

VILLAGE OF MESICK

Master Plan and Recreation Plan

Draft August 2012



Let Our Resources Work For You.



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Mesick Village Master Plan & 5-Year Recreation Plan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Incorporated in 1901, the Village of Mesick is a community of about 400 residents known for its access to recreation and natural resources, its small town atmosphere, and its backdrop of rolling hills and scenic views. Originally known as a railroad-based shipping center and lumber town, the Village has experienced changes over the years in its economy, population, and development patterns.

Today, the community has access to an incredible wealth of assets—including hundreds of thousands of acres of public forest land, extensive trail systems, quality fishing and hunting, and diverse regional employment opportunities—but must also contend with challenges stemming from changes in local, regional, and statewide development patterns and economic trends. To address these challenges, while ensuring that future development and activities preserve and

enhance the Village’s best qualities, the community must plan and prepare for future change.

The purpose of the Village of Mesick Master Plan is to set forth a strategy for the Village to guide future development and change according to the community’s priorities. The plan is intended to provide for:

- **Informed decisions:** The Master Plan provides a stable, long-term basis for informed decision-making. Analysis of existing conditions, combined with the goals and policies that are outlined in the Plan, help guide the Planning Commission and Village Council as they consider zoning, new development, capital improvements, and other matters relating to land use and development.

Statutory Authority

The Village of Mesick is a General Law Village. Residents elect a six-person Village Council and a Village President. Elected officials represent residents’ interests, establish a budget, and are responsible for Village policies and initiatives. The Village Council also appoints a Planning Commission, which oversees and administers planning and zoning policies and ordinances.

The Master Plan was created by the Village of Mesick Planning Commission, with assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. The Plan was prepared in accordance with provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) to enhance and protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.

- **Optimizing Investments:** The Plan provides for coordination of public improvements and private development, and also helps the Village prioritize improvements to community facilities.
- **Predictability:** The Master Plan informs citizens, property owners, and neighboring communities of the Village’s priorities and goals, as well as where and how the community is expected to grow—allowing them to plan for the use of property in a way that is consistent with the community’s vision.
- **Zoning:** The Master Plan provides the legal foundation for zoning. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires the zoning ordinance be based on a plan designed to meet residents’ needs for natural resources, housing, recreation, industry, business, service, and other uses.

Planning Process

The Village of Mesick Master Plan was developed by the Village of Mesick Planning Commission and a master plan subcommittee, with assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. The 2012 Master Plan provides background information and public input, with strategies designed to address changing population, economic, and land use trends.

In order to ensure a broadly representative planning process and recommendations, public input was obtained from a variety of sources. A public forum was held on February 28, 2012, and a community survey was mailed to all property owners and addresses in the Village.



Other Plans and Resources

Many previous studies and plans have informed the development of the Village of Mesick Master Plan. Relevant elements of the following plans and studies are highlighted/identified throughout the Master Plan:

- **Wexford County Master Plan (2003)** includes policy based on the natural capabilities of the land to sustain development; future needs for various types of development; the relationship of agricultural and undeveloped land on the community's character and economy the desires and needs of residents and officials.
- **The Grand Vision (2008)**, a six-county vision for land use and transportation, was created with input from thousands of residents in the region. The goal of the Grand Vision is to create prosperity by making this region an even better place to live, work, and play, by improving transportation systems, land use patterns, housing choices, food and farming systems, natural resources, and energy efficiency create a regional community with the quality of life that attracts high-paying jobs and economic sustainability. www.thegrandvision.org
- **New Designs for Growth** is a best-practice resource guide for local governments and developers in Northwest Lower Michigan. New Designs for Growth builds on the ten tenets of smart growth to provide design guidelines that preserve the region's unique character, scenic beauty, and natural resources. www.newdesignsforgrowth.org
- **The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2011)** assesses the economic conditions of the region and provides a strategy for building on strengths and overcoming challenges.
- **Regional Non-Motorized Comprehensive Strategy (2008)** is a facilities strategy for 13 counties in northwest lower Michigan that identifies priority non-motorized transportation projects to help guide MDOT's investment in the region's non-motorized transportation system.
- **Benchmarks Northwest (2004)** evaluate quality of life indicators in Northwest Michigan by offering secondary data and public perception (survey) information that provides a snapshot of community strengths and challenges. The reports integrate environmental, economic, and social factors in a way that demonstrates the interconnectivity of issues impacting regional quality of life.
- **Six Pillars of Prosperity** are economic sectors that the People and Land/Land Policy Institute have identified as priority areas for Michigan's success in the New Economy: Attractive Cities and Neighborhoods, Highly Competitive Schools and Lifelong Learning Opportunities, Knowledge Based Technologies, Thriving Agriculture, Natural Resources for Recreation and Job Creation, Inclusive and Entrepreneurial Culture.

Survey summaries and responses, along with information relative to public events, are included in the plan appendices. Plan goals, objectives, strategies, and future land use recommendations were developed based on public input obtained throughout the process, analysis of existing conditions, and previous or related plans and studies.

Organization of the Plan

The Village of Mesick Master Plan provides overviews of existing conditions, discussion of public input, identification of issues and opportunities surrounding different elements of the community, and goals, objectives, and action statements/implementation strategies. Descriptions of best practices, relevant programs, and examples from other communities are highlighted throughout the plan. The plan is divided into sections and chapters as follows:

1. **Introduction** provides an overview of the process and contents.
2. **Existing Conditions and Context** discusses Mesick's history and regional context, as well as issues that are relevant across the spectrum of the community, including demographics and economics indicators.
3. **Natural Resources** discusses the topography, soils, water resources, and green infrastructure available in and around the Village.
4. **Recreation**. This chapter serves as the Village's 5-year recreation plan, and discusses existing recreational facilities and future needs.
5. **Sense of Place**. This chapter discusses local assets and other characteristics that affect Mesick's quality of life.
6. **Land Use**. This chapter summarizes the character, types, and location of the various land uses found in the village, including residential, commercial, and community facilities and services.
7. **Goals, Objectives, and Action Strategies**. Goals, Objectives, and Action Strategies will address the issues and opportunities identified in previous plan chapters.
8. **Future Land Use Map and Zoning Plan** will formalize goals and objectives into future land use policies that will be used in making decisions on zoning changes and new development. The map and zoning plan will provide a stable, continuous basis for land use decision making through changes in the makeup of elected and appointed boards, and therefore encourages the implementation of the long-term goals and objectives of the Master Plan.
9. **Plan Implementation, Leadership, and Civic Engagement**. This chapter will provide an overview of the Village's decision making structure, leadership, and other considerations that will ultimately drive the implementation of the plan. Public participation, civic engagement, leadership, and partnership opportunities will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions and Context

The Village of Mesick is located in northern Wexford County in Michigan’s northwestern lower peninsula. Situated in a region of high forested hills along the Manistee River, the Village is known for its extraordinary scenic views and access to a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Additionally, the Village’s location at the intersection of Michigan State Highways M-37, M-42, and M-115 connect it to the regional service and employment centers of Cadillac and Traverse City, as well as a number of nearby communities including Manton, Buckley, Copemish, Harrietta, Kaleva, and Frankfort.

The Village’s regional context—including its location on major transportation routes and its access to natural resources—have driven much

of its historical development patterns. These factors continue to provide much of the Village’s recreation, service, and employment opportunities, offering the foundation for a high quality of life for its residents. This section discusses this context, as well as the Village’s historic and current growth patterns and economic trends that are working to shape the future of the Village.

History & Regional Context

Northwestern lower Michigan is known for its incredible natural beauty, tremendous natural resource assets, thriving agricultural economies, seasonal recreation and resorts, and year-round communities. The landscape of forests, lakes, rivers, orchards and farmland is



Wexford County

Located in northwest lower Michigan, Wexford County boasts a population of about 35,000, with a combined industrial and recreational economic base. Home to the Huron-Manistee National Forest and the Pere Marquette State Forest, nearly 80% of the County's land cover is forested, with about 41% of its total acreage owned by the National Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Nearly 15% of the County's surface area consists of water features, which include eleven major lakes and two major rivers, including the Manistee River and the Pine River, a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River (Pine River).

dotted with villages and small cities that are considerable distances from larger metropolitan communities. These distances have shaped the character of these small communities and created individual identities that are well-recognized as retirement and resort destinations, as well as desirable year-round communities.

The region's rural character and access to water, forest, and other natural resources has been its greatest economic driver. Many communities—Mesick among them—were built up around the lumber industry, or served as major hubs for water-based or rail-based transportation. Originally settled in the 1860's, the Village became a railroad stop on the Toledo & Ann Arbor line in 1890, which supported the logging industry and contributed to the growth of the Village, which was incorporated in 1901.

For many years Mesick was primarily known as an important shipping point for lumber and wood products and was a typical logging town with a sawmill, a few general stores, a blacksmith, and a handful of saloons, as well as a handle factory (Peterson, 356). By 1910, Mesick and surrounding Springville Township had a population of 1,390 residents (Mesick's population was counted with Springville Township until 1930).

Village of Mesick

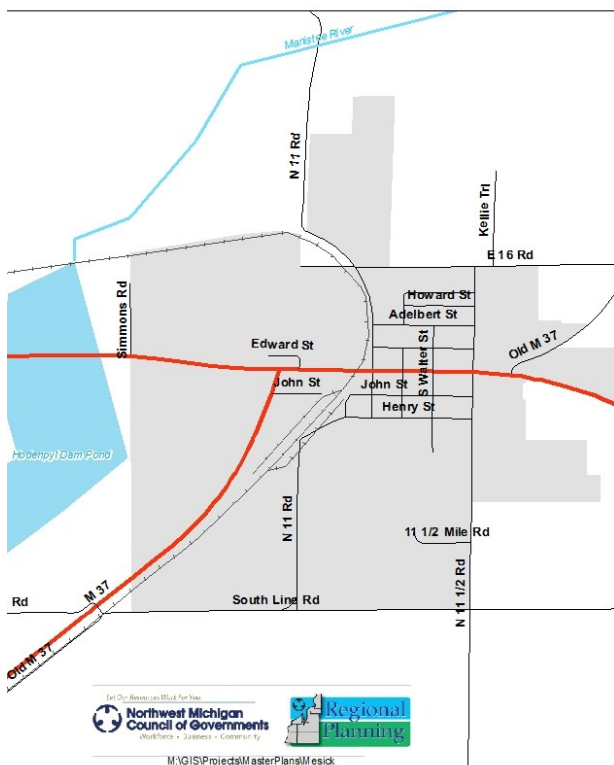
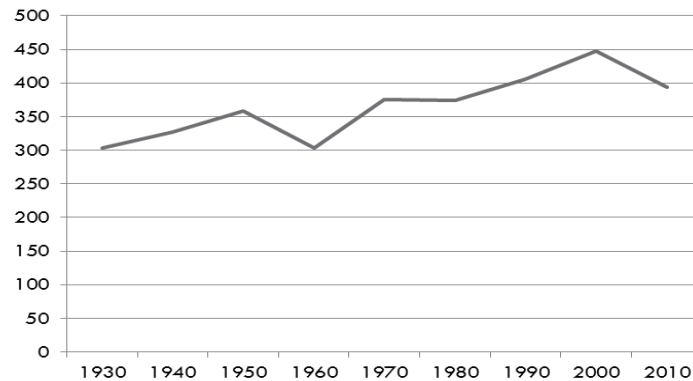


Figure 1. Mesick Population Change, 1930-2010

Source: US Census



Data Sources

- The decennial **US Census** is conducted every 10 years to measure population, age, and other basic demographic information for all geographies in the country. Historically, the Census “long form” also recorded more detailed information on individual household characteristics, including income, employment, poverty, housing value, commute time, etc. As of 2005, that information is instead collected every 5 years by the American Community Survey.
- The **American Community Survey (ACS)** is a large, continuous demographic survey conducted by the Census Bureau that will eventually provide accurate and up-to-date profiles of America's communities every year. Questionnaires are mailed to a sample of addresses to obtain information about households and housing units. The survey produces estimates of population and housing characteristics data for small areas, including tracts and population subgroups. Questions asked are similar to those on the decennial census long form. Estimates for small geographic areas are based on data collected over a 5-year time period, and represent the average characteristics over that time period. Note that, because the Census has recently transitioned to the American Community Survey for detailed population characteristics, which uses different methodology, current data is not comparable to historic Census data for the same indicators. As such, changes over time are not discussed for some indicators (income, employment, etc).
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics** is a unit of the US Department of Labor that collects, processes, analyses, and disseminates statistical data regarding current social and economic issues. Data is available for county geographies, metropolitan statistical areas, and micropolitan statistical areas.

However, as the logging industry declined, so did the population of many communities in northern Michigan. By 1920, the combined Village and Township population dropped to 748 residents .

Today, the Village of Mesick is a community of about 400 residents, still shaped in large measure by its access to natural resources and location along major transportation routes. Known for its proximity to the Manistee River and Manistee National Forest, the Village offers a wealth of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities. Nearby trails—including the North Country Trail and a number of ATV/ORV and snowmobile trails—offer abundant access to the region’s hundreds of thousands of acres of public land, and are a draw for many hikers, snowmobilers, hunters, mushroomers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. The Manistee River, meanwhile, is considered one of Michigan’s top 10 trout streams and is regionally significant in terms of its importance to tourism, offering canoeing, boating, and fishing. Mesick also

hosts a number of popular festivals, including the Mushroom Festival, which has been a community mainstay for decades. Tourists and others are well-served by a number of campgrounds, motels, and nearby resorts that provide tourist lodging while acting as an important employment base for the community.

Historically and today, the Village’s access to transportation systems continues to make it an important gateway to northern Michigan and provides access to services including hospitals, community colleges, airports, resorts, and a variety of entertainment, shopping, and recreation options. Many of the region’s employment opportunities are located in these communities.

Population Characteristics

Like many villages in northwest lower Michigan, Mesick’s population has remained

Table 1. Population Trends, 1930-2010									
	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
NW Lower Michigan	116,900	129,031	135,488	139,017	158,333	208,286	230,962	281,468	297,912
Wexford County	16,827	17,976	18,628	18,466	19,717	25,102	26,360	30,484	32,735
Mesick Village	303	327	359	304	376	374	406	447	394

Figure 2. Percent Population by Age, Mesick Village and Wexford County

Source: 2010 US Census

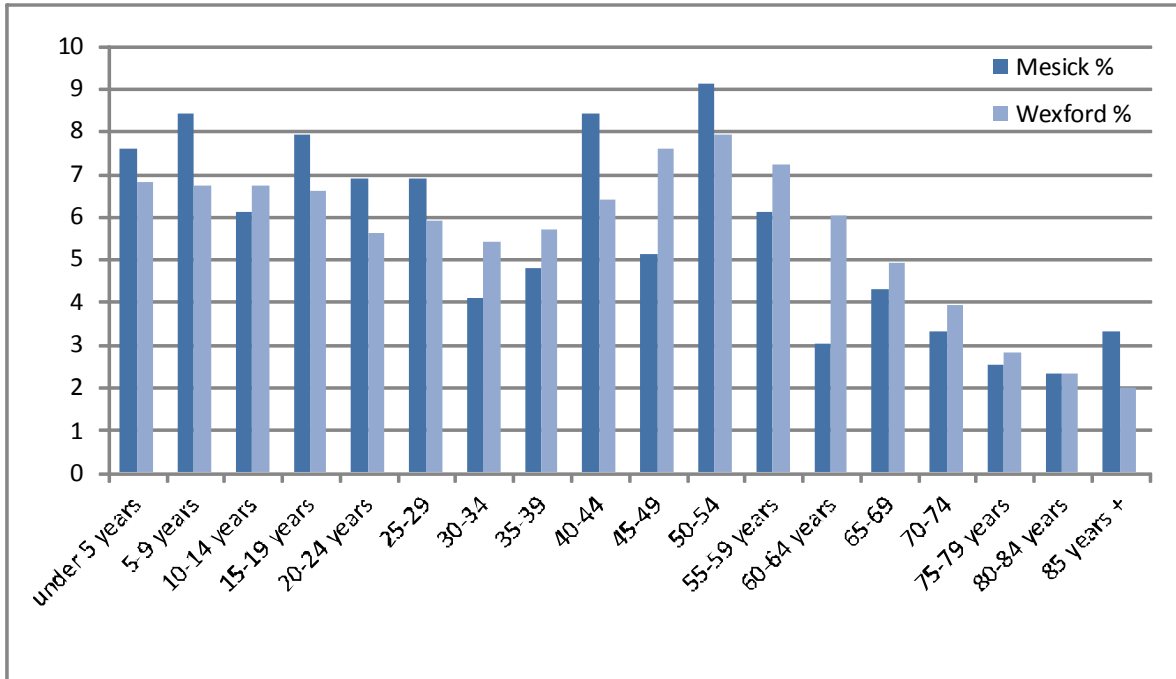


Figure 2. Population Change by Age, 2000-2010

Source: 2010 US Census

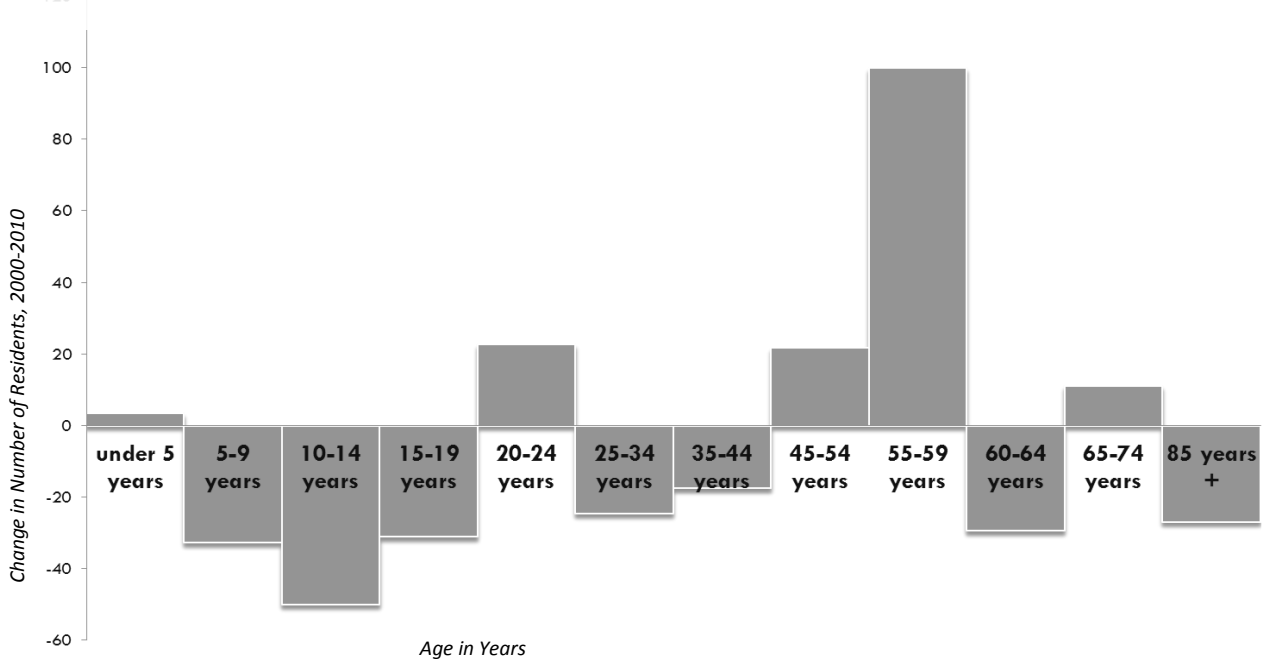


Table 2. Income and Poverty, 2010

	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	% of Families below the poverty level	% of people below the poverty level
Mesick	\$13,885	\$27,813	25%	34.8%
Springville Twp	\$14,450	\$32,868	15.5%	19.4%
Wexford County	\$19,952	\$39,997	13.0%	25%
Michigan	\$25,135	\$48,432	10.6%	14.8%

Source 2010 American Community Survey

fairly stable since 1930. In 1930, the population of Mesick was about 303, gradually rising to a high of 447 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of residents declined to 394 (about 12%).

This historic stability in population, as well as the recent population decline, is in contrast with many of the rural areas within the region, which have grown dramatically over the last thirty years (see table 1). Between 1930-2010, the northwest lower Michigan region grew from about 117,000 to nearly 300,000. However, most of these population increases—along with the new development that follows population growth—have occurred outside of cities and villages. The desire for rural lifestyles or homes on larger lots, combined with limited land supply and higher costs in city and village boundaries, has led to greater growth and development in rural areas, while city and village population levels remain stagnant or decline.

Household Size and Age

In addition to declining population, many villages in northern Michigan are experiencing an increase in age and subsequent decreases in the number of family households. These changes are themselves part of a national trend toward an aging population, as the country’s largest demographic group, the baby boomers, reaches retirement age. These changes have significant impacts on housing demand, service needs, and employment base.

Mesick’s population is slightly younger than residents County-wide, with a median age in Mesick of 37.8 years, compared to 40.9 years County-wide. However, despite a lower median age, the Village is nevertheless experiencing age-related changes to household and family demographics. Between 2000-2010, despite overall population decline, the number of residents in Mesick between the ages of 65-74 increased slightly; and the largest population increase was in those aged between 45-59

years, with an additional 22 residents in this age range. The largest decline in terms of age range, was in school aged children, with 54 fewer residents within the ages of 5-19 years (see Figures 2 and 3).

Reflecting this decline—as well as a 10% drop in the number of family households and a 25% decline in the number of households with individuals under 18 years of age—Mesick’s average household size decreased as well, from 2.81 people per household to 2.45 people per household.

Sex and Race

The population of Mesick is representative of the County’s population in terms of race and ethnicity. About 97% of the Village’s population is white, compared to 98% in the County and 95% in the region. About 1% of Mesick’s

population is American Indian, and about 1% are black or African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or other race. Another 1% are of two or more races.

In 2010, the male-female distribution was 193 to 201, respectively, or about 49% male and 51% female.

Education and Income

Educational attainment provides an important context when considering local workforce capacities and the community’s economic vitality, and plays a role in determining which types of industries or business may choose to locate in or near the community.

About 79% of Mesick residents have a high school degree or higher, compared to 87% of County residents. However, the percentage of those in Mesick with a bachelor’s degree or higher—about 6.5%—is substantially lower than the County-wide rate of 16.4%.

Education and income levels are closely correlated, with higher education levels generally translating into higher incomes. The median household income in the Village of Mesick in 2009 was \$25,313 - slightly below income levels in surrounding Springville Township and significantly below County and statewide incomes (see table 2). In addition to



lower overall incomes, poverty rates in Mesick are significantly higher than in surrounding communities (see table 2). The percentage of people in Mesick with incomes below the poverty level in 2010, as reported by the American Community Survey, was about 35%, compared to 25% county-wide and 15% statewide. A quarter of all families in Mesick are living in poverty, and nearly 40% of people under 18 were living in poverty.

Housing

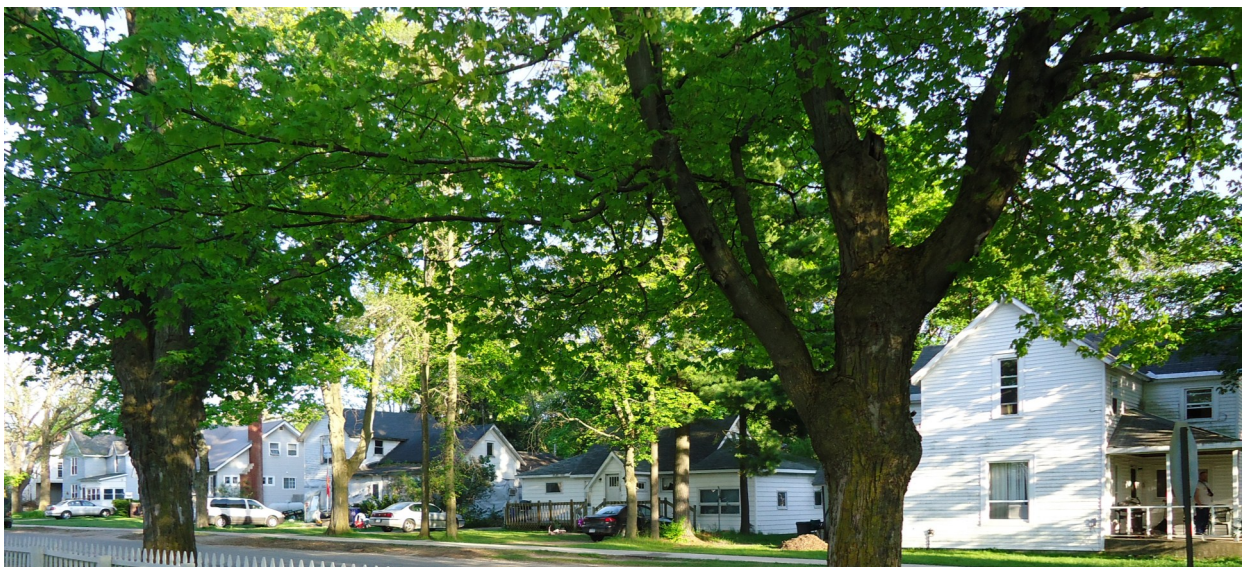
The 2010 Census reports that there are 190 housing units in the Village of Mesick. Of those, 111 (68.9%) are owner-occupied, 50 (31.1%) are rental units, and 29 are vacant. Vacant housing units include units for sale or rent (11), seasonal/recreational housing units (2), or other vacant (16).

Values and Costs

The American Community Survey measures several financial characteristics of housing, including value and rent, owner/renter costs, and income levels of residents. In 2010, the median home value in Mesick was \$90,500, slightly lower than the Wexford County median home value of \$113,000. Median monthly rent was comparable to County-wide median rents, at \$671 per month in Mesick vs. \$676 per month County-wide.

Housing Affordability

“Housing cost overburden” is a term used to measure housing affordability. Housing is generally considered to be affordable to a household if it costs 30% or less of a household’s income. When households pay more than that, they’re considered “cost



overburdened,” which puts them at higher risk of foreclosure, homelessness, overcrowding, or occupying substandard housing.

Lower median housing values contribute to slightly lower housing cost overburden rates, when compared to the County as a whole. In Mesick, according to the American Community Survey, 22% of homeowners with a mortgage pay 30% or more of their household income for housing costs, compared to 40% of County homeowners, likely reflecting lower housing values and associated costs.

Renters experience much higher rates of cost overburden, however, both in the Village and County-wide. 34% of renters pay between 30-34.9% of their income for rent, while 46.3% of renters pay over 35% of their income for rent.

Economy

Workforce and Employment

The 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) reports that Mesick has a workforce of about 199 people (187 are employed). The ACS classifies employees according to **occupations** and **industries**. The term occupations refers to a set of activities or tasks that employees are paid to perform. Employees who perform essentially the same tasks are in the same occupation, whether or not they work in the same industry. The term industry, meanwhile, refers to a group of establishments that

produce similar products or provide similar services.

The most common occupations in the Village were sales and office occupations; service occupations; and production, transportation, and material moving occupations. The largest industries, in terms of number of employees, were retail trade, followed by education, health care, and social assistance services; manufacturing; and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (see table 3).

Most of Mesick’s workforce works outside of the Village, according to the ACS. About 54 residents work in the Village, while 133 worked outside the Village. 94 residents worked outside of Wexford County.

Most employees drove to work, either alone (76.5%) or in a carpool (7%), while about 5% walked to work. About 11% reported working from home. Percentages of those walking to work or working at home are higher than Countywide rates (2% and 4% respectively); however, the mean travel time to work (about 28 minutes) was longer than County-wide commutes (21 minutes).

Economic Trends

The economy is a primary concern for many Mesick residents: the economy or “lack of jobs”

Mesick Village Master Plan

Table 3. Occupations in Mesick Village, 2010	% of Workforce Employed
Management, professional, & related occupations	14.4%
Service occupations	21.4%
Sales/office	39.6%
Natural resources, construction, and	4.3%
Production, transportation, & material moving operations	20.3%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Table 4. Industry in Mesick Village, 2010	% of Workforce Employed
Agriculture, forestry, fishing &	1.1%
Construction	4.8%
Manufacturing	11.8%
Retail trade	26.7%
Wholesale trade	1.1%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	9.1%
Information	0%
Finance, insurance, real estate	6.4%
Professional, scientific, etc	7.0%
Educational services, health care,	19.3%
Arts/entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	11.2%
Other services	0%
Public administration	1.6%





















Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Table 5. Top Wexford County Businesses	
Business Name	Local Employees
Avon Automotive	600
Four Winns Boats Llc	550
Mercy Hospital Cadillac	540
Elmer's Crane & Dozer Inc	450
Cadillac Casting Inc	300

Table 6. Top Regional Businesses (Benzie, Grand Traverse, Manistee, and Wexford Counties)	
Business Name	Local Employees
Munson Healthcare	5,000
Little River Casino Resort	1,000
Grand Traverse Resort & Spa	756
Cherry Growers Inc	750
Turtle Creek Casino	750

Source: EMSI Economic Modeling Specialists. Projections use state data from the following agencies: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

Table 7. Wexford County | Jobs by Industry, 2011

16,681 Total Jobs (2011)	51.7% Male (National: 52.4%)	48.3% Female (National: 47.6%)
Industry	2011 Jobs	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	470	
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	178	
Utilities	40	
Construction	700	
Manufacturing	3,083	
Wholesale Trade	285	
Retail Trade	2,073	
Transportation and Warehousing	515	
Information	259	
Finance and Insurance	706	
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	458	
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	583	
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13	
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	940	
Educational Services	346	
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,829	
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	262	
Accommodation and Food Services	1,274	
Other Services (except Public Administration)	749	
Government	1,917	

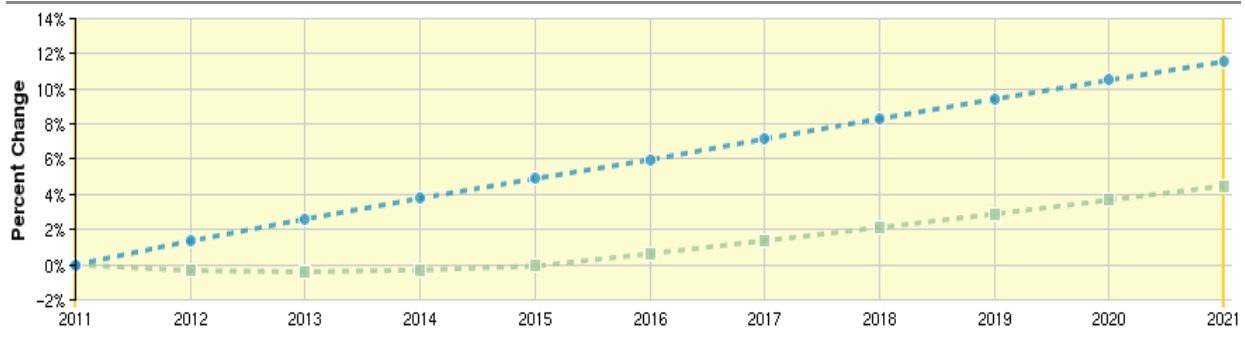
Data Source: EMSI Economic Modeling

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were cited as important concerns in the 2012 Mesick Village Master Plan community survey, with 68% indicating that the economy is “poor” or “needs improvement,” while comments in the survey and at public meetings reinforced the need for additional jobs. These concerns follow a long-lasting economic recession that dramatically affected the State of Michigan: between 2000 and 2009, Michigan lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, creating a long-lasting recession with enormous repercussions, including unemployment rates that remained among the highest in the country for several years.

Manufacturing plays a major role in Wexford County’s economy. According to the Wexford County Master Plan, nearly 20% of the County’s tax base consists of industrial property, and eight of the ten largest taxpayers in the County are manufacturers. As such, during Michigan’s recession, Wexford County experienced higher unemployment rates than the state or region as a whole, with rates rising to an annual average unemployment rate of 17% in 2009. Since that time, however, unemployment rates have begun to decline. By 2011, the annual average unemployment rate in Wexford County, while still higher than the statewide jobless rate, was at about 12.7%.

Fig 4. Projected Percent Job Growth, 2011-2021, Wexford County and 4-County Region



Region	2011 Jobs	2021 Jobs	% Growth
■ Mesick Region (Benzie, Manistee, Grand Traverse, and Wexford Counties)	102,247	114,059	11.6%
■ Wexford County	16,681	17,429	4.5%

Source: EMSI Economic Modeling Specialists. Projections use state data from the following agencies: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

It is expected over the short term that the state and the region's unemployment rates will remain higher than the nation's; however, the region and the state as a whole are experiencing an economic transition, with growth in several sectors and limited growth or decline in some traditional economic foundations. A cumulative 4.5% increase in jobs is projected in Wexford County over the next ten years. That increase is concentrated in several sectors, with some areas seeing significant growth and others experiencing a decline in number of jobs. Following are ten-year projections for specific industry sectors (see also tables 4-6). (Note that, because half of Mesick's workforce commutes outside of Wexford County for work, the following projections include discussion both on Wexford County trends as well as cumulative trends in a four-county region that includes Wexford County and neighboring Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Manistee Counties.)

- **Manufacturing** employment is the largest employment sector for Wexford County, with 3,083 jobs, accounting for about 18% of all employment in the County. The County's concentration of jobs in this sector is higher than that of the state's. The number of manufacturing jobs is projected to remain fairly stable through 2021, with 3% growth.
- Projections for Wexford County's economy through the largest industry sectors are expected to decline over the next ten

Michigan's New Economy

The New Economy, sometimes called the Knowledge Economy, places a premium on talented, creative, and well-educated people as well as on high quality living environments. The New Economy refers to a global, entrepreneurial and knowledge-based economy where business success comes increasingly from the ability to incorporate knowledge, technology, creativity and innovation into products and services.

Key elements of the New Economy include:

- Being rich in talent and ideas
- Attracting educated people
- Physical and cultural amenities
- Ability to adapt
- Bold partnerships with business, government, and nonprofit sector
- Sector diversity and clustering of related sectors
- Communications dependent & energy efficient
- Talented, well-educated people choose location first, job second
- Quality places with high quality of life
- Clean, green environment and proximity to open space and quality recreation are critical
- Connection to emerging global opportunities

- *Planning & Zoning News, December 2010*

Mesick Village Master Plan

Table 8. Projected Job Growth by Industry, 2011-2021, Wexford County

Description	2011 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change	% Change	2011 Avg. Annual Wage
Utilities	40	11	(29)	(73%)	\$67,477
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	940	756	(184)	(20%)	\$19,990
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	470	391	(79)	(17%)	\$16,071
Accommodation and Food Services	1,274	1,055	(219)	(17%)	\$14,492
Government	1,917	1,796	(121)	(6%)	\$53,692
Retail Trade	2,073	1,986	(87)	(4%)	\$25,033
Manufacturing	3,083	3,185	102	3%	\$56,989
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,829	1,917	88	5%	\$42,368
Transportation and Warehousing	515	557	42	8%	\$45,983
Information	259	290	31	12%	\$44,036
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	262	302	40	15%	\$16,858
Wholesale Trade	285	337	52	18%	\$46,241
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	458	553	95	21%	\$16,581
Other Services (except Public Administration)	749	915	166	22%	\$22,606
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	583	746	163	28%	\$47,858
Construction	700	926	226	32%	\$29,230
Finance and Insurance	706	942	236	33%	\$31,641
Educational Services	346	475	129	37%	\$19,710
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	178	282	104	58%	\$44,767
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13	<10	--	--	--
Total	16,681	17,429	748	4.5%	37170

Source: EMSI Economic Modeling Specialists. Projections use state data from the following agencies: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

Table 9. Projected Job Growth by Industry, 2011-2021, Mesick Region (Benzie, Manistee, Grand Traverse, and Wexford Counties)

Description	2011 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change	% Change	2011 Avg. Annual Wage
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,127	2,011	(116)	(5%)	\$18,204
Utilities	355	280	(75)	(21%)	\$106,370
Management of Companies and Enterprises	91	47	(44)	(48%)	\$101,603
Transportation and Warehousing	1,951	1,985	34	2%	\$47,675
Information	1,575	1,611	36	2%	\$50,396
Retail Trade	12,934	12,995	61	0%	\$25,870
Wholesale Trade	2,184	2,307	123	6%	\$49,449
Accommodation and Food Services	8,518	8,765	247	3%	\$17,219
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,545	4,936	391	9%	\$26,201
Manufacturing	8,997	9,456	459	5%	\$57,271
Educational Services	1,828	2,325	497	27%	\$23,190
Construction	6,235	6,804	569	9%	\$41,061
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,350	2,931	581	25%	\$15,807
Government	11,754	12,383	629	5%	\$53,161
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,330	5,040	710	16%	\$25,049
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,198	6,181	983	19%	\$18,723
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5,605	7,004	1,399	25%	\$46,834
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	3,234	4,944	1,710	53%	\$62,676
Finance and Insurance	5,646	7,448	1,802	32%	\$49,181
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,789	14,605	1,816	14%	\$47,562
Total	102247	114059	11812	0.12	39113

Source: EMSI Economic Modeling Specialists. Projections use state data from the following agencies: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

years. **Accommodation and Food services, Government, and Retail Trade** jobs, combined, account for about half of jobs in Wexford County (5264). Over the next ten years, these sectors are expected to lose about 300 jobs. In neighboring counties, job trends in these sectors are projected to be slightly more stable.

- Knowledge– and skill-based employment is experiencing significant growth in the region. **The finance industry** is expected to add 236 job in Wexford County (33% growth) through 2021. An additional 1,566 jobs in Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Manistee Counties are projected for this sector. Additionally, **professional, scientific, and technical services jobs** will see 28% growth during that time period in Wexford County.
- With Mesick Consolidated Schools located within the Village, education is one of the largest employment sectors in the Village. Jobs in **educational services** are expected to increase regionally with a projected 27% growth both in Wexford County and the 4-county region as a whole.
- Hospitals are major employers in the region: Mercy Hospital is the third largest employer in Wexford County (540 employees), and Munson Healthcare is the largest employer in the four-county region (5,000 employees). As the region's population ages and health care needs increase, jobs in the **health care and social assistance** sector are expected to increase significantly, with 14% job growth regionally and 5% growth in Wexford County.
- The **mining, quarrying, and oil/gas exploration** industry is expected to see significant growth (about 58%, or 104 jobs) through 2021.
- Wexford County is one of the state's top Christmas tree producers, and neighboring counties are national exporters of cherry and other fruit products. These agricultural and forestry foundations contribute to an employment concentration in **agriculture, fishing, forestry and hunting sector** at a rate higher than the state. However, employment in this industry is expected to lose about 79 jobs in Wexford County by 2021 (-17%). Surrounding counties are expected to lose an additional 34 jobs, for a total loss of 116 jobs, or 5%, over the next ten years.
- The **construction** industry is expected to see limited growth in Wexford County (about 2%) through 2021. Regionally, the rate of growth is projected to be about 9%.
- **Utilities**, a relatively small employment sector in the County, was identified as a declining sector of the County's economy; employment is predicted to drop by 73%, or 29 jobs, by 2021.

Issues and Opportunities

Demographic Changes

Mesick is experiencing a shift in population away from family households, with a trend toward an aging demographic. The age of a community's residents, as well its household types and sizes, have significant impacts on housing demand, service needs, and employment base; while changing household size and type can reflect can signal a need for additional housing options. An aging population both locally and regionally may translate into greater needs for health care and senior housing. Fewer school children, meanwhile, can affect factors such as school enrollment: between 2000, enrollment in Mesick Consolidated Schools declined from a total of 925 students to 712 students. This declining enrollment can in turn significantly affect school funding.

Income, Housing, and Transportation Costs

Because a majority of Mesick's workforce commutes outside of the Village for employment, transportation costs for households tend to be higher than costs for residents elsewhere in the County. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation Index, the average household travels about 26,2612 miles per year, resulting in transportation costs that account for about 42% of a typical household budget. When combined with housing costs, many residents pay over 60% of their income

for combined costs of housing and transportation. With high poverty rates and lower comparative incomes in the Village, these costs can become a significant financial burden to many households.

Economic Trends

The economy and lack of jobs has been identified as a primary concern by Mesick residents. While many of the factors affecting economic investment are connected to regional, state, or global factors outside the control of the Village, the economic health of a community increasingly depends on local factors that can be affected in part by local



policies and initiatives, including community assets and infrastructure. For instance, adequate and efficient community services—such as affordable sewer and water, well-maintained roads, and wireless or broadband access—are necessary to support new economic development, particularly when industries or business rely on high tech infrastructure or high speed communications. Additionally, a high quality of life—including recreation opportunities, cultural activities, quality natural resources, and a welcoming social environment all work to attract and retain additional economic investment, as well as a skilled workforce, which in turn helps in creating high-paying sustainable jobs. Communities can thus help in attracting investment by providing for adequate infrastructure and working to create a high quality of life by building on existing economic assets—such as surrounding natural resources, events and recreation opportunities, and the local K-12 school system.

Economic Niche Sectors

Current economic data shows a number of sectors in Wexford County and nearby communities that have employment at rates higher than statewide concentrations. These sectors may represent “niche” opportunities upon which Mesick can capitalize within its regional and statewide economic context. However, several of these sectors—including manufacturing and tourism-related sectors—are expected to remain stagnant or decline

over the next ten years. Identifying priority economic sectors may aid the Village in attracting investment as the community works to retain and support existing business while attracting new investment.

Tourism is an important part of the employment base in Mesick and the region, with employment in tourism-related industries at higher concentrations than the state overall. Some tourism-related employment sectors—including accommodation and food services and retail—are projected to decline somewhat over the next 10 years; however, employment in arts/entertainment/recreation is expected to increase regionally. Mesick’s location and resources leave it well positioned to take advantage of this growth and to enhance existing tourism-based business opportunities. Building on and promoting natural resources, scenic views, and recreation opportunities can help to attract new economic investment while enhancing the quality of life for residents. In the 2012 Master Plan survey, public support for promoting recreation and other Village assets was high, with 81% indicating that they would support initiatives to promote the community’s assets. Public input from surveys and meetings also indicated strong support for additional commercial development, including neighborhood commercial, hotels/motels, and restaurants.

With a strong historical foundation in the manufacturing sector, there is also interest and



The Grand Vision

The Grand Vision is a vision of regional growth built on input from over 15,000 residents. The study and public input process included random-sample, scientifically-valid surveys, public workshops, questionnaires, traffic modeling, and data analysis. Initial public input was ana-

lyzed to develop four different scenarios that would reflect different public preferences and development patterns. Each scenario included indicators relative to housing units, land consumed, annual driving hours and gas expenses, and cost of lane miles. These scenarios were presented in a questionnaire that provided information and graphics on how each scenario would impact the number of housing units, investments in road lane miles, and acres of land consumed by development. Questions asked participants to choose which scenario they felt did the best job of promoting the values that were identified in the survey and workshop processes, and additional questions were asked for input on transportation investments, housing types, and other land use patterns. The “preferred scenario,” as identified by the questionnaire and tested by a random-sample survey, was Scenario C, or the “village-based scenario:”

Future growth will occur primarily in the region’s cities and villages, with additional growth in the main cities of Traverse City and Cadillac. Large amounts of rural open space are preserved. This development pattern will require investments in regional bus service, sidewalks, and bike trails in Villages and cities, with some investments in new or widened roadways.

Wexford County results showed strong support for Scenario C, both in the questionnaire and in the follow-up random-sample survey. Some highlights from the study process for Wexford County are as follows:

- Wexford County residents indicated that the most important qualities of a place were having “plenty of jobs or work available” and “having friends or family in the area.”
- Most popular growth strategies were: it should be convenient to walk or bike in new developing areas (94%); and new jobs should be located closer to where people live (93%)
- The least popular growth strategies were that more regional freeways should be built (66% disagree) and that growth should be located mainly in the Traverse City part of the region (61% disagree)

Complete study results, and County-specific reports, are available online at www.thegrandvision.org.

support for greater industrial development. 83% of respondents to the 2012 survey indicated that they would support light industry development in the community.

The community also indicated that they would support food or agricultural-related businesses—another potential economic “niche” sector with regional employment concentration higher than the state’s—with 83% of respondents indicating they would support this activity.

While existing economic foundations provide important opportunities for economic development activities, it will also be important to ensure that economic development is balanced with growing sectors of knowledge-based employment. Knowledge economy jobs—including real estate, finance/insurance, and professional or technical services—are expected to grow significantly region-wide. Other growing sectors include health care-related employment that will respond to the needs of an aging population.

For the Village to be competitive in these new economic trends, it will be important to ensure that Mesick’s workforce has the skills and education required for new economic trends and opportunities. Mesick experiences higher poverty rates than surrounding areas, connected in part to comparatively lower college education rates. As the region’s and the



state’s economy begin to transition economically, developing local workforce skills and assets matched to emerging job trends will be critical both in addressing employment needs and in attracting investment. Public discussions have identified the potential for partnerships with educational organizations and workforce development that could train residents with skills needed to succeed in the new economy. 2012 survey respondents indicated significant support for fostering partnerships with schools and other organizations to offer and enhance educational opportunities.

Chapter 3: Natural Resources

The natural resources in and surrounding the Village of Mesick are some of its most important assets pertaining to economic development and quality of life. The Manistee River that runs along the west of the Village is of regional and statewide significance for its recreational and commercial opportunities; while just outside the Village limits, Mesick has access to hundreds of thousands of state and national forest land. These resources are key to Mesick's quality of life, and both residents and visitors take advantage of the recreation and economic opportunities available in the forests, lakes, and streams within and surrounding the Village.



This chapter will discuss natural resources within the Village, to provide context for planning and future development that considers overall environmental quality.

Natural Resources Inventory

Topography and Soils

Nearly 70% of the Village's land area is covered by Kalkaska sands with slopes ranging from 0-40%. These soils are poorly suited to crops, well suited for building sites and fairly well suited for septic fields; however, there are limitations for septic tank absorption due to poor filtering capacity, which can result in the pollution of ground water supplies. Steeper slopes in this series have the same filtration limitations, but are not suited to buildings. Any development should follow the contour of the land.

Due to the proximity of the Manistee River shoreline, a significant portion of the Village is located on top of wet soils that are not highly recommended for development due to slopes, poor drainage, and seasonal high water tables. Soils in the Northeast area of the Village are well drained and have a relatively high slope range (0-40%).

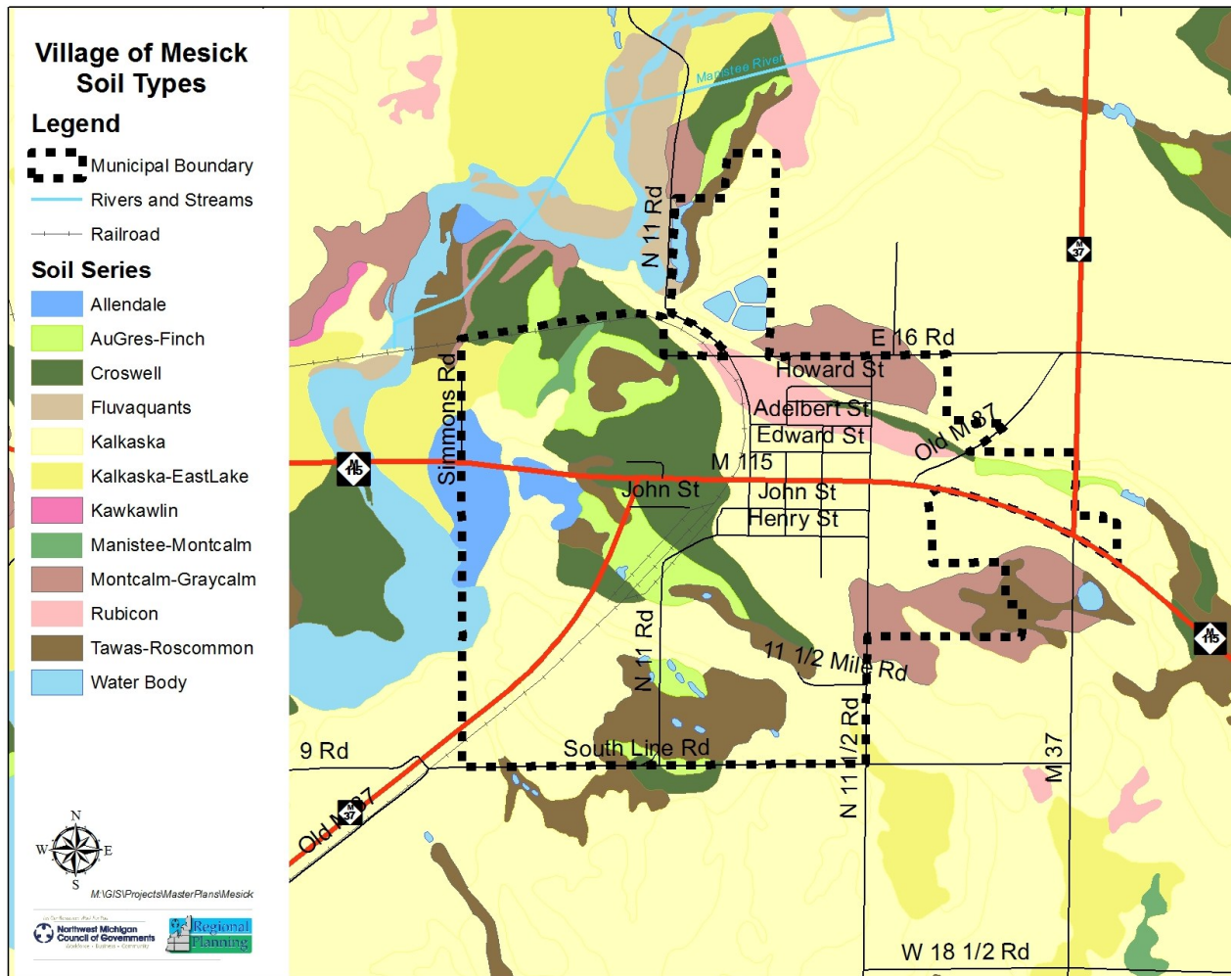
Manistee River and Watershed

Mesick is bounded on the west by about 1 mile of the Manistee River, a major, 190-mile river that flows into Lake Michigan and supports a nationally recognized fishery. The Manistee River Watershed covers about 1.4 million acres and drains about 1800 square miles in northern lower Michigan.

60 smaller drainage areas, including Fletcher Creek and Cole Creek near the Village of Mesick, as well as a large number of named and unnamed feeder creeks that represent artesian flow from groundwater moving north from the glacial hills toward the river. These underground springs or streams, combined with soil types and geological factors, contribute to a water flow that, along with that of the Au Sable, is the most stable water flow of any stream in the country. This stable flow is critical to sup-

The Manistee River watershed is divided into

Map 1. Village of Mesick Soils



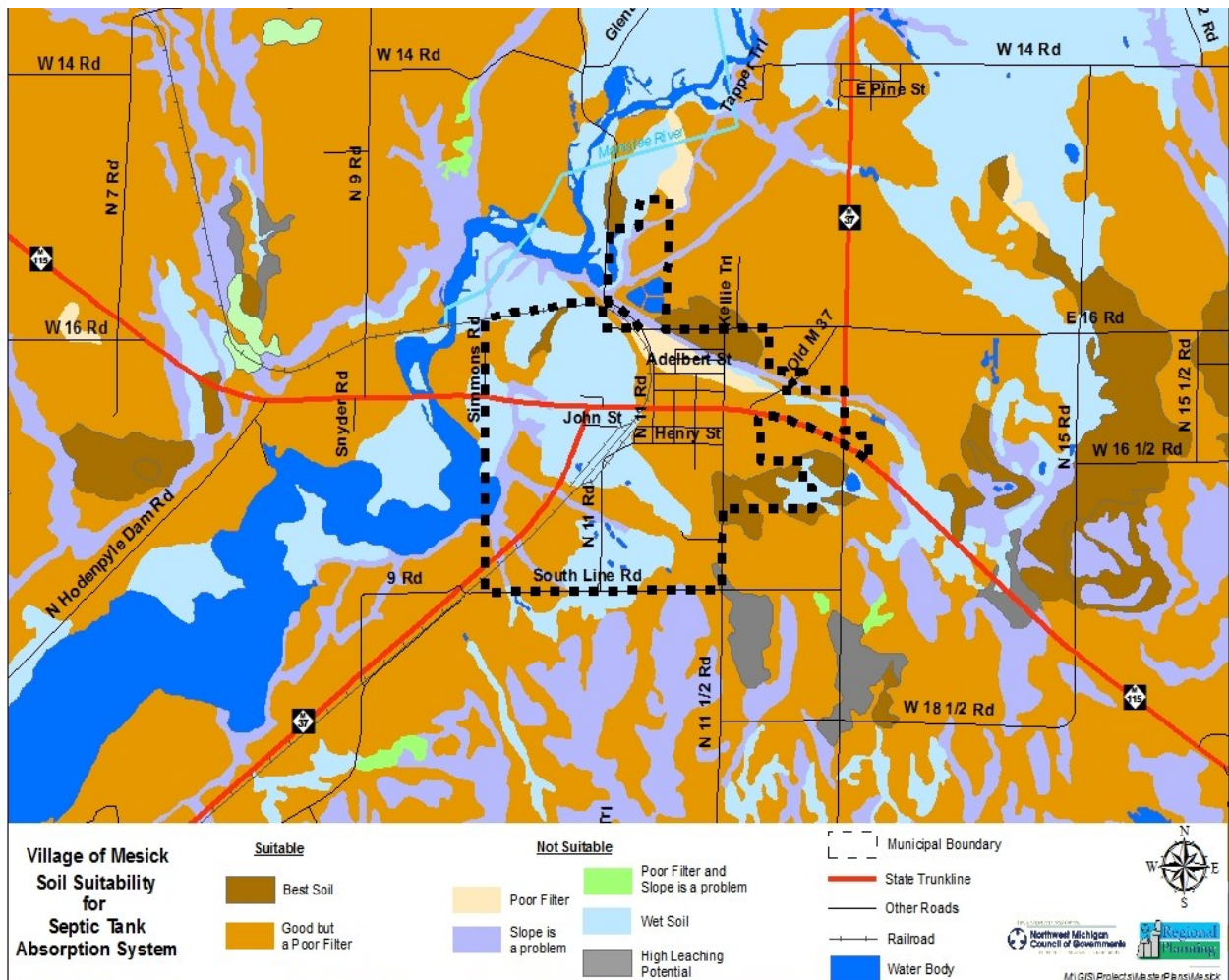
porting balanced and diverse fish communities, and leaves the Manistee resistant to freezing, droughts, and floods.

waters of the dam provides a fishery for bluegill, smallmouth bass, pike, and walleye, as well as lake sturgeon, a species identified as threatened by the State of Michigan. The dam has some impact on water flow and other issues, including warming effects that are passed downstream and can have impacts on coldwater fish species.

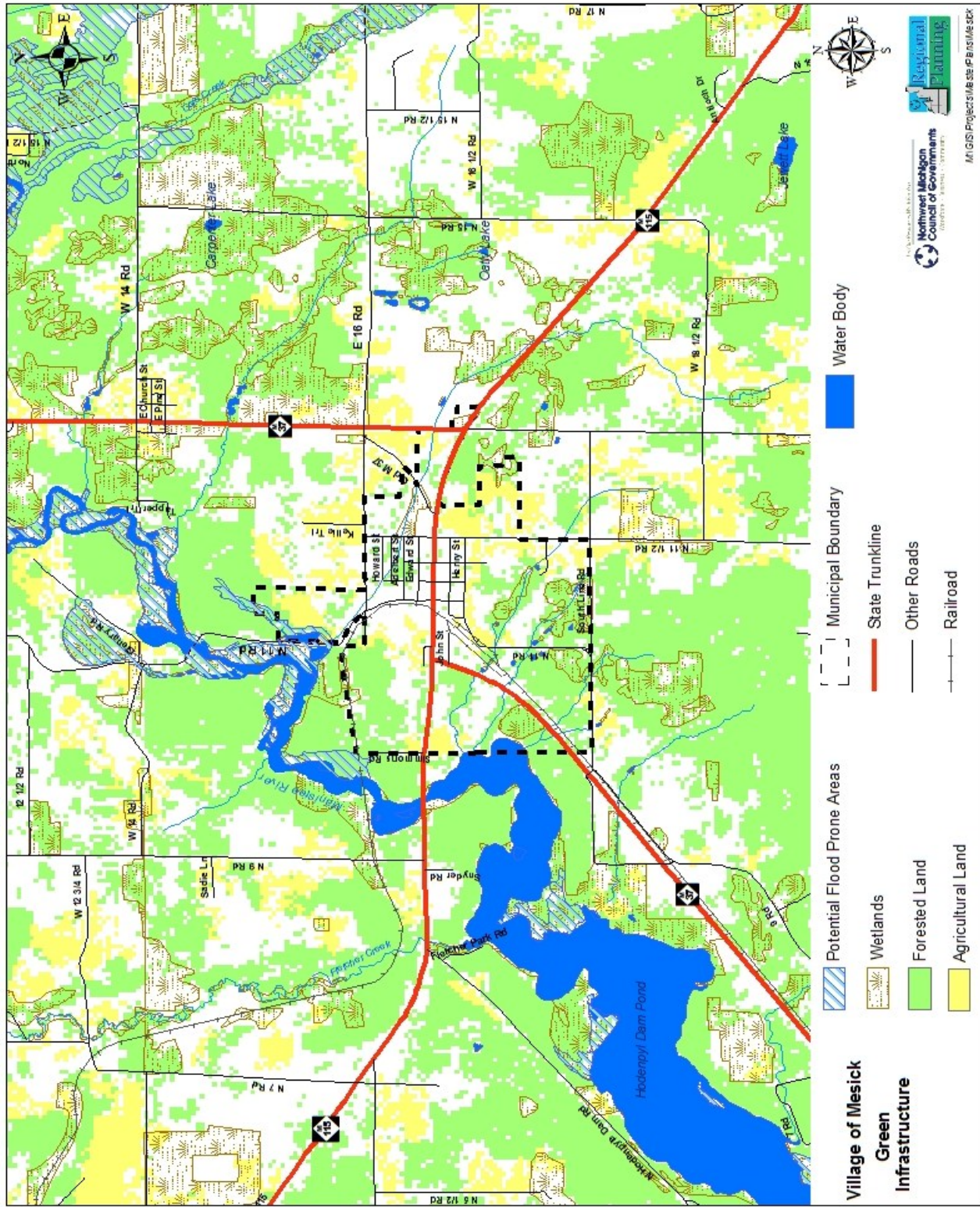
The Hodenpyl Dam, a large hydroelectric dam, is located about 4 miles southwest of Mesick. The dam is operated by Consumers Energy under a settlement agreement with the DNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Michigan Hydro Coalition, which granted Consumers Energy a 40-year operational license in 1994. The back-

Overall water quality in the river is very good, due in part to the limited development in the

Map 1. Village of Mesick Soils



Map 3. Village of Mesick Green Infrastructure



watershed, as well as the deep permeable sands within the watershed that allows precipitation to be rapidly absorbed. The Manistee has had a long standing reputation for being a top-quality trout stream, and provides cold water habitat for over 75 species of fish, including trout and salmon. Lake herring are thriving in several inland lakes in the Manistee watershed, and lake sturgeon have been found below Tippy Dam and in the Hodenpyl backwaters. The Manistee River is considered to be one of the best trout fisheries east of the Rockies, playing a major role in statewide tourism and the local economy.

In addition to its importance as a fishery, the river and watershed are also home to at least 38 species of amphibians and reptiles, including 3 species listed as “special concern” by Michigan—the Massasauga rattlesnake, spitted turtle, and wood turtle. Beaver, mink, muskrat, raccoon, and other mammal species are present in moderate to very abundant populations, including pine marten (threatened species) and woodland vole (species of special concern).

The watershed also provides habitat to a wide variety of bird species, including eight species of birds identified by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory as threatened, endangered, or of special concern: bald eagle (threatened), common loon (threatened), king rail (endangered), Kirtland’s warbler (endangered), loggerhead shrike (endangered), northern har-

rier (special concern), osprey (threatened), and red shouldered hawk (threatened).

Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands—often called marshes, swamps, or bogs—are areas where water is found, either on or near the surface, at any time during the year. These areas are invaluable natural resources for a variety of factors: they offer important wildlife habitat, along with opportunities for recreation such as fishing, hunting, boating, and birdwatching. They improve water quality by removing and sequestering excess nutrients and sediments found in rivers and streams; and reduce potential for floods by acting as natural “sponges,” slowing down flood and storm waters. About 65 acres of wetlands are located in the Village. Wetlands provide important wildlife habitat and are located within proximity to the 785 acre Mesick Wildlife Sanctuary in Springville Township.

Green Infrastructure

The term “green infrastructure” refers to connected systems of woodlands, wetlands, rivers, and streams that are valuable in providing a variety of benefits to a community’s economy and environmental quality. Because greenway spaces like trails and natural areas are often seen as more valued amenities by residents than even golf courses or swimming pools, green infrastructure can increase the value of nearby property, with corresponding increases in tax revenues. And, continuous systems of

forests, wetlands, and other open areas reduce the risk of flooding by controlling stormwater runoff, and provide protection from storm damage and erosion in coastal areas. Green infrastructure systems also provide invaluable wildlife habitat and foster ecological diversity.

Open space and forestland cover about half of the Village's land area. About 180 acres of forested areas are found throughout the Village. Along the boundaries of the Village, forestland generally connects with larger tracts of forest and open space, which in turn is connected to large areas of publicly-owned forestland. The US National Forest Service is located a few miles outside the Village of Mesick, and includes about 1,000,000 acres of forest land. In addition to its importance as wildlife habitat, the National Forest provides a variety of recreation opportunities, including wildlife habitat, both motorized and non-motorized trails, hunting, and fishing. Additionally, the Michigan

Department of Natural Resources owns and maintains the 785-acre Mesick Wildlife Sanctuary, which is home to a number of bird and wildlife species. The sanctuary, located just outside the Village, provides fishing opportunities and walking trails.

Issues & Opportunities

Water Quality

Overall water quality in the Manistee River is very good, due to soil and geologic conditions. Deep permeable sands and limited development have served to preserve water quality. However, the river does experience issues with sedimentation, the primary pollutant in the watershed. Sedimentation is a surface water pollutant that can smother the habitat that aquatic organisms need to survive and reproduce. Manistee River sedimentation issues originated in the logging era, and are exacerbated by issues such as eroding streambanks,



nearby development, and road/stream crossings. Other management issues include invasive species and pests such as lampreys, zebra mussels, and rusty crayfish.

Many agencies have regulatory responsibilities that affect the river, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which has authority over hydroelectric dams; as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the US Environmental Protection Agency, which have responsibilities for land and natural resources management. In addition, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources manages many natural resources and regulatory activities. However, local governments do have an important role to play in water quality, particularly in respect to sedimentation control.

Sedimentation washes from roads, parking lots, and driveways through stormwater runoff, carrying nutrients and other forms of pollution such as salt, oil, and anti-freeze. Normally, these contaminants are filtered out through rain and snowfall, which naturally filtrate through the earth and recharge the groundwater. However, on paved, or impervious, surfaces, precipitation instead flows over the ground, picking up chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants, then flowing into a storm sewer system or directly into a lake, stream, river, or wetland, where it is discharged, untreated, into nearby water resources. Reducing impervious

surfaces such as roads, driveways, and parking lots can provide significant benefits to water quality, while also reducing the potential for erosion. Local governments can also enact zoning regulations that protect water quality through measures such as “greenbelts” or buffer zones along shorelines. Greenbelts are strips of natural vegetation planted along the shoreline that can work to stabilize stream banks, preventing erosion and keeping sediment and nutrients from reaching waterways.

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Chapter 4: Recreation

Parks, playgrounds, community events, trails, and recreation programming bring residents and visitors together and foster opportunities for cultural expression, education, and civic engagement. They promote public health and wellness by encouraging opportunities for physical activity. And they act as economic drivers, raising property values, drawing new residents to the community, and encouraging new development and tourism. Enhancing

Mesick's recreation opportunities will thus help create an engaged, healthy, socially vibrant, and economically vibrant community.

Because of its importance to all parts of the community, recreation is a focal point in the planning process. This chapter will explore Mesick's existing recreation facilities and opportunities to enhance and improve its parks, culture, and recreation opportunities.

What is a Recreation Plan?

Through its recreation grants program, currently funded through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides financial assistance to communities that would like to purchase land for parks, or are planning to improve or develop recreation facilities. To date, the Village of Mesick has not received grant funding from any state funding sources for either acquisition or development of recreation projects.

To be eligible to apply for these grant programs, a community must have a 5-year recreation plan, approved by the DNR, that meets certain requirements. DNR-approved recreation plans must include the following components:

- Community Description and Planning Considerations
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation and Resource Inventory
- Description of Planning and Public Input Process
- Goals, Objectives, and Action Program

Recreation: An Important Community Asset

At their most basic, parks, recreation facilities, and community events provide an environment in which residents and visitors can gather and interact in an informal setting; but parks also provide a number of health and economic benefits to the community:

- Parks encourage physical activity, which is critical in staying healthy, reducing stress, fighting obesity, and preventing chronic conditions that lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.
- Parks and trails are safe options for non-motorized transportation—which is especially important for those that don't own a car or can't drive due to age, disability, or income.
- Recreation opportunities attract visitors, increasing local tourism revenues.
- Demographic groups with expendable income and significant amounts of leisure time, such as retirees and young professional, often relocate to communities with a "recreation oriented" lifestyle and a high quality of life.
- National studies have shown that improvements to parks, civic spaces, and trails can encourage new development or redevelopment.
- Property values tend to increase in direct proportion to their proximity to parks and trails.

Village Recreation Inventory

Several important recreation opportunities are available within Mesick; and Village residents and visitors also have access to a variety of opportunities beyond the Village limits. The following recreation inventory provides discussion on the Village's recreation facilities, and their place in the community, as well as parks and recreation facilities surrounding the Village. Included for each facility is an assessment of the accessibility of the park to people with disabilities.

Mesick Community Park

Type: Community Park

Size: 5.7 acres

Mesick Community Park is currently the only park owned and maintained by the Village of Mesick. The park is located on the north side of Adelbert Street, and includes a baseball field, a basketball court, 2 tennis courts, concession stands with bathrooms, outdoor ice skating/rollerblading rink, a walking park, picnic tables, sitting benches, and a parking area.

The Mesick Community Park also includes the Enchanted River Playground, which was built in 2006, and includes a picnic pavilion, landscaping and gardens, and a number of play structures. The Village donated property for the park, and a committee of volunteers conducted fundraising to purchase materials for construction. The playground was

constructed by volunteers over a three-day period.

As a community park, the Enchanted River Playground, picnic facilities, athletic fields, and other facilities serve the entire Village and surrounding community.

Accessibility Assessment: None of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines.

River Property

The Village owns 23 acres in the northwest quadrant of the Village. The property is currently undeveloped and uses are yet to be determined.

Snowmobile and ORV Trails

Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity for both residents and visitors. Snowmobiles and

ORVs are authorized on Village streets and right-of-ways and on designated trail systems within the Village.

Local Recreational Assets

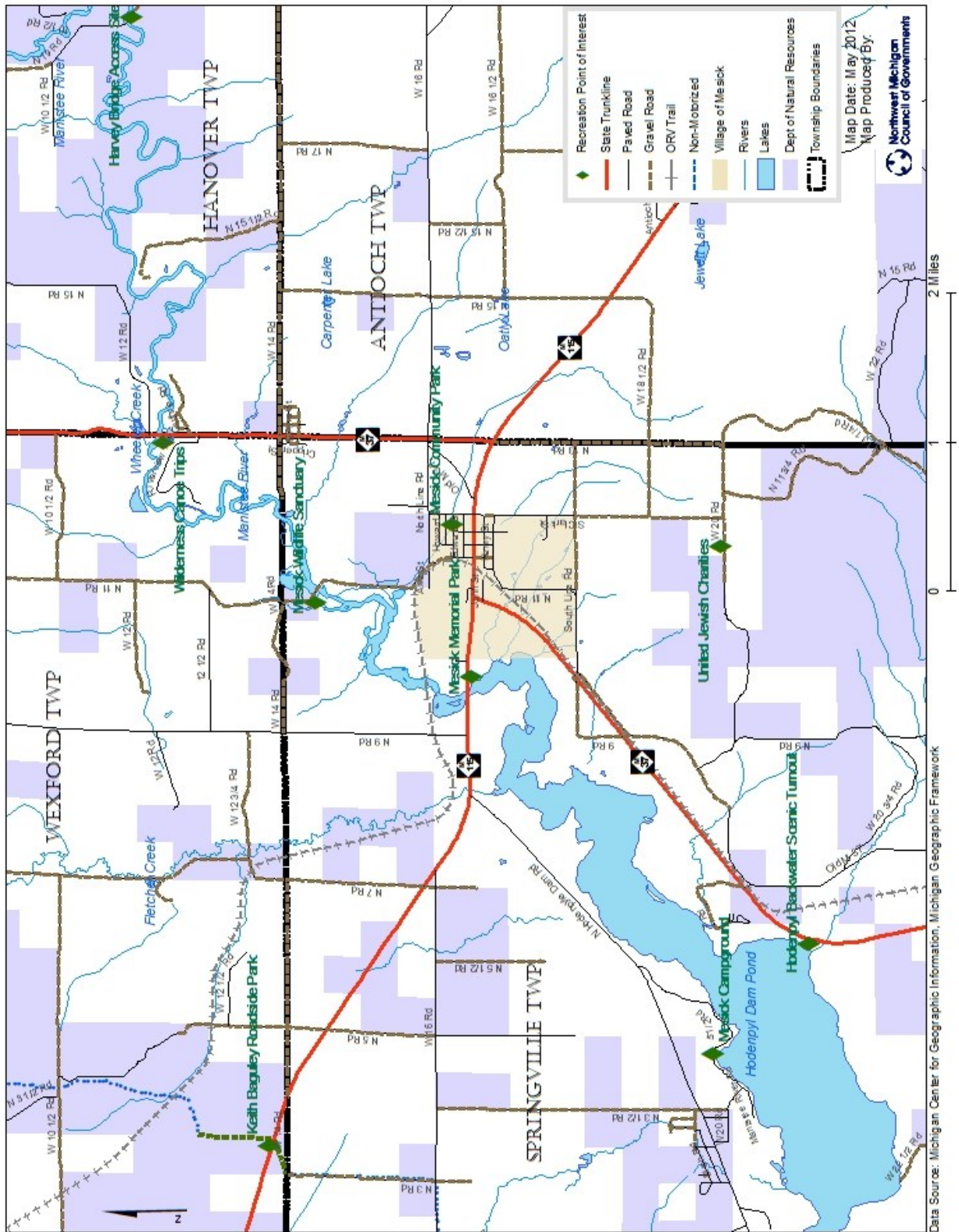
There is currently only one Village-owned and maintained recreational facility within the Village. However, a wide variety of both public and privately-owned recreational opportunities are available within and nearby the Village. Following is a list of parks and recreation facilities within the Village of Mesick; Table 1 shows recreational facilities within 10 miles of the Village.

Mesick Schools Recreational Facilities

Mesick Consolidated Schools are located within the Village. A playground is located at the Mesick Elementary and Middle School. Baseball and softball fields, as well as an indoor



Map 1. Local and Regional Recreation Assets



gymnasium, are available in the Mesick High School.

The Baker Field athletic complex on Clark Street offers facilities for track, football, baseball, and softball.

Mesick Memorial Park

The Mesick Memorial Park is located just west of the Village on M-115, adjacent to the Manistee River, and is maintained and operated by the Mesick Lions Club with assistance from the Village. It is made available to the community through a thirty year lease agreement with Consumers Energy and serves the Village and surrounding areas. The park provides picnic tables, pavilions, barbeque pits, and chemical bathrooms.

The Briars at Mesick

A privately owned 18-hole golf course and restaurant is available just east of the Village limits on M-115.

Faith Lutheran Church

A playground is located at the Faith Lutheran Church, within the Village of Mesick.

Pat's RV Park

Pat's RV Park, a privately owned campground, is located a few miles outside the Village limits.



The park offers 87 modern or rustic camp sites, bath facilities, laundry facilities, and areas for fishing, swimming, boating, and hiking. Basketball and volleyball courts are also available, along with a play area.

Regional Recreational Assets

Manistee National Forest

The boundaries of the Huron-Manistee National Forest—the only national forests in Michigan’s lower peninsula—are located a few miles outside the Village of Mesick. The National Forest includes about 1,000,000 acres of forest land and provides a variety of recreation opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized trails, hunting, and fishing.

Manistee National Forest

The Manistee River, a 232-mile river that enters Lake Michigan at Manistee, runs through the National Forest. The river provides

quality canoeing and kayaking, and is recognized as one of the best trout fisheries east of the Rocky Mountains, as well as one of the nation's most diverse fisheries.

A 7-8 ft. waterfall, known as the Mesick waterfall, is located within the Manistee National Forest on a small creek that runs into the Manistee River. The waterfall is one of only three waterfalls in the lower peninsula of Michigan, and is a popular attraction for hikers and sightseers.

Hodenpyle Dam Backwaters

The Hodenpyle Dam, a hydroelectric dam constructed on the Manistee River by Consumer's Energy in the 1920's, creates a pond—or "backwater"—that is about 8 miles long and up to 1.5 miles wide. Federal law mandates that the land surrounding the backwaters be permitted to be used for public recreation. The backwaters of the dam and surrounding areas provide fishing, swimming, hiking, camping, and wildlife and bird watching opportunities.

Snowmobile and ORV Trails

Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity for both residents and visitors. Snowmobiles and ORVs are authorized on Village streets and right-of-ways and on designated trail systems within the Village. Some trails within the Manistee National Forest also permit

snowmobile/ORV usage.

Crystal Mountain

Crystal Mountain Resort offers downhill and cross country skiing, golfing, and conference facilities. The Resort is located about 16 miles northwest of Mesick off of M-115. Additional facilities at Crystal Mountain include the Michigan Legacy Art Park, an Alpine Slide, climbing walls, paintball, bike rental, disc golf, pool and water playground, summer camps, and other family activities. An important regional tourist destination, the Resort provides important employment opportunities for residents, while creating additional economic activity in nearby communities.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Located about 33 miles northwest of the Village of Mesick, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is one of the largest attractions in the region. The park provides many opportunities for swimming, hiking, bicycling, hunting, picnicking, camping, and bird and wildlife watching. Attracting over a million visitors annually, positive nationwide press has recently resulted in higher exposure and increased visitation rates. Many park visitors from outside the region pass through the Village on M-115 to reach the park.

Regional Recreation Assets

Following is a list of recreation assets within a ten-mile radius of the Village

Public Facilities	Location	Activities
Healy Lake State Forest Campground	10 miles west of Mesick	24 campsites, boating, and fishing access
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Wexford, Manistee Counties	1,000,000 acres of federally-owned and managed forest with hiking, camping, fishing, biking, boating, hunting, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and sightseeing
Mesick Wildlife Sanctuary	1.5 miles from Village	Fishing, nature study, and walking trails
Northern Exposure Campground	4.4 miles	Campground, RV park, basketball court, beach, fishing, playground, movies, hiking
Pat's RV Park	3 miles southwest of Mesick	87 modern or rustic camp sites, bath facilities, laundry facilities, fishing, swimming, boating, and hiking
The Briar's	1 mile east of Mesick	18-hole golf course and restaurant
Wilderness Canoe Trips	2 miles north of Mesick	Manistee River canoeing, kayaking, tubing, and rafting trips

Administration, Funding and Budgeting

Village Council

The Village Council consists of seven members that are elected by the public every four years, along with an appointed clerk and treasurer. The Village Council adopts budgets, approves contracts, adopts policies, and oversees staff. Budgets, planning, staffing, and other issues related to parks and other Village facilities are also overseen by the Council. Committees are appointed by the Village Council to oversee specific recreation projects.

Staff & Volunteers

Parks are maintained by one Village Department of Public Works (DPW) staff person.

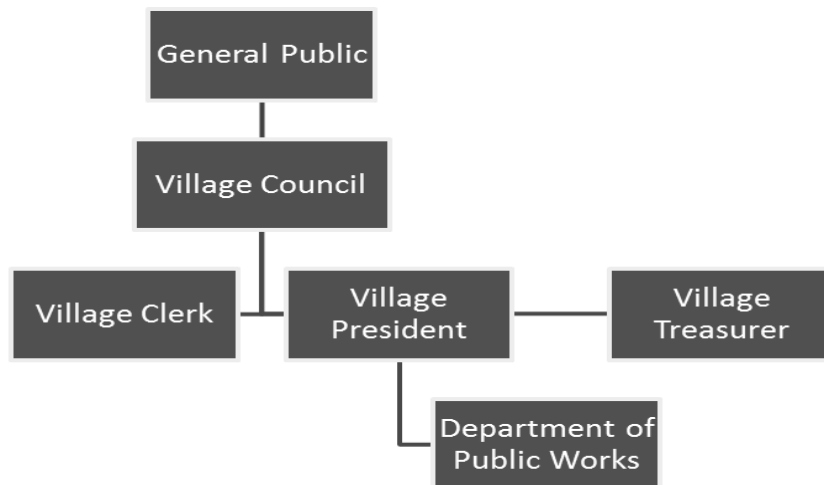
Volunteers have historically played an important role in recreation development. A committee of volunteers raised \$52,000 for building materials for the Enchanted River playground, which was later constructed in three days by over 150 volunteers.

A volunteer committee also serves to oversee the Mesick Summer Recreation program, which provides childrens’ summer baseball programs, and works to raise money for equipment and other program needs. The Summer Recreation Program uses the Village athletic fields.

Funding & Budgeting

Funding for Village parks comes out of the Village General Fund. In 2012, \$4,000 was budgeted for park maintenance, and \$130 was budgeted for park lighting.

Village Administrative Structure



Issues & Opportunities

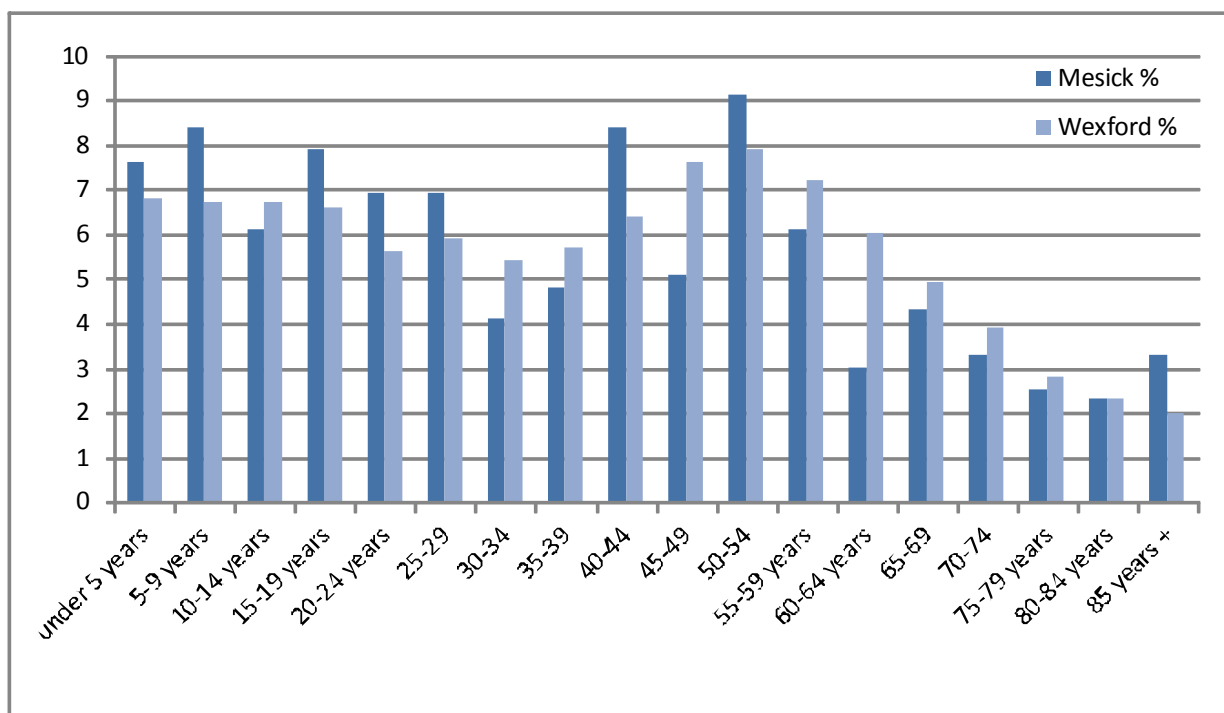
Demographics

Different populations have different recreation needs and interests. As such, when planning for recreation facilities, the community’s growth trends, age, and income levels are important factors to consider. Mesick has seen some population shifts over the last ten years, as noted in Chapter 2, Existing Conditions and Context, with a decreasing household size, a drop in the number of family households, and an increasing number of seniors. As individuals age, needs increase for facilities that accommodate passive recreation such as walking. Barrier-free access to recreation is particularly important for an aging population,

and the provision of barrier-free recreation will become an increasingly high priority as the population ages.

Despite declining numbers of children and family households, individuals under the age of 18 make up about a quarter of Mesick’s total population. Youth-oriented recreation opportunities will thus continue to be important for both current residents and as an amenity to draw new families to the Village. Student surveys distributed to 10th, 11th, and 12th graders at Mesick Consolidated Schools showed strong interest in improvements to parks, additional festivals and events, and outdoor activities.

Population by Percent in Age Range, Mesick and Wexford County (2010)



Recreation Priorities: 2012 Survey Results

The 2012 Master Plan Survey asked respondents to rate the importance of the development or enhancement of the following types of recreation. Following are the percentage of responses that indicated that these activities are “very important” or “somewhat important.”

Hiking/skiing trails	73%
Snowmobile/ORV trails	72%
Fishing access	70%
Boating access	70%
Swimming	70%
Universal accessibility features	70%
Playground equipment	66%
Athletic fields	55%
Disc golf/Frisbee golf	49%
Snowmobile/ORV trails on vil- lage streets	46%
Skate parks	36%

In addition to age considerations, it’s also important to ensure that activities and amenities in the community are within the financial means of the majority of residents. Because per capita and median household incomes in the Village are lower than the County and the State of Michigan, the need for free activities or lower prices to accommodate families and those with moderate incomes may be important.

Athletic Fields

Improvements to existing athletic fields and facilities were identified as a need by the community. Comment received through public discussions and student surveys identified a need for youth-based activities or facilities including a skate park, and soccer fields. Other student suggestions relative to parks included pools, archery, bowling, and skate parks. Student surveys, as well, indicated a strong interest in active parks or improvements to existing basketball courts: existing basketball courts are currently not large enough for basketball games. Suggestions have been made relative to moving the tennis courts at the Community Park to the area currently occupied by the basketball courts, and constructing a larger basketball court on the site of the existing tennis courts.

Community Events

Festivals and other community events can help build public pride and foster community

engagement. Mesick currently hosts two major community events, which are organized by a number of volunteers and community partners: the Mesick Mushroom Festival and the Annual Jeep Blessing/Jeepers Trail Rides, both of which occur in May. These events have been greatly successful for many years in bringing visitors from across the state to the community, providing events and activities, and supporting local businesses. Discussion at public forums included a number of comments about community events, with interest in organizing autumn and winter festivals to attract visitors year-round. Additionally, students responding to school surveys indicated that festivals and events were among their favorite community activities in Mesick, and showed a strong interest in additional events, particularly concerts. Other ideas such as snowmobile races, canoe races, and ice hockey tournaments have been discussed as events with wide regional appeal.

Non-motorized and Motorized Trails

Outdoor recreation activities, and trail-based recreation in particular, are major priorities for Mesick residents: activities including hiking, biking, snowmobiling, and ORV trails were ranked as the highest recreation priorities in the Master Plan survey, and students responding to the Mesick Student Survey selected “outdoor activities” as the “favorite” activity in Mesick. Existing motorized and non-motorized trail linkages in and around Mesick provide access to communities throughout



northwest lower Michigan, and, via the North Country Trail, to neighboring regions and states. The multitude of trails and public property in and nearby the Village of Mesick has helped to create a well-established niche for the Village in attracting and accommodating motorized trail users.

Snowmobiles and ORVs are permitted on Village streets and County-maintained roads, as well as on a number of trails within the nearby Manistee National Forest. These motorized trails are an important part of Mesick’s recreation opportunities, drawing many visitors to the community year-round and acting as a major economic driver. Village residents have expressed interest in enhancing access to motorized trails by providing or encouraging trail linkages and information to trail users. The old railroad bridge crossing, which is located along the multi-use trail (abandoned railway) about a mile west of Mesick, could provide

Planning Process

The recreation plan was developed with guidance from the Mesick Village Planning Commission and Master Plan Committee, with assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG).

Public Input

Public input was obtained through Committee input, a Village Master Plan Public Forum held in February 2012, public discussions with community groups, and a community survey that was mailed to all Village addresses and property owners in December 2011. *Additional opportunities for public input, including public hearings, will be available and will be identified accordingly.*

Public Comment Period

The Village Council must release and announce the Recreation Plan for a 30-day public review period. Dates will be identified.

Public Hearing and Adoption

The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Village Council regarding adoption of the Recreation Plan. The Village Council will hold a public hearing and will consider adoption following the public hearing (at the same or a subsequent meeting).

multi-use trail connections to Manistee, Leelanau, Grand Traverse, Benzie, and other counties. The bridge needs substantial repair in order to accommodate motorized uses. Because of the many connections the bridge could provide, with resulting economic benefits to the Village, bridge repair and trail connections have been identified as a high priority by the community. However, the bridge is currently owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation, and is located outside the Village limits. Coordination with neighboring communities, trail advocacy or maintenance groups, and other levels of government to support this and other connections could aid in the repair of the bridge and work to support Mesick's image as a regional trail hub.

Other motorized trail opportunities that could help promote the Village's trail hub image and draw additional visitors to the community include the creation of an ORV trailhead.

Chapter 5: Land Use

An understanding of existing land use patterns is required to ensure that any future development or redevelopment is compatible with the Village's existing character, environmental features, community needs, and vision and goals. The Master Plan addresses land use through analysis and recommendations portrayed through several types of maps and descriptions :

- The **existing land use map and descriptions** identify the current, "on the ground," uses of properties within the Village, regardless of what is permitted by zoning or recommended by the Master Plan.
- **Zoning** identifies the permitted land uses for development and redevelopment for each geographic area in the Village. The zoning map shows what is legally allowed to occur on a parcel-by-parcel basis,

regardless of the current existing use for that parcel.

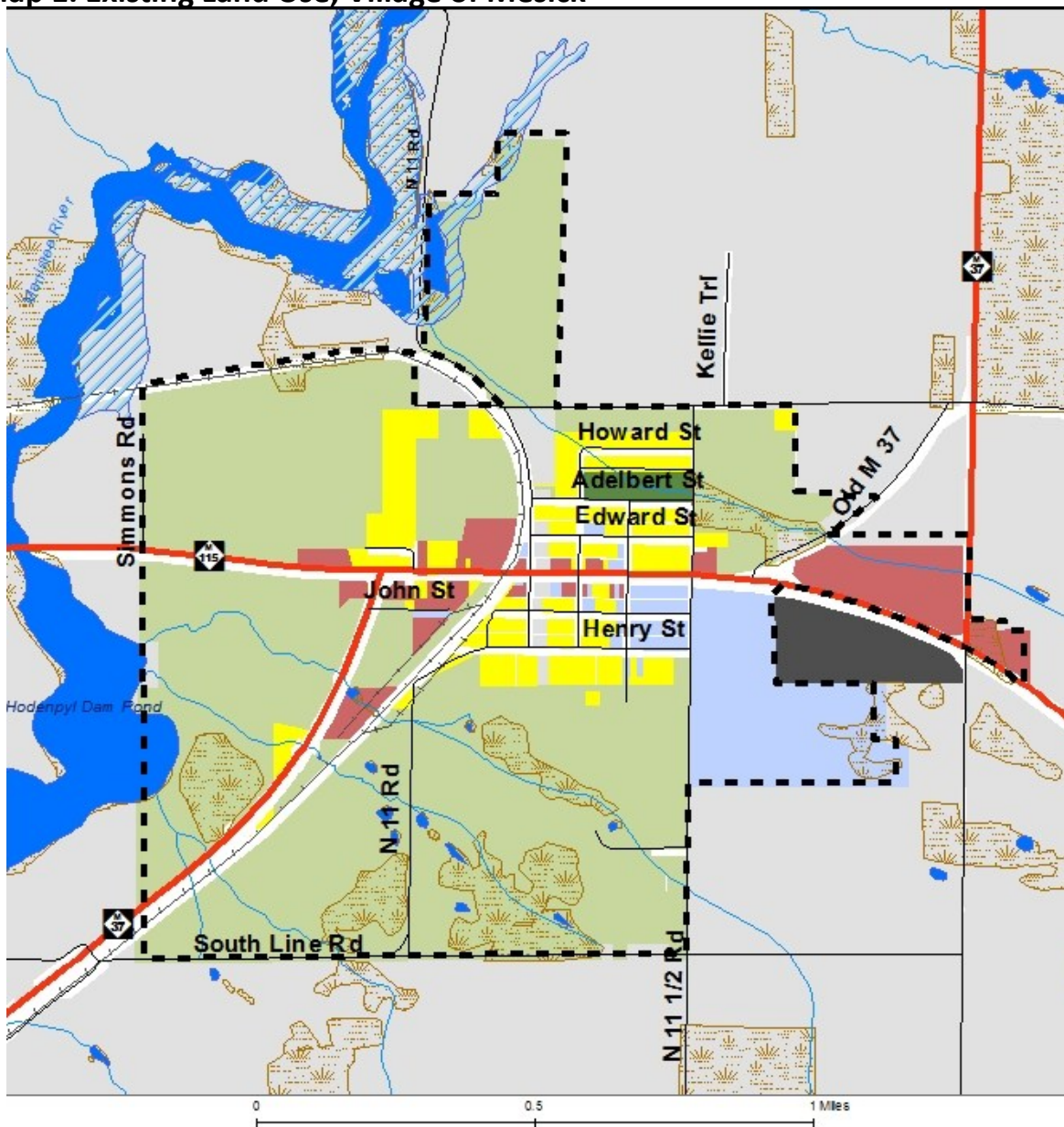
- The **future land use map and descriptions** identify the preferred patterns of development and redevelopment, and are based on the goals and objectives of the community, as identified in the planning process. The future land use map is not intended to be parcel specific; future land use recommendations are intended to serve as a long-range (20+ years), general guide for development patterns. Desired results are not expected to occur in the near future.

To provide a context for future land use decisions, this chapter includes descriptions of existing land use and neighborhood types found in the Village, as well as issues and

Mesick Zoning Ordinance & Relation to the Master Plan

The Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance are closely connected, and both have important impacts on land use and development. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006) requires zoning to be based on an adopted plan that is designed to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of all citizens. The master plan provides guidance for zoning decisions, including amendments to the text or the zoning map. As such, zoning is the method most commonly used to achieve master plan goals. However, it's important to recognize that the Master Plan is only a guide, and does not have the rule of law and cannot enforce where or how something is built. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is a legally enforceable law that regulates land and buildings, and establishes standards for development.

Map 1. Existing Land Use, Village of Mesick



Village of Mesick
Existing Land Use

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Boundary Potential Flood Prone Areas Railroad Lakes and Rivers Wetlands | <p><u>Land Use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Community Services & Facilities Forested-Open Industrial Park Residential |
|--|--|

Land use data from Wexford County 2010 tax class data and field checks

Map prepared by:



opportunities that have been identified for each use.

Residential

About 68 acres in the Village, or about 9% of existing land use, are classified as residential. While only a small amount of the Village’s land area is currently in residential use, over half—about 60%—of the Village’s property is zoned to allow for residential development.

Much of the Village’s residential development consists of owner-occupied housing. The 2010 Census reports that there are 190 housing units in the Village, of which 161 units (84.7%) are occupied. 68.9% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, and 31.1% are rental.

The 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) provides some information on the physical characteristics of housing within the Village. According to the ACS, Mesick’s housing stock primarily consists of single-family homes and mobile homes:

- **Single-Family Residential:** The majority - 80% - of the Village’s housing stock consists of single-family detached homes.
- **Multi-Family Residential:** About 3% of Mesick’s housing units are structures with 2-4 housing units. Less than half of a percent have between 5-9 units.
- **Mobile Homes:** According to the ACS, there are 37 mobile homes in the Village, consisting of about 17% of the Village’s housing stock.

Occupied & Vacant Housing Units

	# of Homes	% of Total
Occupied Housing Units	231	86.8%
Vacant Housing Units	35	13.2%
For rent	16	45.7%
Rented, not occupied	0	0
For sale only	5	14.3%
Sold, not occupied	1	2.9%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	6	17.1%
All other vacants	7	20.0%

Source: 2010 US Census

Year Structure Built

Year Structure Built	# of Homes	% of Total
2005 or later	3	1.0%
2000 to 2004	8	3.5%
1990-1999	40	17.8%
1980-1989	14	6.2%
1970-1979	55	24.5%
1960-1969	14	6.2%
1950-1959	23	10.2%
1940-1949	15	6.6%
1939 or earlier	52	23.2%

Source: 2010 American Community Survey

Homes are located primarily in traditional, small lot, single-family home neighborhoods within two blocks to the north and south of the downtown area, with several streets connected via sidewalks to the downtown area. More rural development patterns begin on the edges of these neighborhoods, with homes on larger lots, farther away from the Village center. A mobile home park is located north of the downtown, at the edge of the traditional neighborhood area.

Many of the Village's housing units are aging: 71% of housing units are over 30 years old (built 1979 or earlier). Over half of the Village's housing stock was built before 1960, and about a third was built prior to 1940 (see table).

Because utility gas infrastructure is currently unavailable in the Village, most housing units are heated with bottled gas (such as propane) (55.1%) or electricity (14%). An additional 11%

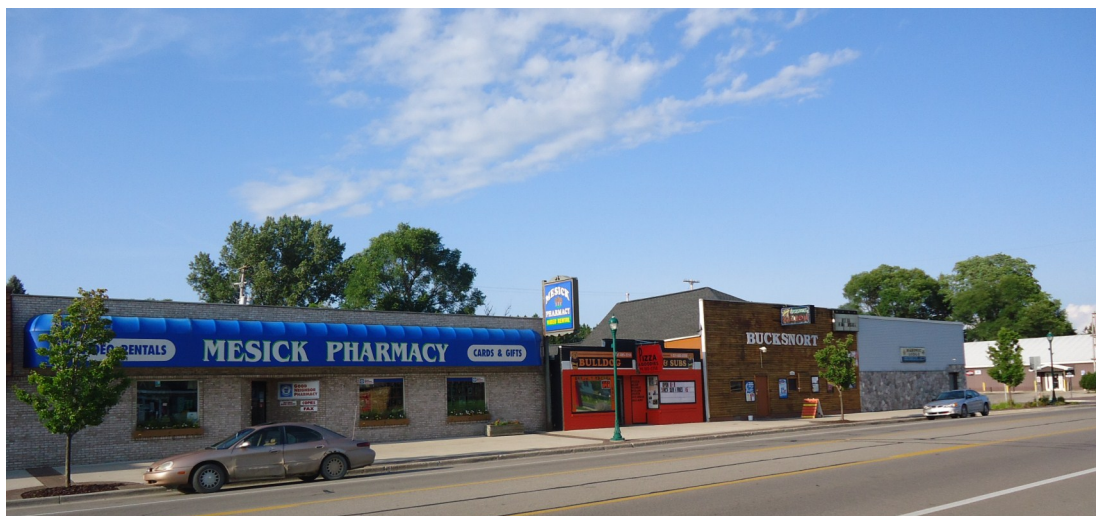
of residential units heat with wood, and 9.5% use fuel oil or kerosene.

Commercial

About 46 acres in the Village, or about 6% of its land area, are in commercial use. Commercial land uses are primarily located in the traditional downtown area, which is bisected by state highway M-115. Downtown commercial uses include a grocery, pharmacy, bank, and other retail, service, restaurant, and hotel/motel/lodging uses. About 5 downtown buildings are currently vacant.

A number of additional retail establishments are located outside of the traditional downtown, near the eastern intersection of M-115 and M-37.

About 168 acres, or about 22% of the Village's



land area, are zoned for commercial uses.

Industrial

There are currently no industrial uses within the Village. However, about 130 acres are zoned for industrial uses.

Several industrial uses are located just outside the Village limits along M-115 and M-37.

Community Facilities and Services

Community facilities and services make up about 9% of the Village (71 acres). These facilities serve recreational, educational, and governmental needs of the Village. The quality of these services and facilities—which are closely connected with residential uses and neighborhoods—play an important role in the

Village’s vitality, quality of life, and employment opportunities. There are several public facilities in the Village, including parks, Village offices and service areas, Mesick Consolidated Schools, a number of churches, and the Mesick Post Office.

Village Services and Properties

The Village office is located in downtown Mesick. The office includes public meeting space and adjoins the Department of Public Works (DPW) garage. Other Village-owned buildings include the museum, library, and an office/service building currently leased by a chiropractor’s office and hair salon. The Village also owns a currently undeveloped 23-acre parcel in the northwest corner of the Village, along with the Mesick Community Park (the Community Park and other recreation facilities are addressed in detail in Chapter 4, Recreation).



Utilities

Municipal sewer and water facilities are available to most of the developed areas of the Village.

The Village's water supply serves about 125 residential and 51 commercial customers. On average, about 60,000 gallons of water per day are used, with peak season maximum demand at about 230,000 gallons per day. Total water capacity is 500,000 gallons per day. A *Water Reliability Study* was prepared in 2012 to review water system facilities, capacities, and

needs through the year 2022, with recommendations for short- and long-term improvements for the Village's water supply.

The Village's sanitary sewer collection system was constructed in 1994 and serves about 110 customers, 80 of which are residential customers. The system has a maximum discharge capacity per day of 1,200,000 gallon per week maximum. Average monthly usage for residential dwellings is 346,000 gallons per month, while non-residential customers use an average of 735,000 gallons per month. The sewer system serves most developed areas of

Best-Practice: DDAs and Tax Increment Financing

Downtown Development Authorities are public entities that provide a number of options for funding public improvements in a downtown district. These public improvements—such as parking, landscaping, or streetscape improvements—can lead to new investment and development opportunities in the downtown.

One way for a DDA to fund public improvements is through the use of tax increment financing. With tax increment financing (TIF), a community can finance (through bonds or general fund revenue) public improvements in a TIF district established by the DDA, with approval from the local unit of government. Then, as taxable values increase as a result of the improvements and added investment, the community can “capture” and use any increase in taxes to repay that financing. For instance, a property's taxable value may be \$10,000—its “base value”—at the time the TIF is established. Within ten years, if improvements are made to enhance the downtown area and additional investment occurs, the same property may be worth \$50,000. With TIF, the community can tax *the difference of the current and anticipated future property value*, and divert those funds—the “tax increment” of \$40,000—to the TIF district for targeted public improvements. The local government and any other taxing authority in the community continue to receive taxes calculated on the base value of the property until the TIF district expires or is terminated.

the Village, but does not extend west of the historic railroad grade. Residents and businesses that are not connected to the sewer system use onsite septic systems. A *Municipal Sanitary Sewerage System Preliminary Engineering Report* was prepared in 2012, with recommendations for future expansions and improvements.

Natural gas infrastructure is currently not available in the Village.

Mesick Consolidated Schools

Mesick Consolidated Schools operate an elementary, junior high, and high school within the Village. The schools enroll a total of about 700 students and are the Village’s largest employer. School-owned property within the Village limits totals about 67 acres .

Other Facilities and Services

The Mesick library, a branch of the Cadillac-Wexford Public Library, is located on Eugene Street in the Village of Mesick. The library building is owned by the Village. In addition to book lending, the library provides eBook downloads and Internet access.

The Mesick Area Museum provides local history exhibits and events. Located downtown in a Village-owned building, the museum is maintained by a nonprofit group of volunteers and is open seasonally, May through



September.

The Mesick Rescue Squad, which is funded through a millage, provides ambulance services to the Village and Springville Township. Fire services are provided by Springville Township.

There are no hospitals or medical establishments in Mesick. Two hospitals are available in nearby communities: Mercy Hospital is located about 18 miles from Mesick in the City of Cadillac, and Munson Medical Center is located about 25 miles to the north in Traverse City.

Forest and Open Space

The majority of land in the Village—about 563

acres, or about 72% - is undeveloped forest or open space. Undeveloped acreage is zoned primarily for residential and industrial uses.

Transportation

Highways and Streets

The state highway M-115 runs northwest-southeast through the Mesick's downtown, bisecting the Village. M-115 is a major tourist route between the southern lower Peninsula and northwest lower Michigan, providing access to Frankfort to the west and Cadillac and Clare to the southeast. Daily traffic counts average about 9,500 vehicles per day (west of the M-37 intersection).

M-115 intersects M-37 at the eastern and western ends of the Village. M-37 provides access to Baldwin to the south and Traverse City to the north. A number of safety issues have been identified by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) relative

to the eastern intersection (connecting to Traverse City), which experiences high volumes of traffic and congestion at peak travel times, particularly during the summer months. A roundabout is planned for the M-115/M-37 intersection to address concerns at the intersection.

The Village maintains 5.52 miles of streets. All-terrain vehicles and off-road vehicles, including snowmobiles, are permitted in rights-of-way of Village street .

Sidewalks and Trails

The downtown commercial area and some residential areas are served by sidewalks.

Non-motorized trails and multi-use trails, including the North Country Trail can be accessed within or nearby the Village of



Mesick, with multiple connections to additional trail systems (see Chapter 4, Recreation).

Air and Rail

Regional air service is available at the Cadillac Airport, about 18 miles southeast of the Village of Mesick; and at the Cherry Capital Airport, located about 29 miles north of the Village of Mesick. The Manistee Blacker Airport is about 43 miles southwest of the Village.

The former railroad, located along the eastern edge of the Village, has been abandoned and designated as a multi-use trail.

Transit

The Village's public transit needs are served by the Cadillac-Wexford Transit Authority (CWTA), a private nonprofit corporation. Established in 1975, it receives funding from state and federal sources, along with county tax revenues from a dedicated transportation millage that supports public transportation services. CWTA operates 21 vehicles and provides door-to-door service within a service area that includes about 32,000 people. In 2010, over 131,000 passengers were served by CWTA.

Transfer to the Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA) transit system, with service to Traverse City, is available in the Village of Buckley, about 9 miles from Mesick.



The ACS reports that 14 households, or about 9% of occupied housing units, have no vehicle available. Generally, public transit is most frequently used by four demographics: those with low incomes, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and households with limited access to vehicles. About 15% of CWTA's total ridership is comprised of seniors, and about 47% is comprised of persons with disabilities.

Issues and Opportunities

Downtown Vacancies and Improvements

Vacant downtown buildings and redevelopment needs are a primary public concern. Reuse and/or redevelopment of the downtown vacancies are high public priorities, and could aid in improving the appearance of the downtown and attracting new businesses.

To encourage reuse and redevelopment of downtown buildings, a number of tools are available at the local and County level, such as



downtown development authorities (DDAs). DDAs can be established by a community that has an area in its downtown that is zoned and used principally for business. DDAs can use tax increment financing and other financing tools such as special assessments, millages, revenue bonds, and donations or grants to fund public improvements in downtowns. DDA-funded improvements could include streetscapes, transportation improvements, enhancements to public spaces, and façade improvement programs. These improvements often spur new investment in the community. DDAs can also help in developing organized downtown marketing efforts, events, and activities.

Other redevelopment tools include brownfield redevelopment authorities and land bank authorities, both of which allow the use of tax increment financing to support site improvements necessary for redevelopment of blighted, contaminated, or obsolete properties. To date, neither entity has been established to date by Wexford County, but Villages are

eligible to establish and operate their own brownfield authorities. Other tools include the Community Revitalization Program, which provides some funding for redevelopment of brownfield sites, which may include blighted properties.

In addition to considering reuse and redevelopment opportunities, a number of enforcement and other tools are available to communities working to address vacant and blighted buildings, including property maintenance ordinances, blight ordinances, and/or nuisance ordinances. Enforcement generally requires an inspection of the property, agreements, prosecution, and/or condemnation of the building. The Village has pursued a number of avenues in enforcing its existing blight ordinance, including property condemnation and accepting donations of blighted property, with subsequent demolition of blighted buildings. However, condemnation and demolition are both costly, time-consuming processes, often involving complex legal procedures. Alternatives to enforcement could include a proactive approach to addressing vacant buildings. Identifying priority sites, reviewing available tools, and working directly with property owners and potential tenants could address some concerns prior to beginning enforcement activities. Also, some tools may be available to the Village through the Community Revitalization Program, which provides funding opportunities for brownfield sites, which can include blighted properties; and the Community Development Block Grant program, which provides funding assistance in

addressing blight concerns.

New Commercial, Industrial, and Service

Community surveys and public discussions about future land use reflected an interest in additional commercial uses that would support the needs of residents. Desired new business types included additional retail opportunities, family restaurants, and fast food restaurants. Discussions also indicated that residents would support doctors' offices, clinics, or other health-related uses in the community. With the exception of a chiropractor's office, there are currently no doctors or other medical services available within the Village of Mesick.

Light industry was also a desired land use type: in public discussions, light industry opportunities were connected with the potential for job creation. In the 2012 Master Plan survey, about 83% respondents supported this type of development.

Assisted Living or Senior Housing

The population both within Mesick and in the surrounding region is aging, creating needs for new types of housing and additional senior housing choices. National studies point to a growing demand and need for smaller homes, rentals, and assisted living, as well as newer models of senior housing, such as co-located housing and services, a model that allows senior housing developments or collaboratively owned and managed housing to provide social



or health services on-site or nearby. Public comment and community surveys showed strong interest in senior housing or assisted living—with 88% expressing support for the idea—as a means to provide additional housing choices, as well as job opportunities, for residents of the Village and surrounding areas.

Food Systems

Food— or agricultural-related business were an area of interest, with 84% of survey respondents indicating they would support new businesses of this type. Food-related businesses can include retail, processing, wholesaling, distribution, or production activities. A growing local food industry in northwest lower Michigan creates opportunities to expand on the region's many agricultural assets. Mesick's location, its renown as the "Mushroom Capital," proximity



to a thriving Amish agricultural community, and location along a highly-traveled summer tourist route could act as potential building blocks for new local food- or agricultural-related initiatives or businesses.

Currently, there is no local farmers market in the Village; however, many farmers or mushroom hunters use the parking lot of the gas station at the intersection of M-115 and M-37, and nearby properties, for roadside produce stands. The Village and other stakeholders could consider designating some property in the M-115/M-37 commercial area or downtown for seasonal produce stands/ farmers market space, and working to attract additional vendors.

Another food-based land use that has attracted local interest is community gardens, which are gardens farmed by a group of people on a single plot of land. In addition to providing fresh produce, community gardens can provide opportunities for recreation, additional sources

of income, neighborhood beautification, and education, while helping to reduce family food budgets. A number of properties within the Village, including undeveloped acreage at the Faith Lutheran Church, may be appropriate for a community garden.

Community Center and Activities

Public comment indicated a strong interest in community-building opportunities, such as a community center that could provide space for senior activities, along with after-school youth programs. Ideas for community center space included sharing space with public facilities or reusing vacant downtown space to provide opportunities for events and activities.

Other initiatives, such as a community garden, or partnerships with regional entities and nonprofits, could provide opportunities for community building or educational activities for youth, adults, and seniors.

Utilities and Transportation

Lack of natural gas infrastructure has significant impacts on business and housing costs in the Village, resulting in high heating bills for residents and business owners. Natural gas infrastructure has been explored as a potential opportunity to lower costs to residents, businesses, and the school system. In the 2012 community survey, over 70% of residents indicated that they would support

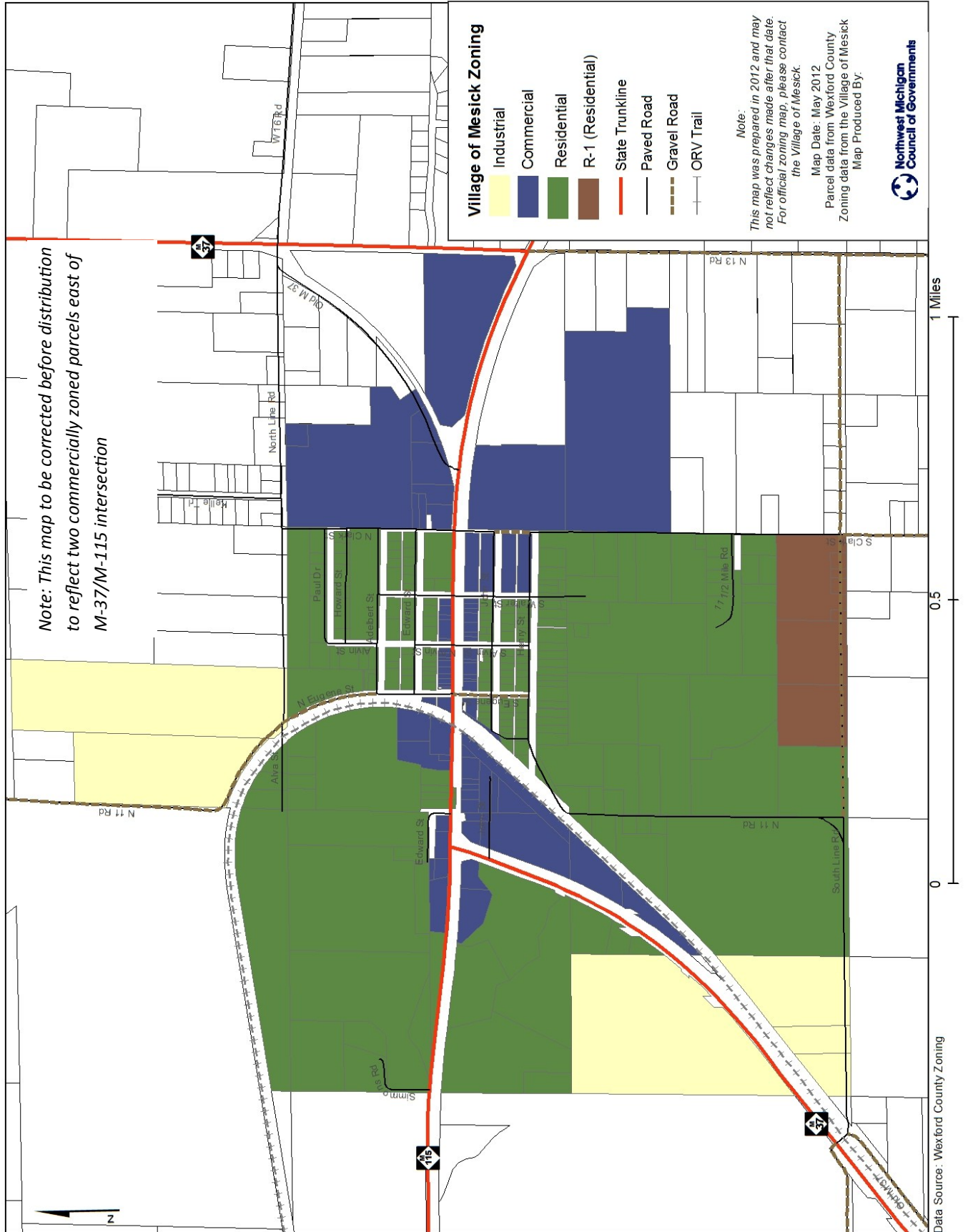
efforts to develop natural gas infrastructure in the Village. However, the costs of such infrastructure are a concern, with fewer residents indicating that they would support additional taxes to develop it. Other options may exist, such as partial grant dollars or partnerships with neighboring communities.

According to the 2004 *Municipal Sanitary Sewer System Preliminary Engineering Report*, conditions on the west side of the Village are generally not suitable for on-site wastewater disposal systems, with high water tables or lack of infiltration on drainfields: some homes are required to install raised mound systems in order to obtain the necessary four feet of clearance above the water table. These issues can create limitations for business and residential expansion, and also create contamination concerns relative to nearby private wells and the Manistee River. The sewer report suggests a number of alternatives to consider, including a sewer main extension to serve various locations within the western side of the Village, as well as improvements to the wastewater treatment facility.

Other infrastructure concerns include transportation issues. Comments were received from the public regarding the need for additional sidewalks and increased sidewalk maintenance in residential areas, in order to provide pedestrian connections to neighborhood schools, churches, and businesses.



Map 2. Existing Zoning, Village of Mesick



Chapter 6: Goals, Objectives, & Actions

Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Actions

The vision, goals, objectives, and action strategies in this chapter are intended to guide future development, policy initiatives, and other activities in a manner that reflects the community's values and priorities. These goals were developed using analysis of current conditions, previously adopted plans and studies, and public input obtained through:

- 2012 Master Plan survey
- 2012 Mesick Student Survey
- February 28 Public Forum
- Community presentations (Mesick School Board, Mesick Lions, Mesick Chamber of Commerce)

Vision: Mesick's Preferred Future

Mesick is home to a thriving downtown, year-round tourism, a variety of housing choices for its diverse population, and unique small-town character. High-quality recreation opportunities, community events and festivals, exemplary schools, a pristine natural environment, restaurants, and shops in and around the Village provide economic well-being and a high-quality of life for Village residents. The downtown provides a diverse mix of services and shopping opportunities that meet the needs of residents and visitors, while cost-efficient infrastructure draws new economic investment to the community.

Definitions

In order to appropriately administer goals, objectives and strategies—and to ensure that progress is being made towards the community's vision—it's important to understand the roles of each and their relationship to each other.

- **Vision** is the preferred future of the community, and serves as the basis for planning goals and objectives.
- **Goals** provide general direction and serve as a description of the desired future. They address issues and specific needs, but are broad in scope.
- **Objectives** are a means of achieving goals, and are attainable.
- **Action Strategies** set forth the specifics necessary to accomplish objectives. One strategy might be used to accomplish multiple objectives; or an objective might require multiple strategies. Action strategies identify implementation tools (such as zoning changes) and the players involved in meeting goals and objectives.

Governance and Partnerships

Provide efficient, responsive, cost effective government services that meet the community's existing and future needs

Objective	Provide responsive and effective Village services
Action	Require attendance at Planning Commission trainings offered by local, regional, and statewide partners
Action	Develop and promote an effective Village web presence
Action	Encourage public participation in Village meetings and decisions
Action	Annually review the Village Master Plan to determine annual priorities and activities
Action	Regularly review and update Village zoning ordinance to meet the Village's vision and goals
Objective	Ensure improvements and initiatives are cost-effective and efficient
Action	Pursue grant funding and donations for projects when applicable and available
Action	Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to provide for effective and efficient budgeting, maintenance, and improvements of sewer, water, equipment, and other public facilities
Objective	Work closely and collaboratively with neighboring communities, stakeholder groups, and the public to implement shared goals and objectives.
Action	Engage in regular communications with neighboring communities and stakeholders on areas of mutual concern.
Action	Partner with nonprofits and community groups on fundraising and implementation activities.
Action	Coordinate with service groups, nonprofits, schools, and other community partners to encourage civic engagement and volunteerism in the implementation of community goals.
Objective	Encourage citizen engagement in Village initiatives, decisions, and activities
Action	Encourage the public, civic organizations, and other stakeholders to provide input on Village activities and decisions, through public hearings, presentations, and other community events
Action	Consider Village newsletters or other outreach efforts to provide regular updates and information to residents, businesses, and property owners
Action	Develop and promote an effective Village web presence with information and documents relative to meetings, plans, ordinances, and Village initiatives

Land Use

Encourage balanced land use patterns and design that meet the needs of existing and future land uses while improving and maintaining the Village's sense of place

Objective	Provide for a range of housing types, sizes, and densities, that meet the needs of all ages and income levels.
Action	Work with partners and community stakeholders to attract and implement senior housing and/or assisted living opportunities to the Village
Action	Consider zoning changes to allow for senior housing and/or assisted living facilities
Action	Consider zoning amendments to allow for accessory dwelling uses, multi-family dwellings, and other types of housing choices
Action	Consider zoning amendments to allow for residential uses in commercial district
Action	Encourage and support partnerships with local, state, and federal authorities to provide affordable housing opportunities Consider zoning amendments to allow for some urban agriculture uses, such as community gardens
Objective	Provide for a range of commercial uses to support the service, shopping, employment, and recreation needs of residents and visitors.
Action	Encourage and support additional neighborhood services, shops, and restaurants in the downtown
Action	Encourage the re-use or redevelopment of vacant buildings or lots in the downtown, through zoning or incentive programs
Action	Engage in partnerships with local, regional, state, and federal economic development organizations to recruit and encourage new retail, entertainment, and other commercial uses in the downtown
Action	Encourage pedestrian linkages between commercial uses and surrounding neighborhoods
Objective	Provide for a variety of industrial uses and activities
Action	Orient industrial development to areas specifically planned, zoned, and designed for industrial use
Action	Engage in partnerships with local, regional, state, and federal economic development organizations to recruit and encourage new industrial uses in areas zoned for industry
Action	Consider zoning amendments to permit wind towers or other alternative energy options

Recreation

Provide a variety of recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities that meet the community's existing and future needs

Objective	Continue to maintain and improve existing parks
Action	Consider improvements to or relocation of basketball courts to allow for larger courts
Action	Improve or post signage at existing recreation facilities relative to hours, rules, and usage.
Objective	Work to build additional trail opportunities in and around Mesick, while enhancing Mesick's image as a regional trail hub
Action	Improve snowmobile and ORV trailer parking facilities at a location in proximity to the downtown area and the rails to trails corridor
Action	Improve signage to identify trail connections, limit snowmobile traffic where undesirable and control speeds along trailways adjacent to residential areas
Action	Consider ordinances and other amenities such as trail mapping and signage to aid in managing various types of ORV/snowmobile traffic.
Action	Work with state and local partners on railroad bridge repair
Action	Pursue trail expansions and/or linkages with nearby trail systems
Action	Market/promote trail opportunities in and around Mesick
Objective	Encourage, support, and facilitate new and existing community events, festivals, and activities
Action	Encourage and promote the use of parks and civic space for community events, festivals, and arts and cultural activities
Action	Work with residents, partners, and stakeholders to develop and support additional community activities such as fall and winter festivals, races, and sports events
Action	Work with residents, partners, and stakeholders to develop and support additional arts and cultural activities, such as concerts and outdoor movies
Action	Work with residents, partners, and stakeholders to pursue opportunities to provide space for a community center or community activities
Action	Work with residents, partners, and stakeholders to provide after-school or youth activities
Objective	Continue the improvements and development of universal design concepts at all the Village's park locations.
Action	Improve restrooms at all the Village's parks, especially at the Enchanted River Play area.
Action	Provide for paved parking areas and trails to provide barrier-free access to all areas.
Action	Develop unique recreational opportunities for elderly and physically challenged residents. Every recreational opportunity should be fully accessible to all individuals where possible and practical

Recreation (continued)

Objective	Develop a system of non-motorized paths which will link the Village's residential neighborhoods with schools, parks, and commercial areas, and which will link the Village to surrounding townships
Action	Construct non-motorized paths adjacent to major Village streets, to link neighborhoods with major activity areas, such as parks, schools, and shopping areas
Action	Develop non-motorized trail way connections from High School and Junior High property's to the Mesick Community Park
Action	Develop a non-motorized path system linking Community Park, Memorial Park, and the Mesick Wildlife Area
Action	Develop non-motorized trail way connections from Downtown to Memorial Park
Objective	Ensure that adequate land is available for the appropriate use and improvements of park and recreation facilities in the Village.
Action	Acquire land or negotiate joint ventures with other government entities to provide for and assure access to nearby open space, water frontage or access points, parks and trail systems that provide expanded leisure time opportunities for members of the community
Action	Acquire land or long-term use-rights along the existing railroad ROW, the existing railroad bridge across the Manistee River or for the connections to the Mesick Wildlife area
Action	Acquire land or long-term use-rights for the connection of non-motorized trails and pathways throughout the community; particularly for the connection to existing snowmobile trails found in the general area
Action	Consider whether arrangements may be made with Springville Township for use of land at the Township Park or whether additional land should be acquired.
Action	Plan recreational improvements that offer both active and passive recreation opportunities
Action	Continue to re-evaluate available lands in the Village for possible acquisition or development as future recreation land
Objective	Work with the MDNR and Consumer's Energy to develop the Mesick Wildlife Sanctuary to permit the intended use of nature observation and enjoyment while preserving the unique natural features of the land
Action	Fund and execute contracts for the purchase and/or lease of property and construction of facilities for the access, parking, marked and measured trails, and nature interpretation panels of the Mesick Wildlife Sanctuary

Natural Resources

Protect and promote Mesick’s natural features.

Objective	Preserve and enhance natural areas such as wetlands, floodplains, and woodland areas
Action	Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas for open space and passive recreation
Action	Regulate and minimize direct storm water discharge into rivers and lakes
Objective	Update zoning to include provisions that will protect and enhance natural resources
Action	Encourage creative design and planning techniques which produce visual harmony while preserving special features and protecting vital natural resources
Action	Provide for green belts or buffers along streams and rivers

Placemaking

Enhance the Village’s sense of place to build a high quality of life and attractive business environment.

Objective	Improve Village aesthetics
Action	Continue to address blight concerns through consistent enforcement of junk or blight ordinances
Action	Consider updating blight ordinance to aid in enforcement activities
Action	Consider state and other funding programs to help offset costs involved in blight elimination
Action	Encourage redevelopment of vacant or abandoned buildings or properties through brownfield or other incentives
Action	Work with community partners to provide and promote housing rehabilitation services and programs
Action	Develop a property maintenance education program to raise awareness about local ordinances
Objective	Support business development through public improvements, promotion, and marketing efforts
Action	Consider establishment of a Downtown Development Authority to provide access to new public improvement funding streams and programs
Action	Work with local and regional partners to encourage and support organized marketing and promotion efforts for Village businesses
Action	Establish and promote façade improvement incentives and programs
Action	Make downtown a focal point of events and festivals
Action	Enhance streetscapes with public art and landscaping

Transportation

Provide a safe, efficient, and balanced transportation system.

Objective	Provide a balanced, high-quality, multi-modal transportation network that provides safety and efficiency for all users.
Action	Maintain and improve the existing road system to provide for traffic flow that is safe and efficient for all users, including vehicle/truck traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, and others
Action	Support the region's public transportation system
Objective	Provide for safe and connected pedestrian infrastructure
Action	Improve and expand sidewalks, where needed and feasible.
Action	Consider zoning changes to require pedestrian connections for new development

Utilities

Provide municipal facilities and services that will economically and adequately service existing and anticipated growth.

Objective	Maintain and improve existing public utilities, buildings, and services as needed
Action	Continue to assess public utilities, buildings, and services to determine current and projected needs
Action	Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to aid in budgeting and improvements planning over the short term
Action	Consider options to resume administrative control over sewer and water through avenues such as rebonding
Objective	Ensure cost effective, adequate sewer and water infrastructure
Action	Implement recommended improvements included in the 2012 <i>Water System Reliability Study</i>
Action	Consider expanding sewer service to residences and businesses not currently served by sewer infrastructure, per the recommendations and alternatives outlined in 2012 <i>Municipal Sanitary Sewer System Preliminary Engineering Report</i>
Action	Consider grants, bonds, and special assessments for sewer expansions
Action	Work with community and stakeholders to explore possibilities for implementing stormwater collection system
Objective	Consider implementing natural gas infrastructure
Action	Conduct presentations, "community conversations," and public hearings on natural gas infrastructure opportunities
Action	Work with community and stakeholders to explore possibilities for natural gas infrastructure
Action	Explore grant and loan opportunities for funding natural gas infrastructure

Chapter 7: Future Land Use Map & Zoning Plan

The Future Land Use Map and district descriptions translate the Plan's goals, objectives, and action statements into future land use policy. Future land use district boundaries and recommendations are based on existing land use, environmental conditions, social and economic characteristics, and community goals and objectives.

The map and district descriptions identify desired future land use development patterns and approximate locations for each district. The map is not intended to be parcel-specific and as such does not reflect the precise boundaries or dimensions of future development. Rather, the Future Land Use Map is a long range guide that describes the

intended character of the Village's neighborhoods and districts, and portrays a general land use arrangement.

The map and descriptions included in this chapter are intended to ensure that existing land uses can continue while allowing for well-planned growth and investment that protects and enhances local assets. As such, the Future Land Use Map and district descriptions will serve as a guide for the Village, residents, property owners, developers, and other stakeholders when considering new policies, current issues, land use and zoning decisions, public improvements, and community investments.

Future Land Use and Zoning Maps

The Future Land Use Map and Zoning Ordinance are closely related, but not interchangeable, community land use policies. The Master Plan is a guide for land use 20 or more years into the future; the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law.

It's important to note that some future land use classifications may be the same as the existing zoning for that area, while in some cases the recommended future land use is different from the existing zoning or use. This means that in some cases, to use a property for a use as identified in the Future Land Use Map, rezonings or zoning text amendments may be necessary. However, the Future Land Use Map does not, in and of itself, change the existing zoning in an area. A property owner must use the property as it is currently zoned. Changes to zoning are subject to an application and review process that provides for legal review, Planning Commission and Village Council action, and numerous opportunities for public comment.

Future Land Use Designations & Zoning Plan

Village Residential

Existing Conditions

The Residential 1 category includes a range of medium- to high-density single-family residential areas, most of which is located in or near the central core of the Village. Most homes within this district have access to Village sewer and water, and are served by Village streets. Many homes are of traditional nineteenth-century design, with some mobile homes and other twentieth-century home styles. Some non-residential uses, including churches, office buildings, parks, and governmental uses, currently exist in this district.

Future Land Use Intent

The intent of the Village Residential district is to preserve the single-family residential character of existing neighborhoods while offering a range of housing types, prices, and sizes. New single-family residential development should be compatible with historic development patterns, and should be well-connected to adjacent neighborhoods, commercial districts, and services via sidewalks, trailways, and streets. Two-family or small-scale multi-family development (i.e. four-plexes) may be appropriate if design is consistent with the single family character of the neighborhood.

This Plan recognizes that some non-residential uses in this district provide important services, employment, and recreation opportunities to residents. Accessory uses, home occupations,



two- or four-family dwellings, public or community uses, small-scale urban agriculture, and small-scale services may be appropriate if the uses support the needs and functions of residents (i.e. parks, churches, schools, daycares, etc), and do not detract from the residential character of the neighborhood. Residential-scale energy production, such as wind turbines or solar panels, may also be considered. Any non-residential uses must limit impacts such as traffic volumes, lighting, and signage.

Rural Residential

Existing Conditions

The Rural Residential district includes much of the Village's undeveloped areas, as well as some existing low- to medium-density single family homes. Existing homes in this district are of a variety of architectural styles, and many are on larger lots that are somewhat separated from the Village core. Homes and lots have a more rural or forested character than residential lots within or near the Village core.

Future Land Use Intent

The intent of this district is to allow for additional residential development in a more rural setting, in a variety of sizes and densities. Development should be consistent with the rural character of the area. Development should provide for both vehicular and non-motorized transportation connections with other parts of the community. Private roads



may be necessary to serve some areas of the Village. While sewer and water infrastructure may be available to some properties within this district, most new development is likely to require use of wells and septic fields.

Best practices for site design, including open space conservation, non-motorized connections or trailways, and environmentally sensitive development patterns, should be considered. Lighting should be shielded so as not to encroach on neighboring properties.

Some areas within this district also may be subject to state and federal regulations pertaining to sensitive natural features such as steep slopes or wetlands. New development in these areas should consider practices that limit negative impacts to the natural environment, such as natural landscaping, use of native

vegetation, and low impact or environmentally sensitive development techniques.

Some non-residential uses may be appropriate in this district, particularly those that protect and enhance the Village's natural resources and recreational activities, such as natural areas, trailways, and parks. Small-scale agricultural uses or residential-scale alternative energy production may also be appropriate.

Neighborhood Commercial

Existing Conditions

The Neighborhood Commercial district includes a mix of retail, service, and entertainment businesses, primarily located in the historic Village center along M-115. Most development consists of single-story buildings fronting the sidewalk, with parking to the side or rear of the buildings.

This district is adjacent to residential neighborhoods and includes some currently non-conforming residential uses, as well as public and institutional uses, including the Village offices and Mesick Consolidated Schools.

Future Land Use Intent

The intent of the Commercial district is to accommodate existing uses and provide additional opportunities for small-scale retail, office, or service uses. A mix of retail, service, entertainment, public, and residential uses may be appropriate for this district, as well as events and community activities like festivals and outdoor markets. Uses that serve basic shopping or service needs for residents and visitors are encouraged.



Development or redevelopment should be compatible with historic building patterns and designs. Streetscapes should include attractive street furniture, public art, street trees, and landscaping that enhances the district's aesthetic value. New development or redevelopment should also include consideration of best practices for site design in order to encourage safe and efficient traffic flow. Parking areas should be designed to minimize impervious surfaces and the amount of roadway frontage devoted to parking. To be consistent with existing development patterns, parking lots should be screened and/or located to the side or rear of buildings, and requirements relative to the amount of parking should be flexible. Lighting should be designed so as not to encroach upon neighboring properties. New development should be well-connected to other parts of the Village through streets, sidewalks, or trailways.

Highway Commercial

Existing Conditions

The Highway Commercial district includes several existing commercial uses and surrounding acreage along M-115 and M-37, as well as some adjacent commercially-zoned properties that abut residential districts. The Highway Commercial district is adjacent to existing industrial zoning within the Village along M-37 in the southern and western corners of the Village. The district also neighbors existing industrial uses in Springville Township along M-115 and M-37, in the



northern and eastern corners of the Village.

Future Land Use Intent

The intent of the Highway Commercial district is to accommodate existing uses and provide additional opportunities for commercial uses outside of the historic Village center. Some light industrial uses may also be appropriate for this district.

As the entry points into the Village, new development should reflect a high quality of design. New development should include consideration of best practices for site design, including access management, in order to encourage safe and efficient traffic flow. Parking areas should be designed to minimize

impervious surfaces and the amount of roadway frontage devoted to parking. Parking lots should be screened and/or located to the side or rear of buildings, and requirements relative to the amount of parking should be flexible. Lighting should be shielded so as not to encroach upon neighboring properties. New development should be well-connected to other parts of the Village through streets, sidewalks, or trailways.



Industrial

Existing Conditions

The Industrial district includes several existing commercial uses and surrounding acreage along M-115. The district is adjacent to existing industrial uses in Springville Township.

Future Land Use Intent

The intent of the Industrial district is to provide opportunities for a variety of industrial uses, including traditional industrial activities as well as light industry, alternative energy, research and development, and business incubators. Some non-industrial development may also be appropriate, particularly those that are complementary to existing or planned industrial uses, such as business services or office space.

including natural landscaping and access management should be considered. Trailways should link industrial uses to residential and commercial neighborhoods, with transit access.

Industrial development should be buffered from surrounding non-industrial uses, using screening or landscaping. Best practices

Chapter 8: Plan Implementation

Zoning Plan

Zoning has traditionally been the primary means of implementation for most master plans. Further, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) requires the Master Plan to include a zoning plan, showing how land use categories on the future land use map relate to the zoning map. The Future Land Use Map and district descriptions act as the Village of Mesick Zoning Plan. The proposed land uses illustrated on the future land use plan map are a guide and not intended to indicate the precise boundary between uses. These uses could vary depending on how a specific proposal relates to existing uses, environmental conditions, and to the plan.

Many goals and objectives in the Master Plan can be addressed through administration and implementation of, or changes to, the Village Zoning Ordinance. The Village should review and evaluate existing regulations to determine where and if changes are needed to encourage or accommodate the desired intent of the future land use map. In particular, some zoning policies the Village may wish to review, update, or develop include:

- Uses permitted
- Site plan review language
- Lighting standards
- Access management
- Parking standards

Rezoning and Conditional Rezoning

In many cases, current zoning allows for the use of properties in a way that is consistent with the intent of the Future Land Use Map. However, in some cases, rezonings may be needed to allow for the intended uses or development types of the Future Land Use Map.

Conditional zoning is a technique permitted in Michigan which allows a property owner to voluntarily attach conditions to a rezoning request. These conditions restrict the development of the property to that scenario proposed by the applicant, and **must be offered by the applicant**—not imposed by the local government. This technique may be useful in circumstances where possible impacts to adjacent uses are a concern. However, consideration should be given to long-term enforcement of the rezoning, and language relative to conditional zoning should be added to the Village Zoning Ordinance, if there is an expectation that this option may be used in the future.

Capital Improvements, Grants, &

Spending

While many Village planning goals will be implemented through zoning or other policies, some projects or objectives will require local expenditures. Because Village resources are

limited, grant opportunities will be key in implementation of the Master Plan. Grant funding for improvements or expenses relative to Master Plan implementation—particularly for initiatives such as infrastructure development, recreation improvements, or redevelopment costs—the Village should consider grant funding as opportunity presents, with review from Village staff and leadership to determine whether grant objectives are aligned with Master Plan goals and objectives.

Other, non-grant funded spending needs will be addressed in the Village budget, which is adopted annually and addresses expenditures for facilities, maintenance, staffing, and other administrative functions.

To aid in the budgeting process, the Village should consider a capital improvements plan

(CIP) that provides a blueprint for capital expenditures such as roads, utility improvements, parks, and heavy equipment. The CIP would act and planning process, help achieve maximum effectiveness of tax revenues, encourage efficient administration, and aid in grant applications.

Other Plans and Policies

Some Village issues and goals identified in the Master Plan, such as infrastructure expansion, may require additional study. The Village should pursue opportunities to conduct detailed studies relative to potential scope and costs of any infrastructure enhancement, accompanied by outreach activities to inform and engage the public in any potential changes.

Other issues, such as blight and redevelopment needs, will require ongoing study and



response. Nuisance and/or blight ordinances and programs should be regularly reviewed in the context of this plan to ensure that they meet Village goals and objectives.

Leadership and Public Input

The Master Plan is implemented in part by decisions that are made by Village leadership on issues including zoning, budgets, policy, and capital improvements. Village leadership includes the Village Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and appointed staff. Each group plays a different role in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Village Council

The Village Council is elected every four years to represent the community. Responsibilities include:

- Appointing the Planning Commission
- Adopting plans and ordinances
- Setting tax rates
- Authorizing expenditures and borrowing
- Hiring administrative staff
- Providing oversight of public facilities
- Actively enforce the zoning ordinance, blight ordinance, and related Village ordinances
- Other duties as necessary

Village Planning Commission

The Village Planning Commission is appointed by the Village Council and is charged with:

- Development of and updates to plans and zoning ordinances
- Administration of the Zoning Ordinance
- Advising the Village Council on proposed rezonings or zoning ordinance changes
- Review of development proposals
- Regular review (at least once every 5 years), and, if necessary, update of the Village Master Plan

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals is appointed by the Village Council and is responsible for:

- Hears appeals on zoning decisions
- Acting on requests for variances from zoning regulations
- Acting on requests for interpretation of zoning regulations

Zoning Administrator

The Zoning Administrator is a staff or volunteer position appointed by the Village Council. Responsibilities include:

- Review and investigate applications to ensure compliance with zoning ordinance
- Issue zoning permits, when appropriate

- Investigate alleged zoning violations
- Conduct site plan reviews and prepare staff reports on zoning applications

Elected and appointed leadership, as well as any paid or volunteer staff, should attend regular training sessions on planning and zoning fundamentals, best practices, and emerging and innovative approaches to community development.

Additionally, to ensure that the Village is responsive to community and development needs while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare, the Village Council, Planning Commission, and staff should engage in regular, open communication with the community. Regular focus groups, public discussions, or other forum type opportunities should be considered as a means to continuously obtain input and feedback.

Partnerships and Citizen Engagement

While many of the plan's objectives may be addressed through Village policies, ordinances, or other regulations, many of the goals and objectives will require strong partnerships with community stakeholders.

The Plan recommends pursuing partnerships with local service clubs, schools, nonprofits, regional agencies, and other levels of



government. Partnerships broaden the scope of available grant dollars and other revenue, encourage citizen engagement in community activities, and enhance staff capacities and efficiencies. Possible partners may include:

- Wexford County
- Neighboring units of government
- Mesick Consolidated Schools
- Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Cadillac Area Land Conservancy

Partnerships with some of these organizations may provide volunteer capital to implement some small-scale community projects. Volunteer activities will be critical to building citizen engagement and community pride.

Plan Updates

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that all plans be reviewed, and updated if necessary, every 5 years. While comprehensive updates may not occur as often as every 5 years, regular review of the plan and its objectives will be important to ensure that the plan and related ordinances are effective, whether the goals and objectives are being

addressed, whether the plan's policies are still relevant and appropriate, and which objectives remain to be addressed.

During the plan review, several objectives should be identified and prioritized as an implementation schedule, in order to help focus the Planning Commission's activity throughout the year.

The Recreation Plan, which is included in this Master Plan, should be reviewed and updated every five years, to ensure that goals are relevant and objectives are being addressed.





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Appendices

Appendix A: 2012 Master Plan Survey Results

Appendix B: Mesick Student Survey Results

Appendix C: Legal Notices and Approval Documentation