River Drive. In addition to the large-lot development facing onto Huron River Drive, a small riverfront subdivision was developed north of the CBD.

The fourth major axis – the railroad – also affected the early development and general form of the City. The railroad line, demarcating the north boundary of the CBD, split the general pattern of commercial and residential development diagonally. The northwest section of the City developed at a slower rate than the rest of the City, possibly because the tracks “cut off” the northwest section from the businesses and institutions in and near the CBD.

The basic pattern of development described in the previous paragraphs was in place in 1970. More recently, the development of the City has been affected most significantly by access to I-75, the major north-south corridor in Michigan and the United States. The Gibraltar Road interchange has created opportunities for regional-oriented development on the east side of the City. The Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant is the most prominent example of such development. Several commercial/office developments are also now located along Gibraltar Road, particularly in the Gateway Commerce Center.

Telegraph Road’s role as a regional transportation corridor has declined. Accordingly, much of the recent commercial development along Telegraph Road has been oriented toward a local market, rather than toward travelers. Some older businesses have become obsolete because of the reorientation of the Telegraph Road market.

Aside from the I-75 access and reorientation of the Telegraph Road commercial district, in recent years Flat Rock’s land use profile has changed because of the construction of new types of housing. The City’s single family housing stock has been diversified with the construction of mobile homes and apartments during the 1970s and more recently in the late 1990s.

In the past five years, much of the City’s formerly vacant land was developed as housing, through Planned Unit Developments, which provided open space, preservation of natural features and development of pedestrian amenities, such as pathways and tot-lots. A visual display of Flat Rock’s existing land use pattern can be seen on Map 2: Existing Land Use. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the total land use acreage with a comparison to the acreages in 1998 when the last survey was completed. A more detailed review of each type of land use follows.

Table 4.1: Land Use Acreage — Flat Rock, 1998 to 2006

Land Use	1998 ¹ Acres	1998 Percent	2006 ² Acres	2006 Percent	Change 1998-2006 Acres	Change 1998-2006 Percent
Agriculture/Vacant	1,485.8	37.77	883.03	22.28	-602.77	-40.57
Commercial	118.6	3.01	119.16	3.01	0.56	0.47
Industrial	807.2	20.52	858.24	21.66	51.04	6.32
Light	134.4	3.42	164.74	4.16	30.34	22.57
Heavy	672.8	17.26	693.50	17.50	20.70	3.08
Landfill	201.6	5.12	201.29	5.08	-0.31	-0.15
Office ³	3.21	0.08	17.39	0.44	14.18	441.74
Quasi-Public	269.0	6.84	203.29	5.13	-65.71	-24.12
Recreational	145.6	3.70	277.11	7.00	131.51	90.32
Residential	902.87	22.95	1295.33	32.69	392.46	43.47
Single Family	651.99	16.57	1065.26	26.88	413.27	63.39
Multiple Family	74.63	1.90	76.45	1.93	1.82	2.44
Mobile Home	176.25	4.48	153.62	3.88	-22.63	-12.84
Residential Open Space	--	--	107.49	2.71	107.49	100.00

¹November 1998 Existing Land Use Survey by McKenna Associates, Incorporated; based on 3933.88 total acres.

²May 2006 Existing Land Use Survey by McKenna Associates, Incorporated; based on 3979.94 total acres.

³Significant increase from 1998 to 2006 in office uses due to re-classification of some commercial designations to office.

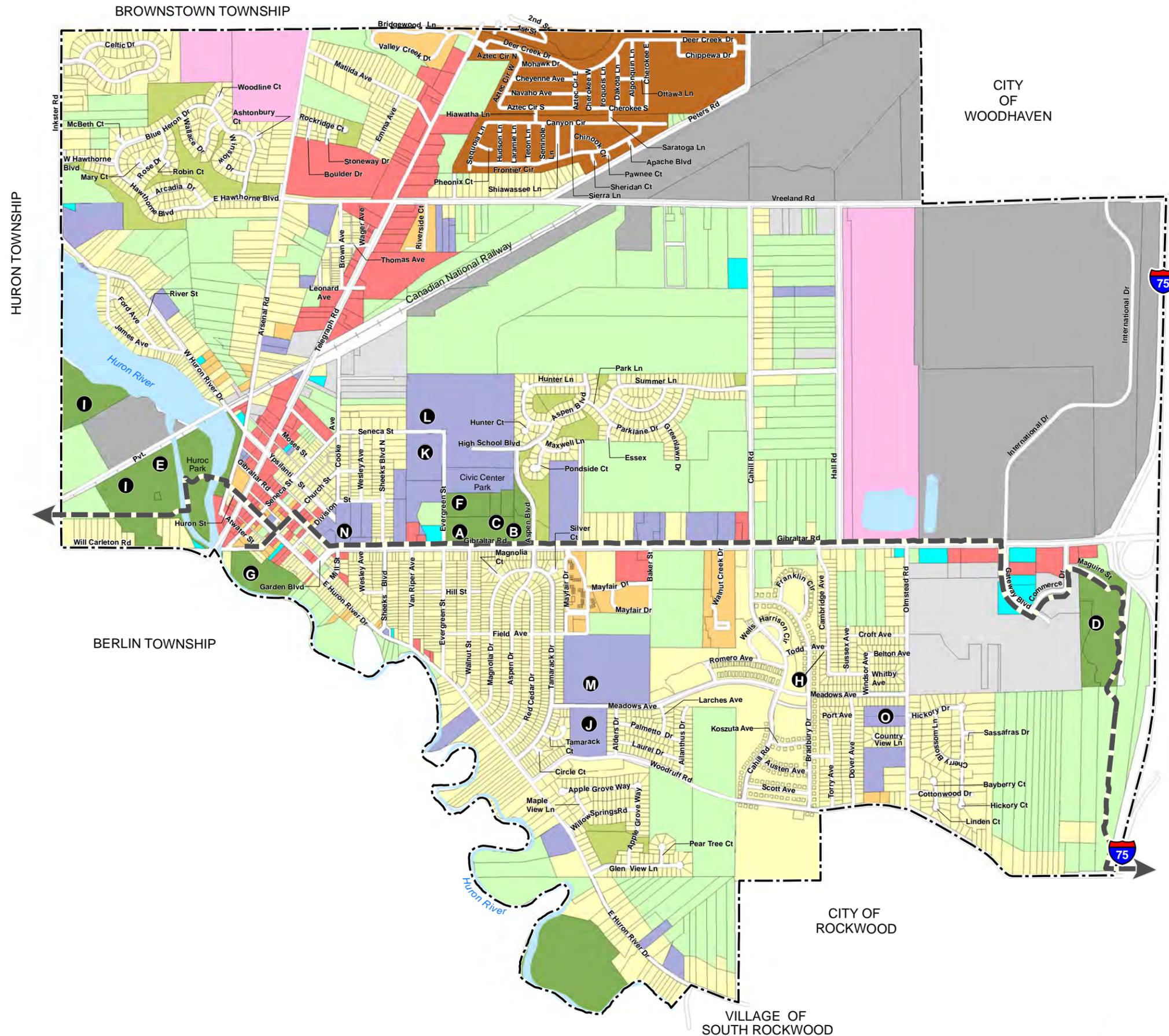
Agriculture/Vacant Land

In 2006, 883.03 acres or 22.28 percent of the City's total land area remains vacant or is used for agricultural purposes. Agriculture now accounts for less than 0.50 percent of the total land area with only 18.07 acres. This represents a 40.57 percent decrease or a loss of 602.77 acres of agricultural and vacant land since 1998. This decrease in agricultural and vacant land has been especially evident in the last 10 years with the development of several subdivisions. The 1998 land use survey revealed that 1485.80 acres, or approximately 37.77 percent of the City's total land area, was used for agricultural purposes or was vacant. The majority of large vacant parcels have been developed, planned or approved for development in the last 5 – 10 years, and new projects continue to be brought forth for consideration. Approximately 125 acres of formally designated vacant land has been permanently preserved as open space within new subdivisions since the 1999 Master Plan.

Map 2 Existing Land Use

City of Flat Rock, Michigan

August 10, 2016



EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES

- Single Family
- Multiple Family
- Mobile Home Park
- Commercial
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Quasi-Public
- Landfill
- Recreational
- Residential Open Space
- Vacant
- DLGI Bike Path

Key:

- A. City Hall (Police/Fire)
- B. Flat Rock Library
- C. "Memory Lane" Historic Village
- D. Community Center
- E. Huroc Park
- F. Civic Center Park (Community Fields)
- G. DNR Boat Launch
- H. Pebble Brook Tot Lot
- I. HCMA

Schools:

- J. Barnes Elementary
- K. Bobcean Elementary
- L. Flat Rock High School
- M. Simpson Intermediate
- N. Old High School Site
- O. Summit Academy (Charter School)



McKenna
ASSOCIATES

Base Map Source: Wayne County, 2014
Data Source: McKenna Associates, Inc. 2015

Commercial and Office

The amount of land allocated for commercial and office use increased by approximately 0.56 and 14.18 acres respectively between 1998 and 2006, an increase of only 0.47 percent for commercial uses but a dramatic increase of 441.74 percent for office uses. This large increase is in fact due to the reclassification of some former commercial uses as an office designation, contributing to the large percentage. The 2006 land use survey revealed that 136.55 acres of land are currently used for commercial and office purposes.

The commercial/office development Gateway Commerce Center on the south side of Gibraltar Road, close to the I-75 interchange, has drawn commercial and light industrial interest. Several businesses are located at this planned light industrial/commercial/office development. Recent and planned additions to the Gateway Commerce Center include an auto auction, medical and professional offices, and a hotel.

The area to the north of the railroad tracks on Telegraph Road has been the most active in terms of commercial activity over the past 20 to 30 years, becoming the center of retail activity in the City. The largest addition recently to the commercial property in Flat Rock is Meijer, the regional chain that sells groceries and household products. This store has the potential to breathe life into the Telegraph Road corridor, even as it resides slightly to the west, and Flat Rock recognizes that development of the area surrounding Meijer will be beneficial to the corridor. The Flat Rock Plaza has recently been the recipient of an updated façade and will be the location for a Family Farm & Home store once completed.

The Central Business District (CBD) is a secondary node of specialty retail and office activity. Based on recent development patterns, continued business development on the remaining Telegraph Road frontage and the redevelopment of obsolete businesses can be expected. For example, the Rite Aid at the southwest corner of Telegraph Road and Gibraltar Road helped set the tone for Flat Rock's traditional downtown. This development replaced the historic Smith Hotel building, which was preserved and relocated to the Civic Center Park. Other significant developments in the CBD include the Monroe Bank and Trust, Fifth-Third Bank, Grunow Law Office, and other building renovations.

Industrial

The 2006 land use survey revealed that approximately 858.24 acres, or 21.66 percent, of the total land area is currently used for industrial purposes. This represents a 6.32 percent increase over the 1998 industrial land use figure.

The most significant industrial construction during the past three decades is the Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant. The construction of this facility marked a reorientation of industry in Flat Rock, toward I-75 instead of Telegraph Road. The facility also set a new standard for industrial design in the City. Other light industrial developments have occurred on Vreeland Road, west of Hall Road.

Little growth has occurred in Flat Rock's older industrial district near the City center during the past three decades. Older industries along the railroad and Telegraph Road were developed at a time when environmental planning issues were of minor importance in industrial districts. Consequently, inadequate parking, buffering, and screening of outside storage areas are common problems. The size and configuration of the sites themselves do not meet the needs of modern industry.

Based on recent development patterns, continued decline of the older industrial district can be expected. The opportunity exists to develop new light manufacturing, research, and warehousing uses on the east side (Hall Road) of the City, where there is convenient access to I-75. Light industrial uses have been developed in the Gateway Commerce Center, and planned industrial development would be an appropriate transitional use to buffer existing and new single family development from the railroad and the Ford Flat Rock Assembly Plant.

Landfill

The 2006 land use survey revealed that approximately 201.29 acres, or 5.08 percent of the City's total land area is occupied by land that was formerly used as landfill. There are two such landfill sites in the City:

- The former Ford Motor Company landfill on the east side of Hall Road, between Vreeland and Gibraltar Roads.
- The landfill site located on the west side of Arsenal Road at the City's northern boundary.

The land occupied by these former landfills likely cannot be used for development in the foreseeable future. Of far greater significance is the impact these landfills may have on the development of adjacent parcels.

Quasi-Public

The amount of land allocated for quasi or semi-public uses decreased by 24.12 percent, or 65.71 acres since the 1998 land use survey. Given this decrease, quasi-public land now accounts for nearly 203.29 acres, or 5.13 percent of the total land area. This decrease is attributed mainly to the loss of a large portion quasi-public land in the center of the City to impending residential and mixed-use development. The majority of the uses which occupy quasi-public lands include schools, municipal buildings, and religious institutions. Most of these uses were built between 1975 and 2000, including the Flat Rock municipal building, several churches along Gibraltar Road and Huron River Drive, and new schools and grounds, such as Flat Rock High School.

Recreational

Recreational land use increased by 131.51 acres, or 90.32 percent since 1998. This land use represents the single largest increase as a percent (not including the large increase in office uses). Approximately 277.11 acres, or 7.00 percent of the City's total land area is classified as recreational.

The recreational land is centralized into three large areas on the Existing Land Use Map. Huroc Park, located in the southwest section of the City, is the largest in terms of area. Civic Center Park is located on Gibraltar Road east and north of the City Hall complex. The Community Center (2 story, 52,000 square foot facility) was completed in December 2004, on 27 acres of wooded wetlands, in the Gateway Commerce Center, adjacent to I-75. There are also significant areas located along the river, including Huroc Park, the DNR Boat Launch, HCMA property and Wayne County land, dedicated to recreational uses.

Residential

Recent residential development has consisted of single-family and multiple-family home construction. The amount of land used for residential purposes increased by approximately 392.46 acres, or 43.47 percent, between 1998 and

2006. Currently, about 1295.33 acres, or approximately 32.69 percent of the total land area, are used for residential purposes.

Single-family residential development increased most with 1065.26 acres, an increase of 63.39 percent since 1998. Most of this development has occurred on vacant land in the northwest, center and southeast sections of the City. Several large scale single-family developments are currently in the planning or construction stages. These developments collectively contain 1,539 new single-family dwelling units on more than 535 acres of land.

Multiple-family complexes currently occupy 76.45 acres, or 1.93 percent of the land in 2006. This is an increase of only 1.82 acres (2.44%) since 1998. Most multiple-family developments are located along Gibraltar Road in the center of the City and to the northwest along Telegraph Road.

In the 1970s and 1980s, scattered large lot single-family housing was in high demand in Flat Rock due to the lack of sewer capacity, insufficient access to vacant lands, and a lack of investment in new subdivisions. This type of development is evident on roads such as Huron River Drive, Arsenal Road, and Cahill Road. Development of scattered large lot single-family homes still occurs, but the majority of new homes are being built in planned subdivisions. More recently, homebuyers have been afforded more choices and are willing to pay a higher price for homes with additional amenities and features.

A few broad areas are suitable for single family development but are not currently accessible via a public road. This includes some areas to the west of Telegraph Road and east of Arsenal and areas in the southern sections of the City.

Residential Open Space

The amount of residential open space was not measured in the 1998 Existing Land Use Survey. With the increase of new residential developments, the Flat Rock Planning Commission has set a standard requiring that all new residential subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments include both passive (nature trails and non-motorized pathways) and active recreational areas (tot lots) within the neighborhoods. The majority of the recent residential developments contain these amenities, providing a great asset to the residents of the development and surrounding areas. In 2006, residential open space accounted for 107.49 acres or 2.71 percent of the total land area.



Regional Land Use Relationships

Overview

Flat Rock is part of the sub-region known as “Downriver.” This sub-region extends approximately seventeen miles along the Detroit River, from Detroit to the Huron River. Northern Downriver communities contains some of the most intensively developed industrial land in southeast Michigan. While Flat Rock does include industrial uses and facilities such as the Ford Assembly Plant and CN Railyard, the City is not intensively developed. On the contrary, Flat Rock is situated along the Huron River Greenway, and its residents enjoy the many active and passive recreational opportunities available to them. Many new development opportunities are available, and the City has policies in place to encourage and incorporate open space into new plans.

Although most of the City has not been subject to the intensive industrial development that characterizes the northern Downriver communities, the City has not been completely insulated from the impact of industrial development in the region. Flat Rock has six sites within the City that are reported to be contaminated. There are twenty more sites with underground storage tanks, eight of the sites with leaking tanks. All of these sites are in various states of clean-up, however, the possibility for future contamination exists given the many outdated structures found in the community. Also, as the outdated structures become abandoned they eventually become obsolete, presenting an opportunity for brownfield redevelopment in the City.

Planning Relationships to Surrounding Communities

Seven communities, including Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Huron Township, Rockwood, South Rockwood, and Woodhaven, surround the City of Flat Rock. Following review of the land use and adopted master plans of surrounding communities, two general observations can be made:

The past and expected future pattern of land use in Flat Rock should not deter adjoining communities from achieving their land use objectives. Furthermore, the proposed pattern of development in surrounding communities does not appear to be in conflict with desired land use development in Flat Rock.

Coordination of future development in adjoining communities would achieve benefits in terms of urban design and the efficient use of public utilities.

The following analysis explores the land use relationships with adjoining communities in greater detail.

The Northern Border

Brownstown Township and Woodhaven adjoin Flat Rock to the north. Brownstown Township's current master plan calls for single-family development between Inkster and Arsenal Roads, and a combination of multiple-family and mobile home park uses between Arsenal and Peters Roads. This pattern of development is compatible with the adjoining land use and zoning in Flat Rock, which indicates a combination of single and multiple-family land uses west of Telegraph Road and mobile home park uses east of Telegraph.

Woodhaven's current master plan specifies light and heavy industrial uses between Peters Road and I-75, north of Vreeland Road. This pattern of development is compatible with the adjoining General Manufacturing and Railroad Industrial zoning classifications, which accommodate the Ford Flat Rock Assembly Plant and Canadian National Railroad interchange in Flat Rock.

The Eastern Border

I-75 provides a substantial buffer between Flat Rock and Brownstown Township, the adjoining community to the north and east. The current master plan for Brownstown Township specifies single and multiple-family uses south of Vreeland Road. Commercial development is proposed for the intersection of I-75 and Gibraltar Road. Planned unit development and light industrial uses are indicated for land south of Gibraltar Road.

The evolving land use pattern in Flat Rock is consistent with Brownstown's master plan in that land around the interchange is proposed for intensive, mixed-use development in both communities. Consequently, the opportunity exists to create a full-service commercial/office/lodging district to meet the needs of travelers along I-75 as well as residents in surrounding communities. Because of the physical separation provided by I-75, the compatibility of adjoining land use is of less importance north and south of the Gibraltar Road interchange.

The Southern Border

Four communities to the south, including Rockwood and three communities across the Huron River in Monroe County, border Flat Rock. The river itself and the heavy vegetation along its banks provide a buffer between Flat Rock and communities to the south. Nevertheless, the single-family development pattern and vegetated vacant land in the southern portion of Flat Rock is consistent with a similar adjoining pattern of development in communities to the south.

The Western Border

Huron Township adjoins Flat Rock to the west. The current master plan for Huron Township specifies park uses south of the Huron River and single-family development north of the river. This pattern of development is consistent with the adjoining pattern of existing and zoned development in Flat Rock.

Additional Regional Issues

In addition to the immediate impact from land use in adjoining communities, there are a number of planning issues that relate to the broader metropolitan area. These issues are analyzed in the following pages.

Transportation

Flat Rock is strategically located near I-275 and next to I-75. US-24's (Telegraph Road) role as an important transportation corridor has diminished since the two interstates were developed. However, US-24 is still an important commercial and transportation corridor for the citizens of Flat Rock. US-24 also plays an important role in diverting traffic from the Interstate highways when there is an accident or highway construction. According to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and average daily traffic count of 19,700.

Residential Development

In 2015 the City of Flat Rock issued no building permits for all housing units, compared to the average since 2010 of 19. In comparison, Brownstown Township issued 180 building permits in 2015, and Woodhaven added just three (3) units. These two communities, along with Flat Rock, show the disparity in residential growth in Downriver communities.

Regional Patterns of Growth

The strength of the regional economy and the patterns of regional development will affect the pace of future development in Flat Rock. Housing construction trends provide one measure of the impact of the patterns of regional growth in local communities. New housing construction occurred at a steady pace in most communities in southern Downriver during the 1970s. The recession in the early 1980s brought housing construction to a virtual halt. As the economy rebounded, housing construction resumed, at a pace equal to or in excess of many other communities located in other parts of the region.

The Downriver region is experiencing tremendous growth in commercial and industrial development as well. In past years, the Downriver Community Conference has published articles stating the region as a whole is progressing upward because land is available at a fraction of the cost of the northern suburbs. Other reasons cited why companies are moving or expanding businesses in the Downriver area include: 1) less traffic and congestion; 2) the cities are traditional in design; and, 3) the people and communities are friendly.

Proximity to I-75

Flat Rock has direct access to I-75, which has been described as the state's, and perhaps the nation's, most important industrial corridor. I-75 provides Flat Rock with access to industrial and commercial centers in southeast Michigan and Ohio. Furthermore, the direct freeway access provides industries in Flat Rock with transportation savings, an expanded labor market, and an expanded market area in general. The large volume of traffic along I-75 also represents a potential market for Flat Rock retail businesses. Traffic counts indicate that 54,600 vehicles travel on I-75 in the vicinity of Gibraltar road during an average 24-hour period. However, other roads in Flat Rock have become more heavily traveled in recent years. For example, according to SEMCOG, the average daily traffic (ADT) on Gibraltar between Garden Boulevard and Hall Road the ADT is 12,490, and between I-75 and Hall Road is 19,400. In the Central Business District alone, Gibraltar Road and Huron River Drive carry 6,800 and 8,700 vehicles per day, which is a significant amount of traffic within the City.

Regional Utility Systems

The South Huron Valley Utility Authority is a major regional utility that has had a substantial impact on growth in the southernmost Downriver communities. The South Huron Valley Utility Authority (SHVUA) consists of the City of Flat Rock along with the communities of Brownstown Township, Huron Township, Van Buren Township, Gibraltar, South Rockwood, Woodhaven, and Romulus.

The original South Huron Valley Wastewater Control System facility was constructed in 1988, which increased the development potential of the area. Development in the area had been held up because of inadequate capacity of the sanitary sewer system. With completion of the treatment plant, development has continued to increase, addressing the growing demand for housing. The capacity of the facility was increased in March of 2001, furthering the ability of communities like Flat Rock to grow.

Regional Activity Centers

Certain activity centers in Flat Rock have a regional impact because of the market served, the level of employment, or because of the services provided. The three principal existing or proposed regional activity centers in Flat Rock are as follows:

- **Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant** - The Flat Rock Assembly plant contains 2.7 million square feet of floor area and provides employment for over 3,700 persons. The facility is currently responsible for the global production of the Ford Mustang and Lincoln Continental. The plant is credited with being a catalyst for additional industrial development Downriver, as well as creating demand for housing in nearby communities.
- **Gateway Commerce Center** - The Gateway Commerce Center is a planned mixed-use development south of the Ford assembly plant, adjacent to I-75. This 300-acre development has begun to develop into a community and regional center for economic activity. Recent and planned additions to the Gateway Commerce Center include a hotel, auto auction, medical and professional offices, and the Flat Rock Community Center.
- **Canadian National Railroad Interchange (Grand Trunk Railroad)** - The Canadian National Railroad interchange has a large regional impact because of its function. The interchange is an important infrastructure requirement for large-scale manufacturing facilities that receive and deliver shipments throughout the country by rail. The Indiana and Ohio Railway Company (IORY) purchased railway from the Grand Trunk Railroad in 1997. IORY provides local rail freight services through shortline and regional hauling, carrying over 110,000 carloads/year. IORY interchanges with Canadian National at the Flat Rock yard.

Regional Initiatives and Memberships

- **Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC)** – Flat Rock is an active participant in the protection of the Huron River through the HRWC. Public engagement, research, advocacy, implementation of protections, and communication are all part of the strategic plan in which Flat Rock plays a part in support of the HRWC.
- **Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative (DLGI)** – The vision of the DLGI is to create a regional system of non-motorized pathways that will connect communities in the Downriver region. Flat Rock play a part in this initiative, as two trails (HCMA East-West Connector and Detroit River Heritage Water Trail) are geographically linked to the City, with several others proposed nearby.
- **Trail Town** – Flat Rock is a designated Trail Town, a distinction signifying that it is a destination along a long-distance trail. The City is home to a section of the Iron Belle Trail and the Huron River Water Trail, and has hosted the Michigan Recreation & Parks Association Trail Summit (2012). Flat Rock has identified non-motorized recreation opportunities that have distinct relationships with the Central Business District. The DDA has also initiated the installation of bike racks in the district to encourage bikers to stop and explore the amenities that the City has to offer.
- **Huron River Water Trail** – The Huron River Water Trail is a 104-mile inland river trail, and is a part of the National Water Trails System, offering recreational opportunities to the residents of Flat Rock.
- **Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority (HCMA)** - Although no developed Metropark land is located in the City of Flat Rock, the City leases 31 acres of undeveloped HCMA land on the west side of the “Mill Race”, adjacent to Huroc Park. In addition, the Oakwoods and Willow Metropark in Huron Township have a regional impact. Over 9.5 million people visit the thirteen Metroparks annually. In particular, Oakwoods Metropark offers visitors nature trails, fishing and canoeing in the Huron River, horseback riding, a nature center and picnicking. Willow Metropark offers an 18-hole golf course, swimming pool, skate park, hike-bike trail, disc golf, produce picking and winter activities, among the many other offerings. The level of existing and planned activity with the two Metroparks is likely to have a spillover impact on adjoining communities, generating increased traffic on access roads and possibly expanding the market for retail businesses.
- **Greenways and Blueways** - In the past several years, the City has been working with adjacent communities, HCMA, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), Downriver Community Conference (DCC), Wayne County, and private business to develop a comprehensive regional Greenway and Blueway system.
- **Floodplains** – Flat Rock has expressed interest in capitalizing on land that is in the Huron River floodplain, and using it as a resource for recreational opportunities.



Housing Review and Analysis

Overview

Despite the fact that Flat Rock is a relatively small community, it contains a broad variety of housing types, including the following:

- Older, wood-frame housing is located near the City center, primarily east of Telegraph Road.
- Newer conventional single-family neighborhoods are located east and south of the Central Business District, and west of Telegraph Road, north of Gibraltar.
- Mixed use housing developments (Bradbury PUD).
- Large lot single-family development in rural-like settings are located along Huron River Drive, Arsenal Road, Cahill Road, and other roads that extend into the sparsely-developed portions of Flat Rock.
- Cottage-type dwellings are located along certain segments of Huron River Drive, providing residents with the recreational benefits of living on the riverfront.
- Higher density multiple-family housing is located in various locations, generally in proximity to the major roads, such as Gibraltar and Telegraph Roads.

- Mobile home development is located on the north side of the City, east of Telegraph Road.

According to the 2014 American Community Survey, there are approximately 3,968 housing units in the City. In 2014 there were an estimated 899 renter-occupied housing units and 2,709 owner-occupied housing units. Renter-occupied units comprised approximately 22.7 percent of all occupied units. In comparison, approximately 33.4 percent of all occupied housing units in Wayne County as a whole are renter-occupied.

Housing construction since the 2000 Census has been centered on single-family and detached condominium development, with no multiple-family units constructed, according to SEMCOG statistics. On average between 2000 and 2006, 79 building permits were issued for housing units, all for single-family development. After 2007, though, the number of permits dropped to an average of 20 single-family residential homes per year.

Age and Condition of Housing

The age of the City’s housing stock is presented in Table 6.1. The largest percentage of the City housing was constructed between 1980 and 1999. This represents a significantly younger housing stock than the County has, where over 41% of the housing units in Wayne County were built between 1940 and 1959. The City built a larger percentage of its stock between 2000 and 2010, also, and both the City and the County have slowed down significantly since 2010.

Table 6.1: Age of Housing — Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2014

	Flat Rock Number of Housing Units	Flat Rock Percent of Total	Wayne County Percent of Total
Total	3,968	100.0	100.0
Built 2010 or later	23	0.6	0.2
Built 2000 to 2009	964	24.3	6.1
Built 1980 to 1999	1071	27.0	11.5
Built 1960 to 1979	829	20.9	22.5
Built 1940 to 1959	897	22.6	41.6
Built 1939 or earlier	179	4.5	18.1

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimate 2014.

Despite the age of the housing in Flat Rock, the dwelling units are in generally good condition. The need for repair and rehabilitation is somewhat evident in the older neighborhood surrounding the City center. Conditions which contribute to the deterioration of housing in this area include the age of the housing, the impact from encroaching non-residential uses, and the conversion of some homes originally designed for single family use into multiple-family dwellings or commercial uses.

Housing deterioration is also evident along certain roads where large lot single-family development has occurred in a somewhat discontinuous pattern. Development in these fringe areas consists of a variety of housing designs and styles, constructed at different periods of time in accordance with different construction standards. Homes, outbuildings, and yards on some of the parcels in these areas have not been consistently well-maintained.

Housing in most other neighborhoods in Flat Rock is in relatively good condition, even though the majority of the housing stock exceeds forty years of age. Housing at this age typically requires major repairs and replacement becomes apparent. Thus, maintenance of the housing stock will be increasingly important in future years.

Housing Size and Density

The housing stock in Flat Rock is about average for Wayne County. In both areas, almost three-quarters of the housing has between four (4) and seven (7) rooms total in each unit. Flat Rock has a slightly higher number of units with over eight (8) rooms than does the county. This is likely due to the newer, slightly larger, housing that has recently been built in the City.

Although Flat Rock compares similarly with the rest of the County in terms of housing size, homes are somewhat larger in the developing northern portion of southeast Michigan. In Oakland County, for example, 29.5% of all housing units have more than 8 rooms, compared to 21.9% in Flat Rock and 18.2% in Wayne County.

Table 6.2: Size of Housing Units — Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2014

Number of Rooms	Flat Rock Number of Housing Units	Flat Rock Percent of Total	Wayne County Percent of Total
1 room	0	0.0	1.3
2 or 3 rooms	147	3.7	7.4
4 or 5 rooms	1500	37.8	35.4
6 or 7 rooms	1452	36.6	37.7
8 or more rooms	869	21.9	18.2

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimate 2014.

The highest density of single-family residential development in Flat Rock is in the conventional subdivisions near the City center and south of Gibraltar Road. The gross density of development in the subdivision located south of Gibraltar Road and east of Evergreen Road is about 4.2 units per acre. The gross density in the single-family neighborhood east of Telegraph Road, near the City center and in the subdivision located east of Olmstead and south of Gibraltar Road is about 3.5 units per acre. Densities of the five proposed detached, single-family residential developments range from 1.13 to 3.54 units per acre.

Aside from the scattered residential development on agricultural lands, the lowest density of existing single-family development is along such roads as Huron River Drive, Arsenal, Vreeland, Cahill, and Woodruff. Lots in some linear subdivisions along these roads typically range between one-half and one acre in size. Most parcels along these roads are not within platted subdivisions, and consequently they range in size from less than an acre to five or more acres in size. It appears that land along these roads may have once been divided for use as narrow strip farms. Along Huron River Drive, though, it appears the land has been divided to maximize the number of parcels with access to the riverfront. As riverfront parcels in the floodplain become available for sale, the City may consider acquiring them to provide an expanded public recreation area along the Huron River near the City's boat launch.

Higher density multiple-family development has occurred in a few locations along major roads in Flat Rock. For example, on the south side of Gibraltar Road, Vreeland Road near Telegraph, and off of Telegraph Road. Multiple-family development consists of predominately two-story apartments and townhouses, constructed at an average density of 15 units or less per acre.

Projected Long-Term Housing Demand

The 2014 American Community Survey estimates that the population in Flat Rock is 9,859. According to SEMCOG, that number will increase slowly to its peak in the year 2030, with a population that reaches 10,048. After that period, SEMCOG projects that the City will begin to slowly decrease in population through 2040 to around the current population levels. SEMCOG predicts that the total number of households will follow a similar pattern, but by 2040 the City will have over 300 more households than today. This is indicative of the larger national trend of households of a smaller size, in larger numbers.

Analysis of Mobile Home Park Needs

The City has a reasonable proportion of mobile home units in relation to the surrounding communities in the region. Deerfield Estates contains 730 homes and Arthur's Mobile Home Park contains 32 homes in the City of Flat Rock. Overall, the City has approximately 762 mobile homes, constituting 15.0 percent of the total housing stock. The proportion of the City's housing stock that is comprised of mobile homes should not be increased because it is desirable to maintain a balance in the supply and quality of housing in the City. A balanced housing stock is necessary for the City to maintain sound fiscal and economic conditions.

Need for High Quality Residential Design

In order to promote strong and viable neighborhoods, both existing and proposed, all new residential development shall be constructed with high quality, long lasting building materials. All ordinances that address residential design should be reviewed to ensure that the intent of the Master Plan and Planning Commission are met. The encouragement of Planned Unit Developments can lead to the requirements of architectural design standards and higher quality residential products.

Housing Market Study

Purpose – “Target Market Housing Analysis”

In order to determine the amount and type of housing that the City of Flat Rock should plan for, this Master Plan includes a Target Market Housing Analysis. Unlike a traditional market analysis, which looks simply at supply and demand for housing units, Target Market Analysis looks at the type of households that are looking for housing to determine what they are looking for and how it can be provided in Flat Rock.

The purpose of this analysis is to determine the types of people that will be looking for housing in Flat Rock over the next 5-10 years (or longer), examine the types of housing and neighborhoods that they prefer, and then comparing that to the existing built environment in both Flat Rock and the Overall Housing Market that it competes within. By finding the “gaps” between supply and demand, this analysis will determine the number of new housing units that could be supported in Flat Rock – and what form that new housing should take.

Methodology and Background Data

Flat Rock Housing Market

Flat Rock is a growing community, gaining nearly 1,400 residents from 2000 to 2010, and gaining another nearly 200 residents between 2010 and 2015. Therefore, planning for additional housing growth in the City is appropriate.

Table 6.3: Demographic Trends — Flat Rock

City of Flat Rock	Population	Households	Household Size	Median Age	Median Income (2015 Dollars)
2000 (Census)	8,488	3,181	2.66	32.8	\$61,010
2010 (Census)	9,878	3,754	2.62	36.9	\$61,507
2015 (ESRI Estimate)	10,065	3,846	2.60	38.3	\$51,018
2020 (ESRI Projection)	10,096	3,964	2.60	38.8	\$58,803

Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI

Table 6.4 shows the existing housing stock in Flat Rock. The majority of units in the City are single family homes, but the community also has a healthy mix of other housing options.

Table 6.4: Housing Units by Type — Flat Rock, 2013

Housing Unit Type	Number	Percentage
Single Family Detached	2,549	63.1%
Single Family Attached	83	2.1%
Two-Family/Duplex	65	1.6%
Multiple Family	740	18.3%
Manufactured Housing	604	15.0%
Total	4,041	

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimate 2009-2013

The Median Home Value in the City is just under \$100,000, while the median rent is estimated to be just under \$600.

Table 6.5: Housing Value and Average Rent City-Wide — Flat Rock, 2013

	Number of Units
Median Home Value	\$99,400
Median Rent:	\$597

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimate 2009-2013

For purposes of the analysis, Flat Rock’s neighborhoods have been divided into five “typologies” – i.e. places with similar characteristics. The five typologies are **Walkable Downtown, Historic Density, Post-War Community, Modern Subdivision, and Waterfront Recreation**. The table below shows the number of housing units and housing cost within each typology. The typologies are shown Map 3 and analyzed in Table 6.6 and Table 6.7.

Table 6.6: Neighborhood Typologies – Flat Rock, 2013

Neighborhood Typology	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Units	Median Home Value	Median Rent
Walkable Downtown	222	5.5%	\$181,000	\$550
Waterfront Recreation	301	7.4%	\$142,361	\$581
Historic Density	353	8.7%	\$128,049	\$566
Post-War Community	1,734	42.9%	\$80,344	\$735
Modern Subdivision	1,431	35.4%	\$131,452	\$539

Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI
 Manufactured Housing has been included in Post-War Community

Table 6.7: Vacancy by Neighborhood Typology – Flat Rock 2013

Neighborhood Typology	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate
Walkable Downtown	222	25	11%
Waterfront Recreation	301	36	12%
Historic Density	353	47	13%
Post-War Community	1,734	190	11%
Modern Subdivision	1,431	119	8%

Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI
 Manufactured Housing has been included in Post-War Community

The Overall Housing Market that Flat Rock is part of is defined for this analysis as a 30-minute drive from downtown Flat Rock. Generally, people from within this area could move to Flat Rock without changing jobs. Map 4 shows the Overall Housing Market, which covers the entire Downriver area, much of Monroe County, parts of the Cities of Detroit and Dearborn, portions of western Wayne County suburbs like Westland, Garden City, Inkster, Wayne, Canton, and Van Buren Township, and portions of Ypsilanti.

The Overall Housing Market has a sixth typology – **Rural/Large Lot** – that does not exist in the City of Flat Rock.

Characteristics of Neighborhood Typologies

Walkable Downtown

The Walkable Downtown housing typology is characterized by dense housing in an urban setting. Multiple-family buildings, including condominiums and apartments are very common. Commercial or industrial properties that have been converted to residential are also common, as are mixed use buildings including office and/or retail along with housing.

Single family homes in this typology tend to either be townhouses/rowhomes or are clustered very close together with small yards and limited driveways. They may be mixed in with other types of housing or with commercial or institutional uses.

The Walkable Downtown typology tends to have older housing, although renewed interest in central city living means that significant numbers of new units have been constructed in this typology within the last 10-20 years.

In Flat Rock, the Walkable Downtown typology can be found in the historic downtown area. In the broader housing market, the Walkable Downtown typology can be found in the downtowns of Wayne, Trenton, Wyandotte, Monroe, and Ypsilanti, Dearborn's east and west downtowns, and Detroit's Corktown and Downtown areas.

Historic Density

The Historic Density Typology is characterized by homes built generally prior to World War II and laid out close together, with smaller yards, in gridded, dense neighborhoods. In some cases, duplexes and small apartment buildings are interspersed with the single family homes.

Some Historic Density neighborhoods feature smaller homes, but others have large, ornate houses.

Historic Density communities can be re-created with new construction if their density patterns and layouts are replicated. Additionally, infill and renovations are popular options to update the housing stock while maintaining the desirable "bones" of the neighborhoods.

Within Flat Rock, Historic Density can be found in the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the downtown. In the broader housing market, it can be found in Monroe, Ypsilanti, and large swaths of Detroit, Dearborn, Melvindale, Allen Park, River Rouge, Ecorse, Lincoln Park, and Wyandotte.

Post-War Community

The Post-War Community typology was built in the decades following World War II, during a time of economic and population boom in the United States. The homes in Post-War Community are on larger lots with larger yards, and there is less variation in size and design than is found in the Historic Density typology.

Post-War Community neighborhoods typically have interconnected streets but are not always complete grids. They frequently have sidewalks and are designed to allow children and families to walk or bike to parks and schools, but the retail is often separated and designed to be most accessible to cars rather than pedestrians.

Multiple-family housing in Post-War Community is usually in the form of small apartment complexes with two to four buildings and amenities like swimming pools and tennis courts. These complexes are usually separated from nearby single family homes.

Post-War Community is harder to replicate with new housing than other typologies, because the Modern Subdivision typology is designed to be an updated version of the same design principles. However, as they have aged, many Post-War Community neighborhoods have developed unique and desirable characters and could be targeted for renovation or infill in order to meet any unmet demand.

Most of the City of Flat Rock falls into the Post-War Community typology, while only the city's oldest and newest neighborhoods fall into other categories. Post-War Community also covers much of the Overall Housing Market, including a broad swath of Downriver and Western Wayne communities, and the outlying areas of Greater Monroe.

Modern Subdivision

The Modern Subdivision typology is found in the type of neighborhoods that have been built on the edge of metropolitan regions since approximately 1980. It is typified by homes on curvilinear streets with large yards. Neighborhoods are often self-contained, with one or two entrances from a major road to ensure privacy.

Homes in Modern Subdivision neighborhoods are frequently larger than in other typologies and are equipped with up-to-date amenities and floor plans. In some cases, they are custom built.

While residential streets in Modern Subdivision neighborhoods frequently have sidewalks, major roads frequently do not. There are very rarely parks, schools, or retail within the reach of the connecting sidewalks. However, these types of amenities are easily accessible by car.

Multiple-family housing in the Modern Subdivision typology typically includes large, self-contained complexes with robust amenities. These are generally separated from the single-family homes.

In Flat Rock, the Modern Subdivision typology includes the City's newest neighborhoods, such as Woodcreek, Huron Woods, Celtic, and Bradbury. In the larger housing market, most the Modern Subdivision typology can be found in far western Wayne County, in communities such as Canton and Van Buren Township.

Waterfront Recreation

The Waterfront Recreation typology is reserved for homes directly on recreational water bodies, such as the Detroit River, Lake Erie, or the Huron River. The design of these homes and neighborhoods may fit into the description of any of the other typologies, but they are their own market and therefore their own category. People looking for a waterfront home have different buying criteria than those that might buy the home if it were not on the water.

Within Flat Rock, the Waterfront Recreation category includes the homes that have frontage on the Huron River. In the larger housing market, homes fronting on the Detroit River, Lake Erie, and Belleville and Ford Lakes are also included. The waterfronts of Ecorse, River Rouge, and Detroit were not included, because the uses there are generally industrial, commercial, or recreational, with very little housing that affords private access to the Detroit River.

Rural/Large Lot

The Rural/Large Lot typology is the non-urbanized part of the housing market. Residential units in this area are either associated with agriculture or on very large "rural estate lots." The age of housing can vary dramatically, from 100+ year old farmhouses to huge, modern homes built since 1990. Some lots are heavily wooded and include creeks or ponds.

Multiple-family housing is very rare, since the available infrastructure generally doesn't support it. Sidewalks and walkable destinations are also rare. Residents of the Rural/Large Lot typology choose this typology because they value the natural environment, privacy, and open space, rather than urban amenities.

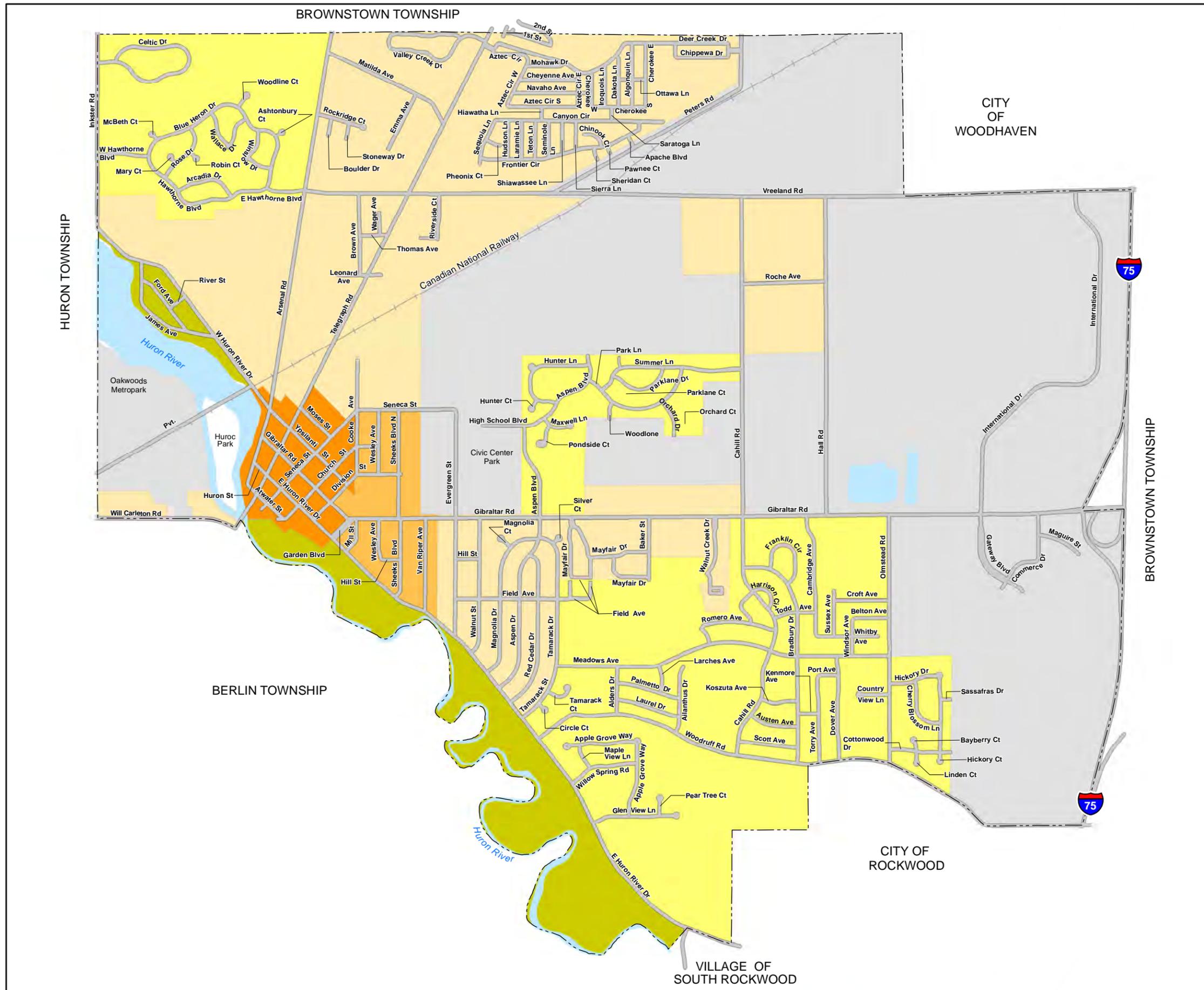
The Rural/Large Lot typology covers the area within the Overall Housing Market that is not urbanized. It is not found within Flat Rock.

Map 3 Neighborhood Typologies

City of Flat Rock, Michigan

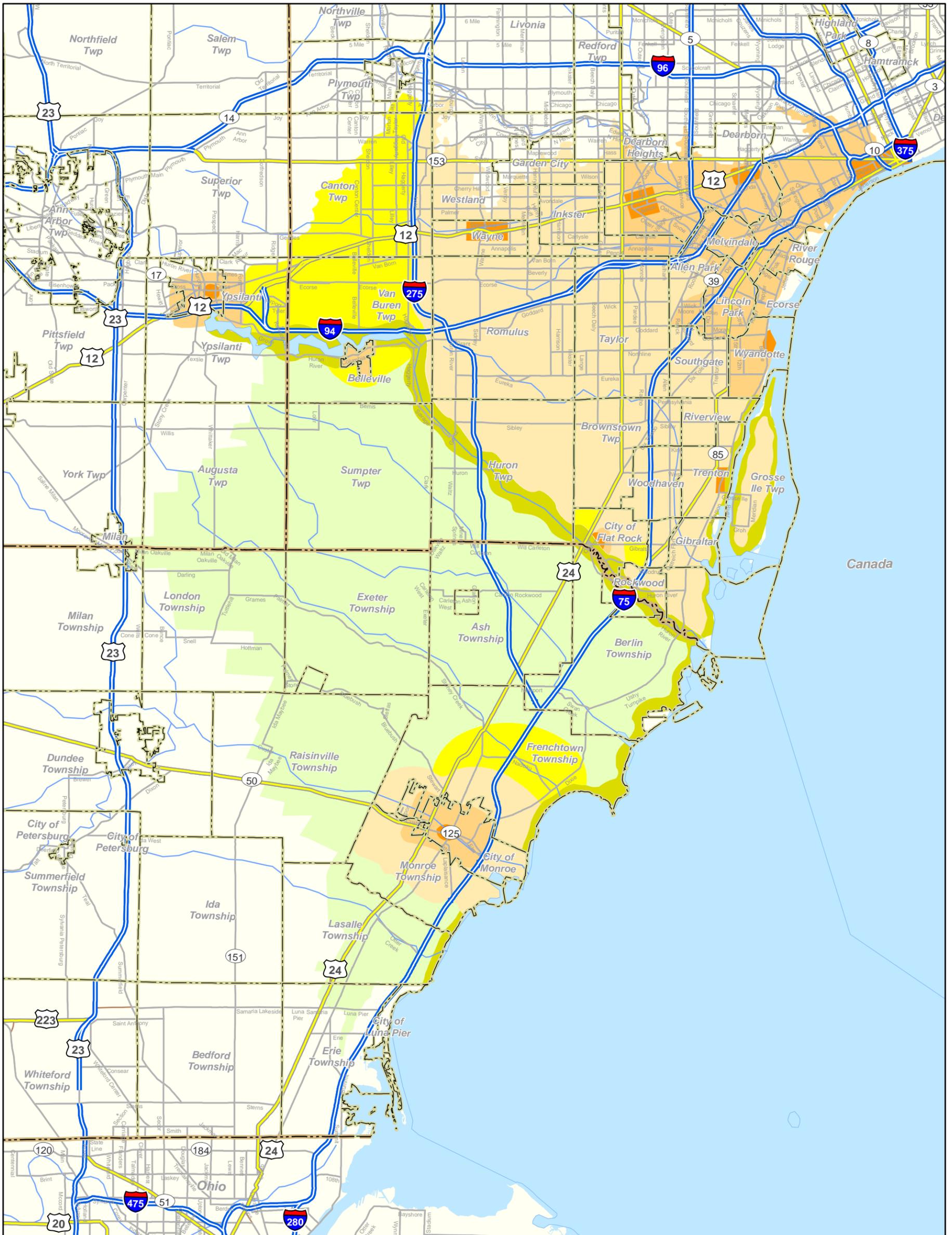
August 10, 2016

-  Walkable Downtown
-  Historic Density
-  Post-War Community
-  Waterfront Recreation
-  Modern Subdivision
-  No Residential Units
-  City Boundary



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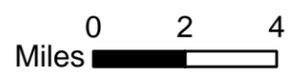
Base Map Source: Wayne County, 2014
Data Source: McKenna Associates, Inc. 2015



August 10, 2016

Map 4 Overall Housing Market

City of Flat Rock, Michigan



Neighborhood Typologies Market

- Walkable Downtown
- Historic Density
- Post-War Community
- Water Front Residential
- Modern Subdivision
- Rural Large Lot



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Base Map Source: Michigan Geographic Framework,
Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 8a
& ESRI, 2006

Target Markets

In order to analyze the Target Markets, McKenna is using ESRI's "Tapestry Segment" analysis. Tapestry Segments are combinations of many demographic and economic factors (age, income, housing preferences, education, etc.) that classify households into one of over 40 categories (which are then given catchy names). By combining demographic indicators into a single classification, tapestry segments give an at-a-glance description of a community.

The five largest Tapestry Segments in Flat Rock are described qualitatively below (as ESRI describes them), with their demographic statistics shown in Table 0.8.

Table 6.8: Characteristics of City of Flat Rock and Top Tapestry Segments, 2015

Top	Population	Households	Household Size	Median Age	Median Income
City of Flat Rock (Overall)	10,065	3,846	2.60	38.3	\$51,018
Traditional Living	2,791 (28%)	1,066 (28%)	2.50	34.8	\$37,000
Home Improvement	2,184 (22%)	822 (21%)	2.86	37.0	\$67,000
Southern Satellites	2,113 (21%)	834 (22%)	2.65	39.7	\$44,000
Heartland Communities	1,945 (19%)	731 (19%)	2.38	41.5	\$39,000
Pleasantville	1,032 (10%)	393 (10%)	2.86	41.9	\$85,000

Source: ESRI

Household Size, Median Age, and Median Income are national data for each Tapestry Segment

Traditional Living

The four segments in Traditional Living convey the perception of real Middle America—hardworking, settled families. The group's higher median age of 37.8 years also conveys their lifestage—a number of older residents who are completing their child-rearing responsibilities and anticipating retirement. Even though they're older, many still work hard to earn a modest living. They typically own single-family homes in established, slow-growing neighborhoods. They buy standard, four-door American cars, belong to veterans' clubs and fraternal organizations, take care of their homes and gardens, and rely on traditional media such as newspapers for their news. (Source: ESRI)

Home Improvement

Married couple families occupy well over half of these suburban households. Most residences are single-family homes that are owner occupied, with only one-fifth of the households occupied by renters. Education and diversity levels are similar to the US as a whole. These families spend a lot of time on the go and therefore go out to eat regularly. When at home, weekends are consumed with home improvement and remodeling projects. (Source: ESRI)

Southern Satellites

These rural residents enjoy country life. Fishing and hunting are two favorite leisure activities, and Southern Satellites residents spend money for magazines, clothes, and gear related to these interests. Because cable is not always available, many residents own satellite dishes. Many own pets. They work in their vegetable gardens and might own equipment such as riding mowers and tillers to help with outdoor chores. Most households have two or more vehicles to meet their transportation needs; they prefer domestic cars, and many drive trucks. They consider themselves to be politically conservative. They read newspapers and magazines infrequently; however, they listen to country radio and watch fishing programs, NASCAR races, and country music programs on TV. Owning personal computers and going online from home isn't important to these residents. (Source: ESRI)

Heartland Communities

Heartland Communities residents invest time and money in their cherished homes and communities. They take pride in their gardening skills and in growing their own vegetables. Many homes own a riding lawn mower to keep up their relatively large lots. Residents tackle home improvement projects such as exterior painting and faucet replacement and shop at Ace Hardware or Lowe's. Many residents order items from catalogs, QVC, and Avon sales representatives. They also shop at Wal-Mart or Kmart and buy groceries at Wal-Mart Supercenters. Favorite restaurants include Golden Corral and Cracker Barrel. The residents in this segment rarely travel by plane. Heartland Communities residents have a distinctly country lifestyle. They go hunting and fishing. They also read gardening, fishing, and hunting magazines and listen to country music and auto races on the radio. Reading two or more Sunday newspapers is important to them. Some join fraternal orders or religious clubs and even get involved with local politics. Many Heartland Communities households subscribe to cable and usually watch news programs and movies on TV. *(Source: ESRI)*

Pleasantville

Because older homes require maintenance and renovation, home improvement projects are a priority in Pleasantville neighborhoods. Not do-it-yourselfers, residents hire contractors for remodeling projects; however, they would probably do their own yard work instead of hiring a lawn service. They shop at warehouse stores for value and use coupons for discounts. For more upscale items, they shop at department stores. Those who are union members contract for health insurance through the union. Pleasantville residents spend time with their families, dine out, play cards and board games, attend baseball games, and visit theme parks. They take sightseeing vacations and beach trips in the United States or cruise to foreign ports. They own and use older PCs to shop online for small items, check e-mail, and read the news. These residents listen to contemporary hit, all-news, all-talk, and sports radio, particularly during their commute times. The sports fanatics listen to ball games on the radio and watch a variety of major sports on TV. For exercise, they usually work out on the treadmill at home, walk, and swim. To keep abreast of current events, they would probably read two or more daily newspapers. *(Source: ESRI)*

Assumptions

This analysis makes two major assumptions:

- Households will gravitate over time to a preferred type of neighborhood determined by their lifestyle, age, income, and family size. That housing preference can be predicted, at least for broad groups of people.
- Households live outside their preferred neighborhood because there is not adequate housing of their preferred neighborhood type near their job, family, or other consideration. Given the opportunity, they will move to a neighborhood that suits their preferences better. Flat Rock will attract new housing development in proportion to its relative size within the housing market.

Tapestry Segments in the Overall Housing Market

In order to determine which markets should be targeted for new housing in Flat Rock, this analysis identified the top 20 tapestry segments in the overall market area, then used ESRI's determination of the preferred housing typologies for each tapestry segment to determine which segments are not being served by the housing currently available. Six of the 20 tapestry segments were determined to have more than 50% of their households living in non-preferred neighborhood types. Table 6.9 shows the characteristics of the top 20 tapestry segments in the Overall Housing Market.

Table 6.9: Characteristics of Overall Housing Market and Top Tapestry Segments, 2015

Top	Population	Households	Household Size	Median Age	Median Income
Overall Housing Market	858,337	337,544	2.51	38.5	\$47,025
Traditional Living	124,149 (14.5%)	47,710 (14.1%)	2.50	34.8	\$37,000
Heartland Communities	79,391 (9.3%)	32,685 (9.7%)	2.38	41.5	\$39,000
Rust Belt Traditions	76,698 (8.9%)	31,169 (9.2%)	2.46	38.4	\$49,000
Salt of the Earth	61,627 (7.2%)	23,680 (7.0%)	2.58	43.1	\$53,000
Hardscrabble Road	44,776 (5.2%)	17,168 (5.1%)	2.64	31.7	\$26,000
Comfortable Empty Nesters	34,312 (4.0%)	13,496 (4.0%)	2.50	46.8	\$68,000
Modest Income Homes	33,300 (3.9%)	12,752 (3.8%)	2.56	36.1	\$22,000
Midlife Constants	28,104 (3.3%)	11,569 (3.4%)	2.30	45.9	\$48,000
Down the Road	27,206 (3.2%)	10,528 (3.1%)	2.74	34.3	\$36,000
Soccer Moms	29,238 (3.4%)	9,737 (2.9%)	2.97	36.6	\$84,000
Retirement Communities	17,258 (2.0%)	9,503 (2.8%)	1.86	52.0	\$35,000
Small Town Simplicity	21,711 (2.5%)	9,257 (2.7%)	2.25	40.0	\$27,000
Green Acres	23,349 (2.7%)	8,615 (2.6%)	2.69	43.0	\$72,000
Middleburg	21,694 (2.5%)	8,053 (2.4%)	2.73	35.3	\$55,000
Home Improvement	20,514 (2.4%)	7,659 (2.3%)	2.86	37.0	\$67,000
Bright Young Professionals	16,104 (1.9%)	6,815 (2.0%)	2.40	32.2	\$50,000
Family Foundations	17,465 (2.0%)	6,811 (2.0%)	2.70	38.8	\$40,000
Social Security Set	9,985 (1.2%)	6,181 (1.8%)	1.72	44.2	\$16,000
Southern Satellites	16,071 (1.9%)	6,056 (1.8%)	2.65	39.7	\$44,000
Set to Impress	11,416 (1.3%)	5,443 (1.6%)	2.10	33.1	\$29,000

Source: ESRI

Household Size, Median Age, and Median Income are national data for each Tapestry Segment.

Table 6.10 shows the characteristics of the preferred neighborhood typology for each Tapestry Segment.

Table 6.10: Preferred Housing Typologies by Tapestry Segment

Top	Walkable Downtown	Historic Density	Waterfront Recreation	Post-War Community	Modern Subdivision	Rural/ Large Lot
Traditional Living			X	X	X	
Heartland Communities		X	X	X		
Rust Belt Traditions		X	X	X		
Salt of the Earth				X		X
Hardscrabble Road	X	X				
Comfortable Empty Nesters	X	X	X			X
Modest Income Homes	X	X				
Midlife Constants		X	X	X	X	
Down the Road				X	X	X
Soccer Moms				X	X	
Retirement Communities	X	X	X			
Small Town Simplicity		X				X
Green Acres					X	X
Middleburg		X		X	X	
Home Improvement		X	X	X	X	
Bright Young Professionals	X	X	X			
Family Foundations		X		X	X	
Social Security Set	X	X				
Southern Satellites				X	X	X
Set to Impress	X	X				

Source: ESRI
Household Size, Median Age, and Median Income are national data for each Tapestry Segment

Table 6.11 shows the six tapestry segments where more than 50% of the households are living outside of their preferred neighborhood type.

Table 6.11: Tapestry Segments with More than 50% of Households Living Outside their Preferred Neighborhood Types — Overall Housing Market

	Households Living Outside Preferred Neighborhood Type		Looking for....
	Percentage	Number	
Bright Young Professionals	88.0%	6,815	Walkable Downtown or Historic Density
Set to Impress	74.7%	4,068	Walkable Downtown or Historic Density
Comfortable Empty Nesters	68.6%	9,260	Walkable Downtown, Historic Density, or Waterfront Recreation
Retirement Communities	54.2%	5,154	Walkable Downtown, Historic Density, or Waterfront Recreation
Traditional Living	53.7%	25,604	Post-War Community, Modern Subdivision, Waterfront Recreation, or Rural/Large Lot
Soccer Moms	51.2%	5,106	Post-War Community or Modern Subdivision

Source: ESRI, McKenna Associates Calculation

The data shows the trends that have been discussed anecdotally throughout the region – Millennials (the “Bright Young Professionals” and “Set to Impress” categories) and Baby Boomers (“Comfortable Empty Nesters” and “Retirement Communities”) are looking for smaller housing units in more walkable neighborhoods, but aren’t finding enough of them, creating a gap in the market that can be captured in Flat Rock.

However, there are still plenty of families looking for a house with a yard in a quiet neighborhood. The “Traditional Living” and “Soccer Moms” categories are generally looking to move from the Historic Density typology to bigger homes on larger lots in the Post-War Community and Modern Subdivision categories.

Demand for New Housing by Preferred Neighborhood Type

Table 6.12 shows the number of units that are demanded in each Neighborhood Type in the region, based on the preferences of the Tapestry Segment that are living outside their preferred neighborhood. Since each Tapestry Segment prefers 2-3 Neighborhood Types, the households in each Tapestry Segment have been divided equally among their preferred Neighborhood Types. Since new “Post-War Community” housing is the same as “Modern Subdivision” housing, no new units have been allocated to that Neighborhood Type.

Table 6.12: Demand for New Housing and Neighborhood Type — Overall Housing Market

Neighborhood Type	Demand for New Housing (Number of Units)
Walkable Downtown	12,280
Waterfront Recreation	13,339
Historic Density	12,280
Modern Subdivision	13,641
Rural/Large Lot	8,535
Total:	60,076

Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI, McKenna Associates Calculation

Flat Rock Share of Gap

Table 6.13 calculates the share of the regional housing demand that Flat Rock can expect to capture. The calculation assumes that, as each neighborhood typology grows, Flat Rock will maintain the same proportion of housing in the region that it has right now. The City could attract more of a particular type of housing through aggressive marketing and other economic development initiatives.

In terms of total housing units, Flat Rock represents 1.1% of the Overall Housing Market, but it’s shares of Walkable Downtown, Waterfront Recreation, and Post-War Community/Modern Subdivision are higher than the overall proportion.

Table 6.13: Projected Flat Rock Share of Households Moving to Newly Constructed Housing

Neighborhood Type	Overall Demand for New Housing (Number of Units)	Flat Rock Share	Units Demanded in Flat Rock
Walkable Downtown	12,280	1.5%	186
Waterfront Recreation	13,339	1.7%	231
Historic Density	12,280	0.3%	35
Modern Subdivision	13,641	2.1%	285
Rural/Large Lot	8,535	0.0%	0
Total:	60,076	1.1%	737

Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI, McKenna Associates Calculation

Conclusions

The Target Market Analysis shows that Flat Rock could attract 737 new housing units, the equivalent of around 2,000 new residents, by planning for the types of housing that are undersupplied compared to the preferences of the region's tapestry segments. Broken down by neighborhood type:

- 186 new units are demanded in the downtown, which would nearly double the number of housing units there currently. In addition, 35 more units are demanded in the neighborhoods immediately around downtown ("Historic Density Typology"). The surveys included in this Plan reference the need for senior housing and assisted living units, which typically fall into these denser neighborhood typologies. The analysis shows that the "Social Security Set" and "Retirement Communities" segments prefer these denser neighborhood types, as well.
- 231 additional housing units are demanded along the waterfront. Since much of Flat Rock's waterfront is built out with single family homes, these units will have to be accommodated in a denser configuration. The City should investigate sites for a dense waterfront community of condominiums or townhouses, with a communal waterfront park and facilities for storing and launching boats or non-motorized craft to make use of the Huron River Water Trail.

There is demand for 285 additional Modern Subdivision units, which likely means a newly built neighborhood on one of the edges of the City.



Economic Analysis

Existing Economic Base

The economic base in Flat Rock consists of two main components: the industrial sector and the commercial/service sector. The industrial sector serves a regional market and draws employment from throughout southeast Michigan. In contrast, the commercial/service sector serves principally local residents and travelers along Telegraph Road. Characteristics of these two components of the economic base are described in this chapter.

Industrial Sector

Based on total employment, volume of production, and similar criteria, the industrial base in Flat Rock is anchored by Ford Motor Company, whose Flat Rock Assembly Plant is located at the I-75/Gibraltar Road interchange. The facility contains 2.7 million square feet of floor area and provides employment for over 3,700 persons. Full production capability of the Flat Rock Assembly Plant is 240,000 vehicles. The facility is responsible for the global production of the Ford Mustang and Lincoln Continental.

Flat Rock contains a variety of other, smaller industrial-oriented businesses, many of which have been in operation for several years. These include Flat Rock Metal, Target Steel, Royal Arc, AAA Sign Company, Flat Rock Bagging Company, and Gerotech, Inc. Most of these industrial facilities are located on the west side of the City, in proximity to the Telegraph Road corridor.

The Canadian National Railroad Interchange is also a major industrial/transportation facility. The Indiana and Ohio Railway Company, which provides local rail freight services through shortline and regional hauling, interchanges with Canadian National at the Flat Rock yard. This interchange is located on the north side of Vreeland Road, just over a half mile west of I-75, and serves industries throughout southeast Michigan.

Commercial/Service Sector

The commercial/service sector in Flat Rock consists of three districts: the downtown area; the linear commercial district along Telegraph Road, north of the railroad tracks; and, the linear commercial district along Gibraltar Road, extending from I-75 to downtown. The businesses in these three districts provide basic necessities. However, residents must shop outside of the City for certain goods and services, particularly if they desire a broader selection of comparison goods. Also, certain specialized services, such as the services of a stockbroker or medical specialist, must be acquired outside of the City.

Numerically, service-type businesses and retail businesses are predominant in Flat Rock's commercial/service sector. Service businesses account for the majority of the City's total businesses including beauty and barber shops, dry cleaning establishments, car washes, vehicle repair shops, heating and air conditioning service establishments, and similar uses. Telegraph Road contains many of the service businesses, including drug stores, banks, hardware stores, restaurants, etc.

During the planning stages of the Gateway Commerce Center, a market study was conducted which revealed that there is market support for specific types of retail stores in the trade area. These conclusions were based on a random survey of residents in the trade areas that was conducted as a part of the larger market study. The survey found that, due to the limited range of shopping facilities in the trade area, many residents shop at malls or shopping centers outside of the trade area for non-grocery items. Southland Mall, in Taylor, is the most popular shopping center, frequented by 43 percent of residents in the trade area. However, the use of the internet for retail purchases will continue to grow in the future.

The market study also found that many residents would be willing to change their shopping habits in favor of new retail facilities that offer better selection, better services, or more competitive prices. In particular, the survey found that development opportunities are best for certain services (such as tax preparers, cleaners, and eye care), clothing stores, general merchandise stores, a large hardware store, a department store, entertainment services (such as a movie theater or bowling establishment), and full-service restaurants. Since the survey was conducted, some of these development opportunities have materialized, offering Flat Rock residents more selection and allowing them to contribute financially to the well-being of local businesses.

Commercial District Profiles

North Telegraph Road Business District

Analysis of the distribution of businesses reveals that the City's three commercial/service districts serve different functions and markets. The linear commercial district along Telegraph Road, north of the railroad tracks, appears to be the primary focus of retail activity in the City. Retail, service, and restaurant uses are predominant in this district.

The quality, character, and size are as important as the actual number of businesses in this district. North Telegraph Road is Flat Rock's newest commercial/service district, containing regional and nationally-recognized businesses located in updated buildings on spacious sites. The combination of generally attractive surroundings and modern marketing techniques increase the appeal of this district. Of the three commercial/office districts located in the City, northern Telegraph Road has the potential to generate the greatest amount of economic activity.

Downtown Flat Rock

Compared to the northern Telegraph Road district, Downtown Flat Rock contains almost twice as many businesses, including almost twice as many retail and service uses. However, the level of economic activity in the downtown area does not match the level of activity along northern Telegraph Road, for the following reasons:

- The downtown businesses district was developed several decades ago. Many buildings and businesses have not been modernized or updated in recent years.
- The downtown area was initially planned with the intent of creating an intensively developed, compact district. Lots are shallow and narrow, and buildings are small. Modern commercial standards call for lots with ample parking and much larger buildings to contain a greater variety of merchandise.
- The economic impact of the downtown area is dispersed among several streets, including Huron River Drive; Gibraltar Road, between Division Street and Telegraph Road; Seneca Street; and Telegraph Road, between the Huron River and the railroad tracks. The economic impact of downtown businesses is further dispersed by the presence of non-commercial uses, including homes and churches, in the business district.
- There is a lack of "big draw" (anchor) retailers in the Downtown district.

Over the past 40 years, much has changed to improve the CBD. For example, the Huron River has become a source of pride for the community, and a generator of pedestrian activity for Downtown. The introduction of the canoe and kayak rental business, and the inception of Flat Rock as a Trail Town in the Huron River Watershed, bring the opportunity for increased ecotourism. However, some of the same challenges exist today that were reported to the City in 1976:

- East-west traffic is a concern as vehicular volumes make for uneven traffic flow.
- Separation between vehicles and pedestrians can be challenging.
- The center of gravity for commercial growth in the central business district is along Telegraph Road with a small nucleus at Telegraph and Huron River Drive.
- Where possible, more intensive (higher density) residential developments should occur within or on the fringe (within walking distance) of the central business district.

Because of certain inherent constraints, downtown Flat Rock accommodates many comparatively small specialty retail and service businesses which do not depend on a steady or large volume of customers or sales for their

livelihood. For example, several businesses in the downtown area operate on an appointment-only basis, and some service businesses have little or no walk-in trade at all.

The downtown does stand apart from the City's other commercial/service districts because of the number of office uses. Approximately two dozen office uses are located in the downtown area, many of which are located in redesigned homes. Offices for attorneys, medical practitioners, insurance agents, and real estate agents are well-suited for downtown Flat Rock. These businesses do not create a severe traffic or parking demand. In summary, the evolving development pattern suggests that the economic health of downtown Flat Rock depends on a mixture of retail, service, office, and residential uses.

Gibraltar Road Business District

The third commercial/service district, along Gibraltar Road between I-75 and downtown, consists of mostly service-type businesses, such as service stations, auto sales, convenient stores, vehicle repair, restaurants, and a self-service auto wash. Businesses along Gibraltar Road are dispersed over a two-mile distance. The commercial uses are widely separated by the more predominant residential and institutional uses and vacant land along Gibraltar Road.

The quality of commercial development along Gibraltar Road varies considerably. A gasoline service station with a restaurant, a hotel, a credit union, professional offices, and a Ford auto dealership anchor the district at the east end. Development in the Gateway Commerce Center is generating additional high-quality, regional-oriented development near I-75. The Gateway Commerce Center includes the Community Center, an auto auction, medical and professional offices, and a hotel.



Economic Development Trends

Various local, regional, and national trends affect current and future growth of the commercial and industrial sectors in Flat Rock. The potential impacts of major economic trends are described below:

General Growth Patterns in Downriver

The general direction of growth in Downriver indicates that the opportunities for economic growth in Flat Rock will be strong. A recent analysis of regional projects and development opportunities found that a significant band of development is taking shape in the central third of the Downriver area, generally along the I-75 corridor.

According to past articles published by the Downriver Community Conference and other Wayne County economic development organizations, Downriver communities are growing at a steady rate. People, businesses, and industries are attracted to the region because large tracts of undeveloped land are still available at a lower cost per acre than in Macomb and Oakland Counties. Downriver has access to major transportation routes such as I-75 and Detroit Metropolitan Airport, as well as international trade zones.

Many industries have developed new or expanded existing businesses in the region. Warehouse development has been particularly strong during the last five years along the I-75 corridor. This development has been prevalent in Brownstown Township, Romulus, and to a lesser extent in Taylor. The economic growth of these areas, because of their close proximity to Flat Rock, will benefit the whole community in terms of increased demand for housing and job opportunities. As the leading edge of development in the region continues to expand to the west and south, proposals for new development can continue to be expected in Flat Rock.

Growth in the Trade Area

Given the population analysis presented in previous chapters, there is modest potential for growth in the Flat Rock trade area. Large increases in the number of residents and housing units are projected. Perhaps more importantly, the income and educational attainment of Flat Rock residents is anticipated to increase steadily. As new residents move into the community, there is more potential for economic growth and contribution. This inherent growth in the trade area creates the opportunity for steady expansion of the local economy.

Changes in Retail Methodology

Methods of retailing have changed dramatically since the time when Downtown Flat Rock and many isolated businesses were constructed. Modern retailing standards call for much larger inventory than in the past, spacious sites with off-street parking, and high levels of visibility. These changes in retailing affect the viability of older businesses and business districts, particularly the central business district, which is now better-suited as a specialty retail and office district. Older businesses along Telegraph Road, north of the railroad tracks, are experiencing intense competition from the newer businesses with updated buildings and larger sites. The Flat Rock Plaza is being updated currently, providing a refreshed building façade for the new anchor retailer, Family Farm & Home.

According to the National Research Bureau, the average gross leasable area (GLA) of retail square feet per capita was 20.53 square feet in 2005. Thus, based upon a population of 9,703 residents (2006 estimate), the City should be able to support approximately 200,000 square feet of retail, exclusive of outside markets and purchasers.

Changes in Industrial Processes and Industrial Development Standards

Industrial operations have changed substantially in the past two decades, creating growth opportunities and rendering certain industrial operations obsolete. Small industrial plants on cramped sites in the heart of the City fail to meet the standards of modern industries. In terms of function, most small and medium size industries no longer rely on rail transportation. Modern industries are concerned about image, availability of space for loading/unloading, availability of space for expansion, and isolation from incompatible residential and commercial uses. Most new industrial development occurs in planned industrial parks. Studies have shown that Downriver has failed to keep up with the needs of modern industry, as reflected in the fact that Downriver contains only 12 percent of all industrial parks in southeast Michigan. This development void provides an opportunity in Flat Rock to develop industrial park facilities that meet the needs of modern industries, and the City is prepared for this type of development with land use policies and standards that consider industrial densities and buffering from incompatible land uses.

Growth in the Service Sector

Increasingly, industrial commodities are being replaced by knowledge-based and information-based services as the most critical components in the national economy. The result of this trend is the growth of the service sector, including such businesses as information processing, transportation, communications, insurance, financial services, accounting, legal counseling, management counseling, advertising, design services, real estate, marketing, and the like. The growth of the service sector creates opportunities for development of office-oriented businesses, an area in which the Central Business District in Flat Rock could capitalize.

Computerized Technology

The widespread introduction of computerized technology is creating new operating procedures for business organizations. The most apparent impact of computer technology is to automate low-skilled work. Computer technology also permits remote management, so that the production of services need not take place where the services are consumed or used. As a result, certain clerical and other functions normally associated with management need not be located in the same high-rent office district as the administrative offices. The relatively low cost of land in Flat Rock could meet the requirements for such computer-linked office functions.

Proximity to Metro Airport, Detroit, and Toledo

In the market study conducted in conjunction with the planning of the Gateway Commerce Center, the potential demand for a suite hotel and executive conference center in Gateway was analyzed. The study authors cited the following location factors in favor of such facilities:

- Proximity to Detroit Metropolitan Airport.
- Accessibility to the entire Detroit metropolitan area via I-75 or I-275.
- Accessibility to Monroe, Toledo, and locations to the south.

Spin-off Effect of the Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant

The presence of the Ford Assembly Plant has resulted in the construction of small manufacturing facilities by suppliers within Flat Rock and surrounding communities. The City is aware of the importance of the Assembly Plant and recognizes the potential need for additional industrial park facilities in support of the Plant.

High Density Residential Development

Greater variety of housing options, at higher densities, located in the downtown can create additional demand for certain types of retail. As an example, the completion of the Belle River Condos is an additional catalyst to the economic redevelopment of downtown Flat Rock. This project has been successful, and similar developments will likely follow in the future. If this trend of residential development does continue, there should be enough people to support a thriving downtown economy.

Catalyst from the Recently Constructed Meijer

Meijer is a regional grocer and home goods store that has the potential to draw significant market share to Flat Rock that was not available before. It is located on the north side of Vreeland Road, west of Telegraph. The increased traffic to this location should provide opportunities for other commercial businesses to flourish as they locate near the intersection of Vreeland and Telegraph. This plan recognizes that the City should encourage and support growth near this location through the adoption of supporting policies and regulations.

Potential for Future Growth

Potential for Future Commercial and Office Development

The analysis presented in this chapter indicates that the potential for future commercial and office development exists in Flat Rock, as the population, number of households, and total income in the trade area continues to increase. Research cited herein reveals that the Flat Rock trade area is currently underserved in terms of retail facilities, based on comparisons with other communities.

Consumers are willing to travel several miles to major shopping centers to shop for goods and services when they are not available locally. However, many shoppers indicate that they would be willing to change their shopping patterns if competitive, quality retail facilities were constructed nearby. It appears that the strongest need is for community-oriented shopping centers and services. Flat Rock has already begun to provide more of these amenities for residents, with the Meijer store as perhaps the most visible.

As such development occurs, it is expected that the particular function, or market niche, of each commercial district will become better defined. North Telegraph Road is expected to retain its status as the primary retail and service district in the City. The downtown area is expected to develop as a mixed use center of office development and specialty retail, combined with residential uses on upper floors. The function of the Gateway Commerce Center is becoming a community and regional center for economic activity. Gateway currently includes a hotel, auto auction, and medical and professional offices. There is more potential for regionally-oriented retail, restaurants, office, lodging, and light industrial development.

As one of the main entranceways to the City, the north side of Gibraltar Road, west of Olmstead Road, would be best-suited for low-intensity office and neighborhood commercial development. Offices would be compatible with adjacent institutional uses that have been developed in recent years, and would provide a good buffer between the road and existing or future residential development on the interior. Neighborhood commercial users may include: coffee shops, bakeries, laundry services, banks, and restaurants.

Potential for Future Industrial Development

Prior to construction of the Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant, industrial development in Flat Rock was limited to a variety of small operations located near the center of the City, generally adjacent to the railroad tracks. The construction of the Ford Assembly Plant dramatically altered the industrial profile of the City. The attributes that attracted Ford to locate in Flat Rock would be equally attractive to other industries.

Industrial uses benefit from the availability of a highly visible and accessible site. Industrial sites are not situated for the attraction of consumers, but access to quality roads for the movement of goods and for a large pool of potential employees. Industrial uses also seek large tracts of land for their specific use requirements. Industrial developers cite five major considerations that determine suitable industrial locations, including transportation, labor supply, energy and other utilities, availability of land, and public policy. Additional considerations that are relevant when selecting a specific site include the topography and soil conditions, the direction and composition of population growth, and types of industries that are expanding or moving into the area. When viewed comprehensively, sites with easy access to I-75 are the most desirable, such as property in the Gateway Commercial Center. Hall Road and Vreeland Road are also desirable for low intensity industrial uses due to the availability of land and proximity to quality roads.

Access to Transportation

The primary industrial location determinant is convenient access to freeway transportation. Research has shown that over three-quarters of all land developed for industry is located within 2.5 miles of an Interstate freeway interchange. A freeway location provides industries with substantial transportation savings, access to an expanded labor market, and an expanded trade area. Immediate access to I-75, which has been described as the state's most important industrial corridor, was clearly one of the major location determinants for Ford Motor Company. Heavy industries in the City also benefit from the Canadian National Railroad interchange facilities.

Labor Supply

The availability of skilled labor is an industrial need that can be met by the Downriver labor force. According to the SEMCOG 2000 Forecast for employment by Industrial class, a greater proportion of the people are employed in manufacturing than any of the surrounding communities with the exception of Brownstown Township. Flat Rock also has a higher percentage of those in manufacturing than Wayne County and the entire Southeast Michigan region. In addition, industries in Flat Rock have access to the trained labor markets in more urbanized communities nearer to Detroit and Toledo.

Energy and Utilities

Industry requires a reliable supply of energy and adequate utility service, including water supply and sanitary sewer service. DTE Energy provides electrical and natural gas to the City. The South Huron Valley Utility Authority provides sewer service to the City. The original facility was built in 1988, but was recently updated in 2001 and the capacity of facility was increased. The City of Detroit Water and Sewage Department provides the water supply for Flat Rock. The Flat Rock Department of Public Services is responsible for maintaining the water and sewer system within the City.

Availability of Land

The need for large amounts of land, both for the initial construction and for later expansion, has been cited as one of the key reasons that industries move out of urban core areas. Large industrial sites are needed that are suitable for construction and free from drainage problems. Vacant land on the eastern side of the City could potentially be used for industrial development in Flat Rock. Three general areas have been identified as being particularly well-suited for industrial development.

- Another manufacturing/heavy industrial use would be appropriate for the former Ford Motor Company industrial plant on Gibraltar Road at I-75.
- Light industrial, research, and warehousing uses would be appropriate in the Gateway Commerce Center.

- Light industrial, research, and warehousing uses would also be appropriate as a buffer along Hall Road and Vreeland Road to separate future residential development from the Flat Rock Assembly Plant and the Canadian National Railroad interchange facilities.

Public Policies

Research in recent years has documented the relationship between public policies and the ability to successfully operate a business or industry. Public policies with the greatest impact on industry in Flat Rock are reflected in the adopted planning and zoning standards. When reviewing these documents, it is apparent that the City has set aside sufficient land to accommodate industrial growth. Evidence of favorable public policies include the City's actions to permit the Ford Flat Rock Assembly Plant to locate in the City and creation of a Planned Unit Development ordinance and tax increment financing to facilitate the establishment of the Gateway Commerce Center.

This analysis indicates that conditions are conducive for industrial growth in Flat Rock. Vacant lands on the east side of the City are best-suited to the location requirements of industry because of the immediate access to I-75. Reuse of the vacant Ford Motor Company plant for heavy industry would be appropriate, but other industrial lands would be better-suited for light industrial, research, and warehousing uses.



Circulation Analysis

Each year, the highways and rail lines that traverse the City move goods and millions of people. Along with the nearby airports, these transportation systems collectively make up a vital part of the infrastructure that contributes to one of the largest regional economies in the country. Wayne County and the Michigan Department of Transportation control and maintain many of the major roads in Flat Rock, connecting the City to the rest of the region. The City is responsible for most of the local streets in Flat Rock.

The local network of streets and thoroughfares is of vital importance for the overall well-being of the City and its residents. The most basic function of local streets is to provide a circulation system by which people and goods can move within and through the City. Roads and road rights-of-way also provide locations for public utilities, such as water, sewer, gas, electric, and telephone lines. Roads provide the means by which emergency and public services are delivered to residents. Road rights-of-way provide locations for landscaping and parking along commercial strips. Most importantly, the road system establishes the basic form and character of the City and has significant impact on the local economy and environment.

The development of the City has been shaped by the location of transportation corridors. The impact of Telegraph Road (US 24) on commercial development is particularly evident. While early commercial development was concentrated in a central business district near the riverfront, commercial development in more recent times has occurred in strips along the full length of Telegraph Road. Proximity to I-75 and the CN Railroad has influenced the largest-scale industrial uses in Flat Rock.

The goal of this section is to inventory the existing transportation network, classify each type of road and to identify potential limitations or constraints in the City’s transportation system. In identifying the potential limitations of the City’s transportation system, it is also important to prepare alternatives to address those deficiencies.

Road Classifications and Jurisdiction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed the National Functional Classification (NFC) to group streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the level of service they are intended to provide. This system was introduced in 1968, and by the 1970s all streets and highways were required to be classified. Transportation engineers and planners around the country recognize the NFC as the unofficial road classification system. The roads within the City of Flat Rock are under the jurisdiction of three agencies: Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Wayne County Department of Public Services, and the City of Flat Rock. The definitions and classifications are based on the Functional Classification Guidelines, as outlined in the 1989 FHWA document. The streets and highways in the City are classified based on the NFC and its jurisdiction identified below.

Table 8.1: Road Classifications — Flat Rock

National Functional Classification (NFC)	Road
Principal Arterial System:	
Interstate	I-75
Principal Arterial	Telegraph Road (U.S. 24)
Minor Arterial System:	
Minor Arterials	Gibraltar Road, Huron River Drive, Inkster Road, Vreeland Road, and Will Carleton
Collector Street System:	
Major Collectors	Arsenal Road, Aspen Blvd., Cahill Road, Hall Road, Evergreen Street, Meadows Avenue, Olmstead Road, and Seneca Avenue
Local Street System:	
Local Streets	All other streets within the City not listed above

Principal Arterial System

Principal arterials are the prominent road type in the NFC hierarchy intended to carry the major portion of trips entering and leaving urban areas, as well as a majority of the trips bypassing the area. The principal arterial system includes Interstates, highways and freeways, and other arterials. Principal arterials have planned rights-of-ways of 120 feet or greater, and provide high speed, uninterrupted travel with limited access or restricted access to regionally important urban areas and amenities, such as airports. This system is a major source for interstate travel and falls under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

I-75 is considered to be the State's most important industrial corridor, and is the only roadway classified as an Interstate within the boundaries of Flat Rock. I-75 is the primary north-south freeway through the region, providing a link to the Detroit and Toledo metropolitan areas, as well as locations farther north and south. This Interstate carries most of the traffic and is the most heavily-traveled road in the City. Accessibility on and off the Interstate system is limited to one interchange located at Gibraltar Road.

I-275, located approximately four miles west of the City limits, is an important Interstate for Flat Rock. I-275 intersects Will Carleton Road, which enters the City from the west. This Interstate provides direct access to expanding markets and employment opportunities in the western suburbs of Detroit and to Washtenaw County.

Telegraph Road (US 24) is the only other principal arterial in the City. It runs in the north-south direction providing access to Detroit to the north and Monroe to the south. Telegraph Road serves the dual purposes as a carrier of through traffic as well as providing access to abutting commercial properties.

Overall, the principal arterial system provides excellent north-south transportation for City residents. The north-south orientation of the regional circulation system has affected business, employment, shopping patterns, and the local economy in general. The circulation system facilitates interaction with businesses in the Detroit or Toledo metropolitan areas, rather than with businesses to the east or west. Access to the east-west regional transportation network is not immediately proximate to the City, but users can access I-94 to the north and M-50 in Monroe County easily via I-75 or I-275.

Minor Arterial System

Minor arterials are similar in function to principal arterials, but they generally carry less traffic and connect to smaller urban centers. The minor arterial system interconnects with and augments the principal arterial system by providing for trips of moderate length with less traffic mobility. Accessibility is greater but stops are more frequent due to signalized intersections. Minor arterial streets are generally spaced from 1/8 – 1/2 mile in the central business district to 2 – 3 miles apart in the suburban fringes, but are normally not more than 1 mile apart in fully developed areas. Minor arterial planned rights-of-ways are usually 120 feet wide and fall under the jurisdiction of the Wayne County Department of Public Services.

Minor arterials in the City of Flat Rock include Gibraltar Road, East and West Huron River Drive, Inkster Road, Vreeland Road, and Will Carleton. These roads generally link local residential roads to the principal arterial road system, however, do not usually enter neighborhood areas. They also serve as a framework for the location of more intensive land uses.

Collector Street System

The collector streets provide access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. These streets differ from the arterial system in that they usually enter neighborhood areas to distribute residents throughout the entire system to and from their destinations. Collector streets also collect traffic from local streets and channel them into the arterial system.

Collector streets are commonly categorized as major and minor collectors. Major collectors are important intra-county travel corridors and provide service to county seats not on an arterial route, to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance. Planned rights-of-way for major collectors are generally 120 feet wide. Minor collectors are identified to collect traffic from local roads and private property and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a major collector or arterial road. These roads are generally spaced at 1/2 mile intervals and are maintained by the City of Flat Rock.

Collector roads in Flat Rock include: Arsenal Road, Olmstead Road, Hall Road, Cahill Road, Evergreen Street, Aspen Boulevard, and Seneca Avenue. Meadows Avenue was upgraded to a major collector in 2006, with the upgrades and construction of a bridge across Silver Creek as part of the Bradbury PUD. In addition, Cahill was extended south to Woodruff Road as part of the Bradbury PUD. Cahill north of Gibraltar remains unpaved; but paving and installation of natural gas lines should be a priority for Flat Rock.

Local Street System

The local street system comprises all streets and highways not identified in one of the higher systems. Local streets primarily provide direct access to abutting land and to minor collector streets. Movement of through traffic is usually discouraged on local streets. Local streets in Flat Rock include minor streets in the central business district and local subdivision roads. Some portions of the CBD and the Bradbury PUD contain alleys.

Circulation System Deficiencies

The ability of people and goods to flow efficiently without numerous stops or unanticipated congestion is an important aspect of the quality of life in a community, as well as a vital part of a community's economic well-being and growth. The City's road grid and roads were designed to accommodate smaller city transportation demands. As the current rate of development continues, traffic generated may exceed the local roads' ability to handle increased traffic, and certain intersections give indications that some limits have been reached. For example, at Will Carleton and Telegraph, vehicles are regularly backed up in more than one direction.

The status of the local road system has significant influences in terms of the future land use plan. An inadequate road system impacts whether or not the City can achieve its development objectives. For example, the lack of high-quality access in some areas of the City has prevented desired residential, commercial, and industrial development. In other areas, continued development without necessary road improvements will result in increasing congestion and traffic conflict on local streets. The circulation system is described below.

Telegraph Road (US 24)

Telegraph Road is an example of a road that is experiencing increasing congestion and traffic conflicts. Strip commercial development has occurred along the road, generating local business traffic. At the same time, Telegraph Road is utilized as a regional thoroughfare for longer through trips by vehicular and truck traffic. As a result, conflicts have arisen between local business traffic, generating many turning movements, high-speed traffic, and relatively slower and cumbersome truck traffic. These conflicts will intensify as the population increases and the commercial district along Telegraph continues to expand.

Congestion along Telegraph Road is intensified during times of highway construction or major accidents on I-75 and especially I-275. When construction or accidents occur on these highways, motorists are generally detoured through the City of Flat Rock or use the City streets to bypass the congested areas.

Circulation in the Central Business District

Gibraltar Road is the most direct east/west road to connect Telegraph Road and I-75, and as such it is used heavily and holds much potential to bring people in to explore the Central Business District. Flat Rock should capitalize on the traffic volumes by utilizing signage, CBD branding, and streetscape improvements. For instance, the Telegraph and Gibraltar intersection could be celebrated as a grand entranceway to the District.

Congestion on East-West Collector Roads

The lack of an east-west arterial will become more apparent as the population of the City increases. It is likely that the current and future adult residents will not work in the City, and many people will travel on to areas in Washtenaw and Wayne County, creating congestions during peak hours. Congestion and back-ups will occur on Gibraltar Road because of the interchange at I-75, shift changes at the local factories, and children traveling to and from school. The intersection of Will Carleton and Telegraph Roads is particularly troublesome, with regular traffic backups.

Need for Collector Roads

In the outer areas of the City, the improved road network is sparse, and there are large tracts of undeveloped land. This limits commercial and residential development to areas that are currently accessible by the road network. Transportation to the west of the CBD is limited to a single crossing over the Huron River at the intersection of Huron River Drive and Telegraph Road.

As new residential development occurs in the City, a residential street system will develop to provide access for these areas. Subsequently, there will be a need for new “collector roads” to channel traffic from the local residential streets to arterial roads. Collector roads are generally wider than other residential roads. Where possible, efforts are made to discourage direct residential access onto collector roads to prevent increased traffic conflicts and congestion due to added curb cuts.

Canadian National Railroad

A constraint to the development of new roads in Flat Rock is the presence of the Canadian National Railroad interchange. The railroad is a physical barrier that makes it very difficult to provide east-west road connections between the central and western portion of the City. Improvements to the railroad crossings at Vreeland Road will be important in order to facilitate better traffic flow along the only east-west road in the northern portion of the City.

Pavement of Roads

There is a need to provide access roads to underdeveloped areas of the City, but there is also a need to pave particular existing roads. Unpaved roads in the City include Woodruff Road, Cahill Road, Seneca Avenue, Peters, and several roads in residential subdivisions. Meadows Avenue was upgraded in 2006 as part of the Bradbury PUD project.

Delivery of Community Services

Currently, deficiencies in the City's existing overall road system frustrate the delivery of community services. For example, the presence of unpaved roads and lack of collector streets has made it difficult for local officials to identify safe and appropriate school bus routes and student transfer stations. In the future, as the City road network is improved, special efforts must be made to accommodate school buses, fire trucks, trash collection trucks, ambulances, and other service vehicles. The Safe Routes to School program could help alleviate many of these issues.

Resources to Address Deficiencies

Resources available to the City include traffic congestion data, accident data, and proposed road improvements, among other things, from SEMCOG and the Wayne County Department of Public Services. These reports should be monitored on a regular basis to determine the safety and total activity within and adjacent to the City.

Resources for Road Improvements

The City's roads are generally in good repair. Road repair should be prioritized based on condition, safety, and use. The City should seek additional grant money than what is provided under Act 51.

In April of 2014, the City completed a PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) study to determine the condition and adequacy of Flat Rock's road network. This study resulted in an asset management plan (see www.flatrockmi.org for further information), which will guide the maintenance schedule, reconstruction activities, and traffic management over the coming years.

Opportunities for Improvement

The following are possible solutions to the road system deficiencies identified in the City:

Access Roads for Residential Development

In 2005 – 2006, Cahill Road was extended south to Woodruff and Meadows extended east and west to connect Olmsted to Tamarack as part of the Bradbury PUD. These road extensions could become future collector roads as residential development in the vicinity expands. The exact location of these road extensions could vary depending on topography, location of drains and wetlands, the need to align new roads with existing roads, proposals for new development, and similar conditions.

Downtown Circulation

Traffic circulation in the CBD may be improved by designating Gibraltar Road as the primary route for through traffic, connecting traffic from the east to Telegraph Road. Along with installing a traffic light, adjustments to the Gibraltar/Garden Boulevard intersection can be made to allow non-stop traffic movement along Gibraltar.

Telegraph Road Commercial Area

To reduce congestion and traffic conflict, the site plan review process should be used to control the number of curb cuts onto Telegraph Road. Developers should be encouraged to construct secondary access drives to serve all of the properties, thereby reducing turning movements on Telegraph Road. For example, traffic safety on Telegraph Road could be improved by constructing a secondary service drive behind the existing businesses along the east side of Telegraph Road, thereby providing an alternate access off of Vreeland road for patrons of businesses along the road.

Additionally, design standards should be incorporated into developments along Telegraph Road, including standardizing business center signage, traffic poles, and a plant palette that could be repeated to form a cohesive corridor.



Michigan State University conceptual improvements to the northern Telegraph Commercial Corridor.

Telegraph Road Railroad Viaduct

Aesthetic and functional improvements should be considered to the viaduct. It has long been discussed as a location along Telegraph that could be improved through plantings, lighting, and other upgrades that could create a functional and visually pleasing transition between the northern Telegraph Road commercial corridor and the Central Business District. The City has worked with groups from Michigan State University to achieve a design direction for these improvements, with discussions on implementation forthcoming.

Truck Routes

Encouraging trucks to use Hall Road as the primary north-south truck route, and Vreeland Road as the primary east-west truck route could reduce conflicts between truck and vehicular traffic. For non-industrial traffic, Cahill should become the primary north-south route, and will require paving to be used in this capacity. Gibraltar Road should become the primary east-west route.

Pavement of Roads

North of Gibraltar to Vreeland Road, Cahill Road should be considered as a road that requires paving. As mentioned above, this route could become a primary north-south connector for the City. Woodruff Road also should be considered for paving.

Improved Access to School

After Woodruff Road is paved, improved access to the Flat Rock elementary and middle schools should be developed. Tamarack Street should be phased out as the primary access to the schools, and a direct route, which does not cut through a residential neighborhood, should be developed.

Improved transportation patterns are also required at the high school. Currently, school bus loading and unloading blocks access to certain streets and hinders the traffic flow on other streets. Ideally, an off-street staging area for buses should be developed, possibly making it necessary for the school to acquire more property.

The Safe Routes to School program may be able to help alleviate some of these concerns, as good planning and cooperation between entities in the City could result in financial backing for improvements to help access to schools.

Improved Access to Cooke Street Industrial District

Industries located along Cooke Street do not have direct access to Telegraph Road. Consequently, trucks serving this industrial district must travel through residential areas. An alternative means of access to this area is required. Two alternatives are possible: 1) Construction of a new road to Telegraph Road, or 2) Construction of an access road along the railroad tracks to Vreeland Road.



Before and After: Michigan State University conceptual improvements to the Railroad Viaduct.

Rail

The Canadian National Railroad runs from northeast to southeast through the City, connecting with a large rail interchange in the northeast part of the City. This railroad is a constraint or barrier to the construction of new roads across the central portions of the City.

Alternative Modes of Transportation and Pedestrian Movement

Public Transportation

Flat Rock residents are not served by a comprehensive public transportation system. However, the Flat Rock Recreation Department offers free “door to door” bus transportation service for senior citizens, low-income residents, and for those with medical conditions that prevent safe driving. Reservations are required one day prior to pick-up.

Air Transportation

Though the City lacks scheduled air transportation service within its borders, local residents are fortunate to have three airports in the surrounding area. Detroit Metropolitan Airport, in the City of Romulus, serves both passenger and freight flights. Detroit Metro is one of Delta Airlines’ major hubs, and handles over 35 million passengers each year. Other airports in close proximity to Flat Rock are: Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti, the Toledo Express Airport in Toledo, Ohio and the Detroit City Airport, both of which provide connector and commuter flights.

Pedestrian Paths/Bikeways (Non-Motorized Pathways)

The need for pedestrian walks and bikeway facilities will increase as the population grows. More residents will lead to more traffic; therefore, a well-developed pedestrian transportation system will be paramount for pedestrian safety. In the future, constructing pathways on certain roads to accommodate non-motorized traffic may be necessary. Other alternatives for facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists include conventional sidewalks, paved shoulders dedicated and marked for bicycle use, and separate bicycle pathways next to the road. Linking bike paths to adjacent communities and neighborhoods has the potential to 1) reduce the number of short vehicle trips; and 2) help in providing recreational opportunities for City residents and residents of neighboring communities. Flat Rock is fortunate to have the Downriver Linked Greenways trails as an integral part of the non-motorized transportation network, as it provides safe access to recreation for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Recommendations/Existing Paths

Sidewalks should be required in conjunction with development, particularly in subdivisions, and with multiple-family, commercial, office and light industrial/office research development. First, developers should be required to install sidewalks along all road rights-of-way in conjunction with all new construction. Second, the City should become directly involved in the installation of sidewalks if any of the following circumstances exist:

- Prevalent pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
- Beneficial to provide access to key centers of community activity, such as parks or libraries.
- Necessary to complete the missing links in an area where much of the pathway system has been installed.

Priorities for installation of new sidewalks in Flat Rock should include the following:

- Missing links along Telegraph Road.
- Missing links in the downtown, particularly in the vicinity of the senior housing complex.
- A new sidewalk along Woodruff Road from Olmstead to Huron River Drive.
- Sidewalks along both sides of Gibraltar Road between the CBD and Gateway Commerce Park.

In 2003, the Planning Commission adopted a “non-motorized Pathway Master Plan”, which provides for the locations of primary and secondary pathway locations. These designated pathways locations will require non-motorized 8- to 10-foot asphalt pathways to be installed in lieu of five-foot-wide concrete sidewalks. The City has been a part of many greenway and trail initiatives since, and now has the distinction of being a “Trail Town.”

In 2004-05, the City installed 4.5 miles of primary route along Gibraltar Road from Huron Park to Woodruff Road via the Community Center. Portions of the secondary routes have been installed along Cahill Road (Wood Creek Park PUD) and Woodruff Road (Bradbury PUD). In addition, link or loop segments have been installed in Hawthorne Ridge and in Civic Center Park.

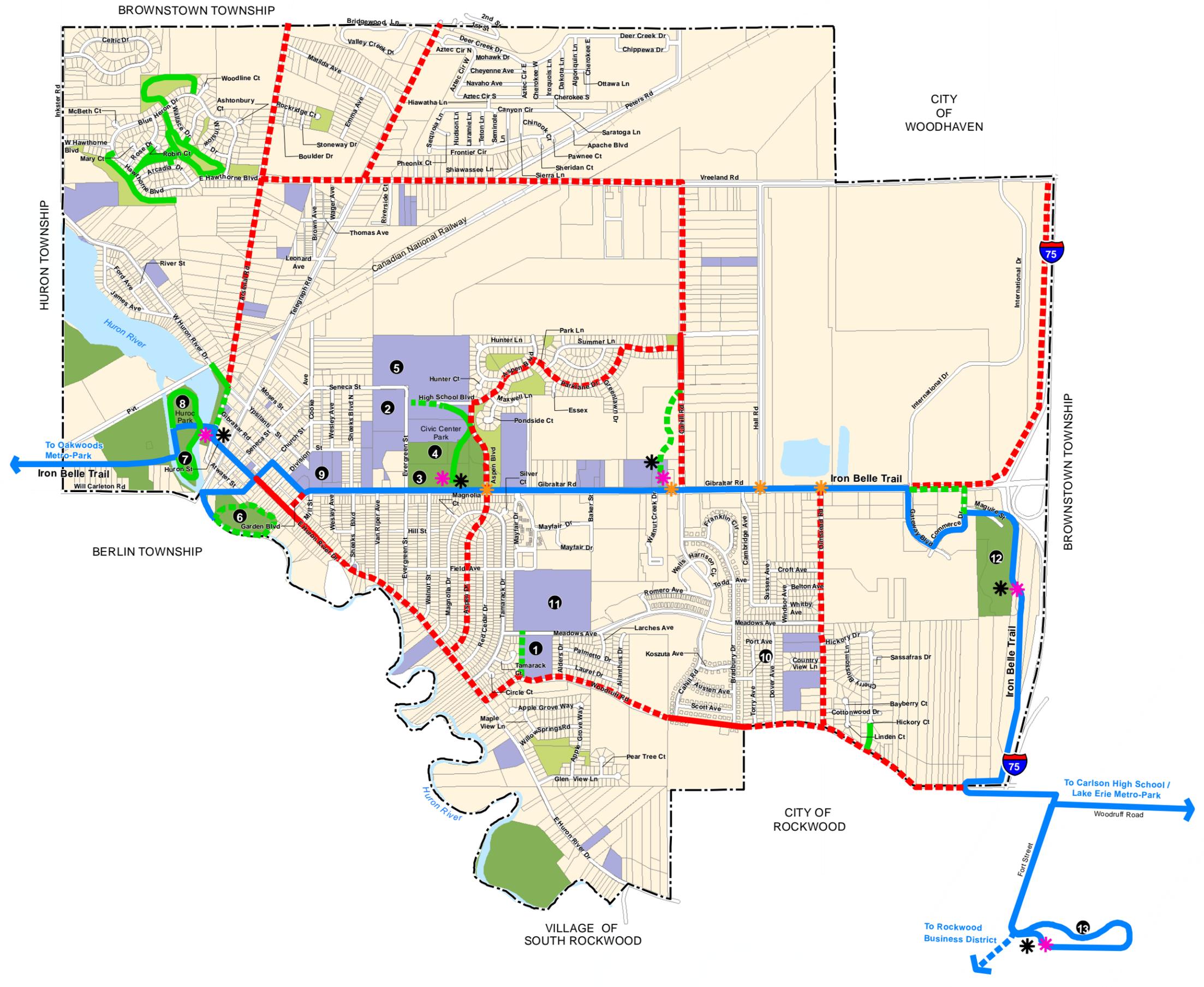
Finally, the City of Flat Rock should promote “Active Living”. Active living communities are places where it is easy to integrate physical activity into daily routines. The Michigan Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports defines active living communities as “places where people of all ages, incomes and abilities can walk and bike-both for recreation and transportation”. Communities who incorporate active living design characteristics achieve many benefits:

1. **Economic:** Improved real estate values and business growth;
2. **Environmental:** Improved air and water quality;
3. **Greater Social Equity:** Convenient and safe opportunities for all citizens to be active;
4. **Increased Safety:** Decreased traffic speeds and crime; and
5. **Enhanced Community Connections:** Increased social interactions and stronger ties to the community.

Map 5 Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan

City of Flat Rock, Michigan

September 28, 2016



Pathways

- Existing/Funded Trails
- Future Trails
- Primary Routes
- Secondary Routes
- Loop / Link Segment

Trail Facilities

- Kiosk /Respite Station
- Restroom
- Future Crossing

Recreation Facilities

- Park
- Quasi-Public
- Residential Open Space

Recreation Facilities

- 1 Barnes Elementary
- 2 Bobcean Elementary
- 3 Civic Center Park
- 4 Community Fields
- 5 Flat Rock Community High School
- 6 DNR Boat Launch (Huron River)
- 7 Huron Park
- 8 Flat Rock Dam Fish Ladder
- 9 Old Flat Rock High School
- 10 Pebblebrook Tot Lot
- 11 T. Simpson Middle School
- 12 Community Center
- 13 Mercure Park (City of Rockwood)



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Base Map Source: Wayne County, 2014
Data Source: McKenna Associates, Inc. 2015



Future Land Use

Introduction

The Future Land Use Map (Map 6), which is presented in this chapter, is the culmination of the comprehensive planning process. This map is based on consideration of the analyses, goals, policies, strategies and public input set forth in the plan and debated at several meetings.

Future changes to the zoning ordinance text and map are expected over time as the economic, social and physical climates change. The work extensively performed by the Planning Commission within this document should serve as guide in evaluating proposed changes to the zoning ordinance and/or map. A deviation from the Master Plan should be considered with care and the reason for the deviation noted when the Master Plan is updated.

Future Land Use Concept

The Future Land Use Map expands on the patterns that have been created incrementally over a period of several decades. Existing land use patterns and market trends were taken into account when the Future Land Use designations were updated.

The main commercial developments are planned in four compact districts:

1. Neighborhood commercial on the central portion of Gibraltar and Vreeland Roads;
2. The Central Business District, located on Telegraph Road (US 24), south of the railroad viaduct;
3. Transitional commercial on Telegraph Road (US 24) north between the railroad viaduct and Vreeland Road; and
4. Corridor commercial along Telegraph Road, from Vreeland Road north to Brownstown Township.

Heavy industrial is planned at the northeast portion of the City, north of Gibraltar Road, near I-75 and a triangular area bounded by Vreeland Road and Peters.

Two smaller light industrial areas are planned:

1. On the south side of the railroad tracks between Vreeland and Cook Street;
2. West of Hall, south of Vreeland.

The remainder and the vast majority of the City is dedicated to residential development, with single-family residential being the predominant land use category. Five residential classifications of varying density are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Transitional Land Use Planning

The Future Land Use Plan proposes to organize uses based on a transitional land use planning concept, whereby intensive development is buffered from lower density districts by a series of progressively less intensive land uses. For example, lands surrounding the industrial areas are planned as Public, Commercial, or Office. Similarly, Medium Density Residential is planned as a transition in residential density, located between higher and lower density single family development. In addition, a planned unit development (PUD) (Bradbury Park) has been built since the 1999 plan, which allowed for mixed-use development.

Future Land Use Categories

Upon full implementation of the Future Land Use Map, approximately 51.2 percent of the land in the City will be used for residential uses, not including residential uses located in the Central Business District. Industrial uses will occupy 27.95 percent. Recreation land, which includes parks and public land uses (e.g. schools and vacant City land), will occupy 12.16 percent. Non-residential uses, including commercial and mixed use, will occupy about 13.94 percent of the total land area.

Thus, the Future Land Use map establishes the framework for a predominantly single family residential community, but the plan provides for expansion of non-residential uses to satisfy projected community and economic development needs. A more detailed review of each land use category follows.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map sets forth recommendations for continued use, new development, and reuse of land in the City over the next two decades. The Future Land Use Map is a link between what exists today and the “vision” of what City leaders and citizens would like to strive towards.

Together, the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map provide a flexible guide to promote informed public and private decision-making for the betterment of the community. The land use designations on the map are generalized; they are not intended to be site specific or to follow specific property lines. Although the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map form the basis for the Zoning Ordinance and other rigid legal controls, the Plan and Map are intended to be flexible policy documents and decision-making guides.

General Form of the City

The Future Land Use Map builds upon past growth and prevailing development patterns. According to the map, intensive development is generally limited to two areas: along the Telegraph Road (US 24) corridor and along the Gibraltar Road corridor on the east side of the City.

Commercial and service uses are concentrated along Telegraph Road (US 24). Commercial redevelopment is occurring, particularly in the Flat Rock Plaza, where building improvements have attracted Family Farm & Home as the new anchor tenant. Specialized retail, office, and residential development are expected to occur in the Central Business District and designated Neighborhood commercial areas.

Two types of intensive development are slated for the east side of the City. Industrial development is indicated on the Future Land Use Map north of Gibraltar Road. An office/retail mixed use pattern is indicated on the map for the land on the south side of Gibraltar Road, between Cahill and Olmstead Roads.

Residential development is specified for most of the remaining land in the City. Single family residential development is the most predominant residential land use classification. Multiple family developments are called for in several locations, to serve as a transition zone between the single family areas and more intensive land uses. Interspersed within the residential areas are various public uses, such as parks and schools. Bradbury Park is an example of mixed-use residential trends being planned and developed in the City.

Recommendations for each of the land uses identified on the Future Land Use Map are reviewed in the next several pages.

Table 9.1: Current versus Proposed Future Land Uses

2006			2016		
Current FLU Categories	Acreage	Percent	Proposed FLU Categories	Acreage	Percent
Low Density Residential	1393.20	35.40%	Low Density Residential	1268.65	32.90%
Medium Density Residential	241.77	6.14%	Medium Density Residential	221.61	5.75%
High Density Residential	254.23	6.46%	High Density Residential	249.51	6.47%
Multiple-Family Residential	85.48	2.17%	Multiple-Family Residential	72.33	1.88%
Mobile Home Park	170.20	4.32%	Mobile Home Park	162.02	4.20%
Central Business District	58.82	1.49%	Downtown Mixed Use	57.19	1.48%
Neighborhood Commercial	29.13	0.74%	Neighborhood Commercial	79.15	2.05%
Corridor Commercial	131.15	3.33%	Corridor Commercial	198.79	5.15%
Transitional Commercial	43.48	1.10%	Industrial	711.12	18.44%
Office	22.95	0.58%	Public Land	132.98	3.45%
Light Industrial	133.78	3.40%	Parks and Open Space	335.79	8.71
Heavy Industrial	778.52	19.78%	Mixed Use PUD	202.96	5.26
Mixed Use	189.77	4.82%	Railroad Corridor	164.07	4.25%
Public Land	129.00	3.28%			
Recreational	274.34	6.97%			
Total	3,935.82 acres	100.00%		3,856.26 acres	100.00%

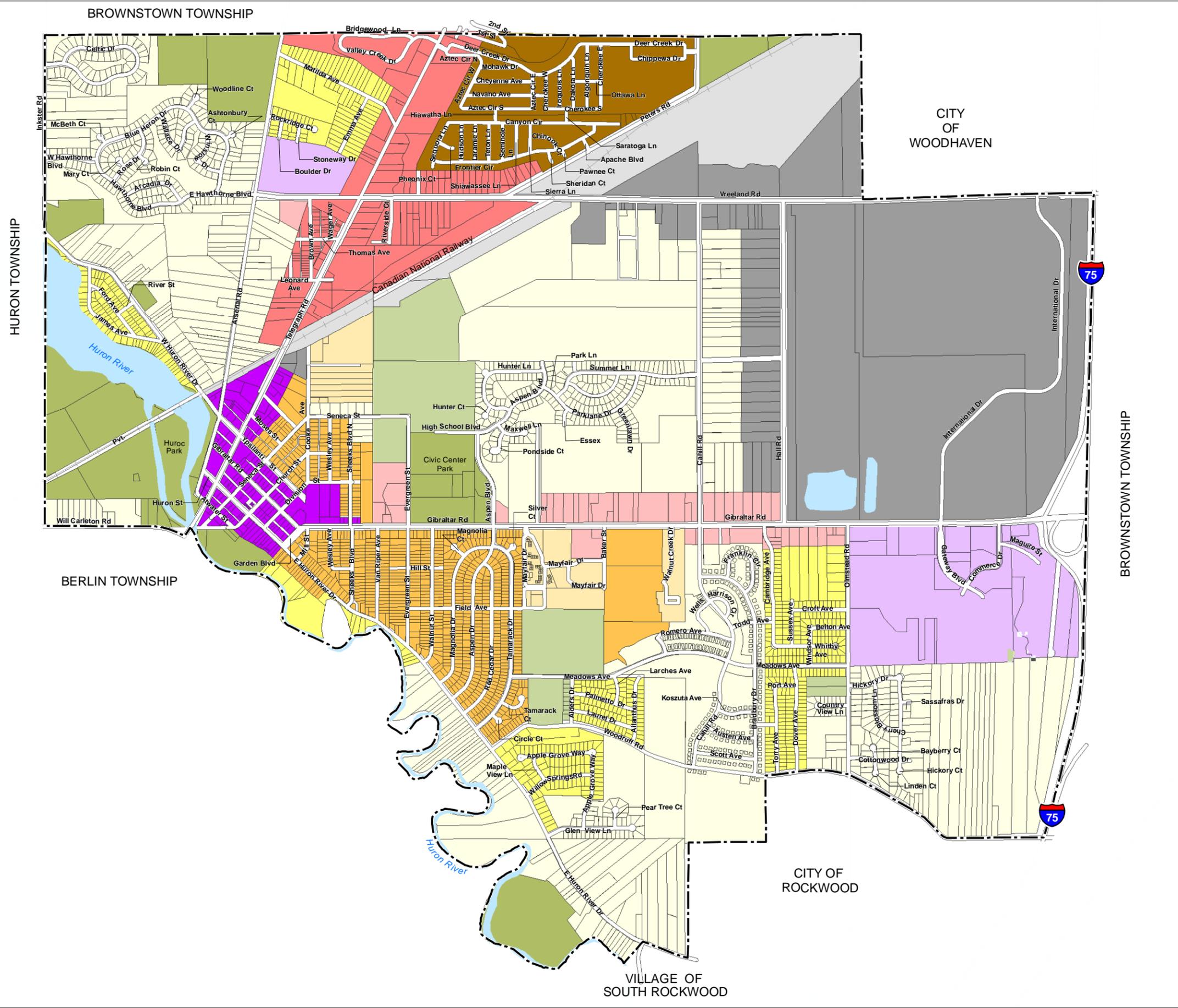
Map 6 Future Land Use

City of Flat Rock, Michigan

September 28, 2016

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Public
- Parks Open Space
- Industrial
- Mixed Use PUD
- Railroad Corridor
- Railroad



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Base Map Source: Wayne County, 2014
Data Source: McKenna Associates, Inc. 2015

The population analysis revealed that the rate of population growth has continually increased since 2000. Several events have occurred recently that are expected to affect population growth in future years. Downsizing of the “Auto Industry”, interest rate hikes on new housing, and life style changes make the future residential market uncertain.

The balance of housing types is an important concern with regard to future residential development. About half of the units constructed between 1970 and 1980 were multiple-family units. This trend has reversed. The vast majority of homes built or proposed in the 1990's were detached single-family housing. In the 2000's, the City began to see several different types of housing options: stacked ranches, duplexes, row housing, and condominiums. All future single family developments shall strive to provide higher quality residential housing to reinforce the City's neighborhoods.

The following standards should be used to guide future residential development:

- Ideally, new residential development should occur in planned settings, such as subdivisions or condominium developments, rather than at random along thoroughfares.
- Residential development should be coordinated with the availability of sewers, public water supply, and public roads.
- The creation of "neighborhoods" should be a primary residential development objective. There is a need to coordinate housing construction with the development of schools, parks, community services, and neighborhood shopping.
- Changing lifestyle choices will affect the mix of housing types available in the market.

The Future Land Use Map identifies a few remaining areas where new single family development is appropriate:

- **Southeast part of the City.** One of the few remaining vacant tracts of land, planned for low density residential, is located north of Woodruff Road, east of Hickory Ridge PUD.
- **City Center.** The opportunity for new residential development exists in downtown Flat Rock. A variety of housing types could be developed in the downtown area, such as townhouses, loft units, mid-rise, or single-family housing, as well as senior housing and assisted living options. New housing should be integrated into an overall mixed use development plan for the downtown.

Three Single Family Residential classifications of varying density are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

Low Density Residential

- Up to 2.9 Units per acre
- Large lots for the construction of large, high quality housing
- Houses should be planned as a subdivision or Condominium to avoid piecemeal development
- Garages shall not face the street or dominate the façade
- Integrated open spaces



Medium Density Residential

- 3.0 to 3.6 Units per acre
- Pedestrian network linking low density residential development to adjacent uses
- Respectful of waterfront



High Density Residential

- Located close to the Downtown Mixed Use District
- 3.7 to 5.5 units per acre
- Transitional use between low-intensity development and high-density uses
- Build out pedestrian networks by creating small parks and open spaces

Mobile Home Park

- Up to 8 units per acre
- Innovative site design
- Provide public park areas
- Require access to arterial or collector roads
- Require access to public sanitary sewer or have an approved wastewater treatment facility
- Must not place a burden on the local school district or the City's ability to provide public utilities and services
- Provide recreational facilities
- Mobile homes should be screened from adjacent conventional single-family development. This screening may consist of abundant landscaping or a natural wooded buffer.



Multiple-Family Residential

- 7 to 10 units per acre
- Serves as a buffer between single-family and commercial/industrial uses
- Have direct access to major thoroughfares or collector streets
- Provide public space
- Townhouses, apartments, stacked ranches, mid-rise housing

The Future Land Use Map identifies four general areas where multiple family housing is appropriate:

1. On the west side of Telegraph Road (US 24) at the north end of the City. The location of this parcel, its shape, the character of land use to the north, and other site constraints make this parcel of land suitable for multiple-family housing.
2. On the south side of Gibraltar Road, west of Cahill. Existing multiple family developments are located in this area to include some vacant land that is developable.
3. North of Seneca, on the east side of Cook.
4. Portions of Bradbury Park provide multiple family condominium options.

Commercial Land Uses

There is a strong potential for commercial development in Flat Rock, as the population, number of households, and total income in the trade area continues to increase. There are three commercial Future Land Use designations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Downtown Mixed Use

As such development occurs, it is expected that the particular function, or market niche, of each commercial district will become better defined. North Telegraph Road (US 24) is expected to retain its status as the primary auto-related retail and service district in the City. The downtown area is expected to develop as a mixed use center of office and specialty retail.

Convenience/value strip centers are providing time-limited consumers with targeted shopping destinations. Consumers know what they need to buy, drive up, park in front of the store, and make their purchases and leave. Consumers often return to their car simply to drive to the other side of the parking lot to shop at a different store.

According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, typical shopping centers contain between 30,000-150,000 gross square feet of buildings, located on 3-5 acres. The typical anchor of a shopping center is a supermarket or drug store. The anchor store's share of the center's total square footage will be 50-70%. The Primary Trade Area, where 60-80% of the center's sales originate, will be within 5-15 miles. Typical Community centers contain between 100,000-350,000 gross square feet of building, located on 10-40 acres. Community centers will typically contain two or more anchors, including, but not limited to: discount department store, supermarket, drug store, home improvement, or large specialty/discount apparel.

Corridor Commercial

- Strictly limited to Telegraph Road, north of the railroad viaduct
- Provide goods and services that are not typically available in the Downtown Mixed Use District or Neighborhood Commercial District

Neighborhood Commercial

- Provide low intensity commercial retail and service establishments for adjacent residential areas
- Oriented to a mix between walk-up and drive-up users
- Quality Architecture
- Shops and offices should be located on the edge of a neighborhood

Downtown Mixed Use

- Storefront entrances should face the street
- Enforce strict design standards: Buildings should be a minimum of two (2) stories, with traditional architectural features incorporated into the design.
- Offer a wide variety of uses and services, including restaurants, offices, and apartments
- Parking should be shared and should be located on the street or in the rear of the building
- Coordination of street trees, benches, lighting, and other streetscape features.

According to the Housing Market Study provided in Section 6, there is currently a demand for 186 new housing units in downtown Flat Rock. Consistent with this market data, and the stated goal of promoting mixed-use retail within walking distance of neighborhoods (including the existing single-family neighborhoods that surround downtown), the development of new medium-density mixed-use buildings, constructed to their frontage lines and including a substantial residential component, is encouraged in the Downtown Mixed Use center.

Five-million dollars of additional retail sales can be supported in Flat Rock (see Appendix A, ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile). In the Downtown, therefore, the preferred configuration of any new mixed-use buildings in downtown Flat Rock would provide retail opportunities at the street level facing the road. Residential or parking would be located at-grade on the back side of the building, with residential or offices uses located on upper floors. Furthermore, a common green space is encouraged within any mixed-use plan, potentially improving the marketability of all unit types. Office uses should be encouraged at grade along new commercial frontages to broaden the pool of prospective tenants for those spaces. (See the sketch provided, Exhibit A in Chapter 1, and the Concept Plan, Exhibit B below).

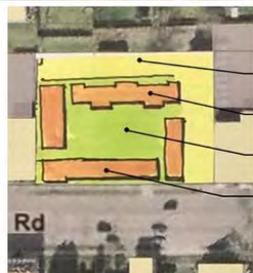
According to the same Housing Market Study, there is also a demand for 231 new Waterfront Recreation residential units in Flat Rock. Immediately adjacent to the CBD to its south along the Huron River, potential exists for waterfront residential units. Residential development here could begin to satisfy this demand and would also provide a new residential use within walking distance of downtown, supporting new and existing businesses there.

Finally, some buildings along Telegraph Road within the Downtown are set back too far at the front for convenient pedestrian access from the sidewalk. Therefore, the spaces within these setbacks constitute ideal locations for business expansions/additions or a yard feature to encourage patronage. (See Exhibit B below).



LEGEND:

 PROPOSED FRONTAGE INFILL SITES



— PARKING (YELLOW)
 — RESIDENTIAL
 — COURTYARD
 — RETAIL ALONG STREET FRONTAGE



Exhibit B

In accordance with the mixed use pattern proposed for downtown Flat Rock, specialty retail, office, and professional service uses would be appropriate. Three factors should be considered when evaluating proposals for the development of mixed-use buildings for downtown:

1. The intensity of any such development must be compatible with existing and future residential development that is located in the downtown area;
2. The intensity of development must be appropriate for the size and configuration of the site on which it is located; and
3. Emphasis should be placed on upgrading existing facilities and quality building design.

Mixed-Use PUD

- Retail, education and health services
- Non-auto sales and repair
- Protect adjacent residential districts from negative impacts
- Architectural and site design standards
- Pedestrian pathways

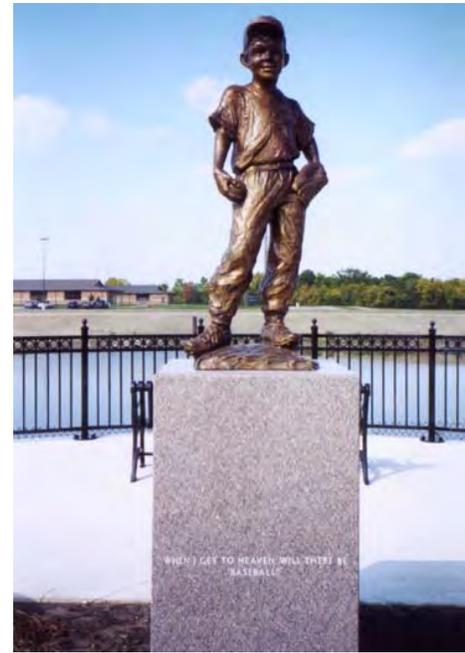
Industrial Land Use

- Accessible to transportation systems
- Developments and industrial parks require buffering, screening, storage controls, protections for commercial and residential neighbors
- The City's industrial attributes include access to freeway transportation, availability of vacant land, and access to rail facilities. Vacant lands on the east side of the City are best-suited to the locational requirements of industry because of the immediate access to I-75. Accordingly, industrial use is indicated on the Future Land Use Map for the northwest corner of the I-75 and Gibraltar Road interchange (Ford Flat Rock Assembly Plant parcel).
- An objective of the plan is to maintain industrial uses on the east side of the City to minimize the effect from trucks, noise, fumes, and other impacts on the rest of the City.

Planned Industrial is proposed in the following locations:

1. **As a transitional use along Hall Road.** In this location, the light industrial development will provide a buffer between the more intensive industrial development to the east and the residential development to the west. Ideally, new light industrial development should be contained in planned industrial parks or a similar planned setting.
2. **Along the Grand Trunk railroad tracks.** The uses in this district have adapted to unusual site conditions that would not be suitable for most other uses. The Future Land Use Map provides for the continued operation of this existing industrial district, provided that the intensity of development does not increase. However, efforts should be made to upgrade the appearance of these facilities and to provide a more direct outlet onto Telegraph (US 24) and Vreeland Roads.
3. **South of Vreeland Road, west side of Hall.** The Future Land Use Map provides for continued use and extension of land which is currently used for industrial purposes. This area is also used as a transition or buffer from the Heavy Industrial district located to the north, across Vreeland.
4. **North of Gibraltar Road, west of I-75.** The Ford Motor Company Flat Rock Assembly Plant industrial complex sits on prime land, proximate to one of the most heavily trafficked north/south Interstate routes in the nation. This parcel is appropriately located away from incompatible land use.

Existing lands currently being used for industrial use in the vicinity of Arsenal Road near the railroad tracks are not designated for industrial use on the Future Land Use Map. The existing industrial uses in this area have been in a state of decline for several years. The sites are too small to accommodate most modern industrial operations. Commercial uses would be more viable on these sites in the long run. Furthermore, commercial development would be more compatible with the existing and future residential uses in the vicinity.



Railroad corridor

The Canadian National rail yard is an established industrial/ transportation use which provides significant economic benefits for the City. The Future Land Use Map anticipates the continued operation of the yard within its existing boundaries. The Map also anticipates continued use of the railroad corridor, as it runs towards the western border of the City.

Recreation

- Parks and Open Space evenly distributed throughout the City
- Provide Integrated Trail Network for Land and Water
- Develop Urban Forestry program
- Provide accessible multi-purpose facilities
- Each neighborhood should have a center such as a school, park, or open space

The City has achieved its goal of providing a variety of recreational land and opportunities throughout the City. This is evident on the Future Land Use Map where several different locations are designated as Recreational land use, which are linked by the non-motorized pathway. These areas include:

- Huron Park is intended to remain as a passive recreational area and pathway trail-head.
- Increased canoe and kayak access to Huron River will be a goal of the City to promote tourism and recreational use as part of the regional “blueways” trails, including the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail and the nationally designated Huron River Water Trail.
- A linear recreation area along the north side of the Huron River is proposed from Huron Park to the DNR Flat Rock Boat Launch.
- A triangular piece of land located in the northeast corner of the City is designated for recreational use. This parcel is wedged between an industrial and a mobile home district off of Peters Road.
- Civic Center Park, contains the Flat Rock Community Fields, Memory Lane historic village, Flat Rock Library, pathways, tennis courts, basketball court, community playscape, splash pad, outdoor fountain and ice rink, and warming building.
- The development of the Community Center and non-motorized pathway has opened up more than 27 wooded acres for recreation use.



Public

The Future Land Use Map identifies City facilities, schools and school owned properties, and cemeteries. Key public facilities are identified below:

- **City Hall Complex:** City Hall is a unique architectural building, which is located in a highly visible, centrally situated site on Gibraltar Road. Improvements include the construction of a new library, an ice skating rink and fountain, expansion to the historic village, construction of the Community Fields, and a brand new entryway to the City Hall building.
- **Community Center:** The Community Center, opened in December 2004, is a 52,000 square foot, two story rustic facility located on 27 wooded wetlands, adjacent to the Gateway Commerce Center and I-75. The Recreation Department and Senior Center are also housed in the Community Center, along with the Stone Creek Banquet Hall facility. In addition, the Flat Rock East-West connector non-motorized pathway traverses through the Community Center site.
- **Schools.** Parcels occupied by four schools are identified on the Future Land Use Map:
 1. Flat Rock High School is located on a fifty (50) acre site north of City Hall. This facility should be able to accommodate Flat Rock's growing population for many years in the future.
 2. Barnes Elementary and Simpson Junior High are located adjacent to each other on Meadows Street. Increased access to these schools will be improved with the completion of the Meadows Avenue extension in 2007.
 3. Bobcean Elementary School is located on Evergreen, north of Gibraltar Road.
 4. Summit Academy South is a K-8 Charter School, located on Olmstead.

The school district owns one other large parcel of land in the City, on the east side of Arsenal Road, south of Matilda. New school construction on this parcel is not anticipated in the near future. Single family development would be appropriate in the event that the school district relinquishes ownership of the parcel.

Future Roads

The following areas have been designated for road improvements:

New Roads:

- South of the railroad tracks: between Vreeland and Cooke.

Paved Roads:

- Woodruff Road
- Cahill Road: between Gibraltar and Vreeland.
- Brown, Leonard, Ruth, Thomas and Wagner Streets.
- Ford, River, and James Streets.
- Seneca, between Cooke and Evergreen.



Downtown Parking Analysis

The availability of parking in a traditional downtown is always a concern when attempting to draw upon a customer base that may be coming to the area by car. It is critical, then, to achieve a balance between the provision of parking spaces and the aesthetic and architectural design that brings charm and character to the area. Flat Rock’s Central Business District has an abundance of parking. Through Ordinance provisions that include 25% requirement reduction for shared spaces and 2-for-1 on-street parking credits, the analysis in this chapter shows that the CBD may have enough parking currently to support another 20,000 square feet of retail and commercial space *and* over 100 residential units. Based on these conclusions, the parking requirements for future developments in the CBD should be closely considered and potentially waived where on-street parking and shared parking are viable options.

Parking Requirements for Existing Uses

Based upon existing use levels in downtown, the existing zoning ordinance dictates a parking requirement of 1,025 spaces (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.1: Downtown Flat Rock Park Requirement Analysis

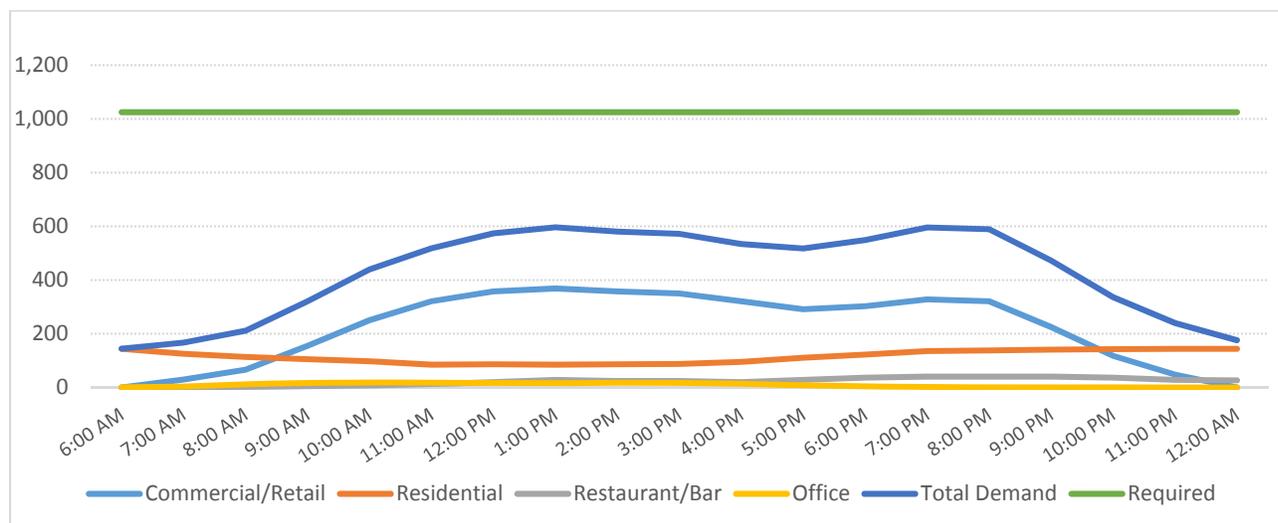
Land Use	Area / Units	Unit of Measure	Parking Requirement	Parking Spaces Required
Commercial / Retail	127,148.3	Per sq. ft.	1 per 150 sq. ft.	848
Restaurant	4,051.1	Per sq. ft.	1 per 75 sq. ft.	54
Office	1,533.9	Per sq. ft.	3.2 per 1,000 sq. ft.	5
Light Industrial	-	Per sq. ft.	1 per 550 sq. ft.	-
Quasi-Public	4,260.0	Per sq. ft.	1 per 200 sq. ft.	22
Multiple Family / Senior Housing	96	Per unit	1 per unit	96
Total				1,025

A recent inventory of existing parking spaces downtown found 645 spaces off-street and an estimated 145 spaces on-street. And, since current zoning allows for on-street spaces to count 2 to 1 against parking requirements, there results about 290 effective on-street parking spaces currently in existence downtown. The approximate total effective downtown parking supply is, therefore, 645 + 290 = 935 spaces. This represents a current shortage of 90 spaces downtown (1025 required spaces – 935 effective existing spaces = 90 spaces) based on the current zoning requirements.

However, existing zoning allows for collective use of parking spaces for separate buildings and “the Planning Commission may reduce the total number of spaces provided collectively by up to twenty-five (25) percent upon making the determination that the parking demands of the uses being served do not overlap”.

Furthermore, an hourly demand model using Urban Land Institute (ULI) guidance for parking for the entire downtown of Flat Rock demonstrates a peak demand at 1 PM of just 597 parking spaces. (See table below).

Figure 100.1: Parking Demand Model – Downtown Flat Rock



The ULI standards for peak parking demand for specific uses demonstrate the degree to which the parking demand for downtown Flat Rock uses overlap. The model shows potential for a 41% reduction in required parking (from 1025 to 597 spaces). If appropriate agreements were in place between property owners, or if a special assessment district were to be created for collective parking within the downtown district, the 25% allowable reduction in required spaces under current zoning would create an effective surplus. Since 25% of 1025 currently required spaces is 256 spaces, the required parking for downtown might be reasonably adjusted to 769 (1025 – 256) spaces, in which case the current effective 935 existing spaces becomes a surplus of 166 spaces (935 – 769).

While it is possible to encourage agreements between property owners and create parking assessment districts, further investigation might reveal that some existing businesses do not rely at all on on-street parking. If so, more on-street parking could be applied toward the parking requirements of new developments. If existing sites provide a substantial amount of their own parking requirement on-site, available on-street parking could be assigned to fulfill the parking requirement for new developments.

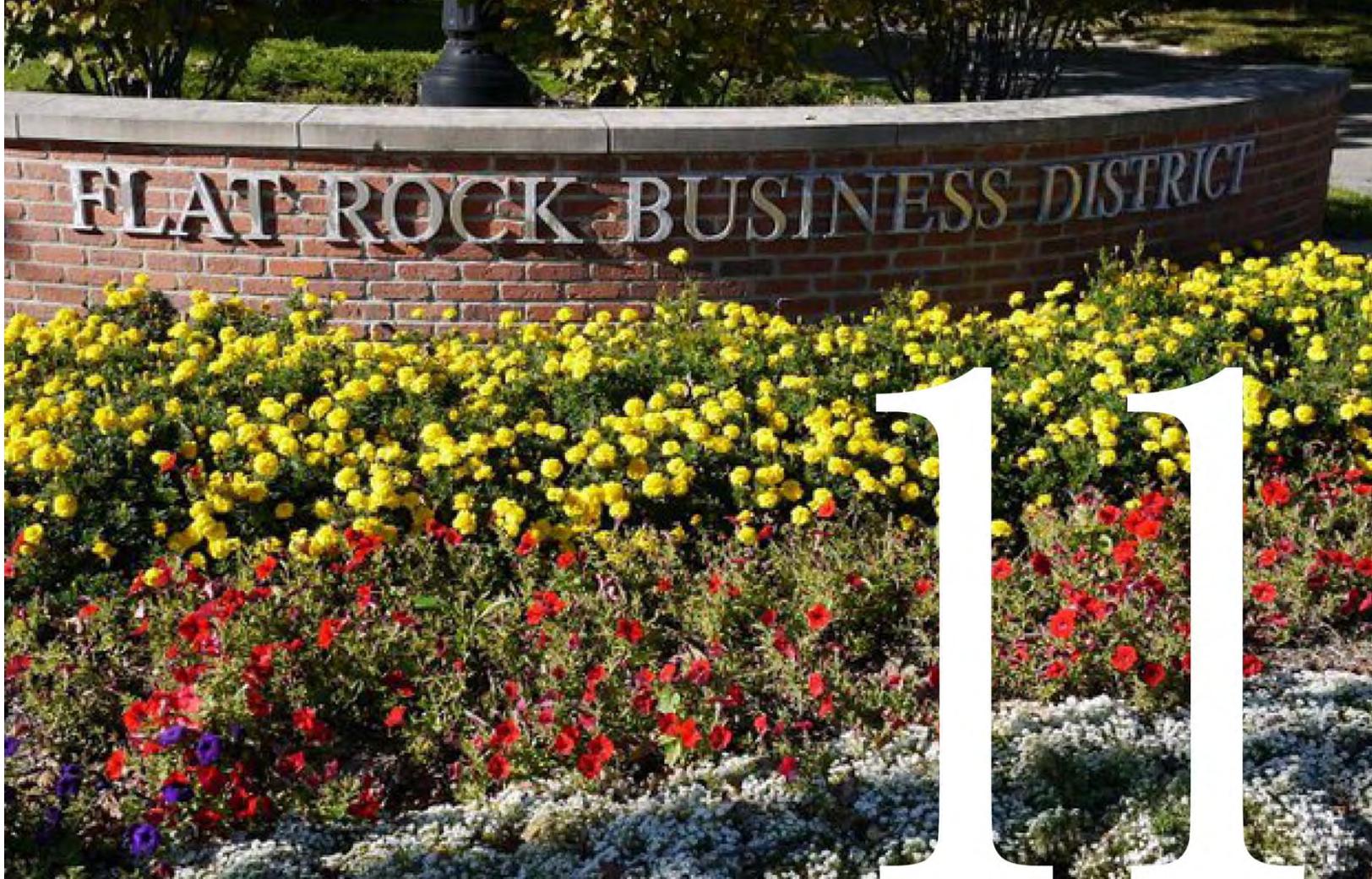
Parking Requirements for Additional Uses

In response to the stated Master Plan goal of “promoting mixed-use retail within walking distance of neighborhoods”, construction of such corresponding building types and their site plans within the downtown area would result in a requirement of approximately 297 additional parking spaces (see Exhibit B and the table provided below).

Table 100.2: Downtown Flat Rock Parking Requirements for Additional Users

Land Use	Area / Units	Unit of Measure	Parking Requirement	Parking Spaces Required
Commercial / Retail	8,146	Per sq. ft.	1 per 150 sq. ft.	55
Restaurant	8,442	Per sq. ft.	1 per 75 sq. ft.	113
Office	6,030	Per sq. ft.	3.2 per 1,000 sq. ft.	20
Multiple Family / Senior Housing	109	Per unit	1 per unit	109
TOTAL				297

Additionally, the site plans in Exhibit B collectively provide approximately 109 parking spaces on-site. This leaves a peak demand for additional parking spaces elsewhere downtown of 188 spaces. The effective 166 parking space surplus combined with larger downtown businesses not relying on on-street parking make it reasonable to conclude that the mixed-use development encouraged by this plan (Exhibit B) can be designed to accommodate parking requirements.



Implementation

This chapter of the Master Plan presents tools and techniques that citizens, community leaders, and City staff can use to implement the land use plan. These implementation measures are workable if there are people in the community with vision and tenacity who are willing to invest the time and effort required to make them work. Community improvement requires a compelling vision, persistence, the flexibility to responding to changing needs, opportunities, circumstances, and an ability to achieve consensus.

The tools and techniques identified in this chapter are capable of being implemented under current enabling legislation. Legislation has been proposed in recent years that would give communities additional tools to implement land use recommendations, such as transfer of development rights, regional impact coordination, impact fees, and tax incentives. Inasmuch as adoption of any such new legislation is uncertain, this chapter focuses on the tools that are available under current law.

Public Information and Education

The success of the Master Plan depends to a great extent on efforts to inform and educate citizens about the plan and the need for regulatory measures to implement the plan. Successful implementation requires the support and active participation of residents, property owners, and business owners. A thoughtfully prepared public education program is needed to create a sense of ownership by City residents.

For example, citizens should be made aware of the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas within the City such as groundwater recharge areas, floodplains, and unique open space areas. They must be informed about voluntary and regulatory methods of assuring protection of these areas. Efforts should be made to identify the benefits to be achieved from new regulations. Individual developments should be reviewed not only on site design issues but also on how regional resources (such as natural habitats, migration areas, water recharges areas, greenways, etc.) may be impacted.

Condensed Brochure

The City can help resolve this situation by producing a more reader-friendly form of the Master Plan. Most individuals will not take the time to read a multiple page document. However, a small brochure with reduced versions of the Future Land Use map combined with condensed versions of the Goals and Objectives and Implementation sections would make an attractive alternative. These brochures could be distributed to individuals at City Hall, given to realtors for new and prospective residents, or even mailed to residents and businesses in Flat Rock.

Design Standards Manual

One component in the City's information/education program should be the preparation of a design standards manual for distribution to developers. The purpose of the manual is to describe the type of development desired in the City and the types of natural features and visual resources the City would like to protect, even as development occurs. The benefit of a design standards manual is that it can be used to communicate concepts and ideas that are not appropriate for the Zoning Ordinance. Design issues typically included in such a manual include architecture, building orientation, parking and circulation, landscaping, utilities, lighting, signs, and access management.

The Planning Commission and City Council should be actively involved in maintaining the Master Plan. The plan should be a dynamic and living document that is continually reviewed and updated. An annual, joint meeting between the Commission and Council should be held to review the plan and any amendments that may have become necessary. This will help ensure that the plan is not forgotten and that its strategies and recommendations are implemented. As of January 9, 2002, PA 285, as amended, "the Municipal Planning Act" requires communities to do the following: *"At least every 5 years after adoption of the plan, the Planning Commission shall review the plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the plan or adopt a new plan."* These steps will not only help keep the public aware of the plan, but they will also make sure it does more than "sit on a shelf and collect dust."

Public Policy and Administrative Actions

Cooperation between Units of Government

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. For example, road improvements will affect quality of life, but the Wayne County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, and SEMCOG make decisions regarding some City roads. Clearly, these other agencies must be aware of the City's land use planning objectives. The Municipal Planning Act now requires a mandatory review period of Master Plan Amendments by adjacent communities, regional, and county Planning Commissions, and registered public utility and railroad companies.

Development Impact Analysis

Impact analysis is a policy tool that is intended to describe the probable outcome of a proposed development project. Typically, an impact analysis involves the identification, quantification, and evaluation of environmental, economic, social, physical, and other impacts resulting from the development. An impact analysis often will also identify measures that can be taken to alleviate the impacts. For example, a traffic impact analysis would typically identify new signalization, changes in road geometrics, and other measures that might be necessary to accommodate the traffic generated by a proposed development.

An impact analysis is most effective if the City establishes explicit guidelines and then participates with developers in completing the impact analyses. The guidelines should identify appropriate sources of information, formulated to be used in calculating impact, and reasonable assumptions to be used in the analysis. The City can assist by creating and maintaining databases (traffic, housing, commerce, etc.) deemed necessary to complete the impact analysis.

The benefit of impact analysis is not just in identifying mitigation measures which would gain from developer participation, but also in identifying future public service capacity problems. Impact analysis identifies the types of development of features that generate the least impact, and by providing information to the City that can be used to study and evaluate development over time.

Prior to making impact analysis a requirement, the City must first identify the types of impacts it wishes to evaluate, and it must establish appropriate guidelines for analyzing each impact. Then, the City must determine when an impact analysis is warranted. The need for an impact analysis might be based on the size of the development (proposed number of dwelling units, floor area of non-residential uses), its location (in or near an environmentally sensitive area, on a high-traveled road), or the type of development. One approach might be to conceptually define a "development of City-wide impact" for which development impact analysis would be required.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Fiscal impact analysis is a special type of impact analysis that involves the projection of direct, current, public costs and revenues associated with a proposed development. It involves a description and quantification of the public costs (police, fire, public works, transportation, and educational facilities) that come about as a result of development, as well as the revenues generated from property taxes, user charges, intergovernmental transfers, and other fees.

As with other types of impact analysis, a fiscal impact analysis is most effective if the City establishes explicit guidelines and then participates with the developer in completing the fiscal impact analysis. The guidelines should identify the appropriate method (average-costing, marginal-costing, or econometric), sources of base data, and appropriate demographic multipliers.

Fiscal impact analysis is one of several other types of analyses that the City could complete in the course of reviewing a proposed development. Consequently, the results of a fiscal impact analysis should be just one part of development review and should not be the sole basis for approval or disapproval of a particular land use.

Establishing Priorities

The Master Plan contains a multitude of recommendations, and there may be insufficient staff or volunteer support to implement all of the recommendations in a carefully planned, deliberate manner. Consequently, a process for establishing priorities must be established as soon as the plan is adopted. Participants involved in setting priorities should include City department heads and appropriate staff, the Planning Commission, and other City officials who should be involved in implementation of the plan.

The Planning Commission can help establish infrastructure and physical improvement priorities through the utilization of the Capital Improvement Program process. Further, during times when the Commission does not have development business to review, the Master Plan should be consulted to develop a work plan. For example, one of the recommendations of this plan is to encourage further commercial development near and in support of the Meijer store. The Planning Commission can make it a point of business to review the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that permitted uses and dimensional standards are not an impediment to desirable commercial development in that area.

Other Flat Rock committees and groups should consult the Master Plan for guidance, as well. The DDA, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works are examples of groups within the City that can take inspiration to develop plans in support of a common vision for Flat Rock.

Land Use Controls

Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Control Ordinance outlines the procedures and standards used by the City in exercising its authority to review and approve the proposed subdivisions, pursuant to the Subdivision Control Act (Michigan Public Act 288 of 1967). Subdivision control ordinances typically require the appropriate designs of lots and blocks, subdivision access, and such necessary internal improvements as streets and drainage, and water and sewer facilities.

The Subdivision Control Act places restrictions on a municipality's power to approve or reject plats, indicating that a rejection may be based on any requirement other than those included in Section 105 of the Act. Nevertheless, many legal experts believe that the Act gives municipalities much greater authority than they have typically exercised. Flat Rock's Subdivision Control Ordinance should be thoroughly reviewed and revised to exercise the City's full scope of authority in regulating subdivision design, environmental impacts, relationship to adjacent uses, and impact on level of public services.

Zoning Regulations

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by the City to implement the Master Plan. According to Section 203 (1) of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006), "The zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare." Two categories of revisions to the Zoning Ordinance are necessary to achieve many of the recommendations set forth in the Master Plan, including revisions dealing with Conventional Zoning Procedures and Innovative Zoning Techniques.

Conventional Zoning Procedures

Rezoning to Implement the Master Plan

The land use classifications on the Future Land Use map provide the basis for evaluating future rezoning requests. Zoning actions that are consistent with the Future Land Use map usually receive deferential and favorable judicial review if challenged. The Master Plan should be the principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests.

Planned Development

Planned development involves the use of special zoning requirements and review procedures that provide design and regulatory flexibility, so as to encourage innovation in land use planning and design. Planned developments should achieve a higher quality of development than might otherwise be possible. Continued use of planned developments is recommended to achieve development in accordance with the goals and objectives of this plan. Planned development can be used as a regulatory tool to permit open space zoning or cluster development, preservation of natural features, and to facilitate mixed use redevelopment in the downtown area.

Performance Standards

Rather than simply regulate development on the basis of dimensional standards, many communities are establishing performance standards to regulate development based on the permissible effects or impacts of a proposed use. Performance standards should be used to supplement conventional zoning standards for the purposes of regulating noise, dust, vibration, odor, glare and heat, safety hazards, and environmental impacts, such as air and water pollution. The complexity of the performance standards should be based in part on the capacity of City staff to administer the testing and measurement of the standards.

Performance standards can be particularly useful in achieving environmental and resource protection goals. If based on a strong body of research, standards can be developed that relate to critical environmental areas (such as floodplains, wetlands, lakes, woodlands, groundwater recharge areas, and unique wildlife habitats), and natural resource areas (such as forest lands). The City's desire to protect and utilize the Huron River floodplain areas for recreation may require the development of performance standards to adequately support these desired uses.

Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning allows a developer to exceed the dimensional or density limitations in the Zoning Ordinance if the developer agrees to fulfill conditions specified in the Ordinance. Incentive zoning should be considered to promote innovative land planning techniques identified in the Master Plan. For example, a possible increase in density can be used as an incentive for developments that implement open space zoning standards.

Setback and Other Standards

It is important to review the required setbacks and other dimensional standards to be certain that they promote the desired type of development and respect historical setbacks and architectural scale. For example, if side or rear parking is preferred, then it may be necessary to mandate a build-to line in the Central Business District that is close to the front lot line.

Innovative Zoning Techniques

Overlay Zoning

Overlay zoning allows the City to impose a new set of regulations on a special area within an existing zoning district. In an area where overlay zoning is established, the property is placed simultaneously in two zones, and the property may be developed only under the applicable conditions and requirements of both zones. Thus, the overlay district regulations supplement the regulations of the underlying zoning district. Overlay zoning has been used in other communities to address special conditions and features, such as historic areas, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas, without disrupting the underlying zoning plan.

Open Space (Cluster) Zoning

Open space zoning is an alternative to conventional zoning that is intended to promote preservation of small town character and protection of natural habitats. The search for an alternative to conventional zoning came with the realization that conventional zoning often results in residential sprawl that consumes large amounts of land and divides open spaces into fragments that are not conducive to water recharge areas, wildlife habitat, large wood lots, or other natural open space uses.

Open space zoning (also known as cluster zoning) provides for dwellings grouped together on part of the parcel so that the remainder can be preserved as open space. The goal is to devise better uses of undeveloped property than what results from proceeding on a lot-by-lot basis.

Zoning Ordinance review procedures must be revised to be no more difficult for open space developments than for conventional subdivisions. In fact, the City should consider making open space development mandatory where it is feasible to contribute to the open space network. The City should strive to require new subdivisions and traditional neighborhoods to contain open spaces that are connected to and accessible from adjoining neighborhoods.

Development Agreement

Although there is no explicit legislative authority for such agreements, many Michigan communities have used development agreements to achieve a mutual understanding between the developer and City concerning the conditions under which development can occur. Development agreements are often negotiated as part of a planned development approval, allowing the community and developer to address complex issues that cannot be adequately addressed on a typical site plan. Development agreements might prove useful to achieve desired developments, especially if or when a mixed use development is proposed.

Conditional Zoning

An owner of land may voluntarily offer in writing, and the City may approve, certain use and development of the land as a condition to a rezoning of the land or an amendment to a zoning map. In approving the conditions, the City may establish a time period during which the conditions apply to the land. If the conditions are not satisfied within the time period specified, then the land shall revert to its former zoning classification. The city cannot add to or alter the conditions approved under the time period specified. However, the time period may be extended upon the application of the landowner and approval by the City. Finally, the City cannot require a landowner to offer conditions as requirement for rezoning.

Public Facility Improvements

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Establishment of a Traditional Neighborhood Development Boundary is proposed as one of the primary methods to manage growth in a manner that achieves efficient use of urban and governmental services. Within the TND the City would incorporate TND characteristics, such as pedestrian scale architecture, front porches, pedestrian accessibility, and garages located to the rear of the home.

Capital Improvements Plan

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), as amended, requires that for municipalities that adopt a Master Plan, a Capital Improvement Program be developed annually to prioritize public improvements that can or should be undertaken in the six (6) years after the plan is submitted. The program should set the City's priorities for infrastructure improvements, utility upgrades, development and improvement of community facilities, and the purchase of major pieces of equipment. The program should be prepared and adopted by both the Planning Commission and City Council and then reviewed annually.

Capital programming influences land development decisions. By properly coordinating utility extensions and other capital improvements with its planning and growth management program, the City can control the direction and pace of development. Capital programming should be viewed as more than just a ministerial act. Using the Master Plan to delineate the location and type of development desired, and the Capital Improvements Plan to schedule the provision of services, the City can inform developers when development of a particular parcel will be encouraged and then what type of development will be allowed.

The need for several important capital improvements has been identified in this Master Plan. These include:

- Road development.
- A long-term plan for full-time fire protection service is needed, particularly if new industrial and commercial developments are constructed.
- A road improvement plan has been prepared to address the congestion problems that have been identified.
- The Capital Improvements Plan must identify feasible funding options for each improvement, such as developer financing, special assessments, grants, loans, and/or a dedicated millage.

City Identity

It is recommended that the City, in cooperation with property owners and stakeholders, work toward developing a distinct image and identity for the City. A task force consisting of design professionals, such as architects and planners, residents, and City officials should be formed for the purpose of defining the appropriate City image and identifying site and building standards that convey the image.

Traditional Neighborhood Development Principles

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) principles mirror the design of American cities from colonial times to pre-World War II. Communities that were developed prior to WW-II are still desirable as demonstrated in the recent trend of people moving back to smaller communities. TND principals are being rediscovered, and they are in many places being incorporated in new developments or redevelopments to achieve the following goals:

1. Minimize the dependence on the automobile to reduce traffic and congestion.
2. Promote a mix of uses that are within walking distance from each neighborhood; including schools, parks, stores, and offices, to provide pedestrian access to desired goods and services.
3. Provide a wide range of housing types and employment opportunities that form a complete and desirable community for all age groups and economic classes.
4. Define public spaces, encourage the public to walk, meet each other and watch over each other's property.
5. Design well-placed civic buildings to promote community pride and provide areas for meaningful assembly.

To achieve the previous listed goals, the following design guidelines should be followed and made part of requirements in the Zoning Ordinance:

Design Guidelines

General

- All lots shall share a common frontage that faces a street or square.
- All buildings shall have their openings facing the street.
- All uses shall be conducted within an enclosed building, with the exception of outdoor seating.
- No building shall be located more than 50 feet from the street centerline.
- Similar land uses shall face across streets; dissimilar uses may abut at rear lot lines.
- Land uses considered slightly more or slightly less intense may share common site lot lines.
- All streets, alleys, and sidewalks shall connect with other streets; cul-de-sacs and T-turnarounds should be discouraged or permitted on a temporary basis only.
- A continuous network of alleys shall run behind all building lots in the CBD.
- Parking lots shall be developed to the rear or sides of the building.
- Parking lots shall be accessible via a network of alleys.

Neighborhoods

- Each neighborhood shall have a gathering space such as a school, park, or open space.
- A small playground (tot-lot) shall be located within walking distance of every dwelling.
- Elementary schools should be located so that every child can walk to school.
- Local streets should be narrow and curvilinear to slow traffic.
- Permit a variety of housing types within the neighborhood.
- Streets shall be lined and shaded with street trees.
- Garage doors should not front the street.
- A minimum of 25% of all houses shall have front porches that can encroach in the front yard setback.
- The center of the neighborhood should be within a five-minute walk from all buildings located in the neighborhood.
- Each dwelling unit should display unique architecture and landscaping.
- Shops and offices shall be located on the edge of the neighborhood.

Commercial

- Commercial lots in the neighborhood shall have a maximum width of 50 feet and no less than 25 feet.
- Store front entries shall face a street and be at grade to meet ADA requirements.
- All buildings shall be at least two stories (20 feet) in height, and features shall be incorporated into the building design.
- The façade shall cover at least 70% of the front lot line.
- The unbuilt portion of the front lot line shall be covered by ornamental fencing, landscaping, or a low (30-inch) brick screening wall.

Civic

- Prominent sites shall be reserved for civic buildings.
- Civic buildings shall be at least two stories in height; zoning district height restrictions shall not apply to civic buildings.
- More prominent, monumental buildings and structures that employ enhanced height, massing, distinctive architectural treatments, or other distinguishing features shall generally occupy focal points or points of visual termination.
- More than one building may be permitted per lot, provided that the buildings relate to one another both visually and functionally. Multiple buildings should front one another or be organized around courtyards that encourage pedestrian activity and social interaction.
- Civic buildings shall exhibit formal architectural features. As a general rule, civic buildings shall have detailed entrance features, be constructed of high quality building materials, avoid long monotonous walls without windows, and avoid long, uninterrupted roof lines.

Commercial Corridor Enhancement

Plans should be continually reviewed to ensure that the aesthetics and appearance of crucial commercial corridors are always improving. A corridor improvement plan should be developed to revise and rehabilitate the Telegraph Road commercial corridor and to promote appropriate and high-quality development along Gibraltar Road. This plan should include the proposed methods, designs, and financing for improving the streetscape, landscaping, and utilities along these thoroughfares. Items that should be addressed include: Central Business District boundaries, additional landscaping and street trees, decorative lighting and street fixtures, underground conduits for utilities, on-street parking and other traffic calming measures, and traffic circulation and access management.

The work that is undertaken by the DDA should address many of these issues, and projects like the development of design standards for the CBD will go a long way towards ensuring that the DDA vision is implemented. The Planning Commission should be working cooperatively with the DDA for input on any site plan and development application that deals with the commercial core of the City.

Entrances and Gateways

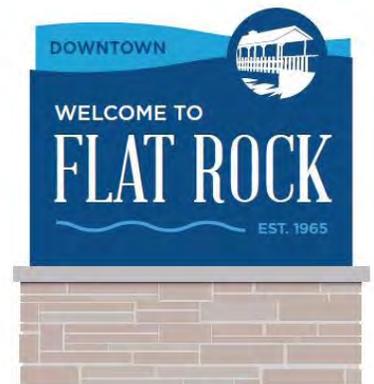
Along with the commercial corridors, attention must be paid to the various entrance points into Flat Rock. The entranceways offer the first impression of Flat Rock to visitors, and also set the tone for the appearance of the rest of the City. The City installed several gateway signs at most of the entrances into the City. A maintenance plan to maintain these entranceways could be included within the corridor improvement plan.

Flat Rock's recently adopted Wayfinding Plan will help demarcate the entranceways and important locations throughout the City, and enhance their effectiveness through the installation of signage throughout the area.

The past addition of the historic clock at Aspen Street and Gibraltar Road serves as an entrance into the High School, Community Fields, Library, and Historic Village Complex.

Extend Updated Streetscape

Extending the streetscape from existing locations will further improve the appearance of Flat Rock's most visible commercial corridor along Telegraph Road. The streetscape improvements have already been implemented south to the bridge near Will Carleton, and should continue northbound when funding is available. This project would coordinate nicely with the MSU project for improvement of the railroad underpass along Telegraph Road. At the same time, the DDA has implemented a proactive program of streetscape improvements within the CBD, including façade improvement grants for interested businesses.



Economic Development and Redevelopment Mechanisms

Redevelopment with Quality Design

Redevelopment of the City's vacant commercial sites on Gibraltar and Telegraph Roads is necessary to turn Flat Rock into a retail destination. However, these sites should be redeveloped in a proper manner that ensures they will be aesthetically pleasing and not injurious to surrounding properties and neighborhoods. Design guidelines and standards should be applied to all new commercial developments as well as expansions and renovations.

Downtown Design

The Downtown area must also be redeveloped if Flat Rock is to become a greater destination point. Care must be taken to maintain Flat Rock's unique Downtown character while simultaneously promoting high-quality, mixed-use redevelopment. A significant step toward this effort would be to evaluate and redraw, if necessary, the boundaries of the Central Business District that better reflect the area that actually functions or has potential to function as a viable Central Business District. Overlay zoning standards may be needed to protect Flat Rock's traditional downtown area. Such amendments can ensure sites are redeveloped in the following manner: buildings oriented with main entrances toward Telegraph Road; building facades that are historically accurate and brought to the edge of the sidewalk; an emphasis on pedestrian circulation and not automobile circulation; adequate landscaping and streetscape features; encouragement of mixed uses, especially residential uses on second floors or in adjoining areas; and, adequate, but not overly provided, parking. An alternative method of achieving the same results would be the use of a planned unit development with appropriate design guidelines.

Whatever method is chosen, a Downtown Development Strategic Plan should be developed as called for in the DDA's Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan. All concerned parties should participate, including the City Council, DDA, Planning Commission, and City staff. Once developed, such a plan should be strictly followed.

Land Acquisition

Land acquisition is an important supplement to land use regulations as a means of managing growth and protecting natural resources. Land acquisition can be used to control the use of a specific acquired parcel, or it can be used to influence the general growth of the City. Local land acquisition programs are generally funded either by local property taxes, such as a dedicated millage or general fund revenues, or by grant programs. For example, the City could use grant programs sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to acquire park land and open space throughout the City, especially along the Huron River. The City may also consider purchasing a parcel along Hall Road to develop an industrial district retention pond to encourage light industrial development.

There are several approaches to acquiring interest in land to advance the goals of the Master Plan. Generally, the City can take direct action to acquire property interest or it can rely on private voluntary land protection efforts.

Direct Action by the City

If the City takes direct action, it can acquire property in fee simple or it can acquire a partial interest through acquisition of easements. Fee simple acquisition provides the greatest level of control over the use of a parcel, but it also is the most expensive method of acquisition. In addition to the acquisition costs, fee simple acquisition removes the property from the tax rolls, resulting in a decrease in property tax revenue.

Easements are distinct property rights that may be sold separately from other rights to the City. Easements are effective for preserving sensitive lands, providing public access along rivers or greenways, and allowing property owners to obtain income, estate, and property tax benefits for land stewardship while they continue to live on their land.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Michigan Public Act 451 of 1994) addresses the issues of conservation easements in two parts of the Act. Part 21, Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement, allows for conservation easements and historic preservation easements. A conservation easement provides limitation on the use of land or body of water, or requires or prohibits certain acts on the land or body of water in order to maintain the similar use or condition. A historic preservation easement provides a limitation on the use of a structure or site that is listed as a national historic landmark. Both easements are granted to a governmental entity, charitable or educational association, corporation, trust, other legal entity. Part 361, Farmland and Open Space Preservation, provides for agricultural conservation easements in which the land owner relinquishes to the public his/her development rights and makes a covenant running with land to prevent future development.

Private Voluntary Land Protection Efforts

Instead of taking direct action, the City can encourage and rely on private voluntary land protection efforts. The term “voluntary” has two meanings in this context:

- Property owners can voluntarily donate land or easements in the interest of conserving natural resources or natural features.
- Private land trusts can be voluntarily established to make use of a variety of land acquisition and conservation techniques to facilitate natural resource protection.
- Other than acquisition at full market value, private tools available to preserve land include:
 - Donation of land or bargain sale – acquisition at below full market value.
 - Options to buy – often used to secure a parcel of land while funding is being obtained.
 - Rights-of-first-refusal – used to tie up a parcel without having to purchase it immediately.
 - Leases – temporary control without the expense of acquisition.
 - Pre-acquisition by a land trust – the land trust serves as the intermediary for the public agency, such as the City.
 - Conservation investment – a real estate syndication for the purpose of resource protection.

Land Conservancy Activities Involving the Government

Private Donations of Land to the Government

Landowners are sometimes willing to simply donate their land to the City for open space or natural area preservation purposes. A donation is executed when the entire parcel or a portion is deeded to a government agency for conservation purposes. The landowner has the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and also may obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The City obtains the benefit of preserving the land.

Private Donations of Conservation Easements to the Government

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate a conservation easement on a parcel of land, which is a voluntary agreement used to transfer certain rights concerning the use of the land to a government agency or legal entity. The conservation easement results in permanent restrictions that run with the land. The landowner might retain the right to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been transferred to the government to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would have the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and may also obtain some benefits on income

taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The City obtains the benefit of preserving the land, and avoids some of the costs of maintaining the property.

Private Donation of Land to the Government, with Right to Use the Land Until the Donor's Death

A landowner sometimes wants to retain full title to a parcel of land and be able to continue to use it, until his or her death, but wishes to have the land transferred to the government at that time (or some other specified time). The landowner can thereby gain some tax benefits, but continue to use the land until his or her death.

Government Purchase of Conservation Easements

A landowner may not be willing to donate a conservation easement but may be willing to sell such an easement to the government. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been sold to the government to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would receive some payment for the easement, and may obtain some benefits on estate taxes and property taxes. This alternative would cost the City some revenue, but the cost would be less than the purchase of all the rights to the land.

Government Leasing of Land

A landowner may not be willing to lose permanent title to a parcel of land, but may be willing to lease it to the government for public uses for a specified period of time.

Placement of Land Under the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Michigan Public Act 451 of 1994)

Private citizens and local government can protect land for specified periods of time by utilizing this State law. The landowner can thereby reduce the property taxes on the land, and the government gains the benefit of maintaining the land as open space.

Land Conservancy Activities Involving a Private Conservancy Organization

Most of the transactions between a landowner and the government can also occur between the landowner and a private land conservancy organization such as The Nature Conservancy, the American Farmland Trust, and the Trust for Public Land. The conservancy organization would then either manage the land itself or convey it, at some future date, to a government agency when public funds become available.

Private Donations of Land to a Conservancy Organization

Landowners are sometimes willing to simply donate their land to a conservancy organization for open space or natural area preservation purposes. A donation is executed when the entire parcel or a portion is deeded to a conservancy or nonprofit organization for conservation purposes. The landowner has the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and also may obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The conservancy organization obtains the benefit of preserving the land.

Private Donations of Conservation Easements to a Conservancy Organization

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate a conservation easement on a parcel of land, which is a voluntary agreement used to transfer certain rights concerning the use of the land to a conservancy or nonprofit organization. The conservation easement results in permanent restrictions that run with the land. The landowner might retain the right to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been transferred to the conservancy organization to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would have the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and may also obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The conservancy organization obtains the benefit of preserving the land, and avoids some of the costs of maintaining the property.

Private Donation of Land to a Conservancy Organization, with Right to Use the Land Until the Donor's Death

A landowner sometimes wants to retain full title to a parcel of land and be able to continue to use it, until his or her death, but wishes to have the land transferred to a conservancy organization at that time (or some other specified time). The landowner can thereby gain some tax benefits, but continue to use the land until his or her death.

Conservancy Organization Purchase of Conservation Easements

A landowner may not be willing to donate a conservation easement but may be willing to sell such an easement to a conservancy organization. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been sold to the conservancy organization to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would receive some payment for the easement, and may obtain some benefits on estate taxes and property taxes.

Certain recommendations in the Master Plan can be best accomplished using a targeted approach, through creation of special districts. Special purpose districts that may be applicable in Flat Rock include the following:

Corridor Improvement Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 280 of 2005)

The Corridor Improvement Authority Act provides for the establishment of a corridor improvement authority to promote the economic growth of districts within the City. The authority would have an ability to correct and prevent deterioration in business districts, encourage historic preservation, authorize acquisition and disposal of property, create and implement development plans and development areas in the districts, to levy and collect taxes, issue bonds, and authorize the use of tax increment financing.

Downtown Development Authority DDA Act (Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975)

The Downtown Development Authority Act provides for the establishment of a downtown development authority (DDA) in the City's business district, upon finding by the City Council that the DDA is necessary "to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation where possible in its business district, to eliminate the causes of deterioration, and to promote economic growth."

The creation of a DDA has the benefit of bringing business people and City officials together in a cooperative setting to address problems in the business district. The Act also provides a means of financing the DDA's activities, including a maximum two-mill property tax within the district, tax increment financing, and issuance of bonds. In other communities, DDA's have undertaken streetscape and road improvements, utility replacement, acquisition and demolition of blighted buildings, parking lot construction, and other improvement activities.

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Financing Act (MI Publication 381 of 1996)

The act provides municipalities the power to create a brownfield redevelopment authority to use tax increment financing for environmental remediation of brownfield sites to promote revitalization, redevelopment, and reuse of certain property (if Core Community).

Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities have the powers and duties to permit the issuance of bonds and other evidences of indebtedness by an authority, to authorize the acquisition and disposal of certain property, to authorize certain funds, to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain state officers and agencies and to authorize and permit the use of certain tax increment financing.

Historical Neighborhood Tax Increment Finance Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 530 of 2004)

The Historical Neighborhood Tax Increment Finance Authority Act provides for the establishment of a historical neighborhood tax increment finance authority to promote residential and economic growth. The authority would have an ability to correct and prevent deterioration in neighborhoods and certain other areas, authorize acquisition and disposal of property, create and implement development plans and development areas, issue bonds, and authorize the use of tax increment financing.

Local Development Financing Act (Michigan Public Act 281 of 1986)

The Local Development Financing Act provides for the establishment of a local development finance authority (LDFA) to undertake economic development activities, such as promoting manufacturing of goods or materials, agricultural processing, or high technology activity, to prevent conditions of unemployment and promote economic growth. A typical LDFA projects might involve the construction of roads and utilities deemed necessary for a specific manufacturing or high technology development project. LDFA activities are most frequently financed through tax increment financing or through issuance of revenue bonds that are retired using tax increment revenues.

Neighborhood Area Improvements Act (Michigan Public Act 208 of 1949)

The Neighborhood Area Improvements Act authorizes cities to designate neighborhood areas for the purpose of planning and carrying out local public improvements for the prevention of blight in such areas. The Act calls for preparation of neighborhood betterment plans by the Planning Commission. The Act also provides methods of financing improvements within the neighborhoods, including special assessment districts and issuance of neighborhood improvement bonds.

Technology Park Development Act (Michigan Public Act 385 of 1984)

The Technology Park Development Act provides for the establishment of technology park districts and to provide certain facilities located in these districts with tax exemptions. The district is to contain one or more of the following uses: Research and development; a high technology service such the providing of services including computer, information transfer, communication, distribution, processing, administrative, laboratory, experimental, developmental, technical, or testing services; a high technology service such as activities including the manufacture of goods or materials, the processing of goods or materials by physical or chemical change, computer related activities, communications, robotics, biological or pharmaceutical industrial activity, or technology oriented or emerging industrial or business activity not involving heavy manufacturing; and/or, a business activity that has its primary function of developing, improving, or creating new or existing products.

Financing Tools

Successful implementation of the Master Plan will depend on the ability of the City to secure necessary funding. Besides the general fund, the following sources of revenue are available to the City:

Bond Programs

Bonds are one of the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for specific community projects and may not be used for other purposes. The general public usually pays off these bonds with property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of public projects that generate revenues. These bonds are then retired using income generated by the project, such as water and sewer service charges.

Dedicated Millage

A property tax millage can be used to generate revenue for a specific purpose. Many communities have decided on a dedicated millage because voters are increasingly wary of approving millage increases for non-specified purposes. Voter approval is required before a millage is passed, subject to periodic renewal by resident vote. A community, for example, may initiate a special land acquisition fund that is supported by a one-quarter mill property tax. The land acquisition fund would be a useful tool to promote open space preservation in the City.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grants are available for park development and land acquisition for communities that have an approved recreation plan. Eligible projects include acquisition of land or rights in land for recreational uses or for protection of the land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty. Development of public outdoor recreation facilities is also eligible. Funds are provided through the sale of oil and mineral leases on State land. Local contributions equal to at least twenty-five (25) percent of the project cost are required. There is no minimum or maximum amount for land acquisition projects. The minimum allowable grant for development projects is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$500,000. The City has effectively used this program in the past to finance park land acquisition and development. The City may wish to seek MNRTF funding in the future for acquisition of land primarily for open space and natural resource preservation purposes.

Special Assessments

Special assessments are compulsory contributions collected from the owners of property benefited by specific public improvements (paving, drainage improvements, etc.) to defray the costs of such improvements. Special assessments are apportioned according to the assumed benefits to the property affected.

Tax Increment Financing

The Downtown Development Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975) and the Local Development Finance Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 281 of 1986) authorize tax increment financing. When a tax increment finance district is established, the state equalized value of all properties in the district is recorded. Every year thereafter, the property tax revenue generated by any increase in the total state equalized value is “captured” by the DDA or LDFA to finance the improvements set forth in a development plan. Often, revenue bonds are issued to finance improvements, and the tax increment revenues are used to repay bonds.

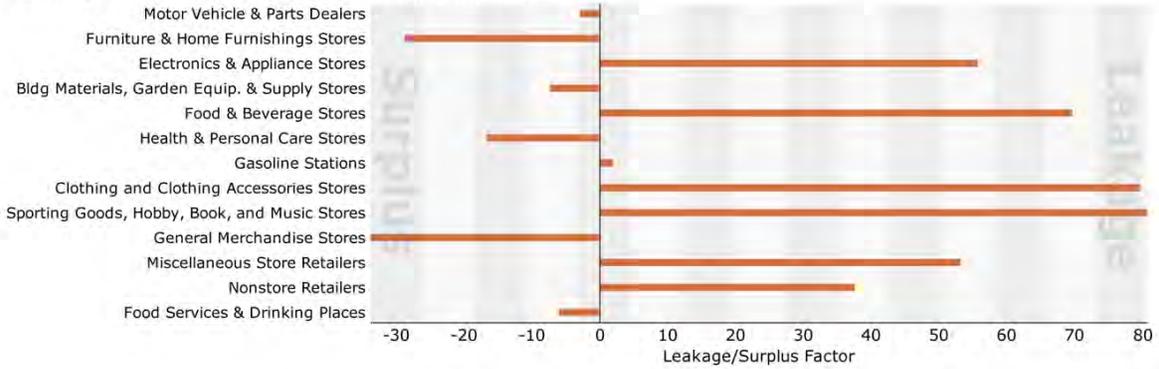
Appendix A: ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile

This analysis measures the balance between the supply and demand of a particular consumer market within the City of Flat Rock.

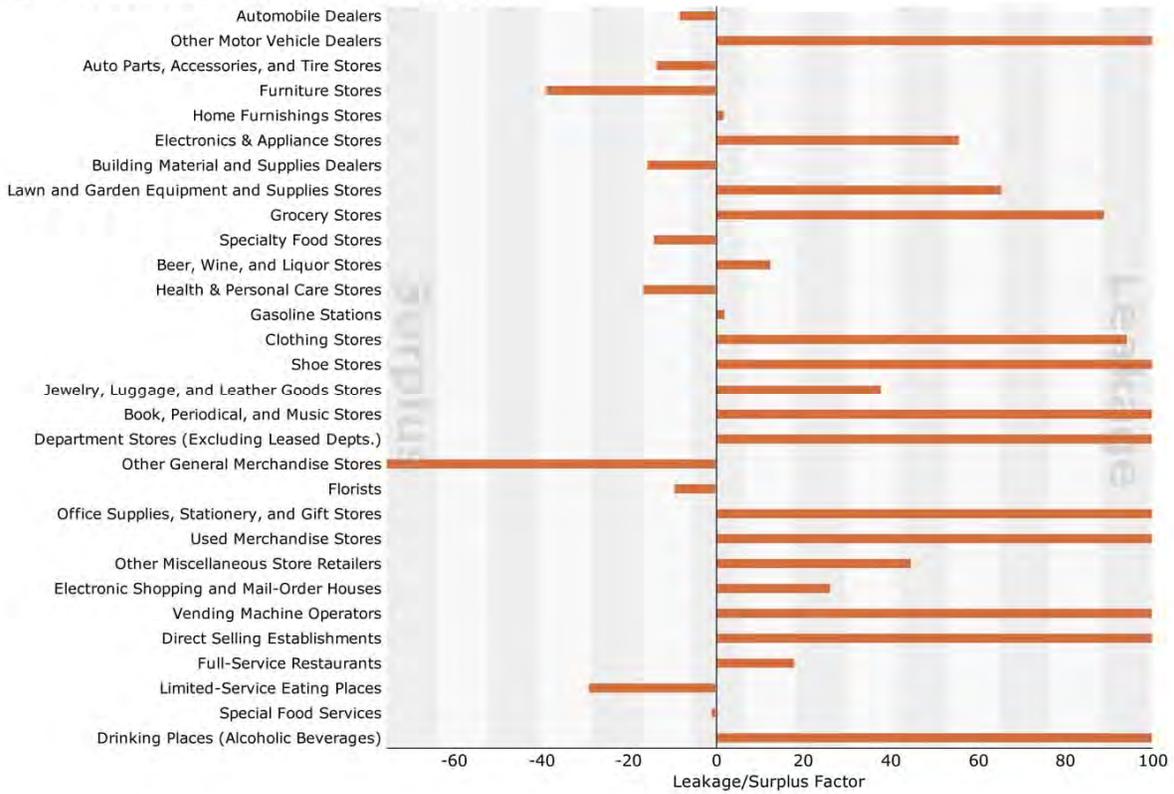
In a market segment that shows “Leakage,” retailers outside of Flat Rock are fulfilling the demand for that market; potential sales are “leaking” out of the City. Alternatively, a market that shows “Surplus” is a market segment in which the City is likely bringing in sales from outside of Flat Rock, in addition to fulfilling the City’s demand.



Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Subsector



Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Group



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Appendix B: Resolution of Adoption

Reserved for City Council Resolution.

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Carrie Leitner

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Project Planner
Project Planner
Project Planner
Urban Designer
Map Production
Senior Graphic Designer

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