

Memorandum



Date: September 1, 2026

To: Buchanan Planning Commission

From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: **Master Plan – Review Revised Future Land Use Map, Objectives-Goals-Tasks and Next Steps**

Future Land Use Map

During the July 14th meeting, Marcy Hamilton from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission attended the meeting and reviewed the Future Land Use map with the Commission and changes were made. The purpose of the map is to envision the future land uses on property. This map does not change the adopted zoning map but helps to guide future development.

Staff have worked with Ms. Hamilton, and additional changes have been made for the Planning Commission to review and comment on. Attached is the draft revised map for review and discussion, below is summary of the changes:

- The Future Land Use categories have been updated to better reflect the current zoning map and the intent of the districts. Open Space has been expanded to include the city owned cemetery.
- The multiple-family and assisted living developments near Ryneerson and Carrol Street have been changed from Neighborhood Center (NC) to Residential as NC would allow for numerous commercial uses within the established residential neighborhood.
- The Industrial area south of River Street and north of McCoy Creek has been changed to Mixed Use.
- The Mixed Use area near Jordan Street and South Redbud Trail has been expanded to include the one residential parcel, thus making the entire block Mixed Use.
- The Industrial area located north of the railroad and west of Liberty Street has been expanded to the west to include two parcels owned by the industrial area and Indiana and Michigan Power
- The Downtown area has expanded along West Front Street to include the post office and the art center and along South Oak to include City owned parking lot and city center property in addition to the block bounded by Chicago, Roe, Days and Oak Streets which currently has a mix of residential, mixed-use, institutional/open space and downtown.
- The two parcels on the west side of South Oak between East Alexander and Smith Streets are shown as residential rather than industrial.

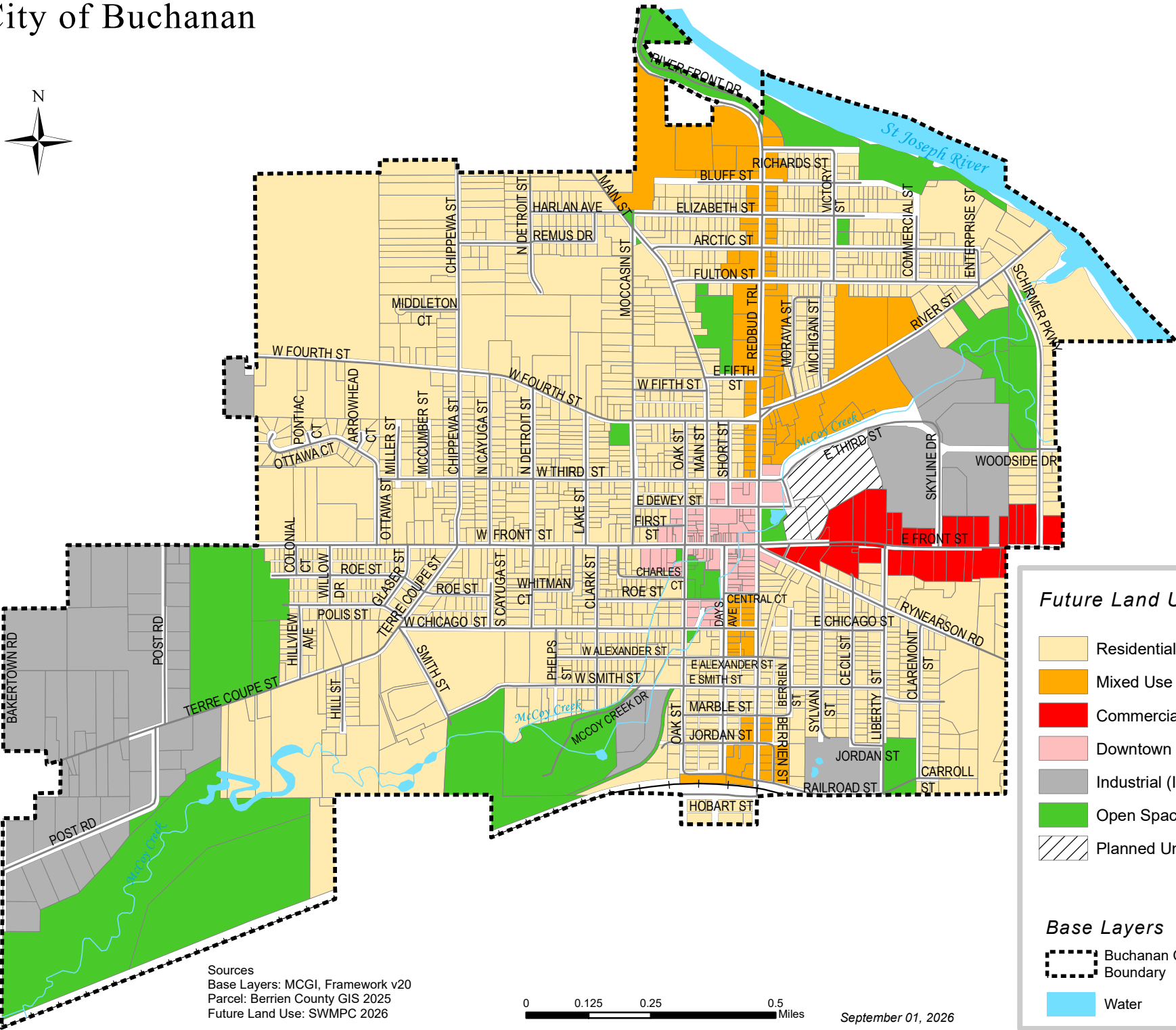
Objectives, Goals and Tasks

The Commission reviewed the initial draft during the August 11th meeting. Staff have incorporated the changes and included comments heard from Planning Commission members after the meeting and city staff. Attached is the updated document for review.

Next Steps

Review and discuss the draft documents. If complete, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission can continue to work on the text of the document for review at a future meeting.

City of Buchanan



Future Land Use

Residential (R)

Mixed Use (MU)

Commercial (C)

Downtown (D)

Industrial (I)

Open Space (OS)

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Base Layers

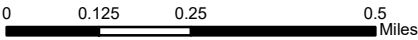
Buchanan City Boundary

Road

Water

Railroad

Sources
Base Layers: MCGI, Framework v20
Parcel: Berrien County GIS 2025
Future Land Use: SWMPC 2026



September 01, 2026

DRAFT 2 - OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND ACTIONS FOR MASTER PLAN (PC08112026 additions)

1. Strong Neighborhoods and Housing – increase housing options, diversity, and supply, support existing housing improvement program, housing incentives, vacant and underutilized buildings/properties, built environment, short-term rentals

#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
1.1.a	Diversity and Supply	Educate community regarding need for additional housing options. Prepare information for website and possible newsletters.	On-going		
1.1.b		Support new landlords and renters with “Welcome to Buchanan” resources.	Near		
1.1.c		Continue work on the UDC to improve and address concerns.	On-going		
1.1.d		Review building permits issued to determine if changes are needed to the zoning ordinance to help provide additional housing options.	On-going		
1.1.e		Study and discuss tiny house developments to determine if appropriate and recommend changes to zoning ordinance.	Short		
1.1.f		Monitor the short-term rental regulations and certificates issued and recommend changes asneeded.	On-going		
1.2.a	Housing Improvement	Investigate funding opportunities to help property owners improve dwellings.	On-going		
1.2.b		Work with other organizations and development community to create opportunities to improve the existing housing stock.	Short		
1.2.c		Develop an accessible housing renovations patter book.	Short		
1.2.d		Identify residential properties that need improvement.	On-going		
1.2.e		Investigate and develop resources for aging in place.	Short		
1.3.a	Housing Incentives	Investigate funding incentives, opportunities, and sources to help create low and moderate housing options in the community.	On-going		
1.3.b		Work with development community to educate the housing incentives available on a local and statewide basis.	On-going		
1.3.c		Promote the Buchanan Promise program.	On-going		
1.4.a	Vacant and Under-Utilized Buildings	Implement adopted ordinance requiring registration of vacant and under-utilized buildings.	On-going		
1.4.b		Work with property owners to reactivate buildings and properties.	On-going		

2. Vibrant Community –natural resources (wetlands, forested areas, streams, river), connecting trails, walkability, complete streets, architecture, historic districts, art, culture, education, non-profits, public events					
#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
2.1.a	Maintain and Enhance Natural Resources	Encourage the use of natural landscaping in community parks, around public facilities and on private land, where appropriate.	Long		
2.1.b		Encourage development along water ways while providing public access to the water.	On-going		
2.1.c		Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).	On-going		
2.2.a	Connect trails, improve walkability	Continue to promote the 50/50 sidewalk replacement program.	On-going		
2.2.b		Look for opportunities to expand existing trail systems within the community while eliminating any known gaps.	Long		
2.2.c		Establish regulations for sidewalk to be installed when vacant property is developed.	Short		
2.2.d		Pursue Trail Town designation	Short		
2.3.a	Architecture, heritage, historic character	Establish list of appropriate locations in need of placemaking activities.	Near		
2.3.b		Encourage activating alleys in commercial areas to be enjoyed by the community.	Short		
2.3.c		Pursue placemaking funding opportunities.	Short		
2.3.d		Investigate opportunities for façade grants or low interest loans for historic buildings.	Near		
2.3.e		Promote community events.	On-going		
2.3.f		Encourage private property owners with eligible historic buildings to pursue designation on the National Register.	On-going		
2.4.a	Gateways, parks and streets	Expand beautification efforts (entryway signage and landscaping) to enhance the appearance of the public places and gateways into the City.	Near		
2.4.b		Enhance streetscapes and public places to include pedestrian-friendly features such as trees, street furniture, bike racks, trash receptacles, and pedestrian scale lighting.	On-going		
2.4.c		Improve linkages between downtown and established trails.	Long		
2.4.d		Implement the goals and objectives identified within the BARB Master Plan.	On-going		
2.4.e		Update parks plans as required every 5-years.	Short		
2.4.f		Ensure all parks are accessible by non-motorized transportation and provide safe and convenient bike parking.	On-going		
2.4.g		Pursue grant funding to support identified park projects.	On-going		

3. Infrastructure, Public Assets, Utilities and Services – streets, alleys, sidewalks, trails, sewer, water, stormwater, city owned buildings, asset management, parks/recreation facilities and programming, canopy trees (Tree City USA), public parking, broadband, capital improvement planning, public transportation, waste disposal and recycling, brush/yard waste, snow removal

#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
3.1.a	Public Assets	Establish and maintain a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for large budget projects.	On-going		
3.1.b		Continue to evaluate the condition of local streets and utilities on an annual basis.	On-going		
3.1.c		Develop plans to implement sidewalk, trail extensions and corridor improvements leading to destination points and visual elements in the City.	Long		
3.1.d		Continue developing the City's geographic information system (GIS) to assist with management of community planning and the development of city assets.	On-going		
3.1.e		Create a plan for the ongoing maintenance of vegetation within and along rivers, creeks and other water bodies.	On-going		
3.1.f		Evaluate city owned buildings to determine existing and future needs.	Near		
3.1.g		Investigate and develop a community wide WIFI/broadband project.	Short		
3.2.a	Tree City USA	Create a comprehensive plan for the City's tree canopy that identifies a strategy to replace dead or diseased trees, prune trees when needed, manage the spread of tree diseases, and maintain or increase the city's overall tree canopy.	Short		
3.2.b		Support the ongoing street tree planting program and designation as a Tree City USA community.	On-going		
3.2.c		Identify a consistent funding source for tree planting, maintenance and watering.	Near		
3.3.a	Waste, Brush and Recycling	Provide efficient and accessible solid waste disposal options within the city.	Near		
3.3.b		Continue to host City-wide clean-up days annually.	On-going		
3.4.a	Parking and Transportation	Improve city owned parking lots and work to address needs of business owners for waste, recycling and grease removal.	Short		
3.4.b		Improve overnight parking opportunities for residents living downtown.	Short		
3.4.c		Promote the need for an Amtrak flag stop near Redbud Trail.	Long		
3.4.d		Investigate and develop opportunities for providing additional public transportation.	Long		
3.4.e		Connect with and educate elected and appointed officials the need for a flag stop.	On-going		
3.4.f		Pursue grants that will support the establishment of an Amtrak flag stop.	On-going		

4. Effective Government – responsive, transparency, communication, public participation, fair treatment, land use and zoning, code enforcement, attain/maintain Redevelopment Ready Certification and implement best practices, participate in regional bodies/efforts (NATS, economic development organizations, etc), cooperation with local governments and the County

#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
4.1.a	Responsive, transparent and clear communications.	Ensure the city's communication programs are accurate, maintained, and easily accessible for all community members including individuals with no internet access and those with disabilities.	On-going		
4.1.b		Provide clear, consistent written correspondence and information when necessary.	On-going		
4.1.c		Encourage the use of the City's website to disperse information, such as planning-related resources, news releases, agendas, meeting minutes, financial information, adopted regulations and plans and any forms.	On-going		
4.1.d		Communicate with property owners and tenants of the responsibilities and expectations of the city based on established rules and regulations.	On-going		
4.1.e		Communication with property owners and tenants should be done via printed materials and through online opportunities to reach as many as possible.	On-going		
4.1.f		Look for ways to streamline approval processes.	On-going		
4.1.g		Investigate other avenues for communication such as text alters or email blasts.	Near		
4.1.h		Develop work order/maintenance system for city assets.	Near		
4.2.a	Public Participation and Fair Treatment	Encourage public participation in local government, including voting, services on board and commissions and volunteerism.	On-going		
4.2.b		Work to obtain a diverse group of volunteers for appointment boards and commissions	On-going		
4.2.c		Provide different opportunities for community engagement while meeting public notice requirements.	On-going		
4.2.d		Conduct joint meetings annually of the City Commission, Planning Commission and Downtown Development Authority.	On-going		
4.2.e		When appropriate conduct community and neighborhood public forums to solicit public feedback from all demographic sections of the City.	On-going		
4.2.f		Identify populations that are missing from critical community conversations, committees, and leadership positions, and develop relationships to bring all groups to the table.	On-going		
4.2.g		Evaluate and update programming as needed to meet community needs and to diversify offerings.	On-going		

4. Effective Government – responsive, transparency, communication, public participation, fair treatment, land use and zoning, code enforcement, attain/maintain Redevelopment Ready Certification and implement best practices, participate in regional bodies/efforts (NATS, economic development organizations, etc), cooperation with local governments and the County

#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
4.3.a	Land Use, Zoning, Development Regulations	Consistently enforce the current Unified Development Code and other City Ordinances.	On-going		
4.3.b		Work to ensure the Unified Development Code is consistent with goals and objectives of Master Plan.	Short		
4.3.c		Follow and research advances in land use, zoning and code enforcement to help maintain the goals and objectives of the community while creating an accommodating atmosphere for the different types of development.	On-going		
4.3.d		Review changes to the UDC associated with green infrastructure such as the use of permeable pavers, solar panels, rain barrels to minimize impact on adjacent property owners.	Long		
4.3.e		Create payment in lieu of parking provisions.	Near		
4.3.f		Conduct annual review of goals and tasks found in the Master Plan. At a minimum review the Master Plan at five-year intervals per state law.	On-going		
4.4.a	Code Enforcement and Property Maintenance	Consistently and fairly enforce Unified Development Code and other City Ordinances.	On-going		
4.4.b		Review existing regulations pertaining to blight and property maintenance and recommend needed changes.	On-going		
4.4.c		Continue to improve property maintenance ordinances and enforcement.	On-going		
4.4.d		Research and establish a property maintenance program.	Near		
4.5.a	Engement with state, regional and local agencies	Work with different agencies to help advance the needs of the community.	On-going		
4.5.b		Participate in workshops to increase knowledge of opportunities available.	On-going		
4.5.c		When appropriate investigate opportunities to create shared services with surrounding communities.	On-going		
4.5.d		Where possible become involved with boards and commissions of professional organizations.	On-going		

4. Effective Government – responsive, transparency, communication, public participation, fair treatment, land use and zoning, code enforcement, attain/maintain Redevelopment Ready Certification and implement best practices, participate in regional bodies/efforts (NATS, economic development organizations, etc), cooperation with local governments and the County

#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
4.6.a	Staffing and Training	Review staffing levels to determine if and where changes may need to take place to address changing needs of the community.	On-going		
4.6.b		Allocate sufficient resources to ensure adequate staffing and the ability to fund training opportunities for staff along with elected and appointed officials.	On-going		
4.6.c		Improve and expand skills and services of public safety employees and volunteers.	On-going		
4.7.a	Encourage prudent use of City financial resources.	Encourage the use of standards of the Certificate of Financial Achievement Award as best practices for the City.	On-going		
4.7.b		Encourage the City to continue to maintain a General Fund balanced budget.	On-going		
4.7.c		Coordinate implementation and capital improvements plan efforts with the City Commission and appropriate departments.	On-going		

5. Economic Vitality – downtown, DDA, commercial, industrial, tourism, economic development, redevelopment, marketing, business and entrepreneurship support					
#	Goal	Action	Timeframe	Key Partners	Tool
5.1.a	Balanced growth while maintaining small town character	Encourage and recruit businesses that provide goods, services, recreation, and employment opportunities that contribute to the vibrance of the community while meeting the needs of the community while attracting new residents.	On-going		
5.1.b		Work with the various cultural and arts organizations to promote arts and cultural programs in the city.	On-going		
5.1.c		Promote the vitality of downtown by emphasizing the entertainment and cultural center, restaurants, library, parks and shopping.	On-going		
5.2.a	Economic Development	Work with the Buchanan Chamber, DDA, Southwest Regional Chamber, Cornerstone Alliance and local businesses to enhance the City's economy and ability to provide affordable housing opportunities.	On-going		
5.2.b		Continue working toward Certified status through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities program.	Near		
5.2.c		Continue to promote and implement the City's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority programs.	On-going		
5.2.d		Investigate and promote state funding programs to help fill gaps in funding needed for both new and redevelopment opportunities	On-going		
5.2.e		Adopt policies regarding the implementation of specific incentive tools.	Near		
5.2.f		Identify priority development sites to help property owner market.	Near		
5.2.g		Establish façade improvement program for commercial buildings.	Near		
5.2.h		Create and maintain available resources for financial assistance for business community.	On-going		
5.2.i		Determine if a corridor plan for the area east of Redbud Trail along East Front Street is needed and if so move forward with the process.	Short		
5.3.a	Marketing	Coordinate with local agencies on the marketing of the community.	On-going		
5.3.b		Identifying a branding program for the community and downtown area.	Near		
5.3.c		Implement wayfinding program to direct residents and visitors to the City's cultural, architectural and institutional resources.	Near		