

# Village of Homer, MI 2019 Master Plan



Recommended for Adoption by the Planning Commission \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by the Village Board \_\_\_\_\_



**Welcome to the Village of Homer**



Homer Community House

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING:

*Scott Salow and Homer Schools for the use of their media center*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Why We Plan

The Village of Homer is a classic Michigan small town on the move. Working towards Redevelopment Ready Certification, Homer is preparing to move into the future while maintaining its small town charm. Close neighbors, a keen interest in the Village's future, and an overwhelming interest in their young people makes Homer a great place to live.

One of the notable aspects of this planning effort has been the Village's desire to involve a younger generation in the master planning process. The Master Plan Committee included a high school senior and several steps were made to inform and engage the youth. Other steps to gather public feedback included a public meeting at the Homer High School in which all members of the community were encouraged to attend.

Many think traditional neighborhoods in older Villages like Homer should stay the way they are for fear that neighborhood environments will be negatively impacted. Planners and

land use professionals understand this is not the case. Mixed-uses and the addition of carefully planned amenities into traditional neighborhoods enliven neighborhoods. The ability to walk to services and restaurants where one could previously only drive, draws people to these areas. Offering diverse types of housing opportunities attracts new residents to the area and just as importantly, it gives the youth of Homer a reason to return and build their adult lives in their home town.

As all Master Plans are intended, this document serves as Homer's eye towards the future. It is a public, guiding document that sets the Village's intentions for its development over the next 20 years. The Planning Enabling Act for the State of Michigan requires that the Village take steps to review and update the Master Plan every 5 years; however, updates can be made any time they are necessary. Homer's Master Plan is not a plan that will sit on a shelf waiting for a mandatory statutory review. This plan includes action items and implementation strategies to help the Village realize projects, both big and small, that will enhance the character of the entire community.



The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 requires that a community's zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the public. The plan which the zoning code is built upon is the Master Plan. Furthermore, The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 states that, "A local unit of government may adopt, amend, or implement a master plan as provided in this act".

The Master Plan is not an ordinance, it cannot change the zoning of property, and does not have the force of law. It does, however, support the Zoning Ordinance which is the regulatory mechanism for the classification and regulation of land use. The Master Plan guides future decisions for land use and reflects the community's vision. The Zoning Ordinance dictates how that vision will be carried out. Courts recognize the validity of a Zoning Ordinance when it is based on a community's current Master Plan.

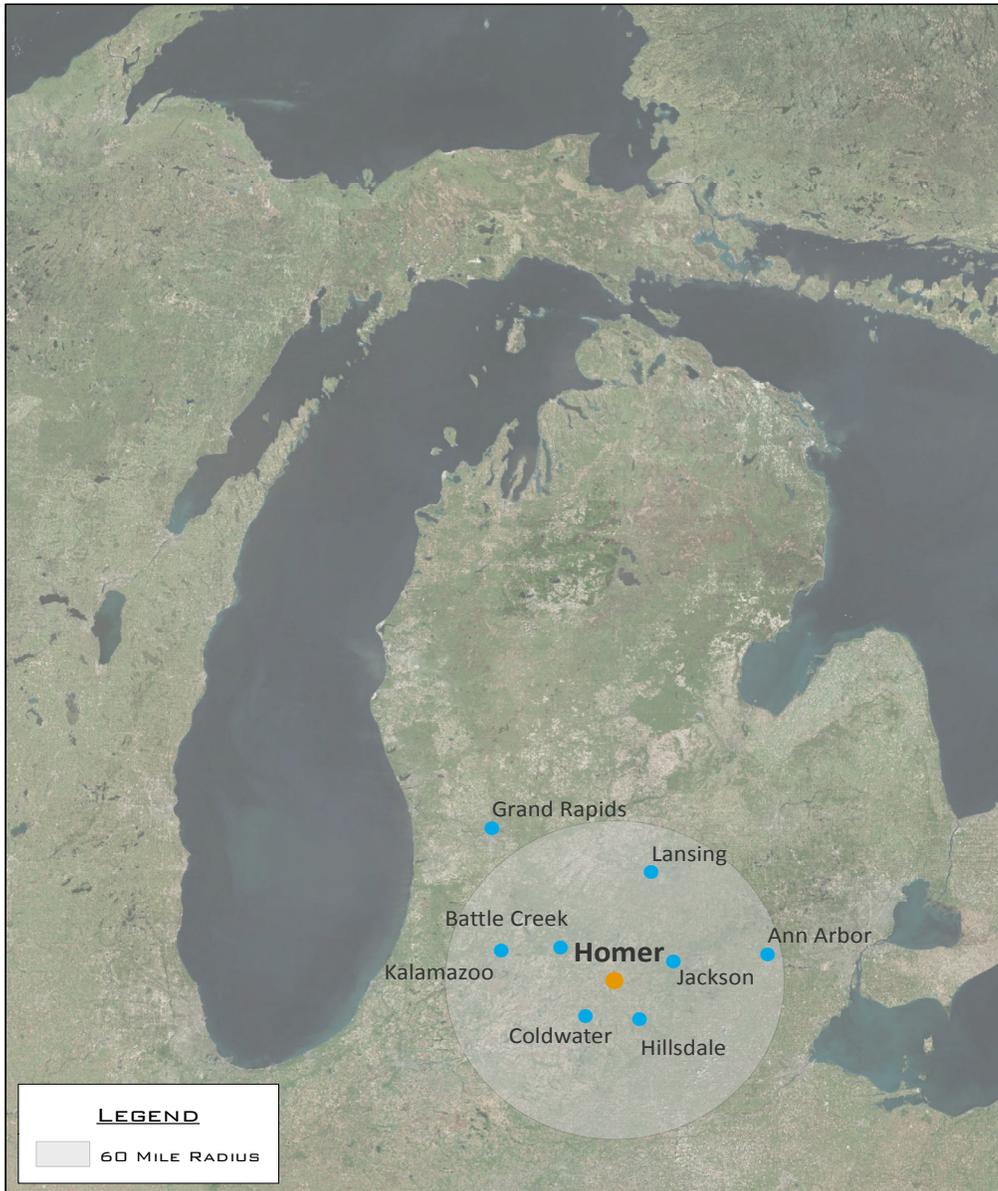
## BELOW: SEPTEMBER 2018 PUBLIC VISIONING SESSION



## History of Homer

As one of the earliest settlements in south central Michigan, the Village was founded in 1832, incorporated in 1871, and has a rich history. It represents an early agrarian mill town which boomed after the Civil War due to the expansion of the railroads. The commercial core consists of a two-block section of Main Street with multi-story masonry buildings on each side. Mature trees line the streets in Homer's downtown district, while music softly plays through the Village's downtown speaker system.

Of particular interest is Milton Barney, the first developer in Homer. He hired a surveyor to plat the Village on the west bank of the south branch of the Kalamazoo River. Barney then built a saw mill, a grist mill, a general store and a hotel. He also encouraged the federal government to develop transportation routes in the area. Originally called "Barneyville", the Village eventually became "Homer", named after the Village in New York. Homer was called "the hub" at one time because three rail lines intersected within its boundaries. The cobblestone house that Barney built in 1837 still stands at 303 South Hillsdale Street as a tribute to the success of his endeavors.



## Regional Context

The Village of Homer is located in Calhoun County, approximately 16 miles southeast of the City of Marshall and 21 miles northeast of the City of Coldwater. The Village of Homer is surrounded by Homer Township to the southeast, Albion Township to the northeast, Eckford Township to the northwest and Clarendon Township to the southwest.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Population Trends

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the projected population of Homer in 2016 was 1,846. It is helpful to know certain data about these people, because it allows the community to know what types of housing, spending, and age groups that need different kinds of services and amenities in Homer. **For ease of understanding, the following demographics will be presented in the context of the Village having 100 residents.** The actual numerical figures will be presented as well.



OUT OF 100 PEOPLE



Population Estimates		
Place	2010 Population	2016 Population
Homer	1,668	1,640
Homer Township	3,015	2,965
Clarendon Township	1,139	1,258
Albion Township	1,123	921
Eckford Township	1,303	1,397

The table to the left shows population estimate over five years in the Village, as well as the surrounding townships. The estimate is based on the 2010 census data and American Community Survey which supplements demographic information between the decennial census. It is estimated that Homer's population is not decreasing at an unusual rate.

## MEDIAN INCOME

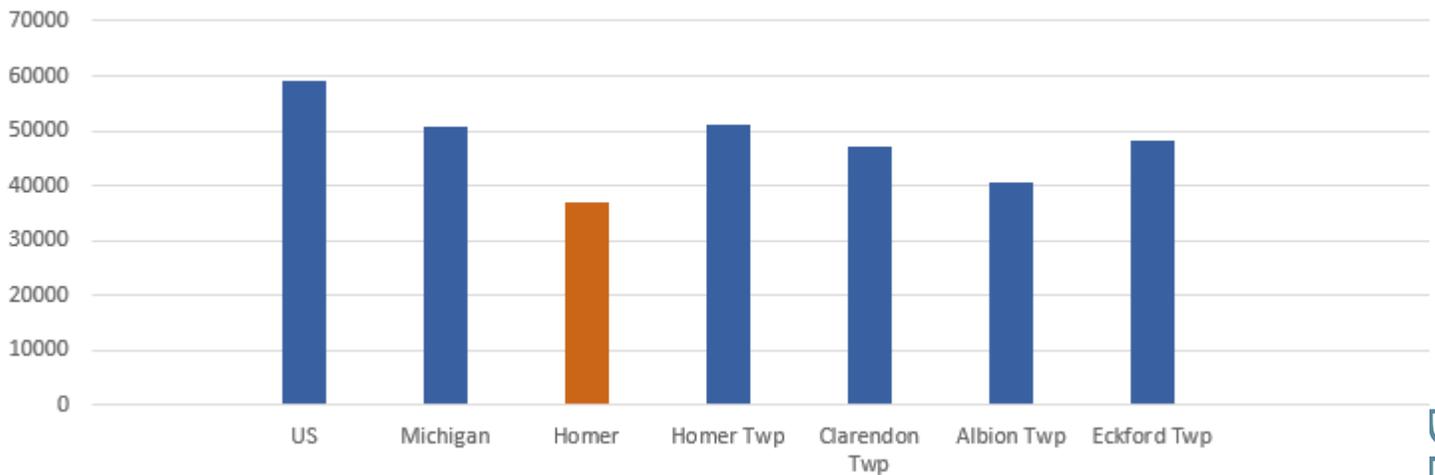
The amount that divides the income distribution in an area into two equal groups. Half of the group will have income above the median and half will be below it.



In Michigan, the Poverty Line for a family of four is \$24,250. In the United States, the poverty line for the same type of family is \$22,162.



Median Income



### MEDIAN INCOME BY AREA:

United States: \$59,039  
 Michigan: \$50,803  
 Homer: \$37,054

Homer Township: \$51,029  
 Eckford Township: \$48,382  
 Clarendon Township: \$47,083  
 Albion Township: \$40,625

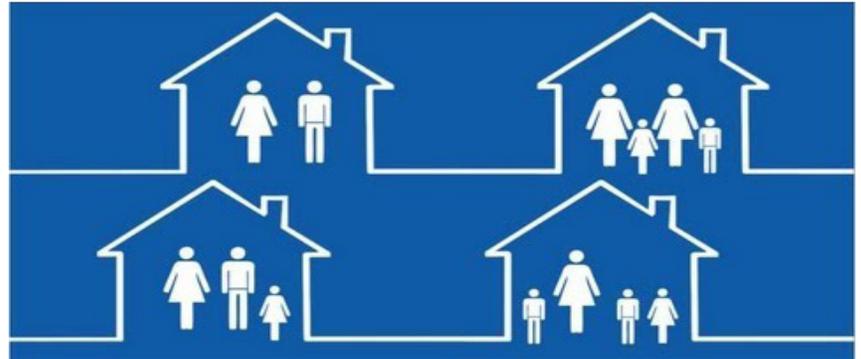
# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Household Trends

According to the 2010 census, there are 615 households in Homer. Approximately 722 housing units including 211 rentals and 107 units that are either for sale, rent, or vacant.

Out of 100 homes in Homer, there are households with:

- 1 person in them: 22
- 2 people in them: 34
- 3 people in them: 17
- 4 people in them: 16
- 5 people or more: 11



Average family size in Homer is 3.12 people. The average family size in Michigan is 2.55.

## OUT OF 100 FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN HOMER...



59 households are married couples with children.



32 are female head of household with children.



9 are male head of household with children.

Of these households with children, 61 are living in homes they own and 39 are renting. 244 households in Homer have children under the age of 18.

## OUT OF 100 PEOPLE IN HOMER...

- 13 have a Bachelors or other graduate degree
- 31 have some college
- 46 are high school graduates
- 10 have no high school diploma



# The Working Population

## OUT OF 100 WORKING ADULTS IN HOMER...



40 people work in blue collar jobs

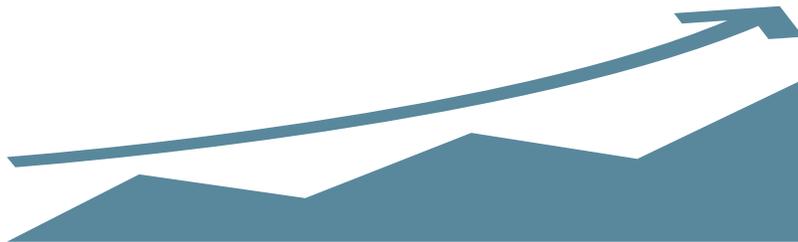


43 people work in white collar jobs



17 people work in the service industry

The unemployment rate in Homer is 9.6%.



## OUT OF 100 PEOPLE IN HOMER...

The following **income** is reflected:

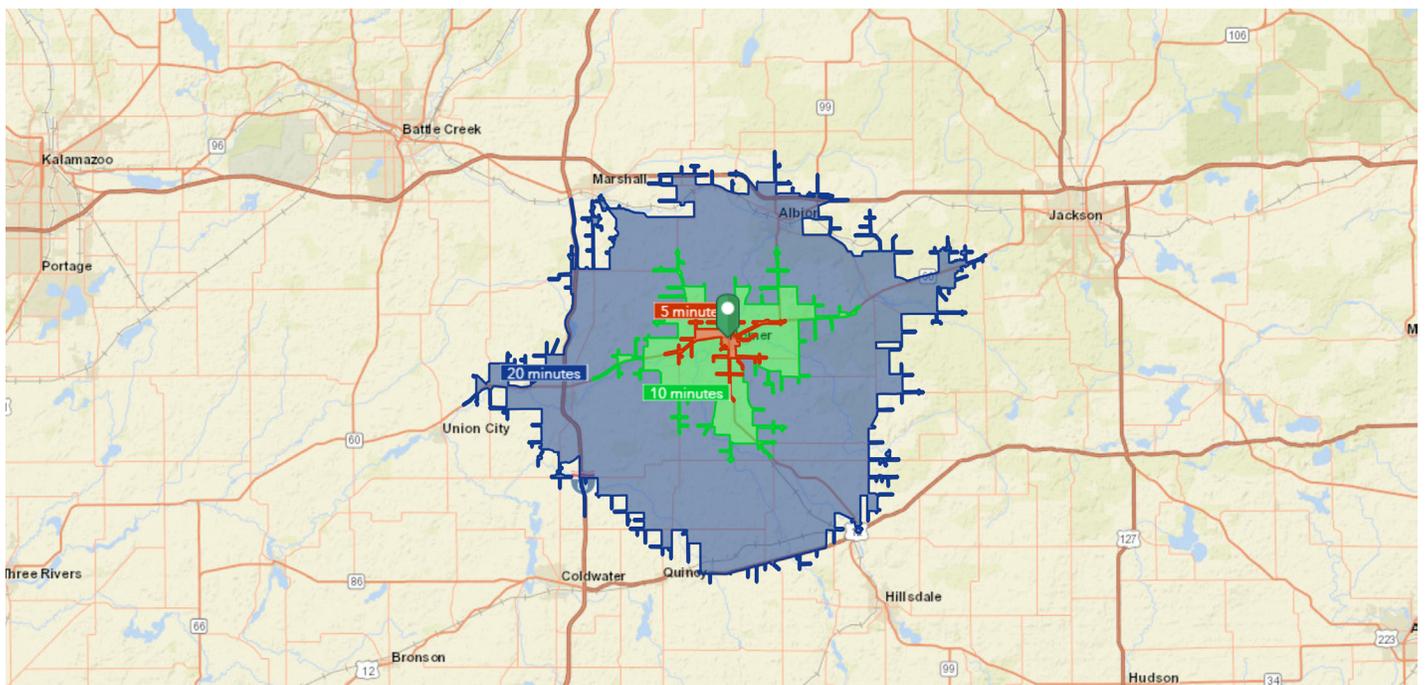
- 16 people make over \$75,000
- 20 people make \$50,000-74,999
- 18 people make \$35,000-49,999
- 15 people make \$25,000-34,999
- 15 people make \$15,000-24,999
- 16 people make under \$14,999

### Where Homer residents are working:

- 70 work in Calhoun County
- 28 work outside of Calhoun County
- 2 work out of state



The mean travel time to work is 19 minutes.



# EXISTING USES

## Land Classifications

### R-1 Low Density Residential

This area is encompassed by single-family homes and low density public uses like churches, golf courses, or nurseries.

### R-2 Medium Density Residential

The R-2 area serves as a transition between low-density residential and multi-family. Single-family homes are permitted in this area, as are multi-family homes like duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses.

### R-3 Multiple-Family Residential

This district primarily serves multi-family dwellings such as apartment complexes, group cluster homes, as well as duplexes and triplexes. Public uses are permitted in this area under special land use.

### R-4 Mixed Residential

The mixed-residential zone provides for transitional areas between residential areas and commercial areas. This zone should be used to provide walkable amenities to residential areas.

### MHP Mobile Home Park

This district is reserved for mobile home communities which are essentially high density residential complexes.

### B Business

The B district refers to commercial and service uses in the downtown area. Homer allows for residential uses on the 2nd and 3rd floors in this area.

### CS Community Service Commercial

The CS area is largely commercial and dedicated to retail and service uses located within the Village.

### HS Highway Commercial

The retail and service uses in this commercial district are designed for auto-related access. In Homer, these uses are most likely located on M-60.

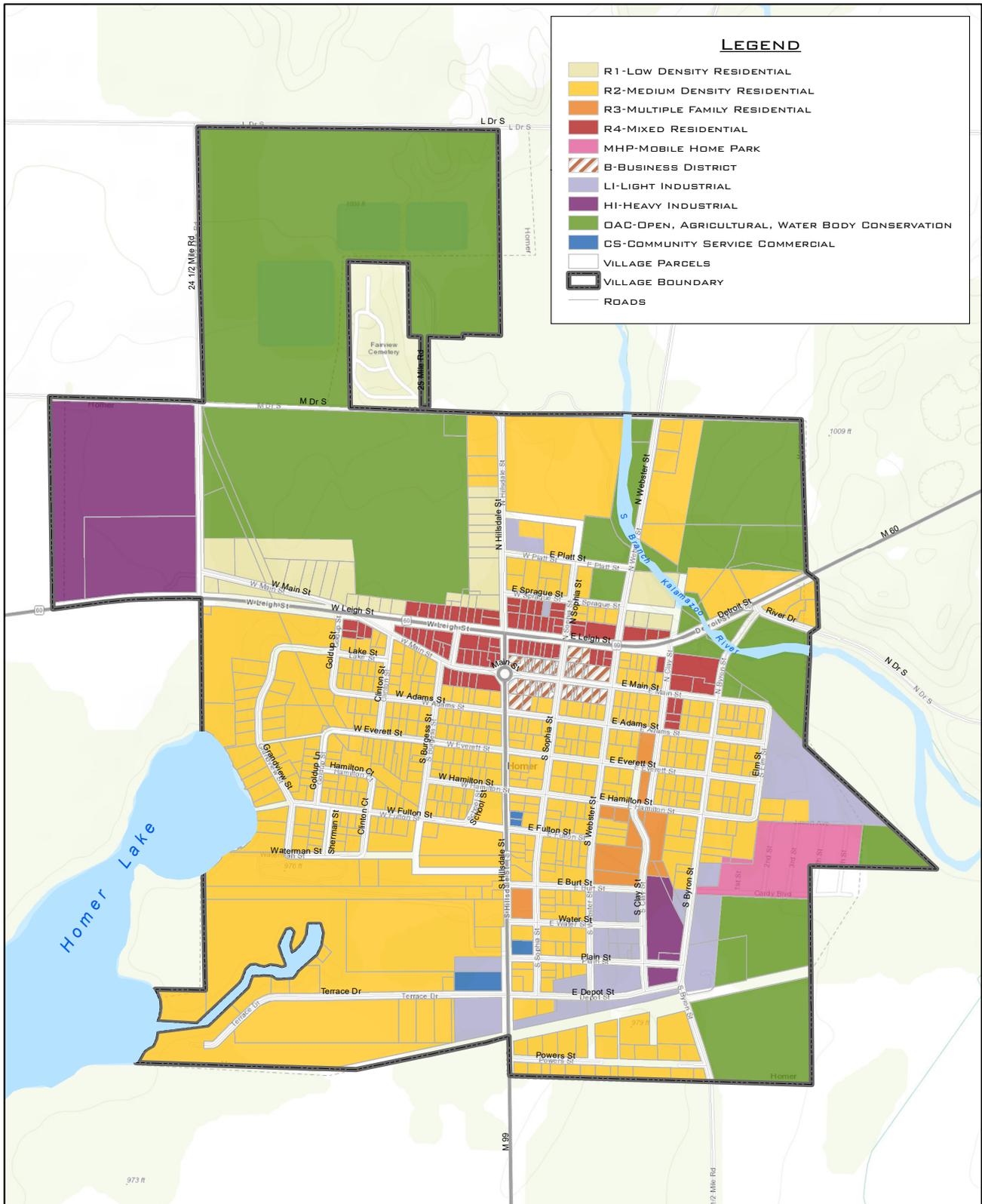
### LI Light Industrial & HI Heavy Industrial

Industrial uses in both areas involve packaging, assembling, manufacturing, storage, and truck garages. Uses are separated into districts by intensity.

### OAC Open Space, Agricultural, and Waterbody Conservation

The OAC area is intended to be low-impact and low-density for both residential and working uses. Conservation areas, farming, and single-family residential homes are among the permitted uses in this area.

# Homer Zoning Map



# EXISTING USES

## Public Utilities

### WASTEWATER

The Village's wastewater is treated at the aeration facility on the north side of the Village. It consists of two aeration cells and three stabilization ponds. After the solids have settled to the pond bottoms the treated wastewater is then discharged in the South Branch of the Kalamazoo River at L Drive South. The plant was first completed in 1980 and was designed to serve a population of 2,500. It has a design flow of 285,000 gallons per day. The current average daily flow is 200,000 gallons per day.

### WATER

There are three well sites in Homer. Two wells are located near Homer Lake and another well is located at the Webster Street Park site. The maximum pumping capacity of the water system is 800,000 gallons per day. The current average daily use of water is between 150,000 and 180,000 gallons per day. The Village built a water tower in 1993 and paid off the revenue bond in 2010.

### STORM SEWERS

During the late 1900s, the Village changed the way they handled storm water. The change was due to a clean up effort for Homer Lake. Around this same time, the Village formed the Homer Lake Board. In present times, the Village now requires all storm water to be collected and handled on site for new developments.

## PARKS & RECREATION

Homer prides itself in offering plentiful recreational opportunities. Through a continued unique cooperative relationship with the Village and Homer Community Schools, residents both young and old have increased recreational opportunities. In addition, the following recreational facilities are located within the Village:

**Lake Front Park** is at the east corner of Homer Lake. A public access site is provided for fishing and boat launching.

**Webster Street Park** is located north of M-60 on Webster Street. A newer park, Webster offers an updated playground, shelter and ice rink.

**Grist Mill Park** is the redevelopment of the former Grist Mill site. It is located along M-60 and contains a walking path, a gazebo, and other enjoyable areas along the river.

**Greg Barton Circle** is at the center of town on Main Street and Hillsdale Street. It contains a paved walkway with a stone wall and benches, landscaping and a seasonal flower display.

**Roadside Park** is located on the north side of M-60 west of the river. Trails lead through this park and into the Grist Mill Park.

**R. K. Curry Athletic Facility** is owned and maintained by the Homer Community Schools. The facility is on 60 acres, and contains softball and baseball diamonds, soccer and football fields, a track and field facility, tennis courts, playgrounds and two gymnasiums.

**County Canoe Launch** is maintained by the Village of Homer on the river at the M-60 crossing.

**Homer Community House** was built in the 1930's and has been extensively renovated several times over the years. The community uses the house for social events, reunions, elections and special events.

## Historic Homer

On July 25, 1996 the Homer Village Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Streets within the historic district include Main, Adams, Everett, and Hamilton between Burgess and Clay. The district also extends south on Hillsdale Street (M-99) to include the High School. Contributing to the historic character of the district are 188 sites and structures retaining integrity adequate to reflect the early settlement and growth of the Village. Twenty-two structures, within the district were classified as non-contributing elements.

There may be state or local preservation laws property owners should be aware of before undertaking a project within a historic property. It is recommended the owner contact the State Historic Preservation Office before taking action with a listed property. Benefits of being listed in the National Register may include federal tax credits and potential grants. The Village should consider working with the local historical society, which seeks to preserve and protect the history of Homer, to further research the status and future intent of its historic properties.

## Government Facilities Within Homer

### PUBLIC SAFETY

The Village of Homer is served by the Calhoun County Sheriff's Department. They have an office at 130 East Main Street in Homer. There are 4 sheriff's deputies that utilize this office and patrol Homer.

The Homer Area Fire Authority is adjacent to Village Hall at 130 E. Main Street. Homer's Fire Department also serves Homer Township and portions of Clarendon and Eckford Townships. The fire department consists of 25-28 part-paid and volunteer firemen.



### LIBRARY

The Homer Public Library is located at 141 W. Main Street near the circle. The library stocks over 28,000 items including books, magazines, audio books, and DVD's. The library also offers community rooms for reservation as needed, as well as copying and faxing services.

### FARMERS MARKET

The Farmer's Market is located on the corner of M-60 and Sophia at Water Tower Park. The market operates on Saturday mornings and sells local farmed and made goods. The seasonal items range from blueberries, apples, fresh eggs to flowers and handmade crafts.

### FIRE MUSEUM

Homer's Fire Station is also home of the Fire Museum established in 1984. It houses a historical display of fire fighting equipment including a horse-drawn steam pumper, leather water buckets and an iron-lined wooden pitcher pump.

# EXISTING USES

## Homer Schools

### HOMER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Homer Community Schools is a K-12 facility located in Homer on approximately 17 acres of land and include the Lillian Fletcher Elementary School and the new Homer Middle and High School complex. The current student population is 1,093 students.

Improvements to the school include renovations to the elementary and new building structure in 2004. The High School and Middle School received a new building in January of 2013. Homer schools take great pride in their sports programs. They participate in the Big-8 Athletic conference and their sports programs include over 300 students.



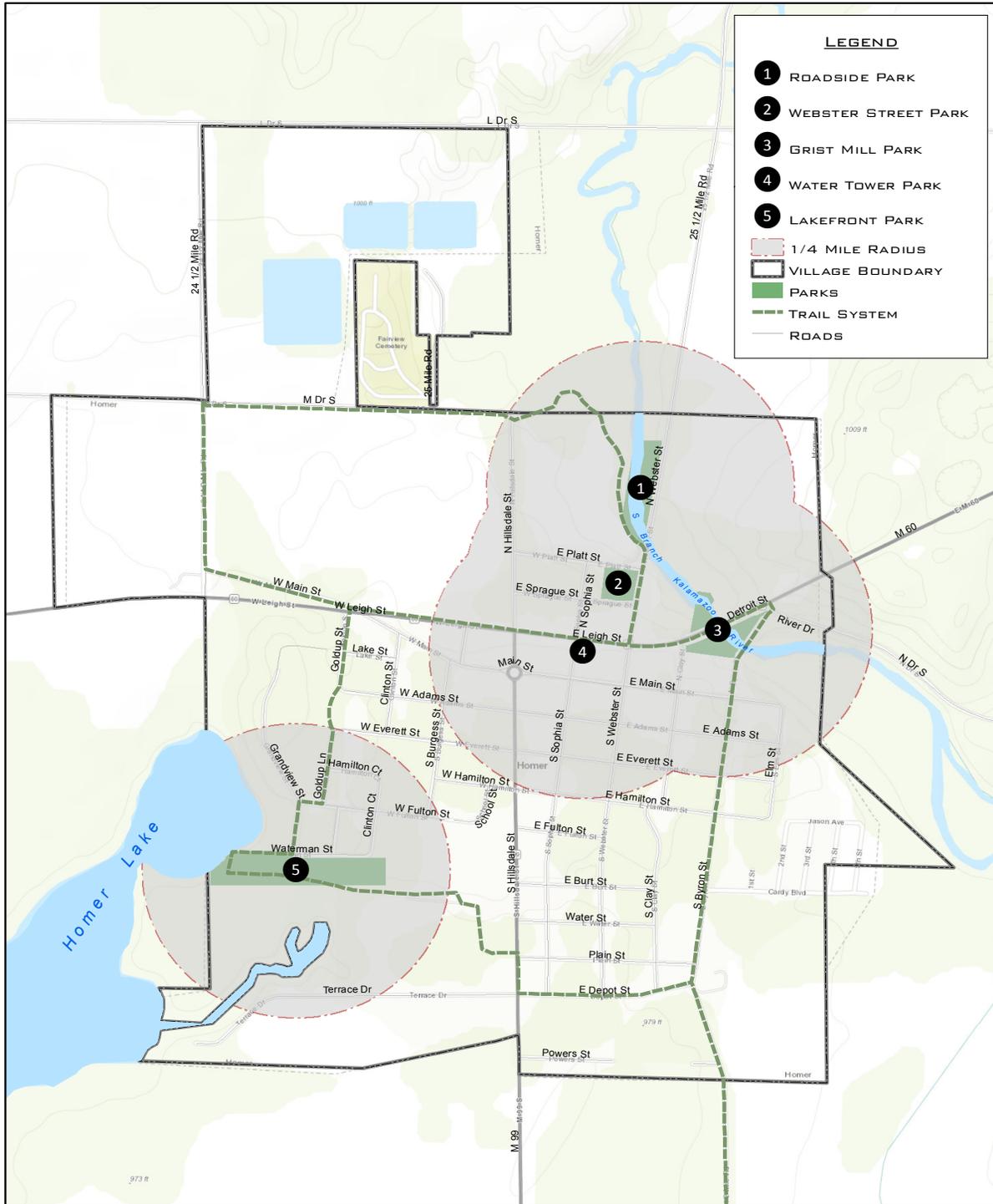
## Transportation & Road Network

Two state trunk lines pass through the Village of Homer. One, M-60 or Leigh Street, runs east and west. The other, M-99 or Hillsdale Street, runs north and south. M-60 runs from Jackson to Cass County. M-99 runs south to the Ohio border and extends north to Lansing.

Major streets in the Village include Leigh, Hillsdale, Main, Elm, Byron, Hamilton, Depot, Burgess, School, Platt, and the section of Clay south of Hamilton. All other roads in Homer are classified as local streets.

The Michigan Department of transportation owns M-60 and M-99. As a result, these roads are not the Village's responsibility.

# Village Walkability Map



# EXISTING USES

## Gateways

Gateways are an important part of any community because they often give travelers their first impression of the areas they are entering. The character, development patterns, relationship to the surrounding neighborhood, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, and distinct architecture all influence the experience of entering a community.

Homer has three main gateways:

1. East bound on M-60 coming from I-69 in Tekonsha.
2. West bound on M-60 coming from Jackson
3. North bound on M-99 coming from Litchfield.

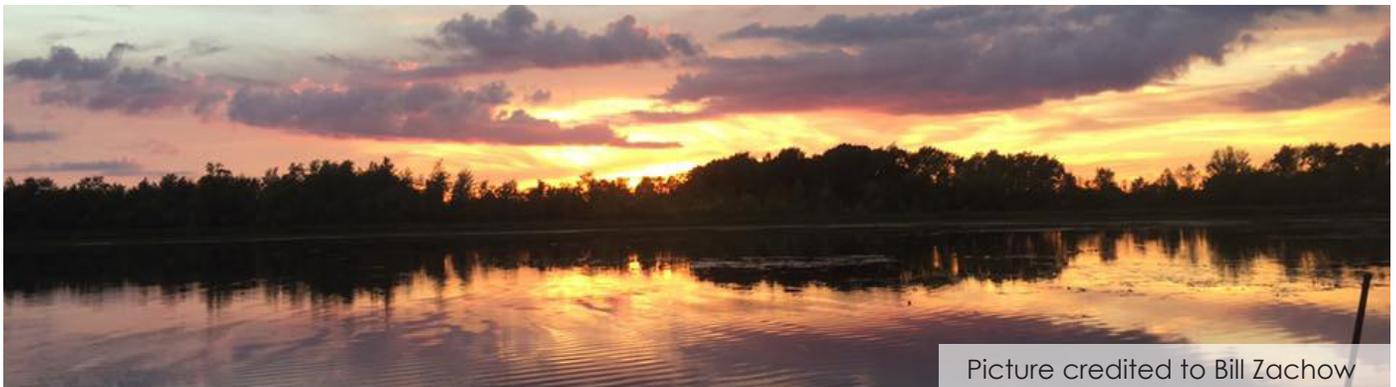
Distinct signage located at the entrance of the Village on all three corridors would serve the Village well. Signage would allow travelers to see that a Village exists one block parallel to the M-60 and allow travelers on M-99 to know when they have arrived. The Village currently has corridor signage and realizes this is an important part of placemaking for their community.

## Natural Features of Homer

The Village of Homer and its surrounding area have been shaped by glacial activity. The impressive and pleasing landscape provides significant water features, woodlands, slopes and ridge lines. Woodlands are one of this areas most valuable natural resources. They provide ground cover which aids in maintaining water table and discouraging erosion. The woodlands support a wide variety of wildlife ranging from waterfowl and water-oriented mammals, to large and small upland species.

Homer is in two watersheds. The north and east sections of the Village are drained by the South Branch of the Kalamazoo River. The southwest area drains to Homer Lake, then through a short tributary to the St. Joseph River. Homer lake is the major water feature for the area. It is 240 acres in size and a two lobed lake connected by a narrow-necked opening.

The south branch of the Kalamazoo River is also a valuable surface water feature in Homer. A canoe launch is maintained by the County at the M-60 crossing of the river. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has a public access site on Homer Lake at the Village Park site.



Picture credited to Bill Zachow

Wightman

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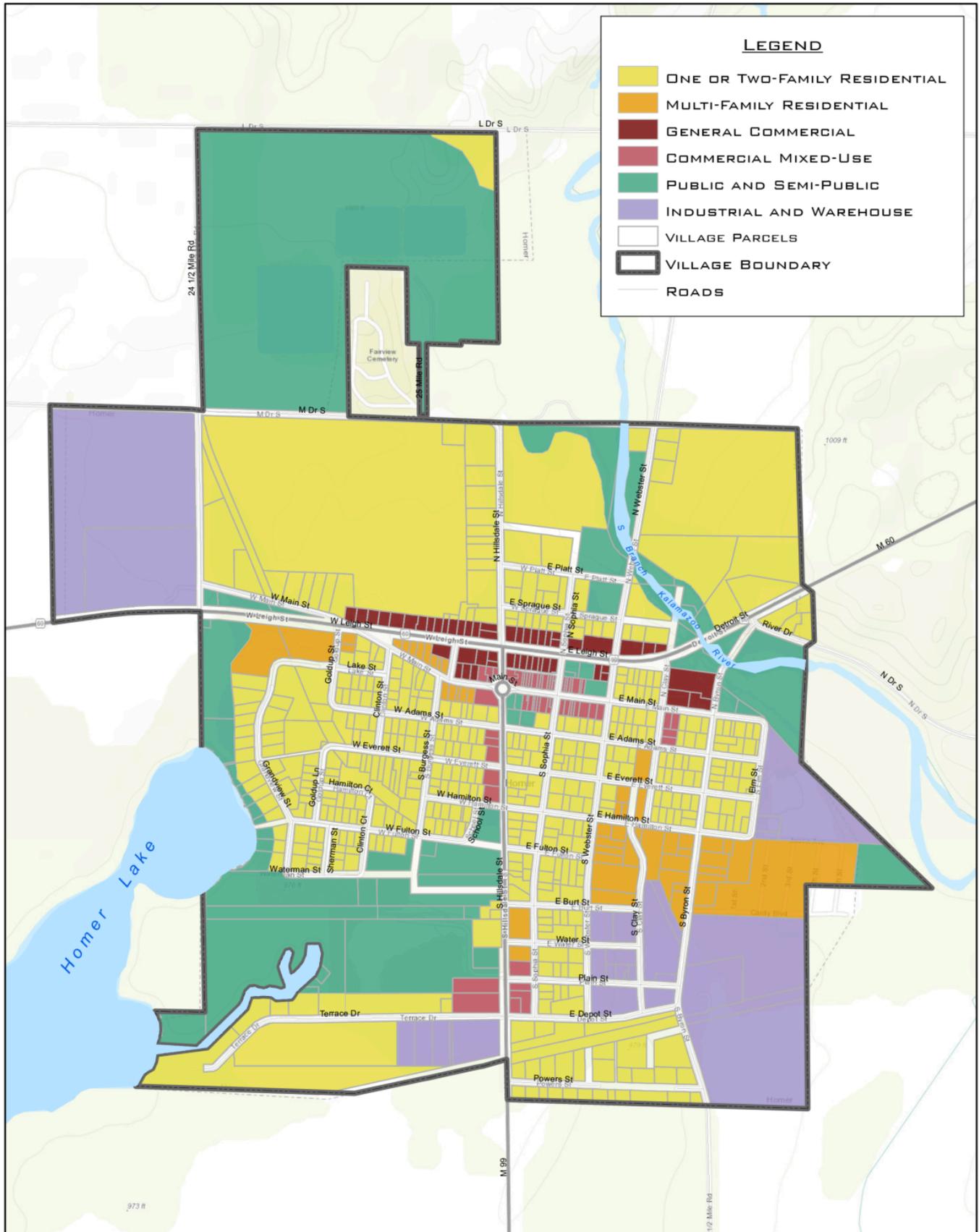
# FUTURE LAND USE MAP

## Purpose

The Future Land Use Plan map shows Homer's community vision for land use arrangement. The map identifies general locations for various land uses envisioned by the community during the 2018 Master Plan process. The Future Land Use Plan map, along with the entire Master Plan, is a guide for local decisions regarding land use. The boundaries reflected on the map are not intended to indicate size, shape or dimension. In addition, the recommendations do not necessarily imply that the rezoning is imminent. Rather, the recommendations set a long-range planning goal.

## FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS

-  **One or Two-Family Residential** Single and two-family dwellings with densities up to 10 dwellings per acre.
-  **Multi-Family Residential** Land that is close to amenities and appropriate for a variety of multi-family structures up to 12-14 units per acre.
-  **General Commercial** Serves primarily automobile-oriented retail sales, service uses, and restaurants.
-  **Commercial Mixed-Use** Reserved for uses that are intended to increase walkability to amenities and incorporate residential uses into commercial properties.
-  **Public and Semi-Public** Including village-owned property, schools, parks and other places that offer public gathering spaces.
-  **Industrial and Warehouse** Includes all production-related and warehouse facilities, along with industrial offices, and accessory uses including outdoor storage.



# DOWNTOWN PLAN

The Village of Homer has a unique asset in its classic downtown. In small Villages like Homer, the downtown serves as the place to meet up with neighbors, have a meal and shop locally, and take care of any business necessary—all within a walkable distance. Preserving the walkability of downtown Homer will be essential and will demand that sidewalk installation and repair, especially in the downtown, be budgeted annually. A vibrant downtown could be described as a walkable place to work, live, and play. Keeping those goals in mind, all downtowns should go through planning and revitalization stages to keep buildings healthy and to garner new interest in activities in the Village's core area. Important features in downtowns that bring residents and visitors alike include parks, entertainment options, and restaurants. Actively marketing Homer's downtown to businesses that will bring new and exciting businesses is an essential activity.



Affordable Apartments in Marshall



Splash Pad in Downtown Hastings

Homer is fortunate to have no immediate needs for infill buildings in the downtown area. As such, the plan for the downtown won't involve new construction of buildings as much as it will include a growth plan for the available space that is in the downtown now.

- MEDC/MSHDA contacts regarding available 2nd and 3rd floor space in the downtown area for Rental Rehabilitation Grant money. There are many advantages to having resident's downtown who actively support retail and service industry businesses located downtown as well. Also, as downtown buildings age, the need to rehabilitate them becomes more and more necessary. Utilizing the Rental Rehabilitation grants allow funds to bring the entire building up to current code and drastically reduce the possibility of fire or blight destroying classic downtown areas.
- Active marketing of available downtown space. The Village has several options to fill downtown store fronts from purchasing the building and issuing public requests for proposals to working with current owners to participate in grants that allow for creation of residential units, facade upgrades, etc.
- Creating options downtown for public entertainment. Splash pads, Village sponsored outdoor movies, sidewalk sales, and festivals all add to the allure of a classic downtown. Other amenities that draw people into the downtown include the creation of small parks and the installation of seating, especially under the shade of the downtown trees.

## Homer Downtown Development District (DDA)

Homer's downtown is the core of the Village. While keeping with the current characteristics, it is necessary to have a strategic plan for the buildings, uses and most importantly the people, who will occupy the downtown area. Utilizing this core area for Village events and to celebrate holidays, it is essential that visitors and residents feel "at home" in the DDA district. The Village should first consider what shoppers may need while they are downtown. Essential is a public restroom facility. When a restroom is available, shoppers are likely to stay downtown longer. Also, adding different types of restaurants, coffee houses, and unique stores to the downtown bring new visitors into town. The draw to unique stores and restaurants supports all businesses in the downtown.



\*To see specific downtown implementation strategies, please see the Implementation chapter of this Master Plan.

# NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

In the past, neighborhoods were built to serve homeowners with vehicles. Amenities within walking or biking distance were not the standards. Rather, uses in the town were divided into districts and separated geographically. Today, planners are trying to remedy that early thought processes by encouraging mixed-uses in neighborhood districts. For instance, a building or several buildings in a neighborhood may consist of upper floor living spaces and retail, dining or service needs on the ground floor. Establishments such as these are intended to serve the people that live within walking distance.

Quality design can build value in a neighborhood through increasing homeownership rates, building stronger neighborhood identities, and encouraging social interaction between residents. Homeowners are more likely to maintain their homes in good condition. When neighborhoods are connected to the town's amenities, especially amenities within walking distance, the result is that all residents receive equal access to businesses and the businesses have a more diverse clientele. Also, residents are less likely to leave town when they can easily access services and businesses within a walkable distance.

## THE 8 ELEMENTS TO A GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD:

- 1. There are stores and restaurants within an easy 5-10 minute walk.**
- 2. The streets are safe and friendly; walking down the neighborhood streets feels pleasant and open.**
- 3. There are many choices to move around within the neighborhood whether its on foot, on a bike, or in a car.**
- 4. The neighborhood has a variety of housing types from single-family ranch homes, to historic duplexes and flats.**
- 5. There are places for people to meet, talk and be neighborly in public gathering places.**
- 6. The neighborhood is served by a variety of public services including parks, schools, libraries and other local services.**
- 7. There is a "character" to the neighborhood; when you enter it, you know where you are by the way it looks.**
- 8. The neighborhood is a refuge, but also an extension of the larger community; it "fits".**

There are many wonderful qualities to Homer's neighborhoods that should be preserved and protected. Among those positive qualities are:

- Affordable, accessible homes
- Neighborhoods are primarily walkable with few exceptions
- Historic homes are prevalent
- Neighborhoods have access to natural assets like Homer Lake
- The Village is family-oriented and multi-generational
- Residents are student-focused with an engaged school system

## PROJECTS IN HOMER NEIGHBORHOODS

1. **Sidewalks** - A sidewalk inventory within neighborhoods should be completed. This inventory will reveal where sidewalks need to be installed and where sidewalks should be replaced. Sidewalks should lead residents to amenities offered within the Village.
2. **Mixed Use Districts** - Consider making it permissible for uses other than residential to be built within neighborhoods. The general "look" of these mixed-uses should blend in with the general aesthetics of the neighborhood and should contain a mix of residential and business.
3. **Facade Improvements and Home Upgrades** - Collect resource information like grants or locally donated help and distribute to homeowners that may need assistance with home improvements.
4. **Increase housing diversity** - Increase the amount of homes priced in the \$150,000-\$200,000 range.
5. **Improve crossings** - Inventory all intersections through neighborhoods and ensure that each intersection consists of accessible crossings.



# GRIST MILL PARK PLAN

On the former historic Grist Mill site, built in 1837, the Homer community enjoyed a multitude of prior uses from community meeting spaces, to a dinner theater and a destination for neighboring communities. When the Grist Mill burned down in the second fire of its lifespan in May of 2010, the site was not rebuilt. The community of Homer eventually turned this area into a beautiful park and sitting area. While the park has served as a welcome addition to the Village, there is room and opportunity for further development.

As a highly visible site, the Grist Mill Park serves as an opportunity yet to be fully realized by the Homer community. The proposed template of development retains the current scenic park area while developing the rear of the site into any combination of uses including residential, business and boutique stores, and shared parking. The site should be developed in the spirit of the historical aspects of the former Grist Mill, maintaining its rustic-feel, while incorporating sustainable building practices and storm water retention on-site.

The conceptual site plan, shown on the facing, illustrates one potential development scenario and describes use opportunities and objectives for consideration. It should be noted the site plan is for visioning and conversation purposes only.





Note: Concept for visioning purposes only

**1 Mixed-Use Development Opportunities**

- High-quality apartment or condominium housing
- Destination dining and retail
- Boutique hotel
- Provide active and permeable ground floor
- Consider 1-3 story building(s)
- Consider smaller, clustered buildings

**2 Pedestrian & Vehicular Connectivity**

- Architectural and landscape design to create an attractive pedestrian environment
- Shared-use parking between developments
- Inter-connectivity with existing park, river, and recreational trails

**3 Sustainability/ History**

- Celebrate and incorporate historical mill race in a meaningful way
- Preserve and enhance existing neighborhood development context
- Extend landscape to transition and buffer development areas

# GATEWAYS & WAYFINDING

Due to the fact that much of the Village of Homer lies south of M-60, travelers along M-60 may be unaware that an intriguing downtown area lies just one block south while they are traveling. Therefore, creating a different atmosphere when entering Homer is important. Certainly, signage is the number one way to let travelers know what is just around the corner. Larger road-side signage at Grist Mill Park would introduce the west bound traveler to the Village. For eastbound travelers, there is a small MDOT "business district sign" as well as the Homer Village sign on the corner of M-60 and W. Main. A large Village sign with landscaping on the corner of Hillsdale Street and M-60 would allow travelers to turn in and be led right into downtown.



When signs throughout the Village are coordinated, it adds to a sense of identity and placemaking. Color-coordinated signs, of different sizes, in different locations throughout Homer would be a branding exercise worth considering.



## Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a term used to describe a transportation network that includes accommodation for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and other legal users. Complete Streets provide transportation choices, allowing people to move about their communities safely and easily. As the community's population ages, Complete Streets will become more essential to preserve the mobility of residents.

Complete Streets can include the following elements:

- Sidewalks for pedestrians to link together neighborhoods, schools and other destinations.
- Bicycle lanes as dedicated travel lanes on streets for experienced bicycle riders.
- Off-street shared use paths for pedestrians, cyclists and others who may be less comfortable with riding in the streets or for use where dedicated bike lanes are impractical.
- Protective streetscape to provide shade from sun as well as minor protection from rain. Street lights contribute to a sense of safety and security.
- Traffic signals with pedestrian signal heads as well as audible crossing signals for visually impaired pedestrians to safely cross major roadways. Pedestrian-only signals work well when vehicular traffic conditions are such that traffic only need stop when pedestrians are present.
- Bump-outs and other traffic calming devices to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, slow vehicular traffic, and alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians.
- Crosswalks, pedestrian pavement markings, and crosswalk signals to make it safer for children to walk to school, along with other strategies to help slow motorized traffic.
- Wayfinding signage to make it easier for people on foot or on bicycles to understand where they are and where they are going. Wayfinding signs help identify a place and important destinations and civic spaces.
- Traffic signals to extend walk time for pedestrians, allowing pedestrians the opportunity to walk across major roadways.

Not all complete streets elements are necessary or appropriate on all streets. While it is important to optimize the street network throughout the city, it is also important to do so within the context of the street types and adjacent land uses.

In order to plan and implement complete streets elements, Homer should adopt a non-motorized plan to guide incremental implementation of complete streets principles. Adoption of a policy and plan will enable the Village to seek additional grant opportunities for implementation of transportation system enhancements.

# ZONING PLAN

The Zoning Plan table outlines an approach to guide zoning decisions under the Master Plan. It identifies zoning districts that are compatible with each of the future land use designations. It also presents zoning districts that may be compatible and suggests some guidance for use by the Planning Commission, the Village Council and the public.

These standards are meant as a point of beginning in a rezoning decision. They should not be regarded as the only factors to be considered. Each rezoning case should be considered on a case-by-case basis; extenuating circumstances could apply to any rezoning request. Deciding bodies should always pay attention to existing and potential land use conflicts and to changing conditions that could impact a rezoning decision. Typically, a rezoning request must be considered using the following standards:

- 1. Consistency with the Master Plan and Future Land Use Plan.** As indicated, the following Zoning Plan will be helpful in this regard, but needs to be applied in the context of this entire plan, not in isolation.
- 2. Reasonable use for the property as currently zoned.** Property owners are entitled to expect that a reasonable use may be found for their property but it is not necessarily reasonable to expect any use desired if it conflicts with broader public objectives.
- 3. Consideration for whether there are other, more appropriate locations in the Village for the proposed zoning.** This involves an analysis of the existing land uses, the Zoning Ordinance and the Future Land Use Plan to evaluate whether the community has already provided appropriately for a particular class of uses.
- 4. Potential detrimental effects of a proposed change in zoning on adjoining and surrounding land uses.** The rezoning will not cause significant adverse impacts to adjacent properties, the neighborhood or the Village and will not create a nuisance or materially impair public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare.

## Zoning Plan Table

Future Land Use Category	Zoning Ordinance Districts
<b>One &amp; Two Family Residential</b>	
Single and duplex, townhouses	R2 and R4
<i>Up to 10 units/acre</i>	
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>	
Apartments, Flats, Lofts	R3 and MHP
<i>12-14 units/acre</i>	
<b>General Commercial</b>	
Retail, service with on-site parking	CS and HS
<b>Public &amp; Semi-Public</b>	
Village-owned and public property, open space	OAC, B
<b>Industrial &amp; Warehouse</b>	
Industrial, packaging, warehousing, storage	LI and HI

# GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

## Goal 1: Energize and activate downtown Homer.

### Objective 1A: \*Pursue affordable and market rate apartments in the upper stories of downtown buildings.

Strategy 1: The Village hosts a meeting between downtown building owners, Village representatives, and MEDC's CAT Team representatives, to discuss opportunities including the rental rehabilitation program.

Strategy 2: Keep up-to-date inventory of available and occupied spaces in downtown buildings and assist building owners in marketing and attracting tenants.

Strategy 3: Ensure the Village Zoning Ordinance supports mixed-use development opportunities in downtown Homer.

**Champions: Village Manager, building owners, CAT team representative**

**Timeline: Begin Spring 2019 with key downtown buildings and continue.**

### Objective 1B: Attract more visitors and residents to downtown Homer.

Strategy 1: Host at least one community event in downtown Homer per season.

Strategy 2: Coordinate store hours with all downtown business owners and work together to create events like sidewalk sales and shopping nights.

**Champions: DDA, business owners**

**Timeline: Begin Spring 2019, continue seasonally**

### Objective 1C: Actively plan to keep downtown Homer attractive.

Strategy 1: Create and maintain a Village facade-improvement program funded through the DDA.

Strategy 2: Plan and save money for downtown improvements as needed like sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and seasonal plantings.

Strategy 3: Consider creating outdoor spaces along main street downtown.

**Champions: DDA, Village Manager, Volunteers**

**Timeline: Begin Fall 2019, sidewalks are a rolling project**

### Objective 1D: Offer business training resources to small business owners in Homer.

Strategy 1: Gather resources and consider collaborating with other communities to offer training for small business owners.

**Champions: Village Manager, Municipal Managers in region, County, Colleges**

**Timeline: Begin Spring 2019 communicating needs to other municipalities and County**

*\*Potential Funding sources and partners include: Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Main Street Program, and crowd-funding opportunities like Public Spaces Community Places.*

## Goal 2: Revitalize aging housing stock in Village neighborhoods.

**Objective 2A: Improve the safety and aesthetics in neighborhoods by taking proactive measures and bringing resources to residents.**

Strategy 1: Build an inventory list of homes needing vital repairs.

Strategy 2: Educate and inform residents about state programs that may help them fund repairs on their homes. Example: Michigan Section 504 Home Repair Program, Section 502 Direct Loan Program.

Strategy 3: Compile a list of local resources for those residents in need of help. Lists may include scouting groups, teenagers needing community service hours, churches and youth groups, etc.

**Champions: Volunteers, interns, consultants, CAT Team representative**

**Timeline: Begin Summer 2019 with building inventory and gathering resources**

## Goal 3: Create the “Homer Brand.”

**Objective 3A: Engage in placemaking activities to increase the recognition of those things that are specifically Homer.**

Strategy 1: Create a placemaking/design committee in the Village that will make recommendations to Village Council on placemaking opportunities.

Strategy 2: Decide on the Homer logo, colors, and design and place matching Homer signs at the entryway of each major gateway.

Strategy 3: Consider various matching wayfinding signage to each of Homer's major destinations like the downtown, the school, and the lake.

**Champions: Volunteers, DDA, Placemaking/Design Committee**

**Timeline: Begin by DDA forming Design Committee Summer 2019**

## Goal 4: Prioritize and encourage the use of non-motorized amenities.

**Objective 4A: Encourage residents to walk, bike and non-auto methods of transportation.**

Strategy 1: Update the Parks, Recreation and Trailways Plan to allow for the Village to apply for MDNR and Passport Grants to improve trails and recreation facilities.

Strategy 2: Install bike racks and require new commercial/industrial developments to do the same.

Strategy 3: Meet with local trail groups to assist with connecting Homer to other nearby trails.

Strategy 4: Meet with the local chapter of the North Country Trail to investigate making Homer an “NCT Trail Town”.

**Champions: Village Manager, Village Council, Trail committees, Volunteers**

**Timeline: Begin in Winter 2019 by sending RFP for Parks, Recreation and Trail Plan Update.**

# GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

## Goal 5: Encourage mixed-use buildings in the Village.

**Objective 5A: Recognize as a community that mixed-use buildings allow for value and promote connectivity.**

Strategy 1: Review the Zoning Ordinance uses in each district. Consider adding mixed-use allowances for downtown, commercial corridors and in strategic neighborhood locations.

Strategy 2: Consider the use of form-based code in districts where development is likely to occur.

Strategy 3: Discuss incentives for developing mixed-use buildings in strategic neighborhood locations with commercial uses on the ground floor like grocery-related retail.

**Champions: Planning Commission, Village Council, Village Manager**

**Timeline: Begin Spring 2019 researching nearby form-based code ordinances**

## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a list of possible funding sources the Village could pursue to fund implementation of Master Plan projects. It is not a complete list and while information was deemed accurate at the time, the long-term availability of these funding sources cannot be guaranteed. As needed, the Village should revise, update, and expand this list of funding sources. While it is likely that many projects and improvements could be implemented through typical administrative or policy decisions and funded through conventional municipal programs, others may require special technical and/or financial assistance.

### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF):

TIF funds utilize future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for improvements and incentivize further reinvestment. As Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties increase, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is reinvested in the area. Funds can typically be used for infrastructure public improvements, land acquisition, and in offsetting the costs of development. The typical life of a TIF district in the State of Michigan is 10 years and it can be extended if approved by the county and state.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG):

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) on behalf of the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF) administers the CDBG program. CDBG is a federal grant program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Funds can be used by municipalities to help private businesses locate or expand in their community. They can also be used for infrastructure and enhance sense of place in low and moderate-income communities. CDBG funds require matching funds by the municipality or the benefiting business. The Village can also use CDBG funds to support the development and rehabilitation of quality rental housing in Homer.

### BROWNFIELD TAX INCOME

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers the Brownfield Tax Incentive to assist clean-up of former industrial or commercial areas that were abandoned due to environmental contamination concerns. Developers building new structures on these properties may qualify to receive funds in return for cleaning up and developing the sites.

### SRF/DWRF/USDA STATE REVOLVING FUND/DRINKING WATER REVOLVING FUND/UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

Funding available for water and sewer projects.

**Thank you to the businesses, staff,  
and residents of Homer.**

