

## CHAPTER 3

# A VISION FOR WATERFORD

The Vision Statement is an aspirational narrative that paints a picture of what the Township can achieve following the adoption of the Waterford Township Master Plan. The Vision Statement depicts the community's collective desires and serves as the foundation for the Plan's goals, recommendations, and actions.

## VISION STATEMENT

*In 2040, Waterford Township will be a unique destination in Southeast Michigan that is known for its multitude of lakes, wetlands and, unique parklands. The Township's evolving commercial corridors and Drayton Plains district create a vibrant food, shopping, and service scene, while diverse and high-quality residential areas and lake amenities makes Waterford Township an attractive place to live, work, and recreate.*

*The Township will retain its single-family neighborhoods while fostering a diversity of housing that enhances the community's visual character and image. New townhome and senior living options will be strategically added to ensure the availability of housing to suit all needs. New mixed-use developments located at key locations throughout the Township provide housing options above commercial uses.*

*The Township's population will be supported by an evolving mix of places to shop, dine, and get together. Through the Township's investment in infrastructure and the strategic repositioning of commercial properties, a new town center will emerge along Dixie Highway at Frembes Road. This area will serve as a pedestrian-friendly "downtown" district with a unique mix of housing, retail, and entertainment offerings. Meanwhile, Dixie Highway, Highland Road, and other major corridors will continue to accommodate a mix of visually appealing retail and service establishments that increase the community's range of goods and services. The health of these corridors will be improved with the addition of housing in areas where distressed commercial properties were previously predominant, supporting quality commercial corridor development with additional buildings and residents. New neighborhood dining and services along select waterfronts will further heighten the Township's appeal to residents and visitors.*

*Reinvestment in local commercial corridors will be complemented by quality development and public improvements, like streetscaping and public art. Improvements at key intersections will ensure that the Township's gateways provide a positive and welcoming environment. The existing industrial sites along Highland Road, Dixie Highway, and North Telegraph Road will continue to provide employment opportunities while enhancing the community's character.*

*Waterford Township's natural resources and parks, including Dodge 4 State Park, Hess-Hathaway Park, the Clinton River, Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area, and the inland lakes will continue to underpin the community's identity and quality of life. The road network will provide safe, efficient transportation across the community. Recreational amenities and open spaces that are strategically located along the inland lakes will function as community cornerstones. They will allow residents and visitors to gather, recreate, and enjoy the Township's spectacular lakefront. New multi-use trails along major transportation routes will create a cohesive recreation network that connects the Township's neighborhoods and commercial areas. The Township will also feature a new community center that offers diverse activities and specialized recreational facilities, including pickleball courts, a sports center, dog parks, and children's parks, that will increase the choice of recreational activities for Waterford Township residents.*

## GOALS

Goals are broad, long-range desired outcomes. The community's actions and decisions should work to support these goals. They are ambitions and will require the culmination of many incremental actions to be fully achieved.

### Land Use & Development

#### *Goal 1*

Maintain the existing residential, commercial, and industrial land use pattern as it has existed historically, while repositioning strategic areas to broaden the tax base and provide greater housing choice.

- Promote the reuse and redevelopment of underused commercial properties to create vibrant commercial spaces and mixed-use districts.
- Allow for upper-floor residential, multifamily residential, and single-family attached developments on underutilized sites in the corridors.
- Prioritize redevelopment with a mix of commercial and residential uses in strategic nodes including the Drayton Plains subarea along Dixie Highway and the Cooley Lake Road Corridor.
- Support the reinvestment and rehabilitation of housing in established neighborhoods and lakefront areas to improve the neighborhood's character.
- Promote the reuse and redevelopment of industrial properties while encouraging future industrial developments in existing industrial areas.
- Direct growth away from environmental areas, such as forests, wetlands, and riverine areas, and conserve their natural integrity.
- Identify and enhance points of destination

### Housing & Neighborhoods

#### *Goal 1*

Foster reinvestment and rehabilitation in the Township's established neighborhoods, provide a range of housing options, and support a high quality-of-life for all residents, regardless of age or background.

- Continue to preserve and reinvest in established single-family neighborhoods.
- Encourage infill development of context-sensitive townhomes and duplexes in commercial districts.
- Promote gentle density increases through single-family attached housing, multifamily buildings, and senior housing where residential neighborhoods transition into commercial/office land uses and at strategic locations along major corridors.
- Proactively encourage the rehabilitation of residential properties to promote high-quality housing and to enhance the community's visual appeal.
- Build a unified sense of community and local identity within neighborhoods.
- Preserve and integrate green spaces in existing and new residential areas.
- Guide future residential growth into development patterns that respect the natural environment by clustering housing units within non-sensitive areas of the property.

## Economic Development

### **Goal 1**

Maximize the commercial corridors' economic performance through repositioning commercial activities within strategic locations and creating new mixed-use destinations, including a town center along Dixie Highway and the Cooley Lake Road area.

- Establish a town center along Dixie Highway north and Frembes Road featuring a lively, pedestrian-friendly environment and a diverse mix of residential and commercial uses
- Encourage additional mixed commercial and residential development at other strategic locations along key corridors
- Promote outlet developments in underutilized parking lots
- Transition commercial corridors' underutilized sections into a mix of multi-family and single-family attached residential to better create a critical mass of commercial activities in specific nodes
- Support redevelopment by establishing financial incentives to assist with façade improvements, seeking grants to fund redevelopment, and coordinating with developers to redevelop opportunity sites, such as Summit Mall
- Establish gateways to the Township that serve as centers of activity and enhance the community's visual quality, especially along M-59 at the Township's western border and the Summit Mall site.

### **Goal 2**

Leverage existing commercial waterfront regions through supporting business growth and variety of businesses, including dining, entertainment, commercial service establishments and outdoor dining and grow the Township's image as a destination.

- Support a range of businesses, including specialty food and drink, entertainment, and local restaurants on the Township's commercial properties. This includes encouraging the development of restaurants and outdoor dining on lakes that offer commercial opportunities
- Limit the prevalence of storage uses, automotive repair, and other uses that deter the commercial corridors' level of activity and visual appeal
- Enhance commercial properties that offer waterfront view-scape
- Encourage the development of active outdoor dining uses on waterfront commercial properties while ensuring that they complement the surrounding neighborhoods' character.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

### **Goal 1**

Provide a safe and efficient, connected system of roads and streets that enhances the community's character and assures proper circulation within and throughout the community.

- Continue to foster partnerships with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to develop a multi-year Capital Improvement Program for improvement and maintenance of the Township's public roads
- Develop and maintain an annual review process for evaluating the Township road's capital needs.
- Establish a master nonmotorized maintenance plan
- Undertake streetscape improvements, such as boulevard with landscaping and raised medians, in vehicular corridors including Highland Road and Dixie Highway to improve appearances and traffic safety
- Enhance the existing sidewalks and nonmotorized trails and add new sidewalks and nonmotorized trails along major roads and residential streets to improve nonmotorized travel throughout the Township
- Explore ways to connect identified points of destination
- Improve pedestrian safety through traffic calming methods

### **Goal 2**

Provides adequate and cost-efficient water and sewer service to all geographic areas of the community, consistent with the development of the Township.

- Continue the maintenance and updating of water mains and sanitary sewers
- Investigate, develop, and implement the installation of water line loop systems
- Continue to evaluate the water system to ensure that hydrants possess the water capacity and pressure necessary for fighting fires

### **Goal 3**

Provide a sustainable, cost effective and user-friendly storm drainage system to accommodate storm water runoff, prevent property damage due to flooding and improve environmental quality.

- Ensure that all new development and redevelopment projects are evaluated and constructed without overburdening the Township's storm drainage system

### **Goal 4**

Maintain Township facilities and partnerships with service providers, including Waterford Schools, Police and Fire Departments, healthcare providers, and utility providers to supply community services and ensure a high quality of life and the overall desirability of Waterford Township.

- Ensure that all Township buildings provide a safe and effective environment for Township staff to deliver services to Township residents
- Develop an annual Township buildings capital and maintenance needs assessment review process
- Develop, implement, and maintain a preventative maintenance schedule for Township facilities and equipment as part of the Township capital improvement plan
- Promote partnerships between the community and Waterford Township Schools to integrate the community with the school system, and coordinate education opportunities and community involvement.
- Facilitate the addition of new community services including a community and recreation center and technology/trade school.

## Parks, Open Space, and Environment

### **Goal 1**

Facilitate water-based recreation through the addition of new lakefront connections and create an inter-connected network of recreational trails for the community.

- Continue to enhance waterfront connections on Loon Lake, Cass Lake, Pontiac Lake, Crescent Lake, and Otter/Sylvan Lake to provide the public with waterfront recreation opportunities
- Construct a network of non-motorized recreational trails to connect neighborhoods, commercial areas, and recreation facilities to enhance bicycle and pedestrian recreation throughout the community
- Maintain the Township's existing park system including Hess-Hathaway Park, Dodge 4 State Park, Elizabeth Woods Park, Pontiac Lake Recreation Area, and Drayton Plains Park continue to support diverse recreational opportunities
- Work with neighboring communities and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to establish a trail connection with the Iron Belle Trail

### **Goal 2**

Maintain and enhance the community's existing park system to provide robust recreation opportunities for residents and visitors and preserve the Township's natural features.

- Preserve the Township's natural features, including wetlands, wooded areas, and riverine areas, through discouraging developments within these areas
- Promote conservation design within future developments to maximize preservation of natural features
- Explore and implement other recreational facilities that provide residents greater diversity of recreational activities
- Preserve the quality of the Clinton River and the Township's inland lakes
- Draft and adopt a five-year parks and recreation plan to detail and coordinate the Township's park improvements.

