



Muskegon County  
Comprehensive Plan

2004

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## **Acknowledgements**

### ***Map Steering Committee Members***

Blue Lake Township  
Cedar Creek Township  
City of Montague  
City of Muskegon  
City of Muskegon Heights  
City of North Muskegon  
City of Norton Shores  
City of Roosevelt Park  
City of Whitehall  
Community Foundation for Muskegon County  
Consumers Energy  
County of Muskegon  
Dalton Township  
DTE Energy  
Egelston Township  
Fruitland Township  
Fruitport Township  
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Holton Township  
Laketon Township  
Michigan Coastal Management Program, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Michigan Department of Transportation  
Moorland Township  
Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce  
Muskegon Area First  
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District

Muskegon Community College  
Muskegon Conservation District  
Muskegon Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Muskegon County Cooperating Churches  
Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council  
Muskegon County Road Commission  
Muskegon Township  
Ravenna Township  
Sullivan Township  
Timberland RC&D  
United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Village of Fruitport  
Village of Ravenna  
West Michigan Lakeshore Association of Realtors  
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Whitehall Township  
White River Township

# Chapter 1: Muskegon Area-Wide Plan

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## What is the MAP?

The Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP) is a comprehensive county-wide process integrating land use and other regional concerns. The process is a true grassroots effort to develop a county-wide vision for Muskegon County. The process was initiated and is being lead by local units of government and community leaders. As a result, each city, township, village, and the county all have an equal voice in the development of the county-wide vision.



*The mission of the Muskegon Area-wide Plan is to involve citizens in creating a shared vision for the future of Muskegon County.*

The MAP establishes visions and goals for the county, based on analysis of existing data sources, extensive mapping, and public participation during the process. An implementation plan completes the MAP process.

It is important to note that neither the MAP Steering Committee nor the County of Muskegon has the land use authority under Michigan law to implement the shared county-wide vision through zoning. However, the local jurisdictions who have been full participants in the planning process have that authority. Therefore, the implementation of land use policies will ultimately be under the control of the townships, cities and villages in Muskegon County. Other policies included in the MAP can be implemented through partnerships between a wide range of players within the community.

### **How the MAP Project Began**

The MAP project began in 1999 when the supervisors of Dalton, Laketon, and Muskegon Townships were discussing the

updates of their existing comprehensive plans. During that conversation, it was suggested to include more communities and develop a regional plan. As the discussion continued, it was quickly decided to invite every unit of government in the County of Muskegon to participate in the process.

The three township supervisors then approached the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) for assistance in coordinating the effort. The WMSRDC is a regional planning agency that promotes and fosters regional development in West Michigan through cooperation amongst local governments. The Regional Commission, under the direction of the three supervisors, called a multi-jurisdictional planning meeting with the 27 units of government plus the County of Muskegon to discuss the development of a county-wide plan in early 2000. The meeting was successful with overwhelming support for the idea. By the end of 2000, a 40-member steering committee was formed with each jurisdiction, as well as many community agencies and organizations, appointing a member and alternate to serve on the committee. The MAP Steering Committee members are community leaders representing agriculture, environmental interests, business development, local government, education, and public interest groups.

Once the MAP Steering Committee was formed, the Regional Commission was designated to coordinate the project and act as staff to the committee. After several months of organizational meetings and fundraising efforts, the project officially kicked off during the summer of 2002.

### **Why is the MAP Project Important?**

The Muskegon area combines economic opportunity with an exceptional quality of life and unique natural resources. For

generations, Muskegon County's inland lakes, miles of rivers, and spectacular Lake Michigan waterfront have attracted individuals from throughout the Midwest and beyond. Over the next 20 years, Muskegon County's population is expected to grow by 13.3 percent to nearly 195,064 people. Although this does not seem startling, the amount of land that is predicted to be developed during that same time period is alarming. The rate of land consumption in Muskegon County over the next 20 years is nearly 20,000 acres of land. This disproportional consumption of land in Muskegon County is much greater in comparison to the counties surrounding Muskegon County.

Muskegon County's urban areas struggle to attract residents and retain jobs. Township governments are challenged to finance public improvements and to provide services with limited resources. Sensitive environmental and agricultural lands are increasingly encroached upon. Resolving this problem requires a comprehensive approach: i.e., the MAP project. Simply expanding services such as roads and water and sewer lines is not feasible.

One obstacle to crafting effective solutions lies in the existing structure of our governments: most land use plans guiding future development are prepared and adopted by local units of government, while

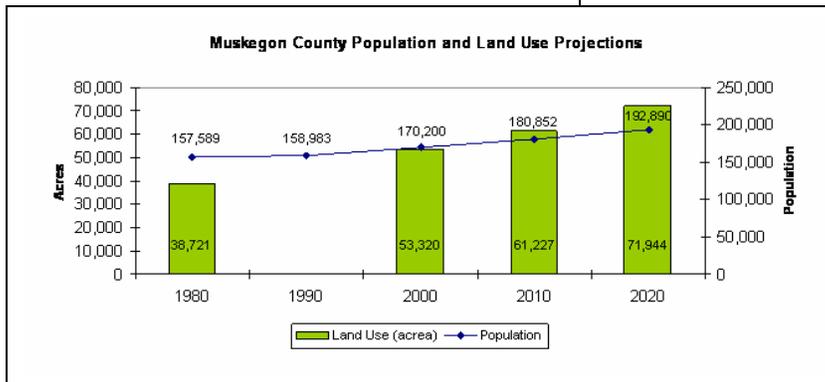


Figure 1.1: Muskegon County Population and Land Use Projections

Muskegon County shares borders with the fast-growing counties of Kent, Ottawa, and Newaygo. In addition, the past decade has been marked by growing public concern over increasing traffic congestion, air pollution, loss of farmland and green space, as well as infrastructure costs flowing from the current urban development patterns in Muskegon County. These development patterns are dominated by low-density single-use residential, business, and commercial development, usually on prime agricultural lands, with the automobile being the only viable means of transportation.

most transportation and infrastructure planning is conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, and the County Wastewater Authority. The region needs to view new development, land use,

transportation, and infrastructure systems at the same level to ensure any public investment decisions are smart decisions. In addition, such issues as the loss of open space and agricultural lands are directly affected by how and where Muskegon County grows.

The major challenges before Muskegon County are how to plan the best use of undeveloped and agricultural land, how to protect our natural environment, how to maximize urban redevelopment and infill opportunities, and how to coordinate these efforts throughout Muskegon County.

## **A History of Planning and Zoning in the State of Michigan**

During the mid 1900s, the Michigan state legislature passed numerous acts granting counties, cities, townships, and villages the ability to regulate land use within their jurisdiction. These acts include the following:

- MCL 125.201 et seq. County Zoning Act
- MCL 125.101 et seq. County Planning Act
- MCL 125.31 et seq. Municipal Planning Act
- MCL 125.271 et seq. Township Zoning Act
- MCL 125.321 et seq. Township Planning Act

Currently under the above planning and zoning acts, Michigan townships, cities, and villages cannot practice exclusionary zoning. This means that each jurisdiction has to allow for a number of different land use categories including residential, commercial, industrial, and open space. For example, a jurisdiction, by law, is required to allow for industrial land within its borders, even if the residents do not wish to have that form of development in their community. This reality causes the biggest concern for the 1,241 townships in Michigan. In theory, based on current Michigan Law, townships have the potential to develop into cities, and many are over-zoned. The term over-zoned means that if a jurisdiction were to completely develop based on its current zoning ordinance, there would be more people and buildings than the existing infrastructure and land could handle.

In recent years, land use and planning has come to the forefront in the state's legislative arena. As a result, Governor Jennifer Granholm, with support from the

Michigan House of Representatives and Senate, created the bipartisan Michigan Land Use Leadership Council to study land use trends and provide recommendations to preserve and protect Michigan's environment and economy.

Where possible, the Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP) strives to remain consistent with the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council's Final Report.

## **Planning and Zoning in Muskegon County**

Muskegon County was incorporated in 1859 with a total population of 3,947. At the time, the county was divided into six townships that included Muskegon, Norton, Ravenna, White River, Dalton, and Oceana. Today, nearly 150 years later, Muskegon County consists of seven cities, four villages, and 16 townships totaling a population of more than 172,000.

All 27 local units of government in Muskegon County have an active Land Use/Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance in place as allowed by Michigan Law. However, in recent years, local units of government are facing planning issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries including roads, water, sewer, air quality, school districts, etc. In addition, Muskegon County is the only county in western Michigan from the Traverse Bay area to the Indiana border that does not have an active county-wide comprehensive development plan as allowed by Michigan Law. As a result, local governments and community leaders are attempting to work together to address these challenges through the MAP project, which will shape and direct the future of Muskegon County for the next 20 years.

## **Chapter 2: Gaining a Feel for the Community**

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## Gaining a Feel for the Community

During the first phase of the MAP project, an extensive public participation program was conducted in order to gain an understanding of the community's perception about the past, present, and future of Muskegon County. A number of public involvement techniques were undertaken as a result. The techniques include the following activities:

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis,
- Stakeholder Interviews,
- Community Survey, and
- Community Forums.

The results of these public participation techniques are outlined below and summary reports are included in the Appendix. The results of the public participation efforts have had a tremendous effect on the formulation of the MAP Visions and Goals.

### **SWOT Analysis**

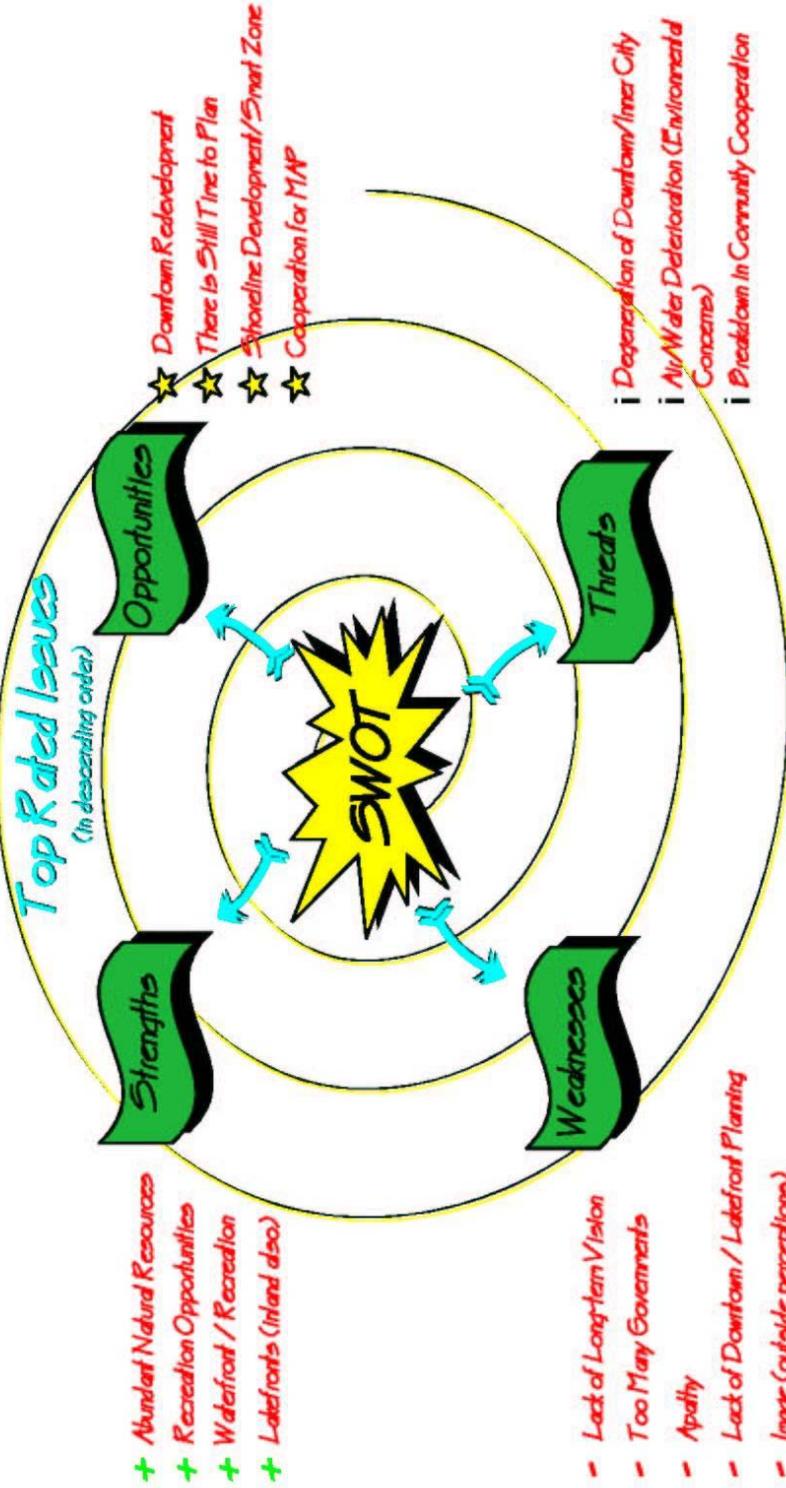
During the summer of 2002, the MAP Steering Committee conducted a SWOT Analysis exercise to assess the existing and future conditions of Muskegon County. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis is a highly effective way to identify a community's existing conditions/attitudes and possible future direction, as well as, assist a community to focus on the areas where it is strong and where its greatest opportunities lie. Following is a list of the top issues identified by the Steering Committee for each of the four SWOT Analysis categories. A complete report of the SWOT Analysis can be found in Appendix C.



# Muskegon Area-wide Plan: Steering Committee SWOT Analysis

Assessing Your Current and Future Situation

July 30th, 2002



HNTB

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

In August 2002, 19 persons who have a vested interest in the future of the Muskegon area were interviewed by HNTB Michigan Inc. The list of persons interviewed was generated and agreed upon by the MAP Steering Committee and includes individuals that have been highly involved in Muskegon County from both the public and private sectors. The purpose of the Stakeholder Interviews was to gain additional information about the area's history along with the existing conditions. The 19 stakeholders interviewed, collectively have 830 years of experience in the county and local knowledge of the Muskegon area. They were generous with their time and eager to see the potential of the Muskegon area be realized.

The majority of the stakeholders interviewed were aware that many planning studies have taken place, not only in Muskegon County, but also at the regional level. The stakeholders were eager to see the outcomes of these studies and plans, as well as the MAP project. For this reason, implementation became a primary focus of the MAP. The stakeholders also noted that there have been positive strides towards a collaborative atmosphere between the municipalities, but also noted that there is still room for improvement. Of all the issues identified during the interview process, the five that were heard most frequently are identified below, in no particular order. A complete report of the Stakeholder Interviews can be found in Appendix B.

### **Key Issues**

*What is the future of Downtown Muskegon?*

*What will become of the Muskegon Mall property?*

*The Muskegon area needs an identity that celebrates and encompasses all that Muskegon has to offer.*

*The quality of life in the Muskegon area is outstanding and therefore must be protected and enhanced in order to be recognized as a great place to visit, work, live, and play.*

*There is a necessity for a collaborative approach to this project – the entire community and all decision makers must take ownership in order to make the Muskegon Area-wide Plan a successful document that will lead to Muskegon's future identity and health.*

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### **Community Survey**

A community phone survey was conducted in November 2002. The survey was prepared with assistance and final approval from the MAP Steering Committee. EPIC-MRA, a full service firm with expertise in public opinion research and analysis conducted the survey. A total of 302 adult residents of Muskegon County participated in the 20-minute phone survey. Respondents were selected utilizing an interval method of randomly selected records of households with publicly listed phone numbers. The sample was stratified so that every area of the county was represented in the sample, proportionate to its population within the county.

The results of the survey now serve as a clearing house for the concerns, likes, and dislikes of the residents of Muskegon County. This information is an invaluable source of data to help plan for future growth and development in the county. The

following are some of the main results from the community survey.

When respondents were asked what they liked most about Muskegon County, 34 percent of respondents cited, “water” (the proximity of lakes, rivers, and activities related to them) as their top choice. In a related question, when asked what they disliked most about Muskegon County, 21 percent of respondents stated that there was, “nothing” they disliked about Muskegon, and 16 percent were undecided or did not know what they disliked about the county.

According to EPIC-MRA, it is indeed good news for Muskegon County to have one feature identified by more than one third of all respondents as something they liked, with no particular items jumping out as something they disliked about Muskegon County.

Results of the survey are summarized in the chart below. The Executive Summary and Demographic Analysis of the Community Survey can be found in Appendix C.

### **Survey Results**

#### ***Why do you live in the community where you reside?***

To live in a place that is quiet .....	88%
Safety from crime .....	79%
A strong sense of community .....	77%
Less traffic congestion .....	76%
The availability and quality of affordable housing .....	73%

#### ***Community issues of highest personal concern:***

The out-migration of good paying jobs..	79%
Water pollution .....	78%
The quality of schools in the area .....	73%
Air pollution.....	68%
Future planning and development of the downtown and lakefront areas .....	68%
The ability to expand and develop the existing manufacturing base.....	68%

#### ***Most important factors that would attract future development to the county:***

Many beautiful beaches.....	94%
A skilled labor force.....	94%
Good retail opportunities.....	92%
People willing to work together .....	92%
Strong school system and opportunity for higher education .....	92%

#### ***Top policy goals identified by residents:***

Encourage the creation and expansion of businesses and industries creating new jobs .....	96%
Continue to provide more investments in higher education and job training.....	91%
Provide tax and financial incentives for the reuse and redevelopment of the inner city areas .....	81%
Strengthen Muskegon County’s image as a tourist attractions.....	81%

**Community Forums (First Set)**

A total of seven community forums were held through the duration of the MAP process. The first set of three community forums was held in January 2003, with approximately 175 community members attending. The forums were held in three different locations throughout the county including Ravenna Township, Muskegon Township, and Whitehall Township. The purpose of the first set of forums was to gain additional knowledge and viewpoints of Muskegon County residents and to concentrate on establishing a vision for the future of Muskegon County. During the forums, attendees learned about past trends in Muskegon County and then participated in a highly effective mapping exercise. The map exercise was based on past trends and growth rates in which future development trends were projected. Attendees were informed that by the year 2020, an additional 20,500 acres of land was projected to be developed in Muskegon County, in three major land use categories:

<b>Land Use Categories</b>	
Residential Land	18,000 acres
Commercial Land	1,800 acres
Industrial Land	700 acres

Attendees, grouped into tables of between six and eight people, were given a map of Muskegon County with currently developed land identified and color-coded into land use categories. Participants were then given packages of Legos® in three different colors representing the projected residential, commercial, and industrial lands to be developed. With each round peg of a Lego® representing 40 acres, the groups were asked to place the Legos® on a map of Muskegon County where they believed the development should occur in the county.

Once the exercise was completed, the attendees were asked to respond to the exercise by stating what they liked and disliked about how the map looked with the future development in place. Below are the top reactions from the map exercise:

**Top Reactions**

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- There is too much sprawl.*
  - We need to preserve open space and farmland.*
  - Density should be increased.*
  - We need to redevelopment the inner cities.*
  - What is the impact on existing infrastructure?*
  - What is the cost of new infrastructure?*
  - We need to develop around existing infrastructure*
- 

Upon the completion of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis; Stakeholder Interviews; Community Survey; and Community Forums, it was evident that the hundreds of participants who provided the valuable information have extremely strong opinions and ideas about the past, present, and future of Muskegon County. Some of the main underlying themes that arose during this process are the need to capitalize on the area’s assets, including Muskegon County’s proximity to water and its high quality of life, protection and preservation of the county’s abundant natural resources, secure economic viability, and the creation of balance between development in urban and rural areas.

## Defining the MAP Principles

The following graphic was created based upon the compiled information from the public participation process. It identifies the four MAP principles, the five visions areas, and key focus areas addressed in the objectives.

The four guiding principles encircling the outer ring of the graph serve as the framework and foundation for the visions and goals of the MAP. Every vision and goal was written with the idea of striving for each of the four guiding principles within Muskegon County.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### ***Economic Viability***

Muskegon County has rode on an economic roller coaster over the past few decades as have many counties across the United States. This is further described in Chapter 3, Trends and Analysis. In recent years,

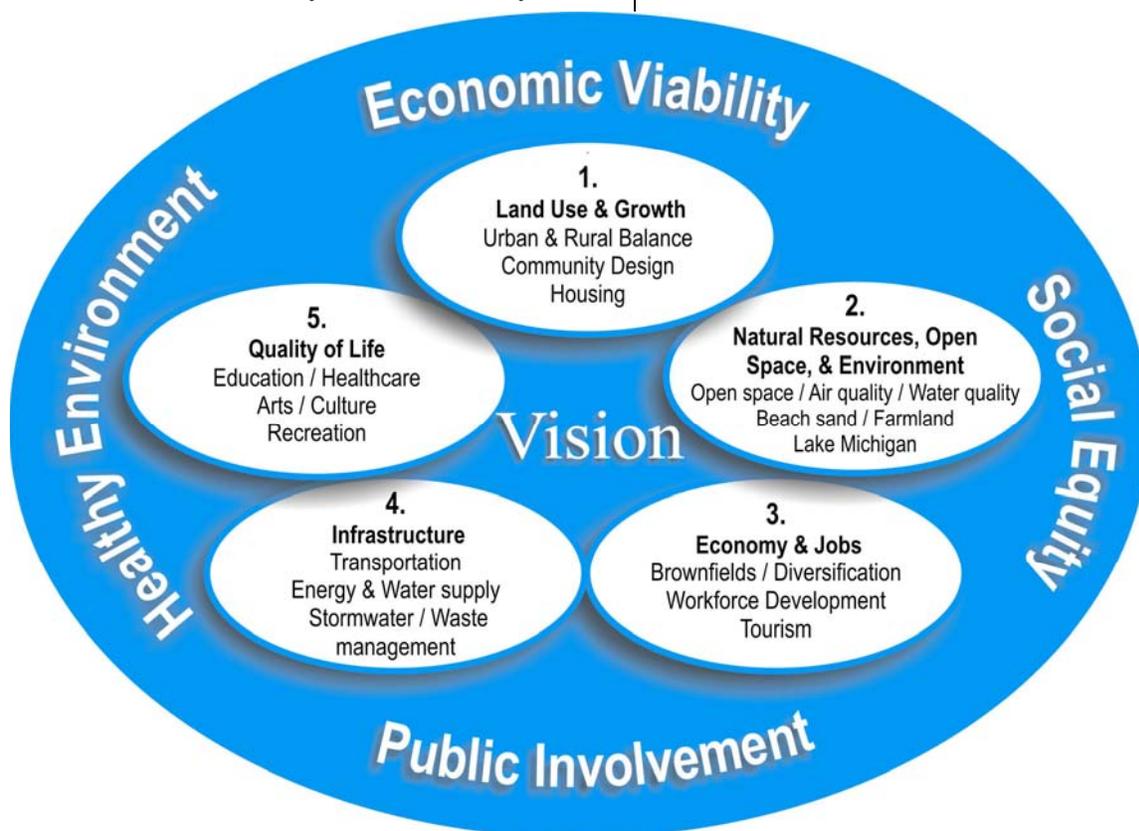
county and community leaders have made great strides to diversify the area’s economy. However, in order to foster economic viability within Muskegon County, leaders should also provide better choices in transportation, housing, and jobs for all residents.

#### ***Social Equity***

Muskegon County is blessed with ethnic and social diversity. In order to embrace and achieve social equity within Muskegon County, it is necessary to provide fair growth outcomes and shared benefits for all people.

#### ***Public Involvement***

Public involvement is critical not only in creating a vision for Muskegon County, but also for making that vision a reality in the years to come. Therefore, greater citizen participation must be encouraged in local government and community planning.



**Healthy Environment**

Muskegon County’s unique and abundant natural resources are one of its greatest assets. Because of this, it is crucial to protect and preserve the area’s natural resources and provide livable, safe, and healthy communities.

**Creating a Vision and Identifying Goals**

The five visions and attached goals were created, approved and are supported by the MAP Steering Committee. They were presented to and well received by the 150 attendees of the second set of community forums held in September 2003.

**VISION 1: Land Use and Growth**

*Encourage and promote land use and growth patterns that sustain and improve quality of life in Muskegon County, while maintaining a strong sense of place, community, and responsibility.*

Coordinating land-use planning poses challenges for both urban and rural communities alike. Small communities may lack the resources and urban communities may be overcome by development decisions and pressures by neighboring communities. The goals are designed to strengthen local land use planning by supporting coordination across political jurisdictions. New strategies such as open space preservation programs and in-fill redevelopment are promoted.



**GOALS:**

- Develop integrated and coordinated land use planning in rural areas to revitalize small towns. Link natural resource protection with residential development and maintain working landscapes (agricultural, natural resource tourism, forestry, etc.).
- Develop policies to ensure land is available to provide employment opportunities, variety of housing types, open space and natural areas, and access to goods and services based on future projected needs.
- Limit adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive lands by encouraging redevelopment and by increasing densities in cities, where necessary and desired.
- Identify strategies that will manage growth and support reinvestment in urban areas and promote rural viability.
- Encourage compatible land use plans between adjacent jurisdictions by updating land use plans, zoning ordinances, and regulations.

**VISION 2: Natural Resources, Open Space, and the Environment**

*Protect and preserve natural resources and continually improve the quality of air, water, and land resources found in Muskegon County.*

Recognition and wise use of natural resources defines what many people value about Muskegon County. Each goal seeks to enhance development in local jurisdictions and quality of life for all residents. State, federal, and local programs will leverage coordination to achieve the goals. Best practices, such as conservation zones, would incorporate preservation and protection in new development. In addition, the protection and enhancement of both the

quantity and quality of natural resources will be emphasized in the implementation strategies of the MAP.



**GOALS:**

- Protect the valuable farm and forestlands, wetlands, surface and groundwater resources, wildlife habitat, and opportunities for passive and active recreation.
- Develop policies and regulations to address the quantity and quality of water resources.
- Link natural resource protection with development to reduce the loss of important natural resources and open spaces in urban and rural areas.
- Mitigate environmental and human health impacts to important natural resources.
- Foster increased environmental sensitivity and voluntary stewardship through public-private partnerships, federal-state-local cooperation, and public education and outreach.
- Protect the watersheds and shorelines of Lake Michigan and the inland lakes of Muskegon County.

**VISION 3: Economy and Jobs**

*Promote economic development and diversity that ensures access to jobs, goods, and services throughout Muskegon County.*

It is vital to create a healthy balance between development in urban and rural areas. Abandoned main streets and employment

centers lead to dispersed development and community decline. To minimize sprawl and decline, urban communities will need to identify economic assets (land, skilled labor, etc.) to foster redevelopment and investment. By marketing historic, cultural, and natural resources attributes, rural areas can develop local strategies to strengthen economic opportunity.



**GOALS:**

- Encourage partnerships with government, local organizations, and businesses to help achieve local and regional economic development goals.
- Work collaboratively to encourage economic diversity throughout the region and reduce competition between communities.
- Enhance and retain “human capital” in the region, fostering a skilled, educated labor force.
- Develop strategies for the redevelopment of brownfields, adaptive reuse of existing structures, and in-fill development in urban and rural areas.
- Retain and expand agricultural businesses to maintain synergy and a diversified economy.
- Promote natural resource based tourism and the county’s quality of life as an economic development tool.

**VISION 4: Infrastructure**

*Develop a county-wide approach to improving and maintaining infrastructure, transportation, public facilities, and community services.*

The quality and availability of existing infrastructure (water and sewer), transportation, public facilities, and services affects quality of life and determines where development occurs. As development continues in rural areas, greater and expanded services are expected by residents. New residents are often looking for a lifestyle that offers the best of both city and country living. Strategies to promote wise investment, planning, and land use will be encouraged to be utilized by local governments to control costs and minimize impacts to the environment.



**GOALS:**

- Work collaboratively to ensure the availability of a full range of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of all residents in Muskegon County.
- Prioritize water and wastewater facility improvements consistent with the distribution of the region’s population, employment, and planning while emphasizing water conservation and reuse.
- Provide safe and efficient alternate modes of transportation to reduce auto dependence and promote high air quality.
- Maintain and improve the existing transportation system to provide safe and efficient mobility and access.
- Provide infrastructure systems in both urban and rural communities utilizing existing infrastructure capacity where it exists before developing new infrastructure.

**VISION 5: Quality of Life**

*Promote high quality of life by recognizing Muskegon County for its diversity, environmental, educational, arts, cultural, and recreational assets.*

Quality of life overlaps both individual and community needs and is closely intertwined with the first four visions. It is important to promote a high quality of life by providing a better understanding of the health, education, cultural assets, and needs for all citizens. Coordination between local agencies, non-profits, service providers, and local governments would be strengthened.



**GOALS:**

- Promote coordination and enhancement of arts, cultural, recreational, and historic resources in the county.
- Develop a regional strategy to improve and maintain access to high quality educational services throughout the county, including elementary, secondary, and alternative schools.
- Develop partnerships between government and non-government organizations to improving the health of the environment and individuals.
- Improve access to healthcare services and develop strategies to maintain Muskegon County as a regional healthcare provider.

## Chapter 3: Trends and Analysis

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## Location

Muskegon County is located on the western side of Michigan, along the shoreline of Lake Michigan, midway up the state's Lower Peninsula. The county has 27 miles of Lake Michigan waterfront, 20 inland lakes and more than 400 miles of rivers.



Figure 3.1: Location Map

In 2000, Muskegon County was designated by the US Census Bureau as a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the Muskegon-Norton Shores MSA. The county had previously been part of the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland MSA in the 1990 Census.

Muskegon County is located 197 miles from Detroit, 153 miles from Flint, and 107 miles from the state capitol in Lansing. Additionally, it is 185 miles from Chicago, 276 miles (highway) from Milwaukee, and 224 miles from Toledo.

The county contains sixteen townships, four villages, and seven cities as defined by Michigan law. The county seat is Muskegon, which is also the largest city in the county.

The county is part of the Western Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC). The agency incorporates a five county area, including: Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. WMSRDC serves as an Economic Development District for the region and as the Air Quality Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning

Organization for Muskegon County and northern Ottawa County, among other roles.

## History

The earliest recorded history of the Muskegon area reflects that it was inhabited by the Ottawa and Pottawatomi tribes. The name "Muskegon" is derived from the Ottawa Indian term "Masquigon" meaning "marshy river" or "swamp." The "Masquigon" river is identified on French maps as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, suggesting that French explorers had reached Western Michigan by that time (Yakes).

The first known Frenchmen in the area were Father Jacques Marquette, who traveled through the area in 1675 on his way to St. Ignace and a party of French soldiers under LaSalle's lieutenant, Henry de Tonty, who passed through in 1679 (Yakes).

The earliest known resident of the county was a fur trader and trapper named Edward Fitzgerald, who settled in the area in 1748. Settlement of the area began in 1837 with the organization of Muskegon County from portions of Ottawa and Oceana Counties. At the time of its incorporation in 1859, Muskegon County had six townships (Muskegon, Norton, Ravenna, White River, Dalton, and Oceana) (Yakes).

The lumbering era put Muskegon County on the map, in economic terms. Ravenna was settled in 1844 when E.B. Bostwick built a sawmill. The city and township were named after Ravenna, Ohio, the hometown of the surveyor who platted the land. Norton Shores was settled by Colonel S. Norton in 1846. Casnovia was founded in 1850 by a tavern keeper named Lot Fulkerson. Montague was first settled in 1855 by Nat Sargent. Whitehall was platted in 1859 by Charles Mears and Giles B. Slocum. The town was originally named after Mears. In 1864 the Muskegon Log Booming Company was formed to sort logs and raft them to the

mills. In 1868, Fruitport, originally Crawville, was founded by Edward Craw. It was renamed a year later when the Pere Marquette Railroad built a station in the town that was a fertile fruit growing area and a port. In 1872 North Muskegon was recoded as Reedsville, named for the first settler, Archibald Reed. It was renamed in 1881 when it was incorporated as a village. North Muskegon was later incorporated as a city in 1891 (Multi-Mag Michigan).

1890 marked the end of the lumber boom in Muskegon County. Successful area industrialists formed the Muskegon Improvement Company to stimulate the economy as it lagged at the end of the lumber boom. The Muskegon Improvement Company purchased 1,000 acres and sold the lots in a lottery, using the proceeds to underwrite new businesses. The project was successful enough that a train station was located in the area (Muskegon Heights) in 1902 to serve the Chicago & West Michigan Railroad (Yakes).

The lumberman John Torrent built his 31-room mansion in 1881-1892. He also served the community as an alderman, a justice of the peace, and as mayor for three terms. In 1972 the city purchased the home to save it from demolition. Union Depot was opened in 1885 to serve the Chicago & West Michigan; Muskegon, Grand Rapids, & Indiana; and the Toledo, Saginaw & Muskegon railroads. It was designed by A.W. Rush & Son of Grand Rapids in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The station was closed in 1971 until it was donated to the county in 1992, restored, and reopened as the visitor's center and museum (Historical Markers). Lakewood Club was formed as a resort association in 1912 by the Mayo brothers. It was popular enough by 1914 that a seasonal post office was set up, which became permanent in the 1940s (Multi-Mag Michigan).

The oil boom in Muskegon County was a distinct period during the city's industrial era. The oil was found by accident in 1869 when Gideon Truesdell was looking for salt. They had been drilling in various Muskegon County locations for salt between 1869 and 1886 but the salt they found was contaminated with petroleum. In 1922, Stanley Daniloff found oil seepage in the swampland near his home, within five years he had amassed enough funds to have the site drilled and a "gusher" was located in Muskegon Township in 1927. The price of crude oil fell with the depression in 1929 and the oil boom ended (Parrish).

During the world war period, Muskegon became an "Arsenal of Democracy." In the post war housing boom, Roosevelt Park was formed as a residential suburb in 1949 and named after Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The 1950s and 60s brought rough economic times to Muskegon County. Many workers were laid off and several local companies closed. In the 1960s and 70s, consolidation and mergers with national corporations left few locally-owned businesses in the county. The local economy has been struggling to diversify since that time (Yakes).

### **Population**

Muskegon County was the 11<sup>th</sup> largest county in Michigan in 2000, with 170,200 residents. This population represented approximately seven percent growth in population over 1990. Population growth in Muskegon County has not been constant over the past century. The county grew rapidly in the 1920s and 30s, and then again in the 1950s and 60s. During the 1980s and 1990s, the county realized very little population change.

The largest age groups in the county are 40 to 44 years olds and those between five and 14 years old. The age groups in early adulthood are smaller than the mid-career and youth groups. In terms of functional

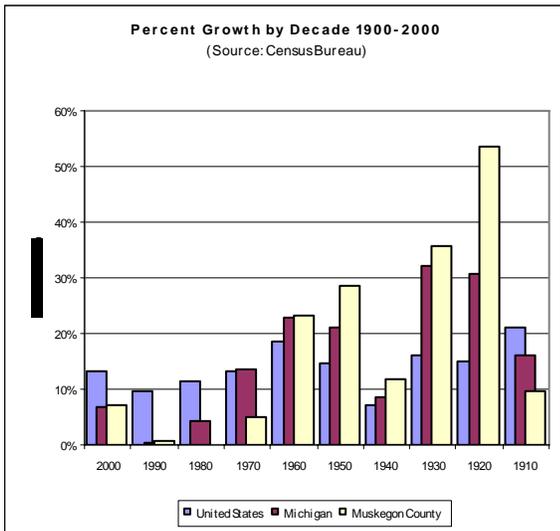


Figure 3.2: Percent Growth by Decade

age groups, 27.5 percent of the county population is under age 18. A small percentage of the county is college-aged adults, only 8.7 percent. The younger working age (age 25 to 44) population makes up 29 percent of the population, but many of them are over age 35. The older workers (age 45 to 64) are another 21.9 percent of the population, and 12.9 percent of the county is older adults, over age 65.

Increases in the county population were due to natural increase (births over deaths). The net migration of individuals into or out of the county was negative, meaning that more people moved out of the county than into the county from 2001 to 2002. Muskegon County was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the state for births and deaths in 2001/2002. The state faced a similar situation where all growth was due to natural increase and net migration was negative.

The population of Muskegon County was primarily urban, inside urbanized areas in 2000, with nearly 70 percent of the population residing in urbanized areas. An additional five percent lived in urban clusters. Twenty-six percent of the county

population lived in rural areas. This distribution is fairly consistent with the state average.

The Muskegon County population is expected to grow 13.3 percent by 2020. This represents approximately three percent growth every five years. The county population in 2020 is projected to be 195,064 (WMSRDC). The state population is expected to realize increases of roughly two percent every five years, growing to 10,545,737 residents by 2020.

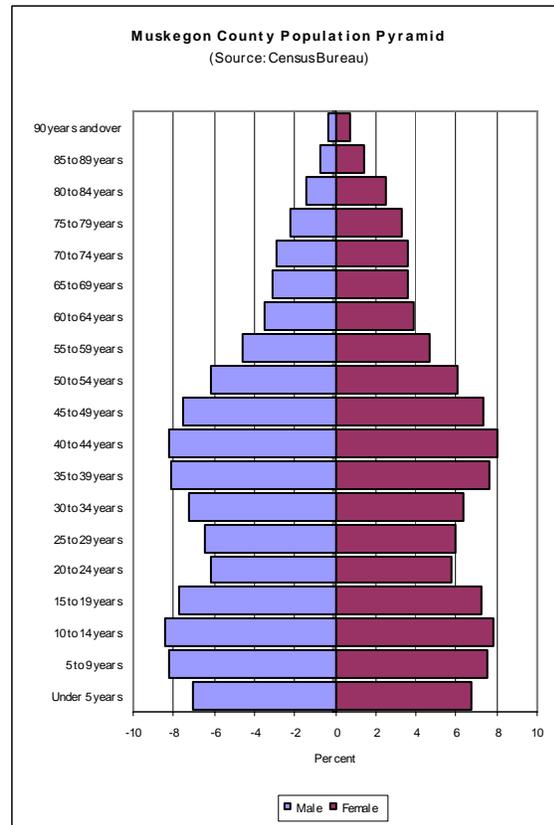


Figure 3.3: Population Pyramid

In 2000, 82 percent of the Muskegon County population identified themselves as white, 14 percent as black, and two percent as multi-racial. The remaining residents identified themselves as American Indian or

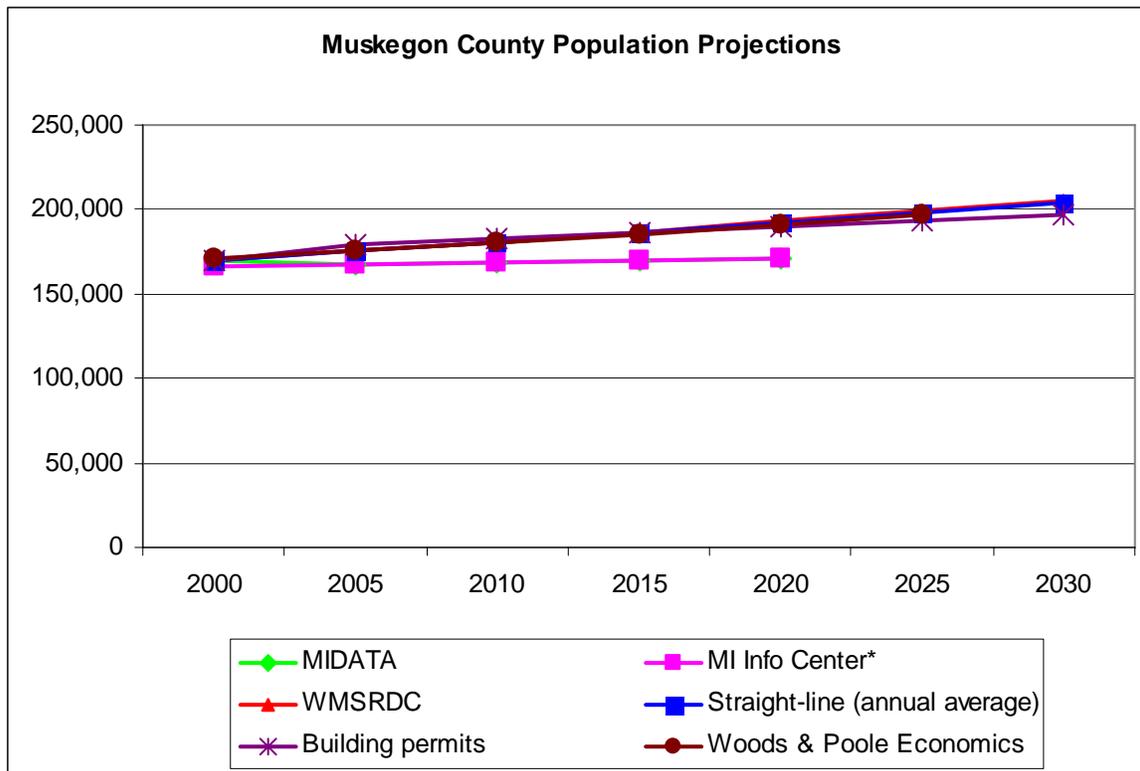


Figure 3.4: Population Projections

some other race not specified by the Census. In the State of Michigan, 80 percent of residents identified themselves as white, 14 percent as black, two percent as Asian, and two percent as multi-racial.

The Hispanic population in Muskegon County is 3.5 percent, approximately the same percentage as the state average. Approximately 91 percent of the adult population statewide speaks only English, while 95 percent of Muskegon County residents speak only English. More than two percent of the adult population statewide and in the county speak Spanish, more than three percent of children ages 5 to 17 speak Spanish both statewide and in the county.

The black population in Muskegon County is heavily concentrated in the cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. More than thirty percent of the population in the

City of Muskegon is black and 77.8 percent of the population in Muskegon Heights is black.

Most Muskegon County residents are native Michiganders, with 82 percent of the population born in the state. An additional six percent were born in other Midwestern states. Sixty percent of county residents lived in the same house in 1995 as in 2000; this is consistent with the state average. Nearly 30 percent of residents moved to another house in the county between 1995 and 2000 and 12 percent had lived in a different county in 2000.

Movement within the county was toward decentralization of the population away from the urban centers. Blue Lake Township realized a population growth of more than 60 percent from 1990 to 2000. Dalton, Egelston, and Ravenna townships also experienced significant growth while Muskegon Heights lost 8.6 percent,

Whitehall City lost 4.7 percent, and the City of Muskegon lost 0.4 percent of its population.

### Households and Families

There were 68,080 households in Muskegon County in 2000. More than eighty percent were family households, with spouses, children, or other relatives living in the household. Nearly four percent of households were males living alone, and 5.5 percent were females living alone. There was a slightly larger percentage of family households in Muskegon County than in the state or nation.

One quarter of households were people living alone in the county in the 2000 Census. Approximately another quarter were married couple families with their own children under 18 living at home and nearly thirty percent were married couples without children under 18 living at home or with children who weren't their own. Approximately two percent of householders were males with children of their own living at home. More than nine percent of households were females with children of their own living at home, which was higher than the state and national averages of approximately seven percent.

Similarly, one quarter of Muskegon County residents over age 15 had never married as of 2000. More than half of county residents over age 15 were currently married, approximately seven percent were widowed, and nearly 12 percent were divorced. The county divorced population was somewhat higher than the state and national averages.

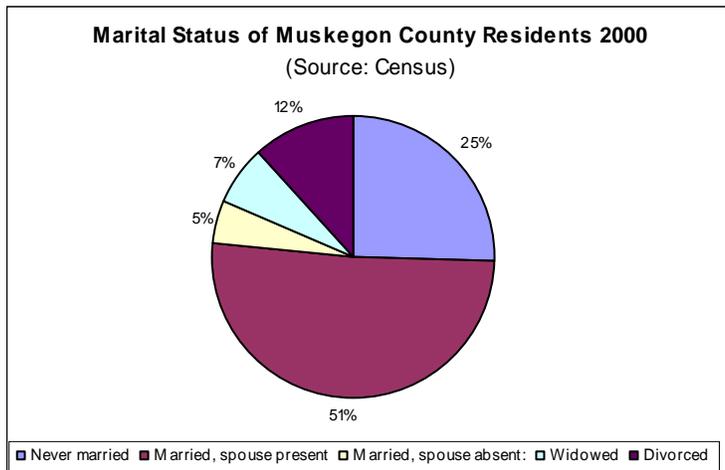


Figure 3.4: Marital Status

### Housing Units

There were 68,556 housing units in Muskegon County in 2000. More than 92 percent of the units were occupied, a higher occupancy rate than either the state or the nation. Most townships and municipalities in the county also had high occupancy rates, White River Township was the notable exception, with a 65.7 percent occupancy rate. More than three quarters of Muskegon County housing units were owner occupied in 2000, considerably higher home ownership than the state or the nation. Exceptions to the high owner-occupancy rates were in the City of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Roosevelt Park, and Whitehall. Each of these communities had at least a third of occupied housing units being rented out. In Muskegon, 37.1 percent of the vacant units were for rent, Muskegon Heights had 32.1 percent of its vacant units for rent, and more than 70 percent of the vacant units in Whitehall were for rent.

While Michigan has a higher vacancy for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use rate than the national average, that is not the case for Muskegon County. More than half of the vacant homes in Michigan during the 2000 Census were for seasonal use, while

only about 25 percent were vacant for that purpose in Muskegon County.

Nearly three-quarters of the housing units in Muskegon County were in urban areas, similar to the national and state average.

Like most homes in Michigan, nearly three-quarters of Muskegon County homes were single unit structures. Only a small percentage of the housing in the county is in multi-family units with greater than ten units. Nearly eight percent of Muskegon County housing units were mobile homes, which is above the state average of 6.4 percent. In certain townships, mobile homes are quite prevalent housing options. In Cedar Creek, Egelston, Holton, and Whitehall townships more than one quarter of the housing stock was mobile homes in 2000.

Housing units in Muskegon County are a little older, on average than in the state or nation. The median age of the housing stock in 2000 was 1962 for the county, 1965 for the state, and 1971 nationally. In Blue Lake Township, the median age was 1981, indicating the newest housing stock in the county. Not surprisingly, the City of Muskegon has the oldest housing stock, with a median age of 1950. In Blue Lake Township, nearly 30 percent of the housing stock in 2000 was built between 1995 and March 2000. Egelston Township also has quite a bit of newer housing stock, with 20 percent being built after 1995. In areas like Casnovia Township, and the municipalities

of Montague, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, and Whitehall, at least one quarter of the housing stock was built prior to 1939.

Housing units that were vacant for rent had a median monthly rent of \$373 asked in 2000. This was considerably lower than the state median of \$444 or the national of \$469. More than 300 of the vacant units in the county at that time had asking rents of \$350 to \$400 per month.

Owner occupied housing units in the county had a median value of \$84,400, while the state and national values were \$110,300 and \$111,800 respectively. Most owner-occupied houses in Muskegon County had a value between \$40,000 and \$150,000 in 2000. Homes that were vacant because they were for sale had a median asking price of \$64,700 in the county, compared to \$88,400 statewide and \$89,600 nationally. The largest number of units available was in the \$70,000 to \$80,000 range.

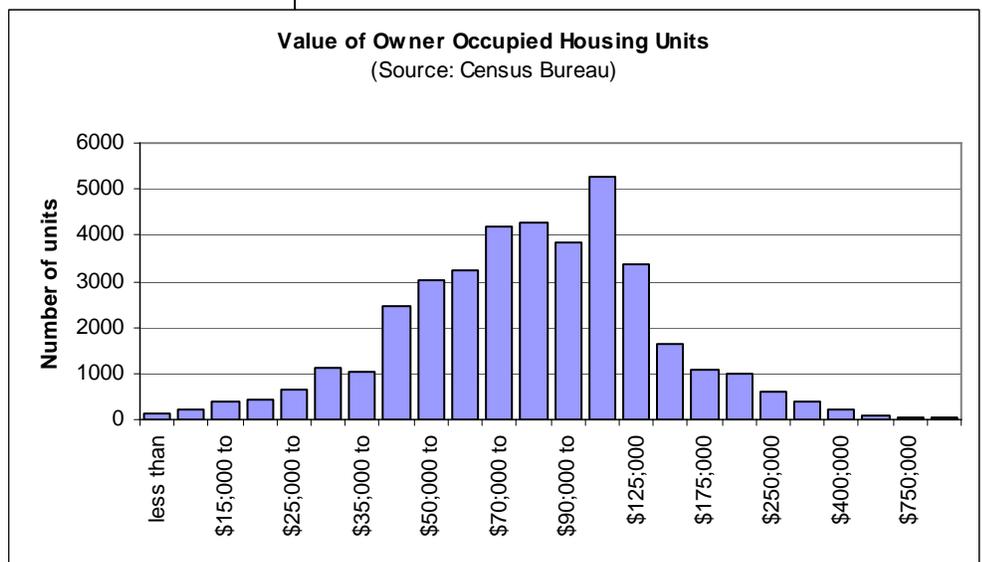


Figure 3.6: Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units

Housing affordability is related to household income. Household incomes are divided into five general classifications based on US

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards:

- Very low income (<30% of area median income)
- Low income (30-50% of area median income)
- Low/moderate income (50-80% of area median income)
- Moderate income (80-120% of area median income)
- Middle/high income (>120% of area median income)

Using these classifications for Muskegon County, very low income households earn less than \$11,402 annually, low income households \$11,402 to \$19,004, low/moderate income households \$19,004 to \$30,406, moderate income households \$30,406 to \$45,610 and middle/upper income households earn more than \$45,610.

These income levels translate into the ability to rent or buy housing. In terms of monthly payments, households in Muskegon County can afford (based on 28% housing expense to income ratio):

<i>Affordable Rents</i>	
<i>Income Group</i>	<i>Monthly Payments</i>
<b>Very low income.....</b>	<b>\$266</b>
<b>Low income.....</b>	<b>\$443</b>
<b>Low/moderate income.....</b>	<b>\$709</b>
<b>Moderate income.....</b>	<b>\$1064</b>
<b>Middle/upper income.....</b>	<b>More than \$1064</b>

Table 3.7: Affordable rents

For home ownership, other factors need to be considered including the required insurance, property taxes, interest rates, and closing costs. Based on standard assumptions of zero monthly debt payments,

5.625% interest, 3% closing costs, a 1.25% property tax rate, and 1% insurance the following value homes are affordable in Muskegon County:

<i>Affordable Home Values</i>	
<i>Income Group</i>	<i>Home Value</i>
<b>Very low income.....</b>	<b>\$35,638</b>
<b>Low income.....</b>	<b>\$58,313</b>
<b>Low/moderate income.....</b>	<b>\$93,951</b>
<b>Moderate income.....</b>	<b>\$140,116</b>
<b>Middle/upper income.....</b>	<b>&gt; \$140,116</b>

Table 3.8: Affordable home values

With those facts in mind, only 3 percent of the current rental housing stock is affordable to very low income households, 14 percent to low income, and 19 percent to low/moderate income households. If home ownership is considered on the basis of the monthly ownership costs, only 2 percent is affordable to low income and 14 percent affordable to low/moderate income households. Just on the basis of the home's value, 14 percent of the housing stock is affordable to low income households, and 31 percent is affordable to low/moderate income households.

	<i>Percent of Affordable Housing</i>		
	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Own (monthly cost basis)</i>	<i>Own (home value basis)</i>
<b>Very low income</b>	3%	<1%	4%
<b>Low income</b>	14%	2%	14%
<b>Low/moderate income</b>	19%	14%	31%
<b>Moderate income</b>	19%	27%	49%
<b>Middle/upper income</b>	100%	100%	100%

Table 3.9: Percent of affordable housing

Household projections were made based on the population projections and the average number of persons per household. The national, state, and local population per household in 2000 was 2.5 persons per household. This figure was used to project the number of households, which served as a proxy for the needed number of housing units.

The population in Muskegon County is expected to grow 13.3 percent by 2020. Based on 2.5 people per household, that

would mean that more than 77,000 housing units would be needed in Muskegon County in 2020. This is an increase of 8,600 units over 2000. Meeting the projected housing need will require the construction of approximately 430 housing units per year.

### Residential Building Permits

The number of residential building permits issued in Muskegon County decreased in 2002 compared to the level of activity in 2000 and 2001. Countywide 700 permits were issued in 2002, compared to more than 800 each in 2000 and 2001.

In 2002, 26 new multi-family permits were issued for a total of 312 units. These multi-family units accounted for 31.4 percent of the units in 2002. This was a significant increase from the previous two years when 3.9 percent of permits were for multi-family units in 2000 and 9.1 percent in 2001.

Most of the new single family residential permits are outside the central city of Muskegon. In 2002, only 7.8 percent of the

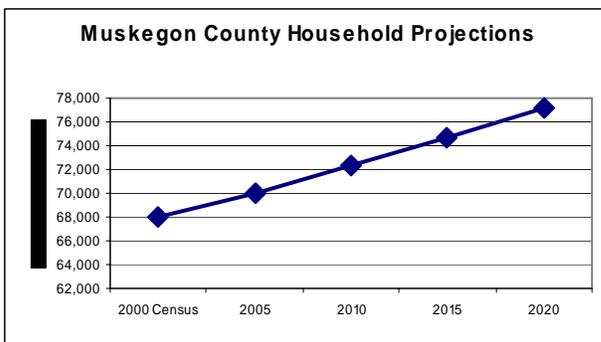


Figure 3.10: Household Projections

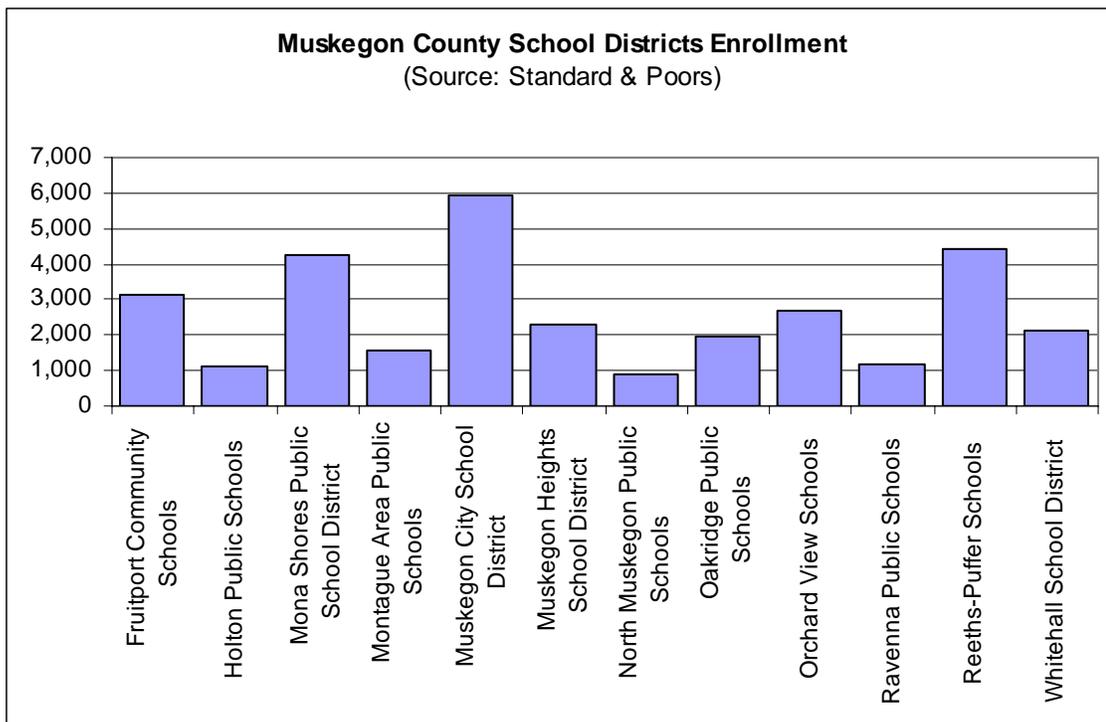


Figure 3.11: School District Enrollment

residential building permits issued in the county were in the City of Muskegon. However, 65.4 percent of the permits issued for multi-family housing were issued in the city.

### Education

There are twelve public school districts in Muskegon County. Muskegon City School District is considered to be a mid-sized city school district, while there are six districts considered to be urban fringe districts and five that are rural districts inside the metropolitan area.

Enrollment in the county public schools is 31,586 students. Thirty-eight percent of the students in the county are economically disadvantaged. This is higher than the state average of 30.7 percent. More than fifteen percent of the public school students in the county are considered to be special education students.

The student/teacher ratio in Muskegon county schools ranges from fifteen in Muskegon Heights Schools to nearly twenty-two students per teacher in the Mona Shores Public School District. The statewide average student/teacher ratio is 17.6; five districts in the county have higher student/teacher ratios.

Statewide the average teacher salary is \$54,035. Muskegon County teachers make considerably less on average, approximately \$48,154. Salaries in the county range from an average of \$43,735 in Orchard View Schools to \$50,597 in Reeths-Puffer Schools; all districts in the county have lower averages than the state average.

### Educational Attainment

Muskegon County young adults are pursuing higher education. In 2000, 34 percent of those county residents aged 18-24 had completed some college or

an associate degree and four percent had completed a bachelor degree.

Of adults (over age 25) in Muskegon County, 83 percent had completed at least high school (or its equivalent) and nearly 14 percent had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. The county is comparable to the state in terms of the percentage of residents with a high school diploma, but lags the state in residents who have completed at least a bachelor's degree.

It is important to note that the population over age 65 has a lower educational attainment than the working age adults, and this reduces the overall educational attainment level for the county and the state. More than 85 percent of adults between 25 and 64 have completed at least high school, compared to about 65 percent of residents over age 65. The same is true for bachelor's degrees, more than 13 percent of working age adults in the county have obtained a bachelor's degree while less than ten percent of those over age 65 have obtained them. In the over 65 population, women have significantly lower educational attainment than men due to the opportunities available to them as young adults and the culture of the time.

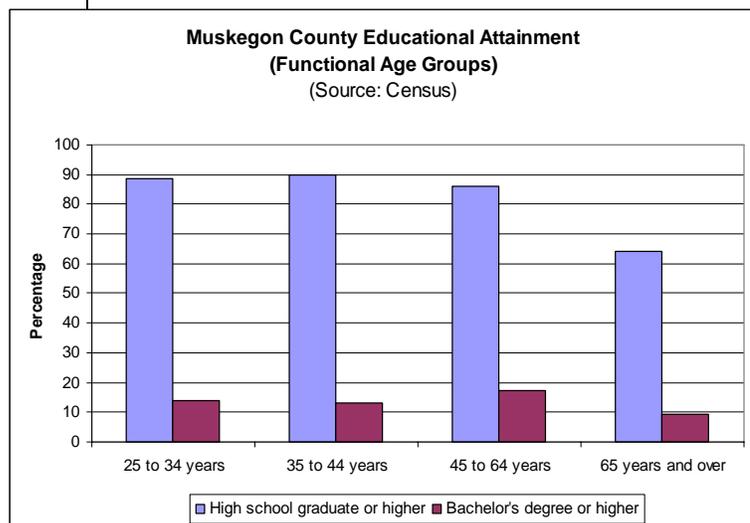


Figure 3.12: Educational Attainment

However, in all age groups, Muskegon County lags significantly behind the state in the percentage of the population that has obtained at least a bachelor's degree. On average, only 15 percent of Muskegon County working age residents have obtained at least a bachelor's degree.

### Labor Force

The labor force is defined as those who are employed or who are unemployed, but actively looking for work. The labor force is based on where people live, so it is those individuals who live in the county and are employed, regardless of whether they work in the county or elsewhere.

There is a labor force participation rate of 63.1 percent among adults age 16 and over in Muskegon County. Nearly sixty percent of women over age 16 are participating in the labor force. Sixty-seven (67%) percent of Muskegon County males over age 16 are participating in the labor force. The largest age groups not participating in the labor

force are, not surprisingly, 16 to 19 year olds and those over age 60. Nearly 20 percent of residents aged 65 to 69 are participating in the labor force and more than six percent of those over age 70 are participating in the labor force. This is comparable with state labor force participation of older adults and somewhat lower than national participation rates.

Generally, Muskegon County has a higher unemployment rate than either the State of Michigan or the United States. The local unemployment rate does tend to trend with the national and state economies, however. When the economy is strong in the state and in the nation, it is strong in Muskegon County and vice versa. From 1991 to 1998, Muskegon County's unemployment rate declined from 11.2 percent to 4.4 percent. These were the best economic times in recent memory in Muskegon County. The worst times were in 1985, 1991/1992 and 2003, with 12.6 percent, 11.2 and 10.9 percent, and 10.6 percent unemployment.

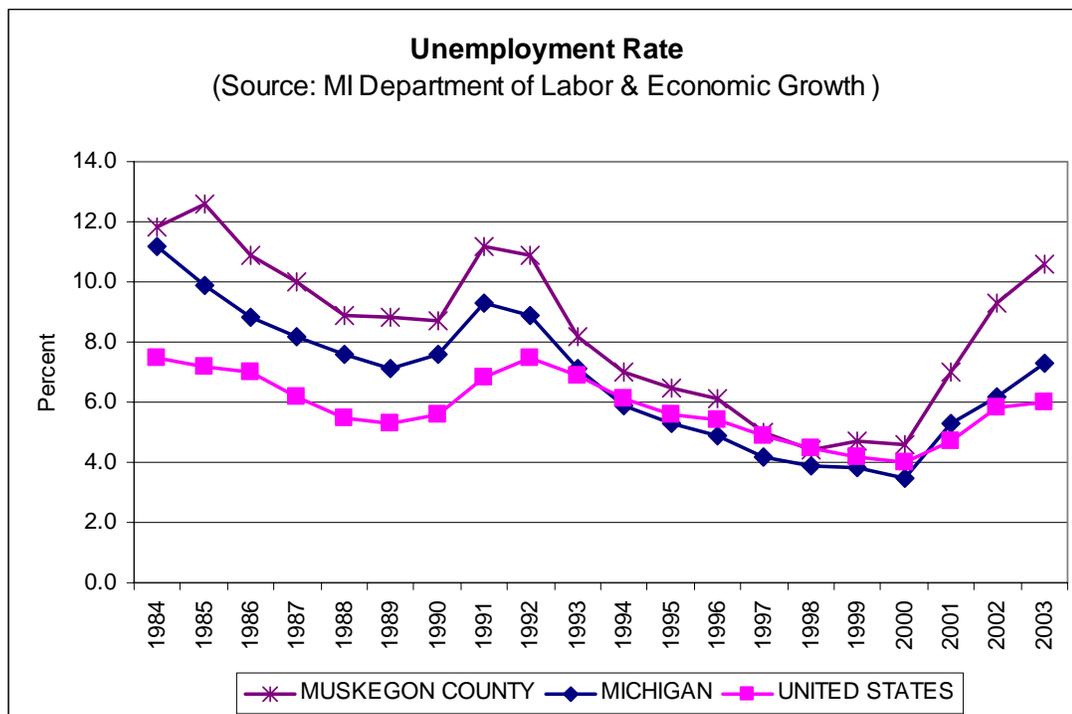


Figure 3.13: Unemployment Rate

The highest unemployment in the county corresponds with national recessions in the mid-1980s, early 1990s, and early 21<sup>st</sup> century that impacted manufacturing states like Michigan in particular. The time between peak employment and the next peak employment is known as the business cycle. The most recent business cycle covered the years 1989 through 2000.

Unemployment in the state was at 7.1 percent in 1989, peaked (lowest employment) at 9.3 percent in 1991 and then declined to 3.5 percent in 2000. Nationally, the picture is similar. Unemployment was 5.3 percent in 1989, rose to 7.5 percent in 1992, and declined to 4.0 percent in 2000. High unemployment tends to peak earlier in manufacturing dependent states than in the national economy as a whole, explaining why the worst unemployment in Michigan and Muskegon County occurred in 1991, while it didn't peak until 2002 nationally.

Unemployment is a major concern in some areas of Muskegon County. The older, more urban cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights, as well as Muskegon Township have experienced high unemployment from time to time. Muskegon Heights is of particular concern since the unemployment in that city has remained above ten percent during the best economic times. In 1991 unemployment reached 23.3 percent in the city, it declined to 10 percent in 1998 and returned to 22.2 percent in 2003.

<i>Community Unemployment Rates</i>			
<i>Community</i>	<i>Unemployment Rate</i>		
	High (1991)	Low (1998)	Recent (2003)
<b>Muskegon City</b>	14.7	5.9	13.9
<b>Muskegon Heights City</b>	23.3	10.0	22.2
<b>Muskegon Township</b>	12.6	5.0	11.9

Table 3.14: Community Unemployment Rates

Other townships are not exempt from high unemployment. Five other townships have experienced high unemployment rates in prior recessions and as of 2003 have not recovered from the most recent recession. Blue Lake Township has had double-digit unemployment for twenty years. As of 2003, the following townships had unemployment rates over 10 percent: Blue Lake, Cedar Creek, Dalton, Egelston, Holton, and Muskegon.

<i>Township Unemployment Rates</i>			
<i>Township</i>	<i>Unemployment Rate</i>		
	High	Low	Recent (2003)
<b>Blue Lake</b>	23.9	10.2	22.8
<b>Cedar Creek</b>	17.4	4.1	10.0
<b>Dalton</b>	13.7	4.6	11.0
<b>Egelston</b>	16.2	5.5	12.9
<b>Holton</b>	15.2	4.8	11.7
<b>Whitehall</b>	12.7	3.8	9.2

Table 3.15: Township Unemployment Rates

### Employment by Major Industry

Muskegon County is heavily dependent on manufacturing as a source of employment. Nearly 28 percent of jobs in the county were in manufacturing in 2001, compared to 18.9 percent statewide and 13.9 percent nationally.

Other significant employment sectors in Muskegon County include health care and social services (14.5 percent) and accommodations and food services (9.7 percent). Muskegon County has more employment in those sectors than the state or national average.

Muskegon County has not experienced the structural shift in the economy from a manufacturing economy to a service economy as intensely as the state or the

nation. In the 1980s more than 20 percent of jobs in the United States were in manufacturing. Historically, in manufacturing dependent states like Michigan, nearly 30 percent of the jobs were in manufacturing as late as 1989. Industrial counties like Muskegon County had nearly 35 percent of their employment in manufacturing.

By 1997, the economy had shifted away from a manufacturing base to a service base. In the national economy, the service sector accounted for 21 percent of jobs in 1997, compared to 17.7 percent in manufacturing. Statewide manufacturing had declined to one quarter of jobs, while services grew from 27.8 percent to 32.5 percent. In Muskegon County there was a shift similar in magnitude to the statewide and national shift, but manufacturing was still the largest employment sector at 30.8 percent.

In 1997, the US federal government changed the way industries were classified, moving from the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system that had remained unchanged since 1987 (then only modified) to the new North American Industrial Classification

System (NAICS). NAICS codes more accurately reflect the products and services available in the modern economy, but they do not correspond well with SIC codes. Therefore, a different system is used in measuring the continued economic shift.

In 1998 approximately 21 percent of jobs statewide were in manufacturing under NAICS, compared with nearly 15 percent nationally. In Muskegon County 28.5 percent of jobs were in manufacturing.

By 2001, at the end of the last business cycle, manufacturing accounted for 27.9 percent of jobs in Muskegon County, compared to 18.9 percent statewide and 13.9 percent nationally.

Targeted industry analysis is a means of evaluating trends in the local economy to identify those industries that are current strengths, emerging strengths, high priority retention targets, and poor performers due to local factors or to limited overall prospects for the industry.

The major components of targeted industry analysis are location quotient and shift-

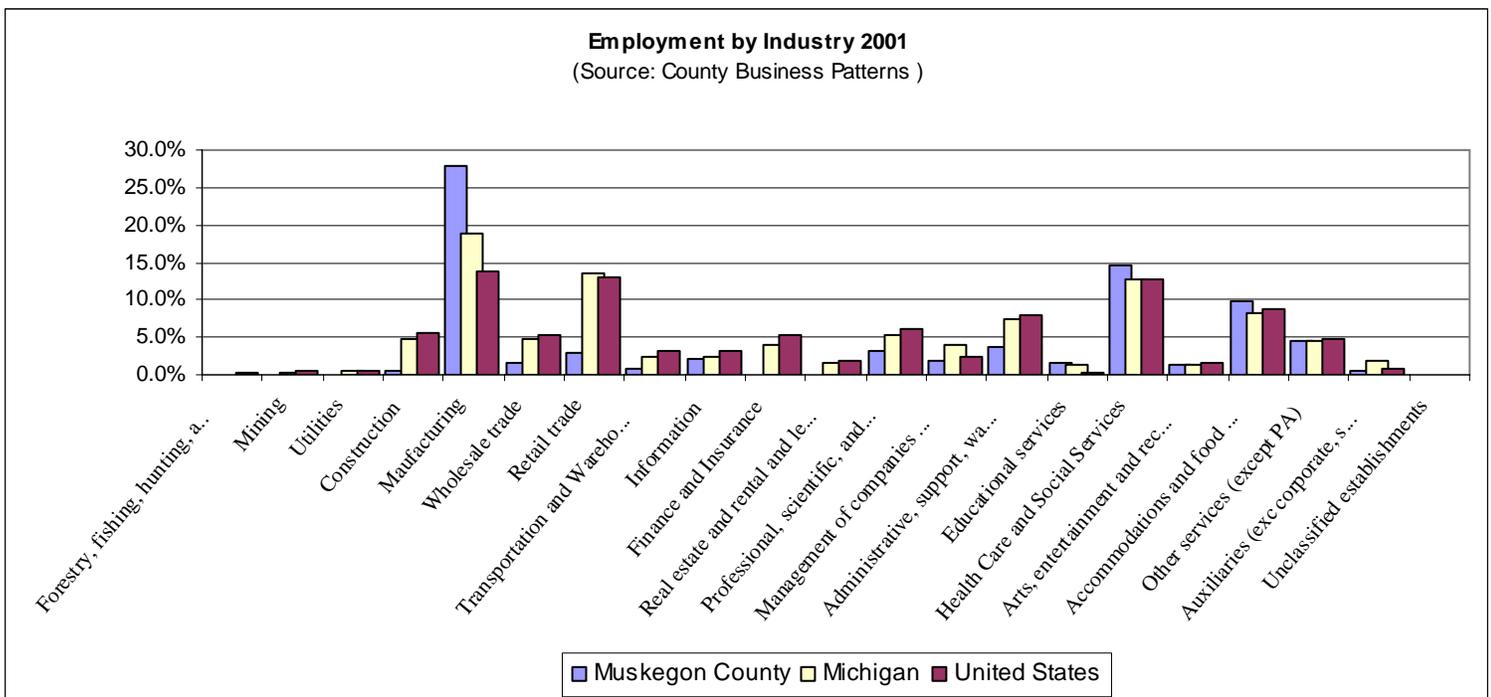


Figure 3.16: Employment by Industry

share. Location quotients reveal whether an industry is a basic (exporting) industry in the local economy. The shift-share examines changes in local employment to determine how much of the change can be attributed to national trends, the industry itself, and local factors.

Due to the change in classification system, the 1989 through 2001 business cycle is analyzed in two periods, 1989-1997 and 1998-2001.

Of basic (exporting) industries in Muskegon County, five were manufacturing sectors that employed a large percentage of people in providing goods for export and were strong performers from 1989 to 1997. These industries were: primary metal industries, miscellaneous manufacturing industries, fabricated metal industries, chemicals and allied products, and rubber and miscellaneous plastics products. Two industries that usually serve only markets also had sufficient employment to be considered basic employers and were strong performers: general merchandise stores and holding/investment offices. Locally two basic manufacturing industries performed poorly from 1989 to 1997: industrial machinery and equipment, and furniture and fixtures. These are of concern because their poor performance is due to local weaknesses. Local industry specializations that lag in performance are considered high priority retention targets. Locally these included eating and drinking places, furniture and home furnishing stores, and health services.

The industries that are not current specializations but performed well are considered emerging strengths.

Poor performance among industries that are not local specializations indicates structural problems in those industries nationally and

they have limited prospects for employment growth.

More recently the local economy is evaluated in terms of NAICS classifications. This section of analysis covers 1998 to 2001, the time when the economy was at its strongest before the recession that began in 2001 (employment data are from mid-March of each year, before the recession began in 2001).

Locally strong performers were found in most industries. Construction sectors were more than meeting local demand. Machinery manufacturing and electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing performed well, as did miscellaneous manufacturing and nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing. The local retail industry had strong employment performance in several sectors. Service industries including information, real estate, and health and social services also performed well. A high-priority retention target identified was the security and commodity contracts sector of the finance and insurance industry.

There were also a number of poor performers. It is likely that attention can better be targeted elsewhere unless these sectors are considered to be of overriding importance to the local economy.

Several sectors in transportation and other services showed promise as emerging industries including transportation support services and air transportation. Poor performers in these other local industries have limited prospects overall and should not be considered as employment targets.

It is important to remember that this analysis only studies the local economy in terms of employment. If a local business has invested in technology rather than employment then their strength will be discounted in this analysis.

### Employment Projections

Employment projections illustrate further the direction of the local economy. WMSRDC prepares population projections for each county in their jurisdiction. The 2002-2007 projections were released in late 2003.

Total employment in the county is projected to grow 8.7 percent between 2000 and 2007, creating more than 7,000 new jobs in the local economy. Between 2000 and 2005, the population is expected to grow only 2.89 percent while 5.6 percent job growth is projected. This means that some Muskegon County residents who are unemployed or employed in other counties will likely be able to find work in Muskegon County over the coming years.

Manufacturing employment is expected to stabilize, while wholesale trade, retail trade, and services are expected to increase in employment levels. The service sectors is projected to grow approximately 13 percent above the 2000 employment level by 2007 to more than 26,000 jobs.

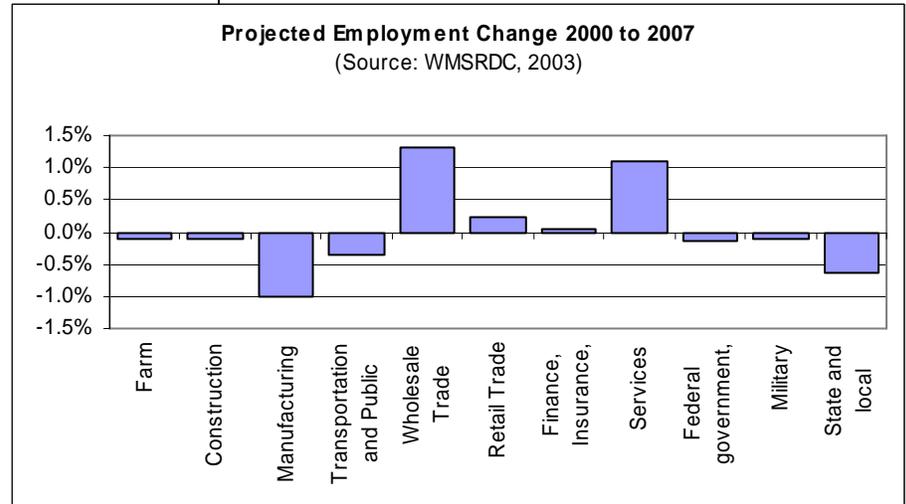


Figure 3.17a: Projected Employment Change 2000 to 2007

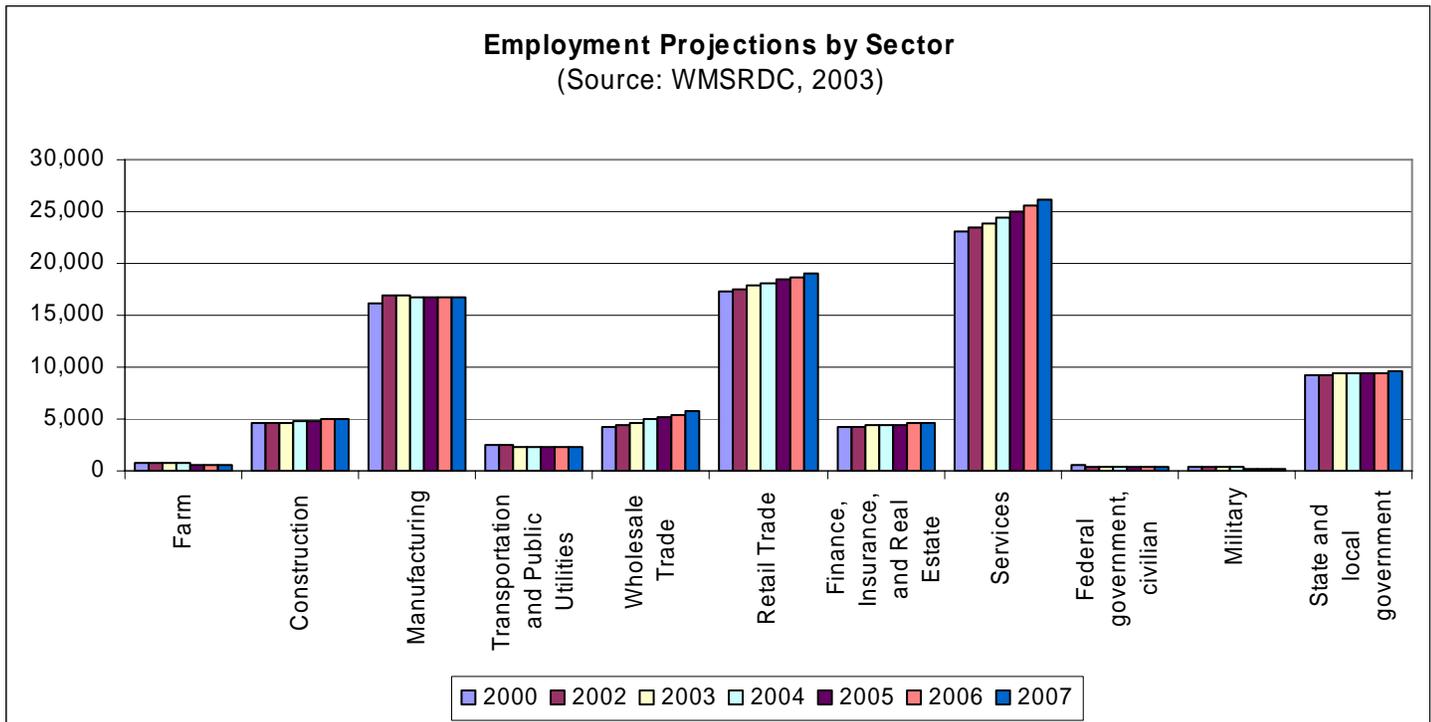


Figure 3.17b: Employment Projections by Sector

<b>Assessment of Industry Development Status, Muskegon County</b>	
<b>A. Local Industry Specializations</b>	
<u>SIC</u>	<u>Industry</u>
	<b>Strong Performers</b>
	<i>Construction</i>
15	General contractors and operative builders
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
33	<b>Primary metal industries</b>
39	<b>Miscellaneous manufacturing industries</b>
34	<b>Fabricated metal industries</b>
28	<b>Chemicals and allied products</b>
30	<b>Rubber and misc. plastics products</b>
27	Printing and Publishing
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
52	Building materials and garden supplies
53	<b>General Merchandise Stores</b>
55	Automotive dealers and service stations
	<i>Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate</i>
67	<b>Holding and other investment offices</b>
	<i>Services</i>
78	Motion pictures
79	Amusement and recreation services
75	Auto repair, services, and parking
72	Personal services
	<b>Lagging Performers</b>
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
58	Eating and drinking places
57	Furniture and home furnishing stores
	<i>Services</i>
80	Health services
	<b>Constrained Performers</b>
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
37	Transportation equipment
	<b>Poor Performers</b>
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
35	<b>Industrial machinery and equipment</b>
25	<b>Furniture and fixtures</b>
	<i>Transportation, Communications, and Utilities</i>
44	Water transportation
49	Electric, gas, and sanitary services
48	Communication

Table 3.18: Assessment of Industry Development Status

<b>Assessment of Industry Development Status, Muskegon County</b>	
<b>B. Other Local Industries</b>	
<u>SIC</u>	<u>Industry</u>
	<b>Strong Performers</b>
	<i>Construction</i>
16	Heavy Construction, except building
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
24	Lumber and wood products
38	Instruments and related products
	<i>Transportation, Communications, and Utilities</i>
45	Transportation by Air
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
59	Miscellaneous retail
	<i>Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate</i>
64	Insurance agents, brokers, and services
62	Security and commodity brokers
	<i>Services</i>
83	Social services
82	Educational services
81	Legal services
87	Engineering and management services
	<b>Lagging Performers</b>
	<i>Construction</i>
17	Special trade contractors
	<i>Services</i>
76	Miscellaneous repair services
73	Business services
	<b>Constrained Performers</b>
	(none)
	<b>Poor Performers</b>
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
32	Stone, glass, and clay products
36	Electronic and other electrical equipment
	<i>Transportation, Communications, and Utilities</i>
42	Trucking and warehousing
	<i>Wholesale Trade</i>
51	Nondurable goods
50	Durable goods
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
56	Apparel and accessory stores
	<i>Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate</i>
64	Insurance agents, brokers, and services
60	Depository institutions
65	Real estate
63	Insurance carriers
61	Nondepository institutions
	<i>Services</i>
86	Membership organizations
70	Hotels and other lodging places

<b>Assessment of Industry Development Status, Muskegon County</b>	
<b>A. Local Industry Specializations</b>	
<u>NAICS</u>	<u>Industry</u>
	<b>Strong Performers</b>
	<i>Construction</i>
233	Building, developing, and general contracting
234	Heavy construction
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
327	Nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing
333	Machinery manufacturing
335	Electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing
399	Miscellaneous manufacturing
	<i>Wholesale Trade</i>
422	Wholesale trade: nondurable goods
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
442	Furniture and home furnishings stores
443	Electronics and appliance stores
446	Health and personal care stores
447	Gasoline stations
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores
454	Nonstore retailers
	<i>Information</i>
511	Publishing industries
512	Motion picture and sound recording industries
	<i>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</i>
531	Real Estate
	<i>Administrative, Support, Waste Management, and Remediation Services</i>
562	Waste management and remediation services
	<i>Health Care and Social Services</i>
621	Ambulatory health care services
623	Nursing and residential care facilities
	<i>Accommodations and Food Services</i>
722	Food services and drinking places
	<i>Other Services (except Public Administration)</i>
811	Repair and maintenance

	<b>Lagging Performers</b>
	<i>Finance and Insurance</i>
523	Security, commodity contracts and like activity
	<b>Constrained Performers</b>
	(none)
	<b>Poor Performers</b>
	<i>Mining</i>
211	Oil and gas extraction
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
311	Food manufacturing
314	Textile product mills
311	Primary metal manufacturing
334	Computer and electronic product manufacturing
	<i>Transportation and Warehousing</i>
483	Water transportation
486	Pipeline transportation
	<i>Information</i>
514	Information and data processing services
	<i>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</i>
532	Rental and leasing services
	<i>Health Care and Social Services</i>
622	Hospitals
	<i>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</i>
713	Amusement, gambling, and recreation industries
	<i>Other Services (except Public Administration)</i>
812	Personal and laundry services

The industries that are most crucial to local economic growth are those that produce goods and services for outside the local economy, generating an inflow of income. These industries are known as an area’s “economic base” or “basic industries.”

Current strengths are those basic industries that are strong performers, they are experiencing growth locally and gaining competitive share.

Lagging performers are high priority retention targets. The basic industries are experiencing employment growth locally, but not gaining competitive share.

Lower priority retention targets include constrained performers which are not experiencing growth locally, but are

industries that are gaining competitive share. These industries have limited prospects due to external trends. Poor performers are also lower priority retention targets. These industries are not gaining employment locally, nor are they gaining competitive share. Their prospects are limited due to local weaknesses.

Assessment of Industry Development Status, Muskegon County	
B. Other Local Industries	
NAICS	Industry
	<b>Strong Performers</b>
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
448	Clothing and clothing accessories stores
	<i>Transportation and Warehousing</i>
481	Air transportation
488	Transportation support services
492	Couriers and messengers
	<i>Professional, scientific and technical services</i>
541	Professional, scientific and technical services
	<i>Accommodation and Food Services</i>
721	Accommodations
	<i>Other Services (except Public Administration)</i>
813	Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and like organizations
	<b>Lagging Performers</b>
	<i>Educational Services</i>
611	Educational Services
	<b>Poor Performers</b>
	<i>Manufacturing</i>
323	Printing and related support activities
325	Chemical manufacturing
332	Fabricated metal product manufacturing
337	Furniture and related product manufacturing
	<i>Wholesale Trade</i>
421	Wholesale trade, durable goods
	<i>Retail Trade</i>
441	Motor vehicle and parts dealers
444	Building materials, garden equipment and supply dealers
445	Food and beverage stores
452	General merchandise stores
453	Miscellaneous store retailers
	<i>Transportation and Warehousing</i>
493	Warehousing and storage
	<i>Information</i>
513	Broadcasting and telecommunications
	<i>Finance and Insurance</i>
522	Credit intermediation and related activities
	<i>Management of Companies and Enterprises</i>
551	Management of companies and enterprises
	<i>Administrative, support, waste management, and remediation services</i>
561	Administrative support services
	<i>Health Care and Social Services</i>
624	Social assistance

Industries that are not current specializations (or basic industries) can “plug leaks” in the local economy through import substitution.

Strong performers in this category are emerging strengths. Lagging, constrained, and poor performers have limited prospects.

## Tax Rates

The General Property Tax Act of 1893 established property taxes as the main source of revenue for local government in Michigan. The basis for the tax is real and tangible personal property value that is not exempt. Exemptions include: property owned by religious and nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, government property, and certain agricultural property. Exempt personal property includes: inventories, special tools, and air and water pollution control equipment. Homestead property is exempt from the 18-mill basic local school district operating tax.

Beginning in 1995 the property tax base was changed from state equalized value (SEV, equal to 50 percent of the true cash value) to taxable value. The taxable value is capped at five percent growth per year, or the rate of inflation, whichever is less (unless the property is transferred). Once transferred a property's taxable value rises to its SEV. Beginning in 2001, the taxable value of agricultural land that remains in agricultural use after transfer remains capped.

In 1994, Proposal A brought sweeping changes to property tax law in Michigan. The effects of Proposal A include:

- Lower property tax rates on homestead and qualified agricultural land
- Restraints on growth of taxable value
- Reduced differences in school operating mileage rates across districts
- Divided property tax into two groups: homestead (and qualified agriculture) and non-homestead
- Eliminated locally levied school operating taxes on most homestead property
- Allowed school districts to levy up to 3 mills of "enhancement" mileage from 1994 to 1996.

- New 6 mill State Education Tax (SET) levied on all property

Michigan's taxable value is largely concentrated in the Lower Peninsula. The five largest counties (Oakland, Wayne, Macomb, Washtenaw, and Kent) comprised 52.6 percent of the statewide taxable value in 2002. The five largest counties account for 57 percent of statewide industrial real taxable value and 52.5 percent of statewide residential taxable value. In 2002 residential taxable value accounted for the largest share of taxable value in all 83 counties.

Between 1993 and 2001 non-school property taxes increased an average of three percent statewide, while total mills decreased nearly 30 percent. The local school operating and state education tax mileage was reduced by 57.9 percent during that period. The dramatic shift was caused by the changes to state tax law under Proposal A.

In Muskegon County the 1993 tax rate was 58.23 mills. In 2001 the rates were 30.68 mills for homestead property and 51.29 mills for non-homestead property. During the period from 1993 to 2001, homestead property mills decreased 47.3 percent in the county while non-homestead mills decreased nearly 12 percent.

The local 2001 mileage was higher for non-homestead property than the state average, but the homestead rate was lower than the state average. In Muskegon County, the burden of property taxes falls on residential property, as is the case in all Michigan counties. 57.1 percent of property taxes levied are on residential properties while commercial properties account for 22.6 percent and industrial properties account for 15.3 percent. Commercial and industrial properties in Muskegon county bear a smaller percentage of the property tax responsibility than the state average.

Average property tax credits in Muskegon county range from \$259 in Orchard View to \$559 in North Muskegon. The total property tax credits in the county are valued at \$6,994,598.

### **Tapestry Profile**

The Community Tapestry segmentation system from ESRI provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods. U.S. residential areas are divided into 65 segments based on demographic variables such as age, income, home value, occupation, household type, education, and other consumer behavior characteristics. These segments are also associated with the type of community in which the segment lives, whether in the urban center, on the suburban fringe, in small towns, or rural areas.

Twenty-five of the 65 segments are represented in the Muskegon County population. The top ten segments in the county are:

- Green Acres (14%)
- Salt of the Earth (12.6%)
- Rustbelt Traditions (11.3%)
- Cozy and Comfortable (7.7%)
- Southern Satellites (6.3%)
- Metro City Edge (6%)
- Midland Crowd (5.3%)
- Home Town (4.5%)
- Modest Income Homes (3.6%)
- Midlife Junction (3.3%)

In terms of urbanization groups, the top five groups in Muskegon County are: Rural (I), Suburban Periphery (II), Urban Outskirts (II), Urban Outskirts (I), and Metro Cities (II). Thirty-two percent of Muskegon County households live in rural (I) areas, 18.7 percent in the suburban periphery (II), 22.7 percent in the urban outskirts (I and II), and 6.4 percent in metro cities (II).

Each of these segments is described below.

**Green Acres:** A little bit country, these blue-collar baby boomer families with children aged 6-17 enjoy living in pastoral settings of developing suburban fringe areas. These neighborhoods are found mostly in the Midwest. Their median household income of \$60,000 and their median home value of \$163,000 are high compared to that of others in the United States.

**Salt of the Earth:** *Salt of the Earth* resides in blue-collar neighborhoods in rural areas or small towns. Hardworking, primarily in agriculture, manufacturing, or mining, the labor force is slightly older with low unemployment. They earn a median household income of \$46,300 that parallels the United States median. These married couples have a median age of 39.5 years and own homes with a median value of \$111,200.

**Rustbelt Traditions:** *Rustbelt Traditions* are the backbone of older industrial cities in states bordering the Great Lakes. For years these residents sustained the manufacturing and transportation industries that drove the local economies. Their median age is 36.1 years. Households are a mix of married couples with a high proportion of single parents and singles without children. Most live in modest, single-family houses with a median value of \$87,500. Their median household income is \$41,400.

**Cozy and Comfortable:** These older, settled married couples are still working but are looking forward to retirement. Many of them are still living in the homes in which they raised their children – single-family homes built before 1970 with a current market value of \$139,000 and located mainly in suburban areas in the Midwest and Northeast. Most of the population is older with a median age of 40.2 years.

**Southern Satellites:** Found primarily in the rural South, these neighborhoods are

dominated by a single manufacturing and/or construction industry. Residents also do some farming. Families in *Southern Satellites* own newer, single-family or mobile homes with a median value of \$76,200. The market is a bit older with a median age of 36.9 years.

**Metro City Edge:** Young singles and single parents live in *Metro City Edge*, older suburban neighborhoods of large cities. The median age is 28.5 years. Half of them own their single-family homes with a median value of \$69,500. The labor force is varied with jobs primarily in the service sector. Median household income is approximately \$30,000.

**Midland Crowd:** *Midland Crowd* represents Community Tapestry’s largest market with more than 10 million people, nearly 4 percent of the United States population. They mirror the United States norm with a median age of 35.9 years and a median income of \$45,700. Their differences are striking: they are found in rural areas that have been growing by 3 percent annually since 2000. Nearly 95 percent of their homes are single-family or mobile homes; one third of the houses were built after 1900.

**Home Town:** These low-density, settled neighborhoods in the Midwest and South rarely change. *Home Owners* may move from one house to another, but they seldom cross the county line. Over half of the householders own homes with a median value of \$55,300. The local job market offers employment primarily in manufacturing, retail trade, and support services.

**Modest Income Homes:** Although they earn modest incomes, half of these residents

own single-family homes with a median value of \$48,000 in the older suburbs of metropolitan areas. These multigenerational households focus on family. They are relatively young with a median age of 34.2 years.

**Midlife Junction:** Phasing out of their child rearing years and approaching retirement, most *Midlife Junction* residents are still working, earning a median household income of \$41,800. Nearly one-third are drawing retirement funds. Few households still have children living at home. Most still own single-family homes, although some are moving into multiunit apartment buildings, giving up home ownership responsibilities. Their median age is 40.1 years.

These ten segments account for 75 percent of the Muskegon County households.

**Commuting Patterns**

According to the 2000 Census of workers living in the county, 74.9 percent worked in the county. Also 83 percent of people working in the county lived in the county.

All together approximately 30,500 people either enter or leave Muskegon County to work. Approximately 7,300 more people

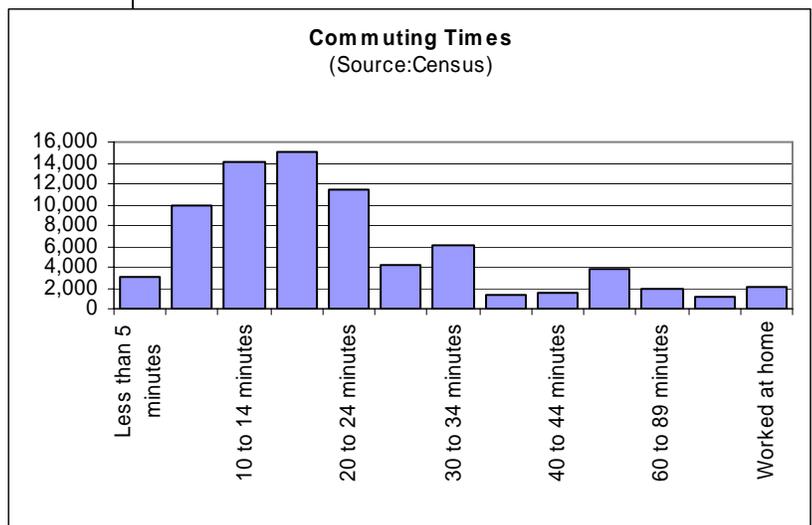


Figure 3.19: Commuting Times

work outside the county than people from elsewhere who work in the county. 15.8 percent of the inflow of workers and 38.9 percent of the outflow is with Ottawa County.

Of the approximately 56,500 Muskegon County residents who also work in Muskegon County, approximately 45,000 or 80 percent work in another part of the county than where they live. Those living in Muskegon slightly favored jobs outside the city while those living outside Muskegon strongly preferred jobs outside the city.

Eighty four percent of workers in the county in 2000 drove a car, truck, or van alone to work. This group alone accounts for 63,303 vehicles on the roads in Muskegon County per day for the purpose of getting to work. An additional 10 percent carpooled.

Most Muskegon County residents enjoyed reasonable commute times of less than 30 minutes in 2000.

### Income

From the 1990 Census to the 2000 Census, median household incomes in the county's outer townships rose by 12.8 percent, compared to 10.9 percent in the City of Muskegon. In 2000, the median household income for the City of Muskegon was \$27,929 or 66.6 percent of the median income for Muskegon County households outside Muskegon Township. There is considerable variation between the median incomes in the townships from 1990 to 2000. Blue Lake Township saw an increase of 77.7 percent in real terms between 1990 and 2000, while White River Township realized a real loss of 5.7

percent during the same period. Increases in township income are likely linked to higher income households moving to new residential development in the suburbs.

The 2000 median household income for Muskegon County was \$38,008, an increase of 10.4 percent in real terms over 1990. This is greater growth in real terms than the State of Michigan experienced. The state as a whole experienced a 7.2 percent increase in median household income between 1990 and 2000, with a 2000 median income of \$44,667. This is likely due to the strength of the manufacturing economy in the late 1990s.

For Muskegon County households with income less than \$100,000, the income is distributed quite evenly, although a few percent more households have incomes in the higher ranges than in the lower ranges. Nearly 64 percent of households had income below \$50,000 in 1999 (Census 2000).

### Earnings

Muskegon County employees earned average wages of \$31,739 in 2002, a 2.4 percent increase in real terms over the past ten years. In 1992, Muskegon County employees average annual wage was

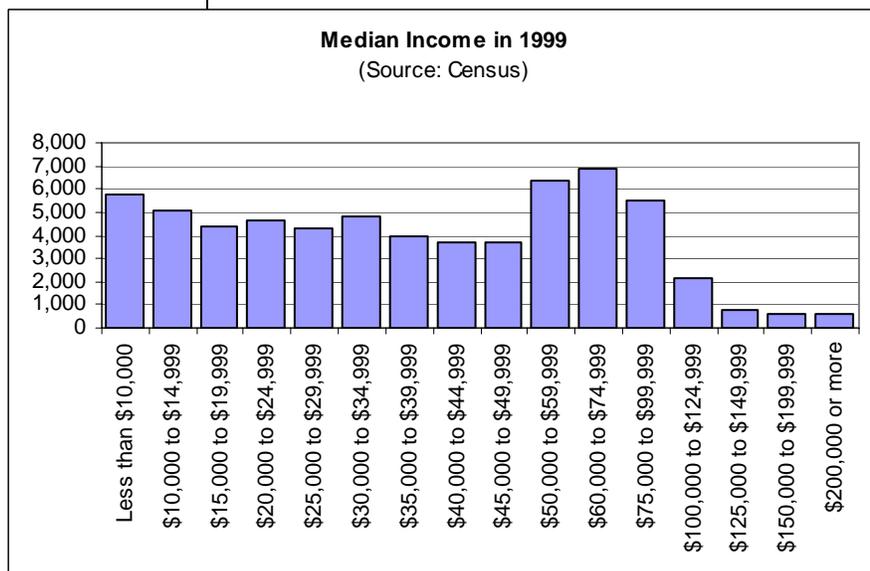


Figure 3.20: Median Income

\$31,006 (adjusted for inflation), or 88.1 percent of the state average. By 2002, Muskegon County wages had fallen to 83.3 percent of the state average.

Neighboring Kent County saw an increase in average annual wages of 8.7 percent in the period from 1992 to 2002, with a 2002 average wage of \$35,239. This is 92.5 percent of the state average. Ottawa County experienced an 8.7 percent increase in average wage over that period, rising to \$33,442 in 2002, or 87.8 percent of the state average. The average annual wage for the State of Michigan in 2002 was \$38,104, an increase of 8.2 percent over 1992 in real terms. The average annual wages for the state were 103.7 percent of the national average in 2002.

### Cost of Living

In terms of cost of living, the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland MSA is more expensive than the Flint, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing, and Saginaw areas. However, it is more affordable than the Ann Arbor, Benton Harbor, or Detroit areas in Michigan and the Chicago, Illinois or Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. The median home purchase cost in the third quarter of 2000 was \$107,300 in the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland MSA compared to \$128,500 nationally. Homes in the area appreciated at the same rate as the national average. Cost of living comparisons were made prior to announcement of the new Metropolitan Statistical Areas and are not available for the county alone at this time.

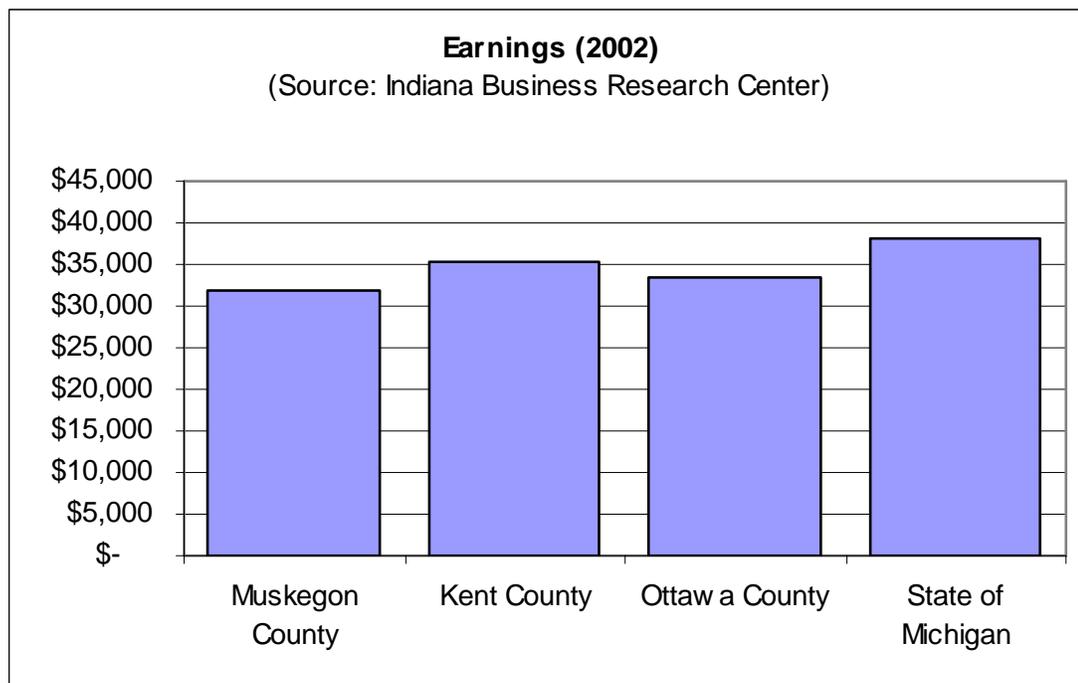


Figure 3.21: Earnings

**Tourism**

Tourism has a long history of activity in Michigan, based on its abundant natural resources and recreational opportunities. Families (with children under 18) are the primary tourists in Michigan. Lodging with friends or relatives remains the most popular form of accommodation statewide, and the state relies heavily on resident travel for tourism activities. This means most of the tourists are Michiganders from other parts of the state. In western Michigan, the Lake Michigan shoreline is a particular attraction. In 2001, more than 30 percent of the visitor days in the state were in western Michigan and nearly 16 percent of the visitor days were in southwest Michigan (DK Shifflet & Associates).

**Why Muskegon County?**

Muskegon County has 27 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, 400 miles of rivers, and 11,400 acres of inland lakes for outdoor recreation and other activities. The Lake Michigan shoreline is accessible at eleven dune filled public parks.

<i>Visitors to Muskegon County Events</i>	
<i>Event</i>	<i>Number of Visitors</i>
<b>Summer Celebration.....</b>	<b>620,000</b>
<b>Tall Ships.....</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<b>Muskegon Air Fair.....</b>	<b>122,000</b>
<b>Parties in the Park.....</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Shoreline Spectacular.....</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Unity.....</b>	<b>18,000</b>
<b>Irish Music Festival.....</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>MayFest.....</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Miss Michigan Pageant.....</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Trillium Festival.....</b>	<b>3,000</b>
<b>Memorial Day Spectacular.....</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>West Michigan Marathon.....</b>	<b>500</b>

The county is also home to a number of state parks, a state game area, and Manistee National Forest.

The county’s outdoor recreation opportunities are year round with mild summers for water-based recreation, camping, and hiking. The winter brings approximately 80 inches of snow on average for winter outdoor recreation such as snowmobiling, sledding, skating, hockey, and ice fishing. Autumn brings an array of color as the deciduous trees change color.



There are also a variety of man-made recreational and tourism destinations that make Muskegon County attractive to visitors. The county is home to the Blue Lake Fine Arts camp, which attracts young musicians from around the state and the world each summer. Frauenthal Theatre hosts concerts, dance performances, and national tours of Broadway and off-Broadway shows. It is also home to the Miss Michigan Pageant. Michigan’s Adventure Amusement Park is the largest amusement park in Michigan.



Events also generate tourism activity in the county. The Summer Celebration is a ten day event that has developed a tradition of excellence in music performance and other entertainment. Similarly, the Unity Fest brings Christian musicians to Heritage Landing each August. The Muskegon Air Fair also generates excitement, with the Blue Angels included in the program on a bi-annual basis. The Tall Ships Festival is a parade of large old sailing ships from around the world. Other destinations include the USS Silversides, and the Great Lakes Naval Memorial and Museum.

**Visitors to Muskegon County**

Events and attractions in the county bring a significant number of visitors during the year. In 2001, events and attractions brought more than 4 million visitors to the county. The largest event was the Summer Celebration, bringing 620,000 visitors to Muskegon County. The Air Fair brought more than 122,000 people to the county.

In terms of attractions, Hoffmaster State Park has the largest number of visitors, with 590,000 in 2001. Muskegon State Park (500,000), the county parks (496,261), and Fury Hockey at the L.C. Walker Arena (400,000) also attract significant numbers of visitors.

Out of area visitors to these events and attractions generated 1,760,200 pleasure trip nights for the county in 1996. In the region, only Kent County surpassed Muskegon County in the number of pleasure trip nights generated in 2001.

The visitors to Muskegon County in 1996 generated direct expenditures of \$95,628,000. This is the estimated revenue brought into the county (to local businesses) from tourists.

<b>Visitors to Muskegon County Attractions</b>	
<b>Attraction</b>	<b>Number of Visitors</b>
<b>Hoffmaster State Park .....</b>	<b>590,000</b>
<b>Michigan’s Adventure.....</b>	<b>500,000</b>
<b>Muskegon State Park.....</b>	<b>500,000</b>
<b>County Parks.....</b>	<b>496,261</b>
<b>L.C. Walker Arena.....</b>	<b>400,000</b>
<b>Great Lakes Downs.....</b>	<b>160,000</b>
<b>Frauenthal Theatre.....</b>	<b>144,000</b>
<b>Gillette Visitors Center.....</b>	<b>65,000</b>
<b>Muskegon County Museum.....</b>	<b>40,064</b>
<b>Muskegon Museum of Art.....</b>	<b>36,000</b>
<b>Cherry County Playhouse.....</b>	<b>35,000</b>
<b>USS Silversides.....</b>	<b>35,000</b>
<b>Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.....</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Port City Princess.....</b>	<b>13,500</b>
<b>Hackley &amp; Hume Historic Site.....</b>	<b>9,693</b>
<b>Fire Barn Historic Site.....</b>	<b>2,330</b>
<b>Seaway Run.....</b>	<b>2,000</b>

*Table 3.23: Attractions*

According to the 1996 MSU study, Muskegon County was capturing 1.6 percent of the tourism market.

**Benefits of Tourism to Muskegon County**

The benefits of tourism to Muskegon County extend beyond the revenue generated by area businesses. There are jobs that are created due to tourist activity, and wages paid to those workers. Additionally, the county collects a hotel/motel accommodations tax that benefits the county.

The covered employment and wages for 2002 in the tourism related sectors of arts, entertainment, and recreation and the accommodations and food service sector

provide an indicator of the impact of the tourism industry, even though all of the jobs are not solely dependent on visitors to the county (locals dine in restaurants and use entertainment venues as well as tourists). In 2002, there were 1,037 people employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector and 5,869 employed in accommodations and food services sector. The arts, entertainment, and recreation sector had annual average wages of \$14,215 and the accommodations and food service sector had annual average wages of \$9,673.

Muskegon County is one of eight Michigan counties that can collect an excise tax of up to five percent on hotel/motel stays. The tax rate for this tax is five percent and it is collected on hotel and motel room fees. The revenues from the tax can be used for tourism operations and promotion. In 2001, the local revenue from this tax was \$642,102.

<i>Financial Tourism Benefits</i>	
<i>Muskegon County</i>	<i>Local Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue</i>
1995.....	\$410,826
1996.....	\$391,431
1997.....	\$338,684
1998.....	\$560,088
1999.....	\$507,051
2000.....	\$574,335
2001.....	\$642,102

Table 3.24: Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue

**Seasonal homes**

There is a significant second home, seasonal home, recreation housing market in Muskegon County. According to the 2000 Census, 26 percent of the vacant housing units in the county were vacant for seasonal,

recreational, or occasional use. The number of units specified in that category was 1,379.

**Community Facilities**

**Police, Fire, & Emergency Services**

The Michigan State Police is the state’s leading law enforcement providing public safety and law enforcement services for Michigan’s citizens. Along with the police counterparts at the local, county, and federal levels of government, the Michigan State Police assists in preventing crime, apprehending fugitives, improving traffic safety, ensuring homeland security, providing quality support services, pursue resources for expanded use of technology, and maintaining basic police services for local communities in Michigan. Michigan State Police law enforcement services for Muskegon County are located out of the Sixth District, located in Grand Haven, Michigan.

Muskegon County is served by a county sheriff’s department. The county sheriff is an appointed official, and was appointed in 2003. The Department also has an Undersheriff, a Chief Deputy Sheriff, and a Captain. The Patrol Division is the most visible branch of the Muskegon County Sheriff’s Office. The Patrol Division provides law enforcement service to over 70,000 people living in unincorporated areas throughout the County. The division has 17 deputies, three shift commanders, and a division commander. The Muskegon County Jail houses 370 inmates managed by 46 full time correction officers. The main jail houses the holding, minimum to maximum security as well as female and juvenile inmates. The Ernest W. Heikkila addition houses work release and minimum security inmates. The jail has a redundant state-of-the-art surveillance and cell door locking system needed to maintain the

many levels of security to ensure employee, public and inmate safety. The Marine Division patrols Lake Michigan and the inland waters during the summer months. The Marine Division handles search and rescues and recoveries in Muskegon County. The Division also teaches young people how to become safe boat operators. Classes are held during the school year in cooperation with local schools. The Division has a sergeant and four seasonal deputies. The fleet of the Marine Division is made up of 7 patrol boats and 1 jet ski including the new Pursuit Enforcement 2470cc. The Sheriff's Office provides security, swears warrants and serves subpoenas for the Muskegon County District, Circuit and Probate Courts. Court Services is responsible for providing inmates for their time in court. The division also transports inmates to the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Muskegon County Emergency Services is the coordinating agency for Muskegon County's preparedness and response to disasters and/or emergencies. Emergency Services directs the implementation of the Muskegon County disaster preparedness activity and is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective control and emergency services planning.

Muskegon County Emergency Services include:

- Muskegon County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Muskegon County's Hazardous Materials Response Team (HAZMAT)

The mission of the Muskegon County Emergency Services Department, in cooperation with the Emergency

Management Division of the Michigan State Police (EMD/MSP) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is to save lives and protect property in this County. This will be accomplished by having an emergency plan and program that is developed and exercised according to State and Federal guidelines and which takes into account any unique circumstances within our County.

In cases where the situation is jurisdiction-wide or extremely severe, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be established.

The EOC is capable of operating on a continuous or intermittent basis for as long as the situation requires.

When a disaster or large-scale emergency occurs, a representative of each agency will be notified to report to the EOC. At that time, the entire EOC staff will be briefed on the incident. Those not immediately involved will be released on a stand-by basis.

<i><b>EOC Locations</b></i>	
<i><b>Primary EOC Location</b></i>	<i><b>Alternate EOC Locations</b></i>
Emergency Services Building B 133 E Apple Avenue, Muskegon	City of Whitehall Police/Fire Building Complex  Muskegon County Road Commission  Norton Shores City Hall  Muskegon City Hall  Area Adjacent to Muskegon County Central Dispatch

The Central Dispatch mission is to serve, without prejudice or favoritism, all of Muskegon's citizens and visitors by providing prompt, accurate and reliable access to the county's public safety agencies.

The Central Dispatch maintains an administrative staff of five, including an Executive Director, Operations Manager, Office Manager, and two Information Technology staff.

Muskegon Central Dispatch takes E-911 calls for the following public safety agencies listed in the chart below.

The Muskegon Police Department is the local law enforcement arm in the city of Muskegon. In the spring of 2004, the Muskegon Fire Department, the Muskegon Police Department, and Muskegon Inspection Services were combined at the administrative level into the Muskegon Public Safety Department. This consolidation places the three departments under the supervision of the Director of Public Safety with a Deputy Director overseeing the daily operations of both fire and inspections.

The Police Services Division consists of the following Bureaus: Patrol, Investigations, and Administration. Each bureau encompasses units of related functions that contribute toward the division's overall goals accomplishment. Primary responsibilities of the division include law enforcement, investigations, and the maintenance of public records. The Police Services Division operates within the context of community policing i.e., forming community partnerships to reduce crime and enhance the quality of life within the city. The police department currently has 91 sworn positions and 11 non-sworn positions.

<i>Emergency Services</i>	
<i>Fire Departments</i>	<i>Police Departments</i>
Blue Lake Township Fire Department # 1/2	Michigan State Police WEMET
Casnovia Township Fire Department # 1/2	City of Montague Police Department
Dalton Township Fire Department	City of Muskegon Heights Police Department
Egelston Township Fire Department	City of Roosevelt Park Police Department
Fruitport Township Fire Department # 1/2	City of Norton Shores Police Department
Holton Township Fire Department	City of Whitehall Police Department
Montague Fire District	Muskegon Township Police Department
Moorland Township Fire Department	City of Muskegon Police Department
City of Muskegon Fire Department # 3/4/5	Muskegon Central Dispatch 911
Muskegon Township Fire Department # 1/2	Muskegon County Sheriff's Department Airport
City of North Muskegon Fire Department	Muskegon County Sheriff's Department Fruitport
City of Norton Shore Fire Department # 1/2/3	Muskegon County Sheriff's Department Admin
City of Muskegon Heights Fire Department	Muskegon County Sheriff's Department Jail
Ravenna Fire Department	
White Lake Fire Authority # 1/2	

Table 3.25: Emergency Services

The Patrol Bureau includes 1 Captain, 3 Shift Lieutenants, 7 Sergeants, 41 Patrol Officers, 11 Community Officers, and 10 individuals in the Parking Office. The Investigations Bureau includes 1 Captain, 2 Sergeant, 12 Detectives, 1 Officer, and a Narcotics Team. Officers working with the Chief of Police include 2 Detectives, 1 Lieutenant, a Community Coordinator and Administrative staff. The Patrol Officers handle day to day emergencies, regularly patrol areas of the City to prevent crime, maintain public safety and order by enforcing local, state, and federal laws and ordinances, and sometimes perform specialized police activity such as criminal investigations, undercover surveillance and other duties.

The cities of Montague, Muskegon Heights, North Muskegon, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, Whitehall, and the Muskegon Township all maintain their own police departments, although some of them utilize part-time personnel. These Departments handle day to day emergencies, regularly patrol areas of the local jurisdictions to prevent crime, maintain public safety and order by enforcing local, state, and federal laws and ordinances, and provide other public services.

The total number of full time officers in the County is 193 officers and 25 part time officers. Assuming that the service areas of these Departments are exclusive of one another, the Level of Service (LOS) for personnel for the County is 1.14 full time officers per 1,000 of population. This is below the national standard of 2.0 offers per 1,000 as determined by the Urban Land Institute's 1994 study.

#### ***Fire Protection Services & Emergency Medical Services***

The City of Muskegon Fire Department operates the largest single department in the County, providing the following functions:

Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Service, Training, Fire Prevention, Code Enforcement, Fire Safety Education, and Specialized Rescue. The Fire Services Division is responsible for delivery of the services within the City, as well as providing fire prevention and public fire safety education services for citizens and businesses. The Fire Services department currently uses automatic and mutual aid with neighboring jurisdictions to deliver life-safety services to citizens in the most rapid and efficient manner possible. The City of Muskegon Fire Department has 45 full time firefighters, which translates into a LOS of 1.12 firefighters per 1,000 population. This LOS is lower than the recommended 1.65 firefighters per 1,000 as determined by the Urban Land Institute's 1994 study.

The Central Fire Station location is in need of replacement. The current structure has severe structural problems and cannot accommodate newer, larger firefighting apparatus. The Department is currently studying possible locations for the new station.

The cities of Muskegon Heights, North Muskegon, Norton Shores, and the Townships of Casnovia, Dalton, Egelston, Fruitport, Hoton, Muskegon, Ravenna, and White River maintain their own fire services, and much of the service is provided by volunteers. Within these listed fire departments, there are 47 full time firefighters and 224 part-time/volunteer firefighters.

Emergency ambulance services are provided to Muskegon County by two services, Professional Med Team, Inc., (Pro Med) and White Lake Ambulance Service. Professional Med Team, Inc. is a not-for-profit advanced life support ambulance and health transportation service owned by Hackley Health System and Mercy General Health Partners. However, Pro-Med operates

as a self-sufficient company. Pro-Med was founded in 1986 and offers advanced life support, basic life support, and non-emergent transportation services. Pro-Med is the medical communications provider for Muskegon County, responsible for dispatching ambulances in Muskegon County. The service responds to over 14,000 ambulance requests per year and provides over \$55,000 annually in charitable care for patients who cannot afford to pay for service. Pro-Med receives no local

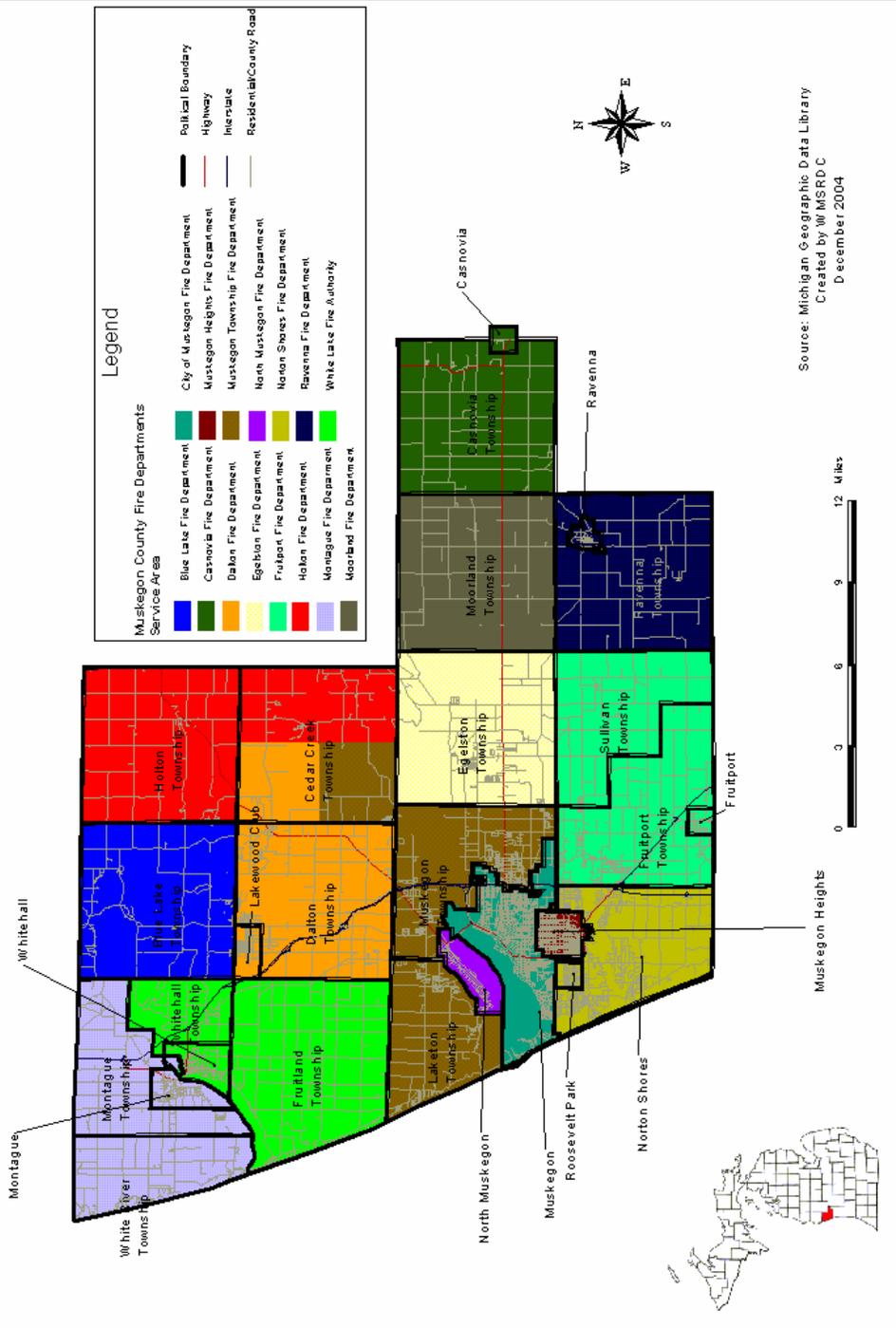
government subsidies or local tax dollars for its service. Pro Med employs 93 people, 15 ambulances and three wheel chair vans.

In addition to Pro Med, White Lake Ambulance Services is a volunteer ambulance service that provides additional support for Muskegon County. The company's staff includes 3 full-time, approximately 20 volunteers, and has four ambulances.

Table 3.26

<b>Muskegon County Fire Department Average Response Time</b>			
<b>Department</b>	<b>Average Response Time (minutes)</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Average Response Time (minutes)</b>
Blue Lake	6 – 10	City of Muskegon	3 – 4
Casnovia	3.67	Muskegon Heights	3
Dalton	7	Muskegon Township	3 – 5 Scenic Rd. area 7 – 8
Egelston	4 – 5	North Muskegon	4.48
Fruitport	3	Norton Shores	4
Holton		Ravenna	5
Montague	5.12	White Lake Fire Authority	5.49 – 8.39
Moorland			

# Muskegon County Fire Departments and their Service Areas



### **Medical/Health Facilities**

Mercy General Health Partners, which includes Mercy Campus and Muskegon General Campus, is the largest Hospital in the County with 302 beds, 2,098 full time employees, and 297 volunteers. Mercy General Hospital is an Osteopathic teaching hospital with medical students, residents, and interns from across the U.S. learning and practicing alongside their physicians. Mercy General Hospital is the leader in the region for many specialty areas including open heart surgery, other cardiac and vascular procedures, orthopedics, and obstetrics.

Hackley Hospital is a 181-bed acute care facility with a wide array of medical services and many of the latest advancements in medical technology. Major medical services include a comprehensive Cancer Center, an award-winning Emergency Department, an 11-suite Surgical Department, Hackley Hospital's Family Birth Place, inpatient Psychiatric Hospital, and Muskegon's largest Occupational Health Center. Hackley Hospital's medical staff includes a wide range of specialists located throughout the community.

Hackley Primary Care, a member of the Hackley Health System, is the lakeshore's largest network with over 40 physicians at 11 locations specializing in family practice, internal medicine, obstetrical care, pediatrics and geriatrics.

LifeCare Hospital is an accredited, 20 beds, specialty acute care hospital conveniently located in Muskegon in the Mercy General Oak Avenue campus. The hospital specializes in the needs of the medically complex patient who requires an extended hospital stay. Specialty programs include:

- Respiratory Program (ventilator management, weaning, decanulation

Wound Program (stage III/IV wounds, complex surgical wounds/grafts, fistulas, post burn care, use of wound VACS) managed by a certified wound care specialist

- Medically Complex Program (IV antibiotics, TPN, multi-system organ failure, dialysis, and telemetry)
- Restorative Rehabilitation Program includes speech, physical, occupational and recreational therapy services for CVA, recent amputation and medically complex patients whose needs cannot be met at a lower level of care).

In addition, four family practices offer excellent care from offices in Montague and Whitehall, including the Lakeshore Medical Center, whose ten physicians support an urgent care center with extended hours, and The Family Medical Practice in Montague, home to one M.D. and a physician's assistant. Both provide a wide range of medical services. Lab and x-ray services, and the care of two physicians and a physician's assistant, are available at the Colby Street Medical Practice. These practices, affiliated with Hackley, and Mercy General Health Partners Hospital in nearby Muskegon, offer personal care with the advantages of modern technology and equipment.

Other professional care providers include a number of dentists and ophthalmologists practicing in modern offices throughout the area. Physical and occupational health is available in local facilities, as well as massage, behavioral therapy, and speech therapy. Complete skilled nursing services are provided by area practices, as well as the local Visiting Nurses Service. A number of private residences provide specialized and individual senior care. Heartland Health Care, with facilities large enough to accommodate 125 residents, sponsors a well-rounded program, including recreational and therapeutic activities.

### **Public Utilities**

Public utilities play an important role in the growth and management of Muskegon County. Through the delivery of reliable and plentiful water, and the safe and efficient disposal of wastewater, communities in Muskegon County can achieve an improved quality of life for local residents. Utility systems have the potential to aid in the growth of a community by enabling greater densities in selected locations. In addition, and most importantly, public utility systems give the County and communities the ability to provide effective stewardship over such important natural features as surface water and groundwater features within the region.

### **Public Wastewater & Treatment Systems**

The wastewater and treatment system for the County is the Muskegon County Wastewater Management System (See Figure 18). All of the communities in Muskegon County send their wastewater to the Muskegon County Wastewater Management System or have rural septic systems for wastewater. The Metro System currently treats approximately 24 million gallons per day at an 11,000 acre site in Moorland and Egelston Township. The system capacity is 42 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater, 73 tons per day of suspended solids, and 65 tons per day of biochemical oxygen demand. The peak daily flow is 28 million gallons per day and is typically reached only once per year.

At the Metro site, the treated waste is collected by an extensive network of agricultural under drainage, with ultimate disposal to both Big Black Creek and the Muskegon River. The collection and transportation network consists of sewers, force mains, pumping stations, and 12

access points where the existing sewage system and water-using industries enter the County system. The interceptor contains 13 miles of reinforced concrete pipe ranging from 16" to 42" in diameter. The final portion of the transportation network is composed of a large pump station with four pumps, having a rated capacity of 56,000 gallons per minute, that transport the combined wastewater 11 miles through a 66" diameter reinforced concrete pipe to the treatment site (Muskegon County, 2002).

The Metro plant has recently completed major renovations on its pretreatment processes, irrigation and drainage systems, a main pump station, a new outfall, and a new rapid infiltration system.

The City of Roosevelt Park owns and operates a sewer collection system that serves the entire City for stormwater. The sewer collection system was installed in the 1940s and is in decent condition. The City recently made the necessary replacements, repairs, and relines of the sewer collection system. This process is ongoing. The City sends their wastewater to the Muskegon County Wastewater Management System. The City of Roosevelt Park treats approximately .75 mgd of the City's own wastewater.

The City of Norton Shores owns and operates a sewer collection system that serves the entire City for stormwater. The City sends their wastewater to the Muskegon County Wastewater Management System. The stormwater collection empties into Mona Lake or the County drain system, which empties into Blake Lake, with the entire system ultimately discharging into Lake Michigan.

Figure 3.28: Muskegon County Sewer Network

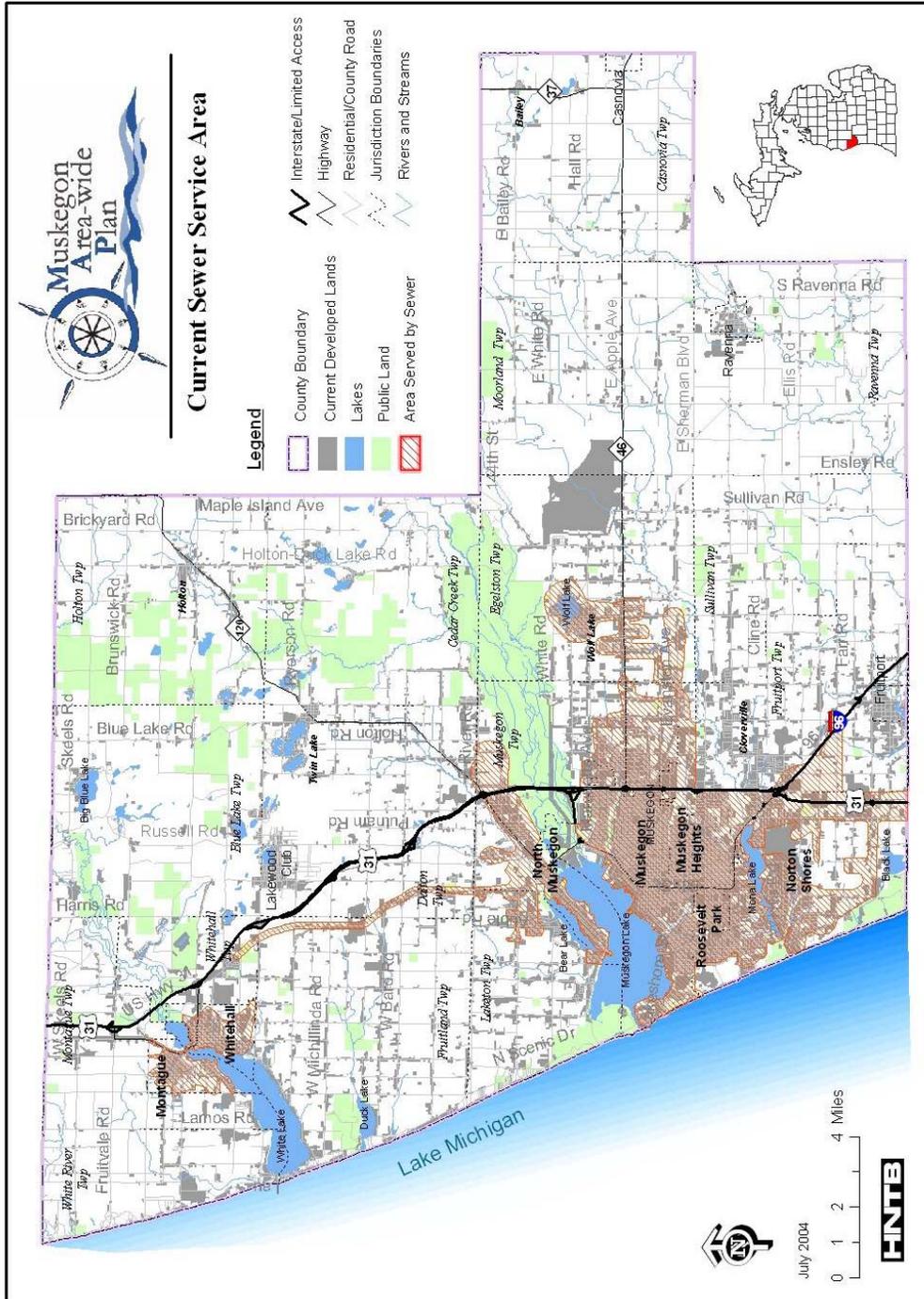
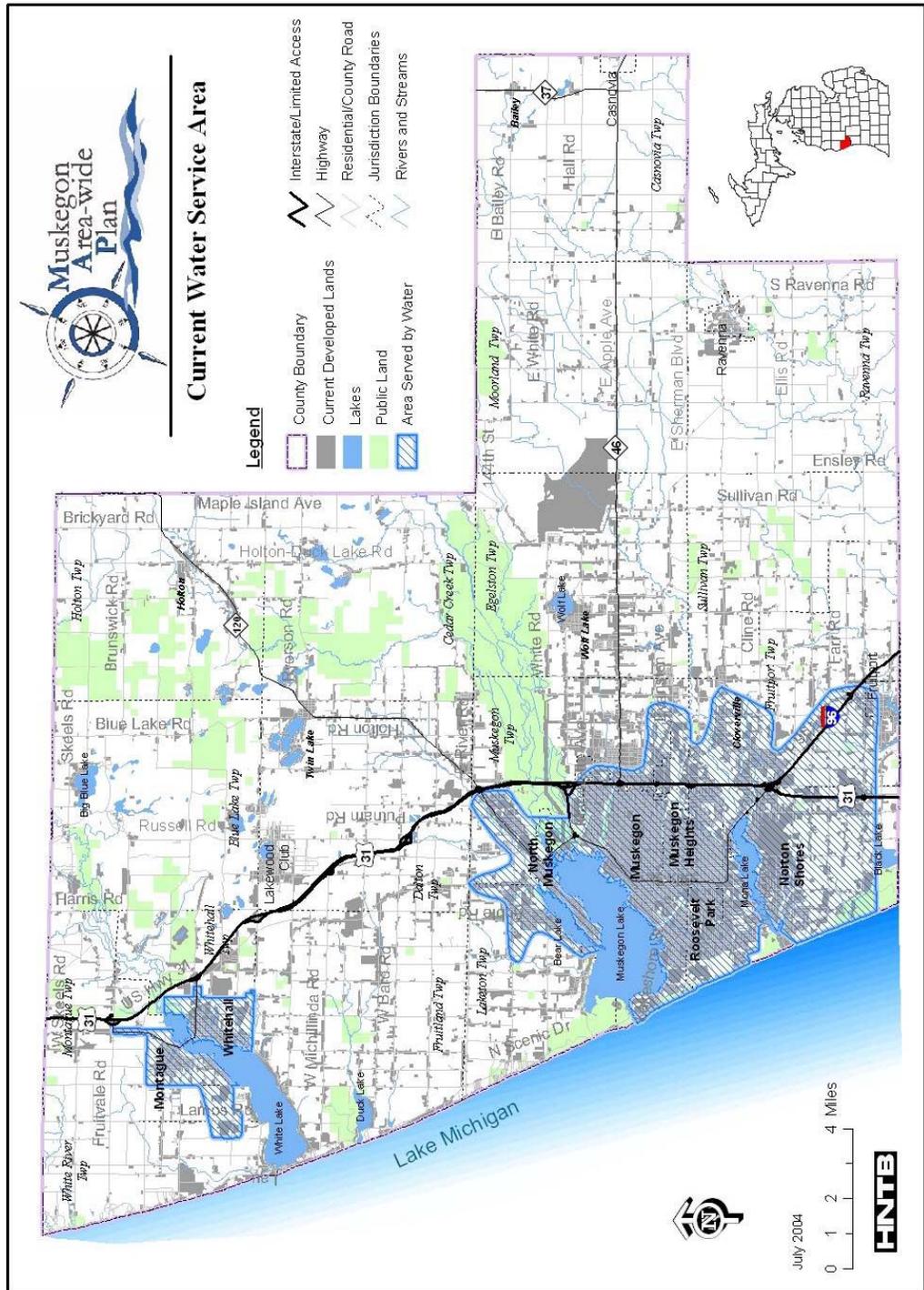


Figure 3.29: Water System



### **Public Water Supply Systems**

Public water supply is the process of withdrawing, treating, and distributing water for a variety of residential, public, commercial, and industrial uses. Residential uses include water for drinking, household activities, and lawn and garden watering. Public uses include fire fighting, street washing, and supplying municipal parks, golf courses, and swimming pools. Commercial and industrial uses include providing water for hotels, restaurants, laundries, office buildings, manufacturers, and industrial complexes. Public water supply systems are the sole source of water for many of these facilities, while others use a combination of public and self-supplied water sources.

The Muskegon Water Filtration Plant is a conventional water treatment plant with a capacity of 28 million gallons per day (MGD). The capacity is currently being expanded to 40 MGD. The average daily flow is 9.245 MGD and the peak daily flow is 20.744 MGD. Current excess capacity is 7.266 MGD (accounting for peak demand), and will be expanded to 19.266 MGD when the expansion is completed in 2005. Customers include not only the City of Muskegon, but also Muskegon Township, North Muskegon, Roosevelt Park and the County North side system. The system draws water from Lake Michigan and the intake pipe extends one mile out at a depth of forty feet.

The Muskegon Heights Filtration Plant is located at the end of Seminole Road in the City of North Shores. It has a capacity of 25.2 MGD. The average daily flow on an annual basis is 6.3 MGD. During the summer the plant treats 12 to 14 MGD, but in the winter it only treats 5 to 6 MGD.

The City of Roosevelt Park purchases its water from the City of Muskegon. The City

of Roosevelt Park owns and operates a water distribution system that serves the entire City. The water system was installed in the 1940s and is in need of replacement. Last year the City completed a reliability study that recommended a 20 year replacement. The City adjusted the commodity rates accordingly and has begun this process. No significant capacity changes are needed other than increasing the minimum water main size, from 6" to 8", and 12" trunk lines. The City pays the same rate as the Muskegon customers with a 1.35 multiplier. The City's average daily demand is 0.455 MGD.

The cities of Whitehall and Montague have separate groundwater supplied water systems. In 1997 a water main was constructed under the White River to supply each other with water under emergency conditions.

The City of Montague has four wells, two elevated storage tanks, and 28 miles of water main. The City of Whitehall has five wells, two elevated storage tanks, and 32 miles of water main.

The City of Montague has a total capacity of 2.45 MGD with a firm capacity of 1.73 MGD. In 2025, Prein & Newhof projects that the city will have a maximum daily demand of 1.92 MGD.

The City of Whitehall has 3.93 MGD total capacity, with a firm capacity of 1.99 MGD. By 2025, the maximum daily demand is projected to be 3.41 MGD.

Both cities are exploring alternatives for expanding their capacity at the request of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Alternatives studied by Prein & Newhof include groundwater wells east of US 31, surface water from Lake Michigan, and supply from the Muskegon County Northside System.

## **Schools**

School performance is of interest to the County, not because of any great impact the Plan has on the quality of schools, but because performance is a significant factor in residential location decisions. In addition, education typically represents the single-largest local public expenditure. People with children place a high priority on residing in a community with quality schools. Many would say that schools represent the most important community facility in terms of home or business relocation decisions. The magnitude and pattern of the County's growth directly impact school needs, including facility size and location, the number of staff needed, supplies, and the level of required investment for education. Muskegon County is broken up into 12 Constituent Districts, 4 Charter Schools and 14 Non-Public Schools. The performance of these Districts is listed in the following Table 3.30.

### **Public Schools**

#### *Fruitport Community Schools*

Fruitport Community Schools is a pre-K through 12 public school district located near Hoffmaster State Park. The Village of Fruitport neighbors Muskegon, Spring Lake, and Grand Haven communities and is approximately 30 minutes from both Grand Rapids and Holland. The district operates three elementary buildings, one middle school, and one high school. In the fall of 2003, a bond for 8.4 million was passed for the Fruitport Community Schools. All schools will receive improved athletic facilities, replacement windows, roofs, boilers, floor coverings, classroom furniture, musical equipment, improved technology for classrooms and infrastructure, new signage, security systems for elementary buildings, meeting ADA standards, and many other improvements. The Fruitport Community Schools maintain 16.3 percent

of their current spending as reserves, higher than the county average of 10.9% and about the same as the state average of 16.0%. The district's long-term debt per student is \$3,562, lower than the county average of \$8,684 per student and the state average of \$8,327 per student.

#### *Holton*

Holton Public Schools, the second smallest District in the County, is a pre K-12 public school district located in the northeastern part of Muskegon County. The district operates one elementary building, one middle school, and one high school, all located on one campus. In 2001-2002, a bond was passed for the existing Middle School. Future needs are continued financing, student enrollment, improvements to the existing sports facilities, and additional course offerings for students in preparation for college or other interests. The Holton Public Schools maintains a smaller percentage of its spending as reserves, 9.3 percent than the county average, and has a larger amount of long-term debt per student at \$9,173.

#### *Mona Shores*

The Mona Shores Public Schools are located in North Shores and Roosevelt Park, located south of the City of Muskegon. The district operates four elementary buildings, one middle school, and one high school. In September of 2003, the District requested a \$1.75 mill levy (\$725,000 annually, \$5.1 million over 10 years) for future quality needs within the District schools. This bond was not passed. No future expansion is currently needed because of declining student enrollment; however, future quality upgrades are needed. Areas of improvement are roofing, parking facilities, technology, safety and security, and curriculum upgrades. The Mona Shores schools maintain a much higher percentage of their spending as reserves than the county average, more than 22 percent is kept as

reserve. The district's long-term debt per student is equivalent to the county average, at \$8,649.

*Montague*

The Montague Area Public School District encompasses 120 square miles and serves children from the City of Montague, Rothbury Village, Montague Township, White River Township and part of Grant, Otto, and Claybanks Townships. The district operates one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, all located within the City of Montague.

*Muskegon Public*

The Muskegon Public Schools of the City of Muskegon encompasses an area approximately 19.3 square miles. It includes all of the City of Muskegon, as well as portions of the City of Norton Shores and Muskegon Township. The school district is unique in that it not only offers a comprehensive preschool through twelfth

grade curriculum to its students, but it also operates the Muskegon Museum of Art and Muskegon Training and Education Center (MTEC). In addition, Muskegon Public Schools provides special education services for hearing impaired students from the other 11 school districts in Muskegon County, as well as a Vocational Consortium program which also serves the area.

The district operates 10 elementary buildings, two middle school buildings, and one high school campus. In the fall of 1999, the district completed a three-year, \$54 million facilities upgrade project that involved renovations and improvements to all school buildings. Improvements included meeting ADA standards, new music and science classrooms, new lunchroom facilities, heating and boiler system improvements, classroom technology and infrastructure, floor coverings, athletic facilities, and other improvements.

Future needs of the District include

<i>Public School Districts (2000-2001 School Year)</i>							
<i>School District</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>All Staff</i>	<i>Student/Teacher Ratio</i>	<i>Average Elementary School Population</i>	<i>Average Class Size – Grade 1</i>	<i>Average Class Size – H.S. Math</i>
<b>Fruitport</b>	3,104	175	187	17	464	25	26
<b>Holton</b>	1,112	72	80	15	395	25	27
<b>Mono Shores</b>	4,240	204	214	20	463	21	25
<b>Montague</b>	1,556	90	100	17	726	17	25
<b>Muskegon</b>	5,535	367	398	15	295	20	28
<b>Muskegon Heights</b>	2,339	138	165	16	246	25	24
<b>North Muskegon</b>	901	44	63	20	382	18	25
<b>Oakridge</b>	2,040	108	116	18	367	30	30
<b>Orchard View</b>	2,652	164	182	16	415	22	25
<b>Ravenna</b>	1,203	71	83	16	449	22	25
<b>Reeths Puffer</b>	4,393	244	364	18	383	25	29
<b>Whitehall</b>	2,200	119	138	18	593	24	24

Source: The School Report ([www.theschoolreport.com](http://www.theschoolreport.com))

Table 3.30 Public School Districts

financing and resizing the school facilities for the number of students in the District.

The Muskegon Public Schools maintain much less in reserve than the county average, only 5.6 percent of current spending. The district also has a lower amount of long-term debt per student, \$5,696, than the county average.

#### *Muskegon Heights*

Muskegon Heights Public Schools are located south of the City of Muskegon and north of the City of Norton Shores. The district operates six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The District has much lower reserves as a percentage of current spending than the county average, at 7.7 percent. The district also has more long-term debt per student than the county average, \$10,979 per student.

#### *North Muskegon*

The North Muskegon Public Schools is the smallest district in the county and operates one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, which was built in 1932. Last September, a \$14 million dollar bond was passed by voters. This bond will include a facility upgrade project that involves renovations and improvements to all school buildings. Specific improvements include new high school classrooms, new heating and boiler system, classroom technology and infrastructure, windows, electrical, plumbing, and communications. The North Muskegon Public Schools have a much lower level of reserves than the county average, 4.2 percent of current spending. The District has low long-term debt per student, at \$228.

#### *Oakridge*

The Oakridge Public Schools operate two elementary schools, and one middle school, and one high school. The Oakridge district's reserves relative to current

spending is lower than the county average at 7.9 percent. The long-term debt per student in the district is near the county average at \$8,438.

#### *Orchard View*

The Orchard View Public Schools operate one preschool/kindergarten school, two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Orchard View schools maintain a relatively small reserve compared to current spending at 7.9 percent, but the district's long-term debt per student is very low at \$96.

#### *Ravenna*

The Ravenna Public Schools operate one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school.

The Ravenna Public Schools completed renovation improvements to all school buildings during the last couple years. In the fall of 2001, the expansion of existing rooms in the high school and elementary was completed. The elementary tripled in size due to the improvements. No future needs are currently needed at this time. The Ravenna Schools has a very large reserve at 20.9 percent of their current spending. The district also has no long-term debt per student.

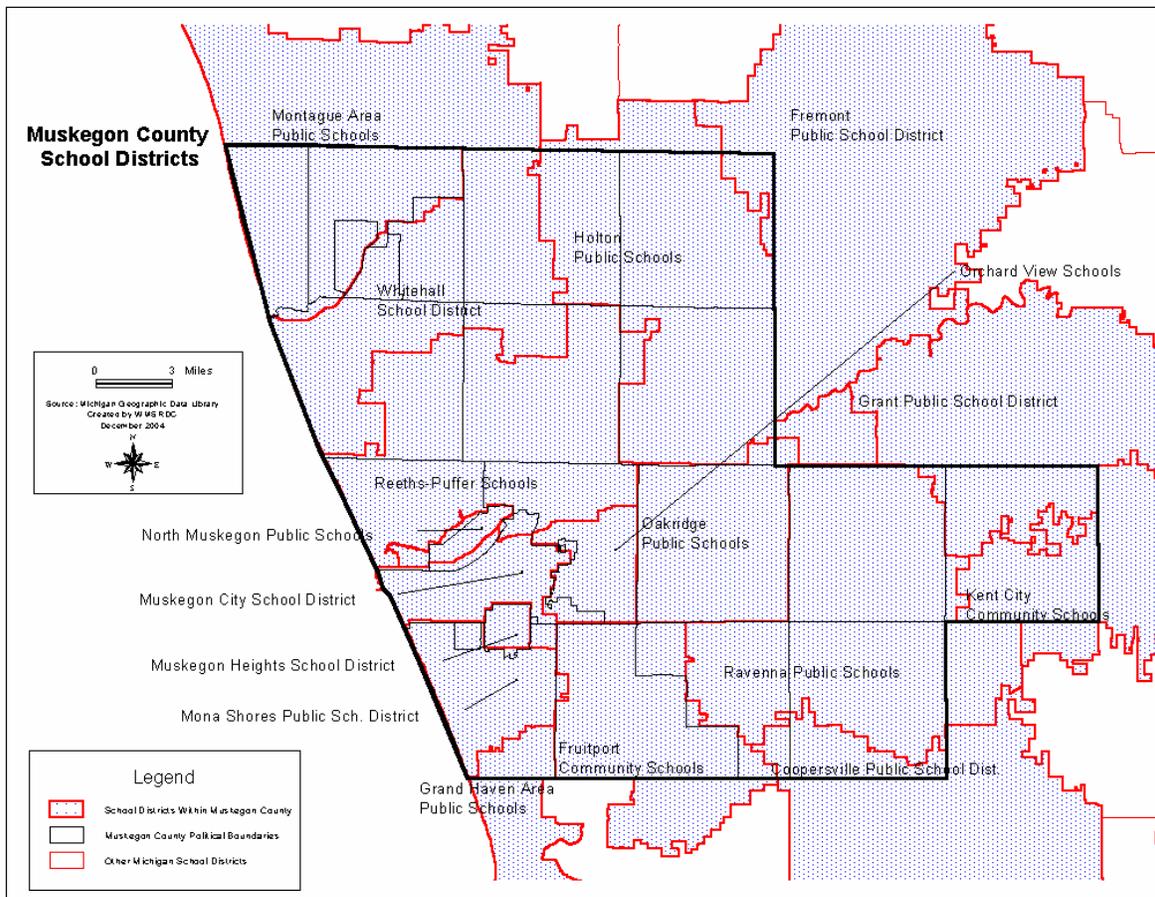
#### *Reeths-Puffer*

The Reeths-Puffer Public Schools operate one preschool/kindergarten school, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. In addition, the school district operates two alternative schools and an adult education center. During the 2001-2002 school year, a bond for \$23 million was passed for renovations and improvements to all school buildings. Improvements included meeting ADA standards, upgraded infrastructure including all mechanical, electrical and plumbing, new lunchroom facilities, 11 new classrooms in the middle and elementary schools, floor

coverings, new bus maintenance facility and other improvements. No future needs are anticipated at this time. The Reeths-Puffer district has a relatively low reserve compared to current spending, 5.3 percent. The district also has long-term debt per student that is nearly double the county average at \$16,147.

**Whitehall**

The Whitehall District Schools operate two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. A school bond was passed in 2001 for the construction of a new high school. The new 160,000 square feet high school will be completed this year, with class room size increasing to 900 square feet from 750 square feet. The Whitehall schools reserve is about the same relative to current spending is about the same as the county average at 10.5 percent. The district has double the county long-term debt per student, at \$17,479.



### **Charter Schools**

Charter public schools, or public school academies, as they are known in Michigan, are independent public schools that operate under a performance contract called a charter. Charter schools are made possible by a 1993 Michigan law. It empowers local and intermediate school districts, community colleges, and state universities to sign charters authorizing the schools. These contracts govern areas such as education goals, curriculum standards, assessment measures, governance, and funding.

There are three Charter schools located in the region, and all are located in the City of Muskegon. They include: Tri-Valley Academy serving kindergarten to 8th grade, Timberland Academy serving kindergarten to 6th grade, and Muskegon Technical Academy serving 6th to 9th grade. Within these three Charter schools, the number of students is over 800 who are served by 52 full time teachers and support staff.

### **Non-Public Schools**

Private, or non-public schools, are a school which is owned and operated by an individual, a religious institution, a partnership, or a corporation other than the State, a subdivision of the State, or by the Federal government. They are usually supported primarily by other than public funds and teach the required subjects on each grade level for the same length of time as students must be taught in the public schools.

Within Muskegon County, there are 14 non-public schools and are as follows:

- Greater Muskegon Catholic Schools (3 schools)
- Calvary Christian Schools
- Grace Christian Academy
- Holton Evangelical Lutheran School
- Michigan Dunes Montessori

- Muskegon Christian Elementary School
- Oakcrest Christian Academy
- St. Catherine's School
- St. James School
- Seventh Day Adventist School
- Western Michigan Christian High School
- West Shore Lutheran School

### **Standardized test scores**

Standardized test scores are often used as indicators of school performance. The Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP), American College Test (ACT), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) are standardized test scores that are collected and compared for Michigan school districts. In terms of the MEAP passing rate, Muskegon county schools as a whole are near the state average of 52.8 percent. Performance varies considerably between the individual school districts. In North Muskegon Public Schools, approximately 71 percent of students passed the MEAP. However, only 20.2 percent of Muskegon Heights students passed. North Muskegon schools also had the highest rate for excellence on the MEAP.

In Michigan more students take the ACT than the SAT. ACT participation statewide averages 68 percent, while SAT participation is approximately eight percent. The ACT is graded on a 36 point scale. The statewide average score is 21. The average score for Muskegon county schools is comparable to the state average. Individual districts average scores vary considerably.

The County and the school districts should continue to coordinate long-range plans to select school sites, establish multiple-use facilities, and ensure that school facilities have adequate utilities, fire protection, police protection, street access and non-motorized access. As the population of the County continues to grow, coordination

efforts will need to be continued in order to maintain a high standard and quality of school systems in Muskegon County.

### Higher Education

The state of Michigan has fifteen public universities and twenty-eight public community colleges in addition to the numerous private institutions of higher education. Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in Allendale is the closest main campus for a public university to Muskegon County. GVSU has a current student enrollment of more than 21,000, nearly 18,000 of which are undergraduates. Muskegon Community College, in Muskegon, is one of the state's public community colleges. Muskegon Community College has a current enrollment of approximately 4,400, 65% of which are Muskegon County residents.

Baker College, a private college is also located in Muskegon. It is the main campus for the Baker College System. The Baker College System is the largest independent college in Michigan, with over 25,000 students in more than 80 programs on 12 campuses and four branch locations.

The Stevenson Center, (formerly the Muskegon Center for Higher Education), is a 93,500 square foot building constructed on the picturesque campus of Muskegon Community College. The Center houses a unique academic consortium comprised of Muskegon Community College, Ferris State University, Grand Valley State University, and Western Michigan University. The Center contains 40 classrooms/conference rooms including a computer classroom and laboratory, a large conference room, a large lecture hall, and a science room. A catering kitchen on the second level accommodates food service needs for banquets, meetings, conferences, and receptions. Communication technology advancements allow for a variety of instructional delivery systems. Each room in the facility is wired for voice, video and data transmission. Teleconferencing and integrated distance learning technology is available as well. The Muskegon Community College Graphics Technology instruction and reproduction departments, Media Services Department, and the Television Studio are all housed in the Stevenson Center.

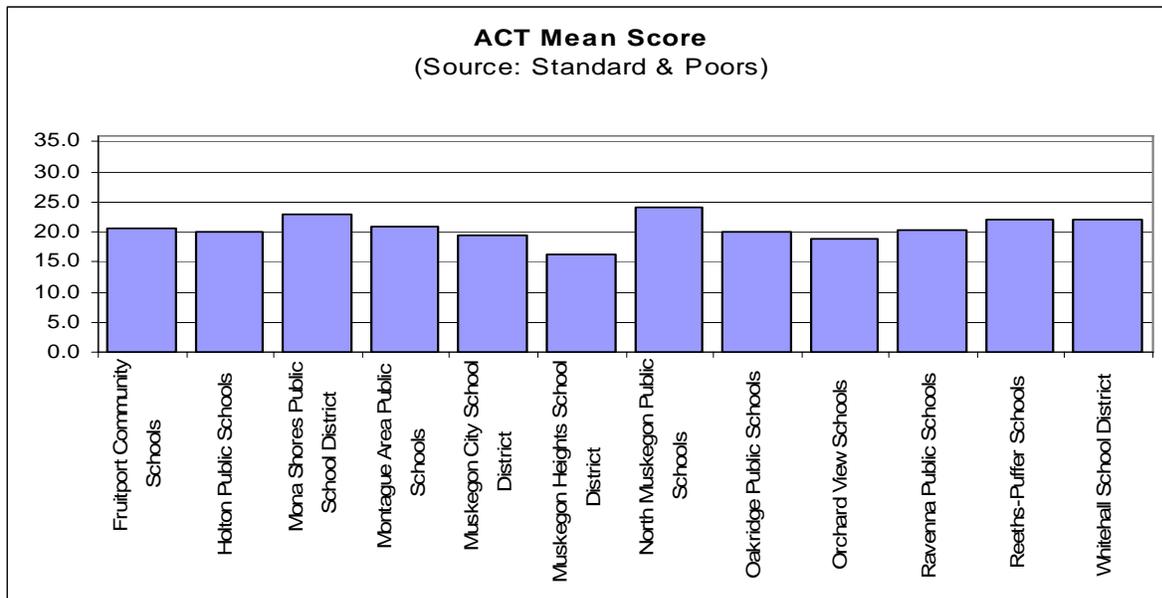


Figure 3.31: ACT Scores

Additionally, Grand Valley State University, Ferris State University, and Western Michigan University have campuses in Muskegon County.

Other colleges and universities within 100 miles include Aquinas College, Calvin College, Cornerstone College, Davenport College of Business, Grand Rapids Community College, ITT, Kendall College of Art and Design, the Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, as well as Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Hope College in Holland, Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, Montcalm Community College in Sidney, and Southwestern Michigan College in Dowagiac.

### **Libraries**

The Muskegon County Library has a collection of 230,000 books and periodicals; in addition, there are 4,800 CDs, records, cassettes and other audio materials, as well as 1,890 video items, such as DVDs and VHS tapes. Internet terminals are available for use by the general public. Staffing consists of 25 employees, of whom 7 are fully accredited librarians, plus volunteers. The system comprises 9 branch libraries, plus one bookmobile. Branch libraries are located in Twin Lake, City of Muskegon, Fruitport, Holton, Montague City, Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores, Ravenna, North Muskegon, and Whitehall. Annual expenditures on the library collection total \$220,000. Patrons make 330,000 visits annually, and check out materials 560,000 times. Thirty-two percent of all check-outs are children's materials.

Hackley Public Library, located in Muskegon, has a collection of 126,000 books and periodicals; in addition, there are 1,980 CDs, records, cassettes and other

audio materials, as well as 340 video items, such as DVDs and VHS tapes. Internet terminals are available for use by the general public. Staffing consists of 19 employees, of whom 5 are fully accredited librarians, plus volunteers. Annual expenditures on the library collection total \$75,000. Patrons make 88,000 visits annually, and check out materials 80,000 times. Twenty-nine percent of all check-outs are children's materials.

White Lake Community Library, located in the City of City of Whitehall, has a collection of 30,000 books and periodicals; in addition, there are 1,200 CDs, records, cassettes and other audio materials, as well as 660 video items, such as DVDs and VHS tapes. Internet terminals are available for use by the general public. Staffing consists of 5 employees, including one fully accredited librarian, and volunteers. Annual expenditures on the library collection total \$17,600. Patrons make 66,000 visits annually, and check out materials 63,000 times. Fifteen percent of all check-outs are children's materials.

## Land Use

The primary authority to plan for land use and utilize zoning as a land use policy implementation tool lie at the township and municipal level in the state of Michigan. The legal authority for land use planning at the township level is established under the Township Planning Act 168 of 1959. Zoning authority for townships is established under the Township Zoning Act 184 of 1943. Municipal planning authority was established under the Municipal Planning Act 285 of 1931. Zoning authority for cities and villages was established under the City and Village Zoning Act 207 of 1921.

State law does provide for regional planning. Under the Regional Planning Act 281 of 1945, “a regional planning commission may conduct all types of research studies, collect and analyze data, prepare maps, charts, and tables, and conduct all necessary studies for the accomplishment of its other duties; may make and coordinate the development of plans for the physical, social, and economic development of the region, and may adopt, by resolution of its governing body, a plan or the portion of a plan so prepared or any objective consistent with a plan as its official recommendation for the development of the region.” It is in this context that land use will be discussed as a part of the Muskegon Area-wide Plan.

In Muskegon County, there are 27 planning and zoning jurisdictions. Each of the townships has planning and zoning jurisdiction. Additionally the cities of Montague, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, North Muskegon, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, and Whitehall and the villages of Casnovia, Fruitport, Lakewood Club, and Ravenna have planning and zoning authority.

Muskegon County has a land area of 509 square miles, or 325,760 acres. The 2000 population density was 334 people per square mile. Muskegon County, like many areas in Michigan, has abundant inland water resources. The five largest named lakes in the county have a combined surface area of 5,102.5 acres, or 1.6 percent of the surface area of the county. The largest lake is Muskegon Lake, which has an area of 4,150 acres alone. Additionally, 12,500 acres of Muskegon County’s area are controlled by the State of Michigan in the form of Duck Lake State Park, Muskegon State Park, Hoffmaster State Park (part in Ottawa County), and the Muskegon State Game Area (Muskegon County portion only).

The character of Muskegon County ranges from industrial urban areas to villages, shoreline areas, and rural areas. The urban areas have a rich industrial heritage, much of which was dependent on the county’s location on Lake Michigan. Ravenna is a small agricultural community that also plays a role as a commuter city to both Grand Rapids and Muskegon. Casnovia is situated on top of a hill overlooking mid-west Michigan’s beautiful orchard country. Lakewood Club is a quiet residential community situated around beautiful Fox Lake. Fruitport is a scenic town including a park on the lake, adjacent to the center of town, where one can watch the boats coming to visit. The shoreline is changing along Muskegon Lake and White Lake. Much of the shoreline was once dominated by industrial activity, but recently there have been efforts to restore public access and beaches. Agriculture, particularly orchards, remains important to the character of rural Muskegon County.

The developed area of Muskegon County increased by 24 square miles, or 4.7 percent, between 1978 and 1998. While much of the new development occurred in the areas

between existing urban areas, there was also significant new development in Fruitport, Dalton, and Mooreland townships. Map 3.32 highlights the decentralized nature of the new development.

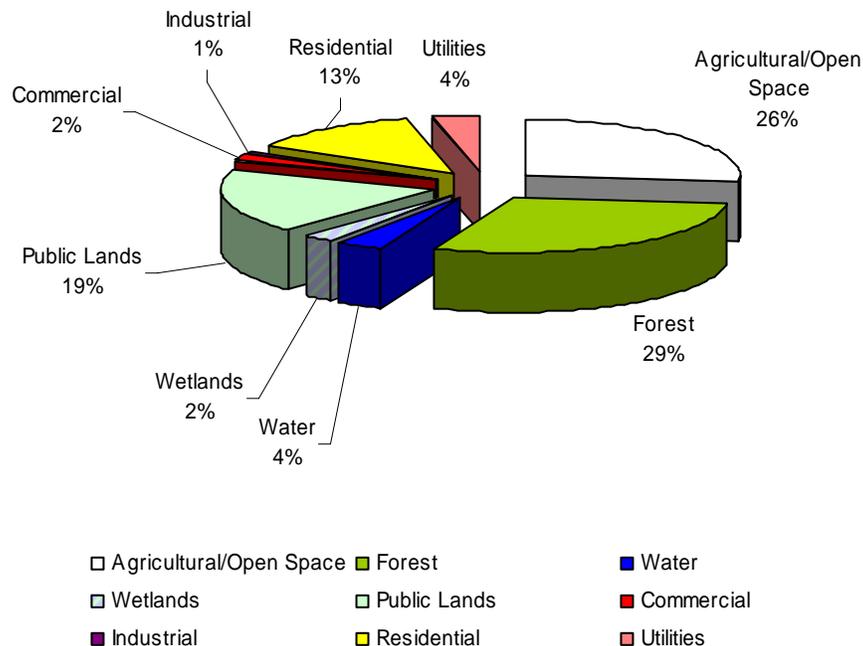
Land uses are typically classified as agricultural, residential, commercial/office, industrial, public/semi-public, or recreational in nature. Residential uses include all types of structures where people live. Commercial/office space is used in the sale of goods or services and/or the production of service outputs. Industrial land uses are for the manufacture, assembly, and distribution of goods. Public and semi-public uses include government owned lands and schools.

There are 337,088 acres of land in Muskegon County. Of that, nearly 162,200 acres or 48 percent is in forest land. An additional 27 percent is in agricultural or open space uses. Water accounts for 3.7 percent of the surface area and wetlands

account for 2.2 percent. These combined uses are more than 80 percent of the land in the county. Nearly 30 percent of the land is in uses such as forest, water, and state and federal lands that are not likely to be developed.

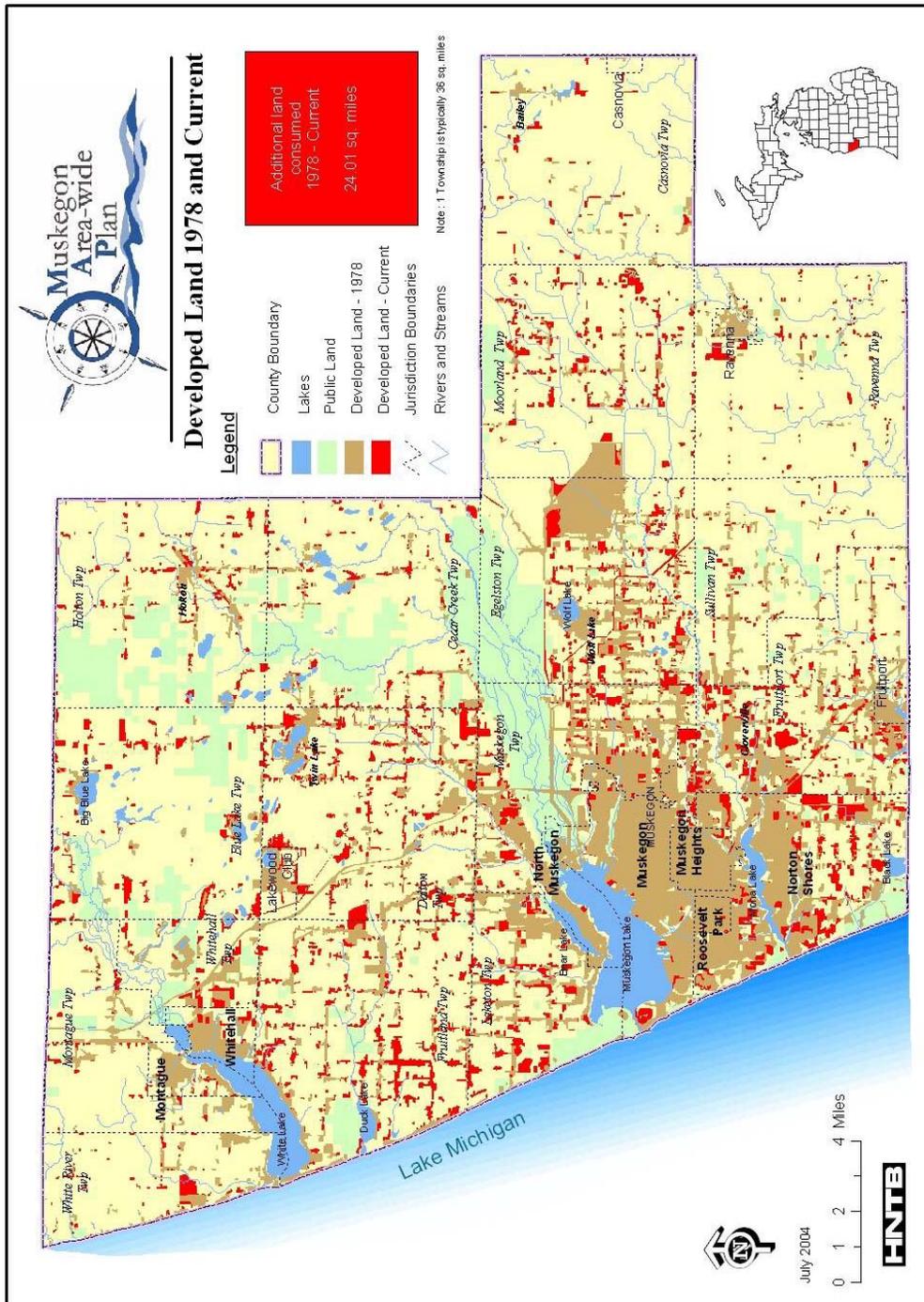
The largest urban land use in Muskegon County is residential uses, occupying more than 43,000 acres, or 12.9 percent of the land area. Commercial uses account for nearly two percent of the land area and industrial uses account for another one percent. Utilities account for 3.7 percent, largely due to the amount of land at the wastewater treatment facility. Urban land uses in Muskegon County are concentrated near Muskegon Lake and Mona Lake, and near White Lake.

**Land Use by Category**

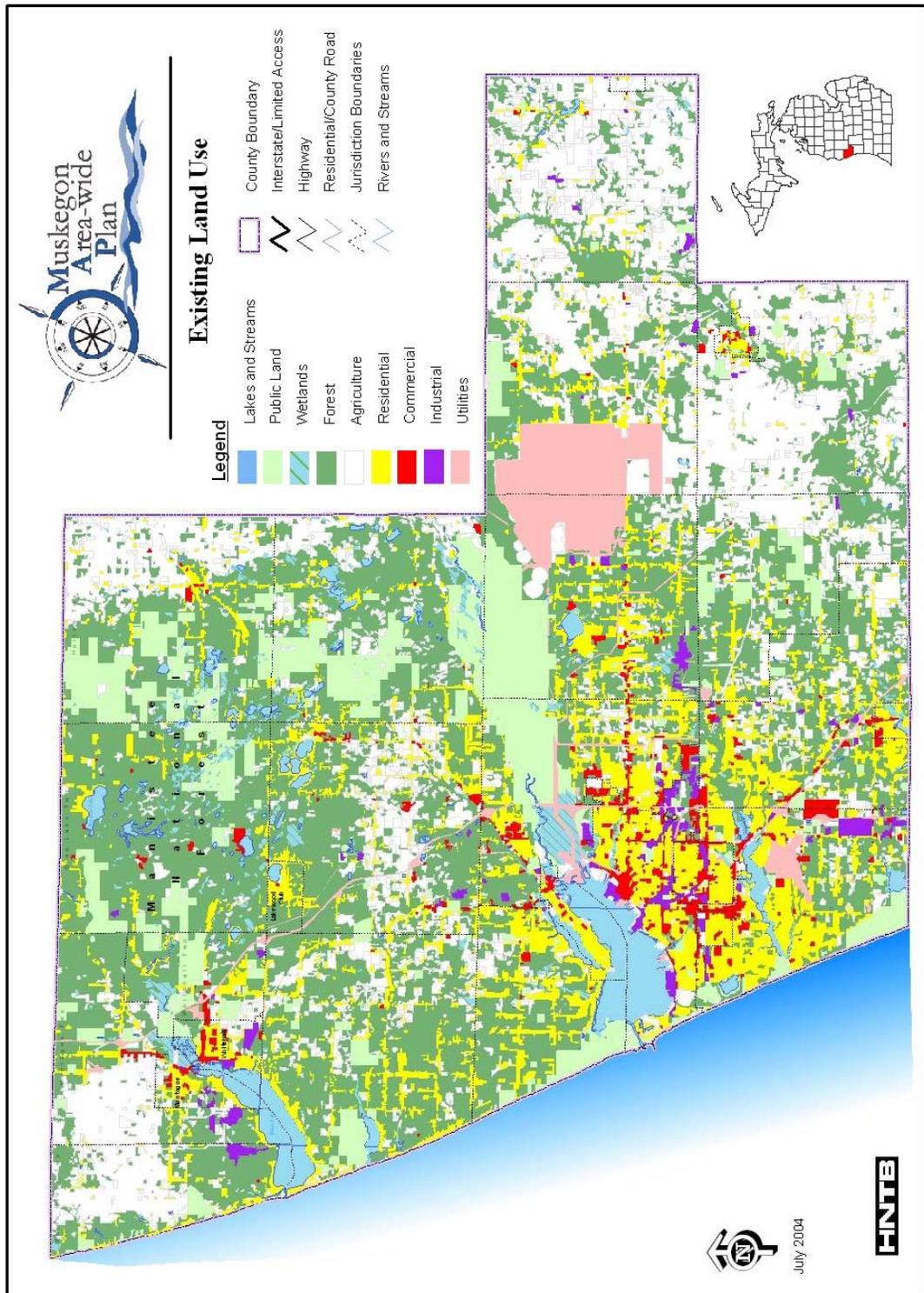


*Chart 3.31: Land Use by Category*

Map 3.32: Developed Land, 1978 and Current



Map 3.33: Existing Land Use



### **Residential**

The dominant land use in the county is residential uses, which account for 12.9 percent of all land uses. This is the dominant land use in the county other than agriculture, forest, water, wetlands, and open space. Residential uses include single-family homes, multi-family homes, and mobile homes. Multi-family residences account for one half of one percent of the land use in the county. There are a variety of housing types in the county including single family homes, mobile home parks, apartment buildings, loft apartments, senior communities, and condominium developments. The higher density residential areas are concentrated near the urban centers of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, North Muskegon, Norton Shores, and Roosevelt Park. There are also higher density residential areas in Fruitport, Montague, Ravenna, Whitehall, and Wolf Lake.



### **Commercial/Office**

Commercial land accounts for 1.9 percent of existing land uses in Muskegon County. Seven commercial corridors have been identified in Muskegon County:

- M 46/Apple Avenue
- M 120
- Colby Road/Business US 31
- Henry Street
- Sherman Boulevard
- Sternberg Road/Harvey Street
- Whitehall Road

Commercial land also includes office spaces. The heaviest concentration of office space is in the Muskegon central business district. There is also a significant amount of office space located in Norton Shores. All together there are 893,865 square feet of office space in Muskegon County, with an additional 129,500 square feet of speculative office space anticipated. Most of the office space in the county is more than 15 years old and has physical signs of deterioration.<sup>1</sup>

The Whetstone Project is a business accelerator designed to assist in the development of new and emerging businesses. It is located in historic Muskegon Heights.

Retail is also a major commercial function. According to the Muskegon Chronicle survey conducted by MORI Research, Inc. in 2003, the top four shopping destinations in the Muskegon area are the Lakes Mall, Lakeshore Marketplace, Sherman Boulevard/Henry Street, and Henry Street/Norton Avenue. Shopping out of town has declined since the construction of the Lakes Mall (Alexander).

Meijer is a major retail force in the Muskegon Area. It remains the top grocery location, with 85 percent of those surveyed having shopped there in the past month and

78 percent shopping at Meijer for groceries. Wal-Mart has captured 37 percent for groceries in the past month and Plumb's has captured 40 percent. Meijer is also the major player in the home improvement market, followed by Menards, Lowe's, and Home Depot. There are two Meijer stores in Muskegon County: M 120 north of Muskegon and Henry/Norton Streets. A third Meijer is proposed at the intersection of Harvey and Sternberg Road (Alexander).

The survey found that Muskegon shoppers like discounts. Of the discount and department stores in Muskegon County, the leading six are value-oriented. This is also reflected in the top places to shop for women's clothing. Meijer again ranks first, Wal-Mart and Target follow, with JC Penny finishing fourth (Alexander).

#### *Downtown Muskegon*

There are approximately 239,400 square feet of office space in the Muskegon central business district. All of the class "A" office space, in the Terrace Point building, remains vacant. Most of the office space in the downtown area is older office space, some in renovated buildings and some in buildings that are showing signs of deterioration.<sup>2</sup> There are three speculative projects including office space planned for the central business district, totaling 87,500 square feet. These projects include the National City building, the Muskegon Hotel, and the Boilerworks (Grub & Ellis). Completed and planned improvements to downtown Muskegon exceeded \$180,500,000.

One completed project is the residential lofts of the Amazon Building. Also completed is the Hartshorn Centre mixed used development and Shoreline Drive. The GVSU Water Resources facility, Heritage Landing improvements, Muskegon Chronicle expansion, and Shoreline Inn & Suites have also been completed. In

addition, the Lake Express Cross Lake Ferry began in the spring of 2004.

Renovation projects completed include the Muskegon Harbor Holiday Inn, the Hartshorn Municipal Marina, and Fifth Third Bank.

Projects still under construction include Edison Landing, the Muskegon Trail System, and Shaw Walker. Coming soon are the Third Street Project, and the former Muskegon Mall project. The former downtown mall has been deconstructed and will be developed as a new "Urban Village" which will feature offices, retail, and residential space.

**M46/Apple Avenue:** Apple Avenue is a five lane corridor running east/west through the central portion of the county. It is lined with strip malls and restaurants. There is one big box business (Kmart) located on corridor near the US 31 interchange.

**Colby Road/Business 31:** Colby Road is a local business route through northern Muskegon County's White Lake area. It is primarily a three lane corridor, although is five lanes near the US 31 interchange. The corridor is lined with local retail and commercial business.

**Henry Street:** Henry Street is a five lane corridor running north/south through the western portion of the county. The corridor is lined with strip malls, restaurants, and banks. It has two recently vacant big box buildings with the relocation of JCPenney to The Lakes Mall and the recent closing of Kmart. However, there is a proposed redevelopment for the former JCPenney property in the City of Roosevelt Park.

**Sherman Boulevard (Near US 31 interchange):** Sherman Boulevard is a

major corridor with recent growth over the past five to seven years. It is one of the County's major retail areas with several big box developments including Target, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Lowe's, and Circuit City. The corridor also has many smaller retail stores and restaurants. All commercial and retail development is located east of the interchange. Immediately west of the interchange is Mercy General Hospital surrounded by several related medical offices.

**Sternberg Road/Harvey Street:** This is a major retail area located in southern Muskegon County at the corner of Sternberg Road and Harvey Street. Development in this area includes The Lakes Mall, Kohl's, Lakeshore Market Place, Menard's, and many restaurants and smaller retail stores. Other development in the area includes apartment buildings, condominiums and small office buildings.

**M120/Whitehall Road:** Whitehall Road is primarily a three lane corridor (five lane near US 31 interchange) running southwest/northeast through central Muskegon County. The corridor includes many strip malls with local retail and commercial establishments.



## **Industrial**

Industrial land accounts for an additional one percent of the land in Muskegon County. There are several industrial areas in the county, though the largest industrial areas are near Muskegon Lake and in Muskegon Township.

### *Muskegon Lakeshore SmartZone*

Muskegon is one of eleven communities statewide that has partnered with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to develop a university-supported technology park through the SmartZone program. Michigan SmartZones are collaborations between universities, industry, research organizations, government, and other community institutions intended to stimulate the growth of technology-based businesses and jobs by aiding in the creation of recognized clusters of new and emerging businesses, those primarily focused on commercializing ideas, patents, and other opportunities surrounding corporate, university or private research institute R&D efforts. SmartZones provide distinct geographical locations where technology-based firms, entrepreneurs and researchers can locate in close proximity to all of the community assets that will assist in their endeavors. SmartZones coordinate all of the community assets and services necessary to support technology development in the knowledge based economy. The Muskegon SmartZone includes Edison Landing which is a mixed-use development that combines university resources with new energy technologies, corporate offices, residential, and retail offerings. The Michigan Alternative & Renewable Energy Center is also in the SmartZone and is operated by Grand Valley State University. It includes a business incubator, research facility, and a conference center. Of the 34 total acres on the site, 26 are available. The site is zoned for convenience and comparison business.

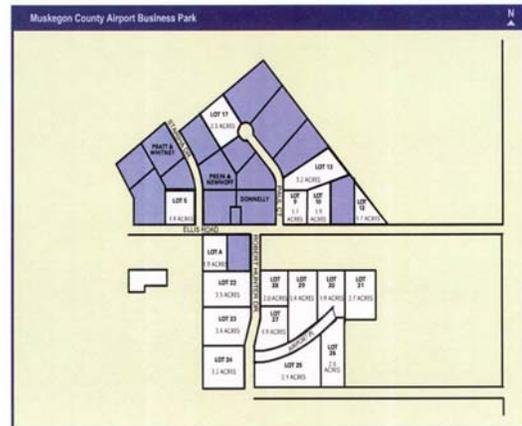


### Renaissance Zone Program

There are four Renaissance Zones and six subzones in Muskegon County. The Renaissance zones are: Muskegon County Business Park North, Muskegon Mall, Seaway Drive Industrial Park, and Shaw Walker. The subzones are: Hoyt Street Site, Mona View Development, Sanford Village, Seaway Drive, Western Avenue, and Whittaker Electric. Renaissance Zones are regions of the state set aside as virtually tax-free for any business or resident locating in or moving to one of the zones.

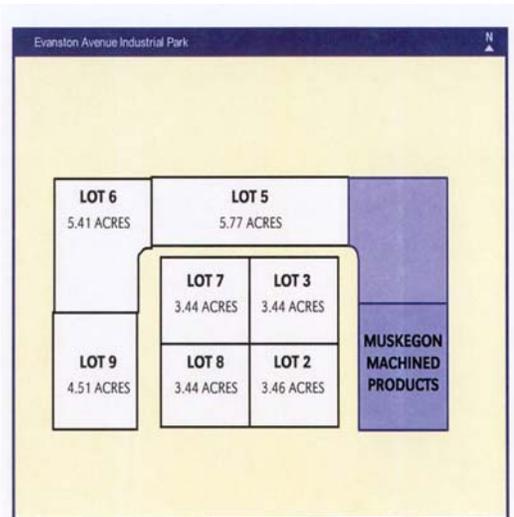
### Airport Business Park

The Airport Business Park is a 76 acre park located in the City of Norton Shores. Nearly 40 acres remain available. The site is zoned as a special use district with light industrial and office uses considered acceptable uses. The park is a Verizon Smart Park, which means it is wired with fiber optics and data-quality copper cables allowing for high-speed, reliable data, voice, and video transmission.



### Evanston Avenue Industrial Park

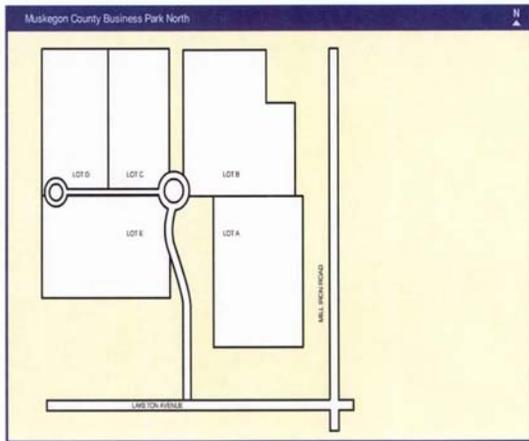
The Evanston Avenue Industrial park is a heavy industrial park located in Egelston Township. The site is less than 45 acres and approximately 34 acres remain available.



### Muskegon County Business Parks

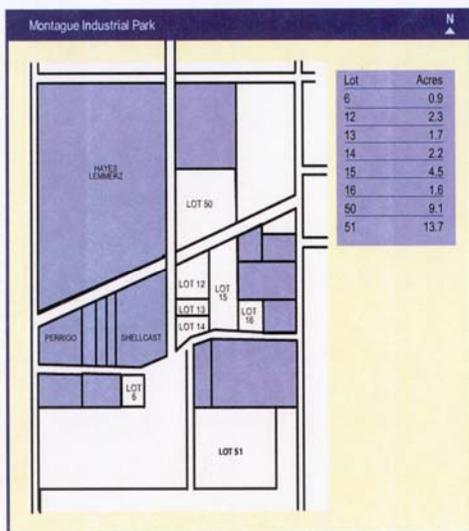
The Business Park East is located in Egelston and Moorland Townships and has 2,300 available acres; it is planned for large tenants that need 100 acres or more. The land will be rezoned from agricultural to general industrial.

The Business Park North is located in Dalton Township and has 210 acres available for 10 acre facilities. The zoning is for industrial uses. It was an abandoned industrial site that is being redeveloped as a business park under the Renaissance Zone program. Energy companies are being targeted for this development as a part of the areas economic development strategy.



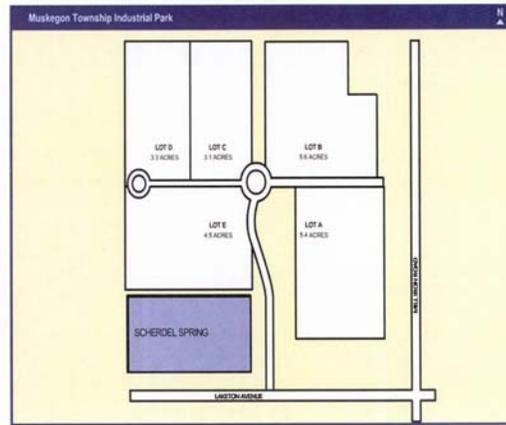
**Montague Industrial Park**

The Montague Industrial Park is a 158 acre park in the City of Montague, with 71 acres available. The park is zoned for light industrial uses.



**Muskegon Township Industrial Park**

This 31 acre park is located in Muskegon Township and all 31 acres are available for light industrial uses.



**Norton Industrial Center**

This 137 acre center is located in the City of Norton Shores and has 16 acres available. The property is zoned for general industrial uses.

**Port City Industrial Center**

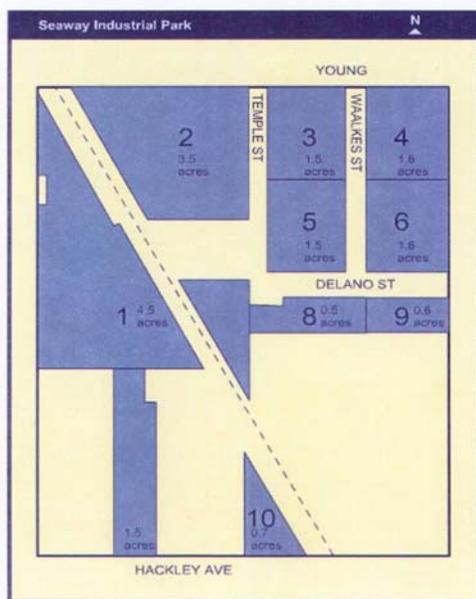
This 425 acre center is located in the City of Muskegon. 120 acres are available and the property is zoned for general industrial uses.

**Porter Properties**

This is a 24 acres site located in the City of Norton Shores. All of the acreage is currently available and is zoned as a PUD, light industrial/office.

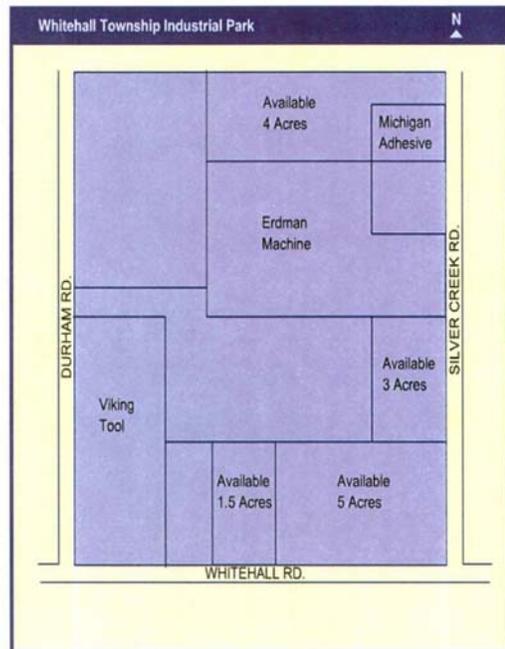
**Seaway Industrial Park**

The Seaway Industrial Park is a 40 acre industrial park located in the City of Muskegon. Eighteen acres of the light industrial zoned land remain available.



**Whitehall Industrial Park**

This is a 345 acre industrial park with 65 acres available in the City of Whitehall. The land is zoned for light industrial uses.

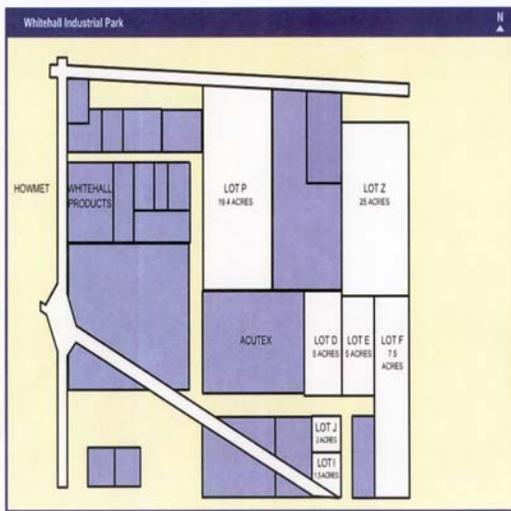


**Public/Semi-Public**

Public and semi-public uses include public buildings and facilities such as city halls or village halls, township halls, post offices, fire stations, police stations, and libraries. This category also includes public educational facilities. Public uses account for 1.1 percent of land uses in Muskegon County.

**Government facilities**

There are 28 jurisdictions in the MAP planning area. These jurisdictions include Muskegon County, the 16 township in the county, seven cities (Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Montague, North Muskegon, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, and Whitehall), and the villages of Fruitport, Lakewood Club, Ravenna, and Casnovia. The facilities of each of these jurisdictions are detailed elsewhere in the plan.



**Whitehall Township Business Park**

This is a 40 acre industrial park in Whitehall Township. More than 13 acres remain available. The land is zoned for light industrial uses.



### *Schools*

There are 38 public elementary schools, 13 public middle schools, and 12 public high schools in Muskegon County. Three Charter schools are located in the region, all located in the City of Muskegon. Also within Muskegon County, there are 14 non-public schools.

The Montague Area Public Schools district operates one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, all located within the City of Montague.

The Whitehall District Schools operate two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The Holton Public School district operates one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, all located on one campus.

The Oakridge Public Schools operate two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The Reeths-Puffer Public Schools operate one preschool/kindergarten school, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The Orchard View Public Schools operate one preschool/kindergarten school, two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The Muskegon Public Schools district operates 10 elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school campus. It also operates the Muskegon Museum of Art and the Muskegon Training and Education Center (MTEC).

The Muskegon Heights Public Schools district operates six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The North Muskegon Public Schools operate one elementary school, and one middle school, and one high school.

The Fruitport Community School district operates three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The Mona Shores district operates four elementary buildings, one middle school, and one high school.

The Ravenna Public Schools operate one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school.

### *Churches*

There are many churches in the county covering a range of denominations.

**Recreation**

Recreational uses cover approximately 25,000 acres and account for 7.4 percent of land in Muskegon County. There are over 20 jurisdictions that provide park and recreation opportunities in the county. The federal and state governments manage more than 23,000 acres of park and recreation land in the county.



The Manistee National forest lies in northeast Muskegon County and covers 12,501 acres. State parks account for more than 2,600 acres in Muskegon County. The facilities that are located in the county include Duck Lake State Park, Muskegon State Park, and Hoffmaster State Park (part in Ottawa County). The Muskegon State Game Area is a 14,000 acre facility, with 8,637 acres in Muskegon County and approximately 5,300 acres in Newaygo County.

There are more than 700 acres of county parks. The county parks include:

- Blue Lake County Park, located on Big Blue Lake north of Muskegon. This 25 acre park has nearly 600 feet of frontage along the southeast shore of the Lake.
- Deremo County Park is a paved launch that is maintained for boating, water-skiing and fishing on Big Blue Lake.
- Meinert County Park is located on Lake Michigan north of Montague. The Park is approximately 88 acres.

- Patterson Park is located on the Little Rio Grande Creek two miles southwest of Ravenna. The park is 28 acres on the river flood plain.
- Pioneer Park is a 145-acre park located on Lake Michigan north of Muskegon with over 2,000 feet of white sand beach frontage.
- Twin Lake County Park is located on Twin Lake north of Muskegon. Twin Lake Park is a 15-acre park.
- Half Moon Lake
- Moore County Park in Casnovia

The county also has the 11,700 acre wastewater facility that is considered recreation land.

There are also more than 1,100 acres that are controlled by the various municipalities in the county and nearly 300 acres controlled by townships. The City of Muskegon owns more than 600 acres of parkland and open space. Major parks include Fisherman's Landing, McGraft Park, Pere Marquette Park, Bronson Park and Sheldon, Seyferth, and Beachwood Parks provide passive and active recreation opportunities to adjoining neighborhoods. The City of Montague owns and operates four community parks, totaling approximately 30 acres of recreational facilities. The City of North Muskegon owns and operates five community parks and recreational facilities, over 25 acres total. The City of Roosevelt owns and operates eight community parks and recreational facilities, over 14 acres total.



Ten of the townships operate parks: Casnovia, Dalton, Egelston, Fruitland, Fruitport, Laketon, Muskegon, Sullivan, Whitehall, and White River. There are also fourteen golf courses in the county. Twelve of the courses are open to the public.

Three villages also operate parks: Fruitport, Lakewood Club, and Ravenna.

The county is also home to Michigan's Adventure Amusement Park, the largest amusement park in the state. The park features one of the world's longest wooden roller coasters.

Parks are covered in further detail later in this chapter.



## Agriculture

The unique geographic qualities of Michigan encourage the production of a wide variety of agriculture crops. Michigan has relatively high-quality soils and a range of microclimates created by glacial landforms and the surrounding Great Lakes (Wyant, 2003). Michigan agriculture is among the most diverse in the nation. Farmers in the state produce more than 125 agriculture products, second only to California in agriculture diversity (Wyant, 2003). Overall agriculture is the second largest industry in the state, contributing more than \$37 billion to the economy (Wyant, 2003).

As for Muskegon County, farming is a significant component of the local economy, and the monetary value of the goods produced is an indication of the importance to society of those goods. The monetary value of agricultural production in cash receipts in 2002 for Muskegon County was \$48,852<sup>1</sup> per square mile (Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2002). Muskegon County supports the production of a wide variety of agriculture crops including corn, soybeans, hay-alfalfa, small grains, and fruit orchards, just a sample of the crops grown in the counties 410 farms<sup>2</sup>. In 1997 there was over 73,000 acres of agricultural land in Muskegon County, with the average sized farm at 178 acres (USDA, 1997). In addition to agriculture crops, dairy, cattle, sheep, and

<sup>1</sup> This indicator reports the dollar value of the annual output of major crops and livestock. The value is determined by multiplying the amount of output by the prices received by farmers (in 1999 dollars). The data are presented both nationally over time and by location for the most recent year available, 1999 (Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Final 2002 Census of Agriculture data at the national, state and county levels will be released on June 3, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Muskegon County ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in blueberry production in 2000, 2001, and 2002, all years for which data was available.

hog production facilities also contributed to the value of agriculture in the County.

**Farm Statistics**

In 1997, there were 410 farms in Muskegon County, using a total of 73,113 acres of land. The average farm size was 178 acres. By 2002, there were 545 farms using 73,918 acres. The average farm size was 136 acres. The average size of farm did not significantly change from 1987 to 1997, but decreased more than 40 acres between 1997 and 2002. In 1997, more than 70 percent of the farms in the county were between 10 and 180 acres in size. Thirty-five percent were small farms of 10 to 49 acres and an additional 35.1 percent were in mid-sized farms of 50 to 179 acres. By 2002, three quarters of the farms were between 10 and 180 acres, and nearly 45 percent were between 10 and 49 acres.



Of the 545 farms in the county, 456 are devoted to cropland, totaling 49,139 acres. The remaining land in farms is devoted to livestock and poultry purposes. There were 154 cattle farms in the county in 2002, 21 hog/pig operations, 22 sheep farms, and 52 poultry operations.

According to the Census of Agriculture from 1997, 429 acres in 14 farms were protected farmland under either the wetland reserve or conservation reserve program.

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and the Conservation Reserve Program are

administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10-year duration.

*Permanent Easement.* This is a conservation easement in perpetuity.

*30-Year Easement.* This is a conservation easement lasting 30 years. Easement payments are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement.

*Restoration Cost-Share Agreement.* This is an agreement (generally for a minimum of 10 years in duration) to re-establish degraded or lost wetland habitat.



The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, landowners can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

The average value of farm machinery and equipment was \$68,752 per farm in 1997.

The average value of agricultural products sold was \$108,379. The average farm expenses totaled \$83,991 per farm. The average net cash return to the farm was \$24,468. More than half of Muskegon County farm operators listed something other than farming as their principal occupation and 44 percent worked more than 200 days of the year off farm.

### ***Special crops for Muskegon County***

Muskegon County ranks fifth in the state of Michigan for blueberry production.<sup>3</sup> It is identified as one of the five “blueberry counties” in the state, all of which are along the western shore of the Lower Peninsula.

There were 920 acres of blueberries grown in Muskegon County in 2000. This number has been decreasing over time. In 1991 there were 1,000 acres, which increased to 1,090 in 1994 and then declined to 920 in 1997. The number of blueberry farms has also decreased. In 1991 there were 35, by 2000 that number had declined to 25. Of the 920 acres in blueberry fields, 520 acres had overhead irrigation in 2000, and 200 acres had some other form of irrigation. An additional 200 acres were not irrigated.

However, blueberries are not the only fruit grown in Muskegon County. Muskegon is in the West Central fruit district for the state. There were a total of 44 fruit farms in Muskegon County in 2000. 2,300 acres were in the growing of apples, 170 acres for tart cherries, 95 acres for peaches, and 20 acres for other fruits. In 1997 there were a total of 3,995 acres in fruit production, by 2000 that number had declined to 3,505, a 12 percent decline in acreage.

Muskegon County also ranks second in the state in cucumbers.

### ***Agricultural Laws in Michigan***

Michigan is a Right to Farm state. In 1981 the Michigan Legislature passed PA 93 to provide farmers with protection from nuisance lawsuits. As a part of that legislation, the Michigan Department of Agriculture has created a series of Generally Accepted Agriculture & Management Principles (GAAMPs) that are voluntary practices for farmers.

Additionally, the state has recently created a program called the Farmland and Open Space (FLOS) protection program. The FLOS program has five methods for preserving farmland and open space: farmland development rights agreements, purchase of development rights, agricultural preservation fund, local open space easements, and designated open space easements. The purpose of the agricultural preservation fund is to provide grants to eligible local governments for purchase of conservation easements through the purchase of development rights (PDR) programs. Generally the program allows a farm owner to enter into an agreement with the state that ensures that the land remains in agricultural use for a minimum of ten years. The maximum enrollment is for 90 years, agreements are extended in 7 year increments beyond the initial 10 year agreement. The primary benefits of the program to farm owners are tax credits and special assessment of the farm land. Land owners may still sell their land when it is under a conservation easement, but the agreement runs with the land, not the owner.

Muskegon County is currently writing the ordinances necessary to implement a PDR program locally, with a focus to permanently protect the prime and Locally important farmland.

### ***American Farmland Trust: Farming on the Edge***

According to the recent study by the AFT, Michigan grows more beans, blueberries, tart cherries, cucumbers, flowering hanging baskets, geraniums, Niagara grapes, hosta, and impatiens than any other state. It is ranked as the 9<sup>th</sup> most endangered farm state. The study found that the prime soil that is the most fertile is being lost to development, and that every state is losing some of its best food producing farmland.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

#### ***Manistee National Forest***

The Huron-Manistee National Forests comprise almost a million acres of public lands extending across the northern lower peninsula of Michigan. The Huron-Manistee National Forests provide recreation opportunities for visitors, habitat for fish and wildlife, and resources for local industry.

The forests of northern Michigan are rich in history. In the late 1800s logging was at its peak and these forests were quickly cut and cleared. In 1909, the Huron National Forest was established and the Manistee National Forest was formed in 1938. In 1945, these two National Forests were administratively combined.

#### ***Muskegon State Park on Lake Michigan***

Muskegon State Park is located four miles west of North Muskegon on the shore of Lake Michigan. With over two miles of shoreline on Lake Michigan and with over one mile on Muskegon Lake, this is one of the top recreational areas in the region. The park features 1,165 acres of land and recreational facilities include wildlife viewing, boating, fishing, swimming, picnic areas, playgrounds and a luge run is available for winter park visitors.

#### ***Duck Lake State Park***

Duck Lake State Park is a 728 acre park, located in Muskegon County. The Park stretches from the northern shore of Duck Lake to Lake Michigan. The Park contains a mixture of open brush land to mature hardwood forest, with some pockets of open meadows mixed in. The Park features include hunting, swimming, fishing, picnic areas, hiking, boating and snowmobile areas.

#### ***Hoffmaster State Park on Lake Michigan***

The Hoffmaster State Park is a 1,100 acre park featuring forest covered dunes along nearly three miles of Lake Michigan shore. Its sandy beach is one of the finest shores in the area and a focal point of the Park is the Gillette Visitor Center. The Gillette Visitor Center is located at the top of a large sand dune surrounded by a pristine wooded back-dune, the center features state-of-the-art exhibits to tell Michigan's unique sand dune story. With exhibits, interactive displays, multi-image slide shows, and other nature programs to orient visitors to Michigan's unique cultural and natural features, this attraction is one of the top attractions in the State. The center has a variety of programs to help visitors enjoy and understand the unique environment of the sand dunes of the Great Lakes.

The center features an exhibit hall depicting the ecological zones of the unique dune environment. Multimedia presentations on the dunes and seasonal nature subjects are shown in an 82-seat auditorium. In addition, the Center offers educational opportunities for students and families throughout the year.

#### ***Hart-Montague Trail State Park***

The Hart-Montague Trail State Park is a paved, 22 mile trail passing through the rural forested lands of the Park. Scenic overlooks and picnic areas are located along the route. The Park is approximately 22 acres in size and is accessible from the communities of

Hart and Montague, as well as other communities between the two cities along US 31. Additional recreational amenities include wildlife viewing, fishing, biking, and snowmobile areas during the winter.

*Blue Lake County Park*

Blue Lake County Park is located on Big Blue Lake north of Muskegon. This 25 acre park has nearly 600 feet of frontage along the southeast shore of the Lake and provides water recreation activities including boating, fishing, waterskiing and swimming. In addition to these water activities, other features include picnicking, camping and hiking. The Park offers 25 modern campsites for recreational vehicles with open and shaded sites. All campsites offer water and electric hookups.

*Deremo County Park*

Deremo County Park is a paved launch that is maintained for boating, water-skiing and fishing. The Deremo access site is located on Fruitvale Road on the north side of Big Blue Lake. Deremo access site hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and is open year-round with limited snow removal.

*Meinert County Park*

Meinert County Park is located on Lake Michigan north of Montague. The Park is approximately 88 acres with rolling dunes, including a large parabolic dune<sup>3</sup> and scenic overlooks that provide visitors a spectacular view of Little Flower Creek and Lake Michigan shoreline. The Park features picnicking, swimming, camping, hiking, and rental cottages.

<sup>3</sup> Parabolic dunes, defined by their distinctive U-shape, are found only in moist environments where extensive vegetation cover often stabilizes the dunes. Parabolic dunes slowly move inland as sand is pushed over the crest and deposited on the leeward side.

Picnicking shelters are available for rent and seat approximately 40 people. The Park offers 67 modern campsites for recreational vehicles with open and shaded sites.

<b>County Park Acreage</b>	
<b>Muskegon County Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>Blue Lake</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Deremo</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Heritage Landing</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Hilt's Landing</b> .....	<b>232</b>
<b>AC Fairchild</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Meinert</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>Moore</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Muskegon County Fairgrounds</b> .....	<b>160</b>
<b>Patterson</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Pioneer</b> .....	<b>145</b>
<b>Twin Lakes</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Veterans Memorial Park</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Muskegon County Wastewater</b> .....	<b>11,700</b>
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>12,441</b>

Table 3.34: County Parks

All campsites offer water, electrical, and sewer hookups. Rental cottages are offered for a family or group of six, on a weekly basis Memorial weekend through Labor Day or on a weekly or daily basis before Memorial Day and after Labor Day. The cottages include 3 bedrooms, living room, kitchen and dining room, and full bath.

*Heritage Landing*

During the summer, Heritage Landing provides the venue for the Summer Celebration, Michigan Irish Musical Festival, Christian Music Festival, and Lunch on the Landing, a free weekday lunch concert series. With carnival rides, music from popular musical performers, and fireworks displays, Heritage Landing brings excitement to the Muskegon Lake waterfront.

### *Patterson County Park*

Patterson Park is located on the Little Rio Grande Creek two miles southwest of Ravenna. The park is 28 acres on the river flood plain with wooded and open areas. A variety of wild flowers bloom throughout the spring and summer offering the visitor the opportunity to view species not common to most areas in Muskegon County. The park is a quiet setting with restrooms, a small picnic shelter grills and tables. Walking along the riverbank and sitting next to the small dam and spillway are picturesque and relaxing activities.

### *Pioneer Park*

Pioneer Park is located on Lake Michigan north of Muskegon and has over 2,000 feet of white sand beach frontage. This popular 145-acre park offers camping, swimming, sunbathing, picnicking, tennis, softball, basketball and volleyball. The park is filled with a variety of mixed oak, maple, white pine and hemlock pine trees. This is the Counties largest and most popular park.

A lodge building is available to rent for family reunions, company, church picnics, or other group activities where shelter is desired. The park offers 213 modern campsites for recreational vehicles, with open and shaded sites, and offer water and electric hookups. In addition, a group camping area is available for family, church groups, and camping clubs with up to 27 camping units.

### *Twin Lake County Park*

Twin Lake County Park is located on Twin Lake north of Muskegon. Twin Lake Park is a 15-acre park with 800 feet of frontage on Twin Lake with shaded and open areas for family outdoor activities including picnicking, swimming, tennis, volleyball, and boating. The lodge building and two picnic shelters are available to rent for family reunions, company and church picnics, or other group activities where

shelter is desired. Shelters offer seating for 60 people, a large park grill for cooking and electrical outlets.

### *City of Montague*

The City of Montague owns and operates the two acre Maple Beach Park and eleven acres at Medbury Park.

Maple Beach Park has playground equipment, picnic facilities, beach area, and restrooms. Medbury Park has picnic tables, beach area, and a boardwalk.

Lake Front Park has a band shell and restrooms. It is adjacent to the Montague Boat Launch. Each area is approximately three acres.

Additional investment in Maple Beach Park is planned for 2006, with \$250,000 to be invested in acquisition and development.

### *City of Muskegon*

The City of Muskegon owns nearly 600 acres of parkland and open space. Major parks include Fisherman's Landing, McGraft Park, Pere Marquette Park, Bronson Park and Sheldon, Seyferth, and Beachwood Parks provide passive and active recreation opportunities to adjoining neighborhoods.

Other recreational facilities include special use facilities typically providing unique or unusual recreational opportunities. These facilities include Hackley Park (formal central City park dedicated in 1890, on National and State historic registers, strong, attractive, historic element), the Indian Cemetery (the oldest known Indian cemetery in the area, circa 1800s), L.C. Walker Arena/Convention Center (sporting and cultural events, public/private skating, banquets, flea markets and meetings), Hartshorn Marina (only municipal marina on Muskegon Lake and home of the Port City Princess), the Kruse Park observation deck, and Jaycee's Launch Ramp (heavily

used public launch ramp on west end of Muskegon Lake).

All schools in the Muskegon Public School District provide outdoor recreational facilities. Because schools are distributed throughout the City, their recreational facilities function as local neighborhood playgrounds used by school age children in surrounding neighborhoods.

#### *City of Muskegon Heights*

The City of Muskegon Heights has 87 acres of park and recreation land. Local parks include the Little Black Creek Major Park, Mona Lake City Park, West heights Park, the Johnny O. Harris Playfield, War Memorial Park, and Rowan Park.

#### *City of North Muskegon*

The City of North Muskegon has more than 20 acres of park and recreation land in five locations.

#### *City of Norton Shores*

The City of Norton Shores has more than 230 acres of parkland. The majority of the parkland is at the Lake Harbor Park. The second largest park is Ross Park at 43 acres.

#### *City of Whitehall*

Funnell Field is a neighborhood park that has softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, Little League fields, playground equipment, restrooms, and picnic facilities. The Goodrich/White Lake Municipal Marina is a regional community park with a fifty slip marina, playground equipment, and restroom and picnic facilities. City Hall/Slocum Park has tennis courts and picnic amenities. Gee Park is a neighborhood park with playground equipment and picnic facilities.

#### *Village of Fruitport*

The Village of Fruitport has five parks and a bike path. Pomona Park has a playground,

picnic shelter, and band shell. The other park sites are a boat launch site with access to Spring Lake, Grand River, and Lake Michigan; a handicap accessible fishing pier; and, two small area access sites. The bike path connects to Spring Lake, Ferrysburg, and Grand Haven.

#### *Village of Ravenna*

There are two public parks in the Village of Ravenna. Conklin Park has a number of recreation courts and fields, picnic tables and grills, restrooms and concession stands, and playground equipment. Thatcher Park has two pavilions with picnic tables, restrooms, and playground equipment.

#### *Village of Lakewood Club*

The Village of Lakewood Club has a 9.5 acre park with a baseball field, playground, and a pavilion with a grill. The park was deeded to the village from Dalton Township, but can revert to the township if the village ceases to use the park for public purposes.

<b>Local Pak Acreage</b>	
<b>Local Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>City of Montague</b>	
Cullen Athletic Field.....	10
Ellenwood Park .....	0.25
Koon Creek Park .....	2.75
Lake Front Park .....	3
Maple Beach Park .....	4.5
Medbury Park .....	6.5
Montague Boat Launch .....	3
<b>City of Muskegon</b>	
Aamodt Playground .....	2
Beachwood Playground .....	3
Beukema Playfield .....	10
Bronson Park.....	32
Campbell Playfield .....	10
Chase Hammond Golf Course .....	214
Cottage Grove Launch Ramp	
Curve Park .....	24
Gidding Street Launch Ramp	
Green Acres Playground.....	5
Hackley Park.....	2
Hartshorn Marina Launch Ramp	
Lake Michigan park.....	55
Marsh Playfield.....	6
McCrea Playfield .....	9
McGraft Park.....	92
Pere Marquette Boat Launch	
Pere Marquette Park .....	32
Reese Playfield.....	13
Richards Park - Boat Launch.....	7
Ryerson Valley Park.....	72
Seyferth Playfield .....	16
Sheldon Playfield .....	6
Smith Playfield .....	23
Yacht Club Mooring Basin	
<b>City of Muskegon Heights</b>	
Johnny O. Harris Playfield .....	11
Little Black Creek Major Park .....	20
Mona Lake City Park.....	47
Rowan Park.....	2
War Memorial Park.....	2
West Heights Park.....	5
<b>City of North Muskegon</b>	
Bear Lake Park .....	7
Block 58 - Lakefront Sports Park .....	7

Causeway Memorial Park .....	4
Custer Park .....	0.5
East End Park .....	0.75
Ruddiman Overlook .....	1
Walker Park.....	1
West End Park .....	4
<b>City of Norton Shores</b>	
Avondale Park .....	2
Chapman-Veurink Park.....	2
Hidden Cove Park.....	20
Lake Harbor Park.....	184
New Development .....	1
Ross Park.....	43
<b>City of Roosevelt Park</b>	
Community Recreation Center .....	4
Delmar Playfield .....	5
Germaine Road Park.....	0.5
Hubert D. Carsell Park .....	0.5
James Davies Park.....	1
James V. Wells Park.....	0.5
Leon Lambert Park.....	1
Post Road Park.....	0.5
Princeton Road Playground.....	0.5
Tennis Courts .....	0.5
<b>City of Whitehall</b>	
City Hall/Slocum Park .....	2.5
Covell Park.....	4
Funnell Field .....	12.5
Gee Park.....	1.5
Goodrich Park.....	8.5
Lions Park .....	3.5
Mill Pond Peninsula .....	4.5
Norman Park.....	1
Svensson Park.....	4
Veteran's Memorial.....	0.5
<b>Village of Fruitport</b>	
Pomona Park .....	2
Village of Lakewood Club.....	9.5
<b>Village of Ravenna</b>	
Conklin Park .....	10
Thatcher Park .....	2
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1107.25</b>

Table 3.35: Local Parks



## Transportation Network

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Muskegon County and northern Ottawa County. As the designated MPO, operating under the name of the West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan), the Regional Commission undertakes a comprehensive transportation planning program to maintain the eligibility of local governments in the area to receive federal and state transportation funds for street and road improvements, as well as subsidies for mass transit.

The County is well served by a series of freeways, state highways, major roads and local roads. The County's primary link to other metropolitan areas in southern Michigan is by Interstate 96 which terminates as it enters the City of Norton Shores. Access to downtown Muskegon from I-96 is provided by Seaway Drive (Business 31). I-96 empties onto Seaway, which provides the most direct route to the downtown center of Muskegon. Other regional access routes are provided by U.S. 31, which is the primary north-south road for communities along the coast of Lake Michigan and by Apple Avenue (M-46), a state highway providing access to townships and communities to the east, and M-120 which begins in the City of North Muskegon and terminates in Hesperia on the Oceana and Newaygo county line at M-20.

A total of 693 miles of roads are maintained by the Muskegon County Road Commission, 374 miles of which are primary roads.

There are 513 miles of local roads within the jurisdictions of the cities and villages of Muskegon County. See Figure 3.37 for the major road network.

The Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) was originally formed in 1969 as the Muskegon County Metropolitan Transportation System (MCMTS). In 1972, MCMTS absorbed the operation of another public transit organization, the Muskegon Area Transit Authority (MTA), and became the Muskegon Area Transit System. MATS is a Department within Muskegon County Government and is authorized to provide public mass transportation services within the County. MATS currently operates service on seven fixed-routes with a 100 percent handicap accessible fleet utilizing 10 buses during maximum peak service and serving the urbanized areas of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Roosevelt Park and Norton Shores and Muskegon Township. Muskegon Trolley is operational from Memorial Day to Labor Day, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday to Sunday. MATS also provides paratransit services to meet the public demand.

MATS has a total of 20 vehicles and employs 29 people. According to the Michigan Department of Transportation, for the fiscal year of 2002, MATS traveled approximately 622,000 miles, served approximately 402,400 passengers and had over 41,000 vehicle hours. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturdays 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Greyhound operates out of a terminal on Morris Avenue in Muskegon. The terminal is open Monday through Saturday, but closed Sundays and holidays. Service is available to a variety of cities. Muskegon is part of the Greyhound Great Lakes region.

Pioneer Resources is a non-profit organization that provides a variety of services to people with disabilities in order to increase their independence and community participation. One of their

services is transportation for people with mobility impairments, developmental disorders, special education students, and senior citizens. Their fleet includes lift equipped transit buses, school buses, suburbans and vans. They also provide MedTrans service, a non-emergency service to transport disabled individuals to medical appointments and clinics.

In terms of rail, Muskegon County is served by CSX Transportation and the Michigan Shoreline Railroad, which is a CSX partner. There are freight services available from Muskegon and Muskegon Heights.

The commercial port on Lake Michigan for Muskegon County and the surrounding area is the Port of Muskegon. Access to the lake is also provided at eight marinas in the county.



Lake Express, a high speed ferry service across Lake Michigan, began service in June 2004 linking the cities of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Muskegon, Michigan. The Lake Express Terminal is located at the Great Lakes Marina, 1920 Lakeshore Drive, with easy connections to Interstates 96 and 31 and Interstate 131 via Rt. 46. These major highway connections link Muskegon to Grand Rapids, Holland, Detroit, Mackinac Island and the entire Western Michigan shoreline. The high speed Lake Michigan crossing will take just two and one-half hours, saving passengers a lengthy

drive through heavily congested Chicago. Lake Express is a modern, efficient, and proven transportation solution alleviating traffic hassles, while saving valuable time. Lake Express is capable of holding 46 cars for each passage across the lake. It also provides passengers with the option to travel without their vehicle. Lake Express will have a full-service car rental facility at both terminals to handle daily or weekly transportation needs. Ground transportation is available from the terminal.

Muskegon County Airport, located in Norton Shores, with an annual 92,826 passengers, is a modern, all weather facility, serving the air transportation needs of the West Michigan shoreline. The airport encompasses 1,000 acres within the City of Norton Shores and has a total employment of 165. Commercial airline service is one of the airport's major activities. Muskegon County Airport has the regional services of three major carriers, Northwest, Midwest Express and United Airlines.

In addition to commercial airline activity, Muskegon County Airport has significant general aviation activity. Many prominent businesses base their aircraft in Muskegon. The airport is also visited on a daily basis by corporate and private aircraft, with an average of one hundred fifty daily aircraft takeoffs and landings.



During the summer the airport is host to one of West Michigan's most popular summer activities, the Muskegon Air Fair.

Muskegon County also has non-motorized transportation options. The Hart-Montague Trail is a 22 mile trail that is part of the state park system, and is accessible from Montague. The Musketawa Trail is also state owned property and is a 26 mile corridor from Marne to Muskegon. Within the City of Muskegon the Lakeshore Trail has approximately 10 miles completed in four segments. Routes that are on or along the street will connect the existing trail sections to a new section of the trail scheduled to be completed in 2005. The City of Whitehall has a 2.2 mile trail called the White Lake Pathway.

#### **Air Quality – Non Attainment Area**

A designation is the term the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses to describe the air quality in a given area for any six common pollutants known as criteria pollutants. These pollutants include ground-level ozone which is unhealthy to breathe.

EPA designates an area as non-attainment if it has violated or has contributed to violations of the national 8-hour ozone standard over a three-year period. EPA also may designate an area as attainment/unclassifiable if it has: 1) monitored air quality data showing that area has not violated the ozone standard over a three year period; or if 2) there is not enough information to determine the air quality in the area.

The designations process plays an important role in letting the public know whether air quality in a given area is healthy. Once designations take effect, they also become an important component of state, tribal and local governments' efforts to control ground-level ozone.

Many areas have been categorized as basic non-attainment areas. They will have to comply with the more general non-attainment requirements of the Clean Air Act. EPA classifies ozone non-attainment areas based on the severity of their ozone problem. Classified areas fall into six categories: basic, marginal, moderate, serious, severe or extreme.

In April 2004, several counties in West Michigan were classified as non-attainment for ozone by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Kent, Allegan, Ottawa and Madison counties were classified as basic while Muskegon County was classified in the higher moderate category. Later, Muskegon County was "bumped down" to the lesser category of marginal. This was announced in September 2004 during a visit to Muskegon County by the EPA Director Michael Leavitt.

Muskegon has until 2007 to meet the new standards. It is important to note that West Michigan has an extreme ground-level ozone transport issue as much of the polluted air monitored in West Michigan is blown across Lake Michigan from areas like Chicago, Milwaukee and Gary, Indiana.

The Clean Air Act of 1970 (CAA) and its Amendments require that the federal government review all transportation plans to assure air quality conformity. These conformity requirements, first introduced in the 1977 CAA Amendments, prohibited federal approvals of actions that did not concur with state government's State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality improvements. These requirements were further expanded in the 1990 Amendments, which require transportation plans to conform to the SIP's expressed purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and

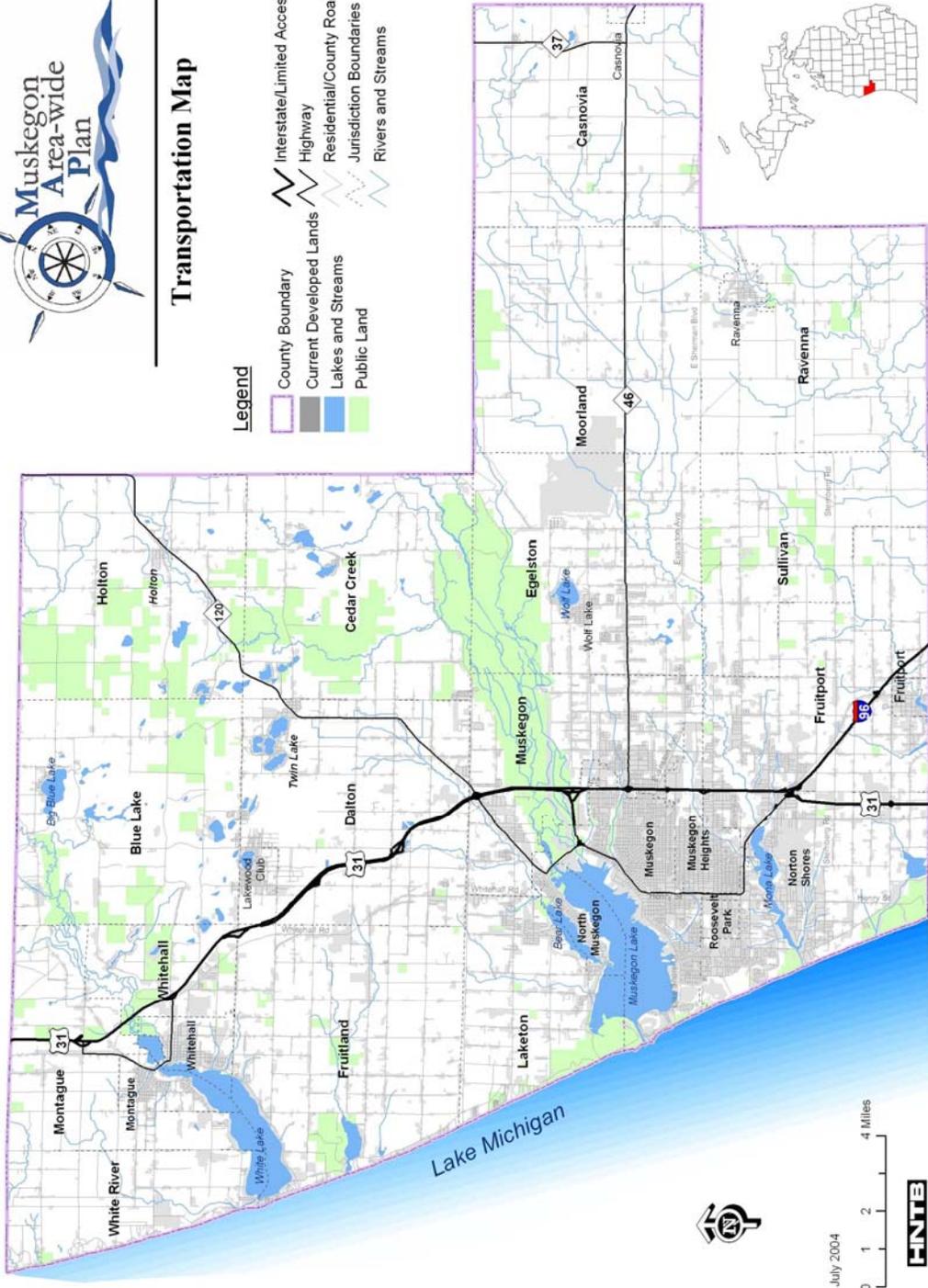
achieving expeditious attainment of such standards (WMSRDC, 2001).

The Muskegon area and the State of Michigan are operating under the State Implementation Plan adopted for 2002-2004. This plan identifies how air quality will be protected and improved in the State. The processes for reviewing and approving long range plans and projects are outlined in the SIP and will be followed in the development of transportation plans statewide. One of the most successful efforts for improving air quality in the Muskegon area is the ongoing “Ozone Action! Program”. The program has promoted voluntary ozone reduction strategies on targeted days since 1995 (WMSRDC, 2001).



### Transportation Map

- Legend**
- County Boundary
  - Current Developed Lands
  - Lakes and Streams
  - Public Land
  - Interstate/Limited Access Highway
  - Residential/County Road
  - Jurisdiction Boundaries
  - Rivers and Streams



July 2004  
0 1 2 4 Miles



# Chapter 4: Alternative Development Scenarios

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## Alternative Development Scenarios

Muskegon County enjoys a rich industrial and agricultural heritage, and its development has been related to the industries, crops, and tourism activities that have developed as the economic life of the county. The ability to maintain rural, recreational, and other open space areas for agricultural and tourism uses and to redevelop industrial areas in ways that support existing, new, and emerging industries is critical to the future of Muskegon County. The Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP) is a vision for that prosperous Muskegon County future.

As a means of developing a plan for obtaining this future vision, alternative scenarios were developed for evaluation by the citizens of Muskegon County. Scenario building provides an opportunity to consider what might happen in the community under various policy conditions.

The purpose of considering alternative scenarios is to understand the policy choices, educate local officials and the public about the implications of policy choices, and evaluate which policy choices are right for Muskegon County. Understanding the policy choices and their implications forces trade-offs between conflicting goals. These alternatives are general in nature and have been prepared to illustrate and explore distinct potential future development patterns for the planning area.

As a means of developing the alternative scenarios, regional opportunities and threats were considered along with projected area trends, existing conditions including transportation infrastructure and utility service capabilities, sound planning principles, and public opinion. The opportunities considered include:

- Diversifying economy

- Community character
- Precedents for regional cooperation
- Natural resources
- Growing public awareness/concerns regarding growth
- Destination tours

The threats outlined include:

- Lack of coordinated land use planning
- Lack of shared vision
- Household decentralization
- Increasing decline in the urban centers
- Loss of farm/open space
- Threats to environmental quality

The MAP project is intended to overcome the threats and take advantage of regional opportunities.

The current distribution of land uses as represented by acreage of the total county is as follows:

- 12.9% residential
- 1.9% commercial
- 1.0% industrial
- 4.8% public lands and utilities
- 79.5% agriculture, open space, forest, water, and wetlands

Other important trends that were considered in the development of scenarios include:

- Continued decentralization
  - Growth in Fruitport Township
  - Growth in southeast Muskegon Township and southwest Egelston Township
  - Growth along corridors in Moorland Township
  - Growth along corridors in Egelston Township

- Growth along corridors in Fruitland Township
- Growth in Blue Lake Township
- Between 1970 and 2000, development occurred in a sprawling pattern that “stripped out” residential lots along county roads. These lots were predominately low density.
- Loss of farm/open space
  - Between 1992 and 1997, 0.7 percent of the county’s farmland was lost to development
  - Between 1987 and 1992 there was a loss of 10.4 percent of farmland
  - Only 429 of 73,113 acres under formal farmland protection programs
  - Michigan ranked as 9<sup>th</sup> most endangered farm state by the American Farmland Trust
- Conflicts between new residential development and agricultural uses
  - 30 percent of housing units in Blue Lake Township built after 1995
  - 20 percent of housing stock in Egelston Township built after 1995
  - Development conflicts between residential/commercial developers and citizens concerned about protecting environmentally sensitive areas
- Residential land uses expanding
  - More than 700 building permits issued countywide in each of the last three years
  - Only 7.8 percent of permits issued in City of Muskegon

- More and longer car trips
  - 25 percent of Muskegon County residents worked outside Muskegon County in 2000
  - 17 percent of those who work in Muskegon County do not live in the county
  - More than 30,000 people enter or leave Muskegon County for work each day
  - 84 percent of workers drove a car, truck, or van alone to work in 2000
- Minority populations disproportionately located in Muskegon County urban areas
  - Sixteen percent of the county population is minority, more than 30 percent of Muskegon is African-American and more than three quarters of Muskegon Heights is African-American

Under these circumstances three scenarios, or development alternatives, were considered. The Business as Usual scenario is the baseline scenario which continues existing market and demographic trends. The Zoning Build-out scenario shows how the region would develop if local governments followed the existing zoning ordinances and new development followed the existing land use patterns. The Smart Growth scenario policies encourage infill development in urban areas, suburban areas, and rural centers. Some infill may also occur in mature corridors that connect centers or along transportation corridors.

The Business as Usual and Smart Growth scenarios were developed using a 2020 target year. Using this target, the population is expected to grow thirteen percent, or by 23,000 people. Residential land uses are expected to increase 38 percent and

consume an additional 17,000 acres of land. Commercial uses are expected to grow 29 percent and consume 1,700 additional acres, and industrial land uses are expected to grow 21 percent, consuming an additional 700 acres. Land consumption is projected to outpace population growth between 2000 and 2020. The same assumptions were used in each scenario for gross density and the number of persons per household, the difference in the scenarios is where the growth occurs.

In the Zoning Build-out scenario, the scenario shows all of the areas that are currently zoned for development using the existing zoning maps for all of the jurisdictions in the county (the Villages of Casnovia and Fruitport were not available). This scenario does not reflect a 2020 base year, but rather the build out of all of the land currently zoned for development.

In each case, the scenarios include recommendations for public improvements such as new or improved transportation facilities that would help attract and support the desired development pattern. The next chapter will add detail to the preferred scenario, based on public input.

The scenarios represent distinct ideas that respond to one or more of the visions or goals expressed by the Steering Committee. These alternatives have been created to generate specific discussion as to what can be supported locally and what elements cannot.

**Muskegon County Population and Land Use Projections**

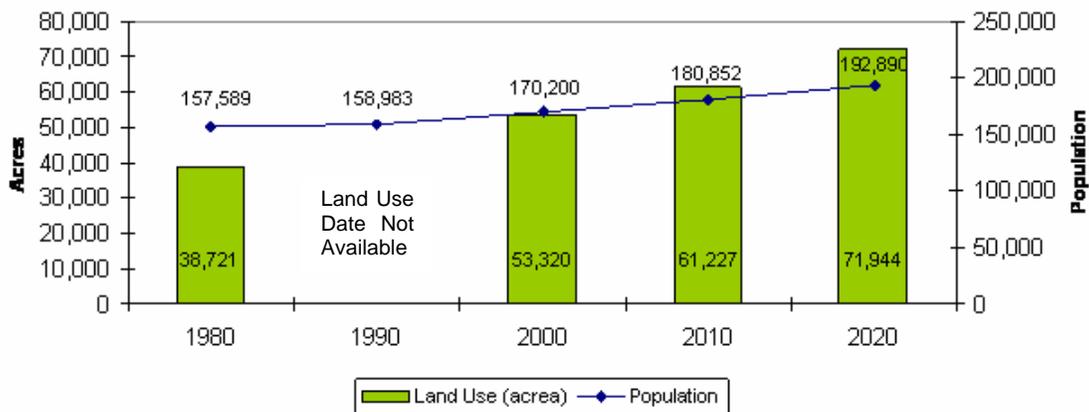


Figure 4.1: Population and Land Consumption Projections

### ***Business as Usual***

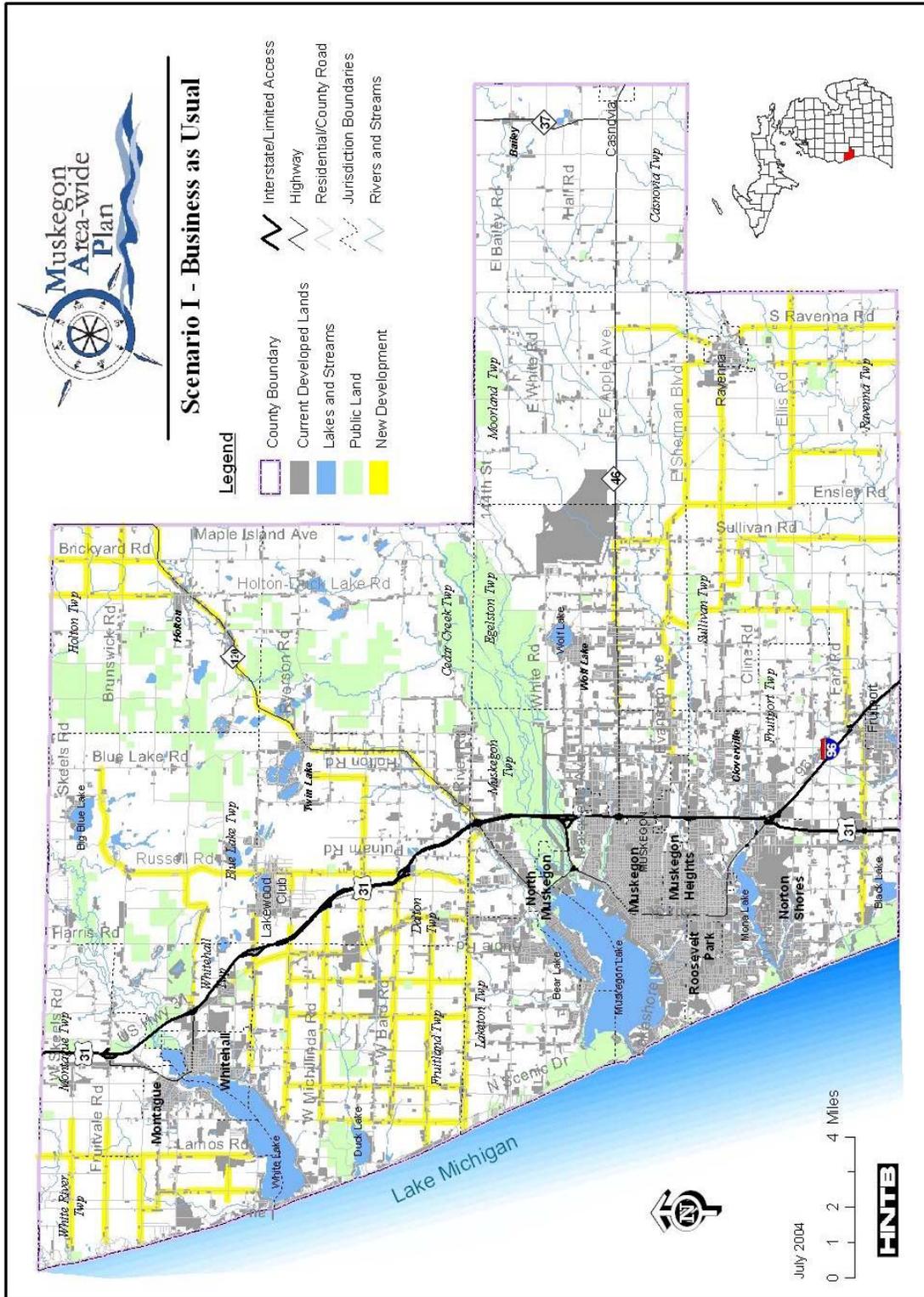
The Business as Usual scenario is the baseline scenario in the sense that it assumes continuation of the existing market and demographic trends. Future trends follow the past trends in terms of urbanization and land consumption. This scenario assumes that the current land use policies remain in place and allows maximum flexibility and independence for the local jurisdictions in development decisions. It relies on cooperation among localities on most development issues such as watershed protection, land use planning, natural area conservation and economic development. Under this scenario, each community bears the burden of its own growth-related costs.

The following principles apply to the Business as Usual scenario:

- Average lot sizes and the distance between homes increase
- Most new residential development would be single family homes on large lots
- Residential growth would continue to cause a reduction in agricultural and open space lands
- Transportation and other infrastructure (water, sewer, and utilities) costs would increase
- Construction and maintenance cost of transportation links would increase over time

Under this scenario, the growth would continue the pattern that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s of “stripping out” land along transportation corridors for residential and commercial development. The majority of this growth would occur in the southeast townships and in the northwest corner of the county.

Map 4.2: Scenario I – Business as Usual



### *Land use*

This distribution of land uses would effectively be the same as the existing land use distribution.

Agricultural land and open space is threatened along corridors throughout the county in the Business as Usual scenario. One land use concern associated with this development pattern is that some agricultural land could become unusable for production due to access constraints. More than 8,500 acres of farmland and open space is consumed under this scenario.

Forest land is least threatened under this scenario as the development occurs in narrow strips along corridors and doesn't require removal of significant stands of trees. Under the Business as Usual scenario, approximately 8,600 acres of forested land is lost to development.

### *Transportation*

Transportation corridors would likely become increasingly congested during peak travel times as people commute farther to jobs in the urban area and other counties. The commute times in the outer townships, if they continue at the 1990-2000 rate of change, would be more than thirty minutes by 2020. This includes; Casnovia, Egelston, Fruitland, Holton, Montague, Mooreland, and Ravenna townships.

This scenario has the highest number of road miles to maintain, and generates the most traffic, more than 450,000 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per day. Due to the dispersed development pattern, the opportunities for transit would be limited under this development pattern.

### *Emergency services*

Under the Business as Usual scenario, 15 percent of the new development occurs outside of an eight minute response time

(based on an average speed of 30 mph and using "crow flies" distances).

Fruitport Township would experience a significant portion of the growth outside of the service areas. Currently Fruitport Township has an Insurance Standards Organization (ISO) rating of 5 (scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the highest). However, significant portions of Fruitport Township are not within an eight minute response area for fire fighting, particularly the southeast portions of the township. Not being able to meet the eight minute standard 90 percent of the time affects the department's ISO rating, raising the cost of homeowners and business insurance. As development continues in Fruitport Township, another station may be needed to cover the southeastern portion of the township if the development pattern follows the Business as Usual scenario. Also, in order to meet the eight minute response standard, a fire station would be needed in northwestern White River Township.

A 6,000 square foot fire station with three bays, a kitchen, and training areas costs approximately \$800,000. A 2,000 gallon pumper truck costs approximately \$175,000. Therefore, the two new fire stations needed under the Business as Usual scenario would cost approximately \$1,950,000.

Staffing for fire departments is determined on their ability to meet response standards. It costs approximately \$2,000 to outfit a firefighter with the needed equipment. If additional staffing is needed for the new fire stations, or existing fire stations, the approximate cost would be \$2,000 per year per firefighter in addition to any labor related costs.

### *Water*

Water service in the county is provided by four systems, Montague, Whitehall, Muskegon, and Muskegon Heights. The

Whitehall system serves the city and a commercial area along Colby Road. Planned expansions include the Colby corridor near the US 31 interchange, Whitehall Road from Colby to White Lake Road, and White Lake Road near the industrial park and the US 31 interchange. The Montague system serves the city and a commercial area along Business 31, as well as a residential area that had contaminated wells southwest of the city. Muskegon customers include the City of Muskegon, Muskegon Township, North Muskegon, Roosevelt Park and the County North side system. The Muskegon Heights system serves Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores, and Fruitport Charter Township.

The existing total capacity for the county's water treatment facilities is approximately 60 million gallons per day (MGD). Currently only about 17 MGD of that capacity is being used on an average daily flow basis.

Under the Business as Usual scenario, 65 percent of the new development would be outside of the planned future service area. This would result in an additional 5,936 households using private wells, the equivalent of 1.48 MGD in water flow.

In order to serve all of the new development under the Business as Usual scenario with water, 150 miles of additional water mains would need to be extended at a cost of \$67,320,000 (rough estimate).

#### *Wastewater*

The county is served by a single wastewater treatment system. The Montague-Whitehall system and the Metro system were combined in May 2003. The average daily flow for the system is 24.4 MGD, with a maximum daily flow of 28.2 MGD. More than 60 percent of the average daily flow is from industrial users, with a single user who

contributes 12.8 MGD to the total. The population that is on sewer is 115,000.

There are \$37.3 million worth of improvements planned for the wastewater treatment plant. Phase I improvements include replacing pump stations, eliminating pump stations and replacing with a central pump station, upgrading and rehabilitating pump stations, and a new force main. Phase II improvements include constructing a new pump station, optimizing the existing wastewater treatment facility, and headworks improvements.

Under this scenario, 65 percent of the new development would fall outside of the planned sewer service area. This would result in 5,054 additional households using septic systems, or the equivalent of 1.49 MGD of effluent entering the ground rather than a wastewater treatment facility.

In order to serve all of the new development under the Business as Usual scenario with sewer, 150 miles of additional sewer mains would need to be extended at a cost of \$178,200,000 rough estimate.

#### *Parks*

Residents would continue to enjoy abundant park and recreation land in the national forest, state owned lands, county, township, and local parks under the Business as Usual scenario. The amount of park land per 1,000 people far exceeds any national standards in aggregate. On the county, township, and local level additional park acreage would be needed to provide recreation opportunities for children in the form of parks that can be accessed without cars and playground equipment and recreation fields. The additional acreage needed for the parks systems are:

Providing this additional acreage in locations where it efficiently serves the local

<i>Additional Park Acreage Needed</i>	
<i>Government Level</i>	<i>Acres</i>
<b>County</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>Township</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>Local</b> .....	<b>162</b>

*Table 4.1: Additional Park Acreage Needed*

park function would be difficult since the development is not concentrated.

In workshops, citizens noted the following likes regarding the Business as Usual scenario:

- Promotes rapid development – realtors and developers enjoy rapid profits
- Sprawl is reality
- It’s the direction of current development
- There is freedom, no regulation
- Allows local flexibility
- We are accustomed to this growth
- Freedom of choice
- Works for developers and land owners
- No conflict/individual freedom
- Driven by market forces
- Requires no effort
- Local control

Citizens also suggested the following changes to the Business as Usual scenario:

- Continue growth south – saturation
- Bring communities together with congruent zoning
- Open space

### **Zoning Build-Out Scenario**

The Zoning Build-out scenario shows how the region would develop if local governments follow their existing zoning and new development followed existing development patterns. In order to construct this scenario, a composite zoning base map was created based on the existing local zoning maps.

In the Zoning Build-out scenario, the growth is distributed throughout the county. Much of the growth will occur in the metro area, Moorland Township, near Ravenna, in the Duck Lake area, in Dalton Township, Blue Lake Township, and western Holton Township.

Land left undeveloped would include the federal and state lands, and portions of Casnovia, Ravenna, Sullivan, Egelston, Fruitland, White River, eastern Holton, and Cedar Creek Townships.



### *Land use*

In this scenario, residential development continues to occur at existing zoned densities, expanding infrastructure needs, consuming agricultural land and fragmenting open space and forest lands.

Build-out calculations were completed using information from the local zoning ordinances about the minimum lot size allowable in each residential and agricultural zone. This information, along with the amount of land zoned for each use (in each jurisdiction) in the composite zoning map was used to calculate a build-out population, based on a population of 2.5 persons per household. Further the WMRSDC population projections were extended to determine the year at which build-out would be achieved.

Including agricultural lands, the build-out population would be at least 875,000 (data not available for all jurisdictions). Without further development in agricultural areas, as permitted under the existing zoning ordinances, the build-out population would be nearly 790,000. Neither of the calculations includes residential development that may occur in Planned Unit Developments or Mixed-Use Developments with higher densities allowed.

Based on the WMSRDC population projections assuming 3.3 percent growth for every five year increment, it would roughly be the year 2240 before the residential zones alone reached build-out and 2255 before the residential and agricultural zones reached their build-out population. **Hence, the county is zoned for much more growth than it anticipates in the next twenty years.** Having excessive land zoned for residential uses encourages development to occur outside of existing service areas and in a lower density, less efficient pattern than if the appropriate amount of land was zoned for a reasonable planning horizon. In effect

the zoning pattern is giving very little direction to the prioritization of desired development sites.

Open space is threatened in the Zoning Build-out scenario. Most of the undeveloped area of the county would be in the environmentally sensitive areas of the national forest, state game area, and state lands. Areas zoned for agriculture would also remain undeveloped.

Under this scenario, 75 percent of the new development occurs in forested land, consuming 52 percent (87,043 acres) of the county's forest resources. More than 25,000 acres of agricultural land and open space are consumed for development under this scenario.

### *Transportation*

Under the Zoning Build-out scenario there would be fewer "spot" projects and more "system" projects than in the business as usual scenario. Since development would be more compact than under the Business as Usual scenario there would be a more moderate number of road miles to maintain and some improved efficiencies for snow removal.

The operations impacts such as regional travel time and distance would be moderate as would fuel usage.

The multi-modal opportunities are moderate for transit services and there are improved options for non-motorized transportation compared to the Business as Usual scenario.

This scenario leads to predictable patterns for long range transportation planning.

### *Emergency services*

Under the Zoning Build-out scenario 85 percent of the new development is within an eight minute response time for fire fighting. Areas in Fruitport Township and in the

Cedar Creek and Moorland Township area would not be served within this response time without the construction of new fire stations.

The development in Cedar Creek and Moorland Townships is in the eight minute response time for the DNR fire station, but that staff generally does not fight structural fires.

The cost of a new fire station in Fruitport Township would be approximately \$975,000 based on a three-bay station with a kitchen and training areas and a pumper truck. The same costs would apply to a new fire station in Cedar Creek or Moorland Township to service new development in that area.

*Water*

Under the Zoning Build-out scenario, 51 percent of the new development is outside of the planned future water service area.

New development outside of the water service area would be on private wells. There would be 24,970 new households using wells; the equivalent of 6.24 million gallons per day (MGD) of water flow.

Expanding the water treatment system to the planned service area from the current area would require \$3 to \$25.1 million worth of investments based on estimates for the White Lake Water Authority from the engineering consulting firm of Prein & Newhof.

*Wastewater*

In the Zoning Build-out scenario, not all of the growth occurs within the future sewer service area and areas that are served by sewer are left undeveloped. Development in Mooreland, Sullivan, Fruitland, Holton, and Blue Lake Townships is not served by sewer. This can be a concern when septic fields are built too close together and fail. Further, the public investment in wastewater

treatment infrastructure is not maximized when development does not occur in areas where sewer is available.

Specifically, 56 percent of the Build-out development would occur outside of the sewer service area. Under the Zoning Build-out scenario, the county population is approaching 875,000. If this entire population were on sewer, using the planning standard of 250 gallons per household per day and 2.5 persons per household, the treatment plant would need to have a capacity of 87.5 MGD, or 45.5 MGD additional capacity just to serve residential customers.

*Parks*

While Muskegon County has abundant land for recreation in the form of the national forest, state parks, the state game area, and county, township, and local parks, those facilities were not planned to accommodate a Muskegon County population in excess of 875,000 people. If no additional park land were developed by the build-out year of 2255, the level of service for county, township, and local parks would be reduced to 2 acres per 1,000 people and the overall parks level of service (including federal and state lands) would be reduced to 50 acres per 1,000 people. As mentioned earlier, federal and state lands do not necessarily meet the same recreation needs as county, township, and local parks. Therefore, to meet the 2000 level of service of 4 acres of county parks, 2 acres of township parks, and 7 acres of local parks per 1,000 residents, the following number of acres of park land would be needed:

<i>Additional Park Acreage Needed</i>	
<i>Government Level</i>	<i>Acres</i>
<b>County</b> .....	<b>3,120</b>
<b>Township</b> .....	<b>1,229</b>
<b>Local</b> .....	<b>4,661</b>

*Table 4.2: Additional Park Acreage Needed to Meet 2000 Level of Service*

### *Public Comments*

In workshops, citizens liked the following about the zoning build-out scenario:

- Supports current zoning master plans
- Allows more space for building and growth
- More realistic unless there is collaboration/consensus on issues
- More closely represents what is likely to occur
- Creates alternatives for people willing to move to the area
- Local input
- Works for local governments
- Respects individual property rights
- Attracts more opportunities to the area
- Concentrates housing
- Local control
- Less density

Citizens also recommended the following changes to the zoning build-out scenario:

- Work together between the townships
- Restrict future development or infrastructure/services costs will be astronomical
- Listen to communities

**Smart Growth Scenario**

Generally, “smart growth refers to an overall set of broad policies designed to counteract sprawl. These usually include: (1) limiting outward expansion, (2) encouraging higher density development, (3) encouraging mixed-used zoning as distinct from fully segregating land uses, (4) reducing travel time by private vehicles, (5) revitalizing older areas, and (6) preserving open space” (Muro and Puentes, March 2004). In this scenario, policies are intended to encourage infill in developed urban, suburban, and rural centers. Infill of mature corridors that connect centers or are along transportation corridors may also occur. The policies provide for limited growth at low densities in clustered settings, which is assumed to occur in areas outside existing urban, suburban, and rural centers. The majority of the development is assumed to occur where public water and sewer are available. Smart Growth policies also encourage investment in quality of life, or livability factors.

The principles that apply to the Smart Growth scenario include:

- Development locating near existing communities providing opportunity for the sharing of services
- Commercial and retail services would be located within short distance of residential areas, and provide walking and biking opportunities
- Less open space and agricultural land would be lost to development in this scenario
- Encourage the adoption of new regulations for planned unit developments (PUD), cluster development, and open space in communities
- Increase investment in non-motorized transportation linkages

such as trails, pathways, and open space corridors

- Average lot sizes would be smaller, with increased diversity of housing types and prices
- Smaller lots would consume less land over time, resulting in lower infrastructure costs than the business as usual scenario
- Transportation investments would focus on improvements and transit

In this scenario, new development is concentrated in Laketon, Muskegon, Egelston, and Fruitport Townships, near existing communities. There are also development areas surrounding Montague and Whitehall, Casnovia, and Ravenna.

**Smart Growth Principles:**

- Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Mix Land Uses
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design



### *Land use*

The Smart Growth scenario development pattern addresses concerns related to farmland protection, average lot sizes, and infrastructure development by concentrating growth near existing urban areas and rural villages. These shifts would be accomplished through policy changes that require the development and adoption of new zoning ordinances and Planned Unit Development ordinances that allow for smaller lot sizes, encourage cluster development, and provide for non-motorized transportation linkages.

In this scenario, development would occur near existing development in the Townships of Muskegon, Laketon and Dalton, the Wolf Lake area and the villages of Lakewood Club, Ravenna, and Casnovia.

Open space is preserved in the Smart Growth scenario by directing growth toward existing urbanized areas and away from environmentally sensitive lands and prime farmland. The open space areas include protected federal and state lands, and rural areas in the outlying townships. Under this scenario, 13,808 acres of forest land would be lost to new development. However, only 4,195 acres of farmland/open space would be consumed by new development. Since much of the land in Muskegon County is forested, it would be impossible to plan for growth in serviced areas without losing forest resources. By concentrating the area of development, larger tracts of habitat are left intact.

### *Transportation*

The Smart Growth scenario has the most limited number of miles of roads to construct and maintain. It provides for “system” improvements to better service local needs. This development scenario is also the most efficient of the three for snow removal.

The Smart Growth scenario involves a savings of 62 percent of vehicle miles traveled per day over the business as usual scenario. It also provides for the lowest total regional travel time, lowest total regional fuel usage (saving \$6 million per year in fuel costs) and has the fewest air pollution impacts from mobile sources.

The Smart Growth scenario also provides for the greatest opportunity for providing transportation choice in terms of transit and non-motorized options. It provides a predictable growth pattern that facilitates long range transportation improvement planning.

### *Emergency services*

Only two percent of the new development in the Smart Growth scenario lies outside of the current eight minute fire response time. Since nearly all of the new development is within an existing service area, no new stations would be needed – no capital investment would be needed. Compared to the Business as Usual scenario local governments would save \$1,950,000 in fire station construction and equipment. This saves townships from investing or having to seek grant funding for that amount. It would save taxpayers (if shared by all county taxpayers) \$0.04 per \$100 of County Equalized Value (CEV) or approximately \$35 for the average household.

### *Water*

Under the Smart Growth scenario only six percent of the new development is outside of the planned future service area.

This would result in the equivalent of 570 households on private wells, or .14 MGD of water flow that could be on municipal water. While wells do not create some of the health and environmental hazards that septic systems create, there are still public health issues with wells related to the potential for well contamination.

The Smart Growth scenario would eliminate the need to construct 150 miles of water lines over the Business as Usual scenario, at a cost of \$67,320,000 (rough estimate), if all new development were to be served with water.

Expanding the water treatment system to the planned service area from the current area would require \$3 to \$25.1 million worth of investments based on estimates for the White Lake Water Authority from Prein & Newhof.

#### *Wastewater*

In the Smart Growth scenario only five percent of new development would be outside of the planned sewer service area.

This level of development outside the service area would result in 532 households using septic systems, putting .13 MGD of septic effluent in the ground.

According to a 2004 Prein & Newhof study, the 2020 estimated daily flow is 35.3 million gallons for the whole county.

#### *Parks*

Residents would continue to enjoy abundant park and recreation land in the national forest, state owned lands, county, township, and local parks. The amount of park land per 1,000 people far exceeds any national standards in aggregate. On the township and local level, additional park acreage would be needed to provide recreation opportunities for children in the form of parks that can be accessed without cars and playground equipment and recreation fields. Providing this additional acreage in locations where it efficiently serves the local park function would be possible since the growth is concentrated in the existing urbanized area and new development can have parks incorporated into the overall development plan to serve the new households.

Quality of life is generally considered an important focus of a Smart Growth scenario. Muskegon County residents defined quality of life using the following terms:

- small town atmosphere
- rural character
- quiet
- safe
- family
- sense of community
- water resources
- arts, cultural, and educational opportunities
- greenway
- parks and recreation
- events
- quality healthcare

Through policies that focus growth in urban areas and around small towns, Smart Growth promotes maintenance of rural and small town character. A focus on non-motorized transportation places priority on linkages such as greenways to connect points of community interest such as beaches, parks, schools, and government buildings. Open space preservation allows for active and passive recreation opportunities, in both structured and unstructured open spaces.

In workshops, citizens noted the following likes about the Smart Growth scenario:

- Preserves private ownership rights
- Conserves land uses
- Concentrates growth
- Keeps major roadway undeveloped
- Creates open space development
- More visually appealing
- Better way to develop small community atmosphere
- Limits growth in rural areas
- Preservation of farmland/open space

- Continued development of urban areas
- It is contained, leaving plenty of room for agriculture
- Greater density
- Less sprawl
- Less pollution
- Conserves lakeshore and prime farmland
- Considers outcome, collaboration
- Planned
- Local governments working together
- Less impact on the environment

- Will facilitate redevelopment of brownfield sites
  - Benefits the entire community
  - Better use of infrastructure
- Citizens also make the following suggestions for change to the scenario:

- Should be an emphasis on greenway & green infrastructure as an integrated part of Smart Growth
- Acknowledge some strip development will occur
- Somewhat bigger lots
- Listen to existing communities

Table 4.5: Comparison of Development Scenario Impacts

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Scenario I: Business as Usual</i>	<i>Scenario II: Zoning Build-out</i>	<i>Scenario III: Smart Growth</i>
<b>Acres of forest consumed</b>	8,612	84,658	13,808
<b>Acres of agricultural land/open space consumed</b>	8,563	25,056	4,195
<b>Percent of development outside 8-minute fire response</b>	15%	15%	2%
<b>Number of needed fire stations</b>	2	1 (or 2)	0
<b>Cost of new fire stations (capital)</b>	\$1,950,000	\$975,000	\$0
<b>Percent of new development outside water service area</b>	65%	51%	6%
<b>Number of new private wells</b>	5,936	24,970	570
<b>Water flow from wells</b>	1.48 MGD	6.24 MGD	.14 MGD
<b>Percent of new development outside of sewer service area</b>	65%	56%	5%
<b>Number of new septic systems</b>	5,054	33,999	532
<b>Septic flows</b>	1.49 MGD	8.49 MGD	.13 MGD
Both water and sewer calculations are based on 2.05 acres per household (average for new development), 100 gallons of water/sewage per person per day and 2.5 persons per household.			

Table 4.6: Comparison of Development Impacts on Transportation

<b>Scenario I: Business as Usual</b>	<b>Scenario II: Zoning Build-out</b>	<b>Scenario III: Smart Growth</b>
<b>Construction</b> Highest road miles to construct Large number of "spot" intersection projects	<b>Construction</b> Moderate (planned) road miles to construct Fewer "spot" projects/more "system" improvements	<b>Construction</b> Most limited new road miles to construct "System" improvements better serve local needs
<b>Maintenance</b> Highest road miles to maintain Highest snow removal costs	<b>Maintenance</b> Moderate (planned) road miles to maintain Improved efficiency for snow removal	<b>Maintenance</b> Most limited new road miles to maintain Most efficient snow removal plan
<b>Operations</b> Highest total regional travel distance Highest total regional travel time	<b>Operations</b> Moderate total regional travel distance Moderate total regional travel time	<b>Operations</b> Lowest total regional travel distance Lowest total regional travel time
<b>Environment</b> Highest total regional fuel usage Most air pollution impacts for mobile sources	<b>Environment</b> Moderate total regional fuel usage Moderate air pollution impacts for mobile sources	<b>Environment</b> Lowest total regional fuel usage Least air pollution impacts for mobile sources
<b>Multi-Modal Opportunities</b> Inefficient and costly transit service/low ridership Limits non-motorized options (due to distances)	<b>Multi-Modal Opportunities</b> Moderate/reasonable transit service opportunities Improves non-motorized options	<b>Multi-Modal Opportunities</b> Designed to optimize transit service & ridership Optimizes non-motorized options
<b>Other Public Priorities</b> Least predictable long range improvement plan Increased emergency response times	<b>Other Public Priorities</b> Predictable long range improvement plan Moderate/reasonable emergency response times	<b>Other Public Priorities</b> Most predictable long range improvement plan Improved emergency response times

## **Chapter 5: Smart Growth – the Preferred Scenario**

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The strategy chosen for the future development of Muskegon County was the Smart Growth scenario. This scenario was chosen based on public comments that the business as usual scenario continued inefficient development in the community and the perception that the zoning build out scenario allowed for “too much” development. More specifically, participants supported the Smart Growth scenario because it:

- Preserves rural character and limits sprawl
- Emphasizes cooperation
- Uses existing infrastructure
- Protects open space
- Emphasizes urban redevelopment

The selection of the Smart Growth scenario reflects the public’s desire to make the best use of existing infrastructure, plan for limited infrastructure expansion in order to minimize utility costs, and preserve agricultural and open space lands.

#### **Preferred Scenario: Smart Growth**

Urban sprawl is a concern in Muskegon County. When asked if their community “has sprawl” participants responded that it does:

- 70% of Fruitport Township respondents felt their community has sprawl
- 52% of Norton Shores respondents indicated the same
- Half of the participants who have lived in the area from 11 to 20 years responded that their community “has sprawl”

The combined reactions from the Community Forums indicated that:

- There was too much sprawl
- There was a need to preserve open space and farmland
- Increased densities were needed
- Redevelopment of existing areas was needed
- There was a need to develop around existing infrastructure due to the impacts to existing infrastructure of sprawling development and the cost of new infrastructure.

When asked if density should be higher than what the current trends have been, 43 percent agreed that density should be higher, with 22 percent strongly agreeing.

Under the Smart Growth scenario, 18,356 acres of land are developed (new development). Residential uses account for 88 percent of the new development, or 16,153 acres. Commercial uses are 1,652 acres and industrial uses 550 acres. Map 5.1 shows the planned pattern of residential, commercial, and industrial development.



The existing infrastructure has capacity to accommodate growth within existing service areas. The County-owned wastewater treatment plant currently operates at 76 percent of capacity. The City of Muskegon water treatment plant currently operates at 33 percent of its 28 million gallons per day (MGD) capacity (average flow), with plans to expand to 40 MGD capacity. At peak daily flow, the plant reaches 74 percent of its capacity currently. Muskegon Heights also maintains a water treatment and distribution system, their system has an average daily flow of 3 MGD.

Some infrastructure improvements are already planned. Upgrading the City of Muskegon water treatment facility to a capacity of 40 MGD is one planned infrastructure improvement. In the transportation realm, infrastructure improvements to 2015 include:

- US 31 project to add a west bound to south bound loop ramp
- Grand Haven Road reconstruction with drainage improvements, widening from two to three lanes
- Shoreline Drive East project to create a new four lane divided roadway
- Harvey Street reconstruction with drainage improvements, widening from two to five lanes
- Giles Road resurfacing, adding a center turn lane and drainage improvements
- Pontaluna Road reconstruction with drainage improvements, widening from two to four lanes
- Grand Haven Road reconstruction from three to five lanes
- Whitehall Road reconstruction, widening from two to five lanes north of Giles Road

Another issue related to smart growth is the retention of agricultural land, parks, and open space. The value of the agricultural land in the county can be measured in terms of the farm revenues produced in the county. Muskegon County ranks second in the state in cucumber production and fifth in the state in blueberries. The market value of agricultural products sold in the county was \$46,301,000 according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The net cash income from farming activities in the county was \$7,040,000. The harvested acres of berries in the county grew from 56 acres in 1997 to 94 acres in 2002, showcasing the popularity and importance of berry farms to the county.

More generally, the following findings have been made in studies documenting the value of agricultural lands, parks, and open space:

- Corporate CEOs say quality of life for employees is the third-most important factor in locating a business, behind only access to domestic markets and availability of skilled labor.
- Across the nation, parks, protected rivers, scenic lands, wildlife habitat, and recreational open space help support a \$502-billion tourism industry.

### **Smart Growth background**

“Smart growth” means different things to different people. There is no single definition of smart growth; its meaning depends on context, perspective and timeframe. The common thread among different views of smart growth is development that revitalizes central cities and older suburbs, supports and enhances public transit, promotes walking and bicycling, and preserves open spaces and agricultural lands.

Smart growth does not mean no growth; rather, it seeks to revitalize the already-built

environment, fosters efficient development at the edges of the region while creating more livable communities.

Smart growth meets the key goals of sustainable development through community design. Focusing new housing and commercial development within already developed areas requires less public investment in new roads, utilities and amenities. Investment in the urban core can reduce crime, promote affordable housing and create vibrant central cities and small towns.

By coordinating job growth with housing growth, and ensuring a good match between income levels and housing prices, Smart Growth aims to reverse the trend of longer commutes, particularly to bedroom communities beyond the region's boundaries. People who live within easy walking distance of shops, schools, parks and public transit have the option to reduce their driving and therefore, pollute less than those living in car-dependent neighborhoods (Association of Bay Area Governments).

"Smart Growth means using comprehensive planning to guide, design, develop, revitalize and build communities for all that: have a unique sense of community and place; preserve and enhance valuable natural and

cultural resources; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner; value long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over short term incremental geographically isolated actions; and promote public health and healthy communities" (APA).

Smart Growth is seen as the antidote to sprawl, which is defined to include:

- Low density/Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
- Unlimited outward extension
- Skipped-over (leapfrog) development
- No attempt at clustering, mixing of uses, or center establishment
- Resource-consuming development
- Automobile-dominated transportation (Burchell 1998)

Smart Growth is pro-business, pro-equity, pro-environment, and pro-quality of life. These are, in sum, bipartisan issues (Michigan Land Use Institute).

Figure 5.2: Traditional Development Pattern



Figure 5.3: Suburban Sprawl Development Pattern



Sprawl occurs as personal choices are made based on apparent benefits. The combined effect of these choices is often self-defeating and contrary to their original purpose. Nevertheless, it is useful to list the apparent “benefits” of sprawl as perceived by some individuals as they make these personal decisions. Some of the apparent benefits of sprawl are as follows:

- Allows unlimited use of the automobile
- Relieves inner-suburban and urban congestion
- Reduces suburban-to-suburban travel times
- Provides physical distance from urban problems
- Guarantees increasing property values and good public services (Burchell 2001)

The Smart Growth movement is not just about fighting sprawl, but also proposing development that better utilizes existing infrastructure and is environmentally responsible, fiscally sound, and socially equitable. Smart Growth provides a new opportunity to address persistent challenges facing low income inner-city neighborhoods and older suburbs by redirecting growth and investment back into existing communities (Betty Weiss 2001)

The principles of Smart Growth include:

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Mix land uses
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Take advantage of compact building design  
(Smart Growth Network)

### ***Disagreement, Partial Agreement, and Agreement***

There are some Smart Growth elements that provoke disagreement, some which can garner partial agreement among interest groups, and some elements on which there is a general consensus. Table 5.4 summarizes these elements.

Table 5.4: Smart Growth Concepts: Areas of Disagreement, Partial Agreement, and Agreement

<i>Disagreement</i>	<i>Partial Agreement/Disagreement</i>	<i>Agreement</i>
Placing limits on the outward extension of further growth.	Promoting compact, mixed-use development.	Preserving large amounts of open space and protecting the quality of the environment.
Financing the additional infrastructure needed to deal with growth and maintain existing systems properly.	Creating significant financial incentives for local governments to adopt “Smart Growth” planning.	Redeveloping inner-core areas and developing infill sites.
Reducing dependency on private automotive vehicles, especially one-person cars.	Adopting fiscal resource sharing among localities.	Removing barriers to urban design innovation in both cities and new suburban areas.
	Deciding who should control land-use decisions.	Creating a greater sense of community within individual localities and neighborhoods and a greater recognition of regional interdependence and solidarity.
	Adopting faster project application approval processes, providing developers with greater certainty and lower project carrying costs.	
	Creating more affordable housing in outlying new-growth areas.	
	Developing a public-private consensus-building process.	

(Anthony Downs, 2001)

## Fiscal Benefits

In numerous studies, planners and engineers have hypothesized that there are two related ways in which urban form can influence the public capital and service-delivery costs associated with development, economies of scale and economies of geographic scope. These theories, when combined, suggest that more compact development can reduce the costs of capital and operations for government (Muro and Puentes, March 2004).

Research by the Real Estate Research Corporation, and others, documents that compact growth can be as much as 70 percent cheaper for governments than equivalent volumes of scattered growth. It simply costs less to provide infrastructure (such as streets, schools, flood control or sewers) and often services (such as police or fire protection) to denser, more contiguous households than to far-flung, low-density communities (Katz, 2003)

At the regional scale, cooperative growth management can encourage more compact development patterns, protecting farmland and open space from sprawl (APA, 1998).

Locally, the fiscal impacts can be measured in terms of the cost savings of the Smart Growth scenario over the Business as Usual scenario. The Smart Growth scenario has the potential to save \$5.18 per \$100 of County Equalized Value (CEV) for Muskegon County taxpayers. This would save the average homeowner \$4,450 over the 20 year planning period, or \$220 per year in taxes to pay for the improvements to water, sewer, roads, and fire protection. Additionally, householders could experience savings of \$100 per year in fuel expenses due to reduced vehicle miles traveled. The fiscal impacts are further discussed later in this chapter.

## Estimated Annual Fiscal Benefits to Muskegon County Taxpayers

County Equalized Value		\$4,840,137,970
	Potential Savings	Potential Savings per \$100 CEV
Water	\$67,320,000	\$1.39
Sewer	\$178,200,000	\$3.68
Roads	\$3,200,000	\$0.07
Fire service	\$1,950,000	\$0.04
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$250,670,000</b>	<b>\$5.18</b>

The first barrier to implementation is often local regulations that do not permit mixed uses, provide for transportation options, or allow small lots or upper story residential uses. Other barriers can include market conditions, development and process costs, financing, and [lack of] community involvement (APA, 1998).

There are solutions to the obstacles to implementation of Smart Growth strategies. Table 5.5 summarizes some of those solutions.



*“Communities should be shaped by choice, not by chance. We can keep on accepting the kind of communities we get, or we can learn how to get the kind of communities we want” – Richard Moe*

Table 5.5: Smart Growth Concepts: Strategies, Obstacles, and Solutions

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Obstacle</i>	<i>Solution</i>
Efficient Use of Land Resources	Excessive lot-area dimensions	Revise setback requirements; minimum lot sizes
Small-lot infill development Infill development on large lots	Inflexible subdivision and lot-area requirements	Average lot size for whole development, allow flexibility to preserve natural features
Coordinated development	Coordinated development not addressed	Specific development plans; master plans
Better use of deep lots	Excessive frontage and multiple access requirements	Midblock lanes; interior block cluster development; flag lots
Less land for streets	Excessive street design standards	Adopt “skinny” street standards
More efficient use of parking areas	Excessive parking requirements	Reduce minimum parking ratios; set parking ratio maximums; acknowledge on-street parking; encourage shared parking
Full Use of Urban Services		
Achieving planned densities	Underbuilding; no support for density goals	Minimum density standards
Attached units	Lot sizes not in proportion to unit sizes	Reduce lot-size requirements; allow single-family attached in all residential zones
Attached units	Lot-area dimension requirements	Revise setback requirements
Accessory units	Excessive minimum unit size; density maximums too low	Allow accessory units
Mixed Use		
Mixed-use buildings	Single-use zoning; separation of uses	Allow home occupations and live/work units; density bonus for mixed-use commercial/residential buildings
Mixed-use neighborhoods	Single-use zoning; separation of uses	Limited commercial in residential zones; allow multi-family residential in commercial zones; limited retail in industrial zones
Healthy commercial districts	Single-use zoning; proximity	Community shopping centers with street connectivity; main street districts
Transportation Options		
Multimodal streets	Street design standards overemphasize autos	Revise street standards; promote “skinny” streets

Transit, bike, and pedestrian connectivity	Physical barriers or out-of-direction travel	Cul-de-sac and block-length maximums; internal connectivity standards; sidewalk requirements
Transit-supportive development	Transit-supportive development not addressed	Mandate transit-oriented development along transit corridor
Detailed, Human-Scale Design		
Compatibly designed buildings	Too abrupt transitions between zones	Density transitioning; mid-block zoning district lines; building height limits
Compatibly designed buildings	No design guidelines for new buildings	Incorporate compatibility guidelines for new infill construction
Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes (commercial)	Street standards emphasize cars; design discourages walking	Building orientation; parking lot placement; allow shared access; 50% 80% frontage rule; etc.
Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes (residential)	Street standards emphasize cars; design discourages walking	Require sidewalks; limit setbacks; garage placement; lighting; utility placement; etc.
Quality architectural design	No incentives to provide amenities	Density bonuses for amenities
Implementation		
Examining the development review process	Onerous procedures for variances, conditional uses	Allow administrative approval for minor adjustments
Examining the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process	Onerous PUD requirements	Improved PUD regulations
Flexibility in the design review process	Discretionary design review process; vague standards	Dual-track design review process

Without updating planning requirements and providing a certain amount of coordination and guidance among local jurisdictions, achieving any level of smart growth is next to impossible. This is particularly true in states with strong home-rule governments and different local planning requirements, as in Michigan, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. (APA, 2002).

### **Smart Growth in Michigan**

In Michigan, Governor Jennifer Granholm created a land use leadership council based in part on the premise that rapid metropolitan decentralization “is hampering the ability of this state and its local governments to finance public facilities and service improvements” and is “creating a strain on the efficient provision of public services” (Executive Order No. 2003-4, February 27, 2003).

The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council was comprised of state representatives and senators, local government officials, homebuilders, business leaders, citizens, environmentalists, land-based industry representatives, social justice advocates, real estate agents, and others. The directors of state departments such as agriculture, consumer and industry services, environmental quality, natural resources, history, arts, and library, and transportation served on the Council as non-voting members (Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, 2003).

The purpose of the Council was to:

1. Identify the trends, causes, and consequences of unmanaged growth and development
2. Provide recommendations to the governor and the legislature regarding ways to minimize the negative economic, environmental, and social impacts of current land use trends; promote urban

revitalization and reinvestment; foster intergovernmental and public-private partnerships; identify growth and development opportunities; protect the state’s natural resources; and, better manage the cost of public investments in infrastructure (Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, 2003).

The key recommendations to emerge from the Council were aligned with the Smart Growth Principles outlined by the Smart Growth Network, which have been referenced throughout the Muskegon Area-wide Plan (Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, 2003).

These recommendations have broad support as indicated by a survey conducted statewide in 2003 by Michigan State University. The survey demonstrated that nearly 60 percent of Michigan residents supported increased land use planning and regulation. Also, three quarters of residents are very or somewhat concerned about local urban sprawl. The study further went to find that 92 percent agreed the state should encourage local governments to work together to manage growth, 86 percent supported restricting development to protect farmland, and 86 percent supported restricting development to protect environmentally sensitive areas (Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, 2003).

The availability of tools for implementing Smart Growth is critical to the success of the community’s efforts. Tools provided at the state and federal level often involve policies, tax incentives, and grant programs. The following programs are among the tools for implementing Smart Growth in Michigan:

#### *Brownfields Redevelopment*

In 1995, Michigan passed a law that limited the liability for brownfields clean-up only to those parties responsible for contamination.

Three years later, then Governor Engler passed the Clean Michigan Initiative, a \$675 million environmental bond that facilitated redevelopment. In 2000, the state passed tax credits and additional proposals to ease brownfields redevelopment.

#### *Tax-Free Renaissance Zones*

Michigan has thirty-four Renaissance Zones (comprising 164 geographic areas) around the state designated as virtually tax free for any business or resident presently in, or moving into, a zone. They are designed to provide selected communities with the most powerful market-based incentive—no taxes—to spur new jobs and investment. The zones range in size from five to 3,000 acres.

The taxes affected by the program include nearly all the state and local taxes levied on business activity: Single Business Tax (SBT), state personal income tax, six-mill state education tax, local personal property tax, local real property tax, local income tax and utility users tax.

The duration of the zone designation ranges from 10 to 15 years, starting from January 1, 1997. In all cases, the tax relief will be phased out in 25% increments over the last three years of the program.

#### *Right to Farm Act*

The Michigan Right to Farm Act, P.A. 93, was enacted in 1981 to provide farmers with protection from nuisance lawsuits. This state statute authorizes the Michigan Commission of Agriculture to develop and adopt Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) for farms and farm operations in Michigan. These voluntary practices are based on available technology and scientific research to promote sound environmental stewardship and help maintain a farmer's right to farm.

#### *Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act*

The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act enables a farm owner to voluntarily enter into a development rights agreement with the State. The agreement is designed to ensure that the land remains in an agricultural use for a minimum of 10 years and ensures that the land is not developed in a non-agricultural use. In return for maintaining the land in an agricultural use, the land owner may be entitled to certain income tax benefits, and the land is not subject to special assessments for sanitary sewer, water, lights or non-farm drain projects.

## Smart Growth in Muskegon County

Certain principles of Smart Growth are already under way in Muskegon County, particularly in terms of urban infill and redevelopment projects. These initiatives meet the principle of directing development toward existing communities and in terms of farmland protection efforts that meet the principle of preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

Renaissance Zones are one of the tools being used in Muskegon County to direct development toward existing communities. As described previously, Renaissance Zones are areas in the cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights designated as virtually tax free. The tax relief will be phased out in 25% increments over the last three years of the program.

Several infill development and building conversion projects are planned, under way, or completed in Muskegon County:

- Amazon Building: Conversion to apartments
- Conversion of the Shaw Walker Building into the Watermark Lofts
- Muskegon Boiler Works (pending): convert Boiler Works building to artist's lofts
- City of Whitehall considering moving city services into the heart of downtown to preserve the Whitehall Bank Building and increase foot traffic downtown
- Redevelopment of the Muskegon Mall into a mixed-use combination of residential, office, and retail developments in a city center or historic "main street" design

Another local initiative has been the establishment of the Muskegon County

Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program which would work to voluntarily protect local farmland using state and federal grant money. The program has the eventual goal of purchasing the development rights of 35,000 acres (about half the farmland in the county) so that the prime agricultural soils are preserved for food production and open/green space.

### *How Far?*

At the public meeting in September, 2004 members of the steering committee and general public participated in a visual choice survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine the level to which residents of Muskegon County wished to implement various Smart Growth principles. This choices poll was intended to:

- Develop an understanding of how much participants supported the concept of each principle
- Develop a consensus on the intensity of the principles as applied to Muskegon County
- Introduce innovative development solutions from other areas

Participants were asked to select their preference for the degree to which a concept is implemented as presented on each slide, basing their response to the concept presented in each image, not the policy ramifications or cost. Each slide was presented from a minimal approach through moderate approach, to an aggressive approach for implementation. Preferences were selected using an electronic voting system.

The results of the survey helped determine the extent to which Smart Growth principles would be integrated into the implementation strategies.

Generally residents voted for a moderate level of implementation. In terms of

housing choice, or the range of housing options that should be available in Muskegon County, the participants believed that housing choice should occur at the township level. This means that each township should have a range of housing options available, rather than having certain types of housing available only in particular areas of the county. Participants felt that walkability was important to connect subdivisions to schools, retail areas, and employment areas in the rural parts of the county and that it was important to be able to walk to the grocery store, pharmacy, video store, corner store or a place of worship in the cities and villages.

Most participants felt that the various jurisdictions in the county partner effectively on low level issues, or issues that lack significant importance or commitment of resources. The participants felt, however, that it is important for the jurisdictions to change their zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage the use of Smart Growth principles. This will require significant collaboration among jurisdictions. Participants also felt that local governments should have standards which encourage the development of distinct areas with a sense of place, but they do not support development of strict architectural controls or establishing architectural review.

Participants felt that it was most appropriate to mix land uses in suburban areas to give those areas more character and access to services. They felt that development should occur in mixed-use cluster developments.

Participants were very supportive of initiatives that protect farmland. They indicated that they would support an increase in mileage to preserve natural resources and agricultural areas. They also believed that development should not occur in rural natural resource areas. This suggests that stringent farmland and natural

resource protections regulations and programs would be acceptable locally.

Participants indicated that in both rural and suburban/urban areas they would be willing to use multiple forms of transportation if they were available in the county including walking, biking, carpooling, and taking the bus. Alternative forms of transportation should be incorporated into the transportation plans for the county.

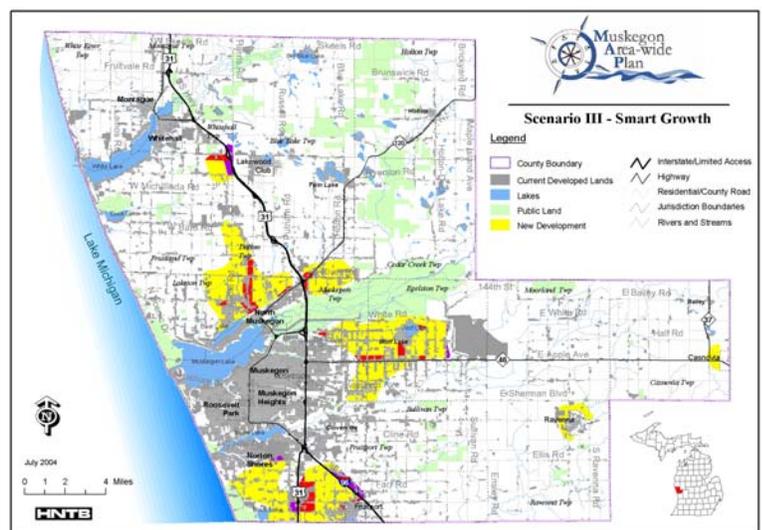
In terms of directing development toward existing communities, participants believed that there should be a county-wide coordinated plan to steer growth to areas with existing utilities and community facilities. They also believed that new growth should be precluded unless it is served by utilities and community facilities.

### **Smart Growth Implications for Muskegon County**

The potential impacts of the Smart Growth scenario were evaluated in the areas of land use, transportation, fire services, water treatment, wastewater treatment, and parks.

#### **Land Use**

The Smart Growth scenario development pattern would address concerns related to farmland protection, average lot sizes, and



Map 5.6: Smart Growth Scenario

infrastructure development by concentrating growth near existing urban areas and rural villages. These shifts would be accomplished through policy changes that would require the development and adoption of new zoning ordinances and Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinances that allow for smaller lot sizes, encourage cluster development, and provide for non-motorized transportation linkages.

The development would occur near existing development in the Townships of Muskegon, Laketon and Dalton, the Wolf Lake area, and the villages of Lakewood Club, Ravenna, and Casnovia.

Open space is preserved in the Smart Growth scenario by directing growth toward existing urbanized areas and away from environmentally sensitive lands and prime farmland. The open space areas include protected federal and state lands, and rural areas in the outlying townships.

Any type of development will consume either agricultural land or forested land in Muskegon County. Development that is clustered rather than stripped out along roadways may consume more agricultural land or forested land, but will ultimately provide greater protection of biodiversity by not segmenting habitats and preserving tracts of farmland that are viable for agricultural production. Stripped out development often threatens the viability of habitats and farmland production. Under this scenario, 13,808 acres of forested land are converted for development. Agricultural lands and open space would also be affected, though to a lesser extent. Approximately 4,200 acres of farmland and open space would be converted to development under this scenario.

The calculations presented assume the same density that Muskegon County has currently. It is only the location of development that is

altered to provide for smarter growth. The amount of impacted forest and farmland could be minimized if policies that increase density in development and in redevelopment areas are implemented.

### ***Transportation***

The transportation system is especially sensitive to the geographical spread and spatial relationship of development areas. Low density developments spaced far apart present the illusion of reduced traffic congestion, but that is true only for the most local of streets. Generally, traffic congestion is an issue on arterials and major collector roadways, and these facilities are not affected by local street conditions. In other words, the congestion on major roadways is unchanged, but people have driven further (expending more time, fuel and resources) to get to them.

Taking these factors into account, the Smart Growth scenario involves a savings of 62 percent of vehicle miles traveled per day over the Business as Usual scenario. Under the Business as Usual scenario, Muskegon County would witness an increase in vehicle miles traveled of 900,000, whereas under the Smart Growth scenario the number of additional vehicle miles traveled is 557,000. It also provides for the lowest total regional travel time, lowest total regional fuel usage (saving \$6 million per year in fuel costs) and has the fewest air pollution impacts from mobile sources. The fuel savings amount to approximately \$100 per household per year.

The Smart Growth scenario benefits public investment levels since it has the most limited number of miles of roads to construct and maintain. It provides for “system” improvements to better service local needs. This development scenario is also the most efficient of the three for snow removal.

The Smart Growth scenario also provides for the greatest opportunity for providing transportation choice in terms of transit and non-motorized options. It provides a predictable growth pattern that facilitates long range transportation improvement planning. Bus routes have a greater potential for success in terms of ridership if there is a density capable of supporting the service.

### **Fire Service**

There are fifteen fire departments in Muskegon County, served by 21 fire stations. One of those departments is the DNR fire station, which does not, as a rule, fight structural fires.

The standards for fire departments depend on whether the department is staffed with career fire fighters or volunteers. The National Fire Protection Association has developed standards for both types of departments. Career departments have both time and staffing objectives. The first engine company of the fire department should arrive within four minutes and/or the first full alarm assignment should arrive within eight minutes. While the four minute standard may not always be achievable, the eight minute standard must be met. A first responder should arrive on the scene within four minutes at an emergency medical incident. The fire department is expected to meet these standards 90 percent of the time.

Engine companies should be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty personnel at all times. Tactical hazard units (in jurisdictions with such units), should be staffed with five to six on-duty members. Ladder or truck companies should be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty personnel at all times. A first responder (EMT) with an automatic external defibrillator should arrive within four minutes 90 percent of the time. For departments with Advanced Life Support (ALS) units, the ALS Company

should arrive within eight minutes 90 percent of the time.

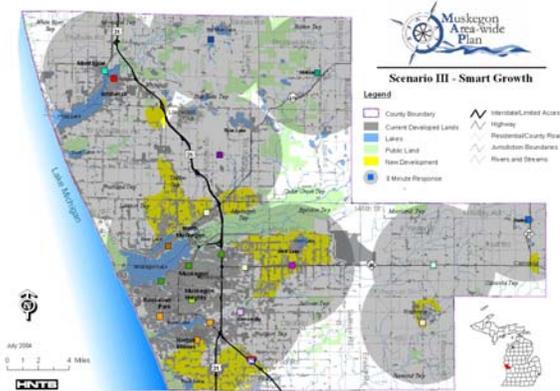
Most of the career departments in Muskegon County have an average response time between three and five minutes. The City of Muskegon, Norton Shores, and Fruitport departments report average response times of four minutes or less. These departments meet the response time standard. Norton Shores has the best Insurance Standards Organization (ISO) rating of the county departments. Its rating was recently upgraded to 4. The City of Muskegon department has an ISO rating of 9, the City of Muskegon Heights has a rating of 6, and Fruitport has a rating of 5. ISO ratings are on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the best rating possible.

Map 5.7 shows the areas that are within eight minutes of a fire station, assuming 30 mph average travel speed and “crow flies” travel routes. Only two percent of the new development in the Smart Growth scenario lies outside of an eight minute fire response time. Since nearly all of the new development is within an existing service area, no new stations would be needed – no capital investment would be needed. This saves \$1,950,000 in capital costs associated with fire station construction and fire trucks that would be needed under the Business as Usual scenario.

Compliance with staffing standards is more difficult to determine for a specific department since the required number of firefighters and companies is determined by what the local department needs to meet the time standard. Engine companies should have four on-duty personnel at all times. Assuming an eight-hour shift, this would mean each station needed 12 staff members to cover a day. Most likely, the existing fire departments, between full time and part time staff, are appropriately staffed to handle the

growth. However, adequate staffing needs to be determined locally.

Map 5.7: Fire Response



### Water Treatment

Under the Smart Growth scenario only six percent of the new development is outside of the planned future service area.

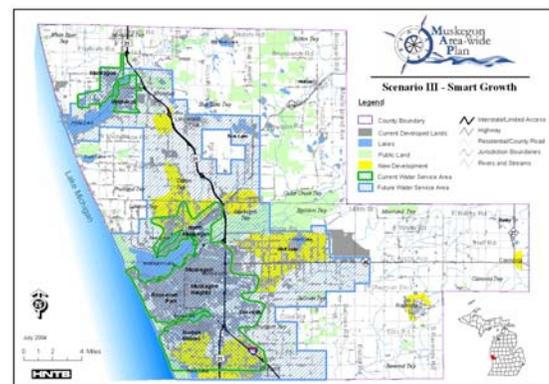
This would result in the equivalent of 570 households on private wells, or the equivalent of 0.14 million gallons per day (MGD) of water flow. While private wells do not pose the public health risks that septic systems can pose, there is still concern about the potential for contamination of individual wells. Having city water also brings the ability to have fire hydrants located near development, providing additional public safety.

The Smart Growth scenario would eliminate the need to construct 150 miles of water lines over the Business as Usual scenario, for a cost savings of \$67,320,000 (rough estimate), assuming all new developments were to be served with water.

Expanding the water treatment system to the planned service area from the current area would require \$3 to \$25.1 million, based on estimates for the White Lake Water

Authority from Prein & Newhof. The Montague/Whitehall system is planning to add capacity to meet the projected 2025 demand of 5.33 MGD. The three alternatives under consideration include groundwater wells east of US 31, surface water from Lake Michigan, or connecting to the Muskegon County Northside System. The Muskegon County system is planning expansions north along Whitehall Road from River Road to Riley-Thompson Road. These system expansions will allow for most of the development in this scenario to be on municipal water, rather than on private wells.

Map 5.8: Water Service Area



### Wastewater Treatment

In the Smart Growth scenario only five percent of new development would be outside of the planned sewer service area.

This level of development outside the service area would result in 532 households using septic systems, putting .13 MGD of septic effluent in the ground. In order to service all new development with sewer under the Business as Usual scenario, investments of \$178,200,000 (rough estimate) would be needed. This expenditure is saved by concentrating development into the planned sewer area and investing a more modest amount into improvements to the existing system.

According to a 2004 Prein & Newhof study, the 2020 estimated daily flow is 35.3 million gallons. This is based on the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) population projections and a planning standard of 100 gallons per person per day. It also accounts for Sappi Fine Papers increasing their flow from 13 MGD currently to 17 MGD.

The planned sewer network will provide service to most of the new development; however, there are significant issues to be addressed within the current distribution system in existing parts of the developed area. The planned improvements total \$37.2 million. Phase I improvements include replacing pump stations, eliminating pump stations and providing a central pump station, upgrading and rehabilitating pump stations, and a new force main. Phase II improvements include constructing a new pump station, optimizing the existing wastewater treatment facility, and headworks improvements.

Septic system failure is a significant concern because the effluent can contaminate private wells and pose public health risks. Generally, it is preferable for urban density development to occur in sewer serviced areas.

Figure 5.9: Sewer Service Area



## Parks

Muskegon County is blessed with abundant parks and natural areas. The county has 12,500 acres of federal lands in the Manistee National Forest.

The county also has more than 2,600 acres of state land in three state parks and the Hart-Montague Trail State Park. The Hart-Montague Trail is a paved 22-mile path with scenic overlooks and picnic areas. The park portion of the trail is approximately 22 acres. The county is also home to a large portion of the Muskegon State Game Area, with 8,600 acres in the county. With state park lands included (but not the State Game Area), there are 25 acres of park land in Muskegon County for every 1,000 residents. With the State Game Area, there are 71 acres of park and recreation land for every 1,000 residents of Muskegon County.

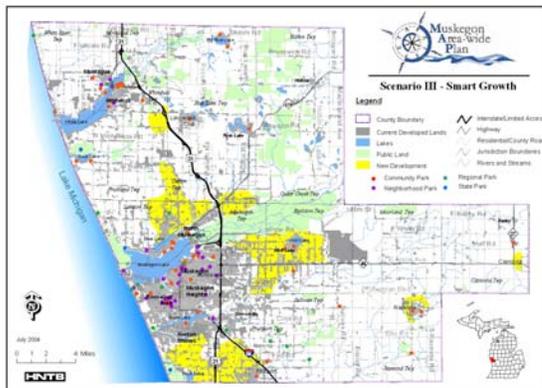
County parks are also abundant in Muskegon County. There are 12 county parks encompassing more than 740 acres, not including the Muskegon County Wastewater Treatment facility lands which are used for recreation purposes. This translates to four acres of county park land for every 1,000 residents of Muskegon County. If Muskegon County did not have the wealth of state and federal parks and recreational areas, the county would likely need to add approximately 100 acres of park land by 2020 to accommodate population growth at the same level of service of four acres per 1,000 people. However, since there are ample recreation opportunities in the county, the need to provide for additional opportunities is unlikely.

Eight of the townships operate parks: Egelston, Muskegon, Fruitport, Laketon, Casnovia, White River, Fruitland, and Holton.

Local parks are also available in most Muskegon County cities and villages. Local

parques account for more than 875 acres in the county. This translates to a level of service of five acres per 1,000 people in the county. To maintain this level of service for the 2020 population, an additional 128 acres of park land would be needed. While there are abundant park and recreation opportunities in the county, local parks fulfill needs that state and federal lands typically do not, such as parks that are accessible to children and teens without adult transportation and recreation equipment such as playgrounds and athletic fields for children. Therefore, some additional local park land may be needed to accommodate the growing needs of the areas that experience population gain.

Figure 5.10: Parks



### Applying Smart Growth to the MAP Goals

The vision and goals of the Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP) can be achieved through the application of Smart Growth principles. In the remainder of the section, each vision and its goals are related to the Smart Growth principles that achieve the vision or goal.

#### Land Use and Growth

Vision 1:

*Encourage and promote land use and growth patterns that sustain and improve*

*quality of life in Muskegon County, while maintaining a strong sense of place, community, and responsibility.*



Goals:

- Develop integrated and coordinated land use planning in rural areas to revitalize small towns, link natural resource protection with residential development and maintain working landscapes (*agricultural, natural resource tourism, forestry etc.*).
- Develop policies to ensure land is available to provide employment opportunities, variety of housing types, open space and natural areas, and access to goods and services based on future projected needs.
- Limit adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive lands by encouraging redevelopment and by increasing densities in cities, where necessary and desired.
- Identify strategies that will manage growth and support reinvestment in urban areas *and* promote rural viability.
- Encourage compatible land use plans between adjacent jurisdictions by updating land use plans, zoning ordinances and regulations.

These goals relate to the following Smart Growth principles:

- **Create a range of housing opportunities and choices:** Policies that encourage a variety of housing types provide opportunity and choice for a variety of needs and populations.
- **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas:** Preserving open spaces and natural areas by ensuring land is available for open space and limiting the adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive lands by encouraging redevelopment achieves this principle.
- **Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities:** Encouraging redevelopment and managing growth in a manner that supports reinvestment in urban areas will shift the development focus toward existing communities, strengthening them and preserving rural areas for agriculture and open space uses.
- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration:** Achieving the plan goal of encouraging compatible land use plans between adjacent jurisdictions will require collaboration between the municipalities, the county, WMSRDC, and the residents of the communities.

### **Natural Resources, Open Space and the Environment**

Vision 2:

*Protect and preserve natural, resources and continually improve the quality air, water, and land resources found in Muskegon County.*



Goals:

- Protect and valuable farm and forest lands, wetlands, surface and ground water resources, wildlife habitat, and opportunities for passive and active recreation.
- Develop polices and regulations to address the quantity and quality of water resources.
- Link natural resource protection with development to reduce the loss of important natural resources and open spaces in urban and rural areas.
- Mitigate environmental and human health impacts to important natural resources.
- Foster increased environmental sensitivity and voluntary stewardship through public-private partnerships, federal-state-local cooperation, and public education and outreach.
- Protect the watershed and shoreline of Lake Michigan; inland lakes of Muskegon County.

These goals relate to the following Smart Growth principles:

- **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas:** Protecting environmentally sensitive areas and farmland will achieve this Smart Growth principle.

- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration:** Policy and regulation development will require partnerships at the local, regional, and state level to be able to improve the local water quality. Stewardship efforts will require significant collaboration to coordinate and implement across the county.
- **Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place:** The Lake Michigan shoreline, inland lakes, and public lands provide Muskegon County with a unique local character. Initiatives that protect those natural resources will ensure the continued appeal of Muskegon County to future generations.

### **Economy and Jobs**

Vision 3:

*Promote economic development and diversity that ensures access to jobs, goods, and services throughout the Muskegon County.*



Goals:

- Encourage partnerships with government, local organizations and businesses to help achieve local and

regional economic development goals.

- Work collaboratively to encourage economic diversity throughout the region and reduce competition between communities.
- Enhance and retain “human capital” in the region, fostering a skilled, educated labor force.
- Develop strategies for the redevelopment of brownfields, adaptive reuse of existing structures and in-fill development in urban and rural areas.
- Retain and expand existing agriculture businesses to maintain synergy and a diversified economy.
- Promote natural resource based tourism and the county’s quality of life as an economic development tool.
- Infrastructure
- Develop a county-wide approach to improving and maintaining infrastructure, transportation, public facilities and community services.

These goals relate to the following Smart Growth principles:

- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration:** Partnerships between government, business, and organizations encourage broad participation in the development of the community.
- **Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place:** Reducing the competition between communities and encouraging diversity will help to create unique communities within Muskegon County, strengthening the county’s unique character as a place to live, work, or visit.
- **Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost**

**effective:** Brownfields redevelopment and infill development are easier for developers and more likely to occur when the developers know what to expect in terms of permitting, requirements, and other matters. Time is money and reducing the amount of time needed to process developments through the regulatory process can increase the likelihood of quality development in urban areas.

- **Mix land uses:** Brownfields redevelopment and infill development can be quality mixed use developments that encourage 24 hour use of areas of the community. In order to make this type of development possible, it may be necessary for jurisdictions to revise their zoning codes to encourage, or even allow, mixed use development.
- **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas:** Adding value to the local forested, open, and agricultural lands through tourism and agribusiness help to make them financially sustainable without being sold for development. This form of “home grown” economic development can also create jobs for people with a variety of skills. Using a county-wide approach to infrastructure, transportation, and public facilities will encourage development in the existing urbanized areas, rather than sprawling development that consumes farmland and open space. Brownfields redevelopment and infill development also encourage farmland and open space protection by bringing new development into existing urban areas.
- **Strengthen and direct development towards existing**

**communities:** Redevelopment of brownfields and infill development, along with using a county-wide approach to infrastructure, transportation, and public facilities will direct development into the existing urbanized areas, and existing communities because those are the locations that have infill opportunities, likely brownfields, and existing services.

### Infrastructure

Vision 4:

*Develop a county-wide approach to improving and maintaining infrastructure, transportation, public facilities and community services.*



Goals:

- Prioritize water and wastewater facility improvements consistent with the distribution of the region’s population and employment while emphasizing water conservation and re-use.
- Provide safe and efficient alternate modes of transportation to reduce auto dependence and promote high air quality.
- Maintain and improve the exiting transportation system to provide

safe and efficient mobility and access.

- Provide infrastructure systems in both urban and rural communities utilizing existing infrastructure capacity where it exists before developing new infrastructure.

These goals relate to the following Smart Growth principles:

- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration:** In order to accomplish the infrastructure goals, coordination and collaboration will be needed between the municipalities, county, state, utility companies, and property owners throughout the county.
- **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas:** Directing development toward existing infrastructure will allow for appropriate urban and rural land uses, allowing for the protection of prime farmland, valuable open spaces, and natural areas such as forests, wetlands, and recreation areas.
- **Provide a variety of transportation choices:** By providing safe and efficient alternative modes of transportation in an effort to improve the local air quality, the county will have a greater variety of viable transportation choices including pedestrian and bike options, and bus service.
- **Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities:** Focusing development where infrastructure such as water, sewer, and transportation corridors exist directs development into existing

communities where those services are available.

- **Take advantage of compact building design:** Utilizing infrastructure capacity where it currently exists works to encourage compact building design because it enables more development to occur in the area that is served rather than extending utilities to allow growth outside of the currently developed area. Alternative modes of transportation allow people to live in more compact areas when less land is consumed for roadways and parking.

### Quality of Life

Vision 5:

*Promote high quality of life by recognizing Muskegon County for its diversity, environmental, educational, arts, cultural and recreational assets.*



Goals:

- Promote coordination and enhancement of arts, cultural, recreational and historic resources in the county.
- Develop a regional strategy to improve and maintain access to high quality educational services throughout the county, including

elementary, secondary and alternative schools.

- Develop partnerships between government and non-government organizations to improving the health of the environment and individuals
- Improve access to healthcare services and develop strategies to maintain Muskegon County as a regional healthcare provider.

These goals relate to the following Smart Growth principles:

- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration:** Community collaboration will be reinforced through efforts to coordinate and enhance arts, cultural, recreational, and historic activities in the county. A regional strategy for educational services will also encourage collaboration beyond the Intermediate School District. Partnerships for environmental and individual health will also reinforce the principle of collaboration.
- **Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place:** Muskegon County's natural, cultural, and recreational resources are what make it a unique and special place. Coordinating and enhancing the resources in the county will further develop that sense of place and encourage support for the distinctive places that make Muskegon County special.

# Chapter 6: Implementation

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## Creating the Strategies

The Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP) project had formalized five vision areas and a number of goals assigned to each vision from community input during the second set of Community Forums held in September 2003. These visions and goals are outlined in Chapter 2.

The MAP Steering Committee was then faced with the difficult question “*Where do we go from here?*” The committee, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) and HNTB, had to decide how to implement the visions and goals. Three main questions that needed to be answered in order to establish the MAP implementation strategies include:

**WHAT?**

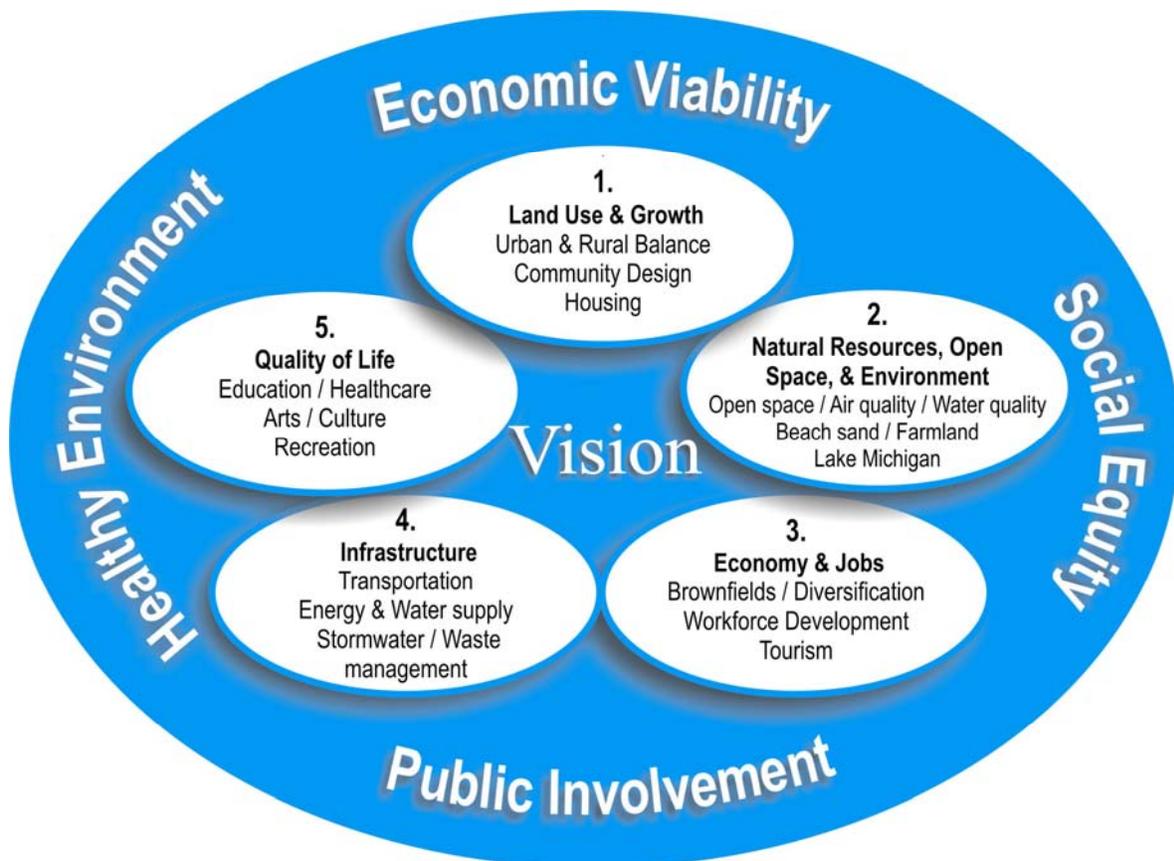
What task(s) can be done to accomplish each vision/goal?

**WHO?**

Who should be responsible for accomplishing each task?

**WHEN?**

When or in what period of time should the task be accomplished?



The MAP Steering Committee went through the difficult task of answering these three questions for each of the identified visions and goals. In addition, at the final Community Forum held in September 2004, attendees participated in an exercise where they were given the opportunity to answer these three questions related to the MAP visions and goals.

**Implementation Strategies – Answering the Questions**

Following are responses to the questions of What, Who, and When with respect to the five MAP visions and their implementation strategies.

**VISION 1: Land Use and Growth**

Encourage and promote land use and growth patterns that sustain and improve quality of life in Muskegon County, while maintaining a strong sense of place, community, and responsibility.

**WHAT?**

- **Ambassador Program:**  
Recruit six volunteers to act as MAP ambassadors and meet with each of the 28 units of government and at least five organizations within Muskegon County in order to promote the MAP project and Smart Growth Principles.
- **Adopting Principles:**  
Request local governments and planning commissions to adopt Smart Growth Principles by resolution to use when reviewing and/or approving growth within their jurisdiction.

- **Coordinated Planning:**  
Coordinate local planning documents with adjoining units of governments.
- **Educational Seminars:**  
Hold one seminar per year to educate local developers, builders, and realtors on the principles of Smart Growth.
- **Encouraged Communication:**  
Create a platform to encourage increased communication between local governments and area developers, builders, and realtors in order for each group to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of each and how to more efficiently work together.
- **Model Ordinances:**  
Prepare model zoning ordinances and codes that incorporate the Smart Growth principles and make them available for implementation locally.
- **Planning Commission Meetings:**  
Establish a quarterly county-wide meeting with one representative from each of the 28 planning commissions within the county.
- **Planning Law Reform:**  
Meet with local legislators to encourage the reform of current Michigan Planning laws.

**WHO?**

The following organizations were identified as having a lead role (L), a supporting role (S), or an advisory role (A) in implementing the Land Use and Growth vision. Organizations identified as having a lead role will have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the vision. Supporting organizations will provide technical expertise, public relations, educational programs, and staff support to implementation.

Task	Local Governments			County Government	WMSRDC	Ambassadors	Legislators	Private Sector	Steering Committee
	Townships	Cities	Villages						
Ambassador Program					S	L			A
Adopting Principles	L	L	L		S	S			A
Coordinated Planning	L	L	L	L	S				A
Educational Seminars	S	S	S	S	L				S
Encouraged Communication	L	L	L	S	A			S	S
Model Ordinances	A	A	A	A	S				L
Planning Commission Meetings	S	S	S	S	L			S	L
Planning Law Reform	L	L	L	L	A		L	S	S

L = indicates lead role, S = indicates supporting role, A = indicates advisory role

WHEN?

Task	Year						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 – 2015	2015 – 2025
Ambassador Program	Active work						
Adopting Principles	Active work			Passive work			
Coordinated Planning	Active work						
Educational Seminars	Active work						
Encouraged Communication	Active work						
Model Ordinances	Active work			Passive work			
Planning Commission Meetings	Active work						
Planning Law Reform	Passive work						

Key:  Active work  Passive work

VISION 1: Summary Chart

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<b>Ambassador Program:</b> Recruit six volunteers to act as MAP ambassadors and meet with each of the 28 units of government and local organizations within Muskegon County in order to promote the MAP project and Smart Growth Principles.	Volunteer MAP ambassadors with assistance from WMSRDC	Each local government once per year and five organizations
<b>Adopting Principles:</b> Request local governments and planning commissions adopt Smart Growth Principles by resolution to use when reviewing and/or approving growth within their jurisdiction.	MAP Steering Committee members and WMSRDC	Upon completion of MAP Document
<b>Coordinated Planning:</b> Coordinate local planning documents with adjoining units of governments.	Local governments and Muskegon County	Ongoing
<b>Educational Seminars:</b> Hold seminars to educate local developers, builders, and realtors on the principles of Smart Growth.	WMSRDC and local educational facilities	One per year
<b>Encouraged Communication:</b> Create a platform to encourage increased communication between local governments and area developers, builders, and realtors in order for each group to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of each and how to more efficiently work together.	Local governments and area developers, builders, and realtors with assistance from WMSRDC	Ongoing
<b>Model Ordinances:</b> Prepare model zoning ordinances and codes that incorporate the Smart Growth principles and make them available for implementation locally.	MAP Steering Committee with assistance from WMSRDC	December 2006
<b>Planning Commission Meetings:</b> Establish a county-wide meeting with one representative from each of the 28 planning commissions within the county.	Local governments with assistance from WMSRDC	Four times per year
<b>Planning Law Reform:</b> Meet with local legislators to encourage the reform of current Michigan Planning laws.	Local governments and legislators	Ongoing

## **VISION 2: Natural Resources, Open Space, & Environment**

Protect and preserve natural resources and continually improve the quality of air, water, and land resources found in Muskegon County.

### **WHAT?**

#### ▪ **Farm Land Preservation Program:**

Create a Farm Land & Open Space Preservation Program in Muskegon County, which will utilize the purchase of development rights to voluntarily conserve private agricultural lands and open space in Muskegon County.

#### ▪ **Educational Seminars:**

Provide educational seminars for local elected and appointed officials on the benefits of preserving open space, and the impact they can make within their jurisdiction.

#### ▪ **Coordination of Activities:**

Coordinate MAP activities with the efforts of local environmental groups and organizations working within Muskegon County in order to minimize the duplication of efforts.

#### ▪ **Green Infrastructure Plan:**

Create a county-wide green infrastructure plan for Muskegon County, which can be coordinated and implemented locally.

#### ▪ **Educational Visits:**

Visit local organizations through the MAP ambassador program in order to educate on the environmental benefits of utilizing Smart Growth Principles.

#### ▪ **Great Lakes Protection:**

Continue to work with other Great Lakes States on Great Lakes issues through the participation in the Lake Michigan Academy. Meet with local state representatives to encourage the adoption of the Great Lakes Legacy Act, and the Great Lakes Restoration Act.

*WHO?*

The following organizations were identified as having a lead role (L), a supporting role (S), or an advisory role (A) in implementing the Natural Resources, Open Space, and Environment vision. Organizations identified as having a lead role will have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the vision. Supporting organizations will provide technical expertise, public relations, educational programs, and staff support to implementation.

Task	Local Governments			County Government	Environmental Groups	WMSRDC	Ambassadors	Legislators	Private Sector	Steering Committee
	Townships	Cities	Villages							
Farm Land Preservation Program	L	S	S	L	L					
Educational Seminars	A	A	A	A	A	S	L			A
Coordination of Activities					L	L				S
Green Infrastructure Plan	A	A	A	A	L	S				
Educational Visits					S	S	L		S	A
Great Lakes Protection	L	L	L	L		A		L	S	S

L = indicates lead role, S = indicates supporting role, A = indicates advisory role

**WHEN?**

Task	Year						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 – 2015	2015 – 2025
Farm Land Preservation Program	Active work					Passive work	
Educational Seminars	Active work						
Coordination of Activities	Active work						
Green Infrastructure Plan	Active work		Passive work				
Educational Visits	Active work						
Great Lakes Protection	Passive work						

Key:  Active work  Passive work

*VISION 2: Summary Chart*

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<p><b>Farm Land Preservation Program:</b> Create a Farm Land &amp; Open Space Preservation Program in Muskegon County, which will utilize the purchase of development rights to voluntarily conserve private agricultural lands in Muskegon County.</p>	<p>Local governments, community leaders, local environmental groups and organizations, and area farmers</p>	<p>Program in Place by December 2006</p>
<p><b>Educational Seminars:</b> Provide educational seminars for local elected and appointed official on the benefits of preserving open space, and the impact they can make within their jurisdiction.</p>	<p>MAP Steering Committee, WMSRDC, and local educational institutions</p>	<p>Two per year</p>
<p><b>Coordination of Activities:</b> Coordinate MAP activities with the efforts of local environmental groups and organization working within Muskegon County in order to minimize the duplication of efforts.</p>	<p>MAP Steering Committee, local environmental groups and organizations, and WMSRDC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Green Infrastructure Plan:</b> Create a county-wide green infrastructure plan for Muskegon County, which can be coordinated and implemented locally.</p>	<p>Local governments, local environmental groups and organizations, WMSRDC, and the WMSA</p>	<p>December 2006</p>
<p><b>Educational Visits:</b> Visit local organizations through the MAP ambassador program in order to educate on the environmental benefits of utilizing Smart Growth Principles.</p>	<p>Volunteer MAP ambassadors with assistance from WMSRDC</p>	<p>Five per year</p>
<p><b>Great Lakes Protection:</b> Continue to work with other Great Lakes States on Great Lakes issues through the participation in the Lake Michigan Academy. Meet with local state representatives to encourage the adoption of the Great Lakes Legacy Act and the Great Lakes Restoration Act.</p>	<p>Local governments, community leaders, and state representatives</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

### VISION 3: Economy and Jobs

Promote economic development and diversity that ensures access to jobs, goods, and services throughout Muskegon County.

#### WHAT?

- **Agricultural Business Plan:**

Develop an agricultural business plan for Muskegon County which will outline a strategy to retain and expand existing agricultural business, as well as maintain synergy and a diversified economy.

- **Live Near Work:**

Request local employers to provide benefits that encourage employees to live near where they work.

- **CEDS Process:**

Incorporate Smart Growth Principles into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) goals and objectives.

- **Business Improvement Districts:**

Create business improvement districts/corridors that encourage neighborhood and intergovernmental cooperation.

- **Workforce Development:**

Meet once per year with area employers to identify their employment and workforce training needs.

- **Economic Diversity:**

Review the local economy on a yearly basis in order to create benchmarks and identify policies that will assist in diversifying the regional economy within Muskegon County.

- **Tourism:**

Create a task force to meet on a quarterly basis in order to identify issues and opportunities that will promote tourism in Muskegon County.

- **Public/Private Partnerships:**

Create a platform to identify opportunities for public/private partnerships which will encourage cost savings, shared services, and regional economies of scale.

- **Brownfield Redevelopment:**

Create an inventory of brownfields within Muskegon County, as well as identify and prioritize potential sites for redevelopment.

**WHO?**

The following organizations were identified as having a lead role (L), a supporting role (S), or an advisory role (A) in implementing the Economy and Jobs vision. Organizations identified as having a lead role will have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the vision. Supporting organizations will provide technical expertise, public relations, educational programs, and staff support to implementation.

Task	Local Governments			County Government	Environmental Groups	WMSRDC	Muskegon Area First	Chambers of Commerce	Private Sector	Steering Committee
	Townships	Cities	Villages							
Agricultural Business Plan					L	A	S	S	S	
Live Near Work								L	S	A
CEDS Process	S	S	S	S		L				
Business Improvement Districts	L	L	L			S	S	A	A	
Workforce Development				L			S		L	
Economic Diversity						S	L	S	A	
Tourism				L			S	S	L	
Public/Private Partnerships	L	L	L	L		A	S	S	L	
Brownfield Redevelopment	S	S	S	S		L	S			

L = indicates lead role, S = indicates supporting role, A = indicates advisory role

WHEN?

Task	Year						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 – 2015	2015 – 2025
Agricultural Business Plan	Active work			Passive work			
Live Near Work	Active work						
CEDS Process	Active work		Passive work				
Business Improvement Districts	Active work		Passive work				
Workforce Development	Active work						
Economic Diversity	Active work						
Tourism	Active work						
Public/Private Partnerships	Active work						
Brownfield Redevelopment	Active work		Passive work				

Key:  Active work  Passive work

*VISION 3: Summary Chart*

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<b>Agricultural Business Plan:</b> Develop an agricultural business plan for Muskegon County which will outline a strategy to retain and expand existing agricultural business, as well as maintain synergy and a diversified economy.	Local environmental groups and organizations, Muskegon Area First, local Chambers of Commerce, area farmers, and WMSRDC	December 2007
<b>Live Near Work:</b> Request local employers to provide benefits that encourage employees to live near where they work.	MAP Steering Committee, local Chambers of Commerce, Private Sector Employers	Ongoing
<b>CEDS Process:</b> Incorporate Smart Growth Principles into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) goals and objectives.	WMSRDC, and local governments	September 2006
<b>Business Improvement Districts:</b> Create business improvement districts/corridors that encourage neighborhood and intergovernmental cooperation.	Local governments with assistance from Muskegon Area First and WMSRDC	July 2006
<b>Workforce Development:</b> Meet with area employers to identify their employment and workforce training needs.	Department of Employment & Training Workforce Development, MTEC, MAF, MAISD, Private Sector Employers	One per year
<b>Economic Diversity:</b> Review the local economy in order to create benchmarks and identify policies that will assist in diversifying the regional economy within Muskegon County.	Muskegon Area First, Chambers of Commerce, WMSRDC, Private Sector Business & Industry	Once per year
<b>Tourism Task Force:</b> Create a task force that will meet regularly in order to identify issues and opportunities that will promote tourism in Muskegon County.	Convention & Visitors Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, Muskegon Area First, Area Tourism Affiliates	Four per year
<b>Public/Private Partnerships:</b> Create a platform to identify opportunities for public/private partnerships which will encourage cost savings, shared services, and regional economies of scale.	Chambers of Commerce, Muskegon Area First, Community Foundation for Muskegon County, WMSRDC, Private Sector, Local Governments	Ongoing
<b>Brownfield Redevelopment:</b> Create an inventory of brownfields within Muskegon County, as well as identify and prioritize potential sites for redevelopment.	WMSRDC, Local Governments, Muskegon Area First	January 2006

## VISION 4: Infrastructure

Develop a county-wide approach to improving and maintaining infrastructure, transportation, public facilities, and community services.

### WHAT?

- **MPO Process:**

Adopt Smart Growth Principles and the MAP Plan in the Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO) process.

- **Brownfields Inventory:**

Create an inventory of brownfields in Muskegon County and develop a plan which identifies strategies for redevelopment, adaptive reuse of existing structures, and in-fill development in urban and rural areas.

- **County-wide Infrastructure Plan:**

Create a county-wide infrastructure plan which identifies existing roads, water lines, sewer lines, utilities, and available technology. Also identify any future plans for expansion.

- **Expanding Infrastructure:**

Create a county-wide review process/point system for expanding infrastructure.

- **Fix-it-first Policy:**

Adopt a “fix-it-first” policy through local transportation, water, and sewer

authorities, which gives priorities for upgrading existing facilities.

- **Non-motorized Trail Plan:**

Create a county-wide non-motorized trail plan.

**WHO?**

The following organizations were identified as having a lead role (L), a supporting role (S), or an advisory role (A) in implementing the Infrastructure vision. Organizations identified as having a lead role will have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the vision. Supporting organizations will provide technical expertise, public relations, educational programs, and staff support to implementation.

Task	Local Governments			County Government	MPO Committees	WMSRDC	Muskegon Area First/ Private Sector	Water Authority	Sewer Authority	Steering Committee
	Townships	Cities	Villages							
MPO Process	S	S	S	S	L	L				
Brownfields Inventory	A	A	A	A		L	S			
County-wide Infrastructure Plan	S	S	S	L	L	A	A	L	L	
Expanding Infrastructure	S	S	S	L	S	A	A	S	S	L
Fix-it-first Policy	S	S	S	L	L			L	L	A
Non-motorized Trail Plan	L	L	L	L		A				

L = indicates lead role, S = indicates supporting role, A = indicates advisory role

WHEN?

Task	Year						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 – 2015	2015 – 2025
MPO Process	Active work	Passive work					
Brownfields Inventory	Active work	Passive work					
County-wide Infrastructure Plan	Active work	Active work	Active work	Active work	Active work	Passive work	Passive work
Expanding Infrastructure	Active work	Active work	Active work	Active work	Active work	Passive work	Passive work
Fix-it-first Policy	Active work	Passive work					
Non-motorized Trail Plan	Active work	Passive work					

Key:  Active work  Passive work

VISION 4: Summary Chart

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<b>MPO Process:</b> Adopt Smart Growth Principles and the MAP Plan in the Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO) process.	WMSRDC, MPO Technical Committee, and MPO Policy Committee	July 2005
<b>Brownfields Inventory:</b> Create an inventory of brownfields in Muskegon County and develop a plan which identifies strategies for redevelopment, adaptive reuse of existing structures, and in-fill development in urban and rural areas.	WMSRDC, local governments, and Muskegon Area First	January 2006
<b>County-wide Infrastructure Plan:</b> Create a county-wide infrastructure plan which identifies existing roads, water lines, sewer lines, and utilities; and where available future plans for expansion.	Local governments, MPO, Water Authority, Sewer Authority, Muskegon County, Utility Companies, and WMSRDC	December 2010
<b>Expanding Infrastructure:</b> Create a county-wide review process/point system for expanding infrastructure.	MAP Steering Committee, local governments, and WMSRDC	December 2010
<b>Fix-it-first Policy:</b> Adopt a “fix-it-first” policy through local transportation, water, and sewer authorities, which gives priorities for upgrading existing facilities.	MPO, Water Authority, Sewer Authority, Muskegon County	December 2005
<b>Non-motorized Trail Plan:</b> Create a county-wide non-motorized trail plan.	Local governments and WMSRDC	January 2005

## VISION 5: Quality of Life

Promote high quality of life by recognizing Muskegon County for its diversity, environmental, educational, arts, cultural, and recreational assets.

### WHAT?

- **MAP Steering Committee:**

Continue MAP Steering Committee meetings in order to create opportunities for local community interaction, intergovernmental cooperation, and public/private partnerships.

- **Evaluation System:**

Create a points-based evaluation system to be used by local governments that will encourage Smart Growth development projects.

- **Youth Involvement:**

Meet with students from each of the area school districts through the MAP ambassador program to educate them on Smart Growth initiatives, the MAP project, and how they can get involved.

- **Increased Communication:**

Hold meetings with Muskegon area schools districts, hospitals, and local governments in order to increase communication regarding capital improvements.

- **Project Audit/Review:**

Conduct a Smart Growth/MAP project audit/review which will also identify new development in the county.

- **Arts/Culture:**

Meet with local arts and culture providers to encourage communication and identify areas of improvement in Muskegon County.

- **Recreation:**

Create a regional recreation report which compiles information from all local recreation plans and proposed projects within Muskegon County.

- **Cultural Diversity:**

Work with local minority empowerment groups and organizations to assist with local efforts that encourage and increase cultural diversity within Muskegon County.

- **Environment:**

Work with the Muskegon County Health Department and partners to address the environmental health issues raised through the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE EH Project).

- **Healthy Lifestyle:**

Create and promote a standard for healthy lifestyle design in Muskegon County and encourage it to be incorporated into new developments.

*WHO?*

The following organizations were identified as having a lead role (L), a supporting role (S), or an advisory role (A) in implementing the Quality of Life vision. Organizations identified as having a lead role will have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the vision. Supporting organizations will provide technical expertise, public relations, educational programs, and staff support to implementation.

Task	Local Governments			County Government	Ambassadors	WMSRDC	Arts and Culture Providers	Private Sector	Minority Empowerment Groups	Steering Committee
	Townships	Cities	Villages							
MAP Steering Committee						S				L
Evaluation System	L	L	L	L		S				A
Youth Involvement					L	S				
Increased Communication						A		S		L
Project Audit/Review	S	S	S	S		S				L
Arts/Culture							L			A
Recreation	L	L	L	L		S				A
Cultural Diversity								S	L	S
Environment				L		A		A		S
Healthy Lifestyle	S	S	S	L		A		A		

L = indicates lead role, S = indicates supporting role, A = indicates advisory role

WHEN?

Task	Year						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 – 2015	2015 – 2025
MAP Steering Committee	Active work						
Evaluation System	Active work		Passive work				
Youth Involvement	Active work						
Increased Communication	Active work						
Project Audit/Review	Active work						
Arts/Culture	Active work						
Recreation	Active work						
Cultural Diversity	Active work						
Environment	Active work						
Healthy Lifestyle	Active work						

Key:  Active work  Passive work

*VISION 5: Summary Chart*

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<b>MAP Steering Committee:</b> Continue MAP Steering Committee meetings in order to create opportunities for local community interaction, intergovernmental cooperation, and public/private partnerships.	MAP Steering Committee and WMSRDC	Two per year
<b>Evaluation System:</b> Create a points-based evaluation system to be used by local governments that will encourage Smart Growth development projects.	Local governments with assistance from WMSRDC	July 2006
<b>Youth Involvement:</b> Meet with students from each of the area school districts through the MAP ambassador program to educate them on Smart Growth initiatives, the MAP project, and how they can get involved.	MAP ambassadors with assistance from WMSRDC	Three schools per year
<b>Increased Communication:</b> Hold meetings with Muskegon area schools districts, hospitals, and local governments in order to increase communication regarding capital improvements.	MAP Steering Committee with assistance from WMSRDC	One per year
<b>Project Audit/Review:</b> Conduct a Smart Growth/MAP project audit/review which will also identify new development in the county.	MAP Steering Committee with assistance from WMSRDC and Local Governments	Once per year
<b>Arts/Culture:</b> Meet with local arts and culture providers to encourage communication and identify areas of improvement in Muskegon County	Arts/Culture Providers with assistance from the MAP Steering Committee	Once per year
<b>Recreation:</b> Create a regional recreation report which compiles information from all local recreation plans and proposed projects within Muskegon County.	Local Governments, WMSRDC, MAP Steering Committee	Once every five years
<b>Cultural Diversity:</b> Work with local groups and organizations to assist with local efforts that encourage and increase cultural diversity within Muskegon County.	Cultural Groups/Organizations, Private Sector, MAP Steering Committee	Ongoing
<b>Environment:</b> Work with the Muskegon County Health Department and partners to address the environmental health issues raised through the PACE EH Project.	Muskegon County Health Department, Private Sector, WMSRDC	Ongoing
<b>Healthy Lifestyle:</b> Create and promote a standard for healthy lifestyle design in Muskegon County and encourage it to be incorporated into new developments.	Muskegon County Health Department, Local Governments, Private Sector, WMSRDC	Ongoing

# Chapter 7: Conclusions

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## Conclusions

The Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP), which began in the fall of 1998, has brought the citizens of Muskegon County through the process of identifying a common vision for the future of the community. Through the involvement of nearly one thousand participants in the project over the past few years, visions and goals were established, a development scenario was chosen, and implementation strategies were created.

The MAP Steering Committee, community leaders, and the public have continually shown their support and commitment to the success of this most important project. Many of the individuals, organizations, and local governments involved in the MAP have also made a pledge to continue their participation in the project in order to carry out the vision established through the detailed process of creating the Muskegon Area-wide Plan.

## Legal Framework<sup>1</sup>

The following is a brief summary of applicable Michigan Constitutional provisions, by Michigan statutes, which authorize intergovernmental cooperation, or joint projects. The summaries of statutes are organized in the following categories:

- Broad Scope/Inter-jurisdictional/Regional Planning and/or Public Service Provision
- Transferring and Sharing of Functions and Responsibilities
- Libraries, Parks and Recreation, and Other Facilities
- Transportation
- Water and Sewer Service Agreements
- Health and Social Services
- Fire and Police Protection
- Environment
- Administration.

### ***Considerations Related to Intergovernmental Agreements***

Intergovernmental Agreements are a formal contract or informal understanding between two or more units of government concerning a policy matter or the way in which a function or service will be performed for their mutual benefit. Intergovernmental agreements may be made at the national, state or local level and may take place between governmental units at the same level or at different levels.

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<sup>1</sup> This section of the Muskegon Area-Wide Plan discusses the legal framework in Muskegon County and identifies existing laws that authorize planning, economic development, environmental protection and infrastructure provision on an inter-jurisdictional or regional basis in Michigan. It was prepared by Amy Ignash, an MSU Extension staffer working at the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) in 2001. The second part summarizes and analyzes four organizational structures used in different parts of the United States to provide regional planning and other regionally delivered services. It was prepared by Jack Rozdilsky, an MSU Extension staffer working at TCRPC in 2002.

International or interstate agreements generally concern large-scale issues, such as waterways, ports or air pollution. At the local level it is common for communities to agree to share facilities—such as water supply systems, schools or fire departments—so that better equipment may be purchased or specialized personnel hired. In another type of intergovernmental agreement, a county can provide certain services for its cities, villages and towns on a contractual basis. In a third type of agreement, a number of communities might agree to subscribe to a policy concerning a particular issue (Schultz & Kazen 1984).

There are many types of public planning and public services that can be provided by intergovernmental agreement. Two or more units of government can enter into intergovernmental agreements. Such agreements often result in lower cost and more effective provision of public services – especially where there are significant economies of scale and/or more efficient utilization of staff or other resources.

Municipalities seeking to enter into intergovernmental agreements should first consider whether there are any restraints upon the particular agreement intended. A report by SEMCOG and the Metropolitan Affairs Council details six questions municipalities should consider when “determining the existence of legal authority for proposed agreements for intergovernmental cooperation” (Schultz & Kazen 1984).

1. Does the municipality have the power to undertake this type of activity on its own?
2. Does a statute provide for intergovernmental cooperation for the specific activity in question?
3. If there is no statute authorizing cooperation for the specific activity, is a general statute applicable?

## Examples:

- P.A. 35 of 1951 - The Intergovernmental Contracts Between Municipal Corporations Act
  - P.A. 7 of 1967 - The Urban Cooperation Act
  - P.A. 8 of 1967 - The Intergovernmental Transfers of Functions and Responsibilities Act
4. Are there any constitutional or statutory restrictions on the activity aside from provisions relating to the objects or forms of intergovernmental cooperation?
  5. Have the basics of a formal agreement between the parties been provided?
  6. Does the agreement comply with applicable provisions of federal law?

The following are relevant Michigan Constitutional Provisions and a summary of statutes identified as authorizing inter-jurisdictional, metropolitan, regional planning, or other public services.

**Michigan Constitutional Provisions**

Article 3, § 5 of the Michigan constitution provides that “any governmental authority or any combination thereof may enter into agreements for the performance, financing or execution of their respective functions, with any one or more of the other states, the United States, the Dominion of Canada, or any political subdivision thereof unless otherwise provided in this constitution” (Taylor 2000).

Article 7, § 27 “gives the legislature the power to directly create metropolitan authorities with powers, duties and jurisdiction as the legislature shall provide.

The authorities may be authorized to perform multipurpose functions rather than a single function” (Taylor 2000).

Article 7, § 28 gives the legislature the power to authorize multiple counties, townships, villages or districts, or any combination thereof to enter into agreements with one another or the state for the joint administration and shared costs and responsibility of any function which each would have the power to perform separately, transfer functions or responsibilities to one another upon consent, or to lend credit to one another as provided by law in connection with any authorized publicly owned venture (Taylor 2000).

**Michigan Legislative Provisions**

The following is a brief summary of statutes authorizing interjurisdictional, metropolitan, or regional approaches to planning or public service provision. Statutes authorizing multiple activities are presented first. Table 1 lists pertinent elements of all the following statutes.

**Broad Scope/Interjurisdictional/ Regional Planning and/or Public Service Provision**

**Public Act 312 of 1929** - The Metropolitan District Act “establishes the authority for any 2 or more cities, villages, townships or any combination thereof to incorporate into a metropolitan district for the purpose of acquiring, owning, operating and maintaining, either within or without their limits, parks or public utilities for supplying sewage disposal, drainage, water or transportation or any combination thereof. Such districts must exist under charter, and a charter commission shall be established. The act applies to cities, villages, and townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 281 of 1945** - The Regional Planning Act authorizes two or more local units of government to “create a regional planning commission, whose jurisdiction

shall be limited to a defined area. Its powers include completing research studies, plans and recommendations for physical, social and economic development of the region, publicizing its objectives and activities, advising local units, and acting as a coordinating agency for programs and activities of other public and private agencies. Funding may come from gifts, grants, and local unit allocations.” The act applies to cities, villages, townships, counties, and school districts (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 200 of 1957** - The Intermunicipality Committees Act “permits two or more municipalities to form a committee for ‘studying area governmental problems of mutual interest and concern, including such matters as facility studies on sewers and sewage disposal, water, drains, roads, rubbish and garbage disposal, recreation and parks, and ports, and to formulate recommendations for review and action thereon by the member governing bodies.’” (Taylor 2000). “The results of such studies shall appear in reports, complete with recommendations.” It applies to cities, villages, townships, and charter townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 217 of 1957** - The Intercounty Committees Act permits two or more counties to “join together for the purpose of studying area problems.” The joint authority “may fund and staff the committee and may accept gifts and grants from governmental units and from private sources.” It is similar to Public Act 200 of 1957, but applies to only counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 46 of 1966** - The County or Regional Economic Development Commission Act allows two or more contiguous counties, by approval of their boards of commissioners, to “establish a regional economic development commission, which shall be an agency of the

region. It shall complete studies and give recommendations to the boards of commissioners and to interested industries, organizations and associations concerning the development and expansion of the region. It shall also act as the region’s official liaison with state and federal agencies concerned with such programs.” This act applies to counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 292 of 1989** - The Metropolitan Council Act “authorizes local governmental units to create metropolitan councils, and sets forth powers and duties of such councils; authorizes councils to levy tax.” (Taylor 2000). An example of the P.A. 292 action is the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC). The GVMC formed in 1990 as an interjurisdictional planning alliance in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. The Council is appointed to plan for growth and development, improve the quality of life, and coordinate governmental services.

#### ***Transferring and Sharing of Functions and Responsibilities***

**Public Act 81 of 1925** - The Joint Public Improvements portion of Title 5 Municipalities “allows adjoining cities and/or villages to enter into an agreement for the joint development or maintenance of public improvements on or near the boundary between the municipalities; whether or not the improvement lies completely within the boundaries of one of the municipalities. It gives the municipality power to assess property for the cost of the improvement to the same extent as if the land were entirely located within its own borders.” (Taylor 2000). This act applies to cities and villages.

**Public Act 35 of 1951** - The Intergovernmental Contracts Between Municipal Corporations Act “authorizes counties, townships, cities, villages and other governmental units to enter into

contracts for the ‘ownership, operation, or performance, jointly, or by any 1 or more on behalf of all, of any property, facility or service which each would have the power to own, operate or perform separately.’ It authorizes such governmental units to form group self-insurance pools.” (Taylor 2000). “Furthermore, any municipal corporation may contract with any person or any other municipal corporation to furnish any lawful municipal service which it already performs within its limits, to property outside the limits of the first municipal corporation. This act does not grant authority for joint ownership or operation of any public utility or service not already granted by the statutes or constitution of the state.” This act applies to cities, villages, townships, charter townships, counties, school districts, metropolitan districts, court districts, public authorities, and drainage districts (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 7 of 1967** - The Urban Cooperation Act provides for interlocal public agency agreements. “This act authorizes a public agency of Michigan to exercise jointly with any other public agency of the state, or with a public agency of any other state, or with a public agency of the Dominion of Canada or with any other state, or with any public agency of the U.S. government, any power, privilege or authority which such agencies share in common and which each might exercise separately. The contract shall explain the purpose and duration of the agreement, the manner in which power is to be exercised and in which financial support shall be provided and funds disbursed, the precise organization, composition and nature of any separate legal or administrative entity created thereby, the manner of employing, compensating, transferring or discharging necessary personnel, the fixing and collecting of appropriate charges, rates, rents or fees, provisions regarding the acquisition and disposition of property, the acceptance

of gifts or grants, the procedure for application for federal or state aid, the adjudication of disputes or disagreements, the manner of responding for any jointly incurred liabilities, and the manner in which financial reports, including an annual independent audit, shall be prepared and presented to each party.

Execution of the agreement may be made either by one or more parties to the agreement or by a separate legal or administrative entity in the form of a commission, board or special council. The entity shall be a public body, corporate or politic, and, in addition to its other powers, is authorized to make and enter into contracts, to provide for acquiring sites, for staffing, and for financing its procedures, and to incur debts, liabilities or obligations apart from those of the parties to the agreement. It may levy any type of tax or issue any type of bond in its own name.

In agreements other than those between political subdivisions of the state of Michigan, and in all agreements involving funds allocated by the state, an interlocal agreement must be submitted to the Governor for approval. If an interlocal agreement deals in whole or in part with any service or facility under the jurisdiction of an officer or agency of the state, the agreement must be submitted to that officer or agency for approval.

Finally, a public agency entering into such an agreement may receive grants-in-aid or other assistance funds from the governments of the U.S., the state of Michigan, or the Dominion of Canada to carry out the purposes of the interlocal agreement.” The act applies to cities, villages, townships, charter townships, counties, school districts, single and multipurpose special districts, single and multipurpose public authorities, and metropolitan governments (Schultz 1975).

In Southeast Michigan two organizations have been formed under Public Act 7 - the Downriver Community Conference and the Conference of Western Wayne. In Lansing, the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) is organized under this Act.

**Public Act 8 of 1967** - The Intergovernmental Transfers of Functions and Responsibilities Act “authorizes two or more political subdivisions to enter into a contract providing for the transfer of functions or responsibilities to one another or any combination thereof upon the consent of each political subdivision involved.” It also “specifies items for inclusion in function transfer agreements and the manner of adoption, and allows the establishment of a separate administrative body to supervise the execution of the agreement” (Taylor 2000).

“Consent of each party must be obtained, and a copy of the contract is to be filed with the secretary of state. The contract shall include a description of what is to be transferred, the terms of operation of the contract, information on staffing procedures, the manner in which property is to be transferred, sold or otherwise disposed of between the contracting parties and the manner of financing undertakings. A joint commission may be established to supervise the execution of the contract.” The act applies to cities, villages, townships, charter townships, counties, school districts, community colleges, special districts and authorities (Schultz 1975). The large scope of P.A.’s 7 and 8 allows for almost limitless joint exercise of authority.

**Public Act 425 of 1984** - The Conditional Land Transfer Act “authorizes local governments to contract for the conditional transfer of land between jurisdictions for the purpose of promoting economic

development projects; requires certain contractual provisions” (Taylor 2000).

There are several examples of 425 agreements in place within the Tri-County region. Leslie Township and the City of Leslie have an agreement for the purpose of providing fire, police, and sewer services to areas within the township. It is a thirty year agreement that began in 1988. At the end of the agreement the property under 425 reverts back to the township. There is, however, a renewal clause. Vevay Township and Mason have a similar sort of agreement (Harvey 1994).

#### ***Libraries, Parks and Recreation, and Other Facilities***

**Public Act 164 of 1877** - This general law on municipal libraries “states that any township, city, or village adjacent to or adjoining any other municipality which has a free public and circulating library may join with that municipality, and may levy a tax of not to exceed 1 mill to pay for the use of that facility.” It applies to cities, villages, and townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 156 of 1917** - Any “city, village, county, township or school system may jointly operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds independently or jointly by mutual agreement.” This act extended the provisions of P.A. 164 of 1877 to apply to counties (Schultz 1975)

**Public Act 150 of 1923** - The Joint Public Buildings portion of Title 5 Municipalities “authorizes counties or townships to contract with any cities and/or villages located within their borders to jointly acquire and/or construct public buildings for the purpose of housing governmental offices” (Taylor 2000).

“In addition to using buildings for county or municipal government offices, they may be used for any other public purpose, including

a memorial hall for war veterans and for public assemblage.” Cities, villages, townships, and counties may utilize this act. (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 165 of 1927** - “If approved by separate electorates, any two adjoining townships in the same county may consolidate their libraries into one library and designate the site. Expenses for maintenance shall be apportioned between the two townships. Joint control shall be exercised by the township boards, and, after consolidation, the library may be formed into a free public library.” Only townships may apply this act. (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 250 of 1931** - This act provides for the establishment of regional libraries. “If the state board of libraries determines that a regional library (comprising two or more counties) might improve library services to the citizens of a particular area, it shall so propose to the boards of commissioners of the counties. Subsequent to the approval of the latter, a library board of trustees shall then be established, whose powers shall include establishing, maintaining and operating a regional public library, hiring qualified personnel, purchasing books and supplies, and cooperating with other libraries. Funds shall be provided by the counties through the general fund or a tax authorized by the electorates. If it so desires, a municipality may transfer, lease or lend its facilities and services to the regional library.” This act applies to cities, villages, townships, counties, and school districts (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 261 of 1965** - “This act authorizes the creation and prescribes the powers and duties of county and regional parks and recreation commissions. Section 2 states that two or more contiguous counties may create a regional commission upon the approval of the separate county

boards of supervisors.” This act applies only to counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 331 of 1966** - The Community College Act authorizes community college districts. One type allowed by this act is “formed by any one or more contiguous counties upon approval of their electorates. A board of trustees shall govern and direct the district. In establishing such a district, a combined majority of the electors of the counties shall approve the setting of the maximum annual tax rate” (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 24 of 1989** - The District Library Establishment Act “authorizes agreements between counties, townships, cities, villages and/or school boards to form district libraries” and “provides for the election or appointment of a library board of trustees, the authority to borrow money for facilities, and the authorization to send a millage request to the voters” (Taylor 2000).

#### ***Transportation***

**Public Act 381 of 1925** - The Intercounty Highway Act “establishes inter-county highway commissions to plan the system of interconnected highways” (Michigan Society of Planning Officials 1995) Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties have a commission established under the Intercounty Highway Act.

**Public Act 206 of 1957** - “Any combination of counties, cities, villages and/or townships is authorized, upon approval of the respective electorates, to form an airport authority and issue revenue bonds for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a community airport. An airport board shall direct and govern the authority.” This act applies to cities, villages, townships, and counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 204 of 1967** - The Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act “permits contiguous counties to establish or

participate in a metropolitan transportation authority. An authority established under this act ‘shall plan, acquire, construct, operate, maintain, replace, improve, extend and contract for public transportation facilities.’ An authority may contract with other units of government located within ten miles of the authority’s borders to provide services or construct facilities. An authority may establish charges for the use of transportation facilities, and may borrow money to carry out operation.” (Taylor 2000). The act applies only to counties.

**Public Act 196 of 1986** – Public Transportation Authority Act was created to authorize the formation of public transportation authorities with general powers and duties. The act provides for the authorization of local entities to levy property taxes for public transportation service and other public transportation purposes. (In contrast, Act 204 of 1967, the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act only allows counties, not local governments, to create an authority for transportation facilities and only allows the counties to borrow money for operation.) The Public Transportation Authority Act also protects the rights of public transportation employees and offers a public transportation system the option of collecting revenues through bonds or notes. The Interurban Transportation Partnership, formerly the Grand Rapids Area Transit Authority (GRATA), reorganized under this act.

#### ***Water and Sewer Service Agreements***

**Public Act 34 of 1917** - The Municipal Improvements portion of Title 5 Municipalities authorizes a municipality to sell water outside of its territorial limits.

**Public Act 129 of 1943** - The Municipal Improvements portion of Title 5 Municipalities allows for contracts between political subdivisions for sewer systems and sewage disposal. It also authorizes the

‘issue of joint revenue bonds to construct, acquire, extend or improve such systems and to regulate the use of the revenues thereof.’ This act applies to cities, villages, townships, counties, and metropolitan districts.

**Public Act 130 of 1945** - “In extending and improving their municipally owned water systems through the acquisition of an additional source of water supply, any two or more cities may jointly acquire, own and operate that source and each city may finance its determined share through the issuance of water revenue bonds. Such cities are further empowered to purchase and condemn property necessary for the source of supply in their joint names.” This act applies to cities (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 196 of 1952** - The Municipal Improvements portion of Title 5 Municipalities provides for the incorporation of municipalities to acquire, own, and operate water supply systems. This act applies to cities, villages, and townships.

**Public Act 233 of 1955** - “This act goes beyond P.A. 196 of 1952 by authorizing any two or more municipalities to join together to establish an authority for the purpose of acquiring and operating a water supply and/or sewage disposal system. Furthermore, it extends such authority to Michigan’s counties.” It applies to cities, villages, townships, charter townships, and counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 4 of 1957** - “Upon adoption of a charter, any two or more cities, villages, or townships or any combination thereof are authorized to incorporate as a municipal authority for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, purchasing, operating and maintaining a water supply and transmission system. A board of commissioners shall preside” over the Charter Water Authority.

This act applies to cities, villages, and townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 76 of 1965** - The Municipal Improvements portion of Title 5 Municipalities authorizes governmental units to contract for the construction and use of water supply and waste disposal systems with other governmental units. This act applies to cities, villages, townships, and counties.

#### ***Health and Social Services***

**Public Act 178 of 1929** - “This act authorizes any 2 or more counties, no one of which has a population in excess of 1,000,000, to cooperate for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a joint county medical care facility, subject to approval by the state Department of Social Services. Establishment and construction costs are to be borne by each county in proportion to its assessed valuation, and each county may raise funds for construction by special tax not to exceed one mill. Maintenance and operation of such a facility are to be borne by each county in proportion to the number of persons kept by each county in the facility.” The act applies to counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 280 of 1939** - The Social Welfare Act “authorizes 2 or more counties to create a district department of welfare by a majority vote of the board of supervisors of each county. A special district board and medical advisory council will be responsible for administrative duties. The district will have the same powers and duties and will be subject to the same limitations as any single county department, as provided in this act.” It applies to counties (Schultz 1975).

This act was last amended in 1995. The “modernized” act provides for the creation of the Family Independence Agency which is responsible for the ‘operation and

supervision of the institutions and facilities established’ within the FIA.

**Public Act 47 of 1945** - “This act authorizes any two or more cities, townships, villages or any combination thereof to incorporate a hospital authority upon approval by each electorate. This authority, which will be a body corporate, may issue revenue bonds for the purpose of planning, acquiring, constructing, improving, extending, operating, etc. one or more community hospitals and related facilities. The hospital authority shall be directed and governed by a hospital board consisting of members from each participating municipality.” This act applies to cities, villages, and townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 179 of 1967** - “This act provides that any county, city, township or village or any combination thereof, may levy taxes and appropriate funds for operating centers open exclusively to those under 21 and aimed at curbing juvenile delinquency within the community.” It applies to cities, villages, townships, and counties (Schultz 1975).

#### ***Fire and Police Protection***

**Public Act 33 of 1951** - “In this general act on the creation of fire departments in townships, adjoining townships, whether or not they are in the same county, are authorized to purchase fire equipment and arrange for joint township fire protection. General or contingent funds may be allocated to maintain and operate a joint fire department, and costs may be defrayed by imposing special assessments. Upon the creation of a special assessment district, the township board or township boards acting jointly, for the same purposes, may appropriate annually such sums as are necessary in excess of the amount collected by special assessment.” The act affects only townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 236 of 1967** - The Mutual Police Assistance Agreements portion of Title 5 Municipalities “authorizes cities, villages, townships and counties to enter into agreements to provide mutual police assistance to one another in case of emergencies” (Taylor 2000).

#### ***Environment***

**Public Act 179 of 1947** - “Any two or more cities, villages, or townships may, in any combination, incorporate a municipal authority for the collection and/or disposal of garbage and/or rubbish and for the operation of a dog pound.” Cities, villages, and townships may utilize this act (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 40 of 1956** - The Drain Code authorizes the establishment of intra-county and inter-county drainage districts. “Upon petition of two or more public corporations, a county drain may be constructed and a drainage board shall be established to direct it. The board shall make whatever purchases, contracts and assessments as are necessary to undertake such drainage projects.” This act applies to cities, villages, townships, counties, and metropolitan districts (Schultz 1975).

**Part 311 of PA 451 of 1994** (was formerly Public Act 253 of 1964) - The Local River Management Act reads that “if three or more local governments lying wholly or partially within a watershed as defined by their petition shall request to join together for purposes of promoting river management, they may establish a watershed council. Its powers shall include conducting studies of the water resources of the watershed, including water uses and water quality and providing input to state and federal agencies. Any two or more local units may petition the water resources commission to establish a river management district, whose powers shall be more extensive than those of a watershed council. For example, a river

management district may impound and control the waters of the river system. Furthermore; a river management district shall be considered a body corporate with all the powers herein defined.” This act applies to cities, villages, townships, charter townships, and counties (Schultz 1975).

**Part 91 of Public Act 451 of 1994** - Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control “authorizes local units of government to enter into agreements with soil conservation districts . . . to better comply with the provisions of this act and to be better prepared to review proposed land use plans with regard to controlling soil erosion and sedimentation.” It applies to cities, villages, townships, charter townships, and counties. (Schultz 1975). This part applies to earth changes within 500 feet of a lake or stream that is one acre or larger.

**Public Act 145 of 2000** - The Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act allows a city, village or township to enter into an agreement with a county in which that city, village or township is located to exercise the powers allowed under this act. Those powers include the establishment of a brownfield redevelopment authority for the acquiring of eligible property, creation and implementation of a brownfield plan, monitoring of funds from various sources, etc.

#### ***Administration***

Public Act 37 of 1961 - “Any combination of cities, villages, and/or townships may contract jointly to employ an independent appraisal firm to make appraisals on the municipalities or to assist the supervisors and assessing officials as directed by the governing boards and councils.” This act applies to cities, villages, and townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 137 of 1967** - “Any two or more municipalities are hereby authorized to enter

into an agreement to establish, combine and finance retirement systems for their respective employees and officials, elected or appointed.” This act applies to cities, villages, and townships (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 160 of 1972** - “To reduce duplication and provide for more effective tax administration, municipalities are granted authority to jointly make assessments and collect taxes levied by such jurisdiction. Administration may be carried out jointly or by a single designated municipality.” This act applies to cities, villages, townships, and counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 230 of 1972** - The Construction Code establishes a construction code commission and details its functions and powers. “Section 9(1) authorizes counties, cities, villages or townships to provide for joint administration and enforcement of the construction code and any other provisions set forth in this act.” It applies to cities, villages, townships, and counties (Schultz 1975).

**Public Act 226 of 2003** - The Joint Planning Act allows cities, villages, and townships the option of establishing joint planning commissions. Through this two or more municipalities are permitted to adopt ordinances approving an agreement to establish the joint planning commission. The act is considered to be an alternative to annexation. The act became effective on December 18, 2003. Examples in west central Michigan include the agreements between Hart City and Hart Township; Rothbury Village and Grant Township; Newaygo City and Brooks Township, Newaygo City and Garfield Township; Cedar Springs City and Nelson Township; Zeeland City and Zeeland Charter Township; Wyoming City and Byron Township; Otsego Township and Otsego City; and, South Haven and South Haven

Charter Township. There is a statutory 50 year limit in these agreements.

**Table 1**

**MICHIGAN STATUTES PROVIDING FOR INTER-JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING OR PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

Statute	Last Amended	Authorized Joint Activities	Implementation Method	Applies to	Observations	Examples
<b>Broad Scope Inter-jurisdictional or Regional Planning and/or Public Service Provision</b>						
P.A. 312 of 1929 - Metropolitan District Act	1929	incorporating for the owning and operating of parks, public utilities, or transportation	levy taxes	cities, villages, townships		
P.A. 281 of 1945 - Regional Planning Act	1945	create a regional planning commission for studying and planning within the area	gifts, grants, and local unit allocations	cities, village, townships counties, and school districts		
P.A. 200 of 1957 – Intermunicipalities Committees Act	1957	form a committee to study problems of mutual interest and concern	allocate municipal funds, gifts, and grants	cities, villages, townships and charter townships		
P.A. 217 of 1957 - Intercounty Committees Act	1957	form a committee to study problems of mutual interest and concern	allocate municipal funds, gifts, and grants	counties		
P.A. 46 of 1966 - County or Regional Economic Development Act	1969	establish a regional economic development commission	grants, contracts	counties		

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Last Amended</b>	<b>Authorized Joint Activities</b>	<b>Implementation Method</b>	<b>Applies to</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Examples</b>
P.A. 292 of 1989 - Metropolitan Council Act	1998	create metropolitan council for service expansion and improvements	levy tax	cities, villages, townships and counties		Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
<b>Transferring and Sharing of Functions and Responsibilities</b>						
P.A. 81 of 1925	1925	public improvements on or near municipal boundaries	assess property for the cost of the improvement	cities and villages		
P.A. 35 of 1951 – Intergovernmental Contracts Between Municipal Corporations Act	1996	provide facilities or services jointly that are allowed by law separately; form self-insurance pools		cities, village, townships charter townships counties, school districts, metropolitan districts, court districts, public authorities, and drainage districts		

Statute	Last Amended	Authorized Joint Activities	Implementation Method	Applies to	Observations	Examples
P.A. 8 of 1967 - Intergovernmental Transfers of Functions and Responsibilities	1967	transfer of functions and responsibilities	contract	cities, villages, townships charter townships counties, school districts, community colleges, special districts and authorities		
P.A. 425 of 1984 - Conditional Land Transfer Act	1990	conditional land transfer for economic development projects				Cordova
<b>Libraries, Parks and Recreation, and Other Facilities</b>						
P.A. 164 of 1877	1986	cooperative use of free public and circulating libraries	levy tax	cities, villages, townships	<b>Bostedor v. Eaton Rapids</b> (1935) 273 Mich. 426	
P.A. 156 of 1917	1917	joint operation of park and recreation facilities; broadens P.A. 164 to apply to counties	appropriate money	cities, villages, townships counties, and school systems	<b>Royston v. Charlotte</b> (1936) 278 Mich. 255	
P.A. 150 of 1923	1923	construction of public buildings	levy tax, loan	cities, villages, townships and counties		
P.A. 165 of 1927	1927	consolidation of libraries	apportioned between townships	townships		

Statute	Last Amended	Authorized Joint Activities	Implementation Method	Applies to	Observations	Examples
P.A. 250 of 1931	1961	establishing regional libraries	general fund or levy tax	cities, villages, townships counties, and school districts		
P.A. 261 of 1965	1981	creation of county and regional parks and recreation commissions	county appropriation	counties		
P.A. 331 of 1966 - Community College Act	1966	authorizes community college districts	levy tax	counties	<b>Doan v. Kellogg Community College (1977)</b> 80 Mich. App. 316	
P.A. 24 of 1989 - District Library Establishment Act	1989	formation of district libraries	levy tax	cities, villages, townships counties, and school districts		
<b>Transportation</b>						
P.A. 381 of 1925 – Inter-county Highway Act		establishes commissions to plan an interconnected highway system		counties		Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties
P.A. 206 of 1957	1982	construction and maintenance of a community airport	revenue bonds	cities, villages, townships and counties		

Statute	Last Amended	Authorized Joint Activities	Implementation Method	Applies to	Observations	Examples
P.A. 204 of 1967 - Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act	1967	establish a metropolitan transportation authority to contract for public transportation facilities	borrow money, establish fees	counties	Op Attorney Gen, February 23, 1988, No. 6498	
P.A. 196 of 1986 - Public Transportation Authority Act	1986	Authorizes formation of public transportation authorities with general powers and duties	levy property taxes, or collect revenues through bonds or notes	local governments		Interurban Transportation Partnership, formerly GRATA in Grand Rapids
<b>Water and Sewer Services</b>						
P.A. 34 of 1917	1981	sell water outside of territorial limits	rates on water sales	cities, villages, and townships	<b>Meridian v. East Lansing</b> (1955) 342 Mich. 734	
P.A. 129 of 1943	1943	joint sewer systems and sewage disposal	revenue bonds	cities, villages, townships counties, and metropolitan districts		
P.A. 130 of 1945	1945	expansion of services to provide water	revenue bonds	cities		
P.A. 196 of 1952	1952	acquire, own, and operate water systems	self liquidating revenue bonds	cities, villages, and townships		

Statute	Last Amended	Authorized Joint Activities	Implementation Method	Applies to	Observations	Examples
P.A. 233 of 1955	1981	acquire, own, and operate water and sewer systems	revenue bonds	cities, villages, townships charter townships and counties	<b>Davis v. Green Oak Township</b> (1975) 65 Mich. App. 188	
P.A. 4 of 1957	1957	create a charter water authority for financing and acquiring a central water supply system	revenue bonds	cities, villages, and townships		
P.A. 76 of 1965	1965	create water supply and waste disposal systems	pursuant to any laws now existing	cities, villages, townships and counties		
<b>Health and Social Services</b>						
P.A. 178 of 1929	1953	creation of a joint medical care facility	levy tax	counties		
P.A. 280 of 1939 - Social Welfare Act	1995	creation of a district department of welfare (FIA)	appropriate funds	counties	<b>Nelson v. Dempsey</b> (1981) 111 Mich. App. 373	
P.A. 47 of 1945	1979	incorporation of a hospital authority for operating community hospitals and related facilities	issue bonds	cities, villages, and townships	<b>Bullinger v. Gremore</b> (1955) 343 Mich. 516	

Statute	Last Amended	Authorized Joint Activities	Implementation Method	Applies to	Observations	Examples
P.A. 179 of 1967	1988	opening centers aimed at curbing juvenile delinquency	levy taxes; appropriate funds	cities, villages, townships and counties		
<b>Fire and Police Protection</b>						
P.A. 33 of 1951	1989	purchase fire equipment and arrange for joint fire protection	allocated local funds, special assessments	townships	Op Attorney Gen, March 26, 1986, No. 6350	
P.A. 236 of 1967 - Mutual Police Agreements	1974	provide mutual police protection in case of emergencies	apportionment	cities, villages, townships and counties		
<b>Environment</b>						
P.A. 179 of 1947	1955	garbage disposal and collection; operation of a dog pound	revenue bonds	cities, villages, and townships	Op Attorney Gen, September 10, 1962, No. 3664	
P.A. 40 of 1956- Drain Code	1956	establish drainage districts to undertake drainage projects	purchases, contracts, and assessments as are necessary	cities, villages, townships counties, and metropolitan districts	<b>Toth v. Charter Township of Waterford</b> (1978) 87 Mich. App. 173	
P.A. 253 of 1964 - Local River Management Act	repealed but added as Part 311 of P.A. 451 of 1994	establish a watershed council to promote river management and impound and control waters of a river system as a river management district		cities, villages, townships charter townships and counties		

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Last Amended</b>	<b>Authorized Joint Activities</b>	<b>Implementation Method</b>	<b>Applies to</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Examples</b>
P.A. 347 of 1972 - Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act	repealed but added as Part 91 of P.A. 451 of 1994	enter agreements with soil conservation districts for controlling soil erosion and sedimentation issues		cities, villages, townships charter townships and counties	Now a part of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act - P.A. 451 of 1994	
P.A. 145 of 2000 - Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act	2000 - amended from P.A. 381 of 1996	establish a brownfield redevelopment authority for capturing and remediation of brownfield sites	contributions, revenues, bonds, all other sources approved by law	city, village, township, and county		
<b>Administration</b>						
P.A. 37 of 1961	1961	contract with firms to make appraisals or assist assessing officials	general funds	cities, villages, and townships		
P.A. 137 of 1967	1979	create retirement systems for employees and officials		cities, villages, and townships		
P.A. 160 of 1972	1972	make assessments; collect taxes	levy tax	cities, villages, townships and counties		
P.A. 230 of 1972 - Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act	1999	establish a construction code commission		cities, villages, townships and counties		

Four alternative types of regional governance structures are used in the United States and the following discusses the pros and cons of each. It provides more detail on the three types authorized under Michigan law than was presented in Part One.

When planning takes place on a regional basis, it is undertaken in a geographic area that shares common social, economic, and environmental characteristics. A regional planning entity prepares plans that address needs like transportation and other regional issues that serve as a framework for planning by local governments and special districts. Increasingly, the focus of regional planning entities is on addressing myriad issues of greater than local concern (See sidebar for examples of issues of greater than local concern). In part, this focus may be because problems concerning issues of greater than local concern have begun to impact not only the segment of the region where the problem originated, but in some cases, the entire region as a whole. In order to succinctly discuss the range of institutional forms that exist for addressing regional issues, it is important to have a common understanding of terms used. Common definitions of “region”, “regionalism”, “governance”, and “regional governments” are provided in sidebar on the next page. “Regional governance” is used in this technical memorandum principally to refer to the range of organizational options that exist for addressing regional issues within a formal regional entity, like a regional planning commission or regional council of governments.

Different types of institutional structures to enhance regional cooperation have arisen as the need to address issues of greater than local concern has become more critical and more complex. With the increasing urbanization of Approaches to regional cooperation have emerged to help reduce the negative impacts of such regional

## Issues of Greater Than Local Concern

### Definition

Issues of greater than local concern are issues that involve public interests that are broader than simply local interests. This means, the scope of an issue extends beyond the borders of a single jurisdiction or a group of jurisdictions. Issues of greater than local concern affect the quality of life within a multi-jurisdiction geographic area, such as a metropolitan area, a county or a region made up of several counties.

### Selected Examples of

#### Issues of Greater than Local Concern

- **Land Use Issues**
- Incompatibility between land uses along a jurisdiction border (such as industrial and residential uses across the street from one another)
- **Environment and Natural Resource Issues**
- Regional air quality concerns
- **Jobs & Economic Development Issues**
- Land for major employment expansion in an area without adequate roads, public sewer and/or water services
- **Transportation Issues**
- Establishing priorities for state/federal transportation improvements
- Maintaining a regional airport
- **Infrastructure & Public Service Issues**
- Siting of regional services: such as educational centers, high tech centers, social services centers
- **Cultural Issues**
- Establishing and maintaining, zoos, parks, museums, etc.
- **Governance Issues**
- The lack of mechanisms for dealing with inter-jurisdictional equity issues such as who pays for services versus who benefits and the lack of optional mechanisms for sharing public service costs or taxes for those services.

Source: Tri-County Regional Growth Project Technical Memorandum Task II-1.9.2–Inter-Jurisdictional Mechanisms to Deal with Issues of Greater Than Local Concern.

fragmentation. Within the realm of types of institutional structures for regional governance, four approaches to regional cooperation are relevant to Muskegon County and the Western Michigan Shoreline Redevelopment Commission (WMSRDC). These four types of regional structures are: 1) State Planning and Development Regions; 2) Regional Councils/Councils of Government; 3) Metropolitan Multipurpose Districts; and, 4) Unified Metropolitan Governments. To provide a context for understanding these regional governance structures, they can be compared to one-another in terms of the amount of responsibility for projects and services each has at a regional level. Figure 1 shows a continuum of responsibility for programs and services provided with respect to the types of regional governance structures. Those types on the left side of the continuum have less responsibility for programs and services compared to those types on the right side of the continuum.

This part of section provides descriptive information, discusses the pros and cons of, and provides examples of the four most common types of regional structures. The sidebar on the next page lists the primary legislation authorizing regional planning in Michigan.

## Legislation Guiding Regional Planning In Michigan

### Relevant Michigan Public Acts

- ***Michigan Public Act 281 of 1945 – Regional Planning Act***

An act to provide for regional planning; the creation, organization, powers, and duties of regional planning commissions; the provision for the use of regional planning commissions; and the supervision of the activities of regional planning commissions under the provisions of this act.

This act allows for regional planning commissions to develop plans, conduct studies, and coordinate services on behalf of its local government members. Planning commission's by-laws and an Attorney General's opinion define regional planning commissions as not being a government themselves. The Western Michigan Shoreline Regional Planning Commission is organized under this Act.

- ***Michigan Public Act 292 of 1989 - Metropolitan Councils Act***

An act to provide for the establishment of a Metropolitan Regional Council; formation; adoption of articles of incorporation; conditions; establishment of Metropolitan Regional Council Board; appointment of representatives; powers and duties. A metro council can perform regional planning functions and also operate multi-jurisdictional public services. The Grand Valley Metro Council in Grand Rapids and the Mid-Michigan Water Authority are organized under this Act.

- ***Michigan Public Act 312 of 1929 – Metropolitan Districts Act***

An act to provide for the incorporation by any two or more cities, villages, or townships, and any combination thereof of a metropolitan district; comprising territory within the districts limits for the purpose of acquiring, owning, and operating parks, public facilities, supplying sewage disposal, drainage, water, transportation or any combination thereof. The East Lansing-Meridian Water and Sewer Authority is organized under this Act.

- ***Michigan Public Act 7 of 1967 (Ex. Sess.) - Urban Cooperation Act***

An act to provide for interlocal public agency agreements; to provide standards for those agreements and for filing and status of those agreements; to permit the allocation of certain taxes or money received from tax increment financing plans as revenues; to permit tax sharing; to provide for the imposition of certain surcharges; to provide for approval of those agreements; and to prescribe and provide remedies.

### Relevant Federal Acts and Regulations

- ***Presidential Executive Order 12372***

This executive order allows for regional government entities to be designated as a regional review office for reviewing federal grant applications for a variety of local, regional, and state projects in relation to regional plans and policies.

- ***Title 23 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 450 and 49 CFR 613***

These federal codes allow for the designation of regional government entities as Metropolitan Planning Organizations that engage in multimodal-modal transportation planning for a region including the development of the region's long-range transportation plan.

- ***Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3121).  
Amended by Public Law 105-393, enacted November 11, 1998***

Established the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to generate jobs, help retain existing jobs, stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas. Public Law 105-393 reauthorized EDA programs through 2003. State Planning and Development Districts are often designated as being an "Economic Development District" through the EDA, so that the counties and cities in the region are qualified to receive economic development loans and grants from EDA.

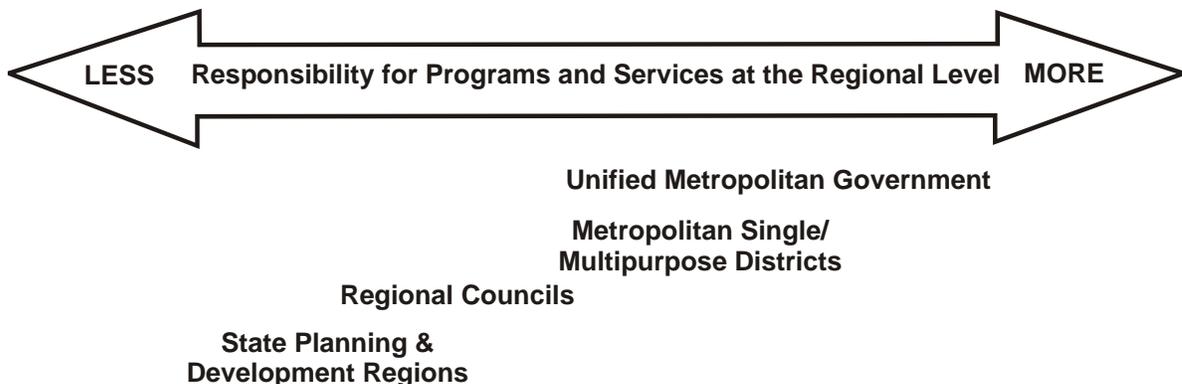
**State Planning and Development Regions (SPDRs)**

State Planning and Development Regions (SPDRs) are one type of regional entity that is common in Michigan. SPDRs are among the easiest and least formal approach to regional government. The origin of SPDRs is related to the proliferation of federal special purpose regional programs during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many of those federal programs required a regional review and comment process and the formation of SPDRs was encouraged so they could be used as a systemized tool for addressing specific multi-jurisdictional problems.

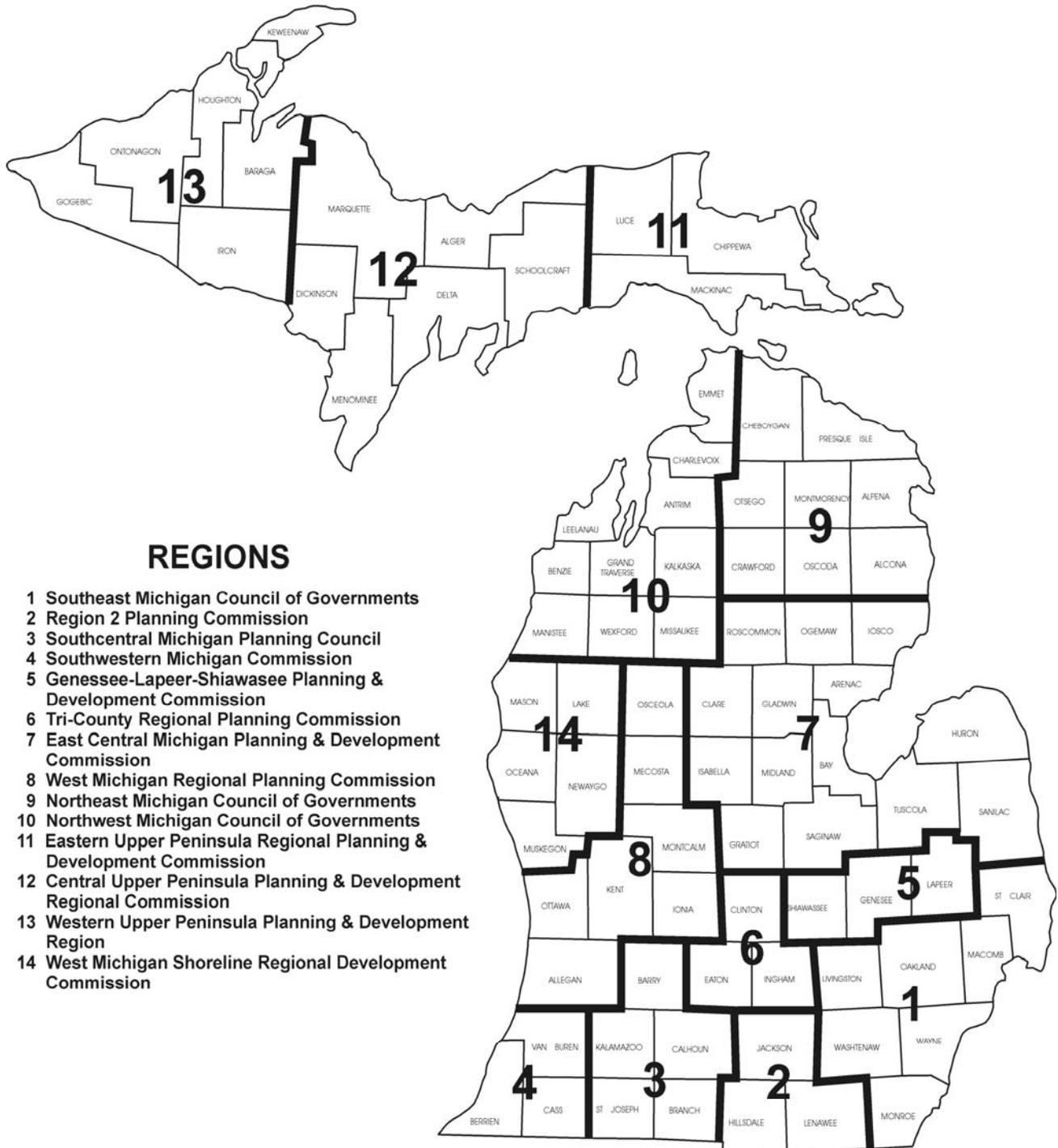
In Michigan, SPDRs were created in 1972 to serve as the state-designated review and comment clearinghouses under Presidential Executive Order 12372. This Executive Order was intended to implement the federal Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 to assure better coordination of federally-assisted projects and to stimulate intergovernmental cooperation in planning and development efforts. The SPDRs originated at a time when President Nixon launched a program to decentralize the federal government by dividing the nation in several regions, each with autonomy to administer federal programs within the region. Washington also encouraged the states to develop a system of regions within each state. Michigan Governor George Romney designated 13 planning regions in Michigan (later adjustments resulted in the

creation of the current 14 Michigan planning and development regions, see Map 1) (VerBurg 1997).

**Figure 1  
Comparison of Regional Government Types**



**Map 1**  
**MICHIGAN'S 14 STATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS**



**REGIONS**

- 1 Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
- 2 Region 2 Planning Commission
- 3 Southcentral Michigan Planning Council
- 4 Southwestern Michigan Commission
- 5 Genesee-Lapeer-Shiawasee Planning & Development Commission
- 6 Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
- 7 East Central Michigan Planning & Development Commission
- 8 West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
- 9 Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
- 10 Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
- 11 Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission
- 12 Central Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Regional Commission
- 13 Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region
- 14 West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Delineating the state into regions for the purposes of planning was originally intended to serve two basic purposes: first, to provide an area-wide framework for the coordination of planning and programming activities of state government; and second, to encourage coordination of planning and programming activities on an areawide basis at a local level. From the viewpoint of state government, a uniform set of regions used for planning and development would provide for a common base for comparing programs and measuring their impact on development in various parts of the state (Michigan Office of Planning Coordination 1968). When the SPDRs were formed, their potential scope of programs was defined as follows: (Michigan State Planning Commission 1972)

“The identification of local problems (issues) and needs including planning needs; development of goals, objectives and policies for solving problems and meeting needs; and assurance of local participation in regional planning and development efforts.

Multi-jurisdictional policy and program planning and coordination in areas such as:

- transportation
- environmental protection
- housing
- criminal justice
- human resources planning and development
- physical and economic resources planning and development.

The development of intergovernmental program cooperation and coordination among and between political subdivisions within the region.

The establishment of a forum and mechanism for review and comment on local and state notices of intent for Federal grant and aid programs.

The identification of alternative regional courses of action consistent with local problems, needs, and preferences.

The creation of an information program to objectively explore alternative courses of action at the regional level, with local and state organizations and interest groups.”

In Michigan, during the past three decades the original boundaries for the 13 SPDRs largely stayed the same, however the institutional structures of the SPDRs has evolved. As the remnants of the multi-state and sub-state regions disappeared when federal funding for regional efforts dwindled, Michigan’s sub-state regional system remained. Many of the planning and development regions are now organized as Regional Councils/Councils of Government and they are funded by a combination of local, county, state, and federal resources. However, many regional planning agencies lack the vigor and funding they once had as changes in federal and state funding led to a narrowing of their activities and decreases in their staff (VerBurg 1997).

As regional entities bring together local governments to meet regional needs, they also join each other at the state level through the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR). MAR facilitates discussion among regional planning commissions to address common issues such as balanced growth, quality of life, environmental safety, aging infrastructure, and economic challenges. The roles of these regional entities remains similar to the original scope of the SPDRs as defined in 1972. Generally, they provide regional forums to bring community leaders and citizens together to address common needs that span jurisdictional boundaries, to provide staff to assist in regional strategic planning processes, to provide technical assistance to local governments, and to administer federal, state, and local programs that can be more economically and

effectively delivered at the regional level (MAR 1996). Table 2 lists the 14 planning and development regions in Michigan and identifies some of their main activities.

A main advantage of the SPDR structure is that these entities were (and are) amongst the first and simplest forums in which a community can begin to discuss coordination of issues that are of greater than local concern. A main disadvantage of the SPDR system is that regions that are closely tied to state and federal funding can become very vulnerable to changes in programs resulting in reduced levels of funding. Also, local support is often weak where few local dollars are used to staff the regional planning commission.

#### ***Regional Councils and Councils of Government***

The Regional Council/Council of Governments (RC/COGs) are another form of a regional government entity that is being applied across Michigan. The RC/COGs are multipurpose, multi-jurisdictional, public organizations that are created by local governments to respond to federal and state programs. They bring together participants at multiple levels of government to foster regional cooperation, planning and service delivery. There are over 450 of these regional government entities across the nation. They have a variety of names, ranging from Councils of Government to Regional Planning Commissions to Regional Development Districts. RC/COGs are guided by governing bodies, primarily composed of representatives of the major local governments in the region, and at times representatives from various sectors and citizen groups. (Dodge 1996) Key program areas of RC/COGs usually include transportation planning, economic development, job training, aging services,

water quality planning, data and information services, infrastructure, technical assistance for planning and community development, and public management and finance. (MAR 1996)

The history of the RC/COGs has varied as federal and state emphasis on planning has changed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. After World War II, RC/COGs emerged as metropolitan areas engaged in voluntary cooperation to address joint problems that could not be achieved by local governments working alone. It was not until the late 1950's that regional planning became a government function. From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, RC/COGs were driven by many of the same factors driving the SPDRs, such as meeting federal and state government requirements for incentive programs. During this period, the RC/COGs generally aligned with the federal government, maintained a low profile, and provided comprehensive planning assistance only. They did want to be in the situation of competing with many of the new private sector enterprises forming to address planning functions.

During the 1980s, RC/COGs made a number of changes to respond to reduced federal and state government funding. By 1980, there were 660 Councils of Government in the U.S., due largely to federal aid arrangements and special federal requirements (notably section 204 of the Model Cities legislation that required a regional review and comment process in all metro areas for certain local grant applications) (Walker 1987).

Currently, there are approximately 530 RC/COGs in the nation. The number of entities has decreased as many federal grant programs that stimulated their creation have been cut back or eliminated. (Stephens and Wikstrom 2000) Current trends indicate that RC/COGs are shifting to more closely align their activities with those of the states, as

opposed to the federal government. RC/COGs are also embarking on more marketing of their programs, and sometimes restructuring themselves by focusing on fewer programs (Dodge 1996).

When comparing the RC/COGs to the SPDDs there appear to be many similarities. However, there are subtle differences that are very important in the structure of these organizations and in the means of implementation employed. The main difference is that the RC/COGs usually are governed by representatives of most of the local units of government in the region and they all contribute to the funds necessary to sustain the RC/COGs activities. As a result, RC/COGs often have closer ties to local officials putting them in a much better position to implement short-term, pragmatic programs than the SPDDs.

The linkages between local elected officials and the RC/COGs can be viewed as either a pro or con to the entities effectiveness. As the linkages between local elected officials and RC/COGs differentiate them from the SPDR's, this relationship is one of their strengths. Implementation of the RC/COGs decisions are usually enhanced because elected officials are directly involved in the planning and decision making process. However, some opponents to this structure have also deemed this characteristic of RC/COGs as a weakness, because it may be more difficult to make critical regional decisions where parochial city or county interests are concerned. (National Service to Regional Councils staff 1971) However, those types of conflicts are usually only a minor weakness since many (if not most) of the RC/COGs are only advisory in nature and they lack the power to implement their decisions. A Regional Planning Commission must rely on consensus, cooperation, and mutual agreements between local governments to implement its decisions.

In Michigan, RC/COGs operate under the authority of the Regional Planning Commission Act (P.A. 281 of 1945). This act permits two or more units of government to adopt a resolution creating a regional planning agency. The act is not very directive and it leaves to the participating local units of government the responsibility of determining the specifics of operation of the commission. In contrast to county or other local planning commissions, a regional planning commission possesses no authority to implement its plans (for example, they have no zoning powers). The purpose of the regional planning commission is to conduct studies of various kinds and to provide a forum through which multi-jurisdictional interests can be best served (VerBurg 1997).

**Table 2  
CHARACTERISTICS OF STATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS IN MICHIGAN**

SPDR	Location of Office	Reg. #	# Local Govts	Reg. Pop. Size	Org.	Staff Size	MPO	Rural Trans	Env. Plan.	Housing	Smart Growth	Econ. Dev.	Plan. Services	Data Center
SEMCOG	Detroit	1	240	4,663,000	COG	100	Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X
Region 2	Jackson	2	91	293,788	RC	10	Yes	X	X	X		X	X	X
South Central	Portage	3	122	509,865	RC	5	No	X	X			X	X	X
Southwestern	Benton Harbor	4	91	284,503	RC	7	Yes	X	X			X	X	X
GLS Region V	Flint	5	87	586,184	RC	n/a	No	X	X			X	X	X
Tri-County	Lansing	6	78	477,728	RC	13	Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X
East Central	Saginaw	7	337	770,000	RC	7	No	X	X			X	X	X
West Michigan	Grand Rapids	8	n/a	997,631	RC	3	No	X	X			X	X	X
NEMCOG	Gaylord	9	103	131,854	COG	8	No	X	X			X	X	X
NWMCOG	Traverse City	10	180	250,000	COG	10	No	X	X			X	X	X
Eastern UP	Sault Ste. Marie	11	39	54,300	RC	n/a	No	X	X			X	X	X
Central UP	Escanaba	12	85	17,438	RC	10	No	X	X			X	X	X
Western UP	Houghton	13	98	85,182	RC	6	No	X	X			X	X	X
West Shoreline	Muskegon	14	120	301,000	RC	11	Yes	X	X	X		X	X	X

**Notes:**

Information for this chart was compiled from the 1996 MAR profile, MDOT documents, web sites, and personal contacts. The last recent overview of Michigan's State Planning and Development Regions was a Michigan Association of Regions 1996 profile "Directory of Regional Councils in Michigan and Profiles of Innovative Projects"

Chart Description: Org. - organization of SPDR as COG (Council of Government) or RC (Regional Council) / MPO - refers to a federal designation of Metropolitan Planning Organization that allows the regions to conduct regional transportation planning and make decisions about allocations of federal highway funds / Rural Trans. - provide transportation planning services for non-urbanized areas / Env. Plan. - environmental planning programs involving water quality planning, air quality planning, solid waste management, shoreline issues, and brownfields / Housing - affordable housing programs and housing renovation services / Smart Growth - programs involving regional visioning / Econ. Dev. - Economic development programs ranging from regionally designated Economic Development Districts to locally determined economic development roles / Plan. Services - other planning services such as a land use planning related technical assistance to local units of government / Data Center - regional data center roles involving analyzing and compiling regional census data to assist local governments and the private sector.



# KEY PERSON INTERVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

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Muskegon Area-wide Plan  
August 26, 2002

## OVERVIEW

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On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> HNTB Michigan, Inc. interviewed 19 persons who have a vested interest in the future of the Muskegon Area. The purpose of these sessions was to provide HNTB with information about the area's past and existing condition. The HNTB interviewers were:

Leslie Kettren, AICP, PCP – Project Manager  
Kathleen Fitzpatrick – Public Involvement Coordinator

The participants were very informational and generous with their time. Not only did all of them have a vested interest in the area, but also they eager for the potential of the Muskegon Area to be realized. The following report summarizes their impressions, concerns and praise about the Muskegon area.

The outline of questions that were asked include:

1. How long have you lived/worked in the Muskegon area?
2. Describe your work and involvement in the area.
3. Why did you decide to live in and/or work here?
4. Are there particular places and people that represent the area to you?
5. What do you know about the Muskegon Area-wide Plan? (Describe how you learned about the project and what you have heard from others).
6. Thinking back, what have been significant moments in Muskegon County for you or for your organization? What do you value most about Muskegon County?
7. What problems/issues/areas of concern do you think exist in Muskegon County?
8. What effect do you think or hope the Muskegon Area-wide Plan will have?
9. In your opinion, what individuals and/or groups will have objections to the approval and implementation of the Area-wide Plan?
10. Do you have any comments or questions that you haven't had the opportunity to address today?

Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The following aggregate information is in no particular order and summarizes the issues discussed by frequently mentioned theme.

### **Frequent Themes:**

- Recreational/Cultural Opportunities
- Area Identity
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Downtown Muskegon's Future
- Development/ Land Use
- Coordination & Cooperation for Local Units of Government
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Environment
- General Comments

### **Years of Experience**

Most of the persons interviewed have either been raised in the area, or have moved in and said they wouldn't think of moving somewhere else. Amongst the 19 participants we were drawing on over 830 years of experience and local knowledge in the Muskegon area. That is an average of 44 years per person, which is outstanding. The Muskegon area attracts people for many reasons, but it is noteworthy that even through difficult economic times, people have stayed.

### **Background Information – Community Involvement**

There is an outstanding dedication to the area by those in the community. People take part in many different organizations, interest groups, and governmental processes in order to contribute to the health and viability of the Muskegon area. Some of these organizations include:

- Muskegon Area First
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Western Michigan Strategic Alliance
- Various planning commissions
- Labor Management Committee
- UAW
- Muskegon High School Foundation
- The Y Board
- Various Charitable and Church organizations
- The United Way
- Labor Management Committee
- The Muskegon Conservation District
- Storm Water Committee
- Rural Task Force
- Every Woman's Place
- Mission for Area People
- Family Coordinating Council

There are many others, which demonstrates the immense commitment and investment made on the part of the county's residents to their community.

## PARTICIPANTS

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### **Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**Bob Carter**  
Sheriff  
Muskegon County Office of the Sheriff

**Christopher L. Kelly**  
Attorney  
Law Offices of Parmenter O'Toole  
Lakefront Development, LLC

**Rillastine Wilkins**  
Mayor  
City of Muskegon Heights

**Nick Tensen**  
Supervisor  
Township of Ravenna

**Bill Lowrey**  
Publisher  
MI Biz

**Merrill Bailey**  
Economic Development Consultant  
County of Muskegon

### **Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**Roger Wade**  
UAW

**Terry Grevious**  
Director  
Muskegon County Airport

**John Snider**  
Attorney

**Kathy Evans**  
Water Quality Coordinator  
Muskegon Conservation District

**Greg Mund**  
Resource Conservationist  
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation  
Service

**Harold Drake**  
Ravenna Township

**Don Hegedus**  
President  
Tridonn Development Co

**Gloria Lewis**  
Superintendent  
Reeths-Puffer School District

**Gary Ostrum**  
Publisher  
The Muskegon Chronicle

**Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**Harold Workman**

Retired Human Resource Director  
CWC Foundries

**Roger Anderson**

West Michigan Strategic Alliance

**Paul Bouman**

County Highway Engineer  
Muskegon County Road Commission

**Lois Williams**

President  
NAACP

**Rev. Don Mathews**

Pastor Emeritus  
First Presbyterian Church

## RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

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- Wide variety of activities during both summer and winter.
- Many great golf courses
- Michigan's Adventure draws many people to the area – even more will likely visit since Cedar Fair purchased it (also owners of Cedar Point) – many improvements planned.
- Hunting opportunities
- Great art museums (city and county).
- Many cultural opportunities – Freunthal Theater, museums, etc.
- Beautiful beaches
- Great state park system, not only the public access to the beaches, but also the trails through the wooded areas.
- The area's ethnic diversity needs to be more appreciated and celebrated through more coordination efforts for festivals. Ethnic groups include African Americans, Asian Americans, Polish, Italian, Hispanic, Irish and many others.
- Great sports teams
- Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp – great cultural asset
- Summer festivals – Tall Ships, Summer Celebration, and Party in the Park – attract huge crowds of people from all over the state! Many success stories.
- Cherry Playhouse – many plays
- Many trails, bike paths to encourage pedestrians to get out and build appreciation for the abundant natural resources.
- Bass tournaments and Charter boating offer tourists and residents recreational opportunities.

## AREA IDENTITY

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- The identity of the area must be changed from a “smelly foundry town” to a viable community with diversity of business opportunities and high quality of life.
- Need to get the “good word” out about the area.
- The perception of the area by residents is a positive one, whereas the perception of those who do not live in the area is less than positive. It’s necessary to turn this around SOON.
- Those outside the Muskegon area view it as a community that has a large minority population, few business opportunities and unsafe. A developed perception of an area is like the inertia of a large ship – takes a long time to stop it and turn it around, but have to start soon.
- Identity has been closely linked with the type of jobs it offered. Originally a logging area, then tourism became a focus in the 1920’s-1930’s, then a Foundry town during World War II, what will it be next? Appears that its moving to a focus of smaller privately owned businesses and tourism – must have diversity in the area to be viable and healthy.
- Need a branding theme for the area

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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- There's a spirit of competition for business development and industry – it is difficult to be collaborative when this spirit exists.
  - Recommendation:
    - ⇒ Revenue sharing. The core (city) cannot be poor and empty while the fringe (suburbs) is becoming very rich in new development.
- Need for a Technical Training Center in order to attract new businesses/corporations that require workers with technical skills.
- Need to strengthen the collaboration between the UAW and Businesses – Necessary to have open dialogue between these two entities.
- The extension of the sewer lines to the northern municipalities is the “first step” for development in that area.
- There must be equal opportunities for executive and leadership roles in the community to be held by those of ethnic backgrounds.
- Inexpensive land will be attractive to businesses looking to relocate.
- Skilled, and inexpensive work force (compared to other states with similar quality of life opportunities) – should be able to attract new businesses and manufacturing.
- Need to capitalize on the benefit of the natural port of Lake Muskegon – one of the largest ports on Lake Michigan, should be able attract foreign ships and.
- If economic development is to become a reality, there must be a change in attitudes towards change and new development.
- The area is changing from mostly union jobs/blue collar jobs to smaller privately owned businesses – the area needs to accept the reality and create a plan for attracting these types of businesses.
- Large companies are pulling up stakes and moving out of the area – should be working with them and helping to meet their needs, whether it be labor issues, or skills training – area workers have helped these companies make profits, and now they are leaving.
- Many area residents have stayed in Muskegon through times of high unemployment, but commute to Grand Rapids, Holland, Ludington, Fremont, and Grand Haven for other jobs. They have had to accept inferior jobs that do not offer benefits.

## DOWNTOWN MUSKEGON'S FUTURE

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- Something must be done with the old Muskegon Mall in downtown.
  - Recommendations:
    - ⇒ Bring in a casino – will act as a destination for people to come and create an environment of economic revival.
    - ⇒ Rehabilitate the existing building for mixed use
    - ⇒ Create an Urban Village with mixed uses
    - ⇒ The Casino is not the answer to downtown redevelopment
- The Smart Zone in downtown will be watched closely and must be successful! It will contribute to downtown's identity. How it goes, so goes the county.
- The Cross Lake Ferry will be instrumental in bringing people to the downtown, but first it must be made a destination town.
- Muskegon Lake has the ability to bring in the big ships and to be used as a port – this needs to be capitalized upon.

Absentee ownership in downtown Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. There is a correlation between the level of crime and absentee ownership since there is little or no vested interest.

### Recommendation:

- ⇒ Target drug houses, buy out, rehabilitate them, and sell through the housing commission, or other housing entity
- People need to feel safe in the downtown – must become a “hub” of activity for it to become a safe feeling place.
- Organizing the Cross Lake Ferry is of vital importance – will bring people to Muskegon area and open up the possibilities.
- Investing in downtown Muskegon by the private sector is very difficult.
- There are 200 acres of lakefront property in the City of Muskegon that is owned by only six property owners – may cause difficulty in redevelopment opportunities in the future.
- Pere Marquette Park beach should be developed and turned into a business district that offers visitors and residents various unique dining, shopping, and recreational opportunities – similar to Grand Haven...hub of activity

## DEVELOPMENT/LAND USE

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- Wastewater Treatment Plan in the County is the key to allowing future development, both residential and industrial
- Development happening only in the suburbs, not in the core city. The health of the core directly relates to the health of the suburbs.
- Need to think ahead when planning for subdivision developments – need to plan for road sharing.
- Land use planning is needed at the county and regional level.
- Very sporadic development patterns – can't just follow roads and schools, planning needs to happen.
- There have been many obstacles to development in the past – officials (city and township) do not know what they want for the area and thus have difficulty in making decisions about proposals for development – very frustrating for the development community.
- Overall frustration and negative view on part of developers towards working within the county.
- Lack of appreciation for new ideas and development potential for the area – instead there should be incentives for development to come in – new development brings many benefits to the area – job, revenue, etc.
- No more neighborhood grocery stores or shops of any kind – have to drive to outlying areas to shop at the large retail stores and big grocery stores (Meijer's, Plumb, etc.).
- Industrial development should not occur near populated areas – location could be near Wastewater plan
- Need to preserve open spaces in the rural communities – zoning ordinances can assist with this – too much land is wasted on housing, parcels are too large, need to densify
- Conservation methods need to be used (i.e. contouring the land)
- Open space Fractionalization and Fragmentation – urban sprawl causing the splitting of large parcels
- Forest areas are also being fragmented – a “stewardship” mentality needed in order to preserve and create a sense of responsibility for these lands.
- Industry should be near the centers where there are people – don't make people drive too far to work.
- Examine all the factors before developing – if there are poor soils, wetlands, and/or various other restraining factors...don't build there.
- History of land development has been “helter skelter” – each unit of government has been deciding their own destiny – there's a need for a regional approach to planning for the future.
- City of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights should create a partnership for water systems and future development – should have a consistent vision and plan.

## COORDINATION & COOPERATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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- Outlying municipalities must be involved for the Muskegon Area-wide plan to succeed!
- The Muskegon Area-wide Plan must set the precedent as a genuinely collaborative planning process.
- Protective strategies need to end turf jealousies
- Teamwork attitude must be promoted in order to accomplish more for the whole – need to look beyond the end of their noses/backyards.
- Need to change the adversarial relationship between builders and planners/elective officials/etc.
- Outlying municipalities need to be included in decision-making about the future of the area. They are part of the whole and need to be treated as such! Feel as if they are the “step children” of the area – this view has to be changed.
- There's good cooperation amongst some of the townships/cities, but many need to improve relationships and thing outside of their jurisdictional boundaries.
- There should be more coordination between the Road Commission and Environmental organizations – teaming should occur on projects in order to have a complete understanding of the morphology, hydrology, water shed issues prior to road design and.
- There's a need for creative and innovative approaches to addressing issues – an open mind is necessary to try unconventional methods

## EDUCATION

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- Great educational system! High number of school districts may present coordination difficulties.
- Need for a Technical Training Center with access for not only students, but also the workforce in the area for continuing education. Muskegon needs a skilled labor force in order to attract companies that will bring new jobs to the area.
- A concerted effort needs to be made to retain the talent produced at the universities in the state of Michigan – need to create atmospheres and business opportunities that will make them want to stay in the area.
- Tailored, locally-oriented education for elected officials regarding environmental issues needs to take place on a regular basis for proper and wise decision making.
- There are 28 Areas of Concern (AOCs) in the United States, and 14 of these are in Muskegon – much attention needs to be given to cleaning up these sites and then protecting them from similar situations in the future.
- Lots of environmental studies are taking place, but there needs to be implementation and use of these studies in all aspects of county development – land use especially.
- Need to train more minorities to become leadership and representatives (i.e. Intercultural Leadership Academy). Use Muskegon Community College, create awareness and encourage more citizens to take an active role in their communities.
- Great partnerships between secondary education institutions and the Intermediate School District (Baker College, Muskegon Community College)
- Should be educating children about land use management – don't continue teaching them the same laws and programming them to automatically accept the way things are. Instead they should be encouraged to think differently – this type of thing should be included with the MEAP tests – Education is the key to changing attitudes and mind-sets about land use management.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

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- Route 31 should not be redirected – needs to bring people through the Muskegon area in order for them to see the area
  - Recommendation:
    - ⇒ Add a level to the freeway in order to preserve open space
- Great Roads!
- Roads need a lot of attention, many in disrepair, especially in rural communities
- Intersection of US-31 and M-120 is very congested and needs reconfiguring due to the large amount of development in this immediate area.
- Very progressive approach to handling the waste water in the area (reference to the Muskegon County Wastewater Management System).
- County is divided by the Muskegon River – limits the North/South access. Only three ways to cross the river so congestion naturally occurs at these points.
- High water table throughout the County, which limits economical home and road building.
- Hydric soils and wetlands are prevalent so there are many constraints on locating new roads or making improvements to existing roads.
- Infrastructure is having a hard time keeping up with the growth.
- Growth is being allowed to happen in illogical areas causing strange road configuration and unnecessary loads on roads that are not designed for that type of use. Development needs to happen close to roads that are designed to handle the pressures new development incurs.
- Many are moving into the area from “high-service” areas and expect Muskegon County’s Road Commission to keep up. The Road Commission is under-funded and cannot provide “city-like” levels of service.
- There is a definite need for land use planning on the county and regional levels – need to have the “big picture” at the forefront.
- Shoreline Drive Extension project has an objective of having people near the lake as they drive through, but the way things are developing people will still not be near the lake – won’t be able to see through the high buildings.
- Continuing education for municipal leadership in regards to what types of requests they can make to developers for road improvements – but keep in mind that their improvements do not include maintenance.
- Transportation Planning needs to be based on where roads are likely to fall apart first, not only where they hope to have development occurring.
- US-31 needs to run through the County and not bypass it; otherwise many will just use US-131 instead and avoid the area altogether.
- The Musketawa Trail is a great resource, but the county must help with financing its maintenance
- Transportation with a senior focus needs to be addressed (in the rural areas especially).
- Airport expansion must take place! (Lengthening of runways for more commercial flight activity). Could become more popular than the Grand Rapids airport in the future.
- Public transit needs to be improved – great distances between “centers” and “nodes”, have to get the people there in an efficient way.
- Roads in downtown Muskegon and Muskegon Heights need quite a bit of attention.
- Need for a larger jail – not nearly enough beds as needed.

## ENVIRONMENT

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- The Muskegon area is highly noted for its many environmental resources – these must be protected and cared for in order to maintain this image.
- The resource of the Lake Muskegon has been squandered for years – must heal it and protect it – no more business on the lakeshore.
- Area resources have been exploited for decades, but it's starting to turn around – must learn from the past and avoid similar situation for future generations.
- Recycling programs should exist in every municipality.
- Unique that Muskegon area has inland lake, Lake Michigan, a natural port, forest lands, wetlands – all need to be protected, enhanced, or cleaned up.
- Loss of aquatic habitat in lakes and rivers
- Natural corridors need to be maintained
- Heritage Landing is a great example of reclaiming brownfields!
- Need a holistic approach to resource management.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

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- There are many strong and viable organizations with many members of the community working hard for improving the area and planning for the future.
- Many of those interviewed expressed that the area's main resources are the great people who love the area and want to see it receive the recognition it deserves.
- It would be beneficial to the community if they had their own TV station to report local news and happenings – only get recognition through the Grand Rapids media and it's not usually the positive news or fair advertising time for the Muskegon area (i.e. weather is reported from Gerald R. Ford airport and not the Muskegon County airport – different levels of advertising).

## SUMMARY

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Generally participants were enthusiastic about the Area-wide Plan. Many planning studies have taken place, not only in Muskegon County, but also at the regional level. People are eager to see something come out of all these studies and plans. Implementation is the prime focus. There are positive strides towards a collaborative atmosphere amongst the municipalities, but there is still room for improvement. Of all the issues identified, there are five that were heard the most frequently. These were:

- Downtown Muskegon's future,
- What will happen to the Muskegon Mall property,
- The area needs an identity that celebrates and encompasses all that Muskegon has to offer,
- The quality of life in the area is outstanding and therefore must be protected and enhanced in order to be recognized as the great place to visit, work, live and play that it truly is, and
- The necessity for a collaborative approach to this project – the entire community and all those in leadership roles must take ownership in order to make this Area-wide Plan a success and a document that will lead to Muskegon's future identity and health.

## MUSKEGON AREA-WIDE PLAN

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### STEERING COMMITTEE SWOT ANALYSIS: ASSESSING YOUR CURRENT SITUATION

August 21, 2002

#### **Purpose of the SWOT Analysis:**

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis is a highly effective way of identifying Strengths and Weaknesses (existing conditions) and also your Opportunities and Threats (possible future conditions). Carrying out this type of analysis will assist an entity to focus on the areas where it is strong and where the greatest opportunities lie.

To identify various areas in each of these categories, often a series of questions ought to be answered. For example, for the Muskegon Area-wide Plan, some of the following questions were examined:

#### **Strengths:**

- What are this project's advantages?
- What are Muskegon's best attributes?
- How do other's view the Muskegon area and its existing condition?

#### **Weaknesses:**

- What are areas for improvement for the Muskegon area?
- What types of things/attitudes should be avoided?

#### **Opportunities:**

- In which areas are the good opportunities facing this project?
- What are the interesting trends that you are aware of?

#### **Threats:**

- What obstacles does this project face?
- Down the road, who or what will be a force for detriment?

When this analysis is done in a realistic and candid way, it can be very informative – both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting various issues into proper perspective.

#### **The Muskegon Area-wide Plan SWOT Analysis:**

On July 30, 2002, the consultant team and the steering committee convened to assess the existing and future conditions of Muskegon County. Leslie Kettren and Tom Coleman from HNTB facilitated a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis exercise. The Steering Committee was divided into four groups and each group was asked to list at least five Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing Muskegon County. The strengths and weaknesses represented current conditions and opportunities and threats represented future conditions.

Within the four groups, each person was given three stickers to place next to the most important issues that were listed on the SWOT sheets. After each person ranked their top choices, each

group selected a spokesperson that reported out the top rated issues. These were recorded on four separate summary sheets with SWOT headings. The group as a whole was then asked to rate the top issues by placing a sticker on the most important of these items. Two graphics representing these findings are attached: (1) All Issues Mentioned, and (2) Top Rated Issues.

### **SWOT Results:**

All of the Issues Mentions were:

#### Strengths

- Wild land areas
- Lake fronts
- Skilled labor force
- Rural atmosphere
- Good road system
- Retail opportunities
- Shoreline
- Diverse population
- Recreational opportunities
- Quality of life
- Sense of community/pride
- Economic diversity
- Non-profit organizations
- Abundant natural resources
- Strong agricultural community
- New industrial parks
- High level and amount of service agencies
- Community events and activities/fun times/tourism
- Low cost of living
- Less traffic congestion
- Slower paced lifestyle/laid back/friendly
- Available open land
- People willing to work together
- Recent growth/development
- County wastewater system
- Active environmental groups/awareness
- Local parks/park systems

#### Weaknesses

- County-wide participation in recreational activities
- Lack of downtown/lakefront planning
- Lack of inter-governmental cooperation
- Small airport
- Failure to develop existing manufacturing base
- Too many governments

- Inner city dilapidation
- No County-wide Master Plan
- Lack of long term vision
- Strong apathy towards the whole
- Lack of public transportation
- Community potential not recognized
- "Health of City" problems
- Declining industrial base
- "Old foundry town" image
- Limited financial resources (lack of philanthropists/low mean income)
- Environmental issues/problems
- Multiple local governmental entities
- Lack of planning coordination
- Lack of connection of infrastructure
- Poor community image
- Public apathy/lack of involvement and communication
- Lack of integration - racial and economic

#### Opportunities

- Provide access from across the lake (ferry)
- More bike trails/paths
- Strengthen image as a tourist destination
- Inter-governmental teams
- New County leadership
- Recreational development
- Utilize existing resources (organizations such as MAF, WMSRDC)
- Airport expansion
- Wastewater management
- We still have time to plan
- Strong infrastructure in core communities (sewer, water, roads, etc.)
- Growing education investments (higher education)
- Shoreline development (Smart Zone)
- Agricultural preservation
- MAP - Cooperation of entities involved
- Smart Zone development
- Muskegon waterfront development
- Education system
- Expansion of recreational opportunities
- Redevelopment of the downtowns - Muskegon & Muskegon Heights

#### Threats

- Loss of rural land/farms/access to local markets
- Over development of the waterfront areas (lakes & rivers)

- High cost of needed infrastructure
- Air & water quality deterioration
- Contamination of wastewater site
- Fractionalization of land uses
- Concentration of poverty in central cities
- Historical image (high crime rates/smelly foundry town)
- Apathy
- Urban sprawl
- Breakdown in community cooperation
- Governor Engler
- Globalism - local industries owned by outsiders
- Lack of cohesive vision
- Health care/Elderly care
- Out migration of jobs (good paying ones)
- Deterioration of inner cities/downtowns
- Lack of public transportation opportunities
- Lack of public communication tools
- Lack of strong County leadership
- Parochialism (narrow-minded thinking)

The Steering Committee voted the following as the Top Rated Issues:

#### Strengths

- Abundant Natural Resources
- Recreation Opportunities
- Waterfront/Recreation
- Lakefronts (inland also)

#### Weaknesses

- Lack of Long Term Vision
- Too Many Governments
- Apathy
- Lack of Downtown/Lakefront Planning
- Image (outside perceptions)

#### Opportunities

- Downtown Redevelopment
- There is Still Time to Plan
- Shoreline Development/Smart Zone
- Cooperation for MAP

#### Threats

- Air/Water Deterioration/Environmental Concerns
- Degeneration of Downtown/Inner City

- Breakdown in Community Cooperation

**Next Steps:**

The issues gathered from the SWOT Analysis will lead into the formulation of a questionnaire for a general population telephone survey. The survey is a statistically valid, quantitative method to measure public opinion. Surveys provide attitudinal, preference, opinion and demographic information. Achieving consensus among all affected constituencies becomes easier when using this type of survey instrument. From the results of this survey, the consultant team will be able to identify critical issues, points of conflict and further refine and focus the material for the first set of community forums.

As the project moves through these various stages of analyses, the vision, goals, objectives and policies of the Muskegon Area-wide Plan will become more obvious.

**Growth, Development and Other  
Planning Issues in Muskegon County**

**Survey of Muskegon County**

**Commissioned by MAP, the Muskegon Area-Wide  
Plan**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY and  
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

**January, 2003**

## METHODOLOGY

**EPIC•MRA** administered interviews with 302 adult residents of Muskegon County (Michigan), from November 11<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Respondents were included in the sample if they were aged 18 or older.

Respondents for the interviews were selected utilizing an interval method of randomly selecting records of households with commercially listed phone numbers. The sample was stratified so that every area of the county is represented in the sample according to its contribution to the county population.

There were two break-outs of geographical areas. The first breakout included individual results for Fruitport Township, Muskegon Heights, Muskegon Township, Muskegon [city], and Norton Shores, as well as combined results for: the cities of Montague, North Muskegon, Roosevelt Park and Whitehall; and the townships of Blue Lake, Casnovia, Cedar Creek, Dalton, Egelston, Fruitland, Holton, Laketon, Montague, Sullivan, White River and Whitehall (Area 6).

The second geographical breakout included five fairly equally populated regions:

Region 1 (northwest region): the townships of Fruitland, Laketon, Montague, Muskegon, White River and Whitehall; and the cities of Montague, North Muskegon and Whitehall

Region 2: Muskegon and Muskegon Heights

Region 3: Muskegon and Fruitport Townships

Region 4: Norton Shores and Roosevelt Park

Region 5: the townships of Blue Lake, Casnovia, Cedar Creek, Dalton, Egelston, Holton and Sullivan

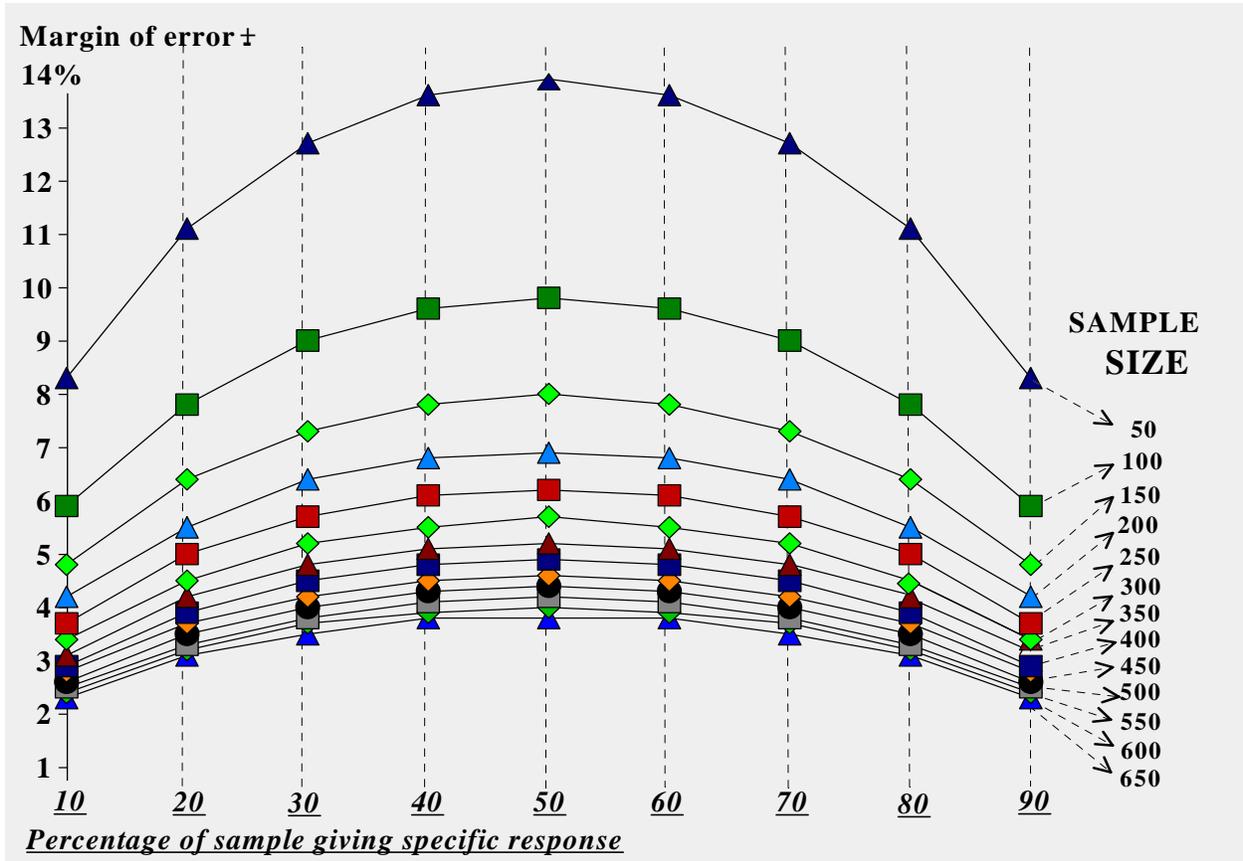
In interpreting survey results, all surveys are subject to error; that is, the results of the survey may differ from those which would have been obtained if the entire populations were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends on the total number of respondents to a particular question. The table below represents the estimated sampling error for different percentage distributions of responses based on sample size.

For example, a narrow 50 percent majority of all 302 respondents said that “nearby hunting and fishing areas” were an important reason for deciding to live in the community where they reside (Question #34). As indicated in the chart below, this percentage would have a sampling error of plus or minus 5.7 percent. That means that with repeated sampling, it is very likely (95 times out of every 100), that the percentage for the entire population would fall between 44.3 percent and 55.7 percent, hence 50 percent  $\pm$ 5.7 percent.

EPIC-MRA SAMPLING ERROR PERCENTAGE (AT 95 IN 100 CONFIDENCE LEVEL)

*Percentage of sample giving specific response*

SAMPLE SIZE	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>90</u>
650	2.3	3.1	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.1	2.3
600	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
550	2.5	3.3	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.3	2.5
500	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6
450	2.8	3.7	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.7	2.8
400	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
350	3.1	4.2	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.1	4.8	4.2	3.1
300	3.4	4.5	5.2	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4
250	3.7	5.0	5.7	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.0	3.7
200	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
150	4.8	6.4	7.3	7.8	8.0	7.8	7.3	6.4	4.8
100	5.9	7.8	9.0	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9
50	8.3	11.1	12.7	13.6	13.9	13.6	12.7	11.1	8.3



## Executive Summary

With the completion of this survey, a great deal of information is now available about the concerns, likes and dislikes of the residents of Muskegon County. This information will be an invaluable source of data to help plan for future growth and development in the county, and also provides useful insight on how to market the area for both residential and commercial development.

Survey respondents provided information in many important areas, including their plans for moving in the next five years and why they would do so; their views about the level of taxes they pay in return for the services they receive; why they choose to live in the community in which they reside; where they work; and whether there is too much growth in their area. They were also asked about urban sprawl and how they rate the job their community does in providing local services.

Survey participants believe there are many things about Muskegon County that will attract residential, business, industrial and commercial development in the future, and they have fairly clear opinions about whether Muskegon County is a better place to live than in the past, worse or about the same, and why they feel that way.

Respondents have clear preferences in terms of policy goals that they believe are important for Muskegon County, and they also support some ideas to encourage – and control – development.

On another topic, respondents were asked if they support or oppose rerouting U.S. 31 through Ottawa County, knowing that it would result in much of the traffic carried by that highway bypassing the southern part of Muskegon County.

### **Key findings:**

“The water” (that is, the proximity of lakes and rivers and activities related to them) is the one feature of Muskegon County that 34 percent of survey respondents cited when asked what they like the most about the area. In a related question, not one item identified by respondents as something they dislike about the county was cited by double digit percentages. It is indeed good news for the county to have one feature identified by more than a third of all respondents as

something they like, with no particular item jumping out as something they dislike about the county.

When respondents were asked why they decided to live in the community where they reside, the reasons offered by the highest percentages were “a job,” “quality of life” and “to be closer to family.”

About sixteen percent of all respondents said they would move to another community within the next five years, with the highest percentages of likely movers coming from: Muskegon Heights and the city of Muskegon, residents who have lived in the county for 10 years or less, respondents in households with children, less educated respondents and younger people, especially younger women (respondents are considered younger if under age 50 – older if age 50 or over). The top reason why people would move is “searching for a job.”

Almost all respondents have an opinion about the taxes and fees they pay in relation to what they get back in services. Just over a third of all respondents said local taxes and fees are too high in relation to the municipal services they receive, with the highest percentages coming from younger residents (especially younger men), those in households with children, and Muskegon Heights residents.

Ideally, the percentage of respondents saying taxes are “too high” should be less than 25 percent if there are any future plans to ask residents to consider tax increase proposals. The more than 30 percent of survey respondents saying taxes are too high is somewhat higher than normal results, given historical trends in EPIC ▪ MRA surveys in other communities. However, although this percentage may be higher than normal, it is important to note that a solid majority, of more than six-in-ten respondents, also said taxes and fees were “about right.”

While a majority of survey respondents said the growth taking place in their community is about right, almost three-in-ten respondents said there is too much growth, with residents of Muskegon and Fruitport townships and other (non-large city) communities saying by the highest percentages that there is too much growth. Overall, while more women than men said there is too much growth, younger men expressed this sentiment more than did older or younger women, or older men.

Three-in-four respondents said their community has the characteristics of urban sprawl, with residents of Fruitport Township and Norton Shores, as well as college educated residents and younger men, saying so by the highest percentages. As might be expected, much lower percentages of residents of the cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights said their community had urban sprawl.

Seven-in-ten respondents gave their local community a positive rating for the job done providing basic local services, with the highest ratings coming from college educated men, age 65 and over and men under age 40. Residents of Muskegon Heights offered a negative rating to their local government.

When respondents were asked to state the main reason they live in the community where they reside, the top reasons cited were “to live in a quiet place” and “safety from crime.” “A strong sense of community” and “less traffic congestion” were other important reasons for decisions about where to live.

In terms of community issues of highest personal concern to respondents, “water pollution,” “the quality of local schools” and “the out-migration of good jobs” were identified by the highest percentages.

When asked what were the most important factors respondents thought would attract development to the county in the future, respondents by the highest percentages said “beautiful beaches,” “a skilled labor force,” “people willing to work together” and “a strong school system.” The identification of beautiful beaches as a top attraction is consistent with the respondents’ previously stated belief that “the water” is the most liked attribute of Muskegon County.

Almost half of all respondents said Muskegon County is a better place to live now than it has been in the past, with nearly three times as many respondents saying “better” than the number saying “worse.” Respondents saying “better” by the highest percentages were college educated, especially college educated women and younger residents, as well as residents of Fruitport Township and Muskegon [city].

The top policy goals identified by most survey respondents were “encouraging the creation and expansion of business and industry to create new jobs” and “continuing to provide

investments in higher education and job training.” In terms of ideas to encourage and control growth in the area, “supporting local farmers by purchasing locally grown or produced foods” and “doing more to meet the needs of large area employers to increase the chances that they will stay in Muskegon County” were top methods cited.

Finally, a plurality of survey respondents said they support the plan to reroute U.S. 31 in Ottawa County, even though it will result in much of the traffic on that highway bypassing southern Muskegon County.

### **Long term residence reported**

Nearly two-thirds of all respondents (65 percent) said they have lived in the community where they currently reside for more than 20 years, or for all their life. Almost one-in-five (19 percent) have lived in their community for 10 years or less, and one-in-seven (16 percent) reported residence in their community from 11 to 20 years.

Among the 26 percent of all survey respondents who said they moved into their community within the past 15 years, almost half (44 percent) moved from another community in Muskegon County, one-in-four (23 percent) moved from somewhere else in Michigan, nearly one-in-five (17 percent) moved from another state, and just over one-in-ten (13 percent) moved from a community in another county near Muskegon County.

### **Water is what respondents like the most about the Muskegon area**

When asked to name the thing they liked most about Muskegon County, 34 percent cited “the water.” No other response registered in double digits. The next closest response was “the people” (cited by nine percent), followed by the “great outdoors” and “small-town feeling” (each seven percent) and “familiar” and “good area” (each six percent).

In geo-demographic break-outs, “the water” was cited as the one thing liked the most about Muskegon County by:

- 52 percent of respondents in Region 4 (Norton Shores and Roosevelt Park)
- 50 percent of Norton Shores
- 37 percent each in Muskegon [city] and those in Region 1 (northwest region)
- 33 percent in Area 6 (all other communities)
- 31 percent of Region 3 (Muskegon and Fruitport townships)
- 29 percent of Region 2 (Muskegon [city] and Muskegon Heights)
- 27 percent of Region 5 (remaining communities)

**No specific dislike cited by double-digits**

When respondents were asked what they dislike the most about Muskegon County, no specific problem or issue was cited by double-digit percentages. In fact, 21 percent said there was “nothing” they disliked, with another 16 percent undecided.

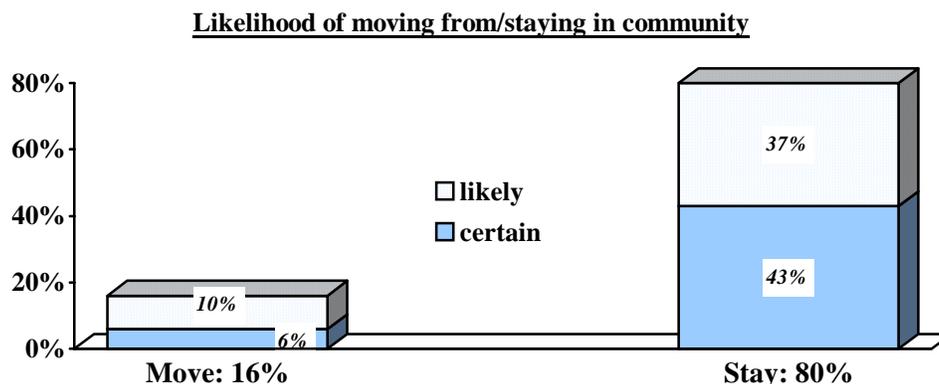
Specific problems cited by respondents included “too crowded and traffic” (cited by nine percent), followed by “local government” (cited by seven percent), “the weather” (six percent) and the “poor economy” (five percent). The fact that no problem or dislike was mentioned by double digits further demonstrates a generally positive view about life in Muskegon County.

**“A job” was the top reason cited for living in city or township**

When asked in an open-ended question why they had decided to live in the city or township where they reside, 14 percent of respondents gave “job” as the top reason. This was followed by “quality of life” (offered by 12 percent) and “closer to family” and “good value” (each 11 percent). “Acreage” and “school” were each cited by eight percent, “housing” and “marriage” by seven percent each, and “familiar and “Lake Michigan” by six percent each.

**Sixteen percent plan to move --**

Sixteen percent of all respondents said they plan to move in the next five years, including six percent who said they were “certain” to move and 10 percent who were “likely” to do so. Eighty percent said they would stay, including 43 percent “certain” and 37 percent “likely” to stay.



Among the 16 percent of respondents who said they would move:

- 25 percent said they would move to another city, village or township in Muskegon County

- 18 percent said they would move to a community in another county near Muskegon
- 20 percent said they would move to a community somewhere else in Michigan
- 27 percent said they would move to another state
- two percent said “to another country” and eight percent were unsure of where they would move.

Although the overall 16 percent expressing an intent to move is not a seriously high percentage, analysis of demographic breakouts gives reason for great concern about several specific groups of respondents who indicated by very high percentages that they intended to move. These include:

- 42 percent of Muskegon Heights (25 percent “certain” to move)
- 21 percent in Muskegon [city]
- 13 percent in Fruitport, Muskegon Township, and Area 6
- seven percent in Norton Shores

When broken down by the five regions of communities, 27 percent of Region 2 (Muskegon [city] and Muskegon Heights), 22 percent of Region 5 (“all other” communities), 13 percent of Region 3 (Muskegon and Fruitport townships), eight percent of Region 4 (Norton Shores and Roosevelt Park), and just two percent of Region 1 (the northwest region) said they expected to move.

Further breakouts of respondents who said they expect to move include:

- by length of residence: 24 percent of respondents who lived in the area for 10 years or less, 16 percent of those in the area from 11 to 20 years, and 15 percent of those in the area for more than 20 years
- by reported children in household: 26 percent of respondents with children at home and only 13 percent of those without children
- by age/education: 41 percent of younger respondents without college, 18 percent of younger college educated respondents, eight percent of older college educated respondents and five percent of older respondents without college
- by age/gender: 34 percent of younger women, 29 percent of younger men, 10 percent of older men and only one percent of older women
- by age: 45 percent of those under age 40 and nine percent of those over age 40
  - The younger respondents are, the more intent they are on moving:
    - age 18 to 29: 51 percent majority
    - age 30 to 35: 46 percent
    - age 36 to 40: 25 percent
    - age 41 to 49: 19 percent
    - age 50 to 55: 12 percent
    - age 56 to 64: nine percent
    - age 65 and over: two percent

**-- top reasons for moving**

Among respondents who said they are certain to move, 28 percent said they would do so because of “a job.” This reason was followed by “my house” (cited by 17 percent) and “more land” (11 percent). Among those who said they are likely to move, “a job” was cited by 19 percent, followed by “family and friends” and “more land” (each cited by 13 percent)

Economic development and job creation in future years could reduce the number of Muskegon area residents who would leave for a job.

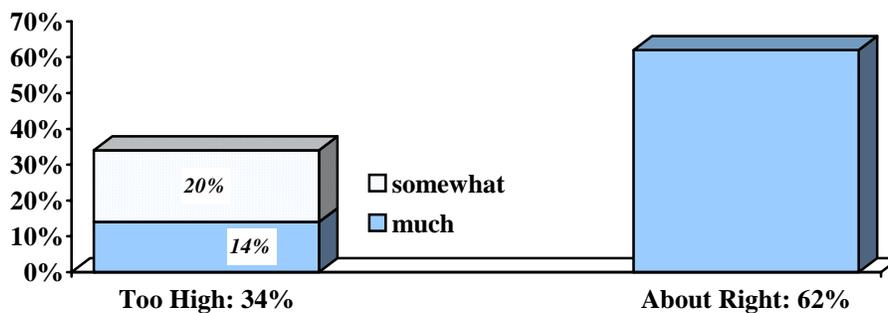
**-- top reasons for staying**

Among respondents who said they were certain to stay, 19 percent cited “family and friends” as their top reason for staying, followed by “its home” (cited by 17 percent), “I like it here” (12 percent) and “good area” (11 percent). Among those respondents who said they were likely to stay, “it’s home” was cited by 23 percent, “family and friends” was mentioned by 11 percent, and “own my home” was cited by 10 percent.

**A third say taxes are too high**

Thirty four percent of all respondents said their local taxes and fees were too high for what they got back in services. This includes 14 percent who said taxes were “much” too high, 20 percent said they were “somewhat” too high, and 62 percent said taxes were about right.

Assessment of local taxes in return for services

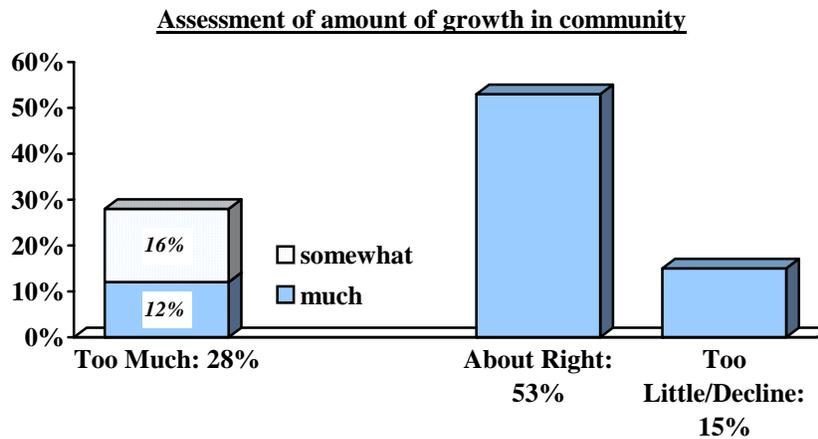


Groups indicating by the highest percentages that taxes and fees were too high included: county worse over past 10 years (52%); younger men (48%); Muskegon Heights, in households with children (46% each); Area 5 (45%); younger without college (43%); respondents who lived in the area for 10 years or less and 11 to 20 years, likely to move, under age 40 (42% each); Area 6 (41%); oppose rerouting U.S. 31, post high school technical education, Region 1 (40% each); county the same over past 10 years (39%); and young college educated (38%).

Twenty-four percent of Region 4 (Norton Shores/Roosevelt Park), 27 percent of Region 3 (Muskegon/Fruitport townships) and 31 percent of Region 2 (Muskegon [city]/ Muskegon Heights) said taxes were too high, which is lower than the county-wide results.

**Nearly three-in-ten say there is too much growth**

Twenty-eight percent of survey respondents said there is too much growth taking place in their community, including 12 percent who said “much” too much. A 53 percent majority said the amount of growth taking place is about right, with eight percent saying there is too little growth and seven percent citing an actual population decline.



Breakouts of respondents who said there is too much growth include:

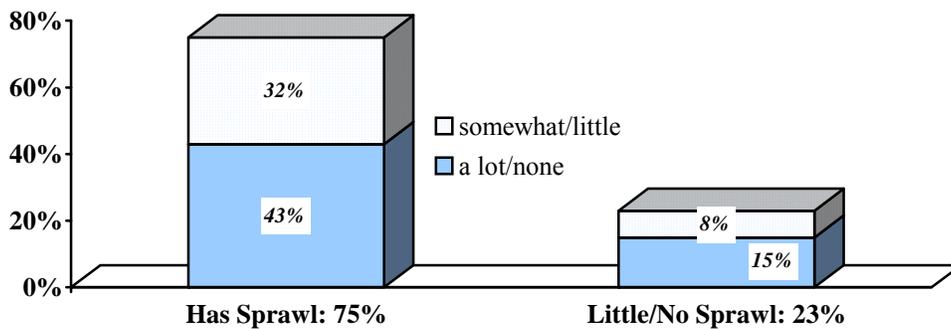
- by residence: Respondents in Muskegon Township indicated by the highest percentage that there was too much growth (40 percent); followed by Region 3 Muskegon/Fruitport townships (38 percent); Region 5 (37 percent); Fruitport Township (35 percent); Area 6 (32 percent), Region 1, Muskegon Heights (29 percent each); Region 2, Norton Shores (19 percent each); Region 4 (18 percent) and the city of Muskegon (15 percent).
- in Muskegon Heights, 38 percent said there is the right amount of growth, 29 percent said there is too much, 17 percent said there is too little and 13 percent said there is an actual population decline
- in the city of Muskegon, 49 percent said growth is about right, 15 percent said there is too much, 16 percent said too little, and 13 percent said there is a population decline
- by gender: 30 percent of women and 25 percent of men
- by length of residence: 42 percent of respondents who lived in the area for 11 to 20 years, 27 percent of those in the area for 10 years or less, and 24 percent of respondents in the area for more than 20 years
- by opinion of taxes: 32 percent of respondents who said taxes are too high and 25 percent of those who said taxes are about right

- by intent to move: 44 percent of respondents who are “certain” to move, 32 percent of those “likely” to move, and 26 percent of those who are “likely/certain” to stay
- by age/education: 36 percent of younger respondents without college, 27 percent of older without college, 24 percent of younger college educated and 22 percent of older college educated
- by age/gender: 33 percent of younger men, 31 percent of older women, 29 percent of younger women and only 21 percent of older men

**Three-in-four say their community has urban sprawl**

A 75 percent solid majority of all respondents said their community has the characteristics of urban sprawl, including 43 percent who said it had “a lot” of such characteristics and 32 percent who said “somewhat.” Twenty-three percent said their community has urban sprawl “only a little” or “not at all.”

Assessment of urban sprawl in community



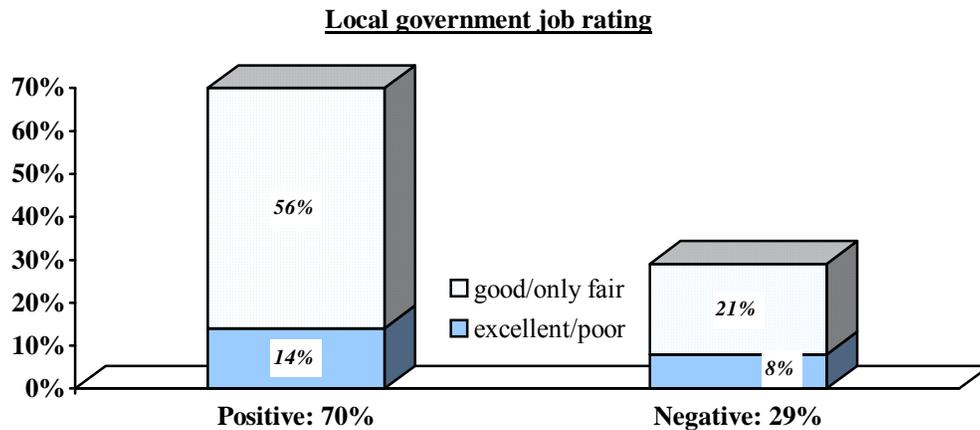
Specific groups that indicated by the highest percentages that their community has “a lot” of the characteristics of urban sprawl included:

*Fruitport Township (70%); unemployed, Region 3 (53% each); Norton Shores (52%); lived in area 11 to 20 years (50%); college educated men, Region 6 (49% each); works in another community in Muskegon County, young college educated, age 50 to 55 (48% each); younger men, age 41 to 49 (47% each); all college educated, Region 4 (46% each); Area 6, Region 1, men over age 40 (45% each); all men, college educated women, county the same over past 10 years, older college educated, age 56 to 64, “Silent” generation [born 1925-43] and “Boom” generation [born 1944-60] (44% each); likely to stay, under age 40 (43% each); men without college, full-time employees, works at home, in households without children, older men and women (42% each); certain to stay, women over age 40 (41% each); Muskegon Township, and men under age 40 (40% each).*

Only 19 percent of Region 2 (Muskegon [city] and Muskegon Heights) said there is “a lot” of urban sprawl.

**Seven-in-ten offer positive ratings for their city or township services**

A solid 70 to 29 percent majority of all respondents offered a positive rating for the job their city or township does in providing basic local services. Although the overall positive rating is high, only 14 percent offered an “excellent” job rating, with 56 saying the municipality was doing a “pretty good” job.



Respondents in every community except Muskegon Heights offered a positive rating by a higher percentage than the overall county-wide results. In Muskegon Heights, 63 percent offered a negative rating and 38 percent gave a positive rating. It should be noted however, that Muskegon Heights provided a small sub-sample size (24 respondents).

Highest percentages offering positive ratings came from:

*age 30 to 35 (85%); taxes about right, works in community where they live (83% each); part-time employees, county better over past 10 years (81% each); college educated men, Region 4 (80% each); Muskegon [city], Norton Shores (79% each); Fruitport Township (78%); young college educated, age 65 and over, men under age 40 (76% each); homemakers, works in another Muskegon County community, Region 3 (75% each); lived in the area 11 to 20 years, college educated (74% each); full-time employees, older men, Muskegon Township (73% each); all men, certain to stay, in households without children, older with and without college (72% each); will likely move, will likely stay, younger men and older women, high school or less education, over age 40, men and women over age 40 (71% each); lived in area over 20 years, and age 41 to 49 and 56 to 64 (70% each).*

Highest percentages of negative ratings came from:

*Muskegon Heights (63% -- small sample size); taxes too high (51%); certain to move, age 36 to 40 (50%); county worse over past 10 years (44%); women under age 40, Region 1 (39% each); younger without college (38%); “X” generation [b. 1960-81] (36%); lived in area 10 years or less, younger women, post high school technical training (35% each); county about the same over past 10 years (34%);*

*other communities, under age 40, age 18 to 29, Area 6 (33% each); “Silent” generation [b. 1925-43] (32%).*

**Quiet and safety from crime most important factors for living in their community**

A list of reasons why respondents might have decided to live in the community where they reside was read. Respondents were asked if each statement describes a very or somewhat important factor in their decision, a minor factor or not a factor at all.

The top ranking reason, cited as important by a solid 88 percent majority, was “to live in a place that is quiet.” This included the 58 percent who cited this as a “very” important factor.

Respondents who indicated by very high percentages that living in a place that was quiet was an important factor include:

- 95 percent of respondents in Norton Shores
- 94 percent each of Regions 1, 4 and 5
- 93 percent of Area 6, other communities
- 87 percent of Region 3 (Fruitport/Muskegon townships)
- 79 percent each of Muskegon [city] and Muskegon Heights, said r.

Other top reasons included:

- “safety from crime” cited as important by a 79 percent majority (54 percent “very” important)
  - 100 percent of Fruitport Township (small sample)
  - 88 percent of Region 4
  - 87 percent of Region 3
  - 86 percent of Norton Shores
  - 84 percent of Region 1
  - 82 percent of Area 6
  - 77 percent of Muskegon Township
  - 67 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 63 percent of Muskegon Heights
- “a strong sense of community” cited by a 77 percent majority (39 percent “very” important)
  - 87 percent of Fruitport Township
  - 83 percent of Muskegon Heights
  - 81 percent of Region 3
  - 78 percent of Regions 2 and 5
  - 77 percent of Muskegon Township
  - 76 percent of Area 6
  - 75 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 73 percent of Region 1
  - 72 percent of Region 4
  - 71 percent of Norton Shores
- “less traffic congestion and a quality road system” cited by a 76 percent majority (45 percent “very” important)
  - 85 percent of Region 5
  - 84 percent of Area 6 and Region 1
  - 77 percent of Muskegon Township
  - 75 percent of Region 3
  - 74 percent of Region 4, Norton Shores and Fruitport Township
  - 72 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 67 percent of Region 2
  - a much lower 54 percent of Muskegon Height

- “the availability and quality of affordable housing” cited by a 73 percent majority (37 percent “very” important)
  - 87 percent of Muskegon Township
  - 85 percent of Region 3
  - 83 percent of Fruitport Township
  - 79 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 77 percent of Region 5
  - 74 percent of Region 2
  - 69 percent of Norton Shores
  - 68 percent of Area 6
  - 64 percent of Region 4
  - 63 percent of Muskegon Heights
  - 61 percent of Region 1
- “high quality of local schools” cited by a 67 percent majority (50 percent “very” important)
  - 87 percent of Fruitport Township
  - 81 percent of Region 3
  - 77 percent of Muskegon Township
  - 74 percent of Region 4
  - 71 percent of Norton Shores
  - 68 percent of Area 6 and Region 5
  - 65 percent of Region 1
  - 64 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 56 percent of Region 2
  - 38 percent of Muskegon Heights
- “Lakefront areas and shorelines” cited by 65 percent (41 percent “very” important)
  - Obviously, respondents in shoreline areas think this reason is more important:
    - 79 percent majority of Norton Shores
    - 77 percent of Muskegon [city]
    - 74 percent of Region 4
    - 71 percent of Region 2
    - 67 percent of Muskegon Township
    - 65 percent of Region 1
    - 60 percent of Region 3
    - 59 percent of Area 6
    - 55 percent of Region 5
    - 54 percent of Muskegon Heights
    - 52 percent of Fruitport Township
- “to be closer to family” cited by 64 percent (46 percent “very” important)
  - 80 of Muskegon Township
  - 79 percent of Muskegon Heights
  - 75 percent of Region 3
  - 70 percent of Fruitport Township
  - 66 percent of Regions 2 and 4
  - 62 percent of Norton Shores
  - 61 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 60 percent of Region 5
  - 57 percent of Area 6
  - 49 percent of Region 1
- “the rural character of the area” cited by 63 percent (34 percent very important)
  - Understandably this reason was not important in the two more urban areas of the county:
    - an 83 percent majority of Fruitport Township and Region 5
    - 76 percent of Region 1
    - 75 percent of Area 6 and Region 3
    - 70 percent of Muskegon Township
    - 55 percent of Norton Shores
    - 48 percent of Region 4
    - 46 percent of Muskegon [city]
    - 42 percent of Region 2
    - 33 percent of Muskegon Heights
- “available recreational activities and a strong park system” cited by 63 percent (28 percent “very” important)
  - 76 percent of Norton Shores and Region 4
  - 70 percent of Fruitport Township
  - 67 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 66 percent of Region 3
  - 64 percent of Region 2

- 63 percent of Muskegon Township
- 61 percent of Region 1
- 56 percent of Area 6
- “a lot of community events, activities and fun times” cited by 61 percent (23 percent “very” important)
- 74 percent of Muskegon [city] and Norton Shores
- 73 percent of Region 2
- 72 percent of Region 4
- 71 percent of Muskegon Heights
- 65 percent of Fruitport Township
- “to be closer to quality health care services” cited by 60 percent (30 percent “very” important)
- 71 percent of Muskegon Heights
- 70 percent of Fruitport Township
- 68 percent of Region 3
- 67 percent of Muskegon Township
- 66 percent of Region 4
- 54 percent of Muskegon Heights
- 49 percent of Region 5
- 57 percent of Region 1 and 3
- 51 percent of Area 6
- 50 percent of Muskegon Township
- 45 percent of Region 5
- 64 percent of Norton Shores
- 62 percent of Region 2
- 59 percent of Muskegon [city]
- 52 percent of Area 6
- 51 percent of Region 1 and 5

Other factors were thought to be important in deciding where to live by fewer than 60 percent, and a few factors were ranked as more unimportant than important.

- “because of a change in jobs” cited as unimportant by a 78 to 21 percent majority (72 percent “not important at all”)
- “to live in an area where you can walk to nearby stores and other places” cited as unimportant by a 64 to 36 percent majority
  - 78 percent of Fruitport Township
  - 77 percent of Region 5
  - 71 percent of Region 1
  - 70 percent of Area 6
  - 69 percent of Norton Shores
  - 64 percent of Region 3
  - 60 percent of Region 4
  - 54 percent of Muskegon [city]
  - 53 percent of Muskegon Township
  - 52 percent of Region 2
  - 46 percent of Muskegon Heights
- “to live where there is a diverse mix of people of different races” cited as unimportant by a 59 to 40 percent majority (45 percent “not important at all”)
  - On this measurement, there are some significant differences among communities:
    - important -- a 54 percent majority of Muskegon Heights and 50 percent of Muskegon Township
    - unimportant -- a 71 percent majority of Region 1; 69 percent of Area 6 and Region 5; 61 percent of Fruitport Township; 55 percent of Region 3; 54 percent of Muskegon [city]; 52 percent of Norton Shores, Region 2 and Region 4
  - Respondents in areas with greater diversity tend to feel it is a more important factor than those in areas that are less diverse.

- “lower local property taxes” cited as unimportant by a 59 to 39 percent majority
  - important -- a 70 percent majority of Fruitport Township; 58 percent of Region 3; 50 percent of Muskegon Township.
  - unimportant -- a 67 percent majority of Muskegon Heights, Muskegon [city], Region 1 and 2; 61 percent of Area 6; 60 percent of Norton Shores; 58 percent of Region 4 and 5 said local property taxes were unimportant.
  - In addition, 64 percent of all women and 55 percent of all men said this was not an important factor.
- “to be closer to work” cited as unimportant by a 58 to 40 percent majority (52 percent “not important at all”)
  - important -- a 65 percent majority of Fruitport Township; 51 percent of Region 2
  - unimportant -- a 65 percent majority of Region 1, 64 percent of Region 4 and Norton Shores; 63 percent of Muskegon Heights; 62 percent of Area 6; 60 percent of Region 5 and Muskegon Township; 55 percent of Region 2; 52 percent of Muskegon [city]
- “the historic charm of the area” cited as unimportant by 50 percent, with 49 percent saying it was important.
  - important -- 54 percent majority of Muskegon [city] and Region 4; 53 percent of Region 2, 52 percent of Norton Shores, 51 percent of Region 1, and 50 percent of Muskegon Heights said the historic charm of the area was important.
  - unimportant -- A 63 percent majority of Muskegon Township, 58 percent of Region 3; 54 percent of Region 5; 52 percent of Fruitport Township; 51 percent of Area 6
- “nearby hunting and fishing areas” cited as unimportant by 50 percent, with 50 percent saying it was important.
  - important -- 68 percent majority of Region 5; 57 percent of Fruitport Township and Area 6; 52 percent of Norton Shores; 51 percent of Region 1 and 3
  - unimportant -- 66 percent majority of Muskegon [city]; 64 percent of Region 2; 58 percent of Muskegon Heights; 54 percent of Region 4 ; 53 percent of Muskegon Township
  - Perhaps not surprisingly, 58 percent of all men and only 42 percent of all women thought “hunting and fishing areas” was an important factor, with identical results among both younger and older men.
- “a lower cost of living than other areas” and “a lot of natural and undeveloped land,” each cited as important by a 59 percent majority
  - lower cost of living important -- a65 percent majority of Fruitport Township; 64 percent of Muskegon [city] and Region 2; 63 percent of Muskegon Heights; 62 percent of Region 3; 60 percent of Muskegon Township and Region 5; 56 percent of Area 6; 52 percent of Norton Shores and Region 4; and 51 percent of Region 1
  - natural and undeveloped land important --75 percent majority of Region 5; 73 percent of Area 6 and Region 1; 65 percent of Fruitport Township; 62

percent of Region 3; 60 percent of Muskegon Township; 48 percent of Norton Shores and Region 4; 43 percent of Muskegon [city]; 41 percent of Region 2; only 38 percent of Muskegon Heights

- “the quality of local services, like water, sewer, trash and snow removal” cited as important by 58 percent
  - Understandably, this ranking varies widely among communities:
    - important -- 74 percent majority of Muskegon [city]; 73 percent of Muskegon Township; 71 percent of Region ; 66 percent of Region ; 63 percent of Muskegon Height; 62 percent of Region 4; 57 percent each of Fruitport Township and Norton Shores; 51 percent of Region 1; 46 percent of Area 6; and 37 percent of Region 5.

### **Most important factors in deciding where to live:**

#### **-- Fruitport Township**

The most to least important factors in deciding to live among Fruitport Township respondents were:

*safety from crime (100%); a quiet area, high quality local schools, a strong sense of community (87% each); affordable housing, the rural character (83% each); less traffic congestion and quality local roads (74%); lower property taxes, closer to family, closer to health care, available recreational activities and strong parks (70% each); closer to work, lower cost of living, a lot of community events, a lot of natural and undeveloped land (65% each); quality local services, nearby hunting and fishing areas (57% each); and the lakefront areas and shoreline (52%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

#### **-- Muskegon Heights**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Muskegon Heights respondents included:

*a strong sense of community (83%), closer to family, a quiet area (79% each); closer to health care, a lot of community events (71% each); safety from crime, lower cost of living, affordable housing, quality local services (63% each); lakefront areas and shoreline, able to walk to nearby stores, available recreational activities and strong parks, a diverse mix of people, less traffic congestion and quality local roads (54% each); and the historic charm of the area (50%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent.*

#### **-- Muskegon Township**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Muskegon Township respondents included:

*a quiet area, affordable housing (87% each); closer to family (80%); a strong sense of community, safety from crime, less traffic congestion and quality local roads, high quality local schools (77% each); quality local services (73%); the rural character of the area (70%); closer to health care, lakefront areas and shoreline (67% each); available recreational activities and strong parks (63%); a lot of natural and undeveloped land, lower cost of living (60% each); a lot of community events, a diverse mix of people, and lower property taxes (50% each) - - other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent.*

**-- Muskegon [city]**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Muskegon [city] respondents included:

*a quiet area, affordable housing (79% each); lakefront areas and shoreline (77%); a strong sense of community (75%); quality local services, a lot of community events (74% each); less traffic congestion and quality local roads (72%); safety from crime, available recreational activities and strong parks (67% each); high quality local schools, lower cost of living (64% each); closer to family (61%); closer to health care (59%); and the historic charm of the area (54%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent.*

**-- Norton Shores**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Norton Shores respondents included:

*a quiet area (95%); safety from crime (86%); lakefront areas and shoreline (79%); available recreational activities and strong parks (76%); a lot of community events, less traffic congestion and quality local roads (74% each); a strong sense of community, high quality local schools (71% each); affordable housing (69%); closer to health care (64%); closer to family (62%); quality local services (57%); the rural character of the area (55%); lower cost of living, the historic charm of the area, and nearby hunting and fishing areas (52% each) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent.*

**-- other communities within Area 6**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Area 6 respondents included:

*a quiet area (93%); less traffic congestion and quality local roads (84%); safety from crime (82%); a strong sense of community (76%); the rural character of the area (75%); a lot of natural and undeveloped land (73%); high quality local schools, affordable housing (68% each); lakefront areas and shoreline (59%); closer to family, nearby hunting and fishing areas (57% each); available recreational activities and strong parks, lower cost of living (56% each); closer to health care (52%); and a lot of community events (51%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

**-- Region 1**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Region 1 respondents included:

*a quiet area (94%); safety from crime, less traffic congestion and good roads (84% each); rural character of the area (76%); a lot of natural and undeveloped land, a strong sense of community (73% each); high quality local schools and lakefront shoreline (65% each); available recreational activities, affordable housing (61% each); a lot of community events (57%); closer to quality health care, lower cost of living and historic charm of the area, nearby hunting and fishing areas (51% each) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

**-- Region 2**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Region 2 respondents included:

*a quiet area (79%); strong sense of community (78%); affordable housing (74%); a lot of community events (73%); quality local services, lakefront shoreline (71%); less traffic congestion and good roads (67%); safety from crime, closer to family (66% each); lower cost of living, available recreational activities (64% each); closer to health care (62%); high quality local schools (56%); historic charm of the area (53%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

**-- Region 3**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Region 3 respondents included:

*safety from crime, a quiet area (87% each); affordable housing (85%); high quality local schools, a strong sense of community (81% each); closer to family, rural character of the area (75% each); closer to health care (68%); quality local services, available recreational activities (66% each); lower cost of living, a lot of natural and undeveloped land (62% each); lakefront shoreline (60%); lower property taxes (58%); a lot of community events (57%); closer to work, nearby hunting and fishing areas (51% each) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

**-- Region 4**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Region 4 respondents included:

*a quiet area (94%); safety from crime (88%); available recreational activities (76%); high quality local schools, lakefront shoreline, less traffic congestion and good roads (74% each); a lot of community events, a strong sense of community (72% each); closer to family, closer to health care (66% each); affordable housing (64%); quality local services (62%); historic charm of area (54%); lower cost of living (52%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

**-- Region 5**

The most to least important factors in deciding where to live among Region 5 respondents included:

*a quiet area (94%); less traffic congestion and good roads (85%); rural character of area (83%); safety from crime, a strong sense of community (78% each); affordable housing (77%); a lot of natural and undeveloped land (75%); high quality local schools, nearby hunting and fishing areas (68% each); closer to family, lower cost of living (60% each); lakefront shoreline (55%); closer to health care (51%) -- other factors cited by fewer than 50 percent*

**Top concerns: Water pollution, school quality, the out-migration of good jobs, air pollution, and future planning and development for the downtown and lakefront areas**

Respondents were asked to use a scale of zero to 10 to rate several public issues, with “10” meaning an issue is an extremely serious concern and “0” meaning it is not a concern at all. The issue that garnered the highest “9 – 10” concern ratings from the highest percentages was

water pollution (rated 9 - 10 by 52 percent). The second highest concern, rated 9 - 10 by 47 percent, was “the quality of schools in the area.”

Other top concerns rated 9 - 10 by the highest percentages included:

- the out-migration of good paying jobs (rated 9 - 10 by 45 percent)
- air pollution (37 percent)
- future planning and development for the downtown and lakefront areas (37 percent)
- the quality and availability of water or sewer systems (36 percent)
- too many local businesses and industries owned by outside national and international corporations (34 percent)
- the ability to expand and develop the existing manufacturing base (32 percent)
- loss of farmland, forest land, and natural wildlife habitats (31 percent)
- the level of planning to manage growth and development (31 percent)
- no county-wide master plan or long-term vision (31 percent)
- having convenient public transportation, especially for seniors and the handicapped (30 percent)
- zoning decisions driven by development rather than existing community plans (28 percent)
- a high crime rate (28 percent)
- the condition of local roads (27 percent)
- too many local governments with overlapping responsibilities (27 percent)
- dilapidation and abandoned buildings in my community (25 percent)
- not enough commercial or industrial growth and development (24 percent)
- the lack of strong county leadership (24 percent)
- the amount of taxes paid in your community (22 percent)
- too much poverty in my community (22 percent)
- public apathy (21 percent)
- a lack of cooperation between communities (21 percent)
- urban sprawl (21 percent)
- loss of open space for leisure activities (20 percent)
- old foundry town image and smell (19 percent)
- traffic problems and congestion (18 percent)
- the financial strain on less populated areas to provide infrastructure services like roads, water and sewer to meet the demands of new development (18 percent)
- too much residential growth and development in some areas (18 percent)
- the level of coordinated land use planning and zoning between adjacent communities (15 percent)
- the expansion and service of the Muskegon county airport (13 percent)

**Demographic breakouts: groups offering 9 or 10 ratings in percentages well above the county-wide results:**

**-- water pollution (52%)**

- 65 percent majority of Fruitport Township residents; 59 percent of Muskegon [city]; 58 percent of Region 3; 54 percent of Region 2; 53 percent of Muskegon Township; 52 percent of Region 5; 50 percent of Norton Shores; 49 percent of Region 1; 48 percent of Area 6 communities; 44 percent of Region 4; and 42 percent of Muskegon Heights
- 55 percent majority of women and 49 percent of men
- 66 percent of college educated women, 54 percent of college educated men, 48 percent of men without college and 47 percent of women without college
- 58 percent of younger men, 56 percent of older women, 53 percent of younger women and only 43 percent of older men
- 59 percent of respondents who are likely to stay, 52 percent of those who are certain to stay, 42 percent of respondents who are likely to move and 39 percent of those who are certain to move

**-- quality of schools in the area (47%)**

- 52 percent of Muskegon [city] and Region 2; 50 percent of Muskegon Heights; 49 percent of Area 6 communities and Region 1; 48 percent of Region 5; 43 percent each of Fruitport Township, Muskegon Township, and Region 3; 40 percent of Region 4; and 36 percent of Norton Shores
- There is a significant difference between men and women: 55 percent of women and 39 percent of men
  - 59 percent of younger women, 52 percent of older women, 47 percent of younger men and just 33 percent of older men
  - 63 percent of college educated women, 51 percent of women without college, 41 percent of college educated men and 37 percent of men without
- The quality of local schools could be an influence on residents planning to move: 56 percent majority of respondents who are certain to move, 50 percent of those certain to stay, 47 percent of respondents likely to stay and 39 percent of those likely to move
- There is also a great difference between the concern expressed by respondents with and without children at home: 61 percent of those in households with children and only 42 percent of those without children at home
- There was also a significant difference based only on age: 59 percent of respondents under age 40 and 44 percent of those age 40 or over

**-- out-migration of good paying jobs (45%)**

- 60 percent of Norton Shores; 58 percent of Muskegon Heights; 52 percent of Region 4; 47 percent of Muskegon [city]/Muskegon Township; 46 percent of Region 2; 45 percent of Region 1; 43 percent of Region 3; 42 percent of Region 5; 41 percent of other communities; 39 percent of Fruitport Township

- 53 percent of respondents who have lived in the county for 10 years or less, 44 percent of those residing for 20 years or more and 42 percent of residents living in the area for 11 to 20 years
- 53 percent of respondents who said taxes are too high, and 41 percent of those saying taxes are about right

**-- air pollution (37%)**

- 43 percent of Muskegon [city]; 41 percent of Region 2; 40 percent of Muskegon Township and Region 3; 39 percent of Fruitport Township; 38 percent of Muskegon Heights and Region 5; 34 percent of Area 6 communities; 33 percent of Norton Shores; 32 percent of Region 4; 29 percent of Region 1.
- 42 percent of women and 31 percent of men
- 53 percent of college educated women, 36 percent of women without college, 33 percent of men without college and 27 percent of college educated men
- 46 percent of younger women, 38 percent of older women, 33 percent of younger men and 29 percent of older men

**-- future planning and development for the downtown and lakefront areas (37%)**

- 50 percent of Muskegon Heights; 48 percent of Muskegon [city] and Region 2; 45 percent of Norton Shores; 44 percent of Region 4; 39 percent of Fruitport Township; 37 percent of Region 1; 34 percent of Region 3; 28 percent of Area 6 communities; 20 percent of Region 5
- 45 percent of college educated respondents and 33 percent of those without a college education
- 40 percent of women over age 40, 39 percent of women under age 40, 37 percent of men over age 40 and 24 percent of men under age 40

**-- quality and availability of water or sewage systems (36%)**

- a greater concern in the urban areas than in the more rural areas:
  - 46 percent of Muskegon [city]; 45 percent of Norton Shores and Region 2; 44 percent of Region 4; 42 percent of Muskegon Heights; 35 percent of Fruitport Township; 32 percent of Region 5; 30 percent of Area 6 communities and Region 3; and 27 percent of Muskegon Township and Region 1
- 41 percent of all women and 32 percent of all men
- 40 percent of respondents who plan to stay in their community, 28 percent of respondents certain to move and 23 percent of those likely to move
- 47 percent of college educated women, 39 percent of college educated men, 37 percent of women without college and 29 percent of men without college.

**-- too many local businesses and industries owned by outside national and international corporations (34%)**

- 42 percent of Muskegon Heights; 40 percent of Muskegon Township and Region 2; 39 percent of Muskegon [city]; 38 percent of Region 3; 35 percent of Fruitport Township; 34 percent of Region 5; 33 percent of Norton Shores; 32 percent of Region 4; 28 percent of Area 6 communities; 20 percent of Region 1.

- 42 percent of women without college, 33 percent of men without college and 27 percent each of college educated men and women
- 44 percent of older women, 32 percent of older men, 31 percent of younger men and 25 percent of younger women
- 37 percent of respondents without college and 27 percent of college educated respondents
- 37 percent of respondents over age 40 and 21 percent of respondents under age 40

**-- ability to expand and develop the existing manufacturing base (32%)**

- 46 percent of Muskegon Heights; 40 percent of Muskegon Township; 36 percent of Region 3; 35 percent of Region 2; 33 percent of Norton Shores and Region 1; 31 percent of Muskegon [city]; 30 percent of Fruitport Township and Region 4; 28 percent of Area 6 communities and 26 percent of Region 5
- Other than geographical differences, there are no other significant demographic differences on this question.

**-- loss of farmland, forest land, and natural wildlife habitats (31%)**

- Understandably, concern is generally greatest in the more rural areas:
  - 43 percent of Region 5; 37 percent of Area 6 communities; 35 percent of Fruitport Township and Region 1; 30 percent of Muskegon [city] and Region 3; 28 percent of Region 2; 27 percent of Muskegon Township; 25 percent of Muskegon Heights; and 21 percent of Norton Shores; 18 percent of Region 4.
- 40 percent of younger men, 35 percent of older women, 29 percent of younger women and 23 percent of older men
- There were no other significant differences among key demographic groups on this issue.

**-- level of planning to manage growth and development (31%)**

- 38 percent of Norton Shores; 37 percent of Region 1; 33 percent each of Muskegon Township and Muskegon [city]; 32 percent of Region 4; 31 percent of Region 2; 30 percent of Region 3; 28 percent of Area 6 communities; 26 percent of Fruitport Township; 25 percent of Muskegon Heights and Region 5
- Key groups that expressed 9 - 10 concern t about this issue included by the highest percentages:
  - college educated women, younger college educated respondents (42% each); age 41 to 49 (40%); all college educated respondents (38%); age 50 to 55 (36%); “GI” generation [born 1924 - prior] and “Boom” generation [born 1944-60] (35%); women over age 40 (34%)

**-- no county-wide master plan or long-term vision (31%)**

- 48 percent of Norton Shores; 44 percent of Region 4; 38 percent of Muskegon Heights; 35 percent of Region 1; 32 percent of Area 6 communities and Region 2; 31 percent of Region 5; 30 percent of Muskegon [city]; 20 percent of Muskegon Township; 19 percent of Region 3; and 17 percent of Fruitport Township

- Key groups that expressed 9 - 10 concern t about this issue included by the highest percentages:
  - lived in the Area 11 to 20 years (48%); college educated women, homemakers (42% each); works in another county, county worse over past 10 years, young college educated (40% each); taxes too high (39%); college educated (38%); older women (37%); all women, older college educated, women over age 40 (36% each); full-time employees, works in another community in Muskegon County (35% each); in households without children, younger women, post high-school technical education (34% each); works at home, county the same over past 10 years, women under age 40 (33% each).

**-- convenient public transportation, especially for seniors and the handicapped (30%)**

- 50 percent of Muskegon Heights; 47 percent of Region 2; 46 percent of Muskegon [city]; 31 percent of Region 1; 26 percent of Fruitport Township; 24 percent of Norton Shores and Area 6 communities; 22 percent of Region 5; 21 percent of Region 3; 20 percent of Region 4; 17 percent of Muskegon Township.
- Key groups that expressed 9 - 10 concern t about this issue included by the highest percentages:
  - homemakers (50%); age 50 to 55 (44%); older women (40%); women without college, women over age 40 (39% each); all women (38%); college educated women, county worse over past 10 years (37% each); older college educated, women under age 40 (36% each); younger women (35%); lived in area more than 20 years, college educated, and age 18 to 29 (33% each).

**Most important factors in attracting residential, business, industrial and commercial developments to Muskegon County**

A list of statements pertaining to things that may attract residential, business, industry and commercial development to Muskegon County was read. Respondents were asked if each statement describes a very or somewhat important factor in attracting development, a minor factor or not a factor at all.

Respondents rated all of tested aspects as “important,” by a high of 94 percent to a low of 72 percent. This includes five aspects rated important by more than 90 percent, four items so rated by 86 to 89 percent, and three by 76 to 72 percent.

The most important factor, cited as “important” by 94 percent, was “beautiful beaches” and the least important factor, cited by 72 percent, was “the area’s ethnic diversity.” With the solid percentages saying all items were important factors, there are very few demographic differences on any aspects tested.

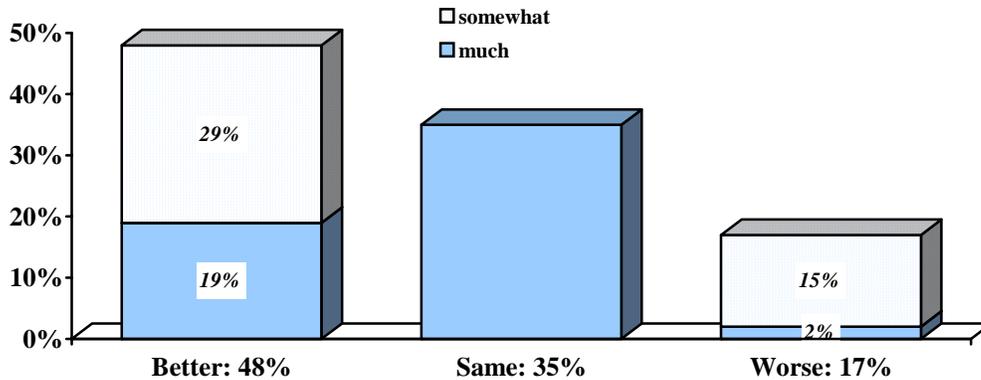
In descending order of percentages of respondents rating an aspect as important, the results were:

- “many beautiful beaches” -- 94 percent important, 76 percent “very” important
- “a skilled labor force,” -- 94 percent important, 72 percent “very” important
- “people willing to work together” -- 92 percent important, 77 percent “very” important
- “strong school system and opportunity for higher education” -- 92 percent important, 77 percent “very” important
- “good retail opportunities” -- 92 percent important, 55 percent “very” important
- “an effective wastewater treatment system” -- 89 percent important, 70 percent “very” important.
- “cultural opportunities like the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Freunthal Theatre, Cherry Playhouse and summer festivals” -- 88 percent important, 56 percent “very” important
- “economic diversity, including a variety of business types and sizes, as well as ethnic ownership and backgrounds” -- 86 percent important, 48 percent “very” important
- “recent growth and development,” -- 86 percent important, 42 percent “very” important
- “new industrial parks,” -- 76 percent important, 33 percent “very” important
- “Michigan’s Adventure, which draws many people to the area” -- 74 percent important, 37 percent “very” important
- “the area’s ethnic diversity” -- 72 percent important, 30 percent “very” important

**Almost half say Muskegon County is a better place to live over the past 10 years**

Respondents were asked if Muskegon County has become a better or a worse place to live over the past 10 years, or if it is about the same as it was then. Forty-eight percent said the county is a “better” place to live, including 19 percent who said “much” better. Thirty-five percent said it was “about the same” and 17 percent said it was “worse.”

Assessment of county as place to live over 10 years past



Respondents who said “better” were asked why they said so. Fifteen percent of these respondents cited “new businesses,” 14 percent said the county was “trying to improve,” 12 percent said there was “better shopping,” eight percent said “it’s cleaned up,” eight percent said there is “more to do now,” and seven percent said “good people moving in.” Six percent each also cited “jobs” and “lakefront improvements,” followed by “community involvement” and “improved schools” cited by five percent each.

The top reasons offered by those who said “worse” included: “unemployment,” cited by 27 percent of these respondents, “crime” (cited by 18 percent) and “business leaving” (16 percent). Eight percent each cited “industrial expansion” and “schools,” six percent offered “too much politics,” and four percent said “declining retail.”

Key groups indicating by the highest percentages that Muskegon County is a better place to live included:

*part-time workers, works in another Muskegon County community (68% each); works where they live, works in another county (60% each); college educated women (59%); young college educated (58%); Fruitport Township, Muskegon [city], full-time workers (57% each); residents for 10 years or less, taxes about right, college educated (56% each); favor rerouting of U.S. 31, age 36 to 40 (55% each); older college educated (54%); age 50 to 55 (52%); college educated men, younger women, Region 3 (51% each); likely to stay, “Boom” generation [born 1944-60] (50% each).*

Groups saying by the highest percentages that Muskegon County is a worse place to live:

*Muskegon Heights (42%); works at home (33%); age 50 to 55 (28%); taxes too high (26%); homemaker (25%); opposes U.S. 31 rerouting, Region 1 (24% each); likely to move, age 30 to 35, “X” generation [b.orn.1960-81] (23% each); age 18 to 21 (21%); college educated men, older men, under age 40, “Boom” generation [born 1944-60], and men under age 40, Area 6 communities and Region 5 (20% each).*

### **Encouraging expanded business for job creation, more investments in higher education and job training top list of important policy goals**

A list of statements pertaining to policy goals was read, and respondents were asked if each statement describes a “top” or an “important” priority, a slight priority or not a priority at all.

A 96 percent, nearly unanimous majority said that “encouraging the creation and expansion of businesses and industries creating new jobs” is an important policy goal. A 76 percent majority said this goal should be a “top priority.”

The second highest rated policy goal, called important by 91 percent, is to “continue to provide more investments in higher education and job training.” Seventy-four percent said it should be a “top priority.

Other goals ranked in the order of their importance included:

- “providing tax and financial incentives for the reuse and redevelopment of the inner city areas of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights” – 81 percent important, 50 percent top priority
- “strengthening Muskegon County’s image as a tourist attraction” -- 81 percent important, 46 percent top priority
- “offering incentives for development to occur in designated areas where roads, water and sewer services are already available, including having developers pay more of the cost to build infrastructure if it does not exist” -- 79 percent important, 48 percent top priority
- “preserving the character of rural areas” -- 79 percent important, 41 percent top priority
- “provide incentives for owners of farmland to preserve it” -- 78 percent important, 45 percent top priority
- “preventing the loss of farmland and protecting it from development” -- 73 percent important, 36 percent top priority
- “improving and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities in and around new development” -- 70 percent important, 25 percent top priority
- “the general public subsidizing the expansions of water and sewer service for the purpose of economic development” -- 69 percent important, 34 percent top priority
- “containing water and sewer expansion only to areas where growth is planned” -- 67 percent important, 25 percent top priority
- “expanding and improving the airport” -- 59 percent important, 20 percent top priority.
- “developing more bike paths” -- 59 percent NOT important, 40 percent important

### **Supporting local farmers gets strongest support as means of encouraging and controlling growth and development**

Respondents were asked if they support or oppose each of a list of several idea of how growth and development can be encouraged and controlled where needed.

The top rated idea was “supporting local farmers by purchasing locally grown or produced foods,” with 94 percent saying they support this concept, including 64 percent who “strongly” support it.

In rank order of total support, the other results were:

- “more must be done to meet the needs of large area employers to increase the chances they will stay in Muskegon” -- 93 percent support, 64 percent “strongly”
- “create a government-supported program to concentrate on redevelopment and re-investment in the inner cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights” -- 84 percent support, 48 percent “strongly”
  - It is worth noting that support for this idea is strong throughout the county:
    - 96 percent in Muskegon Heights; 93 percent in Region 2; 92 percent in Muskegon [city]; 90 percent in Norton Shores and Region 4; 83 percent in Fruitport Township; 81 percent in Region 3; 80 percent in Muskegon Township; 78 percent in Area 6 communities and Region 1; 77 percent in Region 5
  - No other demographic differences were significant enough to mention.
- “tax incentives for landowners who voluntarily preserve farmland and open space” – 84 percent support, 44 percent “strongly”
  - Support for this idea is solid across all demographic groups.
- “by expanding the use of Muskegon Lake as a port, it can attract large foreign ships, making the area a more important destination for travel and commerce” -- 82 percent support, 52 percent “strongly”
  - 90 percent in Norton Shores; 87 percent each in Muskegon [city] and Township; 86 percent in Region 2; 84 percent in Region 4; 83 percent in Muskegon Heights; 82 percent in Region 1; 81 percent in Region 3; 76 percent in other communities; 75 percent in Region 5; 74 percent in Fruitport Township
- “preserve farmland and open space by adopting and implementing local zoning regulation that limits residential development” -- 80 percent support, 48 percent “strongly”
  - There are some differences in community support, ranging from:
    - 90 percent support in Muskegon Township to 63 percent in Muskegon Heights, with 86 percent in Region 5; 85 percent in Region 3; 84 percent in Area 6 communities and in Region 4; 81 percent in Norton Shores; 78 percent in Fruitport Township and Region 1; 77 percent in Muskegon [city]; and 73 percent in Region 2.
  - There were no other significant demographic differences worth mentioning.
- “regulate commercial and industrial growth and development so that it may occur only in and around existing cities and other areas that already have municipal services” -- 79 percent support, 36 percent “strongly”
- “allow developers to build more homes in some areas in exchange for preserving farmland and open space in other areas” -- 77 percent support, 33 percent “strongly”
  - 90 percent in Norton Shores; 86 percent in Region 4; 83 percent in Fruitport Township; Muskegon Township and Region 3; 79 percent in Muskegon Heights; 78 percent in Region 1; 75 percent in Area 6 communities; 74 percent in Region 5; 73 percent in Region 2; 70 percent in Muskegon [city].

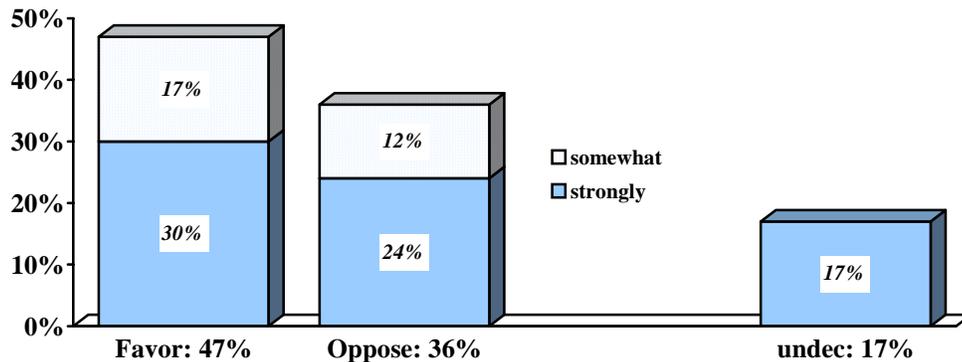
- 88 percent of respondents who live in the community where they live; 78 percent who work in another Muskegon County community; only 60 percent of those who work in communities in another county
- “extend water and sewer lines to the northern communities in the county as the first step to providing more residential and commercial development in that area” -- 67 percent support, 28 percent “strongly”
  - There is somewhat less support for the idea in rural areas than in the cities overall:
    - 80 percent in Region 4; 77 percent in Muskegon Township; 76 percent in Norton Shores; 72 percent in Muskegon [city]; 70 percent in Region 3; 69 percent in Region 2; dropping to 63 percent in Muskegon Heights; 61 percent in Fruitport Township and in Area 6 communities; 59 percent in Region 1; 58 percent in Region 5.
  - 74 percent of respondents who favor the rerouting of U.S. 31, and 59 percent of those who oppose the highway plan
  - 59 percent of respondents in households with children and 70 percent of those without children at home
- “provide a method of sharing tax revenues from higher growth areas that have experienced growth and development with the core city areas that have been unable to attract development.” -- 67 percent support, 26 percent “strongly”
  - There are some differences between the responses of the communities worth noting, but not nearly as great as one might expect on the topic of tax base sharing:
    - 77 percent in Muskegon Township; 72 percent in Muskegon [city] and Region 2; 71 percent in Muskegon Heights; 70 percent in Region 4; 69 percent in Norton Shores; 66 percent in regions 3 and 5; 63 percent in Area 6 communities; 57 percent in Region 1; and 52 percent in Fruitport Township.
  - 75 percent of college educated women, 70 percent of men without college, 64 percent of women without college and only 54 percent of college educated men
  - 75 percent of respondents with a high school education or less, 66 percent of college educated respondents and 56 percent of those with post high-school technical education
- “develop the Pere Marquette Park beach like the Grand Haven area to provide a business district that offers tourists and residents unique dining, shopping and recreational opportunities” -- 64 percent support, 39 percent “strongly”
  - There are some significant differences in the response of communities to this idea, which may suggest that not everyone is enthusiastic about commercial development of areas that are currently popular beaches:
    - 83 percent in Norton Shores; 78 percent in Region 4; 73 percent in Muskegon Township; 71 percent in Muskegon Heights; 69 percent in Region 5; 66 percent in Area 6; 63 percent in Region 1; 58 percent in Region 2; 57 percent in Region 3; and only 52 percent in Muskegon [city]
  - Respondents in Fruitport Township actually oppose this idea by a 57 to 35 percent majority.

- 69 percent of women and 59 percent of men support the idea
- 71 percent of younger women, 67 percent of older women, 65 percent of older men and 51 percent of younger men
- 73 percent of college educated respondents, 67 percent of those with high school or less and 50 percent of those with a post high school technical education favor the proposal.
- 76 percent of college educated women, 68 percent of college educated men, 64 percent of women without college and 56 percent of men without college
- 76 percent of respondents who lived in the area for 10 years or less, 63 percent of those who lived in the area for more than 20 years, and 56 percent of those who lived in the area for 11 to 20 years
- 72 percent of respondents in households with children and 62 percent of those without children at home
- “rehabilitate the old Muskegon Mall to create an urban village development that offers multiple commercial and residential uses” -- 64 percent support, 34 percent “strongly”
  - 76 percent in Region 1; 71 percent in Muskegon Heights; 67 percent in Area 6 communities and Region 2; 66 percent in Muskegon [city]; 64 percent in Norton Shores and Region 4; 62 percent in Region 5; 57 percent in Muskegon Township; 52 percent in Region 3; and 48 percent in Fruitport Township.
  - 69 percent of all women and 59 percent of all men
  - 75 percent of younger women, 63 percent of older women, 62 percent of younger men and 58 percent of older men
  - 78 percent of college educated women, 65 percent of men without college, 63 percent of women without college and 44 percent of college educated men

**Plurality supports plan to reroute U.S. 31 in Ottawa County**

A 47 to 36 percent plurality of all respondents said they support transportation plans to reroute U.S. 31 in Ottawa County, which will result in much of the traffic carried by that highway to bypass southern Muskegon County. Thirty percent “strongly” support the plan and 24 percent “strongly” oppose it.

**Favor/Oppose US 31 re-routing**



Strongest support comes from:

*older college educated (68%); college educated men (63%); lived in area 11 to 20 years (60%); works in another community in Muskegon County, college educated (58% each); Fruitport Township (57%); age 65 and over (56%); Norton Shores, works in another county, “GI” generation [born 1924 - prior] (55% each); college educated women, county better than 10 years ago, Region 4 (54% each); retired, Region 1 (53% each); taxes about right, “Silent” generation [born 1925-43], men over age 40 (52% each); older men (51%); other communities, full-time employees, works at home, older women, over age 40 (50% each).*

Strongest opposition comes from:

*Muskegon Heights (67%); part-time workers (55%); likely to move (52%); works in same community where they live, county worse over past 10 years (50% each); men under age 40 (48%); men without college, post high-school technical education, age 36 to 40 (45% each); certain to move, age 56 to 64 (44% each); taxes too high (43%); works at home, younger without college, younger men, Region 5 (42% each); under age 40 (41%); Muskegon Township, unemployed, older without college, age 50 to 55, Region 2 (40% each); lived in area more than 20 years, age 18 to 29, age 41 to 49 (39% each).*

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## Question-by-Question Overview and Demographic Analysis

### Prior residence

Those who in a prior question said they have lived in the city or township where they currently reside for 15 years or less (26 percent of all respondents) were asked if they moved from another city or township in Muskegon County, from a community in another county near Muskegon County, from somewhere else in Michigan, or from another state or country:

other city/village/township in Muskegon County	44%
community in county near Muskegon County	13
community somewhere else in Michigan	23
another state	17
undecided/don't know	3

Respondents in the following groups said “other city/village/township in Muskegon County” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*employed: part-time, works in other part of county (62%)*  
*certain stay in 5 yrs (60%)*  
*men with college education (57%)*  
*age 18-29 years, Region 5 (55%)*  
*“Boom” generation [born 1944-60], women without college education (54%)*  
*county as place to live/10 years: better (53%)*  
*oppose US 31 re-route, younger without college education (52%)*  
*age 41-49, age 65-over, employed full-time, female over 40, Area 6, Region 3 (50%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “community in county near Muskegon County” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*younger without college education (28%)*  
*age 36-40 years, region: Muskegon city, women without college education (23%)*  
*no college educ, high school/less education, post-high school/technical education (22%)*  
*male under 40, men without college education (21%)*  
*age 65-over years (20%)*  
*local taxes: “too high”, with children in home (19%)*

Respondents in the following groups said “community somewhere else in Michigan” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*works where lives (42%)*  
*live in region 11-20 years (41%)*  
*older with college education (40%)*  
*Region 1 (38%)*  
*age 56-64 years (33%)*  
*Muskegon city (31%)*  
*likely move in 5 yrs (30%)*

*college educated, female under 40, male over 40, men with college education, with no children in home, women with college education (29%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “another state” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

- county is worse place to live in past 10 years (36%)*
- age 56-64 years (33%)*
- post-high school/technical education (28%)*
- “Silent” generation [born 1925-43] (27%)*
- female over 40, older without college education, Region 3 (25%)*
- women with college education (24%)*
- age 36-40 years (23%)*

These respondents (have lived in their current city/township 15 years-less) were then asked to identify the top one or two reasons why they decided to live in the city or township where they reside:

job	14%	familiar	6
quality of life	12	Lake Michigan	6
closer to family	11	natural beauty	4
good value	11	for privacy	1
acreage	8	good shopping	1
school	8	health reasons	1
housing	7	low taxes	1
marriage	7	other	1
		undecided/don't know	2

**Intention to stay/move:**

All respondents were asked if they are likely to stay in or to move from their community in the next five years:

certain to move	6%	<b>16% Total</b>
will likely move	10	<b>MOVE</b>
will likely stay	37	<b>80% Total</b>
certain to stay	43	<b>STAY</b>
undecided/don't know	4	

In the following groups, respondents said “likely move” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

- age 30-35 years (38%)*
- male under 40 (32%)*
- age 18-29 years, age: under 40 (30%)*
- female under 40 (28%)*
- “X” generation [born 1960-81] , younger without college education (26%)*

*younger men (22%)*  
*unemployed, works outside of county (20%)*  
*home business, Muskegon Heights, works where lives (17%)*  
*employed part-time (16%)*

Respondents in the following groups said “likely stay” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*age 50-55 years (52%)*  
*Norton Shores (50%)*  
*live in region 10-less years (49%)*  
*Region 4 (48%)*  
*Region 1 (47%)*  
*employed: homemaker (46%)*  
*age 36-40 years, with children in home, works outside of county (45%)*  
*“Boom” generation [b. 1944-60] (44%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “certain stay” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*employed other jobs (64%)*  
*age 65-over years (60%)*  
*“Silent” generation [born 1925-43] , employed: retired (59%)*  
*older women (54%)*  
*“GI” generation [born 1924 - prior] , older with college, older without college (52%)*  
*older men (51%)*  
*Muskegon Twp (50%)*  
*live in region 20 years-more/lifetime, with no children in home (49%)*

**-- prospective new location**

Those who said “**move**” were asked if they expect to move to another city or township in Muskegon County, to a community in another county near Muskegon County, to somewhere else in Michigan, or to another state or country:

other city/village/township in Muskegon County	25%
community in county near Muskegon County	18
community somewhere else in Michigan	20
another state	27
another country	2
undecided/don't know	8

**-- reasons for decision to move or stay**

Respondents who said either “move” or “stay” were asked to identify the single biggest reason why they expect to do so:

<b>-- reasons why respondent “certain to move”</b>			
job	28%	its home	6
my house	17	security	6
more land	11	climate	6
own home	6	nothing	6
family and friends	6		
<b>-- reasons why respondent “likely to move”</b>			
job	19%	schools	3
family and friends	13	I like it here	3
more land	13	privacy	3
good area	6	crime	3
my house	6	study	3
I’m retired/old age	6	nothing	3
for more to do	6	undecided/don’t know	3
climate	6		
<b>-- reasons why respondent “certain to stay”</b>			
family and friends	19%	privacy	2
its home	17	economy	2
I like it here	12	my house	1
good area	11	more land	1
own my home	9	small town	1
I’m retired/old age	9	for more to do	1
water/lake	5	security	1
Job	3	business	1
convenience	3	hate moving	1
schools	2	health	1
<b>-- reasons why respondent “likely to stay”</b>			
its home	23%	schools	4
family and friends	15	water/lake	3
I like it here	11	hate moving	2
own my home	11	more land	1
job	8	downsizing	1
good area	8	small town	1
I’m retired/old age	6	for more to do	1
my house	6	security	1
		climate	1

**Most liked/disliked aspects of county**

All respondents were asked what they like the most about Muskegon County:

the water	34%	job security	1
the people	9	low cost of living	1
great outdoors	7	privacy	1
small-town feeling	7	the arts	1
familiar	6	the shopping	1
good area	6	Walker Arena	1
good things are happening	3	other	1
rural	2	nothing	6
schools	2	everything	2
hunting/fishing	1	undecided/don't know	7
it's safe	1		

They were then asked what they dislike the most:

too crowded/traffic	9%	businesses leaving	1
local government	7	city water/sewers	1
weather	6	lack of help for seniors	1
poor economics	5	lack of shopping	1
lack of jobs	4	poor housing	1
roads	4	poor use of lakes	1
crime	3	restaurants	1
not enough to do	3	rundown areas	1
downtown area	2	schools	1
high taxes	2	sheriff's department	1
industrial pollution	2	nothing	21
negative attitudes	2	other	2
not changing	2	undecided/don't know	16

**Assessment of level of local taxes**

All respondents were asked if their local taxes and fees are too high, too low or about right for what they get back in services from the city or township where they live:

much too high	14%	<b>34% Total</b>
somewhat too high	20	<b>TOO HIGH</b>
about right	62	
too low	1	
undecided/don't know	3	

Respondents in the following groups said “much too high” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

- employed: home business (50%)*
- local taxes: “too high” (41%)*

*age 30-35 years (31%)*  
*employed: other, likely move in 5 yrs (29%)*  
*younger men (24%)*  
*younger without college education (22%)*  
*age 41-49 years, region: Muskegon Heights, with children in home (21%)*  
*live in region 10-less years, Region 5 (20%)*

Respondents in the following groups said “somewhat too high” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*local taxes: “too high” (59%)*  
*employed: other (36%)*  
*county as place to live/10 years: worse (33%)*  
*male under 40 (32%)*  
*age 36-40 years, live in region 11-20 years, works in other part of county (30%)*  
*age: under 40, younger with college education (26%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “about right” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*“GI” generation [b. 1924 - prior] (77%)*  
*older with college education (76%)*  
*employed: part-time (74%)*  
*county as place to live/10 years: better (73%)*  
*older men, Region 4 (72%)*  
*men with college education (71%)*  
*region: Fruitport, Muskegon Twp, Region 3 (70%)*  
*age 65-over years, favor US 31 re-route, Muskegon city (69%)*  
*age 50-55 years, employed: retired (68%)*  
*older women (63%)*

**Employment in community**

Respondents who in a prior question said they were employed full or part time outside the home (38 percent of all respondents) were asked if they work in the same city/township where they reside, in another city/township in Muskegon County, or outside of Muskegon County:

in city or township where they live	45
other city/township in Muskegon County	35
outside of Muskegon County	17
undecided/don't know	3

Respondents in the following groups said “where they live” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*younger men (63%)*  
*Region 4 (62%)*

*Muskegon city (61%)  
 women with college education (60%)  
 female under 40, Norton Shores (59%)  
 younger without college education (58%)  
 Region 2 (57%)  
 age 18-29 years, employed part-time (55%)  
 “X” generation [b. 1960-81], all women, likely move in 5 yrs (53%)  
 age 41-49 years, female over 40, live in area 10-less years, oppose US 31 re-route (52%)  
 college education (51%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “other city/township in Muskegon County” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*older women (62%)  
 older with college education (46%)  
 favor US 31 re-route (45%)  
 Area 6 (44%)  
 age 50-55 years, live in region 11-20 years, post-high school/technical education (43%)  
 men with college education (42%)  
 male over 40 (41%)*

Respondents in the following groups said “outside of Muskegon County” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*male under 40 (38%)  
 age: under 40, likely move in 5 yrs, men without college education, older men (24%)  
 younger without college education (23%)*

Those who said “other city or township in Muskegon County” or “outside of Muskegon County” were asked to identify the city/township in which they work:

city of Muskegon	35%	Walker	3
Grand Rapids	12	Whitehall/Montague Area	3
Grand Haven	8	Bellville	2
Fruitport	7	Chicago	2
Norton Shores	5	Ludington	2
Dalton	3	Muskegon Heights	2
Holland	3	Ravenna	2
Spring Lake	3	Shelby	2
		other community	3

**Population trends/Urban sprawl:**

**-- assessment of growth in community**

All respondents were asked if there is too much or too little population growth in their community, about the right amount, or if their community is experiencing an actual decline in population:

much too much growth	12%	<b>28% Total</b>
somewhat too much growth	16	<b>TOO MUCH</b>
<b>about the right amount of growth</b>	<b>53</b>	
too little growth	8	
an actual population decline	7	
undecided/don't know	4	

In the following groups, respondents said “too much” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

- certain move in 5 yrs (44%)*
- Muskegon Twp (40%)*
- works in other part of county, Region 3 (38%)*
- Region 5 (37%)*
- male over 40, younger without college education (36%)*
- age 36-40 years, Fruitport Township (35%)*
- employed: full-time (34%)*
- age 41-49 years, employed: homemaker, younger men (33%)*

**-- assessment of urban sprawl**

Respondents (excluding those who said “actual population decline”) were told, “Urban sprawl is generally defined as low-density development that spreads out into the countryside, and relies heavily on automobiles for transportation,” and asked to what extent their community has the characteristics of urban sprawl:

a lot	43%	<b>75% Total</b>
somewhat	32	<b>A LOT/SOMEWHAT</b>
only a little	15	
not at all	8	<b>23% Total</b>
undecided/don't know	2	<b>LITTLE/NOT AT ALL</b>

Key groups indicating by the highest percentages that their community has the characteristics of urban sprawl “a lot” included:

- Fruitport Township (70%); unemployed, Region 3 (53% each); Norton Shores (52%); lived in area 11 to 20 years (50%); college educated men, Region 5 (49% each); works in another community in Muskegon County, young college educated, age 50 to 55 (48% each); younger men, age 41 to 49 (47% each); college educated,*

*Region 4 (46% each); Area 6 communities, men over age 40, Region 1 (45% each); all men, favor rerouting US 31, college educated women, student, county same over past 10 years, older college educated, age 56 to 64 (44% each); likely to stay (43%); men without college full-time employees, homemakers, no children in households, older men, older women (42% each); taxes about right, certain to stay, older without college, women over age 40 (41% each); Muskegon Township, and retired, and men under age 40 (40% each).*

Key groups indicating by the highest percentages that their community did not have the characteristics of urban sprawl at all:

*age 30 to 35 (31%); certain to move (22%); Muskegon Heights (21%); women under age 40 (17%); households with children, under age 40, men under age 40 (16% each); works in another county, age 36 to 40 (15% each); Region 2, lived in area 10 years or less, likely to move, Region 2 (13% each); full-time employees, works where they live, county worse over past 10 years, younger college educated (12% each); younger men (11%); Muskegon [city], Region 4, taxes too high, college educated men, college educated women, younger without college, younger women, college educated, and Region 4 (10% each).*

**Local government job rating**

All respondents were asked to rate the job their local government does in providing basic local services:

excellent	14%	<b>70% Total</b>
pretty good	56	<b>POSITIVE</b>
only fair	21	<b>29% Total</b>
poor	8	<b>NEGATIVE</b>
undecided/don't know	1	

Key groups indicating by the highest percentages that their community has done a positive job of providing basic local services:

*Age 30 to 35 (85%); Taxes about right, works where they live (83% each); part-time employee, county better over past 10 years (81% each); Region 4, college educated men (80%); Muskegon [city], Norton Shores (79% each); Fruitport Township (78%); young college educated, age 65 and over, men under age 40 (76% each); Region 3, homemaker, works in another community in Muskegon County (75% each); lived in area 11 to 20 years, favor rerouting US 31, college educated (74% each); Muskegon Township, full-time employee, older men (73% each); all men, certain to stay, households without children, older with and without college (72% each).*

Key groups indicating by the highest percentages that their community has done a negative job in providing basic local services:

*Muskegon Heights (63%); taxes too high (51%); certain to move, age 36 to 40 (50% each); county worse over past 10 years (44%); works at home (42%); Region 1,*

women under age 40 (39% each); younger without college (38%); households with children (36%); lived in area 10 years or less, younger women, post high school technical education (35% each); county same over past 10 years (34%); Area 6, unemployed, students, under age 40, age 18 to 29 (33% each); Region 2, Region 5, opposes rerouting US 31, men without college, college educated women (31% each); all women, no college (30% each).

**Ranking of factors in residence decisions**

A list of statements pertaining to reasons respondents might have to live in the community where they reside was read. Respondents were asked if each statement describes a very or somewhat important factor in their decision, a minor factor or not a factor at all. In rank order total importance, the responses were:

	IMPORTANT			MINOR/NOTFACTOR			undec
	very	somewhat	TOTAL	minor	not	TOTAL	
to live in a place that is quiet	58%	30%	88%	2%	9%	11%	1%
safety from crime	54	25	79	6	15	21	--
a strong sense of community	39	38	77	6	16	22	1
less traffic congestion and a quality road system	45	31	76	7	16	23	1
The availability and quality of affordable housing	37	36	73	4	22	26	1
high quality of local schools	50	17	67	7	24	31	2
lakefront areas and shorelines	41	24	65	9	25	34	1
to be closer to family	46	18	64	5	31	36	--
Available recreational activities and a strong park system	28	35	63	9	28	37	--
the rural character of the area	34	29	63	9	27	36	1
a lot of community events, activities and fun times	23	38	61	9	30	39	--
to be closer to quality health care services	30	30	60	10	30	40	--
a lot of natural and undeveloped land	29	30	59	9	31	40	1
a lower cost of living than other areas	25	34	59	8	33	41	--
the quality of local services, like water, sewer, trash and snow removal	28	30	58	10	31	41	1
nearby hunting and fishing areas	29	21	50	7	43	50	--
the historic charm of the area	17	32	49	12	38	50	1
to be closer to work	22	18	40	6	52	58	2
to live where there is a diverse mix of people of different races	12	28	40	14	45	59	1
lower local property taxes	17	22	39	13	46	59	2
to live in an area where you can walk to nearby stores and other places	16	20	36	8	56	64	--
because of a change in jobs	14	7	21	6	72	78	1

**Ranking of community concerns**

All respondents were then asked to use a scale of zero to 10 to rate each of a list of issues or concerns in Muskegon County (“0” = not a concern at all, “10” = extremely serious concern):

	Not a concern	neutral	Serious		DK/ Undec
			<u>0-4</u>	<u>5</u>	
loss of open space for leisure activities	<b>16%</b>	25%	28%	20%	11%
water pollution	<b>7</b>	9	26	52	6
loss of farmland, forest land, and natural wildlife habitats	<b>11</b>	20	30	31	8
air pollution	<b>10</b>	15	31	37	7
traffic problems and congestion	<b>26</b>	21	28	18	7
the financial strain on less populated areas to provide infrastructure services like roads, water and sewer to meet the demands of new development	<b>16</b>	24	29	18	13
the condition of local roads	<b>14</b>	20	34	27	5
the expansion and service of the Muskegon County airport	<b>29</b>	17	21	13	20
future planning and development for the downtown and lakefront areas	<b>11</b>	14	31	37	7
the quality of schools in the area.	<b>9</b>	8	26	47	10
the quality and availability of water or sewage systems	<b>11</b>	15	26	36	12
zoning decisions driven by development rather than through existing community plans	<b>14</b>	16	26	28	16
the level of planning to manage growth and development	<b>12</b>	18	30	31	9
the ability to expand and develop the existing manufacturing base	<b>12</b>	11	36	32	9
too much residential growth and development in some areas	<b>21</b>	19	30	18	12
not enough commercial or industrial growth and development	<b>19</b>	17	30	24	10
the amount of taxes paid in your community	<b>11</b>	28	32	22	7
the level of coordinated land use planning and zoning between adjacent communities	<b>15</b>	18	28	15	24
too many local governments with overlapping responsibilities	<b>20</b>	14	25	27	14
no county-wide master plan or long-term vision	<b>14</b>	17	26	31	12
Having convenient public transportation, especially for seniors and the handicapped	<b>13</b>	17	29	30	11
dilapidation and abandoned buildings in my community	<b>15</b>	14	34	25	12
old foundry town image and smell	<b>24</b>	14	26	19	17
public apathy	<b>14</b>	19	34	21	12
too much poverty in my community	<b>16</b>	17	36	22	9

*Continued next page*

*continued from previous*

the out-migration of good paying jobs	<b>7</b>	8	34	45	6
too many local businesses and industries owned by outside national and international corporations	<b>16</b>	16	24	34	10
the lack of strong county leadership	<b>16</b>	19	31	24	10
a high crime rate	<b>16</b>	14	36	28	6
a lack of cooperation between communities	<b>17</b>	13	32	21	17
urban sprawl	<b>21</b>	16	33	21	9

**Ranked by highest combined 6-8 and 9-10**

	Total 6-10		Total 6-10
out-migration of jobs	79%	no county-wide master plan/vision	57%
water pollution	78	public apathy	55
quality of schools	73	lack of strong county leadership	55
air pollution	68	lack of commercial/industrial development	54
planning/development for downtown/lakefront	68	taxes in community	54
expand/develop manufacturing base	68	urban sprawl	54
high crime rate	64	zoning decisions by development rather plans	54
water or sewage systems	62	lack of cooperation between communities	53
loss of farmland/forest/habitats	61	local governments with overlapping responsibilities	52
local roads	61	loss of open space for leisure activities	48
manage growth and development	61	too much residential growth	48
dilapidation/abandoned buildings	59	financial strain of infrastructure of new development	47
public transportation, seniors/handicapped	59	traffic and congestion	46
local business/industry owned by outside corporations	58	foundry town image/smell	45
poverty in community	58	coordinated land use planning/zoning	43
		expansion/service of Muskegon Co. airport	34

**Ranking of factors in development decisions**

Respondents were read several statements pertaining to things that may attract residential, business, industry and commercial development to Muskegon County. Respondents were then asked if each statement describes a very or somewhat important factor in attracting development, a minor factor or not a factor at all. In rank order total importance, the responses were:

	IMPORTANT			MINOR/NOT FACTOR			undec
	<i>very</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<i>minor</i>	<i>not</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
a skilled labor force	72%	22%	<b>94%</b>	3%	3%	<b>6%</b>	--%
many beautiful beaches	76	18	<b>94</b>	2	3	<b>5</b>	1
good retail opportunities	55	37	<b>92</b>	3	5	<b>8</b>	--
people willing to work together	77	15	<b>92</b>	3	4	<b>7</b>	1
strong school system and opportunity for higher education	77	15	<b>92</b>	3	4	<b>7</b>	1
an effective county wastewater treatment system	70	19	<b>89</b>	4	6	<b>10</b>	1
cultural opportunities like the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Freunthal Theatre, Cherry Playhouse, and summer festivals	56	32	<b>88</b>	5	6	<b>11</b>	1
Economic diversity, including a variety of business types and sizes, as well as ethnc ownership and backgrounds	48	38	<b>86</b>	6	6	<b>12</b>	2
recent growth and development	42	44	<b>86</b>	8	4	<b>12</b>	1
new industrial parks	33	43	<b>76</b>	11	12	<b>23</b>	1
Michigan’s adventure, which draws many people to the area	37	37	<b>74</b>	15	9	<b>24</b>	2
the area’s ethnic diversity	30	42	<b>72</b>	16	10	<b>26</b>	2

**Assessment of county as better/worse place**

All respondents were asked if Muskegon County is a better or a worse place to live than it was 10 years ago (or since the respondent moved there if fewer than 10 years ago)

much better	19%	<b>48% Total</b>
somewhat better	29	<b>BETTER</b>
<b>about the same</b>	<b>35</b>	
somewhat worse	15	<b>17% Total</b>
much worse	2	<b>WORSE</b>

Respondents in the following groups said “better” by the highest percentages:

- part-time employee, works in other part of county (68%)*
- works outside of county, works where they live (60%)*
- women with college education (59%)*
- younger with college education (58%)*
- full-time employee, Fruitport Township, Muskegon [city] (57%)*
- college education, live in region 10-less years, taxes “about right” (56%)*
- age 36-40 years, favor US 31 re-route (55%)*
- older with college education (54%)*
- age 50 to 55 (52%)*
- Region 3, college educated men, younger women (51%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “same” by the highest percentages:

- unemployed (67%)*
- Norton Shores (50%)*
- certain move in 5 years, Region 4 (44%)*
- employed at home, younger men, younger without college education (42%)*
- Muskegon Township, taxes too high, retired, age 41 to 49 (40%)*
- women without college, households with children, high school or less education, post high school technical education (39%)*
- Lived in area 11 to 20 years, men without college, age 65 and over (38%)*

Respondents in the following groups said “worse” by the highest percentages:

- Muskegon Heights (42%)*
- Other employment (36%)*
- Employed at home (33%)*
- age 50-55 years (28%)*
- taxes “too high” (26%)*
- homemakers (25%)*
- oppose US 31 re-route, Region 1 (24%)*
- “GI” generation [born 1924 - prior] , age 30-35 years, likely move in 5 yrs (23%)*
- Age 18 to 29 (21%)*
- Area 6, Region 5, college educated men, older men, men under age 40 (20%)*

Those who said “better” or “worse” were asked to state their reason for saying so:

<u>Reasons for “better”</u>		<u>Reasons for “worse”</u>	
new businesses	15%	unemployment	27%
trying to improve	14	crime	18
better shopping	12	business leaving	16
it’s cleaned up	8	industrial expansion	8
more to do now	8	schools	8
good people moving in	7	too much politics	6
jobs	6	declining retail	4
lakefront improvements	6	too crowded	3
community involvement	5	no growth	2
improved schools	5	nothing to do	2
cleaner air	3	urban sprawl	2
improved roads	3	other	4
less crime	2		
new leadership	2		
diversity	1		
fewer people	1		
undecided/don’t know	2		

**Ranking of factors in development decisions**

A list of statements concerning policy goals was read. Respondents were asked if each statement describes a “top” or an “important” priority, a slight priority or not a priority at all. In rank order total “top/important” priority, the responses were:

	PRIORITY			SLIGHT/NOT PRIORITY			undec
	<i>top</i>	<i>important</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<i>slight</i>	<i>not</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
encouraging the creation and expansion of businesses and industries creating new jobs	76%	20%	<b>96%</b>	3%	1%	<b>4%</b>	--%
continue to provide more investments in higher education and job training	74	17	<b>91</b>	6	3	<b>9</b>	--
providing tax and financial incentives for the reuse and redevelopment of the inner city areas of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights	50	31	<b>81</b>	11	6	<b>17</b>	2
strengthening Muskegon County’s image as a tourist attraction	46	35	<b>81</b>	9	9	<b>18</b>	1
offering incentives for development to occur in designated areas where roads, water and sewer services are already available, including having developers pay more of the cost to build infrastructure if it does not exist	48	31	<b>79</b>	12	6	<b>18</b>	3
preserving the character of rural areas	41	38	<b>79</b>	15	5	<b>20</b>	1
provide incentives for owners of farmland to preserve it	45	33	<b>78</b>	13	8	<b>21</b>	1
preventing the loss of farmland and protecting it from development	36	37	<b>73</b>	19	7	<b>26</b>	1
Improving and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities in and around new development	25	45	<b>70</b>	22	7	<b>29</b>	1
the general public subsidizing the expansions of water and sewer service for the purpose of economic development	34	35	<b>69</b>	17	12	<b>29</b>	2
containing water and sewer expansion only to areas where growth is planned	25	42	<b>67</b>	19	10	<b>29</b>	4
expanding and improving the airport	20	39	<b>59</b>	21	18	<b>39</b>	2
developing more bike paths	16	24	<b>40</b>	29	30	<b>59</b>	1

**Support/Oppose development ideas**

Respondents were read a list of several statements describing how growth and development can be encouraged and controlled where needed was read. Respondents were asked if they support or oppose each idea. In rank order total “support”, the responses were:

	SUPPORT			OPPOSE			undec
	<i>strongly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>strongly</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
supporting local farmers by purchasing locally grown or produced foods	64%	30%	<b>94%</b>	2%	2%	<b>4%</b>	2%
more must be done to meet the needs of large area employers to increase the chances they will stay in Muskegon	64	29	<b>93</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>	2
create a government-supported program to concentrate on redevelopment and re-investment in the inner cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights	48	36	<b>84</b>	9	3	<b>12</b>	4
Provide tax incentives for landowners who voluntarily preserve farmland and open space	44	40	<b>84</b>	9	4	<b>13</b>	3
by expanding the use of Muskegon Lake as a port, it can attract large foreign ships, making the area a more important destination for travel and commerce	50	32	<b>82</b>	8	7	<b>15</b>	3
Preserve farmland and open space by adopting and implementing local zoning regulation that limits residential development	48	32	<b>80</b>	14	4	<b>18</b>	2
Regulate commercial and industrial growth and development so that it may occur only in and around existing cities and other areas that already have municipal services	36	43	<b>79</b>	10	3	<b>13</b>	8
Allow developers to build more homes in some areas in exchange for preserving farmland and open space in other areas	33	44	<b>77</b>	8	8	<b>16</b>	7
Extend water and sewer lines to the northern communities in the county as the first step to providing more residential and commercial development in that area	28	39	<b>67</b>	14	12	<b>26</b>	7
Provide a method of sharing tax revenues from higher growth areas that have experienced growth and development with the core city areas that have been unable to attract development	26	41	<b>67</b>	16	12	<b>28</b>	5
Develop the Pere Marquette Park beach like the grand haven area to provide a business district that offers tourists and residents unique dining, shopping and recreational opportunities	39	25	<b>64</b>	13	19	<b>32</b>	4
Rehabilitate the old Muskegon Mall to create an urban village development that offers multiple commercial and residential uses	34	30	<b>64</b>	12	14	<b>28</b>	8

**Favor/Oppose US 31 re-route**

Respondents were told, “Transportation plans call for U.S. 31 to be rerouted in Ottawa County, which will result in much of the traffic carried by that highway to bypass southern Muskegon County.” They were then asked if they favor or oppose the plans to reroute this highway:

strongly favor	30%	<b>47% Total</b>
somewhat favor	17	<b>FAVOR</b>
somewhat oppose	12	<b>36% Total</b>
strongly oppose	24	<b>OPPOSE</b>
undecided/don’t know	17	

Respondents in the following groups said “favor” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

- older with college education (68%)*
- students (67%)*
- College educated men (63%)*
- live in region 11-20 years (60%)*
- college education, works in other part of county (58%)*
- Fruitport Township (57%)*
- age 65-over years (56%)*
- “GI” generation [born 1924 - prior] , region: Norton Shores, works outside of county (55%)*
- county as place to live/10 years: better, women with college education, Region 4 (54%)*
- retired, Region 1 (53%)*
- Taxes “about right,” men over age 40 (52%)*

In the following groups, respondents said “oppose” in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

- Muskegon Heights (67%)*
- employed part-time (55%)*
- likely move in 5 yrs (52%)*
- county as place to live/10 years: worse, employed: other, works where lives (50%)*
- male under 40 (48%)*
- age 36-40 years, men without college, post-high school/technical education (45%)*
- age 56-64 years, certain move in 5 yrs (44%)*
- taxes “too high” (43%)*
- “X” generation [born 1960-81] , younger men, younger without college, Region 5 (42%)*
- Under age 40 (41%)*
- Region 2, Muskegon Township, unemployed, older without college, age 50 to 55 (40%)*

Respondents in the following groups were undecided on this question in percentages significantly higher than the survey average:

*employed: other (43%)*  
*age 30-35 years (31%)*  
*male under 40 (28%)*  
*unemployed (27%)*  
*Muskegon city (26%)*  
*age: under 40 (25%),*  
*men with college education (24%)*

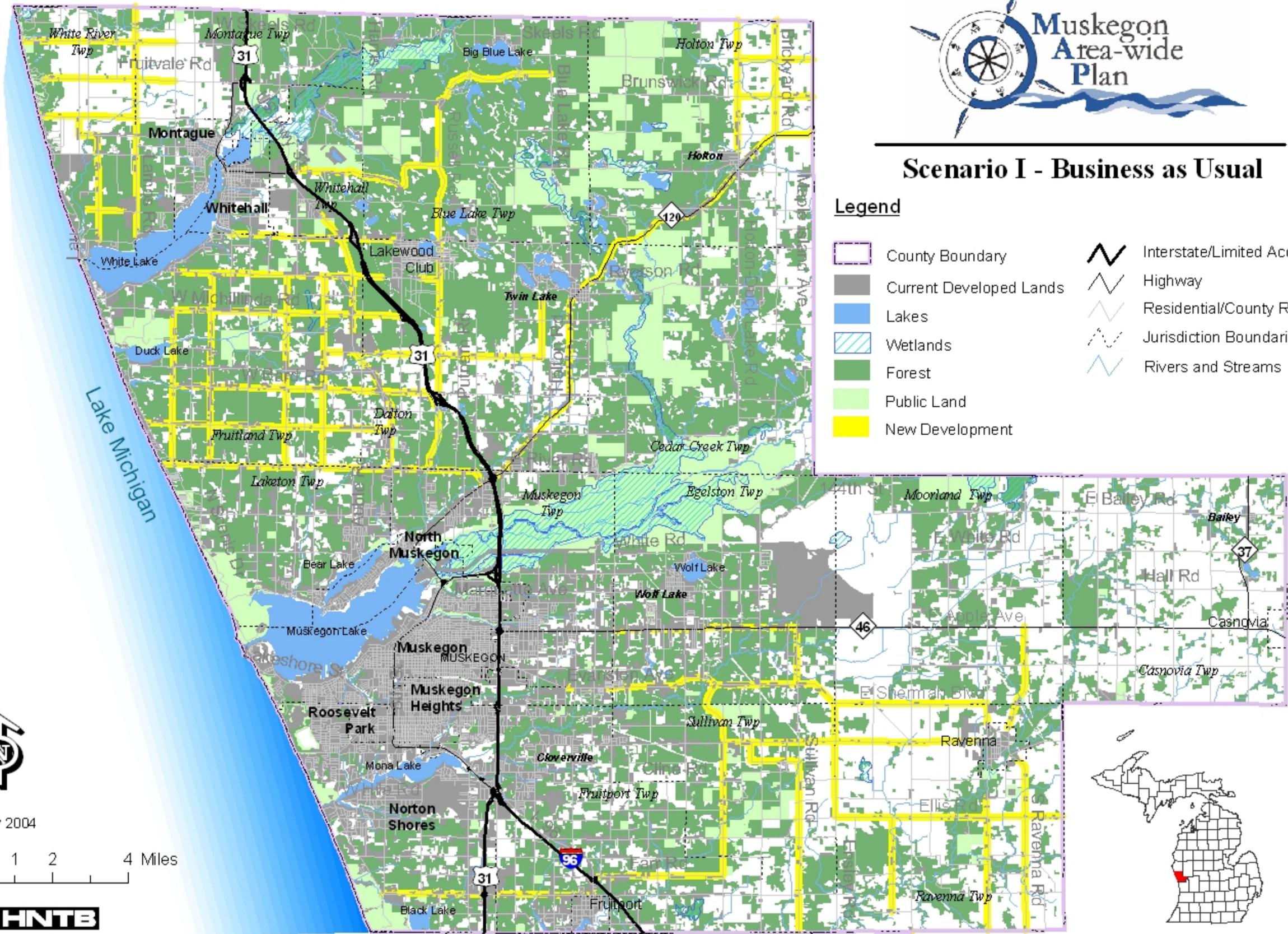
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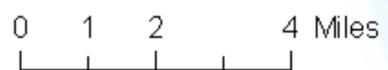
## Scenario I - Business as Usual

### Legend

- |  |                         |  |                           |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Wetlands                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | Forest                  |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Public Land             |  |                           |
|  | New Development         |  |                           |



July 2004

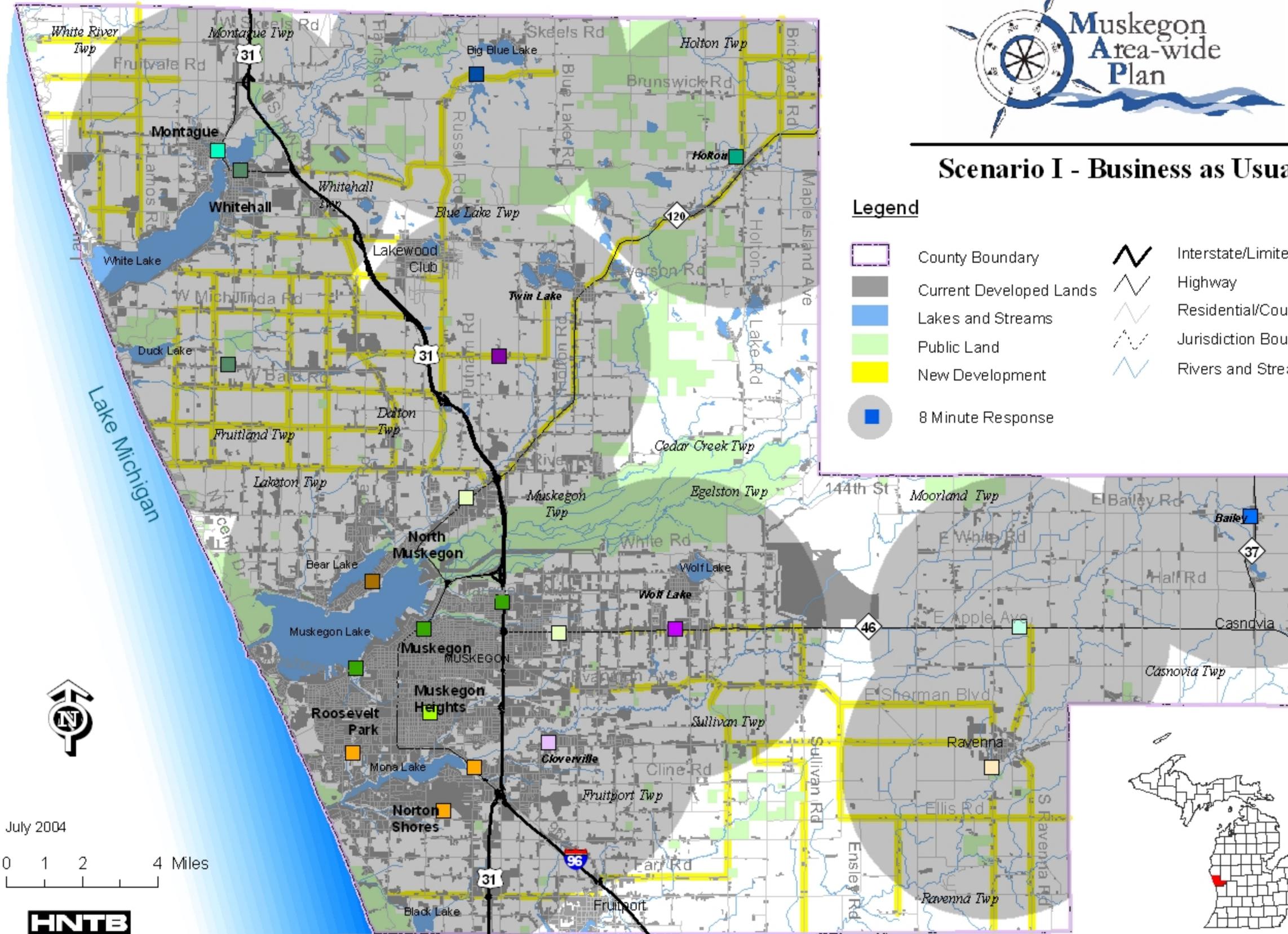




## Scenario I - Business as Usual

### Legend

- |  |                         |  |                           |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes and Streams       |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | 8 Minute Response       |  |                           |



July 2004

0 1 2 4 Miles

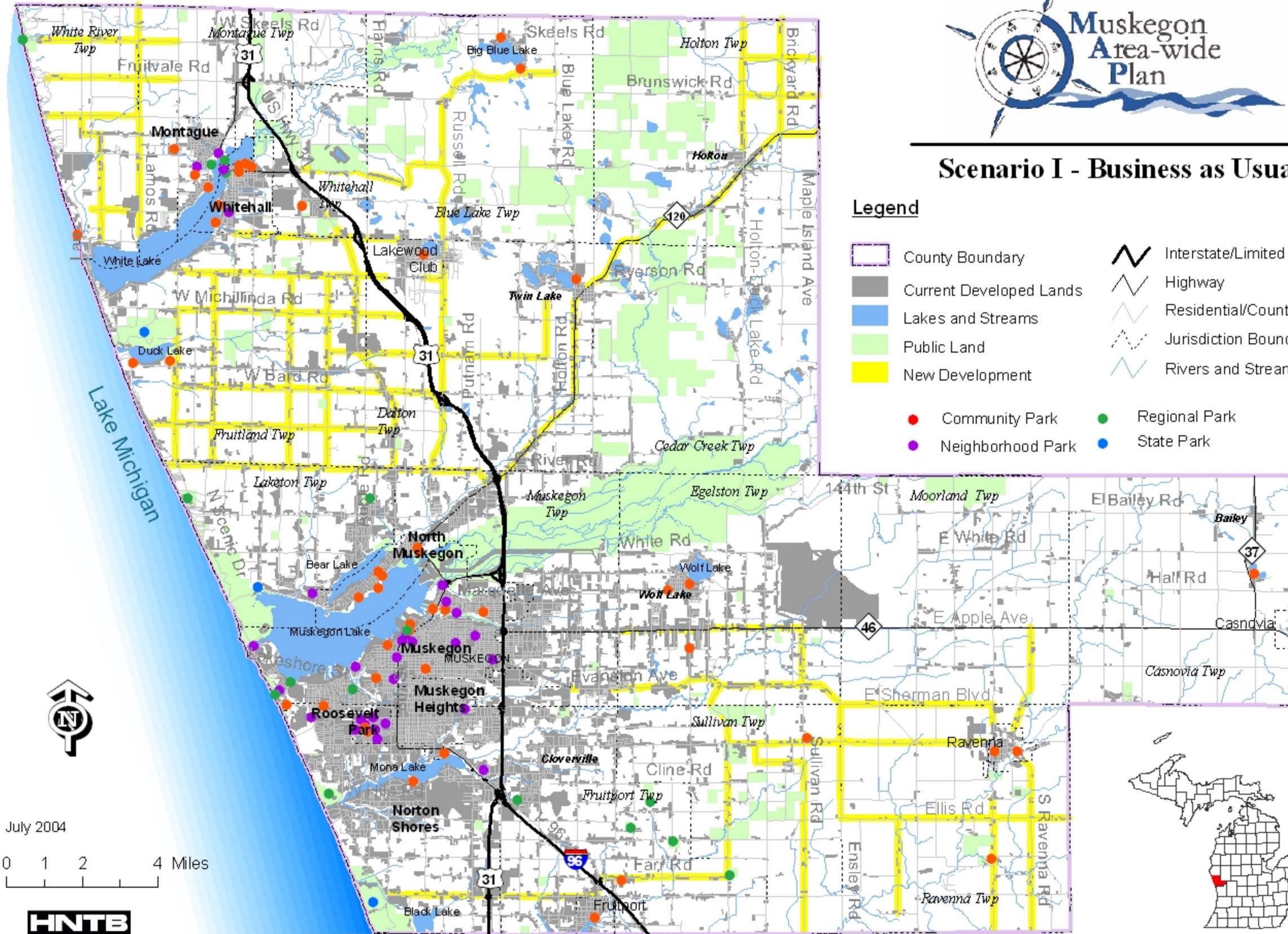
**HNTB**



## Scenario I - Business as Usual

### Legend

- |  |                         |  |                           |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes and Streams       |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Community Park          |  | Regional Park             |
|  | Neighborhood Park       |  | State Park                |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

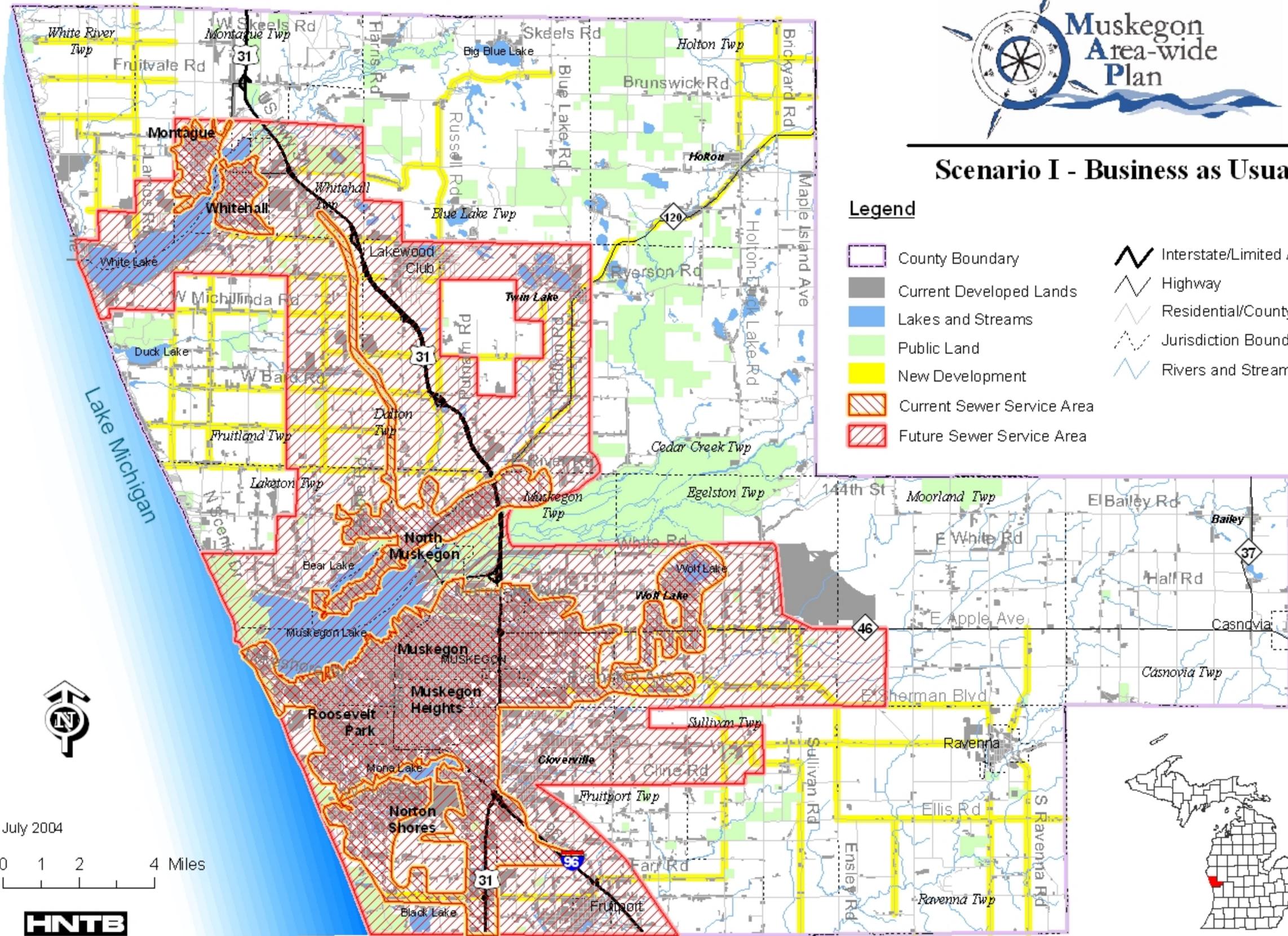




## Scenario I - Business as Usual

### Legend

- |  |                            |   |                           |
|--|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|   | County Boundary            |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|   | Current Developed Lands    |  | Highway                   |
|   | Lakes and Streams          |  | Residential/County Road   |
|   | Public Land                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|   | New Development            |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|   | Current Sewer Service Area |   |                           |
|  | Future Sewer Service Area  |   |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

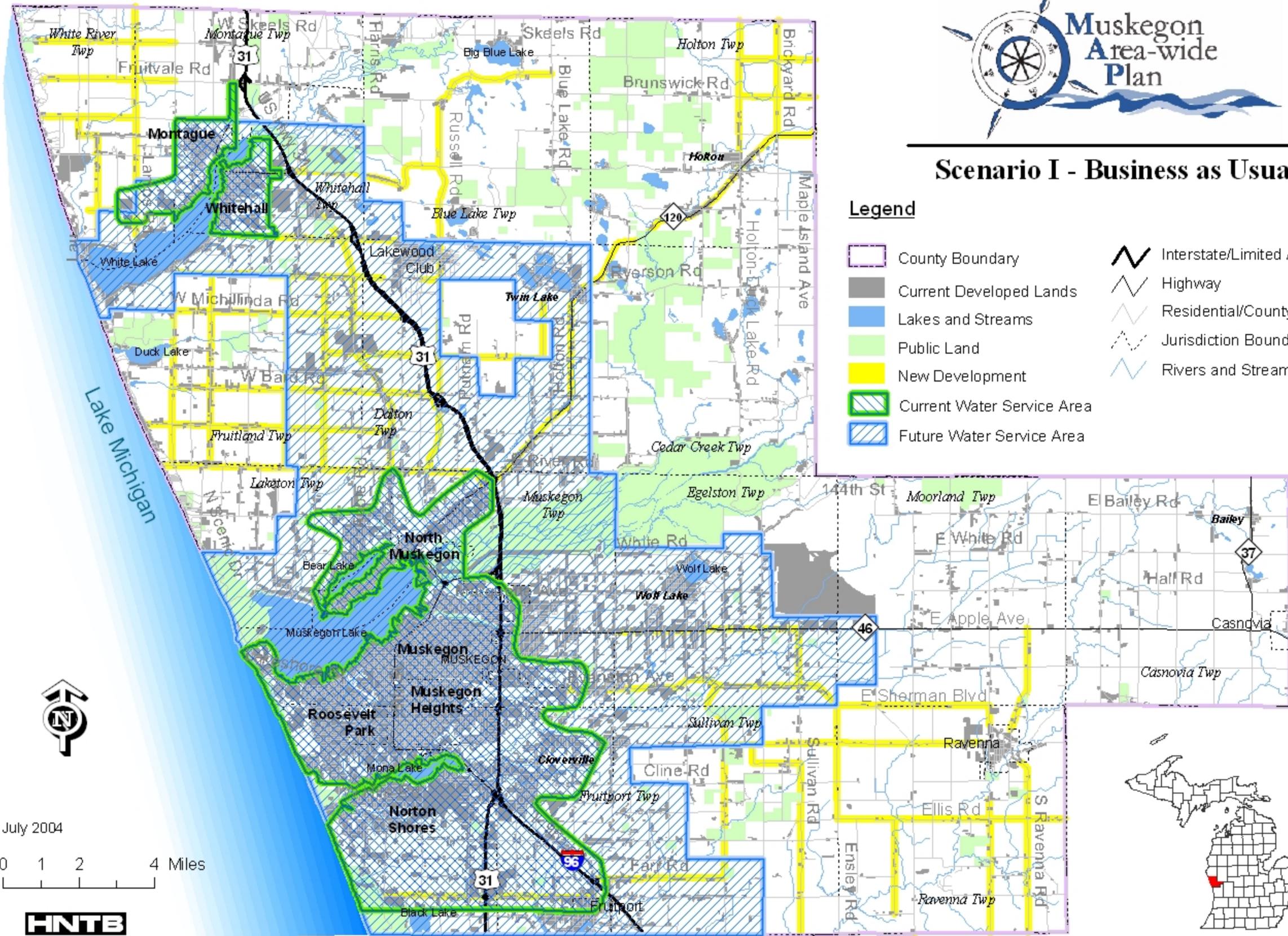




## Scenario I - Business as Usual

### Legend

- |  |                            |  |                           |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary            |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands    |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes and Streams          |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development            |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Current Water Service Area |  |                           |
|  | Future Water Service Area  |  |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

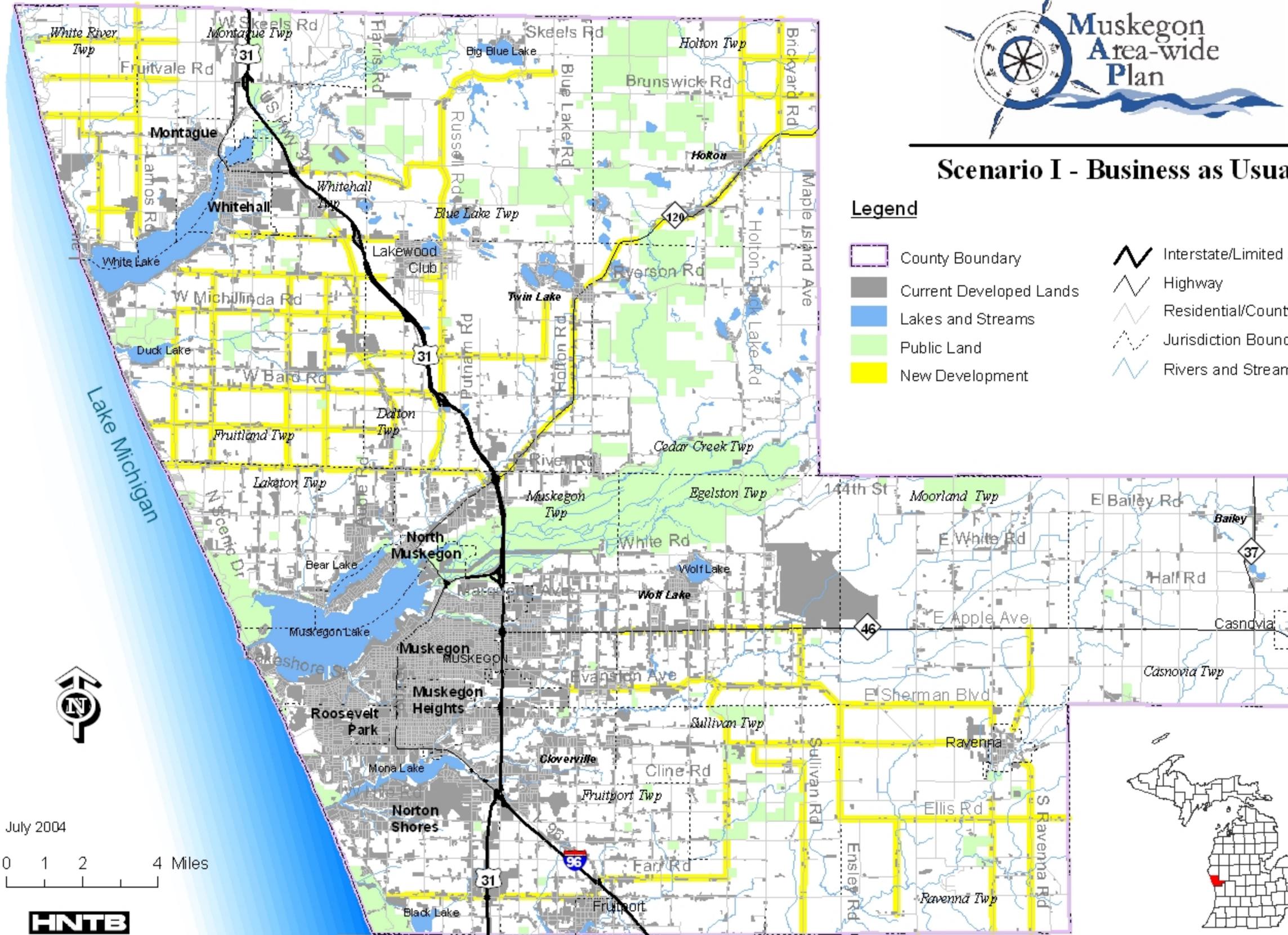




## Scenario I - Business as Usual

### Legend

- |   |                         |   |                           |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes and Streams       |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

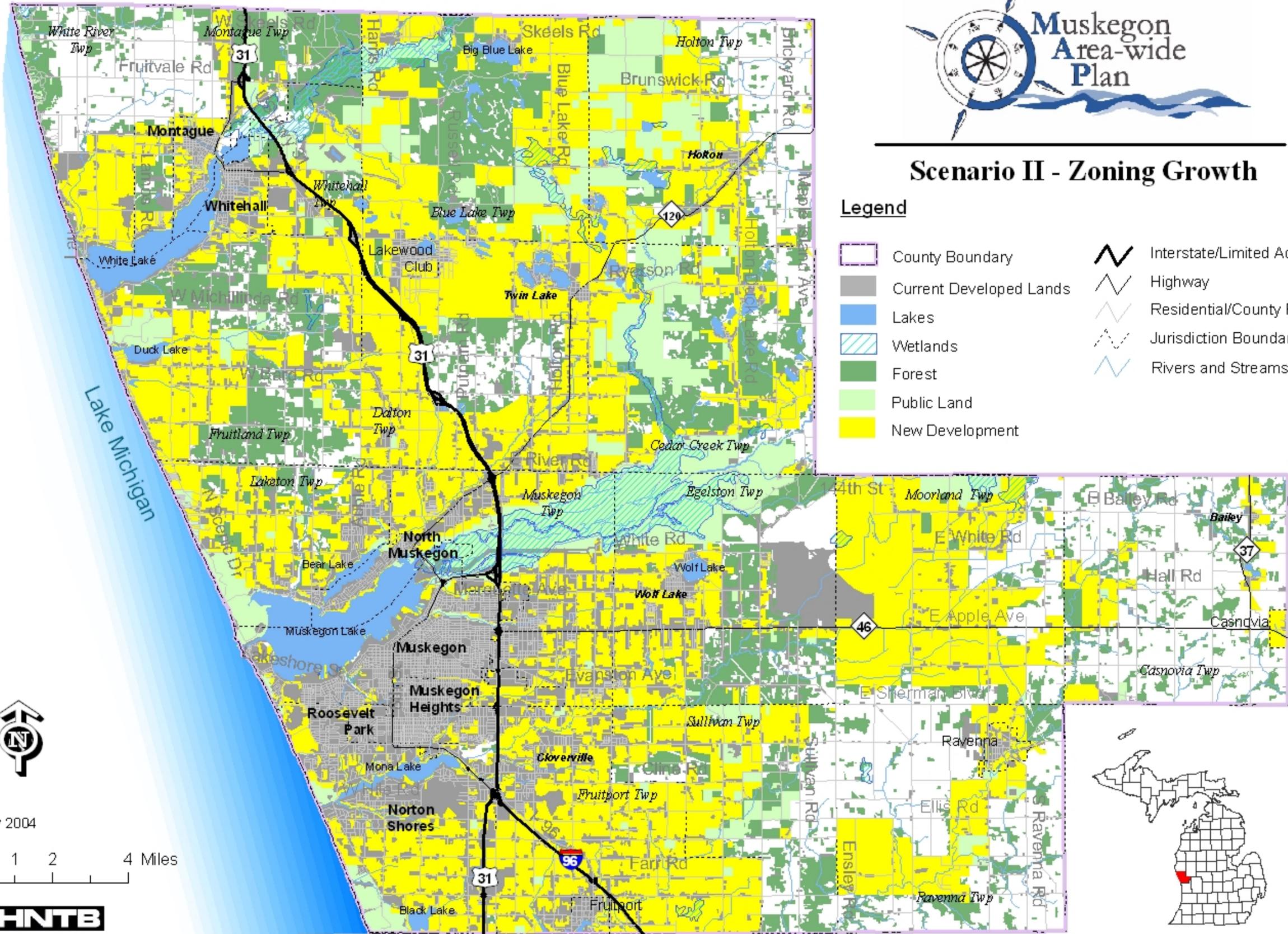




## Scenario II - Zoning Growth

### Legend

- |  |                         |  |                           |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Wetlands                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | Forest                  |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Public Land             |  |                           |
|  | New Development         |  |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

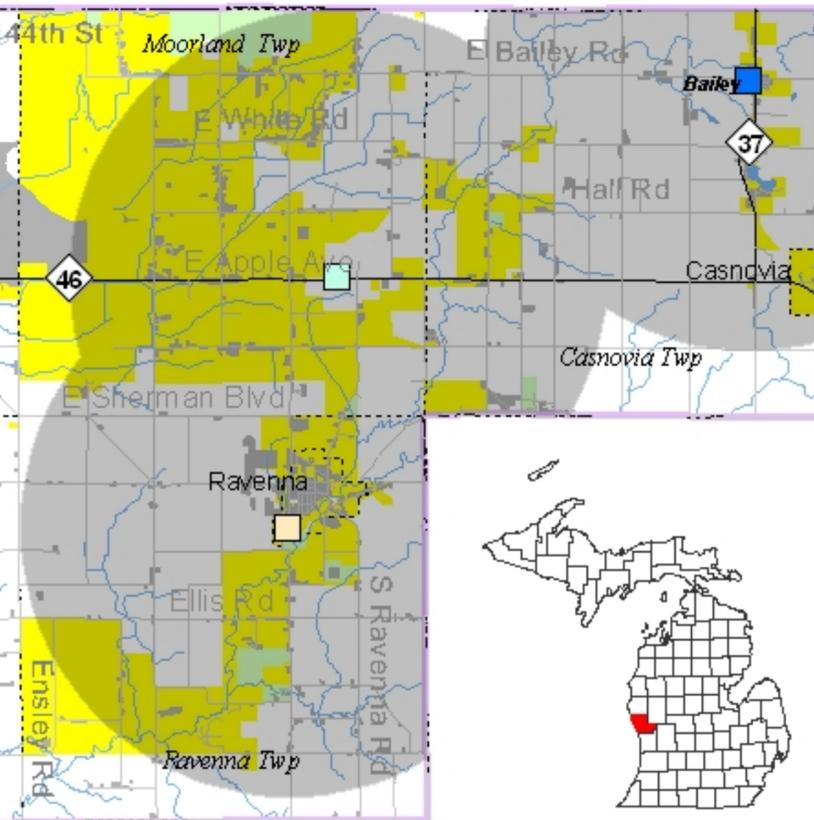
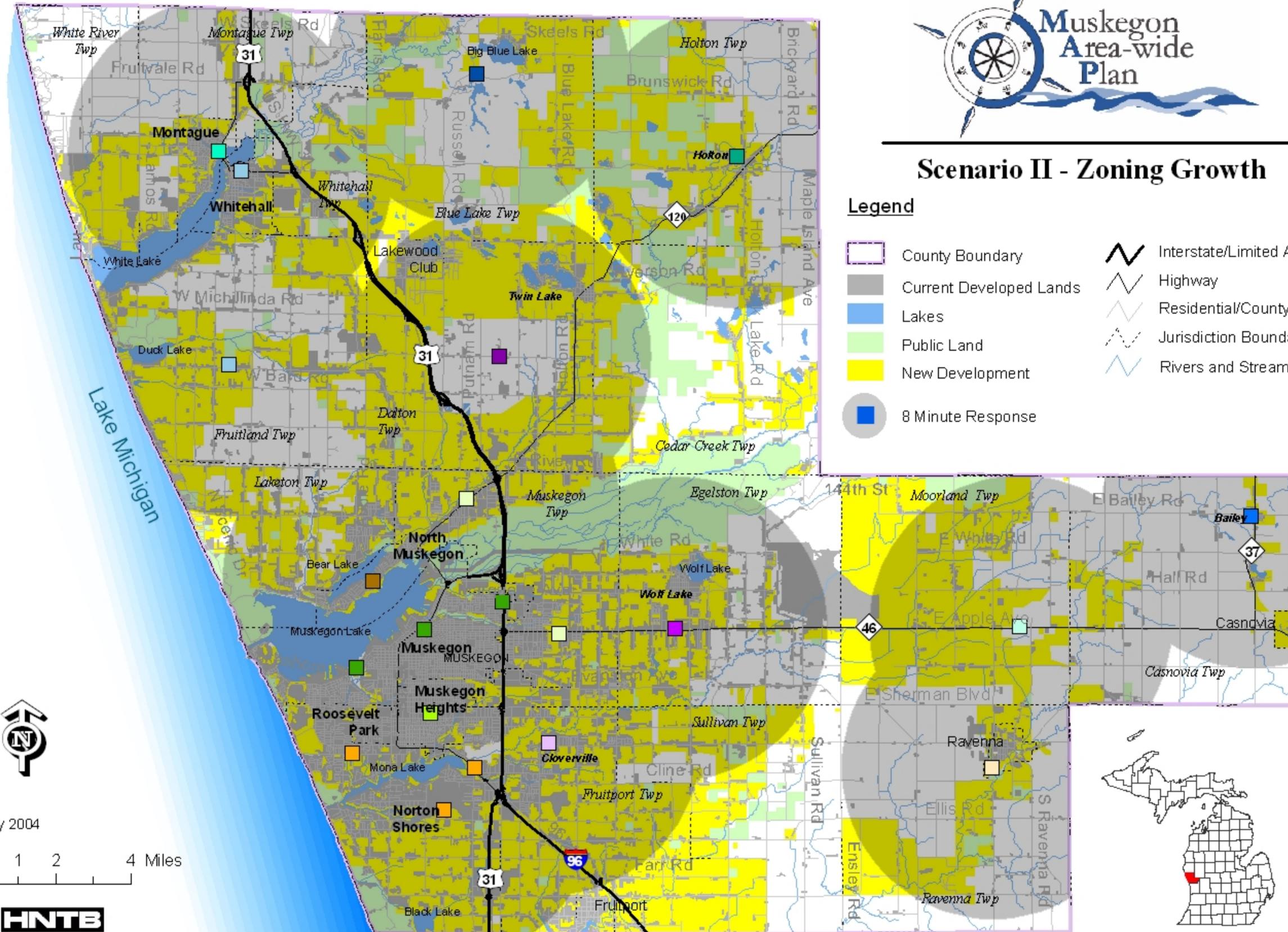




## Scenario II - Zoning Growth

### Legend

- |  |                         |  |                           |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | 8 Minute Response       |  |                           |



July 2004  
0 1 2 4 Miles

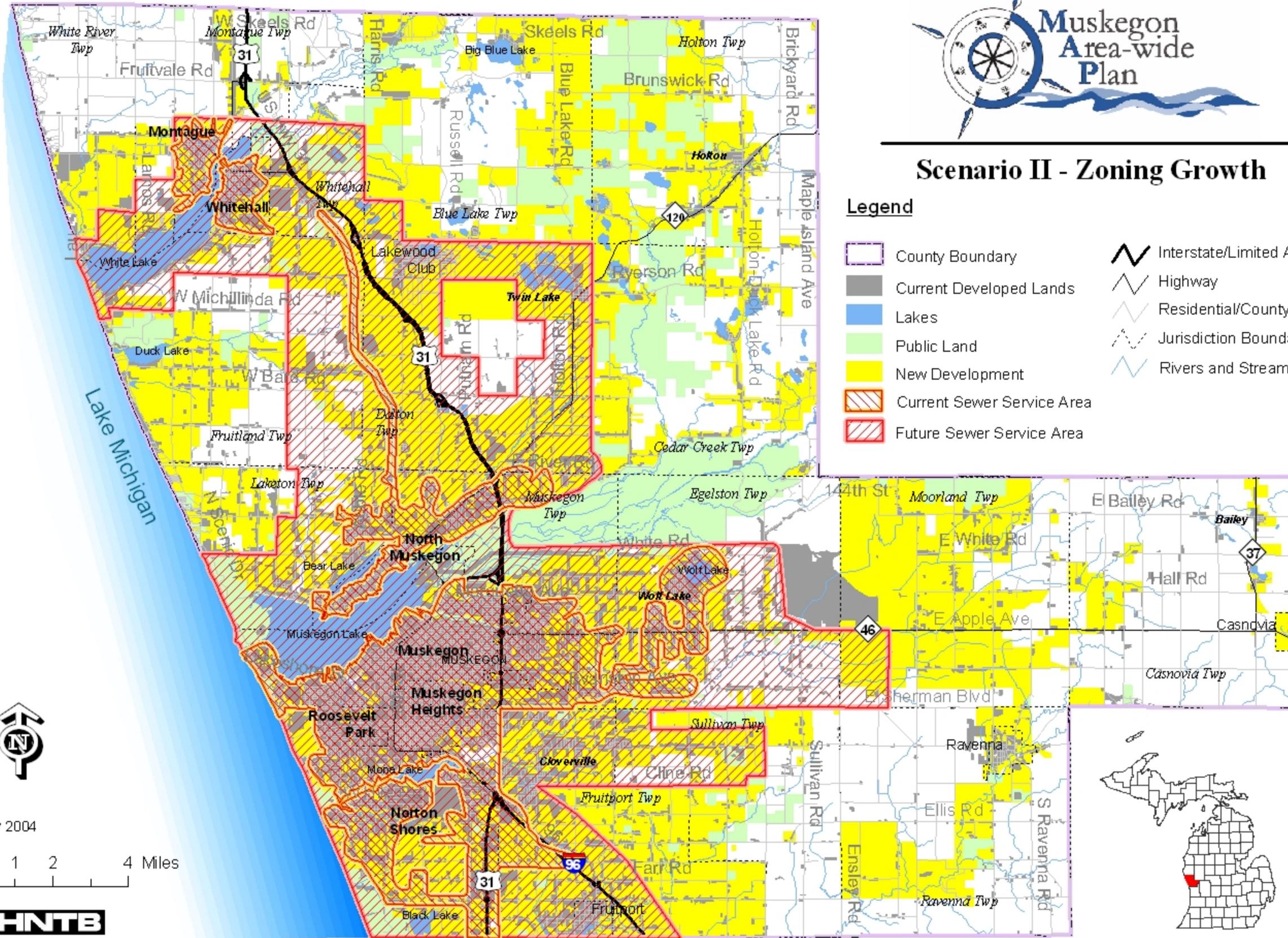




## Scenario II - Zoning Growth

### Legend

- |  |                            |  |                           |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary            |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands    |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                      |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development            |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Current Sewer Service Area |  |                           |
|  | Future Sewer Service Area  |  |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

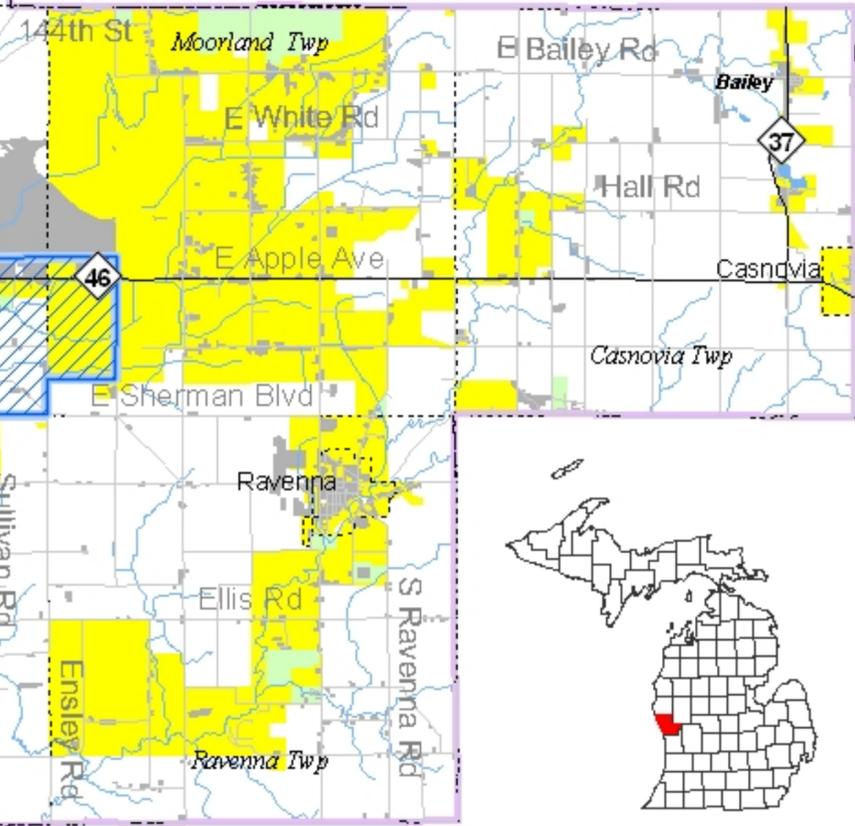
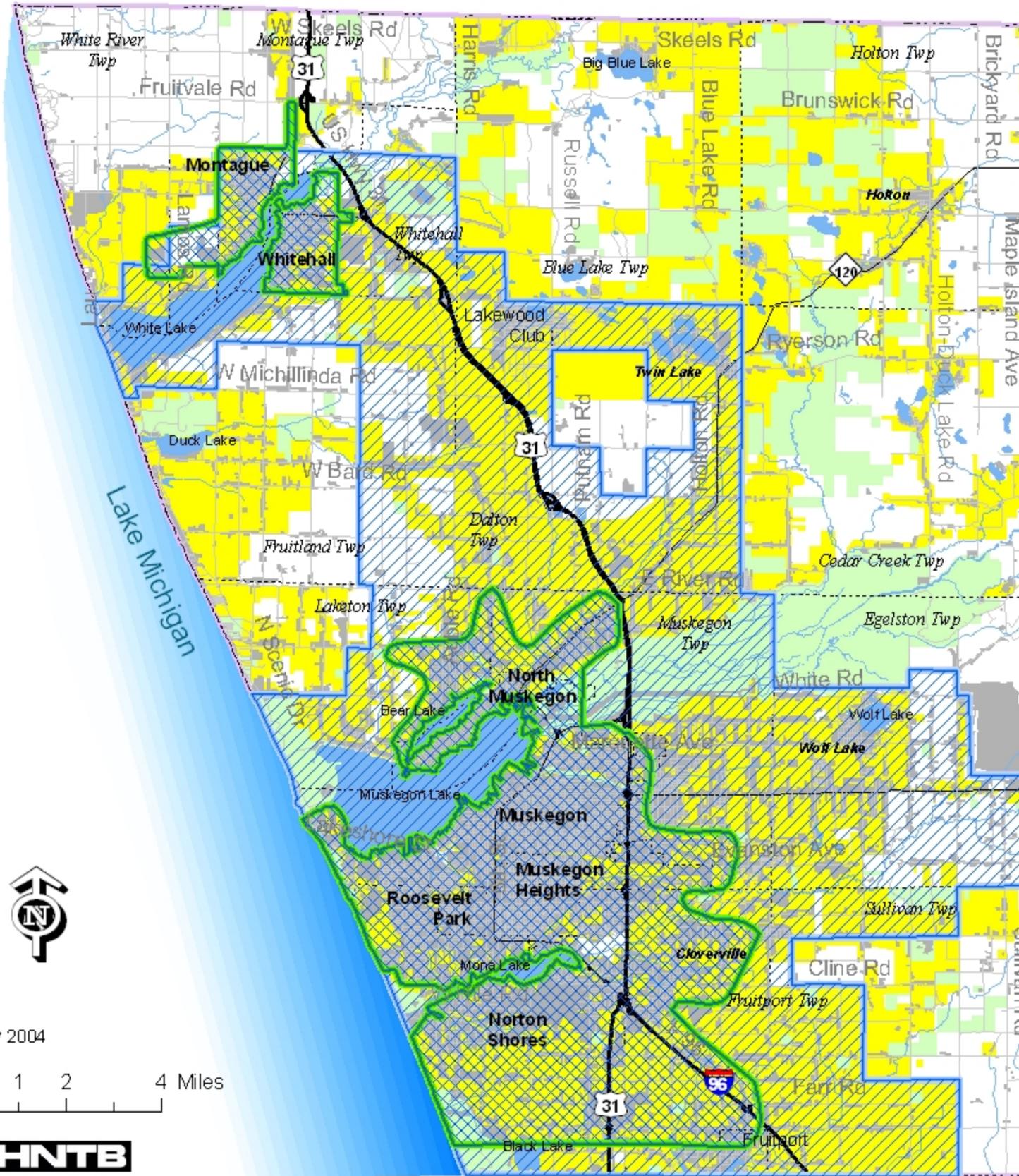




## Scenario II - Zoning Growth

### Legend

- |  |                            |  |                           |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary            |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands    |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                      |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development            |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Current Water Service Area |  |                           |
|  | Future Water Service Area  |  |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

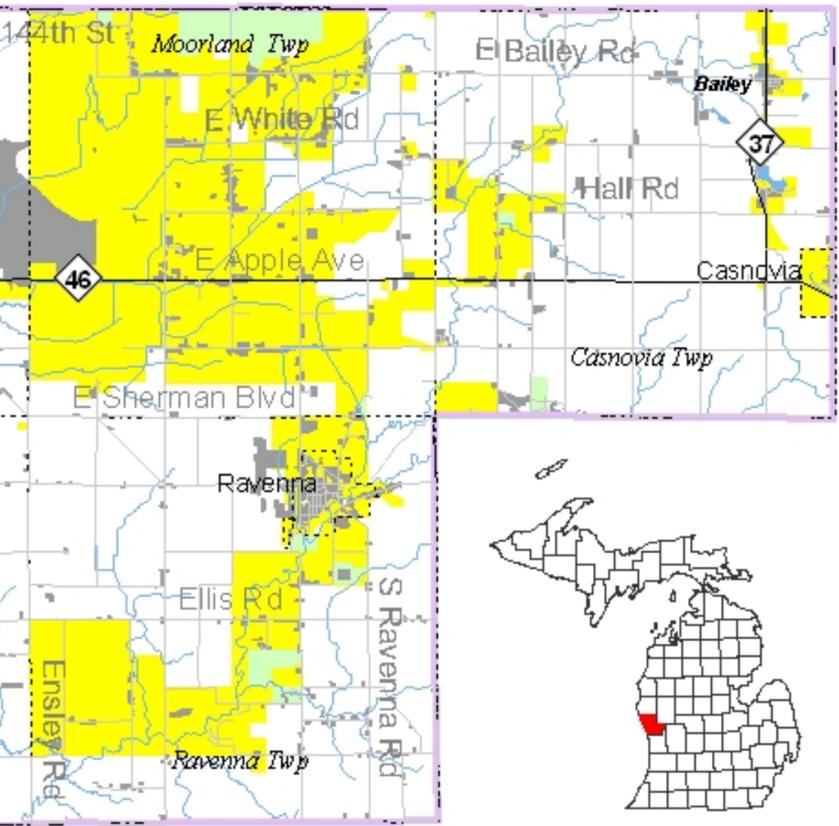
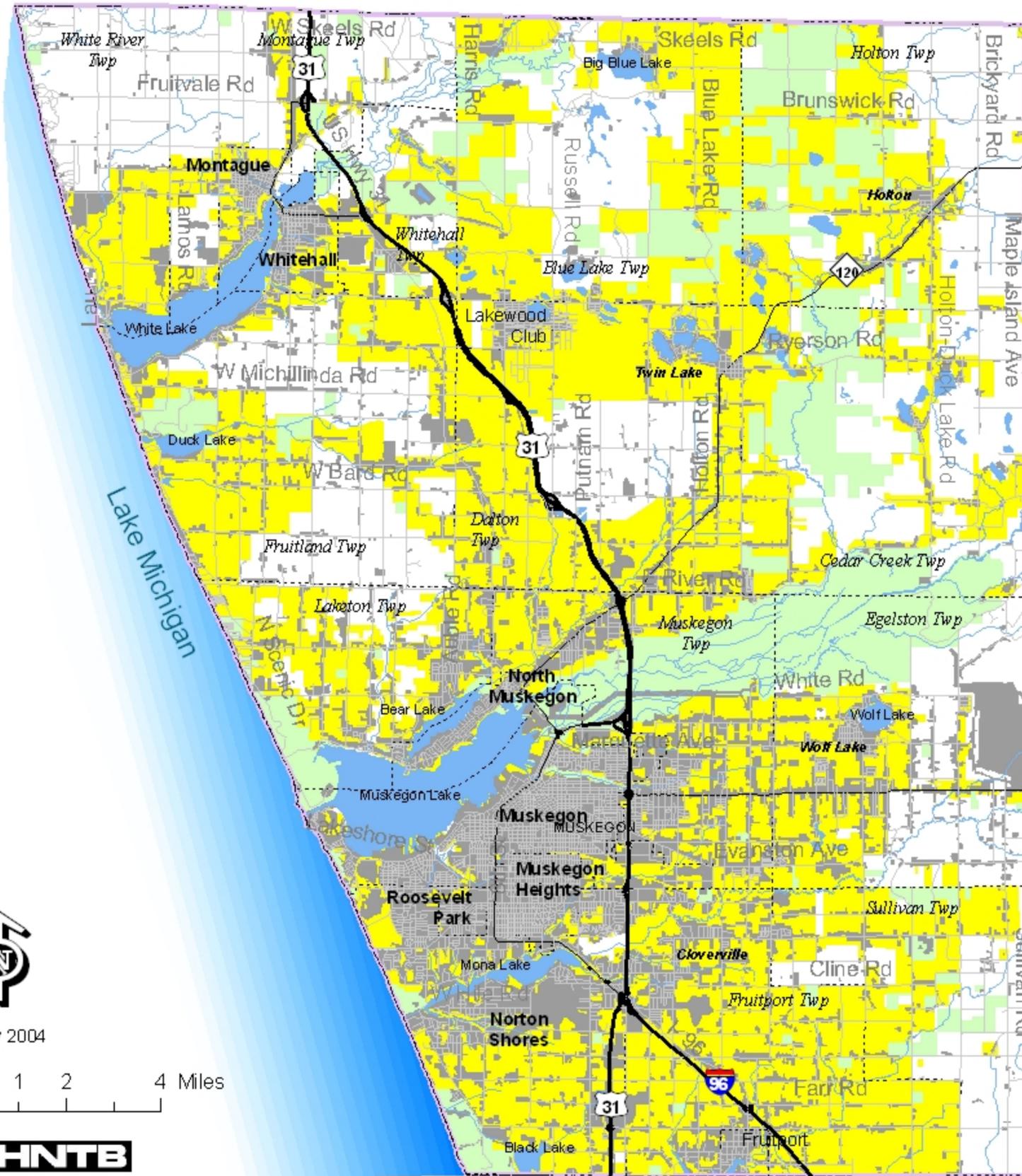




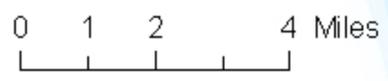
## Scenario II - Zoning Growth

### Legend

- |   |                         |   |                           |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |



July 2004

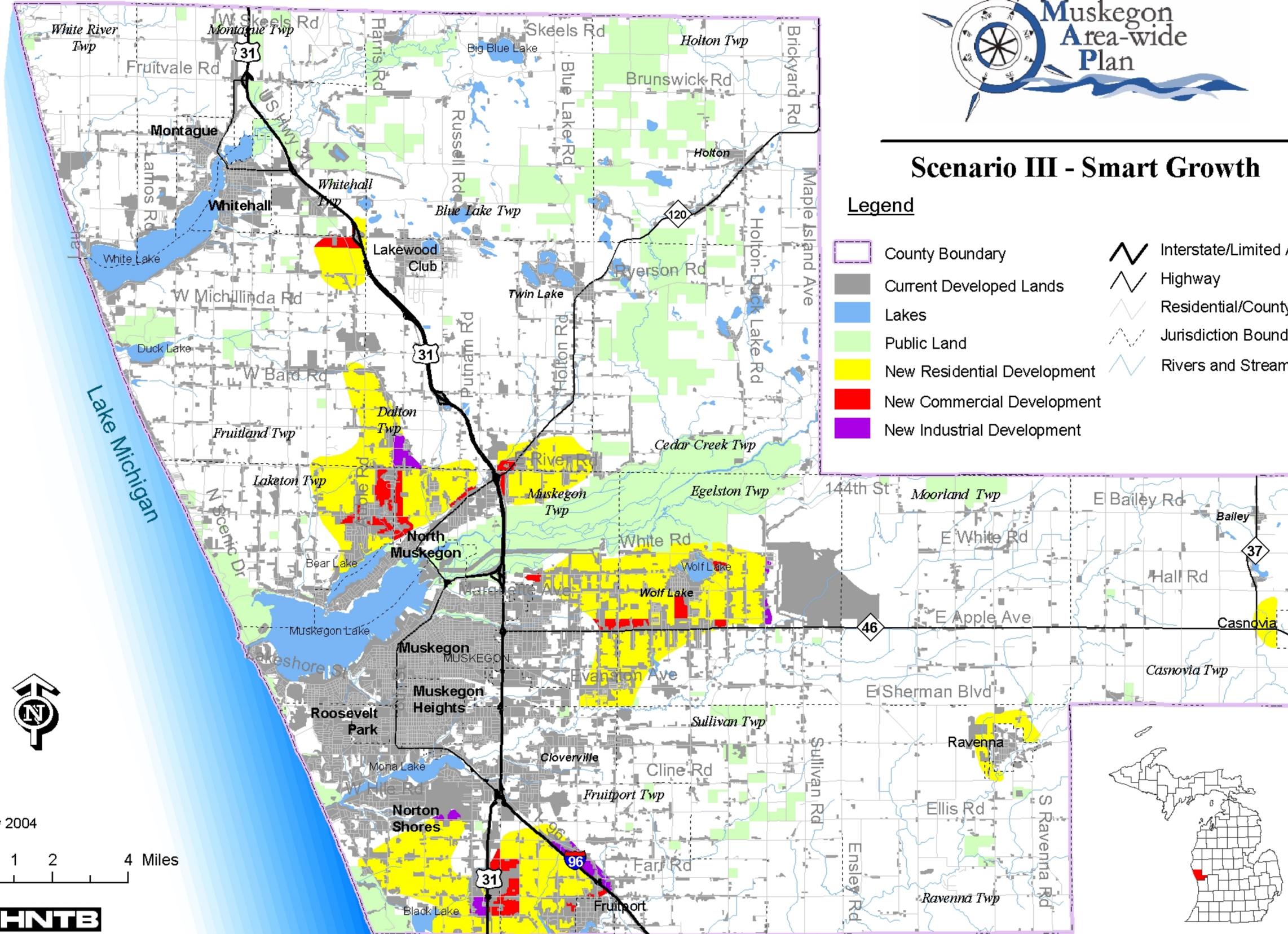




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| County Boundary             | Interstate/Limited Access |
| Current Developed Lands     | Highway                   |
| Lakes                       | Residential/County Road   |
| Public Land                 | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
| New Residential Development | Rivers and Streams        |
| New Commercial Development  |                           |
| New Industrial Development  |                           |



July 2004

0 1 2 4 Miles

**HNTB**

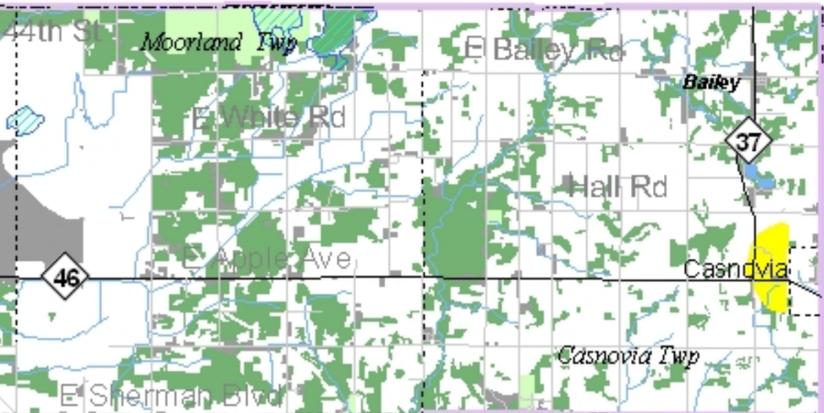
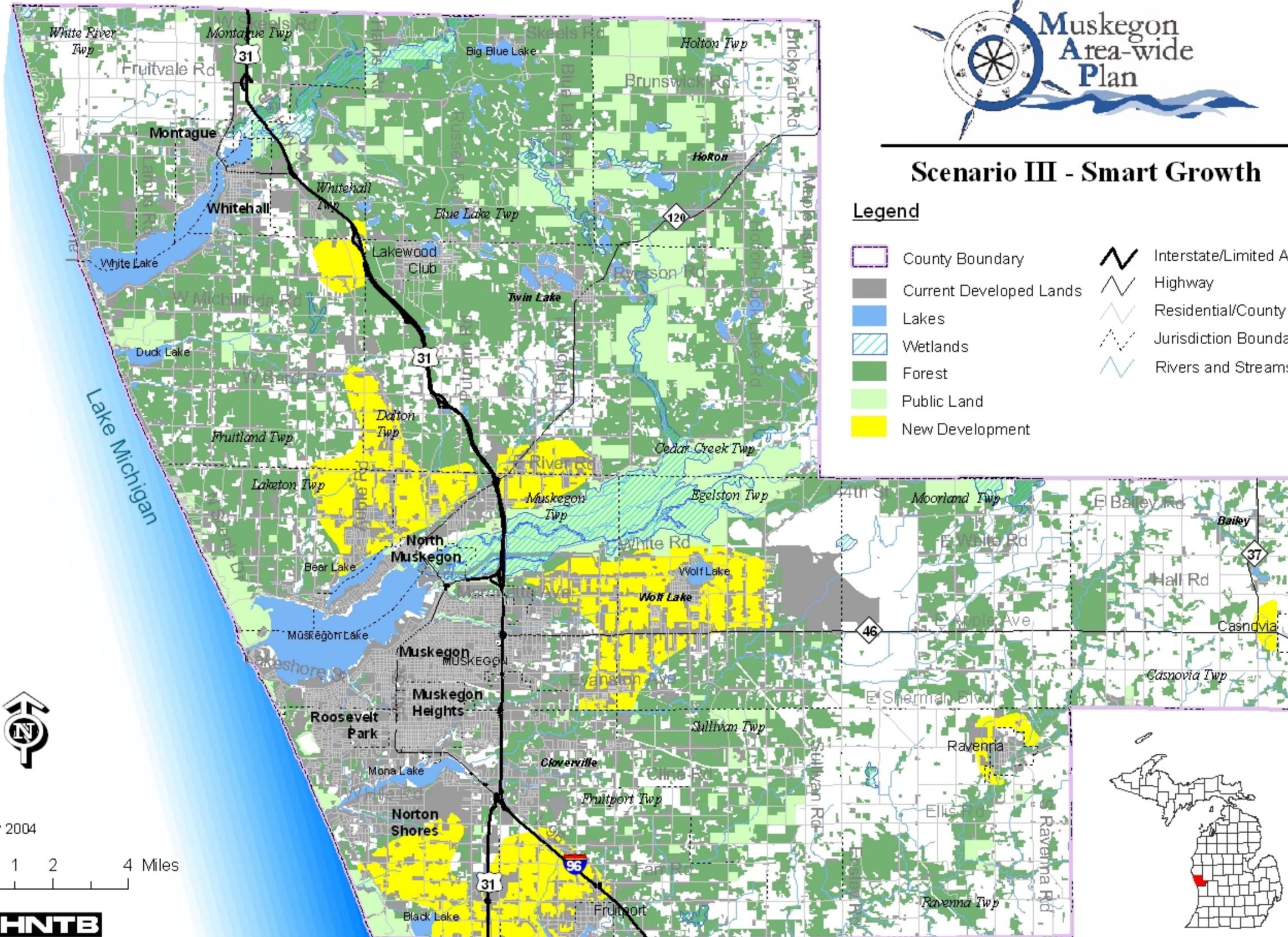




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| County Boundary         | Interstate/Limited Access Highway |
| Current Developed Lands | Highway                           |
| Lakes                   | Residential/County Road           |
| Wetlands                | Jurisdiction Boundaries           |
| Forest                  | Rivers and Streams                |
| Public Land             |                                   |
| New Development         |                                   |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

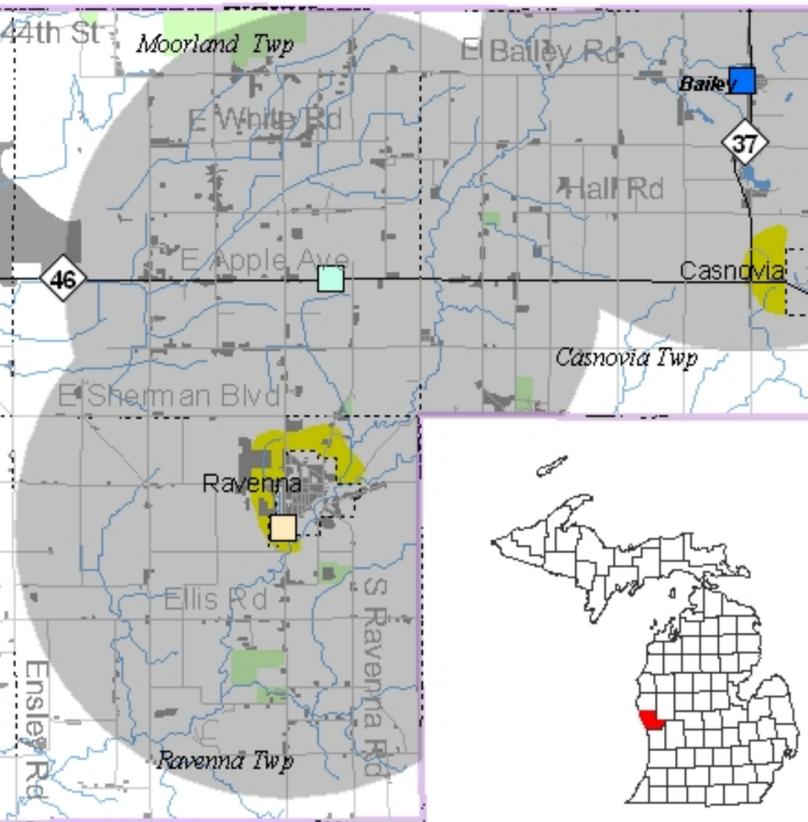
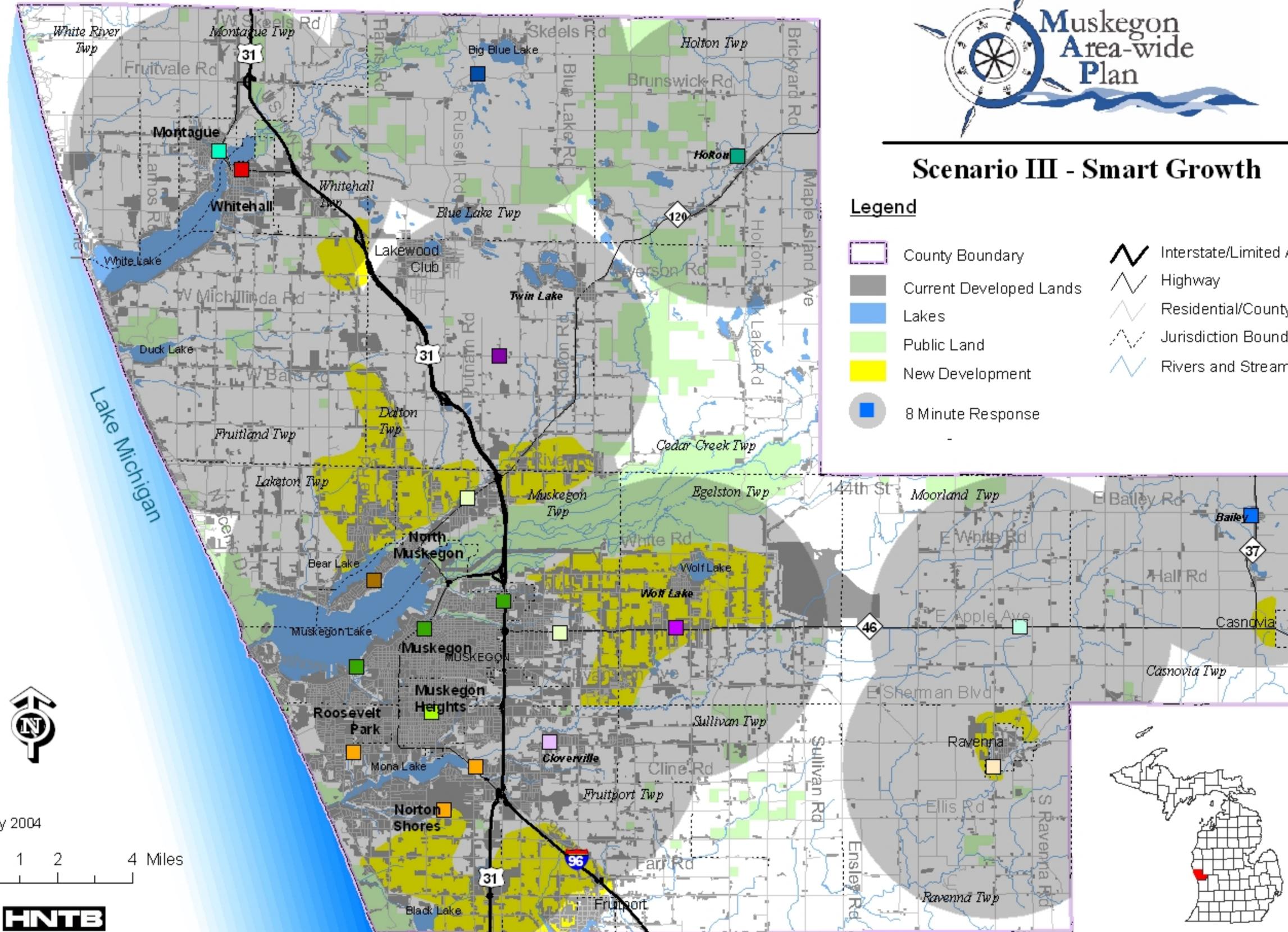




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |   |                         |   |                           |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | 8 Minute Response       |   |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

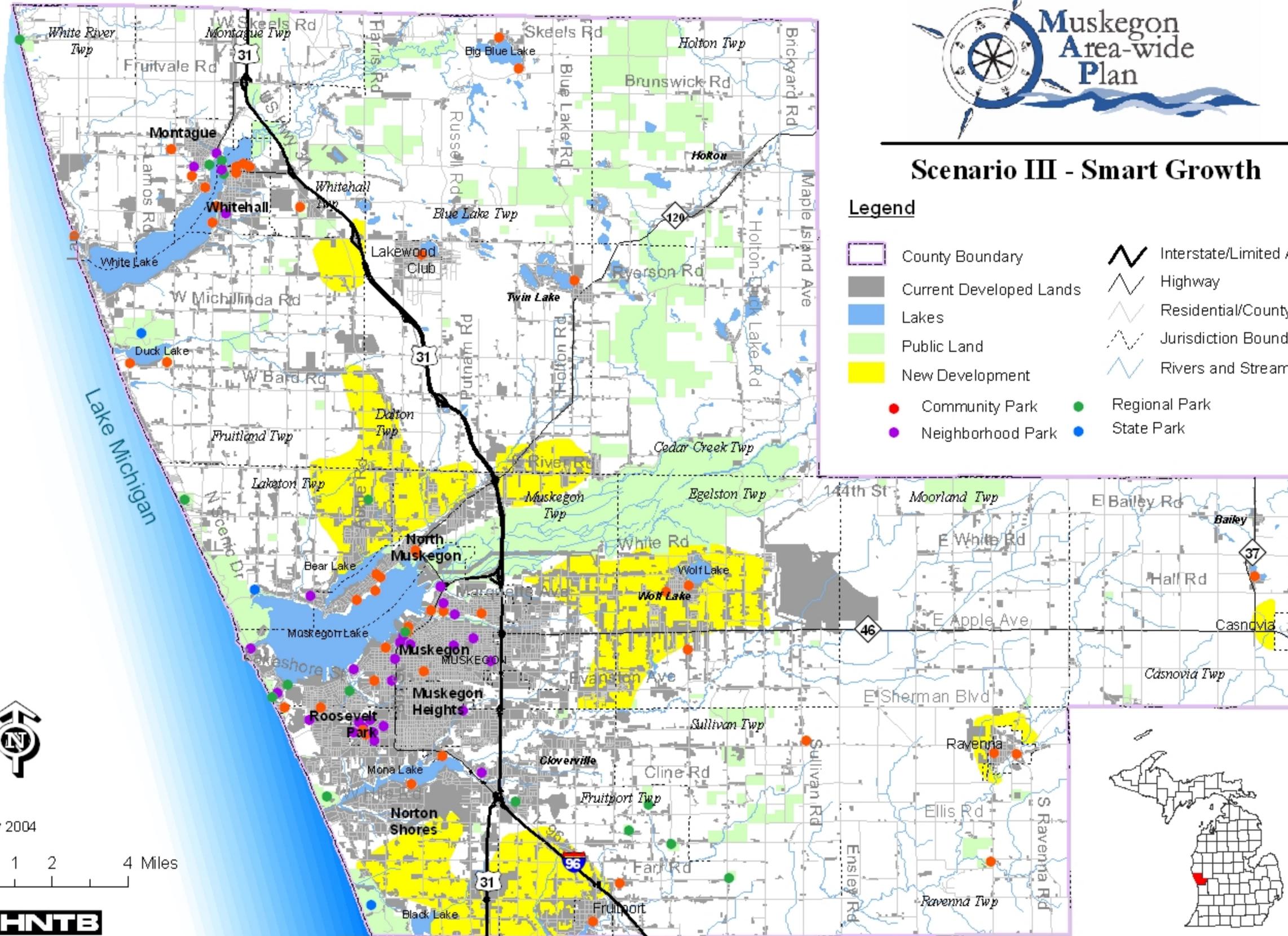




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |  |                         |  |                           |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Community Park          |  | Regional Park             |
|  | Neighborhood Park       |  | State Park                |



July 2004

0 1 2 4 Miles

**HNTB**

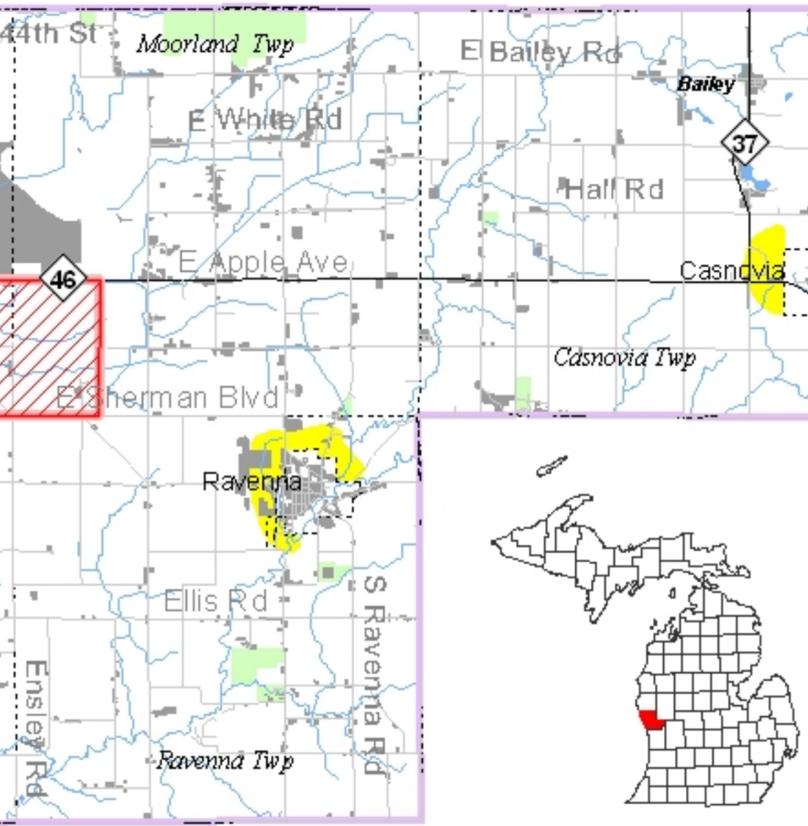
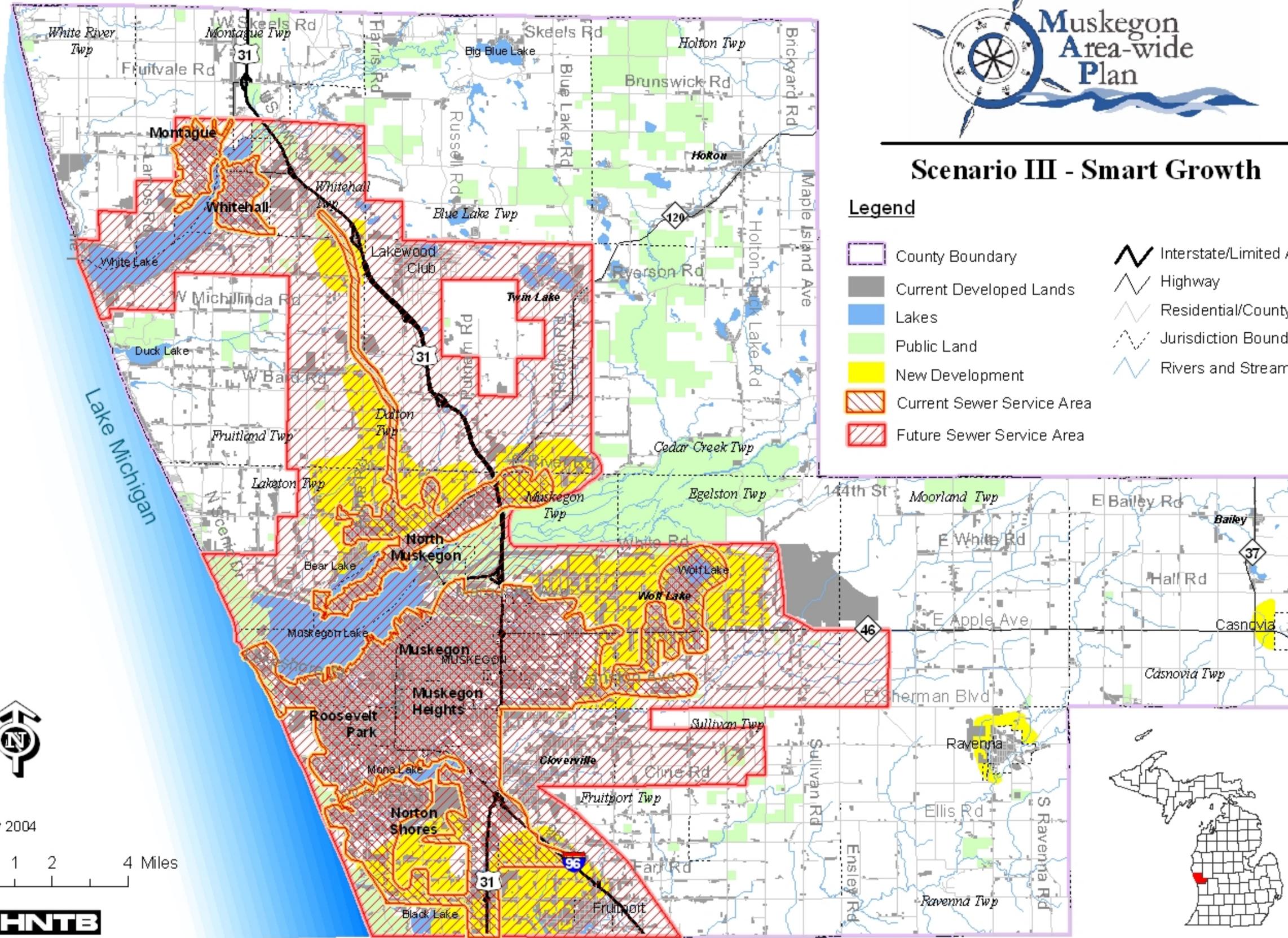




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |  |                            |  |                           |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary            |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands    |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                      |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development            |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Current Sewer Service Area |  |                           |
|  | Future Sewer Service Area  |  |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

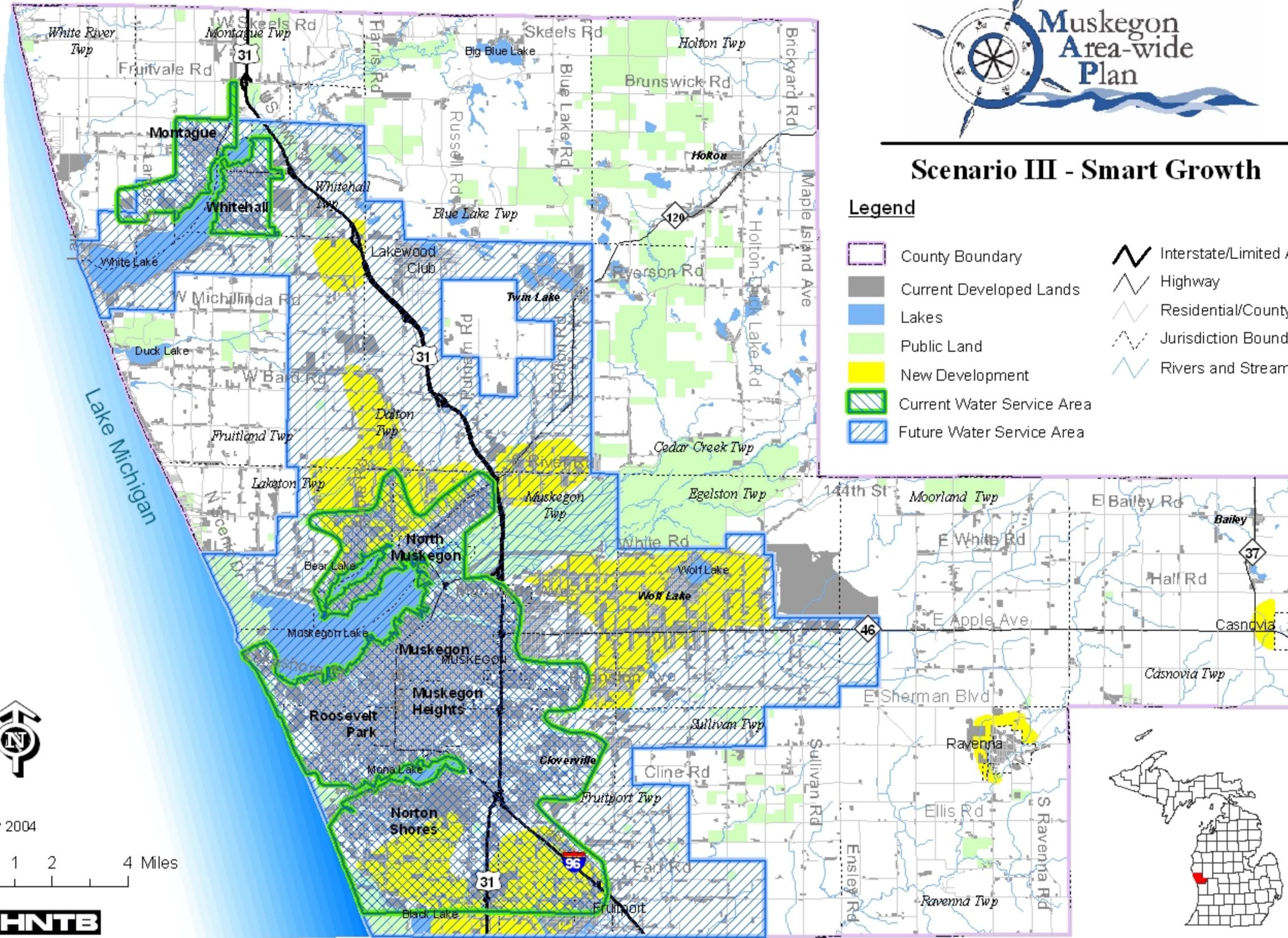




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |  |                            |  |                           |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary            |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands    |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                      |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land                |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development            |  | Rivers and Streams        |
|  | Current Water Service Area |  |                           |
|  | Future Water Service Area  |  |                           |



July 2004  
 0 1 2 4 Miles

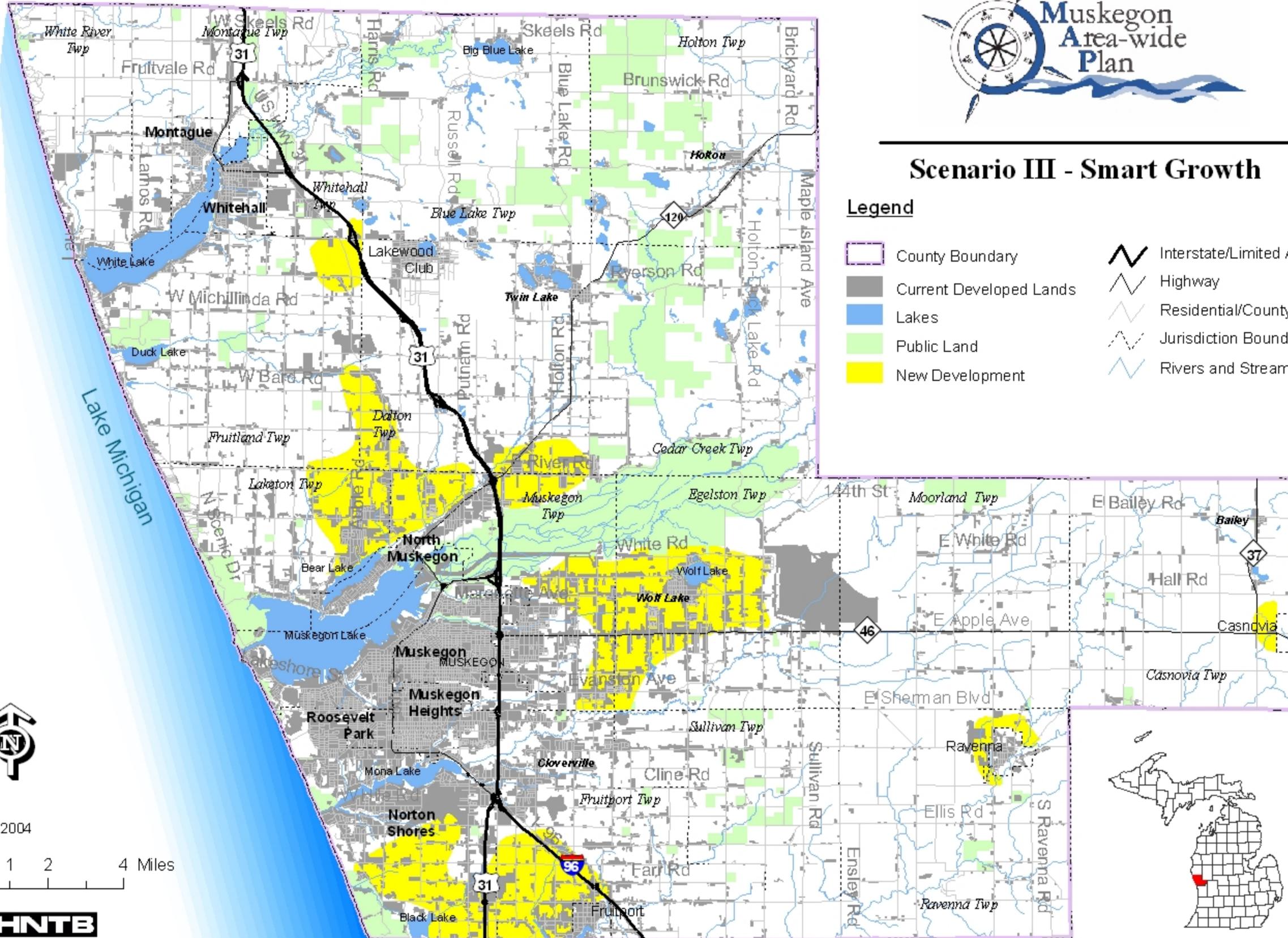




## Scenario III - Smart Growth

### Legend

- |   |                         |   |                           |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | County Boundary         |  | Interstate/Limited Access |
|  | Current Developed Lands |  | Highway                   |
|  | Lakes                   |  | Residential/County Road   |
|  | Public Land             |  | Jurisdiction Boundaries   |
|  | New Development         |  | Rivers and Streams        |



July 2004

0 1 2 4 Miles



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