

CHAPTER 4

LAND USE PLAN

All parcels within the Township have been assigned one of 11 land use designations that cover the full range of Waterford Township's land use types. The Land Use Plan should serve as the basis for development review and approval and future zoning amendments, which may be needed to realize the full implementation of the Plan's recommendations. The future land use map, is presented at the end of this section.

GROWTH STRATEGY & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

This section defines the underlying principles that informed the development of the land use framework. As a largely built-out community, Waterford Township is at a pivotal point in time to define its strategy to continue to grow and redevelop. Based on engagement with stakeholders and the community, this plan identifies several overarching principles that inform this plan's land use policies.

Placemaking & Third Places

Placemaking is a collective, creative process to create public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. It often involves the reuse of space to create places for people to walk, shop, recreate, and spend time in. Effective placemaking does not necessarily involve large-scale effort or costs - small actions such as the addition of temporary seating to activate an underused outdoor area can present an effective approach.

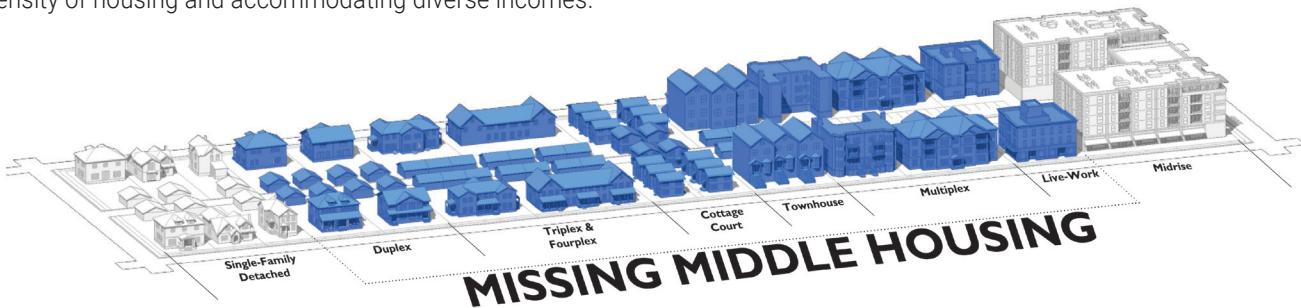
One of the desired outcomes of placemaking is to create "third places." A third place is a location that allows people to come together, spend time in groups, exchange ideas, and build relationships outside of home, often referred to as first place, and work, often referred to as second place. Third places can be both private and public such as parks or plazas that allow people to socialize in groups, coffee shops in which group of friends can connect, or vibrant streets where you can grab a bench and watch the passersby.

The Waterford Township community expressed a desire to promote cohesive places that bring the community together. The placemaking concept is a foundational principle to the Drayton Plains Subarea area along Dixie Highway and the Cooley Lake area, which should include public gathering spaces, outdoor dining, and streetscape features that create a distinctive sense of place. The community also expressed a desire for third places, including a new community center and gathering spaces. Traffic calming and safety features, including the implementation of medians, parkways, and landscaping will be a key component of placemaking in major corridors, as these features will enhance the pedestrian environment and encourage people to walk and spend time in these key areas.



Housing Choice

Housing choice refers to the ability of households to choose housing that suits their needs regardless of age, income, culture, or other factors. Communities accommodate housing choice by intentionally increasing the range of available options to include "Missing Middle" formats such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and townhomes, which often increase the density and range of prices offered than single-family detached housing, thereby furthering housing choice, but without visual or traffic impacts often associated with large apartment buildings. Allowing these missing middle formats often supports housing choice by increasing the density of housing and accommodating diverse incomes.



The Waterford Township community expressed a need to support housing choice through the provision of affordable, safe, clean housing. The Township supports housing choice through the provision of mixed-use development in the Drayton Plans area along Dixie Highway, the Cooley Lake area, the Union Lake Business District, and Urban Business District in which housing should be provided in upper floors of structures with ground-floor commercial uses. Housing choice is also supported through the development of mixed housing formats such as duplexes, townhomes, rowhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes near the commercial corridors.

Conservation Development Design

Conservation design is an approach to develop land for housing, commercial, and employment uses, while preserving key natural features such as forests, wetlands, waterbodies, and open space. As an example, a municipality would allow portions of a tract of land that do not contain trees or vegetation to be developed for housing at a higher density than would normally be allowed, while other portions of the property that contain trees, vegetation, and wetlands would be preserved. The concept is to allow for the development of land in a manner that preserves natural resources.

Though much of the Township is developed, the community contains pristine natural areas including woodlands along the Clinton River and tracts of wooded land in southwest and western portions of the Township. The Waterford Township community emphasized community's natural features as key strengths. The Township should ensure that its key natural features are conserved as properties are developed.



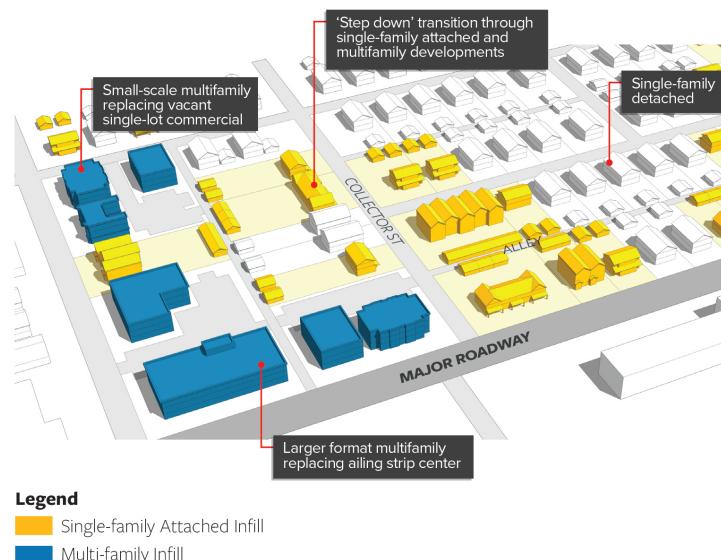
Repositioning Corridors

In the wake of a shifting retail sector and shrinking demand for brick-and-mortar storefronts, communities throughout the United States are looking for strategies to reimagine their commercial corridors. This is of particular concern in built-out communities like Waterford where accommodating a modern commercial development requires the renovation or redevelopment of existing retail areas. Waterford Township features several corridors with vacant or underperforming commercial properties, including Highland Road and Dixie Highway, that the community wants redeveloped to provide a greater range of uses.

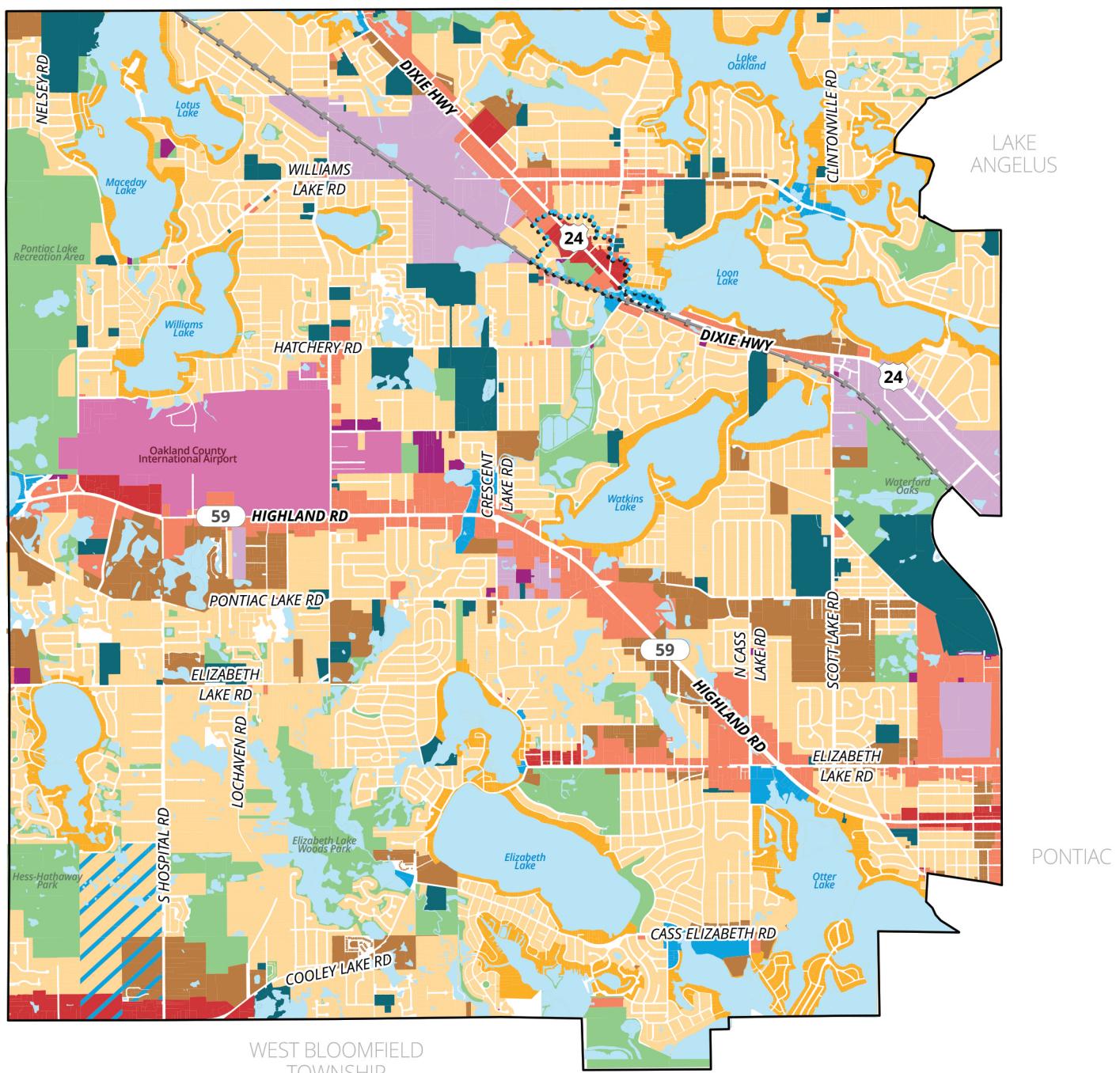
Corridors must be repositioned to transform outdated strip commercial development and large parking lots into vibrant, attractive commercial districts with placemaking components. To enhance redevelopment in corridors, consideration should be given to targeting underperforming lots for new multifamily housing developments that will allow for a flexible range of uses in corridors and bolster support for retail with additional residential sites.

Outlots should immediately be targeted for infill development to provide a buffer between busy corridors and interior streets and increase the density of commercial options at a site. Development in these key corridors should also set aside open space and/or pocket parks. These features will provide greenspace to new residents and help contain runoff from the newly densified developments.

To encourage visitors to walk from one business to another, traffic calming infrastructure will need to be installed to sufficiently slow vehicles and provide the level of comfort necessary for pedestrians to shop. These calming methods could make use of cross access easements between neighboring commercial developments to improve connectivity across multiple sites for both pedestrians and motorists. In addition, streetscaping features including medians with vegetation, widened parkways, and bicycle lanes should be added along major corridors to enhance the pedestrian realm and calm traffic.



INDEPENDENCE
TOWNSHIP



FUTURE LAND USE

- Single-Family Neighborhood
- Lakefront Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Corridor Commercial
- Waterfront Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Transportation/Utilities
- Drayton Plains Subarea
- Planned Unit Development
- Railroads
- Oakland County Int'l Airport

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

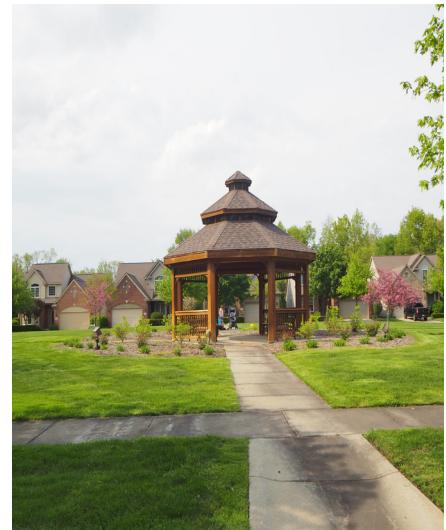


LAND USE PLAN

All parcels within the Township have been assigned to one of the following 11 land use designations.

Single-Family Neighborhoods

Single-family neighborhoods include the Township's historic residential areas that consist primarily of single-family detached housing units on lots that are typically larger and wider than in the Lakefront Residential areas. Single-family neighborhoods are the Township's most prevalent type of land use. A variety of single-family detached residential formats exist ranging from single-story residences on long, rectangular blocks to newer two-floor construction located along curvilinear streets. Efforts to encourage cluster development where possible, enhance the aesthetic quality of neighborhoods, and ensure the visual quality of properties should be a focus.



Mixed Residential

Mixed Residential consists of multiple housing types including townhomes, duplexes, and multifamily buildings. These areas encourage greater variety within Waterford Township's housing stock and allow for greater flexibility to build denser residential development in proximity to the Township's major roadways, including Highland Road and Dixie Highway. Mixed Residential areas also provide a transition between Waterford's major corridors and its single-family neighborhoods. Multifamily and single-family attached housing should be sited and designed to create a cohesive neighborhood setting that allows for walking and biking and promotes an overall sense of place and identity.



Lakefront Residential

Lakefront Residential areas encompass neighborhoods with frontage on or immediately adjoining the Township's inland lakes including Elizabeth Lake and Williams Lake. Residential properties with this designation are typically fully built-out and are narrower in width than the residential areas elsewhere in the community. Many structures date from the mid- 20th century, however, many have been rebuilt in recent years. The consolidation of lakefront residential properties should be allowed; however, diverse housing patterns should continue in the future to retain property owners' access to the lakefront. The rehabilitation or reconstruction of the cottages and lakefront houses should also continue to occur, and the focus should be on maintaining neighborhoods' visual quality and the aesthetics of properties.



Waterfront Commercial

Waterfront Commercial areas include dining and retail businesses that provide unique experiences for residents and visitors on inland lakes such as Pontiac Lake, Loon Lake, Crescent Lake and other waterbodies such as the Clinton River. Small-scale restaurants and retail establishments should predominate, and accessory outdoor dining and retail areas should be encouraged to provide an appealing setting and experience. Such commercial developments should be required to construct and maintain site amenities that integrate with the waterfront. Consideration should be given to site design, buffering, and screening to ensure that these establishments are compatible with the surrounding Lakefront Residential areas.



Corridor Commercial

Corridor Commercial uses include a mix of retail, commercial service, dining, and professional office uses along the Township's major vehicular corridors, such as Highland Road, Dixie Highway, and W Walton Boulevard. These areas encompass a mix of scales including large retailers that attract patronage from outside the Township, and small businesses that serve the needs of nearby residents. Given this land use's large parking footprint orderly vehicle management should be encouraged through efficient vehicle access and cross access easements. Underutilized parking facilities and other underutilized land should be considered for development into new commercial structures and uses. A flexible range of formats are encouraged including plazas and visually appealing strip development, although special attention to site aesthetics, landscaping, building design, and signage should be paid to ensure visually appealing development that enhances the community's aesthetic quality.



Mixed-use

Mixed-use areas form centers of activity that create inviting places for residents and visitors to spend time in the Drayton Plains area along Dixie Highway and along Cooley Lake Road, M-59, and Telegraph Road. Building forms should vary between single and multiple floors, although the structures should front directly on or near right of ways and off-street parking should be located to structures' side or rear to create a pedestrian-oriented environment. Commercial dining, retail, and entertainment uses should locate on buildings' first floors to generate pedestrian activity, while commercial service and residential uses should be allowed on upper floors to create a critical mass of visitors, create foot traffic, and encourage redevelopment.



Drayton Plains Subarea

The Drayton Plains is a unique subarea that functions as a place for residents and visitors to gather and spend time. Redevelopment of the existing commercial structures with a mix of single and multiple floor developments featuring a mix of commercial and residential uses should be encouraged, although the existing narrow lots and configuration of buildings with shared walls should be retained to promote a downtown setting. Outdoor dining and the sale of merchandise should be promoted in the structures' rear to provide an appealing location away from the traffic on Dixie Highway. Public gathering spaces are integral to attracting visitors to a destination, as their seating and landscaping amenities provide a nice spot for visitors to sit and spend time. These users are more likely to stay in the area for longer and spend more time looking into nearby shops or enjoying curated activities. The Township should pursue the establishment of a public plaza along Signet Drive and retaining exiting open space such as Shell Park to provide open space in the Drayton Plains Subarea.

Industrial

Industrial areas include employment-related uses including heavy and light industrial establishments, manufacturing, warehousing, and the distribution of goods and materials. These uses should continue in the locations that they are historically located including along Williams Lake Road, west of Dixie Highway; south of Highland Road, east of Crescent Lake Road; and along Dixie Highway, west of Telegraph Road. Business expansion and redevelopment should be accommodated on developed sites with existing industrial uses but new land and properties should not be developed with industrial uses.



Parks, Open Space, and Protected Conservation Areas

Parks and Open Space areas include recreational facilities and protected conservation areas such as Hess-Hathaway Park, Elizabeth Lake Woods Park, Pontiac Country Club, and Silver Lake Golf Course, which comprise key community assets. These recreational assets should continue in their current form to allow residents and visitors to recreate and enjoy the Township's natural setting. New nonmotorized connections to these spaces should be provided where possible to connect them with nearby neighborhoods and amenities. This designation also includes key environmental features such as wetlands and wooded areas, which should remain completely undeveloped.



Public/Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public designation includes local government uses, municipal facilities, community service providers, schools, and places of worship and assembly. Waterford Civic Center, Waterford Township Public Library, Waterford Township Recreation Center, Waterford Kettering and Mott High Schools, and the Oakland County facilities along Watkins Lake Road are included within this designation. These uses should continue to be located throughout the community, however, concerns such as access, buffering, screening, and aesthetics should be addressed on an individual basis depending on context. Nonmotorized connections should be added to connect to these sites with nearby neighborhoods.



Airport

The Airport includes ground facilities such as aircraft hangars, runways, and airport parking for Oakland County International Airport. The airport should continue in its current location along Highland Road in the Township's east, and renovations, site changes, and small-scale expansions should be allowed over time. The airport provides the opportunity for numerous secondary businesses including catering, chauffeuring, and concierge services, which thrive on visitors arriving and departing the airport. The facility can also accommodate events, entertainment, conventions, and other temporary activity-related uses and the Township should partner with the County airport and communicate regularly to encourage these innovative, temporary uses of the Oakland County airport site. This could include recreational spaces that provide safe spaces for children and photographers to watch planes take off and land or airport bars and restaurants that give guests the chance to dine while watching airport activity.



Transportation/Utility

Transportation/Utility uses support local infrastructure and provide rights-of-way or easements for the transmission of gas, electric, water, sewer, and other infrastructure essential to the community. This includes both facilities and infrastructure as well as related rights-of-way.



Planned Unit Development

The planned unit development designation indicates areas in which new development will need to be approved through the Township's planned unit development. These areas include large sites that could have a broader range of potential uses. The Planned Unit Development process will be used to evaluate innovative plans and proposals that require particular consideration and will allow for more extensive public input than other zoning procedures.