

Into the Neighborhoods:

A Master Plan Update & Strategic Action Plan for
The City of Holland's Central Neighborhoods

Adopted December 10, 2002



**Neighborhood
Planning
Works**

Into the Neighborhoods: A Master Plan Update and Strategic Action Plan for Holland's Central Neighborhoods

Produced by City of Holland Planning Commission

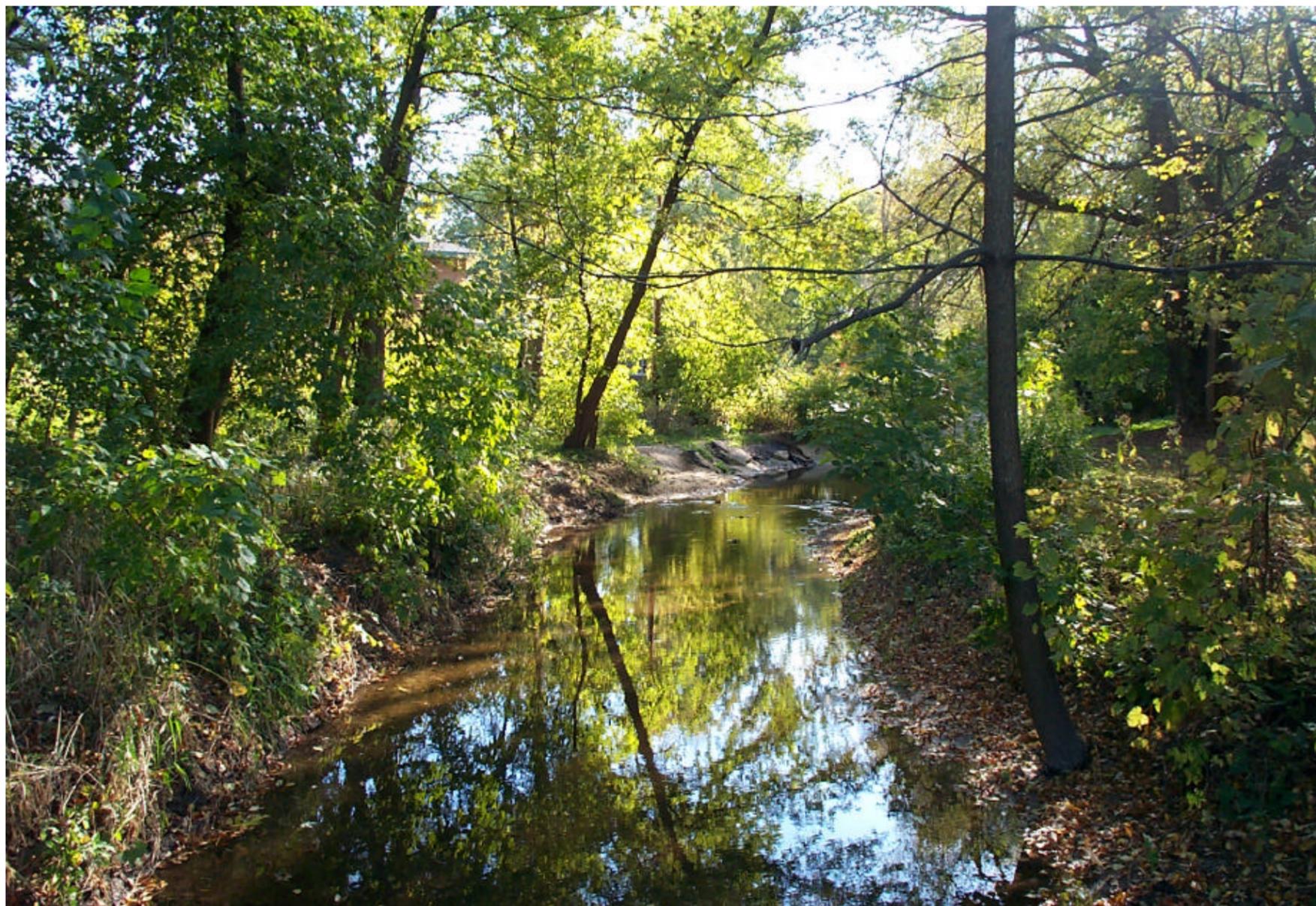
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My neighborhood is the best one in town."

"Oh ya, well mine is better than yours because I have huge trees in my front yard, and I can ride my bike to the grocery store for some bubble gum and a malt cup, all without my Mom having to watch me."

"Cool, but I still know my neighborhood is better than yours because I have a creek on my block where my brother and I can walk to with our pole vault that Dad made for us. The older lady who lives there lets us jump across the creek, and right after we're done getting soaked she always comes out with lemonade and a brownie for us."

"Wow. Do you think I can come over on my bike and check out the creek with you? I'm kind of hungry."

Welcome to the Future and welcome to the Past. In countless ways, the Future is the Past, and the Past is the Future when it comes to our Central City Neighborhoods.

The streets and trees and sidewalks come alive when boys and girls ride their bikes to Grandpa and Grandmas' house, when Dad fires up the lawn mower, when Mom and daughter host a hop-scotch tournament in the driveway, and the neighborhood teenagers play a game of kick the can.

Come take my hand as we look at our Future together.

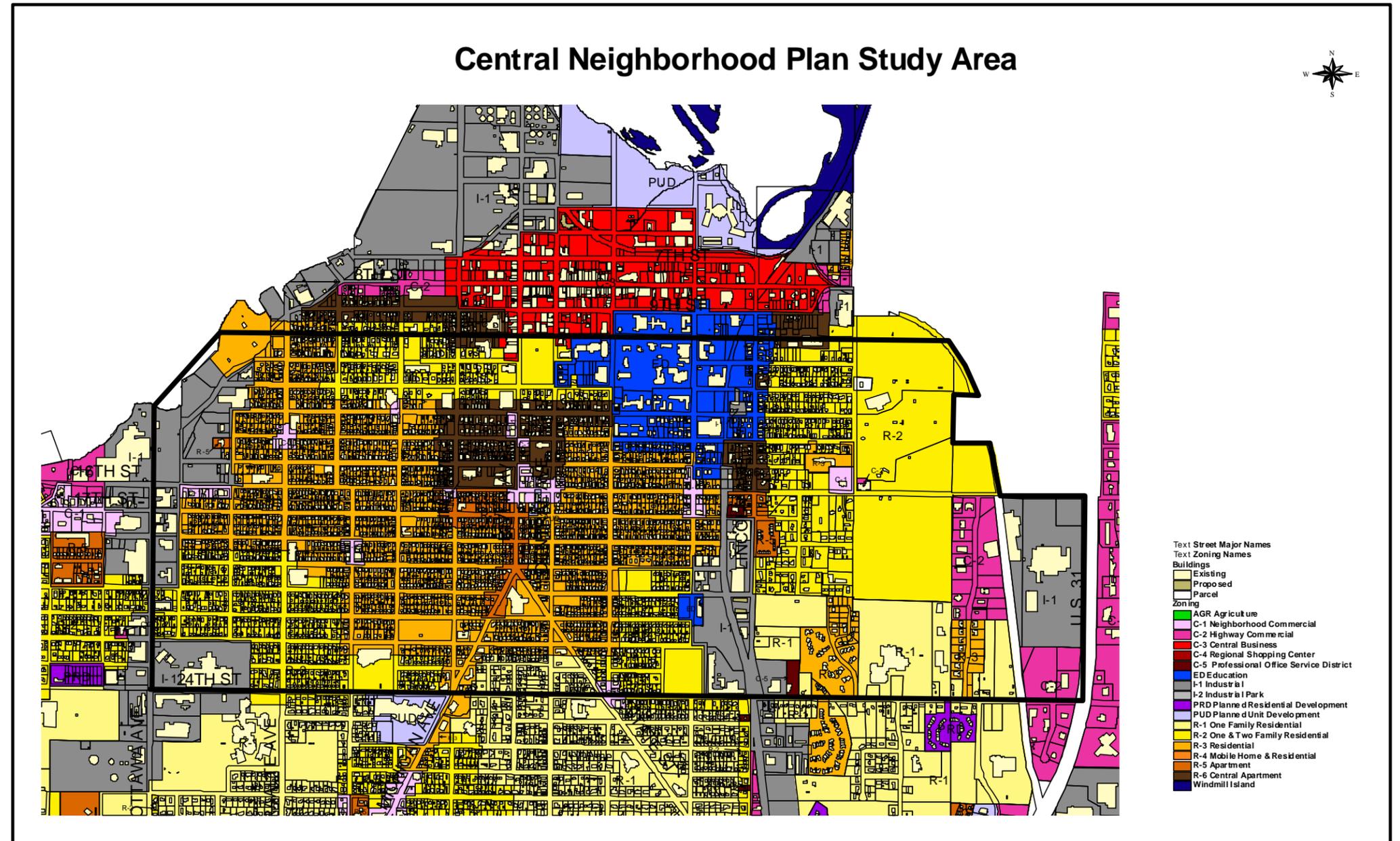
Executive Summary

Cities in Michigan are required under State law to adopt a master plan for the physical development of the City. A Master Plan shows the collective vision and objectives for the development of the City. Pursuant to the Master Plan, a zoning plan is adopted providing for the regulation of the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and property.

The City of Holland last adopted a City-wide Master Plan in 1992. Since that time, the Plan has been updated to include a Strategic Plan for Downtown and a new plan for the recently annexed South End area. The remainder of the Plan is due for review and updating. Rather than tackle the entire City at one time, this Central Neighborhood Plan provides a fresh approach for the Planning Commission by master planning for the future growth, development, and revitalization of this community by focusing on true building blocks- the neighborhoods, streets, blocks, and buildings that comprise the urban fabric and patterns of the City. This more detailed neighborhood-based approach provides more opportunity for direct involvement by neighbors and residents in this process, making this document more alive and meaningful for everyone.

The purpose of this Neighborhood Master Plan is to prepare an action-based framework to help guide future public and private physical planning, development, and improvement efforts in the Central Neighborhoods during the next five to ten year period.

The Central Neighborhood area is defined as the area generally bounded by 10th Street to the north, 24th Street to the south, Ottawa Avenue to the west, and US-31 to the east.



Neighborhood Declaration of Beliefs

This Master Plan provides the following statements that summarize the bedrock Beliefs and Values that will help define and shape responses and action steps to issues central to the continuing work of maintaining and creating healthy and safe neighborhoods:

We Believe That:

- Neighborhoods are an essential element of Holland's quality of life.
- Neighborhood character and environmental quality should be protected.
- Preservation of the Historic Districts and near-in historical neighborhoods, landmark features, and historical structures should be supported and significant structures should be preserved.
- Priority should be given to maintenance and rehabilitation of sound, usable structures rather than demolition.
- The expectation for high levels of maintenance continues for both public and private property.
- Building, housing maintenance, and zoning codes should be strengthened and effectively enforced to insure continued and improved housing quality and community appearance.
- New housing and housing types should respond to current needs and trends while assuring that such development is compatible with the existing neighborhood character.
- Programs that support affordable housing for low and moderate-income households in the City should continue and be vigorously promoted at the regional level.
- The development and rehabilitation of small compatible neighborhood shopping areas to serve the needs of Central Neighborhood residents is encouraged through public policy and private actions.
- New or expanded “good neighbor” industrial and commercial developments are supportive of and characteristic of healthy mixed-use neighborhoods provided they are carefully planned and regulated to assure compatibility.
- The development of formal and informal neighborhood organizations for the purposes of self help, community watch, and neighborhood planning is encouraged through public and private resources.
- Environmental and civic design amenities that enhance neighborhood livability are encouraged in all neighborhoods.
- Synergies between and among public and private sector agencies and service providers should be encouraged whenever opportunities arise.

- Continued improvements to City streets and sidewalks, with automotive and truck circulation working in tandem with high quality pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit systems, collectively will provide a transportation system that assures central neighborhood residents are connected to primary employment and service centers.
- Quality recreational and passive enjoyment opportunities should be available for all Central City residents and age groups.



Master Plan Recommendations:

The following issues have been identified by the Planning Commission and the Stakeholders of the community as recommended items that need to be addressed, solved, and/or completed in order to fulfill our desire of nurturing our ‘Good Neighborhood’ model for the Central Neighborhoods:

A. Neighborhood Organization and Planning (Grass Roots) – Reference Page 32

1. Neighborhood Organizing.

Working directly with neighborhood residents, the City should identify and organize (informally or formally) distinct residential neighborhood groups and neighborhood commercial areas.

2. Neighborhood Planning.

Acknowledging the success of the Ourstreet Program, challenge the Ourstreet Program and the City Community Services and Development Department to develop and implement sustainable grass root level neighborhood planning efforts in specific central neighborhoods.

3. Ourstreet Expansion Process.

The Ourstreet Program should establish a process by which it evaluates when, where, and how to expand or move its program into additional blocks of the central neighborhoods.

4. Conservation Districts.

Establish a task force to study and report to the Planning Commission and/or City Council on the feasibility and desirability of creating an ordinance to enable establishment of neighborhood conservation districts.

B. Land Use and Zoning – Reference Pages 32-37

1. Traditional “Close-Knit” Neighborhood Designs and Characteristics.

The City should review, modify as may be appropriate, and adopt a list of guiding principles regarding traditional neighborhood design and characteristics.

2. Land Use Map Amendments.

The City should adopt amendments to the Land Use Plan Map that:

- a. Shift the development paradigm for the central neighborhoods away from the urban redevelopment policies of prior decades towards one of preserving and maintaining existing housing stock and urban forms such as the grid street system;
- b. Creates a new Traditional Neighborhood planning designation that encourages the mixture of different residential types with commercial and even adjacent industrial type land uses and buildings;
- c. Provides small additions to the Public/Quasi-Public and Park planning areas recognizing the development of two public charter schools;
- d. Provides a slight reduction in industrial area, yielding to the charter schools and certain residential uses;
- e. Slightly modify the Neighborhood Commercial areas with the following adjustments:
 - 1) reduce the neighborhood commercial area on the south side of 13th Street west of Maple Avenue;
 - 2) slightly expand the Washington Square area to include an additional existing commercial building

to the north;

3) expand the area for commercial uses in the vicinity of Pine Avenue and 16th Street;

4) slightly expand the area for commercial use in the vicinity of River Avenue and 16th Street;

5) acknowledge a small area of commercial at the SE corner of 13th Street and Central Avenue; and

6) change the current office zoning along River Avenue from 13th to 15th Street to Neighborhood Commercial.

7) Slightly expand the Public/Quasi-Public Uses designation for Hope College south to 11th Street between Lincoln and Fairbanks Avenues, and along the east side of Lincoln Avenue south to 14th Street.

3. Coding for Building Behavior on Sites vs. Coding for Uses.

Move away from the use-based approach to the regulation and strict separation of land uses in favor of a more contextual and architecturally based approach that regulates building locations, massing, and scale, and protects against potentially negative effects of any land use.

4. Neighborhood commercial areas.

Elevate and re-establish the neighborhood commercial area as a viable center for neighborhood based commerce and provision of services by:

- a. Studying and evaluating whether many remnant commercial areas should be zoned back into conformance before they completely disappear; and
- b. Consider the creation of a City-wide neighborhood commercial planner/advocate position.
- c. Return to an emphasis on commercial nodes as the focus of neighborhood shopping opportunity rather than the corridor-oriented strip developments found along many heavily trafficked streets.

5. Neighborhood industrial areas.

Support the continued use and/or redevelopment of central neighborhood industrial corridor areas for benign, industrial uses.

6. Nurturing of Community Uses: Schools, Places of Worship, Libraries, and Parks.

Celebrate these community uses as vibrant centers of our social lives while assuring that these community uses are good neighbors to adjacent residential properties. Seek a healthy balance between the orderly everyday operations of these uses and the needs of surrounding neighborhoods. Explore opportunities to cooperatively provide recreational and other community facilities and programming of neighborhood schools and churches. Think “out of the box” to investigate the possibility of nurturing other completely new neighborhood gathering opportunities such as a Community Gardening program.

7. Density and Intensity of Uses.

Encourage additional supply of and opportunities for residential and neighborhood commercial uses in the Central Neighborhoods as a means to reduce the pressure on especially the existing housing stock.

8. Edges, Friction and Flare-up points.

The diversity of land uses and building types, and the close physical relationships between such uses in the central neighborhoods can be very exciting and stimulating to the senses on one hand, but can result in friction at other times. This is the very nature of a diverse urban environment. The City should play an active

role in mitigating any such problems, applying appropriate standards when reviewing proposed uses or buildings and investigate if any intervention is warranted where concerns arise amidst existing condition. To this end, the City should review existing standards to assure both that they address issues currently deemed of concern, and that they are reasonable and enforceable. Specific issues include industrial noise and traffic impacts.

9. Traditional Neighborhood Zone District/Concentration of Non-Conforming Buildings.

- a. Develop modifications to the Zoning Ordinance to make the vast majority of residential properties completely conforming again by the crafting of a new Traditional Neighborhood Zone District.
- b. Determine which commercially used but residentially zoned properties should be rezoned or brought back into conformance with the Ordinance, and what properties should continue to be nudged towards conversion to residential use.

10. Building Infill Guidelines for Residential and Neighborhood Commercial Buildings.

- a. Create an illustrated Residential Infill Guideline booklet or pamphlet that can be readily distributed to residents who may be interested in construction activities.
- b. Create infill guidelines and an illustrated booklet for commercial and other non-residential development within the central neighborhoods.

11. Wireless Communication Facilities.

The City has completed a study of the need for towers and other related telecommunications infrastructure. We must now evaluate the findings of this study to determine the potential impact of these facilities on the central neighborhoods, with a clear interest in both providing optimal service while protecting the residential quality of life in the neighborhoods.

12. Proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendments.

The following is a list of zoning issues and potential amendments that should be studied in depth, and if deemed important enough, moved forward to a public hearing stage.

- a. Develop Neighborhood Commercial Infill Regulations.
- b. Require garages and other accessory buildings be setback more than the front façade of the house (prohibition on “snout houses”).
- c. Allow flexible uses to: Allow Accessory Apartments, and Streamline Home Occupation ordinances to create a tiered permitting process.
- d. Off-Street Parking and Loading:
 - 1) Correct noticing procedures regarding parking determinations and correct reference sections.
 - 2) Review City parking and loading requirements to: amend the tables establishing numerical parking requirements; clarify on-site versus off-site requirements; and examine loading and unloading requirements.
- e. Examine the Zoning Ordinance requirement that detached accessory buildings in residential districts must be a minimum of 10' from any dwelling.
- f. The definition of "Family" needs to be updated in light of recent court cases.
- g. Review permitted and prohibited accessory uses of residential yards.
- h. Examine the setback requirements for non-residential uses/buildings allowed in the R-1 District, and by reference then to all R Residential Districts.

- i. Conduct a study to determine the status of exceptional use properties along the Michigan and River Avenue corridor with an eye towards the possible deletion of the exceptional use sections from the Zoning Ordinance. Consider, on a case by case basis, whether the existing exceptional use properties should be rezoned to a suitable commercial zoning district.
- j. Determine what adjustments should be made to ordinance language to keep porches truly functioning as porches. This may include reinstating the ZBA review or adding this to the list of Residential Infill review items that may be approved administratively based on specific standards.
- k. Conduct an open discussion of the pros and cons of instituting a building demolition ordinance.
- l. Undertake the review of amending language that will allow some expansions of non-conforming buildings and structures when the subject property is conforming in use.

C. Housing – Reference Pages 37-38

1. Innovative Housing

Develop innovative market-based and regulatory approaches to promote/require additional and varying types of new housing.

2. Zero Net Loss Housing Policy, Affordable Housing Fund

Develop a proposed policy that would result in a “Zero Net Loss of housing units” in the central neighborhoods. Explore the potential for utilizing an “affordable housing fund” or other mechanisms to assist in this effort.

3. Affordable Housing, Diversity of Incomes.

The City’s existing affordable housing policy states that new housing developments with over 10 dwelling units should contain 10% to 15% affordable units, and that the percentage of low-income households in each census tract be reduced below 51%. These policies and the definition of “affordable” should be reviewed in light of the most recent housing and demographic information, and their specific application to potential new development and public programs within the Central Neighborhoods.

4. Building/Housing Codes.

Building and Housing codes should be reviewed to determine if there are any unnecessary regulations on the books that may reduce flexibility to rehabilitate older homes and buildings.

5. Long-term Vacant Housing.

The Community Services and Development Department, working with other City Departments, should develop a program to identify the long term vacant housing and to establish policies that will substantially reduce the amount of vacant housing in the Central Neighborhoods.

6. Neighborhood Enterprise Zones.

The City should investigate the State Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) Program that provides tax incentives for the development and rehabilitation of residential housing.

D. Sub-Area Neighborhood Studies – Reference Page 39

1. Hope College and Western Theological Seminary.

The College and Seminary should seek increased neighborhood input and dialogue regarding its growth and development issues. The City should take a more active and visible role in working with these institutions

to publicly define the long term vision for this area of the Central Neighborhoods. Further, these institutions are urged to think vertically as much as possible in the development of new facilities.

2. Cappon House and Settlers House and vicinity.

This Plan is supportive of efforts by the Trust to revitalize their West 9th Street neighborhood and encourages the City to identify synergies that may occur between what the Trust's desires and efforts and the City's efforts in the Western Gateway area.

3. Central Avenue Art and Pedestrian Corridor.

This Plan calls for a public discussion beginning with the neighborhood and the Holland arts community to explore the idea of establishing a truly safe corridor through the heart of the Central Neighborhoods that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle movements integrated with a dose of public art to create a special street-scape character.

4. River to Pine Avenues, 15th to 17th Streets.

The City should sponsor a workshop or a design charrette to help identify and establish a vision for the long term use, renovation, or redevelopment of property within this highly visible central neighborhood area.

5. Neighborhood Workshops for Neighborhood School Areas.

The Planning Commission and/or Community Services and Development Department should work closely with the neighborhood schools, defined neighborhood groups, and other City Departments to conduct on-going neighborhood planning efforts throughout the Central Neighborhoods.

E. Public Infrastructure – Reference Pages 39-42

1. Transportation and Streets.

- a. Strategic planning should continue to identify opportunities that improve the physical conditions of neighborhood streets while slowing down vehicle traffic and keeping the streets livable for residential purposes.
- b. The City should fend off schemes that seek to close down streets in our grid system, with well-studied and limited exceptions to this policy dealing with a few streets crossing the main CSX Railroad line.
- c. The City should vigorously explore opportunities for implementation of location-appropriate “traffic calming” measures throughout the Central Neighborhoods, with particular attention to opportunities for such improvements in coordination with regular street paving and reconstruction projects.
- d. The City should chart a course of action for defining and implementing improvements in the Pine Avenue corridor involving substantial public involvement.
- e. The City should meet with the Library and adjacent neighborhood residents to take stock of the current traffic and parking situation along 12th and 13th Streets to determine whether traffic calming measures are needed.
- f. The City should examine all of the designated Truck Routes to determine if any movements can/or should be made to the route locations so trucks have less impact on the residences and schools in the neighborhoods.

2. Vehicle Parking.

- a. Create a limited number of pilot projects to help evaluate the pros and cons of a potential on-street overnight parking program.
- b. The City should examine ways of better using the public and private parking opportunities already in the central neighborhoods, rather than encouraging paving of existing yard areas for additional on-site parking.

3. Public Alleys.

Identify and undertake proactive measures to keep healthy alleys in good shape and to establish a pilot alley project to turn around those that need help before they reach a point where their vacating appears to be the only avenue to improvement.

4. Sidewalks.

In addition to sidewalk construction plans currently in the pipeline, it is recommended that sidewalk construction be examined along Hazel Avenue to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access for school kids to East Middle School, and on the east side of Century Lane from 16th Street to 24th Street to provide a safer system for the residents on the east side of that street.

5. Mass transit opportunities.

Public mass transit will likely continue to provide transportation primarily to those who do not have their own personal vehicles. This Plan believes this “fact” is OK, as long as transportation opportunities remain available for all of our residents.

6. Streetscape amenities.

- a. Continue the informal and formal street furniture program that supports placement of streetscape amenities such as pedestrian lighting in conjunction with the street reconstruction and park renovation programs.
- b. Encourage the placement of more public benches throughout the Neighborhood, particularly in the vicinity of neighborhood commercial areas as a way to provide needed resting areas for elderly residents and others who may want to frequent the area.
- c. Promote the use of bicycles as an alternative means of transportation for adults in the Neighborhood. Additional bike racks should be placed in neighborhood commercial areas so bicycles can be secured.
- d. The City should investigate the idea of a pedestrian and bicycle “Way finding” signage system to identify and note preferred routes to link major destinations in the Central Neighborhoods.

7. “Electronic Village”.

The City should use the public fiber optic system to “wire” the Central Neighborhoods first, and then bring other neighborhoods into this state of the art communications system.

F. Private Improvements – Reference Page 42

1. Buildings and property.

The City must continue on its course of setting a tone that investment is welcomed and desired in the Central Neighborhoods by continuing its lead by making large investments in public infrastructure needs.

2. Landscaping.

- a. The City should at least maintain its current level of spring and fall cleanups and to investigate the possibility of organizing “landscape blitzes” at the smaller block level in conjunction with property owners, landscaping, and recycling businesses.
- b. The City should press harder for the provision of yard waste recycle bins for all properties at more reduced rates in an effort to get more residents to properly maintain and pay attention to the appearance of their properties.

G. Administration and Provision of Services – Reference Pages 42-43

1. Provision of services at the neighborhood level.

This Plan advocates for the continuation of a trend toward the provision of municipal services at the neighborhood level. A study team should be appointed to gather information and prepare a report to the Planning Commission and City Council on the feasibility and desirability of providing more municipal services at the neighborhood and block level.

2. Streamlining of Permit process.

Instill a new “streamlining culture” in those who administer the ordinances and regulations to insure that the “process” never becomes too unwieldy for our customers, the residents of the Central Neighborhoods and indeed the entire City, and that it never fails to produce the intended results of bettering people’s lives and the environment in which they live.

3. Evening Code Enforcement.

The Environmental Health and Inspections Department should conduct evening Code enforcement in the Central Neighborhoods and indeed the entire City on at least an occasional basis.

4. On-site Notification of Proposed Land Use and Zoning Changes.

City noticing requirements should be reviewed to identify additional means that could be used to better notify the public of proposed and potential land use and zoning changes.

II. What is a Good Neighborhood?

What is a neighborhood, and what things must come together to make a good one? Can you see a good neighborhood when driving through one in a car? Are good neighborhoods something you can feel, hear, or maybe almost taste?

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines **neighborhood** as the following:

1. Neighborly relationship; 2. The quality or state of being neighbors; 3a. A place or region near; 3b. An approximate amount, extent, or degree; 4a. The people living near one another; 4b. A section lived in by neighbors and usually having distinguishing characteristics.

This definition interestingly points out the human social relational aspects as the first qualifier of what is a neighborhood. Secondly, it addresses the geographical close proximity aspect that most likely first jumps into people's minds when talking about neighborhoods. And lastly it joins the social and geographic aspects by addressing the sharing, oneness, and sense of place feeling that neighbors have because they have some physical environmental and/or social characteristics in common. So a neighborhood then is both a tangible physical entity as well as an intangible sociological product of our human relationships.

There are surely many text book answers as to what comprises a good neighborhood. Fortunately, the Housing Advisory Commission (HAC) of the City of Holland asked this same question and provided some answers in the form of a Housing Goals and Policies Report (See Addendum C for more details) recommended to and adopted by the City Council back in 1995.

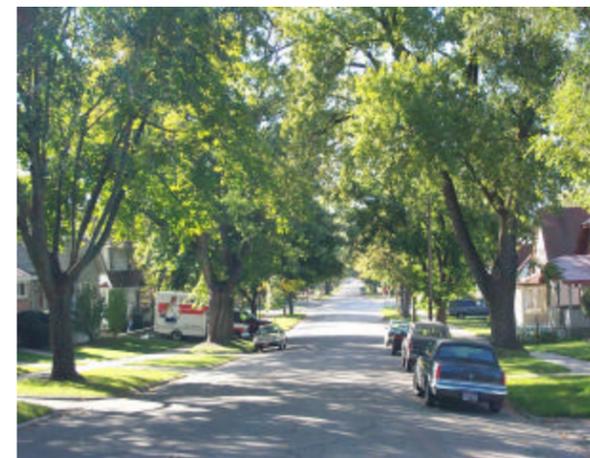
The HAC Report notes that the neighborhood is the primary building block of the City, defining a "good neighborhood" as follows: "A 'good neighborhood' is defined in human terms and measured by what people want and need in their neighborhood to achieve a desirable and fulfilling lifestyle. A 'good neighborhood' goes beyond meeting human needs like shelter and other services by fostering within residents a sense of neighborhood identity and responsibility for both neighborhood and community. A 'good neighborhood' model needs to be a sustainable model that can be used for evaluation of existing neighborhoods yet make sense in the future for guiding the creation of new neighborhoods.

Ideally, a neighborhood will focus around public buildings such as schools, churches, or commercial areas; and be well-defined by recognizable boundaries such as the lake or major roadways. This area is optimally a five-minute walk from the center to any edge of the neighborhood and contains a balanced mix of activities such as dwelling, schooling, recreating and shopping. This configuration of a neighborhood allows walking access to the basic needs of residents/neighbors and cuts down on the dependency on the automobile for daily living needs. New housing development tends to cater to the requirements of automobile usage. The need for automobiles is recognized but a neighborhood should not be automobile focused.

"Good Neighborhoods' are the result of holistic thinking which considers all of the factors that impact the residents of the neighborhood. When all of the human needs are addressed in a neighborhood and the area has a unifying character that comes from integrated designs of streets, buildings, and the space in-between, the neighborhood will be strong and families will seek to locate there." (1995 HAC Housing Goals and Policies Report, pages 1-2, see Addendum C)

Do you know how you feel when you are in a groove and things are all clicking? The feeling of having a great night of sleep, followed by a tasty breakfast, a fulfilling day at work or school, and a fun evening with friends or family. Do this over and over and you are in an excellent routine. Neighborhoods can also fall into a groove and click if properly designed and cultivated. Neighborhoods that click almost always meet the aforementioned definition of a "Good Neighborhood". They always emphasize social and physical patterns, routines, and regularity, not to the point of being stifling, but always to the point of being familiar.

For a more in depth analysis of community and neighborhood design issues, please reference Addendum E.



III. Tending the Garden.

Our Central Neighborhoods have grown quite nicely from their beginnings about 150 years ago. Although burned to the ground in the devastating fire of 1871, the roots previously put down quickly blossomed again and the garden grew, bore much fruit, and continues to do so today.

The garden analogy is really quite accurate if you stop to think about it. As a garden is usually tilled and planted in evenly spaced rows, so was the original development of the streets, the houses, and the trees that line our Central Neighborhoods. The miracle of the seasons, sun, and soil worked in this garden as generation after generation of individuals and families lived productive lives along these City streets. As with any garden though, the gardener must continually cultivate the rows, prune and plant where needed, and always be on the lookout for weeds to pull.

Through this process overtime, the garden and the neighborhood become one's own. Nurturing and investment over an extended period of time give a neighborhood a history, tradition, and a sense of place and belonging that is simply larger than ourselves as individuals. This place becomes more than just a central neighborhood location, it takes on the form of a true "place", which landscape artist Allan Gussow so appropriately defines as, "a piece of the whole environment that has been claimed by feelings." What we are talking about here is community, not in its generic sense that is increasingly devoid of feelings, but almost in its "insula" form where you and I add ourselves and our physical possessions into this almost spiritual sense of the larger whole called our community.

As we explore the different aspects of the central neighborhoods through this Plan, please refer back to this section to stay focused on the themes of place and community and our movements as individuals and a community through time.

The purpose of this Neighborhood Plan is to plan for and identify the best methods of tending, nurturing, and if need be pruning aspects of our Central Neighborhoods. This Plan is prepared by the Planning Commission as an action-based framework to help guide future public and private planning and development efforts in the Central Neighborhoods during the next 5-10 year period.

This first neighborhood specific Plan is also meant to broaden the grassroots interest and involvement of the area residents in the nurturing of their neighborhood areas and the public and private planning and development endeavors that occur in these neighborhoods.



For a Holland History Timeline go to the following website.
www.hope.edu/resources/arc/timelines/holland



IV. Good Gardener's Plan Before Planting.

The Planning Commission is required under State law to adopt a master plan for the physical development of the City. This master plan along with any amendments or additions made to it over the years shall show the Commission's recommendations for the development of the City, including, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets, boulevards, bridges, floodplains, waterfronts, playgrounds and open spaces. Recommendations for the general location of public buildings, public utilities, and public property, as well as the general location, character, and layout of community centers and neighborhoods along with a zoning plan for the control of the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and property. Whew! That is a tall order.

As was previously noted by the Housing Advisory Commission in their 1995 report to City Council, "*Good Neighborhoods' are the result of **holistic thinking**, which considers all of the factors that impact the residents of the neighborhood.* The Planning Commission intends to study the broad range of physical, social, economic, and regulatory issues, and their interaction with and effects on this neighborhood. However, because the Planning Commission as noted above must first and foremost under State law plan for the physical development of the City, the Mission of this Neighborhood Plan is to study, formulate, evaluate, and recommend specific public and private developmental and regulatory strategies to affect the overall physical characteristics of the Central Neighborhoods area.

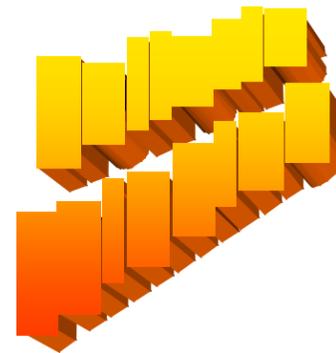
The Planning Commission completed its last major revision to the Master Plan for the Physical Development of the City back in March of 1992. That Plan was a revision to a Plan prepared in the early 1970's, which in turn was a revision of the original Master Plan prepared for the City back in 1953.

Please do not read into this though that city planning and civic design did not occur in the City prior to 1953. In reality, the planning and development of the entire Downtown and Central City area was completed based on many timeless ways, means, patterns, and proportions, some of which date back to the Renaissance period in Europe 400 to 500 years ago. Can you believe it! Many of these city design patterns and proportions were never codified into laws and ordinances because land developers and the public plainly understood how the City should be built based on historical precedence. And they built it, and what a great job they did. We will come back to this "timeless way of doing things" later on.

Now it is generally accepted and even recommended that cities should revise their Master Plans every five to ten years. So during the winter of 1996-97, the Planning Commission began to discuss the need for an update to the 1992 Master Plan. Included in this discussion was the Commission's desire to begin shifting our land use and development policies away from the Post-WWII single use, land consumptive, auto-centric development model towards the more compact, mixed-use, civic design oriented development model of the growing New Urbanism movement.

The Planning Commission wrestled on and off over the next year or so with their desire to address this land use policy shift. This long period of time in the wilderness, so to say, turned out to be a truly essential soul searching exercise. After this time, the Commission came to the conclusion that much of the 1992 Master

Master Planning



Timeless Way of Doing Things

Plan was still valid and accurate, and that a large scale revision to this Plan was not warranted. The Planning Commission decided that a more neighborhood scaled and strategic action oriented approach towards defining goals, objectives, and implementation strategies was warranted.

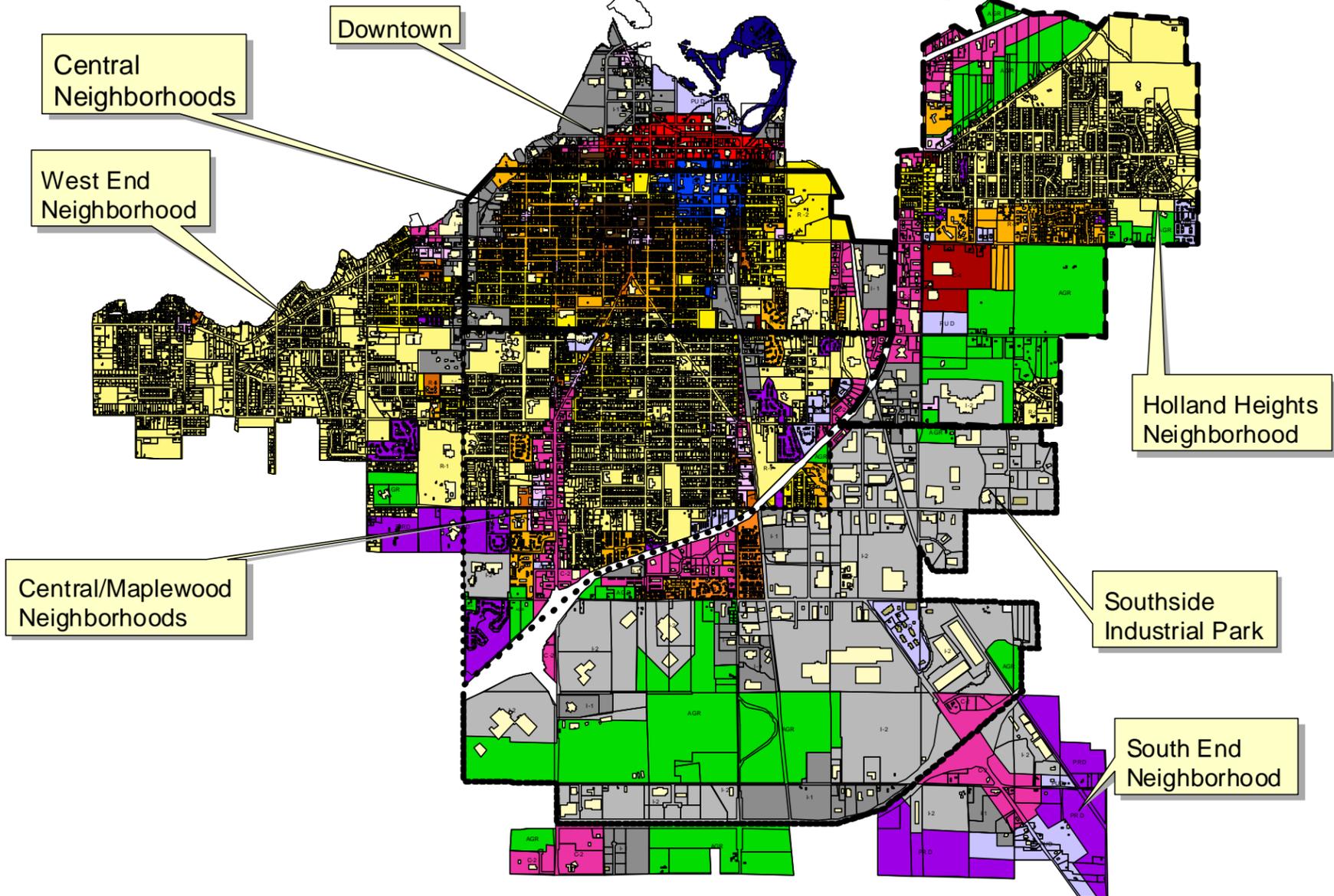
To facilitate this planning process, the Planning Commission divided the City into six study areas described as follows and illustrated on the Master Plan Study Areas Map.

1. Downtown commercial area from 10th Street north to the Macatawa River.
2. Central City Neighborhoods generally bounded by 10th Street, US-31, 24th Street, and Ottawa Avenue.
3. Central City/Maplewood Neighborhoods generally bounded by 24th Street, US-31, and Ottawa Avenue extended.
4. Holland Heights Neighborhood east of US-31 and north of 32nd Street.
5. West End/Central Park Neighborhood west of Ottawa Avenue.
6. Southside Industrial Park area located generally south of US-31 and 32nd east of US-31.
7. A 7th area was added in 1999 with the annexation of 1,100 acres of land located primarily south of I-196 and the Tulip City Airport, and south of the I-196/M-40 intersection (South End area).

These neighborhood and commercial/industrial area boundaries are based on factors such as elementary school districts; the presence of major transportation features like highways, major arterial streets, and railroad lines; pre and post World War II development and housing types; zoning district boundaries, and; downtown and neighborhood commercial compact development as compared to arterial strip commercial development.

After a series of brainstorming sessions, the Planning Commission prioritized the study sequence for the six study areas based on the opportunities and needs facing each area. Although a case could be made for selecting any one of the areas to be studied first, the Commission decided the Central Neighborhoods should be the first area studied. This prioritization was subsequently adjusted as State law requires development of a Master Plan prior to adoption of zoning within a short time frame for the annexed South End area, and where initiatives by both the Planning Commission and Downtown interests have expedited focus on an update to the Downtown Strategic Plan and C-3 Central Business District zoning.

City of Holland Master Plan Study Areas



- Text Zoning Names
- Parcel
- Buildings
 - Existing
 - Proposed
- Zoning
 - AGR Agriculture
 - C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
 - C-2 Highway Commercial
 - C-3 Central Business
 - C-4 Regional Shopping Center
 - C-5 Professional Office Service District
 - ED Education
 - I-1 Industrial
 - I-2 Industrial Park
 - PRD Planned Residential Development
 - PUD Planned Unit Development
 - R-1 One Family Residential
 - R-2 One & Two Family Residential
 - R-3 Residential
 - R-4 Mobile Home & Residential
 - R-5 Apartment
 - R-6 Central Apartment
 - Windmill Island

V. Who Has a Hoe (and other garden tools)?

The stakeholders in this Central Neighborhood Plan are far-reaching and wide. They consist of people from all walks of life, occupations, age, and ethnic groups. Stakeholders also include Central City residents and indeed all City residents who may live, work, or just pass through the Central City area on a regular basis, or maybe even just once, like a tourist! The involvement of these stakeholders in some way, shape, or manner is critical through all stages of this planning procedure to assist both in formulating and validating the findings and proposed actions/remedies for addressing opportunities and concerns. A list of these stakeholders includes but may not be limited to the following:

- **P**roperty Owners
- **R**esidents - Owner and Rental occupied
- **C**hurches and Places of Worship
- **S**chools and Colleges
- **B**usinesses – Small sole proprietors to large corporate industries
- **G**overnmental and Non-Governmental Agencies and Service Providers
- **A**ssociations and Groups - Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and Lions Club, Arts Council, Environmental organizations, etc.
- **P**ass through traffic - Commuters, Truckers, Bicyclists and Pedestrians
- **T**ourists
- **G**ardeners

Public participation from all of the stakeholders was and remains the central visioning and grounding aspect to this Plan. It is only from an extensive public participation process that a sense of validity can be conferred onto the planning process and any document finally approved by the Planning Commission. To this end, the Planning Commission and its staff conducted six neighborhood public meetings as well as meeting with a dozen or so individual stakeholder groups.

The first neighborhood meeting for purposes of receiving input into this Central Neighborhood Plan planning process occurred on March 16, 1999. The Planning Commission held a special meeting on this day and received comments from approaching 40 people. Fast forward three years and the Planning Commission held a series of three neighborhood meetings at Van Raalte, Washington, and Longfellow Schools during April 2002. To round out the public input from the neighborhood meetings, and to help clarify many of the neighborhood issues, Planning staff met with and corresponded with the following list of specific stakeholders:

- Holland Public Schools – School Superintendent and Principals from Van Raalte, Washington, and Longfellow Schools
- Black River Public School – Head of School and Board members
- Vanderbilt Charter Academy – Principal
- Washington Square Merchants

- Ourstreet Committee and the Target Area Team (TAT) Committee
- Holland Area Home Builders Association
- Hope College
- Holland Chamber of Commerce
- Good Samaritan Ministries Housing Task Force
- Inter-Parish Council
- Evergreen Commons
- Lakeshore Center for Independent Living
- City Human Relations Commission
- Community Action House
- Boys and Girls Club
- Historic District Neighborhood Association

During October 2002, the Planning Commission held two neighborhood meetings at Longfellow and Van-Raalte Elementary Schools to receive input from neighborhood residents regarding the recommendations of this Plan and the priority levels assigned to the recommendations.

All of this information has been compiled, presented to and discussed by the Planning Commission, and worked into this Central Neighborhood Plan.

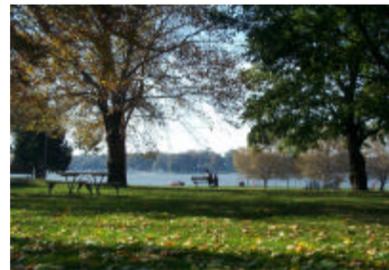
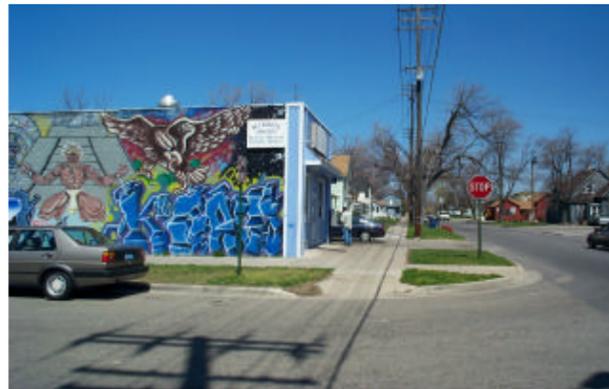


VI. The Lay of the Land.

Every good gardener understands that before one should start digging in the dirt in preparation for seed sowing time, one must take stock of the garden area and try to understand the various influences that affect the growth and fruition potentials for the garden. Before we jump head first into a discussion that identifies, analyzes, and makes recommendations regarding the major issues and themes of the Central Neighborhoods, we must first take stock of the existing conditions.

The following photo gallery will leave you with a flavor of our neighborhood that words cannot describe.

Our neighborhood is alive with a richly diverse rainbow of people from all areas and walks of life!



Our neighborhood is alive with trees and flowers!



Our neighborhood has many quality parks and play areas!





We are proud of our houses and buildings that have tons of character.



We have vibrant, growing commercial areas and gathering places.





Our s is a neighbor hood of mixed housing types, styles, and densities, but pr edominat ely singl e famil y det ached homes.



We have vibr ant national ly and stat e r ecognized Historical Distr icts composed of homes primar il y buil t fr om 1871 - 1920.

Our public str eets ar e gr andly constr uct ed in a gr id pattern that all ows for conveni ence in tr avel and mul tipl e paths for r esident s to get to any l ocat ion.

Our neighbor hood is devot ed to its school s and church es wher e chil dr en can stil l r ide a bike to school and famil ies can wal k to church.



Our neighbor hood hous es a national ly r ecognized liber al ar ts col l ege that tr ul y is an anchor for our entir e community.

Our s is al so a neighbor hood of conveni ence wher e a Gal l on of mil k and loaf of br ead is never mor e t han a 5-10 minut e wal k aw ay.



O.K., so now you have seen the touchy feely stuff of the neighborhood, where's the beef? Where are the cold hard facts, numbers, and measurements of the neighborhood?

The following charts and discussion are meant to provide a snapshot of a short list of demographic factors that are occurring in the neighborhood. They are not meant to be exhaustive by any stretch of the imagination.

1. Population by Elementary School District
2. Population by Race
3. Income and Poverty Status
4. Housing Characteristics
5. Means of Transportation to Work

This brief demographic study is no different from even the longest and most in depth studies in that more often than not, more questions end up being raised than being answered. Some of these questions will be subject to additional study in the future, while others will be left for readers to ponder on themselves.

Discussion: Population by Elementary School District

- While the City as a whole has seen a population increase of approximately 33% between 1970 and 2000, the four Central Neighborhood elementary school districts when combined have seen an 8% increase in population over the same period. The most interesting population statistics come from the period between 1990 and 2000. Those figures indicate a somewhat stable population in the neighborhoods for the 10 year period with the exception of the Lincoln neighborhood that experienced a 30% spike, and which pushed the four neighborhoods to a cumulative 10% increase for that same time frame. This increase in the Lincoln neighborhood accounted for 89% of the population increase in the Central Neighborhoods over that 10 year period, while the other three school neighborhoods combined accounted for 11% of the Central Neighborhoods population growth. This huge increase in the Lincoln neighborhood is due largely to the construction of Freedom Village, the growth in Downtown residential living, and student enrollment increases at Hope College. However, compared to the rest of the City, the percentage of the City population living in the Central Neighborhoods continued to decrease from 51% in 1970 to 42% in 2000.

CITY OF HOLLAND										
POPULATION BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT										
	1960	% change 60-70	1970	% change 70-80	1980	% change 80-90	1990	% change 90-00	2000	% change 1970-2000
City	24,777	6%	26,337	0%	26,281	17%	30,745	14%	35,048	33%
Washington	N/A		2,475	-5%	2,350	-9%	2,130	-1%	2,111	-15%
Van Raalte	N/A		3,200	1%	3,239	2%	3,294	4%	3,433	7%
Lincoln	N/A		4,400	-9%	4,007	-2%	3,938	30%	5,125	16%
Longfellow	N/A		3,400	5%	3,567	9%	3,874	1%	3,904	15%
Neigh. Pop.			13,475	-2%	13,163	1%	13,236	10%	14,573	8%
The 1970 neighborhood numbers are estimates based on Census Tract information.										

- Other interesting items that come to light include how the Washington neighborhood continues to lose population, although the rate of decrease appears to have flattened to the point where it only lost 1% of its population between 1990 and 2000. Although the Longfellow district increased 15% between 1970 and 2000, the rate of increase has flattened to a 1% increase between 1990 and 2000. The Van Raalte district experienced a slow but steady increase between 1970 and 2000.

- Some interesting things are happening in the Central Neighborhoods. Why? The population increase over the past 10 years in the Lincoln neighborhood is very dramatic, especially in light of the fact that it was on such a steep decline since 1970. The increases in that area are almost certainly tied to the development of Freedom Village and the other previously noted reasons. What is behind the steep decline in the Washington neighborhood? We can speculate that this may be due to a number of factors that include the following: The aging of many household populations in this area and the resulting net loss of household populations; a reduction in the actual number of households and physical dwelling units due to construction, development, and expansion of non-residential buildings and uses and maybe the conversion of multi-family houses back to single family houses. There are very likely other reasons for this population reduction that

quickly extend beyond the scope of this document to determine. Also, how can the “built-out” Van Raalte and Longfellow neighborhoods increase in population? This is likely due to increases in household sizes and the possible continued conversion of single family houses to multi-family homes, but we do not know this for sure.

- Further study and discussion is needed to explore the idea of further stabilizing, if not reversing the population trends of the Washington school area, and stabilizing the Lincoln neighborhood population. Why may you ask should we be concerned about the Lincoln area? This Plan believes if it were not for the population generation projects and reasons noted above, this neighborhood may actually have lost population or at best held its own. As further information becomes available from the 2000 Census, and specifically the Neighborhood Statistics Program in which the City participates to tailor arrange Census information to follow the Holland Public Elementary School districts, we should be able to further evaluate the population changes occurring in these neighborhoods.

POPULATION BY RACE IN CENTRAL CITY NEIGHBORHOODS - 1980												
	City	City %	Washington	Washington %	VanRaalte	VanRaalte %	Lincoln	Lincoln %	Longfellow	Longfellow %	Neigh. Total	% Neigh. Total
Total	26281		2350	9%	3239	12%	4007	15%	3567	14%	13163	50%
White	24210	92%	1888	80%	2808	87%	3613	90%	3246	91%	11555	88%
African-American	147	1%	16	1%	23	1%	33	1%	11	0%	83	1%
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	67	0%	10	0%	22	1%	8	0%	8	0%	48	0%
Asian & Pacific Islander	277	1%	40	2%	80	2%	47	1%	16	0%	183	1%
Other	1580	6%	396	17%	306	9%	306	8%	286	8%	1294	10%
Hispanic Origin	2911	11%	713	30%	521	16%	691	17%	433	12%	2358	18%
Note: A person of Hispanic origin does not connote a specific racial background.												

POPULATION BY RACE IN CENTRAL CITY NEIGHBORHOODS - 1990													
	City	City %	Washington	Washington %	VanRaalte	VanRaalte %	Lincoln	Lincoln %	Longfellow	Longfellow %	Neigh. Total	% Neigh. Tot.	% +/- 1980-90
Total	30745		2130	7%	3294	11%	3938	13%	3874	13%	13236	43%	1%
White	27028	88%	1611	76%	2393	73%	3516	89%	3241	84%	10761	81%	-7%
African-American	224	1%	23	1%	23	1%	17	0%	7	0%	70	1%	-16%
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	99	0%	5	0%	0	0%	6	0%	44	1%	55	0%	15%
Asian & Pacific Islander	980	3%	151	7%	258	8%	151	4%	80	2%	640	5%	250%
Other	2414	8%	340	16%	620	19%	248	6%	502	13%	1710	13%	32%
Hispanic Origin	4309	14%	712	33%	927	28%	570	14%	677	17%	2886	22%	22%
Note: A person of Hispanic origin does not connote a specific racial background.													

POPULATION BY RACE IN CENTRAL CITY NEIGHBORHOODS - 2000														
	City	City %	Washington	Washington %	VanRaalte	VanRaalte %	Lincoln	Lincoln %	Longfellow	Longfellow %	Neigh. Total	% Neigh. Tot.	% -/+ 1980-2000	% -/+ 1990-2000
Total	35048		2111	6%	3433	10%	5125	15%	3904	11%	14573	42%	11%	10%
White	27399	78%	1324	63%	2006	58%	4407	86%	2885	74%	10622	73%	-8%	-1%
African-American	888	3%	75	4%	97	3%	123	2%	110	3%	405	3%	388%	479%
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	202	1%	22	1%	36	1%	30	1%	16	0%	104	1%	117%	89%
Asian & Pacific Islander	1257	4%	28	1%	123	4%	141	3%	91	2%	383	3%	109%	-40%
Other	5302	15%	662	31%	1171	34%	424	8%	802	21%	3059	21%	136%	79%
Hispanic Origin	7783	22%	988	47%	1619	47%	717	14%	1133	29%	4457	31%	89%	54%

Note: A person of Hispanic origin does not connotate a specific racial background.

CITY OF HOLLAND POPULATION BY RACE 1980 - 2000										
	Population - 1980	Percent	Population - 1990	Percent	% Inc. 1980-1990	Population - 2000	Percent	% Inc. 1990-2000	% Inc. 1980-2000	
Total Population	26,281		30,745		17.0%	35,048		14.0%	33.4%	
White	24,210	92.1%	27,028	87.9%	11.6%	27,399	78.2%	1.4%	13.2%	
African American	147	0.6%	224	0.7%	52.4%	888	2.5%	296.4%	504.1%	
American Indian & Alaska Native	67	0.3%	99	0.3%	47.8%	202	0.6%	104.0%	201.5%	
Asian & Pacific Islander	277	1.1%	980	3.2%	253.8%	1,257	3.6%	28.3%	353.8%	
Other & two or more races	1,580	6.0%	2,414	7.9%	52.8%	5,302	15.1%	119.6%	235.6%	
Latino or Hispanic Origin	2,911	11.1%	4,309	14.0%	48.0%	7,783	22.2%	80.6%	167.4%	

Note: A person of Latino or Hispanic origin does not connotate a specific racial background.

Discussion: Population by Race

A. City-wide – 1980-2000

- City-wide the largest rate increase came with the African American group that experienced a large population rate increase of 296% between 1990 and 2000, and even a larger 504% increase when measured between 1980 and 2000. However, their total percentage of the City population only increased from 0.6% to 2.5% between 1980 and 2000.
- People of Latino/Hispanic origin increased City-wide between 1980 and 2000 from 11.1% to 22.2% of the total population, and the population increase from 2,911 to 7,783 people was the largest of any group.
- Between 1980 and 2000, the population of the White group grew by 13.2%, but actually decreased in the total percentage of the City's population from 92.1% to 78.2%.

B. Washington Elementary School Neighborhood – 1980-2000

- African Americans had the largest rate of increase at 369%. This group increased from 16 people or 1% of the neighborhood total to 75 or 4% of the neighborhood population.
- Latinos/Hispanics had the largest increase in population in the amount of 275 people to increase from 713 to 988 people, which equates to a percentage increase from 30% to 47% of the neighborhood population.
- Whites decreased from 1888 to 1324 people for a decrease of 30%, which is a reduction from 80% to 63% of the neighborhood population.

C. Van Raalte Elementary School Neighborhood – 1980-2000

- African Americans also had the largest rate increase of 322% to increase their neighborhood population from 1% to 3%.
- The Other group that includes people of two or more races was a close second in this neighborhood with a rate increase of 283% to double from 17% to 34% of this neighborhood.
- Latinos/Hispanics increased from 16% to 47% of the neighborhood population to increase from 521 to 1619 people.
- Like the Washington neighborhood, the White population also experienced a steep decline in population from 2808 to 2006 people that decreased their percentage of the neighborhood from 87% to 58%.

D. Lincoln Elementary School Neighborhood – 1980-2000

- The Latino/Hispanic population dropped from 17% to 14% of the neighborhood, while the White population dropped slightly from 90% to 86% of the neighborhood.
- The American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut group had the largest rate of increase at 275% although their percentage of the population only increased from a statistical 0% to 1% of the neighborhood.
- African Americans ran a close second at 273% rate increase to increase their population from 33 to 123 people.

E. Longfellow Elementary School Neighborhood – 1980-2000

- The White population remained virtually constant between 1980 and 1990, but then their numbers dropped fast to the point where their percentage of the neighborhood population decreased from 91% to 74%.
- The African American group experienced the largest rate increase of 900% for any group in any of the four studied school neighborhoods when their population increased from 11 to 110 people, or 0% to 3% of the population.

- The Asian and Pacific Islanders also had a very large rate increase of 469% when their portion of the population jumped from 0% to 2%.
- The Latino/Hispanic population grew from 286 to 1133 people, which equates to an increase from 12% to 29% of the neighborhood population with their rate of increase at 162%.

F. Neighborhoods Summary

- The percentage of the entire City population attributed to these four neighborhoods decreased from 51% in 1970, to 50% in 1980, to 43% in 1990, and most recently down to 42% of the City total in the year 2000.
- African Americans saw by far the largest percentage of population increases that came entirely during the 1990's. Their population increased from 83 to 405 residents for a 388% increase between 1980 and 2000, although their total percentage of the neighborhoods only increased from 1% to 3%.
- The population of Whites dropped quickly during the 1980's by 7%, but then began to level out in the 1990's with only a 1% reduction for a cumulative decrease of 8% between 1980 and 2000 (11,555 to 10,622 people). This equates to a total neighborhood percentage decrease from 88% to 73%.
- The American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut group increased dramatically in the 1990's by 89%. Their total population in 2000 stood at 104 people or 1% of the central neighborhoods population.
- The Asian and Pacific Islander group experienced big fluctuations over the 20 year period by increasing a dramatic 250% in the 1980's, but then having an equally dramatic decrease of 40% during the 1990's. Percentage wise, their population jumped from 1% in 1980 to 5% in 1990, to then drop to 3% of the neighborhood population by 2000.
- The Latino/Hispanic group experienced the largest gain in total population of any group with an increase of 2100 people between 1980 and 2000. Their population grew 22% during the 1980's and more than doubled that percentage increase to a 54% gain in the 1990's to a 2000 population of 4457, or 31% of the neighborhoods population.
- The Other and Two or More Races group had a very large population increase of 136% during this 20 year period that increased their percentage of the total neighborhood population from 10% to 21%.
- Finally, an analysis of the total Central Neighborhood population percentage for each group relative to the entire City is as follows:
 1. Latino/Hispanic – In 1980 81% of this group's total City population lived in the Central Neighborhoods. In 1990 this figure declined to 67%, and in 2000 it dropped even further to 57%.
 2. African American – In 1980 56% of this group's total City population lived in the Central Neighborhoods. In 1990 this figure declined to 31%, but in 2000 it increased to 46%.
 3. American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut – In 1980 72% of this group's total City population lived in the Central Neighborhoods. In 1990 this figure declined to 56%, and in 2000 it dropped to 51%.
 4. Asian and Pacific Islander – In 1980 66% of this group's total City population lived in the Central Neighborhoods. In 1990 this figure declined slightly to 65%, and in 2000 it dropped quickly to 30%.
 5. Other and Two or More Races – In 1980 82% of this group's total City population lived in the Central Neighborhoods. In 1990 this figure declined to 71%, and in 2000 it dropped even further to 58%.
 6. White - In 1980 47% of this group's total City population lived in the Central Neighborhoods. In 1990 this figure declined to 40%, and in 2000 it dropped slightly to 39%.
- This information appears to show that the population of minority groups in the City is not necessarily trending toward aggregating in the Central Neighborhoods study area, with the exception of African Americans, when examined on a City-wide basis. The population groups appear to be spreading out into other areas of the City, thus making them more diverse. This information would also appear to indicate that the movement of Whites out of the Central Neighborhoods has leveled off.

CITY INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS 1979-1999						
	1979	1989	1999	% Change 79-89	% Change 89-99	% Change 79-99
Number of Households	9,122	10,573	12,044	16%	14%	32%
Median Income	\$ 17,176	\$ 30,689	\$ 42,291	79%	38%	146%
1989' dollars to '1979' value		\$ 16,893	\$ 17,033	-2%	1%	-1%
Per Capita Income	\$ 7,313	\$ 13,334	\$ 18,823	82%	41%	157%
1989' dollars to '1979' value		\$ 7,345	\$ 7,581	0%	3%	4%
No. Families Below Poverty	361	614	535	70%	-13%	48%
Percent Families Below Poverty	5.4	8.2	6.7	52%	-18%	24%

CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS 1979-1989												
	Washington			VanRaalte			Lincoln			Longfellow		
	1979	1989	% Change 79-89	1979	1989	% Change	1979	1989	% Change	1979	1989	% Change
Number of Households	802	666	-17%	\$ 1,195	\$ 1,090	-9%	1041	793	-24%	1312	1247	-5%
Median Income	\$ 13,750	\$ 31,023	126%	\$ 15,748	\$ 29,208	85%	\$ 12,938	\$ 20,165	56%	\$ 16,522	\$ 29,250	77%
1989' dollars to '1979' value		\$ 17,077	24%		\$ 16,078	2%		\$ 11,100	-14%		\$ 16,101	-3%
Per Capita Income	\$ 5,434	\$ 11,148	105%	\$ 6,453	\$ 10,247	59%	\$ 4,780	\$ 6,707	40%	\$ 7,165	\$ 11,711	63%
1989' dollars to '1979' value		\$ 6,136	13%		\$ 5,641	-13%		\$ 3,692	-23%		\$ 6,446	-10%
No. Families Below Poverty	85	45	-47%	12	84	600%	54	100	85%	73	142	95%
Percent Families Below Poverty	15.4	9	-42%	1.5	10	567%	9	24	167%	7.5	15	100%

Discussion: City and Central Neighborhoods Income and Poverty Status 1979-1989

Note: 1999 neighborhood information will not be available until the Census Bureau completes a Neighborhood Statistics Program for the City sometime in 2003.

A. City-wide 1979-1999

- The number of households in the City grew by a moderate 16% between 1979 and 1989, and 14% between 1989 and 1999 for cumulative increase of 32% over this twenty year period.
- Between 1979 and 1989, the income figures when held to a base constant value (1979 dollars) clearly indicate that households and per capita income measures did not make any gains over the decade. In fact, median household incomes dropped by 2%, while per capita income stayed constant. Strikingly, families on the lower end of the economic scale experienced sharp reductions in incomes as indicated by the 70% increase in the number of families that had incomes below the poverty line, and the 52% increase in the percent of families below poverty that increased from 5.4% to 8.2% of the families in the City.
- During the 1990's median incomes in constant dollars did increase ever so slightly by 1% from the 1989 level, but the incomes were still below the 1979 values. Over the 20 year period, median incomes when held constant were still off by 1%. Per capita incomes fared slightly better than the median incomes as they did increase over the 20 year period by an adjusted 4%. The 1990's fared well for reducing the poverty figures, although the 1999 figures for both Number of Families Below Poverty and the Percent Families Below Poverty are still appreciably above the 1979 levels.

B. Washington Neighborhood – 1979-1989

- Although the number of households dropped dramatically by 17%, and as we previously noted the population dropped by 9% during this same period, this neighborhood experienced a remarkable 24% real increase in median household incomes along with a 13% increase in per capita incomes.
- Similarly, the poverty numbers experienced large changes as this neighborhood reduced the percent of families below the poverty line from almost three times the City amount in 1979 to being at almost the same percentage figure as that for the entire City in 1989 (15.4% down to 9%).

C. Van Raalte Neighborhood – 1979-1989

- The number of households decreased by 9%, but the population increased by a slight 2%, which of course can only mean that household sizes are increasing.
- Median household incomes grew a slight 2% in constant dollars, but the larger household sizes played out with a 13% decrease in real per capita income.
- This neighborhood experienced some very dramatic income changes on the lower end of the economic scales as the percent of families below the poverty line spiked over 500% from 1.5% of the neighborhood families to a full 10%.
- This type of a scenario where median household incomes continue to rise, but the bottom falls out on the lower end of the economic scale is indicative of a growing divide in the economics of this neighborhood's residents.

D. Lincoln Neighborhood – 1979-1989

- The number of households decreased very dramatically by 24%, although the total population only decreased by 2%.

- Median household incomes decreased in real terms by a very large 14%, while per capita incomes declined by a staggering 23%.
- While the number of families below the poverty line increased by 85%, the percent of families below the poverty line increased from 9% to 24% of the neighborhood population. This is disturbing in the sense that one out of every four families in this neighborhood is below the poverty level. (Note: The large number of Hope College students in this area may be skewing these poverty numbers.)

E. Longfellow District

- Of all the central neighborhoods, Longfellow experienced the least decrease in the number of households at 5%, and had a somewhat robust 9% increase in population for what many may consider a "built-out" neighborhood. As with other neighborhoods, these may be indicators that the average size of households is also on the increase.
- Median household income reduced by a slight 3% in real terms, but the per capita income figures dropped by 10%, which supports the thought that household sizes are increasing.
- The number of families below the poverty level jumped by 95%, and the percent of families below poverty increased 100% to almost double that for the city as a whole.

F. Summary

- With the exception of the Washington neighborhood that showed real dramatic increases in all income measurements, the other three neighborhoods all indicated downward shifts in income measurements.
- These figures show the telltale signs of lower economic scale households continuing the nation-wide pattern of concentrating in inner city locations. The availability and cost of housing most likely play a large role in this situation.
- It is beyond the calling of this Plan to test hypotheses in a statistical manner regarding "Why?" and "How" these demographic and income figures are occurring. When the new 2000 Census information becomes available for the central neighborhoods via the Neighborhood Statistics Program, all of this information should be updated in a timely manner and made available to the general public.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS 1969-1999															
Federal Government Level									State Government Level						
	1969	1979	1989	1999	% Chg 69 to 79	% Chg 79 to 89	% Chg 89 to 99	% Chg 69 to 99	1969	1979	1989	1999	% Chg 69 to 79	% Chg 79 to 89	% Chg 89 to 99
Number of Households (000's)	62,874	80,776	93,347	105,480	28%	16%	13%	68%	2,653	3,200	3,424	3,786	21%	7%	11%
Median Income	\$ 8,389	\$ 16,461	\$ 28,906	\$ 42,148	96%	76%	46%	402%	\$ 9,236	\$ 19,223	\$ 31,020	\$ 46,181	108%	61%	49%
Dollars to '1979' value	\$ 15,731	\$ 16,461	\$ 15,911	\$ 16,530	5%	-3%	4%	5%	\$ 17,319	\$ 19,223	\$ 17,075	\$ 18,111	11%	-11%	6%
Per Capita Income	\$ 3,007	\$ 7,168	\$ 14,056	\$ 21,690	138%	96%	54%	621%	\$ 3,101	\$ 7,688	\$ 14,154	\$ 22,480	148%	84%	59%
Dollars to '1979' value	\$ 5,637	\$ 7,168	\$ 7,737	\$ 8,506	27%	8%	10%	51%	\$ 5,815	\$ 7,688	\$ 7,791	\$ 8,816	32%	1%	13%
No. Families Below Poverty (000's)	5,008	5,461	6,784	6,977	9%	24%	3%	39%	160	198	252	202	24%	27%	-20%
Percent Families Below Poverty	9.7	9.2	10.3	12.5	-5%	12%	21%	29%	7.3	8.2	10.2	10.4	12%	24%	2%
Holland Government Level															
	1969	1979	1989	1999	% Chg 69 to 79	% Chg 79 to 89	% Chg 89 to 99	% Chg 69 to 99							
Number of Households (000's)	7,962	9,122	10,573	12,044	15%	16%	14%	51%							
Median Income	\$ 10,135	\$ 17,176	\$ 30,689	\$ 42,291	69%	79%	38%	317%							
Dollars to '1979' value	\$ 19,005	\$ 17,176	\$ 16,893	\$ 17,033	-10%	-2%	1%	-10%							
Per Capita Income	\$ 3,214	\$ 7,313	\$ 13,334	\$ 18,823	128%	82%	41%	486%							
Dollars to '1979' value	\$ 6,027	\$ 7,313	\$ 7,345	\$ 7,581	21%	0%	3%	26%							
No. Families Below Poverty	349	361	614	535	3%	70%	-13%	53%							
Percent Families Below Poverty	5.4	5.4	8.2	6.7	0%	52%	-18%	24%							

Discussion: Federal, State, and City Income and Poverty Status 1969-1999 - Comparison of City and Neighborhoods to Federal and State levels

- The number of households for the country as a whole grew faster than the City for this 30 year period (68% to 51%), although the City did match or exceed the Federal household growth increase for the two decades between 1979 and 1999 at 16% and 13%, respectively. The City outpaced the household growth of the State for the two decades from 1979 to 1999 with a 16% to 7% comparison during the 1980's, and a 14% to 11% comparison during the 1990's. Also, the City's household growth measured over the entire 30 year period was 51%, vs. 43% with the State. As we noted in prior sections, the household numbers for the neighborhoods for the 1979 to 1989 period were all in decline, and we do not yet have the 2000 Census data for the neighborhoods.
- In real dollars, median household incomes in the City declined at a substantial 10% clip from 1969 to 1999, while the Federal and State levels increased modestly with a 5% growth rate. In 1979 only the Longfellow neighborhood had a comparable median income to the Federal level. By 1989 the Washington, VanRaalte, and Longfellow neighborhoods had all surpassed the Federal median income level. In 1979, the State median income level far surpassed the City and any individual central neighborhood level. However, by 1989 the Washington neighborhood had actually passed the State level and the VanRaalte neighborhood had reduced the gap. By 1999, the State median income levels had pulled out in front of the City levels, while the City as a whole still maintained levels above the Federal figures.
- Per capita incomes in adjusted dollars saw over 20% increases for the City, State, and Federal level during the 70's, but the 80's saw a large drop in these increases to the point where the State and City were flat with virtually no increase, and the Federal level showing a modest 8% increase. In the neighborhoods, Washington continued its double digit increases at 13%, while the other neighborhoods had double digit decreases ranging from 10% to 23%.
- The percent of families below poverty level figures for this 30 year period show the Federal numbers increasing by 29%, and the State numbers jumped quite dramatically by 42%. The City had a more modest increase of 24% from 5.4% to 6.7% of the population. It is worth noting that the 1980's were not kind to very low income families across the board, but especially in the City where the percent of families below poverty increased by a vast 52%. During the 1990's when median and per capita incomes increased at the Federal, State, and City levels, the poverty rates continued to increase at the Federal and State level (State number of families below poverty decreased by 20%, although the percent of families below poverty increased by 2%). However, in the City of Holland the poverty rates all decreased by double digit figures, which is astonishing.
- In the neighborhoods, Washington continued its dramatic turn around with poverty rates falling over 40%, while the other neighborhoods saw tremendous triple digit increases in poverty rates. Although Washington and Van Raalte were over the City-wide poverty rate, they were below the Federal and State levels.

For additional census information go to the following web sites:

www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/cen2000.html

www.census.gov/

www.michigan.gov/census/

CITY AND CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS 1980 - 2000																		
	<u>City</u>						<u>Washington School Neighborhood</u>						<u>VanRaalte School Neighborhood</u>					
	1980	1990	2000	% Chg 80-90	% Chg 90-00	% Chg 80-00	1980	1990	2000	% Chg 80-90	% Chg 90-00	% Chg 80-00	1980	1990	2000	% Chg 80-90	% Chg 90-00	
No. Housing Units Including Vacant	9,662	11,243	12,533	16%	11%	30%	840	708	705	-16%	0%	-16%	1,231	1,126	1,086	-9%	-4%	
No. Vacant Housing Units	430	671	562	56%	-16%	31%	37	38	49	3%	29%	32%	46	70	31	52%	-56%	
% Own. Occ. Year-round Housing Units	71%	68%	67%	-4%	-1%	-6%	60%	55%	57%	-8%	5%	-4%	74%	74%	72%	1%	-3%	
% Rent Occ. Year-round Housing Units	28%	32%	33%	13%	3%	16%	40%	45%	43%	12%	-6%	6%	26%	26%	28%	-2%	9%	
Median Value Owner Occ. Housing	\$ 40,500	\$ 67,800	\$ 107,900	67%	59%	166%	\$ 28,600	\$ 52,800		85%			\$ 31,600	\$ 51,800		64%		
Dollars to 1980 (1979) value		\$ 37,300	\$ 43,459	-8%	17%	7%		\$ 29,100		2%				\$ 28,500		-10%		
Median Monthly Own. Occ. Mortgage	\$ 335	\$ 664	\$ 915	98%	38%	173%	\$ 340	\$ 603		77%			\$ 308	\$ 585		90%		
Dollars to 1980 (1979) value		\$ 366	\$ 369	9%	1%	10%		\$ 332		-2%				\$ 322		5%		
Median Monthly Gross Rent	\$ 239	\$ 453	\$ 551	90%	22%	131%	\$ 231	\$ 444		92%			\$ 222	\$ 454		105%		
Dollars to 1980 (1979) value		\$ 249	\$ 222	4%	-11%	-7%		\$ 244		6%				\$ 250		13%		
% Monthly Median Inc. for Mortgage	23%	26%	26%	11%	0%	11%	30%	23%		-21%			23%	24%		2%		
% Monthly Median Inc. for Rent	17%	18%	16%	6%	-12%	-6%	20%	17%		-15%			17%	19%		10%		
Note: 1980, 1990, and 2000 income and housing costs are 1979, 1989, and 1999 figures respectively.																		

CITY AND CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS 1980 - 2000												
	<u>Lincoln School Neighborhood</u>						<u>Longfellow School Neighborhood</u>					
	1980	1990	2000	% Chg 80-90	% Chg 90-00	% Chg 80-00	1980	1990	2000	% Chg 80-90	% Chg 90-00	% Chg 80-00
No. Housing Units Including Vacant	1,171	886	1,227	-24%	38%	5%	1,348	1,304	1,328	-3%	2%	-1%
No. Vacant Housing Units	82	66	88	-20%	33%	7%	47	50	49	6%	-2%	4%
% Own. Occ. Year-round Housing Units	39%	39%	47%	-1%	22%	20%	75%	77%	77%	2%	0%	2%
% Rent Occ. Year-round Housing Units	58%	61%	53%	6%	-14%	-9%	25%	23%	23%	-6%	0%	-6%
Median Value Owner Occ. Housing	\$ 26,700	\$ 47,200		77%			\$ 37,600	\$ 62,000		65%		
Dollars to 1980 (1979) value		\$ 26,000		-3%				\$ 34,100		-9%		
Median Monthly Own. Occ. Mortgage	\$ 276	\$ 499		81%			\$ 342	\$ 623		82%		
Dollars to 1980 (1979) value		\$ 275		0%				\$ 343		0%		
Median Monthly Gross Rent	\$ 212	\$ 459		117%			\$ 247	\$ 451		83%		
Dollars to 1980 (1979) value		\$ 253		19%				\$ 248		0%		
% Monthly Median Inc. for Mortgage	26%	30%		16%			25%	26%		3%		
% Monthly Median Inc. for Rent	20%	27%		39%			18%	19%		3%		
Note: 1980, 1990, and 2000 income and housing costs are 1979, 1989, and 1999 figures respectively.												

Discussion: Housing Characteristics for City and Central Neighborhoods 1980-1990 (2000 Selected)

Note: Neighborhood level housing, mortgage, and rent figures are not yet available for 2000, but as previously noted will be available when the Census Bureau completes the Neighborhood Statistics Program.

- Between 1980 and 1990, the number of City-wide housing units increased by an average of 150 per year for an overall increase of 16%. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of City-wide housing units increased by an average of 130 per year for an overall increase of 11%. For the 20 year period from 1980 to 2000, the total number of housing units increased by 2,900 units, or 30%, for an annual average increase of about 145 housing units. However, in the subject neighborhoods, the total number of housing units decreased by 5% from 4,590 to 4,346. Reductions of 16% and 12% occurred in the Washington and VanRaalte neighborhoods, respectively, while Longfellow remained at the same levels and the Lincoln neighborhood increased by 5%. Regarding the Lincoln neighborhood numbers, the dramatic increase in housing units (341) between 1990 and 2000 is directly attributed to the construction of Freedom Village and its 330 housing units. Obviously, these Freedom Village housing units have skewed the Lincoln area numbers to the point where one may surmise that if it had not been constructed, the number of housing units in that neighborhood would have remained static.
- The percent of owner occupied year round housing decreased from 71% to 67% in the City, which also means the percent of rental occupied housing increased from approximately 29% to 33%. The ratio of owner to rental occupied housing remained somewhat stable in the neighborhoods with owner occupied actually increasing in the Longfellow and Lincoln areas. The percent of owner occupied housing in the Washington area has reversed a downward trend and increased from 55% to 57% between 1990 and 2000. The Lincoln area also saw a turnaround between 1990 and 2000 as the percent of owner occupied year around housing units increased from 39% to 47%. The VanRaalte area remained strong with over 70% owner occupied year around housing.
- Regarding the values of owner occupied housing, the City values decreased in real dollars by 8% during the 1980's, but then rebounded by 17% during the 1990's for a 7% increase between 1980 and 2000. The values in Lincoln, VanRaalte and Longfellow decreased between 3% and 10% between 1980 and 1990, while Washington bucked the trend and increased its real value by 2%. It is anticipated that the value rebound that occurred on a City-wide basis during the 1990's included the central neighborhoods, but that will need to be confirmed with additional Census data when available.
- Home owners City-wide were paying 10% more in constant dollars for their mortgages between 1980 and 2000, but for the neighborhoods the mortgages were staying relatively flat at least between 1980 and 1990.
- Gross monthly median rents decreased City-wide by 7% in constant dollars over this 20 year period. In the neighborhoods during the 1980's the gross rents increased by as much as 19% in the Lincoln area, while the Longfellow area did not increase at all. The median rent in the Lincoln area was the highest of all four neighborhoods between 1980 and 1990, and was even higher than the figure for the entire City, all the while experiencing the greatest constant dollar reductions in median household income and per capita income of the four neighborhoods.

- The percent of monthly median income used for mortgage payments on a City-wide basis increased from 23% to 26% between 1980 and 2000, for an 11% increase. All of this increase occurred in the 1980's. In the Washington neighborhood this percentage used for monthly mortgage payments dropped from 30% to 23% for a 21% reduction between 1980 and 1990, while the Lincoln neighborhood saw the greatest increase in mortgage payments as a percentage of monthly from 26% to 30%, which equates to a 16% increase.
- The percent of monthly median income used for rent payments on a City-wide basis decreased slightly from 17% to 16%. Similar to the monthly mortgage figures, the Washington area experienced a 15% decline in the amount of monthly income used for rent between 1980 and 1990, while the Lincoln neighborhood experienced a very large 39% increase from 20% to 27%.



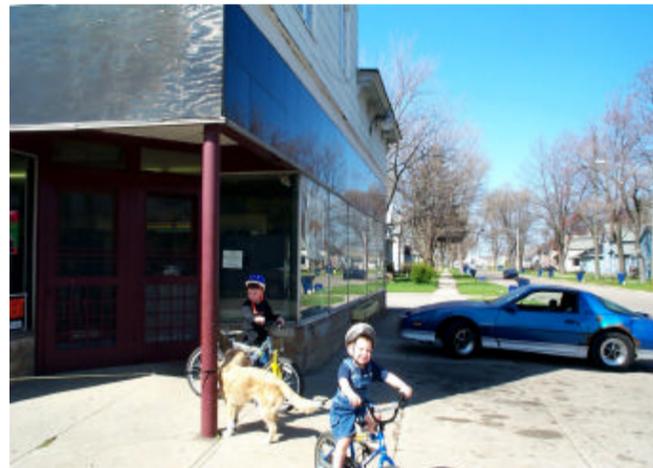
Means of Transportation to Work - 1980-1990 (and City wide for 2000)																		
	City						Washington			VanRaalte			Lincoln			Longfellow		
	1980	1990	2000	% Chg	% Chg	% Chg	1980	1990	% Chg	1980	1990	% Chg	1980	1990	% Chg	1980	1990	% Chg
				80-90	90-00	80-00			80-90			80-90			80-90			80-90
Workers 16 years and over	11688	14513	16928	24.2%	16.6%	44.8%	927	1073	15.7%	1395	1546	10.8%	1636	1856	13.4%	1502	1611	7.3%
Car, truck, van - drive alone	8104	11278	13044	39.2%	15.7%	61.0%	512	791	54.5%	941	1196	27.1%	726	811	11.7%	1119	1172	4.7%
+ Mode percent	69.3%	77.7%	77.1%	12.1%	-0.8%	11.1%	55.2%	73.7%	33.5%	67.5%	77.4%	14.7%	44.4%	43.7%	-1.5%	74.5%	72.7%	-2.4%
Car, truck, van - carpool	1995	1423	1852	-28.7%	30.1%	-7.2%	153	136	-11.1%	318	242	-23.9%	367	141	-61.6%	237	274	15.6%
+ Mode percent	17.1%	9.8%	10.9%	-42.6%	11.6%	-35.9%	16.5%	12.7%	-23.2%	22.8%	15.7%	-31.3%	22.4%	7.6%	-66.1%	15.8%	17.0%	7.8%
Public transportation	111	76	178	-31.5%	134.2%	60.4%	10	25	150.0%	13	0	-100.0%	43	23	-46.5%	1	21	2000.0%
+ Mode percent	0.9%	0.5%	1.1%	-44.9%	100.8%	10.7%	1.1%	2.3%	116.0%	0.9%	0.0%	-100.0%	2.6%	1.2%	-52.9%	0.1%	1.3%	1857.9%
Walked only	1099	1139	1284	3.6%	12.7%	16.8%	207	44	-78.7%	103	53	-48.5%	431	801	85.8%	87	76	-12.6%
+ Mode percent	9.4%	7.8%	7.6%	-16.5%	-3.4%	-19.3%	22.3%	4.1%	-81.6%	7.4%	3.4%	-53.6%	26.3%	43.2%	63.8%	5.8%	4.7%	-18.6%
Other means	266	182	165	-31.6%	-9.3%	-38.0%	34	51	50.0%	20	5	-75.0%	56	11	-80.4%	27	42	55.6%
+ Mode percent	2.3%	1.3%	1.0%	-44.9%	-22.3%	-57.2%	3.7%	4.8%	29.6%	1.4%	0.3%	-77.4%	3.4%	0.6%	-82.7%	1.8%	2.6%	45.0%
Worked at home	113	415	405	267.3%	-2.4%	258.4%	11	26	136.4%	1	50	4900.0%	13	69	430.8%	32	26	-18.8%
+ Mode percent	1.0%	2.9%	2.4%	195.8%	-16.3%	147.5%	1.2%	2.4%	104.2%	0.1%	3.2%	4411.6%	0.8%	3.7%	367.9%	2.1%	1.6%	-24.2%
Mean travel time in minutes	NA	13.5	14.5		7.4%		NA	14.4		NA	13.9		NA	10.4		NA	11.8	

Notes: VanRaalte worked at home figure for 1980 is actually 0, but for statistical purposes we used 1.
Longfellow public transportation figure for 1980 is actually 0, but for statistical purposes we used 1.

Discussion: Means of Transportation to Work 1980-1990 (City-wide for 2000)

Note: As with much other neighborhood level information in this Plan, the only information now available is from the 1980 and 1990 Census. New 2000 Census information should be available in 2003.

- The number of workers increased by 45% on a City-wide basis between 1980 and 2000, including a 24% increase between 1980 and 1990, but the increase in the subject neighborhoods only increased by a range of 7% to 16%.
- Americans “love affair” with the automobile continues to grow and the residents of Holland are no different from others. City-wide, the number of people who drive alone to work increased from 69% to 78% of the population. In the neighborhoods, Washington experienced the greatest increase in the number of people driving alone to work from 55% to 74% of the population. Van Raalte’s figures about mirror those for the entire City, while Lincoln and Longfellow actually saw their drive alone numbers drop slightly.
- Carpooling took a nose dive as the number of residents who use this method of transportation dropped City-wide from 17% to 10%. The largest neighborhood decrease came in Lincoln, while Longfellow was the only neighborhood that actually increased the amount of carpooling.



- Public transportation also took a hit City-wide with a 45% reduction, although the absolute numbers are only a fraction of a percent of the total work trips. The increases and decreases for the individual neighborhoods are very high due to the very small number of people who use this means of transportation.
- Walking as a means of transportation is also on the downside as more and more people use their cars. The only neighborhood where there was an increase is Lincoln that actually had a very large increase in walkers from 26% to 43% of the workers. Other means of transportation such as biking were also down for the entire City, but there were increases both in the Washington and Longfellow neighborhoods.
- And lastly, the amount of people working at home almost tripled in the City, and large increases were seen in three of the four neighborhoods.
- In conclusion, even in our relatively compact central city neighborhoods, where we should seemingly have the greatest amount of choices regarding means of transportation, we continue to use our cars at ever increasing rates. There are glimpses here and there of residents using alternative methods to the single occupancy vehicle, but we are unable to report why. We do not know for example if the incomes in the Lincoln area were higher, would that mean more people could afford vehicles and therefore that neighborhood’s high percentage of walkers would be much less? Would the opposite hold true for the Washington neighborhood? These are all interesting questions that have a bearing on the livability and quality of life of these neighborhoods, but in order to delve into these questions we need additional Census data and the ability to undertake a statistical analysis that is beyond the scope of this neighborhood plan.

VII. Weeds, Wildflowers and Belief Statements.

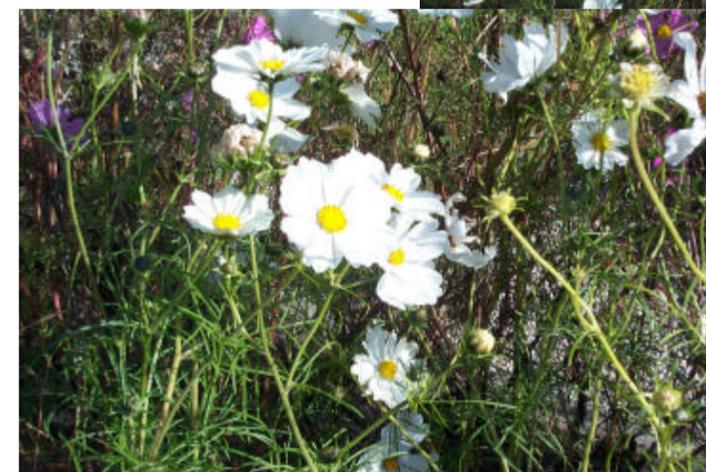
Here we are. We have surveyed our garden area and we now have a good idea of what grows well and blossoms and what does not in our central neighborhoods (Note: Planning Commission reviewed a number of existing Plans and the policies they may include regarding the Central Neighborhoods area. See Addendums.) We are aware of the need to be constantly vigilant to pull weeds when necessary, but we also know that what some residents may consider weeds, others may consider wildflowers. So we must be careful, informed, and know the difference between a weed and a wildflower so we do not uproot what may end up being a strength of a neighborhood if it were allowed to mature.

In order for us to move forward through this process and to help us define the emerging issues, we must first of all define and take stock of our current beliefs and values regarding the Central Neighborhoods and what our expectations are for this process. In a way, the following are both statements of beliefs and more action based current and emerging issues.

We Believe That:

1. Neighborhoods are an essential element of Holland's quality of life. Neighborhood enhancement, preservation, improvement, and development should be encouraged through public, private, and voluntary action.
2. Neighborhood character and environmental quality should be protected. Possible changes in land use or new public and private development in or near residential areas should be carefully evaluated and designed to conserve and enhance neighborhood quality.
3. Preservation of the Historic District and near in historical neighborhoods, landmark features, and historical structures should be supported and significant structures should be preserved.
4. Priority should be given to maintenance and rehabilitation of sound, usable structures rather than demolition. This should apply to all housing in the Central City Neighborhood area, not just the Historic District.
5. The expectation for high levels of maintenance continues for both public and private property through the efforts of the City, private citizens, the private business sector, and voluntary organizations.
6. Building, housing maintenance, and zoning codes should be strengthened, when needed, and effectively enforced to ensure continued and improved housing quality and community appearance.
7. New housing and housing types (townhouses, zero lot line, condominiums, etc.) should be encouraged to respond to current needs and trends including changing family structures, household composition and economic conditions. However, new housing development in existing residential areas should be carefully designed to relate to and indeed be compatible with the existing neighborhood character.
8. Programs that support affordable housing for low and moderate-income households in the City should continue, and this issue should be vigorously promoted at the regional level.
9. The new development of and rehabilitation where needed of small neighborhood shopping areas to serve the needs of Central Neighborhood area residents should be encouraged through public policy and private actions. Regulations should ensure that neighborhood commercial uses are in keeping with the neighborhood's character.
10. Controls to help ensure that new or expanded industrial and commercial developments are good neighbors for residential or other adjacent areas should be carefully evaluated and strengthened where necessary. In the same vein, good neighbor industrial and commercial developments are supportive of and characteristic of healthy mixed-use neighborhoods.

11. The development of formal and informal neighborhood organizations for the purposes of self help, community watch, and neighborhood planning, etc. should be encouraged through public and private resources.
12. Environmental and civic design amenities that enhance neighborhood livability should be encouraged in all neighborhoods and should be protected.
13. Synergies between and among public and private sector agencies and service providers should be encouraged whenever opportunities arise.
14. Continued improvements and refinements to the transportation system are necessary to keep central city residents connected to the primary employment and service centers. A transportation system that acknowledges the modern need for mobility and convenient access to larger transportation networks must nevertheless work in tandem with the quality pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit systems that currently exist in the Central Neighborhoods.
15. Quality recreational and passive enjoyment opportunities should be available for all Central City residents and age groups.



III.V. Plan Recommendations and Emerging Issues:

The following issues have been identified by the Planning Commission and Stakeholders of the community as recommended items that need to be addressed, solved, and/or completed in order to fulfill our desire of nurturing our ‘Good Neighborhood’ model for the Central Neighborhoods.

A. Neighborhood Organization and Planning (Grass Roots)

1. Neighborhood Organizing

- This Plan recognizes that many communities identify their distinct central neighborhoods for organizational and funding purposes. The Planning Commission and Community Services and Development Department in conjunction with the Ourstreet Program, other agencies and groups that focus on the Central Neighborhoods, and most importantly the neighborhood residents themselves should formally identify the distinct neighborhoods that comprise our central city area, and then decide to what extent (formally or informally) they should organize.

2. Neighborhood Planning

- The stated purpose of the Ourstreet Program is to stimulate physical improvements to the neighborhoods by providing proactive “on the street” assistance to homeowners, landlords and tenants. A secondary purpose is to serve as a link between property owners/residents of the target neighborhood (between 13th and 18th Streets and Washington Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue) and the services that could assist them.
- This Plan acknowledges the successes of this program, but challenges the Ourstreet Program and the City Community Services and Development Department towards developing and implementing sustainable grass root level neighborhood planning efforts for the Central City neighborhoods. This neighborhood planning should be a formal extension of municipal functions, and should be free to openly advocate for Central Neighborhood planning, zoning, and other municipal responsibilities. Funding sources should also be explored for the provision of additional planning and development related services.

3. Ourstreet Expansion Process

- Additionally, this Plan suggests that the Ourstreet Program and City Council evaluate when, where, and how it makes the best sense to expand or move its program into another area of the Central City. This evaluation process should at a minimum include a two fold process that first evaluates in as objective a manner as possible whether the goals and objectives are being achieved for current Ourstreet target areas, and secondly includes the study, benchmarking, and setting of goals and objectives for new candidate areas.

4. Conservation Districts

- Conservation districts may be described as scaled back historic districts that can be individually tailored to meet the needs and desires of separate neighborhood or block areas based on the wishes of the area’s residents. The main difference between a conservation district and a historic district is that the former could be set up with virtually any type of legal criteria and could apply to almost any neighborhood, while the latter must meet specific historic designation criteria. An historic district is mandatory and every property in such a district must comply with the requirements, whereas depending on how a conservation district is set up, it may be voluntary, advisory, or mandatory.
- Conservation districts are meant to restore an element of predictability especially to those people making

residential real estate investments in the Central neighborhoods. It is generally understood that one of the reasons why a segment of the population finds suburban living more appealing than living in the Central neighborhoods is because newer suburban developments regularly include private deed restrictions and covenants on the use of land that limit people’s ability to do “offensive” things.

- Properties in the Central neighborhoods by in large do not have protective deed restrictions and are therefore somewhat less predictable and carry more risk when it comes to making an investment in purchasing a home and making improvements to existing real estate. As previously noted, these districts can provide more predictability so people may feel more comfortable in making their investment decisions.
- This Plan supports the creation of a task force, study group, or maybe an ad hoc committee of the Planning Commission to study and report to the Planning Commission and/or City Council on the feasibility, desirability, and legality of creating a mechanism to enable neighborhood conservation districts.

B. Land Use and Zoning

1. Traditional “Close-Knit” Neighborhood Design and Characteristics

- This Plan suggests that the Planning Commission should adopt and the entire structure of our City government should buy-in or at least be familiar with the timeless urban design principles as noted in the Congress for New Urbanism Charter, the Ahwahnee Principles, and the emerging “Close-Knit Community Planning” movement. These urban design principles should act as our Guidelines and Aspirations for City building and maintenance, and our efforts to create and maintain “Good Neighborhoods”. Buy-in and understanding will only be achieved if there is a large educational component geared towards all City employees and representatives to act as marketing agents for “Good Neighborhoods”. A sustained educational effort should also be geared towards the local land development and home builders sector as well as home buyers.

2. Land Use Plan Map Amendments

- Proposed revisions to the Land Use Plan Map seek to build on the changes initially proposed in the 1992 Master Plan that sought to shift the development paradigm for the central neighborhoods away from the urban redevelopment policies of prior decades towards a program or policy of preserving and maintaining existing housing stock and urban forms such as the grid street system.
- Proposed changes also include the creation of a new Traditional Neighborhood planning designation that encourages a mixture of different residential types and ownership. It is envisioned that a large portion of the Central Neighborhood area will be re-designated to this new Traditional Neighborhood planning designation.
- The Public/Quasi-Public and Park planning areas will essentially remain the same with small additions for the two newer public charter schools; Vanderbilt Charter Academy, and the Black River Public School.
- The General Industrial areas will be slightly reduced to reflect Black River Public School’s interest in their property along with some residential rezoning of land in the Ottawa Avenue and 21st Street area.
- The Neighborhood Commercial areas should remain about the same except for the following adjustments:
 - a. Reduce the neighborhood commercial area on the south side of 13th Street west of Maple Avenue to coincide with the existing C-1 District zoning.
 - b. Slight expansion of the Washington Square area to include the commercial building at the NE corner of Washington Blvd and 18th Street, and possibly the lawyer’s office at the NW corner of 17th Street and Washington Blvd.

- c. Add new area for west side of Pine Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets.
- d. Slightly expand the area on the west side of River Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets.
- e. Small area at the SE corner of 13th Street and Central Avenue.
- The Office designation along River Avenue from 13th to 15th Street should be changed to Neighborhood Commercial, which will provide for a wider range of goods and services for area residents.
- The Public/Quasi-Public uses designation in the area of Hope College should be expanded to 11th Street between Lincoln and Fairbanks Avenues. Also, the frontage on the east side of Lincoln Avenue from 9th Street to 14th Street should be changed to Public/Quasi-Public uses.

3. Coding for Building Behavior on Sites vs. Coding for Uses

- This Plan seeks to “turn the corner” regarding the regulatory debate of whether cities, especially in their pre-WWII neighborhoods, should continue the currently wide spread use based approach to the regulation and strict separation of land uses, vs. a more contextual and architecturally based approach that regulates building locations, massing, and scale as buildings can then work together to provide for the wide array of land uses. This Plan promotes the later approach over the former as the best way to achieve our goal of creating and maintaining good neighborhoods.
- This new “old way” of guiding and regulating development and redevelopment opportunities in the Central Neighborhoods may come under fire when the rubber finally hits the road and this method is mainstreamed through the City Codes, because the use based approach has been institutionalized along with the hands off approach towards design concerns for the past 40-50 years and old habits will be very hard to break.

4. Neighborhood commercial areas

- This Plan seeks to elevate and re-establish the neighborhood commercial area as a viable center for neighborhood based commerce and provision of services. Just as the Downtown area of Holland may be viewed as the historical heart and center of the Holland area, so too may the many commercial areas scattered through the neighborhoods be viewed as the historical commercial centers for the neighborhoods.
- As we work towards the renaissance of neighborhood commercial areas, the City should study and evaluate whether many remnant commercial areas should be zoned back into conformance before they completely disappear into the larger residential fabric of the neighborhoods.
- Additionally, as these areas continue to revitalize themselves through the infusion of private and on occasion public sector investments, the City should seriously consider the creation of a City-wide neighborhood commercial planner/advocate position whose responsibility it would be to organize and provide staff support for budding neighborhood commercial business organizations. This person could also spearhead the development of public/private partnerships for improvements to targeted business areas.
- Regarding the preferred form for neighborhood commercial development and redevelopment, this Plan recognizes the market forces that many times prefer corridor/strip type designs over nodal type. The corridors that traverse the Central Neighborhoods in their physical and transportation sense are of the utmost importance to allow the efficient flow of people, goods, and services in, out, and through the neighborhoods. However, this Plan strongly believes that nodal type neighborhood commercial development and redevelopment is the best holistic design approach to provide safe, convenient, and quality neighborhood based shopping experiences for residents of the area as well as those who may pass through on one of the corridors.

5. Neighborhood industrial areas

- There are two somewhat historic industrial corridor areas in the Central Neighborhoods. One of the areas parallels Ottawa Avenue, while the other area parallels Lincoln Avenue and the main CSX Railroad line through the neighborhoods. While some of the manufacturers that once located in these corridors are no longer in business or have relocated (American Aerosols/Guardian, Holland Furnace/BASF, GPM Industries, “sugar beat” factory, etc.) many solid good neighbor manufacturers remain in these two areas such as Hydro Raufoss, Holland Hitch, Heinz, Baker Furniture, Thermotron and Worden among others.
- While the Planning Commission believes that new “smokestack” type manufacturing businesses would not be appropriate for these industrial areas given their close proximity to residential areas, these areas are well suited to more benign forms of industrial uses that do not create large volumes of traffic, noise, light, dust and other potential nuisances. Given that all utilities and standard public services exist in these areas, and the wonderful opportunity for employees to actually walk to work, the redevelopment if need be and the continued use of these industrial corridor areas for benign industrial uses is recommended.
- Some situations and properties may call for a change in use that may create “win-win” scenarios for the property owners and the surrounding neighborhoods. An example of this includes Black River Public School’s desire to receive adjacent vacant industrial zoned property from BASF Corporation and to convert the use of adjoining properties to educational and recreational purposes.
- This Plan believes that the potential neighborhood commercial business planner could also be tapped to work with the industrial businesses located in the neighborhoods.

6. Nurturing of Community Uses: Schools, Places of Worship, Libraries, and Parks

- If functioning neighborhoods are to remain the strong vibrant building blocks of our community, they must contain more than just places to live, park our cars, and buy a loaf of bread. They must also contain schools to educate our children, places of worship to feed our spiritual lives, libraries to feed our minds, and parks to play, relax, and daydream in. These community uses are part of the foundation on which the other aspects of a healthy neighborhood are built.
- Many municipalities now unfortunately treat these community uses as uses that should be highly regulated and separated from their sustaining neighborhood fabric. We must not go down that road, but instead we should celebrate these community uses as being vibrant centers of our social lives and not the noisy traffic generating uses as some people would like to portray them. Some constraints and rules are in place, and new ones may be needed from time to time to assure that these community uses are good neighbors to adjacent residential properties, but the constraints and rules must not be so burdensome that these community institutions may want to move out of the Central City. We must seek a healthy balance point between the orderly everyday operations of these uses and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Our nurturing of these community uses must also remain proactive as evidenced by the synergistic opportunities and projects the City has undertaken and completed with Holland Public Schools to renovate or augment the Van Raalte, Washington, and Longfellow Elementary School playgrounds. These facilities function also as gathering spots for community activities such as recreation, youth oriented organizational meetings, and for other neighborhood based social service meetings. As we continue to work with the schools, we should expand our vision to see what similar opportunities may be available to provide recreational and community programming with neighborhood churches. There appears to be considerable neighborhood interest in investigating the possibility of nurturing other completely new neighborhood gathering places such as a Community Gardening program on vacant or under utilized properties.

7. Density and Intensity of Uses

- It is a commonly held belief that the density of residential housing has increased in the central neighborhoods over the past couple decades, as well as an increase in the intensity at which the housing units are used. The statistics from this Plan indicate that this first belief is false, but the second belief appears to be true.
- The number of housing units actually decreased by 5%, while the population increased by 8%. This can only mean that the average sizes of households are increasing in the remaining housing units in the neighborhoods. Couple this with the statistics that single occupancy vehicle use continues to increase locally and one may be able to quickly surmise that the number of vehicles per housing unit is also increasing. This can add credence to the viewpoint that the neighborhoods are increasingly becoming congested with people, their vehicles and their possessions that are quite often stored outside in the plain view of neighborhood residents, and the rest of the community who may pass through the area on occasion. If the number of housing units and households are demonstrably decreasing, then housing density as a perceived negative central neighborhood issue should be getting better, but the negative perception remains. This Plan believes that the real culprit to this negative perception is the intensity of use the central neighborhoods are experiencing due to the pressure placed on the decreasing housing stock, which manifests itself in a congested “dense” appearance.
- This Plan also suggests that the density of central neighborhood commercial uses is gradually reducing as non-conforming neighborhood commercial uses change over time to residential uses. This reduction in neighborhood based commercial activity is exasperated by the economies of scale afforded to the large chain retailers who by in large locate in locations outside of the central city. This coupled with household’s increasing use of and access to transportation tends to work against traditional neighborhood businesses.
- The common theme here regarding both the intensity and density of residential and non-residential uses is the continuing steady decline of the supply of residential and non-residential opportunities, which equates to a reduction in the number of choices for residents for residential and non-residential goods and services.
- This plan therefore advocates for the promotion of additional housing and neighborhood commercial opportunities for the Central Neighborhoods, which on the surface will produce higher densities of these uses, but should be the prescription for easing the intensity of use on the remaining resources, especially the housing stock.

8. Edges, Friction and Flare-up Points

- When you wander through the Central neighborhoods, or look at the Zoning or Current Land Use Map of the area, you immediately become aware of the vast diversity of land uses, building types, and urban forms in this area. We have one area where historic single-family homes, multi-family housing, a school, church, a neighborhood commercial area, and a neighborhood park are all within 300—400 feet of each other. Talk about things happening! Indeed, this area is likely one of the most diverse urban areas in the entire Holland area. This can be very exciting and stimulating to the senses on one hand, but this close proximity of buildings and activities may create friction at times when an event, activity, or maybe even an everyday occurrence such as school busses swooping down on a school after 3 PM may temporarily overwhelm the neighbors. We must understand, welcome, and even celebrate these everyday characteristics of City life as the heartbeat of our neighborhoods.
- This Plan notes that when friction and flare-ups along primarily the edges of residential and commercial areas start to become too problematic due to systemic and/or operational reasons, then the City should

investigate if any intervention is warranted. Per our existing Zoning Ordinance requirements, any type of zone district change or site plan review request automatically triggers a mandatory review of these compatibility factors between properties and land uses to determine if any mitigating action should be undertaken. Where an approval is involved, mitigating actions may consist of requiring additional landscaping, more or less exterior lighting, restrictions on hours of operation, or other actions that may more appropriately address a situation.

- An example of where some friction is occurring in the Central Neighborhoods is along the north edge of both historic district areas where area residents have complained for years about the loud noises coming from the industrial waterfront areas. This is not a situation that presents any easy answers or fixes regarding the complaints. Most if not all of the industrial businesses along the waterfront have been in their locations for decades and are likely operating in line with established business practices that just happen to produce noise due to the nature of the business. On the other hand, there are new people and families moving into the adjacent residential area on a regular basis that may expect a quiet neighborhood, but then are surprised when they hear industrial noises throughout the evening and during the night. What should be done?
- The City has the ability to regulate some of the business activities if/when a business wants to expand, and the City has used that opportunity in the past to address concerns of the adjacent residential neighborhood. An example of this regulation was when VerPlank’s Dock approached the City 4-5 years ago to expand their business. The City approved the requested business expansion, but placed limitations and conditions on the operation of the business such as limiting the hours of operation for on-site equipment and trucking activities. In order to make progress on other issues, there will be no substitute to the parties just sitting down, discussing the issues, and trying in good faith to find acceptable outcomes for an issue. The alternative to the neighborhood residents, waterfront industrial businesses, and the City not working together to find acceptable outcomes may have to be the formulation of a new Noise Ordinance.

9. Traditional Neighborhood Zone District/Concentration of Non-conforming Buildings

- This Plan recognizes the large amount of non-conforming buildings and uses that exist in the central neighborhoods that were created largely by the urban renewal policies and related ordinance amendments that were adopted in the 1950’s and 60’s. This Plan notes that even though those urban renewal policies and the resulting zoning regulations enabled and made possible the wholesale razing of single family residential blocks for high density residential apartment blocks if deemed desirable and economically feasible by the development community, we can now say with our 20/20 hindsight that those development policies and zoning regulations were ill founded and harmful to the neighborhoods. Presently and here’s the wake up call, we are still carrying many of the zoning regulations meant to implement those urban renewal policies on our books.
- The result of this is that roughly 40% of the residential properties and buildings in the Central neighborhoods are non-conforming because they do not meet the more suburban lot area, width, and setback requirements of the current central city zone districts. Our current Zoning Ordinance is slowly working to physically convert the central neighborhoods into a suburban type area, and maybe more importantly it continues to psychologically sustain a suburban rather than urban attitude about central neighborhood living. Additionally, there are approximately one to two dozen commercially used properties in the area that are zoned for residential purposes. This means our Zoning Ordinance is also officially trying to change the use of these buildings and properties to residential uses, exactly when we would like to encourage the mixture of uses in the neighborhoods.

- This Plan advocates for changes in the Zoning Ordinance to make the vast majority of residential properties completely conforming, again, by the crafting of a new Traditional Neighborhood Zone District.
10. Building Infill Guidelines for Residential and Neighborhood Commercial Buildings
- The City implemented residential infill design requirements for new residential buildings back in 1999 as a response to residents' concerns with several homes being constructed that did not "fit" with the character of existing homes in the neighborhoods. These new requirements have been quite successful as the design of infill homes is now much more respectful of adjacent homes, which will be a positive for the adjoining properties and the larger neighborhood.
 - This Plan suggests that these guidelines be completed, however, by the creation of an illustrated Residential Infill Guideline booklet or pamphlet that can be readily distributed to residents who may be interested in construction activities.
 - Regarding neighborhood commercial properties, in 2000 the City approved new C-1 District maximum front yard setback requirements of 10 feet for new commercial buildings in "traditional neighborhood commercial areas", which is defined as C-1 zoned properties within the area bounded by 8th Street on the north, Fairbanks and Lincoln Avenues on the east, 24th Street extended on the south, and Ottawa Avenue on the west. The Central Park commercial area located at South Shore Drive and Myrtle Avenue, along with the Maplewood commercial area located at 32nd Street and Columbia Avenue are also subject to these new zoning requirements. These requirements more or less require new buildings to relate to the urban character and pedestrian scale of the surrounding neighborhoods by requiring the placement of buildings up close to the street and the placement of parking lots to the side or rear of buildings. The 2000 zoning amendments also reduced the amount of required on-site parking for C-1 neighborhood commercial properties by 50% due to the number of patrons who may walk or ride a bike to neighborhood business areas.
 - This plan also suggests that infill guidelines and an illustrated booklet be developed for new neighborhood commercial buildings with input from both the commercial development community and residential neighborhood groups.
11. Wireless Communication Facilities
- As the demand for wireless communications continues to increase for voice, data, and in the future wireless broadband applications, the need for towers and other related infrastructure, or other design/siting solutions in the Central Neighborhoods is expected. To prepare for this next demand in wireless communications, the City has completed a Wireless Infrastructure Study that inventories all of the existing wireless communication facilities in the City as well as those facilities in adjoining townships that provide wireless coverage into the City. This Study also provides some coverage analysis and indicates areas where we may see future requests for additional wireless communication facilities. This Study notes the rapid change that occurs in this industry as technology continues to leap frog forward thus making physical improvements today almost obsolete within the course of a few years.
 - It is anticipated that further work with a wireless communications consultant is needed to help us better understand what Master Plan policy and zoning ordinance changes should be made to balance the protection of the high quality of life found in the central neighborhoods with the infrastructure needs of the industry as they in turn try to better meet the communication demands of their customers in these same central neighborhood areas.
12. Proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendments - The following is a list of zoning issues identified by Central Neighborhood residents, Planning Commissioners and Planning staff as issues that need further study and potential action in the form of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.
- a. Residential Infill Regulations
 - Need to complete the Guideline booklet to accompany Section 39-198. (See #10 above)
 - b. Neighborhood Commercial Infill Regulations
 - Need to implement Design Guidelines in the form of zoning ordinance amendments to the C-1 District and complete a guideline booklet very similar to that envisioned for the Residential Infill requirements.
 - c. Prohibition on "snout houses"
 - Text amendment to require that attached garages and other accessory buildings are flush with or behind the front facade of the house. Amendments could also set a maximum percent that the garage may cover of the front of the house. The Planning Commission would need to determine if these requirements should apply to the Central Neighborhoods area, or possibly City-wide.
 - d. Allow flexible uses
 - Accessory Apartments – The Planning Commission should study whether Section 39-191 Rear Dwellings that prohibits accessory buildings on a residential lot to be used for residential purposes should be deleted, modified to allow some forms of residential uses that may not include dwelling unit uses as a possible special exception use, or kept as is. Another option may be to only allow accessory apartments in PRD Planned Residential Development districts where specific requirements may be placed on a development by the Planning Commission during the development plan approval procedure.
 - Home Occupations/Businesses – The Planning Commission needs to study and revamp this section with an eye towards creating a new tiered permitting process. As part of a study process, the City needs to first of all recognize that the current ordinance language drives many home occupations underground and makes otherwise law abiding citizens out to be law breakers because many of our citizens perceive the current regulations as being too intrusive and just plain "red tape". This obviously is not the intent of our current home occupation requirements, but it is the net result. We need to use this opportunity to streamline the permitting process and to pare the regulations down to the point where they truly make common sense and are accepted as valid by our residents.
 - A proposed tier permitting process may categorize no impact to very low impact uses as home occupations that are allowed by right in residential zone districts. The second and third tier uses may be newly categorized as home businesses that may have increasing discernable impacts on neighbors. It is envisioned that the second tier permitting process may require review and approval from the Zoning Administrator, while the third tier may require review and approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals or possibly the Planning Commission.
 - e. Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements
 - Section 39-45(c) - Correct noticing procedures regarding parking determinations and correct reference sections.

- Section 39-48 Parking Schedule - Some Planning Commissioners and residents have advocated for tossing out large portions of these requirements. There is some rationale to this bold idea because in today's day and age, retailers, residential developers, and indeed the broad range of development interests have to provide adequate parking to market their properties for tenants regardless of our local regulations. Indeed, some progressive communities are now advocating for and adopting maximum on-site parking requirements in addition to base minimum requirements. This idea has pros and cons and those should be studied in depth and debated by the Planning Commission prior to entertaining any ordinance amendments.
 - Section 39-51(a) - Why do residential and non-residential buildings and uses in Residential Districts have to provide on-site parking, while commercial and non-residential uses in commercial zone districts need only provide parking within 300' of the property? For industrial uses, required parking shall be provided within 500' of the property. The Planning Commission should study these varying requirements to determine if there are any reasons for these varying requirements, and secondly, if there are no good reasons, consider standardizing the requirements.
 - Section 39-55 Off-street Loading and Unloading Spaces - Do we need or even want to enforce this off-street loading/unloading requirement for certain commercial uses in the Central Neighborhoods? At least as it pertains to the Central Neighborhoods, this appears to be an outdated requirement that just adds to the amount of required on-site pavement and works to spread buildings out and produce a suburban site design. This Plan believes that the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to only require off-street loading and unloading spaces for businesses in Industrial zone districts and commercial businesses adjacent to high traffic volume streets, with the exception of commercial businesses in the C-3 Central Business District.
- f. Section 39-185(b) Accessory building separation requirement –
- Is there a good public purpose to continue requiring that detached accessory buildings in residential districts be a minimum of 10' from any dwelling?
 - A handful of variance requests come to the Zoning Board of Appeals each year regarding this issue. If an accessory building is less than 10' from a dwelling, it still needs to meet all Building Code requirements. Shouldn't the Building Code requirements be enough? Here again, this little section of the Zoning Ordinance is working to produce a more spread out suburban site design that requires a somewhat larger lot, instead of allowing a more dense coverage of property that is entirely characteristic of the Central Neighborhood urban fabric. This Plan advocates for the deletion of this zoning requirement and to allow the separation requirements of the Building Code to govern.
- g. Section 39-2 – The definition of "Family" needs to be updated in light of recent court cases.
- h. Section 39-197 Accessory uses of residential yards
- Why is a pad-mounted air-conditioning unit, which is a piece of equipment and not a part of the structure, not allowed in a required side yard? A situation involving this requirement came to the attention of the Zoning Board of Appeals this past year and unfortunately the ZBA had to evaluate a homeowner's request for relief from this section as a variance. The variance was not approved and the homeowner was required to move the equipment at a high cost. The Planning Commission needs to re-evaluate this section to determine if some of these requirements can be deleted or adjusted.
- i. Section 39-210 R-1 Permitted Uses
- This Plan believes the Planning Commission should examine the setback requirements for non-residential uses/buildings allowed in the R-1 District, and by reference then to all R Residential Districts. The setback requirements listed apply to both principal and accessory buildings. Does it make sense to require for instance a storage shed on a church property to be 25' from any property line, or in the case of a school for a storage shed to be 50' from any property line when the same type of accessory building on a Residentially zoned and used property need only be 2 feet from a property line?
 - Maybe even a larger issue here is to re-examine these setbacks to determine whether the rationale for them remains valid. For instance, why are school buildings required to be setback 50' from any property line? Is this the suburban site design model rearing its head in our Zoning Ordinance again? Is the issue of concern the possible scale of new buildings? When the schools in our community look at this ordinance, does it leave them with an impression that they can not expand and remodel older existing facilities in the Central Neighborhoods, and that they should look for acreage properties on the City fringe where they can meet all of our ordinance requirements outright?
 - This Plan believes there may be legitimate issues regarding the scale of buildings, but there is likely a better method of regulating the building scale to setback issue than relying on the one size fits all setback requirements as noted above.
- j. Sections 39-225 and 236, and Sections 39-237, 270, and 280 – All regarding Exceptional Uses
- Exceptional uses are land uses that may be permitted by the Zoning Board of Appeals after a public hearing and review process to determine if the land use and development meet some set requirements.
 - There are two types of exceptional uses allowed in the Central Neighborhoods. Sections 39-225 and 39-236 allow for medical offices in the R-2 and R-3 Districts within 200 feet of the Holland Community Hospital property, while Sections 39-237, 270, and 280 allow for office commercial and accessory parking lot uses in the R-3, R-5, and R-6 Districts when adjacent to any State/Federal highway in the City. In the Central Neighborhoods area this includes properties adjacent to the Michigan and River Avenue corridor.
 - This Plan believes these exceptional uses in many cases are detrimental to the established urban fabric of the Central Neighborhood area. While some of the older exceptional uses have now had time to settle into a new relationship with the adjacent residential neighborhoods (e.g. medical office buildings on north side of 24th Street and some along Michigan Avenue north of 22nd Street), the newer and sometimes failed efforts continue to have problems (e.g. old KFC site).
 - This Plan recommends that a study be conducted to determine the status of the exceptional use properties along the Michigan and River Avenue corridor with an eye towards the possible deletion of the noted sections from the Zoning Ordinance. This study must also consider whether the existing exceptional use properties should be rezoned to a suitable commercial zoning district, such as the C-1 or C-5 District.
- k. Section 39-406(c) Porch Enclosures
- An amendment to Section 39-185(a) approved in 1999 to clarify some front yard setback requirements in Residential zone districts is now having an unintended consequence of allowing residential porch enclosures without the porch special exception review with the Zoning Board of Appeals pursuant to Section 39-406(a) of the Zoning Ordinance. Prior to the 1999 amendment, the

Zoning Board of Appeals would typically grant a porch enclosure special exception, but only if windows were prominent features in the remodel design and the construction materials were compatible with the house. Under the 1999 amendment home owners can now freely convert their porches to other residential uses, which are not necessarily bad, except if the remodeling work ends up removing or drastically reducing the number of porch windows, which has the net adverse effect of reducing the number of “eyes on the street”.

- This Plan recommends that the Planning Commission review Sections 39-185(a) and 39-406(c) of the Zoning Ordinance to determine what adjustments should be made to insure that porches stay truly functional and the neighborhood benefit of having “eyes on the street” stays intact. This may include reinstating the Zoning Board of Appeals review, or more likely adding this to the list of Residential Infill review items that may be approved administratively based on specific standards.

1. New Demolition Permit Ordinance

- Currently, unless a building is in one of the Historic Districts, or is a designated landmark historic building, property owners have the property right to demolish any building or structure they own in the City. While this may be of no concern to some, others may find this downright scary.
- While not advocating one way or the other at this time, the Planning Commission believes an open discussion of the pros and cons of instituting such a building demolition ordinance should occur. Issues of concern that are prodding the Planning Commission to at least examine what may constitute such an ordinance include: The potential loss of a “significant” building; the loss of housing in the Central Neighborhoods which as discussed elsewhere in this Plan would likely qualify as “affordable type housing”; the loss of urban character; and the concern or lack of confidence that whatever replaces the demolished building will be better than what was demolished.

m. Amendments to the Non-Conforming Uses and Structures section

- As previously noted, there are a relatively high percentage of non-conforming buildings (by virtue of area and yard requirements) in the Central Neighborhoods area. While the potential rezoning of large portions of the Central Neighborhoods to a Traditional Neighborhood zone district will likely address the lion’s share of these non-conforming issues, there will still be situations with primarily older commercial and industrial properties where renovation and building improvement projects may be held up and required to receive variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals because an existing building does not meet the current yard area requirements.
- The Planning Commission reviewed this item over five years ago and it did not receive much support at that time. However, in light of the new emphasis to support and facilitate the renovation of older buildings and properties for neighborhood supportive uses, this Plan recommends that the Planning Commission again undertake the review of amending language that will allow some expansions of non-conforming buildings and structures when the subject property is conforming in use.

C. Housing

1. Innovative ways to promote and/or require additional and varying types of housing.

- This Plan recommends that Community Services and Development Department staff research and report to the Planning Commission and City Council on innovative housing methods being used or developed in other areas of the State and Country. The report should identify both market based and regulatory ap-

proaches for housing in central city locations, and evaluate and make recommendations regarding the various approaches. This report should include but not be limited to discussing the following:

- a. What incentives may the City provide for property owners and developers to convert existing two-family and multi-family rental buildings to owner occupied condominium dwelling units? This does not necessarily mean converting two and multi-family houses to single family houses, but instead it places an emphasis on ownership of the existing dwelling units.
- b. What incentives or regulatory requirements are there for new dwelling units to be located on the upper floors of new multi-floor neighborhood commercial buildings and businesses?
- c. How may Accessory Apartments fill part of the housing need? Where and in what situations and locations in the City may this type of housing make the best sense? This may also be a means to provide more ownership opportunities as owners will have additional income for a mortgage payment.
- d. How can Community Land Trusts be used to purchase two-family and multi-family properties and allow for the conversion of rental dwelling units to owner occupied residential condominiums? The trust would continue to own the land, but would lease to condominium owners under a renewable long term lease say for 50 or 99 years. A community land trust can ensure continued housing affordability by tying the resale price of the condominium units to the local wage scale.

2. “Zero Net Loss” Housing Policy and Affordable Housing Fund

- Over the course of the last few years, it has become increasingly evident that the Central neighborhoods are losing housing units. Some of this loss may be attributed to some two and multi-family residences being converted to single family occupancy homes, which in many regards is a positive development. Additional loss has occurred from removal of housing, for instance where repeated flooding problems led to government purchase of two properties and created a public benefit by breaking the cycle of flood and repair being passed from one homeowner to the next. Other houses are removed by private businesses or non-profit organizations to allow for the expansion of their facilities. Still other houses are removed by private businesses or non-profits in anticipation of future development or on a purely speculative basis.
- This Plan recognizes the unique role that the housing stock in the Central neighborhoods plays not only for the City as a whole, but indeed for the entire greater Holland area. By in large the housing production sector in the Holland area is not producing new detached housing at prices comparable to the sales price of existing homes in the Central neighborhoods. So when a house is removed from the neighborhoods and not replaced with a similar structure in the same location, there is one less house available in this price range for the Holland area.
- This Plan also recognizes that cities are living organisms in a sense, and the buildings and other improvements are not constructed to last forever. So it may be viewed as natural that as some homes reach the functional end of their lives that they be removed. However, the key here, which would create a new policy, is that if homes are to be removed, for whatever reason, there should be a corresponding construction of a new house or dwelling unit in the Central neighborhoods. In essence this becomes a new “Zero net loss” policy for housing in the Central neighborhoods.
- An alternative approach that may provide more flexibility for property owners and still address the larger topic of affordable housing is to require the payment of a modest fee into an affordable housing fund for every dwelling unit that is removed from the market. This fund could be used to assist qualified people with the purchase of a home, or to assist non-profit organizations and even for profit businesses with the financing and construction of additional affordable housing in the City. The legality of requiring such a

fee in the City must obviously be determined.

- A “Zero Net Loss” housing policy would likely be controversial, and would raise many questions, especially if the policy leads to subsequent regulations. The idea of an Affordable Housing Fund may be less controversial, especially if payments into the fund are voluntary. In order to better understand what may be the costs and benefits of a “Zero Net Loss” housing policy and an Affordable Housing Fund, this Plan challenges the Community Services and Development Department staff with researching and reporting to the Planning Commission their findings and recommendations regarding these issues.

3. Affordable Housing, Diversity of Incomes

- The existing affordable housing policy adopted by City Council and the Housing Advisory Commission states that new housing developments with over 10 dwelling units should contain 10% to 15% affordable units. Based on 1990 demographic information, it is estimated that 30-40% of the dwelling units in the entire City may be deemed “affordable” with this figure increasing to 40-50% for the central neighborhoods area. The 2000 Census information has not yet been studied to determine what changes may have occurred over the past 12 years, but it is believed that these figures have not changed dramatically.
- However, this policy has proven more difficult to implement when it comes to permitting new housing developments in other areas of the City. Even in those cases where the Planning Commission has pushed for an affordable component of 10-15% in new housing developments, the fact that no ordinance exists to compel such a component leaves the City in a situation where ultimately no or very few such truly affordable units are built.
- This Plan calls for taking a fresh look at this affordable housing topic, both as it relates to the Central neighborhood area and to the larger City and greater Holland area as a whole. To jumpstart a fresh take on this topic, this Plan offers up Andres Duany’s definition of affordable housing as being “a dwelling that can be bought with the starting salary of an elementary school teacher”. This description certainly brings the issue home and to life and frames it better than most other dry academic definitions.
- The City Housing Policy also calls for the community to strive for a mix of incomes in all neighborhoods. This policy states that “A target percentage of low-income households distributed within each neighborhood should not exceed the range of 10 to 15 percent. A further objective is to eliminate any ‘low-income’ census tracts, that is those situations where the percentage of low-income households exceeds 51% percent of households within a given census block.”
- This first stated goal would appear to be unachievable for the Central Neighborhoods and may be better applied to the development of new residential and neighborhood development areas in the City.
- Regarding the second stated goal, 1990 Census information and data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development indicate that six of the eight Census block groups in the Central Neighborhoods have more than 51% Low/Mod households. Three of these block groups range between 51% and 60%, while the other three range between 61% and 70% low/mod households. A view of the information seems to show Hope College skewing this information to some extent as the highest low/mod areas comprised the Central Neighborhood area in and around the College.
- While this Plan advocates for the reduction of low/mod households in those neighborhood areas where these households number more than 51%, this Plan also realizes that we are talking about people and families here who may have chosen to live in these neighborhood areas for a multitude of reasons and may just want to stay put. However, other households may want to move elsewhere in the community if they can find the same quality of life and affordable housing. This Plan believes that although this objective of reducing low/mod households to below 51% may be achieved in some of the Central Neighborhood block groups, as long as the greater Holland area is not providing new owner occupied

housing opportunities that are within the affordability range of these low/mod households, they will likely stay put.

4. Building/Housing Codes

- This Plan recommends that our Building and Housing Codes be reviewed to identify potential amendments to those codes that may allow or promote a greater degree of flexibility to rehabilitate older homes and buildings in the central neighborhoods area. If potential amendments are identified that allow additional flexibility, while at the same time not compromising the safety and welfare of residents, this Plan recommends that those amendments be adopted to our local ordinances. If potential amendments are identified to the State Construction Code (Building Code), this Plan recommends that the City forward those amendments and work for their adoption at the State level. This Plan notes that several other states including Indiana, New Jersey, and Maryland have all adopted legislation designed to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings and have experienced excellent results. Those other State laws require that older buildings need to meet building code standards for safety and accessibility, just like new construction, but the difference is that they can be and are evaluated and regulated differently.

5. Long term vacant housing

- Vacant housing has always been an item of concern in the Central Neighborhoods. Long term vacant housing is especially troubling for a couple major reasons: It is a wasted resource that is not providing shelter for anyone either as an owner occupied or rental occupied housing unit in a community that needs additional housing opportunities; vacant housing along with the property has a higher probability of being neglected vs. occupied housing units, and can quickly become an eyesore and even a blighting influence on the surrounding neighborhood.
- However, based on 1980 through 2000 Census information, the number of vacant housing units in the Central Neighborhoods has remained relatively constant between 1980 and 2000 ranging between 212 and 224 units. These figures include the “normal” vacancies of owner occupied and renter occupied housing units as the occupants of housing are continually changing. If a normal vacancy rate of 3-4% of the total housing is factored in, along with housing that may not be occupied or able to be sold due to legal and/or estate planning reasons, then the vacant number of housing units noted above is not out of the ordinary.
- There may not be much the City can do to effect the vacancy rates of the housing as noted above, but if there are long term vacant homes in the central neighborhoods for no apparent reason, this Plan advocates for the Community Services and Development Department along with the Ourstreet program to identify those housing units and to discuss, determine, and implement policies that will assist the placement of those housing units back into the housing market.

6. Neighborhood Enterprise Zones

- During the neighborhood meetings, several property owners noted that they wished the City had an incentive program for non low/mod income households to help them purchase and renovate residential properties. There are tax credits available for non low/mod income households if they make eligible improvements to a house located in one of our Historic Districts, but that is about the extent of our financial assistance to non low/mod income households. This Plan advocates for the City to investigate the State Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) Program that provides tax incentives for the development and rehabilitation of residential housing to determine if that may be a worthwhile and affordable program for targeted Central Neighborhood areas.

D. Sub-Area Neighborhood Studies

1. Hope College and Western Theological Seminary

- Hope College and the City have an excellent working relationship with each other in seeking mutually beneficial strategies and methods to meet collective objectives. While the north, west, and south edges of the college campus area are predominantly stable areas where the influences of the college campus have had a chance to balance with adjacent privately owned land, this cannot be said for the east edge of the campus. The east edge is in a state of flux as it gradually moves east towards Fairbanks Avenue and the college recreational field properties in that area. While in the long term this gradual “swallowing” of the prior Lincoln Elementary School neighborhood from 9th Street south to 11th or 12th Street is viewed as a must for the continued vitality of the college, concerns and different opinions have been voiced by some property owners and residents of that area.
- This Plan advocates for the College to seek better public neighborhood input and dialogue regarding its growth and development issues without placing itself in a “held-hostage” position. This Plan also advocates for the City to take a more active and visible role in working with the College to publicly define the long term vision for this area of the Central Neighborhoods.
- This Plan also calls on the College to think vertically as much as possible for planned improvements along with multiple uses and users for facilities. Buildings and uses must of course compliment the College, as well as anchor the east and south edges of the Downtown commercial area, stabilize the residential neighborhood area to the south, and remain connected in a physical manner with the rest of the Central Neighborhoods.

2. Cappon House and Settlers House and vicinity

- The Holland Historical Trust is currently undertaking a complete renovation of the Cappon House and property located at 228 West 9th Street. Additionally, the Trust owns the Settlers House property located at 198 West 9th Street, which has been rehabilitated, and several other properties in the immediate vicinity that they are or will be working on to stabilize the physical context of this historical area.
- The Trust has expressed interest in studying the surrounding properties both as a way to help tell the story of the Cappon and Settlers Houses, and to preserve the context of these properties for future generations. This Plan is supportive of this endeavor by the Trust and believes the City should be involved to help identify synergies that may occur between what the Trust desires to do and what the City may plan to do with properties and buildings that it owns in this Western Gateway area.

3. Central Avenue Art and Pedestrian Corridor

- This is an idea that was brainstormed by staff 3-4 years ago as a way to establish a truly safe corridor through the heart of the Central Neighborhoods that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle movements integrated with a dose of public art to create a special streetscape character. This idea was subsequently affirmed and encouraged by Dan Burden who is a nationally recognized pedestrian and bicycle planning expert when he visited the City a few years ago. Dan affirmed the idea that public sculpture and art, building on the artwork already in the Downtown and Centennial Park area, should be extended south through the heart of the Central Neighborhoods along Central Avenue. The south end of this corridor could conclude at the Prospect Park triangle where new art pieces could be added to the already lovely park area. The City and Evergreen Commons own other strategic properties along this route that just may make this idea come to life.
- In addition to the public art along the corridor, it is envisioned that Central Avenue may be able to take on a much more pedestrian character that could be a wonderful neighborhood amenity in itself, in addi-

tion to being a literal physical connection between the Central Neighborhoods and the Downtown.

- This Plan calls for this idea to be “floated” with the Holland arts community and neighborhood to determine if there is any support for such an idea. If there is sufficient support, a task force or a similar type of study group could then make recommendations to the City and other interested parties as to how this idea could move forward.
- ### **4. River to Pine Avenues, 15th to 17th Streets (Holland Public School properties and adjacent neighborhood commercial properties)**
- This Plan recognizes the importance of these Holland Public School properties because of their function and location at the center of the Central Neighborhood area. This Plan also notes the importance of the adjacent existing neighborhood commercial properties on Pine Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets and the vacant somewhat unsightly commercial properties on River Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets. Depending on the desires of the current owners, all of these properties have the potential to be exceptional mixed-use properties that may become wonderful assets and gathering places for the area. This Plan advocates for a workshop or a design charrette to help identify and establish a potential vision for the long term use, renovation, or redevelopment if need be of these properties.
- ### **5. Neighborhood School Area Workshops**
- This Plan calls for the Planning Commission and/or Community Services and Development Department to work closely with the neighborhood schools on an on-going basis to plan for and conduct a series of workshops with neighborhood residents to identify, discuss, make recommendations, and take action regarding neighborhood land use, zoning, traffic, and other issues around the various schools. This planning around neighborhood schools may also be the means for kick starting the Neighborhood Planning efforts envisioned in a previously noted Plan recommendation.

E. Public Infrastructure

1. Transportation and Streets

- We are truly fortunate that the City founders used a standard “grid” pattern when laying out the streets and blocks of the Central Neighborhoods. This simple yet timeless way of land development was the standard city-wide until the 1960’s when curve-linear streets and cul-de-sac development started to gain a foot-hold in the City.
- The prevalence of streets and the grid pattern in the Central Neighborhoods allows all forms of traffic to move freely and efficiently through the City with a minimum amount of traffic congestion. Some congestion does occur in the Central Neighborhoods during peak hours, but that congestion is primarily limited to River Avenue at 9th and 10th Streets that can extend as far south as 12th to 13th Streets, and can be attributed to through traffic heading to the north side of town.
- The network of railroad lines and spurs through the area also contributes to periodic localized congestion on major east/west arterial streets through the area such as: 8th, 9th, 16th, and 24th Streets as backups occur near the main CSX Railroad line; and River and Pine Avenues on the north side of downtown as CSX trains occasionally operate on railroad spur lines to area industries and businesses.
- Probably the largest transportation “problem” in the Central Neighborhoods deals with speeding vehicle traffic through residential areas. This can be managed on a short term basis by traffic enforcement, but arguably the best way to manage or cure this problem is to strategically modify physical elements on problem streets. This method of traffic management is commonly referred to as “traffic calming”. Traffic calming streets can be an expensive fix if done independently, but if traffic calming elements are

built into a planned street reconstruction or resurfacing project, such as the recent 16th and 17th Street reconstruction projects, then the additional costs to include these measures are almost negligible. Examples of traffic calming measures include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Mini-circles/roundabouts such as those in Washington Square.
 - b. Bulb-outs at mid-block and intersection locations like those on 16th and 17th Streets.
 - c. Speed table/pedestrian crosswalk like the one on College Avenue south of 10th Street in the Hope College campus.
 - d. Changing of street surface textures and colors such as the intersection treatments on 16th Street at Pine and Central Avenues, and various pedestrian walks across streets in the Hope College campus.
 - e. Narrowing streets such as what was done with West 17th Street just east of South Shore Drive.
 - f. In neighborhood commercial districts, a combination of bulb-outs and on-street parking (parallel or diagonal) such as Downtown 8th Street.
 - g. Four-way stops like the one at 16th Street and Central Avenue.
- This Plan advocates for the continuation of strategic planning between the City's capital improvements program and other planning activities to identify opportunities that improve the physical conditions of the streets while slowing down the vehicle traffic, thus having the added benefit of keeping the streets livable for residential purposes.
 - This Plan also believes the City should fend off schemes that seek to close down streets in our grid system. Exceptions to this policy should be limited to the careful examination of a few streets crossing the main CSX Railroad line in the vicinity of Hope College, and then only where the streets are not significant for retaining multiple traffic routes in the area. Potential closures in the vicinity of the College should simply not be considered where the closing of a street eliminates access and neighborhood public penetration into the College. The College seems very much a part of the Central Neighborhoods today largely because public streets run through the campus at regular intervals.
 - We must always remember that public streets comprise the vast majority of public lands within the City, and when a public street is closed down, that public space and its inherent flexibility for untold uses for future generations may be lost for good.
 - This Plan applauds the recent work done to reconstruct streets in the Central Neighborhoods in a manner that accommodates yet tames the automobile through some traffic calming measures, and keeps the streets at a pedestrian and residentially livable scale. Other streets through the area that are planned for reconstruction in the future should abide by the same street design philosophy. Specifically, the City must insist that the reconstruction of Michigan and River Avenues through the neighborhoods by the MDOT be done in a way that does not further divide the area and create more of an east/west barrier than currently exists. In fact, we should be proactive in our thinking for this reconstruction to the point of considering a three-lane street section, and considering new intersection design measures such as a modern roundabout for the five spoke intersection of River Avenue, Michigan Avenue, State Street, and 19th Street as it intersects this area. A roundabout in this location would slow traffic through the area, provide for safer left turns from southbound River Avenue onto south bound State Street, and would eliminate traffic backups on State Street to northbound River Avenue. It would also reopen 19th Street from the current cul-de-sac design on the east and west side of this intersection thereby reducing the extra traffic that switched to 18th and 20th Streets as a result of closing off 19th Street at that location, not to mention also providing the opportunity for an artistic focal point/landmark to be placed in the roundabout.
 - A Street that has been described as "a dagger through the heart" of the Historic District and Central Neighborhoods is Pine Avenue. This neighborhood street carries a high amount of through traffic, and

believe it or not carries more vehicle traffic between 9th and 16th Streets than 9th Street traffic in the vicinity of the Civic Center. There have been suggestions ranging from closing the street off at 9th Street, to introducing traffic calming measures, but no suggestions seem to gain any traction. It would seem that closing the street may be too drastic of a measure, while doing nothing contributes psychologically if not physically to a decline in the residential livability of the street. The City should chart a course of action with a good dose of public participation to create a plan for the street.

- A traffic calming project that has been discussed by the Planning Commission on occasion is the desire and need for some sort of measures to be identified and installed around the Herrick District Library on 12th and 13th Streets. This Plan advocates for the City to meet with the Library and adjacent neighborhood residents to take stock of the current traffic and parking situation on these streets to determine if the same level of need for traffic calming measures exists as it seemingly did after the Library expansion, and if the need still exists, what may be the best alternatives for action.
- One final traffic issue that the City should examine is all of the designated truck routes in the central neighborhoods. The City should determine if changes can or should be made to the truck routes through the central neighborhoods so trucks have less impact on residences and neighborhood schools.

2. Vehicle Parking

- As most of us know and experience, our vehicles are of immense importance to us as individuals and a society. Whether we believe it or not, many of us have allowed them to become extensions of ourselves and we dare not park them too far away or else they become more of what they truly are, transportation devices, instead of an extension of ourselves. Why am I talking like this? Because our relationship with the automobile (don't kid yourself, it is a relationship!) and the freedoms it affords us have permeated how we view our City, our neighborhoods, and our properties and homes, to the point now where many contemporary home designs pay homage to our vehicles by making garage doors some of the most prominent design features of our homes!
- As the census information in this Plan informs us, approximately three out of four people both city-wide and in the Central Neighborhoods, with the exception of the old Lincoln School neighborhood, are using single occupancy vehicles for their transportation needs to work. The percent of commuters using personal vehicles increases to roughly 90% when people who carpool are added to the mix. This means more cars on the streets, and more cars being parked on private property when not in use. As the density of vehicles in the neighborhoods has increased, the City has experienced some negative impacts such as cars increasingly parking in unpaved lawn areas, thus creating some unsightly conditions. As the City increased its efforts to police the prohibition of vehicle parking on lawns, property owners started to pave front lawn areas, which within a short period of time was also viewed as a negative. The City then passed an ordinance to prohibit parking in front lawn areas, except for on allowable driveway areas. This ordinance seems to be working for the time being, but the "cost" will likely take some time to become evident. This "cost" will be property owners increasingly having to resort to the paving of rear yard areas, thus decreasing the amount of private green space for residents to enjoy on their properties.
- Although this Plan does not condone the idea of overnight on-street parking at this time, if vehicle transportation trends continue to increase at the current pace and if we are to encourage the additional supply of housing in the central neighborhoods, a time will arrive when the neighborhood and City will need to re-evaluate the current overnight ban on on-street parking. This Plan does support the creation of some limited pilot projects to help us evaluate the pros and cons of such a program.
- Regarding vehicle parking for Central Neighborhood commercial type businesses, the City now requires that only 50% of the normally required parking spaces be provided on-site. This change allows property

owners to use their properties in a more intensive manner that is consistent with a central city location, and takes into consideration that many customers can walk or ride a bicycle to a business, and can park on adjacent streets if they so choose.

- This Plan suggests that there may be other methods of better using the public and private parking opportunities already in the central neighborhoods, such as agreements between residential property owners and churches, schools and other permitted non-residential properties to use parking spaces during non-peak times, instead of having to pave existing yard areas for additional on-site parking. The City should study this issue further and report any findings to the Planning Commission for their information and action.

3. Public Alleys

- Alleys are still the smallest and most fundamental way of providing access to many properties in the Central Neighborhoods. Back 80-100 years or so ago when most of the Central Neighborhood area was being developed and houses were originally being built, the developers typically provided alleys as the means of providing direct access to a property for the delivery of goods and services, and to provide vehicle access to rear yard parking and garage areas for horse and buggies and later automobiles. This system worked well for quite a long time, and had the added benefit of keeping the more public front yard street side of the house free of driveways, vehicles, and other personal items. Starting in the 1920's, developments started not including alleys and provided access to properties directly from the adjoining public street via individual and sometimes shared driveways. This quickly became the norm for new residential development south of approximately 24th Street and one can only assume that about the same time property owners in the Central Neighborhoods began installing their own driveways and used the existing alleys less and less. Property owners began turning their backs on the alleys and thus began the slow slide and decline in their usefulness that continues to this day.
- Some alleys have become almost completely cut off from the adjoining properties both physically and psychologically to the point where no one uses them except those who are being mischievous or worse. This only serves to accelerate a grass roots desire by adjacent property owners to request the vacating of alleys by City Council and the privatization of that publicly owned land. Indeed, City Council has a standing policy of vacating public alleys almost wherever and whenever requested by residents in the Central Neighborhood.
- In many cases, the alleys of the Central Neighborhoods have lost their usefulness and due to their lack of use and sometimes outright neglect by adjacent property owners, many of these public spaces have become eyesores and outright scary places. However, there may be hope for the more healthy alleys, and some of them that have just recently begun the downward slide. This Plan advocates identifying and undertaking proactive measures to keep the healthy alleys in good shape and to examine establishing a pilot alley project to turn around those that need some help before they too reach a point where their vacating appears to be the only solution to their problems.

4. Sidewalks

- Sidewalks are one of the most distinctive and prevalent public improvements in the Central Neighborhoods. Throughout the Central Neighborhoods they are found on both sides of virtually every street. Our sidewalks provide for many of our needs such as a safe pedestrian transportation system to various types of destinations, a safe system for recreational walking, a safe play place for neighborhood children and kids, and a socializing location for adults and indeed all residents of the neighborhood.
- The City has done an excellent job of maintaining the public sidewalks throughout the area and has done

a commendable job of replacing old deteriorated sidewalk, if warranted, during street reconstruction projects in the Central Neighborhoods.

- The City has plans to construct additional sidewalk in the Central Neighborhoods in the limited areas where none currently exist, or where it may only be present on one side of a street. These plans include the following:
 - a. Sidewalk along Lincoln Avenue as a component of a larger scale drainage and street reconstruction project from 17th Street south to 24th Street.
 - b. Sidewalks along the east side of Fairbanks Avenue as a component of the Smallenburg Park renovation and Fairbanks Avenue improvements from 8th Street south to 16th Street. This Fairbanks Avenue sidewalk will also provide increased continuity and access to the Downtown area and locations east along 8th Street.
 - c. Sidewalk improvements along Kollen Park Drive and Cleveland Avenue as a component of the Kollen Park renovation project.
- Additionally, this Plan suggests that sidewalk be studied for along Hazel Avenue to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access for school kids to East Middle School. Sidewalk should also be completed on the east side of Century Lane from 16th Street to 24th Street to provide a safer system for the residents on the east side of that street.

5. Mass transit opportunities

- As evidenced by the transportation information in this Plan, the vast majority of people in the Central Neighborhoods simply choose to not use the available public transit as a means of transportation. The new 2000 Census information may show some increases in the use of mass transit due to the expansion of the MAX bus system with fixed routes, but the very low percentage of users as evidenced by the 1990 Census information that states only 1.1% of workers 16 years old and over used public transit as a means of transportation to work will likely not change too much.
- Reserve-A-Max system ridership information from April 2001 through March 2002 for the City indicates that 29% of those riders were from the Central Neighborhoods area, which is surprising as this is quite a bit below this area's 42% of the City's population.
- Public mass transit will likely continue to provide transportation primarily to those who do not have their own personal vehicles. This Plan believes this "fact" is OK, as long as transportation opportunities remain available for all of our residents.

6. Streetscape amenities

- The City has large amounts of street furniture in the form of benches, bike racks, kiosks, bollards, drinking fountains, pedestrian light poles, sidewalk planters, public sculpture and other forms of art, etc., but these items are mainly concentrated in the Downtown area.
- Over the past five years or so, the City has been increasingly including street furniture elements in street reconstruction projects in neighborhood commercial areas of the Central Neighborhoods. A pedestrian lighting project was also implemented in the Historic District area, bike racks were placed in Washington Square, and many similar pieces of "furniture" have been placed in neighborhood parks.
- This Plan advocates for the continuation of an informal and more formalized street furniture program in conjunction with the street reconstruction, park renovation, and neighborhood commercial revitalization programs. During the neighborhood meetings, quite a few neighborhood residents noted how much they like the pedestrian scale lighting that was extended into the original Historic District area, included in the reconstruction of the Washington Square and Central Place neighborhood commercial areas, and included

in some recent street reconstruction projects like along 16th Street. These residents expressed their desire for additional pedestrian scale lighting to be installed along their streets, and they noted that the City should survey the residents along streets that are scheduled for improvements so the residents have an opportunity to petition the City for lighting improvements as a component of a street reconstruction project.

- This Plan encourages the placement of more public benches throughout the Neighborhood, particularly in the vicinity of neighborhood commercial areas as a way to provide needed resting areas for elderly residents and others who may want to frequent the area.
- This Plan also believes more can be done to promote the use of bicycles as an alternative means of transportation for adults in the Neighborhood, such as promoting an annual “Bike to Work Day/Week” program. Relating to street furnishings, additional bike racks should be placed in neighborhood commercial areas so bicycles can be secured (kids do not worry as much about the security of their bikes as their moms!) in a manner that does not obstruct pedestrian activity.
- As noted by several residents during the neighborhood meetings, the City should investigate the idea of a pedestrian and bicycle “Way finding” signage system to identify and note preferred routes to link major destinations in the Central Neighborhoods (e.g. routes between schools and the Herrick Library, or the schools and Bouws Pool, etc.)

7. “Electronic Village”

- The City and the Board of Public Works (BPW) made a substantial investment in a fiber optic system about 10 years ago. This system was run throughout the City and is mainly being used by the City, BPW, and larger institutional users that have multiple locations. The private development sector is looking very closely at the costs and advantages of hooking into this system even for new residential developments. This Plan believes that in the foreseeable future, most new developments will be hooked into these high speed and high capacity communication and data systems for business and recreational purposes. In the future these systems will be virtually just as important to people as the transportation and public street system is to providing physical access to one’s property.
- In order to insure that the Central Neighborhoods do not fall behind in the development of and connections to these communication systems vs. new development in the suburban areas, this Plan advocates for the City to use the public fiber optic system to “wire” the Central Neighborhoods first, and then other neighborhoods into this state of the art communications system. This will continue to make Central Neighborhood locations competitive with suburban locations when it comes to the provision of increasingly important communication systems.

F. Private Improvements

1. Buildings and property

- All of the previous Emerging Issues focus primarily on the public aspects and interests of the issues. However, we must realize that public interests are at best only half of the equation in the improvement of the neighborhoods as the public role is primarily to establish a framework and base level of expectations through investments in human capital and the public infrastructure, and to provide incentives and encouragement to enable and facilitate private investment and improvements at the neighborhood level that creates wealth for individuals and the community as a whole.
- While there are several City and non-profit agency programs available to help residents in the Central Neighborhoods maintain and improve their properties and homes, improvements will primarily need to come from owners and residents who have the resources at their disposal to improve their properties.

- The 1998 Central Neighborhood Survey notes that 60% of the responses to the statement “Houses [in their neighborhood] are in good condition” strongly agreed/agreed with the statement, but one in five did not agree and another one in five respondents were neutral. These opinions are overwhelmingly from owner occupied housing as 87% of the surveys were completed by home owners in the central neighborhoods. This clearly indicates there is still much room for improvement, at least as it is perceived by area residents.
- Local public policy and delivery of services are two components that are factored into a property owner’s decision to improve or not improve one’s property. That having been said, this Plan believes the City must continue on its course of setting a tone that investment is welcomed and desired in the Central Neighborhoods by continuing its leading by example by making large investments in public infrastructure needs such as streets and underground utilities, sidewalks, and lighting. Indeed, some testimonials from private property owners along East 16th Street point this out as owners state they now feel more comfortable making longer term investments in their properties.

2. Landscaping

- The 1998 Central Neighborhood Survey noted that 59% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the appearance of neighboring yards is pleasant. While this is a good majority of the respondents, the survey notes that one in four respondents did not agree with the statement. When the neutral responses are factored in 40% did not agree with the statement, which means there is much room for improvement.
- Proper maintenance of one’s property, lawn, trees and other plantings is very important to the pride and self-esteem of a neighborhood. If several properties on a block virtually do nothing, then this may serve to depress other neighbor’s standards and desires for the upkeep of their properties. Unfortunately, many of those who do not live in but do pass through a neighborhood that see even a small number of yards in an unkempt appearance will make negative snap decisions regarding the entire area as possessing the same unkempt appearance. This bad apple spoiling the whole bunch scenario is obviously unfair but happens all the time.
- This Plan advocates for the City to at least maintain its current level of spring and fall cleanups and to investigate the possibility of organizing “landscape blitzes” at the smaller block level in conjunction with property owners, landscaping, and recycling businesses.
- This Plan also wishes for the City to press harder for the provision of yard waste recycle bins for all properties at more reduced rates in an effort to get more residents to properly maintain and pay attention to the appearance of their properties.

G. Administration and Provision of Services

1. Provision of services at the neighborhood level

- As evidenced from the success of the Ourstreet Program and the Team Policing program along with the recent launching of the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) in the Central Neighborhoods, it is increasingly evident that the trend toward the provision of municipal services is at the neighborhood level. This Plan advocates for the continuation of this trend, but only after careful analysis to make sure that it actually makes sense for each specific situation. For example, it makes sense to continue to provide recreational and enrichment activities for kids and even families at Central Neighborhood park locations, but would it make sense to provide a mini sized community police office in a neighborhood park building during the summer months? Does it make sense to have a Community Services and Development Department Planner and/or a Building/Housing Inspector working one day a week out of the Ourstreet Program Office in an attempt to provide these services truly at the neighborhood level?

- This Plan recommends that a study team, possibly the Ourstreet Target Area Team, be appointed to gather information and prepare a report to the Planning Commission and City Council on the feasibility and desirability of providing more municipal services at the neighborhood and block level.

2. Streamlining of Permit process

- In the name of good government, municipalities are many times prone to enact new ordinances and regulations that end up having a complex layering effect. Most of the time this is plainly unavoidable as local responsive governments admirably strive to meet the health, safety, and welfare needs of individuals and the community on a daily basis. One of the downsides to this process is the additional administrative effort (a.k.a. bureaucracies) needed to support the new ordinances and regulations.
- This Plan believes that the City should instill through customer service programs and/or Continuous Improvement programs a new “streamlining culture” in those who administer the ordinances and regulations to insure that the administrative process never becomes too unwieldy for our customers, the residents of the Central Neighborhoods and indeed the entire City, and that it never fails to produce the intended results of bettering people’s lives and the environment in which they live.

3. Evening Code Enforcement

- Our traffic laws and other similar City Ordinances are enforced by the Police Department 24 hours a day. Why then are our Zoning Ordinance and Building Code’s seemingly only enforced from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM? The answer is because that is when those code enforcement people work. But should we not have some evening enforcement of these Ordinances and Codes, at least on an occasional basis primarily during the summer months? Based on input from the general public, this Plan recommends that the Environmental Health and Inspections Department conduct evening Zoning Ordinance and Code enforcement in the Central Neighborhoods and indeed the entire City on at least an occasional basis.

4. On-site Notification of Proposed Land Use and Zoning Changes

- The residents of the neighborhoods increasingly want to be informed and “in the loop” regarding the potential for change in their neighborhoods. Most formal actions by the Planning Commission regarding land use and zoning matters require a legal notice both in a local newspaper and via mail to property owners and occupants within 300 feet of a subject property. This Plan suggests that the above notice requirements may not cast a wide enough net and the methods may not reach all of those who are stakeholders or who have an interest in a potential action by the Planning Commission. The Plan suggests that our noticing requirements should be reviewed to identify additional means that could be used to better notify the public of proposed and potential land use and zoning changes (e.g. on-site notification sign with details of the proposal and the review and approval procedures, meeting dates, etc.)

IX. Picking the Right Seeds.

The final step of the Central Neighborhoods Plan is to prioritize all of the Plan Recommendations and Emerging Issues, assign a time frame for the completion of the prioritized items, and to assign the Doers who are responsible for the completion and/or implementation of the items.

To this end, the Planning Commission conducted a ranking exercise that included input from neighborhood residents. This exercise divided the Plan Recommendations into four tiers of importance with Tier 1 including the most important or pressing issues that the Planning Commission and other Doers will work on over the next year. Tier 2 issues should receive attention over the next 1-3 years, while Tier 3 and 4 issues should receive attention over the next 3-5 years. It is anticipated, however, that as staff work programs are developed from these recommendations and issues, there will be some picking and choosing from the various tiers on an ongoing basis as individual issues may tend to increase or decrease in relative importance over time. Constraints both in terms of available staff time and monetary resources will also play a role in how these recommendations and issues ultimately are addressed.

Abbreviation Legend of the Doers:

CSD	Community Services and Development Department
EH	Environmental Health and Inspection Department
LCS	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
OP	Ourstreet Program
PD	Police Department
FD	Fire Department
HRC	Human Relations Committee
MACC	Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
HDC	Historic District Commission
PC	Planning Commission
CC	City Council
COC	Chamber of Commerce
BRA	Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
AC	Arts Council
NR	Neighborhood Residents

Prioritization of Plan Recommendations and Emerging Issues:

A. Neighborhood Organization and Planning (Grass Roots)

	Tier
1. <u>Neighborhood Organizing.</u>	1
• NR, CSD, OP, PC	
2. <u>Neighborhood Planning.</u>	2
• CSD, OP, PC, CC	
3. <u>Ourstreet Expansion Process.</u>	1
• OP, CC	
4. <u>Conservation Districts.</u>	4
• NR, CSD, EH, PC, CC	

	1
B. Land Use and Zoning B. Land Use and Zoning B. Land Use and Zoning	
1. <u>Traditional "Close-Knit" Neighborhood Designs and Characteristics.</u>	1
• CSD, PC, CC	
2. <u>Land Use Map Amendments.</u>	2
• PC	
3. <u>Coding for Building Behavior on Sites vs. Coding for Uses.</u>	3
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
4. <u>Neighborhood commercial areas.</u>	3
• CSD, OP, PC, EH, CC	
5. <u>Neighborhood industrial areas.</u>	3
• CSD, OP, PC, EH, CC	
6. <u>Nurturing of Community Uses: Schools, Places of Worship, Libraries, and Parks.</u>	2
• CSD, PC, CLS, CC	
7. <u>Density and Intensity of Uses.</u>	3
• CSD, PC, CC	
8. <u>Edges, Friction and Flare-up points.</u>	3
• CSD, EH, OP, PC, CC	
9. <u>Traditional Neighborhood Zone District/Concentration of Non-Conforming Buildings.</u>	2
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
10. <u>Building Infill Guidelines for Residential and Neighborhood Commercial Buildings.</u>	4
• CSD	
11. <u>Wireless Communication Facilities.</u>	4
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
12. <u>Proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendments.</u>	4
a. Develop Neighborhood Commercial Infill Regulations	4
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
b. Require garages and other accessory buildings be setback more than the front façade of the house	4
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
c. Allow flexible uses: Accessory Apartments, Streamline Home Occupation Ordinance	2
• CSD, PC, EH, CC	
d. Off-Street Parking and Loading corrections and clarifications.	3
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
e. Examine requirement that detached accessory buildings in residential districts must be a minimum of 10 feet from any dwelling.	4
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
f. The definition of "Family" needs to be updated in light of recent court cases.	3
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
g. Review permitted and prohibited accessory uses of residential yards.	3
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
h. Examine the setback requirements for non-residential uses/buildings allowed in the R-1 District.	4
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	
i. Study and possible deletion of Exceptional Uses.	4
• CSD, EH, PC, CC	

j. Porch enclosure review by ZBA or Residential Infill Review.	4	4. <u>Traffic calming measures on 12th and 13th Streets in the vicinity of the Herrick Public Library.</u>	2
• CSD, EH, PC, CC		• CSD, OP, PC, PD, FD, CC	
k. Open discussion of the pros and cons of instituting a building demolition ordinance.	4	5. <u>Create limited number of pilot projects to evaluate the pros and cons of on-street overnight parking.</u>	1
• CSD, EH, PC, CC		• CSD, OP, PD, CC	
l. Allow expansions of non-conforming buildings and structures when the subject property is conforming in use.	4	6. <u>Examine ways to better use existing public and private parking opportunities on residential properties.</u>	2
• CSD, EH, PC, CC		CSD, OP, EH, CC	
C. Housing		7. <u>Public Alleys.</u>	3
1. <u>Innovative Housing</u>	4	• CSD, OP, EH, PD, CC	
CSD, EH, PC, CC		8. <u>Sidewalks.</u>	3
2. <u>Zero Net Loss Housing Policy, Affordable Housing Fund</u>	4	• CSD, OP, CC	
• CSD, EH, PC, CC		9. <u>Mass transit opportunities.</u>	1
3. <u>Affordable Housing, Diversity of Incomes.</u>	1	• MACC, CC	
• CSD, PC, HRC, CC		10. <u>Street furniture program in conjunction with other City capital projects and improvements.</u>	2
4. <u>Building/Housing Codes.</u>	1	• CSD, LCS, CC	
• EH, CC		11. <u>Promote the use of bicycles as an alternative means of transportation for adults in the Neighborhood.</u>	3
5. <u>Long-term Vacant Housing.</u>	2	• CSD, MACC, CC, LCS	
CSD, OP, EH, CC		12. <u>Pedestrian and bicycle “Way finding” signage system.</u>	3
6. <u>Neighborhood Enterprise Zones.</u>	1	CSD, OP, CC	
• CSD, OP, CC		13. <u>“Electronic Village”.</u>	4
D. Sub-Area Neighborhood Studies		• CSD, CC, HBPW	
1. <u>Hope College and Western Theological Seminary.</u>	2	F. Private Improvements	
• CSD, OP, PC, CC		1. <u>Buildings and property.</u>	1
2. <u>Cappon House and Settlers House and vicinity.</u>	3	• CSD, OP, CC	
• CSD, HDC, PC, CC		2. <u>Landscaping.</u>	
3. <u>Central Avenue Art and Pedestrian Corridor.</u>	2	a. Maintain current spring and fall cleanups and investigate organizing “landscape blitzes” at block levels.	1
• CSD, LCS, CC, AC		• CSD, EH, OP, CC	
4. <u>River to Pine Avenues, 15th to 17th Streets.</u>	4	b. Provide yard waste recycle bins for all properties at more reduced rates.	3
• CSD, OP, PC, CC, Schools		• EH, CC	
5. <u>Neighborhood workshops for neighborhood school areas.</u>	2	G. Administration and Provision of Services	
• CSD, PC, LCS, CC, Schools		1. <u>Provision of services at the neighborhood level.</u>	4
E. Public Infrastructure		• CSD, OP, EH, LCS, PC, CC	
1. <u>Identify strategic opportunities for “traffic calming” measures.</u>	1	2. <u>Streamlining of Permit process.</u>	4
• CSD, OP, PD, FD, CC		• CSD, EH, OP	
2. <u>Maintain grid street system with potential exceptions limited to a few closures at CSX RR crossings.</u>	1	3. <u>Evening Code Enforcement.</u>	1
• CSD, PC, PD, FD, CC		• EH, PD, CC	
3. <u>Define potential traffic calming measures in the Pine Avenue corridor.</u>	1	4. <u>On-site Notification of Proposed Land Use and Zoning Changes.</u>	4
• CSD, OP, PD, FD, CC		• CSD	

ADDENDUMS

The following four addendums are included in this Central Neighborhood Plan as they all include some policy recommendations that relate in some manner to the Central Neighborhoods area. The review of this information was very important to the Planning Commission and its staff in laying the groundwork for this Central Neighborhood Plan, because it is critical to first examine where we have been and what thought processes have already occurred prior to embarking on a revised and more detailed vision for the Central Neighborhoods. These addendums review and discuss the policies included in the 1992 City Master Plan, the 2010 Strategic Plan, the City Housing Goals and Policies Report conducted in 1993 and revised in 1995, and the 1998 Central Neighborhoods Resident Survey. The validity of the policies and recommendations is discussed along with potential suggested changes. Additionally, the implementation strategies and tasks listed in those Plans and Reports are reviewed to determine what tasks have been completed, and what tasks should be carried forward.

ADDENDUM A – 1992 City Master Plan

1992 Master Plan Goals:

1. Environment: To provide our community with an environment that is free of air, water, ground, noise, and visual pollution.
2. Public Utilities: To provide efficient and cost-effective public utilities, facilities, and services that best serve the existing and future needs of the City.
3. Transportation: To provide a transportation system that affords safe, convenient, and efficient movement for vehicles and pedestrians.
4. Parks and Recreation: Quality facilities will be provided throughout the City in order to provide excellent recreational opportunities for all age groups.
5. Housing: Land use policies will be implemented that protects property values and neighborhood stability and that facilitate a variety of housing opportunities.
6. Land Use: To provide a balanced land use pattern, compatible with surrounding communities, which preserves the residential character of the City, yet, provides for commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

Comments:

- Goals 1-4 remain by in large valid statements. However, the Planning Commission has progressed since 1992 in its thinking about Housing and Land Use policies to the point where Goals 5 and 6 should be reexamined for their validity on a city-wide basis.

1992 Master Plan Land Use Policies for the Central Neighborhoods:

The City is divided into 12 policy areas that seek to describe the nature of development that should occur in each area, the general land uses, the quality of development expected, and other relevant characteristics. The Central Neighborhoods fall within Policy Area #7 Parks/Historic/Educational Area, and #9 City Core Residential Area.

Policy Area #7 development policies as summarized as follows:

1. Preservation of the housing since many of the homes are the oldest in the City.
2. Historic District area should be protected from the encroachment of non-residential uses.

3. Non-residential uses that are compatible are churches, small offices for doctors and other professionals, and small shopping areas. These uses should be allowed to continue, but they should not be allowed to expand into the built-up residential blocks in the area.
4. Public uses along the waterfront should be preserved, expanded, or extended wherever possible.
5. The positive relationship between the City and Hope College shall continue to be fostered, and accommodations between the two should be made where possible.

Comments:

- In practice, Item 3 has only been partially implemented by the City. We have enforced not allowing businesses to expand into the Central Neighborhoods, but we have not enforced this onto several large scale institutional entities that have recently expanded into the built-up residential areas. This was a wise move, however, this official written policy should be changed to **boldly** state that institutional uses are welcome and indeed expected to remain and prosper in the Central Neighborhoods.
- The other policies remain largely valid.

Policy Area #9 development policies are summarized as follows:

1. Offices along Michigan Avenue should be limited to the corridor area and not be allowed to extend into the residential neighborhoods.
2. Uses that are not compatible with residential neighborhoods, such as multi-story office buildings, regionally oriented retail uses, and auto-oriented uses like drive-in restaurants and auto repair facilities should not be allowed in a neighborhood.
3. Traffic and parking issues associated with neighborhood commercial activities should be reviewed and mitigated where needed through careful site planning requirements/detailing to achieve a balance between the needs of non-residential and residential uses.
4. Other relationship considerations between non-residential and residential uses may include "architecture and building design that is not incompatible with the character and scale of existing structures. Large scale buildings with expansive parking lots would not be appropriate. Colors should be muted and advertising/identification signs limited in size and height. Lighting should be carefully designed to prevent light spillage onto adjacent properties."

Comments:

- The auto-oriented uses of Item 3 may indeed be incompatible in the interior portions of the neighborhoods, but may be compatible along the edges of a neighborhood. People need to have maintenance services provided on their vehicles someplace, so why not within a walking or bicycle distance of their house.
- The standard of Item 4 can be raised from being "not incompatible with the character and scale ..." to being one where residential and non-residential buildings are expected to be "compatible with the character and scale of existing buildings". It is time to boldly articulate what we want in a positive manner, instead of vaguely saying what we do not want that casts a negative light on what should be a positive situation, namely the construction of new buildings that add to our urban fabric.

1992 Master Plan Implementation Strategy:

The following is a brief assessment of the implementation strategies and ideas for additional discussions.

ENVIRONMENT

- The continued protection of the environment will always remain a priority goal. Efforts to eliminate potential polluting situations should be increased at the design stage of public and private development projects. Pollution problems that develop and are existing situations should be reduced or eliminated through local, State, and Federal regulations and through more cost effective best management practices.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

- The continued upgrading and improvement of public infrastructure is a priority goal. The BPW has a long-term capital improvements work schedule to replace the aging water and sewer systems in the Central Neighborhoods that is commendable.
- The BPW along with its municipal partners must begin the discussion of "Smart Growth" alternatives to the extension of utility systems.
- The 1992 objective of concentrating development where public utilities are best utilized remains extremely important. We should use this to justify a new goal of providing 100% availability to the public water and sanitary sewers for Central Neighborhood properties by the year 2005.
- Public utility rates should be examined to determine that the Central Neighborhood utility customers are not subsidizing the increasingly expensive utility extensions at the outer reaches of the systems.

TRANSPORTATION

- This section continues to view road construction and expansions as the means to provide a safe, efficient, and convenient transportation system. Emphasis is placed on requiring suburban development model components such as large building setbacks, large right-of-way areas, and access management techniques. Regarding the Central Neighborhoods, these suburban standards should not be required. Close knit urban street design patterns should rule and be implemented.
- Kudos to the objectives of constructing sidewalks and bike paths along streets to schools and parks, and for reducing vehicle impacts in residential areas to preserve neighborhoods. This is progressive thinking! The objective of clustering commercial development to reduce traffic problems and unsightly areas is also positive for the Central Neighborhood area.

PARKS AND RECREATION

- The objective of providing a park or recreational area within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of all residential areas speaks volumes towards this progressive thinking and the provision of these valuable civic amenities.
- High quality parks and public open areas are an important counter balance to the higher density and intensity level of uses found in the Central Neighborhoods.
- The objectives are action oriented and focused towards the quality improvement and maintenance of existing parks, and the development of new park and open space areas, especially along waterfront areas.

HOUSING

- The Plan states that it does not address specifics regarding City housing except to establish a policy of working with the City and organizations to meet the housing needs as identified by other groups working on the issue.
- The most relevant item regarding the Central Neighborhoods is the preservation and protection of the existing neighborhoods through housing code and zoning regulations, and traffic management.
- The Goal and objectives stated in this section, although relevant, are not bold or ground breaking statements.

LAND USE

- By in large, the strategies seek to separate the land uses even more than they currently are, and to require private open spaces and buffer yards as a method of addressing density and intensity issues. These strategies are cut straight from the suburban development model.
- While many of the policies may be relevant to those areas of the City that have developed under the suburban model, these policies should not and cannot be force fit onto the Central Neighborhoods without reaping disastrous results.
- Land use policies as they relate to the Central Neighborhoods should discard the Suburban model and embrace the urban design model that still is the norm for the Central Neighborhoods. The Urban design model needs to be elevated as the best design vision for the Central Neighborhoods.

List of 1992 Implementation Strategy Objectives:

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timetable</u>	<u>Status</u>
ENVIRONMENT			
1. Incorporate environmental techniques into project plans.	CPC/PVT	Ongoing	Ongoing
2. Incorporate landscaping into all site plans in the community. (Status Note: Required component of all site/development plans.)	CPC/PVT	Ongoing	Ongoing
3. Development waste mgmt. to reduce landfill disposal. (Status Note: City-wide recycling program in place along with a Solid Waste Management Committee.)	CC/EHD/PVT	Ongoing	Complete
4. Direct and regulate development to minimize pollution.	CPC/EHD	Ongoing	Ongoing
5. Minimize the impact of signs upon visual pollution. (Status Note: Major amendments approved to the Zoning Ordinance in 1994 and billboard requirements upheld by State Supreme Court in 2001.)	CPC/CC	5/1/92	Complete
6. Reduce visual pollution to place all wires underground. (Status Note: Ongoing in Downtown and new developments.)	CC/BPW	Ongoing	Ongoing
7. Develop storm drainage methods to minimize pollution and erosion. (Status Note: Guidelines in place, but no standards.)	CSD/CPC	1992/93	Complete
8. Maintain wastewater treatment facilities. Protect water quality.	BPW	Ongoing	Ongoing
9. Work on regional level to ensure elimination of pollution in area lakes and streams. (Status Note: Research and education continues with the MACC.)	CPC/MACC	1992	Ongoing

PUBLIC UTILITIES

1. BPW to plan utility expansion in accordance with Master Plan. (Status Note: BPW is multi-jurisdictional and planning done in accordance with local City and Township Plans.)	CPC/BPW	1992	Ongoing
2. Concentrate development where public utilities best utilized. (Status Note: City requires utilities present prior to rezoning and site plan approvals.)	CPC/BPW	Ongoing	Ongoing
3. Improve and upgrade the City storm system on a planned basis. (Status Note: Much has been completed, especially in Central Neighborhoods. Work continues.)	CSD	Ongoing	Ongoing
4. Develop long-term solutions for public utility services.	BPW	1992/93	Ongoing

TRANSPORTATION

1. Implement Land Use section of the Master Plan for new and existing roads. (Status Note: Change in philosophy as we now place more emphasis on balancing quality of life issues with transportation needs. Before, interests were skewed towards transportation needs.)	CPC/CSD	Ongoing	Ongoing
2. Set driveway location standards to prevent traffic congestion. (Status Note: Preference for guidelines vs. standards as guidelines allow more flexibility.)	CSD/CPC	1992/93	Not done
3. Economic impacts considered before traffic.	CSD/CPC/CC	Ongoing	Ongoing
4. Construct sidewalks/bikepaths along roads to schools and recreation facilities. (Status Note: Much has been completed. Work continues.)	CSD/CPC/CC	Ongoing	Ongoing
5. Reduce vehicle impacts in residential areas to preserve neighborhoods. (Status Note: Traffic calming concerns are now mainstream. Traffic calming projects are done when opportunities arise.)	CSD/CPC/CC	Ongoing	Ongoing
6. Cluster commercial growth to reduce traffic problems and unsightly areas.	CSD/CPC/CC	Ongoing	Ongoing
7. Analyze feasibility of traffic suggestions in Transportation section on this Plan.	CSD/CPC	1992-93	Complete
8. Work with Airport Advisory Board to ensure consistency with the Airport Master Plan. (Status Note: Work starts this year on a new Airport Zone District.)	CPC/AAB	Ongoing	Ongoing

9. Work to maintain adequate depths in Lake Macatawa for vessel access.	CSD/PVT	Ongoing	Ongoing
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PARKS AND RECREATION

1. Parks/Recreation facilities within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of residential areas. (Status Note: In the Central Neighborhoods this objective is met. If school properties are added, this objective is most likely met City-wide.)	LCS/CSD	Ongoing	Ongoing
2. Recreation facilities/programs developed/maintained for all ages.	LCS	Ongoing	Complete
3. Balance maintained between parks with active and Passive recreation.	LCS	Ongoing	Complete
4. All neighborhood parks to be improved/maintained with quality. (Status Note: Most parks have been completed. Work continues on the few that remain.)	LCS	Ongoing	Ongoing
5. Civic Center to be utilized as a community wide Recreational facility.	CC/LCS	Ongoing	Complete
6. Maintain Lake Macatawa lake-front property, acquire new to improve public access.	CC/CPC	1992-2000	Ongoing

HOUSING

1. Develop land use plan to provide variety of housing types/prices. (Status Note: Current planning includes updated methods. Work with developers continues to actually provide additional housing.)	CPC	1/92	Complete
2. Preserve character of existing residential neighborhoods.	CPC/CC/CSD	Ongoing	Ongoing
3. Protect stability of neighborhoods through housing codes/zoning regulations.	EHD	Ongoing	Ongoing
4. Examine zoning regulations to insure they are not Impediments to needed housing. (Status Note: Discussions included in this Central Neighborhood Plan.)	CSD/EHD/CPC	1992	Ongoing
5. Study Housing Task Plan and CHAS to ensure safe And affordable housing.	CPC/CSD	1992	Complete

LAND USE

1. Direct commercial development away from residential areas. (Status Note: This applies to non-neighborhood commercial businesses.)	CPC	Ongoing	Ongoing
2. Selected commercial development to provide community services.	CPC	Ongoing	Ongoing
3. Encourage industrial development to provide employment and tax revenue.	CC/CPC/CSD/ HEDCOR	Ongoing	Ongoing
4. Improve community aesthetics by attractive commercial/industrial site designs.	CPC/PVT	Ongoing	Ongoing
5. City and surrounding jurisdictions to direct/regulate Development together. (Status Note: MACC does not address land use planning and development issues. Transportation planning agency.)	MACC	1992	Not done
6. Require buffer space/uses between high intensity land uses and residential areas. (Status Note: Required by the Zoning Ordinance.)	CPC	Ongoing	Ongoing
7. Promote open space provision within new and redeveloped sites. (Status Note: Emphasis shift to public open space (vs. private open space) with retaining higher densities.)	CPC	Ongoing	Ongoing
8. Base rezoning decisions on Land Use Plan included as part of the Master Plan.	CPC/CC/CSD	Ongoing	Ongoing
9. Rezone property only after all utilities are secured for the site.	CPC/CC	Ongoing	Ongoing
10. Determine future land use needs of City and plan for their proper location. (Status Note: This is actually a continuing process.)	CPC/CSD	1992-93	Complete
11. Develop sign ordinance to enhance City aesthetics and provide identification.	CPC/CSD	1/92	Complete

ADDENDUM B – 2010 Strategic Plan

This is an excellent strategic document that was prepared by the private sector to aid public sector policy makers in the decision making process. This Plan addresses the following physical and social issues: Education, Finance, Governmental Issues, Health and Well Being, Housing, Industrial/Commercial, Land Use, Multi-Cultural, Quality of Life, and Transportation. The following is an assessment of the physical aspects

of the 2010 Strategic Plan and how they relate to the Central Neighborhoods,

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- Emphasis placed on the need for more Recreation Department programming, public and private facilities being accessible to the handicapped, and providing a transportation system to serve the needs of the elderly.

HOUSING

- Create a Holland area-wide Housing Task Force with committees to report on the availability of funds to provide low income housing opportunities, and to identify ways that local governments may help facilitate the production of low income housing. There should be few new low-income housing projects in the City, instead, low income families should be housed in their own homes.
- Create a non-profit corporation (HOMECOR) to develop low/moderate income single and two family housing, and City aggressively pursue funding for housing.

INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL

- Nothing very applicable to the Central Neighborhoods.

LAND USE

- The #1 Goal will be that development and redevelopment will occur in a quality manner consistent with a master land use plan that is reviewed and updated every five years. Typically, this would be an excellent statement, unless, however, the land use plan is based on the suburban development model, and if it were carried to fruition would open large swathes of the Central Neighborhoods to the wrecking ball. Yikes! We obviously need to change the Land Use Plan to one that supports and builds on the existing urban pattern.
- An objective to prepare a plan for redevelopment within the City should be very carefully examined so the right kind of development that adds to the fabric, instead of detracts is encouraged. Plans for infrastructure redevelopment should be used not only to replace aging utility systems and provide additional system capacities where needed, but also to compliment the public realm of the Central Neighborhoods.
- The bold statement of seeking public use of waterfront from Kollen to Van Bragt Park is admirable and should be re-emphasized.
- A goal to provide abundant green space and landscaping around developed areas via new zoning ordinance requirements and new park land is positive. However, we should guard against the zoning requirements actually having the net effect of reducing the allowable density and intensity levels in the City. While the creation of small useable private open spaces should be encouraged for individual homes and dwellings, the creation of new public parks and augmenting the existing park lands may create the best benefit for the public, vs. mandating the set aside of privately owned and maintained open space that has minimal benefit for the general public.

MULTI-CULTURAL

- Encourage continued growth and funding of community wide ethnic festivals and multi-cultural community events at the Civic Center and other public gathering places.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- The physical goals included here are: to make Holland a visually pleasing community; to strengthen the neighborhoods; and to provide for additional cultural, historical, and recreational programs and facilities.
- The objectives identified to make Holland a more visually pleasing community includes the green space/landscaping zoning ordinance revisions and the public park expansion items noted in the Land Use section of this Plan. Other worthwhile objectives include revisions to the Sign section of the Zoning Ordinance, which have been completed, and more emphasis on historic preservation efforts that directly affects the Central Neighborhoods that are currently underway.
- The most original and worthwhile objective towards making the Central Neighborhoods more visually pleasing, next to park planning, is to examine the street network with an eye towards beautifying particularly major streets and calming traffic through various measures.
- The Goal of strengthening the neighborhoods can be done through expanding the Historic District, establishing neighborhood support groups, sponsoring more cleanup days, and expanding the Police Force. Many of these objectives have been completed, are currently underway, or will be ongoing efforts.
- An objective of restoring the Cappon House as well as expanding recreational opportunities is noted. The Cappon and Settlers House are currently being restored, and the City continues to aggressively expand recreational opportunities and renovate parks in the neighborhoods.

TRANSPORTATION

- Goal #1 seeks to address the capacity, congestion, safety, and efficiency issues of the street network by primarily proposing road building and expansion projects. For example, the Plan notes that 16th and 17th Streets should be widened wherever possible, and that on-street parking should be removed to facilitate traffic flow. This model for traffic flow and management in the Central Neighborhoods is no longer valid and has been changed by the City to more closely follow the ideas of traffic calming. In other words, when street improvements are now needed, they are designed in a manner that accommodates vehicle traffic and capacity needs, but at the same time adds to the streetscape and livability of the street.
- The other two goals discuss public transportation issues that include the expansion of the DART bus system (MAX), and the retention of passenger rail service via AMTRAK. By in large these two goals have been met.

List of 2010 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:

Health and Well Being

1. Recreation Department offer more day-time activities for the elderly, and after school supervised recreational and social activities for youth. Also, young adults need to have expanded recreational and leisure time activities.
2. Expand efforts to mainstream handicapped citizens through greater involvement in programs. Emphasize and work towards making all public and private facilities accessible to the handicapped (ADA now requires as a matter of law?).
3. Provide a transportation system to serve the needs of the elderly.

Housing

Goal 1 - Holland should develop a holistic view of housing which maintains a commitment to meeting the housing needs of all citizens, with special attention to meeting the needs of the handicapped, low and middle income, and the elderly, through a coordinated and balanced approach, including the churches, and the public and private sectors.

- a. Objective 1 - A committee of the Task Force (See Goal 2) should be formed to represent groups committed to housing for seniors, low income and handicapped citizens. The committee should focus its attention on ways to provide individual homes, apartments, condominiums, commercial structures, nursing homes, and health care opportunities.
- b. Objective 2 - A Task Force Committee composed of city professional staff, representatives of social agencies, and concerned citizens for housing, whose mission would include: Reporting on the availability of funds for low income housing, and identifying ways local governments can facilitate the production of low income housing.

Goal 2 - An area-wide Task Force for housing should be formed. Members from local governments, private sector, and housing advocacy groups.

- a. Objective 1 - Create an area-wide housing land use plan. Plan to ensure that housing codes and enforcement laws are uniform through the area.
- b. Objective 2 - Encourage area churches to be active in housing rehabilitation for low income families.

Goal 3 - There should be few new low income housing projects in the City. Low income families should be housed in their own homes to the extent possible.

- a. Objective 1 - Create a Financial Opportunities sub-committee under the Task Force to determine and compile sources of financial support and supply information to potential homeowners.
- b. Objective 2 - Create a non-profit corporation (HOMECOR) to develop low/mod single and two-family housing.

Goal 4 - The Mayor, City Council, and City staff must lead in creating and encouraging initiatives for broad-based, flexible, and creative efforts to meet housing needs.

- a. Objective 1 - The City Manager must identify and apply for those funds which may be used to construct, purchase, or renovate housing in the City.
- b. Objective 2 - Council must establish a housing policy supported by all city employees. This policy would put the City on record as supporting the principal of quality housing for all citizens in Holland.

Industrial/Commercial - Nothing very applicable to subject Central Neighborhoods area.

Land Use

Goal 1 - Holland will be a planned and planning community. Development and redevelopment will occur in a quality manner consistent with a master land use plan that is reviewed and updated every five years.

Area wide cooperation in planning has become a vital force in community development.

- a. Objective 1 - Planning Commission revise Master Plan by 1990, and then review/revise the Zoning Ordinance. Master Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance reviewed and updated in 1995 and 2000.
- b. Objective 2 - A plan for redevelopment within the City will be formulated. Strategies include:
 1. Attention will be given to the needs of the central city, city neighborhoods, primarily through the use of CDBG's for housing rehabilitation, low income housing initiatives, and neighborhood improvement activities. Owner occupancy of homes will continue to be encouraged and conversion of older homes to multi-family units discouraged. Year 1988.
 2. Areas within the City will be identified where changes in land use should occur. Year 1990.
 3. Areas within the City where land use should remain the same will be identified. Specific areas or sites where preservation or rehabilitation will need to be fostered will be identified. Year 1990.

4. A plan for historic preservation of significant sites and areas within the City will be formulated with the help of the Michigan History Division. Year 1990.
5. Review of the City's infrastructure will be conducted in cooperation with the City Engineer and BPW to plan for replacement and expansion relative to the City's land use and redevelopment plans. Year 1990.
6. City Council will approve a long term schedule for infrastructure improvements and establish a financial structure to accomplish the planned goals. (CIP process) Year 1990.
- c. Objective 3 - Area wide cooperation, communication and planning will occur on regular basis. Strategy to include: Establish an area wide land use and transportation planning group. Year 1990.

Goal 2 - Waterfront from Kollen Park to VanBragt Park will be developed for public recreational use.

- a. Objective 1 - Establish financial capacity for development. Year 1990
- b. Objective 2 - Aggressively seek public ownership of waterfront property from Kollen Park to VanBragt Park. Year 1988-89
- c. Establish a plan for the use and development of this waterfront area. Year 1995

Goal 3 - Holland will be a community with abundant green space surrounding developed areas.

- a. Objective 1 and 2 - Zoning revisions will be made in residential, industrial and commercial zones to establish improved standards for landscaping and green space in developments. Strategies include: Discourage paving of yards for parking, and review parking regulations as related to this problem. Density and setback revisions in residential zones, especially multi-family developments. Require park areas in large (more than 20 acres) residential developments.
- b. Objective 3 - Set aside land within the City to be designated for parks or natural, undeveloped land. Strategies include: Identify and protect sensitive natural areas, such as, marsh areas by the river, and the west end of 36th Street. Identify the need for more recreational facilities, such as ball fields, designate the areas, and establish a timeline for development. Investigate the use of abandoned railroad ROW's for walkways or bike paths. Planning Commission will review and revise the City Plan for parks and recreational facilities annually.

Multi-Cultural

Goal 5 - Encourage continued growth of ethnic festivals as community wide festivals (i.e. Fiesta Feast, Libertyfest, Cinco de Mayo, Tulip Time) as a means to provide opportunities for knowledge, human meaning, social responsibility, and personal enrichment.

Objectives include: Funding of community wide ethnic festivals, multi-cultural community events at the Civic Center, etc.

Quality of Life

Goal 1 - Make Holland a visually pleasing community.

- a. Objective 1 - Update Land Use Plan by 1990.
- b. Objective 2 - Increase green space and landscaping in commercial, residential, and industrial development. Change ordinance language by 7/89.
- c. Objective 3 - Keep signage to a minimum and unobstructive. Change ordinance language by 7/89.
- d. Objective 4 - Create (and subsequently encourage) quality redevelopment by preserving and restoring historic buildings, and create a redevelopment master plan by 7/90.
- e. Objective 5 - Expand the master parks plan by 10/90 and include the following: develop neighborhood parks, and expand community recreational parks.

- f. Objective 6 - Implement an aggressive recycling program by 3/95.
 - g. Objective 7 - Include the street/road master plan within the overall Land Use Master Plan by 1/90 with beautification emphasis on the following: Boulevard for East 16th Street, heavily landscape the US-31 corridor, traffic diversions for Pine Avenue.
- Objective 8 - Attention should be given to promoting natural neighborhoods through traffic routing. This includes creating neighborhood traffic areas that allow natural traffic routing but may discourage the sometimes harmful effects of through traffic.

Goal 2 - Strengthen the Neighborhoods

- a. Objective 1 - Expand the Historic District.
- b. Objective 2 - Establish Neighborhood Support Groups.
- c. Objective 3 - Sponsor more clean-up days.
- d. Objective 4 - Expand police force.

Goal 3 - Cultural, Historical, Recreational Programs and Facilities

- a. Cultural and Historical objectives as follows: Convert old Post Office into a new museum by end of 1990; restore the Cappon House; complete Van Raalte Heritage Farm; construct a community performing arts center by 12/2000; protect, promote, and expand celebrations and festivals for all ethnic heritages. Recreational objectives as follows: Complete Van Raalte Farm Park complex as already planned; expand City recreational program by encouraging school and township participation, and include an arts program, and; construct a community sports complex by 2000.

Goal 4 - Preserve the Family Unit.

Objectives include developing more housing and child care opportunities, and implementing proposed solutions through non-profit groups, the private sector, and churches.

Transportation

Goal 1 - The Greater Holland Area will have a sound system of local and state roads and highways, free of congestion and bottlenecks, with safety, efficiency, and aesthetic considerations fully incorporated. The system will fully accommodate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists as well as motor vehicles.

- a. Objective 1 - Holland will have a published map showing all current and prospective high-volume corridors. Zoning will be established along all of these routes to provide for expanding them as required to meet future traffic loads. Year 1989.
- b. Objective 2 - Holland will participate actively in an ongoing regional transportation planning organization. Year 1989.
- c. The roadway network in the eastern part of Holland should provide for a separation of through traffic from local business traffic, and encourage a spreading of east-west traffic in and out of the City among several lanes. Strategies include the following:
 1. A new interchange for I-196 at 32nd Street, and a new interchange to permit SB I-196 traffic to exit onto NB US-31 south of town. Year 2000
 2. Construct a new US-31 By-pass further to the east. Year 2005
 3. The current US-31 should be a controlled access, lower-speed business route through the City, with controlled development and controlled access to new development. Year 1995
 4. Waverly Road from 40th Street to Lakewood Boulevard should be widened to four lanes. Year 1992

5. Lincoln Avenue and the current M-40 should be widened to 4-5 lanes from 32nd to 48th Street.

d. The roadway network in the central city should provide for easy access to the downtown from all directions (with improvements needed from the East and North), and should facilitate a spreading of East/West traffic. Strategies include the following:

1. Reconstruct the 8th Street/Chicago drive intersection. Year 1989
2. Congestion in the River Avenue/Howard Avenue/Ottawa Beach Road vicinity should be eliminated. Year 1989 (Note: Out of City jurisdiction)
3. Longer term plan for maintaining and possibly expanding the River Avenue bridge. Year 1990.
4. To improve East/West traffic movement, 16th and 17th Streets should be widened wherever possible, particularly 16th Street between Lincoln and US-31. Boulevard treatment should be considered. Remove parking from the streets. Year 1995.
5. 32nd Street from Lincoln to US-31 should be widened to four lanes. Year 1992.

e. Within the central business district surrounding 8th Street, special consideration should be given to improving access to destinations and to making traffic circulation among these locations more convenient. Also, the Streetscape improvements to streets and sidewalks should be expanded as downtown areas are rehabilitated or redeveloped. Strategies include the following:

1. Detailed traffic analysis/reconstruction of 7th, 8th, and 9th Streets, and River and Pine Avenues.
2. Additional free off-street parking lots.
3. Improve downtown roadway signage.
4. Expand the Streetscape improvement zone wherever possible in the downtown district.

f. The roadway network on the south side of Holland should provide safe, uncongested traffic flows to and from the industrial park and airport areas, and must also accommodate the needs of growing residential development in the area. This goal and strategies are out of the study area.

Goal 2 - Although the citizens of this region are unlikely to depart from their primary reliance on the automobile for transportation, Holland should provide public transportation sufficient to meet the needs of all of its citizens. Objectives include:

- a. Expand the DART system, and possibly subsidized taxi cabs.
- b. Ferry across Lake Macatawa to connect Park Township area with City and alleviate traffic on Ottawa Beach Road.
- b. Monitor developments in the inner-city bus industry to assure our service is maintained and expanded.

Goal 3 - Holland should make every effort to retain its current rail service, both commercial and passenger, and should strive to participate in any high-speed rail services, which might be established in Michigan.

a. Objective - Explore the rail corridor from the Holland Transportation Center to Kollen Park. Possible use as a people orientated transportation link between these two ends of town. Trolley running on the existing rails, or bicycle/pedestrian/trolley bus paths adjacent to the rails to form a "Railroad/Windmill Park to Town Park to Kollen Park" system.

Goal 4 - Retain and enhance the deepwater port.

Goal 5 - Maintain and expand the Airport.

ADDENDUM C – City Housing Goals and Policy Report

This Report is a succinct yet very articulate report that properly frames housing policy within its real world context, the neighborhood unit. This report defines the characteristics and standards of Good Neighborhoods that cut right to the core of housing and neighborhood issues. Perhaps the force and boldness of this report may be attributed to its list and bullet format that does not beat around the bush regarding the policies for which it advocates. By in large, the Central Neighborhood Plan agrees with most of the policies and action strategies prepared in this Report.

The following is a summary of the more high profile items noted in the Report:

- Call for the definition of and the formal organization of neighborhoods to be followed up with the development of specific neighborhood plans.
- Conversion of rentals to owner-occupied housing and a call for all new developments (owner and rental occupied) with more than 10 units to set aside 10-15% as affordable units.
- The study of Conservation Districts and how the potential design and maintenance standards in such districts may augment the base Zoning Ordinance requirements for a neighborhood.
- Provide more opportunities for mixed-use development by revisions to the Zoning Ordinance that loosens up the primarily single use requirements of the zoning districts.
- Rental housing should be developed on a more scattered basis than allowing concentrations of rental housing.
- The design of residential in-fill development must be compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood housing. This policy is now being implemented through the residential infill regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.

List of Housing Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1 - Stabilize and Improve Existing Neighborhoods

- Objective 1 - Good Neighborhoods: All neighborhoods should be improved to the point that each satisfies the characteristics and standards for "Good Neighborhoods". All existing and proposed City programs, policies, and activities should be evaluated for their effect and contribution toward achieving those characteristics.
- Objective 2 - Neighborhood Organizing and Planning: Neighborhood residents, in a coordinated effort with the City, neighborhood watch program, schools, institutions, and neighborhood businesses, should identify specific "neighborhood" boundaries. Organize and develop specific plans for the improvement of each neighborhood in a manner consistent with the overall goals for the improvement of housing and neighborhoods in the City. Develop a consensus of support and move forward with plan implementation. Seven (7) Program Strategies are included in the Report.
- Objective 3 - Property Values and Housing Cost: Property values for housing in all neighborhoods should remain stable commensurate with positive income growth with the local and regional economy. This stability should provide protection for continued investment by property owners desiring to make a major maintenance or discretionary housing improvements. Total housing costs should remain affordable according to reasonable standards applied to household income. Four (4) Program Strategies are included in the Report.
- Objective 4 - Homeownership opportunities should be increased through two strategies: Increase the number of residential units available for home ownership, and increase the number of households who can afford to purchase a home.

- Objective 5 - Rental Housing: Concentrations of rental housing in the downtown neighborhoods should be reduced through conversion of existing single-family rentals into owner-occupancy and through conversion of multi-family houses that are feasible for single-family use. This strategy for the downtown neighborhoods should be complemented of an affordable housing component (10-15% of the units) in new rental developments over 10 units. Remaining rental housing units should be effectively managed high quality units that are not a negative influence on their neighborhoods. Five (5) Program Strategies are included in the Report.
- Objective 6 - Geographic Income Distribution: The community should strive for a mix of incomes in all neighborhoods. A target percentage of low-income households distributed within each neighborhood should not exceed the range of 10 to 15 percent. A further objective is to eliminate any "low-income" census tracts, that is those situations where the percentage of low-income households exceeds 51% of households within a given census tract. Three Program Strategies.
- Objective 7 - Fair Housing Standards and Enforcement. Three Program Strategies.
- Objective 8 - Property Condition and Quality: Improve the physical characteristics of all properties to provide safe, decent housing meeting minimum codes. Program Strategies geared to code compliance, assistance, compatibility and design character, and education.
- Objective 9 - Alleviate Over-Crowding: Encourage uncrowded conditions within units, within building, and on site. Three Program Strategies.
- Objective 10 - Promotion: Promote the livability of the City's neighborhoods. Improve both the reality and perception of the quality of life within our neighborhoods. Five Program Strategies.
- Objective 11 - Holistic Planning: Make housing and neighborhood improvement the highest priority when considering decisions in related areas including: schools, transportation and traffic, recreation and open space, commercial development, community and social services, public infrastructure improvements.
- Objective 12 - Zoning Ordinance Revision: Current zoning regulations and site plan review standards and procedures should be examined to determine whether they adequately result in "Good Neighborhoods" supportive of continued owner investment and an enhanced sense of community. Strategy - Planning Commission consider a three-tier zoning approach.

Goal 2 - Create Good New Neighborhoods.

- Objective 1 - All new neighborhoods should satisfy the criteria for "Good Neighborhoods".
- Objective 2 - Mixed-Use Development: Housing units of a variety of sizes should be a primary component of new mixed-use development throughout the Downtown, waterfront, and new neighborhood commercial areas. Housing, integrated with commercial office and retail uses, recreational open space, and other community uses will assure a vital and diverse core of our community and neighborhoods. Land use, zoning, building code, and other regulations should be reviewed and revised as necessary to allow such development. Specific opportunities for substantial mixed-use in-fill development incorporating a housing component include: the vicinity of the Civic Center; reinforcing mixed-uses around Centennial Park; 6th and 7th Streets from River to Columbia Avenues; 8th Street from College to Lincoln Avenues; and the underutilized properties south and east of Heinz and Kollen Park.
- Objective 3 - Building Re-use: In considering the future potential for redevelopment or re-use of all existing non-residential structures, housing should be considered where it can become an integral part of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Objective 4 - Affordable housing as a component of new development: The continued segregation of low income households into homogeneous areas or developments is not in the best interest of anyone.

Two Program Strategies.

- Objective 5 - Rental Housing: Distribution of rental housing in new neighborhoods or within new developments should not exceed the rental/owner percentages that are typical within the MACC metro area and should be developed to be scattered sites that do not result in substantial concentrations of low-income populations. Rental housing should blend into the neighborhood and have similar amenities and architectural character. Three Program Strategies.
- Objective 6 - New housing and large-scale in-fill housing developments: Compatible with existing character of neighborhood.
- Objective 7 - Expanding City Boundaries: New areas in the City should include "Good Neighborhood" residential areas.
- Objective 8 - Make housing and neighborhood improvement the highest priority when making many decisions.
- Objective 9 - Environmental Contamination: Develop an aggressive policy and supportive funding source to deal with environmental contamination throughout the City. Steps necessary before redevelopment can occur.
- Objective 10 - Zoning Ordinance Revision: See Goal 1, Objective 12

Goal 3 - Promote Area-Wide Responsibility: See attachment pages 14-16.

ADDENDUM D – 1998 Central Neighborhoods Resident Survey

During the summer of 1998 the Planning Commission and the Housing Advisory Commission conducted a central neighborhood survey to gather information from the public regarding land use, zoning, and housing policy issues within the neighborhoods. The questions were designed to gather a snap shot qualitative indication of the feelings and concerns of residents for various issues. The following is a very brief summary of the particular issues that are relevant to this Neighborhood Plan.

- 800 surveys, 27.9% response rate that is very good.
- 75% of respondents live 10+ years in Holland area, Two-thirds of people have 10 minute or less commute to work, 80% of people live in single family house.
- Rental properties are still viewed negatively: density, upkeep, and parking issues prevail. Opinions on traffic are mixed with more people believing that congestion is not a problem than believing it is a problem, and more people believing that traffic speeds are a problem vs. not a problem.
- People are concerned about parking issues with a large 2/3 majority believing paving in front yards must be limited, and the largest portion of people (49%) believing overnight parking on streets should not be permitted. Paving in front yards is now tightly regulated through amendments made to the Zoning Ordinance.
- Appearances and functional quality of physical things in the neighborhoods are viewed mainly positively (houses, yards, schools, parks and playgrounds, lighting, sidewalks, drainage, etc.).
- People are leaning against any ordinance amendments that may allow more densities of people, cars, and buildings.
- Many people desire to upgrade their homes but are afraid to because of the fear they will not get the money out of the home should they choose to sell.
- People appear to be mainly interested in stabilization, and any efforts that may help to restore and positively benefit the neighborhood.

ADDENDUM E - BIBLIOGRAPHY

Community and neighborhood design references.

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- Ahwahnee Principles www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles.html
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- Traditional homes www.tndhomes.com
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- New Urbanist architect Andres Duany's www.dpz.com/
- New Urbanist town planner Victor Dover's home page www.doverkohl.com/writings.html
- Cyburbia – The Urban Planning Portal www.cyburbia.org
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- City Comforts – How to Build an Urban Village www.citycomforts.com
- National Center for Bicycling and Walking www.bikewalk.org
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- Walkable Communities www.walkable.org