CITY OF HARBOR BEACH

Master Plan

City of Harbor Beach, Michigan

Master Plan

City of Harbor Beach, Michigan

Adopted February 24, 2025
Prepared for:
City of Harbor Beach, MI

Prepared by:

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Resolution 2025-01
Harbor Beach Master Plan Adopting Resolution
City of Harbor Beach Planning Commission

WHEREAS, Act 33, Public Acts of Michigan, 2008, as amended, provides for a Municipal Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan for the physical development of the community; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Harbor Beach Planning Commission has prepared a physical development plan for the City in compliance with said Act 33, including relevant charts, maps and text; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has provided opportunity for public input into the Master Planning process; and,

WHEREAS, on October 21, 2024 the Harbor Beach City Council approved and subsequently distributed a draft copy of the Master Plan to all of the bodies required by said Act 33 for review and comment; and,

WHEREAS, no person or entity submitted comments indicating that the proposed City of Harbor Beach Master Plan is substantially inconsistent with the Master Plan of any adjacent community; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a formal public hearing on the draft 2025 Master Plan on February 24, 2025 to provide additional opportunity for public comment; and,

WHEREAS, the citizens of the City of Harbor Beach were afforded the opportunity to provide oral and written comments on the draft plan; and

WHEREAS, based on the consideration of public comments the City Planning Commission is satisfied that the Master Plan is ready for adoption;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that City of Harbor Beach Planning Commission does hereby adopt the City of Harbor Beach Master Plan, said plan to be dated as adopted this day of February 24, 2025; and

FURTHER, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Harbor Beach Planning Commission does hereby direct the Commission Chairperson to sign this Resolution signifying the adoption of the Master Plan, and to file attested copies of the Plan with the City Clerk.

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION:

Offered by Guitar, supported by Kleinknecht

Yeas: Secretary Roggenbuck, Mayor Guitar, Councilman Wood, Chairman Peterson, Smith, Kleinknecht
Nays:
Absent: Woods, Vice Chairman Schnettler, Hunter

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED BY:

Chairperson

2-24-25
Date

Acknowledgements

Much Thanks

This document is the result of the ideas, opinions, and research shared by the residents, business owners, and stakeholders who have donated their time to participate in our workshops, respond to our survey, and attend public meetings. Thanks to everyone who participated.

The individuals recognized on this page have made exceptional contributions of their time and resources to make the Harbor Beach Master Plan a reality.

City Council

Kevin Guitar, Mayor
Sam Capling, Mayor Pro-Tem
Matt Woodke, Council Member
Adam Wood, Council Member
Will Woodward, Council Member

Planning Commission

Kevin Guitar, Mayor
Eric Peterson, Chair
Adam Wood
Al Kleinknecht
Dave Hunter
Jon Woods
Justin Schnettler
Nick Roggenbuck

City Administration

Ron Wruble, City Manager
Nick Roggenbuck, Zoning Administrator
Kelly Jo Osentoski, Harbor Beach Community Promotions Director

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction **1**
Uses of the Master Plan 2
Organization of the Master Plan 3
History of Harbor Beach 4
Public Engagement Summary 6

2. Demographic and Housing Trends **17**
Demographics 18
Housing 25
Retail Potential 34

3. Existing Conditions **37**
Existing Land Use 38
Downtown 43
Natural Features and Recreation 44
Utilities and Infrastructure 49

4. Goals and Objectives **53**
Introduction 54

5. The Harbor Beach Plan **61**
The Harbor Beach Plan 62
Future Land Use Categories 63
Street Types 67
Building Types 70
Downtown Plan 87

6. Implementation Plan **99**
Summary of Recommendations 100
Implementation Program 101
Economic Development Tools 101
Zoning Plan 111

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1: Regional Location 5
Map 2: Existing Land Use 42
Map 3: Natural Features 45
Map 4: Existing Transportation Conditions 50
Map 5: Future Land Use 66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Residency of Survey Respondents 9
Figure 2: Future Plans of Survey Respondents 13
Figure 3: Future Housing Desires of Survey Respondents 13
Figure 4: Needs of Survey Respondents Over 55 14
Figure 5: Suggested Locations for New Recreational Facilities 16
Figure 6: Population Change, 1990 to 2020 19
Figure 7: Harbor Beach Age Ranges, 2021 21
Figure 8: Age Trends in Harbor Beach 21
Figure 9: Educational Attainment, 2021 22
Figure 10: Median Income Change 24
Figure 11: Trade Area 28
Figure 12: Retail Trade Area 34
Figure 13: Street Types 68
Figure 14: Downtown Districts 88
Figure 15: Planned Connections 90

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Age Makeup of Survey Respondents 10
Table 2: Housing Type of Survey Respondents 10
Table 3: Additional Concerns Shared by Survey Respondents 16
Table 4: Population of Harbor Beach and Surrounding Communities 19
Table 5: Number of Households 20
Table 6: Average Household Size Harbor Beach and Surrounding Communities, 2021 20
Table 7: Average Household Size 20
Table 8: Employment Sectors, 2022 23
Table 9: Housing Types 25
Table 10: Housing Tenure, 2021 26
Table 11: Housing Occupancy, 2021 26
Table 12: Median Home Value 27
Table 13: Harbor Beach Net Migration by Age Cohort, 2010 to 2020 29
Table 14: Trade Area Population Projection 30
Table 15: Homeownership and Headship Rates, 2020 30
Table 16: Demand Calculation Explanation 31
Table 17: Estimated Homeowner/Renter Demand by Age Group, Harbor Beach, 2020 31
Table 18: Estimated Homeowner / Renter Demand by Age Group, Trade Area, 2020 32
Table 19: Estimated Housing Demand, 2030 and 2040 32
Table 20: Change in Housing Demand, 2020-2040, Harbor Beach 33
Table 21: Change in Housing Demand, 2020-2040, Trade Area 33
Table 22: Additional Retail Demand 35
Table 23: Street Type Descriptions 69
Table 24: Plan Correlation to Zoning Districts 111

1

Introduction

Uses of the Master Plan

A master plan is used for a variety of purposes. At the most basic level, a master plan is used as the basis for a community's zoning ordinance. One of the requirements that makes zoning constitutionally valid is that the ordinance be based on a comprehensive plan for the development of the jurisdiction. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 100 of 2006, as amended) requires that zoning ordinances be based on a plan.

In the context of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, the master plan is a study of the present and future growth of a municipality that identifies the land needed for various types of activities, including agriculture, single family and multiple family residences, commerce, and industry. After a master plan is adopted, a municipality can then adopt zoning regulations to ensure that the land is available to meet the community's long-term needs.

A common use of the master plan is for reference to inform zoning changes and special use permits. One of the primary considerations in a rezoning is compliance with the master plan and the future land use map.

Another important function of the master plan is providing guidance to developers, landowners and potential home and business owners when making investment decisions. Consistent and reasonable application of the master plan by the City reduces risk and uncertainty in the real estate market.

A master plan provides guidance and coordination in the provision of public services. Understanding long term growth patterns is helpful in making decisions around public investments such as parks, roads, and water and sewer infrastructure.

A master plan can be the basis for proactive projects and programs to improve a community. A fundamental part of the master planning process is the public involvement that forms the basis for the future land use plan and indicates the community's desires for the City's future and long–term vision. The goals and objectives of a master plan reflect desires for physical development.

A master plan presents the vision of a community over the next 20 years, but also includes a number of specific, short term implementation activities intended to realize the overall vision of the plan.

Organization of the Master Plan

The Harbor Beach Master Plan is organized into 5 parts: Demographics and Housing, Existing Conditions, Goals and Objectives, the Harbor Beach Plan, and Implementation.

1 The **Demographics and Housing** section is an analysis of the current trends that impact Harbor Beach with regards to its people and where they live. Based on numerical data, this section offers a demographic profile of the City and surrounding areas and identifies key projections about the future.

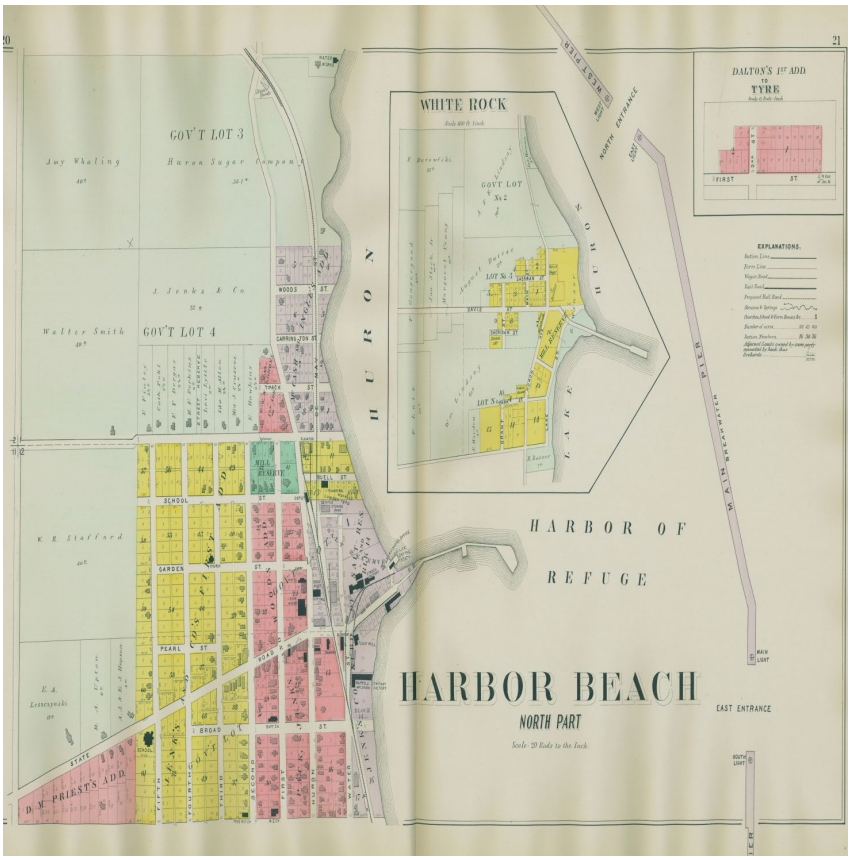
2 The **Existing Conditions** section is a more subjective analysis of the conditions on the ground in Harbor Beach. Including maps, pictures, and text, this section is intended to present the City as it exists today.

3 **Goals and Objectives** communicate the shared vision that community members of Harbor Beach have for themselves into the future. They are used to craft the master plan out of the existing conditions.

4 **The Harbor Beach Plan** itself will be the guiding force for development into the future. Using the community members' stated goals, it will present the way that Harbor Beach can become the City that it wants to be over the coming decades.

5 The **Implementation** section will answer the "how" of the Master Plan. With specific programs, ideas, and regulations, it will guide the City along the path of shaping the Harbor Beach of the future.

History of Harbor Beach



The area that eventually became Harbor Beach was first settled in 1838, when lumbermen arrived on the east side of the thumb on Lake Huron, south of where the City is currently situated. The early economy of the area was based around the lumber industry, and a large sawmill was built near what is now Downtown Harbor Beach. The harbor from which Harbor Beach gets its name dates back almost as far as the earliest settlers, but the current breakwater configuration and lighthouse were built in the 1880s after a number of shipwrecks in the thumb area caused the Federal Government to intervene. The area was selected as the best location for a new harbor, which was completed in 1898. Prior to that, the area went through several name changes, originally called Barnettsville, then Sand Beach, then finally Harbor Beach when the Harbor of Refuge opened. A petition was sent to the Governor in 1899 requesting Harbor Beach be incorporated into a city. On April 4, 1910, the charter was granted.

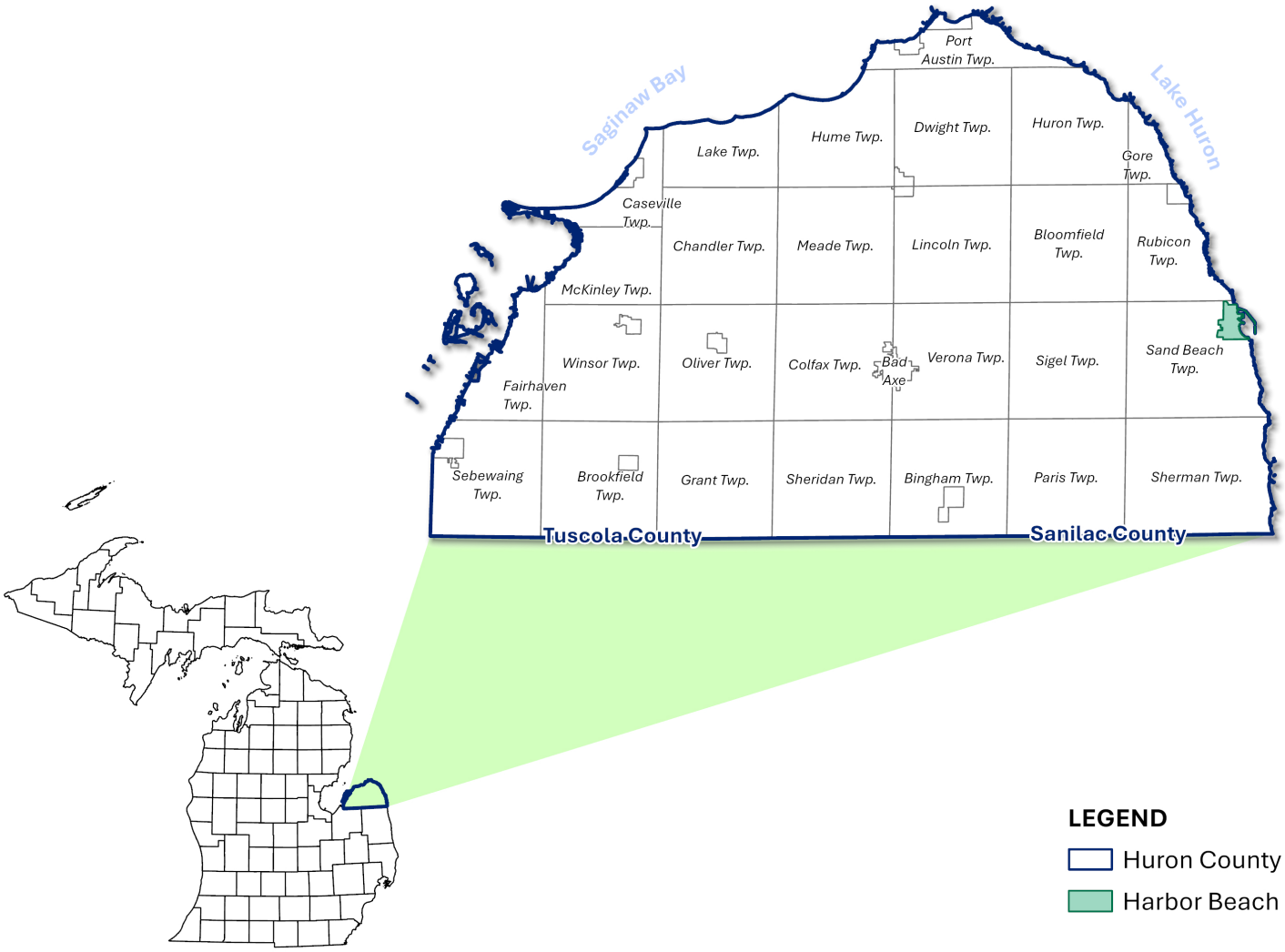
The harbor has always been a point of refuge on Lake Huron, and today it remains as the world's largest man-made freshwater harbor, still serving as such for the small watercraft that use the City's marina. Located within the harbor is the Harbor Beach Lighthouse, built in 1885, as well as the 1,015-foot Trescott Street Pier. The offshore lighthouse has been restored to its historic grandeur and is only accessible by boat or other watercraft as it sits a mile from the coast.

Harbor Beach is also the birthplace of Frank Murphy, a former Michigan governor and U.S. Supreme Court Justice. In addition to being elected Governor and Supreme Court Justice, he was also appointed Attorney General and served as Governor-General of the Philippine Islands.

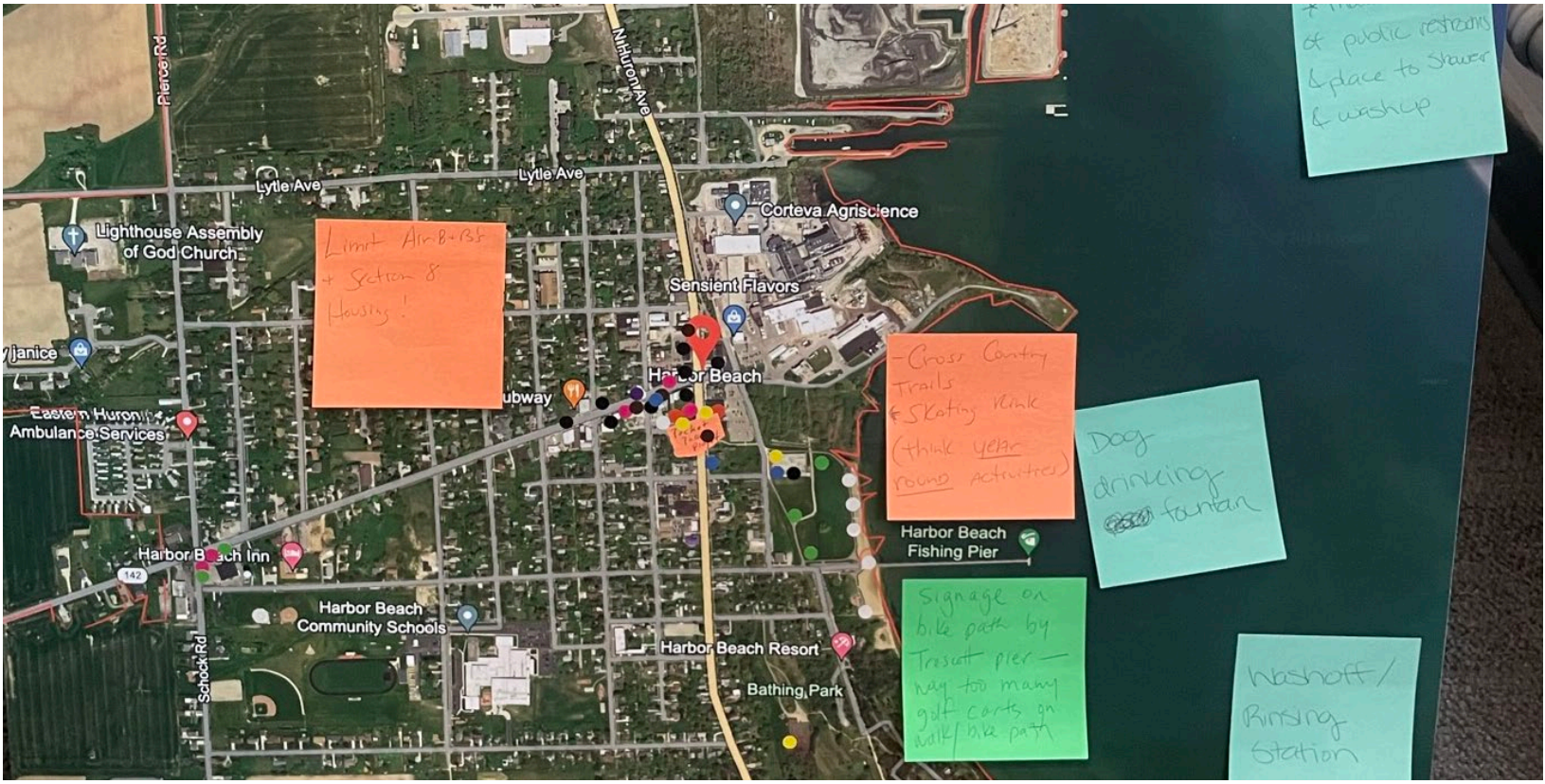
The resort on the City's southern edge dates back to 1896 and has been used continuously ever since. At the time it was built, the City of Harbor Beach did not exist, and the resort saw itself as a nearby but separate entity. This distinction has caused a physical and social separation of the seasonal resort population that continues to this day.

Today, Harbor Beach is a beautiful waterfront community with quality industrial, residential, cultural, educational, and medical assets that position it well for the future. The City's water treatment plant produces drinking water daily for over 40 miles of shoreline communities, while the round-the-clock community hospital, highly rated fire department, and police department manned 24/7 situate the City as a regional hub for high-quality public services. The City's regional location can be found on the Regional Location Map on the next page.

Map 1: Regional Location



Public Engagement Summary



Public engagement is a key part of any community planning process to fully understand the assets and concerns in the City and to obtain feedback on potential strategies to strengthen Harbor Beach for the future.

Specifically, the primary aims of public engagement efforts were to:

1. **Identify Community Strengths:** Understand the aspects of Harbor Beach valued most by residents and stakeholders.
2. **Highlight Areas for Improvement:** Collect suggestions on how to enhance various facets of the community.
3. **Engage Diverse Voices:** Ensure a wide range of community perspectives and priorities are included in the planning process.
4. **Guide Future Development:** Gather data to inform strategic planning and policymaking.

Engagement opportunities included a survey available online and in hard copy, two in-person workshops, and several Planning Commission and City Council meetings. The community was notified of the survey and engagement events in the following ways:

- An announcement on the City website directing folks to the Master Plan website
- Printed flyers handed out at City Hall and the Harbor Beach Area District Library
- Posts on City social media pages with links to the Master Plan website
- Emails to Boards, Commissions, and members of the Harbor Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Several news articles published by the Minden City Herald, Huron Daily Tribune, and Midland Daily News

Workshops

April 16, 2024. The City hosted two workshops to gather input on community character, quality of life, business and economic development, and housing needs, as well as specific, place-based aspects such as amenities in public spaces. The workshops also provided an opportunity for attendees to voice their aspirations for Harbor Beach in the future, as well as concerns over existing circumstances. Below, an overview of each workshop is provided, as well as an outline of the main takeaways gathered.

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

Source: McKenna

Overview

On the morning of April 16th, 2024, a roundtable was held at City Hall to gather targeted information from local businesses owners about economic development, planning, and land use policies that could support their endeavors. About 10 businesses owners joined the roundtable to voice their ideas for Harbor Beach.

Results and Feedback

The following "main points" from the business roundtable were drawn out from sticky notes left on engagement boards and discussion with attendees:

- **Wayfinding and Placemaking.** Business owners want to see the City invest in more wayfinding and placemaking efforts, and showed interest in grants for façade and signage improvements, marketing campaigns to promote Harbor Beach to surrounding communities, and public art installations.
- **Pop-Up Shops.** Attendees supported multiple strategies that could support an entrepreneur starting a pop-up shop, such as repurposing and renting empty buildings Downtown, creating an area with repurposed shipping containers, sheds, or other small shelters to open pop-up businesses, and offering grants or start-up loans for small businesses.
- **Activating the Waterfront.** Multiple attendees expressed ideas to take advantage of Harbor Beach's prime waterfront location, including holding events along the waterfront, extending Maritime Festival activities into Downtown, and having businesses such as restaurants along the waterfront.

MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE

Source: McKenna

Overview

In the evening of April 16th, 2024, a Master Plan Open House was held to gather feedback from the larger Harbor Beach community on land use planning, housing, transportation, and economic development. Engagement boards gave attendees the opportunity to comment on Harbor Beach's amenities, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and provide their big ideas for Harbor Beach. There were about 20 attendees at the Master Plan Open House.

Results and Feedback

The following "main points" from the Master Plan Open House were drawn out from sticky notes left on engagement boards and discussion with attendees:

- **Year-Round Activities.** Attendees expressed an interest in year-round opportunities to engage with Harbor Beach, including winter events like a tree lighting, cross country ski trails, or an ice skating rink, and expressed concern over the lack of businesses open in the off-season.
- **Creative Housing Options.** Attendees wanted the City to explore non-traditional housing options that could improve housing affordability and attainability, such as tiny home villages, micro-apartments, and duplexes, condominiums, and townhomes.
- **Activating the Waterfront.** Ideas to activate the waterfront included establishing a waterfront restaurant, adding boat slips and lodging, and holding festivals and events along the waterfront.

Online Survey

February 1st - April 29th, 2024. To provide a less time-intensive opportunity to share ideas and feedback, a survey was distributed and available as a hard copy or online. Residents, business owners, property owners, and other stakeholders provided feedback about their desires and priorities when planning for the future of Harbor Beach. 200 responses were submitted during the survey period, which was open from February 1st to April 29th, 2024. The survey captured insights on what community members currently appreciate about Harbor Beach, as well as the improvements they envision for the City's future.

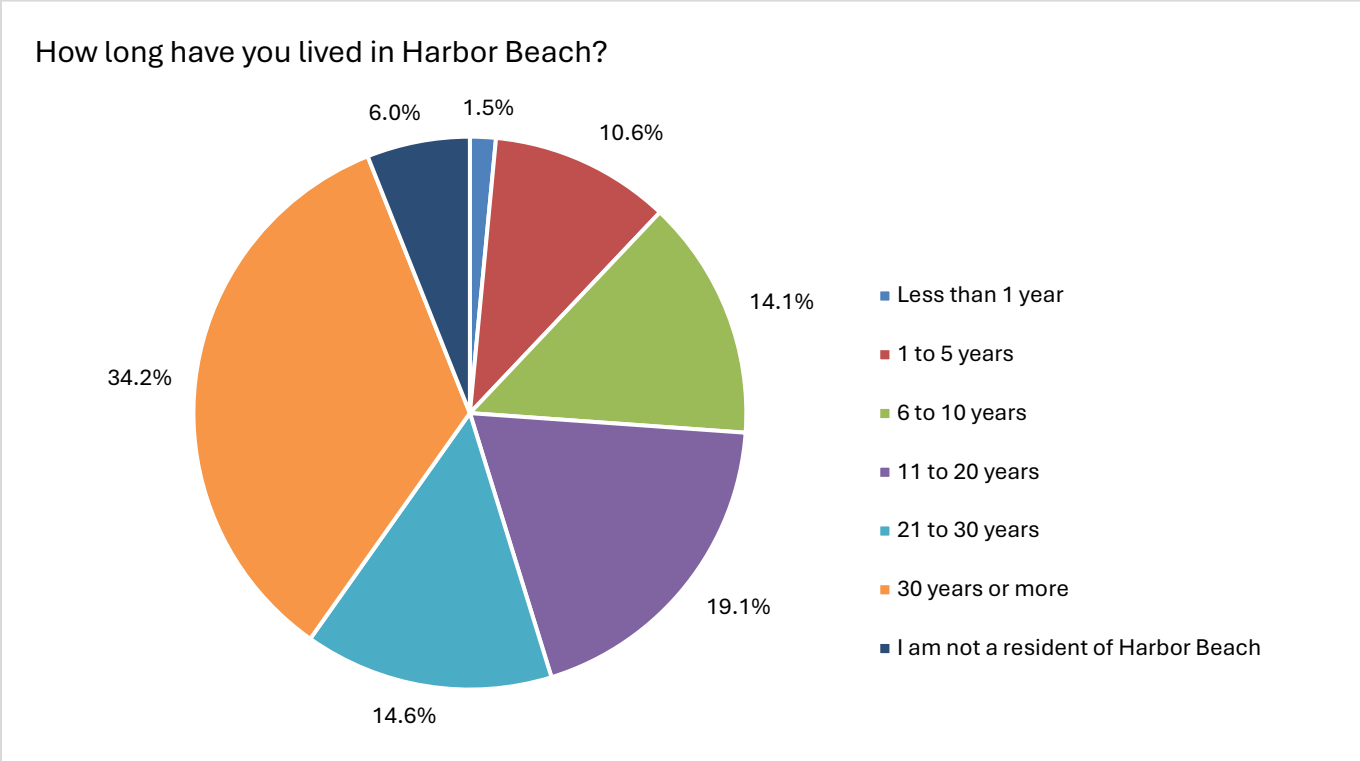
ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

This section provides an overview of demographic information collected from survey participants. This data communicates the length of residency, property ownership patterns, and the distribution of age groups to provide context when examining results.

Length of Residency

Data regarding the length of residency in Harbor Beach provides valuable insights into the community's demographic composition and stability. Respondents reported a diverse range of residency lengths. Most respondents (34.2%) have lived in Harbor Beach for 30 years or more, highlighting a strong presence of long-term residents in the survey responses. Additionally, 19.1% of respondents have resided in the city for 11 to 20 years, and 14.1% for 6 to 10 years, indicating a stable and established community base. Meanwhile, just under 11% of respondents have lived in Harbor Beach for 1 to 5 years, and 1.5% for less than a year, reflecting a smaller influx of newer residents. Notably, 6.0% of respondents are not residents of Harbor Beach, showing the involvement of non-resident stakeholders in the planning process.

Figure 1: Residency of Survey Respondents



Property Ownership

While only 6% of respondents indicated that they were not a resident when asked how long they have lived in the City, 20% indicated that they own property in Harbor Beach but live elsewhere when asked about property ownership. The contrast between these two figures is likely due to the way in which the questions were worded. When asked about length of residency, there was a note on the question stating, "Does not have to be continuous; please add up only your time in Harbor Beach". Given the contrast between the two questions, respondents likely interpreted this to mean the years they resided in Harbor Beach at any time, whereas the question regarding property ownership was worded to ask about if they currently reside in the City or not.

Age Makeup

Respondents were evenly spread across age groups, with the majority being middle-aged (between 35 and 54). Seniors aged 65 and over were the next largest group, comprising nearly 19% of the respondents. Given the age structure of Harbor Beach's overall population, middle-aged respondents are overrepresented, while seniors are underrepresented. Additionally, no responses from children under age 18 were captured. Future planning processes would benefit from alternative methods to engage the City's youth. Age structure and other population details are discussed further in the Demographic section.

Table 1: Age Makeup of Survey Respondents

Age Group	Count of Responses	Percent Response
Under 18 years	0	0.0%
18 to 24 years	5	3.1%
25 to 34 years	21	13.2%
35 to 44 years	44	27.7%
45 to 54 years	33	20.8%
55 to 64 years	26	16.4%
65 years or over	30	18.9%

Current Housing Status and Type

The majority of survey respondents, 92.8%, live in a stand-alone, single-family house while a much smaller percentage live in multi-family duplexes, condominiums, or apartments, and an even smaller portion live in mobile homes. These trends align with the dominance of single-family housing types in Harbor Beach. The survey data also highlights that most respondents, 85.6%, currently own their homes in Harbor Beach, while 8.8% are renting, and 5.6% occupy their residence without owning or renting (i.e., living with family).

Table 2: Housing Type of Survey Respondents

Housing Type	Percent Response
Stand-alone house	92.8%
Duplex	0.6%
Multi-unit Condo	0.6%
Apartment	3.0%
Mobile Home	1.2%
Independent Living Facility	0.0%
Assisted Living Facility	0.0%
Other (please specify)	1.8%

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

Respondents were provided with a series of multiple choice, “select all that apply”, and open-ended questions prompting more detailed responses. The following is a summary and analysis of feedback obtained through the survey.

City’s Strengths and Weaknesses

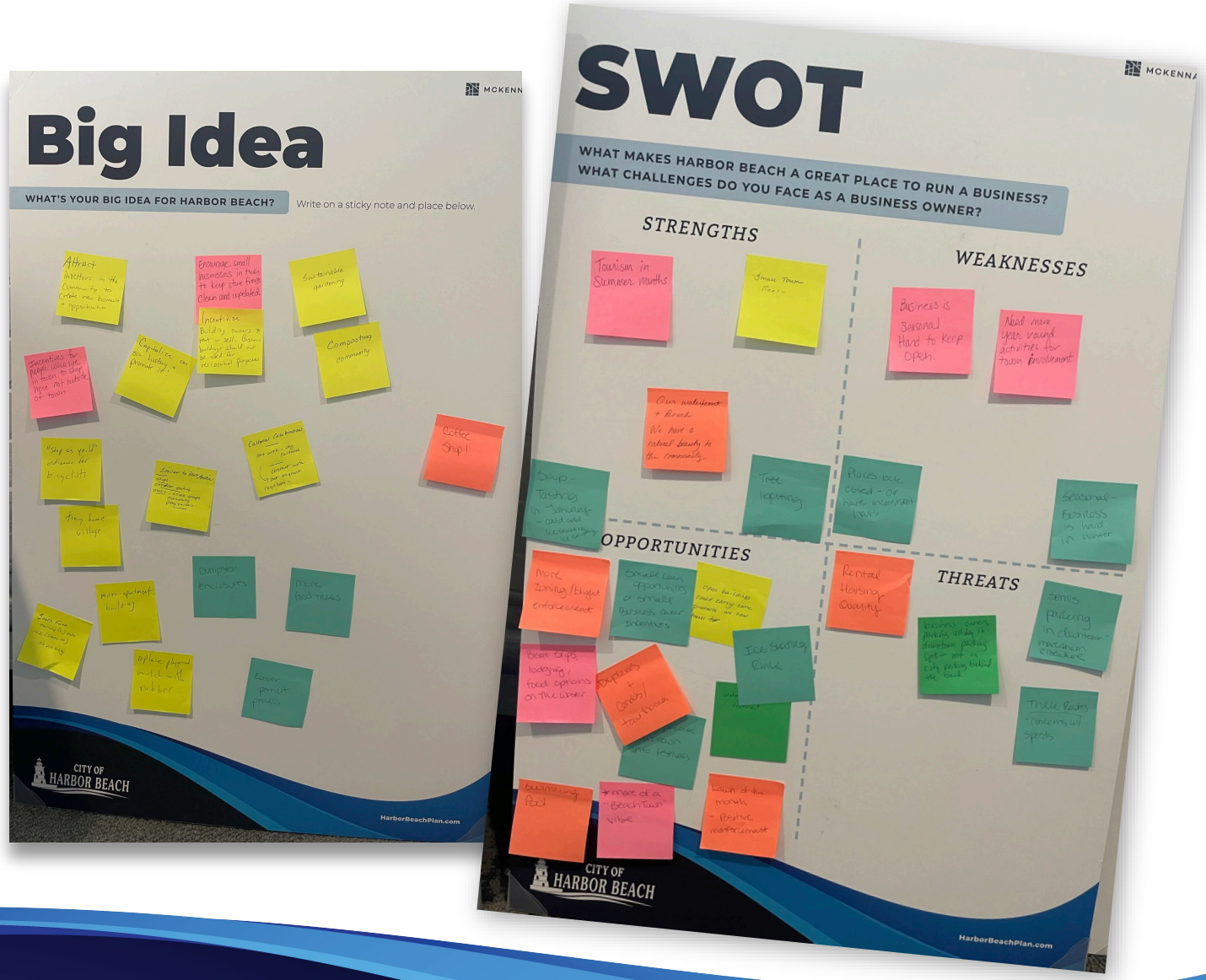
When asked about Harbor Beach's greatest strength heading into the future, respondents indicated that being situated on Lake Huron is its greatest asset, citing a scenic waterfront and historical significance as strengths. However, its greatest weakness appears to be related to economic development and community engagement issues, including a perception of outdated thinking, lack of vibrant Downtown activities, and challenges with industrial odors affecting tourism and community livability.

Strengths

- Scenic waterfront
- Community spirit
- Historical significance
- Infrastructure (roads, water, services)
- Public facilities (parks, campgrounds)

Weaknesses

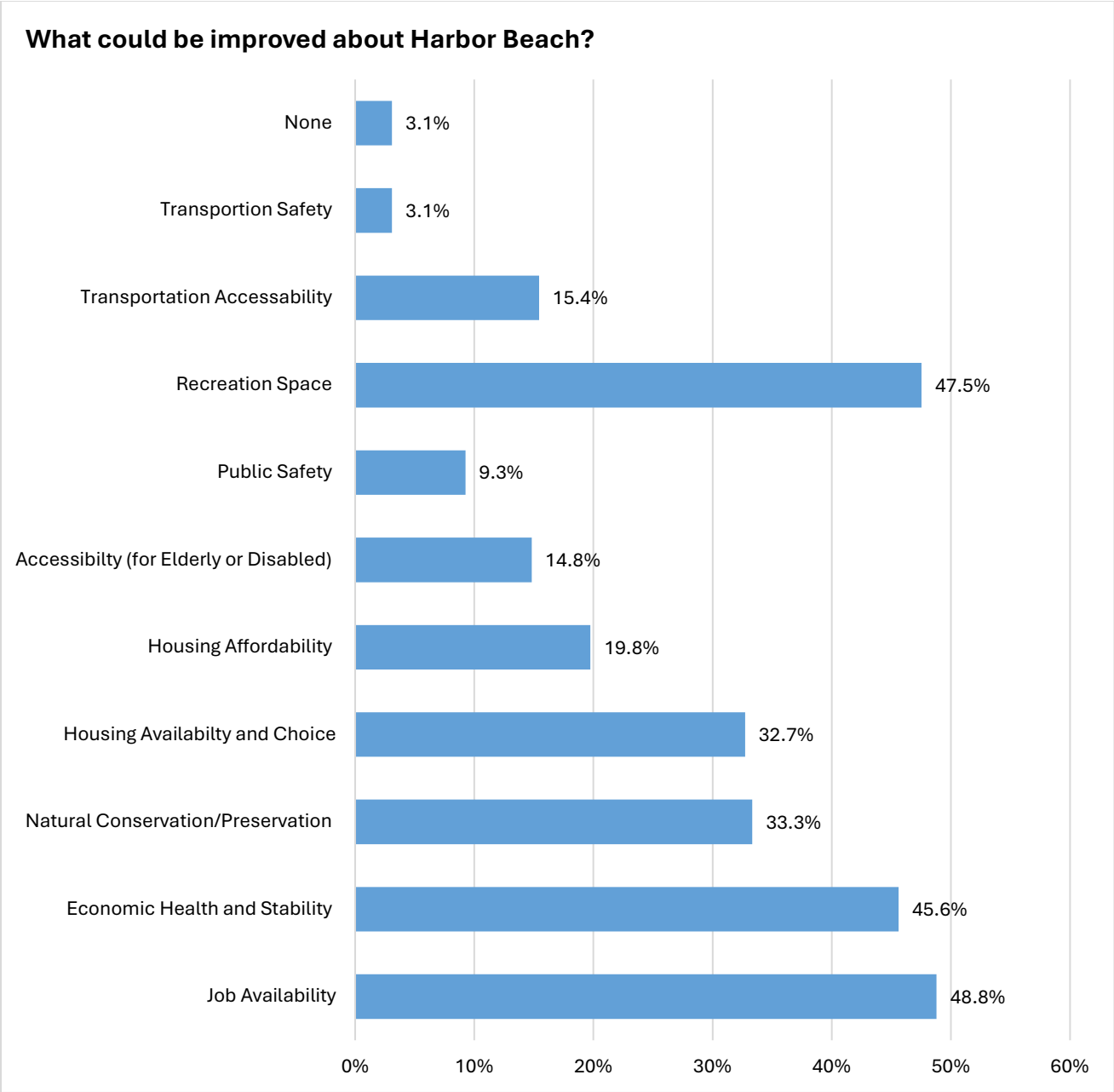
- Economic dependency on few industries
- Downtown vibrancy issues
- Environmental concerns (industrial odors)
- Leadership and vision
- Youth retention and attraction



Desires for the Future

Residents appreciate Harbor Beach's industrial employment opportunities but express concerns about job availability for non-locals and the need for more diverse business offerings Downtown. Community character feedback varies, with positive sentiments towards its small-town feel but concerns about exclusivity. Educational options are generally viewed positively, though some wish for more advanced training opportunities. Public facilities and services are praised for recent improvements, but some note requests for maintenance, such as clean beach facilities and accessible public restrooms. Commercial offerings are critiqued for vacancies and a lack of diverse retail options. Parks and recreational offerings receive appreciation for quality, and suggestions were made for more facilities catering to diverse age groups.

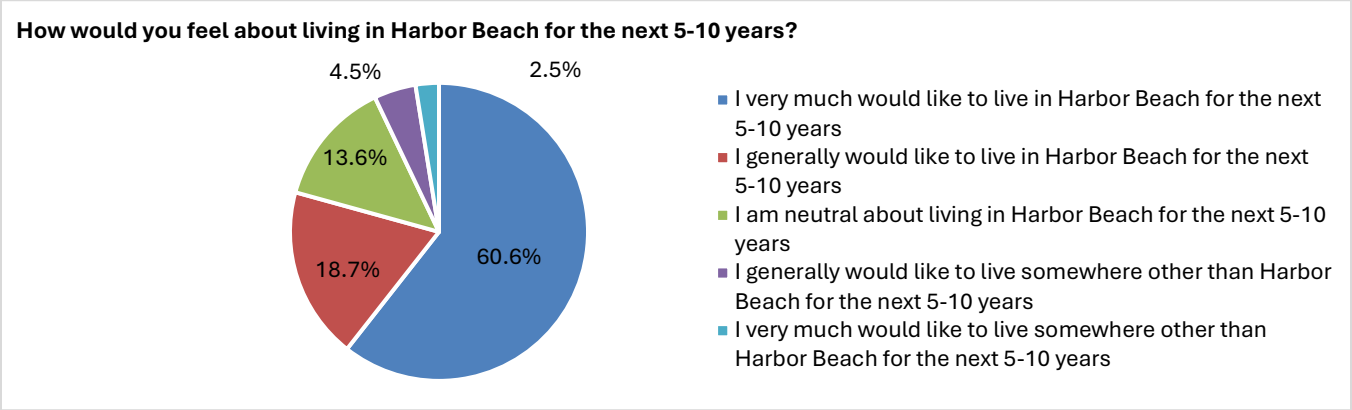
Figure 2: Desires for the Future



Future Residency Intentions

The survey data highlights a widespread desire by current residents to continue living in Harbor Beach. Most survey respondents (60.6%) reported a strong interest in living in Harbor Beach for the next 5-10 years, and another 18.7% of survey respondents expressed a moderate interest.

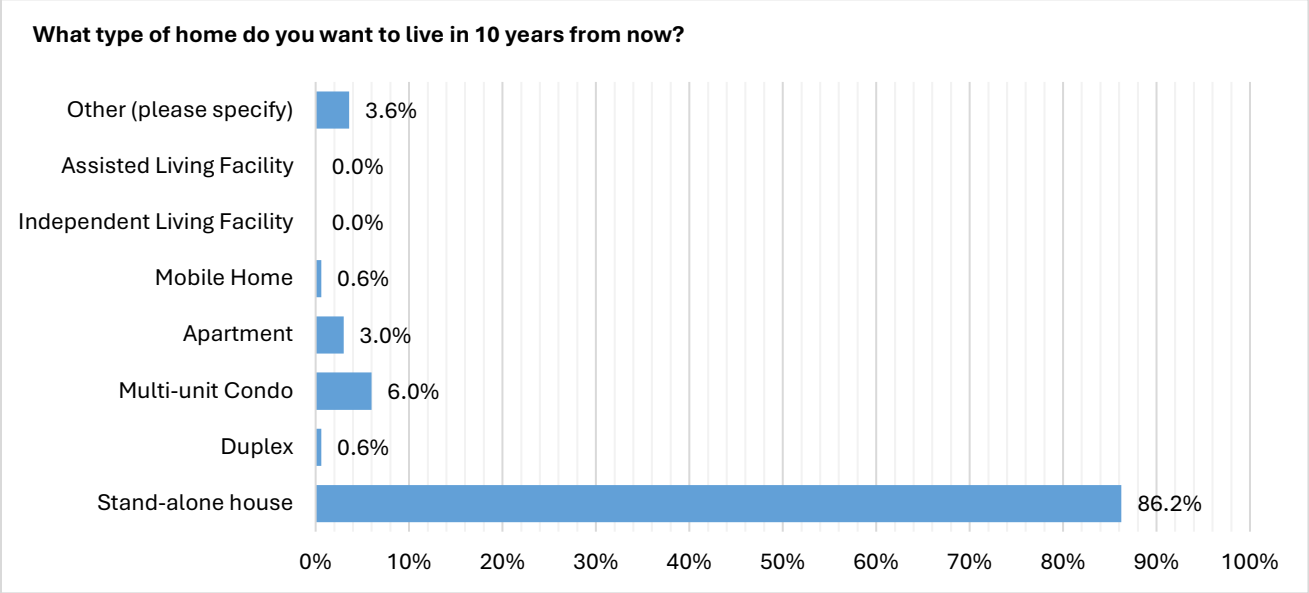
Figure 3: Future Plans of Survey Respondents



Housing Preferences

The survey data reflects a strong preference among respondents for stand-alone homes as their desired housing type 10 years from now, with 86.2% selecting this choice. There is a desire for independent living facilities, which reflects the growing senior population and current housing landscape in Harbor Beach, where stand-alone houses are predominant. Smaller percentages indicated interest in other types of housing such as multi-unit condos, apartments, and additional specified housing types, highlighting a modest interest in more diverse housing options.

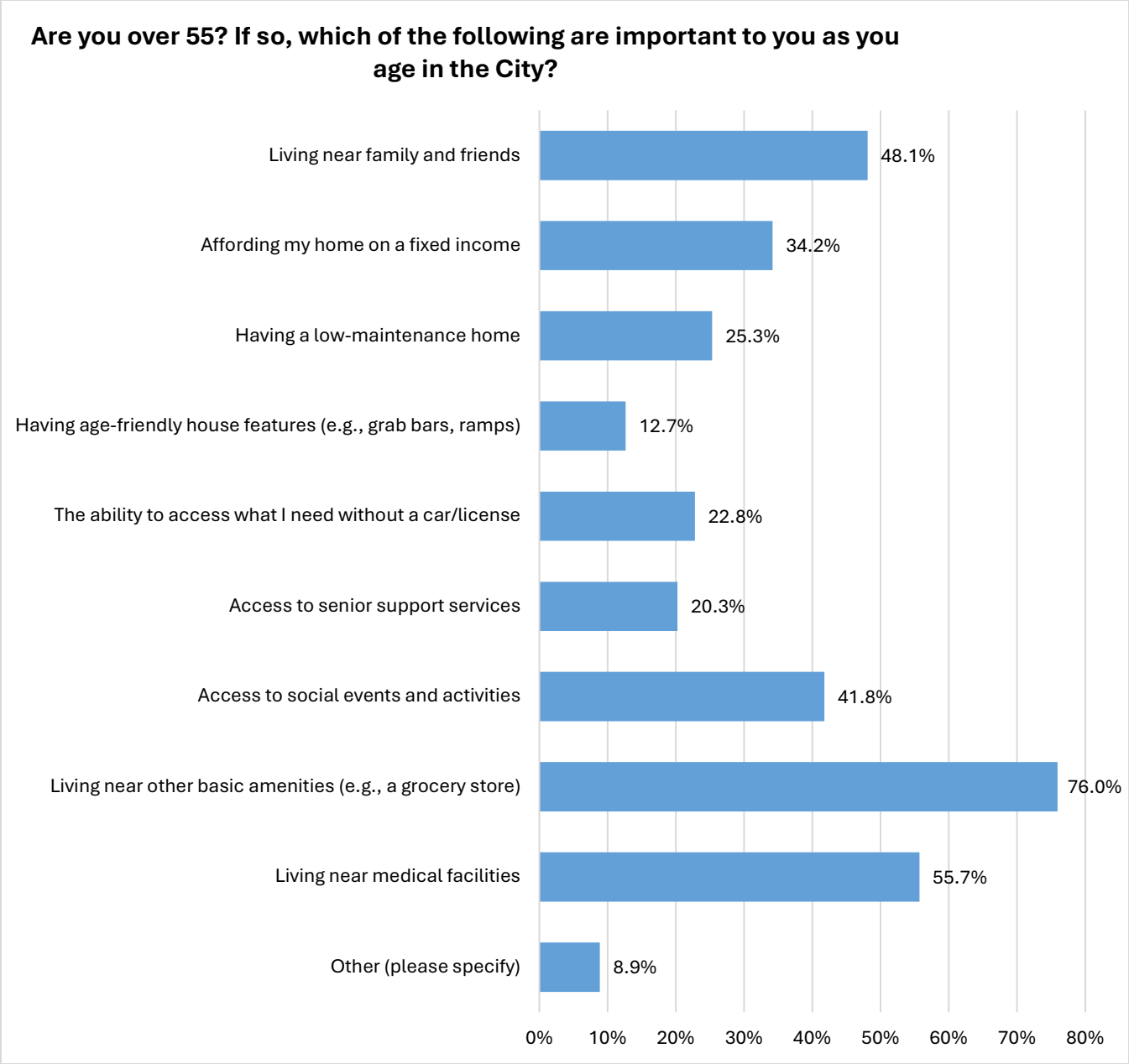
Figure 4: Future Housing Desires of Survey Respondents



Aging In Place

The City's population over the age of 55 in 2021 made up 42% of the overall population. To address the specific needs individuals have as they age, and to ensure Harbor Beach is planning to allow for these residents to age in place, respondents were asked about a variety of need areas. Over half of respondents indicated that living near basic amenities, family and friends, and medical facilities were their top priorities. Access to social events and activities and affordable housing on a fixed income were also ranked among their top concerns. More discussion about aging in place can be found in the Demographics and Housing Trends section on page 17.

Figure 5: Needs of Survey Respondents Over 55



Expansion of Recreational Facilities

There is overwhelming support—82.2%—for expanding recreational facilities in Harbor Beach. Key themes and suggestions are documented in the table above. In 2022, the City adopted a Parks and Recreation 5-Year Plan, which details future plans for each of the City's parks and facilities. The following are themes that were raised regarding parks and recreation facilities in the survey:

Trail Development

- More hiking and biking trails, with suggestions to connect existing paths to nearby areas like Port Hope and to improve current trails
- Extending trails north and south and integrating wooded trails

Beach and Water Access

- Improved beach access, additional restrooms, kayak launches, and designated swimming areas
- Enhancing water-based activities and providing better fishing spots, such as piers and docks

Fitness and Sports Facilities

- New fitness trails, outdoor exercise equipment, and an indoor recreation center with a swimming pool
- Facilities for diverse activities, including a roller rink, ice skating rink, and golf cart paths

Children and Family Activities

- Splash pads, playgrounds with toddler-friendly equipment, batting cages, putt-putt golf, and a roller-skating rink
- Family-friendly spaces and activities

Community Spaces

- Expanding open spaces for community gatherings, adding picnic areas, pavilions, and seating
- Enhancing the business atmosphere with walkable routes and cohesive areas for social activities

Specialty Parks

- Dog park, a pump track, disc golf, and other unique recreational opportunities
- A public golf course and facilities for off-road vehicles

Winter and Year-Round Activities

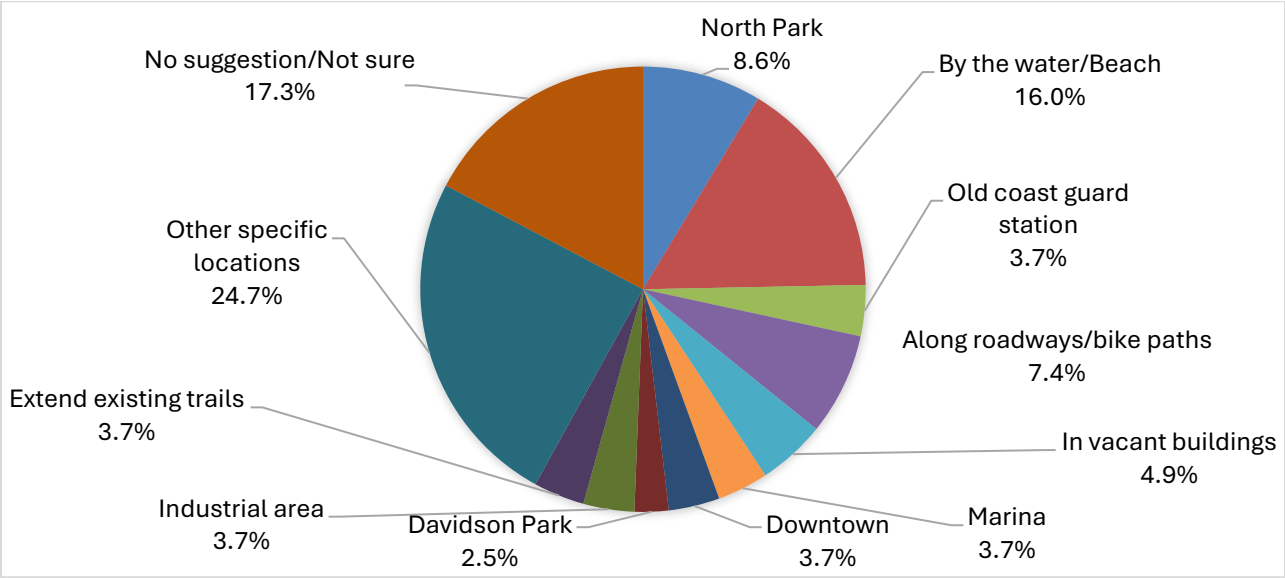
- Winter activities such as cross-country skiing trails and year-round indoor options
- An indoor recreation center with a pool and a quiet coffeehouse-type atmosphere

Tourism and Attractions

- Enhancements aimed at boosting tourism include yacht clubs, wedding venue rentals, maritime museums, and expanded lighthouse tours
- Revitalizing the waterfront and creating attractive visitor experiences to benefit the local economy

Additionally, responses about where respondents would like to see additional parks and recreation facilities is shown in Figure 6 on the following page.

Figure 6: Suggested Locations for New Recreational Facilities



Other themes and Concerns

Several additional themes were raised throughout the survey responses. The following table shares a summary of these concerns, which range from ideas for new activities to requests for change in local policy.

Table 3: Additional Concerns Shared by Survey Respondents

Concern	Description
Activities for Adults	Request for more adult-focused activities like arcades, bowling alleys, and disc golf
Water Safety	Concerns about water safety considering issues elsewhere
Air Quality	Concerns about air safety in light of issues elsewhere
Downtown Development	Desire for Downtown revitalization with art, outdoor seating, and live music
Manufacturing Odors	Complaints about odors from local manufacturing facilities
Community Cleanup	Calls for stricter ordinances, zoning enforcement, and community cleanup efforts
Business Promotion	Critique of local events for not effectively promoting businesses away from the beach
Future Development	Aspirations for Harbor Beach to grow and provide opportunities for residents
Senior Community	Interest in creating activities and support services for seniors

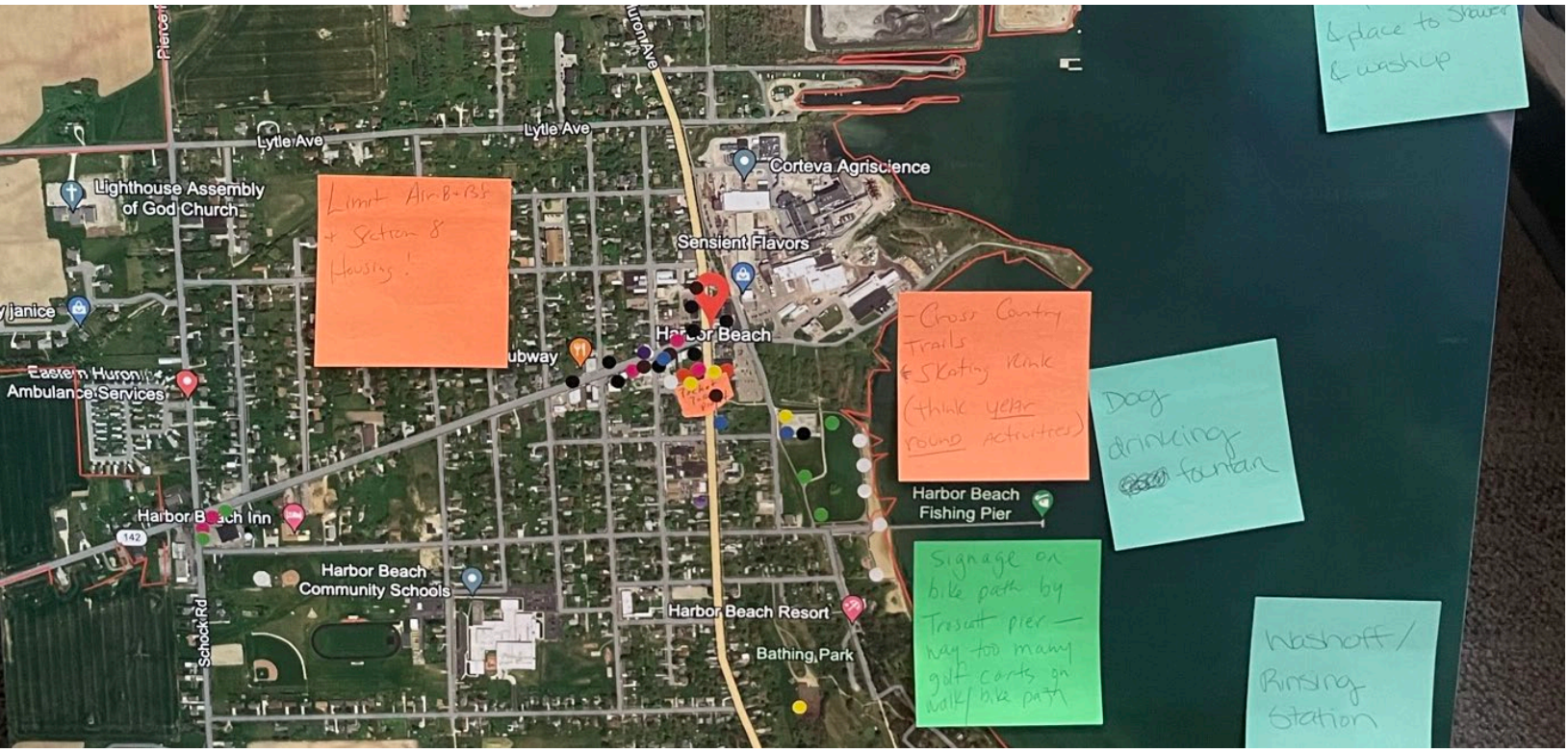
Conclusion

The desires and concerns heard through the activities summarized here have been incorporated to the best possible extent and can be found throughout the Plan's content. The feedback received during the Master Plan public engagement is just one opportunity for the City to capture input from those it serves. Engagement with the public should be ongoing as the City takes on new projects and makes decisions that will shape its future for generations to come.

2

Demographic and Housing Trends

Demographics



This section of the Master Plan analyzes demographic trends. In order to plan for future growth and development, there must be consideration of how many people will need City services, where there is pent up demand for new land uses, and who the residents are that will shape Harbor Beach in the coming decades.

The analysis focuses on the prevailing trends in Huron County and Michigan as a whole. The county-wide trends are assumed to reflect the situation in Harbor Beach and are certainly relevant to the planning process.

Data Sources

All data for 2010 and 2020 comes from the US Census Bureau's Decennial Census. Taken every ten years, the Census is considered the most reliable source of demographic and housing data. Many categories of information come from 100% headcounts, while others are derived from sampling. Available 2021 Census data has also been used where possible from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates. These estimates do not survey every household like the Decennial Census but take samples and average them over 5 years of data to generate statistically reliable estimates.

Data from 2022 generally comes from ESRI, a private demographic and business information company. ESRI derives their data from several sources, including the Census Bureau's sampling-based American Community Survey, records kept by the US Post Office, real estate analysis data, business data, and local sources. It also uses projections based on older information. For most geographic levels, ESRI data is considered very reliable, and has consistently been within 2% of Census headcounts.

Population Trends

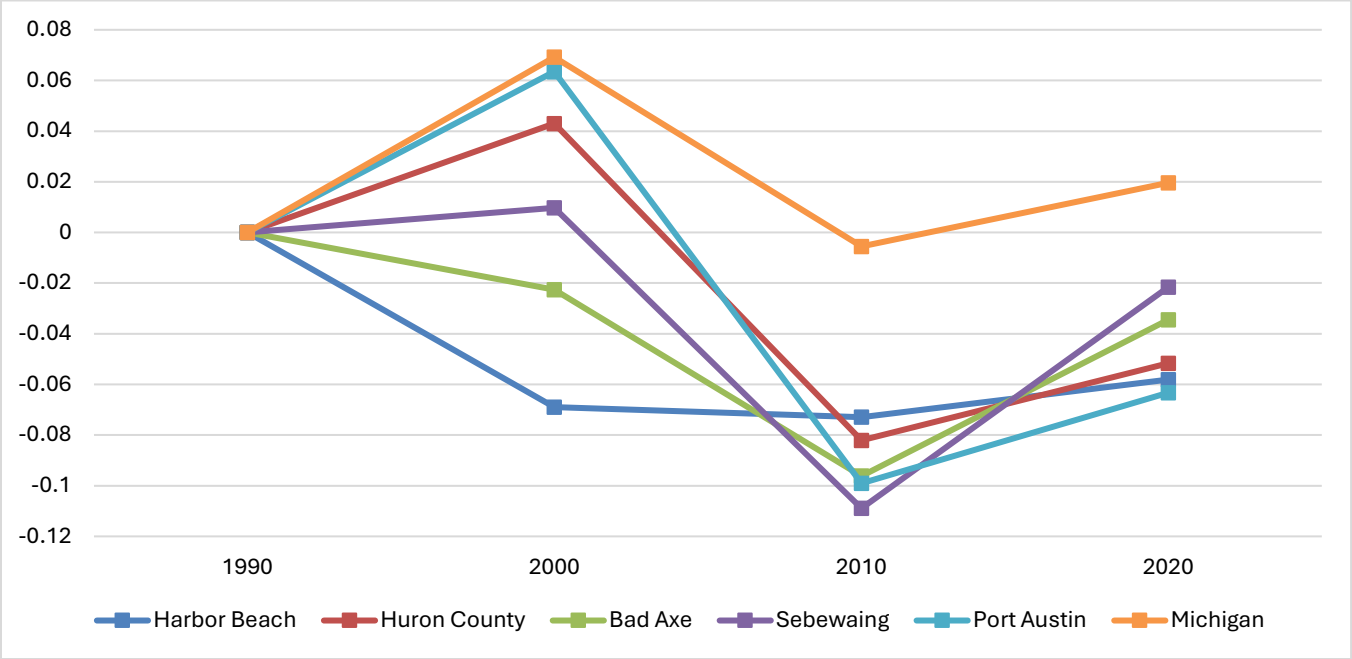
As shown in Table 4 and Figure 7, after growing for much of the 1990s, the population in in the City of Harbor Beach has decreased steadily over the past twenty years, consistent with the trends seen in Huron County and for the State of Michigan as a whole.

Table 4: Population of Harbor Beach and Surrounding Communities

Community	1990	2000	2010	2020
Harbor Beach	1,973	1,837	1,703	1,604
Bad Axe	3,542	3,462	3,129	3,021
Village of Sebewaing	1,955	1,974	1,759	1,721
Port Austin	693	737	664	622
Huron County	34,591	36,079	33,118	31,407
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 7: Population Change, 1990 to 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Households

As shown in Table 5, the number of households in Harbor Beach remained relatively steady until it dropped in 2020. However, the average household size slightly increased at the same time. This could be a result of the many household changes that came along with the COVID-19 pandemic, when young adults were moving back in with their parents while the world transitioned many to working from home. Across Huron County, the average household size continued to decrease in conjunction with the decrease in population. However, in 2021 the average household size increased to 2.30, which could be a sign of more families having children, seniors moving in with family members as they age in place, or young adults moving back home during the pandemic.

Throughout the State of Michigan, population has begun to increase in the last 10 years after experiencing declining population after the year 2000. The number of households also rose dramatically in the last decade, which could be attributed to the shrink in the average size of households. The shrinking average size of a household, as shown in Table 6 and Table 7 generally indicates a combination of an increase in the number of "empty nester" retirees and young people waiting longer to marry and having fewer children.

Table 5: Number of Households

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Harbor Beach	788	774	774	757
Huron County	13,268	14,597	14,348	14,581
State of Michigan	3,419,331	3,785,661	3,872,508	4,089,794

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 6: Average Household Size Harbor Beach and Surrounding Communities, 2021

Harbor Beach	Bad Axe	Sebewaing	Port Austin
2.33 (+)	2.27 (+)	2.11 (-)	1.82 (-)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 7: Average Household Size

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Harbor Beach	2.36	2.31	2.24	2.25
Huron County	2.60	2.42	2.27	2.20
State of Michigan	2.66	2.56	2.49	2.40

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

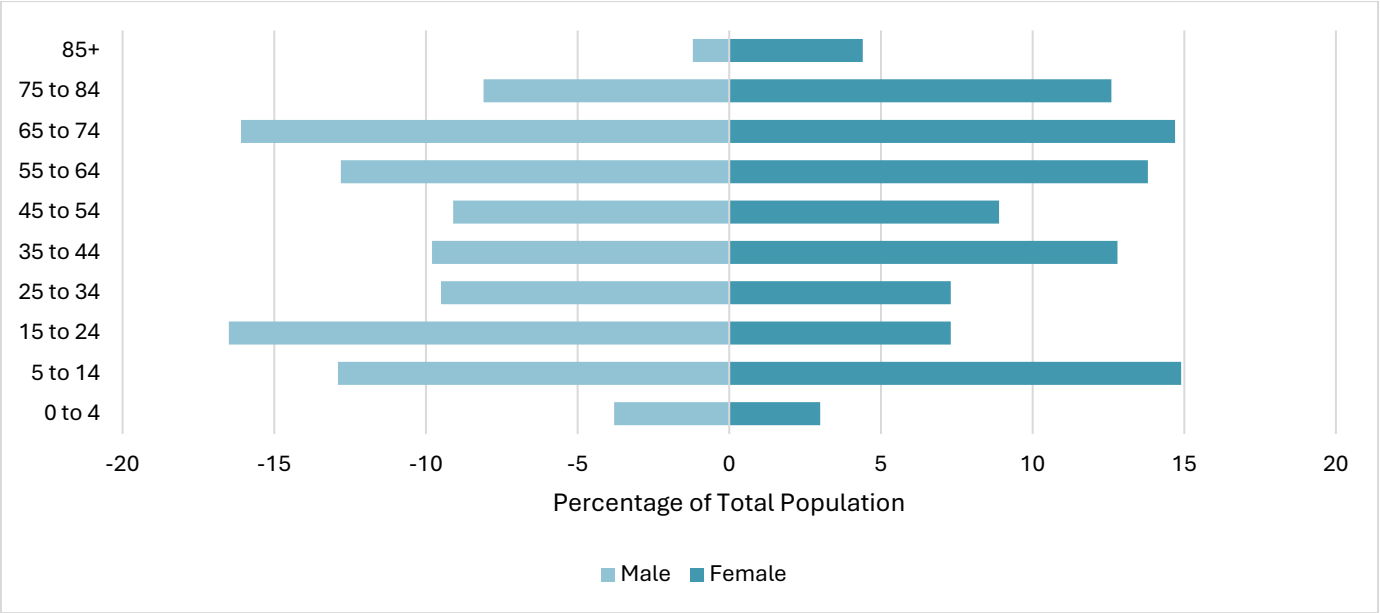
Age

As shown in Figure 8, adults aged 18 to 64 have made up the majority of Harbor Beach's population over the last decade. However, since 2015, the 65 years-and-older cohort has increased in its share of the population. Given that the overall population has continued to decline over the same period, the shift in the 65 years-and-over cohort's share could be a result of young adults moving out of the City for education or job opportunities.

In 2010, Huron County's population was comprised largely of those between ages 44 and 65. This group generally has older children and is preparing for retirement. There was also a sizable proportion of children aged 5 to 14 years that would be entering adulthood over the last several years. In 2021, the population in the county shifted to be comprised of those aged 55 to 74. Similar to communities across the state, Harbor Beach will have to consider how to best support residents as they age in place.

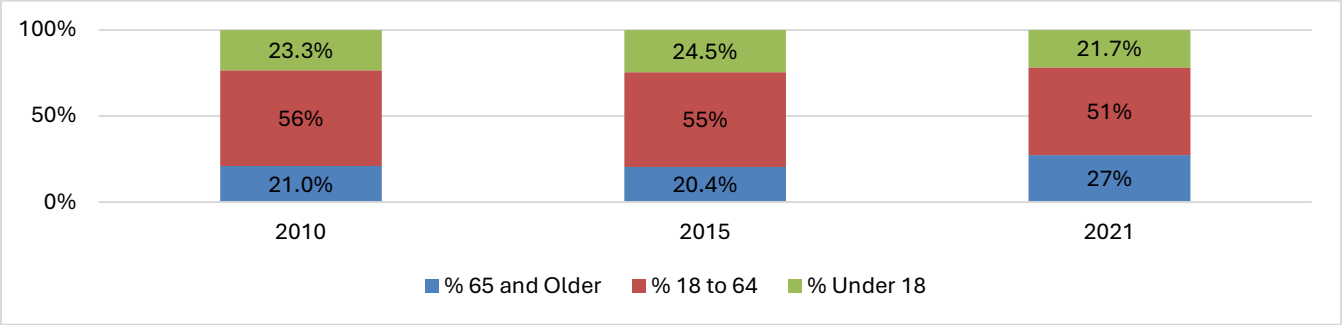
The age of Harbor Beach residents is generally consistent with Huron County, with a slightly larger share of the population being under 18.

Figure 8: Harbor Beach Age Ranges, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 9: Age Trends in Harbor Beach

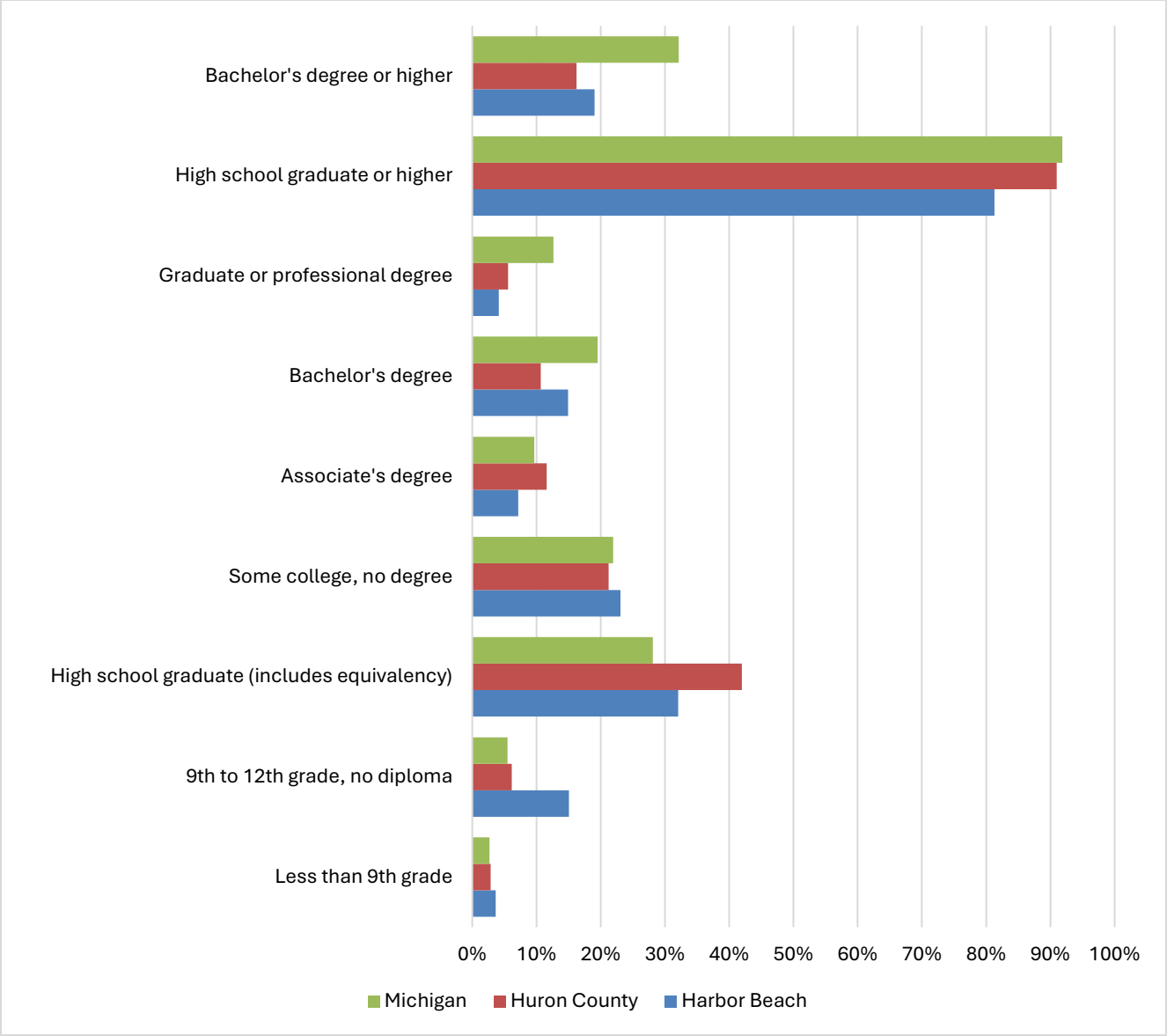


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Educational Attainment

The figure below shows the educational attainment of Harbor Beach residents over the age of 25 compared to Huron County and the State of Michigan. While the majority of residents have completed high school, the County and City still slightly lag behind the State as a whole when it comes to college degrees.

Figure 10: Educational Attainment, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Occupation

As Table 8 shows, residents of Harbor Beach are employed in a variety of fields, with the largest proportions in manufacturing, educational services, and health care and social assistance, and retail trade. The County and State also have a high proportion of the population working in the same sectors.

Table 8: Employment Sectors, 2022

Category	Harbor Beach	Huron County	State of Michigan
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	6.6%	8.5%	1.1%
Construction	3.1%	6.2%	5.8%
Manufacturing	25.2%	21.6%	18.6%
Wholesale trade	4.5%	2.4%	2.2%
Retail trade	10.2%	11.2%	10.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.2%	4.3%	4.7%
Information	0.3%	1.2%	1.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.7%	4.1%	5.7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.3%	5.2%	9.9%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.0%	19.4%	23.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.7%	8.0%	8.9%
Other services, except public administration	7.7%	5.0%	4.5%
Public administration	2.6%	2.9%	3.5%

Harbor Beach has retained a higher percentage of manufacturing jobs than the County and State, a show of its strong industrial presence. While the proportion of residents working in educational services, and health care and social assistance has grown in recent decades, the City has a smaller population working in this sector than the County and State.

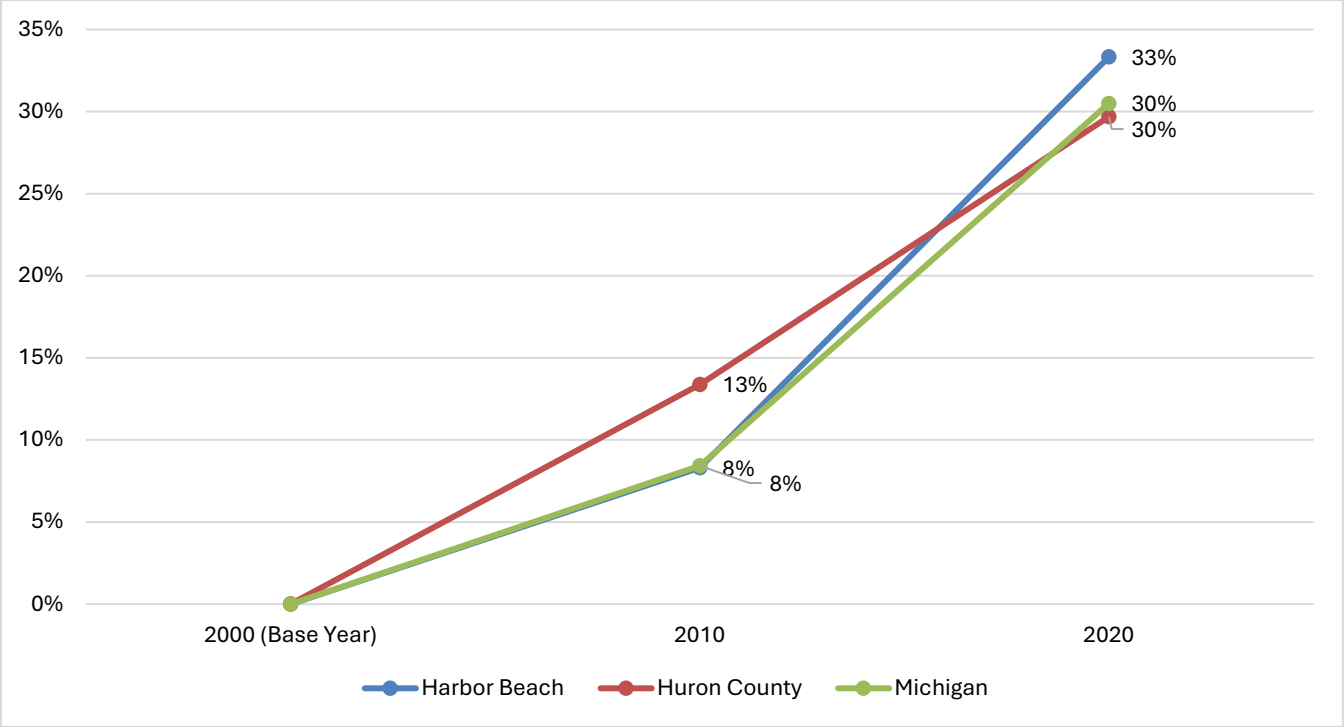
Given the City's position as a resource hub for surrounding communities, providing services like public water and healthcare through the Harbor Beach Community Hospital, it is likely that this sector will continue to grow. Harbor Beach has an opportunity to continue to position itself as a regional leader and provider by offering services like these that aren't found in neighboring communities.

Income

The median income for Harbor Beach was $42,554 and Huron County's was $51,924 in 2021, both below the State of Michigan median of $63,202. Over the past 20 years, as shown in Figure 11, the County and City's median income grew at nearly the same pace than that of the State as a whole. However, the City and County median income still lags considerably behind the State in actual values.

Additionally, during this period the entire world economy experienced both the Great Recession during the late 2000s and the global COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020, both impacting these figures.

Figure 11: Median Income Change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Housing

This section of the analysis pertains to trends in Harbor Beach's housing stock. It explores the types of housing units, whether they are owner- or renter-occupied, and the median value of owner-occupied homes. Analyzing trends over time and comparing the Harbor Beach area to the State as a whole gives a more comprehensive view of the social, economic, and physical nature of the Harbor Beach community. A general overview of these indicators is provided, followed by a projection and analysis of future demand.

Housing Type

Of the 21,199 housing units in Huron County, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 954 are located within Harbor Beach. The majority of these units in both the City and across the County are single-family detached homes, which is generally consistent with the housing unit composition in Harbor Beach as shown in Table 9. Also seen in this table, between 2010 and 2021 there was an increase in the proportion of this type of housing in the County, likely indicating new construction of homes. Additionally, there is a noticeable increase in large multi-family housing types in the City over the 11-year period, and a decrease in mobile homes.

Table 9: Housing Types

	2010		2015		2021	
	Harbor Beach	Huron County	Harbor Beach	Huron County	Harbor Beach	Huron County
Single Family Detached	80.3%	81.8%	76.6%	82.1%	79.2%	85.4%
Single Family Attached	1.4	1.0%	0.9%	1.3%	1.1%	1.3%
Small Multi-Family (>10)	11.4%	4.8%	10.0%	4.6%	9.6%	4.7%
Large Multi-Family (10+)	1.1%	2.2%	8.3%	2.6%	6.7%	2.1%
Mobile Home	6.7%	10.2%	4.1%	9.4%	3.3%	6.6%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0,0%	0.1%	0%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Tenure and Occupancy

The general housing tenure trend in the State of Michigan, Huron County, and in Harbor Beach is that the majority of homes are owner-occupied, depicted in Table 10. As shown in Table 11, the vacancy rate in the County looks very high at 34.1% compared to the rest of the State. However, of the total vacant units, 75.2% are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, 5.4% are for sale, and 5.7% are for rent. The County's housing tenure and occupancy rates is generally consistent with what is happening in the City of Harbor Beach.

Table 10: Housing Tenure, 2021

	Owner	Renter
Harbor Beach	78.1%	21.9%
Huron County	79.8%	20.2%
State of Michigan	65.4%	34.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; ESRI

Table 11: Housing Occupancy, 2021

	Occupied	Vacant
Harbor Beach	74.9%	25.1%
Huron County	65.9%	34.1%
State of Michigan	88.5%	11.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; ESRI

Of the estimated 25.1% vacant units in the City, the Census estimated that 121 units (74.2% of the units considered vacant) are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Therefore, while there may be the appearance of availability and vacancy in the City, there are truly only a handful of units actually available. Additionally, at the time of data collection, the Census estimated that only 29 of the truly "vacant" units are for rent, and not a single unit was for sale.

Table 12: Vacancy Type, 2021

	Harbor Beach		Huron County	
Total:	163	100%	6,969	100%
For rent	29	17.8%	245	3.5%
Rented, not occupied	0	-	18	0.3%
For sale only	0	-	168	2.4%
Sold, not occupied	0	-	155	2.2%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	121	74.2%	5,871	84.2%
For migrant workers	0	-	9	0.1%
Other vacant	13	8.0%	503	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; ESRI

Housing Value

The median home value in the City of Harbor Beach, as of 2021, was $81,300. This is below the median home value for both the State of Michigan ($199,100) and Huron County ($114,100). However, since 2010, home prices in the City of Harbor Beach have increased at a slightly higher rate than they have in Huron County.

Table 13: Median Home Value

	2010	2015	2021	Avg. Annual Change
Harbor Beach	$74,300	$73,900	$81,300	0.86%
Huron County	$104,900	$92,900	$114,100	0.80%
State of Michigan	$123,300	$137,500	$199,100	5.59%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Analysis

PURPOSE

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the demand for housing units in the City of Harbor Beach to inform the City's housing policies in this Master Plan. This study includes a detailed analysis of housing market data from the US Census, ESRI, and other sources. The conclusions of this study are designed to initiate policy discussions with City officials and stakeholders, especially related to zoning decisions and other Master Plan implementation action items.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSES

This study features two key areas of analysis:

» Analysis of the underlying demographic trends that impact the housing market, including population projections
» Projection of the population to 2030 and 2040, with accompanying projections of long-term housing trends

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This analysis is based on estimates, assumptions, and other information developed from market research and knowledge of the industry. Sources of information and the basis of estimates are stated in this section.

The conclusions of this analysis rely on standards set by national organizations and data derived from outside market research organizations. Additionally, they are based on the assumptions stated in this section. The conclusions and supporting data in this analysis are subject to change based on evolving market conditions. This analysis is intended to quantify the market for new housing development and is not intended to be used as a financial projection.

DATA SOURCES

Data for this report comes from the following sources, which are cited where appropriate:

» U.S. Census Bureau:
- 2000 Decennial Headcount
- 2010 Decennial Headcount
- 2019 American Community Survey
- 2020 Decennial Headcount

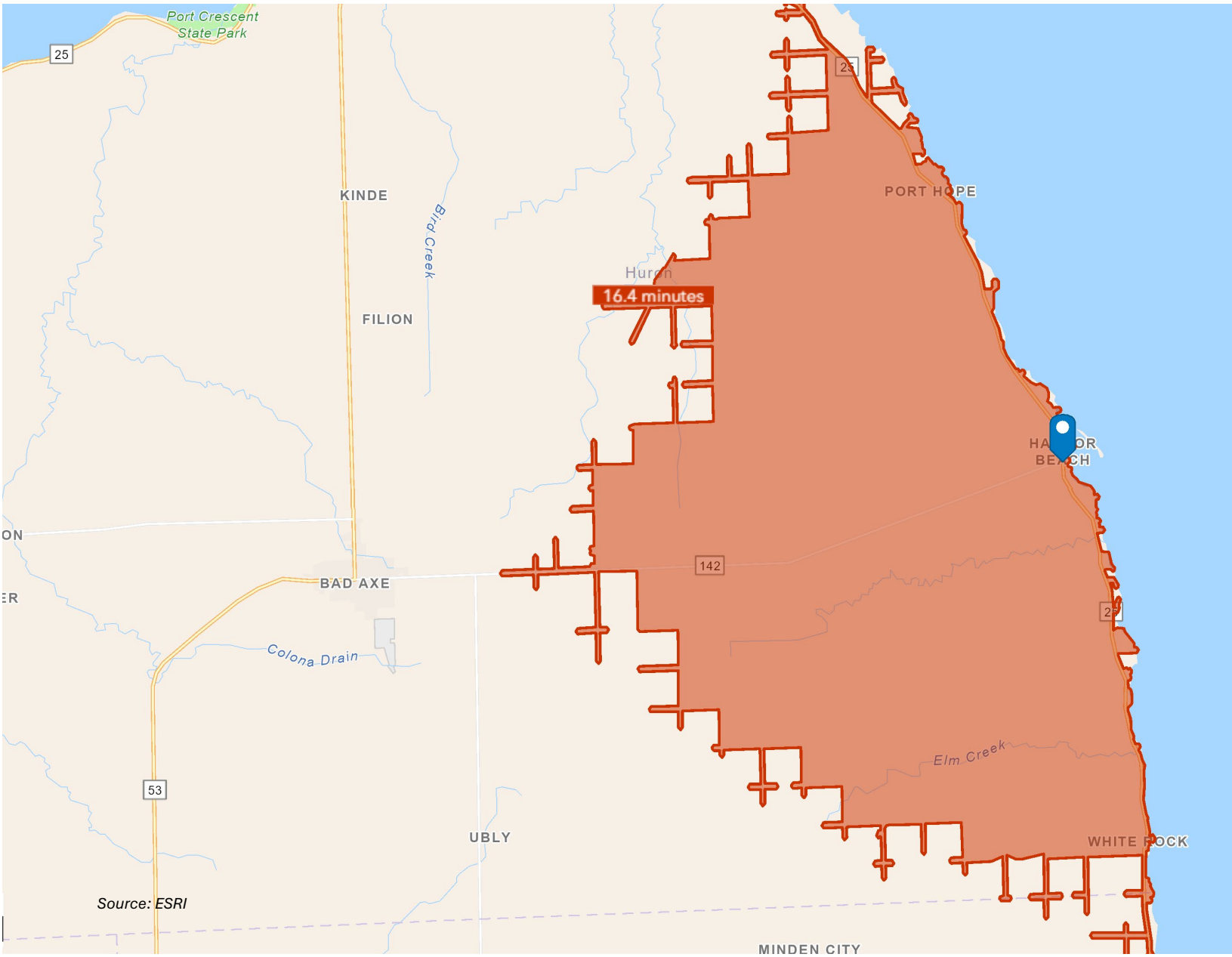
» ESRI Business Analyst
» National Association of Home Builders

TRADE AREA

Markets do not stop at municipal borders. When households seek housing in the Harbor Beach area, they likely do not look solely within City limits, or any other specific community. Thus, the geographic extent of the housing market is more realistically the area where someone can live and comfortably commute into Harbor Beach. To estimate this area, McKenna used the average commute time in the City (16.4 minutes) and mapped the area where a commuter could reach the center of the City of Harbor Beach in that time.

The resulting Trade Area is shown on the map below (Figure 12). The Trade Area incorporates a large swath of communities to the north, south, and west, reaching as far as Port Hope and White Rock. **The Trade Area has a total population of 4,934 people, according to the 2020 Census.**

Figure 12: Trade Area



POPULATION PROJECTION

To project the population in the future, McKenna used a Cohort-Component Population Projection. Cohort-Component Population Projections are developed using the following methodology:

Cohort-Component: The population is divided into ten-year age cohorts, using U.S. Census data. At each ten-year interval, individual age cohorts are moved up the ladder. For instance, the group that was 30- 40 years old in 2010 became the 40-50-year-olds in 2020, minus those who die during that time frame based on the mortality rate for their age group. For the 80+ age cohort, the number not projected to die during the ten-year period in question was carried over to the next decade. To calculate the number of people aged 0-10, the population of women of childbearing age was calculated and a 10-year birthrate per thousand (from the National Institute of Health) applied to give the number of births.

Net Migration Calculation: To account for migration, the population projection also includes a net migration factor. The net migration factor was calculated by running a Cohort-Component Analysis from 2010 to 2020 and comparing the results to the actual 2020 population data. The Cohort-Component Analysis predicted a City population of 1,972 people, compared to an actual population of 1,862. Therefore, the analysis estimates a net loss of 110 people that moved elsewhere who would otherwise still be living in the City. 110 people represents a **-5.6% net migration rate for the decade from 2010 to 2020.**

To add further context to this analysis, the migration rate by age cohort is provided in Table 14 below. It is shown that while there has been a migration loss in the overall population, not every age cohort is fluctuating in the same way. There is a loss in children ages 0-9, but a noticeable gain of 49.7% in children ages 10-19 years old. Young adults ages 20-29 also show a loss, however this is to be expected as this age group includes the majority of young people who may be leaving the City for higher education. Also notable is the gain of 27.1% in seniors ages 70-79, who may be retirees seeking to settle in Harbor Beach for its small-town, waterfront charm.

Table 14: Harbor Beach Net Migration by Age Cohort, 2010 to 2020

Age Cohort	Projection	Census	Net Migration
0-9 years	221	183	-17.3%
10-19 years	195	292	49.7%
20-29 years	264	168	-36.3%
30-39 years	140	159	13.9%
40-49 years	200	205	2.4%
50-59 years	205	213	3.8%
60-69 years	318	293	-7.9%
70-79 years	161	204	27.1%
80+	268	145	-45.9%
Total	**1972**	**1862**	**-5.6%**

Source: US Census, ESRI, McKenna Calculation

In summary, the City should take note of migration patterns, but within the context that these figures are estimates. As such, there are margins of error to consider with any data, as these estimates are based on self-reporting through the Decennial Census and American Community Survey. Keeping that in mind, for the purposes of this analysis, the net migration rates are assumed to hold constant through the 20-year projection period. The results of the population projection are shown in the following table.

Table 15: Trade Area Population Projection

	2020	2030 (Projected)	2040 (Projected)
Harbor Beach	1,862	1,952	1,815
Trade Area	4,933	5,139	4,810

Source: US Census, ESRI, McKenna Calculation

As seen in the table, the population for the City and Trade Area as a whole is projected to fluctuate over the next few decades. This projection is contextualized with housing data in the following section to understand potential impacts on Harbor Beach's housing market.

PROJECTED CITY HOUSING DEMAND – 2030 AND 2040

Headship and Homeownership Rates

The headship rate is the number of households in each age group divided by the population in that age group. By definition, a household resides in a dwelling unit under its control. Using the data in Table 16 we can calculate the propensity of the population in each age cohort to 1) form a household based on the headship rate, and 2) own or rent a dwelling unit. Notably, roommates or a romantic couple living together are considered "co-heads" of a household, and only one person is counted as the "head" for the purposes of the headship rate.

Headship rate data is provided by the National Association of Home Builders. National data is used for headship because it is not available for smaller geographies. The assumption, for the purposes of this analysis, is that Huron County's headship rates are roughly similar to the nation at large.

For the homeownership rate, the State of Michigan's rate is used to create a "baseline" of homeownership demand for the City and Trade Area. Using the national rate would incorporate regions where homeownership rates are lower, and over-state demand for rental housing. Using a more local or countywide rate would be circular logic, merely repeating what is already going on in the housing market, and not allowing for the analysis to show inefficiencies. Therefore, the statewide rate is used.

Table 16: Homeownership and Headship Rates, 2020

	Population (City)	Population (Trade Area)	Headship Rate (United States)	Homeownership Rate (Michigan)
20-29	168	454	39.2%	44.1%
30-39	159	517	54.3%	68.6%
40-49	205	472	56.7%	75.4%
50-59	213	693	58.5%	79.9%
60-69	293	861	63.6%	83.3%
70-79	204	598	64.4%	83.7%
80+	145	290	54.1%	72.2%

Source: U.S. Census, National Association of Home Builders

Given that the headship rates are on a national scale, one must consider that the figures and trends during this time period are from a tumultuous housing market. The COVID-19 pandemic caused several changes in the market to occur, including record low interest rates in 2020 that were intended to keep the economy from halting during state-mandated quarantines. The low rates resulted in an extremely hot sellers' market, resulting in higher housing costs that have yet to come back to pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, historic inflation during the same period has created a scenario where people who may have been entering the housing market seeking to purchase may have been forced to rent due to lack of inventory, cost concerns, etc.

Beginning in 2022, interest rates have been raised to reverse the effects of the pandemic economy and reduce the ever-rising cost of housing. Only in late 2024 have rates begun to marginally drop. In summary, these historic, international events have had a pervasive impact on housing markets across the country and must be considered. Additionally, 2020 was the year for the Decennial Census to be conducted, which is typically regarded as the most reliable source of demographic data and why data from 2020 is used for the analysis rather than another dataset. This context should be held in mind when considering the outcomes of these analyses.

Table 17: Demand Calculation Explanation

Population	Households	Homeowners	Renters
2020 U.S. Decennial Census	Population x Headship Rate in Table 15	Households x Homeownership Rate in Table 15	Households - Homeowners

Table 18: Estimated Homeowner/Renter Demand by Age Group, Harbor Beach, 2020

Age Group	Population	Total Households	Homeowner Households	Renter Households
20-29	168	66	29	37
30-39	159	86	59	27
40-49	205	116	88	29
50-59	213	125	100	25
60-69	293	186	155	31
70-79	204	131	110	21
80+	145	78	57	22
Total:		789	597	192
			75.7%	24.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, National Association of Home Builders, McKenna Calculations

Table 19: Estimated Homeowner / Renter Demand by Age Group, Trade Area, 2020

Age Group	Population	Total Households	Homeowner Households	Renter Households
20-29	454	178	78	99
30-39	517	281	193	88
40-49	472	268	202	66
50-59	693	405	324	81
60-69	861	548	456	91
70-79	598	385	322	63
80+	290	157	113	44
Total:		2,221	1,689	533
			76.0%	24.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, National Association of Home Builders, McKenna Calculations

The ratio of demand for homeownership and rental properties (with approximately 76% of demand for homeownership properties) in the City is just over the ratio of owner-occupied units versus renter-occupied units (approximately 73% of the housing units are owner-occupied), signaling a stronger demand for owner-occupied units than there are perhaps available in the market.

The housing market In the Trade Area has a noticeably different balance from a tenure standpoint (with roughly 83% of housing units being owner-occupied). This could indicate a stronger demand for rental units across the Trade Area than are available.

Housing Demand

The purpose of projecting housing demand in 10 and 20-year increments is to understand the impact of the housing market on City policy over the long term. The Master Plan is a forward-looking document with a 20-year time horizon, and therefore, this analysis uses the same time horizon. Please note that this projection is limited to the parameters in the model and does not take into account unforeseen events or trends that could alter housing demand in the future. Using the population projection described above and the headship and homeownership rates, the number of housing units demanded in the City has been projected out to 2030 and 2040.

Table 20: Estimated Housing Demand, 2030 and 2040

	Projected Population		Households		Homeowners		Renters	
	2030	2040	2030	2040	2030	2040	2030	2040
Harbor Beach	1,952	1,815	865	896	638 (73.7%)	661 (73.7%)	227 (26.3%)	235 (26.3%)
Trade Area	5,139	4,810	2,344	2,407	1,763 (75.2%)	1,784 (74.1%)	580 (24.8%)	623 (25.9%)

Source: US Census, ESRI, McKenna Calculation

Table 21: Change in Housing Demand, 2020-2040, Harbor Beach

Year	Homeowners	Renters	Total Housing Units Demanded	Change
2020	597	192	789	
2030	638	227	865	+76
2040	661	235	896	+31
Total New Housing Units Demanded			**107**	

Source: US Census Bureau, McKenna Calculations

Table 22: Change in Housing Demand, 2020-2040, Trade Area

Year	Homeowners	Renters	Total Housing Units Demanded	Change
2020	1,689	533	**2,221**	
2030	1,763	580	**2,344**	+123
2040	1,784	623	**2,407**	+63
Total New Housing Units Demanded			**186**	

Source: US Census Bureau, McKenna Calculations

CONCLUSION

In summary, the City of Harbor Beach can expect, based on these projections, that an additional 107 housing units will be needed to meet future demand. As can be seen in Table 21 and Table 22, even while population is projected to fluctuate, due to a decreasing average household size, more housing units will be demanded.

Moreover, it should be clear that the projection is based on demand assumptions for permanent, year-round residences. As noted earlier in this section, according to the Census Bureau, there are an estimated 954 housing units in the City, 163 of which are categorized as "vacant". However, 121 of the vacant units (74.1%) are considered to be for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. If these units are considered to be unavailable, then the City's true vacancy stands at around just 4.4%. These existing conditions, combined with the results of this projection, show that there is a strong demand in Harbor Beach for permanent, year-round residences.

These circumstances must also be considered in the context of the City's estimated -5.6% migration rate. The rate was estimated based on recent demographic trends, though it should be noted that given the small number of available permanent housing units, there may be more people who want to live in the City but are unable to find a home that fits their needs. If there was an increase in housing stock, it is possible that the City could see a positive migration rate and growth in its population.

To address existing and potential future housing demands, there are a variety of tools and strategies the City could employ. The City should make it clear to developers and property owners that there is a need for permanent, year-round residences that can meet housing needs. To achieve this, specific recommendations are provided and discussed in further detail in the Implementation Chapter. Some of these strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

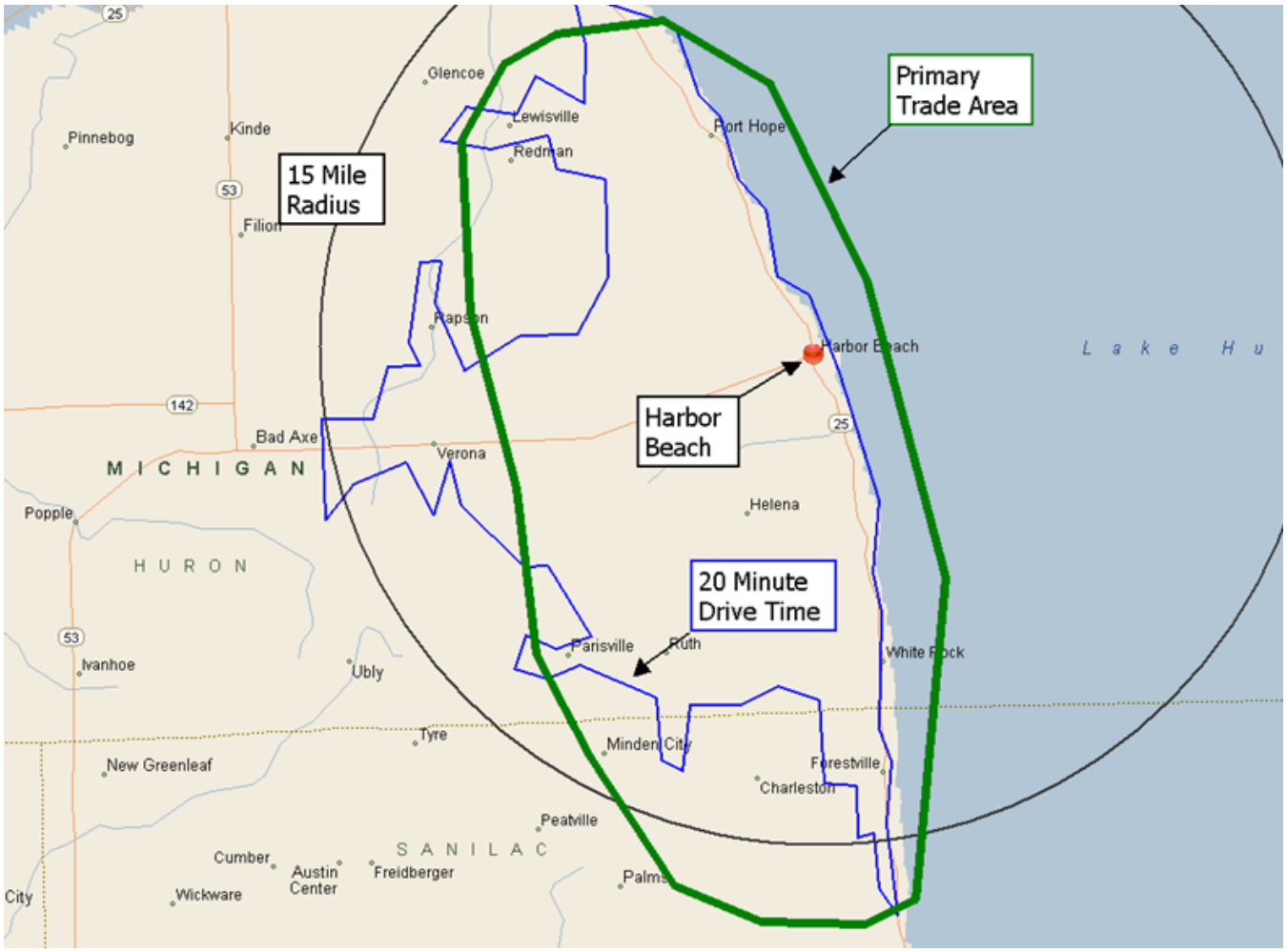
- Encourage the development or redevelopment of housing units in the Downtown, which has potential for housing units on upper floors of commercial units.
- Permitting additional dwelling units (ADUs) to allow for additional housing units to be constructed without drastically changing the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Prioritizing infill development on vacant lots, which can create more density in forms such as duplexes without drastically changing the character of existing neighborhoods.

Retail Potential

To determine the estimated amounts and types of additional retail supportable in the City of Harbor Beach, we defined a primary trade area that would serve the retail in the City based on geographic and topographic considerations, traffic access/flow in the area, relative retail strengths and weaknesses of competition, concentrations of daytime employment, and the retail gravitation in the market. The primary trade area is the consumer market where the City has a significant competitive advantage because of access, design, lack of quality competition and traffic and commute patterns.

We estimate that the boundaries of the City's primary retail trade area, pictured below, extends 11 miles north to Lawitzke Road, 17 miles south to Russell Road, and 9 miles west to Polk Road and Iseler Road. We estimate that people living, working, and visiting the primary trade area will account for up to 75 percent of the total sales captured by retailers and restaurants in Harbor Beach.

Figure 13: Retail Trade Area



Based on the projected consumer expenditure capture (demand) in the primary trade area of the gross consumer expenditure by retail category, less the current existing retail sales (supply) by retail category, we project the potential net consumer expenditure (gap) available to support existing and new development. Net consumer expenditure (gap) is equated to potential retail development square footage, with the help of retail sales per square foot data provided by the Urban Land Institute and International Council of Shopping Centers.

We estimate that the City of Harbor Beach has the potential to support up to an additional 13,200 square feet (sq. ft.) of new retail and restaurant space which could generate new annual sales of as much as $4.4 million. This new commercial development could include roughly 9,500 sq. ft. of new retailers and 3,700 sq. ft. of new restaurants. The following chart illustrates this demand by retail and restaurant category:

Table 23: Additional Retail Demand

Retail / Restaurant Category	Total Existing Demand	Estimated Sales	Sales / SF	Estimated Supported SF
Retailers				
Apparel Stores	$869,912	$855,270	$290	2,900 sf
Grocery Stores	$14,836,321	$2,029,002	$420	4,800 sf
Gift Stores	$2,472,237	$545,527	$300	1,800 sf
Retailer Totals	$26,004,471	$3,429,800	$337	9,500 sf
Restaurants				
Limited-Service Eating Places	$4,753,934	$650,787	$270	2,400 sf
Bakery, coffee, ice cream, etc.	$1,816,290	$366,940	$280	1,300 sf
Restaurant Totals	$6,570,225	$1,017,727	$275	3,700 sf
Retailer and Restaurant Totals	$32,574,695	$4,447,526	$312	13,200 sf

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3

Existing Conditions

Existing Land Use

The existing land use analysis describes what land uses exist in Harbor Beach at this moment in time. The first step in conducting an existing land use survey is to define land use categories to fit the City's unique conditions. Traditional distinctions like "residential" and "commercial" are broken down into smaller categories to describe the situation on the ground.

The next step is to complete a field survey, which was done in September of 2010. The Existing Land Use map was created based on a 2020 field survey. This map was updated with the help of City staff and through aerial imagery analysis. For the purposes of this analysis, vacant buildings are classified by their most recent use or the uses of their immediate neighbors.

Residential Land uses

SINGLE FAMILY

Most of Harbor Beach's developed area fits into a traditional category, which is characterized by single family homes on the City's traditional street grid. The size, architecture, and condition of these homes varies, sometimes dramatically, and sometimes within blocks, but their common feature is their gridded, interconnected layout. Most of these traditional style uses can be found in the residential blocks surrounding Downtown, from Bartlett Street on the south to Lytle Avenue on the north, and from Huron Avenue on the east to Nelson Street on the west.

A small but noticeable portion of Harbor Beach's housing stock falls into a slightly different category, located off Nelson Avenue near Garden Street on the western edge of town. This area has winding streets, and sizable houses on large lots. The infrastructure and housing stock were built recently in these areas, and not all the lots have been developed.

MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The City has a small number of multi-family residential properties. In Harbor Beach these generally take the form of multi-unit complexes consisting of 3 to 4 buildings. The largest multi-family complex is "Harbor House," along Schock Road south of Bartlett on the far southwest edge of town.

SEASONAL RESIDENTIAL

"The Resort" on the City's southeastern edge, falls into a separate residential category. For the most part, this area is populated only seasonally. The Resort is also unique architecturally, with a row of wood cottages, built to blend into the forested landscape, running along the harbor. While the Resort's golf course stretches west of Huron Avenue, the residential component is located on a thin strip along the waterfront.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING

The manufactured housing category includes those land uses often referred to as mobile home parks. The manufactured housing in the City is located north of State Street, west of Nelson Street.

Commercial Land uses

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL

This commercial category is characterized by the traditional layout of a walkable Downtown commercial district. Buildings are built right up to the sidewalk, with several storefronts per building and parking in the rear. Most, but not all, of the buildings in this district pre-date World War II. Harbor Beach's Downtown district stretches along State Street from Huron Avenue to 3rd Street, and along Huron Avenue from Trescott Street to Garden Street.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

Outside of the Downtown area, Harbor Beach's commercial land uses take a different form. Generally set back from the street and surrounded by parking, these businesses cater to and rely upon customers arriving by car. Most of the "Highway Commercial" businesses in Harbor Beach are located along State Street near the intersection with Nelson Street/Schock Road

Downtown Harbor Beach

Industrial Land uses

WATERFRONT INDUSTRIAL

A large portion of the City's waterfront has long been characterized by industrial land use. The DTE site, located on a man-made island jutting off the lakeshore, was active for over 50 years until it was decommissioned, and its stacks demolished in 2020. The remaining active industrial uses include Corteva Agriscience and Sensient Flavors and represent the City's largest employers. While these industrial uses are located on the water, they do not necessarily use Lake Huron or its waters in their manufacturing activities.

INDUSTRIAL

Some smaller companies have set up industrial like uses within the City's Downtown traditional street grid. Located mainly along 1st Street between State Street and Garden Street, these light industrial uses generally blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Harbor Beach also has two industrial parks at the north end of the City. Hunter Industrial Park features a few businesses but has not yet filled all its lots. Immediately south of the Park, Industrial Drive houses a variety of buildings and has few opportunities for new industrial development.

Former DTE Site

Public/Quasi-Public Land use

The following are all classified as Public / Quasi-Public on the Existing Land Use map. For the purpose of providing more detailed information, a variety of specific uses are called out and described below.

CIVIC

One of Harbor Beach's greatest assets is the Harbor Beach Area District Library, on the corner of State Street and Huron Avenue. Housing a community center and movie theater in addition to the library, the building is a true cornerstone of the community.

Other civic land uses include Harbor Beach City Hall, at the corner of State Street and Nelson Street/Schock Road, the Police and Fire Departments, the Grice House and Frank Murphy museums, the Coast Guard Station on the harbor near Richie Drive, and the City's Department of Public Works complex along Pierce Road on the northeast edge of town.

SCHOOL

Harbor Beach Community Schools are located on a large complex on the south side of town, between Bartlett Street, 2nd Street, Trescott Street, and Schock Road. The complex includes the Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, as well as sports facilities.

MEDICAL

Harbor Beach Community Hospital is located near Downtown, with its facilities centered on the block bordered by Broad Street, Trescott Street, 1st Street, and Huron Avenue. The hospital also has additional properties in the surrounding neighborhood and makes use of the helicopter pad at the end of Industrial Drive.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

There are many thriving religious communities within Harbor Beach. Our Lady of Lake Huron Catholic Church and Zion Lutheran Church both operate schools, while First Presbyterian Church acts as a gateway to Downtown along State Street. Other religious institutions include Harbor Beach United Methodist Church, The Lighthouse Assembly of God, St. Anthony Catholic Church, and Faith Bible Baptist Church.

Harbor Beach Public Library

Harbor Beach Community School

Recreational/Green space

RECREATION

Harbor Beach has a variety of public parks, trails, and amenities that are owned and maintained by the City. These include Davidson Park on the south side of town, Memorial Park in the Downtown area just north of the library, Waterworks Park on the north side of town, and the iconic Judge James H. Lincoln Memorial Park along the waterfront near Downtown. These parks allow residents and visitors the opportunity to take advantage of Harbor Beach's impressive natural setting.

In addition to public parks, there are several privately owned and operated recreational facilities in Harbor Beach. The Resort on the south side of town operates its own golf course and other natural recreational land. This area is not generally open to the public but does provide a wooded buffer on the southern edge of the City.

Lincoln Park

MARINA

Harbor Beach offers two commercial marinas, one near Downtown at the end of Lytle Avenue, and one at the end of Richie Drive near the Coast Guard Station. Both are well used, especially because Harbor Beach's breakwater offers refuge from the open, rough water of Lake Huron.

Marina

VACANT/AGRICULTURE LAND

Within the Harbor Beach city limits, there are still several large areas of vacant land, especially the northwest and southwest corners. While some of this land is considered truly vacant and in need of redevelopment, such as the former DTE site, there is also a good portion of this land that is used agriculturally. While there is an opportunity to develop these areas, there is also a benefit of maintaining some open, natural space as it is a quality resource and part of the City's identity.

Existing Land Use

Harbor Beach, Michigan

April 25, 2024

LEGEND

- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Seasonal Residential
- Mobile Home
- Downtown Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Waterfront Industrial
- Industrial
- Public / Quasi-Public
- Marina/ Harbor
- Recreation
- Vacant/ Agriculture
- Parking

0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Harbor Beach, 2024. McKenna, 2024.

MCKENNA

Downtown

Source: City of Harbor Beach

The Downtown Harbor Beach commercial district and its waterfront location curates the City's small town, lakeside character. The Downtown extends down Huron Avenue and State Street from their intersection near the waterfront. The Downtown area has a number of quality historic buildings and thriving businesses, but it also has a significant number of vacant properties and buildings that have been renovated inconsistently with the Downtown context. Ensuring that newly constructed and renovated buildings complement the historic character of Downtown will be essential to maintaining its unique atmosphere. Design guidelines and façade requirements can be implemented through the zoning ordinance and other policies and practices to cultivate the desired aesthetic.

The photo below illustrates existing Downtown buildings that have been maintained consistent with the established historic character of the area.

One of the main focal points of Downtown is the Harbor Beach Area District Library building at the corner of Huron Avenue and State Street. Downtown businesses radiate out from this point, with parks and public spaces surrounding it to the north and east. Going South on Huron Avenue, the business corridor features many of the City's local eateries, including Smalley's Bar and Shipwrecks Ice Cream and Grill. The Frank Murphy Memorial Museum is also located on this stretch of Huron Avenue.

Going north on Huron Avenue, land use transitions rather quickly into traditional single-family housing, although Hunter's Bar and the Harbor Beach Fire Department are both located along this stretch.

State Street features more specialty retail and service/office type uses. In recent years several restaurants have opened, including Ricky J's and Eighteen87. Additionally, as the need for housing has increased, several units have been converted to residential uses on the first floor. While the need for housing is a critical one, having residential on the first floor of a Downtown building is not optimal. The Housing Analysis section in Chapter 2 of this plan further details the current and future demand for housing in the City. Recommendations to address housing needs as well as further enhancements to the Downtown are discussed in Chapter 4, Goals and Objectives, and Chapter 6, Implementation.

Generally, there is consistent occupancy through the first two blocks of Downtown, but there are several vacancies near 2nd Street. Despite the variety of businesses both in Downtown and to the west along State Street, Harbor Beach lacks a few important retail amenities. The most glaring is the lack of a grocery store; while Sandmann's Grocery offers a limited selection of food items on State Street, the nearest full-service grocer is over 18 miles away. Other needed retail areas include clothing and household goods, which is supported by feedback obtained through public engagement.

Natural Features and Recreation

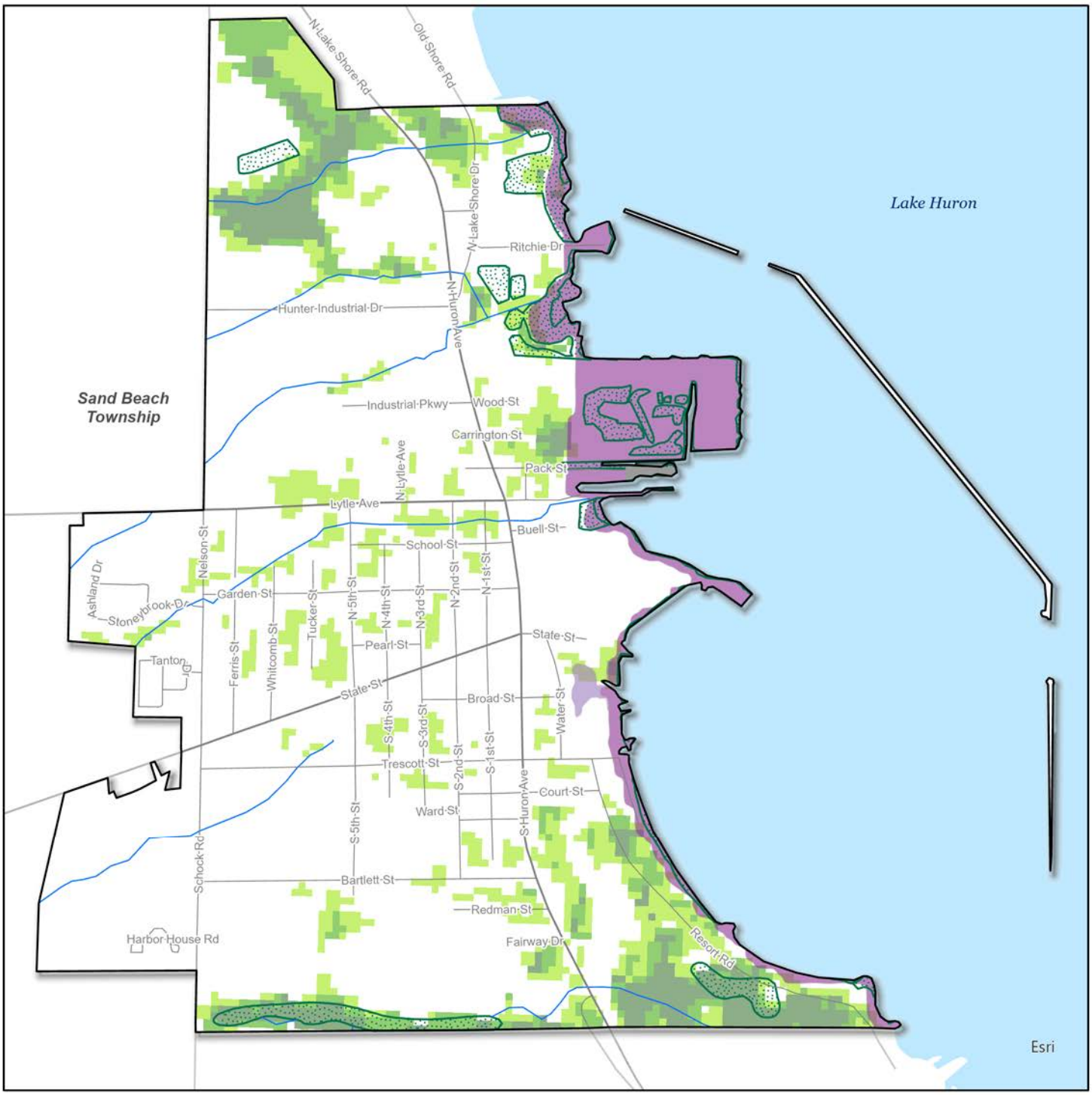
Backus Trail (Source: City of Harbor Beach)

Harbor Beach's greatest strength is its natural setting. Nestled along Lake Huron, with the picturesque, world's largest freshwater man-made harbor and historic lighthouse, in the midst of an old-growth forest, the City is ideally positioned to attract tourists and visitors from around the state and region. However, in order to maximize this potential, Harbor Beach must care for its natural and recreational amenities and must capitalize on its locational advantages.

On the following page is a Natural Features Map which shows where key natural assets are, including wetlands and tree canopy. Additionally, flood hazard zones are determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency are shown. These conditions and the City's position along the waterfront should be considered as new development is proposed and existing infrastructure ages.

Great Lakes shorelines are always changing, and as a result erosion is an expected and natural process along the waterfront. Water levels, wave action, the local geology, and plants impact how shorelines erode. While waterfront living is pinnacle in Michigan, sometimes homes and other structures are built too close to areas at risk of erosion. The State of Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) publishes tools and resources for local communities to help them understand the context and risks of erosion along Great Lakes shorelines, such as the High Risk Erosion Area Program (HREA) maps. The HREA Program identifies shorelines receding at an average annual rate of one foot per year or greater over a minimum period of 15 years. Along these shorelines, new structures are required to meet setbacks for their protection from a changing shoreline.

Much of the Lake Huron coast is not considered to be a HREA, including the City of Harbor Beach. Even still, the City should continue to monitor shoreline conditions and consider developing a specific Waterfront Plan as a companion to the Master Plan to address the City's unique shoreline needs, especially given the presence of the breakwall.



Natural Features

Harbor Beach, Michigan

April 25, 2024

LEGEND

Wetlands

- Palustrine & Lacustrine
- Riverine

Flood Areas

- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

Tree Canopy Cover

- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- > 75%

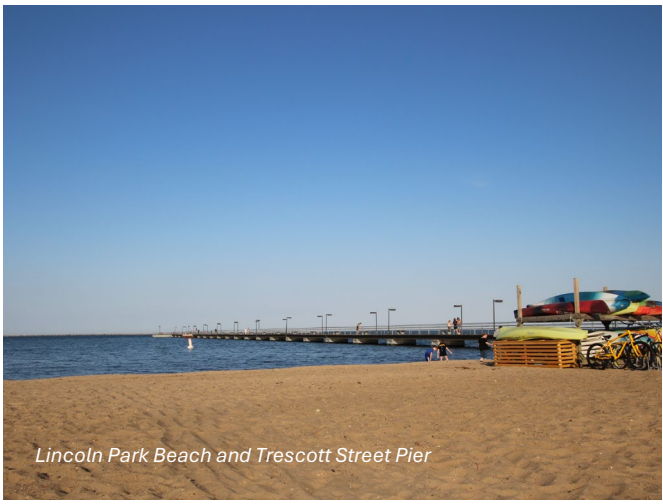
0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Harbor Beach, 2024. NWI, 2024. FEMA, 2024. NLCD, 2024. McKenna, 2024.

MCKENNA

Waterfront

Harbor Beach has diverse land uses along its waterfront. On the northern edge of town is a large vacant parcel which has in the past been proposed as the site for a resort hotel. In 1994, a drinking water plant was built on a portion of the property, which originally served as a dump site. Due to the contamination that lay beneath the surface from its old use, the site has limited potential future uses. The City has considered converting the site into an expansion of the North Park Campground, which consistently has full occupancy. Other types of lodging would be suitable for this site as well, such as cabins or a hotel.



Lincoln Park Beach and Trescott Street Pier

Immediately south of that lies the Coast Guard Station, Waterworks Park (including the Grice House Museum), and one of the City's marinas. In this area, Lake Huron is accessible to the community and visitors, as well as those who use the marina to dock their boats. Recently, the Coast Guard began a renovation and revitalization project on the pier, with plans for repaving and new lighting. The Coast Guard Station itself has not been consistently manned in recent years but is in good condition.

South of Waterworks Park and continuing to the center of Harbor Beach, the waterfront is much less accessible. While there is an active marina at the end of Lytle Avenue, most of the land is taken up by industrial uses such as Corteva Agriscience and Sensient Flavors, and formerly DTE Energy. In 2013, the DTE coal-fired power plant was decommissioned. In light of the push for more sustainable, clean energy sources across the country, many of these sites have been decommissioned in the last decade. In 2020, the site was demolished, and the distinct stacks removed from the harbor front.

While industry is crucial to the economy and tax base of Harbor Beach, and they do make some use of the harbor, they also serve to cut off the core of the City from Lake Huron. The decommissioning and demolition of the DTE plant presents a critical opportunity to open that portion of the waterfront back to the public. Following the decommissioning, the site was rezoned to Mixed Planned Unit Development (MPUD), a district that allows for integrated and coordinated development of various residential and commercial land uses, such as service stations, drugstores, personal service offices, and restaurants. PUDs are tools for municipalities to permit flexibility in the regulation of land development and encourage innovation in land use, design, layout, and type of structures constructed. Though the site is privately owned, the PUD mechanism provides the opportunity for the City to gain additional provisions and community benefits in return for allowing more flexibility than the zoning ordinance typically offers.

Given that the site is a man-made island, the types of uses that could feasibly replace the power plant are confined to an extent. The City should make an effort to collaborate with the property owner to determine what the most strategic uses would be for the site's redevelopment. The site would be suitable for waterfront retail and restaurants, as well as expanding lodging options, which Harbor Beach is in need of. The future development of the site will have a great impact on the City's access to Lake Huron and would benefit the community if it were to open to the public. Amenities like a boardwalk, benches, and even boat slips for visitors coming by the water would be valuable additions to the area.

South of Downtown Harbor Beach is the City's main public lakefront access: Judge James H. Lincoln Memorial Park, formerly known as Bathing Beach. The beach is the only sandy lakefront in the City and features the 1,015-foot Trescott Street Pier as well as playground equipment. This park had a complete makeover in 2012 and includes approximately 480 feet of shoreline. Lincoln Memorial Park is one of Harbor Beach's flagship destinations and hosts a variety of events and festivals throughout the year, including the popular Maritime Festival, which draws thousands of visitors each year.

South of the Lincoln Memorial Park is the Resort, where the waterfront is easily accessible to the seasonal residents but is closed to the general public.

Parks

In addition to Lincoln Memorial Park, the City operates several other parks, many of which have undergone expansion or renovation in recent years. Waterworks Park, on the north side of town, offers access to Lake Huron (although it is grassy, not sandy), recreational equipment, and a connection to the marina. It is also the site of the Grice House Museum. Nearby to Waterworks Park is Bruce Johnson Field, a facility for youth baseball. Recently, a roughly 2,200 square foot covered pavilion was added, as well as four cottages near the waterfront available for nightly rental. The cottages were constructed by students from the Huron Area Technical Center, and provide a breathtaking view of the harbor and lighthouse.

Davidson Park, on the south side of town, is a community gathering place offering a covered pavilion, basketball and tennis courts, and playground equipment. Adjacent to Lincoln Memorial Park, Davidson Park provides a seamless area of recreational space from the residential areas to Lake Huron. Recently, new pickleball courts were installed to meet growing demand for the popular sport.

Memorial Park is nestled directly north of the Harbor Beach Community House off of Huron Street near Downtown Harbor Beach. It is a passive park which features open space with shade trees, benches, and a central plaza containing a veteran's memorial, fireman's memorial, flagpole, and clock tower. The area provides a peaceful place for residents and visitors to relax, and ceremonies are held at the park each year for Memorial Day parade activities.

In 2022, the City adopted a Parks and Recreation Five-year Plan, which should be referenced for more detailed information on current amenities and future expansion plans.

Source: City of Harbor Beach

Source: City of Harbor Beach

Trails, Blueways, and Pedestrian System

Harbor Beach has invested in a 2-mile non-motorized trail running near the harbor front, the Harbor View Trail. Well-lit and smoothly paved, the trail attracts bikers, walkers, and others whenever the weather is pleasant. The trail begins on the north side of town, near the Coast Guard Station, and runs along an old railroad right-of-way into the heart of the City. Just north of the former DTE site, the trail runs along Demay Street, takes a right on Lytle Avenue, and then returns to the railroad right-of-way running parallel with Huron Avenue. South of the Sensient Flavors plant, the trail joins Water Street and then ends at Lincoln Memorial Park. The trail is part of a larger non-motorized trail system planned for Huron County, and the City intends to continue expanding facilities in the future with two more phases currently planned.

Source: City of Harbor Beach

Another treasured amenity in Harbor Beach is the Brian Backus Memorial Nature Trail, named in honor of a Harbor Beach veteran who sadly lost his life while serving in Afghanistan. The 1.5-mile trail is located on the north side of town with an entrance through the North Park Campground. The trail routes through the forest and marshlands north of the campground and includes bridges and boardwalks to provide access to the natural beauty of Harbor Beach. The eastern portion of the trail is universally accessible and paved with hard surface, while an additional area to the west remains in its natural state. The local High School takes advantage of this for cross-country practice and has hosted several meets on the trail.

Source: Harbor Beach Kayak

Both the Harbor View and Brian Backus trail routes can be found on the Existing Transportation Conditions map on page 50.

The Tip of the Thumb Heritage Water Trail is a 103-mile water trail on Lake Huron. It follows Michigan's Thumb into Saginaw Bay to the north and concludes at the Village of Lexington to the south. Paddlers can access the water trail at 44 different access points along the trail, two of which are in Harbor Beach: one at the Harbor Beach Marina and the other at Lincoln Memorial Park. Harbor Beach offers ideal kayaking conditions due to the calmness created by the breakwall and has several shallow water shipwrecks which draw tourists. To further support this, the City is installing a new pier and kayak launch on Pack Street, which will include a pier out to an observation and fishing deck with ADA-compliant accessible kayak launches. Appropriately named the Pack Street Pier, the new addition is slated to finish construction in late 2024.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Roads

Harbor Beach has a quality road system. The streets provide easy travel routes across the City, ample space for on-street parking, simple snow plowing in the winter, and the opportunity for bike lanes and other "complete streets" measures to be added in the future.

The main routes through Harbor Beach are state highways. Huron Avenue is part of M-25, which runs from Port Huron along the coast all the way around The Thumb to Bay City. State Street is part of M-142, which runs from Harbor Beach across The Thumb, through Bad Axe to Pigeon and Bay Port. The National Functional Classification (NFC) for both M-25 and M-142 is "Minor Arterial". The NFC system is used by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to order roadways from the highest mobility function (which emphasizes mobility) down to the lowest (which emphasizes property access) to help determine federal funding allocation. The NFC for Harbor Beach's roadways are shown in the Map 4: Existing Transportation Conditions on page 50.

All of the City's other roadways are considered local except Lytle Avenue, which is classified as a Minor Collector, which is a lower intensity than Minor Arterials, but are still eligible for federal funding.

Sewer and Water

Harbor Beach boasts one of the largest and best water facilities in this part of the State. The City provides water service to many communities in Huron County and along the Huron shoreline, and its facilities are located at the corner of Lake Shore Drive and Ritchie Drive, near Waterworks Park and the Coast Guard Station.

The City also operates its own sewer and stormwater facilities, and operates a wastewater treatment plant that serves several of the surrounding communities. The wastewater treatment plant not only provides service to residents, but also has more than enough capacity to service the local industrial waste load, including the two large waterfront operations, Corteva Agriscience and Sensient Flavors.

Electricity & Natural Gas

DTE Energy provides electrical service to Harbor Beach, though the company's plant in the City has been demolished. Natural Gas Service in Harbor Beach is provided by Consumers Energy. Consumers Energy serves much of the State of Michigan, in a swath from Kalamazoo through The Thumb. Service is somewhat limited and any extensive future non-residential development will require significant natural gas infrastructure improvements.

Existing Transportation Conditions

Harbor Beach, Michigan

April 25, 2024

LEGEND

- Minor Arterial
- Minor Collector
- Local
- Non-Certified
- Harbor View Trail
- Brian Backus Memorial Nature Trail

0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Harbor Beach, 2024. McKenna, 2024.

MCKENNA

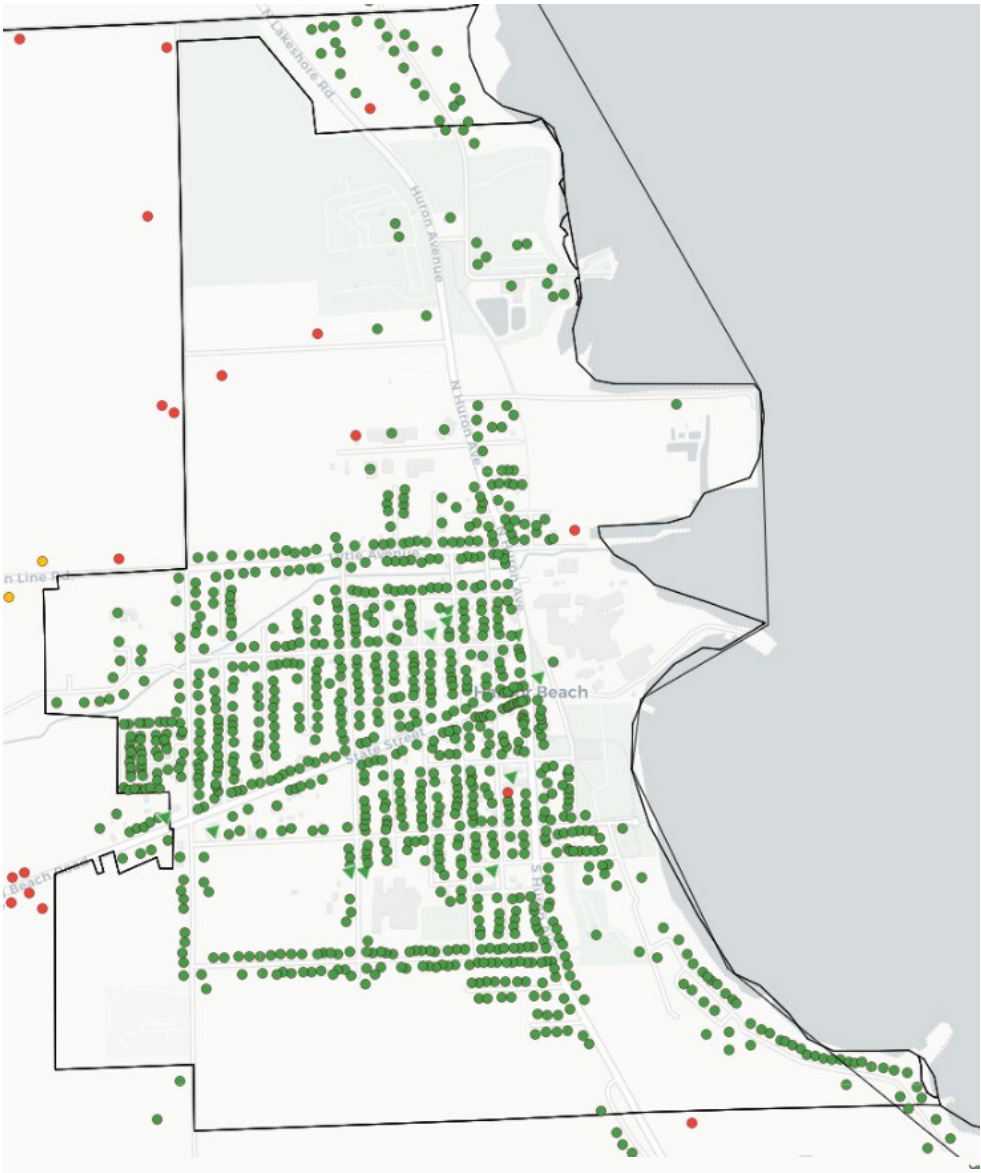
Broadband

As technology has evolved, access to broadband internet services has become essential for day-to-day life. Ensuring that all residents and businesses have adequate internet services is just as critical as providing access to other utilities to ensure they can grow and thrive in the 21st century. The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity works to provide a map of broadband services, a clip of which is shown below, demonstrating Harbor Beach's access.

The map represents broadband availability for each site (household, business, etc.), which are categorized into three service levels:

- **Served**: Addresses with broadband service that meets or exceeds 100 MBPS download speed and 20 MBPS upload speed.
- **Underserved**: Addresses with broadband service below 100 MBPS download speed and 20 MBPS upload speed, but higher than 25 MBPS download speed and 3 MBPS upload speed.
- **Unserved**: Addresses with broadband service below 25 MBPS download speed and 3 MBPS upload speed.

As seen in the map, the City has nearly all "sites" within the Served category, which means a majority of the City has sufficient access, though there are several sites considered Unserved.



Source: The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

Harbor

The harbor for which Harbor Beach was named is perhaps the City's most important asset. With its breakwater protecting ships and boats from the open water of the Lake Huron, the harbor has made the City popular with pleasure boaters, who tie up at one of the two marinas. The harbor also holds the title of the largest man-made freshwater harbor in the world, and provides a unique draw for boaters and swimmers alike. The former DTE plant previously made use of the Harbor by bringing in coal shipments. In light of the Canadian mainland on the far side of Lake Huron, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) maintains a significant presence in the harbor but has decreased its superintendence over time.

Source: City of Harbor Beach

In 2010, the United States General Services Administration, the USCG, and the State of Michigan transferred the lighthouse and the rights to continue occupying the bottomlands to the City of Harbor Beach. The Lighthouse Preservation Society has completed a tremendous amount of work to preserve the lighthouse and began offering a successful season of tours in 2011 after considerable restoration. As there is no pedestrian access at this time, tourists take a short boat ride to and from the lighthouse for a complete tour of the lighthouse. Both the lighthouse and the nearby Grice House Museum make Harbor Beach a picturesque destination for visitors.

4

Goals and Objectives

Introduction

The purpose of the Master Plan is to serve as a guide for City officials, residents, and landowners in making future land use decisions, as well as bringing the future vision for Harbor Beach to life. As such, an overall vision for the community must be identified. During the planning process, a series of public input initiatives were conducted to ensure that the Master Plan reflects the vision of City residents, representatives, and property owners. A summary of this engagement process can be found in the Introduction of this plan.

Goals are general in nature and as related to community planning, are statements of ideals toward which the City wishes to strive. Goals also express a consensus of community direction to public and private agencies, groups and individuals. Goals are long-range considerations that should guide the development of specific objectives.

Objectives are a means to achieve the overall goals of the Plan. Objectives take the form of more measurable standards or identify the methods in which the goals of the plan may be realized. In some instances, they are specific statements which can be readily translated into detailed design proposals or action recommendations.

Together, the following goals and objectives provide the foundation of the Master Plan and a framework for future implementation strategies.

Downtown

GOAL

Future development in Downtown Harbor Beach should respect the historic development pattern of the City while expanding the vitality and range of services available in the Downtown area.

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish distinct destinations within Downtown Harbor Beach (retail district, civic district, medical, hospitality, etc.) and create a branding and way-finding program to identify these areas and connect them to other areas within the City.
2. Encourage mixed-use development or new or redevelopment of existing multi-story buildings which include commercial or retail on the first floor and residential on the upper stories.
3. Consider restricting residential uses on the first floor in the Central Business District to promote an accessible pedestrian experience.
4. Adopt design guidelines and more specific architectural standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that new development and redevelopment of existing buildings in the Downtown area are consistent with the City's existing character.
5. Improve pedestrian access to and within the Downtown by adding pedestrian and bicyclist facilities along State Street.
6. Consider establishing a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and associated Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to invest in amenities and beautification efforts Downtown.
7. Establish an entity (such as a DDA or other similar committee) that is responsible for the promotion, design and economic vitality of the Downtown.
8. Develop a Downtown Plan that identifies development area boundaries, priority projects, and includes mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development elements.
9. Concentrate commercial and service use development Downtown and avoid creating a strip of commercial along State Street between Nelson and 5th.

Residential

GOAL

Maintain the existing residential character within the community while providing diverse housing choices and ensuring that residential redevelopment and new infill development complement and enhance the character of the existing neighborhood.

OBJECTIVES

1. Prioritize new residential infill development in the existing developed areas of the City before expanding to undeveloped areas to concentrate development and avoid undesirable sprawl and unnecessary expansion of infrastructure and City services.
2. Respect historic building patterns, preserving and enhancing them where feasible.
3. Integrate amenities such as neighborhood parks and open space areas into new development.
4. Provide new rental and multiple-family housing in a mixed-use setting such as on the second floor of buildings in the Downtown area.
5. Locate new senior housing in close proximity to the Downtown area to enable convenient access to retail and service uses.
6. Consider adopting design guidelines to ensure that new development in residential areas is consistent with the City's existing development pattern.
7. Encourage reinvestment in and restoration of older homes.
8. Promote use of sustainable practices, in both new residential development and redevelopment, through zoning incentives and regulations such as:
    - Low impact development techniques (rain gardens, bioswales, etc.)
    - Rainwater collection methods (blue roofs, cisterns, water harvesting, stormwater vaults, etc.)
    - Green roofs
    - Pervious pavement
    - Steep-slope protections
    - Street-tree planting standards
    - Parking lot internal landscaping standards
    - Tree preservation or replacement standards
    - Open space preservation development options (i.e. cluster housing)
    - Required native or low-maintenance plantings
    - Permitted renewable energy; and
    - Buffering standards around water bodies or other natural resources.

Waterfront Development

GOAL

Provide opportunities for people to live, work, and play on one of Harbor Beach's most vital assets while preserving its natural beauty.

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to improve the existing waterfront parks and lighthouse and provide year-round programs for residents and visitors alike.
2. Continue to work with established waterfront industrial uses to permit their continued success, while at the same time balancing the needs of the environment, residents and visitors.
3. Encourage new and diversify existing tourism opportunities, including water-front activities.
4. Promote and maintain high standards for site and building design for both public and private developments.
5. Create a Waterfront Development overlay district with specific design standards that reflect the sensitive natural assets on the lakefront while maintaining Harbor Beach's Downtown charm.
6. Adopt an adaptive management approach for planning and managing coastal infrastructure.
7. Develop synergy between the lake, residents, waterfront businesses, and the Downtown through programs, physical improvements, and connections such as non-motorized pathways and blueways (water trails).
8. Continue to expand the non-motorized pathways along the lakefront.
9. Provide incentives for preserving public access and lake viewsheds from Downtown.
10. Continue to emphasize and promote the culture and history of the City's waterfront, including the harbor, lighthouse, industrial uses, and marinas through wayfinding and promotional materials.
11. Consider regional resources and opportunities to increase the viability of water-dependent uses through partnerships, collaboration, and resource sharing.

Natural Resources and Sustainability

GOAL

Preserve intact significant natural features located in the City and integrate natural feature preservation into land use decisions.

OBJECTIVES

1. Preserve wetlands, watercourses and woodlands as development occurs.
2. Improve existing riparian, wetland, water quality, woodland and greenway protection standards, as necessary.
3. Encourage sustainable development practices and consider including incentives in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage such methods.
4. Implement site appropriate structural and non-structural storm water best management practices to prevent or minimize the impact of development on water quality and reduce risk of flooding and other strains on infrastructure.
5. Conduct a community vulnerability assessment to determine natural hazard risks and model future scenarios, including participatory approaches to understand risks perceived by the community.

Complete Streets

GOAL

Create an efficient and safe multi-modal transportation network that integrates various modes of transportation and takes into consideration all network users.

OBJECTIVES

1. Adopt a Complete Street policy and Complete Street ordinance.
2. Pursue best practice traffic calming strategies and access management techniques where appropriate and necessary, such as along S. Huron Ave (M-25).
3. Require transportation infrastructure decisions that support and encourage the land use recommendations of the Master Plan.
4. Require all network users (trucks, cars, bikes, and pedestrians) be taken into consideration as transportation infrastructure decisions are made. Explore innovative traffic designs.
5. Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to provide context sensitive design solutions for state roadways.
6. Provide flexible engineering design standards for City roads to achieve safe and appropriate road design while ensuring that community character is not compromised in order to meet strict engineering standards that may not fit the City's context.

7. Provide sidewalks and other pedestrian circulation improvements such that residents and visitors at any location in the City can reach the Downtown area and waterfront recreation areas in a safe and direct manner.
8. Continue to provide non-motorized transportation linkages to recreation areas within the City and the region.
9. Maintain and enhance alleys, side streets, and parking lots to promote safe, active use. Pedestrian walks and routes between activity centers must be convenient, direct, and attractive to ensure accessibility.
10. Attend and support meetings, sessions, and workshops and establish and maintain good relationships with adjacent communities and regional agencies to connect Harbor Beach to the regional pathway system.
11. Identify federal, state and local applications for funding of the construction of non-motorized trails, paths and sidewalks.

Recreation, Culture, and Leisure

GOAL

Provide, maintain, expand, and improve the arts, culture, and recreation system to incorporate a broader array of opportunities that will best serve the needs of Harbor Beach residents of all ages and attract visitors year-round.

OBJECTIVES

1. Utilize the City's prime recreation areas and cultural venues to attract residents and visitors.
2. Continue to seek grant funding and other financial assistance to help enhance, acquire, and develop City recreational facilities and achieve recreation goals.
3. Develop a public art plan for Downtown Harbor Beach as well as other public places.
4. Continue to improve connectivity, access, and mobility between the existing and planned recreation sites throughout the community.
5. Link school sites, churches, and other civic places to the non-motorized system.
6. Continue to upgrade recreation equipment and facilities.

Economic Development

GOAL

Support and enhance Harbor Beach's local economy.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an economic development strategy to promote the City and actively recruit and retain businesses.
2. Recognize the quality of place and history in Harbor Beach as an economic driver.
3. Continue to invest in and promote improvements to technology infrastructure.
4. Focus new development and redevelopment initiatives Downtown, with a focus on infill development and re-occupancy of vacant buildings and sites.
5. Collaborate with local economic leaders and recognize that a diverse mixture of business types is necessary for a healthy local economy.
6. Identify emerging industries, not just current businesses, to target recruitment efforts.
7. Educate business owners about economic development initiatives and keep them informed on a regular basis.

Community Planning

GOAL

Ensure ongoing community planning and the implementation of the Master Plan.

OBJECTIVES

1. Review and update the Master Plan every five years to address changing conditions, redevelopment opportunities, and the changing needs of the community.
2. Cooperate with nearby communities, Huron County, the school district, and other governmental organizations through the exchange of information on development and redevelopment issues and other shared interests, such as community facilities and services, conservation developments, and development along shared boundaries.
3. Revise the zoning ordinance to be compatible with the recommendations of this plan.
4. Develop and adopt a Public Participation Plan, which will help establish clear expectations for public engagement, ensuring all groups are represented in decision making processes.

5

The Harbor Beach Plan

The Harbor Beach Plan

As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, the Harbor Beach Plan is intended to serve as the City's Future Land Use Plan, which will encourage the use and development of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, ensure that uses of land are situated in appropriate locations, ensure that new development and buildings respect and enhance the City's existing character, and facilitate adequate provision for public services. These considerations are legitimate governmental interests bearing a substantial relationship to public health, safety and welfare. In particular, the Harbor Beach Plan advances the government's interests to acknowledge and protect, within fair and acceptable parameters, the City's character and important natural features without impacting land value.

To that end, the Harbor Beach Plan is rooted in the existing conditions of the City while recognizing and balancing realistic and reasonable future expectations of landowners. The Harbor Beach Plan confirms a commitment to a coherent and comprehensive development pattern that is both informed by and continues the established development pattern of the City, and from which proper, practical, productive, and sustainable growth and development can occur.

Recognizing that a significant portion of the City is developed, the Harbor Beach Plan encourages the concentration of land uses within the developed portions of the City and reserves those undeveloped areas until such time as an increase in population and housing demand can no longer be accommodated within the areas designated for such use.

The Harbor Beach Plan includes two components – Land Use and Character Recommendations and Building Recommendations. The Land Use and Character Recommendations describe the activities and character that are appropriate for the various areas of the City, while the Building Recommendations identify specific types of buildings that are appropriate in the various land use areas according to which type of road they front upon.

Future Land Use Categories

A summary page for each Future Land Use Category is included beginning on page 74, including a description of the overall intent, an image of an appropriate building for that land use category, a table and illustration of recommended development standards, and a table of appropriate building types for that land use category.

For convenience, the description and character statement for each category is described below.

Residential

RESIDENTIAL RESERVE

Residential Reserve is planned for those undeveloped areas of the City that should be protected from development until such time that available land within closer proximity to the established core has been built out. Reserving these areas for future use will enable the City to focus development efforts and avoid unnecessary expansion of utilities and services.

As identified in Chapter 3, Existing Conditions, the land area planned for additional residential development should be sufficient to accommodate the projected demand trend for housing units for the foreseeable future.

SUBURBAN SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Areas planned for Suburban Residential have the character of more recently developed single family neighborhoods, which is often referred to as a “suburban” character. These areas tend to have a more curvilinear street network, with limited access to collector roads and homes that have prominent large front entry garages. Appropriate land uses in Suburban Single Family Residential areas include detached single family units and accessory uses.

TRADITIONAL SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Areas planned Traditional Residential reflect the character of the historic neighborhoods generally located in the center of the City. Appropriate land uses in Traditional Residential areas include detached single family units and uses that can be compatible with single family dwellings such as schools and churches.

SEASONAL RESIDENTIAL

Seasonal Residential has been planned for the area occupied by the Harbor Beach Resort Association located at the southeast corner of the City.

MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Multiple-Family Residential areas permit apartment-style attached dwelling units. This is the residential land use category that permits the highest density development in the City. Uses that can be compatible with residential development such as schools and churches may also be appropriate for Multiple-Family Residential areas.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING

Manufactured Housing areas are residential areas consisting of prefabricated housing developed in a park-like setting regulated by the Michigan Manufactured Housing Commission. This category does not include prefabricated homes developed on individual single family residential lots or parcels.

Commercial

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood Commercial areas are intended to be small scale retail and service nodes in the City that provide goods and services primarily to surrounding neighborhoods and activity areas. These areas often compete with the Downtown business establishments. Therefore, it is imperative that they be limited to those areas planned for such use and that further expansion, or "stripping" of commercial uses along State Street or Huron Avenue, be prohibited. New commercial development should be concentrated Downtown.

WORKPLACE

Workplace areas are intended to accommodate office, medical, service, low intensity commercial, residential conversion, live/work units, and similar type uses located along the State Street Downtown gateway, as these uses do not generate large volumes of vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Some of the areas planned for workplace uses are currently occupied by single family homes. Future development in this area is intended to take place primarily through the conversion of existing structures in order to maintain the established character of the area.

Industrial

WATERFRONT INDUSTRIAL

Waterfront Industrial areas are planned to permit the continued use of the existing waterfront industrial developments. Waterfront industrial development is not planned for any areas beyond those currently used for such use. Any new industrial use within the City should be located within areas planned for Industrial Park.

INDUSTRIAL PARK

Areas planned for Industrial Park encompass the City's two industrial areas located on the north end of the City along Industrial Drive and Hunter Industrial Drive. Much of the area planned for future Industrial Park development is currently undeveloped.

Other

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC

Public areas are suitable for municipal or governmental uses such as City buildings, libraries, schools, churches and other similarly owned and operated uses.

RECREATION AND LEISURE

Areas planned for Recreation and Leisure include those areas of the City that provide passive and active recreation and leisure opportunities in the City. These areas include all City parks as well as cultural amenities like the Frank Murphy Memorial Museum.

MARINA

Marina areas include the Harbor Beach and offshore marinas. The marina land use designation is intended to permit the continued operation of the existing marinas and accessory uses.

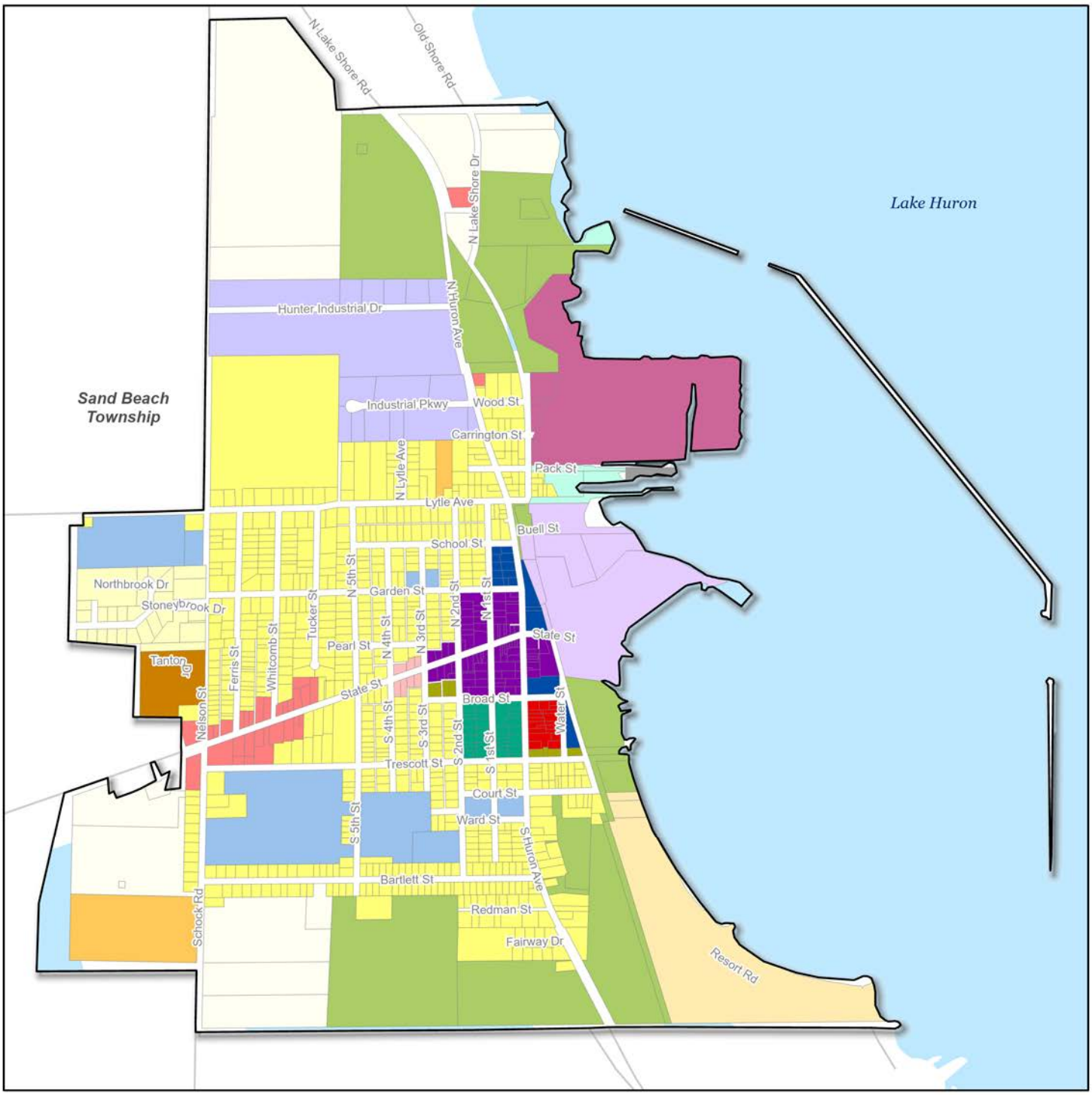
MIXED USE

Currently, the only property planned for Mixed Use outside of The Downtown is the former DTE site situated on the waterfront. In light of the decommissioning and demolition of this site, it poses an opportunity for a reimagining of the area. In the Mixed Use category, a mix of residential, commercial and office, municipal, and civic uses is appropriate and encouraged. Lodging and commercial uses, such as retail and restaurants, are encouraged as new uses in the Mixed Use area, which should prioritize keeping the waterfront open to the public to enjoy.

Downtown

Downtown is the identifiable center of Harbor Beach. It has a small town character, and is a desirable walkable mixed-use area designed at a pedestrian scale. New buildings in the Downtown area should be built to traditional specifications, and a mixing of residential, commercial, municipal, and civic uses. Lodging and senior housing in particular are encouraged as new land uses in the Downtown area.

Buildings should be restricted in floor area to reflect the existing character of buildings in the Downtown and to discourage overly large buildings from destroying its close-knit fabric. Uses that have an outdoor storage component should be specifically prohibited the Downtown area and should be located in planned industrial areas.



Future Land Use

Harbor Beach, Michigan

October 15, 2024

LEGEND

- Residential Reserve
- Suburban Single Family
- Traditional Single Family
- Seasonal Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Manufactured Housing
- Mixed Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Work Place
- Waterfront Industrial
- Industrial Park
- Public Quasi Public
- Public Recreation & Leisure
- Marina/ Harbor

Downtown Districts

- Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Civic
- Medical
- Tourism

0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Harbor Beach, 2024. McKenna, 2024.

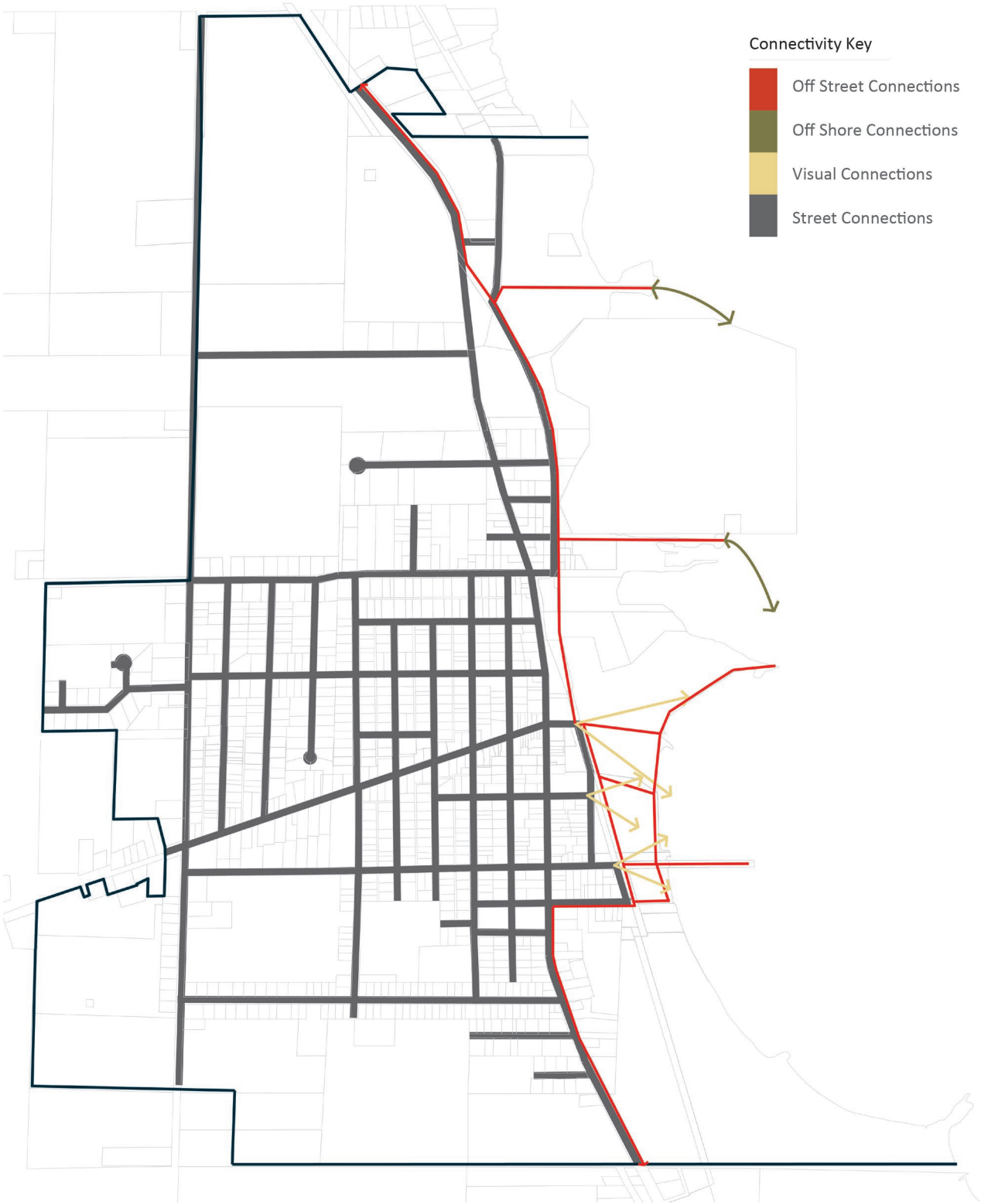
MCKENNA

Street Types

In addition to describing what kind of land uses are appropriate in each land use category, the Harbor Beach Plan also presents recommendations for how buildings should be designed and how they should function. These recommendations are based not only on the land use, but also on the character of the street upon which the building fronts.

Figure 13 identifies the locations of the different street types in the City of Harbor Beach. The design characteristics of each road will, in large part, determine the character of that road. It is important that all roads are designed to be consistent with their function in order to ensure that roads are not over or under built, and also to ensure that each street is a “Complete Street”, meaning that each street meets the needs of all persons and abilities who will use it, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

Figure 14: Street Types



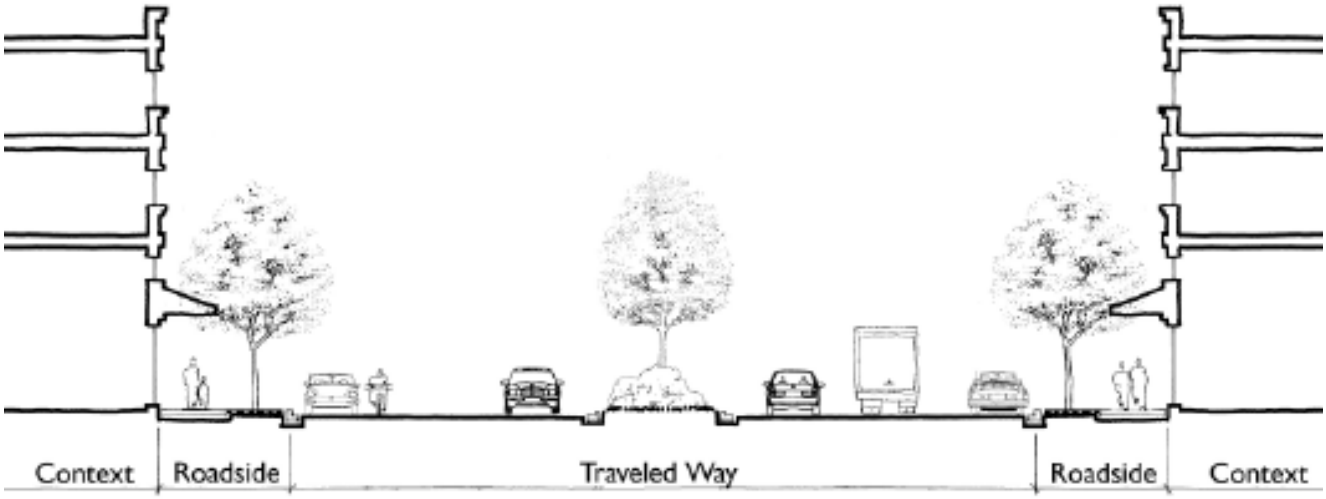


Illustration of Road Design Areas

Source: Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares, Institute of Traffic Engineers

In general, roads can be divided into two primary areas – the travelway and the roadside. The travelway accommodates travel lanes, turn lanes, parking lanes, and bicycle lanes. The roadside accommodates landscaped areas; street trees (planted either in a tree lawn or in tree grates); pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks or non-motorized pathways; streetscape improvements such as decorative lighting or street furniture; and uses associated with nearby buildings such as outdoor cafés.

General road design guidelines are provided in Table 24, which should be used as a guide for future road improvement plans to ensure each street is "complete" and roadways are not over or underbuilt.

Table 24: Street Type Descriptions

	Street Type	Lanes	Roadside Area Width	Roadside Area Improvements	Bicycle Lane	On-Street Parking
ROAD DESIGN GUIDELINES	Corridor	2-3	16 ft. min.	Sidewalk or non-motorized trail, landscape area	Yes	No
	Downtown Main	2	12 ft. min.	Sidewalk, street tree plantings, street furniture	Permitted	Yes
	Downtown Side	2	12 ft. min.	Sidewalk, street tree plantings, street furniture	Permitted	Yes
	Industrial	2	16 ft. min.	Sidewalk or non-motorized trail optional, landscaped area	No	No
	Road	2	16 ft. min.	Sidewalk or non-motorized trail, landscape area	Permitted	No
	Neighborhood Street	2	12 ft. min.	Sidewalk, landscape area	No	Yes

Building Types

Historically, the City's land use plan and zoning ordinance have regulated setbacks but did not elaborate or provide further guidance or regulation as to how the buildings should look or function. This meant that new buildings would often be out of character with their surroundings. In a community with as much existing history and character as Harbor Beach, it is important to make sure that new buildings are compatible with old ones to preserve and enhance the community's irreplaceable character.

The different types of building will fit in with the particular setback and lot coverage requirements for each district, and the types of building that are appropriate in each land use area will contribute to the character of the neighborhood.

Single Family

A building containing one dwelling unit.

Access and Entry. The principal entrance to each dwelling should face the street.

Off-Street Parking. No guidelines.

Garages. Garages should be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the front building wall, and garages should be located in side or rear yards.

Exposure to Light and Air. Each building should have all four sides exposed to the outdoors.

Multiple Unit Single Family

A building containing two to four dwelling units with the appearance and character of a single family building.

Access and Entry. A maximum of one exterior entrance should be located on the front façade of the building.

Off-Street Parking. Parking should be located behind or next to the building.

Garages. Garages should be located in rear yards.

Exposure to Light and Air. Each unit should have at least two sides exposed to the outdoors.

Townhouse

A group of attached dwelling units where units are located next to each other (not above or below each other) and divided from each other by common vertical walls.

Access and Entry. Each unit should have its own separate entrance leading directly outdoors at ground level. Primary entrances should face the street.

Off-Street Parking. Parking should be located behind the building.

Garages. Garages on the front building façade should not account for more than 20% of the building width and should not protrude beyond the front building wall of the unit.

Exposure to Light and Air. Each unit should have at least two sides exposed to the outdoors

Apartment

A building containing multiple dwelling units arranged as flats.

Access and Entry. Individual units may have entrances directly to the outside or onto an interior hallway.

Off-Street Parking. Parking should be located in side or rear yards, although up to 50% of the front yard may be used for parking.

Garages. Garage doors should not account for more than 25% of the width of any façade facing a street.

Exposure to Light and Air. Each unit should have at least one side exposed to the outdoors.

Live / Work

A building that can be used for residential, retail, office, or service uses. A live/work building can be used for any configuration of uses, including live/live, live/work, or work/work purposes. Residential units can be located above the ground floor or attached to the side or rear of a storefront.

Access and Entry. Direct access should be provided from the street to the principal entrance of the work portion of the building.

Off-Street Parking. Off-street parking should be located in a side or rear yard. On-street parking for live/work units is strongly encouraged to accommodate customer parking.

Garages. Garages should be accessed from the rear of the building.

Exposure to Light and Air. Each dwelling unit should have at least two sides exposed to the outdoors.

Downtown Mixed Use

A building that can be used for nearly any purpose. The ground floor should be used for commercial purposes, while upper floors can be used for commercial or residential uses.

Access and Entry. Automotive service and truck-oriented wholesale uses are not appropriate in a Downtown Mixed-Use building, nor are overhead vehicle bay doors on the front façade.

Each building should have ground floor access on the front façade. Entrances for dwelling units may be accessed from other facades.

Off-Street Parking. Off-street parking should be located in the side or rear yard or off-site at a nearby location.

Garages. Garages, if present, may only be accessed from the side or rear yard.

Exposure to Light and Air. Dwelling units should have at least one side exposed to the outdoors.

Office / Retail

A standalone building for highway-oriented business and service uses.

Access and Entry. No guidelines.

Off-Street Parking. No guidelines.

Garages. No guidelines.

Exposure to Light and Air. No guidelines.

Civic / Institutional

Buildings intended to house arts, culture, education, government, public assembly, recreation, and religious uses. These buildings can be located in nearly any land use area.

Access and Entry. Each building should have at least one street-facing entrance, and the street-facing entrance should be located within 30 feet of the street.

Off-Street Parking. Parking should be located behind the building, although up to 30% of the front yard may be used for parking in some instances.

Garages. No guidelines.

Exposure to Light and Air. No guidelines.

Future Land Use Summaries

Residential Reserve

Residential Reserve is planned for those undeveloped areas of the City that should be reserved for future development. Undeveloped land in areas planned for Suburban Single Family and Traditional Single Family should be built out before areas planned for Residential Reserve. Once it can be demonstrated that building in of these areas is warranted, future development may be consistent with the standards for Traditional Single Family development, or another land use that is consistent with Harbor Beach Plan. Until such time, any development of these sites should comply with the standards below.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	150 feet
Minimum Lot Area:	43,560 sq. ft.
Maximum Building Coverage:	20%
Building Height:	25 feet

Parking: Garages should not protrude beyond the front façade of the building and should be located in rear or side yards.

Front Porches: Unenclosed front porches should be allowed to encroach up to 10 feet into the front yard setback area.

Uses: Large lot single family residential developments. Units clustered on smaller lots to preserve natural features or important vistas and viewsheds may also be permitted.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» Single Family

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Corridor
» Road

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	50 feet	None
Side (Street)	50 feet	None
Side	20 feet	None
Rear	50 feet	None

Suburban Single Family

Areas planned for Suburban Single Family Residential have the character of more recently developed single family neighborhoods. These districts tend to have larger lot sizes than other parts of the City. Appropriate land uses include detached single family units along with accessory buildings and uses.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	80 feet
Minimum Lot Area:	10,000 sq. ft.
Maximum Building Coverage:	30%
Building Height:	25 feet

Parking: Generally, garages should not protrude beyond the front façade of the building and should be located in rear or side yards.

Front Porches: Unenclosed front porches should be allowed to encroach up to 10 feet into the front yard setback area.

Uses: Single family residential uses are permitted throughout this area. Civic or institutional uses may be permitted in these areas but should be located only on corner site.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» Single Family

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Neighborhood Street

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	30 feet	None
Side (Street)	30 feet	None
Side	8 feet (total 12 feet both sides)	None
Rear	35 feet	None

Traditional Single Family

Areas planned Traditional Single Family reflect the character of the established neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown area. Appropriate land uses in these areas include detached single family units and accessory uses that can be compatible with single family dwellings.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	7,200 sq. ft.
Maximum Building Coverage:	30%
Building Height:	25 feet

Parking: Garages should not protrude beyond the front façade of the building, and should be located in side or rear yards.

Front Porches: Unenclosed front porches should be allowed to encroach 10 feet into the front yard setback area.

Uses: Single family residential uses are permitted throughout Traditional Single Family Residential areas. Civic or institutional uses may be permitted in these areas but should be located only on corner sites.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» Single Family

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Neighborhood Street

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	25 feet	None
Side (Street)	25 feet	None
Side	6 feet (total 16 feet both sides)	None
Rear	35 feet	None

Seasonal Residential

Seasonal Residential has been planned for the area occupied by the Harbor Beach Resort Association located at the southeast corner of the City.

Development Standards	
Minimum Density:	None
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	None
Maximum Building Height:	25 feet

Parking: n/a

Uses: Residential uses are permitted throughout Seasonal Residential area. Complimentary accessory uses such as outdoor recreation areas, dining halls, and lodges may also be permitted.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» Single Family

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Neighborhood Street

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	Existing	None
Side (Street)	Existing	None
Side	Existing	None
Rear	Existing	None

Multiple Family Residential

Multiple Family Residential areas permit apartment-style attached dwelling units. This is the residential land use category that permits the highest density development in the City.

Development Standards	
Minimum Density:	10 units/acre
Minimum Lot Width:	100 feet
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	30%
Maximum Building Height:	30 feet

Parking: Generally, parking should be located behind the building, when such building faces a public street. Garages should not protrude beyond the front façade of the building.

Front Porches. Unenclosed front porches should be allowed to encroach up to 10 feet into the front yard setback area.

Uses: All types of residential uses are permitted throughout Multiple Family Residential areas. Civic or institutional uses may be permitted in Multiple Family Residential areas but should be located only on corner sites.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

- Single Family
- Multiple-Unit Single Family
- Townhouse
- Apartment

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

- Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

- Neighborhood Street

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	40 feet	None
Side (Street)	40 feet	None
Side	40 feet	None
Rear	40 feet	None

Manufactured Housing

Manufactured Housing areas are residential areas consisting of prefabricated housing located in a park setting.

Development Standards	
Minimum Development Area:	10 acres
Minimum Lot Area:	5,500 sq. ft.
Maximum Building Height:	15feet

Parking: Should be located in parking strips adjacent to the dwelling unit or on-street.

Uses: Residential uses are permitted throughout areas planned for Manufactured Housing. Complimentary accessory uses such as outdoor recreation areas and community centers may also be permitted.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

Single Family

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» None

Appropriate Street Types

» Neighborhood Street

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	50 feet	None
Side (Street)	50 feet	None
Side	10 feet	None
Rear	30 feet	None

Downtown

The Downtown is the visual center of Harbor Beach. It has a small-town character, and is a walkable mixed-use area designed at a pedestrian scale. New buildings in the Downtown area should be built to traditional specifications, and a mixing of residential, commercial and office, municipal, and civic uses is appropriate and encouraged. Senior housing and lodging in particular are encouraged as new uses in the Downtown area.

Buildings should be restricted in floor area to reflect the existing character of buildings in the Downtown, and to discourage overly large buildings from destroying the close-knit fabric of Downtown. Uses that have an outdoor storage component are specifically discouraged in the Downtown area.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Minimum Building Width:	Buildings should be at least 90% of the width of the lot/
Maximum Building Coverage:	90%
Maximum Building Height:	35 feet

Parking: Parking must be located behind the building, on-street, or in off-site lots.

Uses: Residential, commercial, office, municipal, medical, resort, and civic uses are appropriate.

Additional Standards: Refer to page 87 for a detailed Downtown Plan, including more detailed building design recommendations.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» None

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Live / Work
» Downtown Mixed-Use
» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Downtown Main
» Downtown Side

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	0 feet	5 feet
Side (Street)	0 feet	10 feet
Side	0 feet	None
Rear	5 feet	None

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial areas include those commercial areas outside of the traditional Downtown. Commercial and office uses are appropriate in the Neighborhood Commercial areas, excluding uses that have drive-through facilities. Outdoor storage and sales should also be prohibited in these areas.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	50%
Maximum Building Height:	30 feet

Parking: Parking may be located anywhere on the lot, although parking lots located where they will be visible from adjacent public streets should be buffered with low level landscaping or a low decorative masonry wall.

Uses: Commercial and office uses are appropriate. Municipal, civic and institutional uses may also be permitted in these areas.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» None

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Office/ Retail
» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Corridor

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	25 feet	None
Side (Street)	25 feet	None
Side	0 feet	None
Rear	20 feet	None

Workplace

Workplace areas are intended to accommodate the conversion of existing buildings to commercial, office, and service uses that do not depend on or generate large volumes of vehicular or customer traffic.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	50%
Maximum Building Height:	30 feet

Parking: Parking should be located in the side are rear yard.

Uses: Commercial, office and service uses that do not rely upon or generate large volumes of customer traffic are appropriate.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» None

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Office/ Retail
» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Corridor

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	25 feet	None
Side (Street)	25 feet	None
Side	10 feet	None
Rear	35 feet	None

Waterfront Industrial

Areas planned for Waterfront Industrial uses include those areas along the waterfront currently used for industrial activity. This land use category is intended to permit the continued use of the waterfront in these restricted areas for industrial use.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	30%
Maximum Building Height:	60 feet

Parking: Parking should be located on site in the side or rear yard, although parking located in view of adjacent streets, from the waterfront, or adjacent recreational uses must be landscaped and screened from view.

Uses: Manufacturing, research and technology, heating and electrical generating plants, and similar uses are planned for Waterfront industrial areas. Outdoor storage could be permitted provided such storage is adequately screened from adjacent non-industrial uses and roadways.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» None

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Industrial

Appropriate Street Types

» Industrial

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	60 feet	None
Side (Street)	60 feet	None
Side	30 feet	None
Rear	30 feet	None

Industrial Park

Areas planned for Industrial Park are planned to accommodate industrial land uses in a planned, park like setting.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	30%
Maximum Building Height:	40 feet

Parking: Parking should be located on site in the side or rear yard, although parking may be permitted to occupy a portion of the front yard provided such parking is screened from view of adjacent roadways.

Uses: Warehousing, manufacturing, research and technology, and similar uses are planned for industrial park areas. Outdoor storage could be permitted provided such storage is adequately screened from adjacent non-industrial uses and roadways.

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» None

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Industrial

Appropriate Street Types

» Industrial

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	40 feet	None
Side (Street)	40 feet	None
Side	20 feet	None
Rear	20 feet	None

Public/Quasi-Public

Areas planned for public uses are suitable for municipal or other civic uses such as City buildings, libraries, museums, schools, and other similar publicly owned and operated uses.

Development Standards	
Minimum Lot Width:	None
Minimum Lot Area:	None
Maximum Building Coverage:	30%
Maximum Building Height:	40 feet

Parking: Not applicable

Uses: Not applicable

Appropriate Building Types

Residential Buildings

» None

Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings

» Civic / Institutional

Appropriate Street Types

» Corridor
» Downtown Main
» Downtown Side
» Road

Recommended Building Setbacks

Setback	Minimum	Maximum
Front	40 feet	None
Side (Street)	40 feet	None
Side	20 feet	None
Rear	20 feet	None

Recreation and Leisure

Recreation and Leisure areas are those areas that provide passive and active recreation amenities for residents and visitors of Harbor Beach.

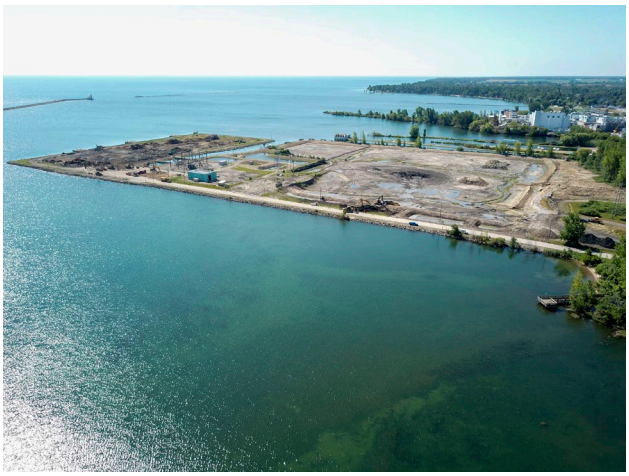
Appropriate uses for Recreation and Leisure areas include parks and conservation uses, museums, and golf courses. Buildings or structures related to a parks or conservation use such as gazebos, boardwalks, or trail systems are appropriate in these areas.

Marina

Areas planned for Marina are suitable for marina-related activities and accessory uses. These areas are planned for the existing marina facilities in the City.

Appropriate Building Types
Residential Buildings
» None
Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings
» Office / Retail

Mixed Use



In the Mixed Use category, a mix of residential, commercial and office, municipal, and civic uses is appropriate and encouraged. Lodging and commercial uses, such as retail and restaurants, are encouraged as new uses in the Mixed Use area, which should prioritize keeping the waterfront open to the public to enjoy.

Currently, the only property planned for Mixed Use outside of The Downtown is the former DTE site situated on the waterfront. In light of the decommissioning and demolition of this site, it poses an opportunity for a reimagining of the area. The site is already zoned Mixed Planned Unit Development (MPUD), which intends to allow flexibility of design on relative large-scale parcels, which would not ordinarily be possible under conventional Zoning Ordinance Regulations. Therefore, no development standards are proposed.

Downtown Plan

Creating a Vision

The strength and uniqueness of Downtown Harbor Beach is its quaint historic character and waterfront location. Realizing this and having a long tradition of sound planning, City leaders understand the need to comprehensively plan for the future of the City with particular attention to its Downtown core. The City knew that the success of this vision needed community and stakeholder feedback and support in order to stand the test of time and that an innovative approach to planning was necessary. Therefore, a public participation process was created based on the following beliefs:

- Planning must involve stakeholders in a welcoming, inclusionary process;
- The process must be designed to be information rich, in which decisions are based on a foundation of research and analysis; and
- The future of the City and its Downtown must be collaboratively defined and designed by both the public and private sectors.

As part of engagement efforts, a special session was held with business owners on April 16th, 2024. The event was publicized on the City's website and social media, through several newspaper articles, and by the Harbor Beach Chamber of Commerce. A detailed summary of the feedback received can be found in the Public Engagement Summary section of the Introduction Chapter.

During engagement conducted during the previous Master Planning process in 2011, an all-day design workshop was the main means of obtaining input, developing ideas, and reaching consensus on the future of the City. The workshop included collaboration among City leaders, stakeholders, and residents. It was a democratic process in which all voices and viewpoints were aired and considered. When stakeholders participated and understood each other's issues they were able to compile a set of solutions that best fit the needs of all involved parties. Informed consensus among participants and the City is key to implementing the recommendations of the Harbor Beach Plan.

Downtown Harbor Beach is no longer the retail and commercial center it once was. Retail in the core has been replaced with service-oriented uses and shopping dollars have migrated to the western edge of town along State Street and to the regional commercial center of Bad Axe. Retailers, especially grocery stores, can take advantage of higher traffic volumes and population in regional centers. Harbor Beach cannot directly compete with these types of centers, so it must create its own unique retail mixture of uses to maintain and enhance the Downtown. Downtown Harbor Beach is the district that defines the character of the City.

Downtown creates the unique sense of place for the community and presents the opportunity to create a decisive competitive advantage for the City. Downtown is not, and should not try to be, a contemporary retail hub for everyday life like Bad Axe. Serving that function in the competitive retail marketplace would require compromising the City's historic character to meet contemporary retail models. Because of the City's historic character and critical mass of historic buildings, Downtown is better suited to serve niche markets and position itself as a 'destination downtown'.

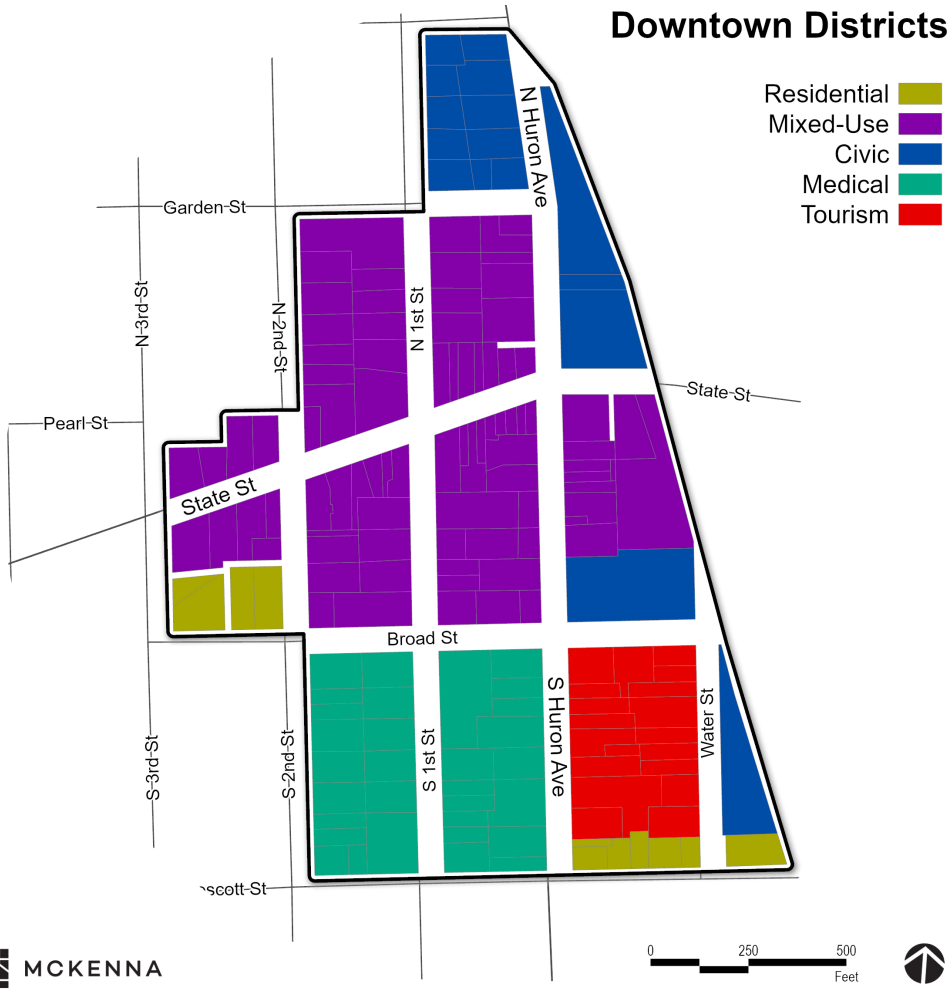
Smaller historic downtowns become destinations for a number of reasons including location, amenities, historic resources, and activities. Destination downtowns succeed because they can cater to patrons that are looking not for a particular good or service at the lowest price possible, but rather for an experience. A well-maintained and vibrant traditional downtown can offer what a modern highway-oriented shopping center cannot – an experience. Harbor Beach has all of the ingredients necessary to become a destination downtown, most particularly the historic resources, waterfront location and activities. The next step is to create the right physical environment and tenant mixture in the Downtown area to support Harbor Beach as a destination. Destination downtowns tend to be supported by niche retail establishments, restaurants, recreation, and entertainment venues.

Downtown Land Uses

The land uses planned for the Downtown are intended to create "mini-destinations" or districts within the Downtown area. These are illustrated in Figure 14, Downtown Districts, and can be categorized as follows:

- Medical District
- Civic District
- Mixed Use District
- Tourism District
- Residential

Figure 15: Downtown Districts



Each of these districts is dependent upon one another to create a destination downtown. These districts are also dependent on the connectivity to, and the quality and success of, the City's residential and recreation and leisure areas.

MEDICAL DISTRICT

This area has been planned to encourage the continued use and expansion of the Harbor Beach hospital within the Downtown core. The hospital is the City's largest employer and attracts daily visitors that support downtown businesses. It is a key anchor. If the hospital were to move outside of the Downtown core it would leave not only a large land void, but daily population void too.

CIVIC DISTRICT

Historically, many civic uses have been built along the northern edge of Downtown, south of School Street and north of State Street. These civic uses include the fire station, library, and post office. Civic buildings and spaces contribute to a City's identity. Without great civic buildings and spaces, there would be no great cities.

MIXED USE DISTRICT

Mixed use has been planned for the majority of the Downtown area. Mixed use areas should include a cluster of residential, commercial and office uses. Senior housing in particular is encouraged as a residential land use in the Downtown area.

TOURISM DISTRICT

Harbor Beach offers many cultural, recreation, and leisure opportunities for residents and visitor alike. These opportunities are part of the foundation necessary to continue to make Harbor Beach a place where people want to visit and play. However, at this time there is limited lodging available for people to make this area a place to visit for more than one day. The Tourism District has been planned to provide an opportunity to assemble land to be developed for lodging and entertainment uses.

Downtown Connectivity: Complete Streets

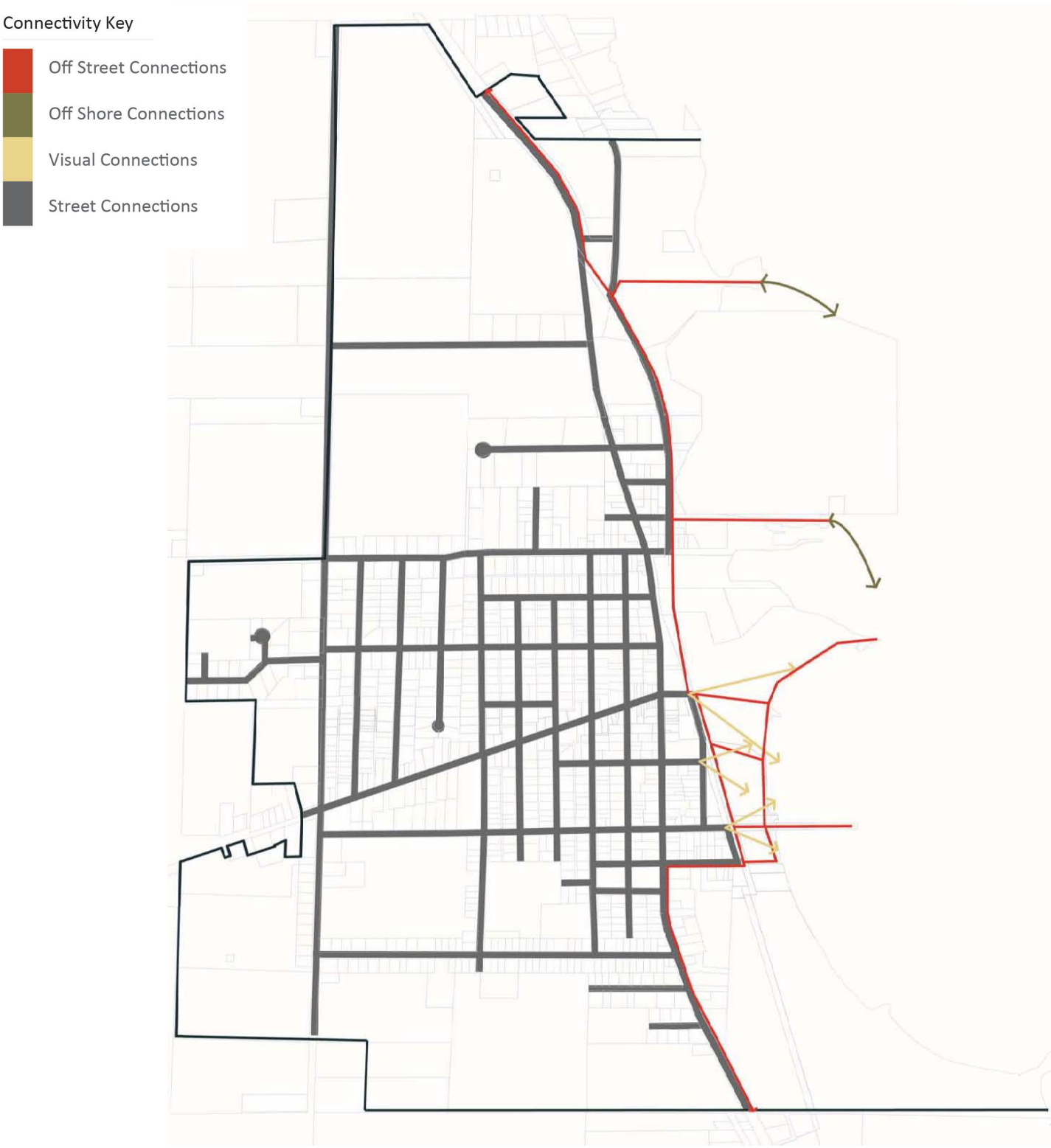
While all components and recommendations of the Harbor Beach Plan are important, connectivity between land uses may have the most significant impact as the City continues to evolve. The convenience of accessing different amenities within the City is directly related to fostering a community where residents and visitors can quickly and easily travel to school, work, Downtown, parks, and other destinations within the City and the region.

As Harbor Beach looks to the future, it is important to design land uses in such a way to help attract and support activities and businesses to the City. A coherent multi-modal "Complete Street" network is imperative to the success of the City's businesses, the quality of life for residents, and the City's overall image.

While the City has made great strides to improve non-motorized transportation connectivity there are many key destinations that could benefit from improved accessibility.

Figure 16 illustrates the location of major connections planned for the Downtown area. These connections are both physical and perceived in nature.

Figure 16: Planned Connections



The following connectivity amenities are planned for Downtown Harbor Beach.

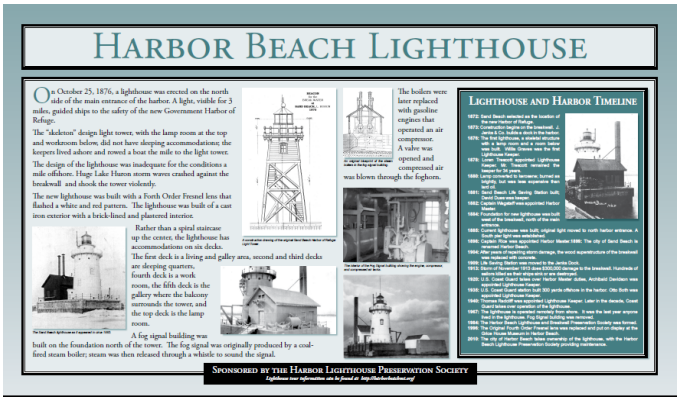
CROSSWALKS

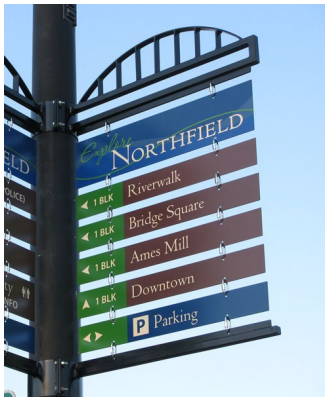
When trails or sidewalks are integrated into the City's street network, the safety of pedestrians must be considered. Therefore, it is imperative that clearly identifiable crosswalks be incorporated. Crosswalks can also be used to not only improve pedestrian safety, but to improve the appearance of City streets. The following are examples of pedestrian crosswalk improvements appropriate for Harbor Beach.

WAYFINDING

People identify Harbor Beach with its waterfront and recreation amenities. Many Downtown businesses rely on people to visit the City for these amenities. Therefore, it is important to create a comprehensive wayfinding system for the Downtown. This wayfinding system should also include information and directions to other destinations (marinas, parks, museums) within the City. Wayfinding is another tool for the City to use to connect the community.

The following pictures illustrate the types of wayfinding appropriate for Harbor Beach.



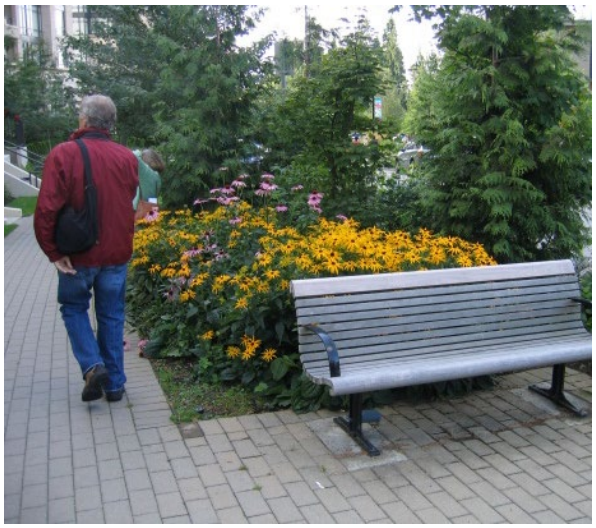


Examples of Wayfinding Signage

OFF-STREET CONNECTIONS

Pedestrian connections linking the Downtown to adjacent recreation and leisure areas that are not located within a public right-of-way are considered off-street connections. Off-street connections planned for the Downtown have the benefit of providing a non-traditional walking experience for a resident or visitor traveling from one area to the other. Figure 5.3, above, illustrates the location of potential off-street connections in the Downtown.

If designed correctly, these connections have the potential to be a destination themselves. The following pictures illustrate potential off-street connection designs.



Examples of Wayfinding Signage (Source: www.pedbikeimages.org)

VISUAL CONNECTIONS

While physical connectivity between the Downtown and other City destinations, such as the waterfront, is important, the importance of providing visual connections cannot be overlooked. Visual connections, often referred to as view-sheds, must be considered as new land uses as development occurs within the Downtown and adjacent Waterfront Industrial areas. Figure 5.3 illustrates the important visual connections that must be preserved, created, and enhanced in the City.

Building Design Guidelines

The physical structures in the Downtown establish much of the community's character to visitors and residents. Therefore, it becomes critical to establish acceptable parameters for new construction and renovation. These design guidelines will help to ensure that Harbor Beach's character is maintained and enhanced as new development occurs. These design guidelines are intended to require that new development and improvements to existing structures adopt the design principles that are characteristic of traditional downtowns. These regulations will define acceptable building materials, lot coverage, parking requirements, building height and placement, signage, lighting and public space improvements.

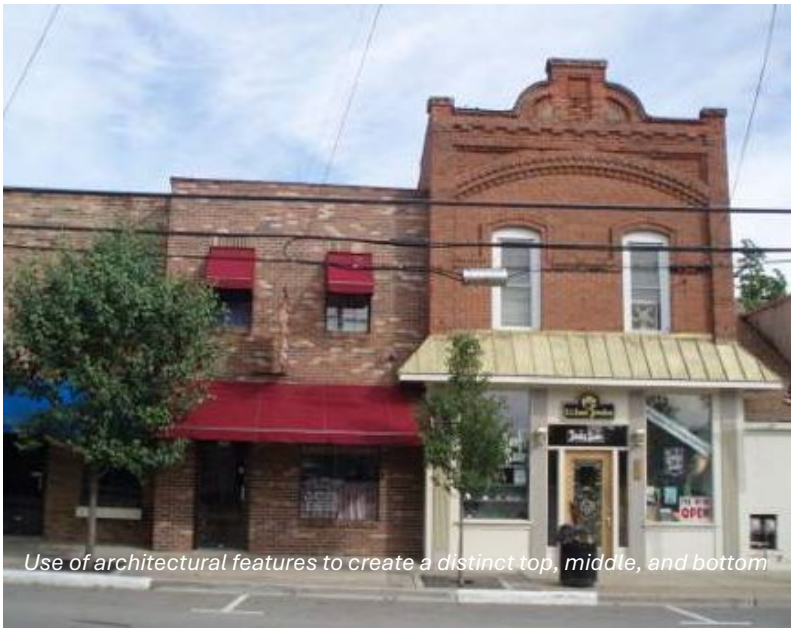
BUILDING PLACEMENT AND ENTRANCES

- Zero lot lines – i.e. lot line to lot line construction
- There should be a door every 30 feet so that pedestrians have access to merchandise at a comfortable pace.
- Entrances should be at grade to allow pedestrians easy access (raised plinths along a sloping street are not desirable).

Example of zero lot line construction

BUILDING HEIGHT AND DETAILING

- Buildings should be two stories.
- The exterior of all buildings should have a clearly defined base, separated from the upper floors with a cornice, awning, or other three-dimensional element.
- The roof line of the building should also be defined with a cornice or 3-dimensional element of some type. This will give the building a top, middle and bottom, as opposed to the suburban model of the monolithic façade.



Use of architectural features to create a distinct top, middle, and bottom

BUILDING USE

- Commercial, entertainment, medical, office and residential uses permitted

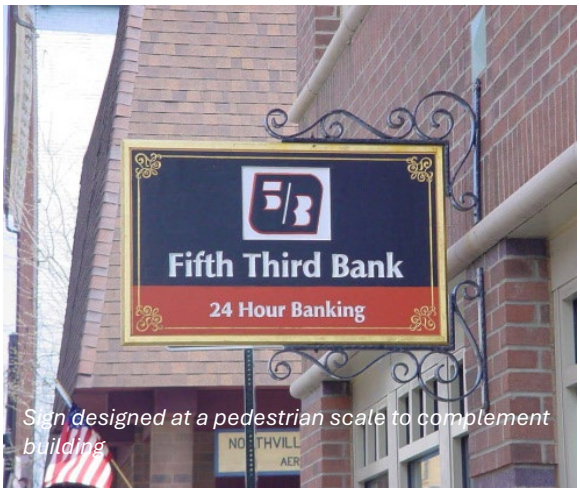
BUILDING MATERIALS

- It is important to use materials that have a long life (brick, stone, steel).
- Dryvit (EIFS – exterior insulation systems in general), vinyl and aluminum siding, all have a 20-year life and should not be used Downtown.
- Any changes to buildings over 50 years old should restore original materials and design.
- First floor should:
  - Have 70% clear glass (reflective glass, tinted glass, glass block cannot be used).
  - Be built of stone, brick or steel with wood storefronts.
- Second floor should:
  - Have windows with a vertical proportion (taller than wide).
  - Be constructed out of durable, natural materials such as brick, stone or steel.

Proper use of materials and window proportion.

SIGNAGE

- Signage should be designed to complement the building façade.
- Signs should not overhang or cover windows or other architectural details.
- Signage should be designed at a pedestrian scale.
- Interior illuminated signage should be avoided.
- Non-commercial message murals are encouraged on blank building walls.



Sign designed at a pedestrian scale to complement building

PARKING

- No ground-level parking between the building and the street – parking areas should be in the rear of the building.
- Common public parking in surface lots and on-street parking are encouraged.

Progress Toward the Vision

Photo Sources: City of Harbor Beach

In the years since the most recent update of this Plan was adopted in 2011, there have been many efforts to work toward realizing this vision. The City has an incredibly active Chamber of Commerce that conducts a variety of economic development activities, including:

- Maintaining a membership of nearly 80 businesses, organizations, and entrepreneurs.
- Hosting events such as Souper Saturday, Harvest Festival, Harvest Fine Arts Show, and Citywide Garage Sales that draw hundreds of people.
- Collaborating with regional marketing efforts such as Discover the Blue: Michigan's Thumbcoast (which is affiliated with the Pure Michigan, the State's official travel and tourism campaign) and the Huron County Economic Development Corporation
- Producing a Visitor Guide and Event Calendar including nearly 100 community events across the City each year.

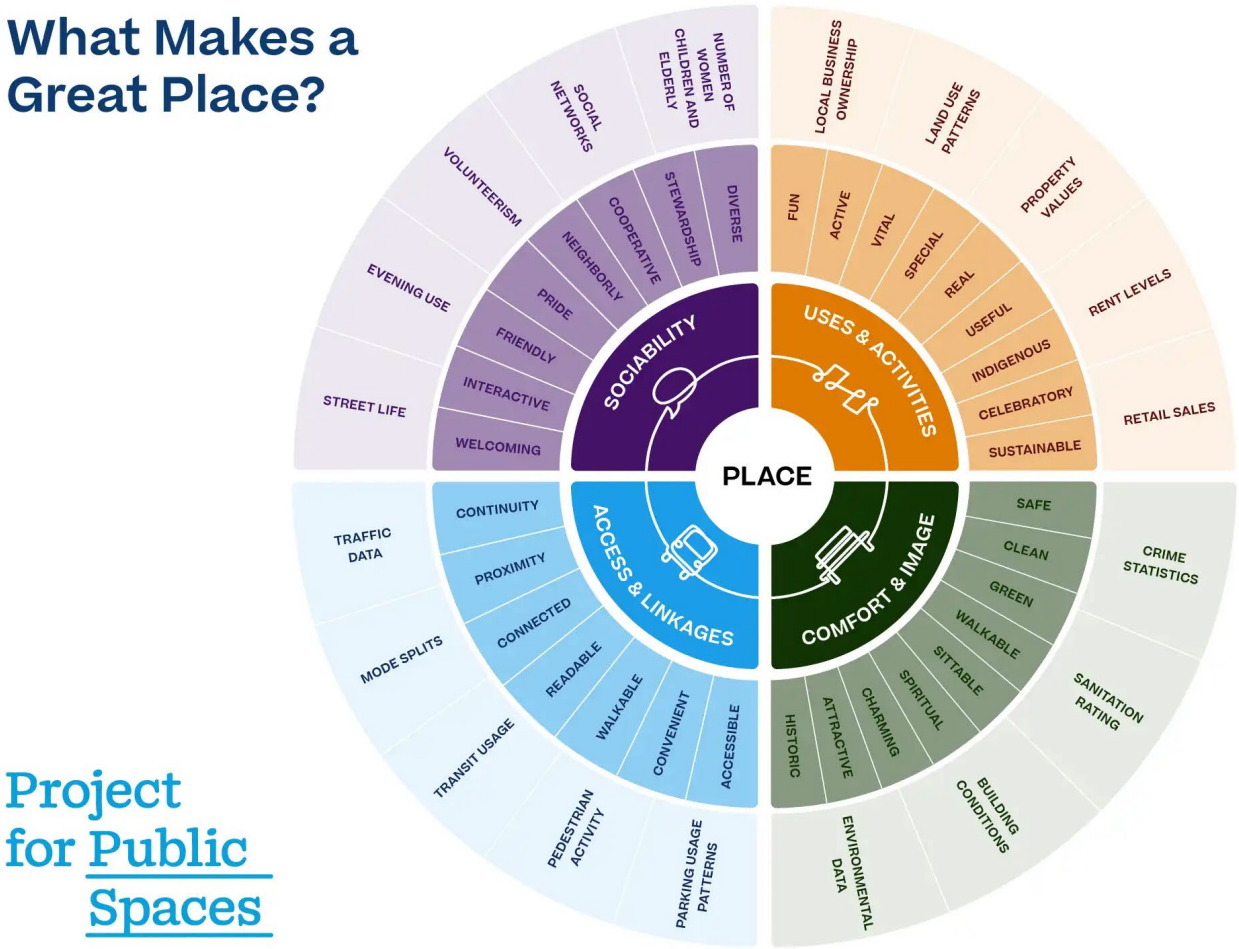
Additionally, the Chamber organizes winter-season events such as a Christmas Parade that concludes with a Tree Lighting on the lawn of Murphy Museum, complete with bands and Santa. During engagement, residents indicated their fondness and appreciation for these types of winter events and expressed a desire for more, offering ideas such as a Hot Chocolate festival. Business owners also provided feedback that slow winter seasons are a major challenge.

Foot traffic and vibrant public spaces are major drivers for small, local economies. Local economies suffer when the sidewalks, streets, and connecting public spaces are unwelcoming and inaccessible during winter months. Some businesses shut down during this perceived “off-season” until the spring. However, there is still desire from permanent residents for vibrant community life during colder months. Year-round activities, retail offerings, and dining options were all expressed as desires by residents during public engagement.

The City also has a variety of cultural assets and amenities that have been invested in over the last decade, such as:

- The Harbor Beach Lighthouse Preservation Society, who restored the light house and began conducting tours in 2011
- The Grice House and Frank Murphy Memorial Museums, which are well-maintained pieces of Harbor Beach history
- North Park Campground, which is often at capacity
- The municipally owned Harbor Beach Marina, capable of handling all sizes of recreational boats and offering 72 slips and 6 launches
- Harbor View Cottages, available for rent within steps of the waterfront
- Harbor View and Brian Backus Trails
- Tip of The Thumb Heritage Water Trail
- Installation of 4 pickleball courts and basketball courts just off the main beach at Lincoln Memorial Park
- A Historical Walking Tour with informational signage that leads trail users and pedestrians along the City’s trails and Downtown sidewalks

All of these assets and activities are what make up Harbor Beach’s unique draw and charm, which contributes to placemaking. The Project for Public Spaces defines placemaking as a planning term that gets at the heart of local character and charm, a mechanism for strengthening the connection between people and place. When communities take action to shape public spaces through events, design guidelines that create aesthetic cohesion, and ensure accessible public walkways and gathering spaces in a way that meet their needs and improves everyday quality of life, they are engaging in placemaking.



Source: Project for Public Spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the City of Harbor Beach and its partnering community organizations are already doing a great deal of work to foster a lively Downtown. The following recommendations build off of this existing work and seek to further enhance it to help the City achieve its Downtown goals:

- Continue existing placemaking, marketing, and economic development efforts.
- Consider expanding winter season programming.
- Advocate for the development of additional lodging, which the redevelopment of the DTE site could herald in.
- Recruit additional retail and dining businesses. Results from public engagement imply a desire for more diversity of options and more consistent hours of operation.
- At the same time, business owners shared a concern over slower winter seasons and challenges with maintaining regular hours. Drawing existing events further into Downtown will allow businesses to take advantage of the foot traffic. Bridging already popular events like the Maritime Festival with Downtown could be achieved by having additional food trucks or one of the concert stages Downtown.

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CITY OF HARBOR BEACH

Implementation Plan

The Master Plan represents a vision for the future of Harbor Beach – a vision to preserve and enhance the best characteristics of the City while making the most of opportunities that come with new development. The Plan in itself is a vision and provides goals and objectives that should be considered in daily decision-making. Successful implementation of the Plan will be the result of actions taken by elected and appointed officials, City staff, public sector agencies, and private citizens and organizations.

Finally, this chapter concludes with a chart summarizing the recommended actions or strategies, and the entities primarily responsible for implementing each action or strategy.

Summary of Recommendations

This chapter identifies and describes actions and tools available to implement the vision created in this Master Plan. Broadly stated, the Plan will be implemented through:

- **Planning and Zoning:** Evaluation of the City's Zoning Ordinance and amendments to City regulations will be necessary to implement the recommendations of this Plan. Continuous evaluation of the recommendations of this Plan must occur at regular intervals to ensure that the overall vision for the future development of the City remains relevant.
- **Civic Improvements:** Improvements such as parks, public spaces, and utility systems fall into this category. Civic improvements are generally funded through public funds and are tangible "brick and mortar" projects.
- **Circulation Improvements:** Improvements to the City's motorized and non-motorized circulation system fall into this category.
- **Economic Development:** This category includes the economic and physical development of the City. These improvements include a wide range of activities from physical development activity to promotion and marketing, and may be completed by public or private entities, or some combination thereof.

Economic Development Tools

Tax Increment Financing is a funding method that authorized bodies may use for public purposes. When a TIF district is established, the total state equalized value for property in the district is recorded. Every year thereafter, the property tax revenue generated by increases in the total state equalized value is captured by the TIF. In this manner, the TIF is funded only by increases in property values and the City's general fund is not affected by the tax capture of the TIF.

The following is a summary of bodies that can use tax increment financing and other funding resources:

» **Downtown Development Authority** (Public Act 197 of 1975). A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a non-profit development corporation which exists for the purpose of promoting a desirable environment for businesses and residents, and implementing economic development projects. A variety of financing techniques are available to DDAs, including bond issues, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and public and private contributions.

  In order to establish a DDA, the City must demonstrate evidence of stagnant or declining property values within the boundary of the proposed DDA. The City had previously had a DDA which was dissolved in 2009. This tool is still available to the City.

» **Corridor Improvement Authority** (Public Act 280 of 2005). This legislation establishes a new method of improving older commercial corridors without establishing a DDA. The Corridor Improvement Authority Act allows local governments to create one or more Corridor Improvement Authorities (CIA) to address established, deteriorating commercial corridors located outside their downtown areas. The primary benefit of this tool is to provide local governments with the option of using TIF for improvements in the district(s), and to undertake a wide range of activities to promote economic development and redevelopment in commercial areas.

  In order to be eligible to create a CIA, the development area must have a minimum size of 5 acres, consist of at least 50% commercial property, and be zoned to allow mixed-uses, including "high-density" residential use. A municipality must also expedite the local permitted and inspection process in the development area and promote walkable non-motorized interconnections throughout the development area.

  An advantage of this act is that it allows more than one CIA to be established in a community, in addition to the one DDA that a community is typically permitted to establish.

» **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority** (Public Acts 381, 382, and 383 of 1996). Communities are authorized to create one or more Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities (BRA) in the community. BRAs may be used to finance the cleanup and reuse of contaminated property. Costs that can be funded by a BRA include the demolition of buildings necessary to remove hazardous substances and new construction if needed to protect against exposure to hazardous substances that are to remain.

  A BRA may use a TIF to pay back a developer for activities needed to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. Once the developer has been paid back for initial site remediation, the additional captured property taxes may go into a local site remediation fund to pay for cleanup and rehabilitation activities on other brownfield sites in the community.

  An important feature of a BRA is the ability to capture state and local school taxes, but only from the taxes paid by the user of the redeveloped contaminated site. BRAs may also issue revenue and TIF bonds and notes or borrow from the MDEQ's Revitalization Loan Fund.

  Harbor Beach has an established BRA and it is a tool that may be appropriate again in the future.

» **Principal Shopping District/Business Improvement District** (Public Act 120 of 1961). This Act provides for the establishment of principal shopping districts and for the undertaking of certain activities within these districts. Municipalities are permitted to complete street and pedestrian improvements, acquire property for and construct parking facilities, along with other facilities that "serve the public interest."

The municipality may also create a board for the management of certain ongoing activities, including various initiatives to promote economic development (i.e. market studies, public relations campaigns, and retail and institutional promotions). In addition, the maintenance, security, and operation of the principal shopping district may be carried out through this board. For ease of description, this board is often referred to as a Downtown Management Board (DMB) and the area it represents as the Principal Shopping District (PSD).

The DMB is composed of a number of members determined by the City at the time of authorization with a majority of the members being nominees of individual businesses within the PDS. One member is a representative of the adjoining residential neighborhoods, and one member is a representative of City government. All board members are appointed by the Mayor the City with the concurrence of the City Council.

The DMB may be funded through grants and contributions and may also use the proceeds of special assessment levied by the City Council on property within the PSD specifically for maintenance, security, and operation purposes. All assessments are levied in accordance with the City's special assessment policies and procedures.

PSDs are a useful tool for addressing issues such as parking lot construction and operation by shifting responsibility and accountability to a single organization. The organization is business driven, yet closely linked to the City through the appointment process and funding arrangements. It is therefore an organizational expression of the partnership between the City and business interests. Its powers to conduct cooperative advertising and promotion, public relations, maintenance, and general operations are broad enough to address many of the previous strategies.

PSD's do not, however, possess the authority to conduct broad redevelopment or public infrastructure development activities. It also does not have access to a dedicated property tax millage or the ability to undertake TIF.

» **Commercial Rehabilitation Act** (Public Act 210 of 2005). The Commercial Rehabilitation Act enables local units of government to create one or more rehabilitation districts in which rehabilitated commercial property may receive property tax reductions for one to 10 years from the municipality (excluding personal property and the land upon which the rehabilitated facility is located).

  These tax reductions or abatements may be used to encourage redevelopment in the community; however, they do reduce the amount of tax revenues collected by the City. Therefore, this tool should be used judiciously.

» **Local Development Financing Authority** (Public Act 281 of 1986). A Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA) is intended to assist industrial development, to promote economic growth, and prevent unemployment. Eligible activities include the support of business investment in districts where the primary activity is the manufacture of goods or materials, agricultural processing, or high-tech activities such as product development, engineering, product testing, or research and development.

  A LDFA may use TIF, and only one LDFA may be created in the community. The industrial area encompassing the area planned for Industrial Park on the Harbor Beach Plan would be the most natural locations in Harbor Beach to create a LDFA to assist in economic development.

» **Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC)** Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) is a voluntary technical assistance initiative offered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) which provides best practice toolkits for planning, zoning, and economic development. These best practices encourage communities to be "development-ready". This involves planning for new investment and reinvestment, identifying assets and opportunities, and focusing limited resources. By becoming RRC Certified, Harbor Beach would signal to developers and stakeholders alike that there are clear development policies and procedures, a community-supported vision, a predictable review process, and compelling sites for developers to locate their latest projects. Communities who achieve Certified level gain access to a series of additional benefits, including the Redevelopment Services Team, a specialized team focused on supporting development opportunities for priority sites through site packaging and marketing efforts. These packaged sites are primed for new investment because they are located within a community that has effective policies, efficient processes and the broad community support needed to get shovels in the ground. Additionally, RRC Certified communities gain access to additional funding opportunities offered by MEDC and other state partner agencies.

» **Main Street Program** The Michigan Main Street Program supports downtowns and traditional commercial neighborhood districts by promoting and implementing the Main Street Four-Point Approach® in communities across

the state. This approach helps build partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders and encourages historic preservation. It promotes environmentally-sustainable redevelopment, integrates communities' cultural assets and fosters entrepreneurial development and downtown living.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a community-driven, comprehensive strategy that encourages economic development through historic preservation in ways that are appropriate for today's marketplace. The four points include:

- **Design.** Enhancing the downtown's physical environment by capitalizing on its best assets including historic buildings, and creating an inviting atmosphere through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, streetscapes and landscaping. The Main Street Program also focuses on instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems and integrating long-term planning.
- **Economic Restructuring.** Strengthening a community's existing economic base while also expanding and diversifying it. By helping existing businesses expand and recruiting new businesses to respond to today's market, the Main Street program helps convert unused spaces into productive properties and sharpens the competitiveness of business enterprises.
- **Promotion.** Marketing a downtown's unique characteristics to residents, visitors, investors and business owners. The Main Street program develops a positive, promotional strategy through advertising, retail activities, special events and marketing campaigns to encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.
- **Organization.** Involving all the community's stakeholders, getting everyone working toward a common goal and driving the volunteer-based Main Street Program. The fundamental organizational structure consists of a governing board and four standing committees. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director or Main Street manager. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, it builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

Implementation Program

The chart on the following page presents a detailed summary of all of the recommended implementation activities, who is responsible for completing the activity, and available funding resources for each activity. Additionally, specific action items to launch each implementation activity are provided to offer immediate next steps.

Priority	
A	Most Important
B	Very Important
C	Important

Timeframe	
1	6 months
2	1 year
3	3 years
4	5 years
5	10+ years

Responsibility (Color)	
	Project Lead
	Key Participant
	Contributor

Goal Alignment (As Identified in Chapter 4)	
DT	*Downtown:* Future development in Downtown Harbor Beach should respect the historic development pattern of the City while expanding the vitality and range of services available in the Downtown area.
R	*Residential:* Maintain the existing residential character within the community while providing diverse housing choices and ensuring that residential redevelopment and new infill development complement and enhance the character of the existing neighborhood.
WD	*Waterfront Development:* Provide opportunities for people to live, work, and play on one of Harbor Beach's most vital assets while preserving its natural beauty.
NRS	*Natural Resources and Sustainability:* Preserve intact significant natural features located in the City and integrate natural feature preservation into land use decisions.
CS	*Complete Streets:* Create an efficient and safe multi-modal transportation network that integrates various modes of transportation and takes into consideration all network users.
RCL	*Recreation, Culture, and Leisure:* Provide, maintain, expand, and improve the arts, culture, and recreation system to incorporate a broader array of opportunities that will best serve the needs of Harbor Beach residents of all ages and attract visitors year-round.
ED	*Economic Development:* Support and enhance Harbor Beach's local economy.
CP	*Community Planning:* Ensure ongoing community planning and the implementation of the Master Plan.

Responsibility (Abbreviation)		
BA	Brownfield Authority	
CC	City Council	
CoC	Chamber of Commerce	www.harborbeachchamber.com
+CM	City Manager/Administration	
HEDC	Huron County Economic Development Corp.	https://www.huroncounty.com/
HBPZ	Huron County Planning, Building, and Zoning	https://www.co.huron.mi.us/building-zoning
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation	www.michigan.gov/mdot
PC	Planning Commission	
PO	Property Owners	
RC	Recreation Commission	

Funding	
Public	Includes public funds from the City operating budget, County, and State funding. May also include local government bonds.
Private	Includes funds from private sources such as grant monies, corporate funding, or property owners.
DDA/TIF	Tax increment financing provided by an authorized body. Please refer to the summary of economic development tools on page 101.

Circulation Improvements

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING			GOAL ALIGNMENT
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private	DDA / TIF	
Streetscape Improvements	B	4	CC	MDOT		●	●	●	CS
Action Items:	» Connect with MDOT to explore options for M-142 and M-25 and including streetscaping as part of future improvements. » Consider conducting a Downtown planning study to determine the appropriate locations for additional and improved crossings and estimated construction costs. » Explore funding opportunities for improved pedestrian safety and non-motorized transportation facilities.								
Huron County Trail System	B	3	RC	CC	PO	●	●		NRS
Action Items:	» Explore connecting the Harbor View Trail to the Huron County Trail System » Meet with County officials and staff to discuss future plans and opportunities for joint planning and implementation efforts. » Continue to seek funding opportunities for expanded recreational trail and non-motorized pedestrian systems.								
Off-Street, Offshore and Visual Connections	B	5	PC RC	CC	PO	●	●	●	CS
Action Items:	» Conduct a facilities inventory in comparison to the connectivity map on page 72 of The Harbor Beach Plan for gaps and opportunities for connection » Consider conducting a circulation planning study to determine the appropriate locations for additional and improved pedestrian and vehicular connections and estimated construction costs								
Road improvements	B	5	CC	MDOT CM		●	●		CS
Action Items:	» Share the plan with MDOT staff and officials that work in and with the City. » Review the recommendations of The Harbor Beach Plan when launching City-lead road improvement projects. » Review feasibility of City-owned roadway improvements identified in this Plan.								

Planning and Zoning

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING			GOAL ALIGNMENT
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private	TIF	
Zoning Ordinance Update	A	1	CM PC CC			●	●		CP
Action Items:	» Conduct a zoning audit to review the Zoning Ordinance for consistency and relevance. » Create architectural design standards to be consistent with this Plan. » Update street design standards to be consistent with complete street recommendations of this Plan. » Rezone properties according to the Plan and new Zoning Ordinance » Update sign standards								
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Plan Development	B	2	CM CC	RC PC	PO	●	●	●	ED
Action Items:	» Identify key priorities such as transportation, utilities, public facilities, parks, or housing. » Assess the condition of existing infrastructure to identify projects necessary for replacement or repair. » Estimate future revenues from local taxes, federal/state grants, and other sources like bonds, fees, or special assessments. » Identify specific funding sources for capital projects, such as general fund appropriations, public-private partnerships, or special funding districts. » Develop criteria for prioritizing projects, such as urgency, community impact, legal mandates, safety, and return on investment. » Organize the CIP to cover at least 5-10 years, with a detailed plan for the first year and less detail for the outlying years and include detailed project description, justifications, cost estimates, funding sources, and project timelines.								
Community Branding Plan for City and Downtown Destination Areas	B	2	CM CoC	PC CC	PO	●	●	●	DT
Action Items:	» Gather input from residents, visitors, businesses, and stakeholders on the city's current image. » Identify key community assets like landmarks, parks, cultural attractions, and public spaces. » Define the city's core values such as innovation, community, and sustainability. » Create a cohesive visual identity with logos, colors, and typography for consistent branding. » Develop a marketing strategy using digital, print, and events to promote the brand. » Engage residents, businesses, and leaders through workshops, partnerships, and ambassadors. » Roll out the brand across channels with coordinated signage, events, and online presence.								

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING			GOAL ALIGNMENT
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private	TIF	
Parks and Recreation Plan	B	2	RC CC			●	●	●	RCL
Action Items:	» Ensure the Parks and Recreation Plan is updated every 5 years. » Conduct parks facility inventory, and assess improvements needed over the next 5 years. » Submit the Parks and Recreation Plan to the MDNR by February 1 of the year it expires to ensure there is no lapse in MDNR grant eligibility. » Align the parks and recreation capital improvements with the general capital improvement plan (CIP).								
Green Infrastructure	B	2	PC CM CofC			●			NR S
Action Items:	» Encourage LEED/Energy Star certification for new or renovated buildings by incentivizing them in the zoning ordinance. » Raise awareness of the benefits of green building standards.								

Civic Improvements

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING			GOAL ALIGNMENT
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private	TIF	
Park Amenity Improvements	A	5	RC CC	CM		●	●		RCL
Action Items:	» Identify park amenity deficiencies and opportunities. » Coordinate improvements with goals and objective of the Parks and Recreation Plan. » Ensure park improvements are included in the City's CIP. » Identify stakeholders and volunteers that can collaborate with the City to accomplish improvements to park amenities.								
Waterfront Visibility	B	5	CC	HED C	PO	●	●		WD
Action Items:	» Determine existing barriers to waterfront visibility. » Explore opportunities to strategically acquire property along the lake. » Work with existing property owners along the lake to improve connectivity and develop a shared vision for the waterfront.								
Public Art Programming	B	3	CoC	CM		●	●	●	RCL
Action Items:	» Develop a public art program for public spaces. » Identify public spaces that would be good candidates for public art. » Establish a partnership with local artists to create public art. » Advertise the public art program using City communication channels and using brand standards, identified in the Community Branding Plan (as identified in the planning projects).								
Wayfinding Signage	C	3	Cof C	CM RC	PC	●	●	●	DT
Action Items:	» Evaluate community asset locations. » Determine where signage is appropriate and beneficial for visitors to navigate to destinations within the City. » Explore funding opportunities including public funding, public-private partnerships, and grant funding. » Coordinate new signage with the Community Branding Plan (as identified in the planning projects).								
Downtown Streetscape	B	4	PC CC	CM		●	●	●	DT
Action Items:	» Create a streetscape design palette using feedback from the City, as well as residents, business owners, and stakeholders. » Explore funding options from private grant sources. » Include streetscape improvements in the City's CIP.								

Economic Development

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING			GOAL ALIGNMENT
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private	TIF	
TIF District / DDA District	A	1	PC CC CM	HE DC		●			ED / DT
Action Items:	» Establish a TIF District and or DDA District. (See economic development tools on page 101). » Determine properties to include in DDA/TIF District. » If applicable, form DDA board by soliciting interest of residents and business owners.								
Business Recruitment Strategy	A	2	CoC	HE DC CM		●	●	●	ED
Action Items:	» Utilize market research to understand industry trends and competitive advantages. » Develop incentive packages and support programs to attract businesses. » Promote the area's strengths through marketing and public relations campaigns. » Utilize brand standards to create consistent messaging consistent with the Community Branding Plan (as identified in the planning projects).								
Façade Program	A	2	CoC	PC CC	P O	●		●	DT
Action Items:	» Restart the façade program to fund building façade improvements to Downtown buildings. » Ensure application process is streamlined and user-friendly. » Promote the program through the City's communication channels.								
Downtown Marketing	B	2	CoC	CM	P O	●			DT
Action Items:	» Explore feasibility of becoming a Michigan Main Street Community. » Actively recruit hospitality and tourist related businesses for Downtown. » Explore potential for new events, particularly events in the Downtown. » Create a marketing plan using the Community Branding Plan (as identified in the planning projects).								
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	B	3	CC	CM		●		●	ED
Action Items:	» Determine if new Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities are needed to redevelop formerly industrial land. » Establish Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities as needed (See economic development tools on page 101).								

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING			GOAL ALIGNMENT
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private	TIF	
Housing	B	3	PC CC	CM		●		●	R
Action Items:	» Encourage infill residential development and mixed-use development in the zoning ordinance. » Explore short-term rental restrictions. » Determine if state funding is available to encourage housing development (MSHDA).								

Zoning Plan

The structure and recommendations of Harbor Beach Plan are a departure from past planning practice. In the past, master plans had a strong focus on land use and only an incidental focus on character or physical development form. This plan focuses as much on character and physical form as it does on land use.

The City's existing Zoning Ordinance is also representative of a land use first approach to planning as can be seen by the numerous zoning districts that have been created over the years to try and adapt to evolving land use patterns. Because we have adopted a new approach to community planning with this plan, the recommendations herein are not consistent with existing zoning districts in some cases and the need for some of districts has been eliminated.

Harbor Beach Plan Correlation to Existing Zoning Districts

The following table summarizes the zoning districts that correspond with each of the land use categories in this plan.

Table 25: Plan Correlation to Zoning Districts

Land Use Area		Corresponding Zoning Districts
Residential	Residential Reserve	-
	Suburban Single Family	R-1
	Traditional Single Family	R-2
	Seasonal Residential	-
	Multiple Family Residential	RM-1
	Manufactured Housing	MHP
Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial	B-2
	Workplace	OS-1
Industrial	Waterfront Industrial	M-2
	Industrial Park	M-1
Other	Public/Quasi Public	-
	Recreation and Leisure	-
	Marina	WM
	Mixed Use	MPUD
Downtown Plan	Medical District	CBD
	Civic District	CBD
	Mixed Use	CBD
	Tourism District	CBD

It should be noted that while many of the land use areas identified in the Harbor Beach Plan have a corresponding zoning district, these zoning districts may need to be amended to ensure that the composition of land uses and building design guidelines for each area are consistent with the Plan.

Areas with No Corresponding Zoning District

Implementation of this plan will require a decision on the part of the City regarding the best way to address the Land Use Areas in the above Table 6.1 that do not have a corresponding zoning district. The City can address these areas in one of three ways:

- **PUD.** Implement the Harbor Beach Plan recommendations through the PUD process. This choice will not require the City to adopt new zoning districts, as it can use an existing tool. However, if the City chooses this route it may result in piecemeal development because PUD's are optional. Some landowners may elect to develop or redevelop their property using the current standards. Also, the PUD process itself can be a disincentive to property owners and developers because it can be a lengthy, difficult, and uncertain process. It is likely that most property owners will choose the easy route and continue to develop using the conventional standards.
- **Overlay Districts.** Adopting overlay districts would allow the City to more easily permit development that is consistent with the Harbor Beach Plan recommendations by eliminating the PUD negotiation process.
- **Adopt New Zoning Districts and Zoning Map.** This option for implementing the Harbor Beach Plan would be the most costly and difficult up-front, but it will provide the most certainty in the future. Adopting new zoning districts for these areas will ensure that development and redevelopment is consistent throughout the area and will provide a greater level of certainty to the City about what kind of development it will achieve.

Zoning Districts with No Corresponding Development Areas

There are three existing zoning districts, the P-1 Vehicular Parking District, B-2 General Commercial District, and B-3 Planned Resort-Waterfront Business District, that due to the need to create new districts or alternative implementation tools (PUD or overlay) are no longer necessary.

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CITY OF
HARBOR BEACH

Master Plan
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