



St. Clair County Agricultural and Rural Character Protection Plan

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Presentation Outline

- County Overview
 - Goals, Socioeconomic Profile, and Land Use
- County Agriculture and Agricultural Trends
- Farmland Preservation in St. Clair County
- Zoning Ordinances
- Methods of Increasing Farm Profitability
- Raising Public Awareness
- Recommendations





Introduction

- Client:
 - St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) and Senior Planner David Struck
 - Project
 - Agricultural and Rural Character Protection Plan in coordination with County Master Plan Update
 - Goal
 - To protect farmland proactively using a system of planning and legal tools, increasing agriculture profitability, raising public awareness, and directing growth to appropriate areas in the County.
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St. Clair County Goals

Goals related to farmland and rural character, as provided in the St. Clair County Master Plan, include:

- Preserve Rural Character
- Protect Farmland
- Sustain the health, diversity, and extent of natural resources
- Protect viable farmland while accommodating nearby land use change
- Preserve agriculture as an economic component



Location of St. Clair County

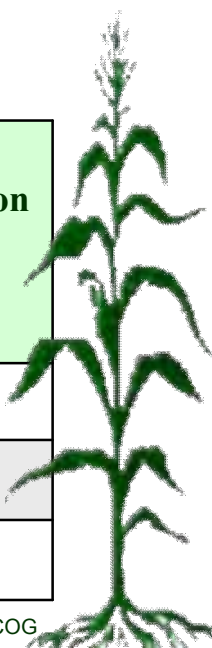


County Profile

- Median age: 36.6 – predicted to rise to 39.9 by 2030
- Median family income: \$46,313 in 2000 (compared to \$53,457 for Michigan)
- Services and retail trade main sectors in the economy
- Agriculture accounts for 3% of employment, compared to 1% in Southeast Michigan

Population and Housing Estimates and Projections

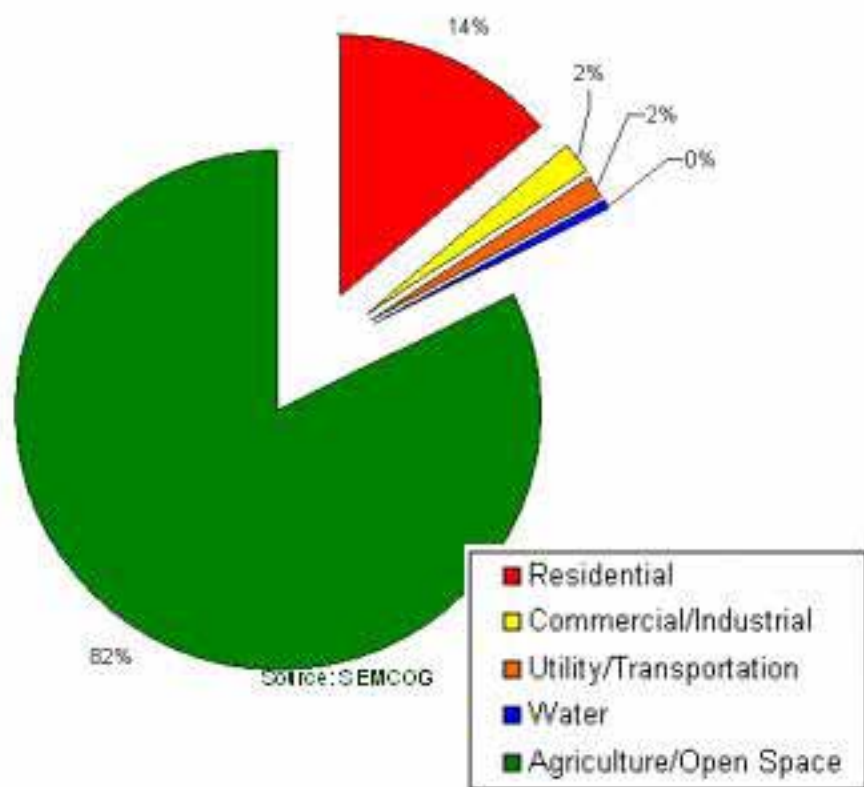
Place	2007 SEMCOG Population Estimate	Population Growth 1990 - 2007	Housing Unit Growth 1990 - 2007	Estimated Population Growth 2007 - 2030
Southeast Michigan	4,907,628	6.91%	15.29%	10.20%
St. Clair County	174,080	19.55%	27.36%	16.76%
Livingston County	189,106	63.52%	73.35%	59.21%



St. Clair County Land Use

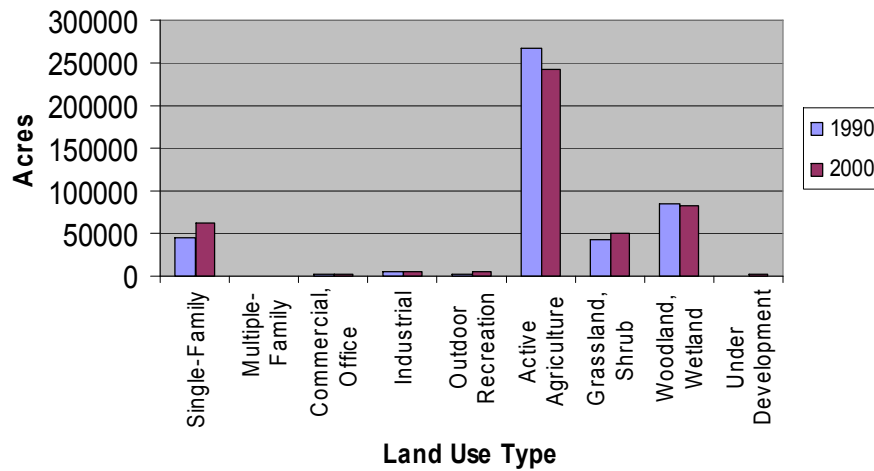


Land Use (2000)

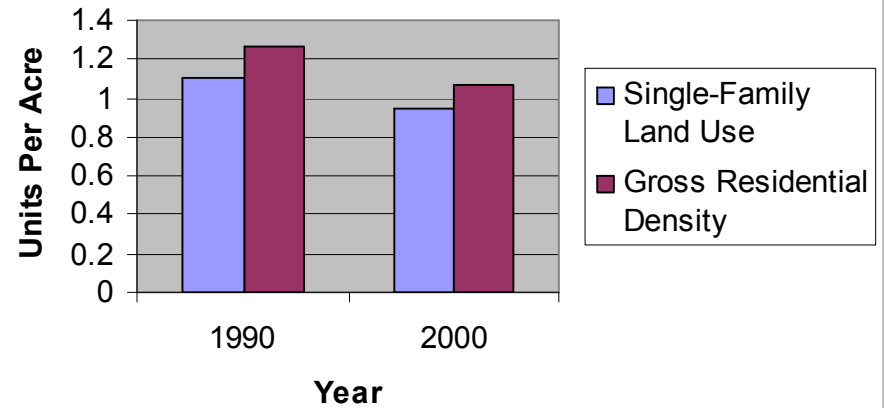


St. Clair County Land Use

Land Use Change St. Clair County, 1990-2000



Residential Density St. Clair County, 1990-2000



Metropolitan Planning Commission Designated Districts

- Urban and General Services District
- Rural Residential District
- Rural and Agricultural Conservation District



Prime Farmland Soils

- The Rural and Agricultural Conservation District contains vast amounts of prime soils
- These soils are not found in abundance elsewhere in the County



County Agriculture Trends - Top 10 Products

Ranking In Ag. Production by Market Value	State of Michigan	St. Clair County	Lapeer County	Macomb County	Sanilac County
1	Corn	Corn	Corn	Nursery, Greenhouse Crops	Corn
2	Soybeans	Soybeans	Soybeans	Corn	Soybeans
3	Dairy Products	Nursery, Greenhouse Crops	Dairy Products	Soybeans	Wheat
4	Wheat	Dairy Products	Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes	Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes	Dairy Products
5	Other Crops (sugar crops, dry beans, dry peas, etc.)	Cattle, Calves	Nursery, Greenhouse Crops	Wheat	Cattle, Calves
6	Hay, Silage, Field Seeds	Other Livestock, Livestock Specialties	Cattle, Calves	Cattle, Calves	Nursery, Greenhouse Crops
7	Nursery, Greenhouse Crops	Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes	Wheat	Fruit, Tree Nuts, Berries	Oats
8	Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes	Wheat	Hay, Silage, Field Seeds	Dairy Products	Other Crops (sugar crops, dry beans, dry peas, etc.)
9	Cattle, Calves	Hay, Silage, Field Seeds	Poultry, Poultry Products	Hay, Silage, Field Seeds	Hay, Silage, Field Seeds
10	Hogs, Pigs	Hogs, Pigs	Other Crops (sugar crops, dry beans, dry peas, etc.)	Other Livestock, Livestock Specialties	Hogs, Pigs

Source: USDA

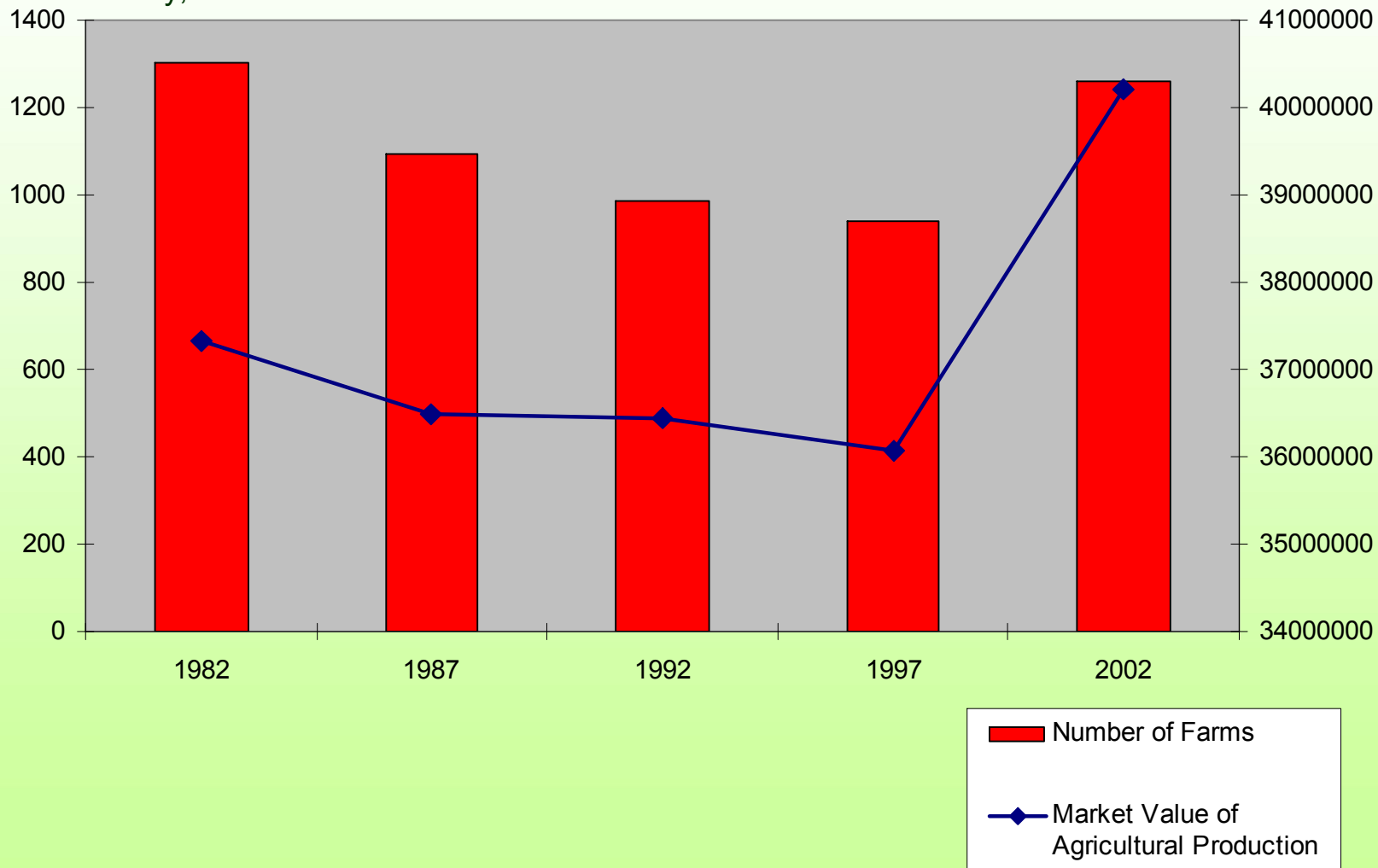
County Agriculture Trends

- Total farmland in St. Clair County has declined since 1982, but cropland and harvested cropland grew between 1997 and 2002
- The number and market value of farms decreased steadily between 1982 and 1997, then increased between 1997 and 2002
- The top agriculture product in St. Clair County in 2002 was corn, but nursery and greenhouse crops gained the most market share between 1997 and 2002
- Direct sales of agriculture products grew strongly between 1997 and 2002
- Net farm losses are rising



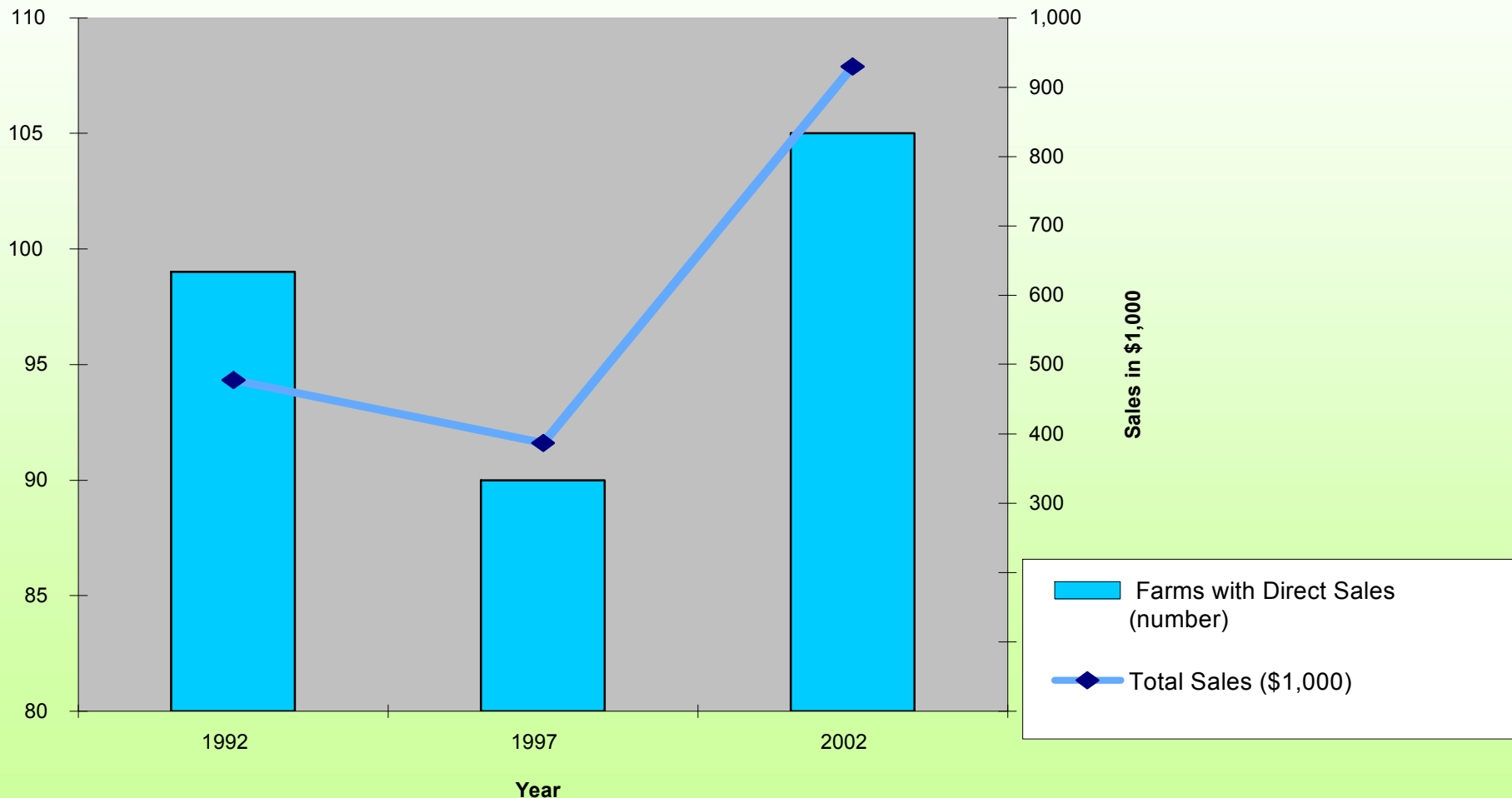
County Agriculture Trends

Number of Farms and Value of Agriculture Production in St. Clair County, 1982 - 2002



County Agriculture Trends

Value of Agricultural Products Sold Directly to Individuals in St. Clair County



Since 1997, the number of farms participating in direct sales increased by 15 and total direct sales increased 140.3%.

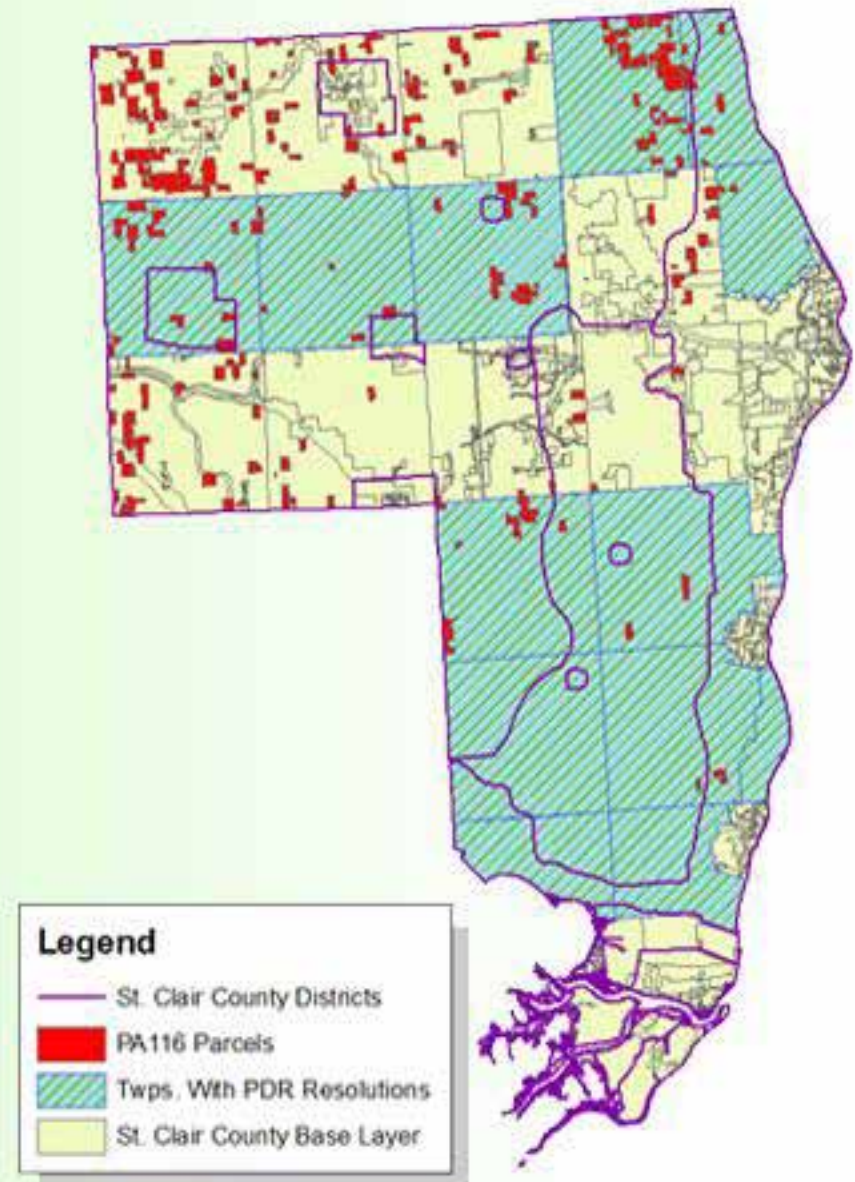


Agricultural Land and Open Space Preservation Toolbox

- Comprehensive Planning
- Zoning
- Conservation Easements
- Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Programs
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs
- Michigan Farmland Preservation Act (P.A. 116)
- Right to Farm Act
- Michigan Agricultural Fund
- Direct Development to the Urban and General Services District

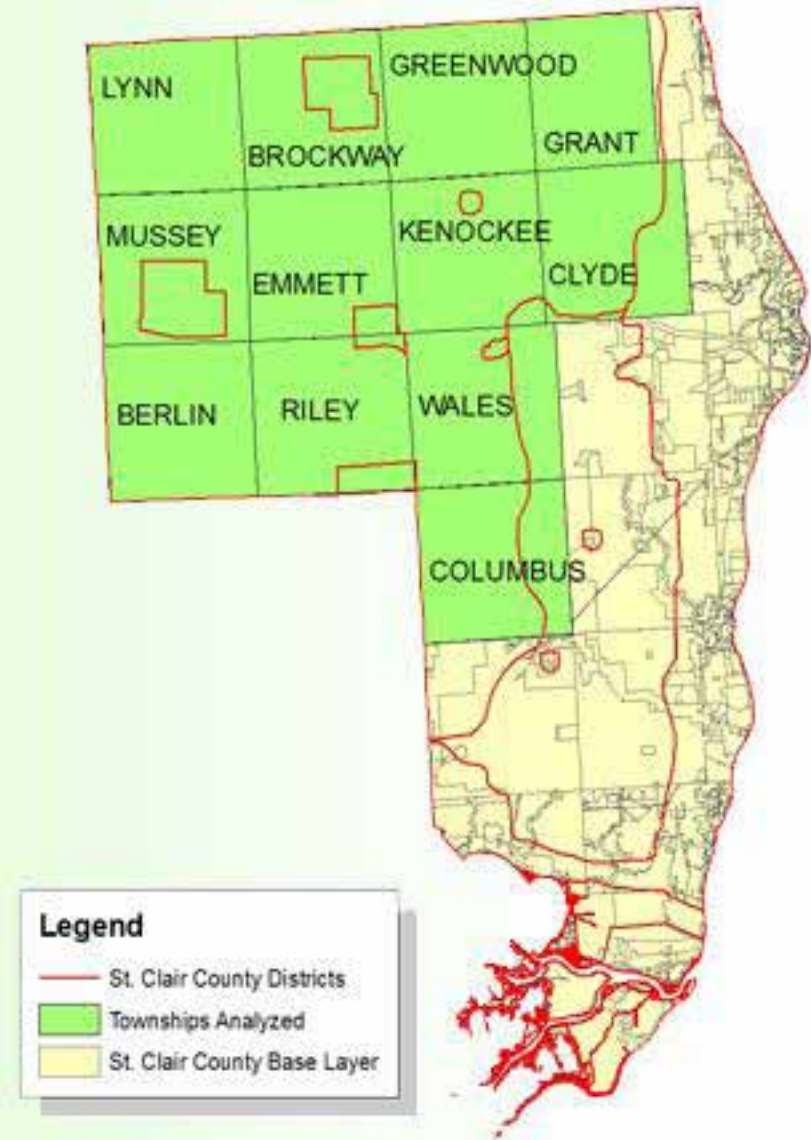
Current State of Farmland Preservation in St. Clair County

- P.A. 116
 - 338 parcels of land totaling 30,076 acres in St. Clair County, are currently enrolled in P.A. 116
- Purchase of Development Rights
 - 13 Townships have passed PDR resolutions



Rural and Agricultural Conservation District Zoning - Outline

- Reviewed Township Zoning Ordinances
- Performed Township Ordinance Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
- Determined Level of Support for Agriculture
- Provided Best Practices Examples
- Zoning Ordinance Language and Definitions



Rural and Agricultural Conservation District Zoning

- Reviewed Township Zoning Ordinances
 - Focused on Agricultural, Open Space, River Conservation designations and ordinance adoption dates

- Township Ordinance SWOT Analysis
 - Assessed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of each zoning designation

- Determined Level of Support for Agriculture Zoning
 - High, Medium, and Low Support
 - Location Concerns



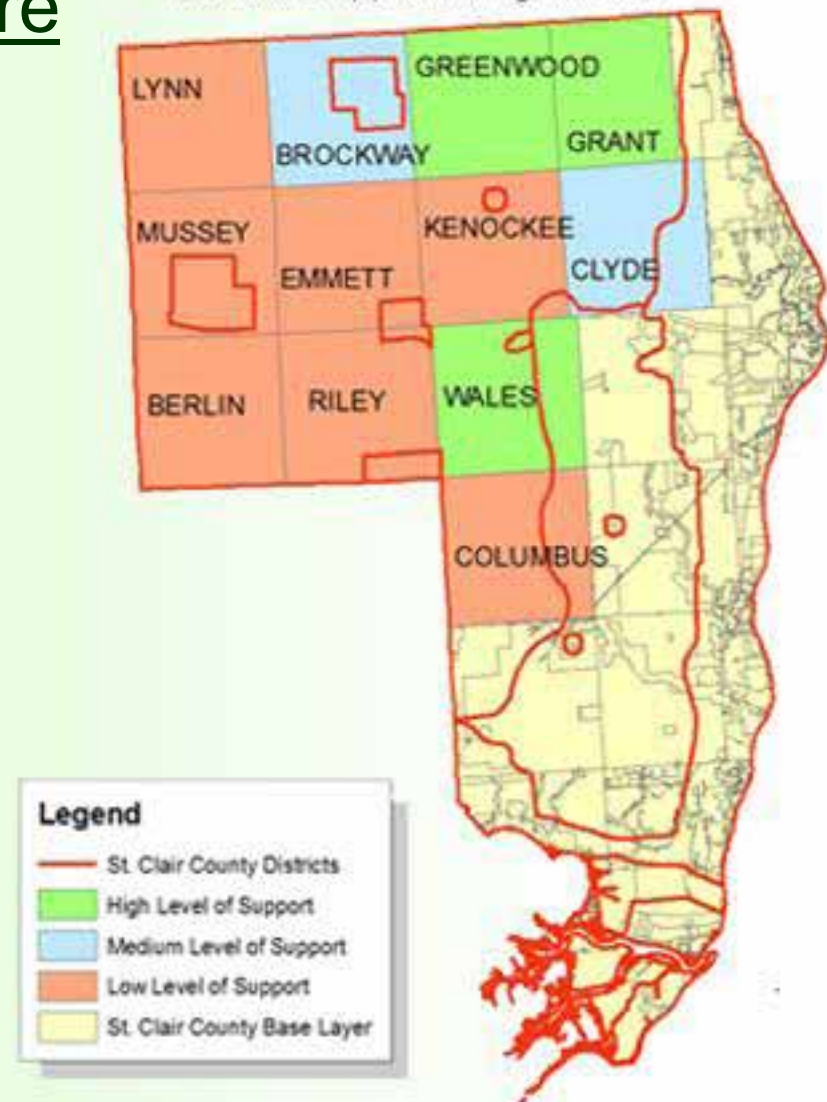
Township Ordinance Rating Matrix

Municipality	Approximate Percent of Prime Farmland	High Support	Medium Support	Low Support	Location Concerns (Bordering Other Counties)
Greenwood Township	80%	X			
Grant Township	70%	X			
Mussey Township	80%			X	Borders Lapeer County
Emmett Township	90%			X	
Clyde Township	45%		X		Close Proximity to Ft. Gratiot and Port Huron
Berlin Township	90%			X	Borders Macomb and Lapeer County
Wales Township	85%	X			Borders Macomb County
Brockway Township	85%		X		
Columbus Township	50%			X	Borders Macomb County
Kenockee Township	65%			X	
Lynn Township	85%			X	Borders Lapeer County
Riley Township	90%			X	Borders Macomb County

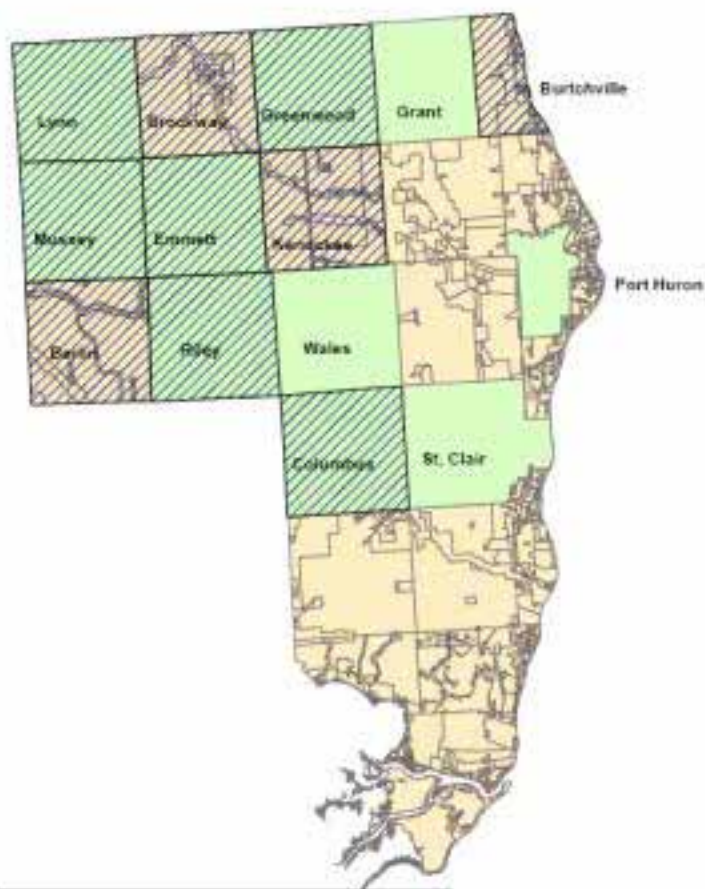
Level of Support for Agriculture

- High Support
 - Multiple agricultural zones
 - Allows direct sales
- Medium Support
 - Often allow residential development in agricultural zones
 - May or may not allow direct sales
- Low Support
 - Single agricultural zone
 - Allows residential development
 - No direct sales




SCC Township Zoning Ordinance
Level of Support for Agriculture



Current and Expected Population Growth



Legend

-  Top 10 Twp. Expected to Grow 2000-2030
-  Top 10 Fastest Growing Twp. 1990-2007
-  St. Clair County

Source: SEMCOG and MSU Practicum Team, 2007

Township	Twp. Growth Percent Change 1990 - 2007	Expected Twp. Growth Percent Change 2000 - 2030	Twp. Ordinances Providing Low Support
Emmett Twp.	68.99 %	96.60 %	▼
Greenwood Twp.	58.15 %	46.10 %	
Grant Twp.	57.36 %		
Riley Twp.	57.13 %	68.10 %	▼
Mussey Twp.	54.44 %	52.80 %	▼
Lynn Twp.	53.09 %	58.80 %	▼
St. Clair Twp.	52.88 %		
Columbus Twp.	51.75 %	52.20 %	▼
Wales Twp.	45.42 %		
Port Huron Twp.	43.70 %		
Kenockee Twp.		65.90%	▼
Berlin Twp.		52.80 %	▼
Burtchville Twp.		48.20 %	
Brockway Twp.		48.00 %	

Source: SEMCOG and MSU Practicum Team, 2007

Rural and Agricultural Conservation District Zoning

■ Best Practices Examples:

- Greenwood Township
 - I-A (Intensive Agriculture) District
 - OS (Open Space, Recreation Conservation) District
- Clyde Township
 - RSF (Residential Suburban Farms) District
- Ira Township
 - Agribusiness Amendment
- Peninsula Township (Grand Traverse County)
 - A-1 (Agricultural District)



Rural and Agricultural Conservation District Zoning

- Updating Zoning Ordinance Language and Definitions
 - Agricultural Tourism
 - Value Added Products
 - Agricultural Products
 - Non-Agriculturally Related Uses
 - Farm Market/On-Farm Market/Roadside Stand
 - Seasonal Signs



Value Added Agriculture

- The use of innovative methods to increase the market value of existing farm products
 - Direct Marketing
 - Agricultural Tourism



Value Added Agriculture



Source: Maple Creek Farms

- Direct Marketing
 - Farmers Markets
 - Blue Water Farmers Market in St. Clair
 - Community Supported Agriculture
 - Maple Creek Farms in Yale
 - Niche Markets
 - Additional studies required to determine specialty products demanded in St. Clair County

Value Added Agriculture



■ Agricultural Tourism

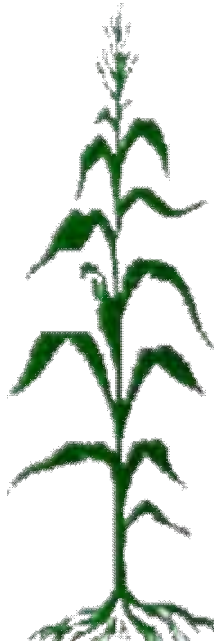
- Includes: bed and breakfast, U-pick farms, cider mills, corn mazes, and Christmas tree farms

- Benefits
 - Allowing for continued farming and keeping the farm viable
 - Generating additional income or off season income
 - Increasing and diversifying the market
 - Responding to a need or opportunity in the market (specialty product)

Public Awareness Campaign

Goal: Increase the consciousness of community members about farmland preservation

- Education
 - Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) Chronicle Newsletter, MPC Workshops, Channel 6/Public Access Television
- Participation
 - Master Plan Update Visioning Session, County Department Visioning, Open Forum Meetings, Public Hearings
- Communication
 - Public Radio and Television, Pamphlets, Community Web-sites, The Voice Newspaper, Channel 6/Public Access
- Preservation
 - Education, participation, and communication aid in preservation





Recommendations

1. Update Township Ordinances in the Rural and Agricultural Conservation District
1. Implement Public Awareness Campaign
1. Identify Growing and Niche Markets in St. Clair County
1. Explore Direct Marketing in St. Clair County
1. Increase Current State of Participation in Farmland Preservation
1. Explore Opportunities for Preservation Funding

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape featuring large, rectangular agricultural fields in various shades of green. A small cluster of buildings is visible in the center. The background shows a forested hillside under a bright sky. A decorative green and white graphic is in the top-left corner.

Take a Proactive Stance on Farmland Preservation.

Thank you!

Questions?