

# Chapter Two



## Background

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### I. History of the Northeast Area

The Huron and Potawatomi Native American tribes lived, hunted and traveled in the Northeast Area prior to European settlement in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. On March 7, 1825, a year after the City was founded, settlers made the first purchase of land in the Northeast Area just north of the Huron River near what is today Maiden Lane and Broadway. In 1828, the first Broadway Bridge was constructed, which crossed the Huron River and an adjoining millrace. The area on the north side of the bridge, where two Native American trails converged on the River, became known as “Lower Town”. In 1830, Anson Brown bought the water rights and dammed the north side of the Huron River to build a flourmill. Anson Brown became postmaster in 1832 and relocated the post office to Lower Town. Brown named streets in the area after those in New York City such as Broadway, Wall Street and Maiden Lane. Anson Brown died of cholera in 1834. In the years that followed, the Lower Town commercial center began to weaken primarily due to the train station and University of Michigan being established on the south side of the River.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, houses were slowly established on Broadway, Maiden Lane, Wall Street and Pontiac Trail. Some of Ann Arbor’s oldest houses remain along Broadway and Pontiac Trail, while many older homes along Maiden Lane and Wall Street have been replaced with University of Michigan facilities. Mills along the Huron River and Traver Creek functioned until the turn of the century. After World War I, homebuilding surged in the area and some businesses returned. This area was available to African-American homeowners and renters because it was free from restrictive deeds that were common in other parts of the City. African-American residents made up a large percentage of residents of Lower Town throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, development also occurred in other parts of the Northeast Area. Beginning in the 1830’s, scattered farmsteads were established along Geddes Road, Plymouth Road and Washtenaw Avenue. These roads remained rural in character until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when single-family homes and neighborhoods began to be constructed. Other roads were established during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Northeast area and remain today, including Pontiac Trail, Broadway Street, Plymouth Road (once called Dixborough Road), Maiden Lane, Wall Street, Geddes Road, Washtenaw Avenue, Earhart Road, Dhu Varren Road and Nixon Road.

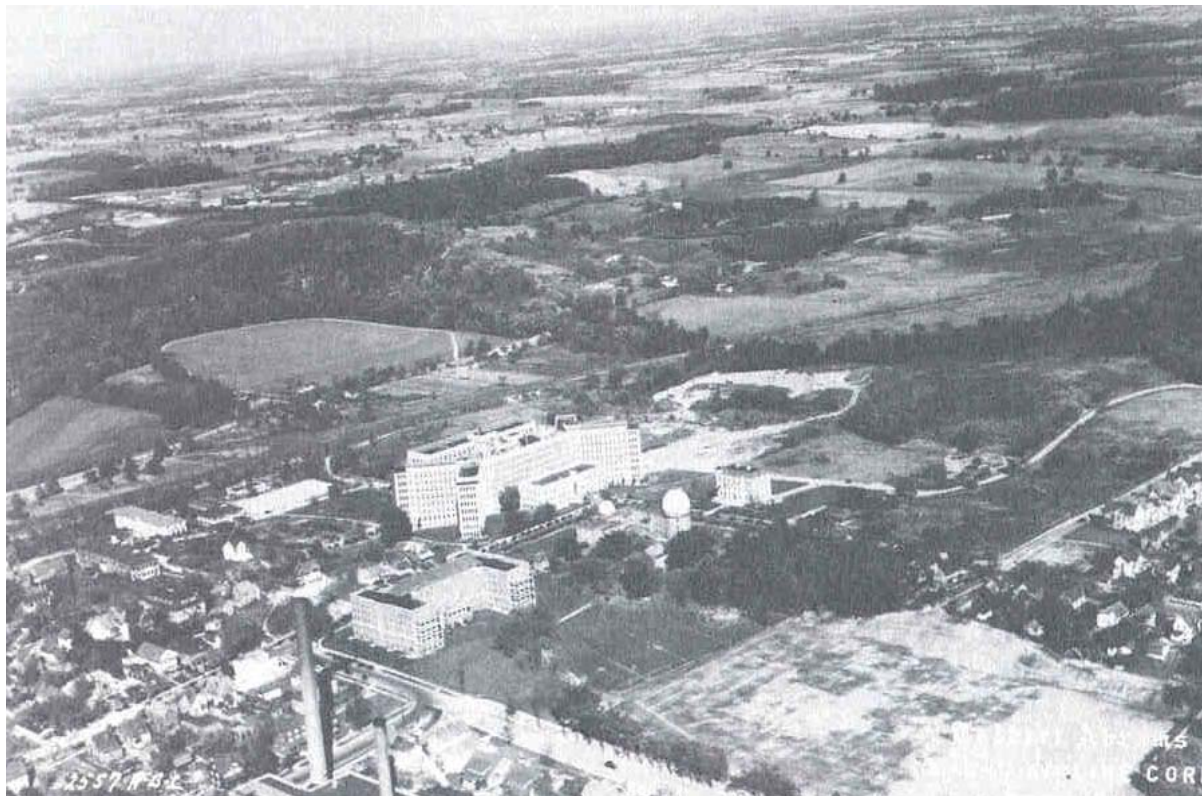
Two railroad lines currently exist in the Northeast Area. The Norfolk Southern Railroad line, originally constructed in the late 1830’s, travels east/west from Detroit to Chicago and runs

primarily along the south side of the Huron River. Six Amtrak trains run daily, including three westbound and three eastbound. The westbound trains travel to Chicago and points west. The eastbound trains travel through Detroit to Pontiac, Michigan. The Ann Arbor Railroad line (north/south) was completed in 1878 and is currently used exclusively for freight. Three trains run daily between Flint and Toledo and travel through the Northeast Area, (from downtown Ann Arbor) across the Huron River at Argo Dam, along Plymouth Road, through Leslie Golf Course and under M-14.



Railroad at Dhu Varren

In the early 1950's, two events occurred that significantly changed the character of much of the Northeast Area. The University of Michigan purchased 800 acres of land to establish North Campus and the Michigan Department of Transportation began acquiring land for the construction of US-23. During the late 1950's and early 1960's research firms began locating along Plymouth Road due, in part, to the proximity of University of Michigan's North Campus and US-23. The 1960's and 1970's saw a tremendous amount of growth in the Northeast Area, including single-family subdivisions, apartment communities, new employment centers, Arborland Mall, Plymouth-Green shopping center and numerous North Campus student housing projects. M-14 was constructed in the 1960's.



Northeast Ann Arbor (looking northeast) beyond University Hospital (c. 1930)

In 1984, the University of Michigan adopted the North Campus Planning Study, which established a planning framework to guide the future physical development of approximately

800 acres northeast of the University's Medical Campus. In 1998-1999, the design firm of Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates prepared several newer planning studies for North Campus. The studies provided guidance on issues related to land uses, density, development, transportation and natural areas preservation. Most recently, the University initiated a transportation planning study for North Campus. In 2003, the University agreed to help sponsor a City of Ann Arbor non-motorized study.

During the 1990's, strong growth pressures in Ann Arbor resulted in the development of additional hotels, commercial centers, office buildings and residential projects in the Northeast Area. A significant amount of City parkland also was acquired in the 1980's and 1990's. New parks established during this period include Ruthven, Oakwoods, Furstenberg and Northeast Area Park (later re-named Olson Park).

## **II. Unique Characteristics**

Many characteristics make the Northeast Area unique. Compared to the City's other geographic areas, the Northeast Area has the following special features:

- The oldest commercial building in Ann Arbor (1001-1007 Broadway, built 1832)
- The largest private employer (Pfizer Inc., 3,600 employees)
- The lowest population density (4.9 persons per acre; South Area: 6.2, Central Area: 21.6, West Area: 6.3)
- The highest percentage of non-white residents (approx. 34.5%)
- The largest under-18 population (6,369 residents under age 18)
- The most total acreage (6,298 acres)
- The highest number of dwelling units (13,335)
- The most residential land (3,024 acres)
- The lowest elevation in the city (749 ft. above sea level, Huron River at U.S. 23)
- The most river frontage (approx. 6 miles)
- The most City park land (52 city parks totaling approximately 900 acres)
- The most research and industrial land (180 acres)
- The most public/institutional land (812 acres)
- The most vacant land (approx. 800 acres)
- Lowest percentage of commercial land (1.7 percent)

Note: Population figures based on 2000 U.S. Census; land use based on 2000 land use data



The Huron River in the Northeast Area.

### **III. Related Planning Efforts**

Over the past twenty years, various City planning efforts have guided land use decisions in the Northeast Area. The following is a summary of the significant planning efforts that addressed the Northeast Area:

Ann Arbor Corridor Study (1983) – Analyzed the opportunities and constraints for improving major transportation corridors such as Plymouth Road and Washtenaw Avenue in Ann Arbor and provided design guidelines for aesthetic and transportation improvements.

Northeast Area Plan (1989) – The previously adopted Area Plan for the Northeast Area.

Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update (1990) – Analyzed and projected transportation conditions in all areas of the City and made transportation recommendations.

Geddes/Fuller/Conrail Corridor Study (1994) – Analyzed transportation opportunities along Geddes and Fuller Roads and the Conrail (now Norfolk Southern) rail corridor from downtown Ann Arbor to Ypsilanti.

2006-2011 Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan (2005) – Analyzed park and recreational needs and provided information and recommendations on parks, recreation and open space issues in Ann Arbor.

2005-2010 Capital Improvement Program (2003) – Compiled and prioritized a list of possible capital improvement projects in the City of Ann Arbor through fiscal year 2010.

Natural Features Master Plan (2004) – Provides a framework to guide the City and its citizens in their policy making and stewardship of natural features protection activities.

## IV. Population Profile

Two sets of data have been used to determine the population profile of the Northeast Area. The United States Census Bureau provides actual population counts and other demographic information, including age, race and gender. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) provides population forecasts and information on housing and employment.

According to the 1990 US Census, the Northeast Area population decreased slightly between 1980 and 1990; however, the 2000 US Census indicates an increase of over 4,600 persons (12%) between 1990 and 2000. SEMCOG forecasts a 16% increase in population for the Northeast Area between 2000 and 2020. The City of Ann Arbor grew only 4% between 1990 and 2000, indicating that the Northeast Area is growing faster compared to other areas of the City.

<b>TABLE : Northeast Area Population Change 1980 - 2000 and Projected Change 2000-2020</b>						
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	
U.S. Census	28,304	27,332 -3.4%	31,130 12%			
SEMCOG Forecasts		28,384	30,300 7%	32,295 7%	35,228 9%	

Note: Percentages indicate the 10-year change in population.

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 31,130 individuals reside in the Northeast Area, which makes up approximately 27% of the City's total population (Table 1). According to this data, the Northeast Area is the most racially diverse of the City planning areas. The percentage of white residents is lower than those found in other planning areas, while Asian or Pacific Islander residents constitutes the highest percentage of non-white residents in the area.

**TABLE 1: 2000 U.S. Census Population and Race by Planning Area**

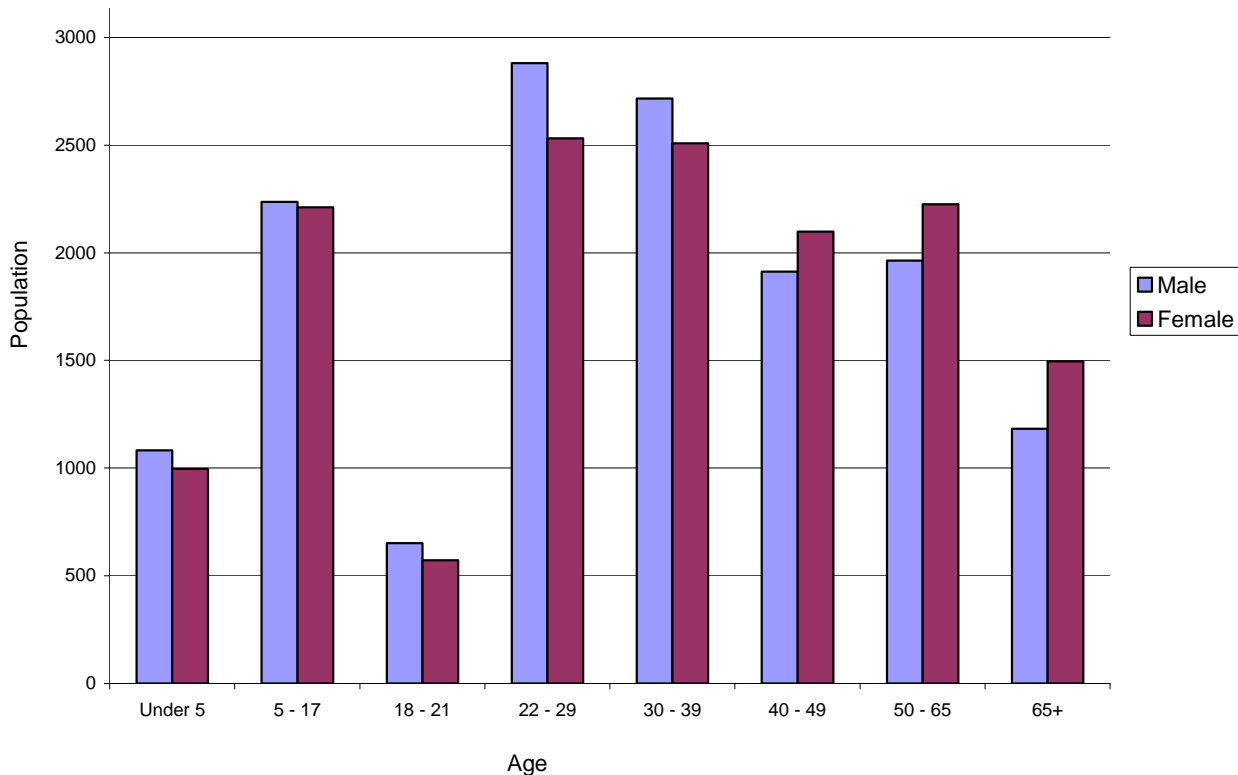
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>City Totals</b>
<b>Population</b>	31130	27099	33550	22245	114024
<b>% of total Population</b>	27.3%	23.8%	29.4%	19.5%	100.0%
<b>Race</b>					
White	20399	19670	26440	18642	85151
Black	2768	3495	1864	1943	10070
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	67	102	109	54	332
Asian or Pacific Islander	6610	2500	3685	771	13566
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island	5	15	10	11	41
Other	362	332	452	238	1384
Multiple Race	919	985	990	586	3480
<b>Race Percent</b>					
White	65.5%	72.6%	78.8%	83.8%	74.7%
Black	8.9%	12.9%	5.6%	8.7%	8.8%
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	21.2%	9.2%	11.0%	3.5%	11.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%
Multiple Race	3.0%	3.6%	3.0%	2.6%	3.1%
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>					
Percent	3.0%	3.6%	3.9%	2.7%	3.3%

According to the age composition of the Northeast Area (Table 2), the highest number and percentage of Northeast Area residents are between the ages of 22 and 29. This is attributed, in part, to the student and family housing populations that reside on the University of Michigan's North Campus. The remaining age categories have a similar composition to the South and West planning areas. The population and age data of the City's Central Area is unique due to the University's student population and the lack of larger residential neighborhoods.

The 2000 census showed that the Northeast Area has the lowest residential densities of any planning area in the City. At 4.9 persons per acre, the density is lower than the City average (7.24 persons per acre), the South Area (6.2 persons per acre), the West Area (6.3 persons per acre), and the Central Area (21.6 persons per acre).

TABLE 2: 2000 U.S. Census Population and Age by Planning Area					
	Northeast	South	Central	West	City Totals
<b>Population</b>	31130	27099	33550	22245	114024
% of total Population	27.3%	23.8%	29.4%	19.5%	100.0%
<b>Age</b>					
Under 5	2040	1826	545	1333	5829
5 - 17	4329	4087	1210	3739	13619
18 - 21	3172	1087	16053	659	21011
22 - 29	5805	4565	8313	2480	21289
30 - 39	5204	5100	2866	3804	17169
40 - 49	3893	4121	1876	4076	14244
50 - 64	3987	3760	1646	3431	13199
65 and Up	2700	2553	1041	2723	9312
<b>Age Percent</b>					
Under 5	6.50%	6.70%	1.60%	6.00%	5.00%
5 - 17	14.00%	15.00%	3.60%	16.80%	11.80%
18 - 21	10.00%	4.00%	47.80%	3.00%	18.20%
22 - 29	18.30%	16.80%	24.80%	11.00%	18.40%
30 - 39	16.50%	18.80%	8.50%	17.00%	14.80%
40 - 49	12.60%	15.20%	5.60%	18.40%	12.30%
50 - 64	13.20%	13.90%	4.90%	15.50%	11.40%
65 and Up	9.00%	9.50%	3.10%	12.30%	8.10%

The Northeast Area population by age and sex indicates a greater male population in all age groups up to the age of 39. Beginning at the age of 40, the female population is slightly higher.



**Chart 1: Northeast Area Comparison of Male and Female Populations**

## V. Housing Analysis

According to the 2000 United States Census figures, there currently are approximately 13,335 housing units in the Northeast Area, of which 6,727 are rentals, 6,128 are owner-occupied and 480 are vacant. The total housing units increased 11% since the 1990 U.S. Census, which reported 12,026 units. The census reports 12,502 households in the Northeast Area, with an average household size of 2.49 persons. This compares to the other City planning areas as follows:

	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>West</b>
Population	31130	27099	33550	22245
Households	12502	12446	10990	9755
Average Household Size	2.49	2.18	3.05	2.28

Source: 2000 US Census

SEMCOG forecasted a 20% increase in households in the Northeast Area between 1995 and 2015 (an additional 2,400 households). The majority of the growth is expected north of Plymouth Road.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Households</b>		<b>Population</b>		<b>Average Persons</b>
	<b>1995</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Per Household</b>
Total	12,201	14,680	29,313	33,737	2.4 in 1995
Growth		20%		15%	2.3 in 2015



New Construction in the Northeast Area

## VI. Neighborhood and Business Associations

A total of twenty-nine neighborhood and business associations exist in the Northeast Area. These associations were formed for a variety of reasons, but most function to provide information to members and to speak with one voice about issues that affect their neighborhoods or businesses. Some associations have existed for decades, while others have formed recently. Some have regular meetings; others meet only when necessary. The Planning and Development Services Unit maintains a list of neighborhood and business associations, which is used to contact groups when issues affecting them arise.

The following is a list of registered Business Associations in the Northeast Area:

- A. North Campus Plaza Shopping Center
- B. Plymouth & Broadway Area
- C. Plymouth Mall Merchants Association

The following is a list residential Neighborhood Associations in the Northeast Area:

- 1. Arbor Hills Condominium Association
- 2. Arrowwood Hills Cooperative
- 3. Brentwood Square Condominium Association
- 4. Broadway Area Neighborhood Association
- 5. Bromley Homeowners Association
- 6. Chalmers Neighborhood Association
- 7. Chapel Hill Condominium Association
- 8. Dhu Varren on the Park Homeowners Association
- 9. Earhart Village Homes Association
- 10. Foxfire Condominium Association
- 11. Geddes Farms Homeowners Association
- 12. Geddes Lake Cooperative Homes
- 13. Glazier Way Association
- 14. Huron Chase Condominium Association
- 15. Huron Highlands Neighborhood Association
- 16. No Condos
- 17. Northside Neighborhood Association
- 18. Oak Ridge Neighborhood Association
- 19. Orchard Hills/Maplewood Homeowners Association
- 20. Oxbridge Neighborhood Association
- 21. Parkway Meadows Senior Council
- 22. PLANSMART
- 23. River House Condominium Association
- 24. Riverside Park Place Condominium Association
- 25. Thornoaks Association
- 26. Tuomy Hills Area Homeowners Association
- 27. Vintage Valley Homeowners Association
- 28. Windy Crest Partnership
- 29. Woodcreek Association
- 30. Woodhaven Hills Homeowners Association