



City of West Branch Master Plan 2019

West Branch, Michigan

Ogemaw County

www.westbranch.com

Adopted: March 4, 2019



**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION
BY THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL
City of West Branch Master Plan**

WHEREAS: The City of West Branch, Ogemaw County, Michigan established a Planning Commission under State of Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, and;

WHEREAS: The City of West Branch Planning Commission is required by Section 31 of P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended to make and approve a master plan as a guide for the development within the City and;

WHEREAS: The City of West Branch Planning Commission, in accordance with Section 39(2) of the Act, notified the adjacent communities, public utilities, road/transit agencies, and the Ogemaw County Board of Commissioners of the intent to develop a plan and, in accordance with Section 41(2) of the Act, distributed the final draft to the same for review and comment, and;

WHEREAS: The plan was presented to the public at a hearing held on January 8, 2019, before the Planning Commission, with notice of the hearing being published in the Ogemaw County Herald on December 19, 2018, in accordance with Section 43(1) of the Act, and;

WHEREAS: The City of West Branch Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed plan, considered public comment, and adopted the proposed plan by resolution on February 26, 2019, and;

WHEREAS: The West Branch City Council has, by resolution, asserted the right to approve or reject the plan;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

The content of this document, together with all maps attached to and contained herein are hereby adopted by the West Branch City Council as the City of West Branch Master Plan on this fourth day of March, 2019.

Motion: Mayor Paul Frechette

Second: Council Member William Ehinger

Ayes: Bennet, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman

Nays: None

Absent: None

Certification

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted at the March 4, 2019, meeting of the West Branch City Council.


_____, Mayor
City of West Branch


_____, Clerk
City of West Branch



WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL

Paul Frechette	Mayor
John Dantzer	Clerk/Treasurer
Dan Weiler	Council Member
Michael Jackson	Council Member
Joanne Bennett	Council Member
Cathy Zimmerman	Council Member
Ellen Pugh	Council Member
Bill Ehinger	Council Member

CITY OF WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION

Robert David	Chairman
Michael Jackson	Member
Kara Fachting	Member
Jan Hasty	Member
Corine Lucynski	Member
Lisa Jensen	Member
Evelyn Schenk	Member

CONSULTANTS

2014 Master Plan: Lapham Associates

2019 Master Plan Update: NEMCOG (Northeast Michigan Council of Governments)



www.nemcog.org

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Chapter 1

Planning Process



A Master Plan is a tool used by municipalities to analyze the current state of their communities and to plan for their future growth, development, and needs. This document attempts to address this process by detailing the City of West Branch's current conditions and looks to the future to take specific actions to address the needs of the community.

A Master Plan can generally be described by the following key characteristics:

- **Future Oriented:** The Plan concerns itself with long-range planning in guiding growth and land use needs. The plan is not only a picture of the community today, but a guide to how the community should evolve over the next five to ten years in response to growth.
- **General:** The plan establishes broad principles and policies to address future growth and land use needs.
- **Comprehensive:** The plan addresses all types of land uses and the practical geographic boundaries of each.
- **A Plan:** The land use plan is a tangible document, which consists of both text, and maps, with maps typically illustrating the policies set forth within the text.

The purposes of the Master Plan are intended to preserve and create a community that is best for its residents and its neighbors. In order to achieve this, the Plan is written as an analysis of what the community has and a guide regarding how to use it when making land use decisions.

Master Plans serve to:

- **Seek** citizen input on needs and services.
- **Provide** an overall perspective of the land, how it is being used, and how it should be used in the future.
- **Create** a general statement of the goals and objectives of the community
- **Preserve** the quality of life in the community.
- **Promote** public health, safety, and welfare for the region's citizens.
- **Guide** the use of limited resources and preservation in the most effective manner possible through clear and logical zoning decisions.

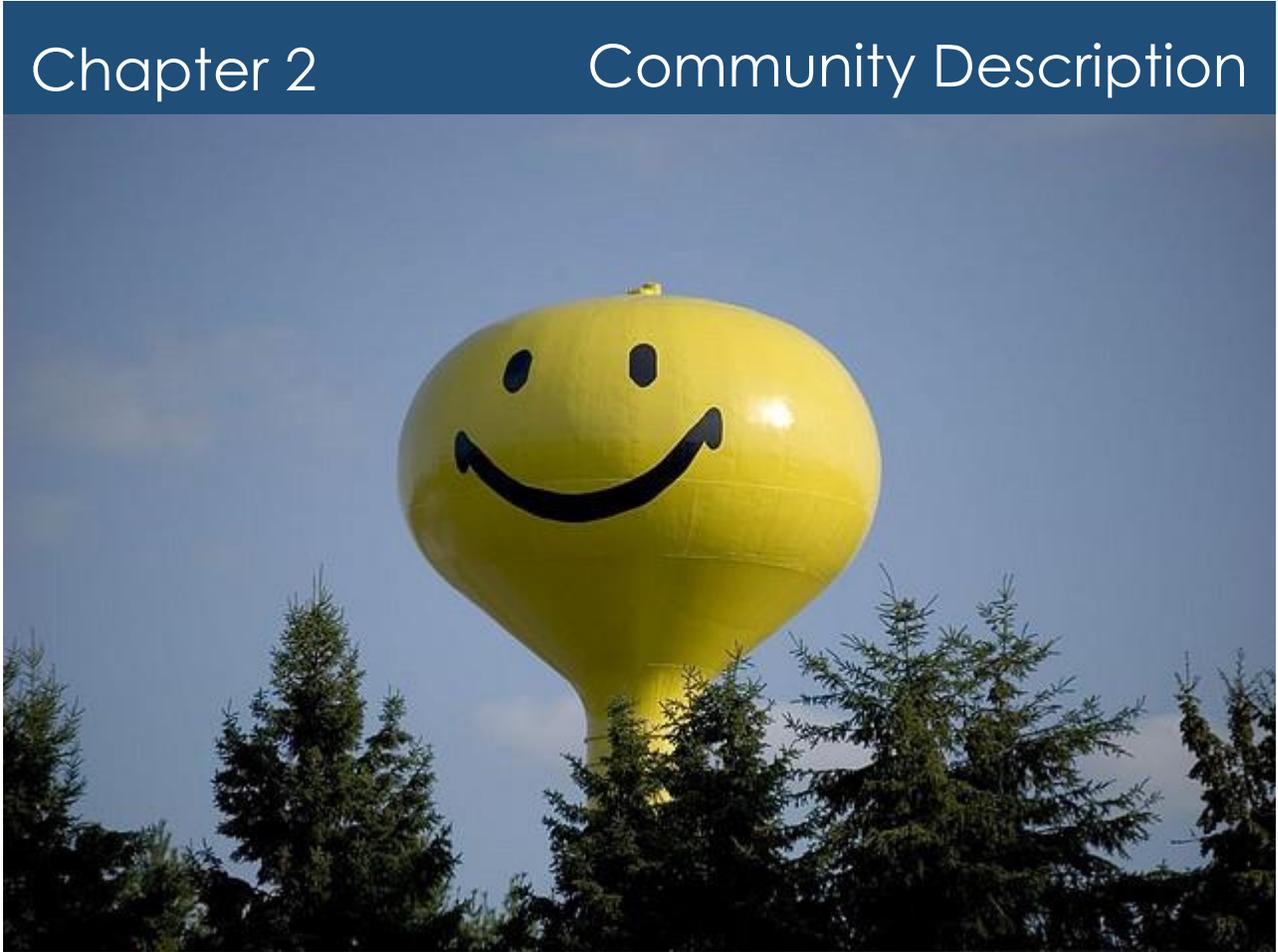
Master Plans do not have the force of law. **As guides, they are intended to be referenced and kept current.** The Future Land Use plan is the key feature of the plan when making zoning decisions, capital improvement decisions, utility expansions, land divisions and all decisions with neighboring communities. It is important to remember however, that *as a guide, as opposed to an engineering tool*, the maps contained in this document are not intended to be used to scale property lines, be a definitive source for tax purpose, or determine the exact

boundaries of flood plains or wetlands, for example.

The Plan only has value if it is used and it has value that is more ongoing if it is used in conjunction with all the other planning efforts that are going on in the City of West Branch and the surrounding communities. Coordinated planning helps each group leverage their individual funds, knowledge and momentum toward an outcome.

Some of these efforts are:

- West Branch Downtown Development Authority Plan
- Growth Analysis Planning group
- The Ogemaw Economic Development Corporation
- The West Branch Historic District Committee
- The I-75 Business Loop Market Study and Plan
- The Brownfield Authority
- Project Rising Tide



HISTORY

According to Scientific Publication No. 1, Report of Earthworks of Ogemaw County, Michigan, (Cranbrook Institute of Science, Fred Dustin, 1930), researchers discovered that “mound dwellers” or “mound builders” lived in the Rifle River area 11,000 to 15,000 years ago. In 1931, anthropologists working in the Selkirk area uncovered three Indian mound formations. These and other mounds discovered in Ogemaw County confirm that ancient mound dwellers were inhabitants of the area long before Christopher Columbus discovered America.



The abundance of wild game and fertile soils for berries and planted crops drew Chippewa Native Americans to the West Branch area and the first Europeans in the area were traders, clergymen, and soldiers. For nearly 150 years, little contact between Native Americans and the new European settlers took place in this interior of northern Lower Michigan. Forts, outposts, and other settlements stayed near the shores of the Great Lakes.

After 150 years, Europeans by benefit of guns, germs, whiskey, and sheer numbers came to dominate mid-Michigan. The heavy influx of settlers began after the Erie Canal opened in 1825 making migration by the Great Lakes as easy, or easier than, the Ohio River route which had led to the settlement of the lower Midwest much sooner than Michigan. This new immigration from the northeast is evident by the numbers of New Englanders and New Yorkers who were early settlers of the area.

The magnificent white pines that graced the land in West Branch stood untouched until 1871. However, having felled the forests further south, lumbermen began their trek north from the Bay City and Saginaw areas. Their progress was closely linked to the building of railroads. Railroads were a necessity since inland waterways were neither deep nor wide enough to provide dependable transportation. The railroad was built through West Branch between 1871 and 1872.



Ogemaw County Historic Timetable

1790 – part of Knox County
1803 – part of Wayne County, Indiana Territory
1810 – part of Michigan Territory
1818 – part of Michimackinac Territory
1819 – part of Oakland County
1852 – part of Mackinac
County 1856 – part of
Cheboygan County 1860 – part
of Midland County 1867 – part
of Iosco County
1875 – Ogemaw County established
1885 – Village of West Branch established

The end of the lumbering era was around 1910 when the catastrophic forest fires broke out during the dry summer. The fires were fed by dry-as-tinder brush and slashings left from the earlier lumbering activities. The fires were the end of the remaining old growth timber. Originally called Springvale, the City of West Branch was eventually renamed to reflect its location – on the west branch of the Rifle River. West Branch had its beginnings in the early 1870s when the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad built a line to the area for transporting lumber. In 1873, the City was given a US Post Office.

By 1874 the area had added a school, hotel, house, train depot, and a doctor and lawyer. The hotel, originally called the Weidmans and Wright Hotel was renamed the West Branch Hotel. Also in 1874, Edward Washington opened a general store. It was in his honor that Houghton Avenue was called Washington Avenue for a time. By 1884, the village included several stores, a bank, mill, and newspaper. West Branch was formally organized as a village in 1885 and was reorganized as a fourth-class City in 1905. By 1920, there were 1,105 people living in the City of West Branch.

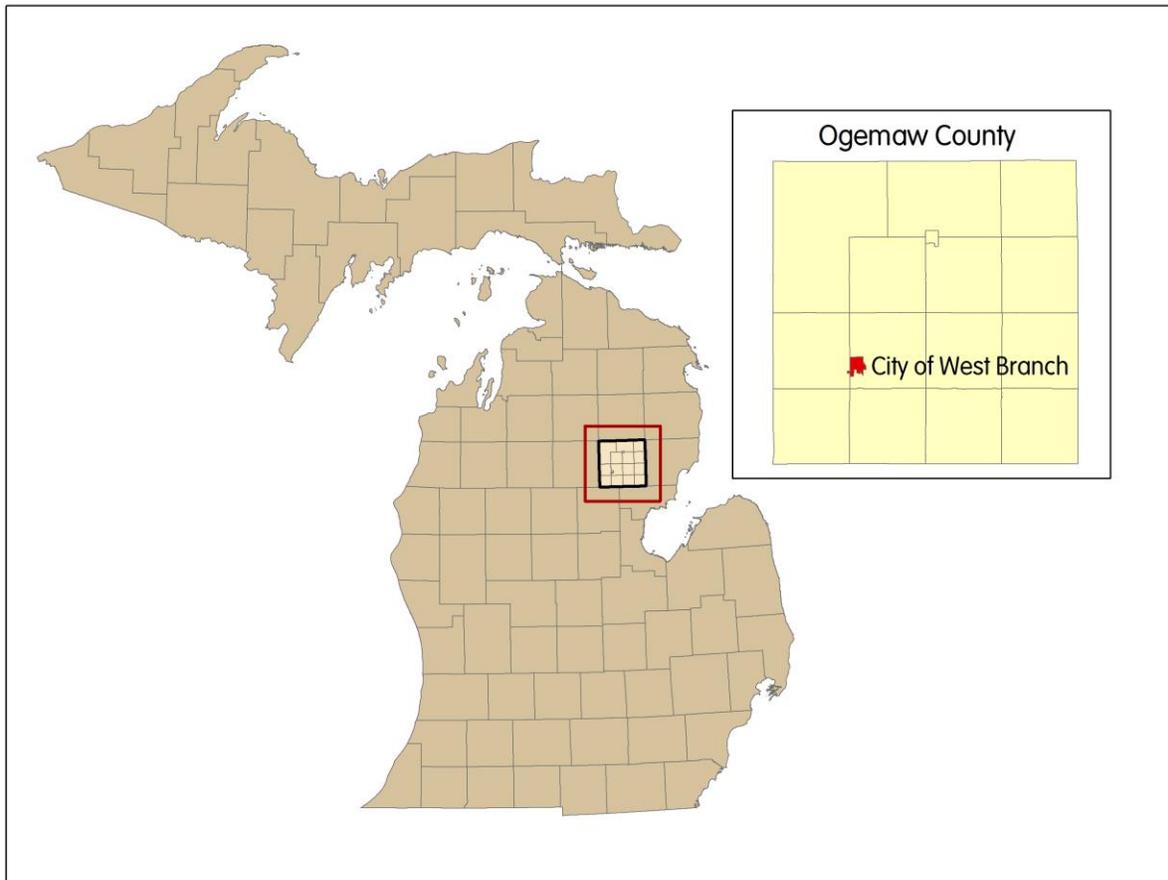


LOCATION

The City of West Branch is located at the junction of M- 55 and M-30 in Ogemaw County and is the largest city in the county. It is the county seat and encompasses approximately 1.3 square miles. The northern edge of the City is bounded by Willow Street, Court Street runs along the western city limits, and Fairview Street along the east. The southern boundaries are irregular.

There are several smaller cities within 20 miles of West Branch. Distances to these and other Michigan cities are listed in the table at the right.

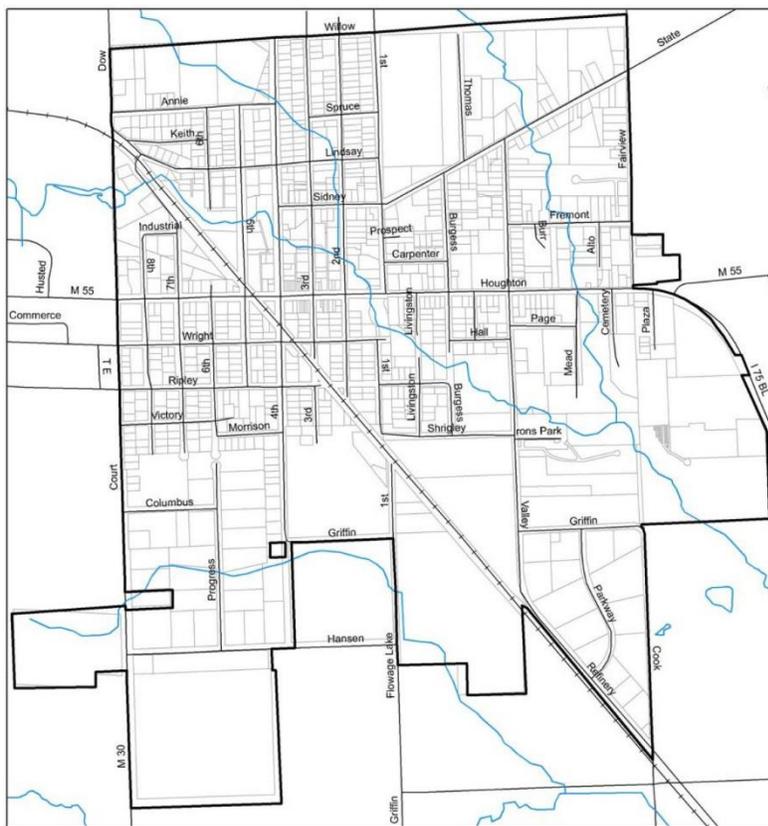
City	Distance from West Branch (miles)
Rose City	13.1
St Helen	13.8
Skidway Lake	14.7
Prescott	21.8
Sterling	22.5
Gladwin	26.6
Mio	27.2
Standish	27.9
Saginaw	62.3
Detroit	152.1



TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

Interstate 75 Business Loop (BL I-75) runs east-west through the center of West Branch on M-55 (Houghton Ave). The loop uses a portion of the former M-76 and the current M-55. M-30 (Court St.) runs along the western border of the City, north-south. Two I-75 interchanges provide access to the City of West Branch, Exits 212 and 215.

Most of the roads within the city limits are paved. There still remain, however, a few dirt roads, the east end of Willow Street for example. Both Houghton (M-55) and Court (M-30) carry substantial amounts of traffic.

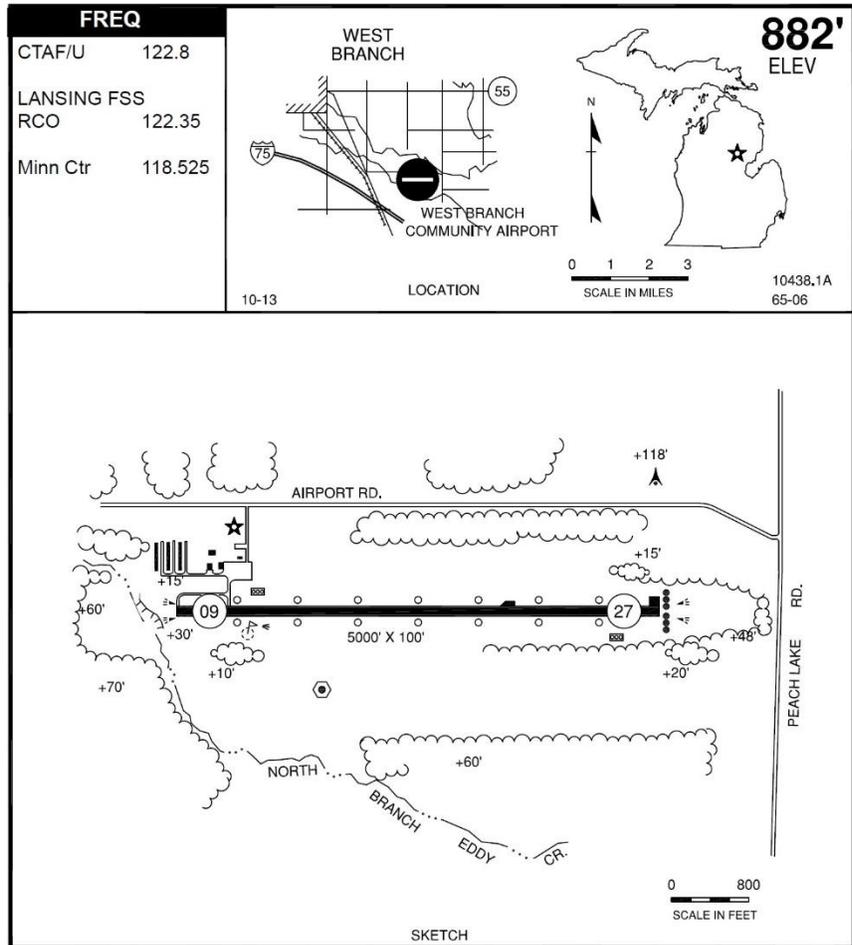


The I-75 Business Loop Market Study and Plan Transportation Review and Report has identified average daily traffic volumes, crash statistics and road capacities and speed limits through West Branch and the corridor. While it is not necessary to repeat this work here, it is worth noting that the MDOT 2018 Annual Average Daily Traffic Report estimates counts of 13,442 between the westerly city limits to Fifth Street, and 15,204 from Fifth Street to easterly city limits. Commercial traffic on M-55 from the westerly to easterly city limits is 1,154 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes on Court Street total 5,674 vehicles per day from the hospital north to M-55.

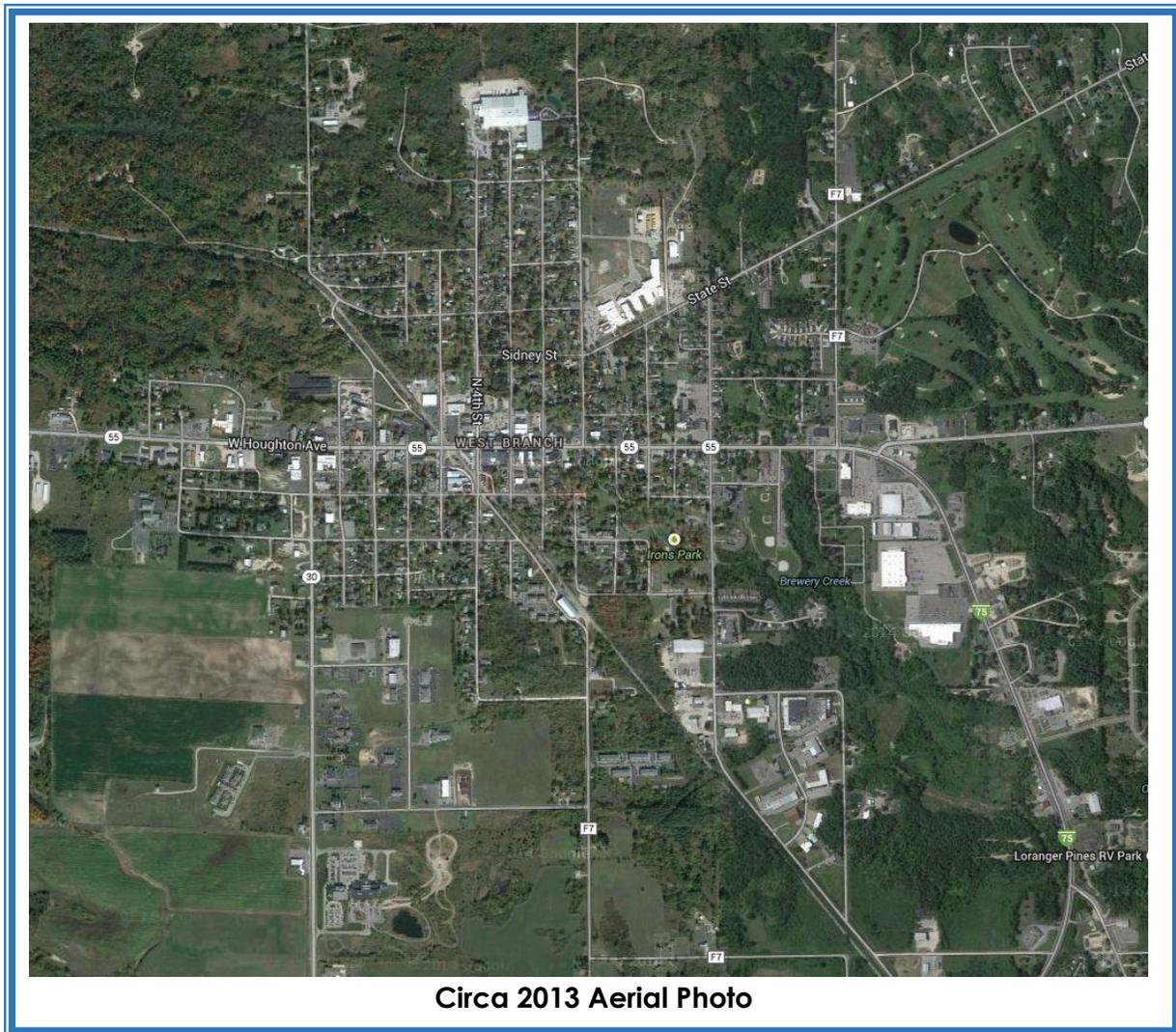
The Corridor Plan has isolated vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic issues to study. Of these concerns, many access management, vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic related recommendations emerged and are detailed as part of that study. Those that impact the City of West Branch most are expressed in goals in this plan.

A community airport, three miles southeast of the City, serves private airplanes.

The airport has a lighted 5,000 foot asphalt runway and offers fuel, hangers, and tie downs. The airport has an attendant during normal business hours and by appointment during non-business hours. An airport terminal building offers visitors additional airport services. Bus service by Ogemaw Public Transit Organization serves the area with a demand/response for the City. Additionally, the area is served by freight shipping, especially as there is a United Parcel Shipping service office in the Industrial Park.

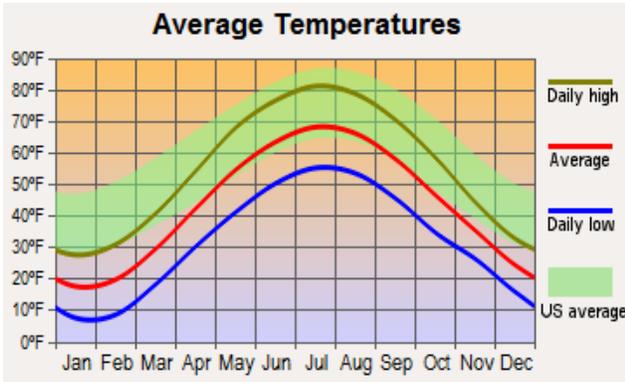


The City is also almost bisected by the old Jackson, Lansing, and Saginaw Railroad line running from the southeast corner to the northwest corner of the City. This rail line runs from Gaylord to the north to Bay City and from there connects with railway lines across the southern part of the state. Lake State Railway freight trains use this rail several times a week.



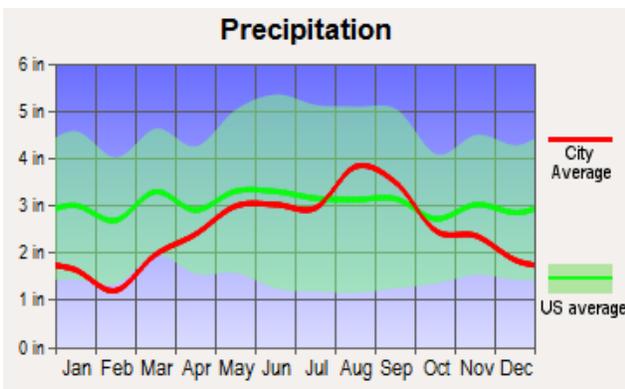
UTILITIES

The City is served by a municipal water and sewer system. Concerns over water contamination led to the need to construct additional treatment facilities and modify some aspects of the distribution network. There is one water tower in the City, the famous smiley face. The City also has full cable and cellular service provided by private companies.

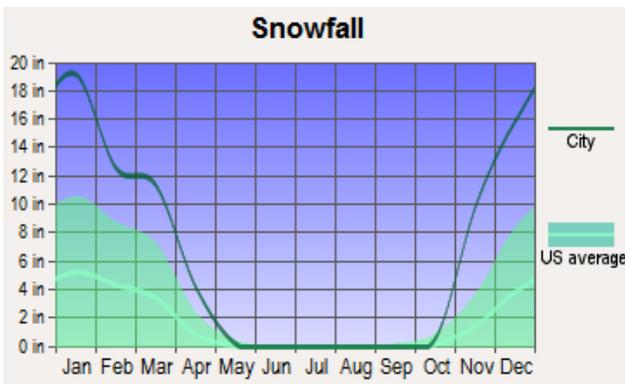


CLIMATE

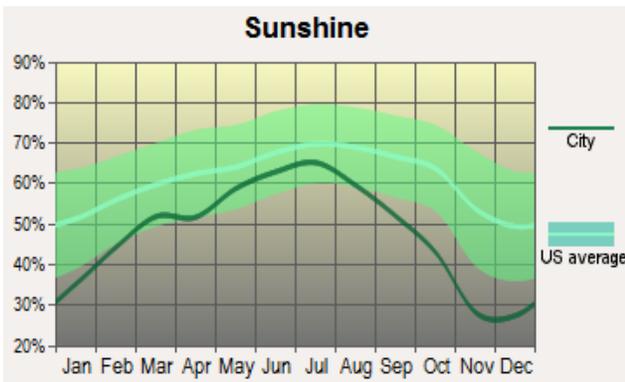
The temperature in West Branch ranges from a daily maximum of 28°F in January to 81.5°F in July. The lowest daily minimum temperature of the year is usually recorded in January and is 8°F. The average annual temperature for the area is 55.6°F.



Total annual rainfall is just over 30 inches. August tends to have the highest amount of rainfall with an average of almost 4 inches. However, May, June, July, and September have mean rainfall amounts of approximately 3 inches or more each month.



The variation in climate and four distinct seasons makes West Branch and the region desirable for water, biking, and other summer sports as well as snowmobiling, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing in the winter. These activities draw tourists and visitors to the area, accounting for much of the seasonal fluctuations in population in the City and the increase in the number of workers associated with the Accommodations and Service industries.



Normally, January has the most amount of snowfall with an average of 13.2 inches. The next highest snowfall month is December with 11 inches. Both January and February have the highest amount of snow cover with average depths of 7 and 8 inches, respectively. Total annual snowfall is almost 50 inches.

TOPOGRAPHY

The average elevation of the City of West Branch is 955 ft. There is little elevation change in the City with several sections at 950 ft. while there are portions at the northwest, northeast, and southwest corners that are 970-980 ft. above sea level.



Ogemaw County, Michigan (MI129)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
11E	Rubicon sand, 18 to 35 percent slopes	0.2	0.0%
13A	Au Gres sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	127.9	6.3%
14	Roscommon mucky sand	36.5	1.8%
17B	Graycalm sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	10.8	0.5%
17C	Graycalm sand, 6 to 18 percent slopes	15.1	0.7%
20B	Montcalm loamy sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	0.9	0.0%
20C	Montcalm loamy sand, 6 to 18 percent slopes	0.0	0.0%
21	Histosols and Aquepts, ponded	12.0	0.6%
22B	Nester fine sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	194.0	9.5%
22C	Nester fine sandy loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes	62.7	3.1%
22C2	Nester loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	128.7	6.3%
22D	Nester fine sandy loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes	0.5	0.0%
22D2	Nester loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, eroded	7.2	0.4%
22D3	Nester clay loam, 12 to 25 percent slopes, severely eroded	4.6	0.2%
23B	Kawkawlin loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	177.6	8.7%
24	Sims loam	18.4	0.9%
28	Udorthents, loamy, nearly level	17.6	0.9%
38	Tonkey sandy loam	3.1	0.2%
44B	Croswell sand, loamy substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes	163.9	8.1%
45	Wheatley mucky loamy sand	106.5	5.2%
47A	Gladwin sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	113.8	5.6%
48	Epoufette mucky sand	3.8	0.2%
50B	Menominee sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	6.4	0.3%
51B	Iosco sand, 0 to 4 percent slopes	145.8	7.2%

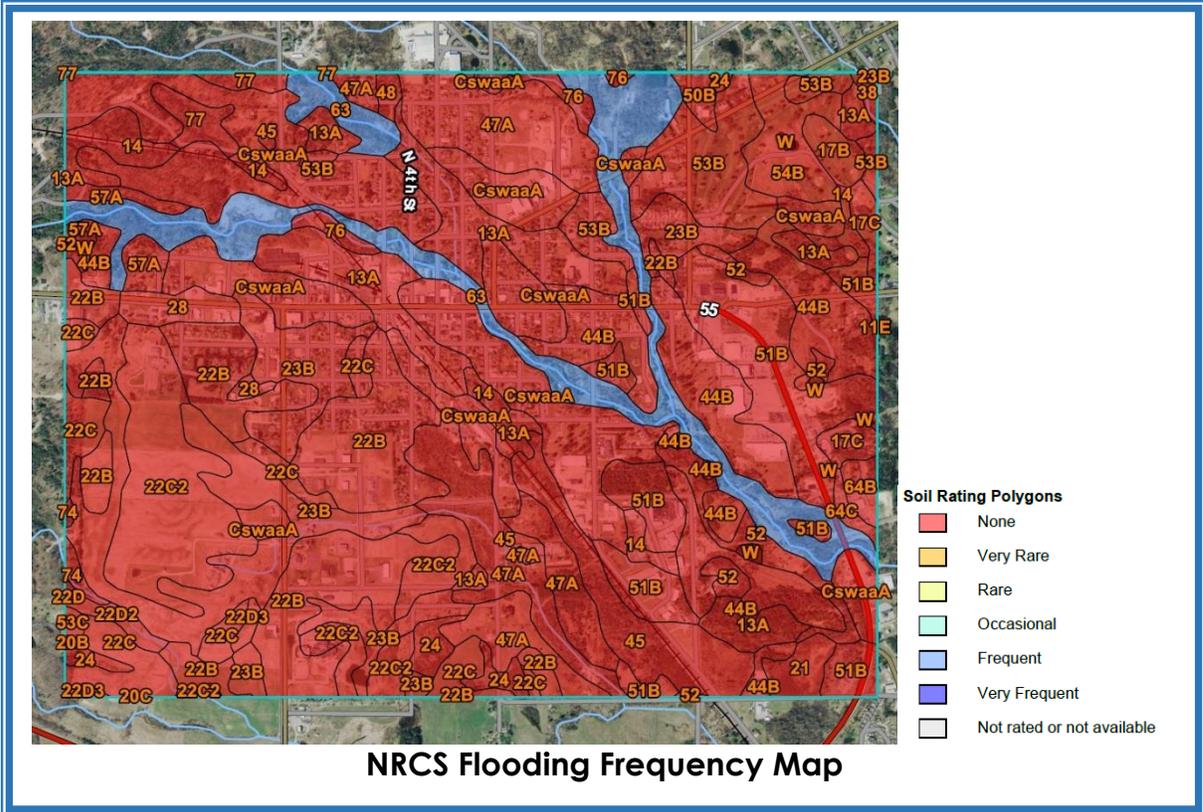
Ogemaw County, Michigan (MI129)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
52	Brevort mucky loamy sand	32.9	1.6%
53B	Manistee loamy sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	74.4	3.7%
53C	Manistee loamy sand, 6 to 12 percent slopes	2.0	0.1%
54B	Allendale loamy sand, 0 to 4 percent slopes	32.2	1.6%
57A	Belding sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	16.6	0.8%
63	Ewart sand	156.2	7.7%
64B	Melita sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	7.8	0.4%
64C	Melita sand, 6 to 18 percent slopes	4.2	0.2%
74	Cathro muck	4.5	0.2%
76	Lupton muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes	12.5	0.6%
77	Tawas mucky peat	17.5	0.9%
CswaaA	Croswell sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	311.1	15.3%
W	Water	5.1	0.3%
Totals for Area of Interest		2,035.2	100.0%

Soil composition and drainage are important considerations for the construction of basements for houses. In West Branch, 85% of the soils are unfavorable for basements without major soil reclamation or special design required. The remaining soils are moderately favorable for basement use with special planning or design. These soils are located in the southwest corner of the City.

Ponding is defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as standing water in a closed depression. Unless a drainage system is installed, water is removed only by percolation, transpiration, or evaporation. "Frequent" ponding means that it occurs in the area more than once in two years. Areas considered to have frequent ponding are located in the southeast and northeast quadrants.

The river and creeks are banked by Ewart sand and are considered to be areas of frequent flooding. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) "frequent" means that flooding is likely to occur often under normal weather conditions. This means the chance of flooding is more than 50% in any year but less than 50% in all months of any year.

The rest of the areas in the City are not considered to be flood prone. The chance of flooding in these areas is near 0 percent in any year, with flooding occurring less than once in 500 years.



The Federal Emergency Management Administration has not mapped the City of West Branch so no federally produced flood maps are available. Soil analysis is being used in this Master Plan to discuss flood prone areas.

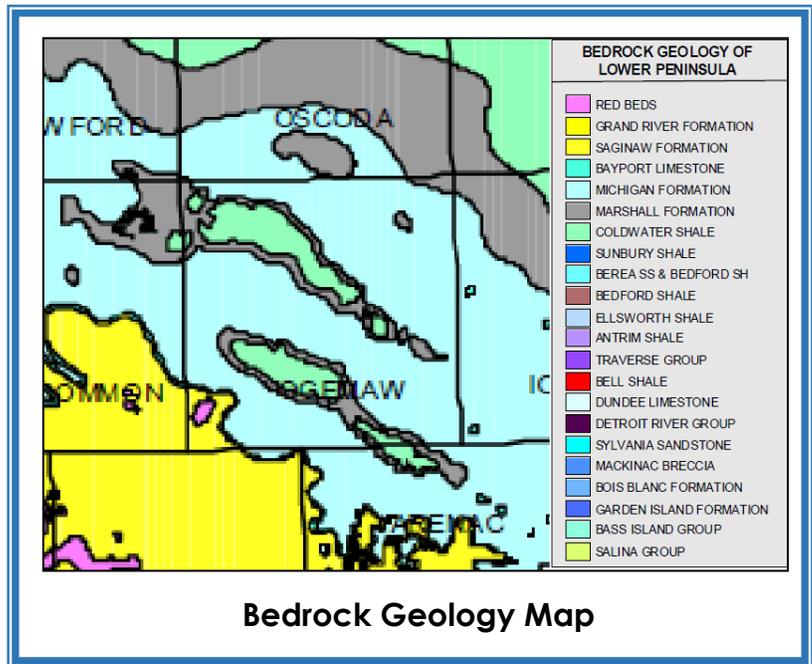
GEOLOGY

The geologic history and character of the City sets the tone for every other resource and land use issue. The geologic processes that gave rise to the land of the City, provided its elevations, shaped its contours, deposited its ancient deep underground deposits of oil and gas, formed its hills, carved its river valleys and laid down the parent materials for its soils. Rich gravel deposits along the face of the large West Branch-Port Huron Moraine bless the region with extractable resources but also leave it scars caused by that extraction. Geology is divided into bedrock and surface geology.

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock geology of the City is that of the Michigan Basin: sedimentary rock of limestone, dolomite, shale, and sandstone laid down in ancient seas of Paleozoic Age up to 500 million years ago. Beneath these sedimentary rock deposits is ancient igneous rock and above them is a thick layer of glacial drift, varying in thickness and type, extending 1,500 feet below ground surface. Several strata of the sedimentary rock deposits beneath the City are rich in hydrocarbons: oil, gas, and other petro-chemicals.

Some of the earliest oil development in the state occurred in the local, relatively shallow Dundee formation during the 1930's. This field, and one in Oil City, Michigan, east of Mt. Pleasant, provided much of the initial fuel for early expansion of Michigan's auto industry. Many of the wells in the Dundee formation yield crude oil and "sour gas" hydrogen sulfide. This is not only foul smelling but highly toxic and can be dangerous when concentrated. In



In many places in the region, the gasses associated with hydrocarbons mercaptans often lend a tell-tale "oil field" smell to the local still, summer air.

Many of the primary oil reserves of the Dundee formation have been depleted. For the past few decades, much of the activity in this field has been in secondary and tertiary recovery, including cleaning the old wells, injecting water to purge the remaining oil, and related activities. Development of facilities to separate brine and water from gas and oil was a major activity during the past 20 years, but this has proved to be a marginal enterprise and is not expected to be a major aspect of hydrocarbon development and utilization in the future.

During the late 1950's, deeper deposits of more valuable natural gas were discovered in the Niagran reef formations. The subterranean faults and folds in the deep sedimentary rock formation serve to trap and concentrate both gas and oil. These have been extensively studied by the tools of seismology, and

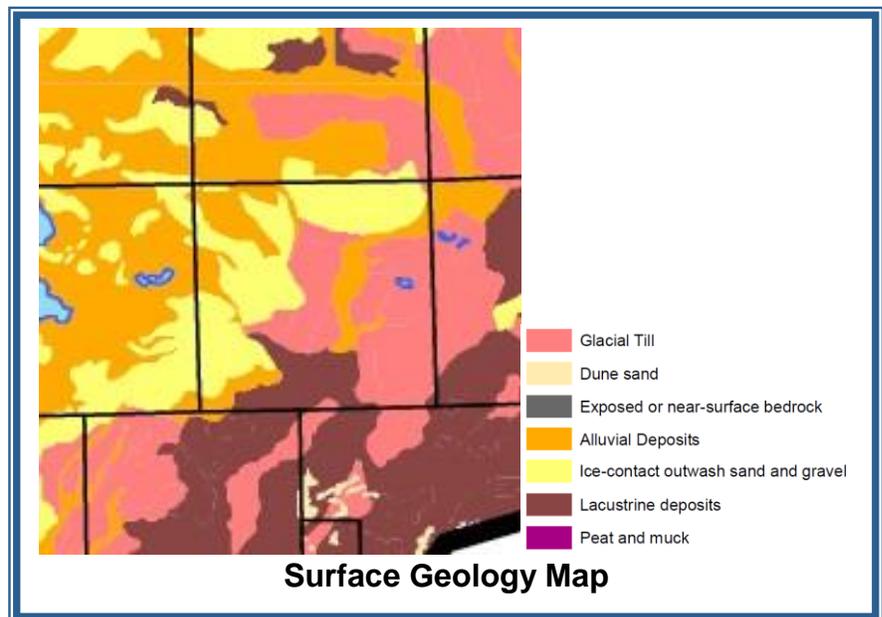
while some exploration continues, most of the patterns of potentially rich deposits and concentration are quite well known and are being actively extracted.

Pipelines, storage tanks, and well sites are apparent throughout much of the region. Both local and large capacity pipelines traverse the region in many areas. Oil and gas remain a major industry; however, from a planning point of view, is the often-negative legacy left by this industry from its earlier days. A most notable instance is the abandoned refinery site located southeast of the City along Old M-76 which has been rehabilitated into the Manufactured Mulch operation. In addition, throughout the region, there has been the long-term impact of leaking wells, sludge pits, sour gas flares, abandoned sites, service roads, and a host of other hydrocarbon-related activities. The lands of the region have continued to be basically healthy in the face of these historic uses that attests to the resiliency of Mother Nature, but assuring responsible cleanup and better regulation in the future is a significant planning issue.

One of our most valuable resources for the future is the immense supply of fresh groundwater available in the region. Protection of this resource from subsurface contamination is a high priority. A related issue is the severance of mineral rights from surface ownership of land parcels. Because of the value of the oil and gas that may lie beneath any given parcel of land, numerous land transactions have occurred in which the surface ownership was sold but the mineral rights were owned by parties interested in developing the resources. This is a common practice in many places including West Branch.

Surface Geology

The surface geology of the City is glacial in origin. The depth of the “fill plain” zone varies from about 850 to 1050 feet. This more fertile and gently rolling landscape was overridden by glacial ice. The deposits are the “bed load” of the glacier, a mixture of all sizes of soil components from clay to boulders. This type



of deposit is called a “fill plain.” Because glacial meltwaters did not wash out the finer, more fertile soils, these soils are inherently fertile and have high capacity to absorb and hold nutrients (cation-exchange capacity) for productive agriculture. Drainage can be a problem in lower areas, but with tiling, the fill plain areas can be highly productive. These are also pleasant areas for low-density rural residential development.

SURFACE WATER AND GROUNDWATER

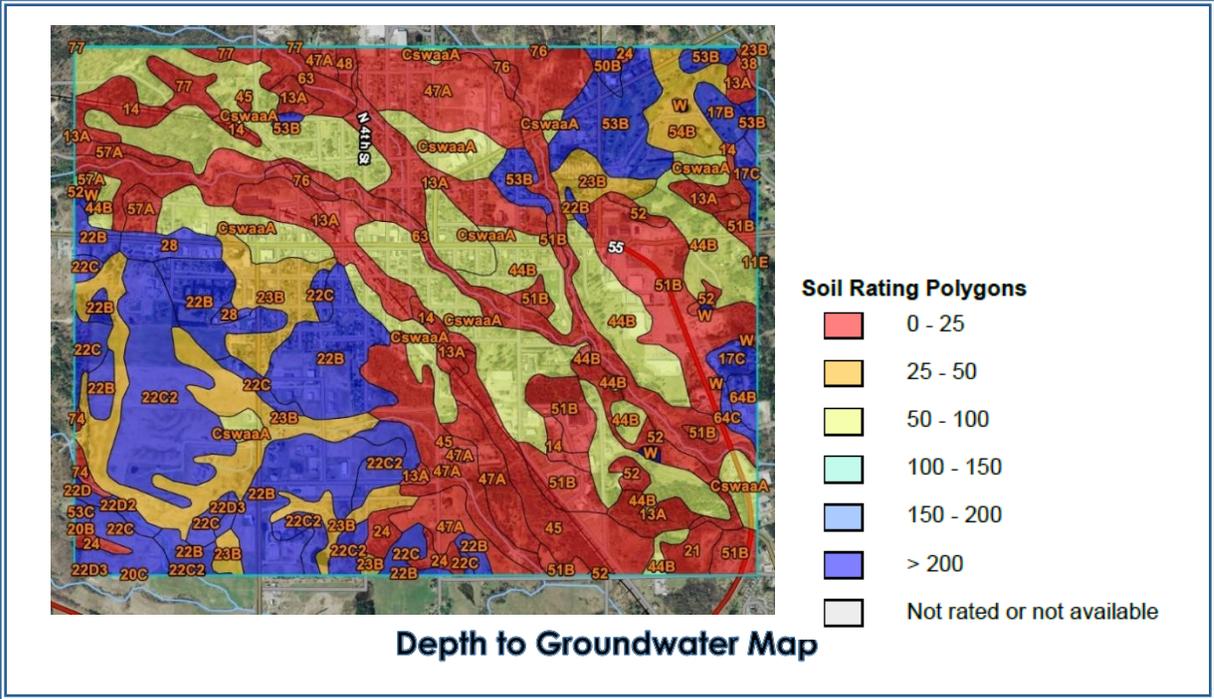
A fortunate consequence of the manner in which the glacial deposits were laid down is the abundant supply of fresh water in the City. The sandy soils above “Long Hill” receive a constant replenishment of water from melting snow and rainfall. These highly porous soils allow the water to infiltrate, recharging the underground aquifer with clean water filtered through hundreds of feet of pure sand and gravel. Layers of clay and silt bedded within the glacial deposition formed by the pattern of ice movement and melting cap this rich aquifer and create the conditions for springs and artesian wells wherever the clay cap is penetrated. Wetlands, headwater seeps and springs, ponds and artesian wells abound along the base of the moraine, extending southward even beyond West Branch in some places. Because the glacial drift contains limestone and other mineral-rich rock, the City’s groundwater tends to be “hard” and somewhat high in iron. Groundwater seeps, springs and wetlands abound.

It is probable that some of the streams that originate in nearby townships are actually recharged by infiltration over a more extensive area than the political boundaries of the City. Some of the headwater streams of the Rifle River system have actually been shown to have a greater base flow output than the surface input to their watershed area (MDEQ, Geological Survey Division). The only way this is possible is for the underground recharge area to extend beyond the boundaries of the surface watershed. Because of impermeable layers of clay sloping southward and southeastward from beyond the top of the Ogemaw Hills, it is highly probable that City gets groundwater from surrounding areas of Klacking, Foster, West Branch and Ogemaw Townships.

The City of West Branch is in the Au Gres – Rifle River Water Shed. The west branch of the Rifle River runs through the City from the northwest corner to the southeast corner. Ogemaw Creek joins the main river in the northwest quadrant of the City. Other small branches enter off the main river. Approximately 18% of the City’s land borders waterways.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) defines water table as a saturated zone in the soil that lasts for more than a month. The majority of the City’s land is between 50 and 100 cm above the water table; while 20% of the

land, notably in the northeast and southwest quadrants of the City is more than 200 cm from the water table.



WETLANDS

The National Wetland Inventory classifies several areas in the City as wetlands. These areas are designated on the adjoining map. Most of these wetlands are categorized as Freshwater Forested Shrub and are predominately along the river banks toward the edges of the City, most notably in the southeast, northwest and northeast corners. (Note, not all of the river/creek banks in the City are considered to be wetlands.) Additionally, there are wetlands close to the southeastern section of the railroad tracks and a large area just north of Griffin Road bounded by First and Fourth Streets.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population and Age Distribution

The population of the City of West Branch has changed little for almost six decades. In 1940, the population was 1,962 and, in 2010, the population was 2,139, a 9% increase over the 70 years. The 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates have the total population of the City of West Branch up to 2,269 - an increase of 130 from 2,139 reported by the 2010 census.

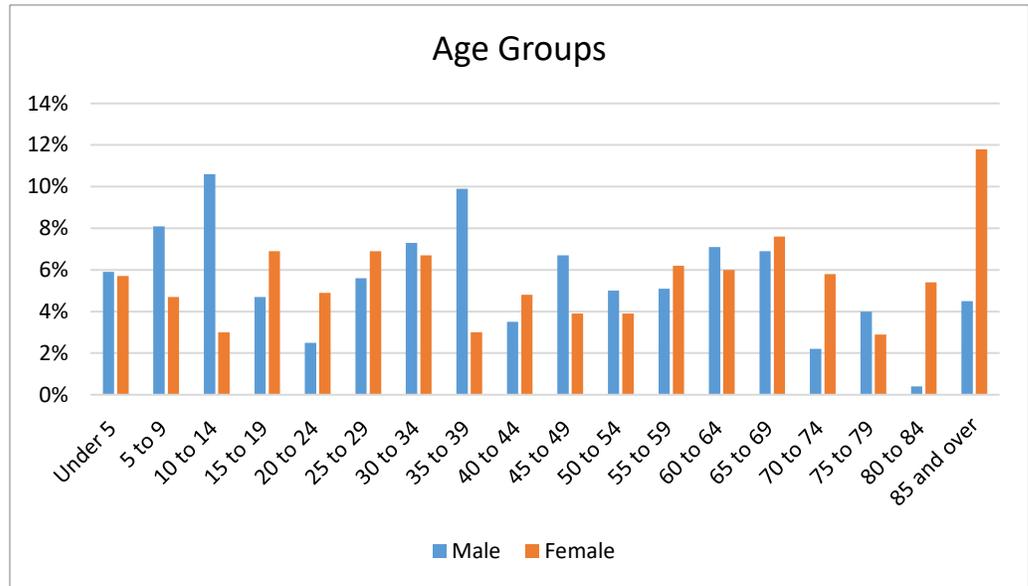
When compared to the population of Ogemaw County during the 1900s, West Branch seems to have matched a similar growth pattern up until the 1960s. From the 1970s through 2000, Ogemaw County's rate of growth was ahead of the City of West Branch. Predictions of substantial population growth from the 1970s, based on an anticipated influx from people from the Detroit area, have not been realized. Additionally, there was a 6.6% drop in population from the 1970s to the 1980s. This drop was attributed to the economic recession of the times. By the 1990s, the population was back up to 1,914 and has been increasing slightly since that time.

Ogemaw County Population Data: 2000-2010 US Census, 2016 ACS

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	2016 Population
City of West Branch	1,926	2,139	2,269
Churchill Township	1,603	1,713	1,495
Cumming Township	796	698	689
Edwards Township	1,390	1,413	1,443
Foster Township	821	843	790
Goodar Township	493	398	393
Hill Township	1,584	1,361	1,364
Horton Township	997	927	1,022
Klacking Township	617	614	588
Logan Township	581	551	532
Mills Township	4,005	4,291	4,172
Ogemaw Township	1,118	1,223	1,080
Richland Township	956	914	1,021
Rose Township	1,409	1,368	1,206
Rose City	721	653	612
West Branch Township	2,628	2,593	2,427
Ogemaw County	21,645	21,699	21,103

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

According to the 2016 ACS 5-year estimates, 43.5% percent of the City's residents are male, and 56.5% are female. The age distribution of residents has remained almost the same from 1990 until the most current surveys. In general, the community seems quite balanced with 23.6% of the residents between the ages of 25 and 44, 24.2% under the age of 19, and 26.6% over the age of 65. In 1970, the median age for residents was 31.9 years, while the median age for Michigan was 26.3 years. By 2016, the median West Branch resident age was 43.6 years, closely matching the State median age of 39.5 years.



Age Distribution		
	Total	Sum
Under 5 years	5.8%	24.2%
5 to 9 years	6.2%	
10 to 14 years	6.3%	
15 to 19 years	5.9%	
20 to 24 years	3.9%	27.5%
25 to 29 years	6.3%	
30 to 34 years	7.0%	
35 to 39 years	6.0%	
40 to 44 years	4.3%	
45 to 49 years	5.1%	21.7%
50 to 54 years	4.4%	
55 to 59 years	5.7%	
60 to 64 years	6.5%	
65 to 69 years	7.3%	26.6%
70 to 74 years	4.2%	
75 to 79 years	3.3%	
80 to 84 years	3.2%	
85 years and over	8.6%	
US Census Bureau 2012-2016 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates		

Almost all of the residents are of the white race (95.2%). The remaining 4.8% are Black, Asian, American Indian, or two or more races. One-third of the population comes from German origins. Other top ancestral nationalities are English, Irish, Dutch, Polish, and French.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

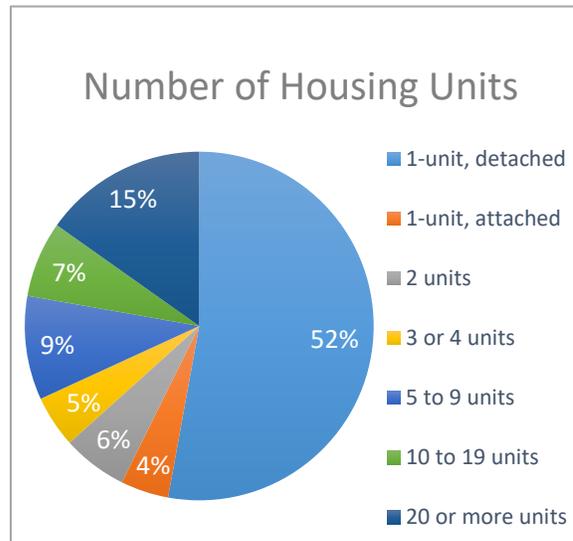
Households

There were 1,032 households estimated in the 2016 ACS 5-Year estimates in the City of West Branch. Of these 1,032 households, 471 (45.6%) consider themselves family units. Family households are composed of married couples, both with and without children; single parents with children; and other related individuals. Nonfamilies are people who live alone or with people who are unrelated.

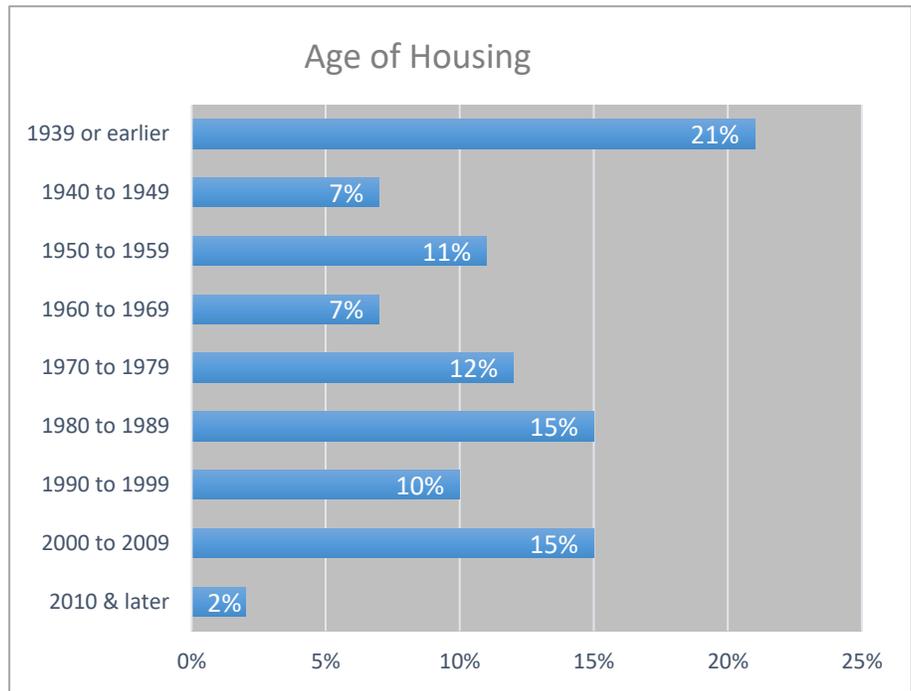
In 2016, 25.3% of the households had children under the age of 18. Households with one or more people age 60 and over totaled 48.6%. In 2016, the average household size was 2.01 persons. This is down from the 1970 average of 3.13 and the 1990 average of 2.34.

Housing Units

In 2016, there were 1,102 housing units. Of these, 1,032 were occupied, and 70 (6.35%) vacant. Owner-occupied housing accounted for 45.7% of the available housing units. Renters have a median monthly rent, including utilities and fuel costs (gross rent), of \$596 and account for approximately 54.3% of occupied housing. In the State overall, the percentage of rental-occupied housing units is 29.2%. The City of West Branch has two senior citizen apartment buildings. Single units account for 53.8% of the occupied housing units while multi-family units comprise 46.2%.



The median year the City's housing units were built was 1956. That means that half of the City's units were built before 1956. And, in fact, 43.7% were built before 1940. There were 298 units built from 1990 to 2016. More evident are the condominiums on the east side of the City on Victorian Court and on Fairview close to Houghton. This change in the characteristics of newer housing units is representative of a constant, but aging, population and smaller family size. Additionally, more people are choosing life styles and living units that require less maintenance.



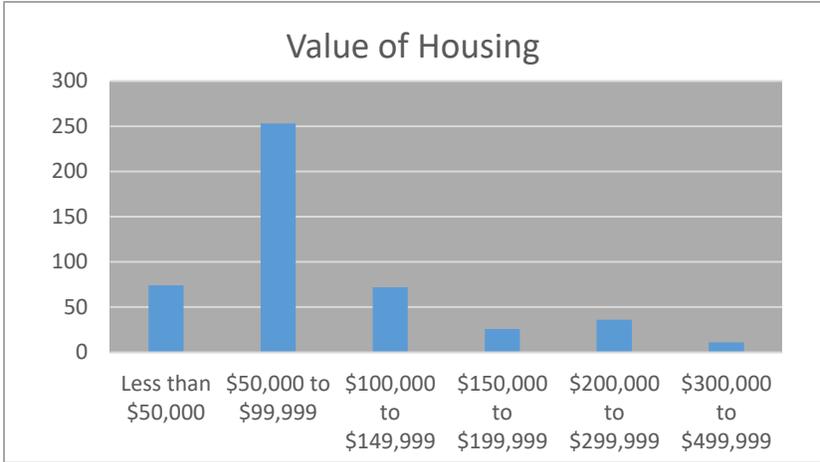
The median number of rooms for housing units in the City is 5.2. Only 22.8% of the housing has 3 rooms or less, while 38% of the housing has 4 or 5 rooms, and 40% has 6 or more rooms. Of the occupied housing, 100% has one occupant or less per room.

13 of the occupied housing units are estimated to be lacking complete kitchen facilities in 2016 and 18 are estimated not to have telephone service. This statistic is likely to indicate the growing trend toward people having only cellular phone service and wireless internet service instead of landlines, but this is not able to be substantiated with the 2016 ACS information.

Homes are generally heated with utility gas (80.2%), while electricity, fuel oil, wood, propane, and other fuels sources account for the remaining homes. The City of West Branch provides water and sewer systems to all but a few residents who remain on wells for water supply.

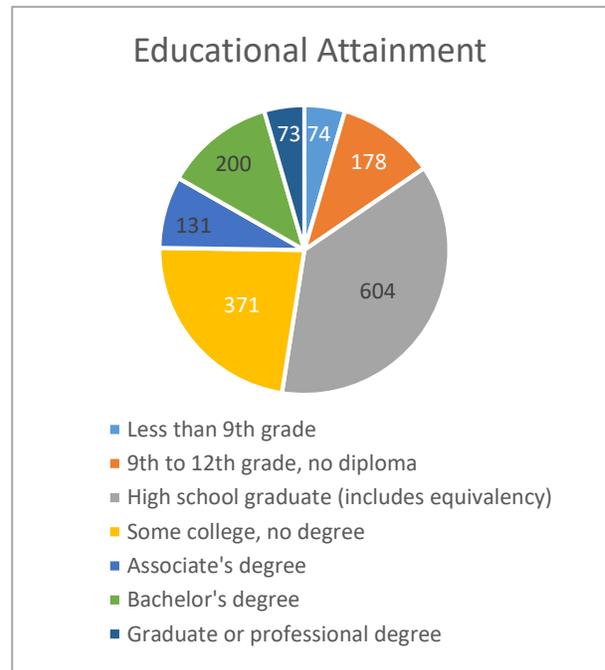
The median house value in 2000 was \$67,200. It has been estimated that the

median value in 2016 was \$79,200. The State median house value for 2016 was \$127,800.



Education

There was a dramatic increase in the education level from 1990 to 2016. Approximately 48% of residents over the age of 25 have some college education. This compares with 33% for 1990.

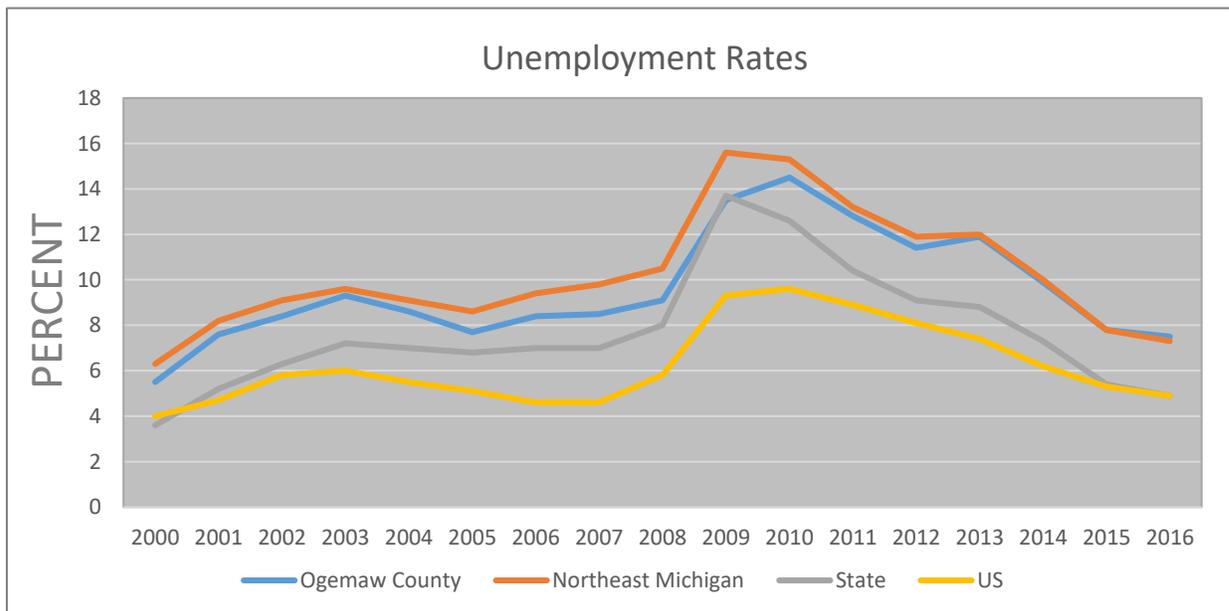


ECONOMICS

Employment

Of the 1,825 residents 16 years and over in 2016, 856 (46.9%) were part of the labor force. People considered in the labor force are those who are employed or actively looking for work. Of these, 773 (90.3%) were employed, 76 (8.9%) were unemployed, and 7 were in the Armed Services. In 1990, the comparable unemployment rate was 10.2% and, in 1970, the rate was 8.6%. What is notable, however, is that, in 1970, more than 90% of those eligible to work were part of the labor force – either employed or unemployed. By 1980, this had dropped to just over 53%, and in 2000, 64% of those over 16 years old were considered part of the labor force. In Ogemaw County, 52.2% of the population over 16 years was part of the labor force in 2000. Of the County's labor force, 8.5% were unemployed.

The figure below shows unemployment rates for Ogemaw County, Northeast Michigan, Michigan, and the United States. Ogemaw County unemployment rates, while higher than the State and the U.S., have been slightly lower than the Northeast Michigan region. However, in 2013, Ogemaw County and Northeast Michigan have had a similar rate. The rate has fallen from a high in 2009. Overall, unemployment rates for all four have mirrored each other in trend.



In 2000, 31% of those employed were part of the management/professional occupation group. This sector showed the largest increase from 1990. There are very few of the City's residents employed in farming, fishing, or forestry.

Additionally, the number of those employed in the construction industry has decreased since the 1990s. Almost 80% of the work force was employed in management/professional, sales/office, or service occupations in 2000. This compares with 68% for those employed in these occupations in Ogemaw County. In 2016, the two largest subgroups of industries were health care and social assistance (23%) and accommodation and food services (22%).

Industry of Civilian Labor Force

	#	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	11	1.4
Construction	38	4.9
Manufacturing	38	4.9
Wholesale trade	16	2.1
Retail trade	110	14.2
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	33	7.3
Information	3	0.4
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	17	2.2
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	33	4.3
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	247	32.0
<i>Educational services</i>	70	9.1
<i>Health care and social assistance</i>	177	22.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	184	23.8
<i>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</i>	14	1.8
<i>Accommodation and food services</i>	170	22.0
Other services, except public administration	18	2.3
Public administration	25	3.2

Source: US Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

An economic sector showing growth from the 1990s is the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food services sector. In 1990, this sector accounted for 2% of the employment, while in 2012 more than 22.5% of the labor force worked in this industry. In 2016, this number continued to grow to 23.8%. The Service Industry, of which these occupations are a part, is growing statewide as well. Ogemaw County is a recreational area and tourism accounts for substantial income to the communities in the county, as is evidenced by the employment data.

General classification by occupation of the civilian labor force in West Branch shows that over 32% were in sales and office occupations, 29% in service occupations, and over 26% in management, business, science and arts occupations.

Occupation of Civilian Labor Force – West Branch		
Management, business, science, and arts occupations:	205	26.5%
Management, business, and financial occupations:	71	
Management occupations	61	
Business and financial operations occupations	10	
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations:	56	
Community and social services occupations	4	
Legal occupations	6	
Education, training, and library occupations	46	
Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations:	78	
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations	45	
Health technologists and technicians	33	
Service occupations:	222	28.7%
Healthcare support occupations	39	
Food preparation and serving related occupations	101	
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	17	
Personal care and service occupations	65	
Sales and office occupations:	248	32.1%
Sales and related occupations	111	
Office and administrative support occupations	137	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations:	35	4.5%
Construction and extraction occupations	23	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	12	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	63	8.2%
Production occupations	33	
Transportation occupations	25	
Material moving occupations	5	
<i>Source: US Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates</i>		

In terms of commuting to work, 6.6% of the civilian labor force has no access to a vehicle, however 34% had two vehicles available and 30% had three or more vehicles available. Over 67% of workers in West Branch are within 10 minutes of their job. The mean travel time for all workers was 10.6 minutes.

The 2016 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages shows that, in terms of average employment, Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance employs the largest numbers of people. The highest average weekly wage is in the Transportation and Warehousing Industry and State Government.

Employment – Ogemaw County

Industry	Number of Establishments	Average Employment	Average weekly wage (\$)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	22	153	454
Mining	4	20	870
Construction	68	318	831
Manufacturing	31	252	621
Wholesale Trade	18	332	823
Retail Trade	87	1472	450
Transportation and Warehousing	18	267	1359
Information	9	35	758
Finance and Insurance	21	138	644
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	11	54	546
Professional and Technical Services	19	66	653
Administrative and Waste Services	13	49	567
Health Care and Social Assistance	49	1064	612
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	11	65	298
Accommodation and Food Services	45	574	265
Other Services (except Public Administration)	43	182	434
Federal Government	8	58	911
State Government	9	100	1200
Local Government	22	576	633

Source: 2016 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages – Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget.

The labor force inflow/outflow table (2015) below shows that, while there are approximately 1,927 people employed in West Branch, only 161 of those people also live in West Branch. Of the total labor force living in West Branch, 80% are employed outside of the City. There is an influx of 1,766 people into West Branch daily for employment.

Labor Force Inflow/Outflow - 2015

Selection Area Labor Market Size (All Jobs)		
	Count	Share
Employed in West Branch	1,927	100.0%
Living in West Branch	811	42.1%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	1,116	-
In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs)		
	Count	Share
Living in West Branch	811	100.0%
Living and Employed in West Branch	161	19.9%
Living in West Branch but Employed Outside	650	80.1%
In-Area Employment Efficiency (All Jobs)		
	Count	Share
Employed in West Branch	1,927	100.0%
Employed and Living West Branch	161	8.4%
Employed in West Branch but Living Outside	1,766	91.6%
Outflow Job Characteristics (All Jobs)		
	Count	Share
External Jobs Filled by Residents	650	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	164	25.2%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	346	53.2%
Workers Aged 55 or older	140	21.5%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	214	32.9%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	249	38.3%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	187	28.8%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	103	15.8%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	209	32.2%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	338	52.0%
Inflow Job Characteristics (All Jobs)		
	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	1,766	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	366	20.7%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	914	51.8%
Workers Aged 55 or older	486	27.5%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	587	33.2%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	721	40.8%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	458	25.9%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	73	4.1%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	262	14.8%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	1,431	81.0%
Interior Flow Job Characteristics (All Jobs)		
	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	161	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	32	19.9%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	85	52.8%
Workers Aged 55 or older	44	27.3%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	49	30.4%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	60	37.3%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	52	32.3%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	7	4.3%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	19	11.8%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	135	83.9%

Source: US Census Bureau "On the Map"

Income and Poverty

The median household income for West Branch in 2016 was \$25,741. In Ogemaw County the median was \$36,941 and in Michigan it was \$50,803. Almost 21% of the City's families were considered to be in poverty in 1990. By 2000, this number had fallen to less than 10%, just under the 11% number for Ogemaw County. The 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates indicate that number for the City has risen to 21% in contrast to Ogemaw County at 15% and the State of Michigan at 5%.

Household Income Levels	
Income	Percent
Less than \$10,000	14.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	10.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	23.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	16.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.7%
\$200,000 or more	1.1%
Median Income Levels	
City of West Branch	\$25,741
Ogemaw County	\$36,941
State of Michigan	\$50,803
United States	\$55,322
<i>US Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates</i>	

State Equalized Value (SEV)

West Branch Assessed Value 2008-2017

	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Real + Personal Property
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
2017	26,761,400	35,879,600	2,911,900	9,696,900	75,249,800
2015	24,548,500	34,461,500	2,789,700	9,113,400	70,913,100
2013	27,429,600	33,607,005	2,812,400	9,934,000	73,783,005
2010	28,499,300	33,543,300	2,981,600	10,657,600	75,681,800
2008	33,146,500	33,256,300	3,582,300	10,042,600	80,027,700

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury

Chapter 3

Existing Land Use



EXISTING LAND USE

Prior to determining future land uses and developing a future land use map, a community must have an accurate assessment of existing land uses. This chapter presents information on the types and location of existing land uses. The map was created using a combination of methods including aerial photo analysis and a windshield survey conducted in July of 2018. Land Use was mapped on a parcel by parcel basis.

Existing Land Use Classifications

Residential – Single Family. This classification is for areas with single family dwellings and accessory structures.

Residential – Multiple Family. This classification is used for multiple family dwellings and accessory structures.

Commercial. This category includes all parcels containing commercial facilities, offices, and medical facilities.

Industrial. Included in this category is land used for processing, extractive, manufacturing, fabrication, assembling materials, utilities or for the outside storage of equipment and materials.

Institutional/Governmental/Utility. This classification is used for public and government buildings, churches, cemeteries, and utilities. Schools – public and private – are also added to this classification.

Recreational. This classification is used for parks and other recreational facilities such as ball fields.

Vacant/Undeveloped. All existing vacant or undeveloped parcels are included in this category including forested areas and wetlands.

Land Use Analysis

Residential Single Family. Residential land is located in the northern two-thirds of the City. Low density residential land comprises about 208 acres or 27% of all land area in the City. This is the largest use of land in the City and it interspersed with some commercial, office and multi-family uses.

Residential Multiple Family. Multi-family housing totals 117 acres (15% of all land area) and is located in the southern half and the northeast portion of the City.

Survey results indicate that there is more demand for multi-family housing including apartments and townhomes.

Commercial. Commercial land uses are located in the downtown area along Houghton (M-55), on I-75 business loop on the east side of town and at the medical complex on the southwest corner of the City. Office commercial uses are also located throughout the community in homes. Commercial uses vary in type from independently-owned shops in historic structures to typical franchise developments. Commercial uses are located on 180 acres and make up 23% of land area.

Industrial. There are 74 acres of industrial land which is almost 10% of the entire City. About half of the industrial land is undeveloped. Industrial uses are located in an industrial park at the southeast corner of the City that abuts the rail line, near the northwest corner of the City, also on the rail line and on Thomas Street across from the school complex on the northern edge of town. Some of these uses are original rail-related uses such as the grain elevator but the majority of uses are distribution-related due to West Branch's location on highways I-75, M-30 and M-55.

Institutional/Governmental/Utility. 92 acres of land are classified as Institutional/Governmental/Utility. In West Branch this includes all the land for schools, churches, government/publicly-owned offices, and utility buildings and sites. These uses are located throughout the City and use about 12% of land area.

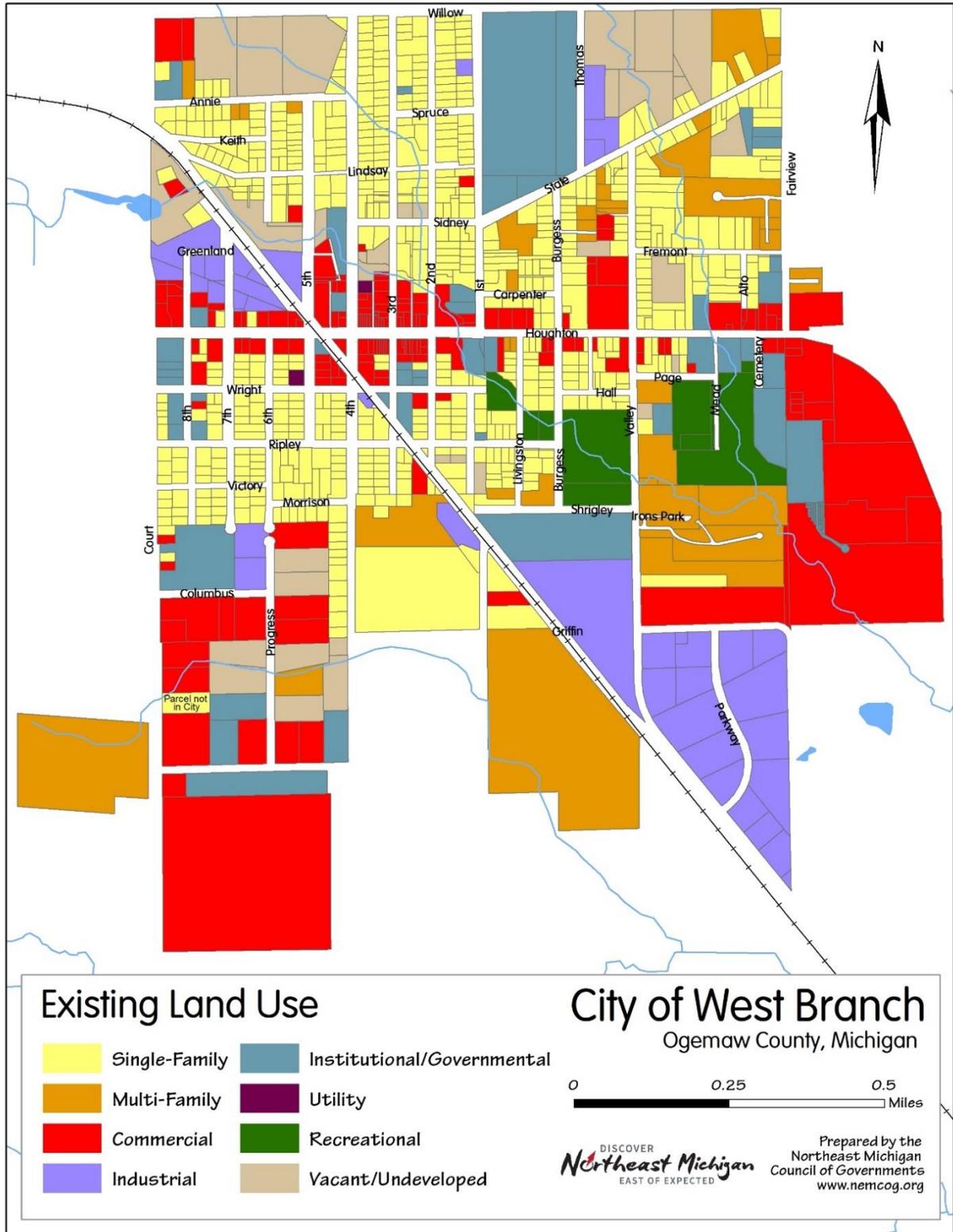
Vacant/Undeveloped.

Vacant land is the fourth largest land use in the City with over 74 acres and 10% of land area. This is a deceiving figure from the view of a driving survey since it appears that the City is almost fully developed. However there are large tracts of undeveloped land near the borders of the City on the north and south sides. Some of this land is wooded or overgrown so it is not apparent that it is actually within the City's boundaries.

Existing Land Use Table

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Residential Single Family	208	26.9%
Residential Multi Family	117	15.1%
Commercial	180	23.3%
Industrial	74	9.6%
Institutional/Governmental/Utility	92	11.9%
Recreational	29	3.7%
Vacant/Undeveloped	74	9.6%
Total (not including rights-of-way)	774	---
Right-of-Way	169	---
TOTAL (including rights-of-way)	943	100%

Source: NEMCOG



Chapter 4

Community Input & Objectives



COMMUNITY INPUT

To ensure that the City's Master Plan reflects the goals of the community, a survey was prepared to gather input from residents. During April and May 2018, the City of West Branch posted a community survey on their website and made printed copies available at City Hall. Input was requested on several major issues including Housing, Land Use, Government Services, Transportation, Recreation, Blight, and General Community Development. The survey was promoted in the Ogemaw County Herald and on social media. Public input was also welcomed at all Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

A total of 146 surveys were completed - 138 via the website and 8 were handwritten.

General Respondent Profile

- 70% of the respondents were home owners in West Branch.
- More than 50% of the respondents have lived in the City of West Branch for over 10 years. 23% of respondents have only lived in the City for five years or less. 13% of respondents do not live in the City.
- Approximately 87% were over the age of 30.
- 38% of respondents were in the "professional/managerial" field, 14% were self-employed, and 24% were retired.
- 47% work in the City of West Branch and 33% work outside of Ogemaw County.

The City Overall

There are several common responses given for the biggest assets about the City of West Branch. Common responses include friendliness, quant small town atmosphere, downtown, sense of community, parks, safety, community involvement, and shopping.

When asked about the biggest problems in West Branch, there were varied responses. Included were traffic, roads/sidewalks, blight, empty stores downtown, water/sewer costs, taxes, parking, jobs, lack of businesses, and lack of entertainment.

56% viewed the current economic state of the City as "stable" with 22% viewing it as "bad." 49% perceived the real estate market as "weaker" with 30% perceiving it as "stable." 76% felt there were not adequate job opportunities in the City. When asked if they would locate a business in West Branch today, 39% stated that they would while 26% stated that they would not. 64% support the use of partial tax abatements to attract and retain new jobs and businesses. 91% felt that the City should continue to improve the downtown business district.

When asked whether the downtown should continue the Victorian theme, 46% said yes while 31% responded said no. 28% think that the current Victorian theme is a hindrance

to business owners while 37% think it is not.

Housing

48% of respondents felt the quality and range of housing options was moderate with 24% rating it as poor. 56% felt that the City should allow more attached housing options (apartments, townhouses). 51% felt that there should be more low-cost housing for senior citizens. 53% support the development of “tiny houses” within the City. 57% support the encouragement of accessory dwelling units.

Land Use

Respondents were asked what type of commercial development they would like to see in the City. More retail options was a common response but other responses included artisan businesses, medical facilities, breweries/distilleries, day care, clean energy establishments, health food, sports outfitters, and food shops. 48% do not support the idea of neighborhood businesses locating in residential areas (29% support the idea). 78% support the addition of a second industrial park or an expansion to the existing industrial park.

Services within the City

85% of respondents were satisfied with snow removal services in the City. 75% felt that the City should continue its current sidewalk repair/replacement program. 75% are satisfied with solid waste disposal methods available in the City. 46% would be willing to pay extra for curbside recycling while 54% would not.

Transportation

Most respondents (57%) did not feel that truck traffic was a problem. However, 34% did think that truck traffic caused a problem.

Recreation

An overwhelming majority (96%) felt that the City should continue to maintain and improve its park system while 65% felt the City should expand its park system.

Discussion

The Planning Commission has reviewed and analyzed the various elements that may propel or slow down development in the City of West Branch. The slowing of migration northward in Michigan since 2000, much affected by the recession of 2007-8, is a

primary factor. The slowing of the economy nationwide and globally has had a notable effect on local economic activity. And although it appears the economy is improving, it is debatable whether we have seen the end of the consequences of the recession. Even though the City's population has a good balance of age cohorts, in the county and elsewhere in our northern region, the population is aging significantly. Despite West Branch having better than average employment opportunities, the region loses many of its younger generation to other areas of the state and nation where opportunities are much greater and wages and salaries are much higher. And the City has a disproportion of poor residents. All of these conditions have reduced housing and commercial property values and lessened the motivation for new development in and around the City.

Demographic changes in the county as a whole also have an effect in West Branch and are reflected in the plan. People are living longer, delaying marriage and child bearing, and birthrates have sunk to almost non-replacement levels. More housing choices for retirees and childless couples and individuals, more job opportunities for all ages, and a vibrant mixed-use, walkable downtown are called for. The City needs to offer entrepreneurial and job opportunities to keep and attract young talent. By continuing to provide the kinds of social and cultural activities that it is carrying on now, the City and its neighbors can attract and hold residents of all ages -- Boomers, Millennials and younger citizens -- as well as generating increased economic activity.

VISION

The City of West Branch Planning Commission sets forth this vision for the City of West Branch:

The City of West Branch will be a home town and a destination for visitors that is neat, trim, and friendly. It will be a town with a vibrant commercial downtown that provides diverse retail shops and services. The downtown will be pedestrian-friendly with low speed traffic. Offerings for residents and guests will include special events, parks, arts and culture, as well as a variety of culinary choices in its restaurants.

The city is located within a region rich in natural resources, forests, lakes, and rivers that will provide wide-ranging outdoor activities including hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, skiing, and many others.

The West Branch region will continue to be a hub for large box retail, outlet retail, medical, and distribution businesses. It will continue to have a diverse range of retail, services, and manufacturing establishments, all providing significant employment opportunities.

PRIMARY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this plan is to maintain and foster the growth and advancement of the City of West Branch as a place of order, enjoyment and opportunity for all its citizens. To do so the following objectives are put forward:

- **Citizen Involvement.** Involve West Branch citizens in activities of the City that will advance the primary goal of this plan.
- **Housing.** Maintain the City's high quality residential neighborhoods and encourage new appropriate development.
- **City Services and Infrastructure.** Maintain and improve City services and infrastructure.
- **Economic 1 (Sustainability).** Promote and support existing businesses in the City and region to thrive and grow.
- **Economic 2 (Attraction).** Market the City and the region to attract additional commercial and industrial enterprises.
- **Tourism.** Market the City and its environs to draw visitors and tourists to support local businesses and the local economy.

ACTION ITEMS

The following table contains strategies for implementing the primary goal and objectives found in the six focus areas listed above. It is important to note that, while responsible parties are listed, the City will make every effort to collaborate with partner organizations, other local units of government, and members of the public in order to ensure that the correct mix of stakeholders are involved in each item.

TIMEFRAMES

SHORT: Low cost, easy implementation, directly addressing top priorities, or critical to the advancement of other strategies, and to be implemented within the next 1-5 years.

MEDIUM: Important actions that have some level of significant cost and can be implemented within the next 5-10 years.

LONG: Actions that often require significant amounts of funding that must be planned for over time or require other strategies to be completed prior to their implementation.

ON-GOING: Actions that have no beginning and end period but which are continuously on-going in the City.

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES			
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
1 Citizen Involvement	Involve West Branch citizens in activities of the City that will advance the primary goal of this plan.		
	1. Use the City website to provide meeting agenda and minutes of all council, committee, commission, and other bodies as well as to explicate issues and matters of importance before these boards.	ON-GOING	City Staff
	2. Include as many interested citizens as possible on committees on other boards. Encourage members of various boards to participate with other boards to increase communication among all the City government divisions. These boards may also include county and regional groups.	ON-GOING	City Staff City Council Planning Commission
	3. Follow the West Branch Public Participation Plan to maximize citizen involvement.	ON-GOING	City Staff City Council Planning Commission
2 Housing	Maintain the City's high quality residential neighborhoods and encourage new appropriate development.		
	1. Ensure that the City zoning ordinance provides for sufficient areas for the construction of high quality dwellings, multi-family, townhouse, single family, and two-family, of varying densities and types including tiny homes and accessory dwelling units.	SHORT	Planning Commission
	2. Enforce the blight ordinances to eliminate conditions that discourage the upkeep of existing housing and the construction of new high-quality developments.	ON-GOING	City Staff
	3. Continue and promote the housing rehabilitation program for improving existing housing stock. Identify funding sources available for residential improvements and make property owners aware of such rehabilitation programs.	SHORT	City Staff County Housing Dept
	4. Partner with realtors/builders to attract developers that can construct desired housing developments.	MEDIUM	City Staff and Planning Commission
	5. Ensure the zoning ordinance allows for areas of mixed use development, where appropriate.	SHORT	Planning Commission
	6. Consider the necessity of a rental inspection program.	MEDIUM	City Council

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Maintain and improve City services and infrastructure.			
<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">City Services & Infrastructure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to provide quality police and fire protection service to residents. 2. Continue to maintain, improve and plan expansion of water, sewage, and stormwater facilities, if needed. 3. Provide for adequate streets, and the maintenance thereof, that ensure safety while facilitating orderly growth. 4. Continue sound budgeting by departments with a goal toward fiscal responsibility to the residents. 5. Ensure infrastructure is in place for desired development. 6. Maintain the sidewalk repair/replacement program. 7. Explore options (i.e. tax abatements) that would further assist with business recruitment. Encourage City Staff to participate in programs, seminars, and conferences which educate on available opportunities. 	ON-GOING	City Council City Staff
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Incorporate Complete Streets design concepts into the City’s planning efforts and into the zoning ordinance to ensure all forms of transportation are adequately provided for. 	SHORT	Planning Commission
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Revise zoning to require sidewalks and standards for pedestrian connections to all new developments, and work to connect all existing developments along the corridor with sidewalks. 	SHORT	Planning Commission
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Designate neighborhood areas and create a neighborhood betterment plan pursuant to the Neighborhood Area Improvements Act (PA 208 or 1949). 	LONG	City Council Planning Commission City Staff

	11. Continue to make the downtown area “pedestrian friendly” and attractive by continuing to install streetscaping features including street lights, trees where appropriate, benches, wayfinding signage, parks, and well-maintained sidewalks/paths.	ON-GOING	City Council/DDA/Planning Commission
	12. Ensure pedestrian connections existing throughout the City to connect residential neighborhoods to commercial and recreational areas.		
	13. Review and revise zoning to ensure that development of property within the City is not unnecessarily burdensome.	SHORT	Planning Commission
	14. Continue to negotiate with the Michigan Department of Transportation to re- surface Houghton Avenue and at the same time to replace aged sewer and water infrastructure in the right-of-way.	LONG	City Council City Staff Planning Commission MDOT
	15. Continue to investigate, with MDOT, an alternative parking strategy in the downtown area. Work with MDOT to determine if a road diet is applicable.		
	16. Have installed traffic controls along the I75 Business Loop (Family Fare and Brian’s area). Include signage for the service drive in this area.		
	17. Fill the gap between the City and the West Branch Township pedestrian and bicycle trails at the former Kmart property.		
18. Consider developing access management standards for M-55 and other high-traffic city streets.			
19. Participate in the Community Development Board.	ON-GOING	Community Development Board	
20. Incorporate “green” zoning into the Zoning Ordinance, as appropriate.	SHORT	Planning Commission	

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</p> <p>Economic 1 (Sustainability)</p>	Promote and support existing businesses in the City and region to thrive and grow.		
	1. Continue to support tax incentives for industrial expansions.	ON-GOING	City Council
	2. Establish guidelines for landscaping, including screening standards.	SHORT	Planning Commission
	3. Develop downtown design standards to achieve a collective identity of the downtown.	SHORT	Planning Commission DDA
	4. Work with the DDA to implement strategies contained within the current downtown plan.	ON-GOING	Planning Comm, DDA City Council City Staff Surrounding Twps
	5. Continue programs to enhance façades and rear entrances of buildings, including potentially the MEDC/CDBG grant program.	MEDIUM	Planning Commission DDA
	6. Make changes to zoning ordinance and signage regulations to allow for greater flexibility in downtown area – mixed-use CBD district.	SHORT	Planning Commission DDA

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
5	Market the City and the region to attract additional commercial and industrial enterprises.		
	1. Work toward development of the priority redevelopment and infill development areas.	LONG	Planning Commission City Staff
	2. Inventory with local realtor’s available buildings and properties and their conditions for sale or lease (utilize City and other websites to portray). Develop a database that contains specific information pertaining to each commercial/industrial property that can be used as a marketing tool for redevelopment.	MEDIUM	City Staff Local Realtors Planning Commission
	3. Market redevelopment ready properties through the RRC program with assistance from the State.	MEDIUM	Planning Commission City Staff
	4. Determine the best mix of businesses needed in the downtown and identify needs and market to them.	MEDIUM	City Staff DDA
	5. In the Zoning Ordinance, include allowances for all types of mixed land uses in appropriate areas. Implement buffering and lighting standards where residential abuts non-residential.	SHORT	Planning Commission
	6. Support and monitor programs for rehabilitation by the DDA and Ogemaw County (Façade Improvements Program, Brownfields, etc.).	MEDIUM	City Staff DDA Ogemaw County
	7. Support and monitor marketing of the downtown with regional partners.	SHORT	City Staff, DDA, City Council Planning Commission Surrounding Townships Ogemaw EDC Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau Other Partners
	8. Ensure a strong marketing message is created and displayed on the City’s website and on other local websites.	SHORT	
	9. Create a marketing pamphlet.	SHORT	
	10. Consider the expansion of the industrial park or a second industrial park, if needed.	LONG	City Council
	11. Ensure development approval processes are easy to follow, seamless, and predictable.	SHORT	Planning Commission City Staff
12. Implement and maintain the practices outlined by the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.	ON-GOING	City Council Planning Commission City Staff	

Economic 2
(Attraction)

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES			
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
6 Tourism	Market the City and its environs to draw visitors and tourists to support local businesses and the local economy.		
	1. Continue special events that entertain residents and bring visitors to the City.	ON-GOING	City Council DDA Chamber of Commerce
	2. Continue to work with neighboring townships to market the downtown and adjoining commercial areas with the current brand of the community.	ON-GOING	City Staff West Branch Chamber of Commerce West Branch Tourism Bureau DDA
	3. Develop and install wayfinding signage that will direct visitors to the West Branch Downtown and to other special sites in the City and elsewhere.	MEDIUM	City Staff City Council MDOT DDA
	4. Continue to cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Corp., and neighboring DDA's to promote the City and its attractions	ON-GOING	City Staff Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau Ogemaw County EDC Surrounding Townships
	5. Maintain and improve City recreational facilities and expand where needed.	ON-GOING	City Staff City Council Planning Commission

SUPPLEMENTAL PLANNING INFORMATION

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

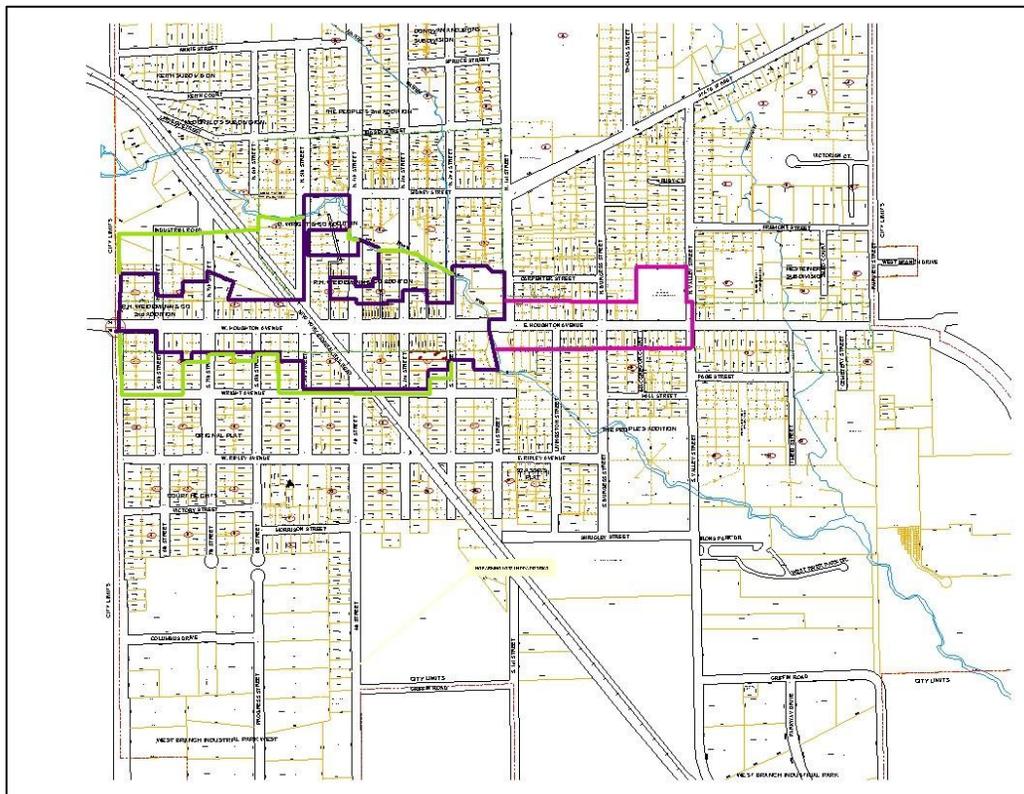
The City of West Branch has established a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) which provides the business district the tools to improve its economic growth. The DDA is authorized by PA 197 of 1975, which permits its creation of an authority to assist business districts with their financial growth by using tax increment financing (TIF). Tax increment financing provides communities with the ability to fund current projects by using future gains in taxes caused by increasing values of properties. No new taxes are levied but instead tax revenues are increased and invested back into the community.

The City of West Branch established the Downtown Development Authority on December 17, 1979 via Ordinance 154. In creating and establishing the DDA, the City found that the DDA was necessary for the best interests of the public to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation, where possible, in the City's business district to eliminate the causes of said

deterioration and to promote economic growth. The boundaries of the DDA were amended on November 17, 1986 (Ordinance 184). The minutes of the Council meeting indicate that this was done to correct an incomplete property description in Ordinance 154. The DDA district was expanded and extended again in November of 2010 by Ordinance 10-9. At this time the development plan was also updated.

The West Branch DDA's first Development Plan/TIF plan, known as "Project Pride" was adopted in 1986. Tax capture took place from 1986 to 2001. Bonds issued for projects in this TIF plan were retired on May 2002. On May 5 of 2003, the City Council approved an amendment/extension of the DDA TIF Plan (Ordinance 03-05). This plan extended and amended the 2003 TIF Plan/Development Plan. Projects that the DDA has provided funding for over the years include:

- Downtown streetscape improvements including sidewalks, planter boxes, landscaping, trash receptacles
- A revolving loan fund for façade improvements
- Railroad track crossing improvements
- Alley work
- Street improvements
- Funding for activities of the Retail Merchants Association, including Fabulous Fridays.



DDA District Map

Wellhead Protection Plan

The City of West Branch has an approved Wellhead Protection Plan (WHPP) which will assist the community in developing long-term strategies to insure safe drinking water for their residents. The City of West Branch relies exclusively on groundwater. WHPPs develop long-term strategies aimed at protecting community drinking water supplies. The purpose of developing a WHPP is to identify the Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) and develop long-term strategies aimed at safeguarding the area from contamination. A WHPA is defined as the surface and subsurface areas surrounding a water well or well field which supplies a public water system and through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move toward and reach the water well or well field within a 10-year time-of-travel. The State of Michigan requires communities to identify seven elements to be included in the WHPP. These elements along with a brief description are below.

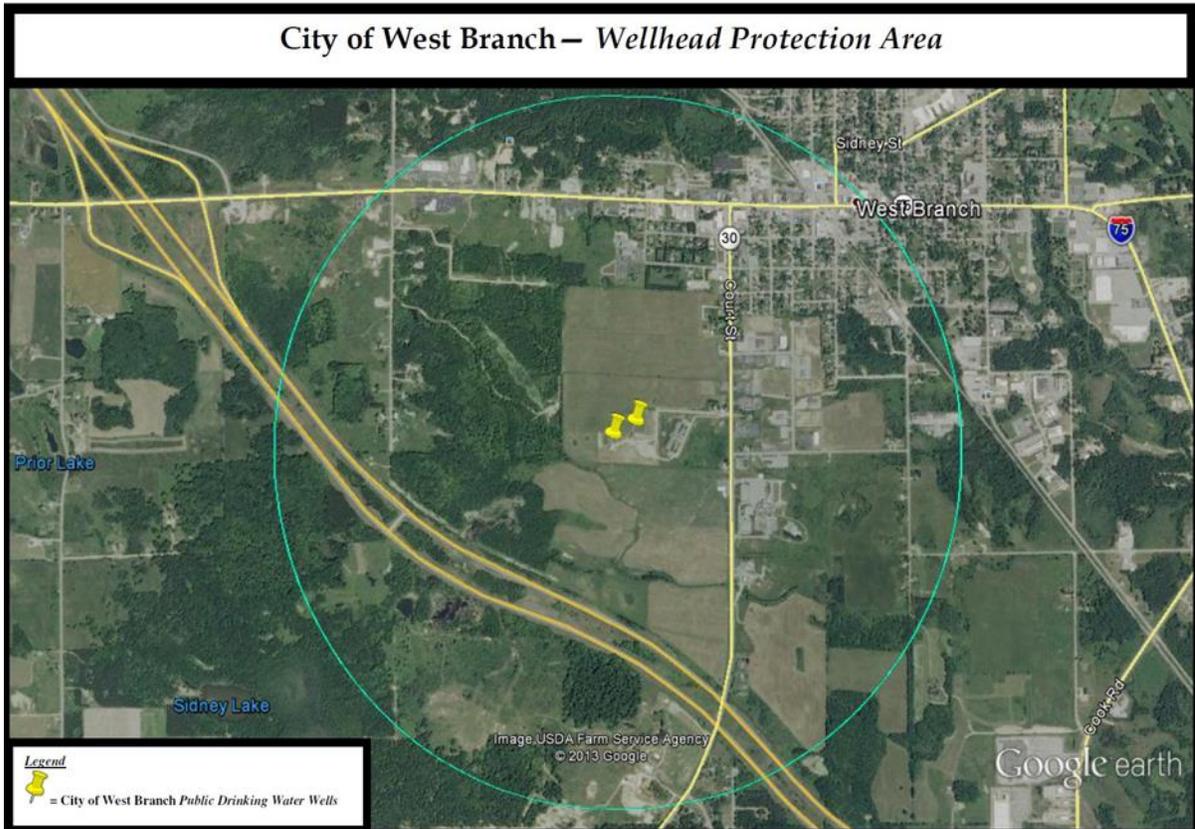
- Roles and Responsibilities – Identify individuals responsible for the development, implementation, and long-term maintenance of the local WHPP.
- WHPA Delineation – Determine that area which contributes groundwater to the public water supply wells.
- Contaminant Source Inventory – Identify known and potential sites of contamination within the WHPA and include in a contaminant source inventory list and map.
- Management Strategies – Provide mechanisms which will reduce the risk of existing and potential sources of contamination from reaching the public water supply wells or well field.
- Contingency Planning – Develop an effective contingency plan in case of a water supply emergency.
- Siting of New Wells – Provide information on existing groundwater availability, the ability of the PWSS to meet present and future demands and the vulnerability of the existing wells to contamination.
- Public Education and Outreach – Generate community awareness in the WHPP by focusing on public education and the dissemination of WHPP information.

It is the intent of this Master Plan to encourage protection of the City's public water supply wells through the establishment of a Wellhead Protection Zoning Ordinance. Within the ordinance, zoning regulations will limit land uses and practices that may degrade groundwater quality within and outside the WHPA.

The most significant sources of water supply contamination are landfills, surface impoundment areas, subsurface percolation from septic tanks and cesspools,

open dumps, uncapped or improperly capped abandoned wells, injection wells and underground storage tanks. These uses represent both point and non-point contamination sources. Point source is the term used to describe contaminants, which originate in the immediate area of the well or tap. All of the above, if located close to the water supply source, are examples of potential point source polluters. Contaminants from these uses may seep directly down through the soil to the water source.

Non-point source contamination is much more difficult to control because the cause of the problem may actually be located a considerable distance from the well. This type of contamination is caused by pollutants that filter into an underground aquifer and then migrate slowly through the groundwater aquifer to off-site wells and water sources. Prevention of this type of contamination must involve a collective effort on the part of property owners and local officials from a large geographic area. It is the intent of this Plan to recognize the importance of groundwater protection within the City of West Branch. All existing and future wells must be protected from both point and non-point source contamination to the greatest degree possible. It is also the intent of this Plan to recognize the importance of groundwater protection within the City of West Branch.



City of West Branch WHPP Mission Statement

- To insure a safe drinking source for residents and businesses by identifying past, present, and future threats to the public water supply.
- To work with other governmental and private agencies to promote a cooperative effort to protect and maintain our water sources.
- To educate residents, businesses, and children on how to preserve our drinking water.
- To develop a plan of procedures in the event that a harmful substance threatens the drinking water.

Wellhead Protection Goals

Goal	Ideas to accomplish goal
Prevent the pollution of surface and ground water	-Plan and develop land uses that will not threaten the water supply. -Educate the public on the effects pesticides have on the water supply. - Evaluate current land issues and identify threats to the surface and ground water.
Promote intergovernmental cooperation to insure protection of water sources	-Include other governmental agencies in the planning of the Wellhead Protection Program. -Ask for assistance in the planning and development of land uses from other government agencies.
Promote residential and commercial cooperation to protect surface water	-Include people from both sectors in the planning, development, and implementations of the Wellhead Protection Plan. -Educate the public on the effects pesticides, oils, paints, etc. have on the surface and ground water.
Develop and implement planning provisions to protect ground water and surface water	-Work with the Planning Commission to develop and implement planning documents aimed at groundwater protection.

Educate the public on the need to protect ground water and surface water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate education efforts with the school. -Produce or purchase educational material to be distributed through special events. -Send information to residents and businesses via the quarterly newsletter.
Plan and prepare for water supply emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Set up a plan and update it annually, which sets forth guidelines to follow in the event of an emergency.
Protect the public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ask all involved to watch and inform City Hall of any potential problems. -Provide educational materials to residents and businesses. -Have an emergency plan. -Revisit abandoned well management in the WHPA to determine if further action is needed to inventory and properly abandon wells.

Sites of Environmental Contamination (201 Sites)

There was one Part 201 site of environmental contamination within the City of West Branch WHPA (Part 201 Site List).

- The Bicycle Factory, 201 N. 8th Street (Pollutants: PB, VCs, Xylenes, Paint Sludge, Paint Waste, Solvents)

Underground Storage Tank Sites

There are six active Underground Storage Tank (UST) sites within the WHPA (Storage Tank Information Center).

- Chemical Bank, 700 W. Houghton Avenue
- Forwards West Branch Mini Plaza, 600 W. Houghton Avenue (1 UST)
- Mobil, 411 West Houghton Avenue
- Schmitt Tire & Gas, 624 W. Houghton Avenue (1 UST)
- The Lazy Oil Company, 116 S. Third Street (1 UST)
- West Branch Regional Medical Center, 2463 S. M 30 (1 UST)

There are six closed USTs within the WHPA (Storage Tank Information Center).

- First Bank, 520 W. Houghton Avenue
- Lahti Fabrication, 651 Columbus Drive
- Ogemaw County Correctional Facility, 912 W. Houghton Avenue
- Ogemaw County Sheriff's Department, 806 W. Wright Street
- The Bicycle Factory, 201 N. 8th Street
- West Branch Diesel, 305 Court Street

Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites

There are two open Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites located within the City of West Branch WHPA (Storage Tank Information Center).

- Chemical Bank, 700 W. Houghton Avenue
- Schmitt Tire & Gas, 624 W. Houghton Avenue

There are four closed LUST sites located within the City of West Branch WHPA (Storage Tank Information Center).

- First Bank, 520 W. Houghton Avenue
- Forwards West Branch Mini Plaza, 600 W. Houghton Avenue
- Lahti Fabrication, 651 Columbus Drive
- Ogemaw County Sheriff's Department, 806 W. Wright Street

Oil and Gas Contamination Sites

City staff surveyed the Wellhead Protection Area to determine that there are no oil and gas wells located within the WHPA.

Hazardous Waste Generators

There are nineteen Hazardous Waste Generator sites located within the WHPA (Michigan Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facilities Directory and WHMD WDS Web Inquiry System).

- Agricultural Property, 2292 S. M-30
- Agricultural Property, 2512 S. First Street
- Agricultural Property, 2699 S. First Street
- Ameritech Corporation, 141 S. 5th Street
- City of West Branch Department of Public Works, 403 S. 1st Street
- County of Ogemaw, 806 W. Houghton Avenue
- Forward Corporation, 600 W. Houghton Avenue
- Lahti Fabrication., 651 Columbus Drive
- Michigan Department of Transportation, I-75 Northbound and Northbound

over M-30

- Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency, 630 Progress Street
- Schmitt Tire & Gas, 624 W. Houghton Avenue
- Selly's Cleaners, 135 N. 4th Street
- Village Quik Lube, 3149 W. Houghton Avenue
- West Branch Collision Inc., 2515 S. M-30
- West Branch Medical Center, 2463 S. M-30
- West Branch Recycling Center, 153 N. 4th Street
- West Branch Tire and Automotive Services Inc., 962 W. Houghton Avenue
- Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation, Oil lines located throughout the WHPA
- Zettels Collision, 3091 W. Houghton Avenue

Groundwater Discharge Permits

According to the MDEQ, there are no groundwater discharge permit facilities located within the WHPA.

Landfill/Solid Waste Disposal Site List

There are no Solid Waste Disposal sites located within the WHPA (WHMD WDS Web Inquiry System).

Federal National Priority Sites

There are no federal national priority list sites located within the WHPA (National Priorities List).

Other Sites of Concern

There are several sites that were included in the previous WHPP Plan, but are not included on the MDEQ lists. They are:

- Dore Store, 411 W. Houghton Avenue
- Charles Wangler—Wangler Implement, 114 S. 4th Street
- Dean Arbor Ford Jeep Eagle, 3382 W. M-55
- Evergreen Clinic, 611 Court Street
- Maxi Muffler, 930 W. Houghton Avenue
- Railroad, City of West Branch, Throughout the WHPA
- Tri City Line X, 155 N. 4th Street
- West Branch Automotive, 623 W. Houghton Avenue
- West Branch Farmers Coop, 105 N. 7th Street
- West Branch Greenhouse, 166 N. 5th Street
- Wash It, 137 N. 4th Street
- West Branch Tank & Trailer, 129 N. 5th Street

Site Plan Review Criteria

The City has incorporated groundwater protection standards into its Zoning Ordinance and intends to continue applying this criteria in the process of reviewing site plans.

Environmental Permits Checklist

The City will also look into incorporating the Environmental Permits Checklist into its site plan review process. West Branch Township and Ogemaw Township are also interested in receiving the Environmental Permits Checklist.

Storm Water Management

The City has installed two rain gardens in Iron's Park. Huron Pines worked with the Nature Conservancy and local students to install the rain gardens. In addition, the City has put in a storm water retention basin in South Valley near the Rifle River. This year, it is putting in another basin on South Burgess Street. Although these sites are located outside of the WHPA, the City would like to continue looking for areas within the WHPA to improve storm water management efforts.

Abandoned Well Management

Although the City did a search of abandoned wells and plugged several of them, it will still educate the public about the danger of abandoned wells. The MRWA has provided information that can be included on the City's website and at City Offices.

Chapter 5

Future Land Use & Zoning Plan



FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use plan illustrates the proposed physical arrangements of land use within the City of West Branch. It identifies and defines the major future land use categories as well as the approximate locations for each use. The boundaries reflected on the map are meant to portray a general land use arrangement which may be refined as the community develops. The plan is prepared to serve as a guide for the City regarding current issues, land use decisions, investments, public improvements and zoning decisions. The plan is also intended to be a working document which will provide for the orderly development of the City, assist the City in its efforts to maintain and enhance a pleasant living environment, and foster economic development and redevelopment.

Residential

Single-Family Residential. Areas designated as future single-family residential are found primarily in large blocks in the central and northwestern portion of West Branch. In addition, an area of proposed single-family is found along Valley and Fremont. Within this category, other related and compatible uses should be encouraged which serve the residents of the area without hampering the single-family environment.

Multi-Family Residential. Multiple-family residential areas are intended primarily for a range of residential uses that would be allowed at a higher density than single-family areas. In addition, areas designated as multiple-family would allow two or more housing units to be located on a single land area. Related and compatible uses would also be situated in multiple-family areas. The City of West Branch has a large number of multiple family units per capita for a community of its size. West Branch also has a large population of senior citizens living in the multiple family units in the City. This population is generally considered the most stable type of renter, meaning they move less frequently than other age groups. Areas designated as future multi-family residential are found throughout the City due to the fact that citizens have indicated a desire for an increased range of attached housing options. A large portion of the northeastern quadrant of the City is designated as future multi-family along with large blocks of land in the extreme northwestern quadrant, near Irons Park in the southeast, along the railroad tracks in the south, and on the west side of Court along the western edge of the City.

Mixed Use

The City of West Branch wishes to encourage mixed use development in several areas of the City including along the Houghton Avenue corridor from 1st Street to Fairview Road. Allowing mixed use developments along this corridor may assist to revitalize the downtown area by attracting entrepreneurs and young professionals by providing more opportunities for mixed business and housing opportunities adjacent to downtown. In addition, a small mixed use area is designated along Wright Street (between 4th Street and 2nd Street) as well as in the northwest quadrant of the City along

the railroad tracks. The goal is to encourage development by permitting a greater variety of uses than would be permitted under conventional zoning. Uses allowed within this mixed use category are not limited and could include a mix of residential, commercial, light industrial (in appropriate areas), office, and public/institutional uses. This land use category could result in a mix of uses on a lot by lot basis (i.e. residential lots next to commercial lots), a mix of uses utilizing different buildings on a single parcel of land, or a mix of uses within the same building.

Commercial and Office

Downtown Commercial. The downtown commercial area provides for development that is pedestrian-oriented and offers a mix of uses within a central core. Downtowns provide convenient, safe access to shopping, restaurants, cultural events, and services for the local community and visitors. Streets, designed to provide efficient traffic flow, as well as centralized parking are critical to accommodating a population orientated to automobiles. At the same time, the City must continue to focus on a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment. Upper story apartments and condominiums over first floor retail and office space, in conjunction with healthy adjacent residential and mixed use neighborhoods, provide additional housing options. The future downtown commercial area extends along Houghton Avenue from 1st Street to Court Street. In addition, it takes in full blocks of property between 2nd Street and 5th Street to the river.

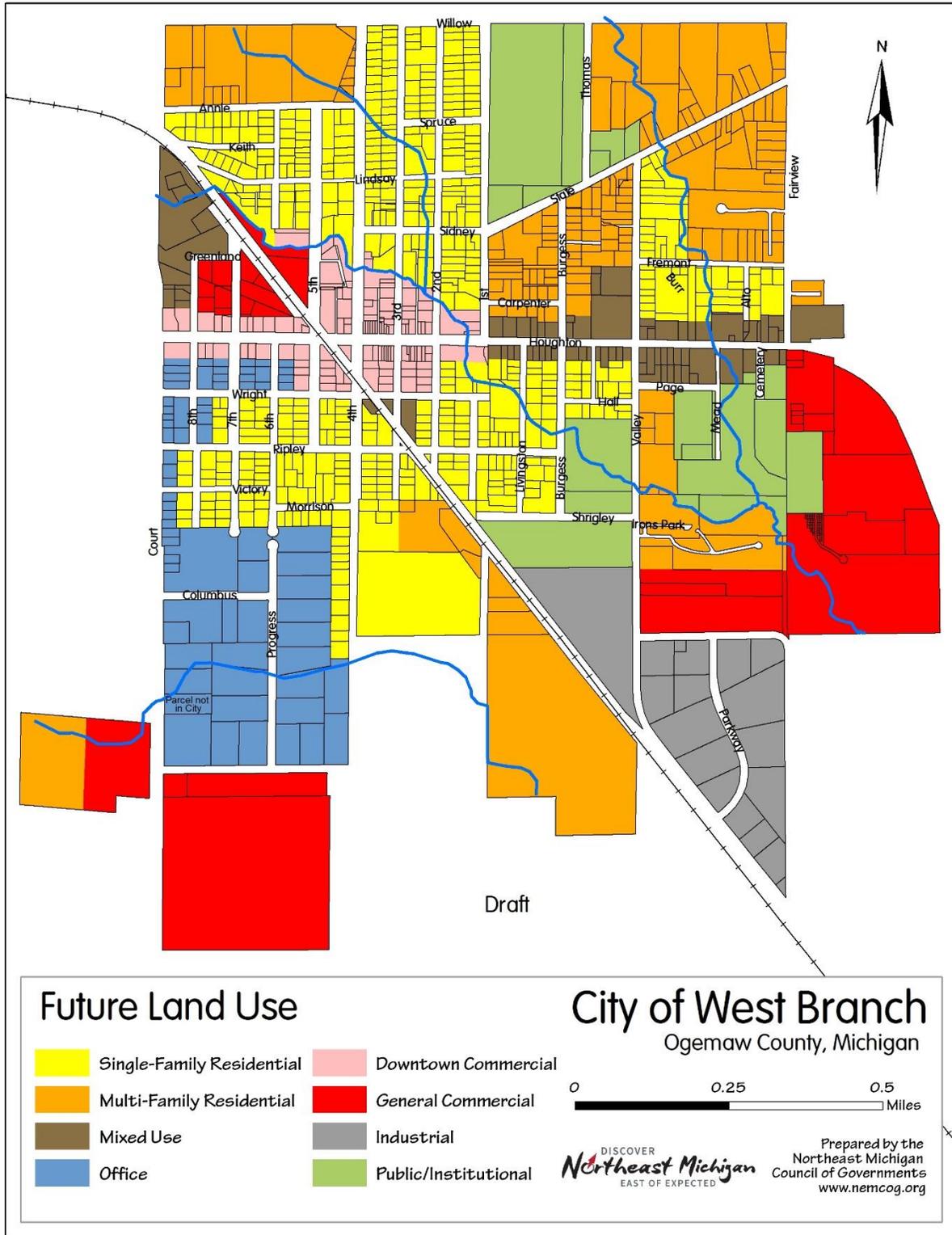
General Commercial. This area is intended for the widest and most intensive variety of retail and service businesses. Businesses that meet the commercial needs of the automobile-dependent public are typically associated with roadways having high traffic volumes. Typical uses in this district include drive-through restaurants, auto service establishments and commercial uses serving a regional clientele. The uses within this district benefit from the exposure of high traffic volume roads. At the same time, the City will work towards providing safe pedestrian access to these establishments. The general commercial area is found in three locations in the City: Along M-55 in the east, along the railroad tracks in the northwestern quadrant, and in the southwestern quadrant. The location of the current hospital is classified as general business. Commercial uses that support the hospital typically locate in these areas.

Office. The areas designated as office are intended to provide for professional and medical office needs of the area. The designation could include privately-owned facilities as well as public or quasi-public institutions. The future office area is also intended to serve as a transition area between commercial and residential areas.

Industrial: The industrial area is located along the railroad tracks in the southeastern portion of the City. The Industrial category is intended to accommodate and attract new manufacturing, processing, warehousing and other industrial uses.

Public/Institutional

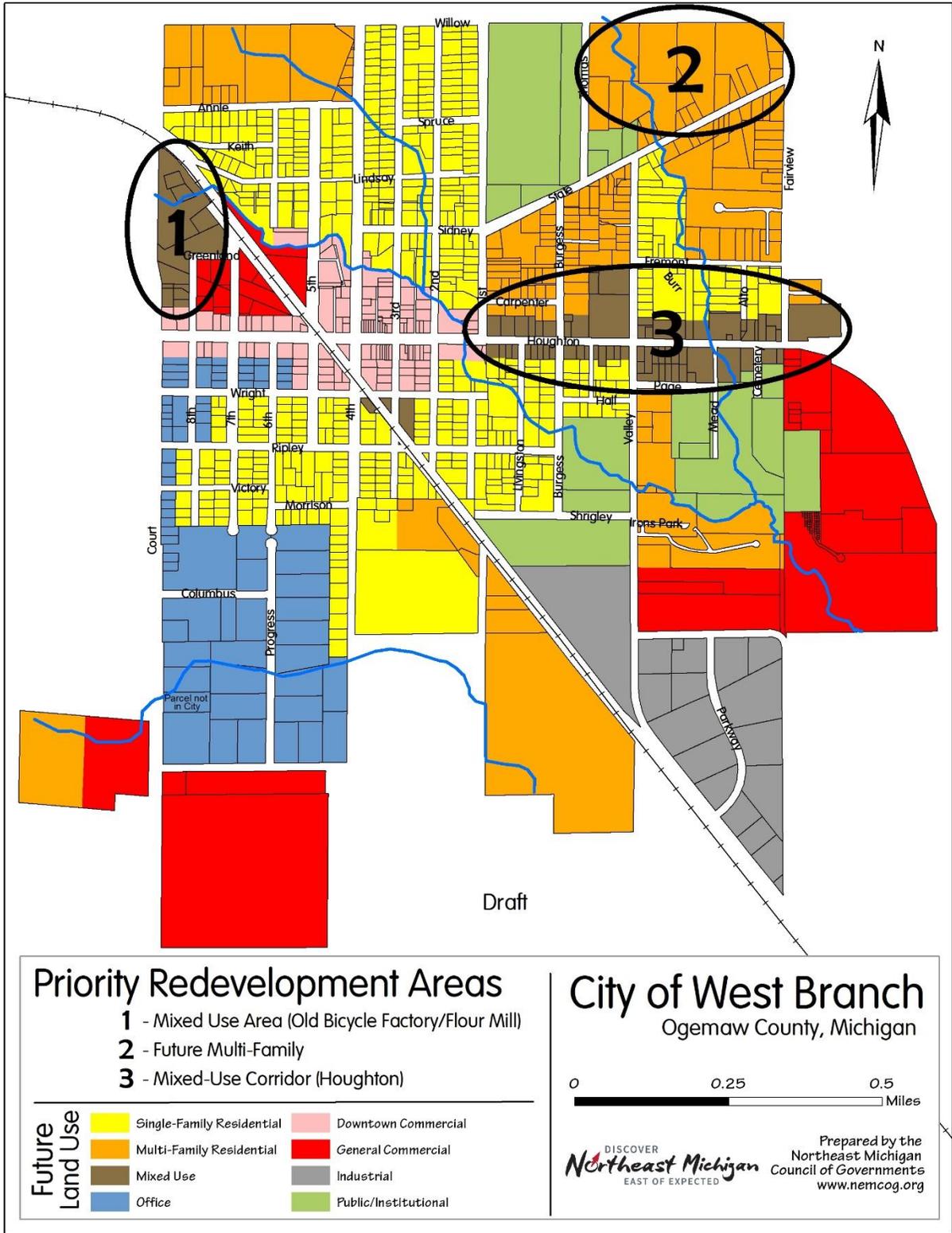
This category includes parks, churches, public facilities, cemeteries, schools, municipal facilities, utilities, and other institutional uses. Portrayal on the map implies a desire to include only those types of uses on a parcel. However, not all publicly-owned facilities are included in the public/institutional category. These types of uses can also occur in the general commercial, office, and downtown business categories which allow a greater variety of uses.



PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

The City of West Branch intends to participate in the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities program. As part of this program, the City will identify and prioritize redevelopment sites. For the purposes of this plan, the City is designating general areas of desired redevelopment. These areas and the priority sites, once specific sites are designated and prioritized, will be reviewed annually and may change throughout the year as circumstances in the community change and as new information becomes available. The inclusion of these general areas of redevelopment in this Master Plan is not meant to preclude alternate areas of redevelopment in the City if the opportunity for redevelopment becomes available. The following general areas are possible redevelopment sites (also included below overlain on the Future Land Use Map). The areas are not listed in order of importance.

1. Old Bicycle Factory/Flour Mill site that has been designated as future Mixed use.
2. Area in the northeastern portion of the City that has been designated as future Multi-Family.
3. Houghton Avenue corridor from 1st Street to Fairview Road that has been designated as Mixed Use.



ZONING PLAN

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) requires that the Master Plan contain a zoning plan which includes an explanation of how the land use categories on the Future Land Use Map relate to the zoning districts. A chart is provided below which includes a listing of the future land use plan categories and the equivalent zoning districts. After adoption of this Master Plan, the City should review the Zoning Ordinance for compatibility with the goals, objectives, action items, and future land uses listed within the Master Plan. The City should review all current zoning districts to ensure that a full range compatible and desired uses are provided for in each district. The Zoning Ordinance should also be reviewed for specific development standards for each district (including architectural and buffering standards), approval procedures, review standards, and general provisions. In general, the Zoning Ordinance should provide enough flexibility to allow the desired development pattern to occur.

Future Land Use Plan/Zoning Equivalency		
Future Land Use Categories	Current Equivalent Zoning	Possible Future Equivalent Zoning
Single-Family Residential	R-1 Single-Family Residential R-M Multi-Family Residential MU: Mixed Use	R-1 Single-Family Residential R-M Multi-Family Residential MU: Mixed Use
Multiple-Family Residential	R-M Multi-Family Residential CBD: Central Business District (above commercial establishments)	R-M Multi-Family Residential CBD: Central Business District (above commercial establishments) MU: Mixed Use
Mixed Use	MU: Mixed Use	MU: Mixed Use
Office	O-S Office Service CBD: Central Business District G-B: General Business MU: Mixed Use	O-S Office Service CBD: Central Business District G-B: General Business MU: Mixed Use
Downtown Commercial	CBD: Central Business District MU: Mixed Use	CBD: Central Business District MU: Mixed Use
General Commercial	G-B: General Business MU: Mixed Use	G-B: General Business MU: Mixed Use
Industrial	IND: Industrial	IND: Industrial MU: Mixed Use
Public/Institutional	P: Parks R-1 Single-Family Residential R-M Multi-Family Residential MU Mixed Use O-S Office Service CBD: Central Business District G-B: General Business IND: Industrial	P: Parks R-1 Single-Family Residential R-M Multi-Family Residential MU Mixed Use O-S Office Service CBD: Central Business District G-B: General Business IND: Industrial

Single-Family Residential. Single-family residential land uses can be accommodated within the current R-1 (Single-Family Residential), R-M (Multi-Family Residential), and MU (Mixed Use) zoning districts. The planned expansion of the Mixed Use category to the Houghton Avenue corridor from 1st Street to Fairview Road will expand the allowable

areas for higher density single-family residential. Setbacks will be evaluated in the Mixed Use District to accommodate structure placement and design that are compatible adjacent to a traditional downtown setting.

Multi-Family Residential. Multi-family residential land uses can be accommodated within the current R-M (Multi-Family Residential) District and CBD (Central Business) District (as dwelling units above commercial establishments). In addition, multi-family residential will be evaluated to be added as an allowable use in the Mixed Use District in order to encourage duplexes, apartments and townhouses along the Houghton Avenue corridor.

Mixed Use. Mixed uses, consisting of single-family residential, commercial, office, and institutional uses, are currently allowed in the MU (Mixed Use) District. However, uses that are allowed within the CBD and G-B Districts are only allowed by right if they consist of up to 50% of the uses in the district. When a CBD or G-B District use would cause the district to become less than 50% single-family, then those uses must undergo a special use permit process. The City intends to assess whether multi-family uses and very light industrial uses should also be allowed in the Mixed Use District. Light industrial uses would be most appropriate in the Mixed Use Future Land Use area located in Priority Development Area 1. This could be accomplished by an overlay district within the Mixed Use District.

General Commercial. The uses included within the General Commercial Future Land Use category are currently accommodated within the G-B (General Business) Zoning District. This district should be reviewed to ensure all appropriate uses are accommodated.

Office. Office uses are currently accommodated by the O-S (Office Service) District. This district should be reviewed to ensure other support and community services are also allowed. In addition, office uses are allowed in the G-B (General Business) District, MU (Mixed Use) District and CBD (Central Business) District.

Industrial. Industrial uses are accommodated by the Industrial zoning district. However, this district should be reviewed to ensure that all appropriate and compatible industrial and heavy commercial uses are accommodated. In addition, as stated above, light industrial uses could also be allowed in the Mixed Use District as an overlay in Priority Development Area 1.

Public/Institutional. Public and institutional uses are currently allowed within all zoning districts in the City. The many types of public and institutional uses should be evaluated in detail to determine if all uses within this category are provided for.

Implementation. The Zoning Ordinance is a tool through which the Master Plan can be implemented. As development and redevelopment continues, this tool will help to provide compatible land use relationships between uses and encourage quality site design. This can be accomplished through the site plan review process.

For the plan to be truly effective, however, the Planning Commission and City Council must actively pursue goals of the plan. This will require revisions to the Zoning Ordinance or other ordinances affecting land use decisions. Additionally, the Planning Commission may wish to actively pursue the implementation of recommended improvements noted throughout the Master Plan document.

