



CHAPTER 6: PLAN GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

FEATURING:

- **MASTER PLAN GUIDING VALUES**
- **20 PRIMARY PLANNING GOALS**
- **OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
- **MONITORING PROSPERITY INDICATORS**

MASTER PLAN GUIDING VALUES | PLANNING PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The St. Clair County Master Plan is a long-range plan for St. Clair County and the local units of government and other organizations with which it partners. The Vision 2045 framework, outlined in Chapter 6, builds upon the foundation first established by the 2000 County Master Plan and charts a course to continually improve the overall quality of life for St. Clair County residents. Below are the five master plan guiding values introduced in Chapter 1, along with the targeted planning goals for St. Clair County and its partners to achieve the Vision 2045 and keep the county moving forward with a strong focus on people, places, and prosperity.

5 MASTER PLAN GUIDING VALUES	
1	<p>QUALITY OF LIFE</p> <p>Ensuring that a person can live his or her entire life in St. Clair County – total quality of life. Quality of life refers to the subjective pleasure and convenience that citizens receive from recreational facilities, public services, private and nonprofit organizations, cultural opportunities, environmental resources, historic features, good jobs, and affordable housing.</p>
2	<p>GREAT PLACES</p> <p>Bringing people and places together. Creating greater access to complete, walkable neighborhoods and healthy communities. Connecting people to healthy food, parks, shops, transportation options and other amenities.</p>
3	<p>PROSPERITY</p> <p>Diversifying the tax base so our communities are fiscally sound and educating/training our people to prepare them for 21st century job opportunities. Revitalizing the county’s economy refers to the overall strategies necessary to promote, increase, and support sustainable economic development. This includes fostering entrepreneurial growth, facilitating industrial development, revitalizing our downtowns, and creating high-skill, high-wage jobs.</p>
4	<p>SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Protecting and preserving our valuable natural resources and sensitive environments for future generations. Ensuring that public bodies are planning for and implementing development that promotes fiscal sustainability.</p>
5	<p>INNOVATION</p> <p>Effective and efficient delivery of public services through smart decision making, lean operations, intergovernmental collaboration, and innovation.</p>

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20 Planning Goals for St. Clair County

QUALITY OF LIFE	EFFICIENT MOBILITY OPTIONS Develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system that supports neighborhood vitality and economic development.	QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING Provide a full spectrum of housing options, and improve housing quality and affordability.	RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES Continue development of high quality parks and recreation facilities, community facilities, and public infrastructure.	VIBRANT, ENGAGING PUBLIC LIFE Develop and maintain inviting and engaging public spaces that encourage social interaction between residents and visitors.
GREAT PLACES	FOCUSED PLACEMAKING Make great places in our local communities by capitalizing on unique assets. Ensure that residents and visitors have multiple options for housing, transportation, recreation, and entertainment.	SAFE, STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS Build on the assets of every community and stabilize neighborhoods by eliminating blight, creating a sense of community, and improving community character for St. Clair County's changing population.	WALKABLE COMMUNITIES Promote greater access to complete, walkable neighborhoods. Connect people to healthy food, parks, shops, transportation options and other core services.	ENHANCED LIVABILITY Create highly desirable communities that provide residents with high quality public services, access to great schools, access to quality health care, and outstanding public safety day in and day out.
PROSPERITY	ECONOMIC DIVERSITY Foster a sustainable economy that provides opportunities for all.	COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION Work with community partners to revitalize St. Clair County downtowns and community centers into dynamic places that attract a diverse mix of businesses, living spaces, and talent.	TALENTED PEOPLE Ensure that all county residents have access to quality education, job training, and skills development. Work to attract and retain talented people for knowledge-based jobs.	ACTIVE GROWTH CORRIDORS Work with local government officials, transportation agencies, and economic development organizations to develop a vision and long-range plan for key growth corridors in St. Clair County.
SUSTAINABILITY	RESOURCE PROTECTION Create a cleaner and greener built and natural environment - more trees, better air and water quality, and lower carbon emissions.	SMART GROWTH Direct growth to areas with existing infrastructure, preserve high quality farmland, and prevent unnecessary and costly utility extensions which, in turn, will promote fiscal sustainability for local governments and prevent inefficient, sprawl-type development.	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES Work to create resilient communities within St. Clair County. Resilient communities are better prepared to adapt to sudden economic or environmental disruptions or changes.	HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLACES Create a healthy environment for people, decrease chronic and acute diseases, and promote access to fresh, healthy food in all St. Clair County communities.
INNOVATION	EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES Reinvent and continually improve how effective and efficient public services are delivered to the public. Seek innovative ways to improve the quality and depth of public services.	COLLABORATIVE GOVERNMENT Foster collaboration and share leadership on local and regional issues.	INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP Stay abreast of the latest trends in public administration, planning, and public service delivery. Use data and technology to ensure smart analysis and decision making.	SMART COMMUNITIES Work with local units of government to prepare our communities for the coming wave of smart infrastructure, connected and autonomous vehicles, open government/data, mobility on demand, and the sharing economy.

While the primary planning goals identified above are broad in nature, they encompass the five guiding values of the master plan and provide county leaders and planning staff with guidance on programmatic areas or collaborative efforts in which they should be involved. As mentioned earlier in the plan, the master plan cannot implement itself. Additionally, planning does not happen in a vacuum. County planners must rely on stakeholders at partner organizations, local units of government, and the general public to achieve the overall vision of the plan.

The following pages highlight action strategies that can be employed to achieve the primary planning goals, as well as other implementation strategies and recommendations.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Across the world, the key characteristic found in all great communities is a high quality of life. Ensuring that a person can live his or her entire life in St. Clair County – total quality of life. Quality of life refers to the subjective pleasure and convenience that citizens receive from recreational facilities, public services, private and nonprofit organizations, cultural opportunities, environmental resources, historic features, good jobs, and affordable housing. In other words, our high quality of life in St. Clair County is the culmination or the general well-being of our residents and communities.

PARTNERS IN HELPING ST. CLAIR COUNTY ENHANCE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE GOALS: OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

- Local units of government
 - Non-profit organizations and foundations
 - Historic Societies/Clubs
 - Neighborhood Organizations
 - St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)
 - Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC)
 - Community Foundation of St. Clair County
 - Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County
 - Council on Aging
 - Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
 - Region 6/I-69 International Trade Corridor
 - Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
 - Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
 - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
 - Community Services Coordinating Body (CSCB)
 - CSCB Housing Services Work Group
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
 - Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
 - Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
 - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
 - Watershed Planning Groups
 - USDA Rural Development
 - Friends of the St. Clair River
 - Friends of the Island Loop
 - Blueways of St. Clair Committee
 - Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs)
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Tax Increment Finance Authorities
 - St. Clair County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
 - St. Clair County Land Bank Authority
 - St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission
 - St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission
 - St. Clair County Road Commission
 - St. Clair County Health Department
 - St. Clair County Library
- EFFICIENT MOBILITY OPTIONS
 - QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING
 - RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES
 - VIBRANT, ENGAGING PUBLIC LIFE

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL 1: EFFICIENT MOBILITY OPTIONS

Develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system that supports neighborhood vitality and economic development.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure residents and visitors have a variety of transportation choices and that they can easily get around our community.
- Plan for and invest in transportation infrastructure improvements to accommodate electric vehicles, connected vehicles, and other emerging technologies.
- Support development and operation of commercial marine ports.
- Consider the strategic future value of properties near commercial port areas to preserve port capacity as well as to identify land assembly opportunities for new industrial uses, industrial buffer areas, and green infrastructure.
- All communities in St. Clair County make Complete Streets a priority.
- A highly functional, accessible public transit system.
- Continue to expand St. Clair County's non-motorized transportation network and develop new trails, paths, greenways and blueways as appropriate.
- Leverage St. Clair County's position as an international border crossing, along with its outstanding freight movement infrastructure (i.e. I-94, I-69, SCC International Airport, ports, and rail infrastructure).

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Develop a model Complete Streets policy and work with community partners and road agencies to integrate the policy into local plans.
- Work with community partners to plan for and establish a bike share program in downtown Port Huron.
- Consider and implement recommendations from SEMCOG's *Access to Core Services* report to connect people to jobs and other core services (e.g. schools, libraries, health care, transit, supermarkets, and parks).
- Develop targeted plans for St. Clair County's Active Growth Corridors.
- Participate in local, regional, and statewide initiatives to connect hike-bike trails and water trails.
- Educate local officials on the importance and benefits of planning for and implementing Complete Streets.
- Update the St. Clair County Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) every five years.
- Work in concert with SCCOTS and its participating road agencies to develop an effective prioritization system for planning transportation improvements.
- Coordinate planning and potential expansion of access to public transit with the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL 2: *QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING*

Provide a full spectrum of housing options, and improve housing quality and affordability.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Create affordable housing opportunities for all St. Clair County residents.
- Provide public education about housing cost burden, what affordable housing is, and who needs and qualifies for affordable housing.
- Support and encourage the development of senior housing and assisted living facilities to meet expected demand.
- Integrate more housing into neighborhood business districts to strengthen them and increase pedestrian activity.
- Find ways to encourage the building of a person's or family's first house in St. Clair County.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Review local zoning ordinances to identify current barriers to development of affordable housing and aging in place.
- Review the types of housing not currently provided within St. Clair County and determine where they could be located in the future.
- Provide model ordinance language to local units of government to make it easier for residents to age in place.
- Develop model zoning language to encourage affordable housing opportunities, including language for "granny flats," density incentives, planned unit developments (PUDs), and workforce housing.
- Conduct a study to identify strategic locations in St. Clair County where accessible senior living is in higher demand and can be increased.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL 3: RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Continue development of high quality parks and recreation facilities, community facilities, and public infrastructure.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Work with community partners and stakeholders to develop and implement a Blueways of St. Clair Strategic Master Plan.
- Promote the special features within the county including forests, parks, trails, lakes, rivers, and other physical amenities.
- Link new and existing recreation facilities with non-motorized trails.
- Link new and existing trails and greenways with new and existing trails and greenways in neighboring counties.
- Promote county attractions in order to stimulate awareness that St. Clair County is a great place to live, work, and play, and enhance business attraction efforts.
- Enhance and encourage downtowns as commercial, cultural, and entertainment centers that attract a diverse and multi-generational population.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Coordinate efforts with local jurisdictions and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to implement the recommendations of the St. Clair County Master Recreation Plan
- Once developed, work with community partners to implement the recommendations of the Blueways of St. Clair Strategic Master Plan.
- Create a prioritized list of areas underserved by parks and recreation spaces and develop a schedule for addressing each one.
- Help create a private operation/association to plan, promote, and support both Blueways and greenways, coordinating with business and government efforts.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL 4: *VIBRANT, ENGAGING PUBLIC LIFE*

Develop and maintain inviting and engaging public spaces that encourage social interaction between residents and visitors.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Create vibrant and bustling cities and villages that are functional, people-oriented, and the center of activity within the county.
- Work with appropriate organizations to increase arts and entertainment opportunities in downtown communities.
- Support further development of arts and cultural institutions and events, which contribute to the character of a place and enhance quality of life.
- Plan for and provide parkland, open spaces, trails, and blueways to meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- An engaged citizenry that takes an active role in community planning activities.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Work with local units of government to concentrate new commercial development in a manner that strengthens and reinforces the vitality of existing commercial development in downtowns and village centers.
- Re-use vacant and underutilized sites, including demolished foreclosed properties, as locations for community gardens and other gathering spaces.
- Promote civic experiences and public events and campaign to broaden and diversify our experiences through arts and cultural opportunities throughout St. Clair County.
- Create public-private partnerships that provide programming and market events and activities in public spaces throughout the county.
- Support events and festivals of various scales that animate public space, ensuring that persons of all ages, background, and ethnicities have access to a rich and vibrant public realm.
- Develop a plan for artists to activate public spaces through temporary and interactive art installations, creating an engaging and vibrant experience for residents and visitors of St. Clair County.
- Increase creative methods for public outreach to ensure that community organizations are truly representative of their populations.

GREAT PLACES

Great places bring people together and connect them to healthy food, parks, shops, transportation options and other amenities. Communities must focus on providing residents with high quality opportunities for education, access to good health care, and keeping people safe. In order to develop great places, communities must focus on people as the driving force behind public policy and development decisions. Regardless of the geography - a neighborhood, a downtown, a public park - a place must be designed with people as the primary priority.

PARTNERS IN HELPING TO CREATE GREAT PLACES IN ST. CLAIR COUNTY... OUR GOALS FOR GREAT PLACES:

- Local units of government
 - Non-profit organizations and foundations
 - Historic Societies/Clubs
 - Neighborhood Organizations
 - St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)
 - Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC)
 - Community Foundation of St. Clair County
 - Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County
 - Council on Aging
 - Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
 - Region 6/I-69 International Trade Corridor
 - Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
 - Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
 - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
 - Community Services Coordinating Body (CSCB)
 - CSCB Housing Services Work Group
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
 - Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
 - Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
 - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
 - Watershed Planning Groups
 - USDA Rural Development
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 - Friends of the Island Loop
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 - St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission
 - St. Clair County Road Commission
 - St. Clair County Health Department
 - St. Clair County Library
- **FOCUSED PLACEMAKING**
 - **SAFE, STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS**
 - **WALKABLE COMMUNITIES**
 - **ENHANCED LIVABILITY**

GREAT PLACES GOAL 1: FOCUSED PLACEMAKING

Make great places in our local communities by capitalizing on unique assets. Ensure that residents and visitors have multiple options for housing, transportation, recreation, and entertainment.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage people to congregate in downtowns through special events, festivals and attractions, such as farmers markets and sidewalk cafes.
- Work with local units of government to promote and implement walkable, mixed-use developments in appropriate locations.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Work with local units of government to identify barriers to mixed-use development in zoning ordinances and master plans.
- Develop model ordinance language to promote mixed-use development in downtowns, commercial corridors, and other appropriate locations.
- Work with partners to develop a bike share program in Downtown Port Huron, integrating assets such as the Bridge to Bay Trail and the Blue Water River Walk.
- Continue to build upon the momentum of the Blue Water Trail Towns program and the Blueways of St. Clair to maximize economic development opportunities along trails and waterways.
- Work with community partners to promote and implement infill development and redevelopment.

GREAT PLACES GOAL 2: SAFE, STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Build on the assets of every community and stabilize neighborhoods by eliminating blight, creating a sense of community, and improving community character for St. Clair County's changing population.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Rehabilitation and modernization of single-family homes in areas with large numbers of single-family residential homes with traditional neighborhood character, or where there is a market for a single-family product.
- Assist seniors in stabilizing and upgrading existing housing to facilitate aging in place.
- Make St. Clair County a more competitive housing location for empty nesters, seniors, students, and young professionals.
- Encourage “green” retrofits in existing neighborhoods.
- Utilization of the St. Clair County Land Bank Authority and the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to their fullest potential to address problem properties throughout the county.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Support policies that accommodate aging in place, including accessory dwelling units to increase housing affordability, transit-supportive land use patterns, and compact, mixed-use and walkable development.
- Continue to implement the CDBG-funded Homeowner Assistance program throughout the county.
- Conduct housing condition surveys in neighborhoods within the Urban and General Services District to help local units of government identify targeted improvement areas within communities.
- Work with local units of government to expand choices of neighborhood and housing types.
- Incorporate opportunities for including artists and other creative enterprises in affordable housing plans.
- Work with community partners to encourage green retrofits in neighborhoods, such as energy efficiency improvements, tree planting, rain gardens, native landscaping, and backyard or community gardening.
- Reduce the supply of functionally obsolete buildings through conversion or demolition.
- Improve enforcement of property maintenance codes.

GREAT PLACES GOAL 3: WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

Promote greater access to complete, walkable neighborhoods. Connect people to healthy food, parks, shops, transportation options and other core services.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Take advantage of the inherent connectivity among coastal communities in St. Clair County.
- Encourage small-scale neighborhood commercial uses within residential neighborhoods.
- Make downtown streets pedestrian-friendly and encourage active street level uses.
- All communities in St. Clair County make Complete Streets a priority.
- Residents take advantage of the abundant recreation and trail amenities in St. Clair County to live more healthy, active lifestyles.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Improve walkability through street calming measures where appropriate.
- Implement the recommendations of the Blue Water Trail Towns Master Plan.
- Work with local units of government to ensure all new residential developments and commercial corridors have sidewalks.
- Develop and regularly update walkability maps for all of the cities within the Urban and General Services District.
- Develop a model Complete Streets policy and work with community partners and road agencies to integrate the policy into local plans.
- Participate in local, regional, and statewide initiatives to connect hike-bike trails and water trails.
- Educate local officials on the importance and benefits of planning for and implementing Complete Streets.
- Seek grant funding to assist in implementing walkability projects.
- Lobby the State and Federal Government to provide more flexibility to communities to increase walkability by street calming.

GREAT PLACES GOAL 4: ENHANCED LIVABILITY

Create highly desirable communities that provide residents with high quality public services, access to great schools, access to quality health care, and outstanding public safety day in and day out.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- St. Clair County is home to safe, quality schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces.
- Improved public outreach and civic engagement to involve more citizens and business owners in community planning activities.
- Ensure streets are developed with the safety and mobility of people in mind.
- Efficient public service delivery.
- Widescale access to quality health care and other core services.
- Vibrant neighborhoods.
- More people in St. Clair County have the option to use public transportation to get to where they live, work, or recreate.
- Local zoning regulations that are aligned with local master plan goals and objectives.
- Modernized, proactive plans, ordinances, and capital improvement programs that prepare communities to achieve their long-term visions.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Collaborate with RESA and local schools on projects that will contribute to enhanced livability, economic development, and community improvement.
- Designate existing or new community gathering spaces in every neighborhood where people of all backgrounds can congregate.
- Develop a civic engagement strategy to help increase the capacity of the public to participate in the decision-making process.
- Work with local units of government and road agencies to create new pedestrian crossings at suitable intersections and midstreet crossings and educate motorists and pedestrians about crosswalk safety.
- Collaborate with State and Federal Transportation agencies to increase non-motorized and pedestrian safety along U.S. and State routes
- Create a comprehensive neighborhood indicators system for tracking neighborhood health and stability.
- Collaborate with law and code enforcement professionals with groups of neighborhoods to target enforcement of areas of illegal activity and ensure that revitalization of one neighborhoods does not result in a spread of crime and disorder to other surrounding neighborhoods.
- Direct growth to areas of existing infrastructure.

PROSPERITY

Diversifying the tax base so our communities are fiscally sound and educating/training our people to prepare them for 21st century job opportunities. Revitalizing the county's economy refers to the overall strategies necessary to promote, increase, and support sustainable economic development. This includes fostering entrepreneurial growth, facilitating industrial development, revitalizing our downtowns, and creating high-skill, high-wage jobs.

PARTNERS WORKING TOWARD A MORE PROSPEROUS ST. CLAIR COUNTY...

- Local units of government
- Non-profit organizations and foundations
- Historic Societies/Clubs
- Neighborhood Organizations
- St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)
- Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC)
- Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County
- Council on Aging
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
- Region 6/I-69 International Trade Corridor
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Community Services Coordinating Body (CSCB)
- CSCB Housing Services Work Group
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
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- St. Clair County Road Commission
- St. Clair County Health Department

OUR GOALS FOR PROSPERITY:

- **ECONOMIC DIVERSITY**
- **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION**
- **TALENTED PEOPLE**
- **ACTIVE GROWTH CORRIDORS**

PROSPERITY GOAL 1: ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Foster a sustainable economy that provides opportunities for all.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Collaboration with community partners to implement successful economic development throughout St. Clair County.
- Promote and expand community events, festivals, and recreation opportunities.
- Support and promote technological advances, such as high speed internet and fiber optic networks in St. Clair County to encourage economic development.
- Attract and retain businesses that increase economic competitiveness.
- Continue to build and nurture St. Clair County’s growing entrepreneurial culture through business and education partnerships.
- A robust food economy, including urban agriculture, community gardens, fresh food retail, food processing, and related entrepreneurial and regional supply-chain opportunities.
- Fostering entrepreneurial growth.
- Facilitating industrial development.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Become well-versed in legislation and economic development programs in Michigan.
- Continue to support and collaborate with the Blue Water Chamber of Commerce, Blue Water Convention and Visitors Bureau, and other community partners to promote tourism and cultural activities.
- Ensure the countywide Broadband Committee continues to actively meet and implement the recommendations of the St. Clair County Broadband Technology Action Plan.
- Continue to actively participate in and collaborate with SEMCOG and the Region 6/I-69 International Trade Corridor.
- Identify economic development incentives the county can offer for appropriate projects and utilize those incentives in making projects happen.
- Review ordinances and regulations that inhibit small business owners wanting to conduct business within their residences, while keeping with the spirit and values of the community.
- Provide firms with data, educational resources, and other services dedicated to expand trade and investment.

PROSPERITY GOAL 2: COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Work with community partners to revitalize St. Clair County downtowns and community centers into dynamic places that attract a diverse mix of businesses, living spaces, and talent.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Revitalize vacant, distressed, and/or environmentally contaminated buildings and lots throughout the county.
- Promote strategic demolition and infill development or green space to revitalize neighborhoods and business districts.
- Form-based zoning codes that support streetscape and commercial and neighborhood design based on community context and character.
- Elimination of residential, commercial, and industrial blight.
- Reinvestment in our downtowns and central business districts.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Aggressively utilize the tools available through the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the St. Clair County Land Bank Authority to revitalize communities and support economic development activities.
- Develop a strategic plan for the St. Clair County Land Bank Authority.
- Inventory and analyze the features contributing to community character in St. Clair County communities and identify how development regulations can best protect or enhance them.
- Conduct neighborhood condition surveys for all cities and villages in St. Clair County to inform decisions on neighborhood improvement plans and housing grant programs.
- Educate local government officials and the general public about the benefits of form-based zoning.
- Identify and address barriers to downtown, corridor, and neighborhood redevelopment and infill development projects.

PROSPERITY GOAL 3: TALENTED PEOPLE

Ensure that all county residents have access to quality education, job training, and skills development. Work to attract and retain talented people for knowledge-based jobs.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Market attractiveness of expanding or locating businesses where there is a concentration of workers, supply-chain networks, research and development facilities, and educational institutions to support new businesses.
- Encourage young people to think about starting their own businesses, including education and encouragement in K-12.
- Preparing our citizens for 21st century job opportunities.
- Collaboration with community partners to improve educational attainment, individual development, and community engagement within our communities.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Collaborate with community partners to develop basic resources for skilled trades professionals who would like to start their own business (e.g., electrician, plumber, auto mechanic).
- Collaborate with community partners to strengthen ties between education/training organizations and employers to ensure employees have needed skills.
- Emphasize the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education as a basis for all types of technical careers.
- Develop outreach activities that highlight the importance of obtaining a college degree.

PROSPERITY GOAL 4: ACTIVE GROWTH CORRIDORS

Work with local government officials, transportation agencies, and economic development organizations to develop a vision and long-range plan for key growth corridors in St. Clair County

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Development of specialize study area plans for active growth corridors throughout St. Clair County.
- Improved visual character along active growth corridors.
- Highlight strategic international connections that facilitate freight flows, exports, and business travel.
- Monitor development of the Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline that will run from Lake Huron to Flint and work with local communities to minimize adverse impacts and identify beneficial opportunities.
- Educating local officials on the interrelationships between land use, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development along active growth corridors.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Develop Corridor Master Plans for key active growth corridors, including the Range Road Corridor, the Fred Moore Highway Corridor, and the Marine City Highway Corridor.
- Continue to work with state and local partners on the potential expansion or other changes to the Blue Water Bridge Plaza.
- Develop model sign ordinances to improve corridor aesthetics.
- Work with local units to revise land use and design regulations to ensure smart planning along active growth corridors.
- Continue working with SEMCOG and the Region 6 I-69 Thumb Region on economic development activities at the corridor level.

SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting and preserving our valuable natural resources and sensitive environments for future generations. Ensuring that public bodies are planning for and implementing development that promotes fiscal sustainability.

PARTNERS IN WORKING TO MAKE ST. CLAIR COUNTY MORE SUSTAINABLE...

- Local units of government
- Non-profit organizations and foundations
- Historic Societies/Clubs
- Neighborhood Organizations
- St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)
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OUR GOALS FOR PROSPERITY:

- RESOURCE PROTECTION
- SMART GROWTH
- RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
- HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLACES

SUSTAINABILITY GOAL 1: RESOURCE PROTECTION

Create a cleaner and greener built and natural environment - more trees, better air and water quality, and lower carbon emissions.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Protection and preserve ground and surface water.
- Protection of woodlots, wetlands, and other natural vegetation.
- Innovative management and control of invasive species that threaten native and non-invasive species in the county.
- Preservation of the natural character of the shorelines of lakes, rivers, and streams.
- Preservation of forested land, steep slopes, wetlands, and other ecologically or visually valuable landscape features.
- Development that helps preserve historic buildings or sites.
- Increased awareness of the value of clean rivers, streams, and lakes and the role nonpoint source pollution has in degrading water quality.
- Preservation of high quality agricultural land throughout St. Clair County.
- Communities are proactively protecting sensitive environmental areas by ensuring their land use policies promote appropriate buffers or transitional areas between incompatible land uses.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Continue to encourage farmers to participate in the PA 116 farmland preservation program.
- Work with the St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board to carry out activities that promote agriculture as a key economic driver in the region.
- Work with local units of government to implement changes in zoning requirements that more effectively protect valuable farmland and enhances support for value-added agriculture, agri-business, and agricultural tourism throughout the county.
- Continue to develop a local wetlands mitigation bank to purchase and preserve larger, more important wetlands throughout the county.

SUSTAINABILITY GOAL 2: SMART GROWTH

Direct growth to areas with existing infrastructure, preserve high quality farmland, and prevent unnecessary and costly utility extensions which, in turn, will promote fiscal sustainability for local governments and prevent inefficient, sprawl-type development.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Direct growth to areas with existing infrastructure.
- Rural residential areas through the interior of the county.
- Ensure residents and visitors have a variety of transportation options to get to where they need to go.
- Preserve high quality agricultural land and promote farming as a critical component of St. Clair County's economic engine.
- Redevelopment of failing or abandoned strip malls into mixed-use developments that enhance the community.
- Local units of government that are proactively planning for growth, with master plans, zoning ordinances, capital improvement plans, and other tools that are aligned in support of an overall vision.
- Communities that offer a wider range of housing options to attract and retain residents of all ages and walks of life, especially starter housing, senior housing, and accessible housing.
- Land use decisions are focused on capitalizing on existing infrastructure in order to prevent sprawl forms of development and to promote sound fiscal management.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Encourage cluster developments that reduce infrastructure costs by reducing the length of roads and utility lines in new developments.
- Higher density residential, commercial, and industrial uses are primarily targeted for the Urban and General Service District (see St. Clair County Vision 2045 Map).
- Assist communities by providing model zoning language for mixed-use developments and form-based codes.
- Educate local officials and residents on the benefits of allowing a variety of housing types within the community.
- Ensure that access to transportation and core services are considered in making development decisions.
- Partner with local units of government to assess existing master plans, ordinances, and other key documents to ensure they are modern, effective tools to proactively manage change and development.

SUSTAINABILITY GOAL 3: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Work to create resilient communities within St. Clair County. Resilient communities are better prepared to adapt to sudden economic or environmental disruptions or changes. Taking a multi-sector, multi-jurisdictional approach to planning and preparing for change, disruptions, and shocks to our community systems. Increasing our resilience in order to decrease sensitivities to climate impacts and extreme conditions, reduce exposures to damage and loss, and increase our adaptive capacity.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Coordination of county and local planning and zoning efforts to discourage fragmentation of open space and the natural environment.
- Implementation of renewable energy projects throughout the county.
- Utilization of green infrastructure to effectively manage stormwater runoff and mitigate other environmental impacts of climate-related hazards.
- Reduction in paved, impervious surfaces throughout the county.
- Protection and preservation of the abundant water resources in St. Clair County.
- Proactive planning that allows communities to quickly adapt to economic disruptions.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Review the St. Clair County Hazard Mitigation Plan on an annual basis and update the Plan as needed.
- Develop model ordinances for alternative energy sources such as wind energy, solar energy, and biofuels.
- Integrate SEMCOG's Regional Green Infrastructure Plan into county and local master plans.

SUSTAINABILITY GOAL 4: HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLACES

Create a healthy environment for people, decrease chronic and acute diseases, and promote access to fresh, healthy food in all St. Clair County communities

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Healthy, locally-grown food is easily accessible no matter where a person lives.
- Increased demand and awareness for physical activity in our communities.
- Walkable, bikeable communities.
- Data-driven decisionmaking to address public health deficiencies in the county.
- A decrease in the number of people who engage in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, drug use, and other activities that contribute to poor health.
- Increased public awareness about where people can walk, bike, or paddle.
- All residents have access to quality health care.
- Obesity rates for adults and children in St. Clair County continue to decline.
- The percentage of residents with good physical and mental health continually increases.
- Violent and property crime rates are low.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Develop plans and guidelines that offer incentives to create walkable and bikeable communities and increase the demand and awareness for physical activity.
- Annually assess county health indicators to identify negative and positive trends in public health and work with the St. Clair County Health Department and other partners on initiatives to combat alarming trends and build upon positive momentum.
- Work with local road agencies to develop complete streets policies that can be integrated in to local master plans.
- Develop a set of criteria to rate a neighborhood's health and conduct neighborhood health assessments for communities in the Urban and General Services District.
- Develop and regularly update "Community Walkability Maps" that highlight pedestrian-friendly connections to core services.
- Implement the recommendations of the Blue Water Trail Towns Master Plan.

INNOVATION

Effective and efficient delivery of public services through smart decision making, lean operations, intergovernmental collaboration, and innovation.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY'S PARTNERS IN CREATING AND DELIVERING INNOVATION...

- Local units of government
- Non-profit organizations and foundations
- Historic Societies/Clubs
- Neighborhood Organizations
- St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)
- Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC)
- Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County
- Council on Aging
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
- Region 6/I-69 International Trade Corridor
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Community Services Coordinating Body (CSCB)
- CSCB Housing Services Work Group
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
- Watershed Planning Groups
- USDA Rural Development
- Friends of the St. Clair River
- Friends of the Island Loop
- Blueways of St. Clair Committee
- Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Tax Increment Finance Authorities
- St. Clair County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- St. Clair County Land Bank Authority
- St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission
- St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission
- St. Clair County Road Commission
- St. Clair County Health Department

OUR GOALS FOR PROSPERITY:

- EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES
- COLLABORATIVE GOVERNMENT
- INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP
- SMART COMMUNITIES

INNOVATION GOAL 1: EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES

Reinvent and continually improve how effective and efficient public services are delivered to the public. Seek innovative ways to improve the quality and depth of public services.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- County government implements a fiscally-sound and effective capital improvement program on an annual basis.
- Implementation of complete streets throughout St. Clair County.
- Coordinated and efficient infrastructure improvements.
- Implementation of green infrastructure to meet traditional infrastructure needs.
- Utilization of infrastructure management methods, including right-sizing infrastructure where there is significantly more capacity than is needed for the future.
- Affordable, high-speed broadband access and cell phone coverage to all areas of the county, including “last mile” connections.
- Maintenance and protection of critical infrastructure.
- Premium police, fire, and emergency medical services.
- Outstanding customer service at all levels of county government.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Provide bi-annual customer service training to county staff who deal with the public.
- Work with community partners to streamline the permitting process and create a “development ready communities” program.
- Overhaul the St. Clair County Capital Improvement Program to increase its effectiveness as the primary financial master plan for the county.
- Incorporate green streets concepts, where appropriate, to create more desirable communities and mitigate environmental impacts.
- Employ a comprehensive approach when constructing or updating transportation infrastructure by incorporating new technologies to improve efficiency and safety, as well as coordinating with water/sewer, broadband/fiber optic, or other types of infrastructure projects to more efficiently use resources.
- Assist county departments in carrying out strategic planning activities.

INNOVATION GOAL 2: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNMENT

Foster collaboration and share leadership on local and regional issues.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Continued collaboration among government, businesses, economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other entities to support economic development and environmental stewardship efforts.
- More information sharing and knowledge transfer among communities and organizations within St. Clair County.
- Further cross-sector collaboration to use our region's competitive advantages to grow business, improve education and training, and create jobs.
- Continued partnering amongst governmental units to realize cost-savings in purchasing and public improvements.
- St. Clair County communities and non-governmental organizations are viewed as a model when it comes to collaborating on initiatives to ensure success and enhance results.
- Local units of government regularly cooperate and coordinate when it comes to planning for land use, transportation, recreation, and infrastructure.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Host quarterly Planning Discussion Group meetings throughout the county in order to facilitate discussion and information sharing between local communities.
- Collaborate with community stakeholders to implement the St. Clair County Broadband Technology Action Plan.
- Assist local units of government that are exploring the feasibility and benefits of creating joint planning commissions or regional authorities.
- Continue to engage with the nonprofit community to stay abreast of what is happening in local communities.
- Actively collaborate with at SEMCOG and the Region 6 I-69 Thumb partnership.
- Assist local communities, county departments, and other community organizations in developing strong grant applications seeking funding for projects that will benefit St. Clair County.

INNOVATION GOAL 3: INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

Stay abreast of the latest trends in public administration, planning, and public service delivery. Use data and technology to ensure smart analysis and decision making.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Enhanced public relations and promotion of the positive things that are happening in St. Clair County neighborhoods, businesses, downtowns, and county government.
- An organizational culture at the county level that promotes sustainability and efficiency practices at county facilities to the extent that it is feasible, cost-effective, and practical.
- Making it easier and faster to conduct business with government, while continuing to place a priority on maintaining community values.
- Well-educated, high quality managers, department heads, professional and front-line staff throughout the county organization.
- An organizational culture that values innovation, big picture thinking, and creativity.
- County government that engages the public for input and ideas on ongoing projects and programs.
- The County organization and local units of government within St. Clair County stay abreast of best practices in government planning and administration and are able to adapt and implement innovative solutions to complex problems.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Establish a clearinghouse of best practice development processes for local governments working with businesses.
- Utilize social media, traditional media, and the county’s website to inform the public and highlight projects and programs being implemented by various county departments.
- Develop an organizational energy strategy to realize energy savings and sustainability.
- Create a county policy for incorporating “green design” into future county facility development.
- Prioritize projects in departmental budgets that are consistent with the County Master Plan.
- Work with community partners to streamline the permitting process and create a “development ready communities” program.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a leadership development program at the county level.

INNOVATION GOAL 4: SMART COMMUNITIES

Work with local units of government to prepare our communities for the coming wave of smart infrastructure, connected and autonomous vehicles, open government/data, mobility on demand, and the sharing economy. Becoming Smart Communities will require the integration of all the other objectives and strategic actions in this plan, into all other facets of governance and planning.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Improving connectivity.
- Enhancing the movement of people and goods by improving the county's transportation network.
- Ensuring community sustainability.
- Fostering open systems and innovation.
- Embracing a more open and transparent government.
- Support for and implementation of open data at the government level.
- Working with community partners to identify new ways to collect and analyze 'big data' and identifying ways to use that data to improve connectivity, mobility, safety, and efficiency.
- Implementation of standard architectures and smart infrastructure systems to accommodate and support connected and autonomous vehicles.
- Collaboration with local, state, and regional partners - both public and private - to further develop Smart City plans and programs.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- Implementation of V2x (vehicle-to-x) technologies and infrastructure throughout St. Clair County in order to promote connected and autonomous vehicles, mobility on demand, and the sharing economy.
- Development and promotion of applications that provide greater access to public transportation, public services, and other information.
- Implementation of Smart Grid infrastructure to support electric vehicles throughout St. Clair County.
- Updating the county's website with publicly-available open data, as appropriate, to facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Aggressively seek out grant funding and other resources to implement Smart City plans.
- Assist local communities in developing Smart City strategic plans.