

LAND USE

One of the primary purposes of a community master or comprehensive plan is to guide decisions that directly affect the development and redevelopment of land. Different land uses place different demands and degrees of demand on public services, utilities and infrastructure. Different land uses have different fiscal implications for local governments and their ability

to provide high quality services.

Different land uses also affect the character and function of a community. Ideally, a community would strive to balance land uses which provide jobs and generate economic wealth with

those that provide recreation, stimulation, and respite. Achieving such a balance is, obviously, a difficult task as these objectives are too often perceived to be in opposition to one another.

This document has already discussed core issues associated with land use, but this section focuses directly on the extent and location of current land uses. It also proposes how existing land use patterns might be changed over time to better meet the goals and objectives described above. This proposal is expressed in the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM is an important document that will act as a foundation for land use decisions including

While a future land use plan can propose a bold vision for the future, it should also account for the constraints imposed by things as they are now. After all, planning for a better future is not the same as wishing for one.

- Formulation and interpretation of regulations (for example zoning);
- Investment of limited public resources into different types of infrastructure;
- Efforts to improve quality of life and promote public health, safety, and welfare.

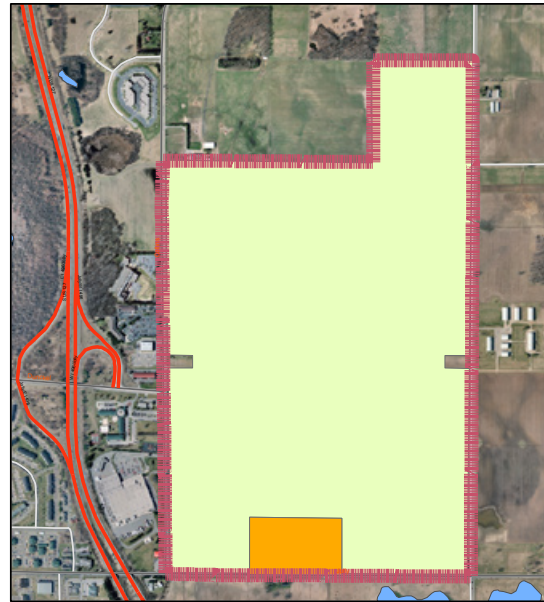
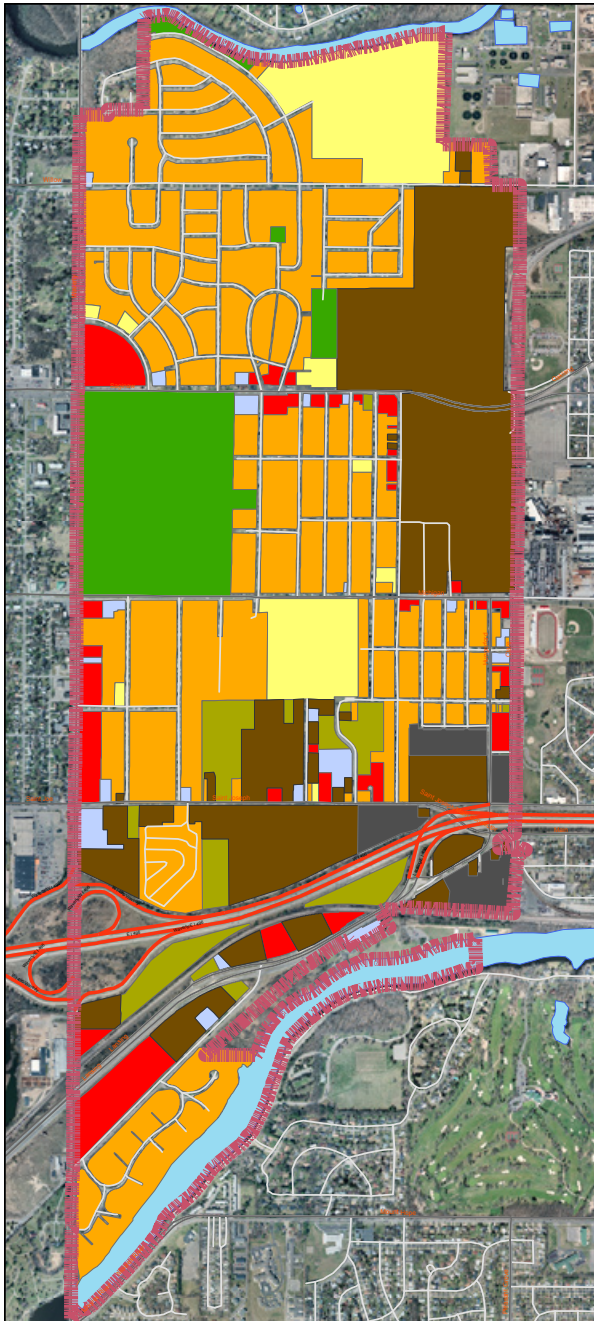
Existing Land Use

Existing land uses have been divided into the 9 distinct categories defined below. Categories were selected to best identify the way a particular property is currently used. They are necessarily broad

in order to facilitate meaningful comparison between categories. Land uses that are in some ways unique are grouped together based on important characteristics that are common to them. For example, commercial retail land uses could include 1 chair barber shops and 80,000 square foot big box retail outlets. Despite the obvious differences between these two types of retail land use, they are treated similarly by current local land use regulation, and (although different by degree) they require similar infrastructure and appurtenances and function in much the same way.

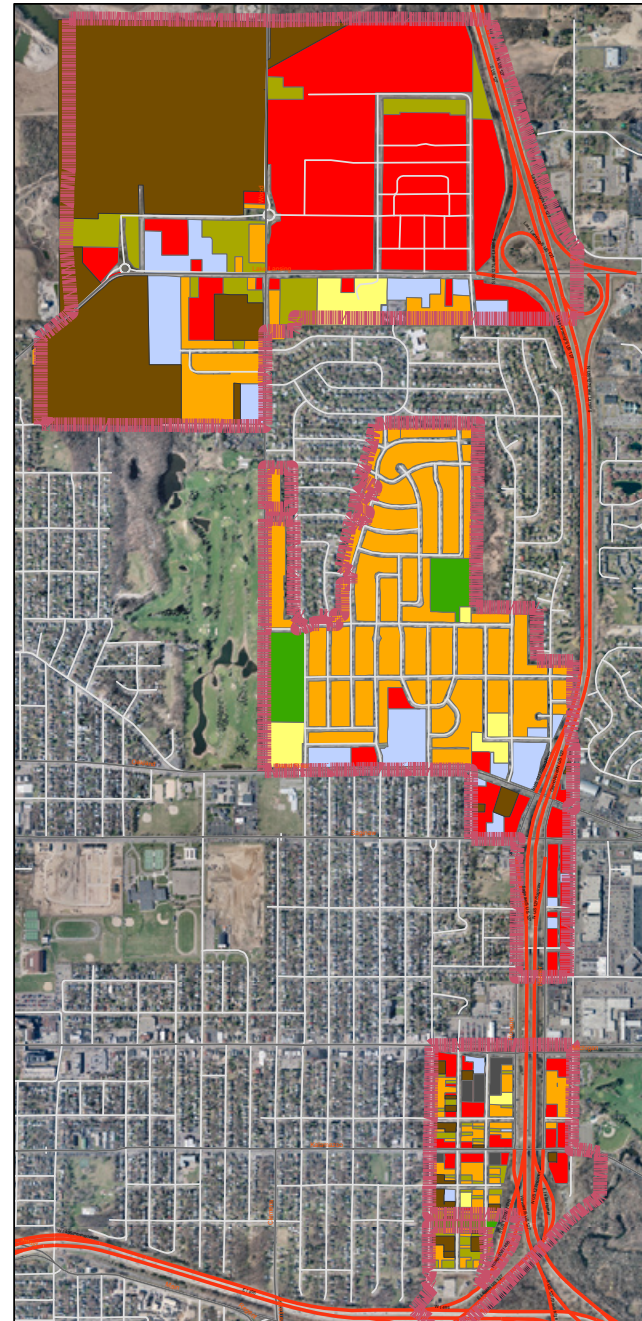
As Table 15 and Figure 13 show, residential land uses (single and multi-family housing) occupy more land than any other single land use covering nearly 750 acres or





Legend

-  Township boundary
-  Highways
-  Major roads
-  Surface Bodies of Water
-  Residential
-  Retail and Services
-  Office
-  Industrial
-  Public Facilities/Institutional
-  Parks and Recreation
-  Agricultural
-  Vacant Paved
-  Vacant Open



28.34% of developable land. In absolute terms, more land is now used for housing than in 1969 when housing consumed 671 acres (Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Background for Planning ... An Inventory).

Although it still represents the third largest land

use in the Township, the amount of agricultural land has decreased just as dramatically. In 1969, the “Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Background for Planning ... An Inventory” reported that slightly over 1,557 acres of “vacant or agricultural” land remained in the northeast and southeast areas of the Township (p. D-9). A significant portion of agricultural land in the northeastern corner of the Township was annexed by the City of East Lansing in the early 1980s and subsequently developed for primarily commercial purposes. This accounts for much of the reduction. Agricultural land now consists of land owned by Michigan State University in the south-

Existing Land Use by % of Total Developable Land

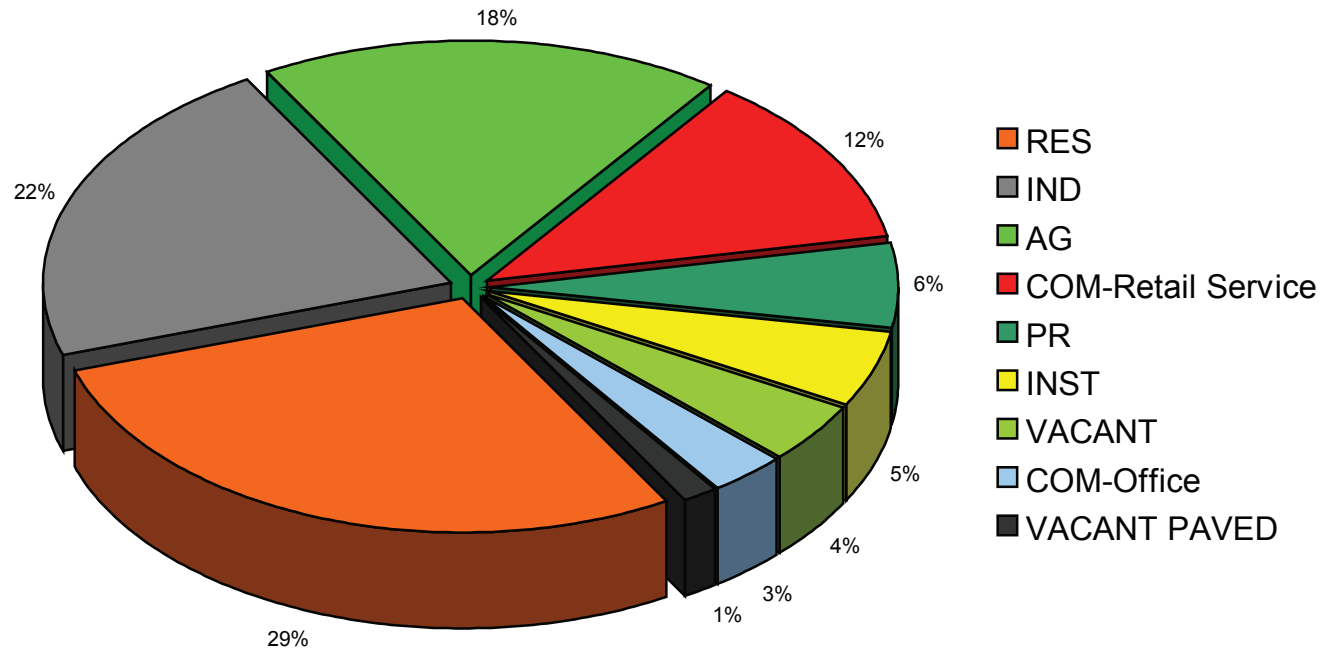


Figure 13 source: Township Assessor’s records, analysis by Department of Planning and Development

eastern corner of the Township. It continues to be used for experimental agriculture. The University has recently expanded a pavilion and constructed a new demonstration hall in this area, and MSU has no plans to convert these agricultural lands to any other land use.

More land is used for industrial purposes in 2009 than was in 1969. In that year, only 245 acres were used for manufacturing, warehousing, and extraction activities. The manufacture of durable goods alone consumed 187.8 acres of land: this is probably not coincidentally the approximate land mass of the former General Motors



Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	Description	Future Land Use Category	Typical Zoning	Total Acres	% Total Developable*	Average #Acres
AG	Agricultural	AG	A - Residential	483.28	18.34%	120.82
IND	Manufacturing; Warehousing; Waste Management; Extraction	WP2; WP3	G - General Business; H - Industrial	569.95	21.63%	1.38
INST	Public Buildings; Schools; Churches; Cemeteries; Community Facilities	INST	A - Residential; F - Commercial; D - ; E - Local Business	141.14	5.36%	
COM-Office	Professional and General Offices	WP1; MU1; MU2	D - ; E - Local Business; F - Commercial; G - General Business; H - Industrial	82.99	3.15%	0.49
COM-Retail Service	Standalone retail and service outlets; big box department, specialty and grocery stores; retail strip, regional, and power centers; malls;	SS1; SS2; MU1;	E - Local Business; F - Commercial	312.82	11.87%	0.61
PR	Parks and recreational areas		A - Residential	154.61	5.87%	12.88
RES	Residential (low, medium, high density)	RES1 - 3; MU1;	A - Single Family Residential; B - 2 Family Residential; C	746.62	28.34%	
VACANT**	Undeveloped land; vacant/under utilized land with no improvements including pavement	Varies	All	107.39	4.08%	0.60
VACANT IMPROVED	Large parking w/o associated active buildings or structures;	Varies	F - Commercial; G - General Business; H - Industrial	35.92	1.36%	0.19
Total Square Miles				2,634.72	100.00%	
				4.12		

*Total Developable: All surface area less surface bodies of water, roadways and unpaved ROW,
 **Does not include undeveloped lands currently used in other active land uses (e.g. agriculture, parks, etc.)

Table 14 source: Township Assessor's records, analysis by Charter Township of Lansing Department of Planning + Development 2009

plants #2 and #3 on the Township's west side. Although nearly 22% of developable land (570 acres) in the Township was in industrial use in 2008 – 2009, demolition of these manufacturing facilities will likely reduce the amount of industrial land in the Township as portions of these sites are repurposed for non-industrial uses.

On the other hand, land used for commercial purposes has increased dramatically over the past 40 years: in 1969, only 83 acres of land had been developed for all commercial purposes. By 2009, Commercial Office land uses alone consumed nearly 83 acres (3.15% of total developable land) with an additional 313 acres of land

(11.87% of total developable land) devoted to retail and service land uses. Much of the growth in commercial land has occurred recently in the northeastern corner of the Township. Specifically, a 335,000 square foot outdoor mall known as "Eastwood Towne Center" was developed on land north of Lake Lansing Road between Wood Street and U.S. 127.

Land devoted to public, semi-public, and institutional purposes consumes nearly 300 acres. Of this, a little more than 150 acres are used for parks and recreation facilities the largest of which is the Waverly Golf Course. This facility has not been opened for 2 years, and plans for



its future are as yet undetermined. Schools, churches, clubs, public buildings and other public facilities occupy the remaining 140 acres of land in this category.

Almost 5.5% of total developable land in the Township is vacant—either currently undeveloped or paved. Vacant, paved land is identified separately due to its unique characteristics and relatively significant presence. Although it represents only 1.36% of total developable land, almost 36 acres of land in the Township are paved parking lots that are nominally or not associated with another functioning land use. These areas do not provide parking for any commercial, residential, industrial, or public purpose other than (in a limited number of instances) the outdoor storage of inoperable vehicles. Much of this land is consolidated in large parcels.

Unimproved developable land (land that has not been previously developed or has been cleared and returned to a more or less pre-developed state) is scattered throughout the Township, much of it resulting from the demolition of single family homes that were built on small lots in the Urbandale subdivision. Many of these lots, as well as several abandoned single family homes, are concentrated south of Marcus Street in the immediate vicinity of Elizabeth Park.

Land Use and Zoning

Zoning is the primary tool by which communities implement land use and urban design programs. Zoning should be based to a large degree on a future land use plan or map and the principles from which it was formed. It is the purpose of zoning to guide land use patterns toward those principles. Ideally, zoning is consistent with future land use, and existing land use is more or less consistent with zoning. Of course change takes time, and consistency between the three is never fully reached. Nevertheless, they should be substantially consistent. When this is not the case, one of two things has occurred: either a community has changed in a sudden and fundamental way which has rendered some part of a zoning regulation obsolete or zoning regulations have failed to guide land use toward greater consistency with a master plan and future land use map.

As Figure 14 demonstrates, the most prevalent zoning district by land mass is “A” Single Family Residential. This category includes all park and agricultural land in the Township as well as institutional land uses that tend to use larger tracts land. All told, land in this category occupies almost 1,200 acres or 43% of all zoned land.

The second largest zone is “H” Industrial which occupies nearly 431 acres or 15% of all zoned land (4.38 square



miles). Industrially zoned land is located almost exclusively on the west side of the Township, the greatest concentration consisting of the former General Motors plants.

The third largest zone is “F” Commercial with 250 acres or approximately 9% of all zoned land. Planned unit development (“PD”) zoned parcels occupied nearly 208 acres or 7.50% of total zoned land.

Percentage of Land by Zoning District

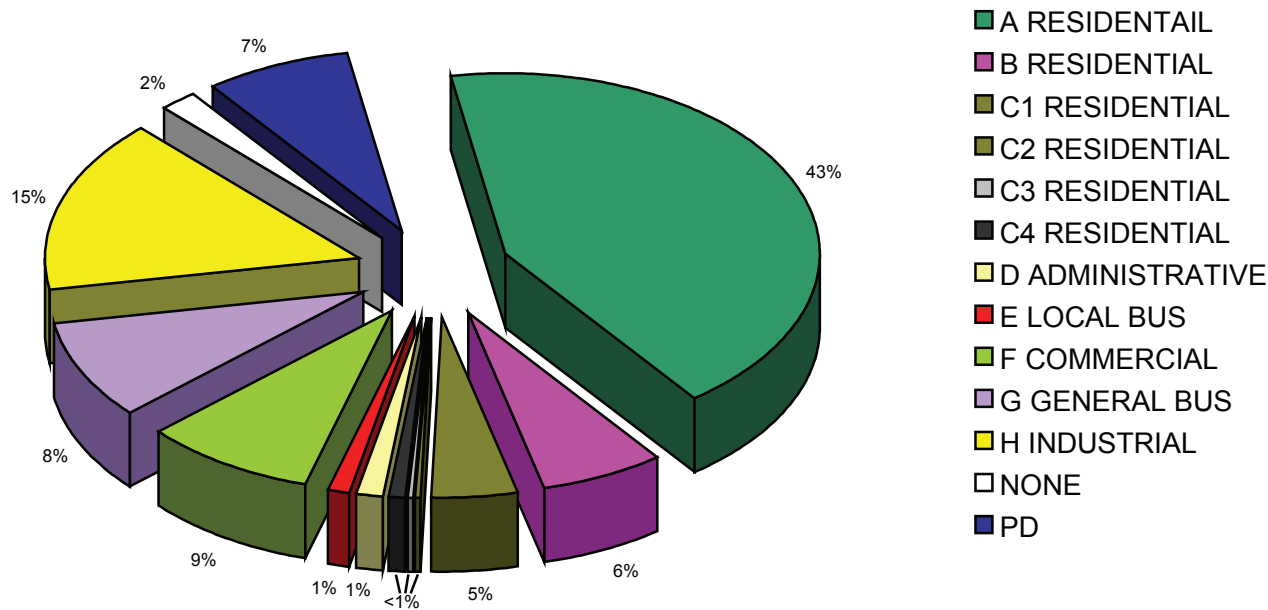


Figure 14 source: Township Assessor’s records

“C-2 Intermediate Density” and “C-3 Medium Density” residential zones occupied the least acreage with 0.18% and 0.25%, respectively. The smallest commercial zone was the “E – Local Business” zone which occupied only 33 acres or 1.18% of all zoned land. “D Administrative and Professional” was only slightly larger with 39 acres or 1.41% of all zoned land.

Nonconforming Properties

Given the general consistency between actual existing land use and zoning districts, it appears that zoning has generally been an effective instrument for guiding development within the Township. But certain exceptions do exist.



F Commercial on Grace Street

Originally subdivided and developed for single and two-family dwellings, residences north of Genesee were rezoned to “F” Commercial by the Township in 1969 to accommodate the growing number of small industrial properties on Rosemary. Rezoning these properties would, it was argued at the time, create a buffer between the more intensive industrial land uses and the residential properties on the west side of Grace. This concept, known as transitional zoning, has not achieved this objective over the past 40 years—not a single residence has been redeveloped as a functional commercial property. Given the configuration of residential lots in this neighborhood and the design of Grace Street, commercial development in this would probably be very undesirable. Commercial traffic would bring many of the same nuisances to residents that the original scheme intended to avoid. The only actual outcome of the action taken by the Township in 1969 has been to render every affected residential land use as non-conforming. Non-conforming land uses in the Township, and in many communities, are regulated so that they will be eliminated over time. As a result, home owners are often unable to sell their properties as residences, and may even find it difficult to refinance their homes. Future land use in this area is therefore shown as residential.

Non-conforming Residential in Urbandale

Urbandale was originally subdivided for single family

homes in the early 20th Century, but zoned “F” Commercial after the homes were built. The intention was probably to eliminate residential land uses from the hazard posed by the floodplain. Although residential properties have slowly declined over time, many remain as legally non-conforming land uses.

Industrial-type Land Uses in F Commercial Zones

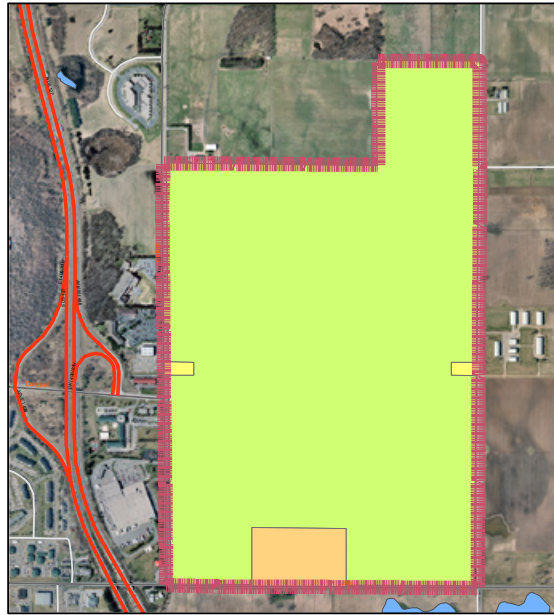
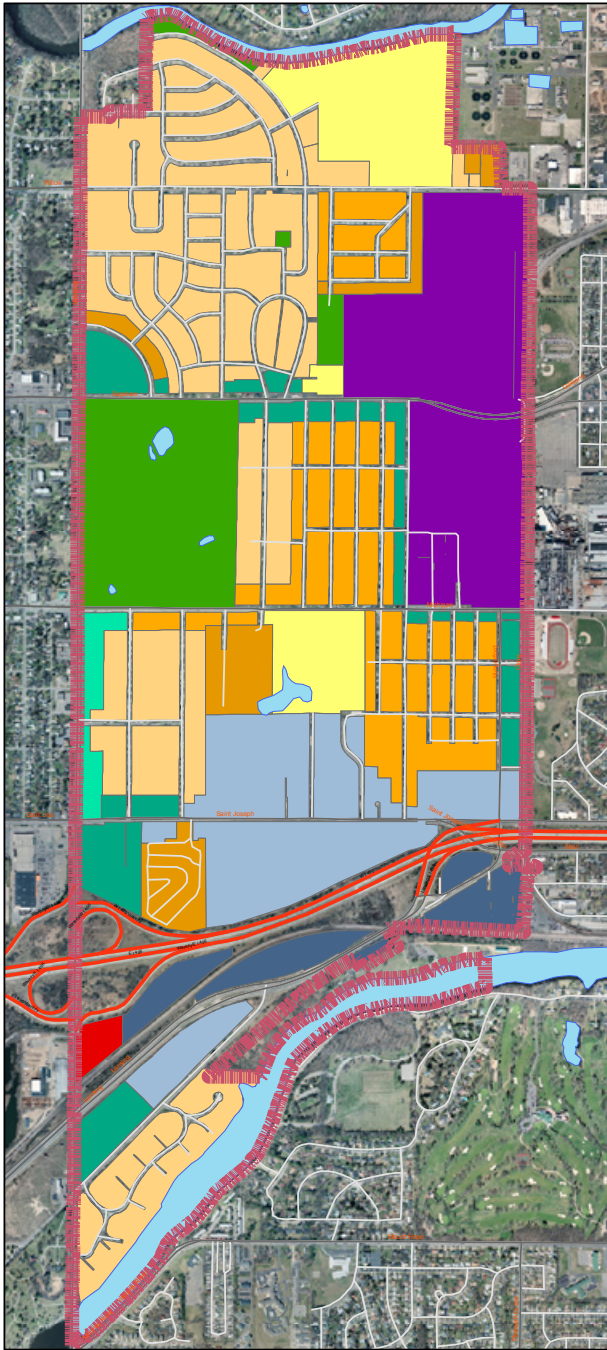
Many single family homes in Urbandale have been demolished and converted to industrial land uses that do not conform with “F” Commercial zoning either. These properties consist of outdoor storage yards that are little more than fenced junkyards for the storage of inoperable vehicles and machinery, building materials, waste and debris.

Future Land Use



















As mentioned before, future land use is the synthesis of existing land use and community conditions with long term community goals. While a future land use plan can propose a bold vision for the future, it should also account for the constraints imposed by things as they are now. After all, planning for a better future is not the same as wishing for one.

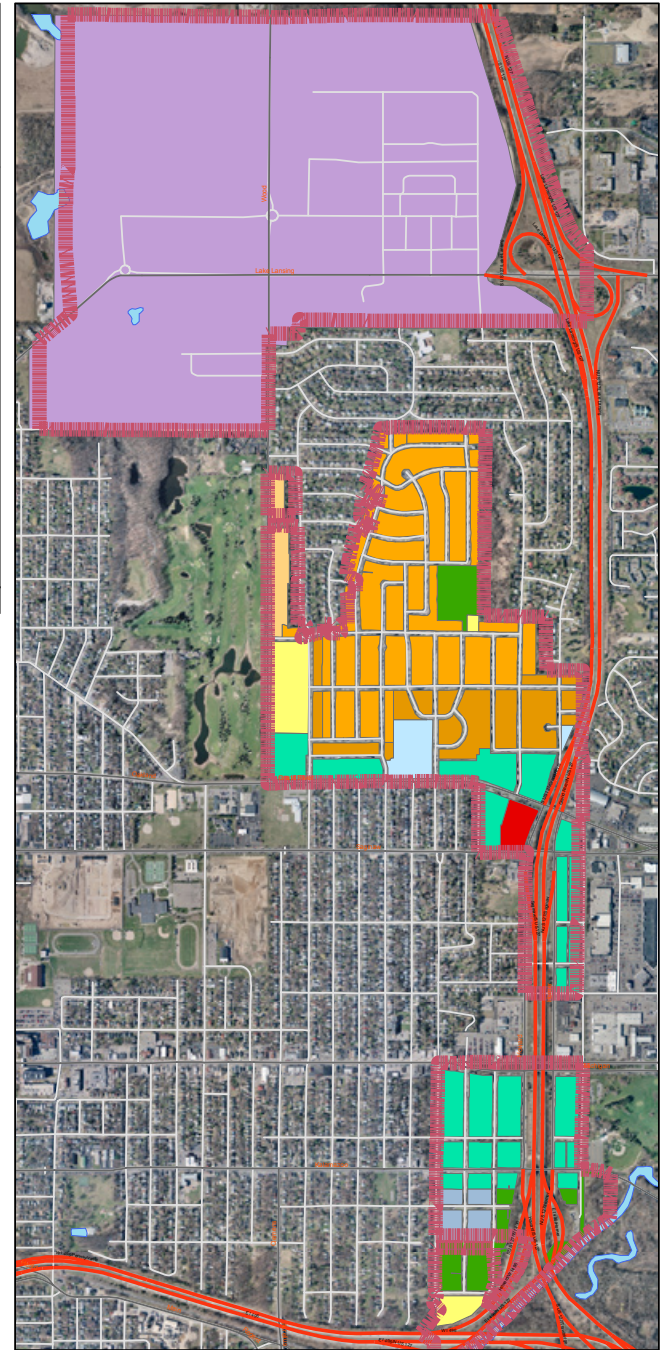
Future land use categories are described in Table 14. Overall, the most significant difference between the 2009 Master Plan and the future land use map con-





Legend

-  Township boundary
-  Highways
-  Major roads
-  Surface Bodies of Water
-  AG
-  NRPR
-  Public Facilities
-  RES1 Low Density
-  RES2 Med Density
-  RES3 High Density
-  SS2 Retail/Services
-  MU1 Mixed Use Ret/Res
-  MU2 Mixed Use Ret/Office
-  WP1 Office
-  WP2 Office/Lt Industrial
-  WP3 Industrial
-  GM Special Plan Area
-  DDA 2006 Master Plan Area



tained in the 1974 Comprehensive Development Plan is the introduction of the areas that are described as “mixed-use.” While mixed-use may mean many different things in land use planning, it is used here to describe places where different types of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses may productively co-exist in immediate proximity to one another. For many years, conventional planning has sought to segregate land uses in categorical terms.

Integrating particular land uses has recently gained greater currency.

Among other things, the careful integration of certain land uses can improve the connection between the many different life activities that make up an average day. Closer proximity between shopping, entertainment, recreation, work, and dwelling means less time spent going from one destination to another, and more time spent taking care of necessities and, most importantly, enjoying life. The following draws attention to future land use in particular places throughout the Township.

Westside

GM Redevelopment Area

Land use in this area has been devoted solely to industrial uses for more than 5 decades. This history of industrial use poses several constraints on any future redevelopment plans. The extent of contamination by hazardous substances is of primary concern. Repurposing this area, or at least certain specific sub areas, for other land uses may be limited by 1) the ongoing presence of elevated levels of hazardous substances and/or 2) the presence of mea-

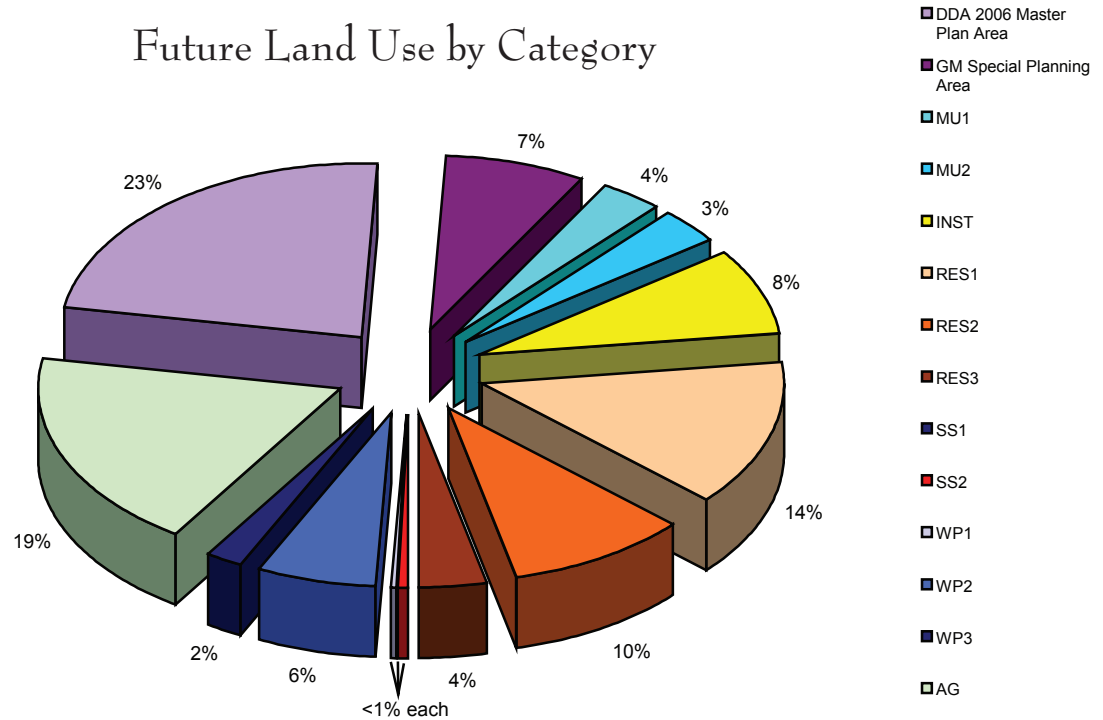


Figure 15 by the Department of Planning + Development

Future Land Use Descriptions and Policies

Charter Township of Lansing Future Land Use Classification and Policy Matrix				
Housing Focus: Predominantly residential neighborhoods with other land uses customarily associated with such places.				
Subcategory	Map Key	Typical Implementing Zoning Category	Typical Density/Intensity	Development Policies
Lower Density	RES1 (Light Orange)	A Residential - Single Family	4 or fewer dwelling units/acre	Maintain and enhance attractive neighborhood characteristics
Medium Density	RES2 (Orange)	A Residential - Single Family, B Residential - Two Family, C1- Multi-Family	> 4 du/acre, < 8 du/acre	Encourage walkability/accessibility within neighborhoods
Higher Density	RES3 (Dark Orange)	B Residential - Two Family, C1 - C4 - Multi-Family	> 8 du/acre	Improve/enhance parks and recreational facilities
				Identify opportunities for higher density infill development that complements existing residential development
Mixed Use: Carefully planned, deliberately designed horizontal and vertical mix of complementary land uses				
Subcategory	Map Key	Typical Implementing Zoning Category	Typical Density/Intensity	Development Policies
Residential/Shopping/Services	MU1 (Light Aqua Blue)	PUD, Corridor Overlay, D - Administrative Professional, E - Local Business, F - Commercial		Encourage walkable, urban neighborhoods that accommodate dwelling, shopping, entertainment, hospitality, dining and other service oriented businesses.
Shopping/Services/Workplace Focus	MU2 (Teal)	PUD, D - Administrative Professional, E - Local Business, F - Commercial, G - General Business, H - Industrial		Encourage walkable commercial districts that accommodate a variety of commercial enterprises with the intention of integrating retail, office, and other more intensive commercial businesses in single buildings/development campuses.
				Achieve synergistic relationships between different land uses in a way that fosters long term, self-sustaining success.
Shopping and Services Focus: Exclusively retail and services				
Subcategory	Map Key	Typical Implementing Zoning Category	Typical Density/Intensity	Development Policies
Neighborhood/Local	SS1 (Light Red)	E - Local Business		Minimize impact of negative off-site impacts on adjacent residential and other land uses including traffic, noise, odor.
Regional	SS2 (Red)	F - Commercial Zone		Improve non-motorized and public transit access to and from shopping/service destinations, residential neighborhoods, and places of work.
				Promote higher quality site design, construction, and architectural practices.
Work Focus: Exclusively work oriented areas that are typically incompatible with, do not benefit or benefit from close proximity to other categories				
Subcategory	Map Key	Typical Implementing Zoning Category	Typical Density/Intensity	Development Policies
Lower Intensity	WP1 (Light Blue)	PUD, Corridor Overlay, D - Administrative Professional, E - Local Business, F - Commercial		Minimize impact of negative off-site impacts on adjacent residential and other land uses including traffic, noise, odor.
Medium Intensity	WP2 (Cobalt Blue)	G - General Business, H - Industrial		Improve non-motorized and public transit access to and from places of work, residential neighborhoods, and nearby shops and services.
Higher Intensity	WP3 (Dark Slate Blue)	G - General Business, H - Industrial		Promote locations for manufacturing and intensive industrial processes that take advantage of existing industrial infrastructure.
				Encourage colocation of industrial uses that benefit from complementary input/output characteristics

Table 14 by Charter Township of Lansing Department of Planning + Development 2009



tures designed to contain and/or remove these pollutants. At present, the best knowledge available suggests that such encumbrances are likely to be very limited, and would likely only prevent certain types of reuse in a limited number of areas.

Despite concerns related to subsurface contamination, this area does possess several unique characteristics that make it an exciting redevelopment prospect:

1. Close proximity to downtown Lansing and the State's capitol;
2. Proximity to established, relatively stable residential neighborhoods;
3. Onsite access to existing industrial infrastructure including high capacity electrical, water, steam, and sanitary sewer;
4. Proximity to regional and national transportation infrastructure including CATA public transit routes, airport, and interstate
5. Central regional location accessible to communities with stronger population and commercial growth.
6. Large tract of assembled land within an urban area

In order to take advantage of all of these characteristics, a redevelopment strategy that balances different types of development is recommended. Done thoughtfully

and with attention to detail, lower intensity industrial and other work place land uses could be located to take full advantage of the existing railroad ROW and industrial infrastructure while the heavily-trafficked frontages on West Saginaw could provide excellent opportunities for local and regional retail and service businesses. Residential development, driven by demand for housing created by work place development, could be integrated into the site in vertical mixed-use buildings, multi-family buildings, townhouses, and even small lot single family homes. Any residential development should be spatially separated from higher intensity industrial land and commercial land uses through the development of a system of parks and greenways. Such a system should be designed to provide non-motorized connections between different land uses within the redevelopment area and surrounding neighborhoods and other recreational facilities. Other amenity areas, including a cultural/community center could be developed to provide the entire region with a unique public facility capable of hosting outdoor cultural events and educational programming. Further investigation and preparation of an area specific plan is strongly recommended for this area.

West Saginaw Street/ Waverly Golf Course

Aside from the General Motors redevelopment sites, the West Saginaw corridor is home to local retail and service establishments and the Waverly Golf Course. The future of the golf course, which has been shuttered for 2 years,



has not been decided by the City of Lansing. At public workshops, many participants expressed their fondness for the golf course as a recreational facility and green space. The sledding hill was repeatedly identified as an important community recreational amenity. It is strongly recommended that the majority of this site remain as a park accommodating structured and/or unstructured recreational activities. However, some portion of the West Saginaw frontage, which faces strip commercial development on the north side of the street, may be considered for limited development while the West Michigan Avenue frontage, which faces residences on a road with much lower traffic volumes, should continue to be used as park. Limited development in this area, if executed thoughtfully, could support new and improved facilities for the majority of the land that would continue to be used as a park. Facilities could include a redesigned golf course, trails, and restored wildlife habitat areas.

The corridor itself is lined with strip commercial development, some of which has fallen into disrepair, abandonment, or is simply obsolete. With its surrounding neighborhoods, and potential for redevelopment of the GM sites, future land uses along the corridor could become more dense with vertical mixed-use buildings and attractively designed local and regional retail and service

establishments infilling empty lots and replacing deteriorated, visually unappealing single use properties.

Closer proximity between shopping, entertainment, recreation, work, and dwelling means less time spent going from one destination to another, and more time spent taking care of necessities and, most importantly, enjoying the life.

Industrial/Commercial Corridor son Main Street and St. Joseph

Industrial land uses have dominated this area for decades. Street configuration, availability of vacant land, proximity to interstate highways, and access to the Canadian

National railroad make this area unique for more intensive work place-focused land uses including industrial.

Mixed-Use on Waverly South of West Michigan

This corridor, which is shared by Delta Township on its western frontage and Lansing Township on its eastern frontage, has a variety of retail and service establishments, offices, and even (limited) multi-family housing. It is, however unintentionally, a mixed-use district. Potential exists for these land uses to be better integrated, and for properties to be developed at higher densities instead of current strip commercial development patterns.

Eastside DDA

Development in this area is described in detail in an area specific plan produced by Vandewalle Associates. The study, completed in 2006, recommends the integration of residential and other commercial land uses amidst ex-



isting retail development at Eastwood Towne Center. It proposes the creation of a wellness/medical cluster at the intersection of Chamberlin and Lake Lansing roads; it recommends that the contaminated Lansing Board of Water and Light fly-ash property be repurposed to support improvements to the Groesbeck Golf Course.

East Michigan Avenue

Michigan Avenue has become a focus for regional redevelopment initiatives, especially the Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority. The Township has strongly supported this effort through a significant investment of staff resources and will continue to do so. Due to its location along this important local and regional retail/services corridor, retail commercial and residential land uses are indicated on the future land use map. Commercial and residential land uses could be realized through vertical mixed use buildings and laterally by locating multi-family residential buildings and other higher density housing types adjacent to commercial buildings. Ideally, uses on Michigan Avenue would be pedestrian activated. Greater description of this area can be found in the Michigan Avenue Conceptual Development Plan, the product of collaboration between the Township and the cities of Lansing and East Lansing.

East Grand River Avenue

Existing development along East Grand River Avenue already consists of a mix of local and regional retail and

service establishments as well as multi-family housing. Medical and professional offices are also quite prevalent. Given the strength of the Groesbeck and Foster neighborhoods, its proximity to Michigan State University, its walkability, and its existing residential densities, this area could support more local and regional retail—especially restaurants and stores catering to nearby residents—integrated with new, higher density residential development.

Urbandale Work-Focussed Area

The Red Cedar floodplain south of Kalamazoo becomes quite deep. Due to this, residential development is very challenging. This area could, however, be used for work oriented land uses including office, light industrial (warehousing, light assembly), and limited retail (specialty shopping like retail greenhouses or contractor supply).

Urbandale Natural Resource and Parks & Recreation Area

As discussed in Natural Resources and the Environment, the southernmost extent of the Urbandale subdivision lies deep within the Red Cedar floodplain. Between Marcus Street and Harton, residential development will be seriously constrained and without significant hazard mitigation planning, ill-advised. With Elizabeth Park located in this area, and several other vacant lots already owned by the Township, this area could become a naturalized flood water storage area. Existing flood water displace-



ment volumes created by existing structures and buildings could be eliminated over time, “banked” and subsequently used to offset floodplain volume created by redevelopment projects in higher elevated parts of the floodplain. If properly conceived and executed, a formalized transfer of floodplain volume program could achieve net reductions in floodplain displacement while facilitating redevelopment in other, more commercially viable parts of the Urbandale subdivision.

Agricultural

The 425 acres of agricultural land in the Township’s southeastern-most corner are unlikely to within the time frame of this master plan. As mentioned before in Natural Resources and the Environment, it would be more consistent with the Township’s redevelopment objectives for this land to remain in active agricultural use.

