



# 2017 Manistee County US 31 Corridor Enhancement Plan

Creating a Livable Corridor Through:  
ACCESS.....AESTHETICS.....ACTIVITY

July 2017

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## Forward:

The US 31 Corridor Plan is the cumulation of work completed through collaboration and cooperation of the local units of government located along the length of US 31 in Manistee County. The existing conditions and trends of the corridor, public input of elected officials, appointed officials and residents of Manistee County was summarized and laid out in a format which provides an understanding of the various character and attributes of the corridor through a vision for the structuring of land uses which will maintain strong commercial centers, provide appropriate locations for housing and protect important agricultural areas and rural viewsheds.

## Acknowledgments:

Manistee County Planning Department  
 Alliance for Economic Success  
 Charter Township of Filer  
 City of Manistee  
 Manistee Township  
 Brown Township  
 Bear Lake Township

Bear Lake Village  
 Pleasanton Township  
 Little River Band of Ottawa Indians  
 Wade Trim  
 Beckett & Raeder, Inc.  
 Michigan Department of Transportation

## Vision of the US 31 Corridor

*The creation of a livable corridor where economic competitiveness is realized through smart land use decisions and a development ready environment, multiple transportation options are available, and preferred community character is realized through the use of strategic and persistent actions.*

## Introduction

The purpose of this US 31 Corridor Plan is to analyze a defined set of existing conditions, provide a basis for understanding leading prac-

tice in what makes a great corridor, and to offer suggestions and a framework for how to move ahead and implement the suggestions of this Plan. Ultimately, this Plan focuses on how access, aesthetics, and activity on land adjacent to the US 31 road itself may be improved so that the US 31 corridor is livable and recognizable as being a place people want to spend time. Fundamentally, it is a Plan that takes what is the very best of the US 31 corridor and offers ways to replicate those attributes.

Communities that spend the time strategically

planning for their corridor by taking a hard look at land use, transportation, and infrastructure along their major corridors, create livable communities in which the corridor itself becomes an asset and generator of prosperity.

Communities that do not engage in corridor planning are at risk of losing the opportunity to build places in which people want to live, work, play, and learn. In fact, Michigan State University in their Building More Livable Communities: Corridor Design Portfolio state that, “If the region does not have a high-quality downtown, key nodes and at least one corridor that is walkable, livable, with good transit service, many restaurants, entertainment venues, and contains missing middle housing, then talented workers are likely to look elsewhere.”

Manistee County has the potential to leverage the US 31 corridor to become the “main street” of Manistee County while satisfying multiple goals (economic development, rural scenic preservation, & agricultural prosperity).

Manistee County is located in NW Michigan and is a part of the State of Michigan’s Northwest Prosperity Region # 2. This region encompasses ten Counties from the southern border of Manistee County East to Mecosta County and North to Emmet County.

Manistee County is bisected by several major transportation corridors including three State primary Highways (M-55, M-22 and M-115), as well as a primary US Highway, US 31. US 31 is the primary transportation route which traverses the County from South to North in the Western portion of the County. US 31 connects communities within Manistee County and also provides



Map 1: Regional Primary Highway Network

connections to neighboring counties to the South and North. (See Map 1)

## Creating a Great Corridor

A great corridor typically doesn't rise from the ground without guidance and input which direct the build-out and land use of parcels which abut the corridor. There are several themes that guide wise land use decisions for quality corridors that are replicated in successful corridor plans and utilized throughout successful corridors. The themes are:

- High quality downtown:
  - ▷ A high quality downtown is punctuated by its connectivity to the surrounding region and the assets of that region. Direct ties to a primary corridor provides much benefit through increased users and use.
- Key nodes:
  - ▷ Recognizing the importance of nodal development and appropriate spacing of nodes helps drive wise land use decisions. Increased densities, infrastructure development and wise building design and placement help to create strong aspects of nodal development.
- Walkable corridor:
  - ▷ Corridor plans often push for the study of movement of vehicular traffic while paying little or no attention to the importance of pedestrian and non-motorized users. Tying together a myriad of approaches for transportation including non-motorized is a characteristic of a strong corridor.
- Livable corridor:
  - ▷ Corridors are impacted by the uses which are developed along them and how those uses are connected to the corridor. Ease of access, availability of assets, protection of viewsheds and character all combine to make a corridor livable.

- Good public transportation service:
  - ▷ Public transportation is a necessity of modern corridors and the availability of public transportation not only facilitates movement of people along a corridor; it also provides avenues of access to points along a corridor for consumers to access goods and services, and access to locations of employment.
- Restaurants and entertainment venues
  - ▷ Not only restaurants and entertainment venues, but a mix of retail and service locations along a corridor that draw users to travel and spend time along a corridor.
- Middle of the range housing options
  - ▷ The housing needs of a community should

- be integrated into corridor land use planning. Providing housing options in close proximity to a corridor often shortens daily trips for work, education and service/retail needs. Middle income and low income housing choice is essential and in line with housing needs
- Ease of Development Ready
  - ▷ Development Ready refers to the ease of ability of moving through a development review, approval and permitting process. Uniformity of regulatory requirements assists with facilitation of development processes when moving along a corridor which may encompass several local units of government.

## Key Definitions

There are several key definitions which must be reviewed and defined prior to moving through this corridor plan. These definitions will arise throughout the document and having an understanding of the term as used in this document will assist the reader as they move through the plan.

**Corridor:** *A major roadway that traverses a geographical area and connects downtowns, commercial nodes, and other land uses.*

**Development Ready:** *Development ready refers to the ability to move quickly and easily through a development process, from concept, to site plan review, to permit application and approval to project construction and completion.*

**Node:** *Hub of economic/commercial activity center that is located where two or more major streets intersect. There is likely only one or two larger centers or downtowns, but many smaller nodes that serve a commercial or economic purpose along a corridor. Nodes are strategically placed along a corridor.*

**Character Zone:** *A term which denotes the type of design and density which represents specific characteristics of a corridor. Character zones are defined by terms such as "Downtown", "Urban", "Suburban" and "Rural". Full explanation and visualization of different character zones will be provided in this document.*

**Gray Storm Water Infrastructure:** *Refers to traditional practices for stormwater management, such as gutter, catch basin and pipes which direct stormwater away from the built environment.*

**Green Infrastructure:** *Refers to modern stormwater practices often referred to as "Low Impact Design" which incorporate green based approaches for infiltration of stormwater as close to the source as possible. Examples include bio-swales, rain gardens, porous pavement, level spreaders and green roofs.*

**Water Districts:** *Water Districts are the location of established districts, which provide water service to residential, commercial and industrial uses located within the district boundaries.*

### Key Definitions Continued...

**Sewer Districts:** Refers to the location of established sewer districts which provide wastewater sewer service to residential, commercial and industrial uses located within the district boundaries.

**Drainage Districts:** The County Drain Commission Office manages and maintains established County Drainage Districts. Drainage Districts were historically created to assist with agricultural production, but are often maintained to assist with stormwater management.

### Study Area

The US 31 corridor for our study purposes is bounded by the South Manistee County line and the North County line. The corridor is 29.05 miles in length for the portion contained within Manistee County.

The US 31 Corridor touches upon 7 local units of government and 1 sovereign nation in the form of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) land held in Trust by the Federal Government. The corri-

dor study area and local units of government are displayed on Map # 2. (See Map # 2)

### Planning Process

Planning within Manistee County has embraced a “bottoms-up” approach in which staff of the Planning Department and Alliance for Economic Success work with elected and appointed officials of local units of government, concerned citizens and stakeholders important to a process, to develop sound planning documents which seek to implement policies and projects which meet the goals of the plan.

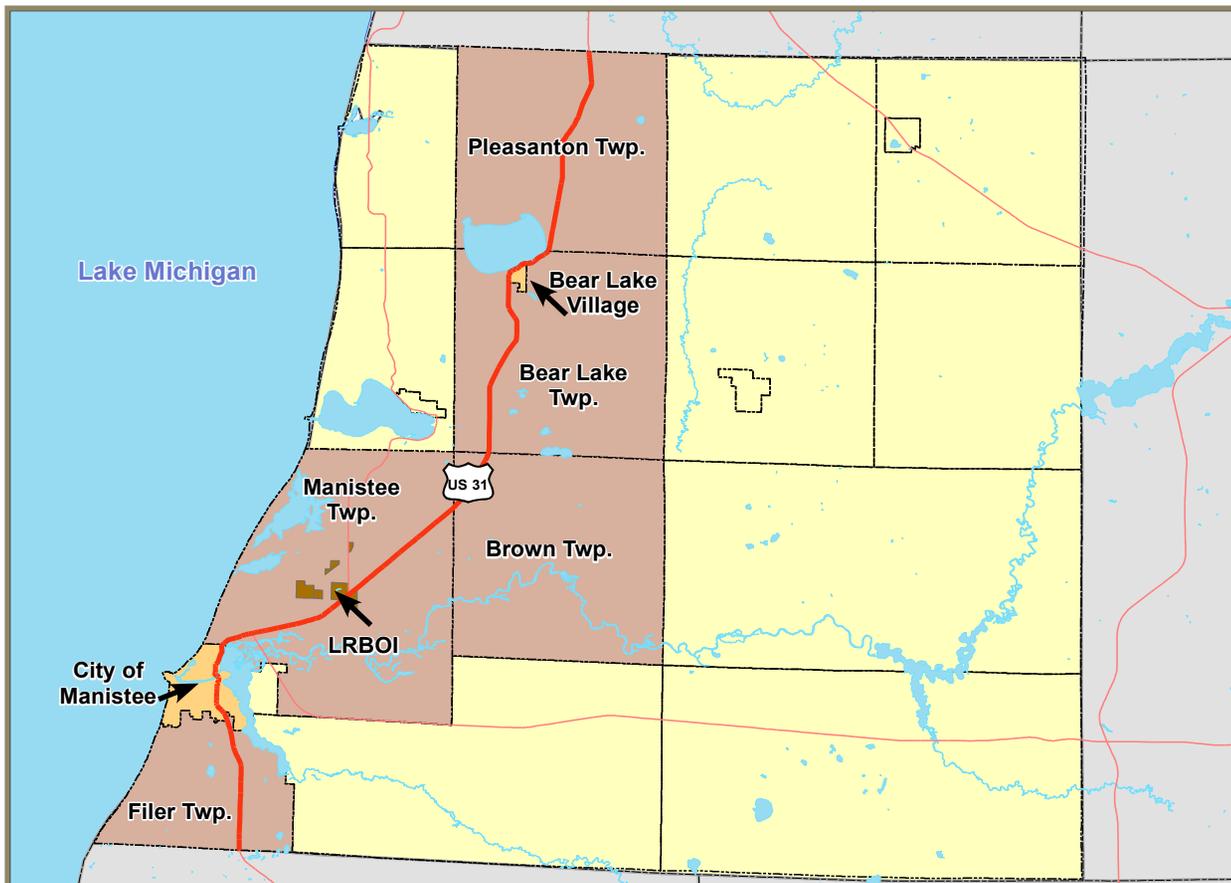
### Leadership Team

All planning processes in Manistee County start with the formation of a leadership team which facilitates communication and outreach to our local units of government, stakeholders and the public. The leadership team participates in meetings, reviews pertinent information, assists with public input and communication to the public, and ultimately reviews drafts of the plan to identify consistency with the needs of their community.

The leadership team for the US 31 Corridor Plan was formed of respective representatives of each local unit of government located along the corridor as well as stakeholders which included the Manistee County Road Commission, Manistee County Planning Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation and local business interests.

### Public Input

Inclusion of public input is a staple of most any planning process. A series of sessions were planned for and held to garner public input. The input sessions were located at different venues



Map 2: US 31 Corridor Plan Study Area



Image 1: Residents take part in public input session

along the length of the corridor to provide an opportunity for comment from residents of the individual communities. The input received will be covered in greater detail later in this plan, but suffice to say the information helped to shape the contents of this document.

### Data Collection & Analysis

Collection of data which outlines the characteristics of the corridor was conducted early in the planning process. Staff utilized a Juno Trimble Unit to collect field data for the entirety of the corridor. Data collection consisted of inventorying each parcel and structure which abutted, connected to or was within 300 feet either side of the US 31 Right-of-Way. The data collected as GIS shapefile point and polygon features was then analyzed with other available GIS data and displayed in map form for utilization within the document.

It is important to recognize that in many instances the data displayed on the maps within this document can be difficult to interpret visually at such a small scale. In these instances the maps

are still a valuable tool for displaying the types of data analyzed, but the real importance of having the data can be more integral to implementation efforts along the corridor. For instance a small scale slope or hydrologic map will show the general areas of these features in this document, but the importance of the availability and use of the data when planning at an individual parcel level provides for informed decision making.

### Plan Writing

Writing of the plan was undertaken upon completion of data collection and analysis. The available information provided a synopsis of current characteristics of the corridor, current regulatory measures and the needs and desires of the communities residents and corridor users. Cumulation of this information provided the basis for the suggested policies and steps for implementation of this planing document.

### Constructive Plan Review & Adoption

Upon completion of a draft form of the document, it was provided to local leaders, stakeholders and residents for constructive criticism of the plan contents. Comments from the review period



Image 2: Resident takes part in public input session

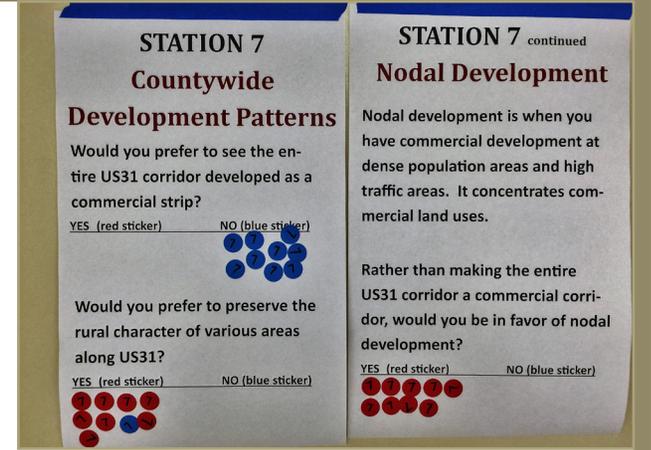


Image 3: Public input voting station

were carefully reviewed and incorporated as necessary into the document.

### Past Planning Work Considered

Building off of established successful planning efforts and bridging gaps between those efforts and newly initiated processes has been a cornerstone of the planning processes undertaken by the Planning Department and Alliance for Economic Success. This process has built upon information gleaned from existing local and regional plans which include:

- US 31 Corridor Management Plan-2004
- Filer Township Master Plan-2009
- City of Manistee Master Plan-2016
- Manistee Township Master Plan-1999
- Brown Township Master Plan-2012
- Bear Lake Township Master Plan-2014
- Bear Lake Village Master Plan-2014
- Pleasanton Township Master Plan-2015
- Manistee County-Wide Recreation Plan-2016
- Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan-2008
- Greater Bear Watershed Plan-2013
- Framework for Our Future “A Regional Prosperity Plan”-2015 (and reports)

## Demographics

Demographic data for the communities along the US 31 Corridor was gathered from "2010 US Census Data" and from "American Fact-Finder 2015 Estimates".

### Resident Population

Local Unit of Government	2010	2015	Percent Change %
Bear Lake Twp.	1872	1841	-1.6%
Brown Twp.	767	816	6.3%
Filer Twp.	2413	2500	3.6%
Manistee (City)	6362	6136	-3.5%
Manistee Twp.	4054	4117	1.5%
Pleasanton Twp.	919	754	-17.9%

Table 1: Resident Population

Population fluctuation along the corridor ranged from substantial decreases in Pleasanton Township and to a lesser degree in the City of Manistee and Bear Lake Township, while gains were made in Brown, Filer and Manistee Townships. Overall the communities along the corridor experienced a total decrease in population of -1.3% between 2010 and 2015.

### Resident Age

The age of residents is continuing along the same trends that have been present in Manistee County over the previous 15 years. Population of residents aged 34 and younger have seen a continued decrease while age classes of 35 and older have continued to grow. Most notable is the large gains in residents age 50 and older across all communities, with Bear Lake and Brown Townships showing double digit percentage increases. It is an ever present fact that our communities are

losing younger residents while current residents are moved into older age cohorts and retirees move to our communities.

### Seasonal Population

The overall loss of resident population can go unnoticed to the casual observer as an influx of seasonal residents and visitors descend upon the County, typically during the summer months. Networks Northwest Seasonal Population Study presents data which displays the impact to the County by month.

Trends in the data indicate an influx of population during all months of the year. Not surprisingly the months of June through September display the largest increases in seasonal population with July and August standing out as the highest percent increases over the entire year. It is important to account for this increase in population due to larger demands on transportation networks and recreational facilities, increased need for water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure, and demand for consumer and service oriented business.

### Educational Attainment (Age 25 & Over)

Educational attainment of a high school diploma or higher is greater than the State average for all

Month	Permanent & Seasonal Population Type				
	Permanent #	2nd Home #	Overnight #	Total #	Percent Seasonal %
January	24,672	931	725	26,328	6%
February	24,672	931	947	26,550	7%
March	24,672	1,678	829	27,179	9%
April	24,672	1,678	995	27,345	10%
May	24,672	1,678	1,898	28,248	13%
June	24,672	7,546	2,984	35,202	30%
July	24,672	7,546	6,853	39,071	37%
August	24,672	7,546	6,829	39,046	37%
September	24,672	2,327	2,969	29,968	18%
October	24,672	2,327	1,816	28,815	14%
November	24,672	2,327	731	27,730	11%
December	24,672	931	698	26,301	6%
Annual Average	24,672	3,121	2,356	30,149	18%

Table 2: Seasonal & Permanent Population

Local Unit of Government	High School Diploma or Higher %	Bachelor's Degree or Greater %
Bear Lake Twp.	94.00%	22.50%
Brown Twp.	88.90%	14.20%
Filer Twp.	93.80%	23.50%
Manistee (City)	92.20%	26.30%
Manistee Twp.	86.40%	15.60%
Pleasanton Twp.	92.80%	21.90%
State Average	89.60%	26.90%

Table 3: Educational Attainment

but Brown and Manistee Townships, although both only lag by narrow margins. All communities along the corridor lag behind the State average for those residents whom have a bachelor's degree or greater. We would expect these numbers to increase over the next decade with the institution of the Launch Manistee program, which assists with college and trade school application processes.

tially attributed to increased cost of living within these metro areas.

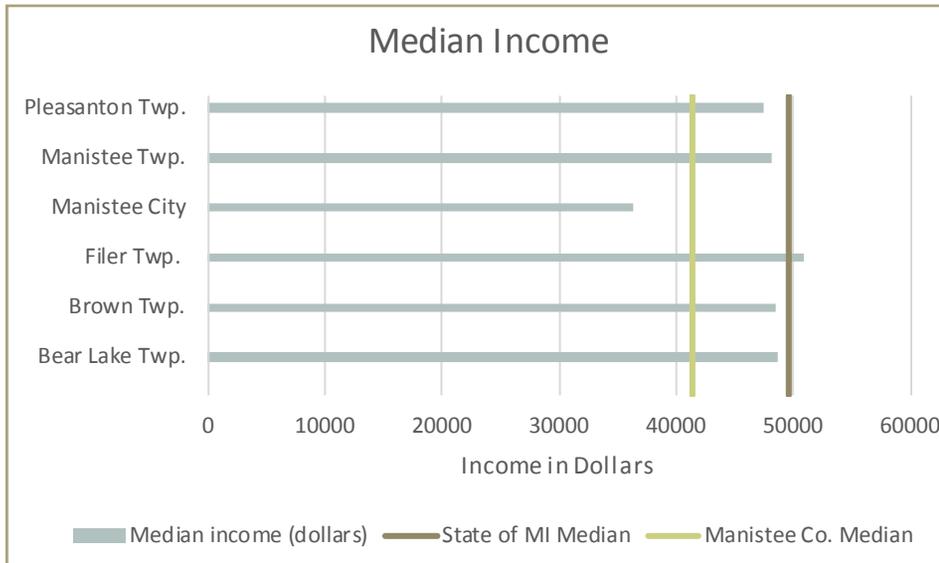
### Families and Poverty Status

Data on poverty status for families in the local units of government provides insight into which family structures (i.e. age, family size) are impacted by poverty in the corridor region, and how

we can implement certain measures at a land use level to assist where possible.

Each community has a percentage of families whom are living within the federal definition of poverty. The City of Manistee contains the largest percentage of families below the poverty level.

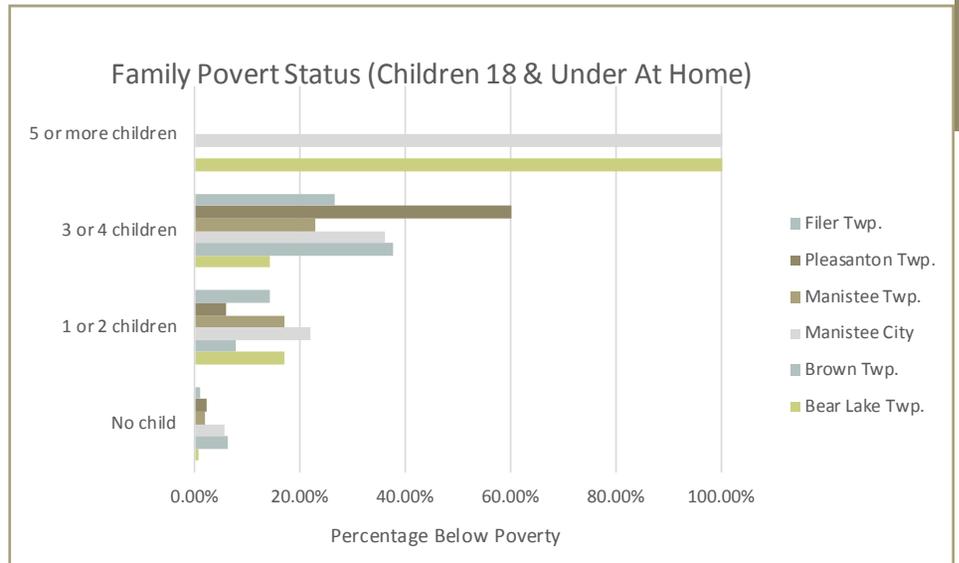
When looking more in-depth into the family



Graph 1: Medium Income

### Median Income (Families)

Median income for the units of government along the corridor is greater than the median for the whole of Manistee County in all but the City of Manistee. All communities except Filer Twp. display median incomes which are less than the median income for the State of Michigan. This isn't surprising since the figures for the State of Michigan are very heavily impacted by residents of the metro-regions of the State (Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing and Detroit) which often have job markets which pay higher salaries par-



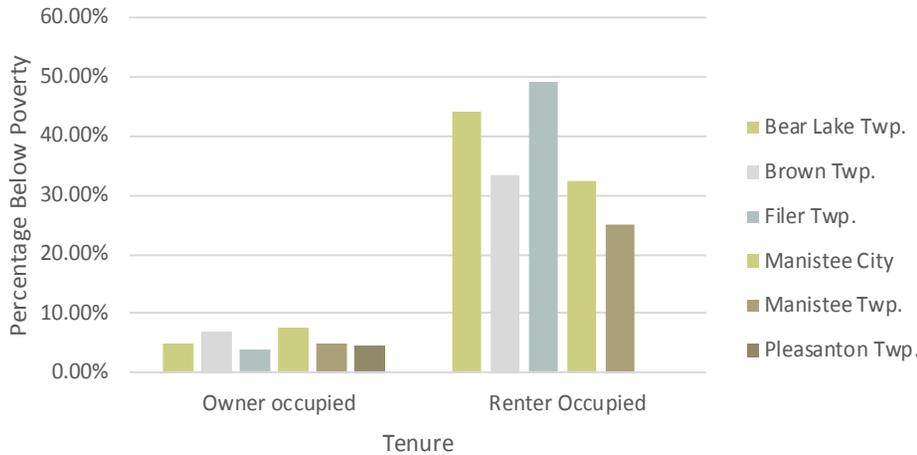
Graph 2: Family Poverty Status

structure to identify those at greatest need, the data displays that those families with a householder aged 65 and older have lower single digit percentage rates of poverty. Correlating with this data is information that identifies larger family size (children 18 and under at home) with greater percentages of poverty. Graph #2 displays the trend of larger family size with a greater percentage of poverty. Thus householders younger than 65 with larger families are more prone to poverty, which would indicate that older families and retirees are not typically as impoverished.

Local Unit of Government	Number of Families #	Percent Below Poverty Level %
Bear Lake Twp.	512	6.80%
Brown Twp.	175	8.00%
Filer Twp.	711	7.00%
Manistee (City)	1,617	14.70%
Manistee Twp.	816	7.00%
Pleasanton Twp.	231	4.30%

Table 4: Families & Percentage of Poverty

### Tenure Poverty Status (Owner vs. Renter Occupied)



Graph 3: Tenure Poverty Status

Poverty rates for owner vs. renter occupied tenure show drastic differences. Far greater percentage of family renter occupied homes are below the poverty level.

Reviewing the studies put together by Networks Northwest in the Regional Prosperity Initiative, one can find information that indicates issues related to housing and child-care as having great impact on poverty levels and families in poverty. Our analysis of community data along the corridor further supports this information. Wise land use decisions on placement of affordable housing, transportation networks, public transit and allowances for child-care can have lasting positive impacts on our population.

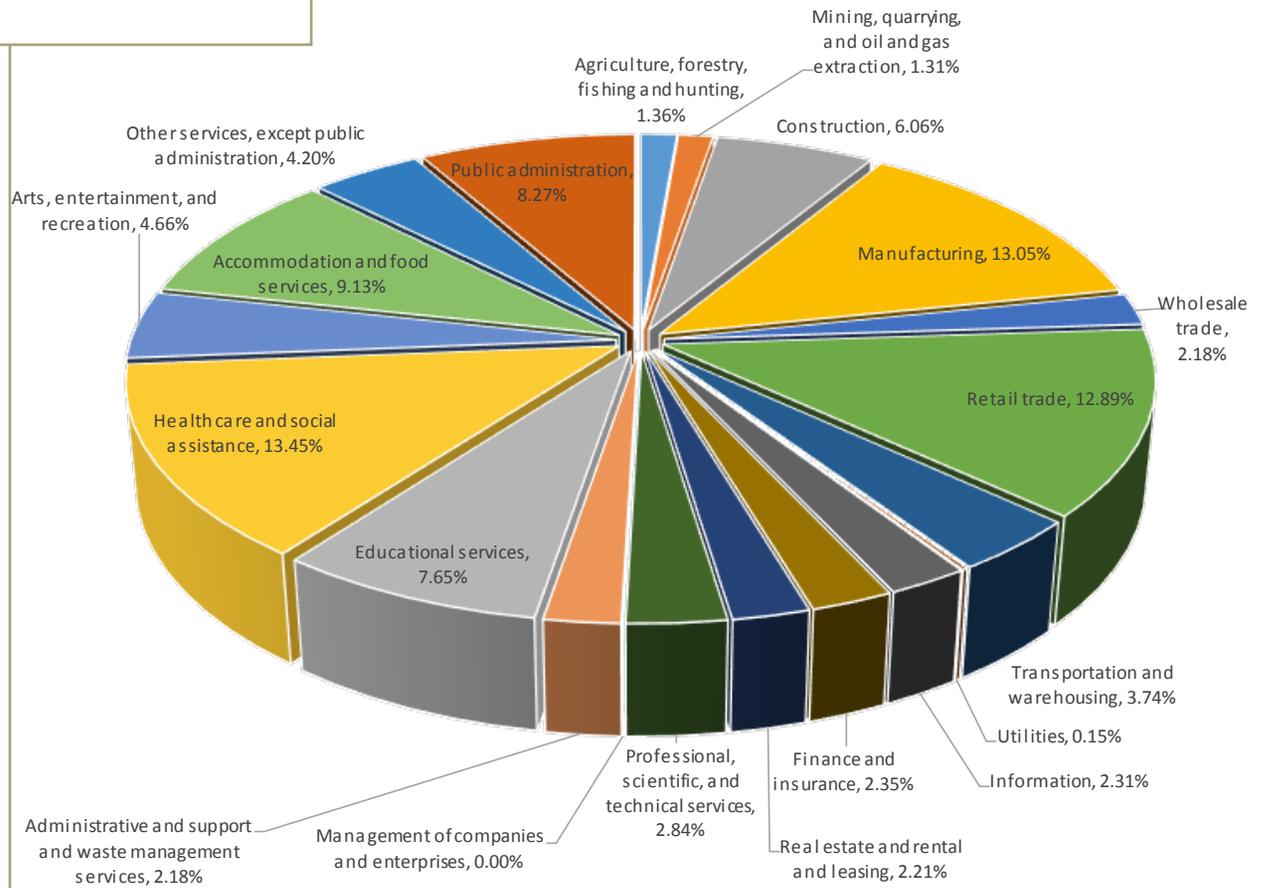
### Industry Employment

Employment data for the corridor is divided into 20 different classifications for industry. The classifications are derived from the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) which defines segments of industry. We have 20 NAICS

industry classifications which contain all of the different employment positions that are held by residents of the local units of government along the corridor. 70.50% of the workforce of the population of residents aged 16 and older fall into seven NAICS categories. They are:

- Healthcare & Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Accommodations & Food Services
- Public Administration
- Educational Services
- Construction

### Industry Employment



Graph 4: NAICS Industry Employment

In an effort to understand which industrial sectors have the greatest potential to grow or expand within our region, Manistee County took advantage of a United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development grant to participate in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program. Through the regionally collaborative effort and extensive data analysis, it was identified that the region has untapped and great potential to grow, expand, and attract businesses in the Energy (Renewable and Fossil), Advanced Materials, and Agri-businesses, Food Processing, and Technology Jobs, industrial sectors. These industrial sectors have the greatest economic comparative and competitive potential for our region. This means that the region can utilize a targeted approach in the creation of jobs within these industrial sectors.



Image 4: Existing Roadway Conditions - Parkdale

## Existing Conditions Inventory & Analysis

Obtaining a clear understanding of the present conditions of a corridor provides the baseline for moving forward with policy development which will continue to define and shape the land use and character which is desired by our communities.

### Environmental Conditions

The US 31 Corridor along various stretches is abutted by and included in different environmental features. How land uses along the corridor interact with these natural features can impact local ecology, air and water quality. Smart Growth and Low Impact Design provide opportunities for sustainable land use which works with and incorporates these natural features, focusing on conservation and protection while still allowing wise development of parcels.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are a prominent feature in much of Manistee County. There are several areas within the County along the US 31 Corridor which are abutted by both large and small wetland complexes. The most notable wetland areas are identified from North to South along the corridor, and they can be viewed on Map # 3.

- Large wetland complex between Norconk and Thirteen Mile Roads. This complex is easily viewed along the corridor on both sides of the highway.
- Pocket wetlands adjacent to the corridor a half mile south of Eleven Mile Road.
- Pocket wetlands adjacent to the corridor immediately south of Lyman Road.
- Pocket wetlands 3/4 of a mile northeast of the M-22 intersection.
- Large wetland complex located at the base of

the hill immediately north of the River Road intersection.

- Large wetland complex associated with the Manistee River floodplain adjacent to the corridor on the southeast side of the roadway behind the businesses and homes. The wetland area runs from south of the airport to the City of Manistee.
- Pocket wetlands along the corridor south of the Fox Farm Road intersection.



Image 5: Corridor Adjacent Wetland

### Watersheds

A watershed is the drainage area where all surface water travels to a single location, typically a wetland, stream or lake. The US 31 Corridor is directly abutted or contained within four watersheds. From North to South they are:

- Greater Bear Watershed
- Portage Lake Watershed
- Manistee River/Lake Watershed
- Gurney Creek Watershed

A fifth watershed the Arcadia-Pierport Watershed is located within 600 feet of the corridor in Pleasanton Township, and could be impacted by land uses along the corridor. (See Map # 3)

Watershed planning is on-going in Manistee County. Currently there are two watershed plans in place for watersheds along the corridor, the Portage Lake Watershed and the Greater Bear Watershed. Efforts are currently underway to perform an update to the Portage Lake Watershed Plan. There is also a newly developed plan in process for the Arcadia-Pierport Watershed.

The Manistee River and Lake Watershed is currently not planned for within a watershed plan. Much of the land area immediately adjacent to the Manistee River is under United States Forest Service and/or Michigan Department of Natural Resources ownership. This ownership helps to protect wetlands and lands adjacent to the river, but it is important to recognize that land uses further from the river and/or located along Manistee Lake can and do have an impact on water quality. Particularly where storm water systems and or County Drains direct stormwater runoff to surface waters of the river and lake. Modern stormwater techniques for commercial and industrial developments and residential developments requiring site plan approval are required by the Manistee County Drain Commission Office under their stormwater guidelines.

## Hydrology

Water courses and lakes are predominant land features that led to the undulating route of the US 31 Corridor within Manistee County. The corridor wraps around large lakes such as Manistee and Bear, and also crosses large rivers such as the Manistee within the City. Many smaller creeks are located near the corridor and several cross the corridor. Most notable is Little Bear Creek which flows out of Bear Lake and joins other tributaries to form the main tributary of Bear Creek. The importance of water quality cannot be un-

derstated. Use of US 31 peaks during our warm summer months when many tourists and seasonal residents travel north in large part to experience our abundance of clean fresh water. Preserving and maintaining water quality is directly tied to regional economic development.



Image 6: Corridor Adjacent Steep Slope

## Topography & Steep Slopes

Rolling hills and plains are common throughout Manistee County. This shifting topography can present some challenges for developing in areas where steep slopes impact buildable sites.

In spring of 2014, Manistee County participated in a State Sponsored LIDAR Flight which took place in Northern Michigan. For a reasonable cost, the County had sub-meter County-Wide LIDAR data collected. The LIDAR data when utilized within Arc GIS Spatial Analyst Extension, allows for very detailed data analysis of surface topography; 1 foot contour creation and a host of other data generation and analysis techniques, can assist developers and planners. Isolation and mapping of slopes at or greater than 15 Degrees was completed County-Wide with the LIDAR data. (See Map # 4)

Identification of these areas of “steep slopes” facilitate land use planning along the corridor by identifying features which can impact access, site development, stormwater management and other factors which can add expense and delays to development activities and impact surrounding land areas.

## Land Use & Zoning

Analysis of existing land use and zoning assists in identifying how development has occurred in the past, and how that development will continue to evolve under current zoning into the future.

## Existing Land Use

Land use data for the corridor was gathered, which identified the current land use for each individual inventoried parcel. Identifying what is occurring on parcels along the entire length of the corridor can assist in portraying trends of development types and concentrations of certain types of uses. (See Map # 5)

Mapping of land uses along the corridor was completed and the colors were aligned with the “Land-Based Classification Standards” which outline specific color classes for denoting use. In reviewing the map, green colored land uses denote “open land areas” with uses of recreation, agriculture, open space and larger individual residential parcels. Yellow and orange indicate small lot residential and commercial respectively. These uses constitute the majority of the land area of the corridor. Other uses such as industrial, civic, institutional, utility and airport are found along the corridor in lesser amounts.

The existing land use map displays areas of denser commercial and residential uses in the vicinity of Northern Filer Township, City of Manistee,

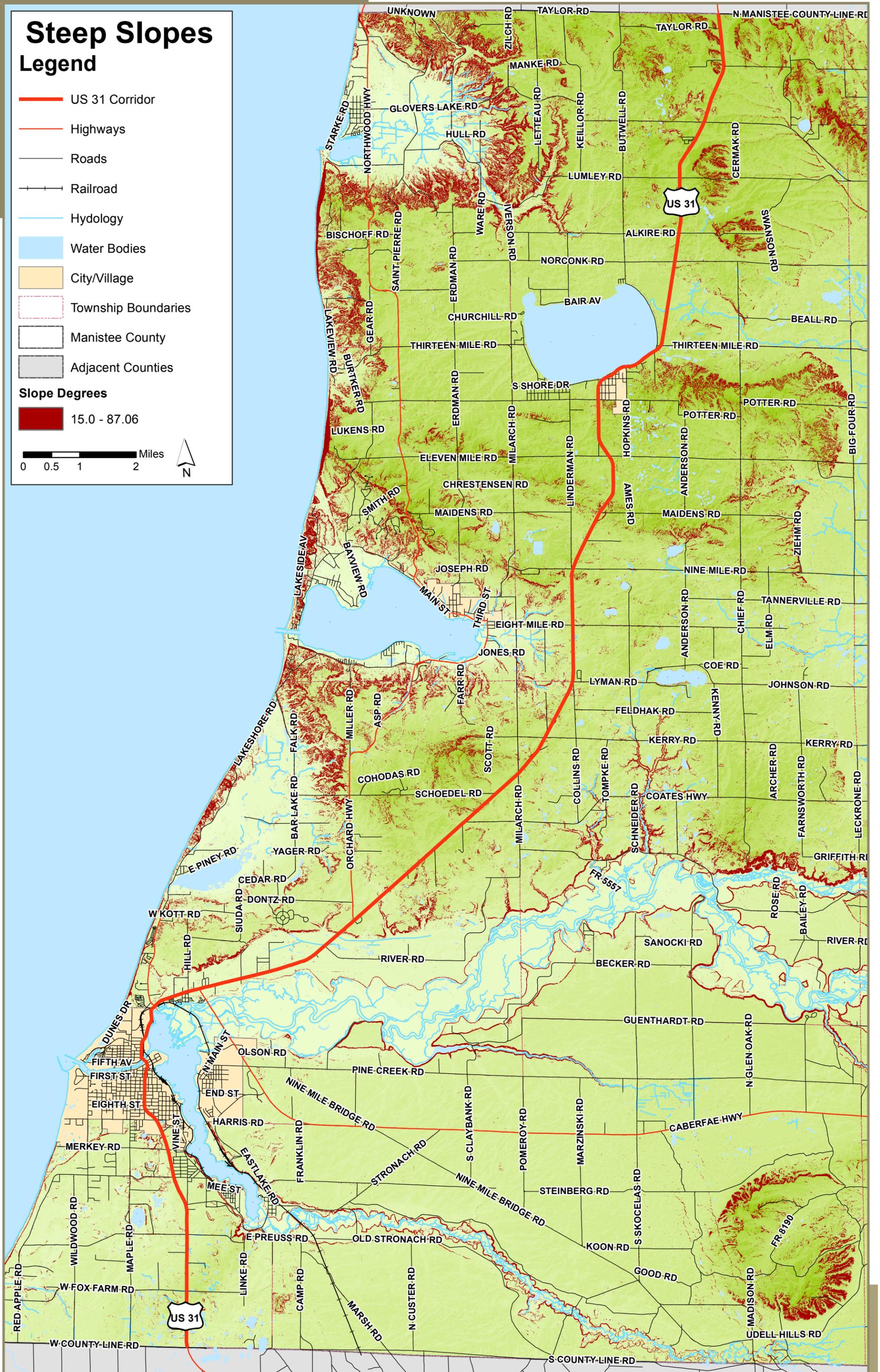


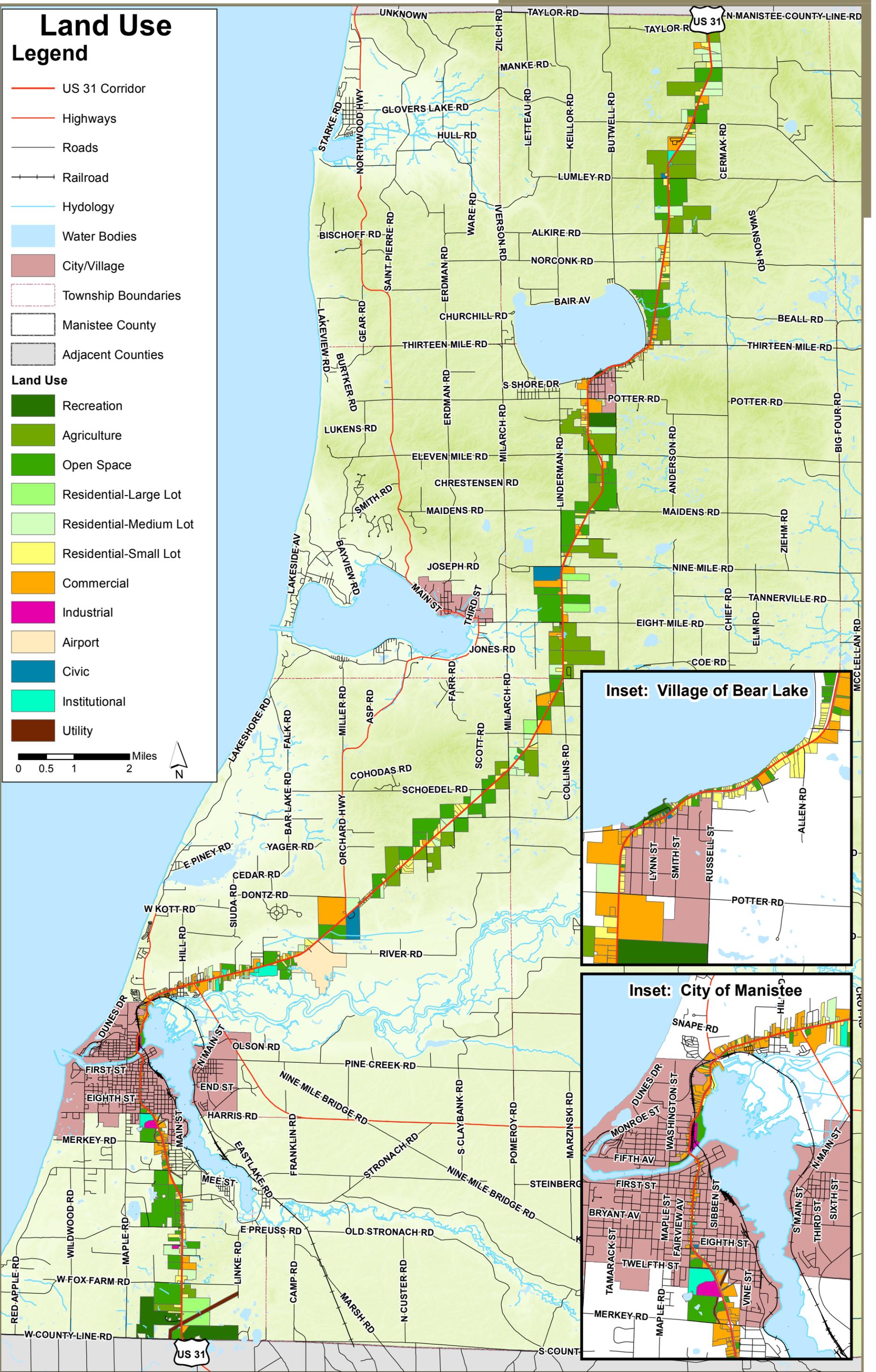
# Steep Slopes Legend

-  US 31 Corridor
-  Highways
-  Roads
-  Railroad
-  Hydology
-  Water Bodies
-  City/Village
-  Township Boundaries
-  Manistee County
-  Adjacent Counties

## Slope Degrees

 15.0 - 87.06

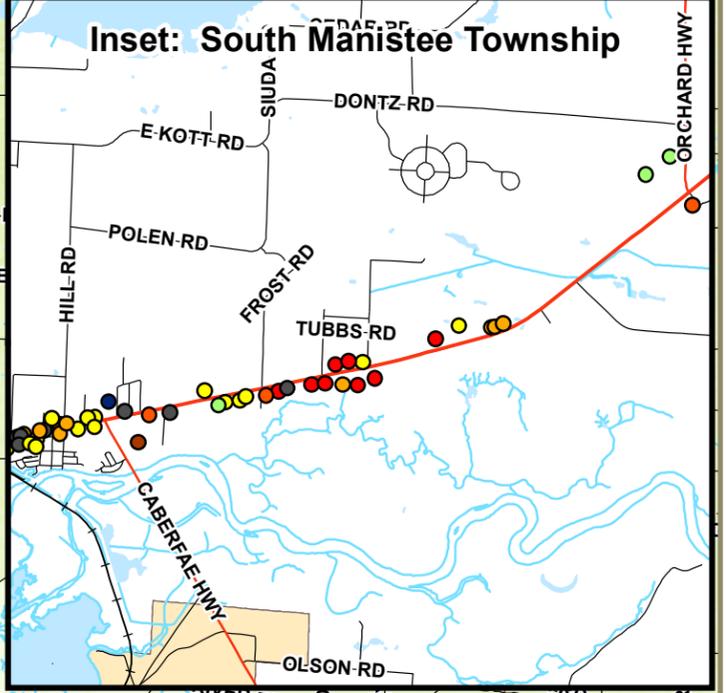
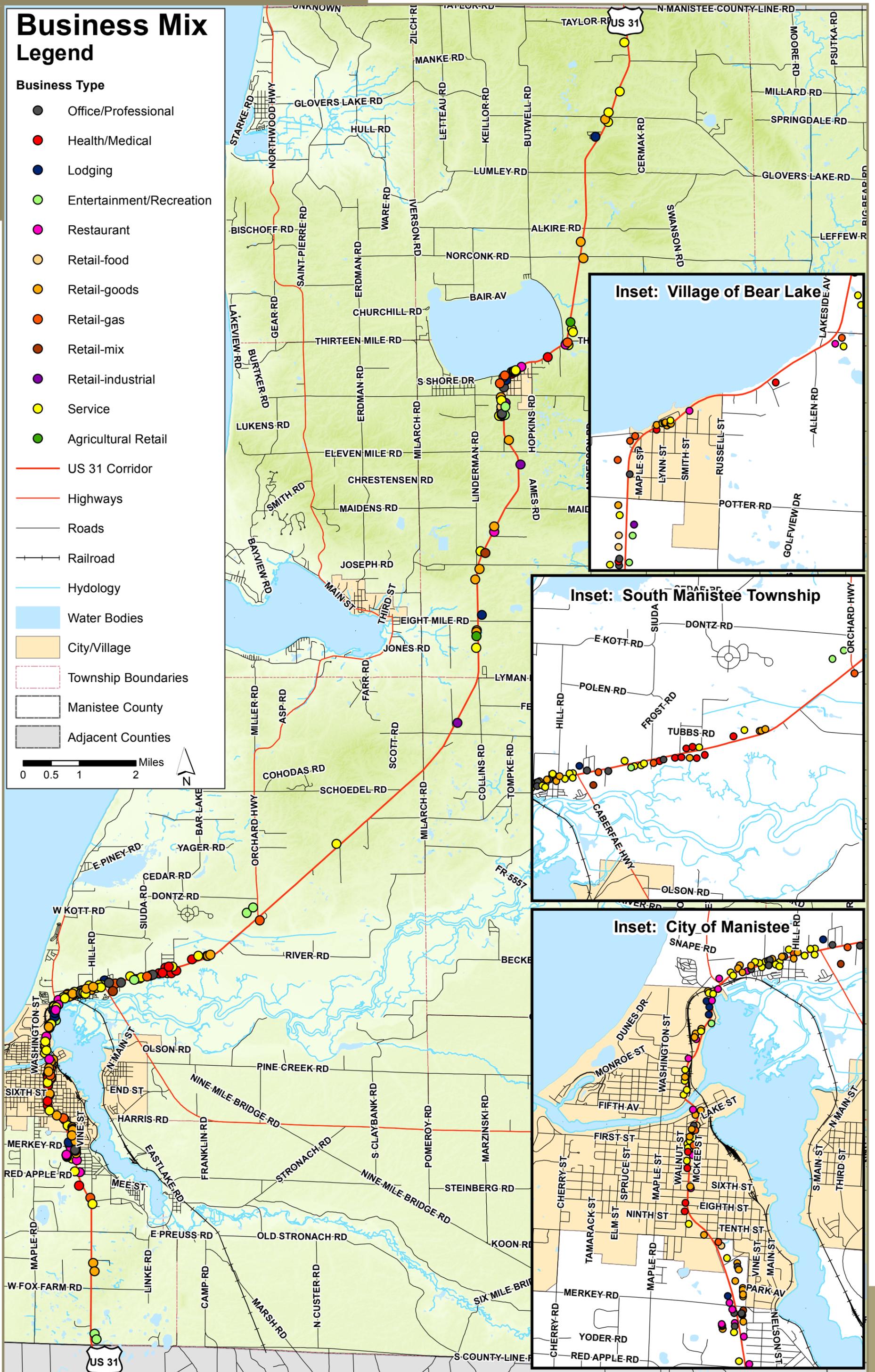




# Business Mix Legend

## Business Type

- Office/Professional
  - Health/Medical
  - Lodging
  - Entertainment/Recreation
  - Restaurant
  - Retail-food
  - Retail-goods
  - Retail-gas
  - Retail-mix
  - Retail-industrial
  - Service
  - Agricultural Retail
- US 31 Corridor
  - Highways
  - Roads
  - Railroad
  - Hydology
  - Water Bodies
  - City/Village
  - Township Boundaries
  - Manistee County
  - Adjacent Counties



Southern Manistee Township, the nodal area of the M-22 and US 31 intersection, the nodal area between 8 Mile and 9 Mile Roads and the Village of Bear Lake including fringe areas to the north and south of the Village limits. Much of the area between these locations is considered rural with large open land areas. Uses in these locations are generally agriculture, open space and large lot residential uses.

### Commercial Land Use "Business Mix"

A total of 202 separate commercial/business establishments are located adjacent to the US 31 Corridor in Manistee County at the time of this writing. These businesses have been categorized, in order to better understand the business mix of the corridor. (See Map # 6)

Business Type	Number	Percentage
Service	55	27.23%
Retail-Goods	53	26.24%
Restaurant	20	9.90%
Office/Professional	17	8.42%
Health/Medical	16	7.92%
Retail-Gas	12	5.94%
Entertainment/Recreation	9	4.46%
Lodging	8	3.96%
Retail-Food	4	1.98%
Retail-Mix	3	1.49%
Industrial Retail	3	1.49%
Agricultural-Retail	2	0.99%
Totals	202	100%

Table 5: Commercial Land Use "Business Mix"

The largest percentages of business fall into the service and retail goods category, with a combined 53.47% of the total businesses. Of no surprise, The

City of Manistee, Filer, Manistee, and Bear Lake Townships contain the highest percentages of businesses along the corridor.

Business by type is fairly evenly distributed among the more "urbanized & suburbanized" portions of the corridor, i.e. The City of Manistee, Filer and Manistee Townships. Bear Lake Vil-

lage and Township share similar proportions of business types within their communities, although they lag behind the previously mentioned communities in the total number of any specific type of business. This is an expected trend, with consumer base and infrastructure likely contributing to greater amounts of businesses along the southern portion of the corridor.



Image 7: Rural Agricultural Land Use

### Land Use Categories

**Recreation:** Private or public parcels open to public use for recreation.

**Agriculture:** Parcels on which on-going agricultural operations are occurring.

**Open Space:** Parcels which currently don't have structures upon them and are not under agricultural operations. Doesn't denote public lands, but is rather public or private parcels which is not built upon.

**Residential Large Lot:** Parcels 39 acres or greater in size with a single principle residential structure and accessory buildings.

**Residential Medium Lot:** Parcels between 10 acres and 39 acres in size with a single principle residential structure and accessory buildings.

**Residential:** Parcels 9 acres or less in size with a single principle structure and accessory structures.

**Commercial:** Parcels on which a commercial structure or use is present.

**Industrial:** Parcels on which industrial structures or use is present.

**Airport:** Parcels contained under ownership of the airport.

**Civic:** Parcels owned and used for government offices.

**Institutional:** Parcels which are under ownership of the school system, a church or other similar entity or organization.

**Utility:** Parcels which are under use for utility infrastructure such as power transfer stations, and transmission line corridors.

## Existing Zoning

Zoning along the US 31 corridor is established and enforced by the local units of government. Of the 7 local units of government, all but the Village of Bear Lake currently enforce a zoning ordinance. The sovereign nation lands of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians are self governed and although located within the confines of Manistee Township, do not fall under their zoning authority.

The 6 local units of government maintain and enforce separate zoning ordinances. Thus as one moves along the corridor, changes in not only zoning districts occur, but also changes in the entirety of the referenced zoning ordinance dependent upon jurisdiction. Map # 7 displays all zoning districts which are adjacent to the cor-

ridor and contain parcels which were inventoried for this plan.

## Zoning District Comparison & Summary

Comparisons of similarly purposed zoning districts across local units of government was completed and the regulations pertaining to lot, bulk and setback requirements were placed in tables. Summaries of the tables are provided here, and the tables themselves can be found in Appendix A.

## Residential District Summary

All local units of government with regulatory zoning have some form of residential districts. There is some uniformity amongst the residential districts regulatory language. Minimum lot sizes in suburban and rural Townships along the cor-

ridor maintained a 15,000 to 20,000 square foot minimum, with lot sizes in the City of Manistee remaining smaller, as expected, at 6,000 to 10,000 square feet. Maximum height requirements are similar in all jurisdictions at 2.5 stories and setbacks also align. Required minimum floor area and minimum exterior wall widths although not perfectly aligned, fall within a threshold of which they can be considered similar, but still differ enough to cause confusion as one crosses a jurisdictional line.

## Agricultural, Forestry & Rural Residential District Summary

Agricultural, Forestry and Rural Residential districts are located along the US 31 corridor in four local units of government. The districts vary from one another greatly in minimum lot

## Existing Zoning Districts & Purpose Statements

**Agriculture, Forest, Preservation:** *To provide for larger lot sizes for residential uses, while protecting agricultural lands, farming and forestry practices and the rural landscape. Commercial and industrial uses are typically not permitted.*

**Residential Agriculture 1:** *To provide neighborhoods of a rural character with a mix of agricultural and forestry uses. Large commercial retail uses and industrial uses are discouraged.*

**Residential Agriculture 2:** *To allow for commercial areas under special use permit along primary roads, State and Federal Highways, in typically rural areas.*

**High Density Residential:** *Designed to allow single-family development on compact lots and parcels in areas of existing or proposed infrastructure such as water and sewer. Non-residential uses are limited in the district.*

**Medium Density Residential:** *Designed to allow or set aside areas for single-family development in locations where infrastructure may not currently be available. Larger lots with decreased density allow for septic and well.*

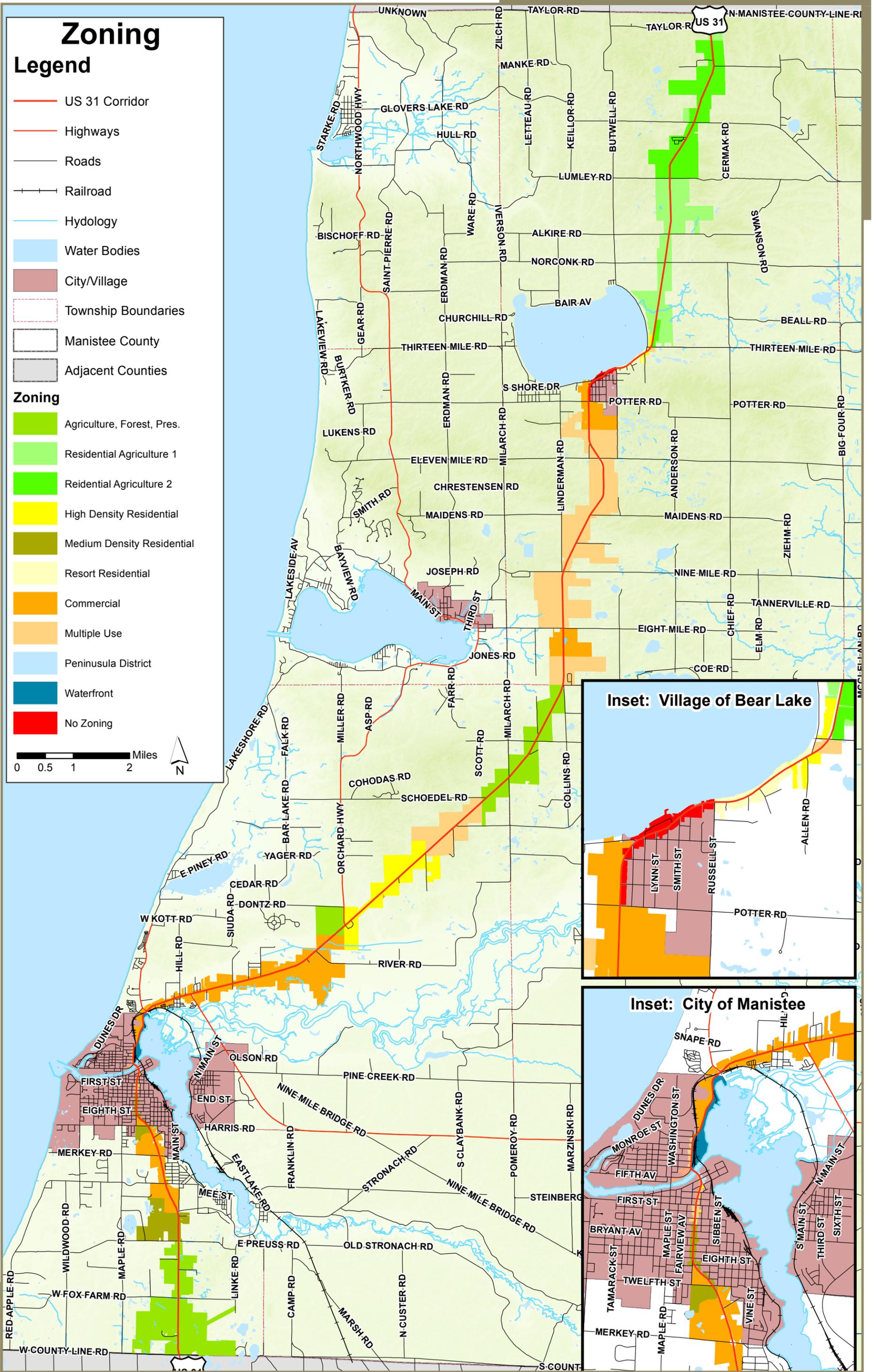
**Resort Residential:** *To provide areas of denser residential development in proximity to surface waters. Parcel sizes are large enough to allow for septic, but not so large to decrease densities.*

**Commercial:** *To provide areas for commercial uses. These districts should be placed in areas of existing or proposed infrastructure such as water and sewer, placed along primary roadways and serve nearby population centers.*

**Multiple Use:** *To allow for a mix of uses through permitted and special uses. Allowances for residential, commercial, agriculture and forestry are common within the existing districts. The districts should be placed as buffer areas between more intense commercial and high density residential districts and medium density single-family residential districts.*

**Peninsula District:** *Is unique to the City of Manistee and is intended to provide for a mix of uses (recreational, residential, business and commercial) adjacent to the waterfront. Uses are to promote sustainable, environmentally and aesthetically compatible developments that use and compliment the shoreline as well as promote expanded shoreline use by the public.*

**Waterfront:** *Is unique to the City of Manistee and is intended to provide for a mix of uses similar to the Peninsula District, while also allowing industrial uses.*





size which range from 2 to 10 acres. Minimum lot sizes in general for these “large lot” rural districts don’t mirror what would typically be construed as Agricultural or Forestry districts, which in most cases would be 20 or 40 acres in size. Rather these districts are more in-line with the standards of a medium-low density residential district, rather than a district which should promote large minimum lot sizes of 20 or 40 acres for the protection/promotion of agricultural, timber and rural landscapes. Setbacks, height requirements and parcel widths are similar amongst all of these districts without much variation.

### **Multiple Use District Summary**

The US 31 corridor has three units of government which have multiple use districts located along the corridor. There is little similarity between the standards for Multiple Use Districts amongst the individual units of government. Minimum parcel areas, widths and floor areas all vary across the different municipalities districts. Setbacks are one standard that are similar across the local units of government. Multiple use districts are most often utilized in Central Business Districts, neighborhood commercial areas and as buffers between more central commercial areas and neighboring residential areas.

### **Commercial District Summary**

Four local units of government have established commercial districts along the US 31 Corridor, with the City of Manistee maintaining several commercial districts which outline varying degrees for size, location and type of commercial uses. Commercial districts vary amongst the local units of government, with minimum lot size requirements ranging from 2,500 square feet in the Cities Central Business District to 40,000 square feet in Bear Lake Twp. Height

requirements, setbacks and parcel width have less variation than parcel size requirements. There is justification in variation of size dependent upon the type, location and commercial use within a single local unit of government. When reviewing districts outside of urban areas, in this case neighboring Townships, commercial districts should more closely align than they do here in Manistee County. Regional commercial districts should, due to the nature of the areas planned for commercial activities, have similar standards than what is present currently. Regional Commercial developments amongst the different local units of government currently range from 15,000 to 20,000 to 40,000 square feet dependent upon the local unit of government.

### **General Standards Comparison Summary**

Comparisons were drawn across each of the local units of government for the primary regulatory measures which are often contained in a "General Standards" chapter of a zoning ordinance. These included: (Landscaping, Parking, Signage Lighting & Highway Access Requirements).

In brief summary, the communities along the southern portion of the corridor, which are also in the more urbanized and suburbanized portions of the corridor (Filer Township, City of Manistee and Manistee Township); all have more stringent regulatory requirement for the general standards identified above. Brown Township, Bear Lake Township and Pleasanton Township contain provisions which are less stringent for signage and parking, and don't necessarily have provisions for lighting and landscaping (outside of buffer provisions). Bear Lake Village currently does not have a zoning ordinance.

A full summary of the general provisions can be

found in Appendix A.

## **Transportation**

The planning for transportation improvements along the corridor is often led by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), although local units of government do have the authority for the structuring of access and connectivity improvements through zoning. MDOT supported a framework for transportation access improvements along the corridor in the “2003 US 31 Corridor Management Plan”. A great deal of the information contained within that plan as it relates to specific intersection improvements, driveway closures, access and connectivity improvements and suggested regulatory language additions to local zoning is still very relevant and should be reviewed and implemented where necessary.

### **Road Network**

There are two major State Highway connections to US 31 within Manistee County. From South to North, the first highway connection is to M-55 which traverses East across the State to Cadillac and beyond. The second highway connection is with M-22 which traverses almost parallel to US 31 along the lakeshore connecting Onkama Twp., Arcadia Twp. and north into Benzie County. (See Map #8)

There are a total of 775 accesses to US 31 along its length in Manistee County. Of these accesses, 87 are road intersections, 12 are alleys (located in the City of Manistee) and 676 are driveways located on parcels.

### **Access & Connectivity**

Access to parcels as well as shared access and con-



*Image 8: Lack of Connectivity-Shared Drive*

nnectivity between developed parcels is an issue that must be addressed if the corridor is to be developed in an orderly fashion limiting traffic congestion where possible. Chapter 4 of the “2003 US 31 Corridor Management Plan“ does a superb job of providing a very comprehensive list of improvements that can be undertaken for the section of corridor in Filer Township, City of Manistee and Manistee Township. These improvements should be given consideration by the local units of government for implementation at appropriate times.



*Image 9: Parking in Front of Building-Undesired*

More recent data collection along the corridor for this planning process inventoried all access locations and identified the existing connectivity between developments. It is evident from the data that locations of structures which connect with a neighboring structure also often limit curb cuts to the parcel to 1 or less. Structure locations which are not sharing connections with neighboring structures often have curb cuts of 2 or more per parcel. The total amount of driveway accesses which are shared, constitutes 14% of the 676 driveways or 94 shared accesses. (See Map # 9)

It is evident for those whom are familiar with the corridor and existing locations of traffic congestion, that the data displayed on the map identifies areas of concern. Areas of particular concern are the corridor north of the Manistee River within the Manistee City limits, the corridor in the vicinity of the hospital and medical care facility, and to a lesser degree the corridor immediately south of the Bear Lake Village limits, for parcels on the east side of the roadway.

### **Parking Lot Locations**

Site layout and placement of parking has an aesthetic impact along the corridor, while also often dictating the walkability of a developed area. Large expansive parking lots in front of buildings provide excessive separation of structures from the corridor creating more difficult patterns for pedestrian connections while also hindering views of businesses.

There was a total of 275 inventoried parking lots along the corridor. Of these inventoried parking lots 30.55% are identified as the desired side and rear lot locations adjacent to the structure along the entirety of the corridor. By local unit of

government Filer and Bear Lake Townships have the lowest percentage of rear and side parking lot locations at 7.94% and 5.71% respectively. All other local units have percentages greater than 27% with the City of Manistee at 50%. (See Map # 10)

### **Public Transit**

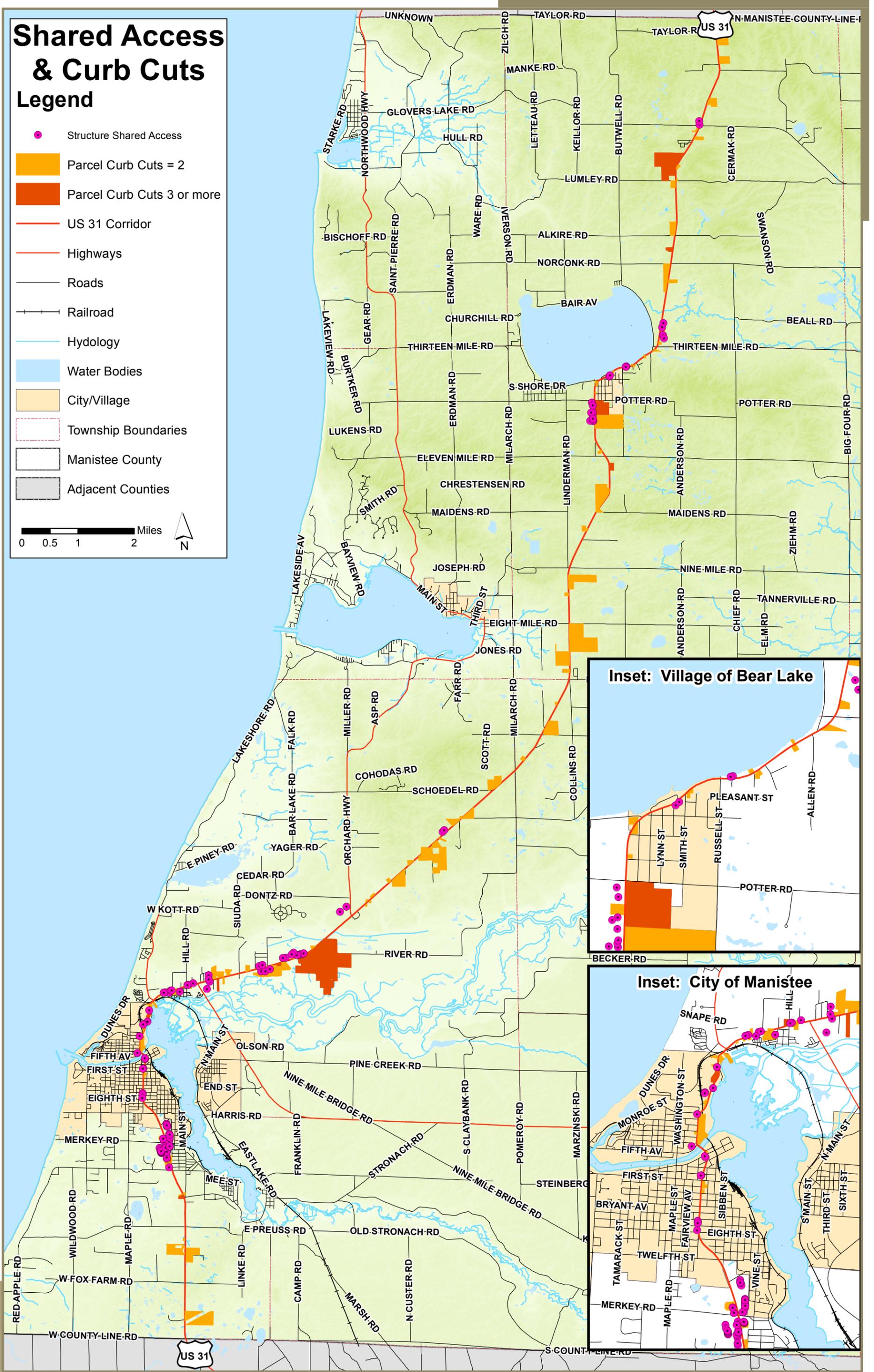
Public Transit is through Manistee County Transportation, Inc. The transit hub is located immediately north of the Manistee River in the City of Manistee on Memorial Drive. Funding for public transit comes from a combination of state and federal support, local millage and individual and contract fares.



*Image 10: Roadway Adjacent Sidewalk*

Transit is available throughout the County during operating hours via a phone call to reserve a seat, set a pickup time and destination.

There is currently a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for the first resident survey of riders and non-riders in Manistee County. The survey seeks to answer questions relative to ridership habits, reasons and needs, including destinations, frequency of service, and level of commitment for future expansion and fare flexibility. The survey



# Parking Location & Public Transit Hub Legend

- Rear & Side Parking
  - Front, Side & Rear Parking
  - Dial-A-Ride
  - US 31 Corridor
  - Highways
  - Roads
  - Railroad
  - Hydrology
  - Water Bodies
  - City/Village
  - Township Boundaries
  - Manistee County
  - Adjacent Counties
- 0 0.5 1 2 Miles



will be instrumental in shaping public transit for Manistee County.

### Sidewalks & Trails

The corridor as a whole cannot be considered pedestrian friendly although several pieces are in place within communities along the corridor which lend to safe locations for pedestrian travel. Most notably the City of Manistee has sidewalks in place for much of the length of the corridor, and Bear Lake Village also has sidewalks although intermittently along the corridor. (See Map # 11)

Trails have received much attention recently in Manistee County, as a major push for implemen-



Image 11: Zimmerman Trail Non-motorized Pathway

tation of regional multi-use trails (non-motorized during warm seasons, snowmobile/non-motorized during winter) stemmed from the 2016 County-Wide Recreation Plan.

Currently there is an existing regional snowmobile trail that extends into Pleasanton Twp. with two locations where it intercepts the corridor. At Pleasanton Twp. Hall, a staging area trailhead for snowmobiles allows for travel to the East and the interior of the County, while a segment of trail connects and terminates at the Corridor at 13

Mile Road just north of the Village of Bear Lake. At this time these are the sole snowmobile trail accesses to the corridor.

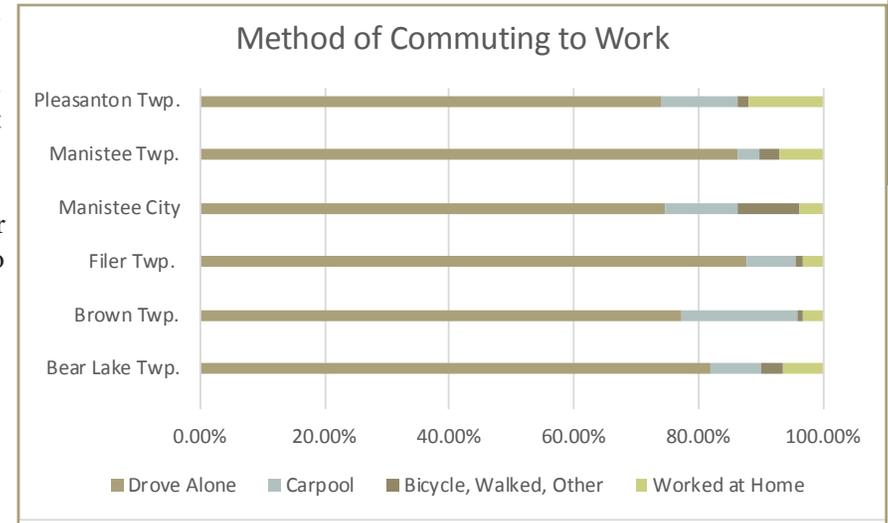
Existing non-motorized trails are currently located within and adjacent to the City of Manistee. Connecting to sidewalks along the corridor, the riverwalk within the City of Manistee provides access to retail, neighborhoods and parks. Immediately north of the City off of Lakeshore Dr. behind Burger King is the start of the Zimmerman Trail. This non-motorized trail established on the historic no longer utilized railroad bed extends to Hill Rd. Efforts to extend this trail segment north to tribal lands and M-22 have met resistance, leading to exploration for alternate routes. It is envisioned that one day a loop regional multi-use trail system will link the communities along the corridor and lakeshore with those in the interior of the County. Please view the “2016 Manistee County-Wide Park and Recreation Plan” for more information.

### Local Commuter Data

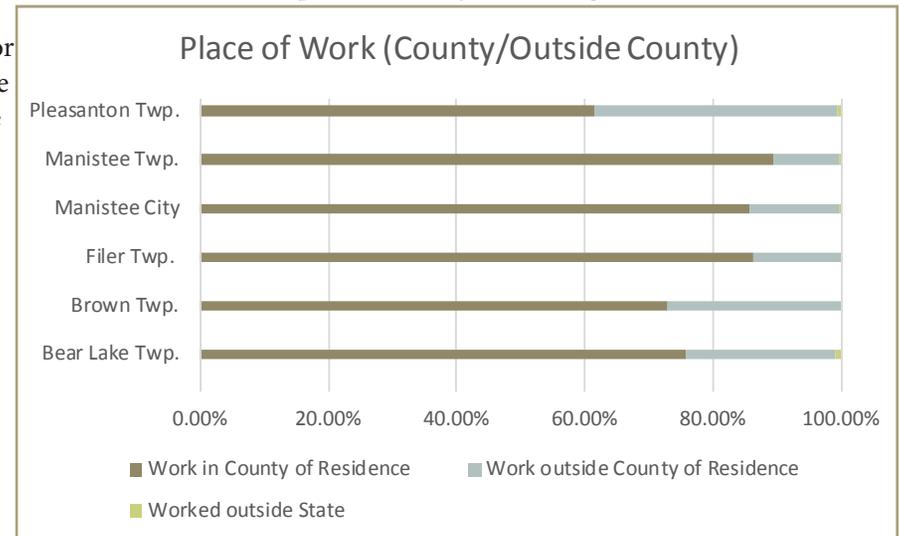
Analysis of commuter data for the corridor communities identifies trends for workers aged 16 and older. For each local unit of government, use of public transit for commuting to work was less than 1%, with most commuters favor-

ing to take their own car. Commuters in Brown Township displayed the greatest rate of carpooling at over 18%. Pleasanton Township and the City of Manistee were next greatest at 12.3% and 11.4% respectively.

Commuters are largely staying within Manistee



Graph 5: Method of Commuting to Work



Graph 6: Place of Work (County/Outside County)

County for employment. Pleasanton Township has the largest number of workers traveling outside the County at over 37%. Filer Township, Manistee Township and the City of Manistee all have very high proportion of the workforce staying within the County at 86.2%, 89.3% and 85.6%. This is no surprise with the largest employers being located around the Manistee Lake area.

In viewing more localized employment location data, the City of Manistee and Manistee Township both retain much of their workforce within the City and Township at 48.5% and 40.9% respectively. Brown Township sees the greatest amount of commuters travelling outside the Township at 92.0%. In Filer Township with 78.8% of the workforce commuting outside the Township, the average travel time to work for 61.3% of the workforce is 14 minutes or less. This would likely place a large portion of the workforce in areas of employment around the Manistee Lake area.

Notable data in travel time to work is displayed

by Bear Lake Township, where over 22.0% of commuters were less than 10 minutes from work. This is likely due to the large offices of Blarney Castle located immediately adjacent to the Village.

Brown and Pleasanton Townships both display the greatest variation in travel time to work. This would seem to correlate with the rural aspect of their communities, absence of large localized employers and the ability of workers to travel both north and south to reach employment destinations easily that are anywhere from 10 to 45 minutes.

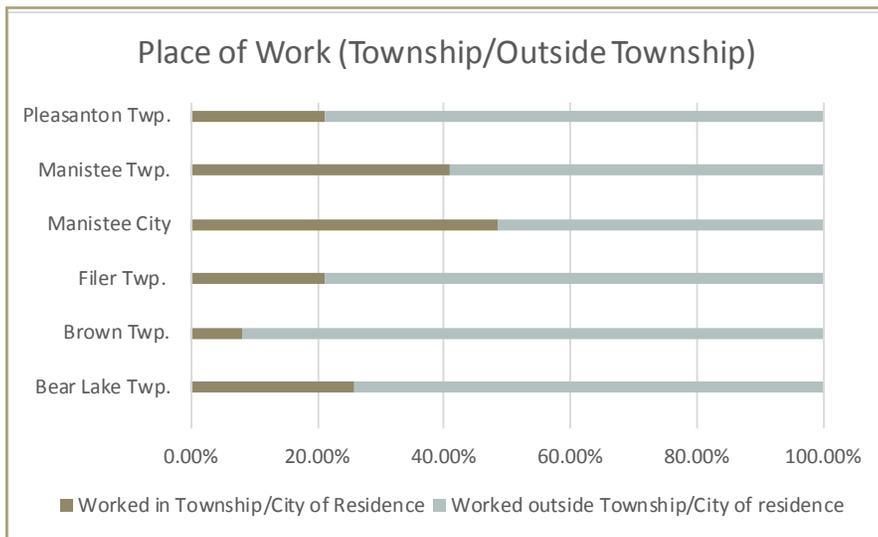
As expected travel time to work for Filer Township, Manistee Township and the City of Manistee have very large portions of commuters traveling 19 minutes or less to work. At 81.3%, 82.3% and 76.7% respectively, commuters are largely staying within the Manistee Lake area.

## Architecture & Site Design

Building architecture and site design have several direct impacts to property, users and the community. They not only impact the aesthetic quality of a location, but also facilitate the way in which pedestrian and vehicular traffic move through a site, establish and maintain property values and develop a character for the community helping to create a sense of place.

## Building Condition

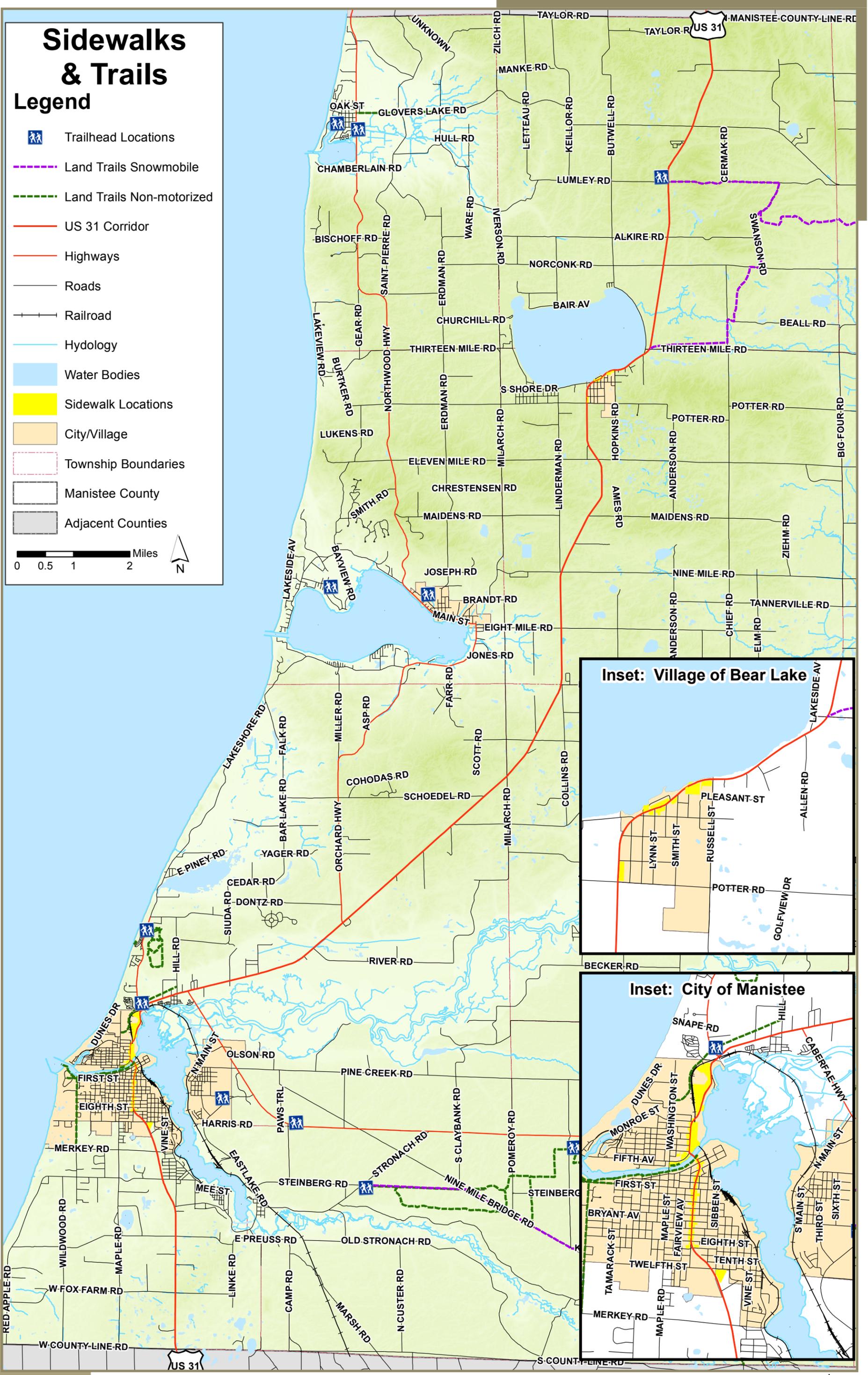
Building condition along the corridor was rated for each of the structures inventoried. A rating of 1-3 was given to the structure, with 1 being “poor”, 2 being “fair” and 3 being “good”. The rating of structures was completed through visual observance from the ROW of US 31, which translates to merely observing the outside condition of the structure. Therefore the rating doesn’t take into account the status of electrical, mechanical, plumbing or structural integrity.



Graph 7: Place of Work (Township/Outside Township)



Image 12: Sound Suburban Design





Structure ratings followed these simple standards:

- Poor Condition: broken windows, missing shingles, abundant peeling paint or missing siding, broken/missing sections of the structure, obvious structural issues (typically a combination of several of these characteristics).
- Fair Condition: windows and structure are largely intact, some peeling paint or missing siding, few broken/missing portions of the structure (typically 1 or 2 of these characteristics is evident).
- Good Condition: building is well maintained with little to no aesthetic or structural issues.

The condition of buildings as a whole along the corridor is represented well with 81.09% rated as being in good condition. This is proportionally carried to both residential and commercial structures along the entire corridor where they are considered in good condition at 82.42% and 80.0% respectively. (See Map # 12)

When breaking down condition by local unit of government, all local units maintain a high standard of condition for residential structures with percentages greater than 75% in all units, and local units such as the City of Manistee, Manistee Township and Bear Lake Village maintaining percentages in the mid to upper 80<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Observing condition of only commercial structures. The City of Manistee, Filer, Manistee, Brown and Bear Lake Townships maintain good building condition at percentages all greater than 80%. The Village of Bear Lake displays the lowest percentage at 43.48% (although with a recent structure leveling fire, likely demolition of a second poor condition building and creation of a land bank, this percentage will likely increase). Pleasanton Township displays the second low-

est percentage of good structures at 61.54%. Of importance to mention is both Bear Lake Village and Pleasanton Township have the highest percentage of poor condition commercial structures at 21.74% and 15.38% respectively. The next closest poor condition percentage by local unit is the City of Manistee at 3.23%.

### Building Facade

Makeup of building materials along the corridor varies by building and building use. Residential structures are by far more represented by vinyl siding 69.36% and to a lesser extent brick and wood at 12.22% and 11.39% respectively.

Commercial buildings along the corridor are



Image 13: Pole Signage Sample

predominantly brick and stone facades at 30.77%, with the following percentages of materials making up the remaining material types: concrete block 16.15%, metal 14.23%, vinyl 13.85%, glass 13.08%, wood 10.77% and stucco 1.15%.

It is not surprising that brick and stone make up the majority of commercial building facades. Brick and stone more often than not retain stronger property and structure values, which assists in

maintaining strong commercial values, and resale values according to the Home Builders Association. These facade materials also often retain better building condition. Of the total amount of commercial structures that are comprised of brick and stone, only 1.2% are considered in poor condition, and 16.4% are considered in fair condition. The remaining 82.4% are in good condition.

### Signage

Signage along the corridor varies tremendously by not only the local unit of government within which it is permitted, but also by the age of the business often represented by the sign. Older permitted commercial land uses as well as permitted commercial uses in less stringent zoning locals, often display pole signs, which may rise 25 or more feet into the air. Other signs which are typical in these scenarios are considered “temporary” or mobile signs with interchangeable letters for displaying messages. When conducting the inventory of signage along the corridor, it was found that 51.02% of the signs along the corridor comprise these two types of undesirable signs, often intermixed with window signs.

Monument, window and wall signs which are often located at more recent developments or locations where signs have been updated in recent years constitute the remaining 48.97% of signs along the corridor. Monument signs are more desired in recent years by both business owners and consumers. These types of signs are placed within the typical viewshed of passing motorists and pedestrians where they are visible without having to divert one’s eyes skyward from the corridor. These sign types also often allow for more aesthetically pleasing designs which is often desired by the public.

Very few electronic signs are located along the corridor, which is a direct result of both zoning and cost/function. Local units of government such as the City of Manistee, Filer and Manatee Townships have regulatory limitations on the type of electronic signs that may be displayed. In most cases this prohibits signs that flash, blink, oscillate, and/or use other types of intermittent light displays and messages. Scrolling electronic signs are often allowed, and can be found at a few locations along the corridor.

There are a total of 28 billboards located along the corridor. They are present in each community except for Bear Lake Village. Billboards can be viewed negatively for the disruptive impacts to viewsheds, often when located in rural scenic areas.



Image 14: Filer Twp. Water Tower

## Landscaping

Landscaping along the corridor adds aesthetic appeal to development sites, can be utilized for traffic calming, improves water quality through infiltration, provides valuable shade cover reducing heat island effects caused by expanses of asphalt and concrete and provides desired viewsheds when natural vegetation is protected. Due to these benefits among others, landscaping is often included as a component in development sites.

Of the inventoried structure sites along the US 31 Corridor, 74.96% of sites had some component of landscaping whether it is flowers, shrubs or trees. 47.81% of sites had all three components of landscaping at their structure site.

When isolating strictly commercial structures, 47.3% have some sort of landscaping component on their site. The majority of landscaping at building sites was placed voluntarily as most municipal zoning codes didn't contain landscape requirements at the time of older developments. Site owners must have felt that having vegetation was important to include in their site design and layout.

## Infrastructure

Good development should include and be partially reliant upon infrastructure to shape the location and placement of land uses. US 31 is complimented in locations along the corridor with existing water, sewer and drainage districts. These districts are under the management and control of different entities within the County. (See Map # 15)

Image 15 (Right): Collaborative Sewer Expansion Article

## Water Districts

Water districts provide communities with water supplies which remove the need for wells for individual building sites. Along the US 31 Corridor water supplies are available from the City of Manistee, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) and Bear Lake Village.

The City of Manistee provides water service to the City, portions of Filer and Manistee Townships and the Village of Eastlake. The LRBOI provides water service to tribal lands in the vicinity of Dontz Road and M-22. Bear Lake Village provides water service within the confines of the village. The majority of densely developed properties, and in particular commercial locations in these locals are serviced by a water supply. Fire hydrants are an asset that is available in each of the water supply districts and communities served by those districts.

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**Tribe and township come to sewage disposal agreement**

Posted by MNA Staff on August 28th, 2014

MANISTEE COUNTY — The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and Manistee Township have approved an agreement that shows successful intergovernmental cooperation.

The two entities announced on Thursday the approval of a Sanitary Sewage Disposal Agreement that paves the way for new construction of the LRBOI tribal sewer line extension in Manistee Township.

The agreement allows the tribe to extend its commercial sewer line to service customers along the U.S. 31 corridor in Manistee County north of its intersection with M-55.

"This example of intergovernmental development and cooperation during a time of increasing budget challenges is something of which we can all be proud," said Tribal Ogema Larry Romanelli in a press release.

With the Alliance for Economic Success acting as a facilitator, representatives of the tribe, county, city and township came together to discuss their mutual challenges and opportunities. After extensive study and negotiation, all of the units of government passed resolutions of support to pursue working together on this area of interest to all.

AES consultant Tim Ervin said the agreement is the culmination of a two year process.

"It's just a wonderful demonstration of partnership (between) the county, city, LRBOI and the township," Ervin said. "We are all indebted to the LRBOI for stepping up in the way that they have. It's just a terrific demonstration of partnership and collaboration and it is a precedent for Michigan. We are so proud that it happened in Manistee County."

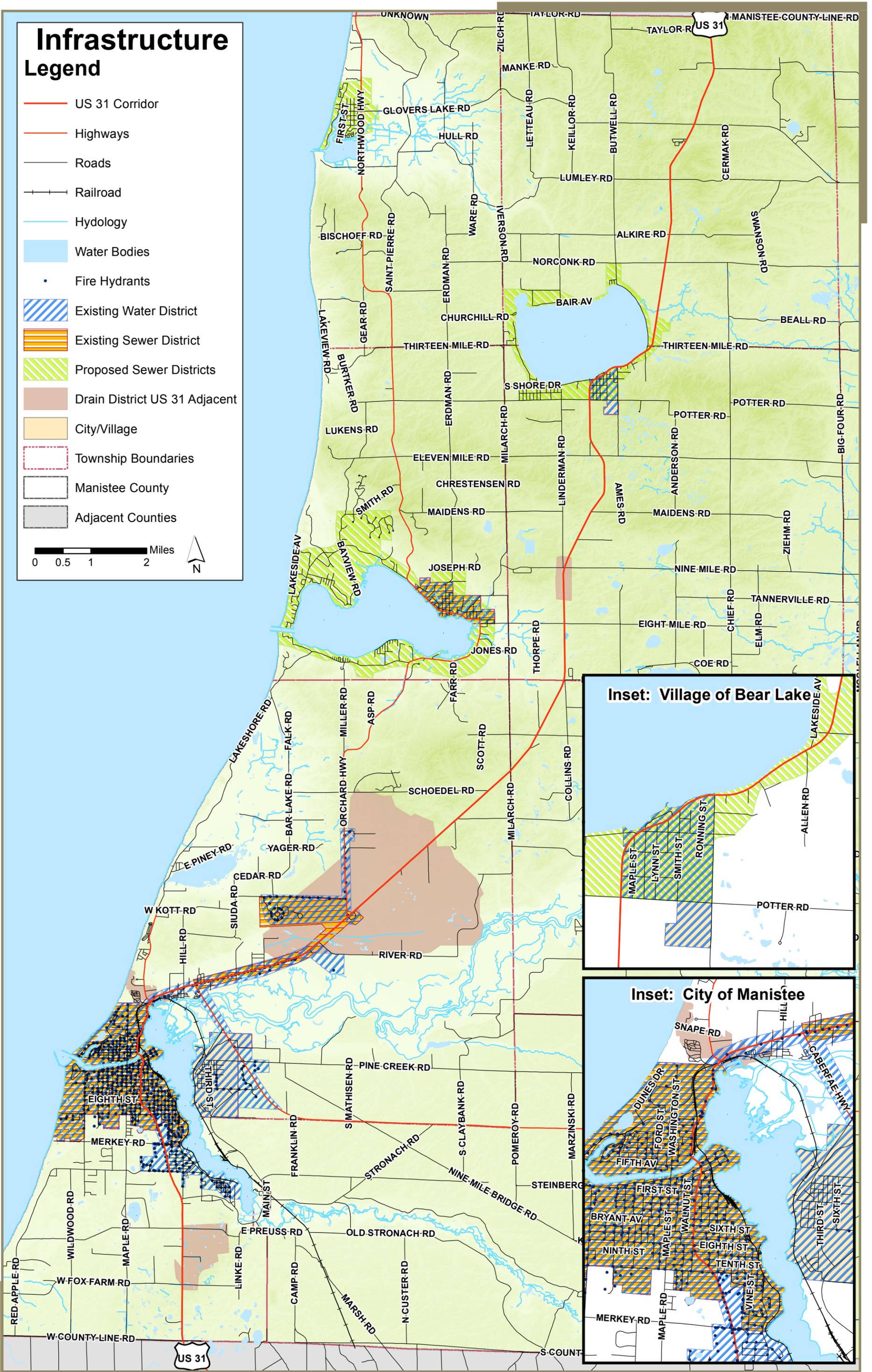
The City of Manistee's existing water line and Manistee County's existing sewer line currently serve the area, but that sewer force main is failing and serves only four customers. The lack of available sewer service has hindered commercial development along that U.S. 31 corridor in Manistee Township for years.

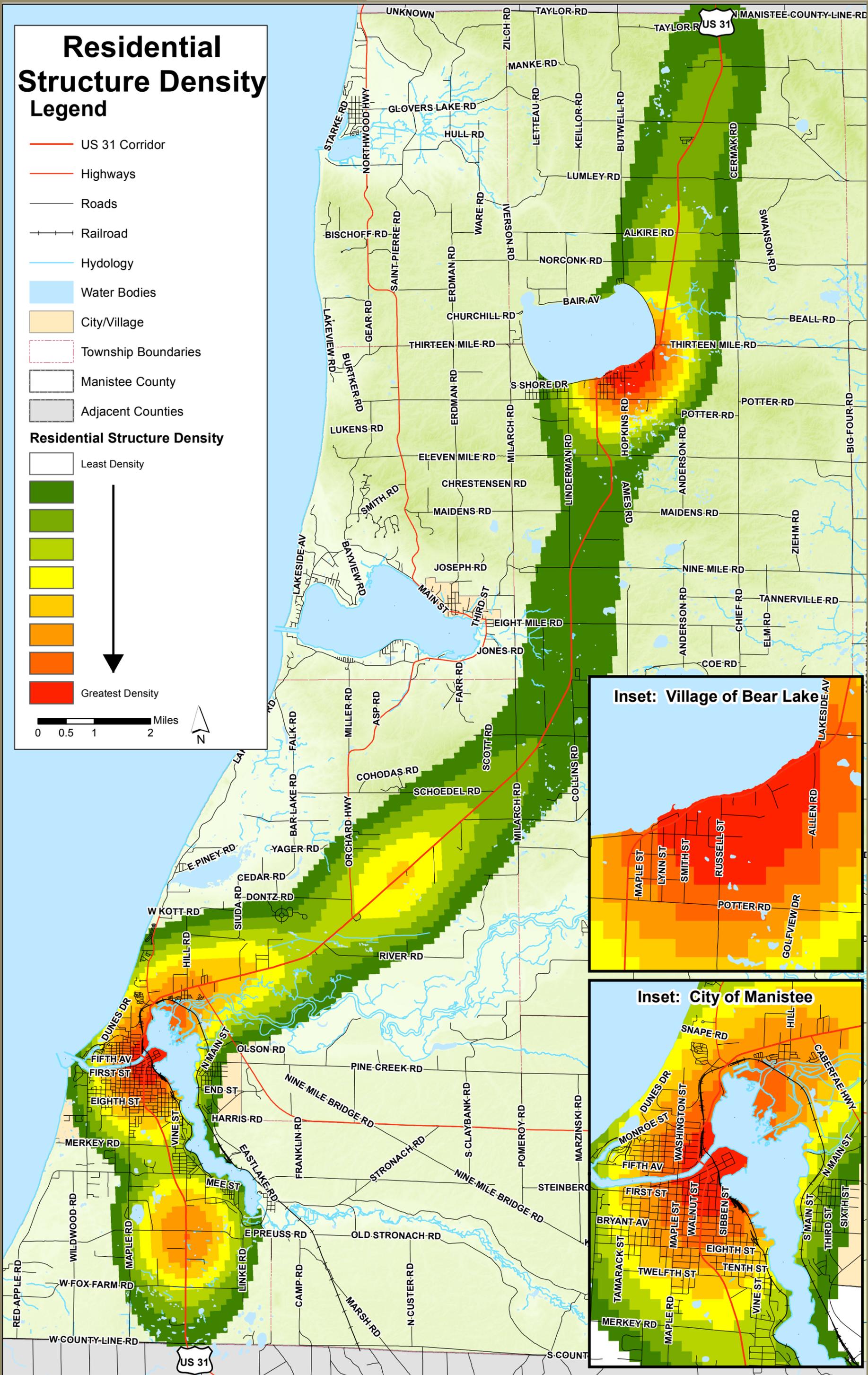
"Without the public utilities, our ability to attract businesses to a site is very constrained and limited," Ervin said. "With the new Manistee (the Little River (Ervin) Partner and the sewer, there's already been a lot of interest in the











## Sewer Districts

Sewer districts provide wastewater removal for development sites and structures which are connected to the system within the district boundaries. There has been recent expansion in service districts and discussion of proposed expansion to denser areas of several communities which currently are served solely by septic systems. The utilization of sewer infrastructure provides benefits to developments, particularly commercial and industrial uses which may have large quantities of wastewater and also to residential subdivisions which can be limited to larger lot size if septic systems are utilized.

The City of Manistee and the Charter Township of Filer are the two municipalities along the US 31 corridor that currently provide waste water collection and treatment services. The City of Manistee provides collection and treatment of waste water for City users. The City of Manistee also treats the waste water collected from the Charter Township of Filer's Special Sewer District located primarily within the Filer Downtown Development Authority district located on US 31 between 12th Street and Red Apple Road.

The LRBOI provides sewer service to tribal lands; with recent upgrades to their wastewater plant



Image 16: McGuineas Drain

and expansion of the district south along the US 31 corridor to M-55 in Manistee Township. Negotiations for expansion of the Tribal sewer district are currently underway for connections around Portage, Arcadia and Bear Lakes. It is important to note that this expansion is preliminary in nature and that all denoted boundaries are in draft form, as no formal district has been approved. Expansion of sewer to denser lake front development is a sound practice for protection of surface waters, as septic systems continue to age, with increased likelihood of septic seepage to water bodies. (See Map # 14)

## Drainage Districts

Under the supervision and authority of the Manistee County Drain Commissioner, development activities which are located within an existing drainage district, all new industrial and commercial developments and any development which requires site plan approval must conform to the Stormwater Guidelines of the Drain Commission Office. Stormwater guidelines outline appropriate methods of managing stormwater on development sites. These methods are often referred to as Low Impact Development (LID), which utilize modern stormwater controls to manage and infiltrate stormwater as close to the source as possible. Examples of LID include rain gardens and bio-retention cells, porous pavement and level spreaders.

There are a total of four drainage districts located along the US 31 Corridor. In Filer Twp. the Green Lake Drain spans US 31, but is predominantly located on the East side. The drain is situated south to north between E. Fox Farm Rd. and E. Preuss Rd. Further north along the southern boundary of Manistee Twp. located predominantly on the West side of US 31 is the Cemetery

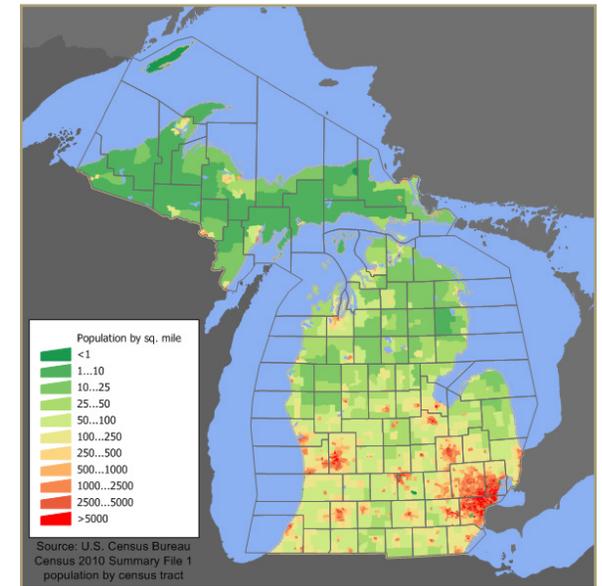


Image 17: MI Population Density

Kaap Drain. Continuing to travel north along US 31 in Manistee Twp., the McGuineas Drain encompasses a large area on both sides of the corridor from Kemmer Rd. north to Fisk Rd. The last drainage district located along the US 31 Corridor in Bear Lake Twp. is the Schoolhouse Drain which is located at the 9 Mile Road intersection, with district boundaries extending southerly for a half mile.

(See Map # 14)

## Structure Density Analysis

Density analysis of existing structures provides an opportunity to generate a regional view which depicts the existing land use patterns of the built environment. Density mapping can be completed through several methods most of which are developed through the gathering of point data for structure locations. The use of kernel density mapping is the preferred geo-spatial model for conveying of information which identifies the

density of locations of built structures.

### **Kernel Density Analysis**

Kernel density mapping utilizes an algorithm which calculates the density of point features around each individual output raster cell. The output raster cells are what is displayed on the following density maps, and the individual raster cells are color-coded to depict increasing or decreasing density of the structure points which are utilized in the model. (See Maps # 16 & 17)

The data gathered for this planning process identified and inventoried all structures located on parcels which abut or have access to the US 31 Corridor. The point features which were gathered simply depict the location of a structure and attribute data includes information on the structure use. The data can then be categorized into structures by use.

For our modeling purposes we isolated residential structures and commercial structures in two different datasets. The purpose of isolating these two uses is the difference in land use and land use policy imparted by each. Dense commercial and residential areas can be found in a singular location, but their are often differences in the make up of land use and density for each, as one moves away from the high density of a built-out urban environment. It is very important to note that the inventoried structure points only account for a structure or structures (in the case of a strip mall). The points don't denote the number of individual living spaces, which would weigh density based upon housing units such as would be contained in an apartment complex or condominium development. This type of data can be easily ascertained in the future and included for analysis, although it's importance would weigh

more heavily for a housing market study.

### **Residential Structure Kernel Density Analysis**

All structures with a residential use along the US 31 corridor were isolated and placed in a single dataset. The structure points were run through a kernel density model in the Arc GIS spatial analyst extension and the results are displayed on map # 16. (See Map # 16)

In viewing the map the color range from dark green for low density to shades of lighter green, then yellow and orange to deep red represent higher density. The end product displays the locations along the corridor where more urbanized, suburbanized and rural character is present.

The areas of higher density residential development in the vicinity of the City of Manistee, Northern Filer Township, Southern Manistee Township and the Village of Bear Lake is expected. Less recognized areas of higher density residential development become apparent from the model for the area of File Township in the vicinity of Preuss Rd. and for Manistee Township North of the M-22 and US 31 intersection.

### **Commercial Structure Kernel Density Analysis**

Structure points with identified commercial uses along the US 31 corridor were placed into the kernel density model in Arc GIS spatial analyst extension. The results from the model are displayed on map 17. Areas of higher density commercial development align with known commercial districts along the corridor, primarily from Northern Filer Township through the City of Manistee to Southern Manistee Township as well as Northern Bear Lake Township through

the Village of Bear Lake. (See Map # 17)

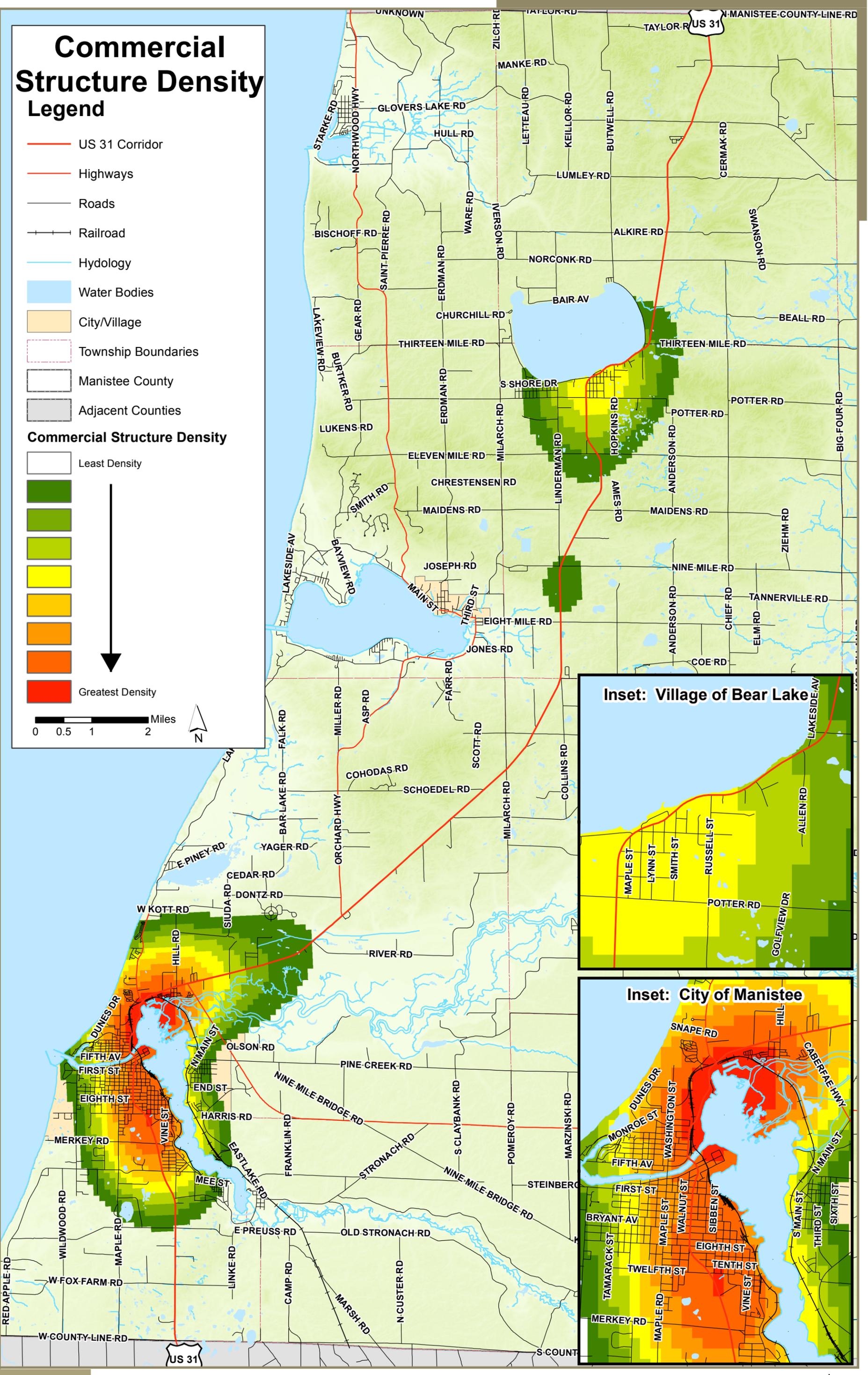
A nodal area between Eight and Nine Mile Roads became apparent from the model. This nodal area contains commercial uses which are linked to agricultural or rural commercial businesses and lodging which caters to outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

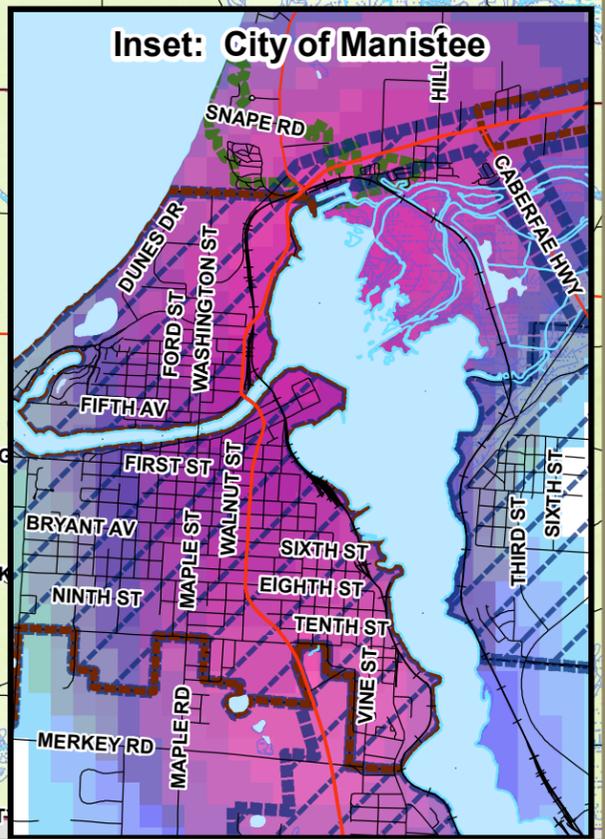
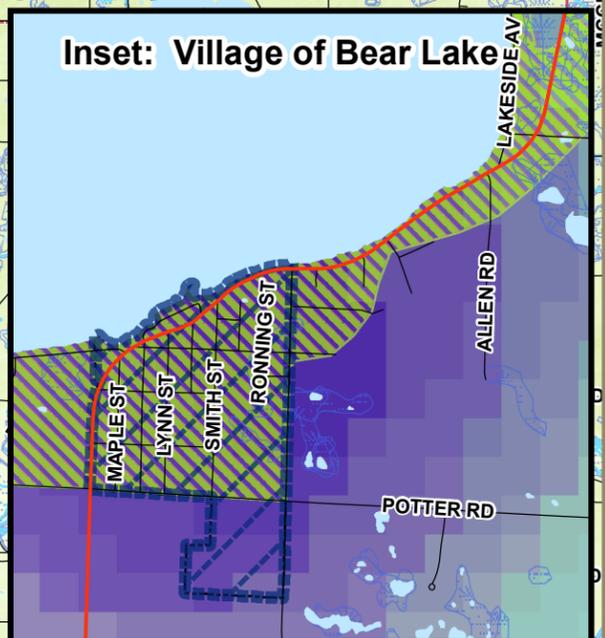
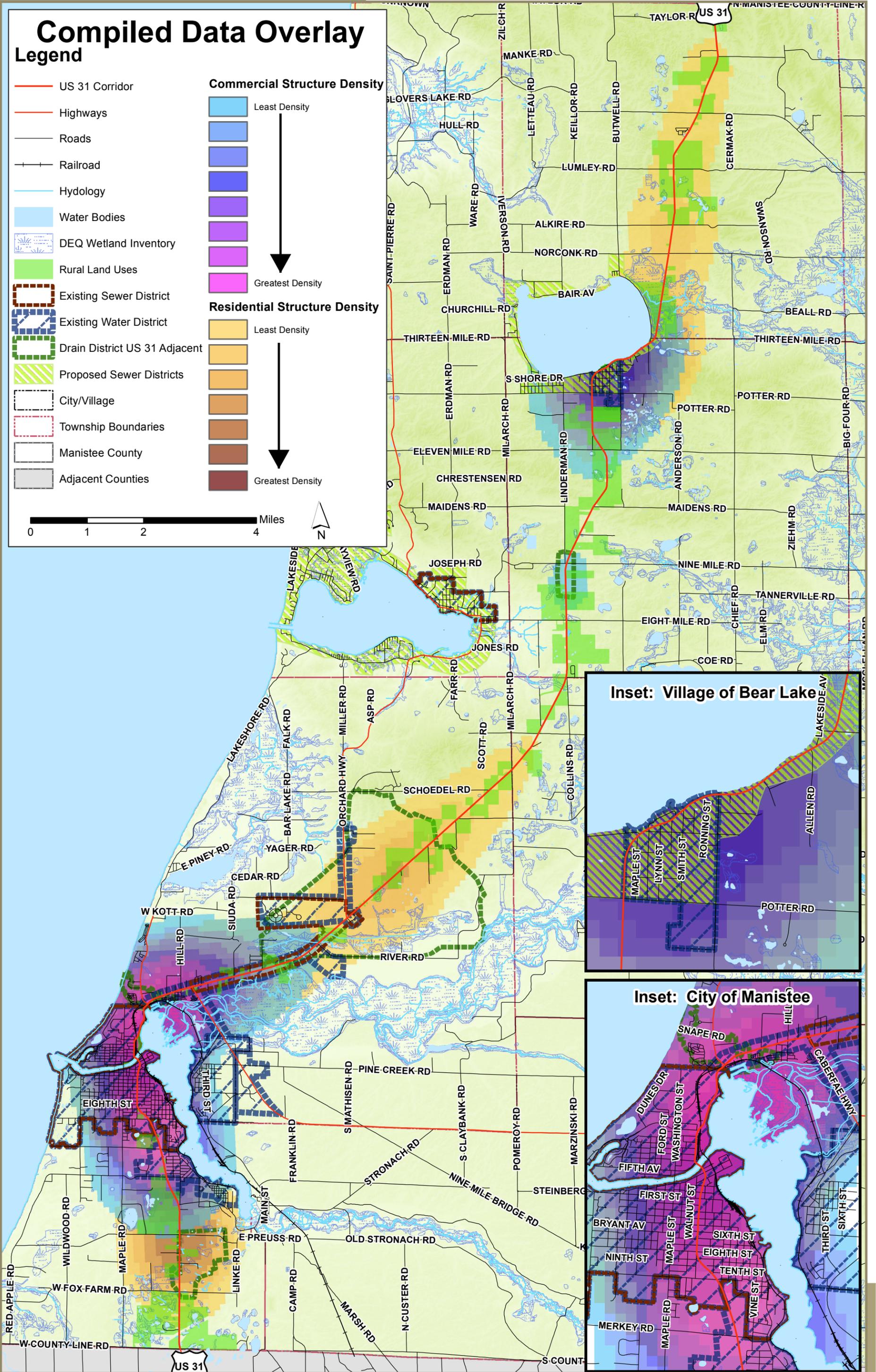
### **Kernel Density Analysis Comparison**

There are noticeable differences in the locations of commercial structure and residential structure densities when comparing the outcome of the two models. Obvious concentrations of both uses are found within the urbanized portions of Northern Filer Township, City of Manistee, Southern Manistee Township and the Village of Bear Lake.

What stands out from comparison of the two models is the shift from commercial uses to residential uses near Red Apple Rd. as one moves south along the corridor in Filer Township, with a similar trend occurring in the vicinity of Kemmer Rd. as one moves north along the corridor from Southern Manistee Township. These shifts occur in areas which are considered more of a suburban character, with fewer commercial structures which are spaced further apart, and the addition of more single-family housing.

In both models the absence of density of structures coincides with segments of the corridor which are rural in character, providing the viewsheds which are enjoyed by our residents and visitors alike. (See Map 16 & 17)





## Summary of Existing Conditions

### Compiled Data Overlay and Analysis

Inventorizing of existing conditions provides the opportunity for overlaying of existing data to provide a comprehensive image of the character of the US 31 corridor as a whole. Represented on map 18 is the cumulation of the pertinent data collected for the corridor. This data includes the location of wetlands and hydrologic features, existing and proposed infrastructure, rural land uses (which includes recreation, agriculture, open space and large lot residential), and density analysis of both commercial and residential structures.

(See Map # 18)

To anyone who travels the corridor it is evident that there is a change in character as one moves along the length of the roadway. The change in character isn't necessarily attributed to the jurisdictional boundary of a specific local unit of government, but rather is a consequence of the land use along the corridor which is impacted by the transportation network, infrastructure, and the build-out of communities based upon demographics and areas of employment.

It is easy to see from the information contained on the map that there are trends of build-out of commercial areas intermixed with residential in our more urban environments where infrastructure is provided that then give way to a more suburbanized feel of spaced commercial structures with residential subdivisions which then transition into large lot residential, recreation and agricultural rural land uses which provide the scenic vistas along portions of the corridor. It is the existence of these varied characters that comprise the US 31 corridor, and each character should be given the opportunity to be sustained in order to promote appropriately located development along with protection of rural aspects of the corridor.

### Demographics

- Aging population (greatest growth in the 55 plus age cohorts)
- Seasonal population influx occurs during every season, with the summer months having the greatest amount of seasonal residents. Growth of nearly 40% of the population by seasonal residents in July & August.
- Educational attainment on par with State for High School Diploma, trail State average for Bachelor's Degree.
- Medium income is slightly above County average, but lags behind State average.
- Poverty rates are highest among larger families with kids under the age of 18 living at home.
- Residents whom rent living space are much more likely to be in poverty compared to homeowners.
- Seventy percent of the workforce fall into 7 employment categories: Healthcare/Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Accommodations/Food Service, Public Administration, Educational Services, Construction.

### Environmental

- Remaining wetlands should be protected and incorporated as an asset into site design when available on site.
- Watershed planning should continue to promote protection and enhancement of waters as a direct influence on our local economy, and for the health, safety and welfare of the public.
- Steep slopes present challenges to development processes, and potential negative impacts to surrounding land areas, thus avoidance of development on slopes greater than 15 degrees should be encouraged.

### Architecture & Site Design

- Structure condition is very good overall along the corridor with 80% of both residential and commercial structures having a rating of good.
- Bear Lake Village has the largest proportion of poor and fair rated structures.
- Facade makeup for residential structures is primarily vinyl.
- Facade makeup for commercial structures is primarily brick and block and to a lesser degree glass and stucco.
- Newer commercial sites utilize monument, wall and window signs with 48.97% of signs types falling into this category. Older commercial sites utilize pole and temporary signs.
- Landscaping is found at 74.96% of all structures inventoried. 47.3% of commercial structures were landscaped with older commercial sites often not having landscaping and an overabundance of pavement or concrete.

### Land Use & Zoning

- Higher density residential & commercial land uses are confined to specific portions of the corridor

currently.

- Agriculture, open space and large lot residential land uses lend to rural scenic views along the corridor.
- Commercial uses outside denser areas of development are typically related to farm/rural retail and recreation.
- 6 separate local units of government administer a zoning ordinance along the corridor, with 1 community (Bear Lake Village) not having zoning. LRBOI maintains their own land use policy for sovereign nation lands.
- Setbacks, height and most bulk requirements are similar for residential and commercial districts across all units of government.
- Agricultural residential, agricultural & forestry and multiple use districts displayed the greatest differences in setbacks, height and bulk requirements across all units of government.
- Uses allowed in agricultural residential, agricultural & forestry and multiple use districts varies greatly, with rural communities such as Bear Lake and Pleasanton Townships having few restrictions on commercial/light industrial uses in these rural districts.
- General provisions for urbanized and suburbanized communities such as Filer and Manistee Townships and the City of Manistee, place greater requirements on building design, site layout, landscaping and signage.
- Local units of government overall are lacking standards for access and connectivity along the US 31 corridor.
- An agricultural commercial node is located between 8 mile and 9 mile. The types of land uses occurring are specific to serving the agricultural community. This is the only commercial node along the corridor.
- The City of Manistee and the Village of Bear Lake are the two dominant core business and commercial hubs of the US 31 corridor with suburban commercial activity occurring in defined areas of the Charter Township of Filer, Manistee Township, and along the edges of the Village of Bear Lake..

### **Infrastructure**

- Water, sewer and drainage districts are currently located in areas of denser residential and commercial development.
- Expansion of sewer districts and infrastructure is proposed for established areas of dense residential and commercial development such as Bear Lake Village.

### **Transportation**

- Access and connectivity suggestions from the “2003 US 31 Corridor Management Plan” should be implemented.
- Utilize new data on locations of driveway cuts and existing development inter-connectivity to implement driveway closures outside of the scope of the 2003 plan.
- 30% of all parking lots inventoried are located in the desired side and rear locations of buildings.
- More information on local ridership trends and desires will be available following the conclusion of the Manistee Transportation Inc. survey.
- Corridor is not pedestrian oriented along the majority of the existing “dense commercial” development.
- Sidewalks are in place within the City of Manistee and portions of Bear Lake Village, but cease as one moves into adjacent dense commercial areas of Townships.
- Existing trails do not connect dense residential/commercial areas to a regional trail system, but work is underway to make these connections.
- Commuter data displays most workers are remaining within Manistee County for employment, and are using their own cars to travel to work with very few ride-sharing.
- A higher percentage of commuters are traveling outside their township for employment, but travel time to work data displays that most are not traveling far from their township of residence, except in the rural townships of Brown and Pleasanton.

### **Structural Density Analysis**

- Trends of build out lend to the regional perspective of a varied character that has developed along the corridor. The character developed are urban, suburban, transitional, rural, and agricultural with portions that require environmental conservation and stewardship.

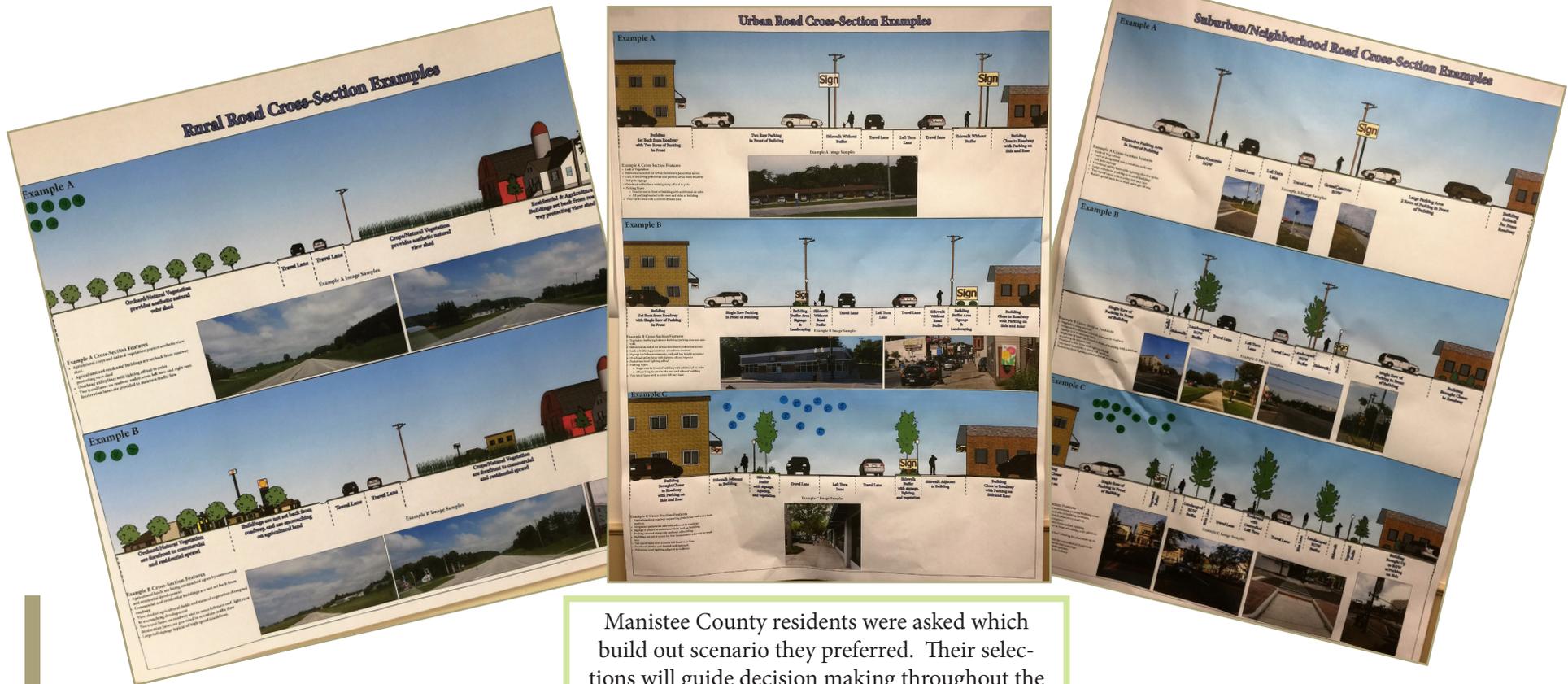
## Public Input

During 2016 a series of public input sessions were conducted. The method of public input was designed to capture two categories of information: to understand the public's perceptions about the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the corridor and to understand their preferred design characteristics of the corridor. Or in other words, what did they like, dislike, and how would they like to see the corridor transformed in the future if all their wishes could be granted. Information was collected for the urban, suburban, and rural

areas of the County.

In order to achieve the goals of the public hearing the public input sessions were designed specifically to meet the challenges of the communities to which the corridor transects while at the same time attempting to provide some uniformity and continuity to the information gathered. The public input was not a quantitative assessment but rather sought general trends of ideas and concepts that the Plan could utilize in creating a

framework for the vision of the corridor. All residents were asked the same questions and provided the same materials to react to and provide guidance in the preparation of the Plan. Again, the quest was to understand their views on Aesthetics, Activity and Access of the US 31 corridor in regards to the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the County. The public input also was designed to provide direction on ways to improve walkability, signage preferences, land use locations, development patterns, and nodal development.



Manistee County residents were asked which build out scenario they preferred. Their selections will guide decision making throughout the corridor.

Image 18, 19 & 20: Public Input Build-Out Scenarios Options

# Here's what residents said they **WANT** to see in their US 31 corridor...



Image 21: Desired Rural Area Example

## In Rural Areas...

- Areas devoted to agricultural crops.
- Natural vegetation lining the road (rather than prescribed landscaping).
- Views of lakes, orchards, and open space.
- Agricultural and residential buildings set back from roadways protecting the view shed.
- Overhead utility lines with lighting affixed to poles.
- Two travel lanes on roadway and at key intersections areas with left turn and right turn deceleration lanes provided to maintain traffic flow.



Image 22: Desired Suburban Area Example

## In Suburban Areas...

- Landscaped vegetation along roadway, between parking/building areas and pedestrian walkways.
- Designated pedestrian sidewalk adjacent to roadway.
- Designated bike lane along roadway.
- Signage is placed on monument structures and/or on building;
- Single row of parking allowed in front of building with additional parking on sides or rear.
  - Building set at a "zero lot line" allowing for placement up to the right-of-way.
  - Two travel lanes with a boulevard for controlled left hand turns and for protection of pedestrians at road crossings.
  - Overhead utilities now buried underground.
  - Pedestrian level lighting adjacent to walkway.



Image 23: Desired Urban Area Example

## In Urban Areas...

- Vegetation along roadway separating pedestrian walkways from roadway.
- Designated pedestrian sidewalk adjacent to roadway.
- Signage is placed on a monument structure and/or on buildings.
- Parking situated along side and rear of building.
- Buildings set at a zero lot line immediately adjacent to roadway.
- Two travel lanes with a center left hand turn lane.
- Overhead utilities now buried underground.
- Pedestrian level lighting adjacent to walkway.

# Here's what residents said they **DO NOT** want to see in their US 31 corridor..



*Image 23: Undesirable Parking Lot Example*

Large, extensive parking in front of buildings without any landscaping



*Image 24: Lack of Pathways & Sidewalks*

Dirt paths rather than sidewalks



*Image 25: Lack of Separation of Sidewalk & Roadway*

No landscaping between sidewalks and the road



*Image 26: Undesired Roadway Example*

Two travel lanes with a center left turn lane and multiple curb cuts



*Image 27: Undesired Sign Example*

Temporary, pole, and very tall signs



*Image 28: Undesired Development Pattern*

Views in rural areas disturbed by encroaching development

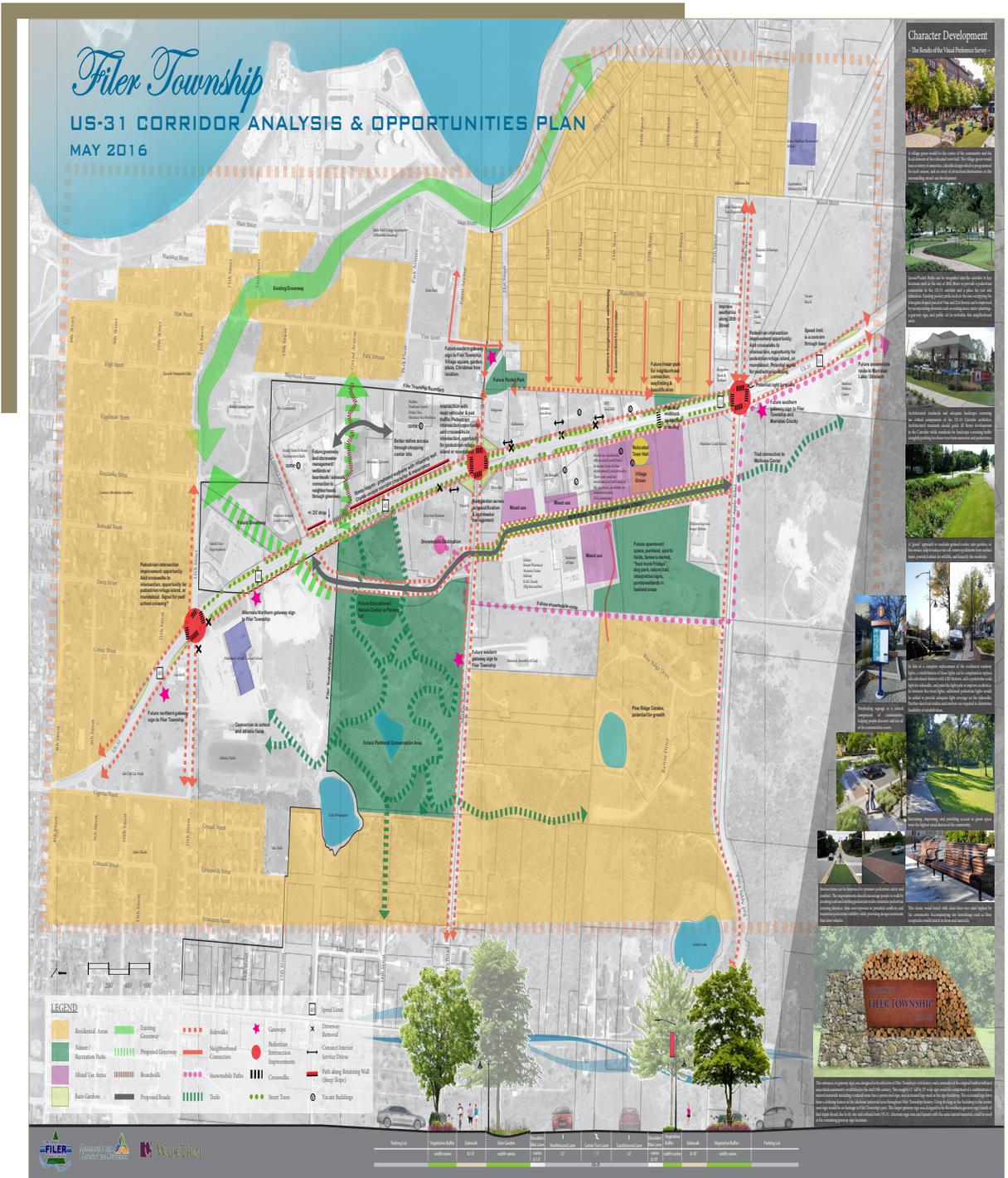


Image 29: Filer Twp. Sub-Area Plan

## Special Sub-Area Planning:

### Filer Township and the Village of Bear Lake

It was decided that two sub-areas of the corridor required public input that would result in the development of a more detailed framework for development and redevelopment of two aging commercial and business district within the County: Filer Township DDA and the Village of Bear Lake.

### Filer Twp. Sub-Area Plan

Filer Township is the historic "suburban" shopping area of the County where most of the fast food chains, chain retail and service establishments, as well as banking and other finance institutions are located. It is also due to have a waste water collection system installed along US 31 within the DDA district.

The installation of a waster water collection system presented tremendous opportunities to rethink and have a conversation about the corridor. The conversation topic sought to answer the question "how do we leverage the infrastructure investment to attract new businesses, create a "livable" corridor where folks could access these shopping and service establishments by walking, and create a "place" that was recognizable to those who travel to, or through, the area?"

Engaged public officials, residents of the community as well as residents of the County, participated in a charrette, or design studio, that looked to understand what needed to be changed to the aesthetics, access, and activities occurring adjacent to US 31. A public input session was facilitated by the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development which led the participants through a process of evaluating the

strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities (SWO) of the corridor. The charrette and subsequent planning work was conducted for Filer Township and completed by Wade Trim. The charrette sought to understand design and character preferences and then allow for residents to present solutions to the issues identified during the SWO analysis.

The results of the public input is displayed on a graphic titled "US 31 Corridor Analysis & Opportunities Plan".

The Plan calls for:

- Identification of future civic space;
- Demarkation of open space;
- Location suggestions for a gateway feature (welcome sign);
- Creating connections between the neighborhoods and US 31;
- Installing sidewalks along US 31;
- Creating safe pedestrian crossing points at US 31 and Merkey, 12th Street, and Red Apple Road;
- Closing five driveways (Manistee Catholic Central, Days Inn, Striketown, two driveways accessing vacant lots between Advanced Auto Parts and KFC- to encourage shared driveways when the property is redeveloped);
- Encouraging mixed uses;
- Slope stabilization and reconfiguring;
- A cross sectional that calls for trees lining US 31, pedestrian height lighting, and rain gardens.

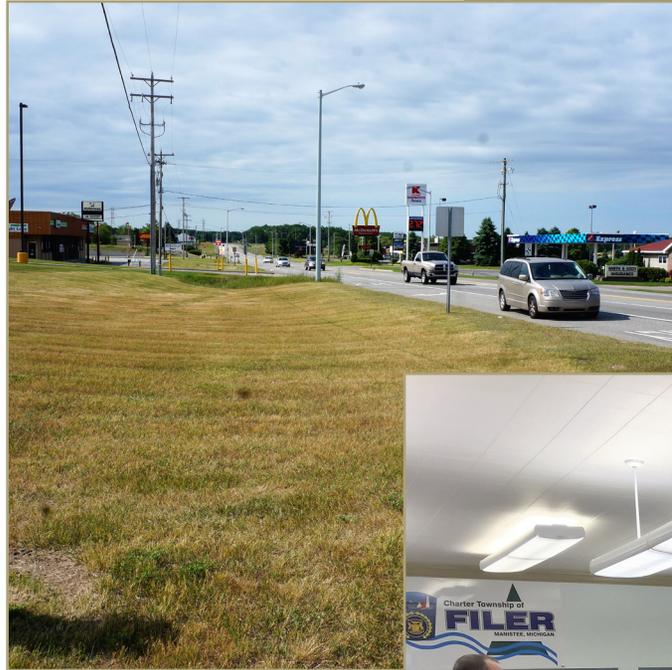


Image 30 (Left): Existing Corridor - Filer Twp.



Image 31 (Above): Filer Public Input Session Attendees



Image 32 (Left): Filer Public Input Session Feedback



Image 33: Bear Lake Village Sub-Area Plan

## Village of Bear Lake Sub-Area Plan

The Village of Bear Lake was also uniquely positioned to have a conversation about their historic downtown. During recent years the blight of structures located along US 31 became alarmingly critical as safety was becoming jeopardized. In fact, a secondary street was barricaded off for years as the community watched the slow deterioration and crumbling of a historic building owned by a apathetic property owner.

In preparation of the day when the blighted structures would be removed, the community needed to understand how they wanted to redevelop their downtown (where US 31 is the unofficial "Main Street") and utilize their greatest asset- Bear Lake.

The conversation included questions like "once the blighted structures are removed, should we use the property as open space thereby connecting the commercial district more aggressively to the park and lake or should we seek investors for the vacant property?" and "how do we utilize Bear Lake as an economic catalyst for the downtown." Bear Lake, is after all, uniquely connected to the business district.

The firm Beckett & Raeder conducted an input session that gathered business owners, residents of the Village, and Bear Lake Township to help them understand a basic framework for how the corridor interacted with business development interests, community identify, and capitalizing on the business districts unique location adjacent to the shores of Bear Lake. The following "Bear Lake Downtown Framework Plan-A Concept" is the product of the public input sessions.

This Plan has already guided redevelopment interests as some of the heavily blighted structures



Image 33: Bear Lake Village Plan Input



Image 34: Bear Lake Village Plan Input

have reverted to County ownership and are thus ready for a newer purpose.

The Plan calls for:

- Removal of blighted buildings on both the north and south side of US 31;
- Viewing decks on the north side of US 31;
- A promenade that links Bear Lake boaters who utilize "shopper docks" to the downtown business district terminating on US 31 with a "clock plaza";
- Bump-outs with special paving;
- Gateway features;
- Landscaping along US 31.

VILLAGE OF BEAR LAKE  
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT  
PLAN

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR OPINION ABOUT  
THE DOWNTOWN VILLAGE BUSINESS  
DISTRICT PLAN

**NOVEMBER 19, 2016**  
**12:00PM**

VILLAGE OF BEAR LAKE HALL  
12376 Virginia Street Bear Lake, MI 49614 Phone: 231-970-2066

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: TAMARA BUSWINKA @ 231-723-4325

Image 35: Bear Lake Village Public Input Flyer

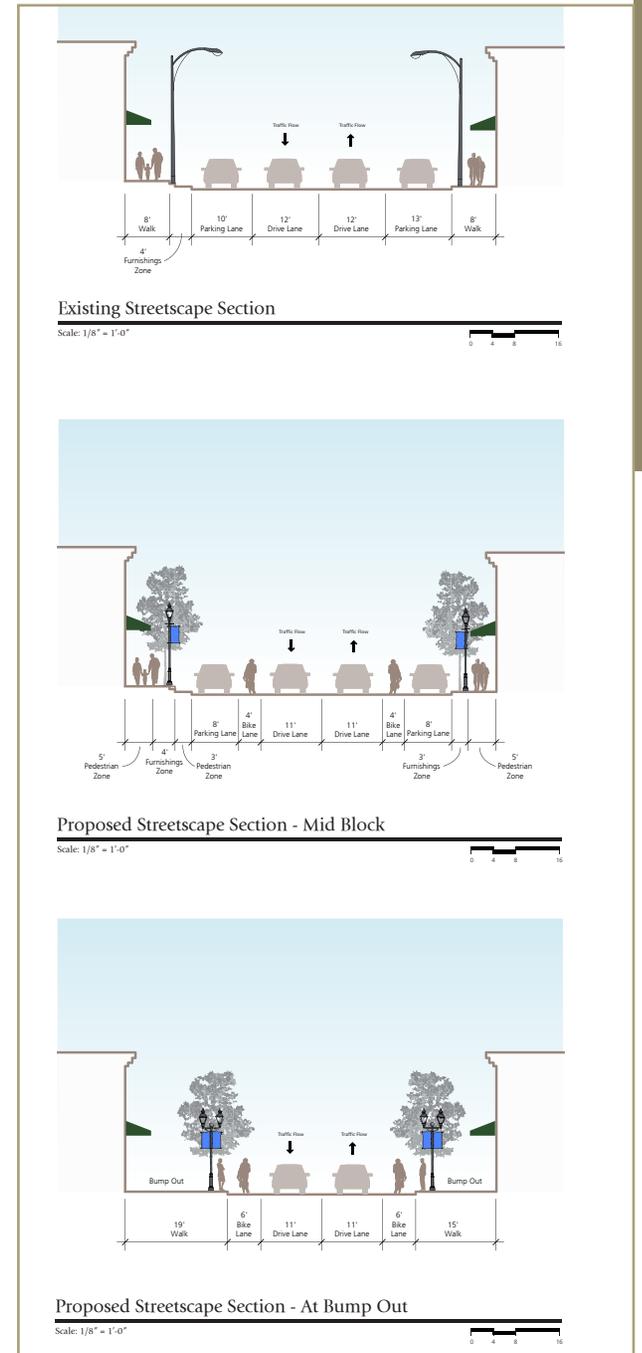


Image 36: Bear Lake Village Urban/Downtown Cross-Section Examples

## Best Practices in Corridor Design

What are the factors that are needed to create a great corridor? What are those intangible and tangible attributes that evoke a positive impact on people; that create a place people are drawn to and that contribute rather than detract from the place we live, play, work, and get educated? What is it that made M-22 so magical that a company branded the number and now sells it on all kinds of merchandise? What makes Highway 66 so iconic that people put it on their bucket list to drive one day? How is it that when you say “The Magnificent Mile” instantly you conjure up expensive shopping in Chicago?

These best practices in corridor planning deal with access (how automobiles flow through and use the road), activity (what is happening on the land beside the corridor), and aesthetics (what does it look like as you travel along the road). These are the three qualities, or ingredients, that cook up a corridor worth talking about. Corridors that contain all or most of the best practices described within this plan set the stage for creating places people want to be. With the understanding that corridors can play both a significant and negative role in our everyday lives, the effort to create a corridor worth remembering is key to Manistee County’s prosperity. What can the US 31 corridor in Manistee County become known far and wide for and as? In order to figure that out decisions need to be made regarding access, activity, and aesthetics of the corridor.



# FORM OVER FUNCTION

## What is a Form Base Code? Is it Zoning?

*This Plan relies on the tools and techniques of Form Based Code principles and techniques. In this way, we are able to provide a more context rich method to create a corridor that meets the vision of the residents who live in Manistee County. While this Plan is not the Form Based Code; it provides the principles to create the framework for future regulatory tools that focus on character development.*

*Form Based Code, as defined by the Form Based Code Institute, are “land development regulations that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.”*

*This Plan is more concerned with the experience the traveler has as they traverse US 31 through Manistee County and that experience is shaped by what they see. So with that in mind, we are not necessarily concerned with what occurs within buildings but rather how those building look, where they are placed, and how does the physical space around the buildings positively affect the people who use the US 31 corridor. The most prosperous communities know that properly designed “place” results in the prosperity of that “place”. And Form Based Codes as a tried and proven method to create the “place” people of Manistee deserve.*

# Access

## Automobile

Planned access is essential to maintaining traffic flows and safety. The Michigan Department of Transportation in 2004 prepared a US 31 Corridor Management Plan for the City of Manistee, Manistee Township and the Charter Township of Filer that focused on access management and identified a number recommendations for driveway closures, realignments, and other traffic operations recommendations. The Plan is still relevant and should be incorporated into zoning regulations and implemented. Fundamentally, the Plan speaks to limiting the number of curb cuts onto US 31, redirecting existing development to close driveways and seek ways to share access points, and for new development to plan for shared driveways and service drives where possible.

## Multi-Modal Transportation Options: Sidewalks, Complete Streets and Fixed Route Public Transportation Stops

While consideration should be given to automobiles other transportation methods, such as non-motorized and public transportation options, are a priority.

Complete street policy and design can help in creating an environment that allows for multiple types of transportation options. "Complete streets" is defined as a design principle to promote a safe network of access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Public transportation (Dial-a-Ride) fixed-route stops are encouraged at key points in the corridor to encourage ridership, regularity and

predictability in public transportation offerings. Enclosed shelters, which provide protection for users in all types of weather, is recommended. Consideration should be given to placing the public transportation in strategic places along the corridor, including the rural areas (to allow for movement of people to employment centers). As the commuter data shows, more people are working within Manistee County then commuting outside the County and therefore assisting them in getting to their places of employment through public transportation or non-motorized methods provides more options than just automobile ownership.

Sidewalks and pathways are important in high population areas and should be put in, preferably at the developers' expense at the time of new development, where ever people live, work, and recreate. If there are segments of sidewalks already put in, efforts to connect them should be made.

### Summary of Access Best Practice:

Limit driveway access points, create shared drives and service drives, expand transportation options (public transit, walkability, bike lanes, snowmobiling).

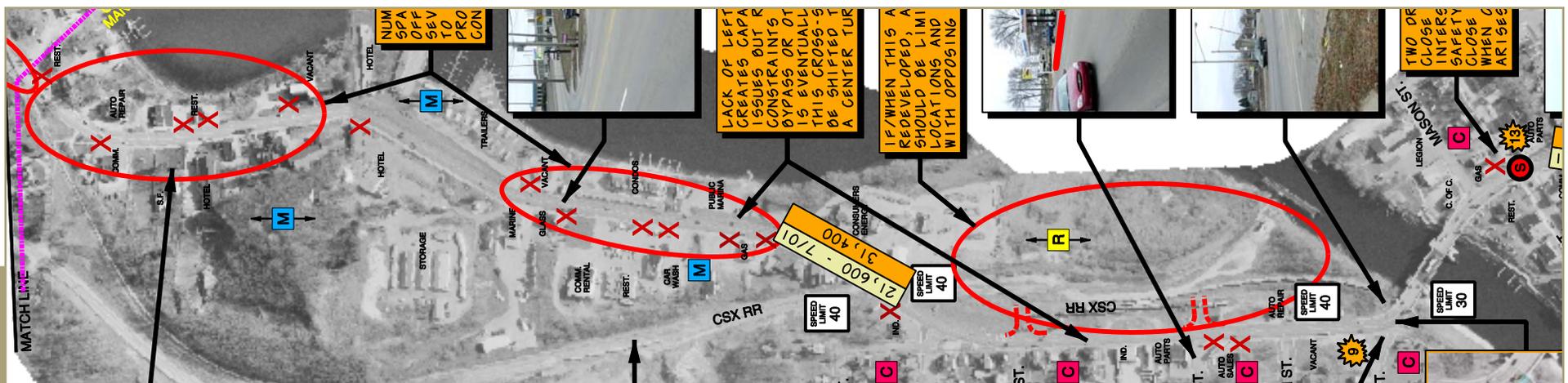


Image 37: "2003 US 31 Corridor Management Plan": Connectivity and Access Improvement Schematic

## Activity

### Walkability

Upon consideration of the 2016 Manistee County Recreation Plan, residents want their communities to be walkable, for recreation and as a form of transportation, and connected (1 out of 2 Manistee County residents want trails and 1 out of 3 residents want sidewalks)<sup>1</sup>. Installing, and where needed connect, sidewalks in the more heavily populated areas is an opportunity to improve walkability. In areas where sidewalks are not practical or needed, development of a pathway/trail that connects these areas to other communities and/or areas of the County is best practice.

### Water and Sewer:

#### Grey and Green Infrastructure

When considering whether to install waste water collection and treatment systems an analysis should be conducted that quantifies costs versus revenues.

“Communities often evaluate the impact of growth on local budgets by conducting or commissioning fiscal impact analyses. Fiscal impact studies project public costs and revenues from different land development patterns.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to evaluating the cost burden, communities often find great success at managing their infrastructure expenses by adopting a policy of infrastructure concurrency. A policy of infrastructure concurrency means that infrastructure expansion is tied to the demand for development and therefore “speculative” expansion is prevented. The developer bears the cost of the infrastructure expansion rather than the community. Another added benefit of the policy of infrastruc-

ture concurrency is that it prevents sprawl. “Researchers in economics and planning assert that sprawl costs local governments more for infrastructure and public services than more compact forms of growth.”<sup>2</sup>

Another way to lower infrastructure costs, while also providing stewardship to the environment, is to consider Green Infrastructure. The Environmental Protection Agency defines Green Infrastructure as “a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides many community benefits. While single-purpose gray storm water infrastructure—conventional piped drainage and water treatment systems—is

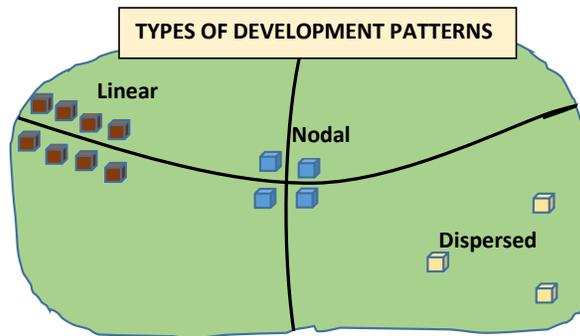


Image 38: Development Pattern Example

designed to move urban storm water away from the built environment, green infrastructure reduces and treats storm water at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other elements and practices to restore some of the natural processes required to manage water and create healthier urban environments.”<sup>3</sup>

Green Infrastructure can improve the aesthetics of the US 31 corridor, while saving tax payers dollars, by using natural systems to filter and store

water. The following are ideas that should be considered prior to using traditional storm water management techniques:

- Rain Gardens
- Planter Boxes
- Bio-swales
- Permeable Pavements
- Green Roofs
- Urban Tree Canopy

### Linear to Nodal:

#### Strategic Placement of Development (No to Sprawl, Yes to Nodal Development)

Strategic placement of development is key to creating place. What this means is that land use decisions are made with consideration to available utilities and infrastructure, character of the area, and likelihood of economic success. Therefore, it is a priority to place land uses in locations that maximizes their best potential.

You can create economic and social synergy by encouraging development in established business and commercial areas of high population density while creating nodes for clustered retail investment in rural areas along the corridor. Nodal development is where there is a clustering of businesses that support each other such as a grouping of agricultural related businesses in agricultural areas. By strategically placing development in areas where existing commercial development is, you take advantage of retail shopping patterns and efficiencies of having infrastructure provisions. This practice of strategic placement of development is also how sprawl is prevented.

A concerted effort to stop sprawl, or low-density uncoordinated growth, will lead to preventing negative social, environmental, and economic consequences. One such negative consequence is

the dilution of the market potential of businesses and commercial areas in general.

“Communities pay a high price for unplanned growth. Scattered development frequently causes traffic congestion, air and water pollution, loss of open space and increased demand for costly public services.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Agricultural Areas Are Valuable**

Agriculture is best located and supported in currently intact agricultural areas. Efforts should be made to keep agricultural tracks of land intact. While not a farmer’s responsibility, agricultural land is one of the key components of rural and scenic character.

### **Mixed Uses**

Where supportable, mixed uses (uses that combine both business/commercial with residential) will help create vibrant and prosperous places in key areas of the corridor. Residential living along the corridor gives residents easy access to places to work, shop, and play and for use of public and non-motorized transportation. These benefits are what the current generation are looking for in a place to live. The locations most suitable for mixed uses are those with a high population density, commercial hub, and has great potential for walkability.

### **Housing For All**

Affordable and work force housing is encouraged in supportable areas with special consideration given to areas of high population density, a commercial hub, existing infrastructure and potential for walkability. What is not acceptable is residential development strung along the corridor creating sprawl; rather we want to see development in pockets or enclaves directly adjacent to existing housing and residential areas.

“When employment is more accessible or proximate to people, then a number of smart growth objectives can potentially be realized: shorter commute times, decreased travel distances, and a higher number of trips by walking and biking, to name just three.”<sup>4</sup>

Where supportable (i.e. has available infrastructure), a wide range of housing options is encouraged such as single unit detached, duplex, tri and fourplex, bungalow court, townhouse, live/work, apartments which should be mixed with commercial development.

### **Development Ready**

Each community should have development regulations that are streamlined, clear, and predictable. Where appropriate (Manistee Township, Filer Township, Village of Bear Lake) the communities should become certified by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation as a Redevelopment Ready Community.

### **Corridor Wide Development**

Character development should be identified based on the uniqueness of the existing areas rather than municipal boundaries. The overall character of the corridor should be cohesive and recognizable. “Character zones are areas of a community that exhibit similar characteristics, qualities, or traits.”<sup>5</sup>

Identifying the character of segments of the US 31 corridor means understanding what makes that area of the corridor unique and is defined by the land use patterns adjacent to the road. It is also about identifying what is liked and disliked about how land is used along the corridor. This emotional response to areas of the corridor is what determines whether people want to live, work, play, and get educated in Manistee County.

### **Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Steep Slopes**

Wetland areas 5 acres or greater in size and/or those connected to a lake or stream are under administrative control of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Permitting and approval for fill or dredging of these areas must be received by the DEQ. A local unit of government may enact more stringent wetland protections if desired through zoning.

It is best practice to avoid developing on areas with steep slopes of 15 degrees or greater.

#### **Summary of Activity Best Practice:**

**Be ready for developers by having regulations that are easy to understand and use, place development in strategic areas, discourage sprawl, development of water and sewer systems should only be installed after the economic potential is proven and through a policy of concurrency, build character through land use choices, cluster development, value agricultural land, encourage mixed uses, sidewalks and pathways are important features of a community that promote healthy lifestyles, connects people with places they want to spend time at, and provides another form of transportation opportunity for a community, and encourage housing along the corridor that is affordable and varied**

## Aesthetics

### Landscaping

Landscaping trends along corridors take advantage of different styles that can drastically change the look and the way people use the land adjacent to the corridor. It is important to safeguard rural landscapes so that the intrinsic quality that is considered “Up North Michigan” is preserved while simultaneously safeguarding intact tracts of agricultural land.

Trees lining the road that are placed between the sidewalk and the road provide a buffer between



Image 39: Desired Landscape Example

a pedestrian and cars resulting in a much more pleasing and safer environment. Often low shrubs with plantings fill in space adding character. Rain gardens, and other green infrastructure methods, are becoming more common as a way to deal with storm water runoff. The use of interesting brick, or cement stamped pavers allow for the visual delineation of where pedestrians may be found within the road. In keeping with the high percentage of properties that utilize the full complement of landscaping treatments (which

accounts for 48% of the total number of properties found along the corridor), regulatory measures should be developed to ensure this positive trend in private property beautification continues and that it will be in keeping with current trends that help support existing efforts. Guidelines that call for the use of landscaping materials such as trees, shrubs, and flowers should be encouraged.

### Form Versus Use

What happens within the building, while important, does not supersede how the building functions, looks, and interacts with its surroundings and people. Consideration must be given to



Image 40: Desired Monument Sign Example

how the building looks (facade- use of windows, building materials), location of the building on the property (closer to the road with most of the parking in the rear), and scale (large buildings that make it unattractive for a pedestrian to walk by). Front stoops, windows, and other architectural design features on public property should be required to face US 31 in order to prevent a solid wall of building material which is visually unattractive, un-welcoming, and limits character development worth aspiring to.

### Signage

Signs are important aspects to business identification. The residents of Manistee County expressed in the public input session that they prefer monument and wall signs rather than pole and temporary signs. This is also in keeping with what type of signs newer development is choosing. Continue to promote the leading practice and market driven trend in using monument signage with or without a wall sign. Eliminate all allowances for pole, temporary, and/or window signage.

### Facades

The use of a specific material for a façade treat-



Image 41: Desired Facade/Signage Example

ment for buildings is determined at the sole discretion of a property owner. Maintenance expenses, historic preservation goals, or simply preference play a role in selecting the material for a building's façade. However, it is important that buildings are maintained and kept from becoming blighted. If enough building owners are in need of a façade “face lift” then collaborative opportunities may exist to find assistance to improve building appearances.

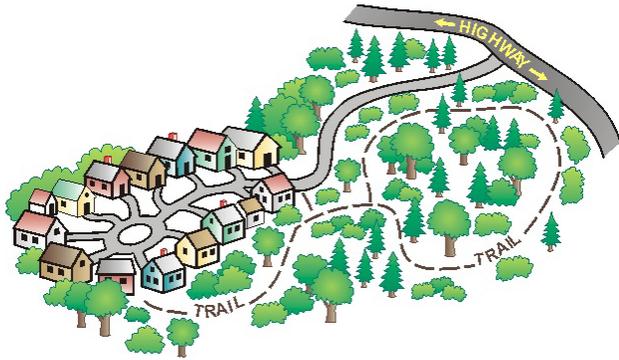


Image 42: Desired Subdivision Layout

### Parking

Continue the trend as set by new development of side and rear yard parking for all development except in the urban areas where no front parking should be allowed, unless on-street.

### Open Space Preservation

#### Regulatory Measures to Preserve Open Space, Environmentally Sensitive and Significant Areas

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, known as Act 451 of 1994 allows local communities the right to regulate land uses in sensitive areas. In consideration to protection of environmentally sensitive areas preservation and integration tools and methods may be deployed to honor environmentally sensitive areas while at the same time accommodating new development.

To preserve environmentally sensitive areas, whether state or federally regulation, communities may utilize any number of natural preservation tools such as:

- Conservation Easements
- Incentive Zoning
- Large-Lot Zoning
- Clustering and Conservation Subdivision

Integrating new development proposals into significant natural areas so that it coexists with natural features allowing them to remain largely undisturbed is best done by utilizing the site plan review process (within zoning ordinances). Site plan review will ensure that the zoning ordinances setback requirements, which should be larger than typical for development in the district due to the desire to protect environmentally sensitive areas, are enforced.

The use of the zoning ordinance to protect environmentally sensitive and significant areas may lay out requirements for the use of cluster development and conservation design requirements, large lots, additional soil erosion requirements, percent lot coverage requirements, as well as other tools.

The use of development incentives to protect environmentally sensitive areas and the rural character is encouraged.

### Low Impact Development

Low impact development is a design strategy that works to reduce the impact of development in areas considered unique, sensitive, or are earmarked for rural scenic preservation. Areas targeted for low impact development include watershed areas, significant environmental ar-



Image 43: Environmentally Sensitive Area

eas, and areas where rural and scenic character preservation is a goal. Consideration to ensuring development proposals contain low impact development measures means that they incorporate best management practices such as:

- Rain gardens
- Construction filters
- Detention/Retention basins
- Infiltration practices
- Native vegetation
- Pervious pavement with infiltration
- Planter boxes
- Riparian buffer restoration requirements
- Soil restoration measures
- Vegetated filter strips, greenroofs, and swales

The benefit of low impact development design strategies is that they provide a high level of water quality treatment controls, are aesthetically pleasing, and ensure water quality for our lakes and streams.

#### Summary of Aesthetics Best Practice:

**Build or enhance existing character, have more concern for how the development looks rather than the use, preserve view sheds and encourage landscaping within the private and public realm.**

## A Preferred Corridor:

### Opportunities to Create Character

Taking what we know about Manistee County, the existing conditions and the public input, as well as leading practice in corridor planning and development and crafting a direction to take that maximizes the US 31's economic and community development potential is the purpose of this Corridor Plan. This section lays out a framework for identifying "place" while also suggesting methods for enhancing "place" along the corridor by establishing Character Zones for distinct areas along the corridor. The delineation of the Character Zones is based on the Structure Density Analysis.

Manistee County's economic prosperity is intricately tied to ensuring that current residents, visitors, and potential investors see the US 31 corridor as a "place" they would want to be. There are many different "places" along the corridor that are unique.

As you travel along the corridor you experience and see different things: urban areas where residential, business and retail shopping exist together in a walkable area, suburban areas where some residential exists side by side with large, chain owned restaurants and commercial businesses that service the region and are more dependent on the automobile but can still be walkable, or rural areas where you find large open spaces with farm houses and barns, agricultural fields, lakes, and views of the natural beauty that is Manistee County.

These areas can be identified and defined and by doing so communities can work toward capitalizing on them as each is unique and each has the power to produce positive community benefits. This US 31 Corridor Plan defines these special

places as "Character Zones".

### Use of Character Zones

The utilization of zones allows for understanding and describing changes in characteristics of the corridor and can be easily shown in the form of an image. The images convey design features and densities which transition from one zone to another as one moves along the corridor. Character Zones allow for a quick framework which conveys policy developed upon existing conditions and a desired character of the corridor.

In other words, the existing land use character zones classifies what is already occurring along the corridor into groupings and then helps set the stage for developing standards and guidelines to maintain or encourage future development to keep with existing development patterns. It also leads to clear communication with developers what the community envisions for an area.

The character zones are not zoning districts but may be refined to fit zoning classifications in future zoning ordinance updates. That decision will be left up to individual communities. However, they do set the stage for creating standards that regulate frontages, building dispositions, open space, and uses that fit the character of the area. But, more importantly, they help create a place along the corridor that is in keeping with the public input given during the visioning sessions held in the County for the preparation of this Plan.

Five character zones, or C-zones, were developed and defined specifically for Manistee County.

The C-zones are:

- Urban C5
- Suburban C4
- Transitional C3
- Agricultural & Rural Character C2
- Environmental Preservation C1

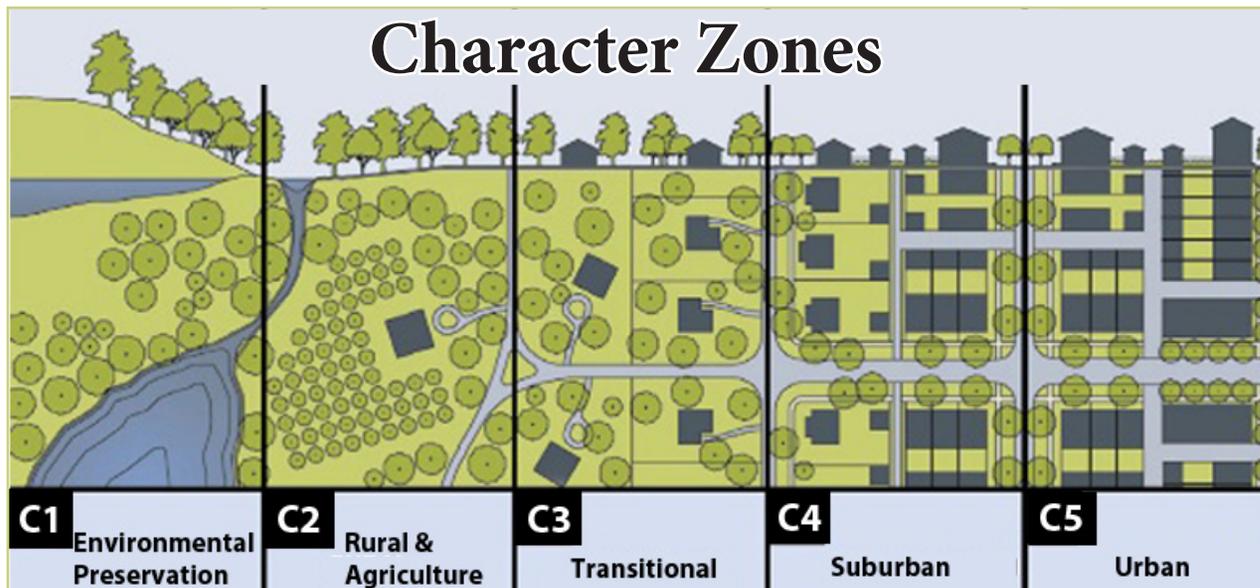
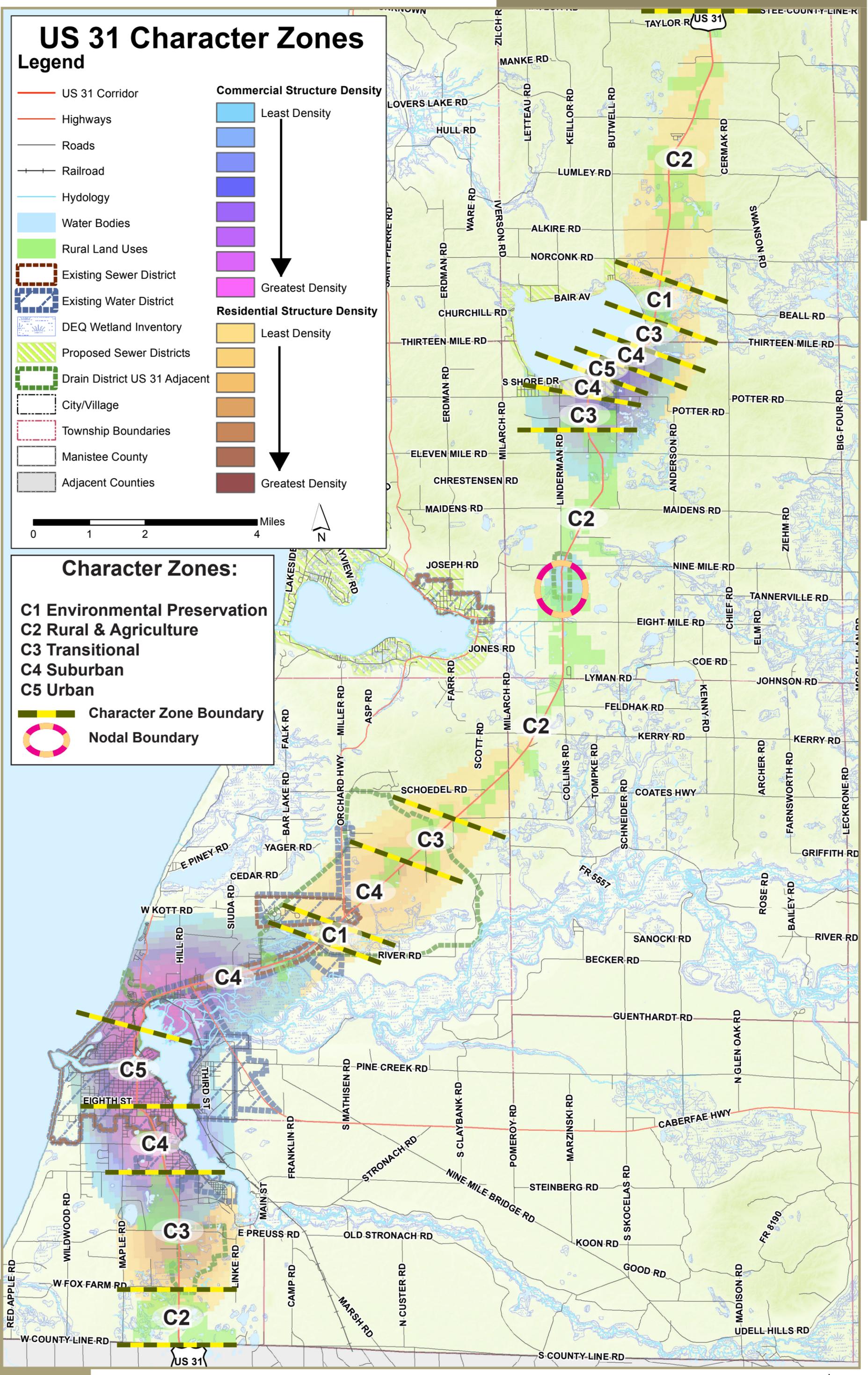


Image 44: Character Zones



# US 31 Character Zones

## Legend

- US 31 Corridor
- Highways
- Roads
- Railroad
- Hydology
- Water Bodies
- Rural Land Uses
- Existing Sewer District
- Existing Water District
- DEQ Wetland Inventory
- Proposed Sewer Districts
- Drain District US 31 Adjacent
- City/Village
- Township Boundaries
- Manistee County
- Adjacent Counties

### Commercial Structure Density

- Least Density
- 
- 
- 
- Greatest Density

### Residential Structure Density

- Least Density
- 
- 
- 
- Greatest Density

## Character Zones:

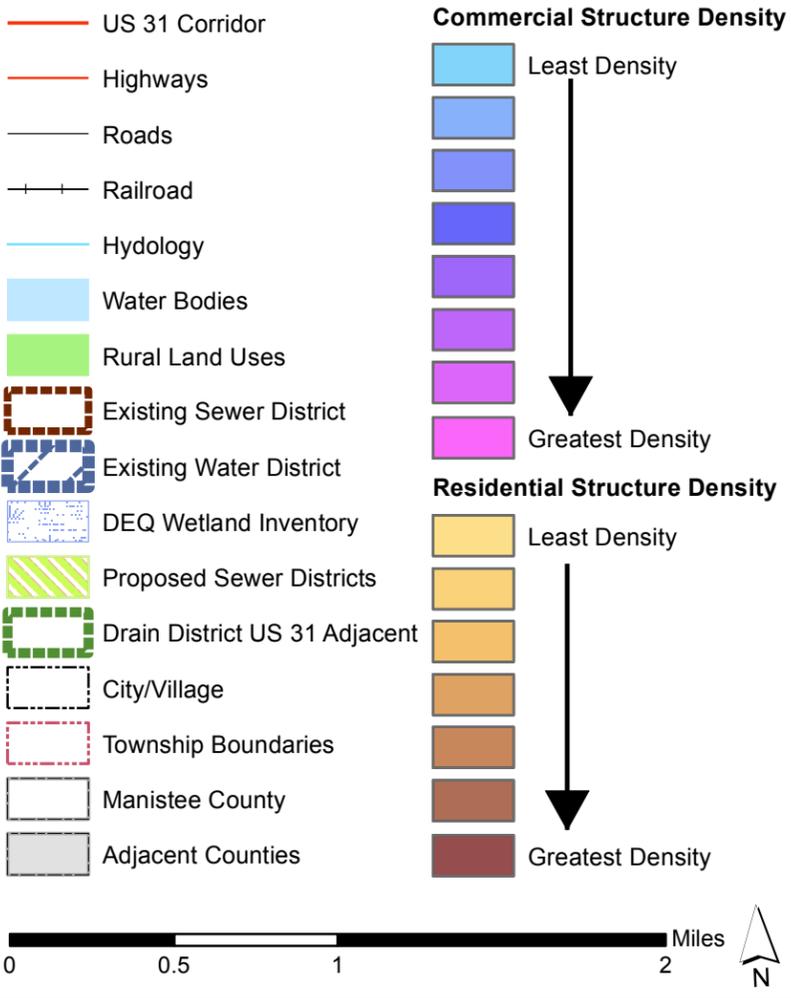
- C1 Environmental Preservation**
- C2 Rural & Agriculture**
- C3 Transitional**
- C4 Suburban**
- C5 Urban**

- Character Zone Boundary
- Nodal Boundary



# US 31 Character Zones Mid-Manistee County

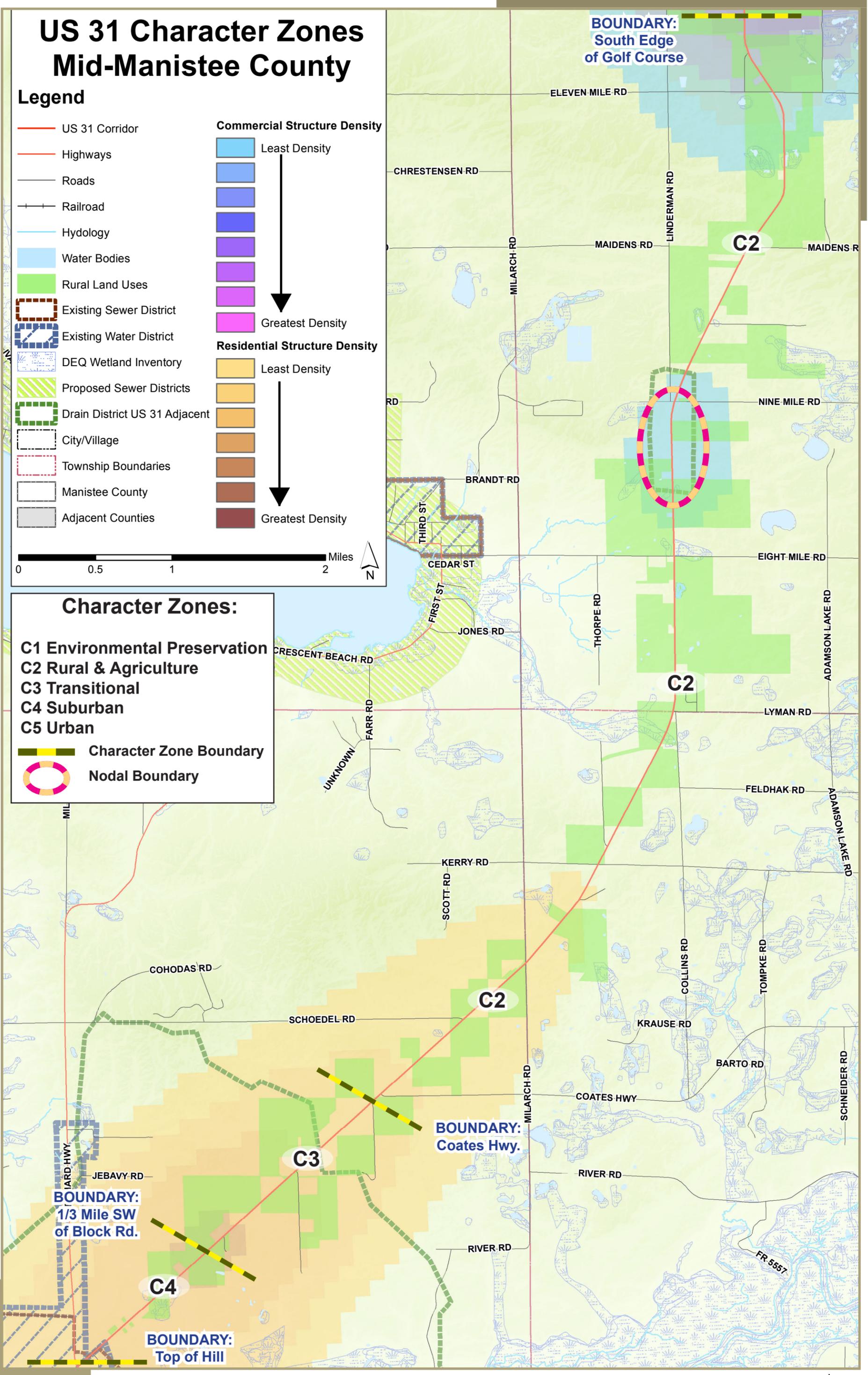
## Legend

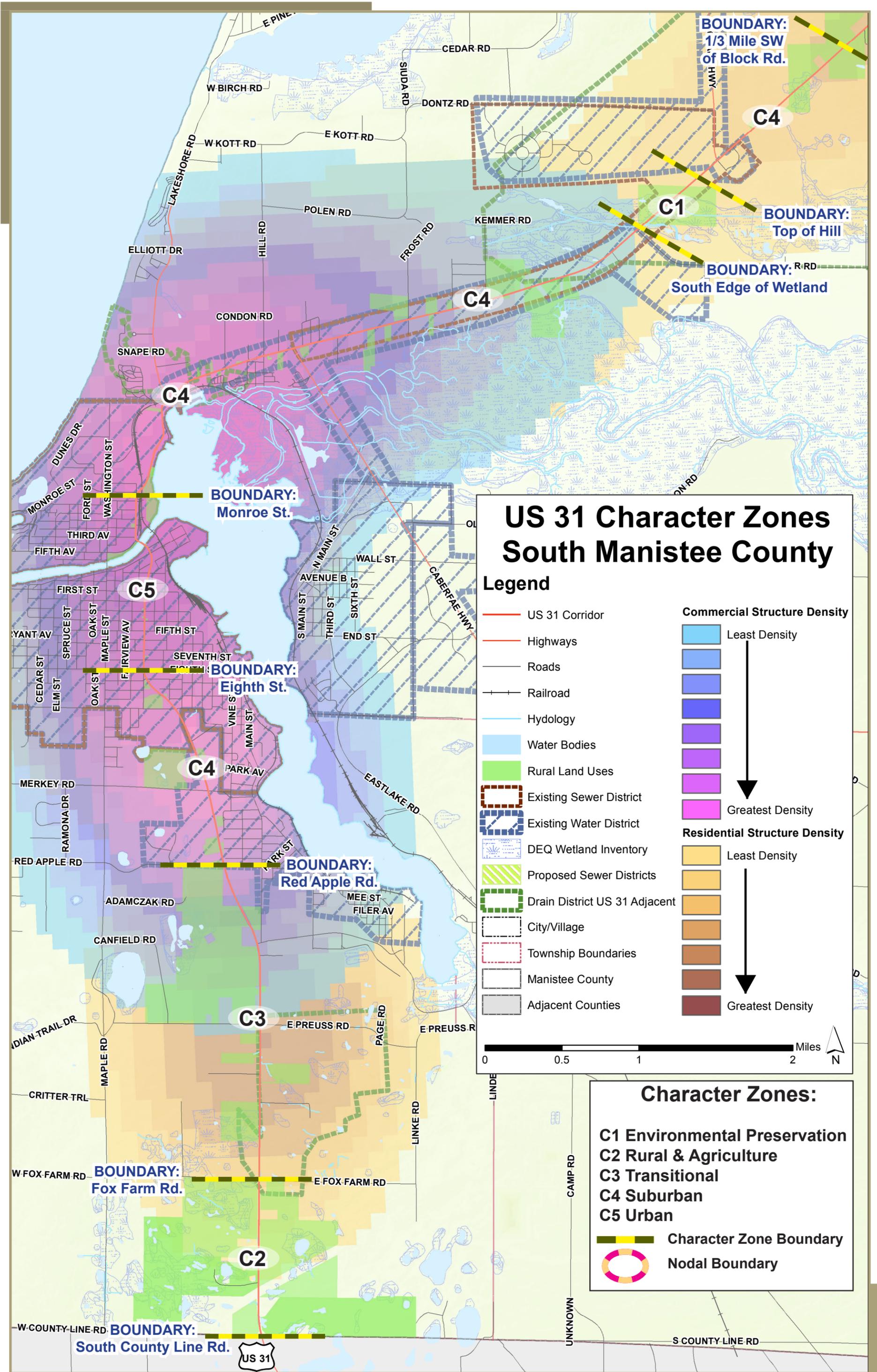


## Character Zones:

- C1 Environmental Preservation
- C2 Rural & Agriculture
- C3 Transitional
- C4 Suburban
- C5 Urban

- Character Zone Boundary
- Nodal Boundary





## Character Zone Land Use Percentages

The existing land uses within each of the defined areas of each character zone were summarized by percentage of all parcel uses and as a percentage of total parcel area for all inventoried parcels along the corridor. The statistics of parcel use and area should support the visually observed changes along the corridor from one Character Zone to the next. This would be observed if the percentages of developed parcels increases as one steadily moves from the C1 to C5 Zones and would also be supported if the uses increased from rural to residential to commercial. The percentages should also closely align within different segments of the same category of Character Zone along different parts of the corridor (i.e. the C2 Zone along north US 31 in Pleasanton Twp. should show similar percentages to the C2 Zone that extends through Brown and Bear Lake Townships.) What follows is an outline of these statistics and the correlation they present to the visually observed changes from one Character Zone to the next.

Table 6: Character Zones Land Use Percentages

Character Zone	Location	% Built	% Rural	Notes/Summaries/Outlier Characteristics
C1 Environmental	South end of Pleasanton Twp.	0%	100%	All wetland and/or steep slopes
C1 Environmental	Central Manistee Twp.	0%	100%	All wetland and/or steep slopes
C2 Rural & Ag.	Pleasanton Twp.	9.51%	90.49%	Ag. is largest land use; Residential/Commercial comprise 6% of acreage
C2 Rural & Ag.	Bear Lake & Brown Twps.	9.11%	90.89%	Open space/Ag. is largest land uses; Res./Commercial comprise 7% of acreage
C2 Rural & Ag.	Filer Twp.	11.24%	88.76%	Rec./Open space is largest land uses. Res./Commercial comprise 3% of acreage
C3 Transitional	Pleasanton Twp.	12.06%	87.94%	Open space/Ag. is largest land uses; Res./Commercial comprise 13% of acreage
C3 Transitional	Bear Lake Twp.	48.77%	51.23%	Even split; Rec. at 51% is largest land use; Commercial/Res. closely follow at 49%
C3 Transitional	Manistee Twp.	16.14%	83.86%	Ag./Open space is largest land uses; Res./Commercial comprise 16% of acreage
C3 Transitional	Filer Twp.	18.79%	81.21%	Open space is largest land use; Res./Commercial comprise 17% of acreage
C4 Suburban	North Bear Lake Village	84.59%	15.41%	Residential is largest land use at 67%, followed by Commercial at 18%
C4 Suburban	South Bear Lake Village	65.06%	34.94%	Commercial is largest land use at 51%; followed by Res./Medium Res. at 43%
C4 Suburban	North Manistee Twp.	72.87%	27.13%	Commercial is largest land use at 45%; followed by Civic/Medium Res./Res. at 41%
C4 Suburban	South Manistee Twp.	80.63%	19.37%	Airport/Commercial/Res. is largest land uses at 71%; followed by Open space at 17%
C4 Suburban	Filer Twp.	67.58%	32.42%	Commercial is largest land use at 41%; followed by Open space at 32%
C5 Urban	Bear Lake Village	42.64%	57.36%	Commercial/Civic comprise 43%; Character Zone acreage largely impacted by 55.28% of Rec. space in form of Hopkins Park
C5 Urban	City of Manistee	88.11%	11.89%	Commercial/Res./Industrial comprise 86% of land use

- Character Zones (CZ) mostly align when categorized, with percent built increasing as one becomes more urbanized. This also holds true for an increase in developed land uses such as commercial and residential as one becomes more urbanized. This holds true for C1, C2 and C4 zones; with the C3 and C5 zones each having an outlier which are explained below.
  - The Bear Lake Village Urban C5 CZ is largely impacted by the expansive Hopkins park. If the park is removed from the data, the built percent rises to 95%.
  - The Bear Lake Twp. Transitional C3 CZ displays a large built percentage which captures fringe commercial development just outside Bear Lake Village. Further change should be monitored closely for trends depicting "urban sprawl", with future analysis of parcel data which replicates the exact method which produced these findings for this transitional zone and all transitional zones along the corridor.

# How do we keep, improve, or build the preferred Character in the Urban C5 Zone?

## What does the Urban Character Zone look like?

The Urban Character C5 Zone hosts a mix of uses that creates vibrancy and energy. Businesses, residential and industrial uses are mixed with entertainment and recreation. Buildings are located closer to the road with parking in the rear. Trees line the road and are located between the sidewalk and the road. Lighting is provided and signs are on monuments or the building walls. The Urban C5 Zone is in areas that have the largest population, are the most walkable due to sidewalks, and is seen as an epicenter of the County. The City of Manistee and the Village of Bear Lake (while different in size are complementary in their role) are the two Urban Character Zones along US 31 within Manistee County. There are no plans for establishing new, or additional Urban Character Zones in the County nor are there plans to expand the current Urban Character Zone.

## Urban Character Zone Cross-Sectional Diagram:

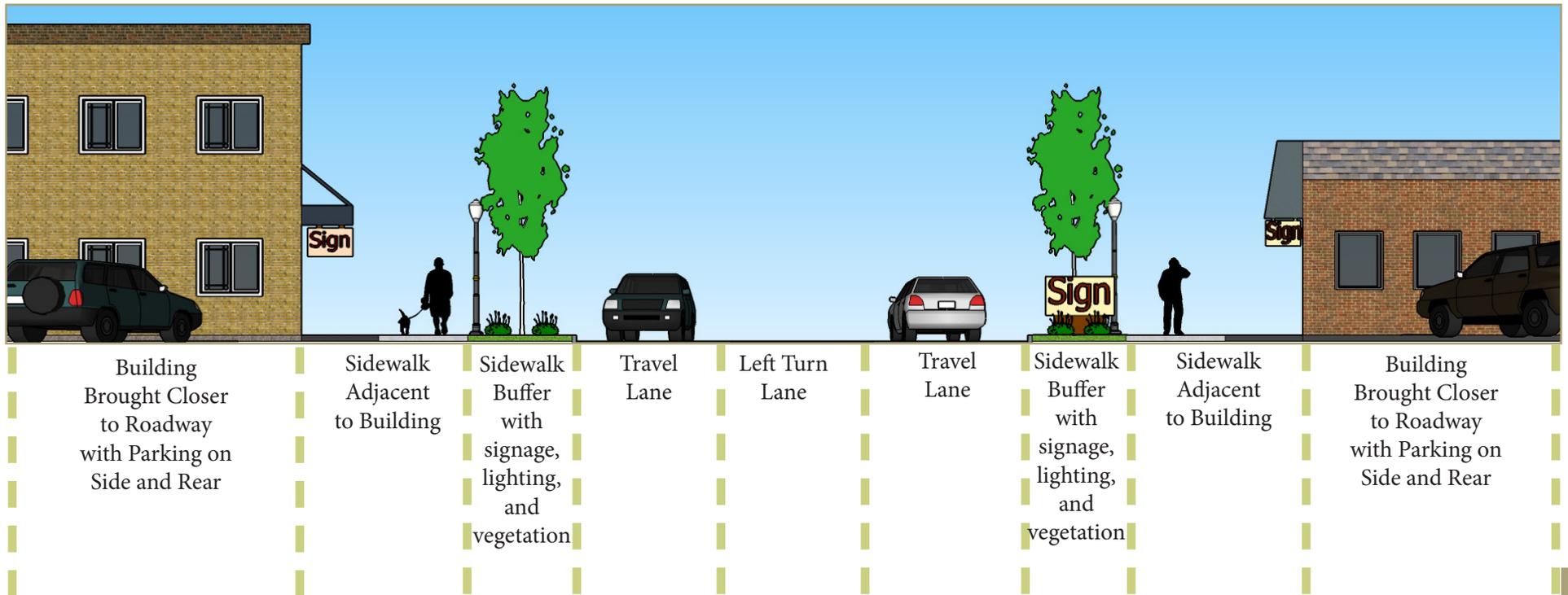


Image 45: Urban C5 Cross-Section Diagram

# Access

## Shared Driveways

- ▷ Implement the 2004 US 31 Corridor Access Management Plan closing driveways and creating shared drives.
- ▷ Require all new development to share existing driveways and create either shared drives or service drives in undeveloped areas.

## Develop a Complete Streets Urban Character Zone Policy

- ▷ Adopt a Complete Streets Policy for Urban Character Zones. While this Plan is not suggesting creating bike lanes on US 31 for the entirety it is suggesting a few key segments that may benefit from a closer inspection for their ability to handle bike lanes directly adjacent to automobile lanes such as between 8th Street and Merkey Road (Filer Township) connecting the City of Manistee sidewalks to the existing regional shopping district in Filer Township. Both of these areas currently experience cyclists riding adjacent to the road even though conditions are not ideal. Additional conversations with cyclists in the County will help precisely define the location of on-street bike lanes.

## Encourage Fixed Route Public Transportation Options

- ▷ Create fixed route stops for Manistee County public transportation. Consider 1st Street (City of Manistee), Monroe Street (City of Manistee), and Virginia Street (Village of Bear Lake).

# Activity

## Sidewalks: For New Development and Within Existing Areas

- ▷ Install sidewalks between Filer Township and the City of Manistee between 12th Street and 8th Street. This connection is critical to linking the two of the largest population centers in Manistee County. While the topography is challenging along that stretch of the corridor the need to make this connection is a priority.
- ▷ Install sidewalks between Monroe Street and M-55 at least on one side of US 31 between the City of Manistee and Manistee Township.
- ▷ Require all new development install sidewalks.

## Create Safe Areas for Pedestrians to Cross the Road

- ▷ Utilize the following tools to create safe areas for pedestrians to cross US 31 at key locations:
  - Raised Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Areas: 1st and 8th Street in the City of Manistee, 12th Street Filer Township
  - Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (Rrfb): 8th Street in the City of Manistee, 12th Street Filer Township
  - Painting/Marking Pedestrian Crossing Zones: At River Street, 1st Street, and 8th Street in the City of Manistee, Lynn Street and Hopkins Drive in the Village of Bear Lake

## Parcel Sizes

- ▷ Align commercial parcel size requirements in zoning ordinances.

## Land Use

- ▷ Encourage commercial development within Urban Character Zones and the 8 to 9 Mile Road commercial node.

## Low Impact design

- ▷ Require low impact design standards as part of new development.

# Aesthetics

## Green Infrastructure: New and Retrofitting Existing Development

- ▷ Consider green infrastructure in all new development proposals and retrofit targeted existing development.

## Landscaping: Trees and Buffers

- ▷ Line US 31 with trees that are placed between the sidewalk and the road.
- ▷ Require all new commercial development to install landscaping.

## Signage: Monument and Wall

- ▷ Revise local zoning ordinances to require only monument signs and wall signs with stipulations that all poles signs shall be considered non-conforming and thus removed when land changes ownership.

## Parking: Rear

- ▷ Require parking to be placed in the rear of the building.

## Placement of Buildings: Zero Lot Line

- ▷ In order to continue the urban look, buildings should be placed at the zero lot line (a 0 setback standard).

## Architectural Recommendations

- ▷ Consider creating architectural design standards that quantify and communicate the community's desire to continue a specified architectural style is highly recommended. The City of Manistee and the Village of Bear Lake both have distinct architectural styles that can be mimicked. Consideration should be given to the use of siding materials, windows, and front stoops/porches.

## Zoning

- ▷ Standardize zoning regulations as it pertains to dimensional requirements (setbacks, height, bulk), and uses.

**Urban Character Zone C5 Pre-Rendered Image (Vicinity of 3rd Street, City of Manistee):**



*Image 46: Urban Character Zone C5 Pre-Rendered Image*

**Urban Character Zone C5 Post-Rendered Image (Vicinity of 3rd Street, City of Manistee):**



*Image 47: Urban Character Zone C5 Post-Rendered Image*

# How do we keep, improve, or build the preferred Character in the Suburban C4 Zone?

## What does the Suburban Character Zone look like?

The Suburban Character Zone in Manistee County may be different than found elsewhere in Michigan and beyond, but for the purposes of this US 31 Corridor Plan is defined as areas that may lay adjacent to the Urban Character Zone, has a mix of uses (commercial and residential) that are more densely located together, and provides a wide range of services and goods to the region. Suburban Character Zones have the following attributes: sidewalk to encourage walkability, lighting is available for the road and pedestrian sidewalks and pathways, trees that are located between the sidewalk and the road, provide an uncluttered view of the corridor through burying overhead utility lines, have shared service drives and inter-connectivity within development, and utilize monument and wall signage. Buildings are located closer to the road, may contain one row of parking in the front but most parking is located on the side or rear of the building. Parking lots have landscaping. Curb cuts are kept at a minimum as internal connectivity and service drives lessen the number of access points to US 31 allowing for the continued flow of traffic. Waste water collection and treatment systems are reserved only for the areas that show the greatest need based on demand and availability of capacity.

## Suburban Character Zone Cross-Sectional Diagram:

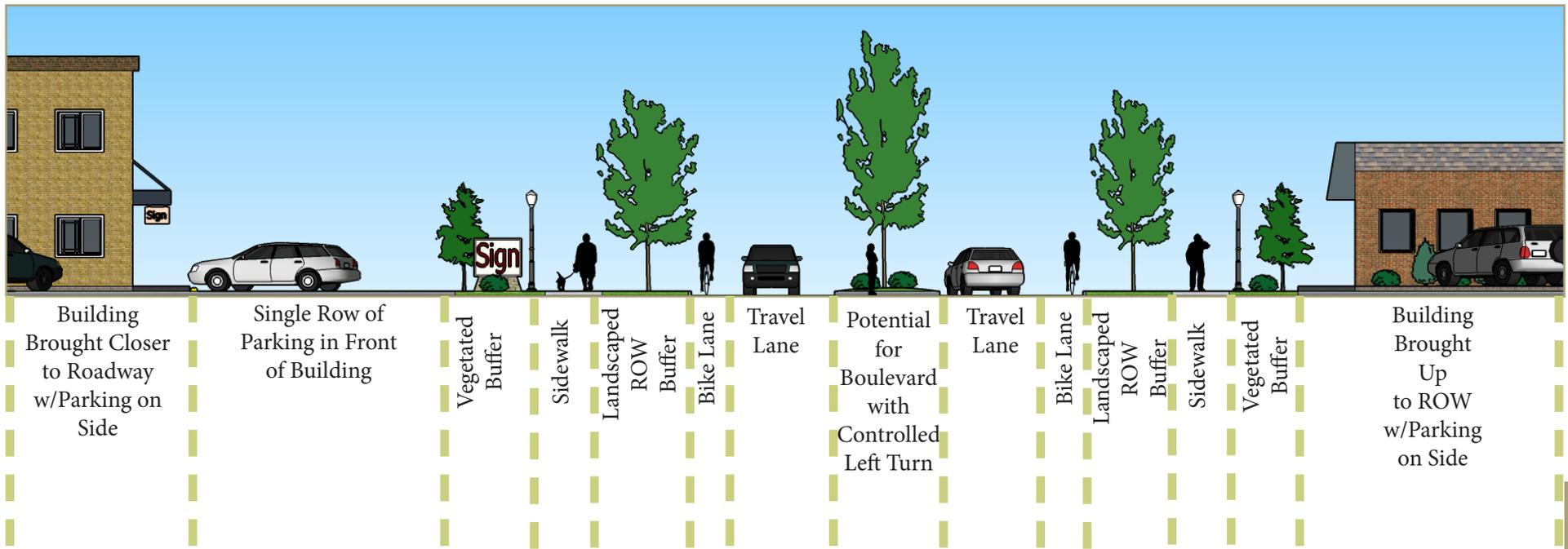


Image 48: Suburban C4 Cross-Section Diagram

# Access

## Shared Driveways

- ▷ Implement the 2004 US 31 Corridor Access Management Plan closing driveways, providing inter-connectivity, and creating shared drives as indicated.
- ▷ Require all new development share existing driveways if possible and create either shared drives or service drives in undeveloped areas.

## Develop a Complete Streets Suburban Character Zone Policy

- ▷ Adopt a Complete Streets Policy for Suburban Character Zones. Consider Hill Road to Munson Healthcare Manistee Hospital (Manistee Township). Both of these areas currently experience cyclists riding adjacent to the road even though conditions are not ideal. Additional conversations with cyclists in the County will help precisely define the location of on-street bike lanes.

## Encourage Fixed Route Public Transportation Options

- ▷ Suggestions for the placement of fixed-route stops are in the areas of Merkey Road (Filer Township), Lakeshore Road (Manistee Township), M-55 (Manistee Township), in front of Munson Healthcare Manistee Hospital (Manistee Township), Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Casino (Manistee Township), Manistee Blacker Airport (Manistee Township).

# Activity

## Sidewalks

Consider the following locations for sidewalks:

- ▷ Filer Township between Red Apple Road and Merkey Road on both sides of US-31. The increasing number of residents who walk along US 31 in Filer Township along the busy road poses a significant safety issue. School age children crossing US 31 to get to school and home again from Manistee Catholic Central, Manistee High School, or Casman Academy could use a sidewalk and designated crossing areas along the corridor for some protection from motorists. Consider participating in Safe Route to School Program.
- ▷ North of the City of Manistee at Monroe Street by extending the sidewalk along the corridor to M-55 or Caberfae Highway. This 1.6 mile stretch sees a number of people walking to their various destinations. Dirt paths within the grassed areas along the road is evidence that people traverse this stretch regardless of a lack of a sidewalk.
- ▷ The 2.3 mile stretch from M-55 to Blacker Airport has great potential for creating walkability. All new development proposals should include sidewalks.

## Low Impact Design

- ▷ Require low impact design standards as part of new development.

## Pedestrian Safe Zones

- ▷ Utilize the following tools to create safe areas for pedestrians at key locations where pedestrians are known to cross US 31:
  - **Raised Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Areas:** Merkey Road in Filer Township
  - **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (Rrfb):** Merkey Road in Filer Township
  - **Painting/Marking Pedestrian Crossing Zones:** At all intersections

# Aesthetics

## Waste Water Collection and Treatment Options

- ▷ New waste water collection and treatment systems should be subject to a Infrastructure Concurrency Policy, be part of the Capital Improvement Plan, and supported by developer initiatives. There are no new areas of the US 31 corridor where waste water collections and treatment systems are planned for or recommended.

## Grey and Green Infrastructure

- ▷ Consideration should be given to green infrastructure before using grey infrastructure in all new development proposals and retrofit targeted existing development

## Landscaping

- ▷ Line US 31 with trees that are placed between the sidewalk and the road.
- ▷ Require all new commercial development to install landscaping; landscaping standards should be well defined within zoning ordinances.

## Signage

- ▷ Monument and wall signs are recommended and existing pole signs shall be considered non-conforming and removed when land changes ownership.

## Parking

- ▷ Parking should be placed in a single row in the front of the building, side and rear of the building.

## Placement of Buildings

- ▷ It is recommended that buildings be placed closer to the road only allowing for the width of a single row of parking, sidewalk, and landscaped areas.

**Suburban Character Zone C4 Pre-Rendered Image (Vicinity of Arthur St. Launch, City of Manistee):**



*Image 49: Suburban Character Zone C4 Pre-Rendered Image*

**Suburban Character Zone C4 Post-Rendered Image (Vicinity of Arthur Street Launch, City of Manistee):**



*Image 50: Suburban Character Zone C4 Post-Rendered Image*

# How do we keep, improve, or build the preferred Character in the Transitional C3 Zone?

## What does the Transitional Zone look like?

This area may be found between the Suburban Character Zone and the rural areas of the corridor (or Rural Character Zone). It is where some residential houses and businesses may be found lining the road but the density is low and the lots are large. The type of commercial development found is related to agriculture or rural living (for example: outdoor retail) but also may be geared toward recreational uses. A large portion of the land is used for agriculture. There are few curb cuts, no lighting, or sidewalks. The area is not walkable. Buildings are set back from the road with one row of parking in the front and the rest of the parking located on the side or in the rear. This area is the interface between medium density and very little density.

## Transitional Character Zone Cross-Sectional Diagram:

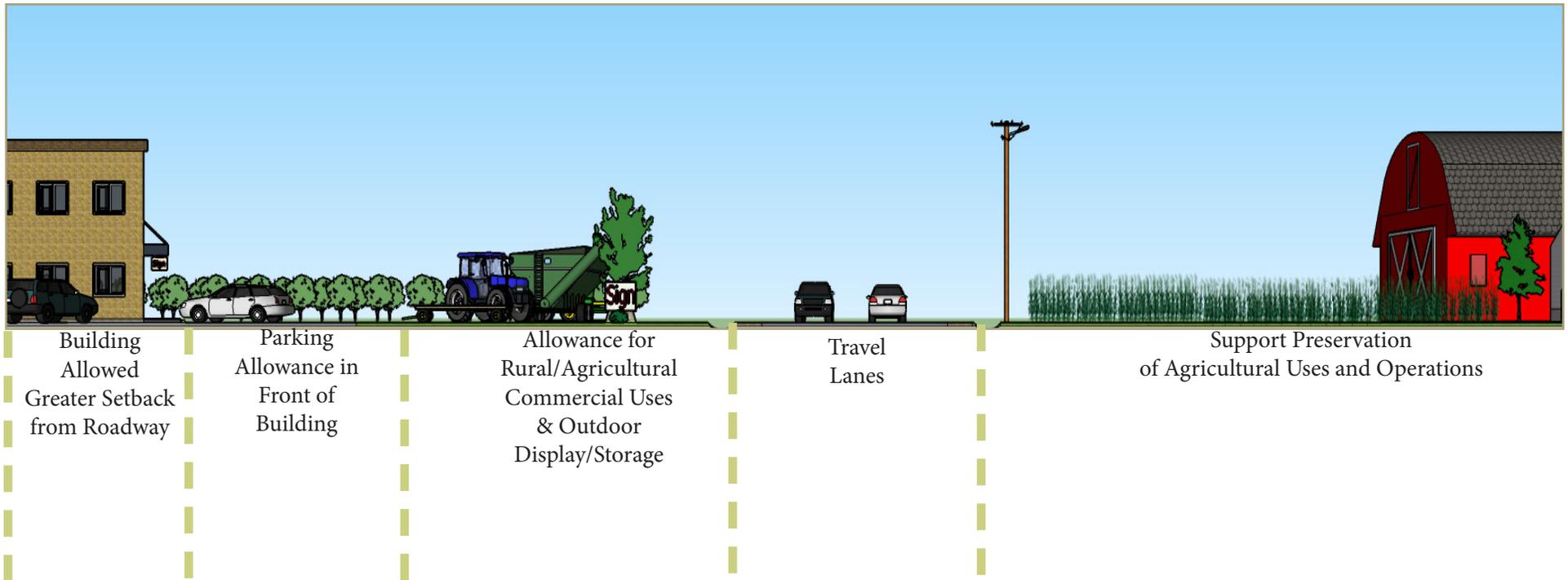


Image 51: Transitional C3 Cross-Section Diagram

# Access

## Mobility: Automobile

- ▷ Maintain mobility on US 31 by discouraging additional curb cuts; Where practical close duplicate drives and create shared drives with adjacent development.



Image 52: Limited Curb Cuts Example



Image 53: Shared Access Example

# Activity

## Sidewalks

Transitional Zones do not usually have the need to install sidewalks but in Bear Lake Township there is an opportunity to connect places of employment and recreation with the Village center. Therefore, it is recommended that sidewalks be considered for the following area:

- ▷ Wise Street to Cody Street
  - Link the Village of Bear Lake to the Township commercial district (where the market, hardware store, and bank are located) to neighborhoods by installing a sidewalk between Wise Street and Cody Street (creating a connection between two areas that already have sidewalks but lack the connection between the two).

## Land Use: Large Lot

- ▷ Limit land uses to large lot residential that is set back from the road with very little commercial development. Where existing commercial development exists, such as Bear Lake Township, consider limiting new commercial development to agricultural and rural related businesses. While the Suburban Character Zone may have commercial development, the Transition Character Zone is meant to phase out commercial and residential uses as the zones move toward the Agricultural and Rural Character Zone.
- ▷ Other types of Transitional Character Zone land uses may include golf courses and other recreational uses.

# Aesthetics

## Waste Water Treatment and Collection Systems: None Planned

- ▷ There are no new areas of the US 31 corridor where waste water collections and treatment systems are planned or recommended for.

## Signage: Small and No Lighting

- ▷ Encourage small monument signs and wall signs with stipulations that all poles signs shall be considered non-conforming and thus removed when land changes ownership.
- ▷ Signs shall not be lit.

## Parking: Side and Rear

- ▷ Require parking to be placed in a single row in the front of the building as well as on side and the rear of the building.

## Placement of Buildings: Deeper Setback

- ▷ Require buildings to be placed further off the road allowing for the width of a single row of parking and substantial landscaping that uses natural vegetation (i.e. is not necessarily a groomed front yard).

## Landscaping: Natural

- ▷ Use natural vegetation to help maintain a rural atmosphere is recommended.

## Zoning

Standardize zoning regulations as it pertains to dimensional requirements (setbacks, height, bulk), and uses.

**Transitional Character Zone C3 Pre-Rendered Image (Vicinity of Bear Country Highlands, Bear Lake Twp.):**



*Image 54: Transitional Character Zone C3 Pre-Rendered Image*

**Transitional Character Zone C3 Post-Rendered Image (Vicinity of Bear Country Highlands, Bear Lake Twp.):**



*Image 55: Transitional Character Zone C3 Post-Rendered Image*

# How do we keep, improve, or build the preferred Character in the Agricultural and Rural C2 Zone?

## What does the Agricultural and Rural Character Zone like?

The Agriculture and Rural Character Zone is undoubtedly one of the most important features that defines “Northern Michigan” for visitors (and those of us who live here) and is home to a significant industrial sector that provides a substantial amount of financial returns for the region. Ensuring that the Agriculture and Rural Character Zone remains in tact is vital to our economy. What defines the Agricultural & Rural Character Zones are the sweeping vistas of the actively cultivated orchards and fields of crops as well as their associated farmhouses and barns. Other land uses may be found but are located in a commercial node that has businesses that service the agricultural and outdoor community. The agricultural and outdoor commercial node is small in area, compact, and located at the intersection of Nine Mile and US 31. Cultural assets, such as churches, township halls, and cemeteries are the other land uses that are found in the Agricultural and Rural Character Zone. There are no sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, or curbs.

## Rural Character Zone Cross-Sectional Diagram:

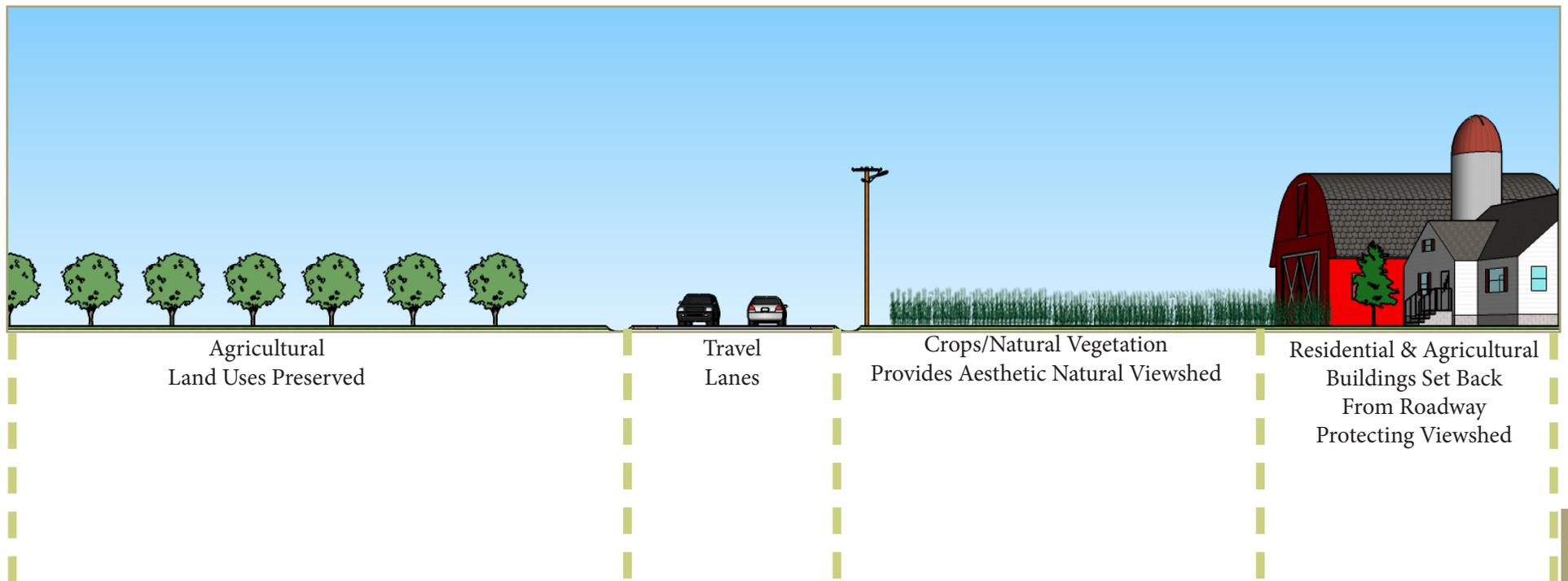


Image 56: Rural C2 Cross-Section Diagram

# Access

## Mobility: Automobile

- ▷ Maintain mobility on US 31 by discouraging additional curb cuts and encouraging shared drives where feasible.



Image 57 (Above): Rural Institutional Example

# Activity

## Land Use

- ▷ The defining features of the Agriculture and Rural Character Zone occurs on the adjacent land uses. It is the use of land that defines the character. Therefore, land uses should remain those that are agricultural and service the agricultural community. Other uses that fill a basic community need for social, spiritual, and civic needs should be allowed but commercial uses are discouraged unless they are located at a node and provide a commercial service to the agricultural community. No retail or food related establishments that are not directly tied to servicing the agricultural community are encouraged.

## AG Preservation Tool Box

- Utilize agricultural and rural character preservation tools.

Image 58 (Below): Rural Viewshed Worth Protecting



# Aesthetics

## Views: Viewshed Plan

- ▷ Prepare a Rural Scenic View-shed Plan that maps out the important views.

## Traffic: No Lights

- ▷ No traffic lights are recommended

## Building Location

- ▷ Building should be set back from the road.

## Landscaping: Cultural & Natural

- ▷ Use natural vegetation to help maintain a rural atmosphere is recommended.
- ▷ Preserve and enhance cultural landscapes which are geographic areas and places that may or may not be man made but signify an important feature to the history of the area. Example includes Pleasanton Township Hall, Pleasanton Township Cemetery

## Signage

- ▷ Billboards are not allowed.
- ▷ If signage is desired then it should be small, monument mounted with no lighting.

**Rural Character Zone C2 Pre-Rendered Image (Vicinity of Lyman Rd., Brown & Bear Lake Twp.):**



*Image 59: Rural Character Zone C2 Pre-Rendered Image*

**Rural Character Zone C2 Post-Rendered Image (Vicinity of Lyman Rd., Brown & Bear Lake Twp.):**



*Image 60: Rural Character Zone C2 Post-Rendered Image*

# How do we keep, improve, or build the preferred character in the Environmental Preservation C1 Character Zone?

## What does the Environmental Preservation Character Zone look like?

The Environmental Preservation Character Zone are areas that contain significant environmental contributions to Manistee County. These areas contain wetlands (some regulated some not) significant stands of trees, as well as other areas communities feel are worthy of our environmental stewardship. They are the areas that, while may not provide an economic benefit to the County, are worthy of our protection and stewardship because of their ecological contributions to our environment.

## Environmental Preservation Character Zone Cross-Sectional Diagram:

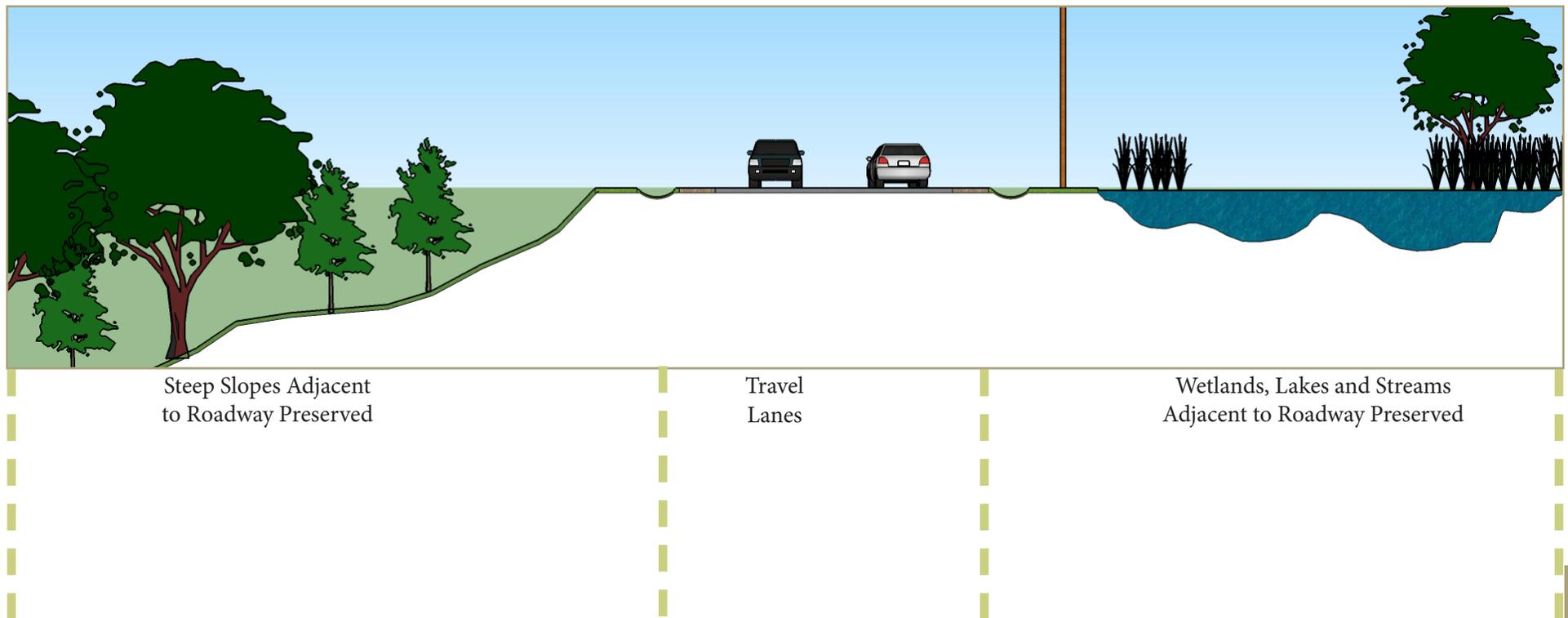


Image 61: Environmental Preservation C1 Cross-Section Diagram

# Access

## Mobility: Automobile

- ▷ Maintain mobility on US 31 by discouraging additional curb cuts.

# Activity

## Land Use

- ▷ New development is discouraged.

# Aesthetics

## Views: Viewshed Plan

- ▷ Prepare a Rural Scenic View-shed Plan that maps out the important views.

## Traffic: No Lights

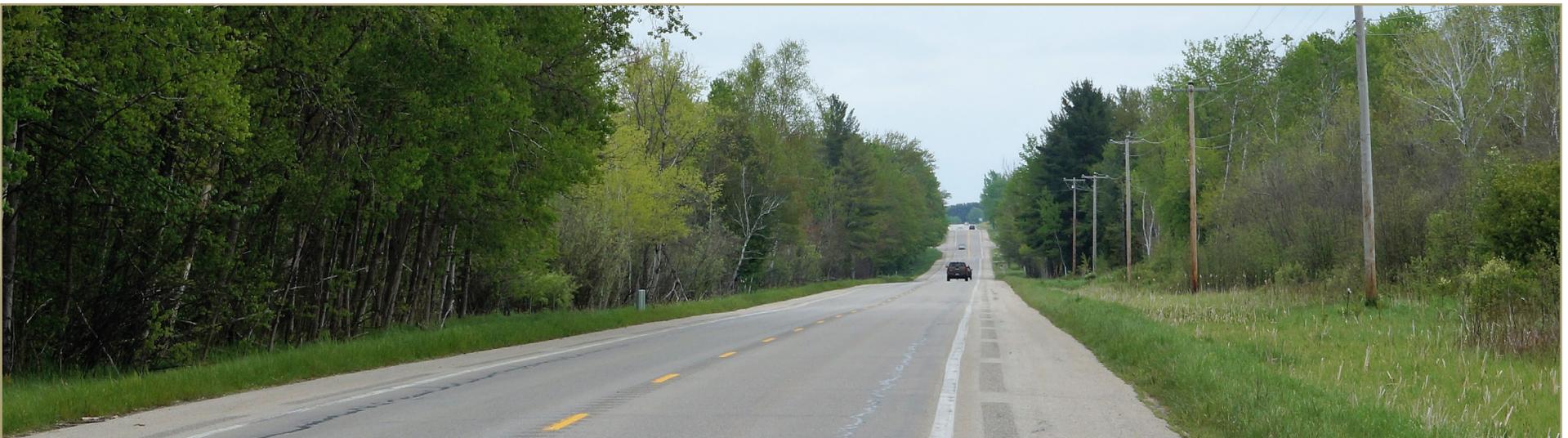
- ▷ No traffic lights are recommended

## Landscaping: Cultural & Natural

- ▷ Use natural vegetation to help maintain a rural atmosphere.



*Image 62 (Above): Wetland*



*Image 63 (Below): Wetland*

## Route Planner

This Plan lays out a vision for the US 31 Corridor that seeks to create a livable corridor by addressing access, activity, and aesthetics. The route begins with the following first steps:

### Creation of Character Zones

Create the foundation for standardizing land use decisions within all US 31 communities by creating Character Zones by taking the following steps:

- Achieve consensus on language that describes a standardization of existing and future land use descriptions within master plans.
- Achieve consensus on language that describes a standardization of zoning districts and/or overlays within zoning ordinances.

### Outcome

Promotes nodal commercial development that strengthens existing commercial areas, places development in areas where capital improvements are located and where neighborhoods may be supported, preserves the rural and scenic character of the County while still allowing the integration of land uses that support the agricultural industry, and provides for protection of significant environmental and natural resource areas.

### Measures

Use of the Structural Density Analysis as completed in 2017 as a base line set of data to mea-

sure density, open space, and overall integrity of the Character Zone boundaries.

### Creation of Character Within Character Zones

Utilize Form Based Code principles and leading practice in ensuring the creation of character as described in this Plan along the corridor; consideration should be given to the following aspects that are part of all new development proposals within both the public and private realm:

- Landscaping
- Use of architectural details in building type (windows, porches, stoops, building materials)
- Parking Location
- Walkability
- Access Management

### Outcome

Ensures that character and creation of “place” is developed over time as new development and in-fill development occurs within each Character Zone by ensuring the development proposals pay attention to targeted details that speak to how the community functions, looks, and feels as a place.

### Measures

Standard set of measures would include cataloging the number of curb cuts closed, length in sidewalk installed (increasing walkability scores), number of projects that propose architectural design details that create character, number of

development proposals that reduce parking and place parking in the preferred locations, and a visual preference survey completed by residents to determine if character is being developed that meets their expectations.

### Community Resiliency

Consider sustainability and resilience to all new development proposals by seeking to ensure that they are energy efficient, located in locations that mitigate natural hazards and utilize low impact design methods, have considered renewable energy options for their power generation needs, and utilizes multiple types of transportation options.

### Outcome

Ensuring that the County, which is integrated with water (contains many drainage districts, traversed by rivers, and located on the shores of Lake Michigan) and is nestled within a Federal forest is able to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations without disruption to everyday life and the local economy.

### Measures

Determine land fragmentation and open space integrity as compared to baseline 2017 data, using SEEDs energy efficiency audit as base line data and compare results over 5 year increments, incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) into County wide building code requirements and track the number of LEED certified structures built.

## Route Planner Guiding Recommendations

- Adoption of the US 31 Corridor Plan and plan content by each respective local unit of government through which US 31 traverses
- Through collaboration of all local units of government along the US 31 corridor seek technical assistance for development of language which supports and maintains areas of established character along the length of the corridor in Manistee County.
- Work with the County Planning Department, consultants, appointed and elected officials on the development of zoning ordinance amendments as needed.

## Suggested Regulatory Measures Table

	Lot	Bulk					Setbacks			Building Design		
	Density	Min. Parcel Width (ft)	Max. Height (ft)	Min. Floor Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	Max. % Lot Coverage	Min. Exterior Wall (ft)	Front & Road Yard (ft)	Side (ft)	Rear (ft)	Water Yard (ft)	Window Area (*1)	Other Architectural & Design Features
Urban	1 unit per 2,500 ft <sup>2</sup>	25 ft	No Restrictions	400 ft <sup>2</sup>	100%	n/a	0 ft	0-5 ft	10 ft	25 ft	15-25%	Stoop, Entryway Building materials made of brick, stucco, plank, glass materials
Suburban	1 unit per half acre	100 ft	No Restrictions	400 ft <sup>2</sup>	50%-75%	20 ft	15-25 ft	5-10 ft	10 ft	(*2) 50-100 ft	15-25%	Stoop, Entryway Building materials made of brick, stucco, plank, glass materials
Transition	1 unit per acre	200 ft	35 ft	400 ft <sup>2</sup>	40%-50%	20 ft	100 ft	5-20 ft	25 ft	(*2) 50-100 ft	15-25%	Stoop, Entryway Building materials made of brick, stucco, plank, glass materials
Rural/AG.	(*5) 1 unit per 40 acres	300 ft	35 ft	400 ft <sup>2</sup>	50%	20 ft	200 ft	5-10 ft	25 ft	50-100 ft	15-25%	Buildings shall look similar to existing agricultural buildings: barns, farmhouse, etc.
Preservation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	Landscaping	Signage		Parking	On-Road Lanes	Walkability		
	Public (ROW)	Private	Type	Location	Traffic Calming	Bike	Sidewalks	Pathway
Urban	Trees	(*3) Adhere to existing buffer classification; Landscaping	Monument, Wall; w/light	On-Street, Rear	Bump-outs, crossing areas	No	Required	n/a
Suburban	Trees	(*3) Adhere to existing buffer classification; Landscaping	Monument, Wall; w/light	Single-row in front, Side, Rear	Bump-outs, crossing areas	Yes	Required	(Preservation of space) or Connection to existing regional trail system required
Transition	Natural Veg.	Adhere to existing buffer classification; Landscaping	Monument no lighting	Single-row in front, Side, Rear	Crossing areas	Yes	Required unless connected to trail system	(Preservation of space) or Connection to existing regional trail system required
Rural/AG.	Natural Veg.	n/a	(*4) yes, no lights	n/a	n/a	no	no	no
Preservation	n/a	n/a	n/a	no	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

### Incentives to Meet Standards: \*

- (\*1) Due to safety concerns window signs may not cover the whole window to allow for public safety to see within building from the exterior if necessary.
- (\*2) Must maintain a vegetated buffer strip
- (\*3) Buffering necessary between buildings and sidewalks/pathways and between sidewalks and roadway
- (\*4) Allowed for roadside stands and other agricultural/rural related business, historic markers
- (\*5) Additional units allowed if cluster development with open space preservation is utilized

Table 7: Suggested Regulatory Measures