

MASTER PLAN

2018

WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP

*Waterways &
Natural Beauty*



Destination Watervliet, Come Grow With Us.

*Walkable
Community*

Balanced Housing

*Sustainable
Redevelopment*

WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP

BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

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Watervliet, Michigan 49098
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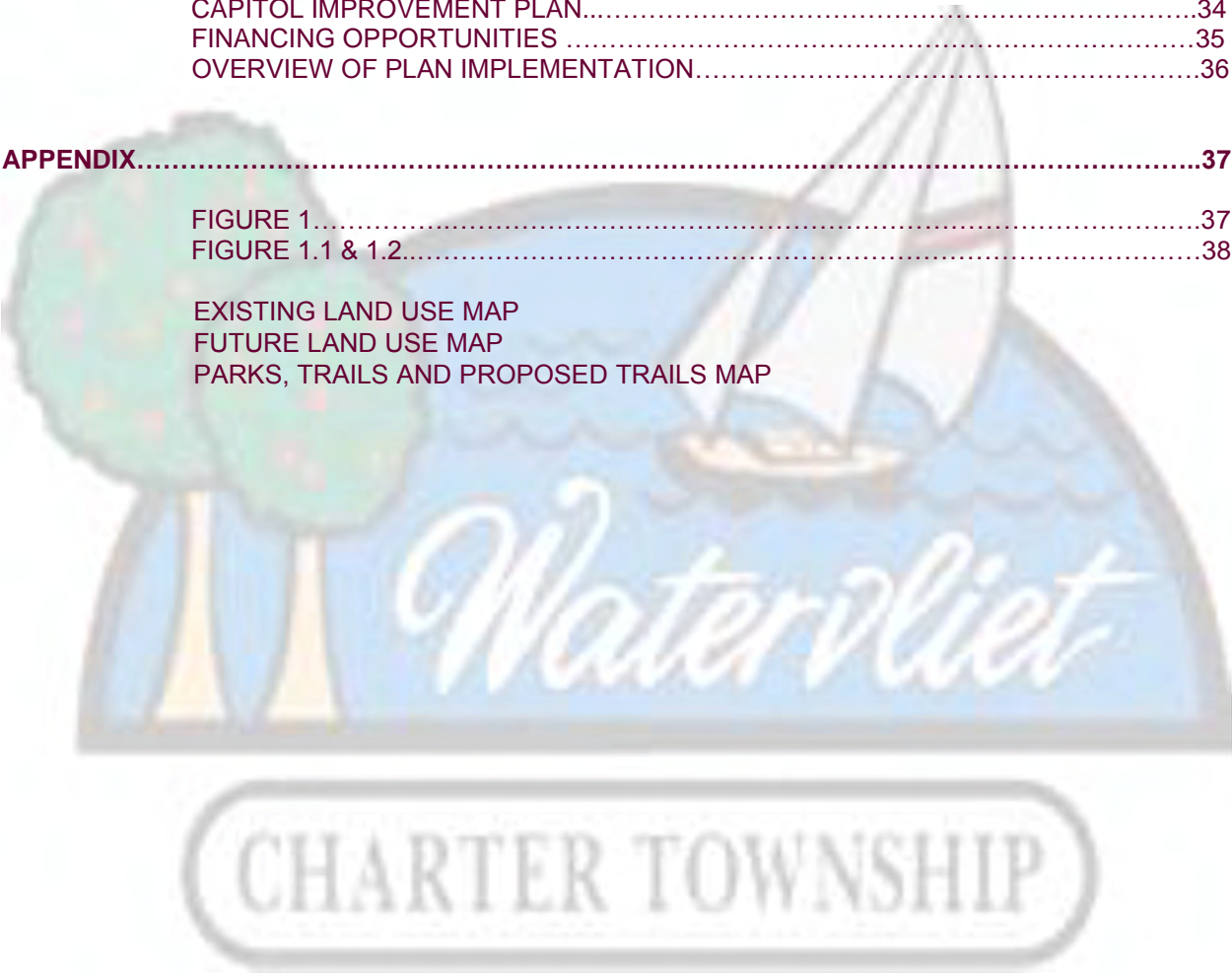
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EXISTING LAND USE MAP
 FUTURE LAND USE MAP
 PARKS, TRAILS AND PROPOSED TRAILS MAP



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

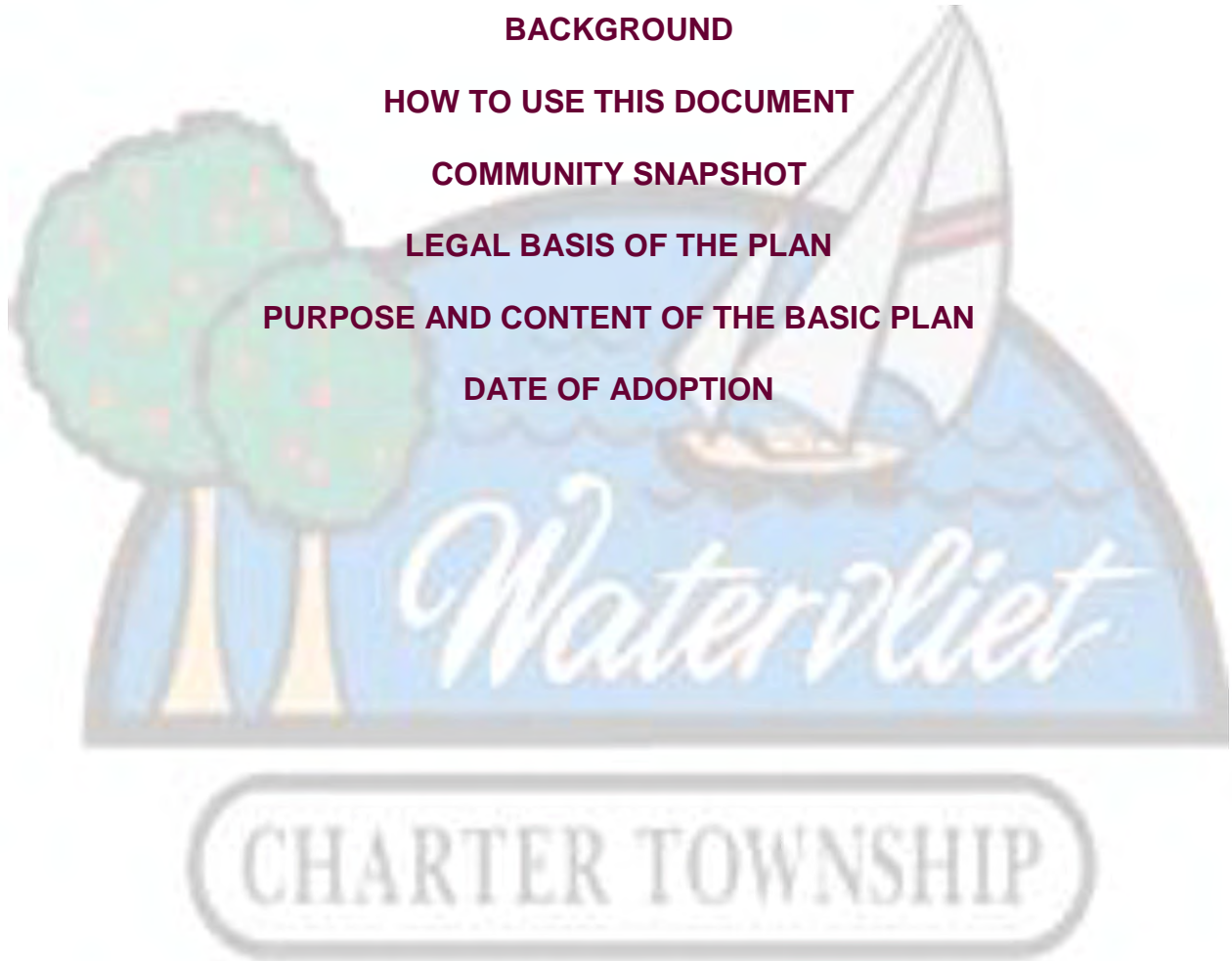
HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

LEGAL BASIS OF THE PLAN

PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE BASIC PLAN

DATE OF ADOPTION



SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

WATERVLIET TOWNSHIP OVERVIEW

Watervliet Township is located in Berrien County, nestled around Paw Paw Lake and the Paw Paw River. As such, the 13 sq. mile township is influenced by the lake and the river both economically and culturally. Flowing through Watervliet Township is the newest water trail, the Paw Paw River Trail, which provides recreational paddling opportunities for outdoor water enthusiasts.

Watervliet Township has diverse land uses that range from parks, to historic resort communities, and housing that ranges from older, modest to large and modern which help shape the character of the Township. Other amenities that add to Watervliet Township's character include u-pick farm stands offering fresh fruit and produce, a golf course, a hospital, an airport with a 5K walking trail and a campground with river access. A strong and reputable school system also draws people to this area, as well as the close proximity and short driving distances to access higher educational facilities such as Lake Michigan College, Western Michigan University and Siena Heights University.

Watervliet Township is bisected by two major thoroughfares, I-94 and M-140 highways, which intersect within the Township boundaries. Consequently, the Township is centrally located in close proximity to the metropolitan cities of Chicago, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and South Bend, which provides easy access to greater opportunities for shopping, entertainment, scenic amenities, sporting, cultural and employment opportunities, as well as making it a desirable destination for seasonal homes and tourists.

Watervliet Township, set in an agricultural setting, is surrounded with natural beauty and abundant waterways and has maintained its quaint rural character. It is bountiful in recreational opportunities for all ages to enjoy, and actively seeks to encourage and promote growth within its borders.

BACKGROUND

The Master Plan is a dynamic long-term planning document that provides a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development using a series of goals and objectives. As such, the Master Plan is a guide for the Township Board, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals in decisions and actions that pertain to site plans, issuance of special use permits, ordinance variances, rezoning, development and all other related issues serving as an official guide for all future development.

Watervliet Township's first Master Plan (called a Sketch Development Plan for Watervliet Township) was adopted in 1975. This original plan contained a map which described the vision for the development of the Township by the Planning Commission and the Township Board. In 1998, a new Master Plan update was completed. This update described the physical features, the land use trends and projected the expected future population growth within the Township. This was the first Plan update which was then adopted by the Township Board. This original plan update was then reviewed in 2005 and 2010 with revisions being made to demographic and background information, but with no changes to the goal or action plans of the original document.

Now, twenty years after the original Master Plan Update, the Planning Commission elected to move forward with a complete review of the Master Plan in order to define and map out the future direction of the Township.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

How the Master Plan can be applied:

- Property owners who may have several interests such as their own property, as well as other properties, which are similarly designated.
- Homeowners who might desire to understand the properties in the immediate neighborhood and/or what the proposed uses are for vacant land.
- Vacant property land owners who might be interested in what the proposed land uses are for vacant property.
- Residents who might want to understand the planning concepts in relation to the goal statements, which specify the Township Board and Planning Commission's views of the Township and the forecast for the future.

- Planners and developers who are looking for land to build on or invest in.

Step #1 Determine the land use designation for your property and the surrounding area.

This information can be found in the Existing Land Use Map located in the Appendix Section of this document. The Existing Land Use Map identifies the current zoning of all parcels in the township. Locating your property on the map will establish its current zoning classification. The Zoning Ordinance will provide detailed information about what uses are permitted, along with specific requirements, in that district.

Step #2 Determine how the Township views development in your area.

Viewing the Future Land Use Map, in the Appendix Section of this document, will show how future development is anticipated to grow and in what areas. Locating your property on this map will show how the area surrounding your property is expected to develop, with what types of uses, in the future.

Step #3 Determine the meaning of the land use designation for your property.

In step #1 you were asked to determine the land use designation for your property. Find the designation that applies to your property and read the description of that land use. Depending on the nature of your interest, this may be as far as you want to go. If you have a specific proposal that does not match the expectations of the Master Plan, you may want to look at it in more detail or, preferably, request an audience with the Planning Commission who will advise you on what your options are.

Step #4 Determine how your property is affected.

The Future Land Use designation indicates the planned use for your property and the surrounding area. Because your property may be projected to be of an entirely different zoning classification in the future, or if your zoning classification does change, your current use will not be affected, and you may still use your property as you currently use it in perpetuity. The intent of the future land use map is to guide the Planning Commission and the Township Board in future rezoning requests.

CURRENT ZONING MAP

LEGEND



R1A - SINGLE FAMILY



R1B - SINGLE FAMILY



R-2 MULTIPLE FAMILY



RMH - RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME



C - COMMERCIAL



M-1 INDUSTRIAL



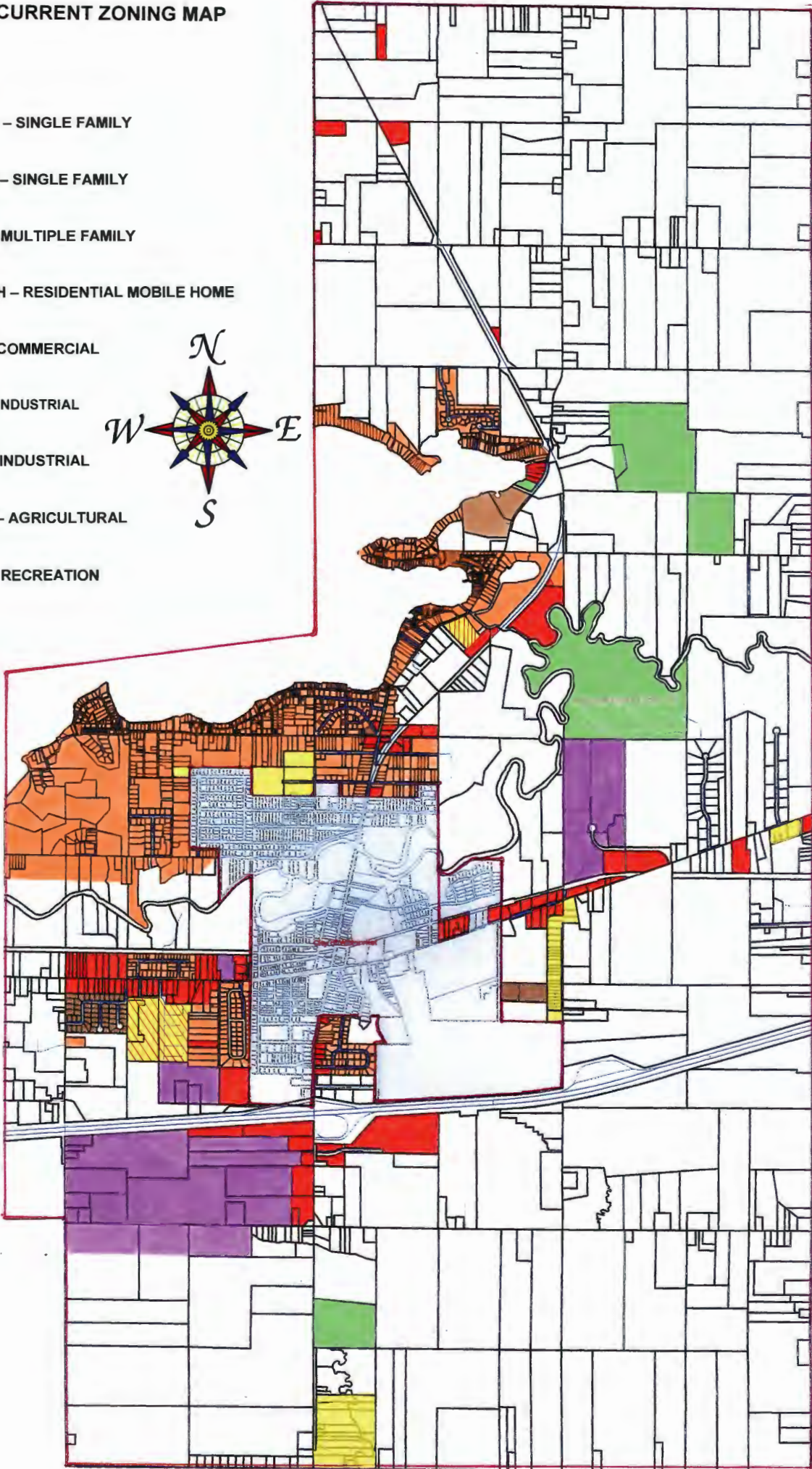
M-2 INDUSTRIAL



AG - AGRICULTURAL



RE - RECREATION



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

In order to know which direction to head in, you must first understand where you have been and where you are now. That is why the community snapshot is the foundation of the Master Plan. This section looks at some of the characteristics that make Watervliet Township distinctive, a place where people want to live, and can also be used to identify issues and trends that could potentially affect future land use.

Watervliet was established in 1833 upon the building of a sawmill. This sawmill eventually expanded to a paper mill in 1892 and would serve as the town's main industry for the next one hundred years. As the timber industry began to decline, farming became the next big industry, shipping thousands of barrels of apples and peaches to the markets in Chicago from the downtown Watervliet train depot. As the Watervliet economy grew it also became a popular hot spot for tourists. The city's downtown was filled with visitors on their way to hotels, camps and cottages on the popular Paw Paw Lake. The community thrived as its close proximity to the Lake Michigan shoreline and accessibility to railroads gave it the perfect opportunity to grow into a resort destination.

Watervliet Township has ample natural features which are enhanced by its rural agricultural setting which makes it an attractive destination point for many outdoor recreational activities. With a blend of rural character and charm the Township offers a unique location for business development alongside family-oriented neighborhoods. The community's reputation for its top-notch school district also draws families to the area. Additionally, the renowned Paw Paw Lake and the Paw Paw River offer plenty of opportunity for recreational enthusiasts of all ages.

LEGAL BASIS OF THE PLAN

In the State of Michigan, townships have the authority to prepare and adopt a basic plan describing future development of the township. (Planning Enabling Act of 2008).

PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE BASIC PLAN

The Planning Enabling Act of 2008 sets forth the purpose of the plan, which is to promote the public health, safety and general welfare; to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; to avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people; to lessen congestion on public roads and streets; to facilitate provisions for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and to consider the character of the township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.

The basic plan shall address land use issues and may project up to twenty years or more into the future. The basic plan shall include the following subjects which reasonably can be considered as pertinent to the development of the township:

- A land use plan and program in part, consisting of a classification and allocation of land for agriculture, residences, commerce, industry, recreation, ways and grounds, public buildings, schools, soil conservation, forests, open spaces, wild life refuges, and other uses and purposes.
- The general location, character and extent of roads, streets, highways, railroads, airports, bicycle paths, pedestrian ways, bridges, waterways, and waterfront developments; flood prevention works, drainage, sanitary sewers, water supply systems, works for prevention of pollution and works for maintaining water levels; and public utilities and structures.
- Recommendations as to the general character, extent and layout for redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted areas; removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandoning, or changing use or extension of ways, grounds, open spaces, buildings utilities or other facilities.
- Recommendations for implementing any of its proposals.

This Master Plan fulfills the legislative requirements of a basic plan. The preparation of this update advances the content and understanding of land use recommendations to guide Township growth and development into the future.

PLAN ADOPTION

Pursuant to Michigan law, it is the duty of the Township Planning Commission to notify all adjoining local units of government and the County Planning Commission of its intent to prepare a plan update. On_____ a letter was sent by the Planning Commission Secretary providing official notice to Coloma and Bainbridge Townships, and the City of Watervliet in Berrien County, and to Covert, Bangor, Hartford and Keeler Townships in Van Buren County requesting collaboration in the update process being undertaken by Watervliet Charter Township. A notification letter was also sent to the Berrien and Van Buren County Planning Commissions.

Prior to the Planning Commission offering the plan update for public comment at a required public hearing, the Planning Commission must review the draft plan with the Township Board and obtain permission to distribute the plan for public review. This action was granted by the Township Board on_____. On _____ a copy of the draft plan was sent to the Planning Commission of each abutting municipality and to the Berrien and Van Buren County Planning Commissions requesting review as required by PEA.

The Master Plan Update of 2018 has been prepared in conformance with applicable Michigan Law and presented to the public at a public hearing held on _____.

The Township Planning Commission on _____ formally recommended adoption of the Master Plan Update of 2018. The Planning Commission also requested the Township Board to consider the adoption of the Plan. The Township Board approved this motion on_____.

SECTION 2

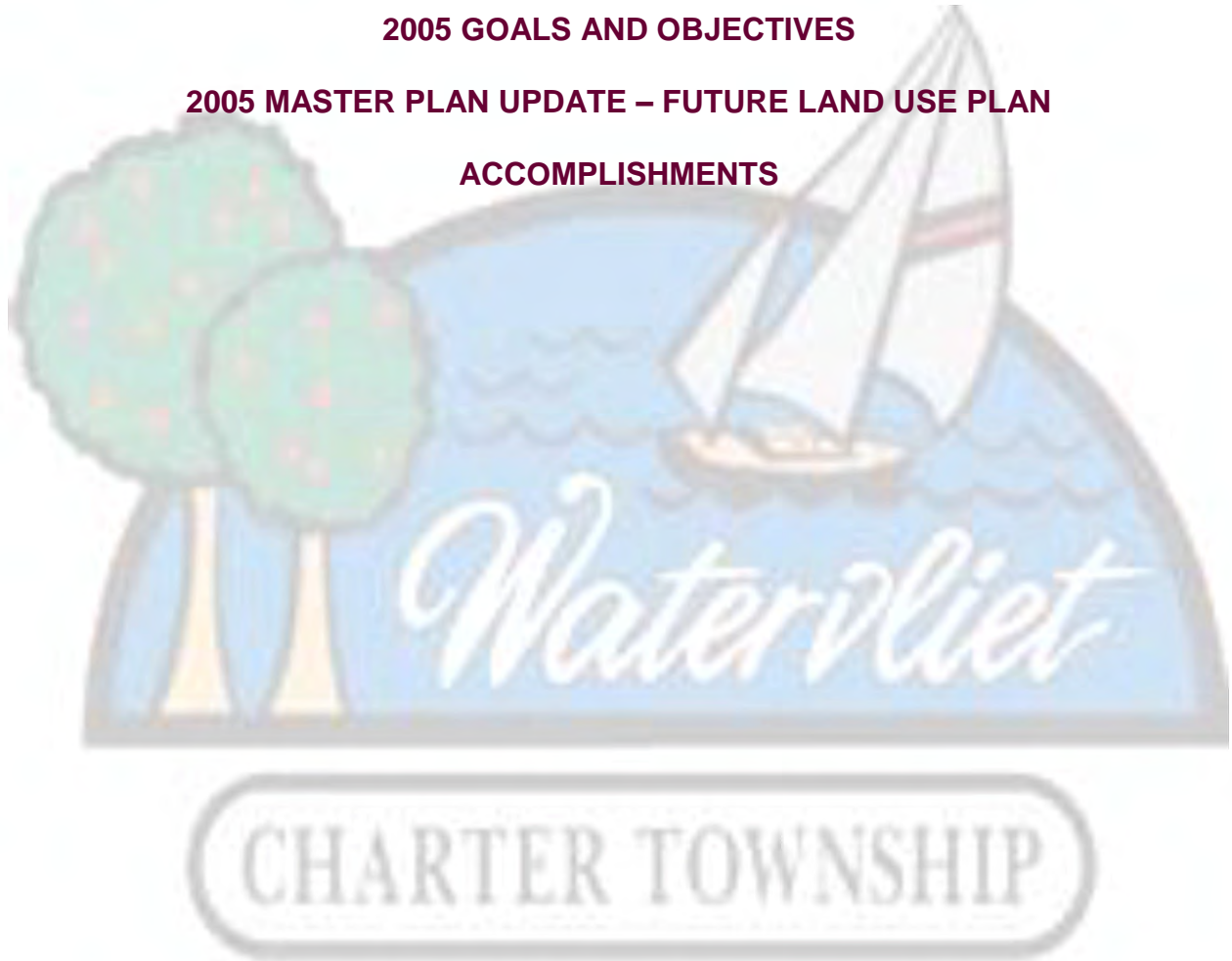
2005 MASTER PLAN UPDATE SUMMARY

DATE OF ADOPTION

2005 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2005 MASTER PLAN UPDATE – FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SECTION TWO

2005 MASTER PLAN UPDATE SUMMARY

DATE OF ADOPTION OF CURRENT MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Watervliet Township Planning commission adopted the current Master Plan Update, on December 6, 2005.

2005 MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1

Watervliet Township will seek to maintain its predominantly single-family home owner character while recognizing the unique natural resources of the township, especially Paw Paw Lake and the Paw Paw River while providing for a variety of housing types at locations which are most suitable for higher density housing accommodations.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Complete a comprehensive review of the Township Zoning Ordinances to identify specific language which must be revised to implement the goals of this plan.
- B. Revise the Township Zoning Ordinance to allow cluster development where farmland and open space is included in the overall design of the development and explore the use of Transfer of Development Rights (disconnected planned unit developments: to allow greater flexibility of design for new development and preservation of farmland and open space in the Township.
- C. Ensure that development along the shoreline of lakes and rivers, especially Paw Paw Lake and the Paw Paw River, is accomplished in a manner that protects and enhances the natural conditions and aesthetic appeal.
- D. Guide urban development toward non-prime agricultural lands, open unused land, and the least productive agricultural land.
- E. Require lot sizes intended to be served by on-site water and wastewater treatment systems that are adequate in size to help prevent earth, ground, water,

and surface water pollution, as well as to encourage aesthetically pleasing residential areas.

GOAL 2

The Township, recognizing that it is desirable to preserve the rural agricultural setting of a large portion of the Township, will seek to discourage the division of large parcels of land presently or historically used in farming operation into small acreage residential home sites serviced by on-site water and wastewater systems by establishing minimum lot sizes for agricultural and residential uses within the designated “*agricultural protection and preservation*” portion of the Township.

OBJECTIVES

- A. When considered appropriate, participate in the Berrien County Farmland and Open Space Purchase of Development Rights Program.
- B. Review the Township’s Land Division and Subdivision Ordinances and recommend to the Township Board amendments to implement the goals of this plan that discourage the fractionalization of agricultural land by scattered urban development.
- C. Prepare a rural development strategy, jointly with large land owners to identify the intended use of the land in the future and to begin discussion of interest in preservation.
- D. Uphold the inherent right of the farmer to perform generally recognized agricultural practices as provided in the Michigan Right to Farm Act, PA 93 of 1981, as amended.

GOAL 3

The Township will encourage business and appropriate industrial development by: 1) assisting private interests in the establishment of industrial or business parks, 2) improving the appearance of businesses and the streetscape along M-140 and Red Arrow Highway and supporting the participation of all Township businesses in retail recruitment and marketing programs designed to increase customer traffic.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Prepare a master development plan and joint public/private development strategy for the development of a business district on and surrounding the former Watervliet Paper Company property located on Red Arrow Highway east of the City of Watervliet.
- B. Seek state assistance in the form of a loan or grant allowing the installation of the necessary infrastructure and roads to service the business district.
- C. Prepare an informational brochure concerning the business district and distribute to various interested parties and businesses to attract their location into the business park.
- D. Prepare a landscape plan for the M-140 entryway route into the community.
- E. Assist any program to expand business participation in the local chamber of commerce and the Coloma Watervliet Area Economic Development corporation designed to improve customer traffic in the community and the mix of businesses available in the community.
- F. Discourage, through zoning techniques, scattered sprawling commercial development patterned along street and highway frontage.

GOAL 4

The Township should install the municipal infrastructure and complete other capital investments necessary to meet current and future needs of development, with funding based on a “*user pay*” philosophy.

OBJECTIVES

- A. The Township will prepare a policy to establish a “*new infrastructure*” improvement program to assist with the financing of the required infrastructure to accommodate anticipated new development.
- B. The Township will identify geographic areas of the Township, in which application of these financing tools will be provided as part of the finalization of the Future Development Plan.

- C. Restrict new urbanizing development to areas adjacent to or near existing urban areas of the Township until municipal utilities become available, thereby ensuring more economical extension of expensive utility systems.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thorough review of the 2005 Master Plan Update reveals the document has been the basis for most decisions concerning future development within the Township. Reading of the 2005 Master Plan Update reveals major accomplishments including:

1. Adopted Open Space Preservation Development option for the preservation of open spaces and agricultural land.
2. Adopted comprehensive Riparian Lot Use Regulations controlling lake front development.
3. Sewer and water installed to industrial park for industrial development.
4. All original lift stations were replaced with new upgraded pump stations.
5. Fostered and promoted the location of hotel, Casey's General Store, strip mall, and the 22-million-dollar Lane automotive expansion.

SECTION 3

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

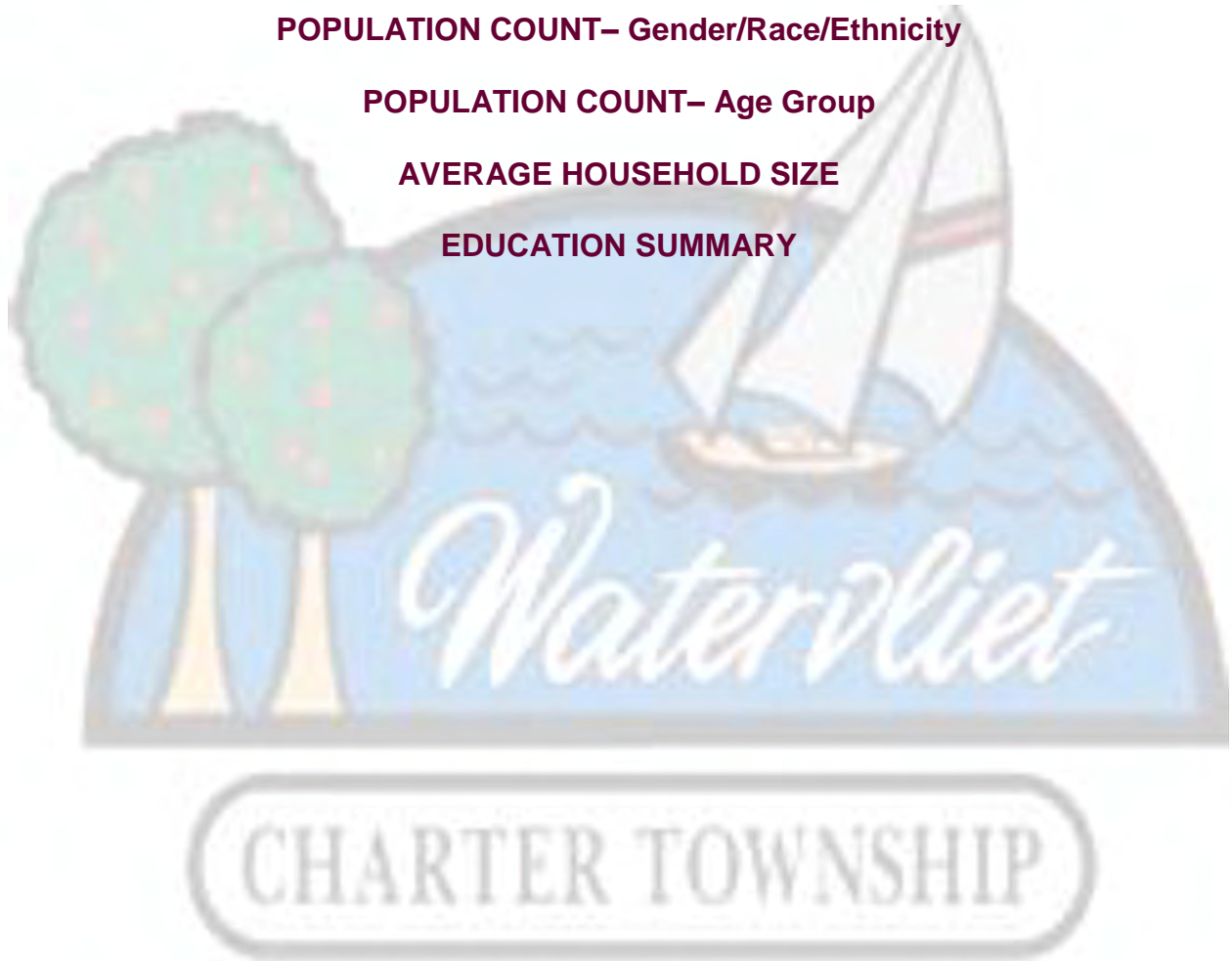
HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS

POPULATION COUNT– Gender/Race/Ethnicity

POPULATION COUNT– Age Group

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

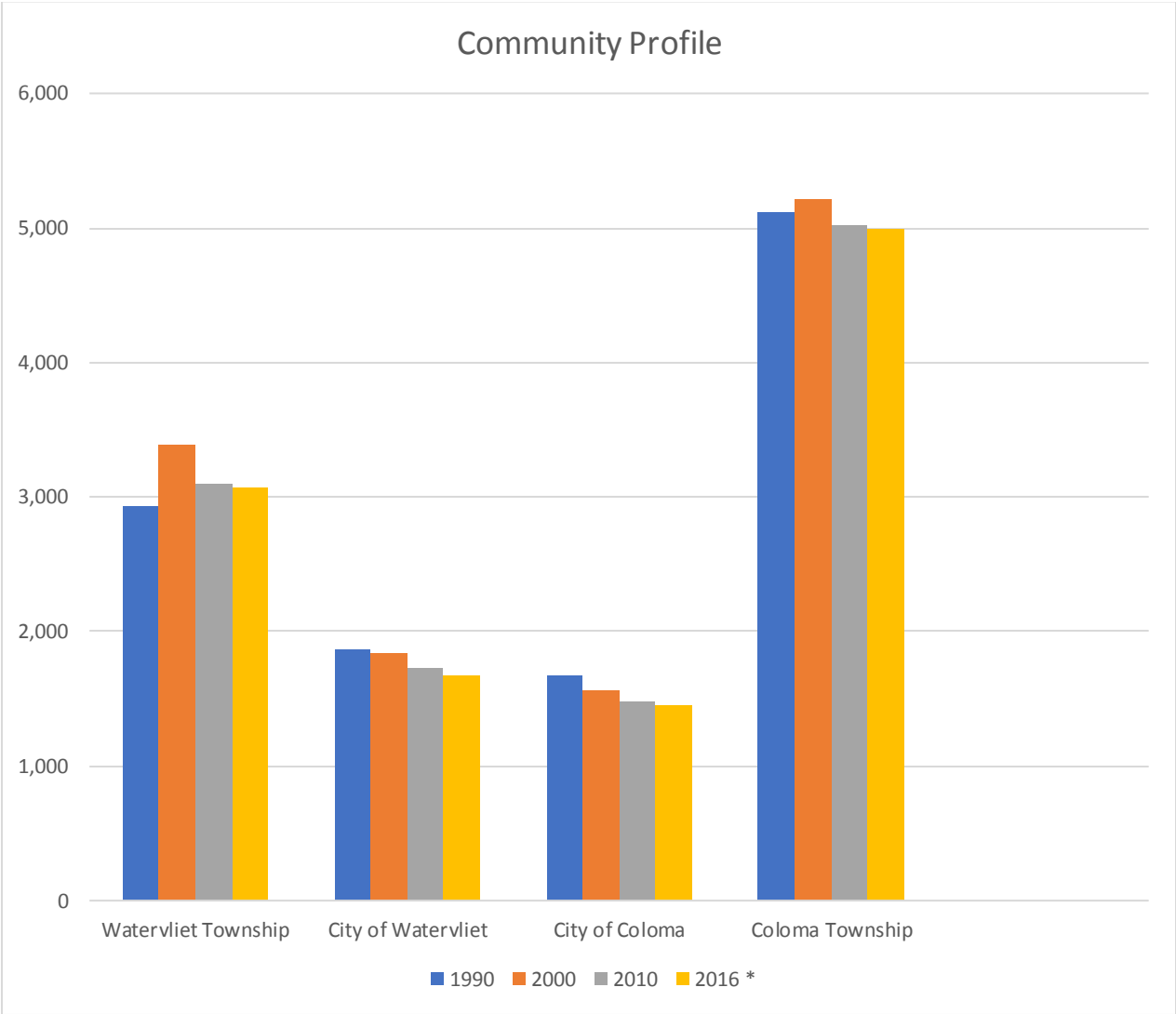
EDUCATION SUMMARY



DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

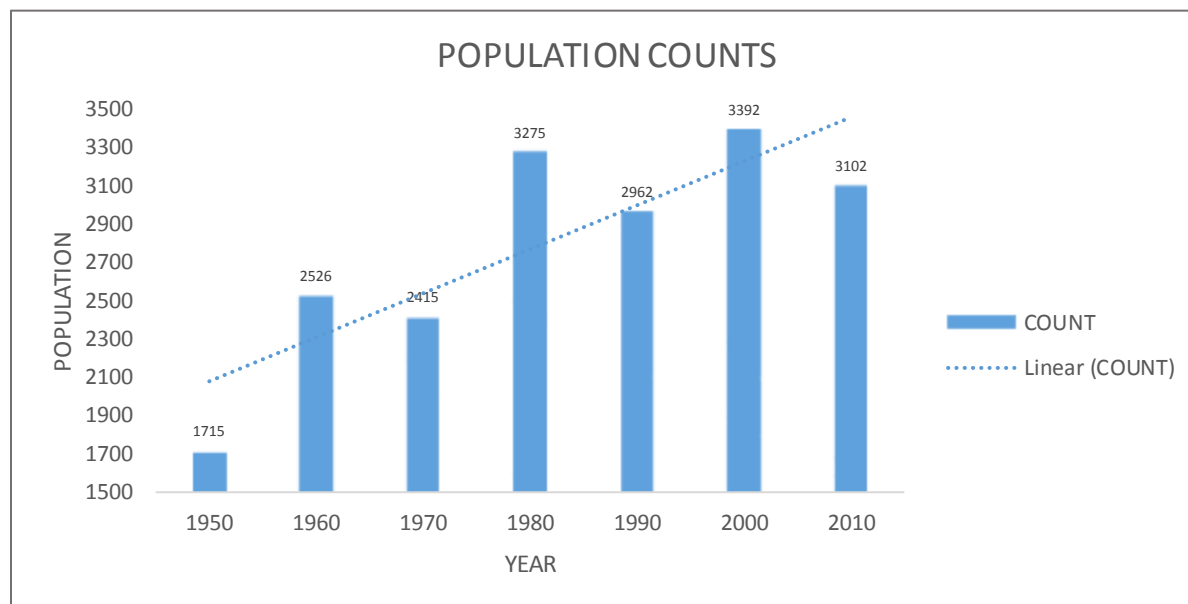
POPULATION PROFILE

The chart below illustrates the township’s growth pattern from 1990 through 2010 with a Census Bureau estimate shown for 2016. The township’s population peaked in 2000 and declined in 2010 but remained higher than the 1990 census number. Worth noting is the fact that of Watervliet City and Coloma Township and City’s populations, the township had the most dramatic change in population.



HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS

Total Township population, as recorded in each decennial census is shown below.

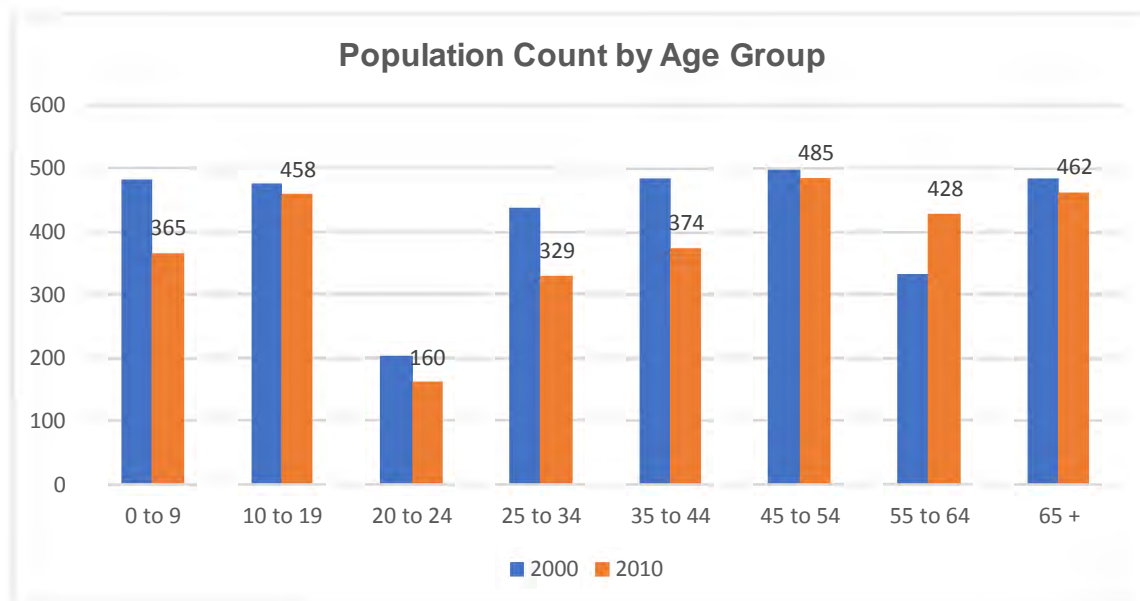
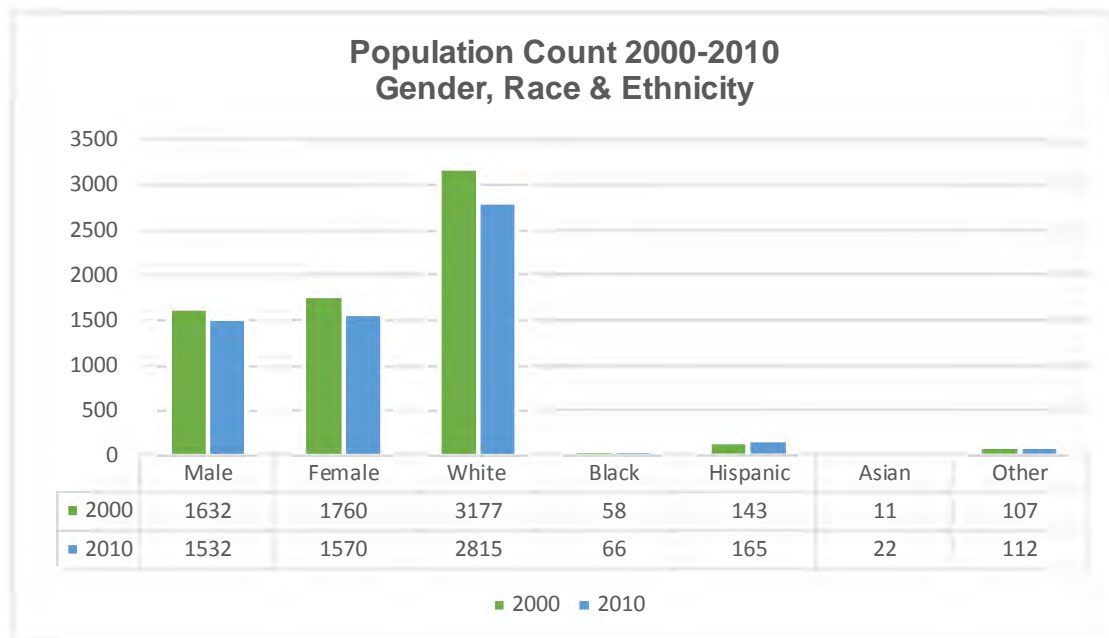


As shown by the data, the decades of 1950 to 1960, 1970 to 1980 and 1990 to 2000 saw population growth, while the decades of 1960 to 1970, 1980 to 1990 and 2000 to 2010 experienced population declines. This erratic behavior pattern may be explained in part by several occurrences.

During the 1960's many older lakefront cottages were converted from seasonal to year-round use. In the 1970's, judicial decisions affecting the school district slowed the influx of younger families. Population rebounded in the 1980's because of the supply of jobs and job growth throughout the area. Beginning in the 1990's and continuing during the year 2000, a significant amount of new population were permanent or seasonal retirees.

The Southwest Michigan Regional Planning Commission is the repository for the United States Census data for Berrien county. In this capacity, the Commission develops population projections for municipalities within the County. The most recent projection for 2020 for Watervliet Township reflects a population of 2,876, which is 7.3% less than 2010. In comparison, the 1998 Master Plan Update projected total population for the Township between 3,392 and 4,592 in 2020, and the 2005 plan review revised the projection to 3,296. The observation is a trend of declining population in the Township.

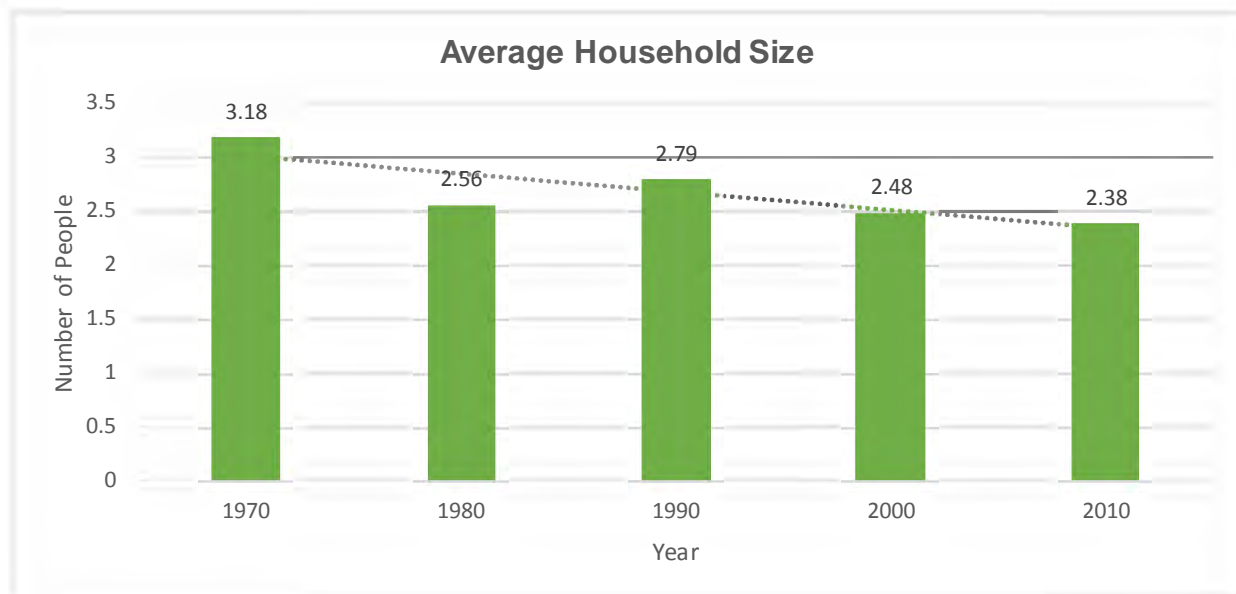
The population is not only declining but is also changing in composition rather significantly, as shown below.



Gender, race and ethnic compositions in 2010 had changed very little since 2000. There are still slightly more females than males and the 2010 racial and ethnic make-up

remains pretty much the same as it was in 2000. However, the age profile reveals some noticeable changes. First, the 55 and older population in 2010 was 28.7% in comparison to 22.7% in 2000. In contrast, the below age 45 group declined from 61.3% in 2000 to 54.5% in 2010.

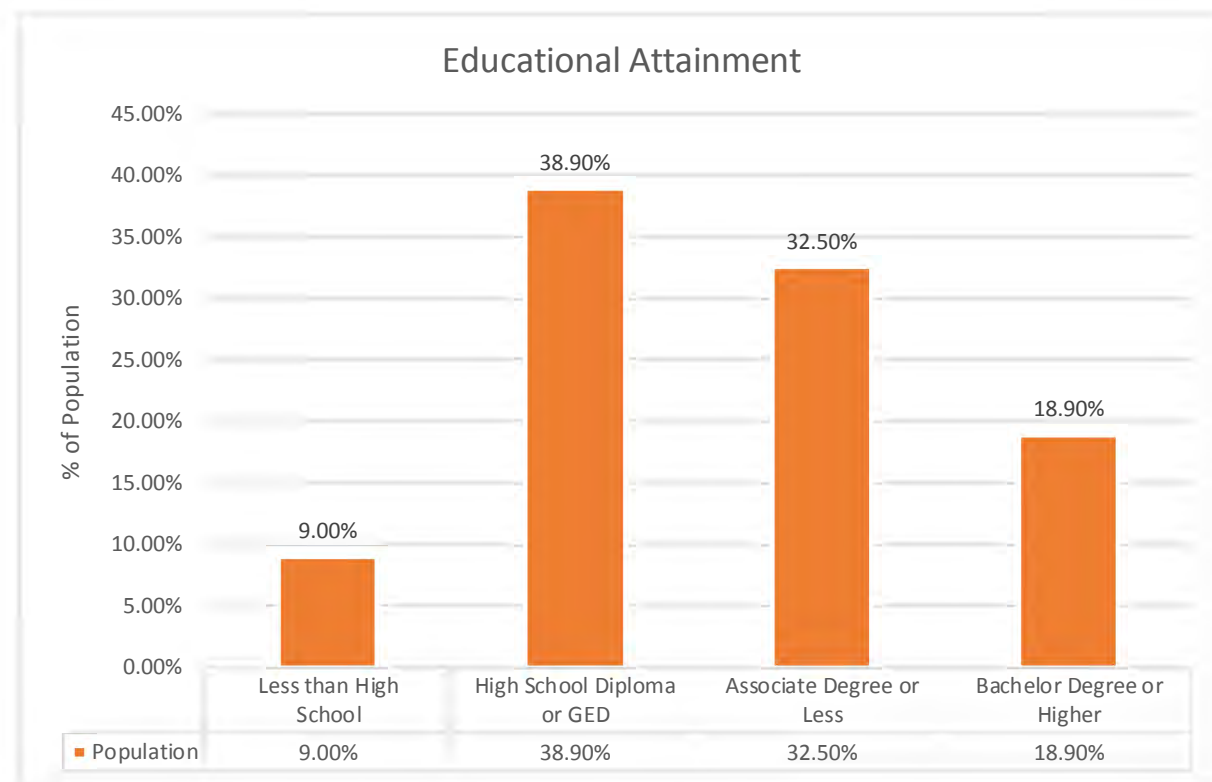
Furthermore, the average household size has decreased over the past several decades as shown below.



This data reflects a decline that will likely continue in the future unless actions are taken by the Township to reverse the trend. The total population, age and household size data document a continuing aging of the Township population and an ongoing trend toward smaller family sizes. These present challenges for the Township in providing services for senior residents and taking action to attract a younger population to the community.

Education Summary – 2010 Census

Of the Township's total population 71.4% have a high school diploma or a GED and either some college or an Associate Degree. In addition, 18.9% have a Bachelor Degree or higher. These numbers reflect a sizeable proportion of the population who have attained a level of education which would qualify them for the types of employment that require a high level of skill and reasoning ability that are prevalent in the modern workplace.



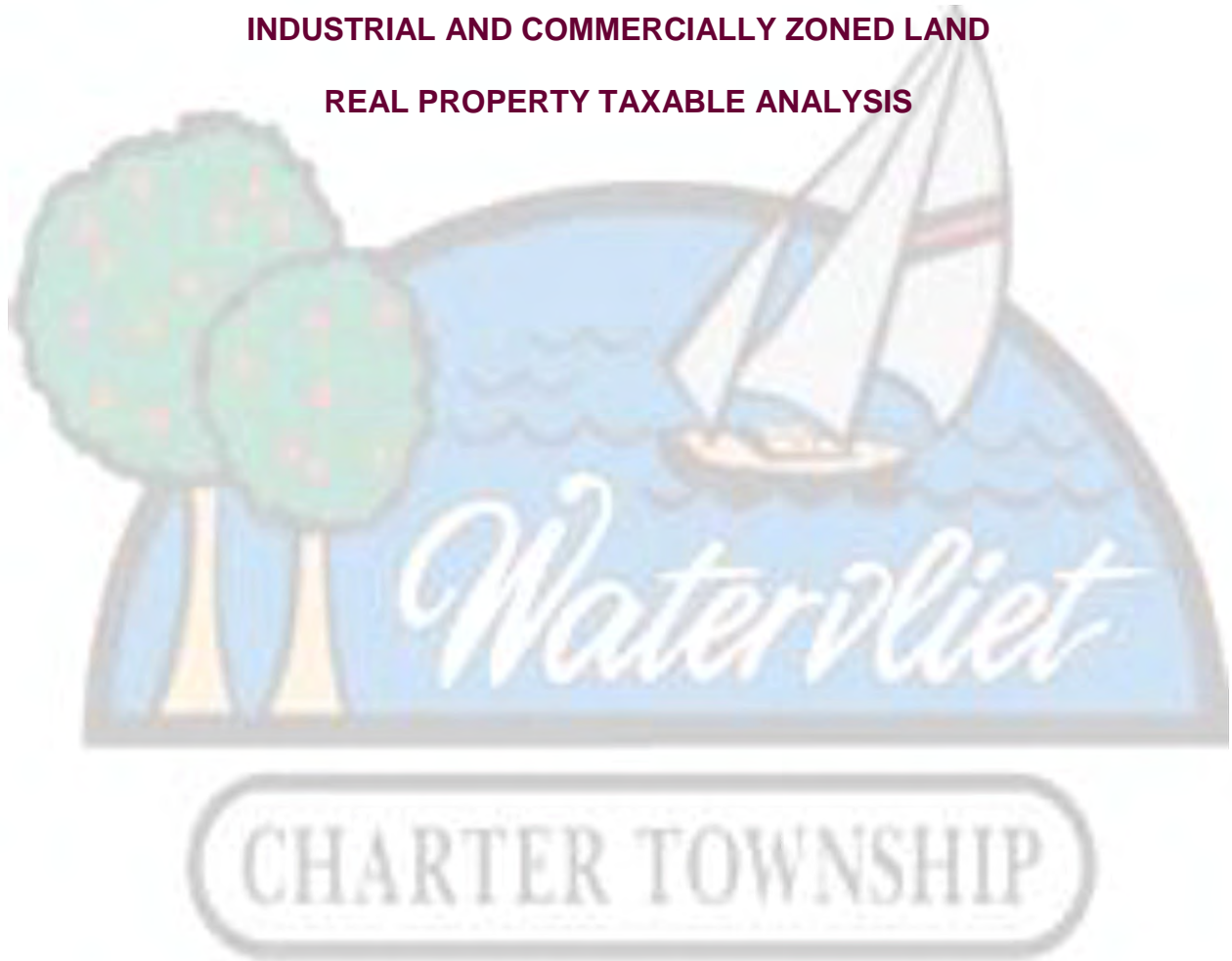
SECTION 4

TOWNSHIP PROPERTY ANALYSIS

TOWNSHIP DEVELOPED CAPACITY ANALYSIS

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ZONED LAND

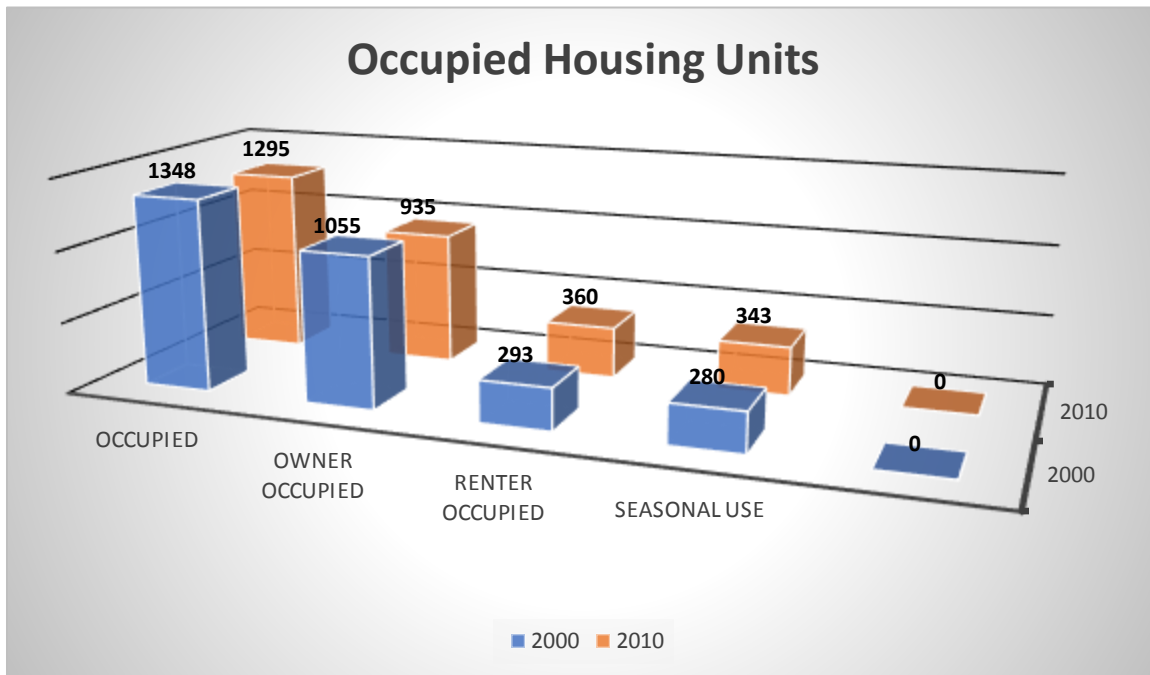
REAL PROPERTY TAXABLE ANALYSIS



SECTION FOUR

TOWNSHIP PROPERTY ANALYSIS

The total number of occupied housing in the year 2000 was 1,724 and 1,767 in 2010. Data regarding housing units in the Township is illustrated below.



There continues to be a preponderance of owner-occupied housing units within the Township, although the proportion of renter occupied, and seasonal use properties has increased somewhat. The increase in seasonal use units suggests some growth in second homes, primarily around Paw Paw Lake.

TOWNSHIP DEVELOPED CAPACITY ANALYSIS

A summary of the developed and available capacity of residential platted subdivisions within the township is shown below.

Subdivision	Total Parcels	Total Developed	Available
Beechwood Shores	31	10	21
Deerwood Estates	23	13	10
Edgewater	103	17	86
Fairview	267	108	159
Forest Beach	153	83	70
Loveland	153	63	90
Natures Cove	35	18	17
Pokagon Heights	154	72	82
Sadler Drive	15	11	4
Watertown Pl.	57	3	54
Total	991	398	593

According to the data above only slightly more than 40% of the residential platted properties in the township have been developed. In subdivisions where streets, utilities, and other infrastructure exist, only 44.5% have been developed.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ZONED LAND

TOTAL ACREAGE VS. UTILIZED

INDUSTRIAL

TOTAL ACREAGE:.....398.3

ACREAGE UTILIZED96.38

PERCENTAGE OF LAND

AVAILABLE FOR INDUSTRIAL

DEVELOPMENT75.8%

COMMERCIAL

TOTAL ACREAGE270.9

ACREAGE UTILIZED145.77

PERCENTAGE OF LAND

AVAILABLE FOR COMMERCIAL

DEVELOPMENT46.19%

NOTE: APPROXIMATELY 53% OF THE COMMERCIAL ZONED LAND ALONG THE RED ARROW CORRIDOR BETWEEN COLOMA AND WATERVLIT IS CURRENTLY IN NON-CONFORMING RESIDENTIAL USE.

REAL PROPERTY TAXABLE BASE ANALYSIS

Year	Total Value \$	Residential Value \$	Commercial value \$	Industrial Value \$
2012	125,158,315	108,999,978	12,256,078	467,319
2013	126,193,048	109,929,794	12,123,849	473,235
2014	126,693,543	110,128,565	12,197,930	553,790
2015	130,623,077	113,171,560	12,108,688	931,339
2016	139,304,332	115,231,490	12,393,517	7,216,357
2017	143,964,813	118,895,118	12,500,238	8,223,855

Except for the substantial increase in 2016, due to the Lane Automotive expansion, the real property taxable base of the Township has been stagnant for the past six years, increasing about 1.75% per year. Assessor estimates project a potential increase in the residential tax base over the next ten years (based on market trend projections).

SECTION 5

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES, FLOOD AREAS AND PARKS

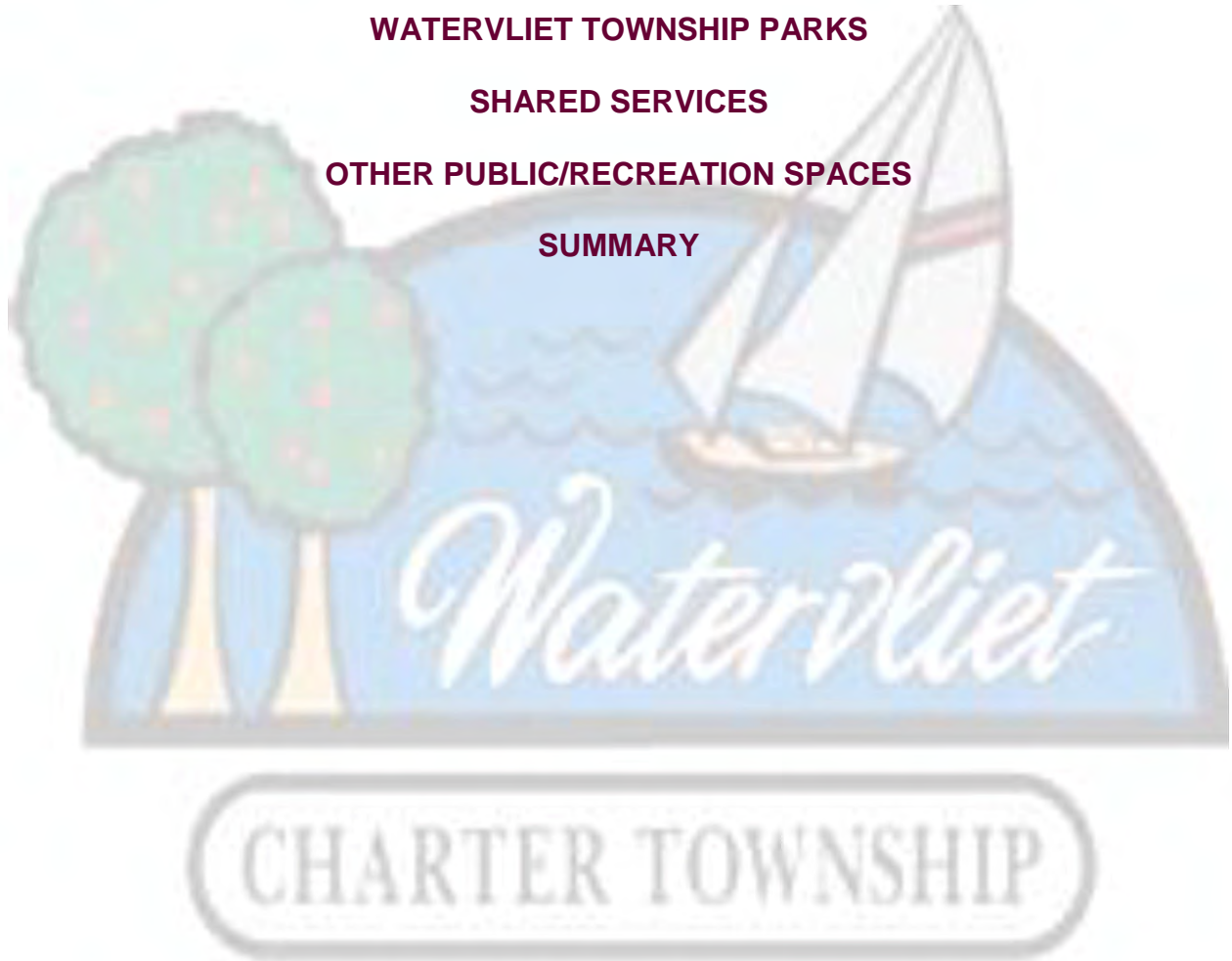
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

WATERVLIET TOWNSHIP PARKS

SHARED SERVICES

OTHER PUBLIC/RECREATION SPACES

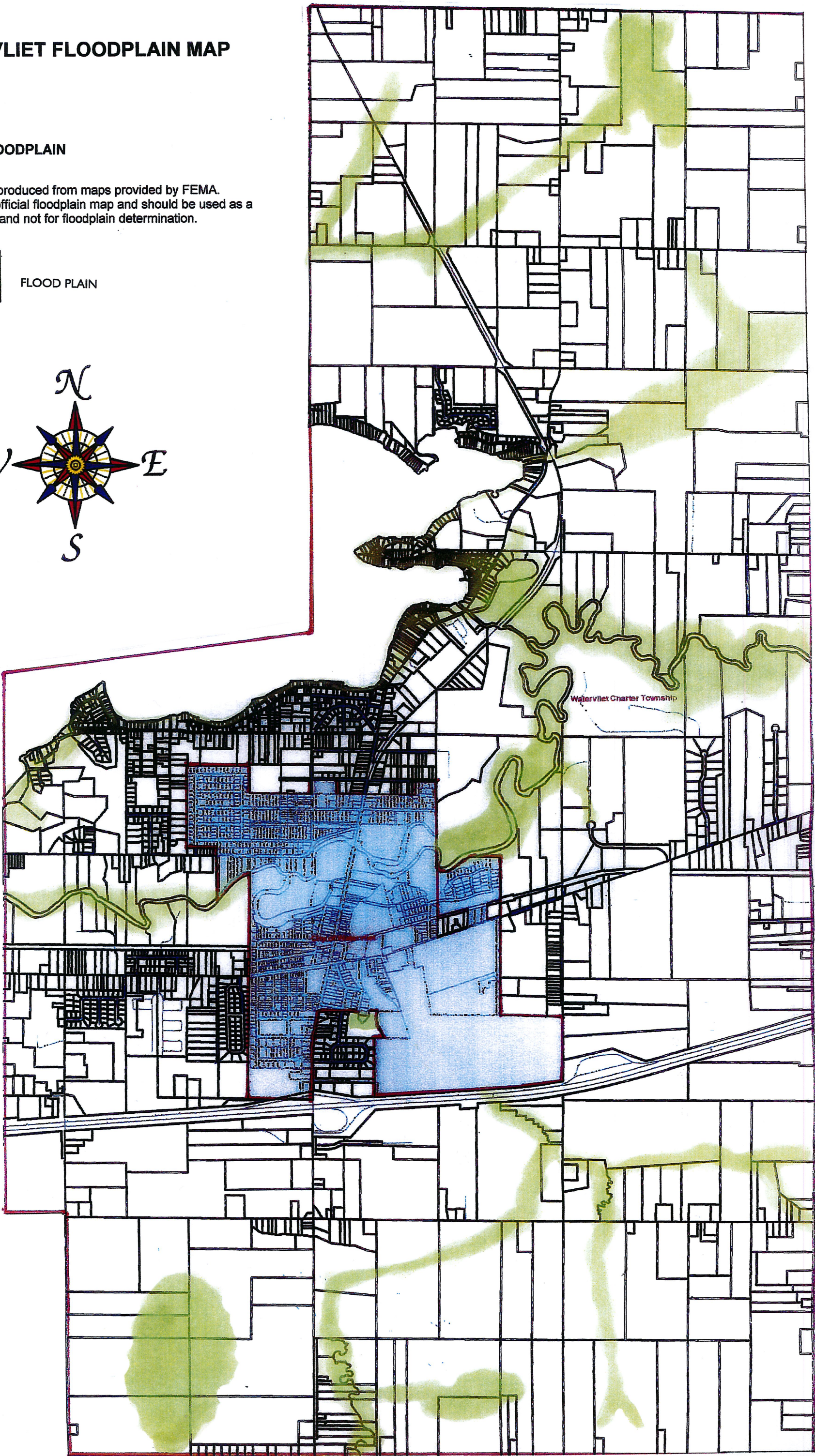
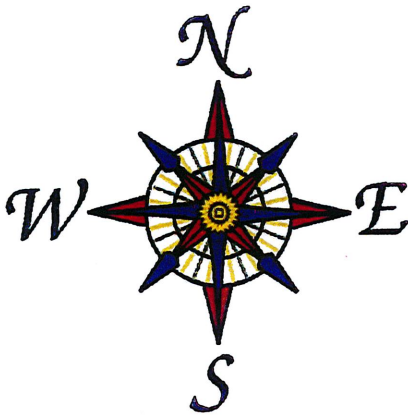
SUMMARY



WATERVLIET FLOODPLAIN MAP

FLOODPLAIN

This map was produced from maps provided by FEMA.
This is not an official floodplain map and should be used as a
reference only and not for floodplain determination.



SECTION FIVE

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES, FLOOD AREAS AND PARKS

DESIGNATED FLOOD PRONE AREAS

The definition of a floodplain or flood plain is an area of land adjacent to a lake, stream or river which stretches from the banks of its channel to the base of the enclosing valley walls and which experiences flooding during periods of high discharge. Watervliet Township's flood prone areas, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are shown on the accompanying map, on the following page. By State of Michigan law, all development proposed for construction in floodplain areas are required to receive permits from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The responsibility of making a final determination whether a specific site is within the floodplain remains a responsibility of the property owner and the MDEQ. A building permit may be withheld until verification of the building site, being in a floodplain, is obtained from the MDEQ. Any construction in FEMA floodway areas is strictly prohibited by Federal and State law.

Watervliet Township's waterfront properties are comprised of primarily residentially zoned land with a few parcels remaining in commercially zoned areas on the east end of the lake. Because the Township has enacted ordinances that restrict development of land subject to flooding, property owners subjected to flooding conditions, may participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Wastewater service planning was initiated in the early 1970's as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Part 201 Planning Grant. The plan called for the installation of a joint wastewater treatment facility to service the four local governments surrounding Paw Paw Lake. The service area was to include the full land area within the cities of Coloma and Watervliet and the highly populated areas within Coloma and Watervliet Townships, including all development along the shoreline of Paw Paw Lake.

The Paw Paw Lake Regional Joint Sewage Disposal Authority was formed by the four municipalities to install and manage the wastewater treatment facility and the approximately 7-mile main interceptor transmission line. Each local government owns and maintains the local collection system that collects and disposes wastewater into the interceptor. Management and operation of the authority is under the responsibility of the board members appointed by each of the participating local governments.

Water is currently supplied to the two areas of the Township by the City of Watervliet under the terms of individual agreements covering the Watervliet Industrial Park and the Lane Automotive/I-94 interchange area. An additional private agreement for water services to the Pokagon Heights area of the Township also exists. However, this is a private contract for water service between the property owners and the City of Watervliet.

City water originates from a local well field and is treated then distributed by the City of Watervliet. Most township properties are serviced by individual well water.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

NAME	Description	Size	Amenities
Sunset Beach	Beach Park Located off Forest Ave.	0.5 acres	Lake Frontage with pier and parking area
Forest Beach Park	Beach Park Located on Shore Ln	. 0.5 aces	Lake Frontage with pier and parking area
Woodland Park	Lake Ave	0.03 Acres	Lake frontage undeveloped
Pamona Park	End of West Elm Dr.	0.5 acres	Lake frontage undeveloped
No Name 33.7 Acres	Forested wetlands Located behind the Watervliet Fruit Exchange, and near Harper Ave.	33.7 Acres	River frontage undeveloped
Township Hall Park	4891 N M-140, located next to the Watervliet Township Building	2.1 acres	Grassy area undeveloped
Total Acreage		36.23 acres	

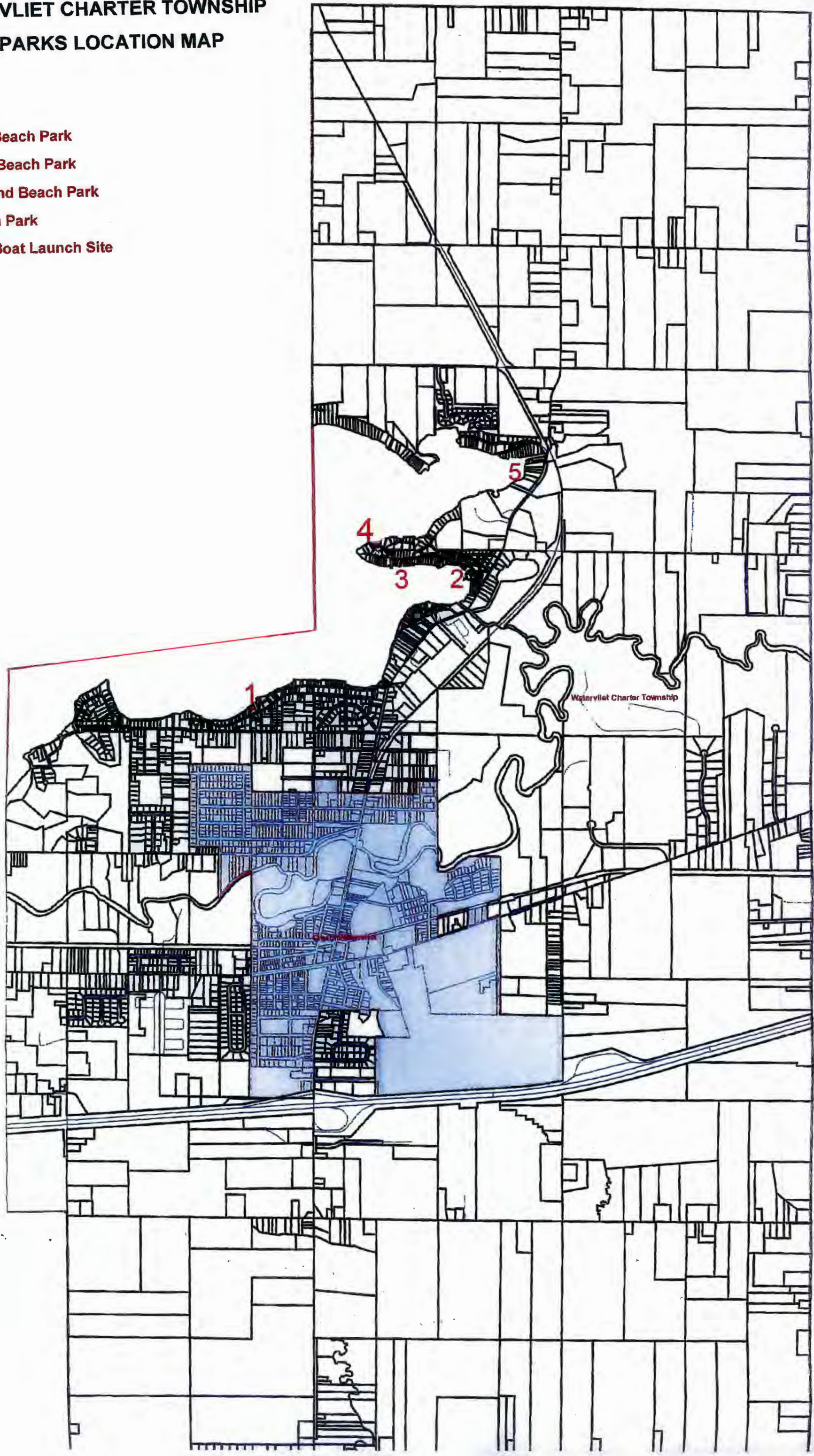
(See map on following page.)

WATERVLIET TOWNSHIP PARKS

Other parks, activities and leisure time pursuits enjoyed by Township residents are provided by other government or non-profit organizations, including Little League baseball, library and senior citizen programs.

**WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PARKS LOCATION MAP**

- LEGEND**
- 1 Forest Beach Park**
 - 2 Sunset Beach Park**
 - 3 Woodland Beach Park**
 - 4 Pomona Park**
 - 5 MDNR Boat Launch Site**



The 2015 five-year Joint Parks and recreational Plan of Watervliet Township and the City of Watervliet established several goals for the acquisition, preservation and development of parks, recreation facilities and open space, including:

- To continue to protect recreational open spaces and resource lands.
- To provide quality and readily accessible recreational environments and opportunities.
- Strategically develop and use parks, recreation and open space to make the City and the Township an appealing place to live, work and visit.
- Provide public access to the Paw Paw River.
- Ensure that recreational land and facilities are located and accessible without reliance on automobiles.
- Acquire land.
- Partner with the City of Watervliet in the development of parks and open spaces, such as walking trails along the river (a river walk), and in preserving points of historic and scenic interest.
- Collaborate with the Berrien County Parks Department to provide for the North County Parks System.

See Appendix: *Figure 1, 1.1, & 1.2 for examples of parks with similar characteristics as the existing undeveloped 33.7 acres of Township property.*

SHARED SERVICES

Watervliet Township currently has a shared services agreement with the City of Watervliet by providing Ordinance Enforcement, Zoning and Rental/Property Maintenance inspections. As noted, in the Merger of the City of Watervliet and the Charter Township of Watervliet 2015 Master Report, historically the Township and the City have a long-standing tradition of sharing services. According to the report this form of managing government services is common in smaller communities, especially in light of the struggles many municipalities have faced in recent years.

Currently, the Township and the City successfully share about half of the services and functions. A summary of the cooperative efforts is shown in Exhibit A from the Merger Master Report. In addition to the services and functions shared between the City and Township, each community also cooperates with other governments on services such as wastewater treatment, a regional historical society, ambulance, and regional parks and recreation plan. All of these efforts demonstrate the value and effectiveness of intergovernmental service sharing.

Exhibit A:	
Watervliet City & Township: Shared Functions	
Shared	Separate
Airport	Ambulance
Building Inspections	Assessing
Cemetery	DDA
Fire	Economic Development
Historical Society	Financial Auditor
Library	Financial Software
Parks and Recreation	Information Technology
Planning	Legal Counsel
Rental Inspections	Police
Sewer Treatment	Public Works
Water Service	Sewer System
Zoning Administration	Streets Maintenance
	Utility Billing

OTHER PUBLIC/RECREATION SPACES

Although not an official part of the Township's park system, the MDNR Launch Site is designed and operated as a small boat launch facility and contains the launch lane, auto and trailer parking as well as restroom facilities. Because it is the only one of two public access points to launch watercraft on Paw Paw Lake, it is usually heavily used. It comprises 2 full acres of land area and is located on North Watervliet Rd. on Sherwood Bay.

SUMMARY

The national planning standard accepted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources specifies the total land reserved for parks and recreation purposes for the Township should be 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents. Therefore, the Township with a projected population of 2,876 in 2020 would require parks and recreational land of approximately 31.5 acres, which is within the 36.23 acres currently held by the Township.

Watervliet Township parks provide for plenty of opportunity to expand upon in order to deliver a parks system which has the potential to improve the quality of life for residents, as well as attract a younger generation of residents which expect such infrastructure to be a part of the community that they live in.

SECTION 6

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

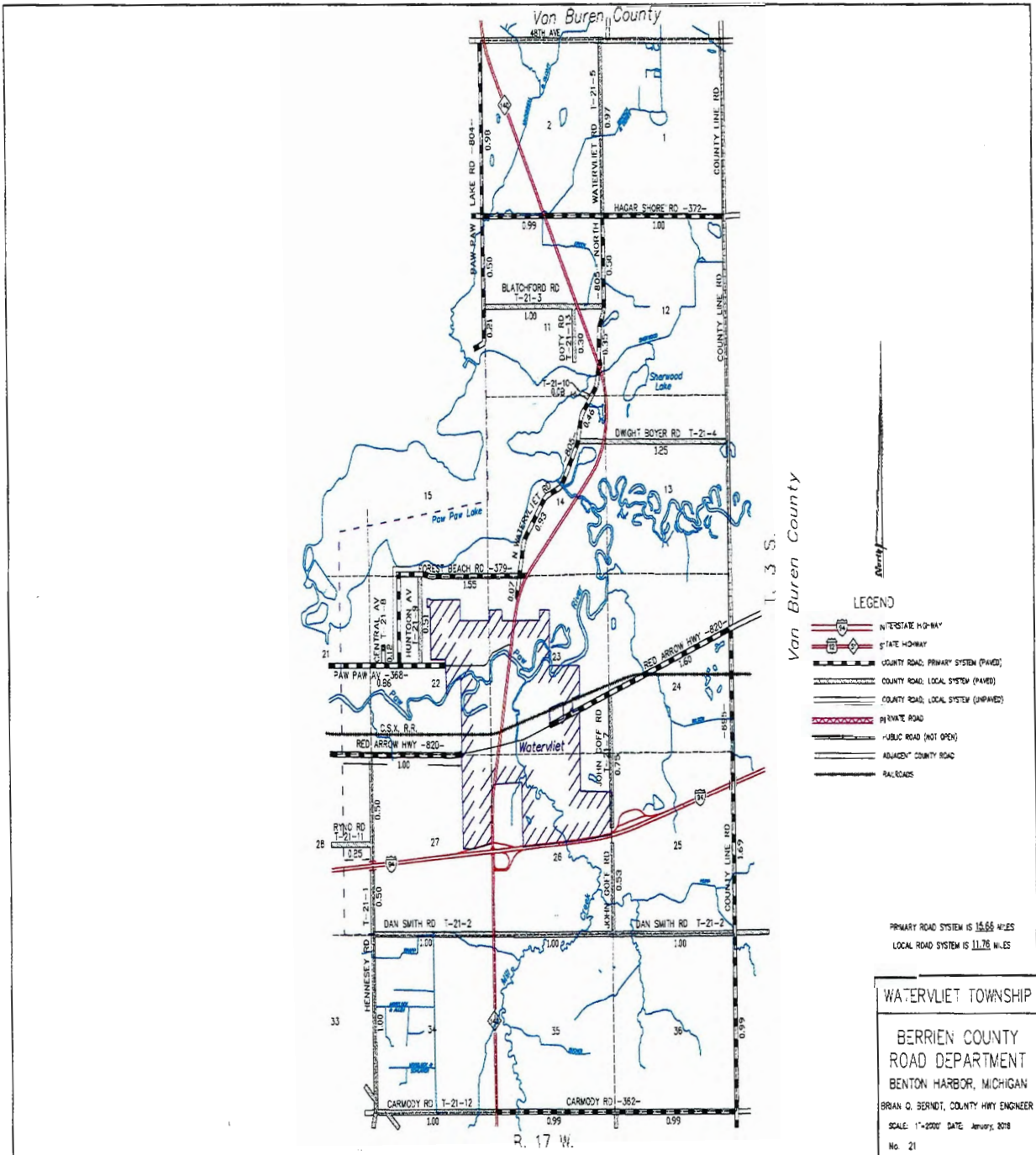
View Protection – M-140

WATERVLIET MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

CONCLUSIONS



WATERVLIET TOWNSHIP ROADS



SECTION SIX

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Transportation access is important to the economic vitality and residential desirability of the township. The internal township and county road system offers easy commuting between various communities within northern Berrien County and superb connection to the regional and interstate road system. As a result, Township residents historically have had a short commute for shopping and entertainment purpose plus the opportunity to secure employment within a reasonable commuting distance.

Surface roads and streets will become more important as the Township expands its commercial and industrial economic base in the area east of the city of Watervliet. Access from the I-94 interchange to the southern portion of the Township will also be of greater concern as the Township develops commercial and industrial uses surrounding the I-94 and M-140 interchange and along Red Arrow Highway east of the City of Watervliet.

Responsibility for construction, maintenance and improving county roads is the responsibility of the Berrien County Road Department. There are 15.7 miles of county roads within the Township's municipal boundaries. The majority of these roads are bituminous-pavement with grassed shoulder. Maintenance includes winter snow removal, patching of cracks, filling of potholes and complete replacement, where needed, of entire roadway surfaces.

Future road planning in the township is the responsibility of the Township, the Berrien County Road Department and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Annually, the Township Board meets with the road department to determine the amount and priority of road maintenance projects for the construction season. Private streets are maintained by local property owners and are not under the responsibility of the Township or Road Department.

The utility classification of all roads in the township is shown in the appendix figure 4. This map illustrates that the township has within its borders an interstate highway, a major state trunk line, county primary roads, secondary roads/streets and several private streets that service the Township.

Neither the Township, the Berrien County Road Department or the Michigan Department of Transportation suggests new roads, in their short or long-term plans for the Township. At the local level, there are no major road improvements planned other than normal road surface pavement maintenance. MDOT's five-year plan includes road reconstruction for east bound I-94.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The Michigan Department of Transportation has established policies to encourage Townships to consider development of a Transportation Access Management Program. The goals of a Transportation Access Management Program are to:

1. Limit the number of roadway conflict points (curb-cuts),
2. Separate conflict points,
3. Separate turning traffic from through traffic,
4. Locate traffic signals to facilitate traffic movement,
5. Maintain a hierarchy of roadways by function, and
6. Limit direct access on higher speed roads.

MDOT has published an evaluation update, Michigan Access Management Program Evaluation, in 2010 which evaluated the Access Management Program in the Township, *Reducing Traffic Congestion and Improving Safety in Michigan Communities: The Access Management Handbook*.

The Michigan Department of Transportation has conducted an Access Management Program since 2002. Over 35 studies have been completed to date using numerous consultants. The studies that have been completed are intended to guide MDOT, local municipalities, and developers in locating future access points and to provide local municipalities with direction for new, or updated, ordinances.

VIEW PROTECTION – M-140

Watervliet Township is also in a unique position to assure the visual appearance of a portion of the M-140 corridor is protected from unwanted sights being viewed by motorists. This may be especially important as these routes are used by tourists to access roadside fruit stands and local wineries.

The Township should review current zoning and other ordinance provisions regulating the location of signs, specific land uses and prohibiting unsightly views. This can be accomplished by preparation of a specific overlay zoning ordinance district addressing the type and placement of signs, accessory uses and on-site storage on properties abutting the road right-of-way. The ordinance should also address screening and landscaping requirements for all new developments as part of the Township site plan approval process. This special district could require that current use of the land area abutting the M-140 corridor remain unchanged (ie: agriculture or open space) for a distance of 100 feet or more, as a view protection setback distance while encouraging clustering the typical transportation route information and advertising signs to specific designated locations immediately prior to intersection locations.

WATERVLIET MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

Watervliet Municipal Airport is a joint City and Township owned facility located immediately behind the Township Hall on Airport Dr. The airport caters to single engine aircraft and general sport aviation operations on a 3,000 foot primary, lighted runway. There are currently 23 airplanes based at the airport which has been the number for the last 7 years. The long-term plan for the future of the airport calls for extensive approach clearing, up-grades to the hangar's appearances and installing permanent aircraft tie-down points.

Fiscal management and oversight is provided by the Watervliet Charter Township Board who also receives monies and disperses funds as needed. Operational and grounds management is provided by the Airport Manager and Assistant Manager. The airport supports its maintenance and operations solely through revenues received from annual hangar lease fees and some donations.

The Airport has adopted and utilizes an Approach Protection Plan which establishes land use restrictions within the airport approach slopes and outer surfaces.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that the current road system will continue to shape the future desirability of the Township as a place to live and conduct various business operations. Maintenance of the existing system, plus selected transportation improvements, will likely be required in the future. Also, more reliance on walkable community, biking and rail transportation through use of the existing train station.

Future road management issues including access management and view shed protection are issues which will increase the desirability of the Township for residential and tourism development, especially for the Red Arrow Highway and M-140 corridors. Access management issues will also be relevant for other roads in the township to make other areas of the township more attractive locations for new business investment, as well as provide for safe access to and from the road system. New zoning regulations will be required to implement access management techniques and to assure retention of current rural views along these roadways.

The airport will serve a more dominate roll in the future development of the Township. Currently, the airport provides a reasonably priced home base for smaller planes. Trends indicate that more visitors and weekend/seasonal residents use the airport for commuting to the Township from their permanent home airports. The proximity of the airport to Paw Paw Lake makes for a conveniently positioned location for travelers making a quick trip to the lake to visit family and friends. In addition to that, it may also assist the attractiveness of the Township for a new business location where business owners or business visitors prefer small aircraft business commuting.

SECTION 7

FUTURE GROWTH POLICIES

2018 GROWTH POLICIES

FUTURE GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

SUMMARY OF FUTURE LAND USE PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2030

CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

OVERVIEW OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



SECTION SEVEN

FUTURE GROWTH POLICIES, GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

The Planning Commission reviewed the growth policies contained in the 1998 Master Plan, which were continued in the 2005 and 2010 plan updates. During the twenty-year span from 1998 to the present, it is noted that the majority of the goals and objectives of the prior Master Plans have been met. Therefore, for the 2018 Master Plan the Planning Commission has formulated the growth policies shown below, some of which are continued from previous plan updates and some are new to this plan.

2018 GROWTH POLICIES

Emphasize residential growth within existing platted areas to minimize costly additions to residential infrastructure.

Emphasize commercial and industrial development in the industrial park and along the major roads of M-140, Red Arrow Highway and I-94 and areas already zoned for those applications.

Require residential lot sizes adequately large enough to help prevent earth, groundwater and surface water pollution, as well as encourage aesthetically pleasing residential areas.

Guide urban growth toward non-agricultural land, open space, unused land and the least productive agricultural land.

2018 FUTURE GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

GOAL 1: INCREASE SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENT CLASS DEVELOPED CAPACITY IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND PLAN FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

ACTION PLANS:

- Develop and implement a plan for increasing the percentage of developed capacity in existing areas, including developed capacity targets.

- Review land use maps to identify areas for potential future single-family resident development.
- Develop a plan for infrastructure in both established and new single-family resident areas.
- Prepare a strategy and information to market the Township as a desirable place to live.
- Limit residential zoning districts to areas already zoned as such.
- Repeal the Private Road Ordinance, so that residential roads would be adoptable into the county road system.

GOAL 2: INCREASE COMMERCIAL CLASS DEVELOPED CAPACITY IN EXISTING COMMERCIAL AREAS AND IDENTIFY AREAS FOR POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL AREAS

ACTION PLANS:

- Develop and implement a plan for increasing developed capacity in existing commercial areas, including a developed capacity target
- Review land use maps to identify new areas for potential commercial development
- Prepare a plan developing infrastructure in these areas
- Initiate discussions with Watervliet City, Coloma City and Coloma Township regarding a collaborative effort to increase commercial development
- Prepare a strategy and information to market the Township as a desirable place to have a business.
- Adopt financial incentive policies (i.e. tax breaks or utility discounts) to areas with available infrastructure

GOAL 3: INCREASE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL AREAS AND IDENTIFY NEW AREAS FOR POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

ACTION PLANS:

- Develop a plan for increasing developed capacity in existing areas, including identifying the preferred types of industry and a developed capacity target
- Review land use maps and identify new areas for potential future development
- Initiate discussion with Hartford City and Hartford Township regarding development of the I-94 Corridor
- Initiate discussions with Watervliet City, Coloma City and Coloma Township regarding a collaborative effort to increase industrial development.
- Adopt financial incentive policies (i.e. tax breaks or utility discounts) to areas with available infrastructure.
- Prepare a strategy and information to market the Township as a desirable place to have an industrial business.

GOAL 4: PRESERVE THE RURAL, AGRICULTURAL SETTING OF A LARGE PORTION OF THE TOWNSHIP

ACTION PLANS:

- Meet with owners of agricultural properties to solicit input on how to preserve the rural, agricultural flavor of the Township.
- Develop Township policies regarding open space preservation and protection
- Identify areas to be preserved as open space.
- Limit residential development in agricultural zones through lot size restrictions or distance restrictions from existing roadways.

GOAL 5: CREATE A DIVERSE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM, UTILIZING THE 2015 – 2019 PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN AS A BASE.

ACTION PLANS:

- Assess viability of developing existing parks and establish development plans where appropriate.
- Identify additional areas for potential future parks and recreational development.
- Investigate potential property acquisition in areas identified for new development.
- Prepare and implement a plan for development of undeveloped 33 acres of Township property and the Township Hall Property.
- Prepare and institute a plan for maintenance of walking and biking trails.
- Expand walking and biking trails with links to other trails partnering with neighboring municipalities (See appendix figure 5).
- Coordinate with Watervliet City and the Berrien County Parks Department to develop a unified river park utilizing existing land and land that may be acquired in the future
- Investigate availability of grants for park and recreational development
- Coordinate with Watervliet City on downtown and airport events (i.e. Halloween, Christmas, Fourth of July, etc.)
- Create a list of potential new events or re-established previous events that would promote Watervliet as a destination.

GOAL 6: INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH WATERVLIET CITY, COLOMA CITY, COLOMA TOWNSHIP, AND SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES REGARDING CONSOLIDATING OF/OR SHARING SERVICES.

ACTION PLANS:

- Prepare a list of services currently shared or consolidated.
- Identify services for potential sharing or consolidation.
- Prepare information on pluses and minuses of sharing/consolidating.
- Educate Township residents regarding consolidation or sharing services.
- Initiate meetings with municipal boards and commissions to discuss and ascertain levels of interest in cooperative efforts.

GOAL 7: INCREASE IMPORTANT SERVICES FOR SENIORS

ACTION PLANS:

- Obtain input from seniors regarding services that are most important and needed.
- Identify services available to seniors from the Township, Cities and County.
- Develop a plan for providing these services.
- Initiate discussion with neighboring municipalities and Berrien County to discuss a collaborative effort to provide services for seniors.

The goals and action plans were formulated from the Planning Commission's analysis and discussion of the demographics in section 3, the property analysis in section 4, the parks and recreational analysis in section 5 and the township assets and potential goals categories in section 7.

The demographics of the township's trend of declining total population, particularly in the young adult ages and in smaller families, would present significant challenges to the township in the future, including in tax revenue, housing development and business development.

At the other end of the age spectrum, the trend toward more senior citizen residents signals a need for the Township to provide essential health care, transportation and other services for this important segment of the population.

The property analysis reveals a mostly stagnant tax base, with little development during the past decade. Failure to take actions to increase the tax base could mean serious financial challenges for the township.

Fortunately, the Township has room to grow in all property classes, as shown in the property capacity data. Therefore, the Townships assets are a major plus for future development, with desirable residential areas and capacity, ample room for commercial and industrial growth, excellent education, health and recreational opportunities.

The Planning Commission believes that there are several key elements that attract people to the Township.

- Desirable, affordable places to live.

- Opportunities for good jobs.
- Excellent educational opportunities for children.
- Things to do with leisure time.
- A safe, attractive community environment.

The plan goals and action plans are intended to achieve the following key objectives:

- Attract new generations of families that could, perhaps, establish a presence in the Township for many generations to come.
- Provide necessary services to seniors.
- Increase the tax base for residential, commercial and industrial property classes through attracting and accommodating new commercial and industrial investments.
- To achieve all objectives while also preserving the character and safety of the Township.

Watervliet Charter Township has the assets, space and means to achieve these goals, provided it has the will and commitment to do the work required.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE LAND USE PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2030

The Future Land Use Plan, in the Appendix Section of this document, denotes a change from the 2010 plan as the anticipated zone “Rural Residential” has been removed. As cited in Section Seven, “Future Goal and Action Plans,” it is the Township’s objective to preserve scenic agricultural open space and restrict residential and non-agricultural development in the Agricultural districts. To assist in obtaining this goal, as stated previously, the Township will aim to restrict residential, commercial and industrial development to areas currently established for such uses where the required utilities and infrastructures already exist.

CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

It is the Planning Commission’s consensus that the necessary utilities of sewer, water, electrical power, natural gas and adequate roads are sufficient to serve existing residential, commercial and industrial areas that are, for the most part, under-utilized;

(See Section Four). As the Township has already made significant infrastructure investments in these areas, it is important that the Planning Commission guide development to these extant areas to utilize their full potential and, at the same time, aid in the protection of farmland, open space and natural scenic areas of the township, the preservation of which has been deemed a goal within this document.

FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

MEDC – Michigan Economic Development Corporation – Public Spaces and Community Places Crowdfunding Initiative.

MDNR – Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant.

MNRTF – Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

LWCF – Land and Water Conservation Fund.

MCACA – Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs

OVERVIEW OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The intent of this section is to summarize the details of the Master Plan and propose implementation recommendations. The Master Plan proposal is reliant on the action taken by the Township Board as well as others in order to accomplish all that is set forth in the plan directives, therefore implementation is not the sole responsibility of the Planning commission.

A Master Plan is a tangible and illustrated statement of where the Township is currently at with a set of goals and action plans which, if followed, will navigate current and future leaders in the direction set forth in this plan. The Master Plan is the vision for the future of the Watervliet Charter Township. Its success is reliant on gaining the desired support of the vision which represents the various concerns of all stakeholders, and their recommendations for the goals and objectives as well as the action plans.

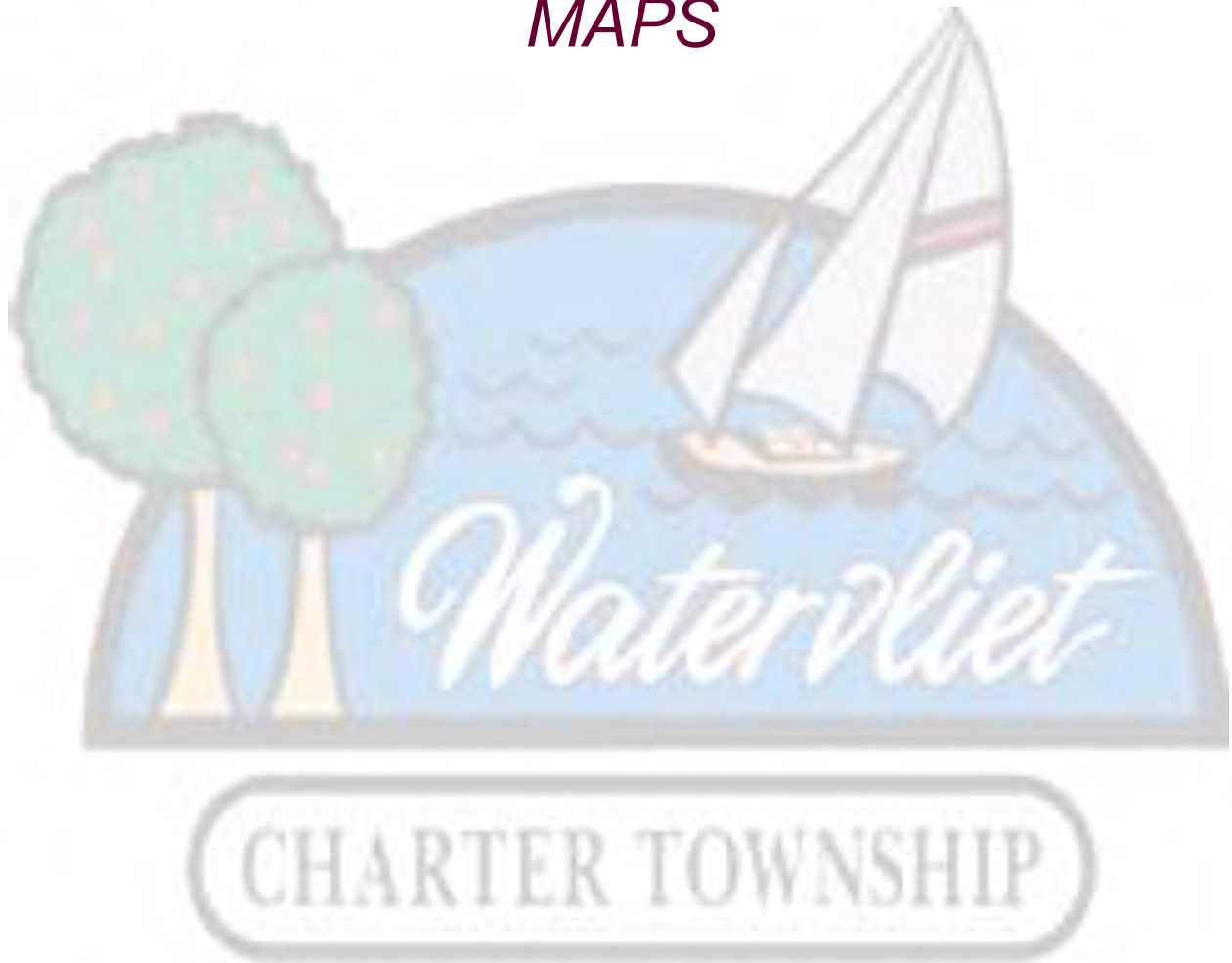
Implementation of a Master Plan is not an easy task; therefore, some actions can be accomplished immediately where others may take substantial time and funds to implement.

Some recommendations of this Master Plan might be modified from the current recommendations in order to compensate for unforeseen future needs of Watervliet Township and potential budgetary limitations thereof. The explicit recommendations in this Master Plan are intended as a starting point for further discussion and improvement prior to implementation, therefore assuring that the actions taken are fully understood and compliment the specific requirements of the Township.

APPENDIX

FIGURES 1-1.2

MAPS



APPENDIX

Galien River Park



Figure 1

The Galien River Park in New Buffalo Township is a mix of upland, forested wetland habitats that stretches along the Galien River. The Berrien County Parks Commission acquired and utilized a combination of funds from the Pokagon Fund and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to establish the Galien River Park. The park hosts a canopy walkway, a high marsh overlook tower and a long marsh boardwalk that leads to river viewing and a fishing platform. Major features include accessible hard surface and barrier free hiking trails.

Manistee Riverwalk



Figure 1.1

The Manistee Riverwalk is a boardwalk that meanders along the shore of the Manistee River 2.75 miles through downtown Manistee to Lake Michigan.



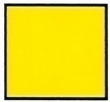
Figure 1.2

Images courtesy of Google

WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP

EXISTING LAND USES

LEGEND



R1A - SINGLE FAMILY



R1B - SINGLE FAMILY



R-2 MULTIPLE FAMILY



RMH - RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME



C - COMMERCIAL



M-1 INDUSTRIAL



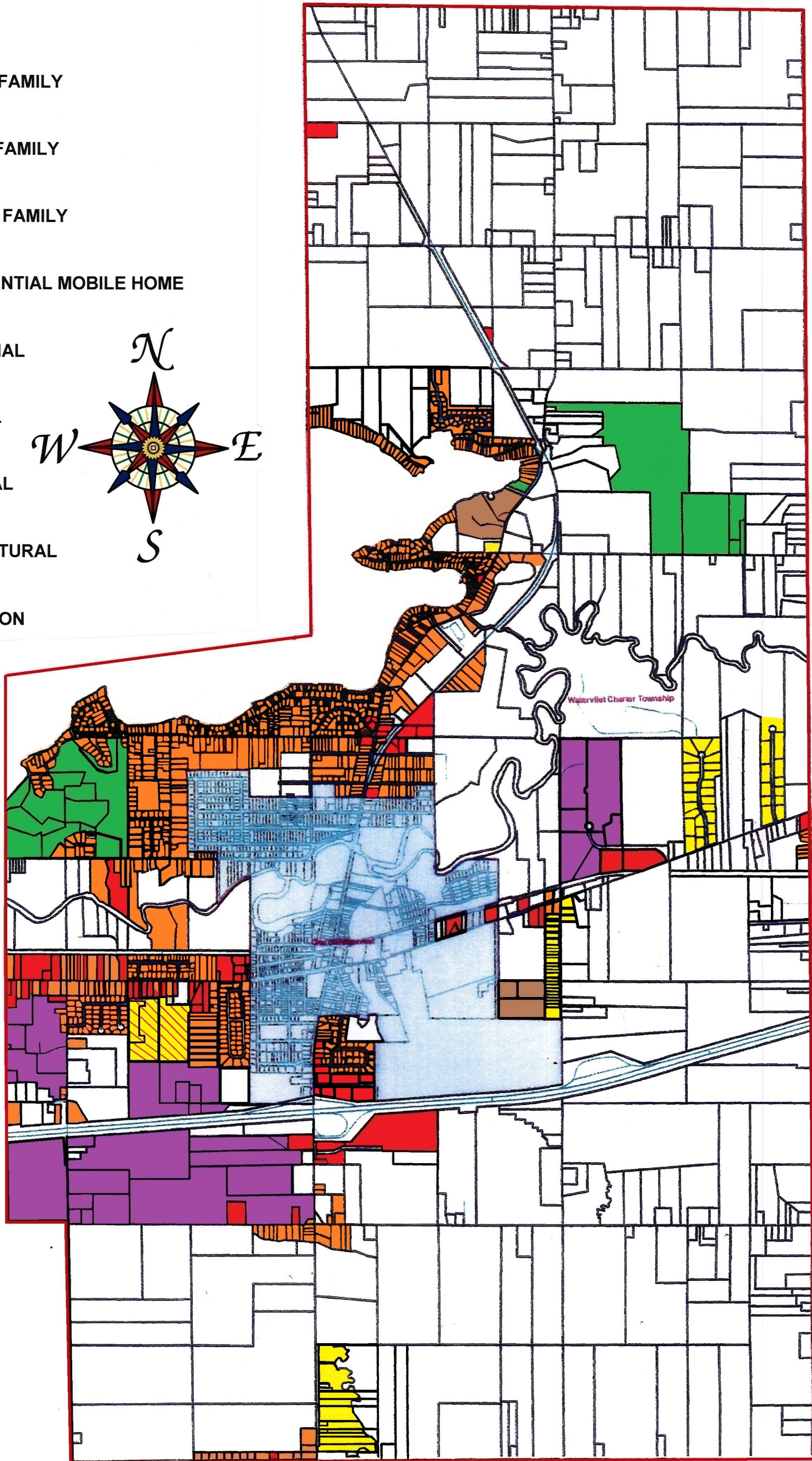
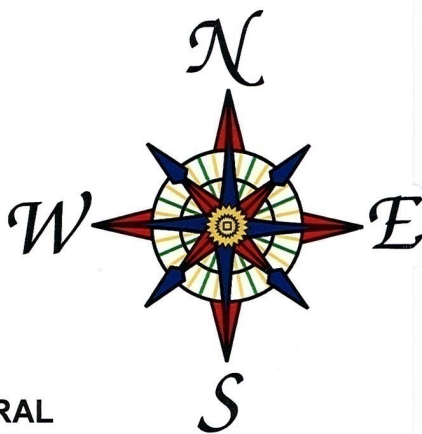
M-2 INDUSTRIAL



AG - AGRICULTURAL

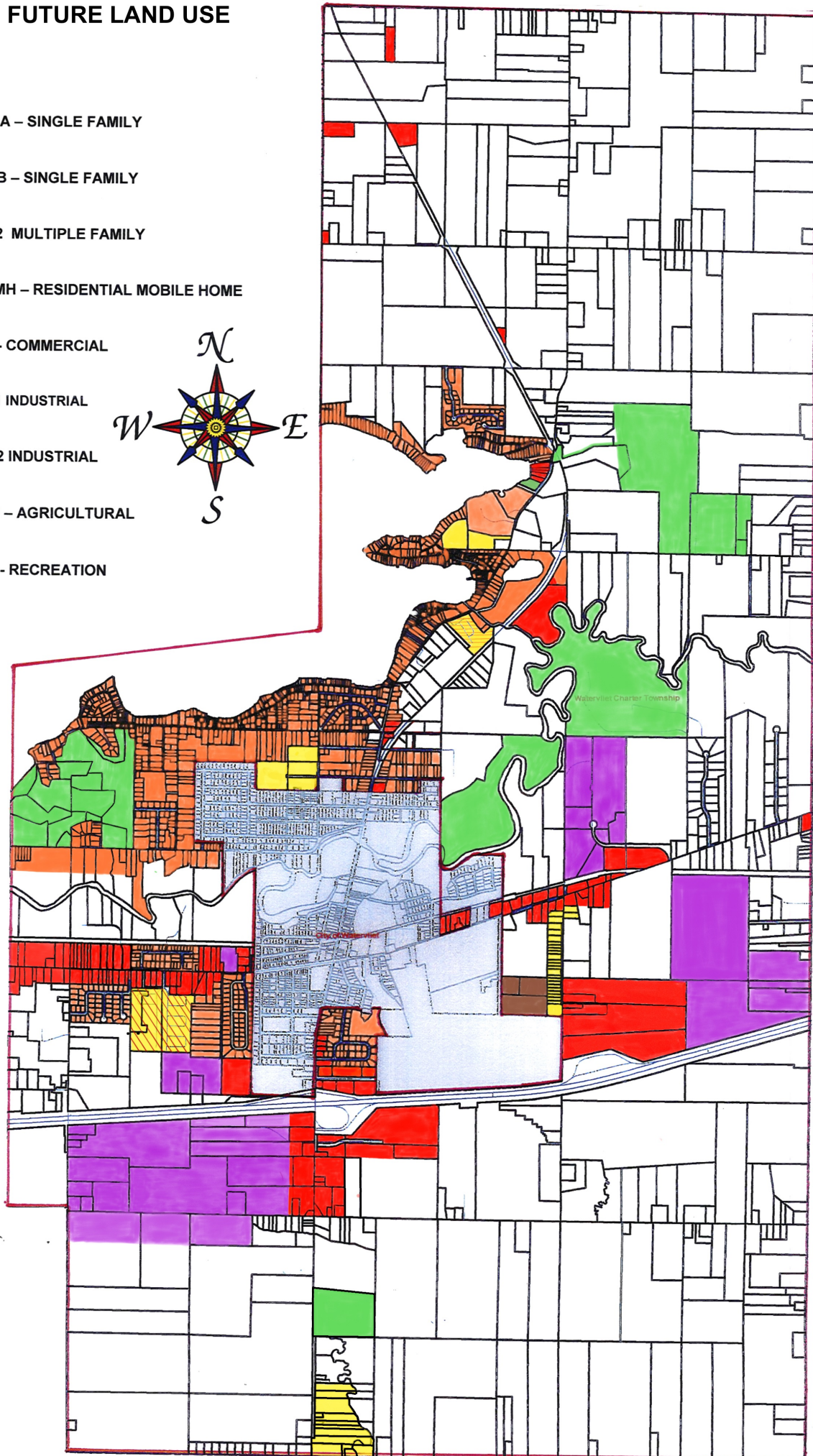
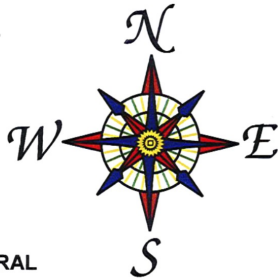
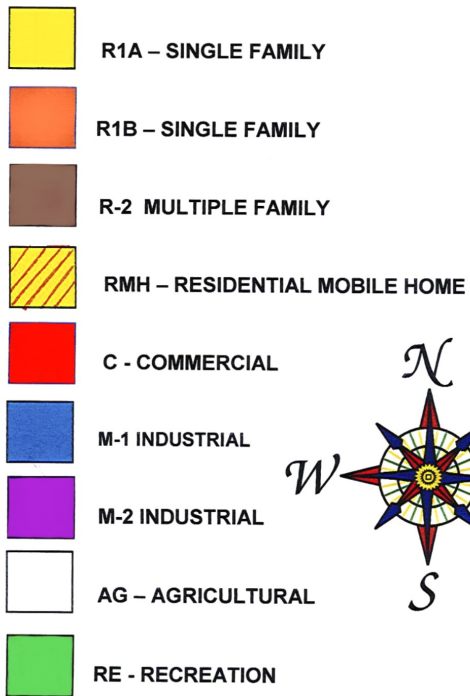


RE - RECREATION



FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND



Parks, Trails and Propsed Trails Map

- Proposed Trails
- Existing Trails

