

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN 2022 UPDATE

CITY OF CLARE, MICHIGAN

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INTRODUCTION TO THE UPDATE

The City of Clare will be a community that maintains its small town atmosphere yet will still seek to offer a variety of retail and service-oriented businesses, recreational activities, employment opportunities, and housing choices to its residents. Clare, in coordination with adjoining Townships, will manage growth so that the growth makes the best use of the residential and commercial areas, infrastructure and land resources. New development will be sustainable and will enhance existing development. New development will be able to tolerate economic depression and will be fiscally sound. New development will fortify the economy of Clare and will not be implemented at the expense of existing development. New development will enable the community to maintain a high quality of life and support existing infrastructure, businesses, and housing.

- City of Clare Vision



Background

The Master Plan for any community in Michigan is its guiding policy document relating to land use, amenities, and physical character as ownership, market forces, climate (social, political, and environmental), and technology change demands for development. A Master Plan is required by Michigan's Planning Enabling Act to be reviewed every five years.

In 2021, the City of Clare Planning Commission initiated an update to the City's Master Plan to guide decisions affecting future development and redevelopment in the community. Environmental, social, political, and economic conditions that affect the natural and built environment are continuously changing. Therefore, the planning process, which seeks to anticipate the impacts of those changes, must also be continuous. The Planning Commission recognized this fact and chose to embark upon the process of updating the 2016 Master Plan.

The City of Clare has a strong history of visioning and planning, with the most substantial update in recent history being the 2007 Comprehensive Master Plan. The process of creating that plan included visioning sessions, participation from residents and elected and appointed officials, and substantial analysis about the existing and ideal conditions of development in the City. An update in 2009 included planning and visioning for the Grant Township area surrounding the City, as municipal services and boundaries were changing in a way that made it necessary to plan for new land area in the City.

Then, in 2015, the Planning Commission initiated another large update to the plan, which included participatory engagement techniques such as stakeholder interest group meetings, a survey, and public meetings. The 2015 update included a renewed focus on the Goals and Objectives of the City, but also included analysis on transportation, changing industries, a renewed focus on downtown character, and changing housing needs.

Plan Update

The 2022 Master Plan Update is a "reaffirmation" of sorts for the City. In 2015, public input for the Master Plan indicated the small town character, strong sense of community, pedestrian friendly downtown, excellent schools, extensive recreational amenities, affordable lifestyle, safe nature of the City, and water and woodland features are some of the many positive aspects of life in Clare. As will be discussed later in this Update, the feedback in 2022 in many ways mirrors the sentiments documented several years ago. The focus here, then, is to ensure that this Plan continues to convey the importance

of these sentiments through clear and concise goals and objectives, a zoning plan which guides these policies towards realization in regulation, and a thorough snapshot of how residents and stakeholders view the future of the City through today's lens. To that end, the public was invited to engage in online surveys and mapping opportunities for a period of time while the plan was being updated.

The plan takes inventory of demographics, housing characteristics, and existing land uses to inform recommendations for future land uses. Then the plan describes updates to the future land use plan and in key areas, identifies potential redevelopment sites that the City can focus efforts on. Finally, the plan identifies implementation actions that can help to further the City's vision and prepare it for the next exciting chapter.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During the last Master Plan preparation in 2016, a survey was distributed to ascertain how residents and users of/ visitors to the community felt about the City and its land uses. Survey respondents were asked what they would like to see for the community many years into the future on topics that included commercial, recreation, retail, and housing.

In 2021, a survey was once again launched as a part of the Master Plan update. Staff created a custom project web page using Social Pinpoint, an online tool that host a wide array of participation activities.

For the 2022 Update, staff chose to host four (4) features on the website:

- The Master Plan survey
- A comment map that let people place “likes,” “dislikes,” and “ideas” on a map of the city
- A calendar of all Planning Commission meeting dates (in addition to the City calendar)
- A document download center, which contained all project documents for transparency purposes

The engagement website was advertised by several means: 1) City administration sent out the link to the engagement website to many of its email contacts; 2) a link was created from the City website homepage to the engagement website; 3) the city offered surveys at the front desk for all visitors; and 4) the city distributed fliers to local businesses that advertised the engagement website and included a QR-code for direct digital access.

The engagement website was open from January 14, 2022, to March 4, 2022. During this time, the site received 425 visits from unique users (13.8% of the city’s population), 121 survey responses (4% of the city’s population) and 75 map comments (2.5% of the city’s population). Many people both took the survey and commented on the map – in total, the site had 127 unique stakeholders.

In addition to the broad public engagement, Planning Commission members and city staff completed a focused worksheet on the status of the goals and objectives from the 2016 Master Plan. The results of this exercise helped staff update the Implementation Table found later in this Update.

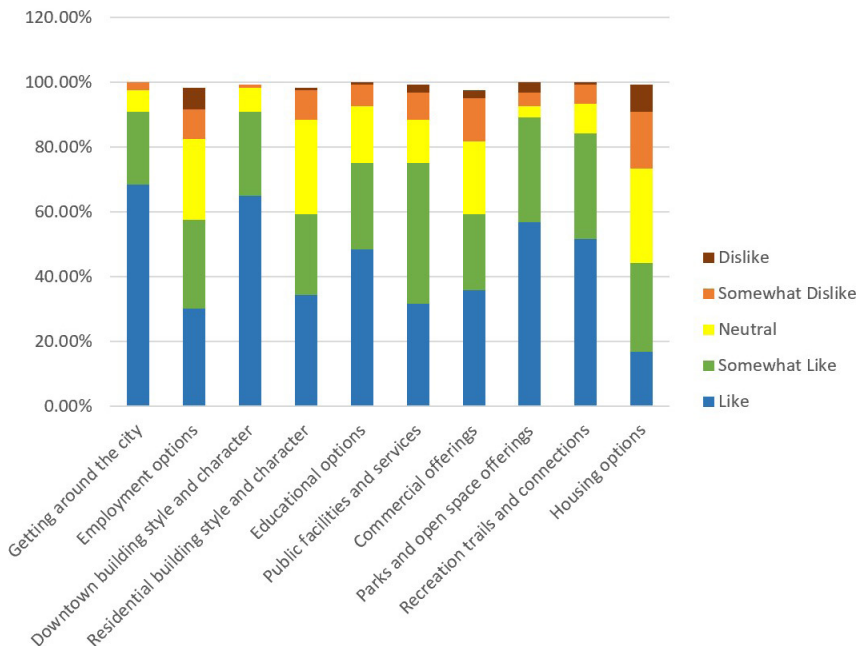
Online Survey

In total, 121 people responded to the online survey (no one returned a paper survey). Only 11 respondents did not live in Clare, and all of those either worked in Clare or had a business in Clare.

The vast majority (77.5%) reported they would either “very much” or “generally” like to live in Clare in the next 5-10 years. Only 1.67% said they would very much like to live somewhere other than Clare. Given that the bulk of the responses were from people aged 35-54, and that 86% of people had lived in Clare for 5-10 years or more, this feedback likely reflects the desire of people to stay in Clare as they age and remain a part of their community. Additionally, 91.6% of respondents said they own their current home, while 5.8% rented and 2.5% lived as a dependent in someone else’s home.

The following chart reflects respondents’ sentiments on different features of Clare. In general, people were most satisfied with getting around the city, the downtown building style and character, and the parks and recreation offerings. People were most dissatisfied with the housing options in Clare, the public facilities and services, and with the employment options. There was also moderate dissatisfaction with the commercial offerings and residential building style. Overall,

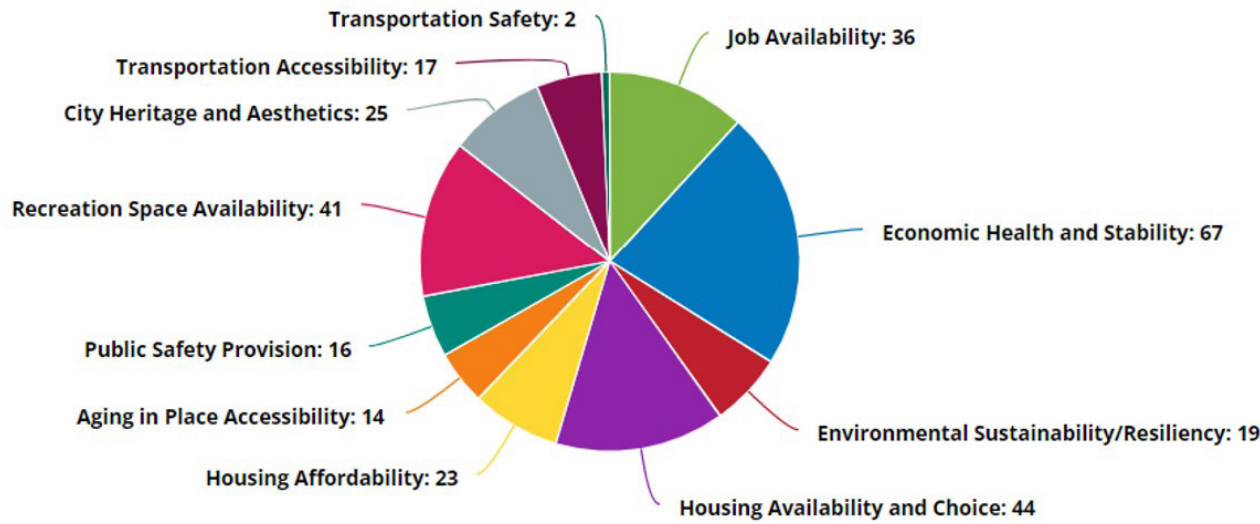
Figure 1: Respondent Sentiment on Features of Clare



when the comments were analyzed individually, the cost and quality of housing rose to the top as the main issue.

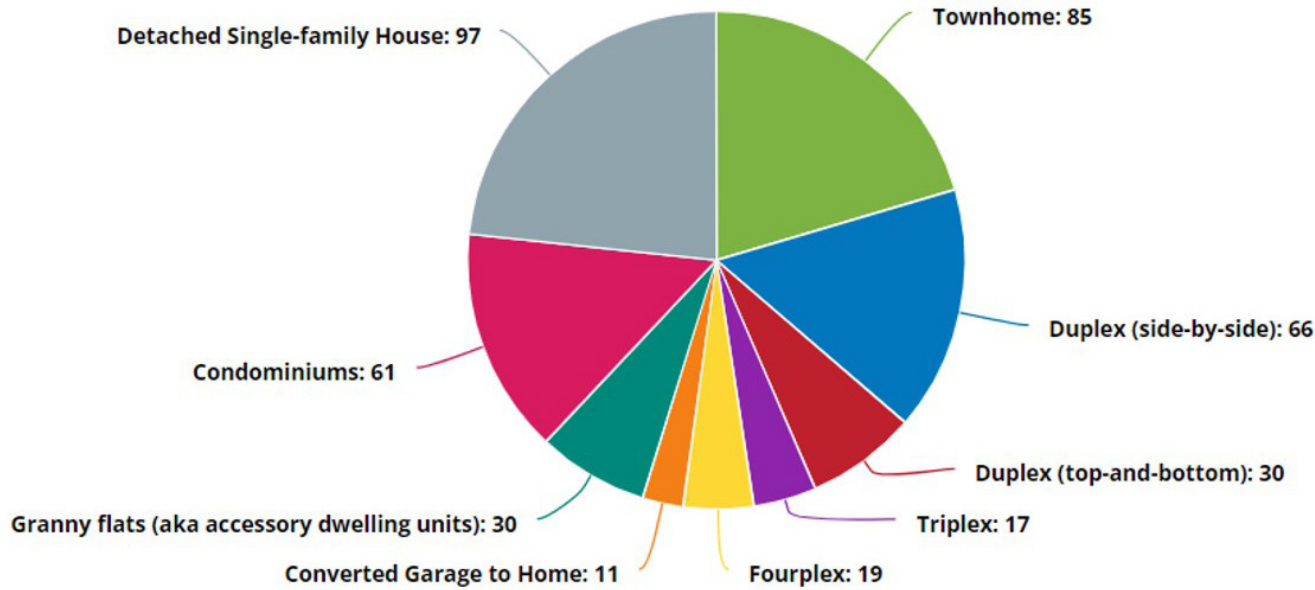
Survey respondents were then asked what their biggest concern for Clare was for the future. Economic health and stability, followed by housing availability and choice, were the two top responses.

Figure 2: Respondent Future Concerns



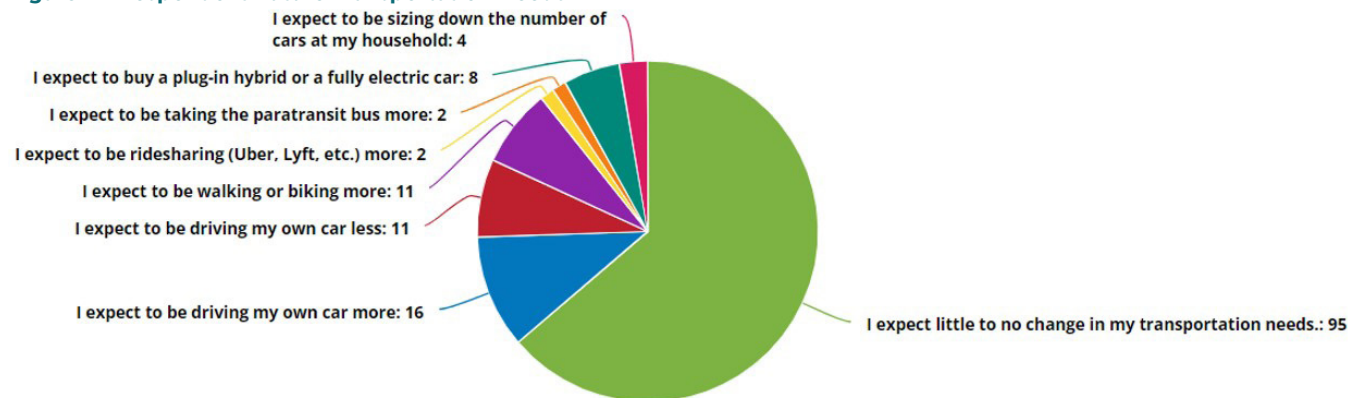
The survey then asked a series of focused questions on key issues, starting with housing. Respondents reported that they felt single-family detached homes, townhomes, duplexes, and condominiums were the most appropriate housing types when considering Clare’s historic and rural character.

Figure 3: Respondent Desired Housing Types



The survey then asked respondents to envision what their transportation needs might be in the future. Most people said their needs will not change or they will be driving more, and around 10% said they would be driving less and walking or biking more.

Figure 4: Respondent Future Transportation Needs



The final focused question was on community character. When polled, most respondents (47.41%) felt that restaurants and entertainment most distinguished Clare from other places nearby, followed second by neighborhood character (25%) and recreation offerings (21.6%). Respondents largely agreed that downtown Clare was the community's greatest asset heading into the future, followed by the friendliness and welcoming attitudes of residents.

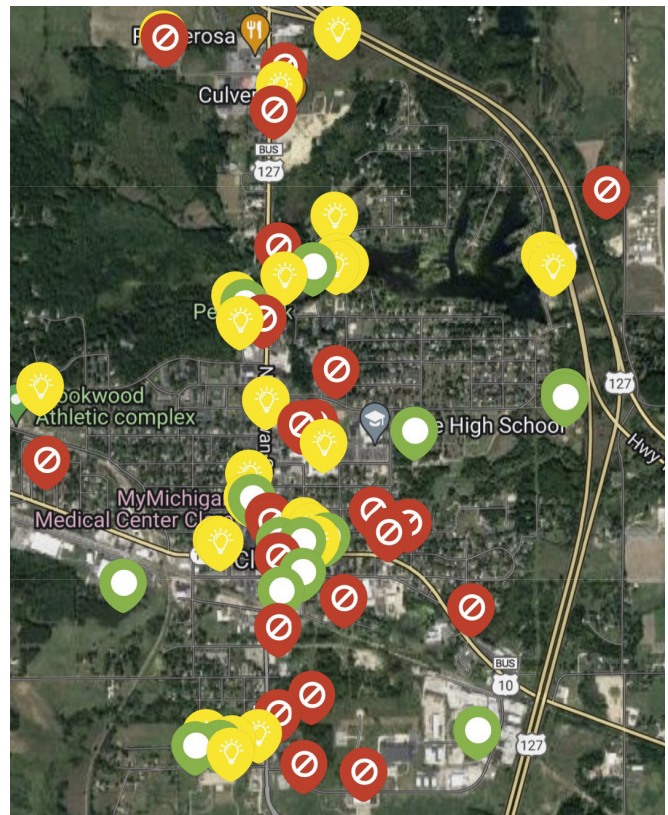
Overall, the survey emphasized the public's desire for more housing options and the pride residents have in their existing businesses, recreation amenities, and community character. These findings reflect the general findings from 2015, and align with the sentiments from the last two plan updates.

Comment Map

The comment map allowed participants to place "pins" around a map of Clare to identify things they liked, disliked, or for which they had ideas. Other users could then upvote or downvote (agree or disagree with) the pins, to signal that they also liked or disliked some feature of the city. Overall, 42.7% of comments were ideas, 24% were likes, and 33.3% were dislikes.

Most Disliked City Elements

- 15 votes: Respondents disliked the aesthetics as you enter town from the east, west, and south sides of Clare.
- 13 votes: Respondents disliked the aesthetics as you enter town from the south side of Clare, and suggested adding some streetscaping and rehabilitating buildings to improve the appearance.
- 8 votes: Respondents disliked the primary school pick-up/drop-off parking arrangement, and felt that car traffic was spilling over into neighboring businesses.



- 7 votes: Respondents did not like the smell of the existing marijuana facility on the south side of the City.

Most Liked City Elements

- 16 votes: Respondents liked the idea of creating a walking trail from Brookwood Park to Shamrock Park.
- 10 votes: Respondents liked the suggestion to improve the public beach (Note: The lake is currently being dredged and public beach improvements are planned after the dredging is completed).
- 9 votes: Respondents liked the idea of adding a kayak launch and/or splash pad for kids
- 9 votes: Respondents liked the idea of improving the soccer field entrance to make it look more like a sports complex, and adding a wider variety of sporting amenities year-round (recreation park, cross country skiing, etc.)
- 8 votes: Respondents liked the idea of building a community recreation center.

General Themes

In general, respondents expressed appreciation for the re-use of historic buildings, the continued contribution of local industrial employers, and the public facilities (campground, airport, parks, etc.) throughout the city. Respondents were most concerned about the aesthetics, such as lighting and landscaping, on the roadways as they enter the City, as well as the traffic downtown caused by the state trunklines that run through the city. These general findings align with the findings from the 2016 and 2007 updates, during which residents mentioned similar issues.

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SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY

A key element to planning a community's future land use and community facility needs is an analysis of its demographic characteristics. This section includes discussions of trends in population characteristics, age structure and composition, and household composition, and their impacts on the City's demographics. The data and trends identified in the analysis of each factor provide a base from which to develop strategies to address the needs of Clare's residents. Due to the Master Plan encompassing the Grant Township Expansion area, datasets for these areas are included where possible.

This section also analyzes the City's housing stock and development trends, and provides projections for new housing construction. A comprehensive plan for the future is vital to the preservation and improvement of the City's neighborhoods and housing stock. The plan will create opportunities for revitalization, growth, and new development, while preserving Clare's special character.



Demographics

Population

The City of Clare is one of many small, older towns located throughout the heart of Michigan. These Michigan communities have experienced slow-downs in population growth, or decreases in population, in recent years. These changes mirror the demographic shifts taking place throughout many rural parts of the United States; however, several townships around Clare have recently experienced significant increases in population. It appears that the population is not necessarily slowing as much as sprawling out from the City of Clare. While Clare claimed nearly 14% of Clare County’s population in 1980, the 2020 Census reported that its share of County population had slipped to around 10% while adjacent Grant Township’s population has increased by more than a third in the same period and is now as populous as Clare.

The population of the City has fluctuated just above 3,000 people for the past forty years, (see Table 1). After rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s, Clare lost 279 people, 8.1% of its population, during the economic downturns of the 1980s. The City experienced slight population growth between 1990 and 2000. Due to the Great Recession and a national trend of declining birth rates, an aging population, reductions in household sizes, and shrinking of rural communities, the City of Clare declined in population again between 2000 and 2010. However, Clare has seen a slight population increase—about 136 residents—over the most recent decade, which may in part attributed to the Grant expansion area, explained in detail below.

Table 1. Total Population: City of Clare

Year	Population	Numerical Change	Percent Change
1960	2,442	—	—
1970	2,639	197	7.46%
1980	3,300	661	20.03%
1990	3,021	-279	-9.24%
2000	3,173	152	4.79%
2010	3,118	-55	-1.76%
2020	3,254	136	4.18%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey and, McKenna
 * 2020 includes the Grant Township Expansion area

In 2008, the City of Clare and neighboring Grant Township entered into an Urban Cooperation Agreement (UCA) where parts of or entire sections of Grant Township will be incorporated into Clare as these areas develop. Map 2.1 illustrates these areas of Grant Township that have been effectively annexed into the City of Clare for development and planning purposes. In 2009, an amendment to the Clare Master Plan titled “Master Plan Amendment—For the Grant Township Expansion Area” was adopted by Clare’s Planning Commission on November 11, 2009, and this 2022 Master Plan amendment includes this expansion area.

Table 2, Population Trends, compares the number of people within the City of Clare to the population in nearby communities over time, illustrating

a population growth pattern common throughout Michigan. Older cities and villages, such as Clare, have seen their populations remain fairly constant or decline, while Townships that previously had sparse predominately rural populations, such as Grant Township and many other communities within Clare and Isabella Counties, have experienced high population growth rates over the past few decades. However, Vernon Township has not experienced such growth as a portion of the growth has been absorbed by boundary annexations by the City of Clare. Isabella County's population increase has primarily occurred in the Townships surrounding Mount Pleasant, and the County Master Plan recommends maintaining most of Vernon Township as very low density "agricultural conservation" or "rural conservation" land uses.

Since 2010, Clare's population has begin trending upward again, while neighboring Isabella County and Vernon Township's populations have begun declining.

Table 2. Population Trends: City of Clare and Surrounding Communities, 1980-2020

Community	1990 Population	2000 Population	1990-2000 % Change	2010 Population	2000-2010 % Change	2020 Population	2010-2020 % Change
City of Clare	3,071	3,173	5.00%	3,118	-1.8%	3,254	4.18%
Clare County	24,952	31,252	25.20%	30,926	-1.1%	30,856	-0.23%
Grant Township	2,636	3,034	15.10%	3,259	6.9%	-	-
Isabella County	54,624	63,351	16.00%	70,616	10.3%	64,394	-9.66%
Vernon Township	1,308	1,342	2.60%	1,369	2.0%	1,300	-5.31%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Household Size and Composition

A household is the term used to describe all the persons who occupy a single housing unit, together, as their usual place of residence. According to the U.S. Census, the City of Clare contracted by 26 households (-1.9%) between 2000 and 2010 and by 45 households (-3.44%) between 2010 and 2020. This decrease in the number of households in the City is consistent with statewide trends. Older and smaller communities were harder hit by the Great Recession's housing crisis that increased the number of vacant homes and homes that converted from owner occupied to renter. The number of households in the surrounding townships and counties also shrank, as shown in Table 3, Number of Households by Community, below. More people are also choosing to move in with their parents or children, which increases the number of "multi-generational" households but decreases the total number of household. This trend can be seen in the rise in the average household size, shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Households: City of Clare and Nearby Communities, 1990-2019

Community	1990	2000	2010	2019	2010-2019 % Change
City of Clare	1,229	1,380	1,354	1,309	-3.44%
Clare County	9,698	12,686	13,208	12,199	-8.27%
Grant Township	952	1,151	1,251	-	-
Isabella County	17,591	22,425	24,773	24,739	-0.14%
Vernon Township	458	488	528	506	-4.35%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, McKenna
 * 2019 includes the Grant Township Expansion area

Table 4, on the following page, illustrates that household sizes have been declining in Clare in a similar fashion as the State and Nation as a whole.



Table 4. Average Household Size: City of Clare and Surrounding Communities, 2000-2019

Community	2000 Persons per household	2010 Persons per household	2019 Persons per household	2010-2019 % Change
City of Clare	2.2	2.22	2.25	1.3%
Clare County	2.42	2.36	2.48	4.8%
Grant Township	2.62	2.59	-	-
Isabella County	2.55	2.49	2.59	3.9%
Vernon Township	2.68	2.57	2.78	7.6%
Michigan	2.56	2.49	2.47	-0.8%
United States	2.59	2.58	2.62	1.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 200, 2010, 2019, ACS Estimates

As Table 5 illustrates, the make-up of families and households in the City of Clare changed significantly between 2010 and 2020. The number of total households in the City decreased by 3.4% during this period while the number of family households decreased even more dramatically by 14.2%. However, the number of married couple families increased by 7.9%, a reversal of the decline seen in the previous decade. From 2010 to 2020, individuals living alone or households in which not all members are related grew by 7.8%. Around 43% of these people living alone are 65 years old or older, but most of the growth in single-person households was in people under the age of 65.

In 2020, almost one third of all City households contained individuals 65 and older, and providing services and care to elderly residents is likely to remain a continuing concern including providing housing options tailored for this age group.



Table 5. Household Characteristics: City of Clare, 2000-2019

Household Characteristics	2000 City	% of Total	2010 City	% of Total	2013 Clare & Grant Expansion	2019 City	2010-2019 % Change
Total households	1,380	-	1,354	12.30%	1,620	1,309	-3.4%
Family households	784	56.80%	764	2.60%	915	669	-14.2%
Married-couple family	564	40.00%	488	2.90%	586	530	7.9%
Female householder, no husband present	180	13.00%	213	2.30%		456	53.3%
Non-family households	596	43.20%	590	28.20%	621	640	7.8%
Householder living alone	525	38.00%	499	26.80%	-	583	14.4%
Householder 65 years and over and living alone	245	17.80%	177	1.20%	-	251	29.5%
Households with individuals under 18 yrs.	433	31.40%	429	7.70%	-	349	-22.9%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	426	30.90%	334	2.40%	-	422	20.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *McKenna Associates, and 2013 American Community Survey available data

The age composition of the City of Clare population reflects larger trends in population and birth rates over the past few decades. As Table 6, Age Group Comparisons, illustrates, the City of Clare has a lower median age than Clare County as a whole, but higher numbers of seniors and children than Isabella County. Isabella County's population is difficult to compare to the City's or to Clare County's, as the presence of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant draws a large student population to that community, skewing the median age downwards. The 2012 Isabella County Master Plan notes that most of the other communities in that County have median ages above the Statewide median of 38.9 years, similar to Clare County.

Table 6. Age Group Comparisons: City of Clare and Surrounding Counties, 2010-2019

Age	2010		2019		2010		2019		2010		2019	
	City of Clare		City of Clare		Clare County		Clare County		Isabella County		Isabella County	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Under 5 years	256	8.2%	233	7.7%	1,758	5.7%	1,677	5.5%	3,634	5.2%	3298	4.7%
5 to 9 years	204	6.5%	261	8.6%	1,620	5.2%	1,893	6.2%	3,505	5.0%	3333	4.7%
10 to 14 years	186	6.0%	94	3.1%	1,843	5.9%	1,430	4.7%	3,384	4.8%	3550	5.0%
15 to 19 years	190	6.1%	132	4.3%	2,021	6.5%	1,662	5.4%	9,126	13.0%	8327	11.8%
20 to 24 years	282	9.0%	116	3.8%	1,678	5.4%	1,532	5.0%	15,390	21.9%	13410	19.0%
25 to 34 years	407	13.1%	426	14.0%	2,923	9.4%	3,224	10.5%	8,007	11.4%	8690	12.3%
35 to 44 years	348	11.2%	370	12.2%	3,504	11.3%	3,068	10.0%	6,365	9.1%	6758	9.6%
45 to 54 years	370	11.9%	472	15.5%	4,709	15.2%	3,918	12.8%	7,616	10.8%	7148	10.1%
55 to 59 years	212	6.8%	130	4.3%	2,421	7.8%	2,618	8.5%	3,612	5.1%	3711	5.2%
60 to 64 years	135	4.3%	171	5.6%	2,282	7.4%	2,508	8.2%	2,845	4.0%	3857	5.5%
65 to 74 years	189	6.1%	297	9.8%	3,679	11.9%	4,244	13.8%	3,704	5.3%	5039	7.1%
75 to 84 years	206	6.6%	241	7.9%	1,872	6.0%	2,166	7.1%	2,160	3.1%	2465	3.5%
85 years and over	133	4.3%	99	3.3%	682	2.2%	711	2.3%	963	1.4%	1102	1.6%
Median age (years)	36.1	-	41.6	-	39.5	-	47.2	-	25.1	-	28.1	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, McKenna

Racial Composition

The population of the City of Clare is close to homogeneous with respect to racial composition. In 1990, 98.3% of the population was white while in 2019, the ACS estimates that the City is 96.7% white while the Grant Township Expansion area is 98.0% white. Clare County has a similar racial composition to the City, while Isabella County is slightly more diverse, with the ACS categorizing 90.7% white, 3.5% American Indian, 3.6% black or African American, and 1.9% Asian.

Education

Clare residents attained significantly improved basic education levels in 2019 than in 2000, according to Census statistics. Over 91.7% of City residents over 25 had earned a high school diploma in 2019, compared to only 81.2% in 2000, and the combined City and Grant Township Expansion area have similar educational attainment levels with slightly lower high school graduation rate.

Educational attainment in Clare County still lags behind the State of Michigan in all categories, as shown in Table 7, Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older (below).



Table 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older: 2000 - 2019

Education Level	City of Clare			2015 City & Grant Expansion	2019 Clare County	2019 Isabella County	2019 State of Michigan
	2000	2010	2019				
Less than 9th grade	5.8%	2.6%	0.6%	5.3%	5.2%	2.6%	2.9%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	13.1%	10.9%	7.6%	10.2%	10.3%	6.0%	6.3%
High school graduate	36.5%	44.0%	30.1%	37.3%	36.6%	31.8%	28.9%
Some college, no degree	21.5%	17.9%	22.8%	18.4%	26.4%	22.4%	23.4%
Associate degree	6.4%	6.7%	11.3%	8.6%	8.9%	8.2%	9.4%
Bachelor's degree	11.3%	9.3%	15.5%	11.3%	7.9%	15.7%	17.7%
Graduate or professional degree	5.4%	8.7%	12.1%	8.0%	4.7%	13.4%	11.4%
Percent high school graduate or higher	81.2%	86.5%	91.7%	83.6%	84.5%	91.5%	90.8%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	16.7%	18.0%	27.6%	19.3%	12.6%	29.1%	29.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, McKenna, ESRI 2015 Estimate

Employment

The occupations of Clare's residents are fairly similar to those held by residents of the surrounding counties, as shown in Table 8, Employment of Residents By Occupation and Industry, below. In 2019, Clare's residents were somewhat more likely to be employed in sales and office occupations than residents of the neighboring counties and Michigan. The City of Clare also has a greater proportion of residents occupied in retail trade, information services, finance and insurance, educational services, health care, and social assistance than the neighboring counties.

Unfortunately, the area has recently suffered from the general downturn in Michigan's economy. While the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a statewide unemployment rate of 5.9% in 2019, Clare County suffered from 10.1% unemployment. Isabella County fared better, likely buffered by University-related employment, with an unemployment rate of only 7.1%. With the ongoing recovery from the Great Recession, statewide employment has slowly been improving since 2009.

Table 8. Employment of Residents by Occupation and Industry: City of Clare and Surrounding Counties 2019

OCCUPATION	Clare		Clare County		Isabella County		Michigan	
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1245		10,891		33,830		4,654,930	
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	402	32.3%	2,946	27.0%	10,759	31.8%	1,705,832	36.6%
Service occupations	266	21.4%	2,323	21.3%	8,301	24.5%	820,083	17.6%
Sales and office occupations	282	22.7%	2,204	20.2%	7,063	20.9%	973,858	20.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	102	8.2%	1,274	11.7%	2,671	7.9%	369,098	7.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	193	15.5%	2,144	19.7%	5,036	14.9%	786,059	16.9%
INDUSTRY								
Civilian full-time year-round employed population 16 years and over	815		7,028		18,569		3,144,363	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	24	2.9%	318	4.5%	561	3.0%	36,733	1.2%
Construction	70	8.6%	706	10.0%	1,323	7.1%	176,929	5.6%
Manufacturing	123	15.1%	1,436	20.4%	2,857	15.4%	747,820	23.8%
Wholesale trade	0	0.0%	144	2.0%	441	2.4%	89,918	2.9%
Retail trade	127	15.6%	884	12.6%	1,728	9.3%	277,953	8.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	16	2.0%	366	5.2%	757	4.1%	155,491	4.9%
Information	27	3.3%	82	1.2%	144	0.8%	44,150	1.4%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	44	5.4%	222	3.2%	1,005	5.4%	200,457	6.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	37	4.5%	369	5.3%	789	4.2%	309,318	9.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	269	33.0%	1,270	18.1%	5,249	28.3%	673,629	21.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	45	5.5%	552	7.9%	2,210	11.9%	178,131	5.7%
Other services, except public administration	22	2.7%	376	5.4%	763	4.1%	122,626	3.9%
Public administration	11	1.3%	303	4.3%	742	4.0%	131,208	4.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey

Income

The annual household income in Clare was higher than Clare County but lower than both Isabella County and the State of Michigan in 2019. With the statewide median household income at \$57,144, the Clare region is significantly lagging behind wealthier parts of the State, with Clare County having one of the lowest median incomes in the Lower Peninsula. In addition to unemployment, this lower income may be impacted by the labor participation rate in the area. Lower participation rates will negatively impact the average household income.

Table 9. Annual Household Income: City of Clare and surrounding Counties, 2019

Household Income	Clare City %	Clare County %	Isabella County %	State of Michigan %
Total Population	1,309	12,199	24,739	3,935,041
Less than \$10,000	12%	9%	11%	7%
\$10,000 – \$14,999	6%	7%	7%	4%
\$15,000 – \$24,999	16%	16%	12%	10%
\$25,000 – \$34,999	8%	13%	11%	10%
\$35,000 – \$49,999	19%	17%	13%	14%
\$50,000 – \$74,999	9%	17%	18%	18%
\$75,000 – \$99,999	12%	11%	11%	13%
\$100,000 – \$149,999	15%	8%	11%	14%
\$150,000 – \$199,999	2%	2%	4%	6%
\$200,000 or more	1%	2%	3%	5%
Median Income	\$42,298	\$39,565	\$45,116	\$57,144

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey

In 2019, 14.1% of Clare families were below the poverty line, down from 28.8% in 2014 but higher than the statewide average. Of graver concern is that 47.9% of families below the poverty level have children under 5 years old. A slightly higher portion of Clare County's families fell below the poverty line in 2019, while Isabella County's population was closer to the statewide average, as shown in Table 10, Families with Incomes In Past 12 Months Is Below the Poverty Level.

Table 10. Percentage of Families whose Incomes in Past 12 Months is below the Poverty Level: City of Clare and Surrounding Counties, 2019

	City of Clare	Clare County	Isabella County	Michigan
All families	14.1%	15.4%	12.3%	9.9%
Families with related children under 18	24.9%	30.5%	20.2%	16.7%
Families with related children under 5	47.9%	29.3%	30.6%	17.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey



Housing

The following section provides an in depth analysis using detailed housing data, relying extensively on the U. S. Census Bureau, City Assessment records, the City's building permit records, and other data sources. Specifically, this chapter analyzes the following housing characteristics:

- Type of Housing
- Age of Housing
- Value of Housing
- Affordability of Housing

Housing Types



The housing trend towards multi-unit and rental developments has slowed since 2016. The 2019 U.S. ACS estimates 62.1% of all housing units in the City of Clare were conventional single-family, detached units, up from 50.5% in 2014. Housing with three (3) or more units continues to be the second most predominant type of housing, with Mobile Homes and Duplex housing a distant third and fourth. For the two decades following 1990, the single-family housing unit type consistently lost percentage, while the multiple family, (three (3) or more units), housing type gained—this trend is now slowly reversing. The relative percentage of three (3) or more unit structures, 29.9% in Clare, is significantly greater than both Clare County at 3.8% and the State of Michigan percentage at 15.5%. Along with the recent increase in the single unit housing type in Clare, the City has experienced an increase in the percentage of owner occupied housing units from 2010 to 2019, rising from 47.6% to 55.5% over the last decade. During the same time period, Clare had a corresponding decrease in the relative percentage of renter occupied housing from 52.4% in 2010 to 36.6% in 2019.

The number of housing units that were vacant in Clare decreased over the last decade from 185 vacant units in 2010 to 113 vacant units in 2019. Vacancies were found in both rental units and units intended for owner-occupancy. There are a significant number of rental units in the central portion of the City, primarily on the west side of McEwan Street, just south of the Lake Petit Park. Clare County's vacancy rate decreased only 3.9% from 2014 to 2020 (43.0% to 39.1%), where this high rate represents a large number of seasonal vacation homes. The State of Michigan saw its vacancy rate decline from 15.5% to 11.6% during the same period.

Table 11. Housing Units: City of Clare, 1990-2019

Category	1990		2000		2010		2019	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1 Unit (attached & detached)	845	63.2%	833	56.0%	802	50.5%	1021	62.1%
2 Units (Duplex)	56	4.2%	77	5.2%	101	6.4%	65	4.0%
3 Units or more	323	24.1%	483	32.5%	558	37.0%	492	29.9%
Mobile Homes	97	7.2%	94	6.3%	97	6.1%	65	4.0%
Other (Boat, RV, Van, etc.)	17	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Housing Units	1,338		1,487		1,442		1643	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2019, American Community Survey, and McKenna



Table 12. Housing Characteristics, Ownership: City of Clare, 2000-2019

Category	2000		2010		2019	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Owner Occupied	722	48.6%	688	47.6%	789	55.5%
Renter Occupied	658	44.2%	735	52.4%	520	36.6%
Vacant	107	7.2%	185	11.6%	113	7.9%
Total Units	1,487		1,608		1,422	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000, 2010, 2019, American Community Survey

Age of Housing

Table 13 provides a snapshot of the age of housing in the City of Clare, organized primarily by decade. Most of the housing units in the City were constructed prior to 1990, with the median year of construction being 1966. There are areas of two story homes over 60 years of age close to Downtown that would be ripe for renovation and preservation. The area just west of McEwan Street south of the railroad comprised primarily of smaller, clapboard ranch homes in an area affectionately called “Dogpatch” has seen several homes recently being renovated.

A significant number of homes were built around Lake Shamrock at the end of the 20th Century. Many homeowners chose to build in this area due to proximity to the lake, while some chose the area just outside of the City boundaries to take advantage of the lower tax rates in Grant Township. Prior to the Great Recession, Clare had a new residential development just east of Downtown on land that was once a nursery. The housing development, called White’s Subdivision, still has several available housing sites.

Also of note is the significant area of multiple family rental housing in the area just south of the river and west of McEwan Street. These structures are, for the most part, large, two story sided structures with exterior access to the units. A ranch-style affordable rental development is also located in this area with seniors occupying many of the single story housing development units. There are no condominium developments whatsoever within the City limits and few downtown housing units are located on the second stories of the commercial buildings.

Based upon the City of Clare’s records, twenty new housing units have been built since 2000. Since 2009, only two new units have been built. This information does not directly correlate to the information provided in Table 13—a compilation of responses from the U.S. Census—nor does it include the multi-family units. The significant decrease in the number of new housing units since

2000 is likely a reflection of the finite amount of available land for single-family development within the City and the general weakness of the rural Michigan economy.

Table 13. Housing Construction by Decade Age: City of Clare, 2019

Years	Number of Housing Units	% of Total
2014 to Present	0	0.00%
2010 to 2013	57	3.39%
2000 to 2009	83	4.94%
1990 to 1999	78	4.65%
1980 to 1989	367	21.86%
1970 to 1979	377	22.45%
1960 to 1969	178	10.60%
1950 to 1959	146	8.70%
1940 to 1949	165	9.83%
1939 or earlier	228	13.58%
Total	1679	100.00%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2019

Value of Housing

Home value is important both to homeowners and to local governments. For the homeowner, a house is generally the household's largest single investment. For local governments, residential property tax is one of their primary income sources.

Clare saw a significant loss in the value of owner-occupied housing from 2010 to 2014, but has since recovered. The median value for owner-occupied units was \$93,500 in 2014, and the value rose to \$112,700 by 2019. According to the American Community Survey, the lowest year was 2012 at \$89,700. While the median home value data from the Census is valuable, it does not distinguish between the different types of housing available in the City of Clare. Clare's housing ranges from historic houses to new single-family development, and includes both new and older housing areas. There are varied neighborhoods with different styles of housing and different development patterns within the City as a whole. The 2019 American Community Survey reported home values ranging from less than \$50,000 to \$299,99. 32.6% percent of homes were valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999 while 31.8% were valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999 with 14.5% of the homes were valued more than \$200,000. In the Grant Township Expansion Area, the median value was \$100,962 in 2013 with twice the number of homes valued over \$150,000 than in Clare proper—26% to 13%.

Table 14 indicates that for all residential properties, assessment values have increased 11% over the previous 5 years, a positive development for the City since in previous years the values had been declining.

Table 14. Residential Properties / Assessed and Taxable Growth : City Of Clare, 2015 - 2019

Growth	2015	2019	% Increase 2015 to 2019
Residential Assessment	37,519,700	41,675,800	11%
Residential Taxable	35,462,530	37,999,604	7%

Source: City of Clare Assessing

While the value of housing has started to increase once again, assessed values are constrained by Michigan's Headlee Amendment, which limits the increases in total taxable value that the City may retain as property values increase.

Housing Affordability

As the median home value rose from \$93,200 in 2014 to \$112,700, the median household income also rose and lowered the proportional cost burden for homeowners. In 2014, the median income was \$26,767 and it has since risen to \$42,298 in 2019. The median home value is no longer outpacing median household income as dramatically as it had been in the 1990 to 2014 period. The affordability factor can be analyzed as the ratio of household income to the cost of buying a house. The higher the ratio, the less affordable it is for someone to become a homeowner.

The 2000 Census reported a median home value of \$78,500, or 2.88 times the median household income. In 2014, this ratio increased to 3.49 times value-to-income. However, in 2019, the ratio once again dropped to 2.66 times value-to-income. This value-to-income ratio now roughly matches the United States' historical average of 2.6 value-to-income ratio, clearly illustrating an improvement in affordability over the last five years.

This affordability issue is a concern as it illustrates a hardship for an increasing number of residents, and it may be a reason for the higher number of renters to owners in the community than State and National averages. Housing unaffordability may prevent growing families from moving to larger homes or may prevent renters from becoming homeowners. During the term of a home loan, homeowners are building equity as they pay off their loans and their houses become assets, which isn't true for renters.

Data is also available from the 2019 ACS on homeowner costs and gross rent paid as a percentage of household income. Gross rent includes mortgage, property tax, and utility costs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers housing to be "affordable" if a household pays no more than 30% of its income on these costs. Over the last five years, affordability has improved for homeowners but worsened for renters in Clare. In 2014, 27% of owner households paid more than 30% of their income on selected monthly owner housing costs—in 2019, this number had decreased to 14%. Of renter households, 55% paid more than 30% of their income on housing costs—in 2019, this number increased to 65%.



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EXISTING LAND USE

The general pattern of land use in the City of Clare has been formed by several key parameters, including the abundance of natural woodland resources in the vicinity, the presence of the railroad, and its proximity at the crossroads of transportation corridors to the north and west. Clare began as a lumbering town due to the abundance of natural pine forests around the City. The lumbering industry necessitated railroad tracks to transport the timber products to markets in more densely populated communities. Downtown Clare began as a center to service the timber industry but with the rail transportation came new residents, farmers, merchants, and visitors.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Clare's community and civic land uses grew and clustered together along McEwan Street, which developed as the City's main street.

In the mid-20th century, the South Tobacco River was dammed creating Lake Shamrock. With creation of the lake and with easy railroad and highway access, Clare became a destination for summer tourists to enjoy the scenic north country. At the juncture of two highways, US-10 and US-127, Clare is still a stopping point today for many visitors as they head to northern Michigan on holiday.



Land Use Analysis

McKenna completed windshield surveys and studied recent aerial imagery to observe existing land uses in the City of Clare in the spring of 2022. From this data, an Existing Land Use map was prepared to show the relative locations of various uses. The following section presents the results of the existing land use analysis.

Please note that there is a noticeable difference in the total acres of Agricultural land included in this table between that number in 2016 (1,504.57 acres). The differences are not attributable; the analysis included here is based on the most recently available parcel data for the City as well as Grant Township.

Table 15. Existing Land Use—City of Clare and Part of Grant Township, 2022

Existing Land Use	Sum Acres	% Total
Agricultural	2,434.8	37.14%
Single Family Residential	1,365.2	20.82%
Multiple Family Residential	142.2	2.17%
Commercial	397.3	6.06%
Industrial	213.4	3.25%
Public/ Semi Public	760.0	11.59%
Vacant	1120.1	17.08%
Water	84.7	1.29%
Other	38.5	0.59%
Total	6556.2	100.00%

Reference: Existing Land Use Map

Land Use Categories

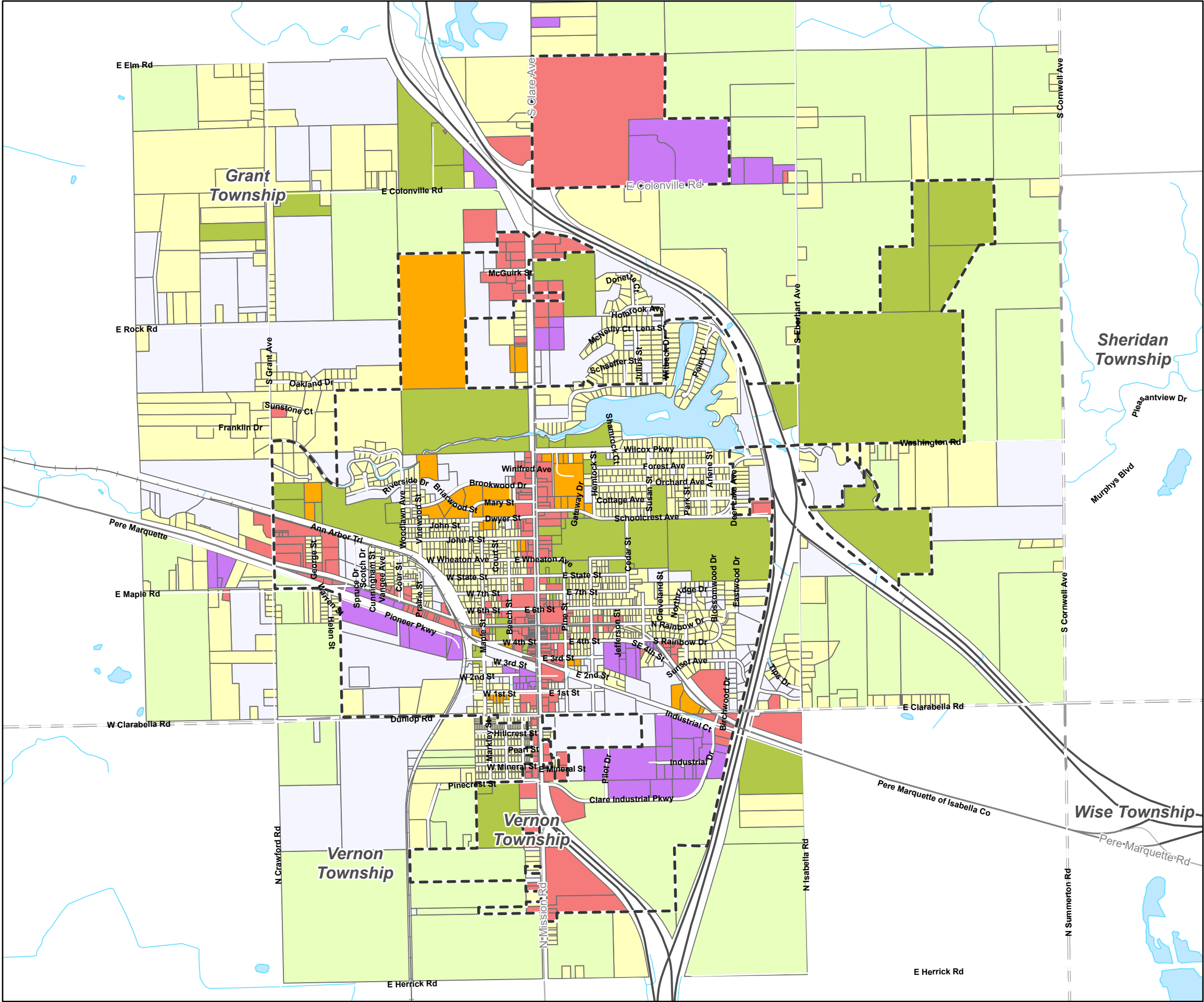
1. **Agricultural:** The majority of the available agriculturally utilized land on the future land use map can be found in Grant Township. Discussed elsewhere in this plan, the City must plan for these areas because those adjacent to City boundaries hold the potential for annexation.
2. **Single Family Residential:** Single Family Residential land uses are improved single land parcels or portions of parcels having a one family detached dwelling unit. The residential land use category includes acreage parcels and subdivision-style lots. The total acres devoted to single-family uses has increased in the last 5 years from 1,285.
3. **Multiple Family Residential:** Multiple Family Residential land uses are improved land parcels occupied in whole or in part by structures containing dwelling units for two (2) or more households including duplexes, flats, apartments, row houses, terrace dwellings, nursing homes, and mobile home parks but excluding commercial dwellings such as hotels, motels, and campgrounds. These more intensive residential uses are located primarily in the area just south of the Tobacco River and Lake Shamrock but there are also multiple family dwellings on the far east and west side of the City.
4. **Commercial/Office:** Commercial/Office land uses are improved land areas and buildings where products, goods or services are sold or used for professional services, such as medical and dental centers, financial institutions, professional offices, and business offices. These uses are concentrated along McEwan Street in the downtown area and near the US-10/US-127/McEwan Street interchange. New commercial development continues to occur along N McEwan near the US-127 interchange through new builds and annexation of Township property. There is also new commercially-planned land north of Colonville Road, along Rebak Way, which will expand commercial land use in the coming years.
5. **Industrial:** Industrial land uses are parcels devoted to the assembling, fabricating, manufacturing, packaging, warehousing or treatment of products, wholesaling, storage and/or servicing of heavy equipment. The industrial land uses are primarily located in three industrial parks, one at the southeast corner of the City, another just east of the US-10/US-127/McEwan Street intersection with a limited amount of industrial located adjacent to the railroad tracks, and the newest, along Colonville Road east of Clare Ave.
6. **Public/Semi-Public:** Public land is comprised of areas and facilities that are publicly operated and available to be used by the general public. Public uses include public schools, government buildings, public recreation facilities, City-owned cemeteries, and parks. The City Hall and other municipal buildings fall into this category. Semi-Public land uses include land and accessory facilities that are privately owned or operated, used by a particular group of persons, and do not have profit as their principal intent such as churches, private clubs, parochial schools, sports clubs, private air landing strips, and similar uses. Public and Semi-Public land includes 760 acres of land.
7. **Vacant:** Land not used for any active use defined above, including farming. Vacant land includes woodland and wetland areas as well as open, uncultivated, undeveloped, uninhabited and unused space. Vacant land has decreased somewhat from 1,200.52 acres in 2016
8. **Water:** The Water land use category is comprised of the large water bodies named on the Existing Land Use Map. These water bodies include the Tobacco River and Lake Shamrock. Water area in Clare equals 84.7 acres or 1.57% of the City.
9. **Other:** Other is a new category on the existing land use map. It includes right-of-way and other miscellaneous land uses that are attributed to land on a registered parcel.

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Existing Land Use Map

City of Clare, Michigan

June 2, 2022 - DRAFT



Legend

- Agriculture
- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/ Semi Public
- Vacant
- Railroads
- Roads
- Water Bodies
- City of Clare Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: City of Clare. McKenna 2022.

Land Use Issues

The existing land use map illustrates several items that continue to be of concern to the City. This section is carried over from 2016 with updates to address specific changes that have occurred since that time.

Multiple Family Developments

One issue of concern raised during the Stakeholder sessions is the development of large parcels of land as Multiple Family rental developments. Clare currently has approximately 34 percent of the housing units now consisting of multiple family dwellings, 2 units or more and over, with more in the planning stages. There are additional areas planned on the Future Land Use Map for multiple family development, including areas along 5th Street near the eastern City boundary. The survey results, however, indicate very little interest in supporting multiple family development in the City, so it may be worth investigating the plan for additional multiple family uses. At the same time, where density is needed is downtown (or downtown adjacent). The future land use plan should be flexible enough to allow denser housing where walkability can work.

Transportation Relationships and Land Use

Clare is at the intersection of two major highways US-10 and US-127. These transportation routes bring many people in close range to Downtown Clare. The corridors provide opportunities for the City to draw people off the expressway and into the community. The four gateway areas into the community from the highways and M-115 currently are not distinctive or particularly attractive.

These four gateway locations could potentially improve the visibility of the downtown. The establishment of gateway areas will require thoughtful planning and design by defining the character of Clare in a positive light (note that 3 of the 4 Redevelopment Areas identified in this plan include “gateways” of sorts). On the flip side, an increase in traffic volume from the expressway interchanges will require careful management to ensure the downtown maintains its small town, pedestrian-friendly environment.

With the new commercial development at the City’s north end, there will likely be a significant increase in traffic in this area. A visual and physical disconnect between the downtown and the north end exists and must be addressed. Developing the connection will help to bring shoppers and travelers into the downtown from this expanding development area. Wayfinding signage and streetscape enhancements should be utilized to bridge the gap between the two districts.

Currently, there are periods during the day when traffic becomes relatively heavy at the main downtown intersection, especially with trucks trying to make the necessary turns at the intersection of Fifth Street and S. McEwan Street. The development at the north end will likely exacerbate to this situation, and steps should be taken through traffic light timing modifications, truck routing changes, and physical improvements to the intersection to alleviate this issue.

Relationship to Surrounding Adjacent Townships and Development

Clare has a professional working relationship with the surrounding Townships. Clare has two 425 agreements in place including a 2008 Urban Cooperative Agreement that included all or parts of twelve sections of land in Grant Township adjacent to the City. This 2008 agreement envisions additional Single Family developments as well as other commercial and industrial uses to be developed in the Grant Township Expansion area. The 425 agreements can be mutually beneficial with the proper zoning ordinance regulations in place. Because Grant Township is unzoned, the City of Clare should prepare a zoning plan that addresses this new situation that the City will be zoning portions of township land as they are developed and come under the requirements of the Urban Cooperative Agreement. This action will require amendments to the City of Clare's Zoning Ordinance to add new districts including Agricultural, Rural Residential, High Density Residential, and Regional Commercial while making modifications to other districts.

Protection of Natural Features and Agriculture Uses

Clare has remaining natural woodland and wetland areas within the City boundaries that help define Clare as the gateway to Michigan's "Up North" country. As these remaining parcels are developed, the natural features will be altered and the community's up-north character will be diminished. The City currently does not regulate natural features such as woodlands and wetlands so the challenge will be to develop general guidelines that will achieve the proper balance between new development and the preservation of the natural features. The Grant Township Expansion area has significant portions of agricultural land that should be developed in a rational pattern that reduces sprawling non-compact development that is resource intensive to serve. The environmental protections are extremely important as they have been highlighted recently at the State level; things like strict stormwater controls will soon be required of municipalities to ensure the environment is protected.

New Commercial and Industrial Development at City's North End

An emerging commercial node is developing on the northern edge of the City at the intersection of US-10/US-127/McEwan Street with the City's northern Industrial Park to its east. With Rebak Way now completed and some new industrial development already underway in the area, there is bound to be interest from developers and agents on these parcels.

Connectivity and Recreational Land

The Grant Township Expansion area has significant developable land, but there are limited linkages east and west from Clare proper into Grant Township. This is due in part to the US-127 freeway on the City's eastern boundary and the S. Tobacco River on the west side. Solutions to address this lack of connectivity in the form of new vehicular and non-motorized paths should be evaluated and then action steps taken to correct these connectivity gaps.

There are also no recreational lands currently under development for the Grant Township Expansion area while new residential developments are anticipated. As the City takes new lands under its control as part of its agreement with Grant Township, it should take active steps to provide new recreational options for these residents. This can be accomplished through updates to the Zoning Ordinance to require pedestrian connectivity or inclusion of resident amenity spaces that are reserved in perpetuity.

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FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan for the City of Clare is based upon the analysis and the goals and objectives described in this plan. The Master Plan should be viewed as a general framework for development, in which a suggested arrangement of land uses and circulation is identified, leaving flexibility to accommodate changing needs and conditions. It must be recognized that the Plan represents an overall policy document and that all elements and concepts cannot be achieved in the near term, but will be realized only through continued effort and follow-through.

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use plan is defined by categories of uses (commercial, residential, recreational, industrial, etc.) that are “aspirational” as the City considers land use changes over time. In many cases, properties are already being utilized for their ideal purpose as envisioned by the plan - single family homes on land designated Single Family Residential, for example.

Where current uses do not match the future land use map, it is the intention that over time, the future land use could be considered through the appropriate zoning mechanism. This means that, for example, if a property is used as a gas station today, but is planned for High-Density Residential on the Future Land Use Map, it may make sense to rezone the property to a district that supports high housing density.

What is most important to understand about the Future Land Use Plan is that it is an attempt by the City to define its vision on a map. It does not dictate that land uses must change, or that these land use changes must be accepted if a proposal comes to the City tomorrow. With certainty, the City should use its approval standards, reasoning, and discretion (as allowed) when considering any future change in land use. The Future Land Use Plan is one piece of guidance in those decisions.

Future Land Use Categories

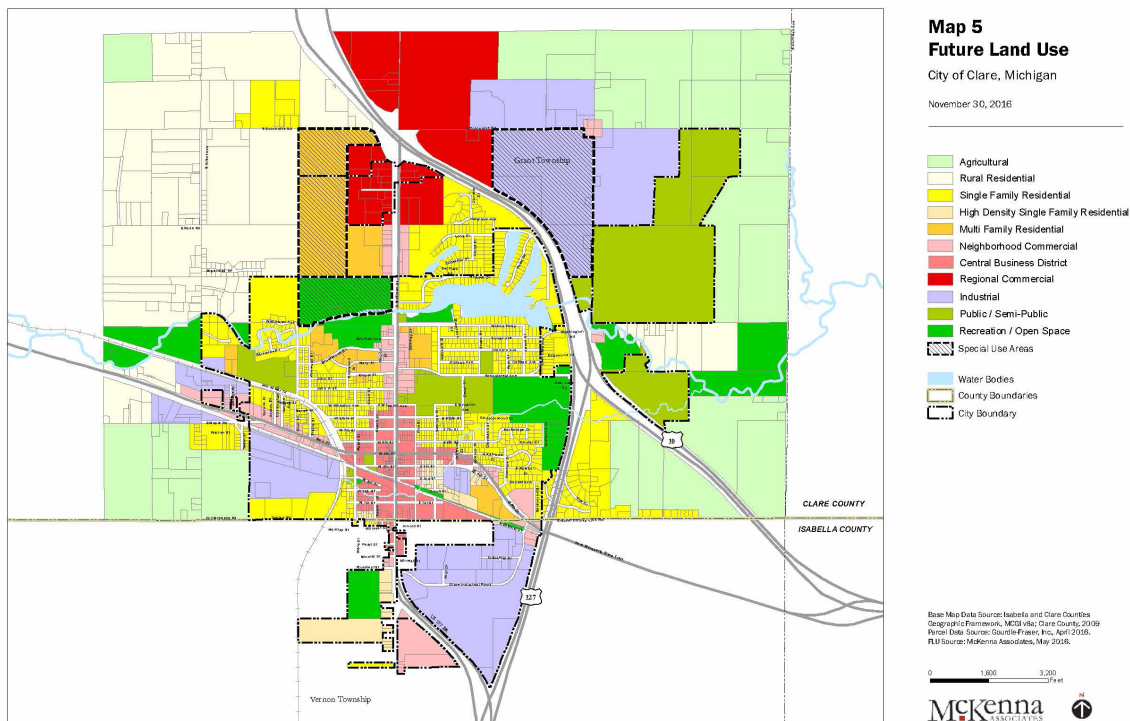
The land use categories used by this plan were defined in 2016, and are listed in the table below. The corresponding “ideal” zoning districts to implement the Future Land Use Plan are shown in the table, also. This is also known as the Zoning Plan. Per the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, a Zoning Plan is required that correlates the Future Land Use categories of the Master Plan with the zoning districts found on the current official Zoning Map for the City of Clare.

Table 16. Future Land Use: Zoning Plan

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District
Agricultural	New Zoning District
Rural Residential	New Zoning District
Single Family Residential	Residential R-1
High Density Single Family Residential	New Zoning District
Multi-Family Residential	Residential R-2
Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial C-1
Central Business District	Commercial C-1/New Zoning District
Regional Commercial	Commercial C-1 and C-2/New Zoning District
Industrial	Industrial and Industrial Park
Public/Semi-Public	Residential R-1/Residential R-2/Commercial C-1
Recreation	Residential R-1/Residential R-2

The Zoning Plan recommendations made in this Update remain generally consistent in terms of future land use categories and their paired zoning district. Five (5) new zoning districts should be considered, described below, to help provide more focused regulation on things like design standards and architectural quality and encourage flexibility in the kinds of uses the City might consider.

The previous Plan anticipated the need for some more flexibility in Zoning Districts around the boundaries of the City, so that when new land gets annexed in the zoning can accurately reflect the more rural character of those areas. This led to a recommendation to create two new zoning districts,



one for Agricultural land and one for Rural Residential land (large lot single family properties, perhaps with hobby farms or other characteristics associated with rural character).

A third residentially-focused new zoning district that was recommended was a High Density Single Family Residential District. This would allow a range of housing types, such as garden houses, attached single-family homes (townhomes), or other creative and modern styles for new housing. The creation of this district would help provide flexibility in the ordinance and perhaps allow the City to consider new market-demanded housing product where it makes sense.

Finally, two new commercial categories (one for central business district and one for regional commercial) should be considered. The creation of a Central Business District in the ordinance would allow the City to incorporate design standards, architectural standards, shared parking requirements, outdoor dining guidelines, and other standards into the ordinance that really only pertain to a historic downtown like Clare's and do not apply to the more automobile-centric businesses that are currently zoned C-1. The second new classification is a very auto-centric designation for Regional Commercial, which would be located along the main corridors and entry points into the City but have a completely different set of design criteria and needs than the downtown has.

New FLU Flex Overlay

In reviewing the Future Land Use Map, there were several areas of the City that don't seem to fit perfectly into a specific future land use category. For these areas, this Update is creating a "FLU Flex Overlay." The purpose of this designation is to recognize that depending on the sequence of development or redevelopment, the City is recognizing that some flexibility is likely going to be needed. What follows is a brief description of why each area is designated on the Future Land Use Map.

1. **Ann Arbor Trail Near Western City Limits:** This area is currently a mix of vacant property, a senior living facility, religious uses, a semi-private athletic use, and some industrial uses. At the outskirts of the overlay, there are single family uses, commercial uses, and a manufactured home park. The ideal development pattern would include religious uses, indoor/outdoor recreation uses, and

professional office uses. However, there could be circumstances where light research/technology uses prevail and can be created with substantial buffering to the nearby residential properties.

2. **Johnston Elevator and Capital Equipment, East and West sides of McEwan:** Understanding Johnston Elevator is a long-operating staple in Clare, there is no anticipation that its use will change in the near future. However, its status as a large property in close proximity to downtown means the City should define a vision for the property. The large area of land defined by the Trail to the north, 1st Street to the south, Maple St. to the west, and Pine Creek to the east is a challenge when considering future land use. The frontage along McEwan should absolutely be commercial in some form. However, the large area to the west could be successful as a higher-density residential use, a unique commercial center, or a small-scale light industrial/tech facility (or perhaps a mix incorporating a bit of each). Protection using substantive buffering should be afforded to any existing property owners to the south and west.
3. **Rainbow, 4th, and 4th Streets:** The small triangle of properties around the confluence of these streets pose a unique planning dilemma, further complicated by the substantive wetland/water body to the southeast. There are existing single-family homes and a retail business existing today, with significant traffic bysecting the area on 5th Street. These properties could be well-served by senior living or to a lesser extent, child care facilities. Both use types are low impact to protect the nearby homes but tend to need high visibility and road frontage typical of more commercial uses. However, these parcels could also be used for townhomes or garden apartments, as the location is within walking distance to downtown.
4. **McEwan / Shamrock Lake / Tobacco River:** There is an area on the map along McEwan that is an obvious gap between neighborhood commercial planned uses to the south closer to downtown and commercial uses to the north heading towards the freeway. Elsewhere in this plan, the City desires to “bridge the gap” between the two so the stretch feels cohesive. As a transition, the properties in this area could function as professional or medical offices just as easily as it could a small hotel to support the Ranch on the west side of the road. Alternately, some modern townhouses or a beer garden could benefit from the proximity to the lake/river.

Future Redevelopment Areas

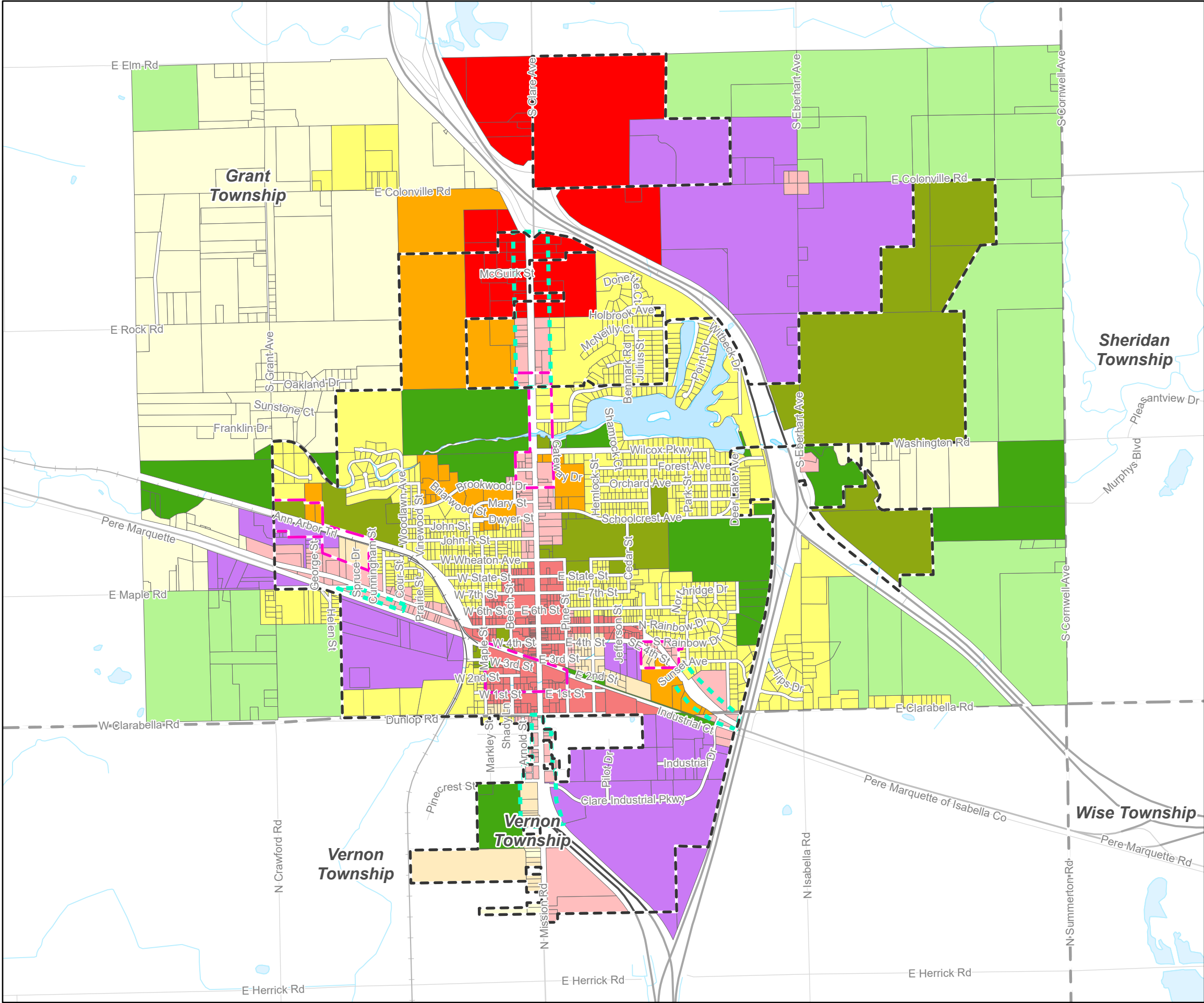
This plan builds upon the foundational future land use plan from 2016 by identifying priority redevelopment areas that have the potential to make substantial impact to the City of Clare, both to the properties and those adjacent as well as the City as a whole. These areas were identified by the public in the engagement process or by staff. Improvements may be as simple as aesthetic upgrades, but could be more complex real estate and development planning projects or substantial environmental cleanup and re-purposing.

Four (4) of the areas identified as highest-impact potential redevelopment sites are noted on the future land use map and further described in detail following the Future Land Use Map. Each future redevelopment area includes a brief introduction and a description of what the area means to the City, identification of the barriers for development, the desired land development pattern, and intermediate steps that could be undertaken to make immediate impact.

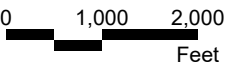
Future Land Use Map

City of Clare, Michigan

June 2, 2022 - DRAFT



- Legend**
- Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single Family Residential
 - High Density Single Family Residential
 - Multi Family Residential
 - Neighborhood Commercial
 - Central Business District
 - Regional Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Public / Semi-Public
 - Recreation / Open Space
 - Priority Redevelopment Areas
 - FLU Flex Overlay
 - Water Bodies
 - Roads
 - Railroads
 - City of Clare Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: City of Clare. McKenna 2022.



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Redevelopment Area: 5th Street at Eastern City Border

5th Street, also known as the Business 10 connector between Farwell and Coleman (and beyond) is one of the main east/west arterial roads in the City. Vehicles traveling westbound entering the City are today welcomed to an open, indistinct view with little vegetation along the road and no “welcome” feature to indicate the traveler has entered the City.

Uses along the road include a car dealership and entrance to a single-family subdivision on the north side, along with a gas station, small manufactured home strip, and medical facility on the south side.



Short-Term Improvements

- Install signage at the corner of 5th and Industrial Drive to indicate there is a connection to the Pere-Marquette Trail;
- Install street trees along entire stretch;
- Install “welcome” signage, such as a Clare-branded monument sign near the overpass;
- Enforce blight and property clean-up requirements on properties that have fallen into disrepair.



Desired Land Uses and Character

- Retail on the south side that complements the Pere-Marquette Trail, such as ice cream parlor, beer garden, or bike shop;
- Mid- or high-density housing options, such as duplex, quadplex, townhomes, or garden apartments;
- Sidewalk/pathway connections on all frontages to connect to Trail;
- Increased standards for landscaping, particularly along road frontages.



Redevelopment Area: Business 127 (N McEwan / N Mission) - Traffic Circle to Dunlop St.

The southern entrance to the City, the traffic circle where N Mission, the Business 127 offramp, and N McEwan meet, marks the beginning of a stretch of retail, gas station, motel, and other various uses line both sides of the road. The 3-lane road is wide open, with little sense of enclosure because there are no street trees and very few monument signs bringing one's viewline down the road.

The traffic circle itself is nicely landscaped, with shrubs on the island and along all sides of the road, supplemented with tree plantings on the west side. There is an opportunity to continue this aesthetic improvement onto private property in the stretch. For instance, Tice's is a regionally-recognized farm market that sells plants and garden materials - it is a natural tie-in to display vegetation along the road rather than bagged supplies. As improvements are made to the properties, landscaping and improved signage are low-hanging fruit for improving aesthetics and encouraging re-investment.



Short-Term Improvements

- Introduce sign standards for properties along this stretch to encourage modernizing signage (Consider sign grant program to encourage updates);
- Remove product displays from front yards;
- Fill in sidewalk network gaps;
- Enforce blight and property clean-up requirements on properties that have fallen into disrepair.



Desired Land Uses and Character

- Neighborhood-scale commercial and offices, including small grocers, EV charging stations, realtor, or similar;
- Buildings placed up near the road to increase the visibility and to provide a more intimate scale for passers-by;
- Shared driveways where applicable to avoid driving conflict as vacant land fills;
- Increased standards for landscaping and signage, particularly along road frontages.



Redevelopment Area: Business 127 (N McEwan) - US127 Interchange to Witbeck Dr.

N McEwan is a 5-lane road on the north side of downtown that has the distinction of being the most heavily used interchange commercial area of the City. Traffic abounds, making navigation difficult particularly during the warm season when many vacationers are coming through the City. There are many driveways along the stretch, adding to the potential confusion.

Along this stretch is a meandering municipal boundary; it is likely that the City will eventually annex properties due to the availability of municipal water and sewer service in the area, to the future land use plan anticipates Regional and Neighborhood Commercial along this stretch regardless of jurisdiction. More growth and infill development will add stress to the road, so coordination with the Road Commission and MDOT will be paramount.

Sidewalk only exists on the west side of the road, so as more development occurs on the east side some accommodations are likely needed for non-motorized traffic in this area.

Short-Term Improvements

- Begin planning for traffic signals and pedestrian crossings, as feasible;
- Introduce frequent and regularly-spaced street trees and light poles to help with traffic calming;
- Enact Access Management standards in the ordinance to minimize curb cuts with new development;
- Enforce road safety standards, such as driveway improvements where necessary.

Desired Land Uses and Character

- Continue to attract modern, high-quality highway-compatible retail at the north end and neighborhood-scale commercial and small multi-family developments towards the south end near Witbeck.
- Shared driveways where applicable to avoid driving conflict as vacant land fills;
- Coordination with road owners to consider boulevard or other options to increase green space and minimize left-turn conflict between vehicles.



Redevelopment Area: Main Street Superfund Site

Located on west of downtown between Main Street and Pioneer Parkway, the Superfund site is a contaminated property in the City that remains in an undevelopable condition. It is characterized by a chain-link fence, open lawn, and testing equipment coming up from the ground across the property.

While there is nothing particularly offensive about the condition of the property, it does stick out as vacant when compared to the industrial users to the south and small retail and office on the north side of Main Street.

This site could hold potential for a minimally intrusive adaptive reuse, such as for a solar energy collection facility. Any consideration of such a use, or any use on the property, would require the cooperation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and potentially the original property owner.

Short-Term Improvements

- Updates to modernize the City signage at the northwest corner of the facility, including the possibility of an electronic sign for community engagement;
- Continued maintenance of the fence and lawn;
- Potential for tree and shrub plantings on the Main Street side of the property to minimize the appearance of the barbed-wire fence.

Desired Land Uses and Character

- Uses that do not need full remediation of the site are most desirable to lower the bar for reuse;
- Solar or other “innovation” use would be a symbolic transition away from a designated hazard site.





GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives for future land development and preservation were re-established with the City's 2016 Master Plan. The Planning Commission has reviewed the goals and objectives, along with the supporting Policies, and have found them to be largely consistent with current planning efforts. Therefore, the pages that follow are intended to restate the intended path for development and land use policy of the City from the previous plan.

General Planning and Development Goals

To guide, plan, and accommodate future growth and development in a manner that:

- Respects the traditional, historic, and small town character of the City.
- Promotes an efficient and well ordered land use pattern.
- Economizes community facilities with sustainable development.
- Respects natural environmental features.
- Promotes local business.
- Supports the friendly, family oriented atmosphere of the City.
- Is fiscally responsible and addresses the needs of a range of household income levels.

Objectives

1. Accommodate future growth within Clare and the adjacent Grant Township while maintaining an appropriate and compatible scale, use, intensity, and purpose for the additional growth.
2. Encourage land use decisions that will reinforce a sense of community.
3. Encourage the preservation of unique and/or historical features.
4. Protect important natural features in and adjacent to the community.
5. Encourage the on-going maintenance and improvement of properties, buildings, and public facilities and services.
6. Encourage the reuse of older buildings as an alternative to new construction.
7. Encourage development that will support and complement existing infrastructure to ensure the greatest efficiency in infrastructure use.

Policies:

1. Reference the Master Plan for making planning decisions and for recommending priorities for long-range capital improvement programming.
2. Review the Master Plan annually and formulate updates to goals, objectives, and policies as needed.
3. Amend the City Zoning Ordinance as necessary to implement the recommendations made in the Master Plan including modifications to existing districts and creation of Agricultural, Rural Residential, High Density Residential, Regional Commercial, and Central Business zoning classifications.
4. Decide to eliminate nonconforming, incompatible structures and uses to permit more appropriate uses when possible.
5. Identify a grant writer to pursue funding sources to meet the above objectives.
6. Continue to encourage citizen participation and involvement in all facets of City of Clare community life.
7. Establish beautification programs to reward property stewardship.
8. Develop programs to address the need for a safe and secure City.

To work cooperatively with adjacent Townships and planning related entities to maintain a mutually beneficial arrangement for area development and for the provision of services in a manner that:

- Respects the goals and objectives of all parties involved.
- Creates new development opportunities.
- Promotes efficient use of and improvement to the infrastructure and services.
- Enhances the economic viability of the area.

Objectives:

1. Establish open communication networks with adjacent Townships and planning entities to establish growth boundaries.
2. Implement techniques to share economic development success with adjacent Townships.
3. Investigate alternative methods to economic growth with the adjacent Townships.
4. Pursue funding from the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Clare School District and other sources to provide and improve facilities.
5. Implement the 2008 Urban Cooperation Agreement with Grant Township in a manner that directs new construction and development in accordance with the current Master Plan.

Policies:

1. Distribute the Master Plan to adjacent Townships and planning entities to clarify the goals and objectives of the City of Clare.
2. Dedicate staff resources to meetings with adjacent Townships and planning entities.
3. Dedicate staff resources or City funding to the investigation of alternative economic growth ideas such as seeking the assistance and funding available through Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies.

Single Family Residential Development Goals

To reinforce the single family character and integrity of the neighborhoods in the City in a manner that:

- Maintains the current housing stock.
- Ensures the continued, long-term viability of the residential areas.
- Plans for a variety of new residences to meet the needs of current and future residents.
- Provides new housing that is sensitive to its environment.

Objectives:

1. Encourage owner-occupied residential dwellings in all single family residential neighborhoods.
2. Promote small town character by preserving and protecting historic homes.
3. Maintain and improve the economic value of all residential areas by monitoring and encouraging reinvestment in single family housing areas, especially in blighted and low owner-occupied areas.
4. Encourage new residential development that provides diverse housing options like detached condominiums and cluster housing while maintaining current single family densities.
5. Encourage new residential development that complements the character of the existing neighborhoods with high standards of housing design and construction.
6. Encourage the development of new residential neighborhoods that respect the natural environmental features of the subject properties.
7. Encourage new development with access to community amenities.
3. Establish housing assistance programs and investigate financial alternatives to provide the means for reinvestment in and the refurbishing of existing residential housing.
4. Discourage the conversion of single family dwellings to multiple family housing.
5. Control the expansion of existing and proposed nonresidential uses which are adjacent to residential areas and require a buffer separation between commercial expansion and residential areas with open space, greenbelts, structures and other buffers as needed.
6. Provide for a range of residential land use densities and housing types to meet the needs of the City's population.
7. Require the layout of new residential developments to be logical extensions of existing neighborhoods. This applies to lot layout, road and sidewalk extensions, and open space plans.
8. Encourage higher density housing on lands that have or are planned to have the road and utility capacity to support such development.
9. Modify the Zoning Ordinance to require new development to provide the open space and other infrastructure and amenity improvements necessary for the development of quality residential neighborhoods.
10. Institute new rental housing inspection programs to address the existing high rate of rental housing and to ensure the public health and safety of the community while combating blight and vacant homes in the City's residential districts.
11. Encourage the incorporation of existing vegetation and other natural features into the design of new residential developments.

Policies:

1. Pursue historic preservation mechanisms and do not allow further commercial encroachment into established residential areas.
2. Enforce existing codes to address neighborhood blight, such as parking on lawns, litter control, and run-down houses.

Multiple Family Residential Development Goals

To recognize that multiple family housing serves as an important housing choice for the community and ensure that the multiple family housing should:

- Satisfies the needs of people with different income levels.
- Satisfies the needs of people with different lifestyles.
- Addresses the needs of the elderly population.

Objectives

1. Provide the appropriate balance of multiple family residential densities such as mixed use buildings, lofts, attached condominiums, manufactured housing, retirement villages, nursing homes, and apartments in Clare.
2. Prevent the encroachment of multiple family residential uses into existing single family neighborhoods.
3. Enhance the quality of existing multiple-family developments.
4. Support the construction of a variety of senior housing developments for differing needs and incomes.

Policies:

1. Modify the Zoning Map to limit multiple family residential developments to areas currently existing and master planned for such use and where they act as buffers between lower density single family residential and higher intensity land uses.
2. Promote investment in site improvements for existing multiple family dwellings.
3. Require the provision of adequate infrastructure like sidewalks and amenities for new multiple family developments.
4. Establish provisions to require that new multiple family developments be sensitive to the environmental features of the site.
5. Aggressively adopt codes to address multiple family area blight such as building maintenance and litter control.

General and Downtown Commercial Development Goals

To ensure a sustainable commercial environment for businesses within the City in a manner that:

- Effectively and efficiently serves the needs and desires of the City of Clare residents.
- Maintains the existing commercial base.
- Strengthens the City's tax and employment base.
- Respects the historic character of Downtown Clare.

Objectives:

1. Provide opportunities for future retail, office, restaurant, and entertainment developments in Downtown Clare so that it can flourish as the commercial focus of the City.
2. Limit strip commercial development from occurring along the major roadways outside of Downtown Clare while encouraging new Regional Commercial to locate near the intersection of US-127/McEwan/Colonville Road.
3. Encourage the adjacent Townships to limit their commercial districts or to develop special commercial districts that would not compete with either Downtown Clare or the emerging north-end commercial district.
4. Ensure high quality commercial architecture, signage, and landscaping that is compatible with the established character of Clare.
5. Support and encourage compatible mixed-use development in the downtown and near the downtown area.
6. Encourage preservation and restoration of unique downtown buildings to enhance the historical character of the City.
7. Provide additional residential dwellings in the downtown area including upstairs residential lofts and new mixed-use buildings.
8. Attract residents and visitors to the downtown area.
9. Maintain and improve relations between business owners and the City government.

Policies:

1. Provide reasonable area for commercial expansion of the Central Business District.
2. Encourage the redevelopment of abandoned or neglected commercial properties in commercial areas such as conversion of the second story floors in the commercial buildings to residential flats.
3. Enforce sound land use and zoning policies, which control the expansion of strip commercial and the unplanned location of isolated commercial activities.
4. Develop and implement appropriate design standards and regulations for future development in Downtown Clare, including architectural standards, lighting, and signage standards.
5. Maintain and improve the enforcement of building codes and ordinances for existing and future commercial development.

Industrial Development Goals

To encourage the type of research and light industrial use that:

- Makes a positive contribution to the local tax base.
- Provides local jobs.
- Respects and enhances the established character of the community.

Objectives:

1. Provide opportunities for Clare to flourish as a center for high technology research and light industrial activity.
2. Promote industrial uses that are environmentally clean, primarily research oriented, or light industrial.
3. Promote the compatibility of industrial uses with adjacent uses and ensure proper buffering between the industrial and less intensive adjacent uses.
4. Ensure that the architecture, landscaping, and signage associated with industrial establishments is attractive and compatible with the established character of the City.
5. Emphasize access control and sensitive site design for all industrial development.
6. Redevelop any potential Brownfield sites.

Policies:

1. Actively solicit high technology industrial development using a comprehensive development package addressing developer concerns.
2. Implement policies that require industrial uses that are located near existing residences to provide landscaping and other elements to minimize any potential conflict between the uses.
3. When expansion becomes necessary, provide land use opportunities for an additional or expanded industrial park.
4. Seek funding for the redevelopment of any Brownfield sites from EGLE.
5. Seek assistance and funding from the Federal, State, Regional, and Local sources for economic development.

Transportation and Circulation Goals

To provide and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system that:

- Promotes accessibility throughout the community.
- Accommodates the vehicular transportation needs of Clare.
- Encourages the development of a multi-modal transportation system, including non-motorized travel throughout the community.

Objectives:

1. Establish a transportation network that addresses the needs of Clare and the adjacent Townships.
2. Maintain the existing traditional grid pattern for future streets.
3. Recognize the need for alternative forms of circulation, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and encourage non-motorized trail development.
4. Discourage fast moving traffic through the downtown area and redirect truck traffic around the downtown through a truck bypass.
5. Provide comfortable, safe pedestrian movement throughout Clare and particularly in the downtown.
6. Improve the function and appearance of local streets.
7. Encourage the implementation of shared parking facilities along US-10 and US-127.

Policies:

1. Coordinate motorized transportation movement with the adjacent Townships, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the County Road Commissions, including a possible truck route around Downtown Clare.
2. Coordinate non-motorized bicycle and pedestrian transportation movements with the adjacent Townships, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the County Road Commissions, rail trail supporters, the Clare Public School Board, and the City to complete the extensive network envisioned for Clare.
3. Research and implement traffic calming measures for implementation in Downtown Clare.
4. Develop and improve pedestrian walks, where possible, to link uses such as shopping, offices, and residential areas to parks, open spaces, and activity centers.
5. Actively support the development of new regional pathways within the Clare area and ensure that the City becomes a hub for this emerging regional path network.
6. Evaluate diagonal parking on McEwan Street in the center of the Downtown with a “road diet” from four to three lanes while adding a center turn lane and evaluate the installation of parallel parking for one side of Fifth Street in the Downtown.

Community and Recreational Facilities Goals

To provide a high level of quality, responsive services to City taxpayers in a manner that:

- Maintains current services and facilities through sound operation and efficient delivery practices.
- Improves and expands upon a range of services to support future population growth in a planned, effective manner.
- Provides adequate community recreation and park opportunities for all residents of the City.

Objectives:

1. Maintain fiscal responsibility with regard to the maintenance and expansion of community facilities.
2. Maximize the efficient use of existing community facilities and encourage the addition to or reuse of community facilities in the downtown, which are consistent with the City's plan.
3. Investigate new land locations for future community facilities as opportunities arise.
4. Encourage the provision of all utilities with new construction by the developer.
5. Complete pedestrian and bicycle linkages between Clare's parks to assure a cohesive, linear open space and recreation system that is accessible to all residential neighborhoods.
6. Maintain a cooperative working agreement with surrounding communities, Townships, and entities for the maximum efficiency of existing and future facilities.
7. Promote strong Police, Fire, Public Services, and Parks and Recreation Departments.
8. Promote an intelligent, creative public educational system that addresses the needs of the community.
9. Create year-round recreation and cultural center that houses indoor recreation facilities that includes a performing arts space.

Policies:

1. Prepare and annually update a comprehensive capital improvements plan for City facilities and major equipment expenditures.
2. Require that adequate public infrastructure be in place prior to the initiation of any new residential, commercial, or industrial land development, including road connections and sidewalks, as applicable.
3. Promote long term beautification of the City, and specifically the park system, with an effective maintenance and litter policy.
4. Improve the quality of existing facilities with equipment updates.
5. Ensure the City's Recreation Master Plan is updated as required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to maintain eligibility for grant funds.
6. Implement the recommendations of the City's Recreation Master Plan by actively pursuing grant opportunities.
7. Coordinate recreation program development and encourage cooperative use, development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities between the City, Township, and Clare schools.
8. Provide the mechanism to complete the missing segment of the rails-to-trails linkage through Clare.

Lake and Environment Goals

To provide for the protection and balanced use of the City's natural resources and environment in a manner that:

- Supports local property values.
- Maintains the natural beauty and character of the area.
- Addresses the ecology of the area in a sensitive manner.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of vegetation and trees while promoting the formation of an urban canopy to augment the City's overall character.
2. Coordinate planning efforts with the adjacent Townships to protect the Shamrock Lake, the South Tobacco River, and groundwater water quality.
3. Maintain and enhance the scenic value of Shamrock Lake and the South Tobacco River.
4. Promote responsible environmental practices in the community.
5. Encourage clustered residential development to preserve open space and viable agricultural areas.
6. Continue to encourage environmentally safe and cost-effective solid waste management systems, which include recycling, composting, and other techniques which may further reduce the City's waste stream.
7. Preserve open space and recreational land where significant natural features and active farm land exists.

Policies:

1. Require high quality landscaping for all developments.
2. Provide City administrative support to identify potential funding sources for the environmental de-siltation clean up of Lake Shamrock and assist with project implementation.
3. Require the preservation of lake viewsheds for all new construction along Lake Shamrock's shoreline.
4. Review all site development for control of runoff and minimization of erosion.
5. Maintain and improve open space along the lakefront.
6. Educate City residents about the ecology of inland lakes and streams and how various lake uses may affect surface water and groundwater environmental quality.
7. Work with the adjacent Townships and other entities to address environmental issues such as storm water drainage, runoff, and surface and groundwater quality related issues.



IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is what makes any plan come to life, turning simple goals and objectives into action that impacts the community. But where do we, as a community, start? This section of the plan aims to provide the boost necessary to push progress first by defining Recommendations that will accomplish the objectives stated in the previous section. Next, a time frame and responsibility are defined for each, so that there is some accountability to the plan. Finally, a new addition to the plan in this update, Action Steps for many of the Recommendations. The Action Steps are baby steps intended to “get the ball rolling” - sometimes just getting started is enough to inspire others to join in.

Accomplished and Recurring Implementation Actions

While the City has begun action on many of the implementation actions from the last plan, several are worth noting which have been accomplished (or are in the final stages, like dredging Lake Shamrock). Others, such as the Master Plan and Parks and Rec Plan updates, are recurring updates based on either compliance with State Acts or grant requirements. It is important to acknowledge the work that has been done to date, and therefore these items have been pulled out of the full list for recognition of progress:

- Distribute this Master Plan to adjacent Counties, Townships, municipalities and agencies.
- Confirm strategies for Master Plan implementation.
- Adoption of the new Master Plan officially.
- Prepare, annually update and adopt a comprehensive capital improvements plan for City facilities and major equipment expenditures.
- Dedicate City staff resources to Township meetings and planning entities to maintain open communication.
- Review Master Land Use Plan and update if necessary.
- Update Parks and Recreation Plan.
- Rezone the necessary parcels and adopt the overlay districts to implement the Future Land Use Plan.
- Assist property owners in securing funding to dredge Lake Shamrock.

Ongoing and Yet-to-be-started Implementation Goals

Aside from the items that have already been accomplished, many others have been started or are on the horizon. The list below includes outstanding items identified for implementation in 2015, many of which have been started and are well underway, others which have not yet gained traction. Regardless of their status, the Planning Commission has identified successes and barriers to success for many of the implementation recommendations and reevaluated each for priority level and time frame by which to accomplish each.

Supplementing the list is a new column, titled “2022 Recommended Action Steps.” The recommendations in this column are intended to kick-start action or create more progress.

KEY

- A = Administration
- CC = City Commission
- COC = Chamber of Commerce
- CCAC = Clare County Arts Council
- DBG = Downtown Business Group,
- DDA = Downtown Development Authority Board
- PC = Planning Commission

Public Policy, Administrative Action and Other Improvements

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Support the Downtown District, the DDA, and its programs.	High	Ongoing	PC, CC, A	Ongoing	Perform analysis to ensure permitted land uses reflect desired DDA development patterns
Joint meeting to discuss needs that can be addressed by ordinance / site plan review standards	High	< 3 months	PC, CC, A		
Reflect façade improvement vision in ordinance updates for architectural control	High	< 6 months	PC, CC		
Establish rental inspection program to biannually inspect all residential rentals.	High	Within 6 months	CC, A	Not started	Identify funding, even if the amount is small
Start small - for example, rental inspections could be required in the Central Business District. Or only address the top 5-10 issues in the first year	High	< 3 months	CC, A		
Establish rental rehab grant/loan program to provide funding to rehab rental properties.	High	Within 6 months	CC, A	Not started	Determine feasibility of CDBG funds being allocated to Minor Home Repair program
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.	High	Within one year	CC, A	Ongoing	Review policies/ordinances of "model communities"
Hold engagement sessions with property owners and developers to get design and implementation input	High	6 months - 2 years	PC, CC, A		
Prepare policy document for adoption	High	< 1 year	CC, A		
Adopt Zoning Ordinance regulation for new projects to incorporate policy	High	< 18 months and ongoing	PC, CC, A		
Complete bike welcome center at the train depot and implement the western connection in town for the Pere Marquette rail trail.	High	6 months - 2 years	PC, CC, A	Ongoing	

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Upgrade code enforcement program.	High	Within one year	CC, A	Ongoing	Prepare community for added enforcement; create "one-pager" about the intent and rationale
Provide support to Building Inspector through funding and time resources	Medium	Ongoing	PC, CC, A		
Establish a committee to implement Public Realm Enhancements.	High	Within 18 months and ongoing	PC, CC, A	Not started	* Determine membership
Identify program goals/objectives	Medium	Ongoing	A		
Brainstorm funding sources	Medium	6 months - 2 years	A		
Create comprehensive Gateway plan and install improvements at identified US highway interchanges.	High	Within 18 months	A	Not started	Initiate meeting with Clare/Isabella County and/or MDOT on road and right-of-way improvements
Compile vision concepts for improvements	Medium	6 months - 2 years	A		
Identify barriers for improvements	Medium	6 months - 2 years	PC, CC, A, DDA		
Establish a grant program to enable renters to purchase their own properties.	Medium	Within 18 months	CC, A	Not started	
Identify locations for East West connections into the Grant Township Expansion Area and raise funds for creating the necessary connections.	Medium	Two years	PC, A	Not started	
Dedicate staff resources to investigating economic growth ideas (i.e., seeking assistance through the Michigan Workforce Development Agency).	Medium	6 months - 2 years	A	Ongoing	
Consider the establishment of one or more Historic Districts in residential areas.	Medium	6 months - 2 years	PC, CC	Not started	
Identify a grant writer to pursue funding sources for various projects.	Medium	6 months - 2 years	A	Ongoing	
Investigate traffic calming measures and make improvements to truck route.	High	6 months - 2 years	PC, CC, DDA	Ongoing	* Make it easier for trucks to use truck routes / disincentivize trucks from downtown

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Partner with schools and surrounding townships to build indoor recreation center.	Medium	3-5 years	CC, A	Not started	
Develop and improve pedestrian walks to link the Multiple Family areas to the Downtown community.	Medium	Ongoing	A	Ongoing	
Encourage citizen participation in community planning decisions.	Medium	Ongoing	PC, CC, A	Ongoing	

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Create or modify zoning regulations to implement Master Plan recommendations including new districts.	High	6 months	PC, CC	Ongoing	<p>Regular review of Master Plan elements - Zoning Plan and Imp. Plan - when Planning Commission agendas are light</p> <p>Assign staff tasks of updating ordinance language based on direction Imp. Plan - when Planning Commission agendas are light</p>
Assign staff tasks of updating ordinance language based on direction	High	6 months to one year	PC, CC		
Upgrade minimum landscaping, parking, performance standards and other similar zoning standards or create new regulations as needed to regulate high quality development.	High	6 months to one year	PC, CC	Ongoing	Review zoning standards based on modern uses, feedback from developers, and zoning trends

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Consider parking maximums rather than minimums to better align with environmental goals	Medium	2 years	PC, CC		
Incorporate modern amenities and services into parking ordinance - charging stations and ride-share drop-off/waiting areas	Medium	6 months - 2 years	PC, CC		
Perform a comprehensive review of the existing Zoning Ordinance.	High	6 months to 2 years	PC, CC	Ongoing - Focused updates	If budget/time constraints slow this process, consider Section-by-Section review. One section of the ordinance gets reviewed per month
High-priority changes needed should be adopted quickly	Medium	6 months to ongoing	PC, CC		
Lower priority changes can be compiled to address later	Low	3-5 years	PC, CC		
Examine, revise and create land division (Subdivision, Condominium etc.) regulations as necessary to implement the Master Plan.	Medium	6 months to 2 years	PC, CC	Not started	
Create Architectural Design Standards for the Central Business District in ordinance format.	Medium	6 months to 2 years	PC, CC, DDA	Not started	
Include Future Land Use Considerations as criteria to be evaluated in a rezoning.	Medium	6 months to ongoing	PC, CC	Ongoing	
Create Architectural Design Guidelines for the remaining areas outside of the CBD of the City.	Low	3-5 years	PC, CC	Not started	

Natural Features and Environmental Considerations

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Implement an urban forestry program.	High	6 months to one year	CC, PC, A	Not started	Identify a model program
Identify funding for inventorying trees in public rights-of-way	Medium	1-2 years	PC, A		
Review current tree preservation ordinance to ensure replacement standards are up to expectations	Medium	1-2 years	PC, CC, A		
Develop and enforce a comprehensive storm water management program.	Medium	1-2 years	PC, A	Not started	
Encourage incorporation of existing vegetation and other natural features into the design of new developments.	Medium	2-3 years	PC, A	Not started	Establish and enforce preservation ordinances for trees and natural features, like buffering setbacks from defined natural areas
Educate residents about lake and river ecology and how various uses may affect surface water and groundwater environmental quality.	Medium	Ongoing	PC, A	Not started	Incorporate educational signage as a requirement of site plans
Raise awareness of the benefits of green building standards among the development community, business owners, and residents of the City.	Medium	Ongoing	PC, A	Ongoing	
Adopt a Natural Features Preservation Ordinance.	Low	2-5 years	PC, CC	Not started	

Economic Development

Recommendation	Priority	Status	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Promote activities to attract people to the Downtown businesses.	High	Ongoing	DDA	Ongoing	Create/enhance DDA's web page to allow for activity promotion (community events only) or event calendar
Outreach to regional groups to promote events in Clare	High	6 months to 2 years	DDA		
Implement the Main Street façade renovation program.	High	6 months to 2 years	DDA	Ongoing	Actively engage with property owners and business owners about the program as funding is available
Support MidMichigan Medical Center – Clare hospital and its continued growth.	High	Ongoing	A, CC	Ongoing	Remove restrictions on use and design which could impede growth
Encourage synergistic relationships between hospital and surrounding service providers (think catering, pharmacies, etc.)	High	6 months to 2 years	CC, A		
Expand the Art Alley and Art-Traction program.	High	Ongoing	A, COC, DBG, CCAC	Ongoing	Encourage interactions between local artists, schools, etc.
Implement Corridor Improvement Authority areas or other appropriate financing mechanisms for the business areas outside the Downtown core.	High	6 months to 2 years	CC	Not started	Identify common needs and rationale for districts in line with Michigan's PA 57 of 2018 guidelines
Maintain a business retention program.	Medium	Ongoing	DDA	Ongoing	

Recommendation	Priority	Status	Responsibility	Status	2022 Recommended Action Steps
Establish housing assistance programs for the elderly and needy, working with the Michigan State Housing Authority.	Medium	1-2 years	A, CC	Ongoing	Consider implementing zoning density bonuses in exchange for a percentage of "protected" housing units in a development
Monitor the Industrial Park areas to determine if expansion is necessary.	Medium	3-5 years	PC, CC, A	Ongoing	
Establish beautification programs to reward property stewardship in the business community.	Medium	1-2 years	PC, DDA, A	Not started	
Evaluate the opportunity to create a City Square in the Downtown.	Medium	3-5 years	PC, CC, A	Not started	
Evaluate the Public Safety Garage for Replacement.	Medium	3-5 years	A, CC	Ongoing	
Evaluate on-street and off-street parking needs for commercial uses.	Low	2-5 years	DDA, A	Ongoing	

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