

# VILLAGE OF MUIR MASTER PLAN

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*Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan*



# Master Plan 2022

VILLAGE OF MUIR, IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Adopted January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Prepared with the assistance of:



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# Acknowledgments

The participation and cooperation of the numerous community leaders and residents in the preparation of the Village of Muir Master Plan is greatly appreciated. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the following individuals:

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Doug Hyland – President  
Laura Steward – President Pro-Term  
Brent Piselli – Trustee  
Jacob Garber – Trustee  
Derek Kacos – Trustee  
Brian Nelson – Trustee  
Ron Vanderwerff – Trustee

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# Introduction and Background

The community master plan is a guide to create a land use development and preservation vision and outline processes to achieve that vision over time. This document represents the first planning and development process undertaken by the Village of Muir.

As outlined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), a community's Master Plan is the visionary document that guides the long-range development of the community. As public policy relies on accurate and up-to-date information, the Master Plan outlines information that is important in land use decisions such as geographic locations, natural features, demographics, and transportation networks. It also offers an opportunity for the community to identify deficiencies or areas of improvement that the community can work towards achieving in the form of goals and objectives. With a strong foundation of current data and the established desires of residents, the Master Plan provides direction for the community's land use planning and preservation endeavors for years to come.

The Village of Muir Master Plan follows this process, identifying data and features that are important land use considerations, gathering input from residents and stakeholders throughout the process, and synthesizing these findings to create a coherent document that holds lasting value. This Plan also incorporates "best practices" from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) so the Village of Muir can position itself to become "Redevelopment Ready Certified," providing additional avenues for accessing state funding. As established in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006), the Master Plan also provides the basis for establishing a land use zoning ordinance.

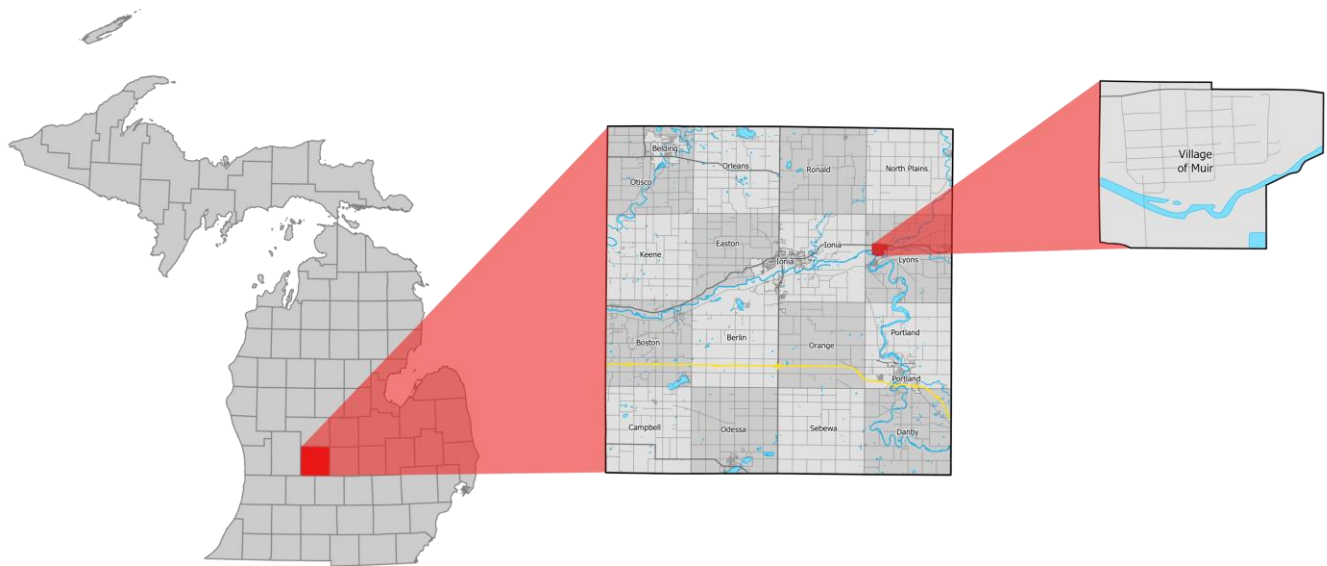


# Regional Context

## LOCATION

The Village of Muir is located in northeastern Ionia County, Michigan near the confluence of the Grand River and the Maple River. The Village is located entirely within Lyons Township and sits half a mile north of the Village of Lyons. The County seat is the City of Ionia, located seven miles to the west. The closest “large” city is Lansing which is roughly 25 miles to the southeast.

M-21 – the east-west highway connecting Flint and Grand Rapids – runs along the northern boundary of the Village. M-66 – a major north-south route connecting the Indiana border to Kalkaska in northern Michigan travels through Ionia seven miles to the west. The Village is also located roughly ten miles north of access to Interstate 96. Although seemingly removed from large metropolitan areas, the Village of Muir is only 40 minutes from downtown Lansing and 50 minutes from downtown Grand Rapids.



*Map illustrating location of the Village of Muir within Ionia County and the State of Michigan.*

## Village History



Prior to European settlement, the land now occupied by the Village of Muir was home to numerous indigenous American tribes. In 1785, a Pottawatomie tribe encamped on Arthurburg Hill (roughly where Arthurburg Street is today) fought off members of the Chippewa and Menominee tribes<sup>1</sup>. Just as the Maple River and the Grand River offered tactical advantages for warring indigenous nations, the confluence of the two rivers also provided an ideal logistical hub for Michigan's bustling lumber industry during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad was being constructed westward in the 1850s, lumbermills were erected and provided a major economic draw to the region. The Village of Muir was incorporated in 1871 with much of its downtown dating from this period.

Just as railways shaped the Village of Muir, the advent of automobiles brought new changes to the region. M-21 was one of the earliest east-west state roadways, with a section running through Ionia County first constructed in the 1920s. The Village of Muir is home to one of the oldest protestant churches in the state, as the Muir Church of Christ was constructed in 1861 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. A time capsule commemorating the Village's founding is buried outside the post office and is set to be opened in 2031.

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1.) Branch, E. (1916). *History of Ionia County, Michigan: Her People, Industries and Institutions, with Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and Geneological Records of Many Old Families*. Accessed from: [https://archive.org/stream/historyioniacou01brangoog/historyioniacou01brangoog\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/historyioniacou01brangoog/historyioniacou01brangoog_djvu.txt)

2.) *Michigan Highways*. (2022, May 22). M-21. Accessed from: <http://www.michiganhighways.org/listings/M-021.html>



# Demographic Profile



Demographic data provides a useful “snapshot” of important characteristics influencing land use planning.

Demographic analysis includes observing data related to population and households, income, employment, commuting patterns, and housing types. These factors provide an understanding of existing conditions and inform decisions such as which housing types may be most needed, what facilities should be planned for children, families, and seniors, and where recreational amenities may be desired. The table below provides an overview of the Village of Muir and includes the same data for the Village of Lyons and Ionia County for comparison.

	Muir Village	Lyons Village	Ionia County
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>66,804</b>
<b>Households</b>			
Total Households	267	293	23,071
Average Family Size	3.44	3.43	3.12
<b>Housing</b>			
Total Housing Units	276	307	24,638
<b>Age</b>			
Under 5 years	5.8%	7.8%	5.8%
5 – 17 years	25.8%	18.2%	16.5%
18 – 64 years	56.1%	64.7%	62.9%
65+ years	12.3%	9.3%	14.8%
Median Age	32.7	36.3	38.6
<b>Income and Poverty*</b>			
Median Income	\$29,620	Not Available	\$60,139
Poverty, all people	22.5%	12.1%	10.5%
Poverty, under 18 years	34.8%	17.3%	13.7%

**Population, Households, and Family Size** – The Village of Muir has an estimated population of 646 residents, fewer than neighboring Lyons but larger than other villages in Ionia County such as Clarksville, Hubbardston, and Pewamo. The Village of Muir also features fewer households than the Village of Lyons. Average family size is slightly larger than those in the Village of Lyons however and is much larger than the average family size across Ionia County.

**Age of Population** – The Village of Muir has a higher proportion of children and teenagers than the Village of Lyons and Ionia County. It also features a younger median age than both Lyons and Ionia County. This along with a larger average family size indicates that the Village of Muir likely has more school-age children, potentially influencing the need for school facilities, playgrounds, and other child and teenage-oriented uses. The Village of Muir also features a higher percentage of senior residents compared to the Village of Lyons but still remains below the Ionia County average.

**Income and Poverty** – The Village of Muir features a significantly lower median income when compared to the Ionia County median income. This corresponds to the community’s high poverty rate of 22.5% - nearly double that of neighboring Village of Lyons and the average across Ionia County. There is also a significant amount of children and teenagers living in poverty, as 1/3 of residents under the age of 18 are considered impoverished according to census data. Although poverty is complex and due to many factors, this is likely influenced by a lack of local employment opportunities along with distance to higher educational institutions.

**Commuting Characteristics** – Due to its small size, the Village of Muir features a limited number of residents living and working within village limits. The table below illustrates the commuting characteristics of Village of Muir residents.

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts	
Employed in Muir, Live Outside	55
Live in Muir, Employed Outside	241
Employed and Live in Muir	4

The daily outflow of residents working in other communities represents the Village’s status as a “bedroom community.” This is likely influenced by the lack of local employment opportunities as well as the community’s proximity to M-21 – a major highway connecting the Village to St. Johns to the east and Ionia to the west.

**Housing Characteristics** – The Village of Muir features a wide range of housing types – from single-family houses to duplexes to small-scale garden apartment buildings. The table below illustrates the housing types currently existing within the Village:

Units in Structure	Occupied Housing Units		
	Muir Village	Lyons Village	Ionia County
1, Detached House	166	204	17,080
1, Attached House	8	0	314
2 Apartments	4	11	787
3 or 4 Apartments	17	5	567
5 to 9 Apartments	46	0	483
10 or More Apartments	12	0	1,264
Mobile Home or Other Housing Type	14	73	2,576
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>23, 071</b>

This data indicates that the Village of Muir contains a high number of single-family houses as well as small-scale multi-unit dwellings. Over 62% of the Village's housing stock are single-family houses. 5% of the Village's housing stock are mobile homes, lower than both the Village of Lyons (25%) and Ionia County in general (11%).



# Existing Land Use

# 3

Knowledge of current land uses allows the Village to consider the compatibility of new land uses and is a valuable tool when considering land management and the delivery of key public services. The existing land use survey provides an inventory of land use within the community and is a key source of background information used in developing the Master Plan.

The Village of Muir consists of seven main land use categories. Different from zoning districts, land uses describe the overarching character of an area and how the land is occupied. The existing land uses represented in the Village of Muir are discussed below.



## Residential

The predominant land use in the Village, Residential areas are defined by single-family houses, duplexes, mobile homes, and other small-scale housing types. These structures typically occupy small-to-medium size lots on the Village's tree-lined blocks. Most of this land use is located between the Fred Meijer Shiawassee Trail on the south and M-21 on the north.



## Multi-Family Residential

This land use is identified as larger residential housing types, such as garden-style apartments, senior housing, and apartment complexes. This land use is concentrated east of Blanchard Street on the Village's east side.



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## Downtown Mixed Use

Occupying most of the historic downtown corridor, this land use is largely defined by buildings designed first-floor commercial uses with residential and office uses located upstairs. However, most of the storefronts are vacant or have been re-purposed as residential. These structures are typically built close to the street and resemble the traditional business districts of the late 19th century. This land use is concentrated along Superior Street just north of the Maple River.



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## Highway Commercial

This land use resembles more auto-oriented commercial development, such as strip shopping centers, drive-through restaurants, gas stations, and big-box retail stores. Structures in this category typically feature large parking lots and are located far from the roadway. This land use is concentrated along the M-21 corridor on the north side of the Village.



## Parks and Open Space

This land use represents areas reserved for parks, recreational amenities, and natural spaces. Parks and green spaces are interspersed throughout the Village – although they are especially numerous along M-21. The Fred Meijer Shiawassee Trail and abutting parcels separate the traditional downtown area on the south with the largely residential land uses to the north. Just east of the Village limits, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) operates a boat access site off M-21 that provides access to the Maple River.



## Education and Public Institutions

This land use represents Village-owned properties, schools, places of worship, and other public institutions. There are multiple churches located in the Village. Twin Rivers Elementary School represents the largest land use in this category.



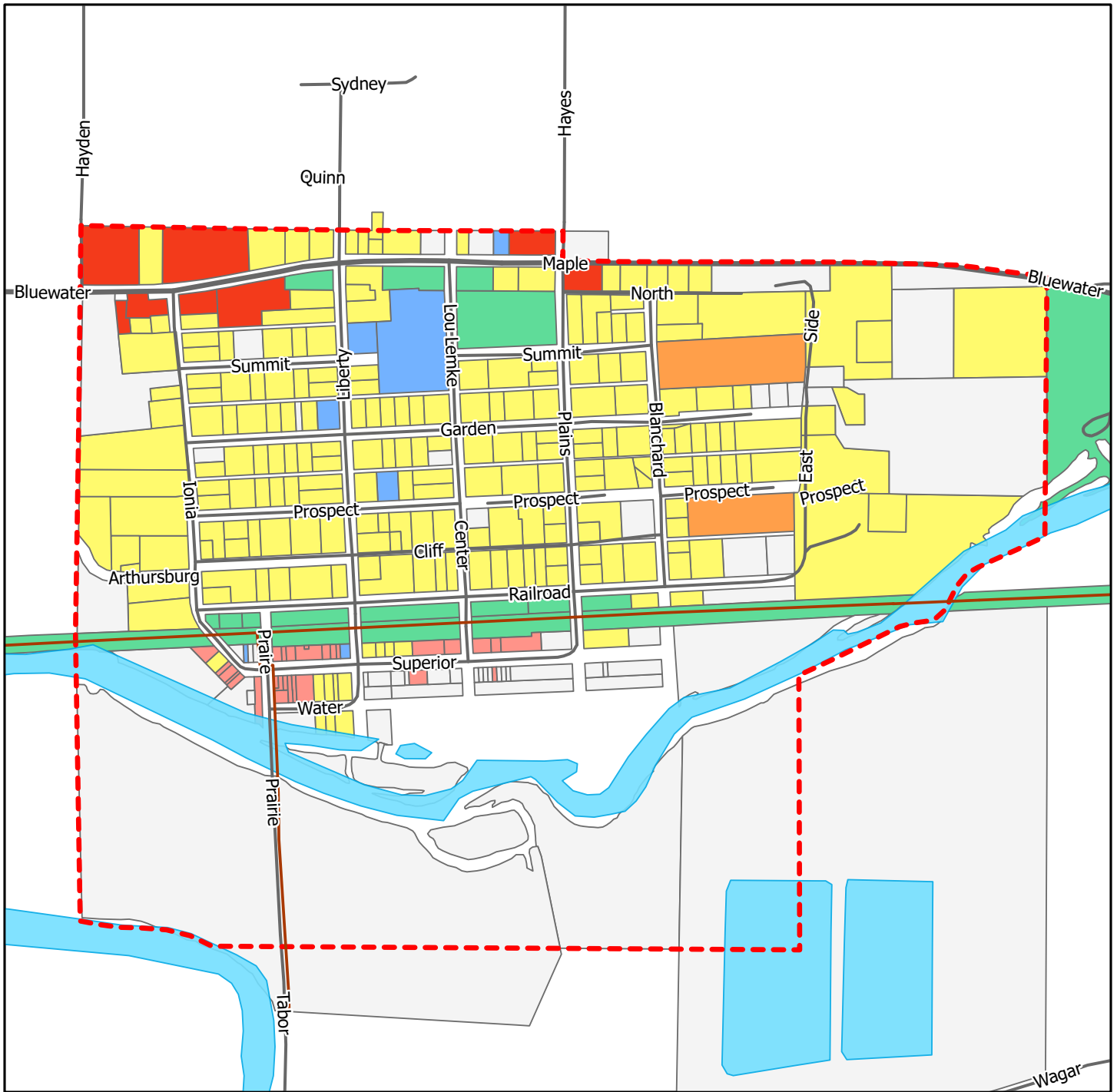
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## Vacant

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This land use is comprised of areas devoid of structures. While there are numerous vacant parcels within the largely residential blocks of the Village, much of the area in this category is located south of the Maple River or is in environmentally sensitive areas.



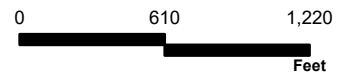


# Existing Land Use Map

Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

## LEGEND

- Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Downtown Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Parks and Open Space
- Education and Public Institutions
- Vacant
- Village Boundary
- Non-Motorized Trails
- Roadways



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.

# Transportation System



The transportation system provides access to jobs, shopping, and recreational amenities. The location of transportation infrastructure influences land use planning and is a key component of how the Village develops far into the future.

## Village Road Network

In total, there are 5.46 miles of streets and roads within the Muir Village limits. The Village features a grid system of streets and alleys between Superior Street on the south and M-21 on the north. M-21 is a state highway that acts as a major east-west corridor through the region. The Village also features a bridge on Prairie Street that spans the Maple River and connects to the Village of Lyons to the south.

Funding for this road network is derived from a variety of sources. The methodology behind state and federal infrastructure funding is discussed below.

**Michigan Act 51 Roadway System** - State funding for roadways is authorized under Public Act 51 of 1951 which developed criteria for classifying roadways. This act provides funding for state trunklines and empowers counties, cities, and villages as “Act 51 agencies,” allowing them to receive funding sourced from fuel taxes, vehicle registration fees, and other automobile-related taxes. Due to its status as a village, the Village of Muir receives funding directly from the state to use for roadway repairs and improvements.

**National Functional Classification (NFC) System** - Federal funding for roadway infrastructure is largely determined through the Federal Highway Administration’s National Functional Classification (NFC). This system assigns classifications to every roadway based on traffic characteristics and their status as either urban or rural roadways. Improvements to higher capacity roadways are prioritized as they tend to link rural communities together. A map illustrating the NFC system in the Village of Muir is included on the following pages.

## Complete Streets

Street design is a key component in improving quality of life within the Village. Because they serve not only automobiles but people walking, riding bicycles, driving golf carts, rollerblading, and dozens of other uses, streets should be designed in such a way to safely transport multiple modes of transportation. This practice calls for the pursuit of “Complete Streets” that accommodate the many needs that streets must provide for.

Strategies for Complete Streets vary based on a community's needs. The most common changes that would be useful to Muir would be the addition of bike lanes or shoulder widening to allow cars to keep a safe 3-foot distance from cyclists. Providing frequent crosswalks and including features to slow traffic are also basic Complete Streets strategies. These methods can reduce traffic accidents and encourage and allow people to drive less, to improve their health and lower their cost of travel.

Because of its access to M-21 and relative proximity to Interstate 96, the Village of Muir is within an hour's drive of many larger communities. The table below indicates distance and estimated travel time to select communities.

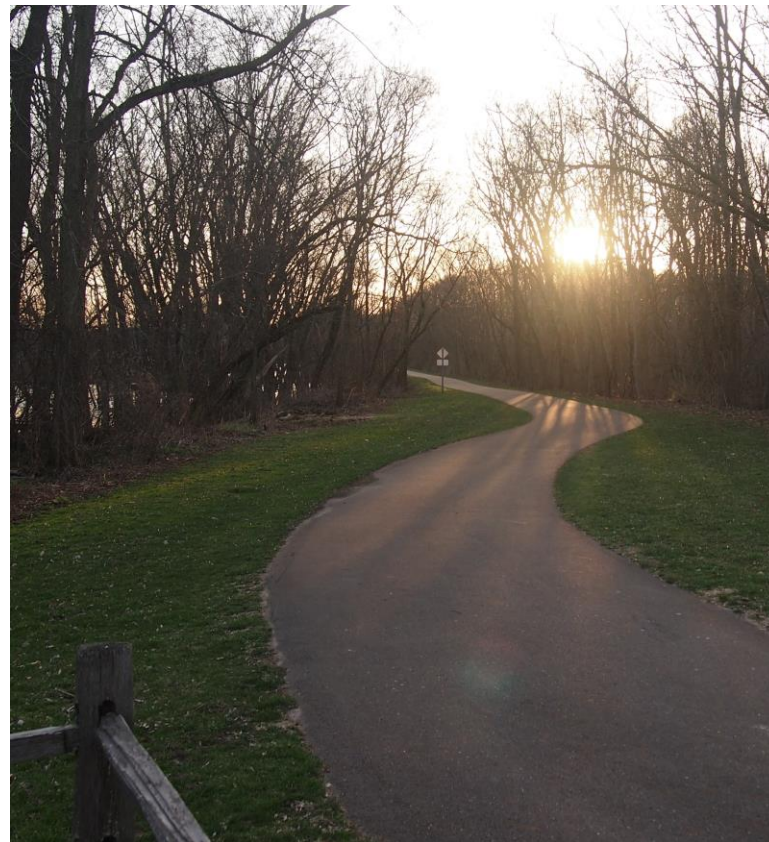
Destination	Destination County	Distance (Miles)	Estimated Travel Time
Ionia	Ionia County	7	10 Minutes
Portland	Ionia County	12	20 Minutes
Belding	Ionia County	21	25 Minutes
St. Johns	Clinton County	21	25 Minutes
Lowell	Kent County	22	30 Minutes
Greenville	Montcalm County	29	35 Minutes
Lansing	Ingham County	38	40 Minutes
Grand Rapids	Kent County	41	55 Minutes

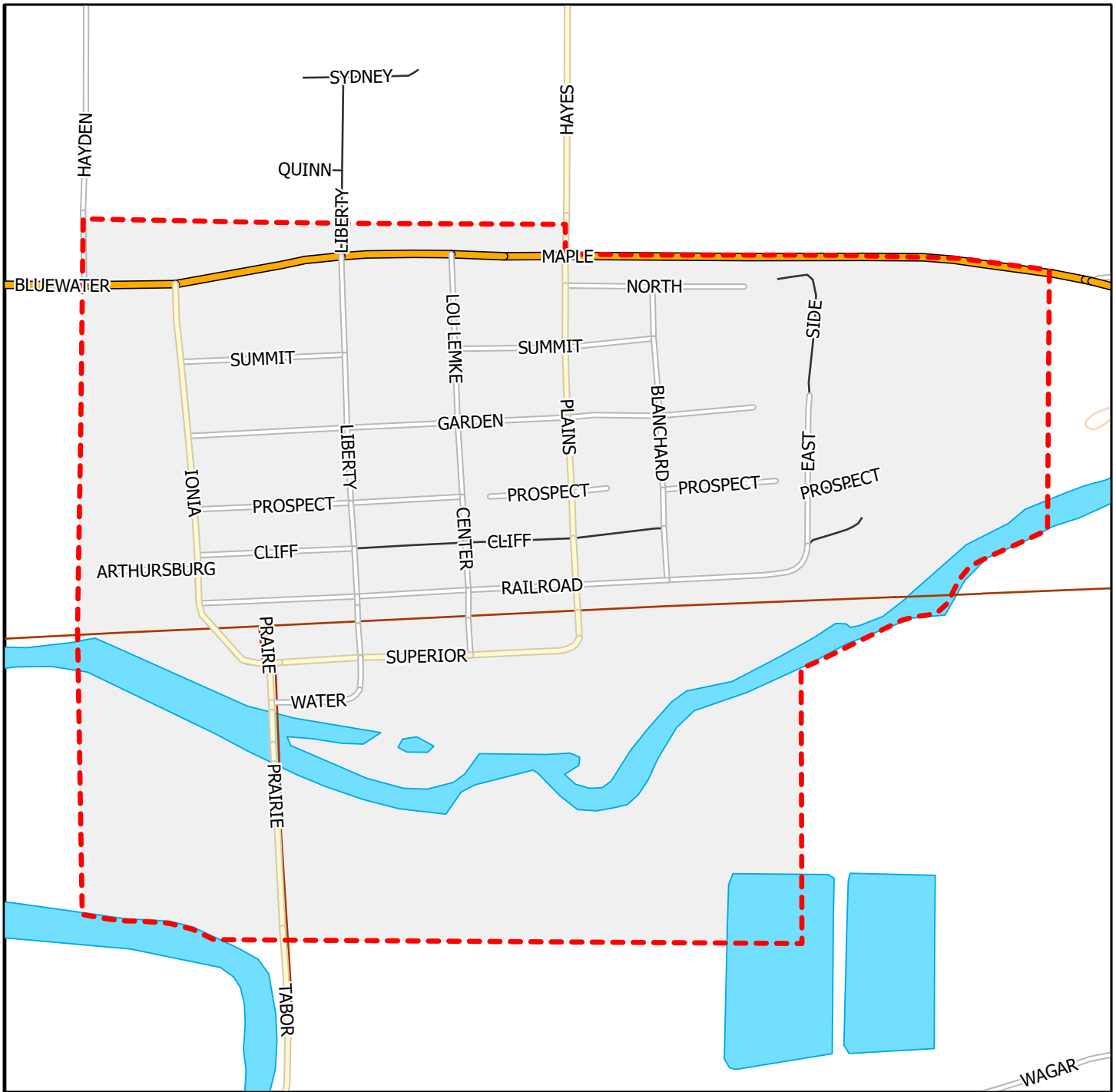
## Non-Motorized Network

The Village features a prominent east-west regional trail running just north of downtown. The Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia Shiawassee Trail runs from Owosso in the east to Lowell in the west, passing through St. Johns, Pewamo, Muir, Ionia, and Saranac along the way.

In addition to this regionally significant pathway, there are numerous sidewalks throughout the Village. While largely fragmented, this sidewalk network connects residential blocks to Twin Rivers Elementary School in the center of the Village. This network can continue to be improved by filling in gaps, such as creating more connections to downtown as well as increasing pedestrian infrastructure around M-21. The Village's small size makes it easy for residents to walk to the park, to school, to church, and to visit their neighbors. Continuing to maintain the sidewalk network and connecting new locales through sidewalks will contribute to a natural walkability.

Another consideration of a robust sidewalk system is maintenance. On less-traveled and lower-speed roads, sidewalks may not be necessary to adequately service residents, freeing up resources to dedicate towards improving pedestrian features in other areas of the Village.





# Act 51 Roadway Classifications

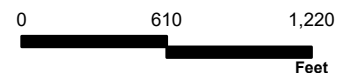
Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

## LEGEND

### Act 51 Roadway Classifications

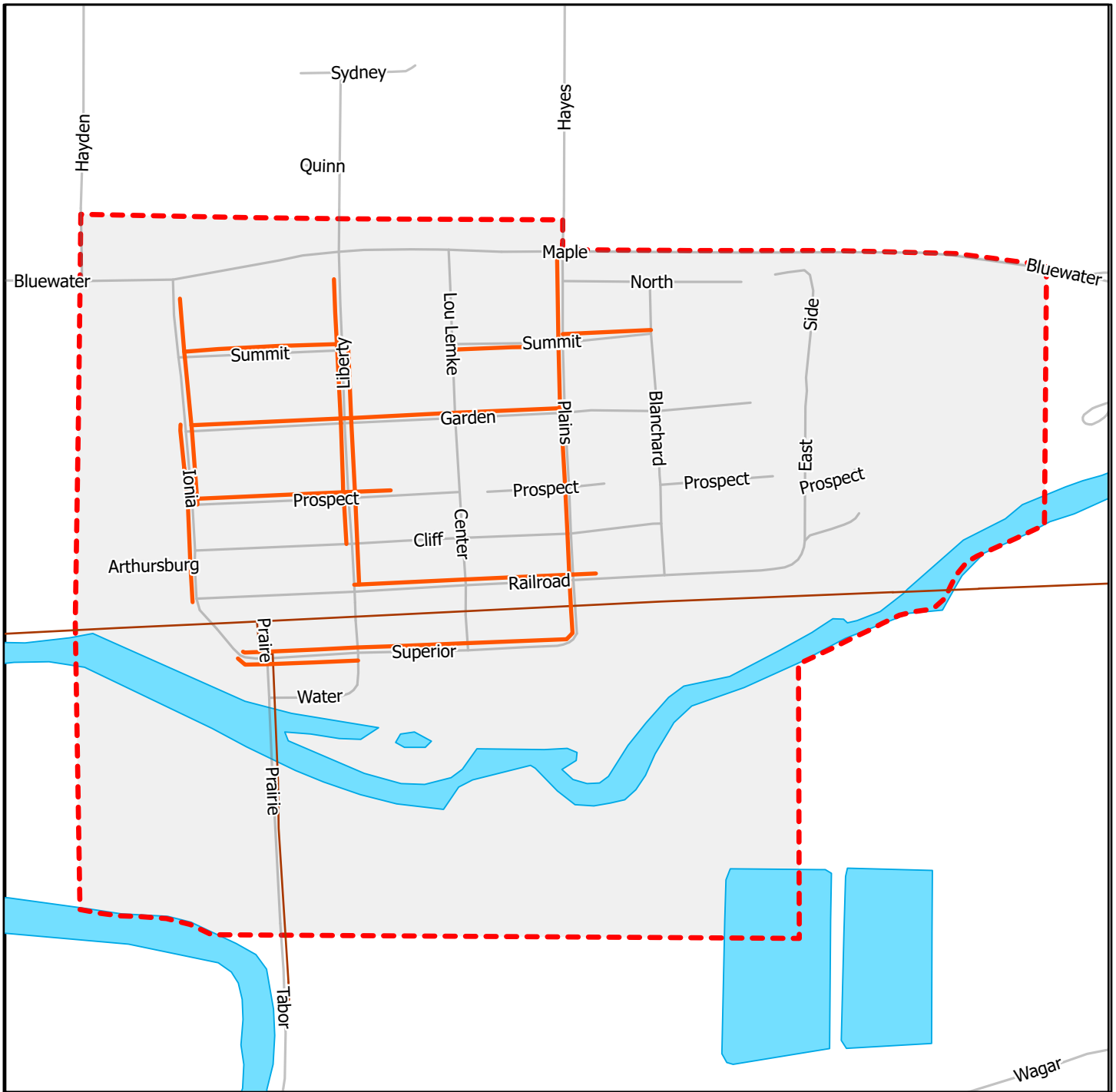
- A64 - Internal Roads
- A41 - Non-Certified Roads
- A32 - Minor Arterials
- A31 - Principal Arterials
- A21 - US & State Highways

- Non-Motorized Trails
- - - Village Boundary
- Water Features



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.



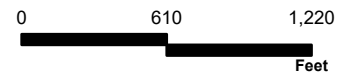


# Existing Sidewalks

Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

## LEGEND

- Sidewalks
- Non-Motorized Trails
- Roadways
- Village Boundary



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.

# Environmental Features

# 5

The natural features surrounding the Village, such as rivers, hills, and woodlands are an important resource to the community. An understanding of where these natural features are located along with environmental concerns are crucial in successful land use planning.

The Village of Muir is largely defined by its proximity to rivers. Located at the confluence of the Maple River and the Grand River, these water features provide nearly limitless recreational opportunities. The hills and ravines surrounding these rivers also provide a unique character to the Village, as the southern portion of the Village sits much lower than the northern portion closer to M-21. These unique natural features and other factors influencing land use planning are discussed below.

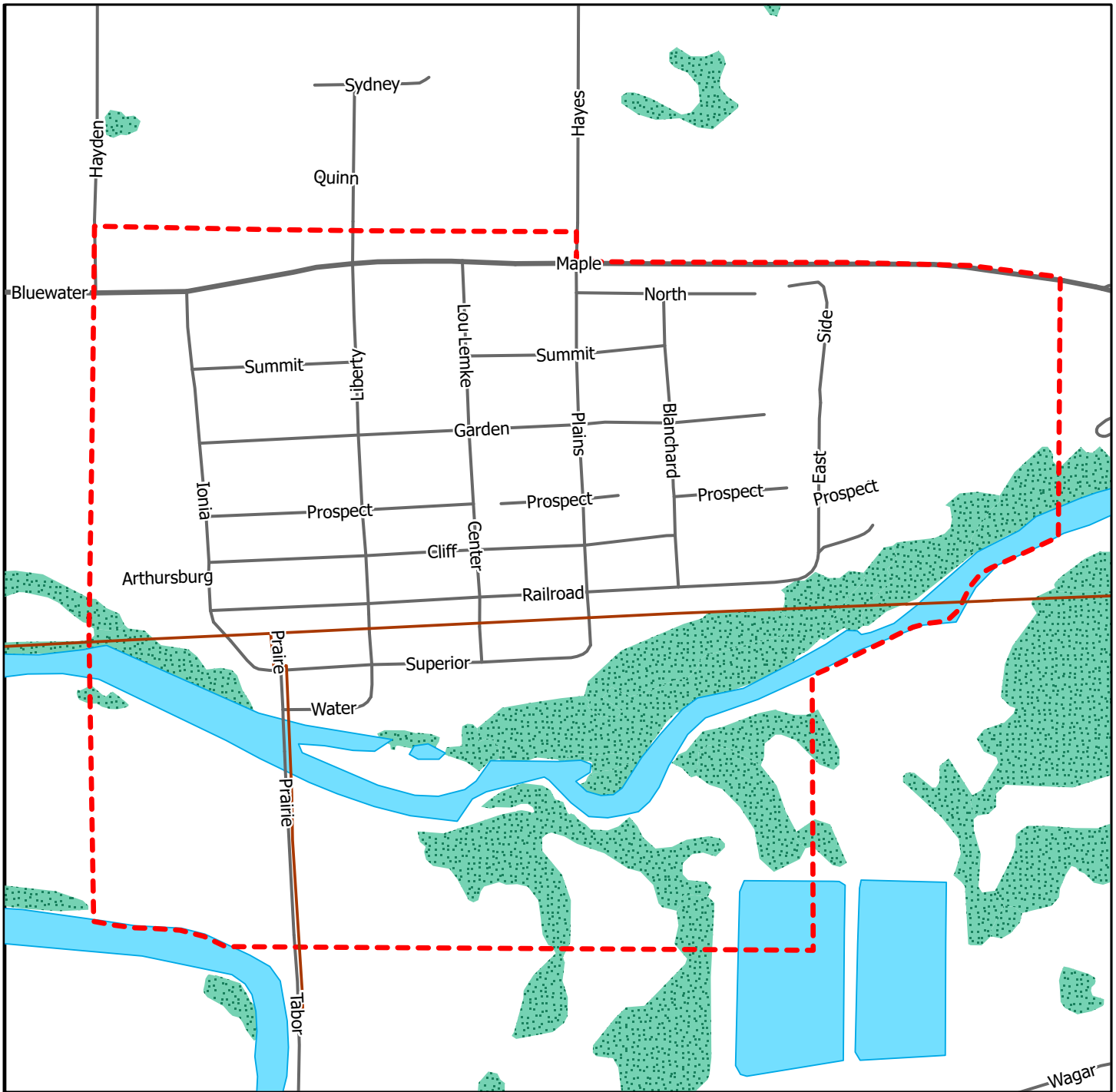
## Rivers and Creeks

The Maple River runs south of the Village, meeting the Grand River less than a half mile west of the Village limits. An unnamed creek feeds into the Maple River on the east side of the Village, running through a low-lying marsh area near the MDNR boat launch site.

**Wetlands** – Because of its close proximity to these water bodies, the Village features numerous wetlands. These are largely concentrated along the Maple River east of the Prairie Street Bridge. While susceptible to flooding, these wetlands serve a critical environmental purpose in filtering stormwater while also providing important habitat to waterfowl and other wildlife.

**Floodplain** – Understanding the flood characteristics of the region is important in land use planning efforts. Due to its location along the Maple River, much of the Village south and east of Superior Street are designated as within the 100-year floodplain by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This makes these areas undesirable for development, as reoccurring flood risks coupled with increased state and federal development regulations limit the viability of successful new development in these areas.

Understanding the susceptibility of flooding in these areas, FEMA has numerous grant programs to either elevate structures within the floodplain or acquire and demolish vulnerable structures. These provide equitable opportunities for residents seeking to relocate while mitigating the community's long-term flooding impacts.

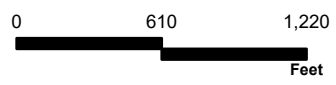


# Wetlands Map

Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

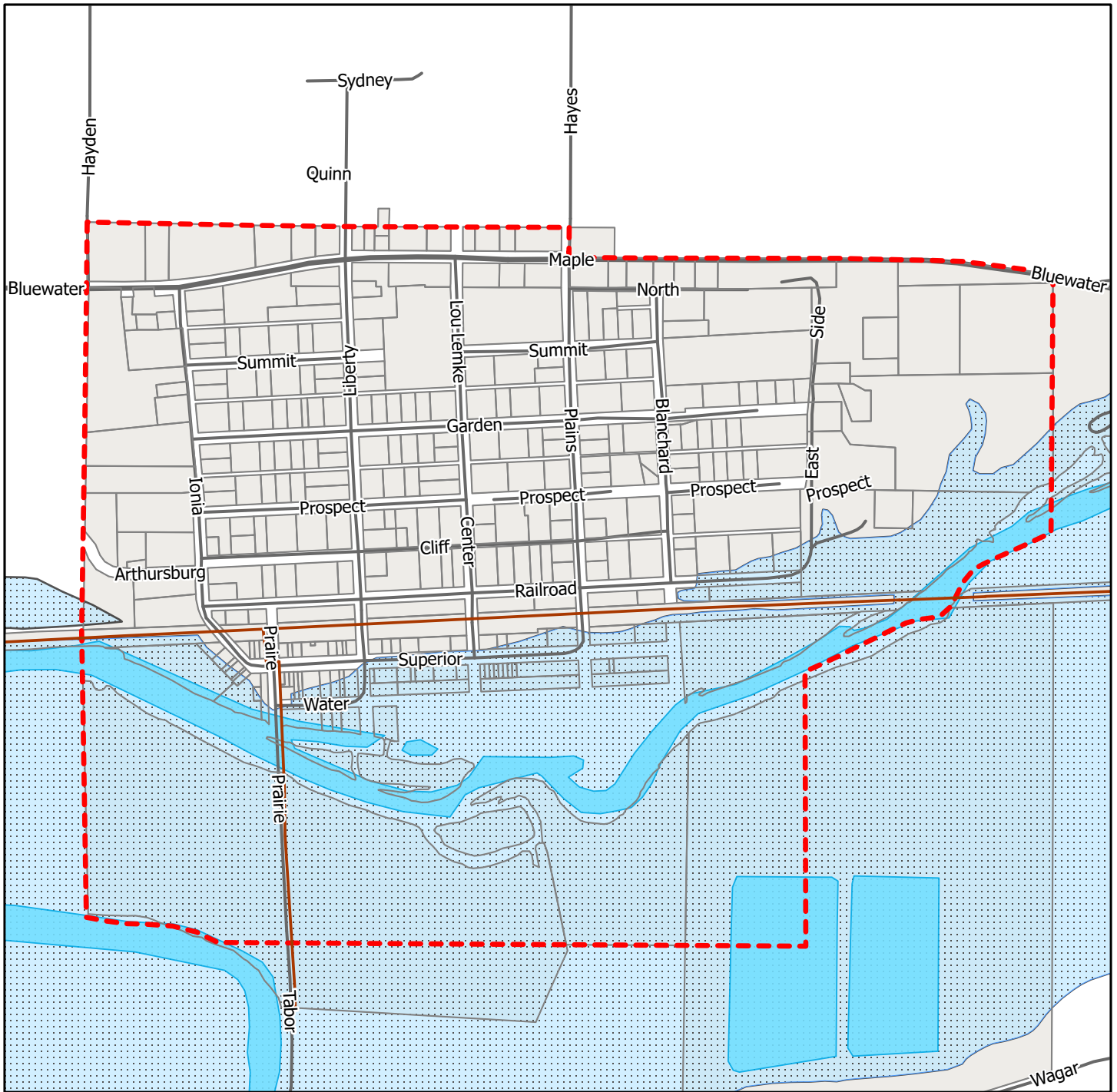
## LEGEND

-  Wetland Features
-  Village Boundary
-  Non-Motorized Trails
-  Roadways



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.








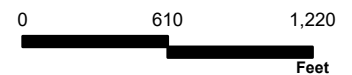


# Floodplain Map

Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

## LEGEND

-  Base Flood Area (100-Year Floodplain)
-  Muir Village Parcels
-  Village Boundary
-  Non-Motorized Trails
-  Roadways



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.



# Public Facilities

# 6

## Schools

The Village of Muir is serviced by the Ionia Public School District. Twin Rivers Elementary School is the only educational facility located in the Village and provides schooling for children from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Students in sixth through twelfth grade attend either Ionia Middle School or Ionia High School in Ionia.



## Recreational Facilities

In addition to the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia Shiawassee Trail that traverses the Village, the Village of Muir features a number of nearby park facilities. These include Railroad Park on the east side of downtown, Douglas Park at the corner of M-21 and Liberty Street, and the Twin Rivers Elementary School playground. The Village also maintains the Oakwood Cemetery at the corner of M-21 and Plain Street. Just east of the Village lies an MDNR-operated boat launch providing access to the Maple River.



## Water and Wastewater Facilities

The Public Works Department operates a public water system that services the Village. Water is sourced from two wells – one 151-foot deep well located on M-21 and one 500-foot deep well located on Arthurburg Street. The Village also maintains a water tower close to M-21 near the Public Works Department building. The Village of Muir also operates a wastewater treatment system. Effluent from the system is carried to aerated lagoons located south of the Maple River.





# Public Participation



The Village of Muir Master Plan update has been developed with the cooperation of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Village Council as representatives of the Village of Muir residents. The public was given the opportunity to provide feedback on the future of the Village of Muir through a Community Open House. This feedback of the Open House was utilized to shape the goals and objectives of this Master Plan.

The public could also provide feedback on the Master Plan during the State-required comment period, which gives residents time to read the Plan and to contact their representatives with questions. Furthermore, all Planning and Zoning Commission meetings were published and open to residents. Anybody in attendance had the opportunity to provide feedback into the planning process and the development of the Plan itself.

Finally, a public hearing will be scheduled at which the final draft of the Master Plan will be presented, discussed, and recommended for adoption. This hearing will be open to the public and will provide an opportunity for the Planning and Zoning Commission to present its findings and layout the proposed future of the Village as well as an excellent opportunity for the community to review the findings of the Planning and Zoning Commission, ask questions, and propose changes or alternatives prior to final adoption of the Plan.

Even after the Plan is adopted, citizen input and participation are still very important and should not end. The Plan should guide the Village in its future actions, with the public providing input and suggesting changes as future circumstances and conditions warrant.



## Community Open House

A Community Open House was held on August 18, 2022, at Village Hall. Respondents discussed their goals for the Future Land Use categories (and eventually zoning districts) in the Village. Participants were asked what the Village should “Do” and “Not Do” in each area.

	Do	Do Not
<b>Highway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a recycling facility at the DPW</li> <li>Allow Electric Charging Stations</li> <li>Find ways to slow traffic</li> <li>Sell the tennis courts to the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibit housing</li> </ul>
<b>Downtown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold More Events</li> <li>Update and Improve Parks</li> <li>Build an Amphitheater</li> <li>Use the tile floor from the demolished building as a plaza</li> <li>Only require zero lot line buildings on blocks where they already exist</li> <li>Install public trash cans</li> <li>Allow apartments</li> <li>Install and allow Electric Vehicle Charging Stations</li> <li>Bury Power Lines Behind Downtown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require retail</li> <li>Regulate paint colors</li> <li>Require “historic” design</li> <li>Allow single wide trailers</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Kids</li> <li>Allow Home Businesses</li> <li>Continue High Speed Internet</li> <li>Allow Chickens</li> <li>Rental Inspections</li> <li>Blight</li> <li>Create a Minimum Unit Size for Multi-Family</li> <li>Require 10 foot rear/side setbacks</li> <li>Regulate noise</li> <li>Require parking for businesses</li> <li>Create a “Zoning Bill of Rights”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow Roosters</li> <li>Prohibit businesses</li> <li>Allow commercial mechanics</li> <li>Regulate architecture or design</li> <li>Allow more than one single wide trailer per lot</li> <li>Regulate fences</li> </ul>
<b>Agricultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow chickens</li> <li>Promote access to the river</li> <li>Put trash cans on the bridge</li> </ul>	

# Goals and Objectives



Before a community can actively plan for its future, it must first declare certain goals and objectives to define the boundaries of its needs and aspirations, and thus establish a basis for the development of a Future Land Use Plan. These goals and objectives must reflect the future vision for the community and the kind of lifestyle its residents wish to follow, given realistic economic and social constraints.

The following chapter represents the goals, objectives, and policies which should be used to guide local decision makers in reviewing future land use proposals. Goals represent the ultimate purpose or intent of the Plan, objectives are the means of obtaining those goals, and policies are specific statements used to guide the actions of the Village.

## Goals

The Village of Muir recognizes its character as a small, residential town with charming neighborhoods and quality parks. In recognizing its role, the Village of Muir adopts the following general community goals to guide future land use changes:

- Preserve the current small town, residential character of the Village
- Protect the natural resources in the Village as a way to preserve a high quality of life.
- Encourage businesses to serve both residents and visitors to open in the Village.
- Preserve the rights of property owners while maintaining the character of the Village.

# Objectives and Policies

With the primary goals in mind, the following specific objectives and policies have been formulated to guide action, programs, and land use in the Village.

## RESIDENTIAL

### Goal 1.1

Promote and allow a mix of different housing types.

- **Objective 1.1.1** Encourage “missing middle” housing types such as duplexes or townhomes as part of new residential construction and infill development to preserve existing open space.
- **Objective 1.1.2** Allow multiple family residential units in areas where they are compatible with surrounding land uses.

### Goal 1.2

Connect neighborhoods to each other to promote community.

- **Objective 1.2.1** Encourage any new neighborhood streets to continue the Village’s existing grid pattern and connections with nearby streets; discourage dead-ends and cul-de-sacs.
- **Objective 1.2.2** Complete the Village’s sidewalk system by filling in gaps and ensuring that redevelop projects include sidewalk.

### Goal 1.3

Provide housing in areas that can be served by adequate public utilities and other services.

- **Objective 1.3.1** Ensure that utilities and services are provided in a cost-effective and efficient manner before the approval of new residential construction.

## COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL

### Goal 2.1:

Promote Superior Street as a focal point of small business commercial activity in the Village, allowing for a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and even light manufacturing.

- **Objective 2.1.1** Improve the business district by encouraging new businesses, maintaining the streetscape and infrastructure, and holding activities at Railroad Park.
- **Objective 2.1.2** Install signs directing vehicle traffic to off-street parking areas and encourage people to walk to the downtown area.
- **Objective 2.1.3** Encourage refurbishment of historic facades and storefronts along Superior Street where possible and ensure regular upkeep to promote an attractive “Main Street” character.
- **Objective 2.1.4** – Encourage small batch manufacturing and “maker spaces” to locate downtown. Examples include breweries, bakeries, artisan goods, and skilled crafts.
- **Objective 2.1.5** – Allow residential uses “by right” in all buildings, and on all floors, within the downtown, in order to create a “critical mass” of downtown residents.

### Goal 2.2

Plan for automobile-oriented “Highway Enterprise” along M-21 (Maple Road)

- **Objective 2.2.1** – Allow for businesses along M-21 that service highway traffic, such as gas stations, automobile servicing, and dining.
- **Objective 2.2.2** – Ensure off-street parking areas are screened by a landscape buffer or that the parking areas are located behind buildings.
- **Objective 2.2.3** – Coordinate the development of adjacent commercial businesses by promoting shared parking, cross access, and a consistent streetscape.
- **Objective 2.2.4** – Ensure that walking and biking activity is not hindered by new development.

### Goal 2.3

Provide limited concentration of industrial land uses while preserving the character of the Village and protecting natural resources and open space.

- **Objective 2.3.1** – Provide regulations requiring suitable buffering of industrial land uses from residential uses.
- **Objective 2.3.2** – Route through traffic to M-21 efficiency and to protect residential areas from heavy traffic.
- **Objective 2.3.3** – Enforce a high quality of site design to limit the impacts of industrial uses on neighborhoods including traffic and pedestrian safety, noise, and aesthetics.
- **Objective 2.3.4** – Ensure new industrial development does not place a burden on Village services.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Goal 4.1

Ensure Village streets are safe and available for all users and transportation modes.

- **Objective 4.1.1** – When designing road reconstruction projects, consider the needs of all users – cars, bikes, and pedestrians.
- **Objective 4.1.2** – Ensure regular maintenance of sidewalks in all seasons.
- **Objective 4.1.3** – Install crosswalks and other traffic calming measures at intersections that are frequently used by pedestrians, especially near the school campus and within the downtown.
- **Objective 4.1.4** – Install new sidewalks where there are gaps in the existing sidewalk network, especially on streets that don't currently have sidewalks.
- **Objective 4.1.5** – Maintain existing sidewalks and construct new sidewalks so that they are usable by persons with mobility challenges.

## Goal 4.2

Utilize the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail as a key asset to residents and visitors.

- **Objective 4.2.1** – Designate the trail adjacent to the downtown area to encourage people to shop, eat, and conduct other activities downtown.
- **Objective 4.2.2** – Provide bicycle parking downtown to encourage biking activity.
- **Objective 4.2.3** – Connect future non-motorized trails to the North Bank Trail as part of a local trail network and provide links to destinations such as parks and neighborhoods.

## Goal 4.3

Minimize the impact of industrial truck traffic on the safety of the transportation system.

- **Objective 4.3.1** – Route truck traffic onto Maple Road whenever possible to take advantage of the direct access to M-21.
- **Objective 4.3.2** – Provide sidewalks or a shared use path along Maple Road to provide safety for pedestrians and bicyclists through and in the neighborhoods to the South.

## Goal 4.4

Provide appropriate roadway configuration and capacity upgrades on an as-needed basis.

- **Objective 4.4.1** – Renovate city streets to the most appropriate standards for the land uses they serve, including provisions for curb, gutter, and street tree plantings.
- **Objective 4.4.2** – Review roadway configuration and capacity needs over time.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Goal 5.1

Preserve valuable natural resources and green spaces for the enjoyment of the community.

- **Objective 5.1.1** – Designate prominent natural areas for preservation through zoning.
- **Objective 5.1.2** – Limit development in 100-year flood plain zones and other flood prone areas.
- **Objective 5.1.3** – Require new land development projects to review the impact of development on natural features such as soils, topographic changes, hydrology, and forested area.
- **Objective 5.1.4** – Encourage low-impact development techniques to minimize the impact of the development process on the environment.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

### Goal 6.1

Promote multi-generational recreation activities for citizens of all ages and abilities.

- **Objective 6.1.1** – Increase accessibility to the Village’s parks and ensure that new facilities are ADA compliant.
- **Objective 6.1.2** – Create local environmental education programs and recreation activities.

### Goal 6.2

Encourage healthy living through outdoor recreation.

- **Objective 6.2.1** – Identify opportunities to encourage healthy living through the development of special events and recreation programs and local recreation activities.
- **Objective 6.2.2** – Increase community recognition of local parks and their importance as a community asset.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

### Goal 7.1

Provide adequate water service to meet the present and future needs of the community.

- **Objective 7.1.1** – Coordinate service additions with future land use and development.
- **Objective 7.1.2** – Update and modernize the lift station to ensure consistent service to all residents.
- **Objective 7.1.3** – Televised and clean the collection system to allow for the development of repair and maintenance plan.
- **Objective 7.1.4** – Participate in decision-making regarding regional utility infrastructure.

## Goal 7.2

Provide sanitary sewer service to meet the present and future needs of the community.

- **Objective 7.2.1** – Coordinate service additions with future land use and development.
- **Objective 7.2.2** – Update and maintain sanitary sewer service as needed to prevent breakages or overflow.

## Goal 7.3

Provide storm sewer service as needed in pace with needs.

- **Objective 7.3.1** – Coordinate service additions with future land use and development.
- **Objective 7.3.2** – Conduct necessary studies and improve storm drainage throughout the city to prevent flooding in high-risk areas.
- **Objective 7.3.3** – Encourage low-impact development techniques, such as permeable pavement in parking lots or bio swales, to minimize impacts of development on the stormwater system.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Goal 4.3

Ensure sufficient communications technology for all residents to participate in the 21st Century economy.

- **Objective 8.1.1** – Allow, and even incentivize, the provision of wireless communications infrastructure in places with poor service.
- **Objective 8.1.2** – Seek grant funding to build out broadband internet infrastructure to all homes within the Village.

### Goal 8.2

Participate in the transition to electric vehicles by providing frequent and easy to find electric charging stations.

- **Objective 8.2.1** – Locate public electric charging stations in or near the downtown.
- **Objective 8.2.2** – Ensure that zoning regulations do not impede the buildout of electric charging stations on private property.

# Future Land Use



The Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for the community. The Plan has been constructed to preserve what already exists in the Village while adding flexibility to foster small business growth and additional residential land uses in appropriate areas. The Future Land Use Plan describes where certain land uses are allowed, while the zoning code reflects the future land use map by regulating development aspects of individual sites.

## Planning Principles

Land use planning principles are used as a guide to evaluate development alternatives and public policy. The following are general principles that should be applied to all land use categories.

### **CONSISTENCY**

Development should be reviewed for general consistency with the intent of the Master Plan, as should sub-area or regional plans. Other governing bodies, such as the State or County, should be encouraged to use the Master Plan in considering programming for the Village of Muir.

### **SUSTAINABILITY OF NATURAL SYSTEMS**

As long-range planning and development happens over decades, developments proposed in environmentally sensitive areas should be scrutinized and discouraged to best protect the long-term health, safety, and welfare of both current and future Village residents.

### **COMPATIBILITY OF USES**

Special attention should be given to any transitions between uses of greater intensity to those of lower intensity. While high-volume commercial businesses are appropriate on high-traffic corridors, the same businesses represent a nuisance when placed near single-family residential properties. In the same vein, single-family residential properties may detract from a business district's vibrancy, illustrating that these two land uses are likely incompatible. Being mindful of the relationships between land uses is crucial in developing a successful Future Land Use Plan.



## Land Use Categories

The land use categories, as well as the conditions under which they should exist, are defined in this section. Village of Muir officials shall be responsible for the interpretation of the intent of the Future Land Use categories and text. These Future Land Use districts provide the future vision of the community and form the basis for establishing zoning districts.

### NEIGHBORHOOD MULTI-USE

This Future Land Use district represents the existing residential areas of the Village. This district features single-family houses, single-family mobile homes, two-unit duplexes, and small-scale multi-unit garden apartments. The streets within this district are tree-lined, low-speed, interconnected, and typically feature sidewalks parallel to the street. Future development in this area should promote a walkable neighborhood feel, though home businesses, corner stores, and “missing middle” housing types should be encouraged, in addition to single family homes, churches, schools, and parks.

### DOWNTOWN MULTI-USE

This Future Land Use district represents the traditional downtown along Superior Street. This district is characterized by zero-lot-line buildings with storefront space on the first floors and residential and office spaces occupying the floors above. This district features wide sidewalks and accommodates pedestrian-oriented retail features such as benches, planters, street trees, and outdoor dining features. Future development in this district should continue the historic development pattern, though buildings could be occupied by a wide variety of uses, including residential, office, retail, and medical.

### HIGHWAY MULTI-USE

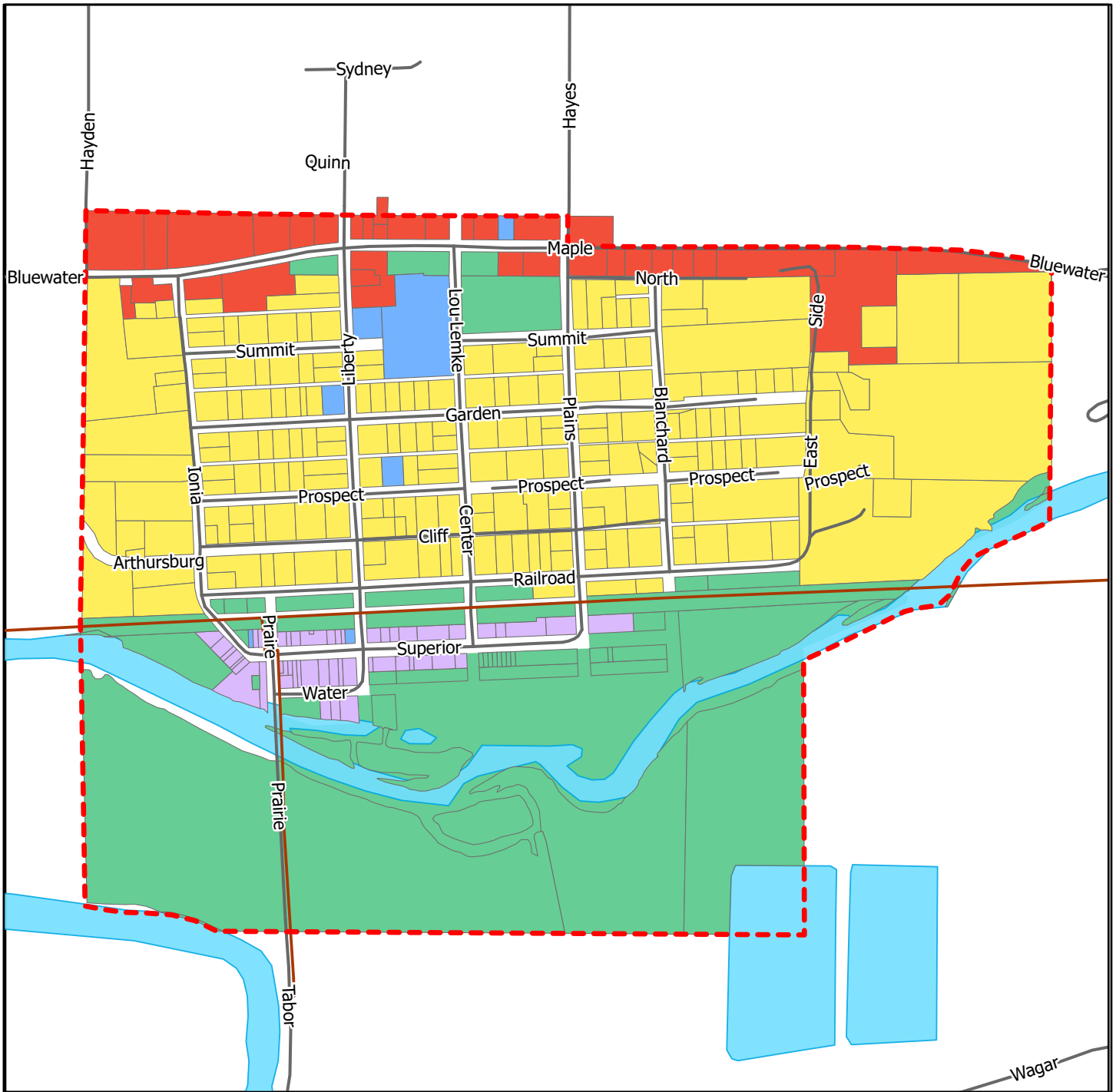
This Future Land Use district represents the commercial and warehouse uses along M-21. This district is characterized by auto-oriented stores with large setbacks and extensive parking lots. Future development in this district should accommodate for appropriate vehicular movement while facilitating safe pedestrian circulation through the area in the form of sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure. A wide mix of land uses are envisioned – residential should be permitted, but a range of industrial and commercial businesses should be encouraged to line the highway.

### EDUCATION AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

This Future Land Use district represents the churches, schools, and public-owned buildings throughout the Village. While unlikely to change, some underutilized land in this designation may be considered for conversion to match other adjacent land uses when desired or practical.

### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

This Future Land Use district represents parks, cemeteries, and open spaces maintained by the Village as well as parcels that currently occupy the floodplain and are susceptible to flooding. Future development in this district should be restricted to public park improvements, such as pavilions, boat launches, and sports facilities if possible. Agriculture is also permitted in this area.

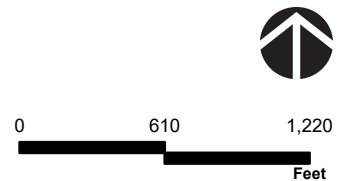


# Future Land Use

Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

## LEGEND

- Neighborhood Multi-Use
- Downtown Multi-Use
- Highway Multi-Use
- Education and Public Institutions
- Parks and Open Space
- Village Boundary
- Non-Motorized Trails
- Roadways



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.

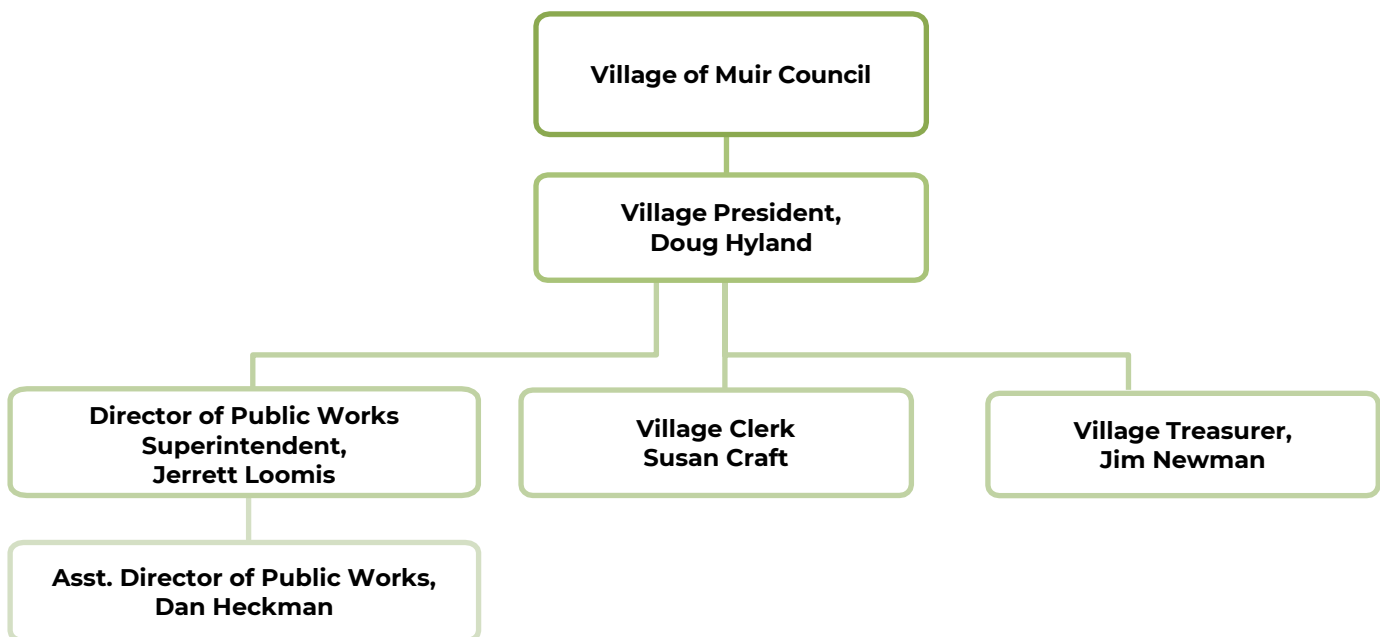


# Parks and Recreation

# 10

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requires municipalities to produce an updated Recreation Plan every 5 years. A recreation plan can provide guidance to community leaders regarding decisions relating to parks and recreation and their impact on the community. The recreation plan includes an outline of the Parks' administrative structure and funding sources, a Recreation Inventory, and a Natural Resource Inventory. The Goals and Objectives for Parks and Recreation were stated in the Goals and Objectives section of this Master Plan.

## Parks Administration



## VILLAGE COUNCIL

The Village of Muir is governed by a six-member council and president established by the General Law Village Act, and local staff. The council has a Parks and Recreation Committee appointed by the President. The committee brings proposals to the council for decisions. The Village staff reports to the Village President, and the President reports to the Council.

## VILLAGE STAFF

The administrative staff at the Village of Muir consists of five positions. The Director and Assistant Director of Public Works are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the Village parks. There is also a Village Clerk and Street Administrator, as well as a Village Treasurer.

## VOLUNTEERS

The Village utilizes volunteers on an as-needed basis, but does not have any formal relationships with volunteer organizations.

## VILLAGE BUDGET

The Parks and Recreation Budget is primarily funded through the Village's general fund.

**FY 2020-21 Budget: \$18,1990**

**FY 2021-22 Budget: \$25,221**

**Current budget for FY 2022-2023: \$24,733**

**Projected budget for FY 2023-2024: \$26,000**

## GRANT HISTORY

Park	Year	Type of Grant	Project Elements	Current Condition
Railroad	2003	Development	Play area, parking lot	Open to Public Grant-Funded Facilities Still in Place No Conversions
CIS Trail Extension	2014	Development	Bike Trail Extension/Spur	Open to Public Grant-Funded Facilities Still in Place No Conversions

## Recreation Inventory

Parks and recreational areas provide personal, social, environmental, and economic benefits to a community. Benefits of outdoor recreation include exercise, entertainment, education, and relaxation. Parks have been growing in use across the country as people recognized the great value of parks during quarantine. Community interaction where there is an affordable outdoor place to go encourages citizen participation and creates a sense of community pride. Parks and outdoor facilities can also attract visitors to the town.

### PLANNING PROCESS - METRICS

On the following pages, maps and a chart illustrate the degree to which the parks in Muir are meeting the needs of residents. The maps show the location of the parks, and the area within a 5 minute walk from each park. The chart shows the facilities available at each park, and compares them to NDPA guidelines for the greater Lyons-Muir community, which contains about 3,000 residents.

### TRAIL NETWORK

The Michigan DNR plans to manage the 42-mile-long segment of a non-motorized trail between Ionia and Owosso called the CIS Trail. It is part of the 130-mile-long Fred Meijer Trail network that will eventually stretch from Owosso to Alma, via Lowell and Greenville. The CIS project transformed 42 miles of abandoned rail bed into a non-motorized trail and converted several railroad trestles into trail bridges. The trail corridor is owned by MDOT.

The majority of the trail is constructed with crushed limestone but paved as it passes through the urban areas of Muir, Fowler, Pewamo, St. Johns, and Ovid. Near Ovid, the trail leaves the rail bed and follows an alternate route to accommodate a milk processing facility. A future trail link is planned by Lyons to connect Muir's trail with neighboring Lyons.

The CIS project is funded by grants from the MDOT Transportation Enhancement Program and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

### LOCAL PARKS

Within the neighboring communities of Muir and Lyons, eight outdoor recreation facilities are available for public use. The Village of Muir currently operates two parks, Douglas Park on the Northwest side of the Village and Railroad Park on the Southwest side of the Village.

The Village of Lyons, directly south of Muir, operates three parks and one memorial with a bandstand dedicated to War Veterans. The Twin Rivers Elementary School is located within the Village of Muir, and it also has a large playground. Ionia County operates one park in Lyons, Greenview Point.

The Ionia Public School System provides a wide variety of outdoor recreation facilities at each of their eight schools. Map 7 identifies the local outdoor recreation facilities available for public use within the immediate vicinity of the Village of Muir.

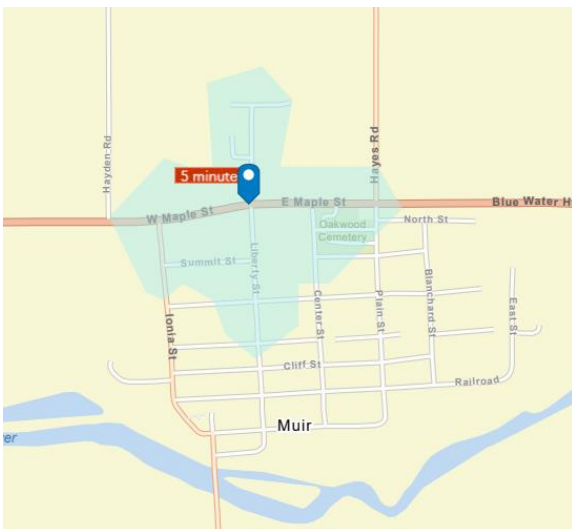
## Railroad Park

Railroad Park lies just north of the Maple River along Railroad Street in the Southwest Corner of the Village. Railroad Park offers playground equipment, a restroom, and picnic areas to visitors. The picnic area offers wheelchair-accessible table seating, handicap-accessible restroom, and designated parking. Using the 2010 ADA Standard this park would be ranked at a 2.



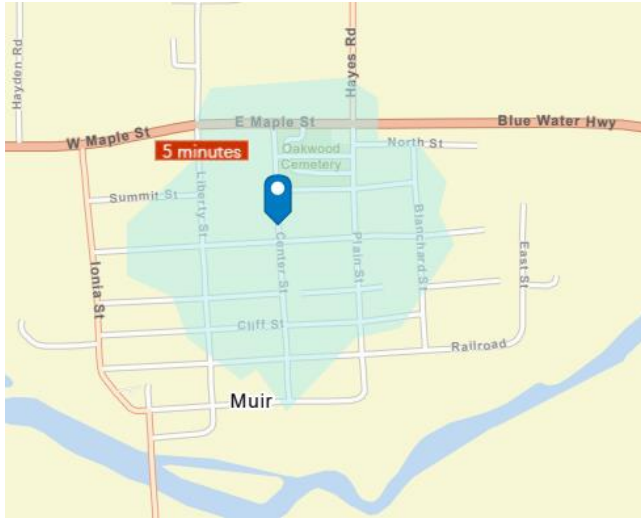
## Douglas Park

Douglas Park is located in the Northwest corner of the Village of Muir. Amenities at Douglas Park include a playground that is comprised of several wooden train play structures, swings, and a slide. A basketball court, picnic area, and a portable restroom are also available. Accessibility features of Douglas Park include handicap parking and an ADA-compliant portable restroom. Douglas Park is not accessible via paved trails or walkways. Using the 2010 ADA Standards this park would be ranked as a 2.

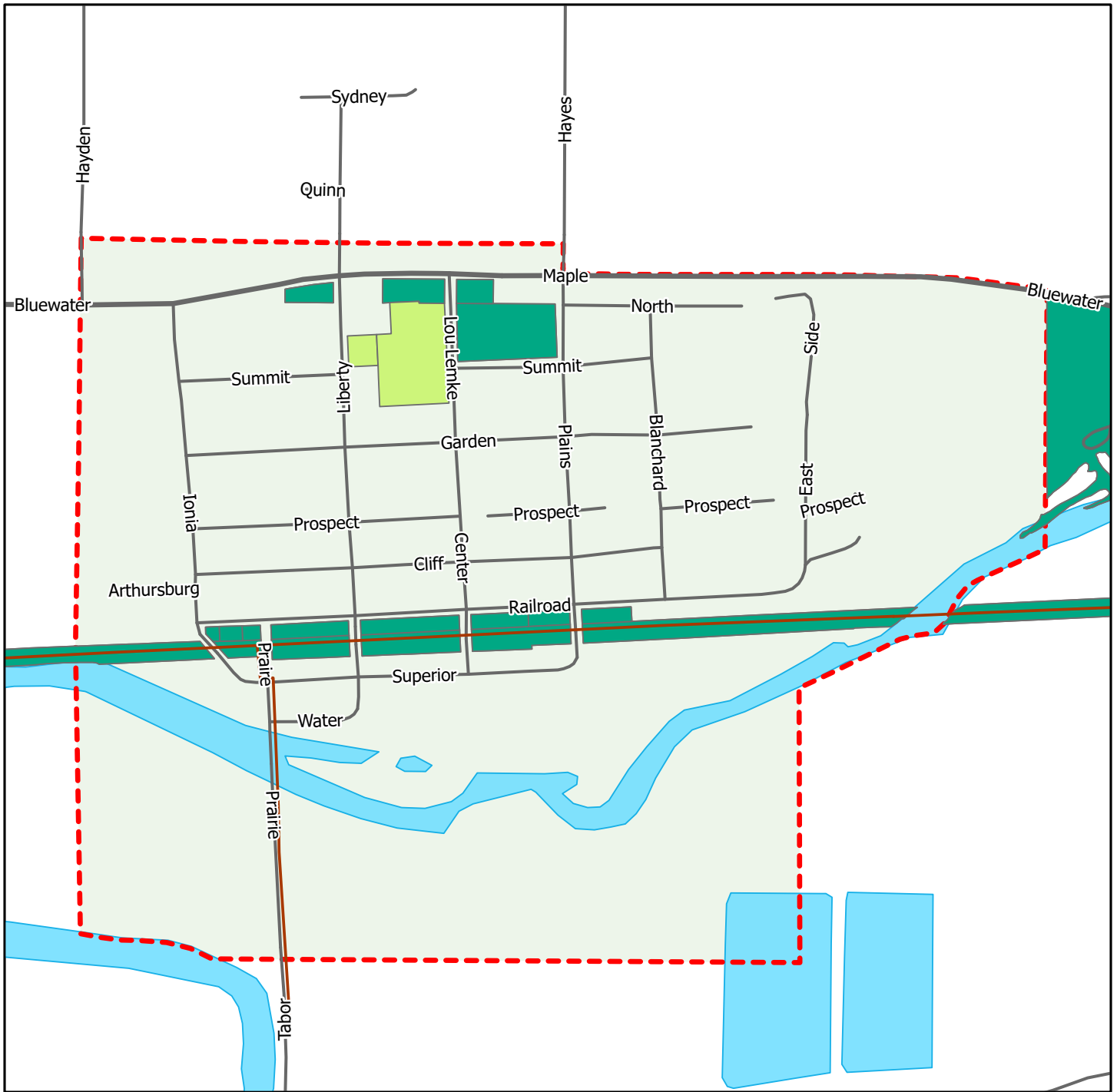


## Twin Rivers Elementary School Playground

Twin Rivers Elementary School is located at 435 Lou Lemke Lane in the Village of Muir. The 4-acre parcel is home to approximately 240 students. Outdoor playground facilities include several playground areas, a baseball diamond, and two basketball courts. Using the 2010 ADA Standard the school grounds would be ranked at a 2.





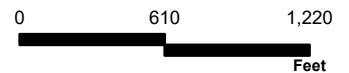


# Recreation Facilities Map

Village of Muir, Ionia County, Michigan

## LEGEND

- Parks and Open Spaces
- Educational Institutions
- Village Boundary
- Non-Motorized Trails
- Roadways
- Village Boundary selection



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library 2022. Ionia County GIS Data 2022. McKenna 2022.

**Recreation Inventory, Village of Muir, 2022**

Location	Classification	Acres/1,000 Population	Playground Equipment	Picnic Area	Skateboard Park	Fishing Dock	Basketball Court	Baseball Diamond	Rustic Camping	Nature Trail	Memorial	Boat Ramp Kayak Launch
<b>Village of Muir</b>												
Douglas Park	Neighborhood Park	1.0 to 2.0 A	1	1								
Railroad Park	Neighborhood Park	1.0 to 2.0 A	1	3								
CIS Trail	Special Use	Variable								1		
<b>Village of Lyons</b>												
Devore Island Park	Community Park	10.0 A	1	5		1			5	1		1
Robinson Community Park	Neighborhood Park	1.0 to 2.0 A	1	4	1							
War Memorial/ Bandstand	Special Use	0.5 A		3							1	
Tabor St Boat Launch	Special Use	2.0 A										1
<b>Ionia Public Schools</b>												
Twin Rivers Elementary	School-Park	Variable	2	1			2	1				
<b>Ionia County</b>												
Greenview Point	Community Park	5.0 to 8.0 A		3		1				1	1	
Maple River Boat Launch	Special Use	2.0 A										1
<b>Totals</b>			6	20	1	2	2	1	5	3	2	3
<b>NRPA Recommendation</b>			1	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Surplus/Deficiency</b>			+5	-	-	-	+1	0	-	-	-	-

## STATE PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Within the six counties that surround Ionia County, there are four State Parks that are owned and operated by the State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources. These four parks are located within a 70-mile radius of the Village of Muir.

Map 8 identifies the State Park locations within the surrounding Counties of Ionia County. The yellow overlay identifies the 70-mile radius surrounding Muir.

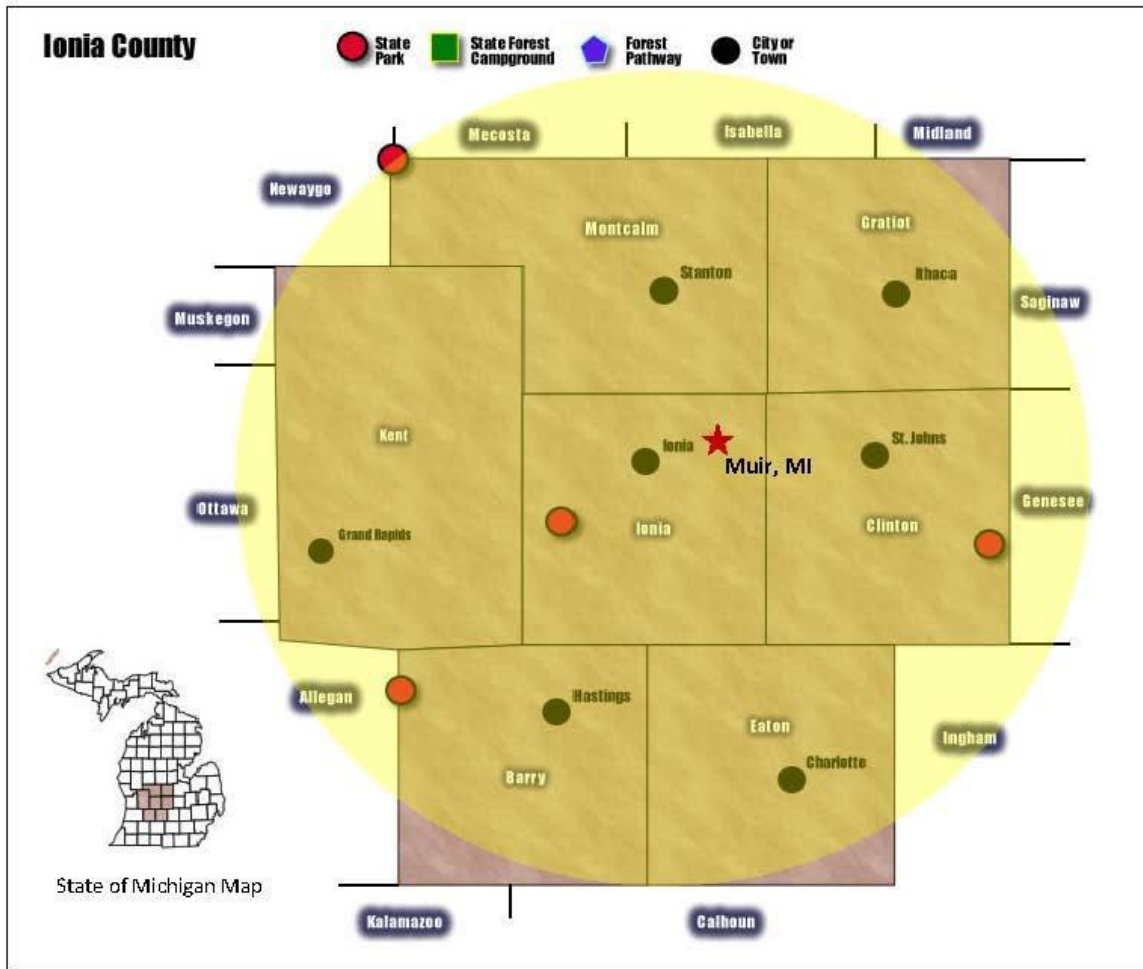
Ionia County Recreation Area is operated by the State of Michigan and has 148 campsites, including nearly fifty equestrian sites. In addition to the State campground, there are 13 additional campgrounds within 25 miles of Muir.

**Table 1: Campgrounds in the Vicinity of Muir**

Name	Location	Distance from Muir (mi.)
Alice Springs Campground	Ionia	6
Bertha Brock Park	Ionia	9
Double R Ranch Resort & Golf	Belding	17
Ionia Recreation Area	Ionia	11
Lakeside Resort Campground	Ionia	10
Larson's Resort	Greenville	22
Leisure Lake Family Campground	Sumner	22
Maple River Campground	Pewamo	7
Red Pines Campground	Carson City	15
Scalley Lake Park	Belding	22
Snow Lake Kampground	Fenwick	11
Three Seasons Campground	Greenville	21
Tyler Creek Golf Course & Campground	Alto	24
Wabasis Lake Park	Greenville	21

**MAP 8: State Parks within the Vicinity of Muir**

Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
State Campground and Park Locations



Source: [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)

**STATE GAME AREAS**

The State of Michigan has a system of publicly owned lands managed primarily for wildlife habitat, wildlife watching, and hunting. More than 100 units are managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Some units have primitive camping, hiking/cross-country skiing trails and boat access but the sites are mostly undeveloped and unstaffed. The five State Game/Habitat Management Areas within Ionia County—Flat River, Grand River, Maple River, Portland, and Saranac-Lowell State Game Areas—are described below.

### Flat River State Game Area

- 11, 235 acres in Ionia and Montcalm Counties.
- Manages eight wildlife species: American Woodcock, Cottontail Rabbit, Eastern Wild Turkey, Karner Blue Butterfly, Mallard, Ruffed Grouse, White-Tailed Deer, Wood Duck.

### Grand River State Game Area

- 870 acres in Ionia County.
- Manages five wildlife species: Cottontail Rabbit, Eastern Wild Turkey, Mallard, White-Tailed Deer, Wood Duck.

### Maple River State Game Area

- 9,251 acres in Clinton, Gratiot, and Ionia Counties.
- Manages six wildlife species: Cottontail Rabbit, Mallard, Osprey, Ring-Necked Pheasant, White-Tailed Deer, Wood Duck.

### Portland State Game Area

- 2,373 acres in Clinton and Ionia Counties.
- Manages five wildlife species: American Woodstock, Cottontail Rabbit, Eastern Wild Turkey, Ring-Necked Pheasant, White-Tailed Deer.

### Saranac-Lowell State Game Area

- 1,863 acres in Ionia and Kent Counties.
- Manages three wildlife species: Cottontail Rabbit, Eastern Wild Turkey, White-Tailed Deer.

## HISTORICAL SITES

The Village of Muir is host to two historical sites. The Muir Church of Christ at 138 Garden Street is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Andrew B. Robinson House at 515 Ionia Street is identified as a Michigan State Historic Site. Both sites have been listed on the registers since May 17, 1973.

## ADDITIONAL RECREATION

There are four public-use golf courses located within 20 miles of the village of Muir.

### 9-Hole Golf Courses

- Rolling Hills Golf Course – Ionia
- Shadow Ridge Golf Course – Ionia

### 18-Hole Golf Courses

- Portland Country Club – Portland
- Huckleberry Creek Golf Course – Pewamo

There are four disc-golf courses within 30 miles of the Village.

### 9-Hole Disc-Golf Courses

- Ta Aorta Kosmou DGC – Lake Odessa
- Danish Disc Golf – Greenville

### 18-Hole Disc-Golf Courses

- Fallasburg Park – Lowell
- Fitzgerald Park – Grand Ledge

## Natural Resources Inventory

### CLIMATE

Recreation facilities and parks within a local community are dependent on the weather influences within the region. Muir experiences all four seasons, allowing it to support a large variety of activities such as kayaking in the summer and snowshoeing in the winter. Like most communities in Michigan, January is the coldest and July is the warmest month. The average annual precipitation is usually greater than 30 inches, with August and September receiving 21% of annual precipitation. Snow fall averages approximately 45.3 inches per year in Ionia County, generally falling between the months of October and April. The average high temperature occurs in July at 82 degrees F. The average coldest temperatures in Muir occur in January with an average high of 29 and an average low of 15 degrees F.

### NATURAL SOILS

Most of the soil in and around the Village of Muir is comprised primarily of Spinks Loamy Sand. Bordering the Maple River on the south side of the Village is a more organic, rich soil: Cohoctah-Sloan Loam and Saranac Clay Loam.

Loam is a mixture of sand, silt, and clay. Loam soils are moist, loose, and full of biomaterial such as decaying worms and microbes that can be recycled as food for plant life. Because of this, loam soil is considered the best soil in which to grow vegetables, garden fruits and flowers such as roses. Loam soil appears rich and dark brown and is usually moist to the touch.

### TOPOGRAPHY

Topography in Muir ranges from a high elevation of 750 feet above mean sea level near the northwest corner of the Village limits to a low elevation of 650 feet above MSL by the Maple River.

### HYDROLOGY

Two primary water sources exist within the Village of Muir. The Maple River and the Grand River both run along the southern border of the Village limits.

The Grand River is the longest river in the State of Michigan. It extends more than 250 miles through seven counties in Michigan, emptying into Lake Michigan in Grand Haven. The Maple River is a 74.1-mile-long tributary of the Grand River, flowing west through Clinton, Gratiot, and Ionia counties. It flows into the Grand River at Muir.

These rivers are home to major game fish such as carp, channel catfish, northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass, suckers, walleye, coho salmon, steelhead, and pike. These rivers are also ideal locations for summer recreation activities such as canoeing, tubing, and kayaking.

## WILDLIFE

Wildlife in the area is typical of that found in most of lower Michigan. Deer are the largest of the area's wildlife, which includes raccoons, rabbits, beavers and other small mammals. The area is also home to a variety of birds including eagles, hawks, owls, wild turkey, pheasants, and many others.

The Karner Blue Butterfly is the only endangered species in Ionia County identified by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory. \*

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\* Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. (2022). *Endangered Species by County*. Accessed from: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/plant-pest/pesticide-enforcement/pesticide-regulatory-info/endangered-species-by-county#ionia>.

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## SITES OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION

Two locations in Ionia County have been identified as Superfund Sites by the Environmental Protection Agency: the Ionia City Landfill and American Anodco, Inc. Ionia City Landfill is located at 28 North Beardsley Street, Ionia, MI and the physical address for American Anodco, Inc. is Cleveland Street, Ionia, MI. Neither of these sites are near the Village of Muir.

The Ionia City Landfill consists of 10 acres east of the City of Ionia. Between the years of 1950 and 1968, the City of Ionia owned and operated the site, using it for disposal of municipal wastes. A portion of the Landfill property later became a recreational area. In 1981, a citizen's complaint spawned the State of Michigan's investigation into the contamination of the landfill site. The State removed 100 drums buried on the site and along the surface. Many were located in the floodplain of the Grand River.

The Ionia City Landfill's current status is that the physical cleanup activities have been completed and the current human exposures at this site are under control. Contaminated ground water mitigation is also under control.

The American Anodco, Inc. site occupies approximately 8 acres of an industrial park, bordering a residential neighborhood in Ionia County. The company disposes of cooling water into a seepage lagoon. The water deposited into this lagoon was found to contain nitric acid and chloride. The potential for groundwater contamination was determined to be high, earning this site its Superfund status.

Ground water remediation and current human exposures at this site are currently under control. An EPA Superfund Record of Decision (ROD), issued in 1993, indicated that the EPA determined that conditions at the site due to contamination by inorganic chemicals pose no current or potential threat to human health or the environment.

## Public Input Process

Gathering public input from Village residents is critical in the development of a Recreation Plan. It is necessary for plans to reflect the opinions and desires of the community. The Village held a Community Open House on August 18, 2022. A description of the results of the Open House can be found in Section 7 of this plan.

The draft plan will be available from October 11 to December 14 for public comment, after which, a public hearing will be held.





# Parks and Recreation Action Plan

## STAFFING AND ORGANIZATION

Develop a volunteer program to assist with the organization of community recreation activities.

## PROGRAMMING

Coordinate community recreation activities.

- Form a neighborhood walking group.
- Form a neighborhood biking group.
- Form a family playground group.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

Inform the public of updates and programming via:

- Village newsletter
- Village website ([villageofmuirmi.gov](http://villageofmuirmi.gov))
- Ionia County Conservation District
- CIS Trail Website ([cistrail.org](http://cistrail.org))

## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (2022-2027)

### Trail Development

Continue to support the Rails to Trails program by participating in committees for the Clinton Ionia Shiawassee (CIS) trail that extends from Ionia east to Owosso. This project will provide a necessary pedestrian connection across the Maple River to the Village of Lyons and beyond. Specific improvements to the trail will include:

- Paved trail parking at the trailhead, and along the alley behind Superior Street, from Prairie to Liberty.
- A covered pavilion at the trailhead.
- Fire pit, covered pavilion, and bathrooms behind the Village Hall (which features a new Community Room), along the trail.

### Park Accessibility and Connectivity Improvements

- Improve accessibility and connectivity between parks by maintaining existing sidewalks and parking lots.
- Provide sidewalks, trails, and new playground equipment in Douglas Park.

### New Facility Development

Identify and maintain potential sites for future park and recreation areas within the Village of Muir, especially spin-off opportunities afforded by the CIS trail. Explore other opportunities to increase public participation by developing new, low-cost recreation facilities, such as:

- Additional ADA-compliant playground equipment
- Drinking fountains
- Maple River Access
- Village Plaza in the Downtown (see Section 11)
- Boat/Kayak/Canoe Launch in town

# Downtown Plan

# 11

## Development Area Boundary

Muir's historic downtown lies along Superior Street between Ionia Street and Liberty Street. While the downtown area lies in a naturally beautiful valley overlooking the Maple River, in recent decades, businesses have migrated to M-21, or out of Muir entirely. Today, the primary land uses in the downtown are residential, recreational, and government.

Still, the downtown holds great promise, and the opportunity for redevelopment into a **vibrant, walkable, mixed-use small town center**.

### *Muir Downtown Development Area*



## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) could be a key tool in developing the downtown area of Superior Street. This type of body was made possible by Michigan Public Act 57 of 2018, which provides several financing sources to municipalities with DDAs. Once created, a DDA must prepare a development plan, and may create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan to submit for approval by the Village Council. According to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation: “A development plan describes the costs, location, and resources for implementation of public improvements expected to take place in the downtown district.” A TIF plan details the tax increment procedure, the amount of bonded indebtedness to be incurred, and the duration of the program. In addition to TIF, a DDA can allow municipalities to create a millage, receive special assessments, revenue bonds, collect donations or grants, and receive contributions from local governments. This funding can help to improve public infrastructure to accommodate new businesses downtown.

## REDEVELOPMENT READY CERTIFICATION (RRC)

The Village of Muir has developed this plan, in part, to meet the requirements of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Redevelopment Ready Certification Program.



## Potential Redevelopment Sites

Below are potential sites for redevelopment to activate Muir’s downtown district. Capital improvements could be focused around these sites to encourage purchase by private ownership. The Village could also consider acquiring these properties to prepare for business occupancy and leasing.

### 187 W SUPERIOR STREET

The property at the Southeast corner of Superior and Prairie streets is prime location for new local retail or dining. Depending on the integrity of the existing structure, the building could be rehabilitated for use or demolished and reconstructed. The location is a major focal point for downtown and is directly across the street from only currently active business at this junction, Fred Haight Insurance Agency. The corner façade could be upgraded to be more visible and distinctive to invite patrons.



### 154 W SUPERIOR STREET

This large building in the center of downtown was clearly once a striking architectural feature of Superior Street. Unfortunately, the building’s deteriorating condition means that it will soon be demolished. However, the site has the potential to be redeveloped with new construction, and to once again reclaim its place as an anchor of Downtown Muir.



## Priority Infrastructure Projects

At the time of this Master Plan, the Village was already heavily investing in its infrastructure, using grant funding. Superior Street was being reconstructed, and the Village's water system was receiving upgrades. Moving forward, the following infrastructure priorities are recommended:

### DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK ACTIVATION

The current sidewalks along the main downtown buildings on Superior Street are narrow, while the street is widened for angled car parking. Given that there is ample space behind the buildings on the North end of Superior Street, parking could be redirected to the rear and the space for front-facing parking could be transitioned into a widened sidewalk with street trees for shade. Trees to provide shade cool the street down significantly and encourage people to walk along the sidewalks and enjoy businesses on hot days. As an additional improvement, heated sidewalks or warming lamps would make the area comfortable and usable even in the winter months. Widened sidewalks would also allow more space for outdoor dining, or benches for seating and congregation. Decorative lighting at the street level would make the paths more inviting and safer after dark. The street could become a safe, welcoming place for residents to enjoy their community all year round.

### VILLAGE PLAZA

The empty lot between 184 W Superior and 156 W Superior is a perfect opportunity for a community plaza. The lot still includes beautiful original tile which could be restored. Creating a landscaped pathway connecting rear parking lots and the trail to the commercial corridor of Superior Street would be a beautiful focal point and could attract business investment. The space closest to 156 could include a veranda with sheltered seating, to service an adjacent business or open to the public. Community events could be held at this plaza to encourage foot traffic downtown and enrich the market for potential businesses. This space has the potential to be a wonderful community asset.



### IONIA-SHIAWASSEE TRAIL AMENITIES

The Ionia-Shiawassee trail is one of the Village's most recognizable assets. Visitors may enter the Village of Muir through this trail and based on their experiences may decide to stop for a break. The path also connects Muir residents to nature, the surrounding forest, and the Grand River. Benches along the trail would encourage people to sit down to take a break, making it more accessible for those with mobility challenges. Current decorative lighting could be adorned with banners, letting visitors know where they are, and celebrating local pride.



# Implementation Plan

# 12

## Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies are a major component of any master plan. They determine how guidelines and recommendations in the Plan become reality. The Village of Muir Master Plan should be seen as a living document. If conditions in the community or the needs of the residents' change, the Plan will need various adjustments or additions. The main goals and objectives in the Plan are not anticipated to require change, but as the Plan is implemented certain aspects will require periodic adjustment.

## Zoning Plan

The following table defines the zoning plan for The Village of Muir, with each future land use category corresponding to a future zoning classification. The Village has never had a zoning ordinance. The Village's first zoning ordinance will be the second major endeavor of the Planning and Zoning Commission after the passing of this first Master Plan. The following are recommended zoning categories for the new Zoning Ordinance to adopt in order to closely follow the Master Plan. The zoning ordinance will apply requirements that will impact the character of any future development, while avoiding drastically changing the property rights of existing landowners or creating

Future Land Use Categories	Future Zoning
Neighborhood Multi-Use	N – Neighborhood
Downtown Multi-Use	D – Downtown
Highway Multi-Use	H –Highway
Education and Public Institutions	Consistent with Neighboring Zoning Districts
Parks and Open Space	A – Agriculture

**N – Neighborhood:** The Neighborhood District will encompass most of the Village's land use. It encompasses primarily single-family residences in keeping with the Village's existing character. It will allow for a wide variety of residential uses, including single family, duplex, townhouses, triplexes, quadplexes, and, on larger lots, multi-family.

**D – Downtown:** The Downtown District will allow for residences and businesses in downtown buildings, and new mixed-use development on nearby blocks.

**H – Highway:** The Highway District commercial and industrial uses which tend to service highway traffic. This includes gas stations and depots as well as restaurants and convenience stores. Residential uses will also be allowed, in keeping with the overall philosophy of allowing a mix of uses throughout the Village.

**A – Agriculture:** This district reserves space for open space, agriculture, and parkland in order to preserve natural landscapes, farm fields, and recreational facilities.

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

A stable and knowledgeable Planning and Zoning Commission is essential to the success of the zoning process. The creation and adoption of this Master Plan shall be the first act of the Village of Muir's Planning and Zoning Commission. The responsibilities of the Commission include long-range plan formulation and the designing of appropriate and reasonable zoning ordinance regulations to implement the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. Adoption of the zoning ordinance by the Village Council then provides the legal basis for enforcement of the zoning ordinance's provisions. The ultimate effectiveness of the various ordinance requirements, however, depends upon the quality of ordinance administration and enforcement. If procedures are lax or handled in a sporadic and inconsistent manner, the results will be unsatisfactory at best.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the role of providing planning recommendations for the Village Council. This planning function is a continuous process and does not terminate with the completion of this Plan. Rural areas are in constant change and planning is an ongoing process of identification, adjustment, and resolution of problems. To sustain the planning process and generate positive results, maintain momentum, and respond to change, the Plan should be reviewed and updated every three to five years to maintain the validity of its data and relevance as a policy document.

## ZONING ORDINANCE

After the adoption of a Master Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission will design and recommend a zoning ordinance to be adopted by the Village Council. The zoning ordinance is made up of two major parts, the ordinance itself, and a zoning map. The zoning ordinance is the text of the regulation, describing what is permitted in each zoning district. The zoning map identifies the location of the zoning districts. The zoning ordinance should follow the recommendations set out by the Master Plan, but it is the ultimate decider of what is and is not permitted in certain districts. In other words, the Master Plan is a recommendation and guide for good development, but the zoning ordinance is the letter of the law. Whenever the Master Plan is updated, the law is not changed until the Village Council approves a change to the zoning ordinance itself.

## LAND DIVISION REGULATIONS

Land division standards following the Michigan Land Division Act (P.A. 288 of 1967, as amended through P.A. 591 of 1996) are a tool for the implementation of this Plan. Whereas zoning is concerned with land use on a site-by-site basis and activities in selected areas, land division regulations deal with the process of dividing land and maintaining the quality of individual developments.

Subdivision standards, as permitted under the Land Division Act, can be created in a Subdivision Control Ordinance to protect the needs of citizens by providing site design controls and improvement standards. Design controls provide for the arrangement and location of streets, configuration of lots, the provision of open space, and the sufficiency of easements for utility installations. Improvement standards ensure adequate roads and other physical improvements.

All other land divisions in the Village are also regulated by the Land Division Act. The act permits the Village to establish a Land Division Ordinance with local authority and the responsibility for the legal approval of land divisions. When land is divided outside of subdivisions, this ordinance can ensure that the resulting lots are consistent with Zoning Ordinance minimum requirements. It can also require lots to maintain minimum access standards to assure availability of public or private roads for the lots. As a community with fewer than 2,500 people, the Village also has the *option* to enter into an agreement with Ionia County to transfer the authority to approve or disapprove a division to the County level.

All land division regulations described in this section were recently changed by the Michigan Legislature and Governor. The Planning and Zoning Commission must remain alert to modifications in this area of regulation in order to assure the Village standards and requirements are consistent with authorizing legislation.

The Michigan Condominium Act was significantly altered in 1982 to permit condominium ownership of land. Since then, many developers have created site condominiums as a substitute for land subdivision. Site condominium development is often an attractive alternative to subdivision because the approval process can be much shorter than with subdivision development. The Condominium Act requires condominiums to comply with the local Village ordinances. The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider establishing standards for site condominium development of land.

Subdivision Regulations under the State Subdivision Control Act (Act 288, P.A. of 1967, as amended) are tools for the implementation of this Plan. Whereas zoning deals with land use on a site-by-site basis and activities in specific areas, subdivision regulations deal with the process of dividing land and maintaining the quality of individual developments. Subdivision standards protect the needs of citizens by providing both site design controls and improvement standards. Design controls are concerned with the location and arrangement of streets, width and depth of lots, the provision of open space, and the sufficiency of easements for utilities. Improvement standards ensure adequate roads and physical improvements.

## Transportation Improvements

### CIRCULATION AND ROAD SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

No additional public roads are expected to be built within the foreseeable planning period. Ionia County Road Department plans to concentrate on the maintenance and improvement of existing public roads. The condition of existing paved roads should be evaluated each year, and roads with high traffic volume should be considered for repaving.

### COMPLETE STREETS

The Village of Muir intends to implement a rural vision of Complete Streets with this Plan and will work with the Ionia County Road Department on road projects. The Complete Streets philosophy is that the roadways should be safe for all legal users. Complete Streets within the Village will mostly consist of widened paved or unpaved shoulders, which can provide access bicyclists. The highest priority for Complete Streets in the Village should be major corridors to schools, churches, and businesses, such as Ionia, Liberty, and Plains for North-South access and Maple, Garden, and Superior for East-West access. Changes to Maple Road will require authorization from the Michigan Department of Transportation, as it is a part of state-owned highway, M-21. Additional space for bike access should be focused on roads which are most heavily trafficked, as less busy streets are usually safer for bicyclists to share the road with cars.

## Action Plan



The Village of Muir Master Plan and its goals, objectives, and policies recommend the future vision for the community. The Village desires to maintain its small-town character while allowing for business investment and accommodating small-scale tourism by revitalizing downtown.

The goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan should be reviewed often, and should also be considered in decision-making by the Village. Successful implementation of this Plan will be the result of actions taken by elected and appointed officials, Village staff and consultants, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Village residents, public agencies, private organizations, and outside government agencies including Ionia County and the State of Michigan.

The table on the following page presents a detailed summary for all the recommended implementation activities, who is responsible for completing the activity, and available funding sources for each activity.

## Action Plan

	Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility (Color)			Responsibility (Abbreviation)		TIF/DDA
			Village	Other Gov.	Private	Public	Private	
<b>Planning and Zoning</b>								
Create a zoning ordinance and map for the Village.	A	1	PZC VC	VSC		•		
Explore the creation of a Downtown Development Authority	B	2	PZC VC	SM VSC		•		
<b>Civic and Transportation</b>								
Implement a vision for a Complete Streets design along Superior St.	B	2	VC DDA	ICRD VSC		•		
Work with MDOT to implement a vision for a Complete Streets design along M-21.	B	2	VC	MDOT ICRD VSC		•		
Work with ICRD to implement a vision for a Complete Streets design along Ionia and Plain Streets.	C	3	VC	ICRD VSC		•		
Seek redevelopment of key downtown sites identified in this plan, using Redevelopment Ready Communities resources.	A	3	VC DDA PZA	VSC				
Create a pro-investment environment to support the development of businesses and housing within the community.	C	3	VC DDA PZA	VSC				

Priority		Timeframe		Responsibility (Color)	
A	Most Important	1	Within one year	Project Lead	
B	Very Important	2	1-3 years	Key Participant	
C	Important	3	3+ years or Ongoing	Contributor	

### RESPONSIBILITY (ABBREVIATION)

<b>ICRD</b>	Ionia County Road Department	State of Michigan
<b>CM</b>	Community Members	Village Staff and Consultants
<b>LO</b>	Land Owners	Village Council
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission	Downtown Development Authority

### FUNDING

<b>Public</b>	Includes public funds from the Village operating budget, County, and State funding. May also include local government bonds and grants.
<b>Private</b>	Includes funds from private sources such as grants, corporate funding, or property owners.
<b>TIF</b>	Tax increment financing provided by an authorized body. Please refer to the summary of economic development tools.





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