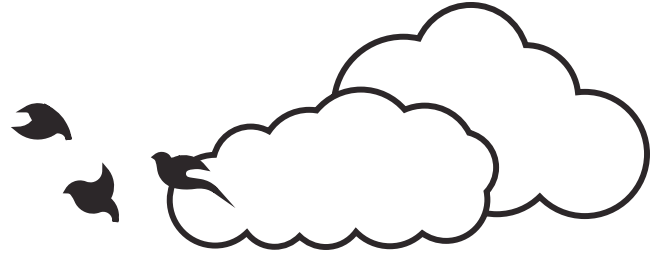


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## INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

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Welcome to the Holland Charter Township Comprehensive Plan - A Unified Vision 2020. With just under 40,000 residents spread over almost 30 square miles, the Township is home to a wide variety of people, businesses, ecosystems, and land development typologies. The purpose of this Plan is to provide a comprehensive vision for the Township's future, through approximately the year 2040, bringing together the diverse elements of the community into a truly unified vision.



The Unified Vision Plan begins with the Township's broad goals and action plan, followed by detailed land use and transportation planning, and then the supporting data and outreach that lead to the plan recommendations. The Plan also includes three sub-area plans:

- US-31 Corridor
- Federal District
- North River/Beechwood

The sub-area plans provide an additional level of detail, befitting three unique portions of the Township likely to see significant Investment and change over the next twenty years.

The Unified Vision Plan envisions a prosperous and sustainable Holland Charter Township, supporting growth where appropriate, preservation where desired, and high quality of life across the board.

# Comprehensive Plan Highlights

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The Holland Charter Township Comprehensive Plan—A Unified Vision 2020, is designed to be a pragmatic, comprehensive, and action-oriented Plan to guide policy and placemaking in the Township for the next 20 years.

The recommendations and implementation measures provided in this plan derive from a robust public engagement process, with widespread community outreach efforts both online and in-person, a Plan Steering Committee comprised of Planning Commissioners and Township staff, community stakeholder meetings with field professionals from various industry sectors, and more.

Some of the important elements and overarching goals of this Plan include:

- Agricultural preservation in appropriate areas, and emphasis on maintaining the delicate balance between rural land and development in the Township. See pages 13, 30, 39, and 46 for additional information.
- Targeted future development and land use patterns to minimize sprawl and preserve existing Township amenities such as stable neighborhoods and outdoor recreation. See pages 37-39, 42-61, and 82-166 for more information.
- Developing a framework for the implementation of all housing types in strategic areas to support a future housing stock of varying styles and densities to provide more housing options for people of all incomes and ages. See pages 14, 36, 48, and 82-166 for additional information.
- Identification of priority sites and suburban in-fill redevelopment opportunities to explore themes reflecting New Urbanism ideals such as walkable neighborhood nodes, ample and active transportation options, human-scale development, and more. See pages 31-34, and 82-166 for additional information.
- Reimagination of several of the Township's most unique areas, such as the Federal District, US-31 Corridor, and the North River/Beechwood District, into thriving places where people can live, work, and play. See pages 22-34, 27-29, 56-57, and 82-166 for additional information.
- Enhanced street network connectivity, pedestrian corridors, greenways, and parks. See pages 18, 23-26, 38, and 70-77 for additional information.
- Various Zoning Ordinance updates and amendments, as well as a detailed action-oriented Implementation Table to ensure the Township can seamlessly transition toward the land use recommendations provided by this Plan. See pages 22 and 35 for more information.

Holland Charter Township officials, staff, and its partners are committed to utilizing this Plan as a framework and reference for all future decisions to ensure the applicability, longevity, and preservation of the Township.

# Spatial Framework

The Spatial Framework for Holland Charter Township provides a big picture view of the municipality's underlying spatial structure. Understanding the organizational patterns, nodes of activity, and important linkages is helpful in the following ways:

- Articulating broad, long-term development directions;
- Identifying areas for placemaking or strengthening a sense of place;
- Providing a lens for prioritizing implementation measures in the Action-Oriented Framework; and
- Seeing how the whole, in other words the system, is greater than the sum of its parts.

## Leveraging the Spatial Framework for Placemaking

A commonly heard public feedback is the Township's lack of an identity or a sense of place. Unlike surrounding municipalities where a strong sense of spatial belonging is defined by community gathering spaces like a downtown, parks, or neighborhoods, the Township—at first blush—appears to reflect typical patterns of suburban development.

A close study of the Township revealed opportunities for bringing coherence and clarity. These opportunities eventually became the cornerstones of the Spatial Framework:

1. Create distinctive gateways to the Township.
2. Enhance traffic safety and sense of arrival at key identity intersections.
3. Encourage mixed use (re)developments in the community nodes / districts / neighborhoods such that each node has an identifiable character (sense of place).
4. Create a connected open space system of parks, nature reserves, water bodies, parkways, and greenways, whether through the extension of the Macatawa Greenway or tree-lined arteries.



## GATEWAYS

Gateways define the edge and entryways into a municipality and create a theme or signature motif to welcome travelers. More importantly, gateways convey a sense of identity for the community and a sense of arrival to the public.

Gateways can be provided in different forms and can vary at each entry point. Treatments include:

- Roundabouts
- Large monuments or signage
- Community art
- Landscaping, plantings, structures
- Lighting

The Township's Zoning Ordinance Gateway Overlay District has identified locations for gateways and defined the standards for approval. The gateways featured in the Spatial Framework are the primary entrypoints; these are distinct from Township Limits signs. Public and community investment in the appropriate signage and landmarks at these locations will be a fundamental first step in articulating the identity of the Township.

## IDENTITY INTERSECTIONS

Like gateways, identity intersections serve to contribute to the neighborhood character as well as to help calm traffic. These are secondary points of arrival within the Township, demarcating the transition from one district to another. Similar treatments apply, albeit in smaller or more modest forms.

## COMMUNITY NODES / DISTRICTS / NEIGHBORHOODS

Analysis of the adjacencies between residential areas, schools / educational institutions, parks, other civic buildings, and neighborhood commercial areas showed several existing and future community nodes. Overlaid with the three sub-areas—the US-31 Corridor, the Federal District, and the Beechwood / North River Ave District—this yielded a system of larger centers of activity and smaller neighborhood clusters.

Collectively, these community nodes / districts / neighborhoods suggest areas where

- existing patterns of development and the local history could help to strengthen a sense of place (e.g. naming Rose Park, Creekside, Pine Creek);
- future development could lend themselves to more intentional placemaking and mixed use programming (e.g. Federal Square, Beechwood Vista, Westshore Community Hub, Adams Street).

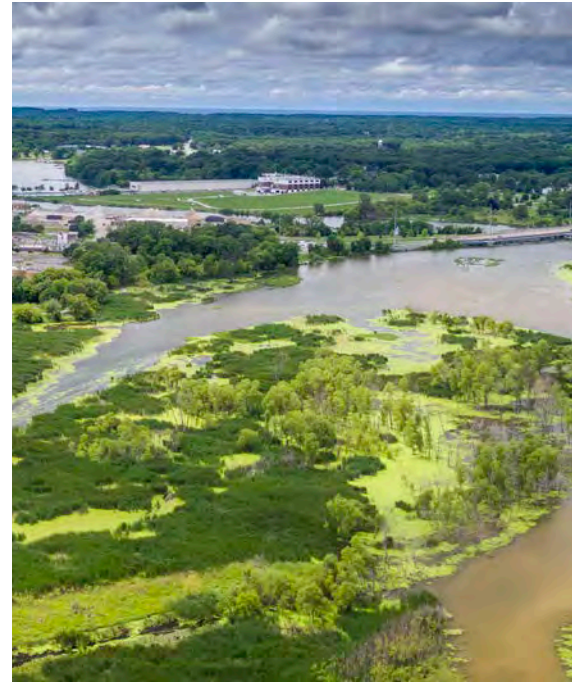
Placemaking in these areas require strong public-private partnerships, including civic participation, thoughtful (re) development efforts by private entities, and some degree of public funding or tax relief to incentivize investment.

## CONNECTED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The Township is bounded by the ecologically-rich Macatawa River system to the south and agricultural lands to the north. Four large parks anchor each of the Township's corners – Dunton Park, Quincy Park, Helder Park, and the Hawthorn Pond Natural Area. Together with the existing Macatawa Greenway and key vehicular corridors linking them, it became apparent that a connected open space system would be advantageous.

Benefits include and are not limited to:

- **Providing organizational coherence**, where distinctive parks and open spaces can shape identity and support way-finding orientation. For instance, Dunton Park is strongly associated with the waterfront, Hawthorn Pond preserves the naturalistic character of the Michigan woodlands, while Quincy and Helder Parks are primarily for active recreational use. Green, tree-lined corridors connecting these destinations bring further unity.
- **Defining a form to assist in determining long-term growth patterns.** An Township-wide open space network operates at the same scale as other infrastructural systems, such as traffic and utilities. In Holland Charter Township, a green corridor or parkway along Quincy Street not only connects two major parks. It can also potentially serve as a definitive edge to future growth, protecting the farmlands to the north. Future parks and smaller scale neighborhood open space networks can also be more strategically located by building on this Township-wide system.
- **Increasing public access and greater park use.** Planned greenways with sidewalks and bike paths provide safe, direct routes to these destinations. Besides encouraging more frequent visits, the connected system of parks and trails support more efficient park use.





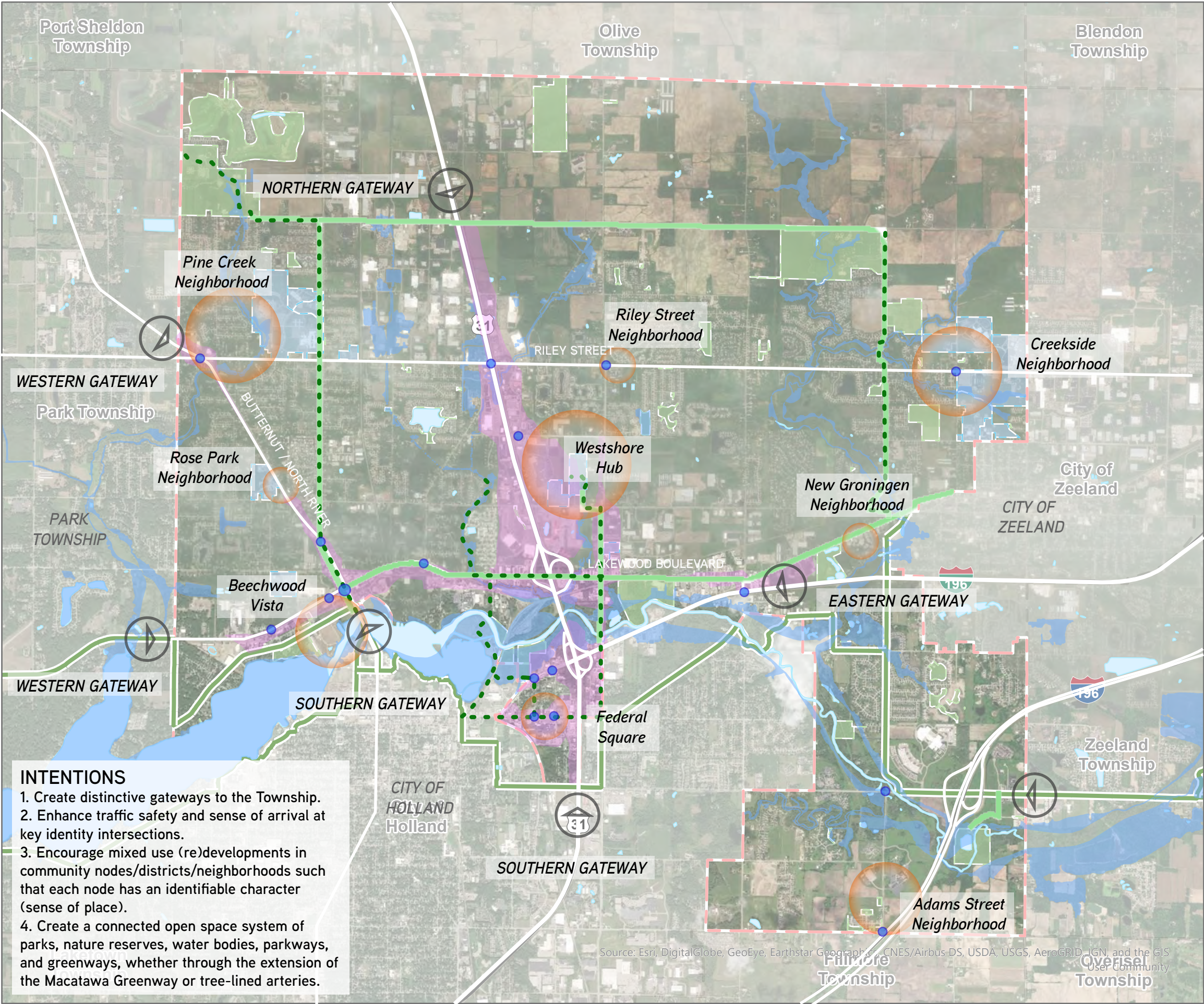


**The connected open space system could be composed of**

- Parks and recreation areas
- Public and private forests
- Cemeteries
- Waterbodies
- Watershed control facilities
- Groundwater recharge areas
- Farmlands
- Highways
- Rail corridors
- Township streets and roads
- Trails

An open space system is formed incrementally over time. It requires patience, capital, and, more importantly, coordination and participation by various independent groups working toward a shared goal. Larger portions of the network may be best established by federal, state, or county governments or through land conservation organizations. Local community parks, trails, and non-recreational natural resource areas are typically established by municipalities, including Townships. Schools, neighborhood associations, or local conservation groups and implement smaller scale projects such as construction or improvement of walking path links. Similarly, private property owners and businesses can contribute by managing trails, wildlife corridors, office or industrial parks, or gardens that link to nearby facilities or open space areas.





# Spatial Framework

Charter Township of Holland, Ottawa County, MI

May 15, 2020

- Legend
- Schools and Public Offices
  - Parks, Cemeteries, & Open Space
  - Holland Charter Township Boundary
  - Other Municipal Boundaries
  - Bodies of Water
  - Macatawa Greenway
  - FEMA 100 yr. Floodplain
  - Primary Gateway
  - Community Node / District / Neighborhood
  - Potential Extension of the Macatawa Greenway
  - Commercial Zone
  - Potential Parkway System
  - Potential Identity Intersections / Traffic Calming



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Holland Charter Township 2020. McKenna 2020.





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