

City of Flat Rock Master Plan 2007-2010

City of Flat Rock, Michigan

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Table of Contents

Title Page	
Transmittal Letter	
Acknowledgements.....	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Maps and Tables.....	iv
1. Goals and Objectives	1
Overview	1
General Goals	1
Residential	2
Economic Development	3
Commercial Development.....	4
Industrial Development	6
Environmental	6
Transportation	7
Community Facilities	8
Recreation.....	9
Historic Preservation	10
2. Introduction	11
Regional Setting	11
History and Evolution of Flat Rock.....	11
3. Existing Conditions	14
Population	14
Age.....	16
Income	20
Occupational Characteristics	21
Educational Attainment	21
Household Growth and Composition	22
Housing.....	24
Future Trends	28
Demographic Analysis: Summary and Conclusions.....	30
4. Existing Land Use	32
Overview	32
Agriculture/Vacant	33
Commercial and Office	35
Industrial.....	35
Landfill	36
Quasi-Public.....	36
Recreation.....	36
Residential	38
Residential Open Space.....	38

5. Regional Land Use Relationships	39
Overview	39
Planning Relationships to Surrounding Communities.....	39
Additional Regional Issues.....	40
6. Housing Review and Analysis	44
Overview	44
Age and Condition of Housing.....	44
Housing Size and Density	45
Projected Long-Term Housing Demand.....	47
Analysis of Single-Family Housing Needs.....	47
Analysis of Multiple-Family Housing Needs	47
Analysis of Mobile Home Park Needs.....	47
Need for a Variety of Housing Types	48
Need for High Quality Residential Design.....	48
7. Economic Analysis	49
Existing Economic Base	49
Commercial District Profiles	50
Economic Development Trends	52
Potential for Future Growth	54
Fiscal Impact of Economic Growth	57
8. Circulation Analysis	60
Road Classifications and Jurisdiction	60
Circulation System Deficiencies.....	63
Resources for Road Improvements.....	64
Opportunities for Improvements	65
Pedestrian Movement and Other Modes of Transportation	66
9. Recreation and Community Facilities Analysis	70
Existing Recreational Facilities.....	70
Analysis of Existing Facilities and Service Areas.....	75
Recreation Programs.....	81
Recreation Deficiencies and Analysis.....	82
10. Future Land Use	84
Introduction	84
Future Land Use Concept.....	84
Future Land Use Categories	85
11. Implementation	97
Public Information and Education.....	97
Public Policy and Administrative Actions	98
Land Use Controls	99
Conventional Zoning Procedures.....	100
Innovative Zoning Techniques	101
Public Facility Improvements.....	102

City Identity.....	103
Economic Development and Redevelopment Mechanisms.....	105
Land Acquisition	106
Special Purpose Districts.....	109
Financing Tools	111

List of Maps

Map 1- Regional Location	13
Map 2- Existing Land Use.....	37
Map 3- Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan	68
Map 4- Community and Recreation Facilities	73
Map 5- Future Land Use.....	87

List of Tables

Table 3.1- Historic Population Trend.....	15
Table 3.2- Total Population and Population Growth Rates.....	16
Table 3.3- Median Age and Percentage of Total Population Under 18 and Over 65	17
Table 3.4- Comparison of Age Groups, by Percentage of Total Population	18
Table 3.5- Change in 5-Year Age Cohorts	19
Table 3.6- Annual Household Income	20
Table 3.7- Occupation of Population 16 Years and Over	21
Table 3.8- Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years and Over.....	22
Table 3.9- Household Composition.....	23
Table 3.10- New Residential Construction	24
Table 3.11- Growth in Population, Households, and Housing Units.....	25
Table 3.12- Changes in Types of Housing.....	26
Table 3.13- Comparison of Housing Types as a Percentage of Total Housing Units.....	27
Table 3.14- Median Value of Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units	27
Table 3.15- General Trends Since 1950.....	28
Table 3.16- Dominant Demographic Trends	29
Table 4.1- Land Use Acreage	33
Table 6.1- Age of Housing	45
Table 6.2- Size of Housing Units.....	46
Table 7.1- Property Value Trends	57
Table 7.2- Largest Taxable Values.....	58
Table 7.3- Breakdown of 2005 SEV by Use of Property.....	58
Table 7.4- General Fund Budget History.....	59
Table 8.1- Road Classifications	61
Table 9.1- Parks and Recreation Facilities.....	74
Table 9.2- Analysis of Existing Recreation Facilities	76
Table 9.3- Recreation Facilities Evaluation	79
Table 9.4- Comparison to Accepted Standards.....	80
Table 9.5- Recreation Program Offerings	81
Table 10.1- Proposed Land Uses.....	89

List of Appendix

Appendix A.....	113
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1. Goals and Objectives

Overview

This chapter summarizes the goals and objectives for the Flat Rock Master Plan. These goals resulted from discussion with Planning Commission, City Staff, community input and visioning session (held December 11, 2006). These goals include: general land use, residential, commercial, industrial, environmental, economic development, transportation, community facilities, and recreation. Collectively, these goals and objectives equate to a general consensus or shared vision by the citizenry of Flat Rock.

Goal statements are general in nature and are ideals toward which the City wishes to strive. They represent the ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is broad and immeasurable. Goals express a consensus of community direction to public and private agencies, groups and individuals as determined throughout the Master Plan update process.

General Goals

1. **Neighborhoods:** Foster strong, vital neighborhoods to ensure that Flat Rock continues to be recognized as a quality community where families and individuals reside, work, and recreate.
2. **Master Physical Planning:** Maintain complementary land use relationships that promote a harmonious, attractive community; preserve natural resources; promote a sound tax base; and provide for manageable traffic volumes.
3. **Property Maintenance:** Recognize that the City and its physical resources are dynamic, and aggressively encourage property maintenance and reinvestment.
4. **Fiscal Stability:** Promote the development of a financially secure community, which can continue to provide all necessary services to its residents and businesses in an efficient manner.
5. **Land Use:** Promote efficient use of the land and encourage assembly and orderly redevelopment:
 - Preserve open space and natural features;
 - Promote pedestrian connections;
 - Permit complementary land uses; and,
 - Recognize historic assets in the community.
6. **Planning Innovation and Flexibility:** Encourage innovation in land use planning (e.g. Planned Unit Developments (PUD's), conditional zoning, overlay districts, etc.), where innovation would:
 - More efficiently implement the goals set forth in the Master Plan;

- Achieve a higher quality of development than would be possible under conventional regulations;
- Result in better use of land in accordance with its character and adaptability;
- Result in development that is compatible with surrounding uses;
- Preserve open space and natural features; and
- Produce recognizable and substantial benefits for the community.

Residential

1. **Housing Balance:** Strive for a housing balance that enhances the City's image as a high quality single-family residential community. Provide other types of housing options (e.g. brownstones, townhouses, row houses, loft units, etc.) to meet the needs of young professionals and empty nesters.
2. **Single-Family Neighborhoods:** Retain single-family residential areas as secluded and quiet neighborhoods through the promotion of safe and efficient internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, creation of open space, maintenance of city-wide public services, and protection from non-residential encroachment.
3. **Housing Choice:**
 - Seek a balanced housing stock consisting of a range of housing types and price ranges, to include low-density, high-quality, upscale single-family housing in conventional subdivisions, and high quality townhomes and condominiums for which there is an existing need, especially near the downtown or Central Business District.
 - Provided a sufficient supply of affordable and alternative housing opportunities for elderly residents which will encourage them to remain in the community. Examples include small, single story detached and attached residential units, high-rise apartment buildings and assisted care facilities.
 - Attract young professionals by providing varied housing options, located within walking distance of parks, pathways, entertainment, and retail.
 - Promote a range of housing options, including: ranches, cape cods, brownstones, and loft units.
4. **Residential Design Standards:** Create residential design standards to ensure that all future residential development is of the highest quality, creating living environments that are attractive and enjoyable to City residents. In order to accomplish this, encourage the use of PUD's.

Examples of design considerations include: architectural guidelines, pathways, open space and other on-site amenities such as walking trails, tot-lots, picnic areas, naturalized ponds, and street trees. New homes should be constructed with the highest quality materials. Housing units and other improvements (e.g. clubhouses) should be placed on the site with sensitivity to natural features and the need to create a stable and secure living environment.

5. **Density Relationships:** High and medium-density residential developments should be separated from lower-density developments. Exceptions to this policy would be in the CBD; where a higher-density residential development serves as a transition between commercial development and lower-density residential development; or where housing of varying densities is contained within a planned development.
6. **Multiple-Family Development:**
 - Provide for new multiple-family housing primarily as a transitional use to separate non-residential uses from single-family development.
 - High and medium-density housing should be located only where there is access to major thoroughfares, and only where it can be adequately served by public and private services without unreasonable disruption to the level of services enjoyed by other residents.
 - Future multiple-family housing should be constructed of the highest quality materials. Buildings and other improvements should be placed on the site with sensitivity to natural features and the need to create a stable and secure living environment.
 - Maintain the quality of existing multiple-family developments through strict enforcement of City ordinances, security, housing inspections, and beautification promotion.
 - Encourage higher density development in the CBD or within walking distance of the CBD.
7. **Mobile Home Park Expansions or New Development:** Limit the number of mobile home parks and mobile home park units to a level commensurate with that of surrounding communities.
 - Create opportunities for developers to build high density, affordable housing through Planned Unit Development standards.
 - Analyze and inventory existing mobile home developments in and around the City to better defend a conservative mobile home park policy.
 - Provide pedestrian amenities within mobile home parks, including open space, tot-lots, clubhouses, and walking paths.
8. **Housing Maintenance:** Encourage housing rehabilitation and require a high standard of property maintenance to perpetuate a high quality of housing among residents. Participate in the Wayne County Housing Rehabilitation Program if the need for home maintenance becomes noticeable.

Economic Development

1. **Economic Development Initiatives:** Continue to develop and apply economic development tools (such as formation of BRA's, business improvement districts, conditional zoning options, tax increment financing, tax abatements, sharing in the cost of utilities, and special assessment districts) in a prudent and efficient fashion to enhance and maintain a

balanced, healthy mixture of business and industry, provided that such programs are consistent with the overall development and financial goals of the City.

2. **Economic Development Incentives:** Economic development incentives should be used primarily to promote development of light manufacturing, research firms, and other types of development that:
 - Are compatible with the City's goals concerning protection of residential areas and the environment;
 - Generate new employment opportunities, particularly for residents;
 - Increase the tax base; and
 - Support existing industries and business.

Gateway Commerce Center: Encourage high quality, mixed-use development (including restaurants), in the Gateway Commerce Center to compliment existing businesses.

Hall Road: Encourage future development along Hall Road by making improvements to the existing infrastructure (e.g. shared stormwater detention).

Commercial Development

1. **Central Business District:** Recognize the Central Business District as the focus of office, specialty retail activity, and housing in a mixed-use setting.
 - Regularly review the boundaries of the Central Business District (DDA) and make adjustments as necessary.
 - Develop the Central Business District by providing business with incentives such as streetscape improvements, low interest rate loans for façade improvements, creative (public) parking, and annual events.
 - Study the feasibility of creating a Gibraltar Road commercial strip between Telegraph Road (US 24) and Division Street that is traditional in design and promotes pedestrian friendly shopping.
 - Promote the tourism resources of the Huron River, Huroc Park, DNR boat launch, and greenways to create economic development opportunities.
2. **Promote Active Commercial Uses/Family Entertainment:** Promote the development of active commercial sites and centers that act as meeting places for Flat Rock residents to prevent commuting to commercial centers outside of Flat Rock. Promote commercial uses such as restaurants, theaters, art, clothing, furniture, indoor recreation, produce markets, coffee shops, health clubs, and book stores, which create spin-off spending for adjacent businesses.
3. **Telegraph Road (US-24):** Recognize that Telegraph Road (US 24), north of the railroad tracks, is the center of vehicular retail activity in the City. Recognize also that Telegraph Road (US 24), north of the tracks, and particularly north of Vreeland Road is the center of service-type businesses in Flat Rock. Enhance the visibility of these businesses through

streetscape improvements and special events. Secure an anchor tenant for the former K-Mart plaza site.

4. **Gateway Commerce Center:** Develop the Gateway Commerce Center as a regional office/business center consisting of business, industry, lodging, and other regional-oriented commercial uses, including restaurants (e.g. TGI Friday's, Bennigans, etc.).
5. **Neighborhood Commercial Districts:** Promote mixed use retail within walking distance of neighborhoods and on major thoroughfares.
6. **Revitalization of Aging Commercial Districts:** Maintain, upgrade, expand, and redevelop aging business structures and sites, anticipating deteriorating conditions and the aging cycle. Provide tax breaks/abatements and other innovative financing to attract and retain new businesses to the City.
7. **Planned Development vs. Linear Shopping Districts:** The development of planned multi-tenant shopping centers or office buildings should be encouraged along commercial corridors, instead of unplanned strip development.
8. **Appearance:** The design of commercial uses in Flat Rock should reflect thorough and careful analysis of the historic character and traditional design of the City.
 - Architecture should be clean and uncluttered, and excessively large or garish signs should be prohibited. Do not permit long blank facades. Signs should be architecturally compatible with building facades.
 - The City should spruce up and provide "gateways" to commercial districts and corridors to announce these districts to potential patrons.
 - Loading and storage areas should be screened, preferably with landscaped screening or a combination of landscaping and walls.
 - Parking areas should be landscaped to provide visual relief to large paved areas.
 - Landscaping and setbacks should generally convey a sense of spaciousness and compatibility with the underlying natural features.
 - Lighting should enhance the appearance of the commercial district. Lighting fixtures should be designed to complement the design of adjoining buildings. Glaring high-intensity lights should not be used in areas where pedestrian activity is desired.
 - Storefronts should be pedestrian oriented.
9. **Office Development:** Encourage the assembly of desirable sites in the downtown area, Gateway Commerce Center, and along Gibraltar Road for both large and smaller scale office uses, which will enhance the City's tax base, be attractively developed, and create employment.
10. **Internet Access:** The City should encourage and promote high speed, wireless, internet access in the CBD businesses (e.g. coffee houses).

Industrial Development

1. **Industrial Diversity:** Continue to promote diversity in the City's industrial base through recruitment of high-tech, research, light manufacturing, and warehouse uses.
2. **Industrial Design Standards:** Promote the location of new high technology, research, and light industrial parks in attractive settings that will coexist harmoniously with the rest of the community. Future industrial development within planned industrial parks should be encouraged. Planned industrial parks should include an internal circulation system, needed supporting facilities, and adequate land use transitions to other parts of the City.
3. **Allocation of Industrial Land:** Confine future industrial to designated areas on the east side of the City, where an industrial base has already been established. Since most industries area oriented toward metropolitan Detroit or Toledo, industrial development on the east would minimize the impact on the rest of the City. The only exception to this policy would be where expansion of an existing industry in another part of the City (such as in proximity to Telegraph Road) would provide recognizable benefits, such as new employment opportunities and increased tax base, but would not have a detrimental impact on nearby residential and commercial areas or on the natural environment.
4. **Utilities and Public Services:** Future industrial development should be permitted only in accordance with the ability to provide required utilities and public services, including public water and sewer services, adequate road construction and maintenance, police and fire protection, and general municipal administrative and regulatory services. The ongoing costs of providing such services should be considered, as well as the costs related to initial construction.
5. **Obsolete Industrial Uses:** Phase out older industrial uses in the center of the City that are incompatible with surrounding uses (housing and retail) and the development goals for the area.
6. **Railroad R-O-W:** Encourage further development along the railroad right(s)-of-way by constructing a parallel service road to provide access to existing land-locked parcels.

Environmental

1. **Huron River:** Recognize the Huron River as the most significant natural feature in Flat Rock. Promote development that will preserve the natural riverfront environment, and maximize visual and physical access to the river for all residents. River trailways should be developed to provide river access and to provide a path and linkage to other open space and recreation areas. Promote recreational tourism through blueways and greenways.
2. **Protection of Natural Features:** Promote the preservation of significant wooded areas, wetlands, and floodplains through the review of development plans, public acquisition of floodplain and other sensitive lands, and utilization of environmentally sensitive areas for storm water control and low intensity uses (such as recreation uses).

3. **Pollution Control:** Continue to encourage land planning, development patterns and effluent treatment techniques that promote energy conservation and minimize noise and pollution of the air, soil, and water. Strive for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified architecture.
4. **Toxic Waste Sites:** Work with the Department of Environmental Quality and other appropriate agencies to determine potential uses for remediation of contaminated sites identified in Flat Rock. Establish a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA).
5. **Recycling:** Promote and encourage a state-of-the-art recycling program and facilities. Advertise and provide access to yard waste and compost sites.
6. **Pedestrian Friendly:** Encourage stewardship of the natural environment by encouraging responsible and non-obtrusive use through the development of the non-motorized master pathway system.

Transportation

1. **Transportation Planning:** Promote transportation improvements consistent with efficient access to community goods and services, public safety and convenience. Consider the capability of the transportation system to accommodate increased traffic produced by development. Review road engineering and improve safety at the Will Carlton and M-24 intersection.
2. **Non-motorized Pathways:** Promote pedestrian pathways and linkages throughout the City to reduce unnecessary vehicle trips and promote healthy living.
3. **Pedestrian/Bicycle Transportation:** Sidewalks and pathways shall be required in conjunction with all new construction, pursuant to the adopted Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan, as amended. Sidewalks shall link residential areas with other residential subdivisions, schools, recreation areas, commercial districts, and other attractions throughout the City. Link the City's non-motorized system to regional plans and pathways.
4. **The Need for New Roads:** Identify locations and work toward installation of new roads where needed to make vacant land accessible for development in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan. Make improvements to the road system that will encourage economic development within the City.
5. **Right-of-Way Widths:**
 - Limit development within the existing or planned rights-of-way as indicated on the Master Thoroughfare Plan. Develop flexible guidelines to restrict development within such "long-range" rights-of-way where the estimated implementation is more than 10 to 15 years in the future.
 - Plan for widening the rest of Gibraltar Road to handle increased traffic as the City's population grows.
 - Allow parallel parking in the CBD where it is currently not permitted.

6. **Road Hierarchy:** Develop a road system that provides access to all parts of the City, yet restricts the use of neighborhood streets by trucks and extraneous through traffic.
7. **Road Aesthetics:** Roadways should be visually pleasing to motorists, pedestrians, and persons who view the roads from adjoining land. Frontage along roads should be amply landscaped. The construction of boulevards or parkways should be encouraged.
8. **Road Maintenance:** Inventory road conditions and make a maintenance or priority schedule based on current road condition and use.
9. **Extend Vreeland Road:** Extend Vreeland Road from Telegraph Road to Arsenal Road to provide greater access from the northwestern portion of the City to businesses located along Telegraph. Extension of Vreeland Road will also curb unwanted cross traffic through existing local streets and neighborhoods.

Non-Motorized Transportation

1. **Advisory Group:** Form a non-motorized transportation advisory group to increase, improve and/or promote opportunities for active living such as walking, biking, or recreation in the City.
2. **Staff Designation:** Designate a department head or staff person to be specifically responsible for pedestrian and/or bicycle transportation options in the City.
3. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan:** Prepare a pedestrian and bicycle master plan, which expands on the existing non-motorized master plan map, to establish ways to include pedestrian and biking facilities. The master plan should cover ways to plan and design bicycle route networks, create bicycle parking, provide bicycling amenities such as showers and clothing lockers, maintain the route network, offer bicycle safety programs, promote bicycling in the City, and obtain funds to implement these items. In addition, the plan should inventory existing pedestrian facilities and conditions, create a priority list of public investment in infrastructure improvements, and implement the plan through a capital improvements program and pedestrian oriented design guidelines.
4. **Encourage Active Lifestyle:** Enhance mobility and physical activity for persons of all age and socioeconomic groups, increase the use of non-motorized forms of transit, and enhance the environmental quality of the community by promoting and encouraging an active lifestyle through walking, hiking, and biking.
5. **Establish Non-Motorized Network:** Create and maintain a comprehensive network of safe walking routes, bike routes, shared-use paths and trails, parks and greenways in the City.

Community Facilities

1. **Municipal Services:** Develop a system of quality municipal services that are responsive and necessary to maintaining the attractiveness and vitality (“Quality of Life”) of the City’s residential, business, and industrial districts.

2. **Maintenance and Replacement:** Provide for system completion, ongoing maintenance, and replacement programs based on a continually updated capital improvement program for roads, street lights, sewers, water mains, and other infrastructure elements.
3. **Community Center:** Continue to provide first class facilities and programs at the Community Center. Develop a teen center and teen programs in conjunction with the Community Center.
4. **Government Services:** Encourage and maintain government services (e.g. post offices, libraries, etc.) in the CBD and core areas of the City.

Recreation

1. **Level of Service:** Provide the maximum level of neighborhood and community-oriented recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of all residents, within the physical and financial capabilities of the City.
2. **Multiple-Use Concept:** Develop the City's recreation system in accordance with the multiple-use concept, whereby the City's main parks provide a total recreation experience for the entire family. Under this concept, each community park serves a large section of the City with facilities for active and passive recreation, competitive sports, facilities for children and adolescents, and picnic and nature study.
3. **Neighborhood Parks:** Assure that, as the City develops, adequate land is set aside throughout the City for recreational purposes. As new residential subdivisions are built in the outlying areas of the City, the use of City-owned properties and school properties as neighborhood parks should be encouraged. Promote development through Planned Unit Developments, which can set aside parkland and open space for residents.
4. **River Access:** Increase public access to the Huron River through acquisition and enhancement of riverfront properties. River trailways should be developed to provide river access and to provide a path and linkage to local businesses, other open space and recreation areas (Huroc Park). Construct a soft shore access launch and attract a canoe/kayak livery business.
5. **Park Design and Landscaping:** Enhance the design and aesthetic quality of all local parks, through landscaping, ornamental features, sculpture, and signage, recognizing the significance of parkland to the overall character and public image of the City.
6. **Coordination with Other Agencies:** Continue to cooperate with other public and private organizations, such as the school district, Downriver Linked Greenways, Detroit Heritage River Trail, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, in providing recreation services and facilities to avoid unnecessary duplication.
7. **Privately-Owned Recreation Facilities:** Encourage privately owned and commercial recreation facilities to locate in the City, provided the type and location of such facilities is consistent with the City's recreation goals.

8. **Recreation Facilities Outside of the City:** Provide expanded access to important recreation resources outside of the City to increase recreation opportunities for City residents.

Historic Preservation

1. **Public Awareness:** Increase public awareness of Flat Rock's history and historic assets through programs, brochures, historic markers and special events.
2. **Designate Historic Areas:** Designate historic areas to add charm and value to the City.
3. **Provide Tax Credits:** Establish a program that provides tax credits for historic preservation/restoration.
4. **Regional Cooperation:** Coordinate Flat Rock's historic assets with those of adjacent communities and surrounding region (e.g. Huron watershed, Motor Cities Heritage area, Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, blueways trail, etc.).
5. **Establish a Historic District Study Committee:** Establish a Historic District Study Committee, per State Historic Preservation Office guidelines, to survey the City's historic assets (e.g. buildings, houses, and sites).

2. Introduction

Regional Setting

The City of Flat Rock is located in Southeast Michigan in the southern section of Wayne County, Michigan (see Map 1). Flat Rock is considered part of the Detroit metropolitan region, which collectively contains approximately five million people. The City is also considered a “Downriver” community, which is a smaller sub-region of the southern Detroit metropolitan area. Adjacent Downriver communities include the City of Woodhaven to the northeast, Brownstown Township to the north and east, Berlin Township to the southwest, Huron Township to the west, and the City of Rockwood and Village of South Rockwood (Monroe County) to the south. Major urban centers less than a one hour drive from Flat Rock include the cities of Ann Arbor, Detroit, Monroe, Romulus, Toledo (Ohio), Windsor (Ontario), and Ypsilanti. The Huron River also flows from the west along the City’s southern boundary, eventually emptying into Lake Erie to the east.

Located along the I-75 corridor, Flat Rock is nestled in the heart of another geographic region commonly called “Automation Alley.” Automation Alley began in 1997 with the intention of creating a regional technology cluster in Oakland County. This has since expanded to include Wayne County and the City of Detroit, among the other southeast Michigan counties. Flat Rock’s inclusion in the cluster is largely due to the presence of AutoAlliance International (AAI), a joint venture between Ford Motor Company and Mazda Motor Corporation. Flat Rock has also become a center for technical training with Gerotech, Inc. and the Haas Technical Education Center.

Flat Rock is located adjacent to I-75 and US-24, within 15 minutes of Detroit Metro Airport, as well as a well-developed rail infrastructure. This unique transportation infrastructure allows the community to be accessible for commerce, business and residential development. The City’s location relative to the interstate highway system and industry has allowed it to continue to attract new residences and industry alike. Despite Flat Rock’s location in the Detroit metropolitan region, the City has maintained its small town character and charm.

History and Evolution of Flat Rock

Michael Vreeland of New York State settled present day Flat Rock around 1817. This settlement was originally named after Mr. Vreeland until it was renamed to Smooth Rock in 1826 and then to Flat Rock in 1838 because of the flat rocks found in the riverbed.

Early inhabitants found the land wild with dense forests, plentiful wildlife and clean running water. Encounters with bears, wolves and wild cats were not uncommon. Game animals abounded and many hunters and trappers made their livelihood around the settlement. The forest produced large quantities of lumber that supported one of Flat Rock’s first primary industries: lumber mills. Unfortunately, malaria and ague (fever) ran rampant in the early days due to a lack of drains and stagnant surface water. Numerous inhabitants and livestock were lost to the dreadful disease.

The original platted village consisted of eight blocks extending north to south from Ypsilanti Street to the river. Several commercial enterprises could be found in or close to this area, including three general stores, two saw mills and tailors, one shoe shop, brickyard, blacksmith, flour mill, hotel, furniture store, lawyer and doctor offices. Many farmers lived around the outskirts of the village.

The first church, the Methodist Church, was built in 1833, followed by the Congregational Church in 1855.

In 1836, the Gibraltar and Flat Rock Company was formed to dig a canal, planned to open up navigation across southern Michigan counties to Lake Michigan. Several sections were partially dug between Flat Rock and Gibraltar. The work was never finished, but evidence of the canal can still be seen today, south of Woodruff Road and East Huron River Drive.

Large changes occurred over Flat Rock's first one hundred years of existence. Early in the 20th century, transportation became the dominant industry in Southeast Michigan. Henry Ford, the father of modern transportation, built a large lamp plant in Flat Rock in 1929. The plant produced as many as the record 16,000 lamps per day for Ford cars that were being sent around the world. At one time, this plant employed 1,400 people, clearly the largest employer in Flat Rock. The plant remains at its original location, near the Huron Dam, but has been closed for some time.



[Map 1- Regional Location]

3. Existing Conditions

This section of the master plan analyzes existing conditions, based primarily on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). Flat Rock's demographic and housing characteristics are analyzed and compared with those of surrounding communities, Wayne County, and the Southeast Michigan region to gain better insight into the community of Flat Rock.

Existing conditions' analysis is a fundamental element of master plans. Planning for future growth and development requires some consideration of “how much” – how many people will need City services, how much housing is “affordable”, or how many new houses will be built based on population increases and land availability.

The intent of an existing conditions analysis is to paint a general picture of the community. The analysis identifies those demographic and housing characteristics in which the community is different from the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. A differential in demographic or housing characteristics may indicate issues or areas in which land use planning and public policies beyond the typical scope of a master plan are warranted.

The existing conditions analysis assesses trends for the following characteristics:

- **Population**
- **Age**
- **Income**
- **Occupational Characteristics**
- **Educational Attainment**
- **Household Growth and Composition**
- **Housing**
- **Future Trends**

The existing conditions analysis concludes with an assessment of the effects of demographic and housing trends on future growth and development patterns in the City.

Population

Total Population

Growth of a community's population is a primary force driving new development and redevelopment. Decline of a community's population can lead to abandoned buildings and blight. Understanding the community's population trend and regional context are necessary to develop an effective future land use plan. This section describes the City's historical population trend, analyzes the regional population growth context, and compares the City's population growth to that of surrounding communities.

Historical Population Trend

The City's historic population trend, based on the decennial census, is presented below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Historic Population Trend,
Flat Rock, 1930 to 2006¹

Year	Population	Population Increase	Percent Increase
1930	1,231	--	--
1940	1,467	236	19.2%
1950	1,931	464	31.6%
1960	4,696	2,765	143.2%
1970	5,643	947	20.2%
1980	6,853	1,210	21.4%
1990	7,290	437	6.4%
2000	8,488	1,198	16.4%
2006¹	9,703	1,215	14.3%

Note: Data from 1930 through 1960 is the population for Flat Rock Village (incorporated in 1923 from Brownstown Township). City of Flat Rock was incorporated in 1970 from Flat Rock Village, reflected by numbers in years 1970 through 2000.

¹SEMCOG May 2006 estimated population.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

The City's largest numerical and percentage increase in population occurred from 1950 to 1960. The growth rate from 1990 to 2000 increased 16.4 percent from the previous period reaching a steady increase close to 20 percent each decade as seen in previous years before the drop in population between 1980 and 1990. Today's (May 2006) estimated population is 9,703, which is a 14.3 percent increase in only six years. The City's population trend should be considered in the regional context, which is presented in the next section.

Population Growth Comparisons

Population and population growth trends for Flat Rock, surrounding communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan are presented in Table 3.2. Over the 10-year period from 1990 to 2000, only Brownstown Township had a larger population growth rate than Flat Rock. During this time, Wayne County experienced a 2.39 percent decrease in population, and the Southeast Michigan region as a whole experienced a modest 5.29 percent increase. The average population growth was 6.98 percent for all of the governmental units listed in Table 2.

The 2000 population of Flat Rock was 8,488, for an increase of 16.43 percent from the 1990 population. This continues a positive growth trend that has occurred since the 1930s. The City has experienced continued population increase since 1990 due to the steady out migration of people from the larger urban core areas, such as Detroit and Trenton, the increase in new housing starts, easy access to transportation corridors, affordable housing, and a strong, growing local and regional economy.

As the region and some surrounding communities continue to lose population, Flat Rock is projected to continue to increase in population. According to SEMCOG, the May 2006 population estimate is 9,703, and the 2030 Forecast is for a population of 13,085. The projected increase in population represents a 14.31 percent increase from 2000 to 2006 and a 54.16 percent increase from 2000 to 2030.

Table 3.2
Total Population and Population Growth Rates,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 1990 to 2000

	1990	2000	Change 1990 to 2000	Percent Increase	2030 ²
Flat Rock	7,290	8,488*	1,198	16.43	13,085
Ash Township	4,710	5,048	338	7.18	7,490
Berlin Township	4,635	5,154	519	11.20	9,974
Brownstown Township	18,811	22,989	4,178	22.21	43,704
Gibraltar	4,297	4,264	-33	-.77	4,009
Rockwood	3,141	3,442	301	9.58	3,255
South Rockwood	1,221	1,284	63	5.16	1,931
Trenton	20,586	19,584	-1,002	-4.87	18,092
Woodhaven	11,631	12,530	899	7.73	13,619
Wayne County	2,111,687	2,061,162	-50,525	-2.39	2,013,975
Southeast Michigan ¹	4,590,468	4,833,368	242,900	5.29	5,408,349

¹Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

²SEMCOG 2030 Population Forecast.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

*SEMCOG May 2006 Estimate: 9,703.

The City of Flat Rock experienced large real and percentage increase in population for almost the entire 20th century. The City's rate of population growth has generally been steady since the 1950s. Even during the 1980s, when the population slowed, Flat Rock continued to grow. Since, the 1990s, though, the City's rate of growth has continued to increase at a higher rate than most of the surrounding communities, particularly Gibraltar and Trenton, who have lost population during this time. The differential growth rates since 1990 suggest economic and housing factors that affect the Southeast Michigan region. Increased population growth indicates development pressures will be increasing and that a review of past land use policies are warranted.

Age

The age of a community's population has very real implications for planning and development, whether it be schools for population under the age of 18, or housing alternatives for empty nesters and elderly residents. This section analyzes the age of the City's population – based on age structure, median age, and percentage of population under 18 and over 65 – and assesses the implications of the population's age on land use and development.

Common Measures of Age

The age analysis begins with three common measures of the age of a population. The first measure is the median age at which one-half of the population is older and one-half of the population is younger. Median age is the most often used measure of age because it can be used to compare populations of different sizes. The second measure is the percentage of the total population that is under the age of 18. Individuals under the age of 18 are usually enrolled in the school system, or preparing to enter school, and thus require services not provided for the general population. The third measure is the percentage of the total population that is aged 65 and over. Many individuals approaching retirement age seek alternative housing. As individuals age, they may lose their ability

to drive and public transportation can become a new but important issue. These three measures of community age are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3
Median Age and Percentage of Total Population Under 18 and Over 65,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, Southeast Michigan, Michigan, and US, 2000

	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²	Michigan	US
Median Age	32.8	36.8	34.0	35.4	35.5	35.3
Under 18 (% of total population)	29.3	25.7	28.0	26.1	26.1	25.7
65 and older (% of total population)	9.5	9.8	12.1	11.0	12.3	12.4

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.
Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the US Census Bureau.

The City's median age, 32.8 years, is younger than that of the surrounding communities (36.8 years), Wayne County (34.0 years) and the Southeast Michigan region (35.4 years). The lower median age suggests that the City's population is relatively younger. This is reflected in the higher percentage of individuals under the age of 18 than the population of the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. Thus, the need for school and recreational facilities and services may be greater in the City than in adjacent communities. The City's population also includes fewer individuals over the age of 65 than the surrounding communities, county and the region.

Age Structure

Age structure refers to the portion of the community's population in each age group. This section compares the City's age structure to that of the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. Subsequently, the change in the City's age structure from 1990 to 2000 is analyzed.

Age Structure and Lifestyle Categories Comparison

To compare the age structure and lifestyle categories of various communities, the population is divided into the following basic groupings:

<i>Age</i>	<i>Lifestyle Category</i>
Under 5:	Pre-school
5 to 17:	School age
18 to 44:	Family forming
45 to 64:	Mature families
65 and older:	Retirement

Table 3.4
Comparison of Age Groups, by Percentage of Total Population,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, Southeast Michigan, Michigan, and US, 2000

Age	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²	Michigan	US
Under 5 <i>Pre-School</i>	8.2	6.4	7.4	6.8	6.8	6.8
5 to 17 <i>School age</i>	21.1	19.3	20.6	19.3	19.3	18.9
18 to 44 <i>Family forming</i>	40.4	38.6	39.0	40.2	39.1	39.9
45 to 64 <i>Mature families</i>	20.8	26.0	20.9	22.8	22.5	22.0
Over 65 <i>Retirement</i>	9.5	9.8	12.1	11.0	12.3	12.4

¹*Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.*

²*Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.*

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the US Census Bureau.

Flat Rock has slightly more individuals in the *pre-school* and *school age* groups relative to the surrounding communities, the county, and the region. The City also has slightly more individuals in the *family forming* group relative to the surrounding communities and the county, but about the expected amount based on the region's population. The City has fewer individuals in the *mature families* group, particularly in comparison to the surrounding communities. Finally, the City has a similar number of individuals in the *retirement* group as the surrounding communities, but less than the county and the region.

The age structure of Flat Rock has several implications for planning and land use. First, the greater number of individuals in the *pre-school* group suggests that long-term demand for school and recreation facilities will be the same or greater than the demand by the current school age population. Secondly, as individuals in the *mature families* group move towards retirement, their housing choices could have implications for the demand for new and different housing types. Finally, as the *retirement* group increases in size, demand for services for senior citizens and elderly residents are likely to grow.

Change in Age Structure

The change in age structure is assessed by comparing the population in five-year age cohorts in 1990 to 2000. For example, those individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort in 1990 would be in the 30 to 34 age cohort in 2000. If the size of the age cohort is smaller in 2000, then the cohort experienced some combination of mortality and out-migration. If the size of the cohort is larger in 2000, then the cohort experienced in-migration. The City's population by 5-year age cohorts in 1990 and 2000 is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Change in 5-Year Age Cohorts,
Flat Rock, 1990 to 2000

Age	1990 Population	2000 Population	1990 to 2000 Change in Cohort Size ¹	1990 to 2000 Percent Change in Cohort Size ¹
Under 5	603	698	--	--
5 to 9	586	726	--	--
10 to 14	636	663	60	9.9
15 to 19	584	650	64	10.9
20 to 24	482	607	-29	-4.6
25 to 29	592	547	-37	-6.3
30 to 34	660	622	140	29.1
35 to 39	692	664	72	12.2
40 to 44	531	738	78	11.8
45 to 49	367	661	-31	-4.5
50 to 54	274	518	-13	-2.4
55 to 59	262	340	-27	-7.4
60 to 64	305	245	-29	-10.6
65 to 69	294	216	-46	-17.6
70 to 74	200	216	-89	-29.2
75 to 79	112	196	-98	-33.3
80 to 84	62	120	-80	-40.0
85 and older	48	61	-161	-72.5

¹Change in cohort size is difference between the population in each group in 2000 and the population in the 10-year younger cohort in 1990.
Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the US Census Bureau.

The cohorts that were age 10 to 19 in 2000 (under 5 to 9 in 1990) *increased* by 124 individuals, suggesting a small in-migration of young families.

The cohorts that were age 20 to 29 in 2000 (10 to 19 in 1990) *decreased* by 66 individuals. A decrease in these age cohorts corresponds to children leaving their parent's homes for college or moving out to get their first jobs. Within these age groups, the net *decrease* was 4.6 percent for the 20 to 24 age cohort and 6.3 percent for the 25 to 29 age cohort.

The cohorts that were age 30 to 39 in 2000 (20 to 29 in 1990) *increased* by 212 individuals, or 19.7 percent. The significant increase in this age cohort suggests that the City provided housing opportunities for young adults and young families.

The cohorts that were age 40 to 49 in 2000 (30 to 39 in 1990) *increased* by 47 individuals, or 3.5 percent. While this is a much smaller increase than the previous cohorts, the increase suggests that the City attracted a small population of individuals moving into the mature family age group.

The remaining age cohorts all exhibited a net *decrease* in population from 1990 to 2000. However, the mortality rate begins to increase for individuals age 40 and over, making detailed findings difficult. Moreover, the aging and retirement of the baby boom generation will have significant impacts across the U.S. In 2006, the first of the baby boomers turned 60 years old, contributing to an ever-increasing senior citizen population. At the state and national levels, paying for social

security and Medicare for retiring boomers are major policy issues. At the local level, the future decisions of boomers about where to live in the US when they retire, what types of housing to live in, and what to do with leisure time, will have profound impacts on local land use and development, as well as local services. Long term issues such as access to medical facilities, public transportation, taxation, and cemetery space will be affected by the baby boom generation.

The analysis of the change in age structure from 1990 to 2000 suggests that the City may lack adequate housing opportunities for young adults when first moving out on their own, but that there are ample housing opportunities for those in the family forming and mature families groups. A more in-depth analysis of housing opportunities for different age groups is provided in a subsequent chapter of this plan.

Income

The annual household income or median household income of a community has very real effects for planning and development, whether it be for new homes, economic development, and acquiring new businesses. This section analyzes the household income of the City, compares the City to Wayne County, and discusses its implications on land use and development.

Table 3.6
Annual Household Income,
Flat Rock and Wayne County, 1999

Income Range	Flat Rock Number of Households	Flat Rock Percent of Households	Wayne County Number of Households	Wayne County Percent of Households
Less than \$10,000	292	9.1	92,221	12.0
\$10,000 to \$14,999	153	4.8	48,855	6.4
\$15,000 to \$24,999	363	11.4	99,816	13.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	412	12.9	93,954	12.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	535	16.8	119,059	15.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	737	23.1	144,208	18.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	380	11.9	81,981	10.7
\$100,000 to \$149,999	229	7.2	62,511	8.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	67	2.1	13,796	1.8
\$200,000 or more	25	0.8	12,225	1.6
Total Households	3,193	100%	768,626	100%
Median Household Income	\$44,084	- -	\$40,776	- -

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

Table 3.6 shows the distribution of median household income levels for the City Flat Rock and Wayne County. Flat Rock generally has a higher percentage of residents with incomes between \$50,000 to \$74,999 than the county, with 23.1 percent for the City and 18.8 percent for the county. The previous gap between the City and county with incomes of \$75,000 and higher has begun to narrow, as the distribution is relatively equal now. Higher incomes are potentially attributable to the increase in mature and established families who reside in the community or have moved to Flat Rock, as well as increased educational attainment.

The median household income in 1999 for the City of Flat Rock was \$44,084, which is \$3,308 more than the median household income for Wayne County. The median household income decreased \$2,820 or 6.0 percent between 1989 and 1999. The 1990 income amount has been adjusted for inflation, thus reflecting true present-day numbers.

Occupational Characteristics

Table 3.7 compares the occupational characteristics of Flat Rock to the County. The table generally shows that the City has fewer people employed in white collar professions, such as management or professional occupations and more people employed in traditional blue collar professions, such as construction, production, or transportation. The largest occupation sector in Flat Rock is production, transportation, and material moving at 26.1 percent, whereas management and professional occupations are the largest sector in Wayne County at 28.1 percent. The second largest occupation sector in the City is sales and office occupations, also the second largest in the County.

Table 3.7
Occupation of Population 16 Years and Over,
Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2000

Occupation	Flat Rock Population	Flat Rock Percent of Population	Wayne County Population	Wayne County Percent of Population
Management, professional, and related occupations	827	20.7	239,562	28.1
Service occupations	709	17.8	141,856	11.7
Sales and office occupations	954	23.9	228,130	26.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0	0.0	936	0.1
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	461	11.5	74,116	8.7
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,043	26.1	166,510	19.6
Total Employed	3,994	100.0	851,110	100.0

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

According to the 1990 Census, 20.7% people in the City were employed in management or professional occupations. Given the population in 2000, this represents a 37.2 percent increase in ten years. Evidence suggests that the City's occupational characteristics will gradually become more white collar as the City's educational attainment increases and more people move into the community. Educational attainment of the population 25 years and over is presented in Table 3.8.

Educational Attainment

According to the 2000 Census, 83.5 percent of the City's population had a high school diploma or higher, and 12.0 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Flat Rock has 6.5 percent higher rate of high school graduates than Wayne County, but 5.2 percent lower rate of those with a bachelor's

degree or higher. In comparison to the State of Michigan, the City has almost exactly the same percentage of high school graduates, but 9.8 percent less with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 3.8
Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years and Over,
Flat Rock Wayne County, and Michigan, 2000

Occupation	Flat Rock Population	Flat Rock Percent of Population	Wayne County Population	Wayne County Percent of Population	Michigan Population	Michigan Percent of Population
Less than 9 th grade	265	5.1	80,328	6.2	299,014	4.7
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	596	11.4	220,178	16.9	765,119	11.9
High school graduate	2,086	39.7	399,885	30.6	2,010,861	31.3
Some college, no degree	1,331	25.6	303,851	23.3	1,496,576	23.3
Associate degree	320	6.1	76,254	5.8	448,112	7.0
Bachelor's degree	418	8.0	141,866	10.9	878,680	13.7
Graduate or professional degree	208	4.0	82,926	6.4	517,579	8.1
Population 25 years and over	5,206	100.0	1,305,288	100.0	6,415,941	100.0
Percent high school graduate or higher	--	83.5	--	77.0	--	83.4
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	--	12.0	--	17.2	--	21.8

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

The percentage of the population in the City that obtained a high school degree or higher increased from 1990 - 2000 from 77.5 percent to 83.5 percent. An increase of 6 percent during the ten year period. The percentage of the population who obtained bachelor's degrees or higher also increased during this time period from 8.7 percent to 12.0 percent, an increase of 3.3 percent. Given this trend, it is likely that the percentage of high school and college graduates will continue to increase.

Household Growth and Composition

This section of the demographic analysis assesses the growth and composition of households in the City. Households are an important level of analysis because changes in the number of households drive the demand for increased (or decreased) housing.

Number of Households

The number of households in Flat Rock increased from 2,670 in 1990 to 3,181 in 2000, an increase of 511 or 19.1 percent. The growth rate in households exceeds the population growth rate of 16.4 percent due to a decrease in the average household size, which is discussed in the following section.

Household Composition

Household composition includes a variety of demographic statistics, including age and gender of the self-identified householder, the number of children, and the number of seniors. Household composition information for Flat Rock, surrounding communities, Wayne County, and the Southeast Michigan region is presented in Table 3.9.

Married couple households constitute a relatively larger portion of the City's households, 51.7 percent, than of the county's households (40.7 percent). However, the surrounding communities have a higher overall percentage at 58.7 percent. Female headed households, with no husband present, constitute a smaller portion of the City's households, 16.6 percent than of the county's households (20.6 percent), but greater than both the surrounding communities (10.4 percent) and region (14.2 percent).

The City's householder is closer to that of the surrounding communities with householders living alone, with 22.9 percent of the City's total households, and with households with an individual age 65 and older living alone, 8.6 percent of the City's total households.

The City has more households with one or more individuals under the age of 18 (42.8 percent), than the surrounding communities (37.5 percent), the county (37.7 percent) and the region (35.8 percent). The City has a very similar percentage of households with an individual age 65 or older as the surrounding communities, at 19.3 percent.

The household composition data in Table 9 suggest that the City faces no out of the ordinary demographic issues. Conventional demographic issues, such as the needs of single parent female-headed households or senior citizens living alone, are still relevant to the City.

Household Size

Information for the average sizes of households and families is presented in Table 9. The City's average household size, 2.66 persons per household, is very similar to the surrounding communities, the county and the region. The City's average family size, 3.12 persons per family, is the same as the region, higher than the surrounding communities, and lower than the county. The average sizes of the City's households and families do not suggest any out of the ordinary planning issues.

Table 3.9
Household Composition,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2000

	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²
Total Number of Households	3,181	29,975	768,440	1,845,313
Number of Married Couple Households	1,645	17,583	313,028	900,201
- Percent of total	51.7	58.7	40.7	48.8
Number of Female Headed Households with No Husband Present	527	3,125	158,179	261,308
- Percent of total	16.6	10.4	20.6	14.2
Householder Living Alone	729	6,850	217,664	502,457
- Percent of total	22.9	22.9	28.3	27.2
Householder 65 and Over Living Alone	274	2,245	76,792	169,511
- Percent of total	8.6	7.5	10.0	9.2

Table 3.9 (continued)
Household Composition,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2000

Number of Households with an Individual Under 18	1,363	11,248	289,469	660,885
- Percent of total	42.8	37.5	37.7	35.8
Number of Households with an Individual 65 and Over	615	5,878	185,205	412,271
- Percent of total	19.3	19.6	24.1	22.3
Average Household Size	2.66	2.65	2.64	2.60
Average Family Size	3.12	3.08	3.26	3.12

¹*Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.*

²*Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.*

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from US Census Bureau.

Housing

Understanding housing issues is important because the need for housing, and the development of houses, mark much of the urban landscape and provides much of the focus for master plans. According to SEMCOG's analysis, the land area developed for residences increased 19.1 percent from 1990 to 2000, occupying 23 percent of the City's land area.

New Residential Construction

The recent number of proposed residential housing developments is not accounted for in any of the housing unit figures or housing unit types because the data ends at the year 2000. As of 2000, a total of ten (10) residential developments have either been built, approved, or are in the planning process, as presented in Table 3.10. There are a total of 1,858 new housing units proposed, including approximately 600 units built, through the winter of 2005 - 2006.

Table 3.10
New Residential Construction,
Flat Rock, 2000 to 2006

Development	Proposed Number of Lots/Units	Number of Acres	Population Projection*	Status
Hickory Ridge PUD	75	38	200	Complete
Rockridge Subdivision	24	10.1	64	Complete
Hawthorne Ridge PUD	292	104	777	Complete

Table 3.10 (continued)
New Residential Construction,
Flat Rock, 2000 to 2006

Woodcreek Park PUD	220	100	585	Phase 4 of 4 Under Construction
Huron Woods/Phase II PUD	43	38	114	Under Construction
Bradbury Park PUD	542	175	1,442	Under Construction
Celtic Farms PUD	57	28.81	152	Under Construction
Falling Water PUD	99	41.28	263	Preliminary PUD
Knotttingham Estates PUD	311 (187 single family, 124 multi-family)	140.05	827	Preliminary Site Plan approved; PUD pending approval
Stonewater PUD	195 multi-family	20.12	519	PUD approved; Preliminary Site Plan pending approval
Total	1,858	695.27	4,943	--

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from the City of Flat Rock, April 2006.

**2.66 average persons per household multiplied by the number of housing units.*

Number of Housing Units

The total number of housing units in the City increased from 2,829 in 1990 to 3,291 in 2000. The comparison among growth rates for population, households, and housing is presented in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11
Growth in Population, Households, and Housing Units,
Flat Rock, 1990 to 2000

	1990	2000	Increase 1990 to 2000	Percent Increase
Population	7,290	8,488	1,198	16.4
Households	2,670	3,181	511	19.1
Housing Units	2,829	3,291	462	16.3

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from US Census Bureau.

The increase in households exceeded the increase in population because the average household size decreased, as described in Table 3.9 previously. The intent of this section is to understand the changing character of the City's housing stock.

Housing Type

The first housing characteristic under consideration is the type of housing. The available census data on housing is categorized into the following types:

- One-family, detached
- One-family, attached
- Two-family / duplex
- Multi-unit apartment
- Mobile homes
- Other units (includes boats, RVs, etc.)

To understand the City's housing stock, the change in housing type is analyzed. Secondly, the types of housing in the City are compared to those in the region and the surrounding area.

Change in Housing Type

The types of housing in the City in 1990 and 2000 are described in Table 3.12. From 1990 to 2000, the total number of housing units in the City increased by 16.3 percent. The number of one-family attached and mobile homes increased at a higher rate than the total number of housing units. The City added housing units in one-family detached, two-family/duplex, and multi-unit apartments, but at a lower rate than total housing growth.

Table 3.12
Changes in Types of Housing,
Flat Rock, 1990 and 2000

	Number of Housing Units, 1990	Number of Housing Units, 2000	Increase 1990 to 2000	Percent Increase 1990 to 2000	Percent of Total Housing Growth
Total	2,829	3,291	462	16.3	100.0
One-family, detached	1,620	1,773	153	9.4	33.1
One-family, attached	21	57	36	171.4	7.8
Two-family / duplex	68	71	3	4.4	0.6
Multi-unit apartment	658	670	12	1.8	2.6
Mobile homes*	378	720	342	90.5	74.0
Other units	84	0	-84	-100.0	-18.2

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

** This is the number of mobile homes within the Flat Rock City limits.*

From 1990 to 2000, one-family detached housing constituted 33.1 percent of total housing growth in the City, but this was second to mobile homes, constituting 74.0 percent of the total growth. The data shows that the City's housing stock and the trend in housing development is primarily one-family detached and mobile home units, as there was a relatively small increase in two-family and apartment housing. These trends may change between 2000 – 2010, based upon the number of mixed use and multi-family units proposed and approved since 2000.

Housing Type Comparison

The types of housing in the City are compared to housing types in the region and the surrounding area in Table 3.13. In 2000, one-family detached housing constituted 53.9 percent of the total housing in the City, which is less than the surrounding communities, the county, and the entire region. Nonetheless, one-family detached housing units constitute the majority of the housing units in the City.

Apartments and mobile homes account for 20.4 percent and 21.9 percent respectively of the City's total housing. The percentage of apartments is similar to the surrounding communities, the county and the region. The mobile home parks are clustered in Flat Rock in two parks. One park is Deerfield Estates and the other is Arthur's Mobile Home Park. Some of the homes in these parks are located in neighboring communities. According to data from the City of Flat Rock, there were 288 mobile homes set in Deerfield Estates and 32 in Arthur's Mobile Home Park from 1990 to 2000, for a total of 730 in Deerfield and 32 in Arthur's as of April 2006.

Table 3.13

**Comparison of Housing Types as a Percentage of Total Housing Units,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2000**

	Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²
One-family, detached	53.9	70.1	67.8	68.1
One-family, attached	1.7	5.0	5.5	5.6
Two-family / duplex	2.2	1.4	6.7	3.8
Multi-unit apartment	20.4	17.7	17.9	18.9
Mobile homes	21.9	5.6	2.0	3.6
Other units	0.0	0.2	0.03	0.04

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

Housing Value

Housing value assessment considers the value of owner-occupied homes and the rent asked for renter occupied dwellings. The data is based on responses to the “one-in-six long form” from the 2000 Census.

Median Housing Value

The data for median housing value represent “specified owner occupied housing units,” which are defined by the Census Bureau as “owner occupied housing units described as either a one family detached from any other house or a one family house attached to one or more houses on less than 10 acres with no business on the property.” The median housing value in the City, the surrounding communities, the county, and the region is presented in Table 3.15.

Table 3.14

**Median Value of Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units,
Flat Rock, Surrounding Communities, Wayne County, and Southeast Michigan, 2000**

Flat Rock	Surrounding Communities ¹	Wayne County	Southeast Michigan ²
\$121,700	\$142,300	\$99,400	\$136,500

¹Surrounding Communities include Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Gibraltar, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Trenton, and Woodhaven.

²Southeast Michigan includes the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from SEMCOG.

The median value of owner occupied housing in Flat Rock is 22.4 percent higher than that in the county, but 12.2 percent lower than the median housing in the region. The City’s median housing value is 16.9 percent lower than the median housing in the surrounding communities. The median housing value is low as of the 2000 Census, but is guaranteed to increase with the new residential development being built in the City since this time.

Future Trends

In order to better understand future land use patterns in the context of demographic characteristics, the future lifestyle trends make clear where cities such as Flat Rock are headed. Table 3.15 below summarizes general trends that have evolved since 1950, and Table 3.16 summarizes the differences in lifestyles among three dominant demographic groups in America. The groups include the “Baby Boomers,” born between 1946 and 1964, “Generation X,” born between 1965 and 1977, and “Millennials,” born between 1978 and today.

Table 3.15
General Trends Since 1950

Since 1950, the average new house has increased by 1,247 square feet, but the average household has shrunk by one person.

One in four Americans wants at least a 3-car garage.

Eighty-eight (88) percent of Americans commute to work. Seventy-six (76) percent of those drivers commute alone.

The number of Americans with commutes of longer than 90 minutes each way has increased ninety-five (95) percent since 1990.

In 1950, 1 in 100 homes had 2.5 bathrooms or more. Today 1 in 2 have 2.5 bathrooms or more.

People who live in cities use half as much energy as suburbanites.

Seven (7) percent of all homes are in gated communities.

Seven (7) percent of all homes are mobile homes.

The average American retires five (5) years earlier than in 1950 and lives twelve (12) years longer.

Sources: Fox, Nathan. “This New House.” *Mother Jones Magazine*, March/April, 2005.

“Living Longer + Working Less = Higher Costs.” *USA Today*, October 25, 2005.

Table 3.16
Dominant Demographic Groups

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Age	42 to 60 years old (born 1946 and 1964) Every 7 seconds, one Boomers turns 50.	29 to 41 years old (born 1965 and 1977)	Under 28 years of age (born 1978 and after) Kids: 0 to 7 Tweens: 8 to 12 Teens: 13 to 17 Post-High School: 18 to 28
Population	78 million	44 million	78 to 100 million
Key Characteristics	Optimistic economically, largely because they were not part of the Great Depression.	Cynical, media-savvy, individualistic, grew up during economic downturn.	Tech-savvy, media-saturated, raised in affluent times, ethnically diverse, fluid approach to family, work and play.
Prime Information Sources	Cable TV, radio, magazines, newspaper.	Internet, cable TV, radio, magazines, newspaper.	Internet, radio, cable TV, magazines.
Key Values	Physically evolving, Lifestyle changing, Financially focused, Strong core values	Freedom, Responsibility, Reality, Cool	Diversity, Flexibility, Empowerment, Change Reward
Buying Power	Total \$10 trillion net worth. Half of nation's disposable income. Holds 70% of the assets.	Spend approximately \$125 billion per year on goods and services.	Millennials up to age 21 are spending about \$172 billion a year and saving about \$39 billion. Pre-teens (8 to 12 years of age) spend \$19.1 billion annually, with 87% spending their parents' money. Teens (13 to 19 years of age) spend \$94.7 billion annually, with 27% spending their parents' money.
Lifestyle	Location is important; they want to be where the action is like they were in college. They want to be near coffee shops, clubs and shopping.	Nearly half (48%) pay a mortgage. Nearly two-thirds of women age 25 to 34 (65%) have had children.	50% of Boomer retirees will remain where they live. 25% will move far away. 25% will move but remain within the region. Key to keeping active adult retirees is to reduce the cost (i.e. taxes) and facilitate social interaction and lifestyle activities.

Source: Webb, Del and John Handley. "Iconoculture 2004." *Chicago Tribune – Modern Living Trends*, June 5, 2005.

Demographic Analysis: Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The preceding sections have identified demographic characteristics of the City that differ from those of the surrounding communities, Wayne County and the Southeast Michigan region. The primary findings of the demographic analysis are:

- The City experienced large real and percentage increase in population for almost the entire 20th century.
- The City's rate of population growth has generally been steady since the 1950s. Even during the 1980s when the population slowed, Flat Rock continued to grow.
- Since, the 1990s, though, the City's rate of growth has continued to increase at a higher rate than most of the surrounding communities, particularly Gibraltar and Trenton, who have lost population during this time.
- The City's median age, 32.8 years, is younger than that of the surrounding communities, Wayne County, and the Southeast Michigan region.
- The City has a higher percentage of individuals under the age of 18 and fewer individuals over the age of 65 than the population of the surrounding communities, County, and the region.
- The City has more individuals in the preschool, school age, and family-forming age groups relative to the surrounding communities, County, and the region, and fewer individuals in the mature families group, particularly in comparison to the surrounding communities. The City has a similar number of individuals in the retirement age group as the surrounding communities, but less than the County and the region.
- Flat Rock generally has more residents with incomes between \$50,000 to \$74,999 than the County. The previous gap between the City and County with incomes of \$75,000 and higher has begun to narrow, as the distribution is relatively equal now.
- The City has fewer people employed in white collar professions, such as management or professional occupations and more people employed in traditional blue collar professions, such as construction and production or transportation.
- The largest occupation sector in Flat Rock is *production, transportation, and material moving*, with the second largest being *sales and office occupations*.
- The percentage of the population in the City who obtained a high school degree or higher and the percentage of the population who obtained bachelor's degrees or higher increased from 1990 to 2000.
- The household composition and average household and family size do not present any out of the ordinary planning issue for the City.

- The increase in households exceeded the increase in population because the average household size decreased.
- The largest percentage of the City housing was constructed between 1940 and 1959.
- Since 2000, 1,858 housing units have been approved or built in the City.

4. Existing Land Use

Overview

Early development in Flat Rock was oriented in relation to three primary transportation axes: Telegraph Road (US-24), Gibraltar Road, and Huron River Drive. At one time, Telegraph Road was the major north-south transportation route in Southeast Michigan, linking Detroit and communities farther to the north with Toledo, Ohio. The heavy volume of traffic on Telegraph Road provided a healthy market for an assortment of retail and service businesses that were developed in a random pattern along the corridor.

In Flat Rock, Telegraph Road north of the Huron River became the “main street” of the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD eventually expanded to encompass about twelve to fifteen blocks, generally east of Telegraph Road. Telegraph Road consisted primarily of retail uses, whereas the rest of the CBD contained a mixture of service, institutional, and residential uses. Some of the oldest housing in the City is interspersed with the commercial and institutional uses in the CBD. A small neighborhood of older single family homes also exist adjacent to and east of the CBD.

The other two primary axes noted above, Gibraltar Road and Huron River Drive, prescribed patterns of additional early residential growth. The largest single family neighborhood in the City developed in a large triangular area bounded by Gibraltar Road to the north and Huron River Drive to the south. Residents who desired more substantial, custom-built homes on large lots in a semi-rural setting settled northwest of the CBD. This second concentration of early residential growth occurred mainly along Huron River Drive. In addition to the large-lot development facing onto Huron River Drive, a small riverfront subdivision was developed north of the CBD.

The fourth major axis – the railroad – also affected the early development and general form of the City. The railroad line, demarcating the north boundary of the CBD, split the general pattern of commercial and residential development diagonally. The northwest section of the City developed at a slower rate than the rest of the City, possibly because the tracks “cut off” the northwest section from the businesses and institutions in and near the CBD.

The basic pattern of development described in the previous paragraphs was in place in 1970. More recently, the development of the City has been affected most significantly by access to I-75, the major north-south corridor in Michigan and the United States. The Gibraltar Road interchange has created opportunities for regional-oriented development on the east side of the City. The AutoAlliance International plant is the most prominent example of such development. Several commercial/office developments are also now located along Gibraltar Road, particularly in the Gateway Commerce Center.

Telegraph Road’s role as a regional transportation corridor has declined. Accordingly, much of the recent commercial development along Telegraph Road has been oriented toward a local market, rather than toward travelers. Some older businesses have become obsolete because of the reorientation of the Telegraph Road market.

Aside from the I-75 access and reorientation of the Telegraph Road commercial district, in recent years Flat Rock’s land use profile has changed because of the construction of new types of housing.

The City's single family housing stock has been diversified with the construction of mobile homes and apartments during the 1970s and more recently in the late 1990s.

In the past five years, much of the City's formerly vacant land was developed as housing, through Planned Unit Developments, which provided open space, preservation of natural features and development of pedestrian amenities, such as pathways and tot-lots. A visual display of Flat Rock's existing land use pattern can be seen on Map 2. Table 4.1 below provides a summary of the total land use acreage with a comparison to the acreages in 1998 when the last survey was completed. A more detailed review of each type of land use follows.

Table 4.1
Land Use Acreage,
Flat Rock, 1998 to 2006

Land Use	1998 ¹ Acres	1998 Percent	2006 ² Acres	2006 Percent	Change 1998-2006 Acres	Change 1998-2006 Percent
Agriculture/Vacant	1,485.8	37.77	883.03	22.28	-602.77	-40.57
Commercial	118.6	3.01	119.16	3.01	0.56	0.47
Industrial	807.2	20.52	858.24	21.66	51.04	6.32
Light	134.4	3.42	164.74	4.16	30.34	22.57
Heavy	672.8	17.26	693.50	17.50	20.70	3.08
Landfill	201.6	5.12	201.29	5.08	-0.31	-0.15
Office	3.21	0.08	17.39	0.44	14.18	441.74
Quasi-Public	269.0	6.84	203.29	5.13	-65.71	-24.12
Recreational	145.6	3.70	277.11	7.00	131.51	90.32
Residential	902.87	22.95	1295.33	32.69	392.46	43.47
Single Family	651.99	16.57	1065.26	26.88	413.27	63.39
Multiple Family	74.63	1.90	76.45	1.93	1.82	2.44
Mobile Home	176.25	4.48	153.62	3.88	-22.63	-12.84
Residential Open Space	--	--	107.49	2.71	107.49	100.00

Source:

¹November 1998 Existing Land Use Survey by McKenna Associates, Incorporated; based on 3933.88 total acres.

²May 2006 Existing Land Use Survey by McKenna Associates, Incorporated; based on 3979.94 total acres.

³Significant increase from 1998 to 2006 in office uses due to re-classification of some commercial designations to office.

Agriculture/Vacant Land

In 2006, 883.03 acres or 22.28 percent of the City's total land area remains vacant or is used for agricultural purposes. Agriculture now accounts for less than 0.50 percent of the total land area with only 18.07 acres. This represents a 40.57 percent decrease or a loss of 602.77 acres of agricultural and vacant land since 1998. This decrease in agricultural and vacant land has been especially evident in the last 10 years with the development of several subdivisions. The 1998 land use survey revealed that 1485.80 acres, or approximately 37.77 percent of the City's total land area, was used for agricultural purposes or was vacant. The majority of large vacant parcels have been developed, planned or approved for development in the last 5 – 10 years, and new projects continue to be brought forth for consideration. Approximately 125 acres of formally designated vacant land has been permanently preserved as open space within new subdivisions since the 1999 Master Plan.

Add Development Districts

Commercial and Office

The amount of land allocated for commercial and office use increased by approximately 0.56 and 14.18 acres respectively between 1998 and 2006, an increase of only 0.47 percent for commercial uses but a dramatic increase of 441.74 percent for office uses. This large increase is in fact due to the reclassification of some former commercial uses as an office designation, contributing to the large percentage. The 2006 land use survey revealed that 136.55 acres of land are currently used for commercial and office purposes.

Overall, very little in commercial/office development has occurred in the City in recent years. The exception is the Gateway Commerce Center on the south side of Gibraltar Road, close to the I-75 interchange. Several businesses are located at this planned light industrial/commercial/office development. Recent and planned additions to the Gateway Commerce Center include an auto auction, medical and professional offices, hotel, and a large automobile dealership that will serve as the first prototype dealership for GM's re-branding campaign.

The area to the north of the railroad tracks on Telegraph Road has been the most active in terms of commercial activity over the past twenty to thirty years, becoming the center of retail activity in the City. However, the closing of the Kmart shopping center has left a blighted structure and has led to a decrease in activity in this area.

The Central Business District (CBD) is a secondary node of specialty retail and office activity. Based on recent development patterns, continued business development on the remaining Telegraph Road frontage and the redevelopment of obsolete businesses can be expected. For example, the recently built Rite Aid at the southwest corner of Telegraph Road and Gibraltar Road has set the tone in Flat Rock's traditional downtown. This development replaced the historic Smith Hotel building, which was preserved and relocated at the Civic Center Park. Other new developments in the CBD include the Monroe Bank and Trust, Fifth-Third Bank, Grunow Law Office, and other building renovations.

Industrial

The 2006 land use survey revealed that approximately 858.24 acres, or 21.66 percent, of the total land area is currently used for industrial purposes. This represents a 6.32 percent increase over the 1998 industrial land use figure.

The most significant industrial construction during the past two decades is the AutoAlliance International manufacturing facility. The construction of this facility marked a reorientation of industry in Flat Rock, toward I-75 instead of Telegraph Road. The facility also set a new standard for industrial design in the City. Other light industrial developments have occurred on Vreeland Road, west of Hall Road.

Little growth has occurred in Flat Rock's older industrial district near the City center during the past two decades. Older industries along the railroad and Telegraph Road were developed at a time when environmental planning issues were of minor importance in industrial districts. Consequently, inadequate parking, buffering, and screening of outside storage areas are common problems. The size and configuration of the sites themselves do not meet the needs of modern industry.

Based on recent development patterns, continued decline of the older industrial district can be expected. The opportunity exists to develop new light manufacturing, research, and warehousing uses on the east side (Hall Road) of the City, where there is convenient access to I-75. Light industrial uses have been developed in the Gateway Commerce Center, and planned industrial development would be an appropriate transitional use to buffer existing and new single family development from the railroad and AutoAlliance International.

Landfill

The 2006 land use survey revealed that approximately 201.29 acres, or 5.08 percent of the City's total land area is occupied by land that was formerly used as landfill. There are two such landfill sites in the City:

- The former Ford Motor Company landfill on the east side of Hall Road, between Vreeland and Gibraltar Roads.
- The landfill site located on the west side of Arsenal Road at the City's northern boundary.

The land occupied by these former landfills apparently cannot be used in the foreseeable future. Of far greater significance is the impact these landfills may have on the development of adjacent parcels.

Quasi-Public

The amount of land allocated for quasi or semi-public uses decreased by 24.12 percent, or 65.71 acres since the 1998 land use survey. Given this decrease, quasi-public land now accounts for nearly 203.29 acres, or 5.13 percent of the total land area. This decrease is attributed mainly to the loss of a large portion quasi-public land in the center of the City to impending residential and mixed-use development. The majority of the uses which occupy quasi-public lands include schools, municipal buildings, and religious institutions. Most of these uses were built between 1975 and 2000, including the Flat Rock municipal building, several churches along Gibraltar Road and Huron River Drive, the senior citizens building in the CBD, and new schools and grounds, such as Flat Rock High School.

Recreational

Recreational land use increased by 131.51 acres, or 90.32 percent since 1998. This land use represents the single largest increase as a percent (not including the large increase in office uses). Approximately 277.11 acres, or 7.00 percent of the City's total land area is classified as recreational.

The recreational land is centralized into three large areas on the Existing Land Use Map. Huroc Park, located in the southwest section of the City, is the largest in terms of area. Civic Center Park is located on Gibraltar Road east and north of the City Hall complex. The Community Center (2 story, 52,000 square foot facility) was completed in December 2004, on 27 acres of wooded wetlands, in the Gateway Commerce Center, adjacent to I-75. There are also significant areas located along the river, including Huroc Park, the DNR Boat Launch, HCMA property and Wayne County land, dedicated to recreational uses.

Insert Existing Land Use

Residential

Recent residential development has consisted of single-family and multiple-family home construction. The amount of land used for residential purposes increased by approximately 392.46 acres, or 43.47 percent, between 1998 and 2006. Currently, about 1295.33 acres, or approximately 32.69 percent of the total land area, are used for residential purposes.

Single-family residential development increased most with 1065.26 acres, an increase of 63.39 percent since 1998. Most of this development has occurred on vacant land in the northwest, center and southeast sections of the City. Several large scale single-family developments are currently in the planning or construction stages. These developments collectively contain 1,539 new single-family dwelling units on more than 535 acres of land.

Multiple-family complexes currently occupy 76.45 acres, or 1.93 percent of the land in 2006. This is an increase of only 1.82 acres (2.44%) since 1998. Most multiple-family developments are located along Gibraltar Road in the center of the City and to the northwest along Telegraph Road.

In the 1970s and 1980s, scattered large lot single-family housing was in high demand in Flat Rock due to the lack of sewer capacity, insufficient access to vacant lands, and a lack of investment in new subdivisions. This type of development is evident on roads such as Huron River Drive, Arsenal Road, and Cahill Road. Development of scattered large lot single-family homes still occurs, but the majority of new homes are being built in planned subdivisions. More recently, homebuyers have been afforded more choices and are willing to pay a higher price for homes with additional amenities and features.

A few broad areas are suitable for single family development but are not currently accessible via a public road. This includes some areas to the west of Telegraph Road and east of Arsenal and areas in the southern sections of the City.

Residential Open Space

The amount of residential open space was not measured in the 1998 Existing Land Use Survey. With the increase of new residential developments, the Flat Rock Planning Commission has set a standard requiring that all new residential subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments include both passive (nature trails and non-motorized pathways) and active recreational areas (tot lots) within the neighborhoods. The majority of the recent residential developments contain these amenities, providing a great asset to the residents of the development and surrounding areas. In 2006, residential open space accounts for 107.49 acres or 2.71 percent of the total land area. This is sure to continue to increase with the new residential developments in the construction and planning stages set to be developed in the City.

5. Regional Land Use Relationships

Overview

Flat Rock is part of the sub-region known as “Downriver.” This sub-region extends approximately seventeen miles along the Detroit River, from Detroit to the Huron River. Downriver contains some of the most intensively developed industrial land in southeast Michigan. A SEMCOG report characterized the northernmost Downriver communities saying, “From north to south, the corridor is a series of blast furnaces, coke ovens, oil tanks, chemical plants, and similar industrial structures, alternating with such extensive land uses as coal piles, slag heaps, and chemical waste ponds.”

The overall image of the Downriver area as an intensively developed industrial region is not strictly applicable to southernmost communities, such as Flat Rock. Although Flat Rock has large scale industrial development, such as the AutoAlliance International plant and the Canadian National Railroad interchange, the City is located along the Huron River Greenway. In addition, several areas of the City have been developed through Planned Unit Developments, which have preserved natural features and open space.

Although most of the City has not been subject to the intensive industrial development that characterizes the northern Downriver communities, the City has not been completely insulated from the impact of industrial development in the region. Flat Rock has six sites within the City that are reported to be contaminated. There are twenty more sites with underground storage tanks, eight of the sites with leaking tanks. All of these sites are in various states of clean-up, however, the possibility for future contamination exists given the many outdated structures found in the community. Also, as the outdated structures become abandoned they eventually become obsolete, presenting an opportunity for brownfield redevelopment in the City.

Planning Relationships to Surrounding Communities

Seven communities, including Ash Township, Berlin Township, Brownstown Township, Huron Township, Rockwood, South Rockwood, and Woodhaven, surround the City of Flat Rock. Following review of the land use and adopted master plans of surrounding communities, two general observations can be made:

1. The past and expected future pattern of land use in Flat Rock should not deter adjoining communities from achieving their land use objectives. Furthermore, the proposed pattern of development in surrounding communities does not appear to be in conflict with desired land use development in Flat Rock.
2. Coordination of future development in adjoining communities would achieve benefits in terms of urban design and the efficient use of public utilities.

The following analysis explores the land use relationships with adjoining communities in greater detail.

The Northern Border

Brownstown Township and Woodhaven adjoin Flat Rock to the north. Brownstown Township’s current master plan calls for single-family development between Inkster and Arsenal Roads, and a

combination of multiple-family and mobile home park uses between Arsenal and Peters Roads. This pattern of development is compatible with the adjoining land use and zoning in Flat Rock, which indicates a combination of single and multiple-family land uses west of Telegraph Road and mobile home park uses east of Telegraph.

Woodhaven's current master plan specifies light and heavy industrial uses between Peters Road and I-75, north of Vreeland Road. This pattern of development is compatible with the adjoining General Manufacturing and Railroad Industrial zoning classifications, which accommodate the AutoAlliance International plant and Canadian National Railroad interchange in Flat Rock.

The Eastern Border

I-75 provides a substantial buffer between Flat Rock and Brownstown Township, the adjoining community to the east. The current master plan for Brownstown Township specifies single and multiple-family uses south of Vreeland Road. Commercial development is proposed for the intersection of I-75 and Gibraltar Road. Planned unit development and light industrial uses are indicated for land south of Gibraltar Road.

The evolving land use pattern in Flat Rock is consistent with Brownstown's master plan in that land around the interchange is proposed for intensive, mixed-use development in both communities. Consequently, the opportunity exists to create a full-service commercial/office/lodging district to meet the needs of travelers along I-75 as well as residents in surrounding communities. Because of the physical separation provided by I-75, the compatibility of adjoining land use is of less importance north and south of the Gibraltar Road interchange.

The Southern Border

Four communities to the south, including Rockwood and three communities across the Huron River in Monroe County, border Flat Rock. The river itself and the heavy vegetation along its banks provide a buffer between Flat Rock and communities to the south. Nevertheless, the single-family development pattern and vegetated vacant land in the southern portion of Flat Rock is consistent with a similar adjoining pattern of development in communities to the south.

The Western Border

Huron Township adjoins Flat Rock to the west. The current master plan for Huron Township specifies park uses south of the Huron River and single-family development north of the river. This pattern of development is consistent with the adjoining pattern of existing and zoned development in Flat Rock.

Additional Regional Issues

In addition to the immediate impact from land use in adjoining communities, there are a number of planning issues that relate to the broader metropolitan area. These issues are analyzed in the following pages.

Transportation

Flat Rock is strategically located next to federal interstates, I-275 and I-75. US-24's (Telegraph Road) role as an important transportation corridor has diminished since the two interstates have been developed. However, US-24 is still an important commercial and transportation corridor for

the citizens of Flat Rock. US-24 also plays an important role in diverting traffic from the interstate highways when there is an accident or highway construction.

Residential Development

Most communities in the Downriver region are experiencing modest to impressive new home starts. According to SEMCOG, in 2005 the City of Flat Rock issued 70 building permits for all housing types, with an annual average of 93 building permits per year between 2000 and 2004. This is down somewhat from the 1998 Master Plan figure of 152 building permits, but there are many new residential developments in the planning and construction phases currently. The City of Flat Rock has issued 16 building permits as of June 2006. Brownstown Township issued 269 building permits in 2005, with an annual average of 539 permits per year between 2000 and 2004. Woodhaven is also growing with 110 permits in 2004 and an annual average of 115 permits per year between 2000 and 2004.

Regional Patterns of Growth

The strength of the regional economy and the patterns of regional development will affect the pace of future development in Flat Rock. Housing construction trends provide one measure of the impact of the patterns of regional growth on local communities. New housing construction occurred at a steady pace in most communities in southern Downriver during the 1970s. The recession in the early 1980s brought housing construction to a virtual halt. As the economy rebounded, housing construction resumed, at a pace equal to or in excess of many other communities located in other parts of the region.

The Downriver region is experiencing tremendous growth in commercial and industrial development as well. In past years, the Downriver Community Conference has published articles stating the region as a whole is progressing upward because land is available at a fraction of the cost of the northern suburbs. Other reasons cited why companies are moving or expanding businesses in the Downriver area include: 1) less traffic and congestion; 2) the cities are traditional in design; and, 3) the people and communities are friendly.

Proximity to I-75

Flat Rock has direct access to I-75, which has been described as the state's, and perhaps the nation's, most important industrial corridor. I-75 provides Flat Rock with access to industrial and commercial centers in southeast Michigan and Ohio. Furthermore, the direct freeway access provides industries in Flat Rock with transportation savings, an expanded labor market, and an expanded market area in general. The large volume of traffic along I-75 also represents a potential market for Flat Rock retail businesses. Past traffic counts indicate that more than 50,000 vehicles travel on I-75 in the vicinity of Gibraltar road during an average 24-hour period. More recent traffic information pertaining to traffic counts on I-75 could not be found next to Gibraltar Road. However, other roads in Flat Rock have become more heavily traveled in recent years. According to SEMCOG, the average daily traffic (ADT) on Huron River Drive between Olmstead and I-75 is 12,430 and on Gibraltar between Garden Boulevard and Cahill the ADT is 14,072. This is a significant amount of traffic within the City.

Regional Utility Systems

The South Huron Valley Utility Authority is a major regional utility that has had a substantial impact on growth in the southernmost Downriver communities. The South Huron Valley Utility Authority

(SHVUA) consists of the City of Flat Rock along with the communities of Brownstown Township, Huron Township, Van Buren Township, Gibraltar, South Rockwood, Woodhaven, and Romulus. The original South Huron Valley Wastewater Control System facility was constructed in 1988, which increased the development potential of the area. Development in the area had been held up because of inadequate capacity of the sanitary sewer system. With completion of the treatment plant, development has continued to increase, addressing the growing demand for housing. The capacity of the facility was recently increased in March of 2001, furthering the ability of communities like Flat Rock to grow.

Regional Activity Centers

Certain activity centers in Flat Rock have a regional impact because of the market served, the level of employment, or because of the services provided. The three principal existing or proposed regional activity centers in Flat Rock are as follows:

- **AutoAlliance International**

The AutoAlliance International plant contains 2.7 million square feet of floor area and provides employment for over 3,700 persons. The AutoAlliance plant is responsible for the production of the new Mazda6 and Ford Mustang. The plant is credited with being a catalyst for additional industrial development Downriver, as well as creating demand for housing in nearby communities. AutoAlliance also serves the community through partnerships such as the Downriver Technical Career Consortium.

- **Gateway Commerce Center**

The Gateway Commerce Center is a planned mixed-use development south of the AutoAlliance plant, adjacent to I-75. This 300-acre development has begun to develop into a community and regional center for economic activity. Recent and planned additions to the Gateway Commerce Center include a hotel, auto auction, medical and professional offices, the Flat Rock Community Center, hotel, and a large automobile dealership that will serve as the first prototype dealership for GM's re-branding campaign.

- **Canadian National Railroad Interchange (Grand Trunk Railroad)**

The Canadian National Railroad interchange has a large regional impact because of its function. The interchange is an important infrastructure requirement for large-scale manufacturing facilities that receive and deliver shipments throughout the country by rail. The Indiana and Ohio Railway Company (IORY) purchased railway from the Grand Trunk Railroad in 1997. IORY provides local rail freight services through shortline and regional hauling, carrying over 110,000 carloads/year. IORY interchanges with Canadian National at the Flat Rock yard.

Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority (HCMA)

Although no developed Metropark land is located in the City of Flat Rock, the City leases 31 acres of undeveloped HCMA land on the west side of the "Mill Race", adjacent to Huroc Park. In addition, the Oakwoods and Willow Metropark in Huron Township have a regional impact. Over 9.5 million people visit the thirteen Metroparks annually. In particular, Oakwoods Metropark offers visitors nature trails, fishing and canoeing in the Huron River, horseback riding, a nature center and picnicking. Willow Metropark offers an 18-hole golf course, swimming pool, skatepark, hike-bike trail, disc golf, picking and winter activities, among the many other offerings. The level of existing

and planned activity with the two Metroparks is likely to have a spillover impact on adjoining communities, generating increased traffic on access roads and possibly expanding the market for retail businesses.

Greenways and Blueways

In the past several years, the City has been working with adjacent communities, HCMA, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), Downriver Community Conference (DCC), Wayne County, and private business to develop a comprehensive regional Greenway and Blueway system.

6. Housing Review and Analysis

Overview

Despite the fact that Flat Rock is a relatively small community, it contains a broad variety of housing types, including the following:

- Older, wood-frame housing is located near the City center, primarily east of Telegraph Road.
- Newer conventional single-family neighborhoods are located south of Gibraltar Road, east of the City center.
- Mixed use housing developments (Bradbury and Knottingham Estates PUDs).
- Large lot single-family development in rural-like settings are located along Huron River Drive, Arsenal Road, Cahill Road, and other roads that extend into the sparsely-developed portions of Flat Rock.
- Cottage-type dwellings are located along certain segments of Huron River Drive, providing residents with the recreational benefits of living on the riverfront.
- Higher density multiple-family housing is located in various locations, generally in proximity to the major roads, such as Gibraltar and Telegraph Roads.
- Mobile home development is located on the north side of the City, east of Telegraph Road.

According to the 2000 Census, there are approximately 3,291 housing units in the City. In 2000 there were 878 renter-occupied housing units and 2,303 owner-occupied housing units. Renter-occupied units comprised approximately 27.6 percent of all occupied units. In comparison, approximately 33.4 percent of all occupied housing units in Wayne County as a whole are renter-occupied.

Housing construction since the 2000 Census has been centered on single-family and detached condominium development, with few multiple-family units constructed, according to SEMCOG statistics. On average, 90 building permits were issued between 2000 and 2004 per year for single-family and detached condominiums, with 70 in 2005 and 14 so far in 2006. It should also be noted that SEMCOG projects that there are 3,841 housing units in the City of Flat Rock as of May 2006. This is an increase of 550 units since 2000, and this is anticipated to continue to increase with the number of planned residential developments (see Chapter 3 for further discussion of new residential construction).

Age and Condition of Housing

The age of the City's housing stock is presented in Table 6.1. The largest percentage of the City housing was constructed between 1940 and 1959. However, as of 2000, 23.2 percent of the City's housing had been built since 1990. In contrast, as of 2000, only 6.0 percent of the housing units in

Wayne County as a whole had been built since 1990. The majority of the housing in Wayne County was built between 1940 and 1959, with 45.8 percent of the total units.

Table 6.1
Age of Housing,
Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2000

	Flat Rock Number of Housing Units	Flat Rock Percent of Total	Wayne County Percent of Total
Total	3,291	100.0	100.0
Built 1999 to March 2000	133	4.0	0.9
Built 1995 to 1998	342	10.4	2.5
Built 1990 to 1994	288	8.8	2.6
Built 1980 to 1989	391	11.9	4.7
Built 1970 to 1979	567	17.2	10.7
Built 1960 to 1969	315	9.6	13.1
Built 1940 to 1959	987	30.0	45.8
Built 1939 or earlier	268	8.1	19.7

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

Despite the age of the housing in Flat Rock, the dwelling units are in generally good condition. The need for repair and rehabilitation is evident in the older neighborhood surrounding the City center. Conditions which contribute to the deterioration of housing in this area include the age of the housing, the impact from encroaching non-residential uses, and the conversion of some homes originally designed for single family use into multiple-family dwellings or commercial uses.

Housing deterioration is also evident along certain roads where large lot single-family development has occurred in a somewhat discontinuous pattern. Development in these fringe areas consists of a variety of housing designs and styles, constructed at different periods of time in accordance with different construction standards. Homes, outbuildings, and yards on some of the parcels in these areas have not been consistently well-maintained.

Housing in most other neighborhoods in Flat Rock is in relatively good condition, even though the majority of the housing stock exceeds forty years of age. Housing at this age typically requires major repairs and replacement become apparent. Thus, maintenance of the housing stock will be increasingly important in future years.

Housing Size and Density

The housing size in Flat Rock is about average for Wayne County. The median size of occupied housing units is 5.4 rooms in Flat Rock and 5.5 rooms for the County as a whole. The size of the housing units for Flat Rock and Wayne County are shown in Table 6.2. As indicated, 51.0 percent of the housing units in Flat Rock have five or six rooms. Similarly, 48.1 percent of the housing units in Wayne County have five or six rooms. In the last several years, larger homes are being built in new subdivisions.

Although Flat Rock compares similarly favorably with the rest of the County in terms of housing size, homes are somewhat larger in the developing northern portion of southeast Michigan. In Oakland County, for example, the median size of occupied housing units is 5.8 rooms. In addition, 37.9 percent of all housing units within Oakland County have 5 or 6 rooms, and 43.4 percent have 7 or more rooms.

Table 6.2
Size of Housing Units,
Flat Rock and Wayne County, 2000

Number of Rooms	Flat Rock Number of Housing Units	Flat Rock Percent of Total	Wayne County Percent of Total
1 room	27	0.8	1.4
2 rooms	120	3.6	3.6
3 rooms	187	5.7	9.0
4 rooms	436	13.2	11.8
5 rooms	1,009	30.7	24.9
6 rooms	667	20.3	23.2
7 rooms	465	14.1	12.5
8 rooms	249	7.6	7.2
9 or more	131	4.0	6.4

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

The highest density of single-family residential development in Flat Rock is in the conventional subdivisions near the City center and south of Gibraltar Road. The gross density of development in the subdivision located south of Gibraltar Road and east of Evergreen Road is about 4.2 units per acre. The gross density in the single-family neighborhood east of Telegraph Road, near the City center and in the subdivision located east of Olmstead and south of Gibraltar Road is about 3.5 units per acre. Densities of the five proposed detached, single-family residential developments range from 1.13 to 3.54 units per acre.

Aside from the scattered residential development on agricultural lands, the lowest density of existing single-family development is along such roads as Huron River Drive, Arsenal, Vreeland, Cahill, and Woodruff. Lots in some linear subdivisions along these roads typically range between one-half and one acre in size. Most parcels along these roads are not within platted subdivisions, and consequently they range in size from less than an acre to five or more acres in size. It appears that land along these roads may have once been divided for use as narrow strip farms. Along Huron River Drive, though, it appears the land has been divided to maximize the number of parcels with access to the riverfront.

Higher density multiple-family development has occurred in a few locations along major roads in Flat Rock, for example, on the south side of Gibraltar Road, Vreeland Road near Telegraph, Olmstead Road in the south part of the City, and off of Telegraph Road. Multiple-family development consists of predominately two-story apartments and townhouses, constructed at an average density of 15 units or less per acre.

Projected Long-Term Housing Demand

According to SEMCOG, the May 2006 population estimate is 9,703. Also, according to the 2030 Regional Development Forecast, the population of Flat Rock is expected to increase by 4,597 residents to 13,085 by the year 2030. The projected increase in population represents a 14.31 percent increase from 2000 to 2006 and a 54.16 percent increase from 2000 to 2030. At the same time, the average household size is expected to decrease from 2.66 in 2000 to 2.34 by 2030.

To accommodate a net population increase of residents, an additional 1,964 housing units would have to be constructed by the year 2030 if Flat Rock continues with the same vacancy rate of five percent. This should be easily attainable because there are a total of 1,858 new housing units proposed, including approximately 600 units built, through winter 2006.

If the existing percentage of renter and owner-occupied housing is maintained in the future (approximately 27.6 percent renter occupied), then 491 of the projected 1,964 housing units will be rental units, and 1,473 will be owner-occupied units. Required residential land area can be computed using average densities of 15 units per acre for rental units and 3.5 units per gross acre for owner-occupied housing. Accordingly, a total land area of 454 acres, 33 acres for multiple family and 421 acres for single family, is needed to accommodate the projected demand for housing by the year 2030.

Analysis of Single-Family Housing Needs

The overall condition of the City's single-family housing stock has continued to improve since the 1998 Master Plan. Many of the previously vacant large tracks of land have been developed, approved, or planned for single family housing. Smaller parcel lots and infill development are more likely the trend for single family units in the future.

Analysis of Multiple-Family Housing Needs

There is currently a rich market for luxury and upscale multi-family (stacked ranch) units in the City. The need for traditional multiple family housing, such as apartments, is currently being met by the existing multi-family housing stock. The multiple-family developments south of Gibraltar Road and west of Telegraph serve the majority of the population seeking this housing.

Analysis of Mobile Home Park Needs

The City has a reasonable proportion of mobile home units in relation to the surrounding communities in the region. Deerfield Estates contains 730 homes and Arthur's Mobile Home Park contains 32 homes in the City of Flat Rock, as of April 2006. Overall, the City has approximately 762 mobile homes, constituting 21.9 percent of the total housing stock. The proportion of the City's housing stock that is comprised of mobile homes should not be increased because it is desirable to maintain a balance in the supply and quality of housing in the City. A balanced housing stock is necessary for the City to maintain sound fiscal and economic conditions.

Need for a Variety of Housing Types

The greatest portion of the housing stock in the City is currently single-family detached housing units. Due to demographic shifts and lifestyle changes, the City needs to offer a greater option of housing choices to retain and attract young professionals and empty nesters.

Need for High Quality Residential Design

In order to promote strong and viable neighborhoods, both existing and proposed, all new residential development shall be constructed with high quality, long lasting building materials. All ordinances that address residential design should be reviewed to ensure that the intent of the Master Plan and Planning Commission are met. The encouragement of Plan Unit Developments can lead to the requirements of architectural design standards and higher quality residential products.

7. Economic Analysis

Existing Economic Base

The economic base in Flat Rock consists of two main components: the industrial sector and the commercial/service sector. The industrial sector serves a regional market and draws employment from throughout southeast Michigan. In contrast, the commercial/service sector serves principally local residents and travelers along Telegraph Road. Characteristics of these two components of the economic base are described in the following paragraphs.

Industrial Sector

Based on total employment, volume of production, and similar criteria, the industrial base in Flat Rock is dominated by AutoAlliance International, Inc. (Ford Motor Company and Mazda), which is located at the I-75/Gibraltar Road interchange. The AutoAlliance International plant contains 2.7 million square feet of floor area and provides employment for over 3,700 persons. Full production capability of the AutoAlliance International plant is 240,000 vehicles. The AutoAlliance plant is responsible for the production of the new Mazda6 and Ford Mustang.

Flat Rock contains a variety of other, smaller industrial-oriented businesses, many of which have been in operation for several years. These include Flat Rock Metal, which was recently acquired by Precision Strip, Inc., Scheel Concrete, AAA Sign Company, Flat Rock Bagging Company, Astro Oil, and Gerotech, Inc. Most of these industrial facilities are located on the west side of the City, in proximity to the Telegraph Road corridor.

The Canadian National Railroad Interchange is also a major industrial/transportation facility. The Indiana and Ohio Railway Company, which provides local rail freight services through shortline and regional hauling, interchanges with Canadian National at the Flat Rock yard. This interchange is located on the north side of Vreeland Road, just over a half mile west of I-75, and serves industries throughout southeast Michigan.

Commercial/Service Sector

The commercial/service sector in Flat Rock consists of three districts: the downtown area; the linear commercial district along Telegraph Road, north of the railroad tracks; and, the linear commercial district along Gibraltar Road, extending from I-75 to downtown. The businesses in these three districts provide basic necessities. However, residents must shop outside of the City for certain goods and services, particularly if they desire a broader selection of comparison goods. Also, certain specialized services, such as the services of a stockbroker or medical specialist, must be acquired outside of the City.

Numerically, service-type businesses and retail businesses are predominant in Flat Rock's commercial/service sector. Service businesses account for the majority of the City's total businesses including beauty and barber shops, dry cleaning establishments, car washes, video rental, vehicle repair shops, heating and air conditioning service establishments, and similar uses. Telegraph Road contains many of the service businesses, including drug stores, banks, hardware, restaurants, etc.

During the planning stages of the Gateway Commerce Center, a market study was conducted which revealed that there is market support for specific types of retail stores in the trade area. These

conclusions were based on a random survey of residents in the trade areas that was conducted as a part of the larger market study. The survey found that, due to the limited range of shopping facilities in the trade area, a majority of residents shop at malls or shopping centers outside of the trade area for non-grocery items. Southland Mall, in Taylor, is the most popular shopping center, frequented by forty-three (43) percent of residents in the trade area. However, the use of the internet for retail purchases will continue to grow in the future.

The market study also found that many residents would be willing to change their shopping habits in favor of new retail facilities that offer better selection, better services, or more competitive prices. In particular, the survey found that development opportunities are best for certain services (such as tax preparers, cleaners, and eye care), clothing stores, general merchandise stores, a large hardware store, a department store, entertainment services (such as a movie theater or bowling establishment), and full-service restaurants. Since the survey was conducted, some of these development opportunities have materialized, offering Flat Rock residents more selection and allowing them to contribute financially to the well-being of local businesses.

Commercial District Profiles

North Telegraph Road Business District

Analysis of the distribution of businesses reveals that the City's three commercial/service districts serve different functions and markets. The linear commercial district along Telegraph Road, north of the railroad tracks, appears to be the primary focus of retail activity in the City. Retail, service, and restaurant uses are predominant in this district.

The quality, character, and size are as important as the actual number of businesses in this district. North Telegraph Road is Flat Rock's newest commercial/service district, containing regional and nationally-recognized businesses located in modern-looking buildings on spacious sites. The combination of generally attractive surroundings and modern marketing techniques increase the appeal of this district. Of the three commercial/office districts located in the City, north Telegraph Road, has the potential to generate the greatest amount of economic activity.

Downtown Flat Rock

Compared to the north Telegraph Road district, downtown Flat Rock contains almost twice as many businesses, including almost twice as many retail and service uses. However, the level of economic activity in the downtown area does not match the level of activity along north Telegraph Road, for the following reasons:

- The downtown businesses district was developed several decades ago. Many buildings and businesses have not been modernized or updated in recent years.
- The downtown area was initially planned with the intent of creating an intensively developed, compact district. Lots are shallow and narrow, and buildings are small. Modern standards call for spacious lots with ample off-street parking, and much larger buildings to contain a greater variety of merchandise.
- The economic impact of the downtown area is dispersed among several streets, including Huron River Drive; Gibraltar Road, between Division Street and Telegraph Road; Seneca

Street; and Telegraph Road, between the Huron River and the railroad tracks. The economic impact of downtown businesses is further dispersed by the presence of non-commercial uses, including homes and churches, in the business district.

- There is a lack of “big draw” (anchor) retailers in the Downtown district.

A report completed in 1976 cited these and similar concerns about the central business district. Among the conclusions stated in the CBD report are the following:

- There is no smooth continuous east/west through traffic flow in the study area.
- The number of streets and alleyways that segment the CBD are a deterrent to sound commercial growth. There is no separation of through traffic, local traffic, and shopper traffic.
- The Huron River has been neglected as an important resource (tourism) and focal point in the central business district.
- The center of gravity for commercial growth in the central business district is along Telegraph Road with a small nucleus at Telegraph and Huron River Drive.
- The Telegraph Road frontage has many of the problems associated with typical strip development, such as excessive signage, fragmented facades, and lack of any real identity or sense of place. *This situation has been somewhat corrected through streetscape enhancements by the DDA in recent years.*
- The mixed use area has within it the basic framework for sound development.
- Where possible, more intensive (higher density) residential developments should occur within or on the fringe (within walking distance) of the central business district.

Many of the concerns raised by the CBD report have been addressed over the past thirty years. The visual appearance and pedestrian environment have been improved through implementation of a streetscape program. A small residential condominium complex was constructed on South Huron River Drive in the CBD. Nevertheless, because of certain inherent constraints, downtown Flat Rock accommodates many comparatively small specialty retail and service businesses which do not depend on a steady or large volume of customers or sales for their livelihood. For example, several businesses in the downtown area operate on an appointment-only basis, and some service businesses have little or no walk-in trade at all.

The downtown does stand apart from the City’s other commercial/service districts because of the number of office uses. Approximately two dozen office uses are located in the downtown area, many of which are located in redesigned homes. Offices for attorneys, medical practitioners, insurance agents, and real estate agents are well-suited for downtown Flat Rock. These businesses

do not create a severe traffic or parking demand. In summary, the evolving development pattern suggests that the economic health of downtown Flat Rock depends on a mixture of retail, service, office, and residential uses.

Gibraltar Road Business District

The third commercial/service district, along Gibraltar Road between I-75 and downtown, consists of mostly service-type businesses, such as service stations, auto sales, convenient stores, vehicle repair, video rental, and a self-service auto wash. Businesses along Gibraltar Road are dispersed over a two-mile distance. The commercial uses are widely separated by the more predominant residential and institutional uses and vacant land along Gibraltar Road.

The quality of commercial development along Gibraltar Road varies considerably. A gasoline service station, hotel, credit union, professional offices, and a Ford auto dealership – anchor the district at the east end. Development in the Gateway Commerce Center is generating additional high-quality, regional-oriented development near I-75. Recent and planned additions to the Gateway Commerce Center include the Community Center, an auto auction, medical and professional offices, hotel, and a large automobile dealership that will serve as the first prototype dealership for GM's re-branding campaign.

An older strip center, located midway along Gibraltar Road is going through façade improvements and a face lift to encourage retail investment.

Economic Development Trends

Various local, regional, and national trends affect current and future growth of the commercial and industrial sectors in Flat Rock. The potential impact of major economic trends is described in the following paragraphs:

General Growth Patterns in Downriver

The general direction of growth in Downriver indicates that the opportunities for economic growth in Flat Rock will be strong. A recent analysis of regional projects and development opportunities found that a significant band of development is taking shape in the central third of the Downriver area, generally along the I-75 corridor.

According to past articles published by the Downriver Community Conference, and other Wayne County economic development organizations, Downriver communities are growing at a steady rate. People, businesses, and industries are attracted to the region because large tracks of undeveloped land are still available at a lower amount per acre than in Macomb and Oakland Counties. Downriver has access to major transportation routes and hubs such as I-75 and Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Many industries have developed new or expanded existing businesses in the region. Warehouse development has been particularly strong during the last five years along the I-75 corridor. This development has been prevalent in Brownstown Township, Romulus, and to a lesser extent in Taylor. The economic growth of these areas, because of their close proximity to Flat Rock, will benefit the community as whole in terms of increased demand for housing and job opportunities. As the leading edge of development in the region continues to expand to the west and south, proposals for new development can continue to be expected in Flat Rock.

Growth in the Trade Area

Given the population analysis presented in previous chapters, there is modest potential for growth in the Flat Rock trade area. Large increases in the number of residents and housing units are projected. Perhaps more important, the income and educational attainment of Flat Rock residents is anticipated to increase steadily. As new residents move into the community, there is more potential for economic growth and contribution. This inherent growth in the trade area creates the opportunity for steady expansion of the local economy.

Changes in the Methods of Retailing

Methods of retailing have changed dramatically since the time when downtown and many isolated businesses were constructed. Modern retailing standards call for much larger inventory than in the past, spacious sites with off-street parking, and high-visibility. These changes in retailing affect the viability of older businesses and business districts, particularly the central business district, which is now better-suited as a specialty retail and office district. Even older businesses along Telegraph Road, north of the railroad tracks are experiencing intense competition from the newer businesses with modern buildings and larger sites. The loss of K-mart and adjacent businesses, on North Telegraph Road, is a sign of changing retail markets.

According to the National Research Bureau, the average gross leasable area (GLA) of retail sq. ft. per capita was 20.53 sq. ft. in 2005. Thus, based upon a population of 9,703 residents (2006 estimate), the City should be able to support approximately 200,000 sq. ft. of retail, exclusive of outside markets and purchasers.

Changes in Industrial Processes and Industrial Development Standards

Industrial operations have changed substantially in the past two decades, creating growth opportunities and rendering certain industrial operations obsolete. Small industrial plants on cramped sites in the heart of the City fail to meet the standards of modern industries. In terms of function, most small and medium size industries no longer rely on rail transportation. Modern industries are concerned about image, availability of space for loading/unloading, availability of space for expansion, and isolation from incompatible residential and commercial uses. Most new industrial development occurs in planned industrial parks. Studies have shown that Downriver has failed to keep up with the needs of modern industry, as reflected in the fact that Downriver contains only 12 percent of all industrial parks in southeast Michigan. This development void provides an opportunity in Flat Rock to develop industrial park facilities that meet the needs of modern industries.

Growth in the Service Sector

Increasingly, industrial commodities are being replaced by knowledge-based and information-based services as the most critical components in the national economy. The result of this trend is the growth of the service sector, including such businesses as information processing, transportation, communications, insurance, financial services, accounting, legal counseling, management counseling, advertising, design services, real estate, marketing, and the like. The growth of the service sector creates opportunities for development of office-oriented businesses, which are not currently well-represented in the local economy or Downriver as a whole.

Computerized Technology

The widespread introduction of computerized technology is creating new operating procedures for business organizations. The most apparent impact of computer technology is to automate low-skilled work. Computer technology also permits remote management, so that the production of

services need not take place where the services are consumed or used. As a result, certain clerical and other functions normally associated with management need not be located in the same high-rent office district as the administrative offices. The relatively low cost of land in Flat Rock could meet the requirements for such computer-linked office functions.

Proximity to Metro Airport, Detroit, and Toledo.

In the market study conducted in conjunction with the planning of the Gateway Commerce Center, the potential demand for a suite hotel and executive conference center in Gateway was analyzed. The study authors cited the following location factors in favor of such facilities:

- Proximity to Detroit Metropolitan Airport.
- Accessibility to the entire Detroit metropolitan area via I-75 or I-275.
- Accessibility to Monroe, Toledo, and locations further south.

Spin-off Effect of AutoAlliance International

Flat Rock has begun to realize the full spin-off effect from AutoAlliance International, resulting from the construction of small manufacturing facilities by suppliers. Several surrounding communities, such as Rockwood, where AutoAlliance International suppliers have located, have felt the benefit of AutoAlliance International's presence. The potential for additional spin-off benefit from AutoAlliance International exists in Flat Rock, provided that industrial park facilities are available to accommodate the manufacturing concerns.

High Density Residential Development

Greater variety of housing options, at higher densities, located in the downtown can create additional demand for certain types of retail. As an example, the completion of the Bell River Condos is an additional catalyst to the economic redevelopment of downtown Flat Rock. This project has been successful, and similar developments will likely follow in the future. If this trend of residential development does continue, there should be enough people to support a thriving downtown economy.

Catalyst from the Recently Constructed Rite Aid

The Rite Aid Corporation agreed to develop a "big box" drug store with architectural elements that are compatible not only with Flat Rock's historic downtown but with the Smith Hotel, which preceded the Rite Aid building on the corner of Telegraph and Gibraltar Roads. This high quality building has set the standard by attracting other high quality developments, such as Fifth Third Bank and the Grunow office building, in the traditional downtown area.

Potential for Future Growth**Potential for Future Commercial and Office Development**

The analysis presented in this chapter indicates that the potential for future commercial and office development exists in Flat Rock, as the population, number of households, and total income in the trade area continues to increase. Research cited herein reveals that the Flat Rock trade area is currently underserved in terms of retail facilities, based on comparisons with other communities.

The potential for further commercial growth is also reflected by survey research, which revealed that residents of the trade area travel several miles to major shopping centers to do much of their

shopping. Many residents indicated that they would be willing to change their shopping patterns if competitive, quality retail facilities were constructed nearby. In summary, it appears that the strongest need is for community-oriented shopping centers and services.

As such development occurs, it is expected that the particular function, or market niche, of each commercial district will become better defined. North Telegraph Road is expected to retain its status as the primary retail and service district in the City. The downtown area is expected to develop as a mixed use center of office development and specialty retail. The function of the Gateway Commerce Center is becoming a community and regional center for economic activity. Gateway currently includes or is planned to have a hotel, auto auction, medical and professional offices, and a large automobile dealership. There is more potential for regionally-oriented retail, restaurants, office, lodging, and light industrial development.

As one of the main entranceways to the City, the Gibraltar Road frontage west of Olmstead Road would be best-suited for low-intensity office and neighborhood commercial development. Offices would be compatible with adjacent institutional uses that have been developed in recent years, and would provide a good buffer between the road and existing or future residential development on the interior. Neighborhood commercial users may include: coffee shops, bakeries, laundry services, banks, and restaurants.

Potential for Future Industrial Development

Prior to construction of the Ford plant, industrial development in Flat Rock was limited to a variety of small operations located near the center of the City, generally adjacent to the railroad tracks. The construction of the Ford plant and then AutoAlliance International dramatically altered the industrial profile of the City. The attributes that attracted Ford and AutoAlliance to locate in Flat Rock would be equally attractive to other industries.

Industrial uses benefit from the availability of a highly visible and accessible site. Industrial sites are not situated for the attraction of consumers, but access to quality roads for the movement of goods and for a large pool of potential employees. Industrial uses also seek large tracts of land for their specific use requirements. Industrial developers cite five major considerations that determine suitable industrial locations, including transportation, labor supply, energy and other utilities, availability of land, and public policy. Additional considerations that are relevant when selecting a specific site include the topography and soil conditions, the direction and composition of population growth, and types of industries that are expanding or moving into the area. The following analysis reveals that, when measured in terms of these considerations, certain areas in the City are well-suited for industrial development.

Access to Transportation

The primary industrial location determinant is convenient access to freeway transportation. Research has shown that over three-quarters of all land developed for industry is located within 2.5 miles of an interstate freeway interchange. A freeway location provides industries with substantial transportation savings, access to an expanded labor market, and an expanded trade area. Immediate access to I-75, which has been described as the state's most important industrial corridor, was clearly one of the major location determinants for Ford and AutoAlliance International. Heavy industries in the City also benefit from the Canadian National Railroad interchange facilities.

Labor Supply

The availability of a trained labor force is an industrial need that can be met by the Downriver labor force. According to the SEMCOG 2000 Forecast for employment by Industrial class, a greater proportion of the people are employed in manufacturing than any of the surrounding communities with the exception of Brownstown Township. Flat Rock also has a higher percentage of those in manufacturing than Wayne County and the entire Southeast Michigan region. In addition, industries in Flat Rock have access to the trained labor markets in more urbanized communities nearer to Detroit and Toledo.

Energy and Utilities

Industry requires a reliable supply of energy and adequate utility service, including water supply and sanitary sewer service. DTE Energy provides electrical service, and Michigan Consolidated Gas provides natural gas to the City. The South Huron Valley Utility Authority provides sewer service to the City. The original facility was built in 1988, but was recently updated in 2001 and the capacity of facility increased. The City of Detroit Water and Sewage Department provides the water supply for Flat Rock. The Flat Rock Department of Public Services is responsible for maintaining the water and sewer system within the City.

Availability of Land

The need for large amounts of land, both for the initial construction and for later expansion, has been cited as one of the key reasons that industries move out of urban core areas. Large industrial sites are needed that are suitable for construction and free from drainage problems. Vacant land on the eastern side of the City could potentially be used for industrial development in Flat Rock. Three general areas have been identified as being particularly well-suited for industrial development.

- Another manufacturing/heavy industrial use would be appropriate for the former Ford Motor Company industrial plant on Gibraltar Road at I-75.
- Light industrial, research, and warehousing uses would be appropriate in the Gateway Commerce Center.
- Light industrial, research, and warehousing uses would also be appropriate as a buffer along Hall Road and Vreeland Road, to separate future residential development from AutoAlliance International and the Canadian National Railroad interchange facilities.

Public Policies

Research in recent years has documented the relationship between public policies and the ability to successfully operate a business or industry. Public policies with the greatest impact on industry in Flat Rock are reflected in the adopted planning and zoning standards. When reviewing these documents, it is apparent that the City has set aside sufficient land to accommodate industrial growth. Evidence of favorable public policies include the City's actions to allow AutoAlliance International to locate in the City and creation of a Planned Unit Development ordinance and tax increment financing to facilitate the establishment of the Gateway Commerce Center.

This analysis indicates that conditions are conducive for industrial growth in Flat Rock. Vacant lands on the east side of the City are best-suited to the location requirements of industry because of the immediate access to I-75. Reuse of the vacant Ford Motor Company plant for heavy industry

would be appropriate, but other industrial lands would be better-suited for light industrial, research, and warehousing uses.

Fiscal Impact of Economic Growth

Property values provide one of the best measures of economic growth. As indicated in Table 7.1, Flat Rock has experienced a rather steady positive increase in property values between 1998, when the last Master Plan was completed, and 2006. There was a small decrease in 2004, but positive increases followed since this time. The total State Equalized Value (SEV) increased from \$199.9 million in 1998 to \$439.6 million in 2006, for an overall increase of 119.9 percent.

Table 7.1
Property Value Trends,
Flat Rock, 1998 to 2006

Year	Value (Thousands of dollars)	Percent Change
1998	199.9	- -
1999	207.6	3.9
2000	224.0	7.9
2001	243.3	8.6
2002	369.6	51.9
2003	375.2	1.5
2004	372.2	-0.8
2005	398.6	7.1
2006	439.6	10.3

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from City of Flat Rock Budget, June 30, 2006.

The increase in the total value of property parallels the increase in the value of industrial property and growth of residential development in the City during this period of time. Most of the increase in value of industrial property can be attributed to the creation of the Gateway Commerce Center, which now has several successful existing and planned businesses. Also during this time, the tax abatement period for the AutoAlliance International plant expired on December 31, 1999, adding to the tax roles for a period of two years. In 2002, AutoAlliance was awarded a Single Business Tax Credit from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) worth up to approximately \$94.9 million over a 20-year period. The City of Flat Rock also approved a local tax abatement worth up to \$31 million over 12 years. Despite the forgone taxes, the property values have continued to increase. Table 7.2 shows the largest taxable values based on the largest taxpayers in the City. The listed taxpayers contribute to a little over fifty percent of the total taxes in the City.

Table 7.2
Largest Taxable Values,
Flat Rock, 2005

Taxpayer	Principal Product or Service	2005 Taxable Valuation (dollars)	Percent of 2005 Taxable Valuation (percentage)
AutoAlliance International	Auto Manufacturing	262,719,100	45.4
Manheim Auto Auction	Wholesale Auto Auction	6,320,407	1.09
Flat Rock Metals	Metal Processing	5,713,200	0.99
Deerfield Estates	Manufactured Home Community	4,488,731	0.78
Detroit Edison	Utility	3,594,297	0.62
Mazda North American	Auto Manufacturing	3,497,900	0.60
Chester Rock, LLC	Shopping Complex	3,112,757	0.54
Normandy Mayfair	Apartment Complex	3,040,300	0.53
MHT Housing, LLC	Apartment Complex	2,608,000	0.45
Michigan Consolidated Gas	Utility	2,446,220	0.42
TOTAL	--	\$297,537,912	51.43%

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from City of Flat Rock Budget, June 30, 2007.

The impact of various uses of property on total land value is indicated in Table 7.2. Residential property uses account for the greatest proportion (51.8 percent) of the total equalized value, down from 66.6 percent in 1998. According to the 2006 existing land use survey, residential land uses occupy 32.69 percent of the total land area, up from 22.95 percent in 1998. A large proportion of vacant lands in the City, however, are considered residential properties for the purposes of tax assessment. The amount of land used for residential uses increased significantly (43.47% overall) while the total SEV increased less than ten percent. Residential uses generally do not generate as much money as compared with industrial and commercial uses when the costs of providing services are taken into account.

Table 7.3
Breakdown of 2006 SEV by Use of Property,
Flat Rock, 2006

Property Use	Percent of Total SEV
Residential	51.8
Industrial	30.6
Commercial	15.8
Utilities	1.8

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from City of Flat Rock Budget, June 30, 2007.

The economic return per acre of land is not nearly as great for industrial uses, which account for the second highest proportion of the total SEV, 30.6 percent, up from 12.5 percent in 1998. Industrial land uses occupy approximately 21.66 percent of the total land area, up only slightly from 20.52 percent in 1998. Industrial uses also account for twice as much of the state equalized value as commercial uses and occupy approximately seven times as much of the land area. Given the current conditions, the figures in Table 7.2 indicate that industrial land use is the least cost-efficient per acre

of land. This assessment does not take into account the positive benefits from industry, though, such as job creation, increased demand for housing, and state generated funds. The proportion of industrial SEV has increased despite the termination and reinstatement of the AutoAlliance International tax abatement.

Commercial property accounts for the next highest proportion of the total equalized value, 15.8 percent, down slightly from 20.9 percent in 1998. Commercial land uses occupy 3.01 percent of the total land area, the same percentage of land in 1998 despite a slight increase in the acreage of land. Commercial uses provide a fairly high return in comparison to the amount of land occupied.

The City has experienced a continued increase in property values from the positive trend that began in the 1990s and has continued to 2006. In 2004, the City experienced a slight decrease in property values, as reflected by the decrease in the general fund revenue. However, the overall increase and stability in the general fund will be reflective of the increasing property values, allowing the City to increase expenditures on public services such as parks or police and fire protection. The trend of the general fund since 2004 is presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4
General Fund Budget History,
Flat Rock, 2004 to 2007

Year	General Fund Budget (dollars)	Percent Change
2004/2005	10,252,999	--
2005/2006 ¹	9,631,970	-6.05
2006/2007 ²	10,406,751	8.04

¹2005/2006 Estimated General Fund Revenue.

²2006/2007 Mayor's Budget.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with data from City of Flat Rock Budget, June 30, 2007.

As expected, property values and tax revenues have increased since 1998 and will continue to increase if the City follows the trend set in the 1990s. Opportunities for continued economic growth, particularly in the industrial sector, are sure to boost the economy of the City. Also, the dramatic increase in housing in the City is sure to bring taxes and jobs simultaneously.

8. Circulation Analysis

Each year, the highways and rail lines that traverse the City move millions of people and several thousands of goods. Along with the nearby airports, these transportation systems collectively make up a vital part of the infrastructure that contributes to one of the largest regional economies in the country. Despite the fact that transportation systems connect the City to the rest of the region and parts of the country, the City has little control or jurisdiction over the roadways. Wayne County and the Michigan Department of Transportation control and maintain the majority of the roads in Flat Rock.

The local network of streets and thoroughfares is of vital importance for the overall well-being of the City and its residents. The most basic function of local streets is to provide a circulation system by which people and goods can move within and through the City. Roads and road rights-of-way also provide locations for public utilities, such as water, sewer, gas electric, and telephone lines. Roads provide the means by which emergency and public services are delivered to residents. Road rights-of-way provide locations for landscaping and parking along commercial strips. Most importantly, the road system establishes the basic form and character of the City and has significant impact on the local economy and environment.

The development of the City has been shaped by the location or, in some cases, the absence of transportation corridors. The impact of Telegraph Road (US 24) on commercial development is particularly evident. While early commercial development was concentrated in a central business district near the riverfront, commercial development in more recent times has occurred in strips along the full length of Telegraph Road. At the same time, the absence of roads in the central and northwestern portions of the City has resulted in little or no development in these areas.

The goal of this section is to inventory the existing transportation network, classify each type of road and to identify potential limitations or constraints in the City's transportation system. In identifying the potential limitations of the City's transportation system, it is also important to prepare alternatives to address those deficiencies.

Road Classifications and Jurisdiction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed the National Functional Classification (NFC) to group streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the level of service they are intended to provide. This system was introduced in 1968, and by the 1970s all streets and highways were required to be classified. Transportation engineers and planners around the country recognize the NFC as the unofficial road classification system. The roads within the City of Flat Rock are under the jurisdiction of three agencies: the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Wayne County Department of Public Services, and the City of Flat Rock. The definitions and classifications are based on the Functional Classification Guidelines, as outlined in the 1989 FHWA document. The streets and highways in the City are classified based on the NFC and its jurisdiction identified below.

Table 8.1
City of Flat Rock
Road Classifications

National Functional Classification (NFC)	Road
Principal Arterial System:	
Interstate	I-75
Principal Arterial	Telegraph Road (U.S. 24)
Minor Arterial System:	
Minor Arterials	Gibraltar Road, Huron River Drive, Inkster Road, Vreeland Road, and Will Carleton
Collector Street System:	
Major Collectors	Arsenal Road, Aspen Blvd., Cahill Road, Hall Road, Evergreen Street, Meadows Avenue (2006), Olmstead Road, and Seneca Avenue
Local Street System:	
Local Streets	All other streets within the City not listed above

Principal Arterial System

Principal arterials are the prominent road type in the NFC hierarchy intended to carry the major portion of trips entering and leaving urban areas, as well as a majority of the trips bypassing the area. The principal arterial system includes interstates, highways and freeways, and other arterials. Principal arterials have planned rights-of-ways of 120 feet or greater, and provide high speed, uninterrupted travel with limited access or restricted access to regionally important urban areas and amenities, such as airports. This system is a major source for interstate travel and fall under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

I-75 is considered to be the State's most important industrial corridor, and is the only roadway classified as an interstate within the boundaries of Flat Rock. I-75 is the primary north-south freeway through the region, proving a link to the Detroit and Toledo metropolitan areas, as well as locations farther north and south. This interstate carries most of the traffic and is the most heavily-traveled road in the City. Accessibility on and off the interstate system is limited to one interchange located at Gibraltar Road.

Telegraph Road (US 24) is the only other principal arterial in the City. It runs in the north-south direction providing access to Detroit to the north and Monroe to the south. Telegraph Road serves the dual purposes as a carrier of through traffic as well as providing access to abutting commercial properties.

I-275 located approximately four miles west of the City limits, is an important interstate for Flat Rock. I-275 intersects Will Carleton Road, which enters the City from the west. This interstate provides direct access to expanding markets and employment opportunities in the western suburbs of Detroit and to Washtenaw County.

Overall, the state system provides excellent north-south transportation for City residents. The north-south orientation of the regional circulation system has affected business, employment, shopping patterns, and the local economy in general. The circulation system facilitates interaction with businesses in Detroit or Toledo metropolitan areas, rather than with businesses to the east or west. The east-west regional transportation network is difficult to reach and utilize, with the closest routes being I-94 to the north and M-50 in Monroe County.

Minor Arterial System

Minor arterials are similar in function to principal arterials, but they generally carry less traffic and connect to smaller urban centers. The minor arterial system interconnects with and augments the principal arterial system by providing for trips of moderate length with less traffic mobility.

Accessibility is greater but stops are more frequent due to signalized intersections. Minor arterial streets are generally spaced from 1/8 – 1/2 mile in the central business district to 2 – 3 miles apart in the suburban fringes, but are normally not more than 1 mile apart in fully developed areas. Minor arterial planned rights-of-ways are usually 120 feet wide and fall under the jurisdiction of the Wayne County Department of Department of Public Services.

Minor arterials in the City of Flat Rock include Gibraltar Road, Huron River Drive, Inkster Road, Vreeland Road, and Will Carleton. These roads generally link local residential roads to the principal arterial road system, however, do not usually enter neighborhood areas. They also serve as a framework for the location of more intensive land uses.

Collector Street System

The collector streets provide access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. These streets differ from the arterial system in that they usually enter neighborhood areas to distribute residents throughout the entire system to and from their destinations. Collector streets also collect traffic from local streets and channel them into the arterial system.

Collector streets are commonly categorized as major and minor collectors. Major collectors are important intra-county travel corridors and provide service to county seats not on an arterial route, to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance. Major collectors planned rights-of-ways are generally 120 feet wide. Minor collectors are identified to collect traffic from local roads and private property and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a major collector or arterial road. These roads are generally spaced at 1/2 mile intervals and are maintain by the City of Flat Rock.

Collector roads in Flat Rock include: Arsenal Road Olmstead Road, Hall Road, Cahill Road, Evergreen Street, Aspen Blvd., and Seneca Avenue. Meadows Avenue was upgraded to a major collector in 2006, with the upgrades and construction of a bridge across Silver Creek as part of the Bradbury PUD. In addition, Cahill was extended south to Woodruff Road as part of the Bradbury PUD.

Local Street System

The local street system comprises all streets and highways not identified in one of the higher systems. Local streets primarily provide direct access to abutting land and to minor collector streets. Movement of through traffic is usually discourages on local streets. Local streets in Flat Rock include minor streets in the central business district and local subdivision roads. Some portions of the CBD contain alleys as well as the Bradbury PUD.

Circulation System Deficiencies

The ability of people and goods to flow efficiently without numerous stops or unanticipated congestion is an important aspect of the quality of life in a community, as well as a vital part of a community's economic well-being and growth. Obstacles relating to traffic are not a serious problem in the City at this time. However, the road grid and roads were designed to accommodate smaller city transportation demands. As the current rate of development continues, traffic generated may exceed the local roads' ability to handle increased traffic.

The status of the local road system has significant influences in terms of the future land use plan. An inadequate road system impacts whether or not the City can achieve its development objectives. For example, the lack of high-quality access in some areas of the City has prevented desired residential, commercial, and industrial development. In other areas, continue development without necessary road improvements will result in increasing congestion and traffic conflict on local streets. Described below are circulation system deficiencies within the City.

Telegraph Road (US-24)

Telegraph Road is an example of a road that is experiencing increasing congestion and traffic conflict. Strip commercial development has occurred along the road, generating local business traffic. At the same time, Telegraph Road is utilized as a regional thoroughfare for longer through trips by vehicular and truck traffic. As a result, conflicts have arisen between local business traffic, which generates many turning movements, high-speed traffic, and relatively slower and cumbersome truck traffic. These conflicts will intensify as the population increases and the commercial district along Telegraph continues to expand.

Congestion along Telegraph Road is intensified during times of highway construction or major accidents on I-75 and especially I-275. When construction or accidents occurs on these highways, motorists are generally detoured through the City of Flat Rock or use the City streets to bypass the congested areas. These conflicts arise when improvements are made to Telegraph Road as well. According to the SEMCOG 2030 Regional Transportation Plan and MDOT Five Year Plan, an approximately two mile portion of Telegraph is slated to be widened from four to five lanes to add a center turn lane. This project is anticipated to begin in 2008. This will contribute to increased congestion on Telegraph and other adjacent roads.

Circulation in the Central Business District

A key transportation deficiency in the Central Business District is the lack of a direct link between Gibraltar Road and Telegraph Road. Following Gibraltar Road all the way through the CBD to Telegraph might appear to be the most logical route. However, there are few directional signs along the route, nor is there a traffic signal at the Gibraltar/Telegraph intersection to facilitate turning movements onto Telegraph.

Congestion on East-West Collector Roads

The lack of an east-west arterial will become more apparent as the population of the City increases. It is likely that the current and future adult residents will not work in the City, and many people will travel on to areas in Washtenaw and Wayne County, creating congestions during peak hours. Congestion and back-ups will occur on Gibraltar Road because of the interchange at I-75, shift changes at the local factories, and children traveling to and from school.

Need for Collector Roads

In the outer areas of the City, the road network is sparse, and there are large tracts of undeveloped land. This limits commercial and residential development to areas that are currently accessible by the road network. Transportation to the west of the CBD is limited to a single crossing over the Huron River at Telegraph Road. Vreeland Road must be extended west of Telegraph Road to Arsenal Road to provide access to the northwest corner of the City that is currently inaccessible.

As new residential development occurs in the City, a residential street system will develop to provide access for these areas. Subsequently, there will be a need for new “collector roads” to channel traffic from the local residential streets to arterial roads. Collector roads are generally wider than other residential roads. Where possible, efforts are made to discourage direct residential access onto collector roads to prevent increased traffic conflicts and congestion due to added curb cuts.

Canadian National Railroad

A constraint to the development of new roads in Flat Rock is the presence of the Canadian National Railroad interchange. The railroad is a physical barrier that makes it very difficult to provide east-west road connections between the central and western portion of the City. Improvements to the railroad crossings at Vreeland Road will be important in order to facilitate better traffic flow along the only east-west road in the northern portion of the City.

Pavement of Roads

There is a need to provide access roads to underdeveloped areas of the City, but there is also a need to pave particular existing roads. Unpaved roads in the City include Woodruff Road, Cahill Road, Seneca Avenue, Peters, and several roads in residential subdivisions. Meadows Avenue was upgraded in 2006 as part of the Bradbury PUD project.

Delivery of Community Services

Currently deficiencies in the City’s existing overall road system frustrate the delivery of community services. For example, the presence of unpaved roads and lack of collector streets has made it difficult for local officials to identify safe and appropriate school bus routes and student transfer stations. In the future, as the City road network is improved, special efforts must be made to accommodate school buses, fire trucks, trash collection trucks, ambulances, and other service vehicles.

Resources to Address Deficiencies

Resources available to the City include traffic congestion data, accident data, and proposed road improvements, among other things, from SEMCOG and the Wayne County Department of Public Services. These reports should be monitored on a regular basis to determine the safety and total activity within and adjacent to the City.

Resources for Road Improvements

The City’s roads are generally in good repair. Road repair should be prioritized based on condition, safety, and use. The City should seek additional grant money than what is provided under Act 51. The successor to the original 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was recently passed. The updated legislation is titled SAFETEA-LU, which stands for Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. SAFETEA-LU

authorizes highway safety, transit, and other surface transportation programs, including regional pathways and trailways systems, for the next five years. Congress has authorized \$244.1 billion to implement programs, with Michigan's apportionment coming to just over \$643 million. Michigan will receive approximately \$239 million more in federal highway funds each year than under the original TEA-21. With the increased funding, many new projects and programs are planned.

SAFETEA-LU funds are designated to be used for projects involving equity, improving safety, congestion relief, maximizing mobility, improving efficiency, and environmental stewardship, among other things. The wide range of projects will allow cities like Flat Rock to accomplish many goals pertaining to transportation, particularly non-motorized and environmentally-focused additions to the community.

The City should identify roads that need improvements, widening, and other traffic management assistance such as signalization of intersections, left and right hand turning movements, and turning restrictions. For example, roads planned without left hand turn lanes create unwanted stacking in an otherwise flowing lane. The City should also identify other modes of transportation, particularly pedestrian-oriented and recreation projects, which are eligible through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the new SAFETEA-LU legislation. These projects serve to enhance the existing road network and make the community a better place. These projects are discussed later in this chapter.

Opportunities for Improvement

The following are possible solutions to the road system deficiencies identified in the City:

Access Roads for Residential Development

The opportunity exists to provide road access to vacant areas east and west of Arsenal Road by extending Vreeland Road west to Arsenal Road. Other undeveloped areas of the City may be accessed by extending Seneca east to Cahill. In 2005 – 2006, Cahill Road was extended south to Woodruff and Meadows extended east and west to connect Olmsted to Tamarack as part of the Bradbury PUD. These road extensions could become future collector roads as residential development in the vicinity expands. The exact location of these road extensions could vary depending on topography, location of drains and wetlands, the need to align new roads with existing roads, proposals for new development, and similar conditions.

Downtown Circulation

Traffic circulation in the CBD may be improved by designating Gibraltar Road as the primary route for through traffic, connecting traffic from the east to Telegraph Road. Along with installing a traffic light, adjustments to the Gibraltar/Garden Boulevard intersection can be made to allow non-stop traffic movement along Gibraltar.

Telegraph Road Commercial Area

To reduce congestion and traffic conflict, the site plan review process should be used to control the number of curb cuts onto Telegraph Road. Developers should be encouraged to construct secondary access drives to serve all of the properties, thereby reducing turning movements on Telegraph Road. For example, traffic safety on Telegraph Road could be improved by constructing

a secondary service drive behind the existing businesses along the east side of Telegraph Road, thereby proving an alternate access off of Vreeland road for patrons of businesses along the road.

Truck Routes

Encouraging trucks to use Hall Road as the primary north-south truck route, and Vreeland Road as the primary east-west truck route could reduce conflicts between truck and vehicular traffic. For non-industrial traffic, Cahill should become the primary north-south route, and Gibraltar Road should become the primary east-west route.

Pavement of Roads

In 2006, a bridge will be constructed over Silver Creek as part of the Meadows Road upgrades for the Bradbury PUD. Once completed, better access will be provided to John Barnes Elementary and Simpson Intermediate Schools. The following roads should receive priority for paving: 1) Cahill Road, north of Gibraltar to Vreeland Road; and; 2) Woodruff Road.

Improved Access to School

After Woodruff Road is paved and Meadows Avenue is connected east to Olmstead, improved access to the Flat Rock elementary and middle schools should be developed. Tamarack Street should be phased out as the primary access to the schools, and a direct route, which does not cut through a residential neighborhood, should be developed.

Improved transportation patterns are also required at the high school. Currently, school bus loading and unloading blocks access to certain streets and hinder the traffic flow on other streets. Ideally, an off-street staging area for buses should be developed, possibly making it necessary for the school to acquire more property.

Improved Access to Cooke Street Industrial District

Industries located along Cooke Street do not have direct access to Telegraph Road. Consequently, trucks serving this industrial district must travel through residential areas. An alternative means of access to this area is required. Two alternatives are possible: 1) Construction of a new road to Telegraph Road, or 2) Construction of an access road along the railroad tracks to Vreeland Road.

Rail

The Canadian National Railroad runs from northeast to southeast through the City, connecting with a large rail interchange in the northeast part of the City. This railroad is a constraint or barrier to the construction of new roads across the central portions of the City.

Pedestrian Movement and Other Modes of Transportation

Pedestrian Paths/Bikeways (Non-motorized pathways)

The need for pedestrian walks and bikeway facilities will increase as the population grows. More residents will lead to more traffic; therefore, a well-developed pedestrian transportation system will be paramount for pedestrian safety. In the future, constructing pathways on certain roads to accommodate non-motorized traffic may be necessary. Other alternatives for facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists include conventional sidewalks, paved shoulders dedicated and marked for bicycle use, and separate bicycle pathways next to the road. Linking bike paths to adjacent

communities and neighborhoods will 1) reduce the number of short vehicle trips; and 2) help in providing recreational opportunities for City residents and residents of neighboring communities.

Recommendations/Existing Paths

Sidewalks should be required in conjunction with development, particularly in subdivisions, and with multiple-family, commercial, office and light industrial/office research development. First, developers should be required to install sidewalks along all road rights-of-way in conjunction with all new construction. Second, the City should become directly involved in the installation of sidewalks if any of the following circumstances exist:

- Pedestrian/vehicle conflicts are prevalent.
- Beneficial to provide access to key centers of community activity, such as parks or libraries.
- Necessary to complete the missing links in an area where much of the pathway system has been installed.

Priorities for installation of new sidewalks in Flat Rock should include the following:

- Missing links along Telegraph Road.
- Missing links in the downtown, particularly in the vicinity of the senior housing complex.
- A new sidewalk along Woodruff Road from Olmstead to Huron River Drive.
- Sidewalks along both sides of Gibraltar Road between the CBD and Gateway Commerce Park.

In 2003, the Planning Commission adopted a “non-motorized Pathway Master Plan”, which provides for the locations of primary and secondary pathway locations. These designated pathways locations will require non-motorized 8 to 10 foot asphalt pathways to be installed in lieu of five foot wide concrete sidewalks.

In 2004-05, the City installed 4.5 miles of primary route along Gibraltar Road from Huron Park to Woodruff Road via the Community Center. Portions of the secondary routes have been installed along Cahill Road (Wood Creek Park PUD) and Woodruff Road (Bradbury PUD). In addition, link or loop segments have been installed in Hawthorne Ridge and in Civic Center Park.

Finally, the City of Flat Rock should promote “Active Living”. Active living communities are places where it is easy to integrate physical activity into daily routines. The Michigan Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports defines active living communities as “places where people of all ages, incomes and abilities can walk and bike-both for recreation and transportation”.

Communities who incorporate active living design characteristics achieve many benefits: 1)

Economic: Improved real estate values and business growth; 2) **Environmental:** Improved air and water quality; 3) **Greater Social Equity:** Convenient and safe opportunities for all citizens to be active; 4) **Increased Safety:** Decreased Traffic speeds and crime; and 5) **Enhanced Community Connections:** Increased social interactions and stronger ties to the community.

Insert Non-motorized Pathway Map

Public Transportation

Flat Rock residents are not served by a comprehensive public transportation system. However, the Flat Rock Recreation Department offers free “door to door” bus transportation service for senior citizens, low-income residents, and for those with medical conditions that prevent safe driving. Reservations are required one day prior to pick-up.

Air Transportation

Though the City lacks scheduled air transportation service within its borders, local residents are fortunate to have three airports in the surrounding area. Detroit Metropolitan Airport, in the City of Romulus, serves both passenger and freight flights. Detroit Metro is one of Northwest Airlines major hubs, and handles over 35 million passengers each year. Other airports in close proximity to Flat Rock are the Toledo Express Airport in Toledo, Ohio and the Detroit City Airport, both of which provide connector and commuter flights.

9. Recreation and Community Facilities Analysis

On March 20, 1989, the Flat Rock Recreation Committee was established under State Act 156 of 1917, as amended, to prepare a recreation master plan for the City and pursue funding for recreation improvements. Since its inception, the Committee has also acted in an advisory capacity to the City Council in matters of land acquisition, park design, construction, operation, maintenance, and financing of recreation improvements in the City.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is headed by one full-time director, who supervises seven (7) full-time and fifty-five (55) seasonal staff. The Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for programming of City-wide recreation programs, including the Community Center, and coordinates activities and facilities with the Flat Rock School District. Park maintenance is provided by the Department of Public Services (DPS) on City-owned facilities and by the school district on school-owned property.

The greatest single natural recreation resource in the City of Flat Rock is the Huron River, which provides approximately 4.5 miles of river-front along the City's southwest boundary. Huroc Park, located northwest of Telegraph Road, attracts both local citizens and persons from the surrounding communities for fishing, picnicking, and other leisure activities. Also notable is the new Flat Rock Community Center (opened on December 20, 2004), located on the eastern side of the City, which offers numerous recreation, fitness and community activities to the residents of the City. The Community Center has exceeded its original expectations of membership and offerings and remains well-utilized.

Existing Recreational Facilities

Regional Recreational Facilities

Flat Rock is literally surrounded by thousands of acres of park and recreation land. Within a sixty-mile radius from the City, there are five State parks, nine state recreational areas, three state game preserves, thirteen (13) Metroparks, and several county parks. The facilities offer every type of recreational facility and programming imaginable. Activities include, but are not limited to: hunting, camping, horseback riding, skiing, fishing, hiking, walking, biking, nature interpretation, picnicking, boating, and shooting. Many recreational classes are offered, including, but not limited to: crafts, nature, and recreational activities are available to the public free of charge. Some facilities have cabins and meeting rooms that can be rented by the day.

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) operates more than a dozen regional recreation areas in southeast Michigan. These parks provide facilities for a wide range of recreational opportunities, which include picnicking, playgrounds, hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, golf, court games, cross-country skiing, ice-skating, and sledding, among others. Four (4) HCMA parks are located in Wayne County: Lake Erie Metropark in Brownstown Township; Lower Huron Metropark in Van Buren Charter Township; and Willow Metropark and Oakwoods Metropark in Huron Township.

HCMA owns the dam that creates the narrow lake in the western portion of Flat Rock, just north of the Canadian National Railroad bridge and Huroc Park. The MDNR approved the construction of a fish ladder at the dam in past years, which allow steelhead to spawn upriver. The fish ladder is an

attraction at Huroc Park, drawing residents and non-residents alike. The HCMA also owns an additional 31-acre site within the City of Flat Rock, north of Will Carleton Road and adjacent to Huroc Park. The Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan awarded the City a grant to construct a 14 ft wide bridge from Huroc Park, across the mill race, to HCMA property.

The City's prime location along the Huron River allows the City to participate in regional recreation efforts, including, but not limited to greenways and blueways. The City has been on the forefront of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative (DLGI) and the Greater Detroit American Heritage River (AHR) Initiative to help create a multi-community system of non-motorized pathways, greenways, and water trails. In 2004-2005, the City constructed approximately 4.5 miles of new pathways, which are part of a larger initiative to link Oakwoods MetroPark to Lake Erie MetroPark and the larger Downriver trail network.

In 2006, the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), is developing the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail system, which will be the first regional water trail planned for Southeast Michigan. The Water Trail will allow canoeists and kayakers to paddle the Detroit, Huron, Rouge, and Raisin rivers and experience first hand the region's abundant natural resources and rich history.

Phase I of the water trail follows the Huron River, as it runs from the City of Flat Rock east towards Lake Erie, up the west shoreline and into the mouth of the Detroit River to Trenton. The water trail will also provide the opportunity to tell distinctive stories about the river's ecology and heritage that will educate residents and visitors alike.

Recreational Facilities within Flat Rock

City Facilities

The City owns and maintains four (4) parks, including the Community Center, comprising a total of 65.3 acres and approximately 5.5 miles of non-motorized trails. The City also leases additional land from the DNR (boat launch, 11 acres) and HCMA (31 acres). A complete list of parks and recreation facilities is shown in Table 9.1.

The largest City park is Huroc Park (27.4 acres), located along the Huron River and adjacent to the western portion of downtown. The park is distinguished by a large island accessible by a covered foot bridge. A second bridge links the island across the mill race to HCMA property and future greenway linkages. Huroc Park contains a gazebo, picnic areas, and benches along the river, and is extensively used for fishing and other forms of passive recreation. The park has been the site of the City's annual Riverfest celebration and other events, including movies in the park. Huroc Park has benefited from recent DDA improvements including landscaping, signage, and trail head development for the City's new greenway system.



Civic Center Park (10.7 acres), is located adjacent to City Hall, north of Gibraltar between Evergreen and Aspen. The park and adjacent property to the north is made up of several adjacent parcels owned by four different City entities: the City of Flat Rock, the Library Board, the Historical Society, and the School District. In 2000-01, the park went through extensive renovations with the

construction of Flat Rock Community Fields. The park contains City Hall, including the police and fire departments; a veterans memorial, a concession and restroom facility; Flat Rock Community Fields; two (2) tennis courts; community-built playscape; picnic areas and a gazebo; a historic caboose; walking trails; warming building; and a fountain/ice rink for use during the summer and winter months. The Flat Rock Community Fields were built with a historic feel and contain four lighted ball fields, including a varsity high school field;



ornamental fencing, brick dugouts and bull pens, restrooms and locker rooms, concession stand/ticket office, storage, gazebo, picnic areas, extensive landscaping, a pond with overlook, and bronze sculpture. Located immediately adjacent to the park are several historic buildings, including the former Smith Hotel and Wagar House relocated to the park in 1999; the public library, opened in 1999; and Flat Rock High School, located immediately to the north. The park has become a great amenity for the City and visitors to the ball field complex..

In 1999, the City completed construction of a Michigan Department of Natural Resources boat launch. The boat launch is located along the Huron River off of Church and Seneca. There is parking available at the site, and the launch is well-utilized. With the construction of the non-motorized pathways to the boat launch and the development of a regional water trail network, this park has the potential for additional recreational users and to foster economic benefits for the downtown.



The newest of all City facilities is the Flat Rock Community Center. The Community Center is a 52,000-square-foot, two-story rustic facility located on 27 acres of wooded wetlands, adjacent to the Gateway Commerce Center and I-75. The facility contains fitness facilities, swimming pool, meeting/banquet rooms, senior wing, daycare, and gymnasium. A portion of the City's non-motorized pathway and trail systems runs through the site. The facility is extremely well-used and now boasts approximately 4,000 individual card holding members, as of Spring 2006.

School Sites

The Flat Rock Community School District is also a major provider of recreation services within the City. The District owns a total of 112.4 acres at five school sites, including Flat Rock High School (54.82 acres). A list of school facilities is provided in Table 9.1. Although these facilities are designed to meet the needs of school children, the facilities serve as additional park space for residents at nights and on weekends. Summit Academy Charter School also provides a small field and play structures.

[Map 4- Community and Recreation Facilities]

Table 9.1
Parks and Recreation Facilities,
City of Flat Rock and Flat Rock Community School District

Other Recreational Resources

The Flat Rock Planning Commission has set a standard requiring new residential subdivisions to provide both passive (nature trails and non-motorized pathways) and active recreational areas (such as tot lots) within new housing developments. The majority of the new Planned Unit Developments contain these amenities and are a great asset to residential areas. Maintenance of these facilities is either provided by the City or by individual home owners' associations.

Analysis of Existing Facilities and Service Areas

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) adopted a set of standards based on those established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The standards provide a baseline to determine the need for recreational facilities in each community. Recreation facilities serving residents are compared to MDNR standards in Tables 9.2 and 9.3. These comparisons provide a general idea of deficiencies, but they are not intended to be followed to the letter. Needs of the population vary from one community to the next. For planning and management purposes, recreation professionals classify park and recreation facilities based on the type of facility and expected usage. Frequently a six-tier classification system is used, as shown in Table 9.4.

Table 9.2
Analysis of Existing Recreation Facilities,
City of Flat Rock, 2006

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards	Flat Rock Facilities	Comments/ Recommendations
Mini-Parks	<i>Description:</i> Used to address limited, passive or unique recreational needs. <i>Size:</i> Between 2,500 sq. ft. and one acre in size. <i>Location:</i> within subdivisions.	Many new residential subdivisions contain mini-parks to serve residents of the subdivisions and adjacent areas lacking a mini-park. Example: Pebblebrook tot lot.	NRPA recommends 0.25 to 0.5 mini-park acreage per 1,000 residents. The City should continue to require the installation of mini-parks with new residential developments.
Neighborhood Parks	<i>Description:</i> Neighborhood parks remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal, active, and passive recreation. <i>Size:</i> 5 acres is considered min. size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.	The community utilizes existing elementary schools (Barnes and Bobcean) as neighborhood parks.	NRPA recommends 1.0 to 2.0 neighborhood park acreage per 1,000 residents. Additional open spaces and playgrounds should be developed in the northwest portion of the City as residential development continues to increase.
School Parks	<i>Description:</i> Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use. <i>Size:</i> Variable- depends on function.	The City utilizes all of the school sites as defacto parks to some degree as both neighborhood and community parks.	Given the degree to which school parks are utilized in the City, maintenance and upgrades should be a top priority.
Community/ Major Parks	<i>Description:</i> Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. <i>Size:</i> As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.	Simpson Intermediate, the Old High School, and Flat Rock High School provide athletic fields to the community at large and serve as defacto community parks to some degree. The upgraded Civic Center Park and Community Fields are now serving a community park, providing facilities used by both the City and the School District.	NRPA recommends 5.0 to 8.0 community park acreage per 1,000 residents. The City should evaluate the use of exiting facilities to determine if there is overuse or shortages of facilities. As the population continues to grow, additional parks serving the community may be needed.

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards	Flat Rock Facilities	Comments/ Recommendations
Regional and Metropolitan Parks	<i>Description:</i> Typically located on sites with unique natural features that are particularly suited for outdoor recreation. Serve a regional area with nature activities, wildlife habitats, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, trails, and play areas. <i>Size:</i> As needed to accommodate desired uses.	Flat Rock is currently served by over 50,000 acres of regional parks, including numerous state, county, and metropolitan parks within 30-60 minute drive.	NRPA recommends 5.0 regional park acreage per 1,000 residents. The Flat Rock Community is served by an abundance of regional and metropolitan facilities within a short driving distance, including Lake Erie Metropark, Lower Huron Metropark, Willow Metropark and Oakwoods Metropark.
Special Use/ Conservancy Parks	<i>Description:</i> Typically single-purpose recreation facilities, such as golf courses, nature centers, outdoor theaters, interpretative centers, or facilities for the preservation and maintenance of the natural or cultural environment. Protection and management of the natural/cultural environment may be the primary focus with recreation use as a secondary objective. <i>Size:</i> As needed to accommodate desired uses.	Huroc Park and the DNR Boat Launch located adjacent to the Huron River provide fishing, access to nature areas, and water recreation. All of these amenities area ideal regional draws to non-residents.	Additional upgrades to Huroc Park are needed to handle the increasing influx of both local and regional users. Increased parking, upgraded picnic facilities, additional fishing piers, slope erosion control, and accessible playground equipment are required to improve this local asset. The installation of a soft shore boat launch and commercial boat livery business will promote greater use of the river.
Linear Parks	<i>Description:</i> Any area developed for one or more modes of recreation travel, such as hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, canoeing, horseback riding, and pleasure driving. <i>Size:</i> As needed to accommodate desired uses.	Flat Rock has constructed 4.5 miles of new non-motorized pathways and trail systems throughout the City. This system connects Huroc Park on the west side of the City to the DNR boat launch, Civic Center Park, and the new Community Center, located on the East side of the City. The pathway connects several neighborhoods in the City via Gibraltar Road and links to the City of Rockwood via Woodruff Road.	Several trailheads and interpretive signage have been installed along the trail. The City should continue to develop this trail network, linking the primary route to neighborhoods, subdivisions, parks, and schools. Ensure the maintenance of the existing trails and bike paths and look for additional private/public partnerships.

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards	Flat Rock Facilities	Comments/ Recommendations
Passive Parks	<i>Description:</i> Provide relief from highly developed residential and commercial neighborhoods. Facilities may include sitting areas and other pedestrian amenities, landscaping, monuments and fountains, and historical features. <i>Size:</i> As needed to accommodate desired uses.	Many passive areas and walking trails are being developed through requirements of Planned Unit Developments in new residential subdivisions.	Portions of Oakwoods Metropark may be developed as a nature conservancy. The Flat Rock Historical Society in cooperation with the City would like to develop the area immediately adjacent to the historic buildings into a “Victorian Era” park, with historic lighting, brick paved walkways, and a formal overlook. The DDA is continuing to improve the appearance of the downtown with the installation of streetscape enhancements, urban plazas, and decorative landscaping.

Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., with criterion from Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans, 2006 and Mertes, J.D. and J.R. Hall (National Recreation and Park Association), Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1996.

Table 9.3
Recreation Facilities Evaluation,
City of Flat Rock, 2006

Type of Facility	Standard ¹	Existing City/Public Facilities ²	Existing School Facilities ²	Total Existing Facilities ²	Need Based on Standard ³	Bonus/ (Deficiency)
Basketball Courts ⁴	1/5,000	3	6	9	2	7
Tennis Courts	1 court/2,000	1	1	2	5	3
Volleyball	1 court/5,000	0	0	0	2	(2)
Baseball/Softball Diamonds	1/5,000 Lighted 1/30,000	4 (4 - Lighted)	4	8 (4-Lighted)	2 (1 - Lighted)	6 3-Lighted
Football Fields	1/20,000	0	3	3	1	2
Soccer Fields	1/10,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Golf Courses - 9 hole	1/25,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Golf Courses - 18 hole	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Driving Range	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Swimming ⁶	1/20,000 (Pools should accommodate 3% to 5% of the total population at one time.)	1 Indoor	1 Indoor	2	1 (291-485 residents at one time)	1
Ice Rinks - Indoor	1/100,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Ice Rinks – Outdoor	Depends on climate	1	0	1	1	0
Running Track (1/4 mile)	1/20,000	1 Indoor	2	3	1	2
Playgrounds/Structures	1/3,000	3	3	6	3	3
Picnic Areas	None Published	2	0	2	--	2
Trails	1 system per region	1 5.5 miles	0	1 5.5 miles	1	0

Footnotes:

¹ Number of facilities per population (Michigan Department of Natural Resources Suggested Standards).

² Figures based on one (1) or more facilities present at City parks and schools.

³ Based on SEMCOG May 2006 population estimate for City of Flat Rock: 2,703, and rounded to the nearest whole number.

⁴ Two backboards were considered to be equal to 1 court.

⁵ This figure includes public beaches and swimming areas.

Table 9.4
Comparison to Accepted Standards,
City of Flat Rock, 2006

Type of Facility	Recommended Minimum Acreage per 1,000 Residents ¹	Existing Acreage ²	Acreage Need for Existing Population Based on Standard ³	Surplus/(Deficiency)
Mini Parks ⁴	0.25	0.2	2.43	(2.23)
Neighborhood Parks	1.0	0	9.70	(9.70)
Major Parks	5.0	10.7	48.52	(38.45)
Regional Parks ^{5, 6}	5.0	4,267	48.52	4,218.48
Special Use Facilities ⁷	Variable	96.4	N/A	--
Linear Park	Variable	5.5 miles	N/A	--

Footnotes:

¹ Based on National Recreation and Parks Association recommendations.

² Includes all existing public acreage in the City of Flat Rock, excluding school acreage.

³ Based on SEMCOG March 2006 population estimate for City of Flat Rock: 9,694, and rounded to the nearest whole number.

⁴ The need for mini-parks is also addressed partially by subdivision common areas, apartment and condominium recreation areas (acres not determined).

⁵ Includes acreage for surrounding Huron-Clinton Metroparks (Willow, Oakwoods, Lake Erie).

⁶ It would be misleading to assess the adequacy of regional park resources based on recommended acreage for the City's population, since the regional resource must serve a much broader segment of the metropolitan area.

⁷ Huron Park, Community Center, HCMA leased area, and DNR boat launch.

⁸ Includes all non-motorized pathways owned or maintained by the City.

Recreation Programs

A variety of organized recreation programs are made available to City residents by local organizations. The Parks and Recreation department offers the following programs through the year:

Table 9.5
Recreation Program Offerings,
City of Flat Rock

Activity/Program	Youth	Adult
Art	X	X
Aerobics		X
Aquacise	X	X
Baseball	X	X
Basketball	X	X
Cooking	X	
Dance, Cheering	X	X
Games		X
Golf	X	
Gymnastics	X	
In-line Hockey	X	
Kidfest	X	
Outdoor Concerts	X	X
Parent & Tot Swimming	X	X
Running/Walking	X	X
Safety Town	X	
Science in Nature	X	
Senior Activities		X
Soccer	X	
Softball	X	X
Swimming/Swim Team	X	X
Travel	X	X
Volleyball	X	X
Weights/Fitness	X	X
Yoga		X

Participants' ages range from 2 and older, as the City provides a variety of activities and programs benefiting all residents. The City maintains a senior wing at the new Flat Rock Community Center. Activities and programs offered at the Community Center include the pool, games, dances, movies, knitting, travel, bus transportation, health events and assistance, and fitness. Many seniors also organize their own activities such as pot-luck lunches, birthday celebrations, and special events.

Many not-for-profit organizations offer programs to City residents, including the Flat Rock Area Little League, the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), the Flat Rock Historical Society, and local churches and organizations.

Recreation Deficiencies and Analysis

Tables 9.3 and 9.4 compare the existing community facilities and acreages to recommend standards based on the current population of the City. The figures indicate that if the school sites are counted in the park acreage figures, the City exceeds the recommended acreage of park land of neighborhood and community parks, but is lacking in acreage for mini-parks for the current and projected population.

The City does not have a neighborhood park in the traditional sense, but Civic Center Park functions as both a neighborhood and community park. Many subdivisions are served by passive parks, tot lots, or nearby schools.

Reliance on School Sites

Cooperation between the City and the school districts provide for efficient use of park land. However, some scheduling conflicts exist between school sessions and school year programming at existing City and school facilities. Moreover, there are limitations associated with utilizing the school sites because use of the facilities are first available to school athletic teams and scheduled programs, and then open to the general public on a request basis. Finally, there are no school or public facilities located in the northwestern portion of the City. New subdivisions in these areas now include subdivisions parks, pathways, and open space.

Barrier-Free Facilities

Most parks have been upgraded in recent years and all new facilities were built in compliance with barrier free requirements. The City can work towards providing better access to water related activities at Huroc Park and the DNR boat launch.

Programs

The construction of the new Community Center has increased access to programming for teens and seniors.

Service Areas

New subdivisions have provided additional open space and park land to new residences. The development of the non-motorized pathway has linked several parks and facilities to each other and adjacent neighborhoods.

Administration

The Parks and Recreation Staff has grown exponentially with the opening of the Community Center.

Maintenance

Limited resources and additional facilities will continue to remain a challenge for the City in the near future.

Protection of Open Space

The preservation and protection of open space should be encouraged through Planned United Developments.

10. Future Land Use

Introduction

The Future Land Use Map (Map 5), which is presented in this chapter, is the culmination of the comprehensive planning process. This map is based on consideration of the analyses, goals, policies, strategies and public input set forth in the plan and debated at several meetings.

Future changes to the zoning ordinance text and map are expected over time as the economic, social and physical climates change. The work extensively performed by the Planning Commission within this document should serve as guide in evaluating proposed changes to the zoning ordinance and/or map. A deviation from the Master Plan should be considered with care and the reason for the deviation noted when the Master Plan is updated.

Future Land Use Concept

The Future Land Use Map expands on the patterns that have been created incrementally over a period of several decades. Existing land use patterns and market trends were taken into account when the Future Land Use designations were updated.

The main commercial developments are planned in four compact districts: 1) Neighborhood commercial on the central portion of Gibraltar and Vreeland Roads; 2) the Central Business District, located on Telegraph Road (US 24), south of the railroad viaduct; 3) Transitional commercial on Telegraph Road (US 24) north between the railroad viaduct and Vreeland Road; and 4) Corridor commercial along Telegraph Road, from Vreeland Road north to Brownstown Township. Heavy industrial is planned at the northeast portion of the City, north of Gibraltar Road, near I-75 and a triangular area bounded by Vreeland Road and Peters. Two smaller light industrial areas are planned 1) on the south side of the railroad tracks between Vreeland and Cook Street and 2) west of Hall, south of Vreeland.

The remainder and the vast majority of the City is dedicated to residential development, with single-family residential being the predominant land use category. Five residential classifications of varying density are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Transitional Land Use Planning

The Future Land Use Plan proposes to organize uses based on a transitional land use planning concept, whereby intensive development is buffered from lower density districts by a series of progressively less intensive land uses. For example, lands surrounding the industrial areas are planned as Public, Commercial, or Office. Similarly, Medium Density Residential is planned as a transition in residential density, located between higher and lower density single family development. In addition, two new planned unit developments (PUD's) (Knottingham Estates and Bradbury Park) have been approved since the 1999 plan, which allow mixed-use developments.

Future Land Use Categories

Upon full implementation of the Future Land Use Map, approximately 54.49 percent of the land in the City will be used for residential uses, not including residential uses located in the Central Business District. The industrial land use categories (Light and Heavy) will occupy 23.18 percent. Recreation land, which includes parks and public land uses (e.g. schools and vacant City land), will occupy 10.25 percent. Non-residential uses, including commercial and office, will occupy about 7.24 percent of the total land area. The Gateway Commerce PUD, which includes the Community Center (27 acres), is listed as a Mixed-use land use on the current Future Land Use map.

Thus, the Future Land Use map establishes the framework for a predominantly single family residential community, but the plan provides for expansion of non-residential uses to satisfy projected community and economic development needs. A more detailed review of each land use category follows.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map sets forth recommendations for continued use, new development, and reuse of land in the City over the next two decades. The Future Land Use Map is a link between what exists and the “vision” of what City leaders and citizens would like to strive towards.

Together, the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map provide a flexible guide to promote informed public and private decision-making for the betterment of the community. The land use designations on the map are generalized; they are not intended to be site specific or to follow specific property lines. Although the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map form the basis for the Zoning Ordinance and other rigid legal controls, the Plan and Map are intended to be flexible policy documents and decision-making guides.

General Form of the City

The Future Land Use Map builds upon past growth and prevailing development patterns. According to the map, intensive development is generally limited to two areas: along the Telegraph Road (US 24) corridor and along the Gibraltar Road corridor on the east side of the City.

Commercial and service uses are concentrated along Telegraph Road (US 24). Commercial redevelopment is expected, particularly in the former K-Mart plaza. Specialized retail, office, and residential development are expected to occur in the Central Business district and designated Neighborhood commercial areas.

Two types of intensive development are slated for the east side of the City. Industrial development is indicated on the Future Land Use Map north of Gibraltar Road. An office/retail mixed use pattern is indicated on the map for the land on the south side of Gibraltar Road, between Cahill and Olmstead Roads.

Residential development is specified for most of the remaining land in the City. Single family residential development is the most predominant residential land use classification. Multiple family developments are called for in several locations, to serve as a transition zone between the single

family areas and more intensive land uses. Interspersed within the residential areas are various public uses, such as parks and schools. Bradbury Park and Nottingham Estates are two examples of mixed-use residential trends being planned and developed in the City.

Recommendations for each of the land uses identified on the Future Land Use Map are reviewed in the next several pages.

Map 5 Future Land Use Map

Single Family Residential

The population analysis revealed that the rate of population growth continually increased between 2000-2006. Several events have occurred recently that are expected to affect population growth in future years. Downsizing of the “Auto Industry”, interest rate hikes on new housing, and life style changes make the future residential market uncertain.

The balance of housing types is an important concern with regard to future residential development. About half of the units constructed between 1970 and 1980 were multiple-family units. This trend has reversed. The vast majority of homes built or proposed in the 1990's were detached single-family housing. In the 2000's, the City began to see several different types of housing options: stacked ranches, duplexes, row housing, and condominiums. All future single family developments shall strive to provide higher quality residential housing to reinforce the City's neighborhoods.

The following standards should be used to guide future residential development:

- Ideally, new residential development should occur in planned settings, such as subdivisions or condominium developments, rather than at random along thoroughfares.
- Residential development should be coordinated with the availability of sewers, public water supply, and public roads.
- The creation of "neighborhoods" should be a primary residential development objective. There is a need to coordinate housing construction with the development of schools, parks, community services, and neighborhood shopping.
- Changing lifestyle choices will affect the mix of housing types available in the market.

The Future Land Use Map identifies a few remaining areas where new single family development is appropriate:

- **Southeast part of the City.** One of the few remaining vacant tracks of land, planned for low density residential, is located north of Woodruff Road, east of Hickory Ridge PUD.
- **Northwest part of the City.** Roads must be developed to provide access to large vacant landlocked parcels which are suitable for residential development. The extension of Vreeland Road to Inkster Road would facilitate development in the northwest part of the City.
- **City Center.** The opportunity for new residential development exists in downtown Flat Rock. A variety of housing types could be developed in the downtown area, such as townhouses, loft units, mid-rise, or single-family housing. New housing should be integrated into an overall mixed use development plan for the downtown.

Three Single Family Residential classifications of varying density are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

Low Density Residential



The vast majority of vacant land is designated as Low Density Residential. Low Density Residential is designated in the southeast, central and northwest sections of the City. Smaller areas of Low Density Residential are planned in other areas as well. For example, a Low Density Residential area is designated in the southeast corner of the City. A maximum density of 2.9 units per acre is anticipated in these parts of the City. Larger lots have been designated in these areas of the City for the construction of large, high quality housing.

Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential provides land to meet the single family housing needs of the Community with a density between 3.0-3.63 dwelling units per acre. Where practical, Medium Density Residential shall provide a transition between low and high density residential uses. The largest area planned as Medium Density Residential is located between the commercial corridor along Telegraph Road (US 24) and Arsenal Road. Other locations that are designated as Medium Density Residential include 2 acres located adjacent to Woodruff Road in the southeast section of the City, along E. Huron River Drive, west of Evergreen.



Table 10.1
Proposed Land Uses

	1999		2006	
Proposed Land Use	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent
Low Density Residential	1279.71	32.51%	1393.20	35.40%
Medium Density Residential	281.85	7.16%	241.77	6.14%
High Density Residential	175.2	4.45%	254.23	6.46%
Multiple Family Residential	177.55	4.51%	85.48	2.17%
Mobile Home Park	176.96	4.50%	170.20	4.32%
Central Business District	58.82	1.49%	58.82	1.49%
Neighborhood Commercial	28.88	0.73%	29.13	0.74%
Corridor Commercial	88.72	2.25%	131.15	3.33%
Transitional Commercial	N/A	N/A	43.48	1.10%
Office	225.07	5.72%	22.95	0.58%
Light Industrial	150.45	3.82%	133.78	3.40%
Heavy Industrial	778.52	19.78%	778.52	19.78%
Mixed Use	N/A	N/A	189.77	4.82%
Public Land	144.78	3.68%	129.00	3.28%
Recreational	369.41	9.39%	274.34	6.97%
Total	3,935.82 acres	100.00%	3,935.82 acres	100.00%

High Density Residential

High Density Residential areas are planned to meet the needs of all the Community's single family housing needs. High Density Residential is concentrated in the traditional neighborhoods (e.g. Van Riper Subdivision) located near the Central Business District. The vast majority of land located under this designation is currently developed. A maximum density of 5.5 units per acre is anticipated in these parts of the City.



The High Density Residential designation provides for a transition in density and minimizes the possibility of conflict between adjoining land uses. This designation is generally shown on the Future Land Use Map between dissimilar uses and intensities.

Mobile Home Park



The land use survey completed in 2006 revealed that approximately 4.0 percent of the City's land area is occupied by a mobile home park which is located at the north end of the City, between Telegraph and Peters Roads. One objective of the Master Plan is to seek a more balanced range of housing, yet provide opportunities for construction of various types of housing to meet the needs of residents. Also, it is the intent of the Master Plan to minimize additional demands on public services and minimize any deterrent impact on future low density single family development elsewhere in the

City. Accordingly, the Future Land Use Map does not designate any additional lands for mobile home park development. If the housing balance improves in the future such that additional single family homes are constructed, then future mobile home park development may be appropriate.

If the need for additional mobile home park acreage eventually becomes apparent, the following criteria should be used to identify appropriate mobile home park locations:

- Mobile Home parks should have direct access to arterial or collector roads.
- Mobile home parks should have access to a public sanitary sewer system with adequate capacity or an approved community sanitary sewer and wastewater treatment system.
- Mobile homes should be screened from adjacent conventional single-family development. This screening may consist of abundant landscaping or a natural wooded buffer.
- Generally, mobile home parks should be located adjacent to other high density residential uses, such as multiple family residential developments.
- Mobile home parks should not place a burden on the local school district or the City's ability to provide water, sewer, police and fire protection.

It is important that these developments are designed in a manner that prevents overcrowding and to assure adequate light and air are provided. Recreation facilities, including pathways, should be provided for all age groups and interests. To ensure a safe environment is provided to the residents of such development, mobile home parks shall not exceed eight (8) units per acre.

Multiple-Family Residential

It is intended that areas designated for multiple family use be developed with attached housing at a density of between seven (7) and ten (10) units per acre. The "multiple family" classification may include owner-occupied attached townhouses, apartments, stacked ranches, or mid-rise housing. Multiple family areas are generally located on the Future Land Use Map where they can serve as a transitional zone between commercial or industrial development and lower density single family housing. Multiple family areas are also located where they would have direct access onto major thoroughfares so as to minimize the impact of increased traffic on the road system and on nearby land uses.



The Future Land Use Map identifies four general areas where multiple family housing is appropriate:

- On the west side of Telegraph Road (US 24) at the north end of the City. The location of this parcel, its shape, the character of land use to the north, and other site constraints make this parcel of land suitable for multiple-family.
- On the south side of Gibraltar Road, west of Cahill. Existing multiple family developments are located in this area to include some vacant land that is developable.
- North of Seneca, on the east side of Cook.
- Portions of Knottingham Estates, Bradbury, and Stonewater PUD's provide multiple family condominium options.

Commercial Land Uses

There is a strong potential for commercial development in Flat Rock, as the population, number of households, and total income in the trade area continues to increase. There are four commercial Future Land Use designations on the Future Land Use Map: 1) Neighborhood Commercial; 2) Corridor Commercial; 3) Transitional Commercial; and 4) Central Business District (CBD).



As such development occurs, it is expected that the particular function, or market niche, of each commercial district will become better defined. North Telegraph Road (US 24) is expected to retain

its status as the primary auto-related retail and service district in the City. The downtown area is expected to develop as a mixed use center of office and specialty retail.

Convenience/value strip centers are providing time starved consumers with targeted shopping destinations. Consumers know what they need to buy, drive up, park in front of the store, and make their purchases and leave. Consumers often return to their car simply to drive to the other side of the parking lot to shop at a different store.

According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, typical shopping centers contain between 30,000-150,000 gross square feet of buildings, located on 3-5 acres. The typical anchor of a shopping center is a supermarket or drug store. The anchor store's share of the center's total square footage will be 50-70%. The Primary Trade Area, where 60-80% of the center's sales originate, will be within 5-15 miles. Typical Community centers contain between 100,000-350,000 gross square feet of building, located on 10-40 acres. Community centers will typically contain two or more anchors, including, but not limited to: discount department store; supermarket; drug store; home improvement; or large specialty/discount apparel.

Corridor Commercial



Corridor Commercial is exclusively located along Telegraph Road (US 24), north of Vreeland Road to Brownstown Township and along Vreeland Road, west of Telegraph to the railroad tracks. The Telegraph Road (US 24) business corridor is expected to retain its status as the main auto-related retail/service district in the City. This area is intended to provide the City and neighboring communities with goods and services that are not typically found in CBD or neighborhood commercial developments. The uses are also a more intense land use than found in the other

commercial districts. Examples include: fast food restaurants, building supply; contractor's offices, big box retail development and auto repair shops.

Transitional Commercial

Transitional Commercial land uses are located north of the Telegraph Road viaduct to Vreeland Road. It is the intent of the district to provide a transition of intensity of commercial uses between the Central Business District and auto-related business located in the Corridor Commercial district.

In order for the former K-Mart plaza site (15 acres) to be more marketable as a Community center, more land and access points will needed to be assembled and added.



Neighborhood Commercial

The Future Land Use Map identifies several locations where neighborhood commercial development is appropriate: the north portion of Knottingham Estates, on Vreeland Road; the "Big Lots" shopping center on the south side of Gibraltar Road, east of City Hall; north of Gibraltar, between Hall and Cahill; and the northern portion of Bradbury PUD, along Gibraltar. Future

development in these areas should consist of low-intensity convenience commercial uses (e.g. coffee shop, bread store, cell-phone store, etc) that are compatible with the surrounding residential development.

CBD

In accordance with the mixed use pattern proposed for downtown Flat Rock, specialty retail, office, and professional service uses would be appropriate. Three factors should be considered when evaluating commercial development proposals for downtown: 1) the intensity of any such development must be compatible with existing and future residential development that is located in the downtown area, 2) the intensity of development must be appropriate for the size and configuration of the site on which it is located, and 3) emphasis should be placed on upgrading existing facilities and quality building design.



Office

Since office uses are permitted in the CBD, Office is designated in only a few pockets along Gibraltar Road on the Future land Use Map. A strip of Office is designated between Olmstead and Cahill on the south side of Gibraltar Road. This area is suitable for professional offices such as real estate, medical, dental, and optical, and financial institutions. An additional location is found on the north side of Gibraltar, west of Evergreen.

Mixed-Use PUD

Retail and automotive sales development are appropriate in the Gateway Commerce Center area, as a part of the mixed use development plan anticipated for the area. A broad range of commercial uses, including restaurants, would be appropriate in the Gateway area, because of its proximity to I-75.

Industrial Land Use



The City's industrial attributes include access to freeway transportation, availability of vacant land, and access to rail facilities. Vacant lands on the east side of the City are best-suited to the locational requirements of industry because of the immediate access to I-75. Accordingly, "Heavy Industrial" use is indicated on the Future Land Use Map for the northwest corner of the I-75 and Gibraltar Road interchange (Autoalliance International parcel). Land north of Vreeland Road in the northeastern corner of the City is identified as Heavy Industrial as well.

Land adjacent to the Grand Trunk classification yard south of Vreeland Road is classified as Light Industrial. Another Light Industrial designation is located on the entire west side of Hall Road and on the south side of Vreeland.

An objective of the plan is to maintain heavy industrial uses on the east side of the City to minimize the effect from trucks, noise, fumes, and other impacts on the rest of the City.

Planned Light Industrial is proposed in three locations:

- **As a transitional use along Hall Road.** In this location, the light industrial development will provide a buffer between the more intensive industrial development to the east and the residential development to the west. Ideally, new light industrial development should be contained in planned industrial parks or a similar planned setting.
- **Along the Grand Trunk railroad tracks.** The uses in this district have adapted to unusual site conditions that would not be suitable for most other uses. The Future Land Use Map provides for the continued operation of this existing industrial district, provided that the intensity of development does not increase. However, efforts should be made to upgrade the appearance of these facilities and to provide a more direct outlet onto Telegraph (US 24) and Vreeland Roads.
- **South of Vreeland Road, west side of Hall.** The Future Land Use Map provides for continued use and extension of land which is currently used for industrial purposes. This area is also used as a transition or buffer from the Heavy Industrial district located to the north, across Vreeland.

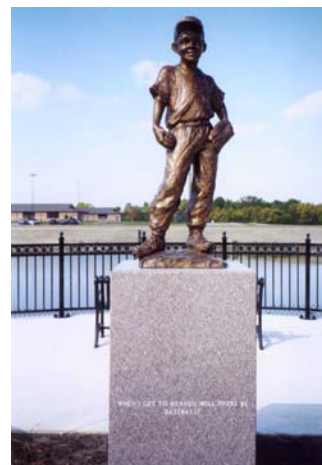
Existing lands currently being used for industrial use in the vicinity of Arsenal Road near the railroad tracks are not designated for industrial use on the Future Land Use Map. The existing industrial uses in this area have been in a state of decline for several years. The sites are too small to accommodate most modern industrial operations. Commercial uses would be more viable on these sites in the long run. Furthermore, commercial development would be more compatible with the existing and future residential uses in the vicinity.

The Grand Trunk rail yard is an established industrial/ transportation use which provides significant economic benefits for the City. The Future Land Use Map anticipates the continued operation of the yard within its existing boundaries.

Recreation

The City has achieved its goal of providing a variety of recreational land and opportunities throughout the City. This is evident on the Future Land Use Map where several different locations are designated as Recreational land use, which are linked by the non-motorized pathway. These areas include:

- Huroc Park is intended to remain as a passive recreational area and pathway trail-head.



- Increased canoe and kayak access to Huron River will be a goal of the City over the next few years to promote tourism and recreational use as part of the regional “blueways” trail- the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail.
- A linear recreation area along the north side of the Huron River is proposed from Huroc Park to the DNR Boat Launch.
- A triangular piece of land located in the northeast corner of the City is designated for recreational use. This parcel is wedged between an industrial and a mobile home district off of Peters Road.



- Civic Center Park, contains the Flat Rock Community Fields, Memory Lane historic village, Flat Rock Library, pathways, tennis courts, basketball court, community playscape, outdoor fountain and ice rink, and warming building.
- The development of the Community Center and non-motorized pathway has opened up more than 27 wooded acres for recreation use.

Public

The Future Land Use Map identifies City facilities, schools and school owned properties, and cemeteries. Key public facilities are identified below:

- **City Hall Complex:** City Hall is unique architectural building, which is located in a highly visible, centrally situated site on Gibraltar Road. Recent improvements include the construction of a new library, an ice skating rink and fountain, expansion to the historic village, and construction of the Community Fields.
- **Community Center:** The Community Center, opened in December 2004, is a 52,000 square foot, two story rustic facility located on 27 wooded wetlands, adjacent to the Gateway Commerce Center and I-75. The Recreation Department and Senior Center is also housed in the Community Center. In addition, the Flat Rock East-West connector non-motorized pathway traverses through the Community Center site.
- **Schools.** Parcels occupied by four schools are identified on the Future Land Use Map:
 1. Flat Rock High School is located on a fifty (50) acre site north of City Hall. This facility should be able to accommodate Flat Rock’s growing population for many years in the future.



2. Barnes Elementary and Simpson Junior High are located adjacent to each other on Meadows Street. Increased access to these schools will be improved with the completion of the Meadows Avenue extension in 2007.
3. Bobcean Elementary School is located on Evergreen, north of Gibraltar Road.
4. Summit Academy South is a K-12 Charter School, located on Olmstead.

The school district owns one other large parcel of land in the City, on the east side of Arsenal Road, south of Matilda. New school construction on this parcel is not anticipated in the near future. Single family development would be appropriate in the event that the school district relinquishes ownership of the parcel.

- **Government Offices/Agencies.** The Department of Public Service intends to build a new office and maintenance building on a parcel of land located on the south side of Vreeland Road between.

Future Roads

The following areas have been designated for road improvements:

New Roads:

- Vreeland Road Extension: between Telegraph Road and Arsenal
- South of the railroad tracks: between Vreeland and Cooke.

Paved Roads

- Woodruff Road
- Cahill Road: between Gibraltar and Vreeland.
- Brown, Leonard, Ruth, Thomas and Wagner Streets.
- Ford, River, and James Streets.
- Seneca, between Cooke and Evergreen

11. Implementation

This chapter of the Master Plan presents tools and techniques that citizens, community leaders, and City staff can use to implement the land use plan. These implementation measures are workable if there are people in the community with vision and tenacity who are willing to invest the time and effort required to make them work. Community improvement requires a compelling vision, persistence, the flexibility to responding to changing needs, opportunities, circumstances, and an ability to achieve consensus.

The tools and techniques identified in this chapter are capable of being implemented under current enabling legislation. Legislation has been proposed in recent years that would give communities additional tools to implement land use recommendations, such as transfer of development rights, regional impact coordination, impact fees, and tax incentives. Inasmuch as adoption of any such new legislation is uncertain, this chapter focuses on the tools that are available under current law.

Public Information and Education

The success of the Master Plan depends to a great extent on efforts to inform and educate citizens about the plan and the need for regulatory measures to implement the plan. Successful implementation requires the support and active participation of residents, property owners, and business owners. A thoughtfully prepared public education program is needed to create a sense of ownership by City residents.

For example, citizens should be made aware of the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas within the City such as groundwater recharge areas, floodplains, and unique open space areas. They must be informed about voluntary and regulatory methods of assuring protection of these areas. Efforts should be made to identify the benefits to be achieved from new regulations. Individual developments should be reviewed not only on site design issues but also on how regional resources (such as natural habitats, migration areas, water recharges areas, greenways, etc.) may be impacted.

Condensed Brochure

The City can help resolve this situation by producing a more reader-friendly form of the Master Plan. Most individuals will not take the time to read a multiple page document. However, a small brochure with reduced versions of the Future Land Use map combined with condensed versions of the Goals and Objectives and Implementation sections would make an attractive alternative. These brochures could be distributed to individuals at City Hall, given to realtors for new and prospective residents, or even mailed to residents and businesses in Flat Rock.

Design Standards Manual

One component in the City's information/education program should be the preparation of a designs standards manual for distribution to developers. The purpose of the manual is to describe the type of development desired in the City and the types of natural features and visual resources the City would like to protect, even as development occurs. The benefit of a design standards manual is that it can be used to communicate concepts and ideas that are not appropriate for the Zoning Ordinance. Design issues typically included in such a manual include architecture, building orientation, parking and circulation, landscaping, utilities, lighting, signs, and access management.

Maintaining the Plan

The Planning Commission and City Council should be actively involved in maintaining the Master Plan. The plan should be a dynamic and living document that is continually reviewed and updated. An annual, joint meeting between the Commission and Council should be held to review the plan and any amendments that may have become necessary. This will help ensure that the plan is not forgotten and that its strategies and recommendations are implemented. As of January 9, 2002, PA 285, as amended, “the Municipal Planning Act” requires communities to do the following: *“At least every 5 years after adoption of the plan, the Planning Commission shall review the plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the plan or adopt a new plan.”* These steps will not only help keep the public aware of the plan, but they will also make sure it does more than “sit on a shelf and collect dust.”

Public Policy and Administrative Actions

Cooperation between Units of Government

Implementation will require cooperation between governmental units. Maximum impact will be achieved only if the City is able to achieve cooperation from other units of government. For example, road improvements will affect quality of life, but the Wayne County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, and SEMCOG make decisions regarding some City roads. Clearly, these other agencies must be aware of the City’s land use planning objectives. The Municipal Planning Act now requires a mandatory review period of Master Plan Amendments by adjacent communities, regional, and county Planning Commissions, and registered public utility and railroad companies.

Development Impact Analysis

Impact analysis is a policy tool that is intended to describe the probable outcome of a proposed development project. Typically, an impact analysis involves the identification, quantification, and evaluation of environmental, economic, social, physical, and other impacts resulting from the development. An impact analysis often will also identify measures that can be taken to alleviate the impacts. For example, a traffic impact analysis would typically identify new signalization, changes in road geometrics, and other measures that might be necessary to accommodate the traffic generated by a proposed development.

An impact analysis is most effective if the City establishes explicit guidelines and then participates with developers in completing the impact analyses. The guidelines should identify appropriate sources of information, formulated to be used in calculating impact, and reasonable assumptions to be used in the analysis. The City can assist by creating and maintaining databases deemed necessary to complete the impact analysis.

The benefit of impact analysis is not just in identifying mitigation measures which would profit from developer participation, but also in identifying future public service capacity problems. Impact analysis identifies the types of development of features that generate the least impact, and by providing information to the City that can be used to study and evaluate development over time.

Prior to making impact analysis a requirement, the City must first identify the types of impacts it wished to evaluate, and it must establish appropriate guidelines for analyzing each impact. Then, the City must determine when an impact analysis is warranted. The need for an impact analysis might

be based on the size of the development (proposed number of dwelling units, floor area of non-residential uses), its location (in or near an environmentally sensitive area, on a high-traveled road), or the type of development. One approach might be to conceptually define a “development of City-wide impact” for which development impact analysis would be required.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Fiscal impact analysis is a special type of impact analysis that involves the projection of direct, current, public costs and revenues associated with a proposed development. It involves a description and quantification of the public costs (police, fire, public works, transportation, and educational facilities) that come about as a result of development, as well as the revenues generated from property taxes, user charges, intergovernmental transfers, and other fees.

As with other types of impact analysis, an impact analysis is most effective if the City establishes explicit guidelines and then participates with the developer in completing the impact analysis. The guidelines should identify the appropriate method (average-costing, marginal-costing, or econometric), sources of base data, and appropriate demographic multipliers.

Fiscal impact is one of several other types of analyses that the City could complete in the course of reviewing a proposed development. Consequently, the results of a fiscal impact analysis should be just one part of development review and should be the sole basis for approval or disapproval of a particular land use.

Establishing Priorities

The Master Plan contains a multitude of recommendations, and there may be insufficient staff or volunteer support to implement all of the recommendations in a carefully planned, deliberate manner. Consequently, a process for establishing priorities must be established as soon as the plan is adopted. Participants involved in setting priorities should include City department heads and appropriate staff, the Planning Commission, and other City officials who should be involved in implementation of the plan.

Land Use Controls

Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Control Ordinance outlines the procedures and standards used by the City in exercising its authority to review and approve the proposed subdivisions, pursuant to the Subdivision Control Act (Michigan Public Act 288 of 1967). Subdivision control ordinances typically require the appropriate designs of lots and blocks, subdivision access, and such necessary internal improvements as streets and drainage, and water and sewer facilities.

The Subdivision Control Act places restrictions on a municipality’s power to approve or reject plats, indicating that a rejection may be based on any requirement other than those included in Section 105 of the Act. Nevertheless, many legal experts believe that the Act gives municipalities much greater authority than they have typically exercised. Flat Rock’s Subdivision Control Ordinance should be thoroughly reviewed and revised to exercise the City’s full scope of authority in regulating subdivision design, environmental impacts, relationship to adjacent uses, and impact on level of public services.

Zoning Regulations

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by the City to implement the Master Plan. According to Section 203 (1) of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006), “The zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.” Two categories of revisions to the Zoning Ordinance are necessary to achieve many of the recommendations set forth in the Master Plan, including revisions dealing with Conventional Zoning Procedures and Innovate Zoning Techniques.

Conventional Zoning Procedures

Rezoning to Implement the Master Plan

The land use classifications on the Future Land Use map provide the basis for evaluating future rezoning requests. Zoning actions that are consistent with the Future Land Use map usually receive deferential and favorable judicial review if challenged. The Master Plan should be the principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests.

Planned Development

Planned development involves the use of special zoning requirements and review procedures that provide design and regulatory flexibility, so as to encourage innovation in land use planning and design. Planned developments should achieve a higher quality of development than might otherwise be possible. Continued use of planned developments is recommended to achieve development in accordance with the goals and objectives of this plan. Planned development can be used as a regulatory tool to permit open space zoning or cluster development, preservation of natural features, and to facilitate mixed use redevelopment in the downtown area.

Performance Standards

Rather than simply regulate development on the basis of dimensional standards, many communities are establishing performance standards to regulate development based on the permissible effects or impacts of a proposed use. Performance standards should be used to supplement conventional zoning standards for the purposes of regulating noise, dust, vibration, odor, glare and heat, safety hazards, and environmental impacts, such as air and water pollution. The complexity of the performance standards should be based in part on the capacity of City staff to administer the testing and measurement of the standards.

Performance standards can be particularly useful in achieving environmental and resource protection goals. If based on a strong body of research, standards can be developed that relate to critical environmental areas (such as floodplains, wetlands, lakes, woodlands, groundwater recharge areas, and unique wildlife habitats), and natural resource areas (such as forest lands).

Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning allows a developer to exceed the dimensional or density limitations in the Zoning Ordinance if the developer agrees to fulfill conditions specified in the Ordinance. Incentive zoning should be considered to promote innovative land planning techniques identified in the Master Plan. For example, a possible increase in density can be used as an incentive for developments that implement open space zoning standards.

Setback and Other Standards

It is important to review the required setbacks and other dimensional standards to be certain that they promote the desired type of development and respect historical setbacks and architectural scale. For example, if side or rear parking is preferred, then it may be necessary to mandate a build-to line in the Central Business District that is close to the front lot line.

Innovative Zoning Techniques**Overlay Zoning**

Overlay zoning allows the City to impose a new set of regulations on a special area within an existing zoning district. In an area where an overlay zoning is established, the property is placed simultaneously in two zones, and the property may be developed only under the applicable conditions and requirements of both zones. Thus, the overlay district regulations supplement the regulations of the underlying zoning district. Overlay zoning has been used in other communities to address special conditions and features, such as historic areas, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas, without disrupting the underlying zoning plan.

Open Space (Cluster) Zoning

Open space zoning is an alternative to conventional zoning that is intended to promote preservation of small town character and protection of natural habitats. The search for an alternative to conventional zoning came with the realization that conventional zoning often results in residential sprawl that consumes large amounts of land and divides open spaces into fragments that are not conducive to water recharge areas, wildlife habitat, large wood lots, or other natural open space uses.

Open space zoning (also known as cluster zoning) provides for group dwellings onto part of the parcel so that the remainder can be preserved as open space. The goal is to devise better uses of undeveloped property than results from proceeding on a lot-by-lot basis.

Zoning Ordinance review procedures must be revised to be no more difficult for open space developments than for conventional subdivisions. In fact, the City should consider making open space development mandatory where it is feasible to contribute to the open space network. The City should strive to require new subdivisions and traditional neighborhoods to contain open spaces that are connected to and accessible from adjoining neighborhoods.

Development Agreement

Although there is no explicit legislative authority for such agreements, many Michigan communities have used development agreements to achieve a mutual understanding between the developer and City concerning the conditions under which development can occur. Development agreements are often negotiated as part of a planned development approval, allowing the community and developer to address complex issues that cannot be adequately addressed on a typical site plan. Development agreements might prove useful to achieve desired developments, especially if or when a mixed use development is proposed.

Conditional Zoning

An owner of land may voluntarily offer in writing, and the City may approve, certain use and development of the land as a condition to a rezoning of the land or an amendment to a zoning map. In approving the conditions, the City may establish a time period during which the conditions apply

to the land. If the conditions are not satisfied within the time period specified, then the land shall revert to its former zoning classification. The city cannot add to or alter the conditions approved under the time period specified. However, the time period may be extended upon the application of the landowner and approval by the City. Finally, the City cannot require a landowner to offer conditions as requirement for rezoning.

Public Facility Improvements

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Establishment of a Traditional Neighborhood Development Boundary is proposed as one of the primary methods to manage growth in a manner that achieves efficient use of urban and governmental services. Within the TND the City would incorporate TND characteristics, such as pedestrian scale architecture, front porches, pedestrian accessibility, and garages located to the rear of the home.

Capital Improvements Plan

The City of Flat Rock should adopt a comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan on an annual basis. The Municipal Planning Act (Michigan Public Act 285 of 1931) requires a comprehensive plan stating, “For the purpose of furthering the desirable future development of the municipality under the master plan the city planning commission, after the commission shall have adopted a master plan, shall prepare coordinated and comprehensive programs of public structures and improvements. The commission shall annually prepare such a program ensuing 6 years, which program shall show those public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, which in the commission’s judgment will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the 6-year period.” The program should set the City’s priorities for infrastructure improvements, utility upgrades, development and improvement of community facilities, and the purchase of major pieces of equipment. The program should be prepared and adopted by both the Planning Commission and City Council and then reviewed annually at a joint meeting of both.

Capital programming influences land development decisions. By properly coordinating utility extensions and other capital improvements with its planning and growth management program, the City can control the direction and pace of development. Capital programming should be viewed as more than just a ministerial act. Using the Master Plan to delineate the location and type of development desired, and the Capital Improvements Plan to schedule the provision of services, the City can inform developers when development of a particular parcel will be encouraged and then what type of development that will be allowed.

The need for several important capital improvements has been identified in this Master Plan. These include:

- Road development.
- A long-term plan for full-time fire protection service is needed, particularly if new industrial and commercial developments are constructed.
- A road improvement plan must be prepared to address the congestion problems that are imminent if development trends continue.

- The Capital Improvements Plan must identify feasible funding options for each improvement, such as developer financing, special assessments, grants, loans, and/or a dedicated millage.

City Identity

It is recommended that the City, in cooperation with property owners, work toward developing a distinct image and identity for the City. A task force consisting of design professionals, such as architects and planners, residents, and City officials should be formed for the purpose of defining the appropriate City image and identifying site and building standards that convey the image.

Traditional Neighborhood Development Principles

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) principles mirror the design of American cities from colonial times to pre-World War II. Communities that were developed prior to WW-II are still desirable as demonstrated in the recent trend of people moving back to smaller communities. TND principals are being rediscovered, and they are in many places being incorporated in new developments or redevelopments to achieve the following goals:

1. Minimize the dependence on the automobile to reduce traffic and congestion.
2. Promote a mix of uses that are within walking distance from each neighborhood; including schools, parks, stores, and offices, to provide pedestrian access to desired goods and services.
3. Provide a wide range of housing types and employment opportunities that form a complete and desirable community for all age groups and economic classes.
4. Define public spaces, encourage the public to walk, meet each other and watch over each other's property.
5. Design well-placed civic buildings to promote community pride and provide areas for meaningful assembly.

To achieve the previous listed goals, the following design guidelines should be followed and made part of requirements in the Zoning Ordinance:

Design Guidelines
<u>General</u> ▪ All lots shall share a common frontage that faces a street or square. ▪ All buildings shall have their openings facing the street. ▪ <u>All uses</u> shall be conducted within an enclosed building, with the exception of outdoor seating. ▪ No building shall be located more <u>than 50 feet</u> from the street centerline. ▪ Similar land uses shall face across streets; dissimilar uses may abut at rear lot lines. ▪ Land uses considered slightly more or slightly less intense may share common site lot lines. ▪ All streets, alleys, and sidewalks shall connect with other streets; cul-de-sacs and T-turnarounds should be discouraged or permitted on a temporary basis only. ▪ A continuous network of alleys shall run behind all building lots in the CBD . ▪ Parking lots shall be developed to the rear or sides of the building. ▪ Parking lots shall be accessible via a network of alleys.

Design Guidelines

Neighborhoods

- Each neighborhood shall have a gathering space such as a school, park, or open space.
- A small playground (tot-lot) shall be located within walking distance of every dwelling.
- Elementary schools should be located so that every child can walk to school.
- Local streets should be narrow and curvilinear to slow traffic
- Permit a variety of housing types within the neighborhood.
- Streets shall be lined and shaded with street trees.
- Garage doors should not front the street.
- A minimum of 25% of all houses shall have front porches that can encroach in the front yard setback.
- The center of the neighborhood should be within a five-minute walk from all buildings located in the neighborhood.
- Each dwelling unit should display unique architecture and landscaping.
- Shops and offices shall be located on the edge of the neighborhood.

Commercial

- Commercial lots in the neighborhood shall have a maximum width of 50 feet and no less than 25 feet.
- Store front entries shall face a street and be at grade to meet ADA requirement.
- All buildings shall be at least two stories (20 feet) in height, and features shall be incorporated into the building design.
- The façade shall cover at least 70% of the front lot line.
- The unbuilt portion of the front lot line shall be covered by ornamental fencing, landscaping, or a low (30”) brick screening wall.

Civic

- Prominent sites shall be reserved for civic buildings.
- Civic buildings shall be at least two stories in height; zoning district height restrictions shall not apply to civic buildings.
- More prominent, monumental buildings and structures that employ enhanced height, massing, distinctive architectural treatments, or other distinguishing features shall generally occupy focal points or points of visual termination.
- More than one building may be permitted per lot, provided that the buildings relate to one another both visually and functionally. Multiple buildings should front one another or be organized around courtyards that encourage pedestrian activity and social interaction.
- Civic buildings shall exhibit formal architectural features. As a general rule, civic buildings shall have detailed entrance features, be constructed of high quality building materials, avoid long monotonous walls without windows, and avoid long, uninterrupted roof lines.

Commercial Corridor Enhancement

Plans should be developed to improve the aesthetics and appearance of crucial commercial corridors. A corridor improvement plan should be developed to revise and rehabilitate the Telegraph Road commercial corridor and to promote appropriate and high-quality development along Gibraltar Road. This plan should include the proposed methods, designs, and financing for improving the streetscape, landscaping, and utilities along these thoroughfares. Items that should be

addressed but not limited to include: Central Business District boundaries, additional landscaping and street trees, decorative lighting and street fixtures, underground conduits for utilities, on-street parking and other traffic calming measures, and traffic circulation and access management.

Entrances and Gateways

Along with the commercial corridors, attention must be paid to the various entrance points into Flat Rock. The entranceways offer the first impression of Flat Rock to visitors, and also set the tone for the appearance of the rest of the City. The City installed several gateway signs at most of the entrances into the City. A maintenance plan to maintain these entranceways could be included within the corridor improvement plan.

The past addition of the historic clock at Aspen Street and Gibraltar Road serves as an entrance into the High School, Community Fields, Library, and Historic Village Complex.

Extend Streetscape and DDA Boundaries

Extending the streetscape from existing locations will further improve the appearance of Flat Rock's most visible commercial corridor along Telegraph Road. For instance, the streetscape could be extended south to Will Carlton Road where an entry feature could be tied in with the streetscape. The DDA has had a proactive program of streetscape improvements within the CBD for the last several years.

Economic Development and Redevelopment Mechanisms

Redevelopment with Quality Design

Redevelopment of the City's vacant commercial sites on Gibraltar and Telegraph Roads is necessary to turn Flat Rock into a retail destination. However, these sites should be redeveloped in a proper manner that ensures they will be aesthetically pleasing and not injurious to surrounding properties and neighborhoods. Design guidelines and standards should be applied to all new commercial developments as well as expansions and renovations.

Downtown Design

The Downtown area must also be redeveloped if Flat Rock is to become a greater destination point. Care must be taken to maintain Flat Rock's unique Downtown character while simultaneously promoting high-quality, mixed-use redevelopment. A significant step toward this effort would be to evaluate and redraw, if necessary, the boundaries of the Central Business District that better reflect the area that actually functions or has potential to function as a viable Central Business District. Overlay zoning standards may be needed to protect Flat Rock's traditional downtown area. Such amendments can ensure sites are redeveloped in the following manner: buildings oriented with main entrances toward Telegraph Road; building facades that are historically accurate and brought to the edge of the sidewalk; an emphasis on pedestrian circulation and not automobile circulation; adequate landscaping and streetscape features; an encouragement of mixed uses, especially residential uses on second floors or in adjoining areas; and, adequate, but not overly provided, parking. An alternative method of achieving the same results would be the use of a planned unit development with appropriate design guidelines.

Whatever method is chosen, a Downtown Development Strategic Plan should be developed as called for in the DDA's Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan. All concerned parties

should participate, including the City Council, DDA, Planning Commission, and City staff. Once developed, such a plan should be strictly adhered to.

Land Acquisition

Land acquisition is an important supplement to land use regulations as a means of managing growth and protecting natural resources. Land acquisition can be used to control the use of a specific acquired parcel, or it can be used to influence the general growth of the City. Local land acquisition programs are generally funded either by local property taxes, such as a dedicated millage or general fund revenues, or by grant programs. For example, the City could use grant programs sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to acquire park land and open space throughout the City, especially along the Huron River. The City may also consider purchasing a parcel along Hall Road to develop an industrial district retention pond to encourage light industrial development.

There are several approaches to acquiring interest in land to advance the goals of the Master Plan. Generally, the City can take direct action to acquire property interest or it can rely on private voluntary land protection efforts.

Direct Action by the City

If the City takes direct action, it can acquire property in fee simple or it can acquire a partial interest through acquisition of easements. Fee simple acquisition provides the greatest level of control over the use of a parcel, but it also is the most expensive method of acquisition. In addition to the acquisition costs, fee simple acquisition removes the property from the tax rolls, resulting in a decrease in property tax revenue.

Easements are distinct property rights that may be sold separately from other rights to the City. Easements are effective for preserving sensitive lands, providing public access along rivers or greenways, and allowing property owners to obtain income, estate, and property tax benefits for land stewardship while they continue to live on their land.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Michigan Public Act 451 of 1994) addresses the issues of conservation easements in two parts of the Act. Part 21, Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement, allows for conservation easements and historic preservation easements. A conservation easement provides limitation on the use of land or body of water, or requires or prohibits certain acts on the land or body of water in order to maintain the similar use or condition. A historic preservation easement provides a limitation on the use of a structure or site that is listed as a national historic landmark. Both easements are granted to a governmental entity, charitable or educational association, corporation, trust, other legal entity. Part 361, Farmland and Open Space Preservation, provides for agricultural conservation easements in which the land owner relinquishes to the public his/her development rights and makes a covenant running with land to prevent future development.

Private Voluntary Land Protection Efforts

Instead of taking direct action, the City can encourage and rely on private voluntary land protection efforts. The term “voluntary” has two meanings in this context:

- Property owners can voluntarily donate land or easements in the interest of conserving natural resources or natural features.
- Private land trusts can be voluntarily established to make use of a variety of land acquisition and conservation techniques to facilitate natural resource protection.

Other than acquisition at full market value, private tools available to preserve land include:

- Donation of land or bargain sale – acquisition at below full market value.
- Options to buy – often used to secure a parcel of land while funding is being obtained.
- Rights-of-first-refusal – used to tie up a parcel without having to purchase it immediately.
- Leases – temporary control without the expense of acquisition.
- Pre-acquisition by a land trust – the land trust serves as the intermediary for the public agency, such as the City.
- Conservation investment – a real estate syndication for the purpose of resource protection.

Following are several variations on the land preservation techniques described above.

Land Conservancy Activities Involving the Government

Private Donations of Land to the Government

Landowners are sometimes willing to simply donate their land to the City for open space or natural area preservation purposes. A donation is executed when the entire parcel or a portion is deeded to a government agency for conservation purposes. The landowner has the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and also may obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The City obtains the benefit of preserving the land.

Private Donations of Conservation Easements to the Government

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate a conservation easement on a parcel of land, which is a voluntary agreement used to transfer certain rights concerning the use of the land to a government agency or legal entity. The conservation easement results in permanent restrictions that run with the land. The landowner might retain the right to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been transferred to the government to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would have the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and may also obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The City obtains the benefit of preserving the land, and avoids some of the costs of maintaining the property.

Private Donation of Land to the Government, with Right to Use the Land Until the Donor's Death

A landowner sometimes wants to retain full title to a parcel of land and be able to continue to use it, until his or her death, but wishes to have the land transferred to the government at that time (or

some other specified time). The landowner can thereby gain some tax benefits, but continue to use the land until his or her death.

Government Purchase of Conservation Easements

A landowner may not be willing to donate a conservation easement but may be willing to sell such an easement to the government. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been sold to the government to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would receive some payment for the easement, and may obtain some benefits on estate taxes and property taxes. This alternative would cost the City some revenue, but the cost would be less than the purchase of all the rights to the land.

Government Leasing of Land

A landowner may not be willing to lose permanent title to a parcel of land, but may be willing to lease it to the government for public uses for a specified period of time.

Placement of Land Under the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Michigan Public Act 451 of 1994)

Private citizens and local government can protect land for specified periods of time by utilizing this State law. The landowner can thereby reduce the property taxes on the land, and the government gains the benefit of maintaining the land as open space.

Land Conservancy Activities Involving a Private Conservancy Organization

Most of the transactions between a landowner and the government can also occur between the landowner and a private land conservancy organization such as The Nature Conservancy, the American Farmland Trust, and the Trust for Public Land. The conservancy organization would then either manage the land itself or convey it, at some future date, to a government agency when public funds become available.

Private Donations of Land to a Conservancy Organization

Landowners are sometimes willing to simply donate their land to a conservancy organization for open space or natural area preservation purposes. A donation is executed when the entire parcel or a portion is deeded to a conservancy or nonprofit organization for conservation purposes. The landowner has the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and also may obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The conservancy organization obtains the benefit of preserving the land.

Private Donations of Conservation Easements to the Government

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate a conservation easement on a parcel of land, which is a voluntary agreement used to transfer certain rights concerning the use of the land to a conservancy or nonprofit organization. The conservation easement results in permanent restrictions that run with the land. The landowner might retain the right to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been transferred to the conservancy organization to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would have the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and may also obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The conservancy organization obtains the benefit of preserving the land, and avoids some of the costs of maintaining the property.

Private Donation of Land to the Government, with Right to Use the Land Until the Donor's Death

A landowner sometimes wants to retain full title to a parcel of land and be able to continue to use it, until his or her death, but wishes to have the land transferred to a conservancy organization at that time (or some other specified time). The landowner can thereby gain some tax benefits, but continue to use the land until his or her death.

Government Purchase of Conservation Easements

A landowner may not be willing to donate a conservation easement but may be willing to sell such an easement to a conservancy organization. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses such as build homes or change its scenic character, has been sold to the conservancy organization to ensure no changes are made to the land. The landowner would receive some payment for the easement, and may obtain some benefits on estate taxes and property taxes.

Government Leasing of Land

A landowner may not be willing to lose permanent title to a parcel of land, but may be willing to lease it to a conservancy organization for public uses for a specified period of time.

Special Purpose Districts

Certain recommendations in the Master Plan can be best accomplished using a targeted approach, through creation of special districts. Special purpose districts that may be applicable in Flat Rock include the following:

Corridor Improvement Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 280 of 2005)

The Corridor Improvement Authority Act provides for the establishment of a corridor improvement authority to promote the economic growth of districts within the City. The authority would have an ability to correct and prevent deterioration in business districts, encourage historic preservation, authorize acquisition and disposal of property, create and implement development plans and development areas in the districts, to levy and collect taxes, issue bonds, and authorize the use of tax increment financing.

Downtown Development Authority DDA Act (Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975)

The Downtown Development Authority Act provides for the establishment of a downtown development authority (DDA) in the City's business district, upon finding by the City Council that the DDA is necessary "to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation where possible in its business district, to eliminate the causes of deterioration, and to promote economic growth."

The creation of a DDA has the benefit of bringing business people and City official together in a cooperative setting to address problems in the business district. The Act also provides a means of financing the DDA's activities, including a maximum two-mill property tax within the district, tax increment financing, and issuance of bonds. In other communities, DDA's have undertaken streetscape and road improvements, utility replacement, acquisition and demolition of blighted buildings, parking lot construction, and other improvement activities.

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Financing Act (MI Publication 381 of 1996)

The act authorizes municipalities the power to create a brownfield redevelopment authority to use tax increment financing for environmental remediation of brownfield sites to promote revitalization, redevelopment, and reuse of certain property (if Core Community).

Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities have the powers and duties to permit the issuance of bonds and other evidences of indebtedness by an authority, to authorize the acquisition and disposal of certain property; to authorize certain funds, to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain state officers and agencies and to authorize and permit the use of certain tax increment financing.

Historical Neighborhood Tax Increment Finance Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 530 of 2004)

The Historical Neighborhood Tax Increment Finance Authority Act provides for the establishment of a historical neighborhood tax increment finance authority to promote residential and economic growth. The authority would have an ability to correct and prevent deterioration in neighborhoods and certain other areas, authorize acquisition and disposal of property, create and implement development plans and development areas, issue bonds, and authorize the use of tax increment financing.

Local Development Financing Act (Michigan Public Act 281 of 1986)

The Local Development Financing Act provides for the establishment of a local development finance authority (LDFA) to undertake economic development activities, such as promoting manufacturing of goods or materials, agricultural processing, or high technology activity, to prevent conditions of unemployment and promote economic growth. A typical LDFA projects might involve the construction of roads and utilities deemed necessary for a specific manufacturing or high technology development project. LDFA activities are most frequently financed through tax increment financing or through issuance of revenue bonds that are retired using tax increment revenues.

Neighborhood Area Improvements Act (Michigan Public Act 208 of 1949)

The Neighborhood Area Improvements Act authorizes cities to designate neighborhood areas for the purpose of planning and carrying out local public improvements for the prevention of blight in such areas. The Act call for preparation of neighborhood betterment plans by the Planning Commission. The Act also provides methods of financing improvements within the neighborhoods, including special assessment districts and issuance of neighborhood improvement bonds.

Technology Park Development Act (Michigan Public Act 385 of 1984)

The Technology Park Development Act provides for the establishment of technology park districts and to provide certain facilities located in these districts with tax exemptions. The district is to contain one or more of the following uses: Research and development; a high technology service such the providing of services including computer, information transfer, communication, distribution, processing, administrative, laboratory, experimental, developmental, technical, or testing services; a high technology service such as activities including the manufacture of goods or materials, the processing of goods or materials by physical or chemical change, computer related activities, communications, robotics, biological or pharmaceutical industrial activity, or technology oriented or emerging industrial or business activity not involving heavy manufacturing; and/or, a

business activity that has its primary function of developing, improving, or creating new or existing products.

Financing Tools

Successful implementation of the Master Plan will depend on the ability of the City to secure necessary funding. Besides the general fund, the following sources of revenue are available to the City:

Bond Programs

Bonds are one of the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for specific community projects and may not be used for other purposes. The general public usually pays off these bonds with property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of public projects that generate revenues. These bonds are then retired using income generated by the project, such as water and sewer service charges.

Dedicated Millage

A property tax millage can be used to generate revenue for a specific purpose. Many communities have decided on a dedicated millage because voters are increasingly wary of approving millage increases for non-specified purposes. Voter approval is required before a millage is subject to periodic renewal by resident vote. A community, for example, may initiate a special land acquisition fund that is supported by a one-quarter mill property tax. The land acquisition fund would be a useful tool to promote open space preservation in the City.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grants are available for park development and land acquisition for communities that have an approved recreation plan. Eligible projects include acquisition of land or rights in land for recreational uses or for protection of the land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty. Development of public outdoor recreation facilities is also eligible. Funds are provided through the sale of oil and mineral leases on State land. Local contributions equal to at least twenty-five (25) percent of the project cost are required. There is no minimum or maximum amount for land acquisition projects. The minimum allowable grant for development projects is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$500,000. The City has effectively used this program in the past to finance park land acquisition and development. The City may wish to seek MNRTF funding in the future for acquisition of land primarily for open space and natural resource preservation purposes.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)

SAFETEA-LU is the successor to the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) authorizing highway safety, transit, and other surface transportation programs, including regional pathways and trailway systems, for the next five years. Congress has authorized \$244.1 billion to implement programs, with Michigan's apportionment coming to just over \$643 million. Michigan will receive approximately \$239 million more in federal highway funds each year than under the original TEA-21. With the increased funding, many new projects and programs will be possible.

Special Assessments

Special assessments are compulsory contributions collected from the owners of property benefited by specific public improvements (paving, drainage improvements, etc.) to defray the costs of such improvements. Special assessments are apportioned according to the assumed benefits to the property affected.

Tax Increment Financing

The Downtown Development Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975) and the Local Development Finance Authority Act (Michigan Public Act 281 of 1986) authorize tax increment financing. When a tax increment finance district is established, the state equalized value of all properties in the district is recorded. Every year thereafter, the property tax revenue generated by any increase in the total state equalized value is “captured” by the DDA or LDFA to finance the improvements set forth in a development plan. Often, revenue bonds are issued to finance improvements, and the tax increment revenues are used to repay bonds.

Appendix A: Resolution of Adoption

City of Flat Rock
25500 Gibraltar Road
Flat Rock, Michigan 48134-1399



Phone: (734) 782-2455
Fax: (734) 783-0304

Website: www.flatrockmi.org

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT CITY OF FLAT ROCK, MICHIGAN MASTER PLAN 2007-20012

WHEREAS, The City of Flat Rock, Michigan Master Plan was last adopted November 1999;
and

WHEREAS, the Township Planning act 285, of 1931, as amended, requires the Planning Commission to review the Master Plan at least every 5 years after adoption to amend the plan or adopt a new plan; and,

WHEREAS, A Letter of Intent (April 3, 2006) to update the plan was mailed to: 1) all planning commissions located within or contiguous to the municipality, 2) the regional planning commission (SEMCOG); 3) the county planning commission (Wayne); and each registered public utility company and railroad company owning or operating a public utility or railroad within the City; and,

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2006, the Planning Commission held a kick-off meeting to review existing documents, demographics, base maps, and trends for the purpose of updating the Master Plan; and,

WHEREAS, a public workshop was held on December 11, 2006 by the Planning Commission to receive public comment; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council reviewed the draft plan and authorized the distribution of the plan on June 4, 2007 for the required period; and,

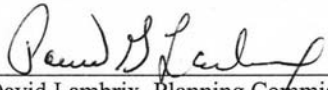
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 24, 2007, after the required review period, to discuss and consider the proposal plan; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City of Flat Rock Planning Commission hereby adopts the Master Plan update, as amended, dated September 24, 2007 including text, descriptive material, and maps.

MAYOR
Richard C. Jones
CITY CLERK, Lorene Butski
TREASURER, Brenda Tallman
ASSESSOR, Timothy E. O'Donnell

COUNCILMEMBERS
Jonathan D. Dropiewski
Mayor Pro-Tempore
Eric D. Painter Kenneth R. Wrobel
Ricky L. Tefend Paul R. Gagne
James E. Martin

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Flat Rock Planning Commission hereby directs the distribution of the adopted plan to the City Council and required entities in accordance with Sec. 8. (5) of PA 285, of 1931, as amended.



David Lambrix, Planning Commission Chair

Ayes: 6 (Lambrix, Bobcean, Farrar, Hoover,
Little, Ratz)

Nays: 0
September 24, 2007
Date of Adoption

McKenna Associates, Incorporated

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Terry Croad, AICP, ASLA Project Director/Manager
Heather McPhail Associate Planner
Sabah Aboody-Keer Map Production
John Otwell..... Graphic Designer

NOTES: