

# **DESIGN LANSING**

**Draft #6 (6-21-10)**

**Plan Principles and Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

**Glossary candidates**

draft for discussion

# Introduction

DESIGN LANSING, the update of Lansing's Comprehensive Plan, recommends consensus-based objectives, plans and strategies to guide Lansing's future land use, development and improvement. It provides the foundation for setting capital improvement priorities, revising zoning regulations and developing other implementation tools. This draft document presents plan principles and objectives that will serve as the foundation for the Plan.

The **plan principles** summarize the big ideas for Lansing's future. They describe the overall vision that guides the planning effort and shapes objectives, strategies and physical plan recommendations.

The **plan objectives**, and related strategies, are organized into 6 topics:

- Land Use/Economic Development
- Land Use/Neighborhoods (Housing?)
- Green Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Public facilities and Services (TBD)
- Placemaking

The objectives were developed based on community input<sup>1</sup>, past and current planning work in Lansing and the region<sup>2</sup> and the insights of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, city staff and the consultant team. Draft objectives were reviewed by a panel of invited local experts and the community in a series of meetings held in February 2010. Refinements were made in March as a result of this input and as a basis for Stakeholder Committee review and comment. A number the objectives served as the basis for illustrating place-specific Concepts for Change with were reviewed by the Stakeholder committee and the community in May 2010. This review confirmed major Plan directions and served as a basis for a final revision of the draft objectives in June 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> This community input included the results of over 30 workshops and 1,000 spot surveys conducted between May and December 2009; a Community Character workshop (with real time voting on visual preferences) conducted in October 2009 and 4 community workshops to identify and prioritize key planning issues conducted in January 2010.

<sup>2</sup> This planning work included the 1999 *Central Lansing Plan*; Lansing's *Complete Streets/Non-Motorized Plan* (adopted \_\_\_\_\_) and *Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update* (adopted March 2010), as well as the cultural economic development plan for greater Lansing's urban center, *Art Works: Creative Invention/Reinvention* (adopted October 2009); the Lansing Economic Area Partnership's *Greater Lansing Next: A Plan for Regional Prosperity* (adopted November 2009); the phase 1 (September 2008) and 2 (June 2009) reports for the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's green infrastructure planning initiative; the Tri-County Regional Planning Commissions' *Regional 2035 Transportation Plan*; preliminary results from CATA's *Michigan/Grand River Avenue Transportation Study* and the Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority Exploratory Committee's 2009 *Draft Michigan Avenue Corridor Conceptual Development Plan*.

# PRINCIPLES

## SUSTAINABILITY

- **Green infrastructure.** Protect, restore and connect natural areas to promote the health of our environment, our city and its people. Remediate contaminated sites. Be energy efficient.
- **New economy.** Capitalize on the “creative economy” (institutions of higher learning and arts and cultural groups) to attract entrepreneurs and innovators, grow new businesses and diversify our job base.
- **Regional collaboration.** Collaborate with other jurisdictions and organizations to seek shared benefits in service effectiveness and cost savings.

## PLACE MAKING

- **Quality.** Create attractive places that draw people and activity and that honor context and human scale. Require maintenance that keeps the city clean, green and safe.
- **Mixed-use.** Encourage walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use centers and districts that provide urban convenience and vitality.
- **Connections.** Provide safe and convenient travel options, including walking, biking and transit, to connect people and places of opportunity.

## LIVABILITY

- **Choice.** Strengthen existing neighborhoods and expand the range of housing choices available to meet the needs of seniors, empty nesters, immigrants and the “creative class.”
- **Health.** Encourage active lifestyles by providing opportunities for walking, cycling and close-to-home recreation. Increase access to fresh, local food.
- **Culture and education.** Support the arts, culture and higher education, as well as efforts to improve K-12 schools.

## STEWARDSHIP

- **Positive attitude.** Foster pride in Michigan’s capital city. Market Lansing’s assets and celebrate its successes to foster a “can-do” attitude.
- **Readiness.** Encourage investment that builds on existing strengths and leverages the investment of others. Create development-ready opportunities to improve our city.
- **Citizen participation.** Encourage citizens to get involved. Share information; lead by example; remove barriers to action.

# LAND USE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## A. BUILD COMPETITIVENESS.

**Rationale.** LEAP's *Greater Lansing Next* report (2009) points to quality of life and place making as keys to attracting the talent needed to grow the job clusters that are already strong and create the businesses (and jobs) of the future. Economic competitiveness will depend on Lansing's ability to become a location of choice for people and investment.

### 1. Quality of Life/Placemaking

- Enhance Lansing's competitiveness as a place to live, work and invest by focusing quality of life and placemaking efforts on:
  - A vibrant downtown
  - A choice of livable neighborhoods
  - Arts and culture
  - Quality public schools
  - Higher education
  - Green infrastructure
  - Healthy lifestyles and fresh, local food
  - Festivals, attractions and entertainment
  - The appearance of community gateways and development nodes
  - Cycling, walking and transit connections
- More effectively market Lansing's quality of life assets.
  - See also **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: GREEN LEADERSHIP**

## B. ENCOURAGE MIXED-USE<sup>3</sup>.

**Rationale.** In areas already zoned commercial, Lansing can promote mixed-use development to create attractive, walkable, transit-oriented activity centers at a hierarchy of scales (regional, community, and neighborhood). This new emphasis on mixed use will encourage the enhancement of existing districts, and the creation of new ones, that provide alternatives to auto dependence by promoting walking, cycling and transit use. In turn, this will help to reduce the community's carbon footprint and foster a cleaner environment. At the same time this emphasis on mixed-use development will create urban neighborhoods with the visual quality and density of attractions that appeal to students, young professionals, and empty nesters -- making Lansing a more competitive housing and business location.

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<sup>3</sup> At a minimum, mixed-use development should include retail/service, office and residential uses.

## 1. Regional scale mixed-use center

- Continue to reinforce **downtown** Lansing as one of the community's quality of life assets and a regional mixed-use destination.
  - Encourage the location of government, corporate office headquarters, cultural, educational, entertainment, restaurant, hotel and retail uses in downtown.
  - Promote the expansion of the resident population in and adjacent to downtown.
  - Market downtown as a destination, including an expanded range of festivals and events.
  - Encourage greater planning coordination between the State and the City to maximize synergy between the capital district and downtown.
    - Encourage state office uses to locate in downtown buildings to create a “captive market” that supports other downtown uses.
    - Encourage walking and trolley connections between state offices and visitor destinations and downtown.
    - Establish a state, city and regional partnership organization to convene a continuing dialogue on how to collaborate in addressing land use, public space, urban design and transportation (streets, transit parking) issues.
  - Create a distinctive identity and clear organizing structure including a hierarchy of streetscape treatments, the addition of urban civic spaces and a high quality of architectural design.
  - Capitalize on downtown's recent designation as a national register historic district.
  - Encourage downtown density.
  - Keep downtown compact and walkable.
  - Make downtown streets pedestrian-friendly and encourage active street level uses.
  - Encourage structured, rather than surface parking in downtown and to serve the state complex.
  - Emphasize downtown links to, and the visibility of, the Grand River. See also **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: River trail**, below.
  - Establish stronger links between downtown and nearby mixed-use districts including Old Town, REO Town and E. Michigan Avenue's Stadium district.
- Encourage a mix of uses and a scale of development in areas immediately surrounding downtown that support (but do not compete) with the downtown core.
  - Protect historically and architecturally significant buildings/districts and neighborhood edges by encouraging careful transitions in building height and scale and compatibility in design (e.g., façade articulation, windows, entries, roof shapes, materials).
  - Maintain the existing grid of small blocks and make streets appealing to pedestrians.
  - Locate buildings to define the street edge with parking located to the rear to the greatest possible extent.
  - Strongly discourage the encroachment surface parking to serve core downtown or state complex uses.
  - Require landscaping to screen surface parking lots visible from the street.
  - Encourage related uses to cluster to create identifiable districts (e.g., state associations; arts/artisans/entrepreneurs live-work).

- Capitalize on the urban reach of Grand River as an asset for economic development and quality of life by encouraging a mix of higher density residential, office and cultural uses (in combination with ground-level restaurants and retail services) that provides public access and open space.
  - Encourage development densities that take advantage of valuable riverfront land.
  - Give priority to residential development.
  - Improve/protect river visibility and provide for public access to and along the river.
  - Strictly control surface parking.
  - Consider creating a public/private organization to promote, implement and manage public access and programming improvements along the riverfront.
  - Extend the river trail and provide improved links to neighborhoods and activity centers (see also **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**, below).

## 2. Community scale mixed-use centers

- Continue to support reinvestment in Lansing’s traditional mixed-use districts -- Old Town, REO Town -- emphasizing their role as urban neighborhoods that provide appropriately scaled retail, housing, institutional and office uses in an attractive, walkable environment.
- Encourage the re-design of large shopping centers (e.g., Frandor; Logan Square, Cedar/Jolly) to create mixed-use destinations that:
  - Encourage a mix of retail, office and housing.
  - Use land more efficiently (higher densities).
  - Improve vehicular access and circulation by creating an internal street and block pattern.
  - Locate buildings to face the street and screen parking.
  - Accommodate the needs of walkers, cyclists and transit users.
  - Provide parking lot landscaping and better manage stormwater.
  - Provide a high standard of design.
  - See also **TRANSPORTATION: BEST PRACTICES and CITY IMAGE**, below.

## 3. Neighborhood scale mixed-use centers

- Encourage a re-structuring of strip commercial development along Lansing’s major gateway streets north of Jolly Road to consolidate retail into walkable, mixed-use centers located at key intersections (“cores”).
  - Provide development standards for density, building placement and design, parking, and public space that create a pedestrian-friendly environment and appropriate transitions to single-family neighborhoods.
  - Update zoning to improve sign regulations to reduce visual clutter.
  - Capitalize on the existing façade improvement loan/grant program that includes design assistance.
  - Encourage the establishment of public/private partnerships to guide the development and implementation of corridor improvement plans.
  - Use public investments to guide and complement private investment.

- Use code enforcement and [land banking](#) as interim strategies.
  - Give particular priority to improvements on S. Cedar and E. Michigan Avenue.
  - Also address [MLK, Pennsylvania](#), N. Grand River, N. East Street, [Mt. Hope](#) and Oakland/Saginaw.
  - See also **TRANSPORTATION: BEST PRACTICES and CITY IMAGE**, below.
- Reinforce existing [neighborhood-serving retail/service centers](#), and support the creation of new ones in unserved neighborhoods, to create a sense of place and provide the option of walking or cycling for short trips.
- Encourage the location of neighborhood service centers at key intersections (for visibility and access) and on transit routes.
  - Encourage a mix of uses (including medium density residential).
  - Provide development standards for building placement (at the street) and design, parking (to the side or rear), public space and density that create a pedestrian friendly environment and appropriate transitions to single-family neighborhoods.

#### 4. Gateway streets

- Improve Lansing’s gateway streets to improve “first impressions,” expand housing options and provide sites for job-oriented uses by encouraging the re-structuring of strip commercial development.
- [On gateway streets north of Jolly Road \(e.g., MLK, S. Cedar, Pennsylvania, E. Michigan Avenue, Grand River\)](#) encourage a transition to non-retail development (higher density residential, [live-work units](#), office/research/light industrial and or green space<sup>4</sup>) uses in between mixed-use cores (“[urban connectors](#)”).
    - [See strategies for neighborhood-scale mixed-use center, above.](#)
    - See also **TRANSPORTATION: STRENGTHEN CITY IMAGE and UTILIZE BEST PRACTICES**, below.
- Where suburban commercial development patterns will remain [on gateway streets](#) (e.g., south of Jolly Road on Cedar, Pennsylvania and MLK) [and in shopping centers](#):
- [Encourage an expanded mix of uses, including higher density residential.](#)
  - Require landscaping to screen parking lots from the street (and adjacent residential development); define internal circulation; improve stormwater management and provide pedestrian amenities.
  - Provide pedestrian and bicycle access through parking lots to building entrances.
  - [Improve transit accessibility.](#)
  - At key intersections, encourage infill development that locates buildings to anchor/define corners and screen parking.
  - Update zoning to provide improved sign regulations.
  - Capitalize on the existing façade improvement loan/grant program that includes design assistance.
  - See also **TRANSPORTATION: UTILIZE BEST PRACTICES and STRENGTHEN CITY IMAGE**, below.

#### C. PROVIDE DIVERSE JOB CENTERS.

**Rationale.** *In addition to the potential for job growth in mixed-use districts/centers, Lansing has significant institutional, commercial and industrial assets that help to shape future land use patterns. These job centers should also be pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented and, in some instances may also include mixed-use*

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<sup>4</sup> Including land banking.

elements that improve their image and enhance their compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Suburban commercial development will continue to accommodate auto-oriented and large footprint retail users, but new incentives/standards are needed to improve their appearance, accessibility and sustainability.

**Rationale.** The Lansing Economic Area partnership (LEAP) has identified four “new economy” job clusters in which Lansing is already strong (see **Jobs**, below). These are significant assets in continuing to diversify and grow Lansing’s economy beyond its historical industrial strength. Lansing also has a number of quality of life assets on which to build in retaining and attracting the “creative economy” talent pool that can generate new knowledge-based enterprises and jobs. The urban reach of the Grand River is one of the most significant of these.

### 1. Cluster strengths

- To diversify Lansing’s job base and build on its “cluster” strengths, focus on making buildings and sites available that meet the needs of the following job sectors with growth potential:
  - Insurance and financial services
  - Health care
  - Life sciences and bio-medical
  - Information technology
- Coordinate the location of major job centers with transit. See also **LAND USE: ENCOURAGE MIXED USE.**
- Continue to work to attract “green” and advanced manufacturing jobs.
  - Leverage available transportation assets (air, rail and highway).

### 2. The “creative economy”

- Promote Lansing as a regional center for the arts and culture.
- In collaboration with area institutions of higher learning, use the organizational and leadership capacity of arts and cultural organizations to attract, welcome, support and celebrate innovators and entrepreneurs.
  - Continue to expand capacity to support entrepreneurs and grow creative businesses (e.g., incubator centers; mentoring; low interest loans).
- Collaborate in preparing plans for fiber optics and other technology capacity needed to support the “new economy.”

### 3. Institutional growth

- Allow and encourage government, educational and health care institutions to grow within the city in a way that enhances neighborhoods; creates walkable streets; manages traffic and parking demand and supports transit use. For example:
  - Avoid disrupting the street grid (street closures).
  - Carefully control the amount, location and design of parking.
  - Develop **Transportation Demand Management** programs to reduce parking needs and peak hour traffic volumes.
  - Step down building heights and massing, and provide green space setbacks, on neighborhood edges.
  - Locate entrances and include ground floor retail and service uses on traditional shopping streets.

- Provide easily accessible transit stops.
- Encourage employer-assisted housing programs.
- Work with institutions in planning for closure and/or re-use.

#### 4. Vacant industrial buildings/sites

- Encourage the adaptive re-use of smaller vacant industrial buildings and the redevelopment of smaller sites for a mix of non-industrial uses that complement adjacent neighborhoods and enhance frontages on major arterial streets.
  - Give special emphasis to potentials for including artist/artisan/entrepreneur live-work space.
  - Encourage re-use and redevelopment that creates an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment (e.g., buildings framing the street; parking to the rear; landscape buffering and screening).
- Encourage the clean-up and re-use of large vacant (and under used) industrial sites for job-oriented uses (from office, to research and light industry, to heavy industry) providing:
  - Buffers to adjacent neighborhoods, including new residential development where appropriate.
  - An internal street and block structure, where appropriate, to facilitate redevelopment.
  - An attractive frontage on major arterial streets, including the possibility of mixed-use development.
  - An emphasis on low impact development strategies and “green” buildings.
  - An emphasis on “green” jobs.
- Explore interim holding and low-cost remediation strategies for large vacant industrial sites.

#### D. FOCUS RESOURCES

##### Rationale.

- Focus reinvestment efforts to build on assets and strengthen key nodes and districts.
  - Be code- and policy-ready to allow desired reinvestment in multiple locations, but establish short-term priorities that build on existing strengths.
  - Use public infrastructure investments and development incentives to foster/support private investment.
  - Create success stories that build momentum and civic pride.

#### E. COLLABORATE.

**Rationale.** LEAP’s research shows that the metropolitan areas that have been most successful in attracting business and increasing jobs are those that have approached economic development as a coordinated regional initiative. It is also clear that a strong central city can work to the economic advantage its region. The factors that have been shown to attract the “creative class” – walkable, bikeable urban settings where transit is available; social diversity; a mixed use environment offering both density and choice in retail and dining options; outdoor recreation that supports active lifestyles – play to the strengths and assets of Lansing’s core area.

- Continue to work towards regional collaboration in economic development.
  - Capitalize on Lansing’s special role in accommodating higher density and mixed-use development.

- Build on/leverage interest and investments of others (e.g., E. Michigan transit).
- Explore mutually beneficial service sharing options.

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# LAND USE: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

## A. STRENGTHEN EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.

**Rationale.** *To retain existing residents and attract new ones, Lansing must work to preserve strong neighborhoods and to stabilize neighborhoods that are experiencing disinvestment.*

### 1. Older neighborhoods

- Build on the special assets of older neighborhoods by preserving historically and architecturally significant structures/areas; protecting existing development patterns; encouraging housing reinvestment and administering strengthened maintenance codes.
- Promote residential infill and renovation that are compatible with the positive urban design characteristics of existing neighborhoods.
  - Identify the design characteristics that define existing neighborhood character types (for example: street, block and lot patterns; building placement, orientation and height; location of garages; building massing, including entry definition, window transparency and orientation and roof type.)
  - Determine which form-based characteristics are most important to compatibility and include them in zoning regulations and/or guidelines.
- Support programs that encourage home ownership.
  - Encourage neighborhood “anchor” institutions to cooperate in planning/implementing improvements and to adopt employer-assisted housing programs.
  - Support lower cost, location efficient mortgage and “sweat equity” programs to attract urban pioneers.
- Support policies that accommodate ageing in place<sup>5</sup> including strategies that increase housing affordability such as shared housing and accessory dwelling units (granny flats).
- Continue to target the use of neighborhood improvement funds (for housing acquisition, demolition, rehabilitation, and infill) and explore “right-sizing”<sup>6</sup> strategies in established focus areas:
  - Comstock
  - Prudden/East Village
  - Oak Park
  - Urbandale
  - Potter Walsh
  - Baker Donora
  - Vision 2020
  - SW Lansing

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<sup>5</sup> Other land use approaches that support ageing in place include compact, mixed-use walkable development patterns; improvements to promote walking, cycling and transit use; access to fresh food; renovation/retrofit funding assistance and universal (or visitable) housing design.

<sup>6</sup> Right-sizing strategies include the temporary or permanent use of vacant lots/areas to create neighborhood and community benefits in the form of cleaner air, cleaner water, flood mitigation, improved access to fresh local food, expanded open space and/or a more attractive environment.

- Work with neighborhood groups to help identify assets as the basis for branding and marketing (e.g., environmental assets; access to parks and trails; walkability; senior amenities; community gardening).
- Continue to work on improving public school options for Lansing’s K-12 students.

## 2. Re-use of public school sites

- Encourage the Lansing School District to take steps to ensure that the new uses of surplus school buildings are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Encourage the re-use of surplus public school buildings located within neighborhoods on residential streets for alternative education and/or community services.
  - Encourage the re-use of surplus public school buildings located on arterial streets for job- (and property-tax) generating uses.
  - Encourage the preservation of public open space associated with surplus public school sites where appropriate.

## B. EXPAND HOUSING CHOICE

**Rationale.** *Alternatives to single-family detached housing are also important (for example, loft apartments and condominiums, town homes, stacked flats) to make Lansing a more competitive residential choice for students, young professionals, empty nesters and seniors. [These higher density housing alternatives can be accommodated most effectively in mixed-use districts and centers and along urban gateway “connectors.”](#)*

### 1. Mixed-use neighborhoods

- Provide an expanded choice of neighborhood and housing types to make Lansing a more competitive housing location for empty nesters, seniors, [immigrants students](#) and the “creative class”.
- Encourage mixed-use development (in downtown, along the urban reach of the Grand River, in traditional mixed-use districts, proposed community and neighborhood mixed-use centers and along “connectors”) that includes medium and higher density rental and owner-occupied housing.
- [Encourage the development of housing serving a mix of incomes, including affordable housing.](#)
- Locate new medium/higher density housing to capitalize on transit routes and to improve land use transitions.
- Evaluate the benefits of providing for live/work units and establishing districts for artists, artisans and entrepreneurs. Incorporate opportunities for including artists and other creative enterprises in affordable housing plans.
- [Support the location of appropriately scaled and designed food stores in mixed-use centers/districts to provide access within walking distance and to serve as neighborhood “anchors.”](#)
  - [Update zoning as needed.](#)
  - [Consider providing incentives such as discounted land acquisition costs or lease rates.](#)
  - [Encourage the formation of food co-ops to support retail food outlets with membership fees and volunteer workers.](#)
- Encourage the development of model “green” neighborhood that includes:
  - Clustered housing
  - Walkability

- Open space
- Links to recreation
- Proximity to transit
- Low impact site design
- LEED buildings
- See also [GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: PURSUE GREEN LEADERSHIP](#).

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# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

## A. SUPPORT HEALTHY NATURAL SYSTEMS.

**Rationale.** Protecting and enhancing Lansing’s natural systems as part of a collaborative regional effort will provide environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. Water quality can be improved, and flood risk reduced, by taking steps to better manage rain water where it falls and to restore riverbanks to a more natural condition. This, in turn, can reduce infrastructure costs related to stormwater and flood control, and encourage the expansion of river-related recreation. Expanding the city’s tree canopy and encouraging native landscapes will also provide ecologic functions with economic value – including the sequestration of carbon to improve air quality and the reduction of the urban heat island effect to reduce energy costs for cooling. Providing opportunities for recreational contact with nature also improves psychological health and can add significantly to a sense of place.

### 1. River systems

- Protect, enhance and promote the recreational and environmental value of Lansing’s river systems.
  - Improve river visibility.
  - Increase river access for recreational boating and fishing.
  - Continue to improve water quality and habitat.
  - Conduct regular river clean-ups.
  - Restore riverbanks (riparian buffers; stabilization; native vegetation).
  - Reduce flooding.
  - Protect groundwater quality and wellheads.

### 2. Connected green infrastructure system

- Identify, protect and link woodland and wetland fragments into a larger greenway network infrastructure system—including river corridors and tributaries, parks, trails and on-street pedestrian/bicycle connections.
  - Give priority to protecting conservation areas identified in Tri-County’s inventory.
  - Identify and field investigate additional/smaller natural resource sites of local importance.
  - Integrate natural area protection into water quality management planning.
  - Inform and educate the community to build awareness and long-term stewardship.

### 3. Urban forest

- **Protect existing trees (the urban forest canopy) and require tree replacement.**
  - Develop and urban forest management plan.
  - Improve landscaping requirements for commercial, industrial, mixed-use and larger-scale residential developments
  - Include tree planting and maintenance in all public improvement projects.

## B. ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES.

**Rationale.** *Parks and off-street trails, especially in combination with walkable, bikeable streets, provide recreational opportunities that promote physical activity and improve health. At the same time, they contribute to a cleaner environment by encouraging people to burn calories, not carbon. Parks and trails provide pervious surface areas to reduce stormwater runoff, as well as trees that improve air quality. Neighborhood parks have also been shown to catalyze private reinvestment and increase the value of nearby property, while destination parks increase urban tourism and its economic spin-offs. In addition, parks help to encourage social interaction and build community. They also provide important opportunities for children to play and learn.*

*Community gardens and farmers markets also provide significant environmental, economic and social benefits. By providing local sources for fresh food, they reduce fossil fuel use for food transportation; provide opportunities for entrepreneurship (urban farming); capture food expenditures in the local economy and offer opportunities for social interaction, exercise and recreation.*

### 1. River trail

- Extend and improve the river trail and create links to neighborhoods and activity centers.
  - Link Frances Park (southwest) and Potter Park (southeast) to Tecumseh Park (northwest).
  - Provide trail development guidelines for urban and natural river reaches.
  - Explore opportunities to link to the regional trail system.
  - Improve visibility of the trail and its access points (trail heads).
  - Increase access points and provide wayfinding and interpretive signs.
  - Address periodic flooding (e.g., raise river trail elevation).
  - Accommodate both walkers and cyclists.
  - Provide opportunities for water access (stabilized banks).
  - Continue maintenance improvements.
  - Consider creating a public/private organization to promote, implement and manage public access and programming improvements along the riverfront.

### 2. Parks

- Preserve existing **dedicated** parks and natural areas.
  - Consider re-purposing closed golf courses as public parks.
- Use “green” development approaches in parks.
  - Provide low maintenance native plantings where possible to reduce maintenance costs and improve habitat.
  - Identify opportunities for sub-watershed stormwater management in parks.
  - Encourage community gardens in parks.
- Continue to provide special events/festivals.

### 3. Local food

- Support local food production and improve access to fresh food including community gardens, farmers' markets and urban agriculture.
  - Capitalize on available park space and property that will be land banked for the mid to long term, (5+ years).
  - Encourage organizations to partner and share lessons learned.

### C. PURSUE GREEN LEADERSHIP.

**Rationale.** *Lansing can be a regional and state-wide leader in urban sustainability by focusing on restoring the ecological and recreation value of its river systems; implementing its complete streets policy and continuing to support its strong local food movement – among other initiatives.*

#### 1. Green accomplishments

- Promote/publicize Lansing's green assets and accomplishments – and their importance -- both within the city and externally. For example:
  - Innovative stormwater management projects
  - Park system
  - The river trail
  - City market
  - Complete Streets ordinance
  - Michigan Healthy Community ranking
  - Re-cycling program
  - Use of co-generation and renewable energy

#### 2. Green development

- Encourage green site selection (**LEED-ND**), site development (**LID**) and building (**LEED**) practices.
  - Prioritize redevelopment on sites in mixed use areas that are walkable, bikeable and served by transit.
  - Minimize grading.
  - Reduce impervious surfaces.
  - Incorporate native landscaping.
  - Capture and clean stormwater run-off on site.
  - Maximize energy efficiency.
- Encourage green retrofits (e.g., rain gardens; native landscape; tree planting; energy efficiency upgrades) for existing development.
- Allow for alternative energy approaches (solar, geo-thermal, wind) on residential sites.

### 3. Carbon footprint

- Work to reduce Lansing's carbon footprint by making land use and transportation decisions that reduce the use of fossil fuels.
  - Encourage land use patterns that encourage walking and cycling for short trips.
  - Provide improved on- and off-street walking and cycling facilities.
  - Promote transit use.
  - Provide incentives for "green" site and building development.
  - Support local food production.
  - Facilitate needed infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles. See also **TRANSPORTATION: BEST PRACTICES**.

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# TRANSPORTATION

## A. PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES.

**Rationale.** Lansing has recently adopted a Complete Streets ordinance and a non-motorized transportation plan as an important step towards ordinance implementation. The city and region are also served by a transit system (CATA) considered to be a leader for a community of its size. These assets will play an important role in providing Lansing citizens and employees with alternatives to travel by car. In implementing its Complete Streets ordinance, Lansing will also make its streets safer and more attractive. As walking, cycling and transit trips increase, the use of non-renewable fossil fuels, green house gas emissions and air pollution will be reduced. These transportation alternatives will also provide improved access for non-drivers and can reduce household costs associated with owning one or more cars.

### 1. Complete streets

- Implement Lansing’s “complete streets” ordinance to design, manage and operate streets to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, vehicles and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
  - Adopt land use and development policies that encourage compact development patterns, a mix of uses, connected streets and transit-supportive development densities to reduce auto dependence and vehicle miles traveled.
  - Establish new **context-sensitive street typologies** that optimize multi-modal service quality to guide street design projects.
  - Continue to implement **road diets**.
  - Evaluate changes to one-way streets especially in and around downtown.
  - Continue to implement traffic calming improvements to reduce travel speeds and improve safety.
  - Include sidewalk and bike lane improvements in bridge improvement/replacement projects wherever possible.
  - Provide streetscape improvements to create a walkable environment.
  - Coordinate improvements with Safe Routes to Schools, including street crossing improvements (cross walks, refuge islands, audible signals, tactile warnings on curb ramps).
- Establish a non-motorized network that serves all Lansing residents and neighborhoods by promoting walking and cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle and a sustainable community.
  - Gradually implement the non-motorized plan recommendations
    - Bike lanes
    - Bike boulevards<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bicycle boulevards are streets with low traffic volumes (under 4,000 vehicles per day) and speeds (25 mph) that are shared by motorists and cyclists, but prioritized for bicycle use using traffic calming and/or reduction strategies, pavement markings, signage and special intersection crossing treatments.

- Pathways
- Bicycle parking
- Complement plan implementation with education/training, enforcement and promotion.
- Coordinate implementation with other agencies, institutions and jurisdictions [to ensure that Lansing is effectively linked to the regional trail system.](#)

## 2. Transit

- Encourage public and private investments and land use policies that support transit so the Lansing area remains a leader for a community of its size.
  - Promote additional density along major transit corridors at development nodes; encourage transit-oriented site design.
  - Provide operational and design improvements that favor transit along key corridors (e.g., E. Michigan Avenue).
  - Provide incentives to use transit (increase parking costs or decrease supply near major transit destinations).
  - Improve the environment around bus stops; ensure safe access, comfort and schedule information for transit riders.
  - [Explore the feasibility of establishing key cross-town routes.](#)
  - [Explore the feasibility of providing trolley routes to link downtown and the state complex.](#)
  - [Explore the feasibility of a grade-separated rail crossing on Michigan Avenue, CATA's highest ridership route.](#)
  - Work with area communities and CATA to expand the system.
  - Support transit planning, improvement and funding efforts.
  - Participate in efforts for passenger rail improvements.

## B. UTILIZE BEST PRACTICES.

**Rationale.** *The implementation of best transportation management practices will increase safety and efficiency. This will help to reduce traffic congestion and delays and related vehicle emissions. Lansing can also look for energy savings in new technologies, as well as adopting low impact development strategies in the design of all transportation projects.*

### 1. Corridor management

- Reduce crash potential and emissions through improved traffic flow for all modes along major arterials.
  - Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) (signal coordination, incident response, driver info, traffic control center)
  - Reduce the number of driveways and increase driveway spacing, especially from signalized intersections on arterial streets (access management).
  - Select intersection and interchange improvements (including roundabouts)

## 2. Green transportation

- Use best practices and technology to reduce emissions and promote energy independence (LEED Transportation Principles).
  - Gradually replace city fleets with energy efficient vehicles.
  - Use energy efficient lighting for streets and parking lots.
  - Priority parking for plug-in/hybrid vehicles in city parking lots.
  - Use Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in transportation projects.

## 3. Green street design

- Promote the use of low impact Development (LID) strategies within the street network.
  - Minimize stormwater volumes and pollutants by reducing impervious surface and using rain gardens.
  - Maximize the tree canopy.
  - Use native and low maintenance plants to reduce irrigation needs.

## C. STRENGTHEN CITY IMAGE.

***Rationale.** Lansing's major roadway corridors are gateways to and through the community and play a major role in defining the image of the city for both residents and visitors. Lansing can adopt strategies to improve visual character within public rights-of-way (greening, burying utilities) as well as to encourage improved development patterns, signage and architecture on fronting parcels. Today, one of the most significant detractors from city image is the way parking is handled. Steps can be taken to reduce its visual dominance, its environmental impact and its land consumption.*

### 1. Visual character

- Improve visual character along major arterials and at major gateways.
  - Improve the functioning and visual character of highway interchanges using the principles of Context Sensitive Design. Give priority to 127 at E. Michigan Avenue (Frondor) and I-496 at S. Cedar.
  - Give priority to improvements on S. Cedar, E. Michigan Avenue, MLK, Pennsylvania, N. Grand River, N. East Street and the Oakland/Saginaw corridor.
  - Reduce roadway pavement width where possible to widen sidewalks and "green" the street by expanding parkways or adding medians with street trees.
  - Bury overhead utility lines.
  - Update zoning to provide better sign controls.
  - Revise land use and design regulations to ensure that adjacent development improves corridor visual character (see **LAND USE: ENCOURAGE MIXED USE**, above).
  - Require improved parking lot location, screening and landscaping (see also **TRANSPORTATION: Parking**, below).

## **2. Parking**

- Encourage the more efficient use of land in providing of parking and reduce its impact on Lansing's appearance, environment, and walkability.
  - Reduce requirements for the amount of off-street parking for certain uses and zones.
  - Encourage shared parking.
  - Encourage the use of parking structures (including underground parking), rather than surface lots, in densely developed areas.
  - Encourage major employers to adopt transportation demand management programs to reduce parking needs.
  - Upgrade parking lot/structure location and design standards (screening, landscaping, stormwater management and bicycle/pedestrian access).

## **3. Wayfinding**

- Improve wayfinding, especially from the airport to downtown and MSU.

draft for discussion