## Chapter Table of Contents

**GOVERNANCE: Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Communities</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Communities</td>
<td>2-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town and Rural Communities</td>
<td>2-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>2-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Plans</td>
<td>2-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Plans and Staff</td>
<td>2-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>2-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Areas</td>
<td>2-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Areas</td>
<td>2-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Areas</td>
<td>2-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential above Commercial in Downtowns</td>
<td>2-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning for Housing Diversity</td>
<td>2-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streamlined Processes</td>
<td>2-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form-Based Codes</td>
<td>2-31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Administrative Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Improvements</td>
<td>2-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Budget</td>
<td>2-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td>2-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Sharing and Consolidation of Services</td>
<td>2-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Jurisdictional Planning and Implementation</td>
<td>2-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and Service Boundaries</td>
<td>2-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placemaking Assessment Tool</td>
<td>2-47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In today’s world of increasingly complex challenges—from shifting economic power and social inequalities to aging societies and depleting resources—municipalities are under intensifying pressure. Now more than ever, they must rapidly adapt and deploy policies to meet these challenges.

But when confronting these challenges, communities struggle with implementing sustainable policies. As pressure rises to address issues quickly and cost effectively, communities sometimes shift debts and create unfair burdens for future generations.

“The lack of equal opportunities in labor markets, education, and health care put the future viability of entire societies at risk. And many communities fail to prioritize the efficient use of natural resources for long-term sustainability. . . In order to ensure quality of life for present and future generations, stakeholders throughout society must pursue and demand more long-term thinking. And doing so requires more innovation in governance—in making policies work for us all, now and in the future.”

(About the SGI. Sustainable Governance Indicators. http://www.sgi-network.org/2014/About.)

Citizens and government officials must work together to find these approaches and ways of governing that support both short-term and long-term community goals.

Some communities are meeting these complex sets of challenges head on, testing new ideas while breathing new life into decades of tried and true governing techniques.

Principles of sound governance are not new but communities are beginning to employ them in unique ways: streamlining regulatory processes, increasing transparency, updating plans and zoning regulations, reimagining community engagement, exploring new opportunities for cost savings, and sharing techniques that work.

What does sustainable governance look like? Sustainable governance engages citizen participation. Its services function effectively and efficiently for all community members while cooperating to solve common problems. (Sustainable Communities online. Governing Sustainably. http://www.sustainable.org/governance.)

Indicators of sustainable governance in a community include policy, ordinances, and taxes that support sustainability; regional collaboration with feedback loops for improvement; waste and toxics management; transparency and accountable implementation; and urban boundary systems that manage growth and development.

As can be seen in the graphic on the opposite page, sustainability and intergenerational responsibility gird all activities associated with governing a community. In this graphic, concepts and overarching principles on the perimeter are universal to each activity within. Those activities become more focused as one moves toward the center of the circle.
GLOSSARY

Center – A center of activity or downtown along the transect. It is often the urban core zone on a transect.

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

Intergenerational Responsibility – Using sound, rational judgment to make decisions that account for impacts on future citizens. It is the duty of current generations to ensure that the quality and quantity of resources (natural, social, etc.), opportunities, and access that are currently enjoyed are available to future generations.

Node – If the urban core on a transect represents a center of activity or downtown, a node is 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, but many smaller nodes.

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.
Communities in Michigan have been legally authorized to prepare master plans since 1931. Through the Michigan Planning Enabling Act in 2008, the Legislature overhauled three outdated local planning acts and combined them into one, creating much needed uniformity. Communities that establish planning commissions are required to create and approve a master plan as a guide for development, and such plans must be reviewed and updated if needed every five years. Regional and local master plans, subarea plans, and infrastructure plans are key tools to implementing sustainability. Not only do such plans express the vision for a community, but they provide the foundation for zoning and other implementation tools that lay out the steps to achieve it. A typical table of contents of a master plan includes the following and also are represented in the graphic on the opposite page:

- Introduction,
- Regional setting or context,
- Existing conditions and trends,
- Goals and objectives,
- Infrastructure (transportation, sewer, water, etc.),
- Future land use plan,
- Zoning plan, and
- Implementation.

Master plans address a wide range of topics like land use, transportation, environment, economy, energy, civic engagement, and social justice, and they also may address many other locally important issues. Implementation sections list action steps (who does what and by when) and include performance measures so staff and citizens know if progress is being made towards goals. Today’s plans are often short, concise, highly visual, and include form elements to portray the community’s desires. They also utilize broad citizen and stakeholder input techniques like charrettes to define the vision for the community.

Why Should Planning Occur?

- The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires local planning commissions to develop a master plan.
- Planning permits communities to make choices and set goals rather than just accept what happens.
- Planning contributes to orderly growth and development.
- Planning helps prevent wasteful expenditure of public and private funds. Planning enables local governments to anticipate service demands and to plan, locate, and build public service facilities accordingly. Costly mistakes are thus eliminated or at least reduced.
- Planning is a key way to allocate scarce resources. Without a public planning process, decisions that determine how land and other community resources are used are largely private decisions. Planning permits the community at large to have a say in how the community develops.
- Planning helps to protect property values largely through zoning by controlling the impact of one land use on a different use on adjacent or nearby land.
- Planning contributes to economic development. It provides information and data to those considering major investments in a community. It allows prospective investors to assess the ability of a community to meet its needs for public services as well as provide amenities the company’s employees may require.
- Planning sets the stage of building quality places that can attract new workers, businesses, and add to the tax base.


The techniques presented generally represent the differing geographies and settings where planning occurs.
Corridor Design Portfolio


http://www.lansingmi.gov/media/view/Design_Lansing_Comprehensive_Plan__ADOPTED_April_9__2012__Low_Rez/3523

Goals

Economy

Land Use

Vision

Natural Features

Infrastructure

Housing

Parks & Other

Community Facilities

Image source (bottom left): 2012-2016 Master Plan. Ingham County Parks & Recreation Commission.

Urban Communities

If Michigan’s cities were lined up by population, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Ann Arbor would be among the old cities at the top. A few suburbs also make the list like Warren, Sterling Heights, and Clinton Township. Historic cities often have unique assets (jobs, culture, deep water port) that make them stand out as the center of commerce and culture in their region even when they have a small population. All of these urban communities must plan for and nurture those assets to anchor the region and help make it competitive.

Many of Michigan’s largest urban areas have struggled to maintain population and businesses for a variety of reasons. But many too, have undertaken major planning efforts in recent years, signaling their readiness for a new phase of growth and renewal. Most recent plans that consider the community in its entirety use the transect to describe and plan for different areas of the community. There may be a center (downtown) and various nodes along a connecting corridor that receive special attention. These areas may have a vision for their desired look and feel, which is articulated through street design, building form, and appearance standards. These new plans usher in unprecedented civic engagement techniques, strategies, and efforts.

Because urban areas are geographically large, the master plans may be supplemented by Subarea, Neighborhood, or District Plans that break the community into more manageable pieces. This is important because retaining neighborhood quality and authenticity is of paramount concern. Subarea plans can identify an achievable vision and the tools for making it a reality.
Flint’s new master plan provides illustrations of typology, images, and descriptions, leaving little room for uncertainty of the community’s desires.

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

**Design Lansing** is Lansing’s new comprehensive plan. Adopted in 2012, four guiding principles lead the plan: sustainability, placemaking, livability, and stewardship. This map identifies broad types of community character and ½ mile walkable radii, and reflects desired change areas and future land use.


**RESOURCES**

[http://lu.msue.msu.edu/2008MPEA.htm](http://lu.msue.msu.edu/2008MPEA.htm)

[http://grcity.us/design-and-development-services/Planning-Department/Pages/Master-Plan.aspx](http://grcity.us/design-and-development-services/Planning-Department/Pages/Master-Plan.aspx)

[http://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning-development/planning/Pages/City-Master-Plan.aspx](http://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning-development/planning/Pages/City-Master-Plan.aspx)
Michigan’s mid-sized communities are categorized by a population between 35,000 to 100,000 persons and includes cities and many suburban townships. While Michigan’s largest cities have struggled to retain their populations, mid-sized ones have had less of a struggle. Bedroom communities often lack a set of unique and identifying assets that urban cities possess and are subject to regional economic downturns.

Large suburban townships may desire more urban amenities like walkable downtowns. Stuck between worlds, many find themselves filling in parking lots and retrofitting existing development to accommodate some higher density along key transit corridors and at key nodes, while preserving the suburban or rural nature that drew many people to them originally.
Adopted in 2014, Mt. Pleasant’s Master Plan includes a section on implementation which identifies key initiatives, who is responsible by when, progress, and how they will be paid for. Performance measures like these help the community understand how to move from a plan to implementation.


To preserve agricultural land and encourage growth and development of existing urban areas with public infrastructure already in place, Delhi Township implemented a public infrastructure boundary (a.k.a. urban service boundary in red) in the southern portion of the community.


RESOURCES


Small Town and Rural Communities

Michigan’s small towns are typically communities with less than 15,000 in population. They are a diverse set of communities ranging from relatively rural communities to ones within larger metro areas. Examples include Williamston, Webberville, Traverse City and Luna Pier.

Recent research by Christopher Leinberger on shifting housing market trends towards walkable urban places reveals that a region needs a blend of walkable urban environments that are all connected, preferably via mass transit. Small towns and rural communities not only provide unique living opportunities for their residents but also for those visiting. Small towns and rural communities are an important component of a successful region, ensuring that a variety of experiences from urban to rural are offered within a region. Small towns at the centers of rural townships are often rural hubs of social and economic activity, but can also function as a standalone center of commerce.
This image along Grand River Avenue looking west toward Webberville’s downtown shows current conditions. Webberville’s master plan contains a section on a Grand Vision that includes both a land use master plan and conceptual illustrations. *Source: GoogleMaps. 2014.*


This concept along Grand River Avenue looking west toward Webberville’s downtown shows a bold vision of a gateway into the community as well as a more defined downtown. Webberville is one center along the Grand River Avenue corridor in the Tri-County Region. *Source: Land Use and Recreation Master Plan. 2013. Village of Webberville. [http://www.villageofwebberville.com/Portals/18/MPDraft10-9-13.pdf](http://www.villageofwebberville.com/Portals/18/MPDraft10-9-13.pdf).*

**RESOURCES**

County planning is highly varied and dependent on the availability of planning staff in Michigan. Depending on whether staff and/or a county planning commission exist, none to four roles are exercised: 1) provide education, 2) supply technical assistance, 3) coordinate planning efforts between jurisdictions, and 4) prepare a general, framework plan. Emmet County, a higher capacity county, enumerates some of its significant roles on its website:

- Provide a regional scope to planning work, promoting coordination.
- Prepare/maintain a County Land Use Plan and Recreation Plan.
- Fill planning voids between State/Multi-County Planning Agencies and individual municipalities.
- Deal with services and facilities that cross municipal lines (i.e., highways, solid waste, trailways, parks, drains/sewers).
- Provide planning advisory services and resources that smaller communities may not have, and be an information center for development and conservation projects (i.e., zoning, land divisions, model ordinance language).
- Promote uniform development standards among several adjacent municipalities.
- Assist local units in satisfying grant agency requirements for plans and plan documentation.
- Carry out educational and promotional services in the County and among local units.
- Administer zoning regulations for unincorporated areas that may not have ordinances of their own.
- Set area-wide land use goals, encouraging local units and adjacent counties to coordinate good land use practices, and otherwise take a leadership role where such is deemed necessary or desirable to prepare for growing future needs.
Oakland County provides a clearinghouse of links to master plans and zoning ordinances to communities within its borders. The county also completes an annual land use inventory and keeps a county-wide composite master plan.

*Source: Community Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan Links. Advantage Oakland.*

Nearly 9,000 citizens across six counties asked that growth occur in existing developed areas of Grand Traverse County.

*Source: Grand Traverse County. A Master Plan for Grand Traverse County. 2013.*

A balanced growth ethic was a central part of the Leelanau County General Plan. This graphic illustrates the many concepts that were accepted as part of that principle.

*Source: General Plan. 2005. Leelanau County.*
[http://www.leelanau.cc/old/downloads/chapter_4_2.pdf](http://www.leelanau.cc/old/downloads/chapter_4_2.pdf)

RESOURCES

Regional Plans

In today’s economy that is based more on knowledge commodities, regions and states are competing globally for customers and resources. The region has become the principal geography for international trade, making it critical that regions have up-to-date economic and infrastructure plans that are based on regional assets and informed by local visions.

There are a variety of entities that provide a range of regional planning services. These include voluntary sub-state units of government known as state-designated planning and development regions (SPDRs) which are also known as regional planning commissions, regional planning and development commissions, or councils of government (COGs). Sometimes SPDRs are also Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) that conduct transportation planning in metropolitan areas. Michigan county planning commissions, if so designated by the county board of commissioners, can also “perform metropolitan and regional planning wherever necessary or desirable” (Michigan Planning Enabling Act).

The SPDRs provide technical assistance and planning services. They coordinate local plans, fill gaps, identify issues and opportunities that may not be apparent at the local level, and help resolve overlapping issues. Many times, regional plans are a prerequisite to receiving federal and/or state financial assistance to implement local plans and projects so regional planning entities partner with local jurisdictions to apply for, receive, and accept grants. They also prepare regional transportation, watershed protection, solid waste, affordable housing, and economic development plans, all tying back to their governmental constituents’ local plans. (Michigan Association of Planning. Proposed Michigan Regional Councils Act. June 17, 2011.)

To help improve regional economic development planning and include other major players like workforce development boards, along with other regional economic development entities like universities, the Snyder administration has initiated a major regional prosperity initiative. A new geography for delivery of economic development services has been established and state agencies are now providing services based on the new geography.
The Grand Vision, a community vision for the future of transportation, land use, economic development, and environmental stewardship in the northwest Michigan region serves as guidance for Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford Counties.


The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and communities in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties continue to refer to, utilize, implement, and update the region’s plan from 2005 which focused on wise growth.


Governor Snyder realigned service delivery boundaries for regions in 2013, reducing them from 14 to 10. For more information on Regional Economic Development Plans see p. 5-5.


RESOURCES
2) Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. http://www.tri-co.org/
3) Regional Prosperity Initiative. MDTMB. http://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/0,5552,7-150-66155--,00.html
Michigan communities recognize the importance of planning and developing for the future in a way that ensures there will be healthy and vibrant places to live, work, play, and learn in the future. There are three pillars that most sustainability plans rest on: a healthy environment, a high quality of life for citizens, and economic vitality. (Audubon International. Sustainable Communities Program). Communities are facing the sustainability challenge in a variety of ways: by developing and adopting sustainability plans, creating a sustainability department with staff, supporting and promoting sustainability programs, or including principles of sustainability into their master plans and zoning ordinances.

Coordination within departments of local units of government is important to the success of sustainability initiatives. At a county or regional level, planning entities are supporting local jurisdictions by providing technical assistance, programs, and projects. In mid-Michigan, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) prepared the Regional Growth: Choices for our Future (1997 and ongoing) plan which helps guide sustainable development in the region. It received signature approval by a majority of communities that have local planning and zoning authority. TCRPC also developed Greening Mid-Michigan, a regional vision for green infrastructure, and the Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability to support sustainability efforts in the region.

A companion tool to this Portfolio was created by MSU’s School of Planning Design and Construction. The Sustainability Audit Tool provides communities with a baseline score and can be used to measure progress in achieving sustainable and green development. Accompanying local official training is also available online. The trainings convey best practices for implementing local sustainable communities and green development tools and techniques to help meet regional goals.
Using the LEED-ND checklist as a starting point, Grand Rapids updated its zoning ordinance to address sustainability by emphasizing neighborhood design and connectivity. The ordinance takes a unique approach to parking, renewable energy, landscaping, and natural buffers.


In 2012, over 90 local governments pushed themselves to be more sustainable by taking the Green Communities Challenge.


Ann Arbor scoured over 20 city plans to produce an overarching sustainability framework that integrates all city planning. It also produced a sustainability action plan that connects goals with quantifiable targets.


RESOURCES
“Zoning was created in the early 20th century as a response to problems associated with overcrowding in central cities and the intrusion of heavy industry into retail and residential areas. Developed in the later years of the industrial revolution, zoning sought to address these problems through separating incompatible uses and limiting residential density. However, the evolution of zoning in concert with rapid suburbanization has had the effect of dispersing suburban development over large areas of land and creating a host of problems such as loss of farmland, increased environmental impacts, greater auto-dependency, inefficient provision of public services, and loss of community character within the suburbs. While there is a resurgence of interest in older, more traditional urban communities, existing zoning regulations make redevelopment of urban communities more difficult by applying suburban zoning standards. Larger setbacks and excessive parking requirements make many cherished urban buildings and spaces nonconforming.

The conventional form of zoning currently used throughout Michigan and the United States is what is commonly referred to as Euclidean zoning. This name is derived from the 1926 United States Supreme Court decision in Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co. (272 U.S. 365) to uphold the constitutional validity of zoning. Euclidean zoning has been in place in Michigan since 1921 with the City and Village Zoning Act, Public Act 207 of 1921. Enabling legislation for townships and counties soon followed in 1943.”

The 2008 Michigan Zoning Enabling Act overhauled the three outdated zoning acts and combined them into one, creating much needed uniformity.

“Michigan communities have experienced many changes over the past 80 years. With this, a new set of challenges in how to regulate development resurrects. Instead of concerns with overcrowding in cities, the focus is now on the negative impacts that uncontrolled sprawl has on the landscape of Michigan. And while the need to separate housing from heavy industry is still a valid concern, planners are now concerned with use-segregated suburbs, where it is not possible to walk to the corner store or for children to walk to school.

The New Urbanism movement (1980 to present) has attracted a great deal of interest in re-creating walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. As an outgrowth of this movement, form-based codes are the latest technique to re-examine the underlying zoning principle of separating uses and instead provide new means to develop vibrant mix-use communities. This is accomplished by placing a strong focus on the creation of proper urban form, wherein a mixture of uses can flourish.

In response to the limitation of Euclidean zoning, a number of zoning techniques have been created with varied levels of success. These include mixed-use planned unit developments, cluster development, performance zoning, and design standards.” (Michigan Association of Planning. Smart Growth Tactics. Issue 28: Form-based Code.)

The image on the opposite page is an example of an element in a form-based code with concepts related to form throughout the image. Many of the images presented address how communities can use zoning to achieve these goals.

More Focus on Design and Form

Other Elements of a FBC
- Regulating Plan
- Administration
- Definitions

3.0 HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS
3.1 Building Height
3.1.1 Building height is measured in stories.
3.1.2 Buildings shall be a minimum of two stories and a maximum of three stories in height. The third story must be located fully within the roof structure.

3.2 Floor Height
3.2.1 Allowable floor height is a minimum of 8', maximum of 14', as measured from floor to floor.
3.2.2 Ground floor must be located a minimum of 18' above sidewalk.

3.3 Accessory Building Height
3.3.1 Accessory building shall be a maximum of 2 stories in height. Second story must be located within the roof structure.

3.4 Parapet Height
3.4.1 Parapets must be a minimum of 2’ in height.
3.4.2 Pitched Roofs may not be less than 6:12 (rises:run); an approximately 12:12 pitch is preferred.

4.0 USES
4.1 Uses
4.1.1 In the principal building, residential use allowed on all floors.
4.1.2 In the accessory building, parking, office and residential allowed on the ground floor and office and residential allowed on the upper floors.
4.1.3 Office use subject to conditions.

5.0 FACADE REQUIREMENTS
5.1 Transparency
5.1.1 A minimum of 25% of the front and side facade shall have transparent, non-reflective windows.
5.1.2 No area of 30% of the front or side facade may have no transparency.

5.2 Building Entrance
5.2.1 The building's main entrance must be located on the primary street.

6.0 FACADE ELEMENTS
6.1 Allowable Base Types
6.1.1 Stoop, porch, or enclosed porch are permitted base types.

6.2 Allowable Cap Types
6.2.1 In Context Zone 3, a Pitched Roof, Pitched Roof with dormers or a Parapet are allowable cap types.
6.2.2 In Context Zone 4, a Pitched Roof or Pitched Roof with dormers are allowable cap types.

6.3 Facade Proportions
6.3.1 Differentiate each rowhouse separately with a vertical emphasis line.
6.3.2 Orient windows vertically and define the edges of windows.

Standards for
- Public Spaces
- Building Form
- Architecture
- Landscaping
- Signage
- Environmental Resources
Urban Areas

Urban areas across the country are experiencing extraordinary revival and renewal. Michigan is no exception. Driven in part by populations that are seeking out walkable urban places, there is renewed interest in urban centers.

Simultaneously, many of Michigan’s urban communities have undertaken major planning efforts in recent years, signaling their readiness for a new phase of growth and renewal.

But many communities struggle under traditional zoning ordinances that do not allow the types of amenities that urban populations are seeking (higher density, mass transit, walkable environments, etc.). This convergence of factors is encouraging communities to update their implementation devices (i.e. zoning ordinances and complementary design guidelines and standards) to reflect new goals and visions for their communities.

Several tools are being deployed in this area including Transit-Oriented Development (see p. 1-115), Form-Based Codes (see p. 2-31), Residential above Commercial in Downtowns (see p. 2-25) and Suburban Form along Key Connecting Corridors (see p. 1-71).
East Lansing adopted a form-based code in 2006 for the East Village District which is bounded by Bogue Street, Grand River Avenue, Hagadorn Road, and the Red Cedar River. “Building envelope requirements assure that the streetwalls in the District create a pedestrian-oriented, human-scale environment while at the same time allowing flexibility in architectural design.”

Source: East Village District Zoning Ordinance (Division 6). City of East Lansing.

Adopted in 2011, Ann Arbor’s Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines provide guidance for context and site planning, buildings, building elements, and character districts.


A 2014 MSU Urban and Planning student Practicum project explored the feasibility of a form-based code in a portion of Lansing. This table compares elements of various implementation strategies.


RESOURCES


Suburban Areas

Much like their urban counterparts, suburban areas are also experiencing pressure to embrace walkable urbanism. Historically dominated by auto-oriented development, many suburban communities are looking for tools to enable more walkable and human-scaled redevelopment in areas of their communities that can support such development.

Unfortunately, suburban communities are finding that traditional zoning ordinances require significant overhauling to allow for greater densities, different building forms, reduced parking ratios, and other policies and design standards that allow for more walkable and urban-oriented infill and redevelopment. Fortunately, many examples exist and several tools are being deployed including Transit-Oriented Development (see p. 1-115), Form-Based Codes (see p. 2-31), and Residential Above Commercial in Downtowns (see p. 2-25).

“Since 1950, metropolitan areas in the United States have been divided into the two broad U.S. Census categories of “central city” and “outlying counties,” many times referred to in the popular press as “urban” and “suburban.” New development patterns suggest this old dichotomy is less meaningful today. Now, the only reason to use the old dichotomy is to show how far we have moved beyond it.

A far more useful understanding of metropolitan America is “walkable urban” and “drivable sub-urban” development. Because both types of development can occur in a metro’s central city and in its suburbs, the old dichotomy is now obsolete.

Walkable urban development is characterized by much higher density and a mix of diverse real estate types, connected to surrounding areas via multiple transportation options, such as bus and rail, bike routes, and moto vehicles. For those living or visiting a walkable urban place, everyday destinations such as home, work, school, stores, and restaurants, are within walking distance.

Walkable urbanism is already a powerful driver of the economy, as shown by substantial downtown and suburban town center redevelopment, the redevelopment of regional malls into mixed-use developments, brown and green field walkable urban development and the rise of the New Urbanism movement.” (Foot Traffic Ahead: Ranking Walkable Urbanism in America’s Largest Metros. 2014. Christopher B. Leinberger & Patrick Lynch.)
The City of Novi was developed as a traditional suburb lacking a true downtown, but due in part to its easy highway access became a regional attraction for employment, entertainment, and shopping. In 1998, the City began investigating ways to address this deficiency and focused on the Main Street district, a nontraditional design concept.


Many communities are moving their ordinances to user-friendly formats that cross reference and are interactive such as this one from clearzoning©.


To accomplish Novi’s vision for the Main Street project, it’s zoning ordinances needed to allow the design of a unique traditional neighborhood community. The City’s existing Town Center (TC) zoning ordinance was refined to “promote the development of a pedestrian accessible, commercial service district in which a variety of retail, commercial, office, civic, and residential uses...” (“Planning and Design of a Suburban Neotraditional Neighborhood.” Brian Wolshon and James Wahl. TRB Circular E-C019: Urban Street Symposium. http://www.urbanstreet.info/1st_symp_proceedings/Ec019_b2.pdf.)

RESOURCES


Rural Areas

One quarter of Michigan’s citizens reside in rural areas. Rural economies are driven by natural resources such as agriculture, forestry, mining, and a wide variety of recreation and tourism opportunities. They also often support private and quiet lifestyles on very large lots.

Many rural communities cite a desire to preserve their rural heritage and culture as a goal within their master plans. The vision of the community often seeks to offer future residents the same solitude and natural beauty that current residents and visitors enjoy.

This is typically accomplished through preserving large parcels of land, thereby limiting the number of lots. Several tools have been used for decades to ensure that rural character is maintained, including Large-Lot Zoning (see p. 1-41), Quarter-Quarter Zoning (see p. 1-43), and Sliding Scale Zoning (see p. 1-45).
Delta Township uses an urban service boundary to protect cropland, parks and conservation areas in its extreme northwest and southwest corners of the township. It also established a 20-acre minimum lot size in its zoning ordinance in the southwest portion.


4-H exhibitions at County Fairs are a part of rural Michigan life and tradition.


Preserving rural character is an important element of a successful regional strategy. A region needs to offer a variety of experiences, including the rural one. Agricultural production and food security area also an important part of a regional strategy.

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

RESOURCES

Most downtown buildings originally allowed residential use above commercial use below but many communities no longer permit it, yet wonder where customers have went. Adapting those spaces is also more energy efficient and cost effective than building new in many cases.

The MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities® Program Best Practice 2.1-Zoning Regulations, outlines evaluation criteria requiring communities to allow for a variety of housing options. Expectations include:

- Accessory dwelling units,
- Attached single family units,
- Stacked flats,
- Co-housing,
- Live/work,
- Residential units above non-residential uses,
- Mixed-income housing,
- Corporate temporary housing, and
- Housing for those with special needs.

One of the ways to meet future housing demand for more housing in urban, walkable settings and more diversity in housing stock is to allow mixed-use developments that combine residential and commercial uses. This is often done more easily in downtown districts where multi-story buildings can provide retail on the first floor and residential opportunities on upper floors. What is old is new and what is new is old.

In recent years, developers have built several mixed-use developments with retail on the main floor and residential above in downtown East Lansing along and adjacent to Grand River Avenue.

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

Renderings in development standards show clearly what type of development is expected.


Allowing for flexible space that can accommodate a variety of housing needs (stacked flats, studio, live-work, etc.) is an important consideration when supplying residential opportunities in downtown.


RESOURCES


As communities seek to diversify their housing stock, there are an increasing number of zoning tools at their disposal. Three of these are: inclusionary zoning, cottage zoning, and accessory dwelling units.

“Inclusionary zoning is a technique in which developers are encouraged or required to include a certain amount of affordable housing in development projects. Most inclusionary ordinances offer incentives that can offset costs and provide valuable flexibility for a project. Common incentives include density bonuses, which allow a developer to build more units than normally allowed, and flexibility for parking, height, and setback standards. Some ordinances allow the developer to build affordable homes off-site, or to pay a fee in lieu of constructing the homes. The fees are paid to a community’s housing trust fund to finance affordable housing programs and projects throughout the community.

Cottage zoning allows for developments of small, single-family homes that are clustered together around a common area, often with shared parking. Cottage housing developments are often built within existing neighborhoods under provisions that permit higher densities than regulations might normally allow, with design guidance that limits the impact of the added density.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are small homes created on a lot with an existing home. Often referred to as granny flats or mother-in-law apartments, ADUs might be located within the home, as a detached unit, or above a garage or other accessory building. Because zoning generally restricts their size, ADUs are typically more affordable than full-size homes.” (Grand Traverse County 2013 Housing Strategy. Grand Traverse County. http://www.co.grand-traverse.mi.us/Assets/Departments/Planning/2013+Grand+Traverse+County+Housing+Strategy.pdf.)
Inclusionary zoning ordinances ensure that new growth includes a range of housing types and prices, while providing the added benefit of integrating different housing types throughout new developments and existing neighborhoods. See also Affordable Housing (p. 1-21).


An example of cottage zoning implemented.

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

Generally less than 1,000 square feet in size, these compact homes can result in lower homeowner costs while providing options for singles, empty nesters, seniors, and other small households.


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RESOURCES

**Streamlined Processes**

**Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC)** is a statewide program offered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation that certifies Michigan communities who actively engage stakeholders and plan for the future. An RRC certification signals to business owners, developers and investors that the community has removed development barriers by building deliberate, fair and consistent processes. The RRC Best Practices, developed by public and private sector experts, are the standard for evaluation. The information in the following section is reproduced from the [RRC Best Practices](#) with permission.

The [MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities®](#) program states “zoning is a key tool to implement plans in a community.” Inflexible or obsolete zoning regulations, lengthy or complex reviews, and subjective approval processes can discourage (re)development by forcing developers to pursue rezoning or variance requests, disturbing project timelines, and creating uncertainty, which in turn can raise costs and impact the feasibility of the project. “Communities should look to streamline ordinances and regulate for the kind of development that is truly desired.”

RRC Best Practice 2.1-Zoning Regulations outlines the following evaluation criteria:

- The governing body has adopted a zoning ordinance that aligns with the goals of the current master plan.
- The zoning ordinance is user-friendly and accessible online.
- The zoning ordinance provides for areas of concentrated development in appropriate locations and encourages the type and form of development desired.
- The zoning ordinance includes flexible zoning tools to encourage development and redevelopment.
- The zoning ordinance allows for a variety of housing options.
- The zoning ordinance includes standards to improve non-motorized transportation.
- The zoning ordinance includes flexible parking and green infrastructure standards.

---

**Parking Requirements**

- No requirements for existing structures Downtown; new buildings 1 space per 1,000 square feet.
- Parking reductions for secure bike parking, and more for showers and bike work stations.
- Parking spaces for carpooling or vanpooling counts as 2 regular parking spaces.
- Parking requirements may be reduced for buildings, structures or uses within 300 feet of a Bus Rapid Transit station or 100 feet of a transit stop.
- Planning Director has the ability to waive 50% of all parking.
- 1 bike parking space for every 10 automobile parking spaces.
Transparent and accessible processes and tracking devices, like this permit managing website that allows users to track a permit through the application process, are an efficient way to streamline processes and make the development process predictable.


Standardized, user-friendly, and accessible forms are another way to streamline processes.

Source: Zoning Administrator Certificate program from the Planning & Zoning Center at MSU.

Zoning ordinances should allow for flexible parking requirements that consider the availability of on-street parking, requiring pervious parking spaces, and allowing for interconnected vehicle passage between lots and shared parking agreements.


RESOURCES


Adopted by a municipality, a form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principal for the code. It offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation and is becoming more widely used.

“Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words, clearly drawn diagrams, and other visuals. There are five main elements to a form-based code:

1. Regulating Plan – A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply. Similar to a zoning map in conventional zoning ordinance.
2. Public Standards – Specifies elements in the public realm including sidewalks, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees, and furniture.
3. Building Standards – Regulations controlling the features, configurations, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
4. Administration – A clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process.
5. Definitions – A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.”

Source: Form-Based Codes Defined, Form-Based Code Institute.
http://formbasedcodes.org/definition


Marquette’s Downtown Waterfront District form-based code includes instruction on interpreting the regulating plan.

Source: [Marquette Waterfront Form-Based Code.](http://formbasedcodes.org/) March 2007. Marquette Downtown Waterfront District. SWMPC.

Form-based codes provide for development that is compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian friendly to create livable neighborhoods and healthy vibrant communities. This concept suggest how a form-based code could create a gateway into the Village of Suttons Bay.


**RESOURCES**


One of the concepts rooted in sustainability is intergenerational justice or intergenerational responsibility. “Intergenerational justice means that today’s youth and future generations must have at least the same opportunities to meet their own needs as the generation governing today. The concepts of intergenerational equity and intergenerational justice are not new, having been used for decades in the contexts of economics, social policy, and natural resource stewardship. However, our responsibility to future generations has taken on new significance in the face of increasing evidence of anthropogenic global warming.”


This is increasingly difficult for municipalities that are faced with a multitude of complex, interlacing, and sometimes competing issues that are displayed in the graphic on this page. But ensuring that proper foresight and planning are accomplished through balancing budgets, self-enforcing fiscal responsibility, and conducting and implementing community planning can go a long way toward balancing today’s and future needs. Cross-jurisdictional planning and implementation are also tools that can be used for sustainability. Reaching across jurisdictional boundary lines for collaboration and consolidation and sharing of services can not only help individual municipalities be more sustainable, but it can have positive benefits for the region as well.

On the opposite page is an illustrated overlay of the Delta Charter Township library with some of the major themes and techniques of this chapter.

Image source (opposite page): Holly Madill, Planning & Zoning Center at MSU. Overlay illustration by Na Li, Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University.
Blend of Incentives and Regulation
Consolidation
Cross-Jurisdictional Planning and Implementation
Fiscal Responsibility
Capital Improvements

A capital improvements program (CIP) is the result of the preparation and updating of a plan listing all new major public facilities to be built, substantially remodeled, or purchased in a community within the foreseeable future. “Capital improvements” (also called “public improvements”) are all major physical facility projects over and above annual operating expenses. A CIP establishes a schedule, or program including cost estimates and the sources of financing, for each capital improvement project according to its priority in the community. A six-year programming period is the most widely utilized, although the CIP must be updated annually to reflect changing priorities and financial resources in the community.

Public investment in capital facilities has a significant impact on the size, location, and timing of future development projects in the community. For this reason, the CIP must be developed with a clear understanding of community objectives regarding growth and land use as outlined in the master plan. Michigan’s planning enabling legislation stipulates that in all municipalities with an adopted master plan, the planning commission must review all proposed public improvements for consistency with the master plan before construction can begin. This assures that large-scale public expenditures are coordinated with long-term planning goals. The CIP bridges the gap that otherwise exists between the comprehensive plan and the actual construction of public facilities. It is the most effective vehicle for approving new public improvements. CIP activities must also be coordinated with similar activities in neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions. (Excerpted from the MSPO Community Planning Handbook.)

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<td><strong>Municipal/Public Facilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>City Hall</strong></td>
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<td>2. Replace Carpet in Courtrooms #1 and #2</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
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<td>3. Carpet Custom HVAC, Air Quality Improvements</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td>4. Joint City Hall Video Recording System</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Replace Exterior Entry Doors to City Hall Entrance</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td>6. Replace Freight Elevator with a Lift</td>
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<td>7. Replace Main Air Handler and Return Air</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td>8. Replace Electrical Panel and Transformers in Penthouse</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td>9. Remodel Wastewater Plant Courtyard, Court Lobby, Second Floor, Office</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<td>10. Remodel Courtyard, Office</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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</table>

**Priority A (Urgent)** Projects which cannot reasonably be postponed. These may be needed to complete an essential or a partially finished project, or to maintain a minimum level of service in a presently established Township program. Also, any project needed to address an emergency situation.

**Priority B (Necessary)** Projects which should be carried out within a few years to meet the anticipated needs of a current Township service, or replacement of unsatisfactory facilities.

**Priority C (Desirable)** Projects needed for the proper expansion of a Township service. The exact timing of which can wait until funds are available.

**Priority D (Deferrable)** Projects which would be needed for ideal operation, but which cannot yet be recommended for action. They can be postponed without detriment to present services.
The City of East Lansing’s CIP includes expenditures related to municipal facilities such as City Hall, library, fire station, rescue vehicles, Department of Public Works, community centers, park facilities, infrastructure and utility improvements, IT projects, parking and paving, and economic development projects in addition to specific improvements to downtown.


Although for Massachusetts communities, this is a sample schedule for preparing a Capital Improvements Plan.


All projects submitted for inclusion in the Delhi Township CIP are prioritized by a classification system adapted from Principles and Practice of Urban Planning, published in 1968 by the International City Manager’s Association (pp. 392-394).

Source: Capital Improvements Program. Delhi Township.

### RESOURCES


According to the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy, more than two-thirds of Michigan’s local governments experienced declines in property tax revenue and state aid in 2010. More than a third continued to experience declines in 2013. (Michigan Suburbs Alliance.) From 2005-2012, 84% of Michigan cities lost General Fund revenue while 25% lost over a quarter of their General Fund revenues. Communities have seen their tax base decline, employee numbers and benefits drop, and a reduction in benefits to new hires. (Department of Treasury.)

The state-level Local Government Task Force on Municipal Finance is examining the issue and developing recommendations such as:

- Encouraging local governments to adopt multi-year budgets and long-term forecasting.
- Updates to the property tax act and considering other taxing mechanisms without reducing revenue sharing.
- Strengthening support for unfunded mandates.
- Streamlining tax reversion processes in some communities.
- Developing early warning signs and improved reporting requirements.

Many communities have structured consolidation and shared-service agreements with adjacent public entities (municipalities, counties, school districts, universities, etc.) to save costs and improve services. See also Service Sharing and Consolidation of Services p. 2-41, Cross-Jurisdictional Planning and Implementation p. 2-43, and Shared Use of School Facilities p. 1-201.
“Reforming the current system, ensuring Michigan’s local governments can balance their budgets and provide services, is critical. According to the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy, less than half of Michigan’s local governments believe they can maintain existing service levels without reform.” (Michigan Suburbs Alliance.)


An entire issue of the Planning & Zoning News is devoted to understanding and weighing the costs and benefits of development patterns.


Without a balanced budget that is based on a predictable revenue stream, most of the quality of life improvements described in this portfolio will not be possible.

Source: Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University.

RESOURCES


Because not all property is owned publicly (most of it is in private ownership) communities often need to partner with or rely entirely on the private sector for achieving some of its goals such as business retention and attraction or development that molds to a specific design standard. Typically there are two strategies that communities use to achieve goals that they cannot realize alone: regulations and incentives. Regulations are most effective when they are enforced. Communities should not adopt regulations that they can’t or don’t intend on enforcing. While human behavior tends to favor the incentive approach, in practice both regulations and incentives are necessary to achieve community goals and are often employed in tandem.

Incentives are used to acquire results that communities want without regulations or within regulations. Examples include building density, low/moderate income units, use type, and open space preservation. These incentives can be applied to zoning, economic development initiatives, and within building design. Some programs used in the Tri-County Region to encourage redevelopment along the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Avenue corridor include the “Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act, Brownfield Tax Increment Financing, Ingham county Land Bank, and Neighborhood Enterprise Zone.” (The Capitol Corridor Plan. 2014.)

Benefits of incentives are often more clear for the private sector. Communities may have to remind stakeholders that using incentives is a holistic approach and public funds for incentives supports broader community goals and don’t just benefit the private good. This can also be reinforced by recalling the goals of the incentives.

When establishing incentive programs, clear goals are required for a number of reasons. Clear goals and targets guide safeguards and policies to ensure that there is no chance they could be manipulated. If working cross-jurisdictionally, clear goals are also essential as many agencies may administer incentives or direct incentive-based programs. Having all stakeholders focused on the target will advance achievement.

### SCHEDULE A: DWELLING MIX DENSITY BONUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Density Bonus</th>
<th>Dwelling Mix Based on Project Size</th>
<th>50 to 100 Units</th>
<th>100+ Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>10% bonus</td>
<td>10% mix</td>
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<td>15% bonus</td>
<td>15% mix</td>
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<tr>
<td>20% bonus</td>
<td>20% mix</td>
<td>40% mix</td>
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</table>

b. Design Incentives

The city may allow up to a twenty percent (20%) increase in permitted density for a development that includes any two of the following housing types according to the following Schedule A:

i. Multi-family dwellings containing more than four (4) units per building;
ii. Single-family detached dwellings;
iii. Two-family dwellings, triplexes, or four-plexes; or
iv. Attached townhome dwellings (no more than six (6) dwelling units per townhome structure).
Density bonuses are used to aggregate development and conserve open space. 

This example shows how design incentives are communicated within a community’s design guidelines and standards. It establishes density bonuses for various residential types. 

RESOURCES

Referencing Transit-Oriented Development from a proposed Bus Rapid Transit line on Michigan Avenue/Grand River Avenue in the Tri-County Region, a recent corridor plan highlights the importance of incentives. “Public incentives should target attracting development to “prove” the market for urban developments, improving walkability, reinforcing employment destinations, and adding housing to leverage employment access.

Source: Dover-Kohl and Associates, under contract to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, reproduced with permission.
Local governments use state funding, called revenue sharing, to pay for core government services such as police protection, fire services, roads, water, sewer, and garbage collection services. Revenue sharing began in the 1920s when the State of Michigan streamlined tax collection by eliminating local taxes and replacing them with state taxes. The State collects and records these taxes and then reimburses local jurisdictions to offset the general budgets of local communities. Since 2000, the State has continually reduced revenue sharing payments to local units of government and 10 consecutive years of cuts have left local communities more than $4 billion short on revenue sharing. While revenue sharing still continues, communities must provide a consolidation plan to receive funds.

This, combined with the Great Recession’s shrinking tax base and resulting lack of revenues for municipalities, communities have become creative in their budgeting and service-delivery processes. First steps are usually internal reorganizations that bring a cost savings; or they may be external, partnering with other local units of government to realize a cost savings in service delivery or operations. This type of service sharing can result in significant savings if carefully done. For example, preparing joint newsletters, sharing equipment, joint insurance pools, and cooperative purchasing agreements. The next step is consideration of consolidation of service across jurisdictions such as fire or police departments. Communities may have a variety of agreements in place across multiple budget items in any given year.

See also Cross-Jurisdictional Planning and Implementation p. 2-43.
The City of Tecumseh lists all of the ways that it consolidates with partners in different budget categories and lists the estimated cost savings associated with actions.

Source: City of Tecumseh, MI, Plan to Cooperate, Collaborate, and Consolidate Services.

This Table of Contents provides a glimpse inside Eastpointe’s consolidation and shared services strategic plan.


Many communities are consolidating public safety services to realize cost savings and to qualify for revenue sharing. The City of Williamston, the Village of Webberville, Leroy, Williamston, Wheatfield and Locke Townships established the Northeast Ingham Emergency Service Authority to provide fire suppression, life safety, ambulance/paramedic, and rescue services.


Executive Summary.................................................................3
Municipal Services Inventory....................................................5
Advisory Reports Summaries...................................................10
Public Management Reform Methods......................................17
Legal Considerations..............................................................19
Conclusions and Recommendations........................................21
Policy Statement of Eastpointe City Council..............................22
Current Joint and Collaborative Services..................................23
Future Planned Initiatives.........................................................25
References................................................................................27

RESOURCES
1) Revenue Sharing Programs. Michigan Department of Treasury. http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,7-121-1751_2197---,00.html
Cross-Jurisdictional Planning and Implementation

Many of the issues that planners address like public health, transportation, natural resources, poverty, and economic development know no jurisdictional boundaries yet cross-jurisdictional coordination can create efficiency, safety, and sustainability in efforts to combat these challenges. Additionally, it is increasingly important for municipalities to work together across jurisdictional boundaries to ensure that regions are strong and successful.

While county and regional planning entities can help broker discussions and facilitate solutions at municipal boundaries (see Regional Plan p. 2-13), communities also work more directly with neighbors to address issues at their common borders. Some communities do this informally through established relationships between departments and staff.

The Joint Municipal Planning Act (Act 266 of 2003) allows communities to formalize relationships and create joint planning commissions for the purposes of creating, adopting, and implementing a plan or zoning ordinance in a defined area in multiple jurisdictions. These informal and formal efforts have resulted in joint master plans and ordinances, coordinated plans, 425 agreements, and growth management plans.

These types of cross-jurisdictional plans address common issues among neighboring communities, bring cohesion in community and character and continuity to regions, cost savings and revenue sharing, and enhance safety and sustainability goals.

See also Service Sharing and Consolidation of Services p. 2-41.
Adopted in 2011, the City of Grand Haven and Grand Haven Charter Township Joint Robbins Road Corridor Plan was intended to improve safety and traffic operations as well as overall development character by integrating design standards and implementing access management.


Three Fremont area communities’ joint master plan smoothed the way for a number of developments that may not have otherwise been possible.


The City of Frankenmuth and Frankenmuth Township began a joint planning effort in the mid-1980s to preserve area farmland. The most recent Growth Management Plan was adopted in 2010. More than 60 annexations have occurred within the urban growth boundary since the first plan was adopted.

Source: 2010 Joint Growth Management Plan, City of Frankenmuth and Frankenmuth Township.

RESOURCES


“Urban growth boundaries and urban service districts are planning tools that promote more efficient, orderly, and compact development. For communities adopting them, they are two components of a municipal growth management program designed to uphold community character, protect water and other natural resources, promote efficient development and use of public infrastructure, stimulate community and economic development, and impart long term, comprehensive thinking about the community’s future.

An urban growth boundary is the line on a map showing the demarcation between land that has or may receive concentrated development (urban, suburban) and land that has or may receive less development (rural, scattered). On one side of the boundary line are predominantly low-density land uses such as farms, timberland, large residential lots, and natural or protected lands. On the other side are more intensive land uses and densely developed lands, such as commercial and industrial uses, multifamily and small lot residential, schools, government facilities, and transit services. An urban growth boundary provides a clear picture of what lands will be developed for a given period of time as specified by a growth management plan” (Urban Growth Boundary and Urban Service District. Chapter 1.8. Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development. 
http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/epp/documents/ilupt_chpt_1.8.pdf). It should be a product of the master plan process and may require zoning amendments or an overlay district.

An urban service district (or boundary) designates where development within the growth boundary occurs by establishing where water and sewer services are provided or planned for. An urban service boundary may be the same as or smaller than the urban growth boundary, but never larger.

When to expand the boundaries and a boundary’s impact on housing prices are two areas where conflict may occur.
In 1974, Oregon mandated the creation of urban growth boundaries in each city. Today, Oregon’s 241 cities all have an urban growth boundary, a line drawn on planning and zoning maps showing where the city expects to grow. This is the boundary surrounding the Portland metro area, dated August 2014.


In 1969, the Midland Urban Growth Area, a two-mile band that was defined by the City alone, was created to promote orderly urban growth. Within the band, Midland instituted a “no annexation, no water” policy. Today, Midland and its surrounding townships see it as a valuable planning tool. This map shows Midland’s City limits.


A preliminary Greater Lansing Area Urban Service District Area and Boundary was developed by a committee that established 10 criteria. Based on these criteria, supplied data, and analysis, a draft boundary was drawn during a series of planning exercises.


RESOURCES


The primary goal of the Placemaking Assessment Tool is to help communities evaluate readiness for strategic placemaking. A secondary goal is to help communities decide which type of placemaking should be pursued. There are approximately 98 Strategic Placemaking questions on topics such as master plans, downtown development plans, corridor improvement plans, zoning ordinances and other codes, economic development, community development, green development and activities.

The Placemaking Assessment Tool walks community stakeholders and local officials through the following self-assessment steps:

- Determine if there is enough of a “Place” to warrant engaging in placemaking activities.
- Determine if the community has the infrastructure in place to support placemaking.
- Determine if the culture of the community is sufficiently accepting of the idea of placemaking to engage in it, or if building a culture that will accept placemaking is one of the first steps.
- Determine which type of placemaking to engage in, or if a community needs to start with one type and then proceed to another.
- Provides a resource list for more information on placemaking, economic development, infrastructure planning, etc.

This tool can be used alongside or separate from the Smart Growth Readiness Assessment Tool (SGRAT) or alongside the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) assessment process operated by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.
RESOURCES

1) Placemaking Assessment Tool, forthcoming from the MSU Land Policy Institute.
2) MiPlace Partnership Initiative. www.MiPlace.org
4) Project for Public Spaces. www.pps.org

A short version (33 questions) of the Placemaking Assessment Tool is available for those communities or organizations seeking to evaluate their readiness for standard, creative or tactical placemaking. A longer, more thorough assessment is available for communities seeking to evaluate their readiness for strategic placemaking.


The Placemaking Assessment Tool provides an extensive and valuable list of resources regarding a variety of topics related to Placemaking.

Source: Placemaking Assessment Tool. MiPlace Partnership Initiative.

Placemaking may be most effective in large or small towns, in the downtowns, along key corridors, and at key nodes on those corridors. This graphic shows that placemaking opportunities differ depending on the location along the transect.

Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company.

Part Five: RESOURCES & GLOSSARY

This resource section provides a list of agencies, institutions, organizations, publications and web sites that offer additional and supporting information for those pursuing an assessment of their community’s readiness to engage in placemaking, or those simply wanting to learn more about placemaking and related topics. Resource topics provided below are:

- Active Living and Healthy Communities
- Arts and Culture
- Citizen Input/Participation
- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Form and Form-Based Codes
- Planning and Planning for Placemaking
- Planning/Master Planning Update Process
- Sustainability
- Transportation Infrastructure/Streets/Walkability
- Urban/Urbanism/CITIES