

LIVABILITY

Chapter

1



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LIVABILITY

Livability is difficult to define because it encompasses so many other concepts and aspects of society. At its most fundamental level, livability seeks to define how a community is meeting the needs of the residents that live there.

In 2009, three federal agencies (the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U. S. Department of Transportation) formed the [Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#) to help communities improve access to affordable housing and transportation while protecting the environment. They are guided by six, core, livability principles:

- **Provide more transportation choices.** *Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.*
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** *Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.*
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** *Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.*
- **Support existing communities.** *Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.*
- **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** *Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.*

- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** *Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.*

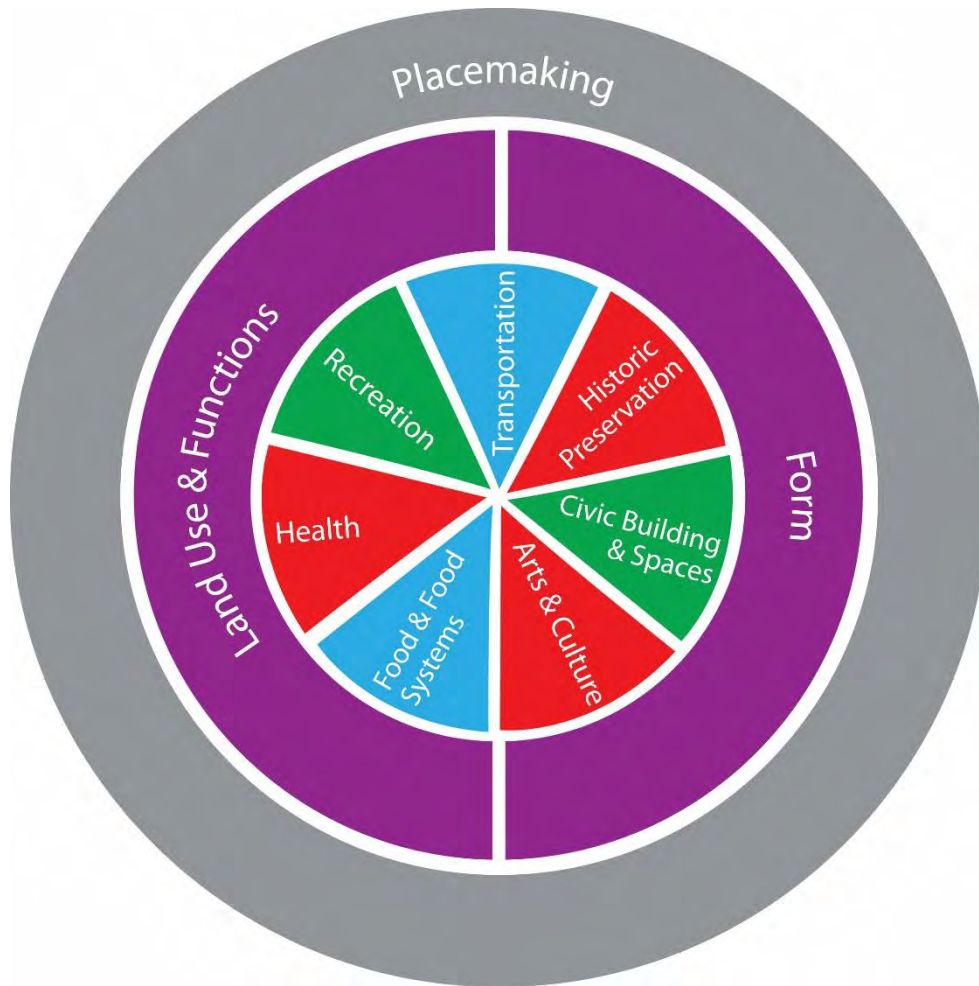
Indicators of livability in a community include education and lifelong learning; healthy lifestyles through health, nutrition, and recreation; responsible buying and consumption; a wide range of housing opportunities; promotion of diversity; mixed-use and transit-oriented development, which includes a mix of uses and walkable neighborhoods; safe and diverse modes of transportation; economic competitiveness; valuing existing communities; and coordination and leveraging federal policies and investment.

Based on these various concepts of Livability, in this Portfolio it is divided into 10 subcategories or subchapters, recognizing that overlap is inevitable.

1. Placemaking.
2. Land use and Functions.
3. Form.
4. Transportation.
5. Health.
6. Historic Preservation.
7. Civic Buildings and Spaces.
8. Arts & Culture.
9. Food & Food Systems.
10. Recreation.



As can be seen in the graphic on the opposite page, all of these components are interwoven into the concept of Livability with some being more overarching than others. But all are important for the daily living of community residents.



Graphic source: Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University.

GLOSSARY

Baby Boomers – The generation of Americans born between 1946–1965 and formerly the largest generation.

Corridor – Major roadways that traverse the transect and connect downtowns and nodes.

Food Innovation District – A geographic concentration of food-oriented business, services, and community activities that are supported locally through planning and economic development.

Food System – All activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption of food.

Millennial – The generation of Americans born between 1981–2000. It is the largest generation on record and 88% of them want to live in urban neighborhoods.

Node – Another hub of activity that is a relatively short distance from the center or downtown, where two or more major streets or transit lines intersect. Along a transect, there is likely only one larger center or downtown, but many smaller nodes.

Right-of-Way – The public property that is dedicated for roadways and accompanying uses and utilities, typically 66 feet wide.

Talented workers – People who work in knowledge industries, creative people, entrepreneurs of any age, and immigrants with advanced degrees. They tend to be highly mobile and seek active living environments with plenty of amenities, diverse lifestyle choices, and business and entrepreneurial opportunities.

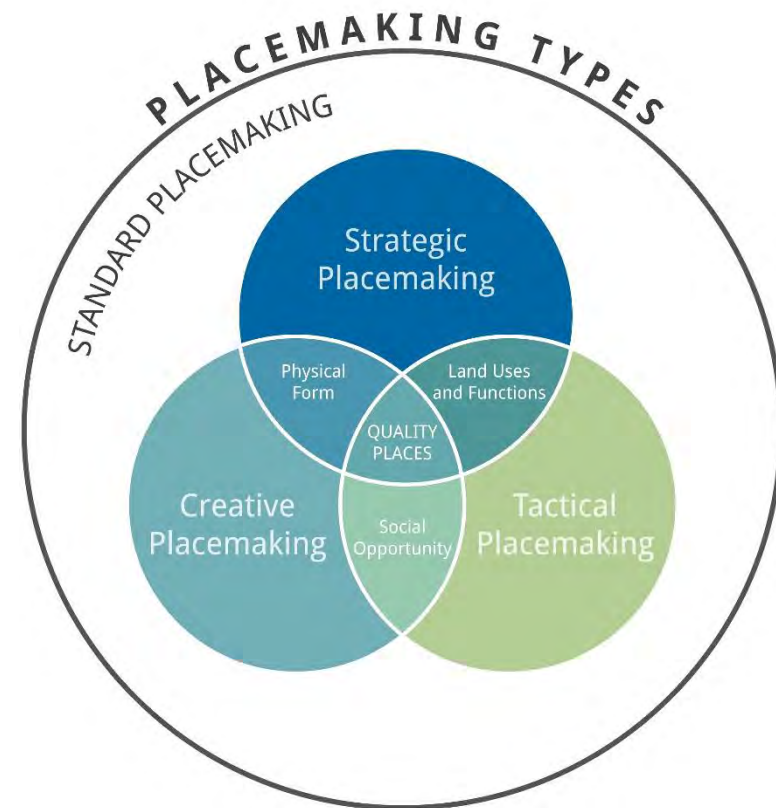
Transect – A progression through a sequence of natural and built environments of increasing density and complexity, from the rural hinterland to the urban core. Transportation, landscaping, buildings, setbacks, and all details of the human habitat vary across the transect.

Placemaking is the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, and learn. Placemaking is a process, it is a means to an end; the end is the creation of quality places. Quality places tend to be walkable, provide the opportunity for people to gather, are welcoming, have amenities such as places to sit and art or fountains to look at, and are surrounded by interesting buildings. However, over time, and because for many decades economic success used to be possible without creating quality places, we lost the drive to create them and our communities lost their unique identities. They became drab and uninteresting, especially compared to cities full of quality places in other parts of the nation and world.

Placemaking is supported by appropriate land use and function (see p. 1-17) and good form (see p. 1-53). There are four types of Placemaking: Standard, Strategic, Creative, and Tactical. Each type consists of projects and activities. Activities often overlap between the four types and sometimes are differentiated by scale alone. It is important to note that **all** Placemaking types will improve the quality of life, amenities, and social options within a community and depend on broad engagement of stakeholders to design projects and activities.

- *Standard Placemaking* creates quality places where people want to live, work, play, and learn.
- *Strategic Placemaking* creates quality places that uniquely attract talented workers, but will also be enjoyed by many others in the community.
- *Creative Placemaking* animates public spaces through arts, culture, and creative experiences.
- *Tactical Placemaking* is short-term, low investment activities to attract people to a place and give it more “life.”

The graphic below shows how the elements of land use, form, and social opportunity relate to each of the types of placemaking. On the facing page is an illustration depicting some of the characteristics that are associated with quality places, and which can be created or activated by good Placemaking.



Graphic source (this page): Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University.

Image source (opposite page): Dover Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced by permission. Overlay illustration by Na Li, Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University.



Standard Placemaking Projects

Standard Placemaking is the process of creating Quality Places where people want to live, work, play, and learn. It requires engaging and empowering people to participate in the process and embraces a wide range of projects and activities. These projects and activities are pursued by the public, nonprofit, and private sectors on a gradual or systematic basis, over a short or long period of time. Standard Placemaking projects use local, private, state, or federal funds.

The Project for Public Spaces, a leading Placemaking advocate, defines Standard Placemaking as:

“Both an overarching idea and a hands-on tool for improving a neighborhood, city, or region. It has the potential to be one of the most transformative ideas of this century. Placemaking is the process through which we collectively shape our public realm to maximize shared value. Rooted in community-based participation, Placemaking involves the planning, design, management, and programming of public spaces.”

The benefit of Standard Placemaking is more Quality Places with quality activities and a strong *sense of place*. These Quality Places are characterized by vitality, vibrancy, activity, and livable public spaces, with communities and regions that residents, businesses, and visitors care deeply about.

Types of Standard Placemaking projects include preservation of important historic structures; downtown façade improvements; neighborhood-based projects such as residential rehabilitations, residential infill, small-scale, multi-use projects, and park improvements; street furniture, street landscaping, bike paths, and introduction of green space in downtown.





This former gas station on Michigan Avenue in Lansing changed ownership frequently. On the corner of Marshall Street and along the main corridor bus route, it offered a prime opportunity for redevelopment.

Source: *The Gillespie Company, LLC.*

A road diet on Michigan Avenue allowed for bike lanes through East Lansing.

Source: *Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.*



After redevelopment, the same parcel now houses a mixed-use development with retail on the first floor and two levels of flats above. In a smaller community, this would be a Strategic Placemaking project.

Source: *The Gillespie Company, LLC.*

RESOURCES

- 1) [Project for Public Spaces.](#)
- 2) [PlaceMakers.](#)
- 3) [The Economics of Place: The Value of Building Communities around People.](#) Edited by Colleen Layton, Tawny Pruitt, and Kim Cekola. Michigan Municipal League. 2011.

Standard Placemaking Activities

Expanding on the Project for Public Spaces definition of Standard Placemaking, it is *“more than just creating better urban design of public spaces, Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections (cultural, economic, social, ecological) that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”*

An effective Placemaking process capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, potential, and civic volunteers to create public spaces that promote improved health, happiness, and well-being.

Standard Placemaking activities include:

- Festivals, parades, exhibits, performances, and other events in public spaces;
- Outside eating and drinking on public sidewalks;
- Movies in the park;
- Outdoor amphitheater productions;
- Public art displays or creation events;
- Cleaning and beautifying streets and plazas (such as planting flowers);
- Introducing street artists and musicians to key public spaces at certain times; and
- Helping restaurants get municipal approval for outdoor seating.

Whether the event is seasonal, temporary, or even permanent, Standard Placemaking activities are able to adapt to a wide range of schedules.





Music festivals are common Placemaking activities. They bring citizens together and attract visitors. The Sun Dried Music Festival is held in Mason's historic downtown.

Source: *J. Franklin Campbell, Mason, MI.*

Farmers markets have become a staple Placemaking activity. This is the Lansing City Market.

Source: [Friends of the Lansing River Trail.](#)



Cold weather events can be successful Placemaking activities. Frankenmuth's "Snowfest" features snow and ice sculpting competitions and is a significant draw to the community during winter.

Source: [Zehnder's of Frankenmuth.](#)

RESOURCES

- 1) [Michigan Festivals & Events Association.](#)
- 2) [Project for Public Spaces.](#)

Strategic Placemaking Projects

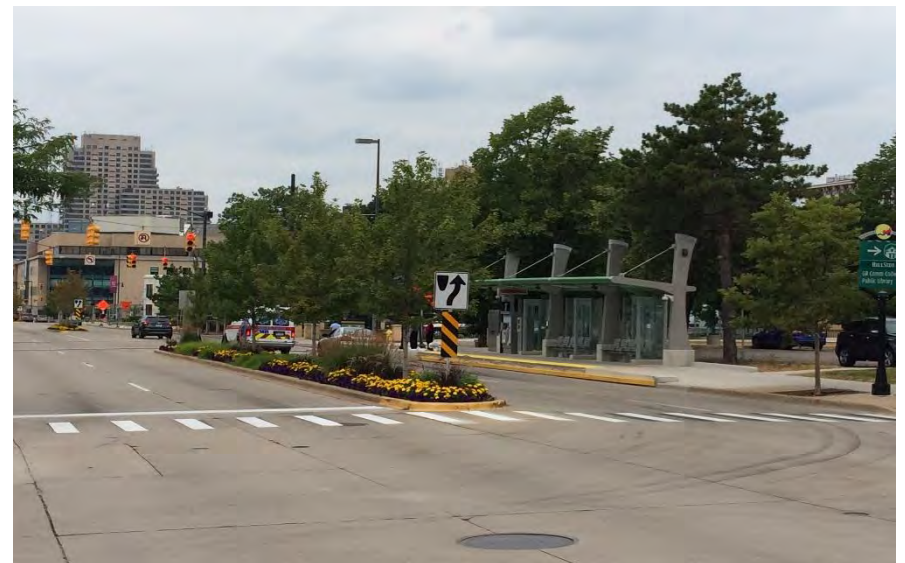
Strategic Placemaking has all the qualities of Standard Placemaking but is targeted to achieve a site-specific goal within a particular place. Most often it is housing, entertainment, mass transit, or lifestyle options designed to attract and retain talented workers. Strategic Places attract human activity.

Strategic Placemaking projects are targeted toward limited locations through the coordinated plans of regional economic development entities (such as regional strategic plans or prosperity plans) and local communities (master plans and sub-area or projects plans at the site level). Targeted locations are in centers (downtowns), and nodes (a secondary hub of heightened activity) along the connecting corridor. Public, nonprofit, and private entities typically pursue a wide range of projects on a targeted basis over at least 10-15 years.

Strategic Placemaking projects create Places that are uniquely attractive to talented workers. Talented workers include anyone with a skill set that is in demand, such as recent college grads; young professionals; seasoned professionals or retired workers with unique skills; and immigrants (especially those with advanced degrees). They create circumstances for substantial job creation and income growth when they concentrate in small areas.

Strategic Placemaking projects possess regional form depending on their location on the transect, but usually they are in transect zones 4, 5, or 6 (see Form, p. 1-53). They can also be connected to other urban, suburban, and rural locations with desirable place attributes.

Strategic Placemaking projects include mixed-use developments in key centers (downtowns), along key corridors (especially ones with rapid transit lines), and at key nodes. They can include rehabilitation and new construction projects such as missing middle housing (see p. 1-19).





Key intersections in a community offer strategic locations for Placemaking. Mixed-used, higher-density buildings on key intersection corners create a gateway into the community. The City of East Lansing is using this strategy at M.A.C. and Grand River Avenues downtown.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.

The Missing Middle Infill Redevelopment project in Bay City is situated near the Saginaw River.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

Grand Rapids' Silver Line is a Bus Rapid Transit (see p. 1-117) system that connects the southern end of the Grand Rapids Metro area with the region's largest activity and employment hub (Downtown and Medical Mile). It runs through 34 stations on a 10-minute frequency during peak hours (20-minute frequency during non-peak hours).

Source: Jeff Keesler, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.



RESOURCES

- 1) [Placemaking As An Economic Development Tool: A Placemaking Guidebook. May 31, 2016. MIplace Partnership Initiative.](#)
- 2) [MIplace Partnership Initiative.](#)
- 3) [Placemaking. Michigan Municipal League.](#)

Strategic Placemaking Activities

Strategic Placemaking investments require detailed planning and consistency with local, regional, and statewide plans. They are cross-functional (i.e., housing, multi-modal transportation, economic development, etc.) in reach, require strong stakeholder engagement (often supported by a charrette), and have broad community support, including local funding. Multiple funding sources, including public and private, are essential for these investments.

When properly executed, Strategic Placemaking results in quality, sustainable, human-scale, pedestrian-oriented, bicycle friendly, safe, mixed-use, broadband enabled, green spaces accommodating recreation, arts and culture, multiple transportation and housing options that respect historic buildings, public spaces, and broad civic engagement.

In comparison to Standard Placemaking, Strategic methods result in faster gains in livability, population, diversity, jobs, income, and educational attainment. In part, this is because such projects tend to be larger and more expensive.

Strategic Placemaking activities include annual events as well as other arts, culture, entertainment, and recreational activities that add vitality to Quality Places and are particularly attractive to talented workers. They differ from Standard Placemaking activities primarily in their scope. Strategic Placemaking activities tend to be larger, last longer, and be supportive of Strategic Placemaking projects (e.g., sponsoring a job fair, hosting open house and restaurant food tasting event at the same time in an area targeting talented workers).





ArtPrize, an international art competition held in Grand Rapids since 2009 uses three square miles of downtown for 19 days. This free and public event attracts more than 1,000 art submissions and 400,000 people and adds more than \$22 million to the local economy. These statistics show the incredible economic impact an event like this can have in a community.

Source: [ArtPrize](#).

The Black Arts Festival in Bronson Park is an annual event presented by the Black Arts & Cultural Center in Kalamazoo.

Source: *Placemaking Curriculum. MIplace Partnership Initiative.*

The annual Silver Bells in the City in Lansing, held the third Thursday in November since 1984, consists of a holiday parade, lighting ceremony of the official state holiday tree, holiday market, and live entertainment. It brings thousands of people together at the start of the holiday season.

Source: [Flickr. SilverBellsintheCity](#).



RESOURCES

- 1) A Placemaking Guidebook, forthcoming from the MIplace Partnership Initiative.
- 2) [MIplace Partnership Initiative](#).
- 3) [Placemaking. Michigan Municipal League](#).

Creative Placemaking Projects and Activities

“Creative Placemaking engages partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region through arts, cultural, and creative experiences.” The National Endowment for the Arts defines [Creative Placemaking](#) as *“a technique that animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.”*

Creative Placemaking helps shape community identity, increases social interaction and civic engagement, and strengthens connectivity. It improves and honors community assets while generating an authentic, comprehensive, long-term strategy in partnership with residents and stakeholders. It is aided by creation of a creative vision for the community.

“The creative city vision serves livability, diversity, and economic development goals. It addresses safety, aesthetic, expressive, and environmental concerns of people who live, work, and visit.”

Creative Placemaking projects are inclusive of artistic, cultural, and creative thinking, such as museums and orchestra halls, public art displays, transit stations with art themes, and live-work structures to spur creative environments. Creative Placemaking activities include new arts, culture, and entertainment activities, such as movies in the park, chalk art projects, outdoor concerts, and sculpture loan programs.





One Book One Community (OBOC) is a community book reading program offered by the City of East Lansing and Michigan State University. Over 4 weeks, students and residents come together in a variety of settings to explore themes, issues, and story.

Source: onebookeastlansing.com.

The Bank of Ann Arbor provides free, summer outdoor lunchtime concerts in downtown.

Source: [Flickr/Michigan Municipal League](https://www.flickr.com/photos/michiganmunicipalleague/).

A winning design from the Flint Public Art Project Flat Lot competition, “Mark’s House” was a temporary, hovering work of art which tells the story of an imagined resident whose family loses their home to foreclosure.

Source: [Flint Public Art Project](http://flintpublicartproject.com).



RESOURCES

- 1) [Creative Many Michigan](http://creativemany.org).
- 2) [Michigan Council for the Arts](http://michigancouncilforthearts.org).
- 3) [Creative Placemaking, 2010](http://www.ned.gov). Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tactical Placemaking Projects and Activities

Tactical Placemaking is the process of creating Quality Places that uses a deliberate, often small-scale, step-wise approach. It targets public spaces (rights-of-way, plazas, etc.) and includes a mix of small projects and short-term activities. Planning and placing temporary improvements provides a framework for civic discourse and gives communities the tools for positive change in the long term. Tactical Placemaking includes both “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” approaches and Tactical Urbanism.

Named and promoted by the [Project for Public Spaces](#), **Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper** (LQC) is a set of small, short-term projects and activities that transform underused spaces into exciting experimental laboratories, leverage local partnerships, display possibility, and employ a place-by-place strategy that can transform an entire city over time.

The [Streets Plan Collaborative](#) defines **Tactical Urbanism** as “. . . incremental, small-scale improvements as a way to stage more substantial investments. This approach allows a host of local actors to test new concepts before making substantial political and financial commitments.” Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change, Vol 2.

Tactical Placemaking projects include activating underutilized public spaces, testing road diets, experimental dwelling types and designs in a neighborhood, or temporary boat rentals in an old waterfront storage facility. Tactical Placemaking activities include chair bombing, pop-up parking space conversions, outdoor music events in town squares, temporary façade changes, and guerrilla gardening.

Creating Great Places The Lighter Quicker Cheaper Challenge

To support Placemaking, we're asking you to tell us how you would spark gathering and playing in your neighborhood or community. Submit an idea here for a chance to win a grant.





The Michigan Association of Realtors offers the [Lighter Quicker Cheaper Challenge](#). The competitive process awards mini-grants for small, tactical Placemaking projects across the state. Projects have included signage, art installation, fountain refurbishment, community gardens, musician entertainment at lunch, and more.

Source: [Michigan Association of Realtors](#).

Dimondale created an historical walking tour and brochure as part of their grant.

Source: [Dimondale Community Development Committee](#).

The DIMONDALE HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR



DISCOVER DIMONDALE

Through the Michigan Association of Realtors Lighter Quicker Cheaper Challenge, the City of East Lansing created the Trowbridge Village Neighbor's Station, a pop-up library (bookcase between two tables) near commercial space in the Trowbridge plaza, which is slated for redevelopment.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

RESOURCES

- 1) [Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper: A Low-Cost, High-Impact Approach. Project for Public Spaces.](#)
- 2) [Tactical Urbanism Salon.](#)
- 3) [The Streets Plan Collaborative.](#)
- 4) "The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-it-Yourself Guide to Placemaking." 2007. Jay Walijasper & Project for Public Spaces. New Society Publishers.

LAND USE AND FUNCTIONS

LIVABILITY

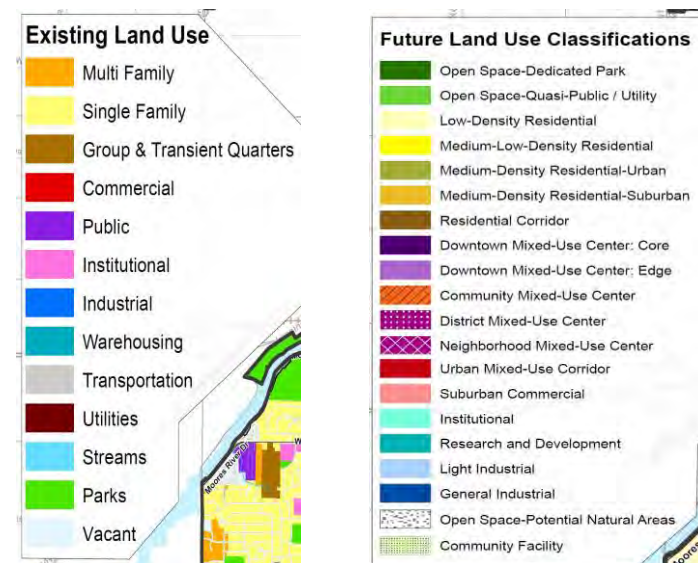
What we do on and how we manage the land affects every aspect of sustainability. Because land use dictates what activities occur in a particular area or on a specific parcel, land use and function is where sustainability is put to the test. The techniques presented, which mirror traditional land use classifications (below), are important for understanding the effect that each land use has on the built, natural, social environment around it.

Land use is most often communicated through the local master plan and a land use map, but implemented through the zoning ordinance/map. Land uses are based on the character and needs of the community, existing development and services, and adaptability of the land. Since the 1900s, uses have historically been separated to protect communities from nuisances like noise, dust, odor, ground vibration, and various air and water pollutants. Traditional land use classifications include the following:

- Residential (low, medium, and high density single-family; manufactured home park; multi-family);
- Office (low and high rise);
- Commercial (neighborhood, downtown, highway, regional);
- Industrial (park, light, heavy);
- Institutional (schools, universities, hospitals);
- Agriculture (farms and farm services);
- Parks (neighborhood, community, regional);
- Natural features (rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, forests, hills);
- Public or quasi-public (municipal buildings, cemeteries, state-owned land);
- Special districts (airport, railroad, harbor); and
- Other (utilities, cemeteries).

Land uses and functional categories are in flux. As displayed in Lansing’s

existing land use map compared to its future land use map (below), the uses are blending and terminology is changing. In the future, there will be more mixed uses within complementary categories (residential, commercial, office, light industrial). Transect language (e.g., Downtown mixed-use center: core) will be especially relevant in multi-jurisdictional and regional plans that seek to develop Placemaking along cross-jurisdictional corridors.

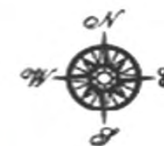
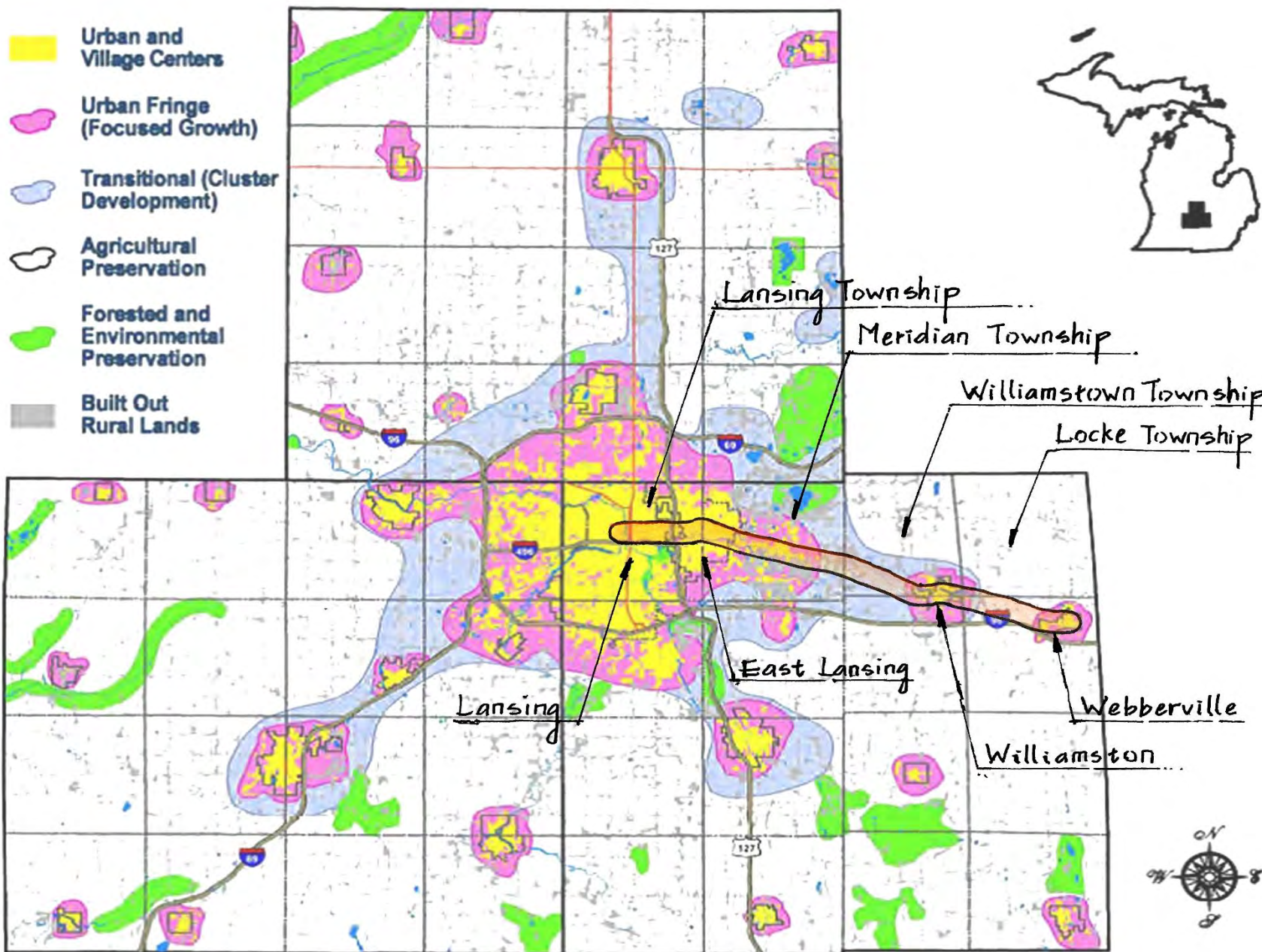


Graphic source (this page): City of Lansing, *Design Lansing Master Plan*. 2012.

On the facing page is an illustration from the *Choices for Our Future* report depicting the Tri-County Region (Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties) with growth areas and general land uses identified. Also highlighted are communities along the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Avenue corridor, the “main street” of the region.

Image source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced by permission. Overlay illustration by Na Li, Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University.

-  Urban and Village Centers
-  Urban Fringe (Focused Growth)
-  Transitional (Cluster Development)
-  Agricultural Preservation
-  Forested and Environmental Preservation
-  Built Out Rural Lands



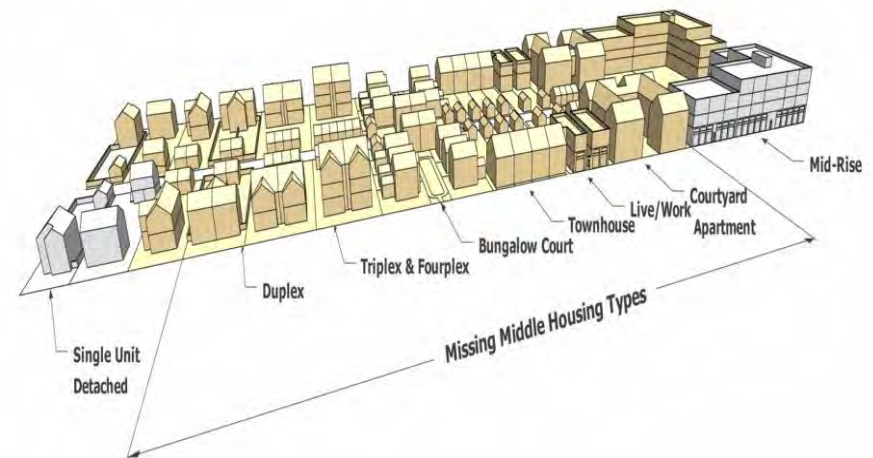
Expanding the Range of Choice

As the Millennial generation (born 1981–2000 and now the largest generation) enters the housing market, research shows that they prefer more dense urban environments with more choices in housing stock and transportation modes even though they grew up in the suburbs. Research also shows that when people reach 65 years old, they sell their houses at a higher rate than they purchase. When they move, nearly 60% move into rentals. At the same time that the Millennials enter the housing market the Baby Boomers will be trying to sell and downsize from their suburban homes. This means that nationally between 2010 and 2030, two-thirds of new housing demand will be for rental, higher-density living.

This poses a significant challenge to all Michigan communities. While residential functions, characteristics, and density vary based on their placement along the rural to urban transect (see p. 1-53), expanding the range of housing choices is the safest bet for an uncertain future. Parking lots, deteriorating structures, and vacant lots offer opportunities to meet this new demand because they are:

- Already flat and well-drained,
- Often already zoned non-residential,
- Usually close to main roads or highways, and
- Large-scale utilities already exist along main transportation ways.

When mixed housing is constructed it also offers an opportunity to make it mixed income so we do not continue the segregation of classes and give lower income persons an opportunity to experience living in places without the stigma of “low-income housing.”





A rendering from *Imagine Flint* (new master plan) displays a variety of housing types including single-family detached (1), duplexes (2), rowhouses (3), senior housing (4), and apartments and condos (5) all existing within a few blocks.

Source: *Imagine Flint Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint*. 2013. City of Flint.

Developments such as this mixed-use building in Lansing can house 20-40 units per acre.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

The “Missing Middle” provides a wide array of housing choices that will be needed for future housing needs. The “Missing Middle” housing provides a wide range of housing choices in much of the country outside the Midwest, which curiously lacks developments of this type.

Source: [Daniel Parolek, Opticos](#).



RESOURCES

- 1) [“Missing Middle Housing: Responding to the Demand for Walkable Urban Living.”](#) February 2013. Daniel Parolek. Smart Growth Network: *National Conversation on the Future of Our Communities*.
- 2) [The 2011 Community Preference Survey: What Americans are Looking for When Deciding Where to Live.](#) March 2011. Belden, Russonello & Stewart, LLC, commissioned by the National Association of Realtors.
- 3) Target Market Analysis Housing Strategy Michigan-Grand River Corridor Greater Lansing Area, Michigan. July 10, 2013. Sharon Woods.

Affordable Housing

According to the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), “families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities, such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50% of their annual incomes for housing.”

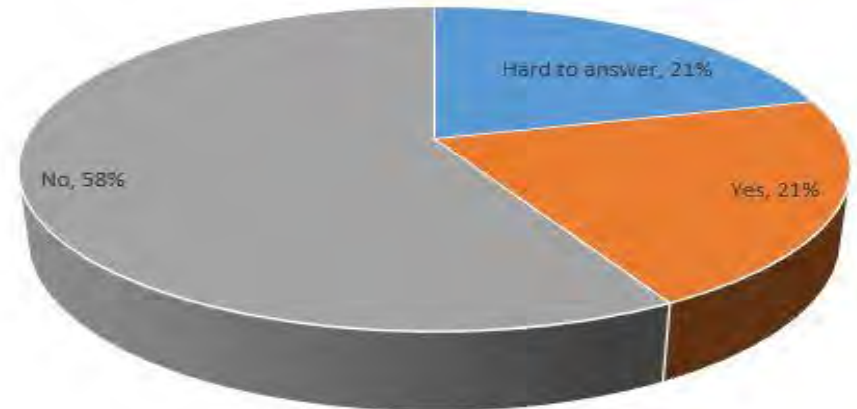
Some communities are facing an affordable housing crisis. As the value of residential real estate increased, the affordability of housing decreased. The housing needs of low and moderate income households are widespread and diverse. The need for affordable housing affects all segments of society based on age, race, ethnicity, and geography.

The barriers to affordable housing are just as diverse: inadequate infrastructure, lack of a regional housing strategy, negative public perception of affordable housing occupants, land cost, and high project economics, among many others.

However, solutions to the affordable housing crisis are within grasp: the creation of new funding sources, changes in zoning to allow for flexibility in use and density, mixed-income occupancy, rent control, tax credit financing, requisition of affordable housing components, action plans for underutilized properties, and the use of nonprofit organizations as sources of money and assistance.

Source: [“Affordable Housing Affects All Segments of Society.” August 2006. Smart Growth Tactics. Issue Number 25. Michigan Association of Planning.](#)

Opinions of Housing Experts on Adequate Supply of Affordable Housing Units, Tri-County Region





“A metropolitan area cannot function effectively unless every municipality provides its fair share of affordable housing. The burdens of concentrated poverty are best overcome by distributing lower-cost housing throughout the region”

Source: Smart Growth Manual.

This pie chart shows that the majority of Tri-County housing experts feel that more affordable housing is needed.

Source: Regional Affordable Housing Study: Part II. Housing Expert Interview Results. P. 8. Suk-Kyung Kim, Michigan State University, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

These houses represent a typical affordable housing style in the Lansing area.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.

Montgomery County, Maryland requires all large developments to include 10% of affordable dwellings. The Village at King Farm was its first such community. This program has produced an average of 379 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) for rent and sale annually since implemented in 1976.

Source: [“Why Montgomery’s Affordable Housing ‘Dumping Ground’ Could Use Even More.”](#) September 21, 2009. Dan Reed. Greater Greater Washington.



RESOURCES

- 1) [Regional Affordable Housing Study](#). June 2014. Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability.
- 2) [Achieving Lasting Affordability through Inclusionary Housing](#). 2014. Robert Hickey, Lisa Sturtevant, and Emily Thaden. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Mixed-Use Development

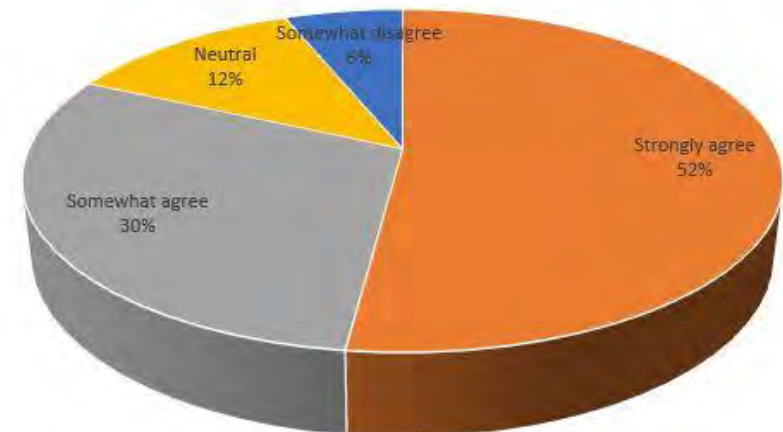
Historically, planning sought to separate land uses to protect populations from nuisances and pollutants. However, planning and design philosophies are evolving to embrace the mixing of compatible uses. Mixed-use developments commonly blend residential, commercial, office, and/or institutional uses in a defined area. That area may be of any scale—within a building, on a site, or within a district.

The mixing of uses spawns variety in housing stock and transportation options. Mixed-use developments typically generate the residential density to support mass transit. When uses are mixed, residential types typically occupy the upper floors of the other uses. Mixed-use housing types are likely to be apartments, lofts, townhouses and other variations of the Missing Middle housing stock (see Residential – Expanding the Range of Choices, p. 1-19)

Mixed-use creates a consistent density to support commercial and office uses, and non-motorized transportation facilities. Transportation-oriented developments (see p. 1-115) are typically mixed-use. The variety of land uses (homes, businesses, offices) creates higher multi-modal traffic volumes which in turn perpetuates increased residential and commercial density and attracts a variety of support services and entertainment venues nearby.



Opinions of Housing Experts on Need for more Mixed-use Developments in the Community





This rendering of the parking lot at Best Buy next to the Meridian Mall shows how a suburban big box site can be retrofitted into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development. It includes open and civic spaces in addition to retail and residential, and sits on a main transit line.

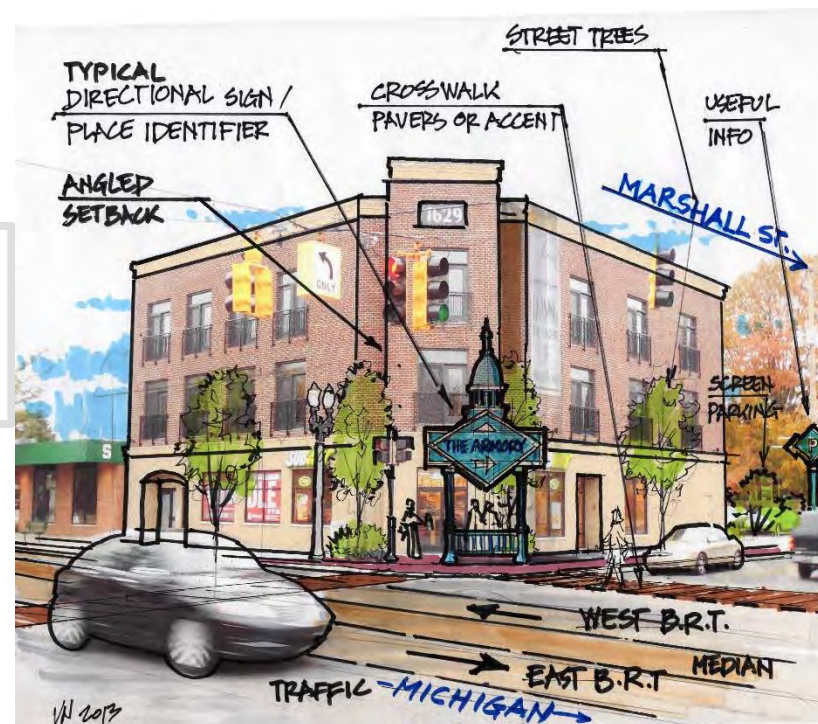
Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-county Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.

A mixed-used building on Lansing's Michigan Avenue with visionary transit and design improvements.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.

The majority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham housing experts feel that more mixed-use developments are needed. They prefer rehabilitation or renovating current vacant buildings into mixed-use developments, as opposed to demolishing existing ones or new construction. This has the benefit of preserving historic structures.

Source: *Regional Affordable Housing Study: Part II. Housing expert Interview Results. P. 17.* Suk-Kyung Kim, Michigan State University, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.



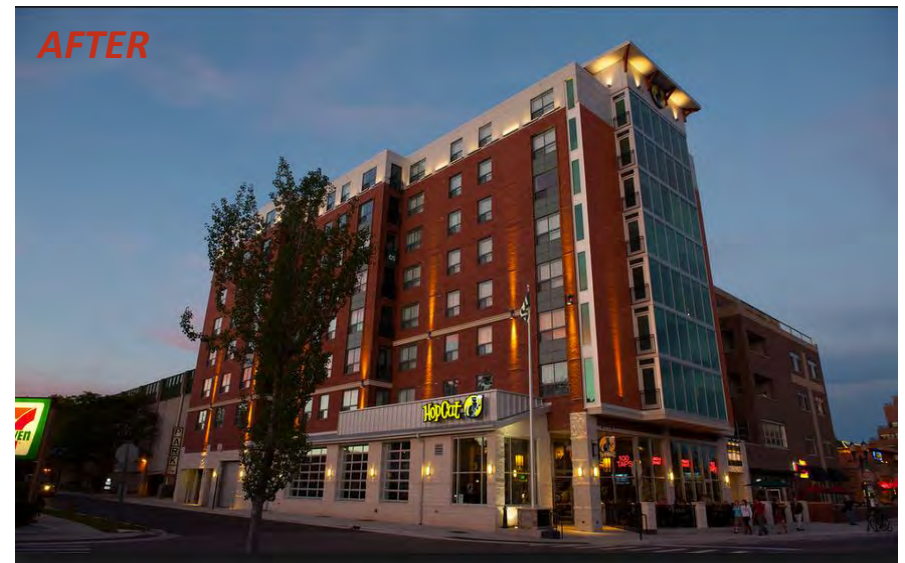
RESOURCES

- 1) [“Zoning for Mixed Uses.” American Association of Planning. PAS QuickNotes No. 6. 2006.](#)
- 2) [Mixed-Use Development Handbook. January 2003. Dean Schwanke. Urban Land Institute.](#)
- 3) [Mixed Use Zoning Toolkit. March 2006. Metropolitan Area Planning Council.](#)

Infill and Redevelopment

Urban infill development has been defined as, “*new development on vacant, bypassed, and underutilized land within built up areas of existing communities, where infrastructure is already in place*” (Maryland Department of Planning, 2001). Urban infill is a land-use technique that encourages future growth in already developed areas, rather than development that takes place in undeveloped areas known as greenfields. Infill development commonly takes place in urban or dense suburban areas, rather than on the suburban periphery in open spaces that have not been built upon.

Infill development encourages new development to fill open spaces left by demolished or vacant buildings and in the process, save open natural spaces and farm fields outside the city. Infill development can take place in residential, commercial, or industrial areas and can benefit communities by keeping development in areas that are already served by infrastructure. As a smart growth technique, communities can provide tax or development incentives to individuals who consider urban infill in new build projects. Tax and development incentives from older communities can offset the pull of sprawling suburban development in the periphery of a region.





This image is of the former low-rise apartment building on the corner of Ann St. and Albert St. in East Lansing, comprised of 5 units and some small office spaces. The building was demolished and replaced in 2013 with the Residences.

Source: [Ingham County Equalization/Tax Mapping](#).

Avondale Square, a 2006 redevelopment project in East Lansing, replaced 23 aged and obsolete rental houses with 16 single-family homes and 14 townhouses to appeal to a range of income levels.

Source: [City of East Lansing](#).

The Residences, a mixed-use development for Fall, 2013 replaced the former property and added 42 one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments and ground-floor retail as part of a larger project that added a total of 73 apartment units and two ground-floor retail spaces to downtown East Lansing.

Source: [Studio Intrigue Architects](#).



RESOURCES

- 1) [Green Mid-Michigan: Infill Development. Michigan State University Urban & Regional Planning Program. 2010.](#)
- 2) [Infill Development: Completing the Community Fabric. Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. Local Government Success.](#)
- 3) [Managing Maryland's Growth: Models and Guidelines for Infill Development. 2001. Maryland Department of Planning.](#)

Commercial-Downtown

Commercial districts are the retail, office, and service centers of cities. Most buildings in downtown commercial zones have a distinct design, character, and form that varies in scale only with the size of the downtown, which is usually based on the population of the community it serves. Downtowns are commonly the principal activity centers of a community, and provide individuals with a place to engage in commerce, share ideas, and socialize. They usually have the highest buildings in the community and are pedestrian-oriented. Rents and parking are expensive, because these are usually the highest value lots in the community.

Downtowns thrive when there are a large number of people residing in and adjacent to the downtown. Yet, communities may have zoning ordinances that prohibit residential uses in downtowns. The result is downtowns of cities are full during the daytime working hours, but are empty after 5 p.m. and on weekends when offices close.

This trend is reversing in Michigan since the turn of the Millennium. Cities like Detroit, Grand Rapids, Flint, and Lansing, among others, are experiencing new residential and mixed-uses in their downtowns. Small towns, too, are rezoning to allow second and third floor residential above retail stores. Not only does this increase retail activity, but it also puts more “eyes on the street” to increase safety. Commercial zones that allow for residential and mixed-uses (see p. 2-25) can more easily increase the activity in the area both during traditional business hours, and evenings and weekends.

The [Michigan Main Street Center](#) provides technical assistance to downtowns and helps them thrive by strict adherence to a Four-Point Approach® system for successful downtowns. This system is effective in large and small downtowns.





Washington Avenue in Lansing is a traditional urban downtown that is heavily used during daytime hours. Restaurants, bars, and 2nd and 3rd floor residential have activated the area in the evening. Mixed-use, multi-story buildings are the predominant land use type. Many of the buildings are historic, adding greatly to the character of the downtown.

Source: [Placemaking in Downtown Lansing. Flickr/Michigan Municipal League.](#)

Traverse City's downtown offers seasonal sidewalk dining and is pedestrian-friendly.

Source: ["Springtime in Traverse City: My Secret Season." Pure Michigan Blog.](#)

Buildings located at or near the sidewalk maintain a traditional streetwall for pedestrians and help create successful downtowns. Alleys and service drives behind buildings provide necessary loading and service areas for downtown businesses. Key intersections are developed on all four corners with structures that create a strong architectural and visual presence.

Source: *Imagine Flint Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint. 2013. City of Flint.*



RESOURCES

- 1) [Michigan Downtown Association.](#)
- 2) [Michigan Main Street Center.](#)
- 3) [Downtown Planning for Smaller and Midsized Communities. 2012. Philip Walker. American Planning Association.](#)

Commercial-Suburban Mall

The indoor, regional, suburban shopping mall was first presented in a 1952 article of *Progressive Architecture* magazine by a Vienna-born architect, Victor Gruen. He opened the first prototype in Edina, Minnesota in 1956. The suburban mall is characterized by commercial retail uses in a single, indoor building located at the perimeter of a community with easy highway access. They may either be single- or multi-story buildings that have deep setbacks dominated by surface lot parking.

“[The Shopping Mall Turns 60 \(and Prepares to Retire\)](#)” by Emily Badger in *The Atlantic Cities* (July 13, 2012) reports that at their peak in 1990, 19 malls were added to the national landscape, but no new ones have been opened since 2006.

Indoor shopping malls are also descending in importance since lifestyle centers emerged. These open-air malls are quasi-pedestrian-oriented allowing for foot traffic, but still supplying ample parking close to the one or two stores a customer comes to visit. They may be smaller than their indoor counterpart, but resemble traditional town squares and may offer some amenities.

With increased internet sales and a renewed interest in downtown commercial areas, suburban malls will face greater competition and will need to be redesigned to align with changing market conditions. They will need to enhance their sense of place, and offer improved non-motorized and transit access or lose business share to more pedestrian-oriented shopping areas.





Meridian Mall in Meridian Township is a classic example of a suburban mall dominated by parking and offset from the road. This area was the focus of a 2013 charrette to redesign the area to accommodate the terminus of a proposed bus rapid transit (BRT) line running to downtown Lansing. For more on Bus Rapid Transit, see p. 1-117.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.

The traditional Centerpointe Mall in Kentwood was converted to an open-air mall.

Source: flickr/grdadof3.

A redesign of the parking lot on Grand River in front of the Meridian Mall in Meridian Township establishes new block-and-street networks to connect pedestrians and the BRT users with the existing Mall. It includes a mix of additional retail, residential, parking structure, and public square space.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.



RESOURCES

- 1) [Retrofitting Suburbia, Updated Edition: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs. 2011. Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson.](#)
- 2) [Retro-Fitting the Shopping Mall to Support Healthier Communities. Anthony R. Mawson, Thomas M. Kersen, and Jassen Callender. World Health Design.](#)
- 3) [Sprawl Repair Manual. 2010. Galina Tachieva.](#)

Commercial-Neighborhood

While mixed-use commonly blends residential, commercial, office, and/or institutional uses in a defined area, commercial uses are also being reintegrated into residential neighborhoods.

Communities that are embracing this concept typically describe these areas as Neighborhood Centers in future land use descriptions. The Design Lansing Master Plan (2012) describes them as intending *“to encourage the creation of marketable and attractive focal points for community activity that provide as many neighborhoods as possible with retail and services to meet daily needs within walking distance of home. Building heights should be limited to two to three stories and buildings should be located close to the sidewalk edge and designed to create an appealing pedestrian environment. Parking should be located to the rear of buildings. Shared parking lots and reduced parking requirements are recommended.”*

The Imagine Flint Master Plan (2013) outlines Neighborhood Centers saying that they *“should include all land uses capable of fostering a node of commercial and social activity. Commercial businesses should be of an appropriate scale, catering to the needs of nearby residents, providing access to daily goods and services. . . Public uses, including schools, churches, and community centers, can also be located within a Neighborhood Center, along with multi-family residential mixed-use buildings.”*





Big City Small World Bakery in Ann Arbor is an example of a successful commercial use located in a predominately residential use area. A deli/market is also located across the street. Other possible commercial uses in residential areas include grocery stores, pharmacies, and coffee shops provided they are scaled and sited appropriately.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

Portions of East Grand Rapids' Gaslight Village could be a neighborhood commercial land use.

Source: rowlanddesign.com.

Neighborhood Centers are typically located along major or minor collector streets, not local streets or arterials. Consideration must be given to ensuring compatibility to surrounding homes, and landscaping and screening used effectively.

Source: [Imagine Flint Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint. 2013. City of Flint.](#)



RESOURCES

- 1) [Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail. 2003. Michael D. Beyard, Michael Pawlukiewicz, Alex Bond. The Urban Land Institute. 2003.](#)
- 2) [Revitalizing Neighborhood Retail. Urban Collaborators Resource Guide Series. Michigan State University.](#)
- 3) [Neighborhood Association of Michigan.](#)

Commercial-Highway Service

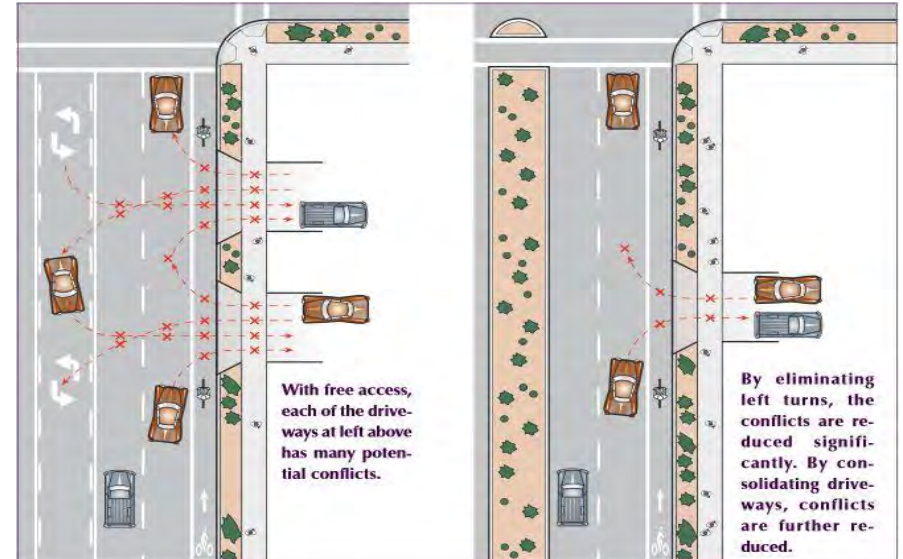
As the Interstate highway system developed and expanded from the mid-1960s to the 1980s, commercial establishments located off highway interchanges to capture the highway service market. This land use type is dominated by businesses that cater to travelers in search of fast food restaurants, gas stations, and convenience stores. In more suburban areas they may include grocery stores, banks, and dry cleaners which cater to those traveling on their way to or from home.

Highway service commercial is characterized by multiple driveways, considerable signage, large parking lots, and wide, multi-lane roads. While these are not qualities of good urban form, every effort should be made to improve these entryways as these areas are usually the first impression for visitors and tourists.

Improvements can be made to create a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing gateway into a community, inviting travelers to visit more of the community. The arterial can be made inviting with improved landscaping, reducing the number of signs, and by developing medians that create a green boulevard.

Managing the number, location, and design of driveways, called Access Management, can be an important technique to achieve better form as well as *“reduce traffic congestion, preserve the flow of traffic, improve traffic safety, prevent crashes, preserve existing road capacity, and preserve investment in roads.”*

Source: [The Access Management Guidebook. Planning & Zoning Center, under contract to the Michigan Department of Transportation.](#)





Managing the location, number, and design of driveways can help create better form and provide for a more inviting atmosphere in highway service areas.

Source: [Main Street . . . When a Highway Runs through it: A Handbook for Oregon Communities. 1999. Oregon Department of Transportation. P. 60.](#)

Signage on a highway service area creates an identity for a community. The [Michigan Sign Guidebook](#) provides helpful recommendations.

Source: December 2011. *Scenic Michigan*.

M-43 is a highway service commercial corridor in Kalamazoo that offers a service drive to reduce driveways on the highway while providing safe access to businesses.

Source: *GoogleMaps. 2014.*

MICHIGAN SIGN GUIDEBOOK

local planning and regulation of signs

December 2011

A GUIDEBOOK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, ATTORNEYS AND CITIZENS



RESOURCES

- 1) [Influence of Transportation Infrastructure on Land Use. 2004. Planning Processes: Land Use and Transportation. U.S. Department of Transportation. Federal Highway Administration.](#)
- 2) [How Communities Benefit from Access Management. Michigan Department of Transportation.](#)
- 3) [Resources for Access Management. Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.](#)
- 4) The Access Management Guidebook. Planning and Zoning Center, under contract to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Office/Service-Eds and Meds

Eds and Meds stands for offices and service uses that align with education (Eds) and medical institutions (Meds). They are large, established institutions of higher education and medical facilities (i.e., hospitals, laboratories, offices). They can be significant drivers of economic development, especially if located on key urban corridors, but they need room to adapt and grow.

That is a big challenge as they are anchors in their present location. If for example, a hospital relocates to a freeway exit (as several have done), they anchor nothing and all local efforts in that area to engage in pedestrian-oriented placemaking will be lost. That means community leaders must sit down with these institutions and pursue joint future visioning. Unilateral planning will only ensure a win-lose proposition.

A recent Brookings Institution report points out that *“these ‘eds and meds’ institutions are large, immobile and often growing employers that hold the potential to offer relatively high-wage jobs to workers without college degrees. A number of metropolitan areas have large concentrations of colleges and universities, while health care institutions are more evenly spread out among metropolitan areas.”* ([“The Local Economic Impact of ‘Eds & Meds’: How Policies to Expand Universities and Hospitals Affect Metropolitan Economies.”](#) Timothy J. Bartik and George Erickcek.) Eds and Meds can significantly raise the earnings of metropolitan residents.

The Imagine Flint Master Plan employs an Eds and Meds typology and describes it as being *“anchored around institutions with the potential to connect with one another, blossoming into a more intense area of the City.”* Typical uses within the typology include public institutions, professional office, residential buildings, open space and greenways, research and development, and light manufacturing.





Flint’s vision for its University Avenue Core place type utilizes Eds and Meds as focal points within future redevelopment (1) and incorporates a number of elements to support the volume of employers, residents, and students, including a bus rapid transit system (2), supporting uses such as office and research (3), a wide range of housing (4), and commercial (5).

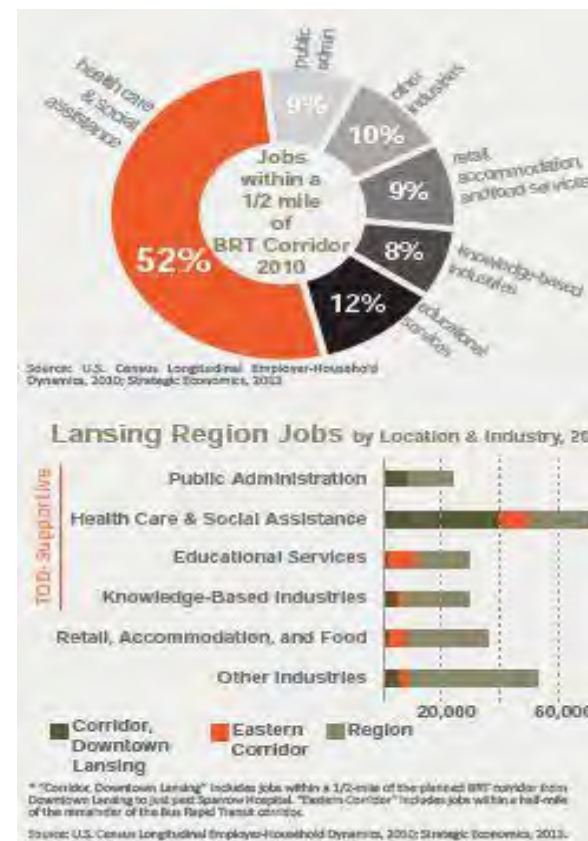
Source: City of Flint. *Imagine Flint Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint*. 2013.

Analysis shows 64% of Lansing area jobs would be within ½ mile of a proposed bus rapid transit line. Many of these jobs are at MSU, Sparrow Hospital, and in state government.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced by permission. P.1.20.

A vision for Sparrow Hospital in Lansing utilizes infill, streetscaping, and transit enhancements to create a more continuous and active street frontage that rebalances multi-modal transportation.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.



RESOURCES

- 1) [“Eds and Meds: Cities Hidden Assets.” September 1999. Ira Harkavy and Harmon Zuckerman. The Brookings Institution.](#)
- 2) [“Where ‘Eds and Meds’ Industries Could Become a Liability.” November 26, 2013. Richard Florida. The Atlantic Cities.](#)
- 3) [Michigan Street Corridor Anchor Study – Initial Findings. September 28, 2011. U3 Ventures.](#)

Office/Service-Office Complex

Office and service land uses are critical to a community's vitality and growth. Large scale office and service uses downtown are the anchors of daytime economic activity, supplying employees to activate the space around the complex and support local businesses in the service and retail sectors (i.e., restaurants, stores). Often, auxiliary or supporting businesses, such as hotels and restaurants are located nearby too, with each complimenting the other.

Suburban office complexes are often park-like and easily accessible by major highways. However, they generate far fewer spinoff business benefits because they are auto dependent (as opposed to pedestrian-oriented as in a downtown).

Industrial office parks are similar to their suburban office complex neighbor in terms of location, size, and spinoff characteristics. When services cluster near office or industrial uses, proximity benefits may spur some additional restaurant, hotel, and related service activity. This can contribute to a community's identify and brand.





Compuware's World Headquarters in Detroit was completed in 2003. In addition to creating innovative internal space, it fronts Campus Martius Park, offering employees and visitors a variety of opportunities both in and outside the complex.

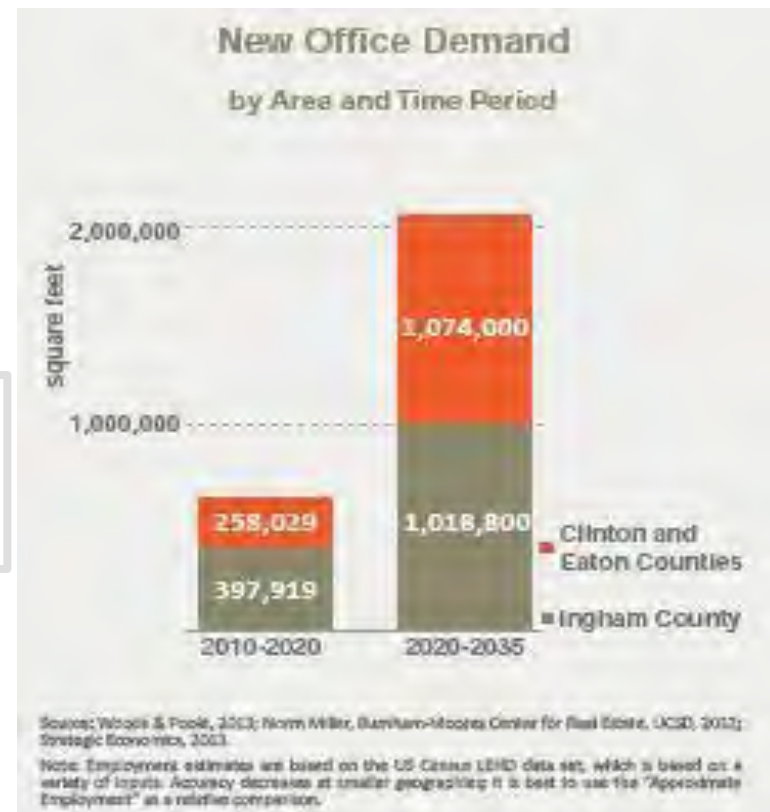
Source: MetroJacksonville.com.

Analysis of the Tri-County Region shows future demand for office space.

Source: *Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced by permission. P. 1.22.*

This aerial view of Lansing shows a cluster of state government office buildings. Supporting service and retail uses are located along Washington Avenue.

Source: *Department of Technology, Management & Budget.*



RESOURCES

- 1) [Office Development Handbook](#). January 1998. Urban Land Institute.
- 2) [Business Park and Industrial Development Handbook](#). January 2001. Anne Frej, Jo Allen Gause. Urban Land Institute.

Office/Service–Small Scale

Unlike their larger office park counterparts, which house a number of separate office buildings, supporting uses, and integrated open space, the small-scale office or service building is a stand-alone building used to conduct business or professional activities in. They may be single-tenant structures or house multiple tenants. In more urban settings, they are multi-stories and may include a mix of uses (residential, retail, hotel, or light industry). In more suburban settings, they are primarily single-use and may be single- or multi-story buildings.

Office/service building development boomed after World War II and continued to rise as employment grew in office and service-based sectors as opposed to manufacturing. This occurred primarily in the suburbs where site costs and rents were lower, building codes for low-rise buildings were less stringent than for downtown multi-story buildings, and surface parking ample. They were often built in conjunction with shopping centers, branches of banks, universities, airports, and hospitals.

Still some office/service buildings thrived in downtowns and uptowns, especially along main arterials, and have become the dominant land use in most downtowns. In recent decades, there has been a resurgence of companies relocating headquarters in downtowns. This is in part because infrastructure and amenities such as adequate mass transit are typically already available.

Future trends will depend on population shifts, technology advancements, green building requirements, construction costs, inflation, and transportation access.





The Christman Building in downtown Lansing is a 60,000 square feet, multi-story, multi-tenant office building that was renovated in 2008. This historic landmark is the world's first "triple platinum" LEED-certified building and recipient of numerous awards.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

Although in downtown Lansing, this single-story, single-tenant office building has characteristics of office buildings found in the suburbs.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

Located across the street from the Capitol in Lansing, these former residential buildings have been redeveloped into multi-tenant office space.

Source: Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.



RESOURCES

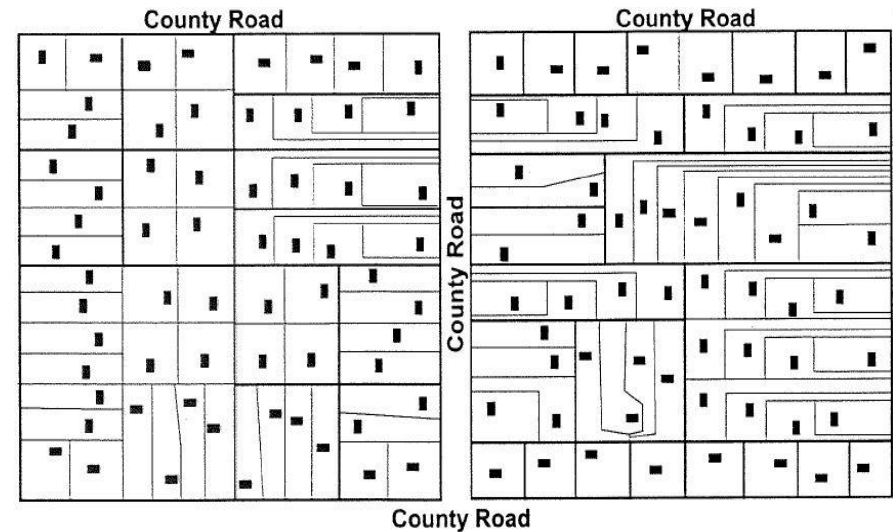
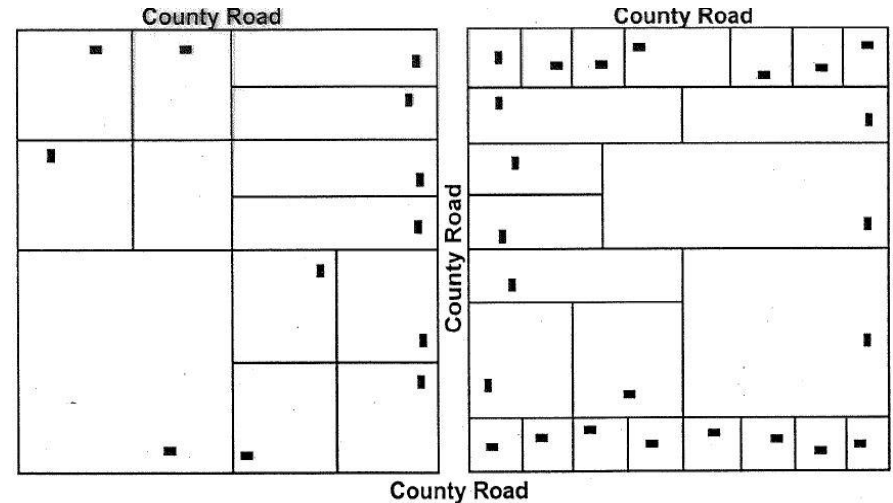
- 1) [Office Development Handbook. January 1998. Urban Land Institute.](#)
- 2) [Business Park and Industrial Development Handbook. January 2001. Anne Frej, Jo Allen Gause. Urban Land Institute.](#)

Agricultural Land-Large Lot Zoning

In Michigan, about 25% of the total population, 2.5 million individuals, live in rural areas. Rural and agricultural areas are marked by prairie land, forests, open spaces, agricultural production, and homes that often have multiple auxiliary buildings on large lots.

Open spaces, farms, and houses on large lots that offer considerable privacy make up the rural character that many individuals value. To retain rural character, many towns and rural areas have implemented zoning requiring a large minimum lot size, often five to 40 acres. Zoning for large lot sizes ensures that the density and demand for public services in rural areas remains low, and is intended to protect farmland. However, the effectiveness of this farmland preservation technique is in question if lot sites are less than 40 acres as it creates residential parcels that are too big to mow and too small to plow.

Lot sizes less than 40 acres result in homes near farm operations that may produce noise and dust, spread manure fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals often for many hours a day. This results in conflicts from non-farm residents that don't like typical farm practices. However, farmland can be carved up very quickly with large lots and over time, the farmland is replaced with large single family homes on large lots and only open space between homes remains. Courts have also frowned on lot sizes less than 40 acres because of the limited agricultural value they have and the impact the large lot has on the cost of owning a home in the country. Other techniques are more effective at protecting farmland.





Hypothetical existing conditions with one house on each existing parcel.

Source: Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

An excerpt from the Watertown Township Master Plan shows the community's goals for preservation of agricultural land for production and rural character.

Source: Watertown Township Master Plan. 2009. Watertown Township.

After dividing parcels into 10-acre lots, farmland is dramatically fragmented.

Source: Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

Watertown Charter Township

GOAL: Preserve lands particularly well-suited for agricultural production.

Objectives:

- Manage growth to reduce encroachment of non-farm uses into prime agricultural lands.
- Separate higher density development from agricultural areas.
- Discourage the premature conversion of agricultural lands into residential and suburban development.
- Coordinate land use decisions with utility planning.



GOAL: Maintain and enhance the Township's rural character and historical resources.

Objectives:

- Encourage the preservation, reuse, and rehabilitation of historic buildings and landmarks.
- Encourage the preservation of farmhouses, barns, silos and other architectural features which symbolize the Township's rural history.
- Discourage the premature conversion of agricultural lands and open spaces into residential and suburban development.
- Encourage new development and redevelopment that reflects the Township's rural and agricultural character.
- Protect scenic views throughout the Township.
- Protect natural elements which contribute to the overall rural quality of the Township, including fence rows, woodlots, fields,



RESOURCES

- 1) [Planning and Zoning for Farmland Protection: A Community Based Approach. 1987. American Farmland Trust.](#)
- 2) ["Saving American Farmland: What Works." 1997. American Farmland Trust.](#)

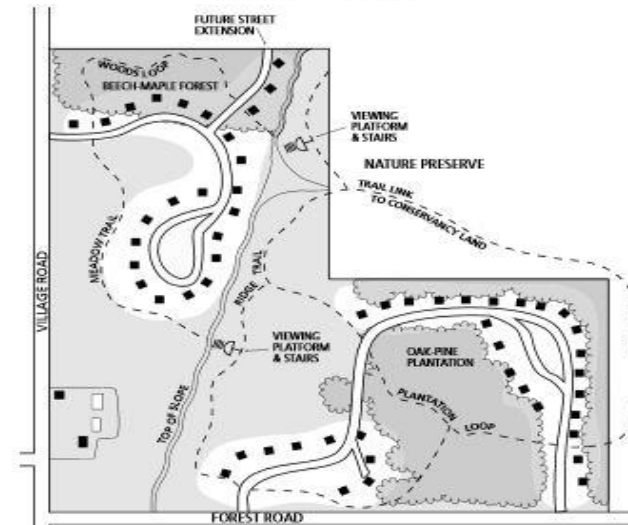
Agricultural Land-Quarter-Quarter Zoning

Quarter-quarter zoning is a land preservation technique that limits the number of splits on open space and agricultural land. A quarter-quarter is 1/16th of a square mile, or 40 acres. Quarter-quarter zoning preserves contiguous farm-producing land and limits non-farm residences in the area.

“The non-farm splits are usually regulated by minimum and maximum sizes, e.g., no less than one acre and not greater than two acres. They are often required to be contiguous to one another to avoid breaking up farmland into smaller or odd-shaped sizes.” ([Kalkaska County Community Center: Quarter Quarter Zoning, Zoning Techniques for Farmland Preservation.](#))



YIELD PLAN



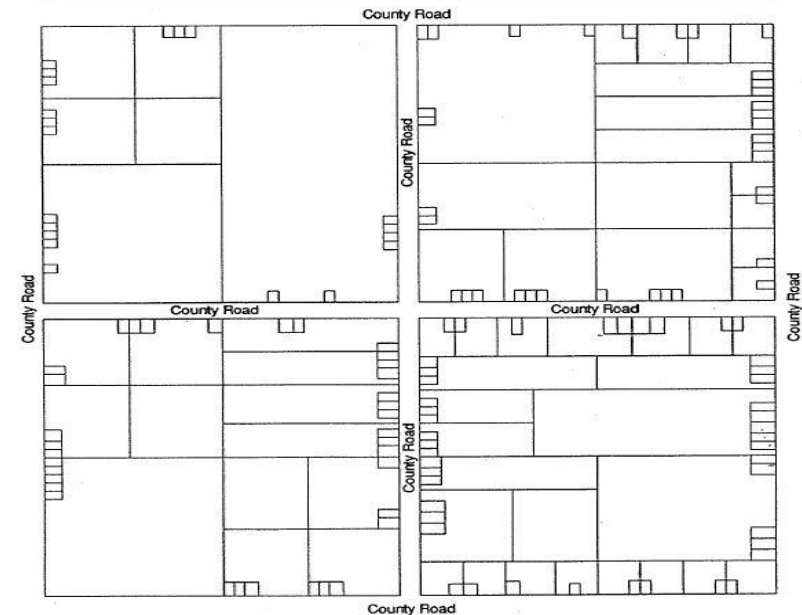
POTENTIAL ROADS AND TRAILS

Agricultural Land-Sliding-Scale Zoning

Sliding-scale zoning is a technique that allows rural, local governments to limit the number of parcel splits that occur on a property. In sliding-scale zoning, the parent parcel can only be divided a set number of times, based on its size. The rationale is that smaller parcels are already less useful for farming, so proportionately, more divisions should take place there, rather than on larger parcels. When parcels are divided, the minimum lot size of the smallest parcel may be as small as a one to two acres, while the others will be larger.

This technique preserves the rural character in an area, but does not preserve farmland as well as very large lot, Planned Unit Development, or Purchase of Development Rights approaches. Sliding-scale zoning helps ensure that what little farmland remains will be contiguous. This encourages landowners to keep farmland in agricultural production, while allowing divisions of land for new rural residential development.

Sliding Scale (Example)	
Area of Lot of Record	Maximum Additional Lots Permitted
1 to 10 acres	1
10.1 to 20 acres	2
20.1 to 40 acres	3
40.1 to 80 acres	4
80.1 to 160 acres	5
160.1 to 320 acres	6
over 320.1 acres	7





Guidelines for sliding-scale zoning land divisions which allow larger parcels to be divided more times than smaller parcels.

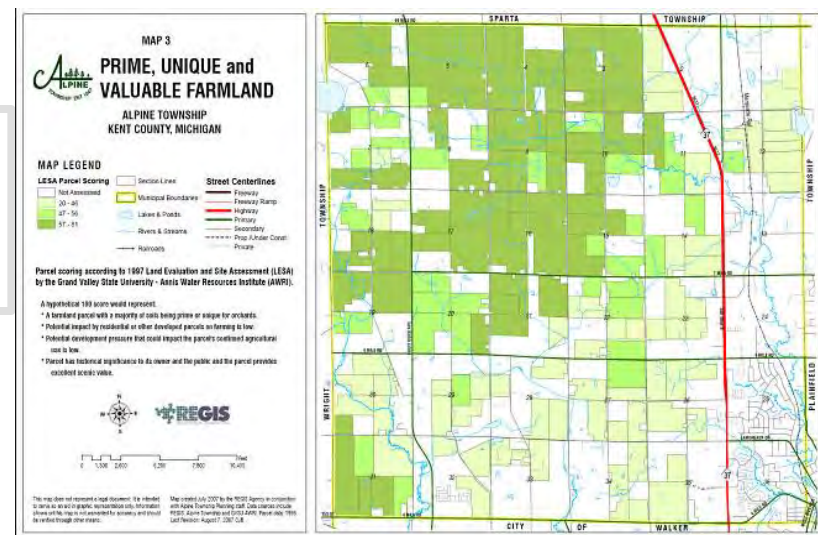
Source: [Kalkaska County](#).

The prime, unique, and valuable farmland in Alpine Township, Kent County. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) scoring system is used to identify and classify farmland.

Source: [Main Street Planning Company](#).

Sliding scale guidelines applied to four sections in a rural area shows large tracts of land can still be used for agricultural production.

Source: [Planning & Zoning Center at MSU](#).



RESOURCES

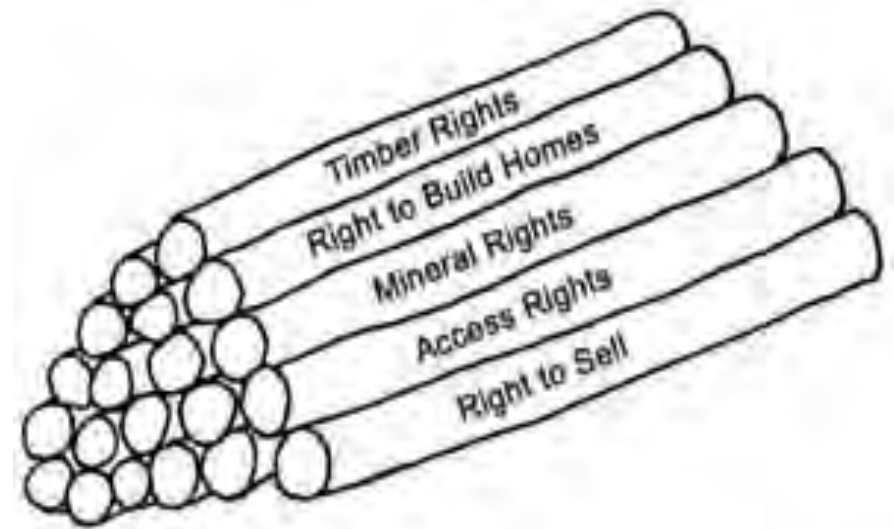
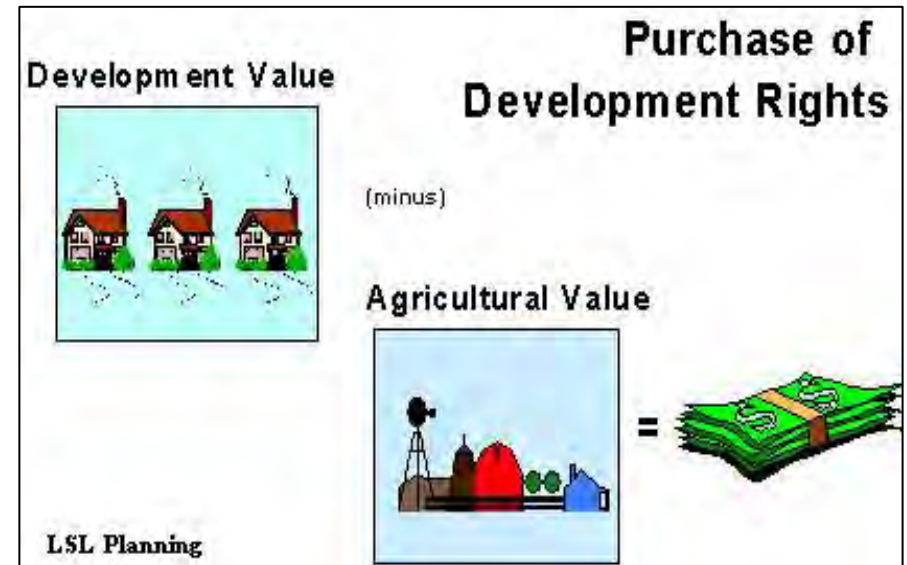
- 1) [Hillsdale County: Zoning techniques for farmland preservation.](#)
- 2) [American Farmland Trust-Michigan.](#)
- 3) "Sliding Scale Zoning." *Community Planning Handbook: Tools and Techniques for Guiding Community Change*. 1991. Planning & Zoning Center, Inc. Michigan Society of Planning Officials.

Agricultural Land-Easements

An easement is a legal document that restricts certain rights on a property. Agricultural easements protect agricultural values of a property when landowners give up the development rights on their farms. Easements for agricultural lands in Michigan generally take on two main forms: Conservation Development (a form of Planned Unit Development) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).

The PDR occurs when a government or nonprofit entity purchases development rights on farmland through a PDR program. This authority is given to local units of government through the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2008. The purchasing of development rights in an open space and rural area guarantees that this land will be preserved as open and agricultural. The rural landowner who is selling their development rights exchanges the development rights to an urban area for compensation. Urban areas that have been wounded by suburban sprawl are able to use the purchased development rights to increase new development and density, instead of continuing to develop farther and farther away from central cities.

See Clustering Buildings p. 1-75 in the Form chapter.





This graphic explains how a Purchase of Development Rights process works.

Source: [Voluntary Farmland Preservation Techniques. Kalkaska County Community Center. LSL Planning.](#)

A sample PDR template easement from the Ann Arbor PDR program.

Source: [Purchase of Development Rights. City of Ann Arbor.](#)

There are several rights that are associated with property, one of them being the right to develop.

Source: [Glossary of TDR Terms. Sustainable Building. King County.](#)

3. Restrictions. The Protected Property is subject to the following restrictions:

- a. Dividing or Subdividing the Protected Property: The Grantor shall not divide or subdivide the Protected Property. The Grantor further covenants and agrees not to undertake any action that would have the effect of subdividing or conveying any part of the Protected Property.
- b. Commercial, Industrial or other Activities: Commercial or industrial activity is prohibited except for those activities specifically permitted in Section 4 below. Under no circumstances shall athletic fields, golf courses or ranges, commercial airstrips or helicopters pads, motocross biking, or any other improvement or activity inconsistent with current or future agricultural production be permitted on the Protected Property.
- c. Installation of New Utilities: Installation of new utilities on the Protected Property is prohibited, except that the Grantor may install utilities necessary to carry out permitted uses of the Protected Property as long as such installation is consistent with the Purpose of this Conservation Easement Deed and is done in such a manner as to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, impact on prime soils. Under no circumstance may the topography be altered permanently. All earth movement must occur within a specific time frame, as determined by the City, and the topography must be returned to pre-existing conditions in accordance with the Baseline Document within one (1) year from the time earth movement activities cease. Future utility easements shall be subordinate to this Conservation Easement Deed. Prior to granting such an easement, the Grantor shall notify and obtain written approval from the City and the United States of proposed easement (s) via first class mail. Any

RESOURCES

- 1) [Ingham County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board.](#)
- 2) [Kent County: Purchase of Development Rights.](#)
- 3) [Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes. February 2012. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.](#)

Other Natural Land-Conservation Land Trusts

Conserving natural lands integral to our quality of life as open space offers attractive landscapes and enhances community values and identity. Protecting natural lands also has many ecological benefits, including preserving wildlife habitat such as forests and wetlands, as well as groundwater recharge areas.

Collective conservation must occur at the local, regional, and state level. Communities that are serious about preserving natural lands create a conservation land trust.

A Conservation Land Trust or Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that works with landowners and partners to permanently protect natural land. Conservancies are qualified to receive tax-deductible donations of conservation easements on land and donations of land for preservation and protection. For Other Natural Land - Conservation Easements see p. 1-51.

In addition to holding conservation easements, they also can hold land outright that is donated to them. When a property is gifted, it qualifies as a donation to a charitable organization and may qualify the giver for a tax deduction. Conservancies may also purchase land for significantly less than market value. The difference between the market value and the bargain sale value may be considered a charitable donation.

Source: [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).





The Bunker Preserve in Ingham County, held by the Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy, *“consists of 130 acres of forest, native prairie, wetland, and grassland. The wetlands are quite extensive and include emergent/open water, shrub, and forested wetlands. Vernal ponds critical for amphibian species are found on the property.”*

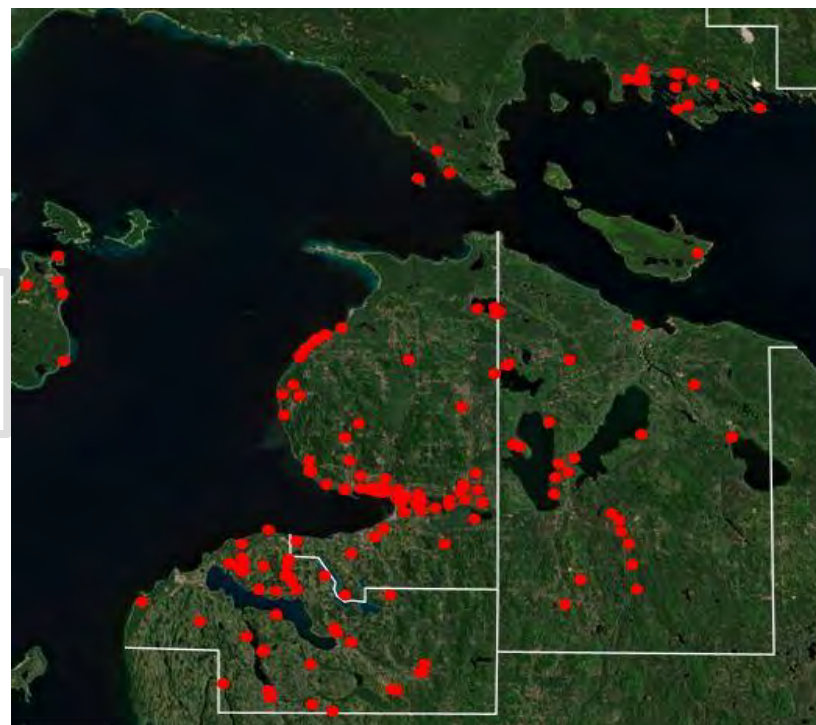
Source: [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).

Founded in 1972, the Little Traverse Conservancy holds many properties in northern Michigan.

Source: [Little Traverse Conservancy](#).

A Looking Glass Sanctuary, in Clinton County, was donated to the MNA by a local church *“with the goal of restoring the land to its native state . . . The preserve consists of southern floodplain forest, wetlands, a prairie habitat, and oak uplands; the Looking Glass River runs through the middle of the preserve.”*

Source: [Michigan Nature Association \(MNA\)](#).



RESOURCES

- 1) [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).
- 2) [Michigan Nature Association](#).
- 3) [The Trust for Public Land](#).
- 4) [Land Trust Alliance](#).

Other Natural Land-Conservation Easements

A Conservation Land Trust or Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that works with landowners and conservation partners to permanently protect natural land and farmland. They are qualified to receive tax-deductible donations of conservation easements on land and donations of land. For information on conservation owned-properties, see Other Natural Land – Conservation Land Trusts, p. 1-49.

Each property contains corresponding rights that includes allowing access to others and building, farming, or harvesting timber on the land, etc. The owner may use an easement to give up certain rights, one such example being a conservation easement.

Conservation easements are designed to protect the conservation values of a property while the property remains in private ownership. Typically rights such as the right to subdivide or the right to develop are given to a conservancy. When the conservation easement is sold to a conservancy, the IRS recognizes the easement may reduce the value of a property and considers the lost value as a charitable donation. But the easement, a legal document that is recorded with the county register of deeds, must be given in perpetuity to be recognized as a charitable gift. While the easement donor may sell or donate the property to another person, the conservation easement stays with the land and all future owners of the property must abide by the terms of the easement.

Source: [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).





These 140 acres in Eaton County are held under conservation easement by the Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy. They consist of 80 acres of open grassland, 50 acres of forested land, and 10 acres of wetlands.

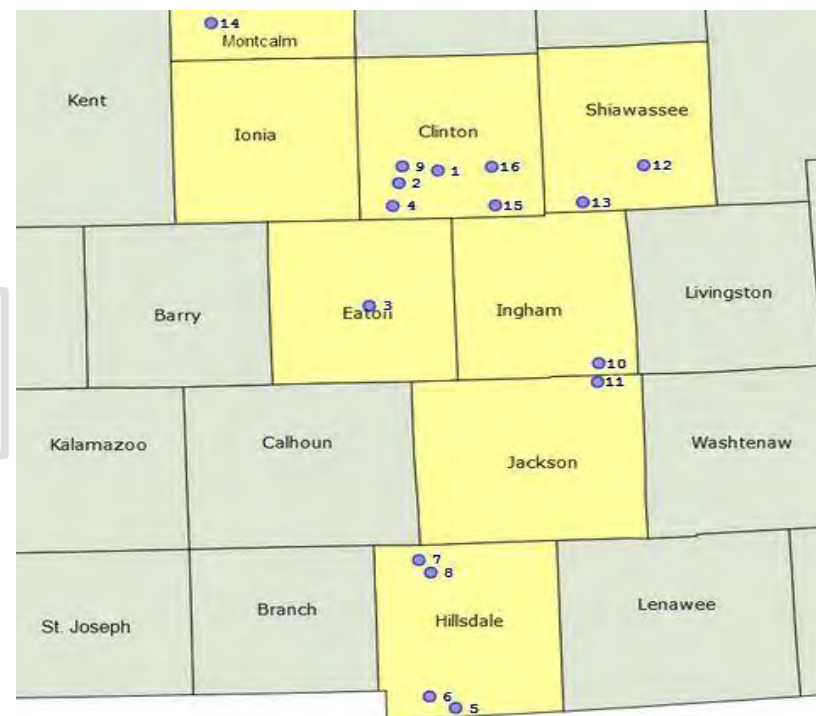
Source: [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).

Of these 16 conservation easements, eight are natural land only, two are farmland only, and six contain both.

Source: [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).

This property in Hillsdale County is held under conservation easement by the Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy. The 51 acres consists entirely of forested valley through which a branch of the St. Joseph River flows.

Source: [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).



RESOURCES

- 1) [Michigan Model Conservation Easement](#).
- 2) [Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy](#).