

Scott Dzurka
Mayor

Brad Gurski
Vice Mayor

Eric Hufnagel
Commissioner

Chris Hyzer
Commissioner

Chris DeLiso
Commissioner



Chad A. Gamble, P.E.
City Manager

Mindy J. Seavey
City Clerk

Kristina Kinde
City Treasurer

Michael Homier
City Attorney

Justin Smith
Director of Public Services

**CITY OF ST. JOHNS
SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING
PROPOSED AGENDA**

**Monday, December 8, 2025, 4:30 p.m.
Room 2200 – Clinton County Courthouse**

***Listen to Meeting Via Telephonic Conference
Dial 1 929 205 6099**

<https://zoom.us/j/2050014286>

Meeting ID: 205 001 4286

***Please note, you will not be able to make public comments through Zoom;
only in-person attendees will be able to participate in public comments.**

- 1. Call to Order (4:30 pm – 4:32 pm)**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance (4:32 pm – 4:33 pm)**
- 3. Presentation of Strategic Plan Process and Discussion of Commission Memo (4:33 pm – 5:40 pm)**
(Presenter: Chad Gamble, City Manager)
- 4. Public Comments (5:40 pm – 5:45 pm)**
- 5. Adjournment (5:45 pm)**

NOTICE: People with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in this meeting should contact the city clerk 989-224-8944 at least two working days in advance of the meeting. An attempt will be made to provide reasonable accommodation.

CITY OF ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION
December 8, 2025 4:30 P.M. Special Commission Meeting - Strategic Planning

Department: Administration	Attachments:	Submitted to CA for Review
Subject: <i>FY 26/27 Strategic Planning – Updating of the Roadmap to Action Plan</i>	[X] FY 26/27 Roadmap to Action Plan November 2025 Update	[n/a]
	[X] Master Plan Goals and Objectives	[n/a]
	[X] Master Plan Action Plan Detail List	[n/a]
Prepared by: Chad A. Gamble, P.E., City Manager	Approved by: Chad A. Gamble, P.E., City Manager	

SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHT: Over the past several years the City Commission has produced a *Roadmap To Action Plan* (RAP). This plan consolidates our planning documents into a single, actionable roadmap for the City Commission and staff. The process this year was highlighted and emphasized with the blending of the compilation and updating of the City’s Action Plan (AP) with the updating of the City’s 5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan (MP). The MP’s major accomplishment was to scrub the City’s AP (attached) to re-order/re-emphasize/de-emphasize the former action plan to assure that the resulting new list aligns with the Commission’s current goals and vision. The Commission should also review the overall goals to confirm current alignment with the Commissions vision of the City.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: The RAP organizes the MP’s goals into objectives and activities into a concise list, serving as a focused guide to align the City’s vision with measurable progress. Key takeaways include treating the document as a “living” tool, with regular reviews and assigning the City Manager responsibility for aligning commission goals with resources and timelines for effective implementation. Adequate funding and staffing were identified as critical for success in the implementation and prioritization of the plan.

The continued focus of this annual process is to confirm the goals, action items, and related tasks/activities of the RAP. As such the FY 26/27 Budget will use the approval of the updated RAP as its starting point.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE: The completion of the RAP will form the focus of key interests of the Commission that will provide direction and clarity to the City Manager and Administrative Staff.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission is encouraged to study the Updated Master Plan – Action Plan list and to reach a consensus on the updating and eventual approval of the FY 2026/2027 Roadmap to Action Plan.

ST. JOHNS CITY COMMISSION: FY 25/26 ROADMAP TO ACTION - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES TO DATE

ACTION PLAN ITEM		FY 25-26 ACTIVITY	STATUS
GOAL #1: INTENTIONALLY PURSUE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
1.1 Strengthen branding	1.1.1 Develop a brand identity.	COMPLETE - The new City Logo and brand was rolled out in October of 2023. In the ensuing months the City has been purposeful and intentional in deploying this logo and color branding throughout the City's media and static platforms. It was very well received and we will continue to use this to further our branding efforts.	
	1.1.2 Implement and communicate new brand identity.	COMPLETE - the communication of this branding was enhanced by increased efforts on social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, website, newsletter)	
1.2 Focus on strategic growth	1.2.1 Identify growth/development segments (industry, housing, and business).	SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS - ONGOING - The City has issued RFP's and placed signage on city property to garner interest, we have disposed of 2 of the City's 4 railcars, and look to address access property for development and are nearing the approval of a Bulk Water Agreement with Bingham Township	
	1.2.2 Explore incentives and barrier reductions.	MARKETED PROGRESS - ONGOING - We have increased communication and interactions with LEAP and engaged the MEDC on grants and other project developments including development opportunities in Bingham Township	
	1.2.3 Establish metrics to measure achievement	Departmental metrics will be proposed in the FY 26/27 Budget process	
1.3 Facilitate business development for local developers and business owners	1.3.1 Become a business development hub.	SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS - ONGOING - We have increased partnerships with the Chamber and LEAP and have participated in workshops to specifically improve access to the local, regional and state toolboxes with assistance to our local businesses.	
GOAL #2: ELEVATE PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES			
2.1 Strengthen wayfinding	2.1.1 Develop a wayfinding improvement plan.	PAUSED - The City Commission removed funding from this objective and this will again be a topic of discussion and priority balancing this along with other budgetary constraints.	
2.2 Develop resident awareness	2.2.1 Improve communication between city, residents, and businesses.	SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS - ONGOING - The creation of a marketing and media coordinator position that was instituted in March of 2025 has significantly increased the bandwidth, quality and quantity of communication opportunities. The implementation of the St. Johns Notifications system in the Spring of 2025 also directly furthers these objectives. The marketed increase can also be directly measured by the number of views on our Facebook over 100,000 views in a months time.	
GOAL #3: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY BONDS			
3.1 Focus on intergovernmental partnerships	3.1.1 Prioritize partnership list.	PROGRESS - The Staff have been intentional in reaching out to our rural fire partners via annual briefings, the school district via our annual meetings and increased shared programs (via FFA partnership), worked with Bingham Township in formulating a Bulk Water Agreement and have continued to increase monetary partnership with the Lions Club and Rotary for their recycling and Independence Day support and leadership.	
3.2 Increase community engagement	3.2.1 Support events that promote social engagement, intergenerational connectivity, and diversity in the community.	SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS - ONGOING - The implementation of St. Johns Notifications and the huge increase in views on our web and social media videos and posts has greatly enhanced the connection to residents and businesses this year building on the social media intern and the new full time Marketing and Media position.	
	3.2.2 Support community engagement in city governance, development, and partnerships.	SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS - ONGOING - The implementation of St. Johns Notifications and the increase of Facebook and YouTube posts creates more opportunities for engagement of residents and businesses. The Maste Plan Update was an example of a successful public engagement of an important municipal process that garnered good participation and engagement. We have continued investment and enhancement of our relationship with LEAP and their development team and business support areas	

03.

Goals and Objectives



Land Use – Development and Redevelopment

Policy Statement: Build an awareness of the City of St. Johns as an outstanding place to live, work and visit by promoting a positive business environment; encouraging new development in industrial parks; supporting redevelopment of targeted sites; broadening and strengthening the tourism sector; and facilitating economic diversification and business growth. All while preserving and enhancing the traditional, mixed land use character of the City by offering planned integration of land uses that promote positive relationships between businesses and neighborhoods and careful separation of conflicting land uses.

GOAL #1: ACCOMMODATE A DIVERSE, STRONG COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE BASE THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

- a) Increase small business development.
- b) Recruit a diverse number of businesses to St. Johns.
- c) Seek boutique hotel developments in and around the downtown.
- d) Increase small town-appropriate commercial options that appeal to young families, as well as those that provide an outlet for healthy recreation for teenagers.
- e) Identify and discuss the best and highest uses for Township land that is close to City and within agreed upon development areas.
- f) Seek the highest and best use for remaining City-owned industrial park property.

GOAL: #2: CREATE A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN WITH DIVERSE BUSINESSES.

- a) Implement the best use of City owned properties downtown.
- b) Encourage and support new and expanded retail establishments.
- c) Connect emerging businesses to landlords seeking to fill commercial space.
- d) Support the DDA/PSD's efforts to increase downtown events and activities.
- e) Recruit/encourage a coalition of businesses to extend hours into the evening/weekends to promote downtown vibrancy.
- f) Support the expansion of the business district east and west from Clinton Avenue along M-21, Walker, and Higham Streets through zoning and other actions.
- g) Seek the highest and best use for remaining City-owned industrial park property.

GOAL #3: ASSEMBLE PROPERTY ALONG THE MEIJER TRAIL FOR REDEVELOPMENT

- a) Partner with MDOT and other regional entities to assemble publicly-owned land into contiguous development parcels, including potential City purchase of land owned by other entities.
- b) Encourage private property owners to seek redevelopment tools consistent with the vision of this Plan.
- c) Work with MEDC, LEAP, and another partners to create a suite of incentives to attract developers to the targeted redevelopment areas.
- d) Seek developer partners for the construction of the envisioned development.
- e) If outside funding or a private development proposal become available, then the silos could be demolished, and their site could become part of the larger vision for the Meijer Trail corridor.



GOAL #4: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC VARIETY AND JOB CREATION THAT WILL LEVERAGE ST. JOHNS' GEOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS.

- a) Rezone vacant or underutilized property in and near neighborhoods to encourage redevelopment that is compatible in use and intensity with the existing neighborhood.
- b) Support and encourage efforts to attract a wide array of businesses to St. Johns.
- c) Facilitate economic development activities to expand the economic vitality and tax base of the City.
- d) Incorporate cross municipal relationship to coordinate infrastructure development with Bingham Township.
- e) Develop a wide range of housing types to attract families to move to St. Johns.
- f) Increase housing in and around the downtown.
- g) Partner with LEAP and MEDC to pursue City goals.

GOAL #5: PROVIDE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS.

- a) Leverage the City's Redevelopment Ready Certification to utilize LEAP and MEDC programs in support of desired business investment.
- b) Identify vacant and underutilized areas and plan to maximize their development.
- c) Provide for local infrastructure development, where needed, to support economic development efforts.
 - 1. Improve pedestrian connectivity and beautification through partnership with the DDA/PSD via a Streetscape and Parking Master Plan.
 - 2. Work with housing developers to construct a new road network south of Townsend Road to support new construction, consistent with the vision of this plan.
 - 3. Redesign Old 127 to improve circulation, turning movements, and non-motorized safety, in partnership with the Clinton County Road Commission and MDOT.
 - 4. Partner with Bingham Township to ensure sufficient water and sewer service to support desired development.
- d) Continue downtown revitalization efforts by encouraging a mix of housing, retail, and complementary services.
- e) Promote expansion of successful redevelopment efforts.

Neighborhoods

Policy Statement: Sustain and enhance St. Johns neighborhoods by providing for the safety and protection of all residents, visitors, and property, and enabling the development of strong, cohesive, and stable neighborhoods.

GOAL #1: PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND ENHANCE THE SMALL TOWN AESTHETIC, ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND LIVABILITY OF ST. JOHNS NEIGHBORHOODS.

- a) Plans, programs and investment opportunities should be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and with the strategies described in this plan for each neighborhood area.
- b) Limit non-residential intrusions into residential neighborhoods and buffer detrimental effects of commercial and industrial uses through the use of open space and landscape treatments and site design.
- c) Ensure that all new housing is compatible with the desired characteristics of that particular neighborhood and in accordance with the general neighborhood strategies contained in this plan.
- d) Improve property maintenance of existing housing stock for renters and homeowners through enhanced code enforcement and rental inspection.
- e) Unifying elements should be utilized as a neighborhood identifier, whether it is signage, similar architecture, street lighting or consistent streetscape landscaping.
- f) Ensure sufficient land is planned and zoned for housing units attractive to seniors and retirees, without sacrificing housing availability for families with children.
- g) Collaborate with homeowners to ensure high quality maintenance of older homes before engaging in code enforcement actions.



GOAL #2: ENSURE THAT THE CITY'S HOUSING STOCK INCLUDES A WIDE VARIETY OF TYPES OF UNITS REFLECTING THE NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION.

- a) Position planning, zoning, and economic development resources to promote the construction of housing meeting the needs identified in this plan.
- b) Target investment in parks to ensure City-wide access to high quality recreational amenities, especially those that provide healthy outlets for teenagers.
- c) Involve residents in planning and maintaining open space and neighborhood parks.
- d) Require newly constructed neighborhoods to retain open space and include sidewalks on all streets and bike trail connections as appropriate.
- e) Provide housing for all ages, including younger families and the aging population.
- f) Provide attainably priced housing for young families.
- g) As the downtown residential population grows, ensure that it can function as a neighborhood through proactive management of quality of life issues such as parking and public spaces.

GOAL #3: PROMOTE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITIES AND CULTURES.

- a) Encourage cooperation between community groups and the City to promote neighborhood cohesion and civic pride.
- b) Develop a street tree program to create a simple, efficient process for residents to beautify public rights-of-way.
- c) Utilize landscaping at entry points, in rights-of-way, and park areas to improve the beauty of all residential neighborhoods.
- d) Install new gateway signage at entrances to the City.

GOAL #4: MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITHIN THE CITY.

- a) Investigate the creation of a demolition restriction zone to preserve historic structures.
- b) Secure façade grants for downtown buildings.
- c) Encourage homeowners to reflect historic standards in the upkeep of their homes, and increase awareness of opportunities for recognition of successful restoration efforts.
- d) Work with the DDA/PSD to ensure continued funding for the facade grant program. Include the Historic District in the Wayfinding Plan.
- e) Secure historic preservation awards for home restoration projects.
- f) Streamline regulations to allow the creation of bed and breakfasts in appropriate structures and locations.
- g) Allow maker spaces and artisan production facilities in the downtown.

Transportation

Policy Statement: To create a safe, connected transportation system that includes street, transit, water, air, and non-motorized components adequate to accommodate the current and future needs of the City of St. Johns and promotes the walkable, traditional character of the community for all users.

GOAL #1: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE, CIRCULATION, AND SAFETY OF THE ROAD NETWORK TO SUPPORT ALL USERS IN THE COMMUNITY.

- a) Mitigate for increased truck traffic, with buffers such as street trees and green infrastructure.
- b) Improve and maintain the specific roads that are being impacted by additional industrial park traffic.
- c) Increase safety at the intersection of M-21 and Scott Road through growth of businesses and providing infrastructure to increase walkability.
- d) Work toward the development of an overall circulation system for the City, which is coordinated with the transportation systems of the region, and which includes a connected network of residential streets designed to connect residents to each other by walking, cycling, or driving. Acknowledge changes in regional driving patterns, including the reduction in regional traffic on Old 127.
- e) Require that all land developments be designed in a manner that reduces the number of potential traffic conflicts (curb cuts), particularly along streets that serve as City-wide or regional traffic carriers. Require connections for both cars and pedestrians between adjacent sites on commercial thoroughfares. New developments should not adversely affect the safety, efficiency, and function of streets.
- f) Require street layouts of contiguous residential areas to be coordinated and connected. Residential street patterns should provide access for emergency vehicles and smooth and safe flow of pedestrians, bicycles, and cars through the neighborhood.
- g) Provide street layouts and street design and paving standards in industrial areas which are appropriate for the heavier truck traffic associated with such uses and which facilitate peak-hour smooth traffic flows with minimum disruption to the general traffic flow of the community.
- h) Control noise of truck traffic in expanding industrial park.



GOAL #2: ENHANCE WALKABILITY AND WAYFINDING IN AND AROUND THE DOWNTOWN.

- a) Follow up the public parking signage program with efforts to designate private lots and make the downtown parking system easier to understand and navigate.
- b) Increase signage leading to downtown, especially at M-21 and Old 127.
- c) Add a branded wayfinding sign on the US-127 freeway before the M-21 exit.
- d) Provide directional signs on Old 127 to direct people downtown.
- e) Continue to enhance downtown parking options for residents and businesses.
- f) Ensure the DDA has sufficient funding for infrastructure upkeep to ensure safety and a positive aesthetic for the community.
- g) Wayfinding Sign Plan with suggested designs for both the downtown and Old 127 Corridor and tying the two together.
- h) Add wayfinding signage for local businesses and amenities along the Meijer Trail, including maps.

GOAL #3: IMPROVE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ON OLD 127

- a) Collaborate with MDOT to increase traffic safety and walkability along OLD 127.
- b) Provide Beautification to OLD 127 to change the road into a gateway.
- c) Provide green infrastructure and landscaping to act as beautification.
- d) Increase streetscape and building improvements to beautify Old 127 Corridor.

Parks and Recreation

Policy Statement: Create a healthy and fun community for St. Johns citizens to live, work and play by improving St. Johns park land and recreational facilities.



GOAL #1: PROVIDE SAFE, INCLUSIVE, COMMUNITY-BASED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT IMPROVE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL ST. JOHNS-AREA RESIDENTS.

Parks provide a natural gathering place for the community as well as provide for free or low-cost recreational activities. Therefore, it is important to continue to provide and improve these facilities. Based on community input, the City will continue to provide and improve these facilities.

- a) Continue to improve and upgrade the City of St. Johns recreational and support facilities, based on community feedback, of which residents can be proud.
- b) Provide increased and better access to and through the City Parks and Trails System. Objective: Add passive and active programming based on community input and available financing.

GOAL #2: PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-MOTORIZED PATHWAY SYSTEM THROUGHOUT THE CITY TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTION AND PARTICIPATION, IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, AND STRENGTHEN NON-MOTORIZED LINKAGES BETWEEN CITY PARKS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

Paths and trails are a high priority with the residents. St. Johns currently has few trails, but with the construction of the Fred Meijer Trail, they have seen a rise in non-motorized activity in the city. Connecting the rail trail with the City Park and other points of interest is a high priority for the community. 80% of survey respondents place a high or moderate funding priority on increasing trail connectivity within the community.

- a) Expand non-motorized pathways in St. Johns, with focus on existing paths and points of interest.
- b) Evaluate options for safely moving pedestrian traffic across Old U.S. 27 to expand non-motorized park access from the east side of the highway.
- c) Pursue a partnership with Clinton County to connect the Fred Meijer Trail to Motz Park and possibly other county resources.



GOAL #3: PROMOTE REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CITY OF ST. JOHNS, CLINTON COUNTY, SURROUNDING TOWNSHIPS, THE ST. JOHNS SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE COUNTY TO BETTER PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO THE RESIDENTS OF ST. JOHNS AND CLINTON COUNTY.

It makes financial and practical sense to coordinate recreation within the city in a way that is aware and supportive of the surrounding areas. The City and School District have been working together for years providing shared recreation programs and facilities. Further collaboration with the County and other organizations will prove to be an important component in providing quality recreational programs and facilities to the St. Johns community.

- a) Continue to work with the existing partners to provide recreational programming and facilities.
- b) Continue to explore options for new and expanded partners, providing additional recreational opportunities.

GOAL #4: ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF QUALITY NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO ALL CITY RESIDENTS.

Park facilities are among the most visible indicators of community identity and pride. Every park in the system, with the exception of the Senior Citizen Park, was shown to be the most important park to several responding households, with all parks being used by individuals on a bi-weekly basis or more frequently. The majority of respondents said clean and quality restrooms and playground areas were the most important features of a park.

- a) Continue to upgrade playground equipment and access, paying special attention to universal access.
- b) Keep parks safe and well-maintained.
- c) Investigate all appropriate methods to provide facilities and for facility improvements, including providing incentives to private developers, promoting donation of property and/or facilities, and the sale of unused/underused assets.

GOAL #5: PROVIDE UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES DESIGNED WITH ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN MIND.

The City wishes to provide recreational activities for residents of all abilities. With ambulatory and cognitive disabilities shown to be higher than the national average, special care should be taken to actively incorporate facilities for these users.

- a) Partner with organizations that serve disabled individuals to better understand and provide for community needs.
- b) Make sure that all improvements and upgrades to park facilities, where feasible, are universally accessible.

GOAL #6: STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF ST. JOHNS AS A REGIONAL PROVIDER/COORDINATOR OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND DEVELOP A PLAN THAT MAXIMIZES THE IMPACT OF EXISTING AND FUTURE RECREATION PROVIDERS.

Due to its centralized location and rural surroundings, the City is the major recreational provider for the central and northern part of the county. Many people from within and outside the City look to us for recreational programming, yet many are not aware of the programming we offer. Several survey respondents were unaware of multiple parks, recreation resources, and facilities.

- a) Expand current internet presence, including the City website, to provide information on facility locations, features, and recreation programs. Objective: Explore the possibility of creating a Recreation Authority with other municipal groups and recreation providers.
- b) Explore additional methods to improve community awareness of recreation programs and facilities.
- c) Encourage citizen involvement in the park system through volunteer programs, interpretive programs, and the decision-making process. Consider implementing regular online community surveys to monitor progress and gain input on specific recreation decisions.



GOAL #7: ACQUIRE PROPERTY, AS NECESSARY, TO MEET THE LONG-TERM RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF CITY RESIDENTS.

In the past, the City has purchased valuable parks and recreation land but has also sold land to other entities providing them with land to expand their facilities. Local officials must be conscious of the need to retain and acquire additional parkland.

- a) Retain existing parkland to meet recreational needs of the City.
- b) Encourage the use of open spaces for recreational purposes.
- c) Evaluate every opportunity to expand/improve the park system and take action where practical, this may include selling underused park land and using proceeds to improve or purchase other parks. Natural conservation should be considered in addition to facility expansion.

GOAL #8: PROMOTE HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES THROUGH THE ST. JOHNS PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

Considering national problems of obesity, heart health, diabetes, and other health issues, it is important to take into consideration the health impact of new and existing facilities and programs. Just over 67% of respondents participate in recreation programs offered by the department, yet 58% of survey respondents still feel that the improvement of health and fitness programming would have a positive impact on their satisfaction, and 75% currently use the parks for fitness and exercise. 66% feel that the development and improvement of trails within the park system would have a very positive impact on their satisfaction, and 11% cite "lack of trails" as a reason for not using the park system more frequently.

- a) Promote awareness of existing facilities and programs that support healthy lifestyles and choices.
- b) Provide additional health and fitness programming. Objective: Provide additional facilities and opportunities, including walking and biking trail systems, which foster healthy choices and lifestyles.
- c) Provide innovative recreation opportunities for all seasons that encourage active year-round lifestyles.

Public Facilities

Policy Statement: Strive for a high quality of life for current and future residents by maintaining a diverse and unified system of municipal facilities and services.

GOAL #1: CONTINUE TO OFFER HIGH QUALITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS.

- a) Create a Pre-Application Committee, consisting of the City Manager, Community Development Director, and DPW Director, and potentially others, to provide initial feedback on development projects.
- b) Increase coordination and cooperation between departments to streamline processes and ensure consistent application of policies.
- c) Update facilities to accommodate improvements and changes in technology.
- d) Work proactively to provide opportunities for non-residents to access recreation programs and other City services, while recouping the costs of expanding those programs.
- e) Utilize the newly acquired Wilson Center facilities to provide programming and activities for residents.
- f) Continue providing services and assistance to neighboring communities in a manner that promotes the spirit of a cohesive region without facilitating inefficient, low density development.
- g) Further develop Stewardship in St. Johns as guidance for maintaining recreation facilities for all members of the community, including leveraging service organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.
- h) Support the Wilson Center as a Community Center.
- i) As part of the ongoing redevelopment of the Wilson Center, ensure that facilities for public recreation, arts, music, and culture are retained within the facility.

GOAL #2: REDUCE STRESS ON THE CITY STORM WATER SYSTEM THROUGH LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT.

- a) Continue on-going planning efforts and studies of storm water infrastructure to ensure it is meeting demands and that adequate capacity is provided.
- b) Require that developers submit a green infrastructure plan at the beginning of the site plan review process.
- c) Develop guidelines and ordinance provisions that would allow for native vegetation.
- d) Continue to work with the County Drain Commission to ensure maintenance of County Drains and prevent flooding.

Vegetation and Landscaping

Policy Statement: Create a healthy, and beautiful environment for St. Johns citizens by preserving and enhancing St. Johns natural resources and planning for the efficient, attractive and environmentally sound use of land.

GOAL #1: INTEGRATE NATURAL FEATURES INTO SITE DEVELOPMENT WHILE CLEANING UP EXISTING CONTAMINATION TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF NATURE IN URBAN AREAS.

- a) Promote the clean-up of contaminated sites with innovative incentives through zoning flexibility and with assistance from the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.
- b) Promote sensitive and responsible storm water management practices by developing guidelines and policies based on Best Management Practices.
- c) Encourage developers to integrate existing natural features into new developments.
- d) Develop ordinances which preserve the integrity of the natural settings of neighborhoods, communities, open spaces and parks, and develop clear procedures for their enforcement.
- e) Integrate vegetation and natural features in road construction and improvements.

GOAL #2: PRESERVE EXISTING TREES AND WORK TO EXPAND THE TREE CANOPY.

- a) Establish a community-wide tree planting program to increase the community's aesthetic appeal, and provide shade to families enjoying the City's neighborhoods.
- b) Develop and maintain a list of desirable and undesirable species for tree planting, especially street trees.
- c) Ensure a wide variety of tree species are planted, especially as street trees, in order to create an attractive tree canopy, and reduce vulnerability to disease and parasites.

02.

Action Plan



Action Plan

This section identifies and describes actions and tools available to implement the vision created in this Plan.

KEY			RESPONSIBILITY (ABBREVIATION)	
PRIORITY	A	Most Important	BO	Business Owners
	B	Very Important	BT	Bingham Township
	C	Important	CATA	Capital Area Transit Authority
	D	Aspirational	CLC	Clinton County
TIMEFRAME	1	Within One Year	CC	City Commission
	2	1-3 years	CCRC	Clinton County Road Commission
	3	3+ years	CM	Community Members
	4	Long Term	CS	City Staff
			CSJ	City of St. Johns
			DDA	Downtown Development Authority
			DEV	Developers
			MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
			MT	Meijer Trail
			PC	Planning Commission
			PO	Property Owners
			SM	State of Michigan
			TCRPC	Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

FUNDING	
PUBLIC	Includes public funds from the City operating budget, as well as Township, County, and State funding. May also include local government bonds and grants.
PRIVATE	Includes funds from private sources such as grant monies, corporate funding, or property owners
DDA / TIF	Tax increment financing provided by an authorized body. Please refer to the summary of economic development tools.

REDEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN			
ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
R-1	Work with the public property owners (MDOT, etc.) along the Meijer Trail from Clinton Avenue to Mead Street and prepare an RFP for redevelopment as shown in this plan.	A	1
R-2	Seek partnerships to creatively reuse the silo site, including outside funding sources to demolish the silos themselves, which may come in the form of a private redevelopment.	B	3
R-3	Encourage and collaborate with the Downtown Development Authority/Principal Shopping District to develop a Downtown Capital Improvements Plan to upgrade streetscape, parking, wayfinding signage, and beautification.	B	2
R-4	Monitor the status of the private properties along the Meijer Trail from Lansing Street to Clinton Avenue, and Mead Street to Old 127 for potential acquisition and redevelopment consistent with market dynamics.	C	2
R-5	Finalize the Urban Cooperative Agreement with Bingham Township to provide unified water and sewer service and promote development as envisioned in the Joint Planning Areas.	A	2
R-6	Work with regional and statewide partners such as LEAP and MEDC to continue to match appropriate incentive programs to desirable investments in the City.	B	2
R-7	Recruit a developer to partner with the City to construct housing on 450 Townsend.	A	2
R-8	Prepare development sites on the south side of town for housing to meet the needs as described in the Housing Market Analysis, including luxury housing to relieve pressure on the middle of the market.	B	2
R-9	Encourage additional housing development in and around the downtown to promote vibrancy and a wide variety of housing choice.	B	2
R-10	Collaborate with MDOT to improve safety at M-21 and Old 127 to promote new investment and incorporate that area into the City's walkable core.	B	3
R-11	Evaluate zoning options to promote a broader mix of uses at the intersection of M-21 and US 127, with the potential for mixed use to extend further east as market conditions warrant.	B	1
R-12	Implement the Zoning Action Plan.	A	1
R-13	Maintain the City's status as a Redevelopment Ready Certified Community.	A	1
R-14	Review and update this plan every five years.	C	3
R-15	Evaluate historic district designation and regulation options within the Old Village Plat.	D	4
R-16	Ensure sufficient public safety resources, including video cameras, to support redevelopment, especially in areas that do not have automobile traffic, like the Meijer Trail.	A	1
R-17	Produce a report from the Planning Commission to the City Commission detailing progress on the ongoing implementation of this plan.	C	3
R-18	Create a Pre-Application Team to review major developments before they enter the zoning entitlements process.	A	1
R-19	Update the fee schedule on the City website.	A	1
R-20	Create a Development Review Guide and Flowchart to make the process of onboarding developments to the entitlements process more efficient.	A	1

MOBILITY			
ID NUMBER	PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
M-1	Prioritize downtown mobility and pedestrian safety improvement, including developing specific projects as part of an update to the Downtown Plan.	A	1
M-2	Work with the DDA/PSD to design and implement streetscape improvements downtown including furniture, amenities, and landscaping. Prioritize adding street trees, flowers, and other softscape.	B	2
M-3	Work collaboratively with the DDA/PSD to enhance and improve downtown parking options for businesses, residents, and visitors.	B	2
M-4	Utilize the permit parking system to encourage downtown residents to utilize parking on side streets to ensure Clinton Avenue parking is available for business customers.	C	3
M-5	Leverage Safe Routes to School funds to improve pedestrian and non-motorized safety in and around the schools campus.	A	1
M-6	Fill sidewalk gaps throughout the City as funds and opportunities become available.	C	3
M-7	Work with MDOT to thoroughly redesign Old 127 between Baldwin Street and Townsend Road in order to improve safety and mobility for all road users.	C	3
M-8	Fill sidewalk gaps along Old 127 north of Steel Street within the context of the current design of the roadway, which is not planned to change significantly.	B	2
M-9	Work with partners to connect to the expanding network of regional non-motorized trails.	B	2
M-10	Designate key cycling corridors through the City grid and upgrade road markings and other infrastructure as appropriate.	C	3
M-11	Develop a route for a north-south bike route along the western edge of the City.	C	3
M-12	Allot sufficient public safety resources to ensure safety along upgraded pedestrian and bicycle routes, and along newly redesigned road corridors.	A	1

PLACEMAKING / BEAUTIFICATION ACTION PLAN			
ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
P-1	Ensure that zoning and other City regulations are not placing burdens on historic and architecturally significant buildings.	C	3
P-2	Continue to work with the DDA/PSD to support the façade improvement program for Downtown businesses.	C	3
P-3	Streamline and formalize the process for approving outdoor dining and other uses of downtown sidewalks.	A	1
P-4	Revitalize and market a program to allow property owners to request and fund street trees in front of their properties.	B	2
P-5	Assess the feasibility of building a permanent farmers' market space.	C	3
P-6	Implement unified wayfinding signage, commercial sign standards, light fixtures, and plantings to Old 127.	C	3
P-7	Implement unified wayfinding signage, commercial sign standards, light fixtures, and seasonal displays to N. Clinton Avenue.	A	1
P-8	Install decorative and branded pavement markings at key intersections.	C	3

BRANDING / MARKETING ACTION PLAN			
ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
B-1	Support and enhance efforts by the DDA/PSD to promote special events and local business promotion.	A	1
B-2	Continue to enhance the City's online presence, including the website, local media outlets, and social media.	A	1
B-3	Develop programming for the Wilson Community Center to enhance activities and support for people of all ages.	A	1
B-4	Create a Public Participation Plan	A	1



PARKS AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN				
ID NUMBER	PARK	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
PR-1	Jaycee Park	Landscaping	C	3
PR-2		Pavilion	C	3
PR-3		Fall Zone Improvements	A	1
PR-4	Kibbee Street Park	Landscaping	C	3
PR-5		Pavilion	C	3
PR-6		Replace Existing Fencing	C	3
PR-7		Fall Zone Improvements	A	1
PR-8	Oak Street Park	Park Improvement Plan — explore alternative playground options (ex. nature playground)	B	2
PR-9	Senior Citizen Park	Construct Parking Lot	B	2
PR-10		Construct Accessible Walk System	B	2
PR-11		Play Equipment — Install new swings	B	2
PR-12		Tennis Court Conversion to Pickleball	A	1
PR-13	St. Johns City Park	Improve Sidewalk Circulation System	A	1
PR-14		Renovate Bath House and Maintain Spray Park	A	1
PR-15		Improve Trail System	A	1
PR-16		Expand and Improve Sledding Hill	B	2
PR-17		Landscaping Improvements	B	2
PR-18		Main Pavilion Exterior Renovation	B	2
PR-19		Construct New Soccer Field	C	3
PR-20	St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park	Park Improvement Plan (East Side)	B	2
PR-21		Playground Equipment	B	2
PR-22		Parking Lot Expansion	C	3
PR-23		Senior Citizen Amenities	C	3
PR-24	Water Tower Park	Construct Accessible Walk System	B	2
PR-25		Land Acquisition (Purchase from Hospital)	C	3
PR-26		Playground Equipment (remove and replace)	C	3
PR-27		Park Improvement Plan	C	3
PR-28	Other	Trail Connections — CIS Trail to Main Park	A	1
PR-29		Trail Connections — CIS Trail to Jaycee / Senior Citizens Park	B	2
PR-30		Trail Connections — CIS Trail to Kibbee Street Park (may include overpass at highway 27)	B	2
PR-31		Implement Park Signage System	B	2
PR-32		Revise City Recreation Website	B	2
PR-33		Park Lighting & Safety Evaluation (All Parks)	B	2
PR-34		Fell Property Development Plan / Community Building	C	3
PR-35		Identify Location for Community Dog Park	A	1
PR-36		Identify Location for Community Skate Park	A	1
PR-37		Identify Other Funding Source Options	A	1

ZONING ACTION PLAN			
ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
Z-1	Review the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance for compliance with recent legislation, such as PA 233, caselaw, including cases on “uses not listed” and to ensure continuing compliance with Redevelopment Ready Best Practices.	A	1
Z-2	Review the Zoning District designation for key redevelopment areas, especially along the Meijer CIS trail, and determine any need for City-initiated rezonings.	B	2
Z-3	Revise the MU District to be more internally coherent and to better reflect the Master Plan vision for areas designated Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map.	A	1
Z-4	Review areas designated Mixed Use on the Future Land Use map, and those Zoned MU, and correct inconsistencies between them through City-initiated rezonings.	A	1
Z-5	Determine whether I-1 and I-2 could be consolidated into a single zoning district.	B	2
Z-6	Evaluate the O District for possible elimination and consolidation into the GC and/or R-3 Districts.	B	2
Z-7	Review regulations applicable to historic properties, such as churches and older homes, and ensure that zoning regulations do not impede the preservation of historic character.	B	2
Z-8	Review standards for fences and accessory buildings to address situations where non-conforming existing setbacks create awkward situations for neighbors.	B	2
Z-9	Allow maker spaces and artisan production as allowable uses in appropriate locations in the downtown.	B	2
Z-10	Eliminate Special Use requirement for Outdoor Dining	A	1

Zoning Plan

A zoning plan is required by the Michigan planning and zoning enabling acts. Section 33(d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, requires that the Master Plan prepared under that act shall serve as the basis for the community's zoning plan. The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the City. These matters are regulated by the specific provisions in the Zoning Ordinance.

DISTRICTS AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

There are 10 zoning districts in the City, each of which is described in the current Zoning Ordinance. There, uses permitted in each district are described. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance's schedule of lot, yard, and area requirements defines specific area, height, and bulk requirements for structures in each zoning district. The Zoning Map is also a part of the Zoning Ordinance and illustrates the distribution of the defined zoning districts throughout the City.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTER PLAN

This Master Plan establishes the vision, goals, objectives, and policies for growth and development in St. Johns for approximately the next 10–15 years. It includes a specific strategy for managing growth and change in land uses and infrastructure over this period, and, as required by statute, will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once every five years. This section, along with the rest of the Master Plan, is intended to generally guide future changes to the St. Johns Zoning Ordinance.

The following is a list of proposed Master Plan community character designations and their corresponding zoning district. Not all of the Master Plan's community character categories will match up with the current location or regulations of the zoning district to which they most closely correspond. Recommended revisions to the Zoning Ordinance are discussed on the following page.

Community Character Areas → Zoning Districts

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AREA	ZONING DISTRICT
Parks, Open Space, and Greenways	New Zoning District OR Zone to Match Surroundings
Modern Spacious Residential	R-1 Low Density Residential R-2 Medium Density Residential
Traditional Walkable Residential	R-2 Medium Density Residential R-3 High Density Residential
Multiple Family Residential	R-3 High Density Residential
Public / Institutional	MC Municipal Center
Core Downtown	CBD Central Business District
Mixed Use	CBD Central Business District, OR Revise MU Mixed Use to Achieve Desired Development Character, OR create new zoning district.
Flexible Redevelopment	New Zoning District OR Achieve Desired Development Character Through PUD Process
Community Commercial	New Zoning District OR GC- General Commercial
Gateway Commercial	GC General Commercial
Industrial	I-1 Industrial – High Performance I-2 Industrial – Liberal Performance
Old Village Overlay	New Overlay District

Clinton County Zoning Plan

The following pages contain a Zoning Plan for Clinton County Zoning, which governs Bingham Township, in order to implement the vision of the Joint Planning Areas.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

The table below shows the Clinton County Zoning Districts that would appropriately implement the vision of the Future Land Use Categories in the Joint Planning Areas. Rezoning within the Joint Planning Areas should be reviewed against this table to determine whether the requested category is supported by the Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES	ZONING DISTRICTS
Modern Spacious Residential	RR Rural Residential R-1 Single Family Residential ² R-2 Single Family Residential ^{1, 2}
Multiple Family Residential	MF Multiple Family Residential ^{1, 2} MH Manufactured Housing Community ²
Gateway Commercial	C-1 Local Commercial ² C-2 General Commercial ² C-3 Highway Service Commercial ²
Commercial / Industrial	C-2 General Commercial ² C-3 Highway Service Commercial ² RO Research / Office ² I-1 Light Industrial ² I-2 General Industrial ²
Industrial	RO Research / Office ² I-1 Light Industrial ² I-2 General Industrial ²
Rural Estate	RR Rural Residential A-3 Agricultural / Residential Transition
Agriculture-Energy	A-1 Agricultural and Open Space Preservation A-2 General Agriculture A-3 Agricultural / Residential Transition MR Mineral Extraction ³
Agriculture-Energy / Industrial	A-1 Agricultural and Open Space Preservation A-2 General Agriculture A-3 Agricultural / Residential Transition MR Mineral Extraction ³ RO Research / Office ² I-1 Light Industrial ² I-2 General Industrial ²

Footnotes:

- 1) R-2 Single Family Residential and C-1 Local Commercial should be limited to areas in close proximity to the City of St. Johns. Rezoning to C-1 Local Commercial should be limited in general, as the C-2 and C-3 districts better reflect the vision of the Gateway Commercial Future Land Use Category. C-1 is most appropriate in areas near residential neighborhoods.
- 2) Rezoning to districts other than A-1, A-2, A-3, MR, or RR should only take place in areas served by public water and sewer.
- 3) Rezoning to the MR District should only occur after careful consideration of the impacts of the potential mining use on the environment, transportation network, and health, safety, and welfare of St. Johns, Bingham Township, and surrounding communities, as well as the impact on the development potential of the land immediately adjacent to the proposed mining operation, and the long-term potential land uses of the site once the mining operation's useful life has ended.

Recommended Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

In order to implement the vision of the Plan, the following changes to the Zoning Ordinance are recommended. These could take the form of county-wide amendments, or in some cases could apply only to a “St. Johns Area Overlay” or something similar.

- » Consider allowing single family residential dwellings in the MF district. This would allow for mixed-density developments in the Joint Planning Areas, including both single family homes and other housing types, such as townhouses, duplexes, and multi-family buildings, without having to use a Planned Unit Development. A minimum density could be established to prevent a single-family-only neighborhood from being built on MF land.
- » Consider expanding the uses permitted in the C-1 District. If the uses permitted in the C-1 District remain restricted, then rezonings to C-1 in the Gateway Commercial Future Land Use category should be limited, as C-2 and C-3 better reflect the Plan’s vision for that area.
- » Consider allowing hotels in the C-2 district by Special Use, and making hotels permitted by right in C-3.
- » Consider allowing the uses permitted in RO in C-2 and C-3, by reference, to allow office development on Old 127 and M-21 without restricting retail, restaurant, and shopping center development.

ZONING ACTION PLAN								
PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			CITY	OTHER GOV'T	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TIF / DDA
Update the Zoning Ordinance to simplify the regulations and organization of the document, and bring it into compliance with Federal and State law.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		
Determine the best course of action for the Flexible Development area. If a new zoning district is warranted, create the district.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		
Revise the MU District to be consistent with the vision for the Downtown Edge Character Area in this plan.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		
Review the R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts to determine if they are consistent with this plan, including creating opportunities for Missing Middle Housing in R-2 and R-3, and ensuring the zoning map reflects the vision of this plan.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		
Determine whether I-1 and I-2 could be consolidated into a single zoning district.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		
Determine whether a new zoning district is needed for the Community Commercial Character Area.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		
Explore the possibility of adopting a Form Based Code for some or all of the City.	B	2	CC PC CS			●		
Create Old Village Overlay Zoning District.	A	1	CC PC CS			●		