

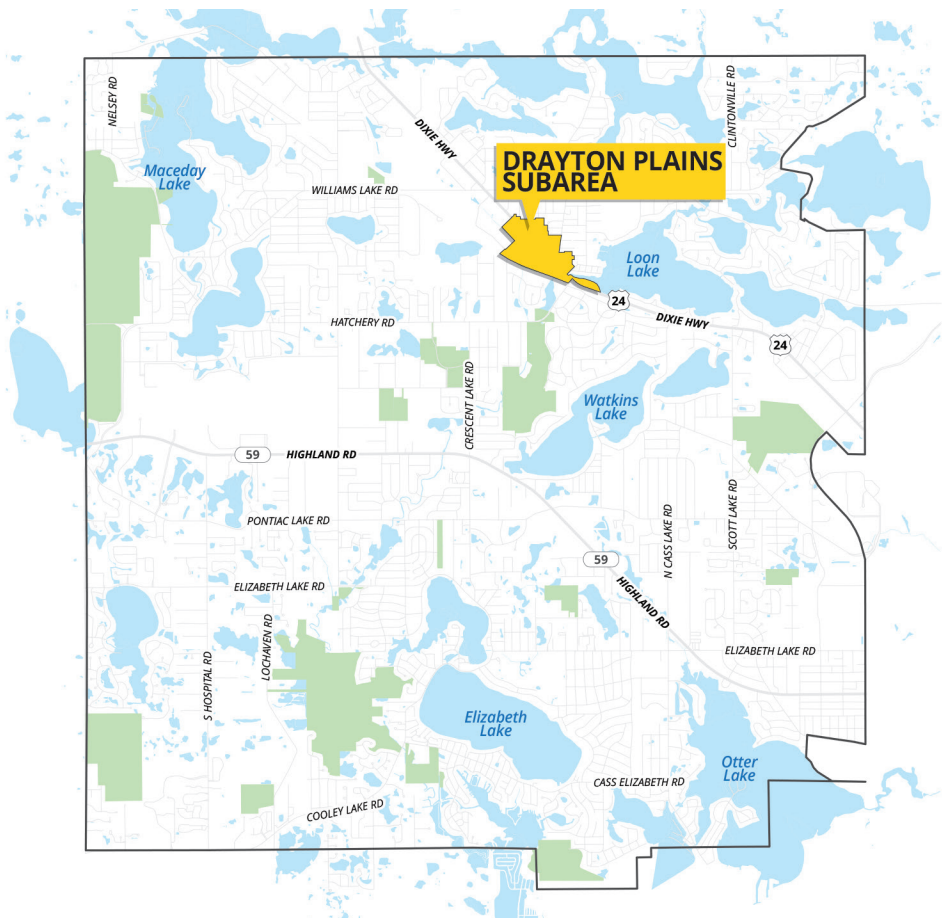
CHAPTER 8

DRAYTON PLAINS SUBAREA



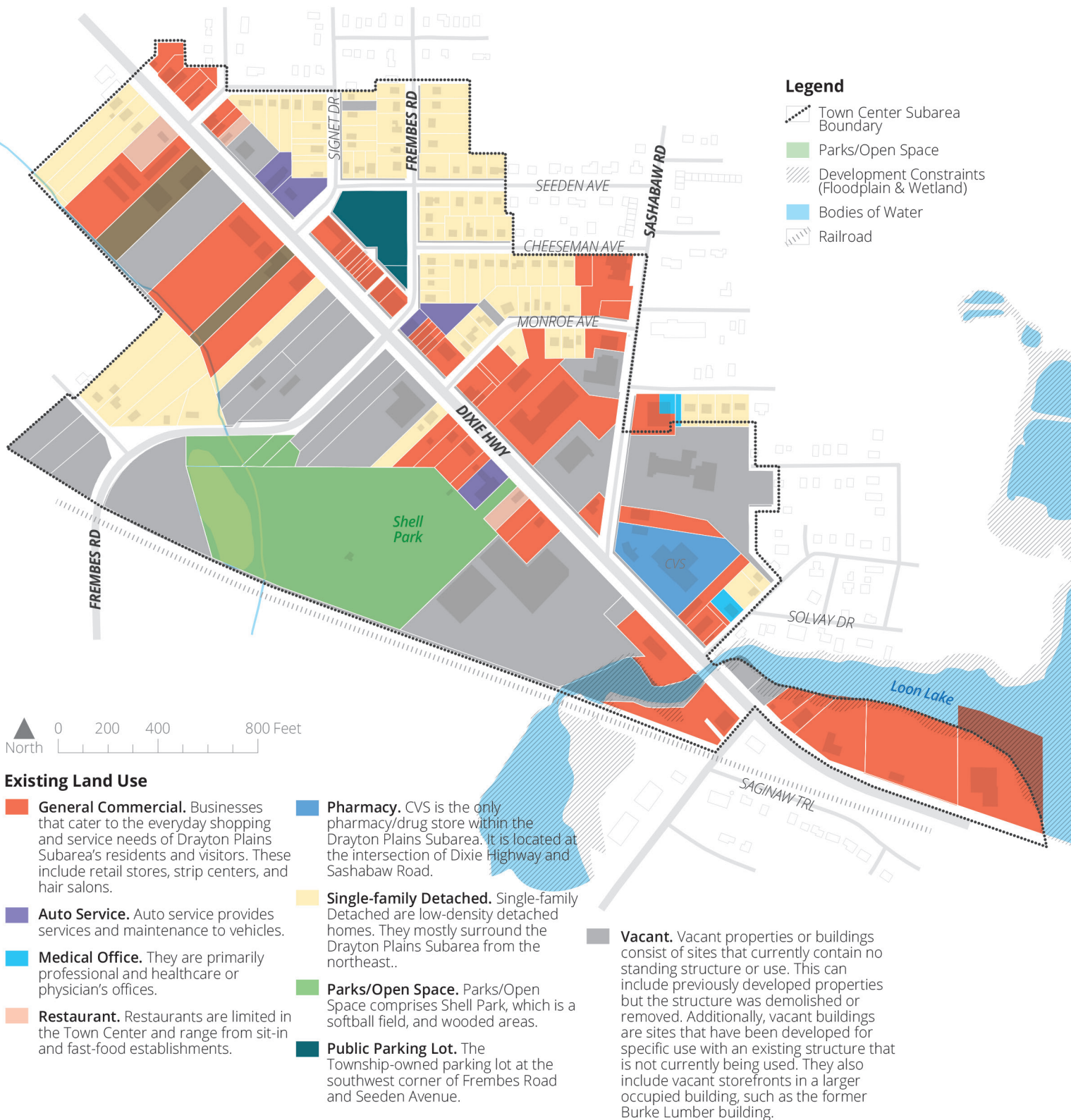
As part of the Master Plan, the Drayton Plains Subarea Plan provides general recommendations for improving local land use, access, mobility, function, and character. The Subarea Plan provides direction for improving the Drayton Plains Subarea over time. Through targeted reinvestment in the Drayton Plains Subarea, the Township can elevate Waterford Township's community image, user experience, and quality of place to draw in desirable development over time.

The Drayton Plains Subarea is located in the northern portion of Waterford Township. The subarea primarily consists of non-residential land uses along Dixie Highway between Loon Lake and Meinrad Drive and along Sashabaw Road between Dixie Highway and Seeden Street. Dixie Highway is one of the Township's two major east-west corridors and provides significant vehicular traffic to the Drayton Plains Subarea. Loon Lake is an important recreational asset, and there are opportunities to strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Drayton Plains Subarea and Loon Lake.



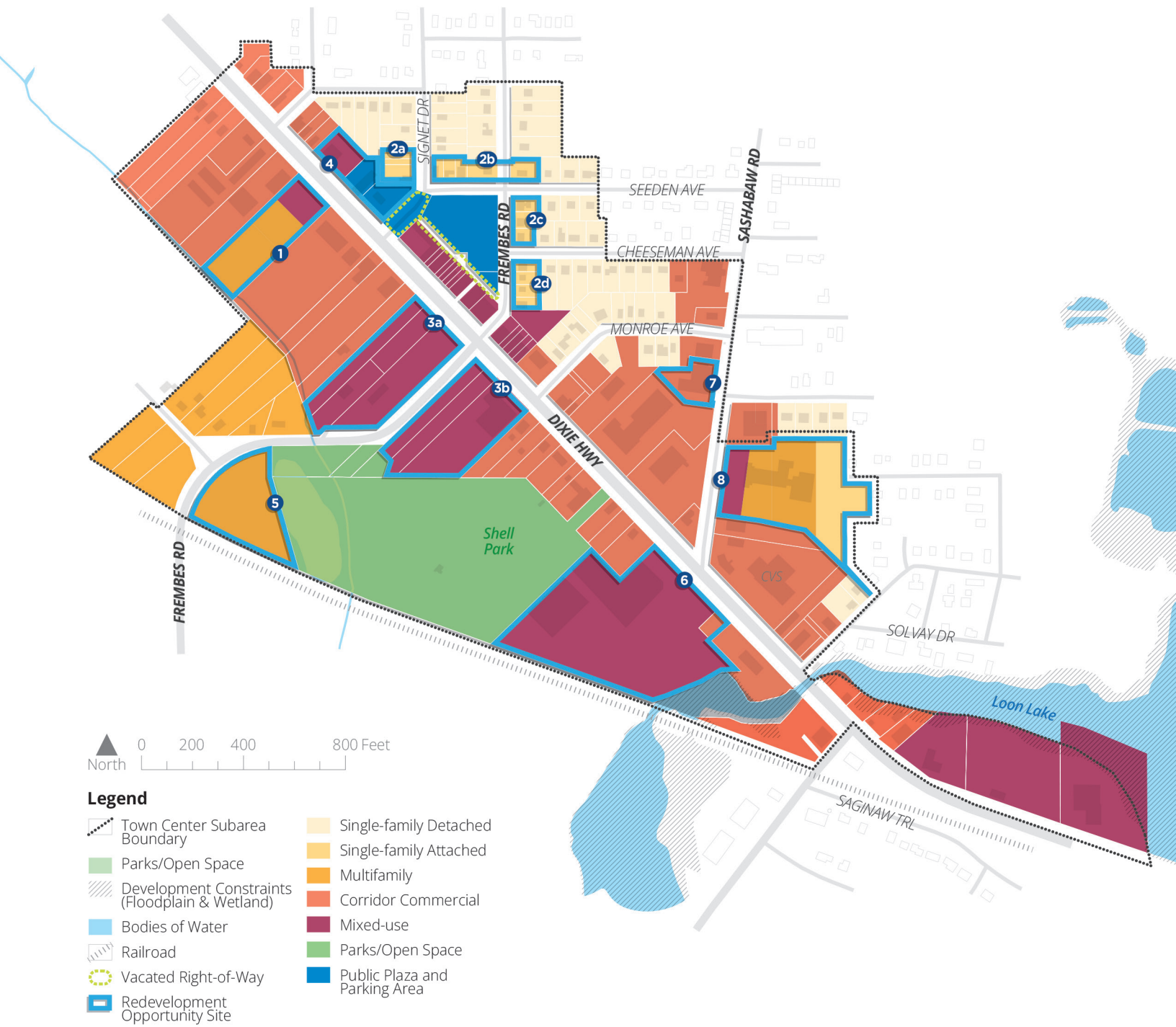
DRAYTON PLAINS SUBAREA

EXISTING LAND USE



DRAYTON PLAINS SUBAREA

LAND USE FRAMEWORK



LAND USE FRAMEWORK

A mix of appropriate land uses is important for establishing a self-sustaining and exciting environment with a critical mass of activity in the Drayton Plains Subarea. The intent is to increase the liveliness of the Drayton Plains Subarea by adding more housing within walking distance of a complementary mix of retail, restaurant, and service uses, and to take advantage of Dixie Highway's high traffic flow and proximity to Loon Lake. The proposed land uses for the Drayton Plains Subarea align with the Master Plan's Land Use Framework.

The Drayton Plains Subarea should continue to be strengthened and improved as a unique environment in Waterford Township. The Township should remain flexible and promote a variety of land uses to diversify consumer options, increase its tax base, and foster the desired energy in the Drayton Plains Subarea.

Single-family Detached

Residential uses include all single-family detached homes of varying lot sizes. Context-sensitive housing, such as duplexes, should be introduced through infill development to promote greater housing choices within the Drayton Plains Subarea.

Single-family Attached

Single-family Attached consists of duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes. They complement single-family detached neighborhoods' built form and encourage greater variety of housing options and slightly denser housing developments in the Drayton Plains Subarea. They also serve as a transition from the Drayton Plains Subarea's commercial uses into the residential neighborhoods.

Single-family attached are generally located around the existing public parking lot, which has the opportunity to accommodate a public plaza that would be extended into Dixie Highway through Signet Drive.

Multifamily

Multifamily uses include buildings containing multiple dwelling units that are vertically stacked with shared common areas and entrances. In the Drayton Plains Subarea, multifamily can be located within upper stories of mixed-use buildings. Similar to single-family attached, multifamily help increase the range of housing choices within the Drayton Plains Subarea and the Township.

Corridor Commercial

Corridor Commercial includes a mix of retail, commercial service, dining, and professional office uses. Within the Drayton Plains Subarea, these areas mostly front Dixie Highway and Sashabaw Road and should contribute towards an inviting environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Future Corridor Commercial developments should possess the following design features:

- Minimal curb cut towards the main roadway.
- Buildings front the roadways while parking is located at the rear of buildings.
- Provide sidewalks along roadways.
- Safe and direct connection between building entrance and the public right-of-way.
- Sufficient parking and perimeter landscaping.
- Adequate level of ground-floor transparency and lighting.
- Minimal auto-oriented pole signs.

Larger corridor commercial uses, such as the future commercial use at 4315 Dixie Highway, should feature a continuous building frontage along Dixie Highway to strengthen the Drayton Plains Subarea's envisioned character. It should also have sufficient perimeter landscaping against Shell Park and Clinton River to provide a buffer between the commercial and recreational uses.

Mixed-use

The intent of mixed-use developments is to provide an appropriate mix of land uses by locating retail and restaurants on the ground floor to create a more inviting and interesting pedestrian experience, while accommodating office/service-oriented and residential in the upper floors. Mixed-use developments in the Drayton Plains Subarea mostly front Dixie Highway and Frembes Road with parking at the rear of buildings.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and Open Space areas include Shell Park and existing wooded areas. These areas will likely remain.

Public Plaza & Parking Area

A public gathering space can create a unique destination in the Drayton Plains Subarea. Vacating the right-of-way on Signet Drive between Dixie Highway and Seeden Avenue provides opportunities for a larger public gathering space with frontage to Dixie Highway. Improvements should include outdoor dining/seating space and landscaping. The public plaza should extend into the existing driveline at the rear of the buildings along Dixie Highway between Signet Drive and Frembes Road. This will require adding perimeter landscaping between the parking lot and the driveline. The existing open space at the southwest corner of Seeden Avenue and Frembes Road may accommodate additional parking space.

DRAYTON PLAINS SUBAREA

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Several sites in the Town Center subarea are highlighted for their redevelopment potential. Redevelopment of these sites may have a dramatic effect on the Town Center's experience and built form.



- 1 Multifamily Redevelopment.** This vacant site presents an opportunity to construct multifamily developments within the Drayton Plains Subarea. Doing so would improve housing choices in the area and increase the Drayton Plains Subarea's customer base. Parking should be located at the rear of the building.
- 2a Single-family Attached Transition.** The lots facing towards the existing parking lots have the potential to transition into single-family attached uses. The lots provide sufficient depth to accommodate rear-loaded townhomes. Their scale and design should complement the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 2b**
- 2c**
- 2d**

- 3a Mixed-Use Anchors.** These corner lots present a unique opportunity for mid-rise mixed-use developments within the Drayton Plains Subarea. The buildings should function as gateways into the Drayton Plains Subarea by fronting Dixie Highway and Frembes Road. Parking should be located at the rear. Depending on the site programming, the rear side of both lots may accommodate additional multifamily buildings.
- 3b**





4 Public Plaza Redevelopment.

The Township should consider establishing a public plaza along Signet Drive to complement adjacent commercial development. Signet Drive right-of-way (between Dixie Highway and Seeden Avenue) can be utilized to pilot the plaza concept, and if successful, consideration should be given to expanding the plaza to the underutilized site to the west along Seeden Avenue. The plaza should incorporate sufficient landscaping, shading, seating areas, and opportunities to host public and community events.

CASE STUDY: NINE MILE REDESIGN

In 2019, the City of Oak Park, MI began the transformation of Nine Mile Road. The study area ran along Nine Mile Road from McCain Drive to the eastern border of Oak Park. This project created two pocket parks, which were former streets connecting Nine Mile Road with the adjacent neighborhood, Seneca Pocket Park, and Sherman Pocket Park. The project intended to create a vibrant streetscape along Nine Mile Road to stimulate local economic development. The project's key features include a road diet, angled on-street parking, the addition of on-street bike lanes, a trailhead, and the creation of new public spaces, including linear parks and pocket parks.

The importance of pocket parks was highlighted in the City's 2014 Strategic Economic Development Plan. The City sought to activate spaces not typical for recreational use. This idea was tested in 2017 with a "pop-up park" and was met with a positive response from the overall community and the adjacent residents. The City decided to build on this experiment by making the pocket parks permanent. Both parks feature landscaping, creative lighting and sitting areas. The Seneca Park features a climbing set for kids and outdoor games such as cornhole and a giant chess set. The City Funding for this project came from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Oakland County, kaBOOM!, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.



5 Vacant Lot by Shell Park. This vacant lot, given its proximity to the existing rail line, Shell Park, and the residential neighborhood, has the potential to be developed into multifamily buildings. This lot is owned by the same property owner who owns Site #3a, and potential exists for a larger, more comprehensive redevelopment of both sites simultaneously.

6 Oak Electric Site. Oak Electric has acquired this site to expand its operating capacities. Though the proposed development is likely to consist of a series of standalone commercial/office buildings, there are opportunities to incorporate a continuous building frontage along Dixie Highway to promote a more continuous streetwall along Dixie Highway.

7 3059 Sashabaw Road. This vacant building may be rehabilitated to accommodate medical offices or other commercial services that do not require much visibility from major roadways. If this site were to be redeveloped, the future redevelopment should be accessed via the existing strip mall to the south, rather than the existing driveway on Sashabaw Road. Consolidating access points would expand the site's buildable area while minimizing potential traffic conflict points.

8 Drayton Plains Elementary School. The vacant Academy of Waterford building has the potential to be rehabilitated to house multifamily lofts. The rear of this lot can accommodate townhomes and duplexes to further increase housing diversity in the Drayton Plains Subarea while providing a physical transition to the single-family detached neighborhoods to the east. If the Academy of Waterford were to be demolished, the site should have multifamily developments that front Sashabaw Road with parking in the rear.



SUBAREA FRAMEWORK

Public Gathering Space. A public gathering space can create a unique destination in the Town Center. Vacating the right-of-way on Signet Drive provides opportunities for a larger public gathering space with frontage on Dixie Highway. Improvements should include outdoor dining/seating space and landscaping.

Public Parking Lot. The public parking lot should be reconfigured and landscaped to accommodate the recommended public gathering space. This facility would provide a central location for visitors to park and walk around the Town Center.

Cross-Access. In addition to removing excess curb cuts, the Township should work with property owners to establish cross-access between non-residential properties. This would enable customers to travel between businesses on a parallel network and eliminate unnecessary trips onto Dixie Highway.

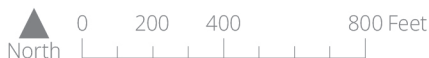
Wayfinding to Shell Park. Shell Park currently does not have any signage. Installing wayfinding will better inform residents and visitors of this amenity.

Redevelopment Opportunity Site. Higher density development should be encouraged at redevelopment opportunity sites, with less dense development or stepbacks used to ensure new investment complements the surrounding neighborhood.

Lakefront Amenity Area. These sites present opportunities to incorporate accessible open space and boat launch facilities.

Dixie Highway. Roadway reconfiguration should explore strategies to calm traffic speeds along Dixie Highway. These may include narrower drive lanes and dedicate greater portions of the right-of-way to the pedestrian zone.

Mixed-use Buildings at Dixie & Frembes. The vacant corner sites at Dixie Highway & Frembes Road present a redevelopment opportunity for 3- to 4-story mixed-use buildings that would help create a focal point in the Town Center. The buildings would have deeper front and street-side setback to provide room for wider sidewalks and outdoor dining space. Uses may include ground-floor commercial and upper-story office/apartment units.



Legend

- Town Center Subarea Boundary
- Parks/Open Space
- Development Constraints (Floodplain & Wetland)
- Bodies of Water
- Railroad
- Intersection Improvement
- Gateway
- Wayfinding
- Remove Curb Cut
- Widened Sidewalk with Landscaped Buffer
- Public Gathering Space
- Vacated Right-of-Way
- Lakefront Amenity Area
- Trail Connection
- Site Screening & Buffering
- Roadway Reconfiguration
- Redevelopment Opportunity Site



Intersection Improvement

Key intersections should be enhanced to improve crossing conditions and build the Township's image while maintaining traffic flow. A key intersection is Dixie Highway and Frembes Road. Working to make this intersection more accessible and welcoming involves working with the Michigan Department of Transportation to reimagine and improve the pedestrian experience. Potential improvements may include high-visibility crosswalks, enhanced landscaping, and new lighting fixtures. Redevelopment of the two corner lots at this intersection's southeast and southwest corner into mid-rise mixed-use developments would elevate this intersection as an important gateway into the Drayton Plains Subarea.

Gateway

Key entry points present opportunities to create gateways to welcome residents and visitors into the Drayton Plains Subarea. The Drayton Plains Subarea has two potential sites for gateways. The first is at the intersection of Dixie Highway and Meinrad Drive, which is on the northwest side of the Drayton Plains Subarea. The second is at the intersection of Dixie Highway and Farner Avenue. Improvements should include corner landscaping, a landscaped median, a north-south pedestrian refuge island, and widened sidewalks with a landscaped buffer. Redevelopment of the specific opportunity sites near the proposed gateways should take priority as they will aid in giving a lasting impression to people traveling in and out of the Drayton Plains Subarea.

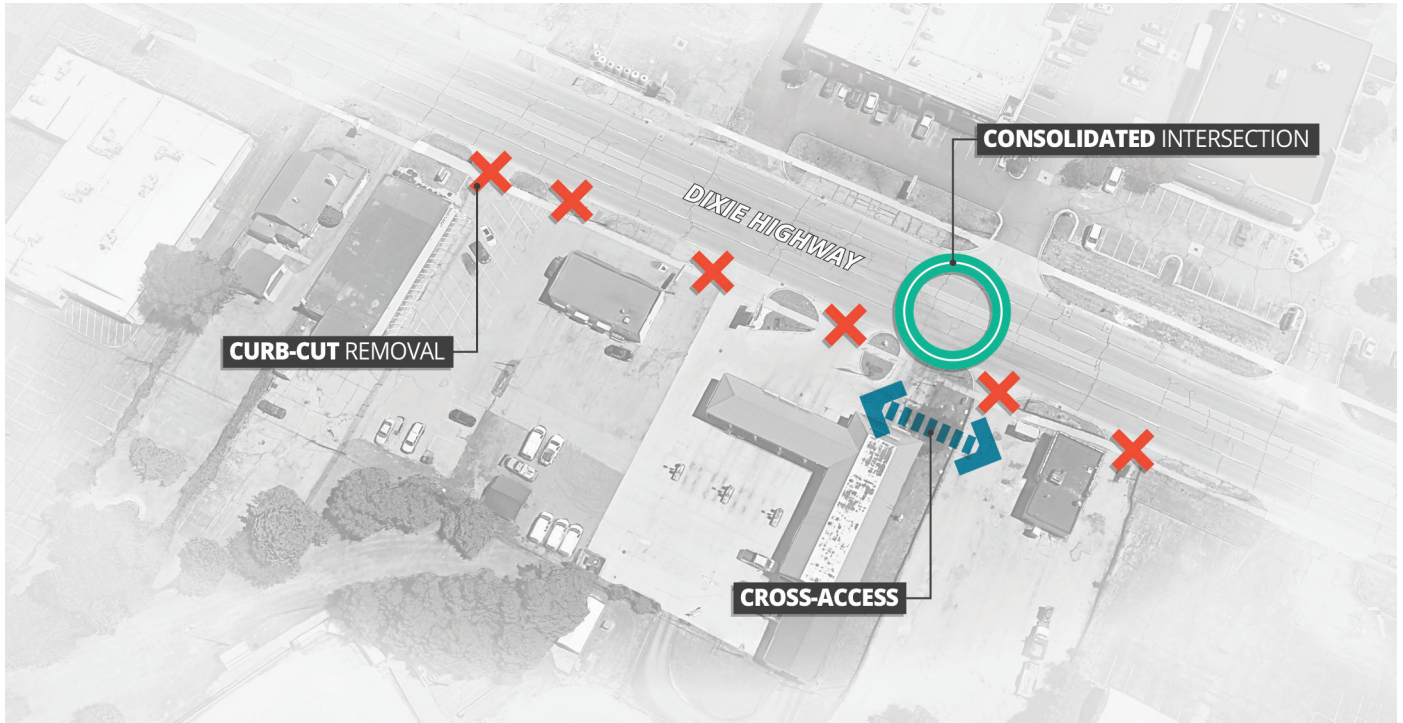


Wayfinding

Wayfinding can play a major part in strengthening sense of place and directing residents and visitors to key destinations within the community. Important destinations could include Shell Park, Loon Lake, local businesses, public gathering spaces, and trail connections. Wayfinding is particularly important in the Drayton Plains Subarea and should include uniform signage that is easy to use and visually appealing. Wayfinding can be intertwined with gateway improvements as they both lead to an increased sense of place and identity for the Drayton Plains Subarea.

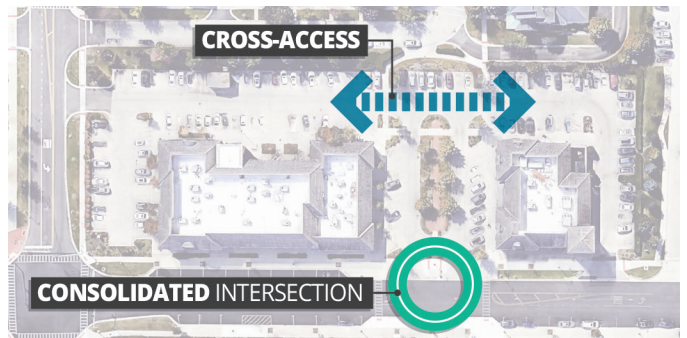
Widened Sidewalk with Landscaped Buffer

Widening the existing sidewalks and adding a landscaped parkway buffer with street trees can be an effective strategy for improving pedestrian safety and comfort in the Drayton Plains Subarea. Most of the sidewalks along Dixie Highway have some sort of landscape buffer, but buffers are narrow and vertical landscaping elements to help provide a visual barrier to vehicles are mostly absent. Increasing sidewalk width should be prioritized to increase the sense of safety for pedestrians. Looking at the sidewalk infrastructure along Sashabaw Road gives good context to what improvements should look like. Additionally, gaps in the sidewalk network should be filled.



Curb Cut/Consolidation

To improve corridor circulation and access, potential traffic conflict points and disruptions in sidewalks should be reduced by either removing or consolidating excess curb cuts. Excess curb cuts decrease the walkability of an area by creating more potential points of conflict between cars, bikes, and pedestrians. The ability to move from business to business as well as general mobility along the sidewalk is affected when cars are able to cross over sidewalks. This may be completed during roadway improvements or through the site plan approval process for future redevelopment. Any improvements to Dixie Highway involves working with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to reimagine and improve the pedestrian experience.

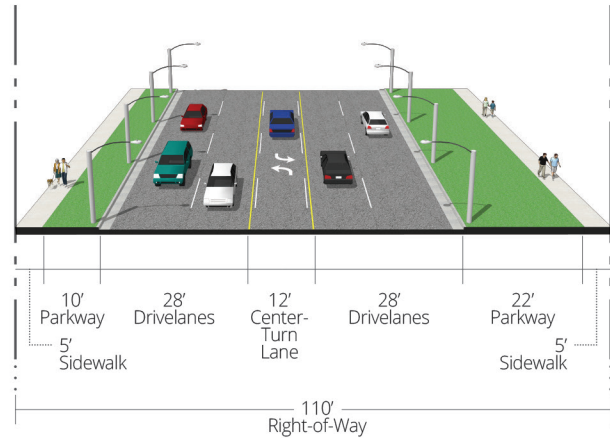




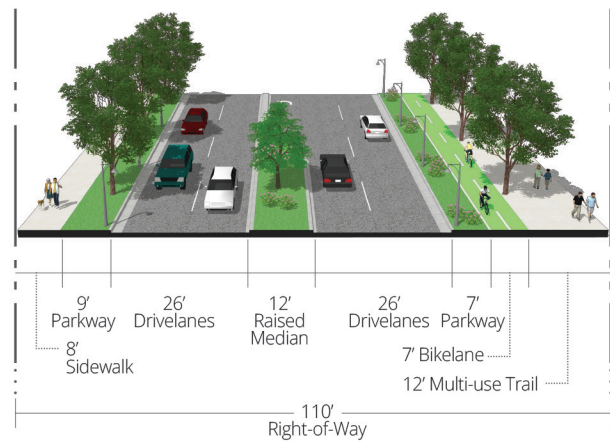
Roadway Reconfiguration

Dixie Highway is predominately auto-oriented by design. Traffic speed is fast, and some segments of sidewalks are located close to the roadway, creating an uncomfortable walking and biking experience. Adding streetscape elements, such as a pedestrian refuge island, medians with landscaping, and mid-block crossings, would improve the roadway's feel and function for pedestrians and make the environment more attractive to potential commercial tenants and residents. Additionally, adding an off-street multi-use path on either side of the roadway could attract walkers and bikers to the Drayton Plains Subarea who would have otherwise driven. The Corridor should be reconfigured to realize its potential as a multi-modal corridor.

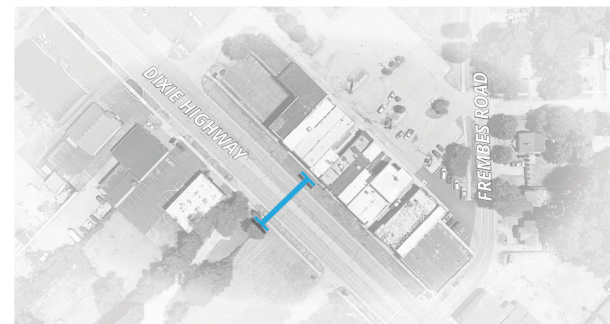
Dixie Highway
Existing Configuration



Dixie Highway
Potential Configuration

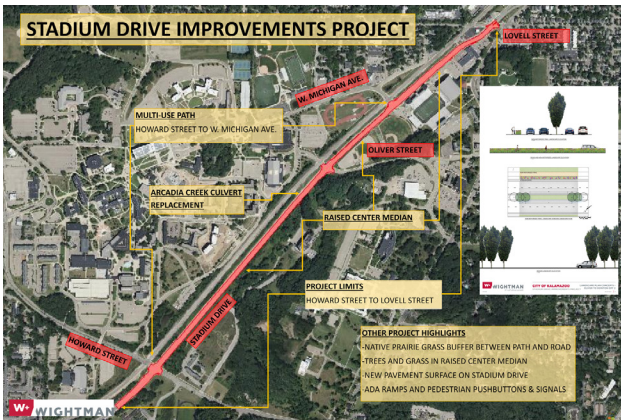


Dixie Highway
Cross-Section Location



CASE STUDY: STADIUM DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS/RECONSTRUCTION, KALAMAZOO, MI

The City of Kalamazoo, MI has a concentration of one-way streets within and around its Downtown area creating an auto-oriented environment. In 2019, the City led an effort to redesign its one-way streets to promote an environment that would be accessible to all modes of transportation. The City used its Complete Streets Policy and its Street Design Manual as official guides in making improvements to these roadways. One of them is Stadium Drive, which was reconfigured into a two-way street with several key improvements. One of them is a landscaped median with native grasses and trees. The City retrofitted all of the pedestrian-crossing signals to be fully ADA-compliant. It also installed an off-street shared-use path on the north side of the street which connects two existing trails. The shared-use path provided pedestrians and bicyclists a safe connection between Downtown and Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College.



Trail Connection

The Township should leverage opportunities to create a trail connection between the Drayton Plains Subarea and the Clinton River Riverwalk to the southwest. Recent improvements to the Riverwalk enhance accessibility and provide more space for recreational activities. Including a trail connection with additional wayfinding will allow visitors to the Drayton Plains Subarea to take advantage of an amenity that they may not have visited otherwise. The trail connection can be established along Frembes Road, which already has an at-grade crossing with the existing railroad, and traverses through the Riverview subdivision to the south. Doing so will require the Township to obtain an easement from the Riverview subdivision. The trail would then head eastward and make connections along the Clinton River. The intention is to establish a bike connection between Shell Park and the existing Nature Center at Drayton Plains to give bikers and hikers access to the Nature Center from the largest park in the subarea. Improved interconnectivity of the subarea and the Township improves the community's quality of life as it can utilize safe, connected trail networks to travel throughout the area.



Site Screening & Buffering

Screening can help elevate the character of corridors and mitigate impacts on neighboring lower-activity uses. Screening includes the use of quality, opaque fencing, walls, and/or landscaping to screen unattractive uses like parking, loading bays, storage, or trash disposal areas from the public right-of-way and adjacent uses. Sites specifically along Dixie Highway should be targeted for screening. Additionally, screening should be used to separate commercial and services uses from the residential uses. Providing a buffer can help demarcate where one land use stops and another one starts.

Redevelopment Opportunity Site

Several sites are either vacant, experiencing disinvestment, or have incompatible development, presenting opportunities for future redevelopment. Future redevelopment should reflect the Township's vision for the Drayton Plains Subarea and feature desirable land use and built form. Most of these sites have large frontages on Dixie Highway. With a focused vision, the redevelopment of these sites will significantly improve the streetscape, walkability, and overall feel of the Drayton Plains Subarea. As redevelopment occurs, density should be focused along Dixie Highway and tapered down as development approaches neighborhood edges.

Lakefront Amenity Area

The vacant site across Dixie Highway from Drayton Station and the property at 4080 Dixie Highway can be a lakefront space that complements the gateway to the Drayton Plains Subarea. As the only point within the Drayton Plains Subarea with lakefront access, these sites are critical to bringing people into the Drayton Plains Subarea as well as connecting the Drayton Plains Subarea to Loon Lake. Safe pedestrian and bicycle access to this site will also be important.

Shell Park

A significant asset to the Drayton Plains Subarea is Shell Park. Sitting on the western side of the subarea, this park currently has multiple baseball/softball fields. The park's accessibility is limited by the train tracks to the south and the commercial businesses to the north and east. Points of entry are found via a dirt road off of Frembes Road and a shared access driveway adjacent to 4355 Dixie Highway. Shell Park has the potential to be transformed into a more complete, multi-use park. Improvements to the park should include a central gathering space, pavilions, and an outdoor amphitheater. The playing fields should be reduced to one baseball and one softball field. Other amenities could be considered including a space for food trucks which could be near the entrance off Dixie Highway.

Implementation and Funding

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines areas in communities that are eligible for funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program based on the share of low- and moderate-income residents. Eligibility for CDBG funding is determined at the block group level.

Much of the Drayton Plains subarea is within a block group that is eligible for CDBG funding as of 2023, which means that projects within the eligible block group could seek various forms of funding from the CDBG program. One such opportunity is the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program, which provides communities with low-cost, long-term financing for economic and community development projects. Section 108 funds can be used for a variety of economic development, housing, public facilities, infrastructure, and other physical development projects. The Township should consider leveraging Section 108 financing and other CDBG-related financing opportunities to assist in development and redevelopment projects in the Drayton Plains Subarea.

Development Concepts

As part of the Master Plan process, Township staff created a series of conceptual plan illustrations for redevelopment along Dixie Highway in the Drayton Plains subarea. The illustration below captures the entire subarea looking east along Dixie Highway. The illustration shows 2-3 story mixed-use development fronting directly on Dixie Highway, a park, and townhomes to the east.



The illustration below shows Dixie Highway from the south looking north. The illustration on the bottom is looking from the north, facing southwest. Both the renderings show mixed-use and townhouse development fronting directly on Dixie Highway with parking located to the rear. The bottom illustration also shows how underutilized parcels and vacated right-of-way could be used to establish a plaza space and public amenity area.



The top illustration shows how Dixie Highway could be reconfigured to include a landscaped median and pedestrian friendly streetscape. The second illustration shows outdoor seating located along a shared parking lot.



The illustration below shows a public gathering space which should be provided along Dixie Highway as a complement to new development.

