

# Shared Master Plan

[Draft]

CITY OF **LESLIE** TOWNSHIP  
**COMMUNITY**

Report prepared by

**Mead  
& Hunt**

Date: April 2013

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## Introduction

### State Requirement for Master Plan

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Act 33 of 2008, provides for county, township, city and village planning under a single state statute. The MPEA gives local units of government the authority to plan for land use in the community. Master plans are a conceptual, policy document intended to guide quality development that is well-suited to the community.<sup>1</sup> A master plan provides a community vision that considers current conditions, anticipated changes and a preferred future defined by community residents.

When adopted, a master plan must address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future.<sup>2</sup> This master plan for the Leslie community has been developed and adopted according to the direction provided in the MPEA.

### Decision to Pursue a Shared Master Plan

The City of Leslie and Leslie Township have a complimentary land development pattern and a slate of elected leaders who recognize the opportunity to plan together for a larger community vision. The City of Leslie is located completely inside of Leslie Township. It is located just south and west of the center of the township. The land use pattern in Leslie Township is almost exclusively agricultural and rural residential. The City of Leslie has a traditional downtown area, single-family residential neighborhoods, an industrial park and highway commercial development.

Across the country and across the state, there is a growing recognition of the benefits of vibrant, urban centers. Terms such as smart growth, new urbanism and placemaking describe compact, walkable, central communities that are economically viable and attractive to new businesses and residents. The Michigan Municipal League's Center for 21st Century Communities and the State of Michigan's MiPlace.org are two examples of such initiatives in Michigan.

At the same time, the reduction of development pressure in agricultural areas can provide economic, aesthetic, cultural and environmental benefits. Recognizing these benefits, the state and the county have both established programs to promote farmland and open space preservation through voluntary donations and purchase of development rights options. A coordinated land use approach can also support farmland and open space preservation. Leslie Township has parcels enrolled in PA 116<sup>3</sup> and PA 260 of 2000. Both programs provide financial incentives for property owners who commit to continuing the agricultural use of the property. Leslie Township also has several parcels in permanent preservation through both the Ingham County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. These properties are explored in more detail in the land use section.

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<sup>1</sup> 125.3807 Section 7(2)

<sup>2</sup> 125.3831 Section 33(1)

<sup>3</sup> Part 361, Farmland and Open Space Preservation, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994

Leaders in both communities have recognized the benefits of a coordinated, cooperative land use planning effort. The contrast between the two communities presented an opportunity for a complimentary land use pattern to support agricultural and open space preservation in the township while encouraging investment and growth in the City. Also, the two communities have an established history of successful cooperation demonstrated by the Woodlawn Cemetery, the Leslie Community Recreation Plan and the Leslie Fire Department.



In 2011, the two communities recognized another opportunity for cooperation. Several options for a coordinated planning effort were explored and a consensus was reached to develop a Shared Master Plan. This document addresses planning for Leslie Township and the City of Leslie and was developed under the guidance of a planning advisory committee made up of representatives from both the city and the township. The committee was advisory only and the plan was then adopted independently by each community according to the requirements of the MPEA.

### **Organization of the Plan**

The Leslie Shared Master Plan is organized into two sections—an inventory section (including current land use), and a policy section (including a future land use map). Both play an important role in the planning process.

The inventory section lays the foundation for the plan by documenting existing conditions and expected changes over the 20-year planning window. The land use inventory and community infrastructure sections are supported by maps while the population, housing and economic sections are supported by tables and charts. This section explains where the community is now and how the community is expected to grow over time. Gaps in community infrastructure and services are identified during this process.

The policy section establishes where the community wants to go—it presents the community vision and ideas for reaching the desired future. The future vision for land use is expressed both in text and on the Future Land Use (FLU) Map and is created in large part by input from the steering committee and community residents. The goals, policies and action statements are ideas about how to move in that direction.

## Community Profile

### Community Location

The City of Leslie is located just east of US 127 in Ingham County. The city is located 28 miles directly south of Lansing and 17 miles directly north of Jackson. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 1.3 square miles, all land.

Leslie Township surrounds the city of Leslie and includes land both east and west of US 127. Its borders are defined by Plains Road on the north, Ridley Road on the west, Baseline Road on the south and Kelly Road on the east. Leslie Township is in the southern tier of townships in Ingham County, located between Onondaga Township to the east and Bunker Hill Township to the west. Jackson County borders Leslie Township to the south.

### Community History

Leslie, Michigan celebrated its 175<sup>th</sup> birthday in September, 2011. The celebration committee included historical society members, city and township officials, school representatives and service organization volunteers. The brochure prepared for the event included the following local history.



### City

Leslie was first settled by Elijah Woodworth in 1836, who built the first log cabin in the city. It was originally named Meekerville after a famous pioneer to the area, Benjamin Meeker. Jerry G. Cornell named the town after a prominent Leslie family in eastern New York, his home state. The name Leslie was adopted officially when a post office was assigned to the area in 1841. Leslie was later incorporated as a village in 1869 and as a city nearly 100 years later in 1968.

### Township

Leslie Township lies in the central part of the state and, on the government survey, is Township No. 1 North, Range No. 1 West. The eastern and southern boundaries were surveyed by Joseph Wampler in 1824, the northern and western boundaries by John Mullett in 1824-25, and the township was subdivided by Hervey Parke in 1826.

Leslie Township was first a part of the township of Aurelius. It was organized as a separate township on December 30, 1837, and received its name as follows: Dr. J. A. Cornell of Spring Arbor was a member of the legislature at that time. When Ingham County was organized and the townships named, each township was called by description and a name was given by various members of the House. When Township No. 1 North, Range No. 1 West was called, Dr. Cornell proposed naming it "Leslie" in honor of a much respected family by that name that he knew in Eastern New York. The name was accepted and appears in the formal act of organization of this township, which was passed in March, 1838. The first

Township meeting was held at the home of Henry Fiske, a log dwelling which stood near the present site of the Allen House, on the first Monday in April, 1838. Henry Fiske presided as moderator and Benjamin Davis was elected as Supervisor.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> Township information is an excerpt from the book "History of the Early Life and Business Interests of The Village and Township of Leslie Ingham County Michigan." Published under the auspices of the Elijah Grout Chapter; Daughter of the American Revolution 1914.

## Regional Influences

Leslie is a community that is part of the larger tri-county region that includes Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties. The mid-Michigan region is a transportation and economic hub that includes the state capital, Michigan State University and a concentration of automobile manufacturing and suppliers. Because of these connections, the tri-county region has historically been a hub for industry, academia and government. More recently, the regional economy is experiencing diversification and expansion with support from the Lansing Area Economic Partnership (LEAP). Growing industries include insurance, healthcare and advanced manufacturing. LEAP also supports a variety of initiatives to support incubators and business start-up opportunities.

The tri-county region is attractive to new business for several reasons. Located at the crossroads of US 127, I-69 and I-96, the Lansing area is within a two hour drive of 90% of Michigan's population. The region also offers many of the social amenities that are attractive to industry including a well-educated population, excellent healthcare and K-12 education systems, a wide range of cultural and recreational opportunities and an affordable cost of living.

The City of Jackson is located south of Leslie at the intersection of US 127 and I-94. Jackson is an urban center with 350 diverse companies including the corporate headquarters of Consumer's Energy. Approximately 60% of businesses supply parts to the automotive industry but the manufacturing industry is diversifying. More than 30 companies have diversified into manufacturing medical devices and the Jackson Technology Park is certified by the MEDC as a SmartZoneSM—a collaborative organization that encourages technology-based businesses. Jackson offers a skilled workforce, a low cost of living and easy access to mid-western markets.

Leslie's location in proximity to both of these regions has the potential to influence both population and economic trends.

## Population

The State of Michigan was hit especially hard by the economic downturn experienced across the country during the past decade. Between 2000 and 2010, many residents left the state in search of jobs as employment declined. This had a direct impact on the state's population. While population has continued to grow in the nation and in the mid-west region, Michigan lost population between 2000 and 2010. Michigan was the only state in the nation to experience a population loss during that time. However, 2011 population projections by Woods and Poole anticipate that Michigan's population will increase back to 2000 levels by 2015 and continue on an upward trend through 2040. Overall employment numbers in Michigan are also projected to increase through 2040 but farm employment numbers show a gradual decline.

The tri-county area is captured statistically as the Lansing-East Lansing Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Contrary to the state trend, this region did not experience a population loss between 2000 and 2010 although there was a loss of employment during that time. The 2010 population of the tri-county area was 464,080. The 2011 Woods and Poole report projects a population increase to 531,270 by 2040

which is 14.5% over 30 years. Regional employment reached 281,070 in 2008 but declined to 266,580 in 2010. Employment numbers in the region are expected to increase slightly by 2015 and to surpass 2008 levels by 2020. Significantly higher employment numbers are projected between 2025 and 2040 (15% increase) while farm employment is projected to decline slowly through 2040. At the same time, population numbers in Ingham County are projected to remain almost unchanged through 2040 (+2.8%) while employment is projected to gradually increase over that time (+24%). Farm employment in Ingham County is projected to decrease from 1,150 in 2010 to 820 in 2040.

The 2010 population of Leslie Township was 2,389 and the 2010 population of the City of Leslie was 1,851 for a combined total of 4,240. The combined population represents 1.5% of the population of Ingham County. From 2000, the City of Leslie experienced a population loss of 9.4% while Leslie Township's population increased by 2.7%. Similar patterns are seen in Webberville and Stockbridge where the central village experienced a population loss while the surrounding township reported a population increase. However, the cities of Mason and Williamston both grew in population while the surrounding township grew more slowly (Williamstown) or declined in population (Vevay).

Population projections are not made at the local level for either the City or the Township because of their size. For planning purposes, county projections are used for guidance while at the same time recognizing that a single new business or housing development can have a significant impact on the local level. In addition to population numbers, US Census statistics describe the population in a variety of other ways. For instance, residents of the Leslie community are almost exclusively "white" with regard to race (98%). Comparatively, both Ingham County and the State of Michigan reported rates of 80% "white." The median age in years for the state (38.9) is higher than the median age in the City of Leslie (35.7) and lower than the median age in Leslie Township (42.9). All three are higher than the median age in Ingham County (31.4). While most residents live in some type of household (vs. group quarters), the city (71%) and the township (78%) both have higher rates of family households than either the county (56%) or the state (66%). These numbers provide a snapshot of Leslie residents collectively as compared to the region.

## Housing

Table 1: 2010 Comparative Housing Statistics				
	Leslie City	Leslie Township	Ingham County	Tri-County
Total housing units	803	964	121,281	
Occupied Housing Units	90.9%	93.2%	89.6%	90.9%
Type of Housing Units				
1-unit (SFR)	77.8%	90.9%	67.9%	71.6%
Mobile Home	7.6%	9.1%	2.5%	4.0%
Other	14.6%	0%	29.6%	24.4%
Median Rooms	5.5	6.3	5.4	5.7
Renter Occupied	21.4%	9.7%	38.3%	31.8%
Householder moved in 2005 or later	35.5%	12.8%	37.2%	34.0%
Median Value of owner occupied units	\$101,200	\$161,800	\$137,900	\$148,300

Source: SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Leslie City Housing Summary

The housing stock in Leslie City is similar to that of Ingham County and in the Tri-County region in many respects. Occupancy rates for housing units are fairly consistent at approximately 90% across the region. While not as diverse as the larger region, housing stock in Leslie City includes approximately 15% that is multi-family including duplex and apartment options. The median number of rooms is similar to that of the larger region. The percentage of housing units that are rented (vs. owner-occupied) is lower than that of the county by half and the larger region by one-third. Just over one-third of residents in the City moved in to their current residence between 2005 and 2010. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is lower than the county or the region as a whole.

Local building permit data shows that five new homes were built in 2010 and 2011 and that two mobile homes were placed in Leslie Estates on Mill Street. In addition, a total of nine new apartments have been made available recently on Main Street with grant support from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).

**Leslie Township Housing Summary**

The housing stock in Leslie Township is different from that of Ingham County and the Tri-County region as a whole other than occupancy rates which are similar. Housing units in the township are single-family residential or mobile homes. There are no multi-family housing units. The median number of rooms in houses in the township is 6.3—higher than the city, county or region. This, combined with the median value of owner-occupied housing suggests that housing is generally larger and more expensive. Less than 10% of housing is occupied by renters compared to 20% in the city, 30% in the region and 40% in the county. The township also has a lower number of householders who moved in from 2005 to 2010 indicating a more established population base.

Local building permit data shows a permit was issued for one new home each year in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

## Economy

### Strength of the Economy

The three-county region that makes up the Lansing-East Lansing MSA has an economy that is anchored by major institutions including the State of Michigan, Michigan State University and General Motors. The region is also host to a network of health services including major hospitals and other post-high school educational institutions including Lansing Community College. The insurance industry also has a strong presence in the region including the Accident Fund’s headquarters in Lansing. Local economic development initiatives have placed a renewed emphasis on entrepreneurial activities and small business development. The region has amenities that attract businesses and an educated and skilled workforce including a lively arts scene and cultural resources, the region’s award winning CATA bus system and strong local schools systems. All of these factors contribute to a diverse regional economy that is recovering from the recent economic downturn.

There is some statistical evidence to indicate that the State of Michigan and Ingham County are pulling out of the economic crisis that hit the nation beginning in 2006. One way to chronicle the state’s economic journey of the past decade is to review the unemployment rate experienced between 2000 and 2009. During that time the unemployment rate rose continually and then spiked dramatically from 2007 to 2009 when it went from 6.1% to 11.1%. The rate remained high in 2010 but began to decline. More recent data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the unemployment rate has continued to decline through the first half of 2012 in the tri-county region to a rate of 6.8% in May 2012. Traditionally, as the rate declines, more people re-enter the job market causing a slow, staggered increase over time. The Woods and Poole projections for Ingham County noted earlier predict a gradual employment increase in Ingham County through 2015 and a more robust increase from 2020 through 2040.



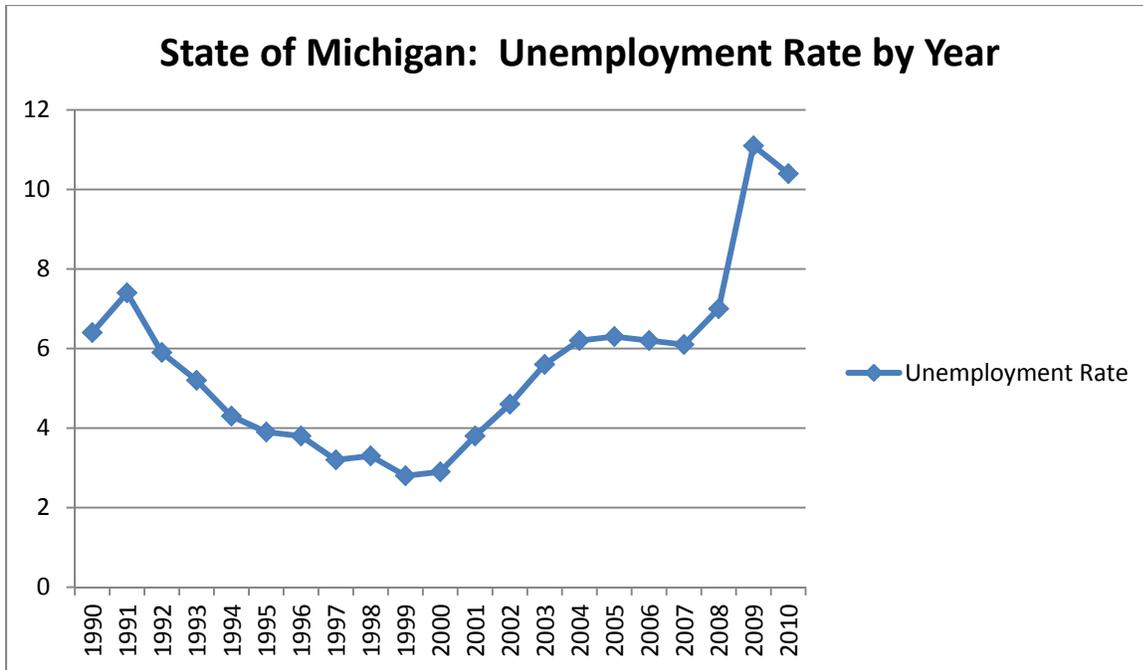


Chart 1: State of Michigan Unemployment Rate by Year

### Industry Concentrations in the Region

The following information about economic industry trends comes from the Greater Lansing, Michigan Regional Demographic Profile 2011 prepared by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.<sup>5</sup> According to the report, between 2006 and 2008, there were some changes to the numbers and types of business establishments in the region. There were more than 200 fewer business establishments in 2008. Declines were noticeable in a number of businesses associated with construction and real estate including construction and retail trade establishments, real estate and rental and leasing firms. At the same time, there was an increase in a variety of services including finance and insurance firms, management companies, accommodations and food service companies.

These trends are also reflected in the 2010 County Business Patterns.<sup>6</sup> The report is produced by the US Census and based on NAICS categories. According to the report, the largest numbers of paid employees in Ingham County in 2010 were found in Health care and social assistance (19,327), Retail trade (13,883) and Accommodations and food service (11,730). The fourth largest employer in the county by number of employees was manufacturing (8,285). The categories *Other services* (8,101) and *Finance and insurance* (7,112) also had a noticeable presence in the county's economy. The regional and county statistics from different sources both support a similar description of employment in the region.

Based on company size based on the number of employees, the most dramatic change came from an increase in firms employing 250-499 employees from only 7 in 2006 to 14 in 2008. (Censtats Database, NAICS- US Census.gov).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tri-co.org/Maps.and.Data/Regional.Data.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/cbpnaic/cbpsect.pl>

### **The Role of Agriculture**

A 2011 report prepared by MSU's Land Policy Institute titled Agriculture in the Tri-County Region is subtitled the Status, Conditions and Economic Impacts. It was written, in part, to raise awareness of the impact of agriculture on the state and regional economy and to encourage its incorporation into regional development plans. According to the report, agriculture accounted for these economic impacts in the Tri-County Region (in 2007 dollar values):

- \$68 million in labor income
- \$114 million in property-type income
- More than 5,182 jobs
- Approximately \$437 million in economic output

The report finds that "(t)he Tri-County Region has an established agricultural base that, based on this report and listening session responses, could be expanded and enhanced to help the region achieve increased agricultural economic activity and could increase its sales and bolster its markets."<sup>7</sup> In other regions of the country, economic investment in agricultural and related industries have occurred where there has also been a long-term commitment to the continuation of agricultural activity through a combination of public land use policies and by private preservation efforts.

Public policy in Michigan and in Ingham County provides tools for agricultural preservation. At the state level, the State of Michigan's Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program works toward preservation through five separate programs. In Ingham County, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board steers initiatives including a county farmland preservation program funded by a voter-approved millage. Both of these programs consider local planning policy as part of the selection criteria for permanent preservation options.

### **Economic Development Organizations**

The Leslie Community has both public and private organizations devoted to local economic development. The Leslie Area Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1975 and continues to play an active role in promoting local businesses through Business After-Hours events, monthly luncheons and other functions to promote the Leslie area.

The Leslie DDA was established in 1990 under the authority of PA 197 of 1975. The Leslie LDFA was established in 1989 under the authority of PA 281 of 1986. Both the DDA and the LDFA are tax-capture organizations. These Authorities do not increase taxes but rather divert tax revenue through a formula based on increased taxable value within the district. This captured revenue is used to fund infrastructure improvements and other projects that, in turn, promote additional economic growth. The LDFA is focused on the industrial park and uses funding for infrastructure improvements. The DDA is primarily focused on the downtown and highway commercial areas and uses funding for a façade improvement program and activities and events to bring people downtown.

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## Community Resources

### Police

The City of Leslie has a full-time police department serving residents and businesses in the city limits. The Police Department is located in City Hall and is staffed by a Police Chief, two full-time officers and additional part-time officers. Residents can dial 911 for emergency response and a business phone number is posted on the City's website. Part of the local millage paid by city residents is used to fund the city's police department.

Police protection in Leslie Township is provided through the Ingham County Sheriff's Department and the State of Michigan Police. These services are very limited.

### Fire

The Leslie Fire Department is cooperative effort between the city and the township. In 2003, voters in the city and township approved a millage to support the construction of a new, modern facility located on the corner of Oak & Kirby Streets. The fire department is a volunteer, paid on-call department. The Leslie Fire Department also maintains mutual aid agreements with most surrounding communities.

The members of the Leslie Fire Department meet two times a month for training and business meetings and hold fire prevention classes for the schools and the public. The Leslie Fire Department also is affiliated with the Ingham County CERT (Certified Emergency Response Team) and has a Leslie Fire Corp.

### Library

The Leslie Library is part of the Capital Area District Library (CADL) system and serves the entire Leslie community. The 3,500 square foot facility was opened in 1998. The building is centrally located at 201 Pennsylvania Street, across the street from Woodworth Elementary School and within a short distance from the Middle School, High School and downtown. All Ingham County residents, with the exception of the City of East Lansing, fund the CADL library system through a designated millage. In addition to the resources housed in Leslie, the CADL system offers inter-library loans within the CADL system and access to the Michigan e-library (MeL) system.

### Schools

The Leslie School district encompasses all of Leslie Township and the City of Leslie as well as parts of four other townships in both Ingham and Jackson Counties. The district is approximately 75 square miles overall. The new Leslie High School was built in 1996 at 4141 Hull Road to replace the first Leslie Public Schools building on Woodworth Street, which was over 100 year old. The school district's mascot is the Leslie Blackhawks and the school colors are orange and black. Leslie's one public high school has an average-size graduating class ranging from 100 to 130 students.

Also located in Leslie is White Pine Academy, a public school academy that is chartered by Saginaw Valley State University. Founded in 1999, White Pine Academy built a new facility at 510 Russell Street in 2005. The school offers an infant and toddler room and classrooms for K-8th grade.

The mid-Michigan area offers many options for post-secondary education including Lansing Community College and Michigan State University.

### Recreation Facilities

The Leslie Community Recreation Plan, dated March 2006, was a successful cooperative planning effort carried out by the City of Leslie, Leslie Township and the Leslie School District. The Community Recreation Advisory Committee was formed to develop the plan and monitor future activity. As noted in the title, the group is advisory in nature. The plan serves to coordinate the recreational activities of the three separate groups and avoid duplication in the systems. The recreation plan describes the current community inventory including:

- City Recreation Resources
  - Tuttle Park (1)
  - Russell Park (2)
  - Swimming Pool (3)
  - Church Street Ball field (4)
  - Washburn Street baseball diamonds (5)
  - Hull Road Trailway Project
- School Recreation Resources
  - Woodworth Elementary School (6)
  - Leslie Middle School (7)
  - Leslie High School (8)
  - School property defined by Race, Pennsylvania and Baggerly (in the City of Leslie)
  - Russell Miller Wild 100 (property located 4 miles south of Leslie in Jackson County which is, in part, adjacent to the Grand River)
- Township Recreational Resources (9)
  - Baseball/softball fields (Township Hall site)
  - Picnic pavilion (30' x 48') with tables and grills (Township Hall site)
  - Community Center (2160 sq. ft.) in the lower level of the Township Hall



The numbers following the listed resources correspond to the location of the resource which is noted on the zoning map. The Recreation Plan included an action program that identified improvements and enhancements to existing facilities and the acquisition of the Huntoon Creek property. These recreation amenities contribute to the quality of life for Leslie residents.

## Transportation

### Roads

Roads are provided in the Leslie area through a tiered system of government. The State of Michigan manages the federal highway system (US 127) as well as a network of state highways (i.e. M-106, M-52). Ingham County provides a system of county roads and the City of Leslie is responsible for the roads within the city limits. The National Functional Classification (NFC) system ranks roads in terms of their function. The ranking is also associated with the federal transportation funding formula. From a planning standpoint, the system designates regional travel routes. US 127 is classified as “other freeway.” There are no major or minor arterial roads in Leslie. In Leslie, the following roads are classified as major collectors: Bellevue Road, North and South Main Street, West Fitchburg Road and Jackson Road. Also in Leslie, the following roads are classified as minor collectors: Churchill Road, Kirby Road and Kinneville Road. All other roads in the city and the township are classified as local roads. A copy of the NFC system map for Ingham County is included in the appendix of this plan. NFC maps for all Michigan counties are available on the MDOT website ([www.michigan.gov/mdot](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot)).



### Transit

Public transit is provided in the Lansing area by the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA). Leslie is not served by CATA's fixed-route service but CATA Rural Service (CRS) provides curb-to-curb service with 24-hour advance reservation for travel in the outlying area of Ingham County. Service operates Monday - Friday 7 AM to 6 PM. Some private taxi services in Lansing and Jackson also serve the Leslie community.

### Rail line

The Jackson & Lansing (J&L) Railroad Company began operations on October 21, 2010. The parent company is the Adrian & Blissfield Rail Road Company. This short-line railroad provides freight service to customers along 47 miles of rail formerly operated by Norfolk Southern (NS) Corporation. This transition from NS to J&L has meant daily service to existing customers according to their schedules and shipping and/or receiving needs. It has also provided former rail customers along the line the option of shipping by rail or truck.

Existing rail customers now have expanded options. In Jackson, the J&L connects with Norfolk Southern; in Lansing, J&L connects with both CSX and CN, which provides current rail customers alternatives to meet their shipping needs (both inbound and outbound).

### **Non-motorized transportation**

The City of Leslie has made significant investments in sidewalks and trails in the past several years. The Recreation Plan describes a three-part paved pedestrian/bike loop that connects downtown Leslie to the shopping plaza on the west side of the city and the high school with a combination of concrete sidewalks, 10-foot wide bituminous pathways and a wooden boardwalk across low-lying areas. This system provides recreational opportunities in addition to creating a safe non-motorized transportation route connecting community destination points.

### **Water and Sewer Services**

The City of Leslie provides and maintains a public water system, a sanitary sewer and a storm sewer system. The sewer and water system maps are shown on Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

Figure 1: City Sewer System Map

Figure 2: City Water System Map

## Physical Features

### Climate

The climate in Leslie is a four-season cycle with the warmest months in June, July and August and the coldest month in February. The average annual high temperatures in June, July and August are in the low 80s and the average annual low temperature in February is just under 10 degrees. The annual average precipitation is 29.24" with the highest monthly average reported in August followed by May and June. The highest average snowfall occurs during January (18") and February (22") followed by December. The spring and fall seasons produce milder average temperatures and lower average precipitation and snowfall.



### Water (Include County Drains)

On a statewide level, Ingham County is part of the Upper Grand Watershed. The Grand River and Red Cedar River are major waterways. At the county level, the Ingham County Drain Commissioner oversees water resources and provides for construction, maintenance and improvement of public storm drains.

The Leslie community has only one lake: Huntoon Lake which is a small lake in Section 14. There are also some natural creeks and streams and some that are part of the county drainage system. The Huntoon Creek generally follows the railroad line in a north-south direction through the township and city and connects to Huntoon Lake via the Auston Creek. The Royston Drain passes through the southwest quarter of the township south of the city limits. The Mud Creek enters the township in the northeast corner. These are included in the county drain system. Some wetland areas are mapped in association with both of these features but would need to be specifically identified through an on-site delineation action.

### Soils

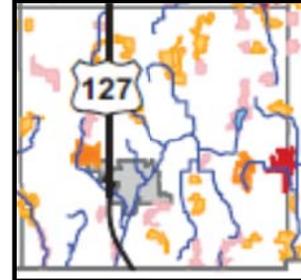
With the exception of the land within the urbanized city limits, almost of all of the land in the Leslie community falls in one of these three categories: *Farmland of Local Importance*, *Prime Farmland if Drained*, and *All Areas Are Prime Farmland*. These categories were developed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and the larger areas are shown on the map titled: Leslie Township/City of Leslie -- PA 116/ PA 261. As a result, soil conditions will support agricultural uses throughout most of the township. The "Ingham County Soil Survey" includes parcel specific maps of the city and township and a generalized soils map that groups many soils together to provide a resource for planning purposes. Of note from this resource is a grouping of muck soils through the middle of the north half of the township, some of which have been permanently protected through the Wetlands Reserve Program.

## Topography

The topography of the Leslie community is relatively flat with only slight shifts in elevation. The USGS survey data presents benchmarks in the average range of 950 feet to 960 feet. A low point in the Huntoon Creek is noted as 935 feet and high points are noted in the 980 foot range.

## Vegetation

A 2000 Land Cover Map for Ingham County in a 2009 report prepared for the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission provides information about the vegetation patterns in the Leslie community. It is no surprise that the majority of land in the city is classified as “developed” and a majority of the land in the township is classified as “agriculture.” There are other pockets of land use including some forest and emergent wetland areas. Two areas are large enough to be identified as potential conservation areas with a score of 10-14 on the northwest corner of the city limits in Section 20 of the Township and a score of 15-31 (highest) on the easternmost township line. While neither of these locations is ranked in the Top 10 areas for potential conservation in the tri-county area, they are the most significant in the Leslie community. The location in Section 20 borders the current city limits and supports a decision not to expand urban development patterns further northwest beyond the current limits. A copy of the 2000 Land Cover Map and the Potential Conservation Areas map are included in the Appendix of this document. The whole report can be found as part of the Greening Mid-Michigan project at [www.tri-co.org](http://www.tri-co.org).



## Current Land Use

In addition to the text sections included here, land use is shown on maps following this section:

Figure 3: Leslie Township Zoning Map

Figure 4: City of Leslie Zoning Map

Figure 5: Leslie Township/City of Leslie -- PA 116/ PA 261

Figure 6: City of Leslie Vacant Land Map

The two zoning maps also show the network of local and county roads as well as the US 127 highway and the railroad. While this master plan does not include a master street plan, the zoning maps include the general road information called for in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008). Additional information on non-motorized pathways and public transit are provided in the transportation inventory.

**Leslie Township:** Leslie Township is a community that is primarily an agricultural and rural residential community. For some, this agricultural land use pattern is a reflection of an investment in an economic system and for others it is a cultural lifestyle choice—or both. For both of these reasons, the community is planning for and taking action to preserve the current agricultural viability of the community.

Currently, there are 3,136 acres of land designated as *Qualified Agricultural Property* in the PA 261 program.<sup>8</sup> PA 261 provides income tax relief. There are also approximately 2,258 acres of land in the PA 116 program, commonly known as the Farmland Preservation Act.<sup>9</sup> PA 116 provides property tax relief and protects property owners from assessment for urban infrastructure. While not identical, both of these tax classifications indicate that the property owner plans to continue the property's agricultural use.

Leslie Township does not provide public water and sewer service which, on its own, limits the development density everywhere in the township. Without public wastewater, the county health department requires a minimum lot size of 1-2 acres for residential development. While some sections have a strip of residential lots split with frontage on the county road, a majority of land in the township is in large lots of 40 acres or more.

Leslie Township has some limited commercial and industrial development, especially along Hull Road and directly adjacent to the city. Some are permitted by Special Use Permit in the agricultural zone. Others are in areas currently zoned for commercial uses along Hull Road and on Bellevue at the southbound exit from US 127. Previous planning documents have anticipated more urbanized land use patterns north, east and south of the city limits with the highway serving as a growth boundary. No independent nodes of commercial or industrial development exist in the township and none are anticipated.

**City of Leslie:** The City of Leslie is a small urban area in the middle of Leslie Township. A highway exit from US 127 on Bellevue Road provides access to the center of the city. Existing highway commercial development and multi-family housing can be found at the exit and Hull and Bellevue Roads. A historic downtown is located along several blocks around the intersection of Bellevue and North Main Street.

<sup>8</sup> PA 261 of 2000: Agricultural Property Recapture Act

<sup>9</sup> PA 116 of 1974 which is now Part 361 of PA 451 of 1994.

These structures are primarily two- and three-story buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses above. The buildings have large front windows at the sidewalk and on-street parking in front. Industrial uses are found both north of the downtown along the railroad line and in the City's industrial park on Rice Street and Industrial Drive. Leslie Estates, a manufactured housing community is located on the north side of Mill Street. A multi-family condominium development called Worthington Place Condos was approved on the north side of Race Road but only one sixteen-unit building was constructed. Currently, only seven of the sixteen are occupied and nine are unfinished.

A large part of the city's land use is single-family residential housing on platted lots. These urban lots served with urban amenities including city streets with curb and gutter, sidewalks and streetlights. While not all lots are exactly the same size, they are rectangular in shape and many are 88'x150' or 75'x150'. This is the predominant residential pattern in the urban city.

A careful examination of the land use patterns in the city showed that in addition to the land uses discussed above, there is a significant amount of land in the city that is currently vacant. There are two areas with large blocks of vacant land—one is on the south side of the city between the railroad and the highway and the other is surrounding the existing residential streets west of US 127 along Churchill Road. The property on the south side of the city is currently zoned "Agriculture" which is a type of holding pattern with no specific expectation of future uses. The property on the west side of the highway was annexed into the city and has remained undeveloped. There are also several vacant parcels in the city's industrial park. Combined, the city has 169.38 acres of vacant land. This does not include residential parcels with vacant homes.

Hold for Figure 3: Leslie Township Zoning Map

Hold for Figure 4: City of Leslie Zoning Map

Hold for Figure 5: Leslie Township / City of Leslie PA 116/ PA 261 Map

Hold for Figure 6: City of Leslie Vacant Land Map

## Leslie 2040: Still the place to be

Leslie is a small community with a big vision. Residents are proud of its history and are planning together for a bright future.

Leslie Township and the City of Leslie are two local units of governments that create a single community. The two are complementary and compatible. Leslie Township is an agricultural community with an abundance of prime and unique farmland. The City of Leslie is a compact, vibrant urban center. Together, they work cooperatively to focus growth in the central urban area and protect the farmland and open space around it. Local elected officials and community leaders support this careful balance because it benefits the whole community.

The Leslie community is a special, friendly place. Residents experience a special closeness that comes from people caring about each other and about the community. Visitors and new residents find Leslie to be a warm and welcoming place. The community is a progressive small town that is enjoying steady growth and expanded diversity.

The City of Leslie has grown stronger within its existing footprint. The buildings downtown are full of robust activity and new ones have been added. The industrial park has filled up and new industrial locations are being planned closer to the highway and along the active railroad. A range of housing options offer desirable choices to meet a variety of needs.

Agriculture is still intact in Leslie Township. A majority of the land area is used for agriculture on large parcels. Parcels are regularly selected for permanent preservation in the township. Residents enjoy the rural atmosphere and lifestyle.

The local economy benefits from the cooperative balance between rural and urban areas. The city has worked to identify and attract businesses around a common theme. The concentration of similar industry has spurred additional economic growth. New businesses are thriving in the downtown and near the highway. The community's commitment to agriculture has also prompted some interest in new agricultural business development.

The community's quality of life continues to improve with thoughtful investment in a variety of areas. The high quality of life in the Leslie community continues to attract new business and residents. Targeted investment in roads, water and sewer, and telecommunications infrastructure has supported business growth and improved the quality of life for residents. The school district is known for its high quality educators and facilities. The two governments keep lines of communication open and find opportunities for coordination and cooperation.

## Leslie 2040: Goals, Policies and Actions

Leslie is a small community with a big vision. Residents are proud of its history and are planning together for a bright future.

### **GOAL: A connected, welcoming and growing community**

**Vision:** *The Leslie community is a special, friendly place. Residents experience a special closeness that comes from people caring about each other and about the community. Visitors and new residents find Leslie to be a warm and welcoming place. The community is a progressive small town that is enjoying steady growth and expanded diversity.*

**Policy:** *Encourage actions that strengthen the community's social network and make the Leslie community an inviting place for visitors and residents.*

### **Actions:**

- Implement design standards that promote human interaction including quality public spaces, parks and trails, sidewalks for transportation and business activity and residential front porches.
- Maintain signage and wayfinding systems and improve as needed.
- Identify and incorporate a variety of cultures and traditions into public art and design.
- Continue to support community events including annual parades and festivals.
- Implement, modify and enforce land use regulations to eliminate blight.
- Implement or modify land use regulations to protect existing natural features and resources during development design and construction (i.e. tree preservation, soil erosion control, low impact design, etc.).

**GOAL: Coordinated and complimentary growth**

Leslie Township and the City of Leslie are two local units of governments that make up a single community. The two are complementary and compatible. Leslie Township is an agricultural community with an abundance of prime and unique farmland. The City of Leslie is a compact, vibrant urban center. Together, they work cooperatively to focus growth in the central urban area while protecting the farmland and open space around it. Local elected officials and community leaders support this careful balance because it benefits the whole community.

***Policy:** Develop and maintain a unified community vision for land use in the Leslie community that encourages growth in the urban center while protecting the agricultural economy and the rural character of the surrounding community.*

**Actions:**

- Focus new urban development in the existing city limits as long as space is available.
- If expansion beyond the city limits is necessary, limit expansion to adjacent areas identified on the future land use map for future urban development.
- Continue open communication between community leaders through semi-annual joint meetings and a regular exchange of meeting minutes.

***Policy:** Maximize use of current infrastructure to reduce public cost for construction and maintenance.*

**Actions:**

- Focus new urban development of all types in areas where there is current water and sewer service or where water and sewer service is planned within the city limits.
- Plan for new local road connections in order to increase the density of development in the city limits.
- Plan for new industrial and commercial uses along the railroad.
- Restrict utility extensions beyond the current city limits while there is vacant land available within planned services areas.

**Policy:** *Maximize access to community resources to improve the quality of life, strengthen local economy, reduce transportation costs, and improve public health. Community resources include parks and recreation, schools, commercial districts, health care facilities and employment centers.*

**Actions:**

- Focus new urban development near existing community resources.
- Allow a variety of residential housing types and medium- and high- density land use patterns within walking distance of community resources.
- Include connected pedestrian infrastructure on new public streets and within new planned developments.

**Policy:** *Prevent or restrict the impact of urban development on farmland in order to protect the existing agricultural economy of the community, encourage future investment in agricultural activities and preserve the rural atmosphere.*

**Actions:**

- Focus new urban development in the existing city limits as long as space is available.
- If expansion beyond the city limits is necessary, limit expansion to adjacent areas identified on the future land use plan as areas for future urban development.
- Recognize parcels enrolled in PA 116 and PA 261 as likely to remain in agricultural use over the planning period.
- Provide and maintain buffer areas to protect agricultural parcels from incompatible urban land uses.

**GOAL: A vibrant, healthy urban center**

*The City of Leslie has grown stronger within its existing footprint which has been cost effective for the community and positive for the local economy. The buildings downtown are full of robust activity and new ones have been added. The industrial park is filling up and new industrial locations are being planned. A range of housing options offer desirable choices to meet a variety of needs.*

**Policy:** *Adopt land use policies and regulations that encourage and support a vibrant, healthy urban center.*

**Actions:**

- Maximize the benefit of existing urban infrastructure and reduce public development costs.
  - Encourage development on undeveloped or under-developed parcels within the City limits.
  - Increase development density in the City.
  - Identify opportunities to expand the local street network in the City to serve future commercial development.
- Permit a mix of compatible development types in the urban core.
- Maintain and improve streetscape amenities including sidewalks, streetlights, street trees and benches.

**GOAL: A rural township with active agriculture and low density, single-family residential housing.**

*A majority of the township's land area is used for agriculture on large parcels. Parcels are regularly selected for permanent preservation in the township. Residents enjoy the rural atmosphere and lifestyle.*

**Policy:** *Adopt land use policies and regulations that encourage and support the preservation of agriculture as a viable economic activity in the community and the rural characteristics of the area.*

**Actions:**

- Continue to encourage the continuation of farming operations and the long-term protection of farmland resources including:
  - Preservation of prime and unique agricultural land for agriculture through preservation tools and land use regulation;
  - Low density residential development through large lot or cluster development;
  - Limited multi-family, commercial and industrial development other than those related to agricultural activity.
- Continue to preserve the rural, agricultural character of Leslie Township through land use regulation tools.
- Identify areas for agricultural preservation in the Comprehensive Plan in order to meet state and local program requirements for farmland preservation selection.

**GOAL: A healthy local economy with growing commercial and industrial segments.**

*The local economy benefits from the cooperative balance between rural and urban areas. The city has worked to identify and attract businesses around a common theme. The concentration of similar industry types has spurred additional economic growth. New businesses are thriving in the downtown and near the highway. The community's commitment to agriculture has also prompted some interest in new agricultural business development.*

**Policy:** *Adopt land use policies and regulations that encourage and support new business development in the urban core.*

**Actions:**

- Support new business development through a development permitting process that is understandable, efficient and predictable.
- Identify and maintain a vacant property inventory in the City and identify properties with commercial and industrial development and redevelopment potential.
- Monitor infrastructure capacity and condition in order to support projected future commercial and industrial development.
- Communicate with and support initiatives by public and private economic development organizations including the DDA, the EDC and the Chamber of Commerce to encourage commercial and industrial development in the City.

**GOAL: A high quality of life that continues to improve.**

The community's quality of life continues to improve with thoughtful investment in a variety of areas. The high quality of life in the Leslie community continues to attract new business and residents. Targeted investment in roads, water and sewer, and telecommunications infrastructure has supported business growth and improved the quality of life for residents. The school district is known for its high quality educators and facilities. The two governments keep lines of communication open and find opportunities for coordination and cooperation.

**Policy:** *Identify and adopt land use policies and regulations that improve the quality of life for residents of the Leslie community through support of public health, education and well-being.*

**Actions:**

- Encourage sustainability through a variety of tools including sustainable development practices and renewable energy options
- Incorporate active, healthy design standards in public infrastructure and site design standards including bike racks and benches and a connected pedestrian system
- Provide, support and maintain access to public recreation through a continuation of the Leslie Community Recreation Committee:
  - Update the 5-Year Recreation Plan
- Plan cooperatively with the school district for residential development to be served by the Leslie Community Schools:
  - Provide and maintain non-motorized access from residential development to school facilities whenever possible
  - Consider the impact on the school system when evaluating new development proposals of all types
  - Communicate regularly with the school district to identify areas of common interest
- Continue to provide shared services to the residents of the Leslie Community and consider additional cooperative efforts when it is cost effective and otherwise beneficial.
  - Continue to provide fire service through a joint effort between the City and the Township
  - Continue to provide and maintain the Woodlawn Cemetery through a joint effort between the City and the Township
  - Watch for grant opportunities to fund cooperative government efforts

## Future Land Use

The Future Land Use map reflects a plan for long-term land use in the Leslie community that was developed cooperatively by representatives from the City and the Township. Decisions about the future land use map were made after review of existing and planned infrastructure and resources in the community and an agreement on growth guidelines.

### **Consideration for existing conditions and planned infrastructure included the following:**

- 1) Existing transportation network including:
  - Highway access
  - Classification of local road system (National Functional Classification system)
  - Railroad
  - Non-motorized transportation network
- 2) Existing land use patterns including:
  - Vacant land in the city
  - Land enrolled in PA 116 and PA 261 in the township
- 3) Existing and planned urban infrastructure (sewer, water)
- 4) Existing community resources and pedestrian destination points

### **Growth guidelines included the following:**

- 1) In order to support the economic health/viability of the traditional downtown, additional commercial development along the highway will be limited.
- 2) The community recognizes that there are many benefits to encouraging new development to occur within the existing city limits including:
  - Increased density creates a more walkable, compact vibrant community
  - Increasing residential population provides increased numbers to support local business
  - Minimizing transportation costs for the public schools
  - Minimizing the cost of public infrastructure expansion and maximizing the use of existing infrastructure including sanitary and storm sewer, water, and recreation investments.
  - Improve public safety by locating new development in an area served by local police protection

- Increasing confidence in private investment in the city
- Supporting the viability of agriculture in the surrounding community by minimizing the threat of urban expansion

3) Over the planning period, the Leslie community recognizes that it may be necessary to locate new private development outside of the current city limits if land area for the proposed use is not available for development. This could occur within the planning period for industrial development but is not anticipated for other uses due to the amount of vacant and underdeveloped land in the city. Future development outside of the current city limit will be considered when the proposed development cannot be located within the existing city limits.

4) Expansion areas will be identified primarily on the east side of US-127 in order to support:

- Public health and safety since police and fire services are located on the east side.
- The continuation of a compact, walkable city center.

5) An area is being reserved for institutional uses which are intended to include retirement centers or medical treatment or care facilities, or private fitness/wellness/recreation facility.

6) The Leslie community recognizes the value of completing street connections to provide more distribution opportunity for local traffic and increase pathways available if detours become necessary. Some street connections may be made through public investment but others will be required as an element of private development to support traditional neighborhood development.

7) Traditional neighborhood development (TND) defines the residential character at the core of the City of Leslie. TND includes small lot (high density), single family residential, duplex and townhome development served by a connected street network. TND requires public infrastructure and is best located in the city where infrastructure already exists. Larger, rural residential lots are not provided in the city.

### **Future Land Use Map**

The future land use map presents a long-term growth vision for the Leslie community based on the existing conditions and growth guidelines presented above and the expected future growth in housing, commercial and industrial development and the anticipated preferences and demands of the private development community.

Figure 7: City of Leslie Future Land Use (FLU) Map

Figure 8: Leslie Township Future Land Use (FLU) Map

## Zoning Plan

**Agriculture:** This classification corresponds to the A-1 Agricultural (A-1) and the Pro-Agricultural (Pro-Ag) Districts in the Leslie Township Zoning Ordinance. Over the long-term planning horizon, there is no land designated as Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map in the City of Leslie with an expectation that land within the city limits will, over time, transition to residential, commercial and industrial uses.

**Quasi-Public/Public/School (QPL):** This area identifies parcels used for any of the following: a public government office, public or private school, park, library, post office, church or other similar use that is generally accessible to the public whether in public or private ownership. This does not correspond to a specific zoning classification but rather appears on the map as a planning tool to identify pedestrian destinations and public resources.

**Single Family Residential:** This classification corresponds to the R-1 zoning district in the township and the R-1A one-family low density residential district in the city. The dimensional requirements are different in the two municipalities due to the presence of public sewer and water service in the city. However, the intent of each district is to permit one single-family residential unit on one parcel or lot. In the township, the minimum lot size is one acre with a minimum width of 165 feet. In the city, the minimum lot size is 13,000 square feet with a minimum width of 88 feet.

**Multi Family/Planned Residential or Institutional/Cottage:** This classification corresponds to the R-2 and R-3 zoning districts in the township and the R-1B medium density residential district and the R-M1 multiple-family residential district in the city. The purpose of this district is to permit a mix of residential uses, including townhouses, row houses, and other multi-family structures, in a platted or planned development at a higher density than the Single Family Residential zone.

In the future, the community may also adopt a mixed use development (MXD) zoning district that can be applied to these areas. An MXD district would expand permitted uses to include compatible commercial and service uses.

**Vacant/Urban Dev. Potential:** This area identifies parcels that are currently vacant within the city limits and, as a result, have urban development potential. This designation does not correspond to a specific zoning classification. Instead, it appears on the map as a tool to identify locations with the potential for planned or infill development within the city limits. The underlying zoning for many of these parcels is currently agriculture or single-family residential and it is anticipated that the city would respond favorably to a higher density zoning classification in these areas if requested.

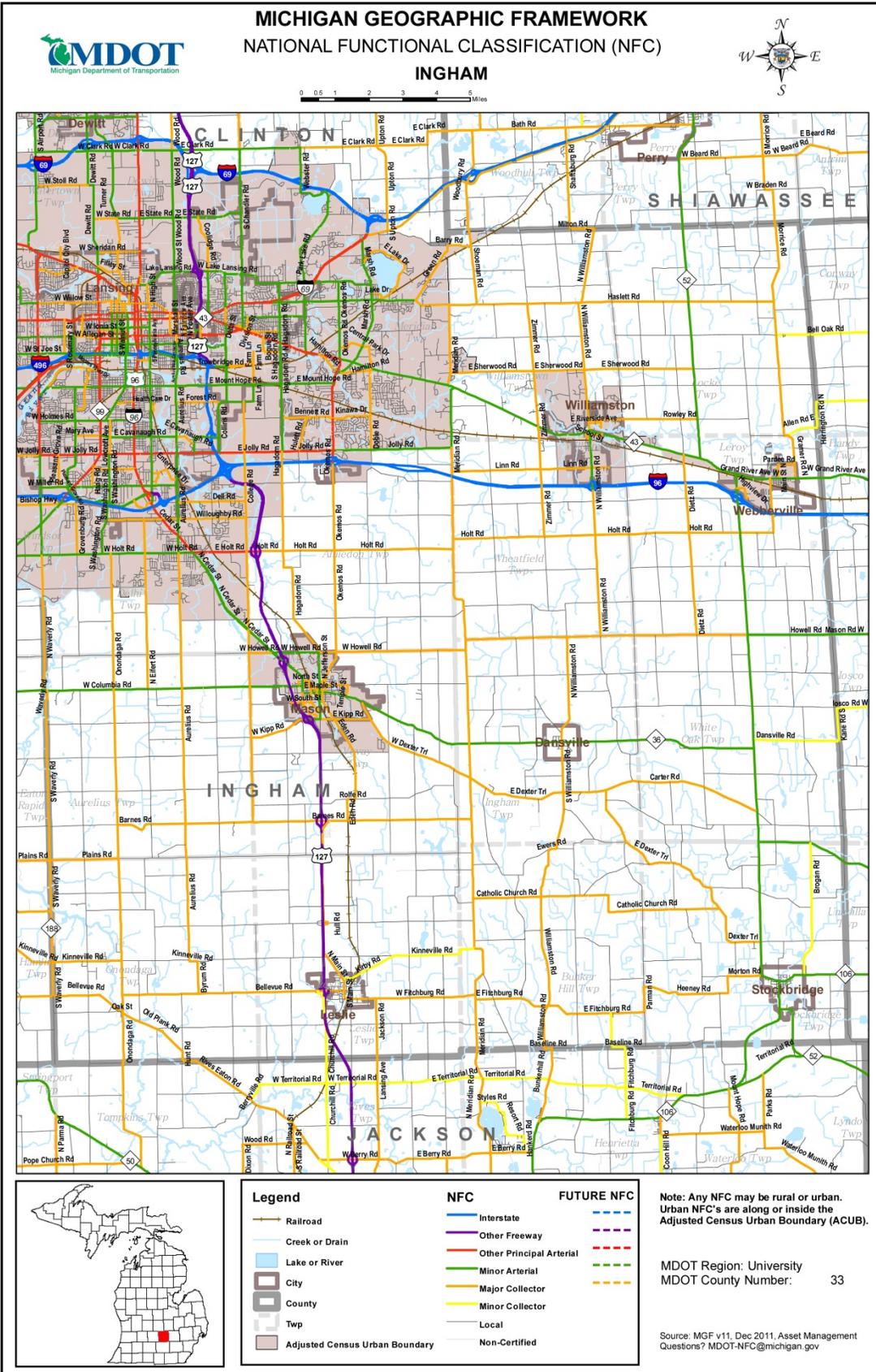
**Office:** This classification corresponds to the B-2 highway service district as it relates specifically to office uses. A specific office district does not currently exist. However, in the future, the city may choose to adopt a more limited office zoning district to serve as a buffer between highway commercial or industrial uses and residential uses. The minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet would likely apply to the new zone. It is not expected that the township will adopt an office zoning district.

**Commercial:** This classification corresponds to the B-1 general business district and the B-2 highway service district in the city and the B-1 general business district in the township. The dimensional requirements are different in the two municipalities due to the presence of public sewer and water service in the city. However, the intent of each district is to permit a wide range of commercial businesses and institutions to serve neighborhood, the city and the region. In the township, the minimum lot size is one acre with a minimum width of 165 feet. In the city, the minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet with a minimum width of 88 feet. These minimum dimensions are expected to remain in place.

**Industrial:** This classification corresponds to the M-1 industrial district in the city and the M-1 Industrial district in the township. The city code references the BOCA Building Code for guidance on dimensional requirements but does not establish a minimum lot size. The township zoning ordinance requires a minimum of 1 acre and 165' of frontage.

## **Appendix A: Supporting Technical Information**

- **National Functional Classification (NFC) Road System Map**
  
- **2000 Land Cover Map**
  
- **Potential Conservation Areas Map**



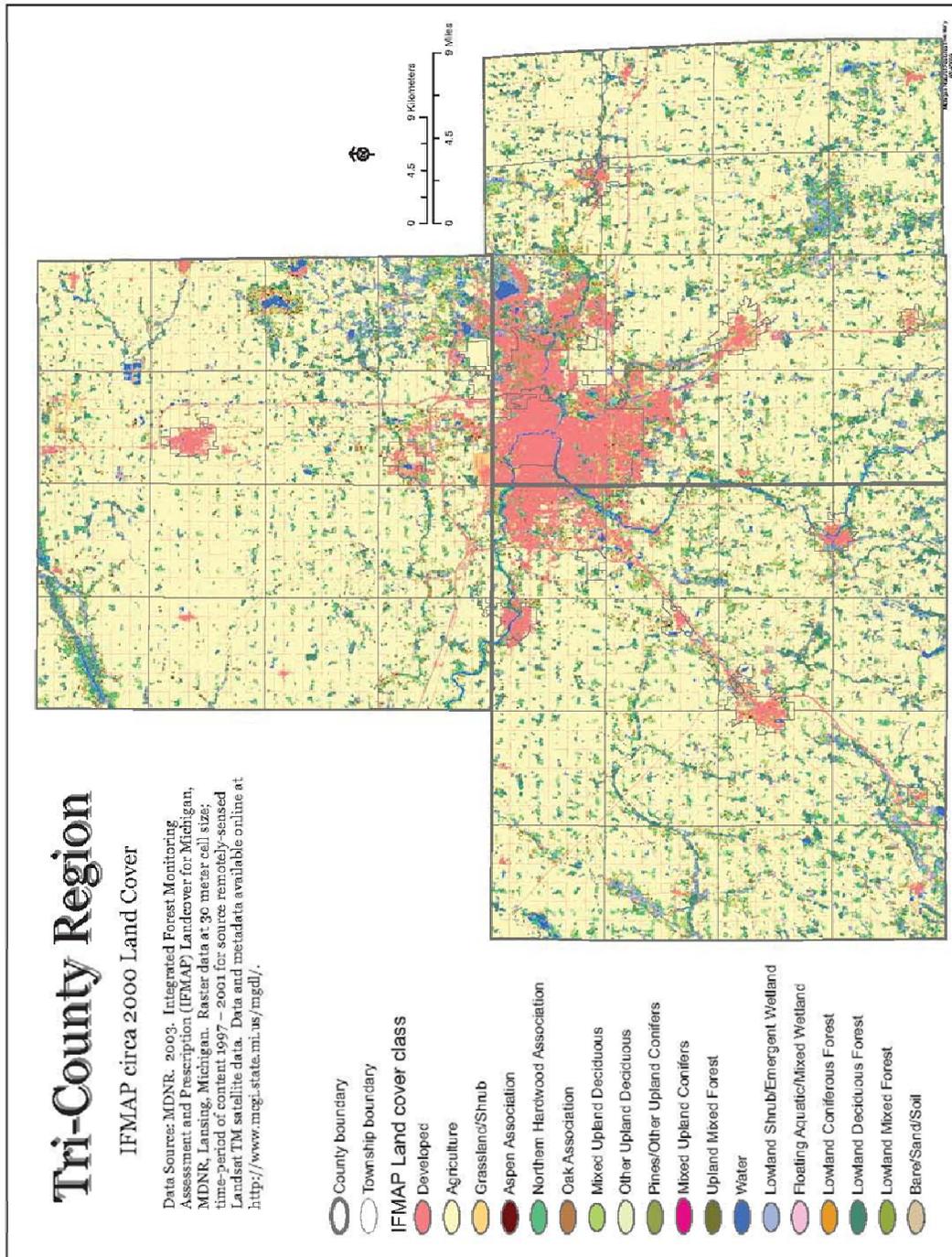


Figure 2. Circa 2000 Land Cover

Significant Natural Features in the Tri-County Region- 7

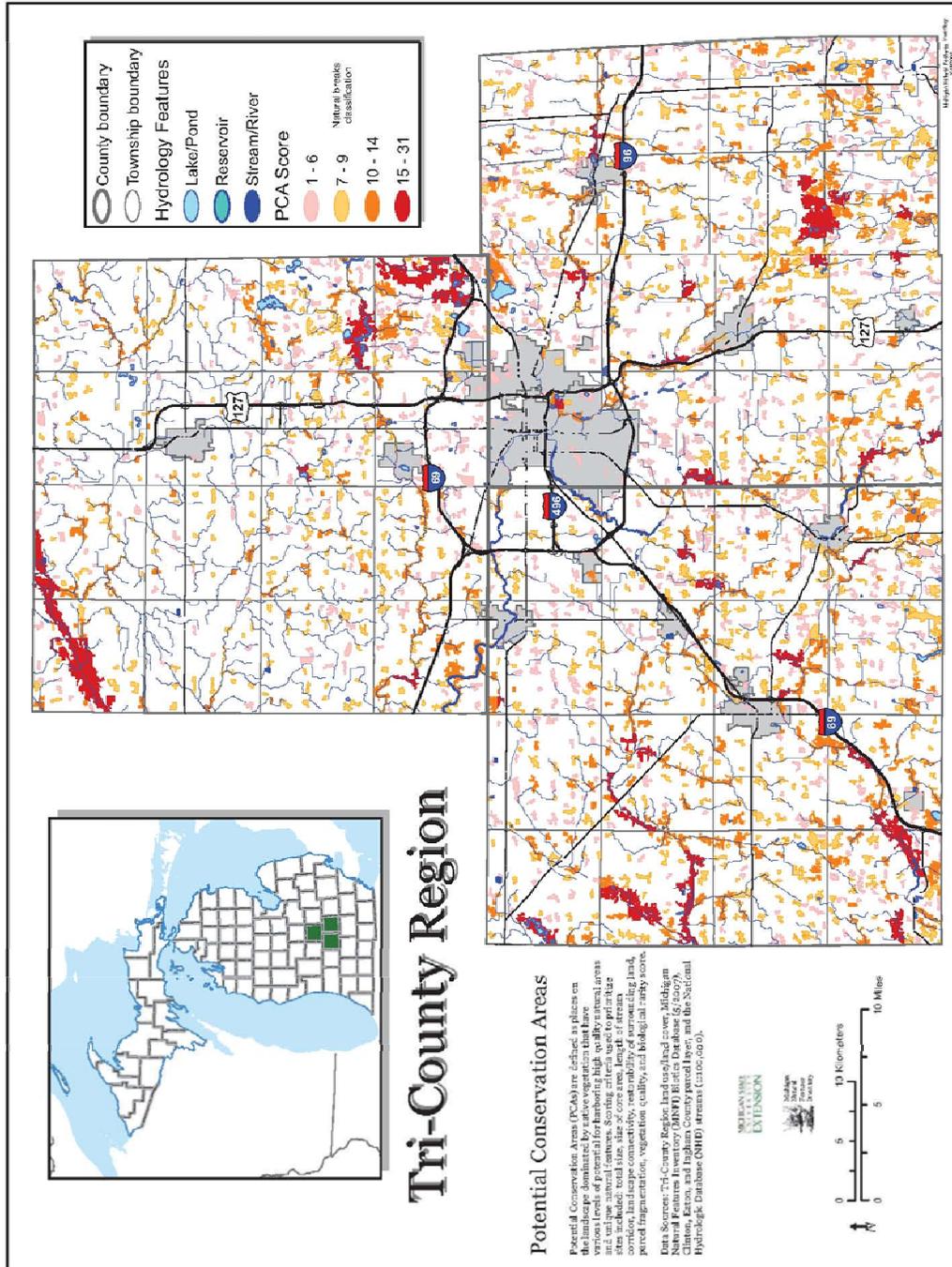


Figure 4. Tri-County Region Potential Conservation Areas

Significant Natural Features in the Tri-County Region- 10

## Appendix B: March 19, 2013 Open House

## Open House Notice

CITY OF **LESLIE** TOWNSHIP  
**COMMUNITY**

**Leslie Community Master Plan Open House Scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup>**

The City of Leslie and Leslie Township are working together to create a shared community master plan. The two local governments have formed a planning committee to work cooperatively on behalf of each community. The committee has no decision-making authority but will bring a draft master plan back to the respective planning commissions for consideration.

A master plan is a long-term vision for the future and is intended to guide future changes to the zoning ordinance and guide planning and funding decision for public facilities such as parks and roads. The committee would like to share some initial ideas with the community at a Public Open House scheduled for **Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Leslie Township Hall building at 6:00 pm**. The Leslie Township Hall is located at 4279 Oak Street.

A brief informational presentation will be given upstairs in the meeting room beginning at 6:00 pm and an open house format will follow until 7:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served. Members of the planning committee and the consultant will be available to answer questions and comment forms will be available. A representative from the railroad will also attend.

Open House Sign in sheets (1)

CITY OF LESLIE TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY		
Shared Master Plan Open House March 19, 2013		
Name	Zip Code	Title / Association*
Robert FOGG	49251	Leslie Twp Plan Comm
MIKE STITT	49251	" " " "
Derek Flory	49251	Leslie City Council
Pete Zamora	49251	mayor city of Leslie
BILL MURZENMAYER	49251	Leslie Planning Comm.
JOE WARREN	49251	Leslie Planning Comm.
JERRY GARFIELD	49251	CITY CITIZEN

\* Association: resident, business owner, elected official, etc.



## Appendix C: Mailing Affidavits

(To be added prior to final adoption)

## Appendix D: Public Hearing Record

(To be added prior to final adoption)