

## CHAPTER 2

# Community Description

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### CONTENTS

Description of Oakland County.....	2
Role of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.....	4
References.....	4

### FIGURES

Figure A: Southeast Michigan region, comprising seven counties .....	2
Figure B: Communities (Cities, Villages and Townships) and Watersheds of Oakland County .....	3
Figure C: Locations of Oakland County Parks in Oakland County.....	4

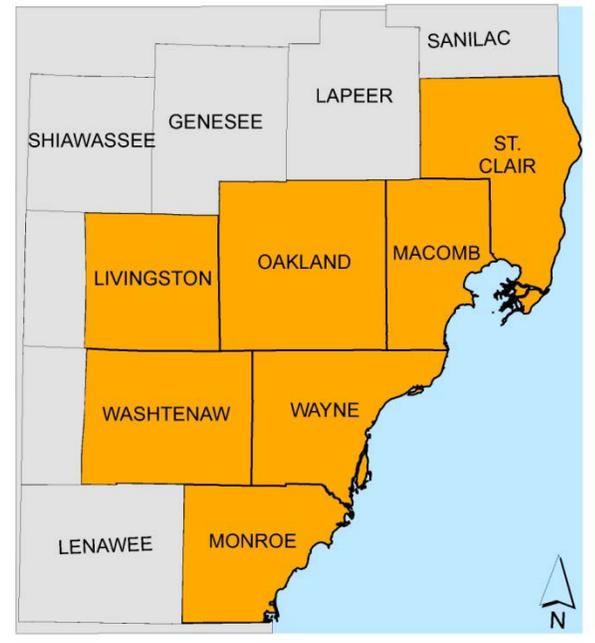
## Description of Oakland County

Oakland County is located in southeast Michigan, approximately 20 miles northwest of Detroit, and covers 910 square miles. According to the U.S. Census, the county's population in 2010 was approximately 1.2 million persons, ranking 32<sup>nd</sup> in population of all U.S. counties. Within the county, there are 30 cities, 21 townships, and 11 incorporated villages, in urban, suburban, and rural landscapes.

Oakland County is home to the headwaters of five major rivers, the Clinton, Flint, Huron, Rouge, and Shiawassee Rivers, all of which are important to the long-term health of the Great Lakes Ecosystem. Many diverse ecosystems are located in the county due to the area's complex topography and geological history and are an important element in the character of the county.

Cultural resources are abundant in Oakland County, with 21 nationally registered historic districts, over 200 individual historic sites and 31 local historical museums. Significant entertainment and sports venues include DTE Energy and Meadowbrook outdoor theaters, the Palace of Auburn Hills (home to the Detroit Pistons), Cranbrook Institutions and the Detroit Zoological Park.

Figure A: Southeast Michigan region, comprising seven counties

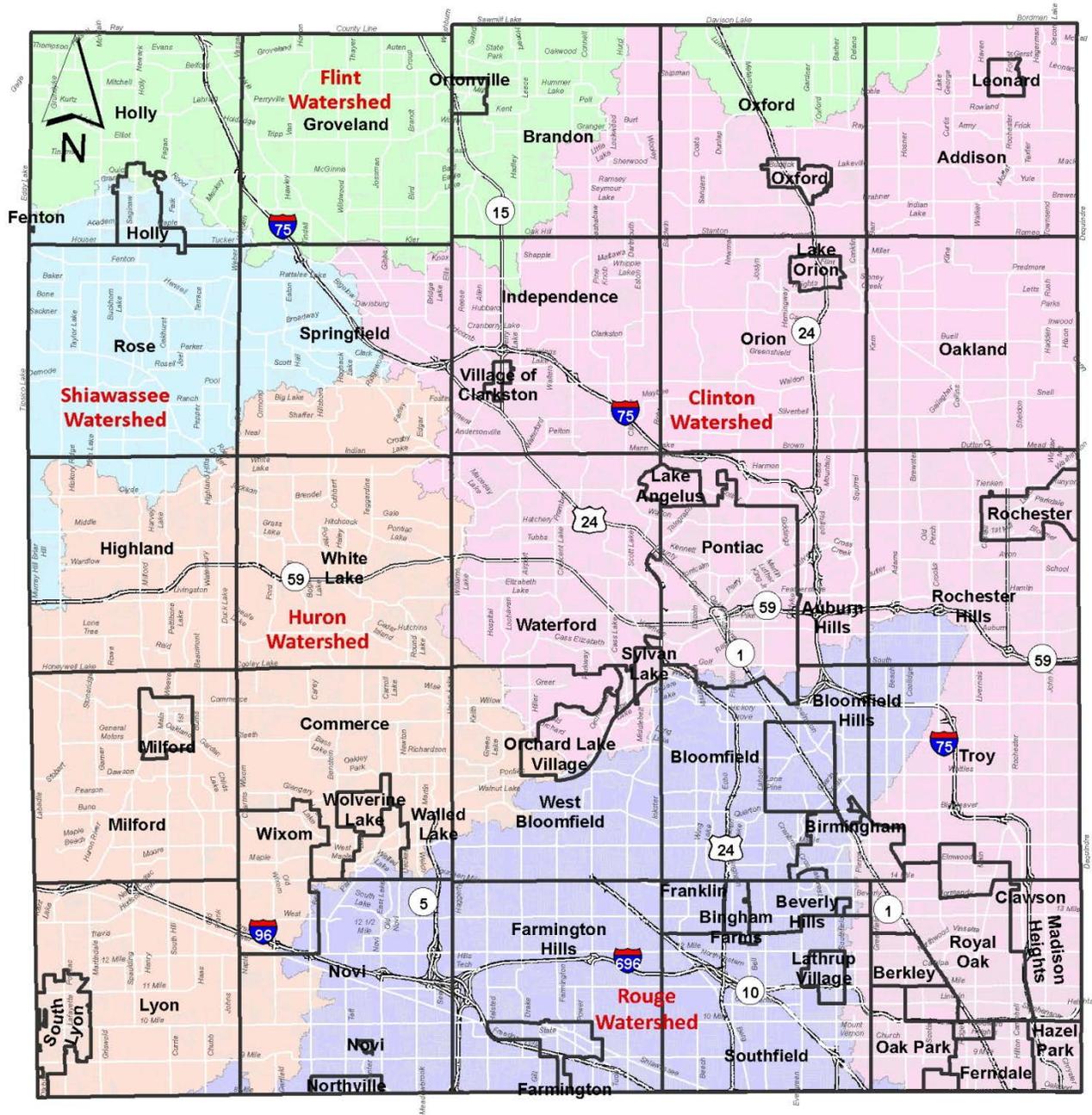


The estimated per capita income of Oakland County residents in 2009 was \$50,334; the county ranks as the fourth wealthiest county in the nation among counties with populations of more than one million people. The county is home to 42,000 businesses, and over 700 companies representing 37 countries conduct business here. 283 companies on the 2010 Fortune 500 list conduct business in Oakland County (OCPEDS, 2011). Land use statistics indicate that the most prevalent land use in 2011 was single family residential. The dense, more urbanized areas are concentrated in the central/southeast portions of the county, or along major state roadways and interstate highways.

Detailed information about many aspects of Oakland County is readily available from the Emerging Sectors report provided by Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services (OCPEDS, n.d.).



Figure B: Communities (Cities, Villages and Townships) and Watersheds of Oakland County



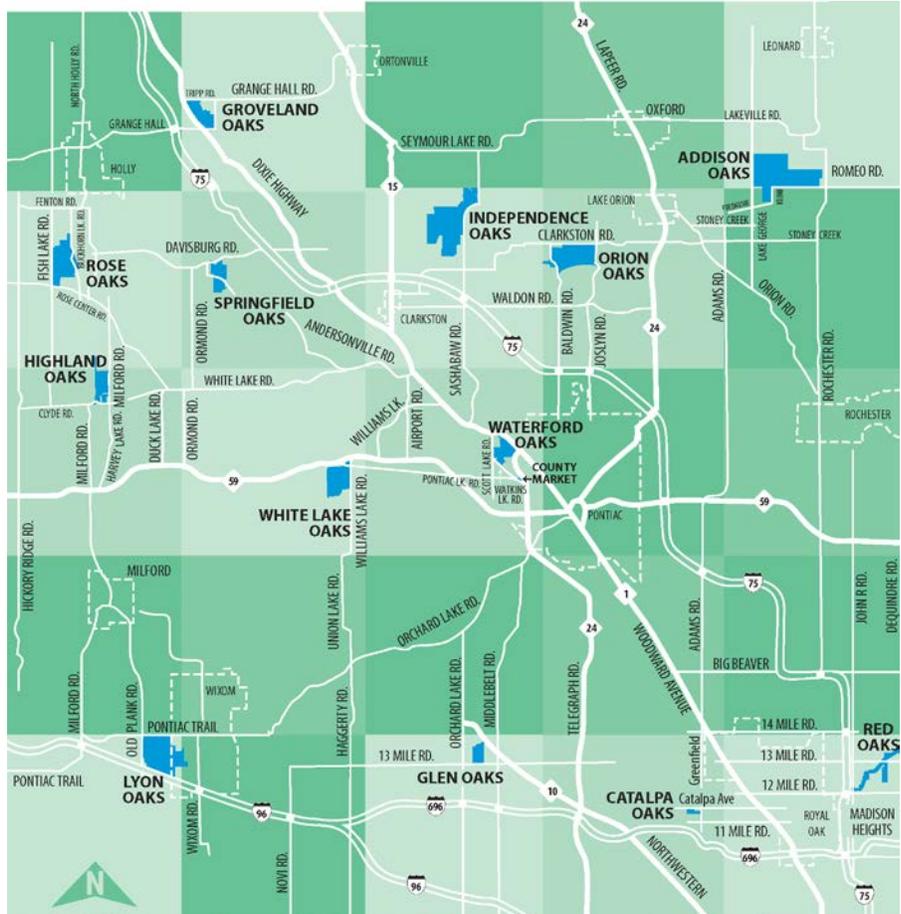
## Role of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) is funded by a quarter-mill tax on property located in Oakland County, as well as through fees, grants, donations, and other income sources. OCPRC’s parks and recreation services are provided within the geographic boundaries of Oakland County, but are also open to all visitors to the county. OCPRC’s role as a provider of recreation in Oakland County and to surrounding areas is summarized in its mission statement:

*“The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to providing quality recreation experiences that encourage healthy lifestyles, support economic prosperity, and promote the protection of natural resources.”*

The recreational facilities and programs provided by OCPRC are designed to serve a diverse population of residents and are carefully planned to complement those services provided by local recreational authorities or by the private, non-profit, or larger regional and state providers. Our mission, with its emphasis on healthy lifestyles, economic prosperity and natural resource protection, is a natural fit with many current initiatives on the state and national level. The Commission also collaborates with other units of government and organizations to manage open space and natural areas and provide recreational facilities and programs on an inter-community, county, and a regional (multi-county) basis.

Figure C: Locations of Oakland County Parks in Oakland County



## References

OCPEDS. (2011, June). *Fortune 500 List*. Retrieved 12 17, 2012, from Advantage Oakland: [http://www.advantageoakland.com/ResearchPortal/Documents/dat\\_fortune500list.pdf](http://www.advantageoakland.com/ResearchPortal/Documents/dat_fortune500list.pdf)

OCPEDS. (n.d.). *Oakland County, Michigan Emerging Sectors*. Retrieved August 13, 2012, from Advantage Oakland - Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services: <http://www.advantageoakland.com/ResearchPortal/Documents/virtualdatabook.pdf>