



# Master Land Use Plan

## 2017-2040

### TECHNICAL REPORT

Adopted by the Sterling Heights Planning Commission  
on February 9, 2017

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING UPDATED MASTER PLAN 2017**  
**STERLING HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION**

This Resolution was made and adopted at a meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Sterling Heights, Macomb County, Michigan held at the City Center on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2017.

Members Present: Members, Norgrove, Rowe, Reinowski, Ancona, Gariepy, Kopp, Militello, and Miller

Members Absent: Member Jaboro

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Member Norgrove and supported by Member Rowe.

WHEREAS, the City of Sterling Heights established a Planning Commission pursuant to the Charter of the City of Sterling Heights, the Michigan Municipal Planning Act, Public Act 285 of 1931, as amended, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, and the Sterling Heights Code of Ordinances, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the Sterling Heights Planning Commission is required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the prior Michigan Municipal Planning Act, to make and adopt a master land use plan as a guide for the physical development of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission and its consultants, Wade Trim, made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the City with due regard to its neighboring jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, with assistance from Wade Trim, solicited input from the public, public utilities, public agencies, and adjacent local units of government in order to prepare a draft of an updated Draft Master Plan 2017 – 2040; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission reviewed various sections of the Draft Master Land Use Plan at its regular Planning Commission meetings during 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission at its regular meeting held on September 8, 2016, forwarded the Draft Master Land Use Plan to the Sterling Heights City Council for review and comment, with a recommendation that it be distributed for review as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, the City Council at its regular meeting held on October 4, 2016, approved the distribution of the proposed Master Land Use Plan as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and commencement of the running of the sixty three (63) day review period; and

WHEREAS, the City Council at its regular meeting held on December 20, 2016, delegated the authority of adopting the proposed Master Land Use Plan to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Draft Master Land Use Plan was presented to the public at the Planning Commission's regular meeting of February 9, 2017, at which time the Planning Commission, after giving notice of a public hearing as required by law, conducted a public hearing; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Master Land Use Update 2017-2040, together with all maps attached to and contained herein, is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission as the City of Sterling Heights Master Land Use Plan Update – 2017 – 2040, on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2017.

AYES: Members, Norgrove, Rowe, Reinowski, Ancona, Gariepy, Kopp, Militello, and Miller

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Member Jaboro

I, Stefano Militello, Secretary of the Sterling Heights Planning Commission, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution that was made and adopted by the Sterling Heights Planning Commission at its regular meeting held on February 9, 2017.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Stefano Militello, Secretary

## Acknowledgements

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### **City Council**

Michael C. Taylor, Mayor  
Barbara A. Ziarko, Mayor Pro Tem  
Deanna Koski  
Maria G. Schmidt  
Nate Shannon  
Liz Sierawski  
Doug Skrzyniarz

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Denice Gerstenberg, City Development  
Director

Adopted by the City of Sterling Heights  
Planning Commission on February 9, 2017

### Assistance Provided By:



Wade Trim  
Detroit, Michigan  
WadeTrim.com



LivingLAB  
Detroit, Michigan  
Livinglabdetroit.com



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Detroit, Michigan  
ArchiveDS.com



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## Appendix: Land Development Scoring Matrix

# Introduction and Regional Context

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## Introduction

### Authority

The City of Sterling Heights derives its authority to prepare a master plan from the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended. Public Act 33 states:

*"A Planning Commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction."*

In describing a master plan, Public Act 33 states:

*"A master plan shall address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future. A master plan shall include maps, plats, charts, and descriptive, explanatory, and other related matter and shall show the planning commission's recommendations for the physical development of the planning jurisdiction. A master plan shall also include those of the following subjects that reasonably can be considered as pertinent to the future development of the planning jurisdiction:*

- (a) A land use plan that consists in part of a classification and allocation of land for agriculture, residences, commerce, industry, recreation, ways and grounds, public buildings, schools, soil conservation, forests, woodlots, open space, wildlife refuges, and other uses and purposes.*
- (b) The general location, character, and extent of streets, railroads, airports, bicycle paths, pedestrian ways, bridges, waterways, and waterfront developments; sanitary sewers and water supply systems; facilities for flood prevention, drainage, pollution prevention, and maintenance of water levels; and public utilities and structures.*
- (c) Recommendations as to the general character, extent, and layout of redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted areas; and the removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment, change of use, or extension of streets, grounds, open spaces, buildings, utilities, or other facilities.*
- (d) For a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan shall include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.*
- (e) Recommendations for implementing any of the master plan's proposals."*

## **Purpose**

The master planning process is cooperative and public. Input from the public and various governmental entities are gathered throughout the planning process. Public Act 33 requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing before the final adoption of the master plan and allows for review of a draft master plan by adjacent communities, the county and other entities prior to adoption. This planning process offers the Planning Commission the opportunity to analyze and address a myriad of planning and development issues as part of a collaborative planning process with citizens, stakeholders, adjacent communities and regional entities.

The planning process is designed to involve the conscious selection of policies relating to growth and development in a community. The master plan serves to promote these policies through the following:

1. Provides a general statement of the City's goals and provides a comprehensive view of the community's preferred future.
2. Serves as the primary policy guide for local officials when considering zoning, land division, capital improvement projects, and any other matters related to land development. Thus, the master plan provides a stable and consistent basis for decision making.
3. Provides the statutory basis for the City's Zoning Ordinance, as required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended.
4. Helps to coordinate public improvements and private development activities to assure the judicious and efficient expenditure of public funds.
5. Establishes a common, united set of adopted planning policies, goals, objectives, and strategies to be utilized by leadership entities throughout the organization (City Council, Planning Commission, City departments, etc.).

## **Plan Organization**

The City of Sterling Heights Master Plan 2016-2036 is organized into two companion documents: a **Master Plan Summary Report** and this **Master Plan Technical Report**. The Master Plan Summary Report is intended to provide a concise description of the key trends, recommendations, policies and vision embraced by the plan and will serve as a succinct reference for City leadership, citizens, business leaders and other interested parties. This Master Plan Technical Report provides an in-depth discussion of pertinent trends and background conditions, goals and policies, future land use planning proposals, and other strategic recommendations.

## **Regional Context**

The City of Sterling Heights is the fourth largest city in the state of Michigan, by population, with a year 2010 population of 129,699. The City encompasses an area of roughly 36.8 square miles, making it the third largest city in land area in the state of Michigan.

It is located in southeast Michigan, approximately 14 miles north of the City of Detroit's central business district. The City's geographic location places it within one of the region's most prominent economic growth corridors with a strong industrial and commercial tax base. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) operates the Sterling Heights Assembly Plant in the City. Ford Motor Company's

Ford Sterling Axle Plant is also located there. Lakeside Mall, a two-level enclosed shopping center is located in the City too. It has 1.5 million square feet with over 180 stores. The City of Sterling Heights also retains Freedom Hill County Park and Amphitheater, one of the region's premier entertainment venues. This outdoor amphitheater accommodates an audience of 7,200 persons who are annually entertained by many of the world's greatest performing artists.

The City's growth and land development pattern has been influenced by regional factors, such as transportation systems, population migration patterns, regional recreational facilities, and the existing land use pattern and proposals from adjoining communities. Understanding this context will provide local decision-makers with a broader foundation for developing future land use recommendations which are consistent with its position in the region.

### ***Historical Population Growth***

The City's history begins with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. This canal linked the eastern seaboard to the Great Lakes region, and opened the American interior to increased settlement. Immigrants were attracted to the land well suited for farming in the Clinton River watershed. Early immigrants first came from the British Isles, followed by German and Belgian families interested in growing fruits and vegetables, or raising dairy cattle.

The Sterling Heights farm culture remained through the 1940s. It retained a very small but stable population during this period. Prior to its incorporation as a City in 1968, Sterling Township had a population of 2,184 people in 1930, 3,648 people in 1940, and 6,509 people in 1950. (Sterling Township was known as Jefferson Township from 1836 until 1838.) Following World War II, industrial plants began to move into the community which rapidly expanded the local population base. The population reached 14,622 people by 1960; however, its greatest rate of population growth was achieved during the following decade. It gained an additional 46,743 people, reaching a year 1970 population of 61,367 (an increase of 319.6 percent over this 10-year period).

### ***Recent Population Change and Migration***

The City's population continued to increase over the next 30 years, achieving a total population of 124,471 people in 2000. Today, the City's population is 129,699 (2010 U.S. Census). The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) predicts the City's population will achieve only modest population growth by 2040, increasing to 136,527 people.

Recent population gains enjoyed by the City are, in part, attributable to net migration patterns within southeast Michigan, combined with movements to and from areas outside the region. The general pattern has been outward from Wayne County into surrounding counties, and movement away from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to outside southeast Michigan. Between the years 1995 and 2000, 15,000 Macomb County residents moved to areas outside the region, while 39,000 residents located elsewhere in the region relocated to Macomb County, a net inflow of domestic migration equaling 24,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Macomb County's net migration between the years 2000 and 2010 slowed slightly, exhibiting a gain of 15,462 people.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, "Migration and Its Impact on Southeast Michigan, 1990-2003", November 2004, page 24.

<sup>2</sup> Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, "Population and Households in Southeast Michigan, 2000-2010, September 2010, page 3.

## ***The Influence of Regional Transportation***

Growth and migration would not have happened without a regional transportation system to support it.

In the late 1800s, approximately 29 street car companies had operated either horse-drawn or electric powered streetcars along streets in and around the City of Detroit. By 1897, there were three companies remaining – the Detroit Citizens Street Railway, the Detroit Electric Railway, and the Detroit Fort Wayne and Belle Isle Railway. On December 31, 1900, they were absorbed into a newly formed Detroit United Railway (DUR).<sup>3</sup>

During the 1800s, another form of mass transportation was also emerging, known as the Interurban Electric Railway System (better known as interurbans). Like streetcars, they operated on rail lines and were powered by overhead wires, but they were larger and more luxurious than streetcars which ran only within city limits. The interurbans also traveled at speeds of 40-50 miles per hour over routes ranging in length from 20-75 miles long.<sup>4</sup> Lines fanned out of Detroit in all directions and included the Rapid Railway and the Shore Line – both which extended to Mt. Clemens. The DUR had succeeded in purchasing all but one of the interurban lines by 1901. By 1903, southeast Michigan had the largest transit system in the United States and was known as the “interurban capital of America”.<sup>5</sup>

The City of Detroit’s population quickly grew, and the DUR found itself unable to service the increasing crowds. In 1922, Detroit residents voted to buy the streetcars, line and all operations and the Department of Street Railways (DSR) was formed. Two decades later, World War II brought rationing. Tires and gasoline were hard to obtain. As a result, public transportation ridership increased.

Rationing ended at the end of World War II. It was also the advent of the interstate highway system, and the dismantling of the streetcar system.

By the 1930s, the private ownership of automobiles was increasing, and roadways were getting more congested. The federal government, to address this growing issue and as a means to help the country recover from the Great Depression, passed The Federal Highway Act of 1938 which directed the Bureau of Public Roads to examine the feasibility of building a six-route, transcontinental toll highway network. The report instead recommended a 43,000 mile, non-toll highway system.

Support for a national highway system diminished with the onset of WW II. As the war ended, attention again refocused on creating a federal highway program. With the popularity of President Eisenhower behind it, the Federal – Aid Highway Act was signed into law in 1956.

Constructing the interstate highway system has improved the mobility of people owning automobiles and allowed central-city residents and businesses to move to suburban locations like the City of Sterling Heights. Today, the City benefits from its proximity to I-75, I-94, and I-696.

Coincidentally, the year 1956 was also the year all Detroit streetcar service ended. Buses became the default public transportation option. In 1964, the DSR proposed a merger with a tri-county “Rapid

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to website, [www.detroittransithistory.info/TheDURYears.html](http://www.detroittransithistory.info/TheDURYears.html), page 1.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to website, [www.detroittransithistory.info/TheDURYears.html](http://www.detroittransithistory.info/TheDURYears.html), page 2.

<sup>5</sup> Refer article on patch.com by Michele Fecht, “Interurban Provided Northville with Mass Transit”, March 5, 2012, page 2.

Transit Authority" which would allow it to expand its services to the suburbs. Establishing a regional system drew little support until state passage of the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act of 1967, which formed SEMTA (the Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority). SEMTA was established to provide suburban mass transit service in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw, Monroe and St. Clair counties. SEMTA acquired the DSR as well. Seven years later, the DSR was reorganized as the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT).

In 1988, SEMTA was restructured into a 3-county agency, which excluded Detroit and renamed SMART (Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation). Efforts to merge SMART and DDOT in the 1990s failed. DDOT terminated its suburban bus service in 1998 with SMART picking up the abandoned routes. Today, SMART provides bus service to the City of Sterling Heights along six different routes. For the past 3-years, oversight of SMART's operations occurs via the Regional Transit Authority for Southeastern Michigan (RTA). The RTA was formed to oversee the existing public transit agencies in Macomb, Washtenaw, Oakland, and Wayne counties and to develop and operate a rapid transit service in the four counties.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Connecting to Regional Parks***

The rapid migration of population into the City from urbanized areas which occurred during 1950-1970 was not only the result of the increased mobility enjoyed by householders and businesses alike, but also their conscious decision in site selection – selecting a destination offering the services and lifestyle characteristics they preferred. Premier among them are nearby regional recreational opportunities offered to them by the Huron – Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA).

The HCMA is a regional special park district covering Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston counties. At the time of its inception in 1940, the park system was created to provide a variety of outdoor recreational and educational opportunities for an expected expanding metropolitan population, to preserve important natural features, and to protect environmentally sensitive lands. The HCMA is funded by a property tax levy of 0.25 mills.

Currently, 13 Metroparks are strategically distributed along the Huron and Clinton Rivers which occupy approximately 39 square miles. Located near the City of Sterling Heights are the Lake St. Clair Metropark located in Harrison Township (770 acres), Wolcott Mill Metropark in Ray Township (3,200 acres), and the Stony Creek Metropark located in Shelby and Washington Townships (containing 4,400 acres).

The Metroparks are currently being planned to be connected to other recreational assets in Macomb County through a hierarchy of trailways (regional corridors, county connectors, and local connectors).<sup>7</sup> A regional corridor is planned within Sterling Heights, extending from Dodge Park. The City has indicated a route along Schoenherr Road and connecting to Freedom Hill County Park and the Metropolitan Parkway system.

### ***Neighboring Development***

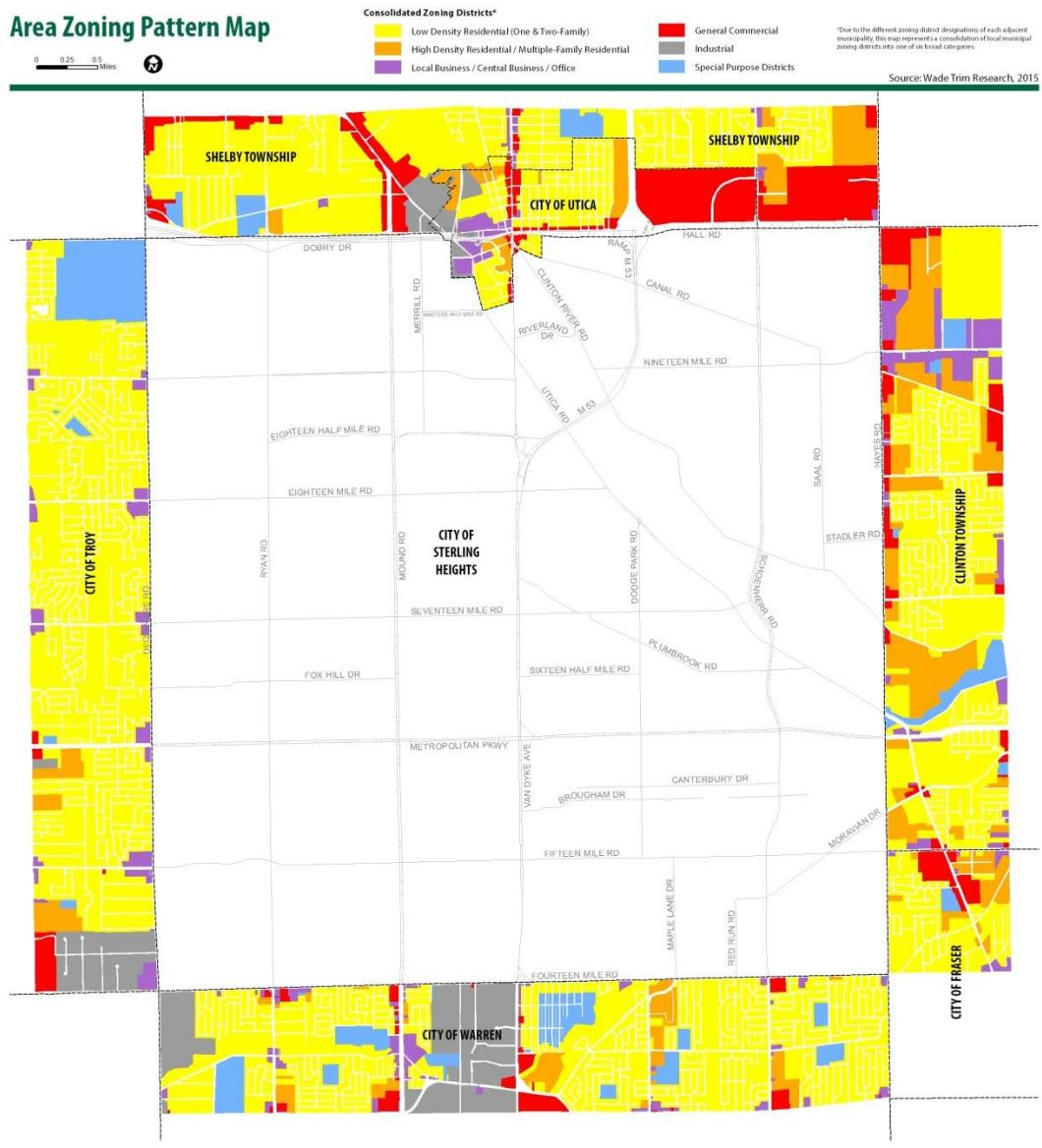
Long-range planning for the City of Sterling Heights must be coordinated with neighboring communities. These communities are Shelby Township, Clinton Township, the City of Warren, the City

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<sup>6</sup> For a complete chronology of public transit service in southeast Michigan, refer to website [www.smartbus.org](http://www.smartbus.org).

<sup>7</sup> A complete description of the proposed routes, including their location, can be found in the "Macomb County Trailways Master Plan", adopted by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners in November 2004.

of Troy, the City of Utica and the City of Fraser. Given the developed nature of the City and surrounding communities, the zoning districts map of each neighboring community was evaluated to identify the zoning categories which are adjacent to the City's corporate limits. In this manner, the land development pattern they intend to permit can be assessed for their planning and zoning influence on the City. An **Area Zoning Pattern Map** has been prepared, which represents a consolidation of the numerous unique zoning district classifications of each adjacent municipality into six broad zoning district categories. Most commonly, the adjacent communities feature low density residential zoning with the exception of the areas surrounding key road intersections, which are typically zoned for local business/office use or general commercial use. Adjacent to the City to the northeast, general commercial zoning is most prevalent within the adjoining townships of Shelby and Clinton. This general commercial zoning is consistent with the City's zoning pattern surrounding Lakeside Mall. Consistent with the City's industrial corridor between Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue, industrial zoning extends both to the north (Utica) and south (Warren).



# Land Development Pattern Analysis

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## Existing Land Use

The existing Land Use survey reveals general land use patterns and trends in the City. The first step in conducting an existing land use survey is to define land use categories. A field survey is then completed, and a map is created to determine the amount of land in each category. The existing land use map also serves as the basis for completing an existing land use analysis. The existing land use analysis examines land use patterns and trends, redevelopment opportunities, and other specific land use issues.

An existing land use survey was completed in June of 2015. The existing land use of each parcel was recorded and mapped, and the acreages of each type of land use were computed using GIS software. The results of the survey are illustrated on the **Existing Land Use Map** and in **Table 1**.

### ***Land Use Categories***

The following generalized land use categories were used for the Sterling Heights existing land use survey:

#### *Single Family Residential*

This category includes all single-family homes and related accessory structures.

#### *Multiple Family Residential*

The category includes residential uses and buildings with two (2) or more dwelling units.

#### *Mobile Home Park*

This category includes mobile home park developments.

#### *Office*

This category includes professional offices, including medical or dental offices.

#### *Commercial*

The commercial land category includes regional, community, and local commercial uses. Neighborhood commercial uses primarily serve nearby residents and draw upon the smallest geographical area for their customers. Community commercial uses primarily serve the residents of the City. Community commercial uses draw upon a smaller geographical area than regional commercial uses, but a larger geographical area than a neighborhood commercial use. Regional commercial uses serve a regional population, drawing upon a large geographical area extending beyond the City's borders to attract customers.

#### *Industrial*

This category includes both light and heavy industrial uses. Uses such as light fabricating or uses located within industrial parks are considered light industrial uses. Large manufacturing operations such as auto plants are considered heavy industrial uses.

Hold page for Existing Land use Map

#### Parks/Public Open Space

This category includes City parks, County parks, nature preserves and other open spaces which are developed for recreational purposes and accessible to the general public. It does not include common elements and recreational spaces found within residential developments which are generally only available for use by residents of the development.

#### Public/Semi Public

This category includes public uses (not operated by the City) and semi-public uses which are generally open to serve the public. Examples of public uses include a road commission storage yard and post office, while semi-public uses include places of worship and fraternal organizations.

#### Municipal Buildings (City)

This category includes all facilities owned by the City of Sterling Heights, including City offices, police stations, fire stations, library, and the senior center.

#### Golf Courses

This category includes golf courses and related facilities such as clubhouses and practice greens.

#### Schools

This category includes public and private school facilities, including preschools, elementary schools, middle and high schools, as well as institutions of higher learning.

#### Utilities

This category includes public and semi-public utility facilities and properties, which may include transmission/pipeline corridors, substations, and related facilities.

#### Vacant

This category includes lands which are generally vacant or undeveloped, such as open spaces, vacated sites, forested lands and agricultural lands.

These existing land uses have evolved over the last few decades to create a framework for future development.

### **Existing Land Use Framework**

The existing land use framework in Sterling Heights is made up of neighborhoods, corridors, and districts.

#### Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods that include single-family, multiple-family, public facilities (schools, parks, etc.) and retail uses comprise the majority of the City.

#### Districts

Districts are similar in size to neighborhoods but are dedicated to a single use. Lakeside Mall is an example of a dedicated commercial district. There are a number of districts in the City, including industrial districts and multiple family districts.

## Corridors

Corridors are also an important part of the framework of Sterling Heights. The land along and between Van Dyke Avenue and Mound Road form the most dominant corridor in the City, if not the county. Primarily defined by their role in providing transportation, these corridors also contribute to land use patterns and the overall image of the City. Primarily industrial and commercial in nature, these corridors also provide access to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

## **Existing Land Use Trends and Analysis**

**Table 1** shows the amount of acres in each land use category in Sterling Heights in 2015, 2003, and 1985. Over the approximately 30 year span, the City has seen a sharp increase in developed land acreage versus vacant land acreage. The total residential land has increased from 29.2% of the City in 1985 to 45.5% of the City in 2015. During this time, commercial land increased from 2.7% to 6.0%, office land increased from 0.6% to 1.7%, industrial land increased from 6.2% to 10.5%, and institutional land increased from 25.3% to 29.4% of the City.

### Residential Land Uses

Residential land uses comprise 10,698.9 acres or 45.5% of the City. The majority of this acreage is single-family residential land (8,500.8 acres), while multiple-family residential land accounts for 1,917.8 acres and manufactured home park land accounts for 280.3 acres. Single-family residential lands are located in neighborhoods throughout the City, with the exception of the industrial corridor between Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue. Multiple-family residential lands are generally located adjacent to higher intensity office and commercial uses, and serve as a buffer between lower density single-family residential uses. A few areas with particularly high concentrations of multiple-family housing include the Lakeside Mall area and the lands south of M-59 between Dequindre and Mound Roads. There are two manufactured housing complexes in the City. Sterling Estates is located on the west side of Utica Road, south of 19 ½ Mile Road, and Rudgate Manor is located south of 18 Mile Road between Mound Road and Ryan Road.

### Commercial Land Uses

Commercial land uses range from neighborhood commercial districts that serve a small population to regional shopping areas that draw from adjacent communities as well as the City of Sterling Heights. In total, commercial lands occupy 1,400.4 acres or 6.0% of the City. There are two primary commercial corridors in the City, Van Dyke Road and M-59, while Mound Road is a secondary commercial corridor. These corridors contain many regional commercial uses, including national chain stores and big box retailers. The Lakeside Mall area, south of M-59 between Schoenherr and Hayes Roads, is the largest single concentration of regional commercial use in the City. Most other commercial uses within the City are concentrated in smaller commercial nodes at key intersections. Such commercial development usually consists of neighborhood commercial uses including grocery stores, convenience stores, gas stations, and retail strip centers with various uses.

**Table 1**  
**Existing Land Use Acreage by Category**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 1985 - 2015**

Land Use Category	2015		2003		1985	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
<b>Residential</b>	<b>10,698.9</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>10,823.9</b>	<b>46.0%</b>	<b>6,874.0</b>	<b>29.2%</b>
Single Family Residential	8,500.8	36.1%	9,224.1	39.2%	6,080.0	25.9%
Multiple Family Residential	1,917.8	8.2%	1,359.5	5.8%	564.7	2.4%
Manufactured Home Park	280.3	1.2%	240.3	1.0%	229.3	1.0%
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>1,400.4</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>1,322.3</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>623.7</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Office</b>	<b>403.8</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>256.4</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>130.6</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>2,473.6</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>2,508.3</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>1,466.5</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>6,902.3</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>7,272.8</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>5,959.2</b>	<b>25.3%</b>
Parks/Public Open Space	1,119.2	4.8%	1,061.2	4.5%	1,295.0	5.5%
Public/Semi-Public	549.1	2.3%	421.6	1.8%	793.1	3.3%
Municipal Buildings	40.0	0.2%	106.0	0.5%	--	--
Golf Courses	662.0	2.8%	661.0	2.8%	--	--
Schools	644.4	2.7%	689.6	2.9%	--	--
Rivers/Lakes	135.3	0.6%	196.5	0.8%	85.3	0.4%
Roads/Railroads	3,206.8	13.7%	3,651.8	15.5%	3,131.3	13.4%
Utilities	545.5	2.3%	485.1	2.1%	654.5	2.8%
<b>Vacant</b>	<b>1,610.0</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>1,317.3</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>8,460.0</b>	<b>36.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,489.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>23,514.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>23,514.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source and Notes: The 2015 land use data was compiled by Wade Trim in June of 2015. City of Sterling Heights total land acreage is based on 2014 Macomb County Geographic Framework Base data from the Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL). Total acreage of rivers and lakes is based on a river and lake polygon GIS layer obtained from the City of Sterling Heights, 2015. Some differences between the 2015, 2003 and 1985 land use data calculations are the result of different methods of measuring and computing acreage. The 2005 Master Land Use Plan was the source for the 2003 land use data. The sum total of the 2003 land use data equals 23,501.0 but was listed as 23,514.0 in Table 7 of the 2005 Master Land Use Plan. The 1985 Master Plan was the source for the 1985 land use data. In 1985, different categorizations of institutional land uses were utilized.

#### Office Land Uses

Office land use occupies 403.8 acres or 1.7% of the City. Office uses are most often intermixed with commercial uses along the City's major commercial corridors and nearby major road intersections.

#### Industrial Land Uses

Industrial land use accounts for 10.5% of the total land of City, or 2,473.6 acres. Almost all of the industrial land is located between Van Dyke and Mound Roads, within an approximately one-mile wide and six-mile long planned industrial corridor which splits the City generally into two-halves. Industrial land uses are characterized by both heavy and industrial uses, including auto and auto parts manufacturing, and light industrial uses. Industrial development that has occurred since the 1985 land use survey has largely been in the form industrial parks and other light industrial development, and has been located along the entire length of Mound Road on the west side of the industrial corridor.

### Institutional Land Uses

Institutional use (including numerous “sub-categories”) makes up 29.4% of the City’s total land. Generally, institutional uses are scattered throughout the City to serve the City’s many residential areas. However, one particular concentration of institutional use is found within the Clinton River corridor between Utica Road and Clinton River Road, consisting of large recreational areas in addition to the City’s governmental center located at the intersection of Utica Road and Dodge Park Road.

### **Non-Conforming Land Use Analysis**

Completion of the existing land use inventory provides the ability to identify existing non-conforming uses within the City of Sterling Heights, by comparing land use field data against the City Zoning Ordinance text and map. This non-conforming land use analysis can be used for a variety of purposes, including allowing City staff to monitor non-conforming land uses and guard against their unauthorized expansion, or help the City institute proceedings for their condemnation and removal in accordance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. Additionally, the non-conforming use analysis could help to identify locations in the City where codes have unintentionally caused non-conforming land use conditions.

### **Methodology**

In order to identify potential non-conforming uses within the City, a matrix of allowable land uses by zoning district was prepared (**Table 2**). This matrix lists the 93 total land use types which are specifically listed as being allowed within the City Zoning Ordinance. The matrix then shows the various existing zoning districts established and notes (with an “X”) whether the specific land use classification is allowed within the zoning district, either as a principal permitted use or a special land use.

**Table 2**  
**Matrix of Allowable Land Uses by Zoning District**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2015**

Existing Land Use Classification	Zoning Districts																	
	R-60 & 70	R-80, 90 & 100	R-2	MHP	RM-1 & RM-2	RM-3	O-1	O-2	O-3	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	P-1	FP	O-R	TRO	M-1
Adult Entertainment Establishments										X								
Agriculture	X	X													X			
Ambulance Service Dispatch																	X	X
Amusement Device Centers										X	X							
Auto, Gasoline Service Stations											X							
Auto, Impound Lots																	X	X
Auto, Sales Dealerships & Rental											X						X	X
Auto, Service Centers (General)																	X	X
Auto, Service Centers (Part of Planned Development)										X	X	X						
Auto, Wash Establishments											X							
Banquet Facilities										X								
Building Construction Contractors																	X	X
Cemeteries	X	X	X															
Central Dry Cleaning Plants and Laundries																	X	X
Child Care Centers							X	X	X	X								
Clubs, Private	X	X	X					X					X					
Concrete and Asphalt Crushing Plants																		X
Dance Halls												X						
Dwellings, Assisted Living	X		X		X		X	X										
Dwellings, Boarding Houses					X													
Dwellings, Independent Living						X	X											
Dwellings, Mobile Home Parks					X													
Dwellings, Multi Family (Low Rise 2 or Less Stories)						X	X						X					
Dwellings, Multi Family (Low Rise 3 Stories)						X	X						X					
Dwellings, Multi Family (Mid to High Rise 3+ Stories)						X							X					
Dwellings, One Family Detached	X	X																

Table 2 (cont.)

Existing Land Use Classification	Zoning Districts																		
	R-60 & 70	R-80, 90 & 100	R-2	MHP	RM-1 & RM-2	RM-3	O-1	O-2	O-3	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	P-1	FP	O-R	TRO	M-1	M-2
Dwellings, One Family Detached	X	X																	
Dwellings, Rehabilitation Centers					X														
Dwellings, Two Family			X																
Education, Higher Institutions	X	X	X					X						X		X	X	X	X
Education, Primary Schools	X	X	X																
Funeral Homes								X				X							
Hospitals								X											
Industrial, Recycling Stations																			X
Industrial, Refuse and Garbage Incinerators																			X
Institutions, Post Offices, Public Facilities and DPW Yards																	X	X	
Institutions, Public (City)	X	X	X											X		X			
Institutions, Public (Non-City)	X	X	X											X	X	X			
Junkyards																			X
Kennels																	X	X	
Lodging, Hotels and Motels									X			X	X						
Manufacturing, Assembly of Electronics and Machines																	X	X	X
Manufacturing, Heavy																			X
Manufacturing, Light																	X	X	
Nonautomotive Paint Shops																		X	X
Offices, professional							X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Parking Lots, Off-Street															X	X			
Parking Lots, Structures														X					
Personal Service, Appliance Repair													X						
Personal Service, Body Art Facilities												X							
Personal Service, General											X	X	X	X					
Places of Worship	X	X	X		X	X													
Printing and Publishing																X	X	X	X
Public Utilities, Local Service	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Utilities, Regional Service	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recreation, Bowling Alleys												X							

Table 2 (cont.)

Existing Land Use Classification	Zoning Districts																		
	R-60 & 70	R-80, 90 & 100	R-2	MHP	RM-1 & RM-2	RM-3	O-1	O-2	O-3	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	P-1	FP	O-R	TR0	M-1	M-2
Recreation, Commercial Indoor or Outdoor																		X	X
Recreation, Golf Courses	X	X	X												X				
Recreation, Miniature Golf and Golf Driving Ranges														X					
Recreation, Non-Commercial Recreation Centers							X												
Recreation, Physical Fitness Facilities											X	X	X						
Recreation, Public Riding Stables	X	X	X																
Recreational Vehicle Storage																	X	X	
Research, Development and Testing Facilities														X		X	X	X	X
Research, Medical Tech Facilities																X	X	X	X
Restaurants (Including Drive Thru)											X	X	X						
Restaurants (No Drive Thru)								X	X	X	X	X							
Retail, Art Galleries													X	X					
Retail, Auto Supply Stores									X		X								
Retail, Building Materials and Outdoor Supply Stores													X						
Retail, Bulk Food Stores											X	X							
Retail, Department Stores											X	X							
Retail, General									X	X	X	X							
Retail, General Merchandise Store										X	X								
Retail, Home Furnishing Stores										X	X	X							
Retail, Jewelry							X		X	X	X	X							
Retail, Multi-Tenant Shopping Center										X									
Retail, Nursery, Lawn and Garden Stores											X	X							
Retail, Office Supplies								X	X										
Retail, Pawnbrokers											X								
Retail, Regional Shopping Centers											X								
Retail, Supermarkets										X	X	X							

Table 2 (cont.)

Existing Land Use Classification	Zoning Districts																		
	R-60 & 70	R-80, 90 & 100	R-2	MHP	RM-1 & RM-2	RM-3	O-1	O-2	O-3	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	P-1	FP	O-R	TRO	M-1	M-2
Self-Storage Facilities												X							
Studios									X		X	X							
Theaters, Auditoriums, Concert Halls and Similar Places of Assembly														X					
Theaters, Movie											X	X							
Tool Rentals												X							
Truck Terminals and Truck Storage Yards																			X
Truck, Equipment, RV, Boat, Mobile Home Rentals																	X	X	
TV and Radio Broadcast Stations																X			
Union Halls																		X	X
Veterinary Offices										X	X	X							
Warehouses and Wholesale Establishments																X	X	X	
Wireless Communication Towers							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

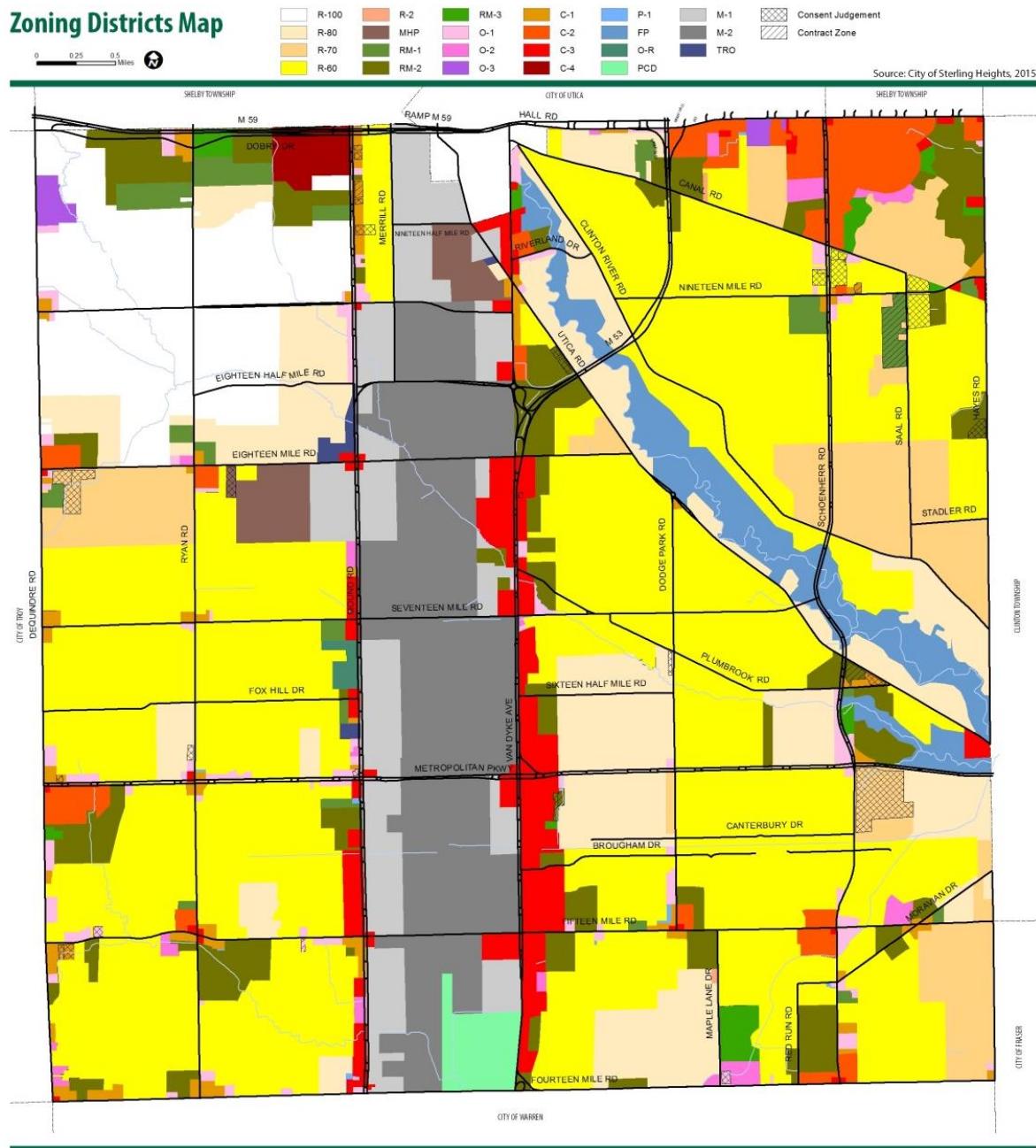
Table 2 Notes:

1. X = Allowable Use (Principal Permitted Use or Special Land Use)
2. The PCD (Planned Center District) allows broad mix of land uses upon review and approval of the City and thus has not been included in the matrix.
3. All vacant land uses have been classified as conforming uses.
4. For geographic distribution of zoning districts, refer to the City of Sterling Heights Zoning District Map.

Source: Wade Trim Analysis based on June 2015 existing land use survey and City of Sterling Heights Zoning Ordinance text and map, Ordinance 278-1 through 278-170.

Each parcel in the City was then coded into one of the 93 specific land use categories. In order to accomplish the analysis, the generalized land use classifications shown on the Existing Land Use Map (i.e., "Commercial") were further divided into such categories as "Banquet Facilities" and "Retail, Supermarkets". Next, each parcel was coded its current zoning district classification, based on the City of Sterling Heights **Zoning Districts Map**. Finally, a comparison was made between the land use classifications and zoning districts in order to determine which parcels were conforming or non-conforming.

## Zoning Districts Map



Hold page for Non-Conforming Use Map

## Analysis

Out of more than 50,000 total parcels within the City, a total of 992 were flagged as having a non-conforming use. The locations of these non-conforming parcels are shown on the **Non-Conforming Use Map**. The map also flags parcels which were identified as non-conforming based on the land use and zoning district comparison, but are part of a consent judgment or conditional zoning. In these cases, such land uses may actually be deemed legal conforming uses depending on the terms of the consent judgment or conditional rezoning agreement.

Non-conforming uses can be found scattered throughout the City. However, they are more commonly found fronting the primary north-south and east-west roadways. Of these major roadways, the Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue corridors feature the largest concentration of non-conforming uses. Few non-conforming land uses are found within the residential neighborhoods.

The non-conforming land use results are further summarized by land use category in **Table 3**. Of the 992 total parcels with non-conforming uses, the largest number (454) contain two-family dwellings. Two-family dwellings are allowed by the City Zoning Ordinance only within the R-2 District. Most commonly, the non-conforming two-family uses are located on parcels zoned RM-1 District. Another common non-conforming use found in the City is multi-family dwellings (low rise, two stories or less), totaling 332 parcel instances, most commonly zoned R-100 District. Multi-family dwellings (low rise, two stories or less) are allowed by the City Zoning Ordinance only within the RM-1, RM-2 and RM-3 Districts. A total of 66 non-conforming use parcels within the City contain one-family detached dwellings. Most commonly, these non-conforming land use parcels are zoned M-1 District.

**Table 3**  
**Non-Conforming Use Summary**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2015**

Non-Conforming Use Classification	Total Non-Conforming Parcel Count	Most Common Zoning District Designation (current)
Adult Entertainment Establishments	1	C-3
Auto, Gasoline Service Stations	5	C-1
Auto, Service Centers (General)	21	C-3
Building Construction Contractors	7	R-80
Child Care Centers	4	R-60
Clubs, Private	2	O-1, C-1 (tied)
Concrete and Asphalt Crushing Plants	17	M-1
Dwellings, Assisted Living	1	RM-3
Dwellings, Multi Family (Low Rise 2 or Less Stories)	332	R-100
Dwellings, One Family Detached	66	M-1
Dwellings, Two Family	454	RM-1
Education, Primary Schools	2	O-1
Funeral Homes	2	O-1
Hospitals	1	C-2
Industrial, Recycling Stations	3	M-1

**Table 3 (cont.)**

Non-Conforming Use Classification	Total Non-Conforming Parcel Count	Most Common Zoning District Designation (current)
Industrial, Recycling Stations	3	M-1
Institutions, Public (City)	1	M-2
Manufacturing, Heavy	2	M-1
Manufacturing, Light	2	C-3
Offices, Professional	1	R-60
Personal Service, Body Art Facilities	1	C-3
Personal Service, General	1	O-1
Places of Worship	12	C-2
Public Utilities, Regional Service	1	FP
Recreation, Bowling Alleys	3	C-2
Recreation, Golf Courses	1	M-1/M-2 Split Zone
Recreation, Non-Commercial Recreation Centers	3	R-70
Recreation, Physical Fitness Facilities	1	C-1
Recreational Vehicle Storage	1	RM-3
Restaurants (Including Drive Thru)	4	C-1
Restaurants (No Drive Thru)	3	O-3
Retail, Building Materials and Outdoor Supply Stores	5	M-1
Retail, General	6	O-1, M-1 (tied)
Retail, Home Furnishing Stores	2	M-1
Retail, Nursery, Lawn and Garden Stores	2	R-60
Retail, Office Supplies	1	C-3
Retail, Pawnbrokers	2	C-3
Retail, Supermarkets	3	C-4
Self Storage Facilities	3	M-1
Truck Terminals and Truck Storage Yards	9	M-1
Union Halls	3	C-3
Veterinary Offices	1	O-1
<b>Total</b>	<b>992</b>	

Source: Wade Trim analysis

# Natural Systems Assessment

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The Natural Features Assessment provides a description and analysis of the significant natural features within the City. These features include rivers and tributaries, bodies of water, wetlands, floodplains, woodlands and other habitat, and topography.

The assessment of natural features may impact future land use decisions, and the preservation of these features may significantly improve the quality of life for citizens and visitors to the community. Additionally, identification of natural features is essential for recreation planning, and increasingly for economic development initiatives that are tied to recreation.

## Clinton River Watershed and Subwatersheds

The City of Sterling Heights falls entirely within the Clinton River Watershed, which is a portion of the Lake St. Clair Regional Sub-basin. The City contains two subwatersheds of the Clinton River Watershed: the Red Run Subwatershed and the Clinton River East Subwatershed.

The Red Run Subwatershed contains the majority of land in the City; the northeastern portion of the City is within the Clinton River East Subwatershed. The Clinton River is the most prominent waterway in the City, running through the northeastern portion; other significant tributaries located within the City include the Red Run Drain, Plumbrook Drain, Big Beaver Drain, Crissman Drain, McCoy Drain, Gibson Drain, and many smaller tributaries.

Rapid urban expansion and subsequent losses in habitat, alterations in riparian corridors, and increases in impervious surfaces and flooding over the last fifty years or more have resulted in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) listing the entire Clinton River Watershed and the near shore area of Lake St. Clair an Area of Concern (AOC) in 1995. Several concerns were cited in the Clinton River Remedial and Preventative Action Plan that described why the river was listed as an AOC. These concerns were: 1) conventional pollutants including high fecal coliform bacteria and nutrients, 2) high total dissolved solids, 3) contaminated sediments including heavy metals, PCBs, oil and grease, and 4) impacted biota. Many old closed landfills in the watershed are also of concern. The TMDL for E. coli in the Red Run Drain and Bear Creek was established in September 2006.

Many projects are currently underway to address Areas of Concern, such as extensive water quality monitoring on the Clinton River, St. Clair River, and Lake St. Clair; bacterial source monitoring; several wastewater treatment system upgrades; SSO and CSO corrections; and numerous other nonpoint pollution control projects are either in progress or in the planning stages.

The Clinton River Watershed Council, an organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of the Clinton River Watershed and Lake St. Clair, is comprised of governmental, business, and civic members who work through a Board of Directors to achieve mutual goals. Sterling Heights is a member of the Watershed Council. The Council provides educational and conservation resources to assist member communities in their efforts to preserve water quality. These resources may in turn form the basis of land use policies or regulations that may be formally adopted by the City of Sterling Heights and implemented when reviewing development proposals.

## Bodies of Water

While lakes are not prevalent in the City, several bodies of water exist. The largest bodies of water are the lakes just south and east of Lakeside Mall in the northeastern portion of the City. Island Park is located interior to the southern-most lake. Commercial and residential development surround the lakes.

Bodies of water exist within the Clinton River Park areas and Joseph J. Delia Jr. Park. Other smaller bodies of water exist in association with wetlands throughout the City, and as storm water control facilities in association with both residential and commercial development.

## Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands within the City are primarily located in association with waterways; the largest areas of wetlands are in association with the Clinton River. The locations of wetlands within the City are shown on the **Wetlands and Floodplains Map**, based on data provided by the National Wetlands Inventory as maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Generally, wetland areas are most commonly found in the northern half of the City along the Clinton River, Plumbrook Drain and Crissman Drain. Some larger areas of wetlands are also found within the industrial corridor of the City located between Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue.

Wetlands are specifically defined by the State of Michigan in Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Wetlands of over five acres in size are protected by the State, as well as wetlands of five acres or less which are contiguous to a body of water (lake, pond, river or stream), and other essential wetlands that may be identified by the State.

Local units of government may take additional steps to protect wetlands that are not otherwise protected by the State, such as with vegetated buffers and construction setbacks. Sterling Heights may wish to adopt regulations which further protect wetlands not currently protected by the State.

Floodplains are identified according to criteria established by FEMA (Federal Emergency Response Administration) and are mapped on Federal Insurance Rate Maps (F. I. R. M.). The **Wetlands and Floodplains Map** shows the locations of 100-year flood zones and 500-year flood zones within the City. These flood zones are commonly adjacent to waterways and drains, particularly the Clinton River, Plumbrook Drain and Red Run Drain. For properties within the 100-year flood zone, flood insurance is required for mortgages that are federally backed through the National Flood Insurance Program.

Article 16 of the City of Sterling Heights Zoning Ordinance regulates development in the floodplain area.

## Woodlands

Since the City is largely developed, significant woodlands are not present within the City, with the exception of those areas near the Clinton River, other waterways and areas within parks. Several wooded areas near residential subdivisions have been preserved.

The City has adopted regulations for tree management in public places and rights-of-way found in Article I of Chapter 51 of the Codes and Ordinances of the City and has adopted a Tree Preservation Ordinance found in Article III of Chapter 51. An Official Woodlands Map has been adopted by the City as part of the Tree Preservation Ordinance, and is available for review in the office of the City Clerk.

Hold page for Wetlands and Floodplains Map

## Topography

Topography within the City is generally level, and does not present a challenge to future land use.

## Green Infrastructure and Natural Features Inventory

Regional planning agencies including SEMCOG and Macomb County have focused on the preservation and enhancement of green infrastructure elements at the county and region level. Green infrastructure refers to natural elements and related land uses including parks, lakes, ponds, existing and potential wetlands, riparian corridors and similar features. Green infrastructure is increasingly being recognized for its contribution not only to environmental quality, but also to placemaking, economic values, and healthy communities.<sup>8</sup> In 2014, SEMCOG prepared a report entitled Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan, which is a framework and guide for the preservation and future implementation of green infrastructure within Southeast Michigan. At the county level, Macomb County has mapped existing and potential green infrastructure elements. Within Sterling Heights, such elements include potential wetlands, water bodies, Michigan Natural Features Inventory elements, parks, woodlots, and riparian corridors. The principal green infrastructure areas/corridors within the City include: the Clinton River and adjacent wetlands, floodplains and recreation areas; the Red Run Drain and adjacent floodplains; the Big Beaver Creek and adjacent wetlands, floodplains and recreation areas; and, the lands including and adjacent to the Plumbrook Nature Preserve in the northwestern portion of the City.

Michigan Natural Features Inventory elements that are present within the County are discussed in a document entitled *Lake St. Clair Habitat Evaluation Study*, dated November of 2012. Ecological summaries were prepared for several sites within the City of Sterling Heights, including Dodge Park and the surrounding lands along the Clinton River. Several natural communities exist within the park, including dry-mesic oak forest, emergent marsh, inundated shrub-swamp, and a sapling-pole stand. More detailed information on this area may be found in the *Lake St. Clair Habitat Evaluation Study*. Disturbances and threats, as well as stewardship considerations are also included in the study.

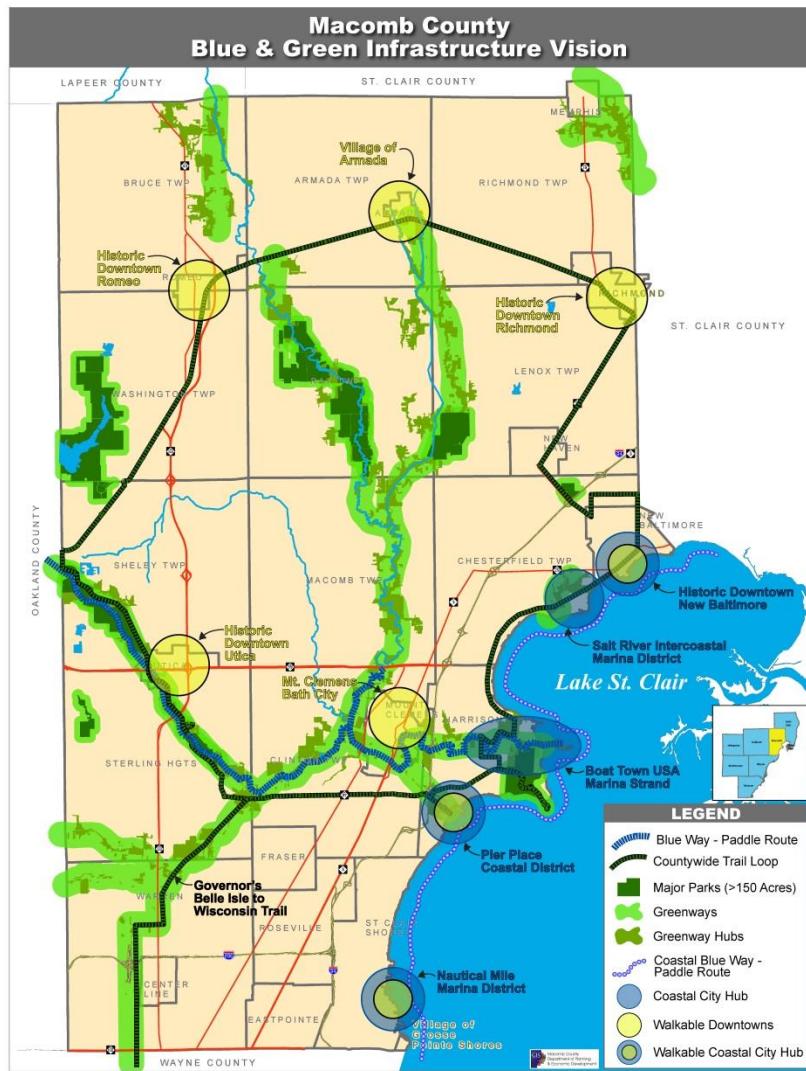
Aquatic sampling was done at several points along the Clinton River within the City; these samplings are detailed within the *Lake St. Clair Habitat Evaluation Study*. The study outlines "potential conservation areas" within the City of Sterling Heights including lands along the main branch of the Clinton River within the City and the area including and adjacent to the Plumbrook Nature Preserve.

## Blue and Green Infrastructure Vision

Embracing the quality of life, placemaking and economic benefits of green infrastructure as well as blue (water-related) infrastructure, Macomb County has identified and adopted a blue and green infrastructure vision of interconnected water routes, trail and natural corridors, recreation areas, walkable downtowns and coastal city hubs. This vision is highlighted in the **Macomb County Blue & Green Infrastructure Vision Map**. Key contributing elements of this vision within Sterling Heights include the Clinton River corridor, Clinton River Trail, Clinton River Water Trail, Plumbrook Nature Preserve, Red Run Drain corridor, Big Beaver Creek corridor, and the planned Governor's Belle Isle to Wisconsin Trail.

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<sup>8</sup> Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan. SEMCOG, 2014.



## Special Development Option Ordinance

The City of Sterling Heights Zoning Ordinance contains regulations which have resulted in the preservation of over 425 acres of privately held open space since the regulations were adopted in 1990. These regulations, found in Article 22 of the Zoning Ordinance, include the one-family cluster option, the planned subdivision option, and the Planned Unit Development (PUD) option.

The purpose of these options is to permit single family residential development which, through design innovation, preserves desirable open space in the form of wetlands, woodlands and other natural assets. In the case of PUD's, innovation in design for non-residential uses is permitted.

# Infrastructure Assessment

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## Transportation Network Assessment

Mobility constitutes a vital part of the social and economic well-being of a community. A successful transportation system is one that enhances the mobility of residents by providing efficient access from home to work and other facilities supplying basic needs. A successful transportation system also contributes to the success of businesses and industries, and allows for outside investment by attracting visitors to the community. Given the transportation system's great influence upon the overall framework and well-being of the community, the transportation element must be fully coordinated with the other elements of the Master Plan. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to ensure that future improvements and land use decisions complement the needs and goals within the community for continued and improved mobility.

### **National Functional Classification (NFC)**

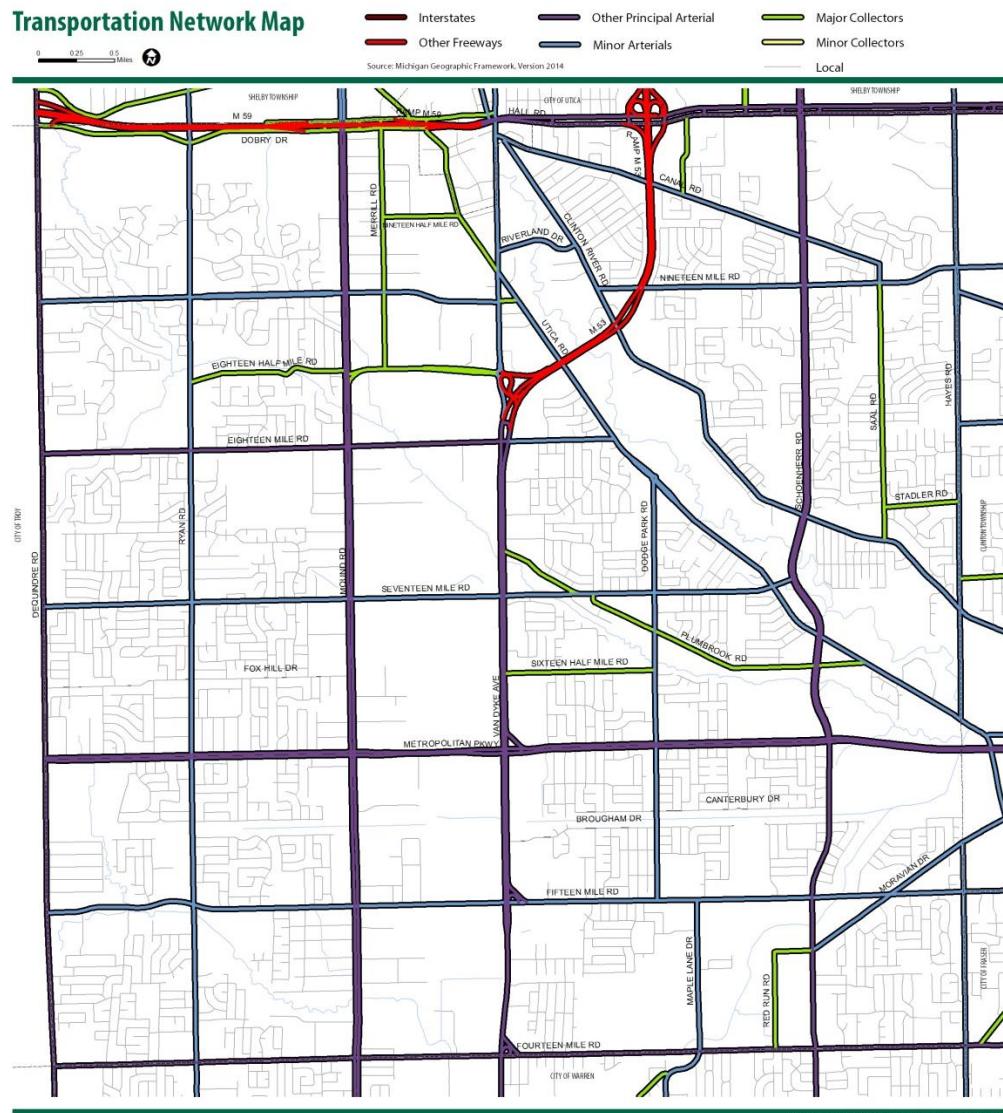
The **Transportation Network Map** shows the National Functional Classification of the City of Sterling Height's roads. The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a federal classification system for all public highways, roads, and streets. This classification system provides the basis for federal aid eligibility of roadways (United States Code, Title 23). In Michigan, MDOT has the primary role in cooperation with appropriate local agencies in updating and revising the NFC. Updates and revisions are subject to Federal Highway Administration approval.

Roads are classified first as rural or urban, dependent based on their location within or outside the federal aid urban/rural boundary. All of the roads and streets in Sterling Heights are designated as urban. The two primary considerations in classifying highway and street networks functionally are access to property and travel mobility, as defined by trip travel time or operating speed. For example, local roads provide access to property, but would be rated low in mobility. The basic classifications for the functional systems are:

- Arterial highways, which generally handle longer trips and operate at higher and more uniform speeds;
- Collector roads, which collect and disperse traffic between arterials and the local roads; and,
- Local roads, streets, and other public ways, which serve the land access function to the residential areas, businesses, individual properties, and other local areas.

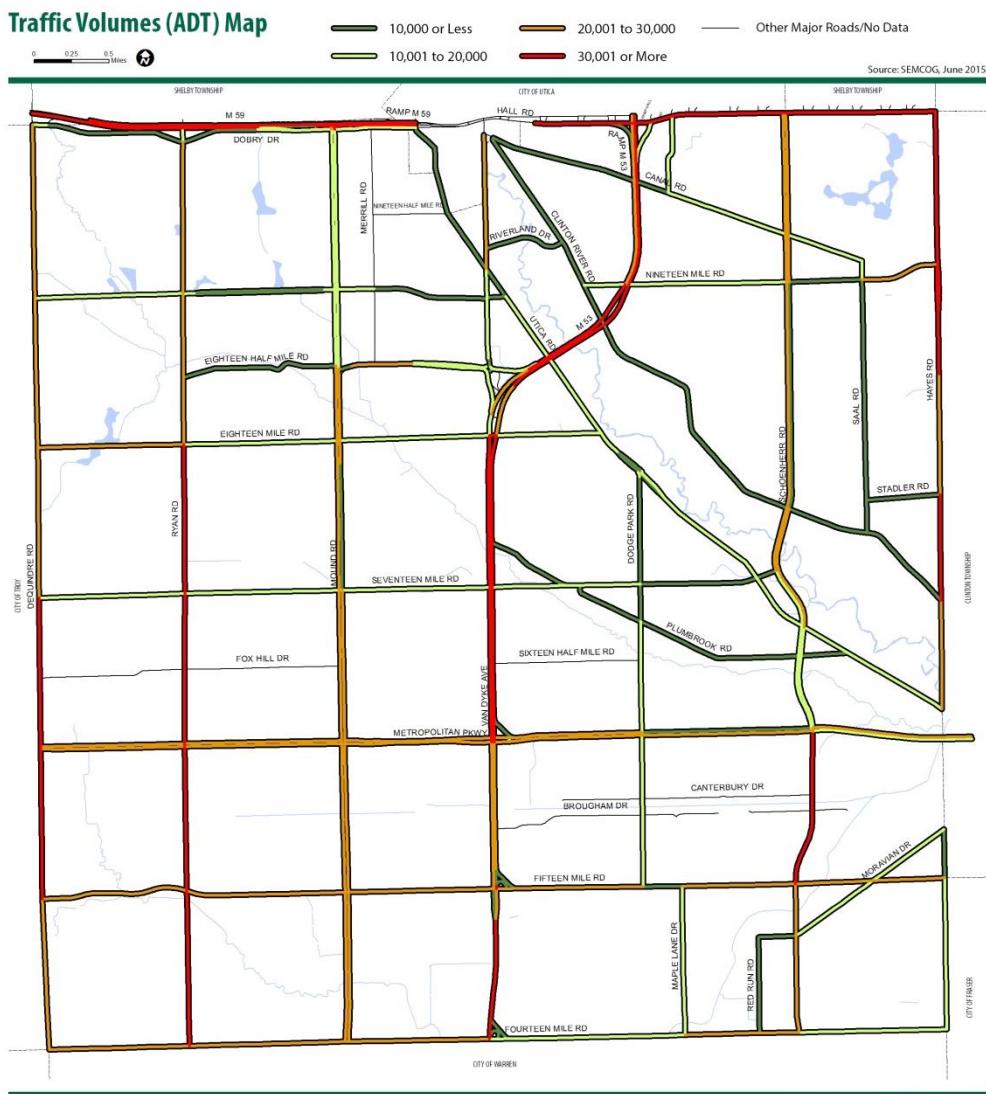
Interstates and freeways are at the top of the NFC system hierarchy. Portions of two freeways (non-interstate) extend into Sterling Heights, including M-53 and M-59. Numerous road segments in Sterling Heights are classified as arterials. Arterial routes are designed to provide for relatively high travel speeds and minimum interference to through movement. Principal arterials generally carry long distance, through travel movements between cities and provide access to important traffic generators, such as major airports or regional shopping centers. Minor arterials are similar in function to principal arterials, except they carry trips of shorter distance and to lesser traffic generators. Principal arterials within Sterling Heights include Hall Road (M-59), Van Dyke Avenue (M-53), Mound Road, 14 Mile Road, Metropolitan Parkway, Dequindre Road and Schoenherr Road. Minor Arterials include 19 Mile Road, 17 Mile Road, 15 Mile Road, Canal Road, Clinton River Road, Utica Road, Dodge Park Road, Ryan Road, Hayes Road and Moravian Drive.

Collector roads tend to provide more access to property than do arterials. Collectors also funnel traffic from residential or rural areas to arterials. Several major collectors are located in Sterling Heights, including Merrill Road, 18 ½ Mile Road, Saal Road, and Plumbrook Road.



### Traffic Volumes

The **Traffic Volumes Map** displays twenty-four hour Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts for selected road segments within Sterling Heights. These traffic counts were obtained from SEMCOG's traffic database obtained in June of 2015. For most streets, two-way traffic counts are shown; however, for freeways and other divided streets (Mound, Van Dyke, etc.), one-way traffic counts are shown. The most heavily traveled road segments in Sterling Heights include M-59, Van Dyke Avenue, Mound Road, Metropolitan Parkway, Hayes Road, Ryan Road, and Dequindre Road.



### Traffic Crash Statistics

Accident statistics for the City of Sterling Heights for 2012, 2013 and 2014 were obtained from SEMCOG. For the three year span, a total of 12,641 traffic crashes were reported. These included 14 fatal, 66 A-level, 444 B-level, 2,232 C-level and 9,885 PDO accidents. The total number of accidents has increased during the three year span, from 3,905 crashes in 2012, to 4,043 in 2013, to 4,693 in 2014.

Listed by total number of accidents, the highest number of traffic accidents occurred on the following roadways:

1. Van Dyke Ave – 1,667 total accidents
2. Mound Road – 1,279
3. Metropolitan Pkwy – 1,236
4. Schoenherr Road – 1,041
5. Hall Road – 932
6. 15 Mile Road – 830
7. Ryan Road – 599

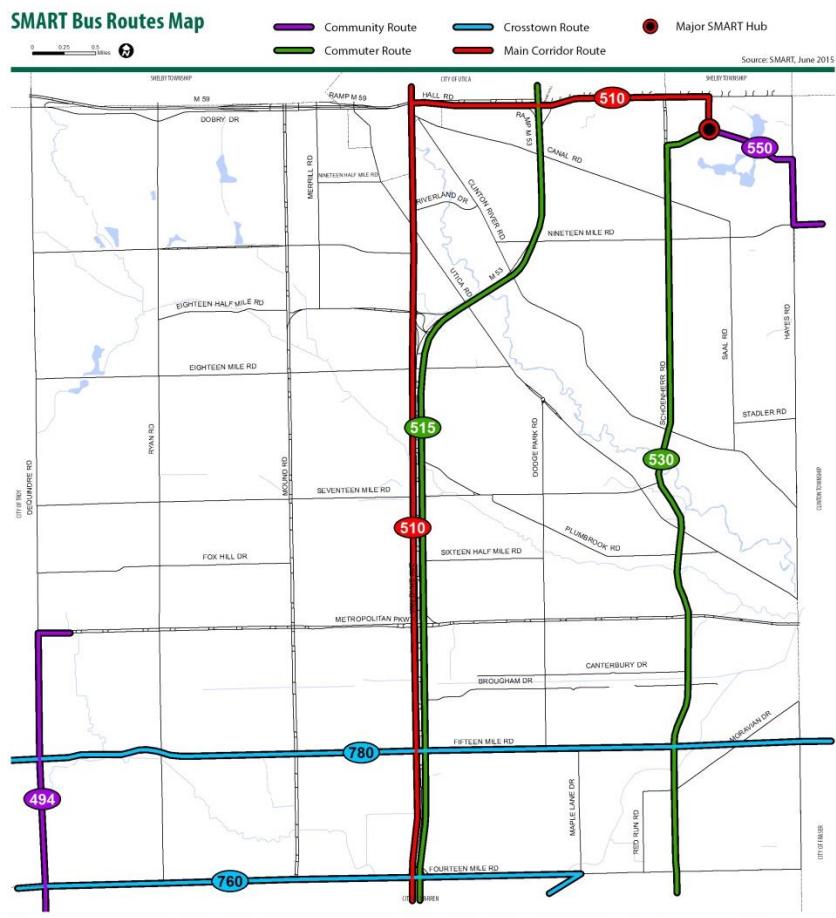
8. Hayes Road – 572
9. Dequindre Road – 460
10. 18 Mile Road - 334

Generally, the traffic accidents which occurred along these roadways during the three year span were not isolated in any particular location; rather, they were fairly evenly distributed along the corridors. However, a review of the accident locations shows a more concentrated number of traffic accidents occurring along the following road segments within the City:

- Hall Road, east of Van Dyke
- Schoenherr Road, between 19 Mile and Hall
- Hayes Road, between 19 Mile and Hall
- Mound Road at Hall Road
- Mound Road, south of Metropolitan Pkwy
- Van Dyke, between 14 Mile and 17 Mile

### Public Transit

Public Transit service is primarily provided through SMART. The **SMART Bus Routes Map** illustrates the locations of SMART bus routes within the City of Sterling Heights. Schoenherr Road and Van Dyke are the primary north-south routes with Fourteen Mile, Fifteen Mile and Hall Road being the major east-west transit corridors. In addition to main line transit routes, SMART also offers specialized transit services, including curb-to-curb connector service and ADA Paratransit service.



## Drinking Water

### **Source**

The City purchases its drinking water from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD). The water is treated and processed before being delivered to the City's water distribution system.

### **Water Quality**

The DNRE, in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey, the DWSD and the Michigan Public Health Institute, performed a source water assessment to determine the susceptibility of potential contamination. The susceptibility rating is on a seven-tiered scale from very low to high based primarily on geologic sensitivity, water chemistry and contaminant sources. The Detroit River source water intakes were found to be highly susceptible to potential contamination. The Lake Huron source water intake is categorized as moderately low susceptibility to potential contaminant sources. However, all Detroit water treatment plants that use source water from the Detroit River and the Lake Huron water treatment plant have historically provided satisfactory treatment to meet drinking water standards.

The City of Detroit treatment facilities operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The treatment process begins with disinfecting the source water with chlorine to kill harmful microorganisms that can cause illness. Next, a chemical called Alum is mixed with the water to remove the fine particles that make the water cloudy or turbid. Alum causes the particles to clump together and settle to the bottom. Fluoride is also added to protect our teeth from cavities and decay. The water then flows through fine sand filters called beds. These filters remove even more particles and certain microorganisms that are resistant to chlorine. Finally, small amounts of phosphoric acid and chlorine are added to the treated water just before it leaves the treatment plant. The phosphoric acid helps control the lead that may dissolve in water from household plumbing systems.

The chlorine keeps the water disinfected as it travels through the water mains to reach your home. In addition to a carefully controlled and monitored treatment process, the water is tested for a variety of substances before treatment, during various stages of treatment and throughout the distribution system. The DWSD tests hundreds of samples each week in their certified laboratories by a highly qualified, trained staff. Detroit water not only meets safety and health standards, but also ranks among the top 10 in the country for quality and value.

Since 1992, the City of Sterling Heights' water division has been testing homes with plumbing systems that may contribute lead to their household water supply. Of the twenty four (24) homes tested in 2011, none were found to have lead levels above the action level. Homes in Sterling Heights do have copper pipes that, prior to late 1988, were connected by lead solder. Lead solder was widely used prior to being banned in 1988, but it is still available in hardware stores for purposes other than home plumbing. The actual presence of lead connections does not indicate a lead problem. Over time, a protective coating builds up inside the pipe. This coating can reduce the amount of lead that might dissolve in the water. If your home was built prior to 1989, it may have piping that has lead soldered joints. If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for women and young children.

Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The City of Sterling Heights is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components.<sup>9</sup>

## **Sanitary Sewer**

The City of Sterling Heights maintains and operates its own sanitary and public storm sewer systems to ensure proper functioning. Staff of the City's Sewer Division inspect, repair and restore damaged utility structures, sewer lines, and replace the concrete required by these repairs. Included among duties of this Division is the maintenance of public retention ponds to assure proper functioning for the temporary retention of storm water drainage. Staff is also responsible for responding to emergency flooding conditions, checking known sanitary sewer system and lift station problem areas for surcharging and proper operation during heavy rainfall.<sup>10</sup>

The key goals of the City's Sewer Division include:

- To provide a systematic preventative maintenance sanitary sewer cleaning program to prevent sewer blockages.
- To provide efficient and economical maintenance, repair and restoration of the City's sanitary and storm sewer systems.
- To provide an efficient, competent and responsible sewer connection utility inspection program.
- To ensure safe, well maintained, functioning storm water retention basins for temporary detention of storm water run-off without damaging our stream ecology while preventing street and basement flooding.
- To minimize infiltration into the sanitary sewer system through inspection and an ongoing rehabilitation program.<sup>11</sup>

## **Stormwater<sup>12</sup>**

### **Overview**

The entire City falls within the "urbanized area." Thus, the storm water regulations apply to all the separate municipal storm sewer systems (MS4s) within the City limits. As of 2010, when the City last updated its Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP), there were 700 properties in the City that are served by on-site septic systems.

There are two school districts located within the City of Sterling Heights. They are the Utica Community School District and Warren Consolidated School District. The City does not have any cooperative agreements between these jurisdictions for stormwater systems within the corporate limits. Both school districts have contractual agreements with Macomb County and are blanketed under the County's Phase II General Permit. All student campuses have potential for contamination of

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<sup>9</sup> City of Sterling Heights. 2013 Annual Water Quality Report. Published June, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ci.sterling-heights.mi.us/1194/Sewer-Collection>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ci.sterling-heights.mi.us/1194/Sewer-Collection>

<sup>12</sup> City of Sterling Heights Stormwater Management Plan. prepared in compliance with Michigan Department Of Environmental Quality Phase I Storm Water Regulations NPDES Individual Permit MIS040085 Issued March 3, 2009; Revised February 2010.

storm water runoff from large parking lots and from maintenance operations at the facilities, grounds, and athletic fields.

The Macomb County Public Works Office has a number of storm drains within the City and the City is committed to working with this agency and the schools to coordinate and integrate efforts, where applicable. The Macomb County Department of Roads and MDOT have road rights-of-way within the City and both have their own permit coverage.

### **Storm Sewer System**

The City of Sterling Heights maintains storm water map which includes all municipally-owned storm water outfalls, catch basins, and tributaries. This map was submitted to MDNRE in June 2006 and is available upon request. The City currently has 250 outfalls under their jurisdiction. They discharge to various receiving sites including the Macomb County Public Works Office (MCPWO) drains, land owned by the City of Sterling Heights, the Utica Community School District, Warren Consolidated School District and other privately owned property within the City of Sterling Heights. All storm water from the City ultimately drains to the Clinton River.

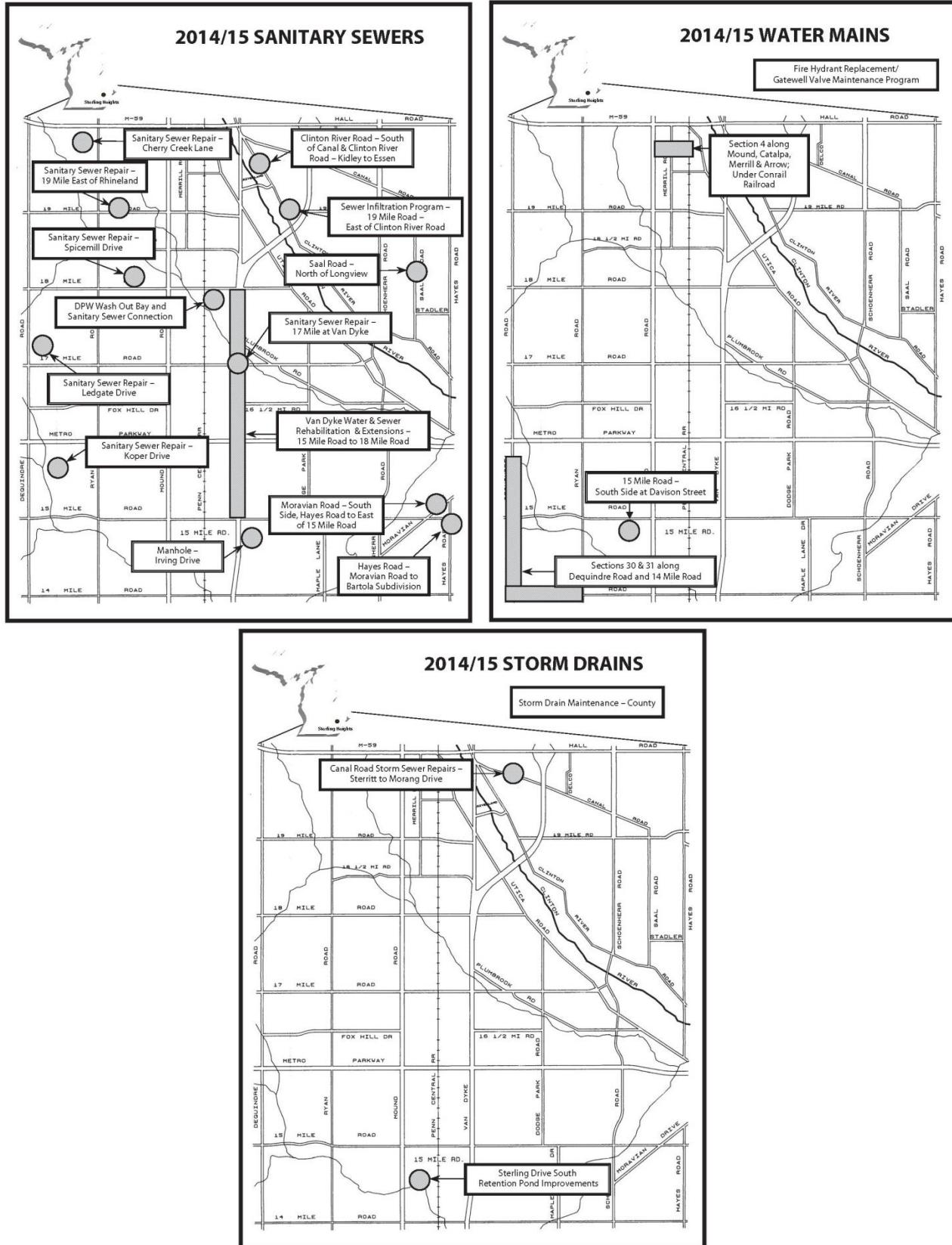
The General Drain Fund services debt that was created by the sale of bonds by Macomb County under Chapter 20 of the Drain Code. The proceeds from these bond sales are realized in the Capital Projects Fund and are used to construct drains within the City. In 2014/15, there were no new drains planned to be constructed with bond sale proceeds.

### **Capital Improvements and Funding**

The Water & Sewer Fund equipment, vehicles, and technology improvements are budgeted within the respective Water & Sewer Divisions. The primary funding sources for Water & Sewer Fund improvements and replacement projects are fees charged for connections into the existing system and funding from special assessments. In Budget Year 2014, sanitary sewer projects totaling \$1,673,000 and water main expenditures of \$3,344,500 were programmed and another \$10,000 was budgeted for the Fire Hydrant Replacement Program. Provided on the next page are maps showing the locations of capital improvements related to sanitary sewers, water mains, and storm drains for Program Year 2014/15.

### **Energy - Gas and Electricity**

DTE Energy provides gas and electricity services to both businesses and residences in the City of Sterling Heights.



Source: Sterling Heights Capital Improvement Projects 2011-2015

# Socioeconomic Trends and Projections

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## Introduction

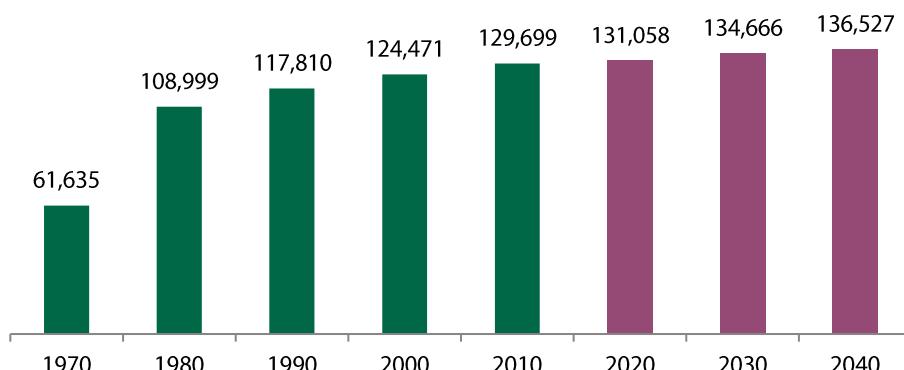
This analysis will describe the socioeconomic characteristics of Sterling Heights, Michigan. These characteristics include information on population, age, race, gender, households, income, education and employment. In many cases, the figures for Sterling Heights are compared to the adjacent City of Warren and Charter Township of Clinton for comparison purposes. These two communities have been selected to provide a relevant comparison given that they are similarly sized (in terms of both population and land area) and situated (within urban Macomb County). Additionally, the City's figures may also be compared to Macomb County as a whole to gauge its characteristics with the immediate region. An examination of these statistics will help determine future land use and programmatic needs. A variety of data sources have been utilized for this analysis, including the decennial reports from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

## Population Characteristics

### *Population Trends and Projections*

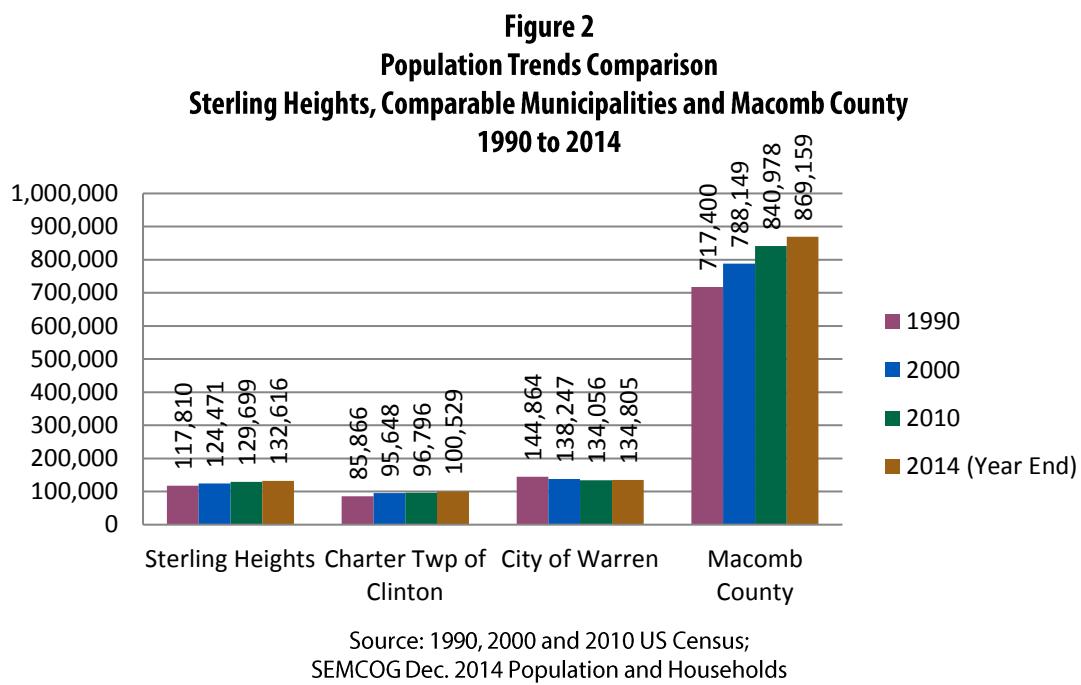
As shown in **Figure 1**, the population of Sterling Heights steadily grew from 1970 to 2010. A total of 68,064 residents have been added to the population between 1970 and 2010, representing a growth of 110.4%. However, the bulk of this increase occurred in the 1970's, as the population grew by 47,364 residents during the decade. Since 1980, the City has seen a slow, steady population growth. According to SEMCOG forecasts, the City's population is projected to continue to grow at a slow, steady pace and is expected to reach 136,527 residents by the year 2040 (5.3% increase from 2010).

**Figure 1**  
**Sterling Heights Population Trends and Projections**  
**1970 to 2040**



Source: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 US Census;  
SEMCOG 2020, 2030 and 2040 forecasts

Population trends from comparable municipalities and Macomb County as a whole provide a frame of reference for the trends for Sterling Heights. **Figure 2**, below, shows population trends for these entities from 1990 to 2014. Similar to Sterling Heights, Clinton Township and Macomb County have witnessed increasing populations during the time period. However, Macomb County's rate of population growth (10.3% between 1990 and 2014) was higher than both Sterling Heights (6.5%) and Clinton Township (5.1%). The trend for the City of Warren shows a slow population decline between 1990 and 2010 followed by a modest growth between 2010 and 2014.



### ***Age Trends and Projections***

Information on age distribution within a population can assist a community in matching public services to community characteristics and in determining special needs of certain age groups. For example, the younger population tends to require more rental housing units and smaller homes, while the elderly population may have a need for assisted living facilities. Analysis of age distribution may also be used by policy makers to identify current gaps in services and to project future service needs for housing, education, recreation and medical care. It is of equal importance in planning to anticipate which age groups are likely to increase during the planning period. Examples of this are the aging "baby boomers" and their children; both forming waves of population rise and fall as they move through their lifecycles.

**Table 4** shows a gradually aging population within the City of Sterling Heights. According to the 2013 American Community Survey, the largest age group in Sterling Heights is the Young Adult & Family Formation age group (20-34 years). The population of this group increased greatly from 2000 to 2013, rising from 25,381 to 37,163 (46.4% increase). Contributing to this trend is the aging of the Primary School Years population group, as those aged 5-19 decreased by 5.9% during the same time period. The population of the Mature Families age group (35-54 years) decreased by 35.8%, and correspondingly, the population of the Empty Nesters age group (55-64 years) increased by 33.5%.

The Retirement Age population group (65 years and older) also increased substantially between 2000 and 2013, growing by 40.7% over the time span.

Further evidence of a gradually aging population is the City's overall median age figure, which has increased from 37.0 years in 2000 to 40.8 years in 2013.

**Table 4**  
**Age Group Trends**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2000 to 2013**

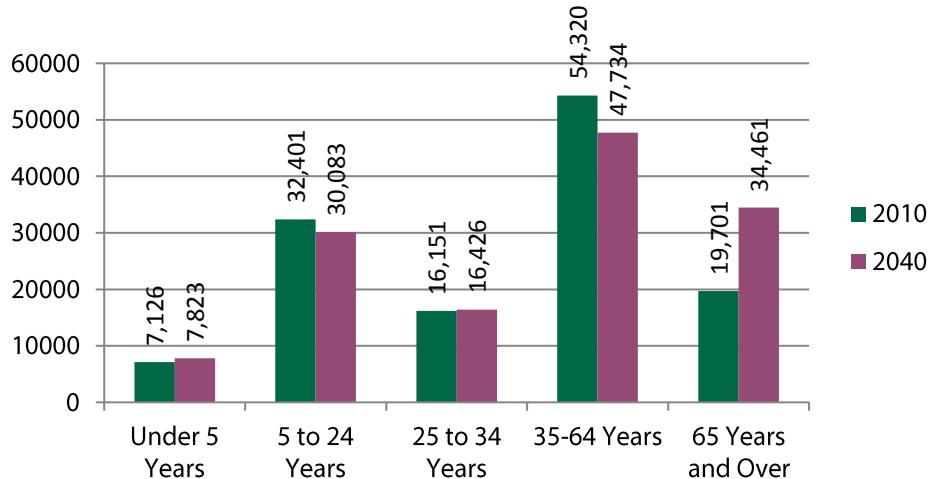
Age Groups	2000	2010	2013	% Change 2000-2013
Young Children (Under 5 Years)	7,729	7,126	6,792	-12.1%
Primary School Years (5-19 Years)	25,237	24,269	23,754	-5.9%
Young Adult & Family Formation ( 20-34 Years)	25,381	24,283	37,163	46.4%
Mature Families (35-54 Years)	38,708	37,181	24,837	-35.8%
Empty Nesters (55-64 Years)	12,778	17,139	17,063	33.5%
Retirement (64 Years and Older)	14,638	19,701	20,600	40.7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>124,471</b>	<b>129,699</b>	<b>130,209</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census; 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Figure 3** shows the population projections by selected age groups for the City of Sterling Heights through 2040, based on data from SEMCOG's 2040 Forecast. The figure clearly shows a shifting population within the City in terms of age. The City's younger age groups (Under 5 Years, 5 to 24 Years, and 25 to 34 Years) are projected to remain relatively steady through 2040. The population of the City within the 35 to 64 year age group is projected to decline significantly, from 54,320 citizens in 2010 to 47,734 citizens in 2040 (-12.1% change). Conversely, the population of the City within the 65 years and over age group is projected to increase dramatically, from 19,701 in 2010 to 34,461 in 2040 (74.9% change).

Similar age group projections are expected within comparable municipalities (Warren and Clinton Township) and Macomb County, based on SEMCOG's 2040 Forecast. For all units of government, the 65 years and over age group is projected to increase significantly. Macomb County, as a whole, is expected to nearly double its 65 years and over population, growing from 120,180 in 2010 to 228,895 in 2040 (90.5% change). Similar to Sterling Heights, the 35 to 64 years age group is projected to decline for all three units of government. Notably, Sterling Heights is the only unit of government where the under 5 year age group is projected to increase between 2010 and 2040.

**Figure 3**  
**Age Group Projections**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2010 to 2040**



Source: 2010 U.S. Census; SEMCOG 2040 Forecast, 2012

### Race Trends

One important social characteristic of a community is its racial make-up. Understanding the racial composition of a community helps to identify the diverse needs of its population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Sterling Heights is primarily composed of those who identify as White. The amount of people who identify as White has only slightly declined from 2000 to 2013, at rate of -1.3%. While the number of people who identify as Black or African American is a relatively low percentage of the City as a whole (6,697 residents or 5.1% of the City), it is the fastest growing racial group in the City, more than tripling in population between 2000 and 2013. Other growing racial groups in the City between 2000 and 2013 included Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (86.7%) and Asian (44.8%) (see **Table 5**).

**Table 5**  
**Racial Trends**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2000-2013**

Race	2000	2013	% Change, 2000-2013
<i>One race</i>			
White	112,899	111,449	-1.3%
Black or African American	1,614	6,697	314.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	260	72	-72.3%
Asian	6,123	8,868	44.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	45	84	86.7%
Some other race	418	208	-50.2%
<i>Two or more races</i>	3,112	2,831	-9.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Gender

As of 2013, females accounted for 50.8% of City population while males accounted for 49.2% of the population. Generally, the gender distribution within the City has stayed steady in comparison to 2000.

## Household Characteristics

This section examines households in terms of the relationships among the persons who share a household. Some households are families, consisting of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, while others are non-family households composed of persons living alone or with unrelated persons. **Table 6** highlights the household characteristics of the City of Sterling Heights and trends between 2000 and 2013.

According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates for 2013, 49,551 households are found within the City. Of these, 34,736 or 70.1% are comprised of family households, while 14,815 or 29.9% are non-family households. Of the 34,736 family households, 26,965 or 77.6% are husband-wife families, while the remainder is single-parent families (either male or female headed family households). Of the 14,815 non-family households, 13,348 or 90.1% are householders living alone.

The City's household characteristics are slowly changing, as evidenced by the comparison of statistics from 2000 and 2013. Generally, the distribution of family households versus non-family households is steady; however, the trend shows slight increases in non-family households versus family households. Within the family household group, the percentage of husband-wife families is declining (from 83.7% of all families in 2000 to 77.6% of all families in 2013), while the percentage of single-parent families is increasing.

**Table 6**  
**Household Characteristics**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2000-2013**

Household Characteristics	2000	% of Total	2013	% of Total
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>46,319</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>49,551</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Family Households</b>	<b>33,392</b>	<b>72.1%</b>	<b>34,736</b>	<b>70.1%</b>
Husband-Wife Family	27,959	60.4%	26,965	54.4%
Male Householder, No Wife present	1,478	3.2%	2,732	5.5%
Female Householder, No Husband present	3,955	8.5%	5,039	10.2%
<b>Non-Family Households</b>	<b>12,927</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>14,815</b>	<b>29.9%</b>
Householder Living Alone	11,160	24.1%	13,348	26.9%
Average Household Size	2.66		2.61	
Average Family Size	3.21		3.19	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## ***Household Size and Projections***

Since the 1970's, the nationwide trend has been a decline in household size. This trend has occurred because of a number of reasons which include: declining number of children per family, higher divorce rates, and a growing number of elderly living alone. Declining numbers of persons per household often is accompanied by an increase in the total number of households and demand for new housing units. This is often true even in circumstances of negative population growth. Following the national trend, and as shown in **Table 6**, the City of Sterling Heights average household size has declined slightly between 2000 and 2013, from 2.66 to 2.61. According to the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast, the City is projected to increase in total households from 49,451 in 2010 to 54,116 in 2040 (9.4% change). During this time, the average household size within the City is projected to continue to decline, reaching 2.50 by 2040 (-6.0% change from 2000). Similar to Sterling Heights, the comparable communities of Warren and Clinton Township, as well as Macomb County as a whole, are projected to witness declining household sizes between 2010 and 2040.

## **Economic Characteristics**

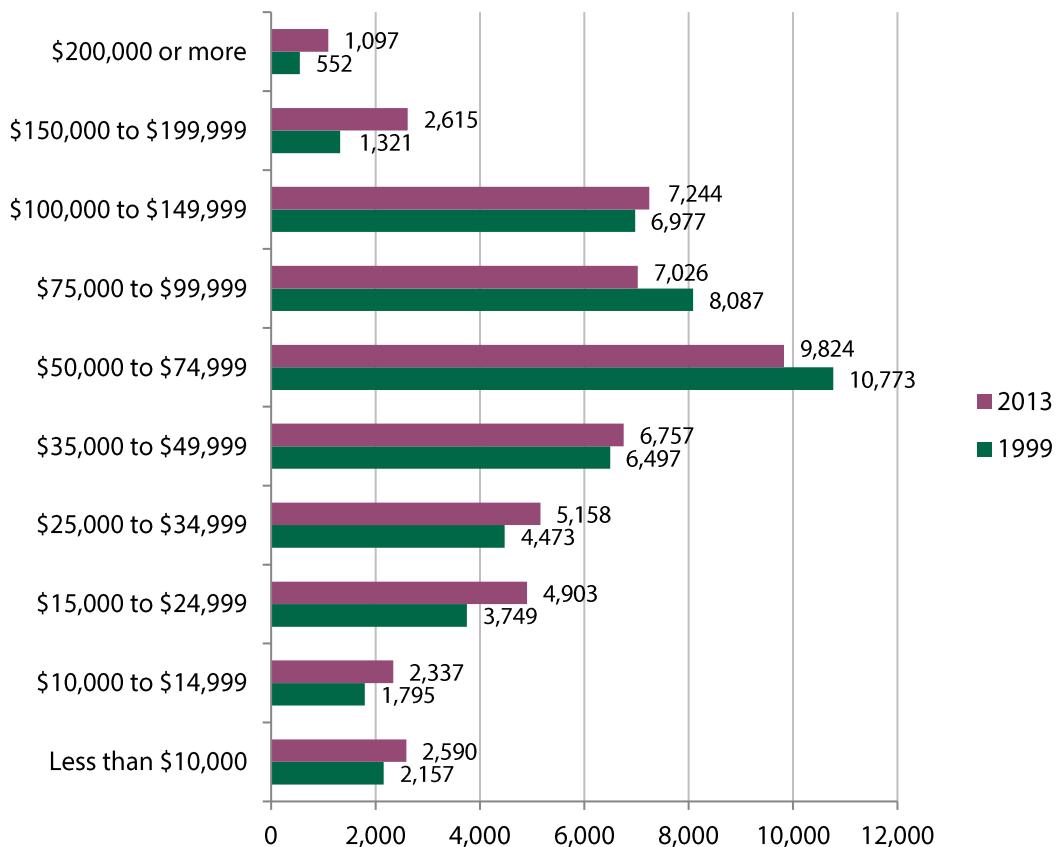
### ***Household Income Levels***

The overall distribution of households by income levels within Sterling Heights has changed between 1999 (income levels from the 2000 U.S. Census were recorded in 1999) and 2013. In 1999, Sterling Heights had a total of 46,381 households; this figure increased to 49,551 by 2013 (6.8% change). Generally, increases in the number of households within the various income brackets between 1999 and 2013 were most pronounced in the lowest and highest income brackets, while the middle income brackets saw modest increases or declines (see **Figure 4**). During this period, the number of households within the two highest income brackets (\$150,000 to \$199,999; \$200,000 or more) nearly doubled (by 98.0% and 98.7%, respectively). At the same time, the number of households within the three lowest income brackets (Less than \$10,000; \$10,000 to \$14,999; \$15,000 to \$24,999) all increased by more than 20% (20.1%, 30.2% and 30.8%, respectively). Of the middle five income brackets, no bracket saw the total number of households increase by 20%. In fact, the number of households within the \$50,000 to \$74,999 bracket declined by 8.8% and the number of households within the \$75,000 to \$99,999 income bracket declined by 13.1%.

Generally similar household income trends between 1999 and 2013 were witnessed in Macomb County as a whole. In terms of the number of households, the top two income brackets grew most significantly within the County between 1999 and 2013. Like Sterling Heights, the number of households within the lowest three income brackets also increased significantly in the County. However, unlike Sterling Heights, the number of households in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 income bracket increased significantly within the County, by 25.7% between 1999 and 2013, while the same income bracket in the City increased by only 3.8%.

Largely as a result of a nation-wide economic downtown in the late 2000's, median household income levels throughout the nation have declined. The same is true in Sterling Heights, as the median household income in 1999 was \$60,494 but declined to \$57,075 by 2013. When adjusted for inflation (\$1 in 1999 equaled \$1.40 in 2013, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator), the median household income level declined from \$84,692 in 1999 to \$57,075 in 2013, representing a decline of 32.6%. A comparable median household income level decline occurred within Macomb County as a whole (26.7% decline).

**Figure 4**  
**Total Households by Income Bracket**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 1999 to 2013**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census; 2013 ACS, 5-Year Estimates

### ***Educational Attainment***

Education levels of the population over 25 years old in Sterling Heights have increased slightly between 2000 to 2013. In 2000, according to the U.S. Census, 84.0% of the population 25 years and over had obtained at least a high school diploma, GED or alternative credential. By 2013, according to the ACS 5-Year Estimates, this same group had increased slightly to 85.8% of the population 25 years and over. In 2000, 23.0% of the City population 25 years and over had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher educational credential (master's degree, doctorate degree, etc.). By 2013, this percentage had increased to 25.8% of the population 25 years and over. Similar trends in educational attainment levels were witnessed within Macomb County as a whole between 2000 and 2013.

### ***Employment***

Data provided by SEMCOG shows the projected job growth and industry groups for the City of Sterling Heights between 2010 and 2040. In 2010, a total of 58,338 jobs were available within the City. By 2040, the total number of jobs is projected to increase by 12.9% to 65,872. Similarly, the

comparable communities of Warren and Clinton Township, as well as Macomb County as a whole, are all projected to increase in total jobs between 2010 and 2040. However, the total projected job growth for Sterling Heights, at 12.9%, is slightly lower than the three other units of government (Warren – 14.4%; Clinton Township – 14.2%; Macomb County – 13.1%).

**Table 7** shows the forecasted jobs by industry for the City of Sterling Heights between 2010 and 2040, based on the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast. As of 2010, the largest number of jobs (12,997) were held in the Knowledge-based Services industry, followed by the Manufacturing industry (11,686). In combination, these two industries represented 42.3% of all jobs within the City. Between 2010 and 2040, the industries that are expected to grow at the highest rates include Private Education & Healthcare (59.4% increase), Natural Resources, Mining & Construction (30.7%) and Services to Households & Firms (20.8%). Of the nine industries, only Manufacturing (-7.1% change) and Retail Trade (-5.0%) are projected to decline in the total number of jobs.

**Table 7**  
**Forecasted Jobs by Industry**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2010-2040**

Industry	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Percent Change 2010 to 2014
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	3,423	3,905	4,091	4,319	4,438	4,522	4,473	30.7%
Manufacturing	11,686	12,652	11,831	11,470	11,335	11,128	10,857	-7.1%
Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	3,095	3,168	3,139	3,294	3,461	3,514	3,420	10.5%
Retail Trade	6,927	6,809	6,544	6,570	6,644	6,727	6,581	-5.0%
Knowledge-based Services	12,997	13,633	13,947	14,067	14,287	14,665	14,830	14.1%
Services to Households & Firms	4,710	4,984	5,032	5,214	5,390	5,607	5,688	20.8%
Private Education & Healthcare	5,307	6,056	6,719	7,053	7,542	7,945	8,457	59.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	5,982	6,206	6,042	6,276	6,432	6,634	6,871	14.9%
Government	4,211	4,133	4,290	4,399	4,516	4,622	4,695	11.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,338</b>	<b>61,546</b>	<b>61,635</b>	<b>62,662</b>	<b>64,045</b>	<b>65,364</b>	<b>65,872</b>	<b>12.9%</b>

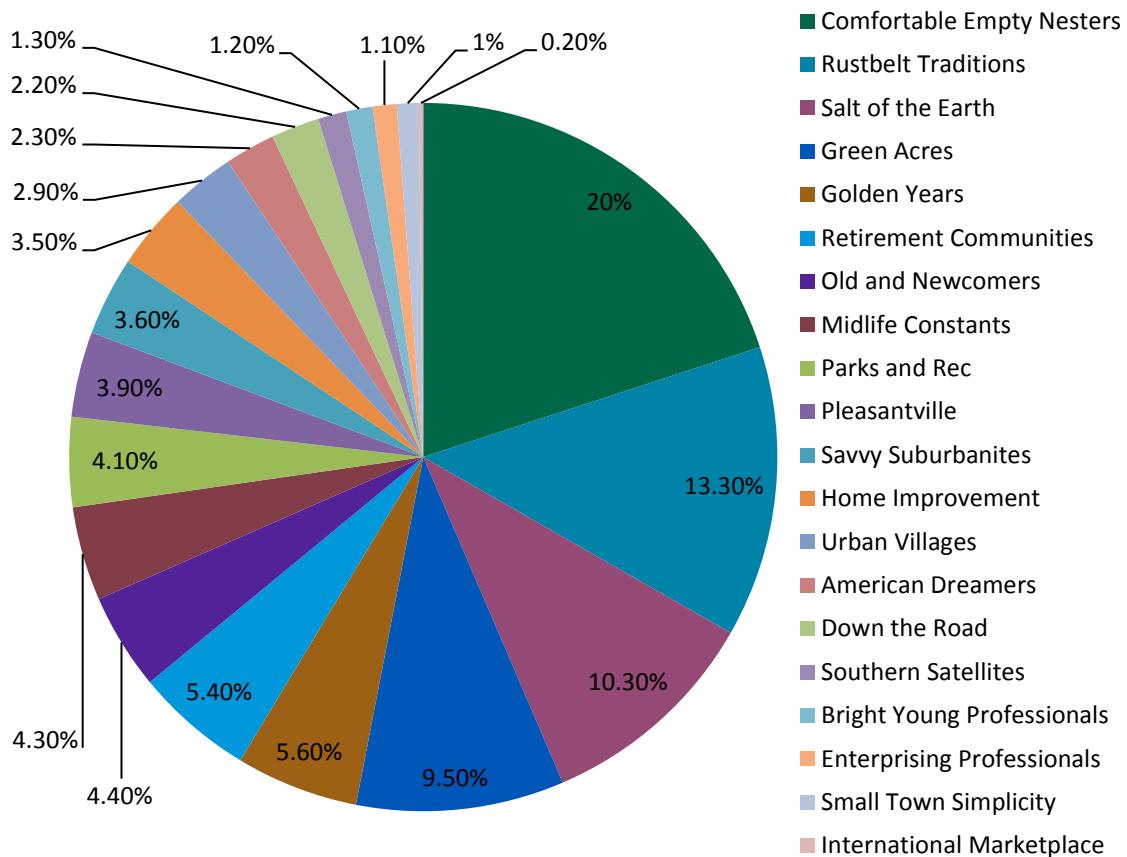
Source: SEMCOG 2040 Forecast

## Tapestry Segmentation Profile

Various commercial data services including Esri provide demographic analyses which identify certain lifestyle characteristics from traditional demographic data. These analyses go beyond income, age and employment and assess the lifestyle characteristics of populations and address subjects like housing type preferences, spending habits, leisure preferences and family associations.

Esri's Tapestry Segmentation is a geodemographic system that identifies 68 distinctive markets in the U.S. based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics to provide an accurate, comprehensive profile of U.S. consumers. Of the 68 tapestry segments within the United States, 20 are found in Sterling Heights. These 20 tapestry segments, ranked by percentage of the City population, are graphically displayed in **Figure 5**.

**Figure 5**  
**City of Sterling Heights**  
**Tapestry Segments, 2015**



Source: Esri Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile, 2015.

Provided below is a narrative summary of the characteristics (i.e., "lifestyle preferences") of the top 10 tapestry segments found within the City of Sterling Heights. To the right of each summary is a quick profile, which highlights each tapestry segment's average household size, median age, diversity index (0 = no diversity, 100 = complete diversity), median household income, median net worth, and average household budget index in 9 retail categories (housing, food, apparel & services, transportation, health care, entertainment & recreation, education, pensions & social security, and other).

For more information on Esri Community Tapestry, including detailed information on data methodology and descriptions of all 68 tapestry segments within the United States, visit [Esri.com](http://Esri.com).

### ***Comfortable Empty Nesters***

(20.0% of City Households / 2.5% of U.S. Households)

Comfortable Empty Nesters are older, with more than half of all householders aged 55 or older and live in the suburbs, often the same suburbs in which they grew up. They earn a comfortable living and most are professionals working in government, health care, or manufacturing. In the nation, 34% are college graduates and nearly 66% have some college education. They have low unemployment at 7% and most of their incomes are from wages or salaries, but a third of this group also draws their income from investments and retirement. Comfortable Empty Nesters value their health and are physically active, as well as financially active, and home maintenance is a priority among these homeowners.

### **Comfortable Empty Nesters**

#### **Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 2.50  
Median Age: 46.8  
Diversity Index: 30.6  
Median Household Income: \$68,000  
Median Net Worth: \$258,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Above US average in all but 1 category

### ***Rustbelt Traditions***

(13.3% of City Households / 2.2% of U.S. Households)

The Rustbelt Traditions group is comprised of married-couples and singles who live in older developments of single-family homes. The work force primarily holds white-collar jobs, with jobs in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care. Most have graduated from high school or have spent some time at a college or university, and the unemployment rate is below that of the U.S. at 8%. They are hard-working consumers with modest incomes but above-average net worth. Most of their income is derived from wages and salaries, but nearly 30% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts. They are located in the dense urban fringe of metropolitan areas throughout the Midwest and South.

### **Rustbelt Traditions**

#### **Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 2.46  
Median Age: 38.4  
Diversity Index: 44.2  
Median Household Income: \$49,000  
Median Net Worth: \$79,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Below US average in all 9 categories

## ***Salt of the Earth***

(10.3% of City Households / 2.9% of U.S. Households)

Salt of the Earth residents are generally traditional and live rural lifestyles. They are older and many have grown children who have moved away. They spend much of their free time outdoors and are the last to buy the latest products. The majority of these residents have a high school diploma or some college education, and many were employed in manufacturing or related industries. The group's household income is just over the national median, while net worth is double the national median. This population is concentrated in the Midwest, particularly in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Because of this, single-family homes are affordable and home ownership rates are high.

## ***Green Acres***

(9.5% of City Households / 3.2% of U.S. Households)

Those who fall under Green Acres live in rural enclaves of metropolitan areas, primarily in older homes with acreage. They are an older group made up primarily of married couples, and most have no children. About 60% of the group's population is college educated, they maintain a low (6%) unemployment rate and derive their income from wages and salaries, self-employment, investments, and increasingly, from retirement. They are self-described conservatives and value outdoor activities such as gardening, hunting and fishing, camping, and golfing. They are cautious consumers and are comfortable with technology, but see it more as a convenience than a trend.

## ***Golden Years***

(5.6% of City Households / 1.3% of U.S. Households)

Those in the Golden Years segment are active seniors who are either nearing the end of their careers or are in retirement. They are primarily singles or empty nesters who are focused on leisure interests such as travel, sports, museums, and physical fitness. They are financially secure and well-educated with 20% holding graduate or professional degrees, 26% with bachelor's degrees, and 26% with some college credit. Unemployment is low (7%) but so is the labor force population (55%) as residents reach retirement age. Median household income is high (\$61,000) and income comes from wages, investments, Social Security

## **Salt of the Earth Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 2.58  
Median Age: 43.1  
Diversity Index: 18.3  
Median Household Income: \$53,000  
Median Net Worth: \$134,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Below US average in all but 1 category

## **Green Acres Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 2.69  
Median Age: 43.0  
Diversity Index: 24.0  
Median Household Income: \$72,000  
Median Net Worth: \$226,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Above US average in all but 1 category

## **Golden Years Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 2.05  
Median Age: 51.0  
Diversity Index: 40.6  
Median Household Income: \$61,000  
Median Net Worth: \$140,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Above US average in all but 1 category

benefits, and retirement income. They are well-connected in terms of internet access, and are generous supporters of the arts and charitable organizations.

### **Retirement Communities**

(5.4% of City Households / 1.2% of U.S. Households)

Most households in this segment are single seniors who live alone, and a fourth of the population is comprised of married couples with no children living at home. They are highly educated, as 14% of residents aged 25 years and older hold graduate degrees, 35% have a bachelor's degree, and more than 60% have attended college. A high amount (57%) of households live in multi-unit buildings, but 34% of the housing stock is single-family structures, and 8% is townhouses. These neighborhoods consist of single-family homes and independent living apartments, assisted living, and continuous care nursing facilities. The homeownership rate is 54%, and the median home value is \$183,328. This group has more time to spend on leisure activities, spend time with family, and join civic clubs and charitable organizations.

### **Retirement Communities Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 1.86  
Median Age: 52.0  
Diversity Index: 46.4  
Median Household Income: \$35,000  
Median Net Worth: \$36,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Below US average in all 9 categories

### **Old and Newcomers**

(4.4% of City Households / 2.3% of U.S. Households)

These residents are either beginning their careers or retiring. They range in age from their 20's to 75 and older. There are more singles and shared households than families in these neighborhoods, and they are in a state of transition as more than half the population aged five years and older has moved in the past five years. About 54% of the housing stock is renter occupied and 44% of the housing units are multi-unit buildings. The unemployment rate is 7.8% and 62.6% of the population is in the labor force. About 28% of the population has a college degree, 33% have some college education, and 10% are still enrolled in college. Their purchases reflect the lifestyles of singles and renters, and they spend less on groceries and do not own larger vehicles. Leisure activities and spending activities are varied by age but the residents' age is not always obvious from their choices.

### **Old and Newcomers Quick Profile**

Average Household Size: 2.11  
Median Age: 38.5  
Diversity Index: 50.1  
Median Household Income: \$39,000  
Median Net Worth: \$23,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Below US average in all 9 categories

## Midlife Constants

(4.3% of City Households / 2.5% of U.S. Households)

Midlife Constants are seniors who are at or approaching retirement and are located in metropolitan areas outside of the central cities in smaller communities. About 64% of Midlife Constants have a high school degree or some college, they have below average labor force participation due to age, and almost 42% of households receive Social Security and 28% also receive retirement income. They primarily live in single-family homes with a median value of \$141,000, and less than half are still mortgaged. This population is generally traditional and opts for convenience and comfort over cutting-edge technology, and they are attentive to prices, but not at the expense of quality.

## Parks and Rec

(4.1% of City Households / 2.0% of U.S. Households)

This segment is characterized by suburban homeowners, many of whom are two-income married couples approaching retirement age but do not plan on retiring in the near future. The amenities of the neighborhood are now attracting a new generation of young couples. Town homes and duplexes are scattered throughout the neighborhoods and single-family residences are built prior to 1970. More than half of the population is college educated, and the work force is diverse with residents who are professionals in health care, retail trade, and education, or are skilled workers in manufacturing and construction. The residents are generally practical in terms of their finances and carefully research their options before making large purchases.

## Pleasantville

(3.9% of City Households / 2.2% of U.S. Households)

Members of this group are primarily slightly older couples, and they move less than any other market. This group has incomes (\$85,000), home values (\$312,000), and net worths (\$285,000) that are higher than the national medians. Most homes are owned and the housing stock is older. The residents are located in suburban areas primarily in the Northeast and the West. Members of this group are highly educated, with 64% college educated and 34% with a bachelor's degree or

## Midlife Constants Quick Profile

Average Household Size: 2.30  
Median Age: 45.9  
Diversity Index: 34.0  
Median Household Income: \$48,000  
Median Net Worth: \$104,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Below US average in all 9 categories

## Parks and Rec Quick Profile

Average Household Size: 2.49  
Median Age: 40.3  
Diversity Index: 47.5  
Median Household Income: \$55,000  
Median Net Worth: \$98,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Below US average in all but 1 category

## Pleasantville Quick Profile

Average Household Size: 2.86  
Median Age: 41.9  
Diversity Index: 58.1  
Median Household Income: \$85,000  
Median Net Worth: \$285,000  
Average Household Budget Index: Above US average in all but 1 category

higher. They have a low unemployment rate (7.8%) and high labor force participation (67%) and a higher proportion of households with two or more workers. They are primarily professionals in finance, information/technology, or management. They are generally not cost-conscious, and are willing to spend more for quality and timeless products.

## Housing Profile

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Housing is a vital characteristic of any community. Houses are highly visible, relatively permanent, and immobile, and for these reasons serve as great indicators of the well-being of a community. This housing profile will present a variety of housing data including type, age, value and ownership. This analysis will assist the City in determining its future housing needs.

### Housing Stock

The housing stock of a community provides indicators of the preferences and lifestyles of the population, as well as the density of development. Consistent with the results of the existing land use analysis, the housing stock within Sterling Heights is primarily composed of single-family detached housing (34,386 units or 66.6% of the 51,626 total housing units in the City) as of 2010 (see **Table 8**). Multi-unit apartments comprise 10,210 units or 19.8% of the City's housing stock, while townhouse/attached condos comprise 5,283 units or 10.2% of the City. Duplexes, mobile home/manufactured housing, and "other" types comprise only a small percentage of the City's housing stock.

Between 2000 and 2010, the total number of housing units increased by 8.6%, from 47,547 to 51,626. During this time, townhouse/attached condo units increased most significantly (2,261 new units representing a change of 74.8%), followed by duplex units (increase of 93 units representing a change of 69.4%). Single-family detached housing units showed a large increase in total units between 2000 and 2010 (1,784), but had a modest rate of change of 5.5%. Multi-unit apartment units increased at a rate of only 1.4%, while mobile home/manufactured housing units decreased by 194 units (-11.3% change) between 2000 and 2010.

**Table 8** also shows new housing units permitted within the City between 2010 and 2014. Notably, single family detached units accounted for 426 or 80.7% of the total units permitted, while 98 or 18.6% were townhouse/attached condo units and 4 or 0.8% were duplex units. No permits were issued for other housing types between 2010 and 2014.

**Table 8**  
**Housing Stock Trends**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2000-2014**

Housing Type	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	New Units Permitted 2010-2014
Single Family Detached	32,602	34,386	1,784	426
Duplex	134	227	93	4
Townhouse / Attached Condo	3,022	5,283	2,261	98
Multi-Unit Apartment	10,070	10,210	140	0
Mobile Home / Manufactured Housing	1,714	1,520	-194	0
Other	5	0	-5	
Total	47,547	51,626	4,079	516
Units Demolished				-12
Net (Total Permitted Units - Units Demolished)				516

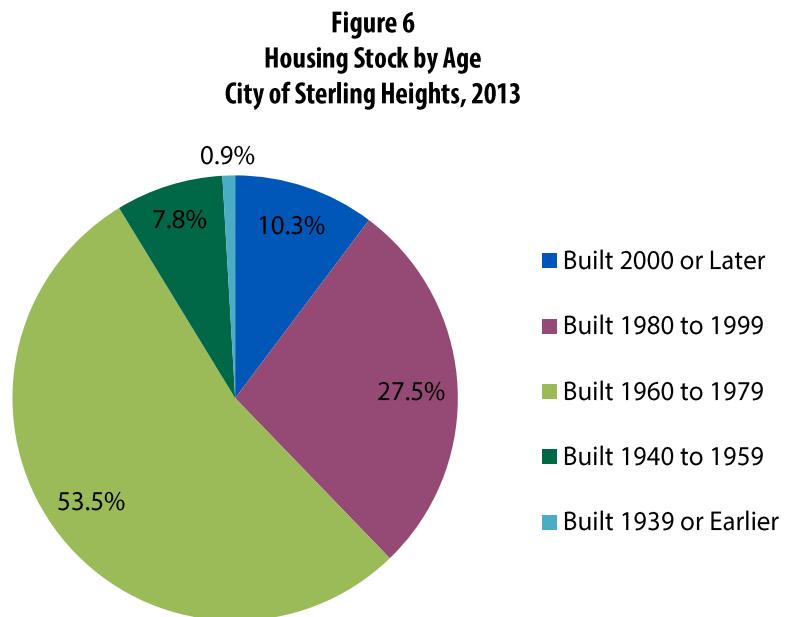
Source: 2000 U.S. Census; 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates; SEMCOG Community Profile of Sterling Heights

Sterling Heights' housing stock composition is relatively unique when compared to the adjacent communities of Warren and Clinton Township. As of 2010, the City of Warren's housing stock is dominated by single-family detached units, comprising 76.7% of its total housing stock (compared to 66.7% for Sterling Heights), while multi-unit apartment units comprise 14.0% of the total housing stock (compared to 19.8% for Sterling Heights). Contrary to Sterling Heights and Warren, only 49.8% of Clinton Township's total housing stock consists of single family detached units. Clinton Township has a much larger percentage of townhouse/attached condo units (16.5%), multi-unit apartment units (29.2%) and mobile home/manufactured housing units (4.0%).

## Housing Stock by Age

The age of a dwelling unit is one factor used to evaluate its structural quality. The average industry standard for the life span of a single family dwelling unit is generally 50 years. However, this typical life span often depends on the quality of the original construction and continued maintenance of the unit. Using this standard, the homes within the City constructed prior to 1959 may be approaching the end of their utility.

**Figure 6** highlights the age of housing stock within the City of Sterling Heights according to 2013 data from the American Community Survey. As is shown, more than half (53.5%) of the City's 52,094 total housing units were built between 1960 and 1979. More than one-quarter (27.5%) of the housing stock was built between 1980 and 1999, while 10.3% was built after 2000. Only a small percentage of the housing stock was built between 1940 and 1959 (7.8%) while less than 1% of housing units were built prior to 1939. Generally, the housing stock by age distribution for the City of Sterling Heights is comparable to the adjacent communities of Warren, Clinton Township and Macomb County as a whole.

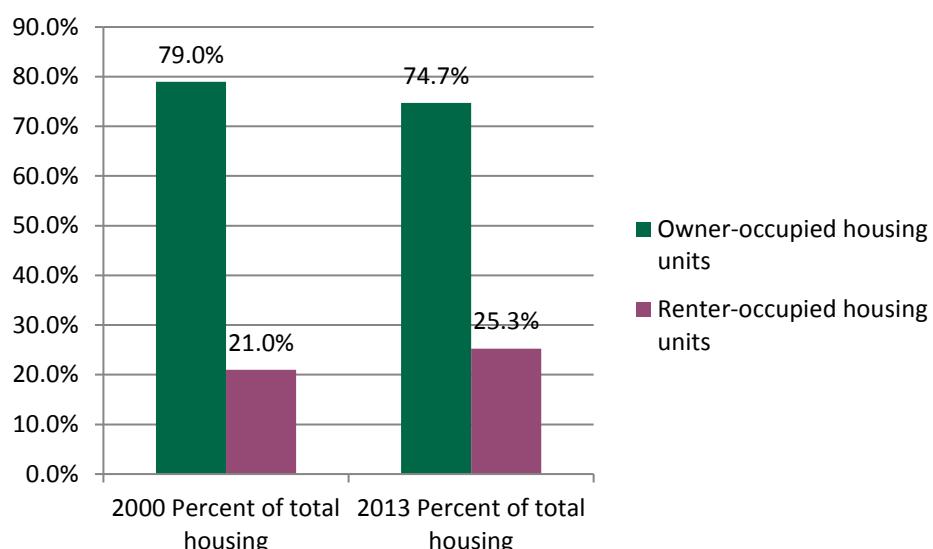


Source: 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Housing Tenure and Vacancy

In 2013, Sterling Heights contained 49,551 total occupied housing units. Of these occupied units, 74.7% were owner-occupied while 25.3% were renter occupied. As shown in **Figure 7**, trends indicate a declining percentage of owner-occupied housing units and an increasing percentage of renter-occupied housing units. Similar trends are found in Warren, Clinton Township, Macomb County and the entire region and may be reflective of numerous factors including an economic downturn, housing foreclosure crisis, and changing housing type preferences.

**Figure 7**  
**Housing Tenure Trends**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2000 to 2013**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census; 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Between 2000 and 2013, the total number of vacant housing units within the City increased from 1,228 to 2,543, representing an increase of 107.1%. While occupied housing units also increased between 2000 and 2013, from 46,319 to 49,551, the growth rate was significantly lower at 7.0%. In line with these trends, the City's overall vacancy rate increased from 2.7% in 2000 to 4.9% in 2013. Although the vacancy rate has increased in recent years, the City's rate is lower than the comparable communities of Warren, Clinton Township and Macomb County as a whole, which have vacancy rates ranging from 6.2% to 9.5%.

## Housing Value and Affordability

Analyzing housing values and rent is one method of evaluating both the quality and affordability of housing. It is of crucial importance that both quality and affordable housing is maintained to help retain current residents and attract new homeowners to a community.

## ***Housing Value Trends***

Consistent with state and national trends caused by the recent economic downturn, the overall median housing value within Sterling Heights decreased from 2000 to 2013, based on data from the 2000 U.S. Census and 2013 American Community Survey. The median housing value within the City in 2000 was \$157,800, which declined to \$144,200 in 2013, representing a decrease of 8.6%. Similar median housing value declines were witnessed in the comparable communities of Warren, Clinton Township and Macomb County as a whole. Median rents within the City and region have similarly declined between 2000 and 2013. As of 2013, the City's median rent stands at \$856.

## ***Housing Affordability***

According to a report from the U.S. Census Bureau, the conventional public policy indicator of housing affordability in the United States is the percent of income spent on housing. Housing expenditures that exceed 30 percent of household income have historically been viewed as an indicator of a housing affordability problem.<sup>13</sup> For housing units with a mortgage, the Census Bureau tracks the percentage of household income spent on selected monthly owner costs. For occupied units paying rent, the Census Bureau tracks the percentage of household income spent on gross rent.

Within the City of Sterling Heights, according to 2013 ACS data, a total of 8,014 or 33.4% of housing units with a mortgage spent more than 30% of household income on selected monthly owner costs. In 2013, a total of 5,729 or 49.3% of occupied units paying rent spent more than 30% of household income on gross rent. These figures are an indicator that a housing affordability issue exists within Sterling Heights' housing market for both rental units and mortgaged units. However, housing affordability is not a localized concern, as comparable affordability rates are found within the adjacent communities of Warren, Clinton Township and Macomb County as a whole.

## ***Housing Quality Assessment***

In order to gauge the overall livability and quality of the City's housing stock, a housing quality assessment was conducted by the project team. This analysis consisted of a structural quality survey of all single-family residential homes, analyzed to determine the extent, character, and patterns of deterioration within City neighborhoods. The overall goal of this analysis was to ensure that the neighborhoods of Sterling Heights, a foundational component of community quality of life, are receiving consistent attention in terms of housing livability and quality.

There are many reasons for the deterioration of a home or neighborhood, such as proximity of incompatible land uses, inadequate building and housing code enforcement, and poor environmental conditions causing blight. However, the major contributor to housing deterioration is inadequate original construction and lack of building maintenance. Just as housing deterioration can be attributed by a combination of factors, so too is the myriad of reasons for lack of proper housing maintenance. Often, older areas of a community are inhabited by the elderly population and first-time homebuyers, who have limited income to make repairs. Also, there may be a lack of incentive on the homeowner's part due to concerns about neighborhood blight and the stability of property values. Finally, poor original construction may increase the cost of repairs to the homeowner.

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<sup>13</sup> *Who Can Afford to Live in a Home?: A look at data from the 2006 American Community Survey.* By Mary Schwartz and Ellen Wilson, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Methodology

This housing quality assessment is conducted in three phases. The first phase consists of a structural quality windshield survey of all single-family detached housing units within the City's neighborhoods. The second phase is the examination of the field data collected during the survey and analysis of the extent, type, and patterns of deterioration to pinpoint problem areas or conditions negatively impacting neighborhood quality. Finally, based on the problem areas or conditions found, treatment strategies are devised.

The structural quality survey was conducted in May and June of 2015 for all single family detached homes within Sterling Heights. The survey was performed using a "windshield survey" technique, where a two-person crew drove each street in the City and recorded the condition of each home. Housing condition was visually examined based on a specific set of predetermined criteria (refer to **Figure 8**). It should be noted that the examination was based only on what could be seen from the road; structural defects hidden from view from the road were not factored into the evaluation. The application of the criteria resulted in the identification of a "score" for each unit. The score placed the structure into one of three categories:

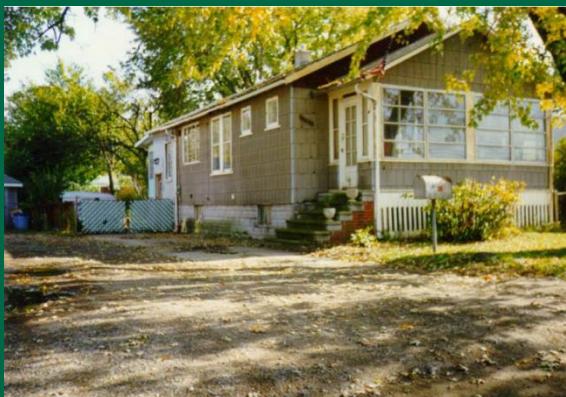
1. **Standard** – Includes homes of all ages, including those currently under construction, which are generally in good repair but may need some minor maintenance.
2. **Deteriorating** – Includes homes that are in poor condition as evidenced by either a defect in a single major structural element (roof sags, walls out of plumb or cracked foundations) or by five or more minor structural flaws like rotted window frames, sagging porches, old or missing shingles, open cracks or holes. The nature of these deficiencies is such that although undesirable, the repair and rehabilitation of the home appears to be economically feasible.
3. **Substandard** – Includes homes that have become so dilapidated that they are unsafe for habitation. They contain at least two major structural defects combined with other minor structural flaws. Rehabilitation is often not economically feasible because of their advanced stage of deterioration.

To help illustrate the differing structural quality categories, sample photographs of each condition are provided in this section. The photographs are utilized as examples only, and do not necessarily reflect the type or actual housing stock found in Sterling Heights.



Standard Housing Condition

These homes are a representation of the type of criteria the homes are graded against in the survey. These are not actual homes of Sterling Heights.



Deteriorating Housing Condition



Substandard Housing Condition



These homes are a representation of the type of criteria the homes are graded against in the survey. These are not actual homes of Sterling Heights.

These homes are a representation of the type of criteria the homes are graded against in the survey. These are not actual homes of Sterling Heights.

**Figure 8**  
**Housing Structural Quality Checklist**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2015**

<b>Major Structural Defects</b>	<b>Minor Structural Defects</b>
<i>Roof</i>	<i>Roof</i>
Sagging/missing materials/holes over larger area (>25%) of roof	Less critical sagging/missing materials over small area (<25%)
<i>Walls</i>	<i>Walls</i>
Bowed walls/holes or missing material over large area (>25%)	Holes/open cracks/missing materials over small area (<25%) chipping paint
<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Foundation</i>
Lack of proper foundation/foundation walls out of plumb/holes or missing materials over large area (>25%)	Holes/open cracks, rotted or missing materials over small area (<25%)
	<i>Windows/Doors</i>
	Loose, rotted, frames and sills out of plumb/missing, broken panes. Lacking storms and screens
	<i>Porches/Steps/Eavestroughs and Downspouts</i>
	Rotted, worn, missing material, sagging or out of plumb, or pulling away from building
	<i>Chimney/Flue</i>
	Out of plumb, sagging, visible cracks, or loose missing masonry units
	<i>Porch Light</i>
	Missing/broken fixture
<b>Total Major Defects</b>	<b>Total Minor Defects</b>
<b>Assessment</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sound: 0 major structural defects: less than 5 minor structural defects <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorating: 1 major or 5 or more minor structural defects <input type="checkbox"/> Substandard: 2 or more major or 1 major + 5 or more minor structural defects	

## Survey Results

The **Housing Quality Survey Results Map** highlights the condition of each residential block within the City based on the percentage of homes within the block that were found to be in deteriorating or substandard condition. (Housing structural survey results are intentionally not shown on an individual parcel basis for the purpose of anonymity.) To provide a more geographically specific analysis of the results, the City was broken up into 10 analysis zones (shown on the **Housing Quality Survey Results Map**). Finally, the results are shown in tabular form, by analysis zone, documenting the total number and percentage of standard, deteriorating and sub-standard homes (**Table 9**).

The survey data overwhelmingly show that the City contains high-quality single-family detached housing stock with strong and stable neighborhoods from a livability and quality perspective. Of the 34,735 single family detached homes surveyed, less than 40 were found to be in deteriorating or sub-standard condition, representing less than one-quarter of one percent of all homes. This is a clear indication that the housing stock within the City is generally free of major structural defects related to roof, walls and the foundation, which may make the housing unit unsafe for habitation. It does not necessarily conclude that homes are without minor structural defects, but it does indicate that homes are well maintained and minor defects are promptly repaired before they turn into more significant structural issues. The high quality housing stock is also reflective of the variety of programs currently in place to assist homeowners in the maintenance and repair of their homes (refer to the Analysis of City Improvement Plans and Funding Programs chapter for a summary of such programs).

**Table 9**  
**Housing Structural Quality Survey Results**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2015**

Analysis Zone	Single Family Detached Homes Surveyed	Standard		Deteriorating		Sub-Standard	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Zone 1	3,124	3,118	99.8%	5	0.16%	1	0.03%
Zone 2	6,054	6,050	99.9%	4	0.07%	-	0.00%
Zone 3	5,201	5,192	99.8%	7	0.13%	2	0.04%
Zone 4	338	334	98.8%	4	1.18%	0	0.00%
Zone 5	5,394	5,386	99.9%	5	0.09%	3	0.06%
Zone 6	1,315	1,312	99.8%	3	0.23%	-	0.00%
Zone 7	1,789	1,786	99.8%	3	0.17%	-	0.00%
Zone 8	5,180	5,180	100.0%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%
Zone 9	2,067	2,065	99.9%	2	0.10%	-	0.00%
Zone 10	4,312	4,312	100.0%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34,774</b>	<b>34,735</b>	<b>99.77%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0.21%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.01%</b>

Source: Wade Trim survey, June 2015

Hold page for Structural Quality Survey Results Map

No particular geographic area of the City contains a more significant percentage of deteriorating or sub-standard single family detached homes; rather, such instances of deterioration are generally scattered throughout the City. As shown on the **Housing Quality Survey Results Map**, most of the planned single family residential neighborhoods and subdivisions do not include deteriorated or sub-standard housing. The individual blocks in the City with higher percentages of deteriorating or sub-standard homes tend to be those which immediately front major roadways and which are somewhat isolated from adjacent residential neighborhoods.

#### *Types of Structural Decline*

Three categories of major structural elements were evaluated: roofs, walls, and foundations. The minor elements examined included the roof, walls, and foundations, as well as windows/doors, porches/steps/eaves troughs/downspouts, chimney/flue, and porch lights. Of the homes found to be deteriorating or substandard, many were identified based on having a major structural defect. Of these defects, the most common problem found was the condition of the roofs. In order for a roof to qualify as having a major defect, it must be sagging, feature missing materials (shingles), or contain holes that encompass more than 25 percent of the entire roof area. The standard useful age of a roof is typically 30 years and, after this time, roof problems can begin to occur. The next major element examined were the walls of the single-family homes. While not as common as roof problems, several homes were identified as having a major structural defect in the walls. In order for a wall to qualify as having a major defect, it must have holes, open cracks, or missing materials over more than 25 percent of the entire wall area, or show deflection. The final major structural element problem found during the survey was with the foundation of the structure. In general, foundation problems were the least frequently identified major structural defect in Sterling Heights.

A few of the homes in the structural quality windshield survey were qualified as deteriorating because of the presence of more than five minor structural defects. The most common minor defects observed were roof problems, window and door defects, porches, eaves and downspout neglect.

#### ***Treatment Strategies***

The third and final phase of the housing needs assessment involves developing strategies to address housing deterioration within the City. Three strategies are generally available to municipalities to improve housing quality: a preservation strategy; a rehabilitation strategy; and a redevelopment strategy. However, given the limited amount of housing deterioration found within the City of Sterling Heights, only two strategies are recommended. Each of these housing treatment strategies is further described below.

#### ***Preservation Strategy***

The preservation strategy is recommended for every block in the City which features less than 15% deteriorating or substandard homes. As shown on the **Housing Quality Survey Results Map**, this includes the overwhelming majority of residential blocks within the City. The preservation strategy involves the continued maintenance and protection of the existing housing stock. It is intended to be a long-term approach to combat structural decline. It involves the property owner, City resources, and private lending institutions working together to ensure the structural health of the City housing stock. Through a sensitive code enforcement program and the continuation of the housing assistance programs offered by the City, a successful preservation strategy can be implemented.

A sensitive code enforcement program in identified preservation areas is a significant support service that a local community can implement. Through sensitive code enforcement, minor structural defects can be addressed to help slow or stop the deterioration of the homes. This encourages lenders to grant loans in these neighborhoods because the fear of decline adversely affecting the marketability of the home is counteracted.

In conjunction with the sensitive code enforcement program, the City needs to continue its efforts in supporting the single-family homeowner in their maintenance efforts. Code enforcement efforts without the benefit of support services for those in need could cause housing abandonment instead of rehabilitation. Therefore, the commitment of the City in continuing their housing rehabilitation program to finance required improvements is critical to the success of the preservation strategy.

#### *Rehabilitation Strategy*

The rehabilitation strategy is recommended for blocks within the City with greater than 15% deteriorating or substandard homes. Based on the survey, this includes six total blocks within the City. The rehabilitation strategy will need to address the repair of existing structural defects, correcting environmental deficiencies, and upgrading public services and facilities to eliminate existing blighting conditions. This will require a more prominent presence of the City Code Enforcement Officers. Frequent field visits to determine violations coupled with close follow-up appointments to ensure compliance are important to the improvement of these declining areas.

It will also be important for Sterling Heights to work closely with the single-family homeowners in these areas to procure their cooperation. Information and counseling services that explain the methods and procedures of making home repairs will be a requirement of this treatment strategy. The City's housing rehabilitation program should be consistently marketed to the homeowners in these areas.

To a lesser extent, and where feasible based on City staff availability or specific opportunities arising, the rehabilitation strategy should be extended to blocks outside of the identified rehabilitation areas that contain higher percentages of deteriorating housing.

#### *Redevelopment Strategy*

The redevelopment strategy predominantly involves clearance of existing, built-up residential and/or nonresidential structures, thereby eliminating substandard and blighting influences. Consequently, the area can then be redeveloped to improve structural and environmental conditions. Based on the results of the housing quality survey, no blocks within the City are identified as being entirely in need of redevelopment. Rather, the redevelopment strategy would be better employed on a property specific case for those homes which have been classified as substandard and where rehabilitation is not economically feasible due to poor condition.

# Land Use and Facility Needs Forecast

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## Introduction

The City of Sterling Heights is nearly fully developed, with vacant land suitable for future development comprising only a small percentage of the community. New development within the City will consist largely of infill redevelopment projects, along with limited development on “greenfield” sites (sites which are currently vacant or undeveloped). A challenge facing the City is determining the right mix and distribution of future land uses, and a decision regarding how much redevelopment should occur. The following land use and facility needs forecast has been prepared to gauge possible demand for various land uses and the optimum allocation of land use types. The City can then respond accordingly in the development of its plan for future land use map.

## Residential/Housing Needs Assessment

### *Future Housing Needs*

The process of projecting future housing need is dependent on a number of factors. As a rule, future housing units can be estimated based on the projected population for the community in combination with the future anticipated household size. Within the City of Sterling Heights, according to the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast, the population of the community is projected to grow through the year 2040, while the average household size is projected to decline. These two factors will equate to a demand for additional housing units through 2040.

In 2010, the City had a total population of 129,699. Over the next 30 years, the City is projected to increase in population by 6,828 residents, reaching 136,527 residents by 2040 (SEMCOG 2040 Forecast). In 2010, of all City residents, a total of 128,927 or 99.4% were living within households, while the remainder (772 or 0.6%) were living within group quarters. Of the 136,527 residents in 2040, SEMCOG projects that 135,542 will be living within households, while 985 will be living within group quarters. This results in an expected growth of 6,615 residents who will be living within households between 2010 and 2040.

In 2010, the City had a total of 49,451 households (occupied units)<sup>14</sup>, with an average household size of 2.61. By 2040, according to SEMCOG, the average household size within the City is projected to decline to 2.50. The 135,542 residents who are projected to be living within City households in 2040 will require 54,116 total households (occupied units). This results in an expected growth of 4,665 households (occupied units) between 2010 and 2040.

In 2010, the City had a total of 52,190 housing units, of which 49,451 were occupied (94.75%) while 2,739 were vacant (5.25%). Assuming that the City has a 5% vacancy rate in 2040<sup>15</sup>, the City will have a total of 56,964 housing units, of which 54,116 will be occupied (95%) and 2,848 will be vacant (5%). Based on these figures, between 2010 and 2040, it is projected that approximately 4,774 total housing units will be added within the City of Sterling Heights.

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<sup>14</sup> The SEMCOG 2040 Forecast considers the number of households as being equivalent to the number of occupied housing units.

<sup>15</sup> A 5% vacancy rate is desirable and allows for transition within the housing market in a manner that doesn't affect the value of housing units.

Based on SEMCOG building permit data, a net total (total units constructed minus total units demolished) of 516 housing units were added within Sterling Heights between 2010 and 2015. Thus, 516 of the 4,774 net total housing units needed by 2040 have already been built. This results in the need for 4,258 additional housing units over the next 25 years between 2015 and 2040.

### ***Housing Gap Analysis***

With an understanding of the new housing units needed over the planning horizon for this Master Plan (4,258 new housing units over the next 25 years), it then becomes necessary to identify the type of housing units which will be needed during this timeframe. To accomplish this, a housing gap analysis has been prepared, based upon a comparison of the current make-up of local housing types against national preferences and emerging trends for various housing types.

#### ***Current City Housing Types***

Presently (as of 2010), the housing stock within Sterling Heights is primarily composed of single-family detached housing (66.6% of all units). Multi-unit apartments comprise 19.8% of the City's housing stock, while townhouse/attached condos comprise 10.2% of the housing stock. Duplexes, mobile home/manufactured housing, and "other" types comprise only a small percentage of the City's housing stock. However, housing unit trends (between 2000 and 2010) for Sterling Heights indicate an increasing demand for townhouse/attached condo units and duplex units, as demonstrated by high growth rates for these housing stock categories. At the same time, single-family detached units, multi-unit apartment units and mobile home/manufactured housing units showed modest or declining growth rates, demonstrating less of a demand for these housing type categories (refer to **Table 8**).

#### ***National and Emerging Housing Type Trends***

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the single-family detached home has played a dominant role in the housing market. Owning such a home was widely considered the primary element of the "American Dream." A strong economy, the development of the interstate highway system, favorable tax laws, and easy financing led to rapid development of the suburbs with predominantly low-density housing. The homeownership rate soared, reaching nearly 70% by the mid-2000s. However, the "Great Recession" that hit in late 2007 brought a housing market crash whose impacts are still felt today. Slow recovery from the recession has occurred, but the characteristics of the housing market appear to have moved in a different direction, steered by various demographic changes occurring within the United States. These changes include racial and ethnic diversification, a growing immigrant population, and an increasing percentage of non-traditional households. However, the growth and evolving preferences of the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations has also had a major impact on housing supply and demand.

Once preferring large-lot detached homes, the aging Baby Boomer Generation (born 1946 to 1964) is expanding the nation's senior population and increasing demand for "downsized" units and housing that caters to the needs of seniors. Despite a preference for many to age in place, a large number of Baby Boomers will be in search of new housing. According to housing market researcher Arthur C. Nelson, when those age 65 and older move, 80% will vacate single-family houses, but only 41% will move back into single-family units; the other 59% will located in multiple-family units.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Steuteville, "The Coming Housing Calamity," New Urban News, June 2011.

Now entering the housing market, the Millennial Generation (those born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s) will account for 75% to 80% of the owner-occupied housing absorbed by people under 65 before 2020.<sup>17</sup> Different from their parents living preferences, this generation prefers housing in mixed-use urban environments and increasingly views renting as an advantageous option.

The following statistics demonstrate the changing trends and emerging preferences related to housing types:

- Younger Americans are faced with weaker employment, high level of student debt and general lack of confidence in housing as an investment.<sup>18</sup>
- Since 2009, the number of owner-occupied housing units has fallen by over 300,000, while the number of renter occupied-housing units has risen by over 3 million.<sup>19</sup>
- Renting is more appealing across all age groups, all parts of the U.S., city, suburb, small town and rural.<sup>20</sup>
- The groups that are growing the fastest are people in their mid-20s and empty-nesters in their 50s. These are the groups that are most likely to seek an alternative to low-density, single-family housing.<sup>21</sup>
- More than 60% of the Millennial Generation would prefer to live in a single-family dwelling. However, while this generation prefers single-family development, they do not have the financial resources to afford this type of product. They have been hit hard by the recession as they've entered independent adulthood. This has reduced their income and limited their ability to form households and attain homeownership.<sup>22</sup>
- The projected need for new housing units between 2005 and 2030 is equally divided between attached units including apartments, townhouses and condos, and small lots (on less than 1/6 acre), with no net increase projected in the need for houses on larger lots.<sup>23</sup>
- Americans' ideal communities have a mix of houses, places to walk, and amenities within an easy walk or close drive. Only 12% say they would prefer a suburban neighborhood with houses only.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Housing Comparison with Selected U.S. Cities*

This housing gap analysis also includes a comparison of Sterling Heights' housing stock characteristics with similar top-performing cities from around the nation. Although a combination of numerous factors, beyond housing alone, contribute to a community's quality of life, it is hoped that this

<sup>17</sup> "Demographic Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Housing Markets," Bipartisan Policy Center, March 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Diana Olick, "Apartments Fill as Rental Demand Keeps on Surging", CNBC.com, June 20, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Ryan Noonan, "Understanding the Trend in Multi-Family Housing Growth During the Recovery", Economic and Statistics Administration, November 25, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffery Gundlach, Doubleline Capital CEO, as reported by ThinkAdvisor.com, May 7, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Urban Land Institute, Higher Density Development: Myth or Fact, 2005.

<sup>22</sup> 2011 National Community Preference Survey by the National Association of Realtors; RLCO Consumer Research Data; and, Bipartisan Policy Center, "Demographic Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Housing Markets", March 2012.

<sup>23</sup> John Pitkin and Dowell Myers, "U.S. Housing Trends: Generational Changes and the Outlook to 2050", 2008.

<sup>24</sup> National Association of Realtors, "The 2011 Community Preference Survey", March 2011.

comparison to top-performing cities may provide an indication of appropriate housing tenure levels and housing stock make-up within a community.

For the purposes of our assessment, we utilized the Top 100 Best Places to Live ranking for 2015 prepared by Livability. Livability examines what makes cities great places to live through proprietary research studies, engaging articles and original photography and video to examine topics related to community amenities, education, sustainability, transportation, housing and the economy. They then leverage the expertise to develop city rankings, including their annual Top 100 Best Places to Live.

We examined this current ranking to identify a select list of peer communities from various locations throughout the nation. They are suburban communities with a population similar to the City of Sterling Heights. The communities that were selected (by region and population) were: Overland Park, Kansas (Midwest Region, population of 175,000); Tempe, Arizona (Southwest Region, population of 160,000); Lakewood, Colorado (West Region, population of 140,000); Sandy Springs, Georgia (Southeast Region, population of 95,000); and Quincy, Massachusetts (Northeast Region, population of 90,000). Housing characteristics which were evaluated include housing tenure (percentage of owner-occupied housing units versus renter-occupied housing units) and housing type. **Table 10** shows the results of this comparison, using data provided by the 2010 ACS 5-Year estimates.

**Table 10**  
**Comparison of Housing Tenure and Housing Types**  
**City of Sterling Heights and Selected U.S. Cities, 2010**

<b>Housing Category</b>	<b>Sterling Heights, MI</b>	<b>Overland Park, KS</b>	<b>Tempe, AZ</b>	<b>Lake-wood, CO</b>	<b>Sandy Springs, GA</b>	<b>Quincy, MA</b>
	(Pop. 130,000)	(Pop. 175,000)	(Pop. 160,000)	(Pop. 140,000)	(Pop. 95,000)	(Pop. 90,000)
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>48,849</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>64,227</b>	<b>61,453</b>	<b>40,614</b>	<b>40,600</b>
Owner-Occupancy Percentage	79%	66%	47%	60%	51%	49%
Renter-Occupancy Percentage	21%	34%	53%	40%	49%	51%
<b>Type of Occupied Housing Units</b>						
1 Unit, Detached	68%	62%	47%	50%	40%	35%
1 Unit, Attached	10%	11%	8%	11%	9%	3%
2 Unit, Apartments	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	15%
3 or 4 Unit, Apartments	3%	5%	6%	4%	3%	10%
5 to 9 Unit, Apartments	9%	10%	8%	9%	12%	6%
10 or More Unit Apartments	7%	10%	26%	23%	35%	30%
Mobile Home or Other Types	3%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%

Source: 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates

In terms of housing tenure, the City of Sterling Heights, at 79%, has a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied housing units than the other compared cities. The next-highest owner-occupied housing rate was found in Overland Park, at 66%, while the lowest owner-occupied housing rate was found in Tempe, at 47%.

In terms of the type of housing units, Sterling Heights featured the highest percentage of 1 unit detached units at 68%. The city with the next-highest 1 unit detached percentage was Overland Park, at 62%. The City of Quincy had the lowest 1 unit detached percentage at only 35%. Sterling Heights' percentage of 1 unit attached structures, at 10%, was at the higher end of the comparable communities, with the lowest percentage of 3% found in Quincy. For multiple-unit apartment structures, the City of Sterling Heights' percentages were generally lower than the other comparable communities, particularly in the 10 or more unit apartment buildings category where four out of the five top-performing communities had more than 20% of their housing stock within this category.

#### Housing Gap Analysis Findings

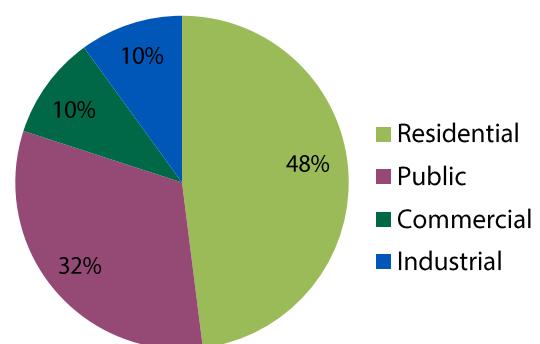
Based upon a review of the current housing types within the City, emerging housing type trends and preferences, and the housing stock make-up of similar top-performing cities, the City of Sterling Heights should seek to ensure housing choice for individuals of all lifestyles and ages through the provision of a more diversified housing stock. Although the single-family detached home is likely to remain the dominant housing type within the City over the next 25 years, the City should encourage and allow for other non-traditional housing types which are increasingly desired by Americans, such as duplexes, fourplexes, bungalow courts, live/work units, and courtyard apartments. The City should also diversify its housing stock by encouraging and allowing, where appropriate, housing types which enable citizens to age-in-place, such as accessory dwelling units, active senior living developments, and elderly care facilities. Finally, an appropriate balance of affordable units and rental units should be maintained as an option for those who desire affordable housing and/or who would prefer to rent instead of own their housing units.

#### **Land Use Ratios**

Land use ratios refer to the breakdown of various categories of land as a percentage of the total amount of land in a community. They are important to examine as part of long-range planning because the data helps local planners to gauge the appropriate mix of land uses that should be encouraged in the future.

The American Planning Association last conducted a survey of land use ratios in 1992. As part of this investigation, a total of 32 large cities (cities having a population of over 100,000 people) were surveyed. Data was collected from their review of recently completed community master plans or through telephone interviews. The results of this survey are shown in **Figure 8**.

**Figure 8**  
**APA Large City Land Use Survey**



Source: Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs. By Arthur C. Nelson, FAICP. American Planning Association, 2004.

To compensate for the dated nature of this study, the City's 2015 existing land use data was benchmarked against comparable data from similar top-performing cities. Similar to the housing type comparison above, the comparable cities included: Overland Park, Kansas; Tempe, Arizona; Lakewood, Colorado; Sandy Springs, Georgia; and Quincy, Massachusetts, all of which are included in the Top 100 Best Places to Live ranking for 2015 by Livability. The results of this comparison are presented in **Table 11**, below.

This data suggest the City of Sterling Heights is generally in balance with its peer group with respect to the percentage of land consumed by most land use categories; however, two exceptions exist. The City of Sterling Heights generally has a higher percentage of its land area occupied by institutional, recreational, and quasi-public uses. This can be attributed to the significant amount of park land found in the City. The City of Sterling Heights also generally has less available land for development. Only seven percent of the City's land area is undeveloped land (vacant, agricultural, rights-of-way, water). This suggests more of the City's future planning effort will be directed to reuse and redevelopment opportunities.

**Table 11**  
**Comparison of Existing Land Use Ratios**  
**City of Sterling Heights and Selected Top 100 Best Places to Live Communities**

Existing Land Use Category	Sterling Heights, MI	Overland Park, KS	Tempe, AZ	Lakewood, CO	Sandy Springs, GA	Quincy, MA
	(Pop. 130,000)	(Pop. 175,000)	(Pop. 160,000)	(Pop. 140,000)	(Pop. 95,000)	(Pop. 90,000)
Residential	46%	39%	45%	59%	49%	53%
Commercial/Office/Mixed-Use	8%	7%	14%	11%	8%	10%
Industrial/Transportation/Communication/Utilities	11%	1%	16%	3%	15%	6%
Institutional/Recreational/Quasi-Public	29%	16%	7%	20%	7%	6%
Vacant/Agricultural/Rights-of-Way/Water	7%	36%	19%	7%	20%	24%

Sources: Wade Trim Field Survey, June 2015 (Sterling Heights); City of Overland Park Existing Land Use Survey, December 2013 (Overland Park); Wade Trim, derived from Lakewood Comprehensive Plan 2025 (Lakewood); Tempe General Plan 2030 (Tempe); City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment Report, 2007 (Sandy Springs); Wade Trim, derived from City of Quincy Zoning Map (Quincy).

## Non-Residential Land Use Projections

The following analysis details the potential commercial, office and industrial base, as well as the potential amount of commercial, office and industrial land which could be consumed by the end of the planning period (2040) according to national land use standards.

### Commercial and Office Land Use

The quantity of developed commercial and office land a community will need in the future is dependent upon its current population size, commuting patterns, household incomes, spending habits, infrastructure capacity, availability of desirable sites, as well as a myriad of other factors within the regional market. Presently, 1,400.4 acres of land, or 6% of the total City land area, is occupied by commercial use while 403.8 acres of land, or 1.7% of the total City land area, is occupied by office land use.

One method of determining future commercial land use need is based on national standards for the number of employees per acre for the commercial sectors. The results of this analysis are displayed in **Table 12**, based on the employee per acre standard for the retail trade as specified in "*Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs*"<sup>25</sup> and the total number of projected commercial jobs by sector as reported in the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast. The results of this analysis show the need for 809.4 total acres of commercial land within the City, which is significantly less than the 1,400.4 commercial land use acres currently found within the City. Thus, the findings would indicate a surplus of existing commercial land; however, this estimating method does not adequately account for the City's position within the Region as a major provider of commercial uses, as evidenced by Lakeside Mall.

**Table 12**  
**Employee Per Acre Standards for Estimating Commercial Land Use**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2040**

Commercial Sector	Total Commercial Jobs 2040 (a)	Employees Per Net Acre (b)	2040 Estimated Commercial Acreage (c)
Retail Trade	6,581	16.62	396.0
Leisure & Hospitality	6,871	16.62	413.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,452</b>		<b>809.4</b>

Footnotes:

(a) Source: SEMCOG 2040 Forecast.

(b) Source: Employment-Based Land-Use Needs (Table 4-6), from "Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs."

(c) Total Commercial Jobs 2040 divided by Employees Per Net Acre

<sup>25</sup> Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs. By Arthur C. Nelson, FAICP. American Planning Association, 2004.

The same employee per acre standard can be applied to estimate future office land use. The results of this analysis are displayed in **Table 13**, based on the employee per acre standard for general office as specified in *"Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs"* and the total number of projected office jobs by sector as reported in the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast. The results of the analysis would indicate that the City could accommodate an additional 250 acres of office land use beyond the 400 existing acres of office land use currently found within the City.

**Table 13**  
**Employee Per Acre Standards for Estimating Office Land Use**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2040**

Office Sector	Total Office Jobs 2040 (a)	Employees Per Net Acre (b)	2040 Estimated Office Acreage (c)
Knowledge-based Services	14,830	31.08	477.2
Services to Households & Firms	5,688	31.08	183.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20,518</b>		<b>660.2</b>

Footnotes:

(a) Source: SEMCOG 2040 Forecast.

(b) Source: Employment-Based Land-Use Needs (Table 4-6), from *"Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs."*

(c) Total Office Jobs 2040 divided by Employees Per Net Acre

### **Industrial Land Use**

The quantity of developed industrial land a community will need in the future is dependent upon its current employment base, infrastructure capacity, local political philosophy, availability of desirable sites, as well as a myriad of other factors within the regional market. Presently, 2,473.6 acres of land, or approximately 11% of the land area of the City of Sterling Heights, is occupied by industrial use.

One method of determining future industrial land use need is based on national standards for the number of employees per acre for various industrial sectors. The results of this analysis are displayed in **Table 14**, based on the employee per acre standard as specified in *"Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs"* and the total number of projected jobs by industrial sector as reported in the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast. The results of this analysis show the need for only 970.5 total acres of industrial land within the City, significantly less than the 2,473.6 acres currently found within the City.

**Table 14**  
**Employee Per Acre Standards for Estimating Industrial Land Use**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2040**

Industrial Sector	Total Industrial Jobs 2040 (a)	Employees Per Net Acre (b)	2040 Estimated Industrial Acreage (c)
Natural Resources, Mining & Construction	4,473	28.73	155.7
Manufacturing	10,857	16.44	660.4
Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	3,420	22.15	154.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,750</b>		<b>970.5</b>

Footnotes:

- (a) Source: SEMCOG 2040 Forecast.
- (b) Source: Employment-Based Land-Use Needs (Table 4-6), from "Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs."
- (c) Total Industrial Jobs 2040 divided by Employees Per Net Acre

Another method of determining future industrial land use need is achieved through the application of employment/density ratios. This method calculates future industrial acreage based on the projected number of industrial jobs multiplied by the existing employment density (industrial jobs per acre) in the community. The results of this analysis are shown in **Table 15**. According to the SEMCOG 2040 Forecast, the total number of industrial jobs within Sterling Heights is projected to marginally decline between 2015 and 2040. Thus, the total needed industrial acreage within the community is also expected to decline, from 2,473.6 acres to 2,351.4 acres.

**Table 15**  
**Employment Density Ratios for Estimating Industrial Land Use**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2015 - 2040**

Total Industrial Jobs 2015 (a)	Ex. Industrial Acreage 2015 (b)	2015 Employment Density: Industrial Jobs Per Acre (c)	Total Industrial Jobs 2040 (d)	2040 Estimated Industrial Acreage (e)
19,725	2,473.6	7.974	18,750	2,351.4

Footnotes:

- (a) Industrial Jobs = Natural Resources, Mining & Construction; Manufacturing; and, Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities. Source: SEMCOG 2040 Forecast.
- (b) Source: Wade Trim field survey, June 2015.
- (c) Total Industrial Jobs 2015 divided by Ex. Industrial Acreage 2015
- (d) Industrial Jobs = Natural Resources, Mining & Construction; Manufacturing; and, Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities. Source: SEMCOG 2040 Forecast.
- (e) Assumes that the 2015 Employment Density will remain the same through 2040.

Both methods of forecasting future industrial land uses show an existing surplus of industrial land within the City of Sterling Heights. It is our opinion, however, that neither method appropriately takes into consideration the City's place within the entire Region and State as a manufacturing hub. Due to its geographic location, transportation networks, infrastructure systems, and corporate and local investments, the City has a large, growing and "in-demand" industrial sector. Further insight into the regional and local industrial marketplace is provided in the following chapter (Evaluation of Local Market Conditions).

# Evaluation of Local Market Conditions

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## Introduction

Any future land use planning effort must consider the amount of retail, office and industrial space which can be reasonably absorbed during the planning period. Thus, an evaluation of national, regional, and in particular, local market conditions is necessary in order to develop realistic and achievable future land use recommendations. Colliers International has prepared this market conditions assessment using proprietary database information built upon historical supply, demand, and absorption rate data, as well as transaction comparables. Additionally, Colliers International draws upon its understanding of regional and local market trends and conditions gained through years of experience working in the real estate market of Metro Detroit.

This evaluation focuses on three key real estate sectors: Industrial, Office, and Retail (Commercial). The chapter first begins with an evaluation of these three sectors from a national perspective, drilling down to regional trends, and culminating with specific trends and opportunities within the local market.

## National Overview

### ***Retail (Commercial) Real Estate Sector***

No other real estate sector is facing the challenges of the retail sector. While other sectors are changing the way they do business, the internet is making brick and mortar retailers fight for their very existence. In some cases, the battle is already over. Stores like Sam Goody, Hollywood Video, and Borders have already succumbed to online competition. With the advent of online retail, retailers not only face competition from each other, but from a completely different form of shopping. For brick and mortar retailers, the change is palpable. Instead of having a large inventory and massive footprint to offer the most products, the focus has changed to offering the best experience possible. The goal is to offer something in the store that makes people put their laptops or phones away, and come into the store. In this environment, the Apple Store is the gold standard; customers come in for the experience as much as the product.

The following are key national trends within the retail sector:

#### *Smaller Stores*

For many retailers, aside from the Walmarts and Meijers of the world, the larger store is not always better. Retailers are looking for a smaller, more specialized location that focuses on experience and customer service. This means better materials inside, and a highly trained, customer oriented staff. The goal is not to have as much stuff as possible, but to provide an experience that gets people to forego online shopping.

#### *Less Inventory*

The rise of online shopping has created a disincentive to keep large amounts of inventory in the store. Retailers find it far more efficient to use their store as a showroom, and ship directly to a consumer from a central warehouse. Once again, the Apple Store provides an excellent example – the store's

inventory is significantly smaller and more specialized than the big box retailers it helped put out of business (Comp USA, Circuit City).

#### *Fast Casual Restaurants*

With a price that is in-between a fast food place and a sit-down, tablecloth restaurant, the fast casual category has come to dominate the food service industry. According to data from market research firm Euromonitor, the category has grown by 550 percent since 1999, more than ten times the growth seen in the fast food industry over the same period. Hallmarks include good quality food, simple menus, and quick service that does not require paying a server a tip. While Chipotle and Panera Bread Company are the industry standard, there are countless other restaurants trying to break into this category.

#### *Dead Malls*

All over the country, older shopping malls are getting squeezed. For many malls, they face the dual challenge of changing, negative demographics, combined with increased competition from other malls. The death of a mall is often slow and painful due to the investment structure, and sometimes leaves behind a white elephant for the community to address. Many malls, however, have been redeveloped into successful power centers, such as Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield and Universal Mall in Warren.

#### *Premium Grocers*

With Whole Foods leading the way, many grocers have decided to stop competing with Kroger or Walmart on price, and have elected to offer higher quality food instead. A focus on smaller stores, higher quality foods, and prepared foods sets these grocers apart from their mass market brethren. The higher-end chains (such as Plum Market and Fresh Thyme) are expected to cut into the market share of mid-level, full service chains such as Kroger.

#### *Online and Brick and Mortar as an Integrated Strategy*

While some experts predicted the demise of brick and mortar retail altogether due to online competition, this is hardly the case. Many companies are using the brick and mortar store and the web as an integrated retail strategy, as after all, as of 2013, just 6% of all retail sales occurred online. Interestingly enough, many companies that started as pure online retailers are expanding into retail stores, enjoying the benefit of a clean slate and a fresh site-selection strategy, and a new way to position their brand. Eyeglass manufacturer Warby Parker is a well-known example, using a select few stores to grow from an online-only platform.

#### **Office Real Estate Sector**

The office sector has experienced an uneven recovery. In first tier markets, such as Chicago, New York, and San Francisco, trophy office buildings are trading and leasing for record prices. In those cities, the recession is over – financial and technology firms are willing to pay for quality space in urban environments. In secondary markets such as Detroit, the office market is still recovering. In these markets, the office sector is facing unique pressures. Employers generally have smaller headcounts, and from there, are using significantly less space per employee. Due to technology, many companies encourage people to work from home, saving real estate costs. With this in mind, the glut of space on the market ensures that tenants will continue to hold more cards in the negotiation process, especially in lower quality buildings. However, for quality buildings, even in markets like Detroit, the outlook is much brighter.

The following are key national trends within the office sector:

#### *Efficient Layouts*

The greatest change in office real estate is the shift towards the open-office layout. Instead of private offices and chopped up spaces, companies are opting for far fewer offices, and open, public spaces. The benefits are two-fold: increased collaboration between employees; and, more efficient utilization of space. For landlords, this is not necessarily good news. According to CoreNet Global, the average amount of space per office worker globally is approximately 150 feet or less, down from 225 feet in 2010.

#### *Virtual Commuting*

The technological changes of recent years make telecommuting and virtual commuting easier than ever before. The typical telecommuter is a well-educated, high wage earner. According to the Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey, the average telecommuter holds a degree, earns about \$58,000 a year, and belongs to a company with more than 100 employees. For office users, it allows a more flexible work environment, and allows companies to cast a wider net for talent. From a real estate perspective, it allows companies to save on real estate costs by simply leasing less space.

#### *Urban and Downtown Offices*

The shift of the millennial generation towards cities and urban environments is not a fad; it is a trend that will affect real estate markets for generations to come. For companies that want to attract and retain smart, hardworking, and young employees, a downtown campus is considered a must. Locally, this shift in tastes and preferences has caused many relocations from the suburbs to the city, such as: advertising firm Campbell Ewald vacating their building in Warren; BlueCrossBlueShield leaving their property in Southfield; and, Dan Gilbert's umbrella of companies relocating over 12,000 employees from the suburbs to the central business district.

#### *Office as Recruiting and Retention Tool*

Piggybacking off of the urban and downtown office trend is the office as a recruiting tool. The no-frills office of the past has given way to the high-design, high amenity office of the present. High-end cafes, day-care centers, and other amenities are now seen as a necessity to retain top-tier talent. Locally, Quicken Loans is known for its spare-no-expense offices, with excellent fit and finishes, youthful décor, and programmed place-making initiatives at the street level.

#### *Amenities*

For office users, nearby amenities are important for employees. Office users pay attention to what restaurants are nearby, if there is a dry cleaners in the area, if there are shops and stores, etc., to provide an upbeat environment for employees. Companies also look for amenities like hotels and golf courses for entertaining clients and accommodating out of town guests. While not every company is image conscious, Class A office tenants, especially in the legal, financial, and management consulting fields, are very protective of their brand.

#### *Industrial Real Estate Sector*

Nationally, the Industrial Real Estate sector has recovered quickly from the recession. A strengthening national economy is driving the demand for space amongst industrial users, which tightens the supply, and turns the market conditions in the favor of landlords. In some submarkets, speculative

development (where a developer builds before space is leased) is heating up. While users demand more space, investors continue to have interest in the asset class, especially in newer buildings. Industrial space is viewed as a safe investment because of market demand and the perceived operational cost advantages – cheaper to construct, easier to repair, less regulation issues, cheaper to re-tenant – than other asset classes. Overall, the trend in industrial is towards larger, more efficient buildings that offer excellent truck access, and more importantly, the flexibility to adapt to future needs.

The following are key national trends within the industrial sector:

#### *Efficient Systems*

Industrial buildings today are more energy efficient than ever before. Every user wants to decrease their electric and water bills, and this is reflected in today's industrial building. HVAC systems are significantly improved from just fifteen years before, providing a more comfortable workplace and a lower bill at the end of the month. Green Buildings, such as Ford Motor Company's Rouge plant, can also be used as a showcase for the company's brand identity.

#### *Clear Heights and Column Spacing*

While layouts are more efficient, the most obvious change in today's industrial buildings is the taller clear heights and the column spacing. The taller clear heights allow for more stacking of goods, and more room for machinery. The wider column spacing/lack of columns allows for more freedom of movement, and the ability to quickly retool a manufacturing space. Nationwide, the 30-foot clear building is becoming the minimum many tenants will consider.

#### *Infill Development*

After generations of greenfield development, characterized by industrial users building facilities farther and farther out of the city, more industrial users are giving infill sites a second look. Infill sites offer in-place infrastructure, access to stronger employee demographics, access to redevelopment incentives, and closer access to potential delivery sites.

#### *Automation*

Automation of industrial production is hardly a new phenomenon. The factory that once employed thousands now only needs a fraction of the employees. While this does not affect the industrial real estate directly, it does affect policy making for cities everywhere, as there simply are not as many jobs available. As a local example, the former Dodge Main Plant in Hamtramck employed over 40,000 people during World War II; the current facility, GM's Detroit/Hamtramck Assembly plant, employs approximately 1,600.

#### *Less Pollution*

Due to regulation and new efficiencies, industrial facilities are not always the poor neighbors that they used to be. The image of the factory belching smoke into the air is a dated one, for the most part. However, industrial facilities do generate more truck traffic, and can also bring noise and pollution when located next to trains.

## Regional Overview

### ***Retail (Commercial) Real Estate Sector***

The overall retail vacancy rate in the Metro Detroit market area decreased to 8.3% at the end of the second quarter 2015, a 30 basis point decrease from the previous quarter. The highest vacancy rates were found in the Downriver area at 14.2%, and the Southfield market with 14.9%. The lowest vacancy rates were in Troy at 2.8%, and Ann Arbor at 4.5%. At \$16.64 per square foot, the Bloomfield submarket reported the highest rents. Overall, the general feeling is that the worst of the recession is over.

Because each category of retail is so different, a brief analysis of each sector has been provided, as opposed to a broad overview of the entire market.

#### ***Shopping Centers***

In the Metro Detroit market area, the average quoted rental rate for shopping centers, all classes (community centers, neighborhood centers, and strip centers) was \$12.56 per square foot at the end of the second quarter of 2015, a small increase from \$12.36 in the previous quarter. Year-to-date, the sector has absorbed 471,748 square feet of space. Since the first quarter, the vacancy rate decline from 13.3% in the previous quarter to 13.0%, further signs of growing confidence in the sector and the market. The affluent Bloomfield submarket quoted the highest rents for the quarter at \$17.72 per square foot.

#### ***Power Centers***

A power center is an unenclosed shopping center that usually has three or more “big-box” tenants. The category has become the development tool of choice to replace enclosed shopping malls, due to their ability to offer a good mix of stores that are better suited to the community’s demographics. Metro Detroit’s power center market showed improved metrics in the second quarter of 2015 from the previous quarter. The vacancy rate decreased from at 7.3% in the first quarter of 2015 to 6.8% in the second quarter. The declining vacancy rate has not translated into strong rental growth, as the rental rate improved just 2 basis points, from \$13.12 to \$13.14 per square foot. In strong submarkets, such as Bloomfield Hills, power centers can command rents upwards of \$36.00 per square foot.

#### ***General Retail***

For general retail, which includes all freestanding retail buildings that are not contained within a shopping center, the second quarter reported 700,134 square feet of net absorption, for a year-to-date total of 1,262,134 square feet of absorption. This marks an excellent start to the year. Across the entire market, average quoted rents are reported at \$11.30, a slight improvement from the previous quarter’s rents of \$11.23.

#### ***Investment Sales***

The second quarter of 2015 was a busy quarter for investment sales. A total of 312 buildings sold for a total volume of \$127,582,193 for a median sales price of \$60.43, and an average cap rate of 7.98%. Notable sales included Shelby Corners in Utica, and Crossroads Town Center in Howell. Institutional capital from within and outside of Michigan have bought and sold properties, which demonstrates that a renewed confidence in the Michigan economy.

### New Construction Slow

The second quarter of 2015 marked a continuation of slow construction trends in Metro Detroit. Just 355,750 square feet of new space was delivered, with approximately 318,845 square feet of new product in the pipeline. While Metro Detroit's macroeconomic indicators are recovering, they are still not high enough to support a wave of new construction.

### **Office Real Estate Sector**

In the Metro Detroit market area, the average quoted rental rate for available office space, all classes, was \$18.14 per square foot at the end of the second quarter of 2015. This represents a solid increase from the previous quarter's quoted rent of \$17.99. The average Class A quoted rental rate was \$20.95 per square foot, a slight increase from \$20.62 in the previous quarter. Quoted rents in Detroit's CBD increased to \$23.76 per square foot. Class A suburban markets quoted \$20.59 per square foot, an increase from the previous quarter's \$20.28. Because of the sheer amount of vacant space available in the market, major rent growth market-wide is not expected. With the exception of a select few submarkets (such as Downtown Detroit, Ann Arbor and Birmingham), landlords will continue to cut aggressive deals to lure tenants.

Major regional office sector trends are highlighted below:

#### Vacancy Rates on the Decline

The overall office vacancy rate in the Metro Detroit market decreased by twenty basis points, reporting 14.6% at the end of the second quarter of 2015. The vacancy rate has continuously improved since 2010, with the exception of a small aberration for the second quarter of 2014. Across the market, Class A performed well in the second quarter, with a reported vacancy rate of 13.3%, down forty basis points from 13.7% at the end of the first quarter of 2015. In Metro Detroit's larger office markets, the highest vacancy rates were reported in the suburban submarkets of Troy North (34.1%), Farmington Hills (27.8%), and Southfield (24.2%). Across all classes, a total of 28,552,487 square feet of space remains available. Overall, the entire Metro Detroit market is much healthier than it was in 2010, when the vacancy rate climbed to 18.3%.

#### Notable Leases and Absorption

Net absorption for the overall Metro Detroit office market was strong in the second quarter of 2015. A total of 1,016,993 square feet of space was absorbed across all classes in the market, which complements the 467,143 square feet absorbed in the previous quarter. This is an excellent start to the year, and a far cry from the dark days of 2009, when the market reported negative 2,296,985 square feet of absorption for the entire year.

#### Major Trades on the Market

The most recent deal to grab headlines in the second quarter of 2015 was the sale of the Fisher and Kahn Buildings located in the New Center district of Detroit. While local landmarks, the Fisher and Kahn buildings had fallen on hard times due to deferred maintenance and increased competition from downtown office buildings. A consortium led by local and New York investors was able to purchase the 776,502 square foot complex for just \$12.2 million. The group plans a major renovation which will likely convert some of the office to residential. After the high sales prices of the Compuware Building and the One Detroit Center, which went for over \$100,000,000 to local entrepreneur Dan Gilbert, the Fisher and Kahn sale is a reminder that the Detroit market still has significant redevelopment work ahead. The high sales numbers for the One Detroit Center and Compuware building are a good sign

for the market, however, showing that investors have confidence in the Metro Detroit area's economic prospects.

#### *Little Headway in Construction*

Metro Detroit's office market continues to lack the fundamentals for new construction. Just 47,428 square feet of office space has been delivered in the first two quarters of 2015. With construction costs continuing to climb and plenty of available space on the market, a wave of new construction is not expected anytime soon.

#### ***Industrial Real Estate Sector***

The average quoted rental rate for available industrial space, all types, was \$4.97 per square foot at the end of the second quarter of 2015. This represents a \$0.13 increase from the previous quarter. The market for flex space saw a slight increase in rents. The average quoted rental rate for flex space at the end of the second quarter was \$8.04, an increase of \$0.15 from the previous quarter. The average quoted rental rate for warehouse space at the end of the second quarter was \$4.50, a \$0.06 increase. Rental rates have been grown steadily since 2011, growing from \$4.41 to \$4.97 per square foot. In tight submarkets, especially the Ann Arbor area, rental rates can be well north of \$7.00 per square foot.

Major regional industrial sector trends are highlighted below:

#### *Vacancy Decreases*

The industrial vacancy rate in Metro Detroit decreased to 6.8% at the end of the second quarter of 2015; a number that represents a 180 basis point improvement from the second quarter of 2014. When viewing vacancy statistics with a broader lens, the 6.8% vacancy rate is a significant improvement from the 13.8% peak in 2010.

The Troy submarket reported the lowest vacancy rate at 3.1%. The East Area/Macomb County submarket continues to be a strong performer as well, reporting a 3.2% vacancy rate. Detroit reported the highest vacancy rate at 14.4%. In general, the high vacancy rates are correlated to the number of obsolete buildings located in the submarket. Within the Detroit market, quality buildings have not struggled to capture tenants. Troy has arguably the best combination of demographics and new buildings, which is why demand continues to get stronger by the day.

#### *Absorption Positive*

Net absorption for Metro Detroit's industrial market was positive 2,090,333 square feet in the second quarter of 2015. This represents an excellent start to the year, and a healthy follow up to the previous quarter's total of 2,036,371 square feet.

Moving into the second half of 2015, the market's main client base, the automotive industry, is in position to expand. This will continue to drive positive absorption. Also, with little in the way of new construction, the market will continue to be tight. Brokers will have less product to show tenants, giving landlords the upper hand during lease negotiations.

#### *Sales Market Improving*

The second quarter of 2015 reported a number of significant deals and racked up four sales to out-of-state real estate investment trusts (REIT's). Brennan Investment Group, American Realty Capital, and STAG Industrial Management all completed transactions in Metro Detroit with a total consideration of \$45,426,760. In the second quarter, 5,012,562 square feet of space traded, with an average sale price of

\$35.85 per square foot. The average deal size was 25,063 square foot. Out-of-state capital returning to Michigan is an excellent sign for Michigan's economy, showing that institution grade investors are willing to stake their capital and reputation on the health and economic growth prospects in Metro Detroit.

#### New Construction Slow

In the second quarter of 2015, 607,562 square feet of space was delivered, the majority of which was build-to-suit or expansion space. New construction has been slow for all sectors of real estate in Detroit.

#### **Sterling Heights Overview**

A historical gauge of the change in establishments by industry code classification for the City of Sterling Heights is provided as **Table 16**. Overall, the number of establishments within the City has grown by 1.6%, from 2,774 establishments in 2002 to 2,817 establishments in 2012.

**Table 16**  
Establishments by Industry Code Classification  
City of Sterling Heights, 2002 - 2012

Industry Code Classification	2002	2012	Change 2002-2012	
			Number	Percent
Construction	315	248	-67	-21.3%
Manufacturing	293	269	-24	-8.2%
Wholesale Trade	173	184	11	6.4%
Retail Trade	494	453	-41	-8.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	46	106	60	130.4%
Information	35	37	2	5.7%
Finance & Insurance	161	162	1	0.6%
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	85	81	-4	-4.7%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	248	248	0	0%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	14	14	0	0%
Admin. Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	149	152	3	2.0%
Educational Services	14	19	5	35.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	244	343	99	40.6%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	27	26	-1	-3.7%
Accommodations & Food Service	217	224	7	3.2%
Other Service (Except Public Administration)	246	250	4	1.6%
Unclassified	13	1	-12	-92.3%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,774</b>	<b>2,817</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 and 2012 Zip Code Business Patterns.

Over the 10 year span, the fastest growing industry codes within the City, by percent change in number of establishments, included:

1. Transportation & Warehousing (130.4%)
2. Health Care and Social Assistance (40.6%)
3. Educational Services (35.7%)
4. Wholesale Trade (6.4%)
5. Information (5.7%)

The most significant declines were found in the following industry code classifications:

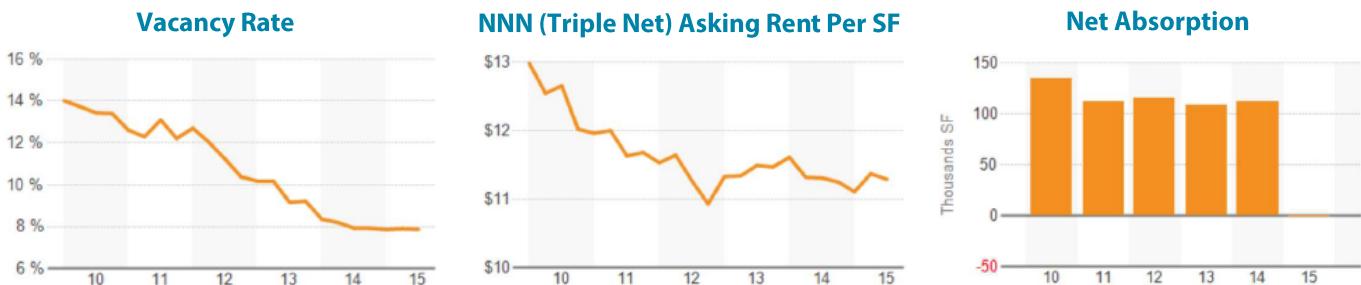
1. Unclassified (-92.3%)
2. Construction (-21.3%)
3. Retail Trade (-8.3%)
4. Manufacturing (-8.2%)
5. Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing (-4.7%)

### ***Retail (Commercial) Real Estate Sector***

In Metro Detroit, Sterling Heights is known as a quality trade area for retailers. Sterling Heights offers both residential and daytime traffic to potential retailers. Sterling Heights is home to many national retailers, and is the home of Lakeside Mall. Lakeside Mall was once the top mall in Macomb County in terms of prestige, but has since lost this crown to the nearby Mall at Partridge Creek in Clinton Township. While the mall has lost status, it is still current on its mortgage, and is still generating returns for the ownership group. The mall is currently in good physical and financial condition, and is still an important draw for other retailers in the community. Because of this, Sterling Heights should do everything within its capabilities to ensure that the mall stays in top form. Because of the complicated financial structures of malls, any decline of Lakeside will be slow and painful for Sterling Heights. This can and should be avoided with a proactive approach to maintaining the mall.

Currently, Sterling Heights reports 8,856,858 square of retail space across all sectors, spread out over 406 buildings. The market's vacancy rate is in good shape, at 7.7% as of the second quarter of 2015. The current vacancy rate is a notable improvement from a high of 15.4% in 2008. The market is performing, but a windshield survey reveals that some of the retail property is beginning to look dated. While there is demand for space, the lack of rental growth shows that there is little "gotta have it" space in Sterling Heights. Rental rates have remained stagnant, currently at 11.24 per square foot as of the second quarter of 2015, a price they have hovered around since 2011.

#### **Retail Trends Sterling Heights, 2010-2015**



### Strategic Opportunities in the Local Retail Market

Because of retail's importance to both residents and employers, it is the recommendation of Colliers International that Sterling Heights be aggressive with keeping the city's retail portfolio up-to-date. While Lakeside Mall is currently performing, the City must keep an eye on the property to ensure that it does not join Northland Mall as a community liability. New retail should avoid enclosed malls, and focus on upmarket facilities that project a positive image for the community. In short, be very picky about which projects gain approval.

### **Office Real Estate Sector**

In Metro Detroit, Sterling Heights is a secondary office market. Ann Arbor, Auburn Hills, Downtown Detroit, Novi, Farmington Hills, and Troy are the established players in the sector, while Birmingham plays a role as providing top-tier office space for image conscious users. Given the amount of vacant space available in markets like Troy, Farmington Hills, and Southfield, and the increased competition from a revitalized Downtown Detroit, it is difficult to imagine Sterling Heights becoming a major player in the office sector. However, as an office market, Sterling Heights has a key advantage – proximity to defense contractors on the Mound Road Corridor. For defense contractors, Sterling Heights is an attractive location for office and research and development facilities, and a major build-to-suit for a defense contractor is likely the only way a major office project breaks ground.

Currently, Sterling Heights has 2,965,236 square feet of office inventory spread out over 180 buildings. The market's vacancy rate is a very healthy 9.7% as of the second quarter of 2015, a tremendous achievement given the 19.9% vacancy rate in the fourth quarter of 2009. While spaces have filled up, rental rates have decreased since 2009. In the first quarter of 2009, rental rates were \$18.45 per square foot. Currently, office space averages \$16.09 per square foot, showing that landlords need to be aggressive to lure tenants. With so much empty space in the overall Detroit Market, it is not expected for rents to grow significantly in Sterling Heights in the immediate future.

**Office Trends  
Sterling Heights, 2010-2015**



### Strategic Opportunities in the Local Office Market

While there is positive momentum in the office market, it is the recommendation of Colliers International that Sterling Heights deprioritize office development. Sterling Heights as a market lacks the fundamentals to lure national tenants, especially when so many buildings are still available in other submarkets, and when the broader trends affecting the office sector are considered. However, as noted above, the City may be able to capture new office and research and development facilities related to the defense sector.

## Industrial Real Estate Sector

In Metro Detroit, Sterling Heights is known as one of the area's better industrial markets. Sterling Heights is known within the commercial real estate community as a City that offers quality building stock without the high prices of Troy and Auburn Hills. Sterling Heights offers industrial users rail access, excellent highway access, rectangular and square shaped parcels, and proximity to other large industrial users. Chrysler and Ford Motor Company anchor the City's industrial market, drawing various other tool-and-die, suppliers, and warehouse users to the market. Sterling Heights has also branched out away from the automotive industry, and has become a nationally recognized hub for the defense industry. Sterling Heights' ability to lure defense contractors is a unique quality within Metro Detroit, as the region is still heavily reliant on the auto industry.

As of the second quarter of 2015, Sterling Heights reports 26,212,300 square feet of industrial and flex space, spread out over 539 buildings. The market's vacancy rate is an astoundingly low 1.9%, with a minuscule 17,000 square feet of space under construction. This is one of the tightest markets in Metro Detroit. Rental rates have also reported significant growth, from a low of \$4.34 in 2011 to the current second quarter 2015 rate of \$5.85. The growing rents and low vacancy rates, coupled with little new product on the way, means that Sterling Heights is becoming a landlords' market. Quality space is difficult to find, and does not last long on the market. Because of these factors, rents are expected to continue to grow.

**Industrial Trends  
Sterling Heights, 2010-2015**



## Strategic Opportunities in the Local Industrial Market

Because of the tight market and the positive momentum, it is the recommendation of Colliers International that Sterling Heights prioritize industrial development. Sterling Heights has all the features industrial users look for, and the market demands more and better space. Sterling Heights has all the fundamentals in place to attract and retain blue-chip industrial users, and should continue to build off of this track record of success.

## ***General Strategies to Capitalize on Local Market Conditions***

Specific strategies were outlined above for each of the three real estate markets. The City should use those strategies as a framework for the development of policies and future land use planning proposals. Additionally, the City should pursue the following general strategies in its efforts to promote economic development, job generation, and maintain high quality shopping and employment options within its jurisdiction. These general strategies are outlined below, along with a case study illustrating each.

### ***Strategy 1: Be Aggressive***

Bad real estate is not like a fine wine – it does not get better with age. In fact, quite the opposite happens. Just one or two blighted buildings can cause an adverse domino effect across a submarket; other nearby owners disinvest, banks refuse to underwrite, tenants leave or avoid the market for greener pastures, etc. Cities facing economic challenges are now and always will be in a tough position. While cities cannot pack up and move, residents and businesses can. With this bargaining position in mind, it is imperative for Sterling Height's long-term prospects to get in front of problems, and nip them before they start. Being aggressive can take many forms, from rigorous code enforcement, to purchasing and demolishing blighted properties. While being aggressive takes time, effort, and money, the long-term benefits of addressing and preventing blight are well worth it.

### ***Strategy 2: Focus on Strengths***

While it is important to address what Sterling Heights does not have, the strategy moving forward should involve building off of Sterling Heights strengths. Sterling Heights offers a good location within the Metro Detroit area, with good highway and rail access. Sterling Heights also offers a strong, educated labor pool, with plenty of manufacturing know how. Finally, Sterling Heights enjoys the presence of many large corporate stakeholders, such as Chrysler, Ford Motor Company, General Dynamics, US Farathane Corporation, and BAE Systems. Sterling Heights is strong in automotive, and more importantly, strong in the stable and growing defense sector. Currently, Sterling Heights is not a hub for legal services, finance, insurance, or technology – and that's OK. Sterling Heights has plenty of strong building blocks, and would do well to embrace and build off of those, instead of worrying about what the City does not have.

## **Be Aggressive**

### **Case Study: Grosse Pointe Park**

Located along Lake St. Clair and the City of Detroit, during the height of the automotive recession, the City of Grosse Pointe Park noticed a growing vacancy issue in an area of the city commonly known as the Cabbage Patch. Home to many duplexes and small bungalows, the "patch" was losing renters and owners at an alarming rate. The small but affluent City developed an aggressive strategy. First, the City purchased blighted properties from the bank to ensure they were properly secured. The homes were then sold to buyers (sometimes at a loss) with a caveat—fix up the homes to the city's high standards. Third, to help all the landlords attract tenants, the City established an incentive program. College students would receive discounted rent through a stipend provided by a City-established foundation. In the endgame, the City's aggressive, creative program allowed the City's housing values to recover with the economy. So far, the program has paid handsome dividends towards the City.

## Set the Table for Redevelopment

### Case Study: Windsor

In the Great Lakes region, many cities have faced severe challenges due to the retrenchment of the auto industry. Flint, Dayton, Detroit, Buffalo, Lansing, and many others have lost jobs and tax revenue due to scaled back or closed plants. One of the common critiques amongst real estate professionals is the red tape surrounding redevelopment. Incentives are competitive, difficult to understand, and awarded on an ad/hoc basis. Across the river from Detroit, another city has faced severe retrenchment from the auto industry as well. However, Windsor's redevelopment procedures are very different. Instead of a murky system of back room deals, Windsor simplified its development procedures, and makes applying simple. Instead of endless meetings and approvals, businesses that meet the pre-determined criteria are awarded the incentives. The process is simple and more transparent.

## Focus on Strengths

### Case Study: Las Vegas

By the late 1990s, Las Vegas faced an identity crisis. Wanting to break away from its seedy past, the city started marketing itself as a family-friendly vacation destination, with limited success. To re-energize the Vegas brand, an ad agency came up with the humorous, tongue in cheek "What happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" campaign. The campaign embraced the care-free attitude of a weekend in Vegas; a cleaned up version of its hard partying past. The ad's tagline became a pop-culture phenomenon, but more importantly, by embracing what was unique about Las Vegas, the city was able to re-energize its brand. The results: continued growth in visitors and occupancy from its first year in 2003 to 2007, the year before the recession.

#### Strategy 3: Set the Table for Redevelopment

One of the most important actions Sterling Heights can take is make redevelopment as simple and clear as possible. A pro-business and pro-development reputation goes a long way in the commercial real estate business. Over time, companies/employers, real estate investors, and brokers begin to understand that a city is easy to work with, making this city the first phone call. This does not mean throw away all the rules and allow anything to be built – far from it. What it does mean is set the table for development. Make the rules simple and clear, and stick with them. More importantly, do not handle development, incentives, and permits on an ad/hoc basis. While it may make sense at first, over the long run, it takes more time to get a deal closed, and everyone in the real estate business knows that time kills deals.

#### Strategy 4: Hitting Singles is OK

Many cities, when faced with economic distress, start to look for the magic bullet solution. The "solution" is generally a massive project of dubious merit and heavy public subsidies. While it is human and American nature to want to swing for the fence, these massive projects often create more problems than they solve. First and foremost, tying up large amounts of capital in one project is risky, as industries change and companies go out of business. The end result is the community is left holding the bag – on the hook for bond payments for a project that is going nowhere fast. Cities, especially small- to mid-sized cities including Sterling Heights, would be wise to steer clear of these massive projects, and instead minimize their short and long-term downside by devoting their public attention to a diverse group of smaller projects. While smaller projects may lack the big headlines up

front, they also lack the big, embarrassing headlines on the back end if they do not work out as planned.

## **Hitting Singles is OK**

### **Case Study: New London, Connecticut**

A small manufacturing city on the East Coast, New London was known for two things: making submarines and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. In an effort to keep Pfizer from leaving town, the City of New London embarked on a massive redevelopment project. The City would acquire a large portion of land, and turn this land over to the company for a new hotel, health club, and stores that were built to Pfizer's specifications. The project was big, expensive, and glamorous, but it had a problem. The lands in question were actually the private homes of many residents, some of whom did not want to sell to the City. After a long and expensive court battle, the City finally won, and was able to take title to the homes, and clear the land for new construction. The City spent \$80,000,000 and created a massive rift in the community. In the end, Pfizer never moved forward with the project. The company also relocated its research facility to Groton, Connecticut, leaving New London for good. For all the rewards that the Pfizer project promised, policy makers failed to realize that risks are just as large as the rewards.

# Placemaking Assessment

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## Introduction

Sterling Heights is defined by, and challenged by, a lack of a cohesive pattern of pedestrian and non-motorized accommodations and an orientation towards ease of vehicle-oriented mobility. This condition poses unique issues that need to be addressed as a part of the master planning process.

The development of the urban design and placemaking framework for the City is developed by integrating three factors:

1. An understanding of current development trends in cities as they relate to concept formation
2. A review and critique of previous design guidelines and master plans for the City
3. An analysis and evaluation of existing conditions

Mixed use areas in walkable cities and pedestrian-oriented areas are experiencing a renaissance unlike anything seen in decades. Largely vacant office buildings are filling up with new businesses and residents, the ground floors are welcoming new shops and restaurants, and the streets and public spaces are returning to life. Walkable areas are finding renewed success.

In metropolitan Detroit, the northern suburbs, while traditionally stable, are also seeing a renewed interest in neglected commercial and residential properties. This provides an opportunity to rethink suburban areas from a placemaking perspective by adding an additional layer of activity to enhance them.

This analysis focuses on how locating pedestrian-oriented nodes within the existing framework of the City can aid in transforming, both in the long and short term, the perception of livability in Sterling Heights. The nodes can become important components of the enhancement and revitalization of commercial and residential zones within the City, and may also become destinations in their own right.

## Analysis and Concept Formation

Sterling Heights connects with adjacent municipalities of varied economic vitality, and also acts as a major residential and industrial enclave. Acknowledgement of this importance, and of the historical drivers that have shaped Sterling Heights until today, will help to plan for the next phase in the evolution of the City. The analysis of the City for the purpose of locating placemaking opportunities focused on three prominent criteria:

1. Overview of the City as a whole
2. The identification of placemaking Opportunities
3. Challenges to placemaking

Specific items that were looked at to determine appropriateness of individual areas included:

- Overall Walkability of the area
- Building and Land Use
- Built Form
- Public Realm
- Vehicular Infrastructure
- Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Ability to Integrate non-motorized facilities
- Access to amenities
- Adjacency to a variety of uses and other nodes
- Linkages/ Connections

## Review of Design Related Documents

### ***Streetscape Design Guidelines (2006)***

The purpose of the review of the Streetscape Design Guidelines was to identify, from our current perspective, the applicability of the recommendations contained within the 2006 document.

The Streetscape Design Guidelines developed for the Corridor Improvement Authority focus on the following physical elements with the intention of providing design continuity between public and private development within the city:

- Colored/ stamped concrete
- Lighting and banners
- Brick pillars and fencing
- Shade trees and vegetation

There are 5 key critique/ observations that were identified as a result of the review of the Design Guidelines:

1. The Guidelines do not address long term development incentives

The Guidelines address the enhancement aspect of the existing public realm; however, they do not give clear indication of how implementing the proposals can lead to a higher level of development and, subsequently, a greater sense of place within the City.

2. The Guidelines provide limited aid for increasing walkability

The City's 2005 Master Land Use Plan encourages walkability. The Design Guidelines should address issues of pedestrian connectivity and pedestrian crossings through physical alterations such as designated pathways, curb bulb-outs, etc.

3. Pros and Cons of the consistent aesthetic for street furnishings and treatments

The use of stamped concrete and ornamental trees may be overdone and unnecessary. Current best practices emphasize clean and carefully implemented concrete installations. This, combined with the aesthetic of the street furniture could lead to a sameness among the areas

where the guidelines are applied. It may be more effective to determine the character of a specific location before implementing the Guidelines.

4. How do we designate a district or a gateway without a sign or marker?

Similar to Observation 3, above, the use of banners and landmark signage, while bringing consistency to the image of the city as a whole, may not capitalize on the uniqueness of many of the locations within the City.

5. The facade improvement guidelines are, generally, in order

More detail is needed to explain the desired results. Some examples are provided, but a variety of examples would probably aid in avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach to enhancing different areas within the City.

### ***Sterling Heights Master Land Use Plan (2005)***

The 2005 Master Land Use Plan was developed to analyze population trends, characteristics, and projections as well as to analyze the economic viability of commercial, industrial, and office land uses. This, combined with information gathered from citizen input, produced the goals and objectives put forth in the Master Land Use Plan.

The purpose of the existing Master Land Use Plan review was to identify areas where there may need to be adjustments made to reflect the current economic, physical, and demographic conditions within the City. The following are ten major critiques/observations from the review:

1. The stated principles within the 2006 Master Land Use Plan are solid, but need to be updated to reflect current realities (post-2008) and trends.

Current urban design best practices call for more strategic, short term, implementable initiatives. Tactical Urbanism and Lean Urbanism models produce greater short term results.

2. How does the Traditional Neighborhood Diagram (Duany-Platerzyberk, 1997) referenced on p.45 of the Master Land Use Plan, translate to an existing suburban retrofit condition?

The existing residential settlement pattern in Sterling Heights does not correspond to the Traditional Neighborhood Development pattern physically. There needs to be a synthesis between the existing suburban residential pattern and the grid and corridor oriented layout of the City as a whole.

3. Sub Area planning needs to be a significant part of enacting the Master Land Use Plan.

The Master Land Use Plan lays out a framework of development principles that are sound. Care must be taken to synthesize these principles into the existing context.

4. Variety of housing types are encouraged in the Master Land Use Plan.

Small square footage homes are encouraged. This ties into current trends to provide affordable housing options to market rate buyers in the post-recession economy. These housing options include multi-family, lofts, small single family, duplexes and mixed use.

5. The Master Land Use Plan on p.150 states "Concentrate commercial development in nodes as opposed to strips along major corridors".

This is a good beginning strategy, but it still separates areas into land use zones. Current placemaking strategies call for a mixture of uses within a concentrated area. The reorientation of development into more concentrated areas will help to create synergy between housing, retail, and commercial uses.

6. The Master Land Use Plan calls for a walkability survey. Has one been implemented?

Today, walkability is seen as a key driver for success in cities, neighborhoods, and districts. Understanding the pedestrian traffic flow throughout the City is a key determinant of the success of any placemaking efforts.

7. The Master Land Use Plan calls for 60-80% detached single family, 10-25% attached single family, and 10-25% apartments.

This should be revised to reflect the current demographic data and to attract varied clientele. Current trends in successful city districts indicate an inclination towards multi-family dwellings among people moving into mixed use areas.

8. P.67: "Transition" land use designation called for in the following locations: a) along major roads, but not intersections; b) where single family needs to be phased out (eg., Mound Rd.); and, c) existing commercial needing redevelopment.

There needs to be clarification as to the intent of this strategy. An important component of a successful Master Land Use Plan is its definitiveness. The closer the Master Land Use Plan comes to delineating the desired outcome, the greater the chance for its success.

9. Potential Intensity Change Areas (PICAs) and Major Redevelopment Opportunities

PICAs are generally in older commercial areas (eg.,Van Dyke/ 14 Mile Rd.) where an intensification of uses could significantly reposition the area for future success. This is a sound strategy, but the desired results need to be clearly articulated.

P.71 identifies Major Redevelopment Opportunities. These are typically in areas where there were large-scale developments that provide unique site opportunities. Examples were:

- Showcase Cinemas Site (15 Mile Road and Van Dyke Ave)
- Van Dyke between 16 and 16 1/2 Mile Roads
- Northeast corner of 14 Mile Road and Schoenherr Road

These types of opportunities (PICAs and MROs) provide the platform for the City to encourage transformative examples of what Sterling Heights can look like by applying current placemaking principles.

10. The 2005 Master Land Use Plan encourages the development of new neighborhoods.

This should be revised to encourage higher density neighborhoods. Nuance is a critical component to successful development in the current economic environment. The 2005 Master Land Use Plan also encourages creating a framework for future development in the City that focuses on the development of nodes focused on key intersections as opposed to linear strip commercial development.

## **Placemaking Analysis by Nodal Development**

The development of the urban design and placemaking component of this new Master Plan uses nodal development as a starting point for envisioning places that people will care about and that have the opportunity of attracting new demographics. The initial step in this process is the overall analysis of the City to identify key areas that have the potential of being significant examples of livability.

### ***Node Identification Framework***

The urban design and placemaking framework for the City will have the optimum possibility of being implemented if the criteria for identifying appropriate nodes is clear and concise. Some initial concepts that have been studied for the framework include:

#### Pedestrian Usage

Solving the continued problem of creating identifiable, pedestrian pathways, circulation and linkages is crucial to a healthy node. Enhancements to this part of the public realm can be solved in many different ways. The Master Plan would identify and look to uncover and strengthen these pathways.

#### Sense of Place

The feel of the node is important to its success. A strong Sense of Place in a node will enhance the ability to promote and market something that is unique to the surrounding communities. More importantly, it creates an atmosphere that encourages people to come to live, work and play.

#### Building on Existing Conditions

The single most important asset the City has is its existing infrastructure and buildings. To compete against the surrounding suburban development for housing, shopping and working environments, the City must retain and enhance its uniqueness.

#### Housing Types

The dwelling units are consistent with every node. However, there are certain elements that make for vibrant, walkable nodes with varied housing stock. An understanding of housing vernacular, types and methods of placement all contribute to achieving positive solutions. Appropriate residential developments need to be thoughtfully integrated into a solid redevelopment strategy.

### Green Spaces / Public Realm

Good sidewalks, convenient parks and unique gathering places can leave a lasting impression on a visitor to the node. Additionally, these public spaces will create comfort for the temporary or permanent resident of the City.

### Mixed Uses

A City is not considered truly healthy unless it can become a consistently active environment. A city of must have many different uses working in unison to create a true place. Some uses include daytime retail, commercial and office activity. After dark, uses may include nighttime retail, restaurants and entertainment. The residential population provides activity throughout the day, night and during weekends. A thorough understanding of this proper mix of uses is evident in many of the world's great urban areas. A strong urban design implementation plan will identify the means to achieve this mix.

### Mobility

Accessibility to the node is an important consideration to its long-term success. Ingress, egress, non-motorized systems, pedestrian accommodations, and parking concepts should be developed to enhance the pedestrian-oriented urban environment.

Access to transportation, appropriately designed streets, bike paths, entry and access points and their integration into the city are all part of successful urban conditions. The Project Team has extensively studied and has a thorough understanding of modes of circulation and how they work to enhance a City node.

This contextual overview notes the physical conditions of each node and contextual area. The environmental scan will be presented in clear, graphic form for ease of understanding and interpretation.

### **Node Identification**

Using base maps and field verification, the Project Team has prepared a conceptual framework for testing design concepts and improvements within 12 specifically identified nodes (Nodes A-L), along with the Lakeside Mall area. The locations of these nodes are shown on the **Node Identification Map**.

A visual survey of the conditions of buildings, amenities, and vacant lots within each node was conducted. This survey generally identifies elements that provide the node's character, potential linkages to adjacent community facilities and/or neighborhoods. It focuses on the physical elements that make or inhibit the node's pedestrian experience. This survey gives general impressions of the man-made and natural features, historic, cultural and recreational resources, land use and open space patterns, circulation and parking opportunities and constraints of a given node and leads to the development of the overall framework.

Hold page for Node Identification Map

For each area of study or potential nodal point, an observation and analysis was undertaken to determine its ability to accommodate placemaking elements. These potential nodal points within the City were examined considering the following development conditions.

#### Infrastructure

- walkability - sidewalks and pedestrian crossings
- streets- widths, amount of travel lanes
- parking conditions- on-street, surface, public, private, shared
- landscape conditions – grass, trees, vegetation
- complete Streets – auto, pedestrian, non-motorized, transit

#### Building Types

- number of floors - one, two, three
- Materials – brick, stone. Concrete, wood, established vernacular
- connection to the street – setback, proximity, frontage

#### Land Use

- parking lots – size, location, connected or isolated
- mixed-use, commercial, residential, institutional, governmental, cultural, etc.
- natural elements – rivers, lakes, forests, ravines, etc.
- density – amount of residents, workers, daily users within the area throughout the day.

#### Context/Adjacencies

- Surrounding physical forms, uses and conditions
  - residential, commercial, institutional, residential

#### Connections and Linkages

- automobile connections/ driving to other nodal points
- pedestrian paths, passageways
- non-motorized activities – link to adjacent communities and county paths
- proximity, distance to nodes and Places

### **Criteria for Judging the Capability of a Node to Support Placemaking**

In order to support placemaking enhancements, a nodal development area should have at least three of these qualities:

1. Proximity to community/government services
2. Proximity to public amenities
3. Proximity to transportation networks including multi-use trails and/or mass transit
4. Sufficient surrounding residential population or commercial facilities
5. Available physical space to accommodate catalytic projects
6. Ability to have both sides of a street engaged in creating "place"
7. Ability accommodate various modes of transportation including autos, transit, bicyclers and pedestrians
8. Ability to become a mixed-use zone within a walkable pedestrian shed (approximately 1/4 mile in each direction)

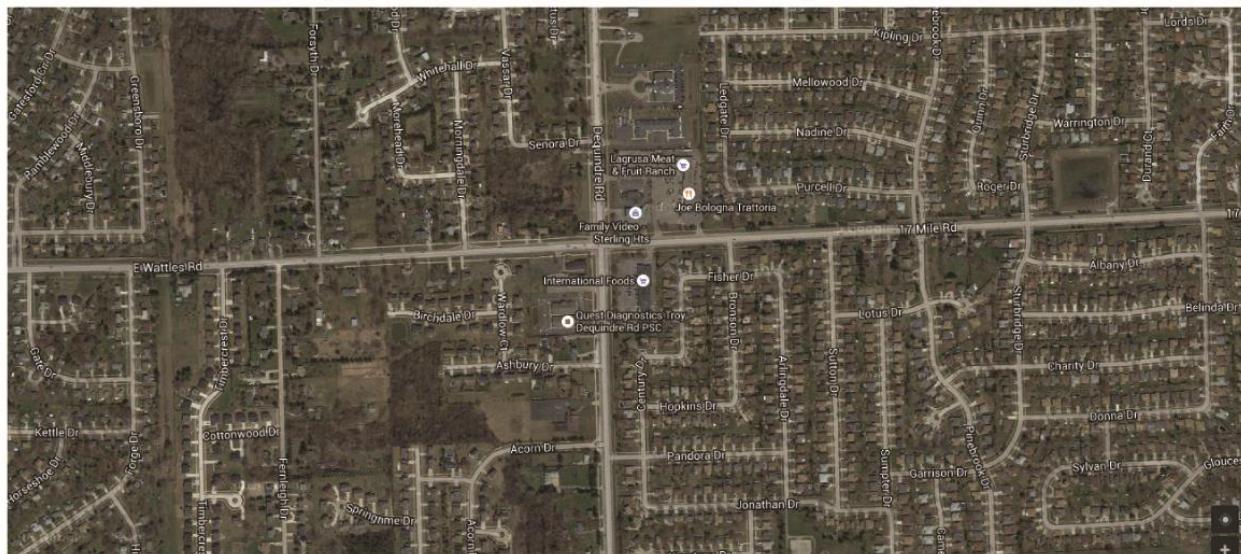
### **General Node Observations**

The following are general observations that are fundamentally applicable to most of the defined study nodes:

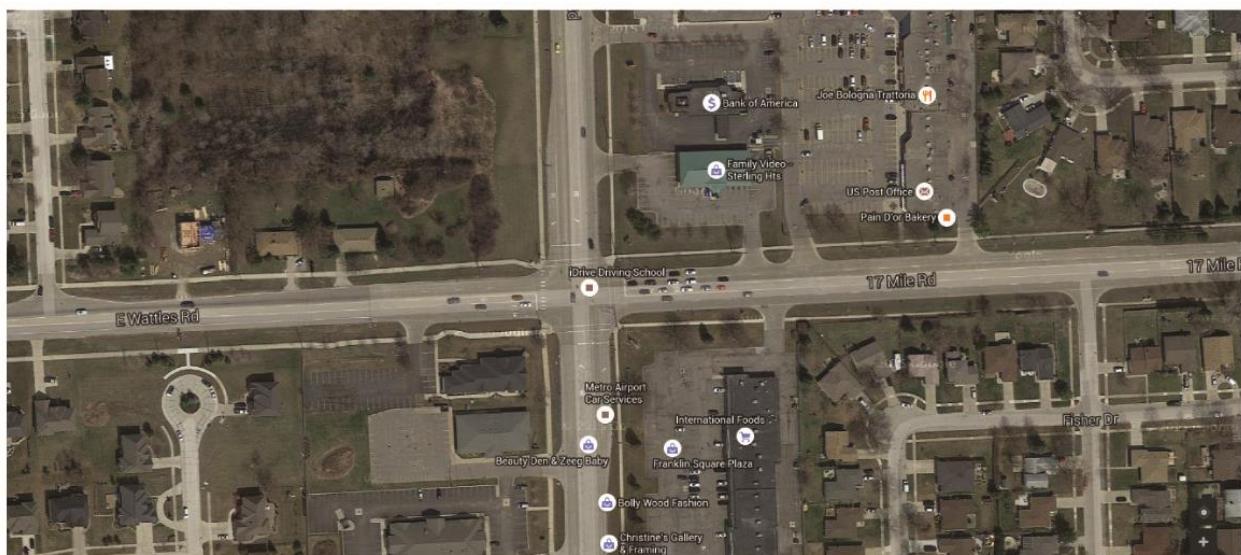
1. Buildings are set back too far from the sidewalk and street and inconsistently aligned.
2. Sidewalks exist in most areas but are rarely connected to the entry areas of commercial and institutional buildings.
3. Parking lots are typically excessive in size and non-pedestrian oriented in their design and layout.
4. Most non-residential development areas consist of singular use, one-story structures. There is minimal density and scale.
5. Existing structures do not work together as a collective, cohesive district. There is a lack of collaboration and connection regarding the use of materials, size, aesthetics, signage, vehicular and pedestrian accommodations.
6. Most potential nodes have some level of vegetation, trees, grass, landscaping, etc. In many areas there is a significant amount of greenspace. However, there is a lack of the collective vegetation working together as a unit. There is potential to collaborate on these greenspaces and formulate a comprehensive asset for the focal point area.
7. Most potential nodes, which include commercial and business uses, are adjacent to a significant amount of single family and multi-unit residential as well as natural assets. However, their connections and linkage, from a pedestrian and vehicular perspective are largely incidental and unintentional.

Our analysis of each node is presented in the following pages.

## Node Analyses: Node A (17 Mile @ Dequindre)



Site Area - 17 Mile and Dequindre



Site Area - 17 Mile and Dequindre

### Overview:

The area is centered around by commercial and retail development.

The existing strip retail shopping center is in need of updating/ redevelopment to become more efficient.

The single-access, single-use commercial businesses are not the highest and best use scenarios for this area.

## Opportunities

The existing neighborhood commercial amenities formulate a base of a mixed-use district that can be further developed. The location provides solid access from the adjacent areas. Within a short, comfortable walk there is an adequate supply of single-family residential units to the east that can support efforts to intensify development.

## Challenges

The Right Of Way at this location is 120'. This creates long pedestrian crossings in the east/west and north/ south directions of the area. The commercial buildings at the intersection are set back from the sidewalk and pedestrian area. This makes it more difficult for the land uses on all four corners to work as a collective district.



Site Area

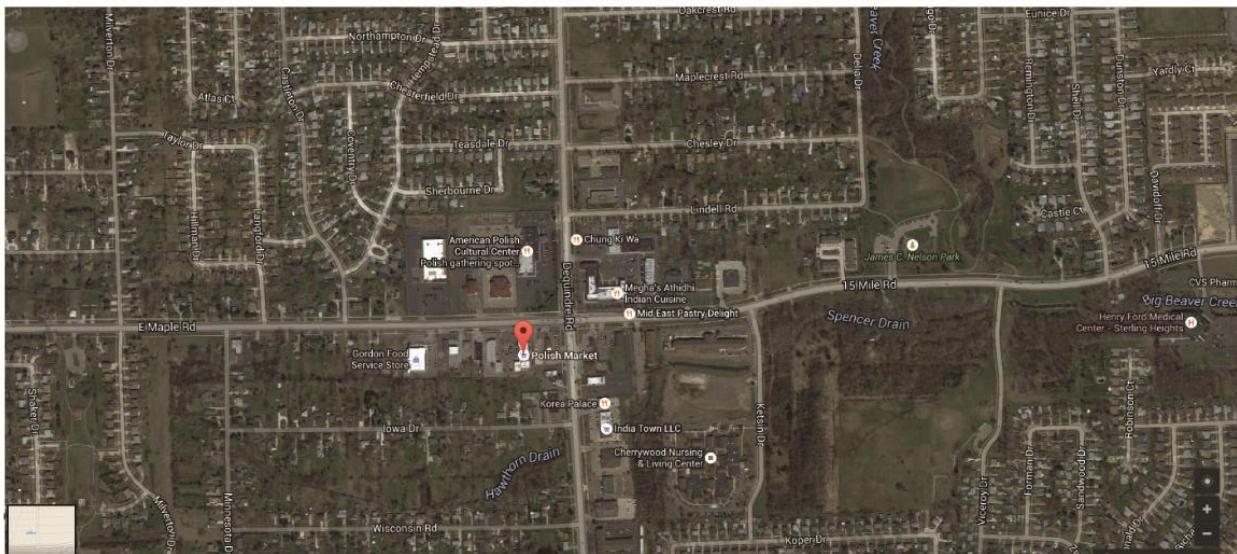


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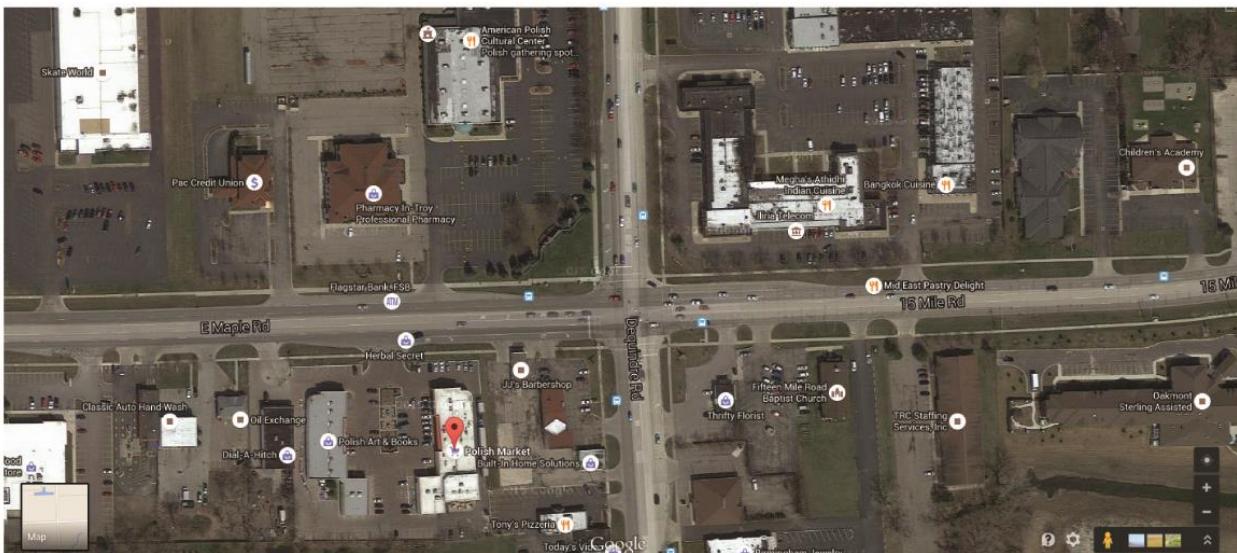


Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node B (15 Mile @ Dequindre)



Site Area - 15 Mile and Dequindre



Site Area - 15 Mile and Dequindre

### Overview:

The area contains commercial, cultural, and retail facilities. The Polish Cultural Center and the Polish Market standout as significant attractive amenities in the area.

## Opportunities

Within walking distance of the node there is significant residential development that could support a placemaking vision centered around the two cultural amenities. The area's distinctive ethnic/cultural elements can be of value in regards to further establishing this as a unique Place.

## Challenges

One of the evident challenges of the area is the fact that the majority of the existing built form is relatively recently constructed. From a timing and priority standpoint, this could be a reason for reluctance to transform this zone.



Site Area



Site Area

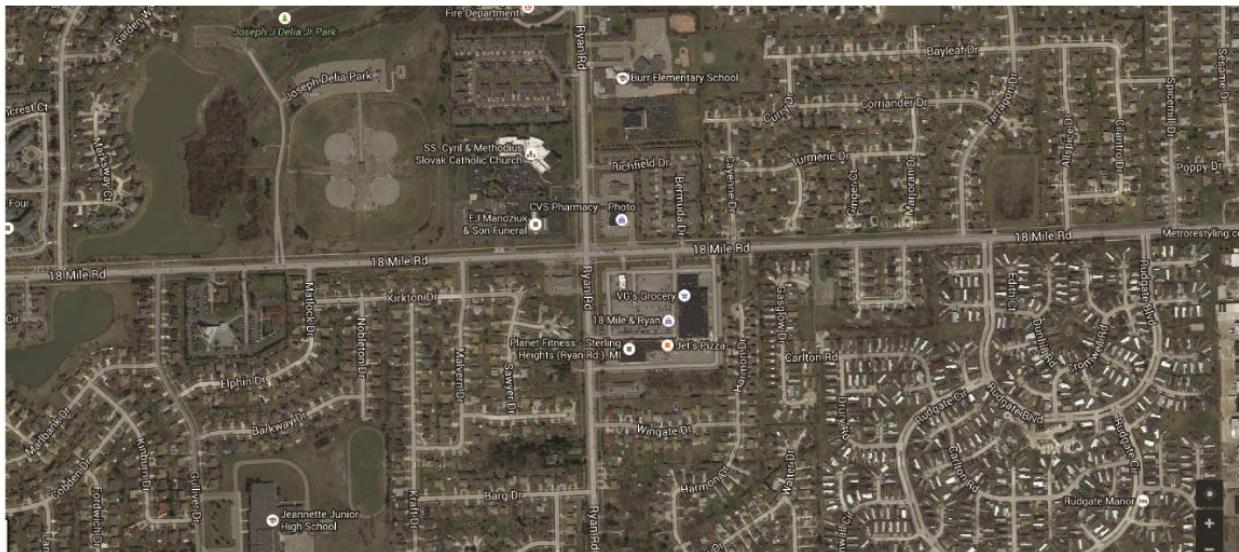


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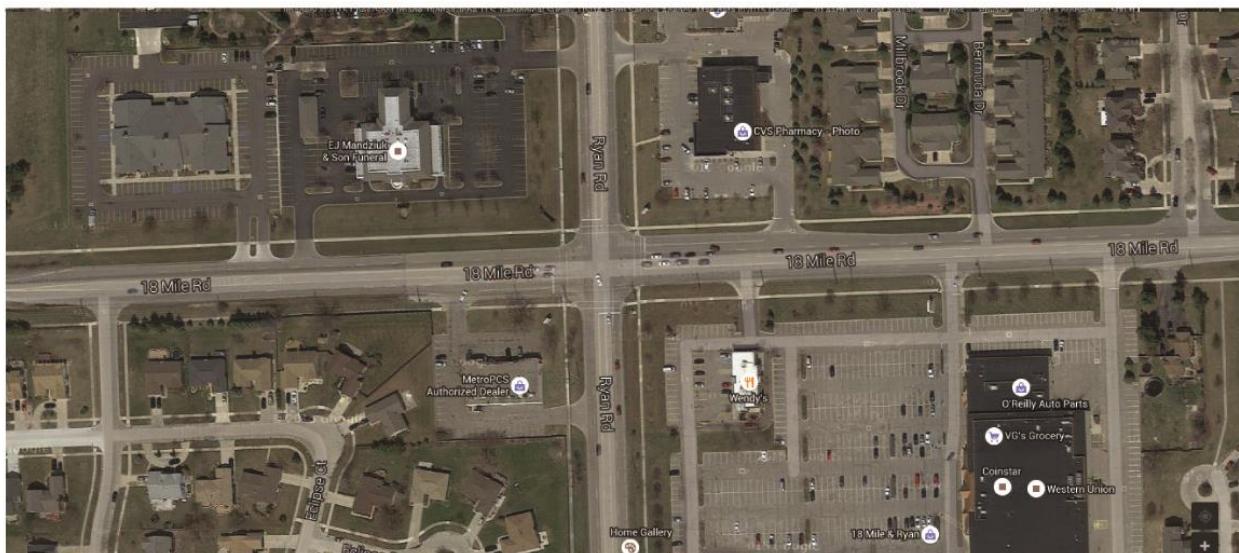


Site Area

## **Node Analyses: Node C (18 Mile @ Ryan)**



## Site Area - 18 Mile and Ryan



## Site Area - 18 Mile and Ryan

## Overview:

The area is dominated by a commercial and retail development.

There exists small and large strip retail shopping developments and freestanding commercial businesses.

These cities small and large strip mall shopping developments are becoming a fixture in the business.

Significant parking areas, especially for the southwest corner strip mall, likely more than currently required.

## Opportunities

The location is easily accessible from adjacent residential areas based on an analysis of walkability. There is a sizable amount of single-family residential units in the surrounding area that could support efforts to intensify development.

The possible excessive parking around the intersection may allow for new development sites for infill projects that would add to the potential mixed-use district.

## Challenges

The Right of Way at this location is 120'. This creates long pedestrian crossings in the east/west and north/ south directions. Large parking lots and excessive building set-backs decrease the walkability of the overall area.



Site Area



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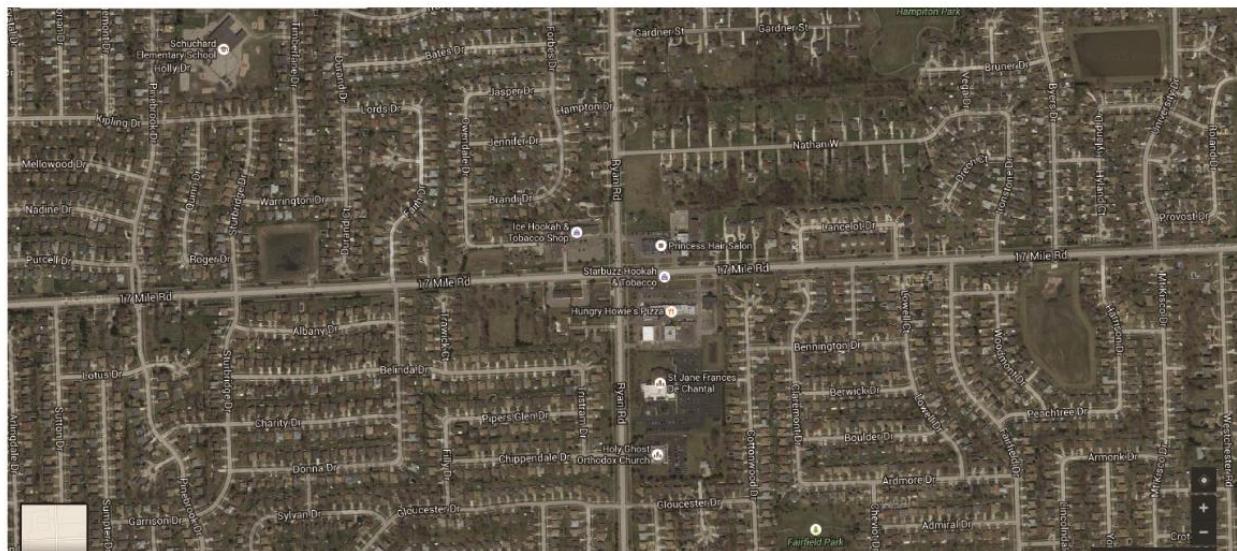


Site Area



Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node D (17 Mile @ Ryan)



Site Area - 17 Mile and Ryan



Site Area - 17 Mile and Ryan

### Overview:

There is a considerable amount of commercial development at all four of the corners of the intersection. Additionally, there is a large amount of underutilized and under-maintained commercial properties within this zone. Existing sidewalks at the intersection connect the commercial uses with a substantial amount of single-family housing.

## Opportunities

Within walking distance (1/4 mile radius from the intersection) there is a sizable amount of single-family residential uses. The commercial development, if reinvigorated, could generate increased amounts of activity. The parking area also provides opportunities for increased density and further mixed-use development.

Wide and multi-lane streets create a possibility for creative traffic calming and a pedestrian refuge. These measures are important to ease the pedestrian crossing effort in all directions.

## Challenges

The Right of Way at this location is 120' and the set-backs for the commercial buildings are significant. This distance from the sidewalk to the buildings and the lack of pedestrian connections inhibits walkability.



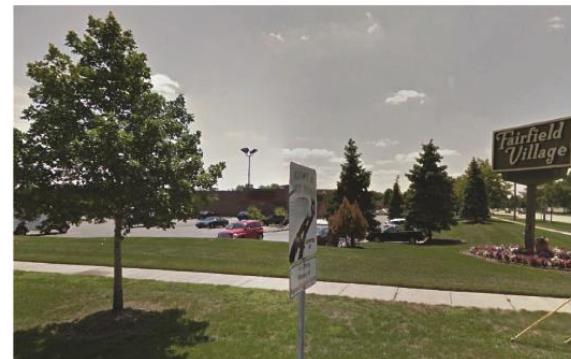
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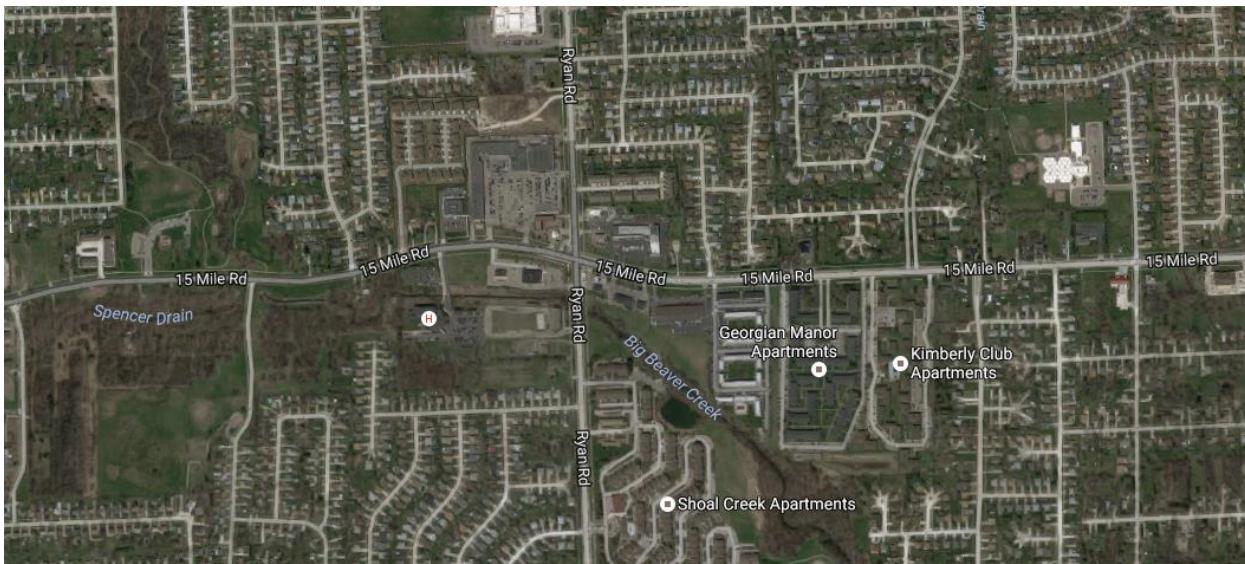


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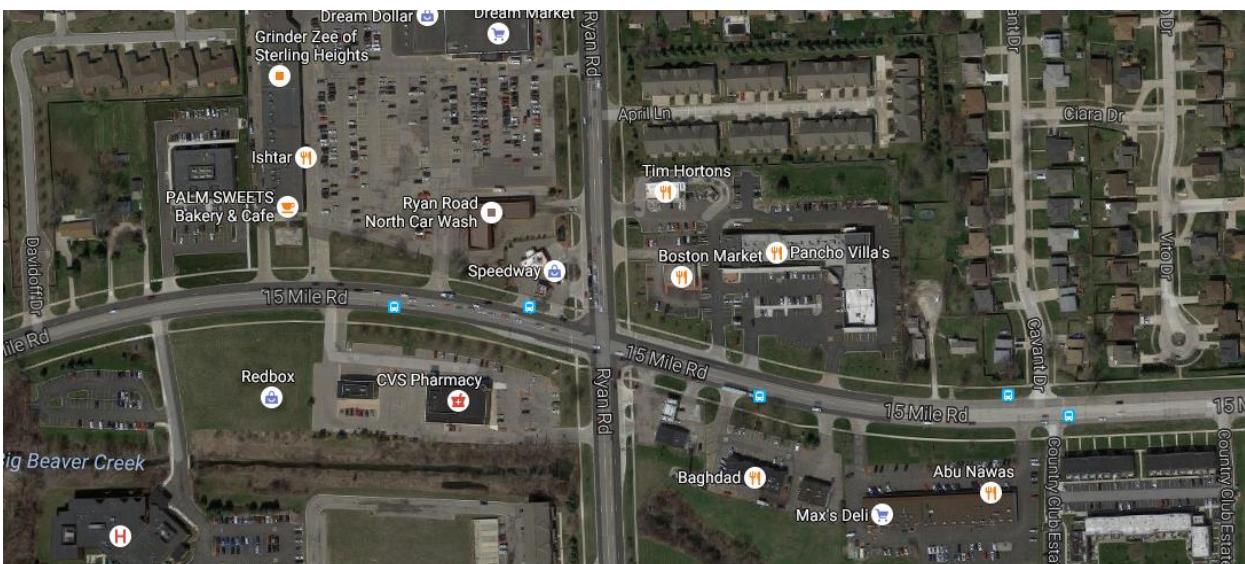


Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node E (15 Mile @ Ryan)



Site Area – 15 Mile and Ryan



Site Area – 15 Mile and Ryan

### Overview:

This node features established commercial development at each corner, consisting of a combination of strip commercial shopping centers and stand-alone developments. However, beyond the immediate corner properties, several opportunities do exist for new development on vacant sites. The commercial node is bordered on all sides by established residential development, generally transitioning from adjacent higher density multiple-family development to lower density single-family development.

## Opportunities

Within walking distance (1/4 mile radius from the intersection), there is a sizeable amount of multiple-family development and single-family neighborhoods. Existing commercial development, if reinvigorated, could generate increased amount of activity. The shopping center at the northwest corner of this node features a sizeable parking lot which could accommodate new commercial development pads along the street frontages.

Wide and multi-lane streets create a possibility for creative traffic calming and a pedestrian refuge. These measures are important to ease the pedestrian crossing effort in all directions.

## Challenges

The right of way width for both Ryan Road and 15 Mile Road at this node is considerable (120') and the setbacks for the commercial buildings are significant. This distance from the sidewalk to the buildings and the lack of pedestrian connections inhibits walkability.



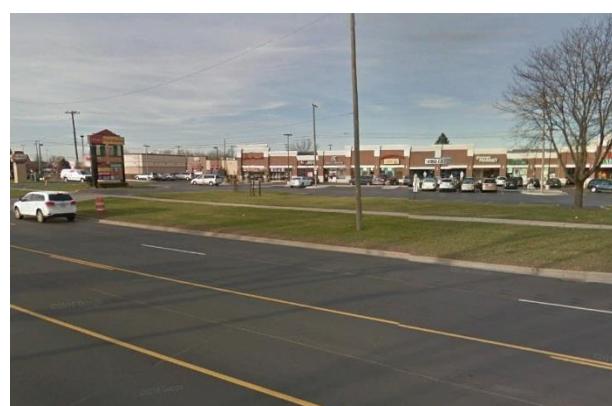
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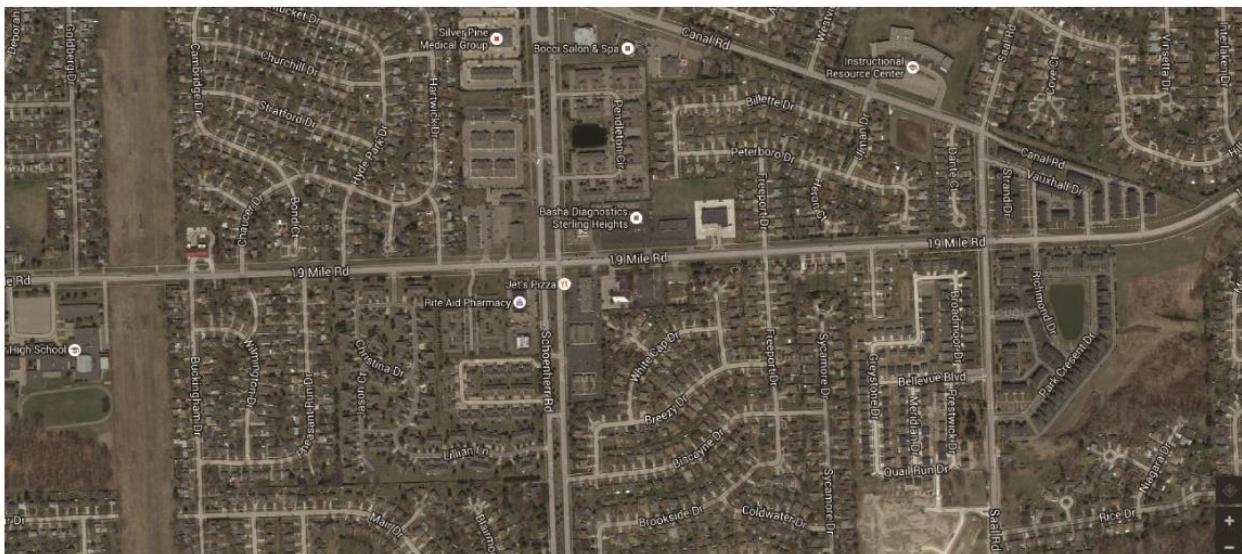


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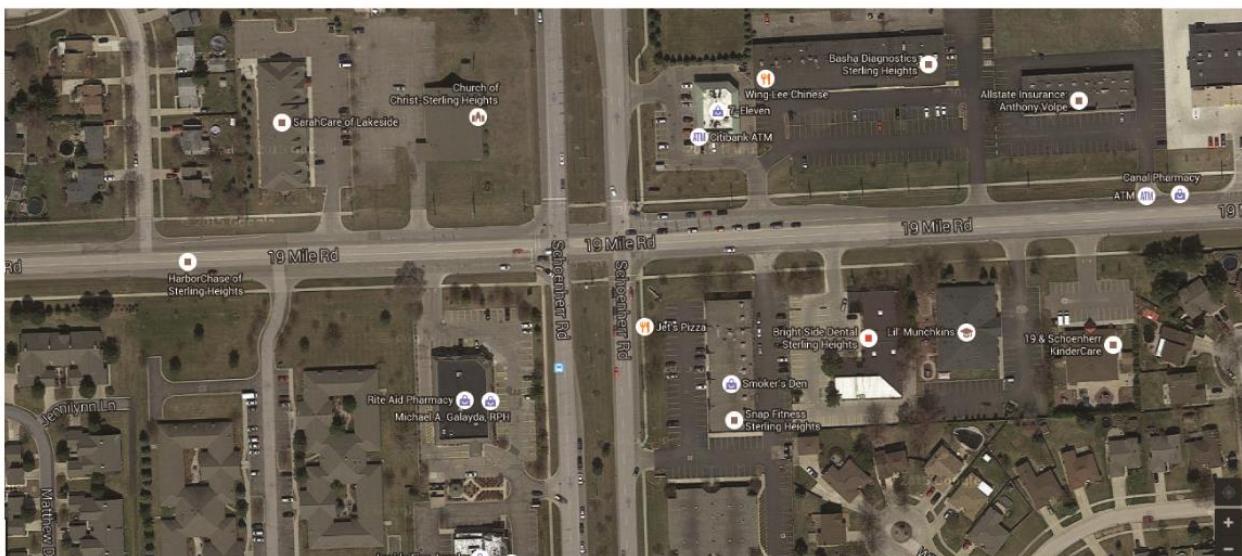


Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node F (19 Mile @ Schoenherr)



Site Area - 19 and Schoenherr



Site Area - 19 and Schoenherr

### Overview:

The area contains residential, commercial, and retail facilities. The area has close proximity to Lakeside Mall as well as the M-59 corridor.

## Opportunities

The location provides good access based on an analysis of walkability. Within the typical pedestrian shed (1/4 mile radius from the intersection) there is an adequate amount of residential development that could support a unique core of activity. Its proximity to Lakeside Mall and the retail along M-59 could allow it to attract newer commercial and office tenants.

## Challenges

An important consideration is the possible reluctance to rethink a relatively active intersection. The emphasis, currently, is on auto-oriented access. In order to be truly successful, the area must be re-envisioned to accommodate pedestrian and non-motorized access.



Site Area



Site Area



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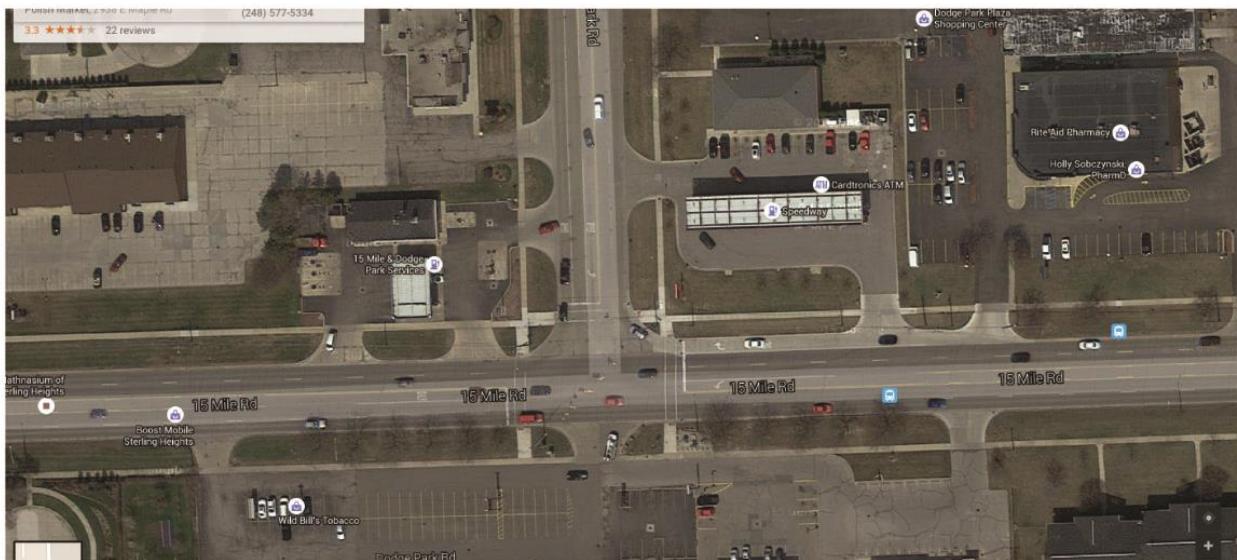


Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node G (15 Mile @ Dodge Park)



Site Area - 15 Mile and Dodge Park



Site Area - 15 Mile and Dodge Park

### Overview:

The area has a unique collection of structures that extend northward from the intersection. There are significant amounts of commercial structures within the zone. The unique three-way intersection has less traffic than the typical intersections within the city.

## Opportunities.

The location provides fair access based on an analysis of walkability. Within the typical pedestrian shed (1/4 mile radius from the intersection) there is a sufficient amount of single-family residential development that can benefit from a more walkable core at this node.

There are buildings along Dodge Park Rd., north of the intersection, that address the street with outdoor seating and pedestrian connections to the existing sidewalks. This condition could provide a successful precedent and aid in enhancing this unique node. Small-scale, strategic moves are critical in this type of area to capitalize on its potential.

## Challenges

The major challenge in this area may be a lack of priority to promote quick, small-scale improvements that set the stage for a complete overhaul of the environment because, currently, it functions well.



Site Area



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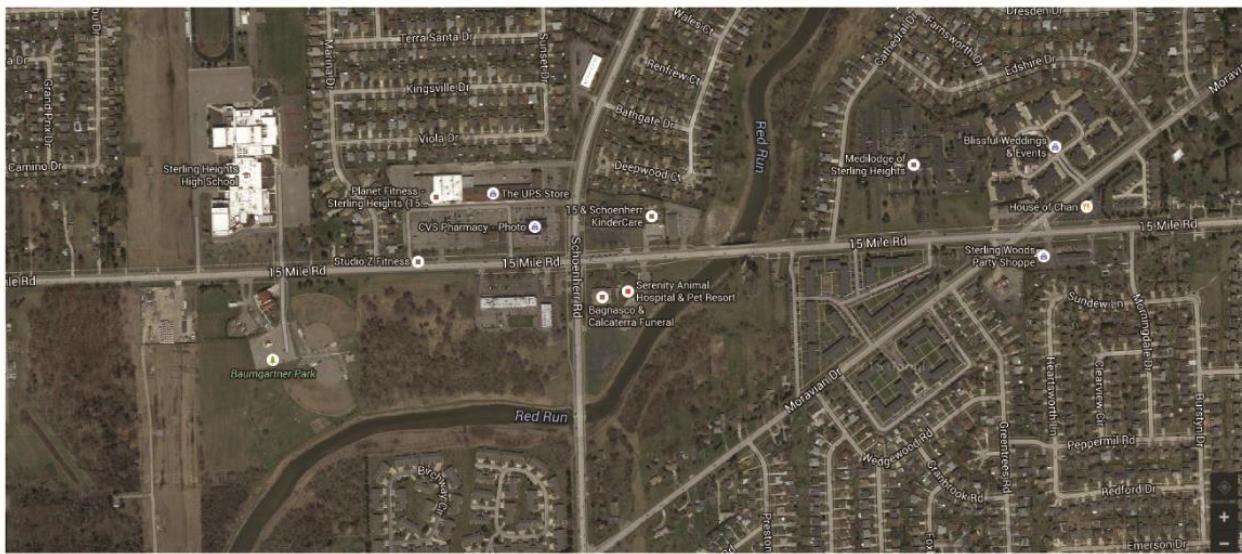


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## Node Analyses: Node H (15 Mile @ Schoenherr)



Site Area - 15 Mile and Schoenherr



Site Area - 15 Mile and Schoenherr

### Overview:

The area has predominantly commercial and retail facilities. It is adjacent to the Red Run Creek

## Opportunities

Within the typical pedestrian shed (1/4 mile radius from the intersection) there is a large amount of open and underutilized space that can be repositioned for future development. There are ample opportunities to create mixed use developments that would change the character of this area.

The adjacency to Red Run Creek provides the opportunity for a unique recreational asset if this area is intensified. This public amenity could become the focal point of this reenvisioned node.

## Challenges

There is a small amount of residential in the surrounding area. This location has poor access from the adjacent residential area based on an analysis of walkability and access criteria. Large scale infrastructural elements such as the Red Run Creek and Sterling Heights High School create a barrier to adjacent residential to the west and south. This creates longer pedestrian travel distances to and from the node.



Site Area



Site Area

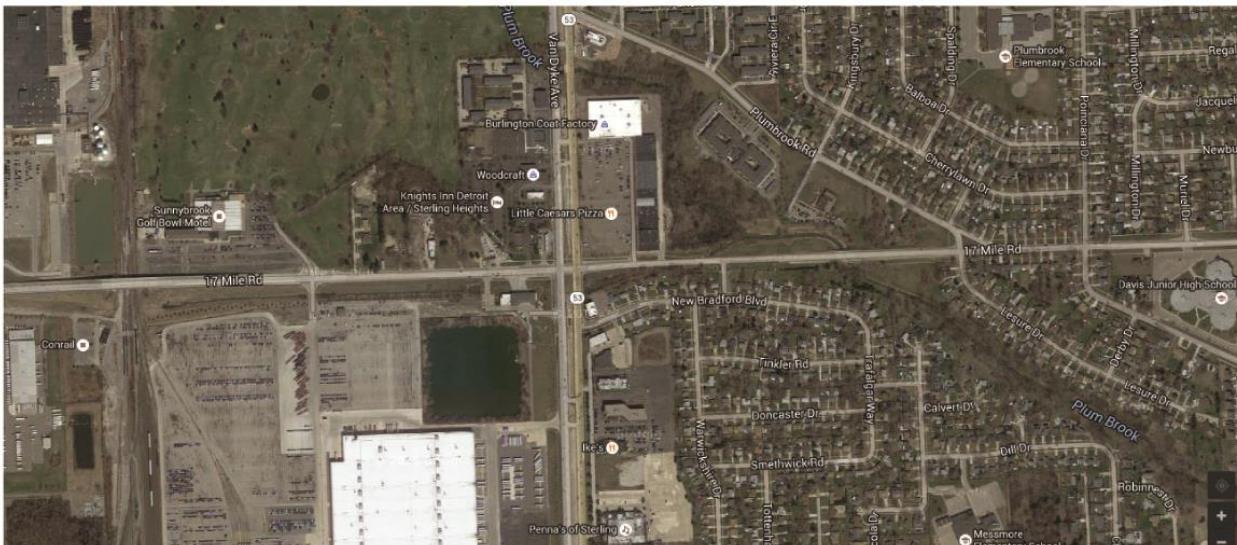


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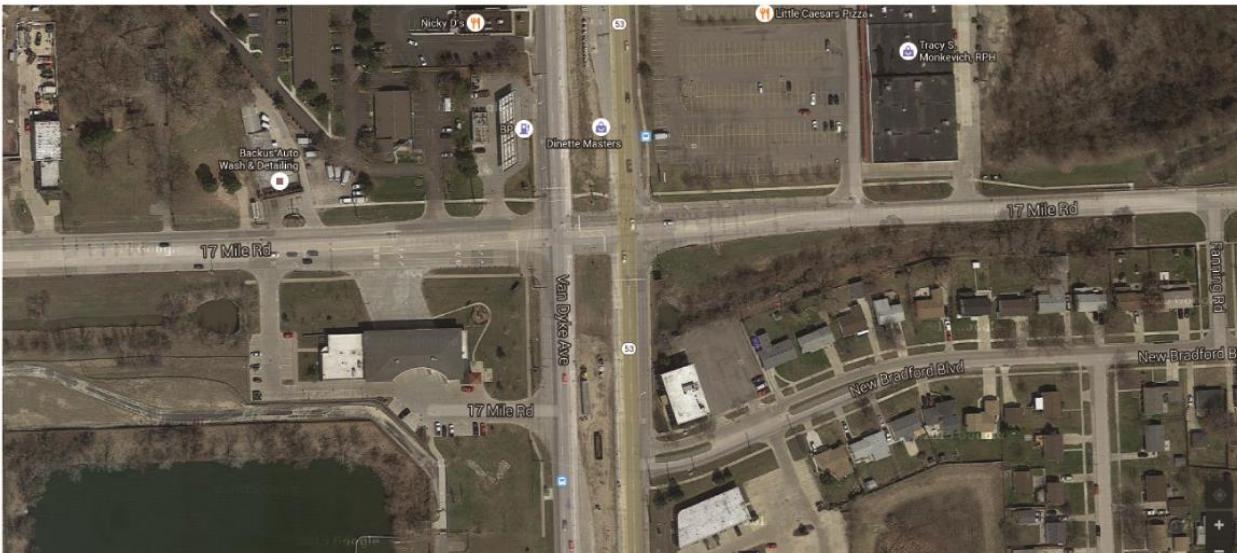


Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node I (17 Mile @ Van Dyke)



Site Area - 17 Mile and Van Dyke



Site Area - 17 Mile and Van Dyke

### Overview:

The area is dominated by a mixture of separated uses. There exists strip retail shopping, freestanding commercial businesses, office development, community facilities, industrial facilities, and access to an adjacent golf course.

## Opportunities

The location is largely pedestrian-accessible based on an analysis of walkability. Within the typical pedestrian shed (1/4 mile radius from the intersection) there is a sizable amount of residential that could support the development of this node.

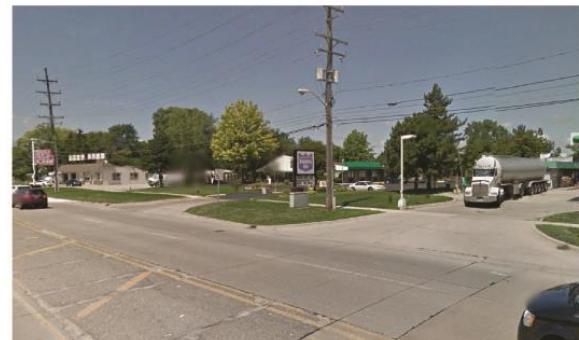
The node also contains a variety of uses that could make its transition to a mixed-use district a logical outcome of enhancement efforts.

## Challenges

Each of the uses in the area would need to be significantly upgraded. This presents issues regarding the timing and priorities if this area is slated for redevelopment.



Site Area



Site Area

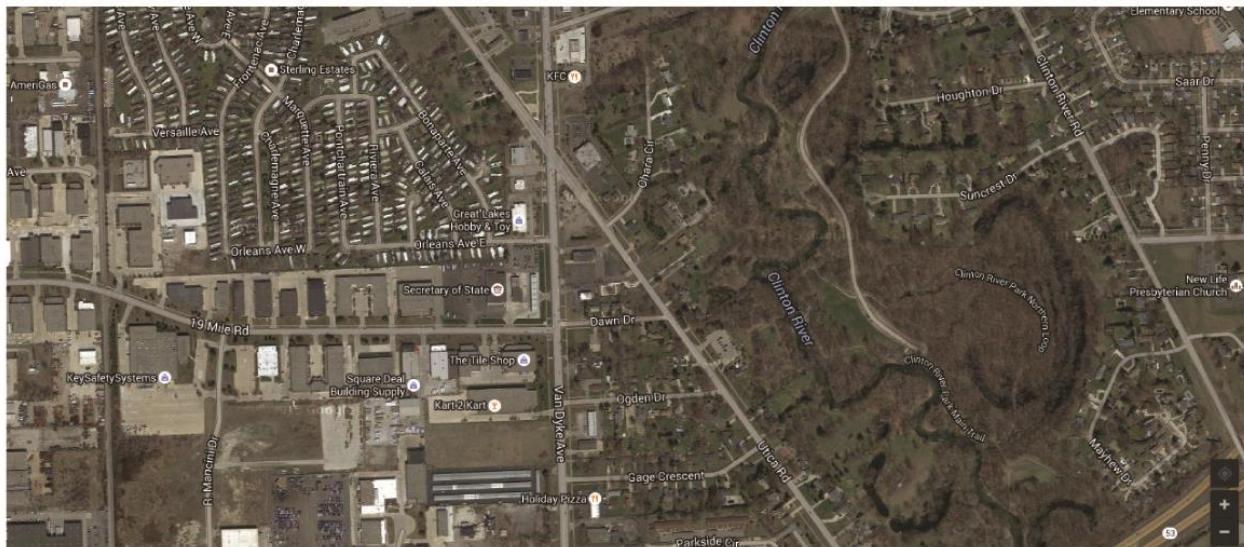


Site Area



Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node J (19 Mile/Utica/Van Dyke)



Site Area - 19 Mile and Van Dyke



Site Area - 19 Mile and Van Dyke

### Overview:

The area is a primary traffic intersection with Van Dyke Rd. being one of the more heavily traveled roads. There is also a high amount of underutilized commercial property within this zone.

## Opportunities

The location provides adequate access from adjacent areas based on an analysis of walkability. Within the typical pedestrian shed (1/4 mile radius from the intersection) there is a limited amount of single-family residential use nearby, however, specifically from the west. Commercial and industrial development is adjacent making this a higher level of mixed land use area than most. Therefore, a refocused district could be successful because of its distinctive place within the city.

The Clinton River and natural features are in close proximity.

## Challenges

The significant amount of north/ south traffic at this intersection may make it difficult to create a pedestrian-focused environment.



Site Area



Site Area

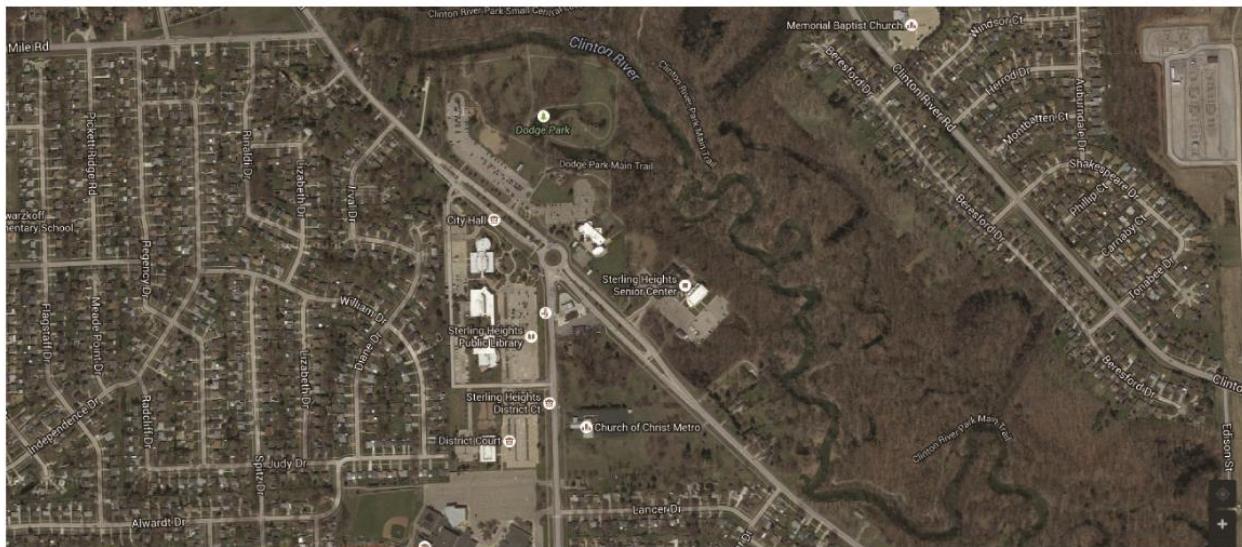


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Site Area

## Node Analyses: Node K (Utica @ Dodge Park)



Site Area - Utica Road and Dodge Park



Site Area - Utica Road and Dodge Park

### Overview:

This is the Civic Center area and its main focus is the Municipal center and the courts.

## Opportunities

The location provides strong access based on an analysis of walkability to and from the area. Direct access to Clinton River system from this location is an excellent asset and gives it unique character. There is an ample amount of land that could be dedicated towards providing infill opportunities for development that will add a mix of uses to the area. Along with the municipal uses, these areas could provide for unique housing/ mixed use opportunities, creating a true “city center”.

## Challenges

Land assembly may be an issue if there are other significant landowners besides the city of Sterling Heights. An additional challenge may be the need to incorporate easier pedestrian crossing around the traffic circle. Currently, this roundabout is geared towards traffic flow only. If the area is to become intensified, more attention should be placed on pedestrian accommodations.



Site Area



Site Area

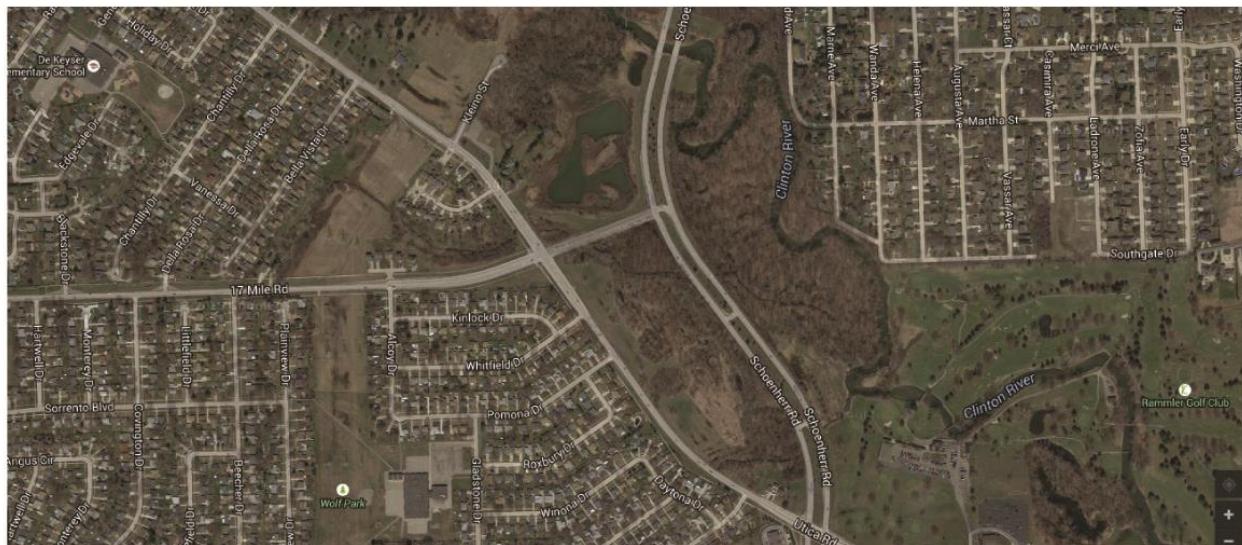


Site Area



Site Area

## **Node Analyses: Node L (17 Mile @ Utica)**



Site Area - 17 Mile and Utica Road



Site Area - 17 Mile and Utica Road

## Overview:

The area's principal characteristics are defined by The Clinton River system, Utica Road, and large amounts of open space.

## Opportunities

The location provides access to the natural elements based on an analysis of walkability. There is a limited amount of residential development to the west and east that is connected to a potentially active node. The Clinton River Trail is a significant asset that currently is disconnected from the adjacent residential areas. A potential connection would greatly enhance the quality of this node.

## Challenges

A consideration is the possible reluctance to reduce the amount of natural or introduce any type of built form into open/ green space. The current emphasis is on auto-oriented access, less pedestrian orientation. Potential new models and best practices would need to emphasize sensitive, low scale mixed-use development.



Site Area



Site Area



Site Area



Site Area

# Analysis of City Improvement Plans and Funding Programs

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## Corridor Improvement Authority

On August 15, 2006 the City Council adopted an ordinance establishing a Corridor Improvement Authority and appointed board members for the District ("District"). The District is located in the north central portion of Sterling Heights and includes properties bordering Van Dyke Road between 18 1/2 Mile Road to the north City limit and along Utica Road between Van Dyke Road and Triangle Drive.

Among the primary goals of the CIA for the District are:

- Enhancement of public spaces within the District;
- Delineation of the District through a consistent theme/style along District right of way;
- Provision of a unified building style to be implemented through development and re-development of properties within the District; and,
- Economic growth and increased property values.

The Development Plan outlines the improvements proposed within the District and the Tax Increment Finance Plan identifies the funding mechanism to be utilized to finance the proposed improvements. Streetscape Design Guidelines have been prepared for the District. The guidelines include select specifications for paving, decorative lighting, site furnishings and landscaping. These amenities are intended to be constructed within the Van Dyke Road and Utica Road right of way as well as on private property as part of future development and redevelopment within the District.

The amenities planned for the District include:

- Colored/stamped concrete;
- Decorative lighting with banners;
- Brick pillars and fencing; and,
- Landscaping.

The Development Plan also includes potential façade improvements with selected styles and material specifications, access management improvements, property acquisition, floodplain/wetland mitigation, park space improvements, general infrastructure improvements and a business recruitment and retention program.

The Tax Increment Financing Plan (TIF Plan) has been prepared utilizing a base year (2006) taxable value for the District of \$28,182,500. Property value growth is calculated based on an annual inflationary growth and new investment in the District. Over the twenty-year development period, the estimated incremental tax revenues generated within the District is \$5,506,721.

It is the intent of the City and the CIA to finance the proposed projects from incremental tax revenues generated and captured from within the District. At this time, there are no plans for a District-wide special assessment. The CIA will be pursuing grants to help cover a portion of the streetscape project. Development Plan

## Consolidated Plan

Sterling Heights is a participating member of the Macomb HOME Consortium and participates in the Consortium's Consolidated Planning Process. The Consolidated Plan identifies the five-year

programmatic goals, and activities for the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) for Macomb County HOME Consortium. The Urban County of Macomb is comprised of 21 local units of government. The Macomb HOME Consortium, comprised of the Urban County of Macomb, the Charter Township of Clinton, and the Cities of Roseville and Sterling Heights has prepared this Consolidated Plan (Plan), in order to qualify for CDBG, HOME, and other formula program funding administered by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The Consolidated Plan is effective from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019.

In sum, the Macomb HOME Consortium has undertaken housing and community development programs for decades. It has repaired homes, promoted transitional housing, helped developmentally-disabled adults find adequate housing and achieve independence, constructed, improved and or expanded public facilities including parks and senior centers, constructed or improved streets, sidewalks and water and sewer facilities, and provided human services to address LMI needs. The 2014-2019 plan will continue, expand, and reinforce these accomplishments. The Annual Action Plan outlines the specific annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) spending that will be allocated to each project and how each meets the objectives described in the Consolidated Plan.

Sterling Heights embraces the objectives identified in the 2014 to 2019 Macomb HOME Consortium Consolidated Plan. The Consortium and its individual members expect to address each of these objectives during the life of this Plan.

### ***Objectives:***

#### *Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure*

Community and stakeholder feedback indicate a need for public works and improvements throughout the County. The public demands that facilities and infrastructure be maintained and installed as appropriate to meet existing and increased needs. This Plan will focus on maintaining and improving existing (and creating new) public facilities and improvements that primarily serve LMI people, or which are located in blighted neighborhoods.

#### *Make Available Appropriate Housing*

The maintenance and preservation of housing for all residents but particularly affordable housing for LMI owners and renters is a high priority of this Plan. Newly homeless, and at-risk, families require assistance to maintain their dignity and preserve what has become a tenuous grip in the economic mainstream. Families face economic uncertainty due to stagnant or declining incomes resulting from un- or under-employment, plus losses of health and other benefits. These families, too, are at risk.

#### *Address the Needs of the Homeless and At-Risk Families*

Homelessness is increasing in Macomb County. The January 2013 Point-in-Time survey conducted by the Macomb Homeless Coalition counted 988 homeless individuals and family members were found in Macomb County shelters, vehicles, hotels, and on the streets. This figure excludes those who are sporadically homeless, temporarily housed, illegally squatting in foreclosed properties, or who have special needs. The result is an undercount, and possibly inadequate support systems.

#### *Provide and Expand Human Services*

Community and stakeholder feedback also indicate a strong need for improved human services, particularly as they relate to individuals and families made homeless, or who risk homelessness due to

job loss or underemployment. Those affected spend inordinate amounts of time seeking essential services only to find them not offered or inaccessible. Municipal resources are overextended, despite the compelling need to serve these people.

#### *Foster Economic Development*

Economic development, job creation, and business attraction and retention continue to be a priority for Macomb County residents. Public Engagement conducted for this plan noted the need work to eliminate blight in low-income areas and the retail/commercial clusters that serve them. Macomb County is still recovering from a period of severe recession. As a result, many families are still unemployed or face unemployment.

#### *Address Post-Foreclosure Housing Crisis Needs*

The 2009 plan noted 11,000 foreclosures in Macomb County between 2005 and 2008.

#### *Expand Comprehensive Planning, Management and Capacity*

We need be able to effectively anticipate and address the rapidly changing economic, social and demographic environment in the County.

### **Strategic Plan and Implementation**

Sterling Heights is expected to receive an average of approximately \$692,850 in federal funding each year, over the next five years, through Community Development Block Grant. These federal funds will be used to address the following priority needs identified by the HOME Consortium:

- Housing Rehabilitation/New Construction
- Rental Housing
- Down-payment Assistance
- Accessibility/Barrier Free Improvements
- Energy Efficiency Improvements
- Property Acquisition/Resale/Rehab
- Code Enforcement
- Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities
- Street, Sidewalk, Water/Sewer Improvements
- Demolition, Clearance and Remediation
- Local and Regional Planning
- Transportation Services
- Senior and Youth Facilities and Services
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Emergency Shelters/Transitional Housing
- Support Services
- Fair Housing
- Food Bank Services
- Economic Development
- Historic Rehabilitation and Preservation

Addressing these needs will assist the Sterling Heights in achieving the overall housing and community development goals of:

1. Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure
2. Make Available Appropriate Housing

3. Address the Needs of Homeless & At-Risk Families
4. Provide and Expand Human Services
5. Address Post-Foreclosure Housing Crisis Needs
6. Expand Comprehensive Planning, Management and Capacity

### **Geographic Areas of Priority**

Sterling Heights has not officially established a Geographic Priority Areas in the 2014 to 2019 planning cycle. The City identified the following potential Geographic Priority Areas to be evaluated in future plans: Potential geographic priority areas in Sterling Heights include the Low-Mod Census tracts.

### **High Priority Projects**

1. Housing Rehabilitation. Provide assistance to low-mod homeowners to complete necessary repairs.
2. Rental Housing. Provide adequate rental housing for low income persons and families.
3. Property Acquisition/Rehab/Resale. Acquire, rehabilitate, and resell properties to support low income residents. Senior and Youth Facilities and Services. Continue and improve programs and facilities that serve seniors and eligible youth.
4. Permanent Supportive Housing. Support Homeless prevention and rapid re-housing.
5. Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing. Provide housing and shelter opportunity to populations in need.
6. Supportive Services. Provide services and access to public resources for low income residents.

### **Low Priority Projects**

1. Down Payment Assistance. Provide down payment assistance to income eligible homebuyers.
2. Accessibility/Barrier Free Improvements. Improve accessibility for low-income residents.
3. Energy Efficiency Improvements. Create opportunities for energy efficiency improvements that improve low income resident housing.
4. Code Enforcement. Improve and continue code enforcement activities in low income neighborhoods.
5. Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities. Develop public facilities to improve quality of life for low income residents and in low income neighborhoods.
6. Streets, Sidewalk, Water/Sewer Improvements. Address infrastructure needs for low income residents and in low income neighborhoods.
7. Demolition, Clearance, Remediation. Demo blighted properties.
8. Local and Regional Planning. Improve planning for regional coordination of housing and community development activities.
9. Transportation Services. Improve transportation for low-income residents.
10. Fair Housing. Promote access to housing for all residents that qualify.
11. Food Bank Services. Provide food access services and programs to support low income residents.
12. Economic Development. Enhance economic development activities and provide job training opportunities.
13. Historic Rehabilitation and Preservation. Address blighted historic properties.
14. Urgent Need. Provide resources to communities that lack the resources to address eligible urgent needs.
15. New Construction Housing. Provide assistance to low-mod income residents to support new housing opportunities.

## **Service Delivery**

Sterling Heights has excellent administrative capacity, with capable staff, excellent relationships with communities and non-governmental entities, and innovative programs. In addition to positive relationships with communities, the Consortium maintain open lines of communication with the CoC and many other non-profits servicing Macomb County low-income residents. The gaps in the institutional delivery of systems can be described in three categories:

1. Management and Capacity: The programs and funds are distributed through complex system of cities, service providers, and organizations. The Consortium is challenged in that each recipient has its own limitations and capacity constraints.
2. Program Administration: Reporting requirements increasingly make it difficult for grant recipients to administer projects and programs, this extends to all levels of the process and is confounded by staffing and budget limitations.
3. Service Streamlining: The dispersion and overlap of programming can create inefficiencies in service provision.

## **2014-15 Action Plan**

Overall, Sterling Heights is a good place to live, work and play, and continues to grow, even during a period of population decline within the State of Michigan. The County is slowly recovering from a long and severe downturn in the regional economy. During the downturn the County's base economy (including housing and durable manufacturing) was severely challenged. Businesses that moved away and thousands of people lost their jobs and their homes. The impacts of the "Great Recession" are still a major priority for the consortium. Municipalities experienced a steep decline in tax revenues due to declining property values, during a time of increased demand for public services. Though the general consensus is the county is recovering from this period, the impacts are still being felt. Quality of life in the County remains threatened and the efforts of the Macomb HOME Consortium to improve conditions for LI residents and families are as important as ever.

Outreach conducted in this planning process confirmed that the delivery system is strong but is challenged by financial constraints and a great need for eligible activities. The working relationships established between partners are noteworthy, having resulted in the creation of the Consortium, the Macomb Homeless Coalition (MHC), effective interdepartmental cooperation that combines resources to further Program objectives, and inter-agency interventions. The Consortium also meets with the cities of Warren and St. Clair Shores on matters of mutual concern, and the County meets with its Urban County peers for the same purpose.

As reported in the last plan, the system is hindered by time and growing resource constraints, which impede cooperation among partners. Each has its own mandates, making it difficult to achieve the inter-organizational alignment necessary to address shared issues. Another constraint boils down to having insufficient money to address all needs. This forces hard choices between high priority needs and objectives, often diminishing opportunities for cooperation.

Sterling Heights has a need to keep existing public facilities that are currently operating at a desirable level. To the extent possible and permitted by funding restrictions Sterling Heights recognizes a basic need to maintain staffing, condition, and contemporary quality at existing public facilities, summarized in the following categories:

- Public parks
- Senior centers
- Emergency response facilities

- River and recreational access ways (trails and paths)

Sterling Heights also has a need to fix existing public facilities that are not operating at a desirable level. To the extent possible and permitted by funding restrictions Sterling Heights recognizes a basic need to address issues at existing public facilities, summarized in the following categories:

- Maintenance at senior centers
- Playgrounds and parks in disrepair requiring modernization
- Parking lots at community centers
- Energy consumption inefficiencies at public facilities

Sterling Heights recognizes that while maintenance and repair of existing facilities present an important and extensive need, there is also a need to create new public facilities to address gaps in the current systems. To the extent possible and permitted by funding restrictions, Sterling Heights recognizes the need to provide new public facilities, summarized in the following categories:

- Community centers
- Senior housing campuses
- Park improvements
- Homeless shelters
- Recreation facilities for youth
- Community gardens
- Satellite community centers
- Water parks
- Creating joint use facility opportunities for parks, pools, and schools
- New geothermal facilities and energy efficient requirements

Public facility needs were determined by meeting with community leaders in a series of public forums and focus groups. The issues identified by these leaders were determined by Sterling Heights to be relevant to current funding priorities given the market and demographic conditions.

Sterling Heights has a need to keep existing infrastructure operating at a desirable level. To the extent possible and permitted by funding restrictions Sterling Heights recognizes a basic need to maintain condition, and contemporary quality with existing public improvements summarized in the following categories:

- Sidewalks
- Road Reconstruction
- ADA ramps for sidewalks
- Safety features of public environments

Sterling Heights also has a need to fix existing infrastructure not operating at a desirable level. To the extent possible and permitted by funding restrictions Sterling Heights recognizes a basic need to address issues with existing public improvements, summarized in the following categories:

- Road Reconstruction
- Sidewalks
- Maintenance activities for transportation infrastructure
- Infill development
- Targeted infrastructure maintenance to affordable neighborhoods and LI areas
- Drainage and storm water systems

- Underground infrastructure
- Other capital projects

Sterling Heights recognizes that while maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure presents an important and extensive need, there is also a need to create new public improvements to address gaps in the current systems. To the extent possible and permitted by funding restrictions Sterling Heights recognizes the need to provide new public improvements and strategies, summarized in the following categories:

- Improvements coordinated through the development of a County-wide capital improvement or strategic plan
- Improvements funded through a 3 or 5-year rotational funding program which will allow communities to do fewer, but larger projects, with a greater impact on quality of life for low income residents
- Establishing growth boundaries to direct improvements into target areas to better serve low income residents
- Requiring new improvements to be constructed only in areas with existing infrastructure services like sewer, water, and transit
- New road construction, including roadway reconstruction/reconfiguration for complete street improvements.
- Creation of new open space corridors, trails, and amenities along rivers
- Installation of streetscape elements including, benches, trees, bike parking, streetlamps, curbing, medians, crosswalks, bikeways and sidewalks
- Bike paths and trails
- Better transportation options,

Sterling Heights has a need to keep existing public services operating at a desirable level. Sterling Heights members are dedicated to providing the maximum level of funding allowed, currently capped at 15%. Priorities for public services are as follows:

- Maintain homeless services, human services, homeless prevention
- Maintain staffing levels for key agency partners
- Encourage comprehensive planning/strategic planning activities to optimize coordination of services
- Measure the impact of existing public services on poverty and housing need on a regional level
- Funding for transit connectivity for seniors, disabled individuals, and low income individuals to employment and essential services
- Explore avenues for increasing level of public services expenditures higher than 15%, including policy advocacy at the federal level
- Support for vital services to residents, including housing, senior programs, child advocacy, literacy and other agencies providing essential needs
- Housing rehabilitation services
- Support services and human services, and emergency human services for residents in need, families with children, elderly, disabled, veterans, and other special need populations (child victims of abuse, victims of domestic violence, those at risk of losing home, hungry, etc.)
- Provision of training opportunities to professionals that help residents navigate complex systems and access available resources
- Creating and managing food banks

- Providing educational opportunities

Sterling Heights also has a need to fix public services that are not operating at a desirable level, summarized in the following categories:

- Provide local connections with public transportation and allow SMART/RTA funding to be directed to local services
- Work with public service providers to determine current gaps and underperforming in services to take steps to correct issues
- Address underperformance of services resulting from inadequate staffing levels
- Address service related infrastructure needs, like relieving blocked storm drains, snow removal staff and equipment, park maintenance staff and equipment

Sterling Heights recognizes that there is also a need to consider new public services to address gaps in the current systems, summarized in the following categories:

- Support for new and improved public transportation
- Attract and foster development of more experienced Community Housing Development Organizations
- Initiate and participate in a new Countywide capital improvement plan/strategic plan comprehensively address the complexity and interrelation of quality of life issues in Macomb County
- Expand homeless support services by providing more beds, better shelters, and expanded rapid re-housing and transitional housing
- Provide assistance for homeowners for mortgage payments who are at risk of foreclosure
- Support new programs and strategies to for seniors to age in place
- Create new community gardens and programs to help neighbors grow their own food, provide plans, ground, seed, etc.
- Support transportation demand management strategies by providing bus passes for students, public employees, and even offer pass benefits to employers
- Provide residents with a list of public service resources that are available to them in order to promote equity, access, and efficiency of programs

# Public Engagement and Input

In the development of the Master Land Use Plan, the City solicited citizen input through several means. This included a web-based “community comment map”, vision fair, and numerous public meetings. Additionally, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing once a draft plan was prepared. A description of each is provided below.

## Community Remarks

A web-based “community comment map” engagement tool was established for the Master Land Use Plan and Parks, Recreation & Non-Motorized Master Plan efforts. This tool allowed citizens to share their thoughts and opinions specific to certain geographic locations within the City. Additionally, it allowed users to view and interact with the opinions of fellow citizens. To facilitate topic-based discussion, a total of eight pre-established categories were created, including: economic development; cultural & community services; parks & public spaces; public safety; housing; environment; motorized transportation; and, non-motorized transportation.

The community remarks engagement tool was active during late 2015 and early 2016. During this time, more than 100 interactions with the tool were received, with the most comments/responses falling within the economic development topic, followed by parks & public spaces, and non-motorized transportation.

Related to economic development, the following themes emerged from the citizen interactions on the community remarks engagement tool:

- Importance and viability of Lakeside Mall, with the potential for redevelopment with additional density and mixed-use
- Potential for redeveloping established commercial corridors (such as Van Dyke Avenue) and major intersections for mixed-use, “mini-downtown” development
- Promotion of the Hall Road corridor for new development and coordination with neighbors and County to facilitate corridor improvements
- Desire for additional cultural facilities and events

Related to parks and recreation, the following themes emerged from the citizen interactions on the community remarks engagement tool:

- The desire for a cultural or historical museum within the City
- The desire for new, recreational facilities to serve citizens of all ages, including:



- Indoor community center (to include fitness center, aquatics and multi-purpose rooms)
- Outdoor pool/splash park
- Outdoor ice rink
- Dog park
- Expansion of the Senior Center
- Farmers market

### Example Community Remarks Comments

The image displays four screenshots of a community engagement platform, likely a comment section for a Master Land Use Plan, overlaid on satellite maps of Sterling Heights, Michigan.

- Top Left (Resident):** A comment from a resident named Resident with 8 votes. The comment suggests creating mini-downtown centers with landmarks and an identity of their own at intersections like 18 Mile and Ryan. The map shows the area around 18 Mile Rd and Ryan Rd, including Wendy's and VG's Grocery.
- Top Right (Martina):** A comment from Martina with 1 vote. She requests a 4-way stop sign at an intersection where drivers randomly stop or cruise through without slowing down. The map shows the area around 17 Mile Rd and Utica Rd.
- Bottom Left (Andrew Lewandowski):** A comment from Andrew Lewandowski with 13 votes. He proposes creating a downtown area or Main Street in the 18 Mile Rd area, noting it would be an attraction for the city and drive up property values. A response from a resident follows, suggesting a downtown or vibrant commercial centers. The map shows the area around 18 Mile Rd and Utica Rd.
- Bottom Right (Elizabeth):** A comment from Elizabeth with 7 votes. She asks for a bike station with tools at Dodge Park. A link to a news article about a bike repair station in Asheville, NC, is provided. The map shows the area around Utica Rd and Clinton River Rd, including Dodge Park and City Hall.

Related to non-motorized transportation, the following themes emerged from the citizen interactions on the community remarks engagement tool:

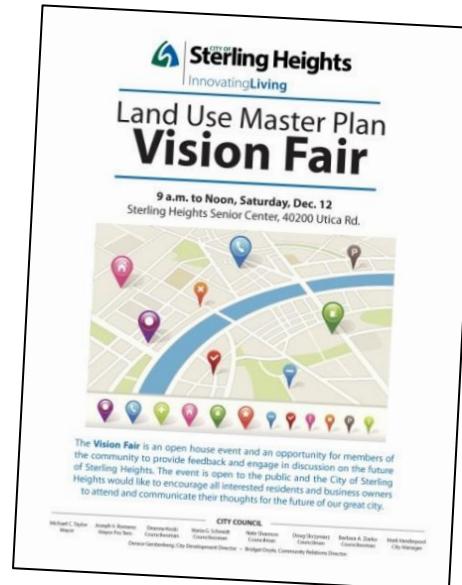
- Identification of specific sidewalk gaps and desired shared-use path connections between neighborhoods, destinations, adjacent communities, and other shared-use path networks
- Desire for more bicycle amenities (bike fix-it station, bike rental, etc.)
- Identification of needed sidewalk/shared-use path bridge crossings or bridge repairs
- The need for sidewalk/shared-use path improvements along Schoenherr Road, generally between Lakeside Mall and the Clinton River Park system
- The need for sidewalk/shared-use path improvements along Utica Road, generally between 18 Mile Road and Van Dyke.

Related to other topics, the following themes emerged from the citizen interactions on the community remarks engagement tool:

- The need for road improvements related to both traffic congestion and road condition
- The need for safety enhancements (signage, signalization, lighting, crosswalks, etc.) along the City's primary roadways

## Vision Fair

On a Saturday morning in December 2015, a Master Plan Vision Fair was held at the Sterling Heights Senior Center. Attended by numerous interested citizens and stakeholders, this open house event allowed attendees to learn more about the project and offer their vision for the future of the City. "Information stations" were established to present data on each major technical element of the work plan, including: parks & non-motorized facilities, population, land, placemaking, and market opportunities. Various City staff and consultant team members were on-hand, allowing for direct interaction between citizens and members of the project team. The vision fair also provided an opportunity for attendees to fill out general comment sheets related to the work products and any other topics related to the future of the City.



## Community Forums

Two community forums were held during the planning process. The first community forum was held on March 16, 2016 and focused on the development of goals, objectives and strategies. The second community forum was held on April 20, 2016 and focused on the formulation of planning proposals related to development, land use, recreation and non-motorized networks. Both forums were held on a weekday evening at the Sterling Heights Senior Center.

## Community Forum #1

Focusing on the development of goals, objectives and strategies, the agenda for the first community forum included an overview of the City's Vision 2030 Plan (serving as a foundation for the Master Land Use Plan and Parks, Recreation & Non-Motorized Master Plan) and two small group exercises. The first small group exercise asked each group to work together to brainstorm problems which need to be solved, as well as aspirational needs related to community development, land use, parks and recreation, and non-motorized transportation. Once identified, the groups then worked together to formulate goals which would address the problems and aspirational needs.

The second small group exercise asked each group to work together to review and evaluate the goals for the Master Land Use Plan and the Parks, Recreation & Non-Motorized Master Plan. For each plan, listed by topic, several goals were already developed by the technical project team. The groups then worked together to ensure that the goals addressed the aspirational needs identified in the first exercise. If not, the group was asked to revise or identify new goals.



## Community Forum #2

Focusing on future planning proposals, the agenda for the second community forum began with a presentation of the "plan drivers" for the Master Land Use Plan and Parks, Recreation & Non-Motorized Master Plan. These plan drivers, recognized as guiding principles behind the planning effort, are highlighted in the sidebar.

Next, the forum included a presentation of a proposed planning framework map, which depicted the broad framework for the future physical development of the City, as well as community-wide connectivity. After the presentation, forum participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet offering their opinions related to the proposed planning framework concepts.

City of Sterling Heights "Plan Drivers"

### Vision 2030

- Connectivity
- Destinations and Attractions through Placemaking
- Recreational Opportunities
- Desirable Neighborhoods

### Smart Growth, Sustainability and Livability Principles

- Sense of Place
- Integration of Diverse Community Features
- Transportation Choices
- Equitable and Affordable Housing
- Mixed Land Uses
- Enhance Economic Competitiveness

### Community Context

#### Respond to the Marketplace

- Residential ↑
- Office ↔
- Commercial ↔
- Industrial ↑

#### Understanding Demographics Trends

- LifeMode Groups
- Household Size
- Population Growth
- Family Composition
- Ethnic Composition

#### Respect Historical Patterns of Growth

- Industrial Corridor (Auto Manufacturing and Defense Industry)
- Clinton River Watershed
- M-59, I-696 and I-94
- Grid/Mile Road Street Network

#### Measuring Community Excellence

- Wall Street Journal Best Places to Live
- Livability Top Places for Families
- AARP Livability Index

#### Recognize Other Planning Activities

- MACRO – Hall Road Improvements
- City Strategic Plan
- North Van Dyke CIA

#### Catalyst Projects

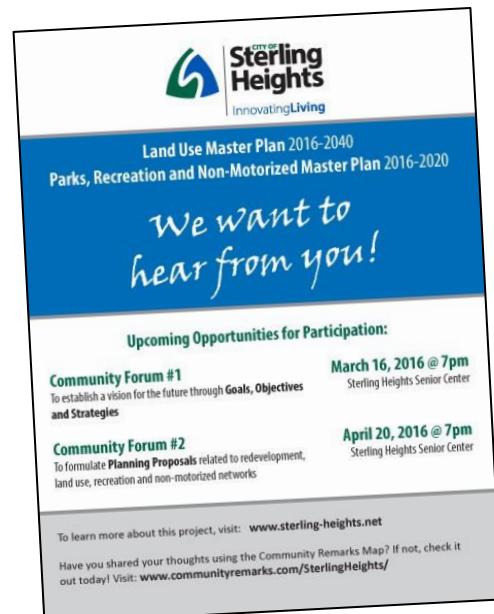
- Sunnybrook Golf Course
- Beaumont Hospital
- Lakeside Mall

#### Public Comment

Finally, the forum included a “community character” group exercise. For this exercise, each group was given a large size planning framework map, along with a variety of precedent development images related to the following categories:

- Recreation Facilities
- Residential Development
- Commercial and Mixed-Use Development
- Office and Industrial Development
- Streets and Non-Motorized Facilities

Working together, the groups selected the images which embodied a desirable character of development for Sterling Heights and placed the images on the margins of the large map, adding text, arrows or other indications to identify specific areas of Sterling Heights that should accommodate the character of development shown in the image. An example of the finished work product from one of the groups is included on the next page.

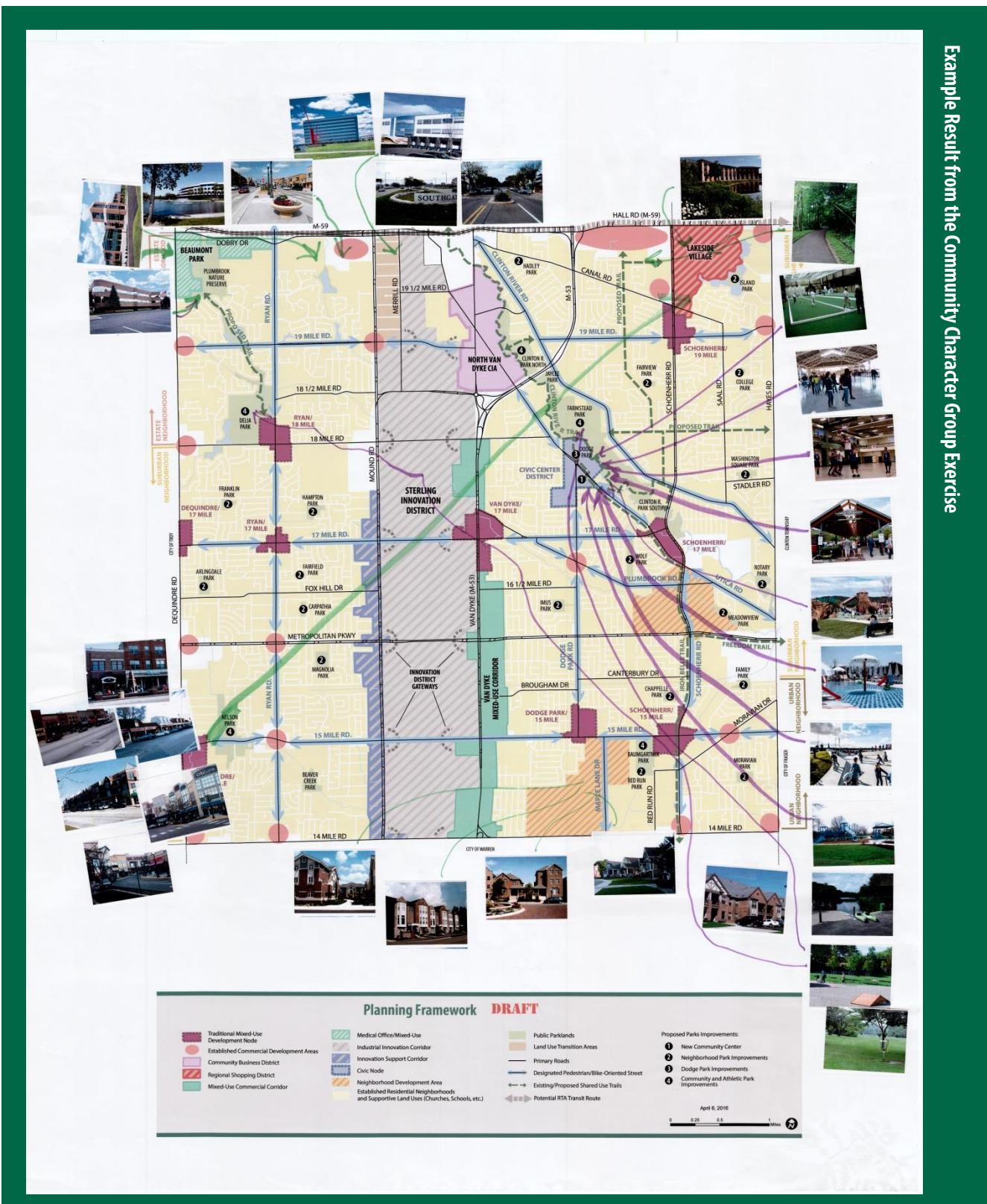


The image shows a flyer for the City of Sterling Heights. At the top, the city's logo is displayed with the text "CITY OF Sterling Heights" and "InnovatingLiving". Below the logo, the text "Land Use Master Plan 2016-2040" and "Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan 2016-2020" is visible. A large, stylized, handwritten-style text "We want to hear from you!" is prominently displayed. Below this, the text "Upcoming Opportunities for Participation:" is followed by two community forum details:

<b>Community Forum #1</b> To establish a vision for the future through <b>Goals, Objectives</b> and <b>Strategies</b>	<b>March 16, 2016 @ 7pm</b> Sterling Heights Senior Center
<b>Community Forum #2</b> To formulate <b>Planning Proposals</b> related to redevelopment, land use, recreation and non-motorized networks	<b>April 20, 2016 @ 7pm</b> Sterling Heights Senior Center

At the bottom of the flyer, there is a note: "To learn more about this project, visit: [www.sterling-heights.net](http://www.sterling-heights.net)" and "Have you shared your thoughts using the Community Remarks Map? If not, check it out today! Visit: [www.communityremarks.com/SterlingHeights/](http://www.communityremarks.com/SterlingHeights/)"

## Example Result from the Community Character Group Exercise



# Guiding Principles

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## Visioning 2030 Plan as Foundation

In 2014, through engagement of community members, business leaders, City officials and City employees, the City of Sterling Heights adopted a Visioning 2030 Plan. This strategic planning effort seeks to ensure numerous outcomes for the future of the City, including stability, community growth, best practices, service excellence, and a stronger sense of community. The Visioning 2030 Plan established a vision statement and guiding principles for the City. Listed below, the vision statement and guiding principles from the Visioning 2030 Plan serve as the foundation for this Master Land Use Plan.

### ***Vision Statement***

A vibrant, inclusive community for residents and businesses that is safe, active, progressive and distinctive. Sterling Heights – a bold vision for an exceptional quality of life.

### ***Guiding Principles***

- Safe, well maintained and desirable neighborhoods enhanced by great schools
- Plentiful leisure and recreation opportunities featuring fully utilized parks
- Abundant pathways for biking and walking
- Focal points that are both public and private to serve as destinations for residents and visitors
- Well maintained and aesthetically pleasing roads and green spaces
- Successful, vibrant and attractive commercial centers with unique offerings
- Destination for high-tech and emerging industries and entrepreneurs

## **Key Themes**

The goals and objectives for the Master Land Use Plan as detailed in this section directly relate to several key themes related to land planning and development that were developed by the community through the public input process, by the Planning Commission, City Council and the City administration. These themes are:

### ***Sustainability***

The City of Sterling Heights strives to become a sustainable place, meaning that it is economically, environmentally and culturally sustainable. Land use and policy decisions should reflect careful consideration of all three factors. Decisions made today should benefit – not burden – future generations.

### ***Smart Growth***

Smart growth is an overriding theme for the Sterling Heights Master Land Use Plan. As government finances become more strained, it will become ever more important to make better decisions about how and where Sterling Heights grows.

What exactly is “smart growth”? The organization Smart Growth America defines it as:

*“Smart growth is a better way to build and maintain our towns and cities. Smart growth means building urban, suburban and rural communities with housing and transportation choices near jobs, shops and schools. This approach supports local economies and protects the environment.”*

*At the heart of the American dream is the simple hope that each of us can choose to live in a neighborhood that is beautiful, safe, affordable and easy to get around. Smart growth does just that. Smart growth creates healthy communities with strong local businesses. Smart growth creates neighborhoods with schools and shops nearby and low-cost ways to get around for all our citizens. Smart growth creates jobs that pay well and reinforces the foundations of our economy. Americans want to make their neighborhoods great, and smart growth strategies help make that dream a reality.”<sup>26</sup>*

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a bit more succinct in their definition, which states:

*“Smart growth helps communities grow in ways that expand economic opportunity while protecting human health and the environment.”<sup>27</sup>*

Smart growth principles will help make Sterling Heights a more resilient community – resilient in dealing with the impacts of climate change, changing economies, demographic shifts and natural disaster.

### ***Sense of Place***

Development and redevelopment in Sterling Heights should help to foster a distinct character that helps to continue to define Sterling Heights moving forward. Placemaking is a key component of determining what exactly is the character of Sterling Heights and how new development, redevelopment and preservation can work to celebrate that character.

### ***Strong Economy***

It goes without saying that a strong local economy positions the City to realize many of the goals and objectives of this Master Land Use Plan. The residents of Sterling Heights recognize the importance of a vibrant economy, jobs created for citizens by existing and new businesses and the type of investments that come from economic development. They also recognize the need to balance economic development with priorities for quality of life in the neighborhoods, balanced transportation alternatives, and maintaining a community that has a sense of place/character.

### ***Accessible Transportation***

It is crucial to create a complete transportation system which includes mass transit, walking, and bicycling in Sterling Heights. The City does not have a robust network of transit and non-motorized opportunities that many Michigan peer communities have obtained. Furthermore, citizens have been vocal about the desire for more transportation choices to get around the city and to connect to regional destinations.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/what-is-smart-growth>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/smartergrowth>

## **General Policy Goals and Objectives**

General policy goals and objectives are detailed below. Other goals and objectives specifically related to particular land uses are detailed later in this chapter.

### ***Goal 1. Adopt a Master Land Use Plan Development Framework Based on the Principles of Smart Growth***

The 10 principles of smart growth, as adapted for the City of Sterling Heights, are as follows:<sup>28</sup>

- Mix land uses, where appropriate
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing developed areas
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

#### *Objective 1.1 Smart Growth Implementation*

Create a planning framework and scorecard that will enhance livability within Sterling Heights; preserve and enhance the City's natural, social and economic resources; discourage unsustainable development patterns while promoting land use decisions; and, standards that promote more efficient land uses that lessen the footprint of development on the natural environment.

### ***Goal 2. Creative Placemaking through Nodal Development***

The development of the urban design and placemaking component of this new Master Land Use Plan uses nodal development as a starting point for envisioning places that people will be drawn to and that have the opportunity of attracting all demographics.

The 2005 Master Plan Land Use Plan on p.150 states "Concentrate commercial development in nodes as opposed to strips along major corridors." This was a good beginning strategy, but it still separates areas into land use zones. Current placemaking strategies call for a mixture of uses within a concentrated area. The reorientation of development into more concentrated areas (nodes) will help to create synergy between housing, retail, and commercial uses

#### *Objective 2.1 Identify Nodes with Potential for Placemaking and Increased Activity*

In order to support placemaking enhancements, a nodal development area should have at least three of these qualities:

1. Proximity to community/government services
2. Proximity to public amenities
3. Proximity to transportation networks including multi-use trails and/or mass transit
4. Sufficient surrounding residential population or commercial facilities

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<sup>28</sup> Based on Smart Growth Online, a website of the Maryland Department of Planning.  
[Http://smartgrowth.org/smart-growth-principles](http://smartgrowth.org/smart-growth-principles)

5. Available physical space to accommodate catalytic projects
6. Ability to have both sides of a street engaged in creating "place"
7. Ability accommodate various modes of transportation including autos, transit, bicyclers and pedestrians
8. Ability to become a mixed-use zone within a walkable pedestrian shed (approximately 1/4 mile in each direction)

*Objective 2.2 Creative Placemaking: Tactical and Lean Urbanism*

Current urban design best practices call for more strategic, short term, implementable initiatives. Tactical urbanism and lean urbanism models produce greater short term results. The City should develop a review and permitting process which enables tactical urbanism while ensuring appropriate and safe designs.

*Objective 2.3 Form Based Code*

The City should work to adopt a form based or hybrid zoning code with strong design elements, particularly for those nodes that have been singled out as having potential for placemaking and increased activities.

***Goal 3. Strategy for Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Sterling Heights***

The City shall take the following actions as a part of its overall strategy to limit the City's carbon footprint:

*Objective 3.1 Non-motorized Transportation.*

Work to create a more robust network of non-motorized transportation routes that encourages pedestrian transportation and biking.

*Objective 3.2 Public Transit.*

Create opportunities within the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and/or SMART to expand transit services within Sterling Heights. Maximize existing regional transportation routes such as Van Dyke, Mound Road, and M-59 to provide enhanced transit services which connect to the City to Detroit and other major suburban destinations.

*Objective 3.3 Energy Efficiency.*

Encourage or require the use of energy-efficient lighting for streets, parking lots, parks and public spaces. Develop a policy requiring all public buildings to use energy efficient appliances, fixtures and building design. Adopt zoning incentives and/or changes to streamline permitting for alternative energy production.

*Objective 3.4 Discourage Unnecessary Restrictions.*

Discourage regulations, subdivision bylaws or other deed restrictions that might prevent or hamper energy conservation efforts, such as the use of solar panels in home design.

***Goal 4. Limit Human Impact on the Environment***

Preserving the quality of the natural environment helps strengthen sense of place and neighborhood quality of life. Further, providing natural areas for stormwater infiltration and implementing standards regulating impervious surface help reduce flooding issues, reduce the cost of stormwater infrastructure and improve water quality.

#### Objective 4.1 Sustain and Enhance Air and Water Quality

Air and water are both regional issues because they cross artificial political jurisdictional boundaries. Sterling Heights should continue to work with SEMCOG, Macomb County and its neighbors to educate the public on the importance of clean air and water. Further, the City should continue to examine performance standards for industrial and manufacturing land uses to ensure these activities aren't having an overall negative impact on local and regional air and water quality.

#### Objective 4.2 Encourage On-Site Retention and Infiltration of Stormwater

The most cost-effective way to deal with stormwater is to create opportunities for infiltration. In a fully developed community like Sterling Heights, creating these opportunities can happen in a number of forms. The City should encourage the expanded use of rain gardens as a part of new developments and in areas where stormwater creates flooding problems. The City should also adopt a green streets policy wherein when a street is completely reconstructed, stormwater infiltration and green infrastructure becomes a component of the project. The City should also look to set limits on impervious surface creation in commercial and residential areas.

#### Objective 4.3 Identify and Preserve Key Natural Features and Habitats

The City should work to identify, assess and protect key habitats, natural corridors, wetlands and woodlands. Any preservation strategy should focus on a larger functioning network of connected open spaces, not on creating and preserving only isolated parcels which cannot ecologically function in isolation.

### **Goal 5. Promote Cultural, Socioeconomic and Age Diversity**

Diversity of all types is a building block for community resilience and sustainability. The City should focus on ways to increase socioeconomic diversity, to ensure the City is a wonderful place to live for citizens of all ages, races and cultural backgrounds.

#### Objective 5.1 Amend Codes to Allow More Housing Types

The City should review and amend its ordinances to allow for a wider range of housing types including micro-units and other similar smaller living spaces.

#### Objective 5.2 Ensure Codes are Reflective of Cultural Preferences

Where appropriate, the City should review its ordinances to ensure that regulations are reflective and inclusive of specific cultural preferences.

## **Residential and Neighborhood Development Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal 1. Improve Livability within the City's Residential Areas**

Livability is a critical component of a sustainable community. Successful communities are those in which people want to live and choose to stay. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has

developed eight fundamental planning and design principles to be considered to ensure communities maintain a high degree of "livability" and quality of life.<sup>29</sup> These eight principles are:

1. Sense of place
2. Mixed-use development
3. Density
4. Regional transportation
5. Complete street design
6. Physical health and community design
7. Public safety, personal security
8. Sustainable approach to neighborhood and regional development

*Objective 1.1 Utilize the Principles as a basis for Regulatory Revisions*

These principles should guide the revision of the City's zoning ordinance and are reflected in the Future Land Use Plan.

*Objective 1.2 Create a Stronger Sense of Place through Zoning*

Preserve, strengthen and enhance the character of a node or district by assessing the natural and man-made assets of that node and working to codify the main elements that create a sense of place in each node. The City should adopt form-based or hybrid zoning to guide nodal development.

*Objective 1.3 Encourage Mixed-Use Development*

The City should create opportunities and/or requirements for mixed use buildings and districts in nodes with close proximity to single family neighborhoods so there is the opportunity to create truly walkable neighborhoods with a range of services available to those without the use of a car. In pursuing this objective, the City must ensure that appropriate buffering is provided to mitigate potential negative impacts between higher density uses and lower density residential uses.

*Objective 1.4 Seek to Create New Housing through Density Changes*

As noted in this Master Land Use Plan, the City is projected to grow while its average household size continues to decline. Therefore, there will continue to be a demand for new housing in the City. Further, trends indicate an increased demand for non-traditional housing types on smaller lots within mixed-use neighborhoods. Thus, new housing should be prioritized in areas where increased density and new housing product are appropriate, which is in nodal development areas.

*Objective 1.5 Access to Regional Transportation Network*

Residents and stakeholders have expressed an increased desire for additional transportation choices. Ensuring City residents have the access to a larger regional transportation network that connects neighborhoods within the City as well as the City to other regional job centers and destinations is essential for the ensuring a high quality of life for Sterling Heights. The City should play a lead role in working with the Regional Transportation Authority to create inter-city transit. Further, the City should work closely with SMART to expand and improve bus service within the City. Transit facilities should be incorporated into new street design and the design of nodal development projects.

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<sup>29</sup> What Makes a Community Livable? Livability 101. The American Institute of Architects. 2005. <http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aias077944.pdf>

**Objective 1.6 Create a Network of Complete Streets**

The City adopted a Complete Streets policy on December 8, 2011. Planning for streets as public spaces that are accessible to all residents (not just drivers) is a key part of Smart Growth and creative placemaking. The City should continue working to ensure that its street network is designed for all users; this does not imply that every street is appropriate for every user; rather, that every user has the ability to get around the street network in whatever manner he or she chooses.

**Objective 1.7 Prioritize Design that Encourages and Promotes Physical Activity**

The Centers for Disease Control has correlated the incidence of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke with physical inactivity. The City should encourage walkable and active neighborhoods for children, teens, adults, and senior citizens. This can be accomplished through various means, including providing recreational spaces and amenities, multi-modal transportation facilities and mixed-use activity centers within walking distance of neighborhoods.

**Objective 1.8 Public Safety and Personal Security**

Sensitive planning and design takes advantage of sophisticated technology and proper operations allows the City to improve public safety in the most unobtrusive ways. Sterling Heights is a very safe community, and the sense of personal security is a huge factor in the high quality of life within the community. The City should work to ensure that zoning and land use policies are not creating isolated neighborhoods and pockets of poverty. Additionally, law enforcement and emergency service officials should be actively involved in the review of zoning proposals and land development projects.

**Goal 2. Allow for a Broader Range of Housing Types and Products**

As described in the demographics chapter, population is expected to grow while household size will shrink between now and 2040. It is vital that the City appropriately plan for additional housing development.

**Objective 2.1 Permit New Housing Types – the Missing Middle**

The City of Sterling Heights should seek to ensure housing choice for individuals of all lifestyles and ages through the provision of a more diversified housing stock. Although the single-family detached home is likely to remain the dominant housing type within the City over the next 25 years, the City should encourage and allow for other non-traditional housing types which are increasingly desired by Americans, such as duplexes, fourplexes, bungalow courts, live/work units, and courtyard apartments. These units are collectively called the “missing middle” by planners because so many Michigan communities don’t have these housing products. These units are illustrated in the graphic below.



Image source: Opticos Design, Inc.

### Objective 2.2 Age-in Place Housing

The City should also diversify its housing stock by encouraging and allowing, where appropriate, housing types which enable citizens to age-in-place, such as accessory dwelling units, active senior living developments, and elderly care facilities.

### Objective 2.3 Ensure a Mix of Affordable and Rental Units

An appropriate balance of affordable units and rental units should be maintained as an option for those who desire affordable housing and/or who would prefer to rent instead of own their housing units. Research has demonstrated that excessive regulation and public participation requirements for housing developments create isolated wealthy enclaves. One way to help accomplish the objective of creating a mix of affordable and work force housing is to shorten development review and provide more administrative approvals to accelerate the timeline for construction of such units.

## **Goal 3. Create Human Scale Places**

The only way to effectively create walkable districts is to make sure the district or node is built to human scale. "Human scale refers to a size, texture, and articulation of physical elements that match the size and proportions of humans and, equally important, correspond to the speed at which humans walk. Building details, pavement texture, street trees, and street furniture are all physical elements contributing to human scale."<sup>30</sup>

### Objective 3.1 Create Form Based Zoning Nodal Development Districts

The City should develop a form-based or hybrid zoning district for nodal development that includes requirements for human scale design.

### Objective 3.2 Review and Adopt Human Scale Zoning Requirements in Other Areas

The City should explore other areas of the City, such as within the Van Dyke Avenue and Mound Road corridors, for the inclusion of new or updated zoning regulations which promote human scale development.

<sup>30</sup> Ewing, Reid. Eight Qualities of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design. *Urban Land*. March 7, 2013.

#### **Goal 4. Provide Access to Natural Areas and Parks for All Citizens**

Accept and implement the City of Sterling Heights Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan as the future vision for recreation services and facilities as well as non-motorized connections.

### **Commercial and Office Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal 1. Create mixed-use nodes that include commercial, office, civic and residential use**

The City's placemaking strategy is based on nodal development as a starting point for envisioning places that people will be drawn to and that have the opportunity of attracting new demographics.

##### *Objective 1.1 Identify Nodes with Potential for Placemaking and Increased Activity*

In order to support placemaking enhancements, a nodal development area should have at least three of these qualities:

1. Proximity to community/government services
2. Proximity to public amenities
3. Proximity to transportation networks including multi-use trails and/or mass transit
4. Sufficient surrounding residential population or commercial facilities
5. Available physical space to accommodate catalytic projects
6. Ability to have both sides of a street engaged in creating "place"
7. Ability accommodate various modes of transportation including autos, transit, bicyclers and pedestrians
8. Ability to become a mixed-use zone within a walkable pedestrian shed (approximately 1/4 mile in each direction)

##### *Objective 1.2 Create Zoning that Allows Mixed-Use Buildings and Districts By Right*

The City should amend its zoning ordinance to allow by right mixed-use buildings and multiple uses within each nodal district.

##### *Objective 1.3 Emphasize Flexible Use and Adopt Form Based Zoning Language*

The City should provide property owners with a greater deal of flexibility in commercial and mixed-use districts. To do this, the City should develop a form based zoning code, or a hybrid code with form based districts.

##### *Objective 1.4 Enhance Auto-Dependent Commercial Corridors*

The auto-centric suburban strip commercial corridor is as much a part of America as apple pie or baseball. These types of spaces, however, are not as resilient or sustainable in comparison well-planned mixed-use districts. Recognizing that some of the City's major road corridors will continue to offer auto-centric land uses to meet the demands of local citizens and regional commuters, the City should seek to enhance these corridors. This can be accomplished through the adoption of regulations/guidelines pertaining to building, site layout and signage design, as well as the implementation of physical improvements such as streetscaping and public art installations. Additionally, the City should explore opportunities to accommodate mixed-use, higher density nodal development within these corridors.

## **Industrial, Manufacturing, Warehousing and Logistics Goals and Objectives**

Sterling Heights boasts some of the best industrial and manufacturing sites in the country. These uses have helped define the community and are vital to its long term economic and cultural health.

### **Goal 1. Build Upon the City's Track Record for Success in the Industrial Sector**

Sterling Heights has all the features industrial users look for, and the market demands more and better space. Sterling Heights has all the fundamentals in place to attract and retain blue-chip industrial users, and should continue to build off of this track record of success.

#### *Objective 1.1 Provide High Quality Infrastructure to Facilitate Business Growth*

Make available and maintain high quality infrastructure, including roads, water, sewer, and communications technology (high speed internet, Wi-Fi, etc.), to support business growth and development.

#### *Objective 1.2 Target the City's Industrial Corridor for Additional Investment*

Enhance and promote the City's industrial corridor as a premier location for innovation and investment. Work with regional and local partners to promote and establish a brand for the district, while initiating economic development programs such as a Smart Zone or Tax Increment Finance District.

### **Goal 2. Create Flexibility**

Technology is changing manufacturing so quickly that traditional Euclidean zoning standards used to regulate industrial and manufacturing often become obsolete soon after they are adopted. While the market for industrial space is strong in 2016, the City should be working to ensure that a downturn in this market does not economically devastate the community.

#### *Objective 2.1 Foster a Favorable Business Climate for Investment*

Continue to offer a streamlined development review and permitting process that allows for design flexibility in manufacturing, warehousing, logistics and other industrial operations.

#### *Objective 2.2 Create a Business Recruitment and Retention Program*

The City should work to create a business recruitment and retention program. While it is natural to focus on the major manufacturing companies related to the automotive, defense and aerospace industries, effort should be made to recruit smaller firms with less intensive space needs.

### **Goal 3. Mitigate the Impact of Industrial and Manufacturing Uses on Neighboring Property**

#### *Objective 3.1 Keep Performance Standards For Industrial and Manufacturing Uses Current*

The City should use the most current science and health safety standards as their performance standards. It's typical for a community to develop industrial performance standards – particularly concerning air quality, water, noise, traffic, light and vibration – and then never update those standards even as the science behind them changes. The City should reexamine these standards every five years at a minimum.

**Objective 3.2 Increase Industrial Greenspace**

The City should encourage and require generous greenspace as part of new industrial development projects for the benefit and enjoyment of employees and to serve as a buffer for adjacent properties.

## **Transportation Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal 1. Create Transportation Choices**

The City shall work to create opportunities for all modes of transportation with a particular emphasis on expanding the opportunity for walking, biking and transit.

**Objective 1.1 Plan and Implement Non-Motorized Connections**

Support and encourage accessibility to and within City parks, as well as development of the local, county and regional non-motorized systems.

**Objective 1.2 Require Non-Motorized Infrastructure**

Require sidewalks as part of all new development and work to fill in gaps in the sidewalk network.

### **Goal 2. Expand Public Transit**

**Objective 2.1 Expand Public Transit.**

Create opportunities within the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and/or SMART to expand transit services in Sterling Heights that provides for transit within the City as well as connecting the City to Detroit and suburban destinations.

### **Goal 3. Plan for Changes in Transportation Demand**

Transportation is also changing quite rapidly. In the last decade, trends have emerged where the young (the Millennials) and older adults are forgoing driving. In many communities, people are not opting to own cars, choosing instead to use car-sharing services such as Zip Car.

**Objective 3.1 Create Opportunities for New Technology and Trends**

The City needs to create incentives that allow for the use of new technologies and trends in transportation. This may include requiring space for bike amenities, car sharing or electric vehicle charging in new developments. It may also include changing parking standards based on changing transportation demand.

### **Goal 4. Maintain the Existing Street Network**

Preventative maintenance is far more cost effective than reconstructing roads.

**Objective 4.1 Develop an Asset Management Plan.**

The City should create an Asset Management Plan and utilize PASER pavement ratings to assess maintenance schedules.

## Infrastructure and Community Facilities Goals and Objectives

### **Goal 1. Develop an Asset Management Plan**

Repeating Transportation Objective 4.1, the City should develop an asset management plan for all of its infrastructure – roads, water, sanitary and storm sewer.

### **Goal 2. Develop a City Forestry Plan**

Trees play a vital role in so many aspects of civic life. They are, of course, a huge amenity for homeowners and renters as they shade our houses and streets. They also help to cool our buildings, reducing the need for air conditioning. Trees are also important for water quality and stormwater management as trees play an important role in stormwater infiltration. Trees help improve air quality. Finally, trees boost our property values exponentially.

#### Objective 2.1 Develop a City Forestry and Tree Planting Plan

The City of Sterling Heights should develop a comprehensive street tree inventory and plan for tree planting in the public right-of-way. The City should also seek to create a stream of dedicated funding to provide for tree planting and maintenance.

#### Objective 2.2 Enhance Road Rights-of-Way through Tree Plantings

Ensure the inclusion of tree plantings in the design of City, County and State road improvement projects.

### **Goal 3. Provide Exceptional Public Infrastructure and Services**

The City should endeavor to provide exceptional public infrastructure and services to serve existing and future development in a manner that practically and cost-effectively facilitates the implementation of the vision set forth in the Master Land Use Plan.

#### Objective 3.1 Provide High Quality Infrastructure and Facilities to Serve Citizens and Businesses

Make available and maintain high quality infrastructure, including roads, water, sewer, and communications technology (high speed internet, Wi-Fi, etc.), to serve citizens and support business growth and development.

#### Objective 3.2 Maintain High-Quality City Buildings and Properties

The City should set the example for high-quality public service through the implementation of best management practices for the design and management of City buildings and properties.

# Planning Framework and Recommendations

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This chapter presents the plan for the future physical development of the City of Sterling Heights over the next 25 years. This plan is shaped by a thorough understanding of existing conditions and community character, as well as the principles, goals and objectives established in the Guiding Principles chapter.

## Planning Framework

The broad framework for the future physical development of the City is described below and highlighted on the **Planning Framework Map**. The planning framework narrative and map also provides the context for more specific proposals outlined later in this chapter, such as the Future Land Use Plan and the Non-Motorized Master Plan.

### ***Established Residential Neighborhoods and Supportive Land Uses***

Safe, strong and vibrant neighborhoods are a major asset of Sterling Heights. The City's established neighborhoods, along with supportive uses such as schools and places of worship, are the foundation of the Planning Framework Plan.

### ***Public Parklands***

Existing City-owned park facilities are recognized on the Planning Framework Plan for the role that they play in the quality of life of City residents. These include large recreational facilities which serve the entire City, as well as numerous neighborhood parks.

### ***Neighborhood Development Area***

The Planning Framework Plan identifies two key opportunities to accommodate future neighborhood residential development. One neighborhood development area is located along Schoenherr, between Utica Road and Metropolitan Parkway; the second area is found along Maple Lane Drive, south of 15 Mile Road. Both areas include existing golf course properties which have the potential to be redeveloped and/or retrofitted to include residential development. Both are ideal locations to accommodate different forms of residential development that are not present in the City and which are increasingly in demand, along with supportive non-residential uses. Strong pedestrian connections to nearby amenities and neighborhoods are critical to facilitate access and recreational lifestyles.

### ***Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node***

This Master Land Use Plan has established a placemaking strategy based on "nodal development" as a starting point for envisioning places that people will be drawn to and that offer an opportunity to attract new demographics. Mixed use areas in walkable cities and pedestrian-oriented areas are experiencing a renaissance unlike anything seen in decades. Largely vacant office buildings are filling up with new businesses and residents, the ground floors are welcoming new shops and restaurants, and the streets and public spaces are returning to life. Walkable areas are finding renewed success and interest in these areas has spurred an increased market demand for such places.

Hold page for Planning Framework Map

In metropolitan Detroit, the northern suburbs, while traditionally stable, are also seeing a renewed interest in neglected commercial and residential properties. This provides an opportunity to rethink suburban areas from a placemaking perspective by adding an additional layer of activity to enhance them. In this regard, the Placemaking Analysis section of this Master Land Use Plan identified 13 nodes which have the potential of being significant examples of livability through the implementation of placemaking enhancements. These nodes were identified because they exhibited key characteristics, including walkability, existing physical development, mix of land use, access, and their context in relation to surrounding neighborhoods or districts.

The **Planning Framework Map** shows these strategic locations as Traditional Mixed-Use Development Nodes. In total, eleven nodes have been identified within the City. Within these nodes, the City seeks to promote the following placemaking concepts:

- Pedestrian Usage – Create identifiable pedestrian pathways, circulation and linkages within the node and to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.
- Sense of Place – Foster a unique sense of place which will encourage people to come to live, work and play.
- Build Upon Existing Assets – New development and redevelopment concepts must be reflective of, and build upon, the node's existing physical character and infrastructure.
- Integration of Varied Housing Types – The thoughtful integration of varied housing stock into each node will be an important component of its future success.
- Green Spaces / Public Realm – Traditional mixed-use development nodes must include good sidewalks, convenient parks and unique gathering places. These amenities will leave a lasting impression on a visitor and create comfort for day-to-day users and residents of the node.
- Mixed Uses – A diverse mixture of uses working in unison can achieve an active environment and a healthy place. The integration of residential use provides activity throughout the day, night and during the weekends. A mixture of daytime and nighttime uses should be pursued.
- Mobility – Ingress, egress, non-motorized systems, pedestrian accommodations, and parking concepts should be developed to enhance the pedestrian-oriented urban environment.

Conceptual plans, which apply the above placemaking concepts in a more specific manner, have been prepared for five of the eleven nodes within the City. These Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concepts are presented in the Future Land Use Plan, which follows this section.

### ***Established Commercial Development Areas***

Existing commercial nodes, most commonly found at major road intersections, are identified on the **Planning Framework Map**. These existing commercial nodes (which may feature other non-residential uses such as offices) provide needed services to adjacent neighborhoods and users of the road network. Thus, they are expected to remain in-place in the long-term.

### ***Community Business District***

The North Van Dyke business district is recognized in the Planning Framework as an important location which provides local employment and serves the convenience needs of citizens. A Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) has been established for the business district to provide a funding source for improvements within the district. The CIA seeks to enhance public spaces within the

district, establish and implement a consistent design theme for public spaces and private properties, and stimulate economic growth and increased property values.

The North Van Dyke business district is strategically located near major transportation routes (M-53 and M-59), a regional trail route (Clinton River Trail), and Downtown Utica. With the construction of the new Jimmy John's Field, a minor league baseball stadium located just to the north of the district, there exists an opportunity for the North Van Dyke business district to capture customers from those who visit the ballpark. Increase demand for restaurants, sports bars and sports-related merchandise stores is likely and could be accommodated by existing or new business within the district. The City and CIA should seek to enhance existing connections to the ballpark, including the Clinton River Trail, or provide new connections, such as a shuttle service to the ballpark.

As the key intersection within the North Van Dyke business district, Utica Road at Van Dyke Avenue has been designated as a Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node. A concept plan for this node has been prepared and is included in the Future Land Use Plan, which follows this section.

### ***Regional Shopping District***

Constructed in 1976, Lakeside Mall is a regional, full-line enclosed shopping mall located along the south side of M-59, between Schoenherr Road and Hayes Road. The mall contains two floors, and has a total retail floor area of 1,505,504 square feet supported by 7,745 on-site parking spaces. The mall features more than 150 stores, as well as a food court. The mall draws shoppers and visitors from well beyond the City limits. Given its size and importance as a regional hub for commerce, the Lakeside Mall and surrounding commercial uses is a key component of the City's planning framework. This Plan outlines a long-term vision to transform the Lakeside Mall into a mixed-use town center or urban district.

### ***Mixed-Use Commercial Corridor***

Van Dyke Avenue (M-53) is the City's primary north-south corridor, supporting several major industrial complexes and commercial centers. The Planning Framework recognizes the importance of this mixed-use corridor for the commerce and employment of residents of both the region and City. However, this Plan recommends numerous enhancements to enhance the corridor's functionality, long-term marketability, access/mobility, and its overall aesthetic appeal.

### ***Medical Office/Mixed-Use***

The Beaumont Hospital – Troy campus is a 458 bed community hospital with full inpatient and outpatient services. Located directly across from the hospital, the Beaumont Medical Center – Sterling Heights includes the Family Medicine Center, Rehabilitation and Dialysis Center and Physician Office Building and Cancer Center. The hospital and medical center are connected via a skywalk over Dequindre Road. The potential for development of this area for future medical and medical office use is high, given the presence of Beaumont Hospital, access to a freeway interchange (M-59 at Dequindre), availability of undeveloped land, and proximity to natural areas (Plumbrook Nature Preserve). Thus, this Plan seeks expanded development of this area to accommodate medical and medical office related use within a planned campus setting.

### ***Industrial Innovation Corridor***

Sterling Heights boasts some of the best industrial and manufacturing sites in the country. These uses have helped define the community and are vital to its long term economic and cultural health. These industrial lands are concentrated within an approximately 6 mile long by 1 mile wide corridor framed by Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue (the Sterling Innovation District).

Sterling Heights has all the features industrial users look for, and the market demands more and better space. Sterling Heights has the fundamentals in place to attract and retain blue-chip industrial users, and should continue to build off of this track record of success. This Plan seeks to continue a proactive approach in promoting the industrial corridor as a premier location for innovation and investment. A district “branding” and marketing effort is currently underway. Once a district identity or design theme is established, gateway treatments on major transportation arteries into the district should be established through a combination of landscaping, hardscapes and/or signage.

### ***Innovation Support Corridor***

The lands along the west side of Mound Road are closely tied to the City’s industrial corridor which fronts the east side of Mound Road. The success of the commercial uses in the corridor is dependent upon the employee base of the industrial corridor. Office and light industrial uses on the west side of Mound Road thrive on proximity to the major industrial operations across the road. This Plan seeks to establish a well-planned mixed-use “innovation support corridor” which supports the success and viability of the City’s industrial corridor.

### ***Civic Node***

The Planning Framework recognizes the existing governmental “center” of Sterling Heights, located at the intersection of Utica Road and Dodge Park Road, as a key node within the City. This Plan envisions additional municipal and civic facility development within this node in the future to serve the City’s growing population and ensure high quality services for its citizens.

### ***Land Use Transition Areas***

The Planning Framework recognizes one area in the City that is in a state of land use transition. This area, located between Mound Road and Merrill Road in the northern portion of the City, is a location where detached single-family residential dwellings are currently located, but should be phased out over time. In line with market demand and timing, this Plan envisions a transition to more intensive land use. Such future land use may include a mixture of multiple-family residential, office, local commercial or industrial.

## Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is focused on ensuring that development and redevelopment occurs in a manner that preserves and enhances the character and quality of the neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas in the City. The Future Land Use Plan section provides a description of the 18 future land use categories identified on the **Future Land Use Map**. These future land use category descriptions generally outline the form that development (including redevelopment) is expected to take in the City. Additional activities will be necessary to implement the recommendations of the future land use category descriptions below.

### **Residential Neighborhoods**

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of a community, and the health and vitality of a City in general is directly correlated with the health and vitality of its neighborhoods. It follows as a matter of course that Sterling Heights is defined primarily by its neighborhoods, and it is of paramount importance that the neighborhoods of the City continue to be inviting, healthy, stable places to live.

It is the intent of this Plan to encourage the maintenance of Sterling Heights' existing neighborhoods, while promoting the creation of vibrant new neighborhoods through intelligent development of the remaining vacant parcels and as redevelopment opportunities occur. Such development and redevelopment should be centered around the following principles:

- Neighborhoods should be compact and pedestrian-friendly.
- Sidewalks should be provided in all instances. Features such as street trees, benches, lighting, and separate bike paths should be provided to create a pedestrian friendly environment. Pedestrian-scale architectural elements are encouraged on front facades to create a strong relationship between the building and the street.
- Neighborhoods should contain enough of a diversity of uses so that many of the activities of daily living can occur within walking distance of home. Continuous and safe pedestrian routes must be provided to support uses within the neighborhoods (schools, places of worship, etc.) as well as adjacent non-residential districts, particularly the "Traditional Mixed-Use Development Nodes" as designated on the Future Land Use Plan Map.
- Neighborhood streets should be interconnected, with continuous sidewalk routes, to facilitate efficient traffic flow and encourage walking. In the instance of infill development, the existing street and sidewalk network should be continued into new developments, regardless of housing type or the adjacent use.
- A broad range of housing types should be available within each neighborhood to ensure that all segments of the population may find places to live. Functional integration of the different types of housing units must be achieved in order for the neighborhood to function as a single unit. Integration can take the form of different housing units on the same street or block, or within an overall development.
- Central public spaces should be provided to facilitate the creation of or to reinforce community and neighborhood identity. In particular, a neighborhood park should be provided within each neighborhood. Such parks may be provided in conjunction with neighborhood schools.
- As redevelopment opportunities occur, basic services (schools, parks, shopping, etc.) should be provided within a five-minute walk (1/4 mile) of all residents of a neighborhood.

Hold page for Future Land Use Plan Map

The Future Land Use Plan has established three specific neighborhood classifications. These categories are listed and described below:

#### Estate Residential

The Estate Residential future land use category encompasses the neighborhoods in the northwestern portion of the City (north of 18 Mile Road and west of Mound Road). Accommodating some of the newest single-family development in the City, these neighborhoods generally feature larger “estate” homes on larger lots in a more rural setting. These planned developments have been laid out to reflect the natural topography and environmental characteristics of the land and preserve natural features through the provision of common open space areas. Typical lot sizes are 10,000 square feet or larger with approximate densities of 4 dwelling units per acre or less. This classification is designed to protect these single-family neighborhoods, maintain their rural estate character and encourage future single-family neighborhood development which is consistent with the rural estate character.

#### Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential future land use category encompasses the majority of the City's neighborhoods (with the exception of the northwestern and southeastern corners of the City). These neighborhoods are well established and were commonly constructed in the 1960's and 1970's. Each neighborhood typically includes a neighborhood park and/or a public school. Typical lot sizes range from 7,200 square feet to 10,000 square feet, with densities ranging from approximately 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre. This classification is designed to protect these single-family neighborhoods, maintain their suburban character and encourage future single-family neighborhood development which is consistent with the existing suburban character.

#### Urban Residential

The Urban Residential future land use category has been established to encompass the neighborhoods within the southeastern portion of the City, generally south of the Sterling Relief Drain and between Van Dyke Road and Hayes Road. Generally constructed in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, these established neighborhoods commonly include a neighborhood park and/or public school within their limits. Typical lot sizes range from 7,200 square feet to 10,000 square feet, with densities ranging from approximately 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre. This classification is designed to protect these single-family neighborhoods and maintain their existing character. This Plan also recognizes the potential for this urban residential area to accommodate, through infill development, a more

## Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood

1. Has a variety of functional attributes that contribute to day-to-day life, for current and future residents.
2. Accommodates multi-modal transportation and ensures ongoing access for transit dependent residents to transit.
3. Has design and architectural features that are visually interesting.
4. Is home to strong community and social organizations that reflect the diversity of the area's residents.
5. Engages the diversity of local residents in discussion of local planning issues.
6. Has local plans that reflect the engagement of the diversity of residents and respond to their concerns.
7. Promotes environmental and social sustainability and responds to climatic demands.
8. Has a memorable character, expressed through both physical features and social life.

Source: *How Do We Create (or Preserve) "Great Neighborhoods?" Comment on Talen et al. (2015)*. By Elizabeth Mueller. Journal of the APA, Autumn 2015, Vol. 81, No. 4.

diversified and dense mixture of housing with densities of approximately 6 to 8 dwelling units per acre.

Additionally, the Future Land Use Plan has designated two specific areas as opportunities for future planned residential development. These two areas are described below:

#### Planned Residential – Area 1

The existing Maple Lane golf course property and adjacent properties, located along Maple Lane Drive between 15 Mile Road and 14 Mile Road, represents a unique opportunity to accommodate future residential growth. The Maple Lane Golf Course is anticipated to remain in operation in the short term; however, it is likely that the site and adjacent properties will be redeveloped eventually to add an integrated residential housing component. A planned mixture of residential housing types is encouraged in this area, to potentially include small-lot detached homes, duplexes, townhomes and other attached housing units, and active senior housing. Supportive non-residential uses, such as recreational facilities, live/work units, office/work space and convenience commercial establishments may be accommodated as part of a planned development.

Strong pedestrian connections to nearby amenities, including the Dodge Park/15 Mile mixed-use node, Schoenherr/15 Mile mixed-use node, Sterling Heights High School, Baumgartner Park and the Iron Belle Trail are critical to facilitate access and promote healthy living. To this end, pedestrian-oriented enhancements to Maple Lane Road would need to occur in conjunction with new development.

#### Planned Residential – Area 2

This classification encompasses the lands along both sides of Schoenherr Road, between Metropolitan Parkway and Utica Road, which includes both the Plumbrook Golf Course property and surrounding properties. Similar to the Maple Lane Golf Course, the Plumbrook Golf Course could be redeveloped or reconfigured in the future to accommodate residential development. Given this area's proximity to existing recreational lands (golf courses, Clinton River park system, etc.) and its location at the crossroads of three regional non-motorized trail systems (Clinton River Trail, Freedom Trail and Iron Belle Trail), a future residential development which caters to an active/recreational lifestyle is recommended. A planned mixture of residential housing types is encouraged in this area to attract persons of all ages, to potentially include active senior housing, small-lot detached homes, duplexes, townhomes, lofts and apartments. Supportive non-residential uses, such as recreational facilities, live/work units, office/work space and convenience commercial establishments may be accommodated as part of a planned development.

Strong pedestrian connections to nearby amenities, including the Schoenherr/17 Mile mixed-use node, Clinton River Trail, Freedom Trail, Freedom Hill County Park are critical to facilitate access and recreational lifestyles.

#### **Multiple-Family Residential**

This land use classification is intended to provide opportunities for more affordable housing and alternatives to traditional single-family detached subdivision development. The demand for multiple-family land is growing, both locally and nationally, as was documented in the Residential/Housing Needs Assessment section of this Master Plan. The multiple-family residential future land use classification seeks to accommodate a diverse stock of housing in the City to ensure housing choice for individuals of all ages and lifestyles.

Multiple-family development may serve as a transitional land use; one which buffers single-family units from more intensive land uses or the impacts associated with transportation corridors. This land use category is most commonly defined by the existence of multiple-family apartment structures, but may also include group living quarters such as independent and assisted living, and convalescent care facilities. In addition, traditional attached single-family development types like townhouses, condominiums, duplexes, bungalow courts, fourplexes, live/work units and courtyard apartments should also be incorporated within this future land use category.

### ***Manufactured Home Residential***

This classification is intended to comprise a group of manufactured housing or mobile homes located on the same property in a park setting. Uses incidental to the manufactured home park such as a sales office and recreational facilities may also be present. Reflective of existing manufactured housing developments, two areas within the City (Rudgate Manor and Sterling Estates) are identified for manufactured home residential usage.

### ***Local Commercial***

This land use designation includes commercial uses intended to meet the daily retail and service needs of the residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Small to mid-scale neighborhood and community commercial uses are appropriate in these designated areas. Such uses may include, but are not limited to, convenience stores, grocery stores, bank branch offices, coffee shops, ice cream stores, video stores, restaurants, dry cleaners and laundries, pharmacies and other types of retail stores.

Local commercial uses may be located on individual sites, or in neighborhood or community commercial centers. Existing local commercial uses tend to be located at and oriented toward major intersections and along major streets (mile roads). Local commercial uses should be designed to relate to the surrounding neighborhood(s) they serve, not just the roads upon which they front.

Retail, office, and residential uses (such as townhomes or upper-story loft units) are appropriate uses to be added to existing local commercial sites throughout the City, but especially those located within a designated mixed-use development node. Intensification of existing local commercial centers, and the inclusion of a residential component in such intensification, will increase the number of residents, creating an increased demand for commercial services. The intensification of existing commercial uses should also create more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly local commercial centers.

### ***Regional Commercial***

This land use designation includes commercial uses intended to serve a regional population. Regional commercial uses have higher gross floor-area requirements and are often found in large retail centers or in stand-alone buildings. Developers of such regional commercial uses typically cite high levels of visibility and accessibility as a requirement. Because these uses are often destination uses that draw people from a greater distance, more parking is required. Due to the above mentioned factors, regional commercial uses require sites with larger areas than other commercial uses, and should be located along major thoroughfares such as Van Dyke Road or M-59.

Regional commercial developments are generally too large and massive to be incorporated into a neighborhood setting; however, such developments should incorporate pedestrian scale development features where possible. A mix of uses should be encouraged within regional

commercial centers, particularly office use but also including institutional and recreational uses. Regional commercial uses have been planned for appropriate locations within the City, including at the major intersections of Mound Road at M-59, Dequindre Road at 18 Mile Road, Dequindre Road at Metropolitan Parkway, Van Dyke Avenue at 18 Mile Road, and M-59 at Schoenherr Road.

### **Lakeside Village**

Given regional and local shopping center trends and factors, the City of Sterling Heights is concerned about the long-term success of Lakeside Mall. These trends and factors include:

- Nationally, many shopping malls are closing or are on the brink of failure. A recent local example of this trend is the closing of Northland Mall in Southfield.
- Lakeside Mall is facing increased competition from new or planned shopping centers located nearby. This includes The Mall at Partridge Creek, an open air shopping center located 2 miles west on M-59; and a recently announced “outlet mall” proposed to be built near the M-59 and I-94 interchange.
- Customer preferences are changing. There is an emerging preference for street-front shopping and to experience “place.”

In response to these challenges, the Lakeside Mall Sustainability Assessment study was completed in September 2015. This study outlines a long-term vision to transform the Lakeside Mall into a mixed-use town center or urban district. Two concept redevelopment plans were prepared to illustrate the potential of the site to accommodate new development and to provide a general direction for a transformation to a fully-functioning mixed-use district. Concept A generally keeps Lakeside Mall in place and provides development opportunities around the perimeter of the mall property. Concept B eliminates the mall concept and instead, incorporates a water feature into the site. Concept B retains the mall anchor stores, but allows for additional development opportunities around the perimeter of the mall property. The **Lakeside Mall Sustainability Assessment Concept A** and **Concept B** are highlighted on the following pages.

The Lakeside Village future land use classification accepts the recommendations of the Lakeside Mall Sustainability Assessment study as the long-term vision for the Lakeside Mall and adjacent properties.

### **Office**

Office uses are planned throughout the City along major roads, but generally not at road intersections. Professional offices, travel agencies, insurance offices, and other types of non-manufacturing or commercial development are appropriate in areas designated for office development. Office development may occur in stand-alone buildings on smaller parcels, or in planned office parks on larger parcels. Secondary uses compatible with office uses may be permitted on the upper stories of office buildings; such uses may include residential dwelling units.

# Lakeside Mall Sustainability Assessment: Concept A

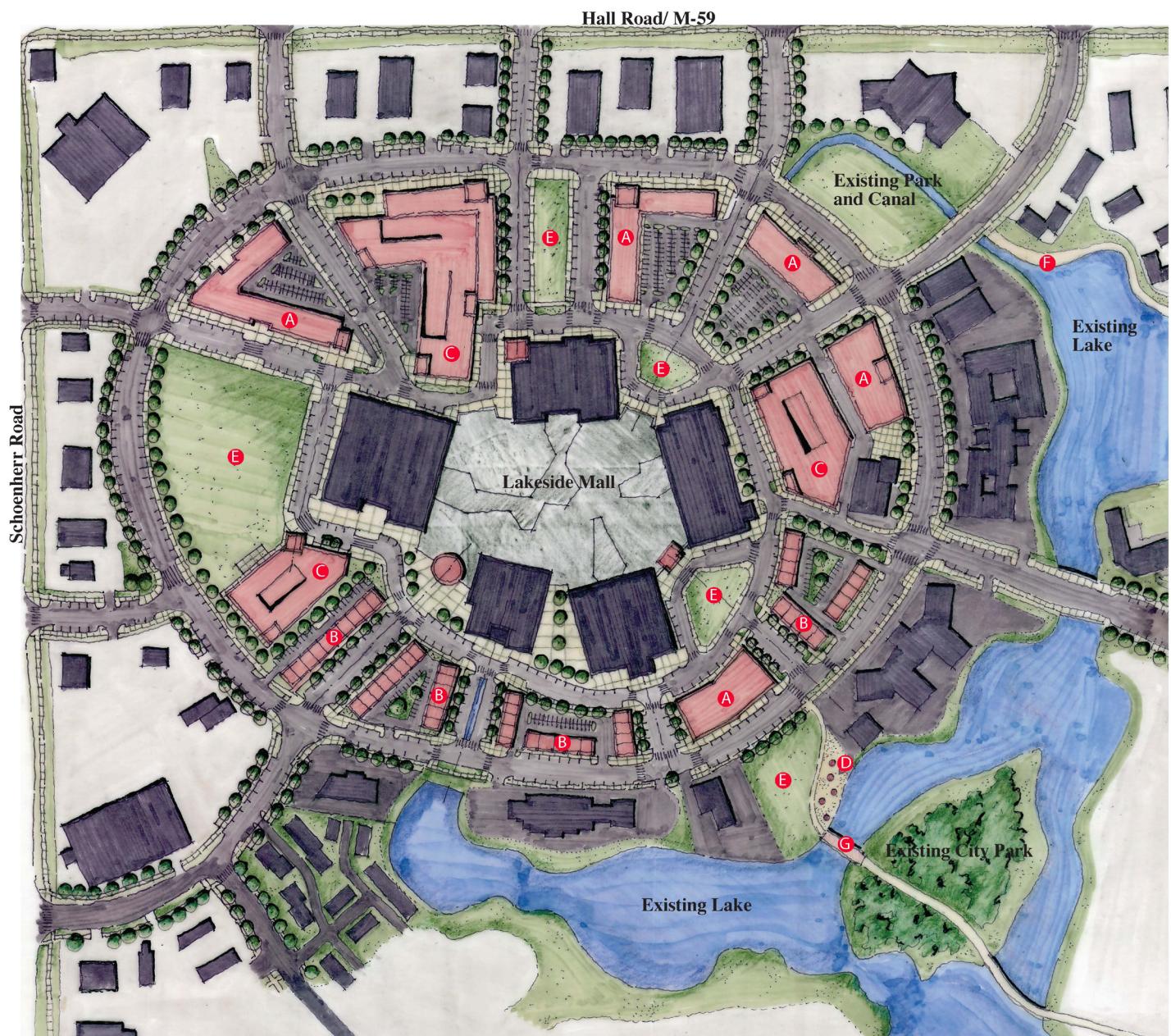
Keep the mall in place and provide development opportunities around the perimeter.

## Proposed Elements:

- A** Developments - Options include: Residential, office, institutional, civic, first floor retail, etc.
- B** Higher density residential development: lofts, townhouses, etc.
- C** Parking deck with first floor retail
- D** Urban beach
- E** Greenspace - Active/passive
- F** Canal/water's edge and pedestrian path
- G** Bridge

## Key:

- New/Infill Development
- Existing Buildings
- Civic/Open Space



## Lakeside Mall Sustainability Assessment: Concept B

**Eliminate mall concept. Retain anchors while integrating water feature through the site and providing development opportunities around the perimeter.**

### Proposed Elements:

- A** Developments - Options include: Residential, office, institutional, civic, first floor retail, etc.
- B** Higher density residential development: lofts, townhouses, etc.
- C** Parking deck with first floor retail
- D** Urban beach
- E** Greenspace - Active/passive
- F** Canal/water's edge and pedestrian path
- G** Bridge

### Key:

- New/Infill Development
- Existing Buildings
- Civic/Open Space



## ***Traditional Mixed-Use Development***

The Traditional Mixed-Use Development future land use classification identifies key sites or nodes where the City's placemaking strategy can effectively be implemented. These eleven locations are as follows:

1. Schoenherr/19 Mile
2. Ryan/18 Mile
3. Dequindre/17 Mile
4. Ryan/17 Mile
5. Ryan/15 Mile
6. Van Dyke/17 Mile
7. Schoenherr/17 Mile
8. Dequindre/15 Mile
9. Dodge Park/15 Mile
10. Schoenherr/15 Mile
11. Utica/Van Dyke

The future land use plan envisions these traditional mixed-use development nodes to be characterized by compactness, walkability, connectivity, a mixture of land uses and a mixture of housing types. The geographic size of each is generally one-quarter mile in each direction of the intersection, which represents a walkable area, called a "pedestrian shed". Over time, each traditional mixed-use development node should include a mixture commercial, office, residential and/or civic uses. The character of development should reflect traditional development principles, including limited front yard setbacks, wide sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented architecture and site amenities, transit accommodations, clustered/attached buildings, multi-story structures, and vehicular accommodations in the rear. Residential uses may be integrated within the upper stories of mixed-use buildings or as stand-alone buildings which are integrated within the non-residential uses. Open spaces should also be integrated within the node in the form of a plaza, commons or park.

### ***Recommended Node Densities***

It is particularly important in suburban environments that mixed-use developments and nodes contribute a significant residential density to help support the retail and commercial components of the node to succeed. A number of academic studies have examined those elements that make for a successful mixed-use node or district.<sup>31</sup>

Sterling Heights has a traditional suburban land use pattern with densities typically remaining below 8 dwelling units per acre. Successful mixed use nodes will require significantly higher densities within the concentrated areas within a quarter-mile of each node center. These densities may approach 25-30 dwelling units per acre and are reflective of the additional residents within walking distance that will be counted on to support the retail components of these mixed-use areas.

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<sup>31</sup> Brass, Kevin. "Drawing People In: Placemaking and the Density Discussion." *Urban Land*. February 29, 2016.

## Qualities of Successful – And Unsuccessful – Traditional Mixed Use Development Projects

### SUCCESSFUL

- A mix of uses
- Connectivity to transportation and infrastructure
- Cohesiveness with long-range community plans
- A strategic vision that features a strong sense of place beyond a standard project

### UNSUCCESSFUL

- A single land use
- A lack of public space and amenities
- Dependence on one mode of transportation, usually the car
- Failure to provide a safe, 24-hour environment

Source: Adapted from Brass, Kevin. "Drawing People In: Placemaking and the Density Discussion." *Urban Land*. February 29, 2016.

### Recommended Node Phasing

The generic phasing strategy illustrated in the figure on the next page can be applied to each of the proposed traditional mixed-use development nodes. These are to be used as general guides and should not be interpreted as rigid construction phasing requirements. These principles are general in nature and are designed to help create a new market or market stability for a product that does not currently exist in Macomb County.

#### **Phase 1: Improved and Expanded Pedestrian Infrastructure**

These are public investments to improve the pedestrian experience for the purpose of encouraging walking and biking. These infrastructure improvements may include widening sidewalks, improving crosswalks, creating on-street parking, and installing bicycle parking. These investments help to signal to investors and lending institutions the City's commitment to creating dense, walkable areas.

#### **Phase 2: Reinforce the Corners**

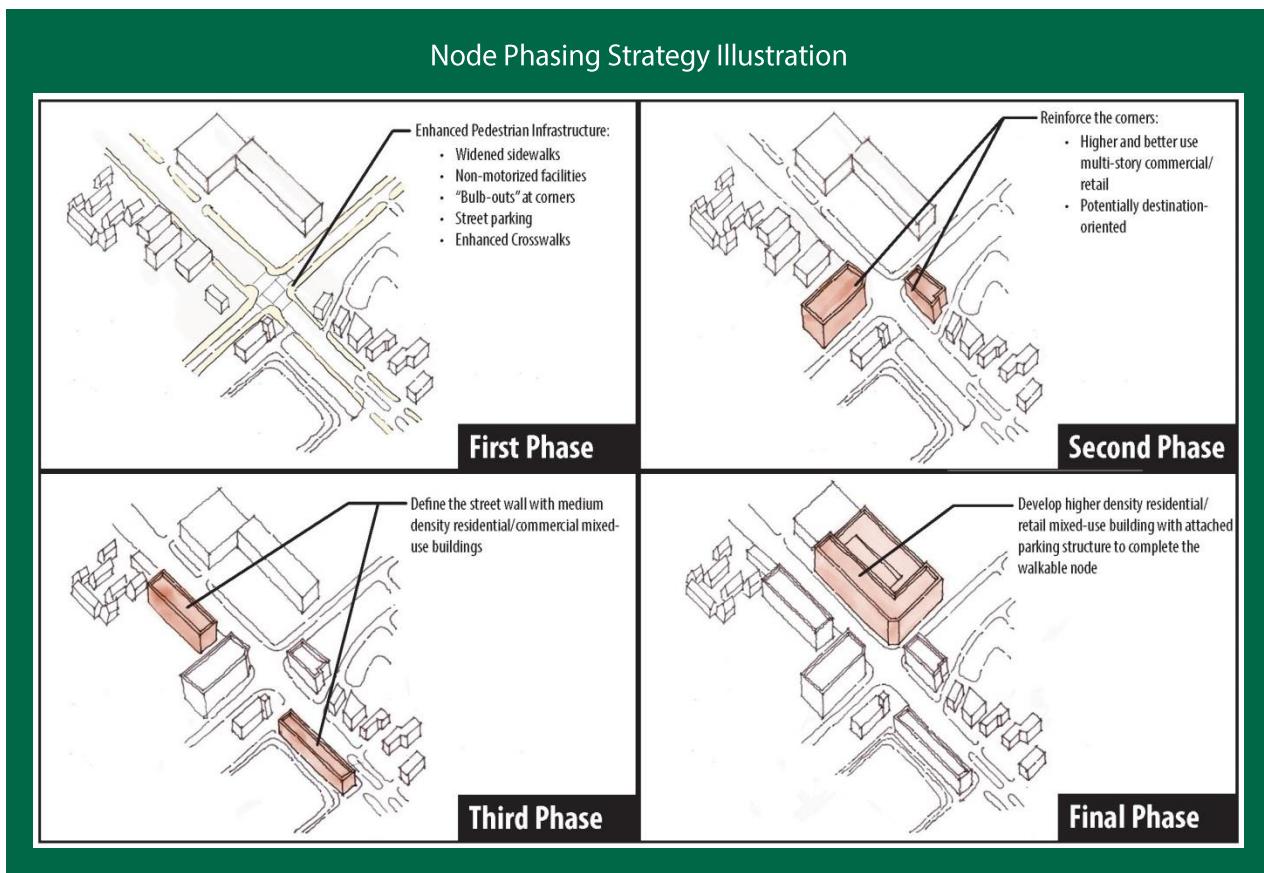
The second phase can focus on improving the immediate corners of a node. These sites provide opportunity for multi-story multiple-use buildings and serve to anchor the node.

#### **Phase 3: Define Street Wall**

Defining the street wall is the private sector equivalent of improving the pedestrian experience. In this case, smaller buildings, which can be residential and commercial mixed-use, bring the built elements that help improve the pedestrian experience – transparency, activity, visual interest, a sense of safety and eyes on the street.

### Final Phase: Increased Density and Parking Structures

This final phase can be thought of as the bonus round – meaning that it is not required for a successful district. A successful mixed-use node will, however, support the demand for increased residential and commercial density, which will potentially trigger a need for a parking structure.

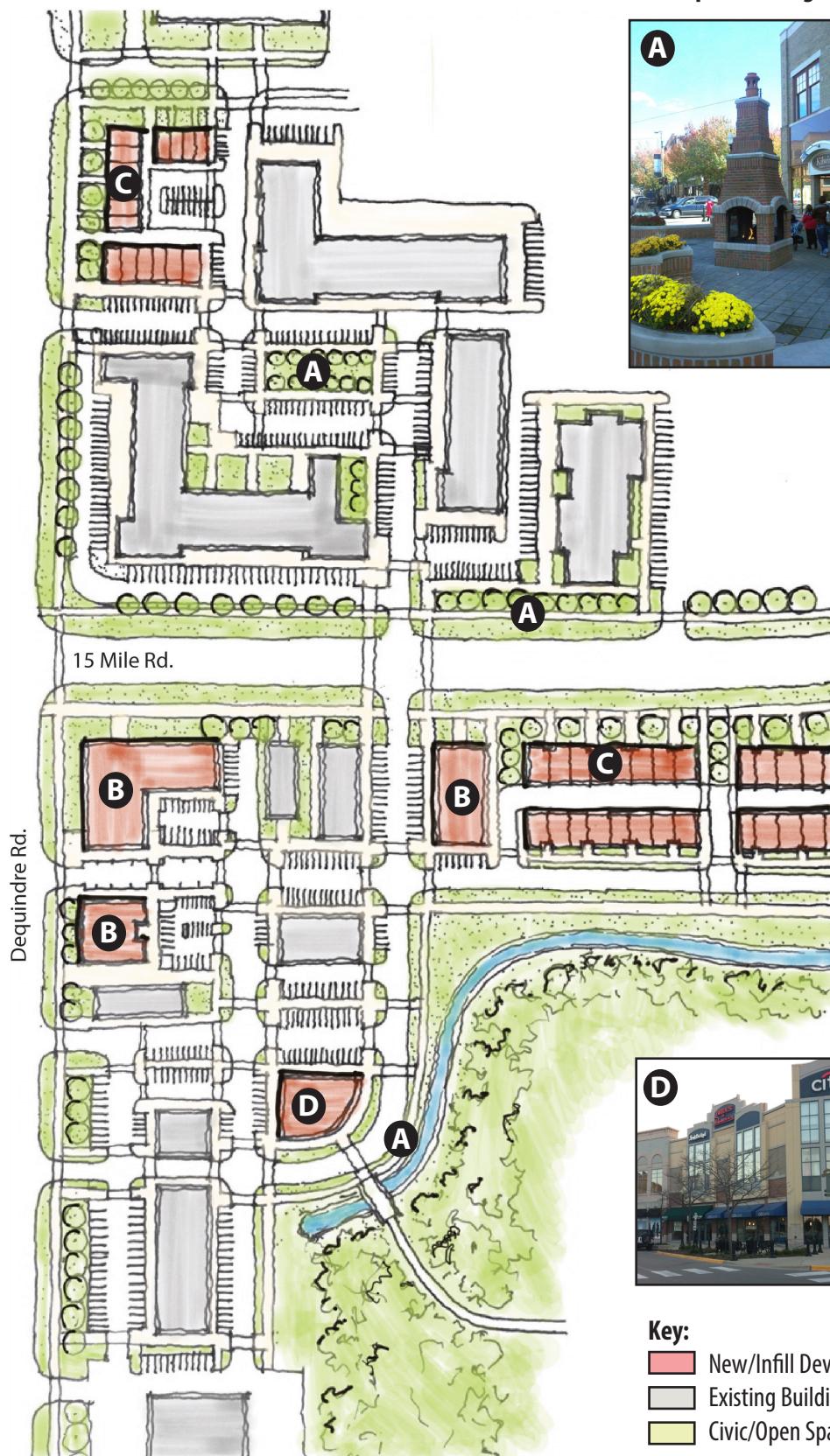


### Node Concept Plans

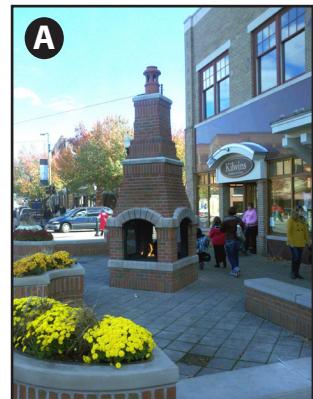
Specific conceptual plans have been created for five of the ten nodes. These **Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concepts** are included on the following pages. Included for each is a plan-view illustration showing how new/infill development buildings and civic/open spaces can be integrated with existing development to form a compact, walkable node. Each concept also features specific development strategies (i.e., uses) and representative imagery which characterizes the recommended uses. For the Dodge Park/15 Mile node, two concepts are presented. The first concept is an initial build-out concept, which presents an initial strategy for applying placemaking enhancements and accommodating new/infill development. The additional build-out concept presents an aggressive, long-term development scenario for the site which builds upon the success of the initial concept.

# Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concept: Dequindre/15 Mile

## Node Concept



## Representative Development Imagery:

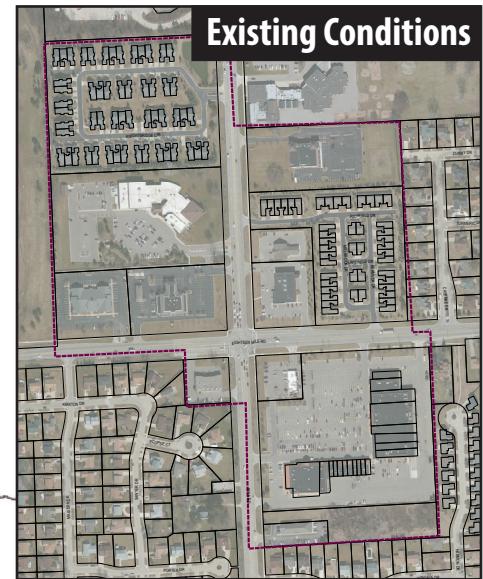


## Development Strategies:

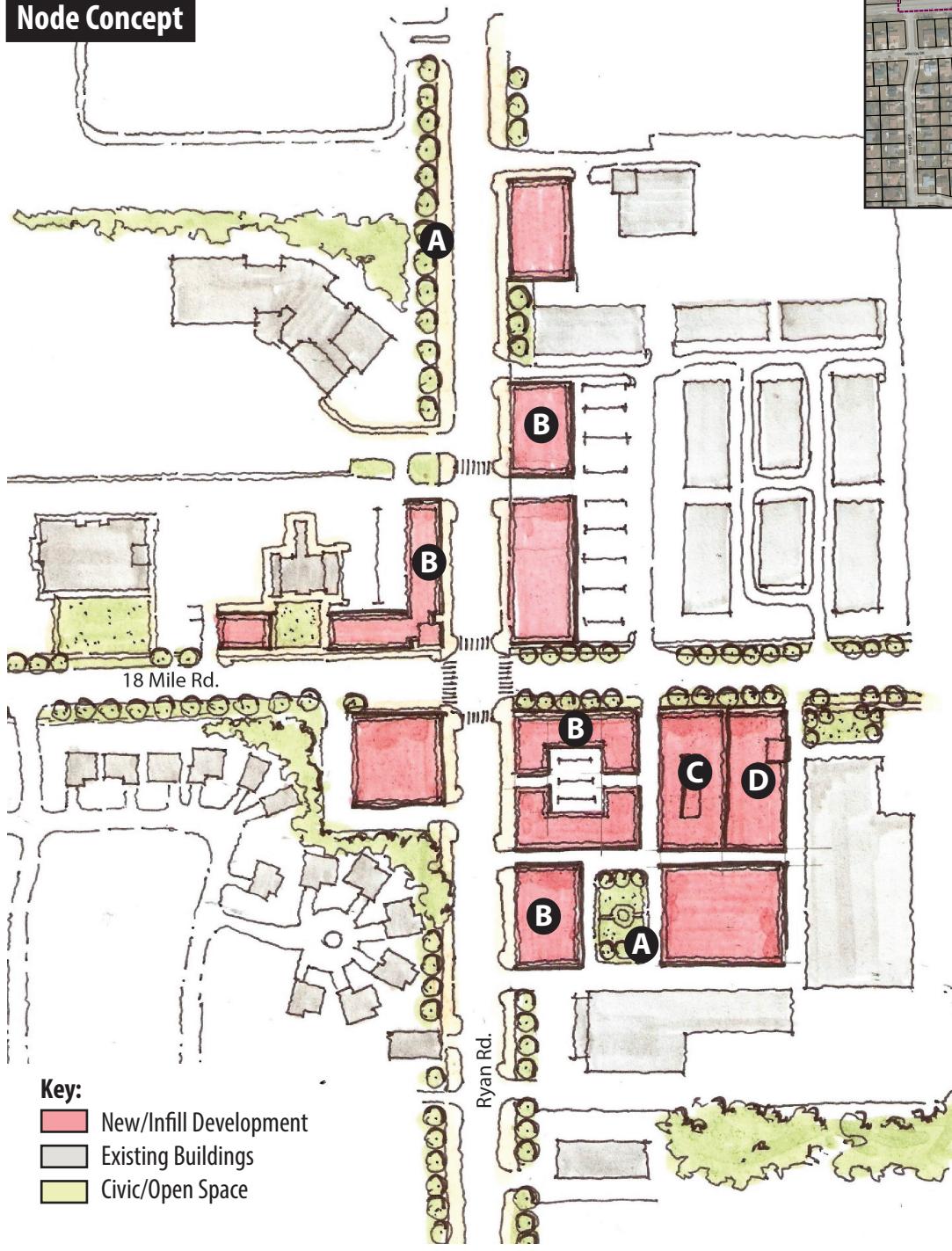
- A** Enhanced Pedestrian Infrastructure
- B** Mixed-Use Housing/Commercial
- C** Multi-Family Townhouse
- D** Multi-Story Commercial

# Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concept: Ryan/18 Mile

## Representative Development Imagery:



## Node Concept



## Development Strategies:

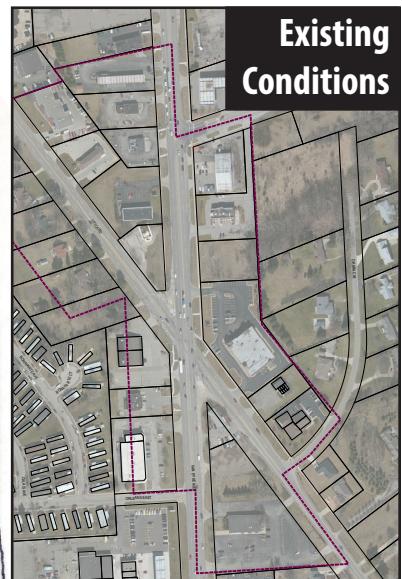
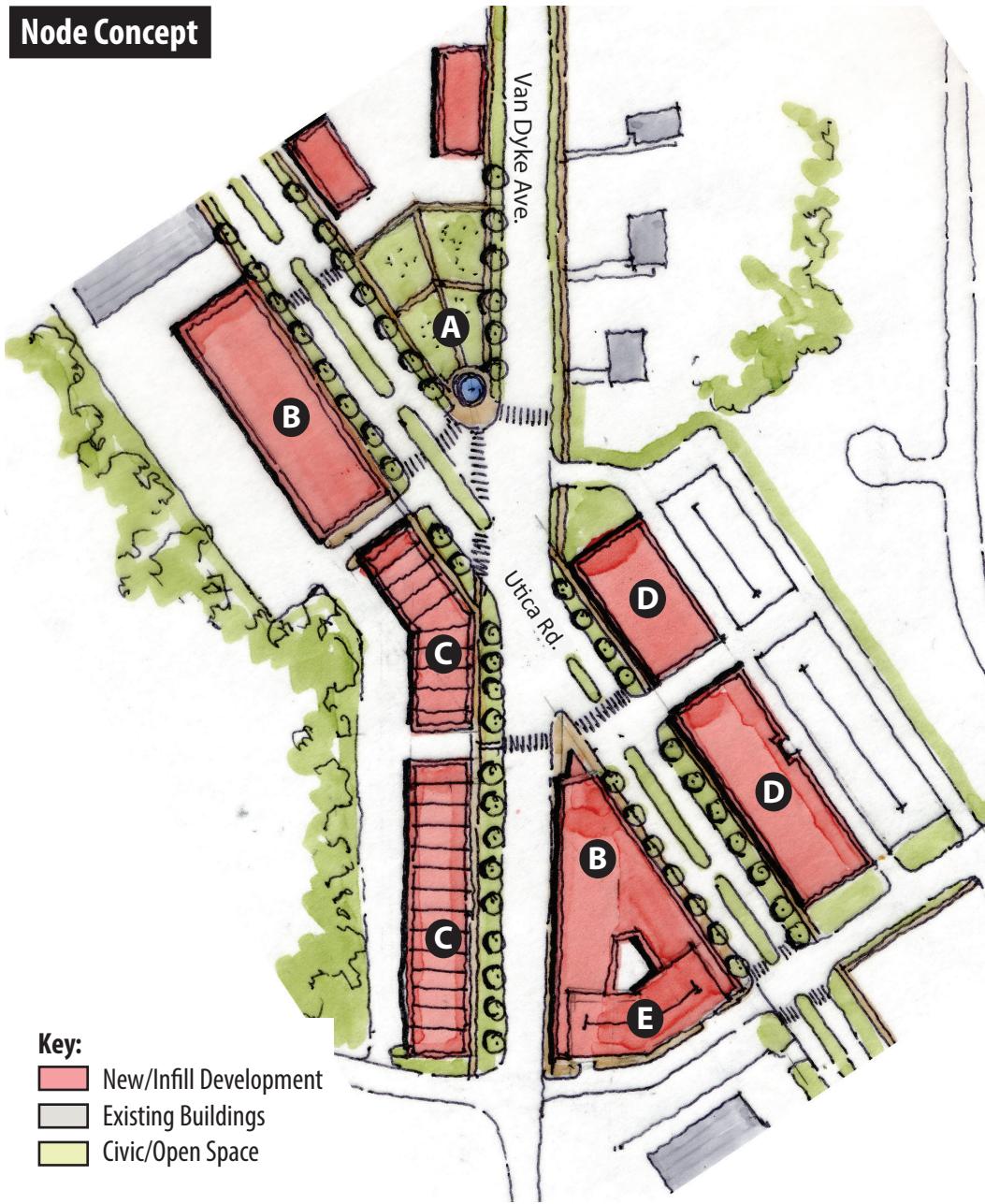
- A** Enhanced Pedestrian Infrastructure
- B** Mixed-Use Housing/Retail
- C** Parking Structure
- D** Multi-Family Housing

## Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concept: North Van Dyke CIA District (Utica Road at Van Dyke Ave.)

Representative Development Imagery:



Node Concept



### Development Strategies:

- A Enhanced Pedestrian Infrastructure
- B Mixed-Use Housing/Commercial
- C Multi-Family Townhouse
- D Multi-Story Commercial
- E Parking Structure

# Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concept: Dodge Park/15 Mile

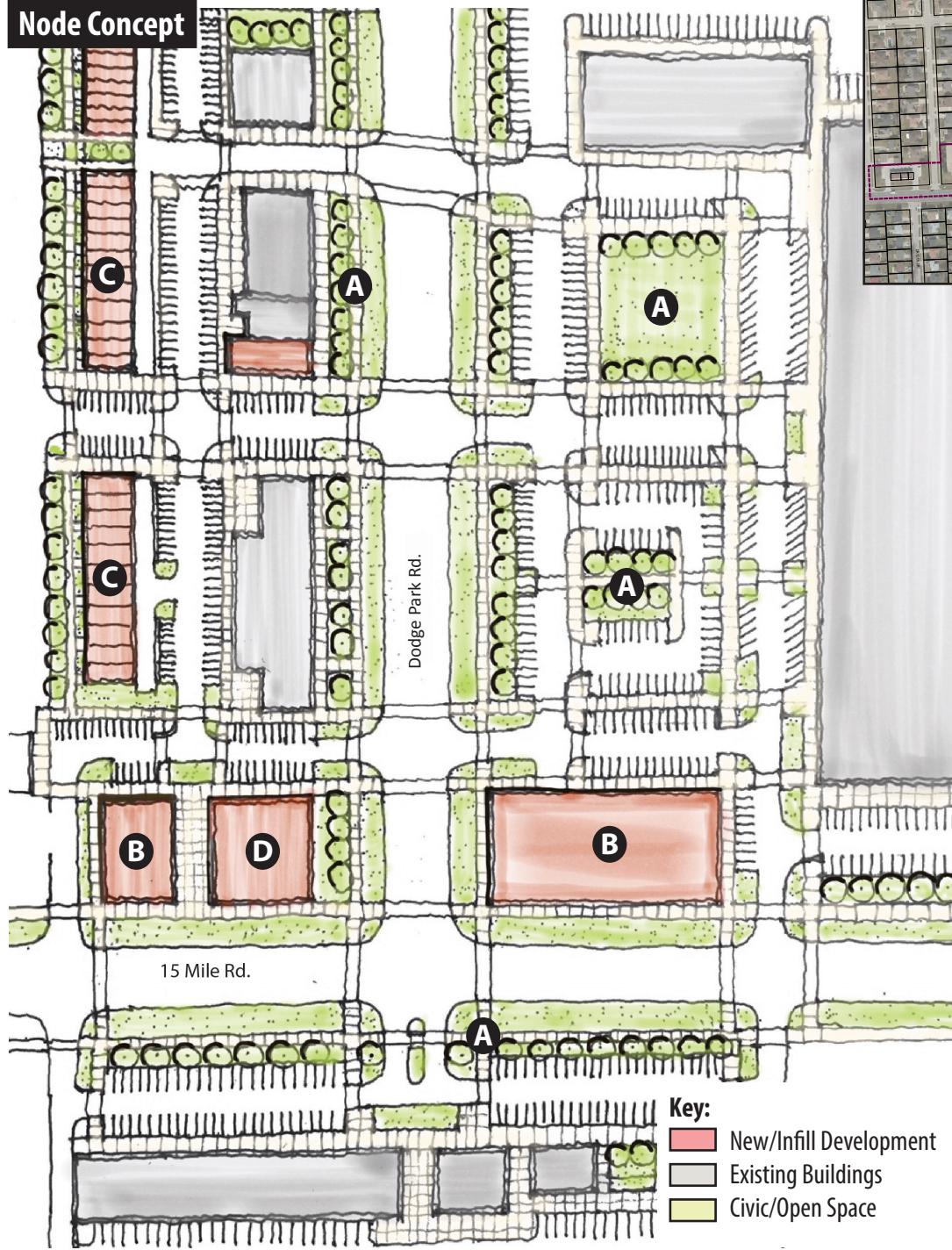
## Initial Build-Out Concept

### Representative Development Imagery:



Existing Conditions

### Node Concept



### Development Strategies:

- A** Enhanced Pedestrian Infrastructure
- B** Mixed-Use Housing/Retail
- C** Multi-Family Townhouse
- D** Multi-Story Commercial

# Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concept: Dodge Park/15 Mile Additional Build-Out Concept

Representative Development Imagery:



## Node Concept



### Development Strategies:

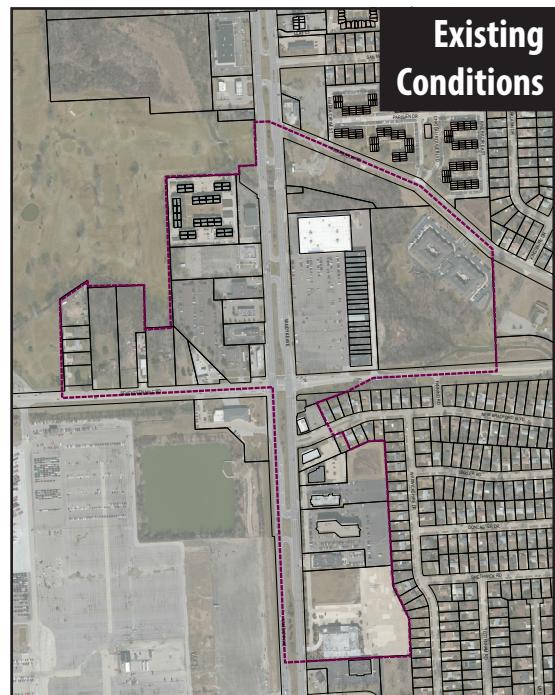
- A** Enhanced Pedestrian Infrastructure
- B** Mixed-Use Housing/Retail
- C** Multi-Family Townhouse
- D** Multi-Story Commercial

### Key:

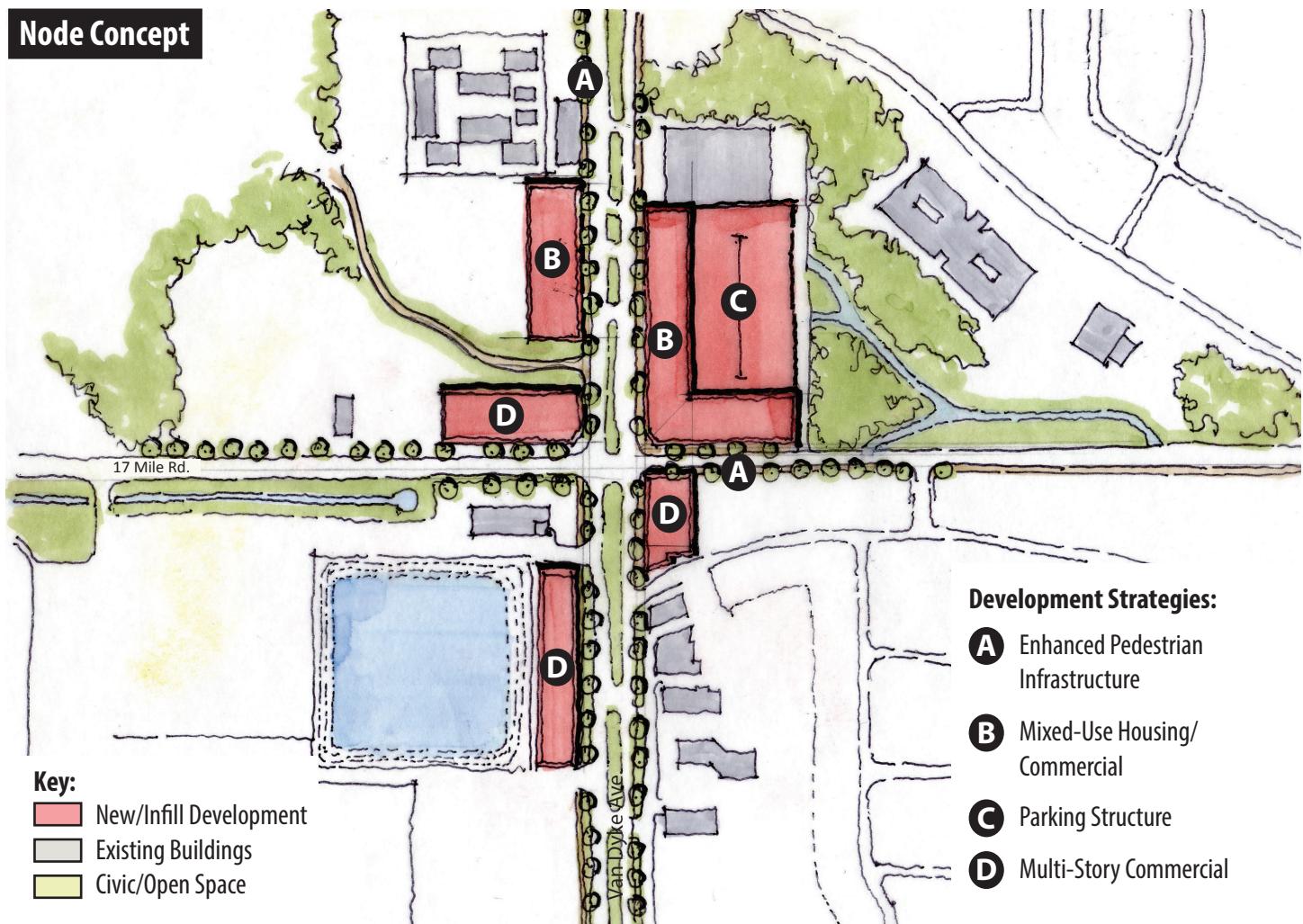
- New/Infill Development
- Existing Buildings
- Civic/Open Space

# Traditional Mixed-Use Development Node Concept: Van Dyke/17 Mile

## Representative Development Imagery:



## Node Concept



## Van Dyke Mixed Use

This future land use category encompasses the Van Dyke Avenue corridor generally between 14 Mile Road and 18 Mile Road. Currently, this segment of the Van Dyke Avenue corridor is comprised primarily of regional commercial uses, including big box retail shopping centers, multi-tenant commercial centers, and stand-alone restaurants, retail stores, automobile-service facilities, office buildings and similar uses. Large parking areas and generous setbacks are common throughout the corridor. The types of uses and current physical characteristics of this corridor are reflective of the opportunity afforded by Van Dyke Avenue's high visibility and traffic volumes, the presence of employees who work in the City's industrial corridor, and the significant customer base found in nearby neighborhoods.

In line with historic and future market demand, it is the intent of this future land use category to permit the continuation of predominantly regional commercial and related land uses within this corridor. However, this Plan outlines numerous recommendations to enhance the corridor's functionality, long-term marketability, access/mobility, and its overall aesthetic appeal:

- Diversify the types of allowable land uses to establish a true mixed-use corridor. In addition to regional commercial uses, this corridor can be enhanced through the integration of office buildings, institutional uses, and residential uses. Residential uses can be incorporated through the allowance of vertical mixed-use (upper story residential units) or through infill development of a higher-density residential nature. Such high density residential development would serve as a transition between non-residential uses along Van Dyke and adjacent single-family residential uses.
- Develop new retail, office and other development "pads" along the road frontage. These pads should feature limited setbacks and should be oriented to the street. In some cases, these development pads could be accommodated within existing large and underutilized parking areas. Other opportunities exist to accommodate development on the interspersed vacant and underutilized lands within the corridor. Intersection reconfigurations as part of the ongoing Van Dyke Avenue reconstruction may also free up the corners of Van Dyke/15 Mile and Van Dyke/Metropolitan Parkway for unique and highly visible mixed-use developments.
- Provide plaza and park areas to break up existing large sites and in conjunction with future mixed-use development.
- Minimize the amount of parking to only that which is necessary to support the proposed uses throughout the year.

## Three Dimensions for Assessing Design Quality

1. **Building Quality** – This involves the engineering performance of a building, which includes structural stability and the integration and robustness of systems, finishes, and fittings.
2. **Functionality** – This concerns the arrangement, quality, and interrelationship of space, and the way in which the building is designed to be useful.
3. **Impact** – This involves the building's ability to create a sense of place and have a positive effect on the local community and environment; it also encompasses the wider effect the design may have on the arts of building and architecture.

Source: *Design Values: Measuring the Economic Value of Investing in Architecture and Design*. By Marc A. Sallette. Urban Land. November/December 2005.

- Promote the creation of a pedestrian friendly site plan that separates vehicles from pedestrians.
- Reconfigure circulation aisles on existing commercial sites to function as streets and to define blocks throughout the sites. Additionally, seek to connect the internal street system to the existing streets found in adjacent developments.
- Establish a uniform aesthetic for private development which builds upon the design amenities constructed as part of the recent Van Dyke Avenue road project.

### ***Medical/Office***

The medical/office future land use classification has been established to accommodate the Beaumont Hospital property found on the east side of Dequindre Road as well as adjacent vacant properties along Dequindre Road and Dobry Drive. Recommended uses for this classification include hospitals, medical clinics, laboratories, medical supply, pharmacies, and professional offices, as well as related commercial uses which may support the primary medical uses and facilities.

High quality site and design standards should be established to ensure a uniform aesthetic character for the area. To promote healthy living and the protection of adjacent environmental habitats, the area should be characterized by pedestrian-oriented design and the integration of sidewalks and pedestrian connections to adjacent uses, recreational areas, and neighborhoods. Appropriate buffer zones should be utilized to mitigate negative effects on unique natural features (wetlands, etc.) as well as adjacent residential developments.

### ***Industrial***

The City's planned industrial lands are concentrated within an approximately 6 mile long by 1 mile wide corridor framed by Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue (the Sterling Innovation Corridor). The industrial future land use classification is intended to permit traditional industrial uses including large manufacturing operations (such as the Fiat Chrysler, Ford, General Dynamics, and BAE Systems), research and development plants, hi-tech industries, smaller light industrial operations inside and outside of planned industrial parks, warehousing, light manufacturing, and other common industrial uses. Among other smaller locations which would support future infill industrial development, the former Sunnybrook Golf Course property represents a key redevelopment opportunity to support new industrial manufacturing and technology use, along with supportive uses (offices, lodging, etc.).

The industrial sector of the economy is continually evolving. It is important that the industrial land use category permit not only traditional manufacturing uses, but also permit and encourage industries of the future to ensure that Sterling Heights retains and enhances its local employment base. Emerging industries such as information technology, bio-technology, and life sciences are more environmentally benign, highly productive, energy efficient, technologically savvy, and globally competitive. Sterling Heights offers an ideal location for industries such as these.

### ***Innovation Support***

The innovation support future land use category generally encompasses the properties fronting the west side of Mound Road, between 14 Mile Road and south of 18 Mile Road. Mound Road, a major north-south transportation artery, frames the City's industrial corridor to the east. Thus, the lands along the east side of Mound Road are predominantly industrial in character and are planned for industrial use. The lands along the west side of Mound Road, within this classification, consist of a

variety of residential dwellings, various retail service, auto-related operations, limited business and professional offices, light industrial uses (some with outdoor storage), and intermittent vacant lots.

Several challenges to planning this segment of Mound Road include limited individual lot depths and widths, lack of space for screening where adjacent to residential areas, high traffic volumes, a poor streetscape aesthetic, excessive curb cuts, and limited pedestrian infrastructure. This innovation support future land use category recognizes the role of this mixed-use corridor and seeks to facilitate incremental enhancements to address the challenges noted above.

The lands along the west side of Mound Road are closely tied to the City's industrial corridor which fronts the east side of Mound Road. The success of the commercial uses in the corridor is dependent upon the employee base of the industrial corridor. Office and light industrial uses on the west side of Mound Road thrive on proximity to the major industrial operations across the road. Given this, it is the intent of the innovation support classification to establish a well-planned mixed-use corridor which supports the success and viability of the City's industrial corridor. Recommended land uses include light industrial (no outdoor storage), high-technology/innovation uses, commercial and office uses. Multiple-family residential uses may also be appropriate in a limited manner. The commercial land uses should be concentrated at the key intersections (14 Mile, 15 Mile, Metropolitan Parkway and 17 Mile). Between these commercial intersections, an effective mix of land use should be encouraged. To facilitate appropriate future development and redevelopment, the consolidation of smaller lots should be encouraged so as to allow for larger sites and to accommodate buffer zones. To enhance non-motorized circulation, pedestrian linkages via sidewalks and bike paths should be provided to the City's industrial corridor and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

### **Civic Center**

The civic center future land use category has been established to encompass the governmental "center" of Sterling Heights located at the intersection of Utica Road and Dodge Park Road. This area features numerous municipal and civic related facilities, including the city hall, police/fire station, recreation center, senior center, library, Dodge Park and Stevenson High School. This future land use plan envisions additional municipal and civic facility development within this district in the future to serve the City's growing population and to ensure high quality services for its citizens.

No specific future land use classification has been established to encompass public and semi-public facilities located outside of the civic center district which support the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Examples of such facilities include public schools, post offices, places of worship, fraternal organizations, fire stations, and utility substations. Instead of being designated as a specific classification, the future land use classification of these facilities and properties is reflective of the classification of the surrounding neighborhood or district. Future public and semi-public facilities which are necessary to serve the citizens of Sterling Heights should be appropriately integrated into the neighborhood fabric through proper site planning principles, including generous screening and buffering where adjacent to residential uses.

In the event that an existing public or semi-public facility within a residential neighborhood closes or becomes available for private development, this Plan recommends that the site be developed for residential use consistent with the existing neighborhood character. Through a mechanism such as planned unit development (PUD), such a project may include a more diverse mixture of housing types at a somewhat higher density than the surrounding neighborhood. Another alternative would be the

conversion of an abandoned public site/property for recreational use as a new neighborhood park or park expansion.

### **Parks/Open Space**

This category includes a variety of public or private land, recreation facilities, and natural resources such as floodplains, woodlands or wetlands which should be preserved. The maintenance and development of these properties and facilities is expected to satisfy the local recreation needs of the residents of the City. Continued park development and natural features preservation will help ensure that Sterling Heights retains its natural beauty and desirability.

### **Transitional Land Use**

One transition land use area has been identified on the Future Land Use Plan to serve as a flexible use area. This area, located between Mound Road and Merrill Road in the northern portion of the City, is a location where detached single-family residential dwellings are currently located, but should be phased out over time. On the west edge of this area, many of the parcels (which directly front Mound Road) have already been developed for commercial or office use. The west edge of this area is adjacent to the City's industrial corridor. This Plan envisions that the existing single-family detached homes will remain for the short term. However, in line with market demand and timing, this area is recommended to transition over time to more intensive land use. Such future land use may include a mixture of multiple-family residential, office and light industrial use. Properties which front Mound Road may additionally support commercial use.

## **Transportation System Plan**

This Sterling Heights Master Plan Technical report describes existing conditions for transportation and includes a broad analysis of and recommendations for roads, non-motorized transportation and public transit. These recommendations are centered around two key principles:

1. Expanding the City's non-motorized network; and,
2. Improving public transit routes both within Sterling Heights and routes connecting to regional job centers.

### ***Non-Motorized Network Recommendations***

Concurrent with the development of this Master Land Use Plan, the City is also developing a Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan. Related to non-motorized transportation infrastructure, the City has established an aggressive long-term strategy for improvements, which is described herein. This long term non-motorized transportation strategy is also illustrated on the **Parks & Non-Motorized Facility Improvements Map**.

The City is committed to continuing to improve connectivity, mobility and safety within the City of Sterling Heights in order to provide transportation choices, recreation, contribute to placemaking, economic development, and the health of residents.

#### *Sidewalks and Sidepaths*

A high priority element for enhancing connectivity and walkability within the City is to systematically continue to complete gaps in the sidewalk/sidepath system along the major road corridors. A number of priority sidewalk gaps are identified within the 5-Year Capital Improvements Program (included within the Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master

Plan) and focus on: gaps adjacent to City parks; short segments, which, when completed, will connect into a large network of completed sidewalks and trails; and, priorities identified by residents that provided input into the Plan.

Insert Parks & Non-Motorized Facility Improvements Map

### Iron Belle Trail

Michigan's Iron Belle Trail routes through the City of Sterling Heights for more than 7 miles via Schoenherr Road, Utica Road and the Clinton River Park Trail. This is a significant and exciting asset to have been selected to traverse through Sterling Heights. Recommendations included in the 5-Year capital improvements schedule related to the Iron Belle route within the City focus on improving the surface of the route to make it a consistent width and material (10' wide asphalt or concrete), and including a pedestrian bridge over the Red Run Drain near Schoenherr. Recommendations also include elevating the pedestrian treatments at the major road crossings to not only improve safety but also assist in branding and wayfinding, and implementing wayfinding and route confirmation signs.

### Shared Use Trails and Mid-Block Crossings

Shared use (peds and bikes) trails are proposed in the Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan including 4 significant connections:

- Delia Park to Plumbrook Nature Preserve Trail Connection
- ITC Corridor from Hall Road to Clinton River Road including connections to Lakeside Mall, Bemis, Browning, Harvey, and Havel Schools, residential neighborhoods and the Clinton River Path system.
- 18 Mile Vacant Right-of-Way from Hayes Road into the Clinton River Path system
- Schoenherr Road gap between Clinton River Road and Utica/Seventeen Mile Road to provide a north south connection to and from the Iron Belle Route and the Clinton River Path system

Each of these additions includes locations where mid-block crossings (as opposed to at signalized intersections) would need to be considered in order to safely facilitate predictable crossings for peds/bikes. Treatment details will be unique to each location and will be determined during design but could include pavement markings, signage, pedestrian islands, curb extensions, stop lines, lighting, rapid flash beacons, HAWK signals, etc.

### Designated Ped/Bike Oriented Streets

Several road corridors within the City have been highlighted as corridors that are Ped/Bike Oriented. These are corridors where the needs of ped/bikes should be accentuated and where a lower level of service for vehicles may be acceptable in order to provide better mode balance. These include:

- Ryan Road
- Dodge Park Road
- Schoenheer Road (14 Mile to Utica Road – Iron Belle Trail route)
- Maple Lane Drive
- Fifteen Mile Road
- Seventeen Mile Road
- Nineteen Mile Road
- Riverland Drive

- Clinton River Road
- Utica Road
- Plumbrook Road

This designation recommends that, when road improvements are being planned and designed, the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists should be accentuated and design elements to increase safety and comfort should be considered. Treatment details will be unique to each corridor and determined during design but could include elements such as narrower vehicular lane widths, mid-block crossings, refuge islands, wide paved shoulders, on-street, protected bike lanes, wide sidewalks, tree plantings, medians, bioswales, lighting, respite, etc.

#### Priority Amenities

There are a number of amenities proposed to enhance the comfort and safety of non-motorized users and encourage greater use of a connected network. These elements include:

- A comprehensive wayfinding signage system
- Bike fix it stations at key locations
- Bike rental at/near Dodge Park
- Secure and convenient bike parking at public parks, public buildings, schools, retail destinations, places of employment and major transit stops

#### **Transit**

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) was created by the Michigan Legislature through Public Act No. 387 of 2012. A 10-member board that is appointed for three-year terms by the county executives of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, the chair of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, the Mayor of Detroit, and the Governor of Michigan governs it. The Governor's appointee serves as chair, without a vote.

The purpose of the RTA is to plan for and coordinate public transportation in the four-county region, including the City of Detroit, and to deliver rapid transit in a region where none exists. It is the entity through which transit providers must apply for state and federal funds, and through which those funds are allocated to providers. The RTA is also responsible for developing a Regional Master Transit Plan to guide present and future service and is empowered to put funding questions on the ballot for public vote, the first of which is a 1.2 mill property tax millage scheduled for November 2016. The typical property would pay approximately \$8 per year to fund the RTA.

The Regional Transit Master Plan is designed to reform the network of transit providers so that riders are provided with improved and modern service with reduced wait times; riders are connected with destinations; and to allow those with mobility issues (seniors and people with disabilities) to gain more independence. Other long-term (all are 20 year projections) economic benefits for Macomb County include an estimated 14,000 new jobs created, a \$1.4 billion increase in gross domestic product and an estimated \$1 billion increase in real personal income.

Regionally, 92% of all jobs are not reachable in less than 60 minutes using transit. Though Sterling Heights is a regional job center, transit connections are lacking for a job center. Sterling Heights will benefit from the RTA in very defined ways: an improved cross-county connection via Van Dyke and 15

Mile Road; a Commuter express route along M-59 that provides connection to the Airport Express station at Gratiot and M-59; and, new local bus service on Dequindre Rd. The cross-county connections will be operated by SMART with capital improvements for stations, stops and additional busses paid for by the RTA. The RTA will also subsidize increased service along these routes. The M-59 Commuter Express Route will run all day during the week and will connect Sterling Heights with Pontiac, Troy, Utica and Mt. Clemens.

### ***Roads***

The Sterling Heights Department of Engineering and Department of Public Works are responsible for design, repair and maintenance of local roads within the City. Van Dyke (M-53) is under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), while major roads such as Metro Parkway and the mile roads are under the jurisdiction of the Macomb County Department of Roads. The road network, as discussed previously in the non-motorized transportation section, needs to accommodate all users. While not every road is appropriate for bicycle and pedestrian use (Van Dyke Road, for example), future road improvements need to take into account non-motorized users accordingly. The non-motorized plan has identified a number of key non-motorized corridors. The City's Capital Improvements Plan and road maintenance program need to include pedestrian safety improvements like crosswalks and signals which may include Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB), HAWK signals or other signalized and signed crossings. Priority for road improvement projects should be given to those projects which will increase pedestrian and non-motorized access and connectivity within the City.

### ***Complete Streets and Vision Zero***

The City adopted a Complete Streets Resolution in 2012 and has worked to provide access for all users. This Master Land Use Plan further clarifies specific actions necessary to develop a complete street network within the City. An additional step the City should undertake is to adopt a Vision Zero policy, a policy which aims to completely eliminate traffic-related fatalities. A number of other communities across the nation and in Michigan have already adopted these policies, which guide and inform road design, engineering and traffic enforcement decisions.

### **Parks and Recreation Plan**

As noted above, the City is developing a Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan concurrent with the development of this Master Land Use Plan. Related to parks and recreation, the City has established an aggressive strategy for improvements. Specific improvements are listed in the Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan's 5-year Capital Improvements Schedule. The key parks and recreation improvements are summarized below. Additionally, the City has announced the Recreating Recreation initiative, which seeks to leverage the City's existing natural resource assets to create a City that provides its residents with year-round recreational opportunities. This initiative included an opportunity for Sterling Heights residents to vote on a dedicated parks and recreation millage (the millage was approved in November 2016). The millage will deliver a diverse mix of recreational opportunities to the City's 130,000-plus residents.

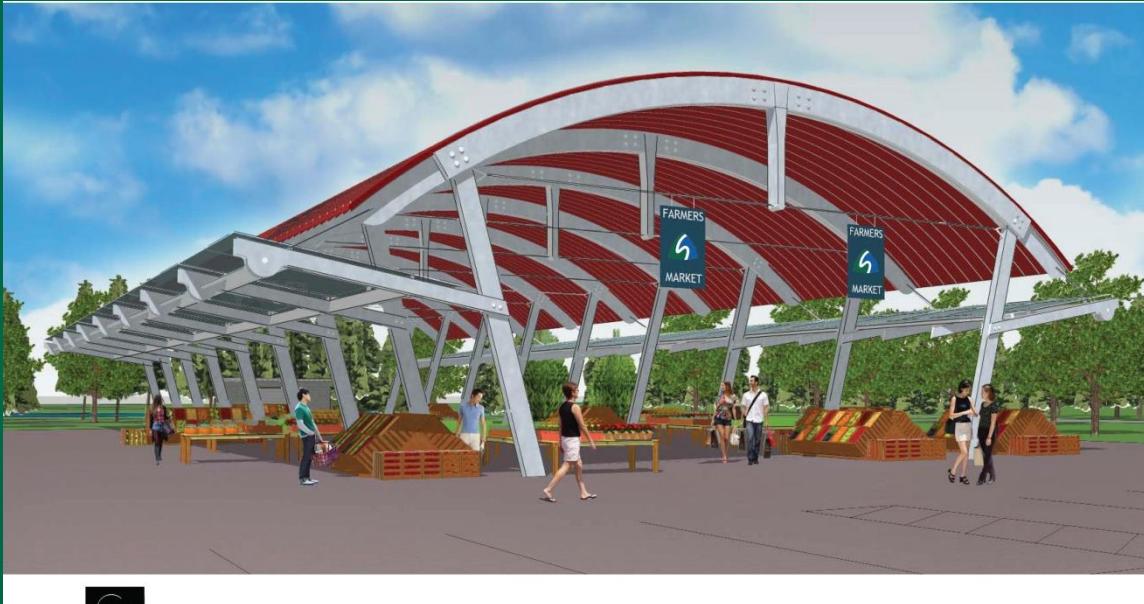
### ***City Center, Nature Center, Senior Center and Clinton River Improvements***

Located in the heart of the City's civic center, several large-scale recreational facility improvements are proposed which would significantly enhance the recreational quality of life for the City's residents. These proposals include:

- Construction of a new 122,000 square foot community center that would be a draw for all residents participating in the wide-array of cultural and recreational programming produced by the Parks & Recreation Department. This facility is proposed to be located across from Sterling Heights City Hall.
- A permanent facility for the highly successful Dodge Park Farmers Market, proposed to be located at Dodge Park.
- A refrigerated ice-rink for winter enthusiasts seeking a place to enjoy outdoor skating, proposed to be located at Dodge Park.
- An outdoor sprayground that will provide families with a great place to cool down, proposed to be located at Dodge Park.
- A multi-use skatepark that will be a unique recreational opportunity for the more adventurous crowd, proposed to be located at City Hall.
- Facilities for canoe and kayak enthusiasts to enjoy the best stretch of the Clinton River in Macomb County.
- Access for City residents to enjoy an aquatics option for year-round water activity.
- A mini turf soccer field for those who enjoy playing the world's most popular sport, proposed to be located at Dodge Park.
- An enclosed bocce ball court, proposed to be constructed adjacent to the existing Senior Center.



## Proposed Farmer's Market Concept Illustration



Farmer's Market Perspective

### **Neighborhood and Major Park Improvements**

A broad array of capital improvements are also proposed for nearly every one of the City's neighborhood parks and major parks. Major park improvements include enhanced internal vehicular and pedestrian connections and athletic field renovations at Delia Park, field renovation and lighting at Baumgartner Park, replacement of the existing pavilion/restroom at Dodge Park, and the renovation of the existing pavilions/restrooms at Farmstead Park, Nelson Park and Delia Park. Typical neighborhood park improvements include new signage, park path resurfacing, athletic court resurfacing, new play structures, landscaping, site amenities and accessibility improvements.

With no currently existing facilities, a new dog park is proposed to be constructed within the City, potentially within Magnolia Park.

# Implementation Plan

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Throughout the Master Land Use Plan, a variety of action oriented recommendations are laid out as a means to accomplish the City's vision for the future. The adoption of the Master Land Use Plan is but one part of the community planning process. Realization or implementation of the recommendations of the Plan can only be achieved over an extended period of time and only through the cooperative efforts of both the public and private sectors. Implementation of the Plan may be realized by actively pursuing a myriad of activities. From a general perspective, these include, but are not limited to:

- Continuing public involvement processes
- Auditing, analysis, revisions, and adoption of existing or new City ordinances or regulations pertaining to continued development and redevelopment within the City
- Supporting and ensuring enforcement and consistent administration of in-place policies, ordinances and regulations
- Providing a program of capital improvements and adequate, economical public services to encourage continued community growth
- Developing and then prioritizing municipal programs and joint public/private partnerships

This chapter details various strategies for implementing the recommendations of this Plan.

## Zoning Plan

Zoning regulations are adopted under the local police power granted by the State for the purpose of promoting community health, safety, and general welfare. Such regulations have been strongly supported by the Michigan courts, as well as by the U.S. Supreme Court. Zoning consists of dividing the community into districts, for the purpose of establishing density of population and regulating the use of land and buildings, their height and bulk, and the proportion of a lot that may be occupied by them. Regulations in different kinds of districts may be different. However, regulations within the same district must be consistent throughout the community.

The intent of zoning is to assure the orderly development of the community. Zoning is also employed as a means of protecting property values and other public and private investments. Because of the impact that zoning can have on the use of land and related services, it should be based on a comprehensive long range community plan.

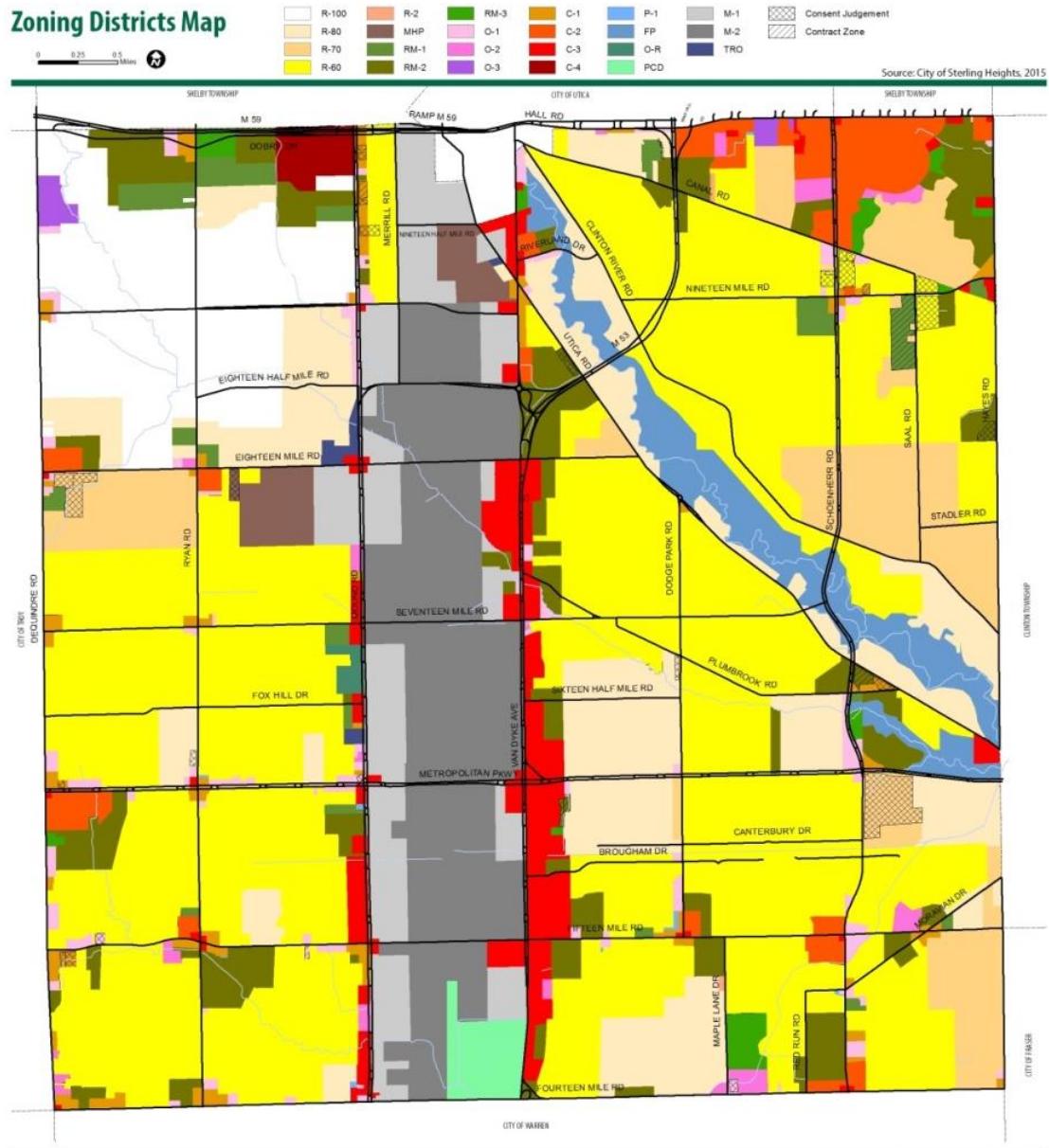
Zoning is an effective tool not only for the implementation of the Plan, but also benefits individual property owners. It protects homes and investments against the potential harmful intrusion of business and industry into residential neighborhoods; requires the spacing of buildings far enough apart to assure adequate light and air; prevents the overcrowding of land; facilitates the economical provision of essential public facilities; and aids in conservation of essential natural resources.

The City of Sterling Heights Zoning Ordinance (Ord. No. 278) is a regulatory tool that guides land use and development within the City. As stipulated by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended, the zoning ordinance must be based upon a master plan. Therefore, this Master Land Use Plan, by setting forth the long term vision of the City, provides the basis for the Sterling Heights Zoning Ordinance, which contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. As required by

the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the following is an explanation of the relationship between the future land use classifications presented in this Master Land Use Plan and the zoning districts established in the City of Sterling Heights Zoning Ordinance. Recommended revisions to the City's zoning ordinance and zoning map, based on the recommendations of this Master Land Use Plan, are also outlined in this section.

### Current City Zoning Districts

Presently, the City's Zoning Ordinance and **Zoning Districts Map** have established 24 total zoning districts. There are five one-family residential districts (R-100, R-90, R-80, R-70 and R-60), a two family residential district (R-2), a mobile home park district (MHP), three multiple family districts (RM-1, RM-2 and RM-3), five office districts (O-1, O-2, O-3, O-R and TRO), four commercial districts (C-1, C-2, C-3 and C-4), a vehicular parking district (P-1), a flood plain district (FP), a planned center district (PCD), and two industrial districts (M-1 and M-2). (Please note that, although the R-90 district is established within the zoning ordinance, there are no lands presently zoned R-90 within the City.)



## ***Relationship Between the Future Land Use Categories and the Zoning Districts***

In total, 18 future land use categories have been established in this Master Land Use Plan. (These categories were shown on the **Future Land Use Map** on page 148 and were fully described in the previous chapter.) **Table 17** summarizes the relationship between the 18 future land use categories and the 24 zoning districts. As an example, the intent of the Estate Residential future land use category, as established in this Plan, is effectively accomplished through any one of three existing zoning districts: the R-100, R-90 or R-80 District.

In several instances, future land use categories which have been established in this Plan do not specifically relate to an existing zoning district. In these cases, it is recommended that new zoning districts be established by the City to effectively accomplish the recommendations of that particular future land use category.

A more detailed explanation of the relationship between the future land use categories and zoning districts is provided below.

### ***Estate Residential***

The Estate Residential future land use category encompasses the neighborhoods in the northwestern portion of the City (north of 18 Mile Road and west of Mound Road). Typical lot sizes are 10,000 square feet or larger with approximate densities of 4 dwelling units per acre or less.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- R-80, R-90 or R-100 one-family residential zoning

### ***Suburban Residential***

The Suburban Residential future land use category encompasses the majority of the City's neighborhoods (with the exception of the northwestern and southeastern corners of the City). Typical lot sizes range from 7,200 square feet to 10,000 square feet, with densities ranging from approximately 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- R-60 or R-70 one-family residential zoning

**Table 17**  
**Zoning Plan: Future Land Use Categories and Zoning Districts Comparison**  
**City of Sterling Heights, 2016**

### *Urban Residential*

The Urban Residential future land use category has been established to encompass the neighborhoods within the southeastern portion of the City, generally south of the Sterling Relief Drain and between Van Dyke Road and Hayes Road. Typical lot sizes range from 7,200 square feet to 10,000 square feet, with densities ranging from approximately 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Through infill development, a more diversified and dense mixture of housing with densities of approximately 6 to 8 dwelling units per acre could also be accommodated.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- R-60 or R-70 one-family residential zoning
- R-2 two-family residential zoning
- RM-1 or RM-2 multiple family residential zoning (low rise)

### *Planned Residential*

Two areas of Planed Residential development are proposed on the Future Land Use Plan. These include: the area along Maple Lane Drive, between 15 Mile Road and 14 Mile Road, which includes the Maple Lane Golf Course; and, the lands along both sides of Schoenherr Road, between Metropolitan Parkway and Utica Road, which includes both the Plumbrook Golf Course property and surrounding properties. Both areas are designed to accommodate a planned mixture of residential housing types, to include small-lot detached homes, duplexes, townhomes, other attached units, lofts, apartments, and active senior housing. Supportive non-residential uses could also be accommodated as part of a planned development.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- No zoning district exists which specifically relates to this future land use category. The closest existing zoning category may be the PCD, Planned Center District; however, this zoning district is oriented more toward the accommodation of commercial, office and industrial uses, along with limited residential use. A new zoning district should be created, or an existing zoning district should be amended, to account for the unique mixture of uses and design character intended for this future land use category.

### *Multiple-Family Residential*

This land use classification is intended to provide opportunities for more affordable housing and alternatives to traditional single-family detached subdivision development. This land use category is most commonly defined by the existence of multiple-family apartment structures, but may also include group living quarters such as independent and assisted living, and convalescent care facilities. In addition, traditional attached single-family development types like townhouses, condominiums, duplexes, bungalow courts, fourplexes, live/work units and courtyard apartments should also be incorporated within this future land use category.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- RM-1or RM-2 multiple family residential zoning (low rise)
- RM-3 multiple family residential zoning (mid & high rise)

### *Manufactured Home Residential*

This classification is intended to comprise a group of manufactured or mobile homes located on the same property in a park setting.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- MHP mobile home zoning

### *Local Commercial*

This land use designation includes commercial uses intended to meet the daily retail and service needs of the residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Small to mid-scale neighborhood and community commercial uses are appropriate in these designated areas. Retail, office, and residential uses (such as townhomes or upper-story loft units) are appropriate uses to be added to existing local commercial sites throughout the City, but especially those located within a designated mixed-use development node.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- C-1 local convenience business zoning
- Certain modifications to the C-1 district are recommended to allow additional building height and a mixture of uses. The City should consider establishing regulations within the C-1 district which place greater emphasis on the design of the building and lesser emphasis on prescribing a particular use.

### *Regional Commercial*

This land use designation includes commercial uses intended to serve a regional population. Regional commercial developments are generally too large and massive to be incorporated into a neighborhood setting; however, such developments should incorporate pedestrian scale development features where possible. A mix of uses should be encouraged within regional commercial centers, particularly office use but also including institutional and recreational uses.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- C-2, C-3 or C-4 commercial zoning
- PCD planned center zoning

### *Lakeside Village*

The Plan outlines a long-term vision to transform the Lakeside Mall into a mixed-use town center or urban district. Two concept redevelopment plans were prepared to illustrate the potential of the site to accommodate new development and to provide a general direction for a transformation to a fully-functioning mixed-use district.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- No zoning district exists which specifically relates to this future land use category. The closest existing zoning category may be the PCD, Planned Center District. A new zoning district should be created, or an existing zoning district should be amended, to

account for the unique mixture of uses and design character intended for this future land use category.

#### Office

Office uses are planned throughout the City along major roads, but generally not at road intersections. Office development may occur in stand-alone buildings on smaller parcels, or in planned office parks on larger parcels.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- O-1, O-2 or O-3 office zoning

#### Traditional Mixed-Use Development

The Traditional Mixed-Use Development future land use classification identifies 10 key sites or nodes where the City's placemaking strategy can effectively be implemented. The Plan envisions these traditional mixed-use development nodes to be characterized by compactness, walkability, connectivity, a mixture of land uses and a mixture of housing types. The character of development should reflect traditional development principles, including limited front yard setbacks, wide sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented architecture and site amenities, transit accommodations, clustered/attached buildings, multi-story structures, and vehicular accommodations in the rear. Residential uses may be integrated within the upper stories of mixed-use buildings or as stand-alone buildings which are integrated within the non-residential uses. Open spaces should also be integrated within the node in the form of a plaza, commons or park.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- No zoning district exists which specifically relates to this future land use category. The closest existing zoning category is likely the C-4, Multi-Use District; however, this existing district is oriented to larger commercial sites and includes development requirements which may be in conflict with traditional development principles. Therefore, a new zoning district should be created, or an existing zoning district should be amended, to account for the unique mixture of uses and traditional design character intended for this future land use category.

#### Van Dyke Mixed Use

This future land use category encompasses the Van Dyke Avenue corridor generally between 14 Mile Road and 18 Mile Road. This segment of the Van Dyke Avenue corridor is comprised primarily of regional commercial uses, including big box retail shopping centers, multi-tenant commercial centers, and stand-alone restaurants, retail stores, automobile-service facilities, office buildings and similar uses. It is the intent of this future land use category to permit the continuation of predominantly regional commercial and related land uses within this corridor. However, the Plan outlines numerous recommendations to enhance the corridor's functionality, long-term marketability, access/mobility, and its overall aesthetic appeal (refer to the detailed description for this category in the previous chapter).

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- C-2, C-3 or C-4 commercial zoning

- PCD planned center zoning
- Traditional regional commercial development can be accomplished through the existing commercial zoning districts and/or the planned center district. However, a new zoning district or zoning amendments are likely necessary to allow for certain mixed-use and higher density redevelopment projects at strategic locations within the corridor. Additionally, design standards should be established to ensure consistent and high quality aesthetic design within the corridor.

#### Medical/Office

The medical/office future land use classification has been established to accommodate the Beaumont Hospital property found on the east side of Dequindre Road as well as adjacent vacant properties along Dequindre Road and Dobry Drive. Recommended uses for this classification include hospitals, medical clinics, laboratories, medical supply, pharmacies, and professional offices, as well as related commercial uses which may support the primary medical related uses and facilities.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- O-1, O-2, O-3 or O-R office zoning
- PCD planned center zoning
- Traditional medical office development can be accomplished through the existing office zoning districts, while a planned mixed-use medical/office development could potentially be accommodated by the existing PCD zoning. However, a new zoning district or an amendment to the O-3 district and/or PCD district may be necessary to allow for a planned mixture of medical and ancillary uses with a uniform design aesthetic.

#### Industrial

The City's planned industrial lands are concentrated within an approximately 6 mile long by 1 mile wide corridor framed by Mound Road and Van Dyke Avenue (the Sterling Innovation Corridor). The industrial future land use classification is intended to permit traditional industrial uses including large manufacturing operations (such as the Fiat Chrysler, Ford, General Dynamics, and BAE Systems), research and development plants, hi-tech industries, smaller light industrial operations inside and outside of planned industrial parks, warehousing, light manufacturing, and other common industrial uses.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- M-1 or M-2 industrial zoning
- TRO technical research office zoning

#### Innovation Support

The innovation support future land use category generally encompasses the properties fronting the west side of Mound Road, between 14 Mile Road and south of 18 Mile Road. It is the intent of the innovation support classification to establish a well-planned mixed-use corridor which supports the success and viability of the City's industrial corridor (along the east side of Mound Road). Recommended land uses include light industrial (no outdoor

storage), high-technology/innovation uses, commercial and office uses. Multiple-family residential uses may also be appropriate in a limited manner. The commercial land uses should be concentrated at the key intersections (14 Mile, 15 Mile, Metropolitan Parkway and 17 Mile). Between these commercial intersections, an effective mix of land use should be encouraged.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- O-2, O-3, O-R or TRO office zoning
- C-3 commercial zoning
- M-1 industrial zoning
- Traditional office, business and light industrial development can be accomplished through the various existing zoning districts. However, a new zoning district or an amendment to an existing district (potentially the O-R district) may be necessary to allow for a broader range of uses that support manufacturing industries within the Sterling Innovation Corridor on the east side of Mound Road.

#### Civic Center

The civic center future land use category has been established encompass the governmental "center" of Sterling Heights located at the intersection of Utica Road and Dodge Park Road. This area features numerous municipal and civic related facilities, including the city hall, police/fire station, recreation center, senior center, library, Dodge Park and Stevenson High School. This future land use plan envisions additional municipal and civic facility development within this district in the future to serve the City's growing population and ensure high quality services for its citizens.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- Presently, this area is largely zoned R-80 residential zoning, which allows for public uses. This Plan recommends that a new zoning district be established to more fully accommodate the diversity of governmental and institutional uses, existing and proposed, which are planned for this area.

#### Parks/Open Space

This category includes a variety of public or private land, recreation facilities, and natural resources such as floodplains, woodlands or wetlands which should be preserved.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- R-60, R-70, R-80, R-90 or R-100 one-family residential zoning, which all allow for public parks and facilities
- FP floodplain area zoning

#### Transitional Land Use

One transition land use area has been identified on the Future Land Use Plan to serve as a flexible use area. This area, located between Mound Road and Merrill Road in the northern portion of the City, is a location where detached single-family residential dwellings are currently located, but should be phased out over time. The Plan envisions that the existing

single-family detached homes will remain for the short term. However, in line with market demand and timing, this area is recommended to transition over time to more intensive land use. Such future land use may include a mixture of multiple-family residential, office and light industrial use. Properties which front Mound Road may additionally support commercial use.

Relationship to existing zoning districts:

- A variety of existing zoning districts may be available to accommodate multiple-family residential, office, commercial or light industrial use at this time and in the short term future. However, as a long term measure, this Plan recommends the creation of a new multi-use district which accommodates a variety of non-residential uses and which establishes uniform development standards.

### ***Zoning Plan Implementation Summary***

The key points of zoning implementation are summarized and generally prioritized in brief below.

#### *Short-Term Zoning Implementation (1-3 years)*

- Establish a new zoning district to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Planned Residential](#) future land use category.
- Establish a new zoning district to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Traditional Mixed-Use Development](#) future land use category.
- Amend the C-1 district in line with the [Local Commercial](#) future land use category, to allow additional building height and mixture of uses, and to place a greater emphasis on the design of the building and lesser emphasis on prescribing a particular use.
- Establish a new zoning district to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Civic Center](#) future land use category.

#### *Mid- to Long-Term Zoning Implementation (3+ years)*

- Establish a new zoning district, or amend an existing zoning district, to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Lakeside Village](#) future land use category.
- Establish a new zoning district, or amend an existing zoning district, to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Van Dyke Mixed-Use](#) future land use category.
- Establish a new zoning district, or amend an existing zoning district, to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Medical/Office](#) future land use category.
- Establish a new zoning district, or amend an existing zoning district, to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Innovation Support](#) future land use category.
- Establish a new zoning district to accomplish the intended land use and development character of the [Transitional Land Use](#) future land use category.

## **Role of the Planning Commission**

A role of the Planning Commission is to provide recommendations to the City Council and Administration. This planning function is a continuous process which does not terminate with the completion of the Master Land Use Plan. The various neighborhoods and districts in the City will continue to undergo change over time. Planning is an on-going process of identification, adjustment, and response to problems or opportunities that arise. In order to sustain the planning process, generate positive results, maintain momentum, and respond to change, the Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years, at a minimum (refer to Section 125.3845 of the Planning Enabling Act). In addition, the Planning Commission or other designated committees, under the direction of the City Council, can prepare organizational plans for specific issues or areas of concern as specified in the Master Land Use Plan. Such plans may include specialized plans for commercial revitalization, corridor plans, housing maintenance programs, brownfield redevelopment plans, transportation plans, or downtown development plans.

The Planning Commission's work does not end with the adoption of this Plan. Every year, the Planning Commission should establish/update its annual work plan based upon this Plan's recommendations. At a minimum, the annual work plan should include the following elements:

- List of necessary zoning text amendments
- Update Capital Improvements Plan
- Review list of public improvement projects
- Identify training objectives
- Review of annual accomplishments

Several of these items are mandated by State Law, including the development of a Capital Improvement Plan and the review of public improvements. These elements are intended to be suggestions for items to be included on the Planning Commission's work plan. Other items will surface throughout the planning process.

## **Coordination Between Boards and Commissions**

In no certain order, the Planning Commission, City Council, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other groups are essential for the implementation of the Plan. To that end, there should be a regularly scheduled coordination session between these groups to discuss work plans and priorities for the year. Resources can be allocated and schedules developed to minimize the duplication of effort and conflicting interests.

Educational or training sessions regarding current planning issues or best practices should be scheduled annually for the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. The City Council should be encouraged to participate in these training sessions, as well.

## **Capital Improvement Program**

The City has and will continue to maintain an updated and effective Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). A CIP is used to evaluate, prioritize and structure financing of public improvement projects. The CIP provides a basis for systematic review of proposed improvements related to the Master Plan by the City Council, and creates an opportunity to coordinate timing, location and financing of those projects. To that end, three objectives can be achieved: (1) financial analysis can minimize the impact

of improvement projects on the local tax rate; (2) appropriate scheduling of projects can take place given an advance picture of future need and development activities identified in the Plan; and, (3) the City Council can demonstrate its coordinating role in serving other elements of local government in formulating project recommendations.

In general, Capital Improvement Programs are most often presented in terms of specific fiscal year listings, although there are some shown in terms of priority categories with a more flexible time schedule. The capital improvements process should include the following steps:

- Inventory of potential projects as related to the Master Land Use Plan, including preliminary cost estimation and initial prioritization.
- Evaluation of projects proposed, in addition to those in the Plan, by various sponsors and City departments.
- Financial analysis of the proposed projects in terms of the available community revenues.
- Project scheduling for five years.
- Recommendation of first-year projects (capital improvement budget) to City Council.
- Formal approval of the capital improvement budget.

The role of the planning agency is primarily to identify potential projects as related to the Master Land Use Plan, coordinate material submitted by others, and work with financial officials in assembling facts for decision by the City Council.

## **Public Understanding and Support**

The necessity of citizen participation and understanding of the planning process and the Plan cannot be over-emphasized. A carefully organized public education program is needed to organize and identify public support in any community development plan. The lack of citizen understanding and support can seriously limit implementation of the planning proposals. The failure to support needed bond issues, failure to elect progressive officials, and litigation concerning taxation, special assessments, zoning, and public improvements are some of the results of public misunderstanding of long-range plans.

In order to organize public support most effectively, the City must emphasize the reasons for the planning program and encourage citizen participation in the adoption of the Plan and the continued planning process. Public education can be achieved through informational presentations at various local functions, newspaper articles, and preparation of simple summary statements on plans for distribution. Participation by residents in various civic groups is evidence of community involvement.

## **Programs and Funding**

Successful implementation of projects will depend on the ability of the City to secure the necessary financing. Besides the general fund, millage proposals and other traditional funding mechanisms, there are several sources of funding available to the City. In many cases, the City has in the past, or currently benefits from such funding. These funding sources are summarized below.

## ***Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Home Improvement Program***

This program provides low interest loans for home improvements through local lending institutions. The Home Improvement Program (HIP) is not targeted to any specific area, but can be utilized City-wide. Interest rates on loans are related to income. The property must be twenty years or older in age or in need of repair. The loans must be utilized to correct items that are hazardous to health and safety, or for items related to energy conservation.

## ***Neighborhood Improvement Program***

The Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) is another home improvement program developed by MSHDA, but it is directed toward specific revitalization areas. Loans, with interest rates dependent on income, are made available to homeowners within such areas. The program operates very similarly to the HIP with local lending institutions participating in the program.

## ***Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)***

The Community Development Block Grant program is an annual allocation of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to local governments for a wide range of community development activities, including housing rehabilitation, public and neighborhood improvements and economic development activities which primarily benefit low and moderate income persons.

## ***Tax Increment Financing (TIF)***

Tax increment financing is a common means of financing public facilities such as roads, water and sewer, and other public facilities which are needed for development. Through the use of TIF, municipalities typically divert future property tax revenue increases from a defined area or district toward and economic development project or public improvement project. In Michigan, tax increment financing is available to selected entities including Downtown Development Authorities, Local Development Finance Authorities, and Corridor Improvement Authorities. Presently, the City's Local Development Finance Authority (for the industrial corridor) and Corridor Improvement Authority (for the North Van Dyke district) both utilize TIF funding to finance economic development and other improvements.

## ***Brownfield Financing Redevelopment Acts (Public Acts 381, 382, and 383 of 1996)***

These acts establish an alternate method of utilizing the TIF financing mechanism. This initiative can be used by a community and land owner or potential user working together to finance the cleanup and reuse of contaminated property. Costs which can be funded include the demolition of buildings if necessary to remove the hazardous substances, and new construction if it is needed to protect against exposure to hazardous substances which are to remain. An important feature of this new initiative is that it restores the ability to capture state and local school taxes, but only from the taxes paid by the user of the redeveloped contaminated site. The Brownfield Act has recently been amended to allow the TIP funds to be used for redeveloping obsolete buildings/uses that contribute to the negative conditions within a Brownfield Area. Presently, the City has a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the entire City has been designated as a potential Brownfield Redevelopment Zone.

## ***Special Assessments***

This technique allows for the financing of public improvements through the assessing of property taxes, on an equitable basis, to benefitting property owners in a specific district. The types of local public improvements that are most often paid for through special assessments include sanitary sewers, storm drains, water mains, road paving, dust control, sidewalk construction and street lighting.

Special assessment districts may be initiated either through a resolution by City Council or at the request of a property owner whose property would be included in the district to be assessed.

### ***Grant Programs to Support Recreation and Non-Motorized Improvements***

#### *Transportation Alternatives Program*

MDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a competitive grant program that uses federal transportation funds designated by Congress for specific activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. Eligible activities that relate to the implementation of this Master Plan include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles. Includes new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, bus racks, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges and underpasses.
- Paved shoulders four or more feet wide
- Curb lane width greater than 12 feet
- Bike lanes
- Pedestrian crosswalks, sidewalks
- Shared use paths 10 feet wide or greater
- Path/trail user amenities
- Grade separations
- Bicycle parking facilities
- Bicycle accommodations on public transportation
- Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Programs designed to encourage walking and bicycling by providing potential users with education and safety instruction through classes, pamphlets and signage.
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian and bicycle trails). Acquiring railroad rights-of-way; planning, designing and constructing multi-use trails; developing rail-with-trail projects; purchasing unused railroad property for reuse.

#### *Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund*

The MNRTF provides funding for both the purchase of land (or interests in land) for recreation or protection of land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty and the appropriate development of land for public outdoor recreation use. Goals of the program are to: 1) protect Michigan's natural resources and provide for their access, public use and enjoyment; 2) provide public access to Michigan's water bodies, particularly the Great Lakes, and facilitate their recreation use; 3) meet regional, county and community needs for outdoor recreation opportunities; 4) improve the opportunities for outdoor recreation in Michigan's urban areas; and, 5) stimulate Michigan's economy through recreation-related tourism and community revitalization.

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service who distributes funds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for development of outdoor recreation facilities. Historically, the focus of this program has been on trailway systems and other community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ballfields, soccer fields and walking paths.

#### Recreation Passport

The Recreation Passport grant is a relatively new grant offered by the MDNR. The objective for the program is to provide funding to local units for the development of public recreation facilities. This includes the development of new facilities and the renovation of old facilities. The program emphasizes renovations to existing facilities and providing unmet recreation needs.

#### Safe Routes To School Program

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is a national movement to make it safe, convenient and fun for children to bicycle and walk to school. When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need to succeed. In Michigan, the program is sponsored by the Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and has gained momentum over the past few years. Michigan's SRTS program makes schools eligible for transportation enhancement funds, providing for infrastructure improvements and education campaigns. The purpose of the program, as defined in the federal legislation, is: to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and, to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

#### **Private Grants and Contributions**

Private sources for grants also exist. Foundations and utility companies are a common source for private grants for municipal projects. These grants are usually special purpose and limited to specific geographic areas.

## Appendix

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### Land Development Scoring Matrix

# Land Development Scoring Matrix

## Conservation

1. **Conservation** – Open space areas are well defined and has connectivity within the development or with natural areas on neighboring properties

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
The open space within the development parcel is physically connected rather than separated as isolated pockets of open space. If all permanently protected open space on a parcel is physically connected, you may claim 100%. If there are breaks in the open space which create multiple areas of permanent protection, only count the largest contiguous area for scoring.	Is connected: 100% 90%-99% 80%-89% 70%-79% 60%-69% 50%-59% 40%-49% 30%-39% Less than 30%	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	X2	
The Project connects its open space with natural areas identified on neighboring properties	Yes No	4 0	X4	
Boundaries of open space are well defined so they can be readily identified and effectively defended from encroachment	Yes No	2 0	X3	
Total Possible = 38		Subtotal		

## Final Calculations Instructions

1. Starting at Table 1 below, sum the subtotals for each section into Column 2 (Section Scores).
2. Divide Column 2 by Column 1 (Total Possible) and enter that number into Column 3 (Calculation).
3. Multiply Column 3 by 100 and enter that number into Column 4. This is the Final Score for the section.
4. Using Table 2, enter the letter grade for each section into Column 5. This is the Final score for the section.

Table 1					
Evaluation Criteria	Column 1: Total Possible	Column 2: Section Scores	Column 3: Calculation (Col. 2/Col. 1)	Column 4: Final Score (Col. 3 x 100)	Column 5: Final Grade (A-F)
1. Smart Growth	86				
2. Sustainability	29				
3. Healthy Community	12				
4. Conservation	82				

Table 2	
Final Score	Letter Grade
90%-100%	A
80%-89%	B
70%-79%	C
60%-69%	D
<60%	F

2. **Built structures** – Will be sited where there will be minimal adverse environmental impacts, and incorporate green building and energy efficient building materials and technologies.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Development occurs within a municipality's designated growth area where infrastructure already exists, or where infrastructure will extend in the near future based on planned growth of the municipality.	Yes No	3 0	X5	
Built structures achieve a minimal level of green building performance as certified or measured using a local, statewide or national system such as GreenStar, or LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design).	Yes No	2 0	X3	
The Project uses at least 30% recycled or "low- impact" building materials	Yes No	1 0	X2	
Project: 1) sites development takes advantage of scenic viewsheds; 2) screens development internally through the use of vegetation, topography and use of natural elements in structures; and 3) screens the development externally as it is viewed from nearby arterial roads.	Yes to all 3 Yes to 2 Yes to 1 No to all 3	3 2 1 0	X3	
Project promotes Low Impact Development principles. These include: 1) taking advantage of the open space's natural landscape of hills, valleys, swales and channels to effectively hold stormwater on-site; 2) the use of pervious pavement; 3) inclusion of green roof designs; 4) the use of rain gardens, rain barrels or cisterns to collect and hold stormwater.	LID qualities: 3 or more 2 1 0	3 2 1 0	X3	
The Project avoids development on wetlands, streams, shorelines and related buffer areas	Yes No	1 0	X1	
The Project avoids development on slopes steeper than 15% or on highly erodible or otherwise unstable soils, on floodplains, or on habitat for threatened or endangered species.	Yes No	1 0	X1	
The Project uses design techniques such as clustering and vertical development to avoid sensitive environmental features, minimize development area and/or maximize areas of contiguous open space on site.	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Total Possible = 44		Subtotal		



## Land Development Scoring Matrix: A Tool to Evaluate Land Development Proposals

This land development scoring matrix has been developed to help City decision-makers and citizens evaluate development proposals and the potential benefits and drawbacks they may bring to the City of Sterling Heights. The scoring matrix is divided into four sections pertaining to Smart Growth, Sustainability, Healthy Communities and Conservation. Read through each section and circle the best answer for each criteria listed. Some responses are weighted differently so that the maximum score reflects its importance to its topic. To calculate the score, multiply the points for a given answer by the criteria's weight and enter it into the score column. Add up the scores for each topical area in the spaces provided below. Instructions for completing the final calculations are presented at the end of the scorecard.

## Smart Growth

1. **Near existing development and infrastructure** – Makes the most of limited public resources and builds on public investments already made. Upgrading existing infrastructure and services is more efficient than building new in previously undeveloped areas. Creates opportunity for infill or redevelopment of underutilized, abandoned, and brownfield sites.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project is located adjacent to existing infrastructure: roads, water and sewer	Existing service Less than 1/4 mile 1/4 to 1/2 mile 1/2+ mile(s)	3 2 1 0	X4	
Project is near at least three of the following – housing, restaurants, retail/convenience/services, schools, recreation centers, offices	Less than 1/4 mile 1/4 to 1/2 mile 1/2 to 3/4 mile 3/4 to 1 mile 1+ miles	4 3 2 1 0	X2	
Project requires new/additional services and/or facilities (fire, police, school)	Not needed Needed	1 0	X2	
Total Possible = 22		Subtotal		

2. **Range of housing options** – Offers a range of housing types and sizes. Increases the choices available to households of all income levels.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project offers a mix of housing types and sizes (apartments, condos, townhouses, single-family, studios, 1BR, 2BR, 3BR, etc.)	Yes No	1 0	X3	
Project has units with a wide-range of pricing options that will be sold or leased, with at least 15 percent priced as affordable housing	Yes No	1 0	X2	
Project contributes to community's fair share of affordable housing	Yes No	1 0	X2	
Total Possible = 7		Subtotal		

3. **Mix of uses** – Creates a vibrant community where places to work, shop, live and play are integrated.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project is mixed use (any combination of housing, retail, office, commercial, public buildings, etc.)	4+uses 3 uses 2 uses 1 use	3 2 1 0	X2	
Project provides a new type of development to an existing neighborhood such as employment, housing, retail, civic, educational, cultural, recreation, neighborhood-serving retail/service	4 uses added 3 uses added 2 uses added 1 use added 0 uses added	4 3 2 1 0	X2	
Project adds to the diversity of uses within an existing community	Yes No	1 0	X3	
Total Possible = 17		Subtotal		

4. **Choices for Getting Around** – Sited near non-motorized transportation routes to decrease dependency on the automobile, thereby reducing traffic and encouraging walkability.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project is accessible by multiple modes of transportation (auto, bus, rail, walking, biking)	4+ modes 3 modes 2 modes	2 1 0	X4	
Project is in walking distance to public transit (bus)	Less than 5 mins 6-10 minutes 11-15 minutes 16-20 minutes 20+ minutes	4 3 2 1 0	X2	
Project has an interconnected road system without cul-de-sacs OR the project is located on an existing street network that is interconnected	Yes No	1 0	X2	
Total Possible = 18		Subtotal		

# Land Development Scoring Matrix



## Smart Growth (cont.)

**5. Walkable, designed for personal interaction** – Designed at the human scale, rather than for the automobile, to help reduce traffic and create places with increased potential for social interaction, walking and sense of community.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
<b>For residential:</b> Average number of dwelling units/acre (including on-site right-of-way and open space)	14+ DU/acre 10-13 DU/acre 7-9 DU/acre 4-6 DU/acre <4 DU/acre —or— 1.0+ FAR .76 – 1.0 FAR .51 - .75 FAR .4 - .5 FAR <.4 FAR	4 3 2 1 0	X2	
<b>For commercial:</b> High floor-area ratio (exclude structured parking and right-of-way)	4 3 2 1 0			
Project parking is located where it does not visually dominate the development from the street and allows easy and safe pedestrian access to buildings	Parking in rear Structure/deck On-street Parking in front	3 2 1 0	X2	
Project density is equal to or greater than that of surrounding areas	Greater density Equal density Lower density	2 1 0	X1	
Total Possible = 16		Subtotal		



## Sustainability

**1. Resilient Economy** – Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project is consistent with the City's policies for economic growth	Yes No	1 0	X3	
Project is conveniently located near major employment centers	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Project provides "green" businesses and jobs	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Project energizes community-based economic development and revitalization	Yes No	1 0	X2	
The Project will produce long-term jobs	Yes No	1 0	X1	
The Project will help community-based businesses to grow	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Total Possible = 9		Subtotal		



**6. Respectful of community character and design** – In keeping with the local architecture, especially in historically significant areas. Enhances the community's desirability as a place to live, work, shop and recreate.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project reuses or rehabilitates existing and/or historically significant structures	Yes No	1 0	X3	
Project building design follows existing or desired architectural style	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Project contributes to public streetscape with pedestrian-friendly amenities such as benches, lighting, street trees, trash cans, and windows at street level	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Project creates or enhances community spaces such as public plazas, squares, parks, etc.	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Total Possible = 6		Subtotal		



## Sustainability (cont.)

**3. Responsible Regionalism** – Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project is consistent with area land use, transportation, and housing plan goals	Yes No	1 0	X3	
Project enhances connection between local activity center and regional destination	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Project encourages marketing between local capital improvement program and regional infrastructure priorities	Yes No	1 0	X1	

Total Possible = 5

Subtotal

**4. Authentic Participation** – Ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
Project developers engaged stakeholders at all stages of the project planning process	Yes No	1 0	X3	
Project developers used a variety of communication channels to involve and inform the community	Yes No	1 0	X1	
Project developers presented clear implementation benchmarks, indicators, and target completion dates	Yes No	1 0	X1	

Total Possible = 5

Subtotal

5



## Healthy Communities

**1. Healthy Community** – Ensure that public health needs are recognized as part of site development.

Measurement	Answer	Points	Weight	Score
The Project will not emit toxins or pollutants or involve hazardous materials as part of their operation	Yes No	1 0	X3	
There is no historic evidence of solid or hazardous waste disposal or releases on or adjacent to the site	Yes No	1 0	X2	
Project development will not result in excessive nuisance impacts (noise, odor, vibration, dust, lighting, etc.)	Yes No	1 0	X2	
The Project has been designed in consideration of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles and measures to secure publicly accessible space	Yes No	1 0	X2	
The Project site is not located near vulnerable resources (e.g. nursing homes) that may require contingency planning for extra protection in the event of an on-site emergency	Yes No	1 0	X1	
The Project does not present unsafe conditions or deter access and free mobility for the physically handicapped.	Yes No	1 0	X1	
The Project design and location are likely to benefit local air quality (reduces the number / and / or length of vehicle trips over conventional, auto-oriented development)	Yes No	1 0	X1	

Total Possible = 12

Subtotal