

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a survey of rural historic structures in and near the urban fringe of the Tri-County Metropolitan area. The Tri-County Metropolitan area consists of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, all within the greater Mid-Michigan area. In this report, the phrase "rural historic structures" entails six different types of structures; barns, cemeteries, churches, farmhouses, grange halls, and cemeteries. One of the goals of the reports was to focus on the rural historic structures that, while historic, may not already be located on a state or national register of historic places. These structures may not be historic at a larger scope but are of historic value to the local community that they are located in. This report was created in partnership with the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, who originally commissioned this report. The reason that this report was commissioned was that, up to this point, no survey had yet been taken of the rural historic structures located within this growth boundary. The information gathered can assist in making good development choices, along with preserving the historic character and heritage of the Tri-County region. Within this report, the following is included; A project overview, an overview of historic preservation, an explanation of development pressure, an area history, a socioeconomic profile, a structure type analysis, a methodology, the survey results, GIS analysis, a collection of current practices in case study form, a list of recommendations, and an appendix containing the full database from the survey conducted.

The socioeconomic profile in this report summarizes current trends in population, employment, and land use and what threats they may pose to structures in the study area. In 2013, the population in the Tri-County had grown by 16,653 people (4%) since the year 2000, with Eaton and Clinton Counties capturing 91% percent of this growth. While Clinton County experienced the highest growth in its population (+17%), it also experienced the sharpest reduction in agriculture jobs (-46%). Lastly, while all the townships in the study area saw a drastic reduction in the number of building permits they issued between 2000 and 2009, residential building permits in outer-ring townships, namely, DeWitt, Watertown, and Oneida, are beginning to rise faster than those of more densely urbanized areas.

The study area for the survey was determined by following the "Transitional: Cluster Development" boundary in the 2005 "Tri-County Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future" report from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The survey was conducted by utilizing various structure databases (i.e.,

the Michigan Schoolhouse Network), along with equalization maps provided by each county. Due to the large number of barns and farmhouses and a lack of data in Eaton and Clinton counties, the barn and farmhouse survey was restricted to Ingham County. For the other four structure types, however, a full survey was conducted in all three counties. For each structure, the county, city/ township, census tract, census block group, address, owner, date constructed, and, in the case of cemeteries, churches, and schoolhouses, the name, were added. In the survey, there is a total of 454 structures. Within that total number, there are 334 farmhouses, 80 barns, 19 cemeteries, 16 schoolhouses, four churches, and one grange hall. The areas that had the highest concentrations of these structures were Williamstown and Bath Townships (In Ingham and Clinton counties, respectively).

Within the report, five case studies are provided, with the case studies focusing on Farmland Preservation PDR in Old Mission Township MI, a historic management plan at Ohio State University, the Boulder Colorado urban service boundary, a historic preservation overlay zone in Lavonia Georgia, and density bonuses. Recommendations from this study include ways to help improve the data gaps currently present in the Tri-County area, create an audit tool for assessing the condition of the structures, increase the level of coordination in this task with farmland and rural preservation programs, and work with them to catalogue these structures.

Other recommendations include adopting an overlay zone that provides increased protection of rural historic structures, establishing a Tri-County urban service boundary, developing and promoting agritourism in the Tri-County area, establishing purchase of development rights (PDR) programs in Clinton and Eaton counties, and offering density bonuses that incentivize high density development in areas that are already urbanized.