DESIGN LANSING
2012 comprehensive plan

Adopted:
April 9, 2012

Virg Bernero, Mayor
Thank You!

Design Lansing 2011 Master Plan
Stakeholder Advisory Committee

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## Thank You!

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**Old Everett Neighborhood**

**Old Town Commercial Association Board & Friends**

**Planning/Zoning Boards**

**PSD/EDC Board Members and Staff**

**Thinkers & Doers on Michigan Ave.**

**Ward 4 Progressives**
# Acknowledgments

## Agencies

| Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) | Northwest Initiative |
| Ingham County Health Department | South Lansing Community Development Assoc. |
| Power Of We | Baker-Donora Focus Center |
| Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) | Lansing Community College (LCC) |
| Lansing Neighborhood Council | Lansing Housing Commission |
| Lansing School District | Sparrow Hospital |
| Tri-County Regional Planning Commission | Cooley Law School |
| Michigan Department of Transportation | Lansing Rotary Club |
| Michigan State University | Old Town Commercial Association |
| MSU Land Policy Institute | Reo Town Commercial Association |
| MSU - Urban & Regional Planning Program | Board of Water and Light |
| Land Use Health Team | CED Network |
| Mid- Michigan Environmental Action Council (MID-MEAC) | Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) |
| Greenway Collaborative | Eastside Neighborhood Organization |
| Allen Neighborhood Center | Westside Neighborhood Association |
| Greater Lansing Housing Coalition | Northwest Initiative |
Acknowledgments

Virg Bernero, Mayor
Chris Swope, City Clerk

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Kate Koskinen, Community Outreach Coordinator
Rick Kibbey, Community Outreach Coordinator

Consultants

JJR
LSL Planning
Landscape Architects and Planners
Katherine Beebe Associates
RESOLUTION #2012-056
BY THE DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LANSING


WHEREAS, the City of Lansing Planning Commission (a.k.a. “Planning Board”, hereinafter referred to as the “Commission”), under the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008) and Article 5, Chapter 6 of the Lansing City Charter, shall develop and maintain a master plan for the orderly development of the City; and

WHEREAS, three citywide comprehensive plans were adopted by the City of Lansing, dated 1921, 1938, and 1958, respectively; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, the City was geographically subdivided into four planning areas (the River Island Area, the Southwest Area, the Southeast Area and the North-East Area) for the purpose of revising the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan, and this revision was completed with the Commission’s adoption of the North-East Area Plan on February 15, 1983.

WHEREAS, the four “Area” plans, along with their numerous amendments and other planning studies were consulted as part of this planning process; and

WHEREAS, the City contracted with Smith Group JJR (hereinafter referred to as “the Consultant”) to prepare and complete a new comprehensive plan for the City of Lansing in conjunction with the Planning and Neighborhood Development Department; and

WHEREAS, the planning process was designed to encourage citizen participation to ensure that community priorities were addressed and consensus on plan directions was achieved in each phase of work. A range of community engagement strategies were used, including:

- The formation of a 77-member Stakeholder Advisory Group, consisting of citizens, property owners, developers, business owners, and government representatives, who met with the City/consultant core team throughout the planning process to review and advise on developing plan content.
- Early interviews with selected public and private sector leaders to identify key planning issues and opportunities.
- A series of over 25 workshops with community groups to help identify areas in Lansing that should be preserved, enhanced, or transformed. The results of these workshops were analyzed to

[15466:3:20120409:194944]
RESOLUTION #2012-056

identify top priorities that served as the basis for drafting goals, issues and strategies, and developing concepts for change.

- Over 1,000 spot surveys that added information on what respondents liked best and least about Lansing.
- A community character workshop structured as a visual preference survey with real-time digital voting.
- A series of four citywide workshops on priority issues and draft objectives.
- A citywide workshop on concepts for change and a subsequent day-long charrette.
- Public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council.

WHEREAS, the Stakeholder Advisory Group, City staff, and consultants carefully and comprehensively studied present conditions, projections of future trends, and the regional context of Lansing and neighboring jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Design Lansing Plan builds on a number of recent and concurrent planning efforts, including the following:

- Non-Motorized Plan, City of Lansing (adopted November 2011),
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010-2015, City of Lansing (adopted March 2010),
- City of Lansing Hazard Mitigation Plan (December 2010),
- Greater Lansing Next: A Plan for Regional Prosperity, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (adopted November 2009),
- Art Works: Creative Invention/Reinvention, Cultural Economic Development Steering Committee (October 2009),
- Regional 2035 Transportation Plan, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (2010),
- Greening Mid-Michigan, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission,
- Michigan/Grand River Avenue Transportation Study, Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA),
- Designing for Transit-Oriented Development, CATA (April 2010),
- Draft Michigan Avenue Corridor Conceptual Development Plan, Michigan
- Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority Exploratory Committee (2009),
- Regional Growth: Choices For Our Future, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (September 2005),
- Saginaw-Oakland Corridor Study (2008),

[15466:3:20120409:194944]
RESOLUTION #2012-056

WHEREAS, copies of the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan were forwarded to all adjoining jurisdictions, railroads, utilities, and state and local jurisdictions that have responsibility for financing or constructing public improvements at least sixty (63) days prior to the public hearing, in accordance with Section 41 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, and as authorized by City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing at the South Side Community Center on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at which five (5) members of the public spoke; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission took into consideration the testimony presented at said public hearing and the comments received from adjacent jurisdictions, and now desires to present its recommendation for adoption of the Plan to the Lansing City Council; and

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting on February 7, 2012, the Planning Commission of the City of Lansing, Michigan approved the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan draft dated February 7, 2012, and recommended its adoption by the Lansing City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Commission further recommended that the City of Lansing proceed with the steps necessary to implement the Design Lansing Plan recommendations, and that this Plan be reviewed and amended as appropriate every five (5) years in accordance with the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Development and Planning has reviewed the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan and the recommendation of the Planning Commission and concurs therewith;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lansing City Council hereby adopts the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan draft dated February 7, 2012, subject to final editing for publication.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Consultant Team:
Design Lansing represents a new direction for the City of Lansing, blending the strengths of the community with time tested development patterns and new thinking. The vision spelled out in the plan is ambitious and optimistic. Moving this vision toward tangible improvement for the residents of Lansing and the region will require a great deal of work from the dedicated and impassioned people that helped formulate the plan, as well as from their growing ranks of active citizens. This report is an invitation to the reader to join in the effort to rethink Lansing, and to proactively guide its future. Each individual contribution is a valuable step toward creating the community the Lansing needs to be.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

As an introduction to Design Lansing’s recommendations, this chapter:

- Describes the purpose of the master plan, the planning participants and process, and the plan’s relationship to other recent and concurrent planning efforts.
- Presents an overview of the planning context including demographic and economic issues, and their planning implications, as well as best practice planning trends.
- Summarizes citizen planning priorities for areas in Lansing to be preserved, enhanced and transformed.
A master plan is a set of long-range goals, objectives, strategies, and maps used to guide the growth and development of a community. The master plan:

- Identifies existing conditions, trends, issues, and opportunities as a basis for decision-making.
- Clarifies and gains consensus on goals and objectives for the future.
- Establishes recommendations for managing change and guiding decisions about land use and transportation.
- Provides the foundation for establishing capital improvement priorities, revising zoning regulations, and developing other implementation tools and programs.

A master plan looks 20 years or more into the future to provide a framework for decision-making that establishes clear directions, but is flexible enough to accommodate changing conditions. It recommends the type, density, and character of development appropriate in different areas of the community, including where new development should occur and where resources should be directed at revitalization and the reuse of existing structures. A master plan also identifies important natural and cultural resources to be protected and recommends improvements to the transportation system.

A master plan serves as a vehicle for communicating policies for the future to state and regional agencies and adjacent jurisdictions as a basis for coordinating land use, open space, and transportation decisions. In addition, it describes the community’s expectations and preferences about future development to property owners, developers, and business people to serve as a catalyst for change.

While Design Lansing addresses a broad range of topics that influence quality of life, it focuses on land use, development, and infrastructure issues on which the City of Lansing (City) can have a direct impact. It will be used by the Planning Commission, City Council, and city staff as a guide for day-to-day decision-making in:

- Reviewing rezoning requests.
- Reviewing development proposals (site plan approval).
- Recommending physical improvements (utilities, streets, bicycle and pedestrian systems, and open space).
- Developing specific design standards.

Design Lansing also provides the foundation for the City’s zoning ordinance, one of the most important tools in implementing plan recommendations over time.

Please note that the Lansing Planning Board, created by City Charter, is referred to in this document as “Planning Commission” in conformance with the Michigan Planning Act (P.A. 33 of 2008).
MASTER PLAN PARTICIPANTS AND PROCESS

Work on Design Lansing, the 2011 Lansing comprehensive plan effort, began in January 2009 and was led by a core team, made up of staff from the Department of Planning and Neighborhood Development (PND) and the consultant team of JJR and LSL Planning, Inc. Kate Koskinen and Rick Kibbey were engaged by PND to assist with community outreach.

The planning process was designed to encourage citizen participation to ensure that community priorities were addressed and consensus on plan directions was achieved in each phase of work. A range of community engagement strategies were used, including:

- The formation of 77-member Stakeholder Advisory Group who met with the City/consultant core team throughout the planning process to review and advise on developing plan content.
- Early interviews with selected public and private sector leaders to identify key planning issues and opportunities.
- A series of over 25 workshops with community groups to help identify areas in Lansing that should be preserved, enhanced or transformed (see Citizen Planning Priorities, below). The results of these workshops were analyzed to identify top priorities that served as the basis for drafting goals, issues and strategies, and developing concepts for change (see Phase 3, below).
- Over 1,000 spot surveys that added information on what respondents liked best and least about Lansing.
- A community character workshop structured as a visual preference survey with real-time digital voting.
- A series of four citywide workshops on priority issues and draft objectives.
- A city-wide workshop on concepts for change and a subsequent day-long charrette.
- Public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council.

The planning process was structured in four major phases that included the following tasks.

**Phase 1 – Data Collection and Community Analysis**
- Community Profile
- Inventory and Analysis Mapping
- Preliminary Transect Analysis and Pattern Types
- Preserve, Enhance, Transform Workshops and Surveys

**Phase 2 – Shared Community Vision**
- Community Character Workshop
- Issues and Objectives Workshops
- Draft Principles, Goals, Objectives Workshops
Phase 3 – Planning and Design Exploration (Concepts For Change)
- Concepts For Change Workshops and Charrette (emphasis on place-specific objectives)
- Draft Future Land Use Plan

Phase 4 – Plan Recommendations
- Draft Report Preparation
- Stakeholder Review
- Mayor’s Review and Referral
- Planning Commission and City Council Review
- Distribution for Community and Adjoining Jurisdiction/Agency Review
- Final Draft Report Preparation
- Planning Commission Public Hearing and Action
- City Council Action
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

Lansing’s last city-wide master plan was adopted in 1958, and a series of area-specific comprehensive plans were prepared and adopted in the 1970s and 1980s. The most recent master plan document is the Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan, prepared in 1999. Design Lansing is intended to complement the Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan, and the Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan remains valid except as it may be modified or elaborated upon by this document. All the other area-specific comprehensive plans are superseded by Design Lansing.

Design Lansing builds on a number of recent and concurrent planning efforts, including the following:

- Non-Motorized Plan, City of Lansing (adopted November 2011) — This plan, developed with the participation of Lansing’s walking and cycling advocates, is the first step in implementing Lansing’s complete streets ordinance (adopted April 2009). The plan includes a vision for establishing a 765-mile walking and bicycling network that links to a regional non-motorized system. Objectives, strategies and performance measures are included in the plan. It also prioritizes routes and facilities based on an extensive public involvement process.

- Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010-2015, City of Lansing (adopted March 2010) — This plan describes the goals, objectives and short-term projects that will ensure continued support for, and enhancement of, the park system. Surveys conducted as part of plan development identified trails, natural areas and public gardens as the types of facilities citizens would most like to see expanded.

- City of Lansing Hazard Mitigation Plan (December 2010) — This plan identifies Lansing’s vulnerability to a range of hazards and identifies potential hazard mitigation projects.

- Greater Lansing Next: A Plan for Regional Prosperity, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (adopted November 2009) — This plan, developed by a consortium of business, government and non-governmental organization leaders, provides a regional vision and action strategies for meeting the challenges of the new economy. Placemaking—focusing on making great places to live and work—was identified as one of four elements that are essential to sustaining economic prosperity in the Lansing region.

- Art Works: Creative Invention/Reinvention, Cultural Economic Development Steering Committee (October 2009) — This plan, prepared by cultural and economic development leaders in Lansing and East Lansing, describes goals, outcomes and action steps for making the Lansing region the “Midwest's most welcoming and supportive destination for creative innovators and entrepreneurs.”

- Regional 2035 Transportation Plan, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (2010) — This plan is a long-range strategy and capital improvement program that will guide the effective investment of public funds in multimodal transportation facilities. Based on a shared regional vision for growth (see Tri-County Regional Growth: Choices For Our Future, below), the plan provides the basis for establishing short-range capital
improvement programs for implementing highway, transit and bikeway projects.

- **Greening Mid-Michigan**, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission — This multi-year green infrastructure planning initiative identified and analyzed potential conservation areas and mapped hubs and potential links in creating a network of protected lands and trails. The heart of this green infrastructure vision is natural resource conservation in balance with economic development and a healthy environment.

- **Michigan/Grand River Avenue Transportation Study**, Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) — This ongoing study is proposing and evaluating alternative improvements to transit, traffic, sidewalks and bike facilities that will enhance community assets and stimulate investment, including transit-oriented, mixed-use development. The seven-mile corridor runs from downtown Lansing east through the City of East Lansing, Michigan State University, Lansing Township and Meridian Township. The Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP, Inc.), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) were all major partners in this study.

- **Designing for Transit-Oriented Development**, CATA (April 2010) — This document provides a guide to the suitability of land uses to support CATA transit service.

- **Draft Michigan Avenue Corridor Conceptual Development Plan**, Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority Exploratory Committee (2009) — In support of the establishment of a Corridor Improvement District on East Michigan Avenue, this plan includes an evaluation of existing conditions, a draft vision and implementation strategies.

- **Tri-County Regional Growth: Choices For Our Future**, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (September 2005) — This plan presents a consensus vision for growth and land use that will maintain regional quality of life by directing growth to established urban, suburban and rural centers, and to mature corridors with a high potential transit ridership that connect regional centers.

- **Saginaw-Oakland Corridor Study** (2008) — This study analyzed the traffic flow and land use patterns along this corridor from city limit to city limit and recommended a set of significant changes to the corridor. The plan recommended a road conversion that would allow the inclusion of dedicated bicycle lanes, as well as supporting the development of mixed use nodes along the corridor, including the redevelopment of the Frandor area.

**PLANNING CONTEXT**

There have been significant changes in demographics, economic conditions and planning best practices since the City last undertook a city-wide evaluation of land use and transportation issues to define a preferred future and outline the policy directions needed to implement that vision. The following pages provide a brief
Figure 1-1: Existing Land Use (Source: City of Lansing, 2007)
description of existing development patterns and an overview of the issues and trends that have shaped the content of this master plan.

**Existing Land Use**

For the most part, the city is already developed with a land use pattern that has been established over the past 150 years. Downtown and the Michigan State Capitol Complex are the center of the city’s older urban core and are surrounded by relatively dense urban neighborhoods with industrial districts flanking the rivers and rail lines. More recent development—between the city’s core and its outer edges—follows a more suburban land use pattern. Single family neighborhoods have been developed at lower densities, and commercial uses line major roadway corridors and are located in larger shopping centers at major intersections and expressway interchanges. In contrast to the smaller parks serving older neighborhoods, large, natural areas are protected as parks along Sycamore Creek and the Red Cedar River (on the eastern edge of the city).

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**Figure 1-2: Housing Age**

*Source: City of Lansing, 2008*
Industrial uses in the more recently developed parts of the city are concentrated around the airport (in the northwest) and the Midway Industrial Park (in the southeast).

**Demographic Issues and Planning Implications**

**Population Loss** – Although the population of the Tri-County region (Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties) has been growing modestly, Lansing’s 2010 population (114,297) represents a 4.24% drop since 2000. The city’s population is expected to stabilize in the next decade. This population decline, combined with other effects of the “Great Recession” beginning in 2008, means that Lansing will have to adjust to a decreased overall demand for housing, retail and services; and will need to continue to work on stabilizing neighborhoods with increasing vacancies and declining rates of investment. At the same time, Lansing should pursue a range of strategies that enhances quality of life, improves visual character and expands housing choices to increase its competitiveness in retaining and attracting residents who, in turn, support a healthy retail sector. Lansing must also continue efforts to ensure that the community is safe, clean and green and to improve quality and choice in K-12 education.

**Aging Housing Stock** – Fifty-one percent of Lansing’s housing stock was built before 1960. The city’s oldest housing is located in the northwest quadrant, while the newest is located in the southern parts of the city. Housing values throughout

![Figure 1-3: Foreclosure Hotspots](source: Lansing NSP Amendment (2008)
*Data is from City Assessor records.*
the city generally correspond to housing age. Nevertheless, the attractive architecture and walkable development patterns of older near-downtown neighborhoods make them attractive to young families and non-traditional households (see Non-Traditional Households, below). As a result, the emphasis in these older neighborhoods should be on efforts to enforce maintenance codes and encourage housing reinvestment. At the same time, the demolition of some obsolete structures may be required, and compatible infill development will need to be encouraged.

Foreclosure Crisis – The current housing foreclosure crisis has exacerbated vacancies and depressed housing values even further. From 2006 to 2008, the average price of a single-family home in Lansing dropped 39% from $98,297 to $59,697. In 2007, 13% (7,000 units) of Lansing’s housing was vacant. In response, the City is implementing a targeted strategy for utilizing federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to acquire, rehab and resell foreclosed homes; to demolish obsolete structures where necessary; and to promote infill housing where appropriate.

Because housing supply is likely to exceed demand in the short- to mid-term, the community also needs to explore right-sizing strategies that use vacant land to create neighborhood and community benefits. These can include shorter-term holding strategies where future infill development is anticipated; for example, low-mow native landscapes, tree planting, rain gardens or temporary community gardens or mini parks. Long-term reuse strategies should also be considered where new development is not anticipated. These strategies can include lot splitting for side yard expansion or driveways; stormwater management projects that improve water quality and reduce flooding; expanded parks, natural areas or trails; or site-based energy production (geothermal wells and solar panels). The community can work with the Ingham County Land Bank Fast Track Authority to develop and implement strategies that help to restructure parts of the city to make it a more competitive place to live, work and invest in the future.

Aging Population – The age 65 and over population, part of the aging of the Baby Boom generation is growing in Lansing. This means that Lansing will need to address “aging in place” strategies so that it can be a competitive (and supportive) housing location for seniors. Lansing can take advantage of its health care institutions, given their locations near major corridors with available public transit, as a draw for older adults and a catalyst for new housing opportunities. Land use approaches are needed that emphasize easy access to shopping and services by foot, bike and transit, and that increase housing affordability, including shared housing and accessory dwelling units (granny flats). Funding assistance for seniors for housing renovation/retrofits will also be needed.

Non-Traditional Households – Lansing is following the national trend towards an increasing number of one- and two-person, non-traditional households. In 2008, one- and two-person households were estimated to represent almost 66% of all city households. This trend strongly suggests that Lansing needs to concentrate on expanding the range of housing choices available in the city to include a greater number of small-lot, single-family homes, townhouses, stacked flats, lofts, live-work units and upper story housing in commercial districts, both for sale and for rent.
**Economic Issues and Planning implications**

Historically the Lansing economy has been driven by three economic engines: the State of Michigan government offices, Michigan State University, located approximately 3.5 miles east of downtown (in East Lansing); and automobile and related manufacturing.

Michigan State Capitol – The Michigan State Capitol attracts approximately 1.5 million visitors per year and, with 14,355 employees, is the largest employer in Lansing. This employee and visitor population represents a significant concentration of consumer dollars located just west of downtown. To capitalize more effectively on the potential synergy between downtown and the Capitol Complex, and to better protect near-downtown neighborhoods, the City and State of Michigan (State) must work together to coordinate land use, transportation (including transit and parking), open space and urban design decisions.

After years of reinvestment planning and implementation, downtown Lansing is realizing its potential as a corporate office headquarters; a regional destination for entertainment, culture and the arts; and an urban neighborhood. Improved City/State collaboration can build on this success to the benefit of state government, the Lansing economy and the competitiveness of the region as a whole.

Higher Education – The East Michigan Avenue corridor links downtown Lansing and the Michigan State Capitol to Michigan State University (MSU). MSU is a significant asset in attracting the talent that will drive job growth in the new economy (see The New Economy, below). With approximately 47,000 students, as well as 5,000 faculty and staff, MSU supports the Lansing housing, retail and services markets, especially on Lansing’s east side and along the East Michigan Avenue corridor. Lansing’s institutions of higher education also include Lansing Community College, Davenport University and Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

Manufacturing Job Losses – In the 1950s, there were approximately 20,000 jobs associated with the automobile industry in Lansing. These well paid jobs did not require a college degree and helped to build a prosperous middle class. By 2000, however, the number of automobile-related jobs had fallen to approximately 6,000. Thanks to General Motors’ recent decision to reinvest in Lansing, the city will have two of the most modern manufacturing facilities in the U.S., stabilizing manufacturing employment, albeit at reduced numbers.

Lansing has been working hard to diversify its job base to build on its strengths in insurance and financial services, health care and, more recently, life sciences, biomedical and information technology. Nevertheless, with the recent economic downturn and the crisis in the automobile industry, unemployment in Lansing reached 10% in 2008.

As a result of this economic restructuring, land use strategies are needed that address the reuse of large and small vacant industrial sites and buildings, including adaptive reuse and redevelopment, to create better transitions to neighborhoods and opportunities for the start-up and expansion of innovative, technology-based and green industry. Strategies are also needed to accommodate the growth of existing health care and higher education institutions while protecting and improving adjacent existing neighborhoods.
The New Economy – In 2009, LEAP published Greater Lansing Next: A Plan for Regional Prosperity, a regional vision with action strategies for meeting the challenges of the new economy. In contrast to the labor-based manufacturing economy, the new economy is driven by businesses based on knowledge and human capital (talent) that create new products, services and technology that, in turn, generate new wealth and jobs. As noted above, LEAP’s analysis of Lansing’s new economy strengths identified four key business clusters as targets for growing and diversifying the regional economy:

- Insurance and Financial Services
- Health Care
- Life Sciences and Biomedical
- Information technology

The well-educated, creative professionals and entrepreneurs that drive the creation and growth of new economy businesses are not tied to a particular place by the need to be close to raw materials or built infrastructure. As a result, they can choose to locate anywhere. Research has shown that these knowledge workers are looking for the following characteristics in the places they choose to live:

- Vibrant and attractive urban environments that provide access to everyday needs by walking or using transit
- Diverse, racially-integrated communities
- A rich mix of retail, entertainment and cultural offerings
- Ready access to outdoor activities that support an active lifestyle
- Third place social environments (parks, cafes and bookstores)

As a result, the LEAP report includes “focusing on making great places to live and work”—or placemaking—as one of the four elements that are essential to sustaining economic prosperity in the Lansing region.

As the region’s core city, Lansing has a special role to play in attracting new economy workers. To succeed in these placemaking efforts, Lansing should capitalize on its existing assets: for example, its downtown and traditional neighborhoods, diverse population, existing park inventory, the River Trail, and its arts and cultural institutions. In addition, Lansing can overcome current placemaking deficits by encouraging walkable, mixed-use, transit-supportive development along major gateway streets; implementing its recently adopted Non-Motorized Plan; and working to create a linked system of open spaces (green infrastructure) as part of a regional network for recreation and environmental protection.

BEST PRACTICE TRENDS

Communities across the country are using a number of planning concepts to help improve their sustainability, livability and quality of life. Lansing and the Tri-County region have already begun to implement some of these approaches.
**Smart Growth**

The TCRPC has adopted a smart growth approach to future planning and development.\(^\text{13}\) The City participated in and endorsed this effort. The TCRPC plan articulates 29 detailed principles based on the general principles of smart growth (see sidebar, page 17).

**Placemaking\(^\text{14}\)**

Placemaking addresses the way elements of the built environment (uses and activities, buildings, streets and parks/plazas) are designed and managed to create appealing, interesting, comfortable and meaningful places for people. Placemaking helps to define the image of a street, neighborhood or community and helps to determine how convenient they are to get to and around. Placemaking also influences how (and how well) a space is used. By encouraging social interaction between people, placemaking can also help build a sense of community and promote stewardship.

Placemaking has grown out of the principles of smart growth and the more urban design-oriented ideas of traditional neighborhood design advocated by the Congress for the New Urbanism.\(^\text{15}\) Four best practice trends are related to—and help describe—placemaking: traditional neighborhood design (also known as complete neighborhoods), transit-oriented design (commercial corridor improvements), complete streets (also known as livable streets) and form-based zoning.

**Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND)** – Based on the principles of traditional town planning, traditional neighborhood design calls for a mix of housing types to meet the needs of different life stages and incomes within walking and biking distance of shopping, services, schools and parks. Streets are laid out as a connected grid to disperse traffic and facilitate walking and are designed

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**Principles of Smart Growth**

1. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
2. Mix land uses.
3. Encourage compact development patterns.
4. Create a range of housing choices and opportunities.
5. Provide transportation choices.
6. Create walkable and accessible neighborhoods.
7. Foster distinctive, attractive development with a strong sense of place.
8. Preserve farmland, open space, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
9. Encourage stakeholder and community collaboration.
10. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.

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*Conceptual diagrams showing Transit Oriented Design spatial relationships between core mixed-use areas and transitions to neighborhoods across different scales. (Source: adopted from Peter Calthorpe, The Next American Metropolis)*
to provide an environment that appeals to pedestrians while accommodating vehicles. Public/civic spaces are included to enhance neighborhood identity and value and to provide shared focal points for community activity. Traditional—or complete—neighborhoods encourage active lifestyles and reduce dependence on the automobile by encouraging walking or biking for short trips to meet daily needs.

**Transit-Oriented Design (TOD)** – Building on the planning and design concepts for traditional neighborhoods, transit-oriented design encourages the restructuring of strip commercial corridors to create a series of mixed-use, transit-anchored centers (cores) linked by non-retail connectors. Mixed-use cores include a transit stop (or station) and a higher-density center with retail, office, service, institutional and residential uses. The core transitions outward to progressively lower densities and a more uniformly residential environment. The outer edge of a transit-oriented, mixed-use node is defined by a 10-minute walking or biking trip (¼ to ½ mile).

This transit-oriented development approach can encourage the transformation of visually unappealing strip commercial corridors that are inhospitable to pedestrians and disguise the quality of adjacent neighborhoods into more attractive, livable and sustainable community gateways.

**Form-Based Zoning** – Conventional zoning emphasizes which land uses are permitted in which locations, often calling for the separation of uses. It gives limited direction on the design and form of development, generally addressing only building setback minimums, and height and density maximums.

In contrast, form-based zoning focuses on what the desired look, feel and character of a place should be. It addresses the relationship between buildings and the street, the form and mass of buildings in relationship to one another, the pattern of blocks and streets and the location and type of public spaces.16

The transect and form-based code approach to zoning uses a rural-to-urban cross-section through a prototypical American city to define areas that vary in the intensity and character of their natural and built components; the transect is used as the basis for defining zoning maps and a land development code. The form-based code promotes walkable, connected streets, mixed use, housing diversity, and transportation options while providing a range of choices in living environments. Each form-based code is designed to address local circumstances and to focus on form over use (see figure 1-4) to produce more predictable development outcomes for each transect zone. Similarly, the transect model can be adapted to respond to local topography, natural resource features, jurisdictional boundaries and land ownership patterns.

Pure form-based codes create an entirely new ordinance that defines building and public space standards tied to a regulating plan that illustrates where specific building, street and open space types are permitted. However, many communities use a hybrid of form-based and conventional zoning by incorporating requirements (for building placement and building features) into their existing
Figure 1-4: Transect includes a continuum of rural to urban development zones that are distinguished by the following types of development characteristics (image and list adapted from Center for Applied Transect Studies).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Zones</th>
<th>Urban Zones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1 Rural Preserve</td>
<td>T3 Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 Rural Reserve</td>
<td>T4 General Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3 Suburban</td>
<td>T5 Urban Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4 General Urban</td>
<td>T6 Urban Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5 Urban Center</td>
<td>Special District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Less Density | More Density
- Primarily Residential | Primarily Mixed Use
- Smaller Buildings | Larger Buildings
- More Green Space | More Hardscape
- Detached Buildings | Attached Buildings
- Articulated Massing | Simple Massing
- Wooden Buildings | Masonry Buildings
- Generally Pitched Roofs | Generally Flat Roofs
- Deep Setbacks | Shallow Setbacks
- Yards and Porches | Stoops and Storefronts
- Narrower Streets | Wider Streets
- Narrow Paths | Wider Sidewalks
- Mixed Tree Clusters | Aligned Street Trees
- Larger Parks and Natural Areas | Plazas and Squares
Green Infrastructure Elements

- Stream and river corridors, including floodplains
- Wetlands
- Woodlots
- Urban tree canopy (trees on public and private lands)
- Steep slopes with natural cover
- Parks and open spaces
- Stormwater management features
- Food production

Design Lansing includes a preliminary transect analysis and a related evaluation of a limited number of development characteristics as a starting point for determining how best to include form-based content into a revised zoning ordinance (see Chapter 7. Placemaking, Transect and Pattern Types).

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of protected natural areas, conservation lands and parks that are planned and managed for their natural resource values and the associated benefits they provide to people and their communities.17

The green infrastructure network provides valuable economic benefits in the form of ecological services (including flood control and stormwater management) that can decrease the cost of grey (roadway and utility) infrastructure investments.
while providing amenities that increase private property values. Green infrastructure investments provide recreational amenities and make the city a healthier and more enjoyable place to be.

As noted above, the TCRPC has developed a green infrastructure vision for Clinton, Ingham and Eaton Counties. The initial phase of work, an assessment of potential conservation areas, was completed in September 2008. A more detailed assessment and the identification of ten top-ranked priority conservation areas was completed in June 2009. The vision map, identifying protected area hubs and critical links, was completed in 2010. These materials provide a stepping off point for regional collaboration in implementing green infrastructure improvements.

Green Development

Sustainability-minded cities around the world are adopting site selection and site and building design practices that minimize environmental impacts and provide long-term cost savings. These green development practices include:

- Avoiding development in wetlands, floodplains and on wooded slopes.
- Adopting compact development patterns that preserve green space and promote walking, cycling and transit use.
- Improving energy efficiency and allowing for on-site energy generation.
- Incorporating reused, recycled and renewable materials.
- Reducing water consumption and providing for water capture and reuse.

Many cities demonstrate the value of these development approaches by including them in public building and infrastructure projects and by offering zoning incentives for green development practices.18

Low-impact development (LID) manages rainfall using techniques that infiltrate, filter, store and reuse and/or evaporate runoff close to its source. The approach is based on the understanding that rainwater is a resource, not a waste product to be transported and disposed of as quickly as possible. Instead of using large-scale structural, and often expensive, end-of-pipe facilities at the bottom of drainage areas, LID emphasizes smaller, more cost effective landscape approaches at the site level. As a result, rainwater is managed where it falls by reducing impervious surface area to take advantage of infiltration to store and treat stormwater. This reduces the volume and improves the water quality of stormwater released to rivers and streams.19

The City has begun to implement LID approaches as part of street reconstruction on East Michigan Avenue. Zoning standards and incentives for the use of LID techniques in new private development (e.g., permeable paving and landscaped infiltration areas in parking lots) offer even greater potential for improving water quality.
Complete Streets

Streets, and the rights-of-way in which they are located, are the primary components of the city’s public realm. While the efficient, safe movement of cars and trucks has been the clear priority for streets in the past, the complete streets philosophy outlines a new perspective in which the mobility and safety needs of all users—pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders of all ages and abilities—are balanced with those of motorists. In some cases, all users can comfortably share the street space. In many cases, however, decisions must be made on which users will be favored on which streets.

Complete streets should also be context sensitive to complement or improve the character of their surroundings, considering aesthetic, environmental and historic priorities. As a result, a range of street design standards are needed to respond to varying traffic volumes and desired speeds; pedestrian, bicycle and transit needs; and surrounding land use and development character. The design of streets can also improve the visual and environmental quality of the city by including landscaping that helps to manage stormwater, provide shade, establish a sense of human scale and create unified visual foreground.

A Complete Street Option from the Oakland-Saginaw Corridor Study. Road section shows bike lanes, landscaped planting strips with shade trees, and pedestrian walks.
CITIZEN PLANNING PRIORITIES

Lansing citizens recognize many of the issues and opportunities raised by these demographic and economic issues and best practice trends. Community workshops in the early stages of the planning process identified the following top priorities for areas in Lansing to be preserved, enhanced and transformed.

Based on the public input illustrated on Figure 1-6: Citizen Planning Priorities it is clear that the residents of Lansing view their existing neighborhoods as a strong element of the community that must be preserved. A common view expressed in the community input sessions was “Lansing has some of the best neighborhoods in the region, if only you could tell that from your experience driving into town on our corridors!” The strength and importance of Lansing’s neighborhoods cannot be overstated, and the Master Plan recommends a number of strategies for stabilizing, preserving and maintaining the places Lansing residents lives. These noted, keep in mind as you proceed through this document that the focus of the Master Plan is on what needs to change, and how this change can be brought about, and less on what areas are already strong.

Figure 1-6: Citizen Planning Priorities

Preserve:
- Parks and protected natural areas
- Historic buildings
- The River Trail
- Stable neighborhoods
- Green space and trees

Enhance:
- River Trail/riverfront access and visibility
- Downtown area, Old Town and REO Town mixed-use districts; and the 2000 block of East Michigan Avenue
- Street design to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists
- Transit service
- Neighborhoods needing stabilization

Transform:
- Gateway corridors (poor visual quality; strip commercial; and vacant commercial buildings)
- Large industrial sites (job-oriented reuse and improved buffering/screening)
- Shopping centers (appearance, vacancies and site design)
CHAPTER 1 NOTES

1. Michigan enabling legislation now requires that a master plan be reviewed, and if necessary updated, every 5 years.

2. The Community Profile, including inventory maps, will be published as a separate document.


4. The other three elements include developing business opportunities, enhancing core assets, and strengthening the ability to plan and work regionally.


6. Ibid.


8. The age 65 and over population is estimated to be about 10% of Lansing’s population in 2008.


12. Home and the workplace are the first and second place social environments.


14. See also Chapter 7. Placemaking.

15. The Congress for the New Urbanism is a non-profit organization promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, sustainable communities and healthy living conditions.

16. Form-Based Codes Institute

18. The phrase “Green Development Practices” is used throughout this report to reference an approach to building and site development which reduces energy consumption, encourages alternative energy forms, constructs with products made from recycled materials, utilizes best management practices for the treatment of stormwater, and related sustainable building and design practices. Standards for such development have been adopted by a number of organizations, and such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, Green Homes America, Energy Star, and others.


20. This map summarizes the input of Lansing residents and stakeholders when they were asked which areas of Lansing they would Preserve (a valuable asset that should be saved), Enhance (an important part of Lansing that is requires some investment) and Transform (areas of Lansing that need significant change). This input was used as a general guide for the recommendations of the Master Plan; however this map does not indicate specific recommendations of the plan.
Chapter 2
VISION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the vision, guiding principles and major goals that describe, in brief, the community’s vision for making Lansing a place where people choose to visit, live, work, learn and invest. This vision is based on input and feedback from Lansing residents, builds on recent and concurrent planning efforts and interrelates ideas for economic development, neighborhoods and housing, green infrastructure and transportation.

Four principles—sustainability, placemaking, livability and stewardship—guided the development of plan recommendations. These principles should continue to guide the definition of specific action steps needed to implement the plan over time as conditions change and opportunities arise. Design Lansing’s nine major goals are the links between the guiding principles and the more detailed plan recommendations, objectives and strategies presented in subsequent chapters. A brief explanation of each goal is provided to illustrate how it is linked to the guiding principles.
LANSING’S VISION

Lansing is located at the heart of the Great Lakes region at an important crossroads in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. I-96 and I-69 meet here, as well as the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers. Lansing is within a two-hour drive of 90% of Michigan’s population, including all its major markets including Detroit, Grand Rapids, Flint, Battle Creek/Kalamazoo, and Saginaw/Bay City/Midland. As the Tri-County region’s central city, Lansing is of vital importance. Along with East Lansing, it serves as the economic, educational and cultural anchor for the region’s 450,000 residents and 14,000 businesses. As Michigan’s capital city, Lansing represents the state’s 10 million residents and 759,000 businesses to the nation and to the world. Its surface, air and rail transportation make it a critical hub as well as a regular destination for business, education and travel.

Fulfilling these roles, and realizing Lansing’s potential, will not be without effort. The Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University describes four keys to cultivating economic growth in the new economy as:

- Developing talent
- Fostering innovation
- Embracing diversity
- Enhancing environment

Lansing will, and must, address all four as it helps to shape the future.

The Design Lansing comprehensive plan focuses on environment. It provides the foundation for land use and infrastructure improvements between now and 2030. This master plan has a world-class vision and three principal goals.

The vision of this plan is for Lansing to become the premier Midwest city – a city of which Michigan residents are very proud, that is globally recognized and sought out by entrepreneurs, new residents and travelers.

The three principal goals of this plan are:

1. To help guide Lansing, in leading communities across the metropolitan region, the state and the Midwest in sustainable development, placemaking, livability and stewardship to reflect the true essence of Pure Michigan’s promise.

2. To utilize existing assets - the Capitol Complex, a downtown consistently experiencing re-investment, a concentration of higher education institutions, a wide array of arts and cultural venues and a diverse economic base - to stimulate collaboration among all who are interested in enhancing greater Lansing’s competitiveness as a desirable place to live, start a business, work and visit.

3. To support the bonds of family and friendship with high quality neighborhoods and convenient shopping, diverse job centers and an extensive connecting network of green spaces, walkable/bikeable streets and excellent public transit.
This is a bold vision to be achieved by 2030, when Lansing is recognized as:

- The best economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable city its size in the Midwest.
- A thriving center of business, industry, culture and arts.
- A friendly, welcoming, attractive, vibrant and active cosmopolitan city.
- A major center for entrepreneurship and innovation.
- A city that has embraced all things Green, including energy efficiency, green development practice buildings, recycling, green product design and manufacturing, alternative energy production, etc.

In short, by 2030, Lansing will be a preferred destination location for new businesses, for people seeking a state-of-the-art education and for tourists with a taste for a wide variety of high quality cultural facilities, entertainment and arts opportunities not typically found in a mid-sized city. A large concentration of talented and knowledge workers will have been attracted to the Lansing area because of its quality of life. Many will be entrepreneurs who seek out Lansing as a place to grow because its culture supports entrepreneurial risk taking and because it has abundant sources of venture capital to support opportunities to commercialize new ideas. The city will be a model of energy efficiency, not only in its new and remodeled buildings, but also in the cars driven and the public and private services provided there.

The high quality of life in Lansing in 2030 will be reflected by the following three measures:

- The population in the city has grown 25% to 140,000 because of natural increase and in-migration by other people from around the nation and the world.
- Unemployment is less than 5% and stays relatively low even in economic downturns, in part because the number of businesses in the region has grown 40% since 2010.
- Family incomes are 20-30% above Midwest averages and comparable to those in mid-sized urban locations on the coasts.

These characteristics will exist in 2030 because of strategic placemaking improvements supported by this master plan that result in the following:

- A strong pedestrian orientation of buildings and infrastructure that is most evident in neighborhoods, mixed-use nodes and along high density corridors.
- An interconnected system of parks, trails, ponds, creeks and other green infrastructure that leaves no neighborhood without ready access to such amenities both within and outside the city.
- A reliable and efficient regional transit system with high speed service along key corridors and a range of other quality transportation choices.
- A wide range of housing and lifestyle choices across the city and region that make it an attractive place to live for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- A capital city with strong connections to rural satellite towns and with
nearby farmers who locally produce much of the food that is consumed in the region.

This vision, these goals and these characteristics of Lansing in 2030 describe a desirable and very possible future for the city if the comprehensive plan’s recommendations are strongly and widely supported, and consistently applied to public and private projects over the next twenty years. There is a positive role that each reader of this plan can play in its implementation. You are encouraged to find an issue, proposed policy or activity in this plan that excites you. Then you are urged to work collaboratively with others in government, business and nonprofit organizations, as well as with other citizens in your neighborhood, the city and the region, to help make the vision, goals and guidelines in this plan become a reality.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Communities need to address issues of revitalization and sustainability with a comprehensive approach. With this in mind, Lansing’s charge is to nurture stability and growth for the benefit of people of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and incomes, through initiatives and actions that make Lansing a good place to invest, work, learn, and enjoy life.

Planning principles that will address this challenge and guide the physical development of the City of Lansing (City) include:

**Placemaking**

- **Character**—Enhance the unique and appealing characteristics of each neighborhood while improving residents’ health and the safety and walkability of the community. Create attractive places that draw people and activity and that honor historic buildings, community assets and human scale.

- **Mixed Use**—Encourage walkable, transit oriented, mixed-use centers and districts that provide urban convenience and vitality.

- **Connections**—Provide convenient, safe, affordable travel options, including walking, biking, and public transit to connect people and places.

**Sustainability**

- **Green Infrastructure**—Promote the health of our environment, our city and its people through the protection, restoration and connectivity of the community green spaces and natural areas. Clean up and reuse contaminated sites.

- **Growing 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 jobs.

- **Green Living**—Promote energy efficiency and waste reduction in our homes, modes of travel and work places.

- **Regional Collaboration**—Collaborate with other government jurisdictions and organizations to seek efficiencies and shared benefits.
Livability

- **Choice** – Strengthen existing neighborhoods and expand the range of housing choices to meet the needs of all people.
- **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.
- **Readiness** – Create a culture and policies that promote investment in the city. Encourage investment that builds on existing strengths and leverages the investment of others.
- **Citizen Participation** – Encourage citizens to get involved. Build a stronger sense of civic pride, engagement and responsibility.
- **Assets** – Preserve and enhance the community’s existing assets.

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Table 2-1: Guiding Principles + Planning Goals. This table highlights the relationship of the planning goals described on the following pages. The majority of goals reinforce multiple guiding principles, targeting multiple issues simultaneously instead of being single-purposed.
LAND USE GOALS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Build competitiveness.

The Lansing Economic Area Partnership’s Greater Lansing Next report (2009) points to quality of life and placemaking as keys to attracting the talent needed to grow the new economy businesses (and jobs) that build wealth and prosperity. Economic competitiveness—for both the city and the region—will depend on the ability to collaborate in fostering the qualities that appeal to knowledge workers: a rich mix of retail, entertainment and cultural offerings; access to everyday needs by walking, cycling or transit use; access to outdoor activities that support an active lifestyle; a diverse, racially integrated social environment; and access to other creative people. As the region’s core city, Lansing has a special role to play in providing this vibrant urban setting.

Encourage mixed use.

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 shops, services and jobs close to home and promote 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 will encourage the development of 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.

Provide diverse job centers.

In addition to the potential for job growth in existing and proposed mixed-use centers, Lansing has significant institutional and industrial assets that help to shape future land use patterns. Government, education and health care institutions can be encouraged to grow within the city while providing appropriate neighborhood transitions, reducing the negative impact of surface parking and enhancing walkability. Industrial job centers can also be more pedestrian- and transit-friendly, provide enhanced screening/buffers and undertake green retrofits to minimize impacts on water quality.

Focus resources.

In a time when municipal resources are severely constrained, Lansing must focus reinvestment efforts on key priorities, build on existing assets and leverage partnerships with other public sector agencies, the private sector and non-profits. The City must also be code- and policy-ready to accommodate desired redevelopment as opportunities arise. The City should seek out opportunities for creating short-term, tangible results and publicize those successes.
Collaborate.

The Lansing Economic Area Partnership’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 new economy talent pool play to Lansing’s existing strengths and will become the focus of future efforts to encourage mixed use.

Figure 2-1: Economic Development Concepts for Change Plan. This interim product identified desired change areas and future land use based on community input.
LAND USE GOALS: NEIGHBORHOODS

Strengthen existing neighborhoods.
To retain residents and attract new ones, the City must work to preserve strong neighborhoods and to stabilize neighborhoods that are experiencing disinvestment. Lansing can capitalize on the placemaking appeal of older single-family neighborhoods and encourage residential infill that is compatible with existing development character in all neighborhoods. The City will continue to target the use of available neighborhood improvement funds in focus areas and explore right-sizing strategies, where appropriate. The City will also work to ensure that daily shopping and service needs can be met within walking or cycling distance of as many neighborhoods as possible.

Expand housing choice.
Alternatives to single-family detached housing are important (for example, loft apartments and condominiums, townhomes and 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.

Green all neighborhoods.
While some neighborhoods have special environmental assets, all Lansing neighborhoods will become more green as the city’s Non-Motorized Plan is implemented and its greenway system is extended. Green development practices can also be encouraged in new development and in retrofitting existing neighborhoods to expand tree planting, improve energy efficiency and enhance stormwater management.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

Support healthy natural systems.
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 rainwater 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 removal of carbon to improve air quality and the reduction of the urban heat island effect to reduce energy costs for cooling.
Encourage healthy lifestyles.

Parks and off-street trails, especially in combination with walkable, bikeable streets, provide recreational opportunities that promote physical activity and improve health. A system of off-street trails and on-street, non-motorized facilities that links parks together also contributes to a cleaner environment by encouraging people to burn calories, not carbon. Parks and trails provide pervious surface areas to reduce stormwater runoff and 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 encourage social interaction and build community, and provide important opportunities for children to play and learn.

A strong local food system infrastructure, community gardens and farmers’ markets provide significant environmental, economic and social benefits. By providing local sources for fresh food, they reduce fossil fuel use for food production.
transportation, provide opportunities for entrepreneurship (urban farming), capture food expenditures in the local economy and offer opportunities for social interaction, exercise and recreation.

**Pursue green leadership.**

The City can be a regional and statewide leader in urban sustainability. Indeed, Lansing’s Board of Water and Light already has the largest solar array in Michigan. In the future, Lansing will focus 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. Lansing will also need to track and publicize its green accomplishments.

**TRANSPORTATION GOALS**

**Provide transportation choices.**

The City recently adopted a complete streets ordinance and a non-motorized transportation plan as important steps toward providing residents and employees with alternatives to travel by car. The city is also served by a transit agency considered to be a leader for a community of its size, and major transit improvements are being planned for East Michigan Avenue. As walking, cycling and transit trips increase, the use of non-renewable fossil fuels, greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution will be reduced. These transportation alternatives will improve accessibility for non-motorists and reduce household costs associated with owning one or more automobiles.

**Redesign streets.**

To implement its non-motorized plan, the City will need to adopt new street design standards. These standards should balance the needs of multiple users in a way that is appropriate not only to the function of the roadway, but also to its land use context. The implementation of these standards will create a safer, greener and more visually appealing transportation network.

**Strengthen city image.**

Lansing’s major roadway corridors are gateways to and through the community and play a major role in defining the visual image of the city for residents and visitors. The City will adopt strategies to improve visual character within public rights-of-way (greening and burying utilities) and to encourage improved development patterns, signage and architecture on fronting parcels. Today, one of the most significant detractors from the character of the community is the way in which parking is handled. The City will take steps to reduce the visual dominance, environmental impact and land consumption of surface parking.
The Concepts for Change illustrated in the plan above were developed with input from the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) and are consistent with the plans and policies of CATA.
Chapter 3
Land Use: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Lansing will continue to encourage business and institutional investment that diversifies the city’s job base, provides the retail services and amenities residents need and generates the revenues required to support quality city services. While manufacturing will continue to be an important part of Lansing’s future, the City of Lansing’s land use policies will support the Lansing Economic Area Partnership’s recommendations1 for diversifying the regional economy by becoming more competitive in attracting the innovative, entrepreneurial talent pool that will grow jobs and create wealth in the new economy. These efforts will focus on encouraging the creation of vital, urban places, building on economic assets and promoting the sustainable reuse of vacant industrial sites and buildings.

Five goals will guide these efforts:

Build competitiveness. To become a location of choice for people and investment, Lansing will focus on quality of life and placemaking efforts.

Encourage mixed use. The City of Lansing (City) will promote mixed-use development to create attractive, walkable, transit-oriented activity centers at a hierarchy of scales: regional, community and neighborhood.

Provide diverse job centers. In addition to strengthening existing, and encouraging new, mixed-use job centers, the City will encourage government, health care and education institutions to grow within the city in a way that enhances neighborhoods, creates walkable streets and supports transit. Industrial sites will be cleaned up and reused emphasizing green jobs, low-impact development strategies and positive neighborhood transitions.

Focus resources. Lansing will build on existing economic development strengths, focus resources and leverage investment to maximize success. The City will update its regulations and policies in order to be development-ready.

Collaborate. A vibrant central city can be a powerful regional economic development asset. The City will capitalize on Lansing’s special role as the capital city to accommodate higher-density, mixed-use development as part of a collaborative regional strategy. The City will also encourage Lansing’s citizens to expand their involvement in making the city a healthy, livable community of which they can be proud.
PRIORITY ISSUES

Both the analysis of the planning context (see Chapter 1. Introduction, Planning Context) and the public involvement process (see Chapter 1. Introduction, Citizen Planning Priorities) identified a number of key issues that became the basis for land use and economic development recommendations.

**Capitalize on placemaking assets.**

Lansing’s downtown, the adjacent Michigan State Capitol and the traditional development patterns, architecture and mix of uses in Old Town and REO Town are consistently identified by Lansing residents as important placemaking assets to preserve and enhance. The potential to improve the synergy between downtown’s core, the surrounding downtown edge areas and the Capitol Complex are considered particularly important. Capitalizing more effectively on the downtown reach of the Grand River as an economic development and quality of life asset is also a high priority.

**Transform strip commercial corridors.**

Major streets that serve as gateways to and through Lansing are typically lined by strip commercial development that presents a negative image of the city and its neighborhoods. Transformation of these corridors into more complete streets (see Chapter 6. Transportation) with retail uses concentrated into transit-oriented, mixed-use cores, and connector street segments that are gradually redeveloped to emphasize non-retail uses, are the top priorities for Lansing residents. The City is taking the first steps in working towards this transformation by adopting an overlay district that establishes minimum and maximum building heights, encourages higher-density residential development and reduces off-street parking requirements on selected commercial corridors. Moreover, the City has established Corridor Improvement Authorities along East Michigan Avenue and West Saginaw Street. The Lansing Economic Development Corporation is working on improvement plans for these corridors with adjacent businesses, neighborhoods, and jurisdictions.

**Diversify the job base.**

Lansing jobs related to automobile manufacturing have declined from a high of 20,000 in the 1950s to approximately 6,000 today. As a result, Lansing has been working hard to diversify and grow its job base by shifting emphasis from the shrinking labor-based manufacturing economy to the new knowledge-based economy (see Chapter 1. Introduction, Planning Context, The New Economy). Success is already being achieved in four significant new economy business clusters: insurance and financial services, health care, life sciences and biomedical and information technology. By adding placemaking and mixed-use development as cornerstones of its master plan strategy, the City is setting the foundation for continued success in attracting knowledge workers and expanding new economy jobs. In addition, the City is focusing its attention on the important East Michigan Avenue corridor, the link between the downtown (and its higher education, arts and cultural institutions) and Michigan State University’s talent pool by collaborating with the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) and neighboring jurisdictions in planning corridor and transit improvements.
**Reuse industrial sites and buildings.**

As a result of the loss of manufacturing jobs, Lansing has a number of vacant industrial sites and buildings for which productive reuse strategies are needed. Lansing residents want larger vacant sites cleaned up and converted to job-generating land uses from office, R&D and light industry to heavier green manufacturing. They also want this redevelopment to be sustainable, including better transitions to adjacent neighborhoods, attractive frontages on major arterial streets and an emphasis on low-impact site development and green buildings. The adaptive reuse of smaller industrial buildings and the mixed-use redevelopment of smaller industrial sites are also high priorities.

### WHAT AND WHY EXAMPLES

#### GATEWAY CORRIDORS

**Fact:** Some of Lansing’s gateway corridors are visually unappealing and create a negative image of the community.

**Why Does It Matter?** Communities that take steps to ensure that development along major streets – and the design of the streets themselves – present a positive sense of place will be more successful in attracting and retaining residents, investors and jobs.

**What Lansing Is Already Doing:** The City has adopted overlay zoning to encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development on West Saginaw Street and East Michigan Avenue and in Old Town and REO Town. Corridor Improvement Authorities have been established for the Michigan and Saginaw corridors to plan and implement the desired improvements. The City is working with CATA (and adjacent jurisdictions) to plan for transit, non-motorized and street design improvements on East Michigan Avenue. The City has also completed a study of the Saginaw-Oakland corridor to evaluate road conversion strategies for widening sidewalks, adding street trees and landscaping and providing bike lanes.

#### JOBS

**Fact:** Lansing has experienced a significant shift in employment away from industrial jobs (from 32.1% of Lansing’s jobs in 1990 to 21.4% in 2007).

**Why Does It Matter?** Building on non-manufacturing strengths to diversify the economy and create new knowledge-based jobs will promote the economic well being of residents and the overall stability of the community.

**What Lansing Is Already Doing:** The Lansing region has adopted a collaborative economic development strategy for retaining existing jobs and capitalizing on new economy job growth potentials. This strategy emphasizes quality of life and placemaking as keys to success. Lansing has initiated an Arts and Culture Loan Program to stimulate private investment in cultural economic development, as well as a concentrated effort to connect Lansing, East Lansing and Michigan State University (called “Linking Lansing and U”).

#### INDUSTRIAL SITE RE-USE

**Fact:** Lansing has a number of vacant industrial sites for which clean-up and reuse strategies are needed.

**Why Does It Matter?** Site clean up and reuse will resolve any environmental problems, provide new jobs and create living environments attractive to new residents.

**What Lansing Is Already Doing:** Lansing has a proactive Brownfield Redevelopment Authority that is working with developers and property owners to prepare vacant land for re-use. Past success stories include the industrial redevelopment of the REO site on South Washington and the adaptive reuse of the Prudden site for urban housing.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: BUILD COMPETITIVENESS.

Placemaking

Placemaking addresses how the elements of the built environment—uses and activities, streets, buildings and open spaces—are located, designed and managed to create appealing, interesting, comfortable and meaningful places for people. As a result, placemaking relates not only to the land use aspects of economic development, but also to neighborhoods and housing, green infrastructure and transportation.

As the urban center of the region, Lansing has important placemaking assets to build on:

- Areas that already have the makings of great places, including downtown and its riverfront, Old Town, REO Town and the 2000 block of East Michigan Avenue.
- Neighborhoods with an appealing environment for pedestrians and walking access to nearby jobs and/or shopping (see Chapter 4. Land Use: Neighborhoods).
- Established business clusters that provide the foundation for growth in new economy jobs.
- The creative economy talent pool represented by the faculty and students at Michigan State University (MSU), Lansing Community College, Thomas M. Cooley Law School and other institutions of higher learning, as well as a wealth of arts and cultural organizations and activities.
- Other strong institutions, such as the State of Michigan, Sparrow Health System and Ingham Regional Medical Center.

Lansing is also beginning to take advantage of placemaking opportunities that will create a greener, healthier community with more sustainable mobility options. Examples include:

- A network of connected green spaces, including the River Trail, that link to a regional system of environmental assets (see Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure).
- A growing number of farmers’ markets and community gardens, supported by a local food systems work group (see Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure).
- A new complete streets ordinance and Non-Motorized Plan resulting from the hard work and collaboration of City staff and community bicycle and pedestrian advocates (see Chapter 6. Transportation).
- A transit agency (CATA) that is collaborating with local officials and citizen groups to lay the groundwork for a bus rapid transit route on East Michigan Avenue (see Chapter 6. Transportation).
Lansing also faces a number of placemaking challenges, including:

- Older shopping centers with extensive parking areas, typically located between buildings and the street, poorly organized internal circulation, little or no landscaping, almost no accommodation for pedestrians and cyclists, and bland, single-story architecture.

- Strip commercial development along major travel corridors that creates an unappealing community image, masks attractive neighborhoods and is dominated by automobiles, parking lots and a visual confusion of signs and overhead wires. These corridors are also experiencing increasing vacancies, suggesting that Lansing is over-zoned for this type of development.

- Residential areas, especially in the southern portion of the city, that lack neighborhood-serving retail and services, are automobile dependent and have no clear focal point for community activity and identity.

- A Capitol Complex edged by massive surface parking lots (with little landscaping or screening) that create dead zones between government offices and downtown, as well as buildings that fail to create height or scale transitions to adjacent development and provide extensive blank walls along street edges.

- Downtown edge zones where older, residential scale buildings have been replaced with taller, more boxy structures resulting in jarring inconsistencies in building height and scale and extensive surface parking that lacks landscaping and/or screening.

- A rail-related industrial corridor and heavy commercial uses that create a barrier between downtown and neighborhoods to the east.

- Large and small vacant industrial sites and buildings that require environmental cleanup and reuse to help diversify the job base and create better transitions to adjacent neighborhoods.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: FOCUS ON MIXED USE.

*Design Lansing* recommends meeting a number of placemaking challenges by preserving and enhancing existing mixed-use districts (downtown, Old Town and REO Town) and by encouraging the restructuring of areas already zoned for commercial use as mixed-use cores linked by connector corridor frontages that will become increasingly non-retail over time.

**What is mixed use?**

Mixed-use development is the combination of different uses (residential, retail, office, institutional, etc.) in a building, or group of buildings, in a manner that is functionally and physically integrated based on an overall plan. Before the early 20th century, when zoning was first developed, a mix of uses was the norm in cities and small towns. From the early 20th century until the late 1970s, zoning was used to increasingly separate and buffer different land uses as a strategy for minimizing conflicts and ensuring health, safety and welfare.

Developers reintroduced mixed use in larger scale urban redevelopment projects in the late 1970s. By the 1980s, smaller scale mixed-use projects were built that were more carefully integrated into the existing development context. In the 1990s, mixed use became a critical element of traditional neighborhood development (TND) and transit-oriented development (TOD). (See Chapter 1. Introduction, Best Practice Trends.) As a result, mixed use has come to mean more than just a combination of uses in a building or larger project; it also includes the concepts of:

- Building in a compact area to locate a mix of uses within walking distance of one another, thus maximizing convenience for area residents, employees and visitors and reducing the need for parking.
- Building at higher urban densities to create a critical mass of people and activity in a core area and creating gradual transitions to lower densities and more residential uses away from the core.
- Creating a connected street pattern (a grid of small blocks) to disperse traffic, maximize on-street parking and create a convenient network of pedestrian routes.
- Emphasizing the quality, comfort and interest of streets for people on foot to create a walkable environment. This is achieved by locating buildings to frame the street, requiring storefronts and building entries to open onto the sidewalk for activity and interest (and upper story windows for eyes on the street), and providing adequately dimensioned sidewalks with trees and street lights.
- Locating parking on the street and to the rear of buildings and providing shared parking to maximize efficiency of use.
- Locating and designing open spaces to serve as social and visual focal points.
- Designing streets to accommodate cyclists and transit.
Residential use has become an essential component of mixed use, with emphasis on providing a range of housing types, sizes and costs to create a diverse mix of residents. The location of higher-density mixed-use development has been increasingly tied to transit corridors to provide the concentration of ridership needed to support more cost effective and frequent service.

One of the primary recommendations of the Master Plan is to create a mix of uses within a particular district or neighborhood at the broader scale. This mix of uses may be achieved vertically (e.g. housing over retail) but also horizontally (e.g., housing and retail within the same block or general area, but not in the same building). The intent of the mixed use designation on the plan is to offer increased flexibility for the developer of land to create a range of uses within a given area, as appropriate to the site, the real estate market, and neighborhood. To the extent that office, retail and residential development can happen within a compact area is encouraged, but not dictated.

**Mixed-Use Benefits**

As suggested above, mixed-use development can provide a number benefits. For example, it:

- Uses land and infrastructure (roads and utilities) more efficiently by creating a compact development pattern.
- Reduces automobile dependence by making walking and cycling for short trips a convenient option. As a result, mixed-use development can reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), roadway congestion, tail pipe emissions and carbon footprint. It is an appealing residential option for people who don’t drive (the old, the young and low-income households) and people who want to reduce the percentage of household income devoted to automobile ownership and use.
- Reduces the need for parking by reducing automobile dependence and encouraging shared parking (sharing parking by uses with varying peak hour parking demands).
- Supports more cost effective, high frequency transit service by concentrating travel origins and destinations.
- Increases the range of available housing options by encouraging a mix of residential types, sizes and costs. As a result, higher-density and lower-cost housing can be distributed in smaller increments throughout the community.
- Increases the value of housing over time.\(^8\)
- Has special appeal for new economy workers.\(^9\)
- Creates a built-in market of employees and residents to support retail and services. Smaller scale retail and service spaces—like a traditional main street—also accommodate unique local businesses.
- Creates an extended cycle of daily activity that increases perceived safety and concentrates activity to give streets and public spaces vitality.
- Encourages social interaction, a sense of community and an attitude of stewardship for a place and its people.
• Promotes a higher quality of site and building design (through the use of a coordinating plan and guidelines) to create pride of place.

Mixed-Use Challenges
Mixed-use development presents challenges, however. These include:

• Lenders and property managers who are accustomed to dealing with less complex single-use projects.
• The time required for site assembly for multi-building projects in already developed areas.
• Optimal market timing for each use in the mix and the need for a flexible phasing strategy.
• Investor/lender patience in realizing the projected return on investment.

Fortunately, Lansing has developers who have successfully planned and completed mixed-use projects and are interested in doing more. This plan, future revisions to the City’s zoning ordinance and the targeted use of City assistance and incentives will encourage mixed use by putting the necessary policies and tools in place to be development-ready when the market timing is right.

Plan Approach: Hierarchy of Mixed-Use Centers
Design Lansing recommends creating a hierarchy of mixed-use centers from the regional to the community and neighborhood scale. These centers should share the characteristics described above (see What is Mixed Use?), but will vary in size, market draw, use intensity, building scale, height and overall density.

Regional Scale — As the heart of the city and the region, downtown Lansing (the Downtown Lansing Incorporated area and the zone surrounding it, including the Capitol Complex, north of I-496) is a regional-scale mixed-use center that can and should include a wide range of government, office, cultural, entertainment, restaurant, hotel, retail and residential uses. The highest densities and tallest buildings should be located within the downtown core (a 10-minute walking radius, roughly bounded by Shiawassee Street, the Pere Marquette rail line, Kalamazoo Street and Capitol Avenue), transitioning gradually to lower densities and more residentially-scaled buildings on neighborhood edges.

Community Scale — Design Lansing recommends the restructuring of existing shopping centers at Frandor, at Holmes Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (the Logan Square area), and at South Cedar Street and Jolly Road to create three new community-scale mixed-use centers, all located on high ridership transit routes.

The three new community-scale centers could include larger footprint retail anchors, along with smaller shops, restaurants and/or services, as long as parking is located behind buildings that define the edges of blocks. In addition to housing at medium and higher densities, non-retail anchors can include office buildings, R&D and light industrial uses, a satellite community college campus or outpatient medical clinics.
Maximum building heights in the core of the community-scale mixed-use centers can be 4-6 stories, transitioning to lower heights and a more residential scale on neighborhood edges. Both existing and new community-scale mixed-use centers should include a connected street pattern of small blocks designed to emphasize walkability.

**District Scale** – Lansing has three existing district-scale mixed-use centers—Old Town, REO Town and East Michigan Avenue (refer to sidebar on the next page)—that are highly valued by residents. Efforts to enhance the use mix and urban design quality of these traditional centers must continue. A fourth district scale mixed-use area is proposed along South Cedar, integrating into existing adjacent neighborhoods while serving this part of the community and those utilizing the busy South Cedar transit corridor.

District-scale centers serve the larger community while being connected to the surrounding neighborhoods, and are located along, or very close to, important transit corridors. They may include an eclectic mix of uses such as offices, restaurants, galleries, specialty shops and residential lofts and townhomes. These centers should value the preservation of the established development pattern, walkable streets and historic architecture, and achieving this goal will require some limitations on the type and scale of new uses. For example, a large footprint chain supermarket (approximately 50,000 square feet) supported by a large surface parking lot would not be a compatible fit in these neighborhood scaled mixed-use centers; however, a smaller food market (e.g., 10,000 square feet) with limited surface parking in a shared lot could be compatible. Building heights should be limited to 3-4 stories and the creation and preservation of a positive street environment is a primary objective, with parking to the rear of buildings and on the street.

**Neighborhood Scale** – Neighborhood-scale centers are proposed to reconfigure the convenience centers located on major streets throughout the city where commercial zoning already exists (for example, North Grand River Avenue, West Saginaw Street, Mount Hope Avenue, and Holmes, Jolly and Miller Roads).

Neighborhood-scale mixed-use convenience centers are not typically located on major transit routes; as a result, they are expected to serve a smaller market/population and be smaller in size. (In some instances, they may include a mixed-use building on each of the intersection’s four corners.)

These proposed neighborhood centers are intended to encourage the creation of marketable and attractive focal points for community activity that provide as many neighborhoods as possible with retail and services to meet daily needs within walking distance of home. Building heights should be limited to 2-3 stories and buildings should be located close to the sidewalk edge and designed to create an appealing pedestrian environment. Parking should be located to the rear of buildings. Shared parking lots and reduced parking requirements are recommended.

The transformation of strip commercial corridors into the recommended mixed-use cores and connectors pattern (see below) will need to be coordinated with improvements within adjacent public rights-of-way. These improvements may include burying overhead utilities, the consolidation of curb cuts, the addition or widening of sidewalks, street tree planting, enhanced lighting and crosswalk improvements within adjacent public rights-of-way. These improvements may include burying overhead utilities, the consolidation of curb cuts, the addition or widening of sidewalks, street tree planting, enhanced lighting and crosswalk improvements.

**East Michigan Avenue**

This important east-west corridor links downtown Lansing and the Capitol Complex through the Stadium District, to Sparrow Hospital and the city’s Eastside neighborhoods and to the Michigan State University campus and downtown East Lansing. East Michigan Avenue plays an important regional and community role because of the major assets it links together; but it also helps to define the identity of the neighborhoods it crosses and the business areas that serve them.

**Reo Town**

Located south of downtown along the historic Washington Street retail corridor, Reo Town is experiencing new signs of revival and investment, with new offices, restaurants and services opening in the district. Reo Town is close to downtown, while having a lower density, distinct character. The Grand and Red Cedar rivers meet in the area, and the river corridors and the non-motorized connectivity help make Reo Town an appealing place to live, work and visit.

**Old Town**

The Old Town area is a well established urban district north of downtown and Lansing Community College, anchored by art galleries, offices in converted industrial buildings and restaurants. Townhome and loft development is occurring in the area, and adjacent neighborhoods are benefiting from the reputation that Old Town has built as a destination for arts and entertainment. The eclectic, arty atmosphere of the area is supported by well run community organizations that promote the district. Investment in the area is now moving the boundaries of the district outward and will better connect the activity of the area to downtown and the river.
walk improvements. (See also Chapter 6. Transportation.) Publicly funded improvements should be used primarily as incentives for the restructuring of existing development into mixed-use community and neighborhood destination centers.

**Plan Approach: Urban Mixed-Use Connectors**

The creation of community- and neighborhood-scale mixed-use centers will help to improve the unappealing image created by an apparent excess of land zoned for commercial/retail use along corridors that serve as important gateways to and through Lansing. *Design Lansing* recommends restructuring these strip commercial corridors to encourage the consolidation of retail into the well-designed mixed-use centers (cores) described above, with a gradual transition to primarily non-retail mixed use along linking frontages (connectors). Non-retail connector uses might include, for example, higher-density residential, live-work

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**Figure 3-1: Hierarchy of Mixed-Use Centers**

- **Regional Centers**
  1. Downtown (existing)

- **Community Centers**
  2. Old Town (existing)
  3. REO Town (existing)
  4. Frandor (new)
  5. Logan Center Area (new)
  6. Jolly Road + Cedar Street (new)

- **Neighborhood Destination Centers**
  7. East Michigan Avenue (2000 Block) (existing)
  8. Major Intersections along South Cedar Street (new)

- **Neighborhood Convenience**

*NOTE:* The proposed locations for neighborhood centers are conceptual. Other locations will be considered.
units or appropriately-scaled office, research and/or light industrial. Because the transformation of connectors will be gradual, the land banking of parcels as green space is likely to be needed as an interim strategy.

Urban mixed-use connectors, or corridors, are located north of Jolly Road on South Cedar Street and portions of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Pennsylvania Avenue; on South Washington Avenue at Mount Hope Avenue and to the north; on East Michigan Avenue from the eastern city limits to downtown; along West Saginaw Street; and on portions of North Grand River Avenue. On these mixed-use corridor segments, the recommended development pattern includes 1- to 3-story buildings with shallow front yard setbacks and parking to the rear, with the goal of creating a more human-scale and visually coherent street environment. Shared driveways and cross access easements along rear property lines should be encouraged to minimize the number of curb cuts needed. Effective screening from adjacent single-family neighborhoods will also be needed.

**Urban Mixed-Use Corridors**
1. Michigan Avenue
2. Grand River Avenue
3. South Cedar Street
4. South Pennsylvania Avenue
5. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (Jolly Road to Holmes Road)
6. West Saginaw Street
7. South Washington Avenue

**Suburban Commercial**
8. North East Street
9. Grand River Avenue (Airport)
10. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (I-96 to Jolly Road)
11. Edgewood Area
Plan Approach: Suburban Commercial

A more suburban pattern of development, including larger building footprints, deeper green space setbacks and parking located between the building and the street, is acceptable on suburban commercial corridors. These include Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, South Cedar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue south of Jolly Road (including the Edgewood area), North East Street and North Grand River Avenue near the airport. In addition to retail and automobile-oriented uses, higher-density residential, office, research and light industrial should be encouraged on suburban commercial corridors, especially those that serve as major transit corridors (see Chapter 6. Transportation). Site design should include improved landscaping to screen parking lots, better define circulation, provide for stormwater management and soften the visual impact of large paved areas. Pedestrian and bicycle access through parking lots to building entries must also be improved.

Plan Approach: Downtown.

A thriving, vibrant downtown is important in establishing an economically competitive region and, especially, in attracting the knowledge workers who drive the growth of new economy jobs. While Lansing’s downtown core area already has many of the placemaking assets that create this appeal, downtown edge zones present some placemaking challenges.

Downtown Core – Significant success has been achieved in maintaining downtown’s traditional architecture and pedestrian orientation while attracting investment to create a regional center for corporate office headquarters, entertainment, culture and the arts. While there have been a number of residential units developed in and adjacent to the downtown core, continued efforts are needed to build the downtown area’s resident population. In combination with efforts to increase the synergy between downtown and the Capitol Complex (see Capitol Complex Edge Zone, below), this will build market support for an expanded range of retail, restaurant and entertainment options.

The downtown core should be the location for Lansing’s highest densities and tallest buildings, using areas that are surface parking lots (or are appropriate for redevelopment) for mixed-use infill supported by structured parking. Large surface parking lots should be discouraged in downtown. It is critical to provide adequate parking in the downtown to support growth and new parking facilities should be, where feasible, supplied in vertical decks and less in surface lots. Infill development is encouraged in the downtown core and edge zones (discussed later) which improve the street level energy, architectural character and pedestrian friendliness of downtown. This type of development may encroach and displace existing surface parking lots. The loss of parking, where demand is adequate, should be mitigated with consolidated private or public parking facilities.

New development should be a minimum of 2 stories and located at or near the sidewalk edge with clearly defined primary entrances facing the street. Long building facades should be articulated into vertical bays to replicate the existing rhythm of buildings on the block face. Incentives should be offered for ground floor retail storefronts, especially on Washington Street and East...
Michigan Avenue. Efforts to take better advantage of the downtown reach of the Grand River should also be continued by improving its visibility and pedestrian accessibility. To the greatest extent possible, new riverfront development should be designed to include view corridors to the river, provide public access along the river edge and present a riverside ground floor that includes windows, building entrances, active uses and outdoor spaces.

Capitol Complex Edge Zone — The State of Michigan’s downtown facilities, including the State Capitol, employ over 14,000 people and draw 1.5 million visitors each year. While downtown and the Capitol Complex are neighbors, many government buildings (and parking areas) are located more than a 10-minute walk from downtown core businesses. As a result, the potential benefits to downtown of the Capitol Complex’s spending power have yet to be maximized. A trolley loop linking the two areas (and possibly connecting to Old Town and REO Town) would make lunchtime and after work shopping, dining and entertainment
more feasible, especially if headways were short. It may be possible for State
departments and agencies to lease downtown office space to build the employee
base within downtown itself. In addition, elected officials and State employees
represent a potential market for close-to-work housing in downtown and its edge
zones.

Parking policies have a significant impact on the relationship between the Capitol
Complex and other downtown edge zones. Extensive surface parking lots for
State employees on the perimeter of the Capitol Complex create large dead
areas that discourage pedestrian linkages and negative perceptions of safety,
especially at night and on weekends. Infill development on these surface lots, in
combination with structured parking, is one of the placemaking improvements
most desired by Lansing residents. Because parking represents a significant cost
to employers (in this case, the State), it may also be appropriate to consider
changes in policies regarding the number of parking spaces provided in the
Capitol Complex and the way that parking is priced. These decisions could help
to tilt the balance in favor of vanpooling, carpooling, living closer to work and/or
transit use.

New policies for Capitol Complex building and site design should also be
considered; for example, using parking lot landscaping to reduce the negative
visual impact of large paved areas and to better manage stormwater (e.g., the
use of infiltration planting areas). The State and the City may want to consider
using some of the Capitol Complex’s vacant land for improved, but interim, park
space, especially if there are no short- to mid-term needs for its development. In
addition, more sensitive architectural transitions between the Capitol Complex
and adjacent areas should be considered, with buildings designed to include
street level entries and building heights stepped down to neighborhood edges.

The range of issues related to the Capitol Complex and their importance to
the success of downtown as a city and regional asset suggest that a continuing
dialogue and collaboration between the State, the City and regional agencies will
be needed.

Other Downtown Edge Areas – Design Lansing recommends a mix of uses in
downtown’s other edge areas, with a scale of development that complements,
but does not compete with, the downtown core. Like the core, the placemaking
emphasis in these edge areas must be on creating an attractive, pedestrian-scale
environment with an urban sense of vitality (see What is mixed use?, above).

Existing conditions and placemaking issues in downtown edge areas vary.

- The areas to the south and southeast of the core west of the river are
developed with larger scale offices and institutional uses interspersed
with surface parking lots. Here, the future emphasis in placemaking should
be on encouraging infill buildings that edge the street to create a more
consistent street wall, with parking located on the interior of the block. In
the interim, stronger standards for screening parking from the street and
providing interior parking lot landscaping should be implemented.
- In the areas north of Ottawa Street between Walnut Street and Lansing
Community College, between North Capitol Avenue and the Grand River
chapter 3 : economic development

**Design Lansing 2012 Comprehensive Plan**

Improve scale transitions with infill buildings that bridge scale differences.

Existing Building Scale Mismatch

**Existing Building Scale Mismatch**

(north to Oakland Avenue) and along North Washington Street (north to East Grand River Avenue), older residential structures are mixed with taller, larger-scale office and residential buildings and the parking lots that serve them. This mix creates uncomfortable discontinuities in scale that undermine the visual coherence of these areas. While newer buildings are located to maintain the front yard setbacks established by older buildings, the surface parking needed to support office use has created gaps in the development fabric. The lack of parking lot screening along street edges undermines the pedestrian character of these areas. In the future, development that helps to bridge the transitions in scale, and carefully located and screened surface parking should be encouraged.

- In the area south of the Capitol Complex, roughly from Sycamore Street to Butler Boulevard, newer residential development has taken on a fairly suburban format, with the closure of parts of the original street grid and the provision of surface parking lots served by cul-de-sacs. In the future, new downtown residential development should create a more urban pattern by maintaining the street grid and locating buildings to face the street with parking to the rear.

- Older residential blocks that remain largely intact are located south of Lenawee Street along Cherry Street extending to the Grand River. Because of its proximity to the river and the downtown core, the Cherry Street area—now zoned for a combination of higher-density residential and commercial use—may have particular value as a medium-density residential location.

- A light industrial/heavy commercial zone is located between Cedar Street and the Pere Marquette rail corridor east of the downtown core from Kalamazoo Street (south) to Old Town (north). This zone creates unappealing vehicular entries to downtown from the east and barriers that discourage pedestrian access to and from near-downtown neighborhoods. Along East Michigan Avenue, a transition to urban mixed use has begun

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Oakland/Saginaw Corridor
with the development of the Lansing Center conference facility, Thomas M. Cooley Law School Stadium (formerly Oldsmobile Park), home of the Lansing Lugnuts, and the Stadium District mixed-use project. Design Lansing recommends a continued transition from industrial and heavy commercial to a mix of office, retail, entertainment, arts/cultural live-work and residential uses. In particular, the potential for redevelopment along the east side of the Grand River between East Saginaw Street and Old Town should be used advantageously. This redevelopment should give priority to residential use and encourage active ground floor uses (shops and restaurants) and building entries facing the River Trail.

Except on the riverfront, light industry can continue to be part of this mixed-use area if external impacts (outdoor storage, noise and truck traffic) are minimized, and buildings and parking are located and designed to make a positive contribution to the area’s visual appeal and walkability. As suggested below (see Provide Diverse Job Centers, page 55), this will require that all light industrial activity be enclosed within a building, that buildings be located to create a clearly defined street wall (with parking located to the rear), and that entries and windows face the street. Multi-story buildings with new economy incubator space and/or artist/artisan studios on the ground floor and housing and/or office space above should be encouraged through a combination of adaptive reuse and redevelopment. While building heights in portions of this zone might be 4-5 stories, heights should step down to 2-3 stories on neighborhood edges. In addition, to increase walkability, the creation of smaller block sizes in the area between Cedar and Larch Streets should be encouraged.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: PROVIDE DIVERSE JOB CENTERS.

The New Economy

While manufacturing will continue to be an important part of Lansing’s job base, city and regional economic development organizations are working to diversify the economy and increase the area’s competitiveness in attracting the knowledge-based businesses and human capital that will grow the new economy. As described in the first chapter, the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), a regional economic development consortium, has adopted a vision and strategies for the future that build on the region’s existing new economy business strengths. LEAP also emphasizes placemaking as essential in attracting the highly mobile talent pool that drives new economy growth.

Mixed-Use Centers

Mixed-use centers are appealing locations for new economy businesses because of their urban place characteristics. Lansing’s downtown, Old Town and REO Town already have this urban, mixed-use appeal. As Design Lansing’s recommendations are implemented, downtown edge areas, the three proposed community-scale centers (at Frandor, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Holmes Road, and at Jolly Road and South Cedar Street) will also become attractive new economy business locations. In addition to more traditional office space, these mixed-use areas can accommodate live-work units, artist and artisan studios, and new and expanded businesses that include R&D, testing and small-scale production components. Smaller footprint users with higher numbers of employees per square foot and minimal external impacts (noise and trucks) are most appropriate in these mixed-use zones.

Design Lansing recommends locating uses toward the light industrial end of the business spectrum on major streets where truck access can be provided without traveling through residential areas. In addition, all activities should be enclosed within a building to eliminate external impacts on adjacent users. The buildings that house these—and all—job-oriented uses in mixed-use areas should create a quality pedestrian environment with buildings located to face, and frame, the street and parking to the rear, attractively landscaped front setbacks and attractive front facades with windows and entries.

As job centers, Lansing’s downtown area and mixed-use centers, existing and proposed, take advantage of transit accessibility. These areas can and should be planned to encourage transit use by encouraging compact, dense development that allows a reduced number of parking spaces as an incentive. Employers in these areas should be encouraged to adopt transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that promote van- and carpooling, transit use and living within walking or cycling distance of work.

Institutions

Lansing’s higher education and health care institutions are important economic assets in providing and employing knowledge workers and incubating new businesses. Lansing citizens recognize their value and would like to see these
institutions remain and grow within the city. Because most of these institutions are located in developed areas—either neighborhoods or the downtown—the manner in which they grow impacts the community fabric. One option is to acquire additional land for expansion at an existing location, another is to increase density within existing property boundaries and a third is to distribute some functions to satellite locations.

No matter which option, or combination of options, is considered best, conflict and controversy will be reduced if planning for the future includes collaboration with the City and the community. *Design Lansing* recommends that opportunities to increase density within existing property limits be explored before adjacent land is acquired and redeveloped. This densification can be achieved by reusing sites with obsolete structures and/or surface parking lots as infill building locations with structured parking. Because deck parking is expensive, institutional employers should reassess employee (and student) parking policies to encourage transit use and minimize the required number of spaces and costs. Institutions may also want to consider adopting employer-assisted housing programs to encourage employees to purchase housing within walking/cycling distance of work. This can benefit the employee, the institution, the adjacent neighborhood and the environment.

Whether the institutional growth strategy is to increase density within existing property boundaries or acquire and develop adjacent land, it will be important to plan carefully for transitions to adjacent land uses. In a neighborhood setting, the tallest buildings would ideally be located on major street frontages and/or toward the center of the campus, with building heights stepping down to residential edges. Landscaped setbacks can also help to ensure a positive transition on residential streets. Rather than blank walls (or parking deck facades) facing adjacent streets, building facades should include windows that reveal active interior uses. Where an institution fronts on a major street with a commercial or mixed-use orientation, primary building entries and ground level retail and services should be encouraged on that frontage. By helping to promote a mix of uses, institutional growth can contribute to urban vitality and reduce automobile dependence and parking needs. Finally, street closures should be discouraged because they reduce walkability and convenience and increase traffic impacts by concentrating, rather than dispersing, traffic flows.

If there are institutional uses that can function effectively at a distance from the main campus, satellite sites should be considered to meet growth needs. These uses might include outpatient clinics, testing facilities, offices for medical practices or freestanding training and/or academic programs. These institutional satellite uses are particularly desirable components of the new community-scale mixed-use centers that *Design Lansing* recommends.

**Industry**

Industrial uses should be located to take advantage of easy access to air, highway and/or rail transportation. Industrial uses that generate high volumes of truck traffic should be located so that access to interstate highways is possible without travelling residential streets. The heavier the industrial use (the more truck traffic, noise and other external impacts it generates), the more important buffers from residential uses become.
Lansing has a number of industrial areas that are well located for multimodal accessibility. These include:

- Midway Industrial Park is located in southeast Lansing, with ready access to I-96 via Pennsylvania Avenue. The Norfolk Southern Railway also passes through the northeast corner of the site. Midway Industrial Park has the added advantage of being located on a major transit route (Pennsylvania Avenue). Both light industrial and heavy industrial uses are currently permitted.

Midway Industrial Park is configured as a business park, with a significant size and the potential to expand north to Jolly Road. The area has been developed with an internal street system that provides three park entrance points and organizes the site into development parcels. It also has the space to provide green buffers on major street frontages and neighborhood edges, although this opportunity has not been used to advantage.
Although not part of the Midway Industrial Park, industrial uses extend north from Jolly Road to Cavanaugh Road, on either side of the Norfolk Southern Railway. Primary vehicular access to this area is provided from Aurelius and Jolly Roads. Jolly and Miller Roads provide access to Pennsylvania Avenue to connect to I-96.

Capital Region International Airport\textsuperscript{16} is located in northeast Lansing, with access to U.S. 127 (via State Road) and I-69 (via North Grand River Avenue). The CSX Railroad also runs through the site. Industrial parcels in Lansing are located between North Grand River Avenue and the rail line. The majority of these have already been developed, some as single user sites, each with separate access from North Grand River Avenue, and others in a business park configuration with consolidated access serving multiple users.

The City of Lansing and Dewitt Township have entered into a P.A. 425 Agreement which allows for the sharing of tax revenue from new development in the area in exchange for Lansing providing fire and police service to the area, as well as some utility services. The land area within the agreement has been designated by the State of Michigan as the second site to fall under the Next Michigan Development program which uses tax incentives to encourage manufacturing, distribution, technology businesses to build facilities in the area.

The creation of a more appealing frontage on North Grand River Avenue is needed as part of a larger effort to improve wayfinding and image along the routes linking the airport to downtown Lansing and, ultimately, the MSU campus. Landscaping requirements for front yard setbacks, and for the screening and landscaping of parking and storage areas, should be upgraded. In addition, the introduction of standards for building materials and facade design visible from major streets should be considered.

The REO Town area is located in central Lansing just south of the Grand River and I-496 between South Washington Avenue and South Cedar Street. This small industrial park, bordered on the north by the CN railroad, has sites remaining for development. This is a good location for light industrial and heavy commercial serving the downtown core area.

Although not part of the REO Town business park, industrial uses (including a City of Lansing Public Service Department site) also extend east of South Cedar Street, along the CN rail line on both sides of the Grand River, and across Pennsylvania Avenue. These sites are likely to remain industrial, as they are located in the floodplain. Nevertheless, important improvements in stormwater management should be encouraged, including vegetated buffers along the river and infiltration planting areas on the edges of large paved areas. Improved landscape screening of parking areas and attention to the image presented on major gateway streets (Washington and Pennsylvania Avenues) are also needed.

The GM Grand River Plant is located south of I-496 and served by the CN rail line. This Lansing site will be retained as part of restructured GM operations. The site includes a large area where buildings have been demolished and extensive surface parking on the riverfront. Surface parking for employees and vehicle storage extends between the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard segments and to the west.

**Improving the Look of Industry**

Lansing can take important steps to encourage improvements in the appearance of industrial sites and to reduce their negative impact on the environment and adjacent neighborhoods. These include:

- Improved standards for landscaping in front yard setbacks.
- Improved standards for the screening of parking lots and outdoor storage areas visible from the street and adjacent to non-industrial uses.
- Increased side and rear yard setback and landscaping requirements adjacent to residential uses.
- Standards for setbacks and vegetated buffers along floodplains, creeks, streams and rivers.
- Requirements (or incentives) for low-impact development stormwater management practices.
- Requirements for coordinated interior circulation systems with limited points of access to major streets in areas where site size (or parcel depths) permit.
- Consolidation of driveways on major streets, where possible.
If a smaller capacity operation is anticipated in the near to mid term, it may be possible to reduce existing impervious surface area to improve stormwater management and protect water quality. In particular, the creation of a vegetated buffer to the river, and landscaping the edges and interior of surface parking lots to remain are recommended. GM should be encouraged to make this site a showcase for green development practices.

If the area to the west along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is not needed in the future, the possibility of its redevelopment for R&D should be considered to take better advantage of its high visibility and proximity to downtown.

Lansing has a number of industrial areas that are not as well located in terms of multimodal access, but are likely to remain in the longer term. These areas include:

- North Grand River Avenue, located between the CSX rail line and North Grand River Avenue from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to, and across, Cedar Street. As recommended above, landscape screening of parking areas and more attractive front yard landscaping and building facades should be the improvement focus. Consideration should also be given to phasing out industrial use north of the rail line, except where easy access to major north-south streets can be provided.

- Willow Street on both sides of Sunset Avenue west to the city limits. Because the City of Lansing Wastewater Treatment Plant is located west of Sunset Avenue, this area is likely to remain industrial. The area to the east of Sunset Street includes a private recycling center for steel and other materials. While the industrial uses in this area are vital to Lansing, they do illustrate the importance of requiring a higher standard of landscaping and screening, especially for heavy industrial uses adjacent to neighborhoods. Industrial development has also occurred to the east of the rail spur and is accessed from Willow Street by a residential north-south street. The feasibility of providing vehicular access to these sites in the rail right-of-way (apparently inactive) should be explored to eliminate this conflict.

Lansing has a number of industrial areas where a transition to non-industrial use is recommended. These transitions focus on industrial corridors that follow rail lines, where uses are not effectively buffered from adjacent neighborhoods and where highway access requires truck movement on residential streets. Many of these areas include vacant buildings and lots.

*Design Lansing* recommends encouraging the relocation of remaining industrial uses from these areas to Lansing’s existing industrial parks (see above) to eliminate existing conflicts. These areas include:

- Oakland Avenue to Kalamazoo Street along the Pere Marquette rail line and west to Cedar Street. As described above (see Other Downtown Edge Areas), *Design Lansing* recommends a continued transition to urban mixed use—anchored by the Lansing Center, Thomas M. Cooley Law School Stadium and the Stadium District project—in this industrial corridor. A combination of office, retail entertainment, arts/cultural and residential uses is encouraged with an emphasis on re-densification and the creation of a visually appealing, walkable transition between downtown and
adjacent neighborhoods. Except on the riverfront, light industrial uses can be part of this mix, but only if external impacts (truck traffic and noise) are minimal and buildings and parking are located and designed to implement the principles of mixed-use development (see What is mixed use?, above).

- From the Logan Square area northeast to REO Town. This inactive rail spur links the proposed community-scale mixed-use center at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Holmes Road north and east to the southern end of REO Town. Design Lansing recommends the acquisition of the rail right-of-way to allow the creation of a greenway and trail connection that incorporates Washington Park and links to the larger city-wide (and regional) green infrastructure and non-motorized trail system (see Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure). The proposed greenway link helps to establish the basis for a transition in land use along its edges to a more residential mixed-use orientation. A transition to mixed use with a new economy job focus (health care, life sciences or biomedical uses) in the existing industrial area at Washington Avenue and Mount Hope Avenue should also be encouraged.

- From East Grand River Avenue northeast to the city limits. This inactive rail spur also presents a special opportunity for creating a greenway connection as part of a larger city-wide (and regional) green infrastructure and non-motorized trail system (see Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure). Although major industrial uses south of East North Street are likely to remain, the balance of the industrial zoning along this spur might be re-evaluated to encourage open space and residential uses.

- GM Verlinden site. As part of GM’s restructuring, the sale of the vacant Verlinden site, located on the west edge of the city between West Saginaw Street and West Michigan Avenue, is anticipated. The site is bounded on the east by a single-family residential neighborhood (along Verlinden Street) and the west by the Norfolk and Southern Railway. Design Lansing recommends that the reuse of this site for R&D be considered, including the creation of an internal pattern of streets and blocks to divide the site into more saleable development parcels. Buildings should be located to face the street with parking located to the rear. An emphasis on green jobs, green buildings and low-impact development stormwater management strategies (landscaped areas for infiltration and permeable paving) are also recommended.
**PLAN RECOMMENDATION: FOCUS RESOURCES.**

Although *Design Lansing* includes many implementation-worthy objectives on a range of topics, both the City and its citizens understand that resources are limited and must be focused on those initiatives that have been identified as top community priorities and which have the greatest potential for short- to mid-term success. Three of the top priorities identified by the community relate to land use objectives for economic development: creating a hierarchy of mixed-use centers, including higher-density housing, transforming strip commercial corridors and creating diverse job centers.18

One of the most important steps Lansing can take in the short term to realize these objectives is to review and revise development codes and policies to support recommended land use changes and provide incentives for desired private investment. In addition, the City must target the use of its capital improvement funds to maximize return on investment. This return is usually greatest when local capital improvement (and state and federal grant) dollars are used to facilitate and leverage private investment and when multiple agencies and community groups are working together to implement shared objectives at a specific location.

The work underway in planning for enhanced transit service on East Michigan Avenue, to better link downtown Lansing to MSU in East Lansing, presents a critical near-term opportunity for success in accomplishing multiple objectives. Led by the regional transit agency (CATA), working in collaboration with multiple jurisdictions and agencies, this project is evaluating alternative transportation technologies; the locations for transit stops that would become the focus for developing mixed-use, transit-oriented centers; and other non-motorized and traffic improvements.

**PLAN RECOMMENDATION: COLLABORATE.**

Research done by the Lansing Area Economic Partnership 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 of its region. As a result, Lansing has a critical role to play in accommodating higher-density, mixed-use development to capitalize on existing placemaking assets and to overcome placemaking deficits.

The City is already collaborating locally and within the region. Some current examples include:

- Leveraging private investment to implement public improvements (e.g. riverfront improvements resulting from Accident Fund and Marketplace investment).
- Joint promotional projects, such as “Linking Lansing and U,” with Michigan State University and the City of East Lansing.
- Joint community development projects with partners such as the Ingham County Land Bank Fast Track Authority and the Greater Lansing Housing Coalition.
- Joint human services projects with organizations such as the Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network and the Power of We coalition.
- Emergency services mutual aid agreements with the Fire and Police Departments of neighboring jurisdictions.
- Regional planning, economic development and placemaking, and interlocal agreements as discussed below:

**Regional Planning**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) provides the regional planning forum for land use, transportation, natural resource, wellhead protection, green infrastructure and economic development. TCRPC is also the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that coordinates the distribution of Federal transportation and economic development funds to local units within the region.

In 2005, TCRPC completed the **Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future** study in partnership with local units of government throughout the greater Lansing area. The City played a major role in this planning effort, which set the stage for the coordinated application of wise growth principles in the Lansing region.

The regional growth plan proposes land use policies that clearly define urban and rural services areas - directing development to existing urbanized areas for the purposes of strengthening the urban core, supporting the agricultural economy and protecting natural resources.

Figure 8-2 (see page 191) provides a composite map of adopted land use plans within the Tri-County region. This map also included Lansing’s future use plan.

**Urban Service Boundary** – The regional growth plan calls for the implementation of an urban service boundary to help accomplish these purposes. TCRPC conducted an Urban Service Management Study, involving a committee representing local jurisdictions, to develop criteria for proposing the boundary, including:

- The existing and planned sewer and water infrastructure.
- The improved roads and road hierarchy.
- Connections between transportation system destinations.
- Existing population densities.
- The zoning districts and master plan/future land use districts of the various communities.
- Natural resources and working lands (e.g. open space, farmland, and protected lands).
- A distance threshold from existing essential services (service radii from fire/police services) and health, police and fire department recommendations.
- The Capital Improvement Plans of the various communities.
- Regional benefit factors, such as economic development.
- Existing and anticipated 425 Agreement areas (see below).
The proposed boundary includes all of Lansing’s contiguous area, as well as the City’s 425 areas discussed below. The final boundary is subject to approval by each directly affected local jurisdiction.

In 2006, the Lansing City Council adopted Resolution #073 in support of the regional growth plan, and continues to work with TCRPC, the Urban Service Boundary Committee and neighboring jurisdictions to support the purpose and intent of the Urban Service Management Study. This may include implementing policies (e.g. zoning regulations) and tools (e.g. conservation easements) that help strengthen and restore urban centers and protect rural areas, wherever feasible.

**P.A. 425 Interlocal Agreements**

P.A. 425 Agreements enable two local units of government to conditionally transfer property by written agreement from one jurisdiction to another for the purpose of making public improvements and conducting economic development projects on that property. They are essentially partnerships for the provision of services within the specified 425 agreement areas. An agreement typically specifies the land uses permitted, the provision of urban services, the governmental jurisdiction, the duration of the agreement and the fate of the property at the end of the agreement.

Lansing has non-contiguous land within its jurisdiction as a result of agreements with three neighboring townships.

**Alaiedon Township** – This agreement, Lansing’s first, was signed in 1998 between the City and Alaiedon Township. It was created to allow the City to retain the headquarters of Jackson National Life (JNL), a leader in Lansing’s growing insurance industry, which had outgrown its facilities in the Corporate Centre Office Industrial Park. JNL now employs approximately 1,300 in its Lansing area headquarters, at the southwest corner of I-96 and Okemos Road.

**Meridian Township** – This agreement was made in 1999 to provide utilities service to College Fields, a residential subdivision and golf course development located near Bennett and Hagadorn Roads in Meridian Township. The agreement provided for a maximum of 288 dwelling units, with at least 195 detached units. The result has been a planned community overlooking a golf course, with several architecturally distinct neighborhoods, providing more housing choice for Lansing area residents.

**Delta Township** – In 2002, the City and Delta Township formed a partnership to provide a location for Lansing’s second world class General Motors manufacturing facility in five years. The complex includes the Lansing Delta Township Assembly Plant and the Lansing Regional Stamping plant, which together employ approximately 4,150. The factory is 3,400,000 square feet in size, and is the first assembly plant in the world to receive LEED® gold certification.

**DeWitt Township** – As note on page 58, the City of Lansing and DeWitt have entered into a P.A. 425 agreement for land near the Capital Region International Airport, and have received the Next Michigan Development designation.
Combined, the 425 areas have added approximately 2.61 square miles to the City’s land area. All are located within the proposed urban service boundary, and any future agreements should also respect these boundaries as the urban service area project moves forward.

**Other City of Lansing Properties**

Currently the City of Lansing owns property outside the incorporated city, in Delta Township (Grand Woods Park) and Lansing Township (the former Waverly Golf Course). As the property owner of Waverly property and Grand Woods Park, open spaces outside the boundaries of the city, the City of Lansing does not have planning authority over these properties.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Goal: Build competitiveness.

Quality of Life/Placemaking

Objective: 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.

Objective: More effectively market Lansing’s quality of life assets.

- See also Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure, Green leadership.
**Goal: Focus on mixed use.**

**Downtown Core and Edge Areas**

**Objective:** 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 offices, corporate office headquarters, and 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.
- 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 of Historic Places 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 Capitol Complex.
- Emphasize downtown links to, and the visibility of, the Grand River. See also Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure, River Trail.
- Establish stronger links between downtown and nearby mixed-use districts including Old Town, REO Town and East Michigan Avenue’s Stadium District.

**Objective:** Encourage greater planning coordination between the State and the City to maximize synergy between the Capitol Complex 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 and transit parking) issues.
Objective: 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., facade articulation, windows, entries, roof shapes and materials).
- Maintain the existing grid of medium and 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 of surface parking to serve core downtown or State complex uses.
- Require landscaping to screen surface parking lots visible from the street.

Objective: Capitalize on the urban reach of the 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 provide 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 Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure, Encourage Healthy Lifestyles).

Community-Scale Mixed-Use Centers

Objective: Continue to support reinvestment in Lansing’s traditional mixed-use districts—Old Town and REO Town—emphasizing their role as urban neighborhoods that provide appropriately-scaled retail, housing, institutional and office uses in an attractive, walkable environment.

- Encourage walking and trolley connections between Old Town, downtown and REO Town.
Objective: Encourage the redesign of large shopping centers (e.g., Frandor, Logan Square and South Cedar Street/Jolly Road) 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 Chapter 6. Transportation, Redesign Streets and Strengthen City Image.

Neighborhood-Scale Mixed-Use Centers

Objective: Encourage a restructuring of strip commercial development along gateway streets that also serve as major transit routes to consolidate retail into walkable, mixed-use destination 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 facade 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 incentives and investments to encourage and complement private investment.
- Use code enforcement and land banking as interim strategies.
- Give particular priority to improvements on East Michigan Avenue and South Cedar Street.
- Also address Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and South Pennsylvania Avenue.
- See also Chapter 6. Transportation, Best Practices and City Image.

Objective: Reinforce existing neighborhood-serving convenience 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).
• Encourage a mix of uses (including medium-density residential).
• Provide development standards for building placement (at the street) and design, parking (to the rear), public space and density that create a pedestrian-friendly environment and appropriate transitions to single-family neighborhoods.

Urban Mixed-Use Corridors

Objective: Improve Lansing’s gateway streets to enhance first impressions, expand housing options and provide sites for job-oriented uses by encouraging the restructuring of strip commercial development.

• On gateway streets north of Jolly Road (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, South Cedar Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, East Michigan Avenue), encourage a gradual transition to non-retail development (higher-density residential, live-work units, office/research/light industrial and/or green space) uses in between mixed-use cores (urban mixed-use corridors).
• See strategies for Neighborhood-Scale, Mixed-Use Centers, above.
• See also Chapter 4. Land Use: Neighborhoods, Expand Housing Choice and Chapter 6. Transportation, Strengthen City Image and Redesign Streets.

Suburban Commercial

Objective: Improve suburban commercial development quality on gateway streets south of Jolly Road (South Cedar Street, Pennsylvania Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard), on North Grand River Avenue and North East Street 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 facade improvement loan/grant program that includes design assistance.
• See also Chapter 6. Transportation, Best Practices and City Image.
Goal: Provide diverse job centers.

Cluster Strengths

Objective: 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 Biomedical
- Information Technology

Objective: Coordinate the location of major job centers with transit.

The New Economy

Objective: Market mixed-use centers (at all scales) and urban mixed-use corridors as new economy business locations.

Objective: Promote Lansing as a regional center for the arts and culture.

Objective: 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 and low-interest loans).

Objective: Collaborate in preparing plans for fiber optics and other technology capacity needed to support the new economy.

Institutional Growth

Objective: Allow and encourage government, education 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.
- Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) 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.

**Objective:** Work with institutions in planning for expansion, closure and/or reuse.

**Industrial**

**Objective:** Encourage industrial investment near the airport, on active rail corridors and where easy truck access to interstate highways is available without traveling residential streets.

**Objective:** Continue to work to attract R&D, green and advanced manufacturing jobs.

**Objective:** Encourage the adaptive reuse of smaller vacant industrial buildings and the redevelopment of small 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 reuse and redevelopment that create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment (e.g., buildings framing the street, parking to the rear, landscape buffering and screening).

**Objective:** Encourage the cleanup and reuse of large vacant (and underused) 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.

**Objective:** Explore interim holding and low-cost remediation strategies for large vacant industrial sites.
Goal: **Focus resources.**

**Objective:** 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 desired private investment.
- Look for early successes that will build momentum and civic pride.

**Objective:** *Invest in helping existing, local businesses to grow, especially those entering second growth stage.*

Goal: **Collaborate.**

**Objective:** Continue to work toward 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., East Michigan Avenue enhanced transit and corridor improvements).
- Explore mutually beneficial service sharing options.
CHAPTER 3 NOTES


2. Other top priority assets to preserve include parks, historic buildings, the River Trail and neighborhoods.

3. Non-retail use examples include higher-density housing, live-work units, appropriately-scaled office, R&D or light industrial.

4. The overlay district applies to areas zoned commercial on East Michigan Avenue and West Saginaw Street. It also applies to the Old Town and REO Town areas.


6. These include financial and insurance; health care; life sciences and biomedical; and information technology. *Greater Lansing Next*, 2009.


10. *Design Lansing* endorses the goals and urban design objectives for the downtown core articulated in the *Central Area Comprehensive Plan*, City of Lansing, 1999. See *Central Area Comprehensive Plan Development Plan Objectives*, pages 1-2 and 1-3; the concepts presented on pages 4-4 to 4-6 and the Commerce Center recommendations on pages 5-34 to 5-36 (through Urban Design). *Design Lansing* also recognizes the City’s continued development of the Principal Shopping District (bounded by Shiawassee Street, Larch Street, St. Joseph Street and Capitol Avenue) as an important part of downtown’s economic development success.

11. Including many state professional and trade association offices desiring a location close to the Capitol Complex.

12. These could be relatively shallow buildings with retail ground floor space and office and/or residential above. On larger parcels, this new infill could serve as liner buildings for new parking decks.

13. The Cherry Hill Historic District is located in this area, focused on the intersection of Cherry Street and East Hillsdale Street.

14. Insurance and financial services; health care; life sciences and biomedical; and information technology.
15. See Capitol Complex Edge Zone, above, for recommendations related to the State government complex.

16. The airport proper is located in Dewitt Township.

17. This site is on the eastern edge of a larger GM complex extending into Lansing Township.

18. The other top priorities include completing the non-motorized (complete streets) network and establishing a system of greenways, encouraging green neighborhoods; and strengthening transit.

19. At a minimum, mixed-use development should include retail/service, office and/or residential uses.

20. Including land banking.

21. Second stage businesses are those already having 10-99 employees and $1 million in revenue. This strategy of supporting the growth of existing businesses, rather than working to attract new businesses, is called “economic gardening.”
INTRODUCTION

Great cities have great neighborhoods. Lansing residents value their neighborhoods and want to support continued efforts to keep stable neighborhoods strong and revitalize those neighborhoods that have experienced stress and disinvestment. Throughout the community, efforts are underway to create active, unique, engaging neighborhoods that provide a positive quality of life for their residents. Lansing will not only preserve successful neighborhoods, but work to replicate that success in other areas of town.

In addition, Lansing will become more competitive in the housing markets for students, young professionals, empty nesters and seniors. To achieve this, the City of Lansing (City) will encourage the development of higher density housing (townhouses, lofts, and apartments) in walkable mixed-use centers (see Chapter 3. Economic Development). In doing so, the City will complement its commitment to complete streets (see Chapter 6. Transportation) with land use patterns that encourage residents to engage in a healthy lifestyle by choosing to walk or bike for short trips and to support transit.

The greening of Lansing’s neighborhoods (see Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure) - both in new development and retrofitting existing structures - will also be an important part of the effort to build a more sustainable community.

Three major goals will guide these efforts:

**Strengthen existing neighborhoods.** Lansing will capitalize on the placemaking assets of older single-family neighborhoods and encourage residential infill and renovation that are compatible with existing development character in all neighborhoods. Neighborhood improvement funds will continue to be targeted in established focus areas, and rightsizing strategies will be explored with neighborhood participation. The clustered development of retail and services, as part of mixed-use centers, will create focal points of activity and identity within walking/cycling distance of home in both urban and suburban neighborhoods.

**Expand housing choice.** New higher-density housing will be located along major transit routes and in mixed-use, transit-oriented centers. More housing units will be encouraged in downtown and the existing Old Town and REO Town mixed-use districts. In addition, higher-density housing will be part of the restructuring of older shopping centers as community-scale mixed-use centers, and strip commercial corridors as mixed-use cores and connectors.

**Green all neighborhoods.** The City will encourage the development of a model green neighborhood on a large vacant or underused site. In addition, the use of green building technology, low-impact development stormwater management strategies, and the protection and expansion of the urban tree canopy will be encouraged in all neighborhoods.
**PRIORITY ISSUES**

**Challenges**

**Housing Age and Quality** – Preserving neighborhoods and improving poorly maintained housing are two top priorities for Lansing’s citizens. Because the city has an aging housing stock, with 51% of its units built before 1960, a strong housing maintenance code, and the staff capacity needed for inspection and enforcement, will be needed. While many older neighborhoods are stable and attracting new residents, some have obsolete structures with limited market appeal and require costly renovation. These challenged neighborhoods have been designated as focus areas for the targeted use of housing improvement funds. In these areas, and to some extent in other neighborhoods across the city, some housing demolition will be required. Strategies for the future use of these properties—whether for infill construction or as open space use that benefits residents—will be needed, based on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood assessment.

**Population Loss and the Housing Crisis** – Broader regional and national factors are also having a negative impact on Lansing’s housing market. While the city’s population is expected to stabilize by 2020, it has declined 4% since 2000, and this decline is expected to continue in the short to mid term. As a result, the overall demand for housing is relatively weak, with vacancies increasing and housing values falling. These trends have been dramatically exacerbated by the recent economic recession and housing foreclosure crisis. The good news is that Lansing offers terrific value for each housing dollar spent, and the City is taking action, with the help of federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, to acquire, rehab where needed and re-sell vacant and foreclosed homes.

**Owner Occupancy** – The rate of homeownership was on the rise between 1990 and 2007, from 54.8% in 1990, to 57.7% in 2000, to an estimated 59.1% in 2008. Housing values were increasing, and homeownership was a secure way to invest. Homeownership declined to 54.3% in 2010, partially as a result of a worldwide recession, mortgage lending practices, and foreclosure. Rental conversions and renter occupancy became default uses of property to avert these foreclosures.

**Rental Occupancy** – This plan supports the expansion of rental housing in mixed use buildings along the City’s corridors for easier access to transit. These projects usually involve apartments, some with possible condo conversions over time, as well as owner occupied for-sale development. The availability of such rental units is an important factor in addressing housing and transit needs of lower income households and those who prefer to be more mobile and unencumbered by maintenance and debt. The realignment of the rental housing market is thus closely associated with the nodal development and transit orientation proposed by this Plan. Moreover, the high mobility in those entering the labor and housing markets differs from the stability usually desired in residential neighborhoods.
Opportunities

Household Demographics and Placemaking – Lansing has assets on which to build in retaining existing residents and attracting new ones. In line with national trends, the city has an increasing number of one- and two-person, non-traditional households. These households include students, young adults, young married couples without children, single parent families and empty nesters. In addition, Lansing’s population is aging, with 10% of its 2008 population over age 65 and an additional 23% representing the Baby Boom generation (between ages 45-64).

With its diversity, history, architecture, convenience and cultural, health care and educational institutions, Lansing has a competitive advantage over the typical suburban subdivision as a residential choice for these older and non-traditional households. Several neighborhoods in Lansing already offer the placemaking qualities that many of these households—especially the new economy knowledge workers—look for, including:

- An urban environment that provides convenient access to everyday needs by walking, cycling or using transit.
- A diverse, racially integrated community.
- A rich mix of retail, entertainment and cultural offerings.
- Ready access to outdoor activities that support an active lifestyle.

By working to overcome existing placemaking deficits (see Chapter 3. Land Use: Economic Development, Build Competitiveness) and expanding the range of higher-density housing choices, Lansing can take advantage of this competitive edge in stabilizing and growing its population. Lansing can also strengthen its appeal to all households, including families with children, by ensuring that the city is safe, clean and green and by working to improve quality and choice in K-12 education.

Walkable/Bikeable Neighborhoods – Lansing residents increasingly value walkable/bikeable neighborhoods where shopping, services, recreation and work can be accessed without driving. They have succeeded in advocating for the adoption of a complete streets ordinance and a non-motorized plan to guide its implementation. Now the City can adopt land use policies that encourage more compact, mixed-use patterns of development that locate a greater number of destinations within walking and cycling distance of one another. This development pattern will also support transit, encourage more active lifestyles and make Lansing a more sustainable city.

A stable or growing population and a range of higher-density housing options are important.

- More Places to Shop – Residents provide the buying power to support the kinds of retail and services—for example, grocery stores—that people want in or near their neighborhoods.
- Better Transit – More people living within walking/biking distance of transit routes helps to increase ridership and supports expanded and improved service.
- More Sustainable Regional Growth – Accommodating a larger percentage of the region’s growth in existing developed areas will result in less sprawl and its associated impacts.
- More Revenue to Support City Services – A growing population that drives demand for housing results in increased property values and more property tax revenue. More people living and working in Lansing will also mean more income tax revenue.
WHAT AND WHY EXAMPLES

POPULATION DECLINE AND NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION

Fact: Lansing’s population declined by 12% between 2000 and 2008, but is expected to stabilize over the next decade.

Why Does It Matter? A stable and growing population is needed to fill housing vacancies, maintain housing demand, support the range of goods and services residents want and generate the tax revenues needed to fund public schools and municipal services.

What Lansing Is Already Doing: The City is using federal assistance through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to target investment in neighborhoods that are distressed, but also have great potential for long-term success. The County Land Bank is collaborating in the acquisition, rehabilitation and resale of tax foreclosed properties. Each property is a neighborhood-scale placemaking opportunity.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND HOUSING OPTIONS

Fact: Aging Baby Boomers make up 23% of Lansing’s population, with seniors representing about 10%. Sixty-six percent of Lansing’s existing households are made up of one or two people. However, Lansing’s housing stock – sixty-five percent of which is single-family detached homes in neighborhoods of moderate to low density – may not meet the housing preferences of these groups.

Why Does It Matter? Lansing can capitalize on these trends to attract and retain residents by encouraging the development of housing options that meet the needs of students, young professionals, married couples without children, empty nesters and seniors. More high density housing choices, especially in mixed use centers served by transit, are needed to capitalize on changing demographics and to expand choices for families with children.

What Lansing Is Already Doing: Recent successful infill development projects, such as Printer’s Row and the Stadium District, have shown that Lansing is a competitive location for this type of housing.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: STRENGTHEN EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.

**Housing Reinvestment**

All neighborhoods—especially older neighborhoods—need continuous reinvestment to remain strong. While most owners, whether they are occupants or landlords, make these investments as a matter of course, others need the impetus of a strong code enforcement program and/or financial assistance with maintenance and repairs. The City can intervene where disinvestment has made inroads on neighborhood stability by working in collaboration with non-profit and neighborhood groups to develop plans for neighborhood improvement. These plans may need to address a range of issues that go beyond physical improvements: for example, building the capacity of neighborhood organizations, community policing, and/or programs for youth and the unemployed.

One key aspect to preserving neighborhoods is the preservation of the architecture that contributes to each neighborhood’s particular character. Lansing has a number of pre-World War II neighborhoods that have a distinct sense of place that is worthy of preservation. While individual homes and structures within these neighborhoods may not stand out as architectural gems, together these structures create a unified whole that contributes to the quality of the neighborhood. Policies and programs which encourage the preservation of the community’s architecture should be promoted, and investment in existing building stock encouraged.

**Housing Demand**

To encourage reinvestment in existing neighborhoods, Lansing will need to work to attract new residents and increase housing demand. As noted above (Priority Issues, Opportunities), the growth in non-traditional households who prefer the diversity and convenience of urban living is a trend Lansing can capitalize on in marketing the livability and placemaking assets of mixed-use districts and older, near-downtown neighborhoods. Lansing can also capitalize on another demographic trend—the aging of the Baby Boom generation—by pursuing development regulations and financial assistance programs that allow seniors to “age in place” by retrofitting homes to accommodate decreased mobility and/or adding an accessory dwelling unit to generate income or house a caregiver.

*Design Lansing* also recommends working with existing education and health care institutions, and State government, to encourage the creation of employer-assisted housing programs that offer incentives for the purchase of homes within walking/cycling distance of work. Local lenders can also be encouraged to consider offering location-efficient (or green) mortgages that recognize the household savings (and increased disposable income) made possible by not having to own a car to meet transportation needs. In addition, low-interest loans for urban pioneering/sweat equity programs might be considered to encourage home ownership and rehabilitation in targeted neighborhoods.

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**Strategies for Strengthening Existing Neighborhoods**

**Stable Neighborhoods**

- Encourage convenience retail and services within walking distance.
- Maintain streets, sidewalks and street lights.
- Consider traffic calming.
- Enforce maintenance codes.
- Support neighborhood organizations.

**Neighborhoods in Transition**

Strategies listed above, plus:

- Provide low-interest loan programs for maintenance and rehab.
- Restrict conversions to multi-family.
- Regularly inspect rental units; work with landlords to improve management.
- Provide technical assistance to neighborhood organizations.
- Provide community policing.

**Challenged Neighborhoods**

Strategies listed above, plus:

- Consider tax freeze/abatement on renovation/improvements.
- Consider acquisition of problem properties.
- Demolish deteriorated structures.
- Assemble sites for infill and/or green infrastructure.
- Improve streets, sidewalks and street lights where needed.
- Sponsor cleanup efforts.
Housing Demolition and Right Sizing

Deteriorated, vacant structures can start a wave of housing disinvestment and neighborhood erosion. As a result, demolition is also an essential tool in stabilizing existing neighborhoods. Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate properties carefully, considering such factors as rehab potential and feasibility, reuse potential, marketability and site conditions. Community input to these decisions is important, and should be considered in light of the evaluation of redevelopment potentials and priorities.

The reuse plan must evaluate where infill (or redevelopment) potential is strong. In these areas, relatively low-cost and low-maintenance, short-term holding strategies are appropriate. These could include, for example, low-mow native landscapes, tree planting (including trees for future transplantation) and temporary community gardens. In other instances, where redevelopment potential is limited or opportunities are presented to resolve longstanding green infrastructure issues, land can be set aside for new uses that make the city more sustainable and, ultimately, increase its competitiveness as an attractive place to live, work and invest. These long-term reuse strategies could include, for example, the creation of buffers between single-family neighborhoods and non-residential development, the expansion of parks or greenways, improved floodplain and stormwater management, urban agriculture or distributed energy production (geothermal, wind and solar). In both short- and long-term rightsizing projects, priority should be given to sites that are high visibility and for which funding is available and implementation partners can be identified.

Compatible Renovation and Infill

In order to strengthen existing neighborhoods, new investment in housing renovation and infill development must be compatible with the density, pattern and urban design character of what exists. As a result, Design Lansing recommends that the overall residential densities of existing single-family neighborhoods be maintained. For the most part, existing densities in the city’s pre-World War II neighborhoods are moderate (6-10 dwelling units per acre), although some projects in downtown and its edge area have been developed at higher densities. In contrast, the predominant existing residential density in Lansing’s post-World War II neighborhoods is lower (less than 6 dwelling units per acre); nevertheless, there are a number of multi-family housing developments at substantially higher densities. For the most part, transit routes have been extended to serve these higher-density housing areas located near the city’s edges. This is not a transit-efficient development pattern, however, when compared to the location of higher-density residential along major streets that provide a more direct link to downtown and other job centers (see Plan Recommendation: Expand Housing Choice, below).

Design Lansing also recommends that housing renovation and infill development complement the site design and architectural patterns that characterize existing neighborhoods. Achieving this compatibility requires an understanding of the design elements that give each neighborhood its special character. These include broader neighborhood patterns (street layout and block size), patterns that are repeated from one parcel to another (building height, setbacks and orientation) and the repeated use of similar design details (porches, window patterns and...
materials). To assist in this effort, Lansing neighborhoods have been grouped into three suburban and three urban residential patterns based on street pattern and block size, overall development density, building setbacks and parking placement, number of stories and roof type (see Chapter 8. Placemaking, Transect and Pattern Types). This information provides a starting point for developing guidelines and/or standards that will help to ensure that urban design and placemaking are given greater emphasis in future neighborhood infill projects.

Public Schools

Public school closures, the reuse of school sites and the design of new school facilities all impact neighborhood quality of life. Lansing residents would like surplus school sites located on residential streets within neighborhoods to continue to serve as neighborhood hubs of activity, for example, by accommodating charter schools, community centers or daycare facilities. In addition, for many neighborhoods, the open space and play facilities associated with school buildings serve critical park functions and would be very difficult to replace. Care should be taken to preserve these important recreational and open space resources, as well as potential off-street trail connections, in planning for school site reuse.

Where the majority of users will no longer travel to new and surplus school buildings by foot, it will be critical to ensure that site circulation systems provide adequate capacity for increased drop-off and pick-up traffic, while maintaining safe pedestrian access. As schools are consolidated to serve larger geographic areas, particular attention will need to be given to establishing safe crossings on higher traffic arterial streets as part of a Safe Routes to School program. As with other types of development, parking areas should be appropriately screened and designed to include the use of stormwater management approaches that minimize pervious surface area and retain and infiltrate rainfall on site (see Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure). In addition, the design of new school sites and buildings should consider a range of green development strategies - from energy conservation and the use of sustainable materials to potentials for incorporating community gardens.

The quality of Lansing as a place to live is directly linked to the ability of local educational opportunities, particularly public schools, to meet the educational needs of the community’s students. Conversely, for local schools to maintain financial and organizational stability, the neighborhoods in Lansing must be stable, rich places to live to attract families to the city and schools. The City of Lansing and the Lansing School District must be partners while each works to achieve their independent goals, strengthening the quality of life and educational opportunities available within the city.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: EXPAND HOUSING CHOICE.

To attract and retain residents, Lansing must capitalize on changing demographics\(^{10}\) by encouraging an expanded range of housing choices offered for rent and for sale. To appeal to students, young professionals, couples without children, empty nesters and seniors, these new housing choices should focus on higher residential densities (8 units and up per acre) located within easy walking and biking distance of shopping, entertainment, cultural activities, jobs, recreation and transit. Design Lansing recommends that these higher-density housing options be located primarily in existing mixed-use districts (downtown, Old Town and REO Town) and in areas now zoned for commercial use along major gateway streets and proposed for restructuring as community- and neighborhood-scale mixed-use centers. Additionally, higher density housing that is targeted toward mature residents should be encouraged to take advantage of excellent health care institutions along the Saginaw-Oakland corridor, East Michigan Avenue, and South Pennsylvania Avenue. This is the model for expanding higher-density housing choices that Lansing residents support as a top priority for the future (see Chapter 1. Land Use: Economic Development, Encourage Mixed Use).

This mixed-use neighborhood type is becoming increasingly familiar in Lansing, with higher-density residential units being developed on the upper stories of existing commercial buildings (for example, in downtown and Old Town), in new mixed-use projects (for example, the Stadium District), in the adaptive reuse of older industrial buildings (for example, Prudden Place) and in new near-downtown townhouse and condominium developments (for example, Printer’s Row).

The benefits of the mixed-use neighborhood approach are many (see Chapter 3. Land Use: Economic Development, What is mixed use?): for example, locating housing within walking distance of shops, services and jobs will allow residents to walk or bike to meet their daily needs, rather than relying on an automobile for short trips. This, in turn, reduces vehicle miles traveled, tailpipe emissions and carbon footprint, as well as the amount of household income that is devoted to automobile ownership. In addition, the location of higher-density housing in mixed-use centers can promote the distribution of affordable housing in smaller concentrations throughout the city. A mix of residential types, sizes and costs (mixed-income housing) should be encouraged. Mixed-use neighborhoods also encourage more compatible transitions in use intensity and building scale by encouraging higher densities in the core with lower densities and more residential uses as distance from the core increases.

Design Lansing also recommends locating higher-density housing on transit routes—whether as part of a mixed-use center or as transition between single-family neighborhoods and high volume traffic streets. This includes the gradual replacement of strip commercial development in some locations along major gateway streets with higher-density housing.\(^{11}\) By coordinating the location of transit and higher residential densities, Lansing will help to create a land use pattern that supports growing ridership and more efficient and cost-effective service.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: GREEN ALL NEIGHBORHOODS.

Some Lansing neighborhoods have special environmental assets—for example, a high percentage of tree canopy coverage, wetlands and/or proximity to river corridors and associated parks—but all Lansing neighborhoods can take steps to become greener and more sustainable. Design Lansing builds on the work already done to adopt the City’s complete streets ordinance, and the Non-Motorized Plan for its implementation, by recommending future land use strategies that promote walking, cycling and transit use. By helping to reduce the use of fossil fuels and the production of greenhouse gases, these strategies will help to make Lansing and its neighborhoods more sustainable. In addition, Design Lansing proposes the development of an expanded system of greenways, trails and on-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities that link neighborhoods and the city to a regional green infrastructure network.

Other recommended strategies for neighborhood greening—both in new development and retrofitting existing development—include:

- Establish and follow green development standards for efficiency in water and energy use, indoor air quality, sustainable materials and stormwater management.
- The protection of existing trees and the planting of new ones to expand the urban forest canopy.
- The use of native vegetation.
- Reducing impervious surfaces, promoting stormwater infiltration (rain gardens) and recapturing and reusing rainwater (rain barrels).
- Permitting the demolition of buildings in areas of the floodplain with the severest flooding conditions, areas of the floodway where the current is rapid, or to ameliorate manmade flooding conditions.
- Expanding backyard and community gardening.

Grocery Stores – The Retail Amenity Every Neighborhood Wants

Mixed-use districts and centers can create the market needed to support smaller food stores because they:

- Are located at a transit stop.
- Concentrate residents and employees within walking distance.
- Reduce the need for surface parking.

These smaller food stores can serve as 21st century neighborhood anchors, but incentives and assistance are likely to be needed. Examples include:

- Discounted land acquisition costs, lease rates and/or renovation assistance.
- The formation of food co-ops to provide membership fees and volunteer workers.
NEIGHBORHOODS: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Goal: Strengthen existing neighborhoods.

Older Neighborhoods.

Objective: 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.

Objective: Allow medium-density residential redevelopment on (and within walking distance of) high traffic streets served by transit; discourage rezoning for commercial use.

Objective: 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; and architectural features (see Chapter 8. Placemaking, Transect and Pattern Types).
- Determine which form-based characteristics are most important to compatibility and include them in zoning regulations and/or guidelines.

Objective: Support creative programs that reduce housing vacancies.

- Encourage neighborhood anchor institutions to cooperate in planning/implementing neighborhood improvements and to adopt employer-assisted housing programs.

Objective: Support policies that accommodate “aging in place,” including:

- Compact, mixed-use and walkable development.
- Transit-supportive land use patterns.
- Accessory dwelling units, where appropriate, to increase housing affordability.
- Retrofit funding assistance.
- Universal (or visitable) housing design.
Objective: Continue to target the use of neighborhood improvement funds (for housing acquisition, demolition, rehabilitation and infill) in established focus areas:

- Comstock.
- Prudden/East Village.
- Oak Park.
- Urbandale.
- Potter Walsh.
- Baker Donora.
- SW Lansing.

Objective: Explore right-sizing strategies for the temporary and permanent use of vacant lots/areas in collaboration with neighborhood residents. Examples include:

- Stormwater management.
- Flood mitigation.
- Community gardens.
- Pocket parks maintained by citizen groups as interim uses.

Objective: 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 and community gardening).

Objective: Continue to work on improving public school options for Lansing’s K-12 students.

Public School Sites

Objective: Encourage the Lansing School District to take steps to ensure that the new uses of surplus school buildings, and the location and design of new schools, are consistent with the master plan.

- Encourage the reuse of surplus public school buildings located within neighborhoods on residential streets for alternative education and/or community services.
- Encourage the reuse 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 and feasible.
- Encourage green development approaches.
- Encourage site design that ensures safe and appropriate access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
**Goal: Expand housing choice.**

**Mixed-Use Neighborhoods**

**Objective:** Provide an expanded choice of neighborhood and housing types to make Lansing a more competitive housing location for empty nesters, seniors, students and young professionals.

**Objective:** Encourage mixed-use development that includes medium and higher-density rental and owner-occupied housing (see also Chapter 3. Land Use: Economic Development, Encourage Mixed Use):

- In downtown, Old Town and REO Town and along the urban reach of the Grand River.
- In proposed community and neighborhood mixed-use centers.
- Along urban connectors (urban mixed-use corridors).

**Objective:** Encourage the development of housing serving a mix of incomes, including affordable housing.

**Objective:** Evaluate the benefits of providing for live-work units for artists, artisans and entrepreneurs. Incorporate opportunities for including artists and other creative enterprises in affordable housing plans.

**Goal: Green all neighborhoods.** (See also Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure, Pursue Green Leadership.)

**Objective:** Encourage green practices in new development, and in retrofitting existing development.

**Objective:** Encourage the development of model green neighborhoods that include:

- Clustered housing.
- Walkability.
- Open space.
- Links to recreation.
- Proximity to transit.
- Low-impact site design.
- Building design that follows green development practices.
Objective: Encourage green retrofits in existing neighborhoods. Examples include:

- Energy efficiency improvements.
- Tree planting.
- Rain gardens.
- Native landscapes.
- Backyard and community gardening.
1. The placemaking assets of older neighborhoods include: a street pattern made up of small, connected blocks; sidewalks and street trees to provide an appealing pedestrian environment; structures framing and facing the street with parking located to the side or rear; and attractive architecture with entries and windows overlooking the street.

2. Right-sizing is the use of vacant land to create neighborhood and community benefits: for example, nature landscapes/rain gardens, community gardens, tree nurseries or mini-parks.

3. Low-impact stormwater management strategies include, for example, reducing impervious surface area, using rain barrels to collect and reuse rainwater, incorporating rain gardens and native vegetation.

4. In 2008, one- and two-person households were estimated to represent almost 66% of all Lansing households.

5. These include existing mixed-use districts (downtown, Old Town and REO Town) and near-downtown neighborhoods.

6. Sixty-five percent of Lansing’s existing housing stock is single-family detached.

7. Complete streets are designed, maintained and operated to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users of all ages and abilities.

8. Re-imagining a More Sustainable Cleveland: City-wide Strategies for the Reuse of Vacant Land, Cleveland Land Lab at the Cleveland Urban Design Studio, Kent State University, 2008.

9. Given the policies for future land use articulated in Design Lansing.

10. An increase in one- and two-person households and the aging of the Baby Boom generation.

11. Other potential uses for these connector street frontages (also known as urban mixed-use corridors) include live-work units, office, research, light industrial and temporary green space.

12. See also Chapter 5. Green Infrastructure.
Chapter 5
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of protected natural areas, conservation lands and parks that are planned and managed for their natural resource values and the associated benefits they provide to people and their communities. Design Lansing addresses these green infrastructure components, as well as stormwater systems, the urban forest, farmers’ markets and community gardens, and sustainable design in built facilities. Enhancing the city’s green infrastructure system will require collaboration within the city and across the region to improve quality of life, increase the city’s competitiveness in attracting and retaining residents and investment, and promote a sense of place.

Three goals will guide efforts to enhance the city’s green infrastructure system.

Support healthy natural systems. Lansing will support healthy natural systems, including both land and water resources, to protect the quality of the environment and, in turn, make the city a healthier, safer and more enjoyable place for people and business. These natural systems will provide opportunities for recreation, education and stewardship, as well as wildlife habitat.

Encourage healthy lifestyles. The city’s green infrastructure will encourage healthier lifestyles for Lansing’s residents. Parks, trails and natural areas will provide opportunities for physical activity, as well as restorative psychological benefits. Community gardens will provide low-cost, fresh foods and focal points for community building. Ready access to locally grown food will allow residents to improve their diets and reduce the use of fossil fuels for shipping and shopping.

Pursue green leadership. The City of Lansing (City) will become a sustainability leader by building on its past accomplishments and encouraging green development and greenhouse gas reduction.
PRIORITY ISSUES

The public involvement process identified a number of key issues that became the basis for plan recommendations.

Preservation and Enhancement of Parks

Lansing residents value their park system and place a very high priority on its preservation and enhancement. A 2009 survey, conducted as part of the update to the City’s parks and recreation master plan, identified four top priorities for facility improvements: trails, natural areas, public gardens and nature centers. The top priority for recreation programming was special events and festivals. Design Lansing participants also identified the park system as their top priority for preservation and suggested an expanded trail system and on-street bicycle and pedestrian improvements to connect the City’s parks.

Protection of Natural Areas

As noted above, the protection of natural areas is a high priority for Lansing residents. The natural area complex that includes Crego Park, Fenner Nature Center, Hawk Island Park, Shubel Park, Potter Park and Mount Hope Cemetery is one of the region’s largest, even though it is located in the heart of the urbanized area. This protected area along the Red Cedar River and Sycamore Creek has significant environmental value; nevertheless, there are other areas of ecological importance in Lansing that merit protection and restoration, including the Grand River corridor and its tributaries, wetlands and woodlands. In addition, connections between natural areas are often missing or highly fragmented.

The creation of a connected network of green spaces requires collaboration at the local and regional levels. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) has initiated such a collaborative effort by identifying green infrastructure conservation priorities and linkages. The City’s existing river-related parks and trails will play an important role in that regional network. New greenway linkages and enhanced efforts to protect ecologically valuable areas within the city can help to expand the green infrastructure system and bring its environmental, social and economic benefits to more Lansing neighborhoods.

The River Trail

The River Trail is the green infrastructure asset that Lansing residents rank second in importance to their system of parks. Today, the River Trail system extends from Moores Park to Old Town along the Grand River, along the Red Cedar River to the east and Sycamore Creek to the south. Design Lansing participants gave high priority to the extension of the trail along the Grand River north to Tecumseh Park and east to Frances Park, as well as improving the visibility and recreational use potential of the river itself.

Local Food

Lansing residents value the downtown City Market and the farmers’ markets and community gardens located throughout the city. Lansing also has a local food systems workgroup building support for local and regional sustainable practice growers and food producers, and improved access to healthy food for all residents.
**Green Development**

Lansing has a number of noteworthy green buildings (e.g., the Christman Building on North Capitol Avenue) and low-impact development stormwater management projects (e.g., the rain gardens on East Michigan Avenue). These green development efforts can be expanded through educational programs and by creating sustainability incentives for new construction and the retrofitting of existing development.

**WHAT AND WHY EXAMPLES**

**GREEN ASSETS**

**Fact:** There are a number of significant high-value natural resource areas in Lansing, most notably the area south and east of the confluence of the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers.

**Why Does It Matter?** In addition to protecting the environment, the preservation and connection of natural areas provides close-to-home recreational and education experiences for Lansing residents, and links to regional trail systems, to promote healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship.

**What Lansing Is Already Doing:** The TCRPC is developing a green infrastructure plan to encourage natural resource conservation in balance with economic development and a healthy environment.

**WATER QUALITY**

**Fact:** The water quality in the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers has steadily improved over the past half century, but continuing efforts are needed to better manage stormwater and reduce flood risks.

**Why Does It Matter?** Reducing flooding and improving water quality helps make Lansing neighborhoods safer and more stable.

**What Lansing Is Already Doing:** Recent street improvement projects have incorporated low impact development (LID) strategies (including rain gardens) to pre-treat stormwater before it enters the river system. The City and County are also working to make city and regional stormwater management improvements and to develop a revised stormwater ordinance that encourages LID. Since 1992 Lansing has worked to separate storm and sanitary sewers through the CSO program, improving the water quality of local rivers by reducing the overflow of sewage into the rivers during storm events.

**GREEN BUSINESS**

**Fact:** As of early 2011, downtown Lansing is home to the only triple LEED® -certified building in the world, and General Motors’ Lansing Delta Plant is the first assembly plant to reach the LEED® gold standard.

**Why Does It Matter?** Lansing is already well-positioned to take a leadership role in green business and the New Economy.

**What Lansing Is Already Doing:** The “Go Green, Go Lansing” initiative has enlisted partners and generated momentum, and LEED® development is becoming the standard for economic development projects. The City has launched an Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund for businesses that can implement innovative renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. The Lansing Board of Water and Light operates a 432-panal solar array – the largest in Michigan, and purchases methane gas produced in Granger landfills.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT HEALTHY NATURAL SYSTEMS.

Protecting and enhancing natural systems will provide environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. Water quality can be improved and flood risk reduced by taking steps to better manage rainwater where it falls and restoring 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 improvement of air quality and the reduction of the urban heat island effect to reduce energy costs for cooling. Parks, trails and natural areas that provide opportunities for recreational contact with nature also improve psychological health and can add significantly to a sense of place.

A Connected Green Infrastructure System

As part of the Design Lansing process, a natural systems analysis (see figure 5-1) was prepared to determine where the city’s most environmentally significant areas are located and how well they are connected. This analysis examined watercourses, wetlands and woodlands across the city and identified areas appropriate for preservation, conservation or restoration.

- **Preservation** – Areas of higher environmental quality that should be protected allowing little or no future development. Preservation areas include the most sensitive ecosystems, such as wetlands or woodlands that provide habitat to a diverse range of species.
- **Conservation** – Areas with sensitive environmental features that are also desirable from a development standpoint. Development approaches that minimize ecological impacts and preserve critical resources as a community asset should be used in these areas. Conservation design is such an approach; it concentrates development in denser clusters on a smaller portion of the site, leaving sensitive environmental areas undisturbed. Often, developers using a conservation design approach are allowed to develop more units/density than otherwise permitted to provide an incentive for the protection of important natural resources.
- **Restoration** – Areas with limited or impacted ecological value that are candidates for restoration activities. Restoration can include re-opening a stream channeled into an underground pipe stream (daylighting), invasive species management, replanting efforts, soil remediation or brownfield cleanup. The restoration of degraded sites often offers opportunities to reincorporate green space into developed areas.

Natural Resource Areas

Protecting and conserving natural resource areas, such as wetlands and woodlands, is critical in maintaining environmental quality and enhancing the livability of a community. This is particularly important in urban areas that have often lost the majority of their natural resource assets. These natural resource areas provide important ecological services that also have economic value, including:
- Core habitat areas for plants and animals, including rare or endangered species, pollinators and seed banks.
- Stormwater infiltration and water quality protection.
- Air quality filtering.
- Natural areas for recreation and learning.
- Access to nature close to home.

As described above, Lansing’s natural systems were evaluated to identify significant environmental resources that provide some or all of these benefits. In some cases, these areas are dedicated park space and already protected. In other cases, they are lands in public ownership or private property. (See sidebar for list of natural resource areas.)

**Figure 5-1: Potential Natural Resource Areas**

**Preservation Areas** – Undeveloped lands with higher quality woodland or wetland vegetation that contain larger areas of core habitat. These may include sensitive, but unprotected, sites, as well as protected sites (i.e., public parks).

1. Sycamore Delta Natural Area (includes Fenner Arb., Scott Woods, Crego and Schubel Parks)
2. Willoughby Park Natural Area
3. Wexford Park Natural Area
4. Fine Park Natural Area
5. Kimberly Park Natural Area

**Conservation Areas** – Sites with a mixture of development and significant woodland or wetland vegetation. Future development should be planned to minimize the disturbance of and impacts on natural features.

6. Techumseh Park Natural Area
7. Forest View Natural Area
8. Wood Creek Natural Area
9. Davis Park Natural Area
10. Marscot Natural Area

**Restoration Areas** – Sites that have strong restoration potential due to proximity to other natural resource areas and/or large undeveloped parcels.

11. Red Cedar/Urbandale Natural Area
12. Coachlight Natural Area
13. Washington-MLK Natural Area
14. East Airport Natural Area

Note that many of these natural areas are named after nearby parks, but the extent of the natural area may include areas beyond the park.
**Greenway Links**

A critical factor in the health of natural systems is how well connected the green infrastructure network is. *Design Lansing* identifies a number of existing and potential open space corridors within the city that connect proposed preservation, conservation and restoration areas together. These greenway links are intended primarily to benefit natural systems, but they may also include trails, interpretative elements or other recreational amenities.

Figure 5-2 identifies primary and secondary greenway links. Primary links connect environmentally significant areas and are coupled with trails and opportunities for expanded recreational use (see sidebar). Secondary greenway links include other opportunities to create habitat connections and might also include trails in the future. They include smaller creek and/or underground drain corridors with restoration potential, rail corridors and vacant properties with natural resource value cutting through developed areas. Secondary links also include on-street connections that could incorporate future green infrastructure improvements, such as native streetscaping, bioswales or other stormwater infiltration strategies and non-motorized improvements.

**Primary Greenway Links**

1. **Grand River Greenway** – A greenway along the Grand River extending the existing River Trail to Tecumseh Park and Frances Park.
2. **Central Rail Greenway** – Follows an old rail line from the riverfront near REO Town southwest toward the Logan Center area.
3. **Red Cedar Greenway** (Existing) – Connects the Sycamore Creek area (Crego Park) northeast toward Red Cedar Park.
4. **Sycamore Creek Greenway** (Existing) – Connects the Crego Park area southward along Sycamore Creek; extensions are possible from Jolly Road to the south and east following the stream tributaries.
5. **Utility Corridor Greenway** – A cross-city greenway connection and trail linkage in the Consumer’s Energy right-of-way.

**Secondary Greenway Links**

6. **Old Rail Greenway** – Links downtown north to Old Town and then northeast beyond Lansing to a regional trail system.
7. **Groesbeck Greenway** – Connects East Michigan Avenue near Sparrow Hospital northeast through the Lansing Public School properties, and then north through Marshall Park and Groesbeck Golf Course.
8. **Reynolds Greenway** – Follows a stream channel to connect Tecumseh Park and the Grand River greenway north across North Grand River Avenue to follow the edge of the airport.

![Figure 5-2: Potential Primary and Secondary Greenways](image-url)
Potential Natural System Implementation Approaches

One important consideration in establishing natural resource areas and greenways is how best to work with private property owners to protect them. Potential approaches include land or easement acquisition, incentive programs and/or development regulations.

**Acquisition** approaches include the purchase (or donation) of land, easements or other development rights that protect natural resources. Some examples include:

- **Fee simple acquisition.** High value natural areas or corridors can be purchased outright by public entities or conservation organizations to ensure permanent protection.
- **Conservation easements.** Conservation easements limit or restrict the use of property to protect natural resource values. The purchase of development rights is one example. The development rights can be held by the City or, as is often the case, a conservation organization.
- **Public access easements.** Conservation easements do not necessarily allow for public access to, or recreational use of, an area; a public access easement may also be necessary.

**Incentive** programs to encourage the voluntary protection and/or improved management of important natural areas can include:

- Education on the value of the resource and best management practices, as well as illustrated guidelines.
- Technical assistance in developing conservation plans.
- Tax incentives for desired improvements such as riparian buffers or the use of bioswales instead of curb and gutter.
- Density bonuses for the use of conservation design approaches.
- Project approval fast tracking.
- Recognition programs.

**Regulatory** approaches can also be used to require natural resource protection. Examples include:

- Landscape ordinances requiring the protection and/or replacement of existing trees.
- Riparian, wetland or other natural resource buffer requirements that define minimum development setbacks and landscape requirements.
- Required financial contributions to mitigation banks from developers disturbing a natural resource; these funds are used to protect or improve other natural areas.
- State and federal environmental regulations (i.e., for erosion control or water quality protection and improvement).

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Secondary Greenway Links (cont.)

9. **River Island Greenway** – Connects St. Joseph Park north through the vacant Verlinden property, through West Side and Dunnebacke Parks, and north to the Grand River greenway.

10. **Hillard-Holmes Greenway** – Restores portions of a stream channel extending from Poxson Park west to Everett High School and south through Cavanaugh Park, terminating near Chisholm Hills Golf Course south of I-94.

11. **Southside Greenway** – Connects McKinch Park and the Utility Corridor Greenway (primary greenway link #5 above) north along a drainage channel to Reo Elementary, Pleasant View Elementary and beyond to Holly Park and the Central Rail Greenway (greenway link #2 above).

12. **West Town Greenway** – Connects from the Utility Corridor Greenway south through undeveloped parcels in the southwest corner of Lansing.

13. **Mud Lake Greenway** – Connects the intersection of the Utility Corridor Greenway and Sycamore Creek (Aurelius Road between Jolly Road and Miller Road) along a stream channel to the southwest and under I-94.

14. **Urbandale Greenway** – Connects the Potter/Crego Park area northwest through the Urbandale neighborhood along a rail corridor.

15. **Forest View Greenway** – Connects the Sycamore Creek Greenway into and through the Forest View conservation area with a possible connection to the SmartZone and Michigan State University.
Low Impact Development
Stormwater Techniques

Re-use of Rainwater – Capturing roof runoff in rain barrels and cisterns allows it to be used for lawn and garden irrigation, reduces peak flows during storms and provides for infiltration into the soil in dry weather.

Green Roofs – A modern variant on sod roofs, green roofs capture a percentage of rainwater and replace some of the functions of the vegetation buildings displace.

Disconnection of Roof Drains – Disconnecting downspouts from sewers and directing their discharge to rain gardens, dry wells or vegetated swales reconnects rainwater with native soil (for infiltration) and vegetation (for absorption).

Surface Drainage – Pitching the drainage of driveways, sidewalks and parking lots into adjacent vegetated soil (and not into storm sewers) also increases infiltration and absorption.

Infiltration Basins – Carefully engineered depressions in the landscape (for example, rain gardens, dry wells and subsurface recharge beds) collect runoff from roofs and pavement and allow it to percolate into the soil.

Tree Plantings – Tree branches and foliage intercept a portion of rainwater; tree roots also absorb rainwater.

Reduction in Impervious Surfaces – Reconfiguring driveways, parking lots and streets to reduce unnecessary pavement allows more vegetated soil and more rainwater infiltration.

Porous Pavement – Special types of asphalt, concrete, masonry and other materials have open pores that detain runoff, filter pollutants and allow water to infiltrate the underlying soil.

Vegetated Swales – Landscaped drainage channels (as an alternative to pipes) slow runoff, remove pollutants and infiltrate water.

River Systems

Lansing’s rivers are the central component of the green infrastructure network described above. The Grand River and its tributaries (including the Red Cedar River and Sycamore Creek) provide significant habitat and environmental benefits, but they are also an important recreation amenity and an economic development asset.

Visibility and Access – The Grand River runs directly through downtown Lansing, yet many people are not aware the river exists. In large part, this is due to the limited visibility of the river, particularly from bridges and riverfront properties where development has blocked river access. Lansing can enhance downtown’s image and take better advantage of its existing riverfront parks and the River Trail, especially on the urban reach of the Grand River (Old Town to Reo Town). This can be achieved by encouraging a land use transition from industrial to open space and mixed use with redevelopment that maintains public access to and along the river. New buildings should provide active ground floor uses, and windows and entries facing the River Trail.

Recreational Use – The Grand River offers great potential for recreational boating and fishing. Grand River Park provides boat access upstream of Moores Park Dam adjacent to the GM riverfront site; however, there is limited access to the river downstream. Additional opportunities for recreational use of the river—for example, boat launch sites, short-term docking, kayak and canoe put-in/take-out sites and fishing access—could enhance its value to residents and create an urban tourism destination.

Water Quality and Flood Control – The quality and quantity of stormwater runoff entering the Grand River and its tributaries influence not only its recreational (and habitat) value, but also the frequency and severity of flooding. Managing stormwater throughout the city in ways that increase infiltration (by reducing impervious surface area and providing landscaped areas to intercept, store and filter rain water close to its source) will reduce the quantity of runoff reaching the river system. Infiltration will also improve water quality by allowing pollutants, sediment and excess nutrients to be filtered out of the water before entering stormwater pipes and waterways.

Restoring riverbanks and riparian buffers will further protect water quality. Especially in Lansing’s downtown area, riverbanks are often in poor condition—including concrete and rubble embankments or floodwalls, sparse or invasive vegetation and eroding soil—and do not function adequately to protect water quality. Naturalizing banks and reestablishing native vegetation would help to slow water entering the river, capture sediment and pollutants, and provide shade to lower water temperatures, all of which can benefit water quality and habitat.

Riparian buffers adjacent to river and stream channels extend beyond the banks to provide additional water quality protection. Typically, 100 feet of natural land cover is desirable on both sides of a river or stream. Although this can be difficult to achieve in developed urban areas, efforts should be made to increase buffer widths as much as possible. Where possible, river and stream channels should be reconnected to naturalized floodplain areas. Wetlands and other stormwater systems located adjacent to the river and its tributaries can capture and infiltrate water to limit peak flows and reduce downstream flooding.

Adapted from Stormwater magazine, July/August 2001.
The City can develop riparian buffer and restoration guidelines that illustrate the setbacks and improvements that are desired within riparian areas when redevelopment occurs. These guidelines could also be incorporated into a river district overlay zone to help ensure their implementation.

Because flooding is a regional issue, collaboration will be needed throughout the watershed to reduce runoff volumes reaching streams and rivers (see LID strategies) and to explore opportunities for increasing flood water storage. The City’s 2010 Hazard Mitigation Plan lists a number of possible flood mitigation projects within Lansing’s boundaries (structural improvements, property protection, preventive measures and risk assessment/risk communication) which are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program funding. Since 2005, the City has obtained $2.8 million to purchase and demolish 47 homes in the most vulnerable parts of the floodplain. This program is entirely voluntary and provides assistance in purchasing and improving a newly acquired home in the City. Lansing will continue to address existing flooding by acquiring residential property (and demolishing residential structures) located within the floodway and exploring the feasibility of flood proofing existing housing located outside the floodway, but within the 100-year floodplain. The City will discourage public investments in low-income housing located within the floodplain, however.

Figure 5-3: Riparian Buffer Guidelines, Adapted from Green Grand Rapids’ River Corridor Guidelines
The Urban Forest

The urban forest is a significant green infrastructure asset that affects the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the city. Environmentally, trees reduce stormwater runoff, provide habitat, moderate climate and absorb CO₂ to protect air quality. From a quality of life perspective, trees provide shade for comfort, enhance visual quality and offer psychological benefits. Economically, trees can reduce heating/cooling costs for adjacent buildings, increase property values and reduce stormwater infrastructure costs.

The urban forest includes all trees, both public and private, in the city. Public trees are those planted and managed by the City including those in park areas and along public rights-of-way. Private trees are those located on private property; their planting and management can be influenced through the landscaping and maintenance standards included in City codes. For example, landscaping ordinances can be revised to require tree protection and replacement, as well as new tree plantings for screening, buffering and shade. It will be especially important to define improved landscaping requirements for parking lots.

Many communities are successfully protecting and expanding urban tree cover by preparing and adopting an urban forest management plan. This management plan can establish canopy cover targets across the city or in designated areas. It can also identify specific policies, management approaches and funding strategies. The City can also lead by example in protecting and expanding Lansing’s tree canopy. For example, the costs of tree planting can be leveraged in utility and roadway construction/re-construction projects. Street design standards can also be updated to require street tree planting and to adopt best management practices for urban street trees.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Green infrastructure has a critical role to play in encouraging a healthy, active and engaged citizenry. Parks and off-street trails, especially in combination with walkable, bikeable streets, provide recreational opportunities that promote physical activity to improve health. A system of off-street trails and on-street non-motorized facilities that link parks together also contributes 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 of fresh food, they reduce fossil fuel use for food transportation. In addition, they provide opportunities for local entrepreneurship and capture food expenditures in the local economy. Finally, community gardens offer opportunities for social interaction, collaboration, exercise and recreation.

River Trail System Expansion and Improvement

Lansing has a much cherished River Trail that connects major destinations along the Grand River and its tributaries and is a significant recreational and non-motorized transportation asset for the city. The River Trail extends from the Turner Dodge House in Old Town into downtown, continuing west to Moores Park. Just south of downtown in the Riverpoint area, the trail branches east along the Red Cedar River. Another trail segment continues south along Sycamore Creek.

Design Lansing illustrates how the existing River Trail can become the heart of a city-wide and regional system by capitalizing on potential greenway and trail links along tributary stream, rail and utility corridors (see Greenway Links, above). In addition, the plan recommends extending the River Trail to connect from Moores Park southwest to and beyond Frances Park and from Old Town northwest to Tecumseh Park. Possibilities for trail alignments on both sides of the river should be explored with a few exceptions including the Lansing Board of Water and Light Eckert site, along Moores Park Drive between Cambridge Road and Riverside Park and along the north bank of the Grand River between Waverly Road and Tecumseh Park. It will also be important to ensure that plans for the reconstruction of vehicular bridges allow for lower level trail alignments to eliminate the need for the trail to cross streets at grade.

When completed the River Trail system will run from city border to city border along the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers, as well as the Sycamore Creek. This accomplishment, while significant, is only the start of building a regional trail system that links Lansing to its neighboring communities. As an example, cooperation with communities along the Red Cedar, as well as with MSU, has resulted in a seamless connection between the campus and downtown. Such cooperation should continue to build with other adjacent and regional communities to connect their growing systems with Lansing’s River Trail.
The future extension and improvement of the River Trail could be assisted by the preparation of design guidelines illustrating trail objectives for the more urban and more natural reaches of the river. These guidelines would show riverfront landowners and developers how new trail segments could be aligned and how they would look. For existing trail segments, the guidelines could illustrate how the relationship between buildings and the trail could be improved through retrofitting or redevelopment. The guidelines could also highlight important bank restoration or other enhancement options, identify opportunities for expanding access to the water for boating and fishing, and define appropriate trail elevations to minimize seasonal closures due to flooding. In addition, a consistent set of design parameters for trail widths, slopes and paving materials (that accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists) should be established. Wayfinding and interpretive signs should also be designed to a consistent standard, and site furnishings selected, to ensure design continuity.
As noted above (see Priority Issues), the visibility of the River Trail—and the river, itself—should be improved by identifying key view corridors (for example, street ends and bridges) and taking steps to ensure that buildings, open spaces and vegetation are located to frame and enhance these views. In some cases, it will be necessary to clear or thin existing vegetation to provide better views of the river. Opportunities to provide additional trail access points should also be explored, and all trailheads should be designed to ensure that they are easily identifiable, using well-designed signs and appropriate entry landscaping.

**Park System Preservation and Enhancement**

The recently updated *City of Lansing Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010 - 2015* describes the goals, objectives, actions and short-term projects that will ensure continued support for and enhancement of the park system. The plan reinforces many *Design Lansing* recommendations. Examples include:

- **Recreation as an Economic Development Tool** – The parks plan proposes collaborating with the Lansing Economic Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce and the Planning and Neighborhood Development Department to coordinate park and economic development efforts. Three focus areas for parks and recreation action are recommended: riverfront development, downtown development, and special events and programs.

- **Systematic and Effective Maintenance** – The parks plan recommends the use of low-maintenance native landscapes where appropriate and increasing the naturalized (riparian) buffer along river edges. In addition, the plan calls for the preparation of a tree inventory as the first step in developing an urban forest management plan. These efforts can help to showcase green strategies as part of a larger community education program on sustainable practices.

- **Environmental Stewardship** – The plan also recognizes potentials to implement low-impact development stormwater management strategies at the site scale (e.g., permeable paving and/or infiltration rain gardens in and adjacent to parking lots), as well as opportunities to combine public open space and larger scale wetland creation and stormwater retention facilities.

- **Preservation of Natural Resource Areas** – The parks plan gives acquisition priority to lands adjacent to existing park properties with significant natural features consistent with the recommendations of the *Design Lansing* green infrastructure framework.

- **Projects** – The parks plan recommends regional collaboration in the continued development of trails within the city. Of the eleven projects recommended for short-term implementation, three relate to the River Trail. The plan also recommends continued study of opportunities to expand community gardening (see Local Food, below).

**Local Food**

The local food movement has been growing exponentially across the country as people become increasingly aware of and concerned about the sources, safety, environmental impacts and social equity of food production, distribution and accessibility. In response, a variety of local food strategies are gaining popularity,
including community gardens, farmers’ markets, food co-ops, community supported agriculture (CSA) and the development of food system infrastructure at the local and regional scale.

Lansing has a growing number of public community gardens and local farmers’ markets sponsored by, and serving, local residents. The locations of these facilities are geographically distributed throughout the community, with concentrations on the eastside and southwest area of the community. Support for local food initiatives is continuing to grow as their environmental, economic and social benefits are increasingly recognized. Environmental benefits include, for example, maintaining green space and permeable surfaces in community gardens, encouraging stewardship by educating citizens about the ecosystems that support food production and encouraging composting. Economic benefits include an increase in food security, the capture of food expenditures in the local economy, and providing jobs and income to local food entrepreneurs. Social benefits include bringing nature into the city, improving the health of city residents, strengthening neighborhood cohesion and pride through cooperative gardening activities and offering opportunities for youth involvement that educate and empower. As a result, Design Lansing recommends continued support for local food production and improved access to fresh, healthy foods for residents of all incomes in all parts of the city.

The Lansing area has a food systems workgroup exploring collaborative strategies for ensuring that “healthy, affordable, green and fair food” is available to all Lansing residents. They advocate a comprehensive food planning process at the local and regional levels that will:

- Strengthen the local and regional economy.
- Improve the health of the region’s residents.
- Be ecologically sustainable.
- Be equitable and just.
- Preserve and sustain diverse traditional food cultures of ethnic minority communities.
- Develop supportive local, regional and state legislation to promote the development of a strong local and regional food systems infrastructure.

Food system infrastructure refers to the full spectrum of farmers, businesses, individuals and organizations that produce, process, distribute and retail food - the supply chain from the farm to the dinner table. The goal of the local food movement is to shorten this supply chain so that the producer and the consumer are closer together in terms of physical location, have a shared investment in the community and harvest the benefits of strong economic connections to one another.

To date Lansing residents have provided significant support for the direct-to-consumer end of the supply chain through the production and distribution of food at the neighborhood level (e.g., community gardens) and their patronage of local farmers’ markets. The next challenge is to build the food system infrastructure for a higher level of the supply chain - the small scale entrepreneurs who produce, process and distribute local food to local institutions, such as schools and hospitals, as well as to local food stores and restaurants.
Building a local and regional food system infrastructure is an effort that is much broader than community planning. Nevertheless, one key strategy that planning and development policies can address is support for the creation of food business districts, or centers, within the community. A food center is an area in which farmers’ markets, smaller-scale food processors and wholesalers, retailers, restaurants and other related businesses can co-locate to promote food business growth by more effectively attracting buyers and spurring mutually supportive entrepreneurial interaction. Eastern Market in Detroit is one example.

*Design Lansing* recommends that the City support the development of mixed-use centers and districts at a variety of scales and locations (see Chapter 3: Economic Development). A range of uses appropriate to the scale and surroundings of each mixed-use center and district is recommended at the regional, community and neighborhood scales. While no specific location is designated as a future food center, they may most appropriately be located in regional or community scale centers and districts. Specific zoning and land uses policies related to food centers will need to be developed, considering, among other issues, how food processing, wholesaling and distribution facilities should be designed and located to fit appropriately.

While the City can support and participate in continued food system planning, it can also consider more direct actions that facilitate expanded local food production and sales. These include, for example:

- Revisions to existing policies and codes to permit community gardens in the majority of zoning classifications and to eliminate nuisance code barriers to gardening (e.g., limited plant heights and no composting).
- Continued collaboration with community groups to provide community garden sites in parks.
- Encouraging community gardens on school and church sites.
- Working with the Ingham County Land Bank to define and adopt policies for community gardens as mid- and long-term uses on tax foreclosed properties.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: PURSUE GREEN LEADERSHIP.

Lansing has a number of green infrastructure successes to its credit: the park system, the River Trail, innovative stormwater projects and the complete streets ordinance. As Michigan’s capital city, Lansing has the potential to become a sustainability leader for cities throughout the state. To do this, Lansing not only needs to implement green infrastructure improvements and programs across the city, it also needs to present its “green story” more effectively to residents and outsiders.

Green Accomplishments

Lansing has many green accomplishments to celebrate - from regional wellhead protection and stormwater managements programs to the addition of hybrid buses to the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) fleet and from “green street” rain gardens to the state’s largest array of solar panels at the Lansing Board of Water and Light.

Many communities across the country have developed sustainability tracking programs that monitor progress and provide a venue for showcasing successes and accomplishments on a yearly basis. Such programs can also play a critical role in coordinating multiple, often interrelated sustainability initiatives that may be occurring throughout the city.

One example is the Minneapolis GreenPrint program. Now in its fifth year, GreenPrint tracks a number of environmental and sustainability indicators across a broad spectrum of topics. These indicators include, for example, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, bikeway miles, green jobs, permeable surface area, tree canopy coverage and waste reduction/recycling. The yearly reports provide trend information, summarize major accomplishments for the past year and highlight existing issues or opportunities that are priority items for the following year.

Green Development

The case for green development practices is growing every day. Economically, green buildings provide long-term cost savings to building operators. At the same time, green buildings provide more hospitable workplaces for people, which has been shown to increase worker productivity, generating further economic benefits. In addition, the environmental benefits provided by green buildings and site development (reduced energy consumption, reduced water use and reduced stormwater runoff) can have a further payback to municipalities by reducing overall infrastructure and service costs. For example, if every development were to manage all of the rainwater falling onto the property on site, municipal stormwater systems could be scaled back in size and cost. Similarly, water reuse and recycling lessen demand on water treatment facilities, minimizing the need to expand water treatment systems.

Green development includes site selection and site and building design principles that embrace the following ideas:
Site selection should avoid sensitive environmental areas (wetland, floodplains and wooded slopes) and the unneeded development of green space; it should promote transit use and non-motorized transportation.

Site design should manage rainfall to infiltrate, filter, store, reuse and evaporate runoff as close to its source as possible and incorporate green amenities (habitat and food production).

Building and site design should improve energy efficiency and allow for on-site energy generation, including passive solar design elements.

Building and site design should incorporate reused, recycled or renewable materials, as well as low-toxicity, low-life-cycle cost materials.

Building and site design should improve water efficiency by reducing consumption (i.e., waterless toilets and efficient irrigation) and providing for water capture and reuse (greywater recycling and stormwater management).

Building design should improve indoor environmental quality including clean air and access to natural light.

Lansing has a number of exemplary green buildings and infrastructure projects, but more need to be encouraged. This can be done in a number of ways: through educational outreach materials and programs; by ensuring that all City building and infrastructure projects lead by example; by providing green incentives in the form of density bonuses, fast-track project review and/or tax credits; and funding support.

Green development in new construction and redevelopment projects should be complemented by efforts to encourage green design in existing neighborhoods and districts by retrofitting over time (see also Chapter 4. Land Use: Neighborhoods, Green all neighborhoods.). These retrofit projects can take place at a range of scales. At the street scale, the rain garden/infiltration planters included as part of reconstruction along East Michigan Avenue are a notable example of retrofitting to capture and infiltrate stormwater while adding landscaping to improve visual appeal. At a district scale, the closed Waverly and Red Cedar golf courses offer the potential for retrofitting as sub-watershed stormwater management areas and naturalized habitat. At the neighborhood scale, residents could take the lead in establishing programs tailored to their particular priorities. In some neighborhoods, green retrofit might focus on tree planting, while in others the emphasis could be on rain gardens, energy efficiency improvements or community gardens. No matter what the strategy, all neighborhoods can become more green through collaborative efforts.

**Carbon Footprint**

Two related measures of carbon footprint are the consumption of fossil fuels and release of greenhouse gases. The burning of fossil fuels, such as gasoline, diesel, coal and natural gas, releases greenhouse gases that capture the sun’s heat and contribute to global warming. Lansing can work towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging green development and adopting land use (see Chapter 3. Land Use: Economic Development) and transportation (see Chapter 6. Transportation) policies that reduce energy consumption.
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Goal: Support healthy natural systems.

Connected Green Infrastructure System

Objective: Identify, protect and link woodland and wetland fragments into a larger greenway network including river corridors and tributaries, floodplains, parks, trails and on-street pedestrian/bicycle connections.

- Encourage the protection of natural resource areas identified in Design Lansing’s green infrastructure framework and TCRPC’s inventory. Identify and field investigate additional/smaller natural resource sites of local importance.
- Encourage the establishment of proposed greenway links.
- Work with environmental groups, conservation non-profits, and local and regional agencies to develop and implement programs, incentives and regulations.
- Inform and educate the community to build awareness and long-term stewardship.

River Systems

Objective: 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.
- Restore riverbanks (riparian buffers, stabilization and native vegetation).
- Reduce flooding.
- Conduct regular river cleanups.
- Protect groundwater quality and wellheads.

Urban Forest

Objective: Protect and expand the urban tree canopy.

- Prepare and implement an urban forest management plan including a tree inventory, canopy goals, planting and maintenance priorities, and funding strategies.
- Improve requirements for tree protection, replacement and landscaping in all commercial, industrial, mixed-use and larger scale residential development projects.
• Include tree planting and protection in all public improvement projects; adopt best practices including species diversity, larger tree pits and engineered soils.

• Encourage tree planting on developed properties and vacant lots.

**Goal: Encourage healthy lifestyles.**

**River Trail**

**Objective:** *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.
• Capitalize on opportunities to link to the regional trail system.
• Improve visibility of the trail and its access points (trailheads).
• 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.

**Parks**

**Objective:** *Preserve existing dedicated parks and natural areas.*

• Consider repurposing closed golf courses as public parks and links in the trail system.

**Objective:** *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.

**Objective:** *Continue to provide special events/festivals.*
Objective: Implement the City of Lansing Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010 - 2015.

Local Food

Objective: Support local food production and improve access to fresh food, including community gardens, farmers' markets and urban agriculture.

- Support local food advocates’ planning efforts.
- Encourage local food organizations to partner and share lessons learned.
- Capitalize on available park space and property that will be land banked for the mid to long term (5+ years) for community gardens.
- Review and revise local policies and ordinances to eliminate barriers to local food production and sales.
- Develop zoning and land use policies that allow the development of food business districts.

Goal: Pursue green leadership.

Green Accomplishments

Objective: Track and report Lansing’s green assets and accomplishments—and their importance—both within the city and externally. Examples include:

- Innovative stormwater management projects.
- The park system.
- The River Trail.
- City market.
- Complete streets ordinance.
- Michigan healthy community ranking.
- Recycling program.
- Use of co-generation and renewable energy.

Green Development

(See also Chapter 3. Land Use: Neighborhoods, Green all neighborhoods.)

Objective: Encourage green site selection, site development and building practices.

Prioritize redevelopment on sites in mixed-use areas that are walkable, bikeable and served by transit; avoid sensitive resources and natural areas.

- Minimize grading.
• Manage rainfall to infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate and reuse runoff on site.
• Incorporate native landscaping.
• Maximize energy efficiency.
• Use reused, recycled and renewable materials.
• Reduce water consumption.
• Improve indoor air quality and natural lighting.

**Objective:** Encourage green retrofits (e.g., rain gardens, native landscapes, tree planting and energy efficiency upgrades) for existing development.

**Objective:** Allow for alternative energy approaches (solar, geothermal and wind).

**Carbon Footprint**

**Objective:** 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 and retrofits.
• Plant trees.
• Support local food production.
• Facilitate needed infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles.
• Establish the regulatory framework needed to encourage the development of renewable energy infrastructure.
CHAPTER 5 NOTES


3. Additional study will be needed to confirm the natural resource value of these areas and the appropriate preservation, conservation and/or restoration strategies.

4. The sale or donation of land or easements is voluntary.


6. The Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management (GLRC) has been established to guide the implementation of a stormwater management program for the communities within the Grand River, Red Cedar River and Looking Glass River watersheds. As part of its work, the GLRC is developing a regional stormwater ordinance based on low impact development Best Management Practices.

7. The banks of the river are the areas immediately adjacent to the water channel.

8. All City of Lansing Parkland is dedicated by City Council resolutions, which are contained in the official City Council Proceedings. Any references to parks or parkland on maps within this document are for illustrative purposes only. Please refer to the Lansing City Council proceedings for a complete and accurate inventory of City dedicated parkland: Resolution 145 of 2003, and Resolution 316 of 2011; incorporated herein by reference.

9. The food systems workgroup is an ad hoc group including people who produce, process, distribute, market, prepare and eat food, as well as policy makers and representatives of public health agencies, higher education institutions and emergency food pantries. The workgroup was established by the Land Use and Health Resources Team of the Tri-County region in response to citizen input received in a series of public health and land use forums held in 2007. The workgroup holds an annual conference called Growing Our Food System.

INTRODUCTION

Transportation has had a major influence on the pattern of land use in Lansing, from initial settlements along the Grand River, to uses related to the city’s many railroads, to more recent commercial concentrations at expressway interchanges. For many decades, most employees walked to work or used public streetcars. As travel became more automobile-dominant in the 1950s and 1960s, the construction of expressways improved accessibility to and from the city, but also supported automobile-dependent growth both within and outside the city limits. Several major streets were also converted to one-way movement to make automobile travel faster.

In the last 25 years, the most dramatic changes in the Lansing metro area’s transportation system have occurred outside the city, for example, the construction of the northern beltway, I-69, and extension of the U.S. 127 expressway. Perhaps the most notable improvement has been the continued expansion of transit service provided by the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA).

Within the city, most transportation investments since the 1980s have been focused on minor improvements to, and maintenance of, the existing street system. More recently, however, noticeable changes in Lansing’s approach to transportation have been taking place. The City of Lansing (City) has implemented strategies for calming traffic, such as road conversions (redesigning streets to reduce the number of travel lanes) and roundabouts; worked with CATA to link transit to land use; and focused on accommodating non-motorized users with bike lanes and trails. While transportation investments continue to improve safety for all users and relieve spots of congestion, they also include reducing the number of travel lanes, widening sidewalks, adding medians and streetscape improvements.
Streets are among the city’s most important public infrastructure and placemaking elements because they define how a visitor, resident or worker perceives a neighborhood, downtown or the city as a whole. While it is important that streets are easy to navigate and foster safe travel for all modes of transportation, they must also create a positive image for the city. Transportation investments that improve accessibility and visual character also create a catalyst for desired private reinvestment. The street network must provide a well-designed system of sidewalks, bikeways and transit routes to offer travel options that can decrease vehicle miles traveled, congestion and carbon footprint. A multimodal transportation system will also make Lansing a healthier place for its residents.

The coordination of policy decisions on the city’s transportation infrastructure, land use patterns and natural environment will play an important role in Lansing’s future. This chapter recommends ways the current transportation system can be enhanced, including: city streets, expressways, sidewalks, trails, transit and passenger rail. Many of the recommendations are based upon review of data such as traffic counts, high crash incident locations, and future traffic projections. The following three goals frame the chapter’s discussion:

**Provide transportation choices.** The City recently adopted a complete streets ordinance and a non-motorized transportation plan as important steps towards making its streets safer and more attractive for all users. The city and region are also served by a transit agency 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 automobile. As walking, cycling and transit trips increase, the use of non-renewable fossil fuels, greenhouse 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 automobiles.

**Redesign streets.** Street rights-of-way occupy a significant amount (about 12%) of the city’s land area. They are important public spaces that should serve all Lansing citizens. As a result, the City will adopt revised street design standards that balance the needs of all users, improve safety, include green design approaches and complement the surrounding land use and development context. Redesigning streets to reduce the number of travel lanes (road conversions) and add center median islands (to add green space and calm traffic) will reduce crash potential while improving visual character and reinvestment interest in adjacent property. On high volume traffic streets where capacity is more fully utilized, a reduction in the number of driveways (access management) and intersection improvements will enhance traffic flow and safety while promoting walking and biking.

**Strengthen city image.** 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. The City will adopt strategies to improve visual character within public rights-of-way and to serve as investment catalysts for desired redevelopment on adjacent private property. The City will also begin a transition from auto-oriented outdoor advertising to pedestrian-scale advertising. This will open up numerous placemaking opportunities as redevelopment occurs, increase convenience to pedestrians and enhance the character and overall...
appearance of the community. Moreover, the City will take steps to better manage parking to reduce its visual dominance, its environmental impact and its consumption of land.

**PRIORITY ISSUES**

Throughout the public involvement process, a number of key issues were identified. Many of these issues are depicted on the transportation analysis map (see figure 6-1) and are briefly discussed below. The recommendations section of this chapter outlines how these issues can be addressed.

**Non-Motorized Network**

Implementation of Lansing’s complete streets ordinance and Non-Motorized Plan will improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians in all areas of the city—one of citizens’ top priorities for the future. Although most of the city is well served by sidewalks, it is not comfortable to walk along or across the street in some locations. Over the last few years, Lansing has gradually worked to accommodate cyclists with bike routes, lanes and trails. While the bicycle network is growing, various types of cyclists—from commuters to casual riders—need to be accommodated more fully. In addition, the mobility needs of the growing number of seniors in Lansing can often be met most effectively with appropriately designed non-motorized facilities.

**Enhanced Transit**

East Michigan Avenue, linking the Michigan State University (MSU) campus to downtown Lansing and the Michigan State Capitol, is one of the highest ridership transit routes in Michigan. Concurrent with the Design Lansing process, CATA, four communities and a number of organizations collaborated in an evaluation of approaches for enhancing multimodal travel along this corridor, including enhanced transit service alternatives. Those agencies adopted “Bus Rapid Transit” as the “Locally Preferred Alternative”. The next steps for this initiative include a request for federal funding and additional detailed analysis. Through the Design Lansing process residents indicated their support for this effort by identifying improved transit as one of their top five priorities. Compact, transit-oriented nodes of development on East Michigan Avenue and other major transit routes can help increase transit viability in the future.

**Corridors with Excessive Driveways**

Numerous studies in Michigan and nationwide have shown that a proliferation of driveways can significantly increase both the number and severity of crashes and reduce the traffic capacity of the street which may create a need for costly street improvements. Too many driveways also make streets less safe and inviting for pedestrians and cyclists. Lansing has several streets where the number and location of driveways have a noticeable influence on traffic flow and crash potential (identified on the transportation analysis map as corrective corridor segments), such as Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK), East Street and Cedar Street.
Streets with Excess Capacity

Lansing has several streets with capacities higher than existing traffic volumes require to provide acceptable and safe traffic operations. This excess capacity can lead to inappropriate traffic speeds and uncomfortable conditions for walkers and cyclists. In particular, several of Lansing’s one-way streets, such as Saginaw/Oakland and the Capitol Loop west of Grand Avenue, have excess capacity and speeds inappropriate for their development context.

Visual Character along Key Corridors and at Key Gateways

Another important priority for Lansing citizens is improving the appearance of the city’s main transportation corridors. Key entry points and corridors used by visitors and commuters were identified as having poor visual character both because of the quality of adjacent development and the design of the right-of-way itself. These corridors project an image of the city that does not reflect the quality of its neighborhoods or other assets.

State Jurisdiction along Major Corridors

While the City has made improvements (road conversions, addition of on-street parking, streetscape) along major city streets including East Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo Street and Washington Avenue, most major gateway corridors are

WHAT AND WHY EXAMPLES

TRANSIT

Fact: In 2008, it was estimated that 11% of all city households did not own a motor vehicle. While higher density housing along transit routes is needed to support a robust system, much of Lansing’s housing is located at the city’s edges.

Why Does It Matter? A convenient transit system is needed to provide transportation to jobs, shopping, schools and recreation. It can also reduce residents’ dependency on cars, thereby reducing the costs of car ownership, and reduce the use of fossil fuels to improve air quality.

What Lansing Is Already Doing: In 2007, the Capital Area Transportation Authority was awarded the outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award by the Public Transportation Association. CATA is leading a study of potential transit improvements, coupled with higher densities of land use and residential development, on East Michigan Avenue.

BUILDING COMPLETE STREETS

Fact: Many major corridors in Lansing were built to carry a higher volume of traffic than currently exists. As a result, there are opportunities to rethink the use of Lansing streets.

Why Does It Matter? Communities that design their streets to serve the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users -- as well as motorists -- are more successful in attracting new residents and businesses, reducing dependency on cars and providing safer streets for all users.

What Lansing Is Already Doing: Lansing has adopted a complete streets ordinance and a Non-motorized Transportation Plan as important steps in creating a more balanced transportation system.
Figure 6-1: Transportation Analysis

- Key corridors and gateways identified as having poor visual character in and along right-of-way
- One-way streets with excess capacity and potential for conversion to two-way
- Corrective corridor segments with high driveway densities and congestion
- Corrective corridor segments where capacity significantly exceeds volumes and/or yields high traffic speeds
- Highest ridership transit corridors (based on CATA annual ridership)
- Intersection areas identified as having congestion, crashes, or other operational problems
- Road conversion projects/intersection improvements included in Tri-County Regional Planning Commission’s Long-Range Transportation Plan
under State control. This limits the City’s ability to make decisions about changes in design and amenities. These state trunklines include MLK (M-99), Saginaw/Oakland (M-43), Cedar/Larch/Grand River (I-96 business loop) and the Capitol Loop. On these streets, as well as on US-127, I-496 and I-96, the implementation of improvements will require coordination and negotiation with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

**PLAN RECOMMENDATION: PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES.**

**Complete Streets**

In August of 2009, Lansing became the first community in Michigan to adopt a complete streets ordinance, joining about 125 other U.S. communities committed to designing streets to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. The same year, new State of Michigan legislation amended the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to require that comprehensive plans include a transportation plan that addresses the facilities associated with all types of transportation users. Michigan’s Transportation Fund (Act 51) was also amended to direct the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to consider the needs of all street users, particularly in the cities that have adopted a complete street ordinance, as Lansing has.

*Design Lansing* endorses these actions and encourages the improvement of streets to be more walkable and bikeable. In addition, *Design Lansing* recommends land use policies that complement this complete streets commitment by encouraging compact development patterns that include a variety of destinations within walking and cycling distance of one another, as well as supportive development densities along major transit routes (see Chapter 3. Land Use: Economic Development and Chapter 4. Land Use: Neighborhoods).

The concept of complete streets is based on the principle of balancing the needs of motorists with others using the right-of-way. Nevertheless, not all streets have the physical dimensions needed to accommodate all users at an optimum level of service. As a result, it is important to develop measures of service quality for different users to aid in evaluating complete street design (and redesign) alternatives.

Traditional transportation planning uses a quantitative measure of vehicular level of service (LOS) to determine delay and congestion along streets for automobiles, with little consideration for other modes of travel. In contrast, multimodal quality of service (QOS) includes measures for comparing the speed, convenience, comfort and security of transportation travel by various types of users. The Highway Capacity Manual describes the accepted professional practice to calculate the multimodal quality of service. The multimodal quality of service table on the following page provides guidelines for determining QOS in potential street design alternatives. These QOS categories are also referenced in the future street typologies matrix (Table 6-1 below) to set standards for all modes across the different street types (see Plan Recommendation: Redesign Streets, below).
### Table 6-1: Multimodal Quality of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Service</th>
<th>Automobile</th>
<th>Transit</th>
<th>Bicycle</th>
<th>Pedestrian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A                  | • Free-flow operations.  
                  • Minimal delay at signalized intersections | • 19-24 hours of service  
                  • Service frequency of 6 or more vehicles/hour  
                  • Less than 0.5 passengers/seat  
                  • Reliability of 95% to 100% on time  
                  • Transit shelters  
                  • Direct pedestrian access to transit stop | • Multimodal pathway or bike lane  
                  • Adequate width of bicycle travel lanes  
                  • Low conflicts with pedestrians  
                  • Average bicycle travel speeds of 14 mph  
                  • High street connectivity  
                  • Low traffic volume and speed  
                  • Low percentage of trucks  
                  • Good pavement condition | • Adequate sidewalk width and condition  
                  • Walking speeds are freely selected, and conflicts between pedestrians unlikely  
                  • Good separation/buffers from traffic  
                  • Low traffic speeds and volumes  
                  • Convenient signalized crosswalks  
                  • Limited driveway access crossing sidewalk  
                  • Small block size and good connectivity  
                  • Walkability between buildings |
| B                  | • Reasonably unimpeded operations  
                  • Low delay at signalized intersections | • 17-18 hours of service/day  
                  • Service frequency of 5-6 vehicles/hour  
                  • 0.51-.75 passengers/seat  
                  • Reliability of 90% to 95% on time  
                  • Transit shelters  
                  • Convenient pedestrian access to transit stop | • Multimodal pathway or bike lane  
                  • Adequate width of bicycle travel lanes  
                  • Low conflicts with pedestrians  
                  • Average bicycle travel speeds of 9-14 mph  
                  • High street connectivity  
                  • Moderate traffic volume and speed  
                  • Moderate percentage of trucks  
                  • Good pavement condition | • Adequate sidewalk width  
                  • Sufficient area for pedestrians to select walking speeds freely to bypass other pedestrians  
                  • Good separation/buffers from traffic  
                  • High traffic speeds and volumes  
                  • Convenient signalized crosswalks  
                  • Limited driveway access crossing sidewalk  
                  • Small block size and good connectivity  
                  • Walkability between buildings |
| C                  | • Stable operations  
                  • Average delays at signalized intersections | • 14-16 hours of service/day  
                  • Service frequency of 3-4 vehicles/hour  
                  • 0.76-1 passengers/seat.  
                  • Reliability of 85% to 90% on time  
                  • Transit stop benches  
                  • Basic pedestrian access to transit stops | • Multimodal pathway or bike lane  
                  • Inadequate width of bicycle travel lanes based upon amount of bicycle and pedestrian traffic  
                  • Moderate conflict with pedestrians  
                  • Average bicycle travel speeds of 7-9 mph  
                  • Moderate street connectivity  
                  • High traffic volume and speed  
                  • High percentage of trucks  
                  • Good pavement condition | • Adequate sidewalk width.  
                  • Space is sufficient for normal walking speeds, and for bypassing other pedestrians with crossing movements causing minor conflicts  
                  • Good separation/buffers from traffic  
                  • High traffic speeds and volumes.  
                  • Widely separated pedestrian crossing signals  
                  • Frequent driveway access crossing sidewalk  
                  • Large block size and poor connectivity  
                  • Difficulty walking to building entrances |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Service</th>
<th>Automobile</th>
<th>Transit</th>
<th>Bicycle</th>
<th>Pedestrian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>• Increased delay and decreased travel speed.</td>
<td>• 12-13 hours of service/day</td>
<td>• Lack of pathway or bike lane</td>
<td>• Inadequate sidewalk width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Service frequency of 2 vehicles/hour</td>
<td>• Bicycle sharing vehicular travel lanes or sidewalks</td>
<td>• Freedom to select individual walking speed and to bypass other pedestrians is restricted; crossing movements face a high probability of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• 1-1.25 passengers/seat</td>
<td>• Moderate conflict with pedestrians</td>
<td>• Limited separation or buffer from traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Reliability of 80% to 85% on time</td>
<td>• Average bicycle travel speeds of 5-7 mph</td>
<td>• High traffic speeds and volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Limited transit stop amenities</td>
<td>• Moderate street connectivity</td>
<td>• Limited or no pedestrian crossing signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Basic pedestrian access to transit stops</td>
<td>• Low traffic volume and speed</td>
<td>• Frequent driveway access crossing sidewalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Limited transit stop amenities</td>
<td>• Low percentage of trucks</td>
<td>• Large block size and poor connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Basic pedestrian access to transit stops</td>
<td>• Good pavement condition</td>
<td>• Difficulty walking to building entrances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>• Significant delays and high volumes</td>
<td>• 4-11 hours of service/day</td>
<td>• Lack of pathway or bike lane</td>
<td>• Inadequate sidewalk width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Service frequency of 1 vehicle/hour</td>
<td>• Bicycle sharing vehicular travel lanes or sidewalks</td>
<td>• Virtually all pedestrians restrict their normal walking speed and space is not sufficient for passing slower pedestrians; crossing movements are possible only with extreme difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• 1.26-1.5 passengers/seat</td>
<td>• High conflict with pedestrians.</td>
<td>• Sidewalk adjacent to vehicular travel lanes with no buffers from traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Reliability of 75% to 80% on time</td>
<td>• Average bicycle travel speeds of 4-5 mph</td>
<td>• High traffic speeds and volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• No transit stop amenities</td>
<td>• Poor street connectivity</td>
<td>• No pedestrian crossing signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Lower quality pedestrian access to transit stop</td>
<td>• Moderate traffic volume and speed</td>
<td>• Frequent driveway access crossing sidewalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Limited or no sidewalk</td>
<td>• Moderate percentage of trucks</td>
<td>• Large block size and poor connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High delay at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• No pedestrian facility to transit stops</td>
<td>• Fair pavement condition</td>
<td>• Difficulty walking to building entrances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>• Street flow at extremely low speeds</td>
<td>• Limited or no service.</td>
<td>• Lack of pathway or bike lane</td>
<td>• Limited or no sidewalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unacceptable delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• 1.5+ passengers/seat</td>
<td>• Bicycle sharing narrow vehicular travel lanes or not allowed</td>
<td>• No barriers or buffers from traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unacceptable delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Reliability less than 75% on time</td>
<td>• Average bicycle travel speeds of less than 4 mph</td>
<td>• High traffic speeds and volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unacceptable delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• No transit stop amenities</td>
<td>• Poor street connectivity</td>
<td>• No pedestrian crossing signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unacceptable delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• No pedestrian facility to transit stops</td>
<td>• High traffic volume and speed</td>
<td>• Frequent driveway access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unacceptable delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• Limited or no sidewalk</td>
<td>• High percentage of trucks</td>
<td>• Large block size and poor connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unacceptable delays at signalized intersections</td>
<td>• No pedestrian facility to transit stops</td>
<td>• Poor pavement condition</td>
<td>• Difficulty walking to building entrances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Motorized Network

A city’s non-motorized network includes streets, sidewalks, trails and other facilities designed to accommodate and encourage pedestrian, bicycle and other non-motorized travel. This network should help pedestrians and cyclists feel comfortable and safe, whether on streets with heavy traffic or on neighborhood side streets. Research consistently shows that providing a safe and attractive non-motorized system is the most effective way to encourage walking and bicycling for recreation and transportation. This network should be complete (covering all parts of the city), connected, attractive, safe and convenient. It should also be accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities.

The City’s Non-Motorized Plan includes a vision for establishing a 765-mile walking and cycling network that links to a regional non-motorized system. The Non-Motorized Plan includes objectives, strategies and performance measures, and prioritizes routes and facilities based on an extensive public involvement process. The recommendations include 12 priority cross-town routes (routes with...
black outlines in figure 6-2), a number of additional neighborhood connectors that include on-street bike lanes, and bike routes and extensions of the city’s existing trail network to connect to regional trails. In addition, the plan calls for bicycle parking in public and private developments, as well as transit-related improvements, educational outreach and marketing.

Transit Service and Ridership

Encouraging greater transit use requires a two-fold approach: first, maintaining and improving service for those who already rely on transit and, second, improving or adjusting the system to attract people who might choose to use transit instead of a personal vehicle. Design Lansing outlines a number of strategies to promote private development and public investments that make transit a more attractive option including mixed-use, transit-oriented centers at the regional, community and neighborhood scale; locating higher density development and job centers along primary transit corridors; and implementing complete streets improvements for walking, biking and transit. CATA and the City should continue to coordinate transportation investments in achieving a sustainable, attractive system.

East Michigan Avenue – CATA Route #1, which runs east-west along the East Michigan/Grand River Avenue corridor from downtown to the Meridian Mall, is the highest ridership route in the transit system (over 1 million riders each year). CATA has commissioned a multimodal transportation study to propose and evaluate enhancements to transit, non-motorized facilities and traffic along this corridor. The most feasible enhanced transit option is bus rapid transit running along the center of the street right-of-way. Design Lansing’s land use recommendations (see Chapter 3. Land Use: Economic Development, Encourage mixed use.) complement the effort and resources already being invested in working to improve the East Michigan Avenue corridor. In addition, Design Lansing recommends that short-term implementation efforts focus on zoning tools and incentives that will encourage mixed-use and transit-oriented development on this important corridor (see Chapter 8. Implementation, Priorities). Continued streetscape improvements, frequent pedestrian crossing locations and the accommodation of cyclists along parallel routes (see the Non-Motorized Plan) will also be needed.

Future Frequent Bus/Express Bus – Several other transit corridors with high ridership, connectivity to key destinations and significant redevelopment potential are identified on the transportation recommendations map as future frequent bus/express bus corridors (see figure 6-4). These include the North Grand River corridor connecting downtown to the airport, the South Washington-Holmes corridor connecting downtown to the Logan Center area and the Cedar/Larch/South Cedar corridor connecting the Stadium District with the Edgewood Drive area. Another corridor not shown on the map that could be considered for express bus enhancements is the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor, which is one of CATA’s top five ridership routes, has few stops and connects directly to the Sparrow Hospital campus and the entertainment district on Michigan Avenue. Private development and transportation investment along these corridors should support the creation of mixed-use, transit-oriented centers and pedestrian-friendly street design to make transit a more viable and attractive option.
Passenger Rail – Although passenger rail service has not been a prevalent transportation mode in Lansing for several decades, potential future initiatives in and around Lansing should be leveraged to promote the city as a transportation hub. In the short term, improved access to Amtrak service can be achieved by improving transit connections to the Trowbridge station in East Lansing. In the longer term, citizens would like to see the expansion of passenger rail service to Lansing. These future possibilities include rail connections to major cities, such as Detroit and Grand Rapids, along existing transportation corridors (interstate highway or rail) and a link to a future high-speed rail corridor from Detroit to Chicago. The evaluation, funding and implementation of major passenger rail improvements are likely to take a considerable amount of time. Lansing’s leaders should continue to work with other passenger rail advocates to promote improvements in existing service and future service links.

Port Lansing

Port Lansing at the Capital Region International Airport is mid-Michigan’s only US Port of Entry allowing for international goods and passengers to clear customs. Recently designated as a Foreign Trade Zone, Port Lansing also offers international businesses the potential to defer, reduce or eliminate duties. Recent development has increased Port Lansing’s role as a regional trade and logistics center, employment center, and gateway to the region and the city. Opportunities to improve transit connections, wayfinding and visual quality should be explored along the streets that connect the airport to downtown Lansing.

PLAN RECOMMENDATION: REDESIGN STREETS

New Street Design Standards

By redesigning its streets over time, the City can not only provide a safe system that balances the needs of various users, but one that also responds to the desired character of adjacent land use and development to make street design more context sensitive. Transportation planning has typically used functional classification as the basis for street design with streets designated as arterial, collector or local based on their function, traffic volume and travel speed. Arterials are intended to move higher volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds to major destinations in the city. Local streets include the neighborhood streets that form most of the city’s network, designed for low volumes and low speeds. Collectors move traffic from the local streets to the arterials, generally at moderate speeds and volumes. In contrast, Design Lansing reinforces the complete streets philosophy that not all arterials or collectors are the same and that their design should incorporate a certain degree of flexibility to ensure that they harmonize with their surroundings.

This type of flexible road design standard considers not only traditional factors such as traffic volumes and function in the overall system, it also considers target vehicle speed, adjacent land use, development character, parking location and users to be served. Not every street can accommodate all potential users equally. As a result, these street standards—or typologies—are designed to prioritize certain types of users for certain streets. As a result, multimodal “quality of
### Table 6-2: Future Street Typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example Cross-Sections</th>
<th>Expressway</th>
<th>Arterial Corridor</th>
<th>Suburban Corridor</th>
<th>Activity Corridor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Typical Design**     | • Restricted access  
                        • Divided highway  
                        • Grade-separated intersections  
                        • Connecting routes  
                        • Median/boulevard  
                        • No on-street parking  
                        • Possible on-street bike lanes along some corridors  
                        • Suburban cross-section  
                        • Continuous center left-turn lane  
                        • Restrict left turns in/out of some driveways  
                        • Center turn lane at main intersections  
                        • Center lane median or no center lane  
                        • Crosswalk bump-outs  
                        • On-street parking  |  
| **Users Served**       | MDOT jurisdiction provides efficient routes for regional and local traffic to traverse areas quickly to access destinations within or outside the city.  
                        Serves autos/transit accessing other corridors and destinations.  
                        Serves primarily autos and service vehicles accessing local and regional business.  
                        Provides access to entertainment, businesses, and employment for motorists, transit users and pedestrians.  |  
| **Land Use Character/Form** | Adjacent land uses front on cross streets or parallel surface streets; these uses should present an inviting image from the expressway with landscaping similar to front yard standards.  
                        Bordered by residential, office and institutional land uses with some neighborhood stores and services. Generally limited business driveway conflict points for smoother traffic flow.  
                        Typically more suburban development patterns with retail and service businesses fronting the corridors and residential neighborhoods behind.  
                        Typically along streets with buildings built close to the right-of-way edge and oriented toward the street. Mixed-use node-based development and redevelopment supports transit and walkable streets.  |  
| **Parking Location/Design** | No on-street or off-street parking. Park and ride/carpool lots should be provided at interchanges in conjunction with MDOT.  
                        No on-street parking. Majority of off-street parking should be provided in the side/rear yards with some front yard parking for short-term customers.  
                        No on-street parking. Off-street parking should be provided in the front, side and rear yards.  
                        May include parallel, angle or reverse-angle on-street spaces. Off-street parking should be provided in the rear and accessed by shared driveways and/or rear access easements.  |  
| **ADT Range** | 20,000-70,000+  
                        12,000+  
                        12,000+  
                        8,000-20,000 |  
| **Target Speed** | 55-70 MPH  
                        35-45 MPH  
                        30-45 MPH  
                        25-35 MPH |  
| **Typical Number of Lanes** | 4- to 8-lane divided highway  
                        One-way: 2-4 lanes  
                        Two-Way: 5-7 lanes or 4- to 8-lane boulevard  
                        3-5 lanes or 2- to 4-lane boulevard  
                        3-5 lanes or 2- to 4-lane boulevard; may include dedicated bus lanes |  
| **Transit** | Express bus to serve park and ride/carpool lots (QoS C)  
                        Bus and express bus service (QoS B)  
                        Bus and express bus service (QoS C)  
                        High-use routes: bus rapid transit, streetcar, light rail, express bus or frequent bus (QoS C) |  
| **Bicycles** | N/A  
                        Shared-use pathways, on-street bike lanes, or cyclists may be directed to parallel local street/neighborhood connector bike routes (QoS B)  
                        Share the road, separated pathways, or cyclists may be directed to parallel local street/neighborhood connector bike routes (QoS C)  
                        Share the road, or cyclists may be directed to parallel local street/neighborhood connector bike routes (QoS D) |  
| **Pedestrians** | N/A  
                        Sidewalks (QoS D)  
                        Sidewalks (QoS C)  
                        Wide sidewalks with frequent crossings (QoS A) |  
| **Desired Quality of Service (QoS) by Mode** | | | |
### Example Cross-Sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prime Connector</th>
<th>Neighborhood Connectors</th>
<th>Local Streets</th>
<th>Principal Non-Motorized Routes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Prime Connector" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Neighborhood Connectors" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Local Streets" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Principal Non-Motorized Routes" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Typical Design**
- On-street bike lanes
- Bike lanes and on-street parking where both can fit
- Crosswalk bump-outs

- On-street bike routes/lanes
- Bike boulevards/other facilities where needed (see also Lansing’s Non-Motorized Plan)

- Pedestrian crossing visibility
- On-street parking

- On-street: Local streets and short off-street segments that serve as parallel/cross-town routes
- Off-street: Corridors along utility, natural or rail corridors

**Users Served**
Connects automobiles, bikes and pedestrians to other corridors via transit and enhanced facilities for all three modes.

Connects automobiles, bikes and pedestrians from neighborhood local streets to more major streets via bike routes/facilities, wide sidewalks and clear signage.

Local streets are all other public and private streets in the city. Very low traffic volumes with frequent stop-controlled intersections.

Provides connectivity for bikes and pedestrians; typically along local side streets or along natural features, utility or rail corridors.

**Land Use Character/Form**
- Typically residential collector streets.
- Generally local residential streets.
- Generally local residential streets or other minor side streets.
- Local residential streets, parks and greenway corridors (including utility and railroad rights-of-way).

**Parking Location/Design**
- May include parallel spaces instead of or next to bike lanes. For non-residential uses, off-street parking should be provided in the rear yard.
- Routes with bike lanes or transit may not have on-street parking.
- On-street parking on one or both sides depending on width.
- N/A

**ADT Range**
- 8,000-12,000
- 2,000-8,000
- N/A
- N/A

**Target Speed**
- 25-35 MPH
- 20-30 MPH
- < 30 MPH
- N/A

**Typical Number of Lanes**
- 2-3 lanes
- 2-3 lanes
- 2 Lanes
- N/A

**Transit**
- Bus service (QoS D)
- Limited bus service (QoS E)
- Limited bus service (QoS E)
- N/A

**Bicycles**
- Shared-use road/pathways or on-street bike lanes (QoS C)
- On-street bike route (share the road) or bike lanes/other bike amenities (QoS B)
- Share the road (QoS B)

- On-street: Bike route (share the road)
- Off-street: Bike pathway or shared-use pathway

**Pedestrians**
- Sidewalks with frequent crossings (QoS C)
- Sidewalks (QoS B)
- Sidewalks (QoS B)

- On-street corridors: Connected sidewalks
- Off-street: Walking/running pathway or shared-use pathway

**Desired Level of Service (QoS) by Mode**

![QoS Chart](image5.png)
Figure 6-3: Future Street Typologies
service" design standards are needed (see Tables 6-1 and 6-2) rather than just as automotive “level of service.” In this way, the design of streets can be more directly related to district or neighborhood character, changing from residential to commercial and from more urban to more suburban, as appropriate. As a result, new street design standards based on the recommended typologies (see Table 6-2 and figure 6-3) will be better integrated with their surroundings.

One example of the need for flexibility in street design is West Saginaw Street. West Saginaw Street is designated as an Arterial Street, due to its important role as a primary east bound traffic corridor; Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard shares the Arterial Street designation for similar reasons. A review of Figure 3-2: Urban Mixed Use Corridors and Suburban Commercial, however, illustrates a key difference-West Saginaw Street is designated as an Urban Mixed Use Corridor, while Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is not. This difference means that West Saginaw Street is more likely to have a mix of land uses with limited driveways and buildings located closer to the road. These characteristics will demand that the street design respond to each street in a appropriate, and likely very different, way.

As described below, existing street capacity can be maximized through intersection improvements, access management and/or improved signal timing to limit or eliminate the need for street widening. In addition, existing pavement widths on many local streets—which vary from 24 feet wide in older neighborhoods to over 40 feet in newer areas—can be reduced where space is not needed for on-street parking. This pavement narrowing offers several benefits including traffic calming, reducing impervious surface area and increasing the width of curb lawns.

The closure and vacation of streets and alleys reduce street connectivity, limit access and concentrate traffic flows and volumes on other streets. As a result, Design Lansing recommends that requests to close streets and alleys be denied unless long-term benefits (such as safety) can be shown to outweigh these negative impacts.

**Redesigning Streets Challenges**

The redesign of streets in Lansing to benefit all users and create context sensitive roadways comes with a set of challenges, including:

- Many of the streets that residents would most like to improve with pedestrian facilities and bicycle lanes have narrow right of way widths, which limits space for some types of improvements, such as streetscape enhancements and medians.

- A number of the major corridors through Lansing fall within the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) which may both complicate and enhance efforts to make road improvements, since the city does not have the authority to determine what changes should be made, unless in partnership with MDOT.

- Many residents may be uninterested in sharing the street with bicyclists, or supporting improvements which may benefit road safety for all users, but increase travel times.
• The cost to improve some roadways is significant, particularly if the project involves relocation of overhead and underground utilities, reconfiguration of curb lines, and re-signalization of intersections.

• Businesses may be reluctant to voluntarily give up multiple curb cuts to better manage access and traffic flow in the larger picture.

While these potential road blocks should not be taken lightly, the city has made significant strides in the last several years to change the way streets are designed and used, including passing the Complete Streets Ordinance, and preparing a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Many residents of Lansing are making change happen from the grass roots and are educating their fellow citizens about the need for improving streets for all users.

**Road Conversions (reduction in number of vehicular lanes)**

On four-lane streets with two-way traffic, road conversions reduce the number and/or width of traffic lanes to provide two through lanes flanking a center left-turn lane, freeing up space for on-street bike lanes, new on-street parking, widened sidewalks or landscaped areas and other streetscape enhancements. Road conversions reduce crashes, enhance mobility for all users and better harmonize street design with adjacent land uses. Road conversions can also be used to reduce five-lane streets to three-lanes or three-lane streets to two-lanes. Lane width reductions are also possible, such as 11 foot wide lanes instead of 12 feet.

Based on actual traffic counts, Lansing has a number of four-lane prime connector and arterial corridors with traffic volumes low enough (generally 18,000-20,000 vehicles per day or less) to consider a road conversion. For example, four-lane Mount Hope Avenue west of South Washington Avenue has an average daily volume of 8,900 vehicles (2008 data)—a volume that can easily be handled by two traffic lanes and a center turn lane, based on widely accepted standards for street design. Other corridors identified for road conversion implementation are shown in figure 6-4.

**One-Way to Two-Way Conversions**

For corridors where one-way streets have excess capacity and/or speeds inappropriate for their development context, there are two options for improved street design. Conversion to two-way movement would likely lower speeds and make it easier for travelers to find their way, especially in the downtown area. However, two-way streets can also increase congestion, have higher crash rates and reduce the area available for cyclists or on-street parking. Alternatively, travel speeds could be reduced by retaining one-way traffic, but removing a travel lane and replacing it with on-street parking, bike lanes, wider sidewalks or additional green space. A study of the Saginaw-Oakland corridor comparing two-way conversion and a one-way road conversion identified several benefits to the one-way road conversion including lower cost, less congestion and a likely decrease in crash rates. This one-way road conversion approach was supported by local participants in the study process. Other one-way streets that appear to have excess capacity and should be evaluated for road conversions and/or two-way conversion are shown in figure 6-4.
**Medians**

Installing a center median can have a number of benefits including calming traffic (reduced speeds), increasing green space and tree cover, providing a mid-street refuge for crossing pedestrians and cyclists and reducing crash potential by restricting left turns. Because of this left-turn restriction, there are several variables that need to be considered in median design, especially along arterial and activity corridors.

Along MLK Boulevard, the median is 60 feet or more in width, providing ample space for automobiles and large trucks to make a U-turn for indirect left turns. But only one other corridor in the city—East Michigan Avenue from Detroit Street east to East Lansing—has the right-of-way width (200 feet) required for this type of median design. However, Lansing’s other arterial, suburban and activity corridors have the potential to accommodate a narrow center median, generally between 12 and 25 feet in width, installed in place of (or within) the center turn lane. Narrow medians permit cars to make a U-turn, but not delivery trucks and trailers. These larger vehicles will only be able to make direct left turns at intersections and median openings where left-turn bays are provided. Pennsylvania Avenue south of I-496 provides an example of a narrow median.

**Corridor Improvements: Access Management**

One objective of access management is to limit the number of driveways in the operation area of a signalized intersection (the area where automobiles are frequently stacked waiting at a traffic signal). Another is to promote good driveway spacing. This helps motorists locate the desired driveway more easily and reduces the impact of turning vehicles on the flow of other vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. A third objective is to reduce conflicts between turning vehicles by either aligning driveways or ensuring that they are adequately spaced (offset) on opposite sides of the street. Access management improvements can be implemented in two ways: as part of street reconstruction and improvement projects or as sites are developed and redeveloped. While access management should be improved along all major streets, it is particularly important on the street segments identified as “Implement Access Management” on the transportation recommendations map (figure 6-4), including the South Cedar, South Pennsylvania Avenue, South MLK Boulevard, North Grand River Avenue and North East Street corridors.

**Corridor Improvements: Major Intersections**

A number of intersections around the city are plagued by traffic problems that affect both motorists and transit/non-motorized users. At these intersections, poor visibility, signage, laneage and pedestrian crossings make it difficult for all users to safely and conveniently reach their destinations.

Intersection improvements should focus on reducing vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian/cyclist crashes, enhancing mobility for all modes and users and increasing compatibility with the surrounding desired development context. Possible improvements include dedicated turn lanes, median islands for pedestrian refuge, high visibility crosswalks and pavement markings, bike lanes and reduced lanes (number or width).
Figure 6-4: Transportation Recommendations

Note: See following page for map legend.
Transportation Recommendations

1. **North MLK Corridor** – Implement road conversion from 5 lanes to 3. Improve streetscape (including additional curb lawn from road conversion) with street trees, landscaping, lighting and wayfinding. Evaluate design options for reconfiguring the Willow intersection to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and reduce crash potential.

2. **North Grand River** – Provide frequent/express bus service, access management and improved streetscape along this corridor, connecting downtown to the airport.

3. **North East Street** – Provide access management and improved streetscape (including potential center landscaped median) along this corridor to support area homes and businesses. Monitor volumes for potential future road conversion.

4. **Saginaw/Oakland Corridor** – Implement road conversion to reduce number of lanes (consistent with the Saginaw-Oakland Corridor Plan). Improve streetscape (including additional curb lawn from road conversion) with street trees, landscaping, lighting and wayfinding.

5. **Cedar/Larch Corridor** – Short-term improvements include access management, road conversion, frequent/express bus service and improved streetscape amenities along both of the one-way pair streets. For the long term, evaluate conversion to two-way corridors; design Cedar Street as activity-based and Larch as a business corridor.

6. **Frandor Area** – Improve circulation and interchange/intersection areas around Saginaw/Grand River crossing, Clippert intersections with Saginaw and Grand River, and access to/from Michigan Avenue. Improve streetscape along major streets including street trees, lighting and wayfinding.

7. **East Michigan Avenue Corridor** – Support future bus rapid transit with transit-oriented development and supportive pedestrian-friendly street design. Continue streetscape improvements with frequent pedestrian crossings, street furniture and signals. Develop parallel bike route(s) to accommodate needs of cyclists.

8. **Expressway Corridor Improvements** – On U.S. 127, I-96 and I-496, encourage MDOT to make noise reduction and visual improvements such as landscaping and upgraded bridge design and materials along the freeway and adjacent streets that serve as a front door to local and regional travelers.

9. **Washington Corridor** – Consider future frequent bus, circulator route and/or express bus as part of a multimodal corridor. Provide intersection improvements, road conversion and bike lanes to meet needs of transit and non-motorized users. For the long term, extend reach of Washington transit improvements to link Logan Center through REO Town and downtown to Old Town along a north-south circulator.

10. **MLK/Logan Center** – Synchronize street improvements with proposed redevelopment. Improve streetscape with lighting and signals, street trees, wayfinding and pedestrian amenities. Implement access management. Provide amenities and more frequent/express bus service to encourage transit as an attractive option.

11. **Pennsylvania Corridor** – Consider express bus along corridor as quicker route (vs. Cedar) connecting south Lansing, Delhi Township and other southern communities to/from Michigan Avenue and downtown.

12. **Cedar Street Corridor** – Support placemaking along South Cedar corridor with frequent bus and/or express bus with node-based transit-oriented development and supportive pedestrian-friendly street design. Improve streetscape with lighting and signals, enhanced pedestrian crossings and street furniture. Develop parallel bike route(s) to accommodate needs of cyclists.

13. **South MLK Corridor** – Implement access management to reduce crash potential and provide additional opportunity for landscaping and consolidated signage. Improve streetscape with lighting and signals, street trees and wayfinding.

14. **Cedar/I-96 Interchange Area** – Consider future express bus and/or frequent bus service with node-based transit-oriented development and supportive pedestrian-friendly street design. Improve streetscape with lighting and signals, enhanced pedestrian crossings and street furniture. Develop parallel bike route(s) to accommodate needs of cyclists.
Another potential approach to intersection improvement is the roundabout. Roundabouts have been shown to reduce delay and the number and severity of crashes by replacing traffic signals and turn lanes with a constant-flow circular intersection. Incoming traffic yields to pedestrians and cyclists crossing the street and to vehicles already in the roundabout before proceeding around to the desired exit leg. The City has already studied a number of intersections, including the I-96 interchange of Pennsylvania Avenue, American Road, South Cedar Street and Edgewood Boulevard (IPACE) area, as possible candidates for roundabouts with varying results. This improvement strategy should continue to be considered as an alternative when evaluating solutions for intersection problems.

Intersections with crash, congestion or other operational issues were identified through the Design Lansing process (see the transportation analysis map, figure 6-1). The transportation recommendations map (figure 6-4) identifies major intersection improvement areas. One particular intersection area that may become a priority for improvement is the Logan Center area (MLK Boulevard and Holmes Road). Reconstruction of this intersection could be a catalyst for transformational redevelopment in the adjacent areas.

**Green Street Design and Operations/Maintenance Practices**

Low-impact development (LID) is an approach aimed at conserving natural resources and protecting the environment by strategically managing rainfall close to its source, minimizing impervious coverage, using native plant species and conserving and restoring natural areas during site development or redevelopment. On a citywide scale, long-term capital savings are captured by reducing the need for costly storm sewer systems and detention areas, and environmental benefits are realized in improved water quality. LID within the street network can be applied to streetscapes, medians, parking lanes and sidewalks.

The most effective way to reduce stormwater runoff is by reducing impervious pavement area. This can be achieved by narrowing streets or traffic lanes where possible and by using pervious pavers or porous pavement in parking lanes and on sidewalks. Streetscape design can also help to reduce demand on the stormwater system, improve water quality and enhance the natural environment along the street. For example, continued implementation of rain gardens, similar to those installed along East Michigan Avenue, can capture water and allow it to evaporate or infiltrate rather than entering the sewer. A more aggressive City tree maintenance and replacement program would improve the tree canopy along city streets to help infiltrate rainfall. In addition, the use of native and low-maintenance plants will reduce irrigation and maintenance needs.
PLAN RECOMMENDATION: STRENGTHEN CITY IMAGE.

Visual Character
The visual character of the city’s gateway corridors is influenced by the design treatment within the street right-of-way and the placement and design of adjacent buildings and parking. Design Lansing’s transportation recommendations focus on elements within the right-of-way including pavement materials and markings, lane and sidewalk widths, landscaping/street trees, street furniture, lighting, and regulatory and directional signs (see also Chapter 7. Placemaking).

Key Corridors
Ten corridors were identified as priority surface streets for visual improvements by Lansing residents, with the highest priority given to South Cedar Street and East Michigan Avenue. These are identified on the transportation recommendations map (see highlighted corridor segments in figure 6-4). Recommended improvements include streetlights, mast arm traffic signals with street signs, improved crosswalk and sidewalk treatments, street furniture, street trees and other landscaping.

Expressways
Expressway corridors also have an important impact on Lansing’s image. Targeted improvements are recommended on all of the three expressways within the city limits as construction projects provide opportunities. These improvements should include enhanced bridge/overpass design and landscaping, as well as place-specific gateway features at selected locations and interchanges. These could help to brand Lansing by using the City seal or other Lansing-specific marker and more decorative materials and textures such as brick and stone.

Parking
The size, location and appearance of parking lots located along the city’s street corridors are a major detractor from Lansing’s image. City regulations and policies should be updated to reduce the area required for parking, reduce its visual dominance and to require better screening and interior parking lot landscaping, including LID stormwater design.

Quantity – While it may be possible to reduce parking requirements for many uses, reductions should certainly be considered for all mixed-use areas, particularly those located on or within walking distance of transit. In addition to specifying a minimum number of required off-street parking spaces, the City should also consider establishing parking maximums to better control the amount of land that is used for parking. Shared parking should also be encouraged to reduce the overall number of spaces required, consolidate lots and allow multiple destinations to be reached from the same parking space. Structured parking, either above or below ground, should also be encouraged in the city’s more densely developed areas to reduce the parking footprint. Parking structures can be designed to accommodate mixed-use space on the ground floor, or with
a liner building covering all floors, to reduce its visual impact. The City can also encourage the reduction of parking demand through incentives for carpooling, vanpooling, ridesharing and using transit as opposed to single-occupant vehicle trips.

**Parking Location** – If Lansing is to succeed in creating a more appealing visual image along its gateway corridors and a more walkable, pedestrian-scale street environment, buildings, not parking, should front the street. While buildings can be designed to provide interest and activity at street level, surface parking lots create unappealing dead zones. As a result, *Design Lansing* recommends that surface parking be located behind buildings wherever possible, especially in mixed-use areas. Limited parking may be provided to the side of buildings in these areas if it is well screened from the street by landscaping, decorative fencing and/or masonry walls. On suburban corridors, more flexibility in parking lot location may be permitted, but landscaped setbacks should be required between parking and the street, as well as interior parking lot landscaping that softens the impact of hard surfaces and clearly defines circulation.

**Parking Lot Design** – As noted above, standards for the design of surface parking should require higher quality screening and landscaping. In addition, safe and attractive bicycle and pedestrian access from the street to building entries should be required. Parking lot design standards should also be modified to allow and encourage the use of landscaped areas for the infiltration of stormwater runoff.

**Wayfinding**

Signs have an impact on the visual character of a community. They can enhance its quality and charm or detract from a welcoming environment. A comprehensive approach to sign planning is needed along the city’s major corridors, especially those linking important activity areas like the airport and downtown. Based on traffic patterns for visitors and commuters, wayfinding signage is most important at key gateways and along gateway corridors. A consistent public sign system is recommended to contribute to the branding of Lansing. The same theme should be used for all non-regulatory public signs to unify the city’s streets. This will also prevent the appearance of clutter that can occur when there are multiple public signs of different colors, shapes and sizes. State route markers and speed limit and regulatory signs must still meet the requirements of the *Uniform Traffic Control Manual*, but some can be placed within a more uniform sign form.

With an increasing consideration for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and networks, these signs also need to connect those users to destination, facilities and staging areas. Lansing’s *Non-Motorized Plan* identifies a standard for use in the branding of pathways and the implementation of directional, access, distance and routing signage.

Along the city’s freeways, the installation of changeable message signs by the Michigan Department of Transportation would provide the opportunity for travel demand management and intelligent transportation systems, providing information on incidents and construction, and routing traffic to less congested routes, especially during peak times and events.
TRANSPORTATION: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Goal: Provide transportation choices.

Complete Streets

Objective: Implement Lansing’s complete streets ordinance to design, manage and operate streets to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists 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 automobile dependence and vehicle miles traveled.
- 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 (crosswalks, refuge islands, audible signals and tactile warnings on curb ramps).

Objective: Implement the Non-Motorized Plan to create 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.

- 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.

Transit

Objective: 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.
- Support transit planning, improvement and funding efforts.
- Work with CATA to:
  - Pursue enhanced transit options (bus rapid transit, modern street car, light rail) on high ridership routes (e.g., East Michigan Avenue).
  - Provide operational and design improvements that favor transit along key corridors (e.g., East Michigan Avenue).
  - Explore the feasibility of a grade-separated rail crossing on Michigan Avenue, CATA’s highest ridership route.
· Explore the feasibility of establishing key cross-town routes.
· Improve the environment around bus stops; ensure safe access, comfort and availability of schedule information for transit riders.
· Provide incentives to use transit (increase parking costs or decrease supply near major transit destinations).
· Participate in efforts for passenger rail improvements.

Green Transportation

Objective: Use best practices and technology to reduce emissions and promote energy independence.

- Gradually replace city fleets with energy efficient vehicles.
- Use energy efficient lighting for streets and parking lots.
- Prioritize parking for plug-in/hybrid vehicles in city parking lots.

Goal: Redesign streets.

New Road Design Standards

Objective: Design streets to fit the character of the surroundings.

- Continue to implement road conversions.
- Establish new context-sensitive street typologies that optimize multimodal service quality to guide street design projects.
- Implement changes to convert one-way streets to two-way, especially in and around downtown.
- Continue to implement traffic calming improvements, including new medians, to reduce travel speeds and improve safety.

Corridor Management

Objective: Reduce crash potential and emissions through improved traffic flow for all modes along major arterials.

- Adopt intelligent transportation systems (ITS) (signal coordination, incident response, driver information and traffic control center).
- Reduce the number of driveways and increase driveway spacing, especially from signalized intersections on arterial streets (access management), when re-constructing streets or when new development occurs.
- Implement select intersection and interchange improvements (including roundabouts).
**Green Street Design**

**Objective:** *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.
- Explore the use of energy-saving LED and solar technology for street lights and signals.

**Goal:** *Strengthen city image.*

**Visual Character**

**Objective:** *Improve visual character along major arterial and activity corridors, and at major gateways.*

- Improve the functioning and visual character of highway interchanges using the principles of context sensitive design. Give priority to U.S. 127 at East Michigan Avenue (Frandor area) and I-496 at South Cedar.
- Give priority to improvements on South Cedar Street, East Michigan Avenue, MLK Boulevard, Pennsylvania Avenue, North Grand River Avenue, North 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 or relocate them to the rear of lots when reconstructing streets.
- Update zoning to provide better sign controls.
- Revise land use and design regulations to ensure that adjacent development improves corridor visual character.

**Parking**

**Objective:** *Encourage the more efficient use of land in providing parking and reduce its impact on Lansing’s appearance, environment and walkability.*

- Reduce requirements for the amount of off-street parking for mixed-use areas.
- Encourage shared parking.
- Reduce the visibility of parking by adopting improved location (to the rear of buildings) and design standards (screening, landscaping, stormwater management and bicycle/pedestrian access).
• Encourage the use of parking structures (including underground parking), rather than surface lots, in densely-developed areas. Encourage the use of liner buildings on parking decks, where feasible.

• Encourage major employers to adopt transportation demand management programs to reduce parking needs.

Wayfinding

Objective: Improve wayfinding, especially from the airport to downtown and Michigan State University.

• Provide wayfinding signs.
• Work with MDOT to utilize electronic/on-board wayfinding to alert motorists of congestion/construction and lead to alternative routes.
• Clearly and consistently label bicycle routes.
CHAPTER 6 NOTES

1. The Capitol Loop includes portions of Grand Avenue, Ottawa Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Allegan Street.
Chapter 7
PLACEMAKING
**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT IS PLACEMAKING? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

Placemaking is concerned with the way the elements of the built environment (uses and activities, buildings, streets, parks/plazas) are located, designed and managed to create appealing, interesting, comfortable and meaningful places for people. Placemaking helps to define the image of a street, neighborhood or community, as well as determining how easily people can get to and around them. Placemaking also influences how (and how well) a space is used. By encouraging social interaction, it can also help to build a sense of community and promote stewardship.

Placemaking is important because it determines whether a community’s physical environment is a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest. In other words, placemaking is part of an effective strategy for attracting and retaining both residents and businesses. More and more people are choosing vibrant, urban settings that offer a rich mix of retail, entertainment and cultural offerings; are ethnically and racially diverse; offer transit, walking and cycling alternatives to reliance on a car and provide ready access to outdoor activities.

**Placemaking Strategies Can be Implemented at a Range of Scales**

At the regional and city-wide scale, placemaking decisions determine larger open space, land use and transportation patterns. For example, the extent to which valuable natural resource areas are protected and linked will determine whether a regional green infrastructure network is created to showcase natural assets and provide access to them. Decisions on where development (and redevelopment) will be encouraged will determine whether growth is directed to existing urban centers to use land more efficiently and reduce sprawl. Coordinated planning for land use, density and transportation will determine how conveniently people can move to and between destinations and how cost effectively improved transit service can be provided.

At a district and neighborhood scale, placemaking decisions relate to the overall layout and spatial relationship of streets, open spaces, uses, buildings and parking (see Placemaking Elements, below).

At the street, site and building design scale, placemaking decisions define the details of the built environment. These details provide continuity, while at the same time creating visual richness (see Placemaking Elements, below).

Placemaking solutions need to be tailored to the scale of the problem, and also fit the specific character of the site surroundings. For example, a planning and design solution that is appropriate for the South Cedar Street corridor may not be appropriate for East Michigan Avenue, although they are both major streets with a strong commercial focus. The Placemaking recommendations outlined in this chapter provide a broad guide of the building blocks and tools of placemaking that need to be considered (see Placemaking Elements, below), the community character types that make up Lansing (see Transect and Pattern

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**Lansing’s Placemaking Assets**

- Parks and protected natural areas.
- The river system and River Trail.
- Historic buildings and districts.
- Traditional “main street” business areas (downtown, Old Town, REO Town, 2000 block of East Michigan Avenue).
- Mature trees.
- Well-maintained neighborhoods.
- Regional transit system.
- Higher education, arts and cultural institutions/organizations.

**Lansing’s Placemaking Challenges**

- Visual quality of entry corridors.
  - Suburban strip commercial development and older shopping centers.
  - Surface parking lot screening and landscaping.
  - Streetscape.
- Some streets inhospitable to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Some car-dependent neighborhoods.
- Vacant and under-used industrial sites/buildings.
- Commercial façade design.
- Neighborhood disinvestment.
- Incompatible neighborhood infill.

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Types, page 146), and the potential form that new development could take (see Placemaking Illustrated, page 155). As Lansing pursues the idea of developing codes and guidelines for shaping change this document provides a place to begin the discussion, with the counsel that the driving motivation behind these efforts is to help refine tools and solutions that fit the character of Lansing, and are appropriate to the scale of the issue.

PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS

A number of important placemaking elements are described and illustrated below to provide a basic vocabulary for understanding and implementing Design Lansing recommendations. These elements include:

- Street and block patterns
- Street design
- Open spaces
- Mix of uses
- Densities
- Building to street relationships
- Parking location and treatment
- Architectural elements/building design

**Street and Block Patterns**

The pattern of streets and the size of blocks help to determine how easy it is to walk or bike from one place to another and how concentrated or dispersed traffic will be. In contrast to large blocks penetrated by cul-de-sacs and bordered by high traffic streets, small blocks and a connected street pattern provide a ‘permeable’ environment for people on foot and in cars, allowing them a greater choice of routes to their destination. This choice optimizes convenience and avoids overburdening a limited number of through streets. A connected street pattern can also improve transit efficiency. Moreover, the city’s streets create view corridors that can focus attention on special buildings or civic spaces located on curves at “T” intersections.

**Street Design**

Because streets are the routes people use to move through the city, their design has a powerful impact on visual image, as well as convenience. Public sector infrastructure investments present the opportunity to have a dramatic influence on quality of place through design decisions on the width of the street and sidewalk pavement, the presence or absence of street trees, the details of paving materials and the design of street lights.

The cross section and design treatment of public rights-of-way are critical in defining the city’s organizing structure, influencing its visual character and determining who the priority users will be (see TRANSPORTATION, Re-design streets and Strengthen city image). A hierarchy of street cross sections and streetscape treatments can give powerful visual cues in understanding the

**Placemaking Principles**

Design Lansing recommendations are based on the following placemaking principles:

1. Preserve/showcase existing built and natural assets.
2. Preserve/ create districts and neighborhoods with recognizable identities.
3. Create walkable, mixed-use activity centers at a variety of scales.
4. Coordinate density and transit decisions.
5. Create a visible organizing structure.
6. Design streets for visual appeal and to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.
7. Use buildings to frame streets and public spaces and to screen parking.
8. Provide transitions in building scale and height to manage changes in density and function.

[Arterial Gateway Corridor With Center Median]

Arterial Gateway Corridor With Center Median
Street Design Variables

Public rights-of-way are important public spaces. Many elements help to define a street’s function and visual character, including:

- Number and width of travel lanes.
- Median width and landscape treatment.
- On-street parking.
- Curb radii.
- Bicycle facilities (lane striping or other pavement markings).
- Traffic calming devices (curb bump-outs; roundabouts).
- Curb-side buffer (parkway) width and landscaping, especially street trees.
- Transit stop or shelter design.
- Street lights.
- Regulatory and informational signs.
- Sidewalk width and paving material.

Open Spaces

Open spaces can range in size and function from an urban plaza or a neighborhood park to a larger complex of active recreation fields or even larger protected natural area. Smaller spaces usually serve as focal points of neighborhood or community activity, while larger spaces serve as district or neighborhood edges. The ideal is to create a connected network that increases accessibility to major open space assets from all parts of the community.

Open spaces that serve as identity and activity focal points (urban plazas, neighborhood parks) function most effectively if they are:

- Located at a cross roads of activity (major transit stop; intersection of high pedestrian traffic pathways)
- Visible and directly accessible from a street and surrounding buildings
- Designed for flexible use (a limited number of fixed elements; moveable seating)
- Simply designed, with emphasis on quality materials (lawn, trees, paving, lighting)

Attractive open spaces that are publicly accessible (whether publicly or privately owned) serve a number of important placemaking purposes. For example, they provide venues for neighborhood and larger civic events. They are also informal gathering places that encourage face-to-face contacts and help to build social networks and a sense of belonging. They are physical expressions of neighborhood and community identity and pride. They provide recreational destinations that can draw people from the neighborhood and from across the city and the larger region.

Mix of Uses

Whether different uses – housing, shopping, jobs, schools – are mixed or separated from one another helps to determine whether people can walk or bike to a variety of daily/weekly destinations; because reliance on the car is reduced, the amount of land that must be devoted to surface parking can be reduced, as well. The mix of uses also influences the cycle of activity within a district or on a street and determines the extent to which people meet face-to-face in their overlapping patterns of daily activity. This web of social interaction, in turn, fosters an active civic life; enhances perceived security and encourages a sense of ownership, responsibility and pride.
A mix of uses can be achieved in a horizontal pattern – with separate residential buildings located near shops, services and jobs – as long as the different uses are planned to functionally connect to, and support, one another. In multi-story buildings, a vertical mix of uses can, for example, locate housing and/or offices above ground floor shops and services. This creates an even finer integration of uses and a more compact development pattern to maximize convenience, urban diversity and face-to-face interaction. In addition, a vertical mix of uses can expand the range of housing choices needed to address the preferences of households who value convenience and connectivity over separation and private open space.

Some locations are more appropriate for mixed use than others. In Lansing, these areas have been identified as existing mixed-use districts (downtown, Old Town, REO Town), older shopping centers (Frandor, the Logan Center area) and strip commercial corridors. In general, it is easier to garner support for mixed use in areas that are already zoned for non-residential use. Nevertheless, all mixed-use development must anticipate and minimize potential quality of life impacts (for example noise, truck traffic, dumpster enclosure) and address them by adopting appropriate performance standards.

**Densities**

A more compact development pattern with higher densities will use land more efficiently, and can be served by utilities and services more cost effectively, than low density “sprawl.” Higher densities also provide the concentration of people and spending power needed to support desirable retail amenities (e.g., grocery stores) and concentrate travel origins and destinations to make transit more efficient.

In combination with a mix of uses, higher development densities can help to ensure that daily destinations are within walking distance of one another, reducing dependence on cars and fossil fuel consumption. As noted above, when located in a mixed-use context, higher residential densities can also provide the housing choices that respond to changing demographics and related housing preferences. Higher density residential development can also make it easier to

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**Figure 7-1. Model Transect** (image and list adapted from Center for Applied Transect Studies).
mix incomes to de-concentrate affordable housing. By offering affordable housing incentives, higher cost market rate units can help to subsidize affordable units, reducing public sector costs.

The way in which density is distributed across the city can also help to articulate its structure — for example, with higher densities and taller buildings located in the core and heights and densities decreasing towards the edges. Abrupt changes in density can create a clear edge, but also a sense of discontinuity that is uncomfortable.

**Building-to-street Relationships**

Consistent building placement in relationship to the street — whether at the sidewalk edge or set back behind a lawn or landscape area — creates a unifying street edge and a coherent visual experience. As a result, building-to-street relationships are an important factor in determining the compatibility of infill development with existing district or neighborhood character.

The closer a building is to the sidewalk, the more it can contribute to the human scale, activity and visual richness of the pedestrian environment. The relationship between building height and street width is also important because it determines the degree of spatial enclosure. As suggested above (see Density), the way the building relationship to the street changes along a major entry corridor can help to underscore the city’s structure.

**Parking Location and Treatment**

Where large parking lots front the street, cars and pavement will dominate the visual environment and the quality of the pedestrian experience will be severely compromised. Landscape screening is essential wherever surface parking is visible from the street. In less intensively developed areas, broad lawn areas with shade trees and low hedges at the parking lot edge provide an attractive visual foreground. In more urban settings, decorative fencing or masonry walls in combination with a narrower landscape area can provide effective screening and help to bridge the “gap” which the surface lot creates in the street wall. For larger parking lots (over 50 spaces) interior parking lot landscaping — green islands with shade trees — should be used to organize internal circulation patterns, provide shade to reduce heat and glare and soften overall visual impact. These islands can be designed to provide opportunities for stormwater infiltration and/or to provide pathways for pedestrians to move safely from the street to building entry.

To create an environment that is visually appealing, comfortably scaled and engaging for people on foot, buildings - not parking - must define the character of the street and sidewalk. For mixed-use and urban residential development, this means locating parking to the rear of buildings (or on the interior of the block and framed by buildings) or in parking structures. Deck parking is more costly than surface parking, but consumes significantly less land and allows the creation of a more continuous built fabric. Parking decks edged by “liner” buildings, or with ground floor frontages occupied by retail, service and even office uses, can significantly mitigate the deadening influence of parking frontages on street activity and interest.
In single-family neighborhoods, driveway widths and garage locations are critical factors in defining overall development character. Garages located to the rear of the lot and accessed by alleys have the least impact on the pedestrian quality and walkability of neighborhood streets. Attached multi-car garages that project in front of the home’s front façade, with two-car driveways, have the greatest negative impact.

One of the most effective strategies for reducing the impact of parking on the image of the city is to reduce the amount of parking that is required, especially in mixed-use areas and those with frequent transit service. Shared parking can also be encouraged to reduce the number of parking spaces needed to serve a mix of uses that have peak parking demands at different times of day (for example, residential and office). A reduction in the amount of required parking provides a substantial cost savings to the developer.

**Architectural Elements/Building Design**

The design of buildings has a tremendous influence on placemaking. Where development (including redevelopment and building renovation) happens incrementally over time and parcel by parcel, the challenge is to achieve a more predictable outcome in terms of architectural quality and character without designing the buildings themselves. While the most important design elements may differ from one district or neighborhood to another, certain key considerations are usually addressed in developing placemaking guidelines or standards.

- The location of primary building entries, and their clear definition, should add interest and appeal to the street.
- The location, number and orientation of windows are important in determining the extent to which buildings share their activity with the street and provide the street visibility (eyes on the street) that is critical to real and perceived safety. The use of ground level “storefronts” to maximize transparency is especially important in creating an active, interesting pedestrian environment in shopping areas.
- Especially on larger commercial buildings, the articulation of a long façade into vertical increments (or bays), and the clear definition of a building base, middle and top, help to create a sense of scale and interest. This is especially important for the compatibility of infill development in traditional “main street” areas.
- A gradual progression in building spacing and height from district to district can articulate the overall organizing structure of the city and create a sense of moving towards or away from the city center. Upper story set backs on taller buildings also help to achieve incremental transitions in building height that avoid discontinuities in scale.
- The quality of building materials, how they are used and their compatibility with materials on nearby structures are important in defining a recognizable development character and determining the compatibility of new infill structures. Consistency in roof configurations (flat, pitches, hipped) can also strengthen development character and compatibility.
- Public and private signs influence whether the street environment appears cluttered and disorganized or unified and interesting. Consistency in size, placement and style is critical in determining not only visual character, but also the effectiveness with which information is communicated.
TRANSECT AND PATTERN TYPES

Introduction
A transect is an urban-to-rural cross section that identifies the relationship of pattern types which vary in the intensity and character of their natural and built components across the city. The different pattern types are defined by the design elements described above, including the layout and design character of streets; lot sizes and how buildings are located in relationship to the street and each other; building types and architectural styles and features. The transect and pattern type descriptions are often compiled in a “pattern book” and used to encourage building and neighborhood design decisions that reflect the regional location and architectural history of a city and that, as a result, are more compatible with the valued characteristics of the existing built context. They have been used effectively to counteract the standardized, “anyplace” design of mass-produced housing and chain retail buildings and to ensure a coherent character and consistent quality in large development projects implemented over time by a variety of builders.

By understanding the pattern types and relationships that exist today, Lansing will establish a basis for developing the tools needed to ensure that valued patterns are preserved and less desirable patterns are enhanced or transformed in the future. This information provides the basis for future discussions on how placemaking content – also known as urban design or form-based considerations – might be made part of Lansing’s development regulations and/or review and approval process.

The future land use plan described in Chapter 8 identifies some of the basic design and planning attributes that are desired for future development in the City, pointing towards a future transect and pattern type of Lansing. To further develop this approach a number of options are available, including;

- **Guidelines** that describe and illustrate desired development principles and outcomes. Guidelines can be used in preplanning conferences with property owners/developers to describe community goals and preferences and encourage voluntary compliance.

- **Financial incentives** that offer low-interest loans (for example, for façade improvements or business sign replacement) or tax credits (for example, for historic preservation) to encourage private sector action consistent with established objectives and guidelines.

- **Zoning incentives** that offer something of economic value – for example, extra floor area or building height, reduced parking requirements or a streamlined development review process – in exchange for implementing placemaking objectives. These incentives (or bonuses) are also voluntary, but are incorporated into the zoning ordinance and specify what a developer must do in order to qualify to receive them. Incentives can be combined with mandatory standards (see below) and both can be used in creating special zoning districts, such as overlay zones.

- **Standards** that incorporate placemaking elements – for example, a build-to-line, height step downs or facade transparency – as requirements in the zoning ordinance. Compliance is mandatory.
Design Lansing provides a preliminary analysis of existing development patterns to serve as the starting point for this work. This analysis included a review of existing land use, the era in which different areas of the city were developed and street layouts and lot sizes to define three major districts: suburban; general urban and urban core. Pattern types were defined within each character district by evaluating the placement of buildings and parking, building heights and roof types and architectural styles, based on a review of aerial imagery, geographic information systems (GIS) data and in-person site visits.

EXISTING TRANSECT AND PATTERN TYPES

The transect (see figure 7-2) illustrates the relationships between residential and downtown character districts and pattern types in Lansing.

Suburban District

Lansing’s suburban neighborhoods were developed after World War II and are located some distance from the downtown core. They range in character from 1950s ranch subdivisions to the larger, distinctive Country Club homes. Although building sizes, types and architectural styles change from neighborhood to neighborhood, the Suburban District, as compared to General Urban District neighborhoods, has larger block sizes and, in many cases, a more organic street pattern with curving layouts and cul-de-sacs. In addition single-family lot sizes are generally larger and development densities lower than in the General Urban District. The Suburban District also includes more recently developed multi-family housing complexes.

Pattern types within the Suburban District include:

- **Suburban residential 1.** Large homes on large lots, built in the late 20th century. Medium to large blocks. Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, mostly with sidewalks. Consistent medium-depth setbacks. Mostly attached side garages with two-car width driveways. Contemporary and Neo-eclectic architectural styles. Two-story building height; variable roof patterns. Example: Country Club homes.

- **Suburban residential 2.** Moderately-sized homes on wide lots (variable in depth) built in the mid- and late 20th century. Medium to large blocks. Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs with some gridded streets, mostly with sidewalks. Consistent shallow setbacks. Mostly attached side garages.

• **Suburban residential 3.** Moderately-sized homes on deep lots (with medium widths), built in the early and mid-20th century. Large blocks; grided streets; inconsistent curbs and sidewalks. Rural feel. Variable setbacks. Rear garages with one-car width driveways. Ranch and Minimal traditional architectural styles. One- and two-story buildings with pitched roofs. Examples: Pleasant View/Risdale Park; Aurelius Road between Jolly and Forest Roads; Gier/Paulson Park.

• **Suburban multi-family residential sub-type.** Post-war and late 20th century multi-family housing complexes. Very large blocks; predominantly curvilinear street patterns. Shared parking lots generally located at front doors. Neo-eclectic and Minimal traditional architectural styles. Two- to four-story buildings; mostly pitched roofs. Examples: South of Miller Road between Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) and South Washington Avenue.

**General Urban District**

Lansing’s urban neighborhoods were developed from the late 1800s throughout the mid-20th century and are located closest to downtown. Originally developed as single-family homes, some older structures have been converted to multifamily use; others have been replaced with newer multifamily buildings. Building sizes, types and architectural styles vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, but the General Urban District is characterized by small and moderately-sized blocks and a grid street pattern. Lot sizes are generally smaller than in the Suburban District. Garages are located to the rear of homes with driveways generally one car wide.
Pattern types within the General Urban District include:


- **Urban edge residential 5.** Moderately-sized homes on small lots, built in the early to mid-20th century. Small blocks with gridded streets; sidewalks. Generally shallow, consistent setbacks. Rear garages with one-car width driveways. Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival and Cape Cod simplified architectural styles. One and one and one-half story heights. Pitched roofs; some with dormers. Front and side facing gables. Examples: West of Groesbeck Golf Course; east of South Cedar Street between Mount Hope Avenue and South Cavanaugh Road.

- **Urban edge residential 6.** Moderately-sized homes on small lots, built in the early 20th century. Small blocks with gridded streets; sidewalks. Generally shallow, consistent setbacks. Rear garages with one-car width driveways. Four-square, Queen Anne, and vernacular architectural styles. Two-story building height with steeply pitched or hipped roofs. Examples: neighborhoods to the east, west and south of downtown.
Urban Core District

The Urban Core District is the historic heart of Lansing including downtown, the capitol building and adjacent state office buildings; what is now the Stadium District along E. Michigan Avenue; Old Town and REO Town and the areas in between. This area is defined by its grid street pattern, medium to small blocks, higher development densities and mix of uses. Major assets include the Grand River and a number of historic districts and buildings.

- **Downtown core.** Multi-story office, institutional and mixed-use buildings of varying ages and styles. Street grid with small blocks and sidewalks. Lot sizes vary. Predominantly shared sidewalk construction with no front yard setback. Ground floor retail concentrated on Washington Street. Surface parking lots and parking decks. Building heights vary, but Lansing’s tallest buildings are located here.

- **Downtown edge.** A mix of early 20th century single-family residential structures (many converted to multi-family or non-residential use), older retail, office and industrial buildings and newer commercial and residential structures. Street grid with blocks of varying size; sidewalks. Small and medium lot widths. Predominantly free standing structures with shallow front and side yards; shared sidewalk, multi-story buildings built to the front property line in Old Town, REO Town and on East Michigan Avenue. Surface parking lots create gaps in the urban fabric. Building heights vary, but generally 2 stories.

Commercial District

In contrast to the traditional “main street” development pattern on downtown’s Washington Street and in Old Town and REO Town, the Commercial District includes major shopping centers (for example, Edgewood and Frandor), strip malls, smaller shopping centers and big box stores along Lansing’s major gateway streets and older strip commercial areas along with smaller freestanding retail and service businesses. These areas are characterized by single-story buildings with parking lots located between the building and the street, most often without adequate screening or interior landscaping. In these areas, there is little or no consistency in building placement. Pole-mounted business signs are typical.

- **Suburban commercial 1.** Uses include highway-oriented commercial, big box and chain stores located at major highway interchanges on the edge of the city. Large blocks. Smaller, freestanding structures located on frontage street “out lots” with larger buildings towards the block interior. Large surface parking lots with little or no screening and interior landscaping. Poorly defined internal site circulation. One-story buildings, often “high bay.” Flat roofs. Pole and building-mounted signs. Examples: Edgewood area, Frandor.

- **Suburban commercial 2.** A conglomeration of larger footprint retail, small strip malls, smaller freestanding retail and service uses and office buildings located on major gateway streets (such as South Cedar Street and Michigan Avenue). Large blocks. Irregular building placement with some frontage road “out lot” development and some buildings fronted by large parking lots. Surface parking with little or no screening and interior landscaping. Poorly defined internal site circulation. One-story retail and service
buildings, sometimes “high bay,” with flat roofs. Two-story office buildings, some with pitched roofs. Pole and building-mounted signs. Examples: Logan Center area; Jolly Road and South Cedar Street area.

- **Business corridor.** A combination of freestanding retail and service buildings, small strip malls and some office buildings fronting gateway streets, predominantly north of Jolly Road. Medium size blocks and lots, but significantly smaller than typical in Suburban commercial 1 and 2. Inconsistent building placement. Parking located predominantly to the front and side of buildings. Little/no parking lot screening. Multiple driveway curb cuts. Predominantly one-story buildings with flat roofs. Examples: South Cedar Street north of Jolly Road; portions of MLK Boulevard and Pennsylvania Avenue.

**Special Districts**

Lansing also has two types of Special Districts – industrial and institutional – that occur in various locations on transect. These Special Districts do not fit neatly into the suburban-urban progression and because of their function cannot conform to the normative pattern types described above. Land use and placemaking recommendations for these Special Districts are presented in Chapter 8. Implementation, Future Land Use Classification.

Table 7-1 provides a summary matrix of each pattern type’s characteristics; figure 7-3 provides a preliminary map of these pattern types.
### Table 7-1: Lansing Existing Pattern Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Urban District</th>
<th>Suburban District</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Street Pattern/Design</th>
<th>Lot Size</th>
<th>Building Placement</th>
<th>Building Types</th>
<th>Building Features</th>
<th>Current Places That Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN EDGE RESIDENTIAL 4</strong></td>
<td>Late 20th century single-family homes with a subdivision feel</td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs; no alleys; sidewalks common; medium and large blocks</td>
<td>Large lot widths; medium lot depths</td>
<td>Consistent medium setbacks; mostly side garages with some projecting and rear garages; two-car width driveways</td>
<td>Contemporary and Neo-eclectic types</td>
<td>2-story with variable roof patterns</td>
<td>Country Club homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN EDGE RESIDENTIAL 5</strong></td>
<td>Mid- and late 20th century single-family homes with a rural feel</td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs; no alleys; sidewalks common; medium and large blocks</td>
<td>Lot widths consistent within neighborhood; generally wider and shallower than other pattern types</td>
<td>Consistent setbacks; generally shallow; mostly side garages with some projecting and rear garages; two-car width driveways</td>
<td>Ranch, Split Level, Minimal Traditional, and Contemporary types</td>
<td>Predominantly 1-story with some 2-story; side-facing gable roofs</td>
<td>Waverly, Holmes, Miller Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN RESIDENTIAL 6</strong></td>
<td>Early and mid-20th century multiple-family complexes located near the city’s edge</td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Grid street pattern; spotty sidewalks; large blocks</td>
<td>Medium lot widths; deep lot depths</td>
<td>Variable setbacks; rear garages; one-car width driveways</td>
<td>Ranch and Minimal Traditional types</td>
<td>1-story and 2-story; side-gaging gable roofs</td>
<td>Pleasant View/Risdale Park; Aurelius Road between Jolly Road and Forest Road; Gier/ Paulsen Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN EDGE RESIDENTIAL 4</strong></td>
<td>Early and mid-20th century single-family homes with distinct architectural features and materials</td>
<td>Multiple family homes</td>
<td>Predominantly curvilinear street patterns; large blocks</td>
<td>Large lots with variable configurations</td>
<td>Variable in relation to parking lot locations</td>
<td>Contemporary, Ranch, Minimal Traditional</td>
<td>Multi-story</td>
<td>South of Miller Road between MLK Boulevard and Washington Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN EDGE RESIDENTIAL 5</strong></td>
<td>Early and mid-20th century single-family homes with distinct architectural features and materials</td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Predominately grid street pattern; sidewalks; generally small blocks</td>
<td>Medium lot widths; shallow/medium lot depths</td>
<td>Consistent, generally shallow setbacks; rear garages; one-car width driveways; some alleys</td>
<td>Tudor, Colonial Revival, Craftsman types</td>
<td>2-story; variable roof patterns</td>
<td>Genesee west of MLK Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN EDGE RESIDENTIAL 6</strong></td>
<td>Early 20th Century single-family homes</td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Grid street pattern; sidewalks; small blocks</td>
<td>Small lot widths; shallow/medium lot depths</td>
<td>Consistent, generally shallow setbacks; rear garages; one-car width driveways; some alleys</td>
<td>Minimal Traditional, Cape Cod, Neoccolonial types</td>
<td>1- and 1.5-story; earlier front-facing gable; later side-facing gable often with dormers</td>
<td>West of Bancroft Park and Groesbeck Golf Course; north of West Willow Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN EDGE RESIDENTIAL 6</strong></td>
<td>Early 20th Century single-family homes</td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Grid street pattern; sidewalks; generally small blocks</td>
<td>Small lot widths; shallow/medium lot depths</td>
<td>Consistent, generally shallow setbacks; rear garages; one-car width driveways; some alleys</td>
<td>Four-square, Queen Anne vernacular types</td>
<td>2-story; front-facing gable or hipped roof; front porches</td>
<td>Neighborhoods to the east, south, and west of downtown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7-1: Lansing Existing Pattern Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban Core District</th>
<th>Commercial District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOWNTOWN EDGE</strong></td>
<td>Multi-story office buildings and mixed-use</td>
<td>Regional-serving highway retail; big box stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOWNTOWN CORE</strong></td>
<td>Multi-story office buildings and mixed-use</td>
<td>Community-serving commercial; smaller big-box stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL 1</strong></td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
<td>Mid to late 20th Century commercial/office uses fronting gateway streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL 2</strong></td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUSINESS CORRIDOR</strong></td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPECIAL DISTRICTS</strong></td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
<td>Industrial and institutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Description</strong></td>
<td>Early 20th Century residential, modern commercial mix</td>
<td>Early 20th Century residential, modern commercial mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses</strong></td>
<td>Office, retail, residential, institutional</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Street Pattern/Design</strong></td>
<td>Grid street pattern; small blocks</td>
<td>Large parking lots; large blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lot Size</strong></td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Placement</strong></td>
<td>Variable setbacks; generally none or shallow</td>
<td>No setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Types</strong></td>
<td>Multi-story historic and modern buildings</td>
<td>Big-box stores; strip malls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Features</strong></td>
<td>Generally 2-story</td>
<td>Big-box stores; freestanding commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Places That Fit</strong></td>
<td>Areas surrounding downtown, Old Town, REO Town</td>
<td>Modern buildings specific to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capitol Avenue and Washington Street in between the Capitol and river</td>
<td>Specific to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frandor, I-96/Cedar Street interchange</td>
<td>LCC, Sparrow Avenue, Midway Industrial Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MLK Boulevard and Holmes Road; Cedar Street between Jolly and Miller Roads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cedar Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, Michigan Avenue, MLK Boulevard, Pleasant Grove/Holmes; Pleasant Grove/ Mount Hope Roads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7-3: Lansing Existing Pattern Types
PLACEMAKING ILLUSTRATED

The following section presents a series of sketches that demonstrate placemaking principles in action for the following topics:

Mixed Use Cores and Connectors
- Community and District Scale
- Neighborhood

Downtown Edges
- Scale Transitions
- Parking

Neighborhoods
- Vacant Lot Strategies
- Green Neighborhoods
NEW MIXED-USE CENTERS: COMMUNITY AND DISTRICT SCALE

Large shopping centers, smaller strip malls and free-standing commercial buildings line Lansing’s gateway corridors creating a development pattern that lacks coherence, presents a negative image of the city and is not welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists. Parking lots, driveway curb cuts and signs dominate the foreground and land is used inefficiently.

*Design Lansing* recommends transforming a number of these corridors to improve their appearance while at the same time adding higher density housing to capitalize on and support their role as important transit corridors. This can be achieved by encouraging the creation of mixed-use transit-oriented centers at key locations along East Michigan Avenue, South Cedar Street and MLK Boulevard.

New community mixed-use centers will be larger in size, include taller buildings and serve a larger market area than neighborhood destination centers. They will also require the creation of an internal street and block pattern and may also include larger footprint retail and institutional users and deck parking. However, both community and district mixed-use centers should be designed to implement the following placemaking ideas:

**Community Mixed-Use Centers**

1. Create an internal street and block pattern.
2. Share driveways and parking and encourage decks.
3. Cluster the tallest buildings and ground floor retail in the core.
4. Allow for larger footprint users.
• Encourage a mix of uses, higher densities and multi-story buildings in a compact area to create a critical mass of activity.
• Cluster ground floor retail uses to create a pedestrian-oriented “core.”
• Locate the tallest buildings in the “core” and transition to lower heights and a more residential scale/use on neighborhood edges.
• Locate buildings to face the street with parking located to the rear; offer reduced parking requirements and encourage shared driveways and parking.
• Locate storefronts and building entries facing the street, and provide upper story windows, to create activity, interest and “eyes on the street.”
• Encourage a high quality of architectural design.
• Provide adequately dimensioned sidewalks with street trees and pedestrian-scale lights; accommodate the needs of transit users.
• Locate and design open spaces to serve as social and visual focal points.
• Provide parking lot screening and landscaping; better manage stormwater.

District Mixed-Use Centers

1. Locate buildings to face the street and screen parking.
2. Use open space to create focal points.
3. Transition to housing on neighborhood edges.
4. Encourage a transition to non-retail use on adjacent corridor frontages.
MIXED-USE CENTERS: NEIGHBORHOOD

Many of Lansing’s lower density neighborhoods already have small strip centers or four-corners commercial development that could provide close-to-home shopping and services. For the most part, these commercial areas do not have the mix or density of uses, or the sense of place, needed for them to thrive as convenience centers or to serve as focal points of community activity. In many cases, parking lots are located between buildings, and between buildings and the street, making it difficult to walk from one use to another; pedestrian connections to nearby housing are also weak.

*Design Lansing* recommends reinforcing existing neighborhood convenience centers, and supporting the creation of new ones in under-served neighborhoods. Nevertheless, these centers must be transformed into pedestrian-oriented places if they are to offer an effective walking and cycling alternative to driving for short trips. This is also true if they are to more effectively serve as activity and identity focal points.

**Four Corners**

Higher density mixed-use development in multi-story buildings located to frame the street can create a strong sense of place at key intersections. Well screened parking is located to the rear of buildings. Upper story residential and/or office and townhomes reinforce market support for upgraded ground floor retail uses and create an expanded cycle of activity.

**Strip Mall**

Smaller strip malls can be redeveloped as mixed-use centers with buildings located at the street edge to welcome pedestrians. New cross streets, created to serve townhomes or apartments added at the rear of the parcel, improve connections from existing neighborhoods to the mixed-use “core.”
DOWNTOWN EDGES: SCALE TRANSITIONS

In many cases, new buildings in the downtown edge area are much taller and bulkier than nearby residentially scaled buildings. These discontinuities undermine the coherence of the urban fabric.

Future infill buildings can be designed to mitigate differences in building scale by using stepped building heights, variations in building massing and architectural details (roof shapes, window patterns) to create more harmonious transitions. In the example below, an infill building at the corner mimics the architectural form and scale of the smaller buildings to the left; building heights and massing transition incrementally toward the taller, bulkier tower building to the left.

DOWNTOWN EDGES: PARKING

In downtown edge areas, parking lots often extend to the sidewalk, creating a fragmented streetscape with breaks in the street wall formed by buildings. Appropriately scaled infill, in combination with strategies for shared parking, lot re-configuration, and streetscape enhancement, can improve the visual character, continuity and pedestrian orientation of downtown edge streets.
NEIGHBORHOODS: VACANT LOT STRATEGIES

Vacant lots interrupt the neighborhood fabric and can become maintenance and image problems. A plan for short- and long-term reuse of vacant land, based on an assessment of redevelopment potentials and prepared with neighborhood participation, can ensure they return benefits to the community.

**Mid- to Long-term Holding Strategy – Pocket Park as an Interim Use**

Where redevelopment potential is low, vacant lots can be reused as recreational and natural resource amenities. Pocket parks can incorporate stormwater management, habitat features or off-street trail connections that benefit the entire neighborhood. Pocket parks could be held by the Ingham County Land Bank Fast Track Authority and improved and maintained by volunteers or neighborhood organizations by agreement with the City.

**Mid-term Holding Strategies – Community Garden or Tree Farm**

Vacant lots can provide a temporary community garden or be used as a tree farm to provide trees at low cost for re-planting elsewhere in the neighborhood.

**Short-term Strategy: Native Landscape**

Where redevelopment potential is high, native landscapes can temporarily improve visual quality and provide environmental benefits. Mowing the edges of these landscape areas ensures that they are recognized as managed assets.

**Strategy: Compatible Infill**

When a vacant lot can be redeveloped, it is important that the new building be compatible with the overall height and size, placement and design of existing structures (see transect and pattern types, above).
GREEN NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods offer opportunities to “green” the city to enhance its visual character, quality of life and environmental health. Sustainable practices on individual residential lots include:

1. Rain barrels that capture roof run-off for reuse in watering lawns and landscaping.
2. Rain gardens that divert water from gutters (or rain barrel overflow), driveways and sidewalks into shallow depressions designed to quickly infiltrate the water into the ground.
3. Native plants that provide shelter and food for wildlife. Flowers attract bees, hummingbirds and butterflies. Choose plants with lower water needs.
4. New tree plantings that provide shade, improve stormwater infiltration and absorb carbon from the air.
5. Solar panels that reduce the use of fossil fuels for electricity, heating and cooling.
6. Pervious paving materials (on driveways and walkways) that allow stormwater to infiltrate into the ground.
7. Backyard composting of food and yard wastes that provides a resource for enriching soils.
8. Minimal lawn areas that reduce the need for fertilizer, pesticides, and mowing.
9. Drip line or ‘soaker hose’ irrigation systems to minimize water use for irrigation.
10. Backyard gardens and “edible landscaping” provides access to local food right at home.
CHAPTER 7 NOTES

1. Neo-eclectic architectural design uses decorative surface elements from a range of historical architectural styles, sometimes combining a variety of stylistic elements in a single structure.

2. Minimal traditional architecture incorporates traditional (e.g., Colonial or Tudor) forms but with minimal detail or ornamentation. Shallow pitched roofs with no eaves and an asymmetrical front façade are typical.

3. Four-square buildings are defined by their simple box shape, low hipped roof with deep overhangs, central dormer and wide porch.

4. American Queen Anne architecture is the most elaborate and eccentric of the Victorian styles. Although very diverse, Queen Anne buildings usually have a steeply pitched roof, bay windows, towers and/or rounded porches.

5. Vernacular architecture is based on local traditions, environment and available materials.
Chapter 8
IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

*Design Lansing* describes the community’s vision for the future and provides a framework of goals, objectives, strategies and related maps to guide development and investment decisions. While the plan addresses a broad range of topics, it focuses primarily on those land use, development and transportation issues on which City of Lansing (City) policy can have a direct impact. This is because the master plan is used by the Planning Commission, City Council and City staff as a guide to day-to-day decision-making in:

- Developing, amending and applying policies and regulations that describe what kinds of development should happen where (e.g., zoning and design guidelines) and using incentives to encourage development consistent with the City’s goals.
- Approving or recommending modifications to development proposals.
- Allocating resources for capital investments and programmatic initiatives.

The process for developing the City’s new master plan encouraged citizen participation, and its content is built on citizen input. *Design Lansing* also aligns with and reinforces other recent and ongoing planning efforts. Examples include:

- The *City of Lansing Consolidated Plan, Neighborhood Stabilization Program Substantial Amendment*, 2008.
- The *Michigan/Grand River Avenue Transportation Study* being prepared by the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) in partnership with local communities.
- *City of Lansing Hazard Mitigation Plan* (December 2010).
The master plan is an important vehicle for communicating the City’s policies for the future to adjacent jurisdictions as the basis for coordinating land use, green infrastructure and transportation decisions. It also communicates expectations and preferences about future development to property owners, developers and business people. By introducing new ideas and development models, the plan can serve as a catalyst for change; but it is important to remember that the public sector can only encourage and guide development. It is the private sector—from individual homeowners, to developers and major corporations (including lenders)—who will make new development happen. Nevertheless, a clear expression of what the citizens of Lansing want—and the objectives and strategies that will be adopted to manage development—establishes a clear guide and supportive context for private investment.

**IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS**

A number of basic principles have been shown to contribute to the success of master plan implementation. To paraphrase a recent community master plan from a nearby community, Lansing should focus future efforts to help “make it easy to do the right thing.”

**Communicate.**

At the start of plan implementation, it is important not to underestimate the need to spread the word about the master plan and its major recommendations. These communication efforts need to be undertaken within City Hall, as well as externally. In addition, as plan implementation proceeds, it is important to measure and monitor progress and report back to the community at regular intervals. This helps to keep the master plan in the foreground and to identify any needs for plan amendment.

**Collaborate.**

Completion and adoption of the new master plan is a major accomplishment; but plan implementation will be achieved over an extended time period and will require the continued cooperation and commitment of the public, private and non-profit sectors. Implementation can be accelerated by collaborating with regional agencies, local organizations, institutions, business and neighborhood groups, property owners and developers. The most successful plan implementation initiatives will be those that are at the top of multiple agendas and are already attracting community and financial support.

**Commit.**

To attract the collaborative effort of others, the City must demonstrate its commitment to the objectives of the master plan. As a result, the plan needs to be used on a day-to-day basis for decision-making by City leadership and by elected and appointed boards and commissions. In addition, the plan must serve as a foundation in developing City department budgets and work programs. This should include a reassessment of how daily work is done and identifying program initiatives needed for plan implementation.
**Be a catalyst.**

As noted above, the master plan can be a catalyst for change, but the City must take the actions needed to be development ready. This means having the development regulations in place that allow desired investment to occur. These can include incentives (e.g., building height bonuses or reductions in required parking) that influence the economics of development. It can also mean providing information, facilitating and coordinating the work of citizen-led action initiatives and/or undertaking the preparation of follow-up studies that show in more detail how plan recommendations can be implemented.

**Be strategic.**

One aspect of being strategic is focusing the City’s capital investment resources where they can be leveraged by the action and investment of others (see Collaborate, above). It also means looking for opportunities to produce tangible success in the short to mid term to keep interest and momentum growing. These successes can be as large as a new corporate headquarters building in downtown Lansing or as small as a new community garden in a park serving a lower-income neighborhood.

**Stay current.**

In order to maximize its value to the community, a comprehensive plan needs to be reviewed regularly in light of changing conditions and opportunities. State law requires that the plan be reviewed at least every five years to determine whether updates and/or amendments are needed.

**IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

While the City’s sphere of influence in implementing the master plan is quite large, its sphere of control is somewhat limited. Its control over other agencies (State of Michigan, Lansing Public School District, Lansing Community College) is narrow at most. As a result, master plan implementation hinges on the level of cooperative effort and available funding, not solely on the City’s ability to execute the plan. Nevertheless, the City has several tools at its disposal to effect change.

**Zoning and Other Development Regulations**

The City’s current zoning code regulates the land uses permitted in each area of the city, how buildings will be located (minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks), how tall buildings can be, maximum residential densities, minimum amounts of off-street parking required, and where and how landscaping and screening must be provided. Because the zoning ordinance is one of the most important tools available for implementing a master plan, the City’s zoning text will need to be substantially revised to allow and encourage the types of development the community envisions. In addition to proposing new land use classifications that must become part of the zoning ordinance (notably mixed use; see Future Land Use Plan, below), Design Lansing also proposes a new emphasis on placemaking that can become part of a revised zoning approach.

**Many people and organizations have a role to play in implementing Design Lansing, including:**

- The mayor and City Council.
- The Planning Commission.
- The staff of the Planning and Neighborhood Development Department with the collaboration of staff from all City departments.
- Many current and potential agency and organization partners: for example, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Ingham County Land Bank, Capital Area Transportation Authority, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Lansing Economic Development Corporation, the Lansing Public School District, the Board of Water & Light and Downtown Lansing, Inc.
- The leadership and staff of adjacent jurisdictions.
- Local institutions, for example, Lansing Community College, Sparrow Hospital, Ingham Medical Center, Cooley Law School and Davenport University.
- Non-governmental organizations including, for example, the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council, Habitat for Humanity, bicycle/pedestrian and food systems advocacy groups.
- Neighborhood groups and business organizations.
- Property owners/developers.
- Individual citizens.
A revised zoning ordinance can address the quality and character of development by incorporating appropriate requirements and/or incentives that influence how buildings are designed, how they relate to one another and to the street, where parking is located and how it is screened and landscaped, and where open space should be located and how it should be designed. Other important placemaking—or urban form—characteristics, such as street and block patterns and how streets are designed, can be addressed by revised City standards for engineering and the subdivision of land (see Chapter 8. Placemaking).

Utilizing a placemaking or form based code approach in the City’s zoning ordinance is one example of how Lansing can “make it easy to do the right thing,” encouraging more flexibility in responding to proposals from developers and reducing variance requirements.

**Public Improvements**

Infrastructure improvements can have a profound effect on plan implementation. Infrastructure investments can enhance the public realm and set the stage for private investment in accordance with development regulations.

A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a formal mechanism for considering, prioritizing and implementing capital expenditures covering a period of 6 years with the first year representing the current capital budget. A CIP allows improvement proposals—for streets, utilities, parks and municipal facilities—to be tested against the community’s adopted plans and policies. Examples of capital improvement projects recommended by Design Lansing include: complete street improvements; park and trail acquisition and development; sub-watershed stormwater management; and flood mitigation. Where State and federal grant funding is available, the City contribution to these capital improvements can be leveraged substantially.

**City Department Work Plans**

While Planning and Neighborhood Development (PND), in concert with the Planning Commission and City Council, will take the leading public sector role in working to implement Design Lansing recommendations, it is important that other City departments be familiar with the master plan and align their work plans and budgets to assist in its implementation. In particular, close coordination with the Parks and Recreation and Public Service Departments will be needed to implement green infrastructure and complete streets recommendations.

The City’s procurement policies can also be instrumental in implementing the plan. The purchase of real property can be used to assemble land for public improvements or to market for private development. The purchase of goods and materials can emphasize recycled content. Fleet purchases of energy efficient and alternative fuel vehicles can reduce the use of non-renewable resources and improve air quality.

**Partnerships**

As noted above, collaborative partnerships between the City, other municipalities and agencies, non-profits and community groups will be critical to plan
implementation. These partnerships are essential in addressing issues and initiatives that have a geographic scope that extends beyond city limits, such as water quality and stormwater management, transit, transportation planning and economic development. In an era of limited municipal resources, local partnerships with non-profits, community organizations, and business and neighborhood groups will also be essential. The City’s collaboration with the Ingham County Land Bank and community housing development organizations (CHODO’s) are good examples.

Incentives

Economic development incentives, while at times controversial, can be used to accomplish community goals. For example, the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority can capture the tax revenues generated by an increase in assessed value from private development on a qualified parcel to use for environmental remediation. Establishing an historic district can make Federal and State tax credits available to leverage qualifying improvements that restore historic properties. Façade loans and grants can leverage private investment to enhance the appearance of a business district. Existing incentives should be reviewed, and any new incentives designed, to ensure that they effectively implement comprehensive plan recommendations.

All of these tools work together to help implement the master plan to accomplish community goals. The action matrix (Table 8-1) on the following pages illustrates how these implementation tools relate to Design Lansing’s goals and objectives.
Table 8-1: Action Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use: Economic Development Goals and Objectives</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build competitiveness.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on placemaking and quality of life efforts.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More effectively market assets.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on mixed-use.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reinforce downtown as a regional mixed-use destination.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maximize synergy between downtown and the Capitol Complex.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage mixed use, walkability and height/density transitions on downtown edges.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capitalize on the urban reach of the Grand River.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support Old Town and REO Town as community-scale mixed-use districts.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage the restructuring of large shopping areas as community-scale mixed-use centers (Frandor, Logan Center area and Cedar/Jolly).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage the restructuring of strip commercial on major transit routes into neighborhood-scale mixed-use destination centers.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage a transition to walkable mixed-use development on urban connectors.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage the creation of mixed-use neighborhood-scale convenience centers.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage a mix of uses and a high quality of development on suburban gateway corridor segments.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide diverse job centers.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build on cluster strengths.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Locate major job centers on transit routes.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market mixed-use centers and urban connectors as new economy job locations.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote Lansing as a regional center for arts/culture.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attract and support innovators and entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support expansion of the technology infrastructure to support the new economy.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow/encourage institutions to grow in the city while enhancing neighborhoods, walkability and transit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage industrial investment where easy truck access to interstates is available without traveling residential streets.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue recruiting green and advanced manufacturing jobs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage the adaptive reuse of smaller vacant industrial sites and buildings for mixed use.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage job-oriented uses, green development and neighborhood transitions in the cleanup and reuse of large vacant industrial sites.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Land Use: Economic Development

#### Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus resources.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Build on assets and reinvest in key nodes and districts.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborate.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Continue regional collaboration in economic development using Lansing's capacity for higher densities and mixed use.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leverage the interest/investments of other agencies and community groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Use: Neighborhoods

#### Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengthen existing neighborhoods.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Build on the assets of older neighborhoods; encourage reinvestment and strengthen maintenance codes.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote compatible infill and renovation in all neighborhoods.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow medium-density residential (rather than commercial) on high traffic streets served by transit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support programs that reduce housing vacancies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support policies for aging in place.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to target improvement funds in established focus areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore right-sizing strategies in collaboration with neighborhoods.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage the reuse of surplus school sites consistent with the master plan.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expand housing choice.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make Lansing a more competitive choice for seniors, empty nesters, young professionals and students.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage higher-density housing options in transit-served mixed-use centers and corridors.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage mixed income housing.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore live-work units for artists and entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green all neighborhoods.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage green practices in all new development.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage the development of a model green neighborhood.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage green retrofits in existing neighborhoods.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Green Infrastructure Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support healthy natural systems.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Protect and link woodland and wetland fragments into a larger greenway network.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhance and promote the recreational and environmental value of Lansing’s river systems.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protect and expand the urban forest canopy.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encourage healthy lifestyles.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Expand and improve the River Trail.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preserve existing dedicated parks and natural areas.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use green development approaches in parks.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue special events and festivals.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support local food production and improve access to fresh food.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pursue green leadership.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Promote Lansing’s green assets/accomplishments.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage green site selection and site development, and building practices.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage green retrofits.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow for alternative energy approaches.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make land use and transportation decisions that reduce Lansing’s carbon footprint.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transportation Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide transportation choices.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to Implement Lansing’s complete streets ordinance.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement Lansing’s Non-Motorized Plan.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adopt land use policies and encourage investment that supports transit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adopt technology to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Redesign streets.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Design streets to fit the character of their surroundings.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve traffic flow to reduce crash potential along major arterial streets.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use green/low-impact development strategies in street design.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengthen city image.</th>
<th>City Departments</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Capital Improvements</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improve visual character along major arterials and at major gateways.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce the impact of parking on Lansing’s appearance, environment and walkability.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve wayfinding, especially from the airport.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

While plan implementation will be a long-term process that capitalizes on and leverages the interests and initiatives of many agencies, groups and individuals, the City should actively seek opportunities to advance implementation of the top priorities expressed by the community in the process of plan development. These priorities are listed below, but are not ranked ordered. They each cut across the comprehensive plan’s topic areas; as a result, they can achieve multiple objectives. In addition, they build on and leverage on-going initiatives and investments. Illustrative examples of short- and mid-term City implementation actions are suggested.

Encourage the development of a hierarchy of mixed-use centers that incorporate higher-density residential housing.

- **CATA’s East Michigan Avenue Study** – Continue to participate in and support this collaborative study as Lansing’s best short- to mid-term opportunity to implement enhanced transit and complete street design improvements. These public investments (and a revised zoning ordinance that allows and encourages mixed use, walkable and transit-supportive development) can serve as a catalyst for the private investment needed to implement key *Design Lansing* recommendations and to demonstrate their placemaking potential.

- **Frandor Special Study** – Explore the potential for forming a multi-community, multi-agency, property owner group to prepare a mixed-use center plan for the Frandor area. As part of the East Michigan Avenue corridor linking downtown to Michigan State University, this area is an important gateway to the cities of Lansing and East Lansing, and to Lansing Township. Redevelopment/reinvestment interest will be substantially increased if the current CATA study leads to corridor and transit investments. In addition, the potential to repurpose the former Red Cedar Golf Course could help to solve a major stormwater management problem.

- **Zoning Revisions** – As an immediate short-term step, the adopted overlay zoning district for Old Town, REO Town, East Michigan Avenue and West Saginaw Street should be revised consistent with *Design Lansing* recommendations for mixed-use centers and urban mixed-use corridors. Work should also begin on a more comprehensive revision of the zoning ordinance to include mixed-use centers at all scales (regional, community and neighborhood) including permitted and special uses; standards for building height and placement, parking and landscaping; other placemaking requirements; and bonus incentives (see Future Land Use Plan, below).

- **Ingham County Land Bank Fast Track Authority**. The Land Bank could play an important role in helping to assemble land in proposed mixed-use center and urban mixed-use corridor locations by holding foreclosed commercial properties and assisting in packaging redevelopment projects.

- **Capitol Complex** – Consider how best to initiate a conversation with the State of Michigan (State) on collaborative planning for improving Capitol Complex/downtown synergy and neighborhood transitions.
Implement the Non-Motorized Plan.

- **Engineering standards** - The Public Services Department will need to adopt the recommended typologies for street design (see Chapter 6. Transportation, Redesign Streets) and develop related engineering standards. This should be done as soon as possible to ensure that every street improvement/reconstruction project includes appropriate on-street bike and pedestrian facilities.

- **Federal SAFETEA-LU grants** - The City should continue to seek the competitive grant dollars available to help support the implementation of non-motorized improvements, including the development of proposed off-street trails.

- **Bike pilot programs** - The City might also consider experimenting with a pilot program for closing selected streets (or street loops) to traffic on several spring/summer/fall Sundays to attract less experienced bicyclists and build their skills, knowledge and confidence. Volunteer citizen assistance can be recruited to help with promotion and implementation. Bicycle education could also be part of the pilot program.

Provide diverse job centers.

In addition to the implementation strategies related to facilitating the creation of job opportunities in new mixed-use centers (see #1, above), short- and mid-term steps might include the following:

- **Downtown Edge Zone** – Work with the Lansing Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) to identify building and site reuse potentials in the downtown edge zone along the Pere Marquette industrial corridor for knowledge-based workers and/or arts/artisan businesses. It may also be appropriate to consider the location of a business incubator in this area.

- **Industrial Location** – In addition to revising zoning regulations related to industrial development, the City might ask LEDC to consider and endorse Design Lansing’s recommended industrial location policies and to use them in prioritizing financial assistance awards.

- **GM Riverfront Site** – Approach GM about developing a plan for R&D and residential reuse on the portions of the riverfront site located along and to the west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK). Discuss the potential for making the industrial reuse of the remainder of the site a sustainable development demonstration project (reduced permeable surface area, stormwater infiltration, green roofs, landscaped (riparian] buffers to the river and riverbank restoration).

- **Downtown Educational Institutions** – Engage institutions of higher eduction in discussions regarding future growth and physical planning to enhance their role in strengthening downtown’s economy and sense of place.

Encourage green neighborhoods (new and retrofit).

- **Green Development Practice Incentives** – Include incentives for green development practices in revised zoning.

- **Comstock Development Area (formly Michigan School for the Blind)** – Work with the selected developer to make the redevelopment plan for the School for the Blind site a green plan.
• **Hands-On Neighborhood Training** – Build on the educational efforts of “Go Green Lansing!” and Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council by asking a non-profit to develop hands-on training programs for neighborhood tree inventories and planting efforts; rain gardens and rain barrels; and/or energy efficiency improvements.

**Encourage transit.**

• **CATA’s East Michigan Avenue Study** – Continue to support enhanced transit and complete street improvement efforts on East Michigan Avenue to capitalize on high ridership (see also #1, above).

• **Zoning Revisions** – Revise zoning to better control parking, especially in downtown and along major transit corridors. Less abundant parking that is priced to reflect its true cost can help to encourage a shift from commuting by automobile to commuting by transit.

• **Transportation Demand Management** – Initiate a program to work with Lansing’s largest downtown and near downtown employers (the State, Sparrow Hospital and Lansing Community College) to encourage the adoption of transportation demand management programs.

**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

**Existing Land Use Patterns**

For the most part, the city is developed with a land use pattern than has been established over the past 150 years. The existing land uses and urban design characteristics of the city create a mosaic of pattern types and these existing patterns have been described in Chapter 7. Placemaking and in figure 7-3 (page 160). Downtown and the Capitol Complex are the center of the city’s older urban core and are surrounded by relatively dense urban neighborhoods with industrial corridors flanking the rivers and rail lines. More recent development—between the city’s core and its outer edges—follows a more suburban land use pattern. Single-family neighborhoods have been developed at lower densities, and commercial uses line major roadway corridors and are located in larger shopping centers at major intersections and highway interchanges. In contrast to the smaller parks serving older neighborhoods, large natural areas along Sycamore Creek and the Red Cedar River (on the eastern edge of the city) have been protected as parks. Industrial uses in the more recently developed parts of the city are concentrated around the airport (in the northwest) and the Midway Industrial Park (in the southeast).

**Future Land Use**

The future land use plan on the following page graphically depicts the vision identified and refined with the community’s participation. The purpose, typical uses and urban design—or placemaking—characteristics of each future land use classification are described below under Future Land Use Plan Classifications. Together, the future land use plan and use classification descriptions provide the foundation for implementing many of Design Lansing’s major recommendations and describe the desired characteristics of Lansing’s future pattern types.
Figure 8-1: Future Land Use Plan
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN CLASSIFICATIONS

Open Space – Dedicated Park
- Purpose: Publicly-owned land that has been dedicated to park and recreation use and cannot be sold without voter approval.
- Typical location/location criteria: Not applicable.
- Typical uses: Open space, recreational facilities, community gardens, natural area protection and interpretation.
- Typical densities/building heights: Not applicable.
- Placemaking characteristics: Not applicable.

Open Space – Quasi-Public/Utility
- Purpose: Land used as utility and rail corridors.
- Typical location/location criteria: Not applicable.
- Typical uses: Utility and rail corridors.
- Typical densities/building heights: Not applicable.
- Placemaking characteristics: Not applicable.

Low-Density Residential
- Purpose: To provide an environment for low-density, single-family detached dwellings.
- Typical location/location criteria: Predominantly those single-family neighborhoods developed after World War II with larger block and lot sizes and lower development densities than in the pre-World War II neighborhoods that are located closer to the downtown area.
- Typical uses: Single-family detached homes.
- Typical densities/building heights: Six dwelling units per acre or less; 1- to 2-story building heights.
- Placemaking characteristics: Building heights, lot widths and front yard setbacks vary, but are largely consistent within individual neighborhoods. Attached garages and two-car driveways are common.

Medium-Low-Density Residential
- Purpose: To provide an environment for medium-low-density single-family detached; single-family attached (townhomes); and two-family dwelling units.
- Typical location/location criteria: Predominantly those single-family neighborhoods located closer to the downtown area and developed prior to World War II with smaller block and lot sizes and higher average densities than in post-World War II neighborhoods.
- Typical uses: Single-family detached, single-family attached (townhomes) and two-family homes. Granny Flats, or apartments above a garage or building that is not the principle structure, may be permitted in two+ family zoning districts under certain conditions.
• Typical densities/building heights: Six to ten dwelling units per acre; 2-story minimum and 3-story maximum building heights.

• Placemaking characteristics: Front yard setbacks are generally consistent and shallower than in post-World War II neighborhoods located farther from downtown. Garages are usually detached and located to the rear of the principal structure; driveways are often one-car wide.

Medium-Density Residential – Urban

• Purpose: To protect existing single- and multi-family dwelling units in downtown’s edge zone.

• Typical location/location criteria: Downtown edge zone.

• Typical uses: Single-family detached, single-family attached, two-family homes and multi-family buildings. Granny Flats, or apartments above a garage or building that is not the principle structure, may be permitted in two+ family zoning districts under certain conditions.

• Typical densities/building heights: Ten to twenty dwelling units per acre; minimum height of 2 stories and maximum height of 3 stories.

• Placemaking characteristics: For new development; consistent, shallow front yard setbacks should be required: buildings should be parallel to and facing the street; parking should be located to the rear; building entries with porches or stoops should be oriented to the street. Minimum percent transparency and vertical orientation for windows should be considered for facades visible from the street.

Medium-Density Residential – Suburban

• Purpose: To provide an environment for multi-family dwelling units in a more suburban format (on larger parcels and served by surface parking).

• Typical location/location criteria: Already existing on the edges of the city. NOTE: For future development, the location of medium and higher-density residential in more urban, mixed-use areas and along corridors served by transit is encouraged (see below).

• Typical uses: Multi-family apartment complexes; mobile home parks when approved as a special use. Conditional uses include schools, churches and residential care facilities.

• Typical densities/building heights: Ten to twenty dwelling units per acre; 2- to 3-story building heights.

• Placemaking characteristics: Large blocks and curvilinear street patterns are common. In the future, a street pattern that extends (and elaborates) the existing street grid is recommended, as well as the location of buildings (and building entries) to face the street (and public spaces) with parking located to the rear.

Residential Corridor

• Purpose: To allow medium-density residential development in a variety of urban formats, rather than a conversion of residential to commercial use, along certain high-traffic streets that also serve as transit routes or are within easy walking distance (¼ mile).
Typical location/location criteria: Located on or within walking distance of an existing transit route currently developed for low-density or medium-low-density residential use where some commercial uses have also been developed, indicating pressure to transition from residential to commercial use.

Typical uses: Townhomes, stacked flats, multi-family apartments and lofts.

Typical densities/building heights: Twenty to fifty dwelling units per acre; 2- to 3-story building heights.

Placemaking characteristics: Buildings (and building entries) should be located to face the street with relatively shallow landscaped setbacks (10-20 feet); parking should be located to the rear accessed by a service alley; and context-sensitive architectural design should be utilized.

**Downtown Mixed-Use Center: Core**

Purpose: To maintain and enhance the vitality of downtown as a regional destination by encouraging a mix of uses; reinforcing the compact, walkable character of the core area; emphasizing the quality and visual interest of architecture; carefully managing parking; and maintaining the presence of older, often historic buildings.

Typical location/location criteria: The area located within an approximate 5-minute walk (¼ mile) of the intersection of Allegan Street and Grand Avenue.

Typical uses: Offices, institutions, retail, personal services, entertainment, hotel and residential. Ground floor retail uses and residential should be encouraged. High rise office and residential towers with large surface parking lots and limited street frontage, and automobile-oriented uses should not be permitted.

Typical densities/building heights: Minimum height of 2 stories. For Washington Square between Michigan Avenue and St. Joseph Street the maximum building height should be 6 stories to maintain the intimate pedestrian character of this corridor. The remaining parts of this district do not have a height limitation. Base density/height and bonuses for residential, mixed-income housing, ground floor retail, open space and other desired development features will need to be determined. Residential densities should range between 60-100 dwelling units per acre.

Placemaking characteristics: Buildings should be located at the sidewalk edge with a nearly continuous street facade and a clearly defined primary entrance oriented to the street. Minimum ground floor transparency (windows and doors) should be established. Ground floor retail storefronts are encouraged. Building base and top should be articulated. Facade articulation into vertical units replicating traditional downtown building widths (e.g., at 30-foot intervals) should be considered. Materials standards should be considered. Surface parking is discouraged with deck parking underground, on-site above the ground floor and/or in the interior of the block, or in publicly-owned structures (funded in part by payments in lieu of parking). Parking ratio maximums should be considered.

**Mixed-use densities**

The residential density ranges provided in mixed-use centers and corridors assume that the first floor of the buildings are non-residential in use, with residential units above. This may not be the case in every mixed-use project with a residential components, and the desired residential density may be adjusted upward or downward if less or more non-residential use is incorporated.
**Downtown Mixed-Use Center: Edge**

- **Purpose:** To support the downtown area by allowing a mix of uses and to enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment; maintain the presence of older, often historic buildings; and provide for a transition in building height and use intensity to near-downtown neighborhoods.

- **Typical location/location criteria:** Located between the downtown core and I-496 on the south, Old Town on the north and near-downtown neighborhoods on the east and west.

- **Typical uses:** Office, institutions, entertainment, live-work and residential. Retail and personal services as an accessory use should be located in the same building as a primary use. Automobile-oriented uses and light industrial are permitted with special approval. High rise office and residential towers with large surface parking lots and limited street frontage should not be permitted.

- **Typical densities/building heights:** Base density/height and bonuses for residential, mixed-income housing, ground floor retail, open space and other desired development features will need to be determined. Minimum 2 stories; up to 10 stories should be considered with height overlay zones and bonuses for desired development features. Residential densities of 20-100 dwelling units/acre depending on sub-area location and existing development context. Refer to the descriptions of the sub areas found starting on page 52 as a reference to density and character.

- **Placemaking characteristics:** Buildings should maintain a consistent setback and nearly continuous street facade to frame the street, with a clearly-defined primary entrance oriented to the street. Surface parking should be located on the interior of the block where possible and should be well landscaped and screened in all cases. Parking ratio maximums should be considered. Building base and top should be articulated. Facade articulation into vertical components should be considered. Minimum transparency (windows and doors) requirements should be established. Transitional features requirements (architectural elements and building massing height step backs) to mitigate potential conflicts between higher intensity uses and residential uses should be considered. Historic preservation of valuable existing buildings, and residentially-scaled and detailed new architecture should be encouraged in areas where older residential structures remain and on neighborhood edges.

**Community Mixed-Use Center**

- **Purpose:** To encourage the transformation of large commercial concentrations into mixed-use districts.

- **Typical location/location criteria:** Major commercial centers located on high ridership transit routes/major thoroughfares (Frandor and Logan Center area, and Jolly Road and South Cedar Street intersection).

- **Typical uses:** Offices, institutions, live-work, retail, personal services, entertainment, hotel and residential. Ground floor retail uses are encouraged in the mixed-use center core. Larger footprint retail and office uses are allowed, but should be part of an overall plan that includes other scale uses and the integration of placemaking principles noted below. R&D
and selected light industrial is permitted with special approval.

- Typical densities/building heights: Base density/height and bonuses for residential, mixed-income housing, ground floor retail, open space and other desired development features will need to be determined. Building heights of 4-6 stories (25-60 dwelling units per acre) transitioning to 2-3 stories (6 -20 dwelling units per acre) and a more residential emphasis on neighborhood edges.

- Placemaking characteristics: As Community Mixed Use Centers are redeveloped they should move from the existing suburban development patterns to a more urban character. The internal street pattern should be encouraged to create a typically urban grid of streets and small to moderate size blocks. Buildings should be located to frame the street with parking located to the rear. Shared and deck parking should be encouraged. Primary building entrances should be oriented to the street. Retail should be clustered to create a shopping core with ground floor retail storefronts; a minimum transparency requirement should be considered. Residentially-scaled and detailed structures should be encouraged on neighborhood edges.

**District Mixed-Use Center**

- Purpose: To support the mixed-use character and pedestrian scale of the existing Old Town, East Michigan Avenue and REO Town districts, and to encourage the consolidation of retail and commercial uses in walkable, mixed-use centers located at key intersections along high ridership transit routes and within walking distance of neighborhoods.

- Typical location/location criteria: At key intersections on high ridership transit routes such as South Cedar Street (spaced at least ½ mile apart), and at existing mixed use centers including Old Town, East Michigan Avenue, and Reo Town. Locations illustrated are conceptual; other locations will be considered. Public assistance and investments should be targeted at these locations (and in downtown and community mixed-use centers) to encourage the consolidation and clustering of retail uses in walkable cores.

- Typical uses: Retail, personal services, office, live-work and residential. Automobile-oriented uses should not be permitted.

- Typical densities/building heights: Building heights of 2 stories minimum; 5 stories maximum with incentives. 7 Residential densities of 10-25 units per acre should be permitted; higher residential densities of 25-50 dwelling units per acre should be permitted on key transit routes (e.g., South Cedar Street, East Michigan Avenue) and with incentives.

- Placemaking characteristics: Buildings should be located to frame the street with parking located to the rear. Shared parking should be encouraged. Reductions in required parking should be offered as an incentive. Primary building entrances should be oriented to the street. Retail should be clustered to create a shopping core with ground floor retail storefronts. Residentially-scaled and detailed structures should be encouraged on neighborhood edges.
**Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center**

- **Purpose:** To encourage the location of convenience retail and services within walking distance of neighborhoods.
- **Typical location/location criteria:** On major streets at key intersections.
- **Typical uses:** Retail, personal services, office, live-work and residential. Automobile-oriented uses not permitted.
- **Typical densities/building heights:** Building heights of 2-3 stories. Residential is anticipated as upper story use (10-25 dwelling units/acre).
- **Placemaking characteristics:** Buildings should be located to frame the street with parking located to the rear. Shared parking should be encouraged. Primary building entrances should be oriented to the street. Buildings should be designed to allow ground floor retail and residential and/or office above.

**Urban Mixed-Use Corridor**

- **Purpose:** To encourage the redevelopment of strip commercial corridors between cores to create a transit-supportive mix of uses, with a clear pedestrian orientation.
- **Typical location/location criteria:** Segments of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, South Cedar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue north of Jolly Road; East Michigan Avenue from downtown to the city limits; and North Grand River Avenue to the east and west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.
- **Typical uses:** Retail and personal services, medium-density residential in an urban format (see Residential Corridor), office, live-work, R&D and selected light industrial with special approval. Smaller-scale automobile-oriented uses may be acceptable when appropriate architecture and screening are used, and driveway curb cuts can be located and designed to maintain a clear pedestrian orientation.
- **Typical densities/building heights:** Twenty to sixty dwelling units per acre (townhomes, stacked flats, multi-family apartments and lofts); 2-4 stories in height.
- **Placemaking characteristics:** Buildings (and building entries) should be located to face the street; shallow landscaped setbacks (0-15 feet) should be permitted. Parking should be located to the rear; reductions in required parking (and parking maximums) should be considered. Shared driveways and cross-access easements along the rear property line should be encouraged. Storefront design should be required for retail and service uses. Minimum transparency requirements should be established. Facade articulation into vertical units should be considered. Context-sensitive architectural design should be utilized.

**Suburban Commercial**

- **Purpose:** To allow for general retail and commercial use, including large footprint and automobile-oriented uses, in a suburban development format that also encourages a mix of uses and accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.
• Typical location/location criteria: Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, South Cedar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue south of Jolly Road; the Edgewood commercial area; North Grand River at Capital City Boulevard and west; and North East Street.

• Typical uses: General and convenience retail uses; medium-density residential in a suburban format (see Medium-Density Residential, above); office; and light industrial with special approval.

• Typical densities/building heights: Ten to twenty dwelling units per acre and 2-3 stories for residential; 1-3 stories for non-residential.

• Placemaking characteristics: Buildings located close to the street (with parking located to the side and rear) should be encouraged at major intersections; otherwise, parking should be permitted between buildings and the street. Buildings should be oriented toward the street with a clearly-defined primary entry. Landscaped setbacks should be required to screen parking from the street. Interior parking lot landscaping should be required to provide pedestrian access routes, define vehicular circulation patterns and provide for tree planting and stormwater management. Shared driveways and connections between parking lots on adjacent parcels should be encouraged to limit driveway curb cuts. Sidewalks should be required.

**Institutional**

• Purpose: To allow for the development of public and private institutions.

• Typical location/location criteria: Abutting an arterial, suburban or activity corridor. Locations served by transit are preferred.

• Typical uses: Hospitals, institutions of higher education.

• Typical densities/building heights: Building heights of 60 feet; can be higher with special approval when located a similar distance from a residential district.

• Placemaking characteristics: Buildings should be located to frame the street with parking located to the rear (or interior of the block) whenever possible. Transportation demand management programs and reduced parking requirements should be considered. Primary building entries should be oriented to the street. Minimum transparency requirements for facades visible from the street should be considered. The stepping down of building heights to residential edges should be encouraged. Landscaped setbacks similar to those for residential structures should be required on residential streets.

**Research and Development (R&D)**

• Purpose: To allow for technology-based business, including testing and limited assembly and production, in a high quality environment.

• Typical location/location criteria: As a research park (Michigan State University Corporate Research Park) and/or as a reuse of industrial sites
close to urban neighborhoods (GM Verlinden site; Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard between I-496 and the Grand River, and at Mount Hope Road and South Washington Avenue).

- Typical uses: Technology-based research and development including office space, labs and limited assembly and production space.
- Typical densities/building heights: Building heights of 3 stories and/or 45 feet; high bay space should be permitted.
- Placemaking characteristics (in urban areas): Internal street and block pattern should be created extending the surrounding street grid. Buildings should be located to frame the street with parking located to the rear. Consistently dimensioned landscaped front yard setbacks (10-20 feet) should be required. Primary building entrances should be oriented to the street. For facades visible from the street and/or adjacent to residential, articulation into smaller architectural increments and minimum transparency should be required. Higher quality building materials than in industrial classifications (e.g., no DriVit or metal siding) should be required.

Light Industrial

- Purpose: To provide an environment for commercial services, sales, warehousing/wholesaling, and manufacturing when located within an enclosed structure. No outdoor storage of materials or equipment other than sales displays should be permitted.
- Typical location/location criteria: Within easy access of rail, air and highway transportation without traveling neighborhood streets. Clustering of uses in a business park environment served by an internal street system is preferred.
- Typical uses: A broad range of uses/activities that are enclosed within a structure from kennels and self-storage facilities to plumbing, heating and electrical contractors, to commercial bakeries and laundries, to warehousing and wholesaling, to the manufacturing and processing of food, pharmaceutical, cosmetics/toiletries and similar products.
- Typical densities/building heights: Building heights of 60 feet; can be higher with special approval and when located a similar distance from a residential district.
- Placemaking characteristics: Landscaped front yard setbacks should be required; consistent front yard setbacks are preferred. Minimum 40-foot setback with landscaped buffering should be required from a residential district. Parking should be located to the side or rear with the exception of limited customer/visitor parking near the building entrance. Parking lot screening from the street and/or residential districts should be required; interior parking lot landscaping and stormwater management should be required.

General Industrial

- Purpose: To provide an environment for industrial facilities that are larger in scale and require outdoor materials or equipment storage.
- Typical location/location criteria: GM riverfront site, Midway Industrial
Park, and along the rail line north and east of Old Town. Within easy access of rail, air and highway transportation without traveling neighborhood streets.

- Typical uses: Power plants, automobile component manufacturing and assembly; scrap processing/recycling; and outdoor storage of equipment or materials. Light industrial uses should also be permitted.

- Typical densities/building heights: Building heights of 60 feet; can be higher with special approval and when located a similar distance from a residential district.

- Placemaking characteristics: Landscaped front yard setbacks should be required; consistent front yard setbacks are preferred. Minimum 40-foot setback with landscaped buffering should be required from a residential district. Parking should be located to the side or rear with the exception of limited customer/visitor parking near the building entrance. Parking lot screening from the street and/or residential districts should be required; interior parking lot landscaping and stormwater management should be required. Materials and equipment storage should be located to the side or rear of buildings and screened from public streets and residential districts.

ZONING PLAN AND LAND USE SEQUENCING STANDARDS

*Design Lansing* sets a vision for the future of the city, including recommendations on what to preserve, enhance or transform. A comparison of the existing land use map (see Chapter 1. Introduction, map 1-1) to the future land use plan (map 8-1) shows the areas where the greatest change will be required for the City to achieve the desired patterns of land use and development character. The most significant examples of transformation are the areas used for automobile-oriented commercial where the development of mixed-use centers and corridors will be encouraged.

Major changes in the existing zoning ordinance text will also be needed to update existing districts and create new ones. For example, the future mixed-use center classifications at community and neighborhood scales and the urban mixed-use corridor classification will require new zoning districts to encourage and allow the redevelopment of automobile-oriented commercial areas as mixed-use neighborhoods with specific design standards and incentives for walkable, transit-oriented development. The zoning text for other current districts will also require revision to include standards and incentives for placemaking (for example to control the location of parking, to include pedestrian-oriented design standards and/or to ensure compatible neighborhood infill development).

The future land use plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use decisions over 5 to 15 years. It is a long-range vision of how land uses should evolve over time. It should not be confused with the City’s zoning map, which is a current mechanism for regulating development. Thus, not all properties will be immediately rezoned to correspond with the future land use plan; zoning map changes can be made gradually so that redevelopment can be managed.

The future land use map as well as *Design Lansing’s* overall goals, objectives
and development recommendations should be consulted to judge the merits of each rezoning proposal. The City should also consider the following sequencing standards:

- Any rezoning should be consistent with the goals of the master plan.
- Any rezoning or development proposal must be compatible with the master plan as a whole and able to stand and function on its own without harm to the quality of surrounding land uses.
- There must be sufficient public infrastructure to accommodate any proposed development or the types of uses that would be allowed under the proposed zoning change. This must include sufficient sewer and water capacity, transportation improvements and all other necessary infrastructure improvements provided concurrent with the development.
- Redevelopment should be compatible with other surrounding land uses or provide for an appropriate transition in land uses with adequate buffering.

Figure 8-2 presents a regional composite of adopted future land use plans, including the future land use plan for the City of Lansing.

The following table provides a zoning plan indicating how Design Lansing’s future land use classifications relate to the current zoning ordinance districts. In certain instances, more than one zoning district may be applicable to a future land use category. Notes are provided to guide the Planning Commission in preparing to update the existing zoning ordinance text.

Given the importance of community gardening and the development of the food infrastructure of Lansing, the Master Plan recommends that the city monitor ongoing modifications to state regulations and court law relative to urban agriculture and consider establishing local zoning policies in the future.
Figure 8-2: Regional Future Land Use. Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission with new Lansing future land use inlaid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Land Use Classification</th>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>&quot;DU/ Acre&quot;</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Space – Dedicated Park</td>
<td>• All districts except Light and Heavy Industrial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Public parks are permitted in multiple zoning districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space – Public/Quasi-Public</td>
<td>• Varies</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Public/quasi-public uses and associated open space are permitted in multiple zoning districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Density Residential</td>
<td>• A Residential District</td>
<td>Up to 6</td>
<td>Single-family detached housing in the city’s outer neighborhoods. Consider additional study of neighborhood patterns to define placemaking characteristics for compatible infill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Low-Density Residential</td>
<td>• A-1 Residential District</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Urban-density single-family, including attached and duplex. Consider additional study of neighborhood patterns to define placemaking characteristics for compatible infill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Low-Density Residential – Suburban</td>
<td>• DM-1 Residential District</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>Multi-family in the city’s outer neighborhoods. Modify density and placemaking standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Corridor</td>
<td>• DM-3 Residential District</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>Residential on high traffic urban corridors served by transit. Modify permitted density. Modify/add placemaking standards/incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Mixed-Use Center: Edge</td>
<td>• D-1 Professional Office District</td>
<td>10-40</td>
<td>To create transitions between the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods. Modify permitted uses and densities. Modify/add placemaking standards/incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Neighborhood Destination Mixed-Use Center</td>
<td>• New District</td>
<td>10-20; up to 40 on key transit routes</td>
<td>A new zoning district to guide continued investment in Old Town, REO Town, and the redevelopment of automobile-oriented shopping centers and nodes on strip commercial corridors as transit-served, mixed-use neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Convenience Mixed-Use Center</td>
<td>• E-1 Apartment/Shop</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Mixed-use nodes to provide services for surrounding neighborhoods. Modify permitted uses and density. Modify/add placemaking standards/incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Mixed-Use Corridor</td>
<td>• New District</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>Mixed-use development for urban activity corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Commercial</td>
<td>• F Commercial District</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>Automobile-oriented shopping centers and suburban corridors. Add placemaking standards and incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>• Varies</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Institutional uses are permitted in multiple zoning districts depending on the type and size of the use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>• New District</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Research and development business parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial</td>
<td>• G-2 Wholesale District</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Modify permitted uses and building heights. Modify/add placemaking standards/incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Industrial</td>
<td>• I Heavy Industrial District</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Modify permitted building heights. Modify/add placemaking standards/incentives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DU = Dwelling Units
CONCLUSION

Lansing has plenty of assets to build on: an increasingly diversified economy, a technologically advanced manufacturing sector, an emerging downtown, budding business districts like Old Town and REO Town, the riverfront and park system, great neighborhoods, quality higher education, the State Capitol . . . the list goes on. Design Lansing focuses on preserving and enhancing what is good and transforming what is not.

The guiding principles of the plan are the principles that will propel us forward:

- Placemaking – creating and enhancing places that are attractive to residents and visitors alike.
- Sustainability – developing in a manner that has staying power – economically, socially and environmentally.
- Livability – strengthening our neighborhoods, providing housing choices and supporting active lifestyles.
- Stewardship – preserving and enhancing our assets, fostering pride and creating a culture of investment in our city.

Lansing has shown that it can unite around a new vision – the vision described in this plan and adopted by the City. That vision will not be realized, however, without the continued support of Lansing’s citizens. This community support is needed to ensure that:

- The goals, objectives and policies of the plan are put into practice.
- Functional plans, (e.g. corridor improvement plans, streetscape plans, the Consolidated Plan, the Parks and Recreation Plan, etc.) support the comprehensive plan.
- Regulatory realignment is implemented to reflect new realities and the new vision. Placemaking, quality and community appearance are key elements of Lansing’s future success.
- The plan is updated regularly, with a course correction every five years as required by law.

The plan encourages individual action. Every façade restored, every house rehabbed, every yard landscaped and every work of public art contributes to the sense of place so crucial to Lansing’s future success. Champions are also needed to advocate for plan recommendations in every arena.

Moreover, the vision for Lansing’s future is so ambitious and comprehensive that it requires collaboration with major agencies, businesses and organizations. The City can’t do it all. The City doesn’t own it all. Collaboration is essential to achieve win-win solutions that benefit the community and the region.

By focusing our efforts on coordinated projects, and leveraging each other’s resources, the Lansing community can accomplish through the power of partnerships what we cannot do as individuals.

As the planning phase of Design Lansing draws to a close, we thank you for your participation in the master plan process. We also want to thank all those who worked on the plan, from conducting the initial research and conceptualizing
the project to seeking and coordinating public input. Finally, we invite you to 
contribute, individually or collectively, in the implementation phase, and to feel 
the satisfaction of making a real difference in your community.
CHAPTER 8 NOTES

1. See Chapter 1. Introduction for a brief description of these (and other) recent planning efforts.


3. In Lansing, the Planning and Neighborhood Development Department includes not only planning functions, but also building safety, code compliance, neighborhood development programs, economic development (under contract to the Lansing Economic Development Corporation) and parking.

4. The Public Service Department is responsible for environmental protection, engineering and transportation planning.

5. All City of Lansing Parkland is dedicated by City Council resolutions, which are contained in the official City Council Proceedings. Any references to parks or parkland on maps within this document are for illustrative purposes only. Please refer to the Lansing City Council proceedings for a complete and accurate inventory of City dedicated parkland: Resolution 145 of 2003, and Resolution 316 of 2011; incorporated herein by reference.

6. The preliminary transect analysis/pattern types identify three low-density, suburban neighborhood types and three medium-low-density neighborhood types based on variations in street patterns (curvilinear vs. grid), lot widths, number of stories, garage placement and driveway width. Additional study will be required to determine whether and/how low-density and medium-low-density residential land use classifications should be further defined based on variations in valued urban form characteristics. This work will look at quantitative characteristics to develop the metrics needed to update the zoning ordinance. The study should also address more qualitative urban form characteristics including, for example, material quality and consistency requirements; building orientation and entrance definition; window patterns/orientation; and overall facade transparency.

7. Automobile-oriented uses include, for example, gas stations, car washes, drive-in or drive-through facilities and vehicle sales.

8. Additional building height (and/or reduced parking requirements) should be offered in exchange for desired uses and urban design characteristics, for example: transit stop, bicycle parking, affordable housing/mixed-income housing and upgraded materials.