



2008 UPDATE
TO THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

... A LAND USE PLAN TO BEGIN THE 21ST CENTURY

CITY OF NORTON SHORES 2008 UPDATE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

April, 2008



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INTRODUCTION

Prior to the adoption of this document, the City of Norton Shores had been implementing the Comprehensive Plan written in July 2000. As the July 2000 Comprehensive Plan states in Chapter 1, constant social and economic changes justify the periodic review and maintenance of a land use plan, so the plan reflects current trends and challenges. Moreover, State planning legislation suggests that a comprehensive land use plan be reviewed at least once every five years and revised accordingly as needed. While periodic review and adjustment of the July 2000 Plan is warranted, long term objectives should be respected to achieve the goals and visions expressed during the process to develop that plan.

This 2008 Update to the Comprehensive Plan serves both as a supplement to, and an update of, the Comprehensive Plan adopted in July 2000.

As part of the process to complete this 2008 Update, the Future Land Use Plan in the July 2000 Comprehensive Plan was scrutinized by the City's appointed and elected officials, professional staff and planning consultants for relevance given today's specific issues, trends, and neighborhood land use challenges. The City reviewed the July 2000 Comprehensive Plan for areas where it could be strengthened, corrected, or otherwise changed to meet the current needs and desires of residents and property owners in the City of Norton Shores, without undermining the policy foundations set in the 2000 document.

The City found that the plan approved in 2000 reflects many current conditions and trends facing the City today. Therefore, this update does not entirely replace the existing 2000 document. Instead, this 2008 Update to the Comprehensive Plan serves both as a supplement to, and an update of, the Comprehensive Plan adopted in July 2000. It reflects the community's concern for economic vitality, quality of life, sense of place, and natural feature preservation, without replacing the 2000 document. And while the 2008 future land use map supersedes the old map, both documents should be utilized because they together form the land use policy structure of the City and provide a set of guidelines for an attractive, livable and vibrant community. The effort to complete the 2008 Update represents the City's commitment to implementing an up to date plan and dedication to smart growth concepts.

SMART GROWTH READINESS ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Smart Growth Readiness Assessment Tool (SGRAT)¹ served as a policy resource for the City of Norton Shores as it reviewed the guidelines of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and contemplated new or modified land use strategies to incorporate into an update to that plan.

SGRAT provided Norton Shores with a series of evaluative questions and a state-wide internet database to determine how prepared the community is to promote efficient and sustainable growth, both in terms of planning and zoning. Specifically, SGRAT measured whether the City is actively encouraging and/or requiring land use elements to parallel the general growth management objectives of “smart growth.” The Ten Tenets of Smart Growth are:

SGRAT helped to determine how prepared Norton Shores is to promote efficient and sustainable growth.

1. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
2. Create walkable neighborhoods
3. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
4. Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place
5. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective
6. Mix land uses
7. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
10. Take advantage of compact building design

The process to collect local responses to SGRAT questions involved two meetings in which small groups of policy-makers and officials developed responses to a series of questions downloaded from the SGRAT website to yield a community-wide response. The City’s planning consultants then entered the entries into the SGRAT website.

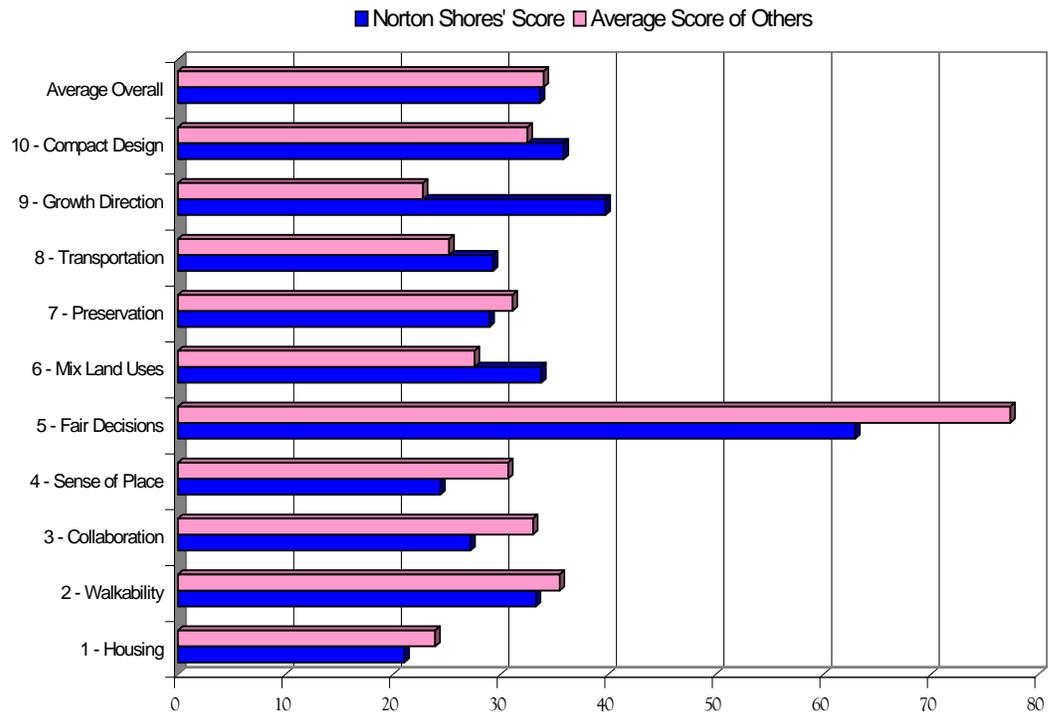
The results of the activity are summarized below, and provide the community’s policy-makers and officials with a further evaluation of

¹ SGRAT is a collection of self-assessment questions intended for use by local communities to assess progress in growing according to the Ten Smart Growth Tenets. It was developed by Michigan State University Extension Citizen Planner, the Land Policy Institute, and the Planning and Zoning Center.

the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the assessment tool results include a series of adjustments to the City’s various plans and ordinances, as well as other policy and regulatory structures, that may be considered. These suggested adjustments may also be considered by the policy-makers. The raw results are presented under separate cover and offer references to techniques, sample documents and various resources that can be consulted or adapted to the local community, to assist Norton Shores in implementing smart growth principles.

Results. The table and graph summarize the output of the activity and compares Norton Shores with the balance of SGRAT participants.

Tenet	Norton Shores	Average Score
1 - Housing Opportunities	21.05%	23.92%
2 - Walkable Neighborhoods	33.27%	35.49%
3 - Community/Stakeholder Collaboration	27.17%	33.01%
4 - Sense of Place	24.39%	30.7%
5 - Predictable, Fair and Cost-Effective Decisions	62.96%	77.37%
6 - Mix Land Uses	33.77%	27.58%
7 - Preserve Open Space, Farmland	28.97%	31.11%
8 - Transportation Choices	29.29%	25.22%
9 - Direct Growth Toward Existing Communities	39.74%	22.77%
10 - Compact Development Design	35.85%	32.5%
<i>Average Overall Score</i>	<i>33.65%</i>	<i>33.96%</i>



The overall average score for the City was similar to the average score of other assessment participants. According to the SGRAT website, when a community achieves 70% or higher on any one tenet, it is either already growing “smart” or has already begun to apply many of the smart growth strategies relative to that tenet. When the score is between 40% and 70% on any one tenet, more can be done to achieve a higher quality of life. A score below 40% indicates that the community is at risk from development that may undermine the community’s efforts to foster economic health and quality of life. With that in mind and when compared to the balance of SGRAT participants, the City’s greatest risks from a smart growth perspective pertain to housing opportunities; walkable neighborhoods; community and stakeholder collaboration; sense of place; and the preservation of open space and natural features.

SGRAT Recommendations. The following are summarized recommendations related to their respective smart growth tenet from the SGRAT results. Of course, it is not feasible to implement all these recommendations, but this listing offers an extensive menu from which appropriate techniques may be selected. The implementation strategies beginning on page 11 include strategies drawn, in part, from this listing modified to address local priorities.

**Tenet 1: Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
(Scored 21.05%)**

The listing offers an extensive menu from which appropriate techniques may be selected.

- ◆ The community could develop and implement plans, ordinances and programs to encourage more housing under \$100,000 or otherwise that costs 30% or less of the median income of families in the City.
- ◆ The City could develop and actively implement a program to help renovate relatively deteriorated neighborhoods and properties; including adoption of special rehabilitation codes to help facilitate the renovation of existing structures.
- ◆ Norton Shores could work with neighboring communities to define the housing needs of the region and to determine how each jurisdiction can help to meet those needs. A potential approach is to allow a greater number of homes on lots less than a quarter of an acre.

Tenet 2: Create walkable neighborhoods
(Scored 33.27%)

- ◆ Norton Shores could work to establish an interconnected network of sidewalks and trails. A first step in that process would be to develop and implement a Pedestrian Plan, which should include locations of desired systems; goals and strategies; potential funding sources, including a Capital Improvement Program; and direction to public and private entities as to where, how and when sidewalks are to be installed.
- ◆ Sidewalks should be a minimum of 6 feet in width so 2 people can walk side by side; and multi-use trails should be at least 10 feet in width to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Consideration should be given to persons with physical limitations, as well, including provision for smooth surfaces; thorough maintenance; strong visual clues for steps, barriers, and changes in grade; and periodic resting places.
- ◆ The City should explore the Safe Routes to School program with the Mona Shores School District, the Muskegon Public School District, and the Grand Haven School District, and develop the program jointly.
- ◆ Walkability criteria could be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance's site plan review standards.

Tenet 3: Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
(Scored 27.17%)

- ◆ The community could develop an outreach mechanism to provide educational or discussion opportunities on smart growth issues. This may include workshops, charrettes, or newsletters; and specific underserved segments of the population may be specifically sought out for participation.
- ◆ The City could consider an outreach or educational program that engages children or youth in smart growth related issues.
- ◆ The City could reach out to specific stakeholder groups when preparing updates to an ordinance or plan. These groups may include developers, realtors, the school district, large land owners, business owners, neighborhood groups, and environmental groups.

Tenet 4: Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place (Scored 24.39%)

- ◆ The City may consider design standards applicable to businesses and offices that require certain features in facade treatments, building materials and roof lines to achieve more of a community-scale aesthetic while avoiding national chain standards. Pedestrian amenities such as benches and bike racks can also be required.
- ◆ In certain desired areas of the community, the Zoning Ordinance may stipulate that parking be located to the side, behind or toward the rear of the building instead of in front.
- ◆ New residential developments could incorporate a mixture of housing styles and prices, especially when adjacent to more intense land uses, services and employment. This would help to avoid a concentration of multi-family land uses, such as apartments.
- ◆ The Zoning Ordinance should include regulations for light levels, fixture design, and pole height limitations relative to neighborhood scale; and timers, dimmers and shields should be required.

Tenet 5: Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective (Scored 62.96%)

- ◆ Staff should review the various ordinances and regulations affecting development to determine whether the submittal and review process is as short as possible while still resulting in quality decisions.
- ◆ Members of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and City Council should take Michigan State University Extension Citizen Planner or other similar training.

Tenet 6: Mix land uses (Scored 33.77%)

- ◆ As redevelopment occurs in the future, the City could encourage more compact and mixed use development near existing potential town centers.
- ◆ Senior housing should be actively encouraged within close proximity to services and commercial establishments.

- ◆ Density bonuses and other incentives could be granted for mixed use, compact developments. Other incentives may include parking reductions, setback or open space reductions, or streamlined permitting.

Tenet 7: Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas (Scored 28.97%)

- ◆ Norton Shores could organize an effort to complete a natural features inventory which describes and maps features such as wetlands, floodplains, sand dunes and high risk erosion areas, open space, threatened or endangered species, and other critical or special features.
- ◆ An inventory of viewsheds and landmarks could also be completed by community residents.
- ◆ Tree preservation could be contemplated in the Zoning Ordinance. For example, the City can require the protection of a certain percentage of mature trees or that new trees of specified trunk width replace each mature tree removed. In addition, existing mature trees or natural areas adjacent to roadways can be preserved even as development occurs with the proper guidelines in place.
- ◆ The City might adopt its own provisions to identify and protect sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, steep slopes, high risk erosion areas, dunes, sensitive soils and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ The City could encourage eco-tourism and agri-tourism businesses to form in the community.
- ◆ Norton Shores could investigate establishing an urban services boundary, possibly in conjunction with adjoining units of government.

Tenet 8: Provide a variety of transportation choices (Scored 29.29%)

- ◆ Sidewalks may be considered for all new developments.
- ◆ The Zoning Ordinance or other applicable regulatory structure could allow different street widths depending on the functional classification of the roadway, character of the area, projected volume of traffic and desired vehicular speed.

- ◆ Non-motorized paths could be constructed that link recreational facilities and other community destinations.
- ◆ Access management strategies could be implemented because they can help improve safety and efficiency of both bicycle and vehicular traffic.
- ◆ The City could seek opportunities to reduce the impact of parking on the community. Strategies may include a review of parking lot utilization for various uses, and applying that utilization as a basis for parking requirements; standards for shared parking; flexibility for reduced parking or limitations on parking; standards for minimum size and number of landscape islands; impervious surface or lot coverage restrictions; and requirements for parking to be located toward the rear of new development.

Tenet 9: Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities (Scored 39.74%)

- ◆ The City should leave undeveloped areas out of the urban service area.
- ◆ The City could consider establishing a Downtown Development Authority, Business Improvement District, Principal Shopping District, Business Improvement Zone, or other mechanism to help direct development toward established business centers.
- ◆ Norton Shores should take steps to ensure that redevelopment is efficient and that priority has been given to developed areas over undeveloped areas.
- ◆ Officials could consider providing financial incentives or expedited review for new development located in areas serviced by urban services or for redevelopment.
- ◆ The Zoning Ordinance could permit the transfer of density into areas with infrastructure capacity or allow density bonuses for development in areas with existing infrastructure.

Tenet 10: Take advantage of compact building design (Scored 35.85%)

- ◆ The City could consider revising its Zoning Ordinance to explicitly permit traditional neighborhood development as an option to conventional segregated uses and zones.

- ◆ Form-based zoning elements could be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to help improve the vitality, efficiency, aesthetics and identity of certain areas.

FUTURE LAND USE SUPPLEMENT

The City of Norton Shores 2008 Update to the Comprehensive Plan focuses on smart growth, sense of place, environmental protection, and walkability. The 2000 Plan concentrated on establishing a general pattern of land use which corresponded with utility infrastructure availability; this update adds smart growth implementation strategies to that general land use mix.

STERNBERG ROAD EXTENSION.

Rural character along the Sternberg Road corridor should be preserved as any future development occurs.

Chapter 8 in the 2000 plan recognizes that east-west connections in the City are limited due in part to the presence of Mona Lake and the Muskegon County Airport, and that it is appropriate to provide for additional east-west mobility in the community without fostering sprawl or unwanted development. Sternberg Road was selected as that additional continuous east-west linkage because this connection would provide direct access to US-31 for residents of the west side of the City; presumably lessen traffic congestion on Seminole Road, Seaway Drive and West Norton Avenue; and provide direct access between US-31 and the lakeshore.

Future extension of Sternberg Road in all likelihood may be achieved incrementally by private developers as residential development is proposed, or by the City where appropriate.

The City anticipates the application of certain design guidelines as Sternberg Road is extended. Rural character along the Sternberg Road corridor should be preserved as any future development occurs. The 2000 plan sets a policy foundation for the preservation of rural character for the southern tier of the community, and this 2008 update supports that philosophy and presents the following additional recommendations and guidelines for both the City and the private sector to follow.

- ◆ **Tree Preservation.** The City should require the protection of a certain percentage of mature trees or that new trees of specified trunk width replace each mature tree or a certain percentage of trunk width removed. This provision should be incorporated into the Norton Shores Zoning Ordinance and can apply to an area within 50 feet of the right-of-way line for Sternberg Road, or can apply universally throughout the City. The intention in connection with the Sternberg Road extension is to help ensure

that wooded areas remain, even as the road is extended and even as development adjacent to the roadway occurs.

- ◆ **Maintain Residential Uses.** The 2000 plan and this update both support the concept of maintaining residential uses along the Sternberg Road corridor, generally between Grand Haven Road and Lake Harbor Road. The exception is adjacent to US-31 and shown on the future land use map.
- ◆ **Non-motorized Pathway.** A non-motorized pathway should be installed within the Sternberg Road right-of-way. This path should be designed for a multitude of uses, including pedestrian use and bicycle use. This path would make the Churchill Athletic Association park land more accessible to residents who live on or off of Sternberg Road. The City should incorporate design standards for this and other pathways into its Zoning Ordinance or other appropriate regulatory structure. The City can require that private developers create and extend portions of this pathway as Sternberg Road is extended; however, the City will need to play a more involved role in connecting this pathway to some meaningful pedestrian network that is yet to be developed.
- ◆ **Minimize Curb-cuts/Increase Green Space.** The City should ensure that the number of driveway curb-cuts be minimized. Further, the City should apply an overlay “zone” to Sternberg Road that would apply to development as it occurs. The overlay zone should require that a space of 50 feet from the right-of-way line be preserved in perpetuity as open green space. The details of such a requirement can be determined during the process to develop the zoning standards. Alternatively, conservation easements for land directly adjacent to a roadway may be sought. These would be legally binding restrictions which provide for the preservation of a specific feature while permitting appropriate development. Easements may be voluntarily offered or purchased from the landowner; and may be referenced in an ordinance. Both the reduction of driveways and the guarantee of open space adjacent to the road would increase the preservation of natural features visible to motorists and pathway users and would thus help Sternberg Road to appear more rural while also protecting a potential wildlife corridor.
- ◆ **Narrower Width.** The City may want to consider a slightly narrower road width configuration for the future portion of Sternberg Road. A context-sensitive approach would encourage

The 2000 plan and this update both support the concept of maintaining residential uses along the Sternberg Road corridor.

lower speeds and would help to discourage higher intensity uses. This traffic calming measure would help to ensure that use of the road would be conducive to a residential collector street, as opposed to a commercial corridor. The City staff should promulgate this concept to developers.

The recommendations overlap the SGRAT suggestions presented on preceding pages and therefore correspond with smart growth principles. Specifically, implementation of these recommendations would respond to: Tenet 2 - Create walkable neighborhoods; Tenet 4 - Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place; Tenet 7 - Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas; and, Tenet 8 - Provide a variety of transportation choices.

STERNBERG ROAD AND GRAND HAVEN ROAD VICINITY.

Development should be relatively large in land area and should include an approved residential component beyond the immediate corner.

Since the adoption of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the closure of Ellis Road and the subsequent rerouting of airport-related traffic have resulted in an increase in motorists traveling along Sternberg Road through its intersection with Grand Haven Road. This increase in vehicular traffic may have land use implications for this intersection.

The east side of Grand Haven Road at the intersection is designated for commercial uses and is in the process of being developed into “The Pointes,” a neighborhood service and retail facility. The northwest corner of the Sternberg Road and Grand Haven Road intersection is planned for office uses.

The southwest corner is currently used for residential purposes. This plan anticipates that the corner will include a mixture of low-impact office uses to meet the needs of City residents. A large-scale commercial development designed to attract the broad motoring public would not meet the objectives for this site. A planned unit development approach is encouraged if it would result in such a mixture of low-impact uses and an overall site design non-intrusive on future adjacent residences.

The future adjacent residences described above are shown on the future land use map as Medium Density Residential, and are contiguous to the Office/Residential use at the corner. It is not this plan’s intent to foster the spread of commercial or other relatively intense land uses west down Sternberg Road. Therefore, the future

uses in any development at this corner should respect the use boundaries presented on the future land use map; commercial or other non-residential uses are not proposed or desired beyond the limits shown on the future land use map.

It is not this plan's intent to foster the spread of commercial or other relatively intense land uses west down Sternberg Road.

To achieve an appropriate balance of uses and to avoid commercial “sprawl” down Sternberg Road, any future development at the southwest corner of Sternberg Road and Grand Haven Road should be relatively large in land area and should include an approved residential component beyond the immediate corner. Further, phasing of the non-residential and the residential uses should be coordinated to ensure that residences would be constructed.

The non-residential uses should be substantially screened from residential uses with abundant landscaping. In addition, pedestrian connections should be provided between the two.

These land use suggestions concur with several of the SGRAT recommendations. For example, the described land use configuration supports a mix of compatible uses within a single development and would thus respond to Tenet 6 - Mix land uses; and supports pedestrian connections between a residential neighborhood and a service area, and would thus comport to Tenet 8 - Provide a variety of transportation choices.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

As stated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the southern tier of the City of Norton Shores is characterized by abundant woodlands and open space; and natural features exist throughout the entire City and define the community's character. The City can do more to ensure that the natural environment is being protected, and the following objectives and strategies are recommended for both the private sector and the City's leadership.

- ◆ **Best Management Practices.**² Best Management Practices for the construction, alteration and maintenance of manmade ponds, lakes, wetlands and wetland mitigation activities should

² The Environmental Protection Agency defines a Best Management Practice as a “technique, measure or structural control that is used for a given set of conditions to manage the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff in the most cost-effective manner.” Best Management Practices are generally procedures used to control stormwater, runoff, sediment control, soil stabilization, and facility management to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution, according to www.stormwaterauthority.org/bmp.

be followed. Often, these facilities can become engineering afterthoughts primarily for the purpose of managing stormwater, placed to the side of a development, lacking any enhancements that create a sense of place, or poorly designed in such a way as to harm natural resources or human safety. Adherence to Best Management Practices can help to alleviate some of these concerns. The City should work with the Public Works Department and consider incorporating regulatory language into the general law ordinances in this connection. Further, to protect groundwater and surface water quality, the City should monitor privately maintained stormwater systems and consider a special assessment district to help restore poorly managed facilities.

The City can do more to ensure that the natural environment is being protected.

- ◆ **Green Infrastructure.** The City should seek methods to promote environmentally-sensitive development. These methods may include amending the Zoning Ordinance to incentivize green development by offering density bonuses or a relaxation of zoning standards for LEED-certified facilities, zero-stormwater discharge facilities, or green-roof systems. Other techniques that mitigate the effects of impervious surface runoff and reduce energy consumption could also be generally or specifically incentivized in the Zoning Ordinance. Moreover, several larger communities in the United States require green infrastructure in public and/or private development; and the City may seek legal counsel regarding the advisability of similar requirements.
- ◆ **Open Space Calculations.** The present Zoning Ordinance provides an option for residential uses that would preserve a minimum of 40% of the total land area of a development as common open space. The ordinance does not prohibit manmade ponds for retention or detention; and some developers have construed this to mean that these ponds can count toward the 40% preservation requirement. This contravenes the intent of the 40% open space requirement; the requirement is meant to preserve as much of the land in its natural state. Therefore, the City should amend the Zoning Ordinance to stipulate that only 50% of manmade water structures, including lakes, ponds, and retention and detention facilities, can be calculated toward the 40% minimum open space standard. This would result in the preservation of more natural land, which is the intent of the regulation.

The above strategies correspond to several of the SGRAT recommendations and would respond to Tenet 7 - Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.

SENSE OF PLACE.

Norton Shores has emerged into a suburban community with a high quality of life, attractive residential neighborhoods, relatively few crime or social problems and a recognized school district. Despite these benefits and amenities, the community may suffer from a lack of identity or central place.

The community may suffer from a lack of identity or central place.

Although the City's commercial areas draw City residents and attract patrons from neighboring towns, the commercial areas may not reflect the character of the community. Moreover, Norton Shores does not have a clearly-defined central gathering place that is recognized as being the social, cultural, entertainment and retail service heart of the community. The Norton Shores City Hall on Henry Street, the various school facilities, Hoffmaster State Park and other parkland, churches, and prominent natural features such as Lake Michigan and Mona Lake, are destinations but do not form a central place due to their isolation.

The "Central Place" neighborhood as outlined on the future land use map presently consists of big box shopping facilities, office buildings and office parks, the Norton Shores Library, strip commercial buildings, fast food restaurants, the East Town new urbanist development, and an eclectic mixture of residential dwellings. This balance of land uses lends itself to a mobilized effort to establish a "downtown" Norton Shores.

The following guidelines are suggested to help reinforce sense of place in Norton Shores and to help build community character.

- ◆ **Explore DDA Possibility.** The City Council should explore the formation of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and a Tax Increment Financing and Development Plan may be crafted to implement the objectives of the DDA. The DDA would help fund improvements to the "downtown business district." While Norton Shores arguably does not currently have a precisely-defined downtown, a DDA could make improvements to an area so as to establish that area as more of a central place. The delineation shown on the future land use

map as “Central Place” is a possible downtown district and development area within which a DDA could work.

- ◆ **Permitted Uses.** The City should review the chapters in the Zoning Ordinance that present permitted uses in the zoning districts that form the “Central Place.” Uses which are not prevalent or which do not customarily promote pedestrian activity may be permitted only as special uses with stringent design parameters.
- ◆ **Development Standards.** The City should require certain features in new development. The following new regulations should be incorporated into the City’s zoning and regulatory framework. These regulations are compatible with the SGRAT recommendations and therefore parallel the concepts of smart growth. Specifically, Tenet 2 – Create walkable neighborhoods; Tenet 4 – Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place; and Tenet 9 – Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities; would be adhered to in the implementation of this objective.

Interaction between the building and the street should be regulated.

1. Sidewalks may be considered for every new development. In presently developed areas, the City should actively engage itself in the process to install an interconnected network of pathways within this “Central Place” and beyond.
2. Design standards should be applied to new buildings. These standards should relate to building materials, entrance design, signage, roof type, requirements for pedestrian amenities, and other elements. Long stretches of unarticulated walls should not be permitted. Large buildings, such as department stores or big box retailers, should include liner stores or human scale design elements to minimize the mass and scale of the structure.
3. Interaction between the building and the street should also be regulated, as far as entrance orientation, window transparency and coverage, maximum building setbacks, minimum and maximum building height, and other elements.
4. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include requirements for a certain percentage of parking spaces to be located to the side or rear of buildings.

An attractive, safe and functional public realm is essential to the vibrancy of a community core.

Deviation from conventional or corporate store design is encouraged.



The three photographs depict an example of the recommended building form and site layout for future development within the “Central Place” area of Norton Shores.

5. Traditional, mixed-use neighborhood development should be permitted in the Zoning Ordinance as an alternative to segregated, single-use developments, but should be subject to Master Plan guidelines.
6. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include provisions for night sky preservation and proper utilization of illumination. These provisions should include light level restrictions, fixture design standards, pole height limitations, and cut-off times.
7. This plan encourages large developments or redevelopments to incorporate public or semi-public park or plaza spaces. An attractive, safe and functional public realm is essential to the vibrancy of a community core because they act as focal points and anchors for human activity and become special places. Parks or plazas should be incorporated into the site and should include seating and other amenities such as fountains and public art to support these spaces as gathering places. These spaces should have a minimum dimension of 20 feet (depth or width) and should have a minimum area of 600 square feet.

Generally, future development or redevelopment within the “Central Place” area should comply with the following design objectives:

- ✓ Deviation from conventional or corporate store design is encouraged; buildings should incorporate varying roof lines and avoid long, flat roofs; high quality materials should be utilized and EFIS (dryvit) should be avoided; different tenants within a commercial facility should use different design features along the building façade.
- ✓ Public places should be incorporated within a development and such places should include pedestrian furniture, iconic features, gathering space, and special landscape areas.
- ✓ The bulk of parking should be placed to the rear of buildings, out of sight; and where a building is visible from a public thoroughfare or parking lot, the building should have entrances and significant window coverage.

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS.

This strategy suggests that the City engage in developing a formal Pedestrian Plan, which would identify a range of opportunities for non-motorized trail linkages throughout the City and build upon and expand the general SGRAT pedestrian connection recommendations. Quality of life and recreational opportunities would be enhanced by formation of a pathway network that connects neighborhoods with natural features such as Mona Lake, as well as with schools, services, and other areas. Pathways offer users a wide range of rewards including mobility, recreation, and an alternative form of transportation that encourages people to exercise.

A trail right-of-way network protecting and exhibiting significant features is anticipated as a result of this strategy. Uses of the trails may include nature interpretation, equestrian, biking, walking, hiking and cross country skiing, adding to the City's established recreational heritage.

A Pedestrian Plan should evaluate current conditions to identify best locations for future construction of pathways.

Additionally, simple sidewalks within rights-of-way are also anticipated. This includes the installation of sidewalks in new development within the right-of-way and throughout the site to help ensure pedestrian safety. The City should include a requirement to this effect in its development regulations. Moreover, the City should encourage installation of sidewalks within the "Central Place" area; this would help foster pedestrian safety in the area of Seaway Drive and near the intersection of West Norton Avenue and Henry Street, where pedestrian activity is evident.

A Pedestrian Plan should evaluate current land use patterns, environmental characteristics, potential greenway corridors, and other features of the built and natural environments to identify best locations for future construction of pathways. In addition, a Pedestrian Plan should recommend alternative funding sources, staging areas, and mechanisms for the preservation of greenways. A Pedestrian Plan will also lay the foundation for the City to consider sidewalks in the future.

It will be imperative to involve all established stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the Mona Shores School District, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, and the Muskegon County Parks Department; their experiences and resources may help in the achievement of this task. The Safe Routes to Schools program should be contemplated in this task, as well.

MAP SUPPLEMENT

**The 2008 future
land use map
supersedes the
2000 map.**

As stated in the Introduction, even though both this document and the 2000 document should be utilized because they together form the land use policy structure of the City, the 2008 future land use map supersedes the 2000 map. The updated future land use map should be utilized as a guide for future growth and development for the next twenty to twenty-five years, while keeping in mind that this plan will be reviewed in five years. The map has been revised to reflect the future land use discussion on the preceding pages. The overall intent of the Norton Shores Comprehensive Plan is to foster efficient development that preserves the community's key natural assets and adds special places for community enjoyment. The future land use map on the following page attempts to achieve this objective.

The following changes were made to the future land use map:

- ◆ The residential properties between Park and Peck Streets, north of Seaway Drive and south of the City of Muskegon Heights were changed from Office to Medium Density Residential to reflect the existing and likely future land uses. This allows a stable residential neighborhood to remain intact.
- ◆ The northwest corner of Grand Haven Road and Sternberg Road was changed from Regional Commercial to Office to reflect a recent zoning map amendment and plans for development. Other revisions to the intersection of Sternberg Road and Grand Haven Road discussed on preceding pages have been achieved, including the creation of a new future land use designation, Office/Residential.
- ◆ Several "future roads" were removed where development has taken place in such a manner as to make construction of those roads impossible.

In addition, the public watermain and sanitary sewer map of the 2000 plan was revised to more accurately depict the location of these public facilities. Since the 2000 plan, water and sewer service has expanded into areas not previously served. The water and sewer service areas map which follows the future land use map in the succeeding pages reflects these new service areas and generally includes the following changes:

- ◆ Water service has expanded into the area along Mount Garfield between Martin and Henry; and south of Mount Garfield between Harvey and US-31.
- ◆ Sanitary sewer has expanded into the area along Sternberg either side of Martin; into the area bounded by Pontaluna, Mount Garfield, Harvey and US-31; along Grand Haven between Judson and Wilson; north of Little Black Lake; and into the area along Martin between Farr and Pontaluna.

