FREMONT COMMUNITY

Joint Comprehensive & Growth Management Plan

City of Fremont | Sheridan Charter Township | Dayton Township

NOVEMBER 2022

DISCLAIMER:

This document refers throughout to the "Fremont Community." It is acknowledged that there are parts of other jurisdictions that may commonly be included in the general Fremont Community. However, unless otherwise noted, where such reference is made within this Plan, it includes solely the three participating jurisdictions of the City of Fremont, Dayton Township, and Sheridan Charter Township.

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1 Background

PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a community-driven policy document used by elected and appointed community leaders to guide decisions about land, people, and structures. When presented with long-term decisions, community leaders should use the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that their decisions are consistent with the vision that Fremont Community residents created. To provide a long-term roadmap, the Comprehensive Plan inventories systems, identifies how the systems work together, and examines how the systems have changed over time. Major systems and themes discussed in the Comprehensive Plan include the following:

» Demographics
» Housing
» Natural Features
» Community Facilities
» Transportation
» Economic Development
» Land Use
» Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan lays out "where we should go" based on a combination of residents' priorities and findings drawn from the inventory process. The inventory process is a blend of external data sources (State of Michigan), internal data sources (local government), and community input. These priorities are the basis for the actions that community leaders pursue through policy and actions, particularly through zoning ordinance updates. The Plan serves as the Master Plan for each of the participating jurisdictions, as required in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008). Therefore, this Plan also provides the statutory basis for the Zoning Ordinance and serves as the primary policy guide for land-use related decisions.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) (MPEA) enables jurisdictions to create comprehensive plans to achieve the following:

» Guide the use of limited resources efficiently;
» Promote public health, safety, and general welfare;
» Preserve the quality of the environment within the jurisdiction; and
» Guide zoning decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to be comprehensive, future-oriented, and accessible to the public; therefore, busy government officials do not need to get swept up in short-term gains at the expense of long-term progress.

Relationship to the Zoning Ordinance

The Comprehensive Plan is not a binding agreement but rather a planning framework. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is local land use law. The Zoning Ordinance is a set of regulations that provide exacting specifications as to how and where development may take place. The Zoning Ordinance implements the Comprehensive Plan; and, as outlined in the MPEA, a direct relationship between the two documents is required. For example, if it emerges through community engagement and research that the housing types available do not adequately serve the population, a municipality would revisit the Zoning Ordinance to determine if the land use code is preventing a particular type of development through height restrictions or lot size requirements. Only when the two documents are in sync can they be effective planning tools.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND A HISTORY OF COLLABORATION

The Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan is a unique collaboration amongst Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township. Most jurisdictions pursue their Comprehensive Plans independently, resulting in a patchwork of planning policy and land use decisions. Regional planning, where multiple jurisdictions collaborate on planning efforts, allows jurisdictions to share resources and ideas, and it reduces planning conflicts. Additionally, natural systems such as water, wetlands, and air traverse municipal boundaries; therefore, regional collaboration is essential in planning for natural systems. The collaboration amongst the three jurisdictions also speaks to the "Fremont Community" mindset, where residents who may live in any of the three jurisdictions identify as Fremont residents.

Downtown Fremont, circa 1955.

Source: Times Indicator Office

Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township have been collaborating for almost three decades. In 1998, the three jurisdictions formalized their relationship with a Joint Planning Committee, and in 2001, the committee wrote its first Comprehensive Plan. After the passage of the Joint Municipal Planning Act (PA 226 of 2003), the three communities formed the Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission (JPC), which replaced the Joint Planning Committee established a few years prior. The second Joint Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2009 by the JPC with special attention to Smart Growth principles. The third update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016 and included only minor revisions to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Context

The Fremont Community is in the heart of Western Michigan, an epicenter of agricultural production. Both the agricultural land in the community and the proximity to major Michigan cities reinforce the importance of the community in Michigan's food distribution network. With the Manistee National Forest directly to the north of the Fremont Community, Fremont is a gateway to the National Forest. The National Forest holds numerous recreational opportunities such as hiking, kayaking, and ORV trails. Additionally, the Manistee National Forest is home to the only wildflower sanctuary in the National Forest system.

The City of Muskegon, with a population of 37,633,[1] is located roughly 21 miles (as the crow flies) southwest of Fremont and is a 35-minute drive. The economic and commercial opportunities in Muskegon attract many Fremont residents who travel into the City for goods and services that are not present in Fremont. Additionally, Grand Rapids is roughly an hour's drive to the south and is the largest city near Fremont. Grand Rapids provides a more substantial nightlife and urban atmosphere compared to the more rural charm of the Fremont Community. Only about 2% of residents in the Fremont Community work in Muskegon, and an additional 2% work in Grand Rapids, illustrating that the Fremont Community is not a bedroom community for these large economic centers.[2]

LOCAL HISTORY

The Fremont area was originally home to Native Americans, as indicated by area landmarks and archaeological findings, including remains of indigenous people at the Pioneer cemetery. Modern-day tribes who historically inhabited the area include the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, and the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Potawatomi.

The arrival of Europeans in the early 19th century marked a period of change for the area. In 1855, Daniel Weaver established a group of settlers, and that same year Fremont Township was established. The community is named for John C. Fremont, "The Great Pathfinder," an American military officer and explorer. John C. Fremont was the first Republican presidential candidate and the first major party

candidate to run on a platform opposing slavery. As the area grew, new communities formed; by 1867, Fremont Township was split into Dayton, Sheridan, and Sherman Township, and the Village of Fremont formed in 1875.[3] In 1872, the community built the train depot, which connected the local economic and production systems to the major cities of Grand Rapids, Chicago, and Detroit by rail. Four years later, Walter S. Platt, a Civil War veteran, printed the first edition of the Fremont Indicator, a publication that is still in circulation today. By 1876, the community had grown large enough to support a high school, and in 1888 and 1910, the community added on to the school to accommodate growth in school-aged children. In 1883, the area established both the Fremont Fire Department and a telephone service in order to provide public services for the growing population.

In the late 19th century, one of Fremont's most significant families, the Gerber family, moved into the community. Initially in the tanning business, the family transitioned to food processing in the 1890s and began manufacturing baby food in 1928. In 1918, Gerber Hospital opened in the donated home of Joseph and Agnes Gerber at 212 Maple Street. In 1954, the new Gerber Memorial Hospital opened across the street from the original home. The late 19th century was also a period of large immigration into Fremont of mainly Dutch immigrants. Interestingly, church services were offered in Dutch into the 1920s.

In 1922, the area established its first public library at the Community Building, though it soon moved to the High School in 1927. By 1963, the library had relocated again into a building at Main and Division before eventually settling in 1980 at the current Main and Merchant location. When the building at Main and Merchant opened, the people of Fremont lined up to pass books hand to hand from the old library to the new building.

In 1935, Fremont established the brick post office on Division Street. The building's lobby features a Depression-era mural painted by Lumen Winter, who went on to be a celebrated muralist, sculptor, and painter. In the mid-20th century, the area country schools were consolidated into the current Fremont Public School District. Since the late 20th century, many Amish have adopted the Fremont area as their home, marking another period of immigration into the area.[4]

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

2016 Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive & Growth Management Plan

While this Comprehensive Plan intends to be the next iteration of the 2016 document, it is important to track whether the community has achieved its goals and if any of the previous goals should be included moving forward.[5] The ten goals and their objectives from the 2016 plan are as follows:

1. Goal: Continue to provide and maintain a range of housing options.
    - » Objective: A range of affordable residential styles and densities to meet the needs of the Fremont Area's diverse population.
2. Goal: Create walkable communities.
    - » Objective: A connected pedestrian sidewalk or trail system to keep the community walkable and connected.
3. Goal: Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
    - » Objective: Expanded citizen participation and informed contributions to community planning for needed and desired improvements and expansions.
4. Goal: Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
    - » Objective: The development of residential neighborhoods that are well integrated into the existing landscape and complement the character of existing neighborhoods and/or residential development.
    - » Objective: The preservation and enhancement of historic structures, sites, and existing neighborhoods.
    - » Objective: Improvement of all housing that falls below minimum standards through comprehensive code enforcement, encouraging home improvements, and private and public investment in rehabilitation programs.
    - » Objective: Commercial architecture, landscaping, and signage that is compatible with the community's traditional and rural character.
    - » Objective: Improved and expanded public and private park and recreation facilities.

5. Goal: Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
    - » Objective: The effective and efficient locating of public facilities and delivery of public services.
    - » Objective: A set of clear expectations for developers and property owners.
    - » Objective: Continues inter-jurisdictional planning efforts to ensure the representation of residents in regional decision-making.
6. Goal: Mix Land Uses.
    - » Objective: A mix of land uses in the appropriate areas to help foster a vibrant community, encourage pedestrian activity, and provide convenient living, shopping, and service opportunities for residents.
7. Goal: Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
    - » Objective: The preservation of important natural features such as wetlands and other wildlife habitat.
    - » Objective: A continuous open space system that interconnects public and private natural areas and recreation facilities as well as provides for wildlife habitat.
    - » Objective: Viable farmlands protected from conversion of non-agricultural uses.
8. Goal: Provide a variety of transportation options.
    - » Objective: Planned, orderly commercial development with attention to traffic issues, pedestrian safety, and convenience of shoppers.
    - » Objective: Sidewalks and bike lanes in developing areas, especially the planned residential areas, to create safe, non-motorized options for citizens.
    - » Objective: Coordinated transportation improvement planning and financing on a multi-jurisdictional basis.

» Objective: Reduced impacts of parking.

9. Goal: Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
    - » Objective: New development within the established urban growth boundary.
10. Goal: Take advantage of compact building design.
    - » Objective: Future growth, infill development, and redevelopment within the City that maintains the traditional and compact character.

The 2022 Comprehensive Plan update is the opportune time to reevaluate each goal, objective, and strategy. Reevaluating allows the community to identify opportunities and barriers for the existing goals or new goals moving forward, and it ensures that the Fremont Community continues to move in its desired direction since visions and preferences tend to change over time.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2020 – 2024)

In addition to a Joint Planning Commission, the Fremont Community also operates a Recreation Advisory Committee that includes members from Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township. The Recreation Advisory Committee is responsible for creating and updating a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to help the community create a vision for the recreational opportunities. The plan was first drafted in 2000, and the most recent update was in 2020.[6] Primary goals from the 2020 update include:

1. Provide safe, inclusive community-based recreational opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all area residents.
2. Promote regional cooperation between the City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter Township, Dayton Township, and other public and private organizations within the County to better provide comprehensive recreation opportunities to the residents.
3. Enhance the quality of local neighborhoods through the establishment and maintenance of quality neighborhood parks conveniently located to all City and Township residents.
4. Provide universally accessible recreation opportunities designed with all community members in mind.
5. Acquire property, as necessary, to meet the long-term recreational needs of the residents.
6. Promote healthy, active lifestyles through the City and Townships with Recreation facilities and programs.

The highest priority action items in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are a new lodge at Branstrom Park, new cabins in the Fremont Lake Campground, dredging the boat launch at the Fremont Lake Park, and renovating the community room at the Fremont Recreation Center.

City of Fremont Economic Development and Marketing Strategy

In 2019, the City of Fremont, Joint Planning Commission, and City staff developed an economic development and marketing strategy to refine the economic development goals established in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. This group developed the strategy with the input of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders, and it is aligned with Redevelopment Ready Communities' best practices. The strategy outlines 21 actions that the City and its partners may take to achieve the economic vision outlined in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The actions include:[7]

1. Review the zoning ordinance to see if it inhibits Joint Comprehensive Plan implementation; make necessary changes.
2. Adopt new zoning requirements identified in the zoning ordinance review.
3. Prepare an economic development plan that:
    - » Identifies potential employers for Industrial Park
    - » Establishes programs to provide necessary education and training for youth to secure jobs.
    - » Promotes development and creates a business climate to attract positive economic development and maintains competitiveness in the West Michigan economy.
4. Review and revise the Joint Comprehensive Plan in response to changing needs and priorities.
5. Update the Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize plan elements, projects, and identify funding options.
6. Develop and implement a rental housing inspection program.
7. Continue to aggressively enforce building and property maintenance codes.
8. Complete, fund, and implement a streetscape program for downtown and gateways.

Train Depot.

Source: Times Indicator Office

9. Review current way-finding signage plan, and identify, fund, and implement necessary changes and additions.
10. Continue development and implementation of additional sections of non-motorized pathway system that coordinates connection to partnering township facilities and destinations.
11. Continue implementation of DDA & LDFA Plans.
12. Implement policies to encourage community clean-up efforts and provide incentives to clean up and improve neighborhoods.
13. Aggressively market Fremont's restaurants and businesses as a unique destination north of Grand Rapids.
14. Improve maintenance practices and procedures for all public facilities parks, and utility systems.
15. Develop and implement policies that serve to protect existing trees, woodlots, and street trees in Fremont.
16. Require new development to interconnect with existing streetscapes.
17. Continue and build on programs that encourage building renovation and improvements.

18. Continue with the implementation of access management measures that control the number, location, and design of access points along all major road corridors.
19. Continue supporting other forms of transportation by interconnecting sidewalks, streets, bike lanes, and non-motorized pathways, in cooperation and partnership with surrounding jurisdictions.
20. Continue to market Fremont Industrial Park's vacant parcels (50 acres) and remain cognizant of expansion opportunities.
21. Continue to support the conversion of the previous Valspar site, owned by Sherwin-Williams, to a potential residential housing site.

The specific actions in the Economic Development and Marketing Strategy provide direct steps for community leaders to realize the vision of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. These will be incorporated into the action plan of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan, where applicable.

M-82 Corridor Study

In 2009, the Fremont Area conducted a study of the M-82 corridor to better understand the future development, internal road systems, and existing land uses of the corridor. The major conclusion from the corridor study was the need for a crosstown route to improve access to the industrial park and hospital, remove through traffic from neighborhood streets, and facilitate movement from one side of the City to the other. In 2019, the City of Fremont completed the southern truck route, fulfilling the recommendations of the corridor study.[8]

Fremont Lake Water Quality and Aquatic Plant Assessment

In 2016, the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office conducted an assessment of the water quality and ecology of Fremont Lake. The assessment relied on the expertise of MSU scientists and local citizen scientists. The purpose of the plan was to develop a detailed understanding of the hydrological and ecological dynamics so local area plans can be tailored to the specific needs of Fremont Lake. A more thorough discussion of the findings and recommendations from the assessment plan is included in the natural features chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.[9]

Newaygo County Recreation Master Plan

Newaygo County is required to plan and adopt a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan to ensure the proper management and future development of their parks system. Newaygo County does not currently operate any parks in Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, or Sheridan Charter Township, but County parks may be used by residents, and the County's priorities for future recreation will impact the Fremont Community. Two goals of the County's recreation plan are to

» Maintain the natural resources and rural character of Newaygo County through recreational uses, and

» Increase public recreational opportunities within Newaygo County for residents and visitors of all ages.

These two goals present an opportunity for the Fremont Community to collaborate with the County on future recreational development/enhancement, especially if the Fremont Community's recreational areas are connected to the larger County-wide system.[10]

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, the regional planning body for the Fremont Community, promotes and fosters regional development and cooperation amongst local governments. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy identified regional priorities for economic and community development within the five-county region. The plan identified six regional economic development goals.

1. **Infrastructure:** Maintain and invest in infrastructure critical to sustaining the region's economy, and infrastructure that will enhance the region's competitive economic advantages.
2. **Workforce:** Cultivate a workforce that meets the needs of the region's economy and that can adapt to rapidly evolving workforce demands.
3. **Economic Diversity:** Expand and retain existing businesses and diversify the region's economy through innovation and attraction.

4. **Regional Integration:** Promote a regional mindset that is cooperative and optimistic, and which seeks innovative and collaborative solutions.
5. **Natural Resources:** Practice stewardship of the region's natural resources while leveraging assets for economic gain.
6. **Quality of Life:** Provide desirable places to live and recreate; with housing, goods, and services needed to retain and attract talent, and amenities to attract visitors and tourists.

Funding opportunities may be available from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission if a project advances progress toward any of the six stated goals.[11]

Regional Prosperity Plan for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance

In 2013, the State of Michigan established the Regional Prosperity Initiative to accelerate the State's economy and improve quality of life by coordinating resources at a regional level. The State is separated into ten prosperity regions, and the Fremont Community is in Region 4, which includes the counties of Mason, Lake, Osceola, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Muskegon, Montcalm, Ottawa, Kent, Ionia, Allegan, and Barry. The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance is not a formal organization but is a collaboration between public, private, and nonprofit organizations that aids in the funding of projects with a substantial regional benefit. Projects that have received support include broadband expansion and a website with resources for entrepreneurs. Key elements of projects that are eligible for support include:[12]

» Long-term impact & sustainability,
» Regional impact,
» Provides employment opportunities to people with a variety of skill levels in a variety of employment sectors,
» Recognizes the Region's strengths and challenges, and
» Promotes and supports public and private partnerships.

Sources

1 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, DP05 2019 5-Year estimates

2 "OntheMap", United States Census Bureau, https://wmsrdc.org/project/ceds-2018/

3 Terry Wantz Historical Center

4 Staff email communication with Rich Wheater and Joyce Peterson of the Times Indicator.

5 "The Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan", Fremont Area Joint Planning Commission, https://www.cityoffremont.net/DocumentCenter/View/780/Fremont-Community-Joint-Comprehensive-Plan-2016?bidId=

6 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Fremont Community Recreation Advisory Committee, 2020, pg. 71 – 79

7 "Economic Development and Marketing Strategy", City of Fremont, pg. 4 – 6 https://www.cityoffremont.net/DocumentCenter/View/1367/Econ-Dev--Marketing-Strategy---2019---rev

8 "M-82 Corridor Study", Fremont Area Joint Planning Commission, https://www.cityoffremont.net/DocumentCenter/View/123/M-82-Corridor-Study-PDF?bidId=

9 De Palma-Dow, A., "Water Quality and Aquatic Plant Assessment-Fremont Lake Final Report", Michigan State University Extension, https://www.cityoffremont.net/DocumentCenter/View/888/MSU-2016-Fremont-Lake-Water-Quality--Plant-Assessment-Report?bidId=

10 "Newaygo County Recreation Plan", Newaygo County, https://wmsrdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Newaygo-Co-Rec-Plan_2018-2022.pdf

11 "2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy", West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, pg. 18 – 24 https://wmsrdc.org/project/ceds-2018/

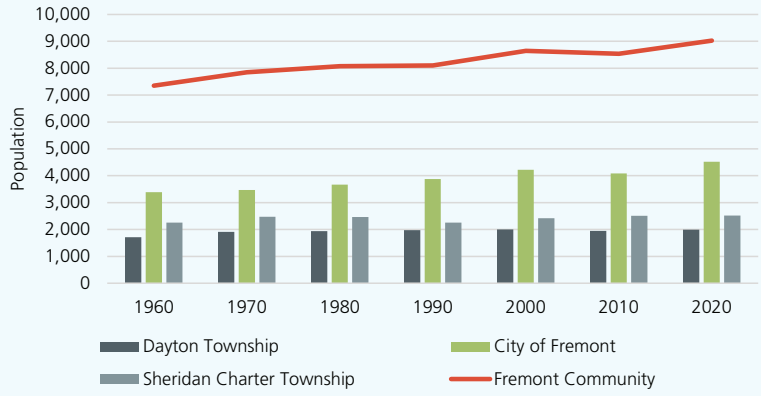
12 "Regional Prosperity Plan for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance", West Michigan Prosperity Alliance, pg. 39 – 41. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dce13bb1ffb65b4d405588/t/5a7c7c2a24a69432dda54734/1518107691792/REGIONAL+PROSPERITY+PLAN+-+APPROVED+10.10.2014.pdf

2 Community Profile

This chapter will explore historical population trends, present composition, and future projections of the Community's demographics. By analyzing population trends, this plan hopes to understand how the demographics of the Fremont Community have both shaped the area and will impact the needs of future residents. This section compares the Fremont Community to other municipalities in the region as well as to Newaygo County and the State of Michigan to provide context for where the Community stands in relation to other geographic units.

Fremont Community Demographic Dashboard

Population Growth, 1960-2020



Source: Decennial Census, United States Census Bureau, 1960-2020

Percent of Population 25+ Years with a Bachelor's Degree (2019)

Dayton Township – 27%

City of Fremont – 23%

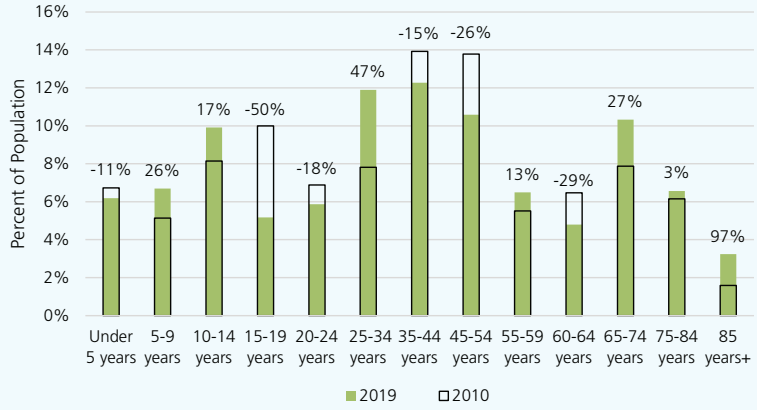
Sheridan Charter Township – 29%

Newaygo County – 17%

State of Michigan – 29%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP02

Population by Age, 2010-2019



Source: 2010 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP05

Percent of Population Below the Poverty Line (2019)

Dayton Township – 15%

City of Fremont – 32%

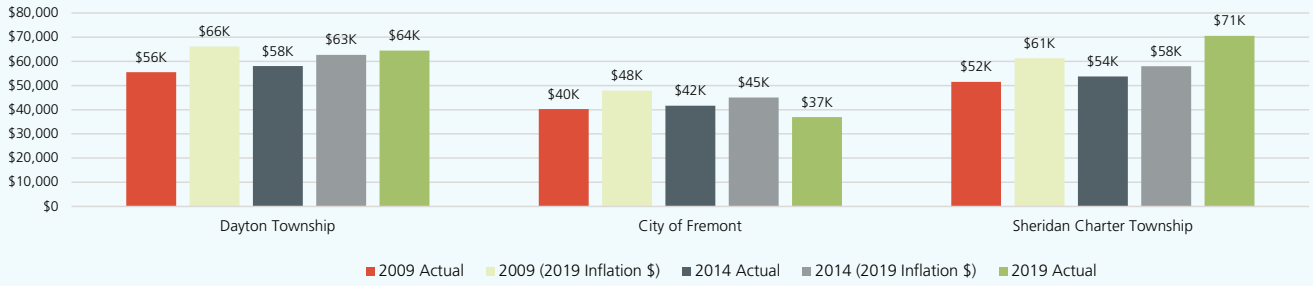
Sheridan Charter Township – 5%

Newaygo County – 11%

State of Michigan – 10%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP03

Median Household Income, 2010, 2014, 2019



Source: 2009, 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP03

DATA SOURCES

The demographic information in this chapter came from the following sources, in this preferred order:

» **2020, 2010, 2000, and 1990 US Decennial Censuses.** The decennial censuses are the most accurate source of demographic information in the United States, though the information is limited. Mandated by the United States Constitution, the aim of the decennial census is to count 100% of the US population. Because the decennial census has been operating since 1790, it offers a valuable reference point to illustrate how populations have changed over time. While the decennial census has been administered for over 200 years, the questions have shifted to reflect cultural changes. For example, one's history of rebellion against the United States is no longer a question on the form.[1] Information collected in the most recent counts includes information about age, sex, race, the relationship between household members, and household tenure.

» **American Community Survey.** The American Community Survey (ACS) replaced the "long-form" Census questions beginning in 2000, collecting the same types of information about social, economic, and housing conditions on a continual basis. Including these questions in the decennial census would be more resource-intensive and could reduce the response rate for the more critical decennial census. The ACS is not a complete survey of the United States but a sample. A random selection of households receives the ACS every year, and the Census Bureau uses the responses to create estimates for the rest of the population. Because the ACS is a sample, smaller communities require multiple years of sampling to create accurate estimates. Communities with fewer than 20,000 people must be sampled over 60 months to create estimates, and these estimates are referred to as 5-year estimates. This plan will use ACS 5-year estimates as Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township all have populations under 20,000 people.

REGIONAL TRENDS

The Fremont Community sits within the broader region known as the West Michigan Shoreline Region. The region encompasses the Counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana. Major cities include Muskegon and Ludington, both of which are located along the shores of Lake Michigan. The region is defined by shoreline communities and smaller agrarian communities scattered throughout the more rural counties.

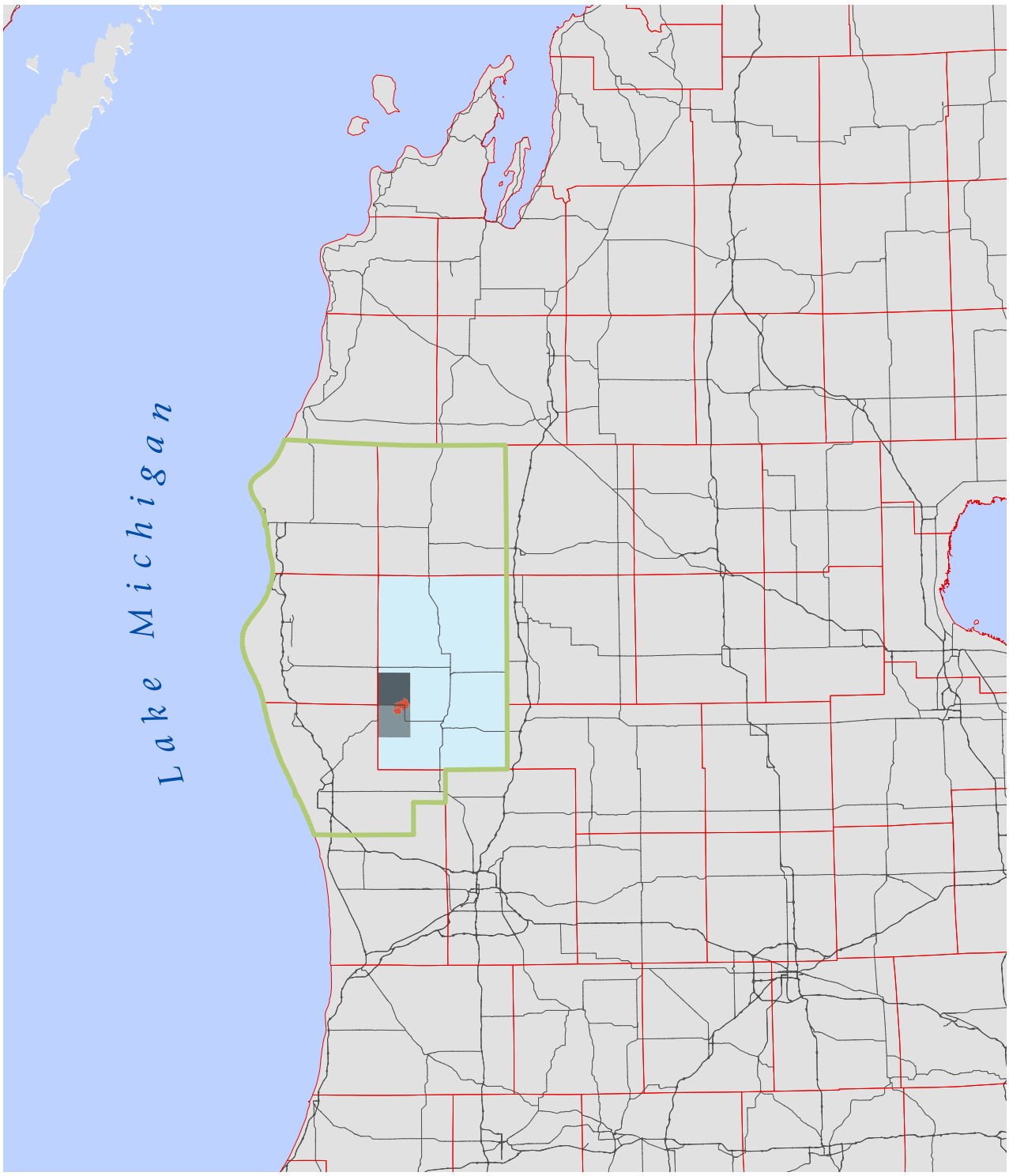
Past to Present

The 1960s marked a period of growth for the region as the population grew by roughly 34,000 people, representing a 17% increase from the beginning of the decade. However, the rapid growth slowed for the next couple of decades. The population in Muskegon, the region's largest city, continued declining, and the City represented only 16% of the total Region's population by 1990, despite accounting for 23% in 1960. The population in Ludington, the second-largest city in the region, also declined, and by 1990, had lost 10% of its 1960 population. The population decline in the cities combined with the regional growth shows that people at the turn of the century were moving into the area for the bucolic, low-density, and rural settings.

At the end of the century and early 2000s, the region grew once more, and the decline of the urban centers continued. Smaller communities, however, such as Baldwin, Fremont, and Hart grew during this period. The 2010s were another period of growth, and all counties in the region grew in population, though the populations in Ludington and Muskegon continued to decline. Since then, the rate at which Muskegon and Ludington populations are declining has remained constant or has slowed down, potentially signifying a transition period for the urban centers and a shift back toward a preference for more urban lifestyles.

The table "1960-2020 Regional Populations" shows the populations for all the counties in the region and the largest city/village in each county. In terms of population, Muskegon County grew the most in terms of number of people from 1960 to 2020, increasing from 129,943 people in 1960 to 175,824 in 2020 (a 35% increase). However, the population in Lake County increased by the greatest percentage, rising by 142% from 1960

Map 1: Regional Map



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Regional Map

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

0 10 20 Miles

- Dayton Township
- City of Fremont
- Sheridan Charter Township
- Newaygo County
- West Shoreline Regional Planning Commission

Table 1: 1960-2020 Regional Populations*

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Lake County							
Population	5,338 (2.7%)	5,661 (2.4%)	7,711 (3.1%)	8,583 (3.4%)	11,333 (4.0%)	11,539 (4.0%)	12,906 (4.4%)
Baldwin	836 (0.4%)	612 (0.3%)	674 (0.3%)	821 (0.3%)	1,107 (0.4%)	1,208 (0.4%)	1,614 (0.5%)
Mason County							
Population	21,929 (11.1%)	22,612 (9.8%)	26,365 (10.6%)	25,537 (10.1%)	28,274 (9.9%)	28,705 (10.0%)	29,052 (9.9%)
Ludington	9,421 (4.8%)	9,021 (3.9%)	8,937 (3.6%)	8,507 (3.4%)	8,357 (2.9%)	8,076 (2.8%)	7,655 (2.6%)
Muskegon County							
Population	129,943 (65.7%)	157,426 (68.0%)	157,589 (63.4%)	158,983 (62.7%)	170,200 (59.8%)	172,188 (59.9%)	175,824 (59.7%)
Muskegon	46,485 (23.5%)	44,631 (19.3%)	40,823 (16.4%)	40,283 (15.9%)	40,105 (14.1%)	38,401 (13.4%)	38,318 (13.0%)
Newaygo County							
Population	24,160 (12.2%)	27,992 (12.1%)	34,917 (14.0%)	38,202 (15.1%)	47,874 (16.8%)	48,460 (16.9%)	49,978 (17.0%)
Fremont	3,384 (1.7%)	3,465 (1.5%)	3,672 (1.5%)	3,875 (1.5%)	4,224 (1.5%)	4,081 (1.4%)	4,516 (1.5%)
Oceana County							
Population	16,547 (8.4%)	17,984 (7.8%)	22,002 (8.9%)	22,454 (8.8%)	26,873 (9.4%)	26,570 (9.2%)	26,659 (9.1%)
Hart	1,990 (1.0%)	2,139 (0.9%)	1,888 (0.8%)	1,942 (0.8%)	1,950 (0.7%)	2,126 (0.7%)	2,053 (0.7%)
Region							
Population	197,917	231,675	248,584	253,759	284,554	287,462	294,419
Growth		+17.1%	+7.3%	+2.1%	+12.1%	+1.0%	+2.4%

Source: Decennial Census, United States Census Bureau, 1960-2020
* Percentages in brackets indicate the overall share of the regional population.

to 2020. Of all the cities/villages listed in the table, Fremont had the largest growth in population (1,132 people) and Baldwin had the largest percentage increase (93%).

Future

Despite the historic trends of general growth in the region, the next 25 years will likely see population growth slow and perhaps even decline. The table, "Population Projections by County" shows the population projections for each county in the region for the next 25 years.[2] The projections were based on a combination of birth, death, immigration, and emigration trends. In 2045, the region is projected to have roughly 310,000 people living in the five counties, about 14,000 higher than the 2020 population. The slowed growth is in sharp contrast to the growth experienced in the mid to late-20th century, likely a result of an aging population. While population projections are useful for gauging how communities could change over the next few decades, they do not account for dramatic changes in land use, such as a large apartment building opening in a small community. Therefore, planning decisions should not take population projections as fact, but should use projections as a reference point.

In Newaygo County, the future stagnation of population growth is a result of an aging population, lack of positive net migration, and declining youth population. The 2020s and early 2030s will see a large increase in the senior population, resulting in a need for more resources to be allocated to healthcare, housing, and other social assistance. However, once this senior bulge passes,

Table 2: Regional Population Projections by County

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Lake County					
Population	11,802	11,691	11,465	11,152	10,716
Growth	-9%	-1%	-2%	-3%	-4%
Mason County					
Population	30,023	30,726	31,167	31,373	31,180
Growth	+3%	+2%	+1%	+1%	-1%
Muskegon County					
Population	178,725	182,278	184,417	185,295	184,280
Growth	+2%	+2%	+1%	0%	-1%
Newaygo County					
Population	50,071	51,547	52,665	53,444	53,630
Growth	0%	+3%	+2%	+1%	0%
Oceana County					
Population	27,095	27,796	28,324	28,651	28,560
Growth	+2%	+3%	+2%	+1%	0%
Region					
Population	297,716	304,038	308,038	309,915	308,366
Growth	+1%	+2%	+1%	+1%	0%

Source: "Michigan Population Projections by County through 2045", State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, September 2019. https://milmi.org/_docs/publications/Population_Projections_2045.pdf

Table 3: Newaygo County Population Growth Projections by County

Age Cohort	Year				
	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Children (0-9)	3%	4%	1%	0%	0%
Teens (10-19)	-2%	2%	4%	3%	0%
Young Adults (20-29)	-4%	-1%	-1%	+2%	+2%
Adults (30-64)	0%	-1%	+2%	+2%	+2%
Seniors (65+)	+15%	+12%	+3%	-1%	-2%

Source: "Michigan Population Projections by County through 2045", State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, September 2019. https://milmi.org/_docs/publications/Population_Projections_2045.pdf

those resources will need to be reimagined for the broader population. Therefore, it is critical when planning for an aging population that strategies and methods may be easily adapted to support other population groups. Furthermore, the number of children and young adults is declining, resulting in population loss on both ends of the age spectrum.

The aging population and lack of youth and young adults present a substantial challenge for the region as a sustainable economy needs a variety of age groups to function. Youth often work in the service industry during the summer and support local businesses by providing unskilled labor. Educated young adults provide skilled labor for professional services and will often become the business leaders of the community. While not evident presently, the future projections provide a stark picture for the sustainability of Newaygo County; however, these statistics are future projections and are not set in stone. Sound planning and decision making can attract underrepresented groups, especially if land use planning and policy is specifically oriented to attract them.

LOCAL TRENDS

While regional trends are important for highlighting broader dynamics, local trends are the most important for the Comprehensive Planning process. For example, a larger region has a diverse economy with many industries, but a smaller local unit of government may specialize in one or two industries which would not be evident by looking solely at the regional trends.

Past to Present

People

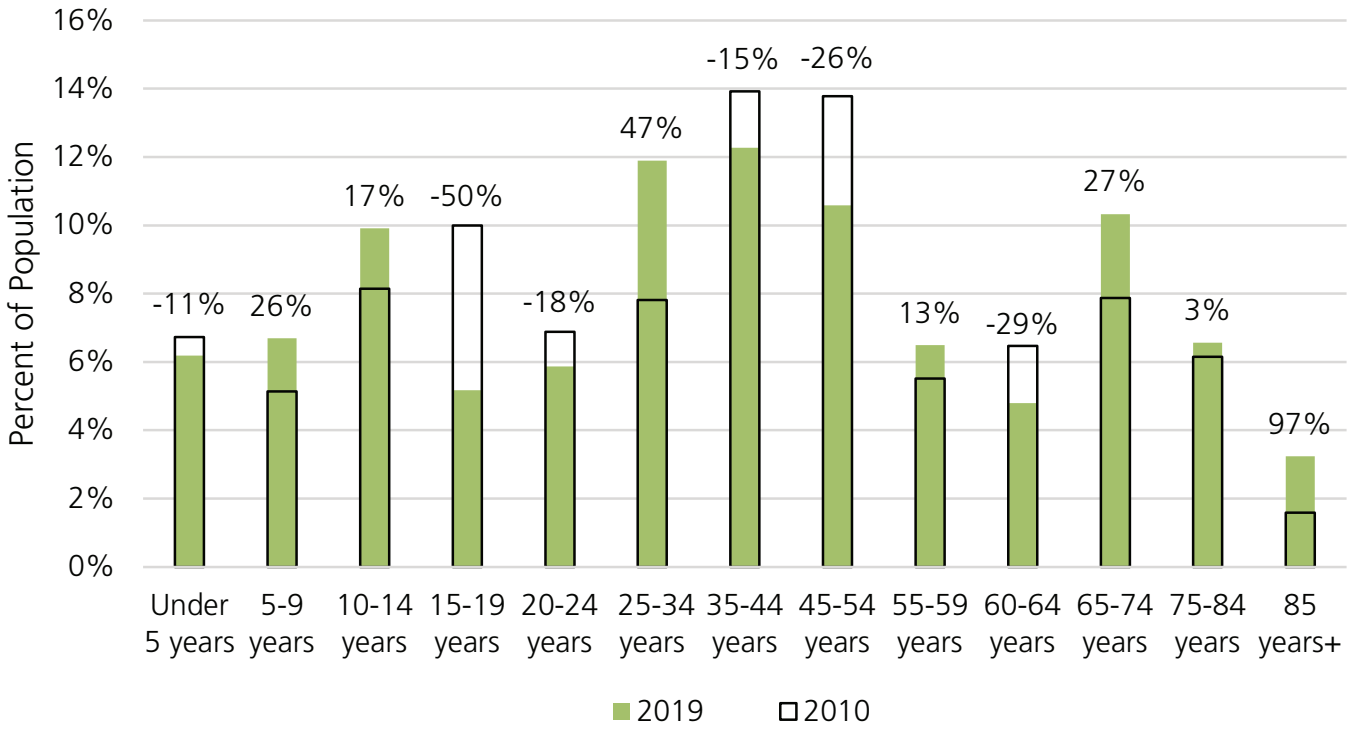
Over the past 60 years, all three municipalities have experienced periods of growth and decline; but overall, the entire Fremont Community has grown since 1960. The 2020 decennial census highlighted that the community was 16% larger than in 1960. However, the population growth is not distributed evenly across all three municipalities. The City of

Table 4: Population Growth Since 1960 for the Fremont Community

	Dayton Township		City of Fremont		Sheridan Charter Township		Fremont Community	
	Count	Growth	Count	Growth	Count	Growth	Count	Growth
1960	1,709	-	3,384	-	2,256	-	7,349	-
1970	1,910	12%	3,465	2%	2,477	10%	7,852	7%
1980	1,938	1%	3,672	6%	2,465	0%	8,075	3%
1990	1,971	2%	3,875	6%	2,252	-9%	8,098	0%
2000	2,002	2%	4,224	9%	2,423	8%	8,649	7%
2010	1,949	-3%	4,081	-3%	2,510	4%	8,540	-1%
2020	1,994	2%	4,516	11%	2,518	0%	9,028	6%

Source: Decennial Census, United States Census Bureau, 1960-2020

Figure 1: Population Pyramid, 2010-2019



Source: 2010 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP05

Fremont has grown the most, compared to the two townships, at an average rate of roughly 190 people every year. Of the 1,300 net new members of the Fremont Community since 1960, 64% of them live in the City.

Age

As the Fremont Community has been growing, it has also been aging, with the oldest age cohort (those over the age of 85) increasing by 97% between 2010 and 2019.[3] Overall, the older population (those over the age of 65) increased from 1,420 people in 2010 to 1,766 in 2019 (a 24% increase). While this increase is consistent with a growing community, the percentage of residents who are of an older generation is increasing. From 2010 to 2019 the percentage of people over 65 increased from 16% to 20%, indicating that the older population is growing at a faster rate than the greater community, a key indicator of an aging population. The aging community in the Fremont Community is not an outlier though; regional trends show that many communities along the West Michigan Shore are also aging.

The figure, "Population Pyramid 2010-2019" shows the composition of the Fremont Community's population by age cohort as well as the percent change of the cohort from 2010 to 2019. One of the notable changes from 2010 to 2019 is the decline of the late teen and young adult populations. Both populations declined considerably, signaling that between 2010 and 2019, the age groups entering adulthood did not remain in the community. Because young adulthood is such an important period, as it relates to family formation and career trajectory, retaining or bringing young adults back to the community is vital for the continued sustainability of the population.

Household vs. Family

A household consists of anyone living in a dwelling unit, and a family consists of a group of two or more people living in a dwelling unit and related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

One bright spot is that the number of residents aged 25 to 34 increased from 2010 to 2019. This age cohort is important because it is the cohort most likely to have children. An increase in this population indicates a potential increase in young children in the mid to late 2020s.

Households

Coinciding with a population growth is a growth in households, which increased from 3,272 in 2014 to 3,426 in 2019.[4] Despite the number of households growing, the average household size and average family size decreased from 2014 to 2019 in all three jurisdictions; however, over a longer period from 2009 to 2019, average family size increased in Dayton Township and the City of Fremont. Similar to the Fremont Area, Newaygo County and the State both experienced an increase in the number of households and a decline in household and family size.[5]

Education

The educational attainment of Fremont residents is increasing. While the education attainment levels in the City of Fremont remained consistent between 2014 and 2019, despite a decline since 2009, both Townships saw substantial growth with a 10% increase in those with a bachelor's degree or higher, between 2014 and 2019. This increase is a result of residents who have lived in the Township for a long period of time attaining degrees and those moving

Table 5: Average Household and Family Size

	Dayton Township			City of Fremont			Sheridan Charter Township		
	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019
Average Household Size	2.84	3.04	2.80	2.44	2.44	2.38	2.71	2.84	2.62
Average Family Size	3.06	3.26	3.16	2.91	3.06	3.04	3.14	3.13	3.06

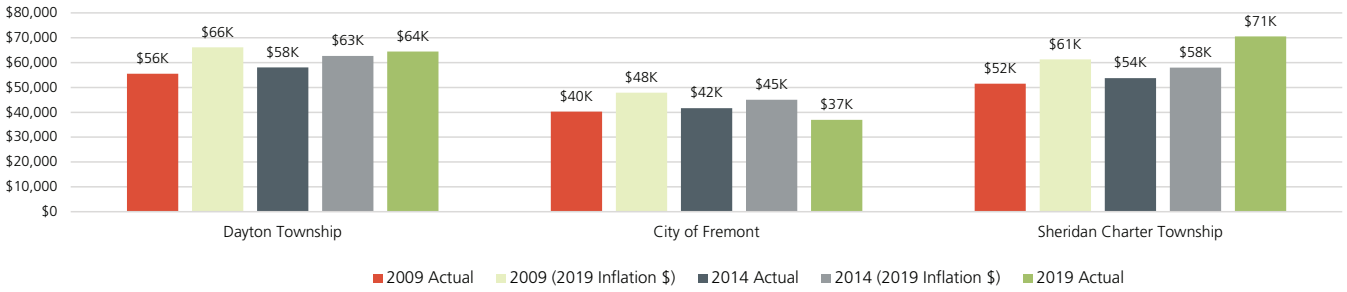
Source: 2009, 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP02

Table 6: Educational Attainment, 2009, 2014, 2019

	Dayton Township			City of Fremont			Sheridan Charter Township		
Population over 25	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019
High school degree or higher	92.3%	89.1%	93.5%	92.2%	91.4%	91.4%	90.7%	88.1%	94.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.1%	17.4%	27.1%	26.4%	23.0%	23.4%	16.3%	18.6%	28.6%

Source: 2009, 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP02

Figure 2: Median Household Income



Source: 2009, 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP03

into the Townships already possessing degrees. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher in Newaygo County is about 17%, which is lower than all three municipalities in the Fremont Community.[6] However, an average of 29% of all residents in the State have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is higher than all three municipalities.[7]

Disability

Roughly 16% of the Fremont Community has a disability. Disability status is strongly correlated to age: 42% of seniors (those over 65) have a disability, compared to 13% of those between ages 16 and 64, and 2% of those who are under the age of 18. The most common disability among seniors (24%) is ambulatory (they have trouble moving around).[8] This is especially challenging in a rural setting where seniors must travel more to access essential services like healthcare. Additional challenges arise when seniors with ambulatory difficulties live alone; however, relatively few seniors live alone in the Fremont Community (3%).[9]

Economy

Income

Coinciding with a growing population and rising educational levels is a growth in income. From 2014 to 2019, incomes in the two Townships grew but declined in the City Fremont. The median household income represents the middle income of all households; in other words, half of all households are above the median, and half are below. The 2019 median household incomes of Dayton Township ($64,432) and Sheridan Charter Township ($70,547) are higher than both the State ($57,144) and County ($50,326), but the City ($36,949) is lower than both the State and County values.

An important consideration with increasing incomes is inflation. If incomes increase at a rate consistent or lower than the inflation rate, incomes are not actually increasing. However, as shown in the figure "Median Household Income," 2019 median household incomes (represented with the green bar in the chart) outpaced the estimated 2014 median household income adjusted for inflation (represented with the light blue bar in the chart) in the two Townships, but 2019 income only outpaced the estimated 2009 inflation adjusted

Table 7: Poverty Status, 2009, 2014, 2019

	Dayton Township			City of Fremont			Sheridan Charter Township		
	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019
People in Poverty	6.3%	13.0%	14.6%	22.4%	20.5%	32.0%	5.8%	15.3%	5.3%
Children in Poverty	9.4%	21.6%	24.9%	34.6%	29.1%	45.6%	5.7%	25.0%	8.1%
Families in Poverty	4.4%	8.1%	9.9%	15.7%	14.5%	24.8%	6.0%	12.9%	5.3%
Single-Mother Households	51.3%	15.6%	75.6%	76.9%	27.1%	53.4%	36.2%	22.2%	32.4%

Source: 2009, 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP03

income in Sheridan Charter Township. This signifies that incomes are increasing in the townships, relative to inflation. Conversely, declining incomes are significantly more substantial when accounting for inflation. In the City of Fremont, if 2014 incomes were to remain consistent with inflation, 2019 median household incomes should have been $45,026. However, the declining household income means that the median household income decreased by $8,077 when accounting for inflation. When comparing 2009 incomes, the gap is even more substantial. If 2009 incomes were to remain consistent with inflation median household incomes in the City should have been $47,909, which is $10,960 higher than the 2019 actual median household income.

Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau determines poverty by comparing annual household income with the federal poverty threshold, which is determined annually and is based on the number of individuals in the household. Poverty status ranges significantly among all three municipalities in the Fremont Community. In all four poverty categories detailed in the table "Poverty Status 2014-2019," the City of Fremont had the highest poverty rate in 2009 and 2014. In 2019, the City still had the highest poverty rate of individuals, children, and families. A shocking three-quarters of female-headed households with children and no spouse (single moms) are under the poverty line in Dayton Township, a substantial increase from about 16% in 2014. Compared to 2009 and 2014, the percentage of single mother households in poverty range significantly. This is a result of the small number of single mother households in the Community, therefore changes to a few households have a significant influence on overall percentages. In Dayton Township, despite income increasing, the overall poverty rate increased from 6% to 13% to just under 15% from 2009, 2014, and 2019. Sheridan Charter Township was the only municipality to see a decrease in poverty among individuals, children, and families, but the poverty rate for single mothers increased by 46%. The increase of households headed by a single mother that are under the poverty line creates an increase in demand/need for affordable childcare, reliable access to healthy and affordable food, and affordable housing options. The overall poverty rate for both Dayton Township and the City of Fremont is higher than the State (10%) and Newaygo County (11%), and the increasing poverty rate from 2014 to 2019 in Dayton and Fremont is counter to the declining rates of the State and the County.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development further defines low-income status by comparing household income to a County's median family income.[10] In the Fremont Community, an estimated 36% classify as low-income, 23% classify as very low-income, and 16% classify as extremely low-income.[11] All three numbers decreased from 2014 levels which were 43%, 29%, and 18%, respectively.

Newaygo County Income Limits*

Extremely Low Income: $26,500

Very Low Income: $32,250

Low Income: $51,600

*Figures based on a family of 3

Employment

An aging population and a new influx of people aged 25 to 34 means that the workforce composition will continue to evolve. The industry in which the most residents were employed was "educational services, health care and social assistance" in both 2014 and 2019. Over that period, an additional 226 residents were employed in the industry, representing a 31% increase. The employment data represented in this section and in table, "Employment Industries in the Fremont Community," reflects what industries residents work in, regardless of whether they work in the Fremont Community. Therefore, someone who lives in Fremont but works in Muskegon, for example, would be represented in this data and table. "Manufacturing" and "retail" were the second biggest industries, but both declined from 2014 to 2019 at a rate of -18% and -26% respectively. In addition to "educational services," industries that gained a large number of employees include "construction" (105), "finance, insurance, real estate, and leasing" (98), and "wholesale trade" (80). Overall, an additional 211 residents were employed in 2019 compared to 2014.

CONCLUSION

The last decade has been a period of change for the Fremont Community. Residents are aging at a rate that is outpacing younger residents, and as children are entering adulthood, they are leaving the community. A recent increase in those aged 25 to 34, however, is a positive sign that those in their family-formation years are moving into the community. Dayton Township and Sheridan Charter Township are becoming wealthier and more educated while the City of Fremont is experiencing lower incomes and higher rates of poverty. Overall, the Fremont Community remains the dominant population center in the County and is anticipated to remain one of the most attractive communities in the region.

Table 8: Employment Industries in the Fremont Community

Industry	Residents Employed in 2014	Residents Employed in 2019	Change
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	722 (20%)	948 (25%)	226 (31%)
Manufacturing	642 (18%)	524 (14%)	-118 (-18%)
Retail trade	532 (15%)	395 (10%)	-137 (-26%)
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	334 (9%)	294 (8%)	-40 (-12%)
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	259 (7%)	288 (8%)	29 (11%)
Other services, except public administration	244 (7%)	282 (7%)	38 (16%)
Construction	175 (5%)	280 (7%)	105 (60%)
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	120 (3%)	218 (6%)	98 (82%)
Public administration	171 (5%)	179 (5%)	8 (5%)
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	122 (3%)	126 (3%)	4 (3%)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	181 (5%)	114 (3%)	-67 (-37%)
Wholesale trade	31 (1%)	111 (3%)	80 (258%)
Information	53 (1%)	38 (1%)	-15 (-28%)
Total	**3,586**	**3,797**	**211 (6%)**

Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP03

Welcome to Fremont sign.

Source: City of Fremont

Sources

1 1870 Census: Index of Questions, United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/index_of_questions/1870_1.html

2 "Michigan Population Projections by County through 2045", State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, September 2019. https://milmi.org/_docs/publications/Population_Projections_2045.pdf

3 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP05 2019 & 2010 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

4 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP02 2019 & 2014 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

5 Ibid.

6 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP02 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Newaygo County

7 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP02 2019 5 – Year Estimates: State of Michigan

8 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, S1810 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

9 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP02 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

10 "Newaygo County Income Limits", United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html#2021

11 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP03 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

3 Housing

As of 2021, the gap between available housing units and housing demand totals 6.8 million units nationwide.[1] The severe shortage of housing units contributes to increasing housing values, costs of housing, and rents. Coupled with wage stagnation, the lack of housing units is creating an affordability crisis in the United States; the Fremont Community and Newaygo County are not immune from the national challenges. In Newaygo County, it is estimated that a person would have to work 64 hours a week at minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent.[2] The following chapter will inventory, analyze, and provide recommendations for diversifying housing in the Fremont Community.

HOUSING TYPES

There are an estimated 3,725 total housing units in the Fremont Community. Of these units, 76% are single-family, 16% are multi-family, 7% are mobile homes, and 1% are townhomes.[3] The distribution of housing types closely mirrors the distribution of types across the State of Michigan (Figure 3). However, compared to Newaygo County, the Fremont Community has substantially more multi-family homes. Roughly 45% of all multi-family homes in the County are in the Fremont Community, making it one of the more attractive housing markets in the region because of its varied housing types.

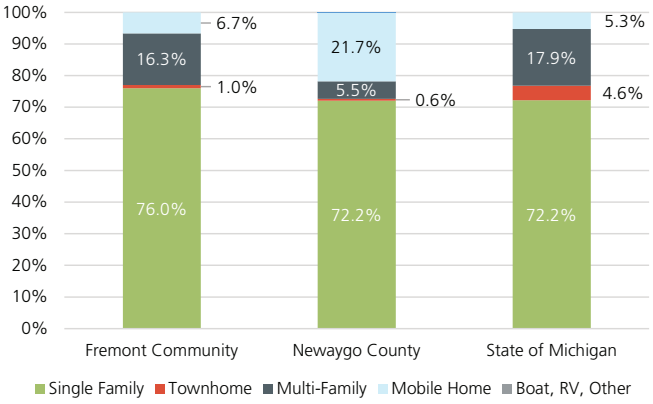
HOUSING AGE

The Fremont Community has a relatively old housing stock, as the percentage of homes built before 1939 (22%) and built between 1940 and 1949 (8%) is higher than the state average.[4] However, between 1950 and 1979 when the state experienced high levels of home construction, Fremont lagged behind. There were two periods of home construction in the Fremont Community that either outpaced the state (1980-1989) or tracked with the state (2000-2009). Following the housing crash of 2008, housing construction has significantly reduced nationwide. While the US Census has estimated no new housing units have been constructed in the past decade, data from the City of Fremont shows 133 new units constructed between 2014 and 2019, representing roughly 4% of the total housing stock, a significant reduction from the construction of the late 20th and early 21st century. Data from the Townships shows 37 new residences constructed between 2014 and 2019, representing about one-quarter of new housing construction in the Fremont Community.

TENURE AND VACANCY

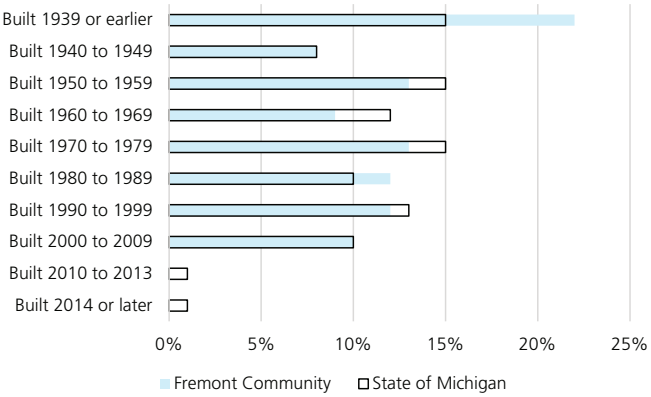
Of the 3,465 occupied housing units in the Fremont Community, 79% are owner-occupied. This is higher than the state (71%) but lower than Newaygo County (84%).[5] It is unsurprising that the Fremont Community has a lower level of homeownership than the County because of the higher percentage of multi-family housing units, which tend to be renter occupied. This underscores that the Fremont Community is one of the only areas in the immediate region that can meet the housing needs of renters, especially low-income renters.

Figure 3: Housing Types



Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP04

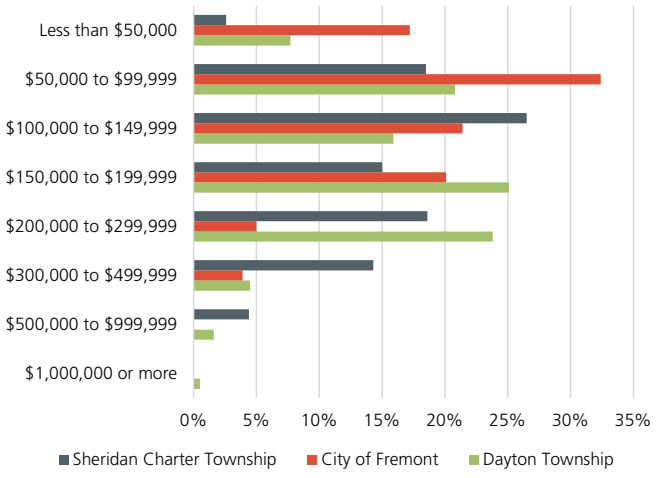
Figure 4: Housing Construction by Decade



Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP04

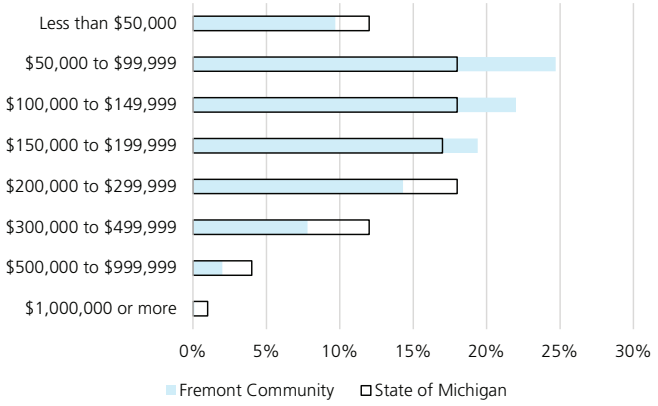
An estimated 8.0% of housing units in Fremont are vacant; however, not all vacant units are available units. Vacancy includes units that have recently sold or are occupied on a seasonal basis. Of vacant units, units that are currently for sale or rent are considered available units. Available units account for only 9.0% of total vacant units and 0.7% of all housing units. Comparatively, 6.6% of all housing units in the state are considered available and 1.4% of all housing units in Newaygo County are available.[6] This highlights the significant lack of housing units for those entering the housing market or those who wish to move to or within the community.

Figure 5: Housing Value



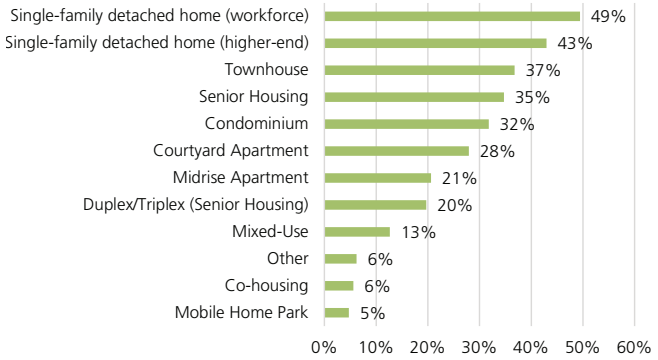
Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Figure 6: Housing Value Compared to State



Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Figure 7: Needed Housing in the Fremont Community (Community Survey Results)



HOUSING VALUE

There is a significant contrast in housing value within the Fremont community. Census estimates indicate almost half of all housing units in the City of Fremont are valued at less than $100,000, compared to 29% in Dayton Township and 21% in Sheridan Charter Township. However, data from the City indicates the percentage of homes valued under $100,000 is closer to 30%. Conversely, homes worth over $500,000 are only present in the Townships. The heavy presence of lower-valued homes in the City makes it the more affordable area in the community.

Despite the high percentage of lower-valued homes in the City, the smaller number of homes valued at less than $50,000 in the whole community may present affordability challenges, especially for low-income or fixed-income households. In the Comprehensive Plan survey, 49% of respondents stated there was a need for workforce housing and 43% stated there was a need for higher-end housing. The clustering of homes in the mid-price range presents a lot of homeownership opportunities for those earning low-middle to middle incomes, but homeownership can still be challenging for those earning low incomes. Additionally, the lack of higher-end homes means that high income earners are likely not finding homes suitable for their preferences.

Personal financial stability is tied closely to homeownership. The bulk of a household's wealth is in its home, so as household members advance in their careers or as households grow, they often upgrade to larger and more valuable homes. This process continues to build personal financial stability and enables other homeowners, specifically first-time buyers, to enter the market at the low-value end of the market. However, a lack of homes in any price range can make it challenging for households to find housing that matches their income, which can cause affordability challenges or limit the amount of equity households can build through property. Therefore, it is important to ensure that there is housing that corresponds to all income levels in a community.

Table 9: Homeownership Housing Affordability

	Percent paying an affordable rate	Percent paying an unaffordable rate
Fremont Community		
With a mortgage	81.4%	18.6%
Without a mortgage	86.8%	13.2%
Newaygo County		
With a mortgage	72.8%	27.2%
Without a mortgage	85.9%	14.1%
State of Michigan		
With a mortgage	76.9%	23.1%
Without a mortgage	85.9%	14.1%

Source: 2019 ACS 5 Year Estimates DP04

Table 10: Rental Housing Affordability

	Percent paying an affordable rate	Percent paying an unaffordable rate
Fremont Community	**42.1%**	**57.9%**
Dayton Township	26.7%	73.3%
City of Fremont	40.1%	59.9%
Sheridan Charter Township	76.9%	23.1%
Newaygo County	**54.4%**	**45.6%**
State of Michigan	**51.2%**	**48.8%**

Source: 2019 ACS 5 Year Estimates DP04

AFFORDABILITY

Two factors affect housing affordability: housing cost and household income. Housing cost and household income vary greatly based on tenure; therefore, it is important to look at homeowners and renters independently.

Homeowners

The percentage of homeowners who live in an unaffordable housing unit in the Fremont Community is slightly lower than the state and the county. Housing affordability is defined as a household spending 30% or less of their income on housing and housing related costs. Understandably, homeowners with a mortgage experience slightly higher levels of housing unaffordability because housing costs for units without a mortgage are 60% lower in comparison.[7]

Renters

Renters often experience higher levels of housing unaffordability. In the Fremont Community, a substantially high number of renters experience housing unaffordability; over half of renters live in an unaffordable unit. In the City, where 85% of renters live, roughly 60% of the units are unaffordable to those who live in them. This highlights the challenges for renters in the region because despite Fremont having a concentration of rental multi-family units in the County, a majority of the units are unaffordable.

FUTURE GROWTH

In 2021, a housing analysis was conducted for Newaygo County to identify how many and what type of affordable housing units the area could support. The analysis concluded that due to the

Table 11: Affordable Housing Demand

Unit Type	Demand
Rental Units	193
$726 - $1,342 monthly rent	115
$1,343 - $2,013 monthly rent	78
Ownership Units	169
$129,000 - $172,000	57
$172,001 - $258,000	112
Total	362

Source: Bowen National Research

increasing population, current housing stock, and current demand for housing units, Newaygo County could support an additional 362 affordable units.[8] As highlighted in the table titled "Affordable Housing Demand," much of the demand is for rental units, especially those at the $726-$1,342 per month price point. While this analysis is for all of Newaygo County, it demonstrates that there is a need for more affordable units in the area, most of which are likely to be located in the Fremont Community.

HOUSING STRATEGIES

An adequate and financially attainable housing market is essential for a growing community. The housing data highlights a lack of low- and high-end housing and the need for more affordable rental units – a clear need for more housing units in the area, especially with a growing community. With the current rate of new construction, the current housing market trajectory is unlikely to meet current and future needs. The diversity of the urban landscape in the Fremont Community, moving from rural farmland to small-town urbanism, means there are two distinct housing markets in the Community – the rural development in the Townships and the more urban development in the City. Current housing preferences in the Townships are for large-lot single-family homes and preferences in the City are for denser housing types and smaller lots; however, preferences may change over time. The following strategies will assist the Fremont Community in supplying an adequate and attainable supply of housing for residents.

Strategies for the Urbanized Areas

Missing Middle

Many communities have zoned for single- and two-family homes and then large apartment buildings. The significant jump between low-density and high-density can create jarring visuals in the urban landscape and lead to density resentment from residents. However, in between the low-density unit types and high-density apartment buildings are a range of other housing types, known as the Missing Middle. Missing Middle housing refers to housing type and form, in the middle area between single-family homes and large apartment buildings. The figure titled "Missing Middle Housing Types" shows the complete range of housing options available. Missing Middle units add density without interrupting the existing aesthetic of neighborhoods, and because of their small size and the increased availability of new units, Missing Middle units often are a less expensive option for residents.

Figure 8: Missing Middle Housing Types

Duplex (side-by-side)

A small (1 to 2-story), detached structure that consists of two dwelling units arranged side-by-side, each with an entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium single-unit house and may include a rear yard.

Number of Units	2	
Typical Unit Size	612 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	11 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	2 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-1, R-2, R-4[A], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	11.9% have interest in this type of unit	
	65.8% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

[A] Only permitted on lots with frontage on collector or arterial streets

Source: Opticos Design, "Duplex: Side-by-Side", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/duplex-side-by-side

Duplex (stacked)

A small (2 to 2.5-story), detached structure that consists of two dwelling units arranged one above the other, each with an entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium single-unit house, may include a rear yard, and fits on narrower lots than the side-by-side duplex.

Number of Units	2	
Typical Unit Size	1,008 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	13 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	1.5 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-1, R-2, R-4[A], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	11.9% have interest in this type of unit	
	65.8% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

[A] Only permitted on lots with frontage on collector or arterial streets

Source: Opticos Design, "Duplex: Stacked", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/duplex-stacked

Cottage Courts

A group of small (1 to 1.5-story), detached structures arranged around a shared court visible from the street. The shared court is an important community-enhancing element, and unit entrances should be from the shared court. It replaces the function of a rear yard. Often, the rear-most building can be up to 2 stories.

Number of Units	6	
Typical Unit Size	840 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	12 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	1 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-4[B], R-MF, O-MU	

[B] Only permitted on corner lots that abut a non-residential use

Source: Opticos Design, "Cottage Courts", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/cottage-court

Triplex

A small-to-medium (3 to 3.5-story) sized detached structure that consists of 3 dwelling units typically stacked on top of each other on consecutive floors, with one entry for the ground floor unit and a shared entry for the units above. This type does not include a rear yard.

Number of Units	3	
Typical Unit Size	1,008 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	23 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	1.67 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-4[B], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	7.6% have interest in this type of unit	
	43.3% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

[B] Only permitted on corner lots that abut a non-residential use

Source: Opticos Design, "Triplex", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/triplex

Fourplex

A detached (2 to 2.5-story) structure with four dwelling units, two on the ground floor and two above, with shared or individual entries from the street. This type has the appearance of a medium-sized single-unit house and may include a rear yard. This type is attractive to developers by generating four units on a typical 50' lot with alley access.

Number of Units	4	
Typical Unit Size	1,200 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	18 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	1.5 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-4[B], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	7.6% have interest in this type of unit	
	43.3% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

[B] Only permitted on corner lots that abut a non-residential use

Source: Opticos Design, "Fourplex", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/fourplex

Multiplex (Mansion Apartments)

A detached (2 to 2.5-story) structure that consists of 5 to 12 dwelling units arranged side-by-side and/or stacked, typically with a shared entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a medium-to-large single-unit house and does not include a rear yard.

Number of Units	12	
Typical Unit Size	765 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	30 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	1.33 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-4[B], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	16.7% have interest in this type of unit	
	33.7% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

[B] Only permitted on corner lots that abut a non-residential use

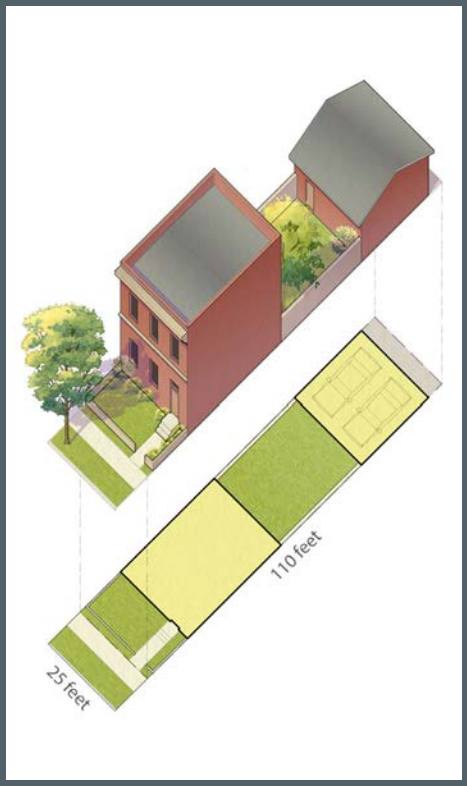
Source: Opticos Design, "Multiplex", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/multiplex-medium

Townhouse

A small- to medium-sized attached structure that consists of 2 to 16 multi-story dwelling units placed side-by-side. Entries are on the narrow side of the unit and typically face a street or courtyard. The street façades have entrances and avoid garages.

Number of Units	1	
Typical Unit Size	1,750 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	12 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	10 ft.
	Side	0 ft.
	Parking Spaces	2 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-3, R-4[B], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	23.0% have interest in this type of unit	
	68.9% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

[B] Only permitted on corner lots that abut a non-residential use



Source: Opticos Design, "Townhouse", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/townhouse

Courtyard Building

A medium-to-large sized (1 to 3.5-story) detached structure consisting of multiple side-by-side and/or stacked dwelling units oriented around a courtyard or series of courtyards. The courtyard replaces the function of a rear yard and is more open to the street in low-intensity neighborhoods and less open to the street in more urban settings. Each unit is accessed from the courtyard and shared stairs (interior or exterior) each provide access up to 3 units.

Number of Units	12	
Typical Unit Size	765 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	30 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	15 ft.
	Side	5 ft.
	Parking Spaces	1.33 per unit
Fremont Zoning	R-4[B], R-MF, O-MU	
Survey Results	16.7% have interest in this type of unit	
	33.7% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	

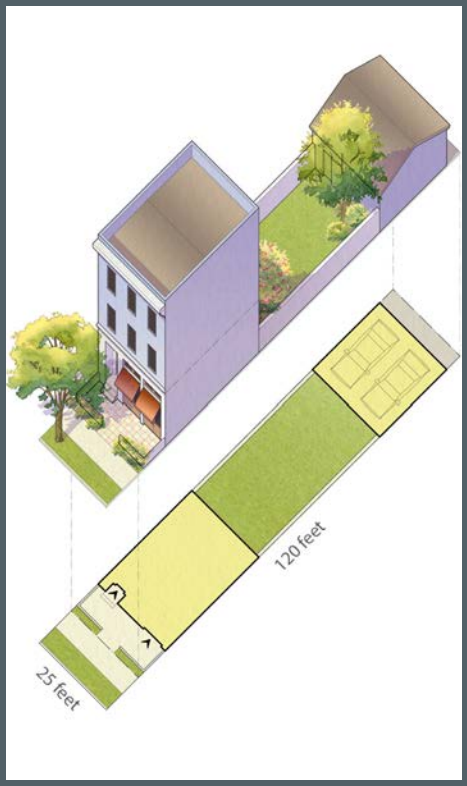
[B] Only permitted on corner lots that abut a non-residential use

Source: Opticos Design, "Courtyard Building", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/courtyard-apartments

Live-Work

A small- to medium-sized (2 to 3.5-story) attached or detached structure consisting of one dwelling unit above or behind a fire-separated flexible ground floor space that can accommodate a range of non-residential uses. The flex space and residential unit typically have separate street entrances. The flex space typically has a taller height (min. 10') and a shopfront façade.

Number of Units	1	
Typical Unit Size	1,750 sq. ft.	
Typical Density	11 du/acre	
Typical Setbacks / Parking	*Front*	10 ft.
	Side	0 ft.
	Parking Spaces	3 per unit
Fremont Zoning	O-MU, O-WL	
Survey Results	11.5% have interest in this type of unit	
	44.0% would live in a neighborhood with this type of unit	



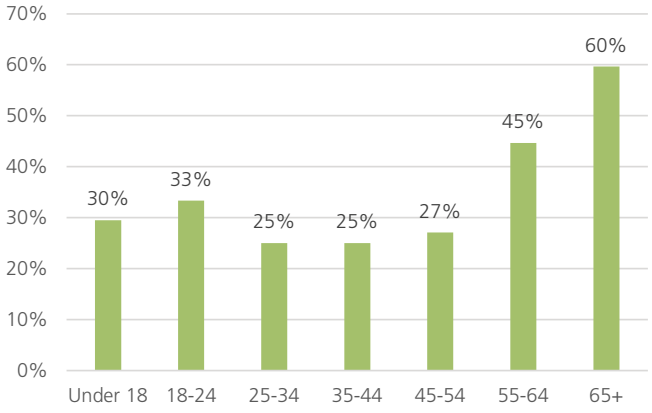
Source: Opticos Design, "Live-work", https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/live-work

All the Missing Middle housing types are currently permitted in the Fremont Community, and many zoning regulations are written in a manner conducive to developing Missing Middle housing. However, the density requirements of the multi-family district make developing higher-density residential structures challenging. It is recommended to reduce the minimum lot area required per unit and to increase the density limit (currently 11 units per acre). Additionally, building multi-family dwelling units or multiple units on a parcel triggers the residential PUD standards in some districts (R-1, R-2, and R-LD). Residential PUD standards restrict the number of two- and multi-family homes to 30% of the total dwelling units on the site, and no structure may have more than four units. It is recommended that this requirement be increased or removed.

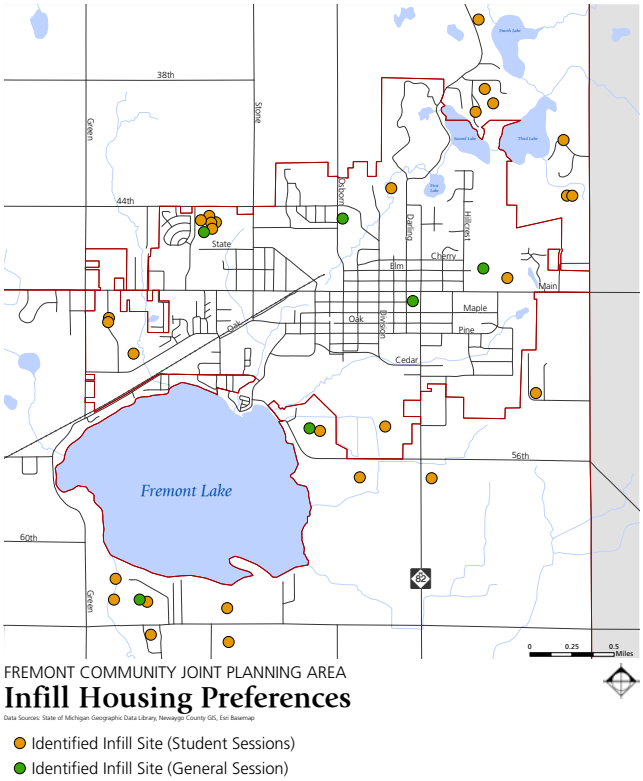
Senior Housing

In the Fremont Community Survey, 34.7% of respondents stated there was a need for senior housing in the community, the fourth-most needed housing type. Among seniors, the percentage was even higher as 59.7% stated there was a need for senior housing. The survey also indicated that seniors either want to live in a single-family home or move into a multi-family structure. Critical considerations for senior housing are accessibility and cost, and many of the Missing Middle housing types offer good solutions for senior housing. For seniors who wish to remain in their single-family home, it is important to connect them with resources to aid them in adapting their home to be accessible as they age.

Figure 9: Opinion on Senior Housing Need by Age Group (Community Survey Results)



Map 2: Infill Housing Preferences



Infill Development

Infill development is the process of selectively adding dwelling units in established neighborhoods by filling in vacant lots or up-zoning to higher-density residential development styles. One of the community engagement exercises conducted with both high school students and adults asked participants to identify areas of the community that would be best suited for infill development. Below is a list of common locations that both students and adults identified as prime areas for infill development:

- South of Fremont High School,
- Around the Waters Edge Golf Course,
- The vacant lot at the intersection of 44th Street and N. Stone Road,
- The south side of Fremont Lake, and
- Agricultural land southwest of the 48th Street and Luce Avenue intersection.

The redevelopment sites detailed in the Economic Development section of this Comprehensive Plan also identify several sites in the community appropriate for residential infill development. Strategies to encourage infill development include identifying appropriate properties and working with property owners to sell or connect with developers; zoning appropriate properties residential; and increasing residential density through zoning.

Cluster Development

Source: M. Kashef

Predevelopment Investments

Private developers are the main actors in housing construction, and profit margins for private actors often drive new construction. One strategy to encourage private developers to build new housing is to lower construction costs through predevelopment investments. Expanding water and sewer infrastructure, sidewalks, and roads before a community approves plans for a new development will lower hard construction costs for private developers and make housing construction more profitable. This strategy requires significant coordination with private developers to ensure that public infrastructure investments are not directed toward an area that developers consider unbuildable. On the flip side, however, it offers the community the advantage of influencing the location of housing development to coordinate it with transportation investments and so that it is convenient to existing and planned job centers. Community officials should identify preferred housing developers and coordinate on potential predevelopment investments that would encourage housing development in the community.

Strategies for the Rural Areas

Cluster Development

Cluster development is the process of organizing subdivisions or multi-unit developments in order to

protect and conserve as many natural features as possible. Clustered developments often reduce the minimum lot size but maintain the number of lots to achieve preservation goals. The Fremont Joint Zoning Ordinance incentivizes cluster development through density bonuses, and community officials should continue to encourage and enforce incentives for cluster development near naturally sensitive areas.

CONCLUSION

With a growing community and affordability pressure on units in the Fremont Community, there is a clear need to expand the housing stock in the area, specifically financially attainable workforce units and higher-end homes. Primary strategies to add additional units include adapting zoning regulations to be more conducive to developing Missing Middle housing units, promoting infill development, and continuing to encourage cluster housing development.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

» Promote that the Fremont Community has the most diverse and affordable housing market in Newaygo County.

» Identify and promote lots in existing neighborhoods for targeted residential infill development.

» Connect seniors with resources to aid them in increasing accessibility in their homes.

» Prioritize Missing Middle housing formats for residential developments.

» Identity reputable private housing developers for new construction in the community.

» Determine where in the community new housing should go and offer predevelopment investments to private housing developers.

Zoning

» Reduce minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirements in the R-MF zoning district.

» Increase maximum dwelling units per acre in the R-MF zoning district.

» Increase or remove the Residential PUD standards in the City of Fremont that restrict two- and multi-family units.

» Continue to incentivize cluster development by offering density bonuses.

» Promote affordable housing in areas within walking distance of essential services.

Sources

1 Rosen, K. "Housing is Critical Infrastructure: Social and Economic Benefits of Building More Housing", 2021, https://www.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/documents/Housing-is-Critical-Infrastructure-Social-and-Economic-Benefits-of-Building-More-Housing-6-15-2021.pdf

2 "Out of Reach – The High Cost of Housing", National Income Housing Coalition, 2021, https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2021/Out-of-Reach_2021.pdf

3 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP04 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter Township, Newaygo County, and State of Michigan

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP04 & B25004 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter Township, Newaygo County, and State of Michigan

7 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP04 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter Township, Newaygo County, and State of Michigan

8 Bowen National Research, "Preliminary Housing Analysis – Fremont, Michigan", October 8, 2021.

4 Natural Features

As communities have grown outward over the past 100 years, the natural environment has been consumed inefficiently in favor of sprawling development. This degradation is due, in part, to a lack of understanding of nature's valuable ecosystem services and the location of sensitive natural features. Only recently have jurisdictions started taking substantial steps that integrate the natural and built environment, and the Fremont Community has shown a positive interest and intent to preserve its natural features. This section of the Fremont Community Comprehensive Growth and Management Plan will inventory the area's natural features, highlight their importance to planning, and outline preservation strategies.

LAND

Land Cover

The federal government undertakes a detailed land cover survey of the country every five years. This analysis is based on aerial and satellite imagery, and it provides a detailed picture of land cover types as shown on the map titled "Natural Land Cover" for the Fremont Community. Wetlands and developed land covers are excluded from the map; wetlands are excluded because the state maintains a more detailed record (discussed in the following section), and characteristics of developed land are discussed in the existing land use chapter. The table titled "Natural Land Cover" details the types and percentages of natural land cover in the Fremont Community.

Natural land covers represent about 78% of the total land in the Fremont Community, which highlights the area's wealth of natural resources. The remaining 22% of land cover is classified as developed land, ranging from low-intensity to high-intensity developed land. Of the natural land, roughly 78% are cultivated crops, a result of the community's deep agricultural roots. While cultivated crops are classified as natural land, decades of topographical and morphological manipulation have transitioned it beyond what would be considered a "natural state." The use of pesticides or other agricultural byproducts may have a negative impact on the natural community; therefore, all agricultural land should not be considered as completely "natural." The other prevalent land cover is deciduous forests (15.4%). All other natural land covers combine for 6.7% of the total natural land which demonstrates that the area is heavily dominated by agriculture and scattered forests.

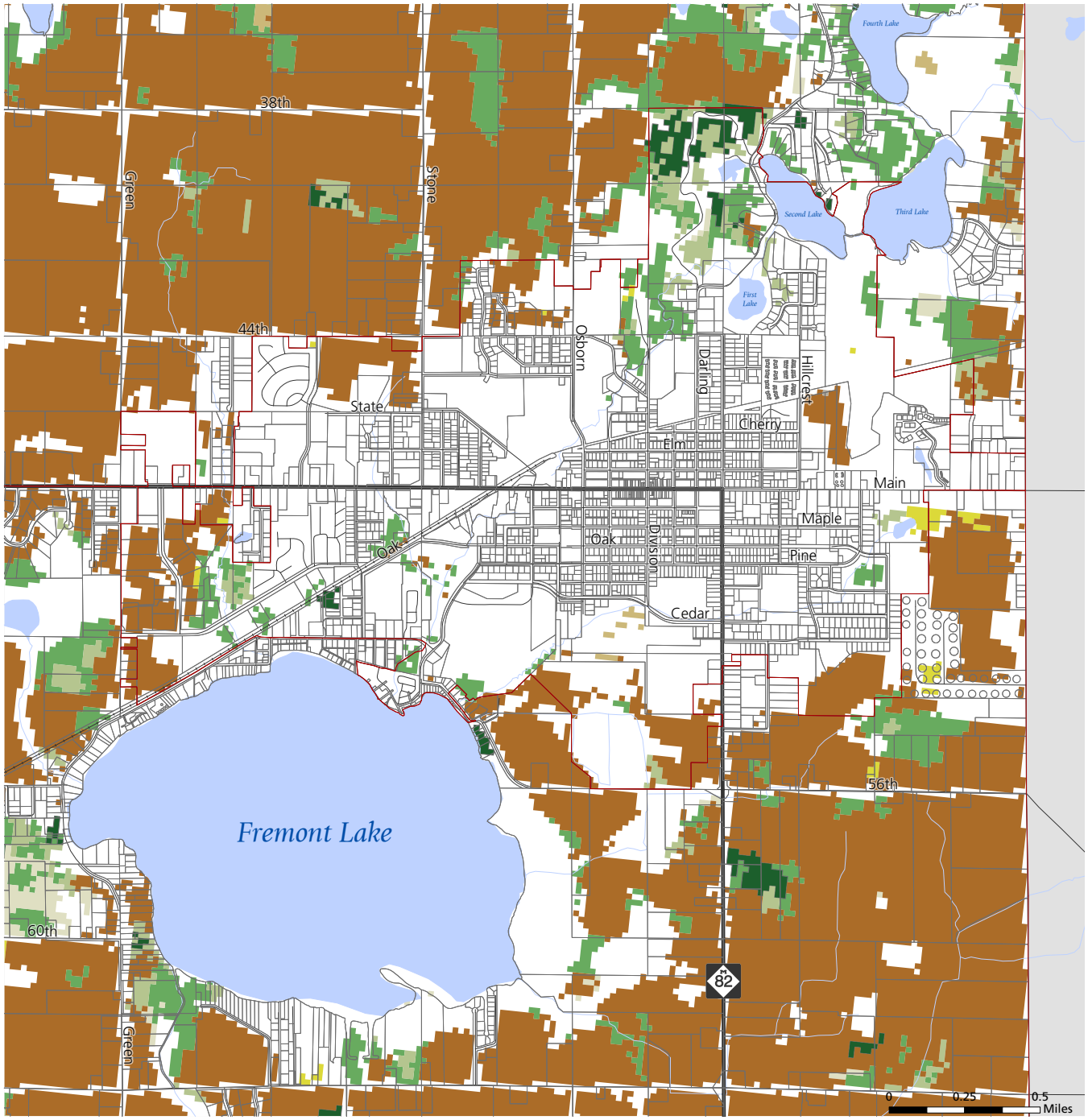
Table 12: Natural Land Cover

Land Cover	Acres	Percent Natural Land	Percent Total Land
Evergreen Forest	568	1.6%	1.2%
Deciduous Forest	5,545	15.4%	12.0%
Mixed Forest	754	2.1%	1.6%
Shrub/Scrub	133.5	0.4%	0.3%
Grassland	857.5	2.4%	1.9%
Hay/Pasture	57.6	0.2%	0.1%
Cultivated Crops	27,987.6	77.9%	60.6%
Barren Land	11.6	0.0%	0.0%
Total	**35,915**	**100%**	**77.8%**

Source: National Land Cover Database, 2016

Agricultural fields.

Map 3: Natural Land Cover



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Natural Land Cover

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap, NLCD

- Evergreen Forest
- Deciduous Forest
- Mixed Forest
- Shrub/Scrub
- Grassland
- Hay/Pasture
- Cultivated Crops
- Barren Land
- Developed Land

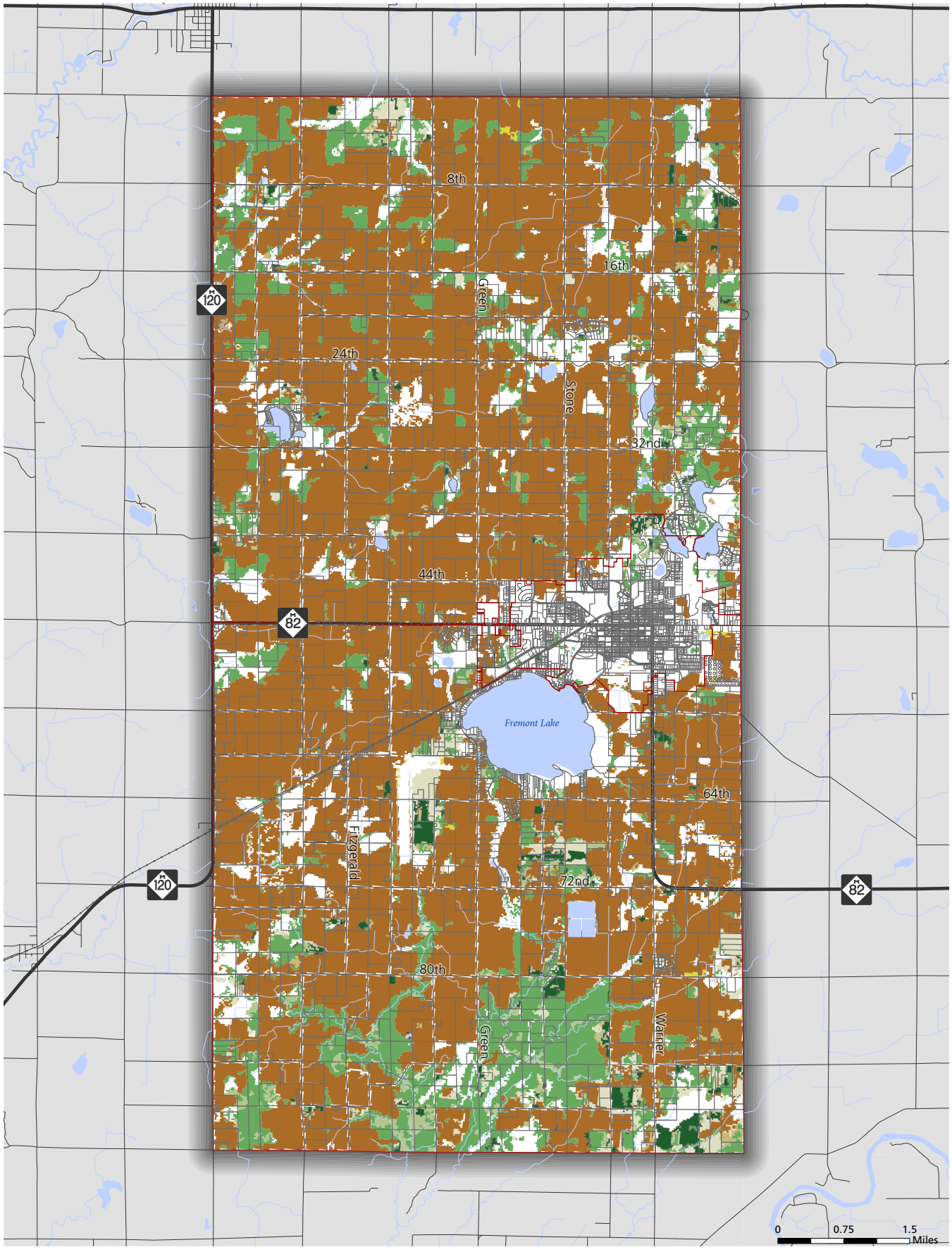

8th
16th
24th
32nd
44th
64th
72nd
80th
Green
Stone
Fitzgerald
Green
Wainer
120
82
120
82
Fremont Lake
0
0.75
1.5
Miles

Table 13: Wetlands

	Acres	Percent
Freshwater Emergent	1,069	34.2%
Forested/Shrub	2,059	65.8%
Total of Existing	**3,128**	**100%**
Restorative Wetlands	6,822	–
Total	**9,950**	**–**

Source: State of Michigan

Types of Wetlands

Freshwater Emergent: characterized by year-round standing water with moss and lichen vegetation – common names for emergent wetlands include a marsh or a fen.

Forested/Shrub: characterized by vegetation including hydrophilic tree species like willow, black spruce, and white cedar. Forested wetlands also have less or shallower standing water and may be characterized as a swamp rather than a marsh.

Wetlands

Wetlands are one of the most valuable and sensitive natural features in Michigan due to the unique ecosystem services that they provide. Wetlands absorb excess water and act as a filtration device by capturing surface water runoff and slowly infiltrating it into the groundwater. Wetlands also provide a unique ecosystem habitat for flora and fauna, making them essential for the healthy biodiversity of a community.[1] Furthermore, wetlands provide recreational benefits, especially when incorporated into larger recreational areas.

There are two main types of wetlands, freshwater emergent and shrub/forested. The distinction between the two wetland types is based on the amount and type of vegetation and the water saturation of the soil. The table titled "Wetlands" details the types and sizes of wetlands in the Fremont Community.

In addition to identifying existing wetlands, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) also identifies where wetland restoration is possible. Areas where wetlands were

Branstrom Park wetlands.

Tree cover around Second Lake.

historically located and have disappeared, likely due to development, are considered restorative. These "restorative" areas are the best places for any additional wetland expansion or rehabilitation because the natural environment has already demonstrated an ability to support a wetland.

As evident in the map titled "Wetlands," large portions of Sheridan Charter Township were once wetlands and have been converted to farmland. Smaller patches of wetlands are scattered throughout the Community, and concentrations of wetlands exist along larger lakes and streams.

Wetlands over five acres in size are regulated by EGLE, but those that are under five acres are less protected. Protections for smaller wetlands are contingent on their distance to waterbodies (those within 500 feet of a waterbody receive protection) or if EGLE classifies the wetland as essential.[2] There are 156 wetlands over five acres in the Fremont Community, accounting for 66% of all the wetland acres. Therefore, the majority of wetlands are protected by EGLE. However, local municipalities have the authority to adopt more stringent wetland regulations to cover the gap between smaller wetlands and five-acre wetlands. The Joint Zoning Ordinance requires that no removal of vegetative cover or grading shall be permitted within 25 feet of a wetland, and septic systems shall be setback at least 100 feet from a wetland.[3] This language could be strengthened to better protect wetlands by adding structures to the 100-feet setback requirements.

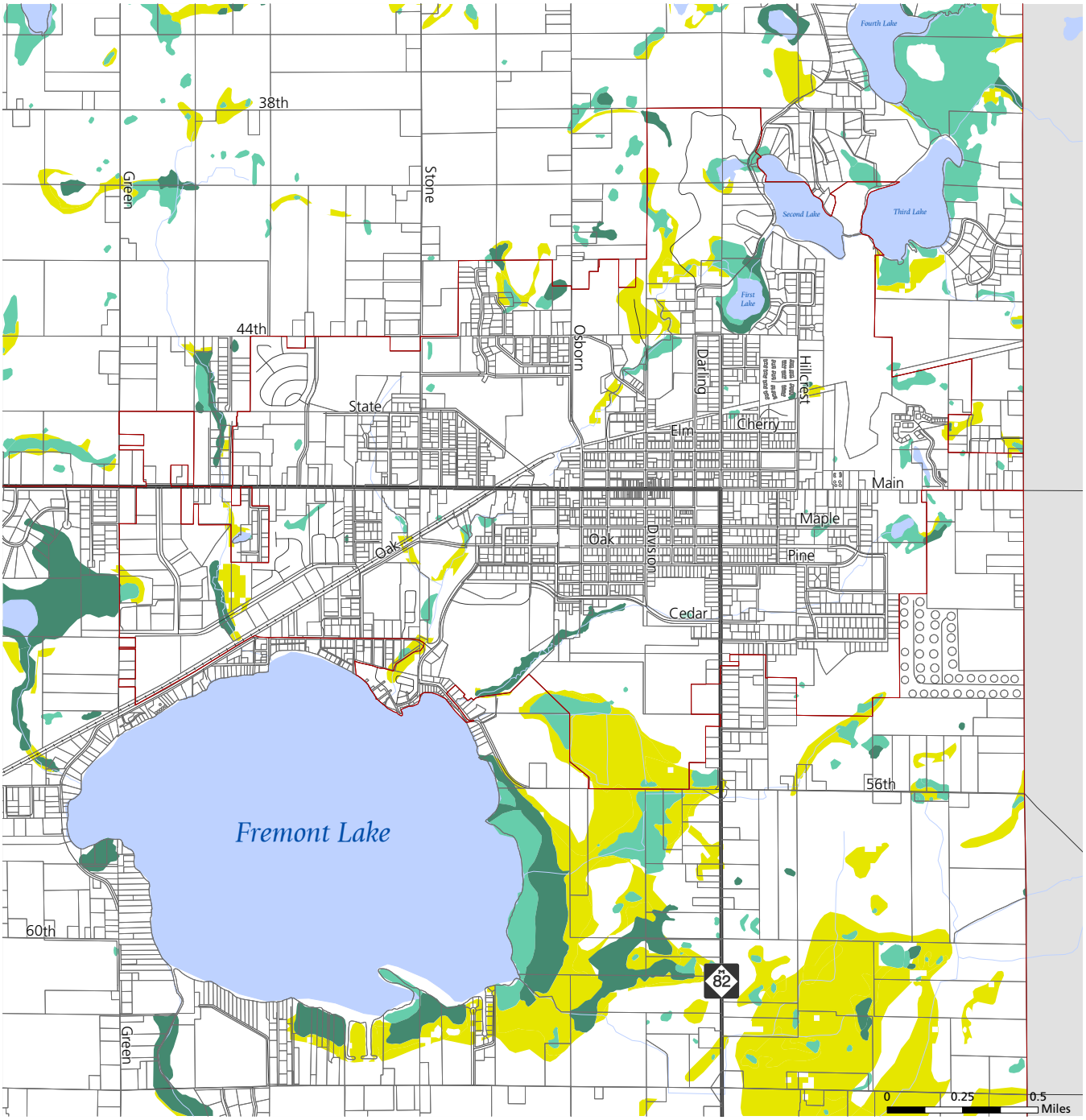
Tree Cover

Similar to the process of determining different land cover types, the federal government quantifies the tree canopy coverage for the entire United States, as can be seen in the map titled "Tree Canopy."

The agricultural development of the Fremont Community means that many historic forests were likely cleared for farmland, leaving the patchwork of tree coverage. The denser areas of tree coverage are in northwestern Dayton Township following several small streams; around First, Second, Third, and Fourth Lakes; and in southern Sheridan Charter Township along Brooks Creek. The existing areas with dense coverage should be preserved through conservation easements or purchasing land for preservation purposes. Dense areas of trees provide valuable species habitat and stormwater infiltration. A fragmented system of tree canopy can make it challenging for flora and fauna to find enough food and space, decreasing the overall health and quality of the ecosystem.

The City of Fremont is a recognized Tree City by the Arbor Day Foundation, signifying the City's commitment to the urban tree canopy. Standards for Tree City classification include: establishing a community tree board, establishing a tree ordinance, spending $2 per capita on urban forestry, and celebrating Arbor Day.[4] The City of Fremont has been a participating member since the early 1990s.

Map 4: Wetlands

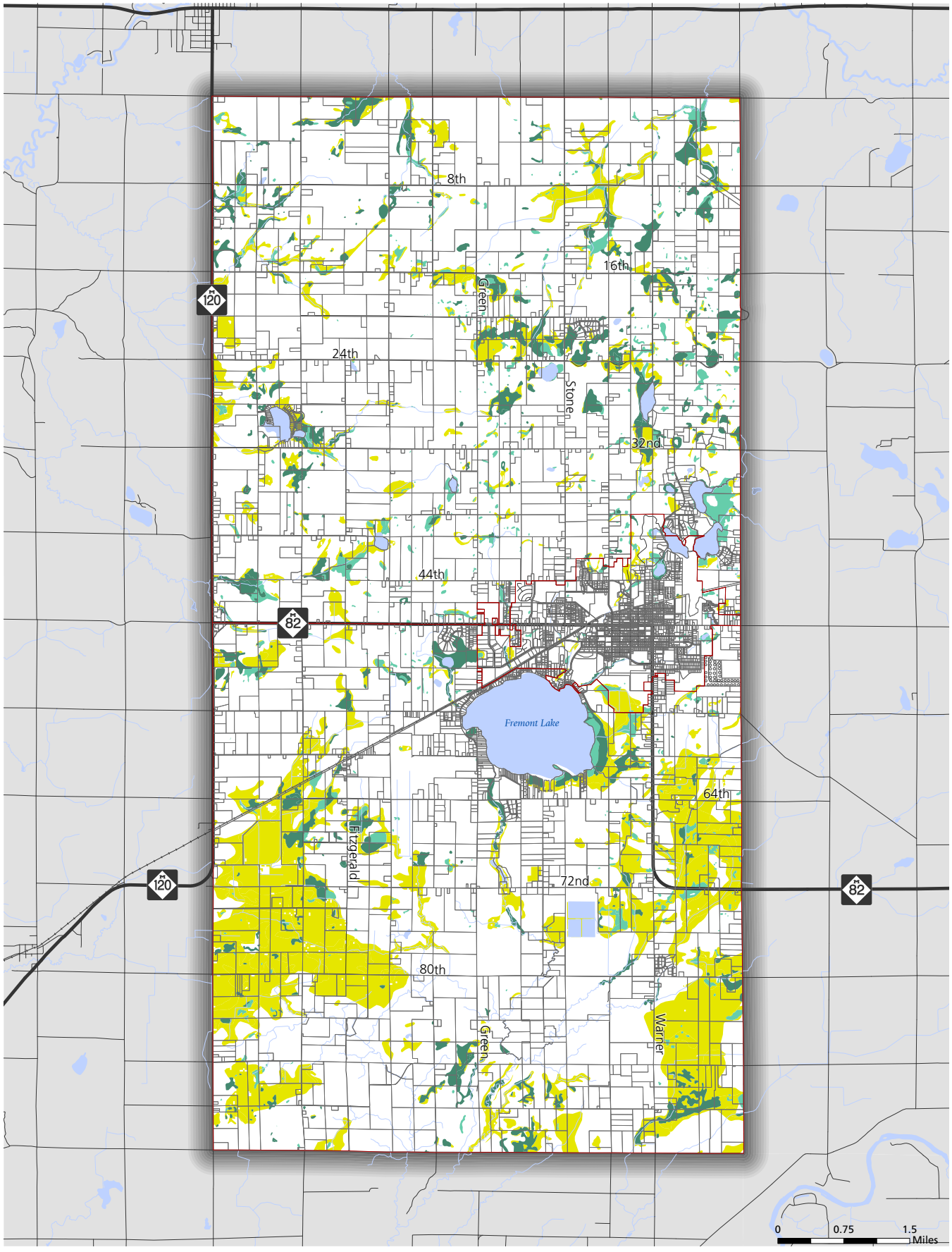


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

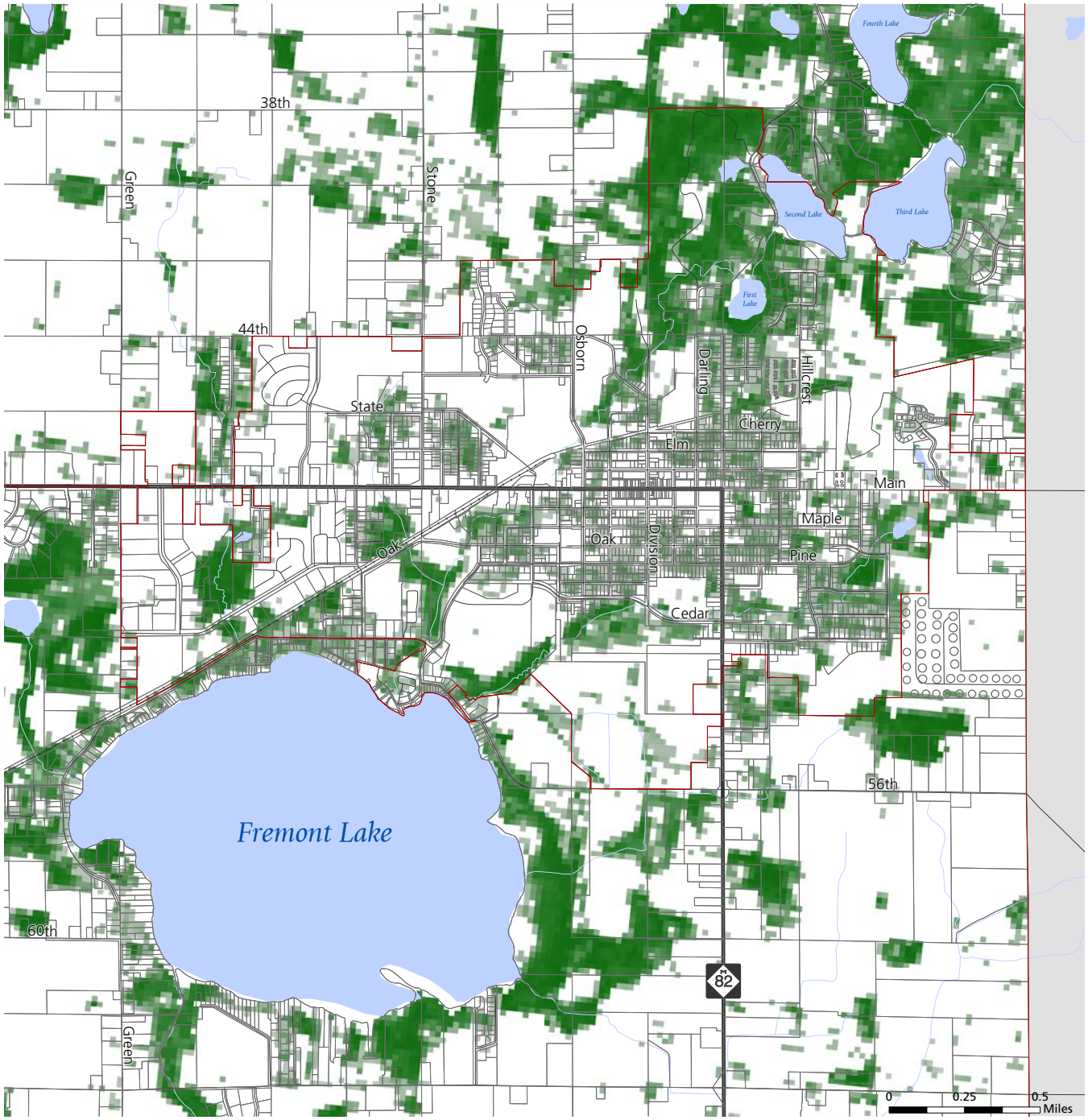
Wetlands

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Emergent Wetland
- Forested Wetland
- Restorative Wetland


8th
16th
24th
32nd
44th
64th
72nd
80th
Green
Stone
Fitzgerald
Warner
Fremont Lake
120
82
0
0.75
1.5
Miles

Map 5: Tree Canopy



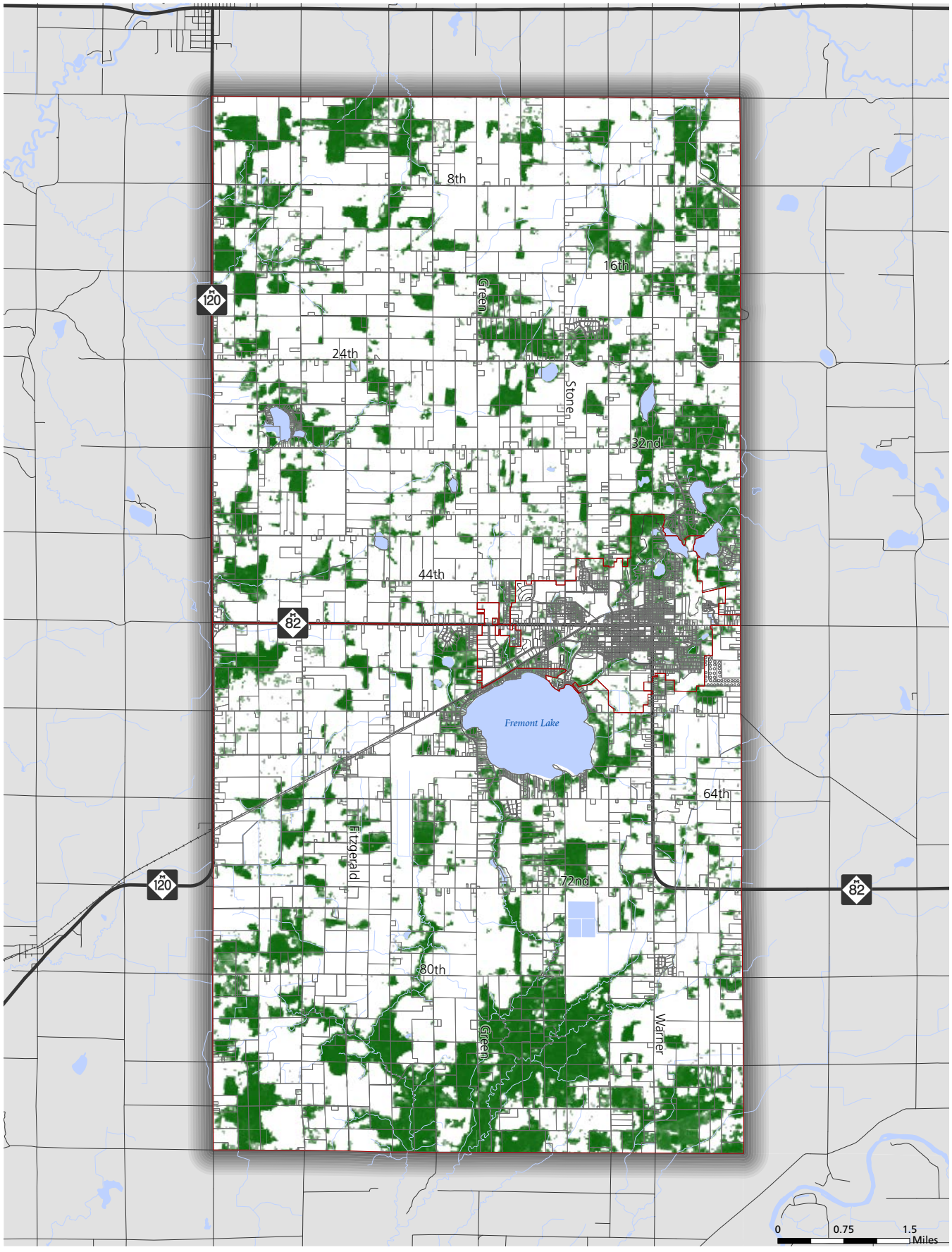
FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Tree Canopy

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

Tree Canopy Coverage

0% 100%


8th
16th
24th
32nd
44th
64th
72nd
80th
Green
Stone
Fitzgerald
Warner
Fremont Lake
120
82
0
0.75
1.5
Miles

WATER

Watershed

A watershed is a geographic basin of water drainage that is defined by high points in topography. Because water and topography do not follow jurisdictional boundaries, jurisdictions are often in more than one watershed. Therefore, land use and pollutants in one watershed can impact multiple communities. This cross-jurisdictional relationship underscores how critical it is to consider how land use impacts water quality, because land use decisions made in the Fremont Community impact others in the watershed.

The Fremont Community sits within two watersheds: the Muskegon and Pere Marquette-White Watersheds. A summary of available watershed management plans is outlined in the table titled "Watershed Management Plans." However, the large geographic scope of the watersheds makes it challenging to coordinate land uses within each watershed. Sub-watersheds are smaller areas of drainage within each watershed.

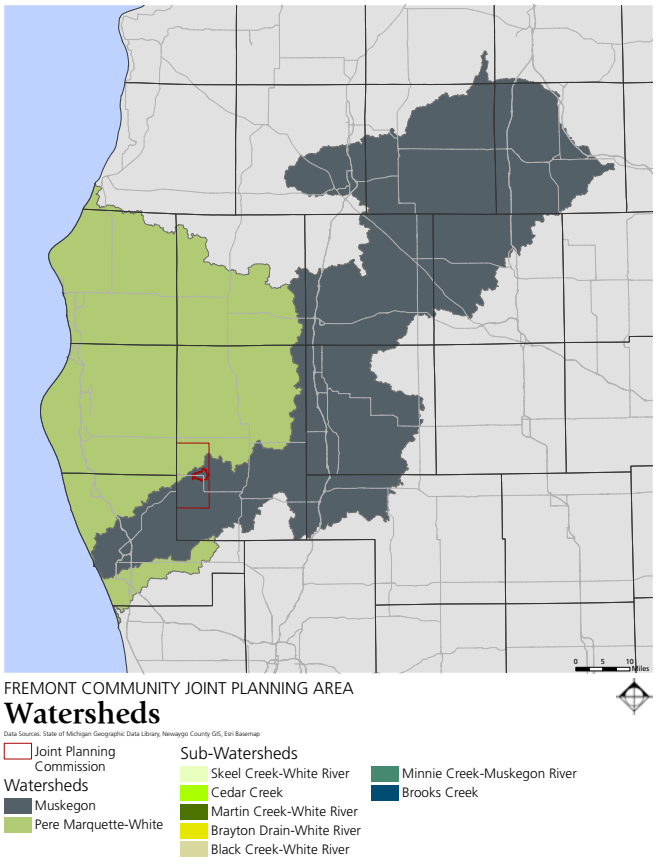
There are seven sub-watersheds that intersect the Fremont Community. Many of the sub-watersheds that intersect the Fremont Community do not have watershed protection plans so no specific recommendations and best management practices are available for these drainage basins.

Major Features

Fremont Lake

Fremont Lake is the central hydrological feature in the community. The lake supports multiple recreational uses including swimming, boating, and fishing. The calm waters and ease of access make it one of the premier attractions in the community. According to a 2016 water quality study by Michigan State University, Fremont Lake is classified as a mesotrophic lake.[5] Trophic status is a measure of lake algae productivity and is commonly used to establish a lake's pristineness. Trophic status falls into one of three categories: oligotrophic, mesotrophic, or eutrophic. Eutrophic lakes have high productivity, meaning that they are dense with the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorous

Map 6: Watersheds



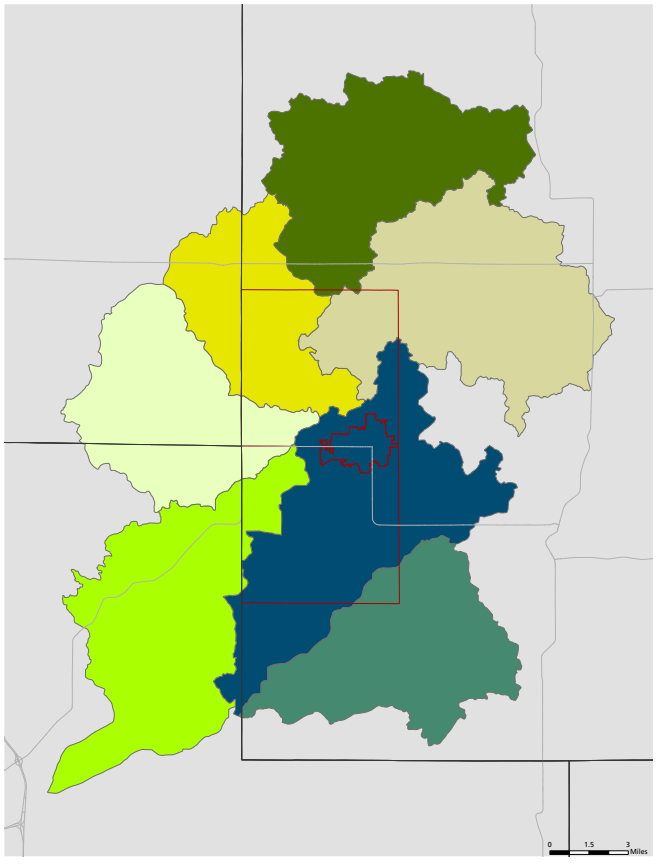


Table 14: Watershed Management Plans

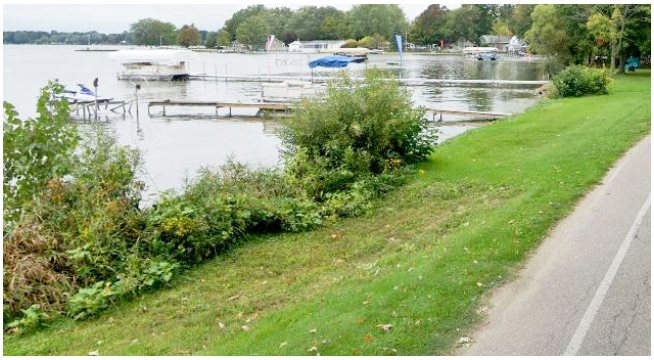
	Muskegon River Watershed Plan*	Pere Marquette River Management Plan**
Threats	Thermal pollution, excess nutrients, changes to hydrological flow	Not listed
Desired Uses	Recreational, aesthetic, cultural	Recreation, aesthetics, cultural, fishery
Goals	Enhance and protect fisheries, control invasive species, sound land use management, restore natural hydrologic flow, continue research, promote stewardship and sustainable economic development	Intergovernmental cooperation, riparian restoration, aquatic habitat restoration, threatened species protection

* "Muskegon River Watershed Project", Grand Valley State Annis Water Resources Institute, https://mrwa.org/wp-content/uploads/repository/MuskegonManagementPlan.pdf
** "Comprehensive River Management Plan – Pere Marquette National Scenic River", United States Department of Agriculture, https://www.rivers.gov/documents/plans/pere-marquette-plan.pdf

and therefore provide robust support to plant life. However, as these plants move through their life cycle and eventually decompose, the process removes oxygen from the water and thus it is no longer able to support animal life. These conditions make eutrophic lakes the least "pristine."

In the 1970s, Fremont Lake was considered a hypereutrophic lake, indicating that the status of the lake has changed over the past 50 years due to improving water quality. The installation of a wastewater treatment plant in 1970 has contributed to the increasing water quality by removing nitrogen and phosphorous from wastewater before it is can seep into the lake. A 2020 wastewater treatment study showed that expanding the plant would allow homes on the south side of the lake to connect to the system, which would decrease the risk to water quality from failing septic systems.

The report identified reducing organic matter and nutrient runoff into the lake as the most pressing goal for preserving and continuing to improve water quality. Expanding the distance of greenbelts and specifying planting requirements for greenbelts is one strategy to reduce runoff into Fremont Lake. While greenbelts are effective at creating a structure setback, many people mow grass within the greenbelt. Mowed grass in a greenbelt does little to capture runoff and functions similar to impervious surfaces because of its low infiltration rate. Prohibiting mowing within a greenbelt and requiring native plantings would increase the infiltration capacity of runoff, reducing pollution, particularly pollution from pesticides and nitrogen-based fertilizers, into Fremont Lake and other waterbodies. Other strategies to reduce runoff pollution include reducing impervious surfaces in developed areas, limiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers (especially nitrogen-based ones), and increasing infiltration via green stormwater infrastructure.



Mowed grass along Fremont Lake.

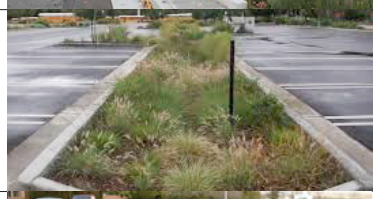
First, Second, Third, and Fourth Lake

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Lakes are a chain of smaller lakes northeast of the City of Fremont. These lakes are dotted with shoreline homes and provide recreational benefits for boating and fishing. While there is no water quality report for these lakes, their small sizes and more vegetated shores indicate that they are likely mesotrophic lakes. Similar efforts to expand vegetative buffers and natural areas around the lake, reduce impervious surface in developed areas, control harmful chemicals, and increase infiltration via green stormwater infrastructure are applicable to these lakes as well.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is broadly defined as "the range of measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement, or other permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspirate stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters."[6] The main goal of green infrastructure is to manage the flow of water into the ground instead of into the sewer system. Green infrastructure has many benefits, one of which is reducing the impact of impervious surfaces by facilitating the movement of water into the ground or into vegetation so that it does not overload the stormwater system. Excess stormwater runoff can negatively impact waterbodies by carrying nutrients and pollutants from the land into the water. The table titled "Green Infrastructure Methods" shows several examples of green infrastructure techniques.

Table 15: Green Infrastructure Methods

Method	Description	Example
Rainwater Harvesting	Systems that collect and store rainwater for later use.	
Rain Gardens	Shallow, vegetated gardens that collect and absorb runoff from streets, sidewalks, and roofs.	
Planter Boxes	Boxes along sidewalks, streets, or parking lots that collect and absorb rainwater. These also serve as streetscaping elements.	
Bioswales	Linear and vegetated channels, typically adjacent to a road or parking lot, that slow, retain, and filter stormwater.	
Permeable Pavement	Pavement that absorbs, filters, and stores rainwater.	
Green Roofs	Vegetated roofs that absorb and filter rainwater.	
Tree Canopy	Trees reduce and slow stormwater flow.	

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

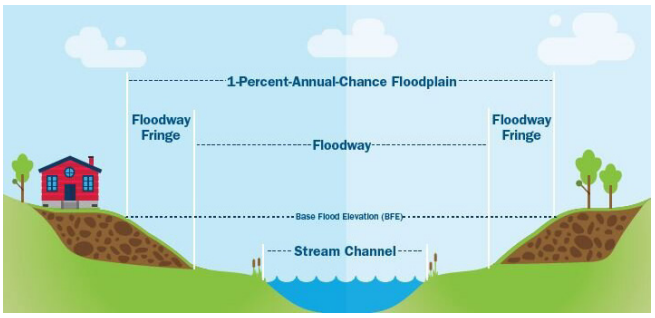
Green infrastructure improvements may be included in public investment with streetscape updates, or in private investment as a requirement for new development. Places that generate a large degree of runoff such as large parking lots, dense groupings of buildings, or manufacturing centers should be targeted for green infrastructure development. To incentivize green infrastructure for new developments, jurisdictions may issue credits towards landscaping requirements for preserving mature existing trees or give density bonuses for additional buildable area if green infrastructure is included in the development.

Flood Risk

Flooding becomes more frequent and severe as structures and impervious surfaces develop over natural areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates three categories of flood hazard: the floodway, the 100-year flood area, or the 500-year flood area.[7] The floodway is the channel directly adjacent to a body of water that is above water during periods of normal water elevation. The fringe areas of the floodplain (the entire area at risk of flooding) are either the 100-year flood area or the 500-year flood area (see the figure titled "Floodway v. Floodplain"). These areas are estimated to be inundated with water during a 100-year or a 500-year flood event. In other terms, land in the 100-year flood area has an annual flood risk of 1% and land in the 500-year has an annual risk of 0.2%. However, the frequency of heavy storms increased 24% during the period 1981-2010 as compared to 1951-1980, and the amount of precipitation in those storms increased by 20%,[8] documenting a pattern of rising frequency and severity for 100-year and 500-year storms that affects each parcel's annual risk of flooding. Natural systems like wetlands and forests significantly reduce the risk and impact of flooding by providing the water a natural place to be stored and eventually infiltrated into the ground, making them increasingly more valuable as flooding becomes more prevalent and severe.

There is relatively little land area in the Fremont Community that is located in the FEMA-designated floodplain, which was updated in 2015. In the designated floodplain are Lake Fremont shorefront properties, the large wetland south of the high school, and the wetlands around First, Second, Third, and Fourth Lakes. The wetland areas are currently undeveloped and unlikely to be developed in the future, so flooding presents no danger in these areas. Shorefront property owners can reduce flood risk by establishing native vegetation in greenbelts or increasing the distance their structures are built from the water's edge .

Figure 10: Floodway v. Floodplain



Source: Tulsa Engineering & Planning https://www.tulsaengineering.com/our-news/2021/1/22/floodway-vs-floodplain

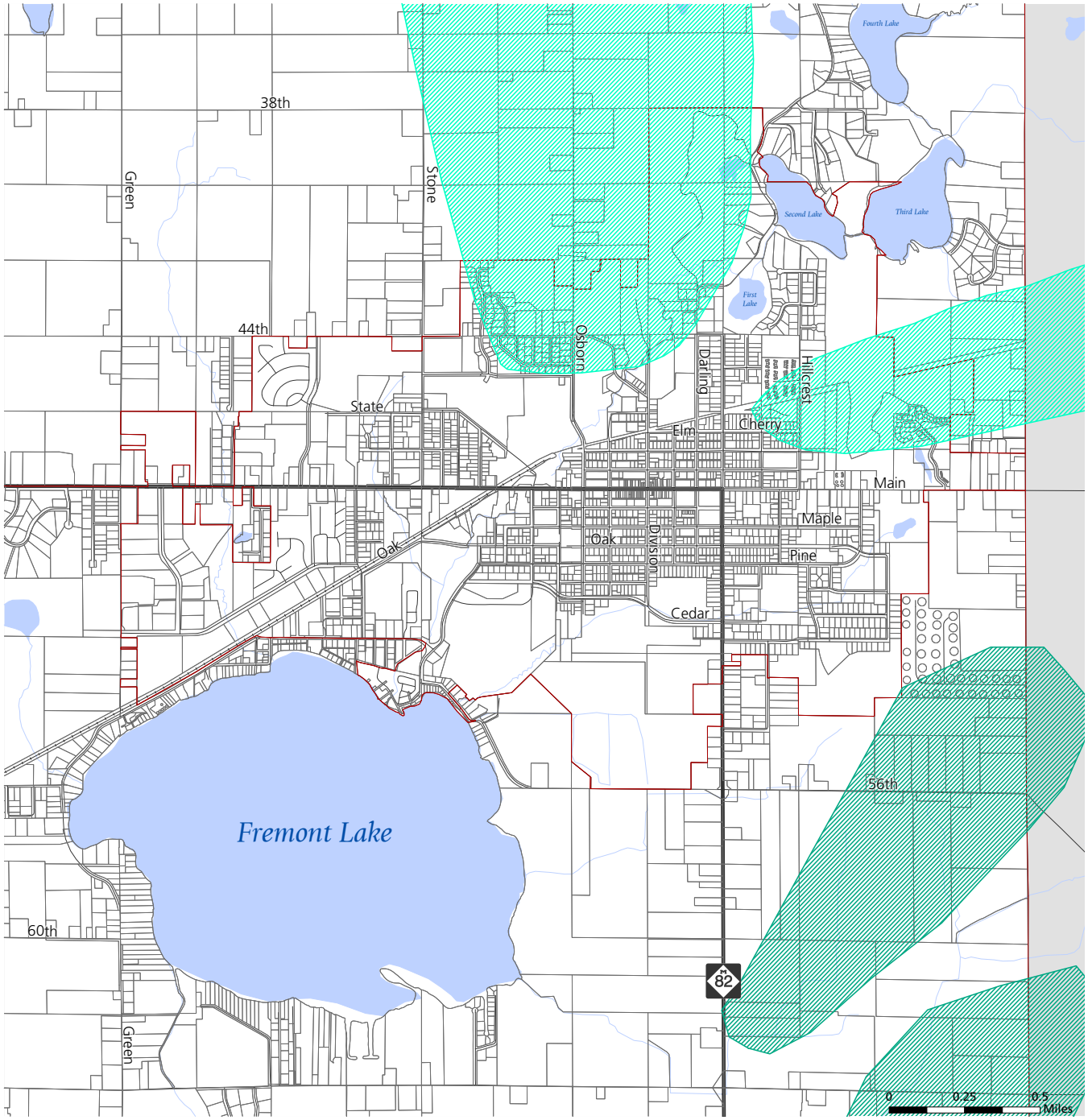
Flooding can also result from the low infiltration ability of soils. Soils with high percentages of clay are often susceptible to flooding and ponding. Structures on flooding-frequent soils will have mitigation measures or be constructed without basements.

Wellhead Preservation Areas

Groundwater is the primary source for public drinking water systems and private wells in most Michigan communities. To promote high-quality drinking water, EGLE administers the Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP). The WHPP requires participating communities to comply with a set of standards to reduce contamination risk in their groundwater. Key to the success of this program are wellhead protection areas (WHPAs). WHPAs are defined as a ten-year travel distance for contaminants around the wellhead. Therefore, the edge of the wellhead protection area is the distance it would take a contaminant to travel to the wellhead over ten years.[9]

There are seven WHPAs that intersect the Fremont Community (see the map titled "Wellhead Protection Areas"), four of them are delineated around wells located in Fremont, and three are delineated around wells in Hesperia. It is important to consider that while a well may not be in Fremont, land use decisions can still impact the water quality of neighboring communities.

Map 7: Wellhead Protection Areas

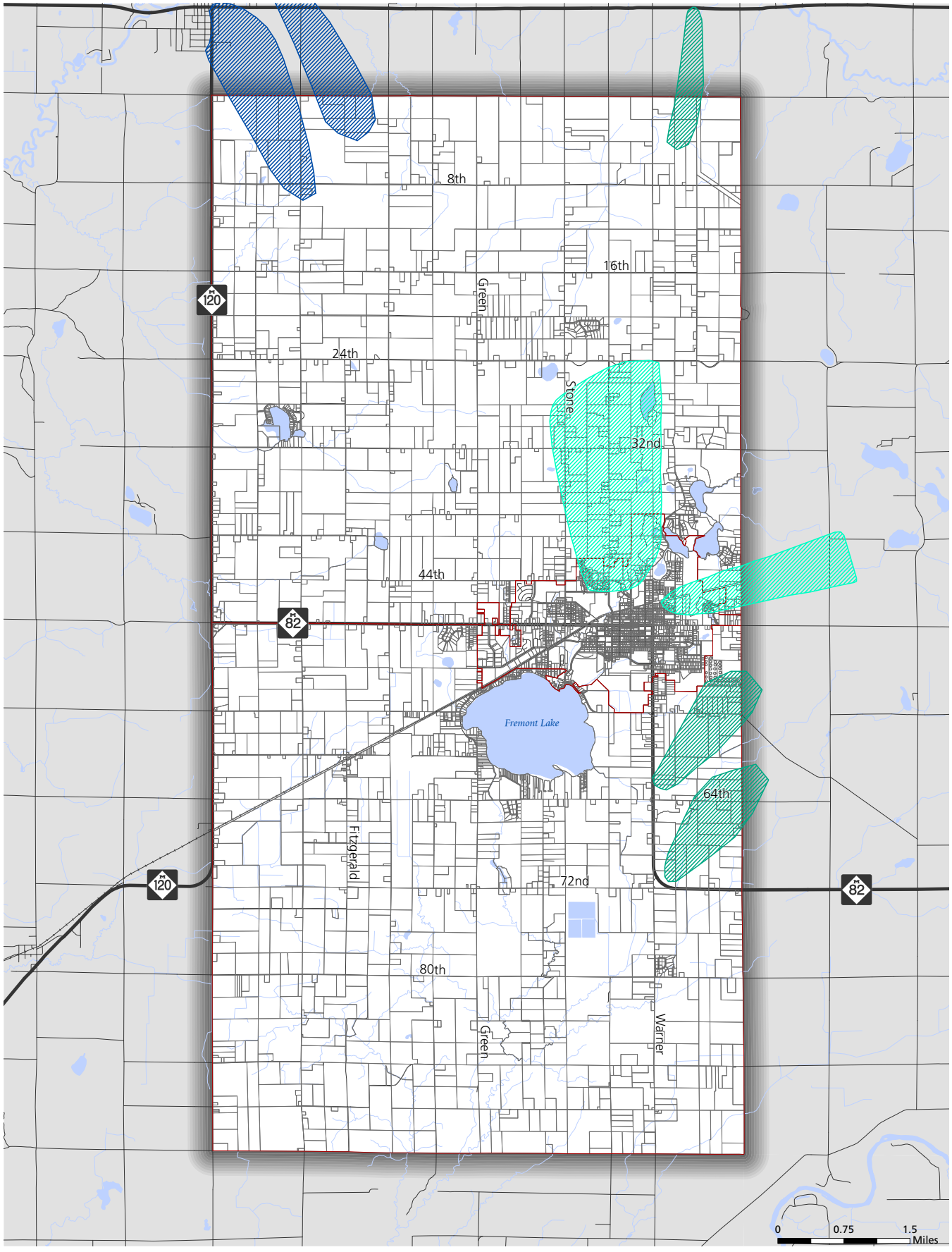


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Wellhead Protection Areas

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

Type 1 WHPA
Type 2 WHPA
Traditional WHPA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Green
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Fitzgerald
Warner
Fremont Lake
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Miles

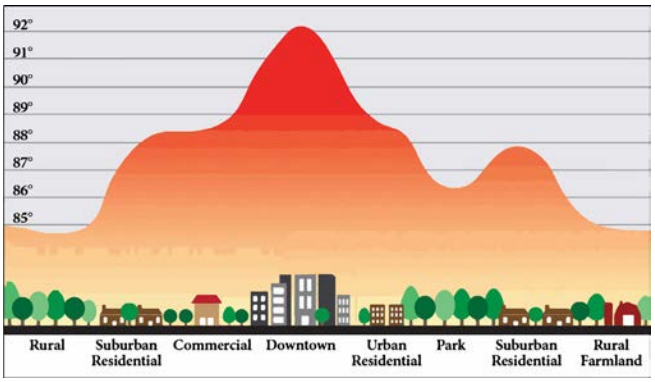
There are three types of WHPAs, all of which are present in the Fremont Community. Type 1 WHPAs are delineated around a community public water well. Type 2 WHPAs are delineated non-community public water wells (wells that supply condominiums, nursing homes, etc.). Traditional WHPAs are delineated around wells that are not classified as Type 1 or Type 2.[10] The Fremont Community does not participate in the WHPP; therefore, to ensure that the quality of drinking water is preserved, it is recommended that the Community pursue enrollment in the WHPP.

Time of Sale Inspection Ordinances

Residents in the Fremont Community receive water and discharge wastewater one of two ways: via the municipal water and sewage system or via a private well and septic system. While private wells and septic systems do not inherently pose a risk, aging systems can experience failure and release biological contamination into the surrounding area, including into the nearby groundwater or surface water. Leakage can be exacerbated by heavy precipitation, and as storms become more severe and frequent, private systems are an increasing threat to water quality.[11]

Currently, Michigan is the only state in the U.S. that does not have a statewide septic code, meaning that each local health department is responsible for septic codes and inspections.[12] Additionally, there is no existing mechanism in Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, or Sheridan Charter Township for septic or well systems to be regularly inspected. However, when septic systems fail in the City of Fremont, the property owners are required to hook up to the wastewater system. Often when a property is sold, the buyer may request an inspection of the well and septic systems, but an inspection is not required in the property sale/transfer process. Local communities have the authority to adopt police power ordinances that require inspections of the well and septic systems when a property is transferred to a new owner. These ordinances are commonly referred to as Time of Sale or Transfer (TOST) Inspection Ordinances. Brooks Township is the only community in Newaygo County that has a TOST Inspection Ordinance.

Figure 11: Urban Heat Island



Source: Stewart, L., "Summer in the City: Seeking Relief from Urban Heat Islands", Bay Area Monitor, Aug. 2017. https://bayareamonitor.org/article/summer-in-the-city-seeking-relief-from-urban-heat-islands/

AIR

Surface Temperature

The urban heat island is the phenomenon wherein urbanized areas have higher temperatures than the surrounding areas. This is a result of impervious surfaces, building mass, and a lack of natural vegetation, such that vertical and horizontal surfaces retain heat and radiate it back into the surrounding area. This can be especially dangerous to sensitive groups such as the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. While Fremont is not developed at the scale of larger cities, the denser downtown areas can still experience higher temperatures than the surrounding areas. Increasing the vegetative cover in the City and decreasing impervious surfaces will reduce the urban heat island effect in Fremont. This is also the primary recommended strategy to reduce stormwater runoff, highlighting how this strategy would have multiple benefits.

CONCLUSION

The inventory and analysis of the Fremont Community's natural features highlights a lack of tree canopy in the Townships, opportunities for local wetland preservation, and the progress that Fremont Lake has made over the past 50 years. Currently, the tree canopy in the Fremont Community is very fragmented, a legacy of heavy agricultural development. This presents challenges for local flora and fauna that benefit

from contiguous sections of habitat. However, the existing dense groupings of tree canopy, especially in more developed areas, provide stormwater management and aesthetic benefits, and expanding coverage would compound the positive impacts. Furthermore, the wetlands in the Fremont Community, especially those under five acres, have very limited protection, meaning that property owners may infill or remove these high-value natural features. Adopting a wetland preservation ordinance would ensure that wetlands are adequately preserved. Finally, the water quality and aquatic plant assessment of Fremont Lake illustrates that the water quality has improved over the past few decades, but threats and contamination still persist. Establishing stricter greenbelt regulations such as prohibiting mowed lawns within greenbelts and requiring native plantings would reduce the amount of runoff pollution into waterbodies and continue moving the water quality of Fremont Lake in a positive direction.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

» Investigate conservation easements for areas of dense tree canopy cover.

» Pursue enrollment in the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Wellhead Protection Program.

» Explore a TOST ordinance for water well and septic systems to protect water quality.

» Expand the wastewater treatment plant to connect homes on the south side of Fremont Lake to the wastewater system.

Zoning

» Add green stormwater infrastructure requirements for developments that exceed a certain percentage of impervious surface.

» Add native planting requirements to the greenbelt requirements.

» Development Review

» Encourage the use of porous paving in parking lots, sidewalks, and other paved spaces.

Sources

1 Wetland Identification and Delineation. Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, www.watershedcouncil.org/wetland-identification.html.

2 Part 303 Wetlands Protections, State of Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, https://app.asana.com/0/inbox/666845507352317/1201293714551366/1201294216242564

3 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance, Section 4-3.08, https://fremont.ordinances.org/23-3-agricultural-residential-district-ag-3#4-3-08

4 Tree City USA, The Arbor Day Foundation, https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/#recognizedSection

5 De Palma-Dow, A., "Water Quality and Aquatic Plant Assessment-Fremont Lake Final Report", Michigan State University Extension, https://www.cityoffremont.net/DocumentCenter/View/888/MSU-2016-Fremont-Lake-Water-Quality--Plant-Assessment-Report?bidId=

6 "What is Green Infrastructure?", United States Environmental Protection Agency. https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure

7 "Flood Zones," Federal Emergency Management Administration, https://www.fema.gov/glossary/flood-zones

8 "Extreme Precipitation," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments (GLISA), https://glisa.umich.edu/resources-tools/climate-impacts/extreme-precipitation/ accessed March 2022

9 "Wellhead Protection", Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313_3675_3695---,00.html

10 Managing Water for Health, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, https://managingwaterforhealth.org/

11 "A Changing Climate: Managing Water for Health", Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, https://www.managingwaterforhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/Managing_Water_for_Health_March-5.pdf

12 "A Changing Climate: Managing Water for Health", Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, https://www.managingwaterforhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/Managing_Water_for_Health_March-5.pdf

5 Facilities & Community Culture

One of the principal functions of local government is to provide services and amenities to residents, such as public safety and recreation. The Fremont Community's spirit of collaboration in planning efforts also extends to the community facilities and cultural assets of the area. Public safety services span jurisdictional boundaries, and a wide range of residents attend community spaces and events.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Water and Sewer

The City of Fremont is currently served by a municipal water and wastewater system. The system operates on eight deep wells with a capacity of seven million gallons per day. An expansion in 1993 increased service to the Gerber Products Manufacturing Company and the growing number of commercial and industrial customers.[1] The 2020 water testing report indicated that the levels of contaminates in the water supply were substantially below concerning levels.[2]

Wastewater is routed to the Wastewater Treatment Facility located on 72nd Street in Sheridan Charter Township, and the excess effluent is used to irrigate City-owned agricultural fields.[3] There is also a Sheridan Charter Township sewer district that serves residents along the north and west sides of Fremont Lake that is connected to the City's system. Sheridan Charter Township is currently analyzing options for expanding the district to the south side of Fremont Lake. The current system capacity is 124 million gallons, and engineering plans have been recently completed to expand system capacity by 50 million gallons to address recent and future growth in demand for service.

Solid Waste Disposal

Within the City of Fremont, solid waste disposal is contracted through Republic Services and provided on a weekly curbside basis. Recycling, contracted through Cart-Right Recycling, is also provided curbside in the City for an additional fee. In 2021, an average of 804 curbside recycling stops were made in the City each week.[4] There is also a county-run recycling drop-off center that is available to the entire community. Residents outside of City limits have access to curbside solid waste disposal on a private contract basis.

Public Safety

Fire

The Fremont Fire Department is the sole firefighting service for the City of Fremont and Sheridan Charter Township. The department also provides service to parts of Dayton Township, Garfield Township, and Sherman Township. In 2021, the department responded to 721 calls, 44% of which were in the City of Fremont, 16% of which were in Sheridan Charter Township, and 11% of which were in Dayton Township.[5] The Fire Department has 12 staff persons who manage downed power lines, fire prevention, fire suppression, rescues, and other emergency services. The cost of fire insurance is driven, in part, by the performance of the Fire Department. On a scale of 1 (highest) to 10 (lowest), the Fremont Fire Department has a rating of 5, one of the best among part-time departments in Michigan.[6]

Police

The Fremont Police Department has 14 staff, eight of whom are full-time officers. Officers are sworn deputy sheriffs so they may provide police support outside the City of Fremont limits. The Police Department supports a business watch program that is designed to assist and work with businesses on safety and security measures through nighttime checks and communication channels.[7] The Fremont Community is also served by the Newaygo County Sheriff's Department.

Medical

Fremont is home to Gerber Memorial Hospital, which is a member of the Spectrum Health Network. The hospital offers a suite of services including emergency medicine, hospice, nutrition, occupational health, palliative care, pregnancy and birth care, outpatient services, surgery, and women's care. The hospital also has specialty cancer and orthopedic care services.[8] The Spectrum Health Network also provides a local wellness center, Tamarac, with membership opportunities. The facility includes a gym with fitness equipment, a pool, a spa, physical therapy services, and a café.[9]

As required by federal law, each hospital must publish a community health needs assessment for its service area. In May 2020, Gerber Memorial published the most recent assessment for Newaygo County and parts of Lake County. The four most pressing health needs in the community from 2017 and 2020 assessments are health care access, mental health, substance use disorder, and obesity. Major concerns about healthcare access include shortage of primary care providers, transportation challenges, and the cost of care. Similarly, challenges of mental health care pointed to a lack of professionals and programs that address mental health in the community.[10]

Table 16: Gerber Memorial Health Needs Implementation

Health Need	Action
Health Care Access	Increase preventative screening in areas with high proportions of vulnerable populations
	Increase virtual technology in their services
	Collaborate with health care community partners
Mental Health Care	Train community members in suicide prevention training
	Expand psychiatric consultive services
Substance Abuse	Increase enrollment for expecting mothers in the Smoking Cessation and Reduction in Pregnancy Treatment program
	Provide technical assistance and education to schools on anti-vaping, marijuana, and nicotine use
	Implement opioid prescribing guidelines
Obesity	Enroll mothers with young children in the Early Childhood Nutrition program
	Continue to host the Cooking Matters education program
	Continue to enroll patients in the Medical Fitness program
	Work with schools to develop positive behavior related to nutrition and physical activity in students

Source: Community Health Needs Assessment 2021-2022 Implementation Strategy, Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial

To address the gaps in health needs, Gerber Memorial has outlined an implementation strategy for 2021-2022. A summary of some of the actions Gerber Memorial is currently taking to address health needs is detailed in the table titled "Gerber Memorial Health Needs Implementation." In addition to the hospital, a private emergency medical service provider serves the entire community with staff and ambulance services.

Broadband

Broadband infrastructure provides reliable internet access, a necessity in the 21st century. Personal broadband provides access to online training opportunities, job searching, and ability to conduct business in an increasingly digital world. Additionally, as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an increase in people working from home, having reliable internet access is as important as ever. As the "Broadband Coverage" map shows, broadband internet serves almost the entire Fremont Community. However, broadband speeds vary greatly depending on location. The City of Fremont, central Dayton Township, and southwestern Sheridan Charter Township have the highest upload and download speeds. The variation of upload and downloads speeds is a result of the infrastructure seems to wane in more rural parts of the Community. Increasing coverage, reliability, and speeds in underserved areas should be a priority as fiber-optic internet is one of the fastest internet connections available and is a critical piece of infrastructure for expanded internet access.

Library

The Fremont Area District Library is in downtown Fremont. The district was established in 1996 and serves the City of Fremont, Fremont Public School District, Dayton Township, Sheridan Township, and Sherman Township.[11] In 2019, the library had 62,585 visits, circulated 90,295 items, and held 168 programs with a total attendance of 3,485 people. The library also has several meeting rooms available for reservation by community groups. The Friends of the Fremont Area District Library is a non-profit organization, incorporated in 1976, that provides financial and volunteer support to the library.[12]

Fremont High School.

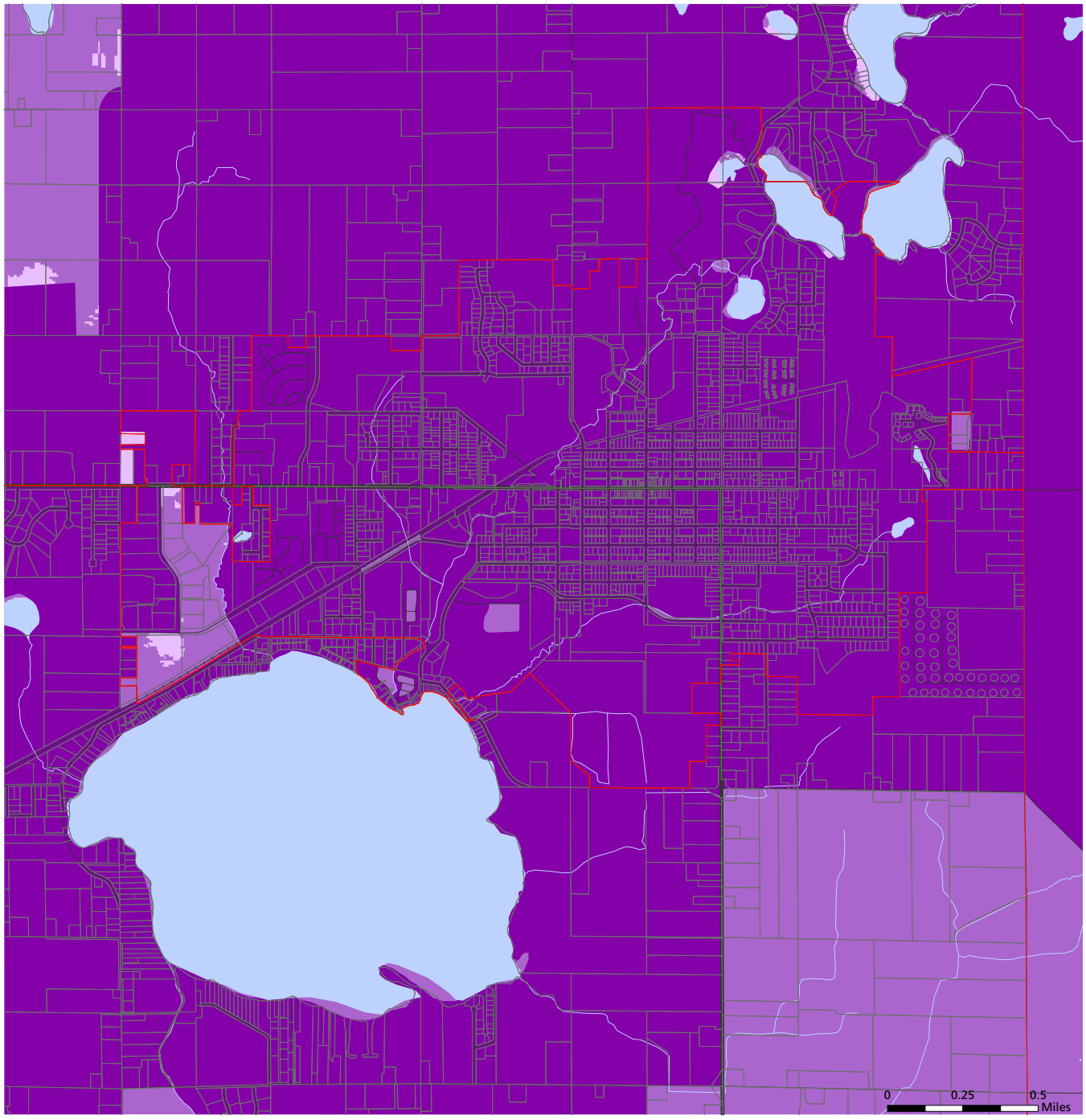
Schools

The Fremont Community is predominantly in the Fremont Public School District, with a small corner of northwestern Dayton Township in the Hesperia Community School District. In the 2020-2021 school year, the Fremont Public School District had 2,037 students, and the Hesperia Community School District had 843 students.[13] Over the past 5 years, student enrollment in the school districts have declined by 4.9% and 14.2% respectively. The Fremont Public School District has one primary high school, an alternative high school, a middle school, a 3-5 grade elementary school, and a K-2 grade pathfinder school. There is also a private Christian middle school and two private Christian elementary schools in the City of Fremont. The Hesperia District has a single elementary school, middle school, and high school.

There is also a Career Technical Education Center that serves area students. While the Career-Tech Center is just outside of the Fremont Community boundaries, it serves the entire region. The Center offers sessions for 11th and 12th grade students from area high schools, and credits may go toward high school graduation and/or college credit. The Center provides job-specific skills training, personal counseling, and job placement services.[14]

Finally, the Fremont Community is a very active homeschooling community. Newaygo County offers programs and services for homeschool parents and students. The County strongly recommends that parents register as a homeschool with either the Michigan Department of Education or through Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), though it is not required. If registered, however, students are eligible for County-funded scholarships.[15]

Map 8: Broadband Coverage



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Broadband Coverage

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap, ConnectedMichigan

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- 25 mbps upload, 3 mbps download
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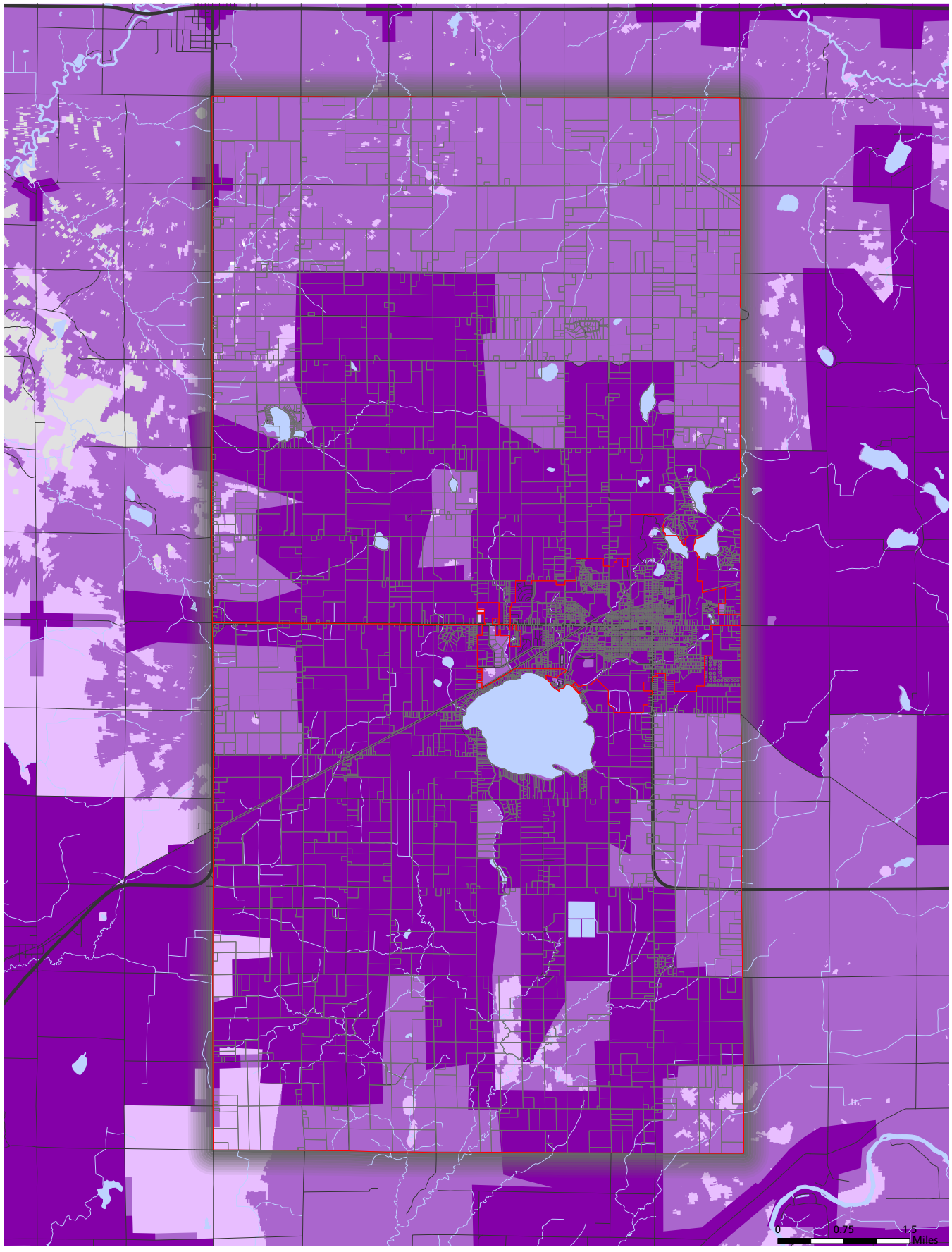
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1.5
Miles

Oak sculpture along Darling Walkway.

Newaygo County Fair.

Source: Newaygo County Fair

Newaygo County Fair.

Source: Newaygo County Fair

CULTURE

ArtsPlace

The Newaygo County Council for the Arts (NCCA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the arts and enhance the cultural climate in Newaygo County. NCCA is headquartered in the ArtsPlace building, which is located on Main Street in downtown Fremont. ArtsPlace offers a variety of art classes, a pottery/ceramic studio, a darkroom, and a lapidary studio.[16] The building also offers a space for local artisans to sell their work, including an exhibition space.

Public Art Program

The Downtown Public Art Program, administered by the Fremont Downtown Development Authority, seeks to enrich the lives of City residents, visitors, and employees by increasing the visual appeal of downtown. Future goals of the program include expanding the program outside the DDA boundary, creating an art walking tour, and creating a public art program brochure. The Darling walkway is one area of the City that has existing public art and is targeted for future public art improvements and development.

Newaygo County Fair

The Newaygo County is an annual event held at the County Fairground for one week in late summer. Started in 1941, the fair has been running for over 80 years. Events at the fair include livestock shows, derbies, food events, music, and tractor pulls. As an agrarian community, the fair is one of the most popular events of the year drawing people from all over the region.

Fairground Events

During non-fair season, there are other events at the fairgrounds, including the Antique Tractor Club Show and moto-cross racing. The Fair Board is planning to construct a new event stadium to allow for larger events.

Summer Concert Series

On Thursday evenings in June and July, the amphitheater in Veterans Memorial Park hosts free concerts for community members to enjoy. The concerts are sponsored by the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce.

National Baby Food Festival

As the "Baby Food Capital of the World," Fremont hosts the National Baby Food Festival. This street festival includes carnival rides games and events. Popular activities at the festival include the baby crawl, baby food eating contest, car show, and nightly entertainment. In recent years, the festival has attracted over 50,000 people.[17]

Fall Harvest Festival

In the fall, the Fremont Chamber of Commerce sponsors the Fall Harvest Festival which encompasses downtown and Branstrom Park. The festival offers live performances, culinary cook-offs, bingo, and a beverage tent. One of the main events of the festival is the Grand Parade where participants drive antique tractors through downtown Fremont. Competitive family events are held at Branstrom Park.[18]

When surveyed, 62.9% of respondents indicated that events including the Summer Concert Series, National Baby Food Festival, and Fall Harvest Festival draw them downtown. Events and retail were tied for the top reason people visited downtown Fremont.

2021 National Baby Food Festival along Main Street.

COMMUNITY

Fremont Market Place Pavilion and Farmers Market

The Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce manages the Fremont Farmers Market, which runs from late June to early October on Saturdays.[19] The Market Pavilion was constructed with funds from the Downtown Development Authority, a USDA Rural Development Grant, and the Fremont Area Community Foundation. The Market Pavilion is integral to community events, and people may also reserve it for private events.

Heritage Farms Market

The Heritage Farms Market is a fifth-generation farm in Dayton Township. The Farm offers school and group tours, including educational programs about how cider is made, bee pollination, hayrides, and an exploration of the pumpkin patch. The Farm also offers a petting zoo, corn maze, and u-pick pumpkin patch. The market sells fresh local produce and baked goods.[20]

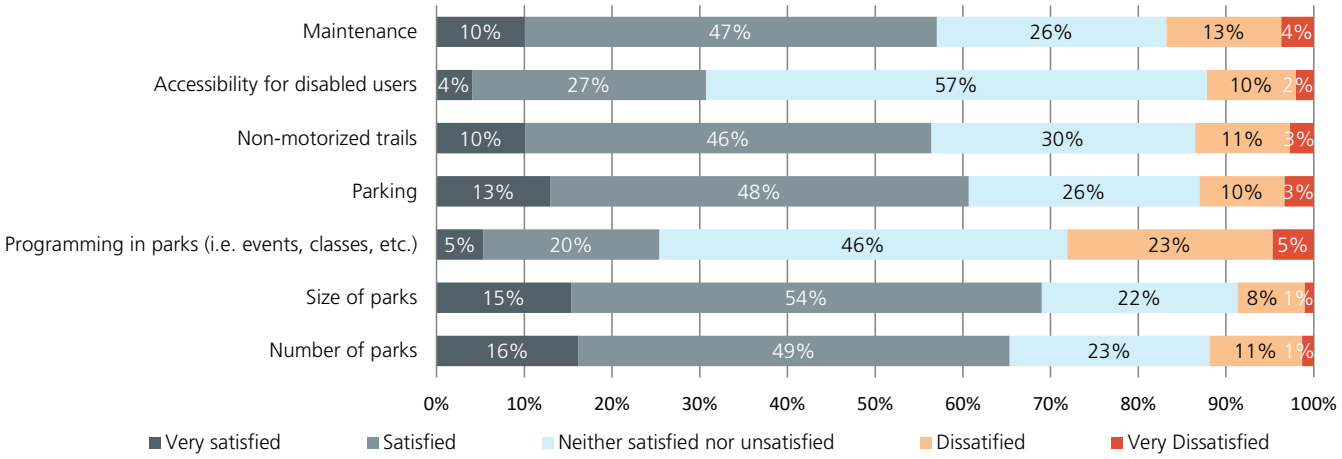
Downtown Development Authority

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is the primary body responsible for aesthetic and community programs in downtown Fremont. The DDA uses local property taxes to fund façade improvements, loans for local businesses, rental rehabilitation, and aesthetic and place-making projects.[21]

Dogwood Center for Performing Arts

Located just outside of jurisdictional limits, the Dogwood Center for Performing Arts is on W 48th St in Sherman Township. The Center has two performance spaces, a main 400 seat theater and a cabaret style venue. This regional cultural resource provides an important space for live music and theater. The Dogwood Center can be rented out for performance, corporate events, community gatherings, or personal celebrations. Volunteers help with fundraising, ticket sales, technical needs, and performance support staff and are an important element of the Dogwood Center.

Figure 12: Recreation Satisfaction (Community Survey Results)



RECREATION

Recreation planning is directly linked to state recreational funding. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) reviews a community's Park and Recreation Master Plan and provides grants only for projects described in the plan. The Fremont Community has a variety of recreational facilities that range from over 100-acre nature parks to smaller mini parks that serve the immediate neighborhoods. In 2020, the Fremont Community updated its Parks and Recreation Plan. The plan outlines several recreational priorities, including providing safe and inclusive facilities and promoting healthy and active lifestyles. In the Comprehensive Plan survey, respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with recreation offerings in the Fremont Community. The figure titled "Recreation Satisfaction" details the results from the respondents. Residents are most satisfied with number and size of parks but see room for improvement in park programming.

Structure

Recreational planning, like land use planning, is programmed and managed by a cooperative board, known as the Recreation Advisory Committee, comprised of members from the City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter Township, and Dayton Township. The Committee, along with the City of Fremont City Manager, Township Supervisors, City Council, and Township Boards, are responsible for developing the recreational budget and other recreation decisions. In addition to budget, the Committee makes recommendations on recreation expansion and recreation programming. The City of Fremont is the only jurisdiction with dedicated park staff, which report to the Director of Public Works. Without a dedicated recreation department, interdepartmental coordination is essential for managing such a vast network of parks and recreational assets.

Recreational Inventory

There are 31 recreational facilities in the Fremont Community, 16 of which are public facilities, 4 of which are private, and 11 of which are associated with an educational institution.

Public Recreation

Public recreation facilities are facilities managed by a public entity and open to all members of the community. Public recreation facilities are generally the most accessible due to their centralized locations and lack of participation costs such as user fees and recreation equipment. The table titled "Public Recreation Facilities" outlines features of each park, including type, size, and amenities.

Community Recreation Center

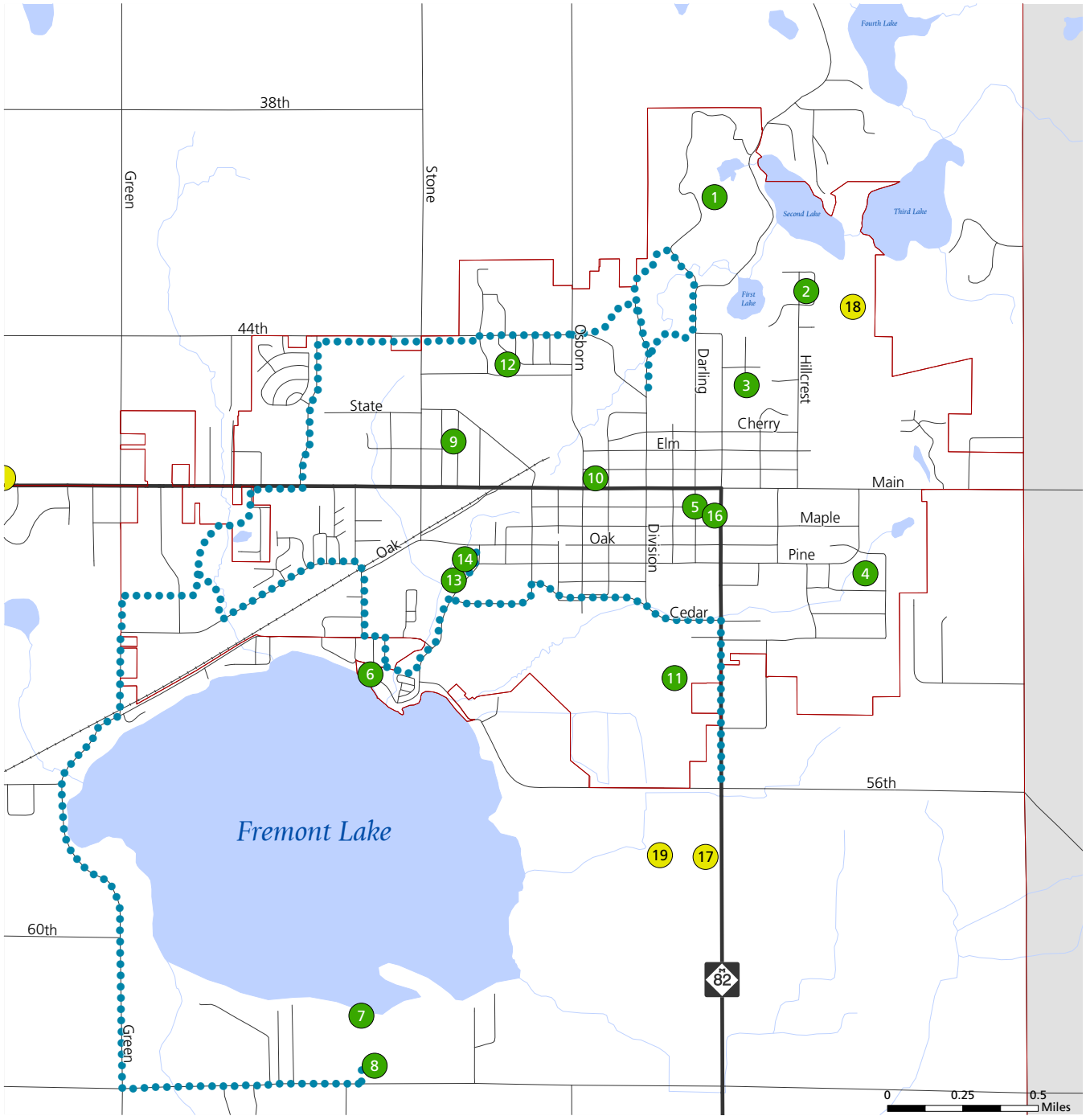
The Fremont Community Recreation Center is one of the premier recreational facilities in the Community. The Rec Center was formerly Fremont High School and is now operated by the Fremont Community Recreation Authority. The facility includes an Olympic-sized swimming pool, gymnasium, indoor/outdoor pickleball courts,

Table 17: Public Recreation Facilities

Park Name	Park Type	Map Number	Park Size	Accessibility Rating*	Amenities
Branstrom Park	Community Park	1	108 acres	2	Baseball fields, walking and hiking paths, basketball courts, sledding hill, playground equipment, disc golf, picnic, pavilions, community lodge
Arboretum Park	Large Urban Park	4	9.5 acres	2	Walking trails and paths, benches, picnic tables
Fremont Lake Park	Community Park	6	17 acres	2	99 RV/tent camp sites, boat launch, swimming beach, volleyball court, picnic shelter, pavilion
Veterans Memorial Park	Large Urban Park	10	2.4 acres	3	Paved walkways, playground, band shell, pavilion, restrooms
Fremont Skate Park	Large Urban Park	13	2 acres	3	Skate/bike ramps, benches
The Refuge	Large Urban Park	15	168 acres	1	Mountain biking tracks, passive recreation
Fremont Dog Park	Large Urban Park	14	24 acres	1	Two fenced in dog tuns, benches
SCT Boat Launch	Large Urban Park	7	6.5 acres	2	Seasonal boat dock, playground, picnic area
Town and Country Path	Large Urban Park	Not numbered	5.5+ miles	4	Paved pathways and trail heads
Darling Pathway	Large Urban Park	5	3 ROW blocks	4	Decorative walkway, public art, benches, pickleball, pavilion
Fremont Recreational Center	Large Urban Park	16	4.25 acres	3	Pool, indoor/outdoor pickleball, rental community space, gymnasium, classroom, workout space
Clubview Park	Mini Park	2	0.5 acres	Not rated	Open space
Beebe's Natural Area	Mini Park	3	0.45 acres	Not rated	Open space
Fremont Avenue Tot Lot	Mini Park	9	0.5 acres	Not rated	Playground
Newaygo County Fairgrounds	Special Use Park	11	28 acres	Not rated	Fair buildings, concessions, restrooms
Cherry Hill Park	Mini – Park	12	2.8 acres	Not rated	Practice ball field, open space

*1 = no facilities meet ADA guidelines; 2 = some facilities meet ADA guidelines; 3 = most facilities meet ADA guidelines; 4 = all facilities meet ADA guidelines; 5 = facilities were developed using principles of universal design.

Map 9: Recreational Facilities



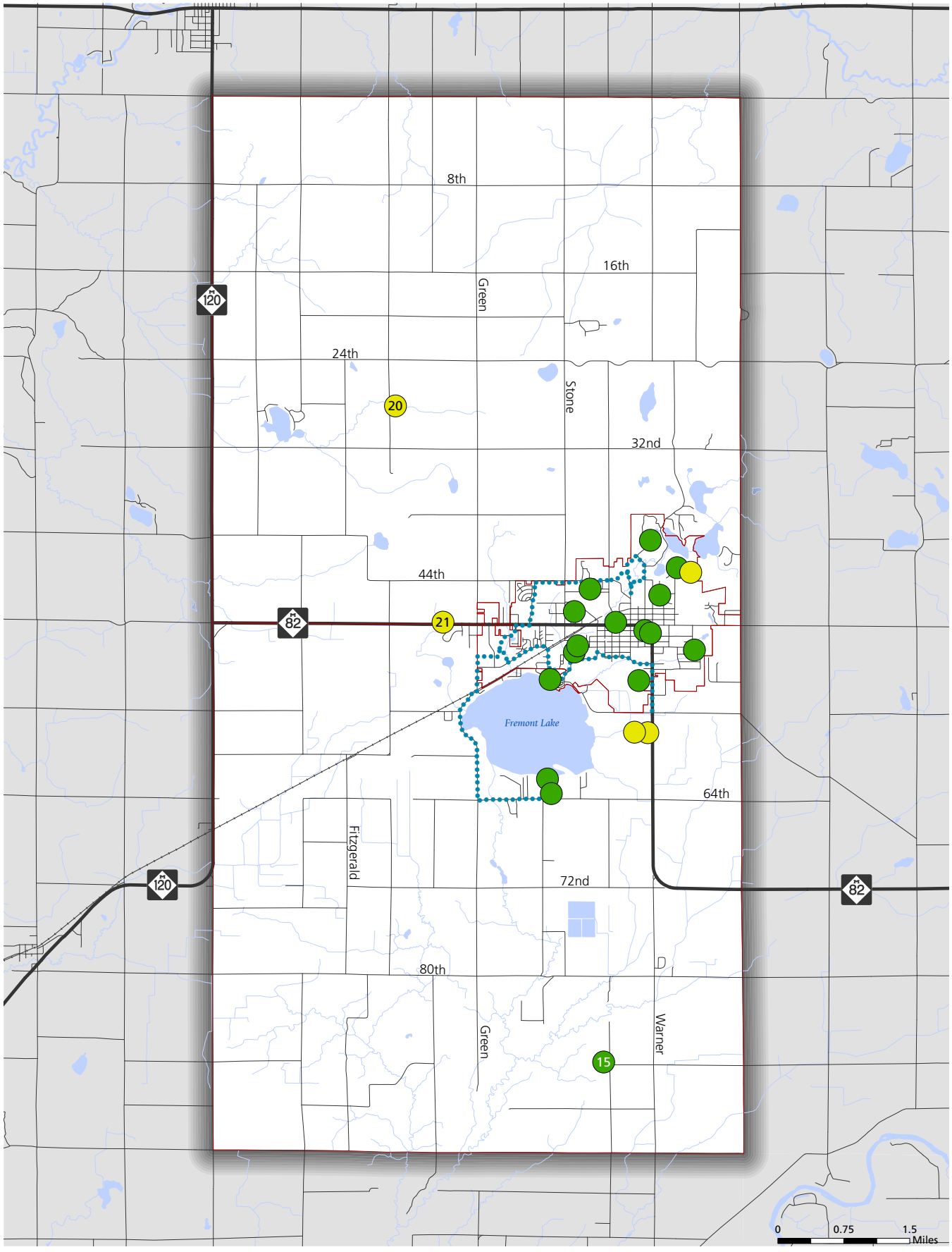
FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Recreational Facilities

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Public Recreation Facility
- Private Recreation Facility
- Town and Country Path

1: Branstrom Park
2: Clubview Park
3: Beebe's Natural Area
4: Arboretum Park
5: Darling Pathway
6: Fremont Lake Park
7: Sheridan Charter Township Boat Launch
8: Sheridan Charter Township Hall
9: Fremont Avenue Tot Lot
10: Veteran's Memorial Park
11: Newaygo County Fairgrounds
12: Cherry Hill Park
13: Fremont Skate Park
14: Fremont Dog Park
15: The Refuge
16: Fremont Community Rec Center
17: Fremont Lanes South
18: Waters Edge Golf Course
19: Summer Breeze Par 3 Golf Course
20: Northwood Golf Course
21: Northpointe Gymnastics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Miles

Table 18: School Facilities

School	Amenities
Pine Street Elementary	Two junior soccer fields, gazebo, playground
Pathfinder Elementary	Soccer field, practice ball field, playground, picnic tables
Daisy Brook Elementary	Soccer field, practice ball field, playground, open space, gazebo, picnic tables
Fremont Middle School	Two soccer fields, two baseball diamonds, softball field, eight tennis courts, two batting cages, four basketball courts, natural trail, gazebo
Fremont High School	Walking paths, open space
Pine Street Athletic Field	Football stadium, 6-lane track, t-ball, two football practice fields, eight tennis courts, locker rooms, restrooms, concessions
Christian Middle School	Soccer field, two practice ball fields, open space
Christian Elementary School	Two practice ball diamonds, play equipment, basketball court, soccer field, open space
Cornerstone Christian Academy	Play area, two basketball hoops, volleyball court
St. Michael's Catholic School	Play area

Table 19: Private Recreation Facilities

Facility	Map Number	Amenities
Fremont Lanes South	17	16 lanes of bowling
Waters Edge	18	18-hole golf course
Northwood Golf Course	19	18-hole golf course
Summer Breeze Par 3 Golf Course	20	9-hole golf course
Northpointe Gymnastics	21	Regional gymnastics facility for all ages

classrooms, rental space for community events, and workout area. Many classes are taught at the Rec Center including yoga, senior fitness, tai chi, and swimming lessons. Registration can be done on a month to month or annual basis and costs $15/month for students, $20 for an individual, and $40 for a family (2022). Non-residents have slightly higher registration costs.[22]

Private Recreation

Private recreation facilities are facilities that are not owned and managed by a public body but still provide community recreational benefits. Often private recreation facilities require payment to participate, making them less accessible than public facilities. The table titled "Private Recreation Facilities" outlines the five private facilities in the Fremont Community and the amenities that each offers.

School Facilities

There are ten school-related recreational sites that are primarily used by students but may be open to the public after hours. Public school facilities manage six of the recreational sites, and the remaining are connected to private schools.

Access

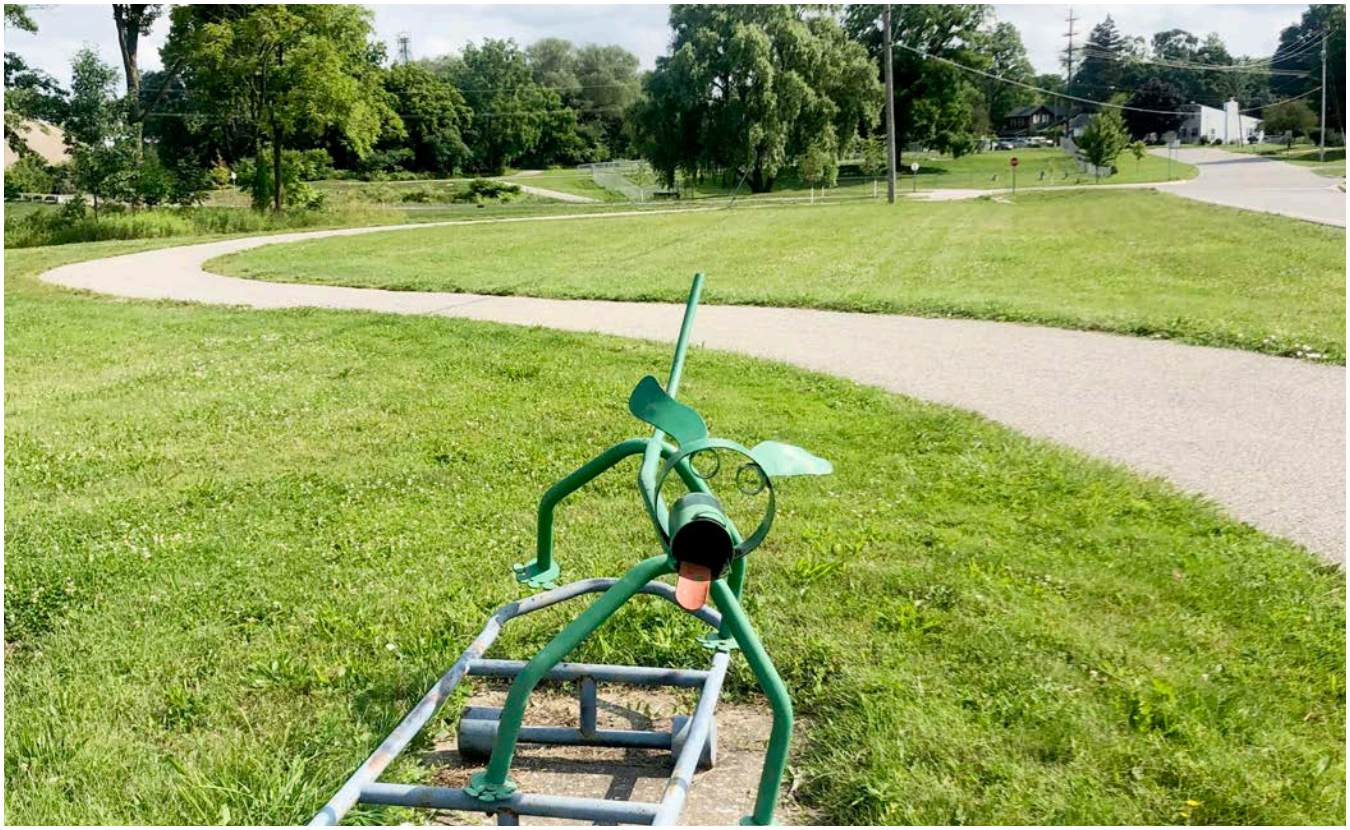
In addition to having a variety of recreational facilities and amenities, it is important to prioritize park connectivity. The "Pedestrian Shed" map shows a ½-mile and 1-mile radius around all public parks. The two areas show which areas are within walking distance of a park (10-15 minutes for ½-mile and 20-25 minutes for 1-mile). The pedestrian shed was only generated for the public parks because these facilities have no restriction on access. For example, if someone lived within a ½ mile of a golf course but could not pay to access the facility, he/she does not have access, regardless of proximity to the site. The table titled "Recreational Access" shows the percentage of parcels that are within the walking distances of a public recreational facility.

The City of Fremont has the highest accessibility level of park accessibility. Over 90% of all parcels are within ½ mile of a property and almost 99% of residential parcels are within 1 mile of a park. Understandably, the high coverage is due to the concentration of parks in the City and its smaller geographic area. In the Townships, where concentration of parks is lower, accessibility suffers.

Table 20: Recreational Access

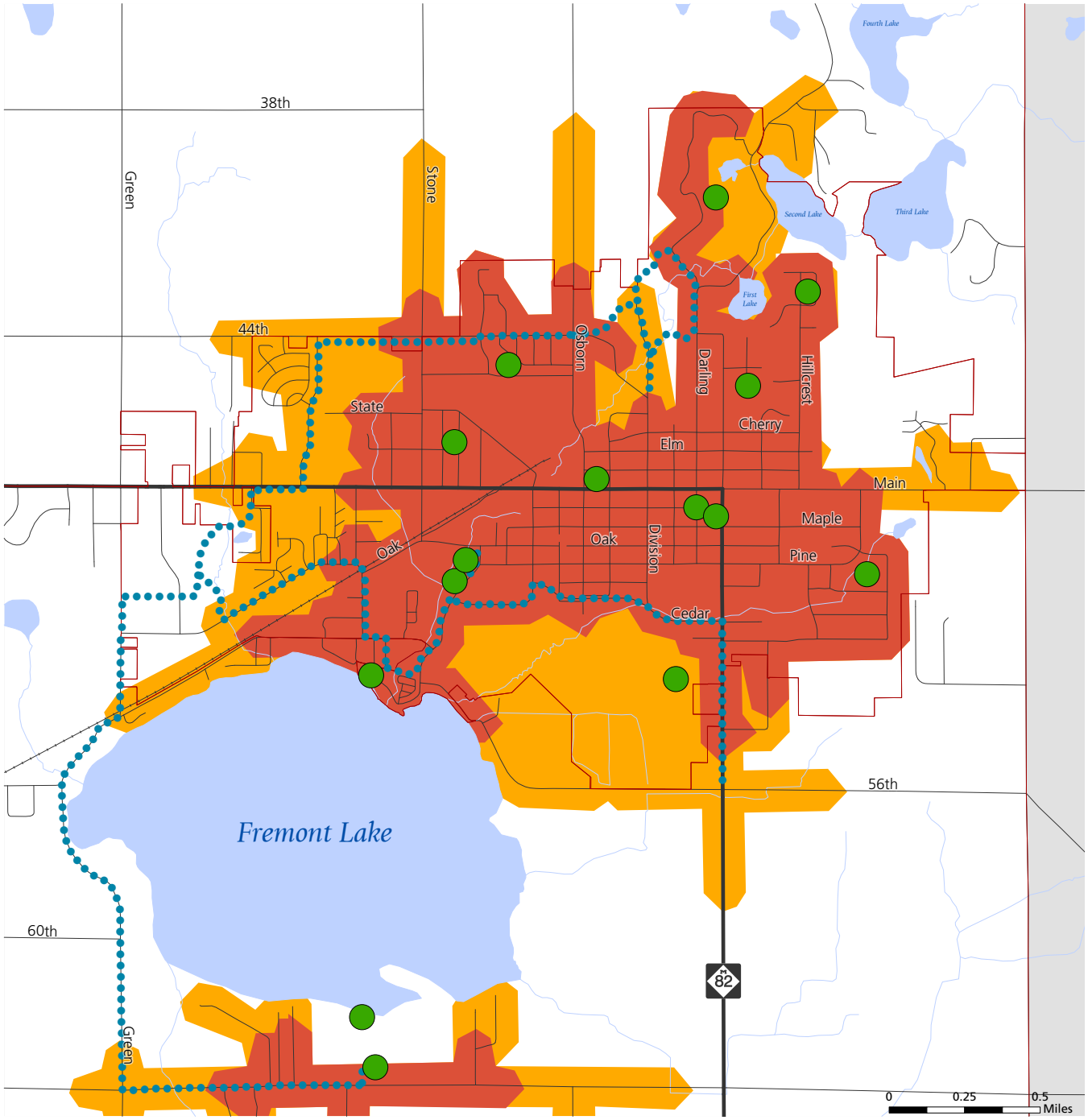
	Within ½ Mile	Within 1 Mile
Dayton Township		
All Parcels	15 (1.3%)	95 (8.1%)
Residential Parcels	10 (1.3%)	76 (9.5%)
City of Fremont		
All Parcels	1,668 (91.4%)	1,778 (97.5%)
Residential Parcels	1,370 (94.0%)	1,436 (98.6%)
Sheridan Charter Township		
All Parcels	200 (19.0%)	426 (40.5%)
Residential Parcels	180 (12.8%)	368 (26.2%)
Fremont Community		
All Parcels	1,980 (43.3%)	2,418 (52.9%)
Residential Parcels	1,479 (46.2%)	1,785 (55.8%)

Dayton Township, which has no public parks, does not have coverage higher than 10%. However, the low-density nature of the Township means that additional park development in the Townships would have a minimal impact on rural coverage.



Sculpture along the Town and Country Path.

Map 10: Pedestrian Shed

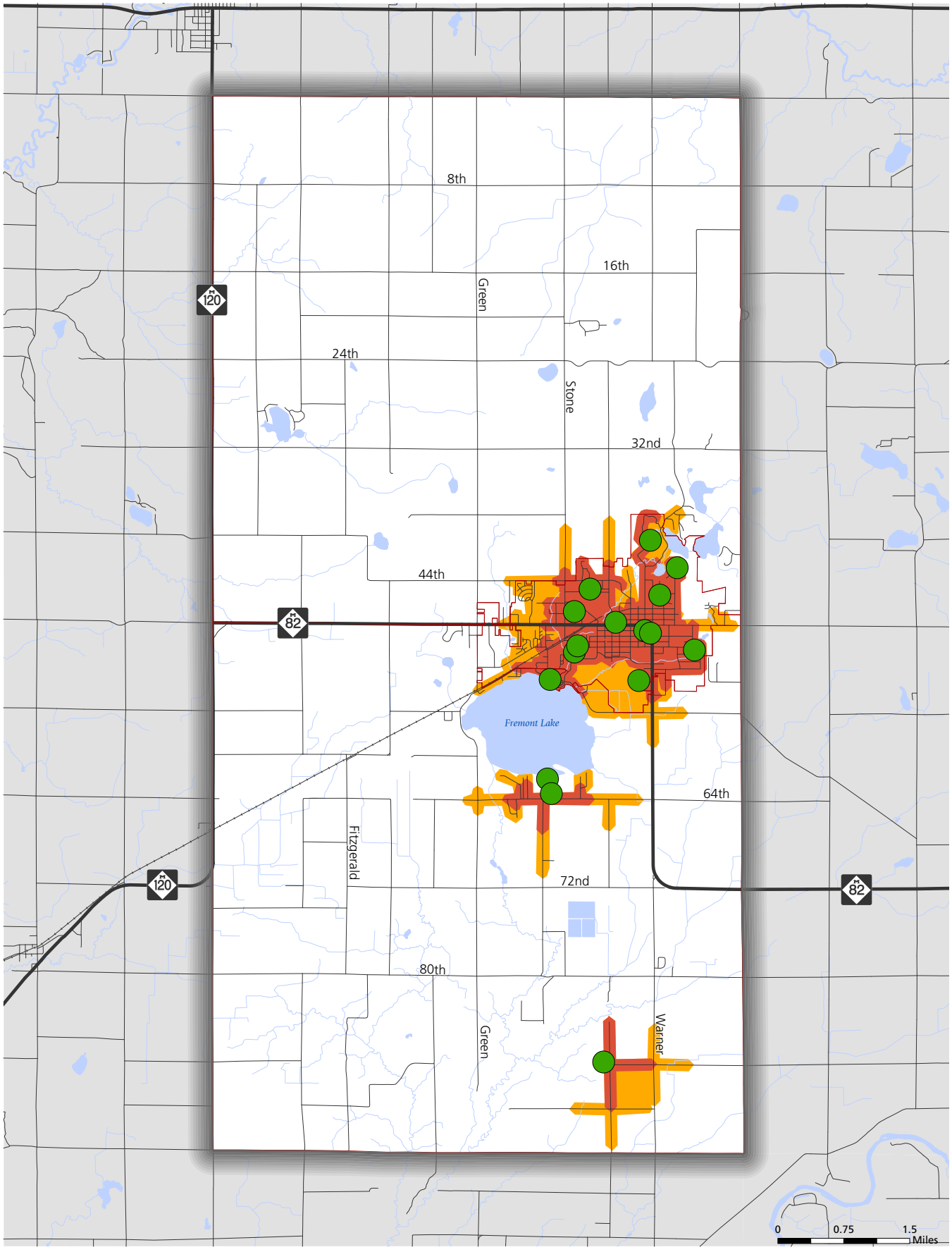


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Pedestrian Shed

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Public Recreation Facility
- 0.5 Mile Shed
- 1.0 Mile Shed
- Town and Country Path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Park Improvements

The 2020 Fremont Area Community Parks and Recreation identified six high-priority objectives for park and recreation development, three of which have been completed.

1. Build a new community lodge at Branstrom Park (the community received an MDNR grant for this project, to be completed in fall 2022).
2. Build new cabins in the campground at Fremont Lake Park (the community has completed one cabin, and the remaining cabin to be completed in summer 2022).
3. Dredge the boat launch area at Fremont Lake Park (completed in spring 2021).
4. Renovate the community room at the Fremont Rec Center (completed in 2022).
5. Install a roof over the ice rink.
6. Add a splash pad at Fremont Lake Park.

Completing several of the high-priority objectives from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will require raising capital funds for construction, or a grant. Funds should be pursued through MDNR, the County, and other recreation-affiliated funding partners to complete these projects.

CONCLUSION

The high number of quality-of-life assets and events make Fremont the cultural center of the region. The Farmers Market and National Baby Food festival are major attractions that strengthen community ties. Additionally, the community services, including public safety, libraries, and educational institutions provide important public functions that contribute to the community's small-town atmosphere. The recreation amenities provide residents and visitors opportunities to engage with the outdoors and contribute to healthy lifestyles. As the cornerstone of the community, these services and cultural assets should be preserved and expanded as the Fremont Community moves into the future.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

» Coordinate with Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital on public health measures aligned with the strategies in the Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan.

» Continue to collaborate with the DDA and Newaygo County Council for the Arts on public arts improvements.

» Expand broadband infrastructure in underserved areas.

» Increase ADA accessibility in underserved parks.

» Continue to host community-wide events.

Projects

» Pursue sources of capital funding for high-priority recreational improvements.

Playground at Fremont Lake.

Sources

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22 Fremont Community Recreation Authority, https://fcra.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pageId=3356

Trail at Branstrom Park.

6 Transportation

Transportation networks are the backbone for mobility. Roads, sidewalks, and non-motorized infrastructure allow residents to move among home, work, social spaces, and common destinations. Connections with larger transportation systems (highways, rail, and air travel) facilitate the movement of goods and products, and the interconnectedness of modern economies still depends on transportation networks. The Fremont Community's history is tightly linked to railway development as the train depot, built in 1872, connected the area's agricultural production to the major cities of Grand Rapids, Chicago, and Detroit. The rapid expansion of auto infrastructure in the early and mid-20th century diversified transportation networks and gave rise to the current dominance of the car, at the expense of infrastructure for other users: pedestrians, bicyclists, and the physically impaired. This chapter reviews the community's transportation routes and describes possible strategies for improving them.

ROAD SYSTEM

The Fremont Community has 223 miles of road within its boundary.[1] Two State roads intersect the community, M-82 and M-120. M-82 connects the community to major roads like M-37 and US-131, which connects to the City of Newaygo, Village of Howard City, and the larger cities of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo. M-82 also goes directly through downtown Fremont. This increases traffic into the core commercial center of the City, which can be great for visibility of local businesses but can simultaneously negatively impact the pedestrian experience. M-120 runs from the Village of Hesperia south along the western border of the Fremont Community and into the City of Muskegon.

Because both roads fall under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), any design changes or improvements to the roads will require coordination with the State. Roads that the State does not manage are under the jurisdiction of the Newaygo County Road Commission, the City of Fremont, or a private entity (individual property owners or neighborhood association). The City of Fremont primarily raises road improvement funds through federal grants and state assistance.[2] Dayton Township and Sheridan Charter Township also contribute funds to improve the road system in their respective boundaries.

Traffic and Classification

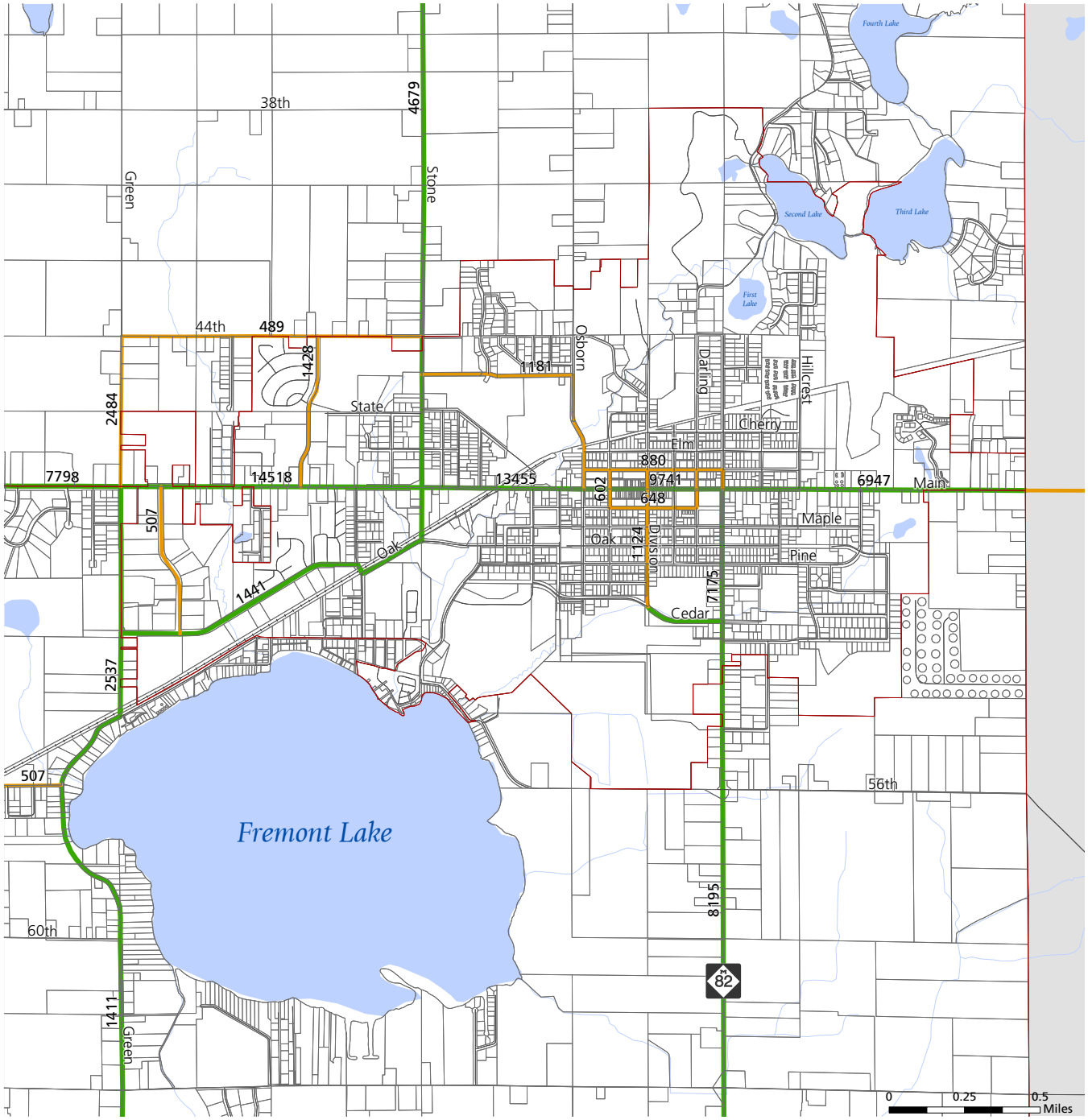
MDOT estimates the number of vehicles that travel daily on State-owned roads throughout the year, a figure termed Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), as shown on the "Road System" map. Understandably, M-82 is the busiest road, specifically the segment between Green Road and Stone Road. The AADT counts closely follow the road hierarchy: higher counts are generally found on minor arterial roads that are designed to facilitate efficient movement to and from major highways or smaller population centers, and major collector roads funnel local traffic to the minor arterials. Local roads experience low volumes of traffic and are primarily used by the people who live on the roads.[3, 4]

Truck Route

One challenge of having a major road intersect downtown Fremont is that trucks traveling through the community must travel through downtown. This creates traffic congestion, and the sound and exhaust from large trucks negatively impacts the experience of downtown visitors. To alleviate these negative externalities, the City of Fremont built a truck route from M-82 to the industrial park on the western side of the City. The City was awarded federal funds in 2018 and completed construction in 2020 . In addition to reducing traffic and congestion in downtown and adjacent residential streets, the truck route also increased the logistical efficiency of the industrial park by making it easier for trucks to arrive and leave industrial facilities. This benefits the businesses located there currently and increases the attractiveness of the industrial park for new businesses.

Local roadway through Branstrom Park.

Map 11: Road System



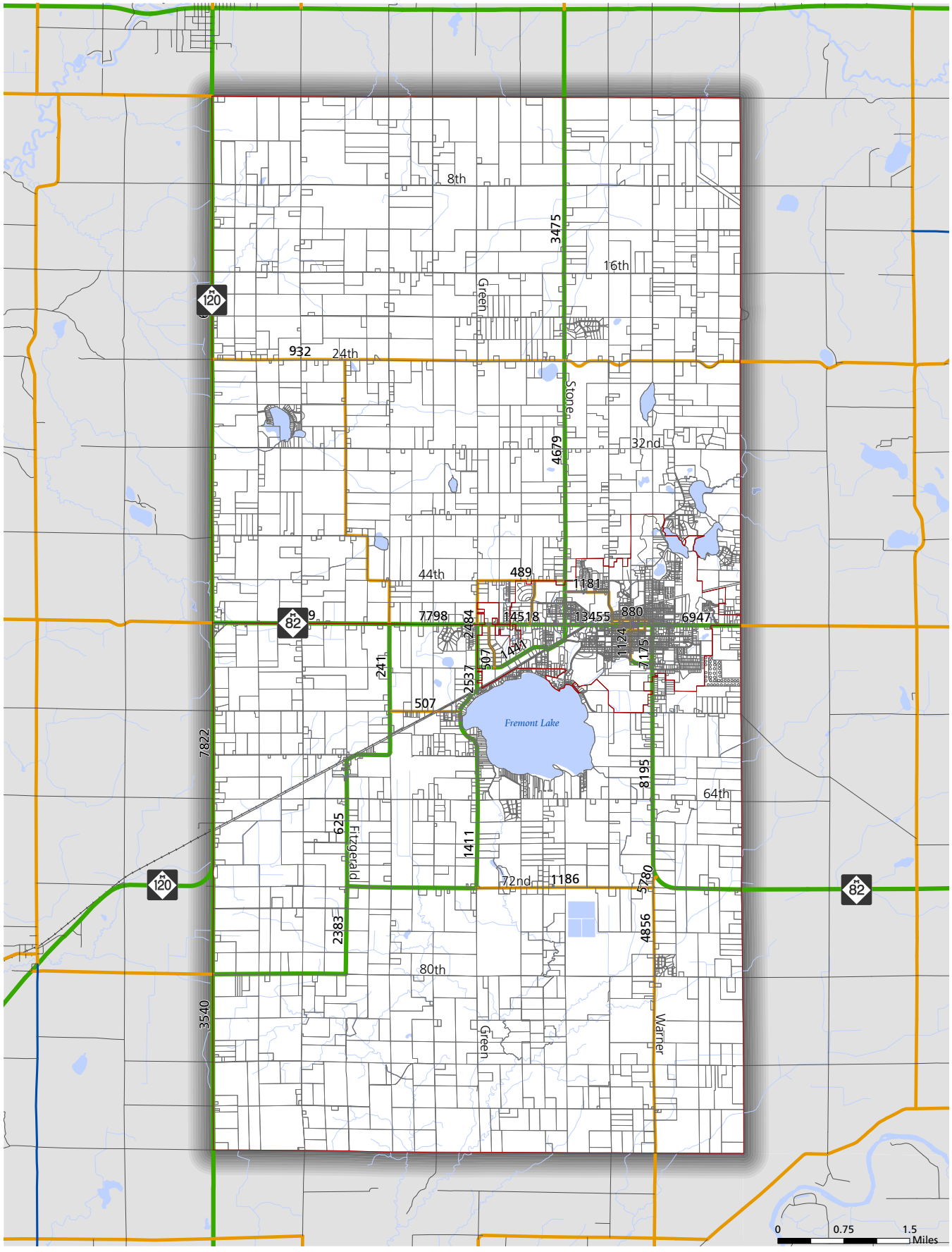
FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Road System

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

Road Classification
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Local

####: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)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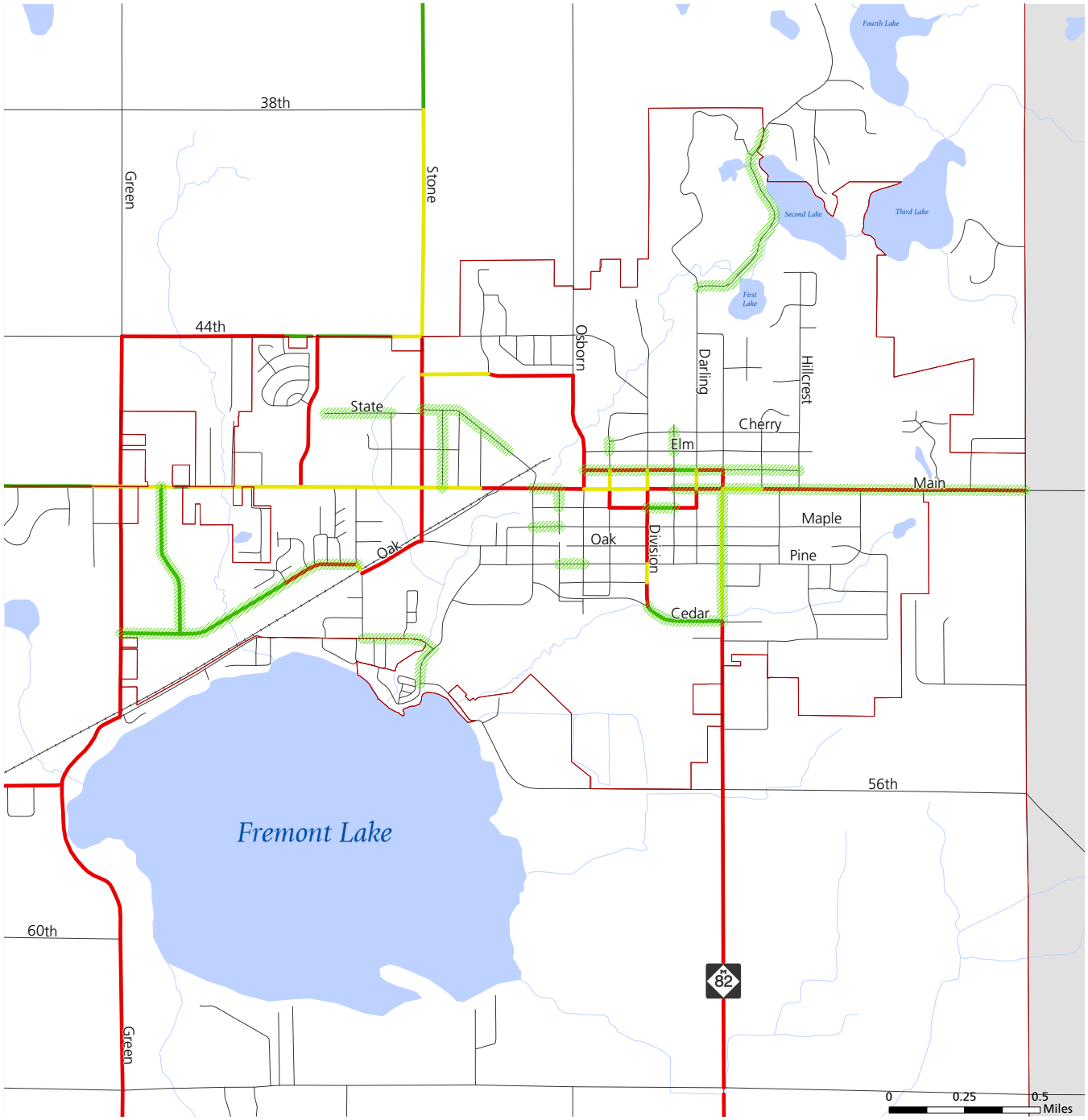
Map 12: PASER Rating

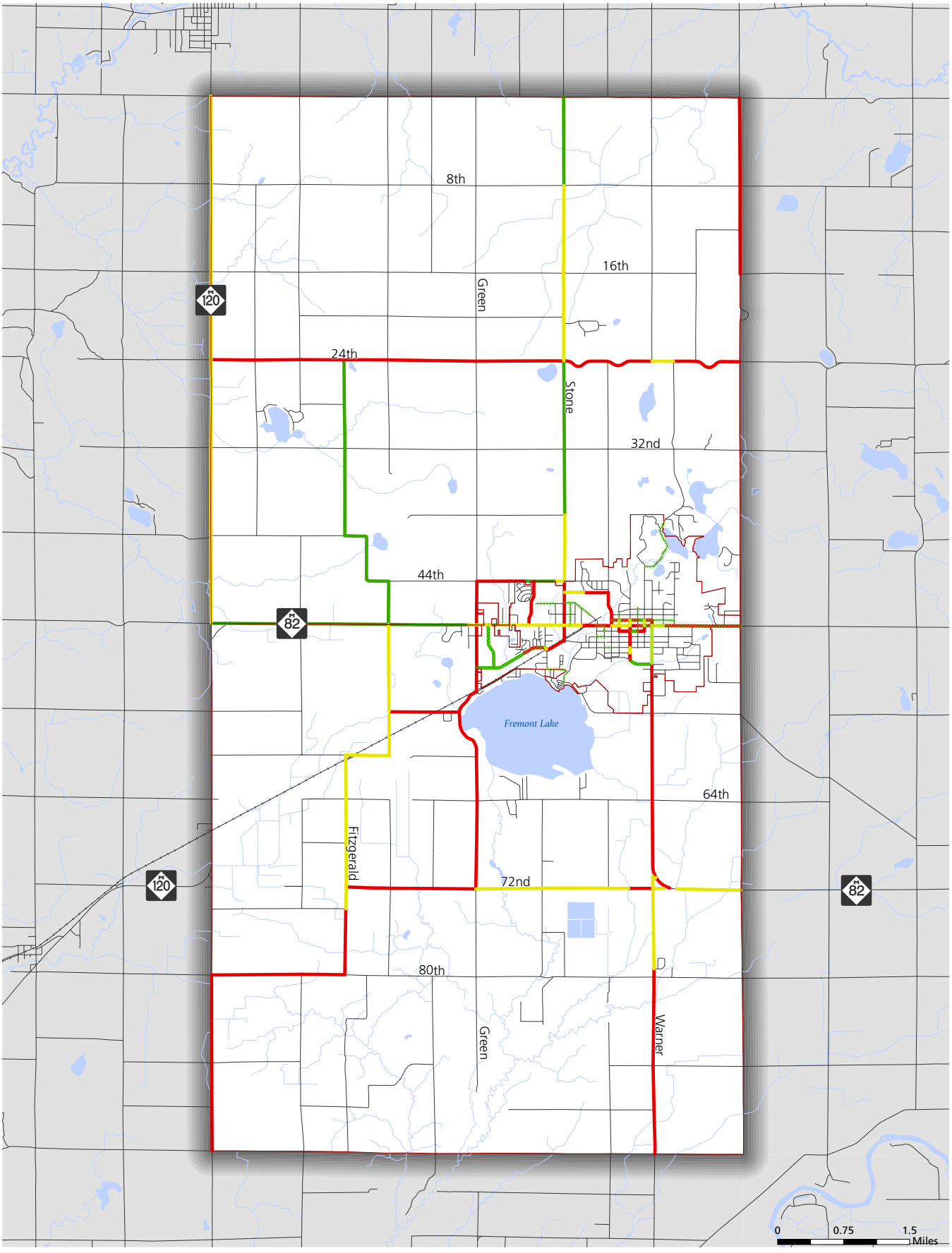


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

PASER Rating

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap, MDOT

- Poor Condition
- Fair Condition
- Good Condition
- Recent / Planned Construction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Condition and Maintenance

The Transportation Asset Management Council, an MDOT affiliate, records the condition of roads, bridges, and culverts across the State. In the Fremont Community, a total of 58.5 miles of roads have been evaluated since 2018,[5] illustrated in the map titled "PASER Ratings." Road condition evaluations are based on materials and presence of visual deteriorations. Of the roads that were evaluated, the majority are in fair or poor condition. Road quality affects residents' and visitors' perceptions of the community and neighborhoods as crumbling roads may be perceived as blight. However, deteriorating road conditions are not a challenge unique to Fremont—transportation infrastructure is faltering and failing throughout the State. Fremont has recently improved streets or is intending to repair streets, per the Capital Improvement Plan. These recent repairs may not have been reflected in the State data but are illustrated on the "PASER Ratings" map.

Financing is often the stumbling block for road repairs. While the State recently announced $3.5 billion in roads spending, all the projects receiving funding are state highways and bridges, and none of the projects are in Newaygo County.[6] The responsibility of improving local roads often falls on the local communities who do not have sufficient revenue to keep roads in good condition consistently. One strategy to increase funds to improve roads is to pass a millage, an effective but often unpopular option. Additionally, the Fremont Community would benefit from cataloging and prioritizing local street improvements to reduce the miles of road that falter.

Table 21: PASER Conditions

Road Condition	Miles	Percent
Poor	28.4	48.5%
Fair	19.0	32.5%
Good	11.1	19.0%

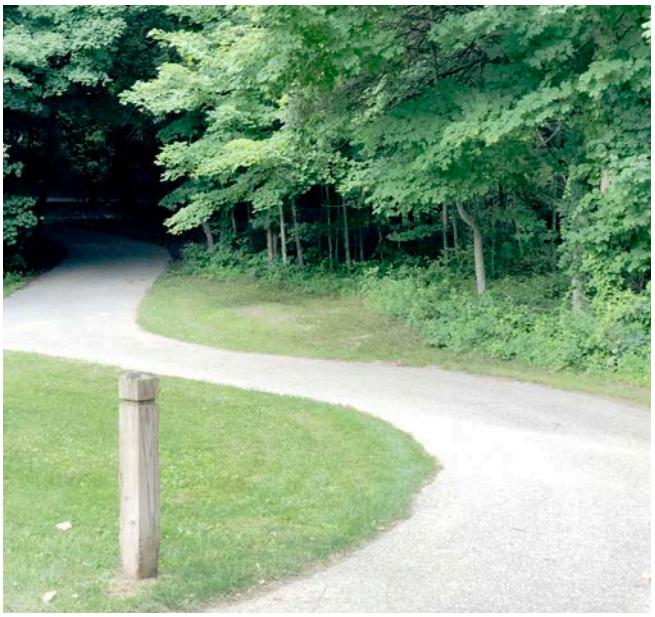
Source: MDOT-TAMC

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

While the car dominates the transportation landscape, non-motorized travel is an accessible and universal transportation mode. Walking and biking are the two primary non-motorized transportation options.

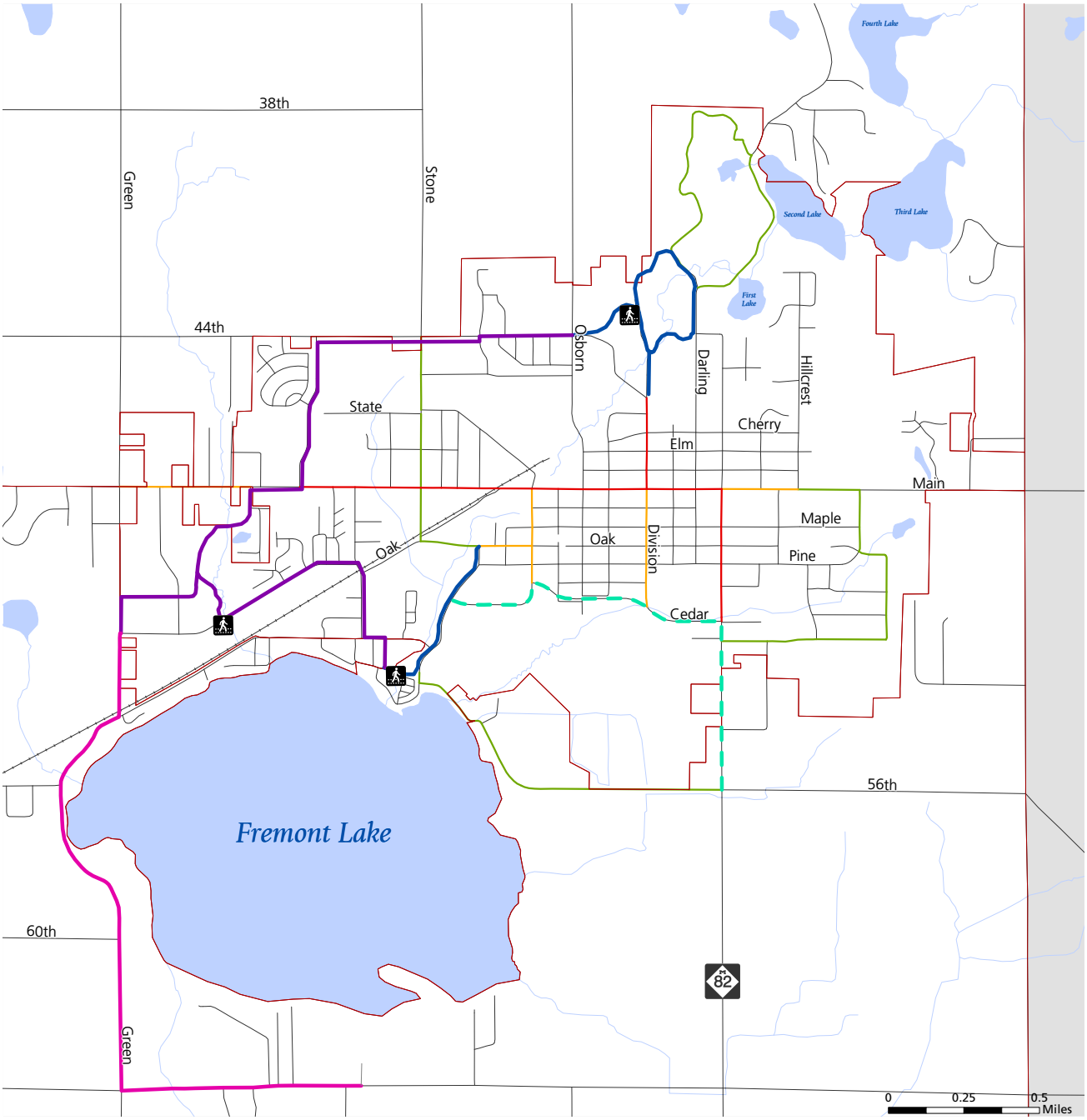
Town and Country Path

The Town and County Path is a shared-use path (walking and biking) that extends from Branstrom Park, along 44th Street, down Market Avenue, and connects to Fremont Lake Park. The Town and County Path has completed three phases of construction, and the next phase will extend the path on the south side of the City of Fremont, as shown on the map titled "Non-Motorized Network." The path links several key recreational facilities and provides a safe non-motorized option for those who live near the path to travel around Fremont. In the most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan survey, 21% of respondent households said that the Town and Country Path was their household's most important recreational facility.[7] The Fremont Community should continue work on the Town and County Path and complete the final phase of construction to expand access around Fremont Lake. Additionally, wayfinding on popular streets or locations near the path directing people to the path would increase visibility and use of the path.



Town and Country Path in Branstrom Park.

Map 13: Non-Motorized Network



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Non-Motorized Network

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

Town and Country Path
- Phase 1 (Complete)
- Phase 2 (Complete)
- Phase 3 (Planned)
- Phase 4 (Complete)

Trailhead

Complete Streets
- High Priority
- Medium Priority
- Low Priority

Table 22: Complete Streets Design Strategies

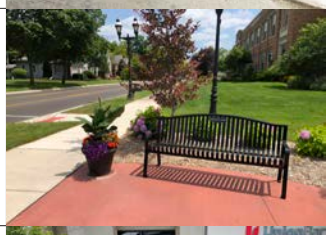
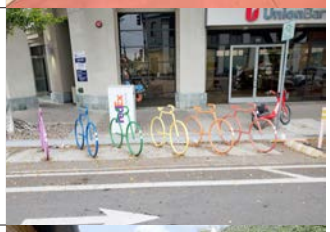
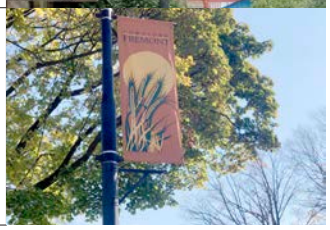
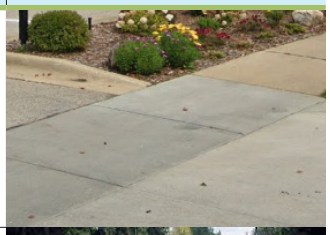
Design Strategy	Applicable Zone	Present in Fremont	Example
Trees / landscaping	Active & Street (street medians)	Yes	
Green infrastructure	Active & Street (street medians)	Limited	
Street furniture	Active	Yes	
Bicycle parking	Active	Limited	
Parklets	Active	Yes	
Pedestrian-scale lighting	Active	Yes	
Wayfinding	Active	Yes	

Table 22: Complete Streets Design Strategies (Continued)

Design Strategy	Applicable Zone	Present in Fremont	Example
Sidewalk level driveways	Active & Street	Yes	
On-street bike lane	Street	Limited	
Off-street bike lane	Active	No	
Horse hitching posts	Passive	Yes	

Complete Streets

While the Town and Country Path is one excellent example of a non-motorized transportation facility, it is important to look at other areas of the community for additional non-motorized development. "Complete Streets" is a movement to make roads more accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists through design interventions. The design principles of Complete Streets are not necessarily time consuming or costly, making them a good option for communities that want to take small incremental steps to improve their roads. Design elements vary by place and are context dependent. For example, increasing crosswalk visibility, sidewalk connectivity, adding bicycle racks, and adding vegetation to make a stroll a more pleasant option could be a good start in a downtown.

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, the community identified and prioritized several streets for Complete Street intervention. Primary consideration was given to streets that connect the Town and Country Path to downtown Fremont. Design interventions fall into two main categories: the active zone (sidewalks and near building environment), and the street zone. The table titled "Complete Streets Design Strategies" outlines several design interventions, their applicable zones, and whether they are present on the identified high priority streets.

While many "Complete Street" design elements already exist on the high-priority streets, there is a noticeable lack of bicycle infrastructure. Because Main Street is a state highway, adding bicycle lanes on Main Street will be challenging. Side streets offer alternative options for bicycle infrastructure and maintain the connection to downtown. To support bicycle travel to and from downtown, the City should add more bicycle racks in the rear of buildings along Main Street and should evaluate side streets for their capacity to support dedicated bicycle infrastructure.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

While there is no singular public transportation system in the Fremont Community or in Newaygo County, there are several alternative transportation options. The Newaygo County Commission on Aging provides three separate services: volunteer transportation, health care van transportation, and senior transit buses.[8] The volunteer transportation service provides transportation for seniors seeking specialized medical appointments outside of Newaygo County. The health care van transportation provides transportation for seniors with medical appointments within Newaygo County and has part-time and full-time staff. The senior transit bus operates five days a week and transports seniors to banking, shopping, errands, and senior meal sites in Fremont, Newaygo, White Cloud, and the White Pine Adult Day Group. Several other smaller services offer mileage reimbursement for those providing transportation to seniors. While the Commission of Aging provides some services, there is a significant lack of alternative transportation coverage for both seniors and non-seniors, likely a result of the scope of the needed coverage area and low demand. While the demand for public transportation may be low, the lack of coverage is a critical problem for those who require alternative transportation. Paratransit services (dial-a-ride) is one option for expanding coverage in rural areas with lower demand. Besides expanding coverage, locating affordable housing in areas within walking distance of essential services is one strategy to close the transportation gap for those who do not have a personal vehicle or cannot drive.

FREMONT MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

The Fremont Municipal Airport is located in Sheridan Charter Township and is accessible off Green Ave. The airport is owned and operated by the City of Fremont and is home to 31 aircraft, 16 of which are single engine airplanes. From 2019-2020, the Fremont Airport averaged 22 aircraft operations per day, 50% of which were general local air operations. The runways are made of asphalt and in good condition.[9] The airport primarily serves smaller aircraft for recreation, business, or agricultural support. The airport does not have any regular commercial travel between other airports. The City plans to invest $1,293,000 in the airport over the next two years including hangar repairs, new runway electrical system, and runway maintenance.[10]

CONCLUSION

The Fremont Community's transportation landscape is auto-dominated. M-82, the main transportation route, travels through downtown Fremont, and heavy vehicular traffic along the route can negatively impact the downtown atmosphere. The recently constructed truck route reroutes traffic away from downtown, but community members have noted that not all trucks follow the alternate route. The lack of routine and accessible public transportation makes it difficult for those without personal vehicles to travel around the Community. The Town and Country Path is the only source of dedicated non-motorized infrastructure in the Fremont Community. Expanding non-motorized infrastructure by completing the Town and Country Path and adopting Complete Streets principles in other areas of the Community will provide alternative transportation options for those traveling around the Fremont Community.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

- Continue to promote truck travel via the truck route with additional road signage.
- Catalog and prioritize local street improvements.
- Assess the capacity and feasibility of downtown side streets to support bicycle infrastructure.
- Explore, in coordination with Newaygo County, the demand and feasibility for a paratransit service.
- Continue to work on adopting a Complete Streets ordinance.

Projects

- Complete phase 3 of the Town and Country Path.
- Follow street and sidewalk maintenance and improvements as outlined in the Capital Improvements Plan.
- Increase wayfinding along and near the Town and Country Path.

Boating on Fremont Lake.

Source: City of Fremont

Sources

1 Michigan Open Data Portal, All Roads (v17a), https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/all-roads-v17a/explore?location=44.564300%2C-86.307700%2C7.34

2 City of Fremont, Financial Statements – 2021, https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/LAFDocSearch/tl41R01.aspx?&lu_id=3788&doc_yr=2021&doc_code=AUD&doc_sqnb=1

3 Dayton Township, Financial Statements – 2020, https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/LAFDocSearch/tl41R01.aspx?&lu_id=3771&doc_yr=2020&doc_code=AUD&doc_sqnb=1

4 Sheridan Charter Township, Financial Statements – 2020, https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/LAFDocSearch/tl41R01.aspx?&lu_id=3784&doc_yr=2020&doc_code=AUD&doc_sqnb=1

5 Interactive Map, Transportation Asset Management Council, https://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/tamcMap/

6 Oosting, J., "Michigan Oks $3.5B in roads spending. Much of it is going to Metro Detroit.", BridgeMI, Jan. 30, 2020, https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/michigan-oks-35b-roads-spending-much-it-going-metro-detroit

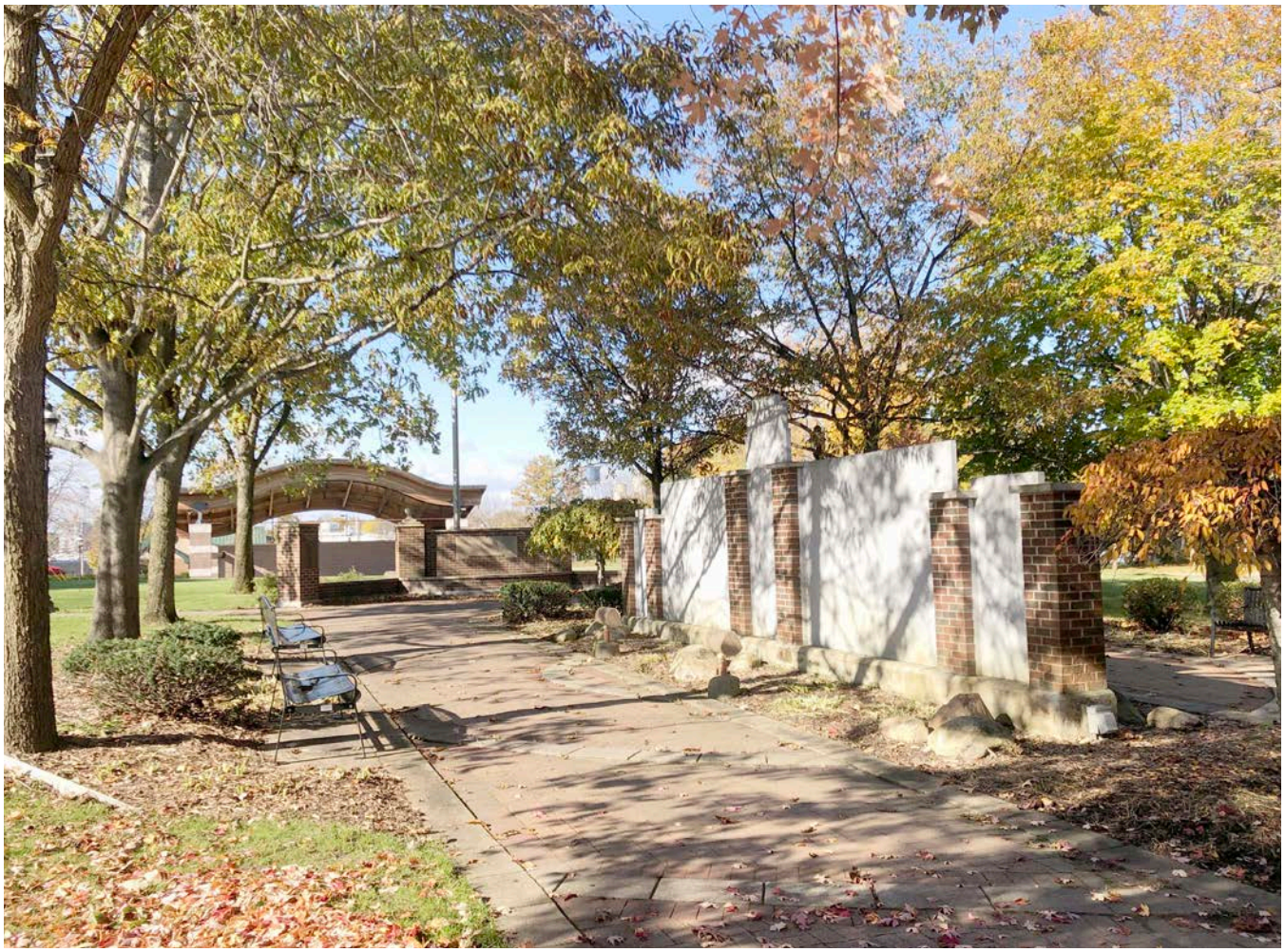
7 Fremont Area Recreational Advisory Committee, 2020 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan

8 Transportation, Newaygo County Commission on Aging, https://www.newaygocountymi.gov/departments/commission-on-aging/transportation/

9 KFFX Fremont Municipal Airport – FAA Information, http://www.airnav.com/airport/KFFX

10 City of Fremont Capital Improvement Plan 2021-2039

7 Economic Development



Ranging from agriculture to manufacturing, the Fremont Community economy is varied. Because of that variation, collaboration amongst local leaders, staff, elected officials, business owners, and residents will be crucial for continued economic prosperity and business growth in the Community, especially as economic trends change at an ever-increasing rate. The following chapter provides an overview of existing economic conditions in the Fremont Community, as well as economic development and redevelopment strategies for future growth.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

Downtown

Downtown Fremont is the economic center of the community. Historic downtowns, like Fremont's, contribute significant cultural and economic value to the local community. Critical to the function of a downtown is a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA is a governing body that uses property taxes to fund programs and improvements within the downtown district, including a façade grant improvement program and business loan program. As shown in the map titled "Downtown Development Authority," Fremont's DDA extends beyond the visual downtown and includes the Gerber Products Company and most of the smaller commercial retail west of downtown. Roughly 42% of all commercial properties in the Fremont Community are within the DDA district, indicating a close relationship between the Fremont economy and its defined downtown district. The DDA is comprised of a board of directors but does not have staff. The lack of professional staff limits the capacity of the DDA to implement economic development strategies; however, even without staff, the board represents a vital economic development entity for the Fremont Community.

The compact parcel and building size and high storefront visibility along Main Street make the heart of downtown Fremont well suited to small local businesses. When the Community was surveyed, 38% of respondents stated they thought the downtown/commercial districts have improved over the past five years, an additional 36% stated downtown/commercial districts have stayed the same, and 26% indicated that downtown/commercial districts have decreased in quality. These percentages indicate that respondents' views on how the downtown has changed over the past five years are varied but there is a slight lean towards improvement. When asked what services respondents would like to see in the downtown / commercial districts, there was substantial demand for restaurants/cafes, recreation/public spaces, and bars/entertainment venues, as shown in the figure titled "Downtown / Commercial District Services."

What is working well in the downtown / commercial areas?

Aesthetics (21%)

Commercial Diversity (17%)

Parking (8%)

What could be improved in the downtown / commercial areas?

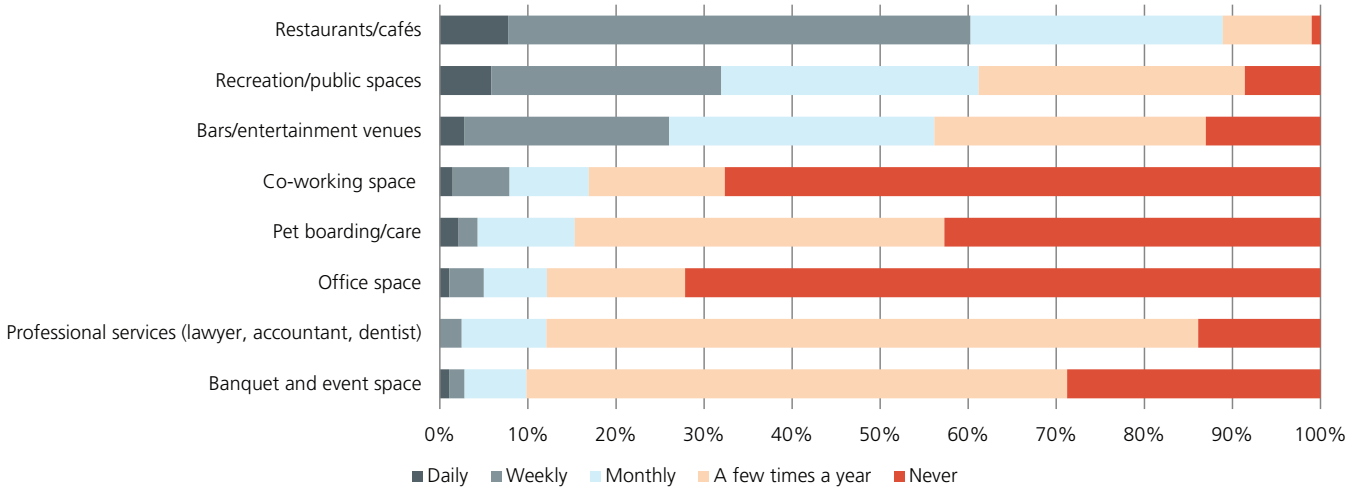
More commercial activity (29%)

More restaurants (21%)

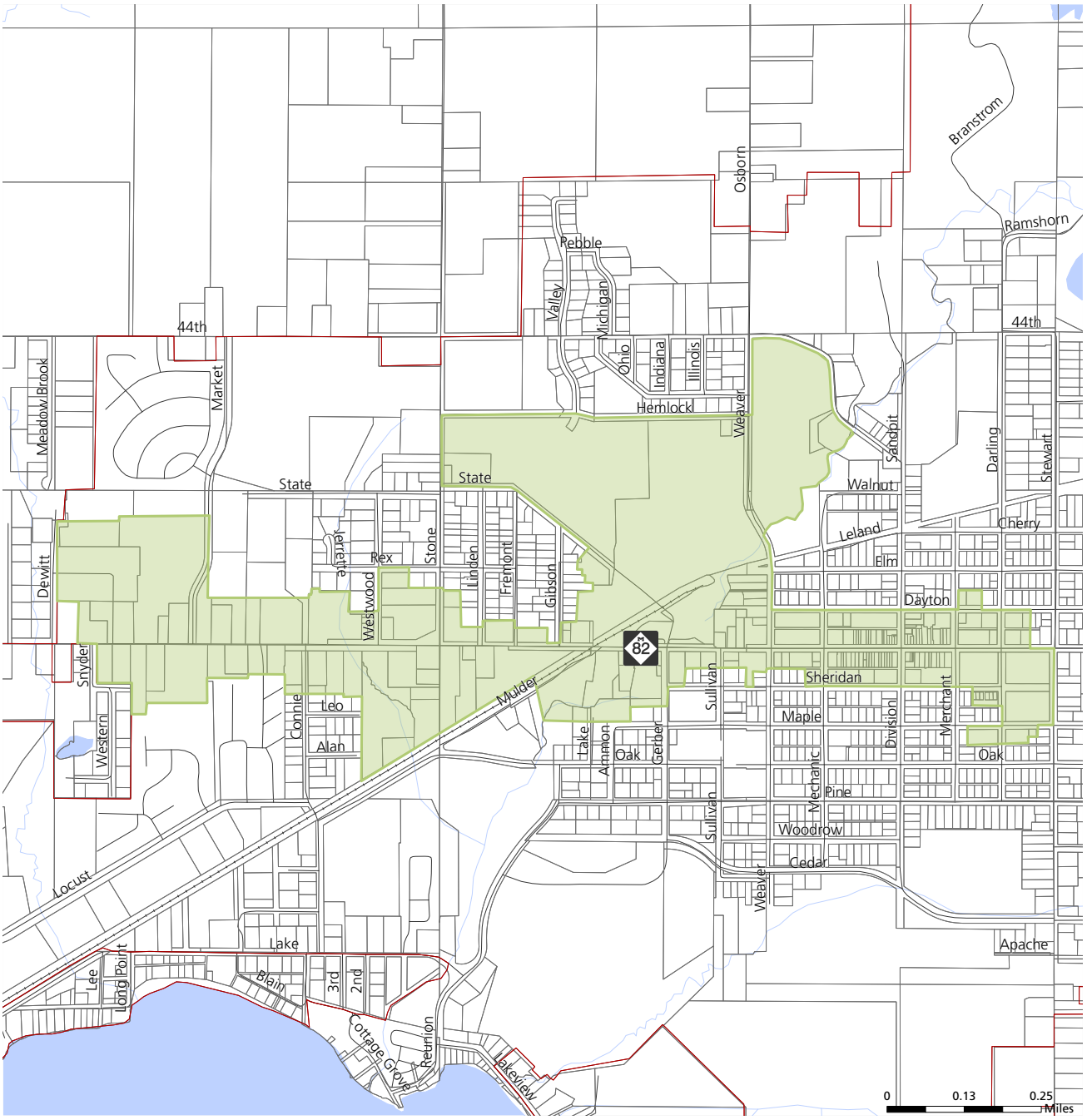
Youth activities (5%)

Source: Fremont Community Survey (2021)

Figure 13: Downtown / Commercial District Services (Community Survey Results)



Map 14: Downtown Development Authority



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Downtown Development Authority

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

DDA District

Food and Drinking Service

One challenge of expanding the food and drinking service industry, which includes restaurants, cafes, bars, and entertainment venues, is that not all buildings are suited for these uses. A mismatch between services in demand and building stock can limit the development of new businesses. Buildings that are best suited for food and drinking service businesses formerly operated as such and ideally feature commercial kitchens in adequate condition. Otherwise, retrofitting a building to service a restaurant substantially raises the startup cost, which can reduce the number of people willing to invest.

However, there are alternatives to the traditional brick and mortar storefronts, including food halls and food trucks . Food halls are similar to cafeterias in that customers may choose from multiple food vendors and dine in a communal space. Because the space is shared, the startup costs are lower than a traditional brick and mortar store.[1] Additionally, rather than launching immediately into an ownership model, entrepreneurs may rent space to pilot their ideas first. Often, businesses that start in a food hall transition to a more established location, allowing the food hall to act as a small business incubator for food and drinking places. Generally, food halls need a larger space because there are multiple vendors and range from 5,000 sq. ft. to 50,000 sq. ft. depending on the number of vendors.[2] Because vendors typically rent space in a food hall, the construction and operation of the overall food hall is handled by a separate party. Private investors, nonprofits like the Chamber of Commerce, and the public sector are all suitable candidates to spur the development of a food hall. To support such a development, the Fremont Community should work to identify partners and funding sources to construct and/or renovate a space, ideally in the downtown.

Food trucks are another small-scale solution in the food and service industry. Startup costs for a food truck are estimated to be roughly 30% of the costs of opening a traditional brick and mortar restaurant.[3] Food trucks also have the added ability to move, allowing them to service special events. Currently, food trucks are only permitted in Dayton and Sheridan Charter Townships. To create a "food truck scene," the Fremont Community should establish a food truck lot or location in the Townships where food trucks may routinely be parked to build a consistent customer following. Food truck lots generally have some seating but can be as simple as closing off a section of an existing parking lot.[4] One challenge of food trucks is that they are not an all-season option, so owners must earn enough money during the warmer months to sustain profitability year-round. Another challenge is that they are often met with resistance from established brick and mortar restaurants who have had to pay higher upfront costs and feel that they are at a disadvantage when competing with food trucks.

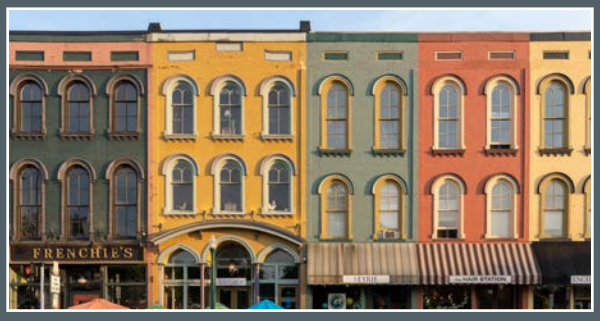
Historic Preservation

The historic character of the buildings and layout of downtown Fremont contributes significant cultural benefits to the community such as human-scale design elements and a sense of history and community. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the elements that contribute to the historic aesthetic are preserved even when building ownership changes. A tool for historic preservation is the Zoning Ordinance. The Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance currently regulates several elements of buildings in the downtown, including building materials and façade requirements. These regulations should continue to be enforced. Additionally, the DDA offers façade improvement funds to eligible building owners. The DDA has $20,000 annually invested in the program and

Autumn in downtown Fremont.

Visual Preference Survey (Color)

Earth / Natural Tones: 60%



Colorful / Bright Tones: 40%

Source: Fremont Community Survey (2021)

Visual Preference Survey (Style)

Traditional Style: 87%

Modern Style: 13%

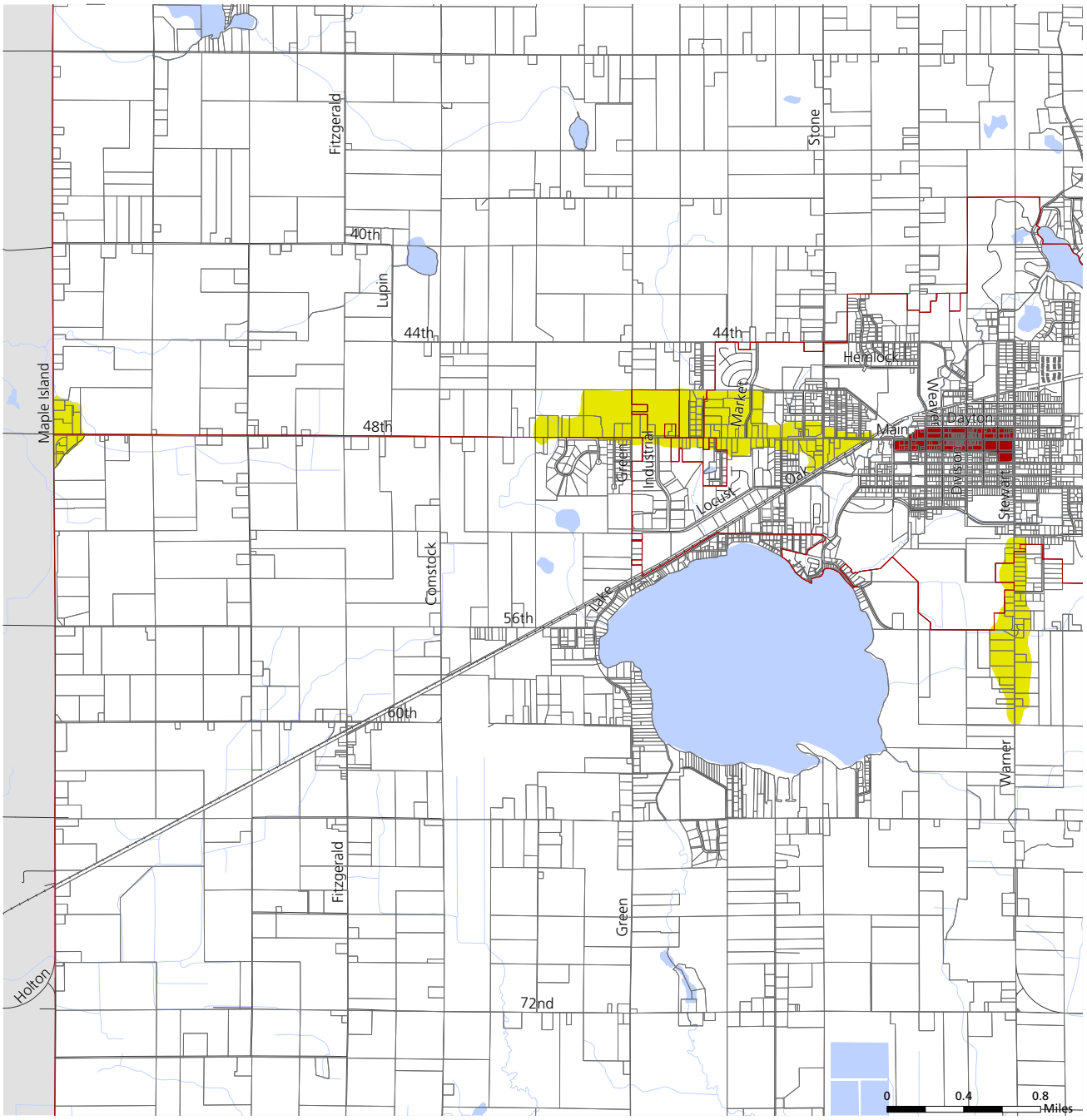
Source: Fremont Community Survey (2021)

there is a maximum award amount of $10,000 per façade project. The City of Fremont could also establish a historic district around downtown to further preserve the historic character of the area. Establishing a historic district would also require establishing historic standards that would specify how building development/redevelopment should look in relation to the historic features of the structure, preserving the historic character of the area. Establishing a historic district would also open additional avenues for funding relating to historic preservation. Historic resources (buildings, public spaces, landmarks) in local historic districts are eligible for Michigan State Historic Tax Credits.[5] The program allows property or business owners to receive a deduction in personal income tax credits or business income tax credits in exchange for completing historic preservation work on their property. Additionally, in the Comprehensive Plan survey, respondents were asked two questions about building aesthetics in the downtown. When presented with two options for building color, 60% stated a preference for earth/natural tones over more colorful tones. When asked about building style, 87% of respondents preferred the traditional building style as opposed to a modern style. These preferences may be used to develop more specific design standards.

Commercial Corridors

Beyond downtown, there are also three main commercial areas, all located on M-82. One of the areas is located on the west side of the City and includes Meijer, Walmart, and other large retail stores. Another commercial area is not as dense as the western one but is located along M-82 from Apache Road to the midpoint between West 56th and West 64th Streets. The final area is located at the intersection of M-82 and M-120, referred to as "5-mile Corner." These commercial areas are defined by auto-centric access with driveways and large front yard parking lots. There are two zoning tools that direct the form and use of the three commercial areas. Most of the parcels in the commercial corridors near the City of Fremont are zoned Urban Commercial and 5-mile Corner is zoned Rural Commercial and Agricultural Preservation. The Urban Commercial District is written to support businesses with heavy automobile traffic, like retail stores with large square footages. The Access Management Overlay District applies to all parcels with frontage on M-82

Map 15: Commercial Areas



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Commercial Areas

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

Downtown

Commercial Corridor

Visual Preference Survey (Signs)

Monument Sign: 61%

Pole Sign: 39%

Source: Fremont Community Survey (2021)

and M-120 (excluding those in the downtown), and it provides standards for automotive access. The combination of the Urban Commercial District and the Access Management Overlay District provides adequate standards for developing commercial corridors.

Because many of the businesses rely on automobile traffic and are set back from the road, they require signs to direct customers and potential customers. The Comprehensive Plan Survey asked respondents to indicate their preferred style of road sign, either pole or monument, so that the Zoning Ordinance could help to regulate visual blight or clutter along the corridors. The majority of respondents indicated a preference for a monument sign. Currently pole signs are only permitted in the Urban Commercial District.

SMALL-SCALE MANUFACTURING

In the 19th century, manufacturing was intertwined in neighborhoods and villages. Due to the small scale of production, local manufacturing establishments were located in smaller buildings and did not have as negative of an impact on the surrounding uses as industrial powerhouses do today. However, as manufacturing scale grew, industrial uses transitioned to larger properties and larger buildings, becoming incompatible with the fabric of surrounding neighborhoods.[6] However, with the influence of online marketplaces and other economic shifts, small-scale manufacturing is on the rise again. Small-scale manufacturing does not have specific definition but is generally defined more by the quantity of goods produced than by product type. Small-scale leather goods, pottery, or clothing operations would be considered small manufacturing businesses. Because the Community already has a vibrant arts scene and a varied economy, it is well suited to receive and showcase the goods produced from the expansion of small-scale manufacturing.

These businesses are a boon to many economic centers because they help increase foot traffic and occupy vacant storefronts that may be too large for retail and too small industrial uses. Buildings with smaller footprints and communal services (parking, lighting, etc.), such as those found in a downtown, on its fringes, or in a commercial corridor, are best for small-scale manufacturing businesses. Additionally, permitting small-scale manufacturing in a downtown, which is a predominately retail

Downtown Fremont.

environment, would make the downtown more resilient due to the diversified array of businesses. Often small-scale manufacturing businesses have a retail front and therefore would still contribute to the retail environment of downtown. Smaller buildings permitted for small-scale manufacturing also fill a gap as businesses scale upwards. For example, home-based businesses that have outgrown the home may be looking for space to expand but cannot afford to build a new structure or buy the larger buildings in industrial locations. Home-based businesses and home occupations are common in the Townships, making small-scale manufacturing an even more viable option for local creators. To support small local businesses and diversify the businesses downtown, small-scale manufacturing should be permitted in the Downtown Commercial District with regulations to address any potential negative impacts.

EVENT SPACES

Event spaces, or other similar venues, are often used for special events or communal gatherings. Weddings, graduations, meetings, and other communal events often rely on the reservation of a space to adequately hold the number of attendees. Over the past decade there has been increased interest in event spaces, specifically in the Townships. Special event spaces on agricultural property, such as wedding barns, have increased in popularity. Currently, "organized meeting space" is permitted in all three agricultural zoning districts under a special land use. Special event spaces can cause contention between neighbors because of the increased activity that they generate including noise, traffic, and light. The amount of activity is often in contrast to the quiet rural nature of agricultural land. Therefore, it is important to ensure that there are adequate regulations in order to control the activity generated by special events. The zoning ordinance does specify requirements for restroom facilities, parking, and hours of operation for meeting venues on agricultural land.[7]

Event spaces on agricultural land are an effective way of supplementing income and increasing the economic productivity of the land. The temporary vacancy of these spaces when no events are occurring does not detract from the surrounding area because the land is predominately agricultural. If event spaces were common in the downtown, the temporary vacancies would negatively impact the downtown environment during periods of no events. These would appear as vacant spaces as opposed to a retail or food service business that would generate daily activity.

GERBER PRODUCTS

Gerber Products (baby food manufacturing) opened in Fremont in 1927 and is now owned by the Nestle Corporation. Since it opened, Gerber has continuously invested in its facilities. At a time when many manufacturing plants move to the most profitable location, Gerber has remained in Fremont. In 2020, Gerber opened an expansion which added 50 additional jobs to the facility. The expansion was made possible due to an investment of $36 million and through collaboration with the

Agricultural land in Dayton Township.

Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Newaygo County, and the City of Fremont.[8] The City also re-established a ten-year Renaissance Zone for the manufacturing plant, which helped to encourage new development in Fremont as opposed to another Nestle-owned plant. There is a long-standing relationship amongst Gerber, area farmers, and local transportation companies, which speaks to the importance of Gerber Products to the local economy. The Fremont Community should continue to work with Gerber Products on future improvements and investments in their facilities as long as the City feels this relationship remains mutually beneficial; for example, they hire locally, pay a living wage, and do not contaminate the land.

INDUSTRIAL PARK

In addition to Gerber Products, there are several other manufacturing and industrial properties including the Fremont Regional Digester that is located in the Fremont industrial park, along Industrial Drive off of M-82 and Locust Street. These properties are planned for existing industrial facilities and have adequate utilities to support industrial development. The park currently has 50 acres of vacant parcels, and the ongoing challenge is recruiting industrial and manufacturing businesses to develop in the park. According to the West Michigan Shore Community Economic Development Strategy, "forest & woods products," "transportation equipment manufacturing," and "agribusiness, food processing, and technology" are the unique industries in Newaygo County. These businesses should be the primary recruitment targets for Fremont because they contribute the most to the local economy.

AGRICULTURE

The cultural identity of the Fremont Community is tied to its agrarian economy. According to 2019 Census data, roughly 3% of the Community is employed in "agriculture, forest, fishing and hunting, and mining", a 37% decline from 2014 (181 to 114).[9] Despite a decline in workers, agriculture acreage is slightly increasing in Newaygo County. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's Census, conducted every five years, the number of acres of operated farmland in the county has reached a high since 1992.[10] Yet the number of farms has decreased to pre-2002 levels. This indicates that farms are consolidating; existing farms are expanding, while others are closing. The decreasing number of farms, while not immediately concerning, may present challenges to long-term agricultural sustainability. As the number of farms declines, but total land stays consistent, each farm becomes more important to preserving agricultural land. Now, if one farm were to cease operation or sell all their land for non-agricultural uses, the total

Table 23: Newaygo County Farm Statistics

Year	Total Farms Operated	Total Farmland Acres	Farm Value (2021 $ adj. / acre)	Net Farm Income (2021 $ adj.)
1992	667	115,338	$1,798	$16,919
1997	670	122,294	$2,329	$26,685
2002	902	135,422	$4,167	$22,888
2007	951	133,403	$4,591	$35,060
2012	923	125,663	$4,319	$29,724
2017	850	136,232	$4,423	$34,302

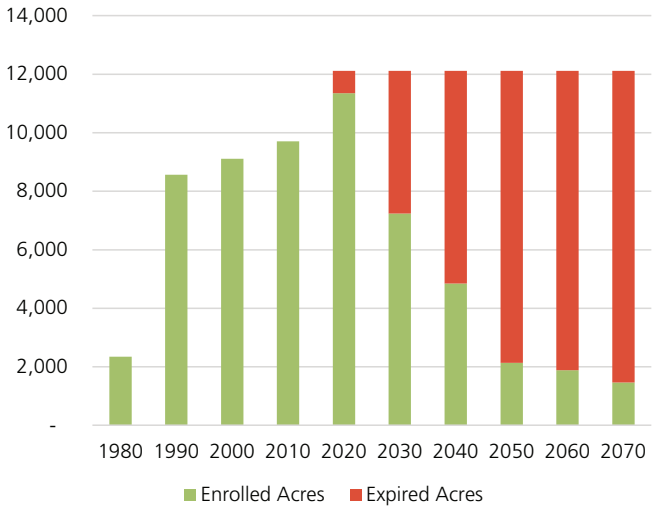
Source: 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, & 2017 Agricultural Census

agricultural land would be significantly impacted. Therefore, it is important for the Townships to monitor several dimensions of farmland statistics to ensure that there is no immediate danger to the agricultural community.

One positive sign is the increasing farm income. Nationally, farm income is declining, which contributes to higher farm loan delinquencies and farm bankruptcies. The declining farm revenues and higher farm closure rates have negative impacts for local agrarian economies which rely on farmers for the purchase of goods and services.[11] However, the recent increases in farm income indicate that national trends of declining revenues do not hold true in Newaygo County; the value of farmland and farm income is approaching the peak set in 2007.

Despite farmland acreage remaining consistent in the last several years, it is important to have a set of tools for farmland preservation in the event that agricultural land starts decreasing. The main farmland preservation tool is the State of Michigan's Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116).[12] This voluntary agreement between the State of Michigan and the landowner restricts development on the enrolled land for the period of the agreement. In return for keeping land in an agricultural or natural state, the landowner receives tax benefits. As of 2020, there are 11,354 acres enrolled in the program in the Fremont Community. The figure titled "Farmland Preservation Acres" illustrates the number of acres enrolled over time. Because these agreements do not last in perpetuity, land that is currently enrolled may lose protection if not re-enrolled. By 2030, roughly 40% of all the currently protected land could be unprotected, and by 2050, the percentage could rise to 82%. The Community can actively encourage landowners to enroll and re-enroll in the program to ensure that agricultural land may continue to be preserved.

Figure 14: Farmland Preservation Acres



Source: Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Additionally, local governments and nonprofits may purchase development rights from private property owners. Through the purchase of development rights, landowners maintain ownership of the land but cede the ability to develop the land in the future in exchange for compensation. These agreements generally require financial compensation and so are not as effective as the State Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. Conservation easements are somewhat

prevalent in the Fremont Community, especially in Dayton Township, where farmers choose to put an easement on their land to prevent it from being developed in the future. Township staff typically direct interested landowners to the Nature Conservancy for conservation easements. The Fremont Community should provide materials to landowners on various preservation programs and the benefits of enrolling in those programs and/or develop a fund to buy farmer's development rights.

REDEVELOPMENT SITES

In 2020, the City of Fremont received RRC® certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). The certification acknowledges the City's efforts to be transparent, predictable, and efficient in the economic development process. To achieve certification, the City aligned with the program's standards and best practices for planning, zoning, and economic development. One of the best practices is a routinely updated list of potential redevelopment sites that are underutilized and could better serve the community. Currently, the City has identified 13 properties that were evaluated according to a set of criteria to prioritize which are best suited for immediate action. Some of the factors considered when prioritizing were the type of future development, existing environmental conditions, and location along major transportation routes. The four sites that were identified as the top priorities for redevelopment are summarized on the following pages.

411 N Darling Avenue

This 10-acre site sits four blocks off Main Street and is surrounded by predominately residential properties. Formerly an industrial facility, there is some environmental contamination, but the property owner, in coordination with EGLE, began remediation efforts in 2019. The City of Fremont and the property owner are continuing to monitor the environmental status of the site, and it may be eligible for brownfield redevelopment incentives. The site is currently zoned Multiple-Family Residential (R-MF) and is designated as High Density Residential in the future land use map. The site has connections to the municipal water and sewer system.

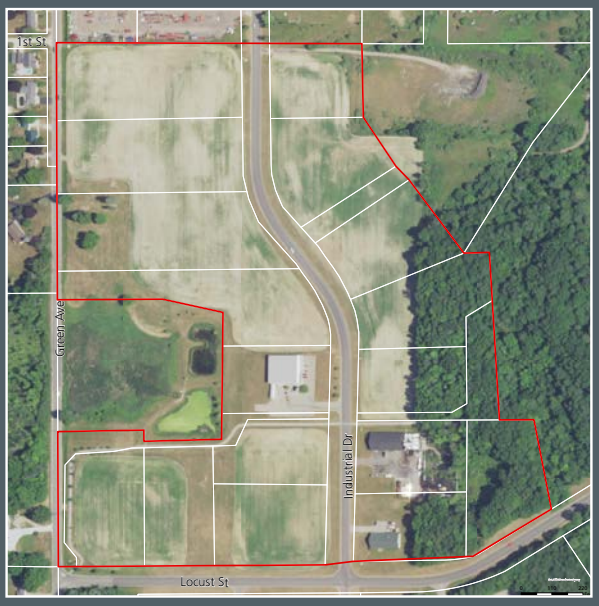
Darling Walkway and senior housing in Downtown Fremont.

12 W Main Street

This charming three-story downtown building is ripe for redevelopment. Recent investments in the façade and windows highlight a sliver of the future potential when the building is completely restored. The City of Fremont and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation have identified this building as an excellent candidate for grant funding. The property is zoned Central Business District (CBD) and is categorized as Downtown Commercial on the future land use map. This property is currently for sale and optimally suited for mixed-use with ground-floor retail or food service and second- and third-floor residential.

Fremont Industrial Park

The Fremont Industrial Park is a pre-platted development with 50 acres of undeveloped land. The industrial park is full-service and certified with a negotiable sale price of $9,000 per acre. All lots are zoned Industrial (O-IND) and categorized as industrial on the Future Land Use Map. The size of the lots makes the park prime for larger manufacturing or warehousing businesses, and the park has direct access to M-82. A recently constructed truck route on the south side of the City of Fremont allows large transportation vehicles to bypass downtown and provides better access to the industrial park.



Priority Redevelopment Site: 12 W Main Street.

Gerber Products.

701 N Weaver Avenue

The City of Fremont acquired this 7.08-acre property in 2022. Since 1986, this property has remained undeveloped. While the property is currently zoned industrial, the City wishes to develop multifamily housing on the site. The City held a public design charette to identify preferred community concepts, and the City is in process of issuing an RFQ for the site.

CONCLUSION

The Comprehensive Plan survey showed that residents want more food and drinking service establishments in the commercial areas. Food and drinking businesses contribute significant foot traffic, offer a "second shift" for local businesses, and support other businesses as they draw in patrons. Therefore, it is important to recruit, retain, and expand these businesses in the Fremont Community. Similarly, small-scale manufacturing should be expanded into the downtown.

There is significant economic activity and potential in the industrial/manufacturing and agricultural industries. Recent investments in the Fremont Industrial Park should be marketed to recruit new or expanding businesses. Agricultural land, while currently stable, should be monitored for dramatic decreases and educational materials about land preservation should be made available for landowners.

Oak Sculpture.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

» Identify vacant buildings suitable for food and drinking establishments and market them as such.

» Identify partners/funding sources to construct/ renovate a food hall space.

» Explore establishing a food truck lot or location in Dayton Township or Sheridan Charter Township where food trucks can routinely be parked and provide necessary amenities.

» Explore establishing a food truck ordinance outlining the regulations and requirements for such establishments.

» Investigate establishing a local historic district around downtown Fremont.

» Continue to work with Gerber Products on future improvements and investments.

» Continue to promote the existing industrial park as development ready.

» Provide and promote educational materials on various farmland preservation programs.

Zoning

» Amend design regulations to reflect desires of the community.

» Consider permitting small-scale manufacturing businesses in the Downtown and Urban Commercial Districts.

Projects

» Continue to promote redevelopment sites, prioritizing the top four.

Sources

1 "Food Halls of North America", Cushman and Wakefield, 2018, http://www.hendricksonjohnson.com/files/CW-Retail-FoodHalls-2018%20(1).pdf

2 Ibid.

3 Maras, E., "Startup Costs by the Numbers", FoodTruckOperator.com, https://www.foodtruckoperator.com/blogs/startup-costs-by-the-numbers-food-trucks-versus-restaurants/#:~:text=The%20recurring%20costs%20will%20be,restaurant%20include%20rent%20and%20utilities.

4 Vance, J., "Equitably Integrating Food Trucks into an Established Business Community", January 2015, https://www.m-group.us/m-lab/blog/2015/1/12/equitably-integrating-food-trucks-into-an-established-business-community

5 Public Act 343 of 2020: Michigan's New State Historic Tax Credit, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, https://www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/programs-and-services/historic-preservation-tax-credits/

6 "Made in Place", Smart Growth America, https://smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/made-in-place-small-scale-manufacturing-neighorhood-revitalization.pdf

7 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 9-6.06-AC

8 McNeel, A., "Gerber to expand Fremont facility, open up to 50 new positions", WZZM ABC 13, https://www.wzzm13.com/article/news/local/gerber-to-expand-fremont-facility-open-up-to-50-new-positions/69-8bdf2995-ee57-4f3c-83dc-d9c522b3735d

9 American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau, DP03 2014 & 2019 5 – Year Estimates: Dayton Township, City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

10 Agricultural Census, United States Department of Agriculture, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017 estimates

11 "Understanding the Economic Crisis Family Farms are Facing", Farm Aid, https://www.farmaid.org/blog/fact-sheet/understanding-economic-crisis-family-farms-are-facing/

12 Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/environment/farmland/general/the-farmland-and-open-space-preservation-program

8 Land Use

Land use is the core element of community planning. When combined with demographic data and community input, land use planning creates a direction for the Fremont Community to develop that aligns future development with the vision set by the Comprehensive Plan. The Fremont Community has developed in a predictable pattern, where the main commercial area is centered around a principal Main Street creating a quintessential downtown. Surrounding downtown are gridded neighborhoods with smaller residential lots and neighborhood facilities such as schools and parks. Beyond the gridded neighborhoods are large parcels that support land-intensive uses like healthcare and industry. Finally, the most rural parts of the Fremont Community are dominated by large parcels that are used for agricultural purposes or for residential homes.

EXISTING LAND USE

Each parcel is classified by the local assessor into one of five classes, and each class is broken down by its status as "vacant" or "improved" (except for exempt uses):

- Agricultural
- Residential
- Exempt
- Commercial
- Industrial

Agricultural

The majority of land in the Fremont Community is agricultural (66%), lying primarily within Dayton Township and Sheridan Township. Despite national declines in farmland (-1.6% in total farmland acres from 2012 to 2017), farmland in Newaygo County is increasing (8.4% in total farmland acres from 2012 to 2017).[1] The increase in operating farmland will likely increase conflicts between agricultural land and the demand for more residential land, especially near existing residential areas.

Residential

Following agricultural, residential is the second-most common land use at 26% of the total land in the Fremont Community. Most of the residential land in the community is developed (88%), as of the designated residential land only a small percentage is vacant. This indicates that as the community grows, there will be increased pressure on other land uses to be converted to residential land. Residential is the largest land use in the City of Fremont (excluding exempt land) showing that the City is the residential and social center of the community.

Exempt

Exempt land represents parcels that receive an exemption from property taxes, which include governmental, educational, and religious properties. The majority of exempt land is local governmental land in Sheridan Charter Township. The airfield and wastewater treatment plant in Sheridan Charter Township, owned and operated by the City of Fremont, are the two largest local governmental sites in the Fremont Community. It can be a financial challenge for communities to have a large percentage of exempt land because it negatively impacts tax revenue. However, with only 4.9% of the total land falling into an exempt land use category, there is an excellent balance of exempt and non-exempt land in the Fremont Community.

Commercial

Commercial land represents roughly 2.5% of the total land in the Fremont Community. Understandably, the City of Fremont has more commercial land than the Townships because of its role as the economic hub of the community. Commercial properties in the City tend to be smaller than those in the Township, making them better suited for small and local businesses. The large tracts of available and vacant commercial land in the Townships mean that large, chain box stores are better suited in the Township near the City boundary, if there is supporting infrastructure for larger development.

Existing Land Use vs. Future Land Use vs. Zoning

There are three main components to the following land use analysis: existing land use, future land use, and zoning. Existing land use codes are applied to parcels by the assessor for taxation purposes and broadly categorized as agricultural, residential, exempt, commercial, and industrial. The future land use map is initially based on existing land uses, but shows how the community wants to change over the next 15-20 years. The table titled "Potential Conflict Detections" examines potential land use conflicts in the existing land use framework and outlines how the proposed future land use framework addresses those conflicts. Finally, future land use categories lay the groundwork for modifying the land use regulations in the Zoning Ordinance so that eventually local law aligns with the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. The table titled "Zoning Plan" compares the descriptions of the proposed land use categories to the existing zoning districts.

Industrial

At only 0.5% of the total land in the Community, industrial land use is the smallest land use category in the Fremont Community. However, the City of Fremont's industrial park has numerous development-ready sites awaiting development. While some land in Dayton Township is classified as industrial, it should be noted that there really is no industrial development in the Township. The Consumer's Energy high-tension power line property runs through the north-east potion of the Township, which represents the area classified as improved industrial. Important to note is that there are several development ready industrial properties in the City of Fremont, but since they are under the ownership of the City of Fremont they are currently classified as exempt properties, not industrial.

Potential for Change and/or Land Use Conflicts

Changing land uses and a growing population have potential to create land use tensions. Below is a list of areas where there is a high potential for change and/or for land use conflicts. These areas for potential change/conflict are further addressed in the tabled titled "Potential Conflict Detection."

» Population pressure and an increased demand for housing on agricultural land.

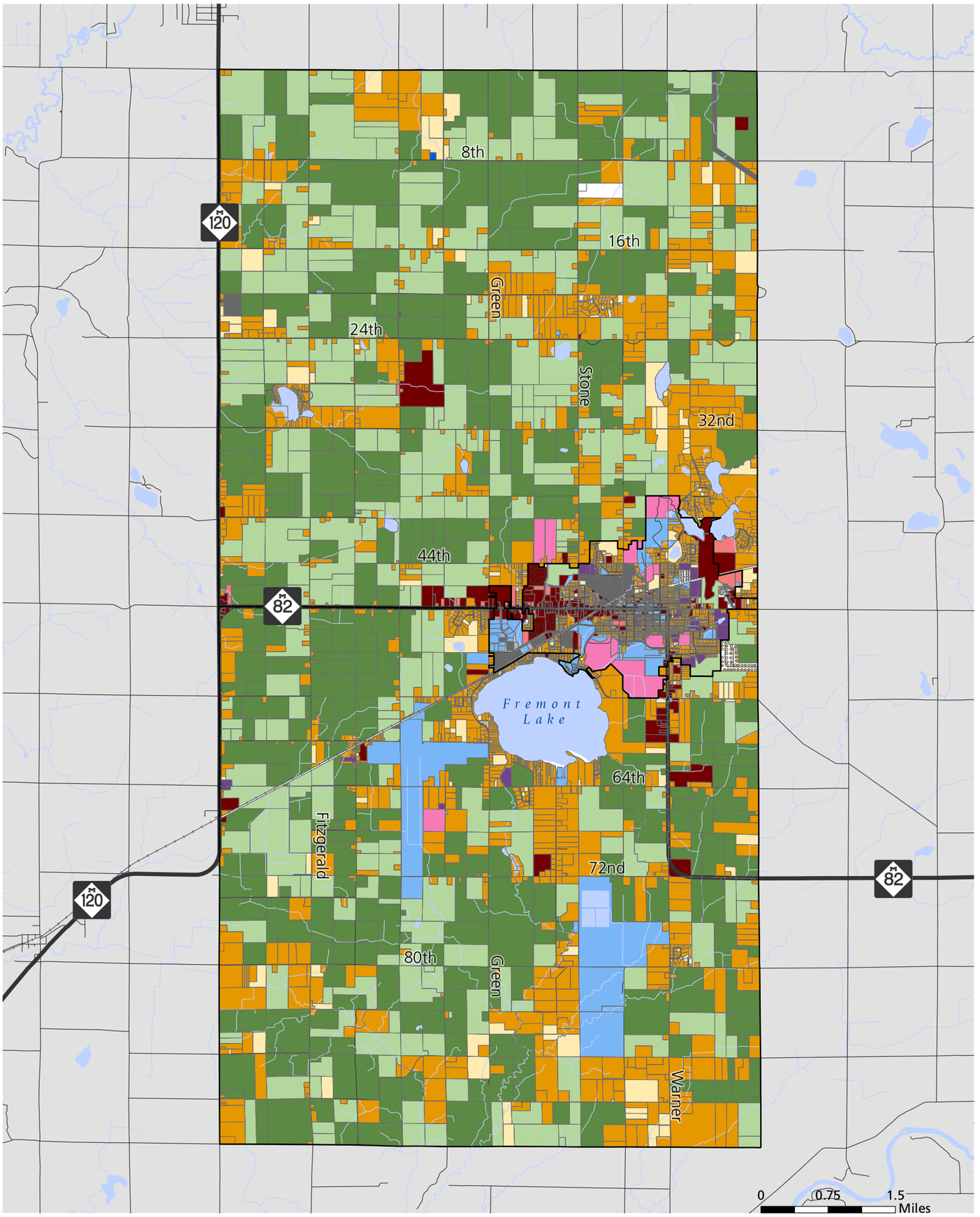
» Industrial land use expansion.

» Additional waterfront development around Fremont Lake.

Table 24: Existing Land Use

Land Use	Dayton Township	City of Fremont	Sheridan Charter Township	Total Acres	Percent of Total
Agricultural	**15,953**	**97**	**13,442**	**29,492**	**66.2%**
Improved	7,694	0	8,699	16,393	36.8%
Vacant	8,259	97	4,743	13,099	29.4%
Residential	**5,080**	**554**	**5,919**	**11,552**	**25.9%**
Improved	4,458	462	5,289	10,209	22.9%
Vacant	622	92	630	1,343	3.0%
Exempt	**86**	**737**	**1,353**	**2,176**	**4.9%**
Local	5	331	1,281	1,617	3.6%
State	4	0	2	6	0.0%
Federal	0	1	0	1	0.0%
Schools	75	295	39	410	0.9%
Religious	1	110	31	142	0.3%
Commercial	**321**	**507**	**271**	**1,099**	**2.5%**
Improved	275	438	271	984	2.2%
Vacant	46	69	0	115	0.3%
Industrial	**77**	**158**	**2**	**238**	**0.5%**
Improved	77	153	2	232	0.5%
Vacant	0	6	0	6	0.0%

Source: Newaygo County Equalization Department

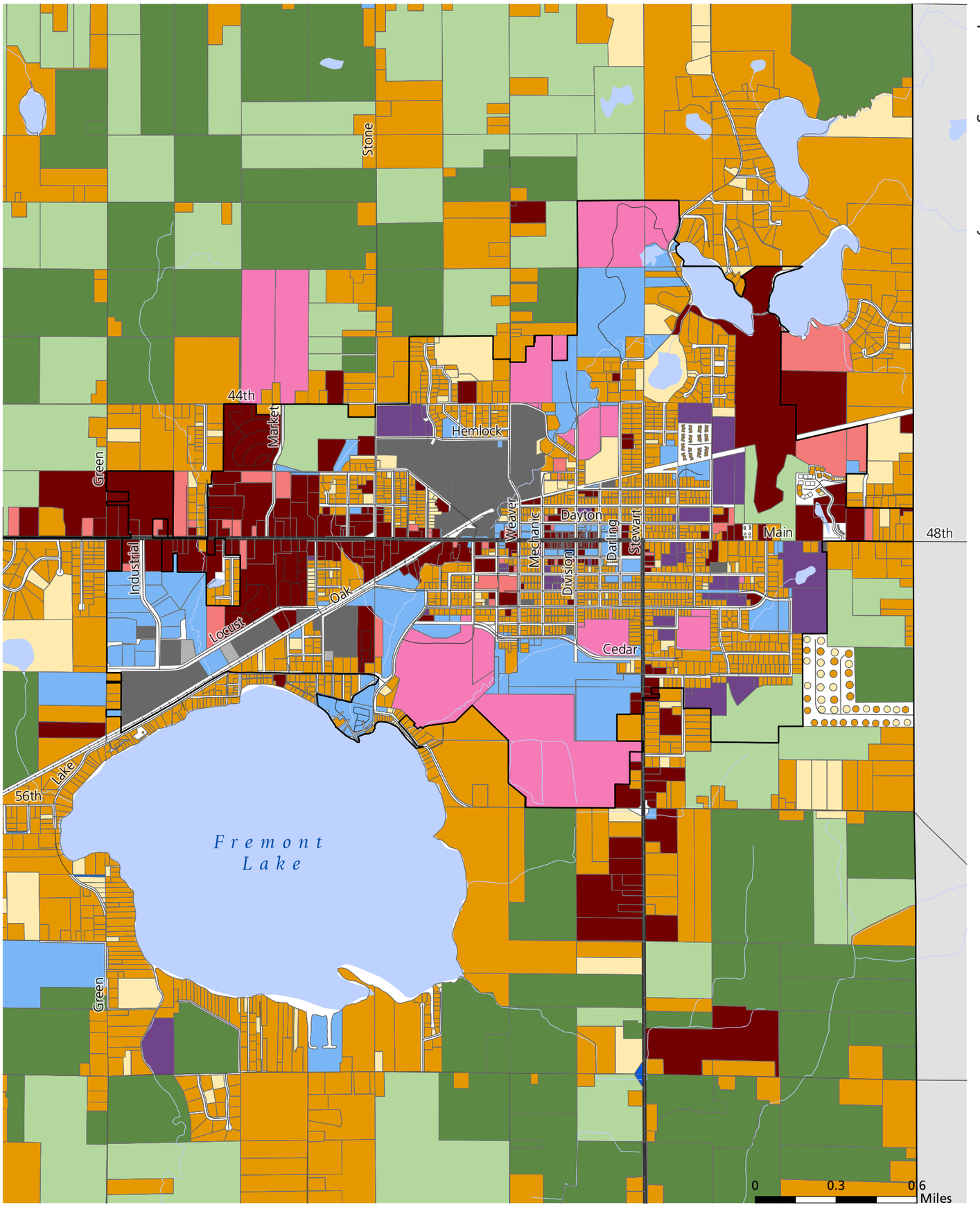


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Existing Land Use

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Agricultural, Improved
- Agricultural, Vacant
- Commercial, Improved
- Commercial, Vacant
- Industrial, Improved
- Industrial, Vacant
- Residential, Improved
- Residential, Vacant
- Exempt, Federal
- Exempt, State
- Exempt, Local
- Exempt, Schools
- Exempt, Religious
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Condominium



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Existing Land Use

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Agricultural, Improved
- Agricultural, Vacant
- Commercial, Improved
- Commercial, Vacant
- Industrial, Improved
- Industrial, Vacant
- Residential, Improved
- Residential, Vacant
- Exempt, Federal
- Exempt, State
- Exempt, Local
- Exempt, Schools
- Exempt, Religious
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Condominium

ZONING

The three jurisdictions in the Fremont Community are governed by a Joint Zoning Ordinance as applied by the Joint Planning Commission and Joint Zoning Board of Appeals. The land use collaboration among all three jurisdictions reduces conflicting uses (i.e., industrial adjacent to residential) across jurisdictional boundaries and creates a more cohesive Fremont Community. A brief description of each district is below, including the table titled "Zoning Districts by Jurisdiction," which outlines all the zoning districts in the Fremont Community and in which jurisdiction each district applies.

Agricultural Districts

Agricultural Preservation (A-1)

This District is intended primarily to conserve and protect prime agricultural lands for farming and agricultural uses. It is also the intent of this District to help maintain land values at levels which farm activities can support and to avoid property value increases through speculation for higher density uses, which force prime farmland into non-agricultural uses.[2]

Table 25: Zoning Districts by Jurisdiction

	Dayton Township	City of Fremont	Sheridan Charter Township
Agricultural Districts			
Agricultural Preservation (A-1)	✓		
General Agriculture (A-2)			✓
Agricultural Residential (A-3)	✓		✓
Residential Districts			
Low-Density Residential (R-1)			✓
Medium Density Residential (R-2)	✓		✓
Estate Residential (R-3)		✓	
Neighborhood Residential (R-4)		✓	
Multiple Family Residential (R-MF)		✓	
Manufactured Home Park (R-MHP)		✓	
Commercial Districts			
Downtown Commercial (C-1)		✓	
Urban Commercial (C-2)	✓	✓	✓
Rural Commercial (C-3)	✓		✓
Industrial District			
Industrial District (O-IND)		✓	
Overlay Districts			
Airport Overlay (O-AO)			✓
Waterfront Overlay (R-WO)		✓	
Access Management Corridor Overlay (O-AMC)			
Work/Live Overlay		✓	
Special Districts			
Lake District (R-L)	✓		✓
Institutional (O-INS)		✓	
Mixed-Use (O-MU)		✓	
Planned Unit Developments (PUD)			✓

✓ *Applicable zoning district to jurisdiction*

General Agriculture (A-2)

This District is comprised of those areas where agricultural production and other rural-type activities exist and should be preserved or encouraged as the principal land uses within the foreseeable future. Large vacant areas, fallow land, and wooded areas are also included in this District.[3]

Agricultural Residential (A-3)

The regulations of the A-3 District recognize lands that retain a relatively high proportion of agriculture and open space use, but due to urban proximity, population growth, soil characteristics, and related factors, experience on-going transition to non-farm low density residential development.[4]

Residential Districts

Low Density Residential (R-1)

The regulations of the R-1 District are intended to encourage a suitable environment for a variety of suburban residential densities and compatible supportive recreational, institutional, and educational uses. The intent of this District is to protect residential areas from the encroachment of uses that are not appropriate to a residential environment and to permit residential and institutional uses not well suited for an Agricultural District.[5]

Medium Density Residential (R-2)

The regulations of the R-2 District are intended to encourage a suitable environment for a variety of suburban residential densities and compatible supportive recreational, institutional, and educational uses. The intent of this District is primarily for single-family residential use on land where public services should be available in the near future.[6]

Estate Residential (R-3)

The Estate District is comprised of residential neighborhoods on larger lots, located in areas that begin a transition to the more rural and agricultural areas in neighboring townships. It is made up of a mix of homes but leaning more toward outlying urban or rural residences. It is characterized by the presence of natural landscape features, a greater amount of open space, and greater building setbacks.[7]

Neighborhood Residential (R-4)

This Residential District makes up the core of the residential neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown and other areas of nonresidential development. It is made up of a complementary mix of historical and post-World War II homes. The Neighborhood Residential District expresses its residential character with its mature trees, grid street system, sidewalks, with clearly defined front entrances, small lots, front porches, and well-maintained homes relatively close to the street.[8]

Multiple Family Residential (R-MF)

This District is intended to provide opportunities for affordable housing and alternatives to traditional subdivision housing through quality design and compatible layout that is urban in nature and harmonious with adjacent properties.[9]

Manufactured Home Park (R-MHP)

This District is comprised of traditional manufactured home parks. Manufactured home communities may be established and operated subject to the requirements and imitations set forth in the Manufactured Home Commission Act, (MCL 125.2301 et seq., MSA 19.855(101) et seq.).[10]

Commercial Districts

Downtown Commercial (C-1)

The regulations applicable to the Downtown Commercial District are planned to permit a mix of land uses that complement the historic character ingrained in the features of the built environment. The downtown is intended as a diverse, concentrated, pedestrian-oriented environment where residents can live, work, shop, and socialize throughout the day and evening.[11]

Urban Commercial (C-2)

The regulations applicable to the Urban Commercial District are planned to permit a mix of land uses that provide suitable shopping and service areas that are primarily focused on auto-oriented uses. The Urban Commercial area is intended as a diverse, generally auto-oriented environment where residents can work, shop, and socialize.[12] The form-based codes standards in the existing C-2 district creates a conflict with the auto-oriented layout of the businesses permitted and

opening in this district. Therefore, variances and deviations from existing language are common and should be addressed in an update to the zoning ordinance.

Rural Commercial (C-3)

The Rural Commercial District is oriented to meeting the rural business needs of the area. The Rural Commercial District is in an area that is not serviced by municipal public utilities. This District has been identified as an area within the Fremont community that is available for small commercial activities that do not require municipal public utilities and are oriented to low-volume commercial uses.[13]

Industrial District

Industrial (O-IND)

The Industrial District is intended to encourage the development of research, warehouse, and light industrial activities in a setting conducive to public health, economic stability, and growth.[14]

Overlay Districts

Airport Overlay (O-AO)

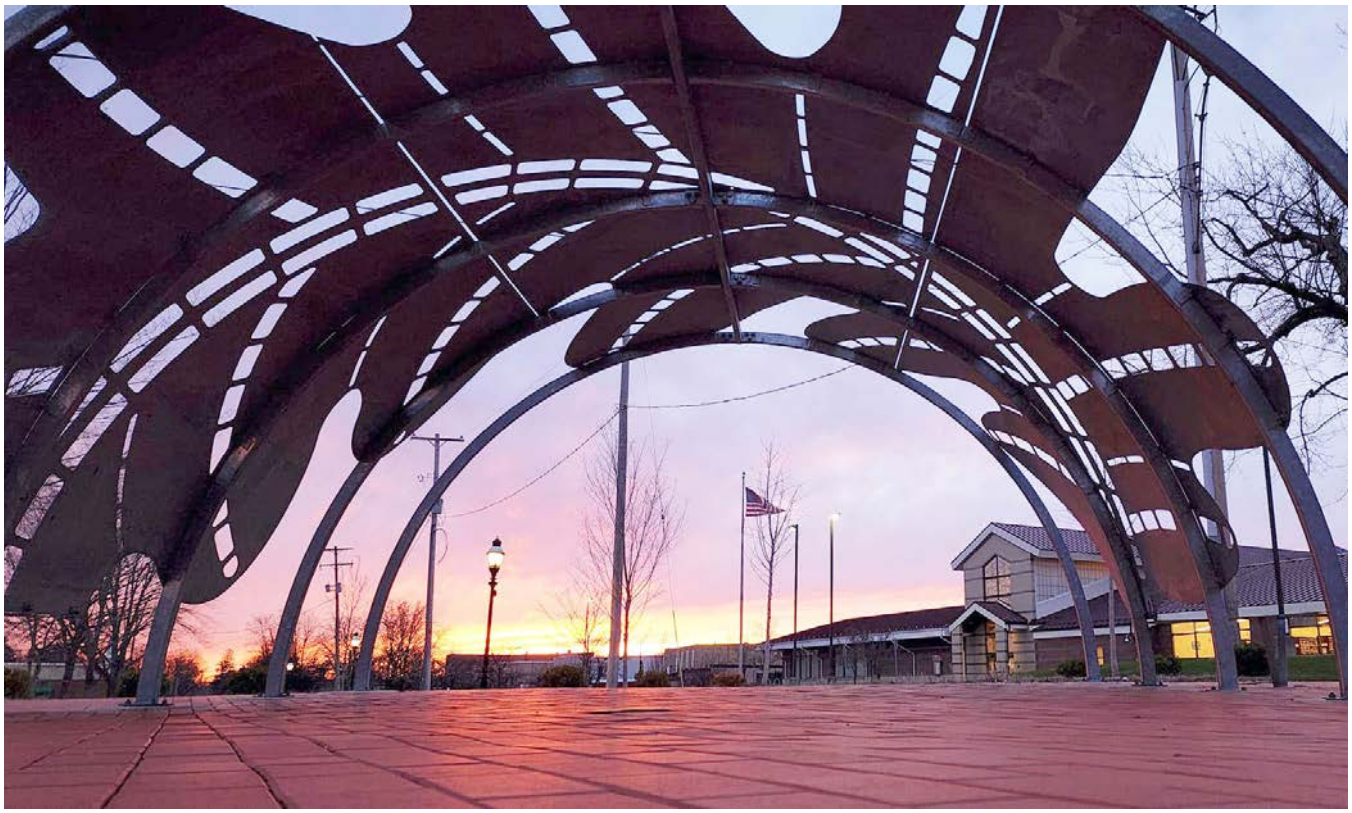
This district is created to prevent the establishment of airport hazards in order to protect the general public, users of the Fremont Municipal Airport, occupants of land in its vicinity, and the public investment within the utility airport.[15]

Waterfront Overlay (R-WO)

Lands included in the Waterfront Overlay District are City of Fremont properties located along waterfront and shoreline areas characterized by uses which are strongly oriented toward residential and recreational experience and enjoyment of surface waters.[16]

Access Management Corridor Overlay (O-AMC)

The regulations of this district are intended to address increased traffic volumes and the resulting introduction of additional traffic conflict points which can erode traffic operations and increase potential for crashes.[17] This district applies to all properties with frontage on M-82 and M-120.



Oak Arch in Darling Walkway.

Source: City of Fremont

Work/Live Overlay District (O-WL)

The intent of the work/live overlay district is to provide for the development of new structures, or the rehabilitation of existing buildings, that incorporate both living and working spaces. Commercial uses must be in accordance with the underlying zoning district. The overlay district applies to all properties zoned C-1 or properties zoned O-MU and immediately adjacent to the C-1 district.[18]

Special Districts

Lake District (R-L)

This District is designed to permit the safe and healthful development of seasonal and year-round single-family dwellings on lake shores in the Fremont Community and to provide for other uses customarily associated with lake development. Its regulations are designed to avoid contamination or destruction of lakes and to protect the riparian rights of lakefront property owners.[19]

Institutional (O-INS)

The Institutional District is intended to provide for the limited need for open space areas, parks, conservation areas, public schools, religious institutions, hospitals, governmental facilities, and preservation of historic places. In addition, the District encompasses land uses that take up large areas where much of the internal activity does not affect surrounding properties.[20]

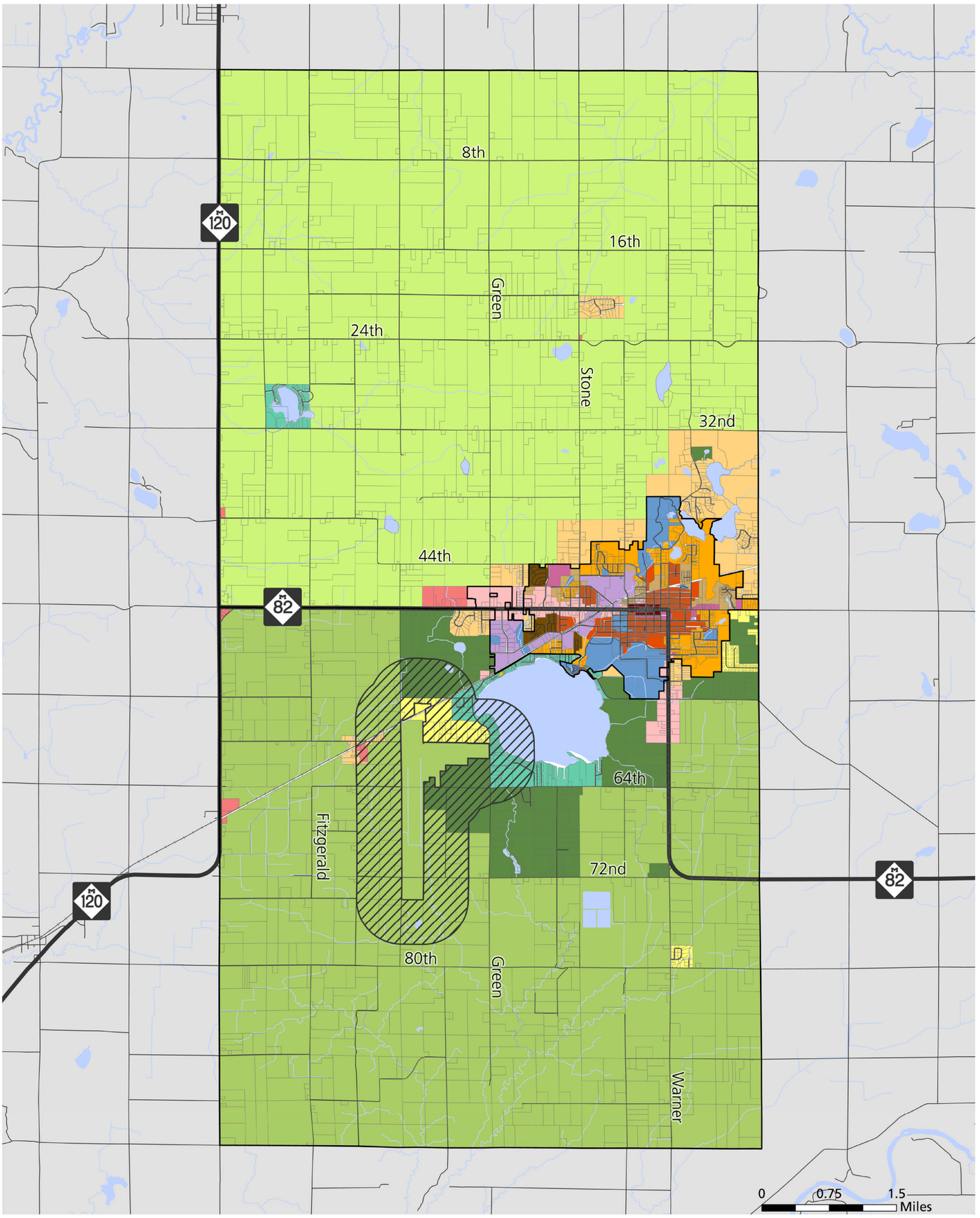
Mixed Use (O-MU)

The Mixed-Use District is intended as a diverse, generally pedestrian-oriented environment that provides adequate vehicular access where needed. Its purpose is to provide a transitional space between residential uses and intensive land uses, such as between Downtown and uses adjacent to primary and collector roads.[21]

Planned Unit Developments (PUD)

The intent of a Planned Unit Development is to permit coordinated development on larger sites.[22]

Veteran's Memorial Park.



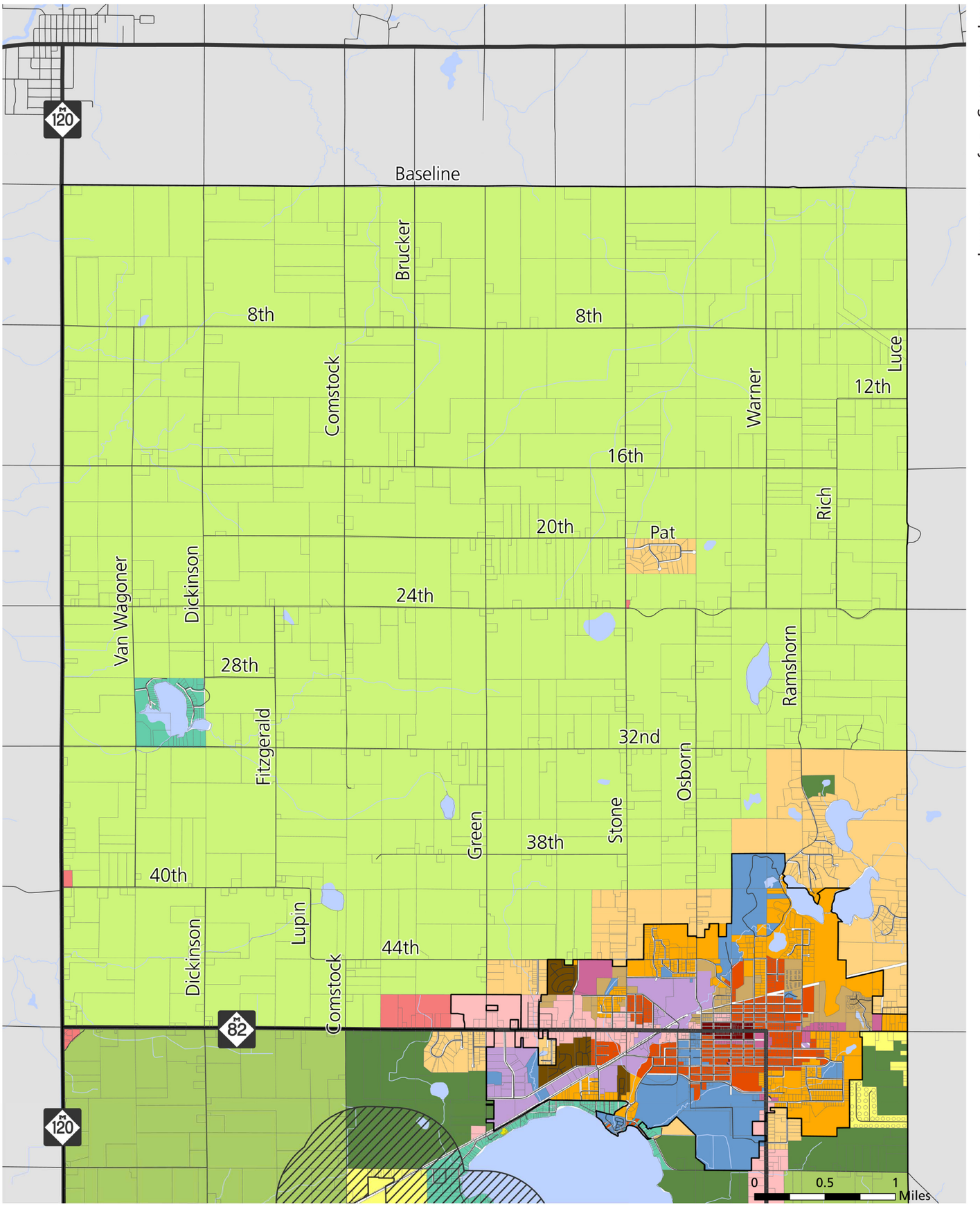
FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Zoning

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

*Not shown on map. Applies to all parcels with frontage on M-82 or M-120.

- A-1: Agricultural Preservation
- A-2: General Agriculture
- A-3: Agricultural Residential
- C-1: Downtown Commercial
- C-1: Downtown Commercial - A
- C-2: Urban Commercial
- C-2: Urban Commercial - A
- C-3: Rural Commercial
- PUD: Planned Unit Developments
- R-1: Low Density Residential
- R-2: Medium Density Residential
- R-3: Estate Residential
- R-4: Neighborhood Residential
- R-MF: Multiple Family
- R-MF: Multiple Family - A
- R-MHP: Manufactured Home Park
- R-L: Lake
- R-WO: Waterfront Overlay
- O-INS: Institutional
- O-IND: Industrial
- O-IND: Industrial - A
- O-MU: Mixed Use
- O-MU: Mixed Use - A
- O-AO: Airport Overlay
- O-AMC: Access Management Overlay*
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Condominium



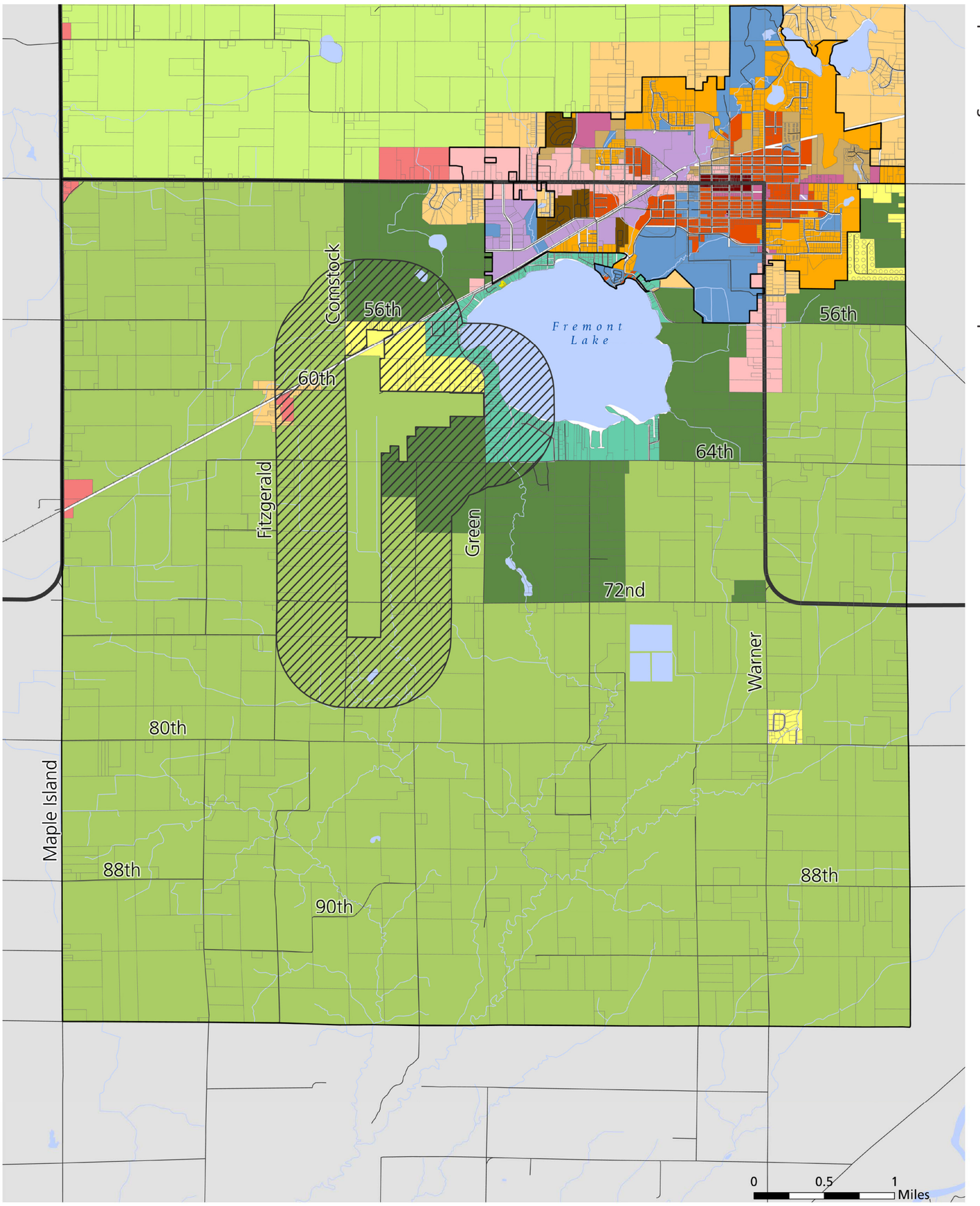
FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Zoning - Dayton Township

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

*Not shown on map. Applies to all parcels with frontage on M-82 or M-120.

- A-1: Agricultural Preservation
- A-2: General Agriculture
- A-3: Agricultural Residential
- C-1: Downtown Commercial
- C-1: Downtown Commercial - A
- C-2: Urban Commercial
- C-2: Urban Commercial - A
- C-3: Rural Commercial
- PUD: Planned Unit Developments
- R-1: Low Density Residential
- R-2: Medium Density Residential
- R-3: Estate Residential
- R-4: Neighborhood Residential
- R-MF: Multiple Family
- R-MF: Multiple Family - A
- R-MHP: Manufactured Home Park
- R-L: Lake
- R-WO: Waterfront Overlay
- O-INS: Institutional
- O-IND: Industrial
- O-IND: Industrial - A
- O-MU: Mixed Use
- O-MU: Mixed Use - A
- O-AO: Airport Overlay
- O-AMC: Access Management Overlay*
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Condominium



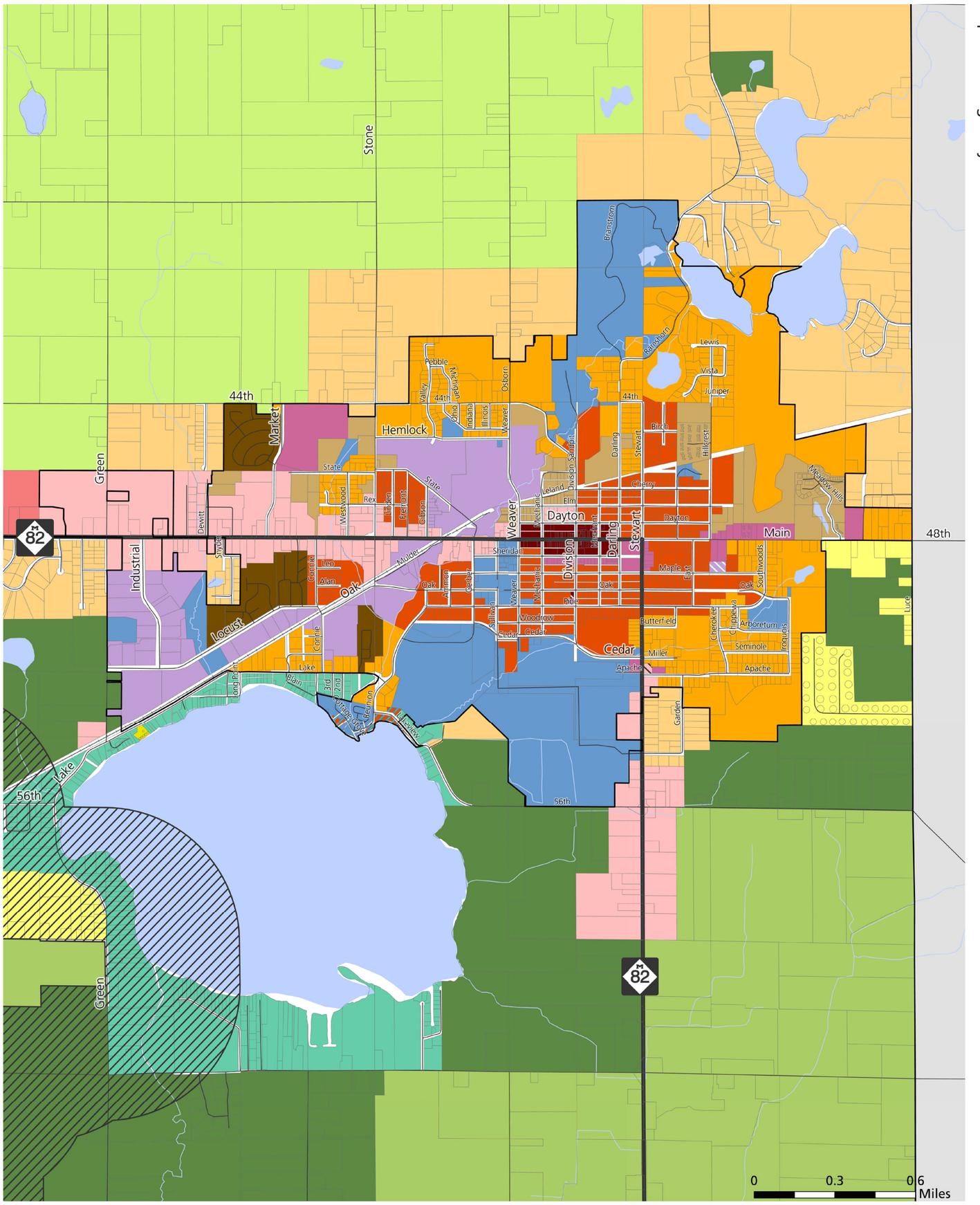
FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Zoning - Sheridan Charter Township

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

*Not shown on map. Applies to all parcels with frontage on M-82 or M-120.

- A-1: Agricultural Preservation
- A-2: General Agriculture
- A-3: Agricultural Residential
- C-1: Downtown Commercial
- C-1: Downtown Commercial - A
- C-2: Urban Commercial
- C-2: Urban Commercial - A
- C-3: Rural Commercial
- PUD: Planned Unit Developments
- R-1: Low Density Residential
- R-2: Medium Density Residential
- R-3: Estate Residential
- R-4: Neighborhood Residential
- R-MF: Multiple Family
- R-MF: Multiple Family - A
- R-MHP: Manufactured Home Park
- R-L: Lake
- R-WO: Waterfront Overlay
- O-INS: Institutional
- O-IND: Industrial
- O-IND: Industrial - A
- O-MU: Mixed Use
- O-MU: Mixed Use - A
- O-AO: Airport Overlay
- O-AMC: Access Management Overlay*
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Condominium



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Zoning - City of Fremont

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

*Not shown on map. Applies to all parcels with frontage on M-82 or M-120.

- A-1: Agricultural Preservation
- A-2: General Agriculture
- A-3: Agricultural Residential
- C-1: Downtown Commercial
- C-1: Downtown Commercial - A
- C-2: Urban Commercial
- C-2: Urban Commercial - A
- C-3: Rural Commercial
- PUD: Planned Unit Developments
- R-1: Low Density Residential
- R-2: Medium Density Residential
- R-3: Estate Residential
- R-4: Neighborhood Residential
- R-MF: Multiple Family
- R-MF: Multiple Family - A
- R-MHP: Manufactured Home Park
- R-L: Lake
- R-WO: Waterfront Overlay
- O-INS: Institutional
- O-IND: Industrial
- O-IND: Industrial - A
- O-MU: Mixed Use
- O-MU: Mixed Use - A
- O-AO: Airport Overlay
- O-AMC: Access Management Overlay*
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Condominium

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies preferred future land uses for the Fremont Community. It is a generalized visualization intended to guide land use decisions over the next 15-20 years. The Future Land Use framework should drive changes to the Zoning Ordinance and inform development review decisions. The FLUM is drafted based on existing land use patterns and issues identified through the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan.

Fremont Lake shoreline.

Table 26: Potential Conflict Detection

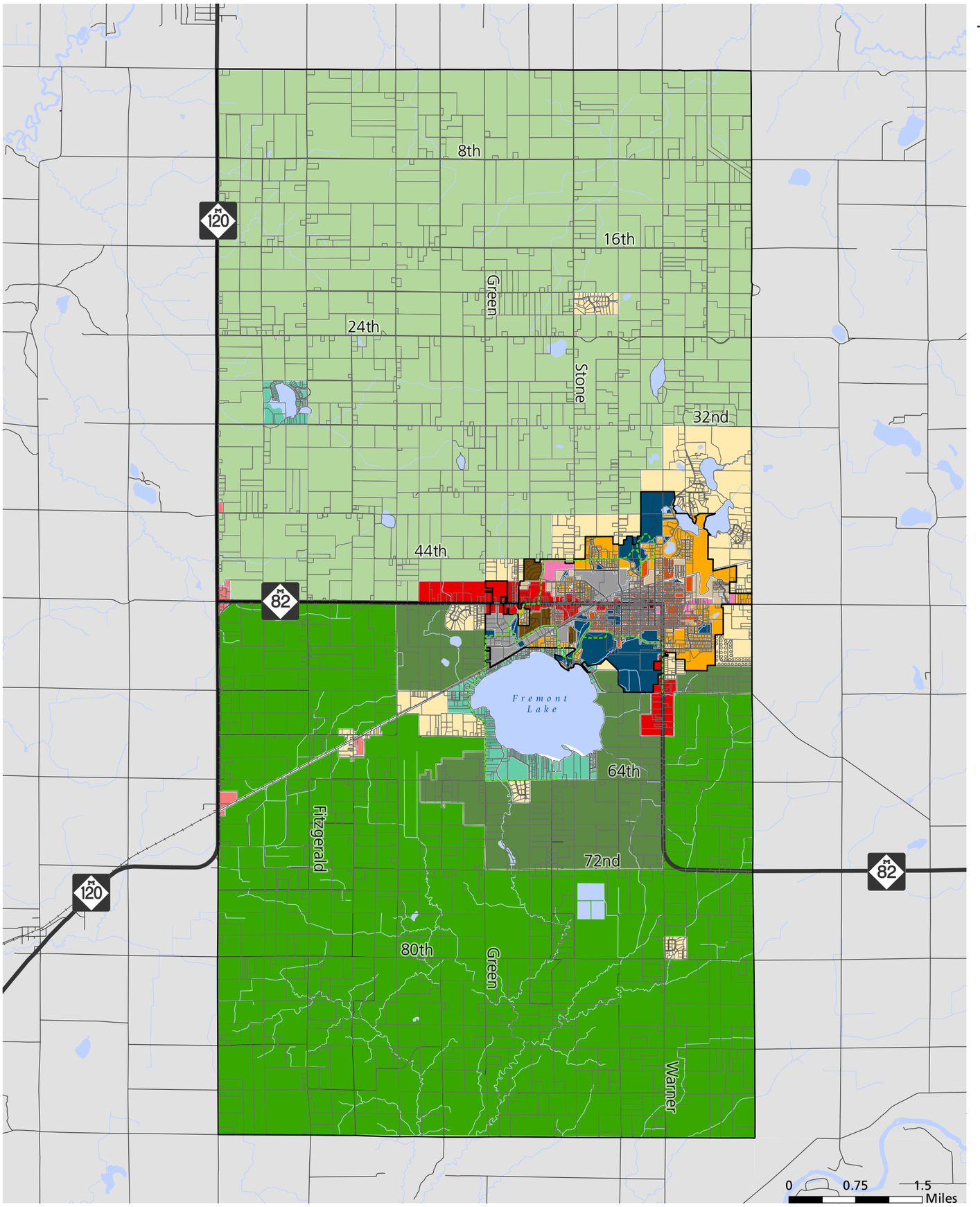
Potential Land Use Conflicts	How Conflict is Addressed
Increased development pressure on agricultural land.	Agricultural preservation language (11-point system) expanded to other areas of the community.
Increased pressure for housing density in the City of Fremont.	Housing unit density increased in the High Density district by decreasing minimum lot size requirements.
Stormwater runoff from near lake properties decreasing water quality.	Vegetation and no-mow requirements added in existing greenbelt regulations.
Industrial use expansion.	Industrial properties are encouraged to develop in areas designated for industrial use and with existing utilities suitable for industrial properties

Table 27: Zoning Plan

Proposed Future Land Use Category	Description of Proposed Land Use Category	Current Zone(s)	Proposed Changes
Agricultural Preservation (Maintained)	Maintains the existing agricultural preservation language including the 11-point scoring system.	A-1	None.
Agricultural General (Maintained)	Maintains existing agriculture operations and other permitted uses.	A-2	None.
Agriculture Residential (Maintained)	Maintains agriculture and open space but transitions into residential areas.	A-3	None.
Low Density Residential (Collapsed)	Supports larger suburban and single-family residential developments in areas not well suited for agriculture.	R-1, R-2	R-1 and R-2 districts collapsed into one.
Medium Density Residential (Maintained)	Encompasses moderately dense neighborhoods and acts as a transition from lower-density residential neighborhoods or agricultural land into higher density neighborhoods or commercial uses.	R-3	None.
Urban Residential (Maintained)	Maintains the denser core neighborhoods in City of Fremont, specifically around the central business district; promotes a variety of housing types including duplexes, triplexes, and multiplexes.	R-4	None.

Table 27: Zoning Plan (continued)

Proposed Future Land Use Category	Description of Proposed Land Use Category	Current Zone(s)	Proposed Changes
High Density Residential (Changed)	Support multi-family housing development and permits the highest residential density in the community.	R-MF	Reduce minimum lot area per dwelling unit in existing R-MF district and increase maximum dwelling units per acre.
Manufactured Residential (Maintained)	Supports existing manufactured housing parks which are regulated under the State of Michigan Mobile Home Commission.	R-MHP	None.
Lake Residential (Changed)	Includes properties with frontage on Fremont Lake and Martin Lake.	R-L	Add native planting requirements within established greenbelts.
Rural Commercial (Maintained)	Encompasses commercial properties that primarily serve the rural community and do not need to connect to municipal utilities.	C-3	None.
General Commercial (Changed)	Supports existing commercial businesses outside of the Central Business District and is intended for larger scale businesses with large footprints that are predominantly accessed via automobile.	C-2	Amend standards based on commonly requested variances and deviations.
Central Business District (Changed)	Encompasses the existing downtown and promotes a pedestrian-oriented environment that supports local businesses and is aligned with the historic character of the community.	C-1	Adopt language for small-scale manufacturing businesses (pottery, tailors, leather workers) and permit in this district. Implement complete streets elements into landscaping requirements.
Mixed Use (Maintained)	Provides a range of uses and encourages a pedestrian environment; acts as a transitional use between higher intensity land uses (i.e. uses in the Central Business District) and residential areas.	O-MU	None.
Public (Maintained)	Includes governmental facilities including parks, open space, schools, and historic properties.	O-INS	None.
Industrial (Maintained)	Supports the industrial operations of the community including warehousing and research.	O-IND	None.

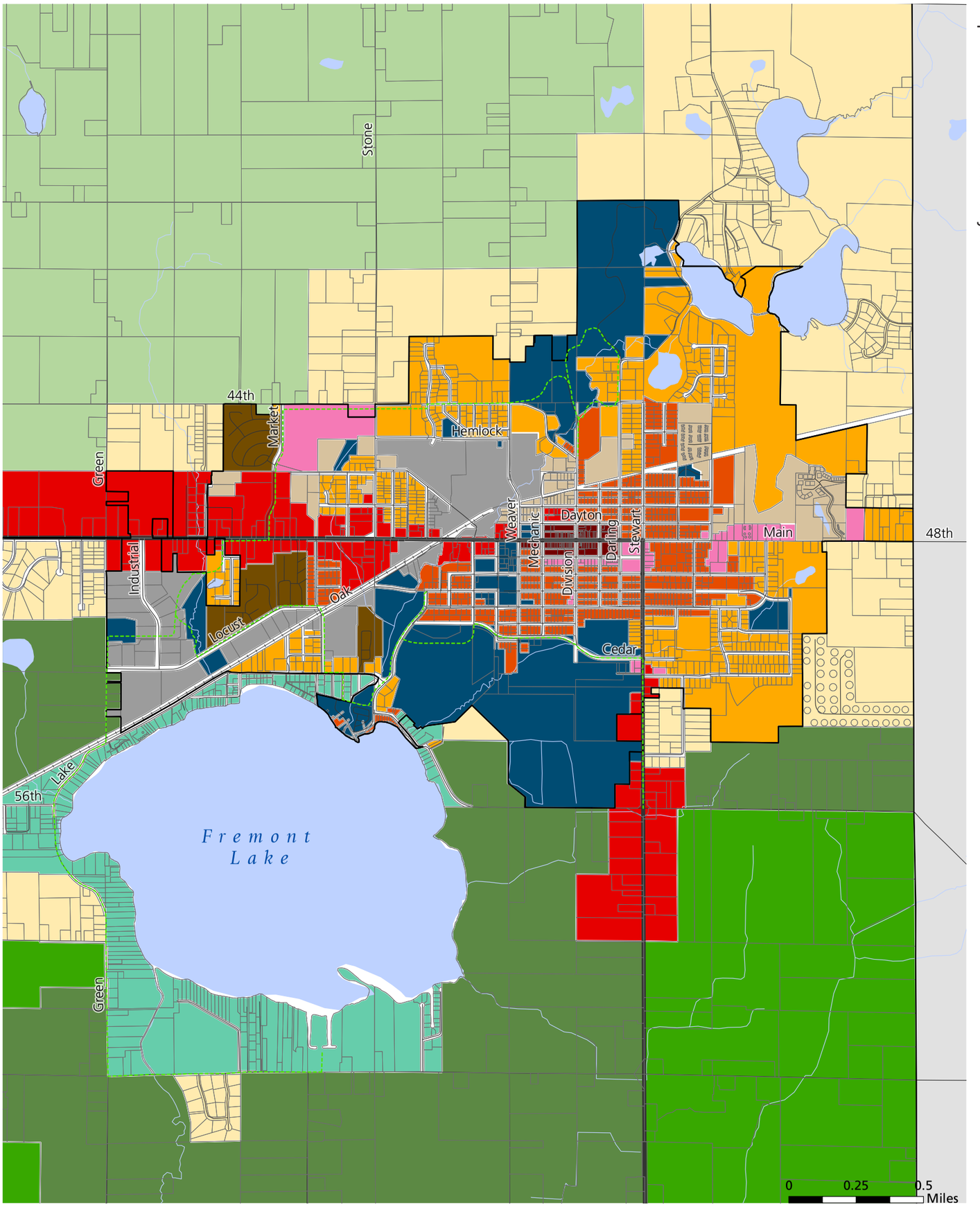


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Future Land Use

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Agriculture Preservation
- Agriculture General
- Agriculture Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Urban Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Residential
- Lake Residential
- Rural Commercial
- General Commercial
- Central Business District
- Mixed Use
- Public
- Industrial
- Town and Country Path



FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Future Land Use

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Agriculture Preservation
- Agriculture General
- Agriculture Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Urban Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Residential
- Lake Residential
- Rural Commercial
- General Commercial
- Central Business District
- Mixed Use
- Public
- Industrial
- Town and Country Path

Sources

1 Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, 2012 & 2017 Estimates: Newaygo County, United States

2 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 4-1.01

3 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 4-2.01

4 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 4-3.01

5 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-1.01

6 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-2.01

7 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-3.01

8 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-4.01

9 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-5.01

10 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-6.01

11 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 5-1.01

12 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 5-2.01

13 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 5-3.01

14 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 7-2.01

15 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 7-4.01

16 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-8.01

17 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 7-5.01

18 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 7.06

19 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 6-7.01

20 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 7-1.01

21 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 7-3.01

22 Fremont Community Joint Zoning Ordinance Section 8.01-A

9 Implementation

The culmination of the comprehensive planning process is the implementation section that applies data and community preferences to shape a preferred course of action. There are six main themes outlined in this section, based on the chapters in this Plan, and each theme has its own action items which include responsible parties, potential partners, and suggested time frames for completion. Additionally, there is a comprehensive action plan organized by responsible party at the end of this chapter, so each has a to-do checklist of tasks for accomplishing the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Glossary of Terms

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act, outlines standards for building and construction to be accessible for those with disabilities.

Cluster Development: A form of subdivision development that prioritizes natural space preservation.

Complete Streets: A philosophy that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and space on streets.

DDA: Downtown Development Authority.

EGLE: Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, the state environmental agency.

MDNR: Michigan Department of Recreation, the state natural resource and recreation agency.

MEDC: Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the state economic development agency.

Missing Middle Housing: A type of housing density that falls between single family homes and mid-rise apartment complexes.

Paratransit Service: A form of on-demand public transportation service. Also known as "dial-a-ride."

PUD: Planned Unit Development, a tool that allows for unique developments that cannot conform to existing zoning regulations.

RRC: Redevelopment Ready Communities, a certification through MEDC that shows the certified community is well positioned for development.

TOST Ordinance: Time of Sale or Transfer Septic/Well Inspection ordinance.

Demographics

The last decade has been a period of change for the Fremont Community. Residents are aging at a rate that is outpacing younger residents, and as children are entering adulthood, they are leaving the community. A recent increase in those aged 25 to 34, however, is a positive sign that those in their family-formation years are moving into the community. Dayton Township and Sheridan Charter Township are becoming wealthier and more educated while the City of Fremont has lower income households and higher rates of poverty, comparatively. Overall, the Fremont Community remains the dominant population center in the County and is anticipated to remain as one of the most attractive communities in the region.

Housing

With a growing community and affordability pressure on housing units in the Fremont Community, there is a clear need to expand the housing stock in the area, specifically financially attainable workforce units and higher-end homes. Primary strategies to add additional units include adopting zoning regulations that permit Missing Middle housing units, specifically in the City of Fremont; promoting infill development; and continuing to encourage cluster housing development. Many of the action items for housing are geared at improving the chances of developing Missing Middle housing.

Community Engagement Summary

- Survey respondents believed that the top pressing issue in the Fremont Community is a lack of housing options.
- Participants in both the youth and community engagement sessions indicated a preference for infill housing development.
- Of those surveyed, 49% indicated a need in the community for single-family workforce housing and 43% indicated a need for higher-end single-family housing.
- Townhomes and duplexes were the most popular "missing middle" housing options.
- Senior housing received 35% support from total survey respondents; however, 60% survey respondents over the age of 65 supported senior housing.

Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Promote that the Fremont Community has the most diverse and affordable housing market in Newaygo County.	Planning Commission	Staff, City Council and Township Boards	Continuous
Identify and promote lots in existing neighborhoods for targeted residential infill development.	Staff	Planning Commission	Identify – 1-2 years; Promote – Continuous
Connect seniors with resources to aid them in to increasing accessibility in their homes.	Staff	Newaygo County Commission on Aging, Senior Living Communities, Senior Center	Continuous
Prioritize Missing Middle housing formats for residential developments.	Staff	Private developers	Continuous
Identify reputable private housing developers for new construction in the community.	Staff	Private developers, Chamber of Commerce	1 year
Determine where in the community new housing should go and offer pre-development investments to private housing developers.	Staff	City Council and Township Boards	Continuous
Reduce minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirements in the R-MF zoning district.	Planning Commission		1 – 3 years
Increase maximum dwelling units per acre in the R-MF zoning district.	Planning Commission		1 – 3 years
Increase or remove the Residential PUD standards in the City of Fremont that restrict two- and multi-family units.	Planning Commission		1 – 3 years
Continue to incentivize cluster development by offering density bonuses.	Planning Commission		Continuous
Promote affordable housing in areas within walking distance of essential services.	Planning Commission	Staff, Private developers	Continuous

Natural Features

The inventory and analysis of the Fremont Community's natural features highlights the lack of tree canopy and wetland preservation in the Townships. Currently, the tree canopy in the Fremont Community is very fragmented, a legacy of heavy agricultural development; however, tree canopy coverage within the City of Fremont is quite high. This presents challenges for local flora and fauna that benefit from contiguous sections of habitat. However, the existing dense groupings of tree canopy, especially in more developed areas, provide stormwater management and aesthetic benefits, and expanding coverage would compound the positive impacts. Furthermore, the wetlands in the Fremont Community, especially those under five acres, have very limited protection; property owners may often infill or remove these high-value natural features. Adopting a local wetland preservation ordinance would ensure that wetlands are adequately preserved.

Finally, the water quality and aquatic plant assessment of Fremont Lake illustrates that the water quality in Lake Fremont has improved over the past few decades, but threats and contamination still persist. Establishing stricter greenbelt regulations such as requiring native plantings would reduce the amount of runoff pollution into waterbodies and continue moving the water quality of Fremont Lake in a positive direction.

Community Engagement Summary

- 59% of survey respondents agree that the Fremont Community's natural features could be better preserved.
- A majority (64%) of participants in the youth and community engagement sessions support additional water quality treatments to preserve water quality in Fremont Lake.

Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Investigate conservation easements for areas of dense tree canopy cover.	Staff		<1 year
Pursue enrollment in the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Wellhead Protection Program.	Staff	City Council and Township Boards, EGLE	1 – 3 years
Explore a TOST ordinance for water well and septic systems to protect water quality.	Township Boards	Staff	1 – 3 years
Expand the wastewater treatment plant to connect homes on the south side of Fremont Lake to the wastewater system.	Staff	City Council and Township Boards	3 – 5 years
Add green stormwater infrastructure requirements for developments that exceed a certain percentage of impervious surface.	Planning Commission	EGLE	1 – 3 years
Add native planting requirements to the greenbelt requirements.	Planning Commission		<1 year
Encourage the use of porous paving in parking lots, sidewalks, and other paved spaces.	Planning Commission	Staff	1 – 3 years

Community Facilities

The high number of quality-of-life assets and events make the City of Fremont the cultural center of the region. The Farmers Market, the National Baby Food festival, the Harvest Festival, and the Newaygo County Fair are major attractions that strengthen community ties. Additionally, the community services, including public safety, the library, and educational institutions provide important public functions that contribute to the community's small-town atmosphere. The recreation amenities provide residents and visitors opportunities to engage with the outdoors and contribute to healthy lifestyles. As the cornerstone of the community, these services and cultural assets should be preserved and expanded.

Community Engagement Summary

- Survey respondents' satisfaction on size, number, maintenance of, and parking at the municipal parks is high (all above 60% satisfaction).
- Programming in the parks and accessibility for disabled users had the lowest satisfaction in the community survey.
- "Fast and reliable internet and cellphone coverage" was the top characteristic that survey respondents want in their community, indicating a need for improvement.

Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Coordinate with Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital on public health measures aligned with the strategies in the Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan.	Staff	Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial, District Health Department 10	1 – 3 years
Continue to collaborate with the DDA and Newaygo County Council for the Arts on public arts improvements.	Staff	DDA, Newaygo County Council for the Arts	Continuous
Expand broadband infrastructure in underserved areas.	Staff	Private contractors	5 years
Increase ADA accessibility in underserved parks.	Staff	Fremont Community Recreational Authority, MDNR	Continuous or until complete
Continue to host community-wide events.	Staff	Chamber of Commerce, DDA, Newaygo County Council for the Arts, Newaygo County Fair	Continuous
Pursue sources of capital funding for high-priority recreational improvements.	Staff	Fremont Community Recreational Authority, MDNR	Continuous

Transportation

The Fremont Community's transportation landscape is auto dominated. M-82, the main transportation route, travels through downtown Fremont, and heavy vehicular traffic can negatively impact the downtown atmosphere. The recently constructed truck route reroutes traffic away from downtown, but community members have noted that not all trucks follow it. The lack of routine and accessible public transportation makes it difficult for those without personal vehicles to travel around the Community. The Town and Country Path is the only source of dedicated non-motorized infrastructure in the Fremont Community. Expanding non-motorized infrastructure by completing the Town and Country Path and adopting Complete Streets principles will increase the alternative transportation options for those traveling around the Fremont Community.

Community Engagement Summary

- The Town and Country Path is a top facility for many households (21% of survey respondents).
- 46% of survey respondents believe that pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure is a top priority that they would like to see prioritized in downtown Fremont.

Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Continue to promote truck travel via the truck route with additional road signage.	Staff	MDOT	<1 year
Catalog and prioritize local street improvements.	Staff	MDOT	<1 year
Assess the capacity and feasibility of downtown side streets to support bicycle infrastructure.	Staff	DDA	<1 year
Explore, in coordination with Newaygo County, the demand and feasibility for a paratransit service.	Staff	Newaygo County	1 – 3 years
Complete phase 3 of the Town and Country Path.	Staff	Fremont Community Recreation Authority, MDNR	1 – 3 years
Follow street and sidewalk maintenance / improvements as outlined in the Capital Improvements Plan.	Staff		Continuous
Increase wayfinding along and near the Town and Country Path.	Staff	Fremont Community Recreation Authority, MDNR, DDA	1 – 3 years
Continue to work on adopting a Complete Streets ordinance.	Planning Commission	Staff, MDOT	1 – 3 years

Economic Development

The Comprehensive Plan survey showed that residents want more food and drinking service establishments in the commercial areas. Food and drinking businesses contribute significant foot traffic, offer a "second shift" for local businesses, and support other businesses as they draw in patrons. Therefore, it is important to recruit, retain, and expand these businesses in the Fremont Community. Similarly, there is an opportunity for small-scale manufacturing expansion in the downtown.

There is significant economic activity and potential in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Recent investments in the Fremont Industrial Park should be marketed to recruit new or expanding businesses. Agricultural land, while currently stable, should be monitored for dramatic decreases and educational materials about land preservation should be made available for landowners. The City of Fremont received RRC® certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in 2020. One of the RRC® best practices is a routinely updated list of potential redevelopment sites that are underutilized and could better serve the community, and the City of Fremont has selected fours sites as top priorities.

Community Engagement Summary

- Dining, retail, and community events are the biggest draws to downtown for survey respondents.
- Survey respondents indicated a strong desire for more food service businesses downtown.
- Business recruitment, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and events and programming were the community's top three priorities for downtown in the community survey.
- The top three most common open responses to the community survey question "what could be improved in downtown / commercial districts?" were restaurants, appearance, and more activities.

Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Identify vacant buildings suitable for food and drinking establishments and market them as such.	Staff	Planning Commission, DDA	Identify – 1 year; Promote – Continuous
Identify partners/funding sources to construct/renovate a food hall space.	Staff	Chamber of Commerce	1 – 3 years
Explore establishing a food truck lot or location in Dayton Township or Sheridan Charter Township where food trucks may routinely be parked and provide necessary amenities.	Planning Commission	Township Boards, Staff	1 – 3 years
Explore establishing a food truck ordinance outlining the regulations and requirements for such establishments.	Township Boards	Planning Commission, Staff	1 – 3 years
Investigate establishing a local historic district around downtown Fremont.	City Council	DDA	<1 year
Continue to work with Gerber Products on future improvements and investments.	Staff	Gerber Products (Nestle Corp.)	Continuous
Continue to promote the existing industrial park as development ready.	Staff		Continuous
Provide and promote educational materials on various farmland preservation programs.	Staff	DDA (Farmers Market), Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program	Continuous
Amend design regulations to reflect desires of the community.	Planning Commission	City Council and Township Boards	1 – 3 years
Consider permitting small-scale manufacturing businesses in the Downtown and Urban Commercial Districts.	Planning Commission	City Council and Township Boards	<1 year
Continue to promote redevelopment sites, prioritizing the top four.	Staff	Planning Commission, MEDC	Continuous

ACTION TABLES BY RESPONSIBLE PARTY

The following pages include the same actions outlined on the preceding pages; however, the following tables are organized by responsible party, so each has a to-do checklist of tasks for accomplishing the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Table 28: Staff Actions

Action	Partners	Timeframe
Identify and promote lots in existing neighborhoods for targeted residential infill development.	Planning Commission	Identify – 1-2 years; Promote – Continuous
Connect seniors with resources to aid them to increase accessibility in their homes.	Newaygo County Commission on Aging, Senior Living Communities, Senior Center	Continuous
Prioritize Missing Middle housing formats for residential developments.	Private developers	Continuous
Identify reputable private housing developers for new construction in the community.	Private developers, Chamber of Commerce	1 year
Determine where in the community new housing should go and offer pre-development investments to private housing developers.	City Council and Township Boards	Continuous
Investigate conservation easements for areas of dense tree canopy cover.		<1 year
Pursue enrollment in the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Wellhead Protection Program.	City Council and Township Boards, EGLE	1 – 3 years
Expand the wastewater treatment plant to connect homes on the south side of Fremont Lake to the wastewater system.	City Council and Township Boards	3 – 5 years
Coordinate with Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital on public health measures aligned with the strategies in the Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan.	Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial, District Health Department 10	1 – 3 years
Continue to collaborate with the DDA and Newaygo County Council for the Arts on public arts improvements.	DDA, Newaygo County Council for the Arts	Continuous
Expand broadband infrastructure in underserved areas.	Private contractors	5 years
Increase ADA accessibility in underserved parks.	Fremont Community Recreational Authority, MDNR	Continuous or until complete
Continue to host community-wide events.	Chamber of Commerce, DDA, Newaygo County Council for the Arts, Newaygo County Fair	Continuous

Table 28: Staff Actions (continued)

Action	Partners	Timeframe
Pursue sources of capital funding for high-priority recreational improvements.	Fremont Community Recreational Authority, MDNR	Continuous
Continue to promote truck travel via the truck route with additional road signage.	MDOT	<1 year
Catalog and prioritize local street improvements.	MDOT	<1 year
Assess the capacity and feasibility of downtown side streets to support bicycle infrastructure.	DDA	<1 year
Explore, in coordination with Newaygo County, the demand and feasibility for a paratransit service.	Newaygo County	1 – 3 years
Complete phase 3 of the Town and Country Path.	Fremont Community Recreation Authority, MDNR	1 – 3 years
Follow street and sidewalk maintenance and improvements as outlined in the Capital Improvements Plan.		Continuous
Increase wayfinding along and near the Town and Country Path.	Fremont Community Recreation Authority, MDNR, DDA	1 – 3 years
Identify vacant buildings suitable for food and drinking establishments and market them as such.	Planning Commission, DDA	Identify – 1 year; Promote – Continuous
Identify partners/funding sources to construct/renovate a food hall space.	Chamber of Commerce	1 – 3 years
Continue to work with Gerber Products on future improvements and investments.	Gerber Products (Nestle Corp.)	Continuous
Continue to promote the existing industrial park as development ready.		Continuous
Provide and promote educational materials on various farmland preservation programs.	DDA (Farmers Market), Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program	Continuous
Continue to promote redevelopment sites, prioritizing the top four.	Planning Commission, MEDC	Continuous

Table 29: Joint Planning Commission Actions

Action	Partners	Timeframe
Promote that the Fremont Community has the most diverse and affordable housing market in Newaygo County.	Staff, City Council and Township Boards	Continuous
Reduce minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirements in the R-MF zoning district.		1 – 3 years
Increase maximum dwelling units per acre in the R-MF zoning district.		1 – 3 years
Increase or remove the Residential PUD standards in the City of Fremont that restrict two- and multi-family units.		1 – 3 years
Continue to incentivize cluster development by offering density bonuses.		Continuous
Promote affordable housing in areas within walking distance of essential services.	Staff, Private developers	Continuous
Add green stormwater infrastructure requirements for developments that exceed a certain percentage of impervious surface.	EGLE	1 – 3 years
Add native planting requirements to the greenbelt requirements.		<1 year
Encourage the use of porous paving in parking lots, sidewalks, and other paved spaces.	Staff	1 – 3 years
Continue to work on adopting a Complete Streets ordinance.	Staff, MDOT	1 – 3 years
Explore establishing a food truck lot or location in Dayton Township or Sheridan Charter Township where food trucks may routinely be parked and provide necessary amenities.	Township Boards, Staff	1 – 3 years
Amend design regulations to reflect desires of the community.	City Council and Township Boards	1 – 3 years
Consider permitting small-scale manufacturing businesses in the Downtown and Urban Commercial Districts.	City Council and Township Boards	<1 year

Table 30: Fremont City Council Actions

Action	Partners	Timeframe
Investigate establishing a local historic district around downtown Fremont.	DDA	<1 year

Table 31: Sheridan Charter Township Board Actions

Action	Partners	Timeframe
Explore a TOST ordinance for water well and septic systems to protect water quality.	Staff	1 – 3 years
Explore establishing a food truck ordinance outlining the regulations and requirements for such establishments.	Planning Commission, Staff	1 – 3 years

Table 32: Dayton Township Board Actions

Action	Partners	Timeframe
Explore a TOST ordinance for water well and septic systems to protect water quality.	Staff	1 – 3 years
Explore establishing a food truck ordinance outlining the regulations and requirements for such establishments.	Planning Commission, Staff	1 – 3 years

Appendix

Appendix A: City of Fremont Resolution of Adoption

Appendix B: Dayton Township Resolution of Adoption

Appendix C: Sheridan Charter Township Resolution of Adoption

Appendix D: Community Survey Results

Appendix E: Scenario Planning Results - Water Quality Preferences

Appendix F: Scenario Planning Results - Infill Housing Preferences

Appendix G: Scenario Planning Results - Small-Lot vs. Large-Lot Housing Preferences

FREMONT
Michigan

"NOW AND ALWAYS -- A Fine City • A Great Community"

RESOLUTION R-22-17

ADOPTING THE FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN BETWEEN THE CITY OF FREMONT, SHERIDAN CHARTER TOWNSHIP AND DAYTON TOWNSHIP

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("MPEA," PA 33 of 2008) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a "comprehensive plan" pertinent to the future development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission has prepared a draft comprehensive plan for the municipality, to update and replace its previous community comprehensive plan, meeting all statutory requirements set forth in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Fremont City Council authorized the distribution of the draft Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan to the general public and the various entities listed in the MPEA, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Comprehensive Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Joint Planning Commission on September 27, 2022 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Planning Commission finds the proposed Comprehensive Plan as submitted for the public hearing desirable and proper, and furthers the land use and development goals and strategies of the Community, and has recommended adoption of the plan to the Fremont City Council;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Fremont City Council hereby resolves to adopt the updated Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended by the Joint Planning Commission to form the complete Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Classification Map.

CERTIFICATE

The foregoing resolution was approved by a majority of the members of the Fremont City Council by a roll call vote at a regular meeting of the City Council held on November 7, 2022, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Motion by Councilmember Heiss, seconded by Councilmember Harmon-Ramsey and approved by roll call vote of:

Yeas:	Rynberg, Siegel, Heiss, Johnson, Harmon-Ramsey
Nays:	None
Absent:	None

James M. Rynberg, Mayor

Vicci TerVeer, City Clerk

I, Vicci TerVeer, City Clerk of the City of Fremont, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly approved by the City Council of the City of Fremont at a regular meeting of said Council held in said City on the 7th day of November, 2022, and of the whole thereof, as appears on record in the minutes of the meetings of said City Council now in my custody.

Vicci TerVeer, City Clerk

Data/Common/Resolutions/2022/R-22-17 Joint 5-yr Master Plan Adoption

Dayton Township Resolution 22-10-01

A Resolution Adopting the Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan between Dayton Township, the City of Fremont, and Sheridan Charter Township

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("MPEA," PA 33 of 2008) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a "comprehensive plan" pertinent to the future development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission has prepared a draft comprehensive plan for the municipality, to update and replace its previous community comprehensive plan, meeting all statutory requirements set forth in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Dayton Township Board authorized the distribution of the draft Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan to the general public and the various entities listed in the MPEA, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Comprehensive Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Joint Planning Commission on September 27, 2022 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Planning Commission finds the proposed Comprehensive Plan as submitted for the public hearing desirable and proper, and furthers the land use and development goals and strategies of the Community, and has recommended adoption of the plan to the Board of Dayton Township;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Dayton Township Board hereby adopts the updated Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended by the Joint Planning Commission to form the complete Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use Classification Map.

Board member Zeldenrust moved the adoption of the foregoing Resolution, which was supported by Board member Sparks and was thereupon adopted on the 13th day of October, 2022.

Brian Frens, Supervisor

Jean Stroven, Clerk

Sheridan Charter Township Resolution 22-03

A Resolution Adopting the Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan between Sheridan Charter Township, the City of Fremont, and Dayton Township

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("MPEA," PA 33 of 2008) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a "comprehensive plan" pertinent to the future development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission has prepared a draft comprehensive plan for the municipality, to update and replace its previous community comprehensive plan, meeting all statutory requirements set forth in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Sheridan Charter Township Board authorized the distribution of the draft Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan to the general public and the various entities listed in the MPEA, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Comprehensive Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Joint Planning Commission on September 27, 2022 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Planning Commission finds the proposed Comprehensive Plan as submitted for the public hearing desirable and proper, and furthers the land use and development goals and strategies of the Community, and has recommended adoption of the plan to the Board of Sheridan Charter Township;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Sheridan Charter Township Board hereby adopts the updated Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended by the Joint Planning Commission to form the complete Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use Classification Map.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify the foregoing resolution was approved by a majority of the members of the Township Board by a roll call vote at a regular meeting of the Board held on October 18, 2022, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Motion by: Makin
Second by: Oosterhouse
Votes: Yea 6 Nay 0 Abstain 0

Maggie Kolk, Clerk

11-8-22
Date

Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive and Growth Management Plan
City of Fremont – Sheridan Charter Township – Dayton Township

2021 Community Survey Results

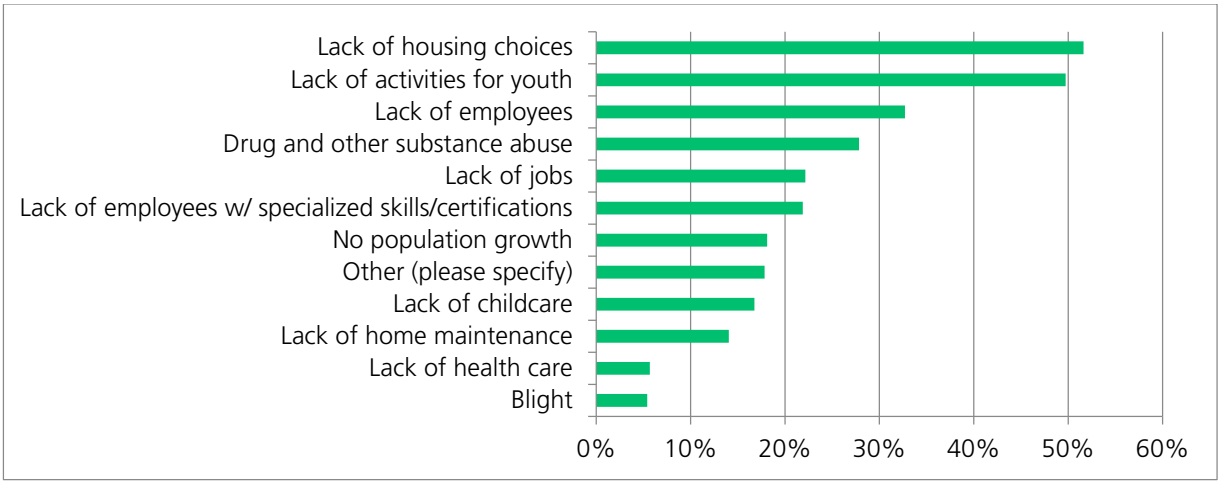
Overview

The 2021 Fremont Community Survey was open for roughly two months, and it garnered a total of 370 responses. Community members received notice of an online survey through a mailer included in the City of Fremont newsletter, a paper survey flyer, and via social media. Paper copies were also available at Fremont City Hall, which were collected and compiled with the online survey results. Below is a summary and analysis of the survey questions and responses.

Survey Questions & Responses

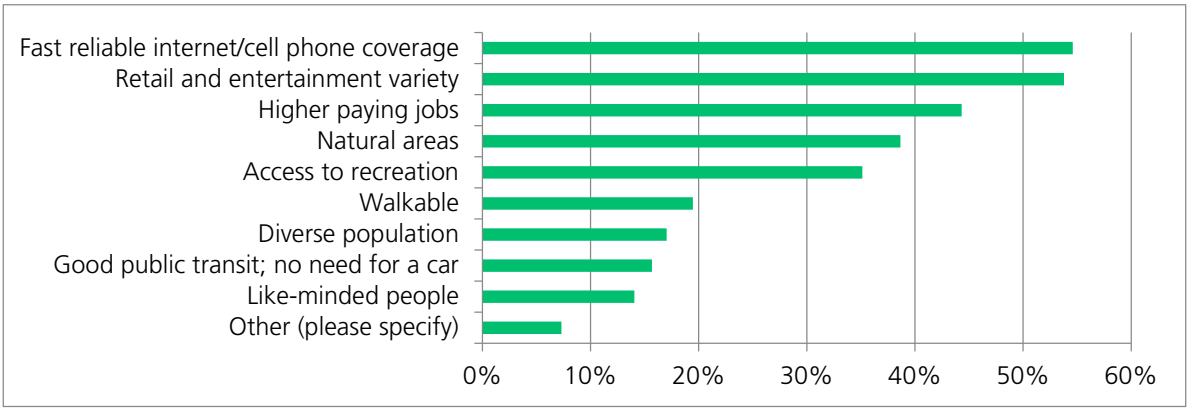
General

Question 1: In your opinion, what are the three most pressing issues in the Fremont Community?



The three top issues that respondents identified in the Fremont Community were "lack of housing choices" (52%), "lack of activities for youth" (50%), and the "lack of employees" (33%). There were also several "other" responses, with common themes pertaining to: lack of commercial opportunities, environmental degradation, lack of transportation, a need for more community events, and concerns regarding community leadership.

Question 2: What are the characteristics of a community that you want to live in? Select your top three characteristics.

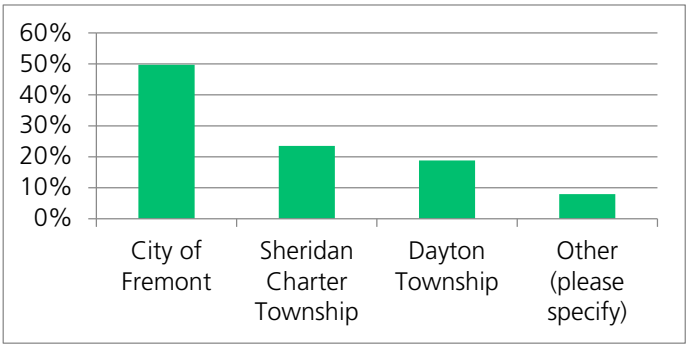


Responses were strongly geared toward economic development. The top choice was "fast and reliable internet and cellphone coverage" (55%), followed by "retail and entertainment variety" (54%) and "higher paying jobs" (44%).

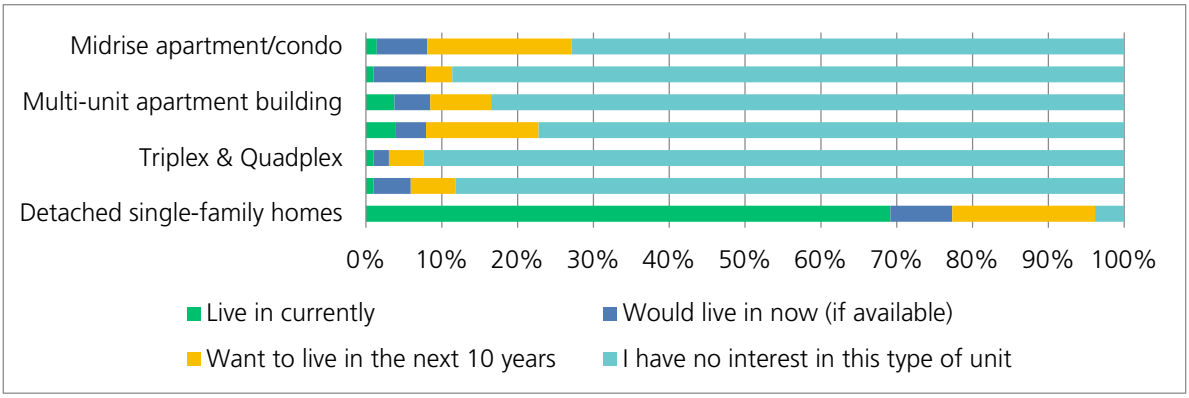
Residential / Housing

Question 3: In which community do you live?

Almost half (49.7%) of survey respondents live in the City of Fremont, just under one-quarter (23.5%) live in Sheridan Charter Township, about one-fifth (18.8%) live in Dayton Township, and the remaining 7.9% live outside the three jurisdictions.

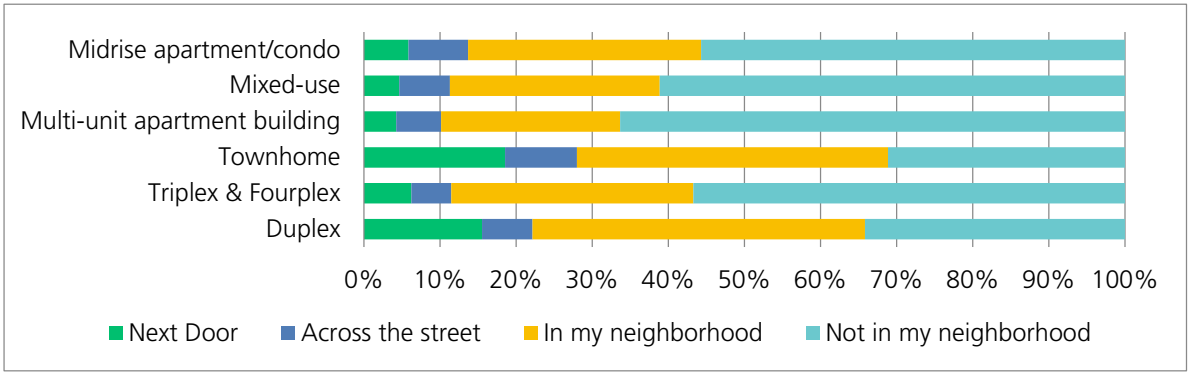


Question 4: What type of unit do you currently live in now, what type would you like to live in now if it were available, and what type of unit would you like to live in 10 years from now? (check all that apply for each column)



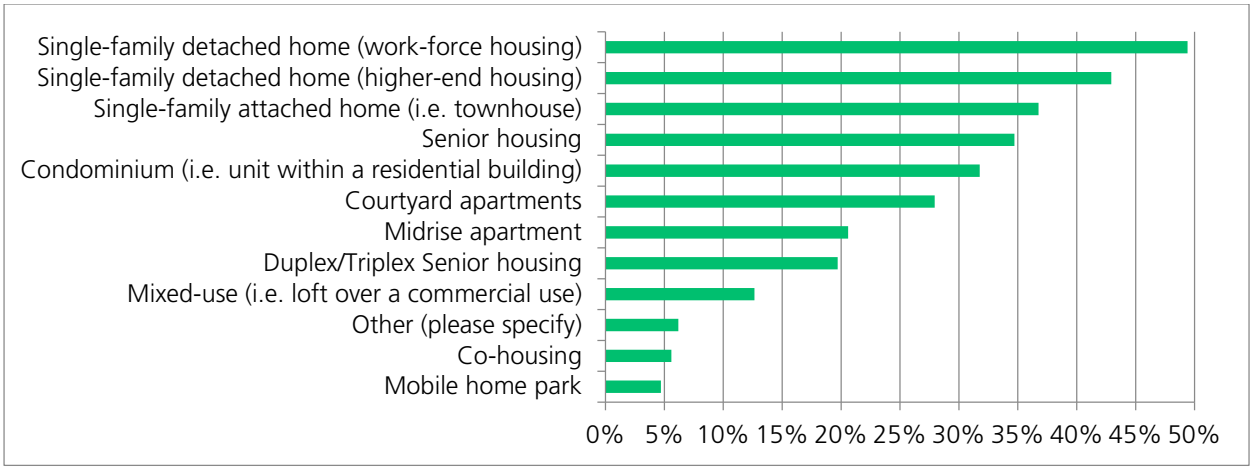
Most survey respondents currently live in detached single-family homes. However, there is an interest and need for different housing formats in the community, especially as people age. The most desired alternative housing formats (non-single family) are midrise apartments/condos and mixed-use units with about 7% of respondents wanting to live in these housing formats now if they were currently available. In the next 10 years, about 20% of respondents want to live in a midrise apartment/condo and 15% want to live in a townhouse.

Question 5: If each of the following types of homes were well-maintained and had a similar aesthetic to your home, what is the closest you would be willing to live to each of the options below?



Survey respondents are generally willing to live near different housing formats with over 40% of respondents indicating a willingness to live either next door, across the street, or in the same neighborhood as all housing formats listed, excluding multi-unit apartment buildings. The most acceptable options were townhomes and duplexes.

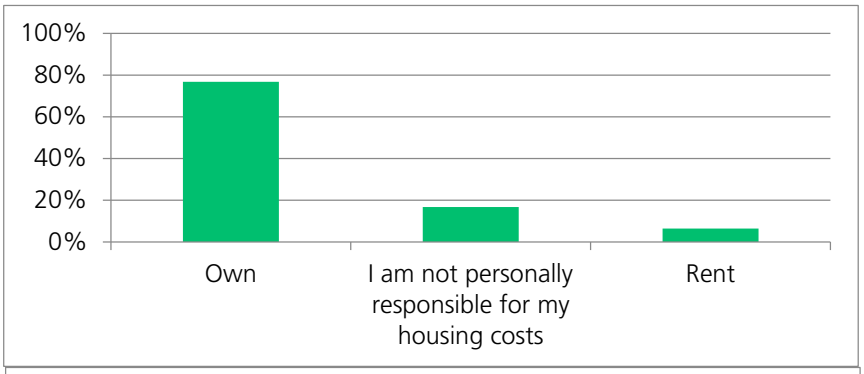
Question 6: What type of home do you think is needed in the Fremont Community? (check all that apply)



The top housing format needs were work-force single-family detached homes (49%), higher-end, single-family detached homes (43%), townhouses (37%), and senior housing (35%). These priorities indicate a preference for housing formats that integrate well into existing single-family neighborhoods.

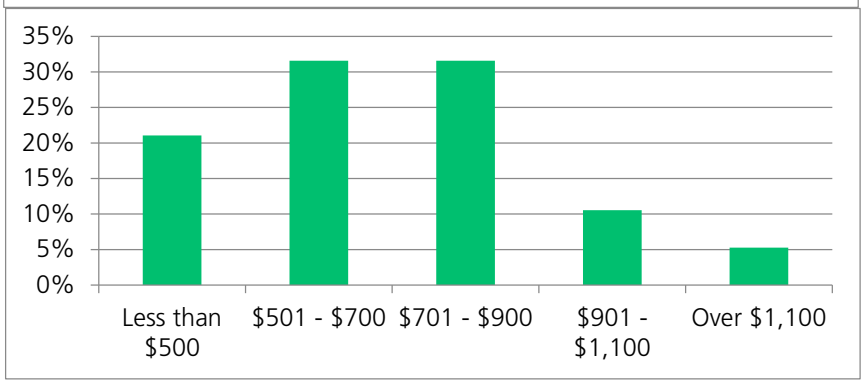
Question 7: Do you rent or own your home?

Most respondents own their homes (77%). Respondents who are not responsible for housing costs represent students who took the survey (17%), and the remaining 6% of respondents are renters.

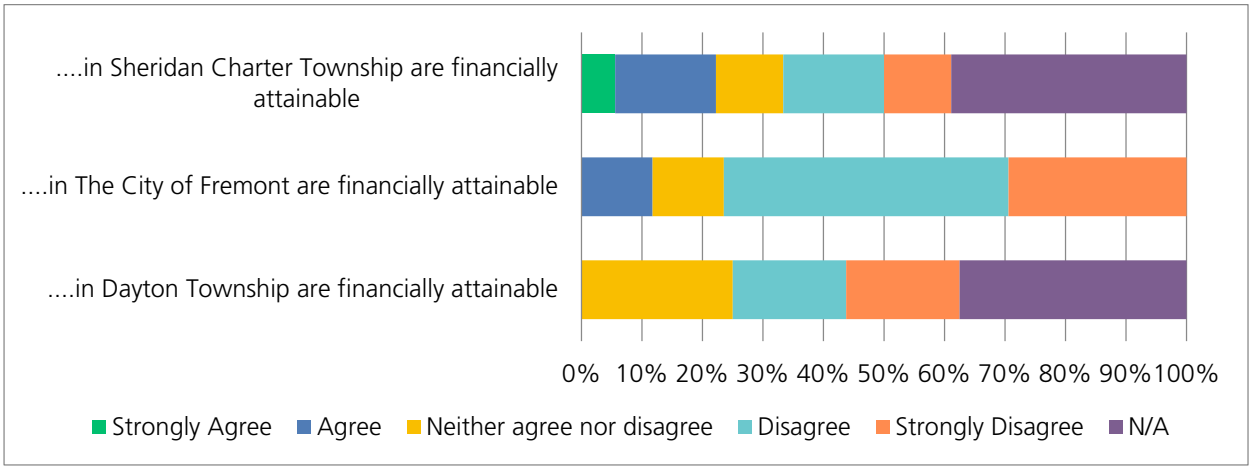


Question 8: What price range do you feel financially comfortable paying on a monthly rent?

This question was geared specifically toward people who rent their homes. Most renters are not financially comfortably paying over $900 per month on rent.

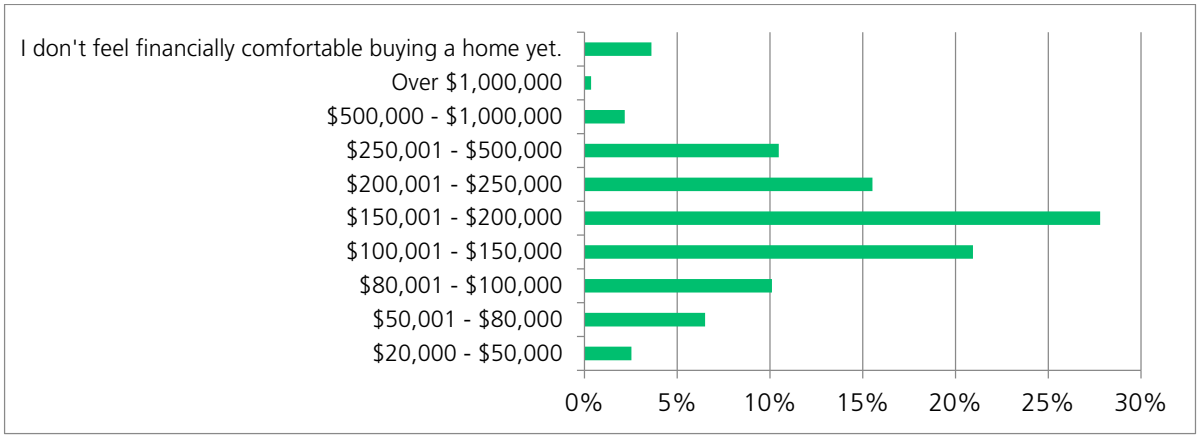


Question 9: How strongly do you agree with the following statement "With my household's current budget, I feel the housing options...."



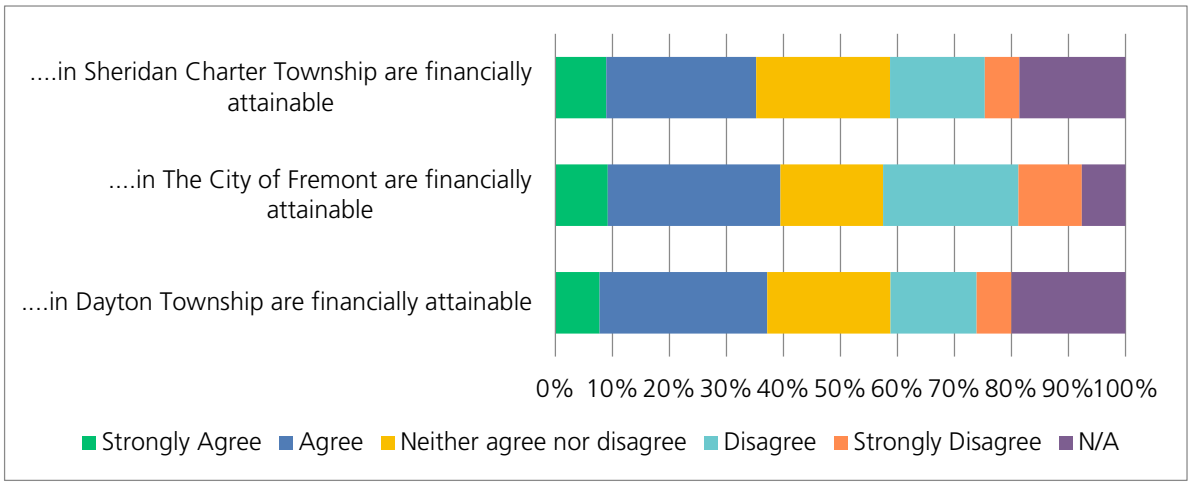
This question was also specific to renters. Housing costs appear to be most unaffordable in the City of Fremont, where 76% of the 19 respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that housing options in the City of Fremont are financially attainable. Of the two townships, housing options in Sheridan Charter Township appear to be more financially attainable for renters.

Question 10: In what price range do you feel financially comfortable buying a home?



This question was specific to people who responded as homeowners. The greatest number of respondents (28%) felt comfortable buying a home in the $150K - $200K price range.

Question 11: How strongly do you agree with the following statement "With my household's current budget, I feel the housing options...."

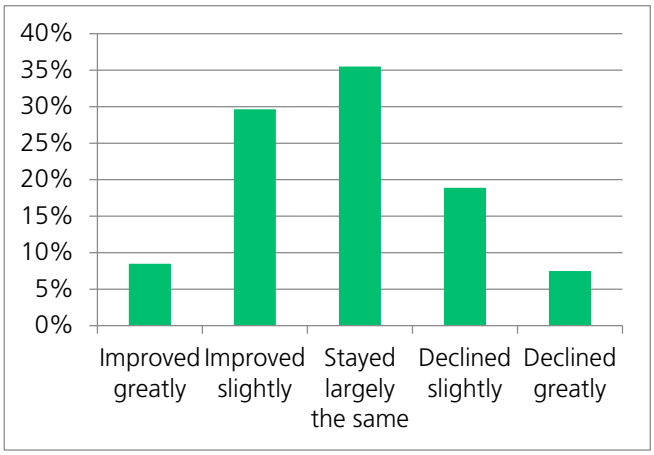


This is the same question the renters answered (see question #9), but it was specific to respondents who own their homes. Housing options appear to be more financially attainable for this group in all three jurisdictions with about 60% of all respondents strongly agreeing, agreeing, or neither agreeing nor disagreeing that housing options are financially attainable in the Fremont Community. Of the three jurisdictions, the City of Fremont appears to be the least financially attainable by a small margin.

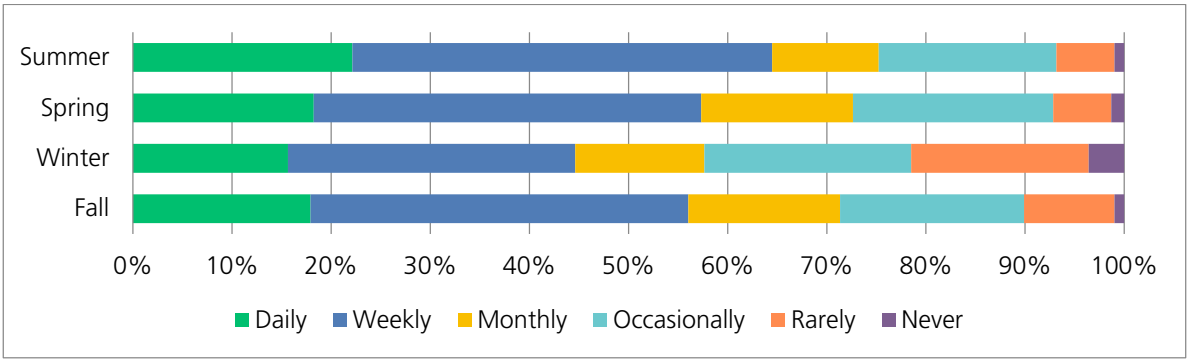
Downtown Environment

Question 12: Excluding the impacts of COVID-19, in the past five years, I think the downtown / commercial districts have...

The greatest percentage of respondents (36%) indicated that the downtown / commercial districts have stayed largely the same over the past five years. An almost equal percentage of respondents (38%), however, believed that the downtown / commercial districts have either improved greatly or slightly over the past five years.

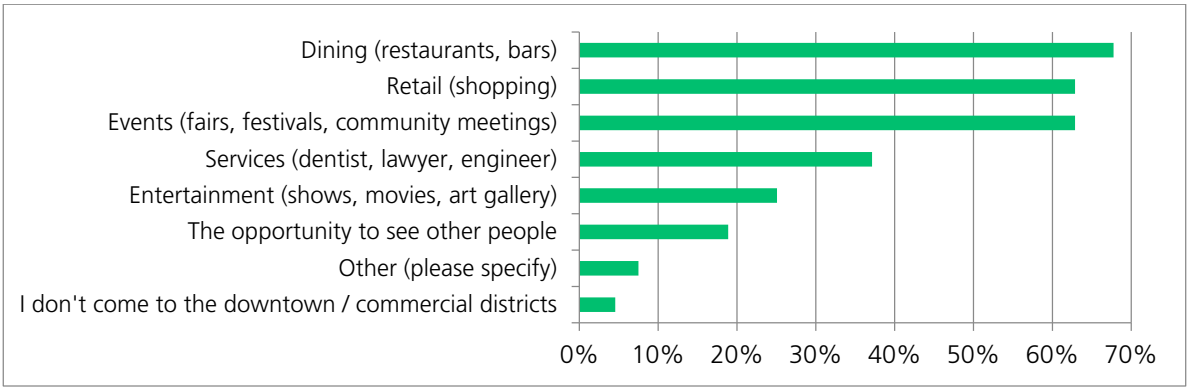


Question 13: About how often do you go to the downtown / commercial districts?



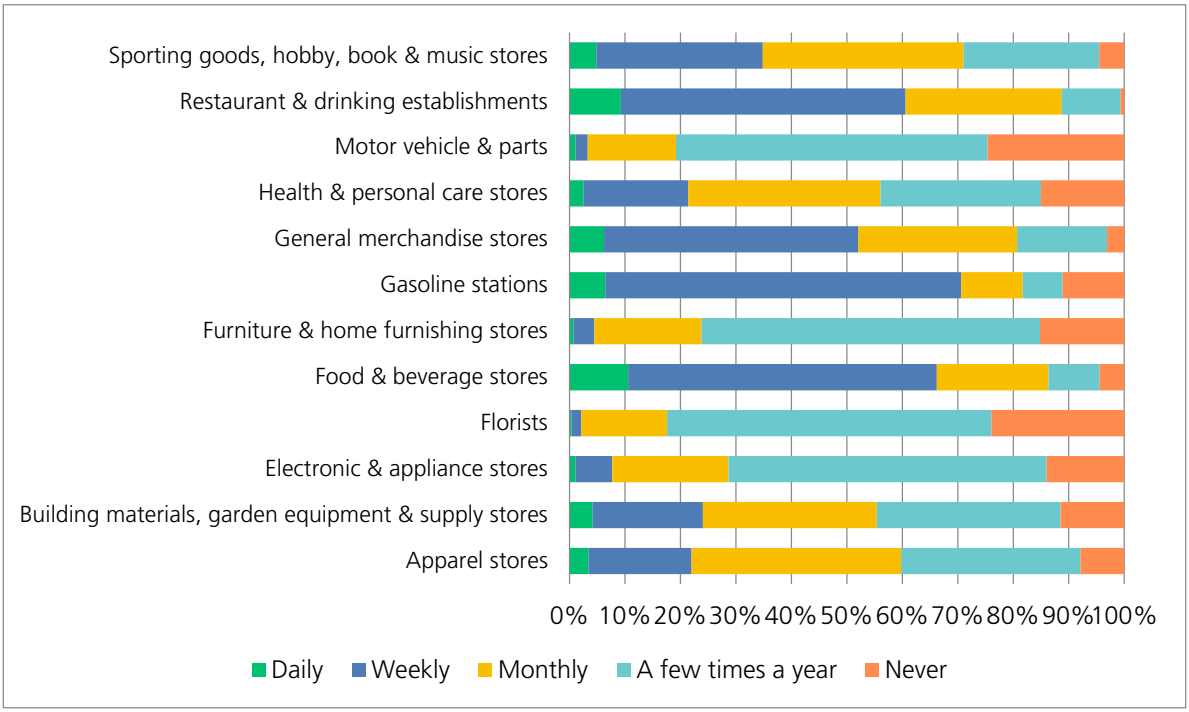
Survey respondents appear to visit the downtown / commercial districts most commonly on a weekly basis year-round.

Question 14: What draws you to the downtown / commercial districts? (check all that apply)



The top three draws to the downtown / commercial districts for survey respondents were dining (68%), retail (63%), and events (63%).

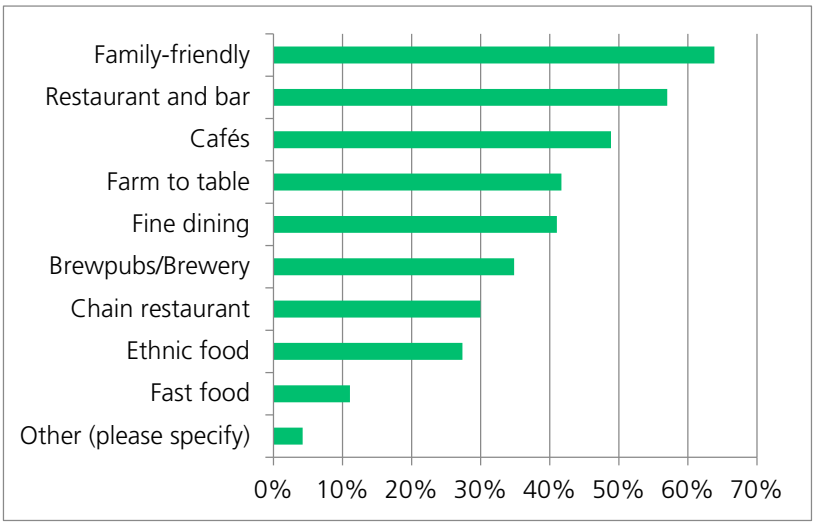
Question 15: What type of retail would you like to see come to the downtown / commercial districts, and how often would you frequent each type of store?



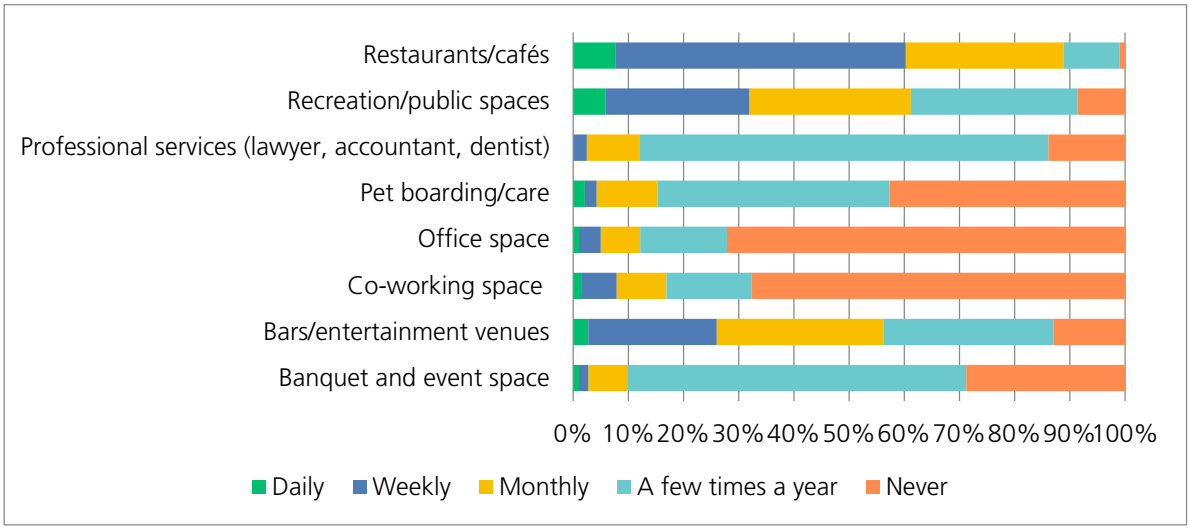
The top three types of retail establishments that respondents would visit on either a daily or weekly basis were "gasoline stations" (70%), "food & beverage stores" (67%), and "restaurant & drinking establishments" (60%), indicating a desire for food-related retail.

Question 16: What type of eating and drinking establishments are needed in the downtown / commercial districts? (check all that apply)

The top three desired types of eating and drinking establishments for survey respondents were family-friendly establishments (64%), restaurant/bar establishments (57%), and cafés (49%).

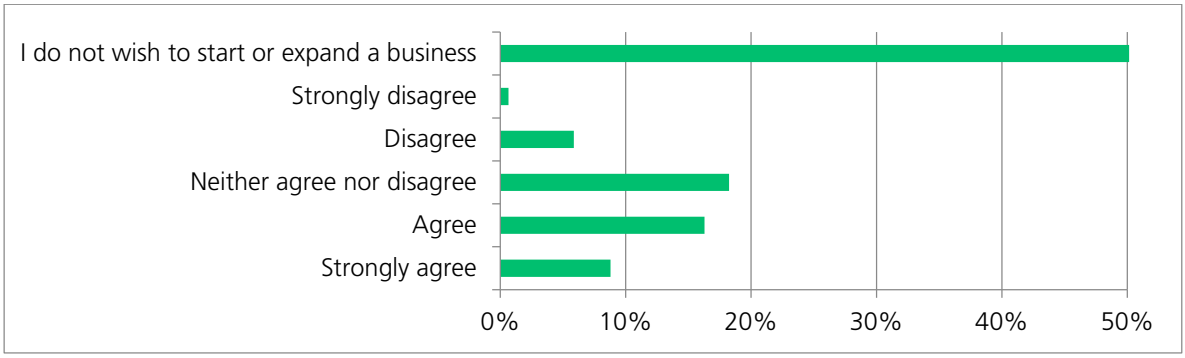


Question 17: What types of services/spaces do you want to see in the downtown / commercial districts, and how often would you frequent them on average?



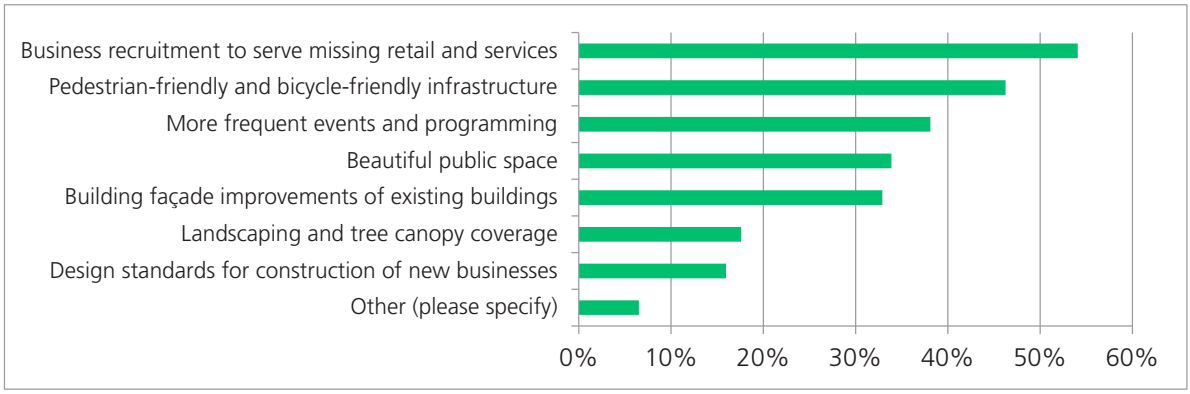
The top three types of services/spaces that respondents would visit on either a daily or weekly basis were "restaurants/cafés" (60%), "recreation/public spaces" (32%), and "bars/entertainment venues" (25%). Neither office nor co-working spaces received much interest from survey respondents.

Question 18: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "I would like to start or expand a business in the downtown / commercial districts, but I am unaware of the resources that could help me do that."



Half of survey respondents indicated that they do not wish to start or expand a business in the community. 25% of respondents, however, either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they would like to start or expand a business in the downtown/commercial districts, but they are unaware of the resources that could help them do so.

Question 19: What are the top three elements of the downtown / commercial districts that you would like to see prioritized?



The top three elements of the downtown / commercial districts that respondents would like to see prioritized were "business recruitment to serve missing retail and services" (54%), "pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly infrastructure" (46%), and "more frequent events and programming" (38%).

Question 20: What is working well in the downtown / commercial districts?

This was an open-ended question that garnered a lot of responses (219). Common responses and themes are highlighted in the word cloud – font size represents how often respondents mentioned a specific theme. The top three themes for things that are working well in the downtown / commercial districts were aesthetics, parking, and restaurants.

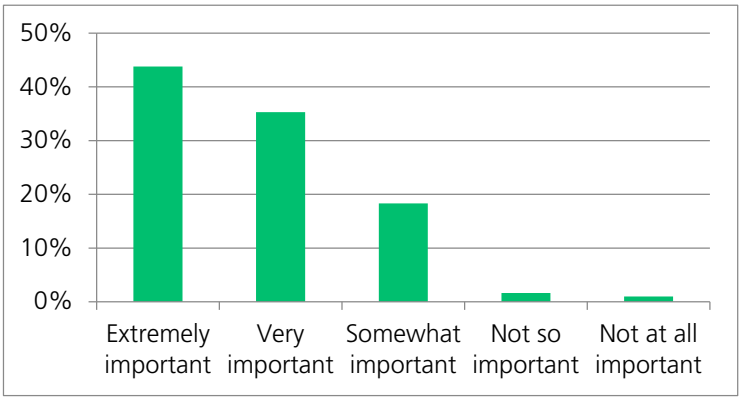
Question 21: What could be improved in the downtown / commercial districts?

This was another open-ended question that also garnered many responses (226). Common responses and themes are highlighted in the word cloud – font size represents how often respondents mentioned a specific theme. The top three themes for things that could be improved in the downtown / commercial districts were restaurants, appearance, and having more activity opportunities.

Local Economy

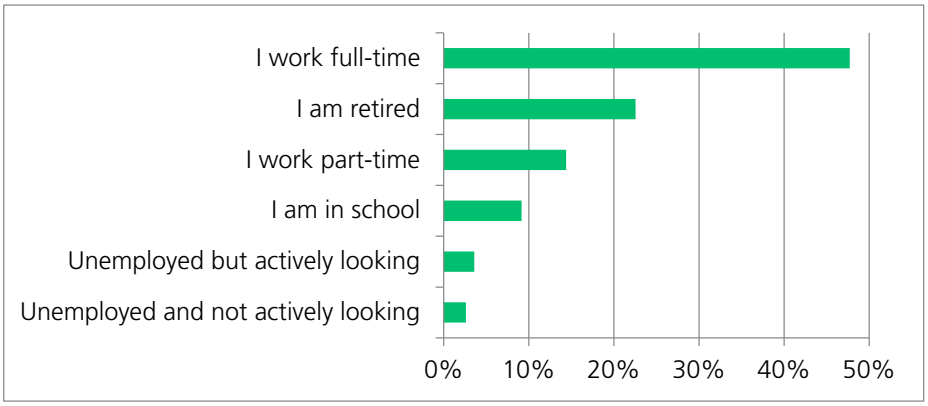
Question 22: How important is it to attract new businesses to the Fremont Community?

It is very evident that attracting new businesses is important to survey respondents with 97% of respondents believe that attracting new businesses is either extremely important (44%), very important (35%), or somewhat important (18%).



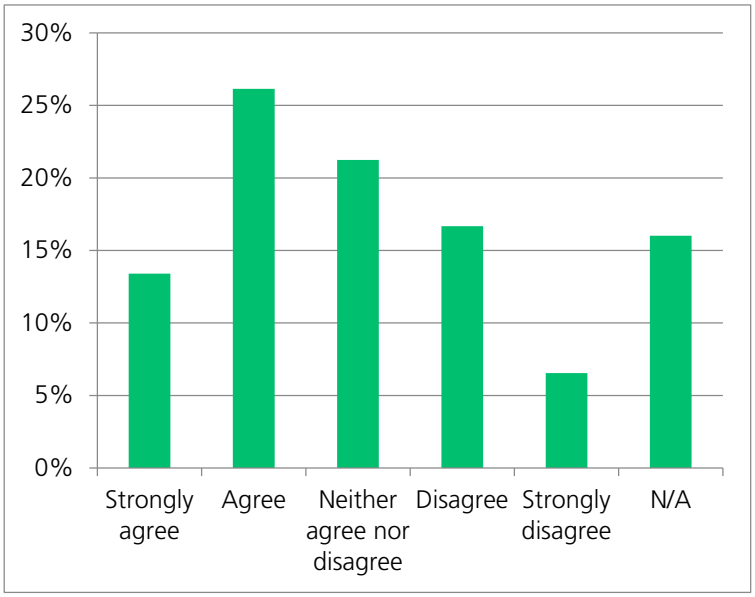
Question 23: Please indicate your current employment status.

The majority of survey respondents work full-time (48%), followed by 23% who are retired.

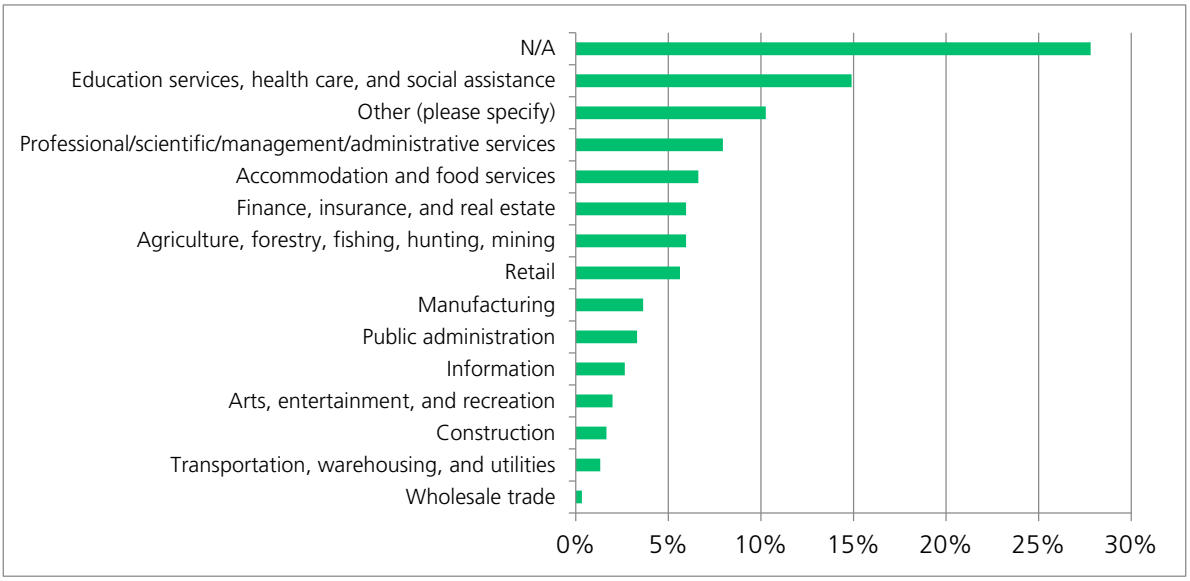


Question 24: To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "There are sufficient employment options that I am qualified for within a reasonable commute from my home."

The responses to this question were somewhat varied; 39% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed. The 16% who answered N/A likely represent students and retirees.



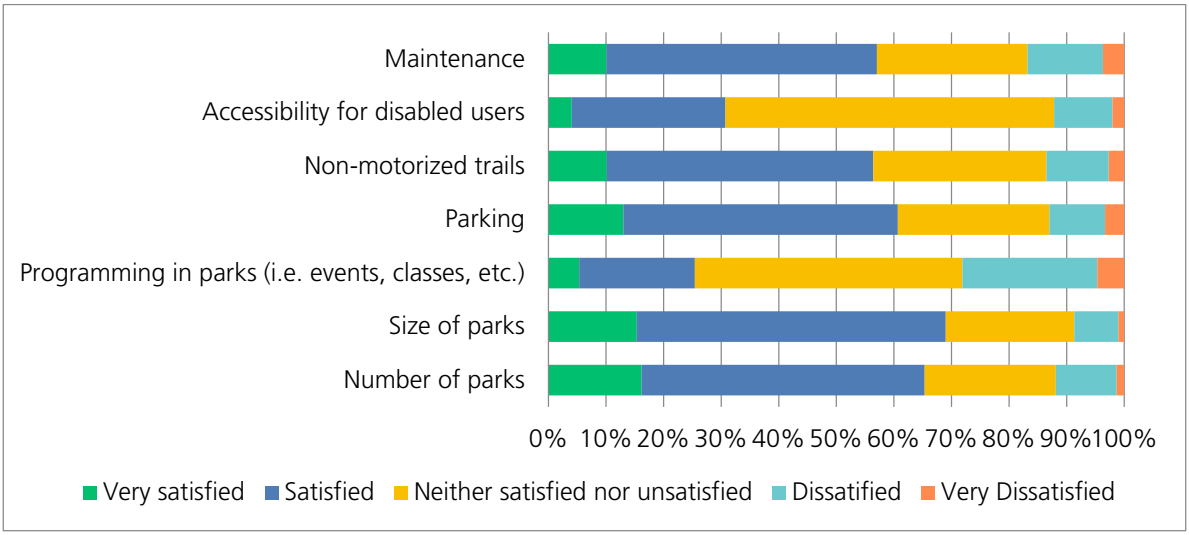
Question 25: What sector do you work in?



Aside from "N/A" (again, likely representing students and retirees), the most common sector of employment for survey respondents was "education services, health care, and social assistance" (15%).

Recreation

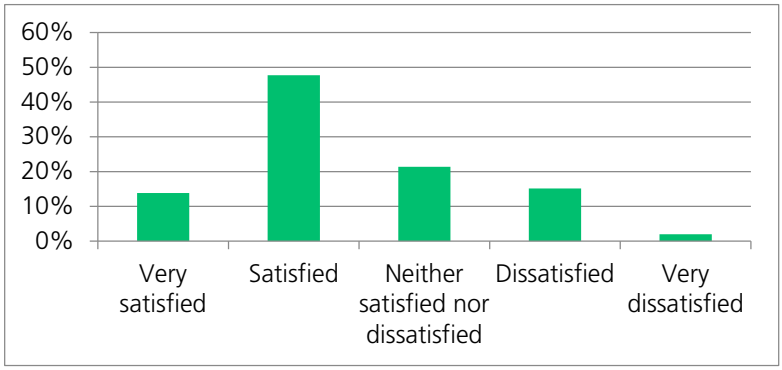
Question 26: How satisfied are you with the parks and other recreation offerings in the Fremont area?



Generally, parks and recreation offerings in the Fremont area appear to be a strength. Very few respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the parks and recreation offerings. Programming in parks was the offering with the least amount of satisfaction, indicating an area of potential focus for parks and recreation services.

Question 27: How satisfied are you with the current level of access to Fremont Lake?

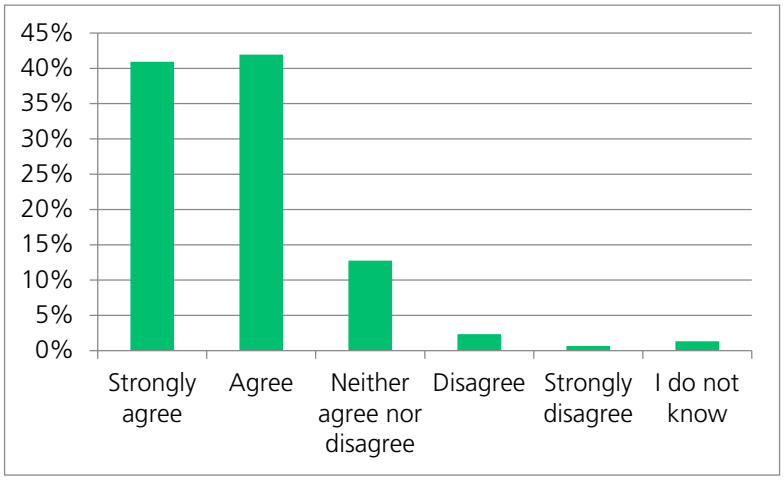
Survey respondents were generally satisfied with the current level of access to Fremont Lake with 62% of respondents indicating that they were either very satisfied or satisfied.



Natural Features / Agriculture

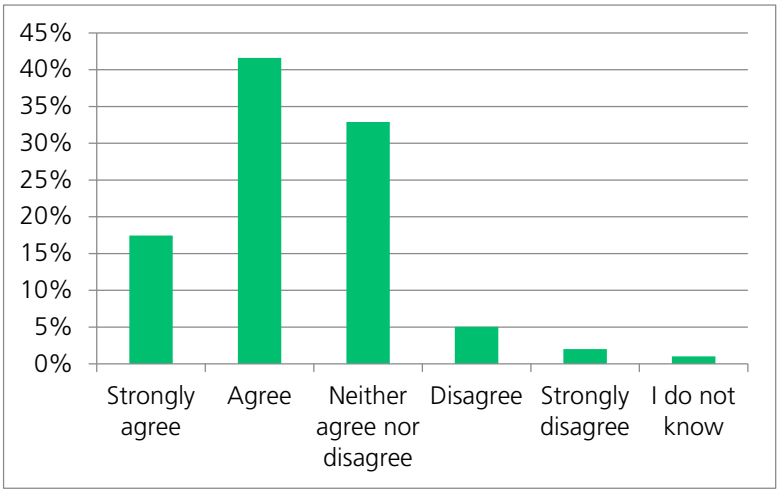
Question 28: To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "Natural features are an asset to the Fremont Community."

There is a strong support for natural features in the Fremont Community as 83% of survey respondents either strongly agree or agree that natural features are an asset to the Fremont Community.



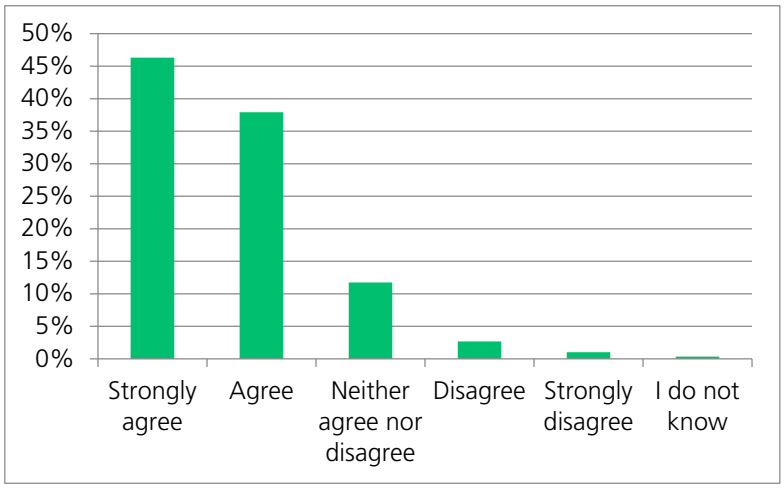
Question 29: To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "The Fremont Community's natural features could be more protected/preserved."

Many respondents also believed that the Fremont Community's natural features could be more protected / preserved with 59% of survey respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement.



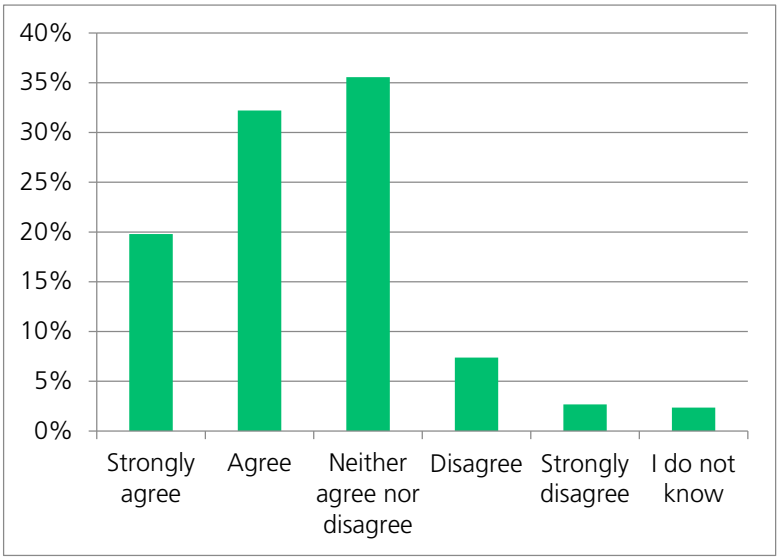
Question 30: To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "The Fremont Community's agricultural land is an asset to the community."

There is a strong support for agricultural land in the Fremont Community as 84% of survey respondents either strongly agree or agree that agricultural land is an asset to the Fremont Community.



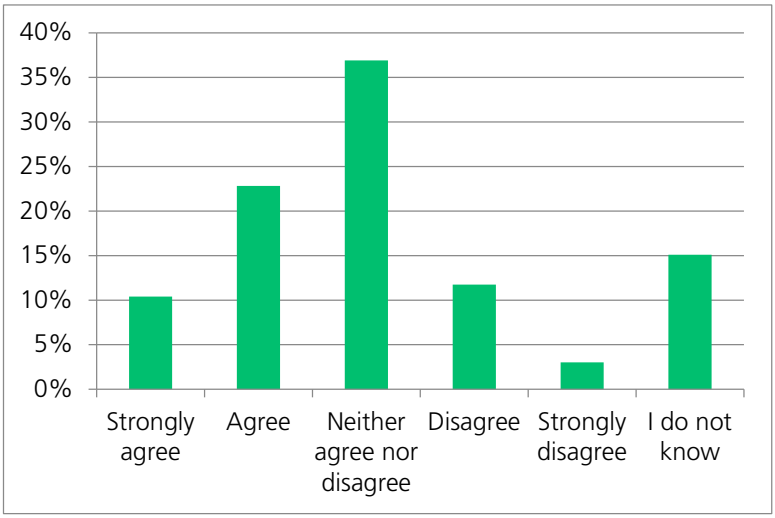
Question 31: To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "The Fremont Community's agricultural land could be more protected/preserved."

Many respondents also believed that the Fremont Community's agricultural land could be more protected / preserved with 52% of survey respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. 36% of respondents, however, neither agreed nor disagreed.



Question 32: To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "The farming community has adequate support from the local government."

Most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (37%) with the statement that the farming community has adequate support from the local government. A large percentage of respondents indicated that they did not know (15%).



Question 33: What strategies could the Fremont Community local government use to better support the farming community?

There were six main themes suggested for strategies that the Fremont Community local government could use to better support the farming community: Farmland easements, commercial connections (i.e. farm-to-table opportunities), advertising, transportation, education scholarships, and community events.

Visual Preferences

Question 34: Which residential development style do you prefer? Click the image to select.

1 STORY: 42%

2 STORY: 58%

By a slightly larger margin, survey respondents preferred 2-story units (58%) over 1-story units (42%) for residential development.

Question 35: Which downtown aesthetic style do you prefer? Click the image to select.

EARTH / NATURAL TONES: 60%

COLORFUL / BRIGHT TONES: 40%

For aesthetic style, survey respondents most preferred Earth / natural tones (60%) over colorful / bright tones (40%).

Question 36: Which downtown building style do you prefer? Click the image to select.

TRADITIONAL: 87%

MODERN: 13%

Tradition building style was overwhelmingly the most popular choice among survey respondents (87%) over modern building style (13%).

Question 37: Which auto oriented development and sign style do you prefer? Click the image to select.

MONUMENT SIGN: 61%

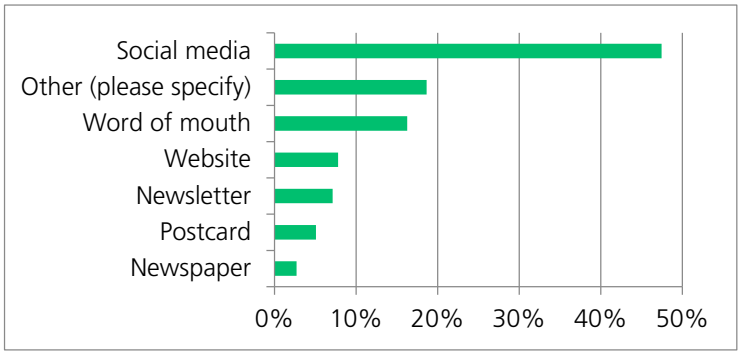
POLE SIGN: 39%

Respondents preferred monument signs (61%) over pole signs (39%) for auto-oriented development.

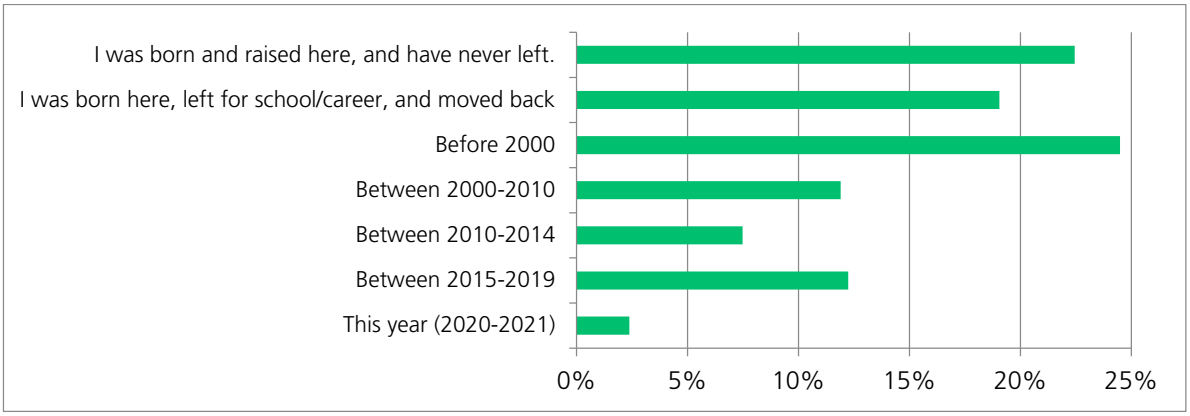
Survey Respondent Information

Question 38: How did you hear about the survey? (check all that apply)

People most commonly heard about the survey via social media (47%). "Other" responses were predominantly "school," referring to the students who took the survey in class.



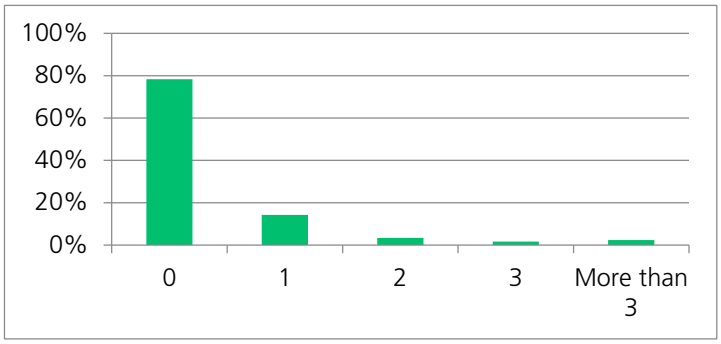
Question 39: What year did you move to the Fremont Area?



The highest percentage of survey respondents moved to the area before 2000 (24%), followed closely by those who were born and raised in the Fremont community and have never left (22%).

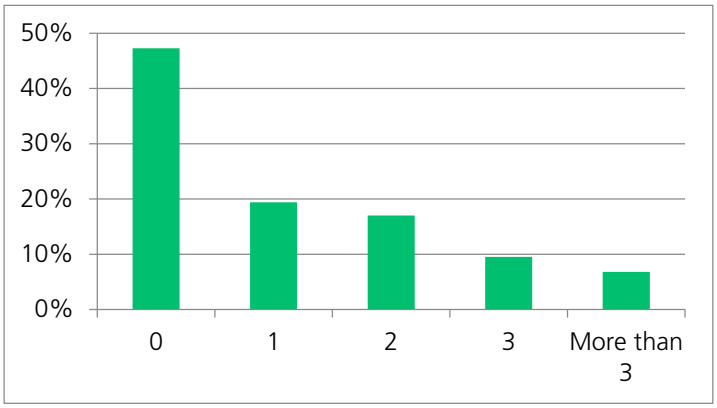
Question 40: How many members of your household have a disability?

Most respondents (78%) answered that members of their households do not have a disability; however, the remaining 22% indicate that at least one member of their households lives with a disability.



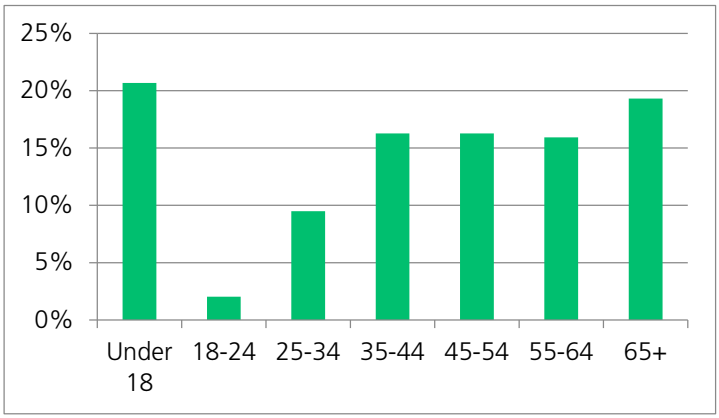
Question 41: How many members of your household are under the age of 18?

Just under half (47%) of survey respondents do not have anyone in their households under the age of 18. The remaining 53% of respondents do have at least one member in their households under the age of 18, representing a large percent of youth in the community.



Question 42: What age group do you fall into?

The survey had extremely strong youth representation, likely due to the in-person community engagement done at the high school – 20.2% of those who completed the survey were under the age of 18. By a very small margin, the age group with the highest response rate was those over the age of 65 (20.5%).

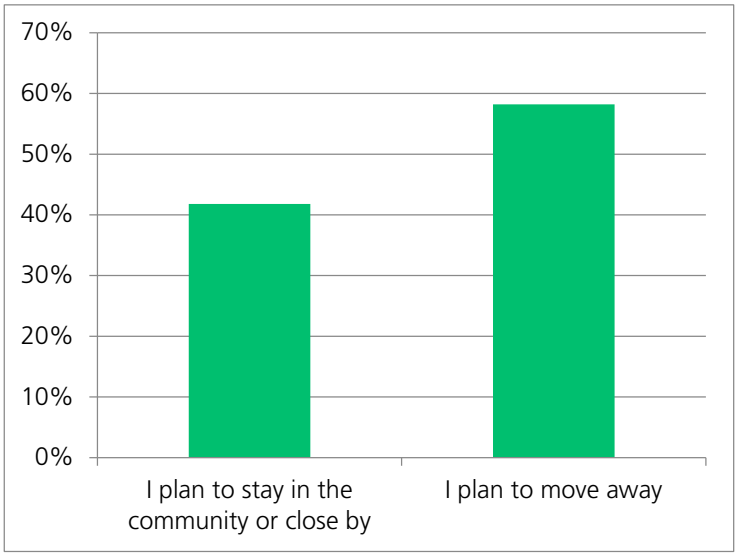


Gen Z Questions

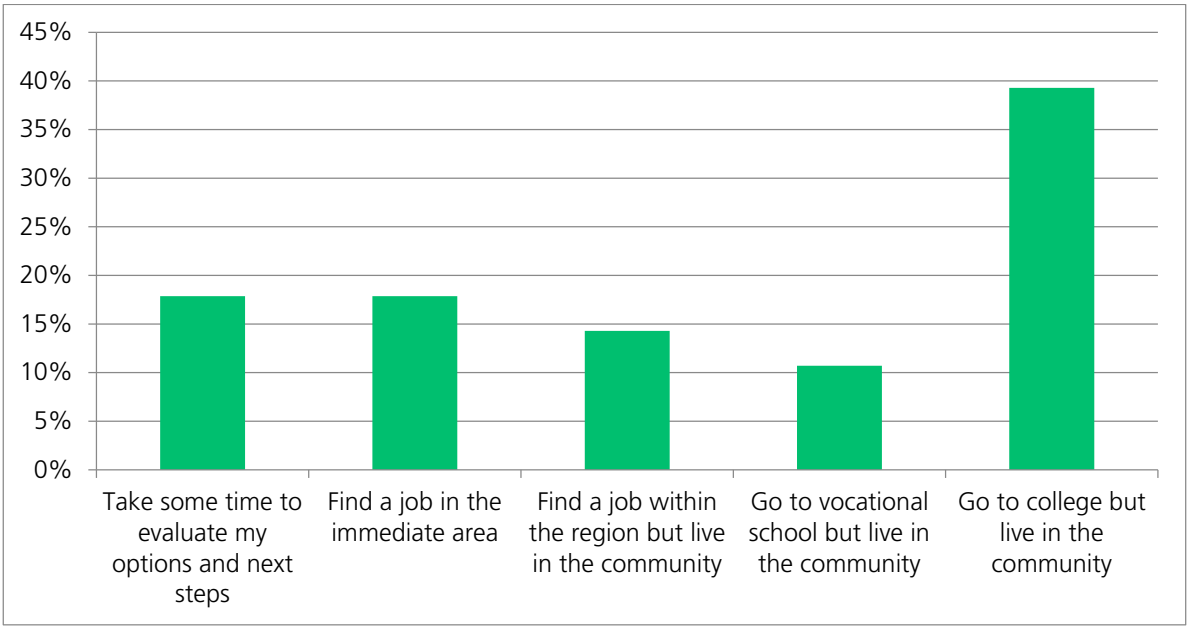
The following questions were specific to those in the "under 18" and "18-24" age groups. The questions varied depending on respondents' plans for the next few years. There were 67 respondents who were eligible for the Gen-Z questions.

Question 43: What are your plans in the next few years?

There were more respondents who selected "I plan to move away" (58%); however, quite a few respondents indicated that they plan to stay in the community or close by (42%). Depending on how respondents answered this question, the subsequent questions differed. Question 44 was for those who answered, "I plan to stay in the community or close by." Question 45 was for those who answered, "I plan to move away."

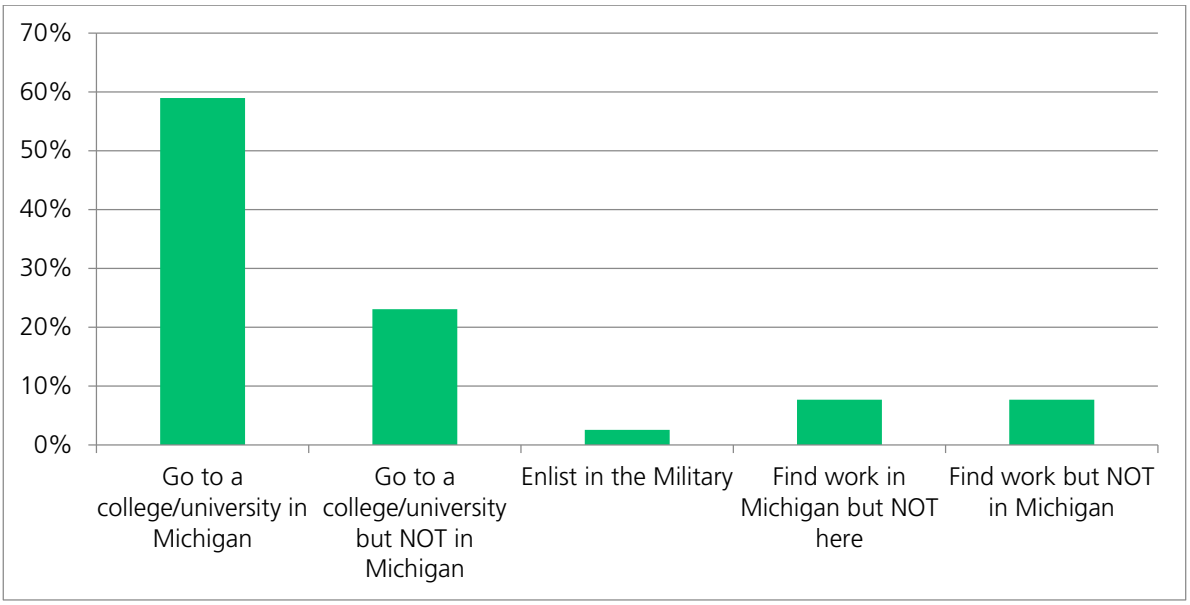


Question 44: In the next few years I plan to:



For respondents who plan to stay in the community or close by, the most common response was "go to college but live in the community" (39%).

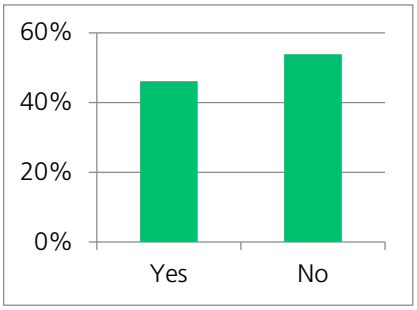
Question 45: In the next few years I plan to:



For the respondents who plan to move away, the most common response was "go to a college / university in Michigan" (59%).

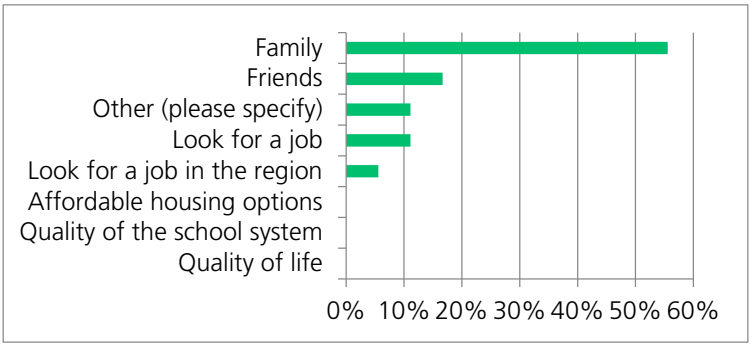
Question 46: Do you ever plan on returning to the area?

This question was specific to those respondents who plan to move away to determine if they have any interest in ever returning to the area. Responses were about equal with 46% saying "yes" and 54% saying "no." Once again, depending on how respondents answered this question, the subsequent questions differed. Question 47 was for those who answered "yes," and question 48 was for those who answered "no."

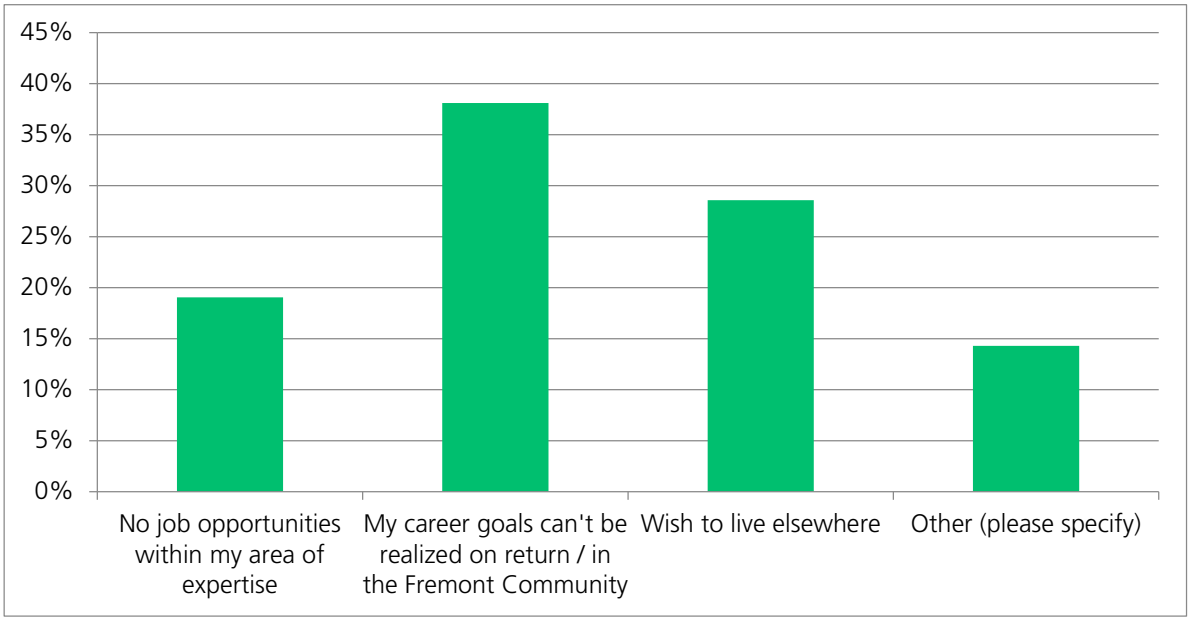


Question 47: What is the primary reason you are returning?

The overwhelming top reason for returning to the area was family (56%), followed by friends (17%). Note that the total number of respondents for this question was 18.



Question 48: What is your primary reason for not returning?

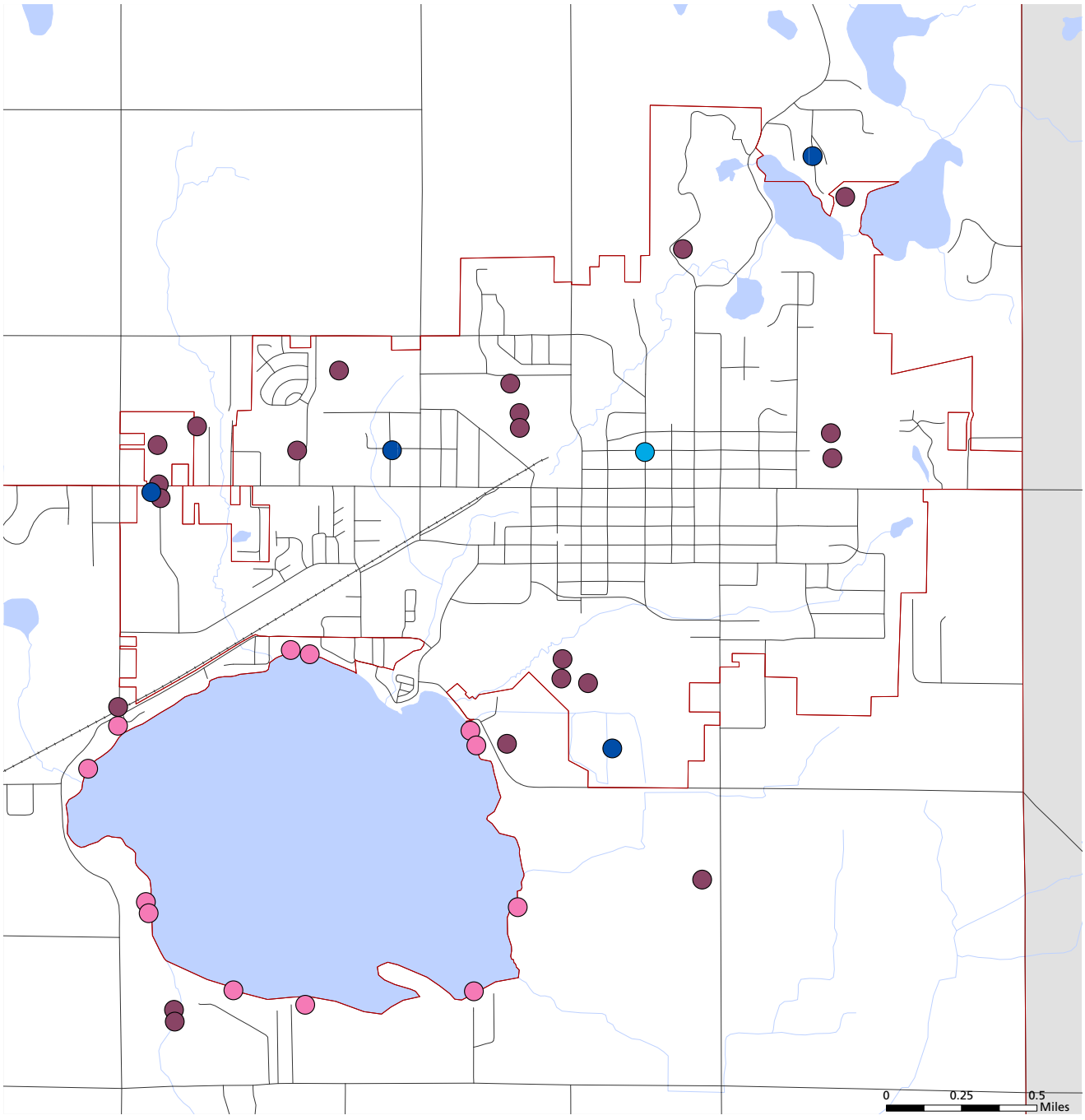


The top reason selected for not returning to the Fremont Community was "my career goals can't be realized on return / in the Fremont Community. "Other" responses were focused on a lack of activities / things to do in the area. Note that the total number of respondents for this question was 21.

Additional Comments

Question 49: If you have additional comments you would like to provide as they relate to the Master Plan please enter them below.

110 respondents left additional comments, predominantly re-iterating items already addressed in the survey, indicating that they had no further comments, or offering appreciation for the survey.

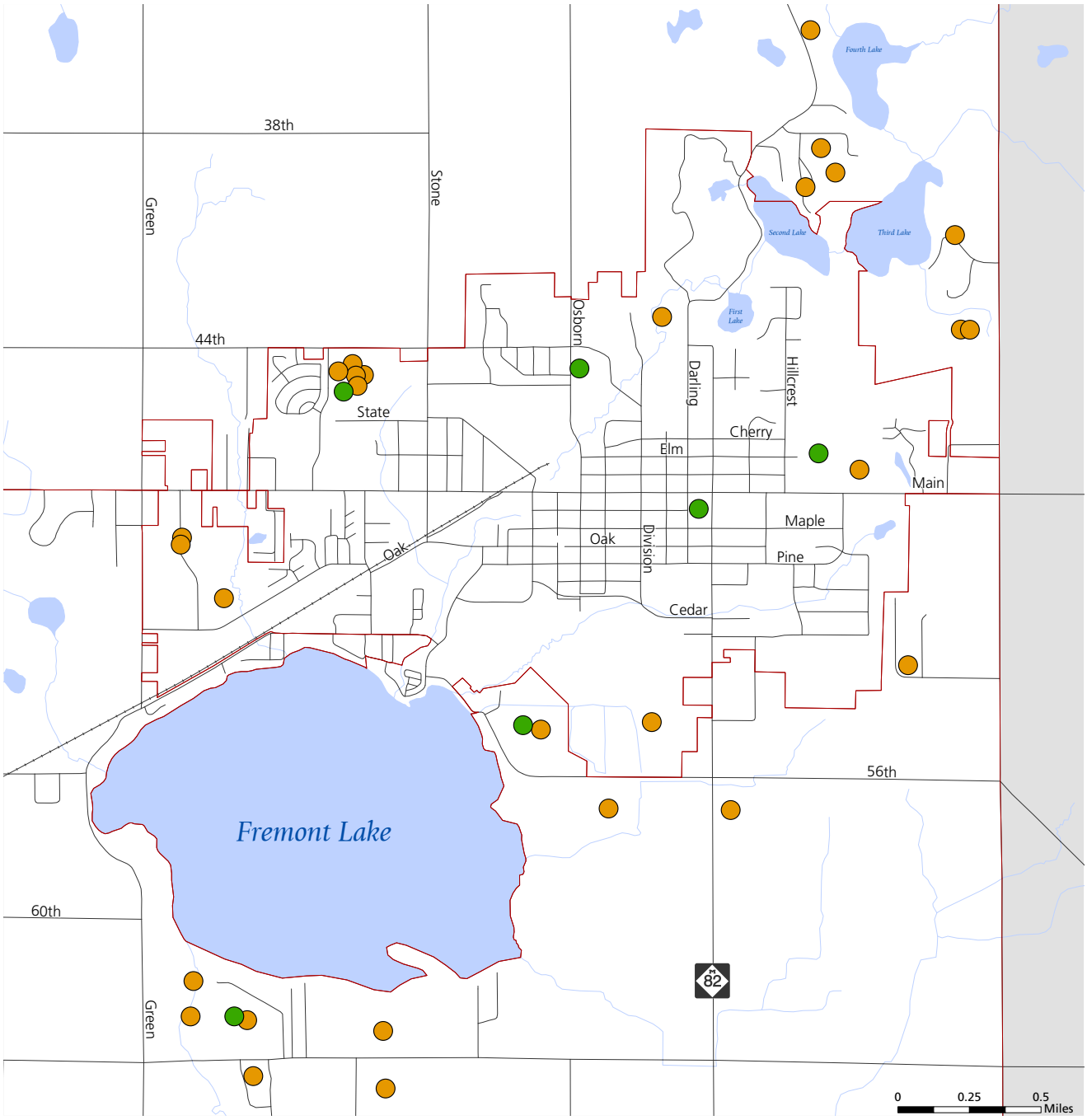


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Water Quality Preferences

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Water Access Point (Student Sessions)
- Water Access Point (General Session)
- Water Treatment (Student Sessions)
- Water Treatment (General Session)

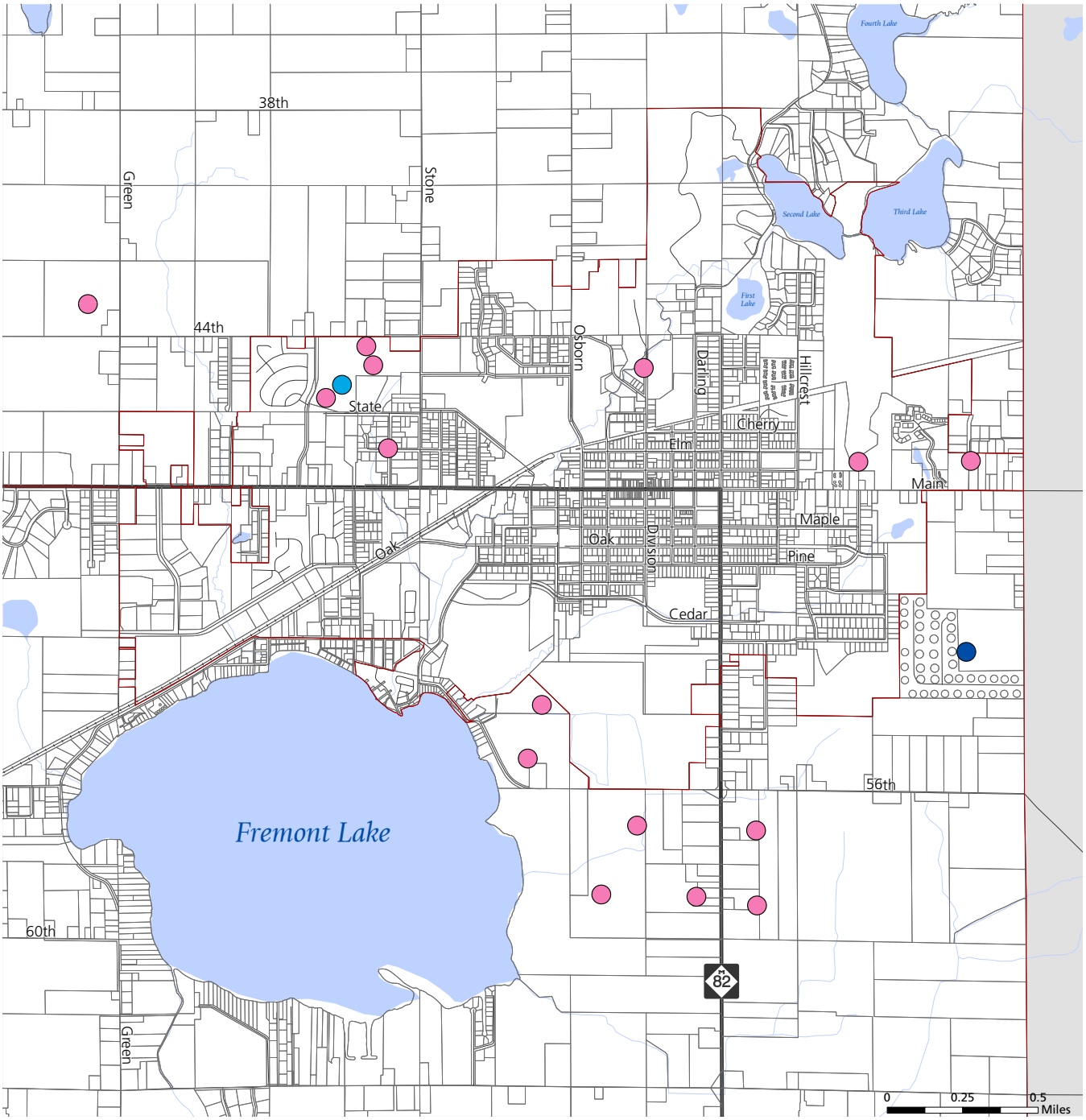


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Infill Housing Preferences

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Identified Infill Site (Student Sessions)
- Identified Infill Site (General Session)

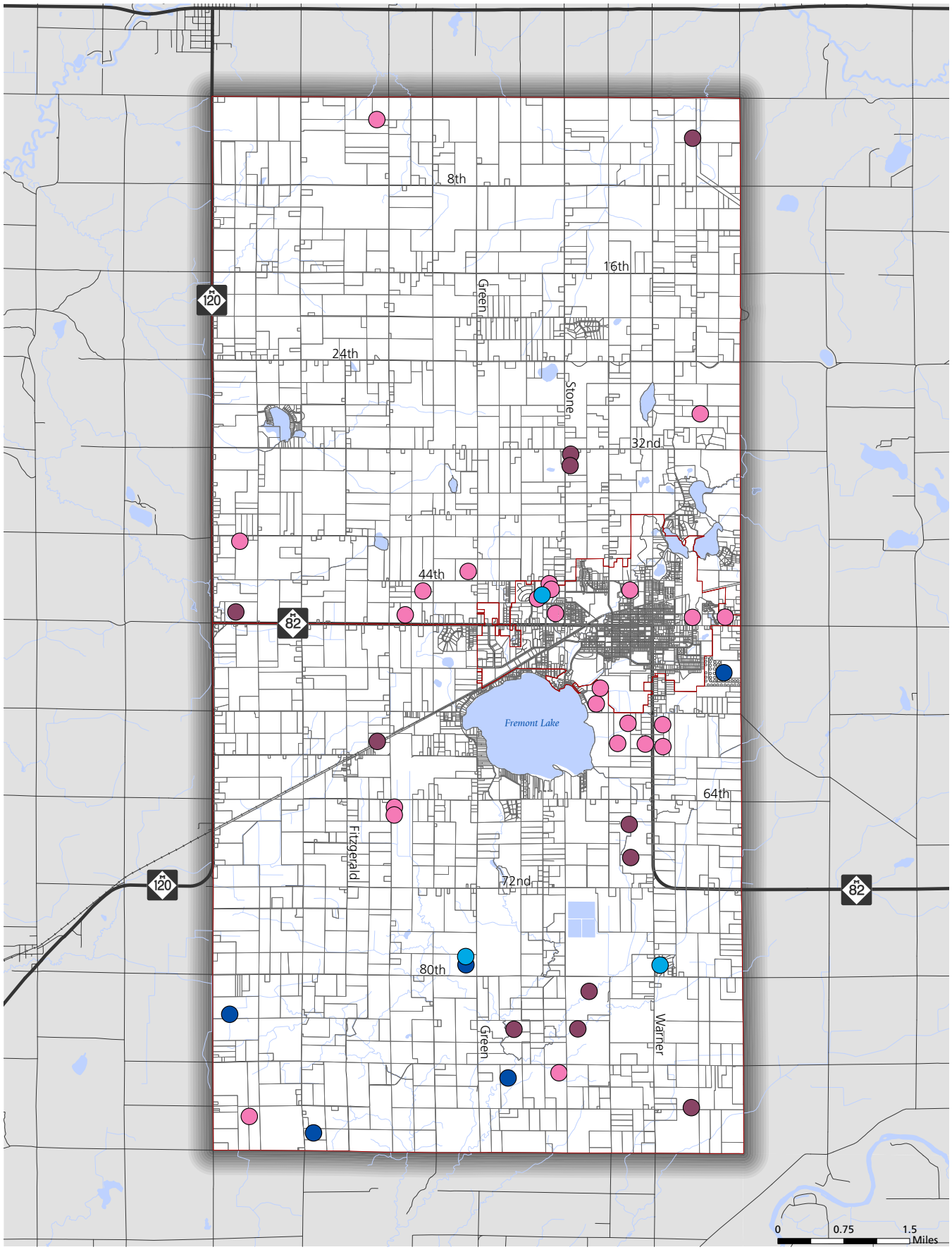


FREMONT COMMUNITY JOINT PLANNING AREA

Housing Preferences

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Newaygo County GIS, Esri Basemap

- Small Lot (Student Sessions)
- Small Lot (General Session)
- Large Lot (Student Sessions)
- Large Lot (General Session)


8th
16th
Green
120
24th
Stone
32nd
44th
82
Fremont Lake
64th
Fitzgerald
120
72nd
82
80th
Green
Warner
0
0.75
1.5
Miles