

# Goals, Objectives & Action Steps

**Goal 1:** Port Austin will maintain its attractiveness as a summer tourism destination while continuing to establish itself as a place of year-round activity.

**Objective 1.1:** Make people outside of the Port Austin aware of the community's unique character, its local attractions and its various opportunities for recreation.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 1.1.1:</b> Increase the number of ways that the Tip of the Thumb Water Trail and Turnip Rock are advertised.		
<b>Action Step 1.1.2:</b> Implement Port Austin's branding strategy, which emphasizes the "small coastal town" aesthetic. Continue to attract and retain businesses that support this local identity.		
<b>Action Step 1.1.3:</b> Partner with neighboring municipalities and the Huron County Economic Development Corporation to identify winter marketing opportunities for the region.		
<b>Action Step 1.1.4:</b> Provide additional winter amenities to encourage more year-round tourism visitation such as small cabins, connected hiking and ski trails and walkable routes to points of interest.		

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**Objective 1.2:** Attract, retain and grow local businesses that help to diversify Port Austin’s economy.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 1.2.1:</b> Encourage business owners with orchards and farms to provide tours, education and experience-driven services in addition to their normal operations.		
<b>Action Step 1.2.2:</b> Provide tours, programming and events at Port Austin’s three art barns.		
<b>Action Step 1.2.3:</b> Convene business owners in Port Austin regularly to encourage collaboration and to listen to the business community’s needs.		
<b>Action Step 1.2.4:</b> Update the municipal website to clearly outline the processes that potential business owners would want to know prior to locating in Port Austin, such as how to acquire a business license, properties available to lease or purchase and regulations or incentives affecting local business operations.		

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**Objective 1.4:** Provide Port Austin’s residents with education and job training resources to contribute to the area’s local economic needs.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 1.4.1:</b> Work with the agricultural industry in Huron County to create college student internship opportunities at farms, orchards and gardens.		
<b>Action Step 1.4.2:</b> Coordinate with North Huron Schools and the Huron County Economic Development Corporation to provide resources to the area’s young entrepreneurs.		

**Objective 1.5:** Use public spaces for recreation and programming throughout all four seasons.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 1.5.1:</b> Create a community calendar listing events occurring in Huron County. Encourage event planners in the county to reduce the number of overlapping events.		
<b>Action Step 1.5.2:</b> Collaborate with Huron County and nearby municipalities to increase the amount of programming for community events, classes and recreation leagues in public spaces.		
<b>Action Step 1.5.3:</b> Develop the open spaces at public easements, especially those that provide access to the Lake Huron shoreline.		

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**Objective 1.6:** Improve existing community amenities to encourage more visitation by residents and tourists.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 1.6.1:</b> Promote safe access to the waterfront, including safety features, handicap ramps and ADA-accessible launches.		
<b>Action Step 1.6.2:</b> Evaluate parks, pedestrian infrastructure and public spaces to ensure that they are designed to accommodate all ages and abilities.		
<b>Action Step 1.6.3:</b> Develop the Points at Grindstone to be used as a community park. The park should include a mix of amenities resembling the plan for the site developed by the planning consultant.		

**Goal 2:** Transportation in Port Austin will be safe and efficient. The community’s amenities will be well-connected with non-motorized routes as well as public transportation. Residents will be able to easily access nearby urban centers.

**Objective 2.1:** Connect Port Austin’s points of interest with safe and scenic non-motorized routes.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 2.1.1:</b> Use markings and signage to designate roads that have adequate shoulder widths as shared-use.		
<b>Action Step 2.1.2:</b> Provide residents and visitors with a map of the designated routes.		
<b>Action Step 2.1.3:</b> Assess the feasibility of acquiring easements to develop paved recreational trails in the community.		
<b>Action Step 2.1.4:</b> Construct bicycling amenities such as wayfinding signs, wide sidewalks, well-marked crosswalks, public restrooms, drinking fountains and benches to connect trail users to local attractions.		

**Goal 2:** Transportation in Port Austin will be safe and efficient. The community’s amenities will be well-connected with non-motorized routes as well as public transportation. Residents will be able to easily access nearby urban centers.

**Objective 2.2:** Link Port Austin to the various parks, non-motorized trails and natural areas throughout Huron County and beyond.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 2.2.1:</b> Partner with neighboring communities to develop a regional trails plan.		
<b>Action Step 2.2.2:</b> Continue to work with Thumb Area Transit and community members to identify ways to improve public transportation use in Port Austin.		
<b>Action Step 2.2.3:</b> Partner with regional, state and national transportation entities to increase the number of connections between Huron County and larger urban centers such as Detroit, Ann Arbor, Bay City and Chicago.		

**Objective 2.3:** Improve the number of opportunities for residents and visitors to navigate Port Austin and Huron County without needing a personal vehicle.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 2.3.1:</b> Assess the feasibility of introducing a seasonal trolley route.		
<b>Action Step 2.3.2:</b> Evaluate the community’s ability to support transit sharing services such as ride-sharing applications, scooter rentals or bike share.		
<b>Action Step 2.3.3:</b> Promote compact development patterns that appropriately mix residential and commercial land uses.		
<b>Action Step 2.3.4:</b> Partner with Thumb Area Transit, nearby jurisdictions, Huron County and local hotels to establish arranged transportation to events county-wide.		
<b>Action Step 2.3.5:</b> Partner with Huron County and the Michigan Department of Transportation to conduct a Traffic Demand Analysis to assess whether existing infrastructure is appropriate for current and future traffic needs.		

**Goal 3:** Port Austin will preserve its qualities that create a sense of place and beautify highly visible areas to promote an aesthetically pleasing community.

**Objective 3.1:** Ensure that Port Austin’s residential and commercial standards are held to the standards set forth in the community’s Code of Ordinances.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 3.1.1:</b> Review the municipality’s code violation remediation procedures to ensure they are clear in their intent and are widely understandable. Include these procedures on the municipal website, at the municipal office and in code violation notices that are sent to property owners.		
<b>Action Step 3.1.2:</b> Work proactively with the owners of blighted properties to identify a rehabilitation plan that addresses code violations.		
<b>Action Step 3.1.3:</b> Identify underutilized, obsolete or vacant commercial structures that the Village/Township could acquire, rehabilitate and sell.		
<b>Action Step 3.1.4:</b> Create a program to maintain façade appearances in commercial areas. Consider the creation of a revolving loan fund, grant opportunities or other incentives to assist business owners with façade upkeep.		
<b>Action Step 3.1.5:</b> Target underutilized, obsolete or vacant buildings or spaces for redevelopment. Create a redevelopment plan by engaging the community on a better use for specific sites.		

**Objective 3.2:** Connect residents with healthy food choices that are easy to access, abundant and affordably priced.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 3.2.1:</b> Revise the zoning ordinance to encourage the development of community gardens in Port Austin’s neighborhoods.		
<b>Action Step 3.2.2:</b> Create a Farm to School Initiative and/or a Community Supported Agriculture Initiative to connect the agricultural industry’s products to local schools, restaurants and food stores.		

**Goal 3:** Port Austin will preserve its qualities that create a sense of place and beautify highly visible areas to promote an aesthetically pleasing community.

**Objective 3.3:** Promote community features that uphold Port Austin as an interesting and scenic place to live, work and play.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 3.3.1:</b> Start a beautification initiative targeting improvements around points of interest and other areas with high visibility.		
<b>Action Step 3.3.2:</b> Partner with local organizations and volunteers to add landscaping and greenery in targeted areas.		
<b>Action Step 3.3.3:</b> Implement design standards for new developments and redevelopments that match the local character. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to include form-based zoning.		
<b>Action Step 3.3.4:</b> Protect views of Lake Huron by discouraging multiple-story developments along the shoreline.		
<b>Action Step 3.3.5:</b> Inventory the community’s historic structures, places and objects and work with the State Historic Preservation Office to register these local assets as historically significant. Consider implementing a historic preservation overlay district.		
<b>Action Step 3.3.6:</b> Emphasize Port Austin’s History Center by providing tours, improving non-motorized connections and marketing the site’s features.		



**Goal 4:** Port Austin will be prepared for the short and long-term risks related to the Lake Huron shoreline. The community will have initiatives and plans in places that support mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery for potential natural disasters.

**Objective 4.1:** Use the Township’s zoning ordinance and site plan review process as a tool to support flood risk mitigation.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 4.1.1:</b> Consider creating a coastal overlay district to require additional standards that promote shoreline preservation such as landscaping with native vegetation and maintaining larger lot sizes.		
<b>Action Step 4.1.2:</b> Update the zoning ordinance to prohibit shoreline hardening features including, but not limited to, seawalls and jetties.		
<b>Action Step 4.1.3:</b> Increase the required setbacks from water bodies, wetlands and areas that are at a higher risk of flooding.		
<b>Action Step 4.1.4:</b> Especially along the coastline, incentivize or regulate site plans to preserve open space, add as little impervious surface as possible and maintain native vegetation.		

**Objective 4.2:** Prepare the community’s infrastructure, emergency response systems and risk mitigation planning to account for the increased frequency of major storm and flood events.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 4.2.1:</b> Assess the Township’s water management systems to determine whether they are well-suited to accommodate the expected increases in storm events and storm intensity.		
<b>Action Step 4.2.2:</b> Create a Hazard Mitigation Plan, an Emergency Preparedness Plan or a plan similar in nature for Port Austin.		
<b>Action Step 4.2.3:</b> Coordinate with police, fire and ambulatory services to plan for different natural hazard scenarios.		

**Goal 5:** Port Austin will continue to preserve the natural features of the community to be enjoyed now and by future generations. Natural areas will be protected with the understanding that these features contribute to ecological stability, they provide aesthetic value and opportunities for passive recreation and they support Port Austin’s tourism-driven economy.

**Objective 5.1:** Reduce Port Austin’s resource consumption through ongoing public education, policy initiatives and infrastructure improvements.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 5.1.1:</b> Educate homeowners and business owners on best practices to reduce energy consumption.		
<b>Action Step 5.1.2:</b> Incentivize or regulate new developments and redevelopments to become certified as energy efficient (i.e. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design).		
<b>Action Step 5.1.3:</b> Identify the community’s ability to support renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.		
<b>Action Step 5.1.4:</b> Educate Port Austin residents on how to properly recycle materials and the importance of diverting waste from landfills.		

**Objective 5.2:** Improve Port Austin’s ability to manage stormwater and runoff.

	<b>Responsible Party(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Action Step 5.2.1:</b> Update the zoning ordinance to regulate or incentivize rain gardens, bioswales and other low-impact development techniques; green roofs; pervious pavement; native, non-invasive landscaping; and the preservation of existing trees.		
<b>Action Step 5.2.2:</b> Work with business owners, especially those in the agricultural industry, to reduce the amount of runoff entering natural systems.		
<b>Action Step 5.2.3:</b> Monitor water quality at the local level to ensure public safety at the community’s public beaches and access sites.		

**Goal 5:** Port Austin will continue to preserve the natural features of the community to be enjoyed now and by future generations. Natural areas will be protected with the understanding that these features contribute to ecological stability, they provide aesthetic value and opportunities for passive recreation and they support Port Austin’s tourism-driven economy.

**Objective 5.3:** Incorporate best practices into the built environment that are designed to sustain the quality of the community’s natural resources.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 5.3.1:</b> Revisit the Township’s protected farmlands on an annual basis to evaluate whether these protected designations should be expanded, reduced or kept the same.		
<b>Action Step 5.3.2:</b> Site new developments near existing infrastructure to reduce public expenditures needed to provide services to these developments.		
<b>Action Step 5.3.3:</b> Promote infill development as an alternative to development in greenfields.		
<b>Action Step 5.3.4:</b> Improve “dark sky” conditions in Port Austin by regulating ambient light and light sources.		
<b>Action Step 5.3.5:</b> Incentivize or regulate developments to include green features such as open space preservation, green roofs, rain gardens or native vegetation protections.		

**Objective 5.4:** Protect ecological diversity by managing invasive, endangered and overpopulated species.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 5.4.1:</b> Collect data on animal species to address overpopulation or endangered populations. Create an action plan that specifies steps to ensure a stable ecosystem.		
<b>Action Step 5.4.2:</b> Coordinate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and regional environmental groups to establish an invasive species management strategy.		

**Goal 6:** Port Austin’s housing options will accommodate residents of various economic statuses, household types, age ranges and living preferences.

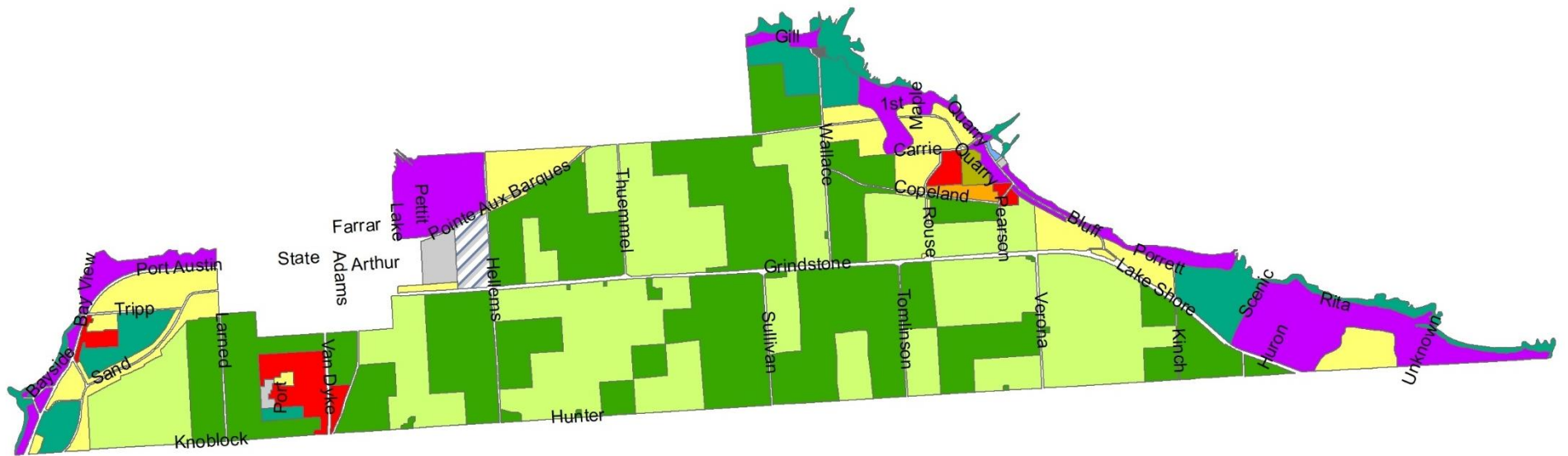
**Objective 6.1:** Accommodate the changing housing needs for aging residents to support “Aging in Place”.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 6.1.1:</b> Guide development closer to existing community amenities to support walkability and easier access to needs such as groceries and medical facilities.		
<b>Action Step 6.1.2:</b> Conduct a housing study to assess the need for more senior housing options. These housing units should include accessibility features.		

**Goal 7:** Port Austin will seek representative civic participation by actively engaging the public through a variety of outreach methods and equitable practices.

**Objective 7.1:** Use a wide range of community engagement techniques to gather public sentiment for local projects and initiatives.

	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
<b>Action Step 7.1.1:</b> Post information regarding public meetings in multiple public spaces and through a variety of mediums.		
<b>Action Step 7.1.2:</b> Use a combination of in-person engagement and remote participation to accommodate more groups to have a voice in the community’s decision making processes.		
<b>Action Step 7.1.3:</b> Benchmark public participation to annually review what engagement techniques are working and which of these could be improved.		
<b>Action Step 7.1.4:</b> Update/create the/a public participation strategy to include a description of different public engagement methods and when it is appropriate to use each one.		



## **Future Land Use Categories**

### **Lake Residential District**

To preserve the scenic beauty, property values and environmental integrity of waterfront areas, this future land use plan recommends the creation of a “Lake Residential” zoning designation. The intent of this district is to provide for and maintain single-family housing on relatively large lots that appropriately fits in with, protects and adapts to the unique environmental characteristics and physical features of the area, cognizant of the dynamic nature of Lake Huron (e.g., changing lake levels, shoreline erosion, wave impacts, and storm surge) and its potential impact on the coastline and property. Developments in this district should not inhibit views of Lake Huron, and should be designed to mitigate against flood risks. This may include landscaping requirements, limits to impervious surfaces and vegetation to reduce stormwater runoff into the lake.

### **Low-Density Residential District**

The intent of this district is to provide for the development, preservation and enhancement of Port Austin’s low-density residential neighborhoods, which include primarily single-family housing. This area supports single-family detached residential developments that are designed as one home on one lot. Streets in this district do not necessarily need to follow a traditional grid pattern and accompanying uses should include parks and recreational areas. Pedestrian connections are encouraged within these areas and with adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Medium-Density Residential District**

This land use category is defined by the existence of townhouses, multi-family apartment structures and other group living quarters on smaller lot sizes. These are areas within the Grindstone City Historic District where Port Austin Township will direct denser development patterns to widen its range of housing options.

### **Commercial District**

The intent of this district is to provide neighborhoods with commercial amenities outside the Village of Port Austin’s downtown. Commercial land uses include but are not limited to: groceries, bakeries, banks, drugstores, hardware stores, gas stations and other service industries. Dedicated commercial areas are traditionally planned along major thoroughfares. In Port Austin, commercial district-planned areas are located primarily in the Grindstone City Historic District, along Van Dyke Road and along M-25 on the west side of the Township.

### **Industrial District**

This district is designed to accommodate wholesale activities, warehousing and light industrial facilities as uses by right and more intense, heavy industrial facilities as uses authorized by special approval. The general goals of this use district include, among others, the following specific purposes:

1. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations to meet the needs for all types of manufacturing in the Township.

2. To protect residential districts by separating them from manufacturing activities.
3. To promote manufacturing development which is free from danger of fire, explosions, toxic and noxious matter, radiation, and other hazards, and from offensive noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other objectionable influences.
4. To promote the most desirable use of land compatible with existing uses and development.

### **Parks & Open Space District**

The intent of this district is to preserve natural features, provide recreational uses and preserve areas devoted to open space. In areas where development occurs, emphasis will be placed on preserving natural features through the use of low-impact development tools and cluster development. This district will also help Port Austin direct development away from areas at a higher risk of flooding.

### **Agricultural**

The intent of this district is to maintain agricultural land uses in the Port Austin area. These locations are intended to remain primarily agricultural, but may also allow for certain commercial uses related to the agricultural industry depending on the use's impact on community infrastructure and community aesthetics, as deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission.

### **Preserved Agriculture**

The intent of this district is to preserve farmland, especially in areas that are considered critical due to their soil and topographical composition. The areas depicted on the Future Land Use Map for this district are currently, or are planned to be, enrolled in Public Act 116 with the State of Michigan, now known as the Farmland Preservation Program.

### **Marina**

This district is intended to permit and encourage those uses consisting of or related to marina facilities.

### **Public/Semi-Public**

This category consists of all developed or undeveloped lands owned by various governmental and public agencies and institutions (including schools, municipal services and religious uses).