



City of Grand Blanc 2018 Master Plan



City of Grand Blanc

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CITY OF GRAND BLANC CITY COUNCIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE RESOLUTION 18-03-03

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CITY CLERK-

ASST. CITY MANAGER
Bethany J. Smith

FINANCE DIRECTOR- TREASURER

Dianne M. Waterworth

CITY ASSESSOR

Tonya Lall

CITY ATTORNEY

Walter P. Griffin

WHEREAS; the City of Grand Blanc has prepared a proposed Master Plan for the future use, development, and preservation of lands within the City in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3081 *et seq* (the "Act");

WHEREAS; on February 19th, 2018 the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to consider approval of the proposed Master Plan in accordance with the Act;

WHEREAS; the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed Master Plan, as amended to City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; the City Council of the City of Grand Blanc, Genesee County, Michigan, resolves as follows;

The City Council hereby approves the Master Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A. Any and all resolutions that in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed but only to the extent to give this Resolution full force and effect.

Motion by Nielsen supported by Blondell to approve the proposed Grand Blanc City Master Plan Update. Motion carried.

Yeas:6

Nays:0

STATE OF MICHIGAN}
COUNTY OF GENESEE}

I, Bethany J. Smith, City Clerk of the City of Grand Blanc, hereby certify this to be a true and complete copy of the Resolution approving the 2018 Master Plan Update of the City of Grand Blanc, duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council held on the 14th day of March, 2018.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan is the result of collaboration between city staff, officials, planning consultants, and the public.

PLANNING COMMISSION

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Wendy Jean-Buhrer, City Manager
Beth Smith, City Clerk

PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1-1 Introduction

2-1 The Master Plan

3-1 Future Land Use

Future Land Use Map (following 3-1)

4-1 Downtown

5-1 Multi-Modal Transportation

6-1 Community Facilities & Services

7-1 Implementation

A Appendix A: Demographics

B Appendix B: Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use Map (following B-1)

C Appendix C: Natural Features

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

High quality neighborhoods, diversity of business, excellent schools and municipal services, and a mixture of uses to provide a stable tax base and employment opportunities are among the many assets found in the City of Grand Blanc. Few communities in the area can match Grand Blanc for its high quality of life.

Like most communities in developing areas, Grand Blanc is constantly undergoing change. Some changes are viewed favorably, such as reinvestment, while others, like increased traffic, may cause concern. Businesses and industries develop and redevelop, homes are remodeled or new ones built, streets and parks are improved. Some communities simply let this change happen, hope for the best, and react to development proposals when presented. Others, like Grand Blanc, work diligently to influence change in a manner that maintains the high quality of life enjoyed by residents and businesses today. A major step in that ‘influencing process’ is the preparation and application of the master plan.

Community leaders are proud of the City of Grand Blanc and the way development has occurred. Over time, issues arise or conditions change, which require the future land use plan to be reevaluated or confirmed. This update focuses on the City’s future land use plan and other factors, which are directly tied to land use decisions. This update provides a written framework for the future to make substantive, well thought-out decisions to ensure the vision of the City is fulfilled.

A. WHY THE CITY OF GRAND BLANC UPDATED THE MASTER PLAN

Many factors led the City to initiate this Master Plan Update. The City’s last full update was adopted in 2007. While that document has provided guidance over the past decade, new issues and opportunities have arisen, including the Great Recession. Recent information has been released from the 2010 U.S. Census to depict the changing demographic characteristics of the community. This information, together with a number of changing best practices, have driven this land use update. Issues that need to be addressed include:

- If more commercial areas are needed in the Grand Blanc community, where should they be located?
- What is the most appropriate mixture of uses in the downtown?
- How should the remaining vacant acres in the city be developed?
- How can the downtown develop in a more compact, walkable arrangement and still accommodate the traffic that is directed through the downtown area?
- How can the City accommodate increases in traffic volumes associated with planned land uses in the surrounding Township?
- How can the City promote reinvestment in its housing stock?
- What type of development is needed to support desired public facilities and infrastructure improvements desired in the future?
- How can the City encourage redevelopment of certain commercial land uses that may be approaching their obsolescence?
- What is the appropriate level of regulation to upgrade site and building design to meet City expectations but still make development financially attractive to property owners?

B. SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

This document begins in Chapter Two with a review of how this plan is integrated with other plans completed by the City either independently or in conjunction with the Charter Township of Grand Blanc. Chapter Three, Future Land Use, describes some of the land use issues in the City and the City's planned land use. This chapter includes a future land use map which illustrates the desired long-term land use pattern. Corresponding text explains the map and its recommendations.

Chapters Four and Five provide an overview of policies and recommendations for the City for transportation and community facilities and services. These chapters serve to reflect recent trends in the City in addition to offering a general summary of other related planning documents. These chapters are intended to supplement the other planning documents, and the reader is referred to those documents for more information.

Chapter Six provides a table which describes tools and methodology for implementation. This is to assist the City with fundamental strategies on the most efficient and effective methods of accomplishing the policies and recommendations set forth in the Plan. Demographic and existing land use information is located in the Appendices. This data helps to provide a general picture of the community that serves as the foundation for policies and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2:

THE MASTER PLAN

Grand Blanc, which means "Great White" in French, was originally settled by Chippewa Indians. French traders arrived before 1800 and gave the town its name. By 1823, pioneer families began setting up trading posts and settling on the abundant farmland. With the development of the railroad the town attracted more workers and as a result, the small community flourished throughout the 1800s. Grand Blanc adopted its City Charter on March 4, 1930. Since that time, the City and greater area have continued to grow and become an attractive area, which serves predominantly as a residential community.

This chapter describes master planning, briefly illustrates the planning history in the Grand Blanc community, provides an understanding for the relationship between this Land Use Plan and related efforts, and explains how the Master Plan can be applied in everyday decision making processes.

A. WHAT IS THE MASTER PLAN?

The Master Plan is a guide for the future growth and development in the community. The Plan incorporates an examination of existing conditions, discussions with community leaders, professional planning expertise, along with the desires of the residents and business owners and with the needs of developers to assist in creating a livable and sustainable community. The Master Plan is a policy document that sets the direction for the City. The Plan establishes future land uses, guides regulation changes, and helps identify and prioritize improvements to infrastructure, facilities, and services. Unlike a Zoning Ordinance, it is flexible in order to respond to changing conditions. While the Zoning Ordinance sets forth specific legal requirements for today, the Master Plan provides recommendations for the future.

The City's Master Plan is authorized by the Municipal Planning Act (33 of 2008). This Act describes the general purpose of a master plan to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
- Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for one or more of the following:
 - I. A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets and provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users.
 - II. Safety from fire and other dangers.
 - III. Light and air.
 - IV. Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
 - V. Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
 - VI. Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
 - VII. Recreation.
 - VIII. The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

B. HISTORY OF PLANNING IN GRAND BLANC

This Land Use Plan represents the latest in a series of planning documents that have helped guide decision-making in the City for over thirty years. In April 1970, the first Future Land Use Plan for the area was prepared for a group called the Grand Blanc Regional Planning Commission. Several years later the Regional Planning Commission was dissolved and was replaced by separate Planning Commissions in the Charter Township of Grand Blanc and the City. Initially the City used a planning advisory committee. The City's official Planning Commission was established in June of 1980 pursuant to Act 285, of the Public Acts of 1931.

In 1981, a Plan titled "Comprehensive General Community and Economic Development Plan" was adopted by the City Planning Commission. In addition to addressing demographics, existing land use, goals and policies, and future land use this plan also focused on economics. The Plan addressed potential for growth and included an Economic Development Strategy Plan.

In 1991, the City and Township Planning Commissions jointly prepared and adopted a Grand Blanc Community Master Plan. This was a Comprehensive Plan that addressed land use, transportation, environment, and other concerns. The Hill Road Corridor Study, which addresses a major thoroughfare in the Township, was also part of this Plan. This Plan replaced the 1981 Plan.

Following adoption of the Grand Blanc Community Master Plan, there was a significant "grass roots" planning process during the mid-1990s. Defined as "Grand Blanc 2020 Vision", a large group of business representatives, community leaders, and citizens held a series of workshops to help define goals for the Grand Blanc Community. Ideas that evolved throughout the Grand Blanc 2020 Vision process form the foundation for many of the subsequent "official" planning documents described below.

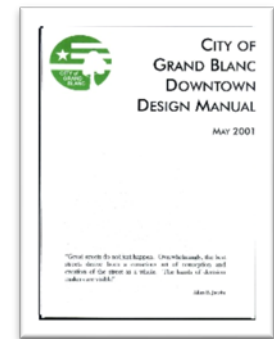
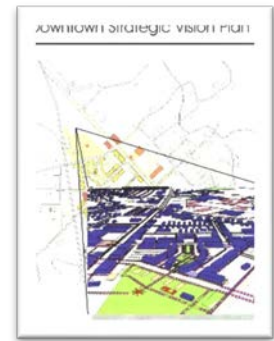
In 2007, an update was prepared and adopted to update the 1991 Grand Blanc Community Master Plan for the City. The City's current Master Plan now includes this Plan, along with the separate documents for the downtown, pathways, parks and recreation, transportation, and Grand Blanc Road Corridor. The 2007 Plan remains the current Plan for the Township. The 2018 update will modernize and revise the 2007 plan.

C. CHAPTERS OF THE MASTER PLAN

Since 1991, the City and Township have prepared several other documents that were adopted as amendments to the overall Master Plan. All of these documents are considered new chapters, or updates that replace corresponding sections of the 1991 Master Plan. Public input was received and considered throughout the development of each of these plans that was used to help develop this Plan. In addition, the City held an Open House during this Plan update to obtain public comment.

- **Pathways Plan.** A Plan that provides recommendations for a community-wide network of bike paths, bike lanes, trails and sidewalks.
- **Parks and Recreation Plan.** A Plan adopted by the Grand Blanc Parks and Recreation Commission with recommendations on park improvements and recreation programming. This Plan is updated at least every five years to maintain eligibility for state funding.

- **Downtown Strategic Vision Plan.** City officials recognized that the “downtown” had potential to be a unique component in the community, but without a specific Plan. An extensive public involvement effort, which included several design charrettes, led to the creation of an overall Plan for the downtown area. This Plan included a market study, transportation, land use and urban design. Implementation of the Plan began through amendments to the Zoning Ordinance through a special CBD overlay. This overlay included standards to place buildings closer to the street, like a traditional downtown. Other standards are included for architecture and site design.
- **Downtown Design Manual.** This document includes narrative and photos as guidelines for new development and redevelopment in the downtown. In tandem with the Downtown Strategic Vision Plan and CBD ordinance, the design manual has helped ensure several new projects have a “timeless” traditional downtown design.
- **Grand Blanc Community Transportation Plan.** This Plan serves as the transportation chapter of the overall community Master Plan. Existing and projected traffic conditions were evaluated to determine potential short and long term improvements. A number of intersection and road improvement projects are recommended.
- **Holly/Saginaw/Baldwin Corridor Plan.** Prepared jointly by the City and Township, this Plan includes specific land use and access recommendations for these three critical arterial roadways in the southeastern/central part of the Grand Blanc community. A series of site and building design standards are also included.



D. USING THE PLAN

The Master Plan, including all of the various documents previously discussed, is intended as a guide for City officials in land use, development, zoning, and capital improvement decisions. The Planning Commission, City Council, and the public should continuously use this document and make reference to the Master Plan to:

- Visualize what can be reasonably expected to occur - to provide some assurance and security with individual investment decisions.
- Review development proposals – to confirm the proposal meets the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.
- Review rezoning requests – to confirm the request is consistent with the City’s criteria to consider rezonings including existing conditions, the future land use map, the appropriate timing of the change, consistency with the goals and policies of the Master Plan, and potential impacts on the city.
- Provide a basis for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance - to help realize plan goals.
- Identify and give priorities to decisions on physical improvements - elected officials can look to the plan to identify desired capital improvements for roads, pathways, parks, and public facilities.

CHAPTER 3:

FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use, how the City should develop or redevelop over the next decade, is the key component of the Master Plan. Other Master Plan chapters are intended to support the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan establishes the intended densities and arrangement of land uses for the future to help achieve the City’s vision and various long-term goals. Use of the Plan will help guide decisions on individual parcels of land over a period of years to ensure they fit into the bigger picture. The following overarching policies provide the framework for this chapter and its recommendations.

Goal 1, Land Uses in General: Promote development and redevelopment which meets public needs, accommodates a diversity of uses, and provides a sound tax base to sustain the City’s high-quality facilities and services.

Goal 2, Housing: Retain traditional single-family housing types and encourage continual reinvestment within the high-quality neighborhoods. In addition, provide diversity in housing choices so residents can afford to remain in the City for their entire life – starter homes, a reasonable amount of rental units and condominiums, varying housing types, and specialized housing for seniors.

Goal 3, Revitalize the Downtown: Pursue implementation of the recommendations from the Downtown chapter through efforts to encourage (re)development, refinements to regulations, and public investment.

Goal 4, Natural Feature Preservation: Enhance the quality of life through the conservation of significant natural features including water bodies, floodplains, open space, wetlands, woodlands, aquifers, and well-head areas.

The City of Grand Blanc, located in the center of the Township, long served as the community’s hub. Rapid growth in a traditional pattern began in the 1960s and continued through the 1980s as many people moved to Grand Blanc from larger urban areas, like Flint, similar to the nationwide suburbanization trend. Several major employers established locations in the area, and new businesses developed to meet the needs of the growing population.

Population and business growth was also accelerated by the construction of the I-75 expressway. The expressway provides convenient access to major employment and shopping centers in Flint, Auburn Hills and other areas. As noted in the 1991 Plan, Grand Blanc became a “bedroom community”, meaning most

residents work outside the community. The 2014 American Community Survey confirms this is still true, as the average resident commutes 26.4 minutes to work (see Appendix A).

Over time, growth within the City has slowed as most buildable land has become developed. Most growth over the last decade has occurred in the Township, which experienced a 25.8% population increase in the 2000s, while the City only grew 0.4% during the same time. Still, the City has many opportunities for both population and business growth and did not experience the decline that the greater Genesee County saw (-2.4%). There are a number of vacant lots scattered throughout the City, and many of these sites are ripe for redevelopment, especially within the Downtown.

Infill development and redevelopment poses a different challenge from the development of open lands addressed in the City's previous plans. Continual reinvestment in existing housing stock needs to be encouraged to help maintain the quality of the neighborhoods. The City desires to retain existing business and encourage them to grow, but the protection of the adjacent neighborhoods must also be considered. Revitalization of the downtown, a focus of recent planning efforts, must continue to remain on the forefront. City streets are not configured to meet the traffic demands of the growth in the surrounding Township. A combination of these and other factors underscores the crucial role that future land use plays in providing a blue print for the community's future.

A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In response to the existing conditions, a framework has been established for the Future Land Use Plan through a set of policies and recommendations. The policies are statements of goals and guidelines which describe the City's guiding planning principles. The policies should be reviewed along with the Future Land Use Plan when development proposals are considered. Recommendations offer more specific direction on how this will be accomplished. The policies and recommendations must be reviewed collectively and not used in isolation to support a particular request.

Goal 1, Land Uses in General. Promote development and redevelopment which meets public needs, accommodates a diversity of uses, and provides a sound tax base to sustain the City's high-quality facilities and services. This policy is based on the following objectives:

- ☐ Protect the significant investments made by landowners by ensuring land use changes are compatible with established areas through their location or sensitive site/building design;
- ☐ Protect the significant investments made by the City so new development does not overburden public facilities, but instead optimizes their potential;
- ☐ Balance the economic interests of individual land owners with the public interest to ensure each land use decision is in the best interest of the City overall. The land use should offer a reasonable rate of return but may or may not be the most profitable use on a particular parcel of land;
- ☐ Provide a diversity of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses to sustain prosperity and support desired public facilities and services;

- ☐ Promote a community-wide land use plan which emphasizes the downtown as the retail and civic center; uses in the nearby areas of the City and Township should complement the downtown rather than compete with it;
- ☐ Encourage businesses to remain and expand in the City, or the community, to strengthen the local economy;
- ☐ Foster the revitalization and redevelopment of existing uses or areas which have become obsolete, either through upgrades or redevelopment with more appropriate uses for the area;
- ☐ Where existing land uses are clearly non-conforming with the area, work toward their gradual removal of relocation and replacement with a compatible land use; and
- ☐ Protect natural and historic resources.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE POLICY

- ☐ Coordinate major land use planning decisions and decisions along community borders with Grand Blanc Township to ensure the objectives of both communities are considered.
- ☐ Align future land use changes and zoning designations to remain consistent with the community character and updated Future Land Use map.
- ☐ Update zoning districts and standards to focus more on form and intensity than just relying on permitted uses. Consider creating and adopting a form-based code, particularly for the Downtown.
- ☐ Create strategies for nonconforming uses to either eventually remove or relocate them or require improvements to the site or operations to make them more compatible with the surrounding area.
- ☐ Encourage desired redevelopment through regulations, streamlined procedures, financial incentives and targeted investments for supporting municipal facilities or services.
- ☐ Target key redevelopment sites, including GM, K-Mart, vacant City-owned properties and other vacant downtown lots, by creating marketing materials and soliciting proposals for redevelopment.
- ☐ Use planning, zoning and economic development tools to direct development to locations where current or planned capacity of municipal utilities, services, and the transportation system can support the impacts of the proposed use(s).
- ☐ Grand Blanc Cement Products, located on the east side of Center Road at the north City limits, has been an important use in the community for many years. However, due to its inconsistency with the surrounding residential uses, it is considered a nonconforming use in terms of zoning. The Plan supports the retention of the use but with careful review of any major change or expansion of use to improve compatibility with the area. If the use were to ever discontinue, the Plan recommends redevelopment of the site with either residential uses or an expansion of Rust Park rather than replacement with another industrial or business use.
- ☐ Encourage continual site improvements along the rail lines, once zoned industrial, to gradually become more compatible with the adjacent residential areas. This may include additional landscaping, improved lighting, or changes in parking and site circulation.
- ☐ Prioritize reinvestment in the existing commercial centers, such as in the downtown and at the Holly Road/Saginaw Street intersection, before new competing centers are permitted.

- ☐ Improve the image of the commercial areas by requiring private investment of appropriate landscaping, modernization of lighting, and replacement of nonconforming signs with conforming signs.
- ☐ Use public investments, such as street improvements, streetscape improvements and public site upgrades, to encourage private investment.
- ☐ Revise regulations to provide more flexibility for redevelopment of significant sites, such as the General Motors and K-Mart properties.
- ☐ Work with the Township, General Motors, and interested community groups to develop a plan for the General Motors properties. This should promote a mixed-use development that meets the needs of the landowner, desires of the community, and complements the City's downtown.

Goal 2, Housing. Retain traditional single-family housing types and encourage continual reinvestment within the high-quality neighborhoods. In addition, provide diversity in housing choices so residents can afford to remain in the City for their entire life – starter homes, a reasonable amount of rental units and condominiums, varying housing types, and specialized housing for seniors.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE POLICY

- ☐ Continue to provide high quality municipal facilities, services, and parks City-wide to ensure Grand Blanc remains a good investment for homebuyers.
- ☐ Maintain streets, street trees, sidewalks, utilities, street lighting, and entry signs within neighborhoods.
- ☐ Use a combination of code enforcement, community education, and housing funding to encourage investments in home improvements.
- ☐ Target community development grants and other programs to senior programs and facilities.
- ☐ Encourage public involvement and support neighborhood associations to strengthen the connection between residents and the City.
- ☐ Review, and revise as necessary, regulations to balance the need to promote home improvements and expansions with the policy to protect adjacent homeowners.
- ☐ Develop creative regulations that would encourage preservation of open space, views and important natural features if development is proposed in certain areas (Smith Lake, The Jewel Golf Club, etc.).
- ☐ Where non-residential uses abut residential areas, promote a harmonious relationship through buffers (landscaping, walls, fences, setbacks), controls on lighting, and sensitive site design to minimize negative impacts. In the case of nonconforming uses, work to gradually eliminate the use and replace with a more conforming use.
- ☐ Respond to concerns about cut-through traffic or high speeds with a combination of neighborhood education, enforcement, and design improvements (i.e. use traffic calming techniques where a problem is documented).
- ☐ Continue to connect neighborhoods and the greater City making it more “walkable” through sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes.
- ☐ Work in cooperation with Grand Blanc Schools and other institutions that contribute to the quality of life in the community to meet their needs while responding to potential negative impacts associated with traffic or site design to ensure that the community continues to be desirable to families and maintains the quality housing market.

- ☐ Create flexibility in the zoning regulations to allow for attached housing types and mixed-use housing in and near the downtown, townhomes and varying housing types in more dense neighborhoods, and senior housing.

Goal 3, Revitalize the Downtown. Pursue implementation of the recommendations from the Downtown chapter through efforts to encourage (re)development, refinements to regulations, and public investment.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE POLICY

- ☐ Promote a diversity of commercial, office, entertainment, and municipal uses in the downtown.
- ☐ Encourage moderate- to high-density residential within and adjacent to the downtown to provide additional support for businesses.
- ☐ Adopt downtown design standards into the Zoning Ordinance.
- ☐ Apply the Grand Blanc design guidelines to new projects in the downtown and when uses desire to expand, incorporate the best elements of a traditional, mixed-use, and walkable downtown.
- ☐ Continue to upgrade public lands and street rights-of-way to support private investment downtown.
- ☐ Provide additional public gathering places and events to bring people downtown.
- ☐ Consider public-private partnerships or solicitation of qualified developers to promote development of City-owned properties to be consistent with Chapter 4: Downtown Plan.
- ☐ Improve traffic circulation in a manner that helps balance the needs of the automobile while at the same time promoting a more pedestrian-friendly environment, particularly along Saginaw Street.
- ☐ Work cooperatively with the Township and Genesee County Road Commission to evaluate and pursue road improvements to improve traffic flow around the City to help reduce through traffic volumes within the City and its downtown.
- ☐ Continue to use banners, ornamental street lights, and other design elements to announce entry to the downtown. Create a west gateway entry feature near the rail crossing along Grand Blanc Road to be consistent with the archway entry along Saginaw Road.
- ☐ Examine Reid Road for possible streetscape improvements and amend the Zoning Ordinance where needed to accommodate future enhancements, including reduced setbacks.



Goal 4, Natural Feature Preservation. Enhance the quality of life through the conservation of significant natural features including water bodies, floodplains, open space, wetlands, woodlands, aquifers, and wellhead areas.



ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE POLICY

- ☐ Preserve quality trees and woodlands through site design and site plan review.
- ☐ Direct development away from designated floodplains.
- ☐ Utilize best management practices for storm water design.
- ☐ Incorporate key natural features as a part of site design by limiting the amount of tree clearing to the minimum area practical.
- ☐ Protect both regulated and important non-regulated wetland environments.
- ☐ Protect open views of the waterways by regulating the type, size, and number of structures that may be constructed along the waterfront.
- ☐ Seek to achieve Bronze Level status through participation in the Michigan Municipal League's Michigan Green Communities (MGC) Challenge.

B. FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Map and the Master Plan were based on sound planning principles and the following factors:

- ◆ **Existing Land Use.** Approximately 87% of the land in the City has been developed. Locations of most existing commercial and industrial developments are appropriate and will continue to serve as the primary business centers. Residential areas have developed throughout the City. The City's land use patterns have evolved in a relatively orderly manner and will be built upon, with slight modification, rather than altered in a significant manner.
- ◆ **Existing Zoning.** There is no 'vested interest' that guarantees zoning will not change; in fact zoning changes are suggested in this plan. However, such changes were carefully considered to ensure the general development arrangement remains complementary to surrounding uses and landowners will be ensured a reasonable use of their land.
- ◆ **Relationship of Incompatible Uses.** The Future Land Use Plan provides important guidance in the ongoing effort to reduce or eliminate incompatible land use relationships. Providing a transition between land uses, such as the introduction of office or multiple-family residential between light industrial and single-family residential areas, is one approach that can accomplish such a transition. In other cases natural features, landscaping, and setback strategies can help facilitate a transition. Importantly, the plan designates general land use patterns for uses considered most appropriate to fulfill the long-term objectives of the community.

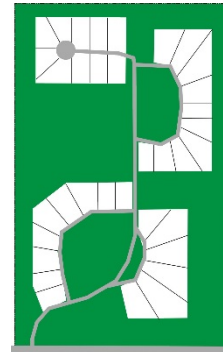
- ◆ **Capacity of Streets, Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services.** The density of residential uses and the designation of land for industrial and commercial development are dependent on the availability and capacity of the infrastructure. Accessibility to, and the capacity of, the street network help to establish the types and intensity of uses that may be served in an area without adversely impacting traffic operations. The availability of community facilities such as schools and recreation facilities identify areas that are especially attractive for residential development, while the availability of police and fire protection may place limits on the quality of service provided.
- ◆ **Market Conditions and Trends.** Market conditions were considered even though they will change during the twenty-year time frame of this Plan. 2010 U.S. Census information on population, income, and housing statistics were considered.
- ◆ **Public Desires.** Comments and opinions about land use patterns and related community planning issues were conveyed at various public forums, informal meetings, and discussions with property owners, residents, and officials.
- ◆ **Previous Comprehensive Plan and Planned Land Uses in the City of Grand Blanc.** Recommendations from the previous comprehensive plan formed the foundation of this plan update. Those recommendations were refined based on analysis of new data, recent development trends, and other factors.

C. FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

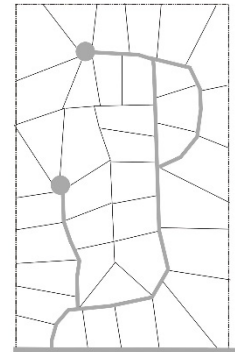
Based upon the policies and recommendations previously listed, a Future Land Use Plan was prepared. This Future Land Use Plan visually represents the desired land use pattern for the City. The plan is intended to provide a foundation for the City to direct future development/redevelopment in a manner that is consistent with its character.

The Future Land Use Plan includes a number of categories with corresponding recommendations on the types and extent of development within those areas. A description of the future land use categories are provided below and illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

Open Space. The Open Space district offers an opportunity to preserve key natural features or open space while allowing limited and strategic development. Uses include both active and passive recreation and low-density residential. While the main objective of the designation is to maintain open and recreation space and to preserve natural features, low-density, clustered residential units are a complimentary use. This flexibility can mutually benefit the developer, nearby residents, and the City overall. The developer can save construction costs and can offer a more attractive setting to prospective residents. Nearby residents and the City overall can benefit through the preservation of open space that may otherwise be lost.



Clustered
Development



Typical Subdivision
Development

There are three public parks included in this designation: 1) Physicians Park located west of Saginaw Street and north of Reid Road, 2) Rust Park positioned at the end of Rust Park Drive and east of Center Road, and 3) the largest, Grand Blanc Commons located north of Perry Road and east of Genesee Road. While public parks do not warrant residential uses, the areas may be improved with public recreation facilities or maintained to preserve natural features. Improvements to the parks are an ongoing process as outlined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. While no areas are specifically planned for new public parks, existing properties owned by the City may be improved with recreation facilities and the community continues to evaluate the need for more parkland if opportunities for acquisition arise. This designation generally relates to the Public Recreation District and Residential PUD.

Single-Family Residential. This classification accounts for the majority of the city. The predominant housing type is the single-family house. Older neighborhoods, closer to the Downtown, typically contain smaller lot sizes and building footprints than newer subdivisions, particularly those along the golf course. Small lot sizes in the traditional neighborhoods should be maintained.



An area of The Jewel Golf Course is shown as Single-Family on the Future Land Use Map. This does not mean the City desires to see the golf course developed. The golf course not only provides an amenity for the City, it also provides desirable views from many nearby homes. This designation suggests that some residential units could be developed along the fairways or through

reconfiguration of the course. If at some point the landowner desires to redevelop the golf course, the intent is that units should be clustered to preserve the existing views and open space character of the area.

Single-Family Residential is currently designated as three districts: R-1, R-2 and R-3. The residential districts should be simplified into one district with a focus on building form and general site standards.

Mixed Residential. This category includes a variety of housing types, including single-family detached, duplexes, and multiple-family developments, generally defined as low-rise condominiums and apartments, or attached single-family homes. The Mixed Residential classification allows for greater flexibility in types of residential, allowing areas to accommodate a greater mix of housing types, including denser residential forms. Density in these areas should be respectful of the existing neighborhood character and capacity of the City infrastructure and services. This relates to the Low and High Density Multiple Family Districts.

Downtown. The City has invested considerable resources and attention over the last decade on the downtown area. The overall goal is to revitalize the area as a focal point in the Grand Blanc community. Strategies for the downtown include a diversity of complementary residential, commercial, entertainment, office, and municipal uses; compact design with buildings near the street edge; a unified streetscape; parks and public spaces; traditional appearance for both old and new buildings; and a transportation network equally friendly to both vehicles and pedestrians. The overall vision for the downtown is outlined in Chapter 4: Downtown.



Mixed land uses are targeted for the downtown area in an effort to make it a multi-purpose destination for residents and visitors alike. Intended uses include local and specialty retail, hardware stores, restaurants, sidewalk cafes, specialty bakeries, coffee shops, bookstores, music stores, florists, personal service establishments, banks, the post office, offices, the museum and City Hall. Residential uses, such as accessory dwelling units, mixed use developments, and townhouses, are also desired in and near Downtown. Automotive-related uses such as gas stations and auto maintenance shops are preferred on the outside of the downtown instead of within the primary core.

The area shown as the Downtown category on the Future Land Use Map generally corresponds to the Central Business District Overlay Zone in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Corridor Commercial. Uses in this designation are intended to provide goods and services to meet the needs of residents and area employees, to offer local employment opportunities, and to help maintain a well-balanced tax base along major roadways such the north and south ends of Saginaw Street, with clusters along Perry and Holly Road. Typical uses include small to medium sized grocery stores, convenience stores, drug stores, dry-cleaners, florists, video rental establishments, small-scale restaurants, small-scale gas stations, certain personal service and smaller scale offices for patients of the nearby neighborhoods (physicians, dentists etc. as opposed to corporate offices). More intense uses include office and retail stores, shopping centers, fast food restaurants, sit-down restaurants, community entertainment and dining, gas stations and automobile maintenance facilities such as car washes, auto parts, oil change and tire repair. These areas are distinct from the uses in the downtown category in that they are typically auto oriented, with front yard parking lots and bigger buildings. However, they should incorporate good

design that accommodates pedestrians and bicycles as well as integrates sites into surrounding neighborhoods where appropriate.

The most notable General Commercial area is centered around the Holly Road intersection at Saginaw Road, including the Grand Mall and other shopping centers. Continued economic success of those centers is important to help meet the needs of residents in the community. Across Saginaw Road, the site of the former K-Mart is a prime redevelopment site. Key factors of this district are:

- Access management – ensure efficient and safe traffic flow along busy corridors.
- Improved site design and walkability – while some uses are auto-oriented, site design should minimize the negative impacts of traffic and parking.
- Key gateways into downtown – the corridors are key entrances into the City that lead to the Downtown. Traffic should be encouraged to flow into the City and its businesses, not through it.
- Residential uses – Though the corridors are primarily used for commercial businesses, certain sites should begin to incorporate vertical and horizontal mixture of uses where they are compatible.

Corridor Commercial generally corresponds to B-2 and B-3 Business District zoning designations. In the future, combining multiple business districts with a focus on building form standards and limiting auto-oriented uses with spacing and Special Land Use standards, will allow for more flexibility and a more coordinated corridor district. Simplifying the districts could also improve administration of zoning and prove to be more user-friendly for developers.

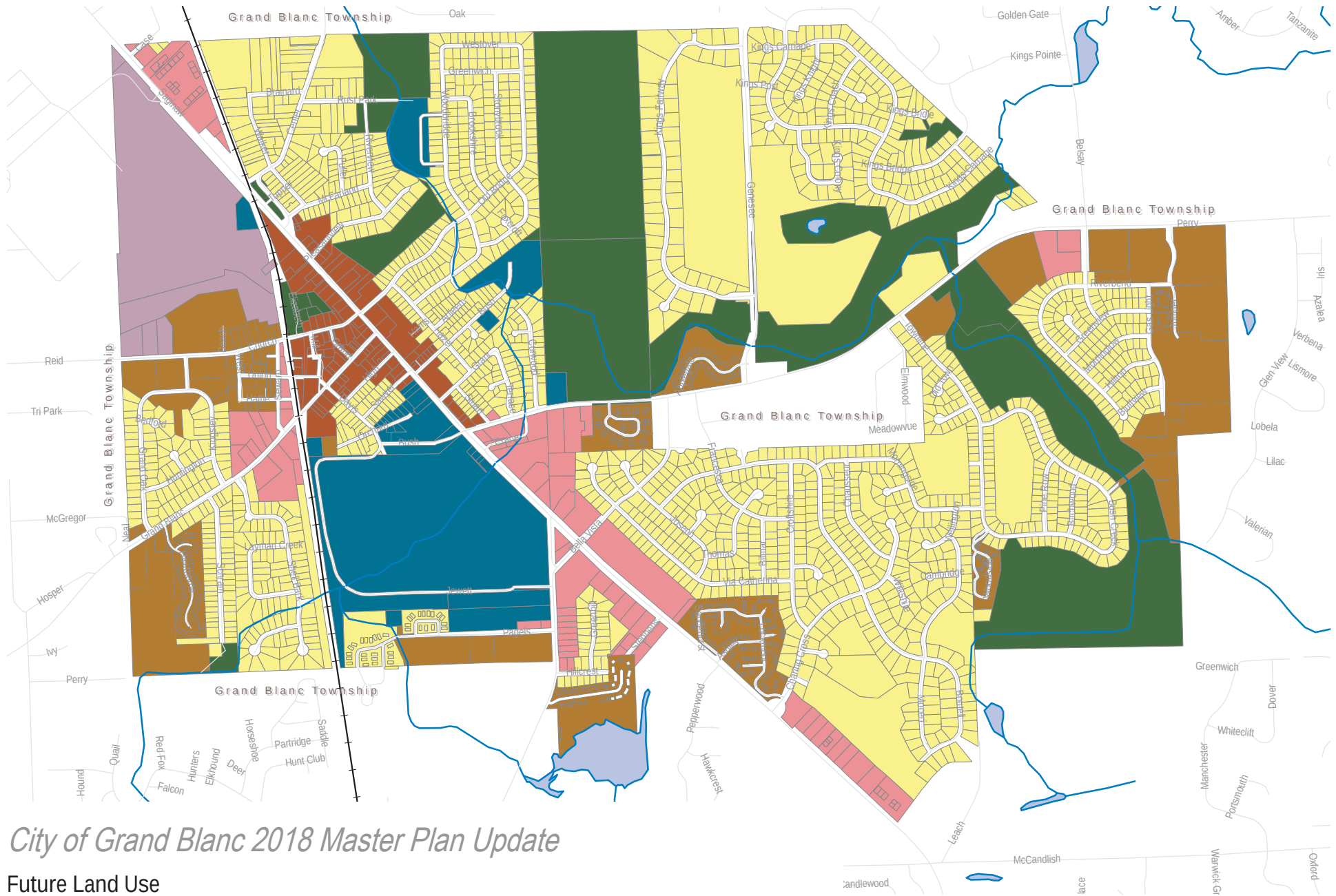
Mixed-Use Campus.

Historically industrial in nature, the GM site and adjacent uses are designated as Mixed-Use Campus to foster flexible redevelopment into campus-style employment center. This area could become a dynamic redevelopment opportunity for the city that provides live/work opportunities with attached residential near modern high-tech, research and development style industrial development.

The intent of this designation is to promote a coordinated development to accomplish the following objectives:

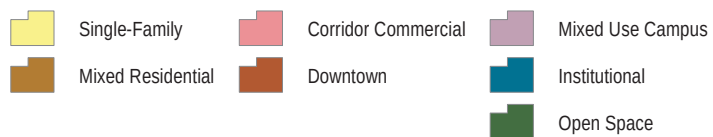
- Ensure the land uses complement the downtown and surrounding land uses.
- Provide flexible design to respond to the unique characteristics of the site.
- Preserve significant natural features and provide some open space or public recreation.
- Ensure public infrastructure and street improvements necessary to meet the demands of the development are completed concurrent with the development, with developer participation.
- Allow for more intense uses that include light industrial, warehousing and manufacturing.

Institutional. A variety of institutional uses in the City provide high quality facilities and services for residents and visitors. Uses classified as Institutional consist of community facilities under public ownership, excluding public parks and recreation. Examples include cemeteries, fire stations, schools, post offices, government offices, and the library. Some privately-owned facilities such as churches, nonprofit organizations, utilities, and private schools are also considered institutional uses. Institutional sites may contain multiple buildings with wide setbacks, shared parking, and should include quality landscaping and greenspace. These types of uses are currently permitted in Residential Districts, including R-1, R-2 and R-3. Creating a new district unique to institutional uses will allow for more control and flexibility over site design for these unique establishments.



City of Grand Blanc 2018 Master Plan Update

Future Land Use



Sources: MCGI, City of Grand Blanc, SAFEbuilt
Updated: July 2017



CHAPTER 4:

DOWNTOWN PLAN

A. DOWNTOWN ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The Downtown Plan update process began with a review of existing planning and strategic documents prepared over the last two decades which focused on the revival of Downtown Grand Blanc. These documents include the following:

- 2001 Downtown Design Manual
- 2007 Master Land Use Plan
- 2008 Short & Long Term Downtown Parking Plan
- Bicycle Transportation Master Plan

Each of these documents reveals elements of a comprehensive strategy for supporting and improving downtown Grand Blanc. Many of the ideas remain relevant and are therefore integrated into the analysis of the downtown and the subsequent recommendations of this document.

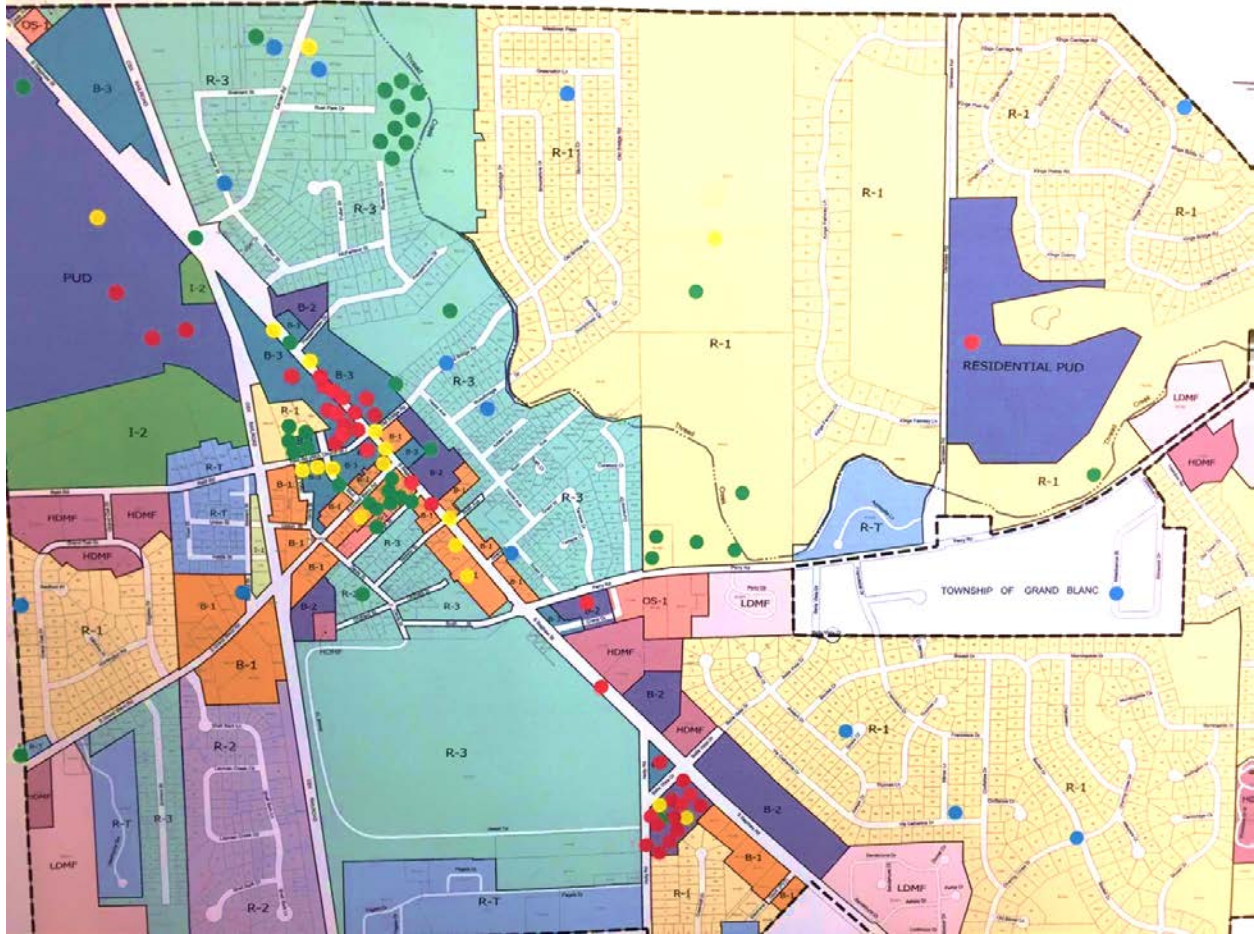
Public outreach was conducted in summer of 2016 which included a summary of the planning process and an interactive display with which participants provided critical input into the needs of downtown Grand Blanc. Additionally, the Planning Commission held a joint public workshop with the City Council to discuss visioning.

Participants were asked to identify which elements of the City's physical environment that they would preserve, enhance, or transform, defined as:

- **Preserve:** Places or key attributes within the project area that strongly contribute to the community's economic, cultural, architectural, and social strength and should be preserved based on their value to the community.
- **Enhance:** Places or attributes within the project area that demonstrate positive potential as to their physical form and economic and cultural importance but are in need of re-investment to help them reach their potential.
- **Transform:** Places or attributes within the project area that are in need of more dramatic change or complete redevelopment and should be transformed in use, physical form, etc.

The outcomes of this process can be seen in the photo below and as summarized:

- **Preserve:**
 - Open and recreation space, including Physicians Park, Rust Park, Grand Blanc Commons, open space between Pleasantview Drive and Old Bridge Road, and City Hall pocket park
 - Gateway arches
 - Streetscape enhancements on Grand Blvd
- **Enhance:**
 - Downtown properties to be more pedestrian friendly
 - Mix of businesses offered downtown, including boutique retail and restaurants
- **Transform:**
 - Redevelopment sites, including the GM site, K-Mart/Farmer Jack site, northwest corner of Reid at Saginaw, and the Dawn Donuts strip mall
 - Saginaw Road, particularly the section north of Old Bridge containing many drive-thrus



Residents applied dots to indicate areas the City should seek to Preserve, Enhance, or Transform during this public involvement mapping exercise.

Participants also stated that they want More and Less of the following in Downtown:

MORE

- Activity places (ice rink, family center, fun needed)
- Cute buildings for businesses and stores
- Arts / festivals / events
- Parks
- Community Center (in old K-Mart plaza)
- Commercial businesses
- Trader Joe's
- Boutique businesses
- Restaurants
- Year-round market
- More family owned businesses / less chains
- Bike paths
- Holiday market
- Windows on 1st floor of buildings

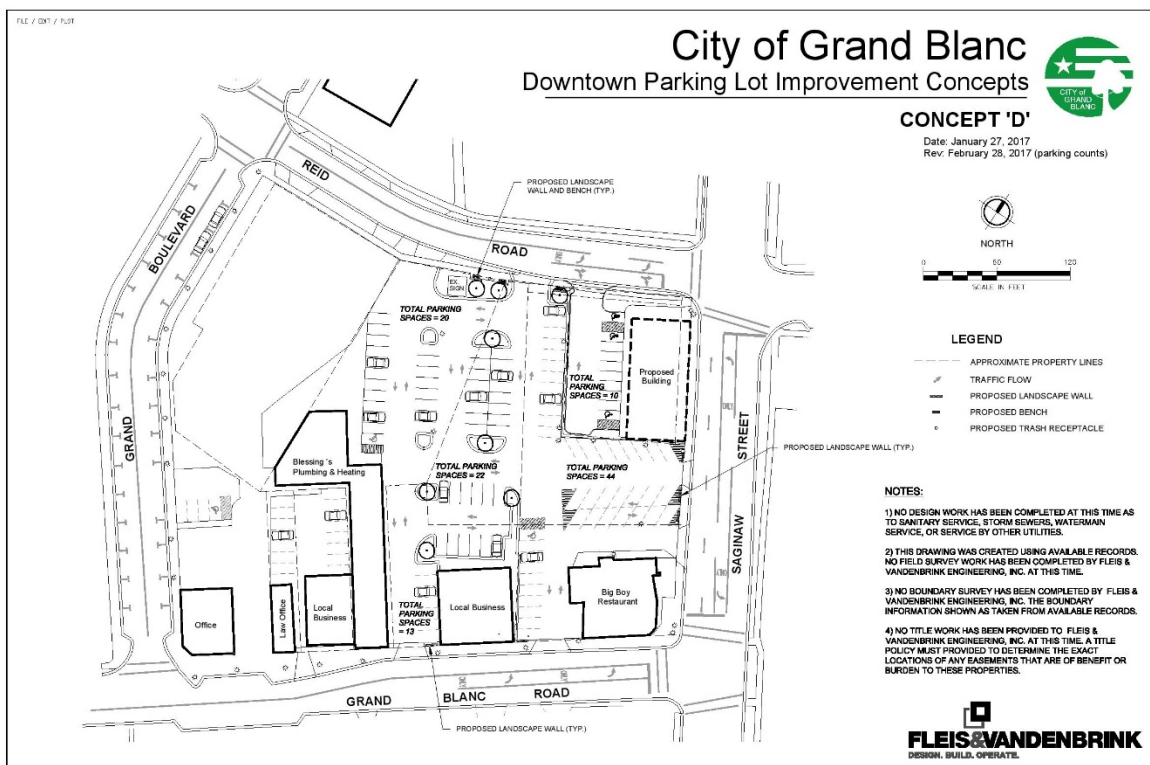
LESS

- Chain restaurants
- Restaurants
- Empty lots
- Parking lots
- Unoccupied buildings
- Street frontage used for parking
- Buildings without windows on storefront

In addition, a survey was publicly posted online in the summer of 2016. The results were very similar to the feedback given at the public outreach events. Survey responses included demand for more activity and unique businesses in the downtown with better pedestrian and bike paths to connect to them. Respondents desired less vacant lots and buildings, less chain and fast-food businesses, and less parking lots and traffic. The full results of the survey can be seen in Appendix D.

In March and April of 2017, downtown business and property owners and City staff met to discuss redevelopment and parking needs in the downtown core. Stakeholders expressed an interest in working together with the City in a private/public partnership to improve parking off of Reid, between Saginaw and Grand Blvd. Continued discussions are needed to move forward on the project to determine the scope, cost and benefits to each of the land owners and the role of the City. Figure 1 shows the proposed parking arrangement.

Figure 1: Proposed Parking Arrangement



B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Downtown Grand Blanc has weathered a number of transitions in economic conditions and market interest. With the current resurgence in interest in living and experiencing urban areas, it would appear that the timing is right for economic growth in the downtown. Currently the downtown is in the early stages in evolution of urban areas, and redevelopment has been slow in coming. However, many of the key pieces are in place for re-investment; local job growth, increased market interest, and more interesting and attractive historic urban character.

Based on the review of existing resources, site visits, the joint workshop, and other stakeholder meetings, the following goals have been established:

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Promote a diversity of commercial, office, entertainment, and municipal uses.
- Strengthen the character of the ‘traditional downtown’ with a town square, on-street parking, high-quality building design, mix of uses, and programming to attract people.
- Apply the Grand Blanc design guidelines and downtown zoning district regulations to new projects in the downtown and when uses desire to expand or change, incorporate the best elements of a traditional, mixed use, and walkable downtown.
- Encourage residential at higher densities within and adjacent to the downtown to provide additional support for businesses.
- Acquire and assemble select parcels to create sites sufficient for new development along with public improvements downtown. The City may consider joint public-private partnerships or solicitation of qualified developers to promote development consistent with the downtown plan.
- Develop downtown commercial activity along Reid and Grand Blanc Roads to draw the core of downtown west of Saginaw Road.
- Update and follow 2008 Short & Long Term Downtown Parking Plan to encourage development that utilizes shared parking and fits within a comprehensive parking plan.

VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

- Improve traffic circulation in a manner that helps balance the needs of the automobile while at the same time promoting a more pedestrian-friendly environment, particularly along Saginaw Street.
- Create an access management plan to limit conflicts, particularly along Saginaw Street.
- Work cooperatively with the Township and Genesee County Road Commission to evaluate and pursue road improvements to improve traffic flow around the City to help reduce through traffic volumes within the core downtown.
- Implement the 2008 Bicycle Transportation Master Plan, providing pathways for safe and convenient bicycle traffic.

OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIONS

- Continue to use banners, ornamental street lights, and other design elements to help identify the downtown.
- Continue to upgrade public lands and street rights-of-way to support private investment downtown, such as the improvements to Physicians Park (parks, City buildings, and streetscape improvements such as trees, ornamental lights, sidewalks, entry signs, street furniture, etc.).
- Provide additional public gathering programming and events to bring people downtown.

C. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Principles

The recommendations for improving and revitalizing downtown are based on a common set of principles, including the following:

- Downtown needs a set of catalytic investment projects to get the re-development ball rolling, from both private development and public infrastructure sectors.
- Downtown has a solid framework in place, so the real need is for incremental development and partnerships – not a wholesale reconstruction
- New zoning approaches and redevelopment plans that encourage desired redevelopment should have flexibility, so users can respond as the market changes. In addition, design expectations need to be practical for the market; for example, zoning requirements for façade materials need to acknowledge the cost implications to developers.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Economic sustainability of the downtown is critical to community pride, jobs, and tax base; and a healthy downtown attracts visitors and new residents. A number of key development sites have been identified in downtown, on properties that are either privately or publicly held. Opportunities exist for the city to create partnerships with private developers to build on well-located and underutilized public lands, as well as for the city to play a role in encouraging development of privately owned sites.

1. Capitalize on public land

- Continue to upgrade public lands and street rights-of-way to support private investment, such as the improvements to Physicians Park and Grand Blvd.
- Provide additional public gathering places and events to bring people downtown.
- Provide attractive wayfinding to identify points of interest and parking locations.
- Consider public-private partnerships to promote new development and public improvements consistent with the downtown plan, including the Reid Road parking lot project.
- Acquire and assemble or sell land to create sites sufficient for new development.

2. Build Downtown Residential population

- Encourage moderate to high density residential within and adjacent to the downtown to provide additional support for businesses.

3. Strengthen Downtown Streets

- Prioritize downtown development opportunities that create critical mass along existing streets.
- Provide pedestrian amenities and wide sidewalks to make streets comfortable for pedestrians.
- Discourage suburban development model on Saginaw at edges of downtown.



Blue: City-owned property

Green: Park

4. Encourage arts and entertainment-based uses and events, but not exclusively targeted to one age segment.
5. Update zoning ordinances to a form-based code approach that is focused on creating flexibility for developers and maintaining and enhancing the sense of place for the downtown.
6. Create a coordinated parking system that meets the needs of downtown uses through on-street, municipal lots, and shared private lots.
 - a. Continue working with land owners in downtown to create shared parking lots and lot improvements.
 - b. Create wayfinding to help users locate existing parking.
 - c. Consider payment in lieu of parking and tax assessment strategies to create a fund for public parking improvements.
 - d. Use short-term parking strategies that work towards a greater long-term strategy to provide municipal parking.
7. Work with DDA on business attraction efforts (See Appendix for wish lists).

VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Making downtown attractive to visitors and moving vehicles into and through the downtown area are hampered by a number of past transportation and streetscape improvements. The downtown streets and transportation facilities need to be updated to demonstrate continued investment, improve visual character, provide for modern transit, and overcome the existing auto-centric design.

1. Humanize Saginaw and Connect to Neighborhoods
 - Work cooperatively with the Township and Genesee County Road Commission to evaluate and pursue road improvements to improve traffic flow and safety around the City and through downtown.
 - Redesign the streetscape to create pathways that are attractive and feel safe for pedestrians.
 - Evaluate crosswalk availability and signal timing along Saginaw.
 - Install crosswalk signals where absent.
 - Create midblock crossing(s) as needed, such as between City Hall and Grand Blvd.
 - Increase walk widths to nine or ten feet wide on Saginaw in downtown by increasing the build-to-line and continuing to require private development to provide pedestrian amenities.
 - Repair and maintain walks.
 - Provide bicycle pathways that connect neighborhoods to the downtown as planned in former studies.
2. Make Downtown Easy to Navigate
 - Reduce curb cuts along Saginaw Road.
 - Improve key gateways into downtown with wayfinding signs, pedestrian crossing improvements, lighting, and new landscape treatments.
 - Help drivers locate parking lots with wayfinding signs.
3. Improve the Placemaking Value of the Streetscape
 - Continue process of Universal Access improvements and sidewalk maintenance.
 - Continue to use Grand Blvd as a shared festival street block to draw activity, start to establish it as the core area of downtown and provide for space for urban street events.
 - Update site furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles, selecting models that are compatible with the historic architecture and the urban environment.
 - Use landscaping to create buffers between pedestrian pathways and heavily trafficked rights-of-way.

OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIONS

People are moving to places which are better connected for non-motorized movement- linking homes to parks, cultural facilities, jobs and downtown districts. Downtown Grand Blanc has a number of key assets drawing residents and visitors and is generally walkable; however, there are several key linkages missing, and a number of opportunities to improve the non-motorized environment.

1. Continue to use banners, ornamental street lights, and other design elements to announce entry to the downtown.
2. Improve link between downtown and parks
 - Add design features along Reid to connect Physicians Park and Saginaw Road, such as pedestrian scaled lights, banner poles, and landscaping.
 - Add mid-block crossing at Grand Blvd and Grand Blanc Road to connect parking, Physicians Park and the downtown core.
 - Enhance the connections between Physicians Park and the businesses to the east.
3. Activate parks and open space with programming and improved facilities focusing on active engagement with downtown.
 - Activate plaza next to Aubree's Pizza.
 - Encourage vendors and community groups to activate the parks.
 - Improve parking lots with landscaping and screening as they are a big component of open space in downtown.
 - Encourage temporary festivals and markets in private parking lots.
 - Provide equipment and infrastructure to activate public spaces (e.g. ice rink, bandstand).

Refresh existing downtown open spaces with lighting, landscaping, site furnishings and screening as needed.

D. PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

RRC Sites

- K-Mart
- GM Site
- Reid @ Saginaw
- City-owned parking site off Reid

Public Actions

- Wayfinding
- Streetscape refresh
- Parking lot signage
- Saginaw Road access management

Policy

- Create Economic Development Committee
- Formulate Economic Development Policy
- Update Zoning Ordinance

Additional redevelopment sites

- Big Boy site
- Apartments off Reid at Grand

CHAPTER 5:

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

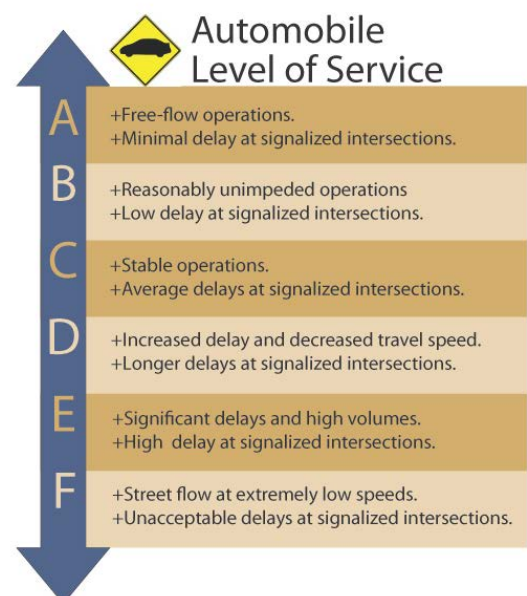
Streets are among the city's most important public infrastructure and placemaking elements because they define how a visitor, resident or worker perceives a neighborhood, downtown or the city as a whole. Many transportation issues in the City are related to the increase in vehicular volumes and congestion. While the automobile is the dominant mode of transportation, the City of Grand Blanc wants to provide a balanced and coordinated 'multi-modal' transportation system to accommodate ongoing growth and development. Comprehensive improvements to all modes of travel can help improve the operation and capacity of the street system.

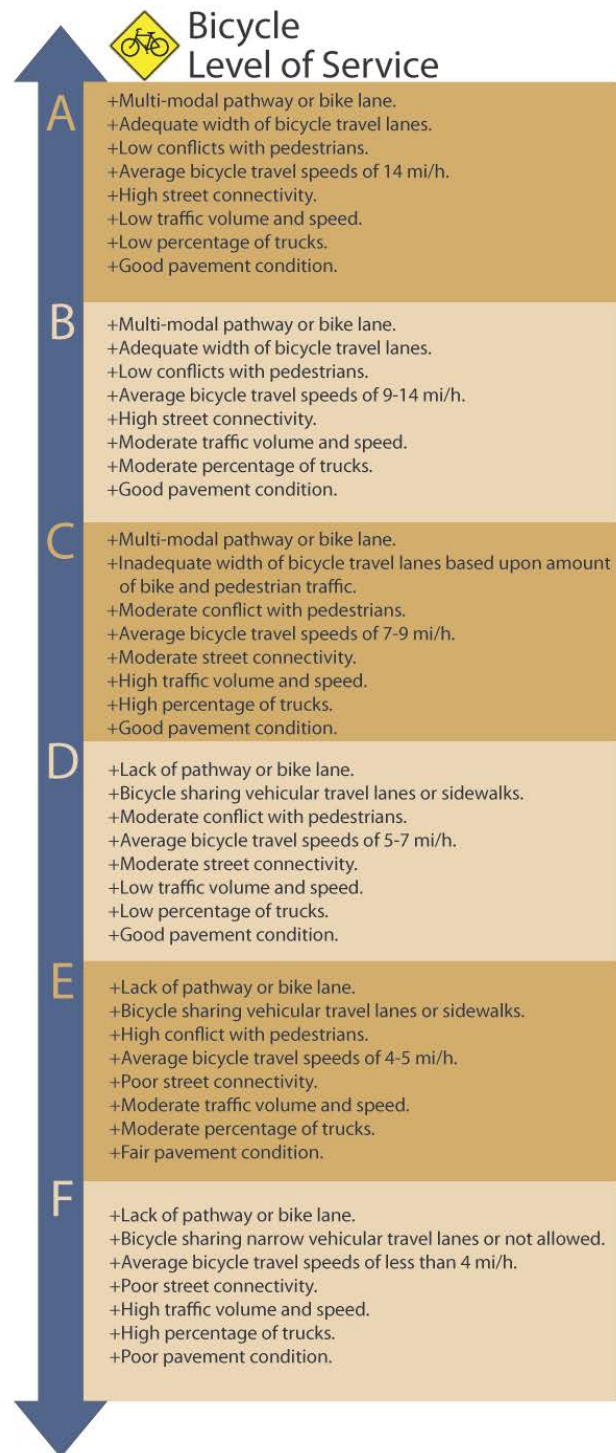
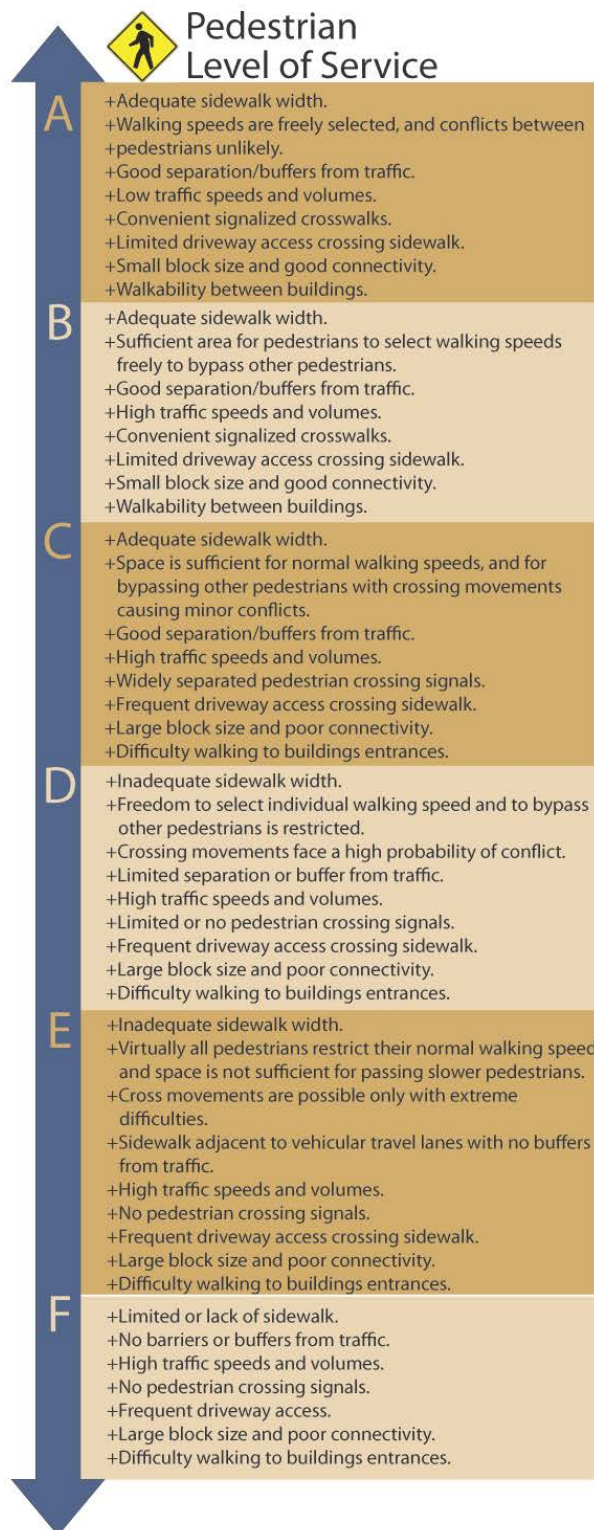
The City of Grand Blanc and Grand Blanc Township adopted a community-wide transportation master plan in late 2000 which details existing conditions, projects future traffic volumes, and provides alternatives for addressing the transportation needs for the community as a whole. Detailed existing conditions information, such as signal location, number of lanes, traffic volumes, level of service, and crash analysis is provided in the transportation master plan. In addition a separate Holly Road/Baldwin Road/Saginaw Road Corridor Plan and Pathways Plan have been prepared to specifically address locational and non-motorized travel concerns. The reader is therefore referred to these plans for more complete information.

Complete Streets

In 2009, new State of Michigan legislation amended the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to require that comprehensive plans include a transportation plan that addresses the facilities associated with all types of transportation users. The concept of complete streets is based on the principle of balancing the needs of motorists with others using the right-of-way. Nevertheless, not all streets have the physical dimensions needed to accommodate all users at an optimum level of service. As a result, it is important to develop measures of service quality for different users to aid in evaluating complete street design (and redesign) alternatives

Traditional transportation planning uses a quantitative measure of vehicular level of service (LOS) to determine delay and congestion along streets for automobiles, with little consideration for other modes of travel. In contrast, multimodal quality of service (QOS) includes measures for comparing the speed, convenience, comfort and security of transportation travel by various types of users. The Highway Capacity Manual describes the accepted professional practice to calculate the multimodal quality of service. The multimodal quality of service table on the following page provides guidelines for determining QOS in potential street design alternatives. These QOS categories are also referenced in the following mode typology graphics to set standards across different transportation types.





ISSUES AND FACTORS CONSIDERED

A number of factors and issues have been identified as currently affecting transportation services and facilities in the City or will affect these services and facilities in the future. These include the following:

- ◆ Current and future streets must function properly and contribute to the livable character sought throughout the City.
- ◆ Future traffic volumes can be influenced by decisions on intensity and location of land uses, especially decisions in the surrounding Township. Thus, the City needs to cooperate with the Township and County Road Commission to address these traffic impacts.
- ◆ Traffic congestion occurs at several locations, most notably at key intersections along Saginaw Street.
- ◆ Many major streets terminate at Saginaw Road, forcing much of the traffic that desires to go East/West onto the already congested North/South Saginaw Street.
- ◆ Congestion along major streets has created cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods, which have led to complaints regarding traffic volume and speed.
- ◆ Traffic signals are generally based on old technology.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon analyzing the determining factors and the existing condition information, a framework was established for a number of policies on transportation in Grand Blanc. The policy identifies a comprehensive statement that is the desired outcome. Recommendations offer more specific direction on how this will be accomplished.

Policy 1, Management of the Street System. Maintain and upgrade the transportation system to support safe and smooth traffic flow throughout the City, while ensuring the design complements the character of that particular area of the City.

Recommendations/Actions to Achieve Policy 1

- ☐ Monitor traffic and street pavement conditions through a regular traffic count and pavement management program to determine deficiencies and program improvements based on funding.
- ☐ Continue aggressive program to maintain and reconstruct streets and sidewalks.
- ☐ Promote safe and efficient traffic flow through select widenings, intersection reconstruction, upgrades to traffic signals, and use of new technology (refer to the Grand Blanc Community Transportation Plan 2000).
- ☐ Continue to evaluate potential improvements to intersections with a poor level of service or crash problems, particularly at the intersections of Saginaw Street with Grand Blanc and Perry Roads.
- ☐ Work with Grand Blanc Township, the Genesee County Road Commission, Genesee County Planning, and MDOT to project future traffic volumes utilizing community-wide and corridor specific computer simulation modeling and evaluate alternatives to help limit future congestion on City streets.
- ☐ Require traffic impact studies for larger scale developments to determine improvements necessary to offset the impacts and to help identify the extent the developer may participate in such improvements.

- ☐ Reduce the number of conflict points along streets and separate access points to preserve the capacity, reduce potential for crashes and make the City safer and accessible for pedestrians. This may include removal, consolidation, or redesign of existing access points when new projects are proposed. Shared access drives and parking lot connections are also recommended for certain road segments, such as the north and south ends of Saginaw Street.
- ☐ Monitor traffic volumes and speeds within neighborhoods. When problems arise, use a combination of enforcement, neighborhood education and street design modifications to address the problem.

Policy 2, Support Other Modes of Travel – Pathways and Transit. Continue to pursue a comprehensive system of Pathways (interconnected sidewalks, bike paths and bike lanes) and opportunities for transit.

Recommendations/Actions to Achieve Policy 2

- ☐ Continue to work with Grand Blanc Township to implement the recommendations of the Grand Blanc Community Pathways Plan.
- ☐ Periodically review and update the Pathway Plan.
- ☐ Require sidewalks or other appropriate pedestrian systems for all new projects.
- ☐ Require bike amenities, such as bicycle parking racks, for all new projects.
- ☐ Require connections between building entrances and the public pathway system.
- ☐ Utilize public and private funds to fill in the gaps in the pathway system and widen pathways that are too narrow to meet needs.
- ☐ Support transit as an alternative through transit oriented design of sites along transit routes.
- ☐ Recognize alternative modes of transportation and allow reduction of vehicle parking requirements with alternative parking strategies.

CHAPTER 6:

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Homebuyers, business entrepreneurs, developers, and industrial users make decisions to remain, reinvest, or move to a community based, in part, upon the ability of a municipality to meet their present and future needs cost-effectively. The range and quality of community facilities and services has contributed to growth and redevelopment in the City. As technology advances, citizens and business owners will expect more from local governments. In order to keep pace with this dynamic trend, Grand Blanc must continually upgrade and diversify facilities and services.

A. EXISTING FACILITIES

Public Schools. The Grand Blanc School District encompasses the City of Grand Blanc, Grand Blanc Township, portions of the City of Burton and Atlas, Holly and Mundy Townships.

The Grand Blanc community currently has eleven school facilities to serve the community needs. Combined, nearly 8,100 students were enrolled in the district during the 2017-18 school year, a decrease of less than 100 children from the previous year.

Grand Blanc School District facilities include:

- Anderson Elementary (K-2)
- City School (Perry Center) (1-5)
- McGrath Elementary (3-5)
- Reid Elementary (K-5)
- Indian Hill Elementary (K-5)
- Grand Blanc Middle School
Brendel Annex (6)
- Cook Elementary (K-2)
- Mason Elementary (3-5)
- Myers Elementary (K-5)
- Grand Blanc Middle School
Main Campus (7-8)
- Grand Blanc High School (9-12)

Private Schools. Holy Family School is the only private school in the City. The school, which first opened its doors in September of 1956, teaches Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade. Enrollment for the 2000-2001 school year was 733 students.

McFarlen Library. Located at the northeast corner of Perry Road and Curwood Drive, this centrally located library serves the needs of both Township and City residents and is part of the Genesee District Library system. The library was developed in part through contributions from local residents.



Parks and Recreation

The Grand Blanc Community has over 380 acres of parkland in the City and Township. These include both active parks with athletic fields and programming to more passive or natural parks and commons. Municipal parks and recreation programs are run by the Grand Blanc Recreation Commission which includes representatives of both the City and Township. Grand Blanc Schools provide an additional 191.4 acres of park and playgrounds. Facilities include:

- ◆ **Creasy Bicentennial Recreation Complex.** Located in western Grand Blanc Township, this complex encompasses over 200 acres. Amenities include a playground, picnic areas, pavilion, nature/hiking trails, adult and youth softball fields, tennis courts, concession facilities, football/soccer field, fitness area, nature study area, horseshoes, bicycling path, basketball courts and in-line skating area.
- ◆ **Grand Blanc Commons.** Located partially in the City and partially in the Township, on Perry Road behind McFarlen Library, Grand Blanc Commons encompasses 137 acres. The park is largely undeveloped to accommodate wildlife view and nature trails. Thread Creek runs through the park and is used for canoeing.
- ◆ **Rust Park.** A sixteen-acre park located on Rust Park Drive in the northern end of the City of Grand Blanc. Rust Park is equipped with playground equipment, baseball/softball diamonds, tennis/pickle-ball courts, picnic area/shelter, and a bicycling path.
- ◆ **Physicians Park.** The 3-acre park located on Reid Road in downtown Grand Blanc recently underwent major renovations. Amenities include playground equipment, a football/soccer field, picnic area/shelter, walking path and a natural ice skating area.
- ◆ **Senior Activity Center.** The Senior Activity Center is located in the center of the community off of Pagels Drive in the City. This facility provides organized programs and event for the senior community living in Grand Blanc.
- ◆ **Grand Blanc Schools Property.** The Grand Blanc Board of Education operates facilities that are utilized by youth sport organizations and adjacent neighborhood residents.

Privately Owned Facilities. Several privately-owned facilities in the Grand Blanc areas provide recreational activities to the community. These facilities include soccer fields at the Maple Road Soccer Complex, the Genesys Health Club and Camp Copneconic. The community is also served by several private golf courses; Warwick Hills Country Club, The Jewel of Grand Blanc and the Woodfield Golf Club.

A number of improvements are planned to enhance the quality of recreation within the community. The Parks and Recreation Plan is currently being updated and will propose updates to recreational facilities within the City and Township of Grand Blanc.

Emergency Services

Police. The City of Grand Blanc Police Department occupies the west wing of the City Hall. The Department is a 24-hour 7-days a week full time police service provider. The Department is a member of Genesee Central Communications and relies on this service for 24-hour emergency dispatch services. Currently the City of Grand Blanc Police Department has 18 members, of which 15 are sworn officers and 3 are support staff.

Fire. The City and Township share a community Fire Department guided by a Fire Commission. The staff includes 4 full-time employees and roughly 40 part-time paid fire fighters. The Fire Department includes three stations, one located on High Street in the city, another along South Saginaw at the Township Hall complex north of the City limits, and another along East Baldwin Road just west of Holly Road.



Public Utilities

The City of Grand Blanc owns and operates a water treatment and distribution system, along with sanitary and storm sewer collection systems. All lands within the City limits are served by these utility networks. The City's Department of Public Works maintains the utilities along with all public streets and their associated right-of-way in the City.

Water System. The City of Grand Blanc water system draws water from a number of ground water wells. The water system consists of four active and two standby production wells, two 500,000-gallon storage tanks and forty miles of water main. The well water is treated at iron removal and reverse osmosis where filtration, softening, and disinfection take place. Treated water capacity in the City is over 3,500,000 gallons/day while consumption averages 1,200,000 gallons/day with a range of 900,000 gallons/day to 3,000,000 gallons/day.

Water quality is related to the conditions around the wellhead. The City completed a Wellhead Delineation Study and Map to assess the vulnerability of ground water supplies. The delineation found that all of the City's wells were within well-confined aquifers, which provide a safe drinking water source.

Water system improvements are reviewed and discussed each year during budget planning. Water main replacement and other system projects directly improve public health and safety by increasing the reliability, quality of water for consumption and fire flow.



Following the recent Flint water crisis, it is important to educate residents and visitors of the quality of Grand Blanc's water supply and distribution.

Sanitary Sewer System. The sanitary sewer system consists of over forty miles of gravity flow pipe and two lift stations with 0.2 miles of force main. The City's collection system flows into interceptor lines owned and operated by the Genesee County Water and Waste Department. All wastewater treatment is performed at the Ragnone Treatment Plant in Montrose, Michigan.

Storm Sewer System. The storm sewer system is designed to move storm water runoff as quickly and efficiently as possible without causing flooding or other water problems within the community. Recognizing the important role storm water management plays in the quality of life for all citizens, many improvements to infrastructure are planned to minimize flooding and protect water quality. The City will be engaged in the following:

- ◆ Participation in the Genesee County wide application process for the NPDES Phase II, a system designed to reduce water pollution and educate the public
- ◆ Storm Water Master Plan
- ◆ FEMA funded flood prevention projects
- ◆ Enlarge and extend storm sewer service

B. ISSUES AND FACTORS CONSIDERED

The following were raised as key issues during this master plan update and were used to shape the community facilities and services policies and recommendations.

- ◆ Continued quality of recreation within the community depends upon the activation of public areas and parks.
- ◆ Continued excellence in the delivery of public service in the future requires improvements to the water plant to include the softening of the public water supply, the creation of a storm and sanitary sewer collection systems Master Plan, remediation of inflow and infiltration for the sanitary sewer collection system, and the continuation of yearly local and major street rehabilitation.
- ◆ Continued collaboration with the Township is required to ensure efficient delivery of public services.

C. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on an evaluation of the issues, existing conditions, a needs assessment, and expectations of the public, a framework was established for policies on community facilities and services in Grand Blanc. Following each policy are recommendations for specific action on how policies will be accomplished.

Policy 1, Continuation of Quality Facilities and Services. The City will continue to invest in public facilities and services to retain the reputation as a good place to live or work.

Recommendations/Actions to Achieve Policy 1

- ☐ Continue to invest in improvements to and modernization of municipal utilities, buildings, streets, parks and pathways.
- ☐ Promote accessibility for the handicapped throughout the community.
- ☐ Pursue public/private partnerships to build telecommunications network to support high-speed internet access.
- ☐ Continually work to improve the quality of storm water runoff through regulations, construction techniques and public education.
- ☐ Protect the quality of the City's water supply through 'well head protection' programs and studies.
- ☐ Evaluate and plan improvements to the parks and recreation system in conjunction with Grand Blanc Township and Grand Blanc Schools through the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- ☐ Assess community facilities and services using the build-out population to evaluate future staffing and spacing needs.

Policy 2, Create a Distinct Community Image. Apply a combination of public investment and regulations for private development to make Grand Blanc a distinct place.

Recommendations/Actions to Achieve Policy 2

- ☐ Continue to create entry features at major gateways to the City.
- ☐ Provide uniform streetscape design within the rights-of-way along Saginaw, Grand Blanc, Perry, Reid and Holly Roads. Streetscape elements may include sidewalks/pathways, street trees, ornamental lights, signage, underground utilities, etc.
- ☐ Ensure signs are constructed to a scale that balance the needs of businesses with the aesthetic goals of the City overall.
- ☐ Generally, require buildings be located close to the street along major corridors, or where parking is located in the front yard, that parking is obscured through landscaping and street walls.
- ☐ Work with the railroad to improve the appearance of the railroad overpass along North Saginaw Road.
- ☐ Provide ample opportunity for input from residents and business representatives in planning projects and drafting potential changes to regulations through a number of venues including an interactive web site.
- ☐ Ensure buildings have a timeless, unique design through application of the Design Guidelines, communication with applicants and through site plan review.

CHAPTER 7:

IMPLEMENTATION

For the City's Master Plan to be an effective document for the next ten years, action steps are provided to guide community leaders towards implementation. This chapter summarizes the policies and the recommendations described in Chapters Three through Five and serves as a quick reference for the planning commission and others to monitor progress or serve as a checklist for implementing the Plan. Table 2, on the following pages, includes implementation strategies to help the City achieve its vision.

Tools to implement the Plan generally fall into one of three categories. Each tool has a different purpose toward Plan implementation. Some suggest specific immediate changes, some are long term policies and others involve on-going activities. The key tools are described below

A. KEY TOOLS

Land use regulations derived from police powers. The purpose of the primary tools for Plan implementation, such as the Zoning Ordinance and other land use regulations, are summarized below. The City also has a number of other codes and ordinances to ensure that activities remain compatible with the surrounding area, such as noise, blight and nuisance ordinances, and to control impacts on the environment and infrastructure.

Capital improvement programs (CIP) derived from budgetary powers. The CIP lists recommended improvements, timing, estimated costs and funding for infrastructure (streets, bikeways, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, waterlines, storm sewers and drainage) and community facilities (public buildings, fire, police and parks). Capital projects have been identified and constructed to help support and promote desired development, and to meet the needs of residents and businesses already in the City.

Revenue generation policies derived from taxing powers. Revenue policies are the purview of the Grand Blanc City Council, within the confines of Michigan law. In addition to traditional sources, the City has the ability to raise revenues or capture the increment in revenues within a specific geographic area for specific purposes.

B. IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation tools outlined above are available and should be used to achieve the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. Comprehensive implementation strategies have been developed to organize and apply these tools. Under each implementation recommendation, specific actions and a timeframe for implementation should be identified. The details of the recommendations to implement the Master Plan are specified in the accompanying table, with the highest priority strategies listed first.

Implementation Recommendations / Actions	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing	Responsible Party
Land Use Actions				
Solicit qualifications and proposals for redevelopment of City owned property in the Downtown	*			Staff, PC, CC
Continue to aggressively pursue the revitalization and appropriate new development in the downtown per the Downtown Strategic Vision Plan and Redevelopment Ready Communities program. Conduct a market analysis to provide a market-based perspective into this Master Plan.	*		*	Staff, PC
Conduct a detailed, technical review of the zoning ordinance to identify amendments, including a Downtown Design Guide, which will implement this plan. Create a prioritized list and timeline for completion.	*		*	Staff, PC
Review the Master Plan on an annual basis, preferably at a joint planning commission/City Council meeting and amend as deemed appropriate. Review and update the Plan at least every five years per state law.			*	Staff, PC, CC
Use code enforcement, housing funding and public investments to help preserve the quality of neighborhoods throughout the City.			*	Staff
Continue to coordinate with Grand Blanc Township on planning and zoning issues, including redevelopment of the General Motors site.			*	Staff, PC, Township
Continue trying to work with land owners on redevelopment of the former K-Mart site and additional redevelopment sites.		*	*	Staff, PC, Township
Support regional efforts to improve traffic flow in the city.		*		Staff, PC, Township
Strategically initiate necessary City-wide rezonings to implement certain land use changes recommended in the Plan and eliminate spot zoning situations.			*	PC

Implementation Recommendations / Actions	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing	Responsible Party
Multi-Modal Transportation Actions				
Apply access management techniques to regulate the number and spacing of driveways to help reduce crash potential and preserve street capacity. Link uses through service drives or parking lot connections whenever possible.			*	Staff, PC
Continue to plan for and construct a comprehensive system of pathways throughout the community.			*	Staff, PC
Require new developments to include pedestrian and bike amenities that connect to pathways where applicable. Examine the potential of a sidewalk assessment program to fill in gaps in existing neighborhoods.	*		*	Staff, PC
Upgrade existing traffic signals using new technology to adjust timing to actual vehicle flow and to ensure individual signals are coordinated.		*	*	Staff
Respond to resident complaints regarding through traffic or inappropriate speeds with a program to document if the problem is real or perceived. Where a problem is confirmed use a combination of education, enforcement, and street redesign to help “calm” traffic.			*	Staff
Monitor traffic and pavement condition data and make improvements as needed based on available funding.			*	Staff
Support transit through transit-oriented design and site plans, a continuous pathways system, and coordination with the transit agency.			*	Staff, PC
Continue to coordinate with Grand Blanc Township and Genesee County Road Commission to evaluate community-wide traffic issues and program necessary improvements.			*	Staff, Township, County

Community Facilities and Services Actions				
Complete construction of the northern loop in the water distribution system.	*			DPW
Continue water main replacement program.			*	DPW
Work cooperatively with the school district, churches, and other institutions to ensure that their needs along with the City's can be met.			*	Staff, PC
Direct infrastructure improvements to support desired development and redevelopment.			*	DPW
Participate in the Genesee County wide application process for the NPDES Phase II.			*	DPW, County
Construction of low pressure Reverse Osmosis water softening plants.		*		DPW
Develop a Sanitary Sewer Master Plan to establish prioritized inflow and infiltration improvements.		*		DPW
Update Parks and Recreation Plan at least every five years.			*	Rec Commission

APPENDIX A:

DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding changes over time helps to provide a better picture of what the future may hold for a community. Analyzing past and present demographic, social and economic data may help anticipate future land use patterns and community needs. This master plan utilizes a wide range of community data as a foundation to provide important guidance for both private sector and public-sector land use and development decision-making.

A. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The review of population statistics provides insight to settlement and development trends within the community. Based on this information the City can anticipate future trends which will assist in its decision making. For example, the city experienced a steady increase in population during the last decades of the twentieth century but since 2000 has remained relatively stable. In addition, the surrounding Township continues to see a fast rate of growth. To accommodate future needs of the changing population the City must plan for the impacts of a being a built-out community in terms of tax revenue, public services, and potential changes in land use to support redevelopment.

POPULATION TRENDS

The population of the City of Grand Blanc grew steadily during the second half of the 20th century to a population of 8,242 in 2000. During the past ten years, the city's population only increased by 0.4% to 8,276 in 2010. In comparison, Grand Blanc Township grew 25.8% in the same time period. Considering the city is nearly built out and Genesee County lost population overall, this infinitesimal population growth shows the city is stable.

The 2011 – 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate suggest a population decline more recently of 2.3% to 8,088. Similarly, Grand Blanc Township declined 1.7% according to the estimate, to 37,019.

POPULATION TRENDS

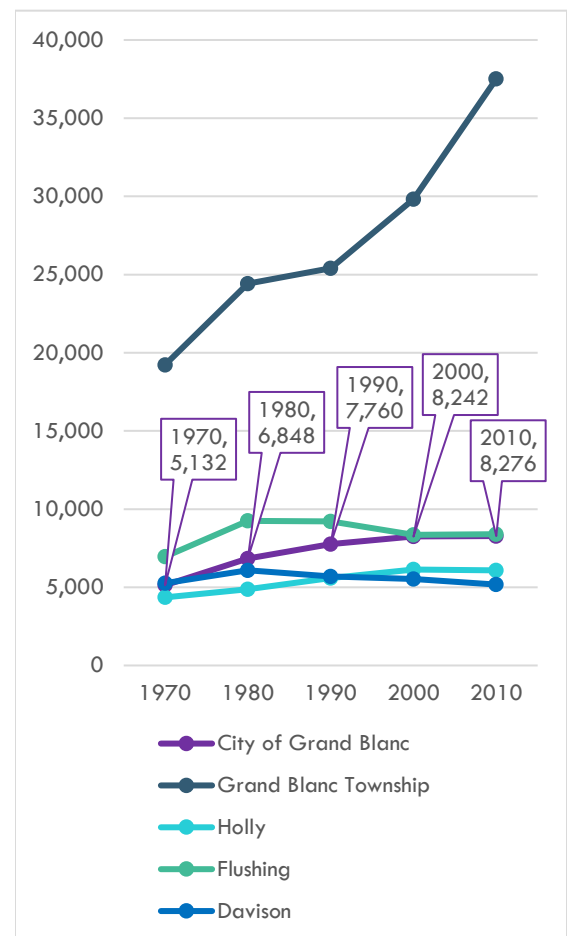


TABLE 3: POPULATION TRENDS, 1970-2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	00-10 % Change
City of Grand Blanc	5,132	6,848	7,760	8,242	8,276	0.4%
Grand Blanc Twp.	19,229	24,413	25,392	29,827	37,508	25.8%
Genesee County	445,589	450,449	430,459	436,141	425,790	-2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2010

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Future population estimates can be helpful to determine potential changes needed to City facilities, services, and parks. Since there has been a trend of decreasing average household size, there is a need for more housing units just to maintain the population.

TABLE 4: POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	2020	2025	2035	2045
City of Grand Blanc	7,930	7,891	7,908	8,001
Grand Blanc Township	37,196	37,524	38,830	39,963
Flushing	8,048	8,055	8,015	8,050
Davison	4,904	4,869	4,872	4,932
Genesee County	405,553	402,253	402,689	407,870

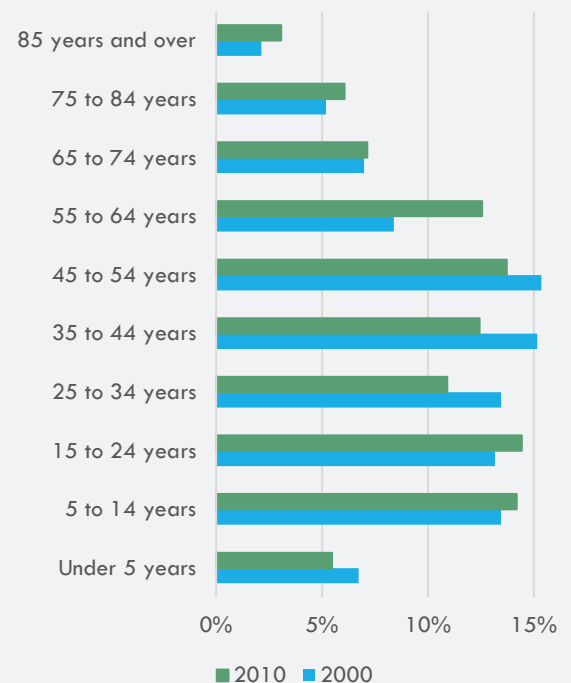
Source: Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, 2018

Since the city has little vacant land, opportunities to add population are primarily through infill, redevelopment, and new development on remaining vacant lots.

AGE

The city's youth (ages 5-24) in 2010 make up a greater percentage of the total population than in 2000 while the adult age groups are smaller than in 2000. Older adults and seniors (ages 55 and up) comprise a greater percentage of the total population in 2010 than in 2000. As the Baby Boomers continue to age, demand for more senior services and housing options will grow.

AGE GROUPS (2000-2010)



ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

An analysis of the economic profile of the City includes educational attainment, income, and occupation; which are each directly related to one another. This information provides insight into the skill level of the community and type of work in which the citizens participate. This assists in focusing in on certain needs of the community, which may affect transportation and land use decisions.

EDUCATION

Educational attainment of residents 25 years and over in the City of Grand Blanc is high when compared to other nearby cities, Grand Blanc Township, and Genesee County. Over 40% of City residents are college graduates, the highest percentage of the selected comparison communities.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	% high school graduate or higher	% bachelor's degree or higher
City of Grand Blanc	95.0%	41.2%
Grand Blanc Township	95.9%	36.5%
Flushing	94.3%	30.3%
Holly	91.4%	24.7%
Davison	94.5%	22.3%
Genesee County	89.3%	19.3%

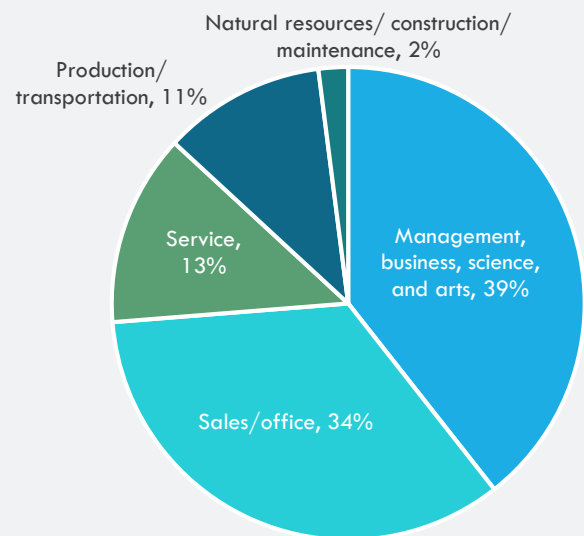
Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-year estimates

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of the City of Grand Blanc workers 16 years and older drive an average of 26.4 minutes to work, the majority driving in a car, truck or van, 94.7%. Many wage earners commute to employment centers in the nearby metropolitan areas of Flint, Saginaw, and Detroit; 68.1% work in Genesee County, with 17.6% working at home. The largest occupational group for City of Grand Blanc residents is management, business and related occupations which has decreased by nearly 10% since 2012 estimates. Sales and office occupations represent the next largest group.

OCCUPATIONS OF CITY OF GRAND BLANC RESIDENTS

Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-year estimates



Nearly one-third of Grand Blanc residents work in the educational and healthcare services industry. The next four most prevalent industries, manufacturing (14%), retail trade (14%), finance services (12%) and professional services (11%), together account for half of the residents' industries. The 5-year estimates are not very accurate with an estimated workforce population of 3,327 people but provide a general picture.

INDUSTRY OF CITY OF GRAND BLANC RESIDENTS

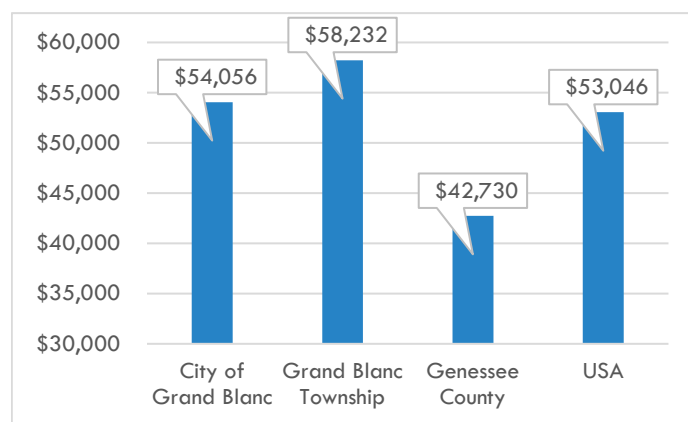
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	29%
Manufacturing	14%
Retail trade	14%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	12%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9%
Other services, except public administration	4%
Wholesale trade	3%
Construction	2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	2%
Public administration	1%
Information	1%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0%

Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-year estimates

INCOME

The median household income of the City of Grand Blanc residents was estimated at \$54,056 in 2012. The 2015 estimates show a 13.5% decrease to \$46,743. Grand Blanc has a much higher median income than the county average, is slightly higher than the U.S. average, and lower than Grand Blanc Township.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: ACS 2008-2012 5-year estimates

B. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing characteristics include tenure of ownership, value, type, and construction rate. These all assist in establishing the characteristics of the residential component of the community. Residents require different types of housing which are generally based on their lifestyle. The value and type of homes help identify how affordable it is to live in the community. In addition, analyzing the types of housing available helps indicate whether the community currently serves the various needs of residents.

HOUSING UNITS AND TENURE

As of the 2010 Census, the City of Grand Blanc had 3,784 housing units. 5.8% of the housing units were vacant. Of the 3,566 occupied housing units, 2,023, or 56.7%, were reported as owner occupied. The 2011 -2015 ACS estimates that owner occupied housing unit share increased to 57.7%.

HOUSING VALUE

The City of Grand Blanc's median housing value is comparable to the surrounding township and much higher than the county overall.

MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE

City of Grand Blanc	\$145,200
Grand Blanc Township	\$145,000
Genesee County	\$99,900

Source: ACS 2008-2012 5-year estimates

HOUSING UNIT TYPE

The largest share of housing type in Grand Blanc is single-family detached homes (54.3%). The City has a much more diverse share of attached units than either the Township or Genesee County. As Baby Boomers age and Millennials seek alternatives to the single-family home, the demand for attached housing units will continue increase.

HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	City of Grand Blanc		Township	County
1-unit detached	2,003	54.3%	63.5%	73.0%
1-unit attached	259	7.0%	5.5%	4.4%
2 units	60	1.6%	0.6%	1.7%
3 or 4 units	157	4.3%	2.4%	2.2%
5 to 9 units	238	6.4%	4.5%	3.7%
10 to 19 units	436	11.8%	12.3%	4.3%
20 or more units	537	14.6%	7.4%	4.7%
Mobile home	0	0.0%	3.8%	5.9%
Total housing units	3,690	3,690	15,506	192,240

Source: ACS 2008-2012 5-year estimates

YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

Half of the Grand Blanc's housing units were built during the 1960's and 70's. Recent decades have seen housing construction sharply decline due to the recession and fewer vacant parcels available for new construction.

YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

Built 1939 or earlier	111	3%
Built 1940 to 1949	125	3%
Built 1950 to 1959	350	9%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,086	29%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,014	27%
Built 1980 to 1989	374	10%
Built 1990 to 1999	591	16%
Built 2000 to 2009	94	3%
Built 2010 or later	0	0%
Total Estimated Units	3,745	

Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-year estimates

APPENDIX B:

EXISTING LAND USE

Understanding existing land use represents one of the most important steps in the Master Plan process. The analysis of this information not only identifies what and where particular uses exist, but also provides insight as to where future development might occur, as well as where conflicts may exist or can develop. Land use conflicts occur when incompatible uses occur adjacent to one another, with various negative short and long-term impacts on a community. An example is an industrial operation, such as the cement plant, next to an existing single-family neighborhood. Negative effects from the plant may include fumes, light, noise, or heavy truck traffic, and general nuisances due to plant operations or building characteristics.

In order to avoid nuisances, communities must take the appropriate planning steps. The existing land use patterns as well as growth trends must be analyzed as part of the process to identify existing or potential opportunities as well as conflicts. This process not only provides the basic framework upon which future land uses proposals are developed but will also provide guidance for future land use and development decisions.

The City of Grand Blanc is nearing build-out. The amount of acreage within the City is narrowing, however, there are some areas that may be redeveloped in the future and others that are not developable due to the existence of regulated wetlands. Available vacant land for redevelopment and development includes 8% of land use with the GM site making up the majority. Residential uses continue to be the largest form of land use at approximately 44% while industrial land uses only make up 0.3% of the City.

Table 7 below identifies the amount of land designated per use as identified in the summer of 2017. Table 8 shows more detailed land uses from a 2002 study. Following the table are descriptions of the categories.

Table 7 2017 Existing Land Use			
Land Use Category	Acreage (2,316 acres total)	Percentage	
		Land Use	City
Residential	1,019	50.4	44.0
City Owned	16	0.8	0.7
Golf Course	298	14.7	12.9
Commercial	150	7.4	6.5
Institutional	160	7.9	6.9
Park	191	9.4	8.2
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	23	1.1	1.0
Vacant	161	8.0	7.0

Table 8 2002 Existing Land Use			
Land Use Category		Acreage	Percentage
Residential	Large Lot Single Family Residential	694	31.2%
	Small Lot Single Family Residential	107	4.8%
	Two Family Residential	25	1.1%
	Low Density Multiple Family Residential	10	0.5%
	High Density Multiple Family Residential	109	4.9%
Commercial & Office	Downtown	41	1.8%
	Office Service	44	2.0%
	Neighborhood Commercial	12	0.5%
	General Commercial	52	2.3%
	Heavy Commercial	7	0.3%
Industrial	Light Industrial	16	0.7%
	Heavy Industrial	24	1.1%
Other	Institutional	167	7.6%
	Public Parks/Recreation	91	4.1%
	Private Parks/Recreation	310	14.0%
	Vacant Land	283	12.7%
	Vacant Buildings	4	0.2%
	Road Right-of-Way/Railroad	266	12.0%
	Total	2221¹	100.0%¹
¹ The downtown category is an overlay district and includes neighborhood commercial, general commercial, and other uses. The acreage and percentage totals, therefore, do not include the downtown figures because they are accounted for in other land use categories.			
Source: City of Grand Blanc, October 2002			

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

Single Family Large Lot Residential - Land uses in this category are defined single family residential lots which are greater than 12,000 square feet in area.

Single Family Small Lot Residential - Land uses in this category consist of single family lots with sizes 12,000 square feet and less in area.

Two Family Residential - This category is defined as two separate dwelling units within a single structure.

Low-Moderate Density Multiple Family Residential - This category is defined by attached residential units of 8 units per acre or less in area.

High Density Multiple Family Residential - This category is defined as attached multiple family housing 8 or more units per acre.

COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Downtown - The downtown area is not a separate land use category, but rather, an overlay zoning district which includes multiple land use categories already listed. The downtown includes a mixture of neighborhood commercial, general commercial, heavy commercial, institutional, office/service, and single family residential.

Office/Service - Office/service uses include professional offices such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, etc., banks and other financial institutions, and general offices.

Neighborhood Commercial - Neighborhood commercial uses are those which are convenient and generally draw customers from the adjacent residential areas. Examples of these uses are gas stations that include convenience type uses.

General Commercial - This land use category contains a mix of commercial and limited office use. These uses generally draw customers from the City, as well as those in neighboring communities.

Heavy Commercial - Heavy commercial uses are more intensive than general commercial but less intensive than an industrial land use. These uses offer products or services on site and draw clients from the City as well as other surrounding communities.

INDUSTRIAL USES

Light Industrial - These land uses are more of a service type of use such as construction contractors or automotive body shops. Light industrial land uses do not have many of the negative environmental impacts that are more consistent with heavy industrial uses such as manufacturing.

Heavy Industrial - Heavy industrial land uses consist primarily of manufacturing uses and railroad switching yards. These uses are considered to be the most intensive uses with respect to all other land use categories.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Public Parks and Recreation - Public Parks/Recreation uses are those uses that are accessible to the entire public and owned by the City or the Grand Blanc Parks and Recreation Commission including parks, playgrounds, and nature preserves.

Private Parks and Recreation - Private Parks/Recreation uses are owned by private entities but are open to the public. This category is comprised of The Jewel of Grand Blanc golf course.

VACANT

Vacant Land - This category is comprised of land that has not been developed. Land in this category is developable in some cases but may include regulated wetlands or required open space which are not permitted to be developed. This category will fluctuate at a slightly slower rate than vacant buildings and ultimately will continue to be reduced until the City is built out.

Vacant Buildings - Vacant Buildings are those buildings that were not occupied during the time of this land use survey. This category is constantly fluctuating in terms of acreage and percentage and can be expected to increase and decrease with redevelopment and businesses opening and closing.

OTHER USES

Institutional - This category includes schools, municipal building and uses, churches, fraternal organizations and public libraries.

Road Right-of-Way/Railroad - This land use category includes all City right-of-way, roads and railroad tracks and switching station. This category will be slightly increasing in the future once Grand Boulevard is developed.



APPENDIX C:

NATURAL FEATURES

Many prominent natural features are found throughout Grand Blanc, such as the Thread Creek, Smith Lake, and various wetlands, wooded areas, and open space. These natural features help define the character of the City. Therefore any development on the remaining vacant areas should be considerate of the existing natural features. Consequently, site design should take advantage of the benefits that natural features provide and minimize any disruptions or loss. In some cases, preservation is regulated by state or federal agencies. In other cases, preservation is possible through City ordinances, which regulate site design, building setbacks, and the protection of existing features.

This appendix provides an overview of key natural features within the City based on available information. A brief discussion on floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, and soils is included along with floodplain and wetland maps. These features were considered as a part of the future land use designations.

A. FLOODPLAINS

Flooding is generally a temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas caused by the overflow of inland waters. Areas designated as a flood hazard area include land, which on the basis of available information, is subject to a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year.

Areas most susceptible to flooding are defined as floodplains. Floodplains serve as important ground water recharge and natural water retention areas during periods of heavy precipitation or snow thaws to help limit flooding elsewhere. Development within the 100 year floodplain is limited by the Grand Blanc Zoning Ordinance to help ensure that the floodplains can accommodate a base flood.

Areas shown on the map as located within the 100 year floodplain are general and should be used for general planning purposes only; the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), published under the Federal Emergency Management Act, is the official source. Lands within the floodplain may be eligible for special flood insurance. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is responsible for regulating floodplains and approving any alternatives.

The map displays the Grand Blanc River and its tributaries, including the Grand Blanc River, Rusty Creek, and the Grand Blanc River. The river is shown in blue, and the surrounding area is green. The map includes street names, property boundaries, and various landmarks. The river is highlighted in blue, and the surrounding area is shown in green and brown. The map is oriented with North at the top.

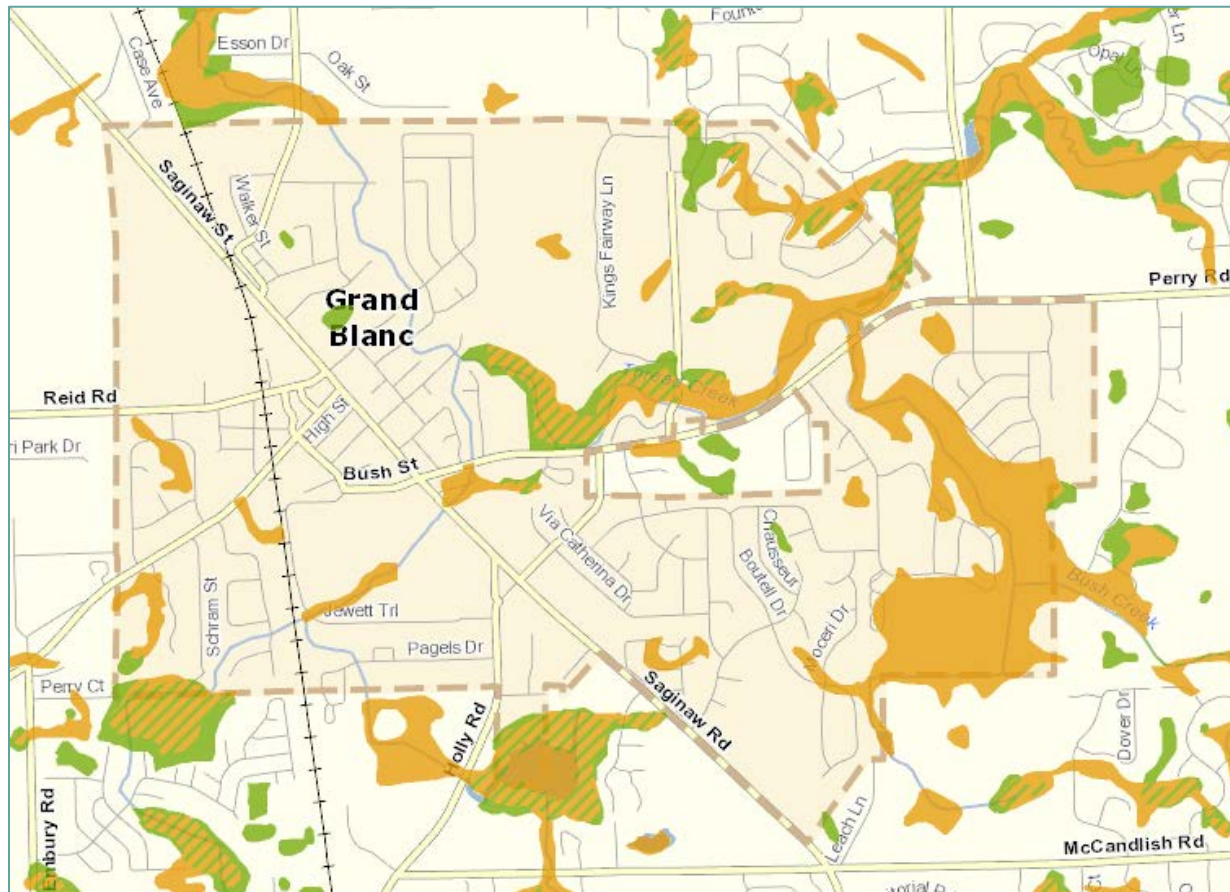
Source: FEMA (fema.maps.arcgis.com)

B. WETLANDS

Wetlands are vital to the environmental quality of Grand Blanc and serve a variety of important functions that benefit the community such as: mitigating flooding by detaining surface runoff, controlling soil erosion and sediment loading in rivers and lakes, providing links with ground water and improving water quality, and providing important wildlife, flora, and fauna habitats. Wetlands may include areas that are seasonably wet, by a surface or ground water influence, to areas that are more permanently saturated throughout the year.

A number of wetlands exist within the City and many more in the surrounding Township. A generalized map of wetlands is provided in this appendix. However, there are a number of locations within the City that are not depicted on the map that appear to contain wetlands. An on-site inspection by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is required to determine if a site has state regulated wetlands. For reference, the MDEQ provides online mapping capabilities with a user-friendly, interactive Wetlands Map Viewer.

MDEQ Wetlands Map



Source: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Wetlands Map Viewer

All wetlands that are contiguous with (within 500 feet) a waterway or any wetland that is greater than five acres in size are regulated by the MDEQ through Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA). Any dredging, excavating, construction on or making use of a wetland (such as for stormwater) requires a permit from the MDEQ. Permits will generally not be granted unless the issuance is in the public interest and necessary to realize the benefits derived from the activity. If a wetland fill permit is granted, mitigation, such as creating new wetlands within the same drainage way or enhancement of existing wetlands is required.

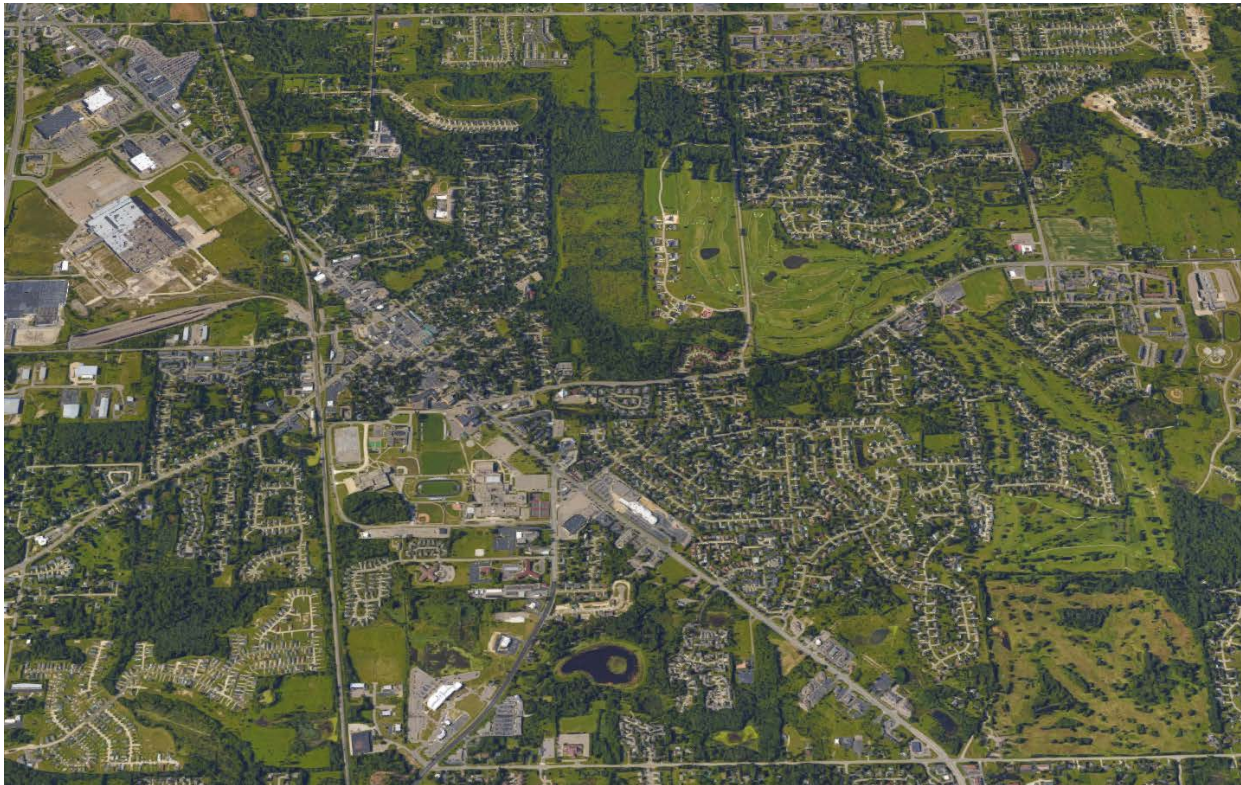
Protection of wetlands is recommended even where the wetland is not state regulated. Development should be directed away from such wetland areas, however, developments may be able to incorporate them into a stormwater management system.

C. WOODLANDS

A number of significant areas of woodlands and mature trees are scattered throughout Grand Blanc. Woodlands, trees, and natural landscaping on sites and along streets provide a variety of benefits. Woodlands influence the micro-climate by moderating ground-level temperatures, reduce air pollution and soil erosion, provide effective noise and wind screens, and provide important wildlife, flora, and fauna habitats.

Grand Blanc encourages the preservation of key woodlands and mature trees as sites develop or redevelop. In addition, the City promotes its designation as a “Tree City” through streetscape and other plantings.

Aerial of City



Source: Google Maps

D. SOILS

Soils can influence the appropriateness of a site for development or impact the construction costs. Soils in Grand Blanc primarily belong within the Miami-Conover-Brookston soil association, but a small portion in the northern area of the City is classified as Conover-Brookston-Parkhill association. In general, soils within the City are commonly suitable for development, but some of the remaining vacant sites have soils less suitable for development. Many times, the original soils found in the City have been disturbed during development over the years. Poor soils, such as those located around Smith Lake, present problems such as poor drainage, poor foundation stability, and septic limitations. This does not indicate that these sites cannot be developed; rather it indicates a need for site design that minimizes negative impacts and may mean increased construction costs due to the need to bring in off-site soils to improve suitability.