

# Chapter Six



## Land Use

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### I. Introduction

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Northeast Area slowly grew outward from Lower Town and Ann Arbor's downtown core. Transportation corridors such as Pontiac Trail, Plymouth Road, Geddes Road and Washtentaw Avenue provided major links to areas outside of the City. Residential neighborhoods were built along these transportation corridors, as were employment and commercial centers.

Significant growth in the Northeast Area occurred after 1950, when the development of the University of Michigan's North Campus encouraged research firms to locate along the Plymouth Road corridor. Residential and commercial growth followed as the Northeast Area developed quickly between 1950-2000. The development pattern of the Northeast Area has largely been suburban in nature, characterized by lower density, auto-oriented design and separated land uses.

Today, the Northeast Area has tremendous diversity of land uses including the University of Michigan's North Campus, the Plymouth Road employment corridor, a variety of residential neighborhoods, active parks, natural areas, schools, places of worship, and commercial centers. Although land use diversity exists, many uses are self-contained and separated from each other by distance and lack of easy pedestrian access. This separation of uses increases the likelihood that trips will be made by automobile.

The variety of housing choices enhances the quality of life for residents of the Northeast Area. Housing choices include single family homes of various sizes located on a small, medium or large lots; duplexes; small, medium and large apartment buildings; townhouses; cooperative housing; nursing homes; assisted living homes; group homes; and dormitories. Prospective residents of the Northeast Area can choose homes near things that are most important to them. Homes of various sizes and cost can be found along the Huron River, in wooded areas, in historic neighborhoods, in new developments, near freeway access, on dirt roads, on large lots, near schools, parks, and employment and shopping centers. However, between 1990 and 2000, housing prices in Washtenaw County rose by approximately 7% per year making it difficult for renters and first time homebuyers to enter the market. Additionally, people with modest incomes have difficulty finding places to live in Ann Arbor. In 2005, the average sales price in Ann Arbor was \$267,000.

Office, research and light industrial centers located in the Northeast Area provide tremendous benefits to the residents of Ann Arbor. They provide job opportunities, help strengthen and stabilize the local economy, provide land use diversity, reduce travel time for local employees and strengthen the tax base. However, an increase in traffic congestion has accompanied increases in employment uses in the Northeast Area. Additionally, many people who work in the Northeast Area commute from other parts of Ann Arbor and Southeast Michigan.

Commercial services are available within the Northeast Area, providing a variety of shopping opportunities for local residents and individuals throughout the region.

## **II. Issues**

### **A. Historic Preservation**

The Northern Brewery, constructed in 1886 and located on Jones Drive, is the only historic district in the Northeast Area. It is currently used as an office building. Various individual historic structures are located throughout the Northeast Area. The Ann Arbor City Council is considering the expansion of the Washtenaw/Hill historic district into a small portion of the Northeast Area along Washtenaw Avenue and Hill Street. In 2002, City Council passed a resolution to appoint a committee to evaluate the feasibility of establishing an historic district in the Lower Town section (and adjoining neighborhoods) of the Northeast Area. Some area residents have expressed concern about the restrictions associated with an historic district designation. Others have indicated that without the protection of an historic district, historically significant properties can be removed or altered.

### **B. Affordable Housing**

Housing costs in Ann Arbor have risen dramatically since 1990. Rapidly rising housing costs have reduced the ability of many people who live or work in Ann Arbor to buy or rent a home in the Northeast Area. An increasing number of people with modest incomes cannot afford to live in the Northeast Area. Maintaining a diversity of housing opportunities, including low cost housing, has been identified in the Northeast Area public workshop process as a community objective. The 2000-2005 Consolidated Strategy and Plan for Housing and Community Development Programs identifies ways to increase affordable housing opportunities. "Affordable Housing" is defined by the City of Ann Arbor Zoning Ordinance as "housing units where the occupant is paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including taxes and utilities". The Zoning Ordinance defines "Lower Income Households" as "references made collectively to low and very low income households or individuals. This encompasses all households with income levels less than 80% of City of Ann Arbor median income as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ". The Zoning Ordinance also describes the "expansion of the supply of affordable housing" as one of the beneficial effects for the City defined by the Standards for PUD Zoning District Review.

### **C. Achieving Land Use Balance**

Since the adoption of the last area plan (1989), the Northeast Area has experienced strong growth in a number of land use categories including office, research, residential and parkland. The major land use category that has not grown significantly since 1989 has been retail

commercial. Retail constitutes approximately 1.7% of land in the Northeast Area, which is the smallest percentage of retail land use of any of the four planning areas in Ann Arbor. Additional residential and office development will increase demand for retail services. Opportunities for new and redeveloped retail uses are limited by zoning to a few small sites. Those sites include a property on Dhu Varren Road near Nixon Road, a site at the southeast corner of Dhu Varren and Pontiac Trail and the gas station and car storage facility at the corner of Plymouth Road and Upland Drive. Chapter 10 makes site-specific recommendations regarding sites that are appropriate for retail land uses.

## **D. Mixed Uses**

Most land uses in the Northeast Area are separated from one another. Very few land uses are mixed (different uses within one building or on the same site) or designed to encourage pedestrian activity between each other (.9% of land uses are mixed in the Northeast Area compared to 3.2% in the Central Area). This segregation of uses results in an increased dependency on the automobile for mobility. Although some residential neighborhoods are within walking distance of retail services, most Northeast Area residents drive automobiles for their retail needs. Likewise, although some residents live within walking distance of employment centers, most residents drive to work. An increasing number of mixed land uses could encourage greater pedestrian access and reduce the number of vehicular trips. Integrating various land uses on the same site or in the same building encourages pedestrian activity, uses land and infrastructure more efficiently, increases vitality, promotes shared parking opportunities and can increase the variety of housing choices. Such mixed uses can include: a variety of integrated residential uses, integrating office and retail uses, and integrating residential uses with retail and office uses.

## **E. Residential Density**

Residential density varies dramatically in the Northeast Area from low-density single-family homes to apartment buildings with densities of up to 50 units per acre. The residential density in the Northeast Area is lower than any other planning area in the City; 4.9 persons per acre compared to the South Area (6.2), West Area (6.3), and Central Area (21.6). Residential density is a significant component of the site-specific recommendations in Chapter 10. The density range established for each site specific recommendation (e.g., “8-10 dwelling units per gross acre minus right-of-way”) will help ensure that new development utilizes land and infrastructure efficiently, supports transit, encourages affordable housing and provides a greater diversity of housing choices without overburdening roadways or infrastructure. Developers should provide at least the minimum density that the range identifies, but not exceed the maximum.

## **F. City Parkland**

Parkland is a valuable component of the quality of life in Ann Arbor. Not only do parks provide numerous recreational opportunities and linkages between neighborhoods, they also help to protect and enhance the City’s natural areas. Fifty-two City parks totaling approximately 900 acres exist in the Northeast Area. The Northeast Area has the highest percentage of recreational land of any planning area; 19.4% compared to 17.4% in the West Area, 16.7 in the South Area and 15.8% in the Central Area. Most residents live within easy walking distance of at least one park. The following are ways that the City acquires parkland:

- **Contribution** - The City has historically been able to acquire parkland through voluntary dedication of land that is part of a proposed residential development project. The 2006-2011 Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan identifies a formula that is used to help determine the amount of recommended parkland that is to be dedicated based upon the number of residential units of a proposed development project.
- **Acquisition** – The Parks and Recreation Department has been able to purchase a significant number of important park properties with money raised in the 1989, 1994 and 1999 Parks acquisition millages.
- **Donation** – The Parks and Recreation Department has been able to acquire a limited number of properties through private gifts.

## G. Land Use and Transportation Relationship

Land use and transportation systems are interrelated. Large commercial centers can attract a significant amount of auto trips, particularly during weekend periods. Large employment centers can generate a significant amount of auto trips during peak travel periods. Large residential neighborhoods can generate a significant number of auto trips during peak weekday travel periods and on weekends. The Institute of Transportation Engineers indicates that single-family homes generally produce more vehicular trips per day than multiple-family homes and townhouses due the higher number of children generally living in single-family homes.

An extensive system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, lanes and amenities can reduce the amount vehicular trips and the need for automobile parking spaces in commercial and office centers. Mixed-use development projects can reduce the amount of auto trips by encouraging pedestrian access between uses. Small neighborhood commercial centers can reduce the number of vehicular trips by encouraging pedestrian or bicycle access from the surrounding neighborhood.

- **“Walkable” and “Bikeable” Communities** - A walkable community provides safe, efficient and plentiful opportunities for non-motorized modes of travel. Providing an array of non-motorized opportunities and supportive land uses can encourage people to walk or ride their bicycles to school, work or for daily errands. Such opportunities also may provide a safer environment for travel and recreation, encourage mass transit ridership and generate a greater sense of community.



Lack of non-motorized path or bicycle lane on Nixon Road.

Development and redevelopment in the Northeast Area provide opportunities for improving non-motorized access. Providing connections for pedestrians and bicycles between neighborhoods, orienting a site so that people have convenient access to mass transit, providing pedestrian paths along major and minor streets, minimizing the size of parking lots and reducing large setbacks can help promote walkability within and between various types of land uses.

- **Mass Transit** - Mass transit is more likely to be successful in areas where residential densities and non-residential intensities are high enough to attract a significant number of riders. The Ann Arbor Transportation Authority has indicated that gross regional residential densities should be between 4-7 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) to support fixed route bus service. Gross regional residential densities include homes, schools, churches, parks and other non-residential uses common in residential areas.

Although the automobile will continue to be the primary mode of transportation for the foreseeable future, providing opportunities for alternative modes of travel will encourage people to commute in ways other than by car.

## **H. Redevelopment**

Many opportunities exist to redevelop sites in the Northeast Area, including commercial, industrial, office and residential properties that have already been built upon. Redevelopment might take the form of building additions or demolition and construction. Projects that propose to redevelop sites should be done in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of this plan that apply to developing vacant sites. Properties should be redeveloped in a manner that considers impacts to surrounding properties and transportation systems. Attempts should be made to provide appropriate building scale and material to ensure that the project interacts well with surrounding uses.



### III. Community Oriented Design

Much of the development in the Northeast Area, built since the 1950's, has emphasized an auto-oriented development pattern that does not encourage pedestrian interaction with the surrounding community. Many neighborhoods are not connected to adjoining neighborhoods with either streets or paths. Some development projects have eliminated natural features that could have been preserved and integrated into the site design. The planning process for the Northeast Area Plan revealed a strong community desire for future development projects to be designed with the larger community in mind. Development projects should consider natural systems preservation, enhancement and linkages, pedestrian access, traffic impacts, housing diversity, lighting, design that conveys a sense of permanence, and design techniques to improve the interaction between the project and the community at large.

The following sections include design guidelines to help ensure that future development projects are designed with the community in mind. The guidelines have been divided into four categories: a) Neighborhoods, b) Retail Centers, c) Employment Centers, and d) Mixed Uses.

#### A. Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods that include a diversity of housing, neighborhood parks, strong pedestrian connections, access to several modes of transportation and are interconnected with other neighborhoods can help foster a greater sense of community. Narrower roads and rights-of-way also help to reduce imperviousness, lower development costs, slow traffic and allow street trees to canopy above the street. Front porches, recessed garages, sidewalks on both sides of the street and reduced setbacks also help to provide a more pedestrian oriented neighborhood. Neighborhood organizations can help foster a stronger sense of community.

Future neighborhoods should be developed with the overall community in mind and address the goals and objectives of this plan. Development should be designed to protect and link natural systems, provide recreational opportunities, increase the variety of housing options, encourage pedestrian access, use infrastructure efficiently, encourage mass transit and provide linkages to other neighborhoods. Affordable and low cost housing should be encouraged to maintain the diversity of housing options.

Some specific community design techniques for neighborhoods can help to achieve many of the goals and objectives of this plan. The following design concepts can help minimize negative impacts to natural systems, improve pedestrian access, reduce imperviousness, lower housing costs and promote a greater sense of community in retail centers. These design elements should be incorporated where applicable, for new or redeveloping residential communities:

- **Compact or clustered development** – concentrating development away from sensitive natural features helps preserve natural systems, utilizes infrastructure more efficiently and can increase recreational opportunities. Techniques may include reducing spacing between buildings, reducing setbacks, providing parking under buildings and using multiple story buildings. Compact development patterns can encourage non-motorized access and neighborhood security.

- **Front porches** – usable front porches should be provided in new residential neighborhoods to enhance the sense of community and increase neighborhood security by increasing surveillance.
- **Garages** – to encourage pedestrian and bicycle safety and a greater sense of neighborhood, new townhouse and apartment garages should be accessed at the rear of the units; the front of the buildings should face the sidewalk and street. For single-family homes and duplexes, garage doors should be located behind or no closer to the street than the front of the house to encourage pedestrian and bicycle safety, encourage a pedestrian oriented neighborhood and reduce the image of a garage dominated streetscape. Garages should not be the dominant feature along a streetscape. Long expanses of garage doors along a street or access drive should not be allowed.



Porch that fronts the house

- **Interconnected streets** – a majority of streets in new residential areas should be interconnected; streets should be connected, where possible, to adjoining neighborhoods; attempts should be made to minimize negative impacts (i.e. traffic calming devices) in those areas where street connections take place; cul-de-sacs should be minimized.
- **Landscaping** – providing extensive landscaping in development projects can soften the visual impact of development, offer shade to encourage pedestrian modes of travel, screen adjacent uses from parking lot lighting, improve property values, provide habitat for wildlife and help reduce energy costs. Trees should be provided on the perimeter of new development projects, where possible, to minimize the visual impact on adjacent sites and along the public right-of-way. Street trees should be provided along both public and private streets. A diversity of non-invasive plant material should be provided whenever possible. Native plants should be used whenever practical. Lawn turf should be minimized due to its limited ability to absorb stormwater and the environmental and maintenance costs of spraying and mowing lawns. Native shrubs and grasses should be planted whenever practical. The proper management of landscaped areas should be provided.
- **Mixture of housing types** – providing a variety of housing types within a development project, such as single-family detached, duplexes, townhouses and multifamily homes (stacked flats, efficiencies and units with a variety of bedrooms), increases the variety of housing choices, encourages neighborhood diversity and expands housing opportunities for individuals of all income levels. Live/work units, in appropriate locations, can contribute to housing diversity. Larger development projects should include a diversity of housing types.

- **Multiple story buildings** – constructing multiple-story buildings minimizes imperviousness, compared to single-story buildings with the same floor area and helps to preserve open space and natural features. Barrier free units should be provided in all development projects to increase housing opportunities for disabled residents. Consideration should be made to minimize the visual impacts of multiple story buildings on adjoining properties. Landscaping, setbacks, building design and materials can minimize visual impacts of taller buildings.



Multiple story buildings can reduce imperviousness.

- **Natural Area Protection** – preserving, through dedication or permanent easement, high and mid-quality natural systems such as landmark trees, woodlands, wetlands, creeks and steep slopes will protect wildlife habitat, water quality and a sense of natural history.
- **Narrowed neighborhood streets** – providing a hierarchy of street widths including lanes, alleys, minor streets and collector streets that reflects the amount of daily vehicular trips would help reduce travel speeds, reduce unnecessary imperviousness, create a more pedestrian friendly environment and reduce development costs, which can help lower housing costs.
- **Narrowed right-of-way** – reducing the width of right-of-ways along neighborhood streets can ensure that land is utilized more efficiently, reduce development costs, reduce housing costs, reduce imperviousness by reducing driveway length, and provide a greater sense of community.
- **Neighborhood Organizations** – establishing neighborhood organizations can increase opportunities for stewardship of natural systems and encourage a greater sense of neighborhood. Neighborhood organizations should register with the City Planning Department.
- **Open space linkages** – interconnecting natural areas helps preserve wildlife corridors, improves recreational opportunities and enhances a sense of community.
- **Pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities** – providing pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities encourage alternatives to vehicular access by increasing travel choices. They include but are not limited to: a) providing safe, well lighted and convenient pedestrian and bicycle paths between development projects, along major and minor streets and to transit stops, b) providing secure bicycle storage facilities such as covered parking, lockers, c) providing conveniently located bus shelters that are

close to stores and street crossings, and d) designing sites with an emphasis on pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street in residential neighborhoods to encourage pedestrian access and provide a safe pedestrian environment.

- **Playgrounds** – providing public recreational opportunities, such as playgrounds or walking trails, increases a sense of community, improves property values and reduces vehicular trips to recreational areas.

- **Private Residential Open Space** – private decks, patios, porches and yards can provide people living in higher density residential communities the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities and increase community surveillance.



Private residential open space above a garage.

- **Reduced setbacks along the street** – reducing the distance between a building and the public right-of-way improves pedestrian access, increases design flexibility, reduces imperviousness by shortening driveways, can provide more usable open space, can help preserve natural features, and allows land to be used more efficiently.

- **Street facing entries** – configuring development projects to include doors and windows that front sidewalks and streets improves pedestrian access, increases security and enhances a sense of neighborhood.

- **Structured or below-structure parking** – constructing parking underneath buildings (ground level or basement parking) or providing parking decks helps to improve water quality by reducing imperviousness, reduces the amount of parking lot lighting, reduces snow removal costs, shelters vehicles drivers from the elements, can improve access and security, and preserve open space. Reducing large expanses of surface parking lots can encourage non-motorized access.

- **Townhouse and Apartment Parking and Garages** – garages and parking areas for townhouses and apartments should be at the rear of buildings and accessed by alleys or drives. The front entrances should face the main street and sidewalk.

## B. Retail Centers

Prior to World War II, retail centers in Ann Arbor were designed primarily for pedestrians. They commonly fronted a sidewalk and street and were easily accessible by foot or bicycle. Due to the increasing popularity of the automobile, most commercial centers constructed after 1950 were designed primarily for automobile access. They were located along busy

thoroughfares, were set back long distances from the street to accommodate a large parking lot, were segregated from the uses around them, and sidewalks were infrequent. Accessing stores became increasingly difficult for pedestrians, particularly persons with limited mobility.

New and redeveloping retail centers should be designed with pedestrian access as a primary goal. Designing commercial centers with safe, convenient pedestrian routes will encourage pedestrians to walk from surrounding neighborhoods and employment centers. It also will help encourage mass transit and reduce the demand for parking.



Retail centers can act as community gathering places if designed for pedestrians.

Regional commercial centers should be designed for a variety of community uses. In addition to commercial uses, public uses such as libraries and post office branches should be encouraged, to reduce vehicular trips and provide a greater sense of community. Residential and office uses above stores would contribute to the vitality of commercial centers, increase pedestrian activity, promote shared parking and use land more efficiently. Strong pedestrian connections to surrounding areas should be provided.

Some specific community design techniques for retail centers can help to achieve many of the goals and objectives of this plan. The following design concepts can help minimize negative impacts to natural systems, improve pedestrian access, reduce imperviousness, lower housing costs and promote a greater sense of community in retail centers. These design elements should be incorporated, where applicable, for new or redeveloping retail centers:

- **Building Materials and Amenities** – Masonry building materials such as brick and stone are encouraged to maintain a permanent, clean and attractive image for years to come. Building mounted awnings or overhangs should be provided to protect shoppers from the elements and encourage pedestrian activity. A focal point such as a clock tower or plaza is encouraged to contribute to the unique character of the center. Benches, landscaping and artwork should be provided in public areas to encourage social activity and to add vitality to the center.
- **Landscaping** – providing extensive landscaping in development projects can soften the visual impact of development, offer shade to encourage pedestrian modes of travel, screen adjacent uses from parking lot lighting, improve property values, provide habitat for wildlife and help reduce energy costs. Trees also should be provided on the perimeter of new development projects, where not already required by the Landscaping and Screening Ordinance (Chapter 62), to minimize the visual impact on adjacent sites and along the public right-of-way. Street trees should be provided along

both public and private streets. A diversity of native landscaping material should be provided whenever possible. Lawn turf should be minimized due to its limited ability to absorb stormwater and the environmental and maintenance costs of spraying and mowing lawns. Native shrubs and grasses should be planted instead.

- **Mixed land uses** – integrating various land uses on the same site or in the same building encourages pedestrian activity, uses land and infrastructure more efficiently, increases vitality, promotes shared parking opportunities and can increase the variety of housing choices. Such mixed uses include: a variety of integrated residential uses; office/retail uses; residential/ retail uses; and residential/office uses. Restaurants should be allowed to provide outdoor seating, where feasible.
- **Mixed Use Neighborhood Retail Centers** – mixed-use neighborhood retail centers provide services primarily to the surrounding neighborhood. They should be designed as a complementary use to the neighborhood. Strip retail centers with large amounts of parking between the sidewalk and the storefronts are discouraged. The following are design principles that should be incorporated specifically into neighborhood commercial centers:
  1. The size of off-street parking lots should be minimized. Unbroken expanses of parking are discouraged. On-street parking is encouraged to reduce the need for spaces in parking lots. Parking should be provided at the rear or sides of storefronts to encourage pedestrian access. A landscaped buffer should be provided between the parking lots and adjacent residential uses. The retail center should be designed in a manner where the parking lot is not the dominant feature from the road.
  2. Office or residential uses should be provided above the store fronts to increase the variety of housing opportunities, encourage pedestrian access to the retail use, improve the viability of the retail businesses and encourage a village center. Single story retail buildings are not appropriate for neighborhood commercial centers.
  3. Setbacks should be minimized. Minimizing front and side setback allows for greater design flexibility, encourages the efficient use of land and promotes pedestrian access. Buildings should be fronted near the sidewalk.
  4. The design should emphasize a village center instead of a strip commercial mall. Small tenant spaces should be included. Corporate design themes should be minimized. Individual stores, each with individual corporate design themes, is discouraged. Large signs and freestanding signs of any kind are discouraged.
  5. Auto related uses such as gas stations, auto repair shops and car washes should be prohibited and businesses with drive-throughs should be discouraged to encourage pedestrian access.
  6. The center should be designed to interact well with the surrounding neighborhood. Large walls around the periphery of the center are discouraged. Convenient pedestrian connections should be provided to the surrounding neighborhood.

7. Lighting should be provided that is consistent with the pedestrian scale of the neighborhood commercial centers. Cobra head lighting should not be provided. Lighting should be confined as much as possible to the immediate area.
  8. Refuse should be stored in locations that minimize the visual impact to adjoining residential uses.
- **Multiple story buildings** – constructing multiple-story buildings minimizes imperviousness compared to single-story buildings with the same floor area and helps to preserve open space and natural features. Barrier free access should be provided.
  - **Parking** – minimizing the amount of unnecessary parking spaces helps improve water quality by minimizing unnecessary imperviousness, utilizes land more efficiently, reduces the amount of heat generated from parking lots, and fosters a more pedestrian friendly environment. The use of shared and deferred parking should be provided where possible. Constructing parking underneath buildings (ground level or basement parking) or providing parking decks helps to improve water quality by reducing imperviousness, reduces the amount of parking lot lighting, reduces snow removal costs, can improve access and security and preserve open space. Surface parking should be placed at the rear of buildings and should not be a dominant element along public streets. Parking lot lighting should be turned down at night and directed so it does not flow off-site. The parking lot should not be the dominant feature from the road.
  - **Pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities** – providing pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities encourages alternatives to vehicular access by increasing travel choices. They include but are not limited to: a) providing safe, well lighted and convenient pedestrian and bicycle paths between development projects, along major and minor streets and to transit stops, b) providing secure bicycle storage facilities such as covered parking, lockers, c) providing conveniently located bus shelters that are close to stores and street crossings, and d) designing sites with an emphasis on pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
  - **Setbacks along the street** – reducing the distance between a building and the public right-of-way improves pedestrian access, increases design flexibility, reduces imperviousness by shortening driveways and allows land to be used more efficiently.
  - **Street facing entries** – configuring development projects to include doors and windows that front sidewalks and streets improves pedestrian access, increase security and enhances a sense of community.

## C. Employment Centers

Office, research and light industrial buildings generally are located long distances from roads. Parking lots are the dominant feature for many developed sites, and land uses are typically segregated from one another. Employment centers should be developed and redeveloped in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts, encourages non-automobile modes of travel,

complements the appearance of the surrounding area and interacts well with the surrounding neighborhood.

Some specific community design techniques for employment centers can help to achieve many of the goals and objectives of this plan. The following design concepts can help minimize negative impacts to natural systems, improve pedestrian access, reduce imperviousness, lower housing costs and promote a greater sense of community in employment centers. These design elements should be incorporated, where applicable, for new or re-developing office or research center:

- **Building Materials** – Masonry building materials such as brick and stone, are encouraged to maintain a permanent, clean and attractive image for years to come.
- **Landscaping** – providing extensive landscaping in development projects can soften the visual impact of development, offer shade to encourage pedestrian modes of travel, screen adjacent uses from parking lot lighting, improve property values, provide habitat for wildlife and help reduce energy costs. Trees also should be provided on the perimeter of new development projects, where not already required by the Landscaping and Screening Ordinance (Chapter 62), to minimize the visual impact on adjacent sites and along the public right-of-way. Street trees should be provided along both public and private streets. A diversity of native landscaping material should be provided whenever possible. Lawn turf should be minimized due to its limited ability to absorb stormwater and the environmental and maintenance costs of spraying and mowing lawns. Native shrubs and grasses should be planted instead.
- **Mixed land uses** – integrating various land uses on the same site or in the same building encourages pedestrian activity, uses land and infrastructure more efficiently, increases vitality, promotes shared parking opportunities and can increase the variety of housing choices. Such mixed uses include: a variety of integrated residential uses; office/retail uses; residential/ retail uses; and residential/office uses.
- **Multiple story buildings** – constructing multiple-story buildings minimizes imperviousness compared to single-story buildings with the same floor area and helps to preserve open space and natural features. Barrier free access should be provided.
- **Open space linkages** – interconnecting natural areas helps preserve wildlife corridors, improves recreational opportunities and enhances a sense of community.
- **Parking** – minimizing the amount of unnecessary parking spaces helps improve water quality by minimizing unnecessary imperviousness, utilizes land more efficiently, reduces the amount of heat generated from parking lots, and fosters a more pedestrian friendly environment. The use of shared and deferred parking



Multiple story office buildings can reduce imperviousness

should be provided where possible. Constructing parking underneath buildings (ground level or basement parking) or providing parking decks helps to improve water quality by reducing imperviousness, reduces the amount of parking lot lighting, reduces snow removal costs, can improve access and security and preserve open space. Surface parking should be placed at the rear of buildings and should not be a dominant element along public streets. Parking lot lighting should be turned down at night and directed so it does not flow off-site.

- **Pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities** – providing pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities encourages alternatives to vehicular access by increasing travel choices. They include but are not limited to: a) providing safe, well lighted and convenient pedestrian and bicycle paths between development projects, along major and minor streets and to transit stops, b) providing secure bicycle storage facilities such as covered parking and lockers close to building entrances, c) providing conveniently located bus shelters that are close to stores and street crossings, and d) designing sites with an emphasis on pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
- **Setbacks along the street** – reducing the distance between a building and the public right-of-way improves pedestrian access, increases design flexibility, reduces imperviousness by shortening driveways and allows land to be used more efficiently.
- **Street facing entries** – configuring development projects to include doors and windows that front sidewalks and streets improves pedestrian access, increase security and enhances a sense of community.
- **Structured or below-structure parking** – providing parking spaces underneath office buildings or in parking structures can reduce imperviousness and shelter vehicles and drivers from the elements.

## D. Mixed-Use Centers

Mixing appropriate land uses represents a change from past planning methods that sought to separate different uses from each other. Mixing office, retail and residential uses on the same site can encourage pedestrian activity, reduce vehicular trips, reduce imperviousness by sharing parking spaces, encourage a wider variety of housing options, provide services closer to places of work and neighborhoods and use land and infrastructure more efficiently. The community design techniques outlined in this chapter for neighborhoods, retail centers and employment centers can help mixed-use projects achieve the goals and objectives of the Northeast Area Plan. Design standards and performance requirements that are required as part of a Planned Unit Development, can increase the likelihood that mixed-use development projects result in pedestrian-oriented centers that are an asset to the surrounding neighborhood.

## IV. Land Use Goals, Objectives and Action Statements

<b>Goal A: To ensure that development projects are designed and constructed in a way that preserves or enhances the integrity of natural systems.</b>
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The Land Use Goals, Objectives and Action Statements provide a framework to encourage viable, diverse and well-designed land use patterns in the Northeast Area.

**Objective 1: *Encourage developers to use innovative design techniques to help protect or enhance natural systems.***

Action Statements:

- a) Develop regulatory incentives that encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces proposed with new development (structured or below-level parking, multiple-level buildings, “green” rooftops, etc.).
- b) Develop regulatory incentives that encourage the enhancement of natural areas on sites proposed for development (i.e., removal of invasive species and the introduction of native species, restoring a wetland, improving floodplain function, etc.).
- c) Support design techniques, such as clustered developments and storm water best management practices, which would minimize impacts to natural systems on and off a site.
- d) Ensure that any development proposed along Huron Parkway preserves the natural and scenic character of the parkway.
- e) Encourage the proper long-term stewardship of natural areas.
- f) Develop methods to assure the long-term maintenance of natural systems on development projects during the site plan process.
- g) Ensure that new development is consistent with the Natural Features Master Plan.

**Objective 2: *Review and modify City codes to help reduce the overall amount of impervious surfaces, thus reducing the amount of storm water runoff, surface flooding and erosion.***

Action Statements:

- a) Evaluate the feasibility of reducing parking requirements or establishing maximum parking limits.
- b) Evaluate the feasibility of allowing certain driveway areas to serve as required parking spaces (i.e. the area in front of a garage).
- c) Revise code to reduce minimum and establish maximum setback requirements in appropriate zoning districts to help shorten driveways and sidewalks.
- d) Evaluate the feasibility of reducing pavement width requirements for residential streets.
- e) Revise ordinances to allow increases in maximum building height for development projects that provide structured parking or parking underneath the building (either at grade or below grade).

**Objective 3: *Establish strong open space linkages with new development.***

Action Statements:

- a) Support the Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan with regard to establishing open space linkages.
- b) Request that linkages be made to existing parks, where possible, when new parkland is dedicated to the City.

- c) Develop regulatory incentives for residential developments that dedicate more parkland than is requested by the City Department of Parks and Recreation.

**Goal B: To promote land use designs that reduce reliance on the automobile.**

**Objective 1: Locate higher residential densities near mass transit routes and in proximity to commercial, employment and activity centers.**

Action Statements:

- a) Encourage residential densities that can sustain bus transit on sites that front mass transit routes.
- b) Encourage multiple-family residential uses to locate above commercial uses.
- c) Ensure that safe and accessible interior sidewalks and bike paths are provided within new development to transit stops and adjacent properties.

**Objective 2: Improve the safety, accessibility and desirability of walking, biking or using mass transit.**

Action Statements:

- a) Ensure that residential, commercial, employment and activity centers to provide pedestrian and bicycle amenities, such as interior and public sidewalks, bus stops (where feasible), awnings and linkages to adjacent sites.
- b) Ensure that bus stops and pedestrian and bicycle paths be well lit for nighttime use.
- c) Improve bus stops with sidewalk access, benches and shelters.
- d) Work with the City's Public Services and Police Departments to assess the locations of existing and new crosswalks and to ensure the safety of crosswalk users by providing enforcement or using other devices to help stop traffic (lights, signs, etc.).
- e) Strongly encourage the City's Public Services Department to include pedestrian and bicycle improvements when streets or intersections are improved or upgraded.
- f) Incorporate the completion of sidewalk gaps in the City's Capital Improvements Plan to encourage pedestrian access to transit stops.
- g) Continue the coordination with the City Police Department and its review of site plans and to implement their suggestions on "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design".
- h) Consider the feasibility of including non-motorized facilities when designing new streets and resurfacing existing streets.
- i) Encourage the regular maintenance of non-motorized facilities.

**Objective 3: Improve transportation integration between neighborhoods.**

Action Statements:

- a) Ensure barrier-free and non-motorized linkages, where possible, between neighborhoods.
- b) Design connections of new neighborhood streets to existing residential stub streets in such a way as to discourage cut-through traffic and minimize traffic speed.
- c) Encourage public streets in new residential development projects that connect to parks and to streets of adjoining properties.
- d) Ensure that new residential development projects provide stub streets to adjacent vacant land to better integrate future neighborhoods and to improve emergency access.

**Goal C: To provide a full range of housing choices (size, price, design, accessibility, etc.) that meets the existing and anticipated needs of all Northeast Area residents.**

**Objective 1: Encourage affordable housing units to be constructed as part of new development projects.**

Action Statements:

- a) Explore revising density standards in single-family neighborhoods, such as reducing lot sizes and allowing duplexes and accessory dwelling units in new single-family development projects.
- b) Revise the zoning ordinance to allow small, detached single-family homes to be constructed on lots smaller than those allowed in the R1D zone.
- c) Develop regulatory incentives, such as density bonuses, for developments that provide affordable housing units.

**Objective 2: Encourage a variety of housing types within new residential and mixed-use development projects.**

Action Statements:

- a) Develop regulatory incentives to encourage new residential developments to provide a variety of housing types.
- b) Develop regulatory incentives to encourage residential uses to locate above or as a component of commercial and office uses in the Lower Town Area, along Plymouth Road and Washtenaw Avenue, and in other appropriate areas.
- c) Work with City departments and public and private agencies to provide information to residents on the value of diversity in housing.

**Goal D: To support the continued viability, health and safety of Northeast Area residential neighborhoods.**

**Objective 1: Encourage new development and redevelopment within established residential areas to complement the design elements of the neighborhood, including size and height.**

Action Statements:

- a) Support registered neighborhood associations that develop their own design guidelines to share with prospective lot purchasers, Realtors and residential builders.
- b) Develop standards for land divisions to ensure that they are compatible with the neighborhood while complying with State law.

**Objective 2: *Protect the integrity of historic neighborhoods.***

Action Statements:

- a) Encourage qualified structures (homes, buildings, etc.) and neighborhoods to apply for historic designation.
- b) Encourage the rehabilitation, reuse or relocation of historically significant buildings.

**Objective 3: *Locate common neighborhood services (schools, parks, places of worship, community and commercial centers, etc.) in areas that provide convenient and safe accessibility for residents.***

Action Statements:

- a) Ensure that safe opportunities for non-motorized modes of transportation are established between residential developments and common neighborhood services.

**Objective 4: *Provide extensive landscape buffering between residential neighborhoods and non-residential uses, including the freeways and railroads.***

Action Statements:

- a) Seek to improve code requirements for landscape buffering between conflicting land uses.
- b) Revise code to require residential development to provide extensive landscape buffering between residential units and freeways or railroads.
- c) Consider revising code to require residential development projects to provide landscaping between residential units and adjacent non-residentially zoned land.
- d) Encourage developers to provide landscaping on the periphery of development projects.

**Objective 5: *Encourage the establishment of neighborhood associations that promote stewardship of neighborhood natural systems.***

Action Statements:

- a) Provide new and established neighborhood associations with information on how to become better stewards of natural systems.

**Objective 6: *Encourage land use patterns that protect health and safety throughout the Northeast Area.***

Action Statements:

- a) Ensure adequate access for public safety vehicles.
- b) Ensure the adequate location of public safety facilities.
- c) Encourage land use design that fosters crime prevention.

**Goal E: To encourage commercial and employment centers that promote pedestrian activity, de-emphasize the use of the automobile, and provide a sense of balance with surrounding land uses.**

**Objective 1: Support mixed-use, “village” centers in existing commercial areas that are designed to provide new residential opportunities, increase pedestrian activity and reduce the total number of vehicular trips.**

Action Statements:

- a) Develop regulatory incentives for developments to incorporate residential, office or public uses into redeveloping commercial centers.
- b) Require developments to provide pedestrian, bicycle and open space linkages between village centers and adjacent residential, commercial and office uses.

**Objective 2: Encourage developers to design commercial and office centers where the parking lot is not the dominant feature from the road.**

Action Statements:

- a) Strongly encourage buildings to front on the street.
- b) Revise code to reduce non-residential or mixed use parking requirements for sites that utilize shared or satellite parking to reduce the total number of parking spaces and to minimize impervious surfaces.
- c) Revise code to reduce setback requirements for commercial centers to allow buildings to be located closer to the sidewalk to encourage pedestrian access and design flexibility.
- d) Revise code to increase landscaping requirements for parking areas, including increasing the size of parking islands and buffers, based on the amount of parking area proposed for the site.
- e) Revise code to require developments to provide pedestrian linkages through landscaped parking areas, where appropriate.
- f) Develop design standards that limit the amount of the right-of-way frontage devoted to parking.

**Objective 3: Encourage neighborhood commercial uses that are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.**

Action Statements:

- a) Support performance and design standards for neighborhood commercial uses proposed as part of a new residential development to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.
- b) Encourage small retail establishments as part of new and existing neighborhoods.

**Objective 4: Redevelop the Lower Town commercial area (Broadway and Maiden Lane) as a vibrant, mixed-use district.**

Action Statements:

- a) Encourage residential uses as a part of redevelopment
- b) Work with property owners, developers and the University of Michigan to relocate dwelling units that otherwise may be demolished.

**Objective 5: Major employers should provide on-site amenities to reduce the number of vehicular trips.**

Action Statement:

- a) Encourage major employers who request site plan approval to provide on-site amenities such as child care centers, a cafeteria, and vending machines or other amenities that help to reduce vehicular trips.

**Objective 6: Major employers should develop comprehensive traffic management plans to reduce peak period traffic congestion.**

Action Statement:

- a) Ensure that large employers provide comprehensive traffic management plans as part of the development agreement to reduce peak period traffic congestion.
- b) Encourage all employers to promote car pooling, the use of public transit and non-motorized modes of travel.

**Goal F: To encourage cooperation between the City and the University of Michigan and between the City and Townships that surround Ann Arbor (Ann Arbor, Pittsfield and Scio) on development issues that affect each other.**

**Objective 1: Establish regular meetings and correspondence between the City and University of Michigan regarding planning and development issues.**

Action Statements:

- a) Request that the University notify the City of proposed private property acquisitions.
- b) Continue to request that the University include the City in future North Campus master planning efforts.
- c) Zone all University of Michigan-owned land to "Public Land" (PL).
- d) Invite University representatives to participate in future studies regarding the Lower Town area.

**Objective 2: Establish regular meetings and correspondence between the City and Townships regarding planning and development issues.**

Action Statements:

- a) Continue periodic meetings between the City Planning Commission and the planning commission of each of the surrounding townships.
- b) Encourage meetings between City Council and each of the surrounding township boards.
- c) Encourage multi-jurisdictional coordination on creekshed management issues.

## **V. Future Land Use Map**

The future land use map provides land use recommendations for each parcel in the Northeast Area, except for those sites identified as Study Sites. Chapter 10 provides site-specific recommendations for the 27 Study Sites. The specific study areas identified in Chapter 10 likely will experience development pressures in the future. The future land use map will help guide decision-making relating to appropriate land use and zoning designations. The Future Land Use Map and the Community Oriented Design section of this chapter are intended to help achieve the land use goals and objectives.