

City of Charlotte

April 2008

City of Charlotte

Community Master Plan

Adopted April, 2008

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T A B L E o f C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION	1
TAB 1	
Chapter One	DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW3
Chapter Two	COMMUNITY FACILITIES9
Chapter Three	TRANSPORTATION 15
Chapter Four	ECONOMIC EVALUATION21
Chapter Five	HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS.....27
Chapter Six	EXISTING LAND USE35
TAB 2	
Chapter Seven	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....41
Chapter Eight	THEMES AND STRATEGIES51
TAB 3	
Chapter Nine	DEVELOPMENT, FORM & CHARACTER.....57
Chapter Ten	FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.....61
TAB 4	
Chapter Eleven	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY79
TAB 5	
	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

TABLES

1.1	Population Trends	3
1.2	Population Forecast	5
1.3	Employment Forecast	6
1.4	Age Distribution	7
2.1	School Enrollment	12
3.1	Road Classification	15
4.1	Employment By Industry	22
4.2	Employment By Occupation	22
4.3	Unemployment Rates	23
4.4	Median Income By County	24
4.5	Charlotte Household Income	24
4.6	Charlotte Family Income	25
5.1	Neighborhood Character	29
6.1	Existing Land Use	37
10.1	Future Land Use	61

MAPS

1.1	Daily Drive Time	4
2.1	Community Facilities	11
3.2	Transportation Network	16
3.3	Average Daily Traffic	17
5.1	Census Block Profile	28
5.2	Housing Quality Analysis	31
6.1	Existing Land Use	38
7.1	Focus Areas	49
9.1	Development Form and Character	58
10.1	Future Land Use - Overall	62
10.2	Future Land Use - NW Quad	63
10.3	Future Land Use - NE Quad	64
10.4	Future Land Use - SW Quad	65
10.5	Future Land Use - SE Quad	66
10.6	Special Areas of Concern	75



The City of Charlotte has initiated this master plan process to develop a model to guide community planning decisions and help shape the future. Charlotte residents experience a high quality of life and an enjoyable-peaceful environment and they wish to maintain these amenities into the future. Charlotte offers residents small town charm combined with sound educational, health care, employment, and personal enrichment opportunities. Charlotte continues to build upon a strong framework of pride and public infrastructure expanding opportunities for current and future residents. Development of this master plan has been guided by input from residents, Master Plan Steering Committee members and city officials. Each primary issue was revealed through community visioning, committee work groups and inventory and analysis. Combined, all of these elements focus on developing a comprehensive master plan that suits the needs of the Charlotte community as new development and growth occurs throughout the city.

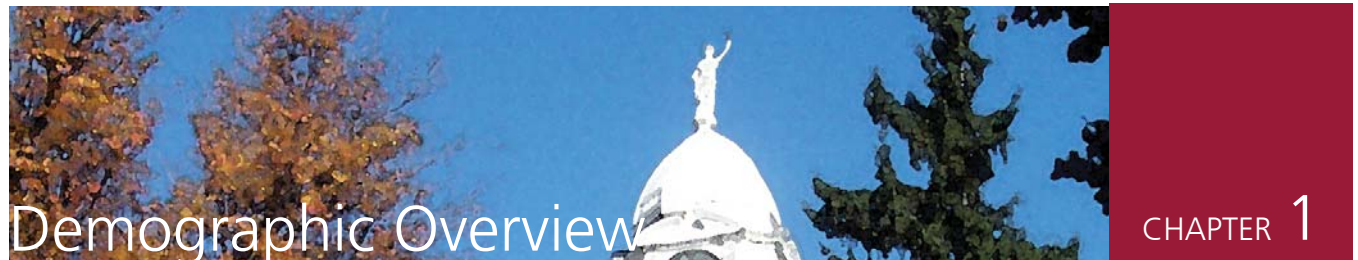
Charlotte officials and the Master Plan Sub Committee took on the responsibility of working with the consulting team of Beckett & Raeder, Inc., and Vilcan Leman Associates to develop the Charlotte Master Plan. In addition to regular Steering Committee meetings, members spent an afternoon touring the city visiting over fifteen focus areas to review existing conditions and discuss future land use options. This tour and the observations of participants was factored into modifications of the Future Land Use Plan.



Master Plan Steering Committee Bus Tour

In order for this master plan to be truly effective the process involved community member participation accomplished through visioning sessions, community workgroups and surveys. The combined input from this outreach effort was used to establish the Themes, Strategies and Values section of the Plan and assisted with the revisions to the Future Land Use map and the direction of the Implementation Strategy. The Charlotte Planning Commission was instrumental in the preparation of the Future Land Use map and its modifications to reflect current and future land use and real estate trends.

The focus of the Community Master Plan encourages continued investment in the downtown, reinvestment in Charlotte's older neighborhoods and the planned expansion of new residential and mixed-use neighborhoods. Redevelopment, rehabilitation and preservation are given the same weight as new construction and expansion. As a result, the key premise behind the Plan is a healthy and vibrant community core that will anchor a successful and sustainable community.



Introduction

The following is an analysis of the demographic makeup of the City of Charlotte and the surrounding townships. Demographic analysis is useful in identifying trends and patterns affecting the community as well as the management strategies for land use, economic and neighborhood development and overall quality of life. This section will look at demographic information such as population, historical trends, projected growth and age distribution within the community.

Population Trends

The 2000 Census reported a population of 8,389 persons living in the City of Charlotte. This reveals a 4.3% increase from the 1990 population of 8,083. Similar population increases occurred in surrounding cities such as Grand Ledge and Eaton Rapids. Carmel and Eaton Townships also experienced similar population increases. Table 1.1 shows the population trends since 1960 for the City of Charlotte and the surrounding communities. Unlike its neighbors who have experienced consistent growth, Charlotte's 2000 population reversed a population decline enumerated in 1990.

Table 1.1

POPULATION TRENDS

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change (1960-2000)
City of Charlotte	7,657	8,244	8,251	8,083	8,389	10%
City of Grand Ledge	5,165	6,032	6,920	7,579	7,810	34%
City of Eaton Rapids	4,052	4,494	4,510	4,695	5,202	22%
Carmel Township	1,111	1,539	2,168	2,433	2,626	58%
Eaton Township	1,359	2,104	3,315	3,492	4,278	68%
Eaton County	49,684	68,892	88,337	92,879	103,655	52%
State of Michigan	7,823,194	8,881,826	9,262,044	9,295,287	9,938,444	21%

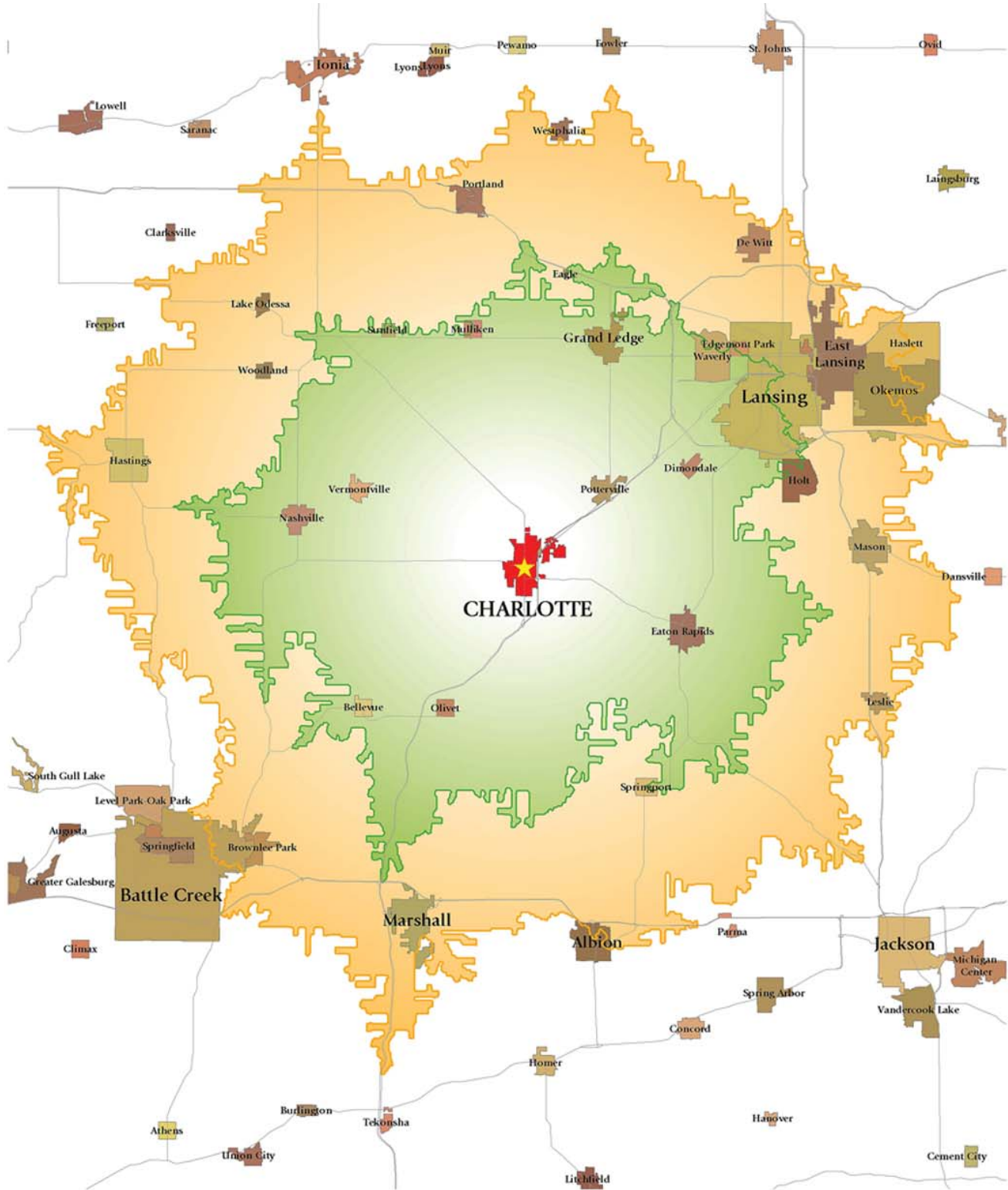
Source: US Census 2000.

What does this mean for Charlotte?

As shown in Table 1.1, the City of Charlotte has experienced a population increase over the past forty years. A large percentage of this growth is simply due to the natural growth rates of communities. However, with the outward migration from the City of Lansing to suburban townships and cities, some of the population growth is the result of Lansing residents seeking a small community such as Charlotte for relocation. This conclusion was reached by analyzing demographic information for the City of Lansing and Ingham County between 1990 and 2000. Analysis shows the City of Lansing declining in population at a rate of 6.4% between 1990 and 2000. While the research does not specifically show that Lansing's population has moved directly to Charlotte, it is safe to assume a percentage of these people relocated to Charlotte to experience a better quality of life.

With the extension of I-69, the City of Charlotte has seen increased commuting traffic both to and from Charlotte. The availability of efficient transportation via I-69 has expanded Charlotte to a much broader range of employment opportunities as well as opening up Charlotte's employment opportunities to surrounding communities. Map 1.1 illustrates the commute time for residents in the City of Charlotte. As a general rule, most commuters prefer a one-way trip to work of a half hour or less per the 2000 US Census. Charlotte fits

Map 1.1 Daily Drive Time



CITY OF CHARLOTTE Daily Drive Time

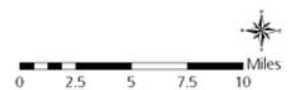
Data Source: Beckett and Kaefer Inc. 2006, U.S. Census 2000

- City of Charlotte
- Designated Places
- State/Interstate Highway

Commute Distance Key

- 20 Minute Commute Time
- 30 Minute Commute Time

Drive times are based on average traffic speeds
adjusting for variables including urbanized and heavy
flow traffic areas



into this category with an average drive time of 20 minutes, however about a quarter of the population drive 30 minutes to an hour to arrive at work. Because of this many new residents will be drawn to the City of Charlotte for the small town atmosphere and work elsewhere in the county and in the Lansing area if energy (gas) prices stabilize.

Population Projections

Population projections are a useful planning tool that allow the City to plan for the demands that future growth will place on the community. Determining this demand is particularly crucial for evaluating the capacity of public facilities and services as well as job growth within the community. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, (TCPC) conducted Trends: 2020 and Beyond, a demographic study estimating projected population, households, and employment demands within the tri-county region.

Population Forecasts

The Tri-County Planning Commission forecasts a population growth of 5.2%, for the City of Charlotte during the years 2010 through 2020. A greater increase in population is forecast for the surrounding Townships during this same ten-year period.

What Does This Mean for Charlotte?

Table 1.2 POPULATION FORECAST				
	2010	2015	2020	Percent Change
City of Charlotte	9,025	9,296	9,497	5.2%
City of Grand Ledge	8,124	8,420	8,719	7.3%
City of Eaton Rapids	5,77	6,026	6,286	8.9%
Carmel Township	2,665	2,762	3,194	19.8%
Eaton Township	5,356	6,123	6,619	23.6%
Eaton County	117,774	124,269	130,869	11.1%
State of Michigan	10,121,298	10,284,960	10,454,737	3.3%
Source: US Census 2000.				

As the surrounding Townships continue to grow the City will experience the impact of increased traffic on Lansing Road, Clinton Trail (M-50) and Cochran Avenue as these areas will develop as commercial corridors supporting township residents. New growth outside the City core will create a need for the extension of City services to the townships. In order for such expansion to occur, strong multi-jurisdictional planning cooperation must be broadened to ensure no one community is burdened by or benefiting from growth. Similarly, if steps are taken to revitalize the downtown as a retail and entertainment district per the Blueprint's study, then the additional "rooftops" added to the greater Charlotte market will further the revitalization of the downtown. Based on forecasts the City could have 800 additional residents and 325 new households by the year 2020. The key will be positioning the downtown to capture the added disposable income coming into the local market and discussing with adjacent townships the strategy of limiting strip commercial uses which dissipate commercial activity downtown.

Another opportunity for the City of Charlotte is to position itself as a "community of choice" by providing a comprehensive package of public services, viable downtown, great park systems and traditional and historic single-family neighborhoods. From a property tax perspective, it would appear that building or buying a house in the surrounding Townships might be cheaper. However, it will be the intangible and tangible factors of living in a walkable community with a quaint downtown, preserved neighborhoods and integrated park system that provides "added" values to prospective residents. This differential between City and Township tax rates will shrink as energy prices increase.

Table 1.3

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

RETAIL EMPLOYMENT	2005	2010	2020	Percent Change
City of Charlotte	958	1,004	1,046	9.2%
City of Grand Ledge	834	884	937	12.4%
City of Eaton Rapids	372	386	402	8.1%
Carmel Township	12	28	41	241.7%
Eaton Township	1,795	1,924	1,972	9.9%
Eaton County	11,924	13,582	14,218	19.2%

NON-RETAIL EMPLOYMENT	2005	2010	2020	Percent Change
City of Charlotte	4,536	4,654	4,762	5.0%
City of Grand Ledge	1,909	2,466	2,532	32.6%
City of Eaton Rapids	1,552	1,602	1,650	6.3%
Carmel Township	146	168	189	29.5%
Eaton Township	915	1,145	1,205	31.7%
Eaton County	35,169	39,707	42,661	21.3%

Source: TRI-County Planning Commission (Study did not include State of Michigan)

Employment Forecasts

The employment forecasts show an increase in employment to occur in and around the City of Charlotte by the year 2015. Table 1.3 shows that both retail and non-retail jobs are forecasted to increase within the City. Retail employment projections in the surrounding townships present the possibility that new service businesses will be developed, most likely continuing the commercial sprawl along Lansing Road.

What does this mean for Charlotte?

Again, this data is an indicator that more commercial development will occur within the townships that surround the City of Charlotte. These new retail centers will create more jobs for City residents but will put more pressure on the central business district to compete with larger retail chains. Therefore, a cooperative effort between the townships and the City of Charlotte is crucial to ensure the needs of all jurisdictions are met. The City in conjunction with the DDA will have to develop new strategies to retain current retail businesses and offer opportunities for new retail development in the downtown. Areas near the existing downtown should be analyzed for redevelopment or infill development to accommodate the new businesses that will look to locate near the growing populations in the surrounding townships. Infill development can be implemented for many purposes and uses by renovating houses, sites, under utilized buildings, or vacant land within an urbanized area.

Principal Employers	Employees	Product Description
Spartan Motors	570	Manufactures custom built vehicles
Wal Mart	400	Retailer
Owens-Brockway Glass	250	Manufacturer glass food containers
Hayes Green Beech Hospital	230	General Medicine & Surgical hospital
Charlotte Public Schools	200	Public School District
Linn Products	150	Manufacturer of aluminium extrusions
Titan Plastics	122	Manufacturer

Source: MEDC Principal Employers by NAICS Code

Table 1.4

AGE DISTRIBUTION: City of Charlotte

1990			2000		
Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent	Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent
Under 5	668	8%	Under 5	602	7%
6 to 20	2,045	25%	6 to 19	1,851	22%
21 to 24	464	6%	20 to 24	558	7%
25 to 44	2,551	32%	25 to 34	1,189	14%
			35 to 44	1,178	14%
45 to 54	706	9%	45 to 54	1,062	13%
55 to 59	276	3%	55 to 59	393	5%
60 to 64	297	4%	60 to 64	267	3%
65 to 74	516	6%	65 to 74	574	7%
75 to 84	381	4%	75 to 84	379	5%
85 and over	176	2%	85 and over	233	3%
TOTAL	8,083	100%	TOTAL	8,286	100%

Source: US Census 2000.

Age Distribution

Population statistics coupled with age distribution can help the City determine what services and facilities will best contribute to its citizens overall quality of life. Also when looking at age distribution within population it is beneficial to look at where various age groups live within the community. Determining the geographic distribution of age groups facilitates planning the location of future facilities and services. To determine where specific services are located it is important to focus on those age groups that rely more on public facilities. Therefore, these dependent age groups are classified as children under age 15 and seniors over age 64. Separating these two groups will help to identify which types of facilities best serve certain locations. Areas with high percentages of children may require more parks and active recreation facilities such as the Lincoln Skate Park, while areas with a higher concentration of seniors may best benefit from a senior center or health care facility.

What does this mean for Charlotte?

In the City of Charlotte, 3,429 residents are between the ages of 25 and 54 and compromise forty-one percent (41%) of the population. The median age for the City of Charlotte is 35, which is lower than both the State and Eaton County. The median age would indicate that current school enrollment levels will be retained and possibly observe an increase in the school age population for years to come depending on the state economy and out-migration trends. Also, these statistics show that Charlotte has a relatively stable work force and will be able to provide a strong labor pool for future economic growth. The elderly population is relatively stable, which implies that the City may not have to increase programs and services to meet the needs of these older age groups.

Community Facilities

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

Community facilities and services can substantially add to residents quality of life. Public facilities, services and institutions are those entities owned, operated and/or maintained by the City or other government or quasi-public organizations. It is important to evaluate the existing public facilities to determine whether the needs of the community are being met. Map 2.1 shows the distribution of community facilities throughout the community.

Government Facilities

City Hall

Charlotte City Hall is located at 111 E. Lawrence Avenue. Constructed in 1975, the building houses the City's administration offices, the City police department and fire station and is located in the Central Business District. The administrative offices located in City Hall include the Mayor and City Manager's office, Clerk, Treasurer, Finance and accounting, Human Resources, Building-Zoning and Community Development, Planning, Assessor, Department of Public Works and the Police and Fire departments.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works garage is located on the south side of Tirrell Highway west of Cochran Avenue. The Department maintains public streets and public areas and manages the city's water and sewer services within the City of Charlotte. The current site does meet the City's needs and has been updated in recent years to allow better service to the community.

Eaton County Government Complex

The county facility consists of 87,700 square feet of office and storage facilities. This campus includes the Barry-Eaton District Health Department, Eaton County Jail, Eaton County Juvenile Facility, Eaton County Medical Care Facility, Eaton County Central Dispatch and the Family Independence Agency. Additionally,



Current Eaton County Courthouse: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

this facility serves as the Eaton County Courthouse. This complex was built in 1976 and continues to expand as county facilities grow to meet the needs of the public. The complex is located on Courthouse drive off Cochran Road.

Post Office

The City of Charlotte Post Office is located downtown at the southeast corner of Lovett and Bostwick streets. Constructed in 1917 the Post Office has faced challenges meeting the increased demands of a growing community. According to the U.S. Postmaster a facility of 8,500 to 9,000 square feet is required for a community of this size. The current facility has only 4,200 square feet of working floor space. Other site deficiencies include lack of customer parking and parking for postal vehicles. It is very important that the post office remain in downtown and the Downtown Development Authority should make this a priority objective.



1885 Eaton County Courthouse, Current Museum

Police and Fire Protection

Fire Service

The Fire Station is centrally located in the Central Business District within City Hall. The Charlotte Fire Department is a full-time/volunteer department with 25 volunteer and 5 full time officers, with one officer on duty 24 hours a day. The Charlotte Fire Department works in agreement with the Rural Fire Association which includes the surrounding five townships.

Police Services

Law enforcement service in Charlotte is provided by the City of Charlotte Police Department which is located in City Hall. The department includes 18 full-time sworn officers. The department includes one chief, one lieutenant, four sergeants, two detectives and 10 patrolmen. Specialty teams existing within the department include accident investigators, evidence technicians, bicycle patrol officers, tactical officers and investigators.



Charlotte City Fire Drill: Photo Courtesy of City of Charlotte

Water Supply

Water for the City is provided from a single groundwater well field located within Bennett Park. Three water wells provide a capacity of 4.4 million gallons per day. Two elevated water storage tanks serve the City of Charlotte. One tank holds 400,000 gallons while the other holds 750,000 gallons. Currently, Charlotte does not have any water purification plant. However, this facility is planned for in the long range plan. The City of Charlotte has been at the vanguard of Wellhead Protection working with the State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality as well as Peerless-Midwest and Capital Consultants, to establish a wellhead protection area that helps protect and ensure safe, high-quality drinking water. Map 2.1 also indicates the location of this wellhead protection area.

Sanitary Sewer System

The City of Charlotte wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1979 and was expanded to its current capacity in the spring of 2000. The current capacity for the City is 1.8 million gallons per day (mgd) which is adequate to accommodate forecasted growth.

Other Public and Quasi-Public Organizations

Charlotte Downtown Development Authority

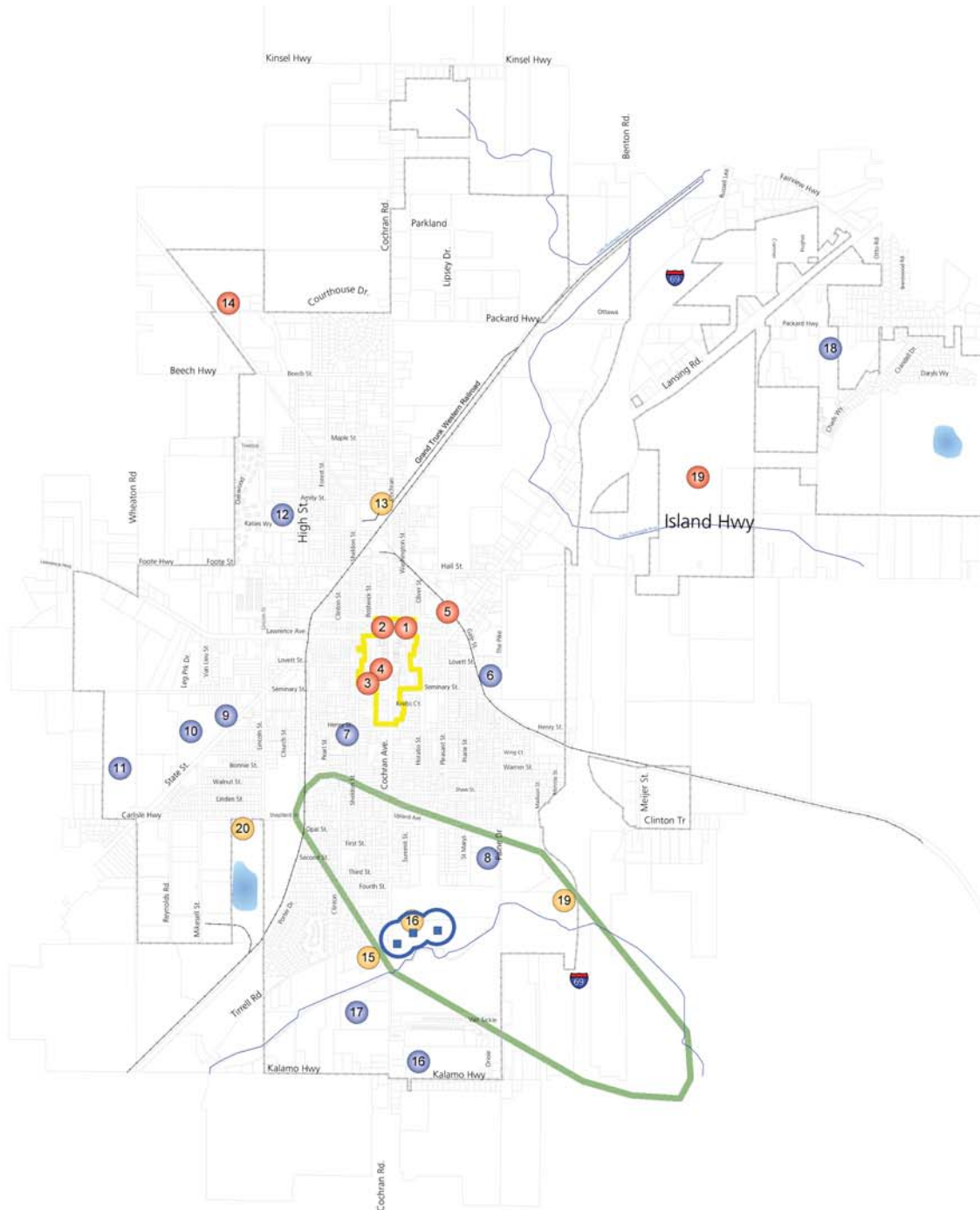
The Charlotte DDA works to develop and maintain the central business district and create and maintain a healthy atmosphere for business development and retention. With the use of a 20-year financing plan the DDA is able to develop and initiate projects downtown, which include a Façade Improvement Grant Program and streetscape improvements that help to make the central business district appealing to the community and future businesses.

Charlotte Can Do! (Charlotte Area Networking for Development and Opportunity)

This not-for-profit community organization includes elected officials, committees and community volunteers. This organization gets behind and supports a variety of public projects and initiatives that benefit and create a healthy community in Charlotte and the surrounding area. Some of the projects that the Can Do organization have been involved with include sponsoring the development and the ongoing review of a strategic plan for the community, expansion of the Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital and creation of the Celebrate Charlotte festival.

Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce works in conjunction with the City of Charlotte and the municipalities of Eaton Township and Carmel Township. The Chamber has helped to promote local business development through economic development activities and strengthening intergovernmental relations. The Chamber of Commerce is very active in the community through programs that help raise community awareness on a number



CITY OF CHARLOTTE Community Facilities

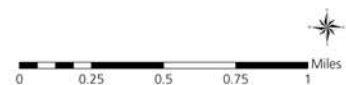
Data Source: Eaton County GIS 2006
Map Source: Beckert & Raeder Inc. 2006

- City Boundary
- Railroad
- Primary Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- State/Interstate Highway
- Parcel Lines

- 1 City Hall: Fire & Police Station
- 2 Historic Eaton County Courthouse
- 3 Public Library
- 4 Post Office
- 5 Eaton County Government Complex
- 6 Hayes Green Beach Hospital
- 7 Fitch Beach Airport

- 8 Galewood Elementary School
- 9 Froebel School
- 10 St. Mary's Catholic School
- 11 Weymouth Elementary School
- 12 Charlotte High School
- 13 Charlotte Middle School
- 14 Washington Elementary School
- 15 Parkview Elementary School
- 16 Seventh Day Adventist School
- 17 Eaton Intermediate School

- 18 Water Tower
- 19 Department of Public Works
- 20 Well Field
- 21 Wastewater Treatment Facility
- 22 Water Tower
- Wellhead Protection Area
- Wells with 200' Isolation Zones
- DDA District



of issues including housing quality and neighborhood safety.

Public Education

The Charlotte Public School District covers an area 124 square miles and served a total enrollment of 3,304 students during the 2005-2006 school year. The school district serves not only the City of Charlotte but also students from the surrounding townships in central Eaton County.



Charlotte Community Library: Photo Courtesy of City of Charlotte

The Charlotte area is operating effectively with a modern high school/middle school campus that includes a state of the art aquatics center located near the Charlotte Middle School. The school district also includes four elementary schools: Galewood, Parkview, Washington, and Weymouth. Table 2.1 shows enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 2.1 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: City of Charlotte		
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: Charlotte Schools 2005-2006	Grade/s	Enrollment
Charlotte High School	9-12	998
Charlotte Middle School	5-8	1,044
Galewood Elementary School	K-4	226
Parkview Elementary School	K-4	456
Washington Elementary School	K-4	333
Weymouth Elementary School	K-4	247
TOTAL	K-12	3,304
Source: Charlotte Public School District		

Social and Cultural Venues

Charlotte Community Library

The Charlotte Community Library is located downtown between Bostwick and Sheldon Streets. The library is a 12,500 square foot building that was renovated in 1995. The library hosts a number of programs including kids summer activities and a monthly movie schedule. The library maintains 19 public computers of which 12 have internet access. The library is also a wireless internet “hot spot” within the community.

Charlotte Performing Arts Center

Opening in 2004 the Charlotte Performing Arts Center hosts nationally known events, as well as rental events and Charlotte Public School District events. The center holds 825 guests and features an orchestra pit, “cushioned” stage floor and professional quality acoustical engineering. The Charlotte Performing Arts Center is located adjacent to the Charlotte High School. A full list of events can be found at www.cpacpresents.com.



Charlotte Performing Arts Center

Eaton Area Senior Center

The Eaton Area Senior center provides social, educational, economic and recreational programs that enrich the lives of seniors in the greater Eaton County area. The center provides opportunities for socialization, games, recreation and guest speakers. The center is open to residents of Eaton County age 55 and older and requires a small membership fee.

Old County Courthouse and Eaton County Museum

The Eaton County Museum is housed in the historic Eaton County Courthouse constructed in 1885. The building is of a Renaissance Revival architectural style and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building and the site are owned and maintained by the Courthouse Square Association, a nonprofit group. Major renovation of the building occurred in 1999



Bennett Park Entrance: Photo Courtesy of City of Charlotte

Public Parks and Open Space

Bennett Park

Bennett Park is a 117 acre park located at the south end of Charlotte. The park includes within its boundaries Veterans Memorial Park, Camp Frances and the Historic 1885 Eaton County Courthouse site. The park contains hiking and nature trails, picnic facilities, horseshoe pits and playground equipment. Additionally, one of Charlotte's premier natural features, the Battle Creek tributary, meanders through the park.

Camp Frances

The camp is an area within Bennett Park that includes a cabin which can be used for social gatherings and events. The wooded setting and outdoor firebowl create a camping/retreat setting within the City limits.

Eaton County Fairgrounds

Located just north of Bennett Park, this 42 acre site is owned by the City of Charlotte and leased to the Eaton County Fair Board. The Fairgrounds is the home of the Eaton County 4H Fair and the Charlotte Blue Grass Festival. Furthermore, the fairgrounds are utilized for Frontier Days and a national rodeo. The grounds also offer 340 campsites with electricity and water for visitors.

Dean Park

Dean park is a neighborhood park of 2.52 acres and is located on Stoddard Street, west of the tracks. Dean park includes a wooden play structure, swings, slides, a modular play structure, sand boxes, two train climbers and a basketball court. Additionally, Dean park includes grills, benches, a memorial stone, new pavilion and restrooms. The majority of Dean Park consists of open terrain with the exception of the play equipment located within a wooded glen.

Southridge Park

Located along Clinton Street adjacent to Michigan Works, this 1 (one) acre park offers a variety of climbers, swings and basketball courts. Grills and benches for picnicking are also features of this park.

Oak Park

This 1.54 acre neighborhood park located on Seminary and Clinton Street offers amenities for picnicking and leisure recreation. The park is covered by a canopy of trees and has a lawn area. Grills are provided in the park along with a barrier free drinking fountain. Two benches, a gazebo and a stone fountain are also features of this park.

Lincoln Park

Lincoln Park offers a 13,000 square foot concrete skate park and disc golf course. Other play areas and paved trails are planned for the future as well as possibly a BMX bicycle track. Lincoln Park is located on the corner of W. Shepard Street and S. Lincoln Street and is approximately 19 acres.

Snell Park

Located at the corner of Upland Street and Cochran Avenue, the smallest park in the City at 0.32 acres is a passive park which offers picnic opportunities surrounded by tended landscaping and several large canopy trees.



Dean Park

Health Care Facilities

Hayes Green Beach Hospital

Since 1933 the Charlotte Area has been provided with medical care by the Hayes Green Hospital now Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital (HGB) which is a hospital accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO). HGB offers the community and the surrounding areas:

- General medical and surgical care
- Pediatric medical and surgical care
- Obstetrics
- Orthopedics department
- Emergency department
- Specialty Clinics

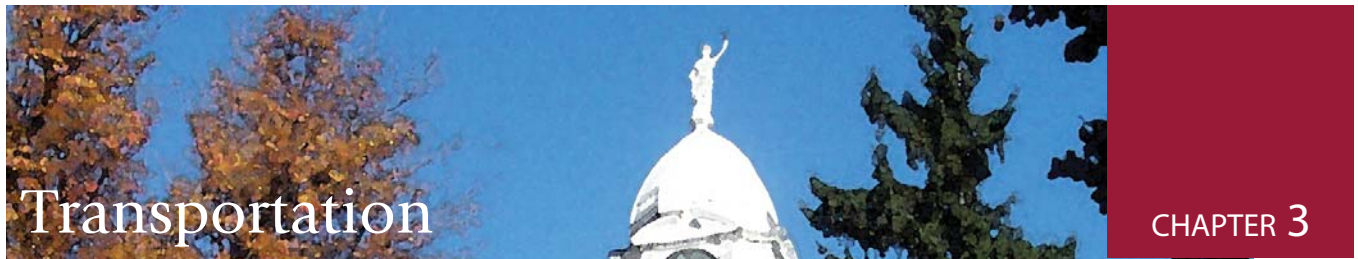
With the expansion in 2000 the hospital added 35,000 square feet to its facility and greatly improved its surgical capabilities. In 2004 and 2005 47,522 square feet of space was added to the facility which includes new patient rooms, new Emergency Room, X-ray facilities, outpatient services and a new entry for the hospital. The hospital was able to convert the former Emergency Room into an Urgent Care facility in 2005. The hospital also provides a Wellness Center that offers residents fitness and nutrition classes and programs for seniors. Community education forums are also offered by the hospital on a variety of health care topics. HGB provides home care, rehabilitation services, emergency medicine and food and nutrition services. The hospital also provides an Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service.

What Does This Mean for Charlotte?

Considering the extensive community facilities, parks, education and health services it is easy to see why Charlotte residents enjoy such a high quality of life. While some residents have been attracted to lower taxes and privacy in the surrounding townships, they soon realize that many amenities available to them are within the city limits. Easy access to parks, downtown and other public facilities offers city residents opportunities to enjoy community assets without traveling greater distances by automobile. As the community grows it is important to add to the existing public facilities to ensure these resources continue to be a very vibrant attribute in the community. With a strong foundation of parks, schools, fire and safety, health care and recreation it can be assumed that Charlotte will offer yet another driving force attracting new residents and retaining those already enjoying the benefits of such a choice community. Investment in Charlotte's community infrastructure will result in long term dividends for the City resulting in stable neighborhoods, great parks and a viable downtown.



Lincoln Skate Park: Photo Courtesy of City of Charlotte



Transportation Evaluation

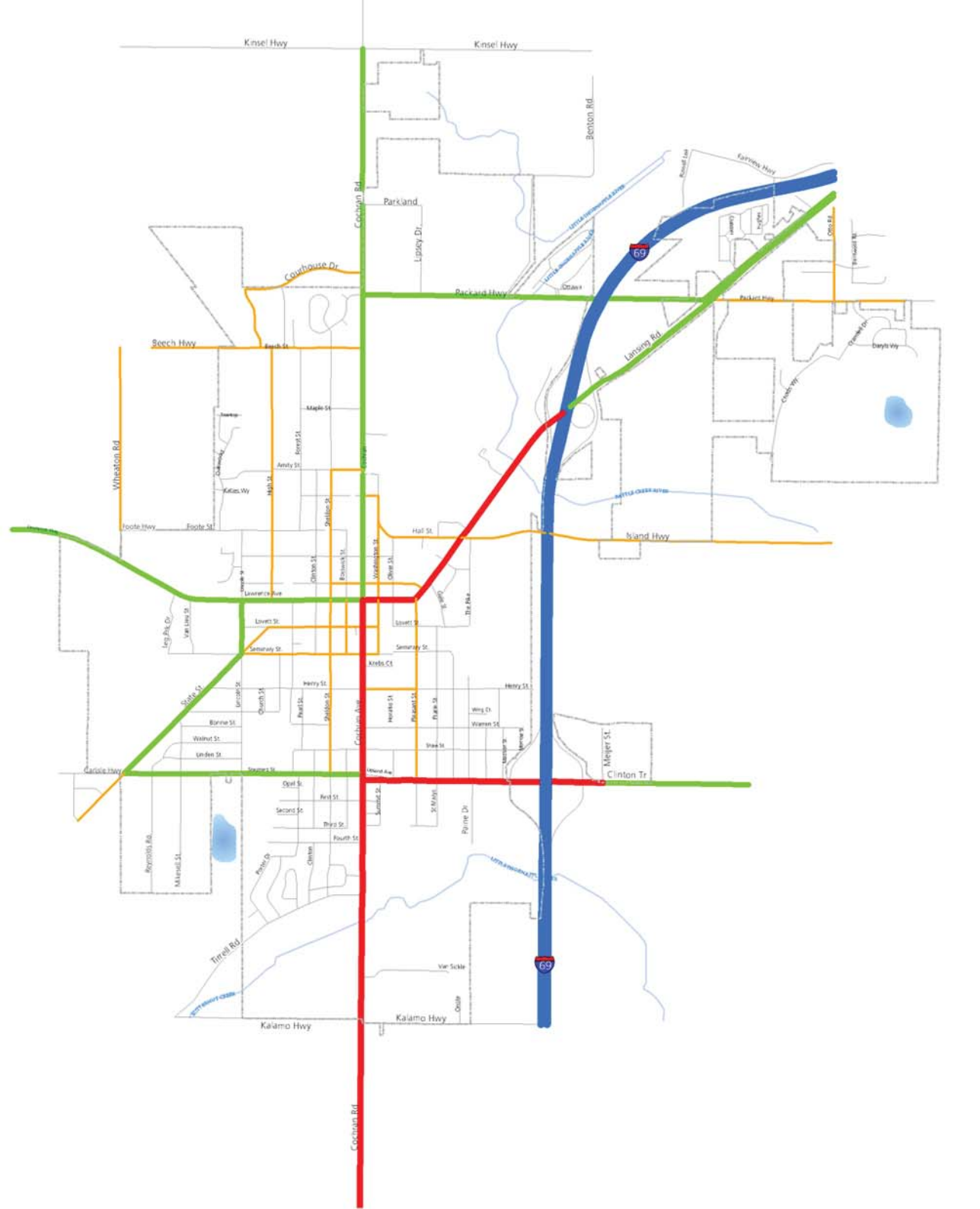
Charlotte has developed around a framework of existing roads and streets in the traditional grid pattern. Three major transit corridors, I-69, M-50 and M-79 have aided in the development of Charlotte allowing access to major urban centers as well as goods and services. Road maintenance within the City of Charlotte is the primary responsibility of the Charlotte Department of Public Works. Freight rail transit is also significant with the existence of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad. The Fitch H. Beach Airport located east of I-69 in the northeast portion of the City supports small recreational and business air traffic in Charlotte. Availability of safe, efficient and diverse transportation is crucial to the overall well being of Charlotte residents. With rising fuel costs and a growing interest in developing a more walkable community, Charlotte will greatly benefit from careful planning of future and existing transportation networks. The following is an analysis of these existing transportation features in the City of Charlotte.

Existing Road and Street Inventory

The first step in evaluating the road and street transportation networks is to establish the different classifications of roads throughout the community. In order to accurately assess the road network; the function and usage of specific roads must be evaluated. To assess the function of Charlotte roads, the Functional Highway Classification System (FHCS), was utilized. The FHCS is based on traffic volumes and traffic related attributes. Map 3.1 and Table 3.1 represent the existing transportation network in Charlotte. To evaluate the usage of Charlotte roads the 2004 Average Daily Traffic Volumes were compiled from the Michigan Department of Transportation, (MDOT). Map 3.2 represents the 2004 average daily traffic volumes for Charlotte. Traffic volumes are calculated throughout the year and are based on yearly averages.

Table 3.1 Road Classification: City of Charlotte				
Rural or Urban Interstate	I-69			
Rural or Urban Other Principal Arterial	E Clinton Tr.	E Shepherd St.	Lansing St.	Lansing Rd.
	E Lawrence Ave.	S Cochran Rd.		
Rural or Urban Minor Arterial	E Clinton Tr.	N Cochran Ave.	N. Cochran Rd.	Lansing Rd.
	Lawrence Hwy.	Packard Hwy.	S Lincoln St.	Battle Creek Hwy
	W Lawrence Ave.	W Shepherd St.	Packard Hwy.	
Rural Major or Urban Collector	Amity St.	Battle Creek Rd.	Beech Hwy.	Beech St.
	Courthouse Dr.	Harris Ave.	E Henry St.	Lovett St.
	E McClure St.	Seminary St.	Hall St.	High St.
	Independence Blvd.	Island Hwy.	Sheldon St.	Washington St.
	N Wheaton Rd.	State St.	Packard Hwy.	Pleasant St.
	S Boswick St.			
Source: Michigan Department of Transportation				

Map 3.1 Transportation Network



CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Transportation Network

Data Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

- Transportation Network Key**
- Blue line: Rural or Urban Interstate
 - Red line: Rural or Urban Other Principal Arterial
 - Green line: Rural or Urban Minor Arterial
 - Orange line: Rural Major or Urban Collector
 - Grey line: Local Roads



CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Average Daily Traffic
Data Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

Traffic Volumes Key

1-2,000
2,001-5,000
5,001-10,000
10,001-20,000
20,001-50,000

Transportation Concerns

Charlotte has developed in a uniform grid of road and street networks facilitating efficient local traffic flow throughout the community. Such a foundation allows for further expansion of new streets as the community grows. However, analysis of the existing transit networks combined with community insight has revealed critical concerns and issues. An explanation of these issues follows.

- Development along Lansing Road influences congestion and traffic speeds resulting in unsafe pedestrian compatibility and excessive curb cut access points, causing access management issues.
- Current railroad operations rely on the existing rail lines within Charlotte. Intersections between rail lines and streets pose significant problems for efficient transportation, paramount of which is emergency vehicle access throughout the entire city. The proposed West Side fire station, if approved by the voters, will alleviate many of these concerns.
- As realized through community input and transit analysis a number of streets in Charlotte along major residential neighborhoods are unpaved and surfaced with gravel or other natural material.
- Charlotte's proximity to I-69, M-50 and M-79 combined with extensive rail line operations draws heavy truck traffic through town. Residents believe that this truck traffic has increased over the past few years, especially along Lansing Road and Cochran Avenue.
- Sidewalks have not always been installed concurrent with residential development. Installation of sidewalks is an issue that the residents would like to see addressed in the near future.



Unimproved Western Gateway area at the Lawrence and Lincoln intersection

What does this mean for Charlotte?

Charlotte's extensive framework of transportation networks, including state highways 50 and 79, Interstate 69, the Grand Trunk Western Railroad and Fitch H. Beach Airport are all very significant assets to the community.



Shepherd Street access to I-69

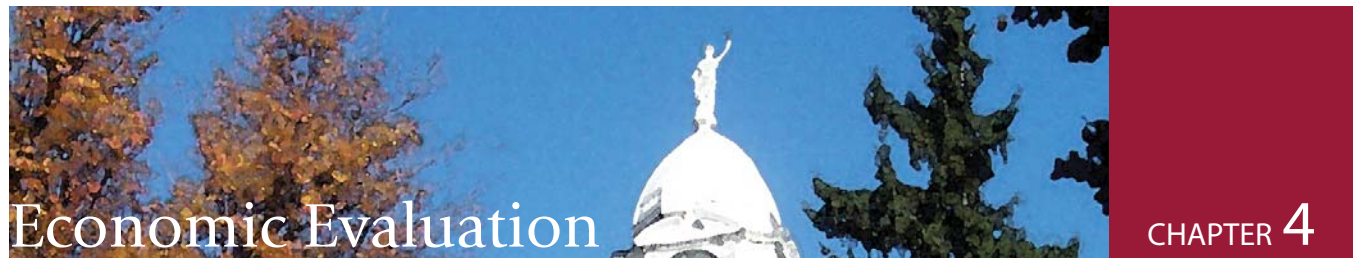
Efficient access to the I-69 freeway provides easy transportation to surrounding communities, as well as to Charlotte from other areas. The grid street system in Charlotte has shaped the location of traditional commercial and residential neighborhoods in the city center. However, as is common in most communities, the sprawling commercial corridor along Lansing Road has developed a disconnected transportation network with increased congestion and high traffic speeds in relatively newer areas of the city. This highly traveled roadway is in need of pedestrian elements, traffic calming features and a strong access management plan. Additionally, the existing rail line has created awkward intersections within the community, and in some instances has accelerated neighborhood decline and blight and emergency vehicles must wait for oncoming trains to pass before continuing their designated runs.

A connected and efficient transportation network offers options for non-motorized transit as well. Therefore, sidewalks and walkways need to be developed as residential areas grow and redevelop. Installation of sidewalks and paving of streets can be implemented concurrently due to their location within the public right-of-way.

The final key issue that has been presented in the transportation analysis is the increase in heavy truck traffic through town. While truck traffic is critical for the operations of manufacturing and other businesses within the community, truck traffic impedes safety and increases the frequency of maintenance of roadways within the city. Overall, Charlotte has a well-established transportation framework offering public transit, auto transit and pedestrian access and should use this system as a platform for continued economic development. Building upon this sound framework by adding traffic calming elements, increased pedestrian safety features and attractive roads and sidewalks will only add to this quality community asset.

Possible Strategies for Consideration:

- Advancing a special millage to surface unpaved streets and repair streets in need of reconstruction.
- Establish a Corridor Development Authority for Lansing Road.
- Construction of a West Side fire station.
- Consolidate commercial and higher traffic trip generators east of I-69 along Lansing Road and Clinton Trail (M-50).



Introduction

The City of Charlotte's economy is spread over a diverse framework of industries and operations. Charlotte's primary economic activities stem from a sound foundation in manufacturing, education, health and social services, public administration and retail trade employment categories. Charlotte is fortunate that many of its residents find employment within these industries locally. However, as with any growing community, Charlotte residents would like to continue to build on the strong economic foundation and expand job opportunities and industrial diversity within the community.

The 2002 Economic Census reported 18 manufacturing establishments within the City with annual sales and payroll of \$361,000,000 and \$51,227,000, respectively. Retail employed 1,105 people in 68 establishments with sales and payroll of \$167,000,000 and \$16,690,000, respectively. The average manufacturing job had an annual salary of \$38,370 compared to \$16,440 for a retail job and \$8,810 for accommodation and food service job.

Employment Evaluation

Charlotte's strong background in manufacturing, service and retail trade has served the community's needs for employment, goods and services for many generations. Charlotte is renowned for the manufacturing of glass, emergency vehicles and wood products. Furthermore, the Charlotte Schools, Eaton County government complex and Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital also greatly enhance the economic vitality and employment base for the Charlotte community and surrounding townships. Availability of efficient transportation offers both the manufacturing and service industries access to shipping and receiving routes that open businesses to many surrounding markets. Charlotte aims to continue building upon the attributes of its economic foundation by fully utilizing the existing infrastructure and availability of industrial park space and a trained workforce.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 represent Charlotte's employment breakdown by industry and occupation. Table 4.1 reveals Charlotte's employment base being primarily focused within five industries. Manufacturing, education, health and social services, public administration, and retail trade account for most of the employment in Charlotte with manufacturing accounting for 24% of the total job base (2000 U.S. Census). These industries are primarily supported at the Combs and Dean industrial parks, Hayes Green Beach Hospital, Charlotte school system and City and County government. While these five industries make up over 67% of the labor force, the remaining employment opportunities span a broad range of activities and pursuits. Employment diversity by occupational group is reflected in Table 4.2. Those occupations which are most common are found in the sales and office, management and professional, production, transportation and material moving occupations. Overall Charlotte has a fairly diversified employment base with a strong foundation in manufacturing industries and professional office occupations. Charlotte's location along major transit networks serves these two economic activities well providing access to heavy truck transit, commercial rail line transit, and employee commuter transit.

Table 4.1 Employment by Industry		
INDUSTRY	#	%
Manufacturing	943	23.9
Educational, health and social services	743	18.8
Retail trade	583	14.8
Public Administration	339	8.6
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	262	6.6
Construction	244	6.2
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	213	5.5
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	166	4.2
Other Services (except public administration)	145	3.7
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	106	2.7
Wholesale Trade	97	2.5
Information	95	2.4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and mining	9	0.2
Source: US Census 2000		

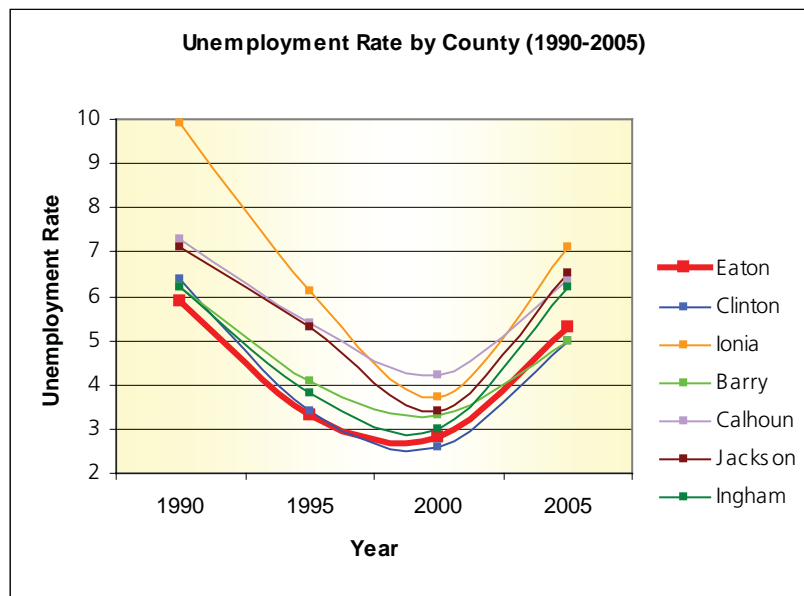
Table 4.2 Employment by Occupation		
OCCUPATION	#	%
Sales and office occupations	1,151	29.2
Management, professional, and related occupations	996	25.2
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	887	22.5
Service occupations	564	14.3
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	338	8.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	9	.2
Source: US Census 2000		

Unemployment

While employment trends were evaluated for the City of Charlotte, unemployment trends are provided for all of Eaton County and the surrounding counties to reveal trends on a regional level. An analysis of Table 4.3 reveals a decrease in the unemployment rate for all counties in the region during the ten year period between 1990 and 2000. Conversely, an increase in the unemployment rate is shown for the following years through 2005. Chart 4.1 graphically represents the decline and increase in the regional unemployment trends. This trend is not unique to this region, but a reflection of the nation as a whole. At the conclusion of the analysis (2005 data) the Eaton County unemployment rate was lower than the State average and ranked among the bottom three in the surrounding counties.

Table 4.3 Unemployment Rates				
COUNTY	1990	1995	2000	2005
Eaton	5.9	3.3	2.8	5.3
Clinton	6.4	3.4	2.6	5.0
Ionia	9.9	6.1	3.7	7.1
Barry	6.2	4.1	3.3	5.0
Calhoun	7.3	5.4	4.2	6.4
Jackson	7.1	5.3	3.4	6.5
Ingham	6.2	3.8	3.0	6.2
State of Michigan	7.7	5.3	3.7	6.7
Source: US Census 2000				

Chart 4.1



Income

In order to completely evaluate the economic sustainability of Charlotte, it is important to look at the salaries of families and individuals. Analyzing the income levels presents a look at the investment that can be expected in goods and services within a community. Tables 4.4-4.6 provide a look at the average yearly incomes for families as well as households for Charlotte and the surrounding region. Table 4.4 provides a regional perspective of income levels for both household and family. Second only to Clinton County, Eaton County presents household and family income levels of \$49,588 and \$57,898 respectively. Eaton County offers income levels above the state average. A more detailed breakdown of income levels for the City of Charlotte is presented in tables 4.5 and 4.6.

Table 4.4 Median Income by County		
COUNTY	HOUSEHOLD	FAMILY
Eaton	49,588	57,898
Clinton	52,806	60,491
Ionia	43,074	49,797
Barry	46,820	51,794
Calhoun	38,918	47,167
Jackson	43,171	50,970
Ingham	40,774	53,063
State of Michigan	46,039	57,277
Source: US Census 2000		

Table 4.5 Charlotte Household Income (1999 Dollars)		
	# of Households	%
Less than \$10,000	262	8.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	265	8.3
\$15,000 to \$24,999	435	13.6
\$25,000 to \$34,999	503	15.7
\$35,000 to \$49,999	626	19.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	627	19.6
\$75,000 to \$99,999	277	8.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	187	5.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0	0
\$200,000 or more	21	.7
Median Household Income	37,473	(X)
Source: US Census 2000		

Table 4.6 Charlotte Family Income (1999 Dollars)		
	# of Families	%
Less than \$10,000	102	4.8
\$10,000 to \$14,999	89	4.2
\$15,000 to \$24,999	195	9.3
\$25,000 to \$34,999	293	13.9
\$35,000 to \$49,999	463	22
\$50,000 to \$74,999	499	23.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999	267	12.7
\$100,000 to \$149,999	178	8.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0	0
\$200,000 or more	21	1
Per Capita Income	18,066	(x)
Source: US Census 2000		

U.S. Census Definitions

Family - A group of two or more people who reside together and are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Household - A household includes all people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. A household may comprise a group of unrelated people or one person living alone.

What Does This Mean for Charlotte?

As in most communities Charlotte residents would like to enhance the economic sustainability of the city and surrounding region. More specifically residents are in support of expanding the existing manufacturing and business centers to accommodate new development and more family-wage jobs. As revealed in the survey results, over 80% of residents who participated feel attracting more high paying sustainable jobs is a main priority for the city's economic development. Furthermore, survey participants would like to see high tech industry and research become a more viable and active part of Charlotte's economy. Based on the 2002 Economic Census, manufacturing related jobs make double the salary of retail employees and almost four times those employed in the food service industry. Positioning the city to be competitive for new job creation means maintaining a quality public school system, creating a vibrant downtown and having a diversity of housing opportunities.

Housing and Neighborhoods

CHAPTER 5

Housing and Neighborhood Assessment

Throughout the visioning process Charlotte residents have voiced a strong concern for the quality, appearance and diversity of the residential neighborhoods and homes in the community. Visioning participants take pride in the appearance of their neighborhoods and feel they are a crucial element in the quality of life for Charlotte residents. Residents envision Charlotte neighborhoods offering attractive and affordable homes, residential opportunities for retirees and young families and a network of sidewalks and paved streets connecting to downtown, schools and other public facilities. This chapter assesses the character of homes and neighborhoods throughout Charlotte. For the purposes of this assessment a number of factors are taken into account such as housing quality, age of home and occupancy. The outcome of this assessment provides a basis for which land use issues can be addressed regarding neighborhood character, historic preservation and diversity of housing stock.



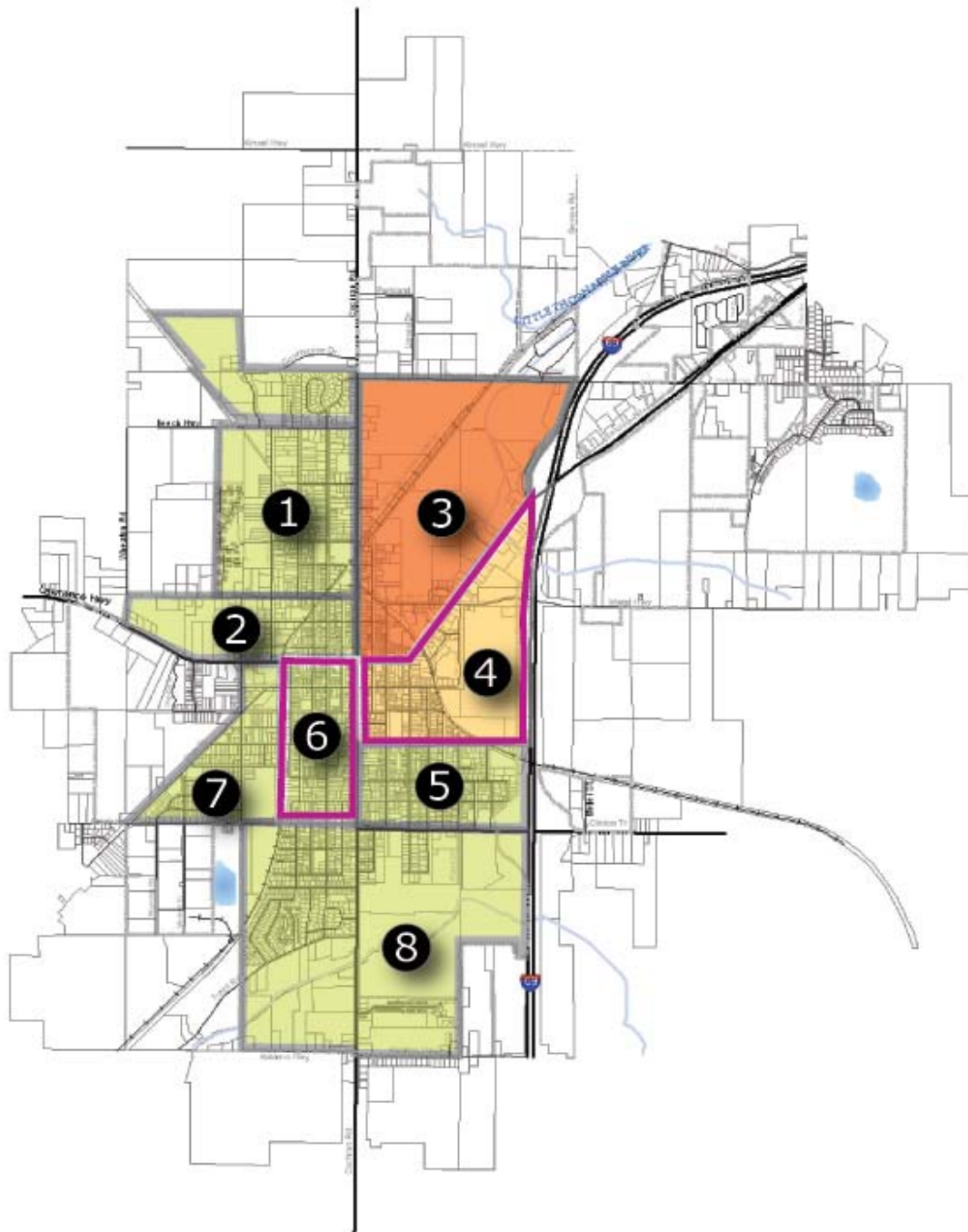
New large single family home



Traditional Residential Neighborhood



Traditional Single Family Home



CITY OF CHARLOTTE Census Block Profile

- ⑧ Block Group #
- Owner Neighborhood
- Renter Neighborhood
- Transition Neighborhood
- Historic Structures



Existing Conditions

It is critical that a community have a diverse housing stock dispersed throughout attractive affordable neighborhoods. This housing must serve the needs of the existing residents as well as the projected future growth. To begin evaluating the conditions of Charlotte's housing stock the following provides a broad view of neighborhood characteristics. Map 5.1 shows the census divisions that are used throughout this plan and more importantly within the housing and neighborhood assessment. Table 5.1 shows the attributes of the Block Groups to reveal a detailed sense of character and make up for these areas. A number of attributes are included within Table 5.1 revealing a broad scope of each Census Block Group. More detailed analysis, at the Census Block level, are included later in this chapter.

Table 5.1 Neighborhood Character					
Census Tract 020900	# of Housing Units	Owner Occupied #	Owner Occupied %	Renter Occupied #	Renter Occupied %
1	360	265	74	95	26
2	321	198	62	85	26
3	331	92	28	239	72
4	390	190	49	168	43
5	438	363	83	48	11
6	517	286	55	186	36
7	288	243	84	35	12
8	522	435	83	81	15
Total	3,167	2,072	65%	937	31%

Table 5.1 (Continued) Neighborhood Character					
Census Tract 020900	Home Built Pre-1940 #	Home Built Pre -1940 %	Neighborhood Type	Median Home Values	Median Income
1	108	30	Owner	\$83,900	\$38,750
2	127	40	Owner	\$91,000	\$44,000
3	155	47	Renter	\$74,200	\$20,893
4	215	55	Transitional	\$82,200	\$40,400
5	173	39	Owner	\$78,900	\$48,516
6	346	67	Owner	\$79,800	\$30,096
7	43	15	Owner	\$93,371	\$36,207
8	76	15	Owner	\$90,600	\$35,889
Total	1,243	39%	Owner	\$83,700	\$49,588

Source: US Census 2000

Neighborhood Character

Charlotte residents truly value the quality of life in their community. One important element of this includes the attractiveness and unique character of the neighborhoods in which they live. Residents expressed concerns for a perceived increase in rental housing within existing single-family residential neighborhoods, the quality and appearance of these rental homes and the changing character of unique and historic neighborhoods. The conversion of owner-occupied homes into rental homes does have a long term negative impact on neighborhood stability. Studies authored by a variety of real estate and housing organizations have found that the conversion of a neighborhood from owner to renter status results in lower housing values, a decrease in median household income and increased incidents of blight violations. The tipping point for a neighborhood is when the percentage of rental housing exceeds 55% of the total neighborhood housing stock.

Historic Neighborhoods

In addition to the number of rental homes in each neighborhood it is also very important to determine those neighborhoods that have a greater concentration of historic homes, or homes built before 1940. Identifying these areas allows Charlotte to focus historic preservation efforts and maximize the implementation of protecting historic neighborhood character. One area with a high frequency of properties is located in the heart of the downtown residential area. This is typical of most communities where the first residential areas built were constructed within walking distance to the downtown.

Housing Quality

In order to gain a more detailed understanding of the housing and neighborhood character in the community, a survey must be completed assessing the quality of the homes in each neighborhood. This was done through a windshield survey in which every home in the City of Charlotte was rated according to a scale developed by the American Association of Planning. Each home was given a rating of good, fair and poor.

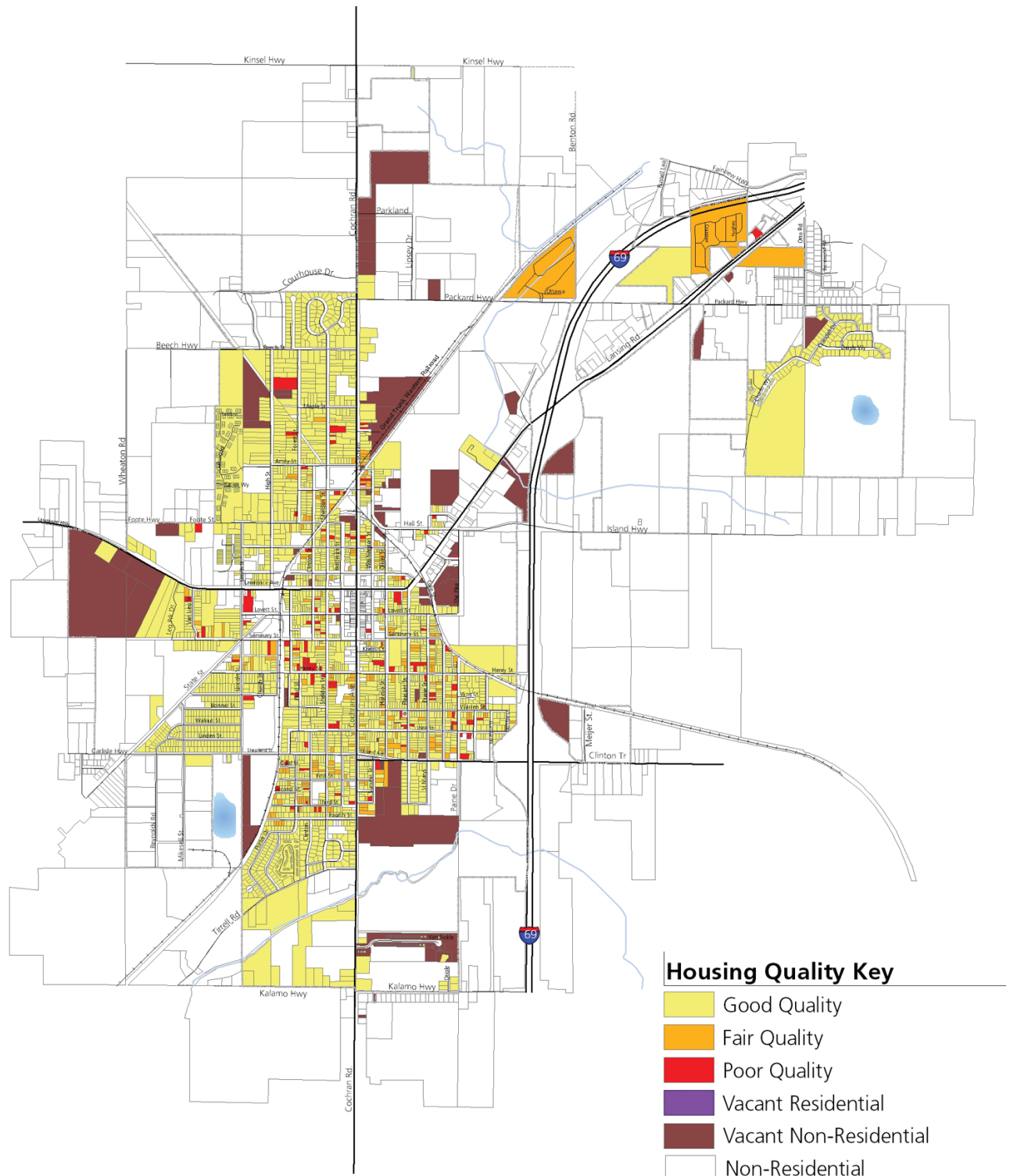
Good = Stable, well-maintained with minimal or no signs of deferred maintenance.

Fair = Showing signs of deterioration through deferred maintenance.

Poor = Building and site not maintained.

This assessment identifies those areas in the community where Charlotte will need to focus efforts to enhance the housing stock, such as targeted existing building maintenance code enforcement, rental inspections and blight enforcement. As shown in Map 5.2, Charlotte has a high amount of good housing as compared to fair or poor. However, some of the lesser quality homes are concentrated in areas that are both rental and historic neighborhoods. The assessment reveals a need to enhance the quality of homes in these areas to ensure that historic neighborhoods are preserved and that rental housing fits with the character of the overall neighborhood.

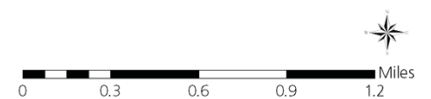
As noted on Map 7.1: Special Focus Areas Map on page 49, building and site code inspections should be targeted with greater frequency in areas designated as inspection and enforcement



CITY OF CHARLOTTE Housing Quality Analysis

Data Source: Beckett and Raeder Inc. 2006

- City Boundary
- Railroad
- Primary Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- State/Interstate Highway



Residents have made it clear that protecting the quality of the neighborhoods and homes in Charlotte is of utmost importance. The primary issues that were presented through community visioning and inventory and analysis were increases in rental housing, appearance of homes and lots, preservation of historic homes and the availability of affordable and diverse housing options.

Increases in Rental Housing

A rental inspection program should be implemented to insure that the appearance and character of neighborhoods will remain attractive. Such a program would hold landlords responsible for upkeep and maintenance of the rental units. Additionally, the quality of rental homes must be maintained and enforced to insure quality housing options for all of Charlotte's citizens. While some residents feel rental housing should be eliminated from existing neighborhoods, it is clear that there is a demand for rental housing in Charlotte. Therefore, it is important to incorporate rental housing within existing single family neighborhoods that does not change or decrease the quality of the neighborhood character.



Rental Apartment Complex

Appearance of Homes and Lots

Through both community visioning and the housing quality survey, it became evident that some residential areas of Charlotte are in need of enhancement and renovation. A review of housing information by block group reveals that a majority of block groups are predominately owner occupied. However, block group 3 has over 70% of the housing units designated as renter. Further, block group 4 is in transition moving from owner to renter status. Block groups 4 and 6 have a higher number of pre-1940 structures which are susceptible to conversion. This data reveals the priority for which enhancement efforts need to be implemented. While local officials are primarily responsible for enforcing residential blight and appearance standards, an alternative maintenance strategy could include creation of neighborhood associations to promote peer review and resident involvement in the neighborhood revitalization process. Implementation of neighborhood associations would give residents an opportunity to share appearance and safety standard ideas with both neighbors and city officials resulting in unique neighborhood characteristics that suit the desires of those living in each designated block. The result would be more quality control of homes and lots within each of these designated neighborhoods.



Well-maintained Single Family Home



Single Family Neighborhood

Preservation of Historic Homes

While the preservation of one specific historic home is a highly valued asset in any community, the preservation of neighborhoods with a high percentage of historic homes is a much more favorable goal. Map 5.3 and Table 5.1 reveal by census block group those areas that have greater concentrations of historic homes. This analysis provides a clear view of those areas in which to concentrate historic preservation efforts.

Historic District

Designating a historic district is the first step in preserving historic homes. This requires the designation of a boundary around an area with a significant percentage of historic homes and structures. A local historic district commission would oversee the maintenance and development of standards for the historic district. The standards for the historic district would be determined by this committee and could be designed to ensure the historic character, unique to Charlotte, is upheld and further enhanced. Homeowners within the district would be required to meet the standards and have any exterior changes to their homes approved by the commission. Residents voiced concern that implementation of these regulations would impose on

private property rights. It is important that residents continue to be involved when determining the desired character of homes and are thoroughly educated in how historic preservation can better the quality of life in their neighborhoods. The State of Michigan State Historic Preservation Office commissioned a study on the economic impact of historic districts in Michigan and a summary of that report is found under Supporting Documentation.

Historic Overlay Zone

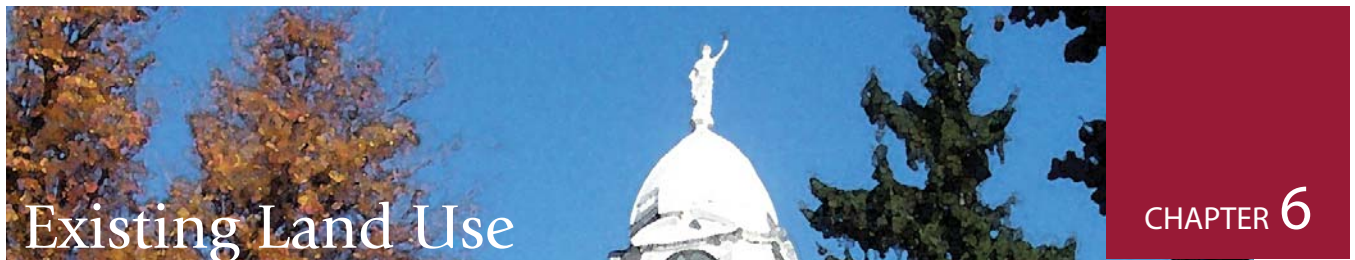
A similar mechanism that would provide regulatory oversight on changes within historic areas is the design of a historic overlay zone. While the overlay zone does not require the establishment of a commission, it does apply regulatory standards to the homes and structures within the zone. The overlay zone would act as an added element within the zoning ordinance that ensures the historic character of homes and structures remains. As with the historic district, the desired historic characteristics would need to be determined to meld with the unique neighborhoods of Charlotte.



New Residential Development in Charlotte

Summary

Charlotte's housing quality is generally good with small pockets of housing showing signs of decline. Based on census data, there appears to be a correlation between older structures and a degradation in quality. This can be associated with conversion from owner to renter status or the inability of a homeowner to properly maintain their older dwelling. Regardless of the cause, the rehabilitation and enhancement of these properties is vital to the city. Healthy neighborhoods will assist downtown revitalization and provide residents with a variety of housing choices.



Introduction

Land use distribution in Charlotte has changed over time in response to a number of factors that have shaped the community. Transformations in land use patterns that have occurred in Charlotte are common to those in many communities. Some influential factors on the location or direction of land uses are changes in transportation networks, accessibility to automotive transportation and number of workers commuting to and from Charlotte, as well as the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan. Charlotte has experienced land use development similar to that of the state and nation. An increased reliance on automobile transportation and a greater commuting workforce have created a demand for goods and services along major transit networks. Additionally, development of big box retail, located along Clinton Trail and Lansing Road, has reduced the patronage of locally owned businesses downtown. Unfortunately this has had a direct impact on the land uses located downtown and has reshaped the traditional retail oriented downtown to a more office and service oriented district. Furthermore, new residential areas of Charlotte have transitioned from traditional densely populated neighborhoods to development more characteristic of large lot and suburban residential development. Overall the Charlotte community has experienced a land use transition no different than many Michigan and nationwide cities and towns. Trends in land use have focused new development away from the downtown and community core focusing development of commercial, service and residential land uses along major transit corridors and outlying rural areas creating a complete disconnect from the City.

Land Use

As discussed in the introduction, land uses have been influenced by many factors. Analysis of Charlotte's current land use distribution provides the framework in which to guide future land use decisions and determine how previous land use decisions may continue to be effective or may need to be reworked. The following is a discussion of the existing land uses and how and where they impact the Charlotte community. Table 6.1 represents the acreages for each land use category. Map 6.1 presents an illustrative view of the location of these land uses. Land use classifications are a product of the Land Based Classification System (LBCS) provided by the American Planning Association (APA). Land uses were determined by a field verification survey performed by the consulting team of Beckett and Raeder Inc., combined with the existing land use data found within the Charlotte Master Plan, 2000.

Residential

As can be expected residential land use is the dominant use found through the City of Charlotte. Table 6.1 presents a total of 1,116 acres that are utilized for residential activities within the city which constitutes 36% of the total land area. Residential development has spread to the outlying areas in the community as the City has experienced residential growth. More residents and newcomers have been drawn to outlying residential areas where new development offers larger lot size, less density and a greater sense of solitude. A number of suburban housing developments in Charlotte are located outside the traditional neighborhoods along Cochran Road and Packard Highway, and at the northern and southern extents of the community. Cochran Road and Packard Highway are both major transportation routes offering efficient connections to outlying communities and employment opportunities. Traditional residential neighborhoods are centrally located adjacent to downtown. With the exception of several small pockets of residential land uses, residential development has followed the Cochran Road corridor, which runs north and south through the community. Residential development north of Amity Street starts to show the desire for larger lots and less dense neighborhoods. Dense traditional residential development exists

south of the City in the area north of Fourth Street, east of the Grand Trunk Railroad, south of Lawrence Avenue and west of Gale Street. Charlotte has a significant number of rental units dispersed throughout these single-family neighborhoods. Additionally, two family dwellings such as townhomes and duplexes have been incorporated into these neighborhoods. A number of multiple family residential developments are located within the City. As shown in Map 6.1 in the orange tone, these uses are fairly evenly dispersed throughout the community. Multiple family residential land uses make up 70 acres of the land area in Charlotte.

Manufactured and mobile home developments exist in the City of Charlotte. The low property taxes and low home ownership costs draw a great deal of interest from lower income families and single-headed households. However, they typically develop in less desirable land use areas in the community. In Charlotte they are primarily located in the outlying areas near manufacturing and industrial zones such as the northeast extent of Lansing Road and at the northeast corner of the Grand Trunk Railroad-Packard Highway intersection. Manufactured and mobile home parks make up 86 acres of land use in the City.

Commercial

A number of land uses are classified under the category of commercial land use. These uses include shopping for goods and services, restaurants and entertainment facilities. Commercial land use comprises the fourth largest land use category in the City of Charlotte. Map 6.1 represents a clear view of where these commercial areas are located in the community as highlighted in red. As mentioned in the introduction, a transformation of the commercial landscape has greatly impacted the character of the community. A large amount of commercial development has followed the sprawling pattern along the Lansing Road corridor. Unfortunately, this has led to a decline in the viability for retail and entertainment to remain in the heart of the community downtown. Similarly, corridor commercial is evolving where familiar stores like Kmart close and leave behind large vacant properties. In other American cities, commercial development has occurred in a sprawling fashion along major highways and transit routes to meet the needs of a very mobile resident population. Commercial land use within Charlotte encompasses 215 acres or 7% of the total area.

Office and Health Services

Typically, as commercial land uses relocate out of downtown, office uses fill the gap. A number of offices are located in downtown Charlotte as well as on the strip along Lansing Road. Map 6.1 depicts office and health service uses in the pink tone. Observing Map 6.1 reveals a rather uniform distribution of office and health services throughout the Charlotte community. Charlotte has two significant areas where these uses are located. The Eaton County facility along Courthouse Drive and the Hayes Green Beach Medical facility along Harris and Lansing Road. Overall, office and health care services make up 157 acres of land area in the City.

Industrial

Industrial land use in Charlotte is heavily concentrated in two major locations in the City. One area is the Dean Industrial Park, located along Mikesell Street and Reynolds Road, that is home to Spartan Motors producers of emergency vehicle chassis and military vehicles. Dean Industrial Park has some room for additional manufacturing and/or industrial uses and provides the optimum location for new developments of this type. The second large industrial use is found within the Combs Industrial Park, located along Packard Highway and Cochran Road. Combs Industrial Park is a newer development than Dean Industrial Park and will continue to provide opportunities for industrial development for some time. Additional industrial areas are distributed throughout the City including smaller industrial sites previously developed along rail



Combs Industrial Park: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

lines. These older industrial sites are now surrounded by residential development and other uses that are not as compatible with industrial activities. Therefore, as these uses cease operations, new industrial development will most likely be located at one of the established industrial parks. Industrial usage of land in Charlotte encompasses approximately 436 acres or 14% of the total area in the City; the third largest land use.

Public and Institutional Facilities

Public and institutional facilities comprise 15% of the land in Charlotte. These public land uses have been utilized for a variety of means, including, schools, mass assembly organizations, public places, municipal services, utilities and other activities that serve the greater public. These areas are presented in the dark blue tone in Map 6.1. Public and institutional uses are evenly distributed throughout the community with very few areas with a high concentration of public uses.

Parking

Charlotte has a number of public parking lots located downtown, which provide parking for downtown residents as well as visitors. The availability of parking currently serves the majority of the downtown parking demand but will need to be increased should building occupancy increase and new development occur.

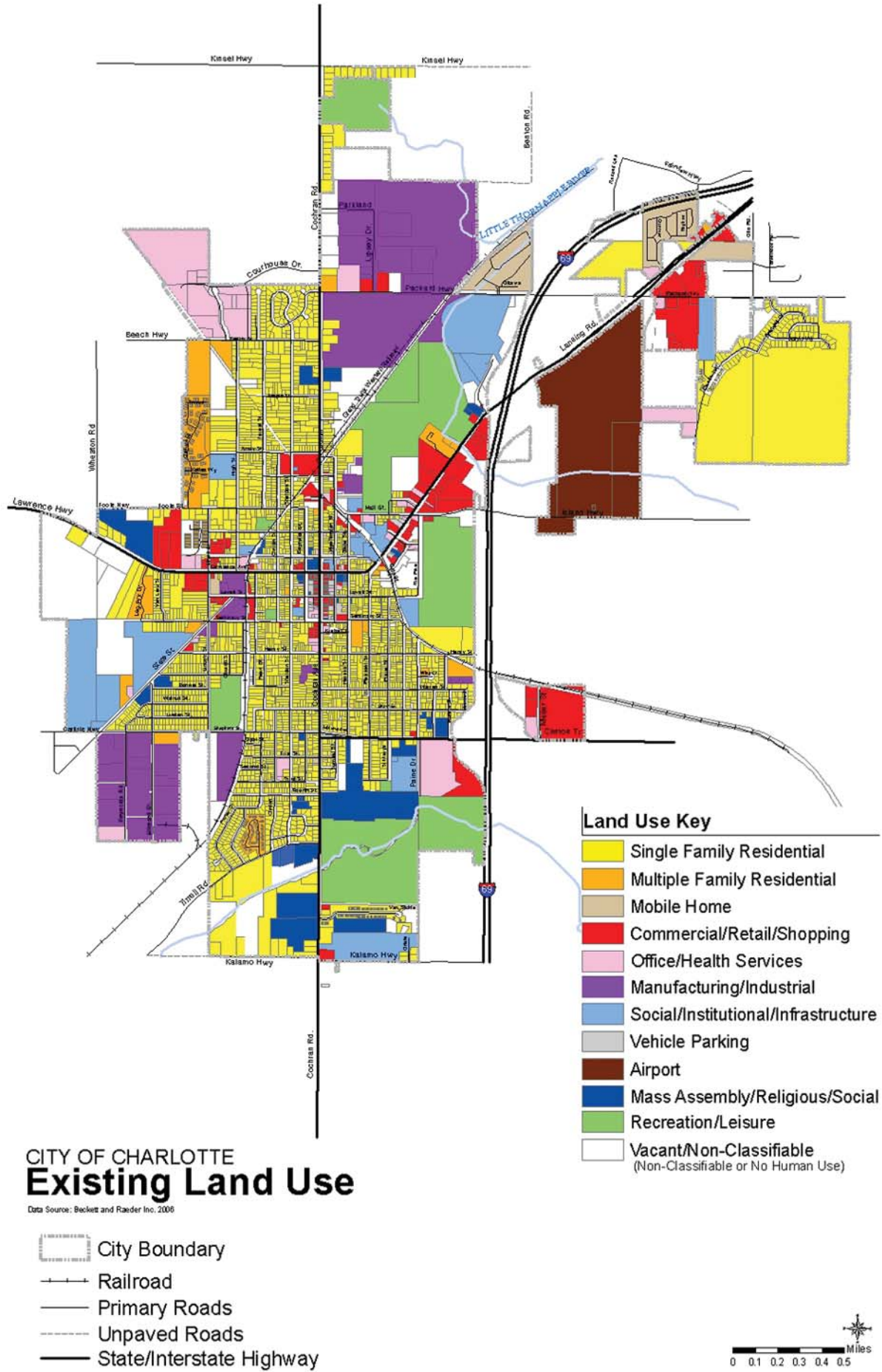
Parks and Open Space

Availability and access to parks, open space and outdoor recreation opportunities are well established in Charlotte. Charlotte continues to improve upon these features to ensure the open space and parks are well maintained and accessible to all residents. Parks and open space make up only 4% of the land use in Charlotte. Other undeveloped areas may be utilized for leisure usage and may not have been visible during the field analysis. Therefore, this figure is an approximation and should be reviewed as such. Park and open space areas are depicted in the light green tone in Map 6.1.

Agriculture and Vacant

Vacant properties and agricultural land typically develop before infill or reuse practices are implemented. Therefore, these two uses have been grouped under the same category. Approximately 345 acres of land are currently undeveloped. With the exception of small pockets of land in neighborhoods and downtown, undeveloped areas are primarily located at the outer reaches of the community covering rather large parcels of land. These areas will draw the attention of developers and are important assets in preserving the character of the community.

Table 6.1 Existing Land Use				
Land Use Category			Acres	% of Total
Single Family Residential			1,116	36%
Multiple Family Residential			70	2%
Mobile Home			86	4%
Commercial			215	7%
Office and Health Services			157	5%
Industrial			436	14%
Public, Institutional, and Facilities			471	15%
Transportation and Parking			53	2%
Parks and Open Space			119	4%
Vacant and Agriculture			345	11%
TOTAL			3,068	100
Source: Beckett & Raeder Inc. Eaton County GIS. 2006				



Land Use Issues

Understanding how and where land uses are distributed throughout the community presents a clear view of recent trends in development and areas that may be in need of further review. Looking at existing land uses reveals areas that may have conflicting activities creating impacts that may impede development or induce property value decline and underutilization. Understanding where land use decisions have benefited the community provide a blueprint to continue those efforts. The following is an explanation of major land use issues that have been observed through this analysis.

Downtown Charlotte

After evaluating the current land uses in downtown, it is clear that the retail, entertainment, specialty stores and community uses, once the focus of downtown, have been replaced by commercial strip development along Lansing Road and Clinton Trail. Therefore, downtown has been transformed into more of a service and office oriented district of uses. A disconnect between retail shopping and downtown has led to a decrease in the support of local businesses. Consequently, it is important for Charlotte to focus efforts to reestablish downtown with the traditional land uses, such as retail, restaurants, offices and mixed-uses. Therefore, it is crucial that Charlotte ensure that downtown and Lansing Road remain physically separated by residential land uses and that the linear commercial development does not extend farther than currently exists.

Lansing Road

Commercial sprawl is a factor influencing cities nationwide. Lansing Road has developed a pattern of land uses that are characteristic of this sprawling landscape. Pressures from strip commercial retailers combined with a mobile resident population have created a corridor commercial area along Lansing Road. These commercial corridors have replaced downtown Charlotte as the regional shopping hub supporting Charlotte residents as well as surrounding communities and rural areas. Establishment of this regional hub has created a decline in downtown business resulting in transformation of the community. Increased traffic, decreased pedestrian and vehicular safety and lack of community continuity are the end result of this type of commercial development. Reversing the sprawling effects of commercial strip development may prove to be very difficult. Charlotte is faced with the challenge of enhancing the Lansing Road corridor and limiting future sprawl along this linear corridor. By not allowing the Lansing Road commercial area to connect with downtown, Charlotte's downtown will retain its unique sense of place and community character. Additionally, as the City and adjacent Townships grow, any residual net new commercial development needs to be focused in existing commercial areas.

Residential

Quality-affordable housing in friendly neighborhoods is the framework which makes a community an attractive enjoyable place to live. Larger lots are developed for single-family homes in these outlying areas requiring the expansion of utilities and services. Furthermore, a more linear pattern of residential development has occurred along major road networks resulting in increased disconnects with the central community as well as reliance on sprawling commercial development.

Fitch H. Beach Airport

In compliance with State legislation the City adopted an Airport Approach Protection Plan and Related Procedures to regulate the type and height of land uses under the designated approach zones to the airport. The master plan amendment adopted July 28, 2002 by the City Council and the associated map are included in the appendix of this plan for reference. This master plan does not rescind this particular action.



Introduction

Community involvement plays a significant role in the success and applicability of any Master Plan. Allowing ample opportunities for residents and community members to participate in the planning process develops a sense of community ownership in the plan. Without successful community input residents have no reason to feel ownership or reward in the plan and the resulting outcome.

The City of Charlotte realizes the importance of involving residents throughout the planning process. Therefore, the City initiated a visioning workshop; facilitated by the consulting team of Beckett and Raeder Inc., which directed residents through a number of exercises to collect the ideas, dreams and goals of the community. Participant's ideas, dreams and goals have been compiled and analyzed to develop a list of themes and corresponding objectives. These themes and objectives; derived from the visioning session, will give direction for the Master Plan as well as planning efforts in the future.

Visioning Workshop

The City of Charlotte held a community visioning workshop on the evening of March 20, 2006. Participants were asked to work through a series of exercises to develop ideas and goals for the Charlotte community. Residents who attended the session were divided into tables of roughly four to six people. The visioning session began with a presentation on the purpose of the Master Plan and discussion on the importance of community input. Next participants were asked to brainstorm on their most proud and most challenging aspects of the community. These issues were compiled into lists for each table and then voted upon by table members. The next exercise required participants to discuss and record events, developments and trends over the past fifteen to twenty years. Following this step, the



Visioning Participants

participants were asked to come up with their individual preferred future land use vision. The dreams and goals for Charlotte were also recorded and then voted upon by table members. One member from each table was then asked to present their table's discussion to the entire group. Following these presentations, a compiled list of each table's preferred dreams was posted and voted upon by all participants. This concluded the visioning session and led to the development of the goals and objectives that the Master Plan follows to achieve the desired future of Charlotte. The following is an explanation of the results of the visioning session.

What We Are Proud of and Challenged By

Proud

Visioning participants were asked to brainstorm on the things that they were most proud of in Charlotte. These items were compiled into a list and voted upon. Those issues were then discussed and presented to the entire group. Issues that received the greatest number of votes and were consistent throughout the entire group are listed below.

- Hospital
- Schools
- Fire Department
- City Parks
- Community Collaboration and Involvement

Charlotte residents clearly view the hospital and the schools as beneficial assets to the community. These issues were continually discussed as factors that draw new residents to the community and retain existing residents. Quality education and health systems are of great importance to any community and Charlotte prides itself in having these features well established. Also receiving a fair number of votes in the “proud” category were the Fire Department, city parks and community collaboration and involvement. These five issues present a sense of pride in the community services, availability of open and recreational space, and resident’s participation in community decisions.



Visioning Participants

Challenges

Participants followed the same process to compile and vote upon issues that they were most challenged by. These are issues that the community members feel need to be improved upon providing a sense of direction for the Master Plan. All of these issues are also listed in the appendices. The issues that received the greatest number of votes and were most common throughout the groups are provided below.

1. The Lansing Road Configuration
2. Lack of Good Paying Jobs
3. Poor Housing and Yard Appearance
4. Truck and Car Traffic
5. Vacant Retail Shops

Participants expressed a strong concern for how Lansing Road is configured with a variety of lane types and changes. Another issue that visioning participants were concerned about was the decline of good paying jobs within the community. Discussion of new industry and high tech jobs was included among those concerned about the availability of jobs in Charlotte. Poor housing and yard quality were remaining issues of concern. The appearance of homes and yards in Charlotte is something that the residents feel should be well maintained upholding a respectable image of the community. The remaining issues included overall traffic through town and vacancies in the downtown retail shops. Compiling this list of challenges in the community provides a direction for determining the items that need to be addressed in Charlotte. These issues will help to develop the goals and objectives of a Master Plan that will focus efforts toward remedying the highlighted problems.

What are the Trends in Charlotte?

Visioning participants were asked to discuss and record the trends that they have observed in Charlotte over the past fifteen to twenty years. Lists the participants put together provide a clear view of what types of things have been going on in the community over this time period. Trends have been broken into categories that will help distinguish which areas in the community have seen the greatest changes. These categories are:

- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Employment
- Downtown and Retail
- Transportation
- Community Wide

Housing and Neighborhood Trends

As residents discussed trends in housing and neighborhoods of Charlotte one major issue was discussed. According to participants, the number of rental and multi-unit housing units has increased significantly over the past fifteen to twenty years. More specifically, the residents feel that older homes have been converted into multi-unit dwellings for rental purposes and that this has led to the decline in housing and yard appearance. However, it is important to note that residents realize that housing and yard blight are not a problem solely associated with rental properties.

Parks, Open Space and Recreation Trends

The availability of parks, open space and recreational opportunities are important attributes of any community. Charlotte residents acknowledged the City's efforts to improve Dean Park and Lincoln Park.

Employment

As with most communities in Michigan and the United States, the diversity of good paying jobs is a common discussion topic among community members. Without viable-sustainable jobs, people are unable to remain in the communities they call home. As expected, participants of this visioning session discussed employment opportunities and trends observed over the past fifteen to twenty years. One trend; which was discussed more often than the others; was referring to Charlotte as a bedroom community. A number of issues develop when more people work outside of their community and one is additional peak hour (a.m. and p.m.) traffic. Residents recognized these issues and voiced their concern regarding this transition to a bedroom community in which residents need to commute farther for sources of employment.

Downtown and Retail

Downtown Charlotte is an asset that is highly valued by both residents and visitors. Visioning participants expressed their observations of the downtown over the past fifteen to twenty years. As Lansing Road has emerged into a retail and service business district, downtown Charlotte has experienced a decline in retail business. Residents described a trend toward a less active downtown lacking retail and services. This would be in conjunction with the state and national trend toward declining downtowns due to increased commercial sprawl and large big box retailers. In contrast, visioning participants have noticed significant efforts to reverse the declining downtown, discussing improvements to facades and sidewalks. It is reassuring to see residents notice efforts that have a positive



Bennett Park Trail: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

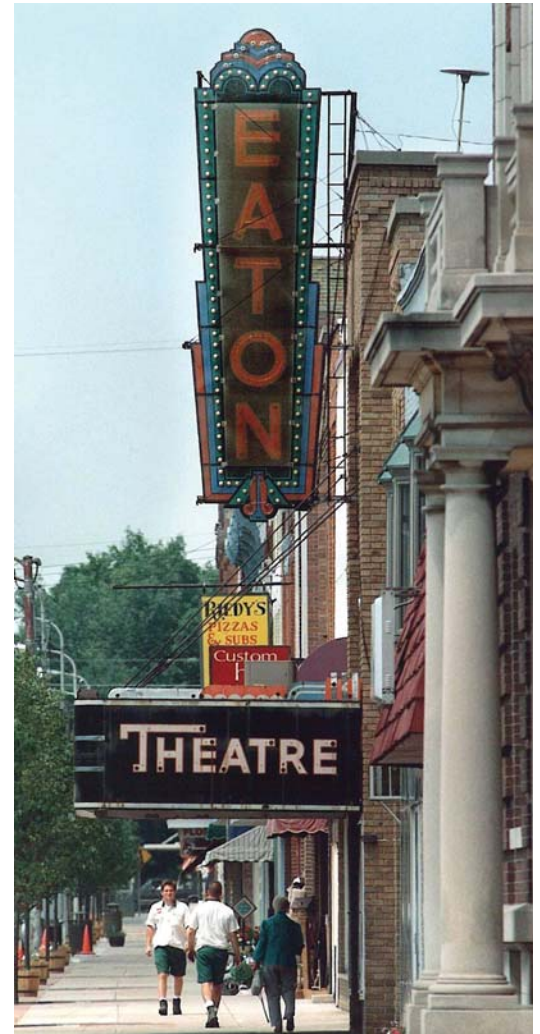
impact on the Charlotte community. Far too often only those issues that are viewed as negative are mentioned. Charlotte has started to make efforts to restore historic buildings, streetscapes and retail businesses downtown and the residents have acknowledged these efforts.

Transportation

Similar to the Proud and Challenge exercise, the Lansing Road corridor was also heavily discussed throughout the Trends exercise. Residents expressed concern that previous planning efforts failed to place limitations on land uses along the Lansing Road corridor and manage how it develops. According to the visioning participants, the Lansing Road corridor has developed like many commercial strips in a sprawling disconnected fashion. Commercial development along Lansing Road has led to increased traffic and increased drive times to obtain daily goods and services. Furthermore, this trend has led to another issue that was also discussed, increased truck traffic. Residents feel that truck traffic through downtown and along Lansing Road has increased significantly. Visioning participants realize that increased auto traffic leads to decreased walkability and congested transit routes. On a positive note, visioning participants were very pleased to see the Eaton County Transportation Authority (EATRAN) beginning to add accessibility and expand routes to meet the needs of a larger geographic population. Charlotte residents view public transportation as an important asset. The expansion and added accessibility of EATRAN is widely appreciated, especially with today's increased fuel costs.

Public Facilities, Institutions, and Services

A number of trends were presented that did not necessarily fit into categories that were previously discussed. These were trends that were observed throughout the community including public facilities, schools, community pride and public policy decisions. The trend that was discussed more than any other was the improvement of the Charlotte school system. Participants were very pleased with the improvements that have been made to both the high school and middle school. Residents value the quality of education above many other attributes in their community. They feel quality schools are a primary draw to the community, as well as one of the reasons people with school-aged children remain in Charlotte. One issue that was discussed in a less positive light was the lack of previous planning efforts for locating land uses and activities. This issue corresponds with the trend toward a commercial strip along Lansing Road as previously discussed.



Eaton Theatre Downtown Charlotte: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

Preferred Future of Charlotte

The final exercise that was performed by visioning participants involved looking into the future and determining what they would like Charlotte to look and feel like in ten years. They were encouraged to brainstorm and write down any visions or dreams they came up with for the community. As with the Proud and Challenge exercise, participants were then asked to vote for the three most important visions their respective group had listed. All of the preferred future visions were then compiled into categories. The following is an explanation of the items that received significant votes in each category.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation	# of Votes
Charlotte offers numerous outdoor recreation opportunities.	15
Fewer manufactured home parks and more single family neighborhood homes.	8
Housing in Charlotte is affordable, attractive and offers opportunities for all.	6
Pedestrian friendly and attractive Lansing Road corridor.	6
Pedestrian and bicycle paths to surrounding communities.	5
Trees in all the parks and along roadways.	4
Natural areas, greenspace and recreational areas are protected.	3

Downtown and Retail	# of Votes
Downtown is a local and regional destination for shopping and dining.	10
Downtown Charlotte is safe and walkable with outdoor eateries and social functions.	8
New streetlighting downtown.	3
Quality dining options are present downtown.	3
Sidewalk cafés downtown.	3
Thriving vibrant downtown.	3

Transportation	# of Votes
Truck traffic is routed around, and not in downtown.	4
Public transportation is available 24 hours a day.	3
Trains run quieter at night and limit horn blowing.	3
Underpass for train with no traffic backups.	3

Community Wide	# of Votes
Charlotte is culturally, economically and demographically diverse.	4
Growth is managed through SmartGrowth principals.	4
Facilities offering assisted living for seniors and handicapped adults.	3
Second fire station located west of railroad.	3

Housing and Neighborhoods

Participants expressed a desire for Charlotte to offer a diversity of affordable, quality and attractive homes to existing residents and newcomers. This vision reflects the current perception of limited quality housing opportunities and lack of pride in some neighborhoods. Additionally, residents would like to see fewer manufactured housing developments and more traditional single-family homes. Participants voiced a desire to restore pride in the historic homes and neighborhoods in the community. As previously discussed, the declining condition of their older homes and transformation to rental units has created a strong desire to bring back vibrant, attractive residential neighborhoods.



Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Throughout the visioning session discussions, one element that seemed to be gaining interest among participants was the desire to become more active in outdoor recreation and activities. This was further supported in the future vision as many items corresponding with recreation were presented. Connections to surrounding communities via bicycle and pedestrian pathways were one such vision. Residents wish to see Charlotte expand and enhance existing pathways that reach out to surrounding communities and the rural areas. Developing these features

would also support the enhancement of walkability throughout Charlotte. Pedestrian safety along Lansing Road was also emphasized as a primary vision for the future of Charlotte. The majority of participants hope Charlotte continues to build on existing recreation facilities and develop more options for adult recreation. Residents would like to see increased opportunities for adults to experience the outdoors such as new tennis courts, golf courses and hiking/biking/walking trails.

Employment

Participants discussed a few visions for employment opportunities in Charlotte. The primary concern was that in the future Charlotte residents are able to work and live in the community. This goal is clearly developed from the concern that Charlotte is undergoing a transition to more of a bedroom community. Additionally, participants would like to see, in addition to Spartan Motors, a large corporate headquarters located in Charlotte offering sustainable-high paying jobs. Participants spoke of attracting a high-tech business that would develop a facility within the city and employ a large number of residents. This would not only provide jobs for current residents, but would also provide opportunities for young educated residents to remain in the community.

Downtown and Retail

Downtown Charlotte is an area that residents in the community value greatly. Visioning participants would like to see downtown Charlotte offer walkable shopping districts, outdoor eateries, entertainment and social activities. As the trends revealed, downtown has seen a significant decline over the past ten to fifteen years. Residents would like to see downtown become a regional hub that attracts both residents and visitors to shop the retail stores and dine in the local restaurants. Furthermore, residents would like to see increased opportunities for entertainment downtown such as music venues and a thriving movie theatre.

Transportation

One issue that was discussed throughout all of the exercises in the visioning session was the concern regarding traffic congestion and truck traffic on Cochran Road (M-50). More specifically large truck traffic has been discussed as a significant concern. Therefore, participants would like to see truck traffic routed around town by way of a bypass or beltway. Another goal that was discussed was the future development of an overpass over the railroad to provide emergency access to neighborhoods across the rail tracks and facilitate uninterrupted connections throughout the community.

Public Facilities, Institutions, and Services

While participants established a preferred future vision for the Charlotte community, a number of broad ideas and dreams arose. These broad goals apply to a wide array of features, services and overall attributes in the community. One goal that received more of the votes was that Charlotte would be a culturally, economically and demographically diverse community. This goal is common to any resident that values the community and city in which they live. However, it is important to refer back to such goals when making planning decisions in any community. Charlotte residents value their community and have set these goals to ensure they experience a high quality of life for years to come. Participants envision a Charlotte that offers a multitude of public services and organizations. Residents encourage community leaders to make decisions that will be reflective of Smart Growth planning principals and work toward a diverse and sustainable community.

Community Wide Survey

In addition to the community visioning session, the City of Charlotte utilized a community wide survey to collect public input. The questions in the survey reflect a number of the issues that were discussed in the visioning as well as other aspects of the community that residents may have interest in or concern with. Surveys were distributed via the internet, hard copy at public locations and random distribution. Survey results were then analyzed and compiled into a concise format to be incorporated into the master plan. Results from both the survey and visioning have been used to develop the themes and strategies and values of this plan and guide the overall future of plan implementation.

The table below summarizes by survey category the aggregate percentage of those residents responding “Important” or “Somewhat Important” to the internet survey questions. These answers are regarded as very positive responses and should be viewed as an indicator of community values on these issues. Historic preservation, neighborhood enhancement, better blight enforcement, continued downtown revitalization and the need for job creation are noted examples.

Internet Survey Results	Important & Somewhat Important
Community Wide Issues	
Maintain a balance between new development and the preservation of existing community character.	86%
Preserve and protect historic structures	86%
Develop a more aggressive blight enforcement procedure.	82%
Establish commercial development guidelines that fit with existing character.	79%
Build a fire station on the west side of Charlotte.	74%
The Post Office should remain in downtown Charlotte.	71%
Maintaining a distinct difference between sprawling commercial growth and the historic downtown.	67%
Housing and Neighborhoods	
Charlotte neighborhoods are friendly and welcoming.	92%
Historic homes and neighborhoods need to be maintained and preserved	85%
Housing standards and enforcement are adequate to maintain safe and attractive housing.	80%
Residential development should be connected to community facilities	70%
Transportation Issues	
Provide safe efficient pedestrian connections between neighborhoods, downtown and public facilities.	80%
Charlotte should pave all streets within the City Limits.	73%
Truck traffic should be routed around and not through downtown Charlotte.	73%
Downtown	
Abandoned or vacant buildings should be renovated for a mix of residential and retail uses.	96%
Charlotte needs to attract new retail, shopping and entertainment into downtown.	94%
Businesses should be encouraged to beautify the area in front of their shops.	90%
Downtown Charlotte should retain a historic appearance characteristic.	85%
Downtown Charlotte should become a destination of choice offering a mix of retail, entertainment and dining.	81%
Employment	
Charlotte needs to attract good paying sustainable jobs to the area.	97%
Charlotte should look toward developing an office and research park to attract high tech industry.	87%
Parks and Recreation	
City parks are well maintained and attractive.	96%
Parks and open space need to be preserved to improve the overall quality of life in the Charlotte community.	88%
Charlotte needs to continue to build upon existing bike/walking trails throughout the city and local parks.	80%

Steering Committee Bus Tour

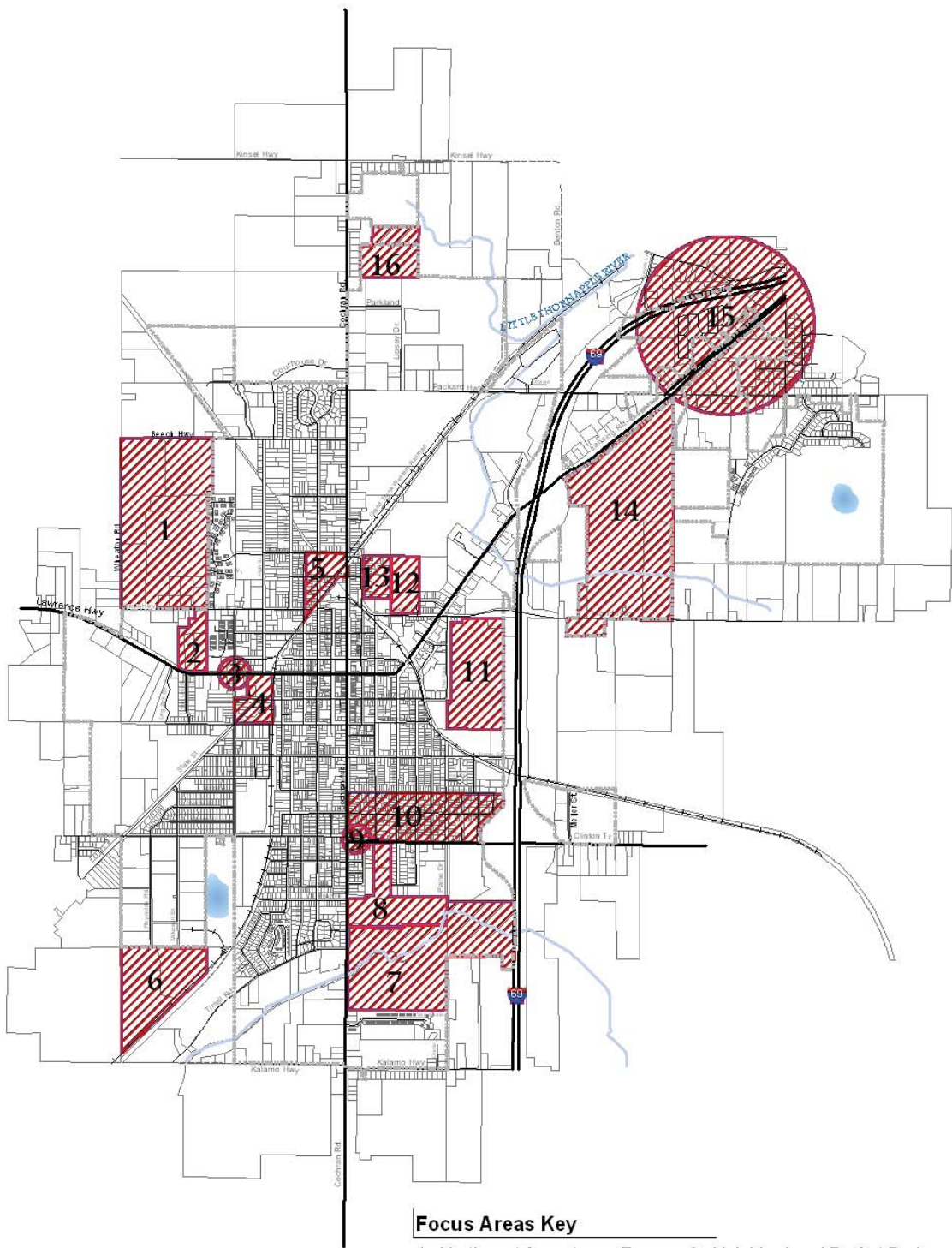
In addition to collecting ideas and information from the general public, subcommittee members participated in a city wide bus tour to gain an understanding of issues of importance in the community. Committee members travelled around Charlotte and looked at a variety of locations involving many specific issues. These issues included land use patterns, traffic concerns, underutilized industrial properties and potential use and reuse of underutilized land. By combining the bus tour with the public input a number of areas were presented that have been highlighted as Focus Areas in Map 7.1. These focus areas may have the potential for reuse, renovation or new development. The primary issues found throughout the focus areas are as follows.

1. Vacant/buildable land in the northwest portion of Charlotte classified as the Northwest Acceptance Zone, item number 1 on the Focus Areas Map.
2. Reuse opportunities in areas that currently have conflicting land uses or are underutilized such as areas classified under numbers 4, 5, and 14 on the Focus Areas Map
3. Recreation enhancement opportunities within Focus Areas 7, 8, 9, and 16. Specifically, the enhancement of the Battle Creek tributary and adjacent land.
4. Suburban residential development that has been configured in a disconnected or satellite manner as noted in Focus Area 15.
5. Declining residential neighborhoods and retail areas that are currently under served and offer revitalization opportunities within Focus Area's 2,4,6 & 10

Summary

After reviewing the visioning session summary and tables, it is clear that the residents in the City of Charlotte have a grand vision for the community's future. The strong consensus that was built on a number of issues presents a clear direction for the areas that the community needs to begin building upon and improving. Furthermore, the clear identification of well-respected attributes and trends presents support for previous efforts and encourages continued enhancement in these areas of the community. Community input is critical to any planning process. Charlotte is fortunate to have residents who are interested and involved in this process. Residents are encouraged to stay active throughout the process and continue to voice concerns, appreciation and ideas to city officials. A continued effort to include the residents in this and future planning processes will ensure a feeling of ownership in this plan and the planning decisions that result.

Map 7.1 Focus Areas



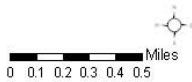
CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Focus Areas

Data Source: Esri County GIS, 2006
Map Source: Beckett and Raeder Inc. 2006

-  City Boundary
-  Railroad
-  Primary Roads
-  Unpaved Roads
-  State/Interstate Highway

Focus Areas Key

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1: Northwest Acceptance Zone | 9: Neighborhood Pocket Park |
| 2: Vacant Retail Space | 10: Underserved Neighborhoods |
| 3: Western Gateway | 11: Recreation Node 1 |
| 4: Disconnected Uses | 12: Recreation Node 2 |
| 5: Conflicting Land Uses | 13: Struggling Neighborhood |
| 6: Spartan Expansion | 14: Airport Reuse |
| 7: Park and Waterway | 15: Satellite Development |
| 8: Park Integration | 16: Northern Park Connection |



Themes and Strategies

CHAPTER 8

Introduction

After reviewing the community visioning session previously discussed a number of dominant themes arose. These “Themes” are those issues that residents feel are the most important within the community and therefore demand more attention. “Strategies and Values” support these “Themes” by providing a more detailed explanation of what the residents desire for the future of their community. Establishing the “Themes” and “Strategies and Values” for Charlotte provides the basis for which the Master Plan and implementation recommendations are developed. The following is an explanation of these “Themes” and “Strategies and Values”.

Theme

Residential: Attractive and Affordable Housing in Vibrant Neighborhoods

Housing quality and the expansion of rental properties and yard appearance has been determined to be of significant concern to the Charlotte community. Residents envision Charlotte offering neighborhoods that have safe, attractive and friendly homes supporting strong community values. Diversifying housing options will provide opportunities for residents in various economic, physical and demographic segments in the community. Established single-family neighborhoods will remain as the fundamental framework for the community and should be preserved to meet quality and appearance standards. Declining residential areas should be restored and enhanced to rebuild a sense of community pride in both owner and rental neighborhoods. Multiple family housing combined with rental housing should be developed in a fashion that fits with traditional neighborhoods and eliminates the perception of being lesser quality. Placing emphasis on the rehabilitation of homes and neighborhoods, combined with well planned multiple family and rental homes, will ensure that the housing opportunities in Charlotte are attractive, affordable and enjoyable places to live.



Historic Charlotte Home: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

Strategies & Values

1. Encourage neighborhood interest groups to promote pride in homes and establish community wide acceptance of appearance standards.
2. Continue enforcement of appearance and maintenance standards for homes and neighborhoods.
3. Encourage neighborhoods that have city parks, schools and churches within an easy walking distance.
4. Maintain blight enforcement standards and make sure the standards are enforced and upheld throughout the entire community.
5. Ensure that a general home building appearance code is implemented for all housing and apply these standards to multiple family and rental home areas.
6. Reclaim older homes that have been converted into rental units, and assist in finding or creating attractive and affordable rental housing for displaced residents.
7. Design rental and multiple family housing developments that integrate into existing neighborhoods providing attractive options for families, singles, and retirees.
8. Utilize community loans and grants for revitalization efforts in areas that have experienced significant decline and transformation into rental properties.



Charlotte Neighborhood

9. Work with historic preservationists and architects to enhance the historic character of older neighborhoods by implementing streetscape improvements such as: buried utility lines, traditional lighting and building façade improvements.
10. Promote the designation of historic neighborhood districts to begin establishing a sense of place in traditional areas throughout the community.
11. Designate areas for new housing within or adjacent to the existing framework of streets and sidewalks to ensure the connectivity and density of quality residential areas is maintained.
12. Encourage recreational open space within each neighborhood.

Theme

Transportation: Safe and Efficient without Heavy Traffic and Congestion

Connectivity between local streets, roads and pedestrian networks will provide efficient and safe access to neighborhoods, goods and services. Charlotte historically developed in a traditional grid pattern connecting neighborhoods with schools, downtown, parks and services. Building upon this grid network will ensure that connections between these community features remain intact. Improving the functional and aesthetic quality of Lansing Road to function as an integrated commercial corridor will benefit the properties within this business district. This will help manage high traffic volumes and begin to restore a safe and connected road network.

Strategies and Values

1. Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation to incorporate traffic calming along Lansing Road to increase pedestrian safety and slow traffic speeds.
2. Encourage Eaton County to expand EATRAN services by offering 24-hour public transportation.
3. Implement a signage and wayfinding system that corresponds with the historic and community features, public facilities, as well as shopping and entertainment destinations.
4. Develop a road corridor plan for all major gateways and arterials.
5. Incorporate an access management strategy along major corridors that includes combining driveway access, limiting the number of curb cuts, and promoting shared access.
6. Develop grade separations within the city, thus providing emergency access, safe pedestrian crossings, and neighborhood connectivity.
7. Study the feasibility of roundabouts and other traffic calming alternatives at major intersections.
8. Develop a community-wide walkability program that encourages the appropriate arrangement and intensity of land uses, neighborhood traffic calming and adequate and safe non-motorized connections, such as bike trails and bike lanes.



M-79 Facing West

Theme

Downtown: Local and Regional Shopping, Entertainment and Service Destination

Downtown Charlotte is located north of Henry Street, south of Harris Avenue, east of Sheldon Street and west of Pleasant Street. This area encompasses the downtown as identified by the Charlotte Downtown Blueprint completed in 2005. Traditionally, downtown Charlotte offered all of the daily goods and services residents demanded. However, due to the introduction of big box and commercial strip retail, locally owned retailers and service businesses have experienced a significant decline in patronage. This problem is clearly presented in the Blueprint study revealing that 58% of residents in the trade area shop at local big box retailers outside of downtown. Increased patronage of large retailers has resulted in downtown stores closing and vacant retail space. Charlotte residents have voiced a strong desire to restore downtown to a thriving commerce center offering a mixture of retail shopping, dining, entertainment, services and residential uses. The Blueprint market analysis revealed that downtown Charlotte has the full potential to support a growing residential market. Downtown Charlotte is envisioned to become a local and regional hub for shopping, dining and entertainment with a unique sense of place and welcoming attitude.



Rehabilitated Downtown Charlotte Building

Strategies and Values

1. Encourage development that resembles the historic character of downtown.
2. Follow the recommendations and findings of the Charlotte Downtown Blueprint report, which provides sound direction for achieving the desired future downtown.
3. Restore downtown Charlotte as a local and regional destination for retail shopping, entertainment, dining, specialty shopping and social functions.
4. Maintain courthouse square, to act as a seasonal venue for a farmers market, holiday open house and other community events.
5. Continue to utilize DDA funding and grants to restore building facades downtown.
6. Educate business owners on the advantages of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program to improve and reuse historic and abandoned buildings.
7. Keep a distinctive separation between downtown Charlotte and the Lansing Road commercial corridor to uphold the downtown's sense of place and history.
8. Continue to support volunteers efforts that will continue to promote locally owned businesses and initiate desired projects throughout downtown.
9. Provide incentives for the reuse of historic buildings downtown and establish interest groups for specific historic buildings.
10. Encourage businesses to extend hours to meet the demands of residents who commute to outlying communities for employment and return to Charlotte during later hours of the day.
11. Design a wayfinding system that serves pedestrians walking throughout downtown.
12. Encourage restaurants to provide outdoor seating and improve facades.
13. Implement a streetscape enhancement program for landscaping, utility line burial, street lighting, street furnishings and outdoor community gathering areas.
14. Provide for safe pedestrian crossings at intersections throughout downtown and at major shopping, entertainment and service locations.
15. Utilize MISHDA funding options to establish a reuse strategy to reuse upper levels of downtown buildings for residential and office uses.

Theme

Economy: Diversity of Sustainable Employment Opportunities

As with any community, Charlotte residents rely on the availability of good paying and sustainable jobs. Charlotte is known as the regional and national hub for fire truck and emergency vehicle and specialty vehicle production. However, based on U.S. Census information 2,154 residents, or 55% within the job force commute outside of the community for employment. Proximity to the State Capitol in Lansing and employment opportunities in Battle Creek provide jobs resulting in a transformation from an employer-based economy to a commuter economy. Charlotte has a skilled labor force that will fulfill demand for new employment as the community begins to develop a broader economic spectrum. Charlotte will continue to focus efforts on developing a diversity of economic activities providing sustainable employment for residents who live and work in the Charlotte community.

Strategies and Values

1. Utilize the proximity to I-69 and Charlotte's skilled workforce to attract new employment venues into the community.
2. Promote trades education programs within the public schools and local community colleges to meet the demands of the existing manufacturing industries.
3. Promote the use of underutilized land adjacent to I-69 and Lansing Road to develop an office/research park attracting high tech industries that are proven employers.
4. Continue to utilize local community organizations and commerce groups to design a marketing strategy that emphasizes Charlotte's skilled workforce.
5. Provide opportunities to fill the existing Combs and Dean Industrial parks with high tech industries and research facilities as well as traditional manufacturing.
6. Provide the conditions to grow a stable and diversified economy emphasizing a mix of industrial and service-oriented uses.
7. Further cooperation of partnerships between downtown organizations, Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital, Charlotte Public Schools, Eaton County and local companies to draw in new businesses and diversify employment opportunities.
8. Seek out new successful businesses offering high paying jobs in high tech industries that would benefit from access to major transit routes and skilled workers.
9. Utilize brownfield incentives to encourage and assist with the redevelopment of environmentally distressed sites.



Vacant Industrial Site Along Street

Theme

Recreation: Accessible, Close to Home and Offering Something for Everyone

Charlotte residents are fortunate to have a number of parks and indoor recreation facilities throughout the community. Recreation and especially outdoor recreation is something that residents appreciate. The City of Charlotte recognizes that recreational opportunities support and encourage development in the community and are dedicated to providing recreation resources to all of the residents.

Strategies and Values

1. Designate open space and parkland in each neighborhood and allocate sufficient park space in all new residential developments.
2. Develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails that are connected to parks, neighborhoods, schools and downtown.
3. Continue to support and implement the recommendations of the five-year action plan as defined by the Charlotte Recreation Plan.
4. Establish seasonal events in City Parks throughout the year to spark interest in those parks that may not be fully utilized by some residents.
5. Continue to support the Lincoln Park Skateboard Park and other parks providing a safe environment for kids and teens to be outdoors.
6. Develop more outdoor recreation opportunities for adults such as a municipal golf course, improved tennis facilities and cycling/walking trails.
7. Improve all parks that are currently not barrier free to provide access to all residents.
8. Design a pedestrian/bicycle river walk through Bennett Park to include interpretive signage, appropriate furnishings, lighting and river access points.
9. Develop water sports access sites that would support fishing, canoe/kayak launching, small watercraft and City operated canoe/kayak livery.
10. Promote an annual community-wide clean up day along the Battle Creek; offering free canoe usage to clean runoff debris and streamside refuse.
11. Investigate the possibility of incorporating a water pad and other features into Lincoln Park.



Night Glow: Photo Courtesy Bryan Myrkle



Kiwanis Barbecue, Celebrate Charlotte Festival: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

Development Form and Character

CHAPTER 9

Introduction

Every community has a distinctive land development pattern influenced by geography, political boundaries and historic land and building development. The resulting land use arrangement is reflected as form and character patterns which help to determine the distribution of future land use trends and potential areas for development. The following eight development forms and related character classifications are highlighted on Map 9.1 and illustrate that the Charlotte community developed as a “core” community growing outward from the City center and its downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Traditional Neighborhood

Primarily dense residential neighborhoods with a high concentration of homes built before 1940.

Core Neighborhood

Mostly dense residential neighborhoods following the traditional framework. Some retail, service and community facilities.

Proximity Neighborhood

Mix of moderate density residential, subdivision residential, commercial, agriculture and parks and recreation adjacent to core neighborhoods.

Satellite Neighborhood

New subdivision residential, mobile home park, vacant big box retail, airport, declining corridor commercial. Developing in a disconnected fashion apart from the community core.

Character



Form

Traditional Neighborhood
Core Neighborhood
Proximity Neighborhood
Satellite Neighborhood
Emerging Node
Commercial Corridor
Location Node

Traditional Downtown

Mostly service, retail, government office, dining, entertainment and some second level residential.

Emerging Node

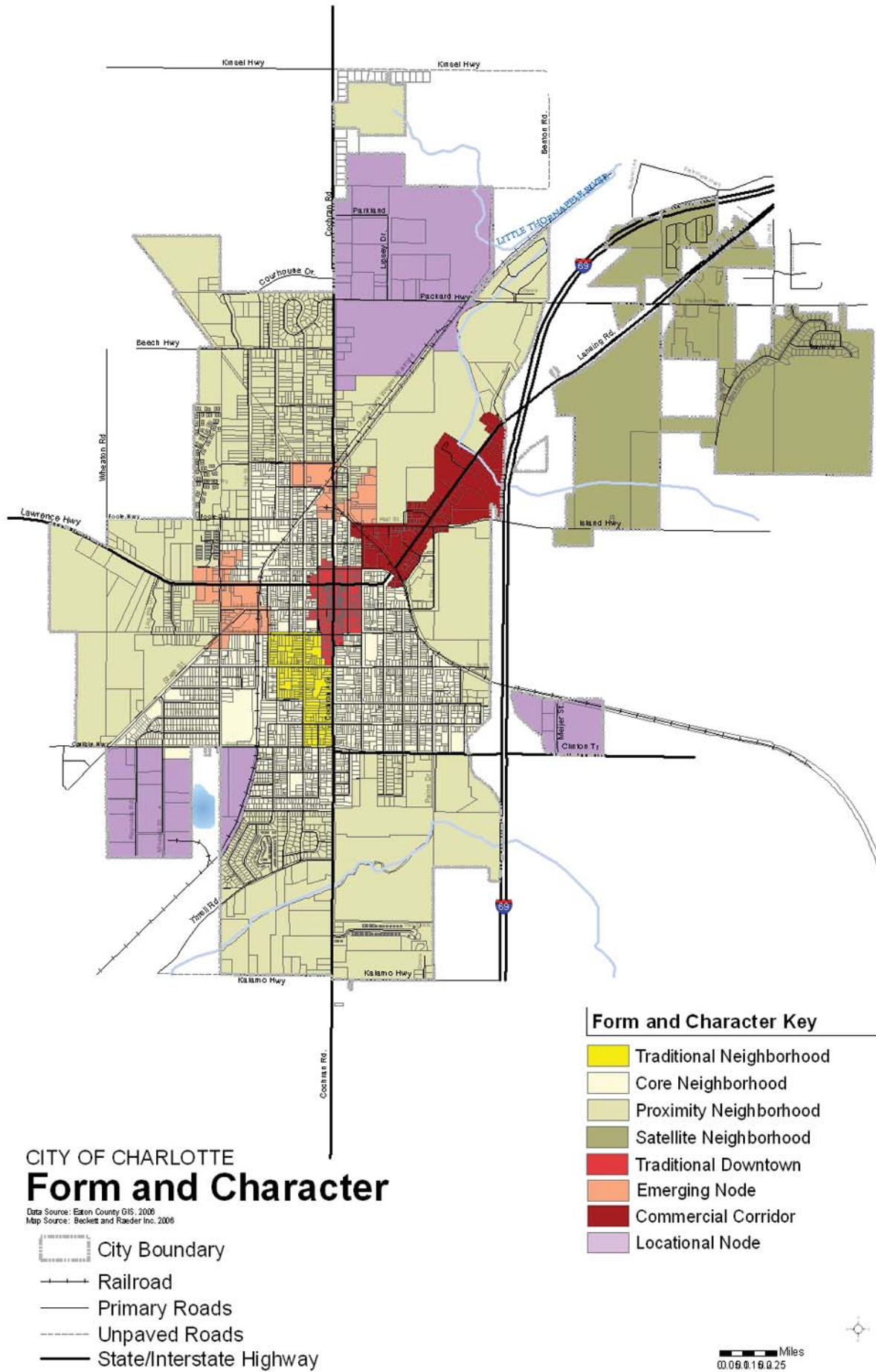
Pockets of retail, commercial and service focused at major intersections with high traffic volumes.

Commercial Corridor

Primarily sprawling retail, service and big box commercial along the Lansing Road Corridor.

Location Node

Manufacturing, commercial and industrial uses relying on rail and highway transit networks.

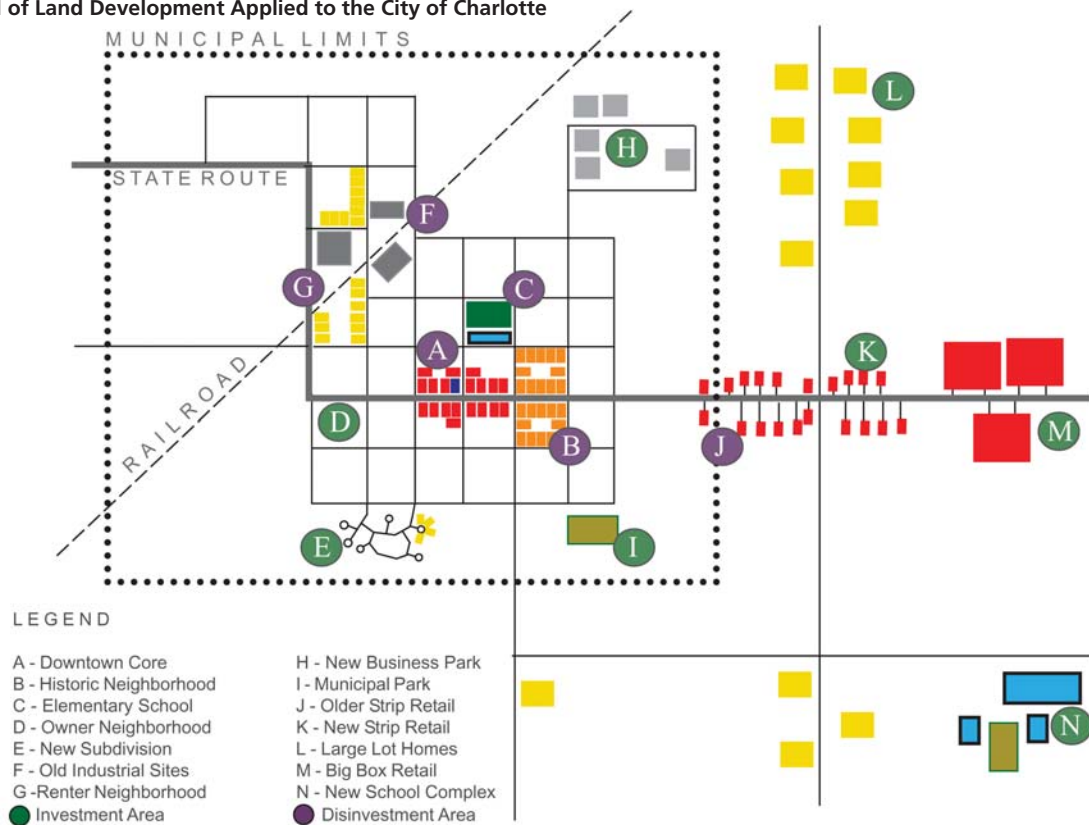


During the community visioning session participants are asked to describe their preferred future for the community along with other table members. At the conclusion of this discussion the results from all participants were collected and tabulated to determine areas of agreement. The following list denotes from highest to lowest the overall community vision goals as articulated by session participants, and these include:

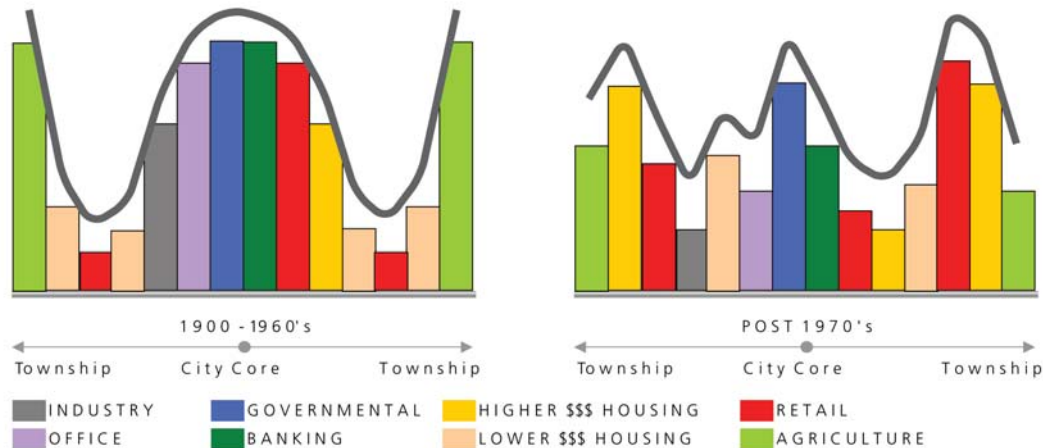
- ♦ Having a vibrant downtown
- ♦ Investment in the community
- ♦ Improving Lansing Road
- ♦ The ability to live and work in the City
- ♦ Walkable Community
- ♦ Less Truck Traffic through town
- ♦ Using Smart Growth principles to guide community development
- ♦ Locating a 2nd Fire Station west of the railroad tracks
- ♦ Having a 24-hour public transportation system
- ♦ Providing assisted living housing in the City
- ♦ Providing affordable housing for residents

In turn, these preferred vision goals could be applied to the Form and Character Areas of the city to assess which goals impact specific locations. For example, a vibrant downtown would not only have a positive influence on downtown properties but it would also positively impact adjacent residential neighborhoods and emerging nodes which are subject to redevelopment pressures. Some goals have widespread applicability; such as making Charlotte walkable, and others; like improving Lansing Road, have a more focused application. This technique of applying community-based goals to geographic areas within the community can also be used to guide fiscal and public policy. For example, in the 1980s the cities of Royal Oak and Ferndale were experiencing neighborhood decline, the conversion of owner-occupied homes to renter-occupied homes and a failing downtown. In the late 1980s and 1990s both communities focused fiscal and public policy on the downtown resulting today in vibrant downtowns and sought after residential neighborhoods. The trend of disinvestment was reversed.

Michigan Model of Land Development Applied to the City of Charlotte



The Michigan model of land development is caused by an imbalanced tax policy between city and townships leading, if unchecked, to disinvestment in the central city. Prior to the 1970s many Michigan cities, like Charlotte, were the hub of activity for government, finance, retail and office uses. And it was not uncommon for higher income households to live near the downtown in stately historic residential neighborhoods or in exclusive residential neighborhoods within the city proper. Since the 1970s these same uses which contributed to the vitality of the city started to respond to real estate market trends and cheaper land by relocating to the perimeter of the city or in the adjacent township. As uses migrated away from the city core the make-up of the downtown and neighborhoods changed. The downtown retail base diminished, office and banking uses follow household growth outside of the city, higher income households move to larger lots and older in-town housing was converted into rental housing occupied by households with a lower median income than the previous occupants. Township farmland near the city perimeter is converted to housing or retail and the rural character of the Township is evolving into a suburb.



Some of these trends are apparent in Charlotte. Downtown Charlotte is going through a revitalization period the corridor commercial areas; not the downtown; are the principal shopping areas for the City and several neighborhoods are in need of redevelopment and rejuvenation.

To counter this land trend cities can employ three basic and fundamentally different strategies when developing or redeveloping properties. The first strategy uses "supply side" incentives employing tax abatements, investment tax credits, partial grant financing, redevelopment ready processes and infrastructure outlays to encourage redevelopment in targeted locations. Communities with unfavorable or under performing markets use this strategy to induce activity. Another strategy involves "demand side" techniques where the community is in a favorable market area experiencing high development pressure and can afford to exact from developers' better site and building designs and participation in public infrastructure.

The last strategy involves "reinvestment" where the community makes a long-term commitment toward annual maintenance, long-term public capital improvement funding, utilization of brownfield-related incentives, historic preservation tax incentives and private developments leveraged with public financial assistance with infrastructure in order to improve the environment for private reinvestment. This strategy occurs over a longer period of time; is usually more sustainable because it is less dependent on other funding sources and market influences and is anchored in public policy which ties a variety of projects and programs together working toward a common vision.

The vision and expectations expressed by residents through the community participation venues reinforce the use of the reinvestment strategy for Charlotte. Here no "big" projects are offered to improve the community. Rather, a deliberate desire to have a vibrant downtown, improved neighborhoods, better streets, greater walkability throughout the city and higher level of blight enforcement provide the means towards a renewed city.

Future Land Use Plan

CHAPTER 10

Future Land Use

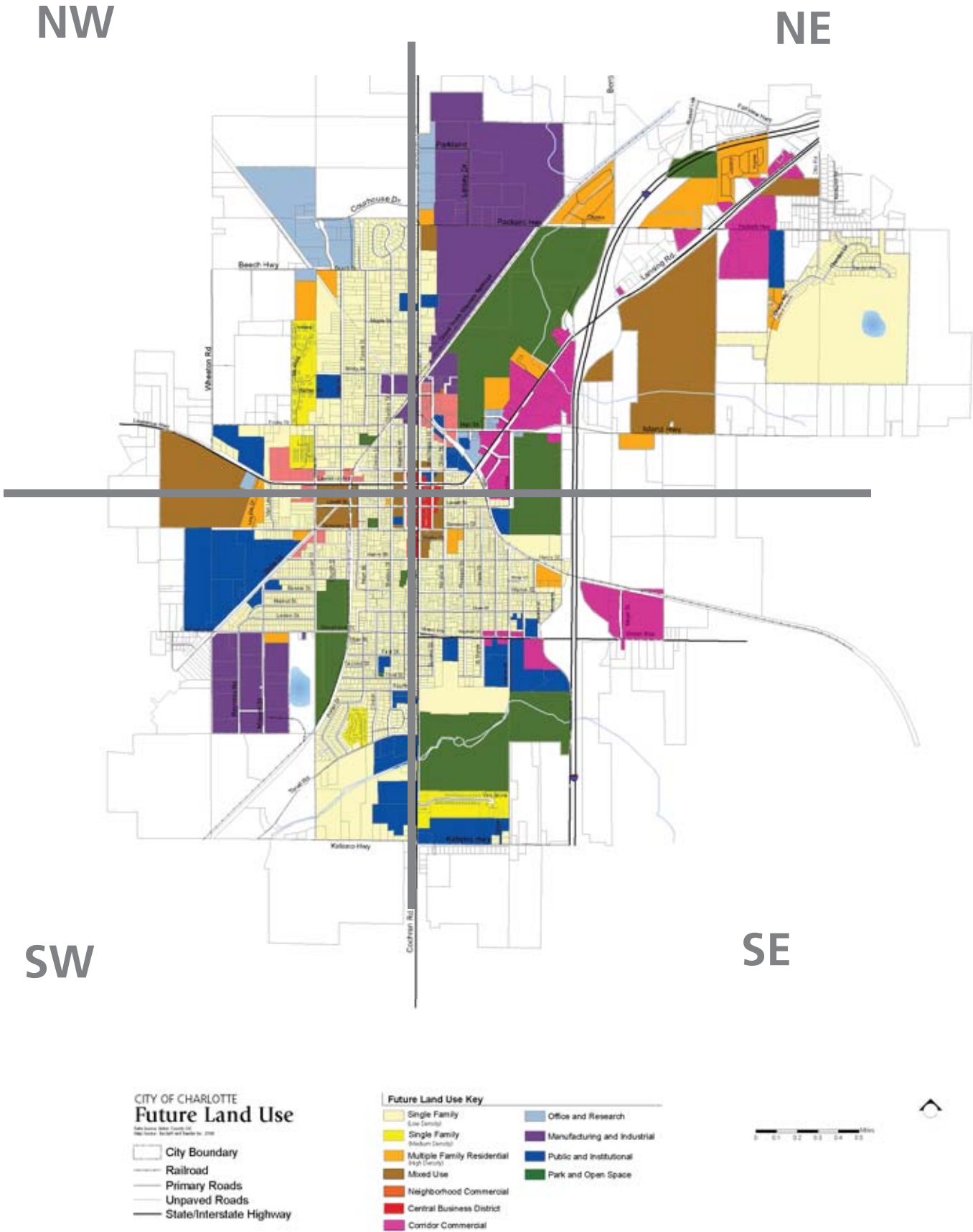
The future land use plan will help guide the distribution of land uses over the life of this master plan. While these recommendations are not set in stone, they have been developed through analysis of existing conditions and community involvement to be flexible and change with the community. The future land use plan is designed to address the community wide issues that have been presented throughout the plan. These primary issues include residential quality, transportation, economic viability in commercial and industrial uses and accessible recreation. Quadrant maps, Map 10.2 through Map 10.5, reflect the proposed land use distribution that will guide new growth and development over the term of this master plan. Additionally, Table 10.1 presents the acreage breakdown highlighted in the future land use plan maps.

Table 10.1 **Future Land Use Acres**

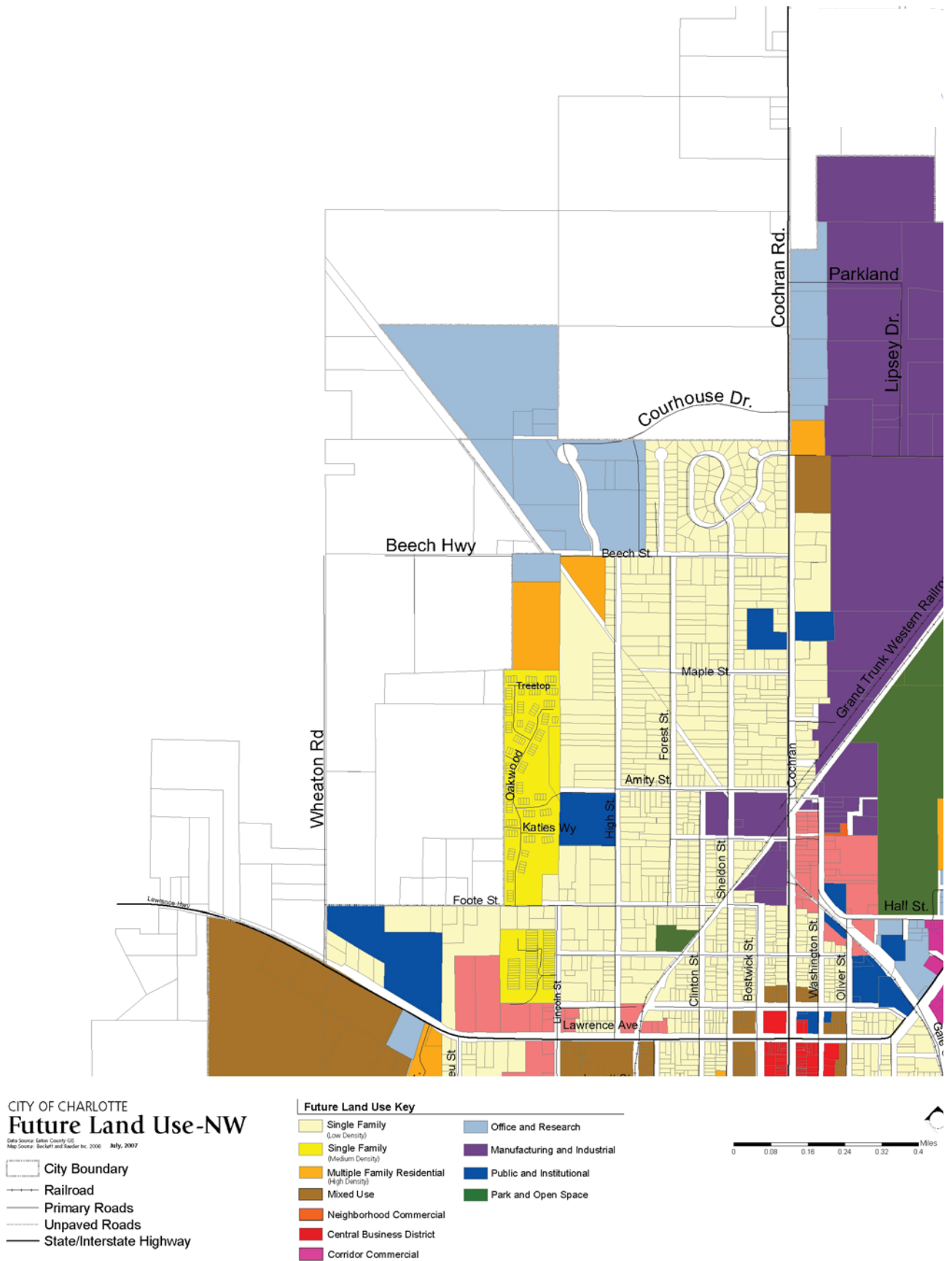
	Acres	% of Total
Single Family Residential - Low Density	1,210	33%
Single Family Residential - Medium Density	90	2%
Multiple Family Residential	246	7%
Mixed Use	383	10%
Neighborhood Commercial	46	1%
Central Business District	22	1%
Commercial Corridor	213	6%
Office and Research	113	3%
Manufacturing and Industrial	480	13%
Public and Institutional	339	9%
Parks and Open Space	509	14%
Total	3,650	100%
Source: Beckett and Raeder Inc. / Data Reflects Major Land Use Classifications / Right-of-Way Not Included		

Residential

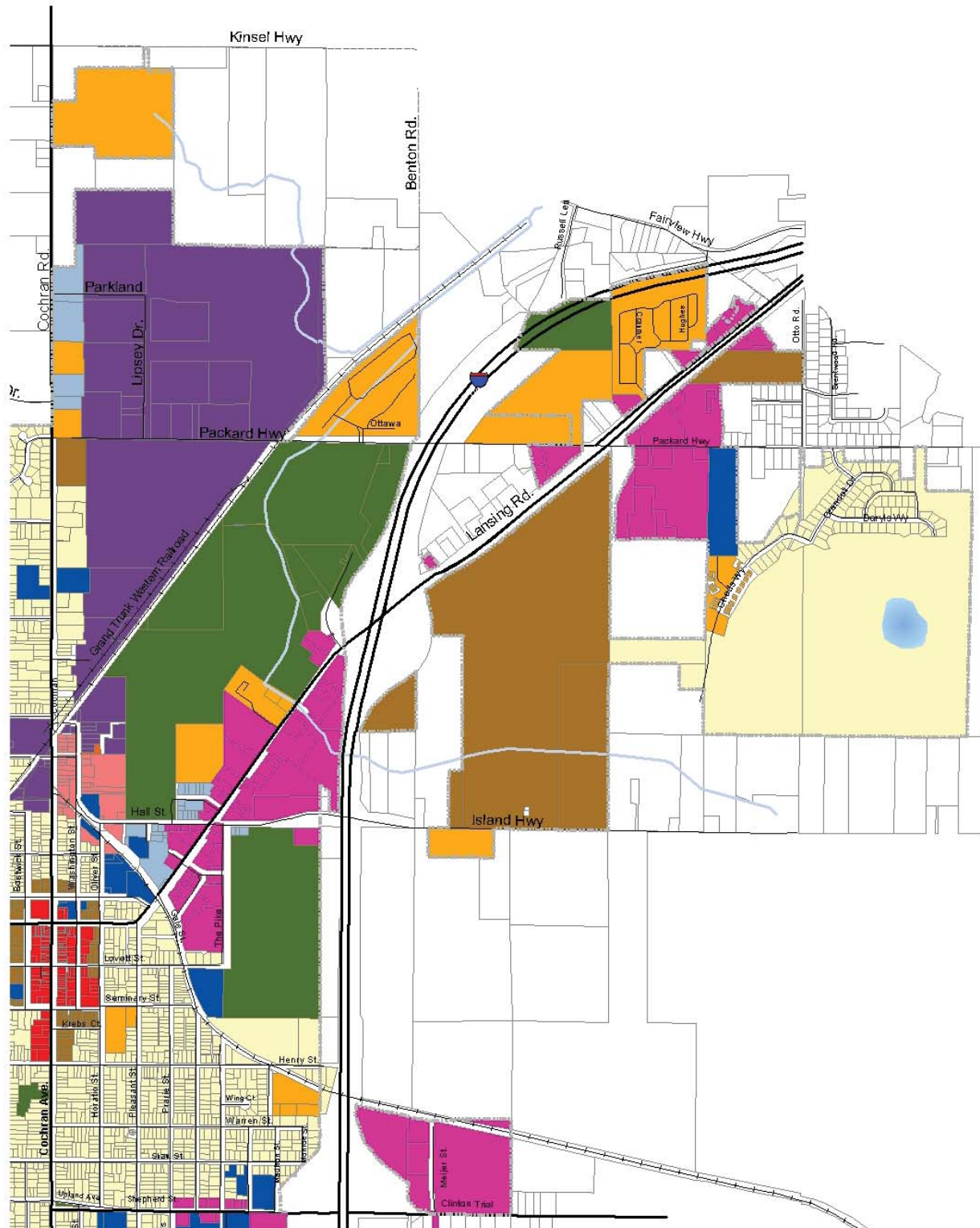
In Charlotte, as with most communities, residential land use is the dominant use within the community. Within the residential land use classification this master plan has delineated three primary residential classes including two single family residential classifications and a multiple family residential classification. Additionally, there is a mixed use classification which provides the impetus for diversifying the residential opportunities as outlined in the themes and objectives as well as integrating a multitude of uses within the available space.



MAP 10.2 Future Land Use Map - Northwest Quad



MAP 10.3 Future Land Use Map - Northeast Quad



CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Future Land Use -NE

Data Source: Future County DE
 Map Source: Esri and Standard, 2006

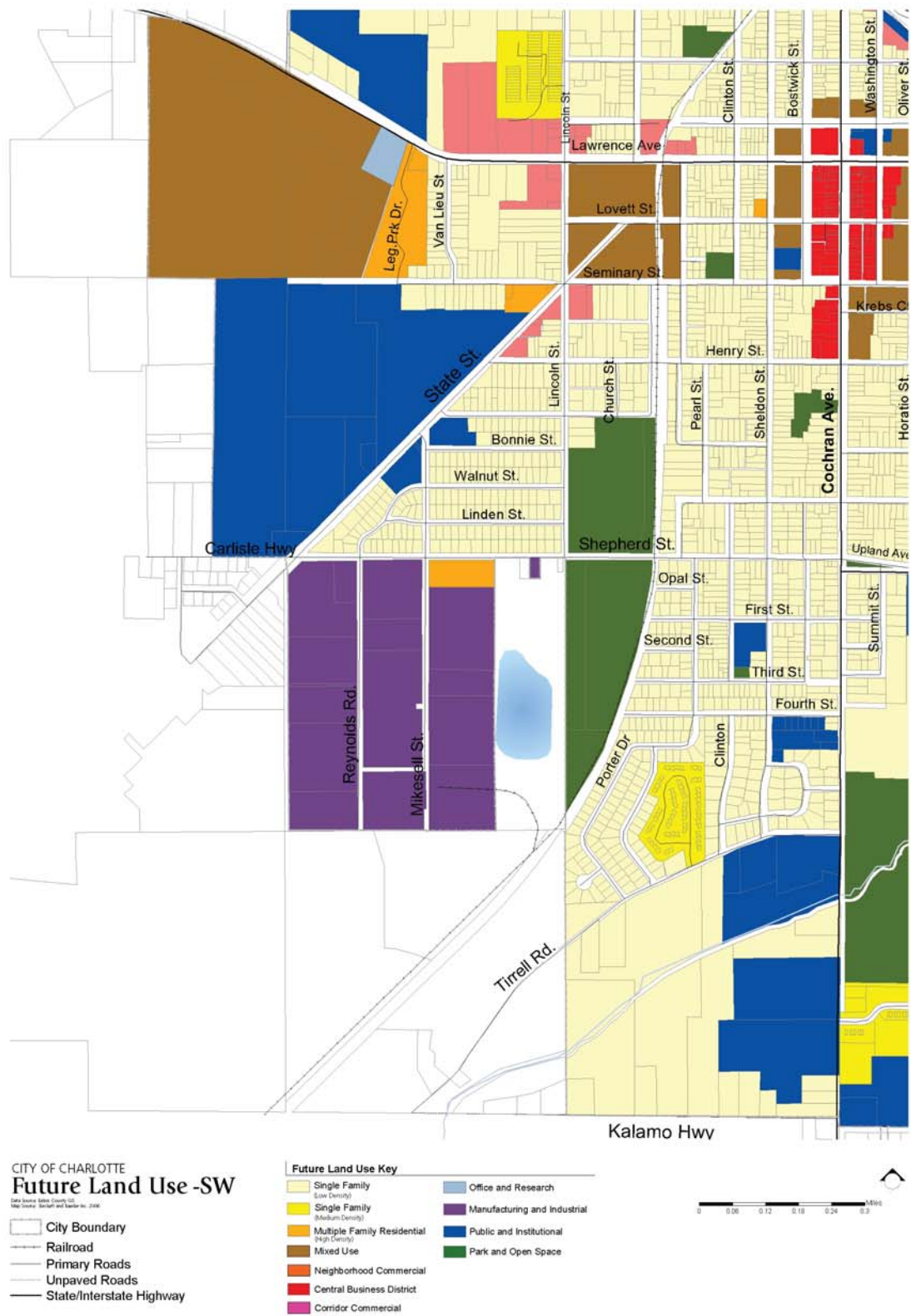
- City Boundary
- Railroad
- Primary Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- State/Interstate Highway

Future Land Use Key

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Single Family (Low Density) | Office and Research |
| Single Family (Medium Density) | Manufacturing and Industrial |
| Multiple Family Residential (High Density) | Public and Institutional |
| Mixed Use | Park and Open Space |
| Neighborhood Commercial | |
| Central Business District | |



MAP 10.4 Future Land Use Map - Southwest Quad





Single Family Residential

Single family Residential - Low Density and Single Residential Family - Medium Density are the dominant forms of land use occurring in Charlotte. The single family home is designed to house one family and may include detached single family homes, as well as attached and detached townhouses and site condominiums. However, some single family homes within Charlotte's traditional and historic neighborhoods have been converted into multiple rental units. While most single family homes were built within traditional neighborhoods, demand for new residential areas facilitated the development of newer houses in the outlying sections of Charlotte. While these two single residential classes, Single Family Residential - Low Density and Single Family Residential - Medium Density, may have similar development trends, they have been separated due to the unique character of each. The Single Family Residential - Low Density classification comprises neighborhoods and parcels within the city where the average dwelling unit density ranges between 1 to 5 units per acre. Subdivisions built post -1970, which are often associated with suburban living have 1/3 to 1/2 acre lots, curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs where the average density ranges between 2 to 3 dwellings per acre. Older and more traditional neighborhoods have density ranges over three dwellings per acre with lots ranging from 6,000 to 9,000 square feet along a grid-street pattern. Single Family Residential - Medium Density is associated with site condominium developments with detached and attached dwellings similar to dwellings along Oakwood and Van Sickle. Due to the design and compactness of these developments the average densities are often higher than conventional single family developments.

While little space remains for new single family development within the central core, areas along the city's perimeter are available for future growth. These areas are connected via existing road networks and have the potential to be integrated into existing neighborhoods. Additional requirements for these single-family residential expansion areas are their proximity to public facilities, parks, schools and downtown. The primary areas shown in Map 10.2 through Map 10.5 are along Lawrence Highway, south of Tirrell Road and south of Packard Road in the northeast quadrant of the city. This expansion would essentially allow for residential growth while strengthening the highly valued neighborhoods throughout Charlotte.

Multiple Family Residential

Throughout the planning process, residents have voiced interest in diversifying the housing options within Charlotte while preserving the neighborhoods and historic character throughout the community. In order to provide adequate housing options for residents, multiple family structures should be allowed. These areas would involve the development of high density residential housing such as apartments. This housing supports residents that have different needs than the traditional single family. These residents may be seniors, "empty-nesters," young singles and young families. Typically, multiple family tenants will need access to primary arterials as well as local public facilities and public transportation. Therefore, multiple family developments are located in transitional areas adjacent to major roads as well as commercial and service areas. Locating these units within these transitional areas provides dependent age groups access to goods and services as well commuting residents access to surrounding urban centers.

New Single Family Developments

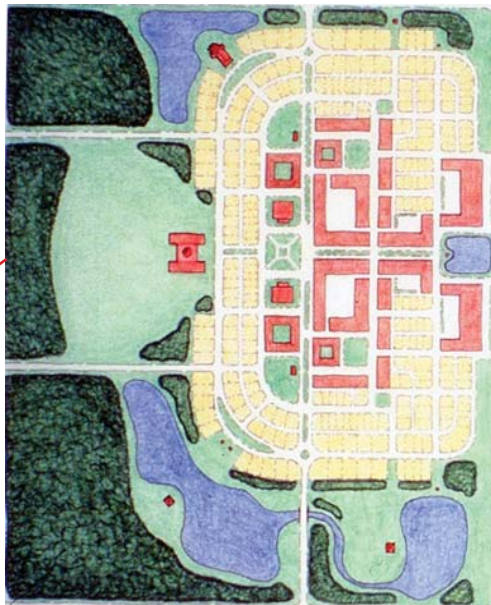
Outlying areas of the community have been classified Single Family Residential - Low Density. The master plan is recommending that new residential developments mirror the philosophy of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), Smart Growth tenets and the recently issued LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system for Neighborhood Development suggesting densities of 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Traditional Neighborhood Development, Smart Growth and LEED-Neighborhood Development are planning strategies which encourage a variety of housing types and sizes and focuses them on the desired character within a traditional community development promoting compact design, walkability, street and pedestrian connectivity and proximity to jobs, shopping and schools. New residential developments would allow for a variety of housing types, public facilities and parks and recreation opportunities. This would result in attractive residential neighborhoods offering a sense of community, connection to daily services and decreased dependency on sprawling commercial corridors and thus automotive transportation. The illustration below presents a view of how "suburban" neighborhoods compare to the "traditional" developments.



Case Study - Example of a Cluster Housing Development

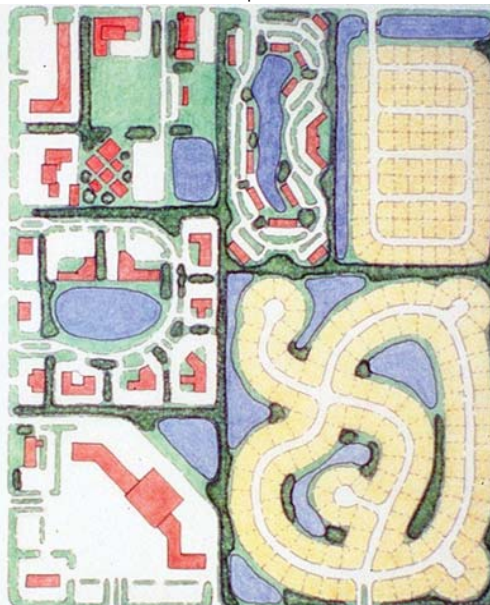
The potential conversion of the Eaton County Fairgrounds to a residential development; as recommended in the future land use map; would provide an opportunity to employ these site design and neighborhood guidelines. This site is within easy walking distance of the downtown, adjacent to Bennett Park, community and institutional facilities and several established neighborhoods.

Traditional neighborhood development



- Mixture of compatible uses
- Diverse Housing Options
- More dense retail and office development
- Increased contiguous open space
- Efficient traffic networks of block grid configuration
- Increased sense of unique neighborhood character
- Community form is paramount to neighborhood value

Conventional development



- Defined disconnections between differing land uses
- Traditional subdivision residential development
- Fragmented retail and office space
- Limited open space and no contiguous green space
- No unique character or sense of shared space

Another prime location for residential development would be in the northeast quadrant of Charlotte adjacent to the airport and along Packard Highway. Incorporating this style of residential development within Charlotte would prove to be an attractive asset and reinforce Charlotte's drive to become a community of choice in the region. To review the success and design of these neighborhoods it is recommended that case studies be utilized to learn from the mistakes and successes of other communities, which include Labadie Park of Wyandotte Michigan, Mason Run of Monroe Michigan and the New Neighborhood Plan for Empire Michigan. Provided careful design and planning are implemented these neighborhoods in Charlotte would become highly attractive residential areas within the region drawing new residents from surrounding urban centers such as Lansing.



*Example: Mason Run Neighborhood Development - Monroe, Michigan
Former Paper Mill - Now a traditional neighborhood*

Transportation

While the future land use map does not single out areas for transportation land uses, considerations for transportation are critical in how land is utilized in the future. Throughout the planning process, walkability, public transit and non-motorized transportation were all issues that were repeatedly mentioned. In order to provide safe and efficient transportation within viable neighborhoods a number of these elements must be included. In all new single family residential areas sidewalks, bike paths and walking trails should be encouraged in order to begin transforming Charlotte into a walkable community. Additionally, residential roads need to be kept within a manageable width such as two lanes creating an efficient road system that allows for alternative modes of transportation such as a bike lane and/or sidewalks. Furthermore, it is important that neighborhoods and downtown have paved streets with pedestrian crossings and traffic calming devices.

Commercial

During community visioning and throughout the planning process it has become clear that residents would like to restructure the commercial landscape and revitalize the commercial core within the downtown. Therefore, the future land use plan has placed limitations on the commercial corridor development and selected areas for commercial uses by varying classes. The following provides an explanation of the commercial land use classifications.

Central Business District

As is common in most communities in the state and nationwide, Charlotte's downtown has struggled to compete with the growing demand for large big-box retailers, suburban strip centers and newer "lifestyle" centers. Charlotte's residents value having an active and attractive downtown. Therefore, it is crucial that Charlotte focus efforts on filling commercial space within the existing downtown and promoting infill development within the downtown district. A number of tools can be implemented to utilize the available space downtown. However, in order for downtown Charlotte to become an attractive downtown it must offer a diversity of opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Therefore, it is important to attract a mix of entertainment, service and specialty retailers to create a well-rounded destination of choice. Infill development has a great deal of potential in locations used for off street parking.



Example: Renovated mixed use development downtown

Utilizing the Downtown Development Authority to develop a recruitment strategy would allow Charlotte to be selective in the types of businesses that fill vacant commercial space. An additional tool to rejuvenate downtown Charlotte would be the attraction of a large anchor retailer. Incorporating a large retail anchor would facilitate more investment into the surrounding downtown retailers, entertainment and service industries. In addition to attracting new business into the downtown, design standards should be developed that would promote the historic character of the downtown.

Corridor Commercial

As previously mentioned, corridor commercial development is typically located along major traffic routes. This type of development is typically associated with “sprawl” or “strip” development. While it has been the growing trend in commercial development, it has created a greater demand on automobile traffic and inefficient transit networks. Charlotte has recently experienced the development of big box retail development along East Clinton Trail. Additionally, Lansing Road has developed in the typical corridor fashion and has been riddled with access curb cuts along its entirety. Therefore, the future land use plan aims to limit the corridor commercial development to the current extent and focus on restructuring Lansing Road to be a much more attractive and safe commercial corridor. Following the access management plan for Lansing Road is in the community’s best interest and the establishment of a Corridor Improvement Authority would assist with this effort. Closing existing curb cuts and developing a corridor enhancement plan, to include pedestrian features, would begin to reshape the commercial landscape that residents currently feel is an unattractive feature in the community.



Case Study: Plymouth Road Commercial Corridor Enhancement
Using an Improvement Authority to Redevelop the Corridor
Livonia, Michigan



Before

Typical corridor development with individual commercial lots and curb cuts and minimal pedestrian amenities.

Access between businesses is limited to vehicles and the corridor becomes segmented with minimal cohesion, connectivity and poor image.



After

Same corridor with Smart Growth principles applied which encourage more dense mixed-use development at a pedestrian scale resulting in the same amount of commercial square footage as traditional strip commercial centers.

This pedestrian oriented commercial promotes walkability and improves the community's image.

Photo Manipulations: Urban Advantage, Inc.

Neighborhood Commercial

In order to create viable neighborhoods and a walkable community, neighborhood commercial districts have been outlined in the future land use plan. These areas are located at major intersections within existing neighborhoods. These commercial areas would offer goods and services that residents would need on a daily basis. Corner markets, mom and pop stores, dry cleaners and local cafes would be suitable commercial operations that would fit into local neighborhoods. Incorporating these into existing and future neighborhoods would also encourage residents to walk to commercial areas limiting the number of daily automotive trips. While limited areas are outlined in the future land use map, it is important to assess additional areas that would be suitable for neighborhood commercial development. To manage the types of uses permitted within these areas, a specific zoning district and definition should be developed. The current B-1 zoning district would provide the security needed to preserve the character of each neighborhood and allow the commercial uses outlined above.

Manufacturing and Industrial

Charlotte is fortunate in that it has designated ample space for manufacturing and industrial activities. These activities are focused within the two major industrial parks Dean and Combs. However, neither park is operating at full capacity. Therefore, the future land use plan continues to focus industrial and manufacturing operations within these two locations. As the demand for new jobs and industry grows, these areas may need to be expanded to accommodate new operations. To fulfill the residents need for high paying sustainable jobs, Charlotte should focus recruitment efforts on attracting clean high tech industries that require a skilled workforce and close proximity to major transit networks, both attributes that Charlotte offers.



Combs Industrial Park: Photo Courtesy City of Charlotte

Office and Research

In hopes of expanding the economic sustainability of the community, the future land use plan has designated areas for office and research uses. These would include operations such as banking, private offices, research and development, governmental offices and health care facilities. While the Eaton County Government complex and Hayes Green Beach Hospital are currently very attractive and sustainable services, it is important to allow for expansion of other office and research operations. These uses will also benefit from incorporation of high tech industries into the community.

Public and Institutional

The Charlotte future land use plan includes the existing public and institutional facilities. The recent renovation of the Charlotte High School and the construction of the Charlotte Middle School has been a very successful addition to the community. As new residents are drawn to the city, additional churches and public organizations will be needed. When growth exceeds the existing services new areas will need to set aside for such uses. However, at this time the schools, churches and other institutions are meeting the needs of the community. Additionally, these uses are usually located within existing neighborhoods due to the community-based nature of their operations.

Recreation

In addition to commercial recreation such as golf courses, sporting clubs and fitness centers, it is crucial to have public parks and recreation facilities that serve the entire community. A number of natural features, including the Battle Creek and Butternut Creek, provide prime opportunities to develop interpretive trail systems and natural observation areas. Residents voiced a strong interest in developing a park and trail system along the Battle Creek. The optimum location for such a feature would be along the river, shown in Map 10.6 as Greenway Corridor. Determining a methodology for allowing new growth while protecting

these natural features is of utmost importance to the community. Furthermore, as new neighborhoods grow, locations for new parks and recreation features need to be determined. As the community grows, the Parks and Recreation Plan needs to be updated to ensure future recreation demands are met. The future land use plan highlights a number of areas that may offer opportunities for parks and recreational developments.

Mixed Use

Traditionally, land uses have been planned and segregated as separate entities within a community. However, it has been realized that developing land uses in this disconnected pattern has increased demand on roadways due to the increase in daily trips for goods and services. Therefore, the future land use plan incorporates a number of areas to be utilized for mixed use developments. Mixed use developments can also serve the community by targeting specific age and dependency groups such as seniors and young professionals. Mixed use developments would include residential, commercial, service, recreation and other non-intensive uses. These unique areas would create a micro community that is walkable, safe, affordable and attractive. Implementation and development of mixed use projects can be achieved through Planned Unit Development (PUD), provisions or inclusion of an overlay district in the zoning ordinance.

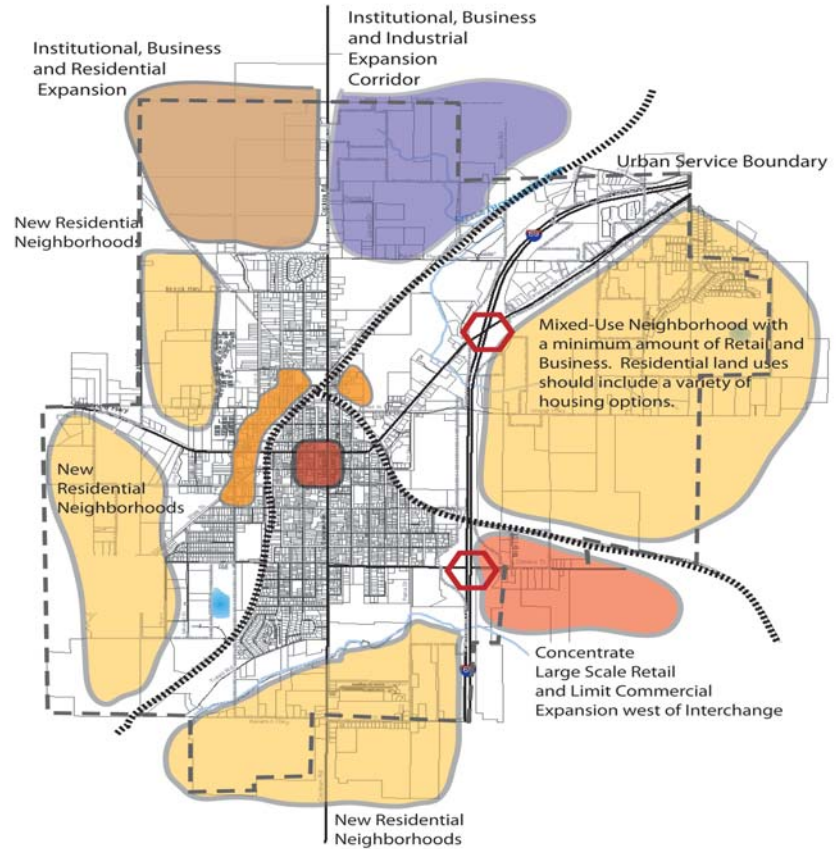


Case Study: Ann Arbor Michigan Mixed Use; retail lower level with residential upper level

Future Land Use Summary

The Future Land Use Map and Community Master Plan seek to strike a balance between redevelopment of existing neighborhoods and underutilized properties against opportunities for new development. From a historical perspective, the city radiated from the core of the community located at the intersection of Lawrence Ave. and Cochran Avenue. This was the hub of commerce for the city of Charlotte and the surrounding rural communities as well as the County Seat.

On the west side of the railroad line several small manufacturing and warehousing establishments were located taking advantage of the road network and proximity to the railroad. Today these areas show signs of decline and several sites are either underutilized or vacant. The residential neighborhoods adjacent to these areas are also showing signs of decline and some of the homes; which were once owner occupied; have now been converted to rental properties. In 2000, the U.S. Census noted that 31% of the housing units in the city were renter occupied. Land development within these existing neighborhoods will be confined primarily to infill projects and adaptive reuse developments. However, it is recommended that infrastructure upgrades, such as, street paving, sidewalk replacement and park improvements be incorporated in the annual capital improvements program.



The future land use plan recommends a proactive redevelopment strategy within these areas, and the use of historic preservation neighborhood revitalization tools to strengthen these older residential neighborhoods. The construction of I-69 on the eastern edge of the community has created easy access for residents and visitors resulting in the development of commercial corridors along Lansing Road and Clinton Trail. The future land use map recommends that the area east of I-69 and south of Lansing Road be utilized primarily for new residential neighborhoods. This includes the reuse of the current airport for a mixed-use and residential development. The plan also recommends that commercial development, specifically large-scale retail, be localized east of I-69 along Clinton Trail. Undeveloped areas located on the south and west perimeter of the city are to be developed for new residential neighborhoods as well. Properties north of the city along Cochran Avenue should be developed for institutional, business and industrial expansion. Although the population forecasts for the city through the year 2020 indicate a potential population increase of 500 residents, the water and sanitary sewer systems can accommodate 12,000 residential unit equivalents and 3,200 residential unit equivalents respectively. The city's infrastructure capacity has the ability to accommodate upwards of 8,000 new residents. Properties incorporated under Public Act 425 Land Transfer Agreement with the adjacent Townships for the most part will have access to this infrastructure. The map graphic above notes the location of the Urban Service Boundary and its relationship to recommended land use arrangements along the perimeter of the city. Properties subject to a Public Act 425 Land Transfer Agreement would be evaluated by the Planning Commission for conformity to the surrounding land uses and zoning.

Strategy Overlay Districts

Although it is important to designate geographic locations for specific land uses throughout the community, each land use functions as a piece of the greater puzzle. Future land use decisions will need to reflect the desires and needs of the community, and therefore, a number of detailed areas have been highlighted to facilitate the progress towards specific issues identified throughout the planning process. These areas of special concern are designed around the Focus Areas study in the Public Participation chapter of this plan. These six overlay districts have been selected by evaluating the existing conditions of the locations, as well as potential for accepting new development. Map 10.6 shows these overlay districts.

- **Redevelopment**

Redevelopment sites are primarily located in areas with disconnected uses. They would better serve the community if they were redeveloped to fit the character of the area and provide a higher tax revenue producer. Redeveloping these areas would turn declining areas into vibrant, attractive focal points in the community. Three redevelopment areas have been highlighted in Map 10.6. These include the neighborhood around Lawrence Avenue, Lincoln, Lovett and Seminary Streets. Also the areas along Cochran Avenue, Hall Street and the Grand Trunk Railroad; as well as along Lansing Road east of I-69 have both been highlighted.

- **Residential Expansion**

Unlike the residential classifications discussed in each future land use category, these two areas would serve as the focus for new residential development. The two areas are located at the airport site and the undeveloped site east of Wheaton Road and south of Beech Highway. Each of these large tracts would be highly suitable for traditional neighborhood development, offering attractive housing opportunities. The following illustrations provide potential layout design for these properties.

- **Historic Preservation**

One primary area (highlighted in Map 10.6) is to be preserved. However, this does not mean additional historic preservation efforts should not be attempted elsewhere. This location simply has the highest concentration of historic homes in the community. Designating a historic district encompassing these homes would be the initial step in preserving the character of these historic structures. In addition, it would allow property owners access to the historic tax credits administered by the State Historic Preservation Office.

- **Corridor Improvement Authority**

Unplanned and unorganized development along major roadways has led to sprawling commercial development along Lansing Road. To reverse this trend and stop it from spreading, a Corridor Improvement Authority district is recommended for the Lansing Road Corridor. This authority; established by the state in 2005; provides Charlotte the opportunity to guide future development and redevelop these areas to become an asset to the community rather than a area of continued concern. The Corridor Improvement Authority is very similar to a Downtown Development Authority using its tax increment financing to implement public improvement projects within the corridor district.

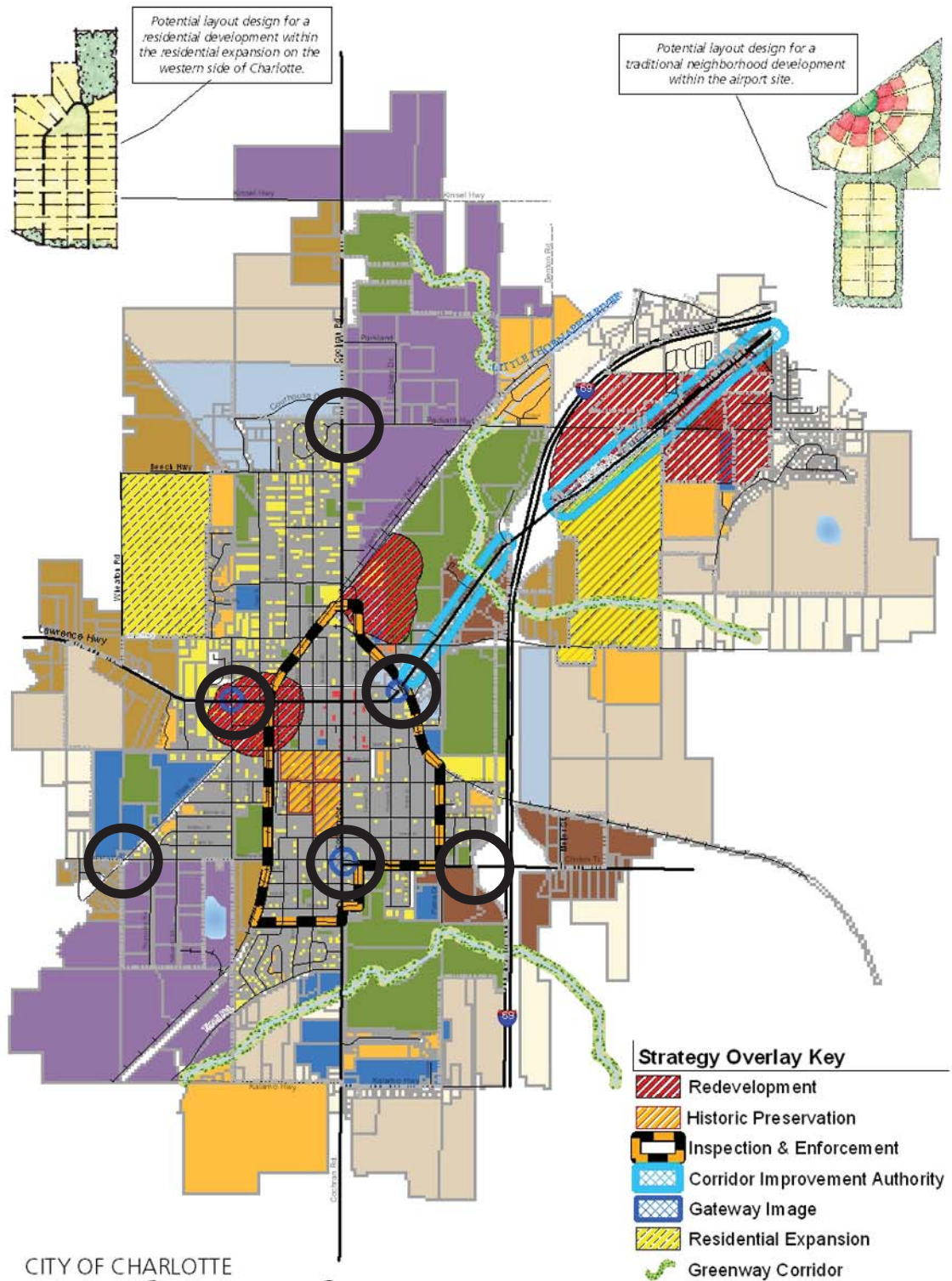
- **Inspection and Enforcement**

Due to increased concern for rental property quality, an inspection and enforcement district has been highlighted. Within this district is a high level of rental as well as historic homes. However, as with historic preservation, these efforts need to be applied elsewhere when appropriate. Establishing an enforcement strategy in this area will also work in conjunction with the historic district. The State Legislature is currently considering a bill which would create Neighborhood Improvement Authorities similar in function to Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs) where incremental taxes can be redirected toward improvements and correction of blight.

- **Gateway Image**

As with any community, Charlotte has six primary gateways into the community. The community would like to enhance these six areas to present the visitor and resident the sense of reaching a place of character. These areas may be enhanced with streetscape and landscape features and signage that provides the traveller a feeling that a destination has been reached. The location of the six gateway intersections are referenced by a bold circle on Map 10.6, "Special Areas of Concern."

MAP 10.6 Future Land Use Strategy Overlay



CITY OF CHARLOTTE Special Areas of Concern

Data Source: Eaton County GIS
Map Source: Beckwith and Rader Inc. 2006

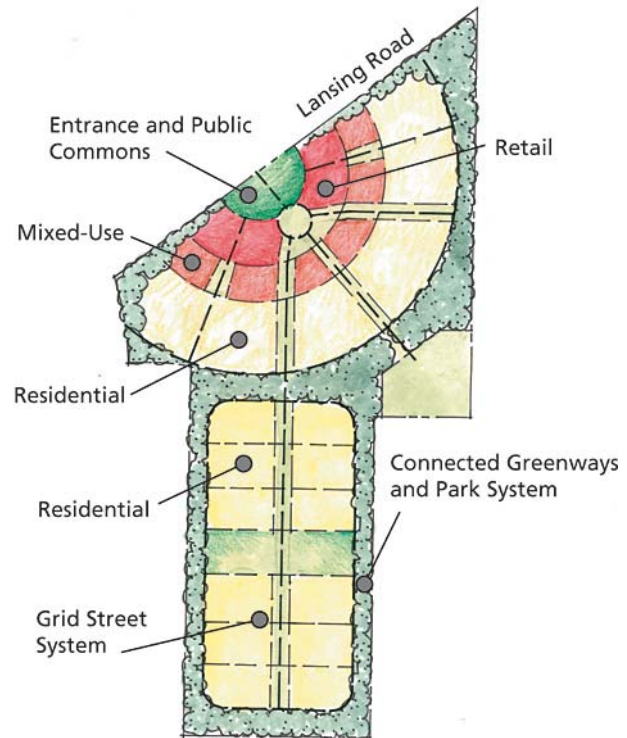
- City Boundary
- Railroad
- Primary Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- State/Interstate Highway



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE - FITCH H. BEACH AIRPORT

The Future Land Use map and Focus Areas map denote several sites for potential redevelopment. The current site of Fitch H. Beach Airport is one redevelopment site (#14 on Focus Area Map) and two parcels on the west side of the City consisting of the vacant commercial property along Lawrence Highway (#2 on Focus Area Map) and a mixed use neighborhood bounded by State, Lincoln and Seminary streets (#4 on Focus Area Map).

The redevelopment option offered for the current airport property is based on New Urbanism principles resulting in an integrated development comprising commercial development along Lansing Road, mixed-uses consisting of office, small retail and residential units and a residential neighborhood with connecting greenways. The table below reflects a build-out of 500 residential units and a valuation exceeding \$150,000,000 for this redevelopment

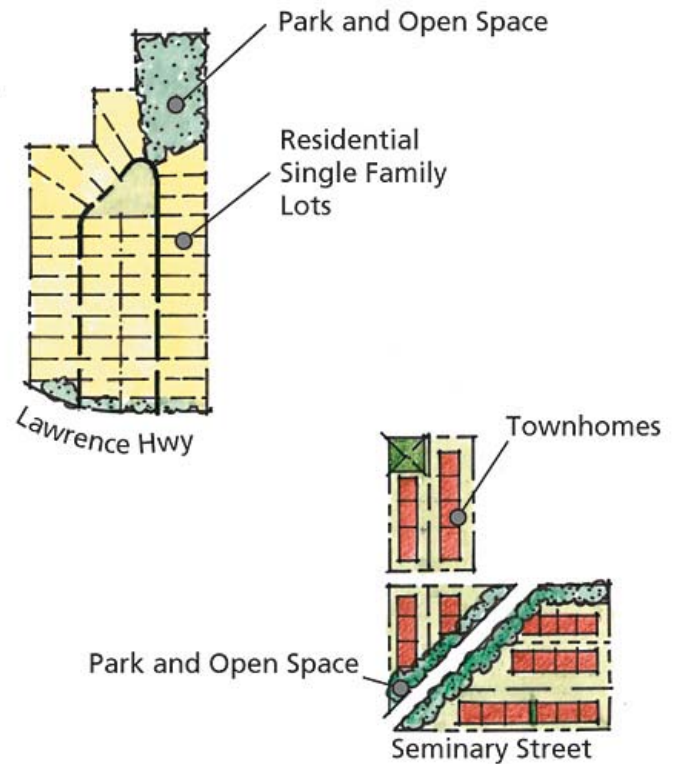


Redevelopment of Airport Property

Land Use	Acreage	Units	Square Footage	Valuation
Residential-Single Family	75	450		\$94,500,000
(Based on 6 Units / Acre with average value of \$210,000)				
Commercial	12		209,088	\$18,253,466
(Based on RS Means building data adjusted for Lansing Market)				
Mixed Use - Commercial, Office, and Residential	12	50	287,496	\$38,199,968
(Based on RS Means building data adjusted for Lansing Market)				
Park and Open Space	20			
ROW and Utility	56			
Total	175	500	496,584	\$150,953,434

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE - LAWRENCE AND SEMINARY STREET PROPERTIES

The western gateway area consists of two (2) separate parcels which when redeveloped redefine a new entrance and image for the Lawrence and Lincoln intersection. This intersection should be used for neighborhood commercial supported by higher quality residential developments. Combined, the two (2) sites render 69 dwelling units with a valuation of \$12,500,000. Redevelopment of several parcels within this Focus Area will require the use of the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.



Western Gateway Development

Land Use	Acreage	Units	Square Footage	Valuation
Residential Single Family	20	43		\$7,955,000
(Based on an average value of \$185,000)				
Residential - Townshomes	4	27		\$4,725,000
(Based on an average value of \$175,000)				
Park and Open Space	13			
ROW and Utility	2			
Total	39	70		\$12,680,000



Implementation Strategy

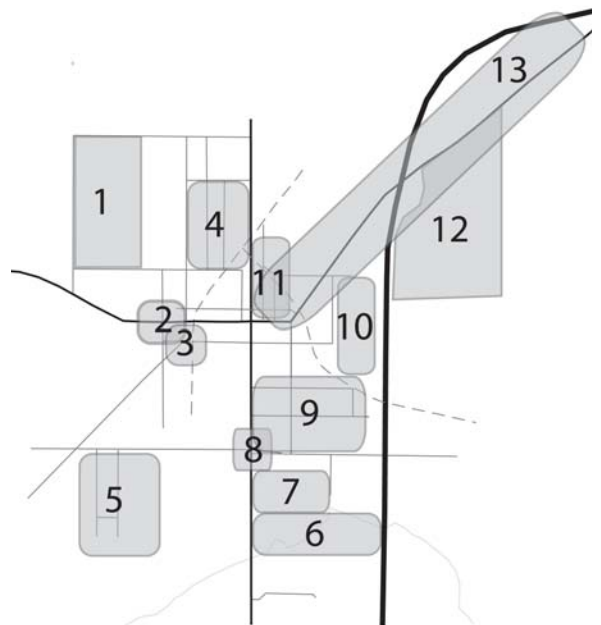
The information presented in the plan represents the characteristics of an older community and a growing and emerging city. The core of the community comprised of the downtown, older and historic residential neighborhoods and areas of commerce and manufacturing present opportunities for redevelopment. Similarly, areas along the perimeter of the city have recently developed or are poised for new development to accommodate residential subdivisions, retail and additions to the city's two industrial parks. As a result, the implementation strategy needs to focus on initiatives and strategies for a newer community as well as strategies often associated with older and redeveloping communities. In some locations of the city, planning and zoning reviews may be the sole tool for the city to use to guide appropriate development. In other areas, redevelopment tools such as the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, creating blighted rehabilitation districts, and establishing code enforcement programs may be needed to encourage new reinvestment. Along Lansing Road the establishment of a Corridor Improvement Authority may be warranted to improve the physical and functional character of the corridor.

The future land use map depicts the location and allocation of land uses based on an assessment of existing conditions, community expectations and the application of prudent planning principles. Incorporated into the future land use map are the 16 focus areas identified and reviewed by the master plan steering committee during a citywide bus tour to review existing conditions and discuss potential options.

From the 16 focus areas three areas required minor adjustments in land use programming while 13 areas required a combination of land use, zoning and community and economic development strategies. Each of these 13 areas are highlighted on a separate program sheet describing the area and the strategies and initiatives needed to effectuate change.

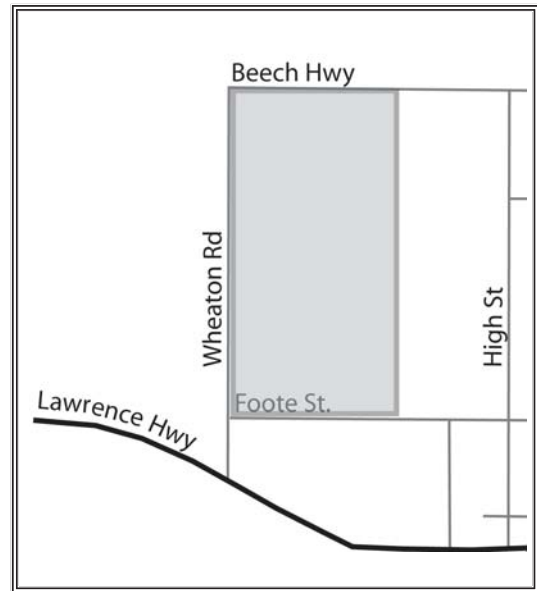
The actions needed to address the changes recommended in each focus area are divided into two categories: governmental actions required to facilitate change and strategies and initiatives. The governmental actions required to facilitate involve the application of specific state statutes, for example the Zoning Enabling Act, the use of Brownfield Redevelopment Authority programs or the establishment of a Corridor Improvement Authority. In addition, each of the governmental actions are classified by the responsible party who may include the City Council, Planning Commission or city administration.

The strategies and initiatives listed are recommended actions that can be taken to further implement the suggestions for each of their respective focus areas. For example several of the focus areas require the application of walkability measures; such as the installation of sidewalks and pedestrian safety features. Several other strategies involve the use of mixed-use provisions which allow for a variety of land uses within a specific development. Because some of these suggested strategies and initiatives are currently not in place governmental actions creating new zoning districts and zoning classifications would be a prerequisite for the developments to occur.



Northwest Expansion Area

Expansion outside of the corporate limits should be carefully planned in conjunction with the expansion of municipal utilities and services. The master plan recommends that the development of new neighborhoods in these areas be designed and constructed as traditional residential neighborhoods emulating the development pattern of the City with grid streets, sidewalks, and densities between 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre. The strategies suggested for this expansion area includes utilization of new urbanism and traditional neighborhood design principles, traffic calming and walkability elements such as sidewalks and nonmotorized trails. Where vehicular connections between new and existing residential developments are prohibitive the master plan is recommending, at a minimum, pedestrian connections between developments.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

- 1 Northwest Future City Expansion Area - this area is positioned to absorb new residential growth expanding easterly from the City.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ New Residential Areas
- ▶ Walkability & Sidewalks
- ▶ New Urbanism and Smart Growth
- ▶ Traffic Calming & Pedestrian Safety

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Act 425 Land Transfer Agreement
- ▶ Sub-Area Master Plan Update
- ▶ Planning & Zoning Reviews

Responsible Party

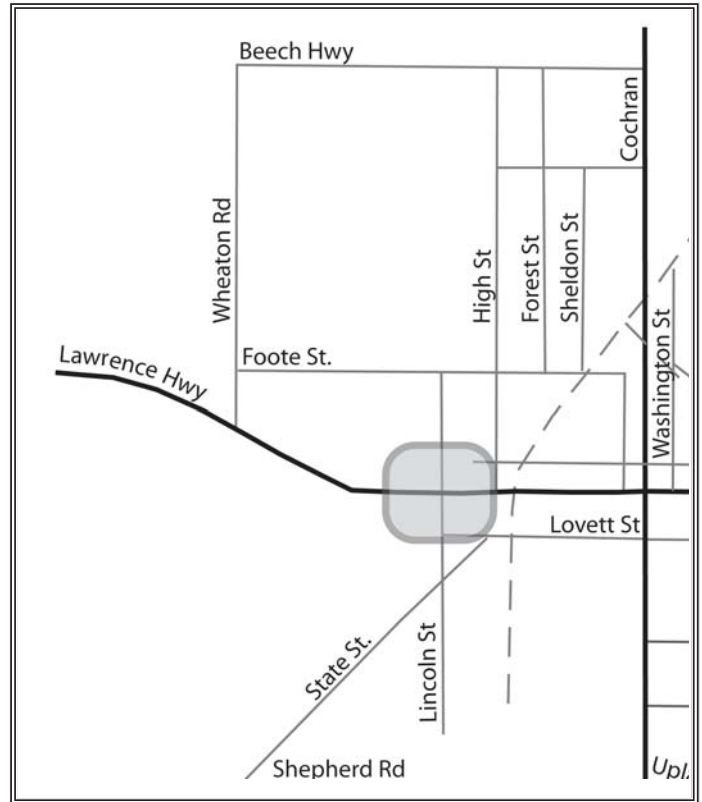
- City Administration
- Planning Commission
- Planning Commission



New Residential Development - Indianapolis
Photo Credit: Urban Land Institute

West Side Commercial

This commercial area is located at a busy intersection at the western edge of the City and serves as a major gateway into the community. Although several of the properties are small in comparison with today's commercial lot dimensions, a balanced approach to private and public investment can enhance the functionality and appearance of this area. Suggested improvements would include special roadway lighting, consistent right-of-way landscaping, collective and shared parking lots and building façade enhancements. Depending on the roadway cross-section the inclusion of pedestrian bump outs at the intersection would serve to create a visual gateway into the City and provide pedestrians with an improved street crossing.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

2

West-side Neighborhood Commercial - focus planning and redevelopment efforts to create a compact and viable neighborhood commercial area adjacent to residential neighborhoods around Lincoln and Lawrence.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Mixed Use Development
- ▶ Walkability
- ▶ Brownfield Redevelopment

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Zoning Ordinance Revision for Mixed-Uses
- ▶ Planning and Zoning Reviews
- ▶ Capital Improvements Funding

Responsible Party

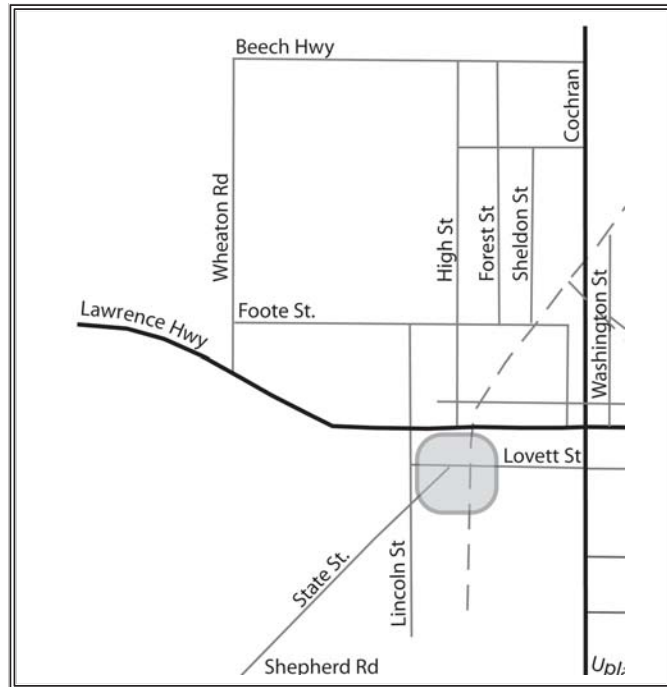
- Planning Commission
- Planning Commission
- City Administration



Existing Commercial Establishment on Lawrence
Photo Credit: Beckett&Raeder

West Side Redevelopment

The Lawrence / Lovett / Seminary neighborhood contains a variety of residential, commercial and industrial land uses some of which are vacant or underutilized. Former factories; which are now functionally obsolete; account for several larger tracts of property. The application of a mixed-use zoning district coupled with brownfield redevelopment tools can regenerate and redevelop this neighborhood into a vibrant community. Implementation will require a close working relationship between the Planning Commission, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the City Administration.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

- 3 **West-side Redevelopment - focus redevelopment efforts to convert vacant and underutilized industrial properties in the Lawrence / Lovett / Seminary / State Streets area for mixed-use development.**

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ New Residential Areas
- ▶ Walkability
- ▶ Brownfield Redevelopment

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Prepare a sub-area redevelopment concept plan
- ▶ Developer solicitation with Brownfield incentives
- ▶ Zoning Ordinance Revision for Mixed-Uses

Responsible Party

- Planning Commission
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Planning Commission



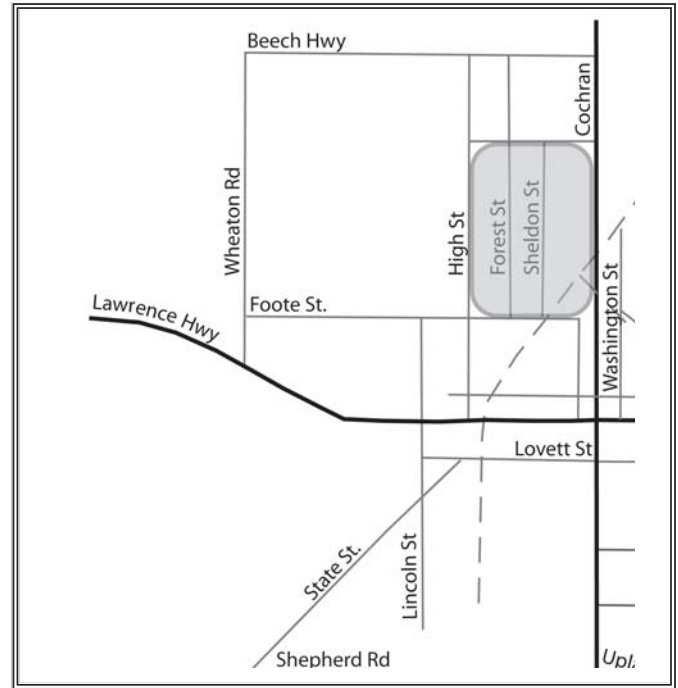
I'On Village Development - A Mixed-Use Development
Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina



Maywood Townshomes - Brownfield Project on former gas station property
Pleasant Ridge, Michigan

Cochran / Sheldon / Forest Neighborhood

This neighborhood is located adjacent to the railroad and several operating industrial uses. Based on the housing quality assessment there are housing structures with fair and poor quality ratings and the incidence of property blight seems more apparent than other areas of the city. Strategies for this neighborhood would include concentrated code enforcement activities, promotion of home improvement programs and possible designation under the Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act to focus efforts and municipal resources to enhance the overall quality of the area. Improvement of the southwest corner of Amity and Sheldon would be a considerable first step in this rehabilitation process.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

4

Cochran/Sheldon/Forest Neighborhood - This area contains underutilized and poorly maintained properties. The location of industrial storage and resulting blight impedes the development of an attractive neighborhood.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Concentrated Code Enforcement
- ▶ Home Improvement Program
- ▶ Blighted Neighborhood Designation

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

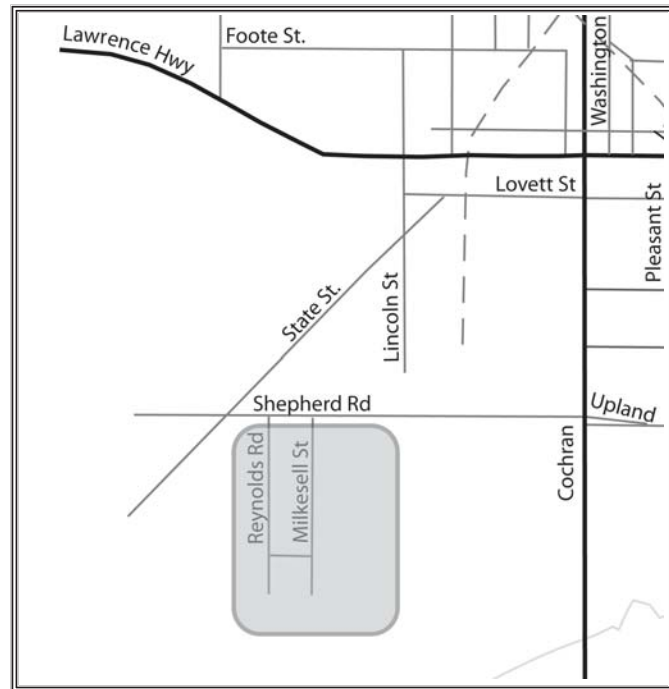
- ▶ Rental Inspection Program
- ▶ Blighted Area Rehabilitation
- ▶ Concentrated Code Enforcement

Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration
- City Administration

Spartan Expansion

Spartan Motors, Inc; a manufacturer and supplier of specialty chassis and vehicles for domestic and military applications, is one of Charlotte's largest industries. Plans to expand the plant and its Charlotte operations are an important economic development opportunity for the community and the Michigan economy. Increased traffic along Shepherd Street may be experienced but the configuration and capacity of this road is sufficient to accommodate the incremental increase. Actions to facilitate this expansion include planning and zoning reviews pursuant to the zoning ordinance.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

5 Spartan Expansion - This location is planned for the expansion of Spartan Motors.

Strategies and Initiatives

- Not Applicable

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

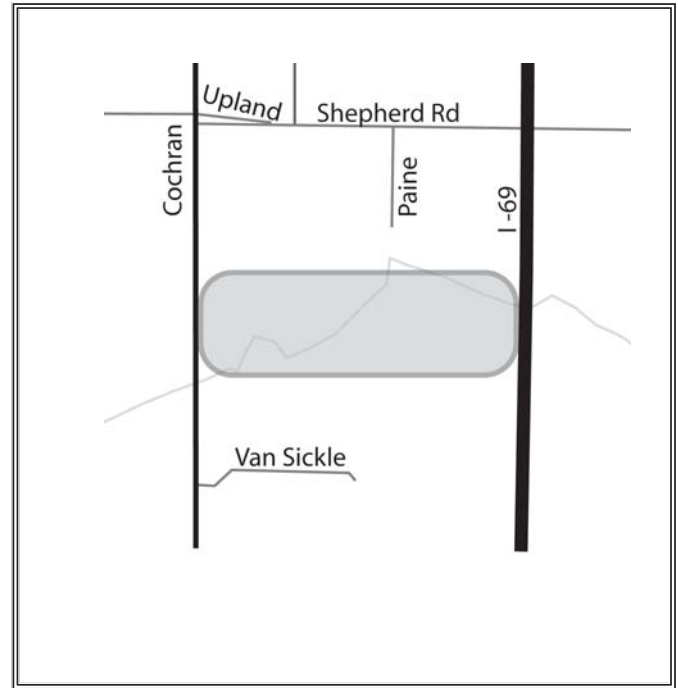
- Planning and Zoning Reviews

Responsible Party

→ Planning Commission

Bennett Park Area

This implementation project involves the possible expansion of Bennett Park easterly along the Battle Creek River tributary to I-69. Expansion of park facilities and trails would best be accomplished with grants administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Other associated projects would include pedestrian connections to adjacent properties. If state and federal funding is pursued to leverage local capital funding for projects, these projects will need to be identified in the City's 5-year MDNR Recreation Plan.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

- 6 **Bennett Park Area** - This area is a prime location for parks, recreation, and open space preservation, and the expansion of Bennett Park.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Connect Recreation and Residential Uses

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Inclusion in 5 year MDNR Recreation Plan
- ▶ MDNR Grant Application

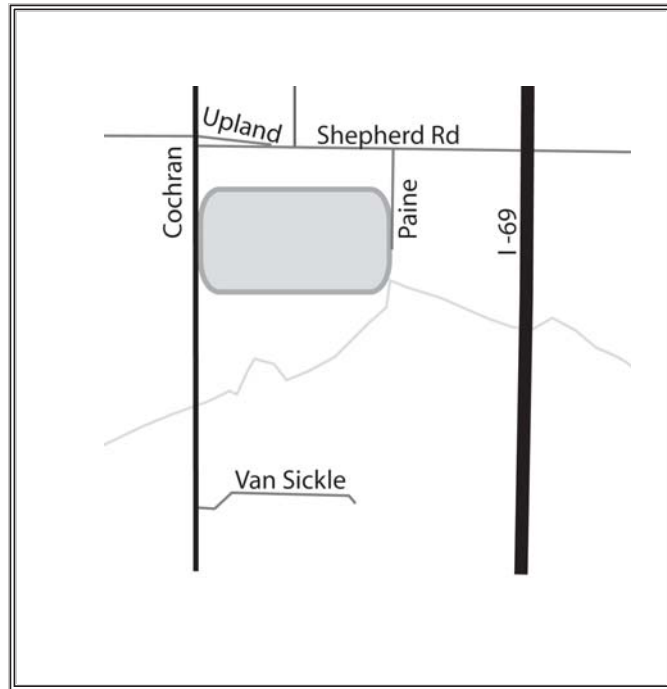
Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration



Redevelopment of Eaton County Fairgrounds

This is a longer-term project that requires the relocation of the county fairgrounds to another location. The highest and best use for this property would be a traditional single-family residential neighborhood, which capitalizes on the proximity of the downtown, community facilities and employment opportunities. Its location north of Bennett Park presents an opportunity for any proposed development to integrate with the park by extending a greenway through the property to Shepherd Street. This would allow neighborhoods north of Shepherd Street to access Bennett Park via a pedestrian trail network. If the property is developed for a residential development it should be designed and constructed as traditional residential neighborhoods emulating the development pattern of the City with grid streets, sidewalks and densities between 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre. The strategies suggested include utilization of new urbanism and traditional neighborhood design principles, traffic calming and walkability elements such as sidewalks and nonmotorized trails.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

7 Redevelopment of Eaton County Fairgrounds - redevelopment of the fairgrounds for a planned residential neighborhood within the City.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ New Residential Areas
- ▶ Walkability Applications
- ▶ New Urbanism Concepts
- ▶ Mixed Use Developments
- ▶ Connect Recreational and Residential Uses

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Prepare a sub-area redevelopment concept plan
- ▶ Developer solicitation with Brownfield incentives
- ▶ Zoning Ordinance Revision for Mixed-Uses

Responsible Party

- Planning Commission
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Planning Commission



New neighborhood in Memphis, TN developed using New Urbanism tenets.



North Trail - Connects Parks and Activity Centers
East Lansing, Michigan

Cochran / Shepherd Park Intersection

The Special Areas of Concern map notes the location of six (6) community gateways and the Cochran and Shepherd Street intersection is one of the gateways mentioned. This small triangular parcel framed by Shepherd, Upland, and Cochran gives the community a unique opportunity to develop a small park and gateway at the southern and east entrance to the City.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

8

Cochran / Shepherd Park - Improve the southeast side of the Cochran / Shepherd intersection for a small neighborhood park and community gateway.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Connect Recreational and Residential Uses
- ▶ Establish Gateway Enhancements

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Inclusion in 5 year MDNR Recreation Plan
- ▶ MDNR Grant Application

Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration



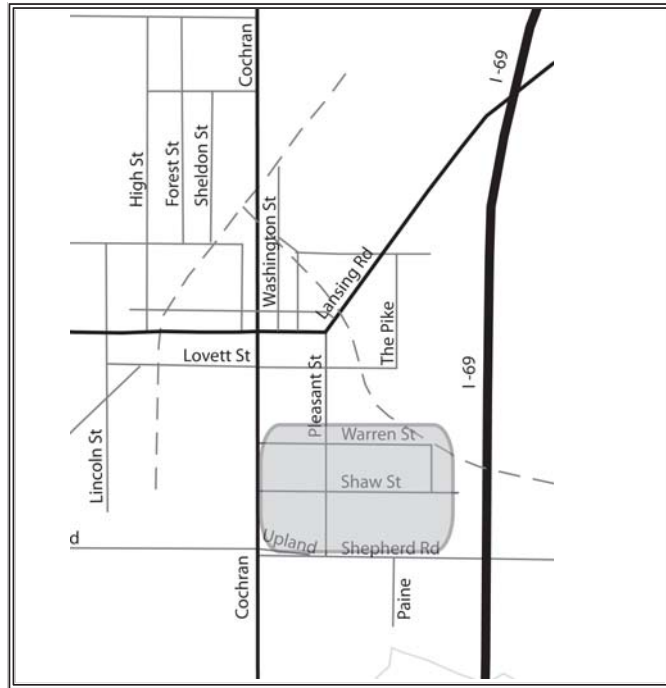
Community Gateway and Sign
Southgate, Michigan



Community Gateway and Sign
Pleasant Ridge, Michigan

Warren / Shaw / Shepherd Neighborhood

Based on the housing quality assessment there are housing structures with fair and poor quality ratings and the incidence of property blight is higher than average for other areas of the city. In addition, some of the streets are unpaved which exacerbates the quality of the residential neighborhood. Strategies for this neighborhood would include concentrated code enforcement activities, promotion of home improvement programs, possible designation under the Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act to focus efforts and municipal resources to enhance the overall quality of the area and the use of special assessment districts and capital improvements funding for street construction.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

9 Warren / Shaw / Shepherd Neighborhood - Improve public infrastructure within this neighborhood with paved streets and sidewalks.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Walkability Applications
- ▶ Integrate Sidewalks
- ▶ Rental Inspection Program
- ▶ Pave Residential Streets

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Capital Improvement Funding
- ▶ Rental Inspection Program
- ▶ Blighted Area Rehabilitation
- ▶ Concentrated Code Enforcement

Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration
- City Administration
- City Administration

Park Expansion

The majority of this area is agricultural land with wet soil conditions consisting of 73 acres of land. Long-term use of this area should be park, recreation and open space and future efforts to procure the property should be pursued. Identification of this goal should be reflected in the MDNR Five-Year Recreation Plan.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

10 Park Expansion - Procurement of property to preserve open space and increase park and recreation opportunities.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Connect Recreational and Residential Uses

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

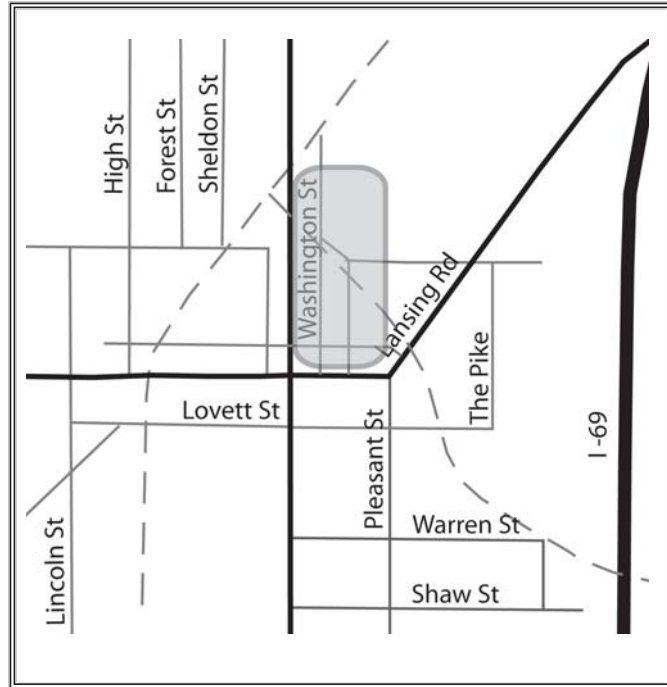
- ▶ Inclusion in 5 year MDNR Recreation Plan
- ▶ MDNR Grant Application

Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration

Oliver / Washington Neighborhood

The Oliver / Washington Neighborhood north of the downtown is influenced by a variety of conflicting land uses similar to the Cochran / Forest Neighborhood north of Foote Street. This neighborhood is adjacent to the downtown, Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital along its east boundary and commercial and light industrial uses along the north boundary of the neighborhood. External traffic, site lighting and rail traffic all have an influence on the quality of the neighborhood. The strategies recommended for this area include concentrated code enforcement, home improvement programs and possible site design requirements through the zoning ordinance; which favor the residential component of the overall neighborhood.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

11 Oliver / Washington Neighborhood - variety of residential, commercial and industrial land uses has impacted the viability of this neighborhood.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Concentrated Code Enforcement
- ▶ Home Improvement Program
- ▶ Blighted Neighborhood Designation

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

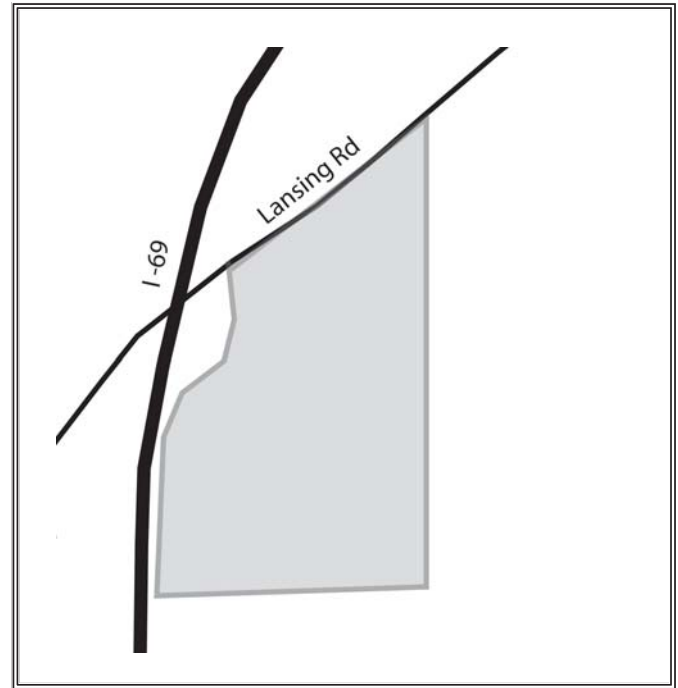
- ▶ Rental Inspection Program
- ▶ Blighted Area Rehabilitation
- ▶ Concentrated Code Enforcement

Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration
- City Administration

Redevelopment of the Airport

Long-term reuse of the Fitch H. Beach Airport for a planned mixed-use neighborhood is recommended in the plan. Conversion to this use would greatly increase the City's taxable valuation by \$150-\$200 million dollars and add approximately 500 housing units and upwards of 1,400 residents. There are many steps that would need to occur to position the property for redevelopment, but it's location adjacent to the I-69 and Lansing Road exit makes it a perfect candidate for a regional commercial and residential development.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

12 Redevelopment of Airport - The current airport location is situated in an optimum location to accommodate new development and growth.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ New Residential Areas
- ▶ Walkability Applications
- ▶ New Urbanism Concepts
- ▶ Mixed Use Developments
- ▶ Connect Recreational and Residential Uses

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Prepare a sub-area redevelopment concept plan
- ▶ Zoning Ordinance Revision for Mixed-Uses
- ▶ Developer solicitation

Responsible Party

- Planning Commission
- Planning Commission
- City Administration

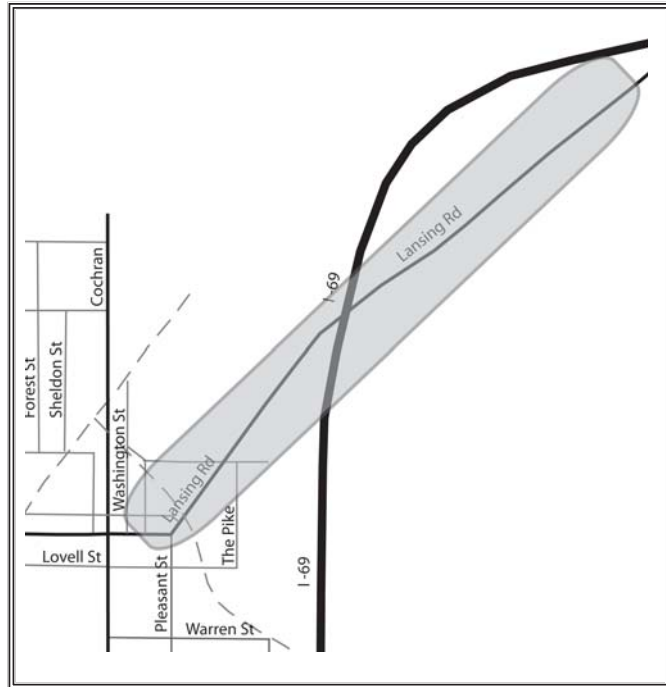


Vickery is a 214-acre (86.6-hectare), mixed-use neighborhood under development in Cumming, Georgia, 30 miles (48.3 kilometers) north of Atlanta. A high-density village center containing a mix of civic and commercial uses as well as townhouses and live/work units is surrounded by small-lot, single-family housing. Planned as an alternative to the low-density development occurring elsewhere in this suburban area; Vickery is designed to provide a diversity of housing choices and community amenities---and thus create a multigenerational and demographically diverse neighborhood. Source and Photos - Urban Land Institute: Development Case Studies

Establish a Corridor Improvement Authority along Lansing Road

The Corridor Improvement Authority, Public Act 280 of 2005, allows Townships, Villages and Cities the opportunity to establish corridor improvement authorities along arterial and collector roads. The framework of the authority parallels many of the attributes of the Downtown Development Authority requiring a board of directors, preparation of a development plan and the use of tax increment financing to accomplish identified projects and programs.

The act specifically allows the authority to expend funds on “public facility” projects defined in the Act as “a street, plaza, pedestrian mall and any improvements to a street, plaza or pedestrian mall including street furniture and beautification, sidewalk, trail, lighting, traffic flow modification, park, parking facility, recreational facility, right-of-way, structure, waterway, bridge, lake, pond, canal, utility line or pipe or building including access routes designed and dedicated to use by the public generally or used by a public agency.” The master plan recommends the establishment of a Corridor Improvement Authority along Lansing Road as a tool to encourage new development and assist with the redevelopment of existing properties.



General Location Map

Relationship to Strategies and Initiatives

13 Establish a Corridor Improvement Authority along Lansing Road.

Strategies and Initiatives

- ▶ Walkability Applications
- ▶ Establish Gateway Enhancements
- ▶ Mixed Use Developments
- ▶ Corridor Improvement Authority

Actions Required to Facilitate Change

- ▶ Establish Corridor Improvement Authority
- ▶ Appoint Board
- ▶ Prepare Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan

Responsible Party

- City Administration
- City Administration
- City Administration



Plymouth Road, Livonia, Michigan is an example of how a Corridor Improvement Authority can refurbish and redevelop a corridor commercial district.

Strategies and Initiatives

1. New Residential Areas

New residential areas should follow broad guidelines for development; which will result in creating well-connected neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and lot sizes. In order to maintain a sufficient number of rooftops that support local retail and downtown development initiatives, it is recommended that densities between 4 1/2 to 6 1/2 dwelling units per acre be encouraged. In addition, developments should include a mix of smaller and midsize residential lots and in certain areas mixed uses including retail with upper story residential units. New developments should include sidewalks; and where appropriate; nonmotorized pathways for pedestrian connections. The use of cul-de-sacs should be minimized in favor of a more traditional street network. Where cul-de-sacs are used pedestrian access easements should be procured by the city as part of the plan review process.

2. Walkability Applications

Walkability applications include a variety of techniques including appropriate dimensions for walkways and sidewalks, the width of roadway cross-sections, availability of pedestrian crossings, provisions for curb ramps and travel speeds on major and local streets. In existing neighborhoods, a walkability survey could be done in conjunction with a sidewalk inspection program. Based on the results modifications could be made as part of the sidewalk replacement program. Similarly; as streets are repaved or reconstructed; a review of the street geometrics could be evaluated against applicable street design and traffic calming standards published by the Federal Highway Administration. In new developments, it is recommended that walkability standards be applied at the outset of development design and that these be incorporated into review approvals conducted by the planning commission. Guidelines for conducting a walkability survey of the community are incorporated in the appendix of this report.

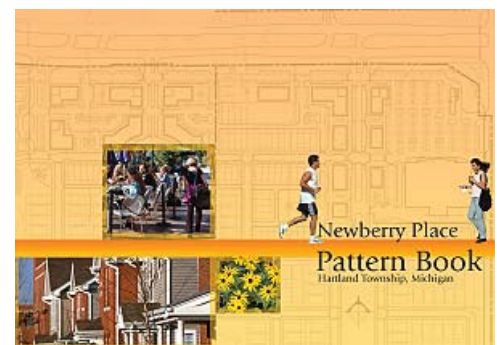


3. Integrate Sidewalk

The City should continue its requirement to install new sidewalks in all new developments. In addition, the city should undertake a program to install sidewalks in areas where they do not exist or in locations where sidewalks are not connected. In many instances, this type of program can be funded through special assessment districts. Typically, a long-term plan is prepared for sidewalk replacement and installation of new sidewalk and this is implemented over an annual cycle and construction season.

4. New Urbanism and Smart Growth Concepts

Several of the focus areas call for the implementation of new urbanism and Smart Growth concepts. These would include higher density developments, provisions for mixed uses, street design based on AASHTO residential guidelines and architectural review standards. In some situations, the use of a "Pattern Book," which regulates land and building design is required as part of the city approval process. The developer or builder of the project normally prepares this document and it is made part of the official project record. Another mechanism to encourage traditional neighborhood development would be the inclusion of the LEED-Neighborhood rating guidelines into various sections of the residential zoning districts.



Use of a Pattern Book to guide and manage new residential development: Hartland Township, Michigan.

5. Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Safety

Traffic calming and pedestrian safety are factored into a walkability program. However, in existing neighborhoods where sidewalks are present traffic calming is done as a separate activity. Depending on the type of street (local or major) and the availability of on street parking different solutions can be offered to reduce the impact of traffic and create a safer pedestrian environment. There are a variety of techniques and capital infrastructure projects that can be installed as part of a traffic calming and pedestrian safety assessment. These assessments can be done in conjunction with street repaving or reconstruction projects. In some communities, the city will annually allocate funds for traffic calming projects and city neighborhoods will submit projects for funding consideration. This approach makes the traffic calming project a neighborhood initiative rather than a City Hall mandate. Included in the appendix of this report is a copy of the Ann Arbor traffic calming guidebook for reference.

6. Mixed Use Developments

The term mixed-use refers to a zoning district which allows a variety of uses. The popularity of mixed-use development has grown with the “Smart Growth” movement. It has been found that appropriately designed mixed-use developments create better living environments and have substantial fiscal and economic benefits for a community. Embodied in the concept of mixed-use is higher density, land use variety, public spaces, and pedestrian oriented retail. It can be argued that downtown Charlotte is a mixed-use district. However, the master plan recommends the development of several other mixed-use sites in the city. The mixed-use development can be promoted through the use of a planned unit development ordinance or the city can create a specific zoning district or zoning overlay district to accomplish this planning objective.



Example of Mixed Use Development
Source: ULI

7. Establish Gateway Enhancements

Gateway enhancements involve physical improvements to primary community entry intersections consisting of specialty lighting, intensive landscaping, wayfinding signage and the application of site and building standards. There are six intersections identified as gateways in Charlotte, which include the intersections of N. Cochran and Packard, Lawrence and Pleasant, West Lawrence and Lincoln Street, S. Cochran Ave (M-50) and Shepherd, Shepherd and State, and Shepherd and Madison. The adjacent photo of Wayne, Michigan is an example of a community gateway entrance at a primary intersection using a brick wall and upright sign with extensive landscaping. Other gateway treatments may include consistent landscaping at each intersection quadrant with a unique community identification sign.



Example of a community gateway in Wayne, Michigan

8. Brownfield Redevelopment

Like many older Michigan communities, Charlotte has underutilized and environmentally challenged properties. Brownfields; as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency; are “abandoned, idled or underused industrial or commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is contemplated by real or perceived environmental contamination.” In the state of Michigan; Public Act 145 regulates Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities and municipalities have the ability to establish these entities and utilize the tax capture generated by the new development. If Charlotte can obtain “core” community status infrastructure costs would also be eligible to pay for the environmental remediation.

9. Rental Inspection Program

Rental inspection programs are established and administered by the municipality. They are enacted by local ordinance and specify a certification program and inspection cycle for rental properties. Typically, federal or state funded and administered housing projects are exempt from the rental inspection program. The primary intent of a rental inspection program is to periodically inspect dwellings that are used as rental property to ensure that they meet current health and safety standards. Results from a rental inspection program can vary depending on the inspection cycle and the breadth of code requirements addressed. Programs often require an annual rental license fee to offset the cost of the inspection program.

10. Connect Recreational and Residential Uses

The master plan recommends that recreation, park and open space be connected to adjacent residential neighborhoods. There is significant evidence that supports the relationship between parks and neighborhood stability. Recently, the Michigan Recreation Parks Association adopted the State of California planning process for park and recreation master plans. This process links the availability of recreation areas and facilities with community and economic development objectives. National surveys have shown a strong correlation between the availability of recreation and open space and increased value and demand for residential property. The 2004 American Housing Preference Survey indicated that open space, parks and pathways were in the top 10 factors for selecting a new house.

11. Pave Residential Streets

There are several neighborhoods in the city that have unpaved streets. As part of a long-term redevelopment strategy the master plan is recommending that all unpaved streets in the city be paved. Due to fiscal limitations, the use of general funds may not be available to accomplish this objective. However; if the desire is sufficient; residents could approve a voted general obligation bond to finance the installation of paved streets. Several communities, including Pleasant Ridge and Essexville have instituted this type of program with success. In addition, municipalities have the ability to special assess for these improvements.



Example of pedestrian connection between residential developments.

12. Blighted Area Rehabilitation

Public Act 344 of 1945, known as the Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act, authorizes cities to adopt plans to prevent blight and to adopt plans for the rehabilitation of blighted areas. As defined by the Act, blighted area means a portion of a municipality, developed or undeveloped, marked by a demonstrated pattern of deterioration in physical, economic or social conditions characterized by the physical deterioration of structures, substandard buildings and efficient division of lots, and the deterioration of public facilities or services. The municipality defines a district and prepares a plan to correct these deficiencies. In order to implement the adopted plan, the municipality has the ability to issue bonds to finance the undertaking of projects identified. The use of this Public Act is to focus attention on specific areas of the community which require coordinated and concentrated capital and fiscal resources.

13. Corridor Improvement Authority

Public Act 280 of 2005, known as the Corridor Improvement Authority, was established to redevelop and improve the condition of commercial corridors in the state of Michigan. The function of the authority is similar to the Downtown Development Authority, which requires the establishment of the district, preparation of a development plan and preparation of a tax increment-financing plan if utilized. Projects implemented by a Corridor Improvement Authority include roadside and streetscape improvements, implementation of access management plans, land acquisition and other capital infrastructure projects necessary to revitalize the business district. This form of authority could be used along the Lansing Road corridor to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety and integrate the individual commercial and business properties into a business district.

14. Concentrated Code Enforcement

Concentrated code enforcement is a locally designed building inspection program targeted at specific neighborhoods which have a high incidence of blight and housing maintenance problems. The program is initiated by sending a notice to property owners within designated neighborhoods notifying them of the inspection schedule. Only the exterior of structures and lots are part of the inspection program; there are no internal inspections. The code used to inspect the exterior of the building is often the existing building maintenance code. Once property owners are notified of violations they are normally given 60 to 90 days to make the necessary repairs. This program can be done in conjunction with a home rehabilitation loan program which provides income eligible property owners grants or low interest financing to fund the repairs needed.

15. Planning Commission Committees

It is recommended that the Planning Commission establish several working committees to address the implementation strategies relegated to the commission. Committees would in turn prepare recommendations for review and action by the commission. This body of work would be discussed in the Planning Commission's Annual Report.

16. Mixed Use District and Planned Unit Development Zoning Provisions

The Future Land Use Map recommends the utilization of mixed-use areas in the City. This type of district is different from a traditional zoning district because it allows a variety of land uses (i.e. residential, commercial and office) to be integrated and adjacent (horizontally and vertically) within a subject property. The previous Future Land Use map also included this land use type around the perimeter of the downtown to encourage commercial and residential development. This plan expands the use of mixed-use as a method to redevelop and strengthen existing neighborhoods. Revision to the City Zoning Ordinance providing for the use of mixed-use districts will need to occur if the City embraces this form of land development. Similarly, it is recommended that a Planned Unit Development ordinance be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance giving both the Planning Commission and the land developer the opportunity to fully utilize the real estate potential of property. To appropriately administer both the mixed-use and planned unit development regulations it is recommended that the Planning Commission go through a special training session on how to administer these provisions.

17. General Building and Site Design Standards

It is recommended that the Planning Commission establish a Committee to work on the preparation of general building and site design standards. These standards would be tailored for specific locations within the community such as the downtown, historic neighborhoods and new mixed-use development. When applicable, the Planning Commission should require developers utilizing planned unit development provisions to submit a "Pattern Book" regulating building architecture and site design elements.

B L A N K

