



HANCOCK

MASTER PLAN



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Approval/Rejection Statement

After a formal public hearing on the Master Plan on Monday, July 23, 2018 the City Planning Commission approved the 2018 Master Plan at its regular scheduled meeting also held on Monday, July 23, 2018.

The 2024 Master Plan Update public hearing was held on March 20, 2024. The City Planning Commission approved the 2024 Master Plan Update at its meeting on April 22, 2024.

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Change



Chapter One | Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of sustainability and resiliency planning and how to best use this Plan.



The Need for Sustainability & Resiliency Planning

Today's quickly changing social, environmental, and economic conditions require thoughtful and impactful responses from local governments to achieve a more sustainable future. Communities include subsystems of infrastructure and services that, when working, create a functioning community system, but when compromised, threaten the community's ability to thrive.

Specifically, shifts in climate, economics, and technology are rapidly occurring and a local government that does nothing or tries to apply old answers to the challenges ahead may not do well. To be successful, local governments need to be proactive in understanding what is likely to come and carry out plans that meet the anticipated challenges.

Some of the main challenges include:

1. **Climate:** With shifting long-term and short-term weather patterns combined with the City's changing landscape, the City requires planning considerations around how to address potential future challenges related to weather for the community.
2. **Economics:** Funding opportunities for local governments are becoming more limited and competitive. Meanwhile infrastructure systems in many communities have aged to the point of critically needing replacement. Creative financing and better coordinated and careful budgeting is therefore more important than ever.
3. **Technology:** Technological advances will offer many opportunities to increase efficiency and improve quality of life. However, because technological advances are happening so quickly, many of the changes will be disruptive and confusing unless municipalities get ahead of the technology, embrace it and use it to their advantage.

Because of these changes, the practice of planning for sustainability and resiliency is a necessary approach. This Master Plan is one of the first in Michigan to be developed with sustainability and resiliency at the forefront and while many of the expected challenges of the future are daunting, this Plan helps to ensure that the City of Hancock's best years are still ahead and holds the potential for bringing new levels of ingenuity and vibrancy to the City.

Planning for the 21st Century – Sustainability & Resiliency Master Plans Defined:

In comparison to the urban renewal style plans of the 1960s and 1970s and the growth management style plans of 1980s and 1990s, sustainability and resiliency master plans are holistic and bring together concepts like placemaking, which elevates economic development and overall quality of life, with environmental stewardship, which calls for the responsible use and protection of the natural environment. The aim of sustainability and resiliency plans is to institutionalize best practices in sustainable operations.

In a sustainability and resiliency master plan process, communities gain an understanding of what is likely to come socially, economically, and environmentally and develop a balanced strategy to meet both existing and anticipated challenges in these areas.



Anticipating and preparing for the City's future.

Specific to this original planning effort in 2018, the legal basis for developing a Master Plan in Michigan is paired with the intention of the Planning for Resiliency and Sustainability grant.

The grant is intended to increase Michigan's coastal communities' capacity to anticipate, prepare for and avoid or mitigate the impacts of severe weather events and trends, which can include hazards to property and public health and safety caused by shoreline erosion, flooding, ice jams, fluctuating water levels, or deteriorating surface water quality.

This Plan is therefore intended to serve as:

1. A general statement of the community's goals and policies that provide a single, comprehensive view of the community's desire for the future.
2. The statutory basis upon where zoning decisions are made. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006) states a zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan.
3. A document that helps guide decisions toward public improvements, community programs and private developments that support sustainability.
4. An educational tool that gives citizens, property owners, developers and adjacent communities an understanding of the existing and likely future conditions of the City Hancock and a clear indication of the community's desired direction in response.
5. A tool to position the City of Hancock as a desirable coastal community in which to live and do business.

2024 Master Plan Update

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), the City of Hancock pursued an update to this Master Plan in 2023. As part of this process, the City and Planning Team held numerous community events and hosted an online survey to gather feedback from residents on the future of their community. This feedback along with the analysis of demographic data informs the updates made to this Master Plan, ensuring it captures the community’s vision for the future.



How to Use this Plan

This Plan is intended to be used as decisions are made concerning new development, redevelopment capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters involving the City. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the Plan.

Annual Work Programs & Budgets

City departments and administrators should be aware of the contents of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets.

Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning, should be a central means of implementing the Plan. Decisions made by elected and appointed officials should reference relevant Plan recommendations and polices. City plans and codes should also reflect and support the vision and recommendations in the Plan.

A Plan developed as a tool to be used by the City for constructive future decision making

Capital Improvement Plan

The City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should be prepared consistent with the Plan’s recommendations. New improvements that are not reflected in the Plan, which could dramatically impact the Plan’s goals, objectives and strategies, should necessitate an amendment to the Plan.

Economic Incentives

Economic development incentives proposed by the City should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan.

Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan in their investment decision.

The Plan is intended to be used as a guide in development deliberations, such as zoning matters and infrastructure improvements.

This Plan should be used as a tool by the City to clearly communicate to property owners and developers the vision for what is desired in the City.

Overall Guide

The Plan should operate as a guide to help the City, development community and local residents plan for the future of Hancock.

The Plan is intended to be flexible and fluid and should be updated and amended as appropriate. New information should influence the evolution of the goals, objectives and strategies over time.



Downtown Hancock

Do you like your hobby?

Post-it
Notes



Crown



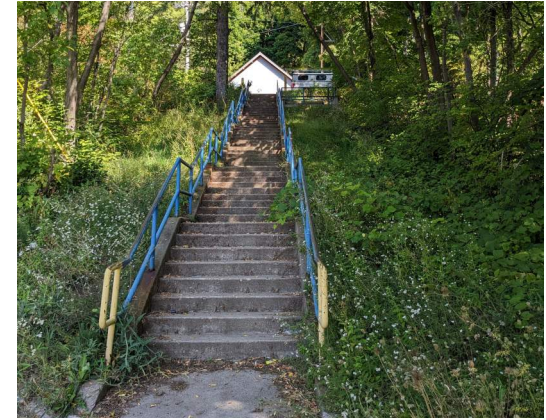
Chapter Two | Creating the Plan

This chapter explains how the Plan was built using data, expert insight and first-hand knowledge from members of the Steering Committee and the public.



2024 Master Plan Update Process

The 2024 Master Plan Update builds upon the plan’s emphasis on sustainability and resiliency while also focusing on the community’s desires for a vibrant downtown as well as Hancock’s status as a four-season city. These focus areas (or themes) reflect feedback received throughout the Master Plan Update’s community engagement and informs the City’s vision for the future. These three themes are identified below:



Nature and Sustainability

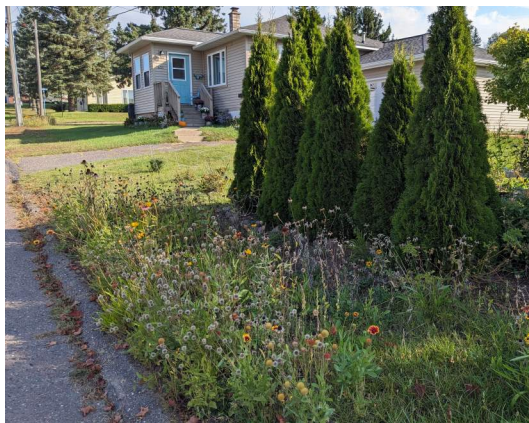
Hancock will emphasize its proximity to the Keweenaw’s abundant natural areas and embrace a culture of long-term sustainability.

Downtown as Destination

Downtown Hancock will be a vibrant and walkable destination with local businesses, restaurants, and housing opportunities.

Connectivity and Community

Hancock will be a connected community that features entertainment opportunities and all-season amenities for people of all ages.



Relation to Goals and Objectives

These themes were reaffirmed by residents throughout the planning process, conveying their importance to residents and stakeholders. With these themes in mind, goals & objectives were developed to strengthen these over time.

Community Engagement

During the Master Plan Update process, the Planning Team held multiple community events and conducted a survey to gather feedback from residents. These events identified residents' priorities and established their long-term vision for Hancock's future.







April Community Events

(April 12 & April 13, 2023)

Held at the Orpheum Theatre on April 12 and the Houghton County Ice Arena on April 13, the Planning Team engaged over 100 residents and stakeholders over the two nights, gathering feedback on what they desire for the future of the community. Attendees were encouraged to participate in a variety of activities. Each of these and the feedback gathered in each activity is summarized in the following sections.

City Dot Mapping Activity

Participants were asked to use colored dot stickers and sticky notes to identify specific places of interest within the city, these items represent:

-  This is a place I enjoy spending time
-  This is a place I avoid
-  This is a place for improvement
-  This is a key destination

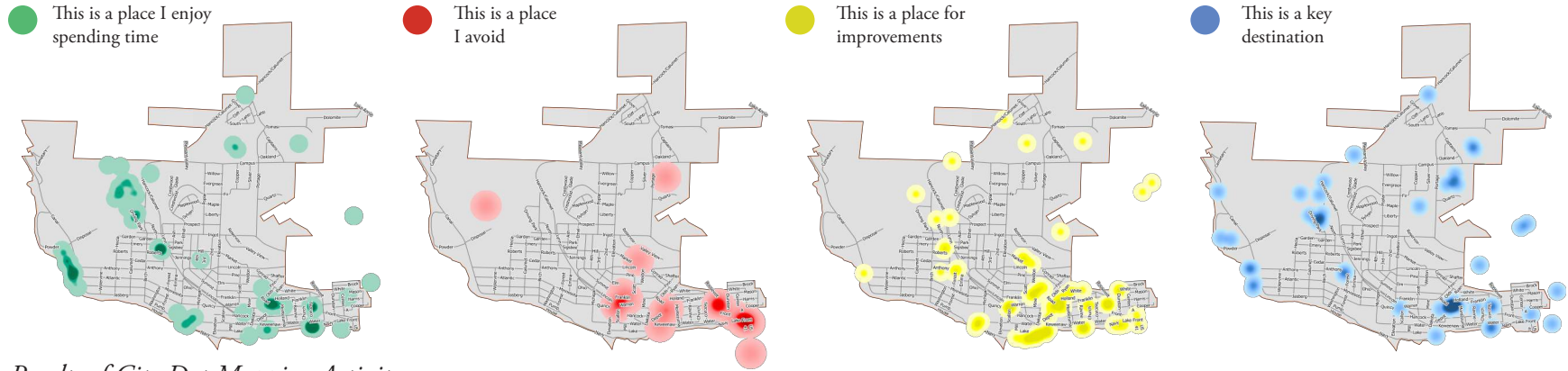
In total, participants placed 222 dots on these maps. Many of these comments touched on similar topics.

Downtown as Key Destination – Participants noted that downtown Hancock is a destination spot – namely Quincy Green, the Finnish American Heritage Center, and the Copper Country Community Arts Center. Participants also largely identified downtown as a place for improvement. Many participants commented that they desire more local businesses in the area as well as ways of slowing traffic along Quincy Street.

City's Waterfront as an Asset – Many participants identified Porvoo Park and the Hancock Beach/Campground as key recreational destinations and mentioned a desire for greater waterfront access and recreation such as trails and nature pathways near downtown.

Finlandia Campus – Participants identified the former Finlandia University campus as a place for improvements. One comment mentioned it as a potential location for new housing; others mentioned the importance of the Paavo Nurmi Athletic Center for physical activity options during the long winters. Other comments suggested the City purchase former buildings such as Old Main or the university library and use them for public uses.

Houghton County Fairgrounds – Participants highlighted this as a key community asset, particularly its future dog park and its connection to the regional Maasto Hiihto trail system.



Results of City Dot Mapping Activity

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) Activity

Participants were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges currently facing Hancock.

Strengths – Participants noted Hancock’s natural beauty and small-town charm along with its status as the “sunny side of the canal” as assets for the community. They also noted surrounding recreational trails along with the region’s history as unique features.

Weaknesses – Participants mentioned Hancock’s relative lack of waterfront amenities along with the City’s trail system being primarily oriented towards snowmobiles and motorized recreational vehicles. Participants also mentioned the lack of a vibrant downtown district and aging housing stock.

Opportunities – Many participants noted Hancock’s status as the “capitol of Finnish American culture” as being an asset to build upon. Others noted the community could leverage its proximity to recreational opportunities along with nearby Michigan Technological University towards creating an eco-tourism environment. Others desired to enhance public transit between Houghton and Hancock.

Challenges – Participants mentioned the closure of Finlandia University as a challenge – both from an economic standpoint but also relaying concerns about its campus. Others mentioned population stagnation and an overall lack of affordable housing as key challenges. A lack of walkability was also noted as a key challenge, as residents do not feel safe walking or bicycling around the community.

Big Ideas and Vision for Hancock

Participants were asked to describe life in Hancock in one sentence. Many participants alluded to the community’s slower pace of life, it’s access to natural features, and its unique four-season climate.

Participants were also asked to “dream big” by identifying their vision for Hancock’s future. Some participants noted the community could build on its Finnish American culture, enhance businesses and public spaces, making the community more walkable and pedestrian-friendly, and encouraging events year-round. These points speak to residents’ desire for Hancock’s peaceful character, abundant nature, vibrant downtown, sustainability, and four-season amenities.



September Open House (September 21, 2023)

Held at the Orpheum Theatre in downtown Hancock, this event was an “open house” style format, where residents could participate at a variety of activities located at stations throughout the room. Throughout the evening, over fifty people participated and offered feedback on Hancock’s existing Goals and Objectives, as well as discussing topics such as sustainability and desired features in downtown.

Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Participants were asked to review the proposed goals and objectives and indicate whether they believe they are important for the City to pursue or not. The following items outline how residents view these proposed items.

Proposed Vision Statement – Participants agreed with the Vision Statement, with comments desiring Hancock to be focused on enhancing the city’s quality of life for full-time residents.

Connectivity and Community Goal –

Participants emphasized the four-season climate of Hancock, the importance of outdoor activities, and their role in encouraging active lifestyles. There was also interest in a community center for indoor activities, specifically the former Finlandia University Paavo Nurmi Athletic Center.

Downtown as Destination Goal – Participants mentioned a desire for safer, more walkable streets along with more housing for full-time residents. Discussions on two-way conversion of downtown streets were mixed; some people opposed the idea while others were in favor or suggested rerouting US-41 to Hancock Street. Parking was also a topic of contention, as some participants believe there is too much land dedicated towards parking within downtown while others indicated that the downtown parking system works adequately and should not be a focus of the Master Plan Update.

Nature and Sustainability Goal - There was widespread agreement with the Nature and Sustainability Goal. People overwhelmingly view nature and sustainability as important to Hancock’s future. There is a strong focus on energy sustainability, particularly in regard to solar panels and electric vehicles. People also related this to the region’s connectivity to nature.



Defining Sustainability

Participants were asked to define the term “sustainability” and how it pertains to their vision for Hancock’s future. Although participants defined it in different ways, there were a few common themes. Many participants desire a focus on renewable energy sources, specifically solar power. Others favored public transit along with walking and cycling infrastructure as ways to reduce residents’ reliance on cars. Others related sustainability to personal household practices such as recycling, composting, and reducing domestic energy consumption. Others saw sustainability in economic terms and desired to have affordable housing and job opportunities that foster a sustainable local economic ecosystem. Although interpreting sustainability in different ways, the large amount of feedback on this activity indicates the community’s interest in sustainability and how it influences the Master Plan Update.



Vision for County Arena

Participants were asked what they would like to see as part of the County Arena site. Responses included fields for recreational sport leagues, indoor fitness facilities and meeting spaces, and childcare facilities.



Downtown Street Operations Activity

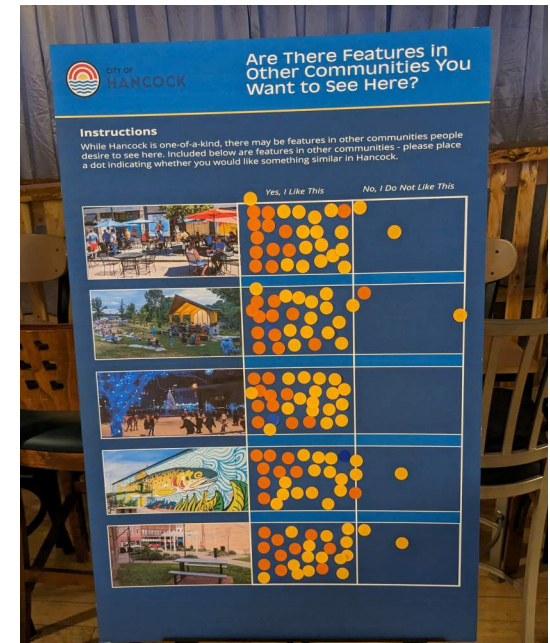
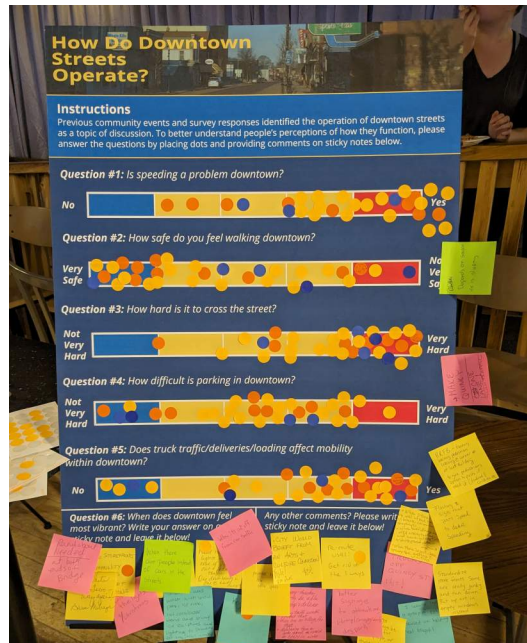
Participants were asked how Hancock Street and Quincy Street function, seeking to identify how residents perceive getting around downtown. Participants noted that speeding is an issue along both streets. Participants noted that – although the streets feel safe to walk along, crossing them as a pedestrian remains challenging. Participants also noted that parking is not difficult downtown but truck traffic and vehicle access to local businesses is a challenge for the area.

Desired Community Features

Participants were provided with pictures of gathering space amenities in other communities and were asked to indicate which amenities they desire to see in Hancock. From this activity, participants indicated a desire for outdoor dining spaces, downtown winter ice features, murals, a public band shell or concert stage, and a pocket park. Of these options, the downtown winter ice features were most popular, followed by the outdoor patio spaces.

Downtown Amenities Map

Participants were provided with amenity stickers and were asked to place them on a map of downtown Hancock, indicating where they would like to see these amenities located. Some of the most prominent items were mentions of slower traffic speeds along the entirety of Quincy Street through downtown. Pedestrian crossings and bump-outs through downtown were also identified as desirable. Outdoor dining was noted as a desirable amenity along Quincy Street. Former Finlandia University’s campus was also mentioned as a desirable location for housing.





Desired Downtown Amenities Map

Feedback Gathered at September 21, 2023 Community Open House Event

LEGEND

-  Bicycle Parking
-  Bike Lane
-  Bulb-Out
-  Business
-  EV Charging Station
-  Housing
-  Outdoor Dining
-  Parking
-  Pedestrian Crossing
-  Public Bench
-  Public Space
-  Public Transit
-  Slower Traffic
-  Street Light
-  Trees



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, 2023. Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region GIS Data, 2023. Progressive AE, 2023.

progressive|ae





Chapter Three | The Context

This chapter presents background information on the City of Hancock and the social, environmental and economic trends that were considered during the development of this Plan.



2

The City of Hancock Sunny Side U.P., Finnish Style

The City of Hancock is sculpted into the steep hillside of the northern bank of Portage Lake, otherwise known as “the sunny side.” Hancock serves as both Michigan’s northernmost city and gateway into the Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan’s Copper Country.

The City is connected with the rest of the county by the Portage Lake Lift Bridge. The City is bordered by Franklin, Quincy and Hancock Townships to the east, north and west, respectively, and has a total land area of 2.78 square miles (1,778 acres).

The Keweenaw Peninsula once flourished with strong copper mining and smelting industries.¹ However, by 1968, virtually all mining activities ceased. Today, the City is known for its beautiful landscape and attracts many summer and winter visitors to enjoy nearby assets like the pristine waters of Lake Superior, the largest Great Lake, and Mont Ripley, a local downhill skiing facility. Acknowledging these natural features and how Hancock’s unique climate can influence the City’s status as a four-season destination is discussed in later sections.

In Spring 2023, Finlandia University (formerly Suomi College)² closed after years of declining enrollment and financial challenges. The closing of Finlandia University raises concerns regarding impacts on the local economy as well as how best to repurpose the former university’s campus.



Hancock is known as the Capital of Finnish-American culture and is home to the Finnish American Heritage Center. Heikinpäivä is an annual mid-winter celebration that highlights Hancock’s unique culture and Finnish roots.

These challenges and opportunities regarding Finlandia University’s closure are discussed in following sections. In recent years, Hancock has developed a business and technology park in the far northern portion of the City as well as purchased the Houghton County Arena. These recent changes influence land use patterns within Hancock and are further highlighted throughout this Master Plan Update.



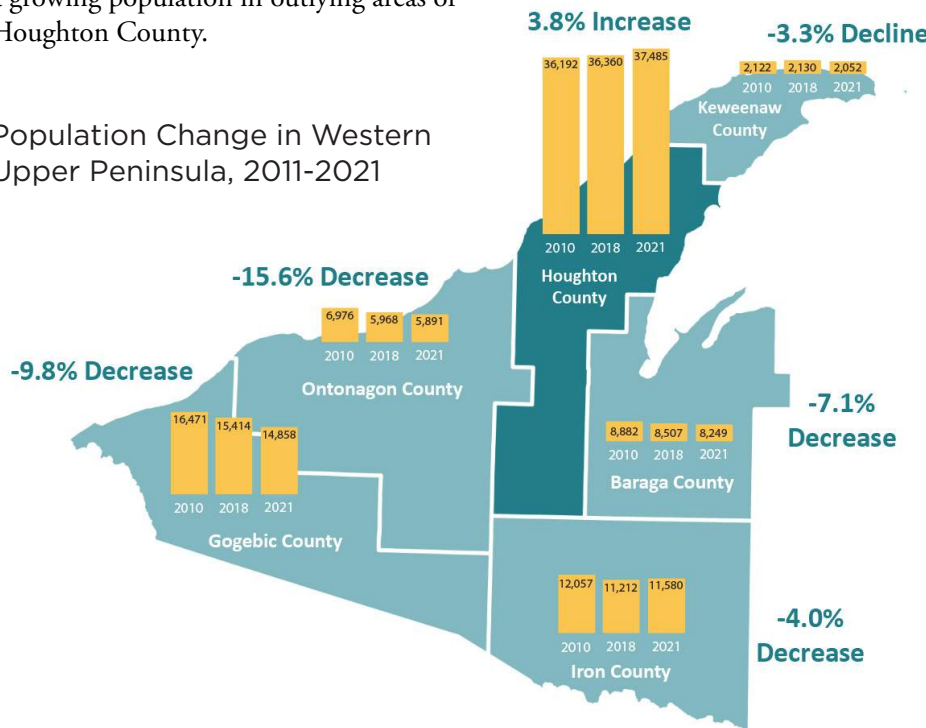
Social Trends

Hancock’s population over the previous five years has largely been stagnant, declining slightly from 4,577 residents in 2018 to 4,558 residents in 2021. This population trend (-0.4% population decline) is comparable with the City of Houghton’s population change (-0.3%) over the same period. Although this represents a stagnant population among cities in Houghton County, Houghton County itself is the only county in the Western Upper Peninsula that gained population over the previous five and ten year periods. This implies a stable population in Hancock and Houghton but a growing population in outlying areas of Houghton County.

Although Hancock’s total population has remained stable, the makeup of this population has changed. Over the past five years, the fastest-growing age cohort has been among 20 – 34 year olds. This shift has resulted in Hancock’s median age decreasing from 43.0 to 30.7 years old. Households with children have also changed, as the share of households with young children has decreased since 2018 while the share of households with teenagers has increased over the same period. The share of residents living alone has also increased over the past five years, rising from 40.5% in 2018 to 44.7% in 2021.

These factors combined represent Hancock’s demographic shift towards becoming younger while featuring fewer young children and more teenagers. It also represents more Hancock residents living alone. With these factors in mind, the Master Plan Update presents recommendations oriented towards retaining the City’s younger population, supporting young families, providing activities for teenagers, fostering community for single householders, and empowering older residents to live active lifestyles.

Population Change in Western Upper Peninsula, 2011-2021



Social Trends Take-Aways

- Population (Stagnant) →
- Households with Young Children (Decreasing) ↘
- Residents living alone (Increasing) ↗
- 20 - 34 Year Old Residents (Increasing) ↗
- Households with Teenagers (Increasing) ↗

Housing Trends

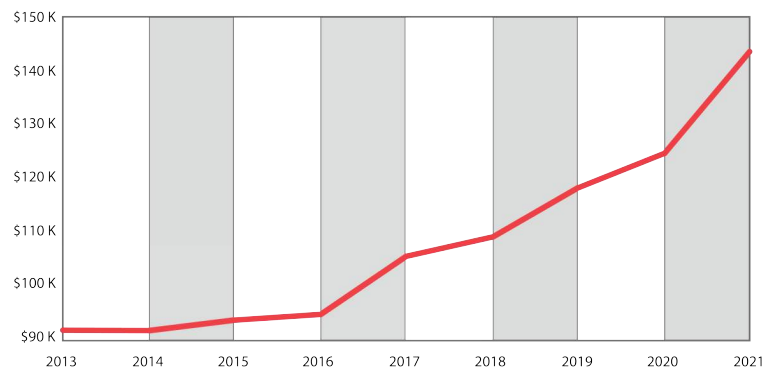
Representing Hancock's early twentieth-century development, nearly 60% of the City's housing stock was constructed prior to 1960. In contrast to this older housing stock however, the percentage of newer structures (constructed 2000 or later) has also increased to 10.5%, indicating new development in recent years. Housing structures in Hancock are primarily single-unit detached houses (58.0%) with a percentage of 2-4 unit structures as well (22.4%). The percentage of renter-occupied housing has remained relatively stable over the previous decade; however the number of owner-occupied housing units has declined during this period. This decrease can perhaps be explained by houses being used as seasonal homes compared to 10 years ago. Although remaining lower than the state average, median housing values in Hancock have increased faster than the state average.



This data point to a shortage of high-quality housing catering to the City's changing demographics. The greater number of single-person households (including college students, young professionals, and elderly residents) likely have different housing needs than families with multiple children or multi-generational households. Housing is a crucial factor in Hancock's long-term success, as stable and available housing provides a foundation for the City's workforce and residents.



Zillow Home Value Index in Hancock, 2013 - 2021.



Housing Trends Take-Aways

Percentage of Rental-Occupied Housing Units (Stagnant) →

Percentage of Owner-Occupied Housing Units (Decreasing) ↘

Median Housing Values (Increasing) ↗



Economic Trends

Highlighted in the 2018 Master Plan, Michigan is in the process of shifting from the “old economy” to the “new economy.” The old economy is based on industrial activity that had once generated a great amount of wealth for communities, promoting growth and extensive development of infrastructure. The “new economy” refers to a global, entrepreneurial, and knowledge-based economy where business success comes increasingly from the ability to incorporate knowledge, technology, creativity, and innovation into their products and services.

This is best reflected in the Keweenaw Peninsula’s economic history; once the capital of the North American copper mining industry (representing the “old economy”) this industry declined throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It has since been replaced by medical and higher education institutions (representing the “new economy”), namely Michigan Technological University and UP Health System – Portage.



Image Courtesy: UP Health System Portage

The table below indicates this trend, as one in three Hancock workers are employed in the medical services or education field. This data also indicates a substantial increase in workers employed in professional or administrative services over the previous decade – representing office or information-based fields. In addition to these, workers employed in service industry professions such as retail, arts, and entertainment declined slightly over the previous decade but remains a large segment of Hancock’s workforce.

Industry or Occupation	2010 Estimated Percentage of Workforce	2018 Estimated Percentage of Workforce	2021 Estimated Percentage of Workforce
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%
Construction	4.9%	3.2%	5.2%
Manufacturing	6.6%	4.3%	5.8%
Wholesale Trade	2.5%	1.7%	1.5%
Retail Trade	11.3%	12.2%	8.8%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	1.4%	2.2%	4.5%
Information	3.2%	0.3%	2.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental Leasing	4.4%	7.4%	4.2%
Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administration	4.1%	10.4%	12.5%
Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	43.0%	33.3%	35.1%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Accommodation	14.4%	13.3%	13.0%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	2.3%	4.3%	3.0%
Public Administration	1.0%	6.1%	3.3%

While many regional economies have traditionally relied on “eds and meds” as their primary employers in this “new economy,” higher education and medical institutions are contending with long-term structural challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic. Declining enrollment rates and a shrinking cohort of high school graduates have resulted in fewer students seeking higher education. Smaller medical facilities have also closed or been consolidated with larger health care systems to reduce operating costs. These challenges are particularly pronounced in smaller, rural communities.

Fractures in the global supply chain along with economic instability following the COVID-19 pandemic also represent the ever-changing environment of this “new economy.” Recent trends point towards increased economic localism and a greater reliance on internet-based commerce to access clients and customers.

This is perhaps best illustrated in the rise of remote work in Hancock. Over the past five years, the percentage of Hancock workers who work remote has risen from 3.4% in 2018 to 17.5% in 2021. This coincides with the increase in professional services and information-based fields over the same period.



The percentage of Hancock’s workforce with a bachelor’s degree or higher has also increased over the previous five years, from 37.6% in 2018 to 47.1% in 2021. Both median household and family income have increased during this period as well. Poverty has also decreased from 24.3% of Hancock residents living below the poverty line in 2018 to 18.9% of residents living below the poverty line in 2021. Those living below the poverty line are primarily over the age of 60 years old, indicating many may be retired or working part-time.



Economic Trends Take-Aways

Percent Remote Workers (Increasing)



Percent Workforce with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher (Increasing)



Median Household and Family Income (Increasing)



Household Poverty (Decreasing)





Cherry Point





Chapter Four | Future Land Use





This chapter presents the Future Land Use Plan for the community. The Future Land Use is a reflection of the Plan's policies as they relate to land use.



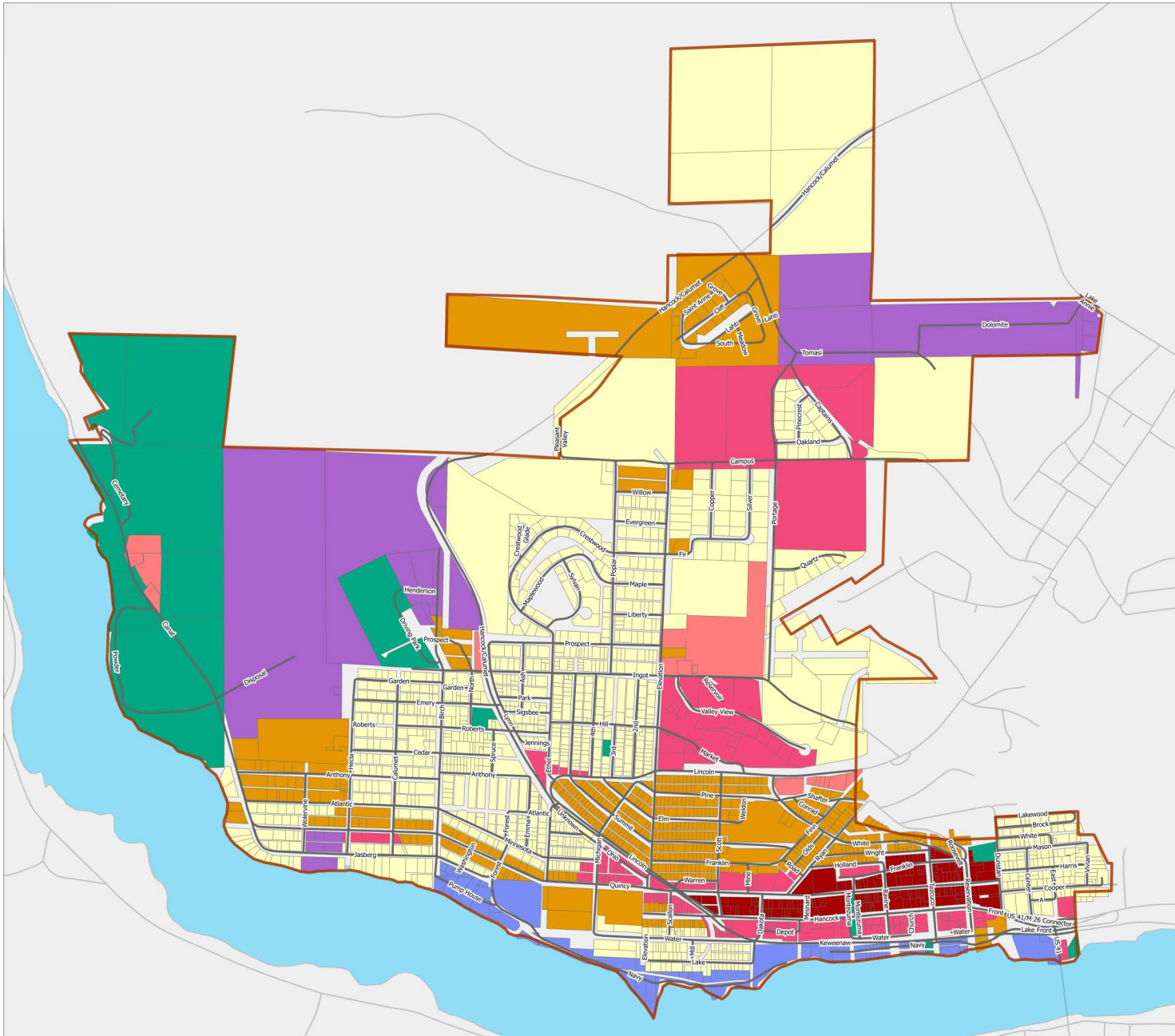
Future Land Use Categories

The future land use categories reflect the City's adoption of its Zoning Ordinance in 2022. These categories were initially developed during the previous Master Plan process in 2018 and are derived from various planning documents, planning concepts related to the goals of the plan, and the Zoning Ordinance. These future land use categories are as follows:

-  *Single Residential*
This category includes land that is used for single-detached housing units in a neighborhood residential setting. This category represents much of the City's early 20th century traditional housing stock as well as mid-century and newer housing stock and typically ranges from compact bungalows to ranch houses set on sizeable lots.
-  *Mixed Residential*
This category includes residential areas that feature a mix of housing types – typically single-detached houses and small multi-unit buildings on smaller lots. This category represents many of the older residential neighborhoods in the core of Hancock.

-  *Shoreline Mixed Use*
This category represents sensitive waterfront development and natural spaces and is characterized by its access to the Portage Lake Canal.
-  *Downtown Mixed Use*
This category represents the majority of downtown Hancock and features a mixture of residential, commercial, office, and public land uses that create a vibrant people-oriented environment.
-  *Community Mixed Use*
This category is oriented more towards the provision of community and services while maintaining flexibility for a variety of supportive land uses such as higher-density residential land uses.
-  *Local Business*
This category encourages small-scale commercial development in neighborhood-sensitive contexts.

-  *Industrial*
This category represents the City's manufacturing, warehouse, and production-oriented land uses. This category is mostly concentrated in the far west of the City as well as the new Hancock Business Park in the community's northeast corner.
-  *Open Space & Recreation*
This category represents the City's parks and natural open spaces. This category intends to preserve recreation and open space land within the City.

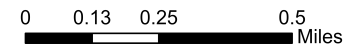


Future Land Use

City of Hancock | Houghton County | Michigan

LEGEND

- Single Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Shoreline Mixed Use
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Community Mixed Use
- Local Business
- Industrial
- Open Space & Recreation



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, 2023. Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region, 2023. Progressive AE, 2023.

Waterfront Connectivity

Throughout the planning process, residents mentioned the importance of Hancock’s access to water and its connection to being connected to the Portage Lake Canal.

“Hike/bike along waterfront, emphasize recreational opportunities”

“Waterfront development, non-motorized trail, dock, transit, marina”

“Waterfront walking trail”

“Hike + bike trail on Navy Street”

“2 stairs to Navy Street - east and west locations”

“Public access to the waterfront is important”



In community events, Porvoo Park and other waterfront areas such as Navy Street were mentioned as community assets – places that residents enjoyed visiting and spending time. Due to their proximity, Hancock’s waterfront is often compared to Houghton’s waterfront on the south side of the canal. Although the Portage Lake Canal is a tremendous natural amenity, connecting to it poses unique land use challenges for Hancock that are not present in Houghton.

Waterfront Topography – Much of Hancock’s waterfront is separated from the city by a steep elevation change. Tezcuco Street for example drops nearly 80 feet south of Quincy Street on its way to the waterfront. Other areas are also disconnected from the waterfront due to these elevation changes.

Distance from Downtown – The waterfront’s proximity to downtown influences how comfortable people are in walking between the two and influences the amount of pedestrian activity throughout the area. Houghton’s waterfront is less than a block from its downtown, as Bridgeview Park is located on the back side of downtown businesses. This proximity draws people to either the waterfront or downtown and makes visiting the other much more convenient. In Hancock however, downtown activities center around Quincy Street which is over two blocks from the waterfront. This coupled with steep elevation changes and difficult pedestrian crossings on Hancock Street makes downtown feel removed from the waterfront and deters people from walking between the two.



Lack of Public Land – Compared to Houghton, much of Hancock’s waterfront is privately-owned. While Navy Street provides public access to the waterfront, it crosses a number of private properties – therefore complicating efforts to convert the waterfront in these areas into public park spaces.

Above: Comments Received during Community Engagement

Taking these factors into account, Hancock can build on the Conceptual Waterfront Plan provided in the 2018 Master Plan and enhance existing waterfront access points with the intent to turn them into key destinations.



Porvoo Park

Named after Hancock's sister city in Finland, Porvoo Park is a nearly one-acre park featuring a boardwalk along the canal and a pavilion with restroom facilities. There is a building that housed a restaurant and outdoor dining space in the past (Waterfront Restaurant and Upper Deck Sports Lounge) adjacent to the park. The park is located two blocks south of downtown and features access to Navy Street as well as the Hancock – Calumet Trail.

Through community engagement sessions, residents suggested two improvements for Porvoo Park in particular. The first was better connectivity to downtown, particularly down Tezcuco Street. Another improvement residents desire to see is a restaurant featuring outdoor dining in the vacant building.



Hancock Labryinth Park

Located near the lift bridge, the Hancock Labyrinth Park features a walking maze and flower gardens. This park acts as the trailhead for the Hancock – Calumet snowmobile trail and is the eastern entrance to the community. It also features a unique stand of pine trees close to the canal lift bridge.



Hancock Recreation Area and Campground

Located at the west end of Hancock, this area features sand volleyball courts, a beach and playground area, a dock, and a campground. This area is a premier recreation spot and is an attraction for both residents and visitors alike. The campground features 72 sites that can be reserved for both tent and RV campers. This offers a revenue stream for the City and draws tourists to the City.

Creating better non-motorized connections between downtown Hancock and the campground can encourage campers who bring their bicycles or desire to walk to downtown restaurants and bars. It can also improve access to the recreation area from other parts of the City, improving residents' access to one of Hancock's greatest natural amenities.

2018 Waterfront Area Plan

As a coastal community special emphasis was placed on the waterfront. The waterfront concept presented on the following pages (32-33), was developed to both protect and support a stronger connection between the community and this key asset.



Arts & Culture District

Vision: Make connections to downtown, nearby churches, schools and cultural centers and other arts and cultural related elements within the City. Identify opportunities to create usable artistic and cultural spaces along the waterfront that pay homage to the history, people and culture of Hancock.

Natural District

Vision: Incorporate sustainable materials and design solutions to develop the waterfront and enhance the natural environment. Utilize existing natural areas to develop a “green corridor” along the waterfront, melding the urban landscape with the natural landscape. Emphasize the importance of native species within the design.

Active District

Vision: Utilize existing amenities and develop new concepts to create opportunities for enjoyment of the four seasons. Create connections and hubs to the numerous local trails offering biking, walking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and a variety of water related activities.



This Conceptual Waterfront Area Plan developed in the 2018 Master Plan proposes an Arts & Culture, Natural, and Active District as described on page 34, to help link the community to the Waterfront.



Hancock Post-Finlandia: Planning for the Former Campus

The closing of Finlandia University in the Spring of 2023 poses both long-term land use challenges but also opportunities for the Hancock community. While unfortunate, the school's closure represents a national trend towards small private colleges closing due to high operating costs and declining enrollment. For this reason, Hancock is ahead of other small communities that will likely experience college campuses closing in the future.



Campus Conundrum: Other Towns Navigating Life after College

Aberdeen, SD (Presentation College)

With the school's closure in 2023, Presentation College leadership partnered closely with the City of Aberdeen to repurpose some of the school campus. In Fall of 2023, the City Parks and Recreation Department purchased the former college's indoor recreation facility along with surrounding soccer fields and vacant parcels, opening them for public use in January 2024.

Bennington, VT (Southern Vermont College)

Following the school's closure in 2019, Southwestern Vermont Health Care purchased the former Southern Vermont College campus in 2020, using it as a resource and immunization center during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, Southwestern Vermont Health Care sold the campus to private developers who seek to convert historic campus buildings into a 130-room resort and event venue.

Mount Pleasant, IA (Iowa Wesleyan University)

When Iowa Wesleyan University closed in Spring of 2023, the Mount Pleasant Community School District purchased much of the campus with the intent of consolidating elementary schools on the site as well as operate the former chapel as a community performing arts center.

Montgomery, WV (West Virginia University Institute of Technology)

Citing declining enrollment as a reason to move, West Virginia University relocated its Institute of Technology from Montgomery to Beckley in 2017. This caused negative economic impacts in Montgomery, as the community was largely reliant on the university. Since then, some buildings have been repurposed, notably BridgeValley Community College operating a satellite campus, a military preparatory academy, housing for seniors and disabled residents, and the media studio for a local news station.

Hancock/Houghton is still home to a nationally-acclaimed science and research university with over 7,000 students and a \$151 million endowment; Michigan Technological University (MTU) is one of the largest employers in Houghton County and remains a key draw to the region. As demonstrated by its demographic trends, Hancock remains a college town, even in Finlandia University's absence. Incoming Michigan Tech students likely don't distinguish between Hancock and Houghton – although many want to live near campus, other students desire affordable housing which was identified as a draw for students. Due to their proximity to one another, Hancock/Houghton function as one region anchored by one higher education institution. Recognizing this, place-making strategies can continuously improve life in Hancock, bolstering the community's attractiveness and ability to retain recent graduates as well as attract workers in a variety of fields.

Cap and Gown and Staying in Town: Keeping Home-Grown Tech Talent

Upon graduation, students are perhaps the most mobile they will be in their entire lives. Presented with job opportunities in distant regions with little tying them to Hancock/Houghton, many students migrate out of the region for good. Recognizing this, the question of how to retain these students can help shape future land use policies and help tap into one of the best talent pipelines in the Midwest.

Each year, over 1,000 seniors graduate from Michigan Tech. These graduates – engineers, computer programmers, chemists, geologists, biologists, foresters, and others carrying specialized technical skillsets are all heavily recruited by private industry. Companies extend job offers to these graduates to relocate to their offices in larger metropolitan regions. However, many of these graduating students chose Michigan Tech for a reason – whether it was the school’s strong academic programs, the desirability of Hancock/Houghton, or an affinity towards the Keweenaw’s natural beauty – there was a draw that made them chose Tech over comparable universities. For this reason, it can be assumed that many graduating students sought out life in Hancock/Houghton with some desiring to remain in the area if job opportunities in their fields existed.



Many of these graduates are entering fields that increasingly offer remote work flexibility. Hancock already has a high percentage of remote workers (17.5% of workers) and has the opportunity to position itself as a community that supports remote work. Along with high-speed internet availability, a “remote worker hub” can create a place for recent graduates and remote workers to access jobs located in other regions. A hub offers remote workers a stable work environment, giving employers assurance their employees have the resources needed for remote work and supports the retention of high-paying jobs in Hancock.

Many recent graduates also have ideas they seek to develop and market. Like Jobs and Wozniack starting Apple out of a suburban garage in Los Altos, some graduates have business ideas that simply need an environment in which to flourish. Often called “makerspaces,” these places offer flexible workstations that entrepreneurs can use to develop concepts and build out their business ideas. Just as the Hancock Business Park provides resources for prospective businesses to open in the community, a makerspace offers a small-scale, flexible room or warehouse space for those looking to innovate and build on their ideas.

The remote working hub and makerspace intend to capture as much of the region’s tech talent as possible. Retaining even a small fraction of them is going to have positive economic spill-over effects. Encouraging tech entrepreneurship and marketing Hancock as a home base for remote work can encourage graduates to remain in the area after school.



Above and Left: Examples of remote coworking spaces. Images accessed Wikimedia Commons.

Potential Uses for Former Finlandia University Campus

As of November 2023, a number of former Finlandia buildings have been sold to a variety of entities while other buildings still have yet to find buyers. The City of Hancock purchased three former Finlandia campus buildings while the Finnish American Heritage Center and Archives and North Wind Books were purchased by the Finlandia Foundation National, a national organization that promotes Finnish-American culture. Other buildings have been purchased by private entities seeking to convert them into housing or for other purposes. Throughout the Master Plan process, residents and stakeholders discussed what a post-Finlandia Hancock can look like and identified potential re-uses they desire to see on the campus. Some of these are listed below:



Many of the buildings acquired by the City of Hancock are in poor condition due to deferred building maintenance. Because of this, demolition may be the most feasible solution for repurposing these sites. Understanding that there is no established plan yet and that any decision will be based on numerous factors, a number of options exist:

Option #1: Winterization and Sale of Buildings

The City purchased three buildings due to Finlandia’s rapid closure and inability to properly winterize the buildings. Without the City’s purchase, Mannerheim, Nikander, and Wargelin Halls would have been abandoned with utilities cut off, leaving them exposed to the elements. By properly maintaining these buildings, the City increases the likelihood that these buildings will be purchased by other entities seeking to repurpose or demolish them for new uses, moving these properties back to a taxable land use.

Option #2: Repurpose Buildings for Public Use

Depending on the overall condition of these buildings, the City can keep a number of buildings that can serve important community functions. Community feedback indicated a desire for public uses:

Library and Remote Working Hub – Residents mentioned a library as a desired community asset, as the Hancock High School is the closest public library and is located one mile north of downtown – making access difficult. Finlandia’s former Maki Library was housed within Wargelin Hall and can potentially be used for this purpose. This can also double as a place conducive for remote workers with fast internet connections, workstations, small conference rooms, and minor amenities such as a kitchen area.

Community Recreation Center – Residents desired more indoor recreation opportunities such as a fitness center, gym, and even an indoor swimming pool. If acquired by the City or another entity, the Paavo Nurmi Fitness Center could be used for this purpose as it was renovated in 2015 and may remain in serviceable condition long into the future.

City Hall and Police Station – It was noted that the police station has outgrown its current location at the existing City Hall building on Quincy Street. If deemed appropriate, the City can relocate police services to one of these buildings. For cost-sharing purposes, the City can also relocate city services to these buildings if additional space is needed.



Building Reuse for Recreation: Holland Charter Township Community Recreation Center

In November 2023, Holland Township announced plans to construct a community recreation center in the former Westshore Mall. The 74,000 square foot building will occupy a former department store and is proposed to include pickleball and basketball courts, an indoor running track, a fitness center, as well as rooms for community events. The facility is anticipated to cost \$14.7 million and will provide a key gathering space for the community.





Option #3: Demolish Buildings

If the City cannot find a buyer and it is decided there is no feasible reuse of the buildings, the City can demolish them and repurpose the land for other uses. While seemingly simple compared to other options, demolishing large buildings of this magnitude will be expensive and will likely require funding support from other entities.

Potential Demolition and New Construction Funding Sources

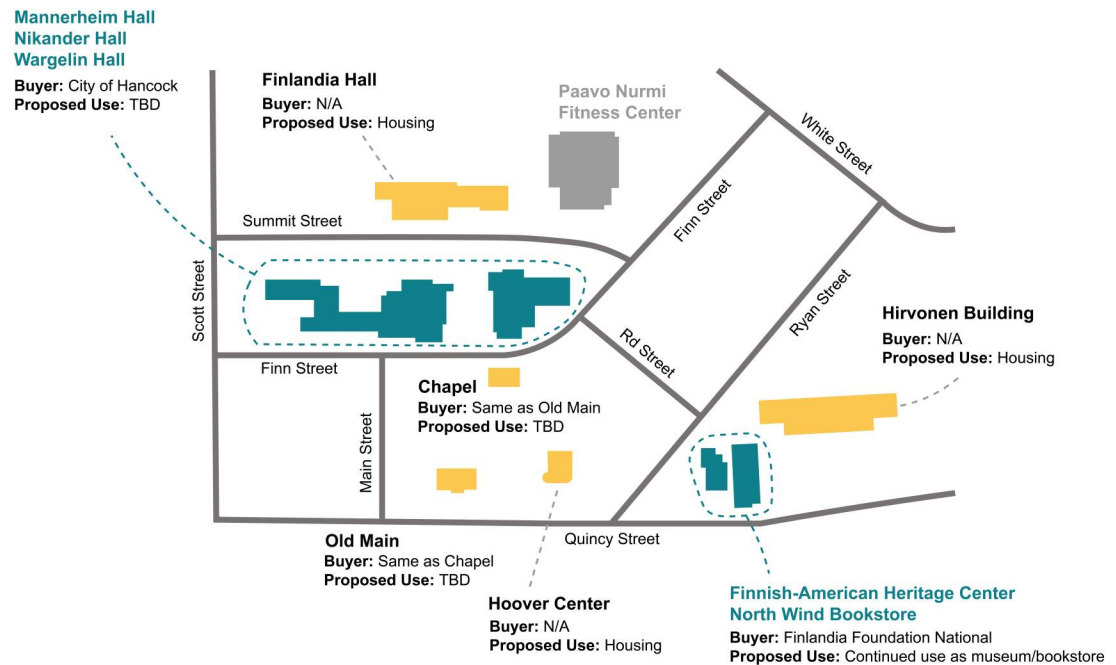
- Michigan Blight Elimination Program
- Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) Program
- Michigan Community Center Grant Program
- Michigan Recreation Passport Grant Program

Option #4: Post-Demolition New Construction

There are many options for the City to pursue if these buildings are demolished. Housing was highlighted as a key desire within this area, as many residents identified the former campus as an ideal location for new residential development, creating taxable land uses in the area while increasing the number of residents close to downtown businesses.

In the event that existing buildings are demolished and residents, stakeholders, and city leaders still desire public uses on the site, the City can consider construction of a multi-use complex to not only house City services but meet other community needs. In addition to providing a new location for the police department and City offices, this facility could provide a library that includes room for indoor community events and remote working spaces as well as a community fitness and recreation center. This multi-use community center could serve as a hub for Hancock and would be centrally located within the community. Although this represents a major capital investment, this multi-use complex would be a major improvement to the community's quality of life and would provide indoor options for the region's long winters as discussed in previous sections.

Status of Former Finlandia Campus Buildings, November 2023





1

Former Finlandia Campus Buildings, 2023

- 1: View from Former Finlandia Campus*
- 2: Nikander Hall*
- 3: Old Main*
- 4: Paavo Nurmi Center*
- 5: Mannerheim Hall*
- 6: Wargelin Hall*
- 7: Hirvonen Building*



2



3



4



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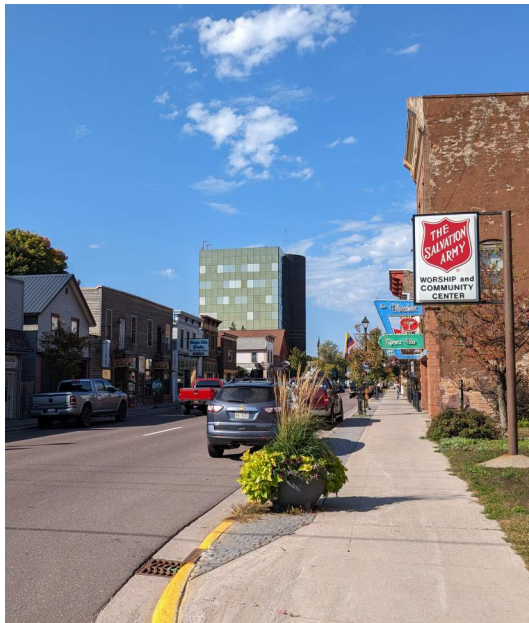
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7

Creating a Vibrant Downtown Hancock

Downtown Hancock was identified as both the heart of the community as well as one of the greatest areas to enhance in the future. Communities across the state and nation are investing in their traditional downtown districts, creating walkable mixed-use environments that support restaurants, businesses, offices, housing, and other complementary land uses. This variety of land uses ensures people are visiting at all times, creating a vibrant, people-oriented environment.



As part of this, investing in a community's downtown is a powerful economic development strategy. Residents throughout the planning process envisioned a downtown Hancock that is more walkable, home to more residents, and features more events and attractions year-round. Although much of a downtown's success is the result of private capital – property owners investing in vacant storefronts, developers constructing housing to meet demand, existing businesses expanding their footprints – the City can make public improvements (both large and small) to encourage and support this private investment. Some of these as identified through public engagement include the following:

Emphasizing the City's Art Culture

Downtown Hancock already features art installations courtesy of the Copper Country Community Arts Center. Residents desired more art installations, noting murals as an appealing way to add dashes of color to downtown buildings. This can be achieved by including murals as an encouraged improvement within the City's façade improvement program as well as identifying underutilized walls and gauging property owner's interest in converting them into canvases for local artists.



*Top: Current artwork around downtown Hancock.
Middle: Water Guardians, Toronto. Image Courtesy of CODA WORX.
Bottom: Example of downtown mural.*

Downtown Festivals and Events

Residents identified current festivals and events as when “downtown feels most alive,” as residents and visitors alike are drawn to downtown attractions. With the recent purchase of Quincy Green, the City has a central gathering space in which to hold festivities. These events offer an opportunity to “showcase” downtown Hancock and bring visibility to the City’s new and existing businesses and downtown improvements.



Outdoor Dining Areas

Residents also noted a greater desire for outdoor dining options downtown. This activity can bring a buzz of street life to Hancock and Quincy Streets and allows restaurant visitors to enjoy outdoor dining during the Keweenaw’s temperate summers. Dining al fresco isn’t limited to warmer months however, as patio heaters and garden igloos can make drinking and dining an enjoyable outdoor experience in many seasons.



Encouraging Housing Downtown

Housing was noted as a preferred addition to downtown, as many residents mentioned the area being desirable for those seeking a more urban environment while requiring less living space. More residents living downtown also increase the demand for services within the area, further supporting local businesses.

Communities that have “parking problems” often find that making walking more appealing can alleviate these problems. Parking for downtown residents must also be considered however, as the conversion of upstairs floors for housing along with new residential developments will increase overall parking demand. Residential parking demand is often the opposite of retail store demand however, as residents leave in the morning for work and return in the evening. As the City experiences more development within downtown, a parking study may be appropriate to better understand current and projected parking demands. In the meantime, the City can develop and promote a map of public parking lots downtown.



Downtown Street Design

Perhaps the most important component of any successful downtown is the design of its streets. Vibrant downtowns feature low traffic speeds, wide sidewalks with plenty of trees for shade, and numerous crosswalks to provide access to other sides of the street. These street design ingredients make an environment where people feel safe and comfortable to walk longer distances. Two-way streets are both safer and feature slower traffic speeds than one-way streets.

Since the construction of the Portage Lake Lift Bridge in 1958, both Quincy and Hancock Streets have operated as one-way streets, with Quincy Street flowing traffic westbound and Hancock Street flowing traffic eastbound. This change was made with traffic throughput in mind, prioritizing uninterrupted vehicle movement through downtown Hancock. During public engagement sessions, residents mentioned difficulties with speeding traffic and trying to cross the street, and desired slower traffic and more crosswalks along Hancock and Quincy Streets.

Although residents voiced overwhelming support for safer and lower-speed streets in downtown, the idea of reconverting Quincy and Hancock Streets to two-way traffic was met with mixed feedback. While many residents favored this change, others desired to keep the streets as-is – noting Quincy Street’s latest redesign in 2017 as well as concerns regarding visibility for local businesses.

- “Pedestrian friendly downtown, less traffic on Quincy”*
- “Crossing the street can be difficult for older people or those who are not quick”*
- “Re-route US-41 to Hancock Street”*
- “Make 41 on Hancock Street two-way or go to one-lane - add angled parking and sidewalk cafe space on sunny/north side”*
- “More stop lights/slower speed limit”*
- “We already redesigned Quincy Street”*
- “Re-route US-41 - get rid of one ways”*
- “No two-way on Quincy”*



With these different opinions in mind, the Planning Team met with MDOT representatives in September 2023 to discuss the feasibility of reconverting downtown streets to two-way traffic if there is future interest. These representatives noted that – as long as challenging intersection geometries and adequate traffic flows across the bridge are maintained – both Hancock and Quincy Streets could function as two-way streets once again. Although both streets currently carry US-41, there is precedent for US highways to be two-way streets in downtown environments – namely US-12 in Coldwater, US-23 in Alpena, or US-31 in Charlevoix as examples. Continued discussions with MDOT can focus on the long-term function of these roadways while identifying traffic-calming solutions in the near future.



It should be noted that infrastructure change occurs over the span of years and often decades. What is planned today takes years of coordination with various entities and agencies before being implemented. Acknowledging this, pilot programs give cities and road agencies an opportunity to “test run” a road design before committing resources to its full implementation. This offers an opportunity to collect data, observe what works and what doesn’t, and get a sense of whether residents and road users view the temporary change as positive. If there is interest in converting Quincy and Hancock Streets from one-way traffic to two-way, a pilot program can offer a cheaper and temporary opportunity to study this road reconfiguration.

With this said, downtown streets prioritize either cars or people; environments designed to channel vehicles through downtown as fast as possible are not conducive to the walkability and vibrant street life identified as a key goal for downtown Hancock. Slower traffic speeds through downtown not only improves safety for all road users, it supports the sense of place and identifies downtown Hancock as no longer a place to drive through, but a destination itself.

*Top Left: Quincy Street looking west.
Left: Downtown Charlevoix, MI.
Above: Top: Downtown Coldwater, MI.
Above: Example of downtown streetlife,
Providence, RI.*



Downtown Hancock in Pictures

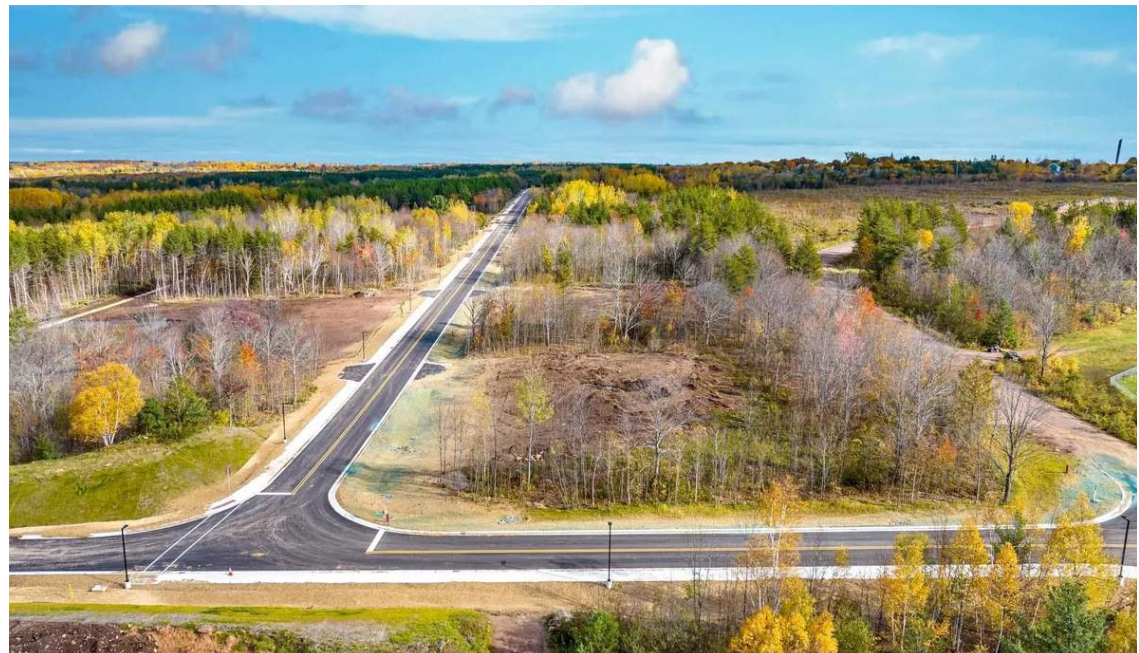
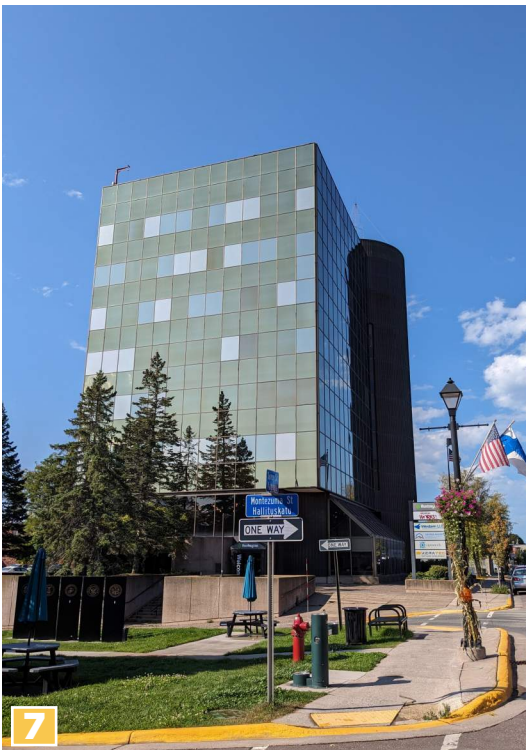
- 1: Looking east along Quincy Street*
- 2: Downtown Hancock sign*
- 3: Celtic House, Former home of Pewabic Pottery founder Mary Chase Perry Stratton, former Mason's Lodge building*
- 4: 102 Quincy Street with Art Deco Vitrolite facade*
- 5: Looking south along Reservation Street*
- 6 (Next Page): 1950s neon signage along Quincy Street*
- 7 (Next Page): Nine-Story D&N Building built in 1972, tallest building in Hancock at 135ft*





Hancock Business & Technology Park

Stemming from a 2021 \$2.7 million federal grant, the City of Hancock invested in infrastructure for a business and technology park north of Tomasi Drive across from Hancock High School. This more than 40-acre site is subdivided into 15 development sites for light industrial and commercial employers. With access to US-41 nearby as well as Houghton County Memorial Airport a few miles north, this area is positioned to become a key employment hub within the City.





Embracing Hancock’s Status as a Premier Winter City

As the northernmost City in Michigan, Hancock lies north of both Montreal and Quebec City in Canada and shares a similar latitude as Seattle. This far northern geography coupled with the surrounding expanse of Lake Superior makes the region’s climate unique from others. Compared to communities along the north shore of Lake Superior in Minnesota, Hancock’s climate is more temperate and receives nearly twice the snowfall of these peer communities. This moderating lake effect makes the Keweenaw Peninsula one of the snowiest locations in the United States.



Seasonal Variation in Daylight Hours	
15 Hours 18 Minutes	Length of Sunlight During Summer Solstice
8 Hours 33 Minutes	Length of Sunlight During Winter Solstice

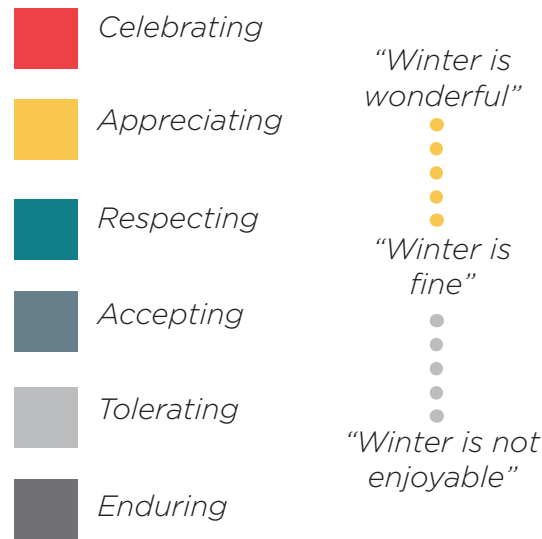
	Average Snowfall (Inches)	Average January Temperature (F)	Record Low Temperature (F)	Average July Temperature (F)	Record High Temperature (F)
Hancock, MI	207.7	15.5	-29.0	64.8	102.0
Two Harbors, MN	97.8	11.2	-38.0	65.7	98.0
Grand Rapids, MN	59.6	8.7	-51.0	67.6	104.0

Above: Climate comparison of three northern communities, illustrating Lake Superior’s snow-generating and moderating effect. Data collected from NOAA Online Weather Data.

Unlike other seasons, winter often elicits strong emotional responses; some people celebrate the onset of cold weather and the sparkling brightness of a snowy day or the gentle flakes falling from the sky; others find short days, shoveling of snow and scraping of ice, and grey skies an endurance test until spring brings chirping birds and clearer skies. Whether positive or negative, winter defines life in the UP. Hancock's long-term planning and winter services delivery will shape the community's perception of these months and increase the overall quality of life.

Adopting a "Winter Cities" strategy is improving the City's response to winter. People's personal responses to winter fall commonly somewhere on a six-part spectrum as indicated to the right, but Winter Cities strategies are intended to move these perceptions up the scale.

Six Stages of Winter Enjoyment



With this in mind, Hancock can develop strategies making winter more enjoyable for all, leveraging the cold weather and snow as assets for leisure and recreation. Some specific strategies are outlined below with the intent of moving people from simply "Enduring" to "Celebrating" winter.

Street Plowing and Maintenance

The City of Hancock receives more than 200 inches of snow annually, which presents a challenge to the Public Works Department and the Michigan Department of Transportation. Tasked with keeping roads passable in the winter, these entities remove snow and lay sand on area roadways throughout the winter.

The City should publish its snow removal policy online to clarify this important seasonal process and identify priority snow removal routes in the City. These routes may be identified using traffic volumes, roadway grades, and priority destinations. Other northern cities have implemented similar policies to communicate their snow removal processes.

Duluth, MN Snow Removal Policy

Duluth features a snow removal policy that prioritizes streets for snow removal and displays them on an interactive web map. Main arterials are the highest priority while alleys are the lowest priority and are to be plowed only after main arterials and residential streets are plowed first. This prepares residents with what to expect during snowfall events and conveys the challenging realities of snowfall removal.



Winter Recreation

This climate characteristic presents an opportunity to market Hancock’s status as a “Winter Sports Mecca” and destination for snow-lovers everywhere. With Mount Ripley and Mount Bohemia nearby, the Maasto Hiihto Trail system in the community’s backyard, numerous regional snowmobile trails, and thousands of acres of protected public lands surrounding it, Hancock is an ideal “jumping off” point towards a plethora of winter recreational activities. Downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice hockey, curling, skating, fat tire cycling, sledding, and numerous other activities are well-supported by Hancock’s annual snowfall of 200+ inches. Finding ways to embrace these activities and encourage residents to participate can improve the sense of community and gives them an opportunity to “go play outside.”



Relationship between Snowmobilers and Other Trail Users – A distinction between motorized and non-motorized recreational trails should be made, as snowmobiling is a popular and celebrated recreational activity in the Keweenaw Peninsula. This poses safety and noise concerns as many of the region’s groomed trails are used by cross-country skiers, snowshoers, winter cyclists, and other non-motorized users seeking to escape into nature. Residents have raised concerns over snowmobile noise pollution and speeding on the City’s streets and trails. With these factors in mind, the City should encourage responsible snowmobile use and provide education on where snowmobiles are allowed within the City. This can include better signage at snowmobile/ORV trailheads that outline expectations on riding through Hancock as well as speed limit/noise signs reminding snowmobilers to slow down and reduce noise through the City.

Outdoor Shelters and Warming Huts

While many residents mentioned their love for winter recreational activities, many simply desire a way to make spending time outdoors more bearable during the winter. In addition to shoveling highly traveled sidewalks, having dedicated shelters to block the wind or even occasional warming huts can create comfortable spaces to stop and linger while being outdoors during the winter. These can be located along areas of high pedestrian activity, making walking long distances more pleasant. These warming huts can be embraced as art installations as well, bringing dashes of color to Hancock's streets during winter. Local businesses can also embrace time outdoors with area heaters and "snowglobes" that offer shelter to customers.



Winnipeg Warming Huts

Winnipeg hosts an annual architectural design competition centered on installing warming huts along the city's riverfront trail. This provides places for people walking, skiing, and snowshoeing within the Assiniboine River valley. The event has been held since 2009 and has drawn submissions from architecture firms around the world. This event has taken Winnipeg's winters and turned them into a canvas on which to display vibrant art displays.

Arts, Color, and Lights

Adding dashes of color to buildings and implementing unique lighting features can help break the monotony of a long winter. Large, colorful murals can create visual interest and can tap into the creative resources of the Hancock art community. Innovative lighting installments can also create interest while contributing to the "winter wonderland" feeling of the community as lights along Quincy Street have done. These lighting features can be coupled with public art displays that create unique environments for residents and visitors to enjoy.



Above: Examples of Grand Rapids World of Winter Festival.

Embrace Finnish-American Culture

As the capital of Finnish America, Hancock has a unique opportunity to cherish its history and ties with the Nordic nation. While Hancock’s embrace of this culture can be seen in the Finnish American Heritage Center and its downtown streets labeled in Finnish, the City can further adopt the Finnish perspective that winter is something to celebrate. This can be embraced in winter marketing efforts, as coupling the community’s winter climate and activities with sleek Scandinavian styling can make colder weather light-hearted and fun.



Describing Winter in Finnish

- Talvi** = Winter
- Metsä** = Forest
- Latu** = Ski Trail
- Pakkanen** = Frost
- Moottorikelkka** = Snowmobile
- Sisu** = Perseverance, hardiness, resilience
- Lumi** = Snow
- Järvi** = Lake
- Hanki** = Blanket of Snow



Finnish Sauna - Perhaps one of the most popular exports of Finnish culture, saunas represent a healthy and calming escape from life in winter climates. Although public saunas are rare in Michigan, they are commonplace in Finland and typically operate on a daily pass or membership basis. These wood-paneled hot rooms remain extremely popular in colder climates, as people seek personal health and restfulness opportunities while seeking activities to connect with family, friends, and neighbors. Saunas are synonymous with Nordic culture and can contribute to Hancock’s unique sense of place. Public saunas can bring tourism to the area while creating a soothing indoor activity for year-round residents.

Indoor Events and Activity Spaces

While many winter city strategies are focused on getting people outdoors year-round, the simple fact is many residents don’t enjoy cold weather or snow-related activities and some days are best spent indoors. For this reason, successful winter cities feature a variety of indoor activities throughout the year. This can include event spaces for programming as well as indoor recreational activities. A community center featuring a diversity of indoor activities ensures year-round variety for residents and visitors.





Image accessed from Visit Keweenaw, 2023.



Cherry
Free



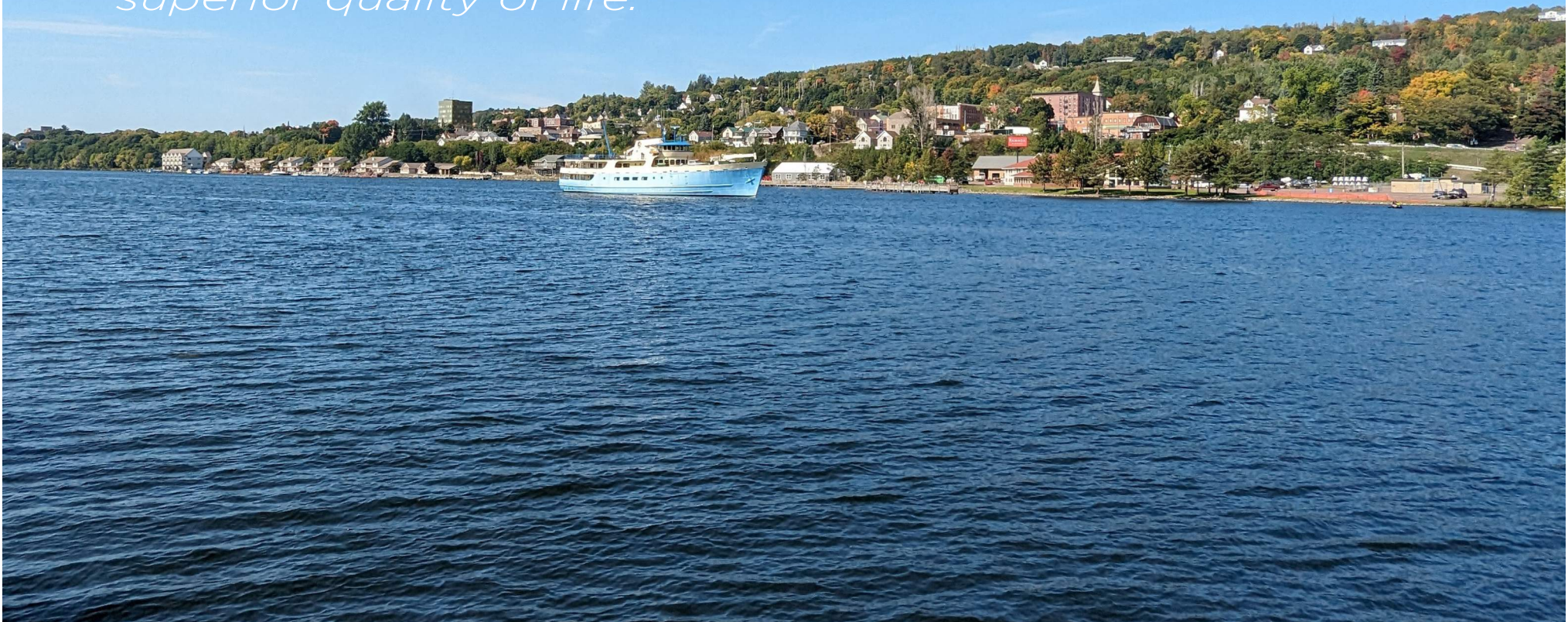
Chapter Five | Putting the Plan Into Action

This final chapter of the Plan presents goals, objectives, and strategies for realizing Hancock's future vision and how Future Land Use districts reflect the City's Zoning Districts.



The Vision for the City of Hancock

“Hancock, Michigan on the Keweenaw Peninsula is a forward-looking community where government, business, and citizens work together to provide infrastructure, services, housing, and recreation to support the well-being of residents and the natural environment, and to envision a sustainable future and superior quality of life.”





Downtown as Destination: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 1.1: Develop signature events and promote downtown's art culture.					
Strategy A: Form a working group comprised of the Downtown Development Authority, Hancock Recreation Commission, Copper Country Community Arts Center, Finnish American Heritage Center, and other entities to program and promote festivals and activities downtown.	●	Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Copper Country Community Arts Center, Finnish American Heritage Center	●		
Strategy B: Install and develop a maintenance plan for local art throughout the downtown and in parks.	●	Copper Country Community Art Center, Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) Grant		●	
Objective 1.2: Honor the City's historic character.					
Strategy A: Install interpretive signage that tells the story of downtown Hancock.	●	Houghton County Historical Society, Michigan Tech Archives		●	
Strategy B: Work with Finnish National Heritage Center to enhance the City's Finnish-American history.	●	Finnish American Heritage Center		●	
Strategy C: Explore historical designation for the Pewabic Pottery (Mary Chase Perry Stratton) House along Hancock Street.	⊖	National Parks Service (NPS), State Historic Preservation Office, Pewabic Pottery		●	
Strategy D: Develop a historic renovation & preservation plan for downtown.	⊖	DDA, Downtown Business Owners			●

Downtown as Destination: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 1.3: Improve the downtown's appearance.					
Strategy A: Fill empty storefront windows with art exhibits from local artists.	●	Copper Country Community Art Center, Hancock Business Association	●		
Strategy B: Identify underutilized walls and encourage murals as part of the Facade Improvement Program.	●	Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Copper Country Community Art Center	●		
Strategy C: Develop downtown garden spaces.	⊖	Hancock Public Schools, Michigan Tech, Beautification Committee, local gardening clubs, local residents		●	
Strategy D: Enhance the Front Street Wall.	⊖			●	
Objective 1.4: Create more public gathering spaces.					
Strategy A: Develop pocket parks and programs with movable chairs, outdoor games, or other items that encourage social connections and activity and establish long-term maintenance plan for these parks.	●	Downtown Development Authority (DDA)		●	
Strategy B: Develop stage or bandshell at Quincy Green for outdoor performances.	⊖				●
Strategy C: Encourage outdoor dining and consider creation of downtown social district.	⊖	Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)		●	
Strategy D: Install public restrooms, shelters, and warming huts in areas of high pedestrian activity.	⊖			●	



Downtown as Destination: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 1.5: Attract a variety of sustainable businesses downtown.					
Strategy A: Hire a part-time Business Development Manager or Assistant Manager for supporting and growing downtown businesses.	⊖	City of Hancock, Downtown Development Authority (DDA)		●	
Strategy B: Install additional electric vehicle charging stations downtown.	●	Downtown Development Authority (DDA), EGLE		●	
Strategy C: Install trash and recycling receptacles throughout downtown.	⊖	Downtown Development Authority (DDA)		●	
Strategy D: Encourage location of business incubator space in downtown.	⊖			●	
Strategy E: Encourage additional housing opportunities within the downtown area.	⊖		●		
Strategy F: Explore and implement ordinances and policies to revitalize downtown commercial spaces, prevent vacancies, and discourage residential uses of commercial spaces.	⊖			●	



Downtown as Destination: Goals and Objectives

● = *In Progress*

⊖ = *To be Considered*

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 1.5: Improve downtown’s walkability and status as a pedestrian-oriented environment.					
Strategy A: Consider strategies and options to reduce traffic speeds and increase walkability.	⊖	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Houghton County Road Commission (HCRC)	●		
Strategy B: Collect traffic and pedestrian crash data at Quincy Street & Reservation Street and identify intersection safety improvements.	⊖	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Hancock Police Department		●	
Strategy C: Continue exploring regional transit opportunities by pursuing interagency agreements or system consolidation with the City of Houghton transit system.	●	City of Houghton, Michigan Tech		●	





Nature and Sustainability: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 2.1: Increase community connections to the waterfront.					
Strategy A: Develop wayfinding signage that denotes walking routes and distance to nearby waterfront locations and other recreational destinations, such as Maasto Hiihto Trails.	●			●	
Strategy B: Enhance pedestrian facilities accessing Porvoo Park and consider installing rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) at Tezcuco Street and Ravine Street.	⊖	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)		●	
Strategy C: Enhance gateway features, signage, and outdoor seating at Labryinth Park.	⊖			●	
Strategy D: Enhance pedestrian features along M-26 and improve pedestrian connections, including improvements to the East Hancock Stairway.	⊖	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)		●	
Strategy E: Re-establish and identify signage for non-motorized route connecting downtown to Hancock Recreation Area and Campground.	⊖			●	
Strategy F: Ensure development along Navy Street preserves natural spaces and public access to the waterfront.	●		●		
Strategy G: Review and update stairway connections in the City's non-motorized network plan, namely along Reservation Street, Ravine Street, and Montezuma Street; add stairway on the west end of the City.	●		●		
Strategy H: Explore potential for Dakota Street pedestrian connection to waterfront area along Navy Street.	⊖			●	
Strategy I: Encourage waterfront commercial land uses near Porvoo Park.	⊖			●	
Strategy J: Create transient boat docks along waterfront locations.	⊖				●

Nature and Sustainability: Goals and Objectives

● = *In Progress*

⊖ = *To be Considered*

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 2.2: Invest in outdoor recreation facilities.					
Strategy A: Further develop the area's trail systems in accordance with the 2017 Non-Motorized Plan, including bike trail along Campus Drive and Campus Drive West.	●	Local bicycle groups and mobility stakeholders, Copper Country Intermediate School District		●	
Strategy B: Enhance creative ways to use the City's alleys for recreation and access, such as an ice skating path, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, biking, and walking.	⊖	Downtown Development Authority (DDA)		●	
Strategy C: Create marketing materials promoting Hancock as a major winter recreation destination.	⊖	Visit Keweenaw	●		
Strategy D: Ensure Parks and Recreation Plan remains updated and pursue pertinent grant opportunities.	⊖	Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)			●
Strategy E: Identify and map sidewalks, bike lanes, and non-motorized trails and create webpage providing this information.	⊖		●		
Objective 2.3: Maintain healthy forested areas, street trees, and urban landscapes.					
Strategy A: Monitor threats to trees including invasive species, pests, and storm damage.	●	Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), MSU Extension			●
Strategy B: Develop an erosion control plan to include the control of trees and shrubs on the slopes between Water Street and the waterfront.	●	EGLE, Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District	●		
Strategy C: Enhance landscaping on public properties and partner with local organizations to create pollinator gardens throughout the City.	⊖			●	



Growing Economic Opportunities: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

○ = To be Considered

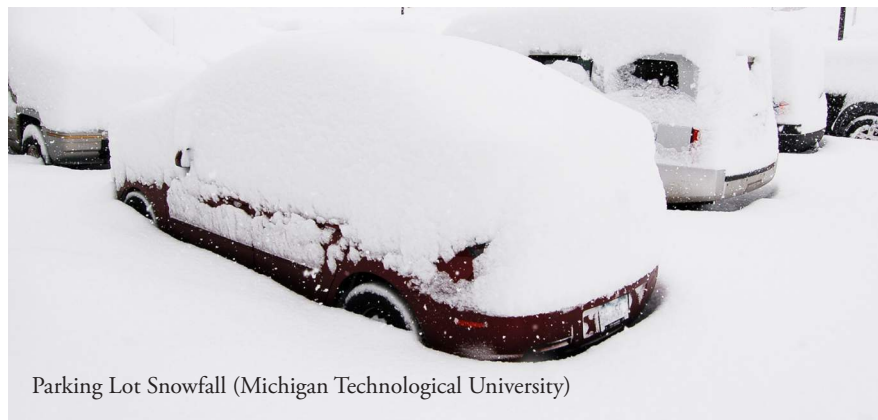
	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 3.1: Attract and maintain regional talent.					
Strategy A: Market Hancock as a desirable and “one-of-a-kind” community and pursue placemaking activities that attract a talented workforce, create public & private partnerships to support childcare and housing opportunities.	●	Portage Hospital, DDA, MEDC, HBA, Copper Shores	●		
Strategy B: Market Hancock’s Business and Technology Park to attract employers.	●	KEDA, Chamber of Commerce, MTEC SmartZone, local realtors	●		
Strategy C: Develop strategy to gauge interest in a regional remote working hub.	○	Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance, Michigan Tech, employers		●	
Strategy E: Encourage development of a “makerspace” or research center that supports innovation.	○	MTEC SmartZone		●	
Strategy F: Support internet providers to build out high speed internet throughout the City.	○	Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), broadband internet providers		●	

Growing Economic Opportunities: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 3.2: Provide a variety of quality housing options to meet the needs of existing residents and attract new employers and workers.					
Strategy A: Improve blight reduction and maintenance efforts.	●	Houghton County Land Bank Authority, MSHDA	●		
Strategy B: Develop program between housing agencies, service organizations, and realtors to help people find quality housing options and resources for property maintenance.	⊖	Houghton, Hancock, and Laurium Housing Commission, housing and development stakeholders, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR), Habitat for Humanity		●	
Strategy C: Pursue grant programs that encourage development of affordable housing and creation of a housing & development trust fund.	⊖	Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)		●	
Strategy D: Encourage development of cooperative housing development for all ages.	⊖			●	



Parking Lot Snowfall (Michigan Technological University)





Growing Economic Opportunities: Goals and Objectives

● = *In Progress*

⊖ = *To be Considered*

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 3.3: Support the local food economy.					
Strategy A: Support and promote the convenient access to local food sources such as the Tori Market.	●	Ryan Street Garden, Copper Shores, WUPPDR, local farmers, UP Food Exchange, UP Sustainable, MSU Extension	●		
Strategy B: Identify barriers to the local food economy's growth.	●	Local garden clubs, local grocers		●	
Strategy C: Enhance pedestrian connectivity to local grocery stores, particularly along US-41 near Scott Street and Market Street.	⊖	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)		●	

Finlandia Campus and Community: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 4.1: Take proactive planning steps towards repurposing the Finlandia Campus.					
Strategy A: Perform community engagement on potential building reuse.	⊖		●		
Strategy B: Market buildings for private purchase/reuse.	⊖	Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance, potential developers	●		
Strategy C: Pursue funding for disposition of buildings.	⊖	Michigan Blight Elimination Program, Revitalization and Placemaking Program (RAP), Habitat for Humanity		●	
Strategy D: Explore funding opportunities for multi-use community center.	⊖	Michigan Community Center Grant Program, Michigan Recreation Passport Grant Program			●
Objective 4.2: Consider developing a multi-use community center for indoor activities during all seasons.					
Strategy A: Pursue support for creation of indoor recreation center.	⊖			●	
Strategy B: Pursue support for creation of community library and indoor event space.	⊖	Portage Lake District Library		●	
Strategy C: Pursue support for relocation of City hall and police station to new civic complex; study reuse potential of existing City hall building	⊖			●	



Finlandia Campus and Community: Goals and Objectives

● = *In Progress*

⊖ = *To be Considered*

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 4.3: Embrace Hancock’s status as the “Finnish-American Capital of America.”					
Strategy A: Implement marketing and signage that highlights Hancock’s Finnish-American roots.	⊖	Finnish-American Heritage Center, Finnish Foundation National, Finnish Theme Committee		●	
Strategy B: Continue hosting Finnish-related events and festivals.	⊖	Finnish-American Heritage Center, Finnish Foundation National, Finnish Theme Committee	●		
Strategy C: Encourage Finnish-oriented tourism opportunities such as sauna tourism.	⊖			●	
Strategy D: Create public sauna at Hancock Recreation Area & Campground.	⊖			●	

Sustainability: Goals and Objectives

● = In Progress

⊖ = To be Considered

	Status	Potential Partners & Funding Sources	Timeline		
			Less than 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	Over 5 Years
Objective 5.1: Explore and encourage the use of renewable energy options.					
Strategy A: Create FAQ sheet summarizing wind and solar zoning requirements.	⊖		●		
Strategy B: Encourage opportunities and implement renewable energy sources on City-owned land and buildings.	⊖	Michigan Tech		●	
Strategy C: Build partnerships to pursue regional sustainability initiatives.	⊖	Michigan Tech		●	
Objective 5.2: Develop a Climate Change Impact Study.					
Strategy A: Identify City-wide carbon footprint.	⊖			●	
Strategy B: Explore composting and strategies for reducing City's carbon footprint.	⊖			●	
Strategy C: Explore energy-efficient "green" building infrastructure updates to reduce the City's carbon footprint.	⊖			●	



Ryan Street Community Garden (www.ryanstreetgarden.blogspot.com)

Plan & Zoning Relationship

The Zoning Ordinance is a regulatory tool to manage land use that is enabled by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA), PA 110 of 2006. Section 203 (1) of the act requires that zoning be based on a plan, given that a plan describes the vision and policies for the future and the Zoning Ordinance provides the regulatory tool to achieve these policies.

For instance, the Zoning Ordinance will help direct land uses to appropriate areas through zoning districts and promote community attractiveness through dimensional and other standards designated for each land use.



Proposed Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

Upon the adoption of the original Master Plan in 2018, the City underwent a Zoning Ordinance rewrite process that brought the City's development regulations into alignment with the vision, goals, and objectives from the 2018 Master Plan. This produced the City's new Zoning Ordinance which was adopted in 2022. Because of this, further changes to the Zoning Ordinance were not a part of the 2024 Master Plan Update process.

To link the Zoning Ordinance to the Plan, the zoning districts will need to connect to the future land use districts described in Chapter Five and displayed on the Future Land Use Map. The chart on the following pages describes how the existing zoning districts roughly correspond with the proposed future land use districts.



Zoning Matrix

Reflecting 2022 Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Future Land Use Category	Corresponding Zoning District	Intended Purpose
<i>Single Residential</i>	<i>R-1 - One-Family Residential District</i>	<i>Development of single-unit detached residential neighborhoods that are traditional in nature</i>
<i>Mixed Residential</i>	<i>R-2 - Multiple-Family Residential District</i>	<i>Development of mixed housing types in a walkable neighborhood format that are close to downtown and other key destinations</i>
<i>Shoreline Mixed Use</i>	<i>SMU - Shoreline Mixed-Use District</i>	<i>Development of a shoreline area that preserves natural open space and ensures development maximizes public access to the waterfront.</i>
<i>Downtown Mixed Use</i>	<i>DMU - Downtown Mixed-Use District</i>	<i>Development of a vibrant mixed-use environment that features multi-story buildings that are oriented around the pedestrian experience</i>
<i>Community Mixed Use</i>	<i>B-2 - Community Mixed-Use District</i>	<i>Development of larger-scale business districts that incorporate a mixture of retail, residential, and other land uses</i>
<i>Local Business</i>	<i>B-1 - Local Business District</i>	<i>Development of small-scale business districts serving the needs of nearby neighborhoods</i>
<i>Industrial</i>	<i>I - Industrial District</i>	<i>Development of manufacturing, warehouse, and innovation-based land uses</i>
<i>Open Space and Recreation</i>	<i>OSR - Open Space and Recreation District</i>	<i>Preservation of parks and natural open spaces</i>

