

COMMUNITY PROFILE: NEW BALTIMORE



The Sustainable Small Harbors project received funding from Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan Department of Natural Resources — Waterways Program, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality — Office of the Great Lakes, and Michigan State Housing Development Authority to engage stakeholders in waterfront communities around Michigan. In 2015-2016, through public workshops and design charrettes, the project team helped community leaders assess challenges and opportunities related to the economic and environmental sustainability of their waterfronts. This community profile captures the insights and future visions developed through that process. For more information, see: sustainablesmallharbors.org.



Community Basics

Waterfront: Lake St. Clair

County: Macomb

Area: 6.73 square miles

Population: 12,084 people in 2010 (+63 percent change from 2000-2010)

Median Household Income: \$78,377 in 2013

Median Age: 40.7 (2014)

U.S. Census, 2000, 2010; City Data

COMMUNITY INVENTORY

The City of New Baltimore is located on the north coastline of Lake St. Clair, at the western edge of Anchor Bay. The city, located along the boundary line of Macomb and St. Clair Counties, offers a public park, beach, farmers market, restaurants, public library, and historic downtown shopping district.

Incorporated as a village in 1867 and as a city in 1931, New Baltimore initially served as a getaway for urban Detroiters for many years due to the inter-urban railroad. The city also had a robust shipping trade thanks to its location on Lake St. Clair. While New Baltimore has since seen a decline in tourism, it is increasingly serving as an outlying community for Detroit.

New Baltimore is listed as one of the 50 Safest Cities in Michigan and benefits from active promotion from the county executive's office, including the "Make Macomb Your Home" campaign.

New Baltimore has seen significant demographic changes over the last 25 years. From 2000 to 2010, the New Baltimore population rose 63.2 percent, outpacing the Macomb County population growth rate of 6.7 percent. The largest demographic changes experienced by New Baltimore have been a proportional increase in citizens aged 14 and younger and in citizens between the ages of 35 and 54.

Source: City of New Baltimore Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012), Macomb County Executive

PLANNING DOCUMENTS

- City of New Baltimore Master Plan (2005)
- City of New Baltimore Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012)
- Downtown and City-Owned Property Vision (2014)
- New Baltimore Downtown Development Authority — Development and Tax Increment Financing Plans (2009)

HISTORICAL REFERENCES

During the community engagement process, the team learned about the city's longstanding discussion and debate about introducing a public harbor and access point to the waterfront. A few of the supplied materials include:

- The New Baltimore Recreational Harbor — Citizens for the Harbor and Recreation Team (1994) — promotional brochure describing

benefits of a harbor at Washington and Front Street waterfront.

- City of New Baltimore Refuge Harbor brochure (1980) — schematic drawing of a proposed harbor at Washington and Front Street frontage.
- Village of Ashley (previous name for New Baltimore) map of historic piers: Ashley Mill Docks, John Lozen Boat Pier, and William Baker Lumber Dock. Several historical pilings are still standing.



Figure 1: Schmid Marina and view of lakefront Walter and Mary Burke Park, Front Street, and Washington Street. USACE 2012

WATERFRONT INVENTORY

Schmid Marina: A privately owned and operated marina since the 1960s, the 12-acre property features approximately 1,200 linear feet of shoreline on Anchor Bay on Lake St. Clair. The marina provides 160 slips with some reserved for transient use. The marina provides dry racks, indoor winter storage, gas dock, 30-amp electric service, water, and pump-out service, plus an 18-ton travel lift. Amenities include shower, restroom, and walkable access to downtown New Baltimore (approximately half a mile). The marina was put up for sale around 2010 and was the focus of the design charrette.

Public Dock at Park Waterfront:

In 2013, the Department of Homeland Security Marine Division dedicated a public dock for use by division staff and the public. Public perception of the docks is mixed, with some indicating that they would not dock there due to lack of protection from wind and waves. The docks are managed through public safety officials and are frequented in the summer by day users.

SALT RIVER MARINAS (APPROXIMATELY 3 MILES EAST OF NEW BALTIMORE):

Anchor Bay Marina: This marina specializes in dry rack storage, accommodating up to 300 boats up to 51 feet in length with a 3-mile commute from storage to the lake. Amenities located at the marina include a ship store, restrooms

with showers, gas dock, pump-out station, and on-site service center for maintenance needs.

Sun-Up Marina: Located on the Salt River, just off of Anchor Bay, the marina provides 120 slips accommodating boats up to 45 feet. All slips are supplied with water and electric hookup and several have drive-up access.

Kenney's Marina and Harbor Heights Marina are also listed, but public information is limited.

Mayea Marina: Established in 1911, this full-service marina in Fair Haven provides 250 slips from 25 to 50 feet with 20 slips reserved for transient use. The marina provides a gas dock, pump-out, boat repairs, mechanical service, party store, storage, bath houses, laundry, and the popular Island Grill Clubhouse. As recently as 2013, the marina basin depth was only three feet; since dredging the basin, the marina now markets itself as a “deep water marina.”

Harbor Marina, providing additional covered and uncovered wells just down from the main marina.

Swan Creek Harbor: A 5-minute cruise up Swan Creek from Anchor Bay, the marina provides boat wells up to 40 feet, restrooms with showers, pavilion with barbeque area, Wi-Fi, buoyed entrance, winter storage, picnic areas, and a fire pit. The marina promotes its walkable access to restaurants and bars and marina parties with movie nights.

- Brandenburg Park (2.0 miles)
- Fair Haven Boating Access Site (6.1 miles)
- Deckers Landing Access Site (16.4 miles)
- Harley Ensign Launch (16.6 miles at mouth of the Clinton River)
- Clinton River Cut Access Site (14 miles)

There are currently no dredging or federal infrastructure projects in New Baltimore.

As part of the visioning process, the community self-identified the following assets and liabilities.



COLLABORATORS

To draw upon community expertise, the following technical meetings were convened:

- Historic Commission;
- Downtown Development Authority; and
- Parks and Recreation.

To facilitate implementation support, the following initial state and regional partners were identified:

- MDNR Natural Resources Trust Fund program;
- Regional Prosperity Initiative field staff;
- Michigan Sea Grant staff;
- and Michigan State University Extension staff.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: “NEW BALTIMORE 2035”

“New Baltimore 2035” represents a shared future vision of the community based on the charrette design process. The preferred alternative has Schmid Marina as public access with a boat launch, downtown redevelopment, and a harbor inserted to Front Street.

For the Schmid Marina focus area, the community engagement process supported public acquisition of Schmid Marina. The proposed design includes incorporation of six public boat launches and parking for boat trailers. Existing indoor dry storage buildings may be retained should the community desire, but would reduce parking capacity. One of the existing storage buildings could be converted into the New Baltimore Recreation Center. As proposed, the site hosts the youth sailing club, a kayak landing, and storage racks, which may be rented. Access to the site along Taylor Street would be widened and a bike lane added.

Full Charrette Report

For additional information on the three alternatives the community evaluated and the development of the “preferred alternative,” please see the full charrette report, [available for download on the website](#).



Figure 3: The preferred alternative for New Baltimore has Schmid Marina as public access with a boat launch, downtown redevelopment, and a harbor inserted to Front Street. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors



Figure 4: Current view and artistic rendering of widened bridge, sailing school site, kayak landing, and expanded parking area. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors



Figure 5: Artistic rendering of a concept for a downtown harbor. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors



Figure 6: Current view and artistic rendering of Washington St. and Front St. intersection, looking toward Lake St. Clair. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors

For the downtown focus area, the preferred design alternative illustrated new development. The “Brewery Block” infill to the west of Washington Street proposes 13,000 square feet of new retail. The “Library Block” infill to the east of Washington Street proposes 33,000 square feet of new retail, restaurant, and office space. The newly designed Willy & Babbish Building (approved for construction on the northwest corner of Washington and Front) will provide 3,200 square feet of new retail.

For long-term planning, residences within the two-block redevelopment area are removed in the proposed plan and replaced with mixed-use development and high-density housing. The library would remain, along with three other buildings, plus the planned development on the corner of Washington and Front Street. The old mortuary building on the corner of Maria Street and Main Street could be renovated into the brewery that would give this block its name (i.e., “Brewery Block”). Ten three-story townhouses with roof decks and drive-in garages are included and the townhouses have shared private green space. Finally, in the design, a portion of Front Street and Washington Street are “flexible streets,” which may be blocked off for festivals and farmers market days.

A Burke Park Marina was proposed, bringing boating to the heart of downtown. This design would remove the current beach area and require excavating to Front Street. The beach, volleyball area, and playground would be relocated within Burke Park. Preliminary investigation of existing underground infrastructure suggests this is technically feasible, although at a cost of more than \$4 million. A floating dock system with wave dissipaters could provide an estimated 80 protected boat slips. The harbor is designed with 30-foot and 45-foot slips as well as a few broad side areas for larger boats.

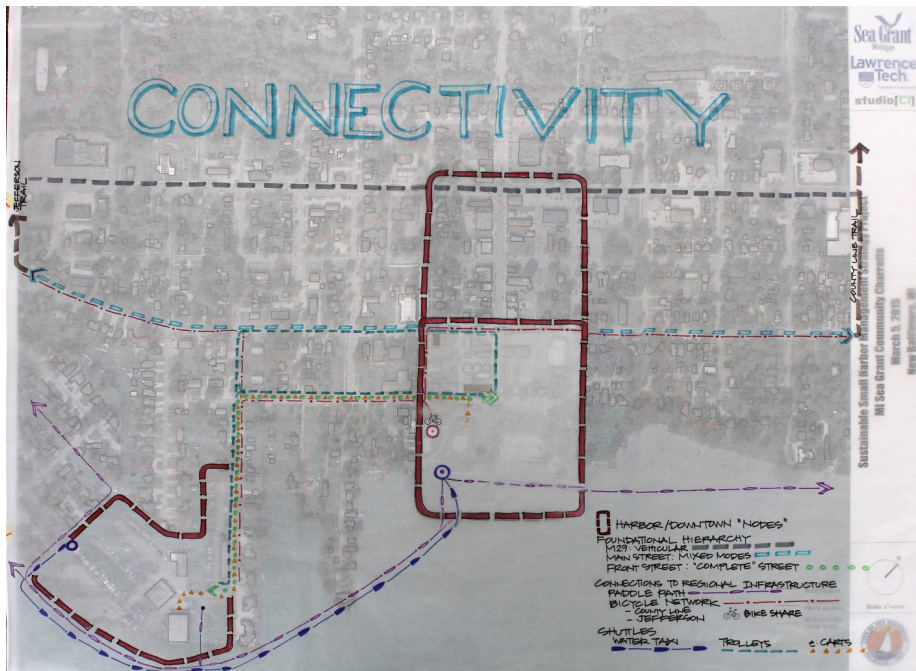


Figure 7: Design connectivity diagram. Source: Joseph Demski

CONNECTIVITY

There are many modes of connectivity proposed in this vision, including linkages for vehicles, bicycles, kayaks, pedestrians, water taxis, trolleys,

e-carts, and personal boats. Bicycle lanes striped on the existing roadway could connect bike traffic to County Line Street and Jefferson Street through the town and to the marina. Bike lanes are part of the design on Main Street

and would shift to follow Front Street for a block between Taylor Street and Maria Street. Kayaking connectivity includes adding a launch site and rentable storage racks at Schmid Marina. This launch site would be part of the existing Lake St. Clair paddle trail along the shore and would connect with the Burke Park beach where there is another launch site. A water-taxi and personal boats would provide additional transportation options.

Pedestrian paths between Schmid Marina and downtown should have improved lighting along the walkways, defined crosswalks, and sidewalks on Taylor Street and Front Street. Additional transportation between the marina and downtown could be provided by an e-cart, or small electric vehicle/shuttle, used as needed to transport people between the proposed recreation center, marina, and downtown. Participants also expressed interest in a trolley circling town and connecting to nearby towns.

VALUE CAPTURE – INITIAL EFFORTS

In support of this alternative, an economic analysis of retail capacity was conducted by a member of the charrette team. Current downtown New Baltimore contains approximately 77,000 square feet of retail, both occupied and vacant. The primary retail trade area has an estimated population of approximately 120,000 with an estimated 45,000 households. Currently the downtown businesses capture between 1.5 and 1.6 percent of the retail trade area, which is well below what a walkable historic downtown should capture. A comparison analysis of retail capture percentages of similar small downtowns in southeast Michigan showed retail capture percentages of

4 to 6 percent. A destination downtown like New Baltimore, further enhanced by waterfront improvements, should be able to capture up to 2.5 - 3 percent of the retail trade market. This would indicate a potential market for an additional 51,000 to 61,000 square feet of retail. Using the lower estimate (51,000 sq ft), this could break down into various major retail categories:

- 17,500 square feet of full-service or limited-service restaurants or pubs
- 18,000 square feet of general shopping goods
- 9,000 square feet of personal services
- 6,500 square feet of miscellaneous retail

The economic analysis for this alternative is supported by research conducted by Macomb County

Department of Planning and Economic Development. The department also reported that Schmid Marina currently operates approximately 80 slips and could be modified to accommodate 160 slips. If 90 percent of the 160 slips were occupied, that would potentially net over \$300,000, which would offset capital improvements. Additional revenue would also come from boat launch fees, onsite storage, marina store improvements, and leasing agreements with sailing clubs or similar entities.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

New Baltimore is located on Lake St. Clair, a popular destination for fishing and boating. However, public boat-launching facilities are limited, and the local marina is privately owned and disconnected from the nearby downtown.

Potential changes identified in the charrette design include the construction of a boat launch, municipal purchase of the private marina, a new marina abutting downtown New Baltimore, and additional downtown development. Economic modeling indicates that these changes could significantly enhance the sustainability of New Baltimore. The boat launch and a publically owned marina could generate revenues of approximately \$400,000 per year.

IMPLEMENTATION

USE OF DESIGN AND VISIONING PRODUCTS. The New Baltimore Charette Final Report provided instrumental documentation of New Baltimore community support and the professional assessment and recommendations made by the Small Harbors Study Team. The final recommendations were used as support documentation for the City of New Baltimore to move forward on an acquisition grant through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund. The City of New Baltimore was awarded a \$2.85 million grant on December 7, 2015, to acquire Schmid Marina for municipal use, as suggested through the charrette process.

In pursuing detailed plans for the property, the city provided the project documentation to Edgewater Resources, LLC. The city hired the firm to conduct further assessments and develop a business implementation plan for the Schmid Marina property.

INITIAL IMPACTS. In May 2016, the city approved the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Land Acquisition Project Agreement for Schmid Marina; once the agreement is fully executed the city will move forward on the next steps of the acquisition process.

Edgewater Resources' initial financial projections for marina operations were very positive. A grant writing consultant for the city noted: "The design charette process made it possible to move the community of New Baltimore towards the vision of public access and beautiful recreational opportunities. Without that experience and process, the community of New Baltimore would not be where we are today."

Source: [Macomb Daily News](#) (2015)

CHALLENGES. Several residents neighboring the Schmid property, who did not participate in the design charrette, were initially displeased with the proposed design alternative. The city provided direct communication to engage the concerned parties, inviting several community members to join a Schmid study committee. As a result, the city has alleviated several concerns and established a dialogue with key stakeholders.

PRIORITIZATION AND FUNDING.

The \$2.85 million Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant requires a roughly \$900,000 match from the city — a local match requirement of 25 percent of the requested state funding.

In January 2016, the city council approved funding for a proposal from Edgewater Resources to conduct a feasibility analysis of the marina development that includes an assessment of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements at the site. In February 2016, the city council voted to allocate the \$22,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding the city will receive this year to bringing the marina in compliance with the ADA. This will ensure the public space is universally accessible.

In covering a May 2016 presentation to city council by Edgewater Resources, local newspaper *The Voice* reported the following update:

"The various renovations and improvements proposed by Edgewater Resources would total about \$2.6 million. A conservative revenue model that includes basin slips, canal slips, dry racks and winter storage shows potential annual revenues of about \$338,000, which would support a \$4.6 million bond at roughly 4 percent over 20 years, allowing for 'near reconstruction of the marina.'"

Sources: [The Voice News](#) (May 2016), [The Voice News](#) (February 2016)

MOMENTUM. The City of New Baltimore Mayor, City Council, Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Commission, Historic District, Downtown Development Authority, and residents and businesses are collaboratively leading implementation of several of the visions suggested through the community engagement process. Edgewater Resources has proposed to renovate the marina in stages so as not to impact the boating season or displace boaters.

The Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Department program manager of land and water resources said Schmid Marina is a key component "to the re-birth of southeast Michigan. I know that sounds like a stretch, but it really isn't... It needs to be known what New Baltimore is to the region because there really is not a walkable downtown outside of Detroit and maybe Windsor, and the city already has what's really key to its success," he said. "But it's also going to be about bringing the people here; it's about access to the water."

Source: [The Voice News](#) (May 2016), [The Voice News](#) (March 2016)