

# **CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN**



**As adopted by the City of South Haven  
City Council on November 7, 2011**



CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN  
VAN BUREN AND ALLEGAN COUNTIES, MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION NO. 2011-53

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2011 CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN MASTER PLAN

Minutes of a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of South Haven, Van Buren and Allegan Counties, Michigan, held in the City Hall, 539 Phoenix Street, South Haven, Michigan 49090 on November 7, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. local time.

PRESENT: Arnold, Bemis, Fitzgibbon, Klavins, Kozlik Wall, Patterson, Burr

ABSENT: None

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Member Fitzgibbon and supported by Member Kozlik Wall.

WHEREAS, the City of South Haven has undertaken the development of a Master Plan to guide development; promote the public health, safety and welfare of the City; to encourage the proper use of resources; to facilitate recreation and other public improvements, and to consider the character of the City and the sustainability of particular land uses; and

WHEREAS, Section 43(3) of Public Act of 2008, commonly known as the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), gives the City Council the authority, through resolution, to determine final approval or rejection of said Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council chose to assert that right through Resolution 07-77; and

WHEREAS, during a regular meeting of the Planning Commission held on October 13, 2011 the Planning Commission adopted Resolution 11-02: A Resolution recommending adoption of the 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan to the City Council of the City of South Haven.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the City Council for the City of South Haven in accordance with the MPEA hereby adopts the Master Plan, as recommended by the Planning Commission, for future development of the City and as the basis for the City of South Haven Zoning Ordinance and directs that copies of the adopted Plan be forwarded to Van Buren and Allegan Counties, all contiguous local governments and other entities as required by Section 43(5) of the MPEA.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect upon passage by the City Council.

RECORD OF VOTE:

Yeas: Arnold, Bemis, Fitzgibbon, Klavins, Kozlik Wall, Patterson, Burr

Nays: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

  
Robert G. Burr, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the City Council at a meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2011, at which meeting a quorum was present, and that this resolution was ordered to take immediate effect. Public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Act No. 167 of the Public Acts of Michigan 1976 (MCL 15.261 *et seq*).

  
Amanda Morgan, City Clerk

PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN  
COUNTIES OF VAN BUREN AND ALLEGAN, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 11-02

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE 2011 CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN MASTER  
PLAN TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of South Haven, Allegan and Van Buren Counties, State of Michigan, held in the City Hall, 539 Phoenix Street, South Haven, Michigan, on October 13, 2011 at 7:00 PM, local time.

Present, Members: Brunvand, Miles, Paull, Soukup, Bugge and Wall

Absent, Members: Pietenpol, Gruber and Smith

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Paull and supported by Member Wall.

WHEREAS, in April, 2008 the City of South Haven Master Plan Review Committee (the "MPRC") was organized to review the 2004 South Haven Master Plan and consider changes to that document; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2010 the MPRC submitted their recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2010 the Planning Commission forwarded the completed draft Plan to City Council requesting that the Plan be released for public review; and

WHEREAS, the City Council did authorize the Planning Commission to release the draft Plan on that date; and

WHEREAS, on October 13, 2011 the Planning Commission, after distribution of and sixtythree (63) days of solicitation of comments on the draft Plan, held a public hearing on proposed changes to the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, on October 13, 2011 the Planning Commission, after considering all public comments, reviewed and approved the final draft of the Master Plan by a minimum 2/3 majority vote; and

WHEREAS, THE Planning Commission agreed on the changes proposed in Exhibit A, and

WHEREAS, attached to this Resolution as Exhibit B, and incorporated by reference, is the 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan which has been approved by the Planning Commission.



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan, attached and marked as Exhibit B, includes maps showing the planning areas used in the Plan and future land use projected in the Plan.
2. The 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan states goals and policies for the specific planning areas as well as for the downtown area, neighborhoods, intergovernmental cooperation, economic development, public services, transportation, and tourism.
3. The 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan, attached and marked as Exhibit B, describes tools for the implementation of the Plan.
4. The 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan, attached and marked as Exhibit B, is hereby approved by the Planning Commission.
5. The 2011 City of South Haven Master Plan, attached and marked as Exhibit B, shall be submitted to the City Council for its consideration and adoption.

AYES: Brunvand, Paull, Soukup, Wall, Bugge and Miles

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Marsha Ransom, Secretary

## **Acknowledgements**

The City of South Haven gratefully acknowledges the dedication and contributions of all who participated in the development of this Master Plan. The following lists those who participated in formal committees as part of the planning process. Not included in these lists, but nonetheless critical to the success of this effort, were many others who contributed by sharing technical expertise through presentations, reports, expert testimonies, and other means. And, of course, the City recognizes and is grateful for all the people of South Haven who provided feedback, attended public meetings, and otherwise supported this effort.

### **Master Plan Review Committee**

Dorothy Appleyard  
Scott Smith  
Sandra Fenske  
Council Member Suzie Fitzgibbon  
Steve Larsen  
Jim Marcoux  
Robert Black  
Art Bolt  
Teresa Cunningham  
Betty Davis

Sandra Fenske  
Pat Gaston  
Dave Paull  
Korky Ingersoll  
Jeff Haglund  
Dennis Lewis  
Jim Glas  
Dave Varney  
Lynne Cheeseman  
Dick Brunvand  
George Sass

### **Planning Commission, October, 2011**

Dick Brunvand, Chair  
Dave Paull, Vice-Chair  
Mary Lynn Bugge  
Clark Gruber  
Amanda Soukup

Vickiy Kozlik Wall  
Steve Miles  
Glenn Peitenpol  
Scott Smith

### **City Council, October, 2011**

Mayor Robert Burr  
Suzi Fitzgibbon  
Don Bemis  
Vickiy Kozlik Wall

Andy Klavins  
Jeff Arnold  
Gail Patterson



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# Chapter One: Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

The Master Plan is designed to furnish public officials, residents, and the development community with a policy and decision making guide that represents the views and desires of the citizens of the community. This plan will reflect and expand upon the Municipal Plan of 2004, which it replaces. The City of South Haven Master Plan was prepared in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended.



Within the Plan, key planning issues are identified; community character is described; goals and recommendations are outlined; existing and future land uses are described and mapped; public facility standards are established; visual character improvements are identified and specific implementation measures are recommended.

The Master Plan is comprehensive in that it includes the following three elements:

- It is long range, covering a timeline of 20 years.
- It addresses both the entire geographic area of the City and the Townships and county in which it is located.
- It addresses multiple topics that have an effect on the community's quality of life.

While it is comprehensive, the Plan is not an inflexible or static document. Rather, it serves as a guide for addressing issues which are important to the City at this point in time, while still allowing for flexibility in making decisions on individual projects, as long as they are consistent with the Plan's goals. Updating the Plan should become a priority every three to five years in order to address future issues in a consistent and proactive manner.



# Chapter One: Introduction

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The Master Plan represents the collective vision South Haven residents have for their community as evidenced through public meetings and written comments submitted during the process of updating the Master Plan. In addition, the Plan outlines a vision of what the residents of South Haven want their community to be in the future and provides a detailed strategy to achieve that vision. The 2011 Master Plan will enable South Haven to build upon these community qualities and values and to create opportunities for securing a vital and healthy future for its residents.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

South Haven citizens were involved from the outset of the planning process, and worked with City staff and the Master Plan Review Committee to develop goals and guiding principles, and to identify major issues and opportunities that face the City of South Haven.

### **Comprehensive Master Plan Review Committee**

The City of South Haven's interaction with area residents regarding the plan update created citizen interest and awareness of local issues and options. The City Planning Commission appointed a Master Plan Review Committee to oversee the planning process and work with the City's consultant, Abonmarche, to review and update the 2004 Municipal Plan. There were 22 members initially appointed to the Review Committee on April 3, 2008, and consisted of the Mayor, two councilmen, and 19 residents and business owners from the community with diverse backgrounds.

The Master Plan Review Committee was supplemented by several community participatory meetings which focused on community facilities, economic development, land use, natural environment, transportation, urban design and utility issues. The meetings involved discussion about citizens' concerns regarding growth and development in the City. This Master Plan is the result of work by the Master Plan Review



# Chapter One: Introduction

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Committee, elected officials and residents who actively participated in multiple information gathering meetings.

## **Visioning Process**

On July 17, 2008, the Master Plan Review Committee held a visioning meeting that produced broad based community input regarding the future of the City. The visioning session included written set of questions focusing on improvements that could be made throughout the City by the year 2028 and a visual exercise of locating possible improvements on large maps of the City. Results were compiled onto one map of the City of South Haven to represent areas for improvement. (**Map 1-1**)

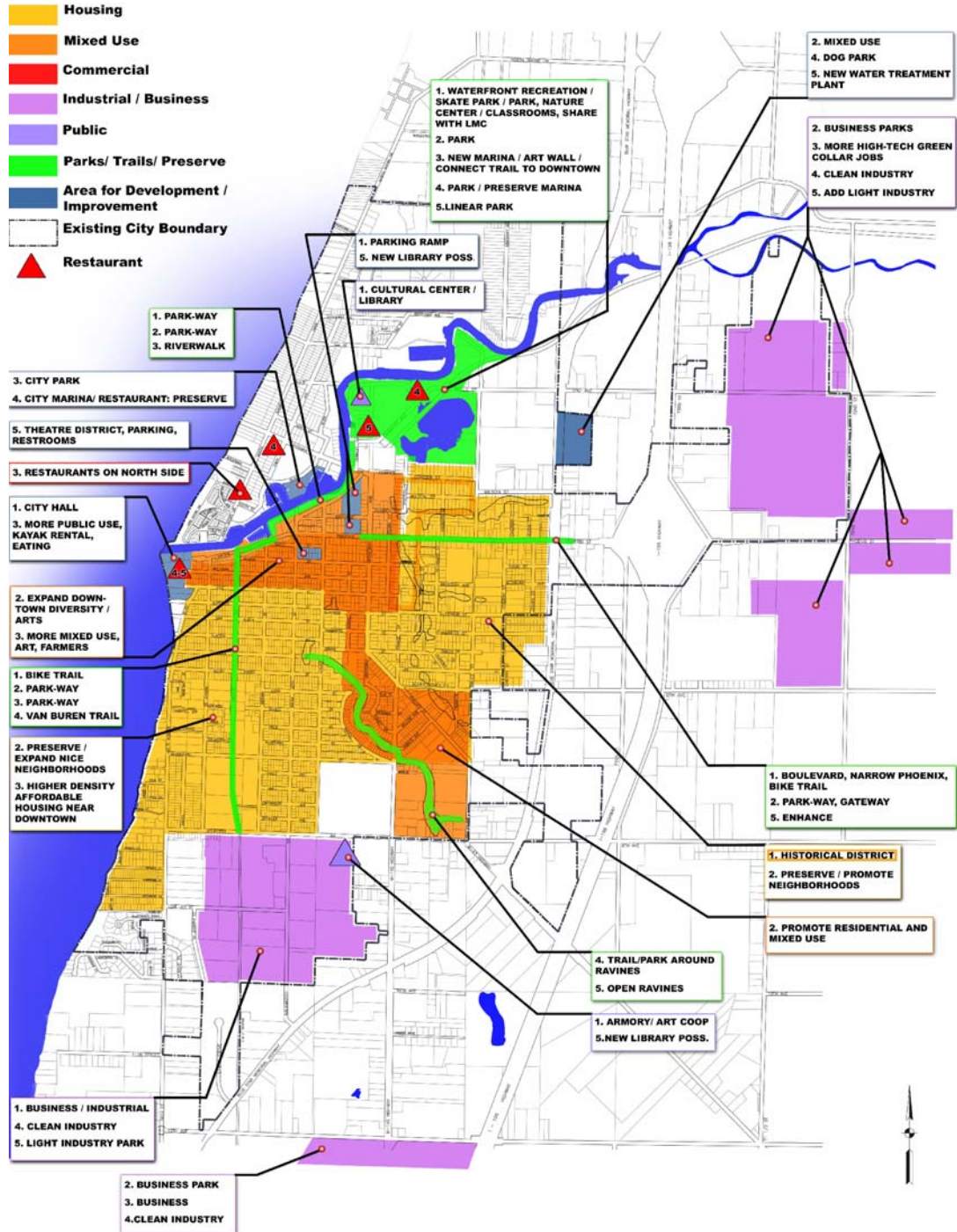
## **Public Workshops**

Two public workshops were held to gather information from the citizens of South Haven. At each meeting, the attendees identified priorities and concerns that are to be addressed within the updated Master Plan. Attendees separated into groups of approximately five to seven people to begin discussion on what specific goals, issues, or problems should be the City's priorities for the next 10 years. This process created a comprehensive list of prioritized issues and concerns which should be focused on by the Master Plan Review Committee. The results of the two public workshops provided insight into community concerns and priorities.





# CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN **Visioning Mapping Exercise Results**





# Chapter Two: Community Character

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## SMALL TOWN SETTING

The City of South Haven is a small scenic town in southwestern Michigan. It is ringed by small scale commercial and industrial development. Beyond the City is largely a rural area of farms and scattered residential dwellings. The City of South Haven is primarily residential with few buildings taller than two stories, a small number of commercial areas in strips and pockets along the major streets, and a concentrated older downtown, which is located near the waterfront of the Black River that flows into Lake Michigan. South Haven has homes and public beaches along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The City has a rich history as a small resort and fishing town and this remains the focus of its identity but it is also known as an agricultural area. South Haven hosts an annual summer Blueberry Festival, along with a well-organized farmers market.



The riverfront is lined with boat slips, sightseeing, and fishing boats. (Photo 2) The architecture of a few of the buildings reflects a nautical theme. Bed and breakfasts and other resort establishments line both sides of North Shore drive located along the Lake Michigan shoreline north of the River. (Photo 3) South Haven tends to be more of a destination resort where people stop to enjoy the amenities rather than to simply drive through.

## WATERFRONT / RESORT

The riverfront is lined with boat slips, sightseeing, and fishing boats. (Photo 2) The architecture of a few of the buildings reflects a nautical theme. Bed and breakfasts and other resort establishments line both sides of North Shore drive located along the Lake Michigan shoreline north of the River. (Photo 3) South Haven tends to be more of a destination resort where people stop to enjoy the amenities rather than to simply drive through.



Photo 2. Boats on the Black River



## Chapter Two: Community Character



Photo 3. Bed and Breakfast in the resort area

The architecture along the shoreline varies from styles of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to post World War II and contemporary. There are both large and more modest homes along both the north and south shorelines. The north segment shows a wider variety of styles reflecting more recent building activity.

The shoreline segment north of the Black River is South Haven's Lake Michigan resort area. This area includes many rental units as well as several beach access points. It is also necessary to drive to this side of the river to access the boat slips along the north side of the river. The south shoreline is more uniformly neighborhood residential with few resort properties, but there are an increasing number of homes being used for weekly rental.

### **DOWNTOWN BUSINESS / RETAIL CENTER**

There are shops, restaurants and a movie theater downtown. Most of the buildings in the central business district (CBD) are two to three stories high, and many have ornate brick facades.

Several buildings have had the original facades updated with different materials. The City Hall was constructed in 1973 and the Post Office in 1933.



## Chapter Two: Community Character

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A large parking lot is located behind the stores along Phoenix Street. From May to October a farmer's market sets up in the parking lot on Wednesdays and Saturdays to offer locally grown produce. In 2004, the municipal parking lot underwent renovations including a landscaped promenade and handicap accessible public restrooms.



Photo 5. Traffic control and amenity islands along Phoenix Street in downtown

The parking lot is also home to a pavilion which was constructed in 2006 to house a large ice skating rink in the winter months and a farmer's market in the summer and fall. The rink is operated by the Downtown Development Authority and is open from November to March. Phoenix Street was recently improved with street trees, planters, benches, traffic control islands (**Photo 5**) and a small park located across from City Hall.

face the waterfront. Generally, the backs of buildings of the CBD face the River. The CBD is approximately a quarter of a mile from Lake Michigan.

The CBD is physically separate from the waterfront and few buildings in the CBD



Photo 6: Tree Lined Neighborhood Street



# Chapter Two: Community Character

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## NEIGHBORHOODS

There are several distinct residential neighborhoods in the City of South Haven. With a few exceptions, South Haven neighborhoods are generally comprised of single-family homes on tree-lined streets laid out in a traditional pattern. **(Photo 6)** The exceptions to the tree-lined streets are the sections of smaller homes between the Elkenberg industrial park and the High School, and the north beach area where multi-family, rental, and resort developments have been recently constructed. Trees have yet to become mature within these areas.

The largest residential neighborhoods are south of the river and stretch from Lake Michigan to the Blue Star Highway. The section west of Broadway is the older neighborhood. Houses are more varied in age and style in the area east of Broadway where the street pattern does not closely follow a grid creating shorter sight lines. Many of the houses are two-stories and date from the early to mid-part of the twentieth century. It is becoming increasingly common for homes in this area to convert from year round to seasonal homes.

The shorefront neighborhoods are located both south and north of the mouth of the river. Access to the public beach passes through this neighborhood. South of these homes, there is no development on the lake side of Monroe Boulevard which establishes an unlimited view of Lake Michigan. South of this open area, there is another lakefront neighborhood. These homes are less visible from the road than other shoreline neighborhoods. The area is generally wooded, and the road is farther from the shore. Homes range from modest size to very large in this neighborhood which reflects the premium lakefront land values. A new subdivision was constructed at the south end of this area in 2003. The north beach neighborhood stretches from the mouth of the Black River north to the City limits. The southern end of this neighborhood





## Chapter Two: Community Character

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is a dense mix of resort-related rental complexes, bed and breakfasts and houses of varying size.

This neighborhood straddles North Shore Drive. It includes the homes on the hill west of Stanley Johnson Park that overlook the River and the apartments and homes north of Dyckman Avenue. Farther north along North Shore Drive from Dyckman Avenue, the neighborhood becomes less dense. Many homes on both sides of the road have broad lawns and scattered trees. This neighborhood character extends beyond the City limits and gradually becomes more wooded.

### **BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

Retail, commercial, financial and service establishments line LaGrange and Broadway Streets, both adjacent to the CBD, and along the streets southeast to the Blue Star Highway. Concentrations of commercial development are located along Phillips Street and LaGrange Street near the High School, and Alyworth Street. There are few businesses catering to the local neighborhood. Most of these establishments serve a regional clientele which makes South Haven more of an automobile dependent community. Commercial concentrations are located at the east end of Phoenix Street, along Broadway Street and Blue Star Highway. Most of this commercial development was built in the past four decades, in contrast to the character of the older part of the CBD.



Photo 7. Industrial building on I-196 Industrial Park

These establishments are typical of strip commercial areas, and often have no special character linked to South Haven.



## Chapter Two: Community Character

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Scattered commercial establishments are located along Blue Star Highway, with a majority of the adjacent land use being light industrial. The Blue Star Highway is one of the regional roads by which people enter the City of South Haven. The Blue Star Highway corridor appears dated since it was the old US 31 route between Benton



Harbor and Holland. The scale of the road right-of-way is small. Sign quality and placement is irregular and landscaping treatment is uncoordinated or non-existent. Photo 8. Industrial building on I-196 Industrial Park

The I-196 Interstate corridor is east of and parallels the Blue Star Highway east of the City. Parcels are generally large although some strip residential development is occurring. Much of this corridor is outside the City limits and is largely rural. The landscape is a mix of fields and woods. The exception is at interchange I-196 with Phoenix Street where large scale retail establishments and the I-196 Industrial Park are located. The Industrial Park includes manufacturing businesses and is a location of Lake Michigan College. (Photos 7 & 8)

South Haven also has two industrial areas in the southern end of the city. One area is located south of Aylworth on both sides of Kalamazoo Street and extends nearly to Blue Star Highway. The other is located on both sides of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, east of Blue Star Highway.



# Chapter Two: Community Character

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## NATURAL AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

Most of the City of South Haven is perched on and back from a high bluff along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The Black River winds through the City and is bordered on one or both banks by a narrow floodplain. This leaves most of the City on the top of the bluffs or on the slopes leading down to the River. See Chapter Four for more detail.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The City of South Haven mixes an image of historic charm and contemporary themes. Its historical character derives primarily from the oldest section of the CBD, and from homes built in the 1800s to the 1920s. Scattered contemporary structures such as single-family homes, multi-unit resorts and condominium developments and strip commercial visually contrast with older structures.



Specific historic structures of significance remain. These include the lighthouse, the train station and various downtown buildings. The lighthouse is an historic site that is owned and maintained by the Historical Association of South Haven. The Coast Guard Auxiliary provides boating safety and rescue services. The train station is now a party store. The tracks have been removed except to display old railroad cars. The Kal-Haven Trail enters the City from the northeast along the old railroad right-of-way. Other historic



## Chapter Two: Community Character

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structures, primarily homes, are scattered along the shoreline and in older City neighborhoods. No large concentrations of historic structures remain.

The **Michigan Maritime Museum** is unique in western Michigan. It houses permanent and changing exhibits located at their riverfront facility at the foot of the Dyckman bridge. These exhibits detail the history of maritime activities locally and in Michigan including Native American traditions, commercial fishing, commercial shipping, passenger steamship travel, boat building, the U.S. Life Saving Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard. There is also a museum store. Walk from the museum along the Harborwalk and view a series of historical markers. On the hill overlooking the harbor is the light keepers house where today the Museums Research Library is located. Sail into lake Michigan on the museums replica of an 1800s schooner 'Friends Good Will' or ride up the Black River on their 30' launch 'Lindy Lou'.

The **Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum**, located on Bailey Street, is a National Historical Site commemorating the life and work of Dr. Liberty Hyde Bailey. Dr. Bailey is considered the Father of Modern Horticulture. The museum offers exhibits and programs linking botany, horticulture, environment and everyday life.

The **Historical Association of South Haven** (HASH) promotes understanding and appreciation of South Haven's history through programs and publications. It is located in the Hartman School Building at 3255 Hubbard Street. HASH has become the guardian of the South Haven lighthouse, which is no longer needed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The **South Haven Center for the Arts** is dedicated to community enrichment through the Arts. It is housed in the old Carnegie library building at 600 Phoenix





## Chapter Two: Community Character

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Street. The center houses many exhibits and shows in their building and a variety art fairs in the community.

**Foundry Hall** is an all-ages performance venue committed to presenting a quality mix of national, regional and local entertainment to South Haven and its surrounding communities. They program all types and genres of original music and performance in two venues: the 50-seat Red Room, and the 250-seat Mainstage.

**Listiak Auditorium** is located adjacent to the South Haven High School on Elkenburg and is used for school and community theatrical activities. Listiak is the home of Our Town Players featuring performances staged by the South Haven Area Community Theater. The auditorium has seating for 500 people.



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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## INTRODUCTION

This Chapter explores demographic and economic changes that have taken place in the South Haven regional planning area and the State of Michigan over the past several decades. For the purposes of this plan, the planning area includes the City of South Haven, the adjoining Townships of Casco and South Haven, and Van Buren County (**Map 3-1**). While it is understood that the city has no planning authority over the other communities, for comparison purposes they are included throughout this chapter. The demographic and economic information provides the context for the following chapters that deal with what the community desires the South Haven Area to be like in the future and methods to reach that potential. As part of the 2011 Master Plan Update for the City of South Haven, some of the demographic information was updated from the 2004 Plan while other information was recompiled from the 2010 U.S. Census. Maps 3-2 through 3-4 show statistics at the Census Block Group Level. Census tract Block Groups boundaries are not congruent with the City boundaries, however, displaying such data at this geographic level is useful for planning the provision of public services, for targeting resources and for directing development investment.





# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE / ROLE OF THE CITY**

South Haven has experienced several transformations in its history. Prior to the nineteenth century, Native Americans lived in the area, at the confluence of what are now the Black River and Lake Michigan. They called this area "Nik-a-nong", which means beautiful sunset. Early settlers of European decent harvested lumber, and South Haven became an active lumbering town. The lumber boom ended by 1900. Tourism became popular as lumbering declined, and South Haven had a new source of prosperity. Visitors from Chicago arrived by steamer and train. They stayed at hotels and resorts in the City and enjoyed the beaches. Manufacturing took over as the major economic force by the 1950s and 1960s. Several manufacturing plants closed by 1980, about the same time the tourist industry experienced resurgence.

The tourist industry centers on the City with its concentration of beaches, accommodations, restaurants, marinas, and tourist-oriented shops. The City's Downtown Development Authority is key to the renewed effort to reinvest in the downtown. Cooperation with the surrounding Townships will also be important as the industrial, residential and commercial sectors are woven throughout the adjoining jurisdictions, and not just the City.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Understanding the demographic trends of the City of South Haven and surrounding areas is a fundamental requisite and the basis upon which analysis can be made regarding the future growth of the City. Much of the data used in this chapter is obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Whenever possible, 2010 data was used. In some cases updated data was not yet available. It is important to remember that the census



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

data reflects a snapshot of the city demographics on the day the survey was conducted.

The City of South Haven experienced a decline in population between 2000 and 2010. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the population of the City was 5,021 in 2000 and in 2010 the population was 4,403. Within the same time, South Haven Township also saw a decrease in population from 4,046 to 3,983 persons. Casco Township decreased slightly from 3,019 to 2,823 persons and the County held fairly steady with a minimal decrease from 76,263 to 76,258 persons. (Table 3-1) The 2010 population figures reveal a trend which is common in many Michigan communities and throughout the Midwest. The downturn in the economy and loss of jobs has caused many young families to leave the state in search of employment elsewhere. Add to that loss the overall aging population and the fact that birth rate in Michigan has fallen twenty-one percent in the last decade<sup>1</sup> and the drop in population becomes easier to understand.

**Table 3-1  
TOTAL POPULATION FOR THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA, 1960-2010**

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Total change 1960-2010	Percent change 1960-2010	Percent change 2000-2010
City of South Haven	6,149	6,471	5,943	5,563	5,021	4,403	(1,749)	-28.40%	-12.4%
South Haven Township	2,766	3,416	4,174	4,185	4,046	3,983	1217	30.60%	-1.5%
Casco Township	2,009	2,304	2,839	2,856	3,019	2,823	814	10.28%	-6.5%
Van Buren County	48,395	56,173	66,814	70,060	76,263	76,258	27,863	36.50%	0.0%

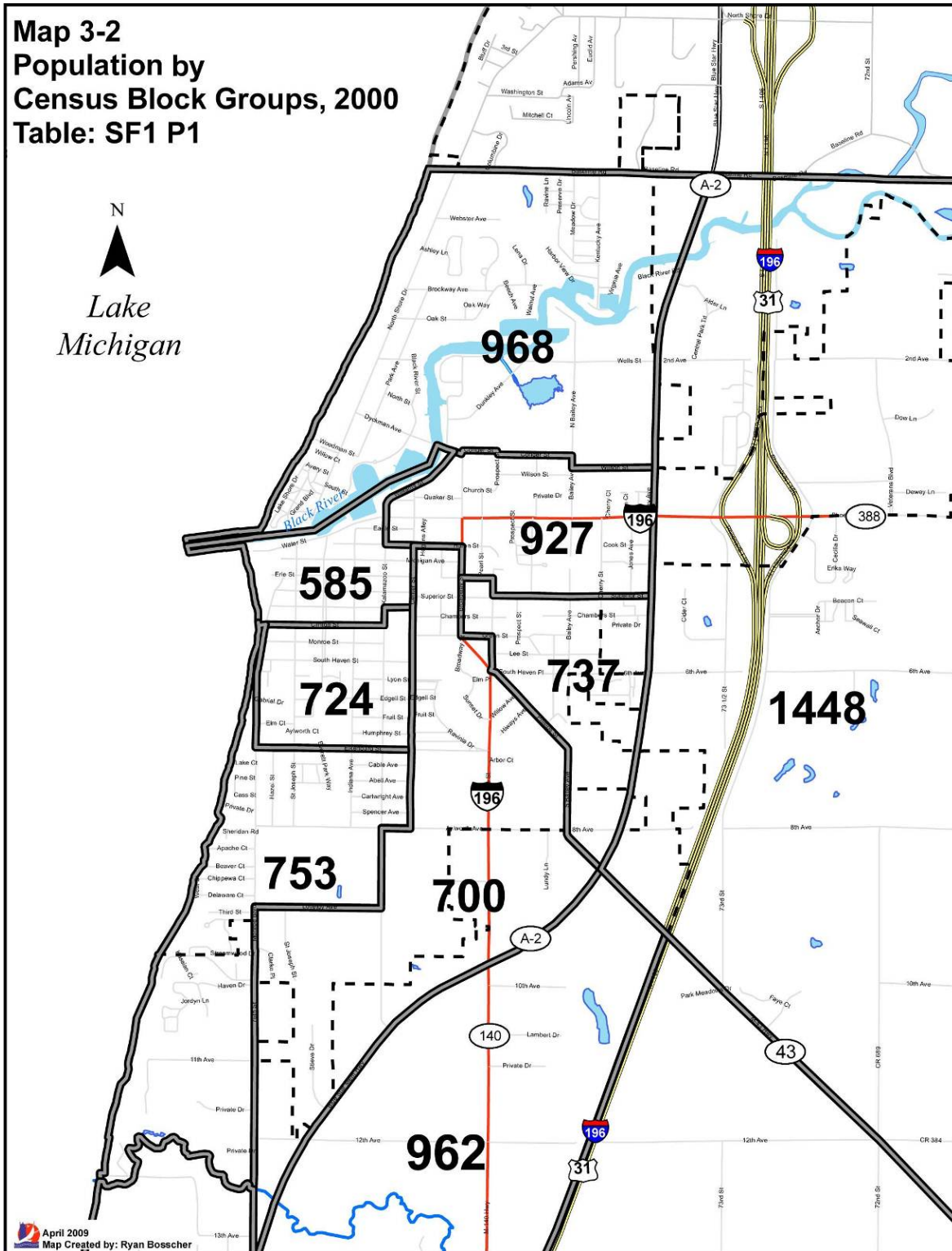
Source: *Census of Population, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960-2010*

<sup>1</sup>

Source: [http://www.mlive.com/business/index.ssf/2010/06/michigan\\_birth\\_rate\\_down\\_21\\_pe.html](http://www.mlive.com/business/index.ssf/2010/06/michigan_birth_rate_down_21_pe.html)



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions



Source: Census of Population, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1960-2000





## Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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The racial composition of the City of South Haven and the surrounding areas is fairly homogenous, with the largest race group consisting of Caucasian people. (Table 3.2) The African American population is the largest minority group in the City, with 13 percent of the population in 2010, 10 percent in South Haven Township and 3 percent in Casco Township. Four percent of the population in the City of South Haven is Hispanic, 10 percent in South Haven Township and 9 percent in Casco Township. Between 2000 and 2010, the percent of African American persons in the City remained fairly constant and the number of Hispanic persons increased slightly.

**Table 3.2**  
**RACIAL MAKEUP OF THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA AND THE STATE,**  
**2000 AND 2010**

Community	Caucasian		African American		Hispanic	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
City of South Haven	82	82	13	13	2	4
South Haven Township	82	80	13	10	5	10
Casco Township	88	90	3	3	11	9
Van Buren County	88	87	5	4	7	10
State of Michigan	80	79	14	14	3	4

*Source: Census of Population, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2010 (percentages not equaling 100% indicate a population category of Other)*

The City of South Haven, Van Buren County and Casco and South Haven Townships had a higher median age than that of the State in 2010 (Table 3.3). The median age for the State was 38.9, for the City of South Haven it was 47.7 and for Van Buren County it was 39.8. The trend toward an older median age is prompted by the aging baby boomer generation and of the drop in birth rate in the last decade. Implications of this trend include an increasing need for medical services for older persons, a less rapid growth of schools and greater economic success for businesses catering to older persons.



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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**Table 3.3**  
**MEDIAN AGE WITHIN THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA AND THE STATE,**  
**1990 - 2010**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
City of South Haven	35.3	42.1	47.7
South Haven Township	33.8	37.9	41.9
Casco Township	33.2	37.8	45.8
Van Buren County	33.3	36.6	39.8
State of Michigan	32.5	35.5	38.9

*Source: Census of Population, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2010*

Age trends are further illustrated in Table 3.4 which illustrates change in population age groups between 2000 and 2010 for the planning area. These charts show a shift in the population from a younger populace to an older community with the largest sector in the 45 to 65 age groups. In all communities shown, there is a significant decrease in the 25 to 44 age group. This group is often referred to as the “family formation” group. That is, this age group represents the sector most likely to be marrying and having children. A reduction in persons of this age often signals a future drop in the Under 18 age group.

Another notable trend in the age cohorts is the shift from the large cohort group of 25 to 44 year olds in 2000 to the 45 to 64 year age group in 2010. This is again related to the baby boomer group working its way through the population cohorts. One significance in this trend is the expectation that this age group will move into the 65 and Over group in the next census. The City will need to plan for the increased need for services, specialized housing, medical needs and other age related necessities that will arise as this group ages.

The age cohort trends seen in the City and surrounding area are common throughout Michigan and most of the nation.





# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

Table 3.4

AGE COHORTS OF THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA, 2000 AND 2010

Age Groups	City of South Haven		South Haven Township		Casco Township	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Under 5	270	238	261	258	168	141
5 to 18	1023	754	958	812	706	560
19 to 24	208	246	187	213	158	107
25 to 44	1214	843	1649	847	808	570
45 to 64	1287	1334	974	1296	811	921
65 and Over	1019	989	579	542	368	474

\* Cohorts are groups with similar characteristics, in this case, a close range in age

Source: Census of Population, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2010

The number of persons per household continued to decline in the South Haven Area as it did for the entire State of Michigan between 1990 and 2010. The City of South Haven began with the lowest number of persons per household at 2.44 and the number has now declined to 2.24. Van Buren County closed the decade with the highest number of persons per household at 2.64 in 2010. (Table 3-5) These figures are typical as the population grows older, as couples marry or have children at an older age, and as more families are headed by single parents. In many communities, single head of household families have less income, and often require affordable housing in the housing mix.

For comparison purposes, it is interesting to note that the persons per household figure for the state in 1970 was 3.10.



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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**Table 3-5**  
**NUMBER OF PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD IN THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA AND STATE, 1990 TO 2010**

<b>Community</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
City of South Haven	Van Buren	2.44	2.30	2.24
South Haven Township	Van Buren	2.56	2.43	2.45
Casco Township	Allegan	2.81	2.66	2.49
Van Buren County	-	2.76	2.56	2.64
State of Michigan	-	2.66	2.56	2.55

*Source: Census of Housing, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2010*

Compared to other communities in the Planning Area, the population density is highest for the City of South Haven, (**Table 3-6**) with a population density in the City just under 1,300 persons per square mile in 2000. Over a forty year period from 1960 to 2000, population density increased in Van Buren County and South Haven and Casco Townships and declined in the City. The 2010 Census showed a decline for the entire planning area. The decline reflects a decline in birth rate as well as the growing number of single parent homes.



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**Table 3-6  
POPULATION DENSITY (IN PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE) FOR THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA, 1960-2010**

<b>Community</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change 1960-2010</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2010</b>
City of South Haven	2,562	2,489	2,286	2,140	1,468	1,295	-49.46%	-12.4%
South Haven Township	152	187	228	229	231	228	33.33%	-1.29%
Casco Township	52	59	73	73	78	73	28.80%	-6.41%
Van Buren County	80	92	109	115	125	125	36.00%	0.00%

*Source: Census of Population, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960-2010*

The same pattern of total population and population density is evident in the change in the number of households between 2000 and 2010. The number of households decreased in the City of South Haven and South Haven Township while Van Buren County and Casco Township showed increases. (Table 3-7)

**Table 3-7  
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS FOR THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA, 1990 AND 2010**

<b>Community</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2010</b>
City of South Haven	Van Buren	2,186	2,095	1,959	-6.49%
South Haven Township	Van Buren	1,635	1,645	1,625	-1.21%
Casco Township	Allegan	1,018	1,083	1,130	4.15%
Van Buren County	-	25,402	27,982	28,928	3.27%

*Source: Census of Population, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2010*



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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## REAL PROPERTY VALUE

State Equalized Valuation (S.E.V.) is a way of attaching a value amount to all real property in a community. It is generally accepted that the SEV for a property is about one-half the market value. If all properties in the City were given an estimated market value based on the use category (eg., residential, commercial, industrial), the city SEV would be approximately one-half of that amount. SEV is a method of tracking the value of land for taxation purposes. Sharp declines in SEV often signal potential decreases in municipal revenue.

The primary real property State Equalized Valuation (S.E.V.) in the City of South Haven is residential at 80 percent. Commercial real property S.E.V. is second at 19 percent. Industrial real property S.E.V. is a distant third with 3 percent, and agricultural real property S.E.V. is at 0 percent. The proportion of the S.E.V. of different types of real property has only slightly fluctuated during recent years.

The value of real and personal property for all jurisdictions within the South Haven Planning Area increased between 1994 and 2008 with the exception of industrial and agricultural classes in South Haven Township. During that period, the largest gains were in the City of South Haven and Casco Township with total percentage increases in S.E.V. of 325.3 and 504.1 percent respectively. The only real property S.E.V. category within the Planning Area to see a decline from 1994 to 2008 not due to re-appraisal was the industrial sector within South Haven Township. This sector decreased 99.2 percent. Most of this decrease occurred between 1994 and 2008 and was a direct result of the City of South Haven annexing over 400 acres into the City primarily for industrial purposes.



## Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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During the period of 1994 to 2008, the City of South Haven and Casco Township experienced dramatic residential and industrial growth. While at the same time, South Haven Township experienced a small decline in industrial SEV land. There was also a marked increase in the SEV of agricultural land in Casco Township (287 percent). This increase indicates that a large portion of the agricultural land just outside the City has been re-appraised for its residential potential. This may encourage farmers to abandon agricultural practices on these lands and sell for largely residential purposes

In 2011, the gains and losses are less dramatic indicating a stabilization of property values. **Table 3-8** illustrates the changes in SEV for the planning area. The largest segments of change are the 33 percent drop in industrial SEV for the City of South Haven and the 47 percent increase in Casco Township in the same class.

The increase in Casco Township may indicate that a large portion of the industrial land has been re-appraised for its full potential. Agricultural lands in both South Haven Township and Casco Township also saw modest increases. This may encourage farmers within the townships to abandon agricultural practices on these lands and sell for largely residential purposes.

Overall, the City remained more steady in total real and personal SEV than the county for the period 2001 to 2011.



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**Table 3-8  
STATE EQUALIZED VALUATION (SEV) FOR THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA,  
1994, 2003, 2008 AND 2011 (In Dollars)**

	City of South Haven	South Haven Township	Casco Township	Van Buren County
<b>Residential</b>				
1994	87,638,000	46,141,750	47,516,550	726,515,553
2003	227,359,200	102,051,400	134,597,200	1,757,441,587
2008	402,465,100	183,089,700	321,222,500	2,629,923,449
2011	378,103,887	155,189,114	279,475,939	2,330,783,019
Percent Change, 2008 - 2011	-6.1%	-1.3%	-13.0%	-13.0%
<b>Industrial</b>				
1994	3,266,756	1,555,024	612,500	152,098,271
2003	10,127,200	800,000	2,606,200	221,043,798
2008	13,647,900	788,100	1,451,100	353,296,200
2011	9,385,400	685,361	2,758,175	348,893,073
Percent Change, 2008 - 2011	-33%	-0.8%	47.3%	-1.2%
<b>Commercial</b>				
1994	20,855,200	11,391,000	1,655,800	94,993,630
2003	54,956,700	14,631,300	3,689,300	182,654,592
2008	88,499,100	22,287,500	6,708,500	286,854,500
2011	88,943,839	21,078,417	6,047,083	281,293,795
Percent Change, 2008 - 2011	0.6%	-5.4%	-9.9%	-1.9%
<b>Agricultural</b>				
1994	118,100	4,480,100	9,131,198	123,516,378
2003	144,700	11,891,100	25,754,600	219,405,215
2008	0	6,773,500	38,577,500	339,902,408
2011	0	7,215,984	39,770,038	352,279,243
Percent Change, 2008 - 2011	NA	6.1%	3.0%	3.5%
<b>Total Real and Personal</b>				
1994	124,533,706	66,497,606	61,552,648	1,185,100,849
2003	320,643,700	132,491,400	170,215,100	2,601,758,027
2008	529,686,000	217,547,000	371,881,900	3,888,266,957
2011	494,663,900	NA	NA	3,313,249,132
Percent Change, 2008 - 2011	-6.6%	NA	NA	-14.8

*Source: Michigan Department of Treasury, State Tax Commission; City of South Haven Assessing Office*



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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## MARKETPLACE CONDITIONS

Reflecting the continuing role the City of South Haven plays as a resort community, the average number of condominium and multi-family units constructed from 1983 to 2008 had remained steady and averaged 15-20 units each year. Single family development had followed a similar pattern over the same time period, although at a slower rate, typically ranging between 5 to 10 units annually. From 1983 to 2008, the number of permits issued remained strong with an average of 245 per year. However, over the last few years, the number of permits issued declined, reflecting the downturn in the housing market in recent years. **(Table 3-9)** Residential permits now are primarily single family units. This is likely reflective of the overall housing market but also may indicate a saturation of the condominium market in the city. Another factor in this trend is the fact that the vacancy rate for rental properties in the city was 19.4% in 2010. This is the highest rate in the Planning Area. The next highest community is South Haven Township at 15.5%.



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**Table 3-9  
RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ACTIVITY FOR THE CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN,  
1983 - 1993 AND 1997 - 2010**

Year	Single-Family		Multi-Family
	Building Permits	New Construction	
1983	164	NA	6 new condo projects/147 units
1984	258	3	5 new condo projects/49 units
1985	184	6	1 new multi; 3 existing multi; 1 new duplex
1986	215	4	1 multi
1987	172	3	1 new multi; 1 new condo/4 units; 1 new apartment/6 units
1988	141	9	2 new condos/11 units
1989	153	3	1 new condo/20 units
1990	151	10	2 new condos/20 units
1991	94	10	NA
1992	178	12	NA
1993	167	7	1 new condo
1997	327	14	0
1998	354	22	0
1999	368	23	0
2000	354	21	1 new duplex/2 units; new condo(s)/9 units
2001	315	12	0
2002	334	17	1 new duplex/2 units; new condo(s)/48 units
2003	303	21	2 new condos/35 units
2004	372	25	8 new duplexes/16 units
2005	325	30	0
2006	262	12	1 new duplex/2 units; new condo(s)/25 units
2007	268	33	1 new duplex
2008	176	13	0
2009	145	6	0
2010	133	9	0

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census & City of South Haven, Building & Development Department*

*\* Data not available for 1994 through 1996*

The resort atmosphere, river, and beach amenities make South Haven an attractive setting for the ownership of second or seasonal homes. The 2010 Census of Housing





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revealed that the City of South Haven has 1,004 seasonal homes. This accounts for nearly one-third of the housing available. For the purposes of analyzing this data, a comparison was made between the City of South Haven and neighboring lakeshore communities with significant seasonal populations. The percentage of seasonal housing compared to overall housing units is similar in the Cities of South Haven, Saugatuck and Douglas, but is significantly higher than the Cities of Grand Haven and St. Joseph. Vacancy rates for rental units and year round homes are comparable in the cities studied with a slightly higher rate seen in Saugatuck.

Vacancy rates assist in planning for future housing need. If vacancy rates fall too low, it may signify that the community will need to plan for additional housing units, whether rental or owner-occupied. The City of South Haven has a higher rental vacancy rate (19.4%) than the state (14.2%), the Midwest (11%) and the U.S. (10%). The owner-occupied vacancy rate (7.0%) is also higher than the state (2.1%), the Midwest (2.6%) and the U.S. (2.6%) (Source: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

**Table 3-10** shows the percentage of seasonal housing units and vacancy rates for selected lakeshore cities.

Community	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units (% of total)	Vacancy Rate	
			Owner-Occupied (Year round)	Rental Units
City of South Haven	3346	1004 (30%)	7.0%	19.4%
City of Saugatuck	942	341 (36%)	6.8%	24.3%
City of Douglas	1075	348 (32%)	4.4%	19.9%
City of Grand Haven	5815	499 (9%)	4.9%	13.5%
City of St. Joseph	4795	342 (7%)	3.1%	14.2%



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The value of the housing stock from 1980 to 2000 is shown in **Table 3-11**. During that period, the housing values increased in all jurisdictions of the Planning Area with the largest increase seen in the City of South Haven. (Updated housing and rent values were not available at the time of this writing.) The number of rental units in the City dropped sharply from 1990 to 2000 but that number has increased significantly in 2010. The City of South Haven saw an additional 157 homes in the rental market while the owner occupied housing dropped from 1,496 to 1,203 units.

**Table 3-11  
NUMBER AND VALUE OF OCCUPIED HOUSING IN THE  
SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA,  
1980-2010**

	City of South Haven	South Haven Township	Casco Township	Van Buren County
<b>Owner-occupied Housing</b>				
1980 -				
# of Units	1,440	1,156	773	17,808
Median Value	\$31,500	\$34,900	\$30,200	\$33,300
1990 -				
# of Units	1,363	1,220	824	19,482
Median Value	\$50,100	\$49,600	\$50,100	\$48,000
2000 -				
# of Units	1,496	1,182	936	22,266
Median Value	\$123,200	\$83,500	\$112,500	\$90,100
2010 -				
# of Units	1,203	1,205	975	22,533
<b>Rental Housing</b>				
1980 -				
# of Units	832	349	178	5,313
Median Rent/Mo.	\$162	\$169	\$153	\$159
1990 -				
# of Units	823	415	194	5,920
Median Rent/Mo.	\$288	\$277	\$261	\$266
2000 -				
# of Units	599	463	147	5,716
Median Rent/Mo.	\$495	\$405	\$532	\$451
2010 -				
# of Units	756	420	155	6,395

*Source: Census of Housing, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980-2010*



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Commercial building activity in the City has fluctuated over the years from a high of 94 building permits in 2004 to lows in 2009 and 2010 of 25 and 22 permits respectively. In the years from 1983 to 2008, the average number of commercial permits issued annually for upgrading existing commercial facilities was sixty (60). New commercial construction continued as well but at a much slower pace, ranging between one and four units annually until 2008. (Table 3-12) The decrease in new commercial construction is due to the economic downturn in the state.

**Table 3-12**  
**BUILDING ACTIVITY FOR THE CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN,**  
**1983, 1993, AND 2003 - 2010**

Year	Commercial		Industrial	
	Building Permits	New Construction	Building Permits	New Construction
1983	44	0	4	0
1993	61	4	4	4
2003	73	3	5	2
2004	94	NA	2	NA
2005	70	NA	0	NA
2006	62	NA	1	NA
2007	51	NA	1	NA
2008	43	3	0	1
2009	25	1	0	0
2010	22	2	0	0

*Source: City of South Haven, Building & Development Department, 1983, 1993, and 2003 -2010*

Growth within the industrial sector of the City has also leveled off in recent years in both renewal and new construction. The City captured Spencer Manufacturing, and River Corporation between 2000 and 2003; and U.S. Tarp and BEI New Orleans between 2004 and 2008. The City has demonstrated its ability to effectively compete with its adjacent neighbors in the industrial market place.



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The annexation agreement established in 1994 added land to the City for industrial and commercial growth. Development in the I-196 Industrial Park includes new motels, a strip mall, and the newest campus of Lake Michigan College. The agreement also provided City sewer, water, and other utilities to adjacent Townships over a phased period, further promoting growth in the immediate area. The agreement included the following provisions:

- The participants are the City of South Haven, South Haven Charter Township and Casco Township
- The City provides water and wastewater service to the Townships
- The Townships are able to purchase capacity (up to a certain amount) in the existing water and wastewater systems of the City
- Extensions, improvements and expansions are jointly owned
- Agreements and conditions for annexation of territory to the City.

The statewide and national recession, an uncertain downtown retail base, summer traffic congestion, pockets of declining housing stock and ongoing issues between the City and surrounding Townships concerning growth and development continue to be significant.

### INCOME AND POVERTY

The following table and analysis includes trends and the most current available data relating to the economic health of individuals, households, and families in the South Haven Planning Area as of 2000. (**Table 3-13**)

The percent of families below the poverty level decreased in every jurisdiction in the planning area between 1990 and 2000. This decrease was the greatest in Casco



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Township at 9.5 percent which had only 4.3 percent of families below the poverty level in 2000. In contrast, South Haven Township only experienced a 3.6 percent decrease which had 9.1 percent of families below the poverty level in 2000. Both the City of South Haven and Van Buren County had 7.8 percent of their families below the poverty level in 2000.

The number of persons below the poverty level has decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000 in all jurisdictions in the planning area. This decrease was the greatest in Casco Township at 48.1 percent and the least in Van Buren County at 20.3 percent. However, the 2007 poverty estimates show that the poverty level has increased since 2000 in both the City of South Haven and Van Buren County at 43.9 percent and 54.5 percent respectively. This increase is reflective of a statewide and national recession which has led to higher unemployment rates. The number of persons below poverty level by Census Block Groups is shown on Map 3-3.

While 2010 local level poverty numbers are not yet available, Michigan's percentage of households at poverty level increased 6.5 percent from 2008 to 2009. This is the largest increase in the U.S. bringing Michigan's poverty rate to 16.1 percent. In 2009, the Van Buren County poverty rate was 16.6, Allegan County was 16.3 and Berrien County was 17.4; all slightly higher than the state overall.



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**Table 3-13  
INCOME AND POVERTY INDICATORS FOR THE SOUTH HAVEN PLANNING AREA,  
1990, 2000 AND 2007 est.**

	City of South Haven	South Haven Township	Casco Township	Van Buren County
<b>Median Household Income</b>				
1990	\$25,967	\$23,635	\$21,747	\$25,491
2000	\$35,885	\$35,000	\$45,043	\$39,365
% Change 1990-2000	38.2%	48.1%	107.1%	54.4%
2007*	\$36,723	\$38,479	\$56,275	\$44,195
% Change 2000-2007	2.3%	9.9%	24.9%	12.3%
<b>Per Capita Income</b>				
1990	\$14,818	\$10,520	\$10,729	\$11,233
2000	\$19,396	\$17,097	\$22,356	\$17,878
% Change 1990-2000	30.9%	62.5%	108.4%	59.2%
2007*	\$19,905	\$20,240	\$27,392	\$20,542
% Change 2000-2007	2.6%	18.4%	22.5%	14.9%
<b>Number of Persons Below Poverty Level</b>				
1990	901	721	486	10,456
2000	462	481	252	8,334
% Change 1990-2000	-48.7%	-33.3%	-48.1%	-20.3%
2007**	665	NA	NA	12,878
% Change 2000-2007	43.9%	NA	NA	54.5%
<b>Percent of Families Below Poverty Level</b>				
1990	13.7	12.7	13.8	12.0
2000	7.8	9.1	4.3	7.8
<b>Percent of Families with Female Head of Household Below the Poverty Level</b>				
1990	40.7	34.9	53.7	40.7
2000	27.5	34.7	14.1	24.5

Source: *Census of Housing and Census of Population, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000*

\* The 2007 median household income and per capita income data was obtained from [www.bestplaces.com](http://www.bestplaces.com).

\*\* The 2007 number of persons below poverty level data was obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.



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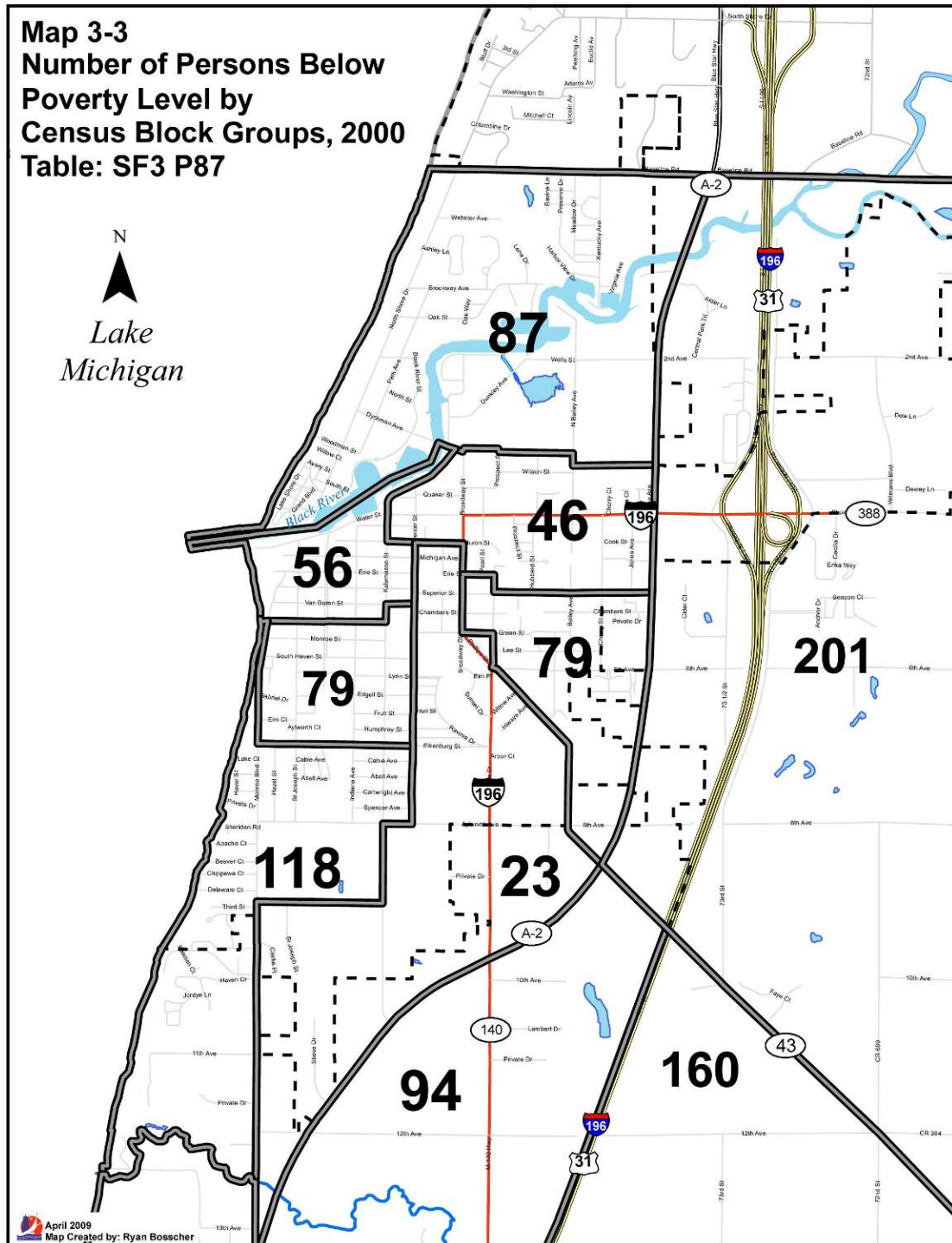
There is a wide range in the percentage of families with a female head of household below the poverty level within the South Haven Planning Area. South Haven Township had the highest percentage in 2000 at 34.7, which decreased only 0.2 percent from 1990. Casco Township had the lowest percentage in 2000 at 14.1 which decreased 39.6 percent from 1990. The City of South Haven and Van Buren County had 27.5 and 24.5 percent respectively in 2000 and decreased in both jurisdictions from 40.7 percent in 1990. This data indicates that many families with a female head of household became more financially stable between 1990 and 2000.

The 2000 median household income was the highest in Casco Township at \$45,043 and the lowest in South Haven Township at \$35,000. The 2007 estimates show that Casco Township continues to experience the largest percentage of growth in median household income similar to what occurred between 1990 and 2000. The 2000 median household income in the City of South Haven is near lowest at \$35,885 and 2007 estimates reveal that it has remained relatively flat between 2000 and 2007. Per capita income also is highest in Casco Township at \$22,356 and is lowest in South Haven Township at \$17,097. However, the 2007 per capita income estimates show the City of South Haven at the lowest at \$19,905. Per Capita income by Census Block Groups is shown on Map 3-4





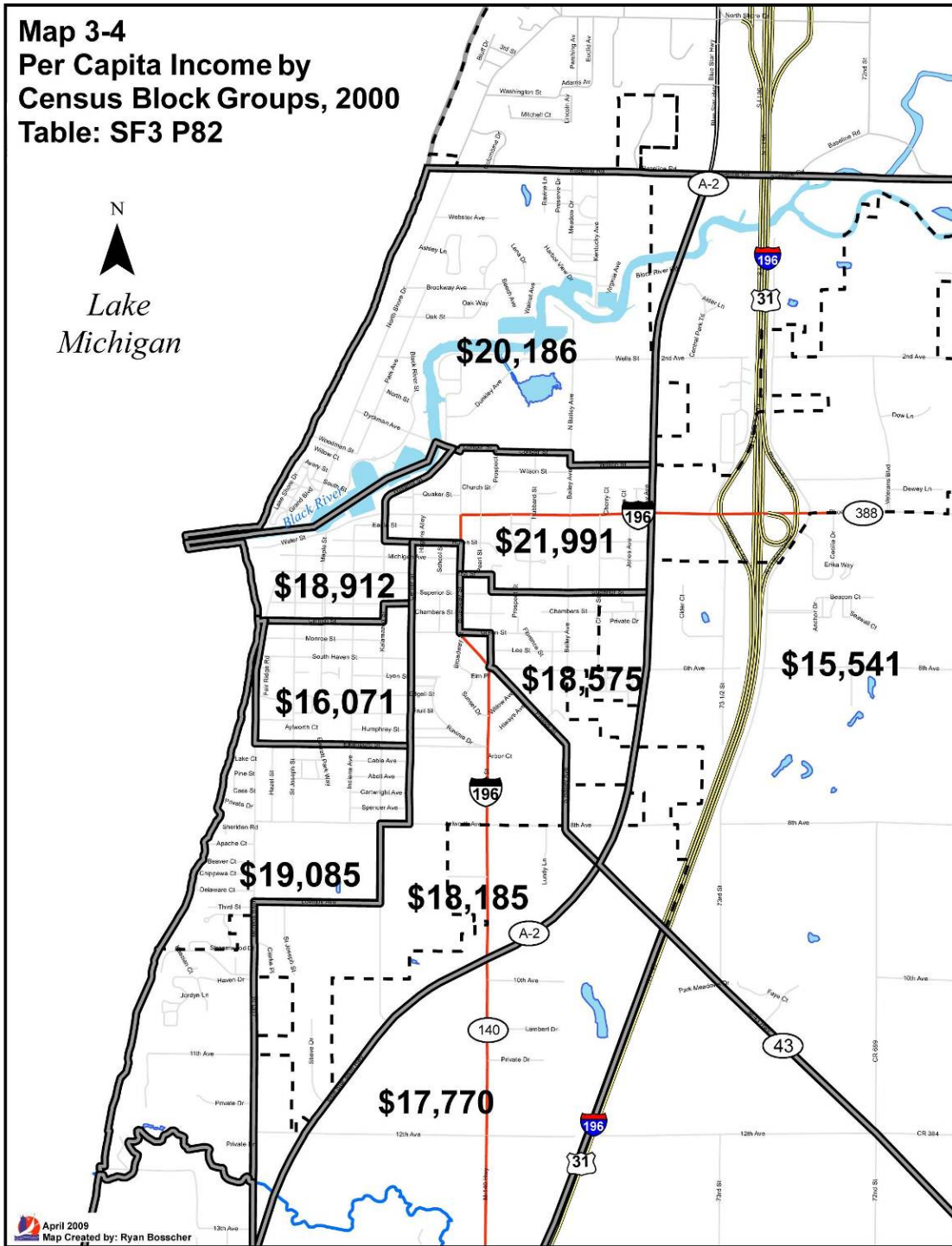
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**Map 3-4**  
**Per Capita Income by**  
**Census Block Groups, 2000**  
**Table: SF3 P82**

N  
 Lake  
 Michigan



April 2009  
 Map Created by: Ryan Bosscher



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## EMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate has remained fairly steady in recent years. In 2000, the unemployment rate for the City of South Haven dropped from 6.1 percent in January to 3.6 percent in May and 3.6 percent in October. Unemployment rates for 2002 followed a similar variation beginning the year at 8.8 percent in January and declining to 5.7 percent in May and 5.1 percent in October.

The State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Development have not prepared unemployment statistics since 2003 on areas that have a population of less than 25,000. Therefore, the only current information on unemployment data is for Van Buren County. According to the data, the unemployment rate has remained fairly consistent over the past ten years with slight increases in the rate over the past seven years from 2001 to 2008. The Van Buren County unemployment rate topped 8 percent in 2008 which is the highest it's been since 1995. The City of South Haven likely has had a similar unemployment rate to that of Van Buren County between 2003 and 2008. Prior to 2003, the City and County rates were virtually identical.

Employment in the South Haven area is seasonally dependent. Employment is highest in the summer, fall and the brief December holiday period, which is not reflective in the data due to the short spike in unemployment. Employment is lowest in the months of January through March. Although unavailable, it is assumed that the unemployment rates since 2002 have experienced similar seasonal fluctuations.

Creation of more year-round jobs would be helpful in not just lowering the winter unemployment rate but in providing a boost year round. However, because of the large resort industry in South Haven that is more summer oriented than winter, there will remain a need for additional summer workers. If South Haven businesses can market



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and capture a greater share of the winter tourist market, seasonal variation in the unemployment rate would be smaller.

Prior to 2006, unemployment in the South Haven Planning Area was greater in all years compared to statewide averages. This indicated that job creation was and will continue to be an important challenge in the area. However, since 2006, the State has experienced a greater unemployment rate than that of Van Buren County. This may be attributable to the local economy being less reliant on the automotive and manufacturing sectors than other parts of the State.

None of the communities experience the long commuting times of more densely populated metropolitan areas due to traffic congestion. Van Buren County, Kent County (Grand Rapids), and Wayne County had mean travel times to work of 23.6, 20.7, and 25.8 minutes respectively. However, employment data show that over 48 percent of Van Buren County residents worked outside the County. In comparison, only 25 percent of Kent County residents, and 9 percent of Wayne County residents worked outside their county of residence. A majority of Van Buren County residents who commute to work go to Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids and the Benton Harbor areas.

### EXISTING LAND USE

Land use in the City of South Haven is predominantly residential, which comprises 37.7 percent of the total area. Industrial, street right-of-way, commercial, and public facility/hospital land uses follow in that order with 15.5, 14.2, 9.5, and 5.0 percent of total areas respectively. (Table 3-14)

The largest changes since 1975 have been in residential with an increase of nearly 474 acres and vacant land with a decrease of 182 acres. An explanation of the reduction



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

in vacant land is included in the following section. Map 3-5 represents existing land use in 2008.

**Table 3-14**  
**LAND USE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN, 1975, 1992, AND 2008**

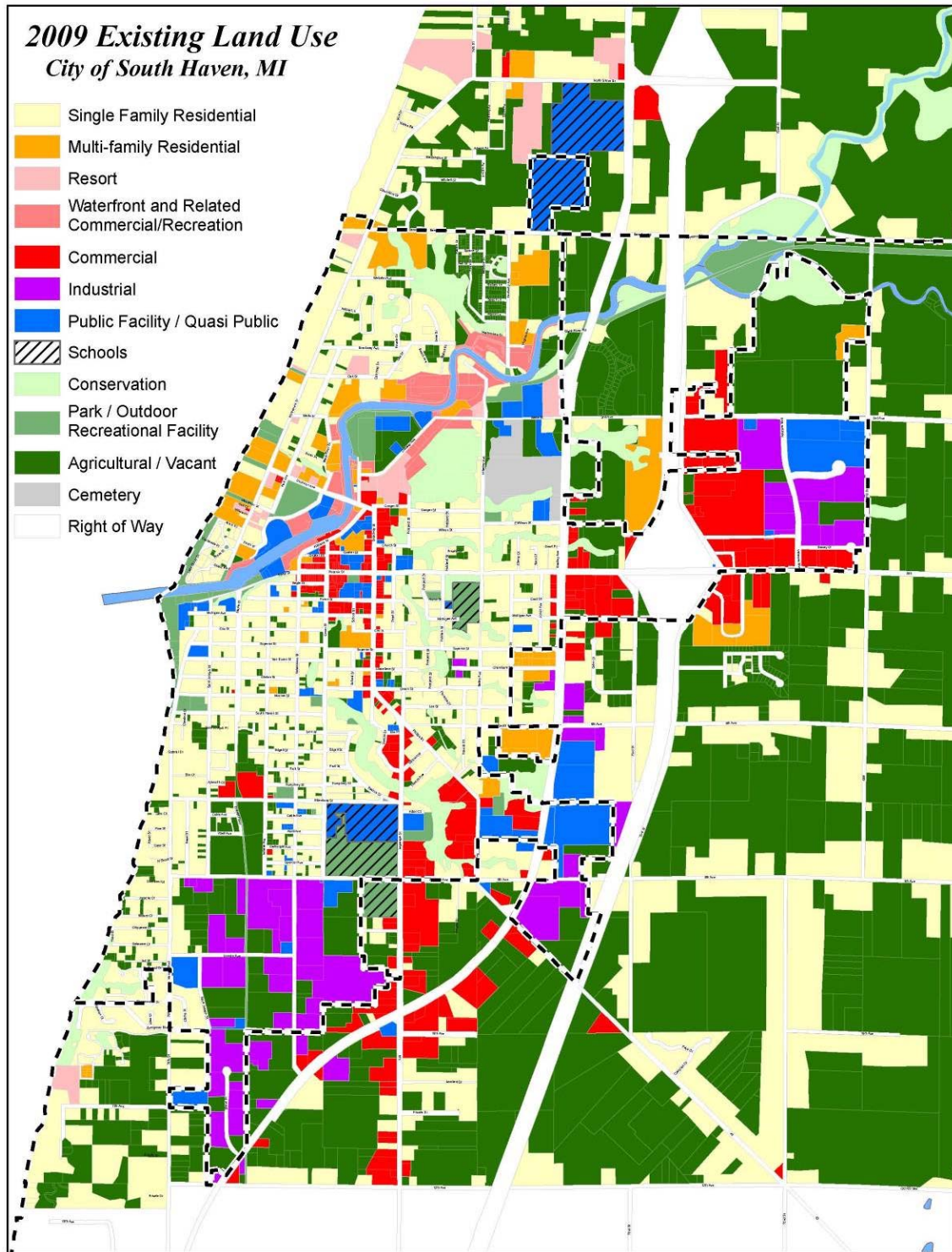
Land Use	Acres 1975	% of Total Acres 1975	Acres 1992	% of Total Acres 1992	Acres 2008	% of Total Acres 2008
Residential	363	24.2%	615	37.0%	837.1	37.7%
Single Family	NA	NA	NA	NA	705.8	31.8%
Multi Family	NA	NA	NA	NA	131.3	5.9%
Waterfront and Related	NA	NA	NA	NA	89.7	4.0%
Commercial/Recreation	NA	NA	NA	NA	15.0	0.7%
Resort	58	3.9%	66	4.0%	210.9	9.5%
Commercial	147	9.8%	163	9.8%	344.4	15.5%
Industrial	69	4.6%	76	4.6%	NA	NA
Public	35	2.3%	40	2.4%	NA	NA
Quasi-Public	NA	NA	NA	NA	110.5	5.0%
Public Facility/Hospital	27	1.8%	30	1.8%	79.7	3.6%
Schools and Institutional	29	1.9%	50	3.0%	NA	NA
Recreational and Parks - City	NA	NA	NA	NA	64.4	2.9%
Parks	NA	NA	NA	NA	37.8	1.7%
Conservation	NA	NA	NA	NA	41.2	1.9%
Cemetery	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.0	0.3%
Transition	456	30.4%	274	16.5%	NA	NA
Vacant	270	18.0%	298	17.9%	314.5	14.2%
Street Right-of-Ways	NA	NA	NA	NA	71.2	3.0%
Water	44	3.1%	50	3.0%	NA	NA
Water-Black River						
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,222.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: *City of South Haven Municipal Plan, 1975*  
*Air Photo Interpretation, 1992*  
*Existing Land Use Map, 2008*





# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions



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## VACANT LAND

Vacant land comprised approximately 274 acres in the City in 1992. (Table 3-14) The largest parcels of vacant land in 1995 were in the extreme north and south areas of the City. The size of parcels available ranged in size from single-family lots to 55 acre parcels. Since 2008, the vacant land category of land use has absorbed into other categories such as parks, conservation, transition, and cemetery.

Current (2011) estimates indicate that there are 259 vacant residential lots in the city and 255 residential units available for sale. There is also 41 acres of commercially zoned lots for sale. The commercial lots tend to be under an acre in size and are spread throughout the community.

## PROJECTIONS

Expansion or retraction of the job base or other changes in the local economy could decrease, stabilize, or increase City population. The City population has slowly declined since 1970. In estimating future population numbers, several methods are available and accepted. Unfortunately, many of these methods do not take into account the downturn in the economy of the last decade or the decline in birth rate in Michigan. For example, the trend-analysis method, which is based on past growth trends, would show a steady decline in the foreseeable future. Another method, based on constant county share, would show neither growth nor decline as the cities have less space for a proportionate share of county growth. Given the uncertainty of several key indicators, this plan will rely primarily on the age cohort method of projection. Any significant change to a key economic indicator could dramatically change the projections.



# Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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There are several elements necessary in the consideration of population projection. In the case of South Haven we should consider based on previous data in this plan:

- The population is aging. The largest single age group in the City is the 45 to 64 year olds. Thirty (30) percent of the residents are sixty (60) years old or older and only twenty-two (22) percent are under the age of twenty (20). Without an influx of young families to replace the inevitable loss of the older residents, the population will continue to drop.
- There is a pattern of decline in person per household as families decrease in size. The drop in birth rate in the state and the increasing number of single parent households are prime reasons for this decrease.
- The slow job growth in Michigan is making it difficult for young adults to stay in the area not to mention attract new families to live here. There is no business projection that shows this statewide trend reversing dramatically in the near future.

Given the above variables, it is unlikely that South Haven will see a significant turnaround in the population pattern in the near future. It is likely that the economy will stabilize over time, however, and the decrease will slow or reverse in the long term. It is also possible that South Haven could capture a large employer in the near future, changing all variables for the better. The uncertainty of these factors makes it difficult to project with any accuracy, even in the short term.

**Table 3-15  
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS FOR SOUTH HAVEN CITY AND TOWNSHIP  
1960-2030**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
South Haven City	6149	6471	5943	5563	5012	4400	4600	5020
South Haven Township	2766	3416	4174	4185	4046	3983	4100	4500

*Source: Census of Population, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1960-2010*





## Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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Population diversity is expected to increase slightly, similar to statewide trends, but the population will likely remain predominately Caucasian. Statewide, the population of young Caucasians and African Americans is expected to continue to decline, while that of the young Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians is expected to increase.

The 1994 annexation of additional land provided opportunity for both industrial and residential development. New jobs will encourage families to move to the South Haven area and encourage existing employment-age people to remain.

The large seasonal housing segment within the City will continue to exist and could potentially increase. Projections of an increased demand in county wide seasonal housing will require an additional 348 acres for this use by 2020. The City of South Haven and the Black River area will likely attract a large share of that demand. If a larger percentage of seasonal housing is developed in the City of South Haven than in the surrounding Townships, the Townships may "capture" a larger percentage of year-round housing. As a result, year-round retail business will continue to grow faster at the fringe or outside of the City than within. Such growth could place a further strain on downtown businesses, due to increased competition from retail development on the fringe of the City.

Projections of the acreage needed for year-round housing in Van Buren County vary from 877 acres for high density housing, to 1,347 acres for medium density housing, and 1,817 acres for low density housing. While substantial growth is anticipated within the eastern portion of the County especially in the Kalamazoo area, a portion of that demand will occur in the South Haven area as the local industrial economy grows. New housing for the South Haven area will need to include affordable housing for the



## Chapter Three: Demographic and Economic Trends and Conditions

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large segment of the industrial and service sectors that provide low to moderate and seasonal wages.

Projections published by the University of Michigan Institute for Labor and Industrial Relations estimate that employment in Van Buren County will increase by 5,873 jobs, from 25,810 to 31,638, between 1990 and 2020. Such a slight increase will require a smaller county-wide acreage for the production of durable goods than are currently dedicated to that purpose, and negligible additional area for the production of non-durable goods for transportation, mining, finance, government, and retail. However, the service sector is projected to require an additional 233 acres county-wide. The City of South Haven will likely experience demand for additional service sector development and "capture" a portion of this new development.



# Chapter Four: Natural Resource Trends and Conditions

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## INTRODUCTION



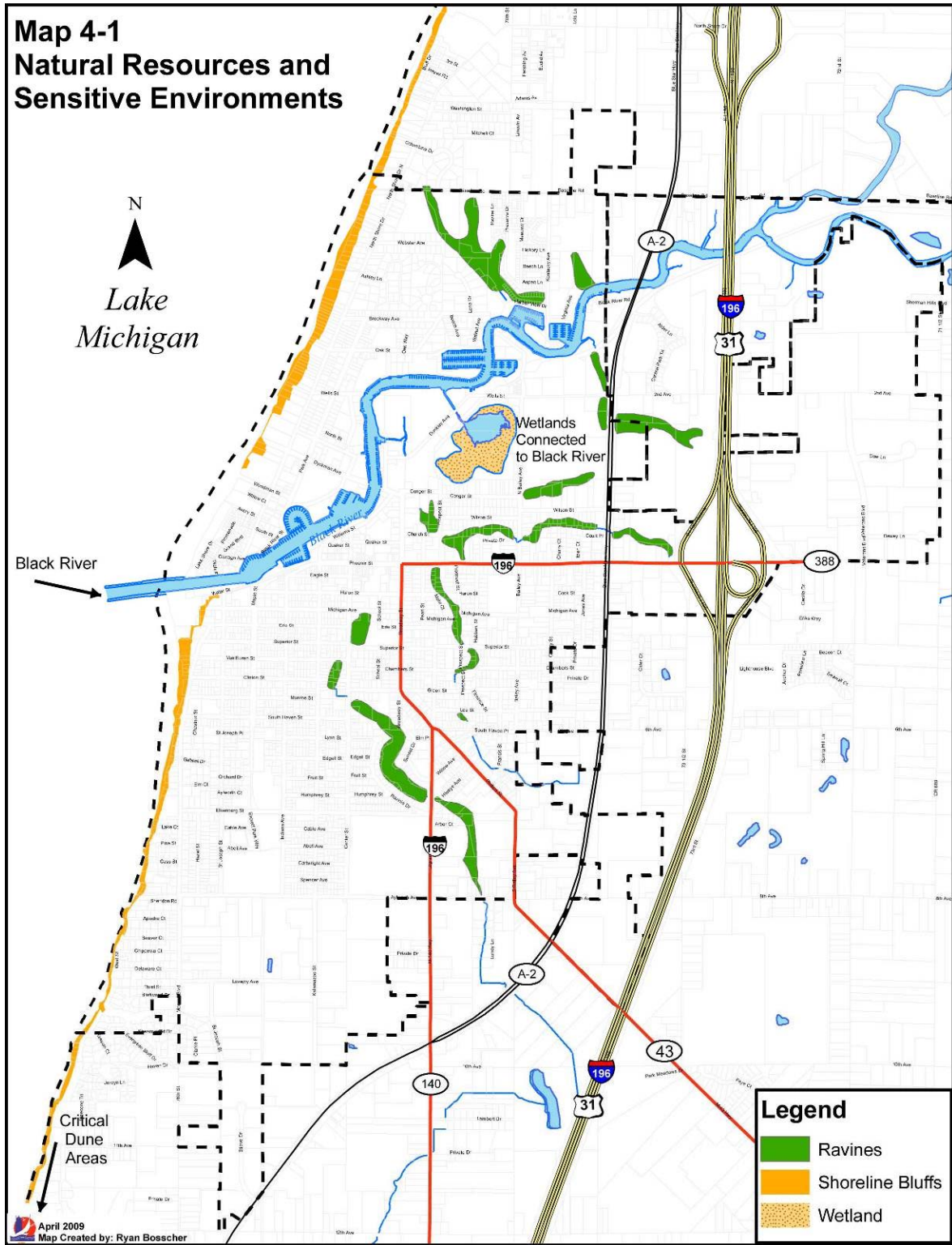
The soils, topography, vegetation and water features are all natural resources on which the City of South Haven and surrounding communities are built upon and depend on for their unique character and quality of life. The primary natural features in and surrounding South Haven are Lake Michigan, the Black River, and the bluffs along the Lake Michigan shoreline. **(Map 4-1)** There are few scattered wetland areas and minor tributaries of the Black River. The neighborhoods of the City of South Haven are wooded, and the shoreline is largely vegetated with shrubs, grasses, and trees in the less densely populated areas. The downtown and industrial areas of the City are sparsely vegetated. Some of the fields in the Townships surrounding the City show signs of recent farming, but in many fields, natural succession has begun to change the vegetation to grasses, shrubs and trees.

The primary natural features of the Lake Michigan shoreline, Black River and bluffs are important because of their sensitivity to damage from improper development. Such developments are those that eliminate large areas of vegetative cover on slopes and on wind and water-exposed Lake and River banks, and those that have large areas of impervious surfaces. Improper development is also that which creates impervious surfaces that allow unfiltered stormwater to flow into the River or Lake or their tributaries.

The City of South Haven has both nearly level and hilly areas. Map 4-2 is the U.S.G.S. Topographic map for the area. This map illustrates major elevations as they relate to roads and structures in place.



# Chapter Four: Natural Resource Trends and Conditions



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Soils range from poorly drained to well drained, including loamy and sandy soils on till plains, moraines, and lake plains. (**Maps 4-3, 4-3a, and 4-3b**) This information was provided by the Soil Survey of Van Buren County, Michigan, compiled by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service.

### **HIGH RISK EROSION AREAS AND CRITICAL DUNE AREAS**

The Michigan Department Environmental Quality (DEQ) has designated certain sections of the Lake Michigan shoreline as High Risk Erosion Areas (HREA). (**Map 4-4**) Construction and substantial reconstruction proposed for these areas is subject to review for conformance with HREA regulations.

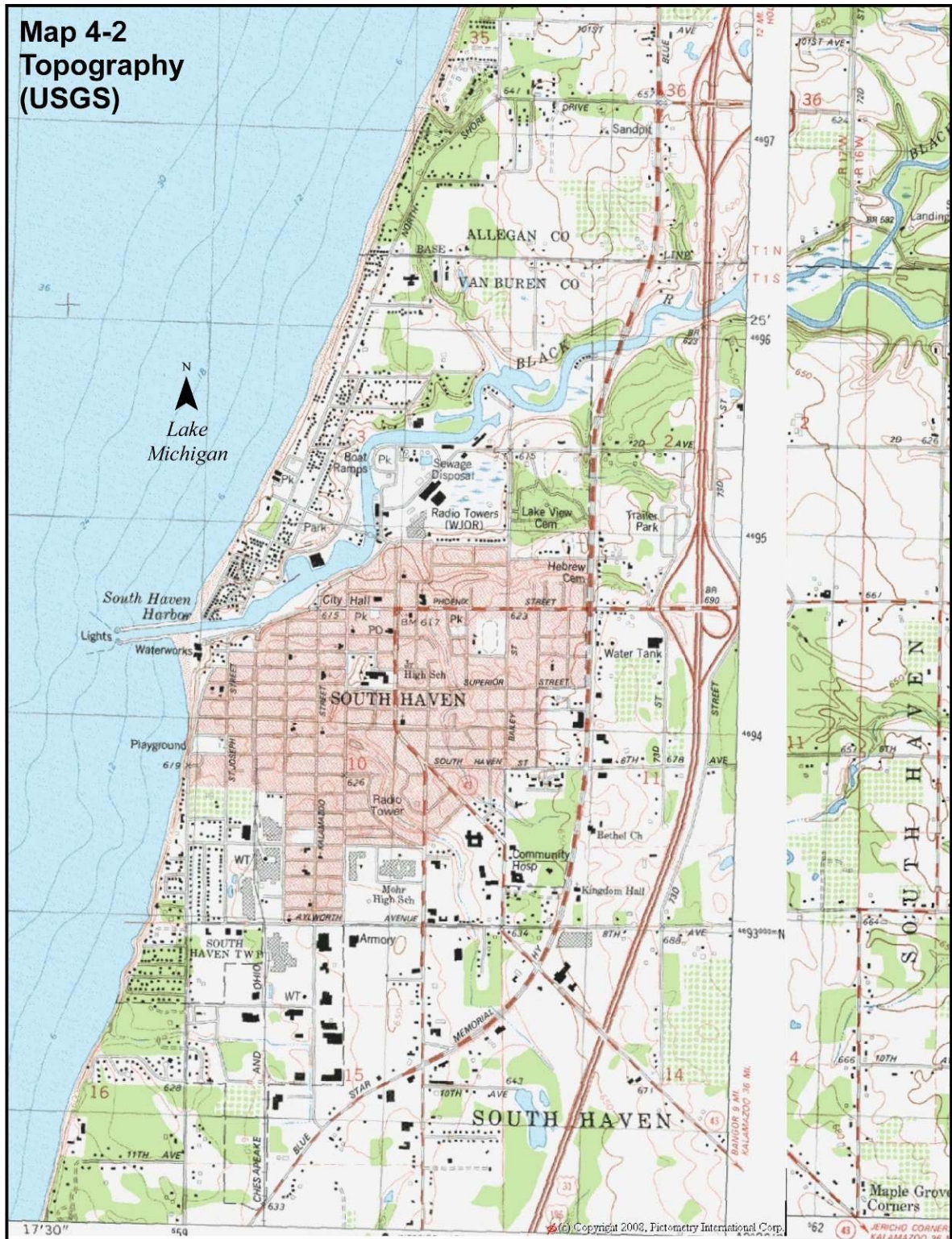
The High Risk Erosion Area provides for minimum setbacks within which no principal structures may be located between the setback line and the ordinary high water mark. According to the City of South Haven Zoning Ordinance the South Haven HREA is comprised of two sub-areas designated as Area A-1 and Area A-2. Each sub-area has a different minimum setback distance which is measured from the bluff line. The setback for Area A-1 is 85 feet and the setback for Area A-2 is 155 feet.

The 1994 DEQ designated HREAs in the South Haven area begin at the south city limits and extend north to approximately Elkenburg Street. Thirty-year erosion rates range from 85 feet to 155 feet within this section, and sixty year erosion rates range from 160 feet to 295 feet.



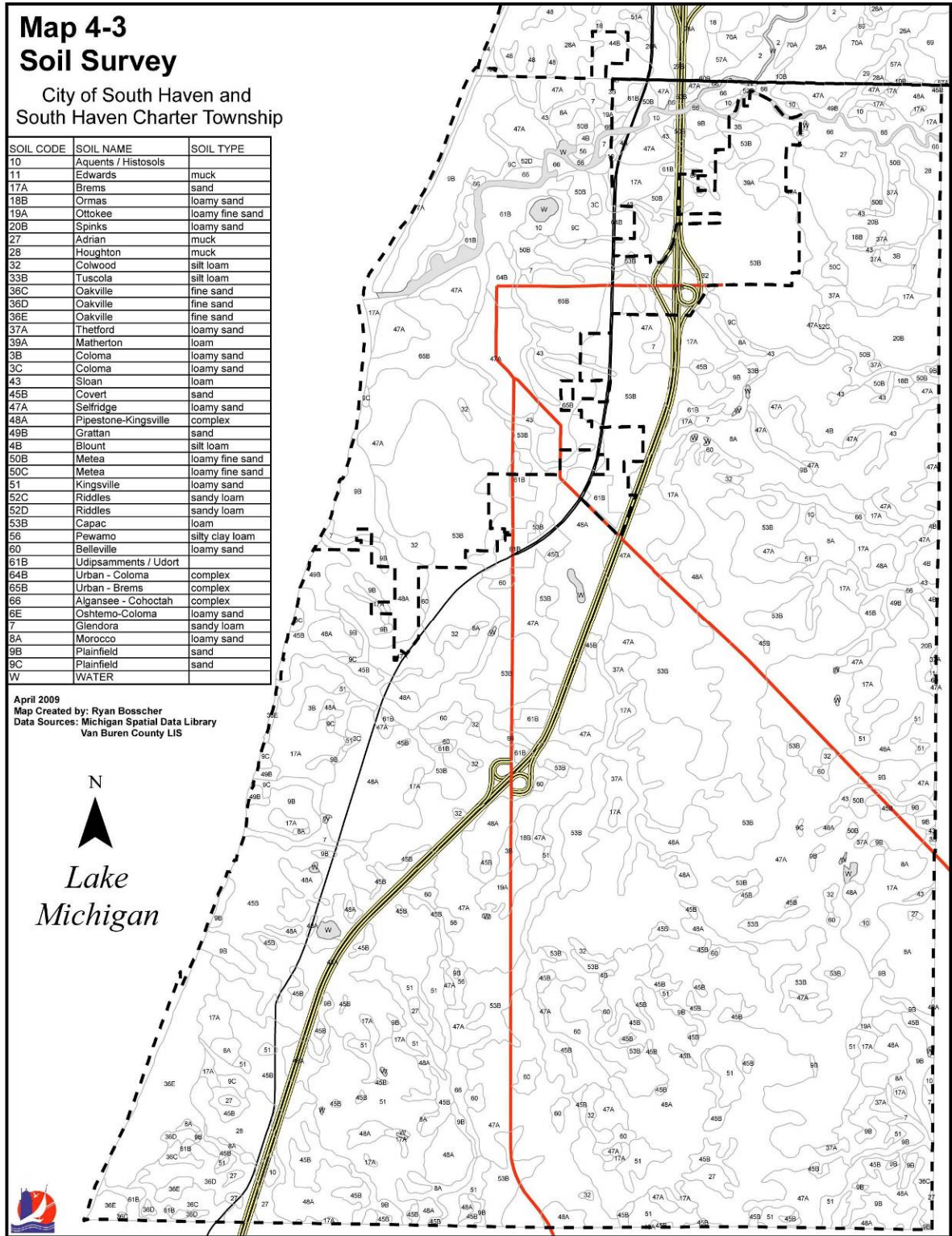


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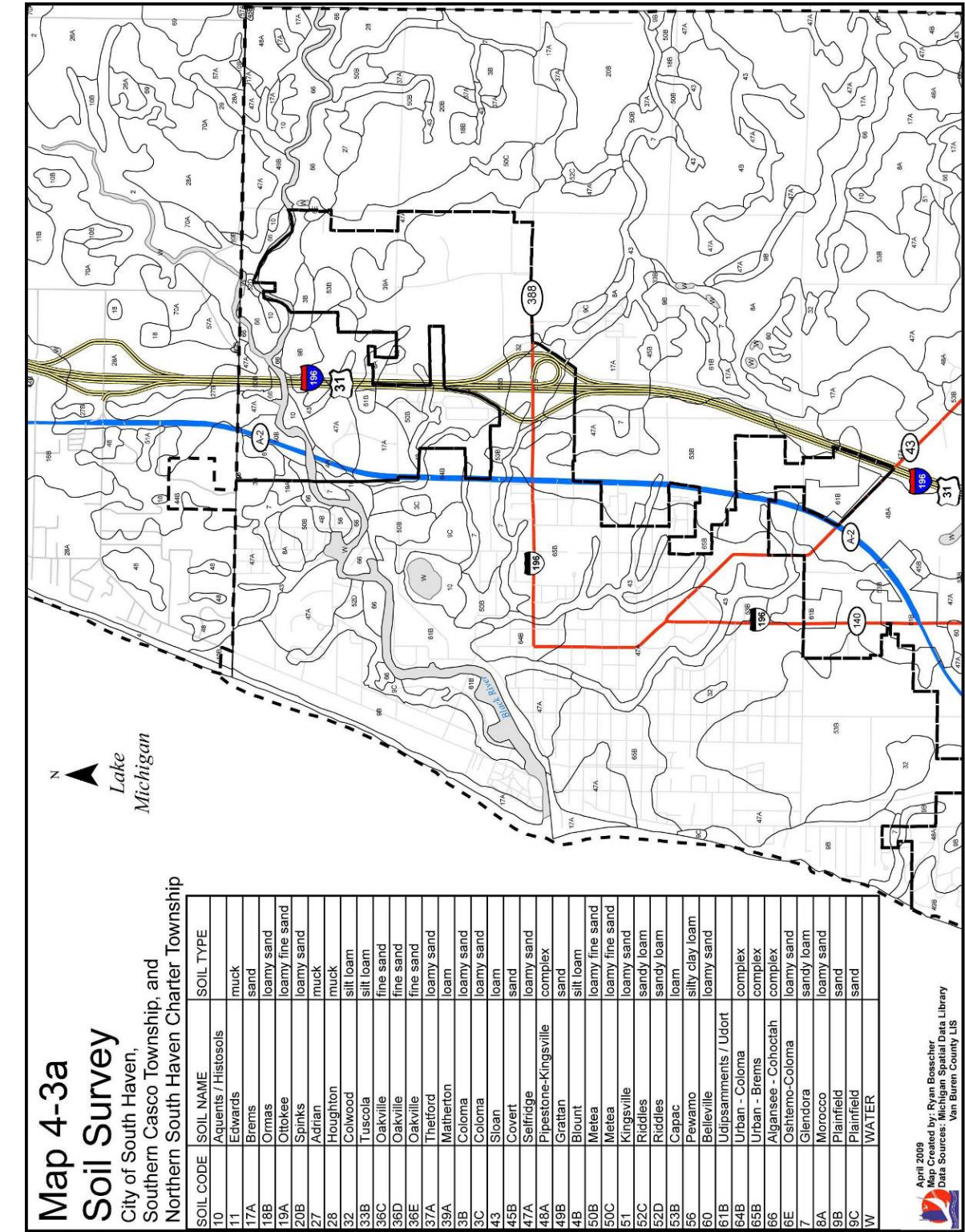




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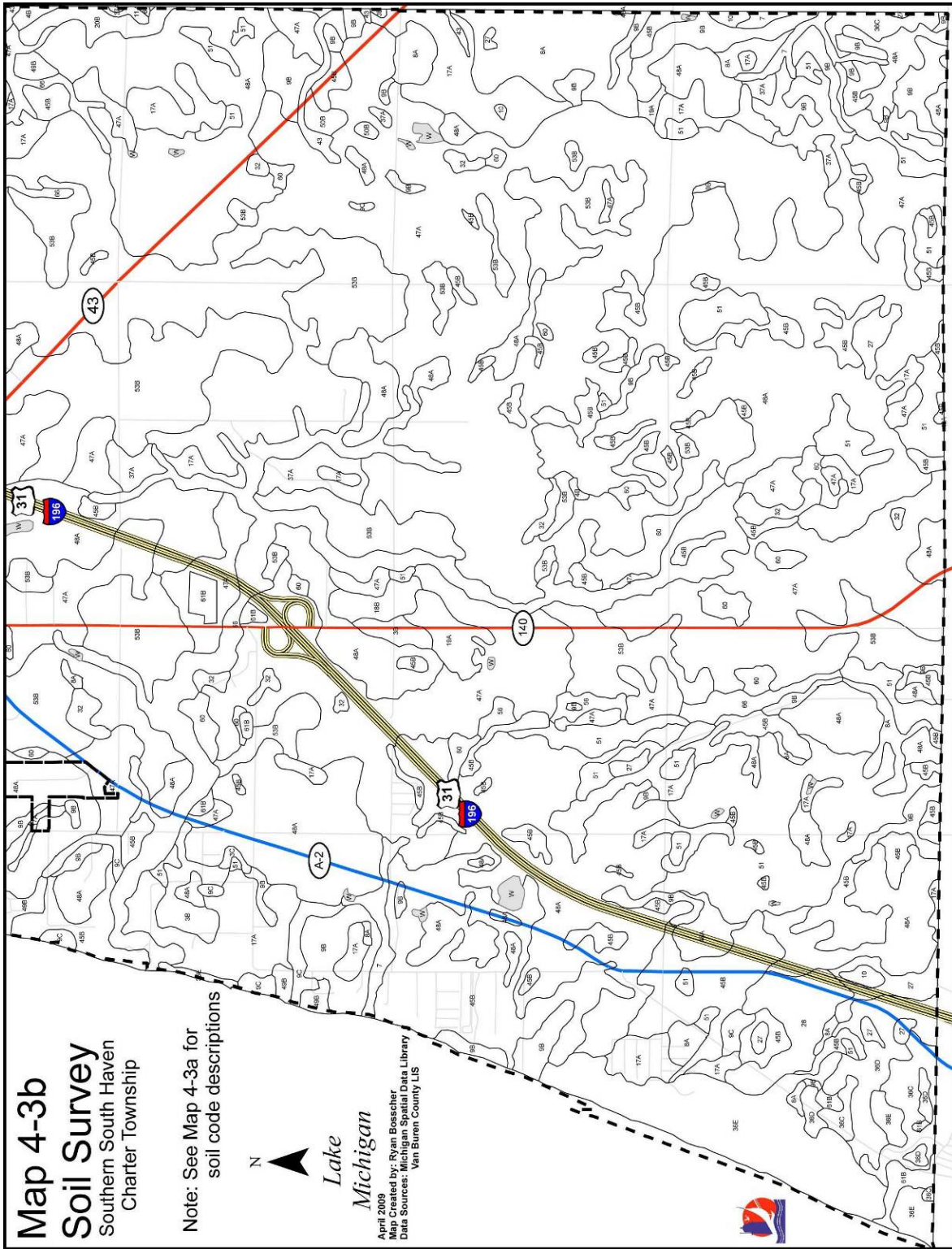


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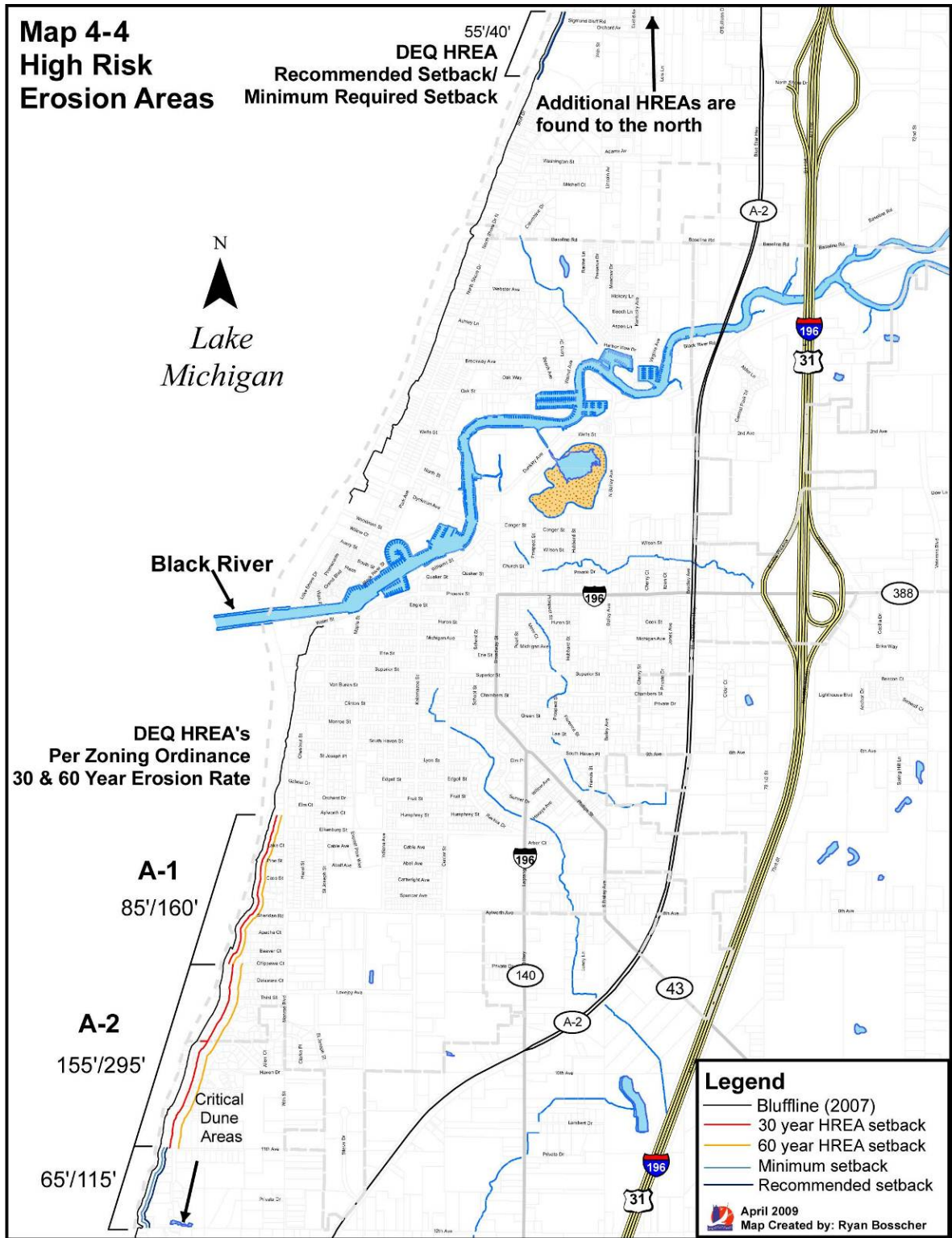




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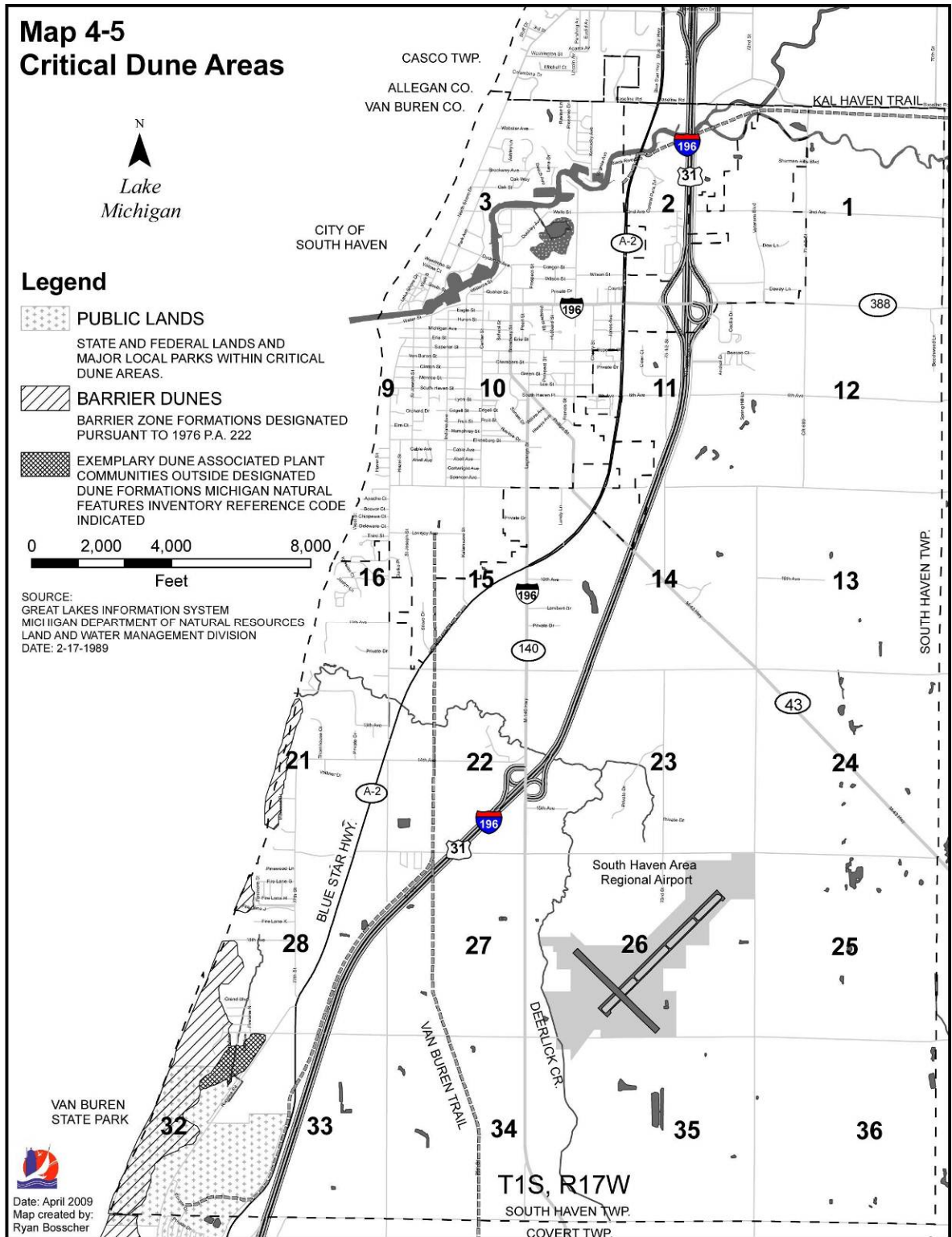
North of the Black River, the Lake Michigan coastline is composed of sandy loam soil with a one to twelve (1-12) percent slope running toward Lake Michigan. South of the Black River, the Lake Michigan coastline soil is also sandy loam soil. The slopes of the bluffs along this part of the coastline are a minimum of twelve (12) percent. This area is within the high risk erosion area subject to regulation under the Shorelands Protection and Management Act (P.A. 245 of 1970).

Critical dune areas are also located in South Haven Township. Barrier dune formations pursuant to 1976 PA 222 exist within Sections 21 and 28 of the Township, and in Section 33 within Van Buren State Park. **(Map 4-5)** Property owners and those proposing development or redevelopment in critical dune areas outside of the State Park need to pay close attention to local regulations, sensitive methods of construction, vegetation, and use of the shoreline. A permit from the DEQ is necessary before building in designated sand dunes. These dunes play a major role in defining the physical character of the area and are an important local tourist attraction.





# Chapter Four: Natural Resources Trends and Conditions



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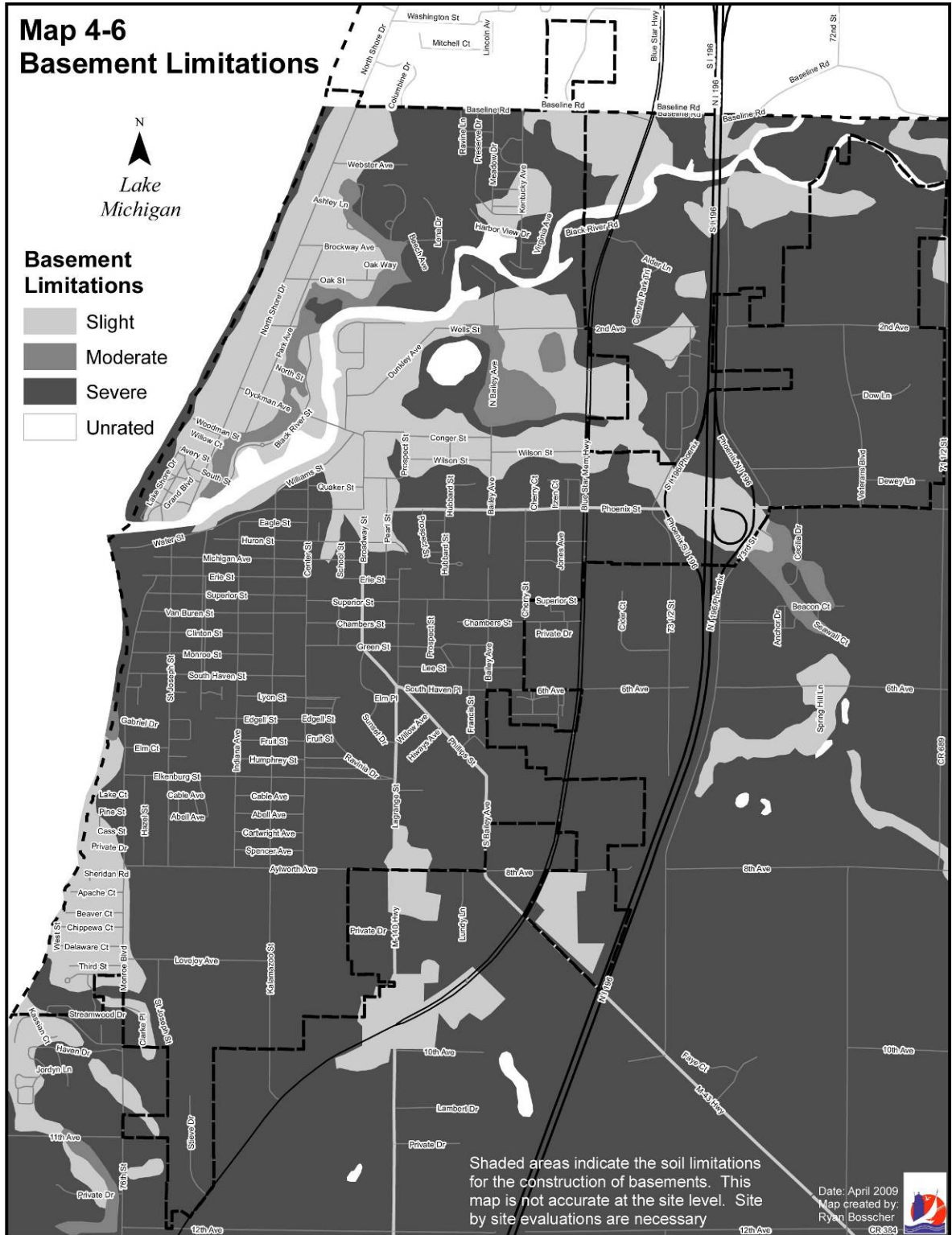
## DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS DUE TO SOILS

The predominant soil types and slopes present moderate to severe soil conditions for certain types of development. According to the Van Buren County Soil Survey, moderate conditions means *"that the limitations for development can be overcome or alleviated by planning, design or special maintenance"*. Severe means *"that soil properties are unfavorable and that limitations can be offset only by costly soil reclamation, special design, intensive maintenance, limited use, or by a combination of these measures"*.

Two important building concerns that are affected by soil condition, and influence where development takes place, are suitability for basements and suitability for septic systems. Development should, if possible, avoid areas unsuitable for basements or use special building methods to overcome soil limitations. (**Map 4-6**) The Van Buren County Soil Survey indicates the City of South Haven and adjoining Townships have little land well suited for basements. Construction without basements or the use of sump pumps will likely be required. Severe limitations also exist for septic systems which mean that new construction should be served by municipal sewers. Slopes, floodplain location, and high water table will become important factors in planning for new development. Areas having high water table are shown on Map 4-7.

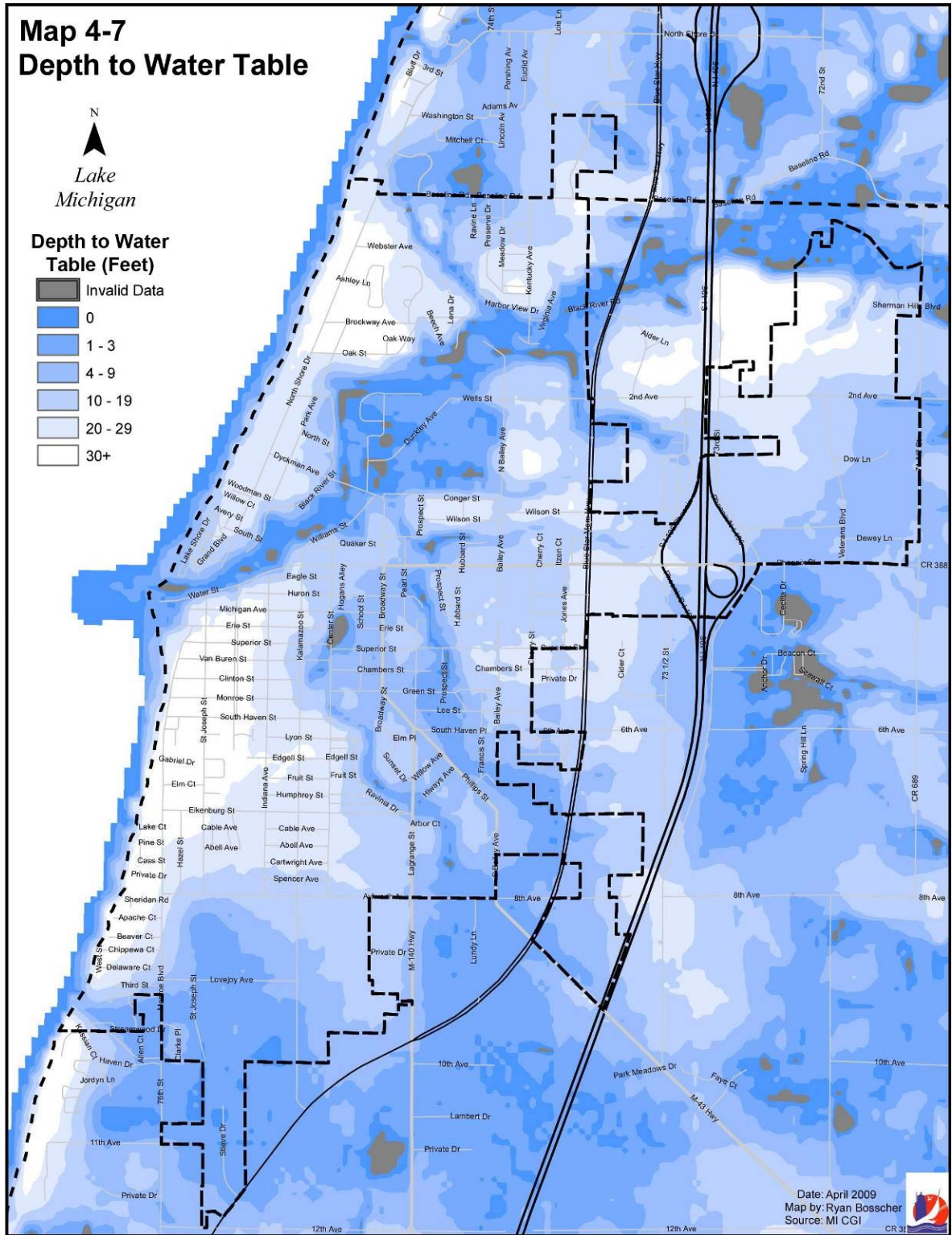


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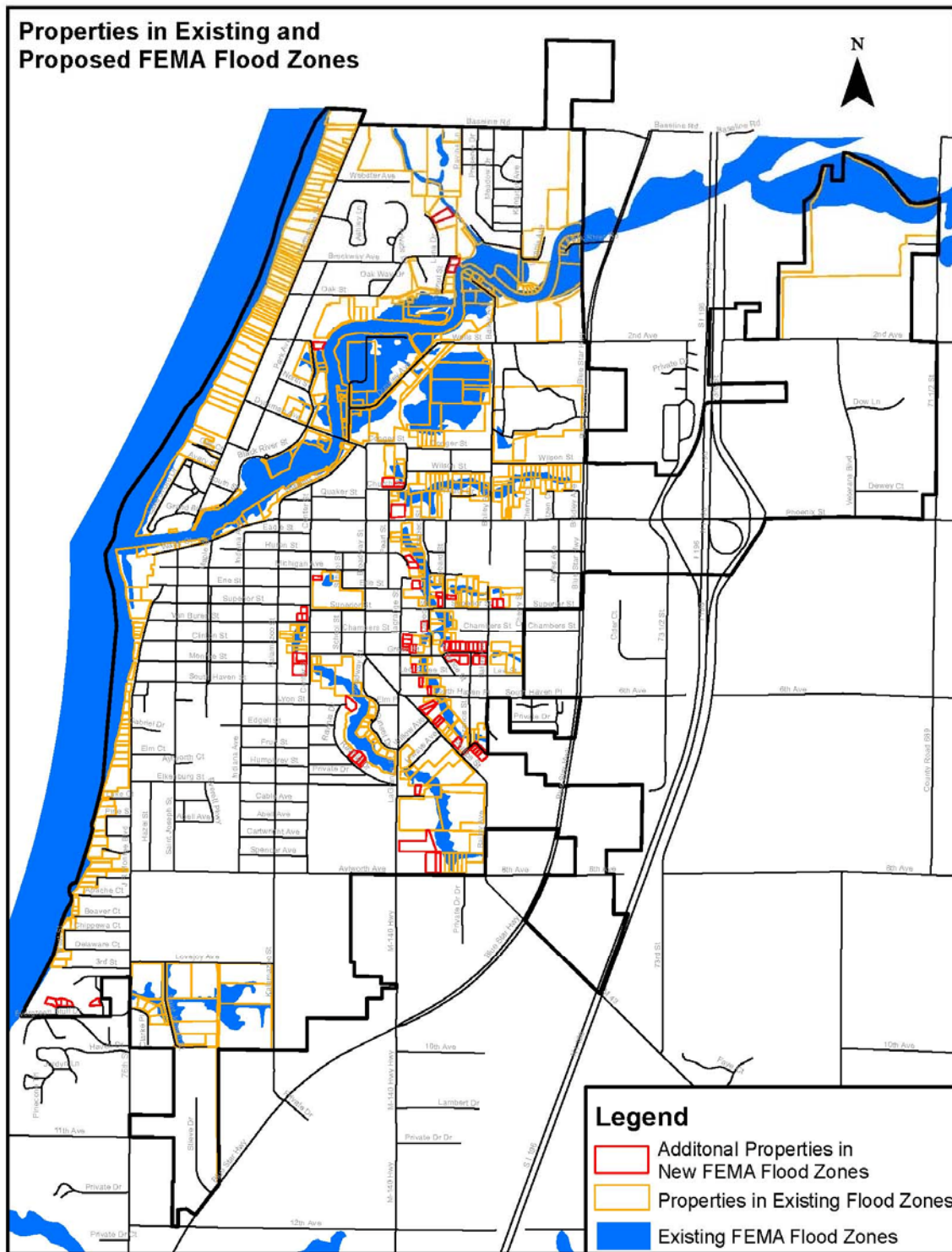


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## WETLANDS

Wetlands as defined within the Goemare-Anderson Wetland Protection Act, PA 203 of 1979, as amended, are areas which have evidence of the presence of water in the soils or on the surface for a significant period each year. Such areas exist in the South Haven Area but are infrequent. There are wetlands along the Black River as indicated on Map 4-1 and they are valuable as floodplain storage areas. While not necessarily wetlands, the ravines of old stream connectors to the Black River also serve to store stormwater, many of which are also floodplains.

## FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are those areas usually located along a river or lakeshore that often become inundated with water following spring snowmelt and rains or other times of the year when there is excessive rainfall. Floodplains for the South Haven area are shown on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as published by the National Flood Insurance Program. **(Map 4-8)** Within these areas new construction should be limited to uses which do not obstruct the flow of floodwaters. Land use should remain or become permanent open space, park, or recreational use with few valuable structures. Boating-related facilities can be safely located along the banks of rivers and lakes, and within a floodplain. A permit is required from DEQ before building within a 100-year floodplain. New structures within these designated areas are usually required by lending institutions to have flood insurance.



# Chapter Five: Infrastructure Trends and Conditions

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## INTRODUCTION

The fabric of life in the City of South Haven and adjoining communities depends to a great extent on the quality of local infrastructure. This includes the transportation systems, urban services such as sewer and water, and recreational facilities. This chapter discusses the current conditions of infrastructure and shows the location of key infrastructure elements on maps. Existing recreation facilities and improvements proposed in other planning documents are also referenced.

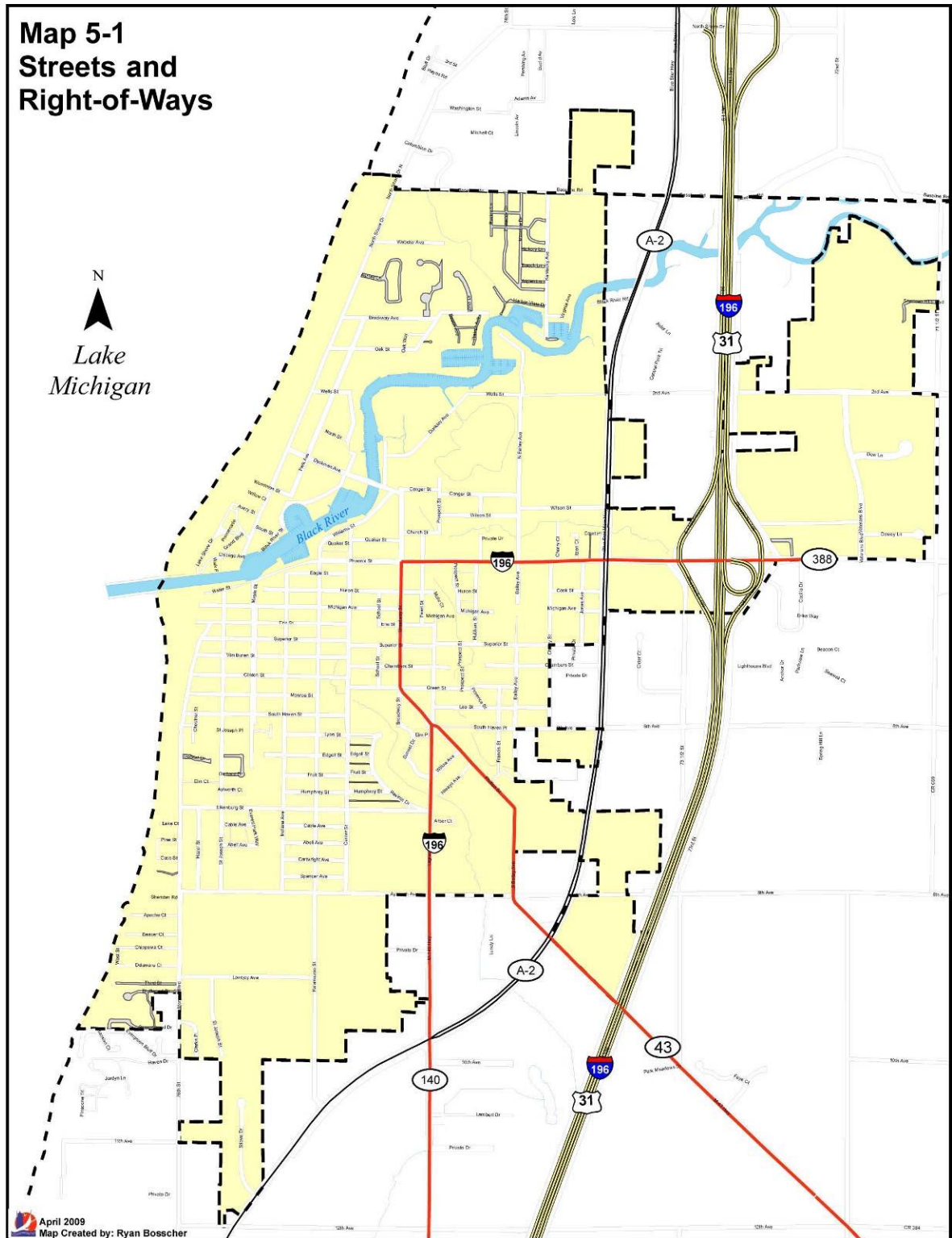
## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

### Street System

Map 5-1 portrays the street system of the City of South Haven and abutting communities. Map 5-2 illustrates the main transportation routes, including both primary and secondary roads. There are two major highways that influence circulation and development in the South Haven area. Interstate I-96 has an interchange at Phoenix Road centrally located to the City of South Haven, a second interchange at North Shore Drive north of the City, and a third interchange at State Road 140 and 14th Avenue. The Interstate highway is located just east of the City and runs north and south. The Blue Star Highway, an unlimited access divided highway, parallels the Interstate highway and is located closer to the City. The Blue Star Highway is an older route which also serves as a corridor for light industry and commercial properties through the City.

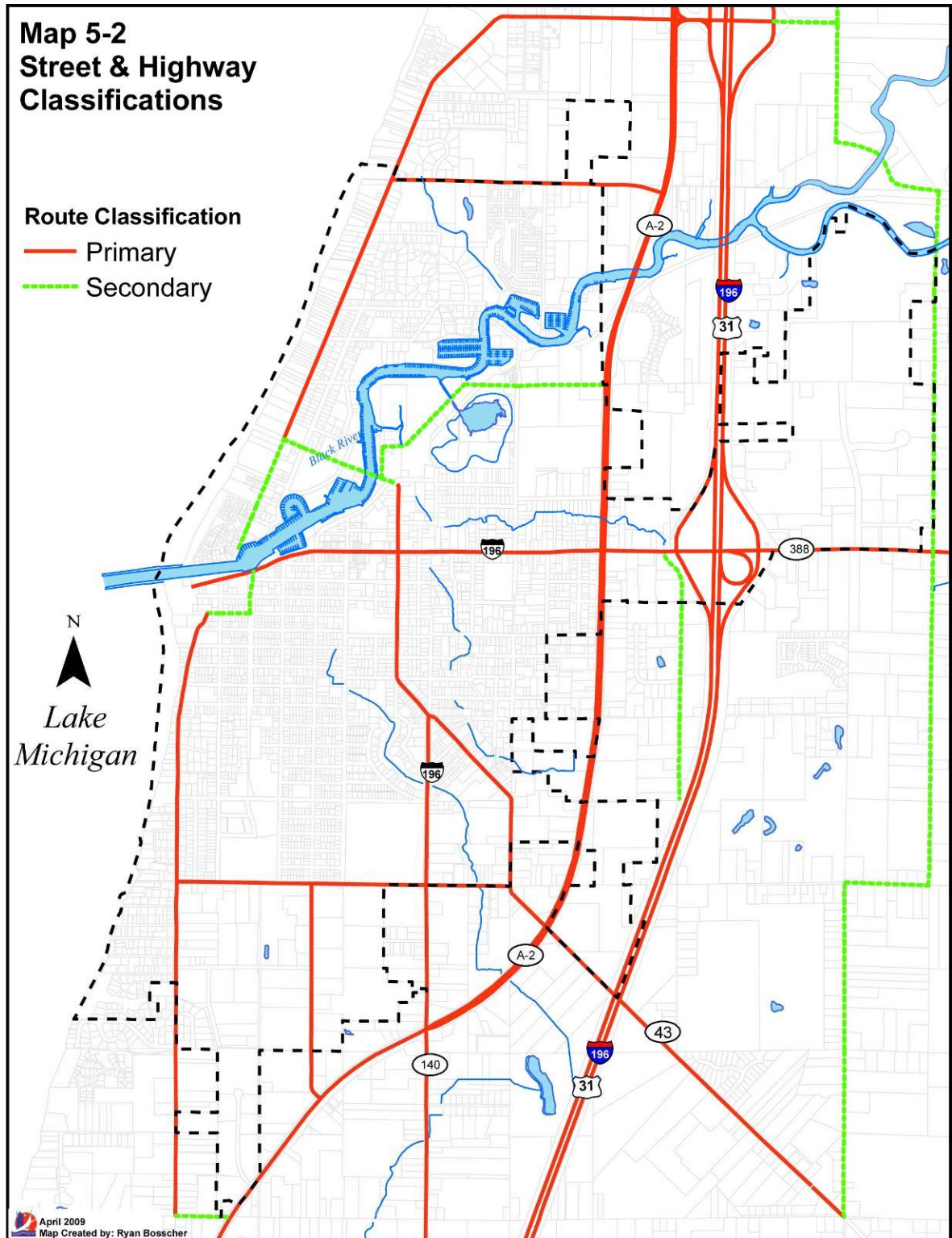


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Areas that need improvement include the Blue Star Highway corridor on both sides of Aylworth Avenue and the bridge on Dyckman Avenue over the Black River. The bridge and the street to the west act as a bottle-neck when traffic is heavy. Community members have also expressed the need for an additional bridge connection over the Black River at the east end of Brockway Avenue or across to connect Kentucky Avenue with East Wells Street. However, the cost effectiveness of any new bridge crossing must be weighed carefully. While a bridge would better link the north and south sides of the City and greatly relieve summer congestion downtown, soil and steep bank conditions will make any new bridge crossing very expensive and potentially disruptive to existing land uses nearby.

### **South Haven Regional Airport**

The South Haven Regional Airport Authority operates an airport three miles southeast of town on State Road 140 and 28th Avenue. Funding is provided by the City and other governmental units. It has a 3,800 foot runway with a taxi area, 12 hangers with space for thirty airplanes, and twenty-four tie-down areas for the general public. The airport is operated year-round and its amenities include available fuel, a lighted runway, a PAPI System, and a REIL System for instrument approach. There are no landing fees.

### **Public Transit**

*Van Buren Public Transit* - The Van Buren County Public Transit has been providing public transit service to the South Haven area since 1979. The service is demand response which requires a minimum of twenty-four hours call-ahead.

*Amtrak* - this train service offers a line called the Pere Marquette which runs from Grand Rapids, Michigan to Chicago, Illinois making a stop in Bangor, Michigan just 10 minutes outside of South Haven.



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*Greyhound* - This bus line provides daily bus services. The station is located on Phoenix Road.

*Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Van Der Zee Motorplex* - Each provides daily car rental service.

### **Bicycles and Bicycle Routes**

Bicycle travel is becoming increasingly important in the City of South Haven as bicyclists continue to use the Kal-Haven Trail, and tourists often find motorized traffic slow in the summer months. Although the City Department of Public Safety had registered only 96 bicycles in 1995 when registration was required, bicycle ownership was probably more prevalent since a majority of bicycles were assumed to be unregistered. The City no longer requires bicycle registration so the current number of bicycles within the City is unknown. Rock 'N' Road Cycle located on Broadway Street south of Phoenix Street rents bicycles at a daily rate. The Police Department has two officers that patrol on bicycle during the summer months along the beach areas. The Van Buren Trail and Kal-Haven Trail are the only officially designated separated bike trails in the City. Signed on street and un-separated bicycle routes exist throughout the City, connecting both Kal-Haven and Van Buren trails to the downtown area. This trail connects the state trailhead at Bailey Street north of Wells to the downtown at the Huron and Kalamazoo Street parking lot. Multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths have been constructed along Baseline Road from North Shore Drive to Blue Star Highway and along Phoenix Street from Blue Star Highway to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Additional linkages and bicycle paths which can potentially be developed are included in the 2009 Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Paddle Plan. A connecting path is planned for construction in 2011 from the Kal-Haven trail head, along Dyckman Avenue and Williams Street to the downtown area.





# Chapter Five: Infrastructure Trends and Conditions

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## **Sidewalks**

Since pedestrian access is important to the City's residents, tourists, and businesses, sidewalk maintenance is vital. More recently constructed sidewalks, such as those in the downtown and Riverwalk Park are in good condition. The condition of older sidewalks especially those in the residential areas are in varying condition. The City should focus on the sidewalk improvements identified in a 1990 study as funds become available. By 2003, barrier free access ramps had been installed at most street crossings in the City. The City is continuing to replace noncompliant ADA ramps as funding becomes available. The locations of these replacements will be guided by the Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Paddle Plan approved by the City in 2009. Streetscape amenities which include inset brick to create interesting visual patterns, planters, lighting, and benches have been installed along Phoenix Street.

## **Parking**

Public parking is available at several locations in the downtown area. These locations include the public lot behind Dyckman Park, street parking along the improved Phoenix Street area, along the Black River by the Old Harbor area, City-owned marinas, and boat launch, and at the Riverfront Park. There is also a new parking lot located at the corner of Huron Street and Kalamazoo Street. The parking lot behind Dyckman Park was renovated in 2004. Renovations included a new layout and traffic pattern, a landscaped promenade to break up the paving, a site for the seasonal ice skating rink, and a new public restroom facility. An important consideration is balancing practicality with appearance. Large areas of concrete, without relief by patterns and changes of materials, are visually uninteresting. Several other downtown areas which contain large amounts of concrete would benefit from renovations similar to the Dyckman Parking Lot. Renovations to the Huron Street parking lot and Dyckman Park have recently been made.



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## URBAN SERVICES

The provision of urban services enables communities to guide the location and pace of development by incremental expansion of services. Intensive development generally requires a full range of urban services. Thus, future job growth is also tied to infrastructure availability. In the short term, new urban service provision in the South Haven Area will concentrate investment into the area between the Interstate Highway, Blue Star Highway, and selected areas east of the Interstate.

### **Sewer, Water, and Electricity**

The City of South Haven provides sewer, water and electric service to the all residences, industries, and businesses within the City. These services are also provided to portions of the surrounding Townships. Maps 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5 delineate the boundaries of sanitary sewer, water, and electric service areas as of 2009. The provision of utilities was an element of the annexation agreement of 1994 expanding service to the areas indicated on the maps. In addition, a new Public Works facility was constructed in 2001 east of Blue Star Highway at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The City of South Haven provides a number of services to the residents of the City and certain areas of neighboring Townships. The primary services include:

- Sewer - The City of South Haven owns and operates a sanitary sewer system that serves the City and portions of the surrounding Townships. The service area is located on Map 5-3. Capacity of the treatment plant is over 2.3 million gallons per day. The system currently Operates under its capacity at about 1.5 million gallons per day.
- Water - The City of South Haven draws water from Lake Michigan and distributes it through a City-owned system. Current water system capacity is over 4 million gallons per day. The City delivers water at approximately half its capacity, which suggests sufficient extra capacity is available for expanded industrial and



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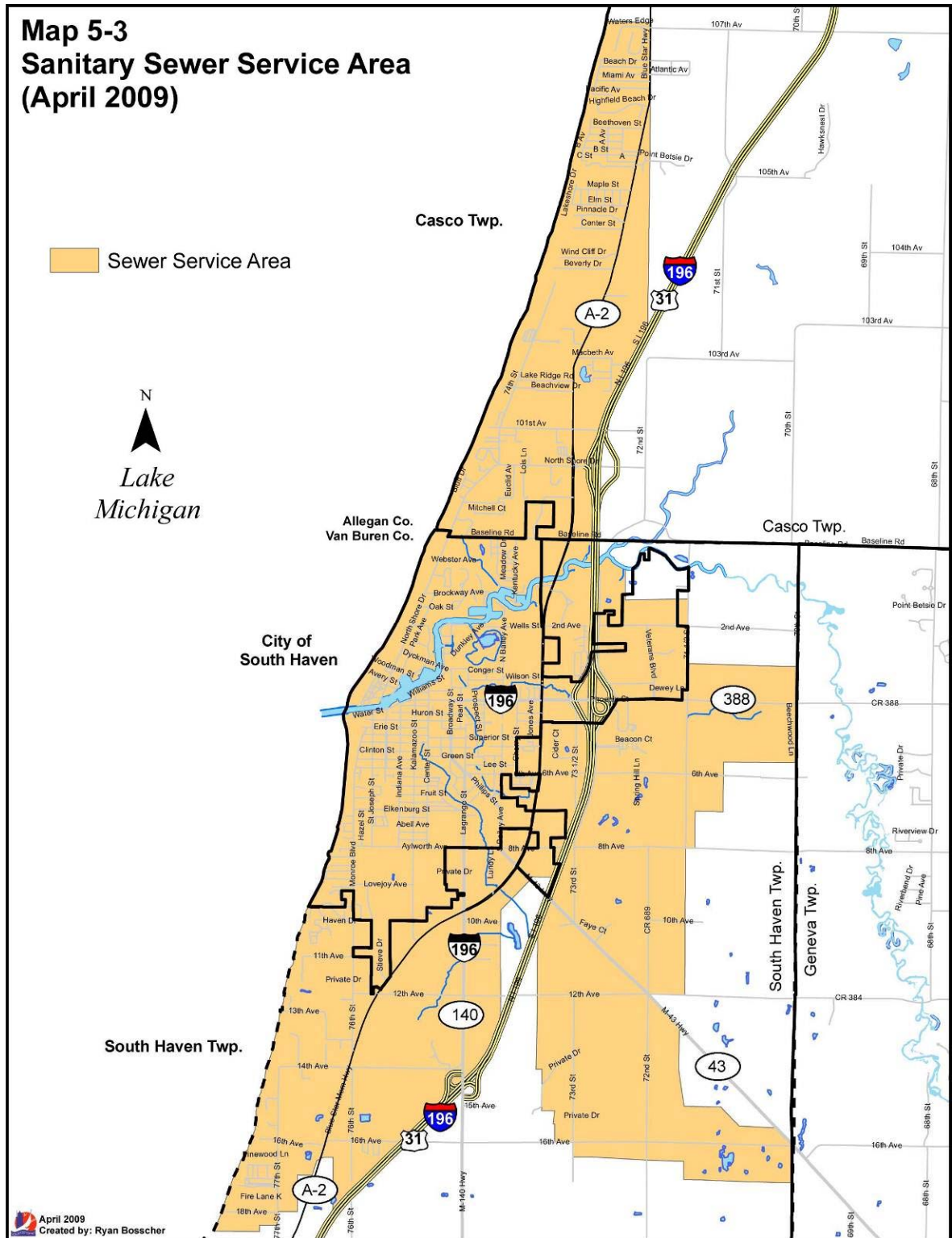
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residential development. The water system service area is indicated on Map 5-4. The water treatment plant is located just south of the mouth of the Black River. Water towers are located in three locations around the City to provide pressure to aid in distribution during periods when pumps are not running or power is in high demand. Water lines range from 8 inches to 18 inches in diameter.

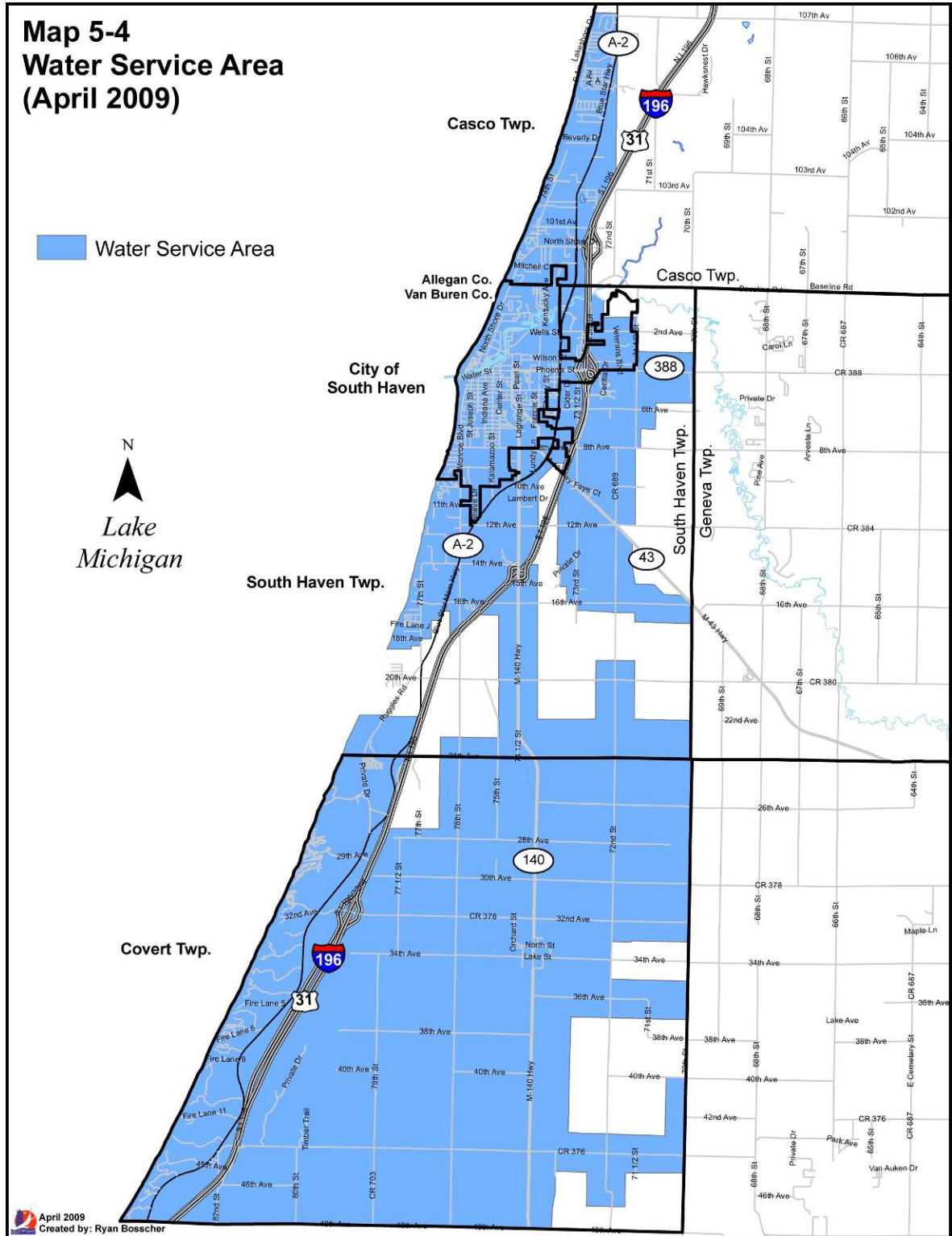
- Electricity - The City of South Haven owns and operates a distribution system for electricity. The City buys electric power wholesale from the American Electric Power Service Corporation. The Electric service area is shown on Map 5-5.



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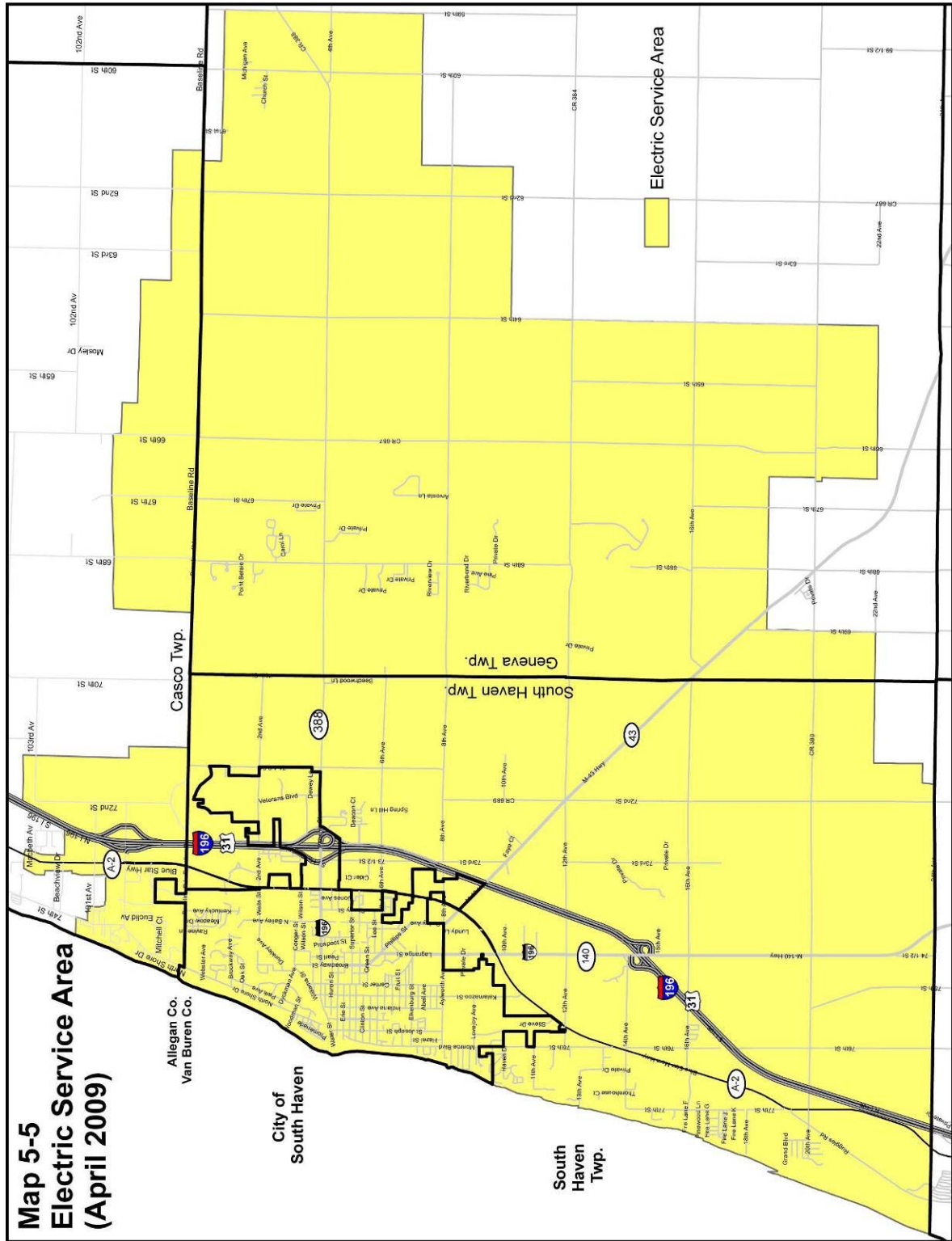


# Chapter Five: Infrastructure Trends and Conditions





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## **Emergency Services**

The City of South Haven provides police, fire and ambulance services to its residents and several areas within the adjoining townships. A combined service facility is located on Blue Star Highway north of North Shore Drive North. Emergency services can be contacted through a 911 system. A regional fire and ambulance agreement was approved by the City in 1995 which formally created the South Haven Area Emergency Services (S.H.A.E.S.). This authority has jurisdiction in the City of South Haven, South Haven Township, Casco Township and Geneva Township. Both the police and fire departments operate with both full-time and part-time personnel.

## **RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

The City of South Haven and adjoining Townships boast a variety of recreational opportunities and facilities. These include Lake Michigan beaches, boating and canoeing on the Black River, camping, non-motorized trail use, riding stables, cultural facilities, ball fields, playgrounds, and golf. Maps 5-5 and 5-6 indicate the location of principal community facilities and recreational facilities in the South Haven area.

### **South Haven Area Recreation Authority**

In 2010, a joint meeting between South Haven Charter Township, Casco Township, South Haven Public Schools Board of Education and the City of South Haven was held to discuss the concept of creating an authority to operate and maintain parks in the area, specifically the proposed South Haven Area Regional Park (SHARP).

The City Council gave approval to the Authority in August of 2010. Other participating jurisdictions included South Haven Township, and South Haven Public Schools. Casco Township opted out of the authority at that time but would be permitted to join later.





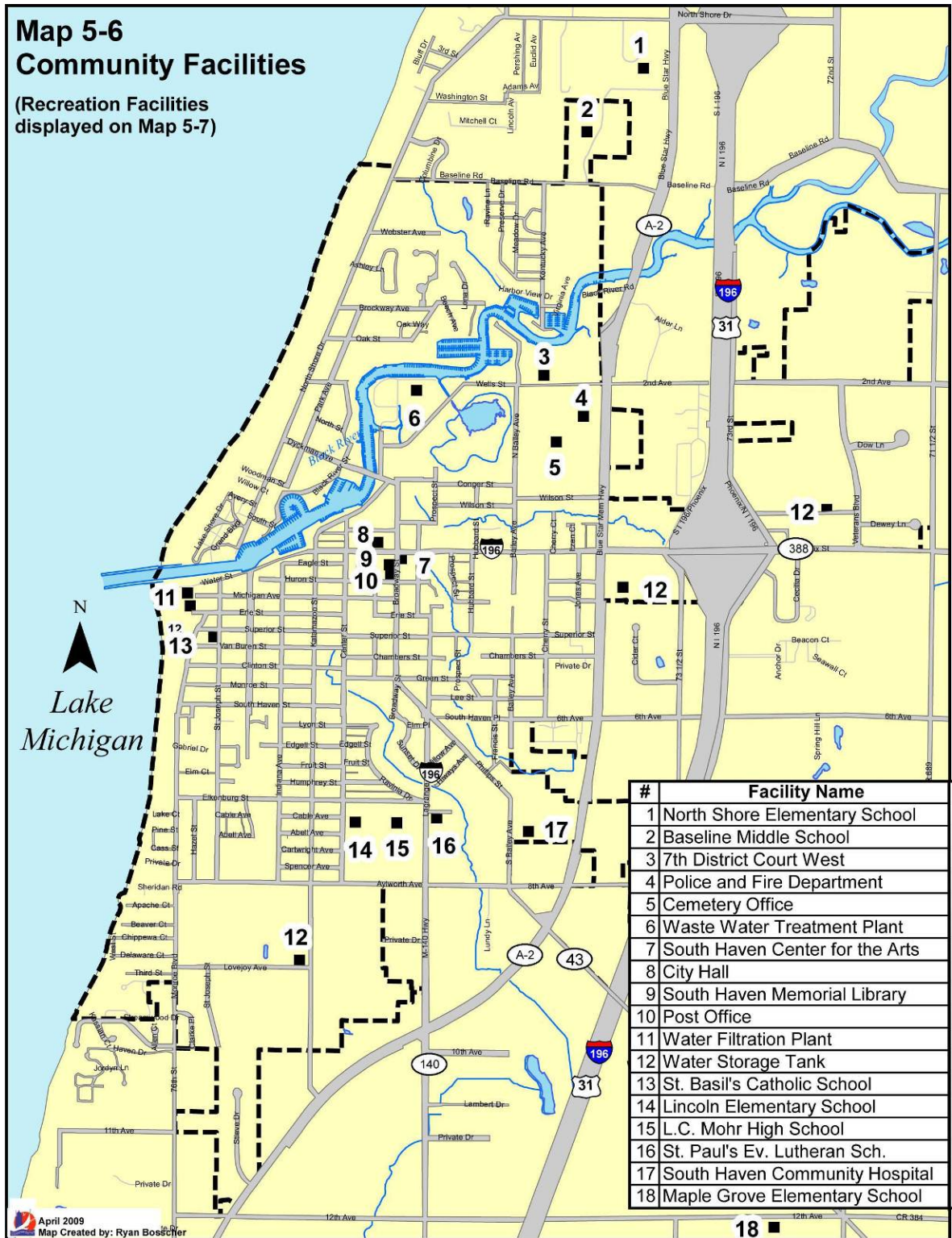
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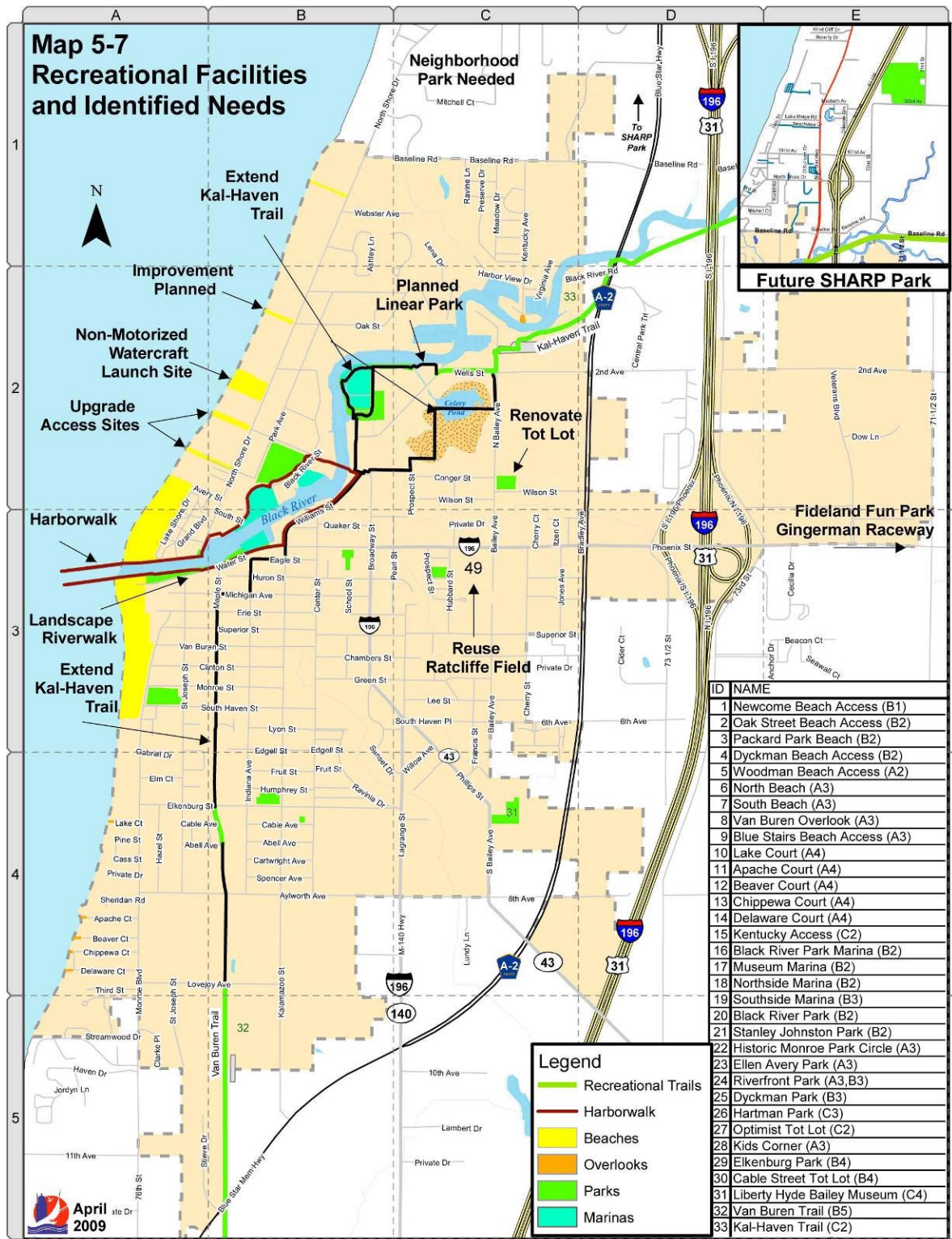
The area of authority for SHARA may be expanded to operate and maintain parks throughout the service area and, in the future, SHARA may operate recreational program activities either on SHARA facilities, school facilities or park facilities owned by the jurisdictions which are members of SHARA. In that event, there will be an approval process to expand the authorized activities which SHARA is permitted to perform.



# Chapter Five: Infrastructure Trends and Conditions



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The City of South Haven is fortunate to be located along both Lake Michigan and the Black River which provide the bulk of recreational opportunities within the Area. Swimming, fishing, boating, jet skiing, wind surfing, and relaxing at the beach are just a few of the recreational opportunities that the City's water-based facilities provide for the local residents and tourists. The City has eight public accesses to the Lake dispersed throughout the City at the ends of its public streets.

The Black River meanders through the City providing locations for over 1,000 public and private boat slips, four full service municipal marinas including two with boat sales, and four commercial charter fishing locations for the general public. Over twenty charter boats operate out of the Black River ranging from large commercial perch fishing boats to sailboats and water taxis. Over eight-tenths of a mile of River frontage is available to the public, most of which is downstream of the Dyckman Avenue bridge over the Black River. With the completion of the Riverfront Walk, the public can enjoy a walk from North Beach to South Beach pier heads. This walk of approximately two miles is provided by publicly-owned lands, easements through private property and access next to private-owned River frontage. One of the segments of the walk on South Beach includes the renovated and lighted catwalk that was finished in 1991.

### **Beaches and Public Access Points**

*North Beach* - The City's North Beach has over sixteen hundred lineal feet of Lake Michigan frontage with nearly ten acres of beach. The beach has parking spaces, bathrooms, a concession stand, and access to the north pier.

*South Beach* - The South Beach is located directly across the Black River channel from the North Beach. It has over two thousand lineal feet of frontage on Lake Michigan and approximately ten acres of beach. South Beach is adjacent to and connected to the downtown by the City's Riverfront Development. There are beach volleyball courts



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and new playground equipment. This beach is the location of the South Pierhead Light. Established in 1903, this lighthouse is still operational and has an original catwalk which is one of only four originals in the State of Michigan.

Modern navigational aids means the U.S. Coast Guard no longer needs the lighthouse so the Historical Association of South Haven (HASH) stepped forward to become the guardian of this important piece of local history.



*Packard Park* - The park is approximately three acres owned by the Public School system and leased by the City of South Haven and is maintained through the Parks Commission. The park has a beach on over three hundred feet of frontage on Lake Michigan, public restrooms, and parking.

*Public Access Points* - The City has four Lake Michigan public access points on the north side of the Black River. These access points are at Woodman Street, Oak Street, Dyckman Avenue, and Newcomb Street. The four public access points to Lake Michigan on the south side of the Black River are located at the ends of Water Street, Van Buren Street, South Haven Street, and Apache Court. The lands abutting all of the access points on the south side are identified as high risk erosion areas under the Shorelands and Protection and Management Act.

### City Parks

*Monroe Playground Park* - The four acre park is located on the bluff above South Beach and is connected to the beach by a stairway. Amenities include renovated bathroom facilities, a ball diamond, a large wooden play structure and a pavilion.





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*Stanley Johnston Park* - This eight acre park is located on a bluff above the Black River. Amenities include a picnic structure, bathroom facilities, a playground, basketball court, tree-lined walks, and a view of the City's harbor and downtown. The City's major fairs, including the Art Fair and Craft Fair are held here during the Fourth of July and Labor Day weekends.

*Tot Lot at Optimist Park* - The one and a half acre Tot Lot includes play equipment, bathrooms, and a small softball field. It is located in the northeastern section of the City.

*Elkenburg Park* - This one and a half acre park is located in the southwest section of town. Amenities include basketball courts, a ball diamond, a playground, and a public picnic area with bathroom facilities.

*Hubbard Park* - This park is an undeveloped park of approximately one acre of land in the southeast portion of the City.

*Dyckman Park* - This park located downtown is a landscaped picnic area with public restrooms.

*Riverfront Park* - This 1,800 foot linear park along Black River is adjacent to the City's downtown. It provides access from the downtown to the City's South Beach. The park amenities include a picnic area, the Black River Marina with forty slips, parking, and public restrooms. The park is the focal point of the annual Harborfest and Blueberry Festival events and hosts weekly concerts in the summer.



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*Black River Park and Marina* - This Park includes a boat launching facility with 10 launch ramps. It is located in the center of the City. It has 60 docks for boats up to twenty-six feet in length, 125 parking spaces for vehicles with trailers, additional public parking, public restrooms, and over four acres of park land with playgrounds and landscaped areas. Additions to the Park in 2003 included new docks, a new restroom facility, a fishing dock, and additional parking and landscaping.

### **Public Boating Facilities**

*South Haven Municipal Marinas* - The four municipal marinas in South Haven are the Southside Marina, Northside Marina, Black River Park Marina, and Museum Marina. These offer 229 boat slips for seasonal or transient boaters plus 550 feet for side tie dockage, additional space for boats up to sixty feet in length within finger piers, and accommodation for larger boats through the use of the head dock. Marina services include seasonal and transient dockage, bathrooms, laundry facilities, covered picnic areas, boardwalks, and other public amenities.

### **South Haven School Recreation Facilities**

*L.C. Mohr High School* - The athletic field at the High School is in the south central section of the City. The facility has twenty-one acres of land with four ball diamonds, five tennis courts, a practice football/soccer field, bleachers, dugouts, bathrooms, and concession areas. The High School has many indoor facilities that are used by the community for recreation such as a swimming pool and gym.

*Ratcliffe Field* - This field of approximately six acres is the home of the High School football stadium and varsity/JV soccer and track. In addition to the track and football fields, the park has public restrooms and a concession stand. It is in the southeast part of the City.



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*Packard Park* - Packard Park is owned by the public school system, but leased and operated by the City of South Haven.

*Maple Grove School* - The School has an undeveloped site of about ten acres.

*Elementary Schools* - There are recreational and playground facilities at each of the four elementary schools.

*Baseline Middle School* - The new middle school was completed in 1993 on a twenty acre site. It has a new gymnasium, locker rooms, grandstands, a stage area, a baseball diamond, soccer/football practice field, and four tennis courts.

*The Armory* - South Haven Schools purchased the former Michigan National Guard Armory and 10-acre site after it was declared surplus property. The building is located on Aylsworth Avenue next to the high school and Lincoln Elementary and is considered a strategic location for a wide range of possible future district uses. The site could be used for sports practice fields.

### **South Haven Area Regional Park (SHARP)**

In 2001, the first meeting of SHARP took place with the purpose of creating an outdoor recreational park for area youth and adults sports programs. The land selected for the park is located east of I-196 in the northwest corner of 71<sup>st</sup> Street and 103<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Casco Township (ref. Map 5-7). Although owned by the City of South Haven, area governments, including Allegan County, Casco Township, South Haven Township and Geneva Township, showed support for the project through signed resolutions.

While the park will have an emphasis on sports recreation, plans also include areas for passive recreation and natural resource maintenance. Anticipated amenities include soccer and football fields, softball and baseball fields, tennis courts, bicycle trails and a



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concession stand. Thirteen acres will be set aside for walking, picnicking and other, less competitive recreation.

### **Civic Groups**

There are 91 civic groups and churches within the South Haven area including the Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, Steelheaders and Scott Club. These organizations use the recreational facilities of the area, and many provide contributions to the maintenance and funding of these facilities. Some even provide recreational opportunities such as the self-guided walking tour of historical buildings downtown offered by the Historical Association of South Haven.

### **State Recreation Facilities**

*Kal-Haven Trail* - This is a 33 mile non-motorized trail located on an old railroad right-of-way which connects the eastern outskirts of the City with the Kalamazoo area, and the countryside to the northeast. The Kal-Haven Trail is a popular linear park which has an estimated 90,000 users annually. The Trail terminates on the east side of South Haven providing the area with an excellent recreational facility for biking, hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling.

*Van Buren Trail* - This trail is a 13 mile stretch of former railroad from the City of South Haven to the City of Hartford and will be linked to the Kal-Haven trail through the City of South Haven.

*Van Buren State Park* - The Van Buren State Park is popular for its three-quarter mile stretch of beautiful sandy beach and dunes. The Park has 220 campsites and provides modern facilities. The picnic area, and Lake Michigan beach and dunes, are a five-minute walk from the campground. The Van Buren State Park is located only five miles from the City of South Haven and provides an excellent camping and picnicking site.



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## Private Recreational Facilities

Private facilities provide full service marinas and boat launching. There are two private yacht clubs. All private facilities combined have approximately two miles of frontage on the Black River. The number of condominium and private commercial boat slips is about equal.

Within and near the City of South Haven are a variety of privately owned recreational facilities including three golf courses, riding stables, bicycle rentals, watercraft rentals, a three-screen theater, lodging, shopping and other recreation-oriented businesses.

In the summer and early fall months many private agricultural facilities offer opportunities for public recreation. Cider mills and wineries are located near to the City along with farmers markets and U-pick farms. These offer an abundant variety of fruits and vegetables to harvest along with children's corn mazes, areas for relaxation, and packing plant tours.

## RECREATION NEEDS

The following recreational needs are identified in the 2008 Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Paddle Plan and through subsequent citizen input during the development of this Plan.

- A regulation soccer field
- Walking/jogging space
- Additional baseball diamonds
- Additional restrooms at various parks
- Replace various play structures at various parks to meet current safety standards
- Outdoor exercise facilities for adults
- Additional storage for equipment, supplies, and materials
- Connect gaps in the sidewalk network and upgrade ramps to be ADA compliant





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- A comprehensive bike path system to link the downtown and beach areas to the Kal-Haven Trail and to Van Buren State Park
- A bike path system through the entire City focusing on potential routes identified in the 2009 Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Paddle Plan
- Additional public parking and handicap accessibility at the public beaches and parks
- Fishing piers and structures in addition to the Riverfront Park
- Complete the Riverfront Walk through the downtown area and include interpretive displays and exercise areas
- Improvements to the former Coast Guard property to provide additional picnic areas and views of the Black River and Lake Michigan
- Improvement at the North and South Beaches in playground and picnic equipment, concessions, restrooms, parking areas, and handicap accessibility for North Beach
- Additional boat launching facilities to meet the weekend demand
- Development of a non-motorized watercraft (sailboats, sailboards and kayaks) launch facility at Packard Park, separate from the beaches
- Provide additional paddle craft launch and docking areas per the 2009 Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Paddle Plan
- Improve existing neighborhood areas for winter sledding
- Renovate existing basketball courts and build additional courts
- Provide additional soccer fields
- The City of South Haven needs additional tennis courts and renovation of existing facilities
- A Park is needed at the north end of the City, to serve the community along Base Line Road
- Renovation of parks on Wilson Street (Tot Lot) and Elkenburg Park on Elkenburg Street is needed



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- Improvement is also desired at Newcomb Street, to permit better access to Lake Michigan
- Repairs to Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum including construction of a new barn and greenhouse

According to the City of South Haven Recreation Plan, the National Parks and Recreation Association Standards recommend ten acres of parks and recreational facilities for each 1,000 population. The City and School's facilities would meet that goal for the year-round population of South Haven, however, tourist use and use by persons outside the City reduces park acreage below contemporary standards.

The basic standards are not met when considering particular neighborhoods of the City, especially those that serve small children and families. Particular neighborhoods with deficiencies in small parks include the southeast section of the City bounded by Blue Star Highway on the east, LaGrange Street on the west and Phoenix Street on the north. The park in that area is undeveloped.

South Haven Public Schools have limited recreation space. Because of the demands by the community for recreation, improvements are needed.



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## **SECTION ONE: A SHARED VISION**

The vision statement presented below attempts to describe South Haven as residents in 2010 would like it to be 20 years into the future. Each of the elements within the statement has been organized into topic areas which are each elaborated upon in the text that follows. What emerges when all sections are read together is a complete image of South Haven as residents would like it to be in 2030. Following this first section of Chapter Six are the goals and objectives that chart a path for achieving this vision each of which also includes a list of action steps for implementation. Specific policies complete the Chapter to provide a clear direction for future decisions, both short and long term, to achieve the vision. When reading this, it is necessary to mentally “transport” yourself twenty years into the future and describe what you see. This approach is intended to give the reader a clearer sense of South Haven’s desired future.

### **The City of South Haven’s Vision Statement**

The residents of South Haven enjoy a rich quality of life year-round within a City that has maintained its small town character and a vibrant downtown as its heart. The downtown and community is supported by a variety of solid neighborhoods and business centers offering housing diversity and business opportunity. It is a City set within a beautiful natural setting having an extensive park system with many scenic overlooks, and over three miles of shoreline/beach frontage directly on Lake Michigan. South Haven’s signature light house marks the City’s entrance from the lake at the mouth of the Black River into an extensive harbor/marina that is immediately adjacent to the downtown area.



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## INTRODUCTION

Satisfying the myriad needs, desires and dreams of residents and businesses is a tall order for any community to fill. Undaunted by the urban to rural population movement and industry shifts occurring throughout the State, the City of South Haven has moved into the 21st century as one of the most desirable places to live and work within Michigan. Residents and businesses in South Haven enjoy a rich quality of life and are reaping the benefits of commitments made years ago. The alluring characteristics that initially attracted residents to the City have not only been maintained over time, but enhanced.

Beginning in 1994, proactive initiatives were undertaken which went well beyond common practice of the day in order to retain, and attract people and business to the City. The results of this hard work are obvious to visitors and residents alike. The buzz word of planning in the 1990's was sustainability (meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs). The City of South Haven has become a true reflection of sustainability.

### **Small Town Character - Images, Impressions, Quality of Life**

The charm of the small town atmosphere embraces visitors as they arrive in the City. The unique waterfront setting is readily apparent as one frequently glimpses Lake Michigan and the Black River while traveling along the City's tree lined streets.

When discussing a visit to the City, terms like "historic," "unique," "charming" and "beautiful" are often used, and they apply just as well today as they did 20 years ago. However, a visitor would be surprised to discover that new growth and development has occurred in various forms and locations throughout the City, reinforcing the small town character rather than detracting from it. Physical modifications to the landscape (especially of views, open spaces, vegetation, and along the water's edge), have



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been minimized by the consensus decision of community leaders to accommodate growth by planned incremental expansion of City borders in cooperation with abutting Townships, and by encouraging thoughtfully integrated new development, and redevelopment, in select locations within the City.

This philosophy has been applied to both residential and non-residential development. Avoiding congestion while maintaining physical and visual integrity of the neighborhoods and downtown was a primary objective of the City's proactive development strategy.

A key aspect of community character has been the conscious effort to maintain and enhance physical linkages (i.e. roadways, pathways, sidewalks, etc.) throughout the City. New developments have been designed to complement existing transportation systems which serve the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles safely and efficiently.

Commercial and industrial developments continue planned expansion as the need and opportunity exist. They are separated or buffered from residential areas to minimize conflicts and to encourage efficient travel patterns.

### **Downtown - The City's Heart**

City officials long ago recognized that for a downtown to remain vital and "alive", it must be a place where citizens and businesses want to be. In achieving that end, City leaders recognized they had a solid historical heritage on which to build. Using that heritage as the foundation, a number of initiatives were undertaken which together have created the results evident today. Downtown has been revitalized as the center for community, business, and resort activity.





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Physical renewal is evident throughout downtown, building on the architectural heritage which was evident in the early 20th century. Convenient, easy and inexpensive transportation shuttles people from City neighborhoods to the downtown and parking is plentiful around its edges.

Pedestrian linkages have been strengthened between downtown and the River, encouraging pedestrian movement throughout the central city. Community events make the downtown the place to be on a regular basis. Complimenting and supporting the physical and functional renewal of the central city has been the growth in cultural experiences available to residents and visitors. The Maritime Museum, established in 1975, has catapulted the City to national prominence as the archivist and curator for Great Lakes history and artifacts. Numerous publications have profiled the museum and its staff, applauding its research and education value to all those living in the Great Lakes region. Only within South Haven can a visitor relive Great Lakes history at the museum and also visit actual shipwrecks off the City's shore. The State of Michigan has designated waters adjacent to the City as a freshwater preserve, the first of its kind in the nation. Underwater divers from around the country have visited South Haven to take advantage of this unique combination of educational and personal discovery about the Great Lakes and its history.



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South Haven's Center for the Arts is also recognized as one of the State's best. Together with the quality of life in South Haven, the arts have flourished as a strong component of this City. Artists throughout the State often spend their summer months in South Haven reflecting on the unique physical and natural characteristics the community has to offer. These same characteristics are significant draws to numerous out-of-towners as they visit the City's downtown. Uniquely designed as a meeting place, its focus offers both a business and leisure setting, a combination unique to southwestern Michigan. This focus has helped South Haven become an all season community, strengthening the downtown business environment in the winter as well as summer months. The City has become well known for its winter activities and festivals, attracting thousands from throughout the Midwest.

Coordinated business hours, physical improvements and customer convenience have all contributed to the vibrancy of the downtown. The enchantment of visiting the core of this City is a result of its physical setting and early heritage. Structures and places of historical and architectural significance have been renewed and serve as reinforcing elements to the downtown's central character. The downtown today is a vital, exciting and active place where sidewalks are lined with shops and full of people. Parks, plazas and streets lined with stately trees welcome visitors and residents alike, while art is evident in all public spaces. The urban setting of downtown has been balanced with the more natural setting provided by the Black River, creating a dramatic backdrop for an attractive and memorable place. The philosophy has been, and continues to be, downtown is a destination which is built for people, both residents and visitors. So far, it appears that this objective has been satisfied.



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### **A City of Neighborhoods – Diversity**

City leaders long ago recognized that accommodating a diversity of life styles was critical to the long term vibrancy and strength of the City. They realized that housing choices and a variety of living environments would strengthen the City over time.

New single family subdivisions have developed around the City's edges, meeting the needs of younger families, while condominiums and cluster housing offer flexible choices for an aging population. Whether residing in one of the City's older neighborhoods or a new subdivision, a key feature of in-town living has been its system of physical linkages - to its parks, downtown, the River and the lakefront. While autos are still the dominant mode of transportation, residents and visitors have other transportation options because of the City's emphasis on people (not cars). A walk or bicycle trip through the City is truly a pleasurable experience, not one fraught with conflicts, confusion and unsafe crossings.

The rejuvenation of the City's older neighborhoods is evident as one travels through the City. This is in part due to significant reinvestment in enhancing neighborhood environments but also, to strict enforcement of the City building, housing and rental codes. Working with local residents, the City has developed programs which encourage property owners to reinvest in their homes, and at the same time, to take pride in their neighborhoods. The result has been dramatic as programs such as Neighborhood Watch and Neighborhood Pride are flourishing throughout the City. As a result, many of the City's least expensive neighborhoods have become some of the most popular for first time home buyers.

At the same time, living within and adjacent to the City's downtown has also become popular. This City's efforts over a decade ago to encourage more residential redevelopment in and around downtown has paid significant dividends in terms of



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strengthening the vibrancy of the downtown as a living environment. Central city housing has been and continues to be a means for further strengthening the vitality of downtown.

### **Natural Setting - Quality of Life and a City of Options**

Blessed with over 3 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, 2 miles of shoreline along the Black River, nearby golf courses, the Kal-Haven Trail, Van Buren State Park and other physical assets, the City has long served as a recreational base for surrounding communities and the larger region as well. Recognizing that one of its greatest assets lies in its physical setting, the City has built upon that base over the past twenty years to establish one of the most diverse and comprehensive recreational programs found in the State. Public accessibility to the water has been enhanced and the unique open spaces in the City have been preserved.

The City has retained its popularity as a major recreational port, accommodating boating enthusiasts from the region and surrounding states. The demand for boat slips have more than doubled over the past twenty years as the recreational focus of the City has grown. A walk along the River continues to be one of the most popular pastimes in the City, with the unique opportunity to shop, picnic, fish, or relax, and view the constant activity generated by more than 1000 boats in a single location. Water-related recreational opportunities have been complimented by everything from neighborhood parks and bike trails to museums, offering a full range of opportunities to both residents and visitors. South Haven has truly become a City of parks over the years, providing a quality of life to its residents that is unparalleled in the west side of Michigan.

The Lakeshore Convention and Visitors Bureau, together with the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce have coordinated efforts to make the out-of-towner, whether



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a businessman or vacationer, feel welcome within the community. Throughout the City, information centers can be found featuring data on South Haven area attractions as well as maps to help the visitor find their way. In concert, these organizations have also been instrumental in bringing back day-tripper boats, creating ferry service across the River and developing the successful water shuttle service between South Haven and Chicago.

Of special significance is the realization that while the City has maximized the value of recreational opportunities offered by its physical assets, it has joined forces with the School District and surrounding jurisdictions to establish one of the most comprehensive regional recreation programs found in the State. Because of the rural nature of the surrounding resort community, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing are all available near the City, enhancing its reputation as an all-season community.

The South Haven Community Foundation has also been a strong presence in area efforts involving recreation enhancement and development. The Foundation makes grants available to local non-profit organizations that seek to enhance the quality of life through education, economic development, arts and culture.

Recent grants provided by the Foundation have benefited the South Haven Center for the Arts, the South Haven Memorial Library, Elkenburg Park Enhancements and the South Haven Area Regional Park.

### **A City of Opportunity - Economic Development**

During a period when cities throughout the State struggle to retain their economic base and stability, South Haven has achieved an unprecedented goal - a strong flourishing economy. Back in 1992, the City appointed its first economic development director and began an aggressive economic development program aimed at retention, expansion and attraction of business and industry within the City. The primary objective was to





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create and maintain a healthy and growing economy in the South Haven community. To appreciate the success of this initiative one need only to visit the City's industrial district. Over 150 acres have been developed for industry since 1980, during a period when rural green-field development has dominated the landscape throughout the rest of the State.

Strong community values and quality-of-life offered by the City have certainly been part of the equation in the attraction of over a thousand new jobs to the City since 1992. Of special significance however, has been the City's foresight in setting the stage for sustained economic growth and expansion. Reuse of older industrial facilities within the City has been highly successful as a result of land assembly, site clean-up and physical renewal of underutilized industrial properties. The creation of flexible development options, ranging from geographic location and parcel size to incentive packages, have also been key ingredients of the job creation program. The City's marketing program, which proactively solicits business and industry, has also been a significant factor in the City's success.

The Michigan Jobs Commission has been using South Haven's program success as a model for other communities throughout the State. Advertising, direct mail, face-to-face visits and trade show participation have all been components of the program. Of prime importance, however, in achieving success, has been the City's ambassador program. Working with business executives who already have invested in the community, the City has encouraged their active participation in touting the unique benefits and advantages of small town living in a supportive working environment.

Also of significance, has been the City's ability to satisfy the basic infrastructure, service and locational parameters demanded by business and industry today.



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By continually reinvesting in itself in terms of sewer and water systems, utilities and transportation, the City has the capability of demonstrating it is ready, and capable, of satisfying both basic industry requirements and quality-of-life criteria on par with any community in western Michigan.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION/COORDINATION**

An agreement between the City of South Haven, Casco and South Haven Townships is a model which is being duplicated statewide. The basis for this agreement is a shared set of policies structured around a common vision of the future which serves as a framework for decision making between governmental entities.

The common vision recognizes the autonomy of each unit of government but establishes a mechanism for dealing with issues of greater than local concern. It is founded on the dual principles of respect and cooperation on issues of mutual interest. Parochialism no longer prevents achievement of area-wide interests, yet the individuality and uniqueness of each is retained.

Coordination of costs, timetables, responsibilities and resources to continue upgrading the quality of life of the area are all included as an integral part of these cooperative policies. All public services and facilities are included. State and private participation has added significantly to the coordination process.

While local land use decisions are guided by local zoning standards, issues of greater than local concern are subject to input from surrounding local governments before a final decision is made. Special ad hoc committees are established to aid communication among local governments in this process and to ensure adequate public participation. This program has significantly contributed not only to the success exhibited by the City over the years in achieving its long term goals, but also that of the



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entire region as one of the most popular living, working and recreating areas in the entire State.

## **SECTION TWO: 2010 GOALS & OBJECTIVES WITH ACTION STEPS**

Following are goals and objectives which translate the vision statement into key elements which must be achieved in order for the vision statement to become a reality. After each objective are a list of action steps that should be taken to achieve the objective. There are also many different policies which could be initiated / developed in order for these goals and objectives to be realized. Policies are listed in the next major section of this chapter. (Measurable actions which should be either ongoing or high priority for the Planning Commission are highlighted in red.)

### **I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **I.A. Goal: Encourage and facilitate a healthy and growing economy in the South Haven area.**

1. *Objective: Strengthen South Haven's 12 month economy.*
  - a. Conduct a market survey of the region's economy to determine markets for business, industry, residential, tourism, second homes, recreation, and pleasure boating uses
  - b. Strengthen Schools, healthcare, senior living options
  - c. Buy locally when possible to help develop the economy
  - d. Encourage local people to shop downtown by establishing consistent hours with stores that stay open longer, and attract year round businesses that meet local needs.
  
2. *Objective: Embrace the agricultural community as a valuable local industry (ex. farmer's market, farming supply stores, fruit and vegetable processing)*



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*and cold storage, agricultural related festivals, spin off industries).*

- a. Develop agricultural and historical tourism in the region, supporting farmers market, farm tours, farm stands. Work in partnership with local organizations such as the Historical Association of South Haven, Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum, Maritime Museum and the South Haven Center for the Arts.
  - b. Establish a Kitchen Incubator for value added products for farmers marketing throughout the region.
  - c. Encourage local businesses and restaurants to sell local agricultural products (i.e.: wines, fruits, vegetables etc.)
3. *Objective: Attract high tech industry with an educated workforce.*
- a. Utilize Lake Michigan College to encourage establishment of technical and educational support programs which match residents with industry needs.
  - b. Promote the college locally keeping citizens informed of programs and opportunities.
4. *Objective: Create new jobs through retention and expansion of existing employers and the attraction of new companies.*
- a. Identify and target businesses and develop recruitment programs for businesses with year round employment needs.
  - b. Establish a contact person within City Hall that will listen to business needs and work to get those needs met.
  - c. Continue an aggressive business and industrial development marketing program to support business attraction and retention and use financial incentives for businesses.
  - d. Talk to people with second homes in South Haven that own businesses



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- elsewhere and encourage them to bring their businesses here. Create a brochure with contact information. Create a DVD of the community as a marketing tool, include the school system, downtown, industrial parks, healthcare and put this video on website.
- e. Develop interactive links on the City's web site that shows data on local and regional demographics and market research.
5. *Objective: Cooperate with surrounding jurisdictions to establish sufficient land zoned to accommodate new and expanding business and manufacturing, and continue to look at expansion of industrial and commercial properties.*
- a. Discuss with the surrounding communities the possibility of establishing a joint planning effort to identify properties that can be used for economic development purposes.
  - b. Explore a Joint Brownfield Redevelopment Authority with townships.
  - c. Develop additional "425" type agreements (agreements that set forth certain criteria and typically involve annexation of lands) to develop industrial parks.
  - d. Purchase unused/blighted industrial land in City and encourage redevelopment.
6. *Objective: Continue to upgrade and enhance the transportation and infrastructure system to meet the needs of business and industry.*
- a. In-home businesses should be encouraged in the city provided that increased traffic, noise or other annoyances do not negatively affect the surrounding neighborhood.
  - b. Find out what infrastructure is needed for home based businesses and determine how the City can encourage telecommuting.
  - c. Make sure we have enough broadband internet resources.





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- d. Improve vehicle and pedestrian entries to the community at Phoenix St., M-140, and Blue Star Highway.
- e. Reduce the impact of truck traffic through downtown on Phoenix St.

### **I. B. Goal: Promote tourism as an important part of South Haven's economy.**

1. *Objective: Recognize, reinforce and strengthen South Haven's role as a resort and tourist community serving the mid-west.*
  - a. Apply market survey data to target tourist types and develop a tourism promotion strategy.
  - b. Maintain communication with the South Haven Convention and Visitors Bureau and South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce.
  - c. Coordinate efforts for regional tourism economic development efforts.
  
2. *Objective: Maintain the Harbor and preserve marine services to attract boaters and tourists, while improving and maintaining facilities which provide public access to public waterfronts.*
  - a. Conduct survey of existing marine services and identify issues and opportunities for improvement
  - b. Obtain a 10 year dredging permit and create a maintenance plan for the river and the part of the harbor in turning basin area that is not done by the Army Corps.
  - c. Encourage private investment in dredging equipment.
  
3. *Objective: Maintain a high level of hospitality and service for residents and tourists alike.*
  - a. Create hospitality training programs for jobs related to the tourist industry.
  - b. Find out what second home owners want, how to cater to them for services, etc. Contact them through the City monthly newsletter (Waves)



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redesign the Waves to attract more readers. Focus each issue on one thing. Possibly have future articles in Waves be written by different groups.

- c. Identify a satellite parking area during the summer season and festivals with frequent and reliable shuttle routes.
- d. Review seasonal police staffing

### **I. C. Goal: Establish and maintain a desirable community with a high quality of life where talented people want to live, work and play.**

1. *Objective: Promote brownfield cleanup and redevelopment.*
  - a. Establish a regional brownfield authority
  - b. Conduct an inventory of existing and suspected brownfield sites
  - c. Create a priority list of brownfield sites
  - d. Pursue funds to clean up brownfield sites
  - e. Have a plan and time line to clean up contaminated City owned properties
2. *Objective: Strengthen the diversity of shopping, recreational, entertainment, and cultural opportunities available to all visitors and residents.*
  - a. Identify weaknesses in the venues above, by conducting a market survey.
  - b. Work with community stake holders to develop a plan to fill the identified needs
3. *Objective: Promote development and redevelopment that is in harmony with the natural environment.*
  - a. Review the zoning ordinance regulations associated with the clearing of trees, drainage and wetlands, back filling of dunes
  - b. Adopt Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED): Green



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Building rating certification principles for City buildings where economically feasible and explore methods to make people aware of the economic advantages.

c. **Night sky lighting – Require exterior lighting to be angled downward**

d. Develop an environmental framework plan for the region that identifies opportunities for upgrading the environment through preservation, applying green technology, improved recycling programs, code enforcement

4. *Objective: Maintain the existing housing stock in the City of South Haven.*

a. Maintain strong code enforcement.

## **II. GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

### **II. A. Goal: Manage growth to enhance the community's year-round livability.**

1. *Objective: Promote development that is in scale with the fabric of the community.*

a. **Involve the public in the drafting and adoption of amendments to the zoning ordinance necessary to implement the growth management principles of this plan**

b. Find a solution for the parking issues in Monroe Park

c. Suggest that Monroe Park become a historic district

d. **If an addition is greater than a certain percentage of the existing home size, then the property must provide all required parking.**

e. **Specific Zoning Ordinance modifications may include:**

- **Set limits on interior floor square footage of new homes based on lot area.**
- **Size of homes should be appropriate to the neighborhood.**



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- Limit footprint of homes
- Tie height limit to provided setbacks
- Include paving in lot coverage calculation
- Require green landscaped area, as a percentage of permeable surface
- Reduce lot coverage limits (to provide more green space)
- Require that parking spaces are individually accessible
- Review "one wall left standing" building code policy
- Provide a method for retaining runoff on property
- Look at zoning code in regards to front porches and decks as related to setbacks

### f. Monroe Park Action Steps

- Establish a maximum volume for homes so that people do not go to the extremes of what is permitted currently.
- Parking should be based on square footage of house.
- Additions should require more parking
- Use an illustration of a large volume house next to a small cottage to illustrate how buildings of a large volume are out of character in Monroe Park
- Evaluate the potential for completely pedestrianizing Monroe Park, no cars.

2. *Objective: Achieve harmony between new development and adjacent land uses.*

- a. Review transitional land use districts
- b. Establish more extensive buffering requirements
- c. Review traffic impacts



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3. *Objective: Upgrade infrastructure by focusing on "green" environmental technology and design.*
  - a. Encourage rain gardens for stormwater management.
  - b. Modify water rates to encourage water conservation
  - c. Develop a renewable energy policy on an economical base
  - d. Encourage renewable energy generation, renegotiate AEP contract to allow electrical generation.
  
4. *Objective: Promote high quality development through design standards and overlay districts.*
  - a. Consider an overlay district for Monroe Park to better address, parking requirements, heights and setbacks.
  - b. Build utilities with City crews
  - c. Remove private utility option from utility policy

## **II. B. Goal: Create zoning requirements that address future development & growth as it pertains to the Master Plan**

1. *Objective: Utilize the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that development is in keeping with the City's Master Plan.*
  - a. Review and revise the PUD provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to establish density and other development standards.
  - b. Study the concept of Form Based Zoning.
  - c. Have the Planning Commission review the zoning ordinance to determine how to define and calculate a half story.
  - d. Review building volume based on lot size.
  - e. Make sure that new and renovated homes still fit the character of the homes in the surrounding neighborhood.
  - f. Review on-site parking requirements and lot coverage.



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g. Single family structures must meet current zoning standards of 2 parking spaces when they are enlarged.

h. Calculate parking based on the square footage of houses.

2. *Objective: Manage land uses to achieve a balance of housing growth and non-residential growth while minimizing negative impacts and conflicts.*

a. Examine and strengthen site plan requirements for green setbacks, fencing, and landscaping between abutting land uses

b. Utilize data incorporated in this plan to help determine how much residential, commercial, industrial etc. is needed and rezone appropriately.

3. *Objective: Retain appropriate public space to preserve and strengthen the views to and from the water while reinforcing a human scale and natural environment.*

a. Identify all public property on or adjacent to water that contributes to the public enjoyment of views. Prioritize each parcel for its value for preservation. Enhance views on these parcels.

b. Identify parcels that should be considered for acquisition to improve views to valued assets.

c. Manage City owned properties to improve views.

## **III. PROVIDE OUTSTANDING CITY SERVICES**

### **III. A. Goal: Maintain a high level of efficiency and quality.**

1. *Objective: Focus on standards and their enforcement to ensure that the community property values are protected and enhanced and a high quality of life is maintained.*





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- a. Parking enforcement needs to be strengthened, snow removal, garbage cans left out, etc.
  - b. Review Homestead properties to see if they are valid homesteads and if not they will be subject to additional tax according to State law.
2. *Objective: Provide comprehensive and cost effective police protection, fire protection and ambulance service.*
  - a. Review staffing and roles of each for redundancy and/or cost effectiveness.
3. *Objective: Maintain cost effective and efficient electrical, water, sanitary and storm systems adequate to service South Haven and its neighboring communities.*
  - a. Promote water conservation.
  - b. Review the utility policy regarding who may construct public utilities and the construction standards to be met.
4. *Objective: Improve and maintain City Hall to make it more customer-friendly.*
  - a. Make City Hall more ADA accessible
  - b. Make ramp at rear entrance.
5. *Objective: Promote high quality customer service.*
  - a. Implement ongoing customer service training
  - b. Evaluate customer service input forms
6. *Objective: Encourage strong communication practices between City staff, City Manager, Boards, Commissions, and Authorities.*
  - a. Increase efficiency in the project and policy review process.
  - b. Build confidence in the developer and resident communities.



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## **III. B. Goal: Maintain and upgrade infrastructure and transportation systems within the City to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.**

1. *Objective: Identify and complete necessary sidewalk, road, water, and sewer maintenance and improvement projects.*

- a. Fill in “gaps” within sidewalk system.
- b. Develop an alternative pedestrian access across the river, possibly widen sidewalk on bridge and better manage traffic over and on bridge.
- c. Continue to implement the Capital Improvement Program
- d. Add sidewalk requirements to Zoning Ordinance. Establish specific requirements for approving sidewalk agreements to reduce the number of sidewalk agreements granted.

2. *Objective: Study options to upgrade the waste water treatment operations to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding area.*

- a. Add additional landscaping and screening
- b. Evaluate new technologies
- c. Reduce inflow into system
- d. Improve water quality

3. *Objective: Improve signage and routing into town along major streets into the City.*

- a. Identify route to boat launch along Wells St.
- b. Add additional signage for direction to the North side for wayfinding and traffic control.
- c. Provide wayfinding signage at the Blue Star Hwy. to direct visitors to area attractions.



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4. *Objective: Build new sidewalks to achieve a more walkable community especially around schools. (Refer to Bicycle, Pedestrian and Paddle Plan)*

- a. Implement sidewalk/paddle plan
- b. Evaluate and revise sidewalk ordinance.
- c. Create routes to school and send letters to people on the route to inform them that they are on the route and to request that they clear their sidewalks, also recruit volunteers to clear these routes. Coordinate with the schools.
- d. Work with schools to get Safe Routes to Schools grants.

5. *Objective: Expand the City's network of trails and walkways to strengthen the link between downtown, the community, and the river.*

6. *Objective: Establish and maintain expanded public transportation options within the City.*

- a. Investigate river crossing modes for pedestrians across the river using a Chain ferry and or water taxi's, and widen Dyckman Bridge for pedestrians.
- b. Identify a satellite parking area during the summer season and festivals
- c. Encourage & promote Van Buren County Transit for convenient commuting and shuttle services.

7. *Objective: Establish infrastructure standards and ensure that they are followed.*

- a. Approve a "Complete Streets Policy" for all users.
- b. Require conformance to City engineering standards when private contractors build infrastructure and have oversight by City Engineers.
- c. Follow best engineering practices for infrastructure design and construction.
- d. Establish "dark sky" standards for lighting on public property.



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## III. C. Goal: Improve cooperation and coordination between surrounding jurisdictions and the City.

1. *Objective: Support a region-wide public transportation system that connects to rail and airport services.*

- a. Continue to support the Van Buren county bus transportation services

2. *Objective: Support economical 911 dispatch services.*

- a. Support regional 911 system
- b. City should continue to review 911 services to keep up with modern technology.
- c. Cell phone and Voice IP (voice over internet provider) compatibility needs to be integrated

3. *Objective: Educate the public on the achievements in regional cooperation.*

- a. Create broader use of existing communication tools, better utilize the City website, cable channel programming, and the City monthly news letter "Waves".
- b. Have educational speakers go to various public groups to discuss examples of regional cooperation.

4. *Objective: Investigate coordination of police services.*

- a. Fairly share services and costs.

5. *Objective: Coordinate control of access and curb cuts on major thoroughfares.*

- a. Work with neighboring townships and road commissions
- b. Develop a set of policies for access management**



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6. *Objective: Promote a regional planning process to achieve common goals.*
  - a. Have at least one joint meeting a year between Planning Commissions of the City, Township, County, and regional agency to discuss regional planning.
  - b. Coordinate planning and zoning in border areas.
  - c. Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle links to townships and surrounding communities

## **IV. MAINTAIN SMALL TOWN CHARACTER**

### **IV. A. Goal: Strengthen, reinforce and enhance the character of the City's existing neighborhoods to promote stability and attract year-round residents.**

1. *Objective: Strengthen and reinforce the character of the City's existing neighborhoods and downtown.*
  - a. Evaluate policies for on-street parking regulations with a view toward safety.
  - b. Make lot width requirements match the historical lot widths of each neighborhood
  - c. Preserve a traditional downtown area
  - d. Adopt the State of Michigan Property Maintenance Code
  - e. Continue to enforce the Dangerous Building Ordinance to reduce blight and assure public safety.
2. *Objective: Maintain the tree canopy within the neighborhoods*
  - a. Review the city-wide maintenance and replacement program for trees on street right of ways and parks, to encourage tree canopies.
3. *Promoting a range of housing choices.*
  - a. Encourage housing choices for all income levels, also encourage multiple types of housing such as apartments, condos, single family, multifamily, senior



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living centers etc.

4. *Objective: Preserve the character of neighborhoods by maintaining the scale of the community by using appropriate standards on setbacks, height restrictions, and percent coverage limitations (including pavement).*

a. Examine existing ordinances and recommend changes to help preserve neighborhood character.

5. *Objective: Analyze seasonal housing market to better understand how changing seasonal demographics affect the housing market and how it impacts the provision of city services.*

a. Establish an appropriate rental ordinance.

b. Survey the second home market to determine the needs of these property owners.

6. *Objective: Maintain and enhance the natural beauty of the City, making its physical assets both accessible and memorable*

a. Create a planting and beautification program. Define specific key roads for beautification. Consider planting flowers in parkway along main roads. (ie: Phoenix St, Broadway St, M-43 etc.)

b. Improve crossings at busy roads

- Implement "Road Diets" by changing 4 and 5 lane roads to 3 lane roads with bike lanes, where the middle lane would be a left turn lane to improve beauty and safety along Bus. I-196 and M-43

- Make sure that all pedestrian crossing signals are timed appropriately to allow sufficient time for crossing the road at Broadway St and Phoenix St

- Work with MDOT to have blinking lights installed on Broadway St at Superior St to indicate there is a pedestrian crossing.





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- Continue experimenting with 4-way stops at Phoenix/Center and Phoenix/Kalamazoo to smooth out pedestrian and auto flows.

c. Improve beauty of entrances to the City and welcome signs

d. Improve beauty of dead end streets with scenic views. Refrain from vacating roads, especially those that have views and or access to water frontage. (ie: Indiana at Eagle St, South Haven St, Kentucky Ave, Lake Ct, Michigan Ave, Apache Ct, Beaver Ct, Chippewa Ct, Delaware Ct. etc.) Add amenities such as benches, landscaping, and picnic tables.

e. Identify, preserve and enhance properties with Lake Michigan and Black River frontage and views and improve accessibility.

- Trim trees appropriately at Riverfront Park for enhanced views of the lake and river.

7. *Objective: Encourage year round recreational, cultural and community activities.*

a. Build upon activities such as ice skating, the farmers market, the Performing Arts Center, the Foundry Performing Arts Center, the movie theater/film series, the South Haven Center for the Arts. Accommodate all ages in these activities.

b. Encourage cooperation between City and SHPS to share use of Listiak Theater at high school. Discuss a location downtown for a performing arts theater. Encourage Maritime Museum to have film series.

c. Encourage a cooperative planning process between groups to promote events and businesses that will attract people.

d. Create a route for snowmobilers on the Kal-Haven and Van Buren trails to downtown.

e. Encourage and support winter festivals and events.

8. *Objective: Encourage individual private property ownership, pride, and initiative through recognition programs to keep neighborhoods strong.*



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- a. Recognize the value of garden walk tours.
  - b. Develop a neighborhood recognition program for pride in ownership to identify home owners and businesses that make improvements to their properties, including monthly nominations and awards.
  - c. Define neighborhoods and include them in literature such as newsletters and promotional documents, include signage to identify these neighborhoods.
    - Sign at Elkenburg Park to identify Pleasant view Neighborhood with a logo.
    - Signs in neighborhoods with historic homes and buildings (ie: Pearl St. historic neighborhood.)
    - Neighborhood focus in the Waves
    - Provide historical information on homes/buildings
    - Holiday decoration awards
9. *Objective: Develop new housing in appropriate locations that are integrated with the community, sensitive to their setting, and attractive in design.*
- a. Improve Planned Unit Development ordinance, make sure developments are well planned out and phased appropriately
  - b. Develop design guideline illustrations for new housing development and its proper integration into an existing neighborhood. Provide multiple solutions to solving problems such as limiting water run-off.
  - c. Locate senior housing where retail and services are available.
  - d. Provide educational materials relating to good design principles. Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance does not prohibit good design

### **IV. B. Goal: Strengthen, reinforce, and enhance the vitality of the City's Downtown.**

1. *Objective: Promote downtown as a major center for commerce, culture, entertainment, and festivals within the region.*



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- a. Use market survey to identify opportunities for expanding commerce and adding new festivities in the region. Encourage regional cooperation.
  - b. Identify the missing businesses and services in the downtown to specifically attract year round residents to downtown.
2. *Objective: Develop new and improved tourist destination attractions / programs and supporting services within the downtown (festivals, restrooms with quality maintenance, shuttle services, hospitality programs, etc.)*
- a. Identify specific needs for physical and program changes to improve the function and attractiveness of City owned facilities.
  - b. Establish a joint festivals committee to identify strengths and weaknesses in the festival programs
  - c. Encourage uniform hours for downtown businesses, early bird specials and other promotions such as street musicians, October Fest, Gallery Openings etc. Promotions during “shoulder seasons”
  - d. Encourage groups such as the DDA, DASH, South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce etc. to promote community activities. Coordination between groups, businesses, non-profits, museums etc. (eg: restaurants recently worked with local non-profits by donating a portion of their revenue to the non-profits.)
  - e. Improve signage directing people to locations and amenities around downtown.
  - f. Add and improve restrooms, drinking fountains, and parking downtown.
3. *Objective: Continue ongoing Historic Preservation, Redevelopment and revitalization, and new infill development within downtown.*
- a. Identify opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization. (eg: acquire and demolish building on SW corner of Phoenix St and Broadway St. with the potential reuse of property for library expansion with some open space for improved view



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of downtown from Broadway St.)

b. Prepare a design guidelines manual for existing buildings and in fill buildings with possibly different guidelines for different areas of downtown illustrating the importance of historic preservation and complimentary public property/right-of-way improvements. (ie: Renovations and infill should fit the historic character of the downtown.)

c. **Require a minimum of 2 stories, require windows on ground floor.**

d. **Create a handbook for developers to follow for their projects**

e. Promote better use of upper floors in the downtown. Create a list of grants and incentives to distribute to developers and property owners. One barrier to residences on upper floors is a lack of available parking and the need for elevators.

f. Evaluate existing blank walls and suggest improvements using planters, murals etc. at especially visible corner properties.

g. **Planning Commission should review and adopt the DDA Streetscape Plan.**

4. *Objective: Encourage the diversity of shopping and entertainment opportunities in downtown through promotion and recruitment of downtown businesses.*

a. Utilize the expertise of our existing business community to identify short comings in product and service offerings in the downtown. Encourage cross marketing so that one business tells the customer where they can acquire products at another store.

b. Encourage some non-retail activity oriented places in the downtown. (Community Center, Children's museum, skate park, classes.)

c. Conduct survey of downtown shoppers and existing residents and second home owners to identify strengths and weaknesses in their downtown shopping experiences.

d. Prepare a DDA plan amendment according to the DDA State Act for



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marketing the downtown, and develop a recruiting plan for new businesses. Identify a City Staff member who will market downtown properties.

5. *Objective: Preserve the City's unique natural resources and view corridors as a means to promote growth and development downtown.*

a. Develop guideline illustrations showing the importance of view corridors to and from the downtown area. (eg: Kalamazoo St and Phoenix St view - building obstructs view on SW corner of Phoenix St and Broadway; Trees block view to draw people down side streets)

6. *Objective: Create a downtown environment which celebrates our waterfront, maintains / expands public access, and serves both water based and land based visitors.*

a. Promote and demonstrate the importance of our waterfront heritage as a catalyst to the community's economy.

b. Encourage improving and developing more dinghy docks

c. Encourage water taxis and or a pedestrian ferry crossing from the northside to the southside.

d. Continue developing and improving the HarborWalk. Try to get the HarborWalk closer to the river on the southside. Add HarborWalk directional signage and or create markings on the sidewalk or use colored pavers to delineate the HarborWalk route. Possibly route people down Center St and Phoenix St. instead of Williams St between Kalamazoo St and Center St.

e. Create a map for merchants, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce, DDA etc. to promote downtown and local attractions.

7. *Objective: Strive for a balance between seasonal parking demand and supply in the*



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*downtown.*

- a. Evaluate loading zones in the downtown
- b. Evaluate parking rules and signage
  - Address the parking needs of downtown employees, residents, and adjacent neighborhoods.
  - Explore management techniques for controlling conflicts in summer season parking demand. (ie: shopping vs. recreation) make sure enforcement is consistent.
  - Add more short term parking (eg: 15 minutes)
- c. Have a shuttle service from outlying parking lot to downtown during the summer seasonal and festivals. Make the shuttle unique like a trolley or a waterfront themed vehicle.

8. *Objective: Respect the need to transition between downtown uses and surrounding neighborhoods through landscaping, streetscape, appropriate signage and other pedestrian amenities.*

- a. Develop design guidelines which illustrate methods of transition from commercial uses to residential neighborhoods. Apply to zoning ordinances as necessary.
- b. Review zoning as it relates to the edge of the downtown area
- c. Reestablish a tree canopy on Broadway St
- d. Avoid blank walls or extensive lengths of street frontage where there is nothing of interest for the pedestrian.

9. *Objective: Review supply and distribution of public amenities such as restrooms, water fountains, and bicycle racks.*

- a. Review and adopt the DDA Streetscape Master Plan before incorporating public amenities and furnishings in the downtown area.





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## **V. PROVIDE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **V. A. Goal: Provide recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of life for South Haven residents while attracting outside visitors.**

1. *Objective: Enhance the open space and recreational opportunities in Black River Park and Dunkley Avenue area*
  - a. Develop and fund a specific plan for the Black River linear park.
  - b. Develop and implement a plan for the linear park and connecting the linear park to the rest of Black River Park as well as the Kal-Haven Trail.
  - c. Create a master plan for upgrading Black River Park that is geared towards other stakeholders than just boaters, include recreation opportunities
  
2. *Objective: Satisfy community-wide recreation needs as set forth in the current Recreation Plan.*
  - a. Utilize the regional recreational organization as necessary.
  - b. Establish new community sports/athletic facilities and programming.
  
3. *Objective: Create a downtown environment which is oriented to both water-based and land-based visitors.*
  - a. Support the establishment of kayak/canoe rental along the river especially close to downtown.
  - b. Enhance and improve the dinghy docks, and establish new dinghy docks referred to in the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Paddle Plan.
  - c. Offer bicycle rentals at municipal marinas.
  
4. *Objective: Protect and improve public access to the lakefront and river.*
  - a. Retain and maintain all public lands adjacent to the river and purchase land



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along waterfronts.

b. Determine if the Black River boat launch is in an appropriate location, and consider alternatives.

5. *Objective: Protect and enhance the ravines in the City to create a natural / rustic greenway system for public enjoyment and exercise.*

a. Implement the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Paddle Plan.

b. Maintain the ravines as the drainage courses and flood plains that they are, thereby enhancing water quality and stormwater management.

6. *Objective: Reinforce and improve the linkages between neighborhoods and the downtown, nearby parks and the City's recreational amenities.*

a. Improving the sidewalk interconnections as well as connecting the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails

b. Consider adding additional ravine pedestrian bridges at Michigan St, Edgell St., and Clinton St. for example.

c. Encourage designated bike lanes and paths throughout the community with connections to the Kal-Haven and Van Buren trails.

7. *Objective: Encourage programming at recreational facilities that includes both active and passive opportunities by working with youth and adult organizations.*

a. Encourage/Improve multi use shelters at parks for activities.

b. Establish a Community Center, with an open gym, bingo, computer lab and other activities. Existing facilities such as the Old Armory building may be appropriate.



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### **V. B. Goal: Enhance the park system to accommodate all users and attract outside visitors while taking advantage of and promoting South Haven's geographic location.**

1. *Objective: Preserve and protect beaches and river front.*
  - a. Upgrade all parks to be ADA Accessible
  - b. Maintain all parks to a "high" standard, and first define what "high" standard means.
  - c. Review lighting levels balancing safety and views.
  
2. *Objective: Provide family friendly, multi-functioning, active and passive park facilities.*
  - a. Provide drinking fountains, exercise stations, benches, tables, picnic areas throughout the park system.
  - b. Implement the South Beach Master Plan.
  
3. *Objective: Maintain waterfront access for public use.*
  - a. Connect linear park with a bridge
  - b. Obtain visual easements along the Monroe Blvd. Bluff from South Haven Street to South Beach.
  - c. Acquire and maintain lighthouse.
  - d. Acquire Packard Park from the South Haven Public Schools.

### **VI. PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES**

#### **VI. A. Goal: Protect and enhance South Haven natural resources.**

1. *Objective: Protect beaches and river frontage.*
  - a. Review and consider overlay standards for developments along riverfront/lakefront properties



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2. *Objective: Promote water and energy conservation.*

- a. Investigate alternative energy sources for application by a public or private industry.
- b. Educate people on water conservation and energy saving devices.

3. *Objective: Balance the scale and density of new development within the context of protecting the natural environment.*

- a. Develop guideline illustrations on the application of preservation techniques for both public and private property.
- b. Promote educational programs that carry out this objective.

4. *Objective: Preserve and protect the natural environmental areas and open space, floodplains, high risk erosion zones, natural drainage ways, and wetlands.*

- a. Develop a public educational manual with guidelines on the importance of preserving the natural environment and methods for accomplishing them.
- b. Encourage and promote Van Buren County guidelines on flood plain management, erosion control, drainage/runoff, etc.
- c. Ensure proper erosion control practices are followed during construction.

5. *Objective: Develop community wide environmental preservation, hazardous waste disposal, and recycling education and programs.*

- a. Contract with the County to implement a regular hazardous waste disposal program available in the City.
- b. Develop a way to institute Citywide recycling, and create financial incentives for recycling.

6. *Objective: Protect the water quality of the river and lake.*

- a. Identify sources of water pollution and apply appropriate techniques for



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mitigation.

b. Establish and illustrate better storm water management techniques for the community. Beginning with City owned property to set an example of how to improve water management and enhance native habitats in the ravine system.

## *7. Objective: Manage public lands to preserve public views and vistas*

a. Trim trees to enhance views.

### **SECTION THREE: CITY POLICIES**

Policies are statements to guide the City Council, Planning Commission, other boards, authorities and City Departments in making decisions and developing programs to serve citizens. Following are policies developed based on the goals and objectives to guide future decisions in the City of South Haven. The policies are organized by general category first, and then by area of the City (see Map on page 27 of Chapter Six).

#### **Transportation Policies**

- 1) Install a sign notifying when the bridge is up, on Phoenix and North Shore Drive to alert vehicles that the Black River Bridge is raised and to pursue alternate routes.
- 2) Improve directional signage both inside and outside of the City, and encourage the use of a uniform design.
- 3) Create a system of municipal signage to promote beaches, parks, boat launches and local attractions.
- 4) Improve traffic congestion problem in the Broadway/Dyckman/Bridge area.
- 5) Promote a bike-friendly city and educate the public on sharing the road.
- 6) Seek to increase the capacity of the Black River Bridge for pedestrians and bikes by constructing new walkway attachments and using existing walkways for traffic movement.
- 7) Improve peak season traffic congestion problem in North Beach area.



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- 8) Connect Kal-Haven and Van Buren trailways to downtown, beaches and Van Buren State Park.
- 9) Investigate a chain ferry or water taxi service.
- 10) Upgrade Baseline Road and Blue Star Highway to serve as an alternate route to the downtown (and around the River), in cooperation with the Allegan and Van Buren County Road Commissions.
- 11) Convert Phoenix Street between Blue Star Hwy and Broadway to a single traffic lane each way with left turn lane in the middle and bike lanes on the edges.
- 12) The City and South Haven Township should jointly petition the MDOT to upgrade M-43 by adding a passing lane in strategic locations to facilitate easier left turns.
- 13) Seek to expand parking within the western blocks of the downtown and along or in proximity to the riverfront while minimizing impacts on adjacent residences and respecting preservation or enhancement of views of the River.
- 14) Implement the South Beach Master Plan to improve circulation, curbing, appearance, landscaping, pedestrian safety, and increase the number of spaces.
- 15) Support creation of a shuttle system (could be public or private) which connects non-beach parking lots to the City's beach areas during peak summer months.
- 16) Add landscape treatments to the median and/or parkway edges of Blue Star Highway to improve its character as well as that of the City.
- 17) Seek to acquire an easement which will permit the construction of the Kal-Haven Trail into downtown. Create a system of trails that do not rely on sidewalks and streets but are linked to them; to new development as it occurs; and to existing and planned park facilities. Consult with the Friends of the Kal-Haven Trail to coordinate the existing trail with the link to downtown. Pursue the MDOT "TEA" grant funds for implementation.
- 18) Complete the Harbor walk system from North Beach to South Beach. Provide historic markers, benches, viewing areas, exercise stations and connections to existing parks as appropriate. Create a walkway closer to the Harbor on the south side by working with the Yacht Club and Old Harbor Village.





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- 19) Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the key destination points and activity centers of the City, including bicycle parking at the Library/Post Office, Riverfront Park and other areas in the downtown. Improve pedestrian and bicycle access routes from residential areas to the High School, the Hospital and shopping areas.
- 20) Consider development of travel options for peak tourist periods and for those without access to private automobiles, including for example, a bus shuttle from downtown to the North Beach, horse carriages between South Beach, Downtown and the North Beach, water taxi service along the river.
- 21) Promote a walkable community by expanding the sidewalk system and encourage landscaping that does not block the sidewalks.
- 22) Pursue the correction of the traffic hazard that exists with the left turn lane of the north bound exit ramp onto Phoenix Street from interstate I-196.

### **Intergovernmental Policies**

- 1) Support continued operation of the regional public transportation system by working with adjacent Townships and the County to ensure a dependable and flexible route system.
- 2) Communicate with other jurisdictions on issues larger than those of individual jurisdictions (ie., transportation, infrastructure, tourism, business attraction, etc.)
- 3) Consider the feasibility of combining public services in order to enhance efficiencies and reduce overall costs in areas such as cemetery, parks, recreation, library and police services. This should include discussion regarding the creation of a public service authority with representation of all participating units of government.
- 4) Discuss with the townships a joint set of guidelines regarding future land use and development especially on properties along Blue Star Highway.
- 5) Jointly develop with adjacent Townships a planned program for expansion of City services and/or annexation at appropriate times or circumstances.



# Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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## **Public Services and Facilities Policies**

- 1) Develop a focus group to undertake a community public services needs analysis, from both the citizen and business perspective.
- 2) Support programs designed to meet continuing education and employment needs of all within the community.
- 3) Evaluate the creation of a community wide rental code which addresses the issue of registering weekly rental properties in residential neighborhoods. Review, update and enforce the housing code and all nuisance/safety codes as necessary.
- 4) Continue to upgrade the current sewer and water infrastructure system as necessary to satisfy the 1994 (and any subsequent) service agreement with Casco and South Haven Townships to meet long term growth demands, as well as meet DEQ requirements.
- 5) Maintain and upgrade as necessary police, fire and emergency services facilities and equipment to continue to meet community needs.
- 6) Develop City buildings in locations and facilities that are adequate to meet the intended purpose and contribute to appropriate use of abutting lands.

## **Economic Development Policies**

- 1) Provide sufficient land, both within existing industrial areas and planned areas, to satisfy a wide variety of business needs.
- 2) Continue and expand the number and frequency of meetings with South Haven area companies to monitor their needs and desires. Develop responsive and proactive strategies to support and promote business development.
- 3) Develop a marketing program for commercial and industrial properties with a goal to increase occupancy above 95%.
- 4) Work with Lake Michigan College to provide job training and skill enhancement services to meet the needs of manufacturers.
- 5) Continue to work with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and State



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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Jobs Commission to identify relocating business and industry needs in order to determine how South Haven might be able to meet those needs.

- 6) Identify sites for future industrial growth.
- 7) Maintain and periodically update a promotional package which describes the community, area businesses, community services and recreational opportunities.
- 8) Develop a community profile for industrial and commercial development and utilize the package for a website presentation and direct mailings to targeted businesses and industries, development agencies, development consultants, and trade shows. Consistently follow up developer and corporate inquiries.
- 9) Working with the DDA and downtown merchants, prepare a target list of businesses and recreation programs which should be brought to the community.
- 10) Continue to identify key issues related to reuse and redevelopment (i.e., site cleanup, building removal/renovation, etc.), and work with property owners and the State to clean up contaminated properties for reuse. Seek financing support to aid in property revitalization efforts.
- 11) Continue to improve roadway, water, sewer and electric services in industrial districts. Monitor industrial district customer satisfaction in utility and infrastructure services with customer surveys.

### **Tourism/Recreation Policies**

- 1) Work with surrounding jurisdictions, the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce, the Lakeshore Convention and Visitor's Bureau, state and regional tourism organizations to maximize exposure of tourism opportunities in South Haven and the Greater South Haven Area.
- 2) Expand the diversity of recreational opportunities available to the residents of the South Haven area.
- 3) Encourage development of marine related recreational opportunities, including recreational diving.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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- 4) Upgrade the physical environment within downtown as an enticement to attract citizens, tourists, and new businesses.
- 5) Develop a positive image entry corridor into downtown from the freeway. Utilize special signs and landscaping; improve landscaping where appropriate. The terminus of the corridor should readily introduce the downtown and riverfront.
- 6) Retain and improve existing views of the River and lakefront from public streets and public property. Add landscape features to downtown parking lots and streetscape, and, preserve existing open spaces and green spaces throughout the City that are not targeted for development or redevelopment.
- 7) Continue working with the South Haven Public Schools to achieve the recommendations set forth in the Recreation Plan. Identify projects to implement and seek grant funding as identified in the plan.
- 8) Maintain and improve the City's major existing recreational facilities through the addition of parking, increased handicap accessibility and improved landscaping to achieve an improved appearance.

### **Residential Neighborhood Policies**

- 1) The desirable characteristics of each neighborhood, such as safety and well maintained properties will be protected. Important neighborhood elements which establish neighborhood character include: house scale, setback, street widths and patterns, vegetation, street signs, use, and access for bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers. Preservation will be fostered through zoning and housing codes.
- 2) Future development should be designed to minimize negative impacts on sensitive lands (like high quality wetlands, steep slopes, or floodplains) while providing natural open spaces. Residential planned unit developments will be encouraged on properties with significant landscape features or sensitive lands.
- 3) All new development in the City should be connected to City sewer and water.
- 4) New development in all areas will incorporate features which are characteristic of a



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city setting, including: public street construction standards, engineering stormwater drainage standards, sidewalks, street lights, street trees, etc.

5) Neighborhood residential infill activity which is compatible with the scale, density and character of existing dwellings is encouraged.

6) Utilize as appropriate, State and Federal funds to rehabilitate substandard housing.

7) Support the initiatives of the South Haven Housing Commission, Housing Development Corporation, and Habitat for Humanity to provide affordable, livable housing for low income residents of the City. The efforts of the South Haven Housing Commission and Housing Development Corporation involve supporting the solicitation of new funds for home modernization as well as upgrading senior citizen apartments as set forth in the Housing Commission Plan.

8) Develop new procedures and standards which ensure long term compatibility between existing and proposed commercial development and residential areas, including the use of landscape buffers and screens.

9) Conversion of property along zoning boundaries will be carefully monitored to ensure that the integrity and character of the residential setting is retained. Rezoning of parcels from residential to other uses will be considered in areas designated for other uses in the Future Land Use Plan. Rezoning of parcels along zoning boundaries should be incremental, and should only include areas of land adjacent to the existing zoning district boundaries.

### **South Haven Housing Commission Long Term Goals**

1) Expand the supply of affordable rental and homeownership housing by building new units using tax credits, HOME funds, state grants, bonds or other funding sources.

2) Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of assisted households that include families and individuals.

3) Continue to advertise and attract potential buyers to the South Haven Housing Commission Homeownership Program to expand the sales in the family housing



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development.

- 4) Develop affordable assisted living housing for the elderly.
- 5) Continue work with the South Haven Area Senior Services (SHASS); expand the South Haven Housing Commission Warren Senior Community Center at River Terrace Apartments to meet the needs of growing senior programs and outreach that includes a growing number of staff and volunteers.
- 6) Continue applying for Housing Resource Funds from MSHDA for the City and administer those programs such as the Housing Rehabilitation Program for low income homeowners.
- 7) Continue to work with Van Buren County Housing Continuum of Care and Organizations providing services to provide greater housing opportunities for the homeless and those with special needs.
- 8) Continue working with MSHDA designated Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) to expand the supply of affordable housing in Van Buren and Allegan Counties.
- 9) Work with agencies to provide information and resources for services and shelters for victims of domestic violence such as the Domestic Violence Coalition, Inc. serving Van Buren County, Center for Women in Transition in Holland and Sylvia's Place in Allegan County.
- 10) Ensure equal opportunity and affirmatively further fair housing.

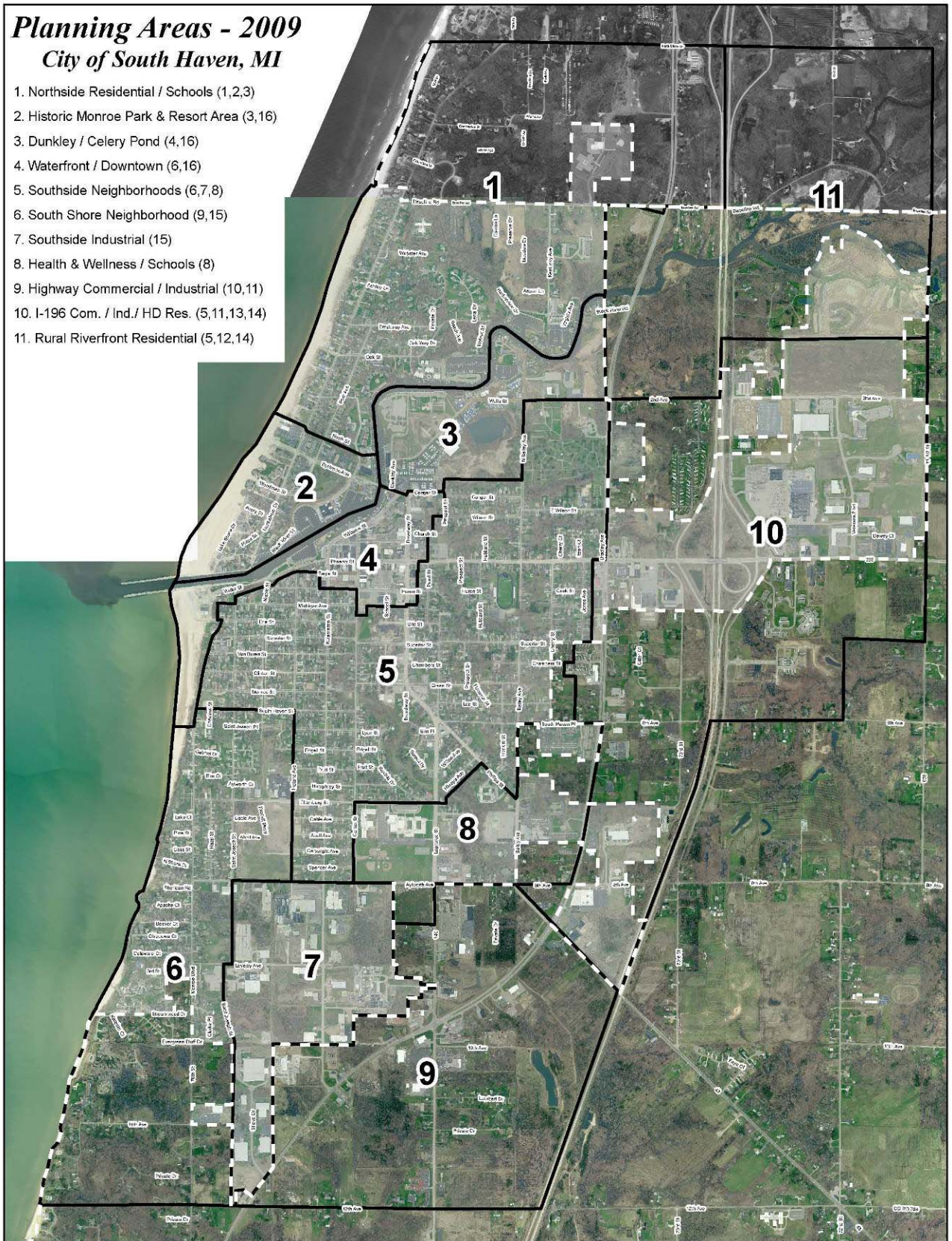




# Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

## ***Planning Areas - 2009*** ***City of South Haven, MI***

1. Northside Residential / Schools (1,2,3)
2. Historic Monroe Park & Resort Area (3,16)
3. Dunkley / Celery Pond (4,16)
4. Waterfront / Downtown (6,16)
5. Southside Neighborhoods (6,7,8)
6. South Shore Neighborhood (9,15)
7. Southside Industrial (15)
8. Health & Wellness / Schools (8)
9. Highway Commercial / Industrial (10,11)
10. I-196 Com. / Ind./ HD Res. (5,11,13,14)
11. Rural Riverfront Residential (5,12,14)



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The previous polices have been applied on an area by area basis to eleven areas of the City which have elements in common that can be viewed collectively.

**Area 1:** Area 1 includes land north of North St, north of the Black River, west of the City limits and west of Blue Star Hwy, to Lake Michigan. Area 1 includes part of Casco Twp from North Shore Dr to the City Limits. North Street is the dividing line between the multiple-family zoning district and single family zoning districts.

POLICY: A residential neighborhood environment will be encouraged within this area. Characteristics will include City street and infrastructure design, connectivity of streets and sidewalks between developments, common park areas and pedestrian accessibility.

POLICY: The City and the school district will strive to maximize the utility of the middle school property as a neighborhood asset. External recreational opportunities will be supported to provide both an active and passive open space setting which enhances the livability of adjacent developments.

POLICY: It is recommended that future development should reflect a pattern of use that minimizes impacts on sensitive lands (like wetlands, steep slopes, or floodplains) while providing natural open spaces. Residential planned unit developments will be encouraged on properties with significant landscape features or sensitive lands.





## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: Pedestrian and bicycle connection between the east and west sides of I-196 should be improved with dedicated bicycle paths and sidewalk. The City should support connectivity of the I-196 at the North Shore Drive bridge to allow for non-motorized traffic. A multi-use path network should be established that would connect City residents to the planned SHARP park on the east side of I-196 and Casco Twp. residents to the City and schools.

POLICY: A varied residential character will be encouraged which provides for flexibility in development options, mixed development density, and a diversity of housing choices.

POLICY: Incentives will be utilized to encourage both single-family development under R-1 zoning and residential planned unit developments which reflect a cohesive neighborhood environment and the creation of accessible and linked open spaces.

Policy: Connect Brockway St to Baseline Road through Woodland Harbor with a sidewalk and bicycle path.

POLICY: As improvements are made to external street systems (especially Baseline Road), sidewalks and bikeways will be provided to link new development with the greater community area.

POLICY: Maintain and enhance, where feasible, view access to Lake Michigan from public property and mark with signage.

POLICY: Physical linkages will be enhanced to the extent possible (improving North Shore Drive sidewalks) to strengthen the pedestrian and bicycle connection between properties north and south of the River.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: The City desires to discuss with the Casco Township policies and plans which affect the long term physical character of this area.

POLICY: Refer to the Casco Township Master Plan for commercial development in the area of North Shore Drive and Blue Star Hwy.

POLICY: Acquire the school portion of Packard Park.

**Area 2:** Area 2 is made up of the North Beach and surrounding neighborhood, the bed and breakfast district on North Shore Drive, Stanley Johnston Park and marinas on the north side of the Black River. There is a commercial area at the corner of Dyckman and North Shore Drive.

POLICY: Maintain and enhance where feasible, view access to Lake Michigan from public property.

POLICY: Improve pedestrian and biking accessibility to North Beach. This can be accomplished by completing the Harborwalk system and ensuring that new development in adjacent areas incorporates pedestrian and biking connections.

POLICY: Physical linkages will be enhanced to the extent possible (using the Harborwalk, ferry service, widening sidewalks on the drawbridge and improving North Shore Drive sidewalks) to strengthen the physical connection between properties north and south of the River.

POLICY: Traffic flow to and from North Beach should be improved during summer months through carefully designed circulation improvements and/or alternative means of transportation.



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POLICY: Encourage the development of shopping and dining opportunities without a need to use a vehicle.

POLICY: Explore methods of transit connection between the downtown, highway business area, North Beach, South Beach, and residential areas east of the City on CR388.

POLICY: Encourage marina services and boat launch/repair services to continue operation on the river as valued providers of services to boaters.

POLICY: Special activities, recreational activities (boating) and cultural activities (Maritime and Art Museums) will continue to be clustered in or near downtown to maximize draw and synergy.

POLICY: The City will continue to strengthen the opportunities to enjoy the natural features of the Black River and Lake Michigan, by supporting water oriented activities, events and places which are natural attractions, as well as by permitting compatible waterfront related commercial recreation development, such as water taxis and passenger-carrying commercial marine operations.

POLICY: The City will complete and thereafter maintain the Harborwalk program linking the North and South riverbanks with the North and South beaches. Acquire additional property to make the Harborwalk more accessible.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will encourage the visual screening and filtering of views between neighborhoods and adjacent commercial parking, alleys and future redevelopment areas.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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**Area 3:** Area 3 includes land on the south side of the river from the drawbridge to Blue Star Hwy. This area includes marinas and marine service businesses, a campground, Black River Park and boat launch, the city-owned Dunkley Avenue site and Celery Pond.

POLICY: Initiate discussions with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MDOT, the Parks Commission, the County Road Commission, the Harbor Commission and affected property owners to identify a strategy for extension of the Kal-Haven Trail into downtown.

POLICY: Encourage mixed use development in this area which is responsive to the physical limitations of the property yet compatible with adjacent land uses. Waterfront commercial services, recreation activities, and natural systems restoration/preservation should be a focus of the area.

POLICY: Work with the owners of the Celery Pond properties to determine best use.

POLICY: The City needs to take the steps to clean up the City owned property at the former DPW site. Complete environmental remediation as possible. The Waste Water Treatment plant expansion or relocation needs to be considered.

POLICY: Move parking lots away from the waterfront and towards the outer edges of the downtown.

POLICY: Encourage development of a waterfront restaurant.

POLICY: Encourage marina services and boat launch/repair services to continue operation on the river as valued providers of services to boaters.





## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: The City will continue to strengthen the opportunities for public enjoyment of the natural features of the Black River and Lake Michigan by supporting water oriented activities, events and places which are natural attractions. Compatible waterfront related commercial recreation development, such as water taxis and passenger-carrying commercial marine operations should be permitted where appropriate along the river's edge.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will require with zoning laws the visual screening and filtering of views between neighborhoods and adjacent commercial parking, alleys and future redevelopment areas.

**Area 4:** Area 4 includes the downtown and South Beach.

POLICY: Consider permitting owner-occupied Bed and Breakfast establishments in transitional areas between downtown and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

POLICY: Windows should not be permitted on the side of buildings in the downtown where there are zero lot lines unless an egress easement is obtained. Windows on the side of buildings which may be later built over by adjacent buildings should not be permitted to be used for building code egress and ventilation design.

POLICY: The sides of buildings on zero lot line should be constructed of masonry.

POLICY: Dumpster locations and odors need to be addressed. All new buildings should identify locations for dumpsters preferably on the property not in public alleys or right-of-ways. Require screening and enclosure of dumpsters.

POLICY: Require all new buildings to be at least two-stories tall downtown.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: The maximum height of a structure in the Central Business District shall not exceed the current zoning standards of 3.5 stories or 45 feet.

POLICY: Encourage high-density development for residents and resorters within walking distance of the downtown, beaches and harbor.

POLICY: Move parking lots away from the waterfront and towards the outer edges of the downtown.

POLICY: Enhance the shopping and dining opportunities in downtown South Haven by requiring retail, office and commercial use of ground level floors of buildings in the Central Business District.

POLICY: Encourage the development of a wide range of shopping and dining opportunities within the downtown area which are easily accessible by pedestrians without a need to use a vehicle.

POLICY: Encourage narrow storefronts which increase the number of shops available to the pedestrian over a given distance traveled.

POLICY: Encourage more windows, especially at the street level.

POLICY: Explore methods of transit connection between the downtown, highway business area, North Beach, South Beach, and residential areas east of the City.

POLICY: Promote non-motorized and alternative connections between the north and south side such as water taxis and passenger-carrying commercial boats. Install dinghy docks to allow access to water transportation.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: Encourage improvements to back lots, alleys and backs of buildings in the downtown.

POLICY: When possible, encourage new structures with underground parking structures, in some cases replacing existing street level parking.

POLICY: Encourage marina services and boat launch/repair services to continue operation on the river as valued providers of services to visitors.

POLICY: The Broadway commercial areas should receive attention to encourage improvement of the area, in the form of streetscape, landscaping, signage, curbing and roadway improvements.

POLICY: Through the zoning ordinance and site plan review, the Planning Commission is encouraged to support mixed use development/redevelopment opportunities downtown and selectively along the River through planned commercial/PUD zoning.

POLICY: Special activities, (i.e. Center of the City events/festivals), recreational activities (boating/sledding/skating) and cultural activities (Maritime and Art Museums) are encouraged to continue to be clustered in or near downtown to maximize draw and synergy.

POLICY: Encourage the creation of new destination spots within downtown, including but not limited to restaurants and small hotels.

POLICY: The City will play an active role in encouraging private businesses to invest in downtown.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: The City will continue to strengthen the opportunities for public enjoyment of the natural features of the Black River and Lake Michigan, by supporting water oriented activities, events and places which are attractions. Compatible waterfront related commercial recreation development, such as water taxis and passenger-carrying commercial marine operations should be permitted where appropriate.

POLICY: The City will maintain the Harborwalk linking the North and South riverbanks with the North and South beaches.

POLICY: Bring the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails into and through the center City as part of an area wide trail system. Provide amenities for cyclists such as bike racks, drinking fountains and restrooms.

POLICY: The City will work with downtown merchants and a consultant to generate building facade guidelines to encourage physical improvements and promote grant programs that assist property owners in the downtown.

POLICY: The City, working with the Planning Commission and DDA, will prioritize and implement the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan which includes all public streets and parking areas in the area bounded by Broadway, Huron, Kalamazoo, and Williams Streets.

POLICY: The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) should work towards improving the parking convenience of auto travelers and docking convenience of boaters through improvement of signage and wayfinding to the downtown.

POLICY: The DDA should promote the downtown area as a people environment where both the physical and visual connections to the riverfront are maximized. This will be



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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accomplished by retaining existing views, and utilizing trees, plantings, lighting, and paving to enhance pedestrian comfort within the downtown setting.

POLICY: The City will continue to build upon its successes relating to community festivals and events as a means to draw visitors and residents into the downtown setting.

POLICY: The City will create a pedestrian friendly environment by: 1) improving the visual and physical connection from parking areas to Phoenix Street; 2) upgrading signs; 3) adding pocket parks; 4) improving crosswalks; 5) adding bike racks in convenient locations.

POLICY: The City will continue to support residential infill within the downtown setting above commercial, retail and office uses.

POLICY: The City should encourage commercial development fronting on Broadway, with landscape buffering between commercial and adjacent residential properties.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will encourage retention of existing residential structures around the edges of downtown.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will encourage the visual screening and filtering of views between neighborhoods and adjacent commercial parking, alleys and future redevelopment areas.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will discourage commercial expansion into adjacent residential areas. Professional and business offices may be considered along the edge properties if the character of the existing structure remains relatively unchanged and sufficient space is not available elsewhere. Zoning districts will establish these



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boundaries.

POLICY: The DDA should continue to soften the pedestrian environment by: 1) landscaping existing parking areas; 2) bringing streetscape characteristics into parking areas; 3) utilizing street trees to improve comfort and provide visual continuity; and 4) creating mini sitting areas for the downtown visitor; 5) lighting improvements, upgrades, and new lights should be “dark sky” compliant.

POLICY: The City should seek to maximize parking opportunities within the downtown.

POLICY: The DDA should seek to attract businesses into the downtown which complement, reinforce and/or support the pedestrian shopping experience.

POLICY: Support downtown infill activity that is compatible with the scale, density and character of existing buildings.

POLICY: Permanent use of the South Beach Area as a public lakefront park connected with the City's riverwalk, downtown, and neighborhoods, should be protected, maintained and improved for the long term. Adjacent future land use activity should be compatible with its primary function as a public recreation amenity.

**Area 5:** Area 5 includes residential areas surrounding the downtown to the west, south and east. It includes the commercial strip along Broadway, Phillips and La Grange Streets.

POLICY: The City should research the establishment of a zoning district that encourages and enhances development fronting on Broadway, Phillips and La Grange Streets, with appropriate landscape buffering between commercial and adjacent residential





## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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properties. Review screening provisions.

POLICY: Review access management along state business loops.

POLICY: Preservation and conservation of existing neighborhoods will be emphasized as a priority within this area. Support residential neighborhood infill activity (building on individual vacant lots) which is compatible with the scale and density of existing dwellings.

POLICY: Develop new procedures and standards which ensure long term compatibility between existing commercial and residential development including but not limited to lighting, signage and the use of landscape buffers and screens.

POLICY: Allow for some flexibility for zoning changes to allow bed and breakfast or multiple family housing on the south side of Huron Street between Center and Kalamazoo Streets which is compatible with the adjacent single family district.

POLICY: The extension of the Van Buren Trail will be encouraged along Maple Street and along the railroad right-of-way. Directional signage should be installed on streets following routes appropriate for non-motorized traffic leading to beaches, downtown, parks and bicycle trails.

POLICY: The Broadway commercial areas should receive attention to encourage improvement of the area, in the form of streetscape, access management, landscaping, signage, curbing and roadway improvements.

POLICY: Phoenix Street east of Broadway and west of Blue Star Hwy should be preserved as a single-family neighborhood.



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POLICY: Conversion of property along neighborhood edges should be carefully monitored to ensure that the integrity and residential character of the setting is retained, especially near downtown and along Phoenix Street.

POLICY: Rezoning of properties from residential to commercial use will be avoided in areas surrounded by residential properties.

POLICY: The residential neighborhood near the corner of Superior Street and Blue Star Highway should be a focus for neighborhood improvements.

POLICY: The City recommends limiting the number of access points and curb cuts on state business loops in order to maintain traffic flow.

POLICY: Working with the Housing Commission and neighborhood residents, City officials should continue a home ownership program promoting the transfer of properties and residences under City control to private ownership.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will review the setbacks along Monroe Boulevard.

**Area 6:** Area 6 includes neighborhoods near Lake Michigan from South Haven Street to the south. Part of New Area 6 is located in South Haven Township.

POLICY: The Planning Commission will review the setbacks and corner lot definitions as they affect Monroe Boulevard.

POLICY: Preservation and conservation of existing neighborhoods will be emphasized as a priority within this area. Support residential neighborhood infill activity (building on individual vacant lots) which is compatible with the scale and density of existing



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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dwellings.

POLICY: Extend the City sidewalk system throughout the residential neighborhoods in this planning area.

POLICY: As redevelopment and/or reuse occurs, the City will enhance compatibility between residential and non-residential uses, both through screening and physical separation.

POLICY: Working with the Housing Commission and neighborhood residents, City officials should continue a home ownership program promoting the transfer of properties and residences under City control to private ownership.

POLICY: The City will improve the compatibility between industrial properties and adjacent residential neighborhoods as redevelopment occurs through the use of landscape buffers and screening to minimize the negative impacts of noise and traffic, and improve air quality.

POLICY: The extension of the Van Buren Trail will be encouraged along Maple Street or along the railroad right-of-way and eventually to the Van Buren State Park.

POLICY: The area near the northwest corner of Elkenburg and Indiana Streets is an area in transition. There should be a level of flexibility in rezoning the area to allow mixed use development. A number of uses might be acceptable in this area, including residential, multiple-family residential, commercial and retail. As development proposals are received, rezoning of the area should be considered based on the impact on adjacent neighborhoods.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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**Area 7:** Area 7 includes the primarily industrial properties south of Aylworth Avenue, and generally east of the St. Joseph Street north-south line.

POLICY: The City will continue to promote revitalization and redevelopment of this Area.

POLICY: The City will improve the compatibility between industrial properties and adjacent residential neighborhoods as redevelopment occurs through the use of landscape buffers and screening. The Planning Commission should encourage uses which do not cause noise, odor, traffic, lighting and vibration that could affect residential areas.

POLICY: The area adjacent to residential uses should be zoned as I-1.

POLICY: The extension of the Van Buren Trail will be encouraged along Maple Street or along the railroad right-of-way and eventually to Van Buren State Park. Sidewalks should be added along Aylworth Avenue.

**Area 8:** Area 8 includes the South Haven High School area, the La Grange commercial frontage from Elkenburg to Aylworth, the Shoreline Wellness and Rehabilitation Center and Hospital, and Briar Hills.

POLICY: The City and South Haven Township should encourage commercial development fronting on LaGrange Street, with landscape buffering between commercial and adjacent residential properties.

POLICY: Consider amending the zoning ordinance to allow hospital uses in commercial districts, and a map amendment to rezone the hospital property to commercial.



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POLICY: Streetscape and sidewalk improvements should be considered as part of a gateway improvement initiative along M-43 and M-140.

**Area 9:** Area 9 includes land outside of the City limits along Blue Star Hwy from M-43 to Stieve Drive. Area 9 is entirely within South Haven Township.

*NOTE: October 1995 South Haven Township Master Plan (as amended in 2001)*

*The South Haven Township Master Plan indicates a variety of uses for Area 9, including High Density Residential, Industrial, Community Commercial, Heavy Commercial and Neighborhood Service Commercial.*

**Area 10:** Area 10 includes areas of the city east of Blue Star Hwy, including the commercial area along Blue Star Hwy, and Phoenix Street from Blue Star Hwy to Wal-Mart and the I-196 Business Park.

POLICY: The City and South Haven Township should support redevelopment of properties fronting on Blue Star Highway, M-43 and Phoenix Street as retail, service and other commercial uses.

POLICY: The City and South Haven Township should develop a scenic highway beautification program along Phoenix, Blue Star and M-43 which encourages development, streetscape, landscaping, access management, street signage, curbing and roadway improvements which make the area safe and attractive from the point of view of customers of potential developments.

POLICY: The City should support improvements to the I-196 interchanges which enhance safety and easier traffic flow. Evaluate a realignment of the north bound exit ramp at Phoenix Street.



## Chapter Six: Goals and Objectives

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POLICY: The City recommends limiting the number of access points and curb cuts on Blue Star Highway in order to maintain traffic flow.

POLICY: The City and Township should work together as new development occurs in this area, to ensure compatibility between uses, to protect the functional integrity of Blue Star Highway and to avoid continuing small lot strip commercial development.

POLICY: New development along I-196 should integrate a landscaped buffer strip to separate highway noise from residences.

POLICY: The City will encourage business and industrial development in the I-196 Business Park with a focus on job creation and new property value creation.

POLICY: Pedestrian and bicycle access between Area 10 and neighborhoods and Lake Michigan College west of I-196 should be improved.

**Area 11:** Area 11 includes the Black River east of Blue Star Hwy and east of I-196. The majority of this area is outside of the City in both Casco and South Haven Townships. The Sherman Hills development is included in this area.

POLICY: Development which preserves natural characteristics of land near the river should be encouraged.

POLICY: Planned Unit Developments and linked subdivisions should be encouraged for residential development where water and sewer is available.

POLICY: New development should provide adequate landscaping buffer adjacent to the Kal-Haven Trail.





# Chapter Seven: Existing and Future Land Use

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## INTRODUCTION

The desired future land use arrangements may be difficult to understand if a community was to rely only on the goals, objectives, and policies in Chapter Six. A generalized description of the future land use configuration that represents one consistent implementation of the adopted goals, objectives, and policies is easiest to understand when represented by a future land use map. This chapter presents both a Future Land Use Map and accompanying text to guide future land use and infrastructure decisions in addition to the goals, objectives and policies of Chapter Six.

The Future Land Use Map accompanying the description of future land use in this Chapter seeks to anticipate the community's desired land use configuration over the next 20-30 years. The Future Land Use Map has been formulated based on information in the preceding chapters. The land use configuration is based on analysis of existing land use, impacts of area trends, projected future land use needs if current trends continue, characteristics of vacant land, and community needs for a strong employment base. All land use arrangements are intended to be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies presented in Chapter Six.

A few key planning and design principles were used to evaluate alternative land use configurations leading to this Future Land Use Map. With slightly different trends and projections, application of the same principles could lead to different conclusions and a different land use configuration. However, these differences may be related more to the amount of a particular land use than their location or relative relationship to adjoining uses. For example, if a large mixed use development (e.g. 1000 single family dwelling units plus some commercial) were built near the City or if a large single employer would enter the scene (e.g. an auto manufacturing facility) then the land use configuration represented by the map must be reexamined. Likewise, there are many areas in which different land use configurations would be satisfactory providing they



# Chapter Seven: Existing and Future Land Use

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remained in keeping with these basic planning principles. Because of changing conditions, it is crucial that this Plan be regularly reviewed and updated at least once each five years to insure its continued relevance in planning for future land use needs.

## **PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

The land use configuration represented by the Future Land Use Map was determined based on compatibility with surrounding land uses, natural capacity of the land for particular uses, availability of necessary infrastructure and services and consistency with goals, objectives and policies.

The following planning and design principles are the technical foundation in support of the proposed land use configuration graphically depicted on the Future Land Use Map. The planning principles listed below are implemented primarily through zoning regulations and applied during the site plan review process. These principles are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies in Chapter Six and should be a key basis for reviewing any subsequent changes to the proposed Future Land Use Map.

These planning principles are:

- Protection of Public Health and Safety
- Conservation of Sensitive Natural Resources
- Environmental Protection
- Minimizing Public Service Costs
- Efficiency in Meeting Land Use Needs
- Insuring Compatibility Between Land Uses (Nuisance Prevention)
- Sustaining a Job Base Adequate to Support Families.

Often a land use decision based on one principle also advances another. For example, prevention of filling or construction within a floodplain protects public health and safety,



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conserves natural resources, protects the environment, and minimizes public service costs (especially for relief efforts). It may also create a valuable buffer or open space between uses and hence helps insure compatibility.

## **Protection of Public Health and Safety**

Key situations in which this principle is applied include:

- Avoiding construction in areas which present natural hazards. In the City these include areas too close to the Lake Michigan shoreline at high risk from erosion from wave action; floodplains; saturated soils and wetlands; soils not well suited for support of foundations and steep slopes.
- Avoiding construction in areas with soils contaminated by hazardous and/or toxic waste until after they have been safely cleaned up and certified for reuse.

## **Conservation of Sensitive Natural Resources**

Failure to consciously protect sensitive natural resources exposes a community to the risk of destruction of those resources which are often the foundation for an area's character and quality of life. Sensitive natural resources include wetlands, sand dunes, areas supporting an abundance and diversity of wildlife, and unique wooded lands. Poorly planned development in or near these areas can not only destroy the resource and the natural character of the area, but can also result in higher public service costs and gradual degradation of an area's tourism potential. An example of conservation regulations are the dark sky ordinances. These ordinances are intended to protect the visibility of the night sky by minimizing light pollution from urban areas.

## **Environmental Protection**

This principle aims at preventing pollution, impairment, or destruction of the environment. While there is considerable overlap with natural resource conservation



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issues, environmental protection measures focus primarily on air and water quality, and the impact of activities where the water meets the land. Environmental quality is best preserved by planning for appropriate land use activities in and near the waterfront and preventing contamination of air, soil and water. This usually means conducting environmental impact assessments before undertaking certain projects and insuring conformance with all applicable Federal, State and local environmental regulations as new development or redevelopment occurs.

### **Minimizing Public Service Costs**

Public service costs may be minimized by encouraging new land uses where existing infrastructure is not used to capacity and where expansion can be most economically supplied. This also results in compact settlement patterns, prevents sprawl, and is usually favored by taxpayers because it results in the lowest public service costs both for construction and maintenance.

### **Efficiency in Meeting Land Use Needs**

To be efficient in meeting future land use needs, existing infrastructure must be optimally used and infrastructure expansion must occur in a manner which keeps the costs low. It also means locating future land uses so that travel between activity centers is minimized, for example, building schools, neighborhood commercial development, and day care facilities, near the residential areas they serve. This saves municipal costs on the initial facility and road construction as well as on future maintenance. Because trips are shorter, it reduces everyone's gasoline expenditures, and conserves fossil fuel supplies for future use. It also reduces travel times and if auto, pedestrian and bicycle travel are planned for, it increases modal opportunities.



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## **Insuring Compatibility between Land Uses**

A central objective of land use planning is to locate future land uses so that they are compatible with one another. This prevents future nuisance situations between adjacent land uses, such as loud sounds, ground vibrations, dust, bright lights, restricted air flow, shadows, odors, traffic, and similar impacts. A few obvious examples of incompatible land uses include factories, drive-in establishments, or auto repair facilities adjacent to single family homes. With proper planning, land uses can be tiered to establish transitions from higher intensity land uses to lower intensity land uses minimizing negative impacts the potential uses may have on each other and allowing more orderly development to occur. Examples include: commercial service establishments on highway frontage with back lot wholesale, storage, or office uses abutting a residential area; or single family residential uses adjacent to park and recreation areas.

## **Sustaining a Job Base Adequate to Support Families**

A community that has a safe, quality environment, efficient services, and has compatible land uses may not remain a good place to live without a job base that offers sufficient wages to support families. Not all jobs that support families living in South Haven need to be located within South Haven because of excellent transportation facilities connecting the City to other job markets. Enlarging the employment base in the City will allow growing public service costs to be spread across homeowners in greater proportions as time marches on. New jobs in abutting Townships will also help meet this need, and may help pay for certain direct public service costs (like sewer and water, if provided by the City) but will not contribute to paying for broader public service costs unless located within the City.

## **Community Character**

When applying the above planning principles to new development proposals, one of the key considerations is compatibility with the character of existing development in an



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area. In describing the character of South Haven, many descriptive words and phrases come to mind, among them: quiet, friendly, clean, small town, bountiful natural assets, and good location. Chapter Two documents the existing community character of South Haven.

### **Development**

Almost all of the land in private ownership in South Haven is developed. The City can use zoning and public improvements to insure that the remaining undeveloped lands are neither over nor under developed, and that new development is compatible with adjacent, existing development.

It is also likely that the City will face development proposals in the next two decades for the redevelopment of existing properties. This has already occurred on several parcels along the waterfront. It may accelerate (if permitted) into replacement of cottages with large houses or densely packed condominiums. Without proper land development regulation, the character of the community could be significantly changed. Walling off the waterfront will not advance that goal. Downtown redevelopment needs to carefully consider the size and scale of what is there. For example, new single story buildings should not be allowed downtown and exterior facades of new buildings, or buildings undergoing rehabilitation, should be compatible with those of adjacent structures.

As new development occurs on vacant land and on land abutting City limits, special efforts should be taken to place each project in the context of the whole community and not view it as an isolated element. Each new development should blend with the natural and built environment around it, be linked to it in safe and convenient ways and contribute to the unique small town character of South Haven that is widely recognized and enjoyed by so many.





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## **Tourism**

A sustained tourist-oriented business sector is something that many South Haven business owners want to continue. Yet the increased activity and congestion that go with successful tourism are characteristics which may negatively impact abutting neighborhoods. New tourist related downtown development and associated infrastructure improvements need to be planned so as to support the quality of (rather than diminish the quality of) abutting neighborhoods.

## **Blending the Resort Areas with the Year Round Community**

There will probably always be a division within the community between resort / seasonal areas and year-round areas. Recognizing the importance of each and fair representation of both in community decision making will be an ongoing challenge in making future land use and infrastructure decisions. Achieving and maintaining a balance will be the key to long term success. The existing commercial and residential areas are generally well separated and the demarcation lines are fairly clear. It will be important that they remain essentially where they are for new commercial activity or the necessary balance may be lost.

## **Year Round Employment / Industrial / Development**

Historically, South Haven has had a strong industrial base for its size and the annexation of land in the late nineties for industrial / research / technological development has expanded this sector. If this sector does not continue to expand, the City could become even more seasonal and retirement oriented than it already is. This in turn would further reduce the capacity of existing commercial businesses to operate year round and further hinder the delivery of certain services such as education. New industrial / research / technological development is both needed and desirable. There are appropriate locations available, and the City should continue its efforts to market



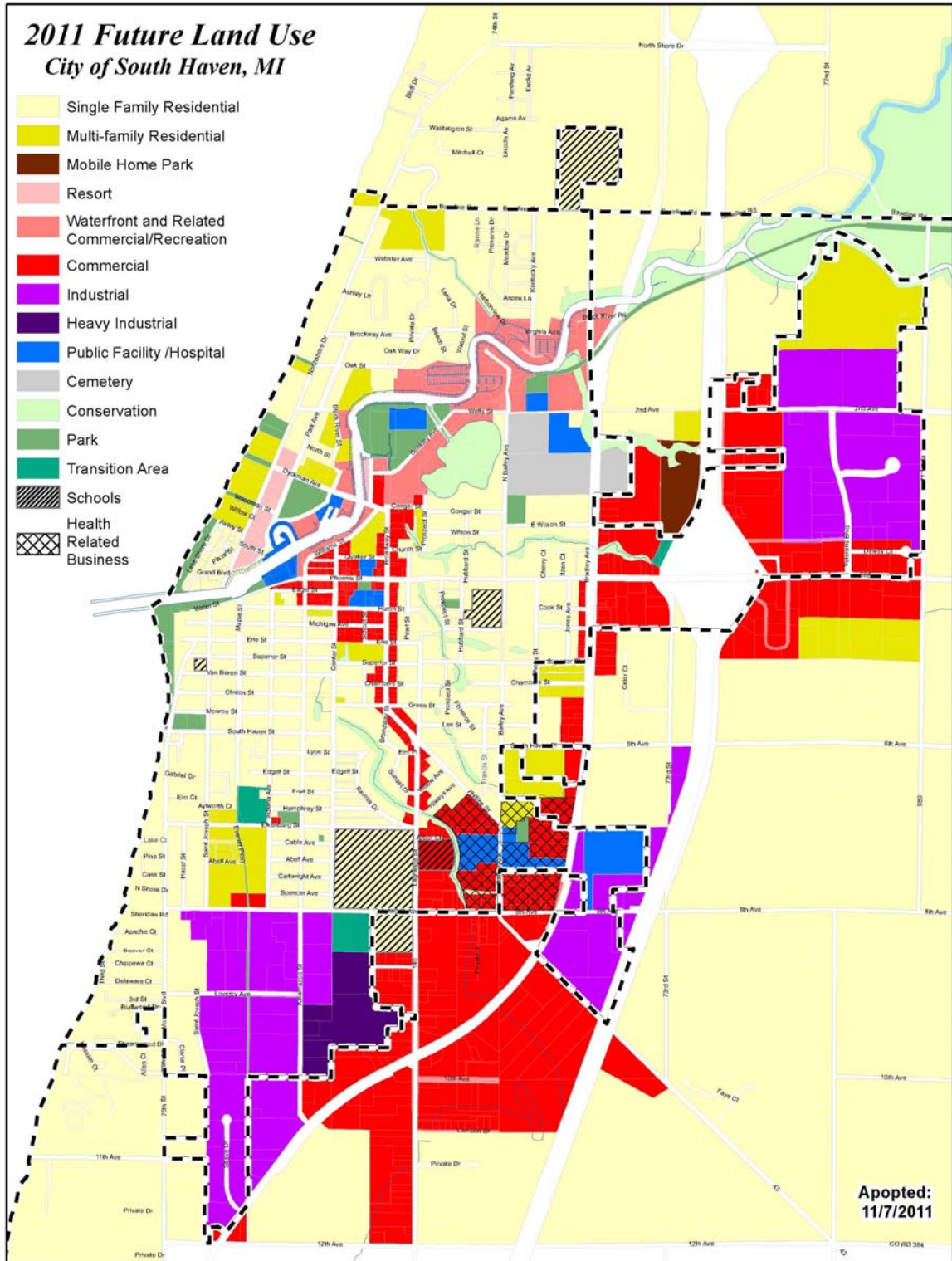
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this space, add to it as needed, and insure that improvements in the quality of life are maintained and improved to help attract good employers.



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## FUTURE LAND USE

The mapping of future land use is a pictorial extension of the goals and policies stated in this Plan. Land use is the primary purpose for which a parcel of land is occupied. This Plan is designed to promote orderly development and ensure that appropriate areas are available for all classes of land uses anticipated to be needed within the planning area during the planning period (roughly 20 years) based on existing trends. This Master Plan promotes orderly development in a number of other ways. Home owners can invest in their properties with protection from the intrusion and impact of incompatible uses in the neighborhood. Overcrowding can be avoided. The City and utility companies can adequately plan for the services needed in (re)developing areas and ensure that adequate land has been anticipated for all necessary uses.

Each of the major classes of future land use is described below. Descriptions of smaller planning areas or neighborhoods are subsequently provided to supplement the general land uses depicted on the Future Land Use Map.

## MAJOR LAND USE CATEGORIES

### Single Family Residential

This category makes up the majority of the land area of the City. The City should preserve the character of the unique residential neighborhoods while allowing reasonable growth to occur as nearby vacant land is developed and as property owners seek to upgrade their homes and yards over time. The City should also seek to preserve those natural features in or next to the neighborhoods, such as the Black River, beaches, and ravines.



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## **Multi-family Residential**

This category includes all of the apartments, town-homes, condominiums, and senior living facilities within the City. This land use is concentrated along the lake shore north of the North Beach area as well as adjacent to the Black River where existing multi-family neighborhoods currently exist. Generally, this land use is adjacent to amenities such as the shore line and downtown, or in the case of senior living facilities on major roadways that provide easy access to transportation.

## **Resort**

This category focuses on the North Shore Drive neighborhood just north of the Black River. Existing bed and breakfast and other resort establishments on both sides of the street along the Lake Michigan shoreline and north of the river should be encouraged to adopt small scale theme signs. When remodeling main buildings and accessory structures, or when developing new resort properties, a residential or "waterfront inn" character should be encouraged if compatible with adjacent uses. Buildings should not exceed two stories, and should be oriented on each parcel to permit views of the water from the street.

## **Waterfront and Related Commercial / Recreation**

This category includes the Riverfront area of South Haven as a critical land use to the future of the City in terms of financial health and quality of life. It should retain the character typical of a waterfront resort community and be protected from changes that would make it less accessible and more shut off from adjacent areas of the City.

The elements that contribute to the waterfront character include the boat slips lining the riverfront, sightseeing and fishing boats, and architecture with a nautical theme. Wherever possible, views of the water and of waterfront structures should be



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maintained, and new buildings not permitted to infill the few open locations on the south bank of the Black River.

In the bluff area of Lake Michigan, south of the mouth of the Black River, the residential character should be maintained. There may occur the demand to remodel smaller homes, increasing their size, or to tear down small homes and build larger homes on small lots. This could change the character of the neighborhood, and where property owners intend to do this, the City should work with them to find architectural solutions that retain the character of the neighborhood.

### **Commercial**

This category includes the Downtown which continues to evolve, with new construction projects occurring every year. Downtown improvement plans have been implemented over the last few decades in accordance with the Downtown Development Plan which should be updated and formally reviewed by the Planning Commission for consistency with this Plan. The Downtown should be a people-oriented center that mixes commercial, residential, governmental, waterfront, tourist and event functions.

Large scale commercial developments, also known as “big box” developments, are recommended only in the area surrounding the I-196 Interchange. The minimum size designating a big box should be established in the district regulations for this area. In the site plan requirements for these uses, it is also important to provide ample landscaping, including in parking areas, to soften the view and help control vehicle movement in and around the site.

Other commercial areas, including the Broadway Street corridor, should be planned to maintain a more urban scale which includes height limitations, adequate landscaping, open space between buildings and compatible exterior finishes. An overlay





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zoning district along the corridor can provide specific design tools while retaining the underlying zoning. The Planning Commission should adopt commercial regulations which place maximum building square footage in areas outside of the Interchange.”

### **Industrial**

This category has been focused on three areas within the City including the existing industrial area south of Aylworth Avenue along Kalamazoo Street, the area east of the Blue Star Highway north of M-43, and the City established business park along Veterans Boulevard. The City continues to encourage industrial land uses to facilitate the establishment of solid wage earning jobs to support the year-round population.

### **Public Facility, Hospital**

This category identifies each of the existing public facilities within the City as well as the South Haven Hospital. These public facilities include the court house, emergency fire / police complex, museums, marinas, City Hall and pavilion, post office, and old public works property.

### **Cemetery**

This category recognizes the existence of the Lake View Cemetery that is owned and operated by the City of South Haven. The City continues to improve the documentation of the cemetery for operational efficiency purposes as well as historical value. Physical improvements to the cemetery are also being pursued.

### **Conservation Areas**

This category embodies environmentally sensitive or "conservation" areas in the City. Conservation areas include sand dunes, wetlands, floodplains, streams, creeks and drains, the Black River and areas at high risk of erosion along Lake Michigan. These areas present severe limitations for development and are proposed for very limited



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future development in keeping with their fragility and importance in buffering Lake Michigan storms, filtering and storing water during periods of flooding, draining storm water from land, providing habitat for a wide range of plants and animals, and for their wide ranging open space values.

South Haven's water resources, sand dunes, and other natural assets make it a desirable place to live. Destroying these resources would destroy the essential qualities which continue to attract residents and tourists to the area. Therefore, future actions and policies to protect the natural environment will be of utmost importance. These lands should be managed to remain as near to their natural state as possible. Only when other public purposes with broad public benefits demand it, should these lands be altered to accommodate other uses. The City Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include better conservation of these sensitive natural resources.

### **Park**

This category represents the existing parks and recreational resources in the City which were identified within the Recreation Facilities Plan and Map. For the most part these are existing facilities exclusive of those associated with the public school system.

### **Transition Area**

This category identifies those areas within the City where mixed uses may be appropriate to facilitate a more workable relationship with surrounding uses and conditions. Additionally, those areas that currently are industrial and are being converted to residential through the utilization of Planned Unit Developments.

### **Schools**

This category identifies each of the public school sites. The High School / grade school at Aylworth Avenue and LaGrange Street is represented as well as the related athletic



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fields nearby. The Baseline Road middle school is also indicated along with the football field south of Phoenix Street off of Hubbard Street.

## PLANNING AREAS

**Planning Area 1** - This area includes land that is both within the City and land that is within Casco Township, adjacent to the north edge of the City, a large portion of which is available for development. By continuing current zoning that permits lots ranging from 12,000 to 40,000 sq. ft., about 200 homes can be accommodated. The density should serve as a transition to larger lot development to the north from the higher density of homes south of Baseline Road. Sanitary sewers will be needed to develop north of Baseline Road. The City will need to work with Casco Township to relate development within the Township with that existing and proposed within the City.

The residential area along North Shore Drive, to the north of Dyckman Avenue, where the strip between the road and the shore becomes narrower, should remain less dense. The City and Casco Township should try to retain the homes on both sides of the road with broad lawns and scattered trees. This neighborhood serves as an entrance to the City, beginning with neighborhoods that are more wooded and changing to more intense development closer to the Black River. Land conversions will be an important issue as there is little vacant land in this area. Land conversion should be carefully regulated to avoid an increase in density, land area coverage and change in character from low and moderate density to high density. Existing multi-family zoning should not be expanded in this area.

Access to Lake Michigan and adequate parking should be increased as opportunities become available. A shuttle system connecting this area with Downtown should be developed to ease congestion on local roads during the summer months.



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**Planning Area 2** - This area is north of the Black River up to North Street extended to Lake Michigan. Historically it has been an area with a mixture of high intensity land uses such as resorts focused on the amenities of North Beach, the river frontage, marina / harbor, and Stanley Johnson Park. This area has a high percentage of seasonal rental units and several bed & breakfast establishments. Many of the structures are multiple family type dwelling units with the exception of the “Monroe Park” neighborhood adjacent to North Beach which is single family detached housing on small lots with minimal setback requirements.

The City should maintain this mix of land uses and continue to improve the amenities within the area. Parking congestion needs to be addressed through proper management and taking advantage of alternative transportation options.

**Planning Area 3** - This area is along the south side of the Black River, north of Dyckman Avenue, and extends from the drawbridge to the Blue Star Highway. It contains the sewer treatment plant and public marina/boat launch. It is proposed for future use as a mixed use district with commercial, recreation and residential uses permitted. A combination of its location along the Black River and link to the Kal-Haven Trail suggests new development be related to the recreation opportunities of those two features and the areas in close proximity to Downtown. Street improvements are necessary to accommodate any development and prevent flooding. Development of this area needs to be flexible to future market needs and to protection of sensitive environments in the area (Celery Pond and wetlands along the Black River as well as the tributary water courses that feed them). The City will need to carefully consider that much of this area is floodplain, and new buildings should be severely limited in floodplain areas. Additional open space and recreational use should be considered as the best uses for floodplain areas not yet developed.



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**Planning Area 4** - Higher density residential uses should be encouraged in the downtown area. In order to maintain a traditional pedestrian-oriented downtown, large numbers of residents within walking distance are very helpful in attracting quality retail and service businesses. It is important to maintain a high level of concentration of retail / service / commercial storefronts at the ground level on streets with a commercial character, so on commercial streets, residential uses should be prohibited on the first floor and encouraged on the second floor and above. New developments should provide adequate parking for residents. New ground level surface parking areas (other than on the right-of-way) should be restricted to the fringe of the central built up area. Parking garages and structures in the central built up area should allow for ground level retail/service/commercial, with parking above or below the ground level.

**Planning Area 5** - The portion of this area west of Broadway is primarily a residential neighborhood southwest of the Downtown. It extends from the Black River on the north, south to South Haven Street extending down to Aylworth Avenue, and from Lake Michigan east to LaGrange/Broadway Streets.

It is a fully developed area and faces important future land use issues dealing with maintaining neighborhood character, while improving or maintaining infrastructure and transitions to adjacent land uses.

The City should set up a program to protect existing trees or replace those damaged through neglect and utility work. Trees should be a priority over utility location selection and in methods for working near existing trees.

Identify and encourage historic preservation where structures are historically significant.



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Pedestrian and bike path connections to the lakefront, riverfront, and Downtown, including the extension of the Van Buren Trail from the south through Downtown should be implemented.

The portion of this Area 5 east of Broadway is another large residential neighborhood. It is located between Broadway Street on the west and the Blue Star Highway on the east. It extends from South Haven Street to Dyckman Avenue and Conger Street to the north.

Houses are more varied in age and style in the area east of Broadway. Here the street pattern does not closely follow a grid, and sight lines along streets are shorter. Many of the houses are two-stories high, and date from the early to mid-part of this century. There is very little vacant land.

Conservation and preservation of homes in this Area is a priority. Residential structures should be protected by controlling the character of development in transition areas, by ensuring that there are appropriate screening and buffers between different land uses and by limiting the removal of housing and the conversion to higher density housing. Infill housing is encouraged where lots are adequate and the character of the new units are compatible with nearby homes.

Where removal of structures are necessary, the land should be reused for the benefit of the neighborhood, either through infill housing or by using the lots as open space or parks.

While many streets in this area are tree-lined, several, such as Phoenix, have little public space for tree plantings. The City should work with property owners to encourage and





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assist them in planting trees on the private portions of their properties adjacent to the streets. Encourage redevelopment of Phoenix Street implementing “road diet” design.

The commercial uses fronting on Broadway, Phillips, and LaGrange are in a state of transition with vacancies having increased in the area between Superior and Elkenburg. A special evaluation of this zone is needed to determine the type of redevelopment that might be allowed in character with the adjacent neighborhoods. New commercial infill should be encouraged north of Green Street and south of Elkenburg. Improvements to school crossings that better link the east and west halves of this area should be considered.

**Planning Area 6** - This area is located along the lakefront, generally west of Indiana Avenue / St. Joseph Street along Monroe Boulevard, from South Haven Street south past the City limits into South Haven Township.

The primary land use issue in this area is with maintaining the existing residential character, protecting the lakeshore, and maintaining separation with adjacent incompatible land uses to the east. Both the City and the Township should encourage new residential development that is compatible with existing housing.

Both new development and existing residential areas should provide connections to the proposed Van Buren Trail extension, which will pass through this Area.

Encourage development that provides for common beachfront access.

The “Overton building and property should be considered for transition, and other uses for the structures and property should be considered, including single and multiple-family residential. The land north of Aylworth Avenue is adjacent to residential districts



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and projects which are compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods should be encouraged.

**Planning Area 7** - This area is located west of Blue Star Highway, north of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and extending to Aylworth Avenue and includes the industrial park east of St. Joseph Street past Kalamazoo Street. There are vacant parcels adjacent to industrial uses, and vacant land within the industrial park.

Development of vacant industrially zoned properties for industrial use should be pursued. At the same time, guidelines for redevelopment of different land uses within this area should also be developed. The guidelines would address vehicular and pedestrian access and encourage the development of buffering and screens between industrial and commercial uses and scattered residential uses within this area. These guidelines should be coordinated with South Haven Township, in which a portion of this Area is located.

Areas along the south side of Aylworth Avenue should be maintained as light industrial.

**Planning Area 8** - This area is located between Aylworth Avenue and Elkenburg / South Haven Street and extends from the older industrial area on the west to the Blue Star Highway on the east.

Connections between residential areas and the schools should also be enhanced. Ensure that pedestrian connections and transit connections are made with the residential areas to help provide links to employment opportunities and reduce the requirement for vehicular travel.



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M-43 is a gateway into the City and the landscaping of it should be improved along with the way-finding signage.

The commercial zoning district should be modified to include hospitals and the zoning for the hospital should be changed from residential to commercial.

Hospital and medical uses should be encouraged in this area.

**Planning Area 9** - This area is located wholly outside the City, and lies within South Haven Township. It runs along the Blue Star Highway, and includes the area out to Interstate I-196, south to 12th Avenue and cuts off at the M-43 Highway. There are large vacant areas zoned residential, with industrial and strip commercial development along Blue Star Highway.

Collaborative planning should be encouraged with the township.

**Planning Area 10** - This area is generally located along the Blue Star Highway and Interstate I-196, north of the M-43 Highway and south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Its mixed commercial, industrial and vacant land zoned for single family residential use presents land use issues dealing with access management, appropriate classifications of land, and the buffering of adjacent land uses.

Buffers between commercial/industrial uses and the existing single family residences should be encouraged as expansion and redevelopment occurs.

Access to streets in this area generally consists of one or more driveways at each property. Consolidation of access points should be encouraged, either through shared driveways or the use of service drives. The latter will be easier to develop where sites are



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vacant or where buildings on several adjacent properties are set farther back from the road. This effort recognizes that MDOT has authority over granting access to the major roadways in this area.

The portion of this area located east of Interstate 1-196 and north of Phoenix Street has nearly all been annexed by the City and has been developed as commercial and industrial with Lake Michigan College located within it because of its close proximity to the Interstate I-196 highway interchange.

Pedestrian and bicycle connections should be encouraged to interconnect this area.

The “Stones Throw” property is a transition area where potentially residential or commercial development would be appropriate.

Phoenix Street should be enhanced as a gateway into the City.

**Planning Area 11** - This area is primarily outside of the City limits with a small portion located in the City, and includes area in both South Haven and Casco Townships, along the Interstate Highway. It is largely vacant, while the area along the Black River has a few scattered single-family residences. The Kal-Haven Trail passes through this Area.

The portions of this area that are south of the Black River are adjacent to a new industrial park (in Area 10). Special buffering may be necessary depending on the characteristics of businesses that locate in the industrial park.

Large lot development should remain along the Black River. Conversion to higher density uses adjacent to the River should be prevented. The Kal-Haven Trail runs along



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the north side of the River and serves as a buffer for the River. Residential areas should be connected to but buffered from the Trail.

## **FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES AND THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, requires cities with an adopted zoning ordinance and master plan to provide a zoning plan offering an explanation of how the future land use categories of the master plan are intended to compel future zoning ordinance updates.

The City of South Haven's Zoning Ordinance was last amended and adopted in 2010. The zoning ordinance regulates land development, including the type of use and size of structures allowed on a property, ensuring the use is appropriate and compatible in relation to other surrounding uses. The zoning ordinance identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as basic standards regulating building height, area, bulk, location on the property and uses. The zoning ordinance is adopted under the authority of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The City of South Haven Zoning Map is included in this document.

The table below indicates the different land use categories of the zoning ordinance and the correlating future land use designation. Further descriptions of the individual zoning standards are found a Schedule of Regulations, which follows this text.



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Zoning Ordinance	Master Plan
Single Family Residential (R-1A)	Single Family Residential
Single Family Residential (R-1B)	Single Family Residential
Single Family Residential (R-1C)	Single Family Residential
Residential (R-2)	Single Family Residential
Multiple Family Residential (RM-1)	Multi Family Residential
Central Business District (CBD)	Commercial
Neighborhood Business (B-1)	Commercial
General Business (B-2)	Commercial
Waterfront Business (B-3)	Waterfront and Related Commercial Recreation
Major Thoroughfare Business (B-4)	Commercial
Professional Business (PB-1)	Public Facility Hospital
Light Industrial (I-1)	Industrial
Industrial (I-1B)	Industrial
General Industrial (I-2)	Industrial

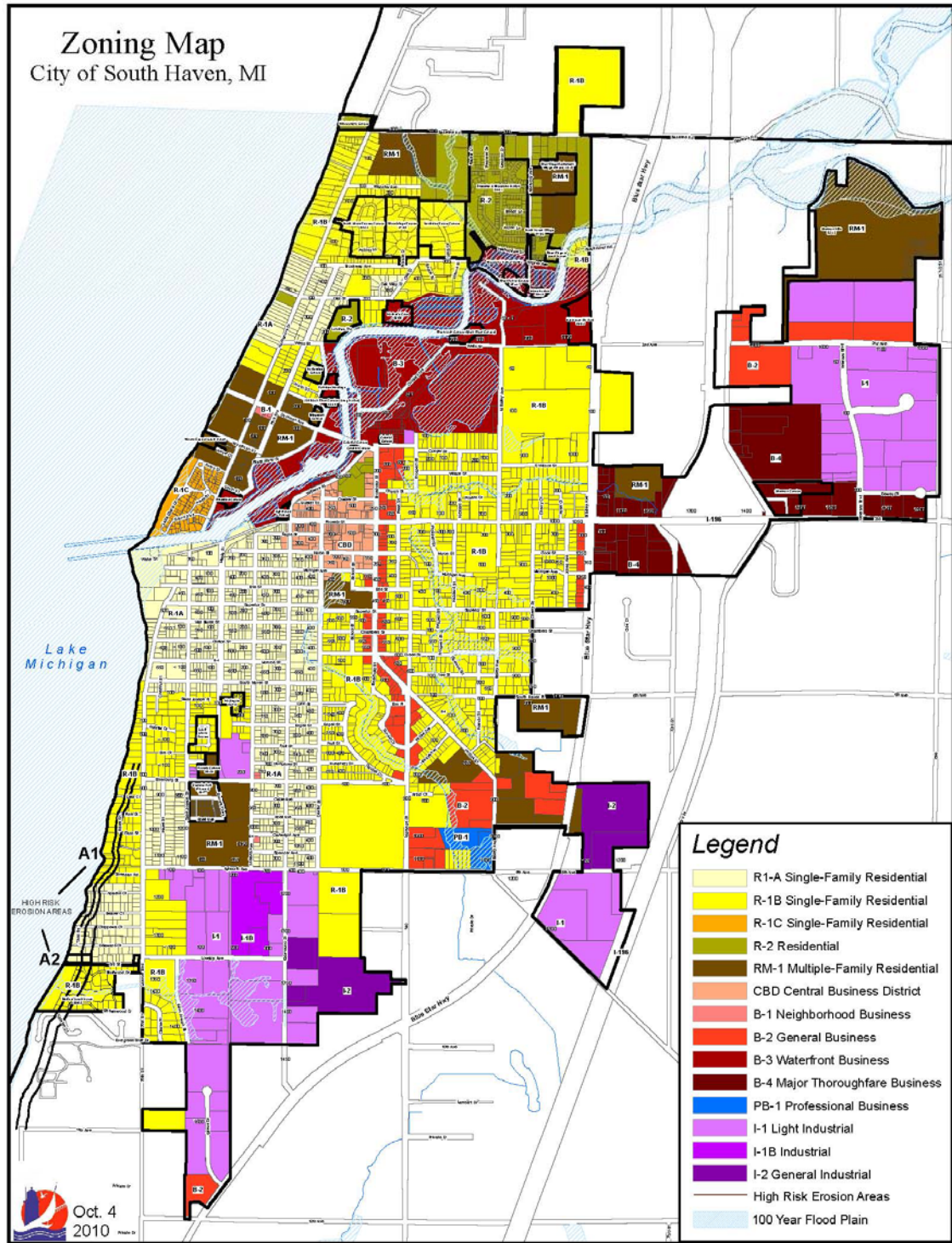
Four future land use designations, Park, Cemetery, Conservation and Transition, do not have specific zoning district correlation. This is because these uses are found in multiple zoning districts. When the zoning ordinance is updated following adoption of this Plan the city may consider an overlay district for the Conservation areas.

It should be noted that the regulations found in the Area and Setback Requirements for the City of South Haven table reflect the regulations in the zoning ordinance at the time of the adoption of this plan. These requirements may change during the zoning ordinance update. Always refer to the zoning ordinance for the most current provisions.





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## Area and Setback Requirements for the City of South Haven

Zoning District	Front Setback	Side Setback		Rear Setback	Max. Lot Coverage	Min Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Min. Lot Width	Max. Height
		Either side min.	Total both sides					
R-1A	15 feet <sup>2</sup>	3 feet	15 feet	25 feet	40%	5000	50 feet	30 feet or 2.5 stories <sup>3</sup>
R-1B	25 feet	8 feet	20 feet	25 feet	35%	8400	66 feet	Same as R-1A
R-1C	3 feet	3 feet	n/a	3 feet	n/a	2178	33 feet	Same as R-1A
R-2	25 feet	8 feet	20 feet	25 feet	35%	8400	66 feet	30 feet or 2.5 stories
RM-1	25 feet	12 feet	n/a	25 feet	35%	8712	66 feet	Residences 30 feet/others 40 feet
CBD	n/a	10 feet (where provided)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	45 feet or 3.5 stories
B-1	10 feet	10 feet	n/a	20 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	35 feet or 2.5 stories
B-2	25 feet	10 feet	n/a	20 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	35 feet or 2.5 stories
B-3	25 feet	10 feet	n/a	20 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	35 feet or 2.5 stories
B-4	35 feet	20 feet <sup>4</sup>	n/a	20 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	45 feet or 3.5 stories
I-1	40 feet	20 feet	40 feet	50 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	40 feet
I-2	40 feet	20 feet	40 feet	50 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	40 feet
PB-1	25 feet	10 feet	n/a	20 feet	n/a	n/a	n/a	35 feet or 2.5 stories

<sup>2</sup> In the R-1A, R-1B and R-1C districts, where the front setback cannot be met, the average of the front setbacks of the two principle structures on the properties directly adjacent to and fronting on the same right-of-way as the property in question may be applied. The front setback shall not be less than 10 feet when calculated as an average of the adjacent structure setbacks. If the adjacent property is vacant or the property is on a corner lot, fifteen (15) feet shall be used as the amount for that side when calculating the average.

<sup>3</sup> See the definition of "Height (Building)", also, no building shall exceed forty (40) feet from the average grade to the highest point of the roof surface. The highest point of a cupola, widow's watch, tower or similar feature that extends above the roof line shall be considered the highest point of the roof surface on roofs with such features.

<sup>4</sup> Buildings on the same lot shall be no closer than 20 feet to each other



# Chapter Eight: Proposed Street, Road and Related Transportation Improvements Implementation

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## INTRODUCTION

Coordinated capital improvement programming on the part of the City, Casco and South Haven Townships, the Van Buren and Allegan County Road Commissions, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) can mitigate some of the negative impacts associated with increased traffic and prevent serious threats to public health and safety.

### *Street Improvement Projects:*

Continue implementation of the Infrastructure Improvement Plan by reconstructing streets which have a PASER rating of 4 or less. The Infrastructure Improvement Plan priorities were last reviewed and approved by City Council on January 19, 2009. The Infrastructure Improvement Plan has four phases, each 5 years in length. Phase 1 projects have focused primarily on Major Streets and areas where utility replacement is of the highest priority. Every effort shall be made to complete these remaining Phase 1 projects, prior to the beginning of 2013:

- Reconstruct Kalamazoo Street between Lovejoy Avenue and Clinton Street
- Reconstruct Monroe Boulevard between the South City Limits and Aylworth Avenue
- Reconstruct Lovejoy Avenue between Monroe Boulevard and St. Joseph Street
- Reconstruct Delaware Court between West Street and Monroe Boulevard
- Reconstruct Chippewa Court between West Street and Monroe Boulevard
- Reconstruct West Street between Delaware Court and Chippewa Court



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- Reconstruct Beaver Court west of Monroe Boulevard
- Reconstruct Apache Court west of Monroe Boulevard
- Reconstruct Superior Street between Center Street and Broadway Avenue
- Reconstruct Kalamazoo Street between Huron Street and Williams Street
- Reconstruct Williams Street between Kalamazoo Street and Dyckman Avenue

Prior to 2013, City Council will be requested to review the Phase 2 projects to determine if they desire to proceed as previously approved or reprioritize future projects.

Continue discussions with MDOT regarding the following transportation related improvements:

- Construct a new circular off ramp from I-196 northbound to Phoenix Street westbound to improve access and relieve traffic congestion near the intersection of Phoenix Street and 73<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- Modify Phoenix Street, Broadway Avenue, and Phillips Street within the existing curb lines. Add a center, two-way left turn lane, reduce the number of through traffic lanes to one in each direction, and add bicycle lanes on each side.

### ***Bridge Improvement Projects:***

- Complete rehabilitation and preventative maintenance on the Dyckman Avenue Bascule Bridge consisting of deck repairs, replacement of expansion joints, sidewalk repairs on bascule span, adding rip-rap at piers, installing new web stiffeners to increase load limits, replacing hydraulic and electric operating systems, replacing traffic gate operators and traffic signals, repainting, and rebalancing and re-shimming bascule spans.



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## ***Non-motorized Improvement Projects:***

Continue construction of the Phoenix Street non-motorized pathway easterly from the intersection of 73<sup>rd</sup> and Phoenix to Veterans Blvd, north on Veterans Blvd to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, and east on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave to 71.50 Street.

- Connect and extend the Kal-Haven trail to the Van Buren Trail and Van Buren State park.
- Install barrier free compliant sidewalk ramps at locations where ramps currently do not exist and reconstruct ramps that are currently not in compliance with the standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Focus efforts on higher traveled routes, including downtown and tourist areas, schools, and parks. Continue installation of barrier free compliant sidewalk ramps in coordination with road reconstruction and repaving projects.
- Continue implementation of the City of South Haven Pedestrian, Bicycle & Paddle Plan by continuing to fill gaps in the current sidewalk and pathway system in conjunction with road reconstruction projects, or as independent construction projects.

## ***Prioritization:***

In making transportation improvements, the City will respond to the greatest needs as financial resources become available, based on the following guidelines:

- a. The degree to which the improvement is needed to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the facility users.
- b. The degree to which the improvement is needed to preserve or achieve full use of existing facilities.
- c. The degree to which replacement of buried infrastructure and utilities is needed.



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- d. The degree to which a project represents a logical extension of existing streets or roads within an area of the City according to its intended land use and service level.



## Chapter Nine: Plan Implementation

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The key to implementation and successfully managing future growth and community change is integrating planning into day-to-day decision making. One method used to reduce the “reactionary mode” (or crisis decision making) is conscientious planning and the assurance that the necessary tools will be available to meet a broad range of issues. For that reason it is especially important that the recommendations of this Plan be implemented as the opportunity presents itself (or revised as circumstances dictate). As additional studies are undertaken and land use change occurs, the Master Plan should be updated to reflect the new information. At a minimum the Plan should be comprehensively reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

A community’s Master Plan is only as valuable as the planning commissioners who implement it. It is not the purpose of the Plan to set on a shelf and wait for the next five-year update. Once every year, the planning commissioners should review the goals and policies of the Plan and determine the progress made in the previous year. At that time, the commissioners should also identify goals to achieve in the upcoming year. Individuals or groups responsible for taking the lead in reaching the goals, if other than planning commissioners, should also be identified and the commissioners should work in consort with those identified.

It should also be remembered that the planning commission only has the authority given them by state and local law. That authority does not extend to the goals or programs of unrelated boards and commissions.

This Chapter will look at a variety of implementation tools available to planning commissioner and other city officials. Again, the emphasis here is placed on actions authorized to the planning commissioners.





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## PRIMARY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

### Zoning Ordinance

The City of South Haven is granted the authority to adopt a zoning ordinance pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006. The intent of a zoning ordinance is to regulate the use of land to provide for orderly growth and development and allow the integration of land uses without creating nuisances. The zoning ordinance defines land use districts and regulates height, bulk, use, area of lot to be covered, and open space to be preserved within each district.

Because zoning is required to be based upon a Plan prepared by the Planning Commission to guide future land use decisions, the zoning ordinance will need to be revised to reflect this Plan's new goals, objectives, policies, and future land use proposals. However, the Zoning District Map and the Future Land Use Map may not and should not be identical. The Zoning Map designations may reflect existing land uses and areas designated for uses other than those existing at present. In contrast, the Future Land Use Map reflects a community's desired land use configuration about 20-30 years in the future.

When considering rezoning requests, the Planning Commissioners should ask the following questions:

1. Is this an appropriate location for the proposed zone?
2. What does the Future Land Use Map show for this property? Is the request consistent with the map?
3. What are the adopted Goals and Policies for the property and does the request further those goals and policies?
4. Are all of the uses permitted in the proposed zoning district compatible with the surrounding area?



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5. Is there another zoning district to which the proposed use would be better suited?
6. How would the rezoning, if approved, benefit the City overall?
7. Would a zoning ordinance text amendment serve the City better in this matter than a rezoning of property?

After considering these questions and consulting the Master Plan maps, goals and policies, the Planning Commission should make correct decisions in matter of rezoning. It should be remembered that every decision of the planning commission related to land use, including rezoning, special use requests, PUDs or site plan reviews should advance the goals of this Plan. Failure to do so may put the City in a precarious legal position should there be a legal challenge.

Areas outside the City limits of South Haven are subject to zoning by South Haven or Casco Townships. It is a goal of this Plan that cooperative agreements will continue to be formulated between the City of South Haven and the two abutting Townships that anticipate expanded City infrastructure and future land uses consistent with this Plan. To that end, the respective Planning Commissions of South Haven and Casco Townships will be encouraged to review their existing future land use plans contiguous to the City, and where inconsistent, to consider changes. Similarly, existing zoning in Casco and South Haven Townships should be reviewed to ensure current zoning is not prematurely encouraging intensive use in areas that lack adequate public facilities. Consideration should also be given to adoption of similar zoning regulations by the City of South Haven, Casco and South Haven Townships for areas that could be annexed in the future. This will prevent the creation of nonconforming uses and establish a uniform mechanism for review of land use changes in these areas.



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South Haven's Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed and made consistent with this Plan. If this is not done then the legal support for future zoning decisions is undermined. The Zoning Ordinance should also be thoroughly reviewed and updated at least once each five years.

### **Subdivision and Condominium Regulations**

The City of South Haven will need to update existing subdivision regulations following (or concurrent with) zoning changes to implement recommendations in this Plan. The enabling legislation that permits the enactment of such regulations is Public Act 288 of 1967, also known as the Subdivision Control Act of 1967. This Act allows a community to set requirements and design standards for streets, blocks, lots, curbs, sidewalks, open spaces, easements, public utilities, and other associated subdivision improvements. Condominium regulations should also be enacted pursuant to the Condominium Act, P.A. 59 of 1978.

### **Capital Improvements**

In its basic form, a capital improvement program (CIP) is a complete list of all proposed public improvements planned for a six year period including costs, sources of funding, location, and priority. The CIP outlines the projects that will replace or improve existing facilities, or that will be necessary to serve current and projected land use development within a community.

Advanced planning for public works through the use of a CIP assures more effective and economical capital expenditures, as well as the provision of public works in a timely manner. The use of capital improvements programming can be an effective tool for implementing the Master Plan by giving priority to those projects which have been identified in the Plan as being most important to the future development and well-being of the community. The Planning Commission should develop a formal capital



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improvement program for approval by the City Council as part of the annual budgeting process.

### **Land Use & Infrastructure Policies**

A strong effort will be necessary to coordinate future capital improvement decisions and land use policies with adjoining units of government. As a result, proposed policy changes should be circulated for comment early. Likewise, proposed capital improvement programs should be prepared with adequate time for review and comment by the adjoining jurisdictions. The CIP process should also be coordinated with parallel processes in South Haven and Casco Townships as City facilities are extended.

### **Housing Program**

Depending on State and Federal requirements and available dollars, the City may benefit from developing and implementing a housing rehabilitation program in addition to its Housing Commission efforts. The benefits of such activity may significantly increase as existing housing ages. However, more important in the long term may well be continued efforts to ensure the existing housing stock is maintained.

### **Building and Property Maintenance Codes**

The Michigan Construction Code is the basic building code adopted by the City to regulate construction methods and materials. The adoption and enforcement of a property maintenance code is important in maintaining safe, high quality housing and in minimizing deteriorating housing conditions.

### **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**

The Downtown Development Authority will continue to play an important role in planning for and implementation of improvements downtown. However, successful



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efforts will be enhanced if the improvements are coordinated with other improvements recommended in this Master Plan. The City Planning Commission and DDA need to review and coordinate the recommendations of the current Downtown Development Plan and this Master Plan.

### **Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA)**

The effective use of the LDFA to finance industrial park improvements should be continued as funds become available. The area affected may also benefit from expansion as the need or opportunity exists. The Planning Commission should adopt the LDFA Plan as a formal part of the Comprehensive Plan if it is first found consistent with this Plan.

### **Other Planning & Economic Development Assistance**

The Planning Commission through the City Economic Development Director should maintain regular communication with the County and Regional Planning Commission on issues of mutual interest. These organizations should be encouraged to expand their County and region-wide planning and economic development efforts and to share relevant materials with the City. Likewise a copy of this Plan should be forwarded to these agencies when adopted or amended.

