

CHAPTER 5

RESIDENTIAL AREAS PLAN

Waterford Township includes a variety of existing neighborhoods largely developed with single-family detached housing. Growth within these existing neighborhoods and in previously undeveloped areas should ensure the community remains an attractive location for current and future residents.

The Residential Areas Plan identifies locations where development patterns should occur, including the wholesale redevelopment of properties, small-scale revitalization of neighborhoods, new growth on previously undeveloped tracts, and maintenance of the existing neighborhood quality. The Residential Areas Plan Map identifies specific tracts of land where these different types of residential growth should occur to accommodate the community's housing goals established in Chapter 4.

RESIDENTIAL FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

The Residential Framework Plan recommends different types of development in different areas of the Township, however, several principles underpin these policies.

Promote Neighborhood Revitalization

Waterford Township's residential neighborhoods comprise most of the community's land area. Much of the housing stock was built between the 1950s and 1970s. Older houses are often more prone to maintenance issues and the housing stock in the Township's oldest neighborhoods tend to be smaller in size and feature fewer amenities than what homebuyers often seek in 2023. The Township should support reinvestment in its neighborhoods to improve the housing stock quality and community character.

Home and Façade Improvement Funds

The Township should educate residents on available grants, loans, and rebate programs from local, state, and federal agencies that could provide financial aid in home repairs. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority provides a property improvement program, which assists homeowners in making repairs and improvements that improve the livability of the structure. Meanwhile, the Michigan Community Action Agency provides a repair program that helps homeowners finance furnace, roof, plumbing, and electrical repairs. The Township should promote neighborhood revitalization by providing access to information on these resources.

Municipal Programs To Support Residential Rehabilitation

Many communities provide financial resources to help residents with home rehabilitation. The Village of Schaumburg, Illinois has a residential rehabilitation program that provides no-interest loans to assist residents in correcting code violations, substandard living conditions, and other basic structural deficiencies. Similarly, the Village's Handyworker program provides funds for contractors to make basic repairs to residences of low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. Funds for these programs are provided through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grants. The Township should explore similar funding sources for housing rehabilitation programs.

Enforce the Building Code

Waterford Township's building regulations are in Chapter 4 of the Code of Ordinances. The Township currently employs one building official (supported by 3 inspectors). In addition to providing incentives for property maintenance, Waterford Township can proactively enforce the building code to improve neighborhood conditions. This includes ensuring proper removal of discarded furniture, inoperable vehicles, renovation of facades, and maintenance of lawns. Code enforcement is typically implemented through property inspection and code citations conducted by staff.

Watercraft and Recreational Vehicle Regulations

The placement of recreational vehicles and watercraft on private property creates visual clutter that detract from neighborhood character. The Township has Zoning standards regarding the storage of recreational vehicles and watercraft that limits the number of watercraft on a single lot, driveway, or front yard and their location near the principal building. Some Michigan communities have stronger standards, such as requiring recreational vehicles be located in rear or side yards entirely rather than front yards or limit the length of time they can be stored. The Township should consider whether adjustments in its standards could be made to promote the visual quality of its neighborhoods.

Conservation Design

Wetlands and mature trees are dispersed throughout the Township, particularly in its southwestern extent. As development occurs on land partially impacted by wetlands, these areas should be preserved through conservation design. This can include cluster development, buffering, and other techniques that sustain natural elements to support the community's natural integrity and stormwater management.

Some communities choose to enact cluster development standards in their zoning ordinance which typically allow for standards in the base zoning, such as lot area, lot width, and setbacks to be reduced when natural features such as wetlands, mature tree stands, or land near riparian areas are placed in a conservation easement. The Township could consider establishing such provisions in its subdivision ordinance to ensure that its natural features are preserved and properties in the west are developed.

CASE STUDY: POKÉGON ÉDAWAT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

In 2004-2005, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians first began to develop townhomes and duplexes in a cluster development style in Dowagiac, Michigan. The housing units are clustered on small, narrow lots along looping roads that follow the site's topography to preserve its natural integrity, open space, and reduce the cost of roads and utilities. The development also maximizes stormwater infiltration through the use of pervious pavement, rain gardens, and bioswales. The footprints of homes are also minimized through the reduction of hallway space and elimination of foyers, further aiding stormwater



Housing Choice

The limited variety of housing options in Waterford Township is a pressing issue. The lack of variety contributes to greater housing cost relative to a households' income and limits the community's appeal to elderly residents and younger households. The Township should take measures to facilitate greater housing choice while retaining the quiet character of the community's neighborhoods that residents value. This can be achieved through "gentle density" increases such as a duplexes within existing single-family areas and through the conversion of previously nonresidential sites in corridors to residential uses.

Facilitate Corridor Redevelopment

Given the Township's largely built-out character, land must be redeveloped to increase housing supply. The Township's Dixie Highway, W Walton Boulevard, Elizabeth Lake Road, Pontiac Lake Road, Highland Road, Telegraph Road, and Cooley Lake Road corridors contain underused sites occupied with surface parking and underused commercial plazas. Areas in these corridors should be redeveloped with multifamily and single-family attached uses to increase the range of housing options as designated in the land use plan. The consolidation of lots should be promoted where it would facilitate the conversion to multifamily development. New multifamily uses should be made to fit the corridor context; buildings should be set back from high-traffic roadways where necessary to ensure the comfort of residents, while buffering and screening should be provided to adjoining single-family neighborhoods.

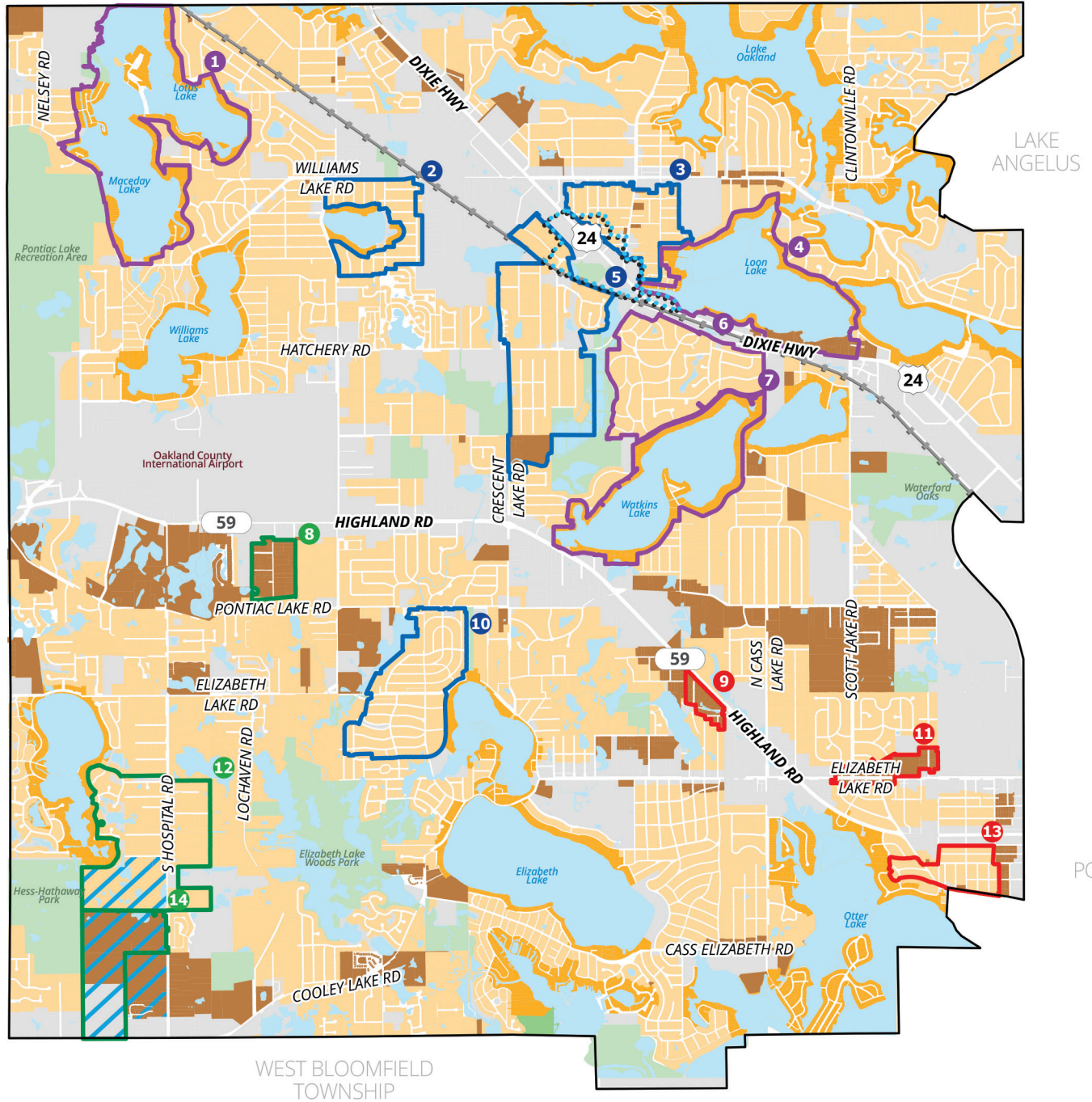
Mixed-Housing Product on Larger Sites

With limited vacant land available, the Township's larger sites present opportunities to add housing in a mix of formats. For instance, the former Art Van Furniture property along Dixie Highway is designated for redevelopment with a mix of commercial and residential uses. A mix of housing formats should be allowed on these sites as they redevelop over time. The Township should enable a mix of residential formats on larger corridor sites in a way that serves developers and market conditions.

CASE STUDY: HOM FLATS

In 2020, the City of Wyoming, Michigan approved the HOM Flats development along West 28th Street which involved the redevelopment of the former Studio 28 multiplex cinema site and the conversion of its surface parking areas for multifamily buildings. It includes a 226-unit apartment complex along the Southwest 28th Street corridor at 28 West Place. Many of the housing units are below market-rate rental prices to increase the range of housing options for low- to moderate-income residents. The Township should consider promoting similar types of multifamily residential development in longtime commercial sites.





RESIDENTIAL FRAMEWORK PLAN

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Framework Plan Designation

- Neighborhood Maintenance
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- New Growth Area
- Redevelopment

Future Land Use Designation

- Single-Family Neighborhood
- Lakefront Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Drayton Plains Subarea
- Planned Unit Development
- Railroads

RESIDENTIAL FRAMEWORK

The Residential Areas Plan builds on the future land use plan to describe detailed policies for the areas of the community designated for residential development. All residential areas in Waterford fall into one of the following four categories, which explain the type of change that should occur in them.

Neighborhood Maintenance. These areas encompass the Township's exiting neighborhoods in which the rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing housing has occurred in recent years. These areas require little to no intervention, though the rehabilitation of housing should continue over time as market forces drive reinvestment.

Neighborhood Revitalization. These areas are existing developed neighborhoods with deteriorating housing due to age and/or lack of reinvestment and maintenance. These areas should be targeted for code enforcement, homeowner assistance programs, and modifications to zoning to facilitate reinvestment.

Redevelopment. These areas include sites with commercial uses that could be partially or fully redeveloped into residential uses.

New Growth Area. These areas include undeveloped land that could be utilized for future housing. Sites within this category do not have wetlands or other sensitive habitats, but efforts should be made to preserve natural features.

Residential Improvement Areas

The following numbered paragraphs describe the desired characteristics and physical attributes of Waterford Township's neighborhood areas as identified on the Residential Framework Map. Each numbered paragraph uses the future land use plan to provide policy direction regarding the appropriate uses, format of development, and placement of buildings and parking for the Township's neighborhoods. Each area is outlined in a color representing one of the residential improvement area categories described above. Investment in these areas should be prioritized based on the category.

- 1. This area includes residential properties with frontage on Maceday Lake and Lotus Lake. Homes in this area are in good condition and many lakefront cottages have been renovated in recent years.** The Township should encourage and allow continued reinvestment and rehabilitation of lakefront homes and the lakefront character of the area, with large homes facing the lakefront being retained.
- 2. This area includes the neighborhoods surrounding Huntoon Lake.** The Township should encourage reinvestment in the housing stock and the replacement or rehabilitation of small, obsolete residential buildings. The Township should consider placing sidewalks to improve connections to Waterford Kettering High School and the planned recreational trail along Williams Lake Road should be added to enhance the area's appeal.
- 3. This area's proximity to Dixie Highway area presents a unique opportunity to create a critical mass of residents near the Drayton Plains Subarea through the addition of new housing.** Duplexes should be allowed as infill development to support this goal. The Township should ensure setback and other dimensional standards encourage desired infill development by providing sufficient buildable area. Sidewalks should be added where they are not present to promote pedestrian access between the neighborhood and the Drayton Plains Subarea.
- 4. This area encompasses residential properties along Loon Lake and Silver Lake that are in good condition.** Many of the area's cottages were renovated or replaced with newer homes. Though the existing pattern of single-family homes, with relatively narrow lakefront access lots, should remain, the recent pattern of reinvestment should continue over time; the Township should encourage property owners to reinvest in, add to, and rehabilitate homes.
- 5. This neighborhood is located immediately south of the planned Drayton Plains Subarea and presents an opportunity to add new housing and a greater number of residents near the future businesses along Dixie Highway.** The Township should ensure that its setback and dimensional standards allow for the construction of new single-family housing and duplexes. Sidewalks are missing in many areas including Warren Drive, Pauline Drive, Georgeland Drive, Crane Street, Bridge Street, and Frembes Road. The Township should consider adding these amenities to increase the neighborhood's access to the Drayton Plains Subarea and Waterford Kettering High School, thereby increasing the area's appeal to residents.
- 6. The area is in proximity to Cooley Elementary School, the Drayton Plains Nature Center, and the planned Drayton Plains Subarea.** The Township should ensure that its zoning regulations allow properties to be redeveloped with new single-family detached and duplex housing. Sidewalks are missing along certain streets including Highfield Road and Denby Drive. If completed, the neighborhood could have quality connections to the amenities around it. The Township should also consider installing sidewalks to connect to proposed trails along Lakewood Drive and the Clinton River.

- 7. This area includes properties with frontage on Watkins Lake along Watkins Lake Road and Lakewood Drive, many of which are in good condition.** Some reinvestment, including remodeling and reconstruction, has occurred in recent years, resulting in larger lakefront homes. Market factors should continue to drive the renovation and reconstruction of lakefront cottages over time and the Township should ensure that its setback requirements and bulk and dimensional standards encourage reinvestment.
- 8. This undeveloped greenfield site along Airway Drive south of M-59 poses an opportunity to develop multifamily housing.** The Township should explore the possibility of hotel and lodging uses on the site, given its proximity to the airport. The new multifamily uses should be buffered with vegetation from the single-family neighborhoods to the south and from the commercial sites to the north and west to preserve the neighborhood's visual integrity.
- 9. This area includes several underused commercial sites along M-59 south of Sharon Street, including medical offices, retail, and automotive-related uses.** These properties should be repurposed to add residential uses over time. The conversion of existing structures to accommodate residential uses on upper-floors should be encouraged. Standalone multifamily buildings should also be added on the sites adjoining residential neighborhoods to the south to provide a transition between the corridor and the neighborhood.
- 10. This area includes the neighborhoods immediately west of Crescent Lake where much of the housing will not appeal to potential homebuyers and needs repair.** The Township's zoning standards should encourage reinvestment in properties by allowing flexible setback and dimensional standards. Proactive enforcement of building code provisions and adjustments to fencing regulations should be considered to improve appearances. The area lacks sidewalks and the Township should consider adding them to connect the neighborhood with Knudsen Elementary School, and nonmotorized trails along Crescent Road and the Clinton River.
- 11. This area in the Township's east presents an opportunity for redevelopment with infill housing.** Many of the single-family detached structures on the deep, narrow lots along Marion Avenue are outdated and not market competitive. The development of duplexes should be promoted on these existing single-family lots. The Township should allow the replacement of single-family structures with multifamily uses over time to expand housing options and create a transition between the traffic on Elizabeth Lake Road and the neighborhoods to its north and south.
- 12. This area is located southeast of Pleasant Lake.** Some of the land is occupied with existing single-family detached residential uses, while other portions are occupied with wetlands. Some opportunity for new growth exists in the site's undeveloped areas. Conservation design principles should be adhered to as new development occurs; the Township should approve denser development, potentially through the use of cluster zoning, when natural resources such as mature trees and wetlands are present.
- 13. This area is located northeast of Otter Lake.** Many properties are in need of repair and little reinvestment has occurred in recent years. The Township should encourage property owners to reinvest in their property through zoning adjustments, code enforcement measures, and access to financial resources. Connections to future nonmotorized trails along Voorhies Road should be formed through the placement of sidewalks and pedestrian paths to ensure that the neighborhood has access to the Clinton River Trail.
- 14. In early 2023, Oakland Community College announced it will close their Highland Lakes campus in three years, with plans to sell the 155-acre property in the future.** With its large open area and numerous campus buildings, an opportunity exists to reuse the site. The Township will need to partner with community members to develop detailed planning concepts for this redevelopment opportunity. Such a process should engage residents, developers, local officials, and other stakeholders to determine the desired layout, uses, and development patterns on the site. Future redevelopment plans should also integrate green spaces and access easements connecting Hess Hathaway Park to Cooley Lake Road and Hospital Road to form new connections to the Township's recreational amenities.