2012

Beecher Neighborhood Stabilization Plan

Prepared for
the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission

in collaboration with
Michigan State University Urban Planning Practicum

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i. Preface

Planning Practicum is the capstone course for both undergraduate and graduate students in the Urban and Regional Planning program at Michigan State University. The course is a test of theoretical, practical, and communication skills. It gives students the opportunity to be involved with a professional project within the field, through which they apply the knowledge and resources they have learned and acquired through the program.

At the start of the course, students select from a list of clients whom which they may choose to work with. Professors oversee projects and assign students into groups where students develop a product reflective of the client needs. This project is the result of such a partnership.

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ii. Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our gratitude to the following individuals for their time, knowledge, guidance, and resources in the development and realization of this project:

- Christine A. Durgan, Principal Planner, Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission
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- Mount Morris Township officials
- Beecher Community School District
- Beecher Community Development Council

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iii. Executive Summary

The study is in support of the Neighborhood Stabilization Plan (NSP) 1 & 3 funding granted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (GCMPC). A portion of these grants were allocated to Beecher site, located in Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, Michigan. The area has experienced noticeable property abandonment and blight. To revitalize distressed portions of this neighborhood, GCMPC requested a land use analysis and recommendation on the future of this neighborhood.

The methodology used included a socio-economic profile, analysis of the physical characteristics of the site, a thorough examination of land uses, inclusion of community input, an analysis of case studies for proven neighborhood stabilization methods in communities across the United States and Canada, and recommendations. The socio-economic profile was conducted to gain a thorough understanding of the demographic and economic trends of Beecher site and the surrounding environment. Analysis was based on the past and future projected trends, as well as comparisons with Mount Morris Township, Genesee County and the State of Michigan. The socio-economic profile analysis was followed by a site factor analysis to assess the physical characteristics of Beecher site. The site factor analysis examined the existing zoning, land use, and their nonconforming uses; transit data; site and regional market profiles; and the identification of community assets. A thorough land use analysis was conducted to assess the habitable condition, ownership, and occupancy of parcels within the neighborhood. These conditions were assessed as part of a windshield inventory conducted by the student practicum team of parcels during the months of February and March of 2012. Collected data were recorded and analyzed with ArcGIS and GRASS GIS. To strengthen site related data collection and findings, a community input session was held in the month of March 2012. The purpose of this session was the identification of possible strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for the region. This SWOT analysis was supplemented by a public forum, and independent SWOT analysis by this practicum team to identify recurring themes. To supplement site related data, case studies were conducted to identify successful strategies used in other neighborhood rehabilitation efforts. Four case studies were identified: motivating social groups to identify community leaders and encourage community activity, development of affordable housing to establish social equity, sideyard expansion as an activity to eliminate vacancy and blight, and adaptive reuse of existing structures.

Based on the methodology used throughout the extent of this study, two land use redevelopment plans were formulated to provide future and transformative plans for Beecher site. These land use scenarios present two different approaches to land use. The first scenario emphasizes preservation and assumes no growth in population; redevelopment efforts and current trends are not likely to change, and preservation of the land may be a viable solution. The second scenario emphasizes redevelopment of existing land uses; redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties into new or similar uses is likely to occur. Each land use scenario implements six land use activities through logic rules. These rules present guidelines for these two land use scenarios, and represent the fundamental differences and consistencies between the two scenarios.

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I. Introduction

The following is an introduction to the client, the project, and the general vision of this practicum project.

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1.1 Client Introduction

Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (GCMPC) provides services, staff resources, and technical support to Genesee County municipalities with the needs and demands of a rapidly urbanizing county. GCMPC is composed of two divisions: Community Development and Transportation; headed by Director-Coordinator Julie Hinterman. The clients for this project are the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission with direction provided by Christine A. Durgan, Principal Planner; Sheila Taylor, Senior Planner; and Anna King, Associate Planner.

Genesee County applied for and received several grants from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Administered by the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, these federal funds provide an opportunity to revitalize distressed neighborhoods throughout the county. A portion of these grants must be used to acquire and rehabilitate houses.

GCMPC requests a land use analysis of the Beecher Neighborhood, termed in this report as Beecher Site, in Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, Michigan. The client has guided this practicum group throughout the process of inventory and analysis. More information on Genesee County and additional programs operated by the GCMPC and other county departments can be found at http://www.gc4me.com/.

1.2 Project Introduction

This project derives from NSP 1 & 3 funding granted by HUD. This federal program provides GCMPC an opportunity to engage in neighborhood revitalization efforts throughout the county. A portion of these grants have been allocated to the Beecher neighborhood, located in Mount Morris Township. At the request of Genesee County, this project seeks to create a land use plan for the future function of this neighborhood. Additionally, Genesee County, its Land Bank, and local units of government seek to create a common vision for the area.

1.3 Project Overview

Through study and analysis, the MSU practicum team has produced an assessment of the Beecher neighborhood based on its geography, social and economic profiles, land uses, and land ownership. Innovative reuse ideas for vacant land were researched while maintaining realistic development plans for the short and long terms.

Producing an analysis of this caliber requires a detailed inventory of all parcels within the Beecher neighborhood. Vacant land, its configuration, and current uses were identified. With these and through identifying the ownership of land parcels, criteria were established for strategic demolition. From our full analysis of the Beecher neighborhood parcels, recommendations are provided to sell existing vacant sites to adjacent homeowners. Development recommendations for viable parcels in the short and long term are provided, and the best method for implementing such a land use plan will be determined. Additionally, several alternative land use options for these parcels are provided.

1.4 Project Methodology

Parcel data were gathered from Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and Land Bank jurisdictions. These data were augmented with Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Business Analyst Online (BAO)

to provide market conditions, forecasts, and analysis of physical characteristics of Beecher Site to identify community assets which may support development in the area. Parcels were inventoried between January and February of 2012 by this practicum team to determine whether a parcel was occupied, vacant, or abandoned. Abandoned parcels were photographed. Definitions were crafted as follows:

occupied - possessing one or more man-made structure on the parcel

vacant - an empty parcel of land with no man-made structures present

abandoned - a parcel of land that appears to have been previously occupied but has since fallen into disrepair; a parcel of land which contains unkempt structures or yards; a parcel of land which contains a partially or completely destroyed structure, by fire or Act of God

Data were parsed, organized, and verified across several databases with geographic information system (GIS) softwares ESRI ArcGIS and GRASS GIS. GIS is a type of computer software designed to work with geographic information. This software enables deep analysis and interpretation of geographic data through the production of maps.

After the completion of this neighborhood parcel inventory, a targeted case study analysis of selected cases was conducted. A focus group involving neighborhood residents of Beecher Site was conducted. Following the analysis of all collected data, recommendations and final conclusions were compiled.

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II. Site Profile

Before a future land use plan of an area can be created, a thorough understanding of the demographic and economic trends of Beecher Site and its surrounding environment is necessary. Data presented in this section will assist this study in providing conclusions and recommendations that are aligned with the community's trends and needs.

2.1 Site Location

Beecher Site is located in the eastern-central portion of the lower peninsula of the State of Michigan (Figure2.1.1). Within Genesee County, the site resides in the eastern corner of Mount Morris Township.

Figure 2.1.1: State of Michigan
Source: ESRI, generated February 2012

Beecher Site is adjacent to three different municipalities; the City of Flint to the south, Mount Morris Township to the north, and Genesee Township to the east (Figure 2.1.2).
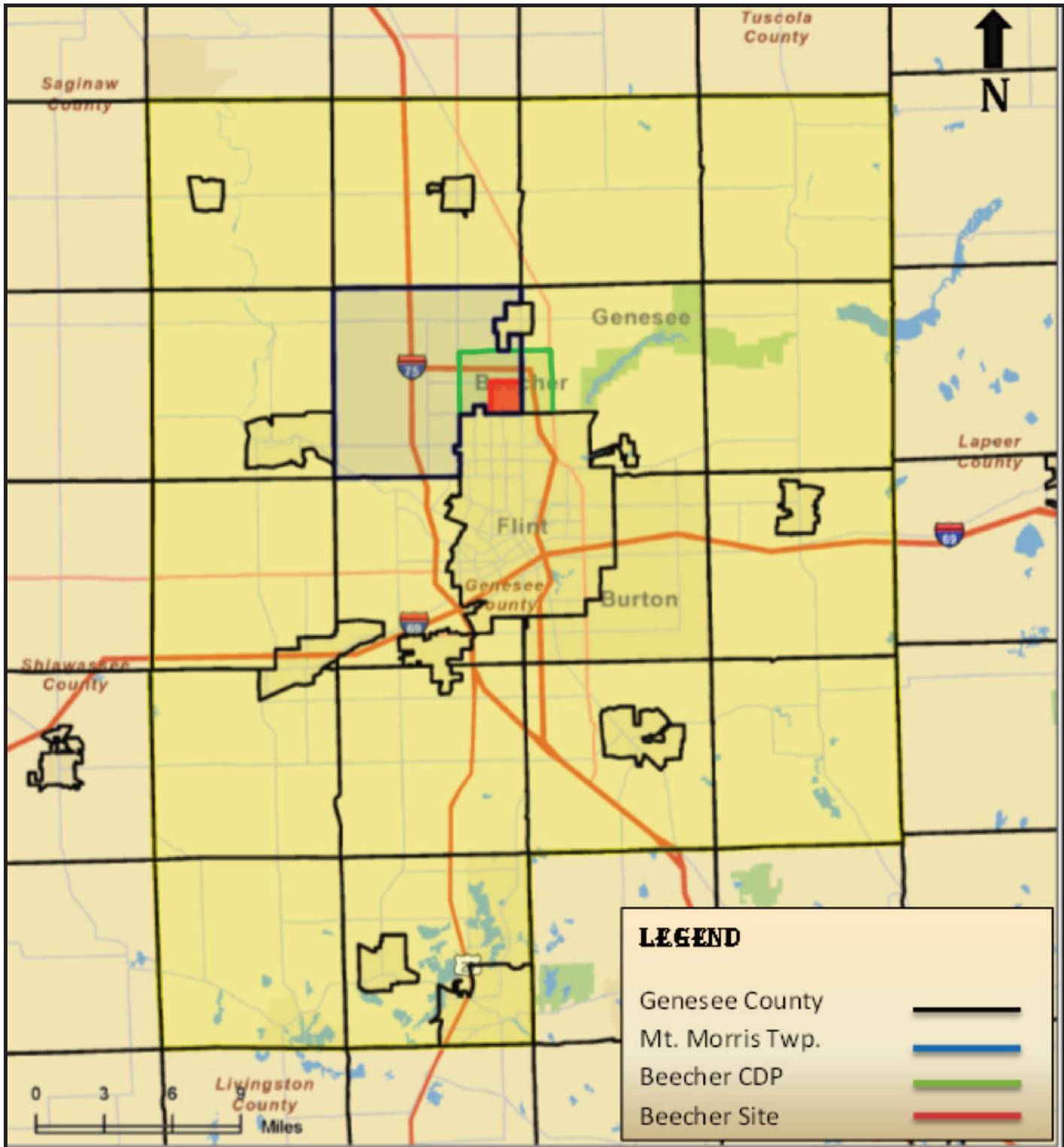
Figure 2.1.2: Location - County, Township, CDP, Site
Source: ESRI, generated February 2012

Beecher Site is further situated within the boundaries of Beecher CDP, a census-designated place (CDP) within Mount Morris Township. Becher CDP is slightly larger than Beecher Site (Figure 2.1.3). This CDP is used by the U.S. Census for statistical usage only.
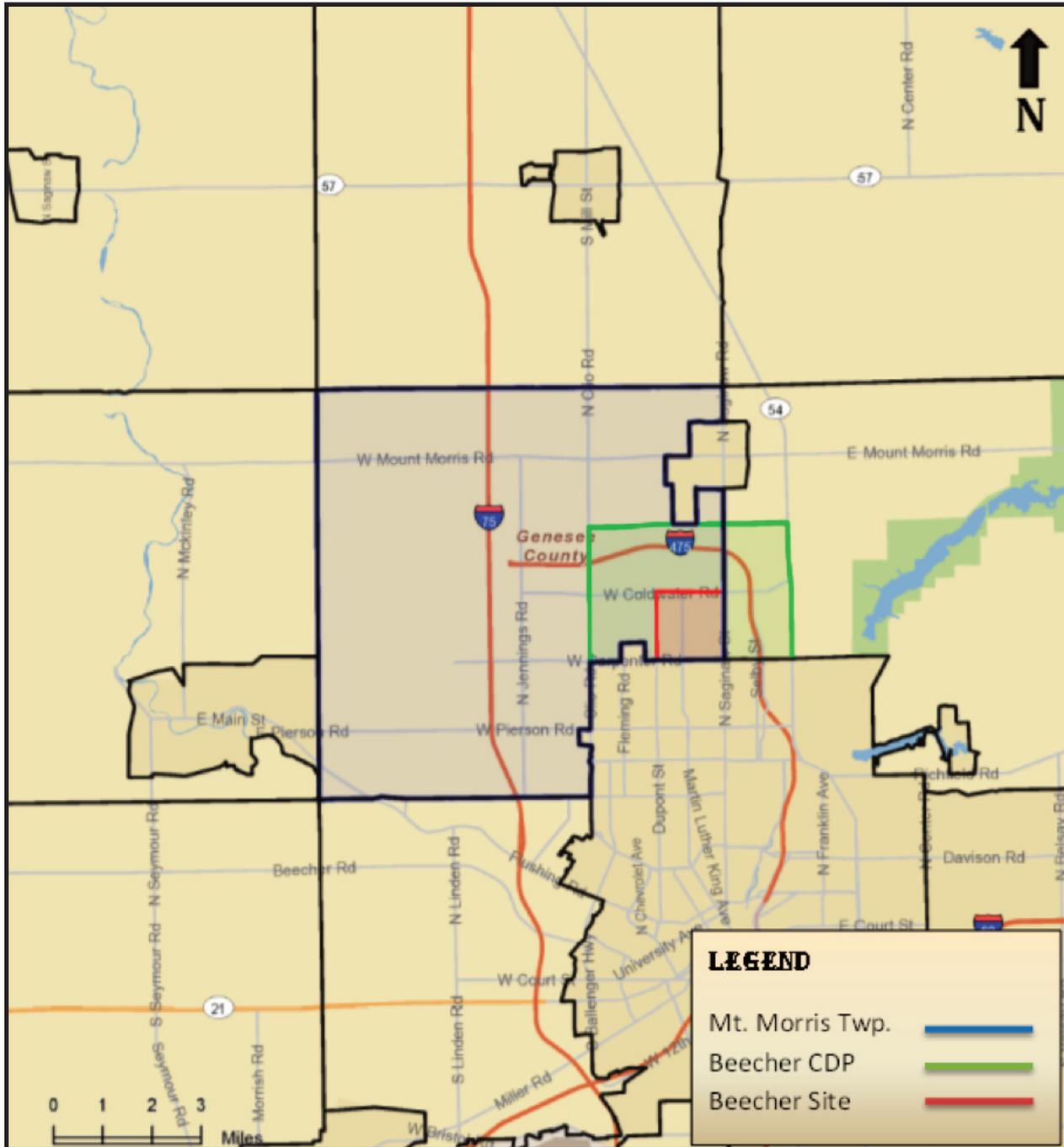
Figure 2.1.3: Location - Township, CDP, Site
Source: ESRI, generated January 2012

Beecher Site consists of a square shape section and covers a region of approximately 1.03 square miles within Beecher CDP (Figure 2.1.4).
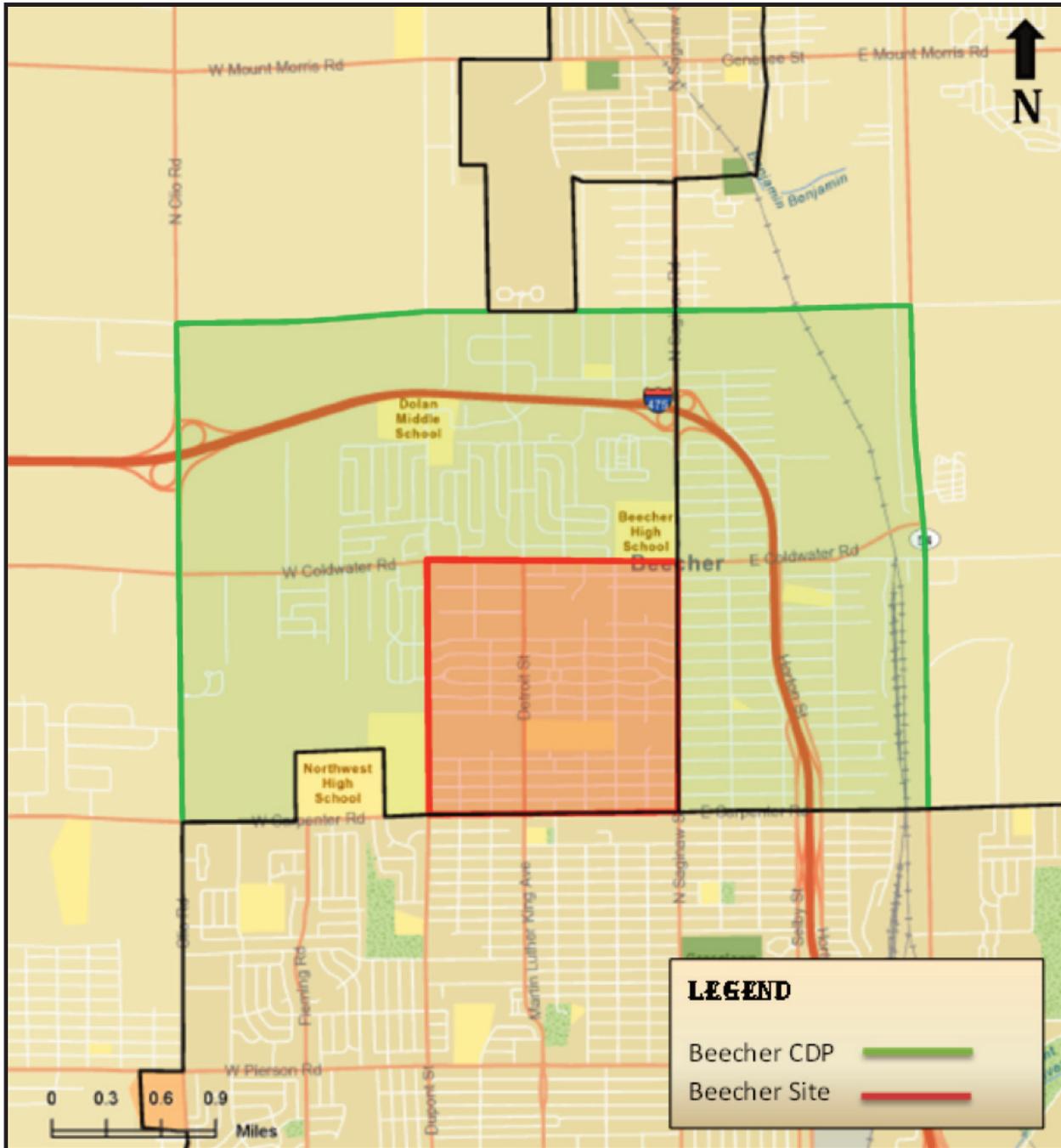
Figure 2.1.4: Location - CDP, Site
Source: ESRI, generated January 2012

Beecher Site is delineated by three thoroughfares; on the north side by Coldwater Road, south side by Carpenter Road, east side by Saginaw Street, and several dead-end roads on the west side, depicted in Figure 2.1.5.

Figure 2.1.5: Site Location
Source: ESRI, generated January 2012

2.2 Character

As of 2010, Beecher Site is comprised of a total population of 3,038 residents, 48% of which are female and 52% are male. These residents reside within a total of 1,505 households; an estimated 39.9% of which are owner-occupied. Housing units are mainly characterized as detached single family homes with an average year built of 1967.[1] Beecher Site is largely residential with commercial and public properties located primarily along the three major thoroughfares. As part of Beecher CDP, the area is served by Beecher Community School District (BCSD) which includes one early childhood school, two elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one adult & alternative high school.[2] The area also has its own designated fire department known as Mount Morris Township Fire Department 3.[3] Additionally, public utility Beecher Metropolitan Water and Sewer District (BMWSD) was established in 1938 and continues to serve residents as the only public agency of its kind within Genesee County. BMWSD provides services to all properties within BCSD boundaries at below-average prices.[4] Township officials believe the utility lines for Beecher Site were constructed in the 1930s with 60-year mains, now likely near the end of their reliable use and capacity.

2.3 History

According to Mount Morris Township officials, development of Beecher Site began in the 1920s. One major initiative begun by General Motors (GM) was to sell building materials to residents for house building.[5] It is likely that a portion of Beecher residents were once employed by GM. No written record of this initiative could be found.

Several historical records were located about the Flint Tornado of 1953. On June 8, 1953 an F5 tornado traveled 2 miles between the City of Flint and Beecher Site.[6] With 900 injured, 116 lives lost, and 20% of residences within Beecher Site destroyed,[9] the tornado also sculpted large swirls into the earth. This tornado remains the 10th deadliest ever recorded in the United States.[7] Figures 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 illustrate physical damage following the aftermath of the tornado.

Figure 2.3.1: Flint Tornado Destruction
Source: Flint Public Library

Economic anchor GM closed eight Buick facilities in 2006.

.

Figure 2.3.2: Flint Tornado Destruction 2
Source: Flint Public Library

2.4 Socioeconomic Profile

The socioeconomic profile has been compiled in terms of population, age distribution, racial composition, educational attainment, household income, unemployment, and crime. Data has been compiled from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) and based upon information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data is provided for Beecher Site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and State of Michigan and follows trends from 2000 to 2010, including 2015 estimations to guide future plans and recommendations.

2.4.1 Population
Future services and needs of an area are based in part upon an estimated change in population. Growth indicates that an area is attracting new residents and assets may need to be developed to match rising demand. Conversely, population loss is usually associated with an over-saturated housing market and property decline.

Table 2.4.1.1 presents populations trends from 2000, 2010 and projections for 2015 for Beecher Site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and State of Michigan.

Table 2.4.1.1 Population Trends
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015

	Beecher Site		Mount Morris Twp		Genesee County		State of Michigan	
Year	Population Total	%Δ	Population Total	%Δ	Population Total	%Δ	Population Total	%Δ
2000	3,375	n/a	23,725	n/a	436,141	n/a	9,938,444	n/a
2010	3,038	-9.99%	22,200	-6.43%	424,800	-2.60%	10,104,633	1.67%
2015	2,893	-4.77%	21,427	-3.48%	414,605	-2.40%	10,039,343	-0.65%

These data illustrate that all three geographic entities have experienced population decline since the year 2000; this decline is projected to continue into 2015. Out of the four geography entities, Beecher Site has experienced the greatest decline with nearly 10% population loss. Mount Morris Township follows with 6.43%, while Genesee County as a whole experienced a smaller decline of 2.6%. In contrast, the State of Michigan experienced a 1.6% growth in population during the same period. Such a drop in population indicates the possible existence of an abandoned housing supply, and a possible decline in aggregate purchasing power for the surrounding environment.

2.4.2 Age Distribution
Age distribution of a community may influence housing desires and services that residents may require. Regions with a high percentage of elderly population will likely desire access to medical services and smaller, more manageable housing units. In contrast, families with young children will likely desire access to playgrounds, larger single family homes, and high-achieving schools.

Table 2.4.2.1 in Appendix 1 presents age distribution trends for 2000, 2010, and predictions for 2015 for Beecher Site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan. Figure 2.4.2.1 illustrates these figures below.

According to the presented data, in 2010 Beecher Site is characterized by an expansive pyramid for age distribution consisting of a higher percentage of youth (age groups 0-9 and 10-24) and smaller percentage of

Figure 2.4.2.1 Age Distribution
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015
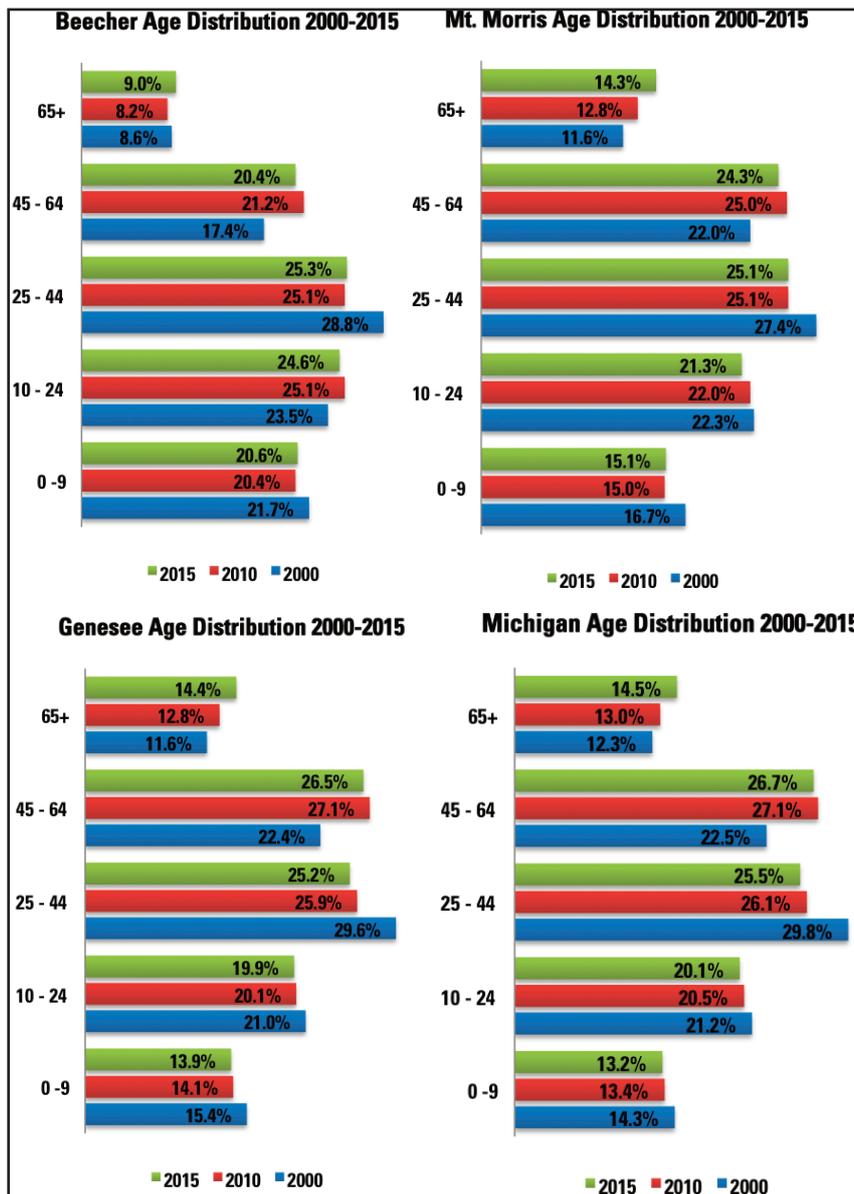
elderly (65+). The age groups of 0-9 and 10-24 make up a combined 45.6% of the population, 21.7% and 23.5% respectively. The elderly (65+) make up an estimated 8.2% of the population while population for age groups 25-44 and 45-64 makes up a combined 46.3% of the population; or 25.1% and 17.4% respectively. Overall, the Beecher area is reported of having a median age of 28 as of 2010. This age distribution has been similar since 2000 and this trend is projected to continue into 2015 as well.

Comparatively, in 2010 Beecher Site consists of the youngest composition of youth population among the three geographic entities, with Mount Morris Township following second with a combined youth population of 37%, elderly population of 12.8% and median age of 35; Genesee County with a combined youth population of 34.2%, elderly population of 12.8%, and median age of 37; and State of Michigan with a combined youth population of 33.9%, elderly population of 13%, and median age of 38. Similar to the subject site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County and the State of Michigan experience minimal change in age distribution within themselves. However, according to the data, while population in Beecher Site is characterized by a slight decline in its median age, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan have been experiencing an increase in their median age. These estimations are projected to remain similar into 2015.

This age distribution, characterized by a larger youth and smaller elderly proportion, indicates that Beecher Site may be in need of different types of services than other geographic units analyzed. To ensure the likelihood of resident retention within Beecher site, it is important that future development efforts in the area consider such an age composition.

## 2.4.3 Race & Ethnic Composition

Table 2.4.3.1 in Appendix 1 presents racial and ethnic composition trends for 2000, 2010, and predictions for 2015 for Beecher Site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan, also shown in Figure 2.4.3.1

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Figure 2.4.3.1 Race & Ethnic Composition
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015

Beecher Site Race/Ethnicity Composition 2010

5.8%
3.6%
0.0%
1.4%
7.6%
46.7%
42.5%

- White Alone
- Black Alone
- American Indian Alone
- Asian or Pacific Isl. Alone
- Some Other Race Alone
- Two or More Races
- Hispanic Origin

Mount Morris Twp. Race/Ethnicity Composition 2010

0.3%
1.4% 3.7% 3.5%
0.6%
40.1% 53.8%

- White Alone
- Black Alone
- American Indian Alone
- Asian or Pacific Isl. Alone
- Some Other Race Alone
- Two or More Races
- Hispanic Origin

Genesee County Race/Ethnicity Composition 2010

0.9%
1.0% 2.6% 2.6%
0.6%
19.1%
75.9%

- White Alone
- Black Alone
- American Indian Alone
- Asian or Pacific Isl. Alone
- Some Other Race Alone

Michigan Race/Ethnicity Composition 2010

2.3%
1.7%
4.3%
2.5%
0.6%
13.9%
79.0%

- White Alone
- Black Alone
- American Indian Alone
- Asian or Pacific Isl. Alone
- Some Other Race Alone
- Two or More Races
- Hispanic Origin

According to the presented data, Beecher Site is characterized by a slightly larger proportion of minority population within its geographical boundaries. The largest group of minorities is represented by Black or African American population which in 2010 comprised approximately 42.5%, followed by individuals of Hispanic origin with 7.6%. Minority composition (non-white) encompasses more than half of the total population. Non-white population has been increasing since 2000 and is further projected to increase in the future as well. The rise of the diversity index for the target area is a further indication of these changes among race and ethnicity of the population. The diversity index is a measure of the racial and ethnic composition of the community as a whole. It calculates the likelihood that two persons chosen at random from the same area, will belong to a different race or ethnicity. The index ranges from zero to 100, where a score of 100 indicates that when two persons from the same area are chosen at random their likelihood of being of a different race or ethnicity is 100 percent; while a score of zero indicates that the area is completely homogeneous in terms of race and ethnicity. As of 2010 Beecher site has a diversity index of 65.7 which describes the subject site as an above-average heterogeneous community.

From a comparative perspective, the Beecher site consists of the highest composition of minorities. Mount Morris Township is somewhat reflective of Beecher site in terms of racial composition, with individual of Hispanic origin comprising the largest difference among the two (3.5% Hispanic origin for Mount Morris Township vs 7.6% Hispanic origin for Beecher site as of 2010). Diversity index is also 10% lower for Mount Morris, indicating a less heterogeneous community. Despite these changes, the largest difference is seen for Genesee County and the State of Michigan. These two regions are mostly composed of White population which comprises 76% and 79% of individuals respectively. In comparison, Black or African American population comprises 19% for Genesee County and 14% for Michigan; while individuals of Hispanic Origin comprise 2.6% for the County and 4.3% for Michigan. These two areas are further characterized by a diversity index of 41.8 for the County and 40.9 for the Michigan, indicating the existence of a more homogeneous and less heterogeneous community in both cases. Based on this analysis, it should be noted that although the subject area is characterized by a heterogeneous population, comparisons indicate that there exists racial concentrations within its boundaries and slightly less so for Mt. Morris Township in comparison to Genesee County and State of Michigan.

2.4.4 Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment is a social indicator closely correlated with income. The region characterized by the largest proportion of population with post-secondary education is likely possesses higher individual incomes and wealth. Table 2.4.4.1.1in Appendix 1 illustrates educational attainment for population over the age of 25 for 2010 for Beecher Site, Mount Morris Township, and Genesee County. Below, Figure 2.4.4.1 depicts these data graphically.

Figure 2.4.4.1 Educational Attainment
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015
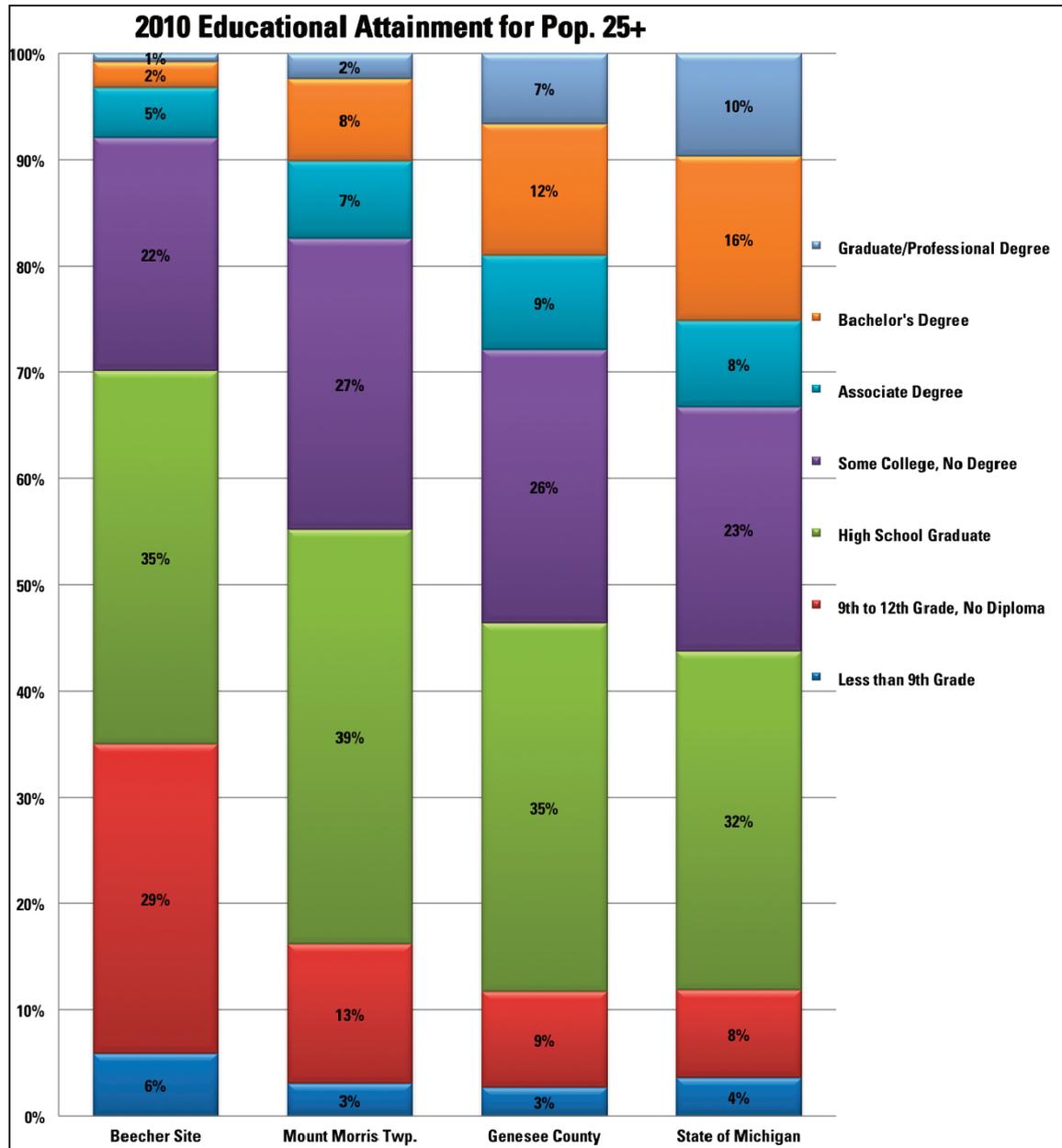
Beecher Site displays a lower post-secondary educational attainment when compared to Mount Morris Township, Genesee County and the State of Michigan with 7.9%.This figure is approximately half that of the post-secondary educational attainment of Mount Morris Township, $^1/_3$ smaller than that of Genesee County, and $^1/_4$ that of the State of Michigan. Population 25+ with 9th to 12th grade and no degree or less than 9th grade follow a similar association with the population in Beecher site; these two groups are approximately two times greater than that of the other geographies analyzed. The majority of the population in this area is characterized by the attainment of a High School degree or less at 70%, while the population with a graduate/professional degree comprises the smallest proportion of the population at 0.8%. This small proportion of post-secondary educational attainment for population 25+, indicates that the Beecher Site may be composed of a lower amount of individual income

compared to the other geographic units analyzed.

2.4.5 Household Income

Household income is an indicator of monetary wealth. The existence of a large household income, or lack thereof, can impact many things: from the ability of the population to supply their basic needs such housing, homeownership, transportation, and healthcare, to the acquisition of more lucrative activities such as recreation and entertainment. A region with high household income levels tends to suggest the existence of greater disposable income and larger consumer markets.

Table 2.4.5.1 in Appendix 1 presents household income trends for 2000, 2010, and projections for 2015 for Beecher site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan. Figure 2.4.5.1 below illustrates 2010 household income for the four geographic entities.

Figure 2.4.5.1 Household Income
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015
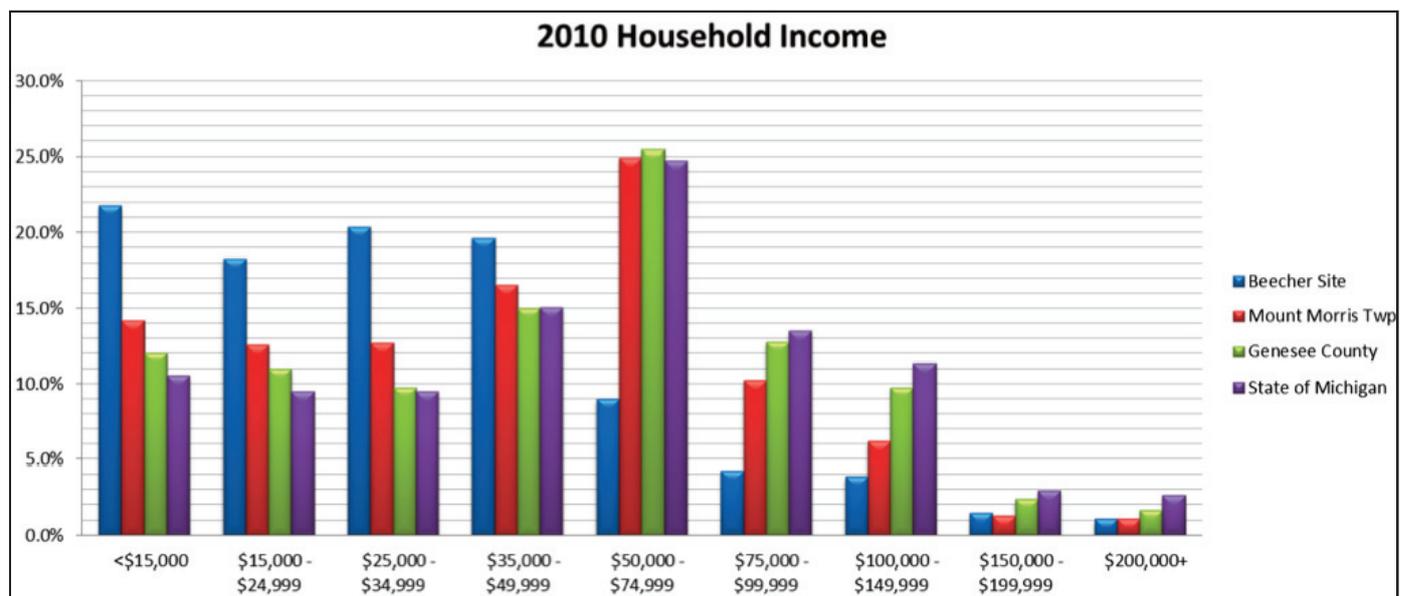
According to the presented data, approximately 80% of the population in the subject area for 2010 is below the Area Median Income (AMI) of the county, with the majority of the population (21.8%) falling in the household income range of $15,000 or less. Conversely, the smallest proportion of the households (1.1%) falls into the $200,000+ range. From 2000 to 2015 the region could experience some positive increase in income levels. This change is noticeable in the median household income of the Beecher area which has risen 25% from $24,622 to $30,603 from 2000 to 2010. These income level increases have been occurring at similar rates among Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan households as well. However, as previously mentioned, the median income for these three geographic entities is also much higher than that of the subject area. For 2010, these figures are as follows: $30,603 for Beecher site, $43,635 for Mount Morris Township, $51,734 for Genesee County, and $67,356 for the State of Michigan.

It is important to note that these household income conditions exist in Beecher Site despite a larger average household size (2.85) than the other geographic entities. Individual earned incomes may be less for Beecher Site than the other geographic entities.

This analysis shows that the majority of households in the subject site are under stressed conditions relative to their household income. Poverty is likely a common occurrence among households. In 2010, for a family or household of three (reflective of average household size of the Beecher area), the poverty threshold was reported at $17,374 . The majority of the households fall below the County AMI which indicates little disposable income.

2.4.6 Employment

Employment levels are an indication of community stability. With low unemployment, there is generally a balanced supply and demand among available jobs for an available, qualified civilian workforce over the age of 16, with many types of jobs available. Typically when joblessness is low, resident attraction to the area tends to be high.[9] Conversely, a high joblessness rate places stress upon a community for available income, quality of life, as well as increasing instance of mortgage default by homeowners.[10]

Table 2.4.6.1 in Appendix 1 presents the unemployment levels for the civilian population 16+ for 2010 and projections for 2015 for Beecher site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan; Table 2.4.6.2 illustrates the industry this civilian population is employed in as of 2010, solely for presentation of occupational distribution of the population. Figures 2.4.6.1 and 2.4.6.2 illustrate these two tables graphically.

Figure 2.4.6.1 Unemployment Rate
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015
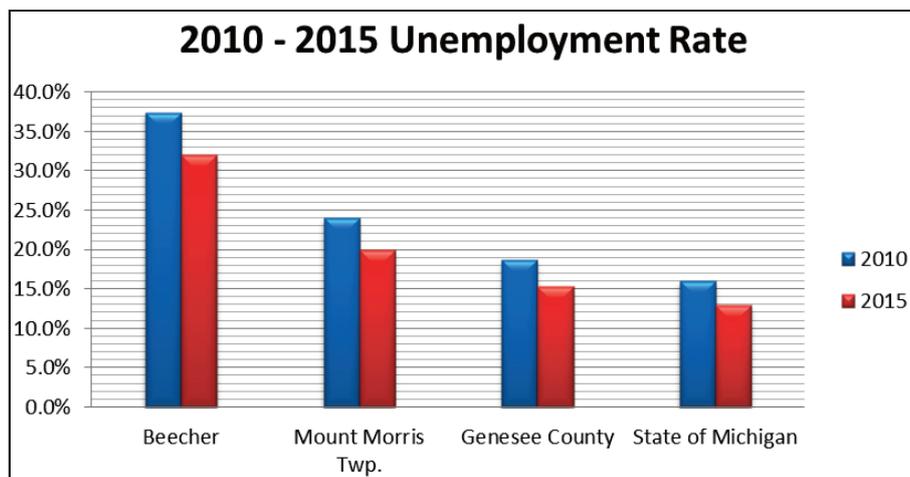
Figure 2.4.6.2 Employment by Industry
Source: U.S. Census Bureau
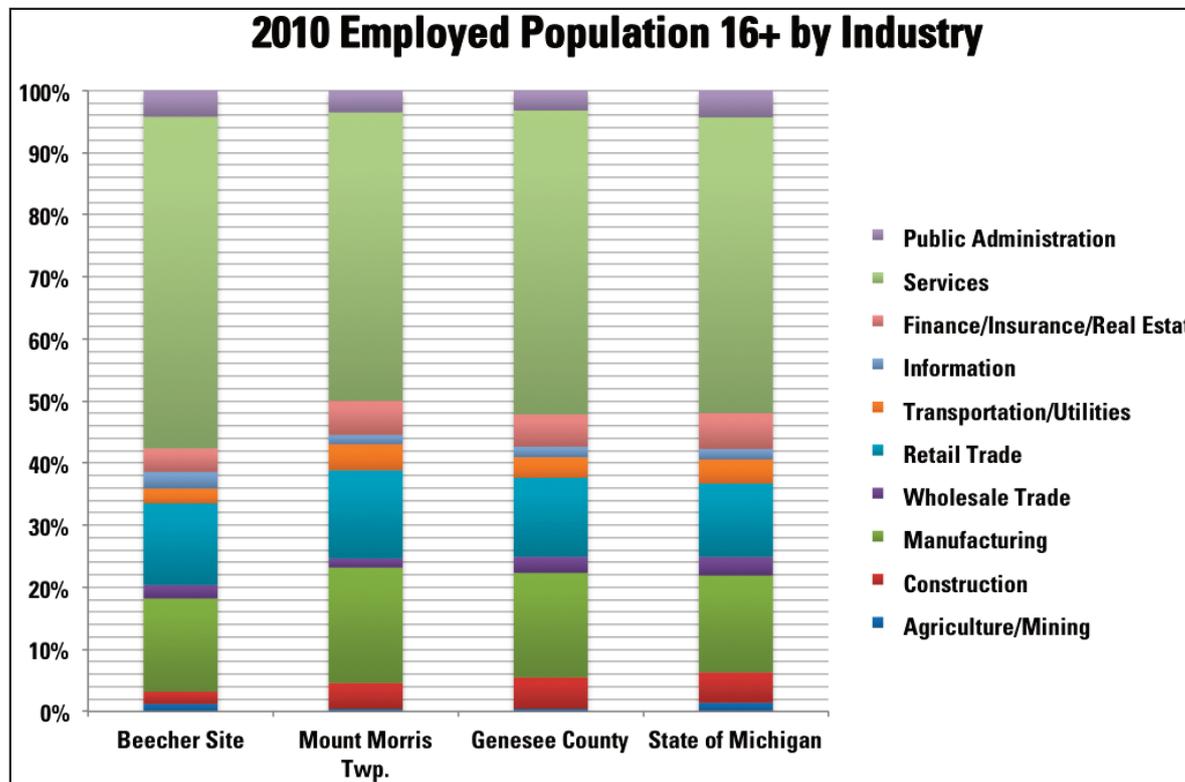
According to the presented data, 37.4% of the civilian population 16+ in the subject area is unemployed. This figure is considerably higher than that of Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan, which have an unemployment rate of 24%, 18.7%, and 16% respectively. While this figure is expected to decline by 2015, for Beecher Site this will still be above the 30% level, and approximately 10% higher, 16% higher and 19% of the expected unemployment rate for Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan.

This high rate of unemployment among the civilian population in the labor force residing in Beecher Site is an indication of this region's stresses. With approximately 1 in 3 of the analyzed population reportedly unemployed, reduced quality of life, reduced disposable income, increased inability to meet financial obligations, and sustained demand for public services is likely to follow. In terms of occupation, nearly half of residents living in Beecher Site are employed in the service industry, with manufacturing, and retail service industries also comprising the majority. These figures are similar to the other three geographic entities analyzed and do not present any outliers.

2.4.7 School Performance

Neighborhood conditions are closely correlated with educational achievement and school performance. Students living in distressed neighborhoods tend to perform poorly in school and are at a greater risk for a lower graduation rate.[11, 12] Consequently, an analysis of the school performance of Beecher Site can provide a general perspective on the condition of the site. This analysis compares the trends of school performance and graduation rates for School District 25240, commonly known as Beecher Community School District (BCSD) against the State of Michigan trends and averages. Schools in BCSD include Beecher High School, Beecher Middle School, Beecher Adult & Alternative, Dailey Elementary, Tucker Elementary, and Early Childhood. Figure 2.4.7.1 presents dropout rates of BCSD and State of Michigan averages for school years 2006 through 2009. Figure 2.4.7.2 through 2.4.7.5 presents school performance for these two geographies for the 2008-2009 school year based on test scores in reading and mathematics from the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) examination for 8th grade students, and Michigan Merit Examination (MME) for 11th grade students.

Figure 2.4.7.1 BCSD Dropout Rate
Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2006-2009
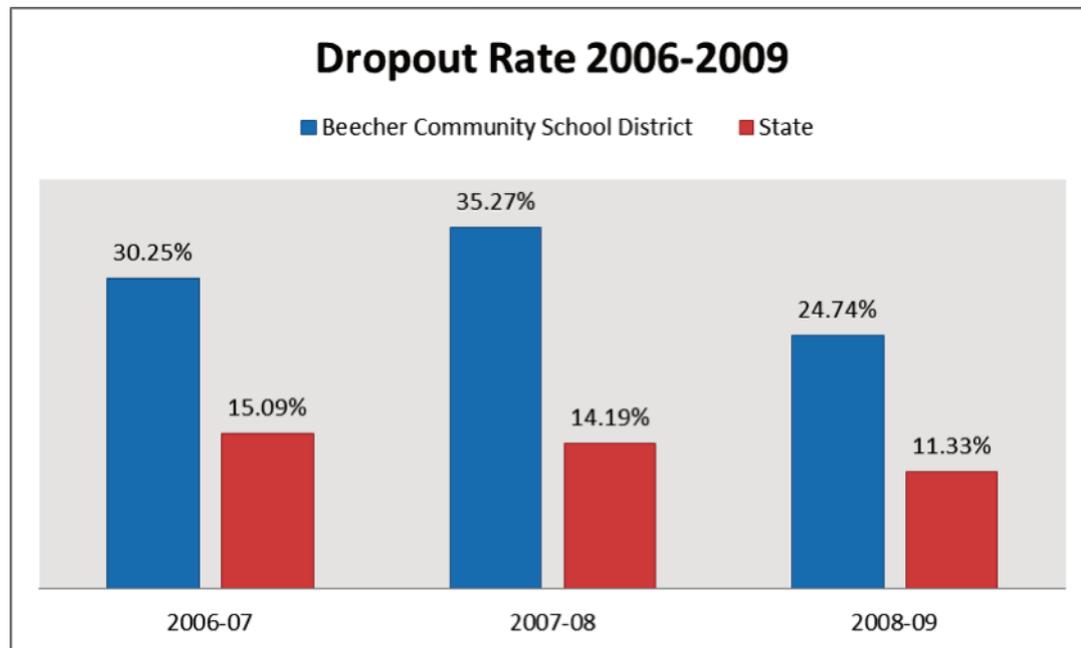
The Beecher Community School District is characterized by a higher dropout rate than that of the State of Michigan. For the 2008-2009 school years, approximately 24.7% or 1 in 4 students dropped out from one of the schools in the school district. For the same year, this figure was approximately 13% higher than that of the State of Michigan. Although trends from 2006-2009 illustrate a noticeable decrease in dropout rates for the

BCSD, this decrease was not steady. Fluctuations were apparent from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008. Comparatively, the State of Michigan is characterized by a steady decrease in dropout rates for the school years analyzed.

Figure 2.4.7.2 MEAP 8th Grade Reading Scores
Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2008-2009
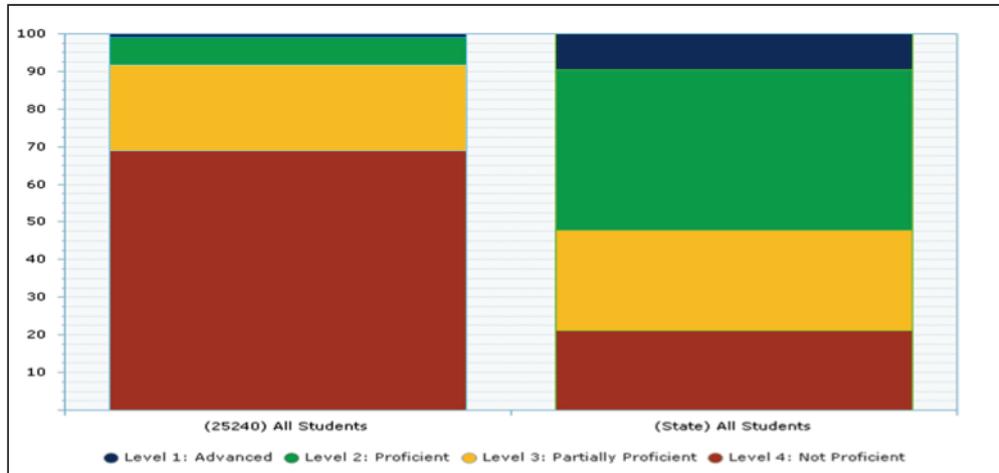
Figure 2.4.7.3 MEAP 8th Grade Mathematics Scores
Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2008-2009
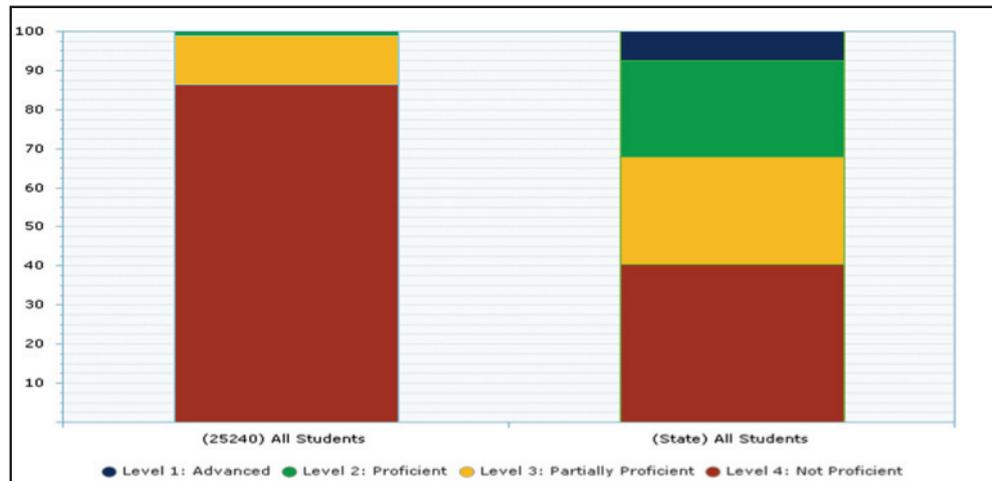
Figure 2.4.7.4 MME 11th Grade Mathematics Scores
Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2008-2009

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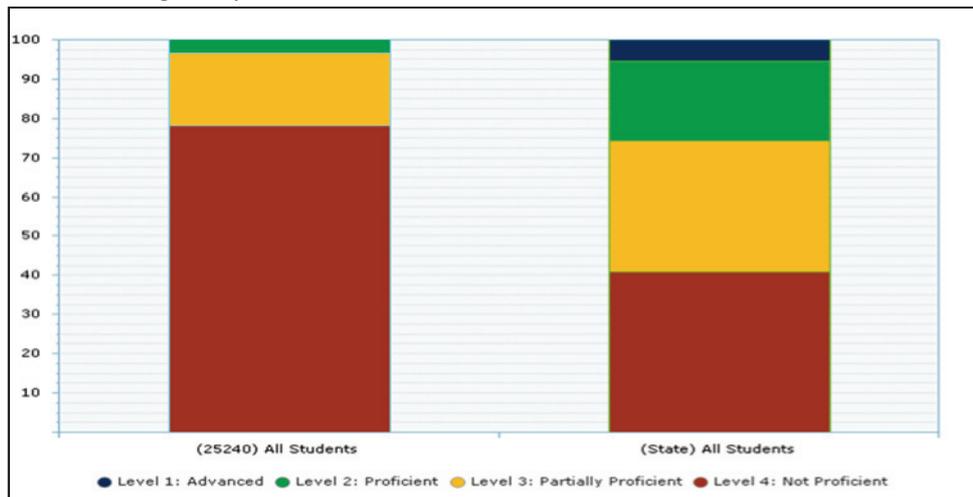
Figure 2.4.7.5 MME 11th Grade Reading Scores
Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2008-2009
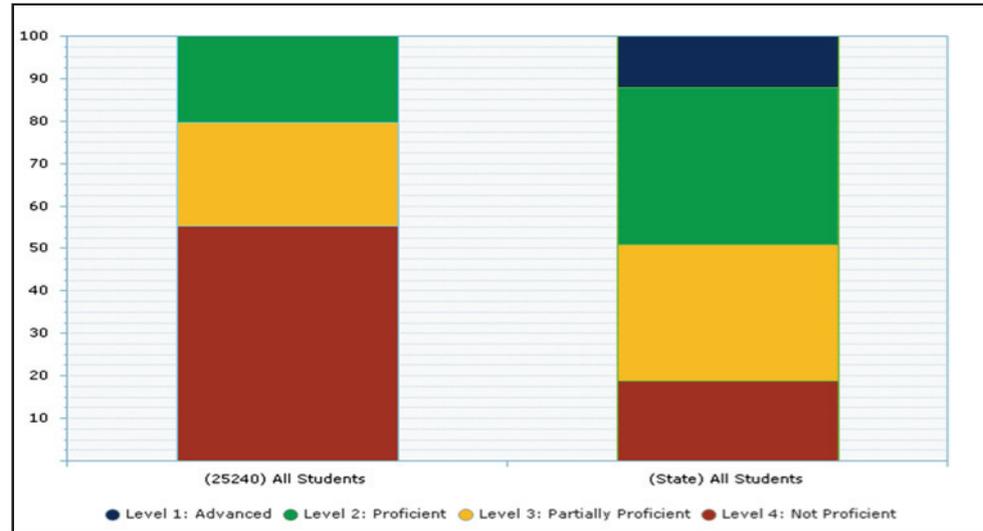
In terms of school performance, the BCSD underperforms when compared to the overall school districts in the State of Michigan. In all cases, more than 50% of students in the Beecher school district were categorized as "Not Proficient" in terms of the subject analyzed. In comparison, students for the State of Michigan in the "Not Proficient" bracket are characterized by lower rates which range between 20% to 40%, and are generally half of the rate represented by students in the Beecher school district under the same category analyzed. The poorest aggregate performances were reported by 8th grade students, while 11th grade students fared slightly better, for both units of analysis.

Based on dropout rates and school performance for students in BCSD and the correlation between neighborhood conditions and school performance, the Beecher site can be characterized as a poor and disadvantage neighborhood. Furthermore, the high dropout rate and poor school performance makes the affected population less likely to acquire employment opportunities, more likely to live in poverty, and more likely to become involved in crime.[13, 14, 15] The aggregate complications of these factors can place stress on the local economy. As a result of these findings, these education related implications should be considered when implementing future land use patterns for the study area.

2.4.8 Crime Rate

Crime incidence provides one perspective on the safety and well-being of individuals and households in a specific area. Crime is also correlated with socio-economic conditions of an area, most notably age composition, unemployment, and rate of poverty. A location characterized by a large male population aged 10 to 30 is more likely to be associated with high crime rates. This condition is also called the age-crime curve, with crime rates typically increasing during ages 10-13 during preadolescence, reaching peak around age 14-19 in late adolescence, than declining steadily once age 30 is passed . Economically, high poverty and unemployment often coincide with increased crime; as household and disposable incomes decrease and employment is lost, opportunity to acquire wealth through legitimate means becomes scarce. Crime is often pursued when faced with these circumstances.[17, 18]

Figure 2.4.8.1 presents violent crime rates for Mount Morris Township, the State of Michigan, and the United States from 2007 to 2009. Violent crime is defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Figure 2.4.8.2 presents property crime rates for Mount Morris Township, the State of Michigan, and the United States from 2007 to 2009. Property crime is defined by the FBI as burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Figure 2.4.8.1 Violent Crime Rate
Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports
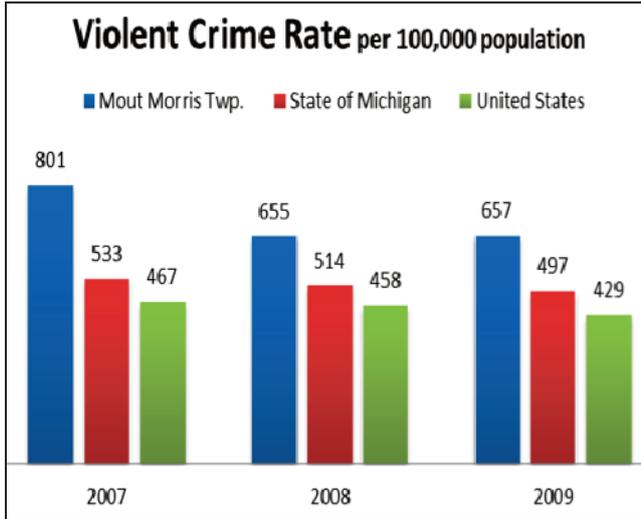
Figure 2.4.8.2 Property Crime Rate
Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports
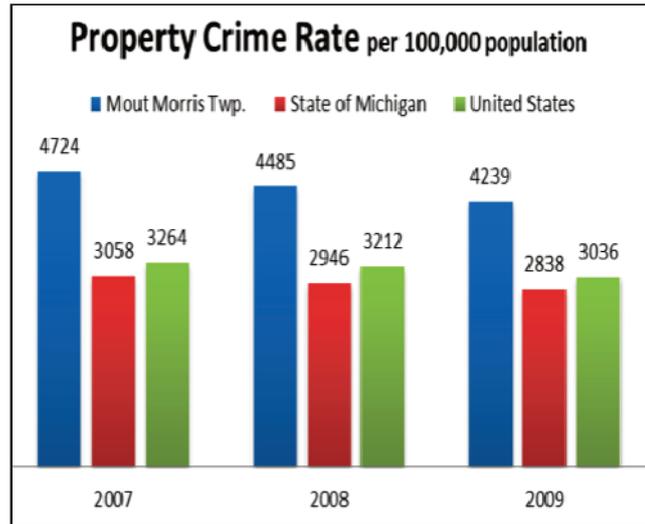
Crime rate in Mount Morris Township is higher than that of the State of Michigan and the whole United States for both violent and property crimes for all three years reported. In 2009, violent crime in Mount Morris Township occurred 25% more frequently than that in the State of Michigan, and 35% greater than the national rate. Property crime exhibits similar patterns. From 2007 to 2009, both violent and property crime rates for all units of analysis experienced steady decline. According to the Michigan State Police, Mount Morris Township saw a modest increase in the rate of arrest during 2010. However the rate of violent crime in Mount Morris Township was 68% higher while property crime was 84% higher than the state average for the same year.

The elevated crime rates can be a cause for concern. The data shows that safety, individual well-being, and property conditions in this region are more at risk than conditions in the state and the nation for the years analyzed. The data also acts as a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of the region which is characterized by a large youth population, high unemployment, and high poverty rate.

2.4.9 Socioeconomic Summary

The following is a summation of the socioeconomic trends and comparisons for Beecher Site based on the analysis conducted in the socioeconomic profile section. Comparisons, where available, were provided for the Beecher Site, Mount Morris Township, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan. Trends, where available, were provided for the year 2000, and 2010, as well as future predictions for 2015.

Population – Beecher site has experienced steady decline in population numbers from 2000 to 2010. This decline is expected to continue into 2015 and represent the largest proportion of decline out of the four geographic units analyzed, at approximately 10%. This drop in population indicates the possible existence of an abandoned housing supply, and a possible decline in aggregate purchasing power for the surrounding environment.

Age Distribution – Age distribution in Beecher site is characterized by a larger youth population (age groups 0-9 and 10-24) and smaller elderly population(age group 65+). These trends are in stark contrast to the other geographic entities analyzed. To ensure likelihood of resident retention within the neighborhood, it is important that future development efforts in the area are considerate of such age composition.

Race & Ethnic Composition – Beecher site is characterized by a heterogeneous race & ethnic composition with a diversity index of 65.7. Minority proportion comprises the majority of the population, with Black or African American population comprising the largest group with approximately 42.5% of the population, followed by individuals of Hispanic origin with 7.6%. Based on comparison analysis, data indicates the existence of possible

racial concentration within the boundaries of Beecher Site.

Educational Attainment – The educational attainment level in Beecher Site at the post-secondary level is about half that of Mt. Morris Township, one-third of Genesee County, and one-quarter of the State of Michigan. This low proportion of post-secondary educational attainment indicates that the Beecher Site may be composed of a lower amount of individual income compared to the other geographic units analyzed.

Household Income - The majority of households in the Beecher site are under stressed conditions relative to their household income. Poverty is likely a common occurrence among households. For 2010, for a family or household of three (reflective of average household size of the Beecher site), the poverty threshold was reported at $17,374. The majority of households fall below the County AMI which indicates little disposable income.

Employment - Beecher site is characterized by an unemployment rate of 37.4% as of 2010. This high rate of unemployment among the civilian population in the labor force residing in Beecher site is an indication of this region's stresses. With approximately 1 in 3 of the analyzed population reportedly unemployed, reduced quality of life, reduced disposable income, increased inability to meet financial obligations, and sustained demand for public services is a likely occurrence.

School Performance - Majority of the students attending schools in the Beecher Community School District are characterized by a high dropout rate and "Not Proficient" school performance. Based on these data and the correlation between neighborhood conditions and school performance, the Beecher site can be characterized as a poor and disadvantaged neighborhood. Furthermore, the high dropout rate and poor school performance makes the affected population less likely to acquire employment opportunities, more likely to live in poverty, and more likely to become involved in crime. The aggregate complications of these factors can place stress on the local economy.

Crime Rate – Beecher site is characterized by a higher crime rate than the Mount Morris Township, and State of Michigan average crime rates. These elevated crime rates can be a cause for concern. Data analyzed illustrates that public safety, individual well-being, and property conditions in this region are more at risk than conditions in the state and the nation for the years analyzed.

Beecher Stabilization Plan

III. Site Factors

The following section includes an analysis of the physical characteristics of Beecher Site. This effort is undertaken with the purpose of identifying viable community assets which may be used to support future constructive development. Topics have been selected based on field work conducted by this practicum team throughout the duration of this project, as well as practiced planning experience.

3.1 Zoning

This section presents current zoning and permitted uses under the zoning ordinance of Mount Morris Township for Beecher Site. Figure 3.1.1 illustrates the zoning map for section 24 of Mount Morris Township which represents the study area in its entirety.
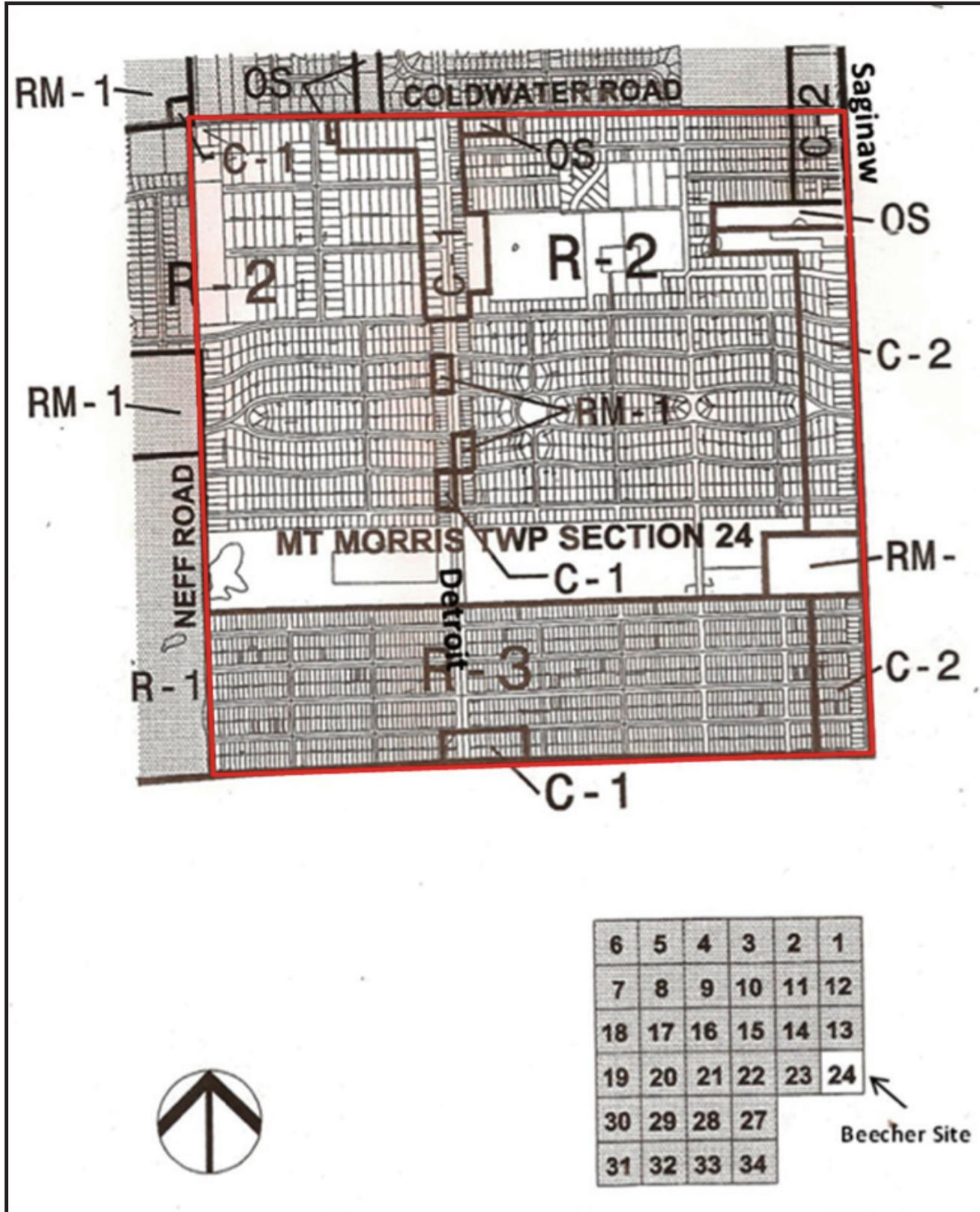

Figure 3.1.1 Mount Morris Twp Section 24 Zoning
Source: Mount Morris Township

According to the map, zones found within the boundaries of Beecher Site are:

> **R-2**: Single Family Residential District
> **R-3**: Single Family Residential District
> **RM1**: Multiple Family Residential District
> **C-1**: Local Commercial District
> **C-2**: Community Commercial District
> **OS**: Office Service District[11]

3.1.1 R-2 & R-3 Single Family Residential Districts

The R-2 & R-3 districts comprise the majority of the surface area in Beecher Site, with the R-2 district covering the greatest area. The R-3 district defines the southern section of Beecher Site, from Downy Avenue south- wards to Carpenter Road. Both R-2 and R-3 districts permit the construction and continued use of single-family residential units; while the districts are functionally identical, the R-2 district is characterized by its denser and smaller lots than the R-3 district.

Permitted principal uses under the R-2 & R-3 district include:
§ Single family detached dwellings
§ Publicly owned parks and other public open space
§ Public buildings and uses
§ Essential services excluding outside storage
§ State licensed child and adult care facilities providing care for less than seven (7)
individuals.

Special uses under the R-2 & R-3 district include:
§ Churches and schools
§ Licensed child and adult care facilities providing care for seven (7) to twelve (12) individuals.[20]

3.1.2 RM-1 District

The RM-1 district comprises small pockets along Detroit Street down the center of Beecher site and in the eastern corner of parcels along Downy Avenue. The purpose of the RM-1 district is to allow the construction and continued use of multiple-family residential units

Permitted principal uses under this district include:
§ Single family attached dwellings (townhouses, row houses, and quadraplexes)
§ Two-family dwellings
§ Multiple dwellings (garden style apartments)
§ Essential services excluding outside storage
§ State licensed child and adult care facilities providing care for less than seven (7)
individuals

Special uses under the RM-1 district include:
§ Convalescent homes
§ Licensed child and adult care facilities providing care for seven (7) to twelve (12) individuals[21]

3.1.3 C-1 Local Commercial District

The C-1 district comprises a small section of the area along the middle and southern area of Detroit Street. The purpose of this zone is the establishment of local services and shopping facilities that might support the

surrounding neighborhood.

Permitted principal uses under this district include:
- § Generally recognized retail business that supply commodities on the premises for persons residing in adjacent residential areas (e.g. groceries, books, clothing)
- § Convenience stores
- § Personal service establishments that perform services on the premises (e.g. repair shops, tailor shops)
- § Dry cleaning establishments or pick-up stations, dealing directly with the consumer
- § Business establishments which perform services on the premises such as, but not limited to, insurance offices and real estate offices
- § Essential services excluding outside storage
- § Publicly-owned buildings

Special uses under this district include:
- § Automotive service stations
- § Restaurants, not including drive-ins or drive-thrus or fast food restaurants
- § Bar and tavern
- § Child day care or nursery schools[22]

3.1.4 C-2 District

The C-2 district defines the section of the target area solely located along Saginaw Street. The purpose of this zone is establishment and accommodation of large consumer based businesses which are generally clustered, characterized by a shared parking area and generate large traffic and pedestrian volume.

Permitted principal uses under this district include:
- § Any retail business whose principal activity is the sale of merchandise in an enclosed building (e.g. department stores, grocery stores, drug stores)
- § Any service establishment with an office, showroom or workshop
- § Clubs, civic and fraternal organizations and lodge halls
- § Restaurants or other places serving food or beverage
- § Theaters, assembly halls, concert halls or similar places of assembly when conducted completely within enclosed buildings
- § Public and private educational facilities and institutions
- § Athletic or physical fitness establishments
- § Greenhouses and landscape sales.
- § Financial institutions
- § Bar and taverns
- § Personal, financial, professional or business services

Special uses under this district include:
- § Indoor and outdoor businesses developed in planned relationship with other uses in the C-2 district
- § Child day care or nursery schools
- § Party stores[22]

3.1.5 OS District

The OS district defines small sections of Beecher Site along Coldwater Road, Detroit Street, and the northern section of Saginaw Road. The purpose of this zone is to establish areas whose principal usage are office buildings,

which might act as a transition district between residential districts and other districts with the potential to detrimentally affect the residential district if located adjacent to them.

Permitted principal uses for this district include:
§ Office buildings for a variety of occupations (e.g. executive, administrative, professional)
§ Medical offices, including clinics, specialty stores that principally dispense
products relating to medical facilities
§ Banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations and similar uses
§ Personal service establishments (e.g. barber shops, beauty shops)
§ Essential services excluding outside storage

Special uses for this district include:
§ Mortuary establishments
§ Publically owned buildings, telephone exchange buildings and public utilities offices; not including
storage yards, electrical transformer stations, substations or gas regulator stations
§ Animal hospital and veterinarian clinics
§ Child day care or nursery schools
§ Public, private, or parochial schools[24]

3.2 Land Use

While a zoning map graphically represents the uses permitted upon a piece of land, a land use map graphically represents the current uses of the land. The two do not necessarily overlap for reasons such as: land use map predating the zoning map, recent rezoning, and non-compliant uses. To establish a comprehensive understanding of the Beecher Site the following section presents a land use analysis of Beecher Site and its built environment. Figure 3.2.1 shows the existing land use map for Beecher Site and its surrounding environment in February of 2012.

According to the Beecher existing land use map, the target area and its surrounding environment is composed primarily of residential units. Commercial units are located mostly along main thoroughfares and tend to follow a similar pattern as set under the commercial zoning districts for the area (C-1, C-2), primarily located on the eastern side of Beecher Site along Saginaw Street, and sporadically along the north-south thoroughfare Detroit Street.

The public/exempt land use covers a large amount of land within the site as well. This land use category is comprised of public institutions, public land or publicly owned vacant land such as green space, churches, school property and other related uses. They are located mostly on the southern side of the target area and cover approximately one-tenth of the land from Saginaw Street to the western most edge of the site; along Detroit Street adjacent to commercial units; on the north-eastern corner of the site between Detroit Street and Saginaw Street; and less densely on the north-western corner of the site. Public/exempt land uses are also found sparsely within the target area and the surrounding environment. However, these lots are likely publically-owned housing which currently stand vacant.

Industrial land uses comprise the smaller portion of existing use. Only two parcels are evident in the area illustrated. These are located outside the boundaries of Beecher Site, east of Interstate 75 (I-75).

Beecher Stabilization Plan
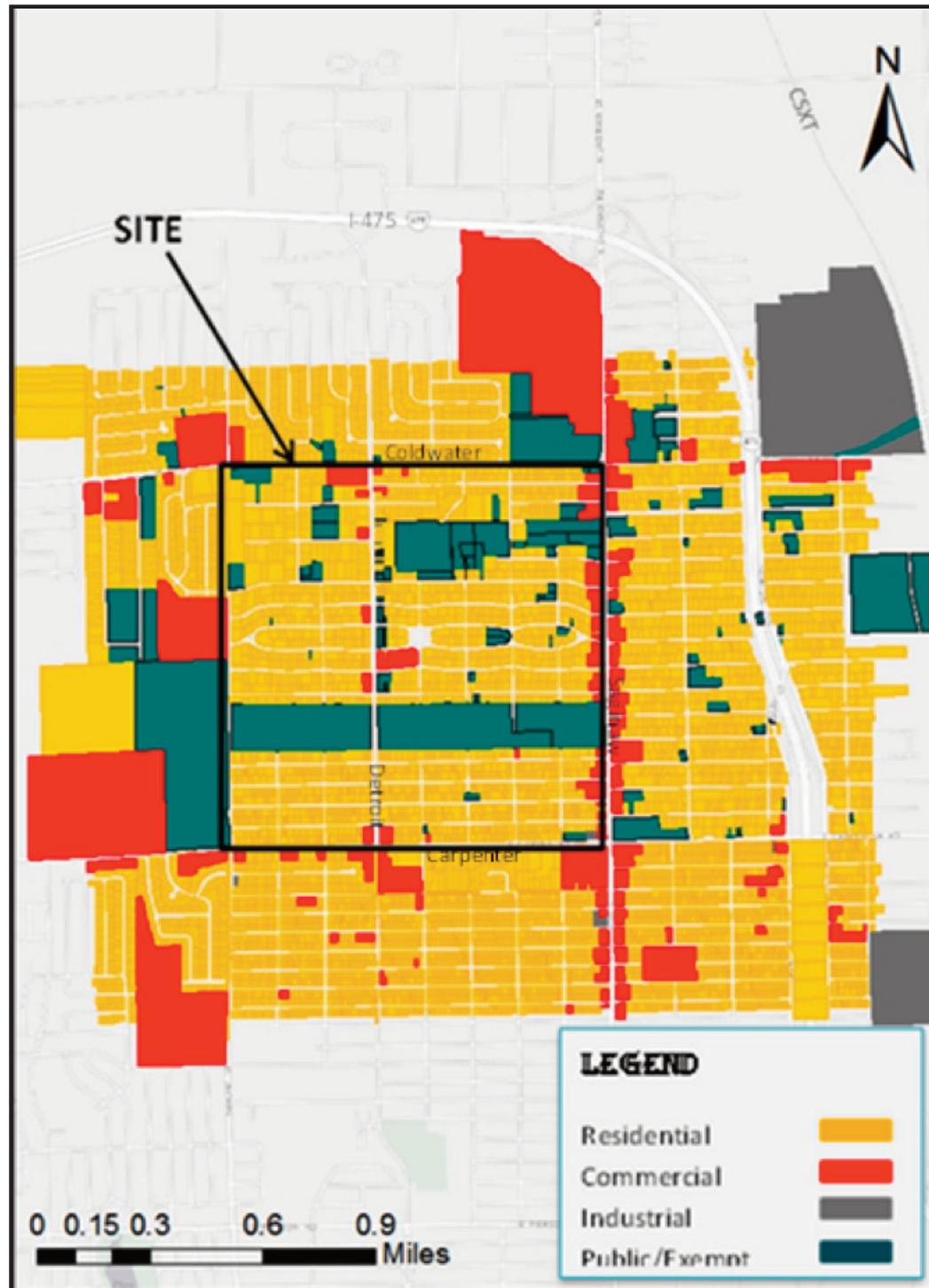
Figure 3.3.1 Beecher Existing Land Use
Source: Generated from Genesee County GIS data, February 2012

3.3 Nonconforming Uses

Previous analysis of the zoning and existing land uses of Beecher Site leads us to identify any nonconforming uses on the site. Nonconforming uses are uses of land that do not conform to the uses explicitly allowed under the Mount Morris Township Zoning Ordinance. Future conformance of nonconforming uses may be important to a community as it allows for compliance with regulations stated in the zoning ordinance, along with realizing the community vision as configured through the zoning regulations. Below, Figure 3.3.1 presents current nonconforming uses in Beecher Site. This map is only an approximation of nonconformance and should not be used for regulatory enforcement.

Figure 4.3.1 Beecher Site Nonconforming Uses
Source: Generated from Genesee County GIS data, March 2012
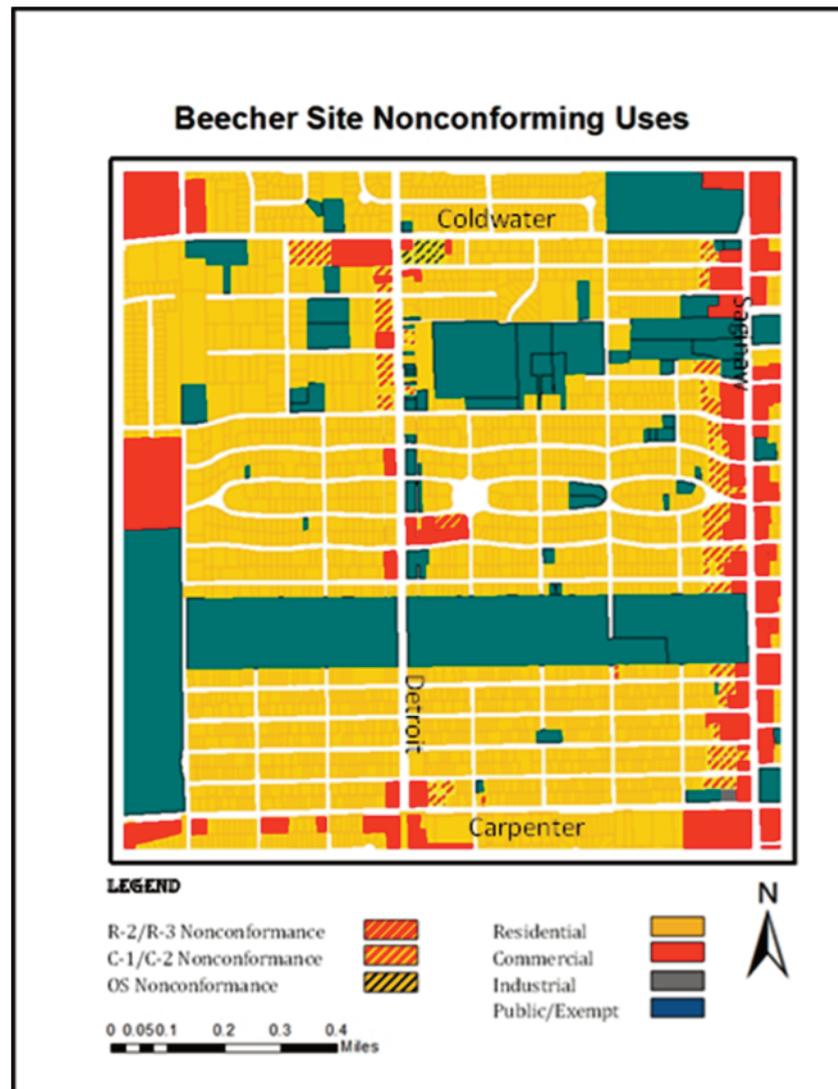
According to the presented map, Beecher Site is characterized by slight nonconformance as based on the zoning map and current land uses. Nonconforming uses are present in the following locations:
- West of Saginaw Road --- Current Use: Residential; Current Zoning: C-2
- North & South of Detroit Street --- Current Use: Residential; Current Zoning: C-1 & OS
- South of Detroit Street --- Current Use: Commercial; Current Zoning: R-3
- Central Beecher Site --- Current use: Commercial; Current Zoning: R-2

3.4 Transportation

Transportation and its infrastructure are important components of communities and economic development. Efficient transportation delivers economic and social opportunities by providing accessibility to markets, employment, and upwards socioeconomic mobility. When transportation is inefficient or poorly maintained, opportunities for growth may pass by.[25] Transportation infrastructure often outlines land uses and defines neighborhoods while acting both as a physical boundary and as a gateway to circulation. In this section, we analyze transportation, its patterns, and its infrastructures towards a future land use plan for Beecher Site.

3.4.1 Broad Infrastructure

Transportation in Beecher Site and its surrounding area is provided through several main arterial roads, thoroughfares, and highways. Several state and federal highways connect Beecher Site to other parts of Genesee County, the State of Michigan, and North America (Figure 3.4.1.1). Federal highways include: Interstate 75 (I-75), a major north-south interstate which connects Michigan with southeastern regions of the United States; and Interstate 475 (I-475), a bypass branch of I-75 which connects areas of the City of Flint with its parent highway I-75. Michigan Highway 54 (M-54) connects the City of Flint to other areas in Michigan.

Highway I-475 remains the closest in proximity to Beecher Site at four-tenths of a mile to the east; this highway runs east and continues north as it merges into I-75. On and off ramps to these highways are

Figure 3.4.1.1 Main Transit Routes
Source: ESRI, generated January 2012

located both north and northwest of Beecher Site. State Highway M-54 is just one mile east, while I-75 lies 2.12 miles west. No other major roadways exist within five miles south of Beecher Site.

Beecher Site lies nine-tenths of a mile east of the CSX Transportation (CSXT) rail system. CSXT is one of several major rail freight systems in the United States, passing through 23 states. The nearest passenger rail service is 7.1 miles away in the City of Flint.

3.4.2 Internal Infrastructure

With an area of 1.03 square miles, Beecher Site is bordered by three main thoroughfares; with Saginaw Street to the east, Carpenter Road to the south, and Coldwater Road to the north. There are no bordering thoroughfares

Figure 3.4.2.1: Beecher Site Street Network
Source: Flint MTA

or minor streets to the west. This lack of roadway is termed a dead end as overgrown brush, shrubs, and metal fencing act as a border. These thoroughfares and dead ends are referred to in this section as the border. Street configuration of Beecher site within the border presents an irregular, rectangular oblong grid pattern. This pattern comes in part from the dead ends for all roads running east and west along the western border of Beecher Site at DuPont Street; roads running north of Downey Avenue, south of Cass Avenue, north of Princeton Avenue, and east of Louis Avenue. All roads, particularly those parallel to Downey and Cass Avenue are not continuous because current land uses including school property and green space create a barrier. Beecher Site also possesses a loop street pattern running both in both east-west and west-east directions as North & South Cornell Avenue in the middle of the site.

Most streets within the border serve the residents as a conduit for journeys from residencies to regions outside Beecher Site. Detroit Street runs north and south and is the only thoroughfare which crosses through the neighborhood (Figure 3.42.2). Based on field observations, sidewalks are nearly absent from Beecher Site; pedestrian mobility both to the surrounding area and within Beecher Site is marginal.

Figure 3.4.2.2 Detroit Street Thoroughfare & Typical Beecher Site Street (N. Cornell Ave)
Source: Google Earth, 2012

3.4.3 Commuting Patterns

Transportation infrastructure within Beecher Site and its surrounding environment can facilitate increased circulation and economic activity within the community. Figure 3.4.3.1 illustrates modes of transportation to work for Beecher CDP, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan for 2010 that are enabled by current infrastructure.

Figure 3.4.3.1 Mode of Transportation to Work
Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010
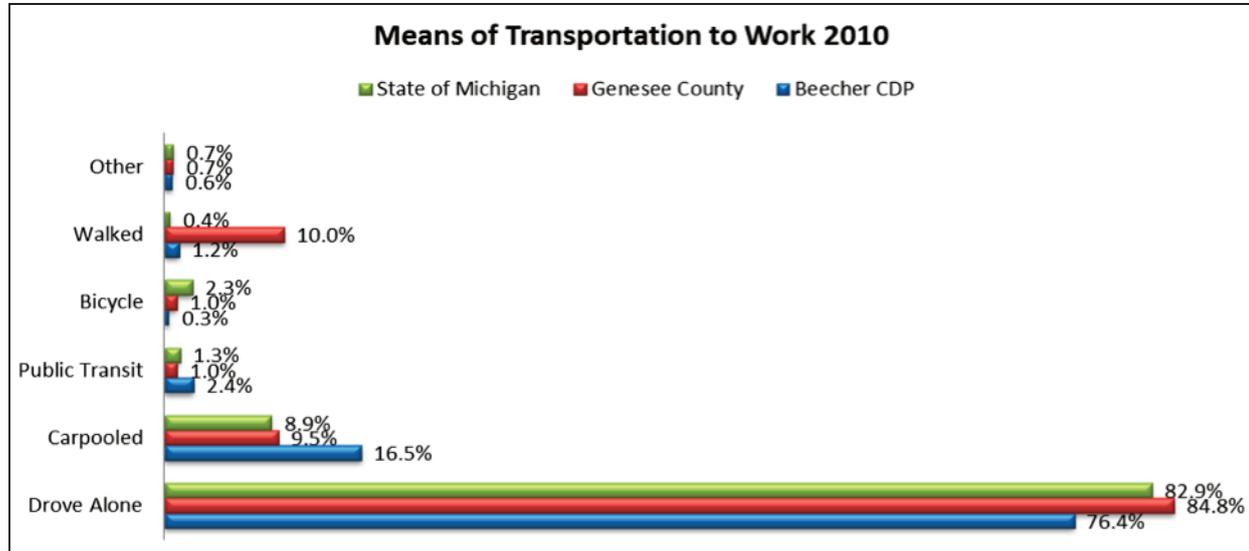
The primary mode of transportation to work for the Beecher CDP is by driving alone at 76% of respondents; carpooling (16%), public transportation (2.4%), walking (1.2%), other (0.6%), and bicycle (0.3%). These variances are most distinct between residents who carpooled, used public transportation, and walked to work. Beecher CDP residents are more than twice as likely to carpool, walk, or use public transportation to work when compared against residents of Genesee County and the State of Michigan. These trends likely coincide with the number of vehicles available per household, as depicted in Figure 3.4.3.2.

Figure 3.4.3.2 Available Vehicles
Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010
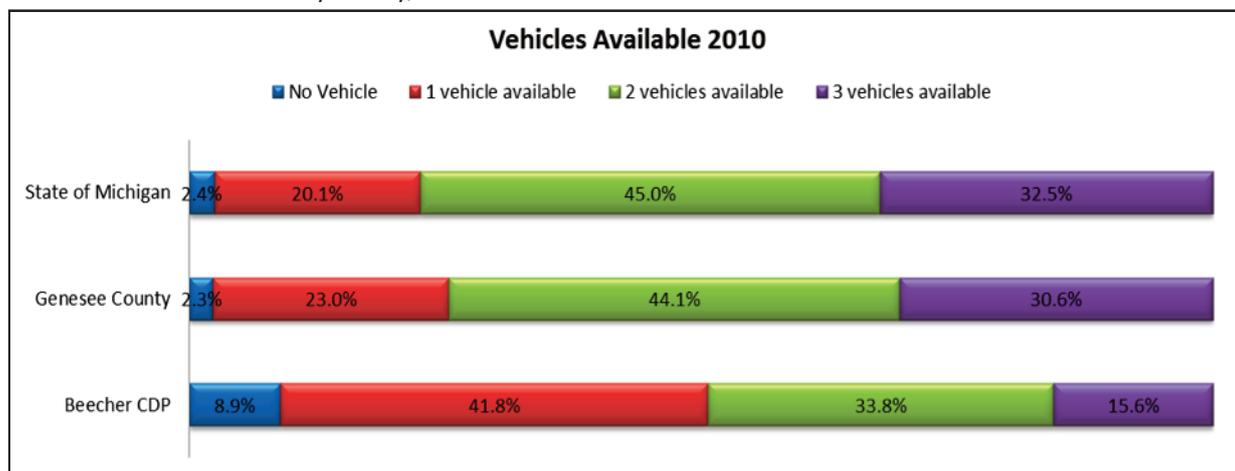
Approximately 9% of households in Beecher CDP own no vehicle while 42% own one vehicle. Four times as many households in Beecher CDP have no vehicles available when compared against Genesee County and the State of Michigan.

Figure 3.4.3.3 depicts commute length in minutes. Households in Beecher CDP commute for slightly greater time intervals to their place of employment than those of Genesee County and the State of Michigan.

Figure 3.4.3.3 Available Vehicles
Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010
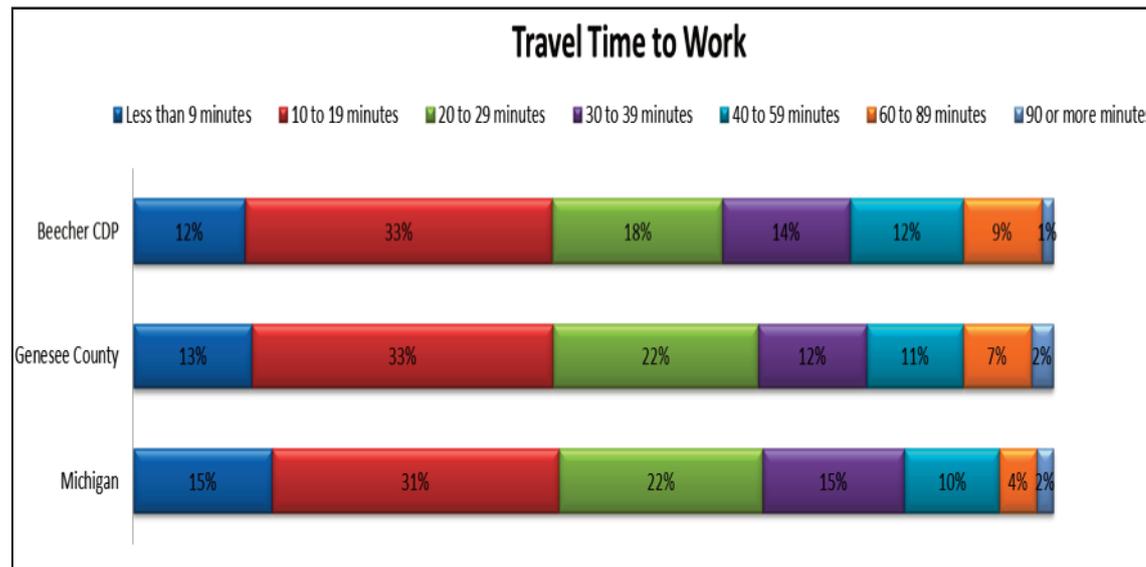
5% more households in the Beecher CDP travel 30 minutes or more to work than residents in Genesee County and the State of Michigan. Comparatively, households working relatively close to their residence with a commute of 19 minutes or less are similar in proportion to that of Genesee County and the State of Michigan at 45% of households.

3.4.4 Public Transit

Public transportation is utilized by a significant portion of the Beecher CDP as their method of commuting to work. With 9% of Beecher CDP residents owning no vehicle, public transportation is a vital link providing individuals with mobility for employment, commerce, recreation, medical resources, and other services in the surrounding region.[27] Public transportation becomes ever more important in lower income areas where reliable, personal vehicles may not be attainable. Furthermore, the connection between public transit and economic development has been well documented. Some benefits of public transit and transit oriented development include connections of workers to jobs; connections of individuals to basic needs; spurs economic development on areas surrounding transit stations.[28] With this in mind, this section presents a brief analysis of the current public transit conditions within the study area to establish whether its current status can be an asset to future land use plans for the area.

Public transportation in and around Beecher Site is provided by Flint Mass Transportation Authority (MTA). Initiated in 1997, the MTA provides regional public transportation across Genesee County with concentration in the City of Flint, including routes into Oakland and Livingston Counties.[29] Figure 3.4.4.1 illustrates the location of 14 primary routes across Genesee County. Fares ranging from $0.00 for children to $1.50 for adults. Alternatively, monthly passes are also available.[30]

Out of the 14 primary routes provided by the MTA, four directly service the subject site. These routes numbers, their location, and schedules are listed in Table 3.4.4.1. Bus stop signage consists of a single pole with bus sign; no other bus stop related infrastructure, such as shelters, maps, and timetables, are found at these locations. Figure 3.4.4.2 shows these bus stops on a map. Although ridership data for these four routes could not be found, MTA reports that general ridership for the 14 primary routes has increased steadily from 2003 to 2008, as depicted in Figure 3.4.4.3.