

## CHAPTER 6

# COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLAN

Waterford Township includes a variety of commercial corridors and districts primarily centered along the community's major thoroughfares such as Dixie Highway, Highland Road, Williams Lake Road, and Telegraph Road. Though these areas have largely been developed with commercial plazas, they vary in current utilization and physical characteristics such as lot area and depth.

The Township also includes several areas that have historically been developed with industrial and manufacturing uses such as automotive parts manufacturing and warehousing establishments, as opposed to traditional retail storefronts. These areas are set behind the Township's corridor commercial sites but have access to Dixie Highway, Williams Lake Road and other major transportation routes. The Commercial and Industrial Areas Plan recognizes the unique differences between these areas and provides strategies and recommendations for commercial and industrial development over time.

## COMMERCIAL FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

Several principles informed the development of the recommendations made in the Commercial Areas Plan. This section highlights the top considerations made in the Plan's formulation.

### Mixed-Use Redevelopment

The conversion of sites along major corridors like Dixie Highway, Cooley Lake Road east of Williams Lake Road, and M-59 to Telegraph Road to accommodate a wider variety of business and residential patterns is fundamental to the commercial areas plan. The mix of uses should form appealing, cohesive spaces for residents and visitors to gather and incentivize the redevelopment of underused sites by diversifying the range of potential uses.

The configuration of businesses and housing should depend on the location and market dynamics, but multi-story buildings with ground-floor retail, dining, service, and entertainment uses, and upper floor office and residential uses should be the typical pattern. Outdoor gathering spaces such as pocket parks and accessory dining should be added where feasible to enhance the area's appeal.

### Lakefront Reuse

Owing to its name, Waterford Township has ample frontage along Otter Lake, Sylvan Lake, Pontiac Lake, Loon Lake, and other inland waterbodies. As a fundamental strategy to achieve the Township's placemaking goal, the commercial areas plan shows that key sites should be converted to food and drink, entertainment, and retail, and other experiential business that allow visitors to access and enjoy these rich natural amenities. As these Lakefront sites are developed, buildings, outdoor dining, and other site features should be located to best provide access to the lakefront. Accessory outdoor dining and patio areas should be encouraged on sites with access to Pontiac Lake, Schoolhouse Lake, Loon Lake, and others to provide a unique experience and best take advantage of their location.

### CASE STUDY: ONE WATER STREET, BOYNE CITY, MI

Boyne City, MI made efforts to proactively plan for its waterfront; its 2006 Waterfront Master Plan proposed the redevelopment of sites adjacent to existing waterfront parks and strengthen the tie between downtown and the waterfront. In 2010, the City approved the One Water Street development, which features, office, retail, residential, and restaurant space, including outdoor dining on a formerly underused site. The development affords residents and visitors views of the Lake Charlevoix Waterfront from the retail and café spaces located on-site.

The Boyne City Main Street program has been a part of Michigan Main Street at MEDC since 2003. The program has completed 37 façade rehabilitations for a total investment of nearly \$28 million and brought in 85 net new businesses to the downtown. The City has also used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and a local building redevelopment incentive program to reimburse for various projects including façade renovations, fire suppression, barrier free access, and brownfield remediation.



## High-Quality Amenities & Design

As redevelopment occurs, the Township should encourage high-quality site design and amenities. Though requirements for building design, landscaping, and nonmotorized access features can add to the cost of development, these requirements present a strategy to reposition the Township's commercial corridors for economic development and facilitate a high-quality sense of place. The addition of vegetated areas within and along the perimeter of parking lots should also be explored to enhance the Township's sense of place by creating a sense of continuity with the natural environment. The Township should also consider encouraging commercial developments featuring high-quality building materials or ground-floor storefronts to ensure that new development enhances the community's visual appearance. This goal could be achieved through zoning incentives and area or height bonuses that would provide economic benefits to developers that achieve the Township's desired visual aesthetic.

## Multimodal Access and Management

The Township should encourage site access for both motorists and nonmotorists as sites are developed. For example, requiring properties along planned nonmotorized trails to feature pedestrian and bicycle amenities that connect buildings with the adjoining street frontage. Driveways that allow vehicles access to sites are necessary to ensure access for motorists but regulations regarding their placement, width, and number should be considered. Cross access agreements should be encouraged, whenever feasible, to reduce the number of driveway entrances along a corridor. The Township should also work with the Oakland County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation to improve sidewalks and implement nonmotorized trails along Dixie Highway, M-59, and other major roads.

## Redevelopment Flexibility

The commercial areas plan recommends redevelopment on Dixie Highway, M-59, Cooley Lake Road, W Walton Road, Elizabeth Lake Road, and Telegraph Road corridors. As a key strategy, the Township should ensure that its zoning ordinance standards are flexible enough to encourage this redevelopment. A patchwork of commercial districts currently regulates the Township's corridors. Because each district has its own use, lot area, width, and setback standards, this patchwork of designations complicates the process to consolidate, plan for, and redevelop contiguous lots. The Township should seek to streamline its commercial zoning to create more consistent, flexible standards.

## Financing Tools For Redevelopment

Achieving the redevelopment and revitalization envisioned in the commercial and industrial areas plan may require financing measures implemented by the Township. The Township should consider the following fiscal tools to encourage redevelopment in commercial properties.

### Downtown Development Authority

Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) are local organizations that exist in many Michigan communities that support redevelopment in commercial districts. Aside from providing business development through networking and information sharing, DDAs are enabled by state statute to create a tax increment financing (TIF) district to support development. TIF allows the organization to collect future increases in property tax revenue within its district to finance a range of projects in the present that could catalyze development, including streetscape renovations, façade improvements, and redevelopment of private property. In 2023, the Township does not have an established DDA, however it should consider forming one in locations planned for redevelopment including the Drayton Plains Subarea area along Dixie Highway.

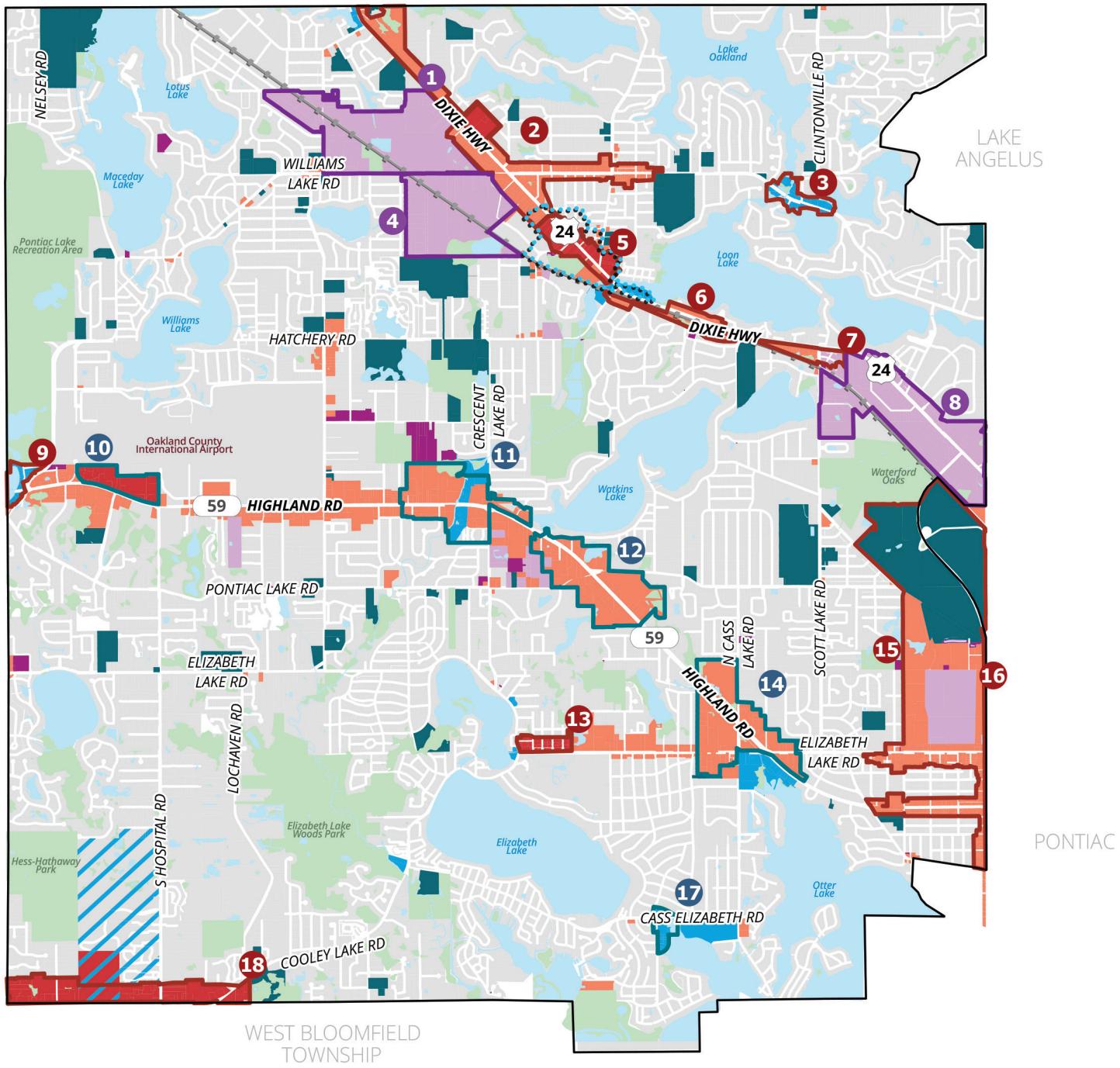
### Millages, Municipal Bonds, and SADs

Raising millages and selling municipal bonds is a common strategy for communities to support capital projects. The Township should consider such measures to support the commercial and industrial areas plan implementation. These often require voter approval to implement. Similarly, Special Assessment Districts (SADs) are designated where most property owners agree to allow a governmental agency to levy a special property tax in exchange for a service or specific type of improvement. The Road Commission for Oakland County's SAD paving program allows property owners along residential county roads to pave or repave their streets.

### Grants For Redevelopment

The Township should proactively seek grants to support the implementation of the commercial and industrial areas plan. The Township has already used funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered annually by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program provides grants to localities for a wide range of projects aimed at providing housing opportunities and expanding economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income households. Other funding sources the Township could explore include Section 108 Loans, which provide CDBG recipients with the ability to leverage their grant allocation to access low-cost financing for economic development, housing, and other infrastructure projects. The Township should search for opportunities to apply for these CDBG grants and other federal, state, county, or foundation grants and to support private developers and residents in seeking these resources. The Township can also consider establishing matching grant funds to achieve Master Plan goals and objectives.

# INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP



# COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FRAMEWORK PLAN

## Framework Plan Designation

- █ Commercial Infill
- █ Industrial Containment
- █ Redevelopment

## Future Land Use Designation

- Corridor Commercial
- Industrial
- Waterfront Commercial



# COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL FRAMEWORK

The Commercial and Industrial Areas Plan builds on the future land use plan to describe more detailed policies for the areas of the community designated for commercial and industrial development. Areas of commercial and industrial change in Waterford Township fall into one of the following three categories, which describe the type of change that should occur in each area.

- **Commercial Infill.** These areas provide opportunities for new commercial nodes in a manner that is compatible with existing uses and development patterns. Outlot development in large, underutilized parking lots is appropriate and the reuse of existing buildings should be promoted.
- **Redevelopment.** These areas have been developed with commercial uses over time, often in automobile-oriented strip patterns. Many of the existing buildings and structures are functionally obsolete. Partial or wholesale redevelopment is needed to accommodate reuse over time.
- **Industrial Reinvestment.** These areas have accommodated industrial uses in the Township's past, including light industrial establishments, manufacturing, and warehousing uses. The industrial reinvestment category emphasizes the need for reinvestment and targeted expansion of industrial and employment-related uses to allow their continuance where they've existed in the past.

## Commercial & Industrial Improvement Areas

The following numbered paragraphs describe the characteristics, issues, and opportunities of Waterford Township's commercial and industrial areas, as identified on the commercial and industrial improvement areas map. Each improvement area is outlined in a color representing one of the investment categories described above. Investment in these areas should be prioritized based on the assigned category.

### 1. This area contains many larger employment uses in 2023 including Penn Automotive, and the GM Warehouse.

These employment uses should continue over time, and minor expansions on the same site should be encouraged to support their continued operation. This area also contains underused properties such as auto parts stores, and auto repair shops, which should continue in the short-term, but should be redeveloped to accommodate new employment uses over time. Existing mature vegetation should be preserved and new vegetation should be added to buffer the site from the neighborhoods to the north and west. Commercial frontage should continue to be maintained along Dixie Highway.

### 2. This area includes existing commercial properties along Dixie Highway and W Walton Boulevard, currently occupied with plazas and low-density commercial uses.

The off-street parking areas on the southwest portion of the area should be redeveloped with new buildings that provide space for both housing and commercial uses. The existing box stores and storefronts that are vacant should be repurposed with new commercial, office, or entertainment uses as market dynamics govern. New housing can also be added above the existing box stores. Buildings dedicated solely to housing, including multifamily buildings, townhomes, and rowhomes should also be developed on-site. In the short term some of these tenant spaces, such as those north of W Walton Boulevard, can be repurposed, but, in the long-term, these properties should be redeveloped for commercial service, dining, and offices in modernized spaces.

The new businesses should support and cater to the Drayton Plains Subarea south along Dixie Highway. New automobile-related uses should be limited, given the proximity to the Drayton Plains Subarea, and any new parking facilities should be encouraged to utilize cross access agreements. A mix of multifamily and single-family attached housing on properties between Williams Lake Road and the community's northern boundary should be explored to allow housing to diversify.

3. **This area includes underused sites along W Walton Boulevard east of Wormer Lake.** Some of the existing single-floor commercial buildings can accommodate some reuse over time, however, the wholesale redevelopment of these parcels with new buildings should be encouraged as market pressures necessitate. New dining uses should be prioritized on parcels with Schoolhouse Lake or Wormer Lake frontage. Off-street parking should be located along roadways, while outdoor dining and patios should be in the rear to leverage lake frontage. Adequate screening should be provided to adjacent residential properties along School House Drive and Clintonville Road. New auto service uses should be prohibited. Connections for watercraft between Wormer Drive, Schoolhouse Drive, Woodhull Drive, and Lake Oakland Drive for improved navigation should also be explored over time.

4. **This area includes sites south of Williams Lake Road west of Dixie Highway that currently accommodate storage, logistics, and auto parts uses.** These uses should be maintained and the Township should accommodate future renovations or additions on existing sites. New industrial sites should not be allowed. Buffers from the neighborhoods west of Van Zandt Road should be added as development occurs.
5. **This area encompasses the Drayton Plains Subarea that stretches along Dixie Highway.** Greater detail on the Drayton Plains Subarea subarea's development is provided in the Drayton Plains Subarea Chapter.
6. **This area includes properties along Dixie Highway between Loon Lake and Scott Lake.** It should accommodate commercial service, dining, and retail uses that serve the Drayton Plains Subarea, planned multifamily uses to the southeast, and other nearby neighborhoods. Many of the existing buildings exhibit limited viability for reuse long-term and should be redeveloped. Narrow lots should be consolidated to allow flexible development formats. Given their shallowness, parking should be to the side of structures, with rear parking developed when space is available. Cross access agreements should also be utilized to consolidate entrance points to parking facilities and increase connections between commercial uses. New automotive services should be discouraged to limit the impact on nearby residences and activity centers.
7. **This area includes properties along Dixie Highway and Scott Lake Road, which contain commercial, industrial, and residential uses.** The properties east of Scott Lake Road should be repurposed with new industrial uses over time, including fabrication, warehousing, and transportation services. Although the housing along Edinburgh Street and Winton Road should continue in the short-term, the Township should allow for their replacement with industrial businesses in the long-term. The properties south of Dixie Highway and west of Scott Lake Road should continue to house commercial service businesses including office and retail businesses. The redevelopment of properties should be encouraged over time.
8. **This area includes commercial and industrial properties along Dixie Highway east of Scott Lake Road, which contain warehousing, transportation, and logistics uses in 2023.** This corner of the Township should continue to serve as a center for new transportation, logistics, and industrial uses in the future. Given the size and depth of properties, and the existing vegetative buffering that exist from neighborhoods to the south, this area should continue to serve as a hub for more-intensive commercial and employment into the future. Consideration should be given to enhance site aesthetics, such as landscaping, and screen features, such as loading docks, from public right-of-ways.
9. **This area includes properties along Williams Lake Road which have strip plazas and low-density commercial uses.** In the short-term, the existing structures can accommodate new commercial tenants, but the redevelopment of the properties with new buildings should be promoted in the long-term to increase the quantity and quality of tenant space. New dining, commercial, and entertainment uses that use the Pontiac Lake frontage should be encouraged. These new dining and entertainment uses sit under the Oakland County Airport flight path and attract diners that want to watch the planes or high income jet owners that use the airport but spend their money elsewhere. Buildings should be situated with off-street parking along Williams Lake Road and outdoor dining along the lake. Streetscape elements such as sidewalks and vegetation should be added to function as a gateway to the community. Boat slips should be encouraged with redevelopment to attract watercraft owners to the area.
10. **This area includes a group of properties immediately south of the Oakland County International Airport that currently contain commercial service, foodservice, lodging, auto-service, and retail uses in strip plazas.** The Township should encourage the redevelopment of these properties over time; the rehabilitation of existing strip plazas should be encouraged where these properties can be reused. New development should complement and provide consistency with the airport site to the north. New businesses that support airport use such as lodging and sit-down restaurants should be promoted.
11. **This area includes properties along M-59 immediately surrounding the Clinton River.** Commercial infill on these properties should be encouraged over time with new service, retail, and foodservice uses, with particular emphasis on new businesses that serve users of the Clinton River Trail. New development should be designed to promote access to the sites for both motorists and nonmotorists, with particular attention paid to access for pedestrians and cyclists. This area also includes potential opportunities to add multifamily housing immediately north of Centre Drive.

**12. This area includes parcels along M-59 east of Crescent Lake Road.** The area should continue to include service, retail, and light industrial uses. Appealing landscaping should be added as infill occurs on previously developed sites to screen the area from nearby neighborhoods. Though existing residential uses are located along Tee Cee Street, these uses should be uniformly commercial uses over time to create greater compatibility between the commercial, industrial, and residential uses and limit disturbance from noise and traffic in neighborhoods.

**13. This area includes commercial properties that front Elizabeth Lake Road west of Doremus Avenue which contain underused single-floor commercial structures.** These commercial properties should be redeveloped over time with two-floor mixed-use developments containing commercial retail and dining uses on the first floor and residential and office uses on the second floor. A sidewalk should be added along Elizabeth Lake Road to connect with existing establishments such as 4th Tavern Lakehouse, and off-street parking should be located to the rear or side of the new buildings to create a contiguous walkable environment. The entire block northeast of Elizabeth Lake and Cooley Lake Roads should anchor the district, and upper floor uses should provide views of Crescent Lake.

**14. This area includes underused commercial properties with low-density uses along Elizabeth Lake Road, Highland Road, and Cass Lake Road.** These lots should accommodate new commercial uses, prioritizing businesses that serve the community's recreational needs. Existing buildings should be repurposed or replaced. The lots on the south side of W Huron Street immediately south of Elizabeth Lake Road are uniquely positioned to afford views of Otter-Sylvan Lake. These properties should be redeveloped with commercial ground floors and residential second floors to allow residents and visitors to leverage these lakefront views.

**15. This area encompasses underused commercial properties west of Telegraph Road, along Summit Drive, and W Huron Street and well as properties north of Pontiac Lake Road.** These sites should be redeveloped with new commercial plazas that include a flexible mix of regional-serving and local-serving commercial retail, service, and dining businesses. As the sites along Summit Drive are developed, the existing vegetation that buffers the area from neighborhoods to the west should be preserved. Similarly, new vegetation should be added along the rear property lines of commercial sites along Telegraph Road and W Huron Street. Oakland County announced its intent to relocate many of its offices and facilities back to Pontiac. The Township should work with Oakland County to explore the conversion of these properties into new commercial and employment uses as this move occurs.

**16. This area represents a major redevelopment opportunity not just for Waterford Township, but for the broader Oakland County region.** While the retail environment has shifted, the site is well-positioned for business park development given its access to major routes including Telegraph Road, M-59, and US 24. The northern portion of the site should be targeted for a flexible mix of business park uses including clean industry, fabrication, and research and development. This site is relatively isolated, which means that businesses that generate more off-site impacts, such as noise, could be permitted. Any outdoor storage should be screened from view from public rights-of-way with attractive fencing and landscaping. Development should be located within a cohesive business park environment with high-quality landscaping, signage, lighting, and building materials that enhance the area's appearance. The southern portion of the site that has frontage on and visibility from N Telegraph and Elizabeth Lake Roads should be redeveloped for commercial development that complements commercial development to the south and east of the site.

**17. This area includes commercial properties along Cass Elizabeth Road at Parkway Street.** This area should serve as a small commercial node that provides recreational-related retail and dining establishments to visitors visiting Cass, Elizabeth, and Sylvan Lakes. Existing dining and water-based recreation uses should continue to serve these purposes and new ones should be added. The existing waterfront apartments that exist in the area should continue.

**18. This area includes sites along Cooley Lake Road west of Williams Lake Road.** In 2023, few of the buildings in the site remain market viable and many should be redeveloped. New one-to three floor structures containing ground-floor commercial, dining, and retail uses and upper-floor office or residential uses should be the primary development pattern. The site features many narrow, long parcels, which should be consolidated, where necessary, to spur this reuse. Multifamily development set behind commercial or mixed-use buildings can be added where deeper lots exist, west of Williams Lake Road. The Four Corners Lakeside development could be used as an example. Vehicle and pedestrian access should be provided between adjacent sites and large surface parking such as the parking area at Waterford Lanes should be reused.