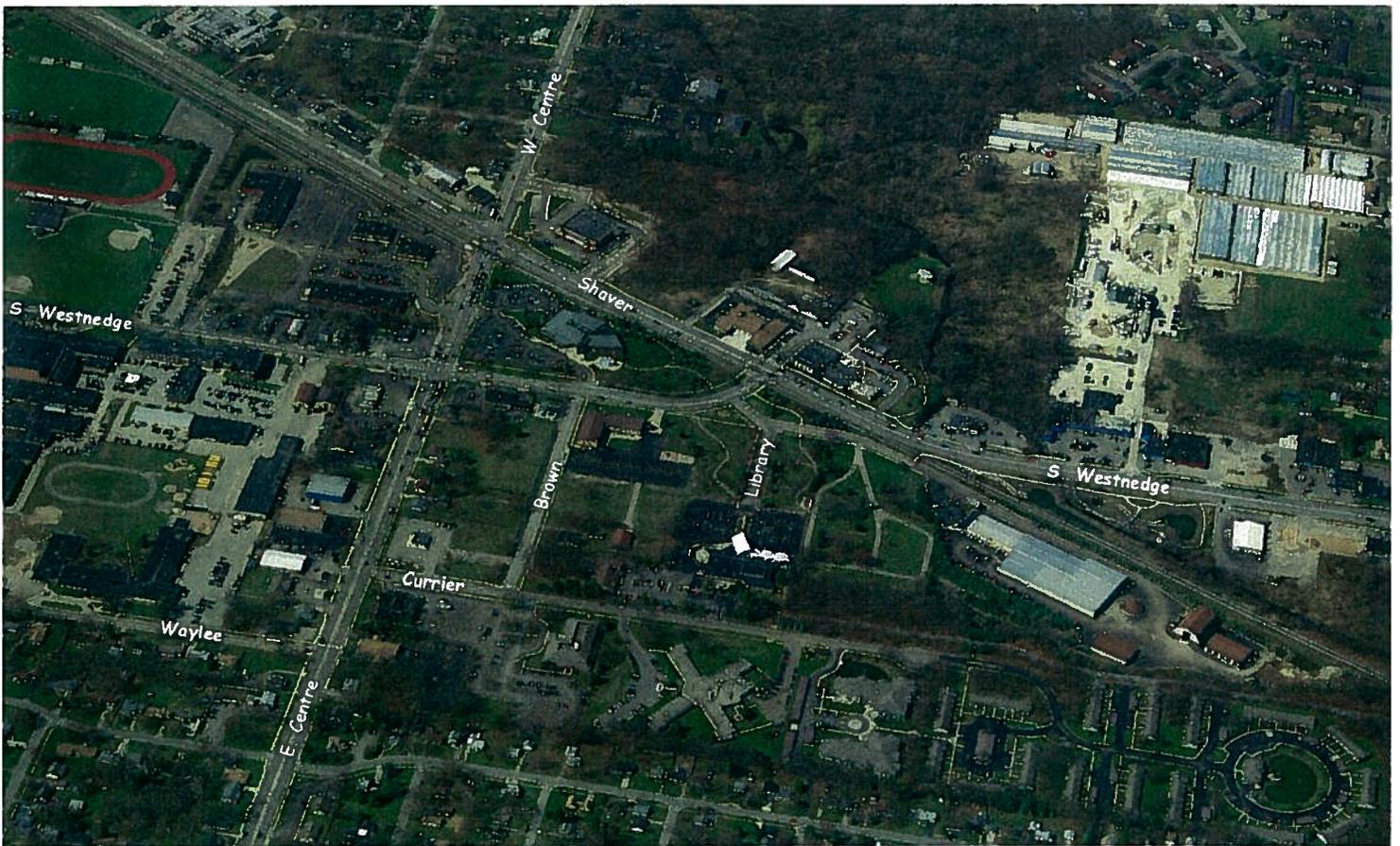


# -- CITY CENTRE AREA PLAN --

A SUB-AREA PLAN FOR CENTRAL PORTAGE



**October 2008**



# – CITY CENTRE AREA PLAN –

## A SUB-AREA PLAN FOR CENTRAL PORTAGE

### **Adopted by the City of Portage Planning Commission**

Cory Bailes  
James Cheesebro, Vice-Chairman  
Miko Dargitz  
Thomas Fox, Chairman  
Kerry Hettinger

James Pearson  
Nancy Vander Roest, Secretary  
Paul Welch  
Richard Yonke

### **Department of Community Development**

Jeffrey M. Erickson, Director  
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**RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2008 CITY CENTRE AREA PLAN: A  
SUB-AREA PLAN FOR CENTRAL PORTAGE BY THE PORTAGE CITY  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

At the regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Portage, Michigan, held on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. local time at the Portage City Hall in the City of Portage, Michigan.

PRESENT: Fox, Cheesebro, Hettinger, Welch, Dargitz, Bailes and Pearson

ABSENT: Vander Roest and Yonke

The motion to adopt the resolution was offered by Commissioner Hettinger and supported by Commissioner Pearson.

WHEREAS, the former Municipal Planning Act and current Michigan Planning Enabling Act allow the Planning Commission of a municipality to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan and sub-area plans for the physical development of the municipality and fringe areas;

WHEREAS, the Portage City Planning Commission has prepared a sub-area plan for the central part of Portage; and

WHEREAS, after causing such notice to be given in the manner prescribed by law, and a public hearing having been held on October 16, 2008 in order to give the citizens of the City of Portage and surrounding areas an opportunity to be heard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2008 City Centre Area Plan: A Sub-Area Plan for Central Portage, including the text and all other related maps, charts and graphic information, is hereby adopted in accordance with State of Michigan statutory requirements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this action be recorded on the plan and descriptive matter by the identifying signature of the Chairman of the City of Portage Planning Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of the plan be certified to the Portage City Council and other local units of government as required by State statute.

AYES: Fox, Cheesebro, Hettinger, Welch, Dargitz, Bailes and Pearson

NAYS: None



## City Centre Area Plan

### Introduction

Sub Area Plans establish specific goals for geographic or special-focus areas of a community and are intended to address areas that can include defined business, government, neighborhood and even environmental elements as they relate to surrounding areas in the community. Sub area plans can include planning for urban (and, where applicable, rural) sub-areas, for street corridors, redevelopment areas, economic development areas, waterfront development and for other activity centers and special interest locations given specific community needs.

As for the City Centre Sub Area Plan, the updated 2008 Portage Comprehensive Plan, which is the Plan for the entire city, provides the essential framework for conducting this more detailed planning effort. The goals, policies, profile/demographics, plan elements, implementation strategies, the Future Land Use Plan Map and so forth provide the underpinnings for this more specific plan.

The Portage City Centre Area is the focus of this sub area plan inasmuch as this geographic area best serves as the “identifying” center and heart of the City of Portage. The long-standing importance of the City Centre Area has been documented over nearly 30 years and in some of the earliest planning efforts undertaken by the City of Portage. The box to the right summarizes multiple planning efforts, where the vision to establish an “identity” and a “downtown” has extended from the early focus of centralizing “civic” (public) activities in the geographic center of the community in the **1981 Comprehensive Plan**. Further emphasis has been devoted to establishing the geographic center of the city as the “city centre” in other planning documents including the **Portage 2000 Report**, **1982 City Center Plan**, **Portage 2020 Plan**, **1996 Comprehensive Plan** and the **2002 Comprehensive Plan**. Most recently, the citizen-based visioning project, **Portage 2025**, which began in April 2007 and concluded in 2008 established the organizing concept statement to create a “*world class community*”, which included the specific goals to:

- ❖ *“Establish a distinct, identifiable and vibrant city center.”* and that
- ❖ *“Portage (have) a walkable...center that connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues and is connected to railways and transportation.”*

#### 1981 Comprehensive Plan

- Provide for the development of an integrated municipal complex of functions and services located at the geographic center of the city, necessary to meet community needs.

#### Portage 2000 Report (1981)

- Consider the central section of Portage as an area to mix small businesses, offices, restaurants, housing facilities especially designed for senior citizens, or others wanting access easy access to public transportation and pedestrian movement to shopping areas. It would be an area easily connected with bike paths leading to schools or parks.

#### 1982 Portage City Center Plan

- Provide a functional, symbolic and aesthetic focal point for the city which reflects local identity, pride and progress.
- Create a development pattern/grouping of functions that is convenient and efficient for the public transacting business.
- Facilitate accessibility and traffic flow for city residents in around the city center.
- Provide for the location of a city hall facility in order to reduce or eliminate the present overcrowded conditions.
- Realize economic savings through joint use of parking facilities, equipment, research and administrative functions.
- Develop a prudent program for the acquisition and/or disposition of land and facilities.
- Encourage private sector development/redevelopment in convenient, appropriate locations in and around the City Center Area.

#### Portage 2020 Report (1991)

- A community cultural center within the City Centre Area would (be available) for various groups.
- Portage will become a model for other communities that wish to develop a strong core of cultural activities.

#### 1996 Comprehensive Plan

- Plan and implement programs and projects to enhance the City Centre Area.

#### 2002 Comprehensive Plan

- To encourage an area in the geographic center of the Portage that can be easily identified by residents and visitors as the “downtown” and which provides a core activity area for public facilities and a destination for the general public.

The literature on “placemaking” can be instructive in identifying concepts and ideas to create a viable, multifaceted city center. Writer Wallace Stegner has remarked that “No place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends or monuments. Fictions serve as well as facts.” (as quoted from Placemaking on a Budget: Improving Small Towns, Neighborhoods, and Downtowns Without Spending a Lot of Money, American Planning Association, 2005). The authors of Placemaking on a Budget suggest complementary approaches to “placemaking”: **Community Values** (the history, tradition, points of pride of a community) that are reflected in the area and **Community Canvases** (the infrastructure, architecture and environmental features) that are present in the area. The authors also emphasize that the ideas that establish “a sense of place” originate from within the community. These community-centered ideas are also well-explored and given further depth and dimension by Projects for Public Places, which is a source of very useful information. This organization has a web-based presence and presents news and ideas about public spaces, civic activities, community issues and related topics. (Projects for Public Places can be found at [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org).)

Marketing principles are a potentially important “placemaking” element and can help establish the identity of a community. However, “marketing” is not simply promotion of a community. As Philip Kotler, Donald H. Haider and Irving Rein convey in Marketing Places, (The Free Press, 1993), place marketing can be most successful when citizens and businesses are pleased and visitor (and investor) expectations are fulfilled. Four components comprise a successful process for place improvement in any community:

- *Sound design that enhances character and develops aesthetic qualities*
- *Basic infrastructure that is compatible with environmental features*
- *Basic services are provided that meet stakeholder needs*
- *A range of attractions are available for their own people and for visitors (pages 99, 100)*

As a final reference to the literature, Jack Williamson, in Community Design Management (Cranbrook Academy of Art, Design Michigan, 1995), discusses a “matrix” and the interrelatedness between community elements. He conveys his insights through use of case studies. As described in a case study that is applicable to the City of Portage, combinations of elements can be significant and can serve to establish an “entry” statement as residents and visitors enter into the community. Also, these elements can create a sense of “arrival” into a city center (or “olde towne” as characterized by the author) that with appropriate “dock and wayfinding” features help to create an unique “experience”. Furthermore, a theme can be strengthened, such as an “economic theme” that can create a “destination” to which residents and visitors wish to return. (page 116, Design Strategy Matrix, Rochester Hills, Michigan)

In the case of the City of Portage, the elements that can serve as building blocks to establish and strengthen the “city centre” as a “place” include the existing quality community facilities and distinctive public features, environmental elements including Portage Creek, municipal recreational amenities, the Portage Public School/Administrative complex and the existing and diverse businesses, business centers and neighborhoods within and adjacent to the geographic center of the community. These building blocks represent core public and private elements, functions and activities that can serve as interdependent destination points for the citizenry and visitors to the City Centre Area.

The Comprehensive Plan update process, together with the Portage Vision 2025 Project process that took place in 2007 and 2008, present opportunities and ways in which to define and develop the Portage City Centre Area based on the unique history and the characteristics of the community. A distinct, vibrant, walkable and interconnected center can be nurtured and grown.

### Goals & Objectives

As part of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan update, public forums and public Planning Commission meetings were scheduled at which opportunities for public input were provided. Public comment, together with Planning Commission input, was received and considered during the review, revision and development of updated goals and objectives. Importantly, an additional source of public comment involved the information developed by more than 150 participants as part of the 2025 Vision Project that occurred at intensive sessions between January and April 2007.

In addition to the overall goals and objectives in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan that address **Land Use & Development, Housing, Economic Development/Marketplace, Environment/Natural & Cultural Resources, Transportation, Public Services and Community Identity**, more specific sub area planning objectives are defined for the City Centre Area. Also, the 2025 Vision Project identified goals associated with **Culture & Leisure, Economic Development, Environment & Natural Resources, Human Services, Municipal Services, Neighborhoods and Transportation**. Specific City Centre Goals and Objectives from the 2008 Plan and 2025 Vision Project include:

- *To encourage an area in the geographic center of Portage that can be easily identified by residents and visitors as the “downtown” and which provides a core activity area for public facilities and a destination for the general public.*
- *Enhance the City Center Area by establishing appropriate zoning provisions that nurture the unique characteristic and potential of this area and ensure walkable community and business centers that connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues and is connected to trailways and transportation.*
- *Encourage (re)development activities which ensure the continued strength of the Portage Commerce Square, the central business area, and the City Centre Area, the geographic center of the city.*
- *Nurture a small town feel and sense of community while facilitating access to cultural and recreational amenities.*
- *Create mixed-use developments, including residential uses located within or adjacent to nonresidential uses, that will become community gathering areas.*
- *Establish a distinct, identifiable and vibrant city center.*
- *Portage (have) a walkable...center that connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues and is connected to trailways and transportation.*

These general goals and objectives can also be found in some of the earlier planning documents and provide continuity for the purposes of this sub area plan. Further, these goals and objectives form the nucleus for City Centre Area future land use recommendations and the City Centre “placemaking” concepts, for which implementation strategies can be developed.

### City Centre Profile

For the purpose of this planning effort, the two geographic areas initially delineated in the adopted 1982 City Centre Area Plan have been continued in this sub-area plan. The City Centre Study Area is defined as the area bounded by Garden Lane to the north and east, Melody Avenue to the south and Perry Street/Timbercreek Court to the west. This geographically central area encompasses existing city facilities and Portage Public Schools education and administrative facilities as well as immediately adjacent residential neighborhoods and business areas. The City Centre Study Area

contains approximately 700 acres and is more than one square mile in size. The City Centre Detailed Area is located within the Study Area and is bounded by Schuring Road to the north, Currier Drive to the east, extends approximately 700 feet south of Centre Avenue and the west boundary is located just west of Oak Street. The Study Area and Detailed Area are depicted on **MAP 1: City Centre Area**.

Within the City Centre Area, zoning, land use, population, demographic, civic features, geographic and other characteristics have been identified and are examined on the following pages.

**City Centre Zoning**

Table 1 below and **MAP 2: City Centre Area Zoning Map**, summarize the zoning districts in this area. The predominant zoning in the overall Study Area is one-family residential (R-1A and R-1B), which account for 321 acres or 46% of the total land area. Commercial zones (OS-1, B-1, B-3 and CPD) account for 182.6 acres or 26% with general business uses occupying the most acreage. Industrial zoning (I-1 and I-2) account for 113.8 acres or 16.2% with light industrial uses occupying over 98 of the 113.8 acres.

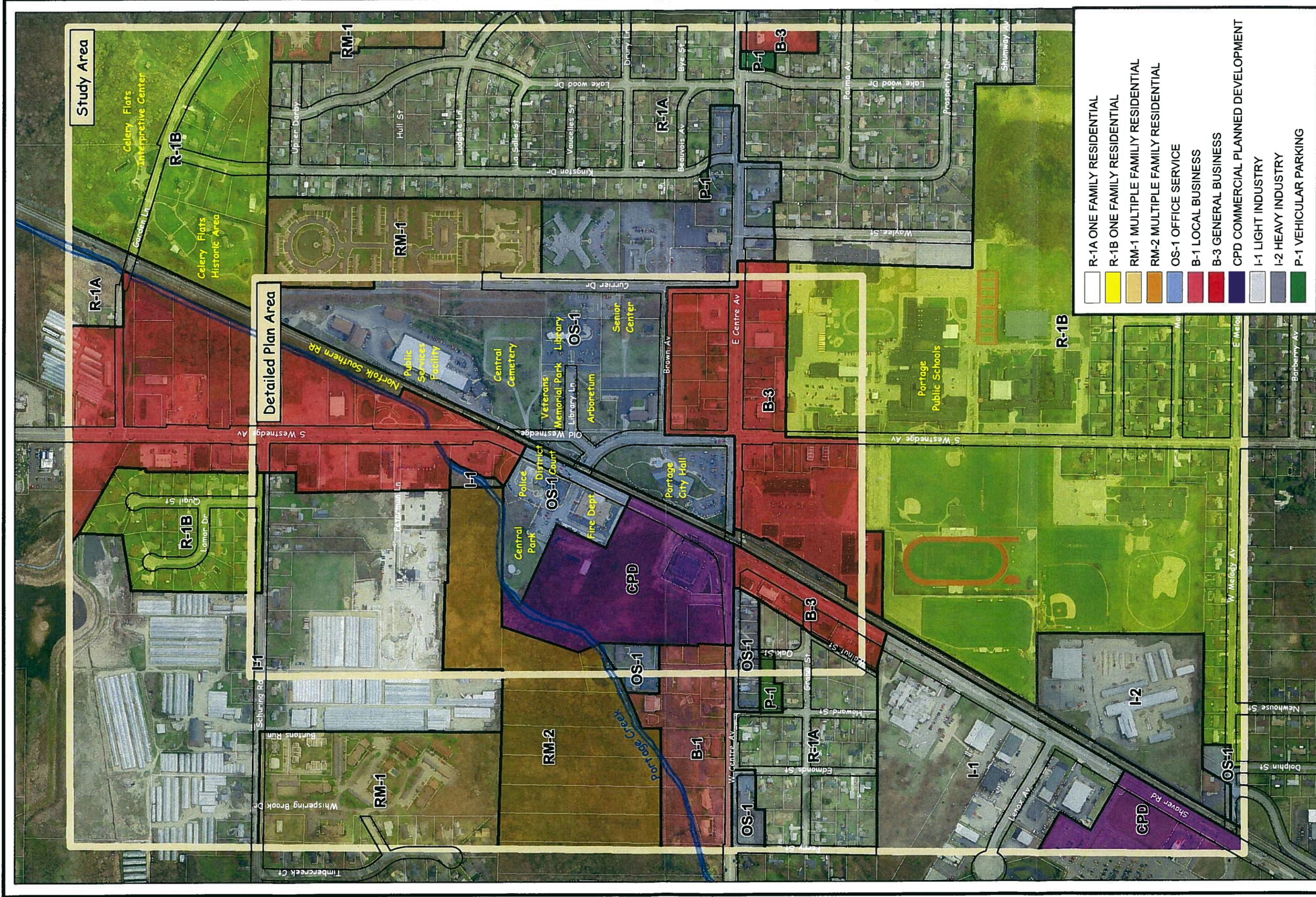
Within the Detailed Area, OS-1, office service zoning accounts for 52.4 acres (30%) of the land area followed by nearly 48 acres (27.3%) zoned B-3, general business land uses. One-family residential zoning accounts for only 12.9 acres (7.4%) of the land area and multi-family zoning (RM-1 and RM-2) 10.7 acres or 6.1%.

Zoning District	Study Area		Detailed Area	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
R-1A, One Family Residential	112.0	16.0%	2.8	1.6%
R-1B, One Family Residential	209.5	30.0%	10.1	5.8%
RM-1, Multiple Family Residential	40.2	5.8%	0.8	0.4%
RM-2, Multiple Family Residential	29.0	4.2%	9.9	5.7%
OS-1, Office Service	72.1	10.3%	52.4	30.0%
B-1, Local Business	11.5	1.6%	1.5	0.8%
B-3, General Business	74.5	10.6%	47.7	27.3%
CPD, Commercial Planned Development	24.5	3.5%	17.9	10.2%
I-1, Light Industry	98.2	14.0%	26.6	15.2%
I-2, Heavy Industry	15.6	2.2%	0	0
P-1, Vehicular Parking	1.4	0.2%	0.2	0.1%
Railroad Right-of-Way	11.5	1.6%	5.1	2.9%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>175 acres</b>	<b>100%</b>

**City Centre Land Use**

The following Table 2 and **MAP 3: City Centre Area Existing Land Use Map**, summarize the existing land uses. Single-family residential is the predominant land use (23.8%) in the Study Area while Public/Institutional is the predominate land use in the Detailed Area occupying 27.5% of the total land area. Public/Institutional accounts for the next highest land use category within the Study Area (20%). Commercial/office/industrial uses combined account for 19.5% of the land uses. Within the Detailed Area, commercial uses are the second highest land use category (17.9%). While businesses change in the near and longer terms, it is estimated that approximately 150 businesses currently exist in the City Centre Area.





Study Area

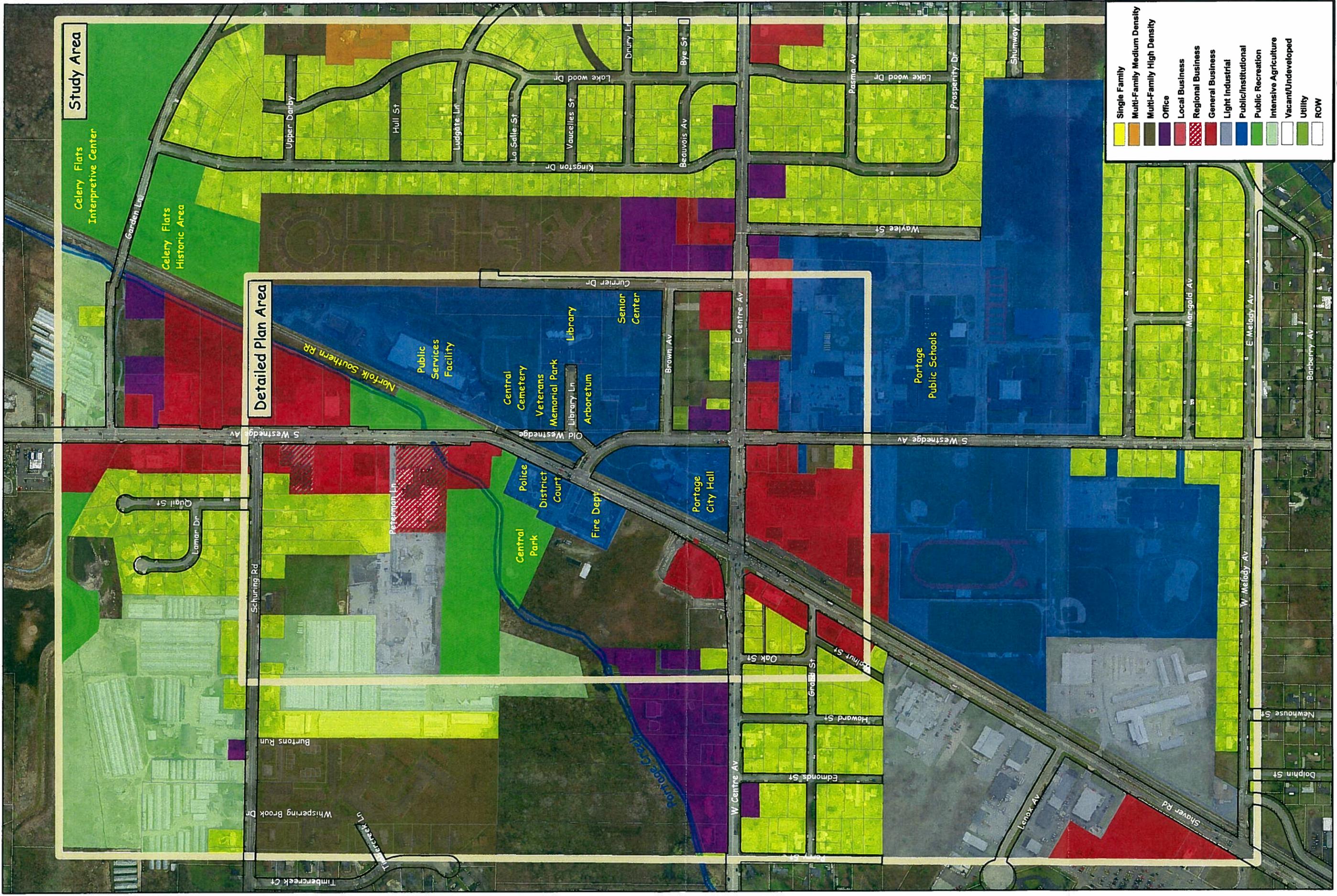
Detailed Plan Area

	R-1A ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	R-1B ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	RM-1 MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	RM-2 MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	OS-1 OFFICE SERVICE
	B-1 LOCAL BUSINESS
	B-3 GENERAL BUSINESS
	CPD COMMERCIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
	I-1 LIGHT INDUSTRY
	I-2 HEAVY INDUSTRY
	P-1 VEHICULAR PARKING



# Map 2 City Centre Area Zoning Map

Map labels include: R-1A, R-1B, RM-1, RM-2, OS-1, B-1, B-3, CPD, I-1, I-2, P-1, Schuring Rd, Whispering Brook Dr, Buntens Run, Lamar Dr, Quail St, Garden Ln, Hull St, Ludgate Ln, Kingston Dr, Vauclles St, La Salle St, Beauvais Av, Drury Ln, Bye St, Lake Wood Dr, Prosperity Dr, Skumway, Portage Creek, Central Park, Police District Court, Fire Dept, Veterans Memorial Park, Library, Senior Center, Arboretum, Public Services Facility, Central Cemetery, Portage City Hall, Portage Public Schools, E Centre Av, S Westnedge Av, W Melody Av, Shaver Rd, Dolphin St, Newhouse St, Barberray Av.



Map 3  
**City Centre Area Existing Land Use**

**Table 2**  
**City Centre Area – 2007 Existing Land Use**

Generalized Land Use	Study Area		Detailed Area	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Single Family Residential	166.3	23.8%	12.4	7.1%
Multi-Family Residential (total) <sup>1</sup>	45.4	6.5%	2.3	1.3%
• Medium Density	2.2	.3%	0	0
• High Density	43.2	6.2%	2.3	1.3%
Office	40.0	5.7%	3.7	2.1%
Commercial (total)	52.7	7.5%	31.3	17.9%
• Local Business	0.5	.1%	0	0
• Regional Business	4.1	.6%	4.2	2.4%
• General Business	48.1	6.8%	27.1	15.5%
Industrial	44.1	6.3%	7.9	4.5%
Public/Institutional (total)	140.1	20%	48.2	27.5%
• Civic	34.3	4.9%	34.3	19.6%
• Religious	4.3	.61%	4.3	2.5%
• Educational	101.5	14%	9.6	5.5%
Public Recreation	39.1	5.6%	13.6	7.8%
Intensive Agriculture (including only greenhouse & truck gardens)	47.2	6.7%	7.3	4.2%
Other (including street right-of-way/ utilities)	96.3	13.8%	27.6	15.7%
Vacant	28.8	4.1%	20.7	11.9%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>700 acres</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>175 acres</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup>includes two-family units

**People/Households/Demographics**

Table 3 below summarizes the 2007 population and households within the City Centre Area. Importantly, within the Study Area, an estimated 2,515 people (978 households) reside. Of these 2,515 people, the vast majority are located in the several neighborhoods that are identifiable in the overall Study Area. This residential (consumer) population is essential because it helps to support the local businesses. While an estimated 79 people (32 households) reside within the Detailed Area, the variety of retail, office and service businesses (a total of approximately 50 businesses) represent the dominant activity and successfully serve residents, visitors and consumers passing through the City Centre Area.



**Table 3**  
**2007 City Centre Area Population Estimate**

Type of Housing Unit	Study Area		Detailed Area	
	Number of Households	Population <sup>1</sup>	Number of Households	Population <sup>1</sup>
Single-Family Dwellings	513	1,256	24	59
Multiple-Family Units	465	1,259 <sup>2</sup>	8	20
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>2,515</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>79</b>

<sup>1</sup> Population estimates based on 2.45 people per household (2000 US Census Bureau average)

<sup>2</sup> Includes Tendercare Nursing Home (120 beds)

**Business Information/Statistics**

The City Centre Area is the location for over 100 successful businesses. Several of these businesses have been located in the City Centre Area for many years while other businesses are new to the area. Within the past five years, a revitalization/redevelopment effort began to emerge due to several factors including development of the Shaver Road Business Corridor, public street, storm sewer infrastructure improvements, municipal expansion projects, most recently including the Police Department facilities, and private sector reinvestment. Table 4 below summarizes the type of businesses, acreage occupied and State Equalized Values (SEV). As shown in the table, there are more general business uses (43) occupying the most acreage (48.1) and highest SEV (\$16.5 million) within the Study Area. Within the Detailed Area, general business uses are also the dominant land use. Office uses rank second in both the Study Area and Detailed Area.

Business Type	Study Area			Detailed Area		
	Number of Businesses	Acres	Total SEV	Number of Businesses	Acres	Total SEV
Specialized Agriculture	7	47.2	\$1,971,900	4	7.3	\$906,300
Office	33	40	6,478,100	10	3.7	3,288,600
Local Business	1	0.5	126,500	1	0.1	126,500
Regional Business	2	4.1	983,400	2	4.1	983,400
General Business	43	48.1	16,511,300	30	27.1	7,531,400
Light Industrial	15	44.1	3,788,700	3	7.9	239,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>\$29,859,900</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>\$13,075,500</b>

Associated with these businesses is a significant work force in the City Centre Area. It is estimated that nearly 2,000 part- and full-time employees work in the Study Area.

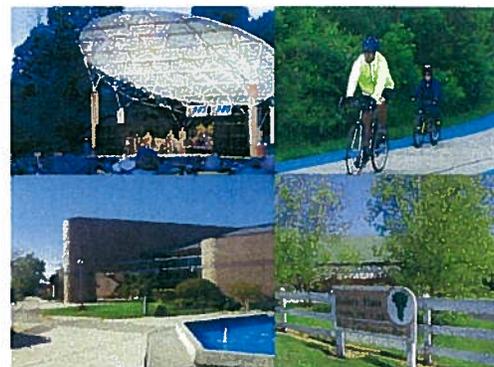
Recent business development in the City Centre Area includes the Portage Centre Plaza and the Portage Creek Landings – City Centre located at the intersection of Shaver Road and West Centre Avenue. These two projects are shown on **MAP 1: City Centre Area Map** and include multiple commercial buildings totaling more than 150,000 square feet. Portage Plaza, a longstanding and successful retail plaza north of Portage Creek, recently underwent a façade improvement. Recent development and redevelopment projects in the City Centre Area include Walgreens Drug Store, Gordon Food Service, Main Street Pub, Colonial Kitchen Restaurant and Huntington Bank.



Portage Centre Plaza

**Civic Features**

Most municipal facilities are located in the City Centre Area including City Hall, Police/Court facilities, Senior Center, Fire Station No. 1, Central Cemetery and a large Public Services facility. In addition to the municipal facilities, recreational facilities including Liberty Park, Central Park, Veterans Memorial Park and Celery Flats Historical Area are also within the geographic center of the city. Together, these public activities and facilities encompass 55 acres. As information on city employees located in the geographic center of the community, for 2008, approximately 270 part- and full-time



Portage employees work at these facilities. Portage City Hall, the Police/Court facilities, the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail, the Shaver Road Bikeway Trail and the Donald E. Overlander Bandshell represent anchor civic features as does the Portage District Library at the east end of Library Lane. These various civic facilities and activity centers are highlighted on **MAP 1: City Centre Area Map**.

From a motorist perspective and not insignificantly, a large number of consumers pass through the overall Study Area using the South Westnedge, Shaver Road and Centre Avenue major street network. Motorists are carried to various shopping/entertainment, employment and leisure destinations in the City Centre Area and to other areas in Portage. The South Westnedge Avenue, Shaver Road and Centre Avenue street segments carry between 10,000 vehicles and 24,000 vehicles each day. Table 5 summarizes the major roadway characteristics.

**Table 5**  
**Existing Thoroughfare Street Segment Characteristics**

Street	From	To	Street Class	Lanes	Posted Speed	Daily Capacity	Daily Traffic	Year	2030 ADT <sup>1</sup>
Westnedge	Garden	Schuring	Major Art.	5	35	32,200	24,150	2004	29,578
Westnedge	Schuring	Shaver	Major Art.	5	35	32,200	24,147	2004	25,141
Westnedge	Shaver	Centre	Minor Art.	4	30	30,600	20,061	2004	6,224
Westnedge	Centre	Melody	Minor Art.	3	30	17,000	10,629	2006	6,514
Centre	Oakland	Westnedge	Major Art.	5	45	34,200	22,310	2006	21,292
Centre	Westnedge	Waylee	Major Art.	5	35	34,200	22,329	2006	22,916
Shaver	Westnedge	Centre	Major Art.	5	35	34,200	24,518	2004	18,917
Shaver	Centre	Vanderbilt	Major Art.	4-5	45	32,500	18,114	2004	19,605

<sup>1</sup> Average Dailey Traffic projected to the year 2030

A comprehensive pedestrian network of sidewalks and pedestrian trails interconnect activities within the overall Study Area. The popular Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail, portions of Millennium Trail and the Shaver Road Bikeway Trail pass through the City Centre Area from northeast to southwest as shown on **Map 1: City Centre Area Map**. Pedestrian facilities also connect park facilities, civic activities including Portage District Library and business centers and the surrounding residential neighborhoods in the area. Augmenting the public sidewalk/trail network are numerous private sidewalks on property that serves residents, business customers and employees. These sidewalks connect as appropriate with the public sidewalk/trail network. It is estimated that 1.25 miles of trails and 2.8 miles of public sidewalks exist in the center of the city to serve pedestrian needs.

Kalamazoo Metro Transit provides bus services into and through the City Centre Area. As shown in the graphic on this page, three of the four bus routes intersect in South Westnedge/Centre Avenue area. Metro Transit provided bus usage information and indicates that the Portage fixed route ridership totaled a combined 34,669. Metro Transit reports that between May 2007, the first full month of service and November 2007, the total ridership of the three routes grew by 39% and the Shaver Road Route (#28) grew 121%. As for the Centre West and Centre East routes that intersect in the center of Portage, more than 32,000 riders used this service between May and November 2007.



In addition to civic features and activity centers, the City Centre Area is the principal location for a variety of cultural and entertainment activities associated with the successful and popular

City of Portage Summer Entertainment Series (SES). The SES is a city-sponsored and community-funded series of musical, theatrical and other events for everyone to enjoy. Prior events have included the popular Taste of Portage, Lunch & Learn series, Family Festival, Caribbean Festival, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and nationally known entertainers including The Lettermen, Peter Noone and the Herman’s Hermits, among others. These major events are held at the Donald E. Overlander Bانشell and at the Celery Flats Historical Area. More than 11,000 people annually attend the SES events held in the City Centre Area. Popular 2007 events included the Taste of Portage event, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, the two-day Civil War Reenactment and theatrical activities at the Hayloft Theatre and amphitheatre. In 2008, the SES will be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> season of cultural and entertainment activities. City recreation and cultural facilities enhance the quality of life and offer unique active and passive options for people and families who work, live or visit the City Centre Area.

The Portage District Library is an important asset to the city and the City Centre. Based on statistical information provided by the Portage District Library, the Library, which maintains a staff of 45, is very busy. As a Class V library serving a population between 26,000 and 49,999 people, 522,044 visits to the Library were recorded in 2007 and the Library has an active registered borrower base of 45,360. The total circulation is 655,709 with a very active children’s circulation of 308,694 (47% of the total circulation). Internet usage is also significant. In 2007, total internet logins approached nearly 70,000 and the District Library website recorded over 4.1 million hits. In addition to being a cultural attraction, the Portage District Library is a popular gathering place within the City Centre Area.

Historic properties also represent an asset that should be incorporated into planning efforts. The Historic Districts Commission indicates, in published information about historic resources, that there are seven historic properties of which three are privately owned in the City Centre Area. These privately owned properties involve residential structures or former dwellings that are used for office purposes and complement the historic resources that are city-owned. The Central Cemetery and the facilities in the Celery Flats Historical Area are city-owned historic facilities. Maintaining and enhancing these resources – by the public sector and by private property owners – will augment the appeal and uniqueness of the center of the community. These resources are shown on **MAP 1: City Centre Area**.



As an additional Civic Feature, Portage Public Schools constitutes a major presence in the Study Area and the Portage Central Campus includes the original Portage Agricultural Schools building, now the Administration building that was originally constructed in 1922. (For an interesting history of Portage Public Schools, see *Portage and Its Past*, by Grace J. Potts, 1976.) Adding to this beginning history, educational facilities including Central High School, Central Middle School, Waylee Elementary and Central Elementary are now all located in the center of the community. For the 2007-08 school year Portage Public Schools has indicated that 479 school district employees work in the Study Area for a large part of the school year and longer. As for the student population, another important element in the City Centre, the Portage Central Campus accommodated 2,957 students during the 2007-08 school year, further contributing to the vitality of the geographic center of Portage. Annual events including Portage Central and Portage Northern High School athletic events are staged at McCamley Field. Drama productions, community meetings and other school and civic events are also held on the Portage Central Campus each year. Each year these activities attract thousands of people.

Total CCA Employment	
Activity	No. of Employees
District Library	45
City of Portage	270
Portage Public Schools	479
Businesses	1,973
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,767</b>

As a result of the passage of the bond proposal in November 2007, significant enhancements and new facilities are planned for the Portage Central Campus including administrative offices, high school and elementary facilities. A concept plan provided by Portage Public Schools for the Central Campus is

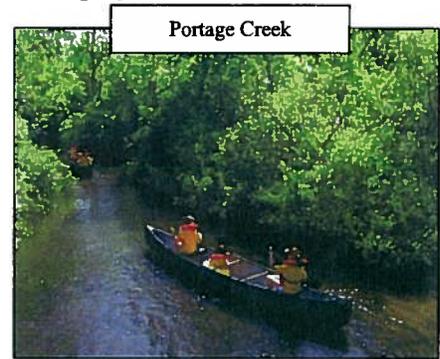
shown on **Map 4: New Central High School Map**. The planned enhanced and new facilities represent an important opportunity to strengthen facilities and activities and the education-element and identity of the City Centre Area. Portage Public Schools contributes to the vibrancy of the community and, together with the business sector and civic functions and activities, is considered a significant “building block” of importance to the success of the centre of Portage.

**Natural Resources**

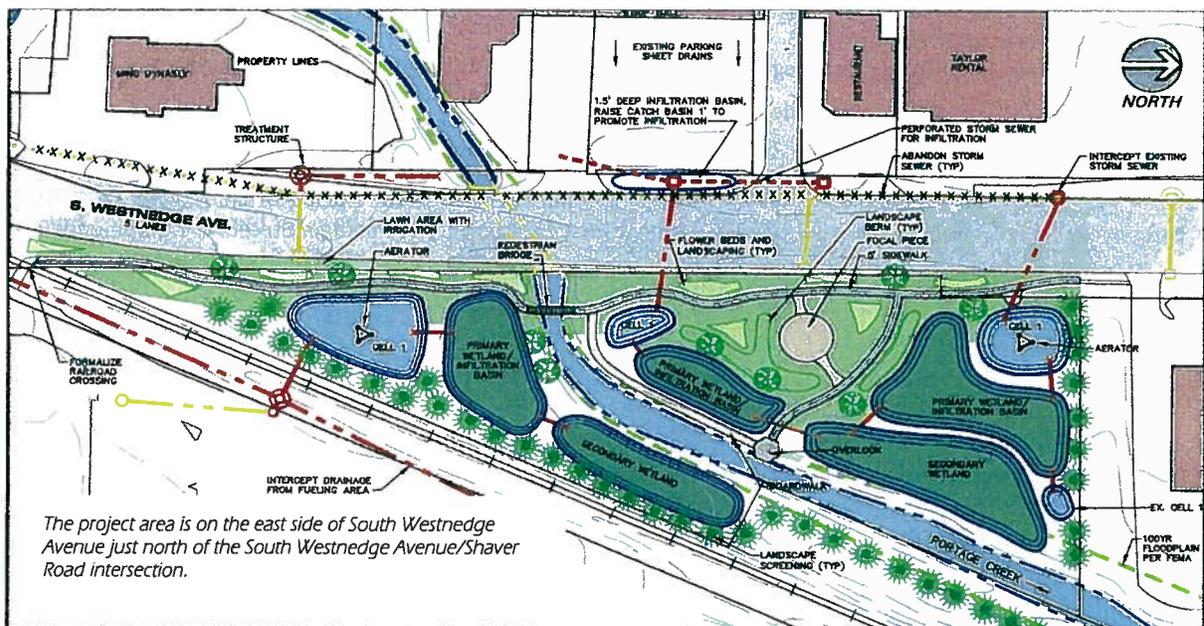
While the City Centre Area Map suggests that the heart of the city is predominantly urban, there are several important natural resources: These natural resources include Portage Creek, a State of Michigan certified cold water trout stream, floodplains, sensitive wetland areas and wooded areas and are highlighted on **MAP 5: City Centre Area Environmental Features Map**. Recognizing the importance of protecting and preserving the natural resources, actions have been taken to ensure these natural areas. Portage Creek stabilization and fish habitat has been improved in previous years. Significant urban forest management activities – Portage is a Tree City USA community – have also occurred. Sensitive land areas have also been acquired for protection purposes.

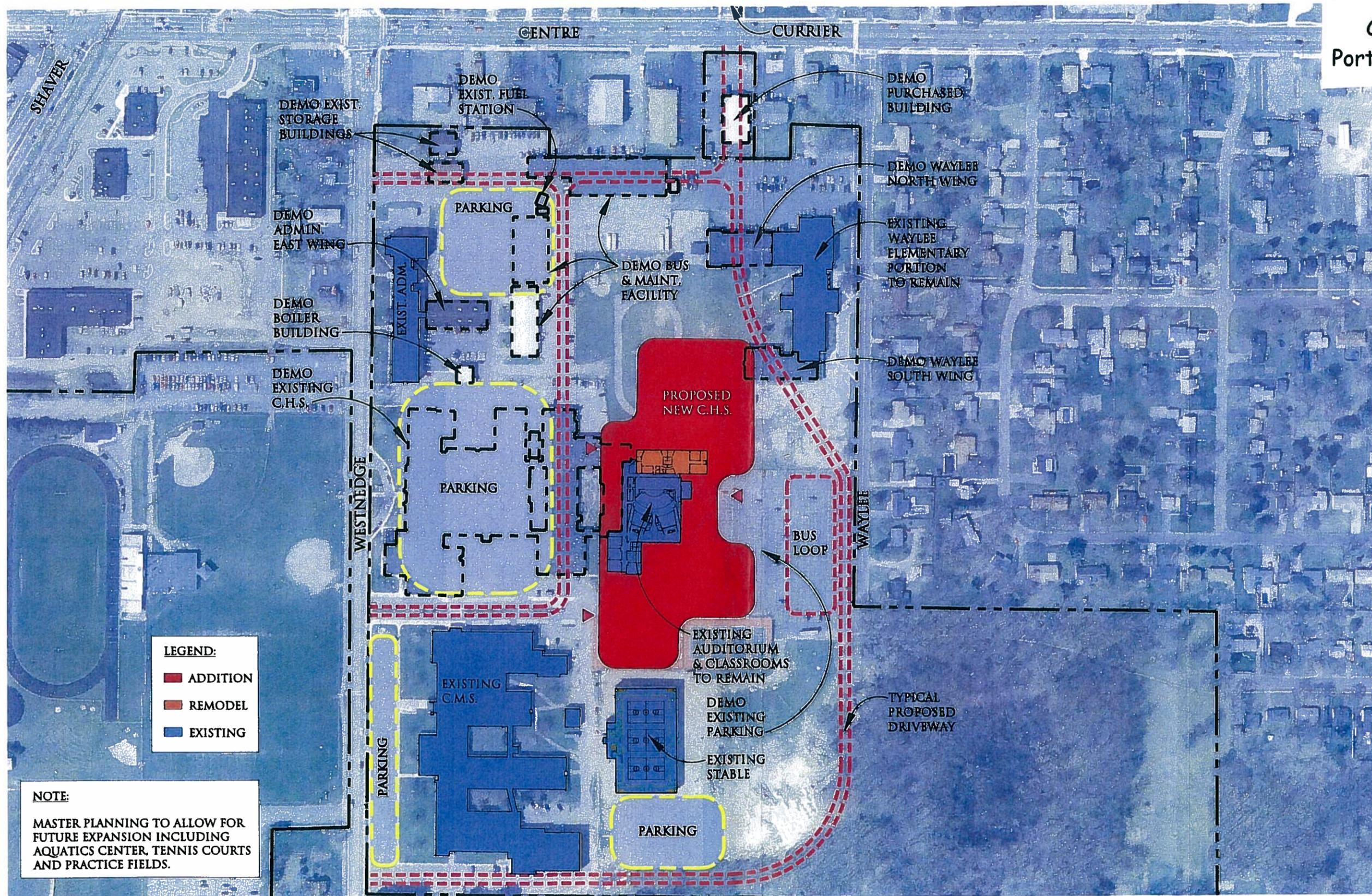
Most recently, the City of Portage initiated the South Westnedge Avenue Stormwater Treatment/Enhancement Project (STEP) in 2004. A drawing of the STEP project is shown below. As a result of this project, the following environmental enhancements were completed:

1. Four direct discharge points to Portage Creek serving a 29 acre watershed were eliminated;
2. Environmentally contaminated site was eliminated;
3. Five leaking underground storage tanks were removed;
4. Storm water is treated through a series of cells and wetland infiltration basins;
5. Liberty Park was established providing additional passive recreational opportunities;
6. Federal requirements have been met for pollution discharge elimination in accordance with the Clean Water Act.



**Figure 1  
STEP PROJECT/LIBERTY PARK**



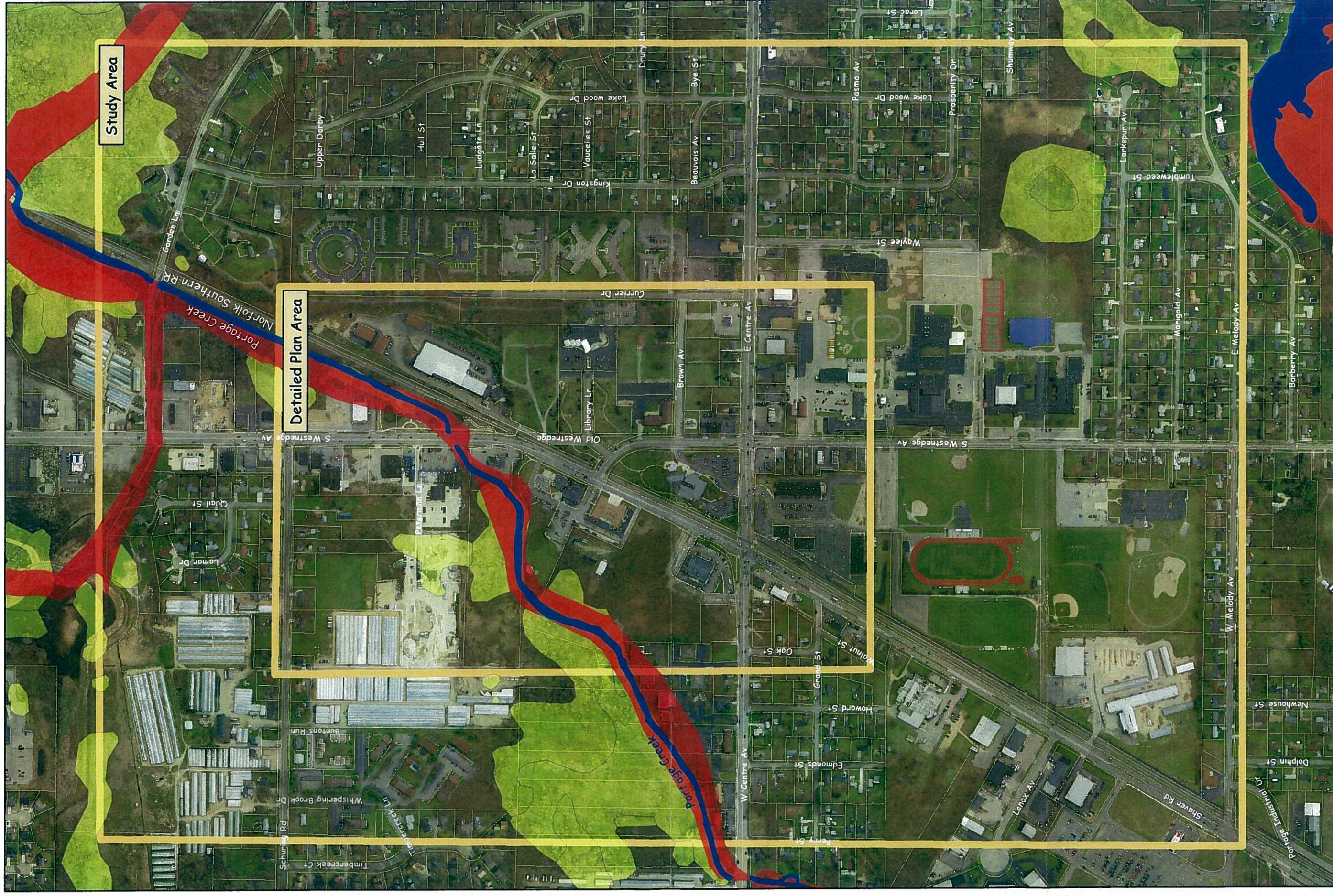


PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
NEW CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



SITE PLAN  
1/21/2008





Study Area

Detailed Plan Area

- River, Stream, Lake
- Flood Plain
- Sensitive Natural Area

# City Centre Area Environmental Features

Map 5



**City Centre Sub Area Plan – Detailed Plan Proposals**

The City Centre Area Plan that was adopted in 1982 primarily focused on municipal functions, space needs and also long range land acquisitions to provide for a municipal complex necessary to provide facilities and high quality public services. As a secondary focus, the 1982 plan also contained recommendations concerning adjacent land uses including appropriate future business and residential development and redevelopment opportunities.

For this sub area planning effort in 2008, the focus is on the elements that can be the “building blocks” to establish and strengthen the “city centre” as a “place”, which include quality community facilities and distinctive public features, the public school system, recreational amenities and the diverse neighborhoods and business areas within and adjacent to the heart of the community. These “building blocks” represent the core public and private functions and activities that can serve as interdependent destination points for the citizenry and visitors to the City Centre Area.

**City Centre Future Land Use Concepts**

The City Centre now provides a concentrated area of business activities, civic facilities and recreational facilities and opportunities surrounded by residential neighborhoods. **MAP 6: Future Land Use Plan Map**, shows the future land use patterns projected for the City Centre Area. Table 6 below lists each future land use category, acreage and the percent of total for each category. This information reflects the City Centre Area as developed in a final, built-out condition.

Future Land Use	Study Area			Detailed Area <sup>1</sup>		
	Acres	% of Total	Redevelopment Potential <sup>2</sup>	Acres	% of Total	Redevelopment Potential <sup>2</sup>
Low Density (single-family) Residential	231	33	33	--	--	--
Med/High Density (multi-family) Residential <sup>3</sup>	98	14	49	26	15	19
Office	36	5	10	3	2	--
Commercial	110	16	42	80	46	32
Public Facilities (total)	136	19	--	52	29	--
• Civic	43	6	--	43	24	--
• Educational	93	13	--	9	5	--
Public Recreation	41	6	--	14	8	--
Shaver Road Business Corridor (mixed commercial and industrial development)	48	7	20	--	--	--
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>51</b>

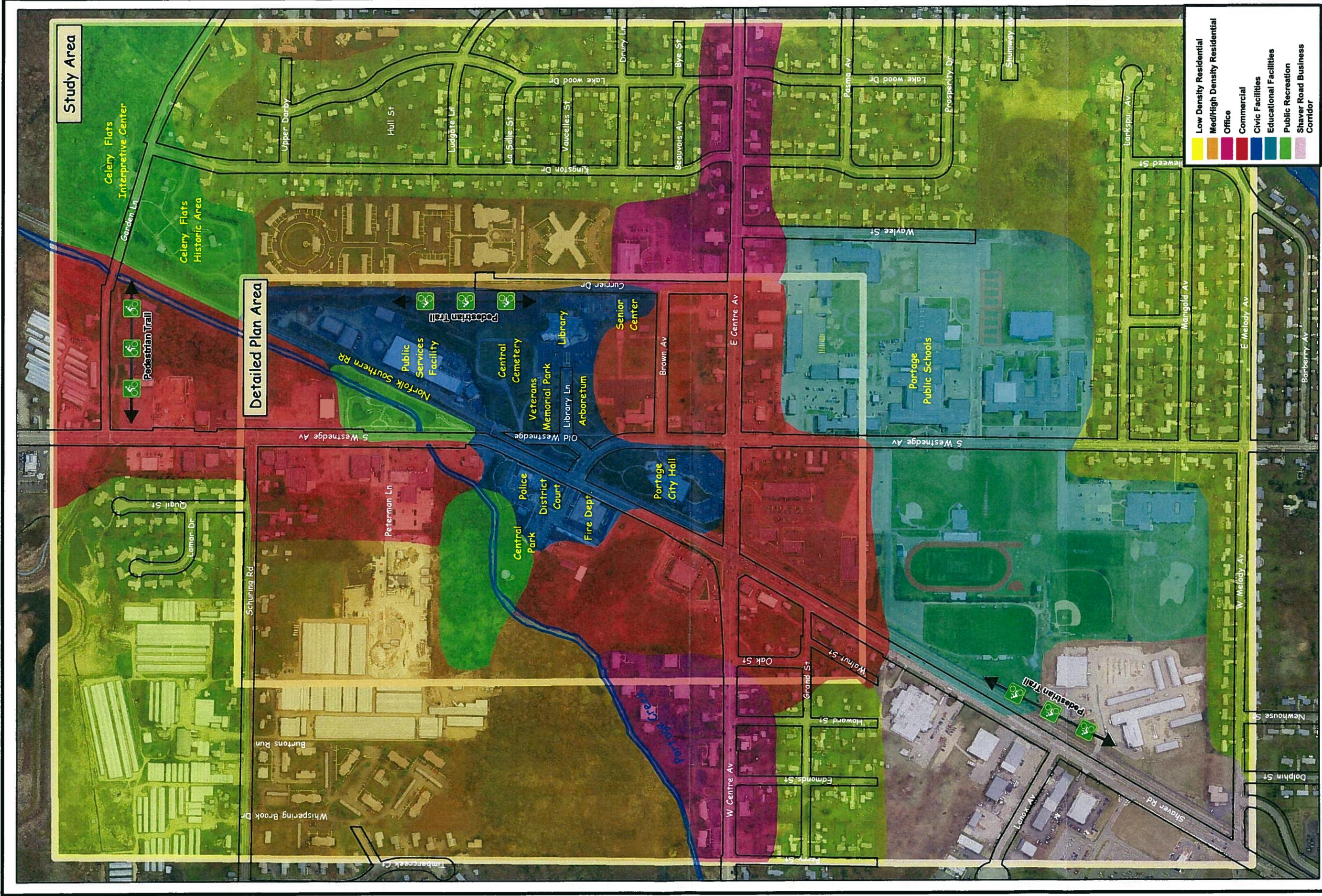
<sup>1</sup> The Detailed Area acres are also included in the Study Area acres

<sup>2</sup> Includes vacant and underutilized acreage

<sup>3</sup> Includes two-family units

Based on the information contained in Table 6 and as shown on **Map 6: Future Land Use Plan Map**, the following general land use observations, with recommendations, can serve to focus plan implementation through zoning and other development-oriented actions to strengthen the center of the community and, over time, with a more urban, central city character, particularly within the boundaries of the Detailed Plan Area.

- ❖ **General Land Use.** Although there exists a mixture of uses in the City Centre Area, the amount and type of land uses could be further expanded and diversified in an effort to facilitate a multi-faceted destination with an urban character for residents and visitors alike, easily accessible by motorists and



Study Area

Detailed Plan Area

- Low Density Residential
- Med/High Density Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Civic Facilities
- Educational Facilities
- Public Recreation
- Shaver Road Business Corridor



Map 6  
**City Centre Area Future Land Use**

pedestrians. Such complementary urban/central city uses include local and specialty retail and eateries (sidewalk cafes and coffee shops), bookstores, music stores, flower shops, personal service establishments, secondary educational facilities, banks, offices and other ancillary uses. Zoning techniques and standards that permit this type of expansion and diversification should be developed and applied in the near term and over the longer term to ensure success.

- ❖ Residential Land Uses. Additionally, high quality low density (single-family) to higher density (multi-family) residential uses are desirable within the City Centre Area. People living in the City Centre Area help support the products and services offered by the local businesses, which contribute to a strong business sector. An increase in the City Centre population can be accommodated through residential and mixed-use developments. The mixed-use developments could involve residential units located above commercial establishments or integrated into the development as freestanding units. This residential concept is best suited in the Detailed Plan Area, as it presents a more urban character.

The areas designated for low density residential use are existing neighborhoods with the exception of an area located along the north side of Schuring Road. These stable neighborhoods offer a range of housing choices. Protection of these neighborhoods from negative impacts associated with non-residential uses is an important component of the City Centre Area Plan. The approximately 33 acre area located north of Schuring Road is occupied by greenhouse operations and several one-family residential dwellings and designated for low density residential use. If redeveloped consistent with the R-1B, one-family residential zoning classification, approximately 110 new dwelling units (with 270 people) could be constructed (the actual number of units may be less due to environmental constraints).

Two primary areas are designated for medium/higher density residential use: The first area is located between Currier and Kingston Drives and is currently occupied by the Hearthside Retirement Village and Tendercare Nursing Home. The second area is located between Centre Avenue and Schuring Road. Existing land uses include apartment units, greenhouse operation and a concrete operation. There is also vacant land located north and east of the existing greenhouse and commercial concrete operations. The southern portion is vacant and partially encumbered by environmentally sensitive lands. Redevelopment of the approximate 49 acre greenhouse operation, concrete operation and vacant areas consistent with the medium/higher density residential use designation (average of 10 units per acre) could accommodate approximately 490 units (with 1,200 people). The actual number of units may be less due to environmental constraints.

The use of proper zoning designations, and potential rezonings, to facilitate development should be considered for implementation. Other methods to protect neighborhoods, while allowing complementary development by private property owners such as screening, buffering, setback/distance provisions can also be identified and used.

- ❖ Commercial/Retail/Office Land Uses. There are also several vacant areas along Brown Avenue, northwest corner of Center and Shaver Road (Portage Creek Landings – City Centre) and along South Westnedge near Schuring Road. Other areas that could be considered underutilized include the west side of South Westnedge Avenue south of Schuring Road, East Centre Avenue between South Westnedge and Currier Drive and the west side of Shaver Road south of Centre Avenue. These areas, which encompass approximately 42 acres, would most likely be candidates for redevelopment in the near future. It is estimated that redevelopment activities could support up to 70 additional business locations with an attendant increase in employment. Access management will be essential to ensure safe and efficient traffic movements. Interconnection of parking areas should also be pursued during site plan preparation and project approvals, for example. Infrastructure improvements to facilitate development should be annually considered and programmed as appropriate. Zoning designations can also be applied to guide private sector development decisions. Such zoning designations could be

studied to foster an urban “downtown” impression. Again such zoning designations and techniques would be particularly suited in the Detailed Plan Area.

In the overall City Centre Study Area, two other areas are designated for commercial use. The first area is located north of Schuring Road and Garden Lane. It is anticipated that the area located near the northeast corner of Garden Lane and South Westnedge could redevelop in the near future. The second area is located along Shaver Road south of Centre Avenue. This section of Shaver Road is generally developed with light industrial uses and redevelopment potential exists. Appropriate zoning techniques should be considered. Review of city-owned land assets for future public use, or if determined excess assets, for disposition/sale, should also be considered to facilitate private investment and development.

Two areas are designated for office use: The first area is located along West Centre Avenue west of Oak Street. The second area is located along East Centre Avenue east of Currier Drive. Both areas are located outside of the Detailed Study Area and are developed with a mix of residential and office uses. As indicated in Table 6, there are approximately 10 acres of land occupied by single-family residential structures that could also be redeveloped: 10-20 new office locations could result with an attendant increase in employment. Access management and interconnection of parking areas will be essential to ensure safe and efficient traffic movements and should also be pursued during site plan preparation and project approvals, for example.

Continued implementation of landscaping, tree planting, green space standards in the Zoning Code during project review and approval is also important to the appearance and function of the City Centre. These landscape and design features can help connect the larger, overall Study Area to the central part of the city with more urban characteristics to be established in the Detailed Plan Area.

- ❖ **Shaver Road Business Corridor.** Although only the very north end of the Shaver Road Business Corridor is located in the City Centre Area, the corridor serves as an important employment generator where a variety of products and commercial needs that benefit the city are produced/provided. Since it is a developing corridor, a mixture of land uses exist. Uses located on the east side of the corridor, east of the Norfolk Southern railroad line, are primarily growing or stable industrial uses. The land uses located along the west side of the corridor consist of a mixture of light industrial uses, commercial uses and some nonconforming single-family dwellings.

Approximately 20 vacant or underutilized acres of land exists for additional (re)development and are located near the Shaver Road/West Melody intersection. Acquisition and (re)development by the private sector, or by the public sector, could be available.

- ❖ **Public Facilities.** The Civic Functions represent anchor activities (municipal buildings, Portage District Library, Central Cemetery, Central Park and Donald E. Overlander Band Shell, Liberty Park, Veterans Memorial Park and other venues and facilities) and are all located within the Detailed Study Area. Maintaining and enhancing these facilities and fostering further activities that are compatible with the residential and business land uses in and adjacent to the geographic center are essential to ensure the continued success and to strengthen the identity of the City Centre Area. Adequate resources must be committed to preserve these civic functions and activities. Enhancements and expansions, where appropriate and that can be funded, should also be annually considered. Urban forest management should be continued and the City of Portage can lead the effort to accomplish tree planting along public streets, for example. Pedestrian linkages are essential between civic functions and the commercial/residential uses, including pedestrian street crossings at appropriate locations along South Westnedge Avenue and Centre Avenue to enhance safety within a more urban, central city area.

With regard to educational facilities, Portage Central High School, Central Middle, Central Elementary, Technology and Training Center (planned to open by 2011) and the Portage Public

Schools Administrative offices are present. With this presence, the planned school-related improvements/enhancements can be successfully coordinated with the public sector and private sector. Tree planting, landscaping along public streets and so forth should be encouraged. Alternative wayfinding signage should be developed. A partnership effort between the city and the schools should be fostered in the interests of creating complimentary complexes for municipal government and for public school education purposes. Interconnections between the school campus and the City Centre Area through the Bicentennial Trail, Shaver Road Bikeway Trail and/or public sidewalks as examples, would be very appropriate. Future growth and expansion options, and programming of educational buildings and related functions and vehicle/access management should be carefully evaluated to maximize the benefits to being located in the City Centre Area.

As conveyed above, this mixture of land uses would allow existing business centers, school campus areas, local government facilities that are situated at visible and convenient locations to be utilized to the maximum potential, creating an unique City Centre Area, beginning within the overall Study Area and extending into the Detailed Plan Area, where there would be concentrated, urban/central city development characteristics accessible by pedestrians and motorists. While the proposed range of land uses can be compatible, care will be needed when considering zoning changes, development and use of zoning regulations, accomplishing public improvement projects and other activities as means to implement the recommendations of this sub-area plan to provide a scale, density, and design that is beneficial to the center of the city while minimizing impacts on other uses/activities. Toward these ends, this City Centre Area Plan can foster and guide actions of the public and the private sectors and encourage activities that can provide a successful outcome. Where favorable private sector market conditions can establish economically feasible project(s), and are coupled with the land use strategies identified in this Plan, a successful, multi-faceted center can result and a strong and vibrant city center can grow and develop.

### **City Centre Placemaking Concepts**

As briefly discussed in the context of the literature on “placemaking” in preceding pages of this plan, in an effort to create a sense of identity and arrival as residents and visitors enter into the City Centre Area, several enhancements can be considered and implemented over time. The following observations, with recommendations, can serve to further enhance the City Centre Area as a “place”:

❖ **Creating/Strengthening the City Centre Identity.** As referenced in the case study by Jack Williamson that is applicable to the City of Portage, combinations of elements can be significant and can serve to establish an “entry” statement into the community. Elements can be utilized to create a sense of “arrival” into a city center that with appropriate “dock and wayfinding” features help to create an “experience”. The “economic theme” in the geographic centre can create a “destination” to which residents and guests wish to regularly visit and participate. Enhancements include the following possible elements:

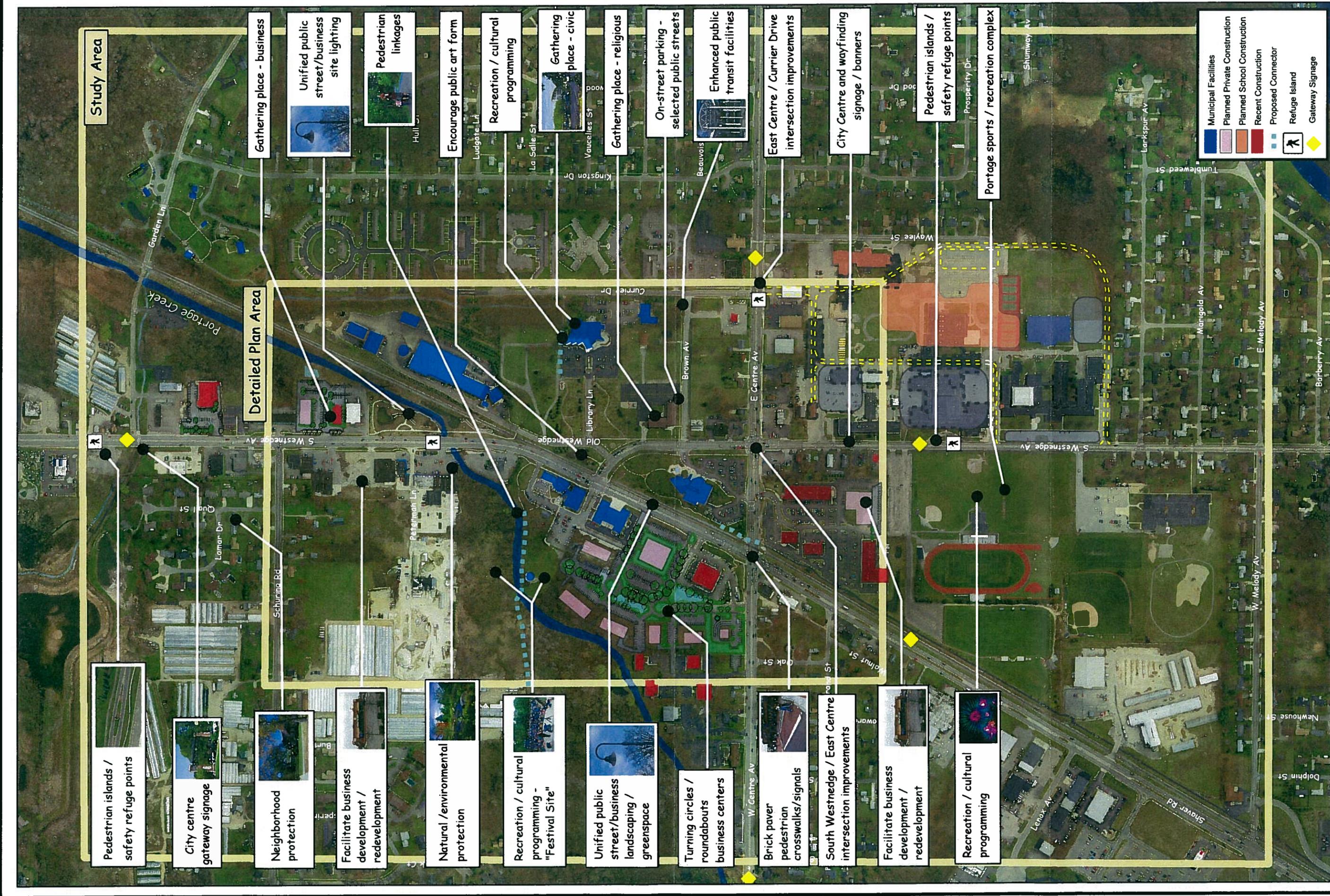
- *Unified public street/business - landscaping/green space*
- *Facilitate business development/redevelopment*
- *Unified public street/business site lighting*
- *Turning circles/roundabouts - business centers*
- *Residential/Mixed-use development*
- *City centre gateway signage*
- *City centre and wayfinding signage/banners*
- *On-street parking - selected public streets*
- *Recreation/cultural programming*
- *Pedestrian linkages between activities - civic, business and other uses*
- *East Centre/Currier Drive intersection improvements*
- *South Westnedge/East Centre intersection improvements*
- *Encourage public art forms*
- *Gathering place - civic/business/religious*
- *Portage sports/recreation complex*
- *Pedestrian islands/safety refuge points*
- *Brick-paver pedestrian crosswalks/signals*
- *Natural/environmental protection/enhancement*
- *Enhanced public transit facilities*

These elements can be considered by the public and/or private sectors for individual properties/projects or in conjunction with business/office centers, as examples. Implementation can occur in the immediate future or over the long-term.

These placemaking concepts/ideas are shown and labeled on **Map 7: City Centre Area Placemaking Concepts Map**.

As for opportunities to consider and implement these elements that foster “placemaking”, the following sections discuss potential approaches that can be considered. Other approaches summarized in **Table 7** are also possible and the following are suggestions to foster creativity on placemaking.

- ❖ **Site/Building Design Considerations.** Development and redevelopment activities can utilize common characteristics to enhance the appearance and function of the City Centre. A common thematic approach can present a cohesive or unifying statement, but still allow for “signature” building styles and elevations that are sought by businesses. Such approaches include, among others:
  1. New business development should be encouraged to place parking lots behind or along the side of buildings, so buildings can be located proximate to public sidewalks.
  2. Increased landscaping, consistent with the established standards as properties are developed.
  3. Facility lighting that is consistent with the “shepherds hook”-style light fixture that is now used along the public streets and in municipal facilities can be encouraged. Portage Creek Landings – City Centre – has already incorporated this light fixture style.
  4. Building materials, mass and style alternatives that are complementary with existing City Centre buildings and facilities.
  5. Advertising/identification signage that is complementary and, perhaps, with uniform “City Centre Area” design components.
  6. While a regulatory approach could be initiated that incorporates architectural design controls, voluntary efforts that recognize the creative possibilities of various property, business and office owner, tenants and others is initially suggested.
  7. Consider on-street parking for purposes of traffic calming and facilitating pedestrian movements during development project reviews, which would fulfill Zoning Code requirements.
  
- ❖ **City Centre Walkability.** Sidewalks exist on both sides of nearly every public street and multi-use trails (Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail, Millennium Trail and Shaver Road Bikeway Trail) are located in and around the City Centre Area to facilitate pedestrian movement between civic facilities, businesses centers, educational facilities and other points of interest.
  1. Infrastructure improvements that encourages “walkability” should be maintained and enhanced, when possible, as part of public sector and private sector activities.
  2. The City of Portage can consider appropriate pedestrian improvements including unique City Centre crosswalk designs and crosswalk signals during annual capital improvement programming. Consider pedestrian “refuge islands” at various locations.
  3. Portage Public Schools can plan pedestrian improvements to ensure campus “walkability” is considered, given the various trail systems adjacent to the school properties/facilities. The planning/designing of the Portage Central Campus is in process at this time.
  
- ❖ **City Centre Activity/Gathering Places.** Each of the activity centers – civic, business, educational and others – can involve and become gathering places. These gathering places can be park and recreation facilities and memorials such as Veterans Memorial Park where events are held, restaurant locations, and business centers in which the variety of business tenants attract consumers. Institutional uses including churches can also serve as gathering places where people interact and, perhaps, can participate in other activities in the center of Portage. Gathering places and linkages should be



Map 7  
**City Centre Area Placemaking Concepts**

identified and strengthened, or created and made attractive and functional in the City Centre, particularly by businesses and institutions in this area, which complement the existing and planned “links” by the educational sector and by the City of Portage, as appropriate.

- ❖ City Centre Cultural/Recreation Programming and Sports Complex. A showcase for cultural/recreational programming and community events would be invaluable to establish the city centre. Additionally, recreational activities, including active recreation opportunities and sports events can be beneficial in the center of the city. While the City of Portage maintains park facilities, historic venues for cultural programs, biking/walking trails, Portage Public Schools has formal sports facilities including gymnasium space, indoor swimming pool facilities, McCamley Field, where high school football, baseball, softball, soccer and other sporting events and activities are held. These City Centre Area facilities attract large numbers of people throughout the year. The following suggestions can be of benefit:
  1. Continue the Summer Entertainment Series of cultural and entertainment events.
  2. Explore a public-private partnership to initiate a “festival site”, perhaps using Central Park and abutting public land that is located adjacent to commercial centers, where the Summer Entertainment Series and commercial center business activities/events can be staged.
  3. Maintain existing facilities at a high quality, as expected by the community and program enhancements as funds permit on an annual basis.
  4. Continue protection of Portage Creek with facilities such as Liberty Park, and efforts to ensure the natural character of the creek in this area.
  5. Explore a partnership between the City of Portage and Portage Public Schools to facilitate use and enhancement of existing sports/active recreation facilities that will serve the needs of the schools and the greater community.
  
- ❖ City Centre Area Transportation Activities. The width of roadways and the speed and volume of vehicles on the roadways that interconnect the City Centre Area each day are significant. Metro Transit also provides bus services through the geographic center of the community. In an effort to promote all modes of transportation and enhance safety and aesthetics, the following proposals should be considered:
  1. Install unique pedestrian crossing facilities (that can also serve as traffic calming devices) at grade level at primary public street and other “entrances” to the City Centre Area. With other types of “gateway” devices, perhaps spanning overhead, these facilities/devices can also serve to create an identifying element within the area.
  2. Continue to encourage developers of business centers to incorporate traffic calming techniques such as turning circles/roundabouts as was done in the Portage Creek Landing – City Center project.
  3. Metro Transit officials can design and install appropriate “bus shelters” to facilitate ridership/bus usage. Such facilities can enhance the City Centre Area, properly advertise the availability of this alternative mode of travel and provide “docking” to protect bus riders and adjacent property owners.
  
- ❖ City Centre Area – Business Interests. Private sector owners/interests can interact as a collective association of members that have a common set of interests. Businesses can separately, or as business centers, advertise and strengthen the identity of adjacent businesses and reinforce each other:
  1. Streetscape enhancements could be coordinated by business interests including the use of civic “banners” and other artistic forms.
  2. Joint marketing efforts, special business events and other types of information and activities by diverse business interests can enhance the center of Portage as a successful business location.

Businesses can be a tremendous asset in developing and utilizing ideas from a business perspective and particularly with their customers, which can serve to enhance the City Centre Area as a destination point to which residents, shoppers and other guests and visitors wish to return.

### Implementation Strategies

The City Centre Area Plan is intended to provide more specific land use recommendations involving the physical development or redevelopment of the geographic center of the city. There are various development-related “tools” available to implement plan recommendations/actions. A more detailed discussion of these “tools” can be found in Chapter 11 of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. Tools to implement the recommendations generally fall into five categories:

1. Land use regulations derived from police powers.
2. Capital improvement programs derived from budgetary powers.
3. Property acquisition programs derived from eminent domain powers or disposition of excess assets.
4. Revenue generation policies derived from taxing powers.
5. Programs or additional studies derived from the City Charter and approvals by the City Council or the City Administration

Each tool has a different purpose toward Plan implementation and may suggest specific immediate changes, long term policies and others involve on-going activities.

Placemaking activities can be directly related to development-oriented methods to achieve desired outcomes. Table 7, Implementation Strategies, displays on several pages suggested methods that can guide activities, actions and programming to implement the City Centre Area Future Land Use Plan concepts and the placemaking concepts, and the related concepts discussed above.

**Table 7  
Implementation Strategies**

City Centre Area	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Property Acquisition/Disposition	Programs or Studies	Short Term	Long Term	On-Going
Install public street and business site lighting consistent or compatible with the “shepards hook” style located in Liberty Park and along the South Westnedge Avenue bridge over Portage Creek.				✓			✓
Develop public street landscaping/green space plan for implementation that would include consistent plant materials and locations.				✓			✓
Consider improvements to facilitate safe pedestrian travel at appropriate public street crossings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of stamped, brick paver pedestrian crosswalks.</li> <li>• Installation of pedestrian crosswalk signals that incorporate audible sounds and a countdown timer.</li> <li>• Installation of pedestrian islands/safety refuge points</li> </ul>		✓		✓	✓		
Encourage installation of turning circles/roundabouts within business center parking lots as a means to calm traffic and improve/increase the amount of greenspace.					✓		
Coordinate with Portage 2025 or other citizen based group, development of a unique City Centre logo that can be used by businesses and also incorporated into gateway signs, street/wayfinding signs and banners.				✓	✓		
Continue recreation/cultural/entertainment programming that establishes the City Centre area as a destination in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Summer Entertainment Series</li> <li>• Explore public-private partnerships to establish a central “festival site” for various community events and activities.</li> </ul>				✓			✓
Continue efforts to protect and preserve the natural/environmental features located in the City Centre area.	✓	✓					✓

**Table 7  
Implementation Strategies**

<b>City Centre Area</b>	<b>Land Use Regulations</b>	<b>CIP</b>	<b>Property Acquisition/Disposition</b>	<b>Programs or Studies</b>	<b>Short Term</b>	<b>Long Term</b>	<b>On-Going</b>
Identify locations and consider gateway signage at the primary entrances into the City Centre (East/West Centre and at the north and south ends of South Westnedge Avenue) and designed consistent with the Portage 2025 recommendations.		✓					✓
Identify appropriate public streets that permit on-street parking as a means to foster an image of a village center.	✓			✓		✓	
Identify traffic calming techniques at appropriate locations for implementation along Centre Avenue, South Westnedge Avenue and Shaver Road.		✓		✓			
Encourage/promote existing and proposed civic/business/religious establishments as gathering places for community residents and visitors.					✓		
Identify improvements to the South Westnedge/East Centre intersection that facilitate pedestrian movement, calm traffic and improve the appearance.		✓		✓			
Continue to maintain and construct new pedestrian linkages in the City Centre area to increase walkability and interconnection between land uses.	✓	✓					✓
Review city-owned land assets for future public use or private use, as appropriate.			✓	✓	✓		
Encourage the public display of art forms through collaboration with local artist groups, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts and other related organizations.				✓			
Enhance public transit bus stop facilities by installing shelters that may encourage an increase in riders. Consider designing City Centre bus shelters that have an appearance similar to the Donald E. Overlander Bandshell/Liberty Park overlook.		✓		✓	✓		

**Table 7  
Implementation Strategies**

City Centre Area	Land Use Regulations	CIP	Property Acquisition/Disposition	Programs or Studies	Short Term	Long Term	On-Going
Encourage a Portage sports/recreation complex through a collaborative effort with the Portage Public Schools Central Campus located in the City Centre area.				✓		✓	
Continue efforts to protect residential neighborhoods by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting analyses of potential impacts on residential neighborhoods for any non-residential development that is constructed adjacent to or near residential areas.</li> <li>Require adequate buffering and transitions between residential and non-residential uses.</li> </ul>	✓						✓
Continue to facilitate business development/redevelopment through low tax and utility rates, public infrastructure and review existing ordinance standards to encourage more flexibility in site design, as examples.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Encourage organization of City Centre business owner interests to take the lead and mobilize City Centre enhancement efforts.				✓	✓		
Develop a City Centre Zoning District that can be used to facilitate development that reflects the unique assets of the area including, for example, mixed use development, signage, civic features, vehicle parking, pedestrian movement, among others.	✓			✓			✓

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