

*INDEPENDENCE  
TOWNSHIP*



VISION 2020 UPDATE  
MASTER PLAN



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## *Preface*

### **Vision 2020: Creating a Clear Vision for the Future**

With the recent turning of the century, the need to evaluate the direction of the community has never been greater. Growth and development pressures on the Township have not subsided and there is every indication they will remain strong. Fundamental questions have been posed regarding how the Township will respond to those pressures. The answers can only be found through a broad, systematic planning process.

It is the responsibility of the Township Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan on behalf of the Township. Independence Township derives its authority to prepare a Master Plan from the Township Planning Act, PA 168 of 1959. The Act requires that at least every five years, the Planning Commission should review the Plan and determine whether amendments may be necessary.

Planning is a process that involves the conscious selection of policy choices relating to land use, development, delivery of services, enhancement of community character, and maintenance of a quality of life which meet the expectations of Township residents. The purpose of Vision 2020 process has been to identify the goals, policies, programs, and strategies which the Township and its residents wish to pursue. Vision 2020 involved a thorough investigation of past trends, current conditions, and alternative futures for the Township. The overall process has been structured to allow for broad participation, expression of new ideas, and creation of new concepts that will carry Independence Township through the beginning of the 21st century.

The unique aspect of the proposed approach is its comprehensive outlook. Past planning efforts in the Township have been somewhat piecemeal, concentrating on one specific aspect of the community's physical structure. The Vision 2020 approach has interrelated all aspects of physical development (i.e. roads, land use, recreation, utilities, etc.) in an attempt to create efficiencies, anticipate unforeseen problems, and search for multi objective opportunities.

Adopted in 1999, Vision 2020 consisted of three major study elements: Background Studies, Strategic Plan, and Master Plan. Published under separate cover, each study element provided a building block for the next study element. Therefore, each of the documents is consistent with one another.



The current update of Vision 2020 consolidates the Master Plan and Strategic Plan into one document. Therefore, the update of Vision 2020 consists of two documents:

- **Background Studies** – The Background Studies appendix consists of basic data and information that establish a baseline of conditions in the Township. Background Studies consist of three components: community characteristics and significant trends and identification of community issues.
- **Master Plan** – The Master Plan represents the long range view of the Township, focusing on more of the traditional elements considered in planning such as future land use, thoroughfares, and community facilities. The Master Plan also takes into consideration the goals and strategies found in the Strategic Plan adopted in 1999. Specific objectives are also identified to address those goals and issues identified through the Master Plan process. As with the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan, adopted in 1999, Target Plans have been developed and updated for various geographic areas of the Township to provide solutions to specific problems and/or issues.

The end result of updates to Vision 2020 is the adoption of plans which will serve as the embodiment of official Township policies regarding the future of the community. The Vision 2020 Update combines the Strategic Plan and Master Plan into one comprehensive document to serve the following functions:

- Provide a general statement of the Township's goals and policies and provide a comprehensive view of the community's desires for the future.
- Define the future character of the community.
- Serve as an aid to both short term and long range decision- making. The goals and policies outlined in the Plans will guide the Planning Commission and



Township Board in their deliberations on matters relating to land use and the physical development of the community.

- Assist in establishing priorities for public improvements so that such improvements will provide the greatest benefit to the Township and its residents.
- Serve as an educational tool and provide citizens, property owners, developers, and adjacent communities with a clear indication of the Township's direction for the future.
- Provide direction to private property owners regarding the use of their property.



## *Introduction*

The Township has maintained a Master Plan which has been updated several times over the past twenty five years. Although plans existed in some form as far back as the 1940's, the first formal document appeared in 1966, was updated in 1975, 1984, 1987, and 1990 with a series of amendments and/or revisions in 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994.

The Master Plan was extensively revised in 1984. As part of the process to rewrite the plan, the Township was divided into various subareas which were thoroughly analyzed. Natural resources, road adequacy, existing land use patterns, and community goals figured prominently in the consideration of various concepts for future land use in the Township.

Further revision of the Master Plan took place in 1987 after additional analysis was performed by a joint Growth Committee, formed of members from the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Corporation. Specifically, the Growth Committee sought to evaluate areas of the Township where new development acceptable with community standards could be attracted.

Another revision was made in 1990, as a result of recent growth pressures both within the Township and nearby communities. The primary emphasis in the 1990 revision was to evaluate residential densities in areas where sewer service was not available or not expected to be extended in the near future. Thirty five different areas were amended. The vast majority of the changes resulted in a less intense land use designation.

The 1991 revision was a study area consisting of Section 25 and Section 36, north of I-75. The revision was initiated in order to evaluate the effort of recent developments in adjacent areas on the study area. The land use designation in the study area changed from Rural Residential to Suburban Residential.

In 1992, the Safety Path Plan was incorporated into the Master Plan. In 1993, amendments focused upon Sections 19 and 30 making Dixie Highway more appropriate for multiple family residential use, and in Section 22 at the I-75 and Sashabaw exit where intensity of commercial use was decreased.

In 1994, Sections 10 and 15 were re-evaluated and an area that was Rural Residential was changed to Recreation and Suburban Farm Residential.

As a result of the Vision 2020 process, the Master Plan was revised extensively and adopted in 1999. The rural, northwestern area of the Township was changed to entirely Rural Residential outside of the sewer district in order to preserve that area's rural character. Several land use categories were amended or added. The Planned Mixed Use category was added and referenced to the Target Plans for the specific areas. Suburban Farm Residential was changed to Estate Residential in order to more accurately reflect the use. A Mobile Home Park category was also added to reflect existing development in the Township, as well as allow for affordable housing opportunities. Traditional Lake Front Residential was added to reflect the historical pattern of development that took place around the lakes. A Single Family Attached/Detached Residential category was added to achieve the goal of providing more housing opportunities. And the category of Industrial Office Park was added as an industrial designation which is in keeping with Township goals. Boundaries for several areas were changed to more accurately reflect existing land use and address inconsistencies.

## **Regional Setting**

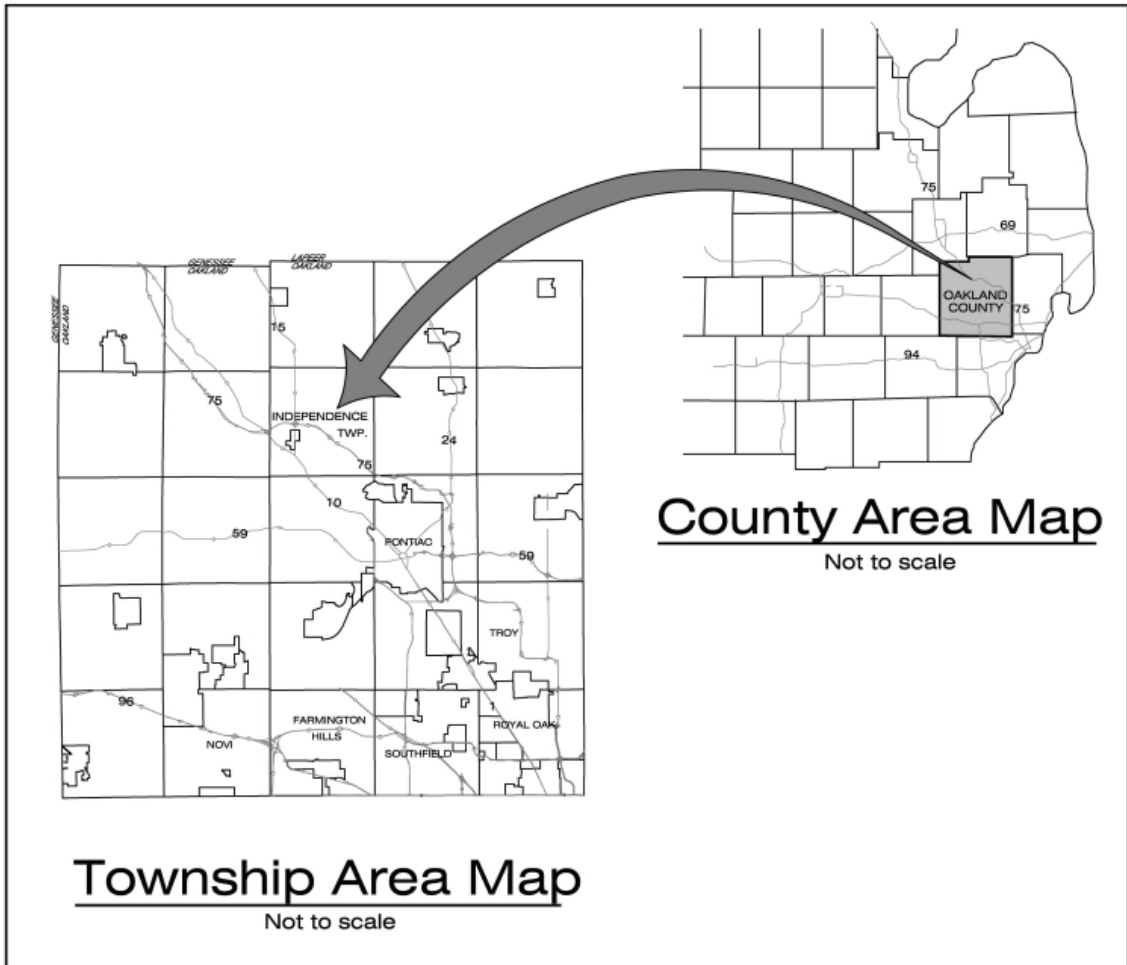
Independence Township is located in north central Oakland County, Michigan. The Township is approximately thirty-six (36) square miles in area. It is bordered by Springfield Township to the west, Brandon Township to the north, Orion Township to the east, and Waterford Township to the south.

The City of Detroit is located approximately 40 miles to the southeast of Independence Township. Other nearby urban centers include Pontiac (10 miles) and Flint (25 miles). The City of the Village of Clarkston is located within the Township area.

## **Plan Organization**

Following the Preface and Introduction, the Independence Township Master Plan is comprised of the following sections: Background Studies Summary, Existing Land Use Patterns, Goals and Objectives, Master Land Use Plan, Target Plans, Transportation Plan, Greenways Plan, Implementation. Also included in the plan is the full text of the Background Studies and a Glossary of Terms.

*Map 1: Regional Setting*





## *Background Studies Summary*

The Background Studies portion of the Master Plan inventories past trends, current conditions, and future projections, thereby illustrating the point from which planning must begin. The following summarizes significant findings. The complete text of the Background Studies is included in Appendix 2.

### **Historic and Rural Resources**

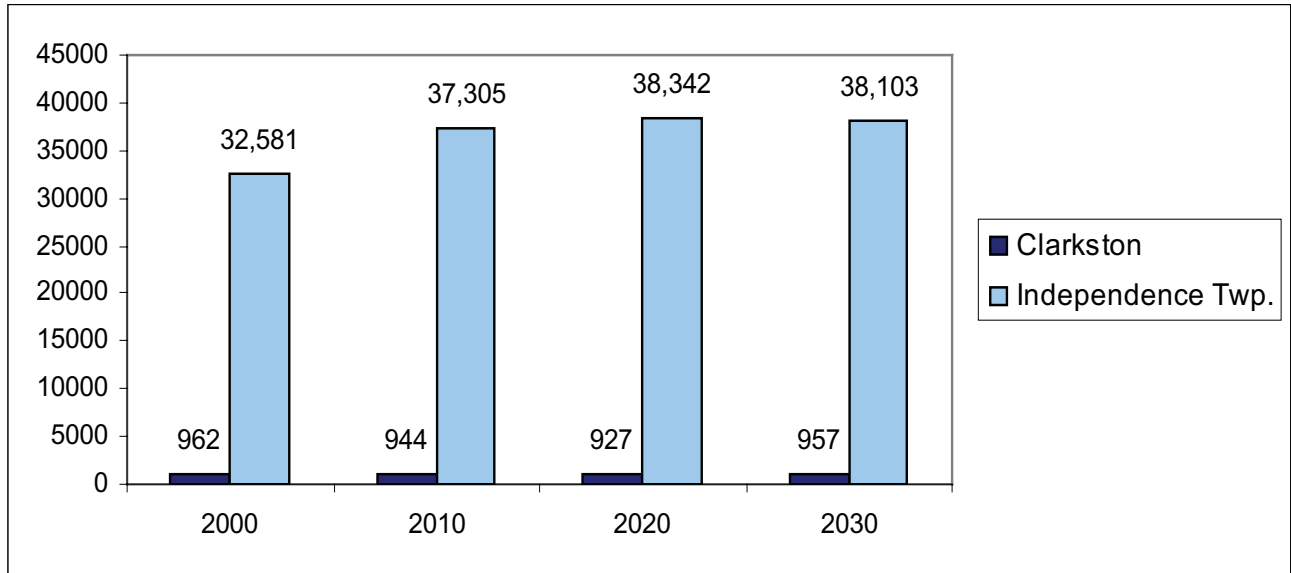
Independence Township has many areas and elements which can be identified as rural areas. These areas are located north of I-75, primarily in the northwest and northeast quadrants of the Township. Both natural resources, such as large expanses of open space and woodlands, and cultural features, such as buildings, identify this rural landscape. By recognizing and preserving remaining rural features, the historic development process and relationships between the various components become evident, and the rural landscape can then be seen as a whole.

### **Population**

Independence Township is situated in an area of the state which has historically exhibited steady population growth. In 1930, Township population numbered 1,803 persons, which included 639 in the Village of Clarkston. Over the past 75 years, attractive natural features, a strategic location, and convenient accessibility have attracted a stream of new residents. By August 2006, the Township's population is estimated to have grown to 34,745, an increase of more than 45% over the 1990 population of 23,717 and 6% over the 2000 population of 32,581.

In past decades, growth in population and growth in the economy have been highly interrelated; the first decade of the 21st century is no exception. As Independence Township witnesses continuous population growth, Oakland County's economy is performing at higher levels than the State of Michigan as a whole. Based on projections prepared by the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), the projected 2010 Township population will be 37,305, an increase of 14.5% since 2000. SEMCOG predicts that by the year 2020, Independence Township can expect to have a population of 38,103 people. The 2020 projected population is an increase of 5,522 people, or 16.9%, from the 2000 population of 32,581. (See Figure 1 below.)



*Figure 1: Township Growth (2000-2030)*

The Township population is relatively young, reflecting its attraction to families with younger children. More than 65% of the Township population is under the age of 45. The age distribution, after shifting substantially between 1970 and 1980, appears to have stabilized since the 1980 Census. The 2000 Census shows the age groups of '45-64' and 'over 65' as the fastest growing segments of the population, which explains the rising median age for the Township. The median age for the Township was 34.2 years in 1990 and increased to 36.4 years in 2000. This value is essentially the same as the county average (36.7) and slightly higher than the national average (35.3).

A clear trend of increased affluence is noted when comparing the various data collected over the last twenty years. The per capita income of Independence Township residents was \$15,653 in 1985, \$21,271 in 1990, and \$33,067 in 2000. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that median household income for the Township was \$29,750 in 1980, grew by more than 80% to \$53,784 by 1990, and grew another 39.4% to \$74,993 by 2000.

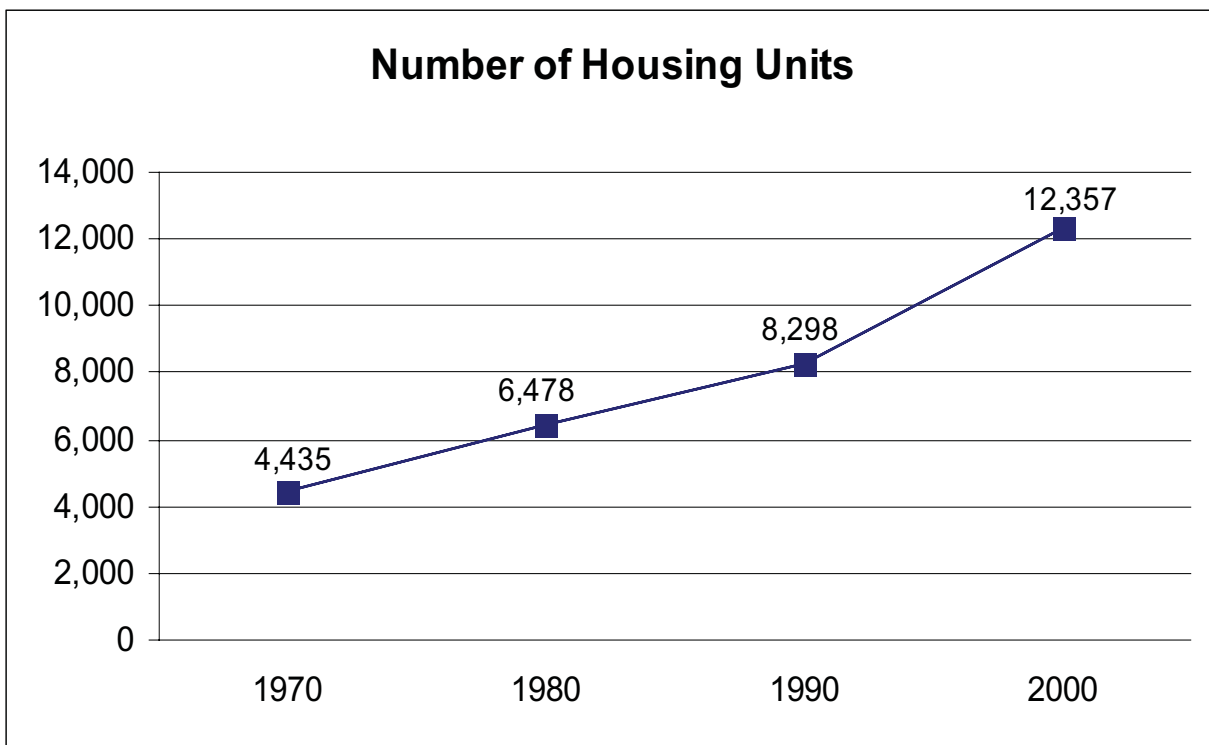
## Housing

Housing trends, depicted in the figure below, indicate that growth in the local housing stock continues to exceed population growth. Population increased by 16% from 1980 to 1990 and 37% from 1990 to 2000, while the number of housing units increased 23% and 49% respectively. (See Figure 2 below.) This difference is attributable to a decline in the number of persons per household.

Although the predominant housing type in Independence Township is the traditional single-family unit, there are also a significant variety of other housing types available. Although 80% of Township dwelling units are single family homes, multiple family dwelling units comprised about 16% of the housing stock, and 4.5% are mobile homes. The percentage of multiple family units has been increasing slightly since 1990 and the percentage of mobile home units has more than doubled in the past 15 years. Age of the Township's housing stock is relatively new.

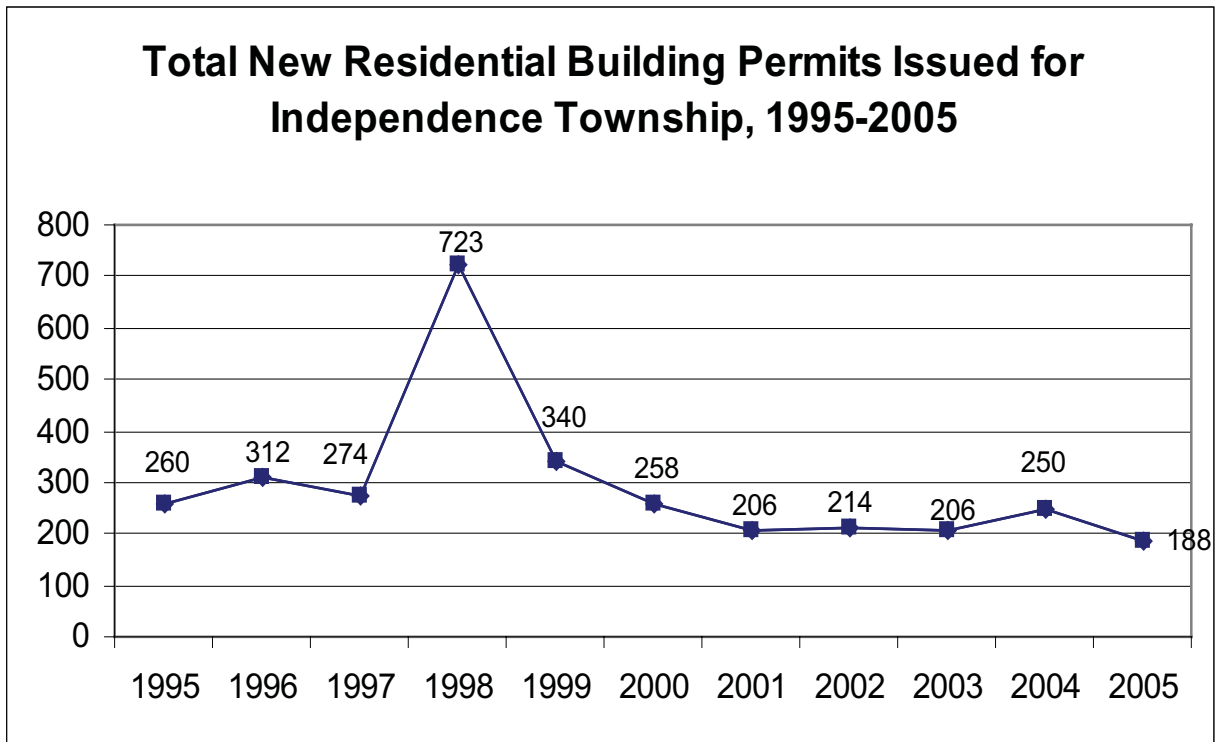
Residential building permits for single family homes has generally decreased in Independence Township since a peak in 1998. In comparison to other communities in Oakland County, the Township ranked only once (in 1994 it was sixth) among the top ten communities in the County in terms of the number of building permits issued. Figure 3 depicts permit activity since 1995.

*Figure 2: Number of Housing Units*



Source: SEMCOG

Figure 3: Total New Residential Building Permits Issued for Independence Township (1995-2005)



Source: SEMCOG Building Permit Database

The average housing cost in 1999 was \$227,700 in Independence Township and \$220,622 in The City of the Village of Clarkston. By 2001, units in Independence had increased in cost by 8.7% to \$247,555, while costs in the City rose 11.7% to \$246,385. In 2003, the most current information available, the average housing cost rose 10.2% to \$272,719 in the Township and 15.4% to 284,429 in the City. While housing costs have been on the rise in both Independence and the City, they have been increasing at a faster rate in the City lately. It is interesting to note the average housing price in the City both met and surpassed that of the Township within the past six years. Average housing costs tend to be slightly lower in the surrounding townships.

## Community Facilities and Services

The Independence Township Hall and Administrative Offices are located within the City of the Village of Clarkston, north of the business district on M-15. Township governmental functions are housed in three buildings located on two acres at this site. The Township Hall contains the offices of the Clerk, Treasurer, Building and Planning, Assessing, Parks and Recreation, and support staff and meeting rooms; the Annex Building contains the office of the Supervisor. The third building is a small facility housing technical support and additional Parks and Recreation staff. The Department

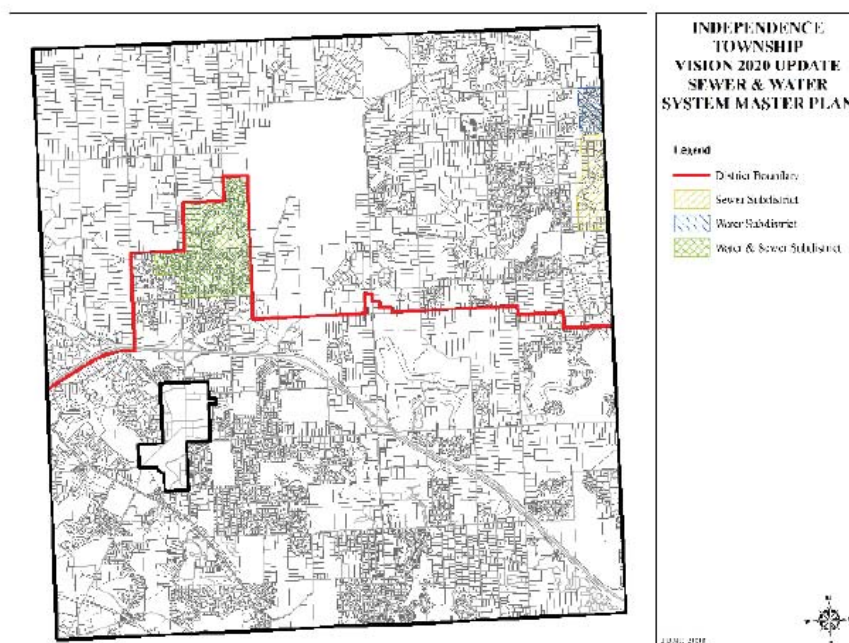
of Public Works (DPW) has a separate facility on Flemings Lake Road that contains administrative offices, storage, and maintenance garages. A new Township Senior Center is located at Clintonwood Park.

The Township Library is located on Clarkston Road at Perry Lake Road in a structure built specifically to be used for library purposes. The Fire Department has three stations within the Township: Fire Station No. 1 on Citation Drive; Fire Station No. 2 at the intersection of Clarkston and Sashabaw Roads; and Fire Station No. 3 at the intersection of Pine Knob and Maybee Roads.

Independence Township students are enrolled in one of three school districts: Waterford Schools, Lake Orion Schools, or Clarkston Schools. Only Clarkston Schools has facilities located in Independence Township.

Independence Township has a fully staffed Parks and Recreation Department committed to providing recreation services to the community. Detailed park and recreation plans and policies are contained in the 2003 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Township operates five recreational facilities, including: Bay Court Park, Clintonwood Park, Senior Center, Deer Lake Park and Sashabaw Plains Park. The City of the Village of Clarkston and Oakland County operate Depot Park and Independence Oaks located in Independence Township.

Independence Township provides public sewer and water service to approximately 50% of the Township and to portions of the City of Clarkston Village. The map depicting the Township's water and sewer service districts is provided below.



## Natural Features

The natural features of Independence Township have played a major role in attracting and influencing growth and development. Like much of Michigan's southern Lower Peninsula, the Township landscape was formed as a result of glacial processes. The landforms are characterized by very hilly to undulating end and ground moraines, which include kettles, outwash plains, and drainage channels. In turn, topography and soils are the result of glacial activity and plant communities develop in response to soil conditions.

The local topography exhibits a high degree of variation and relief. Steep slopes are found throughout the area, but are not common. Most steep slopes are found in the north central region of the Township.

Soil types within the Township are identified in the Oakland County Soil Survey. The most important limiting factor influencing land development is the soil's ability to support septic systems. Most of the north part of the Township relies on individual septic systems for sewage disposal. Because of this reliance upon septic systems, soils become an important element in the location of future land uses. Land uses which produce large volumes of sewage, such as large multi family residential developments and heavy industrial uses, are not compatible with septic systems.

The Township has substantial expanses of forested areas. These include deciduous woodlots composed primarily of central hardwoods and lowland hardwoods in the southwest. A number of larger wooded areas coincide with those areas where grades are in excess of 10%. The most noteworthy expanses of vegetation are located in the low lying areas of the Township in conjunction with the Clinton River, Sashabaw Creek, and their associated wetlands.

The Township has five drainage basins: Clinton River, Sashabaw Creek, Paint Creek, Deer Lake, and Kearsley Creek. Drainage basins are delineated on the Wetlands, Woodlands and Drainage Basins map at the end of this section. The Clinton River Basin is the largest watershed, encompassing nearly 50% of the Township. The headwaters of the Clinton River are located in the northern part of the Township.

Wetlands cover a considerable area of Independence Township. Many small wetland areas (two to three acres) are found scattered throughout the low areas. The largest wetland systems are found along the Clinton River within the north central region of the Township and along the Sashabaw Creek in the eastern part of the Township.

There is also an abundance of lakes scattered throughout the Township, with the exception of the northwestern region. The small lakes are typically 2 to 10 acres in size and the larger lakes are generally 90 to 125 acres in size. Associated with the lakes are numerous streams and intermittent streams.

The North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy, formerly known as the Independence Land Conservancy, was founded in 1972 (one of the first two in Michigan) to protect and link the remaining high-quality natural areas. The Conservancy is an independent, private organization that serves as an education and information source for landowners, neighborhood groups, and towns. The conservation easement is one of the primary tools used for conservation purposes by the conservancy. Current land holdings total more than 500 acres in Independence, which are located throughout the Township in the form of preserves and conservation easements.

The Township has adopted a Greenways Plan that is included in the Master Plan. The Greenways Plan is intended to reduce the visual and habitat fragmentation within the natural landscape by encouraging connections between distinct tracts of open space so as to form a network. The plan's components are the waterway/wetland corridors and other natural resources, the safety path system, established tree canopied streets, parks and other preserved areas, and cluster developments with private open space. By identifying these features, the plan illustrates the existing and potential networks of open space throughout the Township. In this way, the Greenways Plan communicates how development, land use, acquisition, and design can be directed in a way that encourages those links.

## **Transportation**

The Township is traversed in a northwest to southeast direction by I-75. Two intersections of I-75 are located within the Township at Sashabaw Road and M-15. The only U.S. trunk line passing through the Township is U.S. 10 (Dixie Highway). Both I-75 and U.S.-10 convey large volumes of traffic through the Township. U.S. 10 also serves as a major artery within the Township. The only State route within the Township is M-15.

Primary roads are established by, and the responsibility of, the Road Commission for Oakland County upon approval of the Michigan Department of Transportation. There are 26.3 miles of primary roads; 24.9 miles have a hard top surface and 1.4 miles have a gravel surface. The incidence of unpaved local roads is overwhelmingly higher than primary roads. There are 48.8 miles of local roads; 39 miles have a gravel surface and

9.8 miles have a hard top surface. Combining both local and primary roads, there are a total of 75.1 miles of road in the Township with 40.4 miles (53%) of gravel surface and 35.7 miles (47%) of paved surface. Since the Vision 2020 Plan, there has been an increase in the amount of paved local roads in the Township as a result of development.

In addition to the roadway network in Independence Township, the Grand Trunk Railroad traverses the southwestern corner of the Township and is still an active line. General aviation services are available at the Oakland International Airport, located approximately four miles from the City of the Village of Clarkston. Detroit Metropolitan Airport, located thirty five miles to the south, as well as Flint Bishop Airport, located 30 miles to the north, provides the area with full aviation services.

Safety paths in Independence Township have been constructed in accordance with the Safety Path Plan either by the Township or by private developers. The Township has used special millage funds to construct priority paths. In addition, Township development regulations require safety paths on designated routes to be constructed when property is developed. In addition to the local safety path system, Oakland County has been promoting a regional system.

## *Existing Land Use*

### **Introduction**

An understanding of existing land use patterns is essential to formulate a well reasoned plan for the future. Mapping of existing land use has been updated from aerial photographs and field verification. The Existing Land Use Map, included at the end of this section, depicts the land development patterns of the Township.

### **Land Use Definitions**

Mapping of existing land use has been updated from aerial photographs and verified by field observation. The following classifications have been applied to Township land uses:

- **Vacant and Agricultural:** Vacant lands which have no specific use and upon which no buildings have been constructed, or land being used exclusively for agricultural purposes.
- **Rural Residential:** Areas composed of single family dwellings sited predominantly on lots of 3 acres or larger.
- **Estate Residential:** Areas consisting of single family dwellings sited on lots which are 1.5 acres in size.
- **Single Family Residential:** Areas containing single family dwellings sited on lots less than 1 acre.
- **Multiple Family Residential:** Areas which include two family dwellings, apartments, townhouses, condominiums, and other similar attached structures.
- **Mobile Home Park:** Areas which have been planned and developed with the facilities and services necessary to provide sites for a community of mobile homes.
- **Commercial:** Areas which contain both local and community commercial retail and service. Includes neighborhood stores, shopping centers, drug stores, and highway-oriented uses such as gas stations and drive through restaurants.



- **Office:** Areas which include uses such as medical, dental, veterinarian, and real estate offices, banks, and other similar uses.
- **Industrial:** Areas related to the manufacturing, warehousing, and assembly of goods.
- **Public and Semi public:** Areas which are devoted to schools, churches, cemeteries, fraternal organizations, and public buildings and grounds.
- **Recreation/Conservation:** Areas which include public and private recreation sites and/or dedicated open space.
- **Utilities:** Areas which are devoted to utilities, including telephone, electric, gas, and water and sewer services.

### Land Use Acreages

Land use acreage by category for 1983, 1990, 1999 and 2005 are illustrated in the table below. As in the past, the greatest increase in land use has taken place in the rural and single family residential categories. Increases in residential land use have contributed to a 48% decrease in the amount of vacant and agricultural land between 1999 and 2005. Other significant land use increases from 1999 to 2005 occurred in the office and commercial categories.

The following is a detailed discussion of land use patterns in the Township.

- **Rural, Estate, & Single Family Residential:** Residential land use has been classified as rural residential (more than 3 acres), estate residential (1.5 acres), and single family residential (less than 1 acre) to distinguish between rural estate and subdivision types of residential development. Such a distinction is important to depict since the northern half of the Township has a predominance of low density residences, while the southern half is developed in higher density housing. The most significant increases in rural and estate residential land use in the 1990s have been in the northeast quadrant of the Township.

Until the 1970s, non lake single family residential development was largely confined to the sewerred areas south of I-75. However, with much of the lakefront property now developed, new subdivisions and single lot residences have spread to other parts of the Township.

*Figure 4: Land Use Acreages by Category, 1983, 1990, 1999 and 2005*

	1983		1990		1999		2005		1999-2005
	Land Area	% Total	Land Area	% Total	Land Area	% Total	Land Area	% Total	% Change
Single Family Residential	7,931	18.1%	9,660	21.3%	12,904	62.8%	13,150	63.7%	1.9%
Multiple Family Residential	78.5	0.3%	346	1.5%	360	1.8%	502	2.4%	46.4%
Mobile Home Park	13.7	.06%	13.7	0.6%	135	0.66%	153	0.8%	13.3%
Office	17.3	0.1%	52.3	0.3%	58	0.28%	129	0.6%	122.4%
Commercial	109.7	0.5%	162.2	0.7%	221	1.1%	279	1.4%	26.2%
Industrial	97.8	0.4%	97.8	0.4%	121	0.59%	142	0.7%	17.4%
Extractive	122	0.5%	207.3	0.9%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Public, Semi-Public, Recreation and Utilities*	2,204	9.5%	2,529	11.0%	3,489	17%	4,584	22.2%	31.4%
Vacant or Agricultural	123,586	54.3%	10,093	43.6%	3,238	15.8%	1,696	8.2%	-47.6%

\* Public, Semi-Public, Recreation and Utilities mapped and compiled as a unit in past land use inventories

Compiled by: CWA

Several non-lake subdivisions such as Deerwood, Deer Valley, Brookstone, Sashabaw Creek Meadow, and Cranberry Lake Estates have been developed in the northern half of the Township. South of I 75, the infilling of vacant tracts of land within substantially developed areas has also occurred. Significant development has occurred in Sections 27 and 28 with Lake Waldon Village, Spring Lake Estates, Sheringham Subdivision, and Sheringham Woods.

A general observation of residential land use patterns indicates that the pastoral setting in the northern half of the Township has been maintained for residents desiring a low density pattern of living through large lot zoning. However, such patterns have also contributed to a higher level of land consumption than for other categories of land use. As a result, greater amounts of land are being reserved to support fewer numbers of people. Another phenomenon that has occurred is that little additional land is available for development in several areas: Sections 12, 13, 17, 18, 34, and 35.

- **Mobile Home Park:** The southeastern corner of the Township south of I 75 has two areas with existing mobile home parks. The major increase in mobile home units occurred in the 1990s. Clinton Villa is an older park with 498 units and Independence Woods is a modern mobile home park consisting of 430 units.
- **Multiple Family Residential:** There are a number of areas in Independence Township devoted to multiple family residential housing. Comprising approximately 502 acres of land, multiple family residential has witnessed an increase of more than 46% since 1999. Four multiple family areas existed in 1973 and are located in the southwest portion of the Township. Three of these areas are located adjacent to Greens Lake, Van Norman Lake, and Lester Lake. Additional growth in the availability of multiple family units occurred with the construction of the Bridgewater Apartments and Hidden Lake Apartments at Sashabaw and Maybee Roads, Fox Creek on Clintonville Road, and the Lancaster Apartments and Clarkston Bluffs Condos on Dixie Highway. More recently, a number of mixed use projects within the Sashabaw corridor have included owner-occupied condominium units.
- **Office:** A total of 129 acres of land is used for office purposes. As in 1983, most office uses are found on M-15 north and south of Clarkston. Other offices may be found in random locations on Dixie Highway and Sashabaw Roads. Office uses in the Township are primarily devoted to real estate, engineering, medical, and banking activities. Medical office development witnessed increased interest in the 1990s and has been a main reason for the increase in land area since 1999.
- **Commercial:** Commercial land use comprises nearly 279 acres in the Township, an increase of almost 58 acres or 26% since 1999. Three commercial concentrations exist in the Township. The largest number of commercial uses are located in a strip development fashion along Dixie Highway and M-15 south of Clarkston. The majority of commercial uses located in this area are automobile related, shopping center, single site retail, and restaurant activities. A number of properties on Dixie Highway which were vacant in 1983 have since been developed for commercial use.

A second commercial concentration is located on M-15, just north of the City of the Village of Clarkston. This area consists of a limited number of commercial uses and a large concentration of office uses. A final cluster is located at the Sashabaw/Maybee intersection and Sashabaw/Waldon intersection. Development of Sashabaw Road has resulted in an increase of commercial space since 1999. Other single commercial uses are scattered throughout the Township along major thoroughfares such as M-15, Sashabaw and Clarkston Roads.

- **Industrial:** As with commercial land use, industrial development in the Township is limited. A total of 142 acres of land, spread between two areas, are currently devoted to industrial use. The largest area of industrial land use is on White Lake Road, south of Clement Road, and is devoted to general manufacturing and contractor's yards. Light industrial uses, Rectical and LC&I Shefler have also been developed in the Bow Pointe area, east of Sashabaw Road.
- **Extractive:** The 1983 land use survey indicated three general areas in the Township devoted to the "extraction of sand and gravel. There are no longer any active extractive operations in the Township. Former sites have been reclaimed and converted into residential or industrial office park usages.
- **Public, Semi public, Recreation, and Utilities:** Public, semi public, recreation and utilities occupy 4,584 acres in the Township representing the largest non residential land use category. The majority of land use in this category is devoted to public and private recreation.

The largest public recreational property in the Township is the Independence Oaks County Park consisting of 1,089 acres surrounding Crooked Lake. Independence Oaks serves as a regional recreational attraction providing water based activities such as swimming, boating and fishing, picnicking, hiking and nature study areas.

The Township owns three parks, and leases a fourth site. Clintonwood Park is a 120 acre community park located on Clarkston Road in Section 16. The Township also owns a 50 acre park in the southwest corner of the Township called Bay Court. The Township has another park site located on Maybee Road, east of the intersection of Maybee and Sashabaw Roads, called Sashabaw Plains Park. Deer Lake Park, located on the east end of Deer Lake Road at White Lake Road, is leased from Clarkston to provide access to swimming and boating for Township residents.

Non recreational public land use in the Township consists of Township and school facilities. The Township Hall and offices are located in Clarkston, not included in the land use acreage calculations. The Township maintains three fire stations at the following location: Fire Station No. 1 on Citation Drive; Fire Station No. 2 at the intersection of Clarkston and Sashabaw Roads; and Fire Station 3 at the Pine Knob and Maybee Roads. Other Township facilities include the Library on Clarkston Road) Public Works Building on Flemings Lake Road, and Lakeview Cemetery on the northeast corner of White Lake and Dixie Highway.

The Clarkston Public Schools have nine schools plus administrative facilities which occupy approximately 200 acres. In addition to the building, each public school has surrounding grounds for outdoor recreation.

Major private recreation facilities located within the Township include the following: the Pine Knob Country Club, Oakhurst Golf Club, Liberty Golf Club, and the Oakland County Sportsmen's Club.













Other major land uses in the public, semi public, recreation, and utility category include private cemeteries, churches, and utility easements. The largest private cemetery in the Township is Ottawa Park which contains 80 acres. The Township owns its own cemetery, named Lakeview Cemetery, located at the northeast corner of White Lake Road and Dixie Highway. Over 293 acres are devoted to Detroit Edison power line easements which traverse a distance of 12 miles within the Township. Nearly a dozen churches are located throughout the Township.

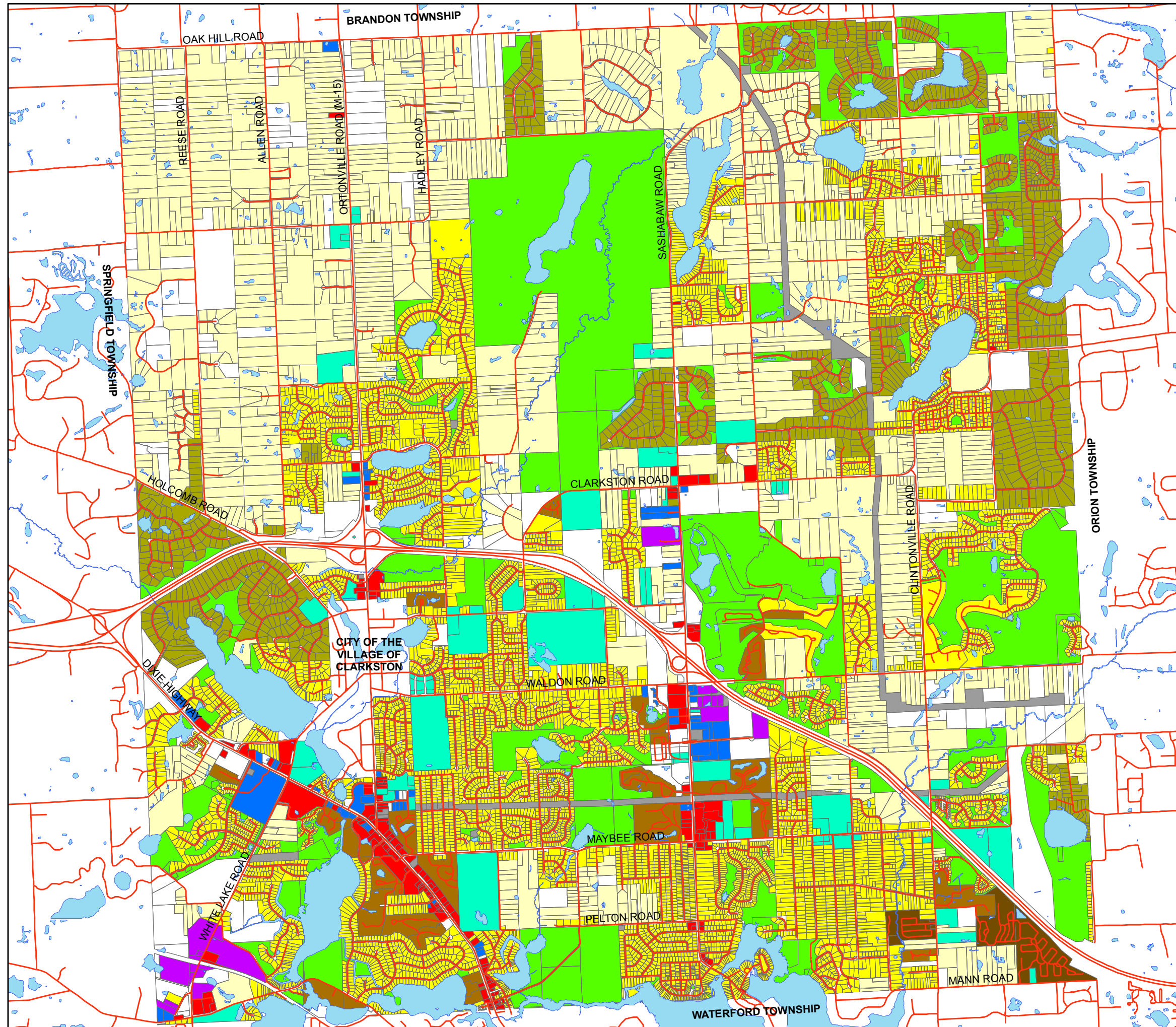
- **Vacant or Agricultural:** The remaining undeveloped land in the Township is classified as vacant or agricultural. In actuality, very little land is currently put to productive agricultural uses. The majority of the land which is vacant may be planned for some future use or is unsuitable for any development purpose. The vacant land category also includes water bodies and wetlands. The category has seen the greatest loss in total acreage. A great deal of vacant land has been converted to residential use since 1973. There has been nearly a 69% decline in the amount of vacant and agricultural land from 1990 to 1999, and a 47% decline since 1999.

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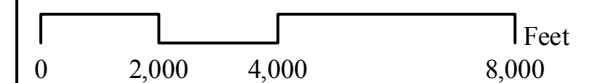
**Legend**

**Existing Land Use**

-  Vacant/Agricultural
-  Rural Residential
-  Estate Residential
-  Single Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Mobile Home Park
-  Commercial
-  Office
-  Recreation/Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Public/Semi-Public
-  Utilities



**MAP 2  
EXISTING LAND USE**



DATE: OCTOBER 2008



## *Goals & Objectives*

### **Introduction**

This portion of the Master Plan establishes goals and objectives for the Township thereby setting forth the basis for action. The vision, goals, and strategy statements from the 2020 Strategic Plan were the starting point and catalyst for the development of the goals and objectives.

The goals and objectives reflect the community's concept and concerns which emerged through the visioning process, and accomplish the following:

- Give direction to private property owners regarding the physical environment desired by the citizens of Independence Township.
- Provide direction for more detailed analysis and eventual changes in existing regulations.
- Establish a framework to assist governing bodies and staff in assessing the impact of their planning and zoning decisions.

Goals represent a desired outcome, and objectives are a breakdown of the issues the goals are meant to address. More concrete and action oriented strategies can be found in the 2020 Strategic Plan. Goals were organized into the following topics:

- Residential Land Use
- Historic and Rural Preservation
- Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation
- Commercial, Office, and Industrial Land Use
- Transportation
- Community Facilities



- Utilities and Services

Goals and objectives for the above topics are listed below.

### Residential Land Use

The strength of Independence Township lies in its residential areas and neighborhoods. As other land use sectors in the community develop, care will be taken to preserve, protect and maintain our residential base. Efforts will be directed at recognizing the changing housing needs of current and future residents.

- In the year 2020, we envision the residential atmosphere and land use characteristics of Independence Township to be as follows:
- Rural character is maintained north of I-75 through the preservation of natural features and open space, ample building setbacks from rural roadways, and lower density.
- The residential environment of the Township is preserved, protected, and maintained.
- Housing is provided for people at all stages of life.
- Residential development reflects the limitations of infrastructure.
- Preservation of open space and natural features is encouraged within residential developments, and coordinated between adjacent developments.

**GOAL:** To preserve residential character and enhance the strong residential base of the community while continuing to recognize and plan for future housing needs.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Provide for a logical arrangement of residential densities which recognizes the physical and natural characteristics of the land, the availability of and proximity to public services and utilities, and the compatibility with existing land use patterns.

2. Recognize the importance of existing neighborhoods and take positive action to ensure their conservation and enhancement.
3. Maintain a low density residential development pattern in the northwest and northeast portions of the Township.
4. Encourage housing that meets a variety of needs while maintaining the residential values which are characteristic of Independence Township.
5. Provide alternatives to residential land development patterns that will result in more efficient and better arranged land uses, increased open space, and the preservation of natural and rural resources, both with and between contiguous developments.
6. Encourage housing for the elderly and persons with disabilities in appropriate locations based upon the availability of services and compatibility with existing land use conditions.

### **Commercial, Office, and Industrial Land Use**

Independence Township has been and will continue to be primarily a residential community. However, there are opportunities to enhance tax base, provide employment opportunities, serve the needs of residents, while maintaining the character of the community.

In the year 2020, we envision commercial, office and industrial land use characteristics in Independence Township to be as follows:

- A centralized retail district with small town character, supported by adequate roads and utilities.
- Increased commercial entertainment and recreational opportunities.
- An enhanced commercial tax base to support community services.
- Office, industrial and commercial land use developed in common themes and located harmoniously with residential areas providing effective separations and transitions.

- Policies which consolidate and restrict commercial development to designated areas within the Dixie Highway and Sashabaw Road corridors, and industrial development to designated areas within the White Lake Road and Sashabaw Road corridors.
- A strong office-service base which responds to the demand for professional services.

**GOAL:** To maintain and attract quality businesses in appropriate areas to serve the needs of residents, contribute to the tax base, and provide jobs.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Provide a consistent and sustained approach toward attracting high quality industrial, research office, office service, and commercial development that is compatible with the predominant residential character of the Township.
2. Concentrate economic development activities in targeted areas with a varied emphasis such as the Sashabaw Corridor, White Lake Road, Northwest Dixie Highway, Pine Knob, and M-15/I-75 Interchange.
3. Provide commercial land use that serves the needs of Independence Township as a residential community.
4. Provide office-services land use that meets the demands for professional services and provides for appropriate transitions between higher intensity and lower intensity uses.
5. Recognize trends in work patterns and the workplace through home-based businesses and offices and live-work units.

### **Historic and Rural Preservation**

Independence Township is rich in historic and rural character. Preservation efforts are necessary in order to retain these assets which are vital to the character of the community, and which reflect the history of the community and the values of its citizens.

In the year 2020, we envision the historic and rural, characteristics of Independence Township to be as follows:

- Strong support for the preservation of historic homes and barns and scenic landscapes.
- Designated natural beauty/scenic roads and natural trails, which maintain the rural character of the northeast and northwest portions of the Township.

**GOAL:** To recognize and promote the importance of the historic assets and rural character of the community, and foster preservation initiatives.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Promote awareness and appreciation of the Township's unique historic and natural assets which are vital to the heritage of the community and its residential character.
2. Maintain and increase the visual appeal of Township rural roadways in order to preserve rural character and natural beauty.
3. Preserve the rural and residential nature of land along M-15 north of Cranberry Lake Road and ensure that future road improvements are sensitive to the rural residential context.
4. Recognize that low density residential land use patterns are vital to maintaining the rural and scenic resources of the northeast and northwest portions of the Township.
5. Explore incentives to ensure preservation of historic homes, out-buildings, and barns.

**Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation**

Rolling hills, wetlands, scenic beauty wooded areas, lakes, and the Clinton River and its tributaries form essential natural elements of the fabric of Independence Township. Preserving these vital assets is integral to maintaining the character and environmental integrity of the Township.

In the year 2020, we envision the open space and natural resource characteristics to be as follows:

- Encourage the preservation of natural features and open space within all developments.
- Ensure that park lands are provided with a balance between both active and passive uses.
- Continue stringent enforcement of Township ordinances related to preservation of natural resources and open space.

**GOAL:** To continue to value open space and natural resource preservation as vital elements to the high quality of life provided to Township residents.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Strengthen preservation efforts for those areas containing unique natural resources in the Township.
2. Promote clustering and other forms of alternative development which maximize open space preservation and are sensitive to fragile natural features such as steep slopes, riparian zones, animal habitats, wetlands, and lakes.
3. Recognize the importance and promote protection of the Clinton River, Sashabaw Creek, and other river and stream corridor resources.
4. Develop a Township Greenway system which is coordinated with the Safety Path Master Plan and Oakland County's Link Trail and Path Network.
5. Maintain a greenbelt along portions of I-75 as designated in the Greenway Plan.
6. Protect the Township's groundwater to ensure the reliable supply and quality of drinking water.
7. Protect the quality of Township surface waters.

## Transportation

The movement of people and goods within and through the Township in a safe and efficient manner is a top priority. In addition to improving the flow of vehicular transportation, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle pathways will continue to be a focus within our community.

In the year 2020, we envision the transportation characteristics in Independence Township to be as follows:

- A well designed road system that efficiently directs traffic through our community with widening and paving improvement, improved drainage, coordination with surrounding communities, “smart road” concepts, computerized traffic flow, vehicle speed control, and integrated light control.
- A transportation system to serve all ages.
- Transportation alternatives provided such as biking, buses, pedestrian paths, additional park and rides, senior and handicap “on call” services, and pedestrian access to recreational facilities from other than main roads.
- A road system which incorporates boulevards and parkways, passing lanes, consolidations of driveways/single entrances to subdivisions and businesses.

**GOAL:** To provide a transportation system which facilitates the orderly, safe, and efficient flow of traffic, and provides alternatives such as facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Utilize the Thoroughfare Plan to establish priorities for road improvements which improve traffic flow, relieve congestion, and facilitate economic development in targeted areas of the Township.
2. Complete the safety path system that links destination points with residential areas throughout the Township and coordinates with Oakland County’s Link Trail and Path Network
3. Incorporate access management along roadway corridors.

4. Improve transportation services for the senior and disabled population.
5. Encourage a parkway concept for M-15 improvements as noted in the Strategic Plan's Northwest Area Target Plan.
6. Ensure that the design of road improvements, both public and private, are sensitive to the context in which they are located.

### Community Facilities

The type and quality of the community facilities provided in the Township directly reflects upon the quality of life in the Township. As growth continues in the Township, the demand for improved community facilities will increase. The Township and its residents will face significant challenges to improve and update existing facilities and provide new facilities in order to keep pace with changing demands and needs.

In the year 2020, we envision the community facilities of Independence Township to be as follows:

- A community in which family, teen and senior social, recreational and cultural facilities are provided.
- Additional land is acquired for open space, greenbelts and parks.
- Improved Township offices that will better serve the needs of residents.
- Police, fire, and other services continued at levels which meet Township needs.

**GOAL:** To provide comprehensive community facilities which promote public health, safety, and welfare, and enrich the quality of life for Township residents.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Pursue developing community and civic centers to provide municipal services, recreation, and community activities in a centrally located area.
2. Provide a comprehensive library system which meets the needs of the Township.

3. Ensure that there are adequate cemetery facilities to serve the current and future needs of the Township.
4. Improve existing parks and recreation facilities, and increase amount of park and open space land to meet current and future Township needs.
5. Build an art and cultural center to expose resident to the visual arts, music, and theater.

### Utilities and Services

The quality of utilities and service are inextricably tied to the quality of living, working and conducting business in the Township. Meeting the basic needs and expectations of Township residents, maintaining a high quality of service and cost effective delivery must remain a priority.

In the year 2020, we envision the utilities and services of Independence Township to be as follows:

- Appropriate sewer, water, and stormwater services are maintained as necessary to accommodate existing areas as well as new development.
- A long range solid waste program is available which incorporates composting and refuse disposal programs
- Police, fire and other services continue to meet Township needs.

**GOAL:** To provide efficient and reliable utilities and services in keeping with Township policies to meet resident and business needs.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Develop a multi-purpose stormwater management system, which reduces the potential for localized flooding and enhances water quality.
2. Provide wellhead protection at public well sites and develop other groundwater protection measures.



3. Provide the necessary water supply in order to provide fire services for the entire Township.
4. Encourage proper and routine maintenance of septic systems.
5. Extend sewer and water to all portions of the Township which are within the water and sewer service district.
6. Support cooperative efforts which promote cost effective development and efficient use of utilities.
7. Ensure that the impact on utility and services is a primary consideration when making land use decisions.

## *Master Land Use Plan*

The Land Use Plan presented on the following page illustrates the proposed physical arrangements of land use for Independence Township. The Land Use Plan serves to translate community goals into a narrative and graphic illustration. It is based largely upon the existing land use, current zoning, planning analysis, and the desires of the residents of the Township.

The plan is prepared to serve as a policy for the Township regarding current issues, land use decisions, investments in public improvements, and future zoning decisions. The plan is intended to be a working document which will provide for the orderly development of the Township, and assist the community in its effort to maintain and enhance a pleasant living environment while fostering economic development and redevelopment where needed.

The land use plan is based on consideration of a number of factors. These factors include:

- Citizen opinion and input
- Existing land use
- Natural features
- Existing plans
- Population projections and characteristics
- Community facilities, utilities, and parks
- Socio-economic considerations
- Traffic and circulation
- Community goals, objectives, and strategies

Of special emphasis in the Land Use Plan are the public comments and opinions that

have been gathered on a continuous basis since inception of the Vision 2020 planning. Public input has been considered in both a formal manner at public workshops and hearings and also in a more informal manner with verbal comments made at Planning Commission meetings and written comments submitted to the Commission.

## Land Use Designations

Land use categories were developed in an effort to create a long term plan for the systematic, efficient, and appropriate development of Independence Township. These classifications are described below.

### Residential Land Use

The predominant developed land use in the Township is residential. In keeping with the Community Goals, the Land Use Plan permits a range of housing types and development concepts which take into consideration the capability of roads, services, natural features, and the needs of the Township's population. The following categories of residential land uses are planned in order to achieve these goals:

- **Rural Residential** calls for single-family residential development at three (3) acres or more per dwelling unit. Rural Residential land use is planned for areas with existing very low density development and least capable of supporting development due to natural resources, road conditions, and existing land use patterns. Rural Residential is intended to preserve open space, natural areas, and the rural atmosphere in specific areas of the Township. It is unlikely that areas planned for Rural Residential will be served by improved, paved roads or sewers. Areas planned for Rural Residential are located almost entirely in the northwestern quarter of the Township north and outside of the sewer service boundary line.
- **Estate Residential** permits single-family residential development at one and one-half (1-1/2) acres per dwelling unit. Estate Residential land use is planned for areas with existing low density and with development restrictions. Estate Residential serves as a transitional zone between the least dense Rural Residential and other more dense residential uses. It is unlikely that areas planned for Estate Residential will be served by improved, paved roads or sewers in the near future. The northeastern quarter of the Township north and outside of the sewer service boundary line is designated primarily for Estate Residential.

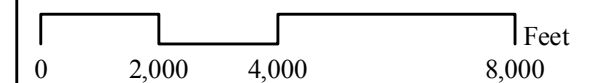
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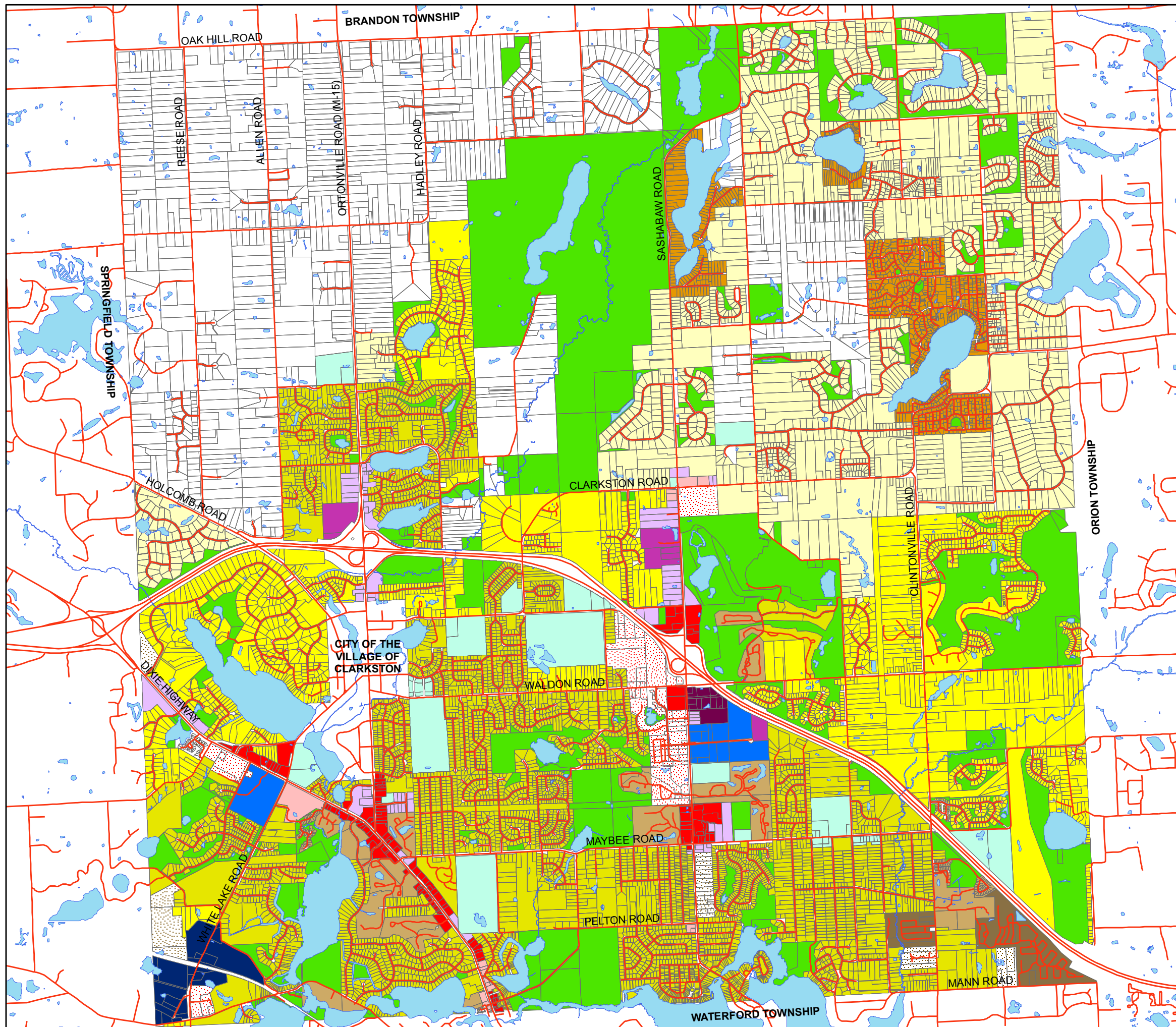
**Future Land Use**

-  Rural Residential
-  Estate Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Single Family Residential
-  Traditional Lakefront Residential
-  Single Family Attached/Detached
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Mobile Home Park
-  Office Service
-  Planned Mixed Use
-  Local Commercial
-  General Commercial
-  Planned Research Office
-  Medical Service & Technology
-  Industrial Office Park
-  General Industrial
-  Recreation/Conservation
-  Public/Semi-Public

**MAP 3  
FUTURE LAND USE**



DATE: OCTOBER 2008





- **Suburban Residential** provides for single-family residential at one (1) acre per dwelling unit. Suburban residential is planned primarily for areas of low density development and serves as a transitional residential use between rural residential, estate residential, and single-family residential. Suburban residential is located in areas more capable of supporting development due to fewer natural resource limitations. The general areas planned for suburban residential include the triangle of land formed by Clarkston Road to the north and I-75 to the south, and the section of the Township bounded by I-75 to the north and White Lake Road to the south.
- **Single-Family Residential** calls for single-family residential development at 15,000 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit. This category is planned for areas with existing similar densities and capable of supporting such densities due to the availability of sewer and water utilities, capability of natural resources, and adequacy of roads. Areas designated for single-family residential are located primarily in the area south of I-75 and east of White Lake Road, and the sewer service area to the north of the I-75/M-15 interchange.
- **Traditional Lakefront Residential** reflects the traditional pattern of residential development that occurred predominantly in the 1930's characterized by small lots 30 to 40 feet wide mainly used for recreational cottages. Many houses have been enlarged and lots combined to reflect permanent residences. Traditional lakefront residential is focused around Walter's Lake, Round Lake, and Whipple Lake. This area is not intended to reflect the low density patterns that are evident in the balance of the northeastern quadrant of the Township.
- **Multiple-Family Residential** designates areas for multiple-family dwellings defined as three (3) or more dwelling units per structure. Planned density ranges from 5-6 units per acre. This designation is the most dense residential development permitted by the Township. Multiple-family residential is planned for areas of existing multiple development, available sewer and water utilities, and improved roads. The general areas of multiple-family residential designation are in the southeastern corner of the Township south of I-75, in the general area of the I-75/Sashabaw exit, and along Dixie Highway.
- **Single-Family Attached/Detached Residential** calls for single-family, owner-occupied residential development with structures either standing alone or attached with a density not to exceed 4 units per acre. This designation is also designed to permit alternative housing options, such as elderly housing. Elderly housing may be considered at a higher density than other types of single family attached/detached units. It is planned for areas with available sewer and water

utilities, improved roads, and nearby services. Single-family attached/detached residential is designated along the east side of Sashabaw Road between Maybee Road and Pelton Road and along western Dixie Highway.

- **Mobile Home Park** calls for single-family residential development of mobile homes which are intended to be permanently located at the site. These are areas of higher density which allow 4 units per acre. Mobile Home Park developments are in areas where sewer and water utilities and improved roads are available. This residential land use is intended to permit affordable housing options. Two Mobile Home Parks are designated in the southeastern corner of the Township south of I-75.

### Commercial Land Use

The Land Use Plan recognizes that the predominant commercial corridors in the Township exist along Dixie Highway, M-15, and the Sashabaw Corridor. The Township desires to restrict strip commercial development and cluster new commercial development into specific areas as identified in the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan's Target Areas Plans. These Target Area Plans are for the White Lake Road Area, M-15/I-75 Interchange Area, Pine Knob Area, Northwest Dixie Highway Corridor, and Sashabaw Corridor. The commercial patterns in the Land Use Plan directly reflect these Target Area Plans. The following commercial land use categories are included in the plan:

- **Local Commercial** is designed to serve the convenience retail and service needs of neighboring residential areas. Local commercial is the primary commercial development planned at the southernmost section of Dixie Highway, the Sashabaw/Clarkston intersection, and the Sashabaw/Pelton intersection.
- **General Commercial** provides larger commercial areas to serve both convenience and comparison shopping needs. General commercial represents the largest commercial category. Significant areas of general commercial are planned along Dixie Highway, directly north of the I-75 Interchange, directly south of the I-75 interchange, and at the Maybee/Sashabaw intersection.
- **Planned Mixed Use** is the general land use category for the Target Plan areas. This designation permits the combination of residential, commercial, office, and light industrial uses in a setting which is designed to preserve natural features, increase traffic circulation efficiency, and have a cohesive design. Areas of planned mixed use include Dixie Highway at White Lake Road, southern White Lake Road, and Sashabaw Road south of I-75. The specific Target Plans for these areas offer a detailed description of their land use designations.

## Office and Industrial Land Use

The Land Use Plan places a great deal of emphasis on providing new areas for office and research-office development. Such emphasis is a result of recent trends in new office development in the Township, especially medical office space, and the recognized advantage that the Township enjoys due to its strategic regional location. Less emphasis has been placed on industrial land use due to changing market conditions and the growth of the Township as primarily a residential service community.

The Township desires to consolidate and restrict strip development and cluster new Office and Industrial development into specific areas as identified in the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan's Target Areas Plans. The office and industrial land use patterns in the Land Use Plan directly reflect these Target Area Plans.

The Land Use Plan, as it reflects the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan, identifies many areas for office and research-office uses in the White Lake Road, M-15/I-75 Interchange, Pine Knob, Northwest Dixie Highway Corridor, and Sashabaw Corridor areas.

The emphasis placed upon office and planned research-office uses lessens the need for additional area set aside for industrial land use. The lack of available land area served by utilities, improved roads, and sufficient isolation distance from residential areas provide further limitations. Areas of industrial designation include a small area within the Sashabaw Corridor and White Lake Road areas. Categories of office, office park, and industrial park land are provided.

- **Office Service** sets aside areas for medical, professional, general, and service-related uses that are dependent upon and supportive of an office environment. The office service designation is intended for areas where there is a need for a compatible transition between higher and lower intensity uses. Significant areas designated for office service use include M-15 north of I-75, several areas along Dixie Highway, along Sashabaw between Clarkston and I-75, and along Sashabaw south of I-75 and Maybee Road.
- **Planned Research-Office** reserves areas for large research-office activities planned in a campus or park-like setting. Areas which have been designated for planned research office include areas at White Lake Road and Dixie Highway, on Sashabaw north of I-75 exit, and on Sashabaw and Waldon south of the I-75/Sashabaw intersection.



- **Medical Services and Technology** is intended for health care services and medical technology uses primarily planned in a planned campus. There are two areas designated for this corner: the McLaren site on the east side of Sashabaw at Bow Pointe and the site approved for POH at the southwest corner of White Lake Road and Dixie Hwy.
- **Industrial Office Park** is intended to accommodate office, research and development, and very limited manufacturing in a planned campus setting. These uses are intended to be enclosed within a building, and external effects are not to be experienced beyond their property boundaries. An area on the east side of Sashabaw directly south of the I-75/Sashabaw exit is designated as Industrial Office Park.
- **General Industrial** provides area for more expansive industry and broader categories of industrial uses. General Industrial is designated at White Lake Road south of Clement Road.
- **Planned Mixed Use**, as noted under Commercial Land Use, is a general land use category for several of the Target Plan areas. This designation permits the combination of residential, commercial and office uses in a setting which is designed to preserve natural features, increase traffic circulation efficiency, and have a cohesive design. The specific Target Plans for these areas offer a detailed description of their land use designations.

### Public, Semi-Public Land Use

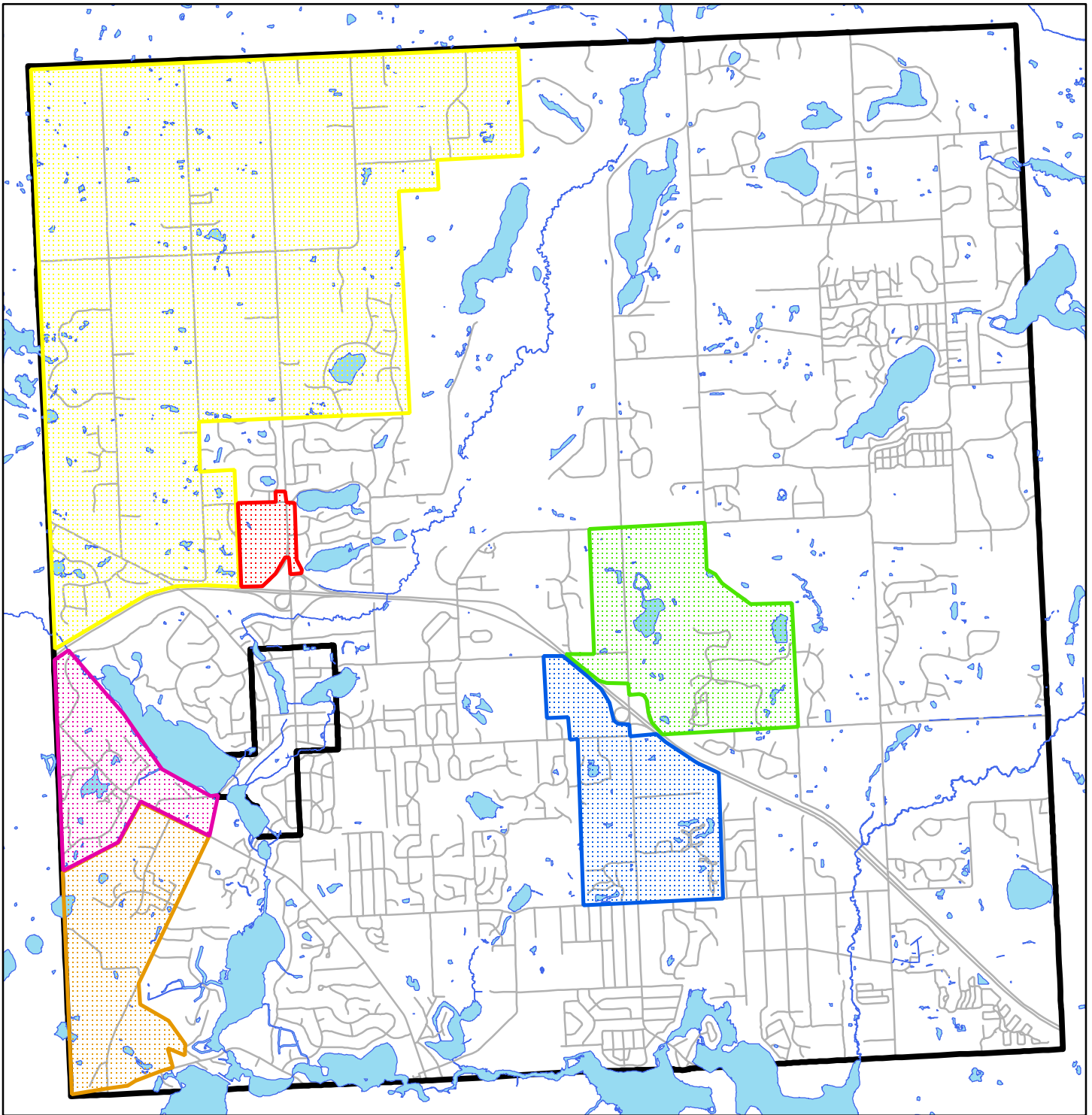
The Land Use plan designates existing areas set aside for institutional uses such as schools, cemeteries, and other public and quasi-public activities. These sites are scattered throughout the Township; however, most are south of I-75.

### Recreational-Conservation Land Use







The designation of Recreational-Conservation land provides areas for both active recreation and conservation of natural resources. This land use can be either publicly or privately owned. The predominant areas designated as Recreational-Conservation are within proximity to the Clinton River corridor, Sashabaw Creek, and the attendant watersheds. Maintenance of these areas are essential to the preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, wetlands, scenic amenities, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Other significant areas are designated throughout the Township and include public parks and lands deeded to the Independence Land Conservancy.

*Target Plans*





**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
TARGET PLAN AREAS**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Northwest Area             |  White Lake Road Corridor |
|  M-15/I-75 Interchange Area |  Northwest Dixie Highway  |
|  Sashabaw Corridor          |  Pine Knob Area           |





# NORTHWEST AREA

Throughout the Vision 2020 process it has been apparent that the desire to maintain the rural character of the Township is a priority. The desire is unchanged with the update of the Master Plan. The northwest area of the Township in particular could be severely impacted by development if efforts are not continued to preserve its rural character. The following target plan describes the potential actions and policies to preserve the rural and historic character of the northwest area.

Rural and historic character is generally made up of a combination of the following features in conjunction with farm structures and historic buildings:

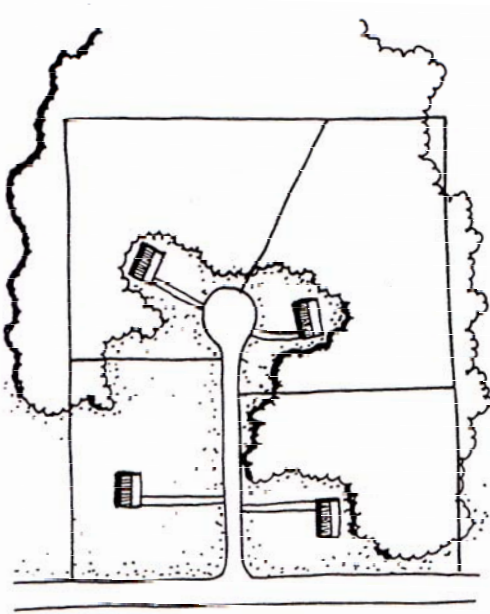
- Tree lined narrow roads
- Woodlots and large wooded areas
- Natural streams, river banks, wetlands, and lakes
- Farmsteads, farms, orchards, outbuildings, fences, and ruins
- Absence of commercial development

## Land Use

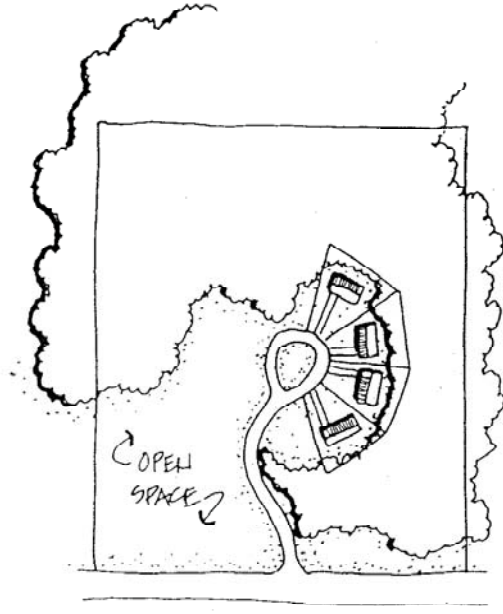
Land Uses are predominantly rural residential in nature in the Northwest Area. Through creative development options like the cluster housing option, natural resources and rural character can be maintained. Ways to protect natural resources and open space include:

- Promote a concept of a rural open space residential option by allowing an average of 1 d.u. per 2.5 acres. This, for example, would allow four instead of three building sites on a 10 acre parcel, and significant amounts of open space.
- Encourage significant amounts of open space (30% or more, for example) to be set aside for rural open space developments. The open space can be used for active recreation and for the preservation of the natural features.

- Working with the North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy, continue to promote a conservation easement program to preserve natural resources which exist on private property.



**Recommended Large Lot Alternative**



**Recommended Open Space Alternative**

Other incentives can be applied for preserving the rural and historic character in the Northwest Area. They are as follows:

- Manage growth and development by maintaining overall residential density.
- Encourage more creative development which preserves rural character and open space through the use of tools such as a PUD and cluster developments.
- Develop a program where property owners can donate development rights for their property and enjoy the tax benefits of such donation. This could be particularly beneficial for historic sites.



- Promote an awareness and appreciation of the Township's unique historic and natural characteristics through educational opportunities such as an historic home tour.
- Ensure that the existing tree canopy is preserved when roadways are improved.

## Circulation

### Rural Roadways

The Northwest Area exhibits a road pattern that follows section and half-section lines typical of rural farm communities developed during the mid-19th century. With the exception of M-15 (Ortonville Road), all roads are designated local and have an extensive tree canopy and gravel surface. It is recommended that the following options be considered:



- Allow private roads for new development with reduced width and gravel surface so that trees and other natural features can be preserved.
- Limit individual access drives from main roads.
- Discourage frontage splits along roadways.
- Establish program to preserve and/or replace the existing tree canopy along roadways with rural character and to increase the greenbelt between the road and the adjacent residences where appropriate.
- Ensure that improvements to M-15 north of I-75 maintain the rural nature of the area.
- Work in cooperation with the Oakland County Road Commission and utility companies to ensure road improvement impacts on mature trees and vegetation is minimized.
- Require extensive buffering between residential developments and M-15, in particular when rear yards abut the roadway.

**Typical**



**Limit Access  
Drives &  
Frontage  
Splits Along  
Roadways**



## M-15

M-15 is a state trunk line, which bisects the Northwest Area connecting I-75 with Independence Township and communities to the north. While M-15 is required to carry ever increasing volumes of traffic, future widening improvements to the roadway would have negative implications for the Township if not approached properly. Widening the road to a 3 to 5 lane configuration might relieve traffic problems, but would significantly damage the character of the northwest portion of the Township, discourage further rural residential use, and encourage unwanted non-residential (i.e. commercial) use.

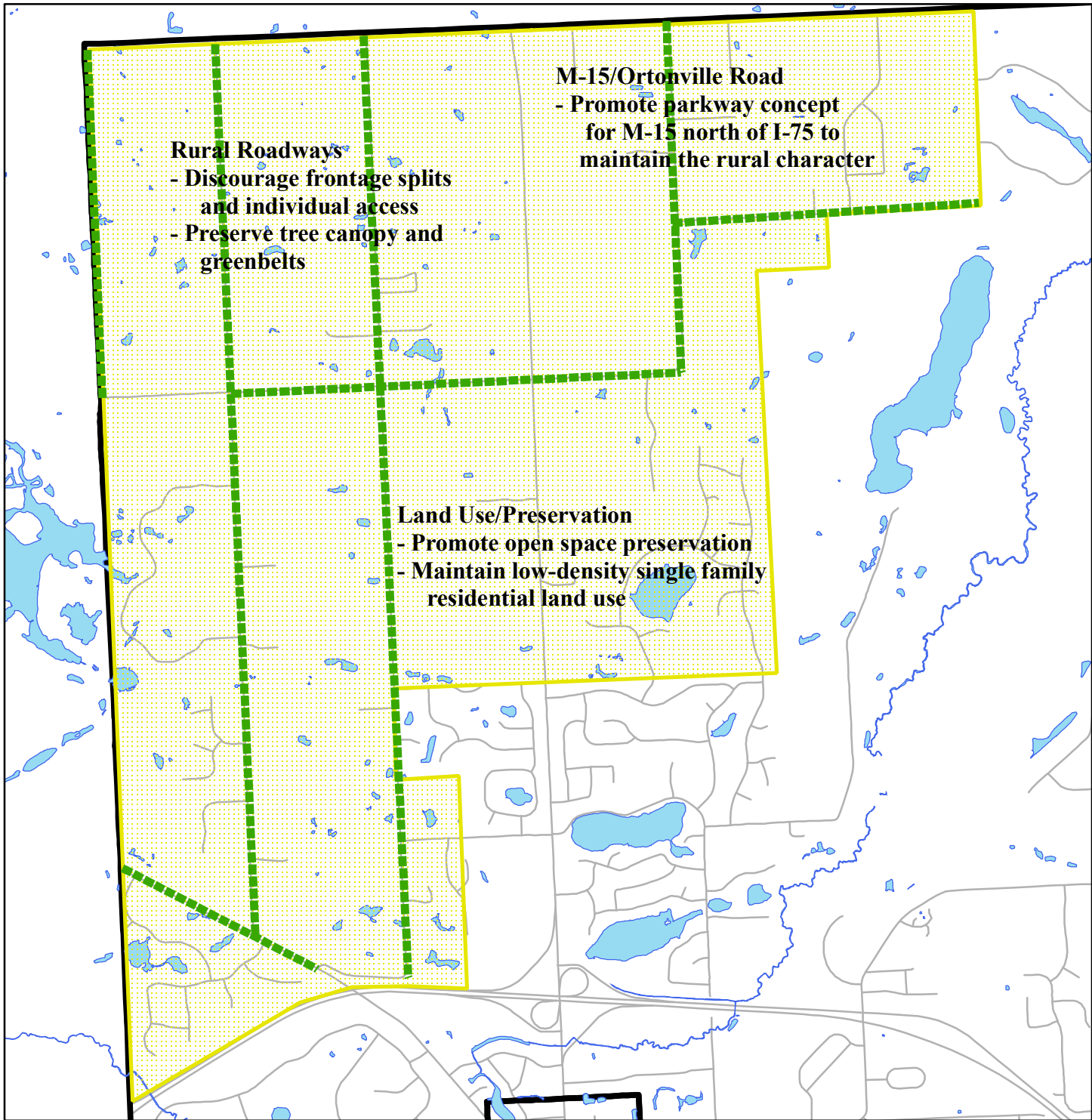
An approach which maintains and enhances the rural and natural character of the existing corridor is encouraged. This approach would entail a “parkway” concept with the following elements:

- A parkway with a heavily landscaped median
- The width of the entire boulevard cross section would be limited to 120 to 150 foot right-of-way
- Maintenance and enhancement of the natural trees and vegetation which lines both sides of the existing corridor
- Planting of center median and adjacent roadside with trees and vegetation native to the area
- A limitation on new curb cuts from adjacent property
- Measures need to be explored to lessen impact of M-15 traffic on the City of the Village of Clarkston, specifically a truck bypass route using Dixie Highway



As shown on the Northwest Area map, the key planning concept for the northwest area is to maintain low density rural and suburban residential land use while providing incentives to preserve its rural and historic character.



***Parkway Concept***



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
 VISION 2020 UPDATE  
 NORTHWEST AREA**

-  Single Family Detached Residential
-  Historic/Rural Roads





## M-15/I-75 INTERCHANGE AREA

The future development of M-15 and I-75 interchange has significant importance for the Township. Including this area as a Target Plan provides the Township with an opportunity to encourage research and office uses situated in a campus like setting, capitalize on the visibility from I-75, and promote an efficient and interrelated circulation system.

Over the past ten (10) years through the policies and action of the Township, the threat of strip commercial development between I-75 and Cranberry Lake Road has been eliminated, and an office-service environment has been implemented. However, the manner in which vacant property on the north side of the interchange is developed will be key to maintaining the character of the area.

### Land Use

This Target Area can be divided into two areas, the east side and the west side of M-15:

- Office Service uses are desired along the eastern frontage of M-15.
- On the western side of M-15, Research Office/Office Service on the eastern portion of the Target Area, and Single-family residential uses on the western portion fronting with frontage on Allen Road.
- Due to the existing residential land use pattern which surrounding this area, properties with frontage along both sides of M-15 are well suited for research and office related uses for several reasons:
  - It serves as a transition from residential land uses to the west and the M-15 corridor to the east.
  - Proximity to and visibility from I-75 providing opportunities for research and office business development.
  - Office and research uses will generate less traffic and thus have a lessened impact upon M-15 than more intensive commercial patterns.

## Circulation

As is depicted on the following map, the improvements to the existing circulation system are recommended below in order to implement the goals for this area:

- Provide one access to the Research/Office Service area from I-75 aligned with Amy Drive. This will allow for greater safety and efficiency.
- No access will be provided from the Research/ Office Service area north to Cranberry Lake Road.

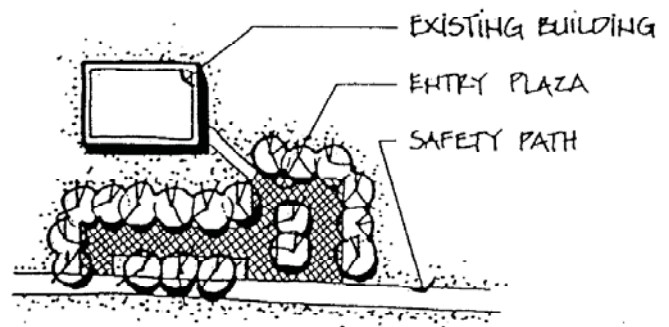
## Natural Features

Given the amount of developed property adjacent to Little Walters Lake, efforts should focus on preserving the existing natural features. Specifically, the southwestern edge of Little Walters Lake must be protected when this area is developed and the view of Little Walters Lake from M-15 must be preserved. A further limitation to this area is constrained access to M-15, due to steep slopes and natural features.

## Design and Layout

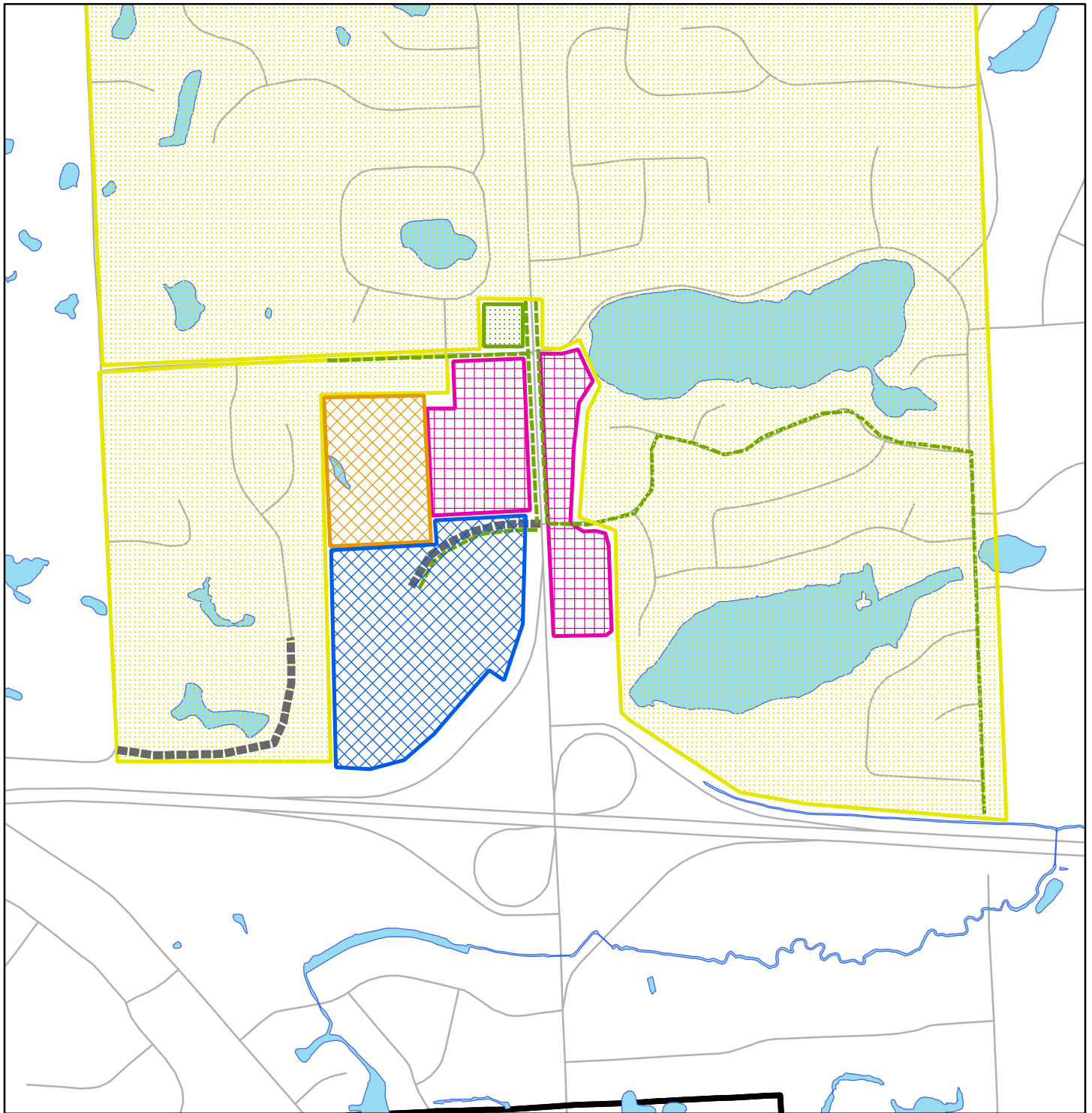
The intent for the proposed research and office uses is to establish a campus-like setting. Elements which contribute to this type of setting include the following:

- Buildings oriented around a central plaza or park
- Pedestrian connections between buildings
- Shared parking located at the periphery of the building cluster










***Building Oriented Around a Plaza***

- Buildings with similar and compatible design elements such as building material or roof pitch.
- Landscape design unifying the different buildings and elements.



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
M-15/I-75 INTERCHANGE**

- |   |  |   |                                  |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Residential                                      |  | Recreation/Conservation          |
|  | Office/Service                                   |  | Pedestrian/Bike Path Circulation |
|  | Office/Service and<br>Research/Office            |  | Future Road Alignments           |
|  | Residential - Single Family<br>Attached/Detached |   |                                  |





# SASHABAW CORRIDOR

A great deal of attention has been paid to the planning of the Sashabaw Corridor over the past thirty years. More recently, through the Vision 2020 process, the Sashabaw corridor area was identified as the core for new economic development and community identity within the Township. Since that time, the corridor has seen both new development and redevelopment based on the policies outlined in the original Target Plan.

This Target Plan is a refinement of the existing policies from the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan, adopted in 1999. In the years that have passed, the Township has been able to watch the corridor grow and reevaluate the current actions and policies. The long term goal is to create a Town Center concept by impacting site design characteristics such as parking, circulation and community amenities. Additionally, based on the goals and policies outlined in the Vision 2020 Plan, the Sashabaw Road Town Center Overlay District, as well as coinciding Design Guidelines, were created.

## Land Use

Since a “Town Center” type development is desired, mixing uses is the most effective approach. Uses such as office, commercial, and residential are allowed to co-exist by mixing uses vertically (for example, residential above commercial), horizontally (residential adjacent to commercial ), or both.

The following are some recommendations to consider when taking a mixed use approach:

- High density residential such as multiple family is often needed in commercial areas in order to promote a vibrant area. Mixing uses encourages pedestrian use of the area. Multiple family could also include elderly housing.
- Civic uses should be considered for the Town Center area. Civic uses provide an anchor for a town center and can be designed in ways to both promote the image of the community and serve as a gateway. For example, a town hall or other public building could serve as a landmark identifying the community. In addition, civic uses often have substantial numbers of employees which can patronize the adjacent business on lunch hours and breaks via a short walk. A “town green” would complement a civic use or uses.



- Industrial uses in the area should be limited to the designated areas, however automobile and pedestrian connections should be established connecting the adjacent uses.
- Medical Service and Technology is a new designation within the Sashabaw Corridor reflecting the medical campus approval on the east side of Sashabaw at Bow Point. A variety of medical offices, specialty medical centers, a hospital and support services are planned in a campus setting.

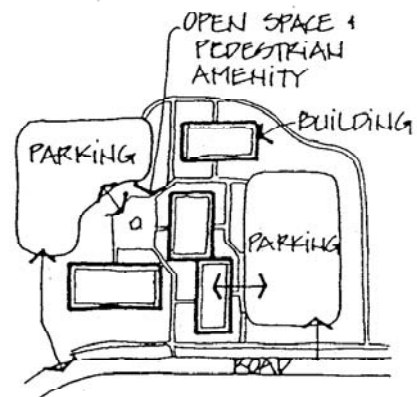
## Overlay District

In order to implement the planning and design concepts set forth herein, an overlay district was created in 2001 and revised in 2003. An overlay district is a special zoning district superimposed over conventional established districts. Overlay zones modify the provisions of the underlying zones and can either add to or reduce from specific regulations of the underlying zoning. The following items were included in the Overlay District Design Guidelines and have been implemented in the Corridor and need to be carried forward in future planning:

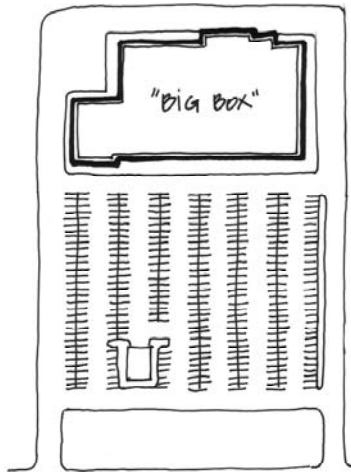
### Design and Layout

Design and layout considerations have promoted a positive image of the corridor. They are as follows:

- Locate all buildings at or within close proximity of front setback line (setback line becomes a build-to line).
- Create a standard front setback which would apply for all possible uses.
- Develop design guidelines in order to ensure architectural compatibility and consistency but not monotony.
- Locate all buildings so that they face Sashabaw Road and have a pedestrian entrance at the front of the building.
- Enhance pedestrian connections between buildings with small plazas or benches



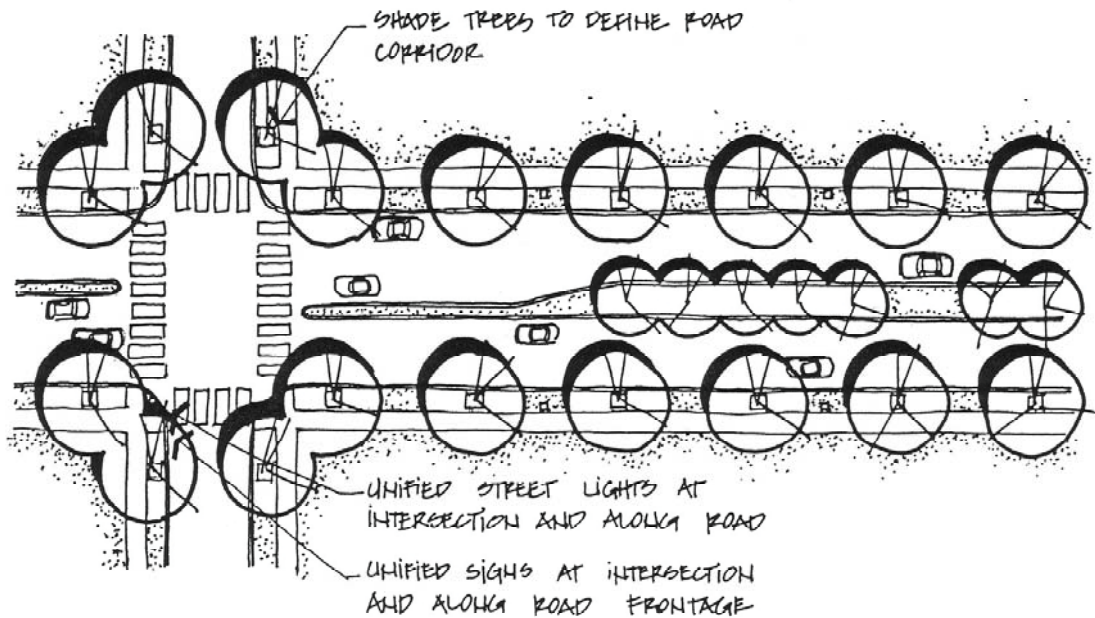
and encourage pedestrian amenities such as covered walkways or awnings.



- Cluster buildings with complementary uses around a small plaza or “town green” in order to provide for public open space which is pedestrian oriented.
- Discourage or prohibit large “big box” commercial retail design.

### Landscape and Streetscape Elements

The enhanced landscaping and lighting requirements of the Overlay District have contributed to the positive image of the corridor. A streetscape plan was designed for the Corridor and plantings have now been installed in the median and along the roadway. As part of the streetscape, decorative lights were installed for beautification and to improve pedestrian walkability. Additionally, a fence and stone column detail is being used on new developments in order to provide consistency and compatibility with the pedestrian environment.

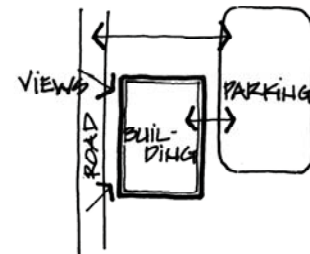
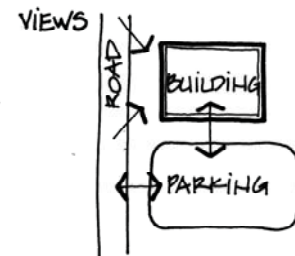


## Circulation

In 2003, the Township, in cooperation with the Road Commission for Oakland County, widened Sashabaw Road to a four lane boulevard with a landscaped median. The result has been a safer roadway, with limited access and a pedestrian-friendly corridor. The roadway is also more functional and has a higher capacity of traffic. It is important to continue to support these circulation enhancements as new developments come forward.

In order to facilitate the smooth and safe flow of traffic, improve pedestrian safety and to improve the image of the corridor, it was recommended that the following measures continue to be implemented:

- Limit individual access drives.
- Require shared access drives and rear shared service drives.
- Require pedestrian access at front of buildings which connects to the sidewalk/pathway along the entire corridor.
- Provide brick pavers or some other distinction at pedestrian crossings to improve safety.



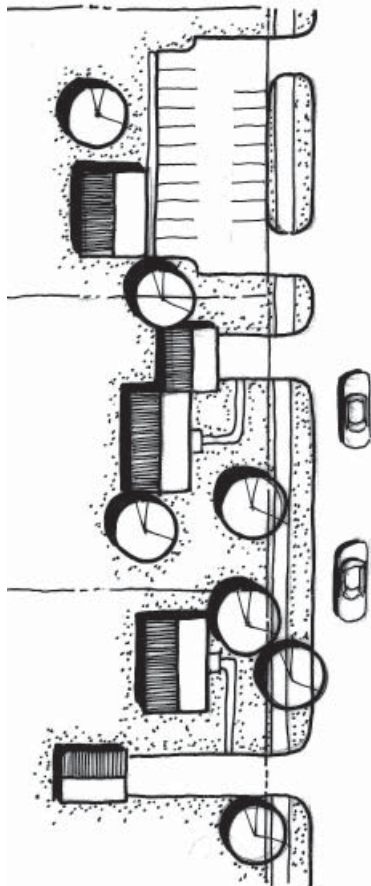
## Parking

Ways to alleviate the negative visual impact of vast amounts of parking are:

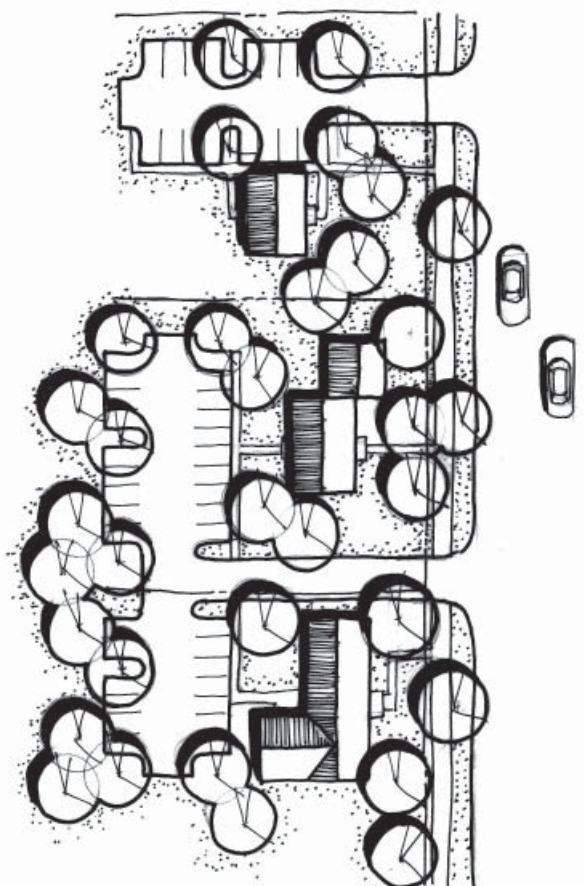
- Locate parking lots at the rear or side of buildings only.
- Require shared parking areas accessed off of service drives.
- Allow for shared parking requirements to be relaxed.
- Break up large expanses of pavement with landscaping.

- Require a standard fence detail and/or landscape screening when the parking lot abuts pedestrian routes.

As with the landscaping design elements, the Overlay District addresses these items. The result has been well designed developments along the corridor with a minimized impact on pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

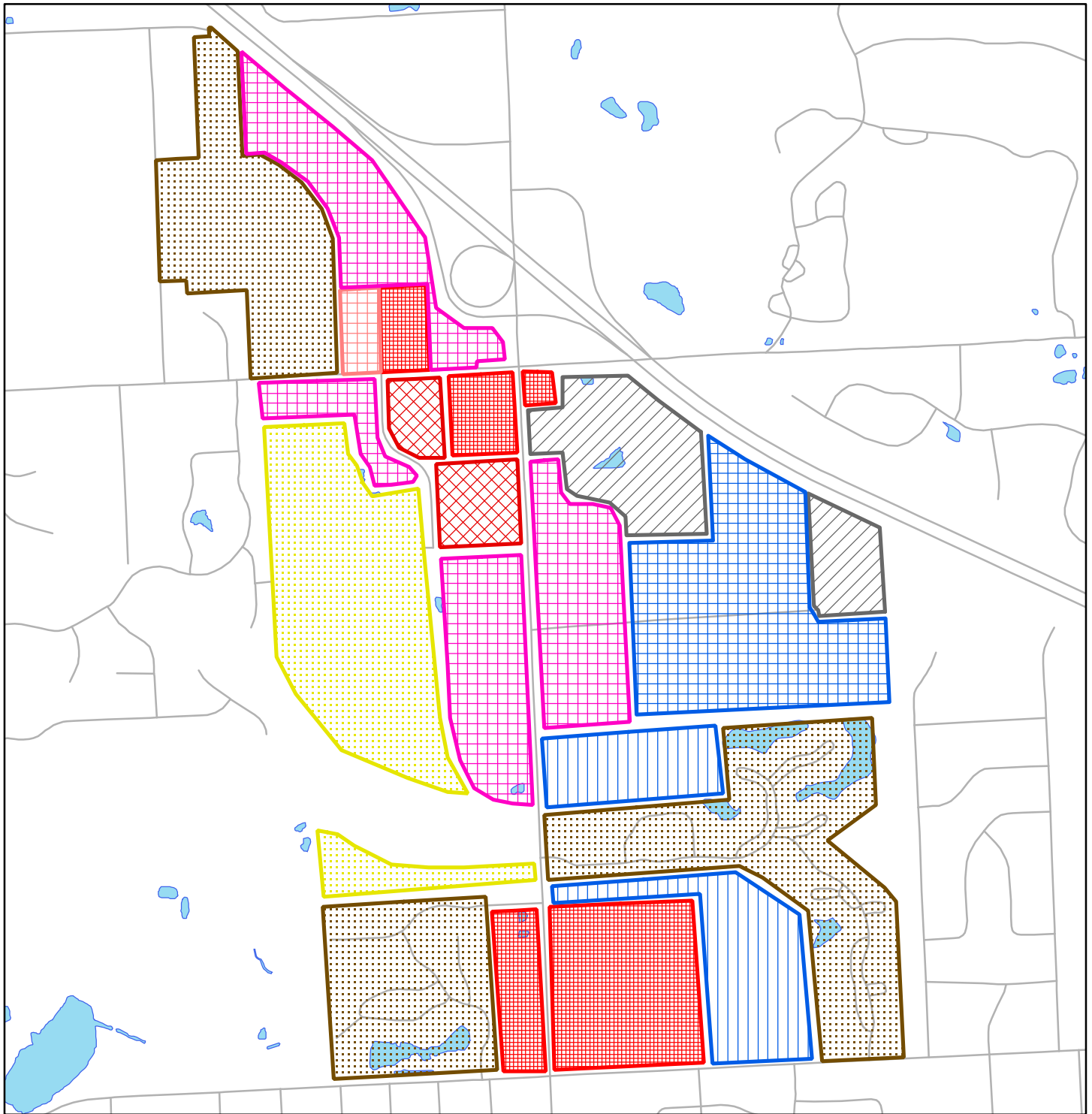


*Typical*












*Recommended*





**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
SASHABAW CORRIDOR**

- |   |                                      |   |                    |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Residential - Single Family Attached |  | Commercial/Office  |
|  | Multi-Family                         |  | Public/Semi-Public |
|  | Commercial                           |  | Office/Service     |
|  | Local Commercial                     |  | Industrial/Office  |
|   |                                      |  | Medical Technology |





# PINE KNOB AREA

The Pine Knob area includes Sashabaw Road north of I-75. The Pine Knob development has a long history within Independence Township. Originally intended to be developed as a multi-use single planned project, various elements of Pine Knob were sold and are now controlled as separate entities. Despite fragmentation of the property, Pine Knob continues to influence the land use characteristics of the area and it is important to guide development of the remaining land in a way that is consistent with the current character and services Pine Knob provides to the Township and recognizes surrounding residential character. The goals for Pine Knob and adjacent areas are the following:

- To capitalize upon the proximity to and visibility from I-75.
- To enhance the existing entertainment oriented uses of Pine Knob.
- To increase the efficiency of the existing road network and provides increased pedestrian and bike access.
- To establish uses, particularly office service, which are compatible with and provide a transition between Pine Knob and surrounding residential uses.

The following Target Plan specifies land uses and circulation improvements for the Pine Knob area.

## Land Use

Land Use and Circulation for the Pine Knob Area are depicted on the map on the following page.

### Residential Uses

All of the areas within Pine Knob that are zoned for residential are either developed or in some stages of being developed. These areas include land located on both sides of Royal Saint George.



One other area which is transitional in nature are the parcels north of Flemings Lake Road west of Sashabaw that do not have frontage on Sashabaw. Maintaining residential use is consistent with the residential development directly west and has adequate buffers from Sashabaw Road from the proposed office, research and related uses.

### Office Service

Areas appropriate for office and related uses would be the parcels on the west side of Sashabaw, north of Flemings Lake Road. As the Sashabaw Corridor plays a more important economic role in the community, the best utilization of this area would be for office, research and related uses. Furthermore, residential uses are no longer appropriate due to traffic increases, and office users will be less impacted by the Pine Knob activities than homeowners.

Another Office Service area is the western portion of the area located north of I-75 and south of Fleming Lake Road. Office related uses here will buffer the residential uses from the north and will thrive from the proximity to and visibility from I-75.

### Commercial Uses

The commercial component of the Pine Knob area is comprised of currently zoned commercial property. The southwest portion of the intersection of Clarkston and Sashabaw has developed as a small neighborhood shopping center.

The frontage along Sashabaw in the area north of I-75 and south of Fleming Lake Road will remain under a commercial zoning designation. This designation is appropriate for an area located in close proximity to a highway interchange. A wetland which bisects this area should be preserved and can serve as the dividing line between the office service and commercially zoned properties.

Lastly, a portion of the land on the east side of Sashabaw road, directly across from Flemings Lake Road is commercially zoned. This area has been split into two designations with different emphases. Again, proximity to the highway interchange and increasing development in the area make this area appropriate for commercial and office development. The northern portion will have an Office designation, and the southern portion is detailed below for a Hotel/Conference Center.

## Hotel/Conference Center

The parcel mentioned above which is south of the intersection of Flemings Lake Road, east of Sashabaw, and north of I-75 is a prime location for the development of a hotel or conference center. This location is further enhanced by its proximity to the I-75 and to the activities at Pine Knob. Independence Township has yet to develop a conference center and without proactive planning, one is unlikely to develop.

## Circulation

The following is a listing of the different improvements that can unify the Pine Knob area and increase the efficiency of the existing roadways.

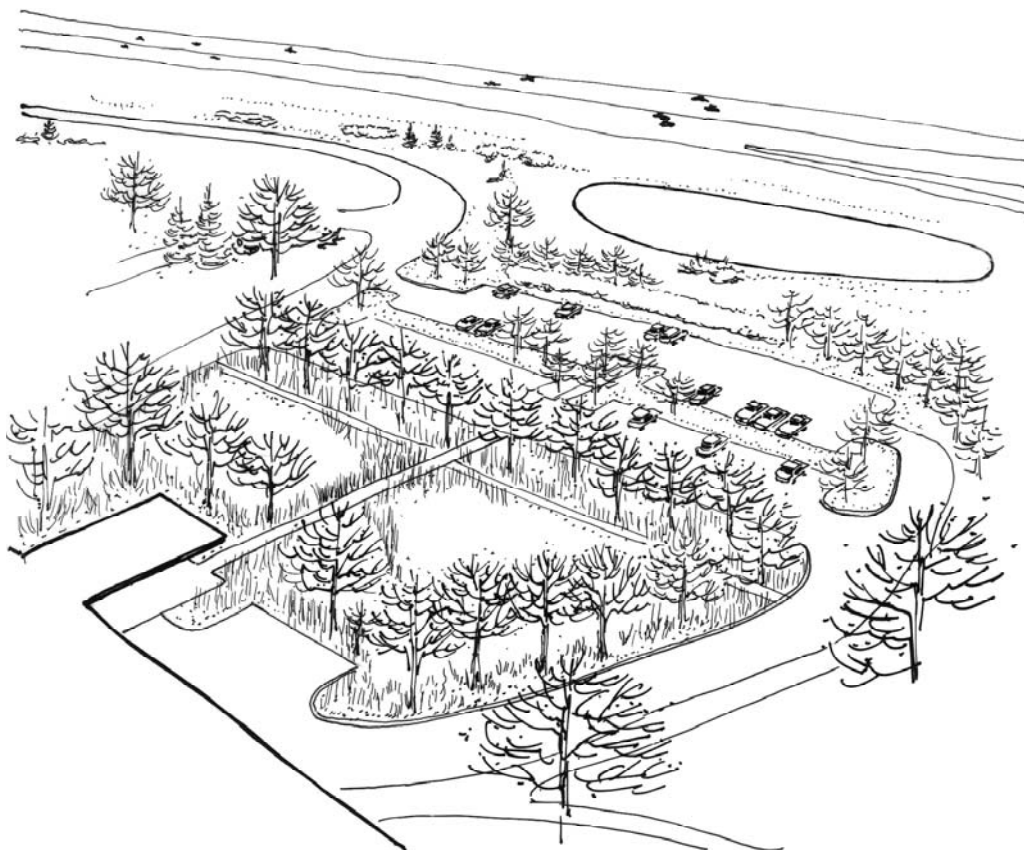
- Create a signalized intersection at Flemings Lake Road to serve the proposed office and commercial center uses. This will serve to align roadways across Sashabaw which increases safety and efficiency.
- Allow office, research and related uses on the west side of Sashabaw to share drives. This will limit the number of curb cuts and allow for connections between related uses.
- Continue safety path development along Sashabaw Road. This is in keeping with the current Safety Path Master Plan and will allow those who wish to bike or walk to do so. Furthermore, pedestrian access other than from Clarkston Road to the proposed recreation complex should be encouraged.
- Develop access across I-75 connecting the area north of I-75 with the Sashabaw Town Center.

## Design and Layout

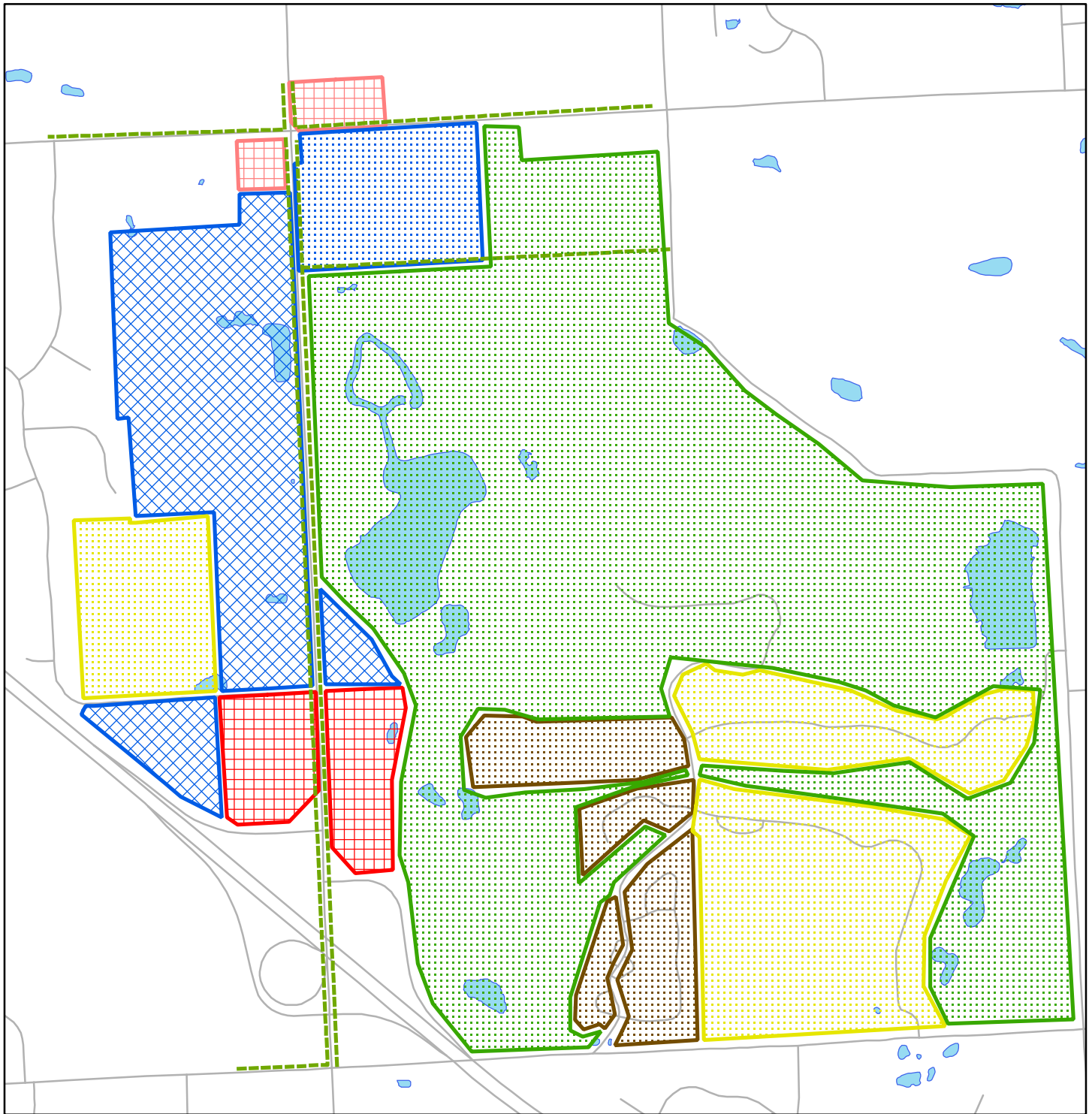
North of I-75, the character of the Sashabaw corridor changes. The area has a more rural character, and has natural features worthy of preservation. The Pine Knob complex currently contains a large amount of preserved open and existing golf course.

The following design elements will help to maintain the character of this area, as well as provide for a transition between Sashabaw corridor to the south, and the more rural and natural character of the area to the north of Clarkston Road.









- Maintain large setbacks along either side of Sashabaw Road. This will help to maintain the current character of the area, and allow for preservation of existing tree stands.
- Retain existing mature trees and other natural features such as wetlands. Design techniques should minimize site disturbance. Natural features should be incorporated into the design of buildings and sites.
- The image for this area will be decidedly different than that of the lower Sashabaw corridor area. A corporate office image which is represented by hi-tech buildings would help to identify the area. This hi-tech style should not be mistaken for lack of preservation of natural features. As mentioned above, existing natural features should be maintained and incorporated into the design.



***Recommended Campus Style Corporate Development Preserving Natural Features***



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
PINE KNOB AREA**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Residential - Single Family      |  Commercial        |
|  Multi-Family Condominium         |  Local Commercial  |
|  Office/Service                   |  Planned Mixed Use |
|  Pedestrian/Bike Path Circulation |  Recreation        |





# WHITE LAKE ROAD CORRIDOR

The White Lake Road Corridor from Dixie Highway to Andersonville Road has exhibited a variety of uses ranging from residential to commercial, warehousing and industrial uses. Some of the older industrial uses remain, but in the last five years, the corridor has seen several redevelopment projects that have resulted in considerable improvement of both the visual appearance and the types of desired land uses.

White Lake Road also serves as one of the major entry points to Independence Township from areas to the south. Therefore, the manner in which the Corridor develops is important to the community's image. Substantial improvements were made through the efforts of the DDA within the White Lake Road corridor, with realignment, surface widening, installation of curb and gutters as well as safety paths. Sewer and water utility extensions were also made. These improvements resulted in new development opportunities which have improved the visual appearance of the area and provided the economic base desired by the Township. As industrial use is in decline, the Township needs to consider more flexible zoning strategies to encourage additional investment and improvement of the area. This target plan describes potential actions and policies to achieve the following goals:

- To set a tone for new land use development
- To mitigate the negative visual impact of existing uses
- To create a positive image for the community and an attractive doorway to the Township

## Land Use

As depicted on the White Lake Road Target Area map, there are four major area, recommended to consolidate the different types of activities along the White Lake Road Corridor. They include commercial, industrial, residential, and medical technology zones.

## Medical Technology

The area located at the intersection of White Lake Road and Dixie Highway west of Foster Road is targeted for uses related to medical care. With a larger proportional share of population growth than the balance of the County, the northwest area of Oakland County is emerging as a significant market for medical care and health related services. This area remains a prime location for these uses because it is easily accessible to I-75, while still taking advantage of the opportunities offered on Dixie Highway. However, as competition emerges in areas closer to I-75, the strategies for this area may have to be revisited by the Township.

Since 2000, Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital (POH) has constructed a medical office building. Additionally, a senior housing complex was constructed. Future phases are planned for this area.

Uses that may be appropriate for this area include:

- Outpatient medical care
- Medical offices
- Health care support services
- Senior housing
- Convalescent care

The POH development was a planned, campus style of development, which was the vision for the Medical Technology Zone. A strong presence from Dixie Highway with a major boulevard entrance and extensive greenbelt along Dixie Highway set the tone for this area. Internal development areas will be served by a central road which winds through the properties and connects to White Lake Road if future phases are developed.

The elements of a successful Medical Technology Park would include:

- A comprehensive master plan which includes all affected properties.
- Compatibility among uses within the park, as well as with surrounding uses.

- Design controls which ensure compatibility with the community and a high level of development quality.
- An open, park like character incorporating amenities such as walking trails and natural areas.
- Continuing responsibility for management to protect investment and maintain compatibility between uses and the community.

### **Commercial**

The intersection of White Lake Road and Andersonville Road is designated commercial. Neighborhood commercial as opposed to general commercial are the uses which are encouraged to serve the residents living in the vicinity and future employees from nearby businesses. An essential element of this concept is to create an attractive entry into the White lake Industrial District. The Gateway Plaza was constructed on the northeast corner of the intersection. This development is typical of what is desired for this area.

### **Industrial**

This zone encompasses the remaining area south of Clement Road to Andersonville Road. It includes the new portion of White Lake Road. Existing uses include manufacturing, storage, recreational vehicle sales and service, a salvage yard and Thompson McCully Asphalt Plant. The intent of this area is to permit a more general type of industrial land use. A key component of this plan is to upgrade and improve the appearance of the more unattractive existing uses in the area. Warehousing and contractor's facilities are the new uses that are encouraged and should be promoted for the Corridor. In the past few years, several quality development projects have occurred, including North Oakland Trim, Michigan Equipment Rental, Camper's Paradise and the recently approved Stars & Stripes gymnastics facility. New zoning strategies are called for in this area because recent development activities, although compatible and desirable, do not fit strictly within the current industrial zoning.

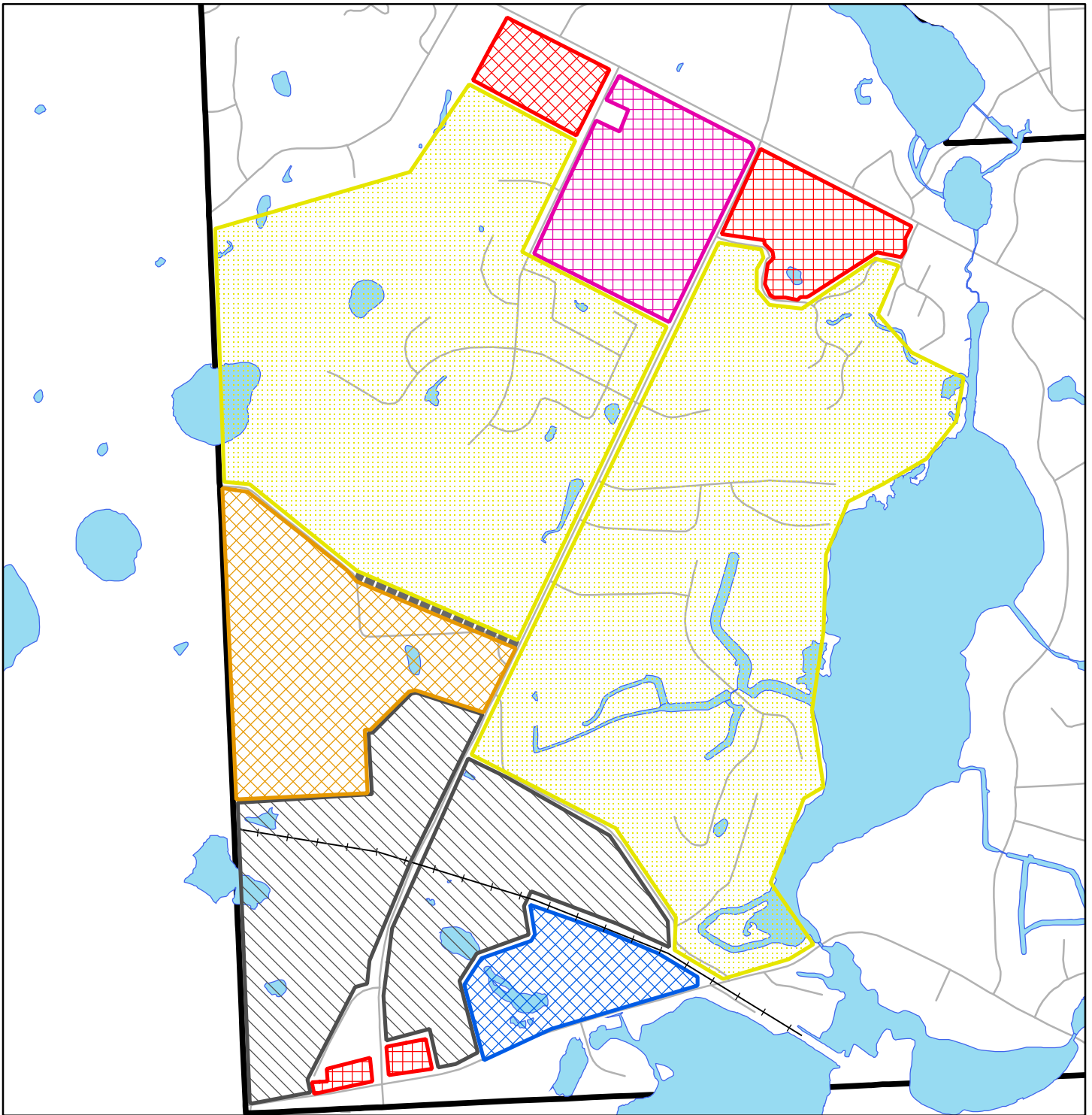
### **Residential**

Within the middle portion of the corridor from Clement Road north, the area east of











White Lake Road is largely residential with small lot subdivisions. The property on the west side of White Lake Road is almost entirely developed and exhibits interesting natural features including extensive wetlands, varied topography and a diversified tree cover. The area is also traversed by both underground pipeline and overhead utility corridors. The Parks of Stonewood PUD is currently nearly complete and the development was well conceived by preserving the natural features while at the same time providing a development with amenities such as a tot lot, pool and clubhouse, as well as nature trails.

New road access into the property from White Lake Road has been tied in with the entry road from Dixie Highway. In addition, the improvement and possible relocation of Clement Road is planned well into the future.



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
WHITE LAKE ROAD CORRIDOR**

- |   |   |   |                           |
|---|---|---|---------------------------|
|  | Medical Technology                            |  | Commercial/Office Service |
|  | Residential                                   |  | Commercial                |
|  | Residential - Single Family Attached/Detached |  | Retreat Center            |
|  | General Industrial                            |  | Future Road Alignments    |





# NORTHWEST DIXIE HIGHWAY

Northwest Dixie Highway serves as an entryway into Independence Township. Although nearly built out, there are a few vacant properties that have the potential to either add to or detract from the image of the community. The goals for the Northwest Dixie Highway area are the following:

- Establish a positive entry way into the community
- Prevent fragmented development of the remaining parcels
- Protect the existing single-family uses adjacent to the corridor and promote compatible land uses
- Control vehicular access to Dixie Highway to promote better efficiency and safety in the transportation system

## Land Use

The important land use goal for this area is to ensure compatibility with the existing adjacent single-family land uses. The following are the land use recommendations for the corridor:

- Office/Service uses along the north side of the Dixie Highway frontage, between Deerhill and Simler Drives. Again, this will provide a logical transition between the single family residential to the north and Dixie Highway. Office/Service uses are also designated for the property on the south side of Dixie Highway, north of Pine Ridge Drive.
- Local Commercial uses along the north side of Dixie Highway, between White Lake Road and Simler Drive. Because this portion of Dixie Highway serves as an entry way into the community from the west, efforts to upgrade and revitalize existing commercial properties in this area will be important components of establishing a positive image.
- Single-family detached/attached uses for the property west and immediately east of Deer Hill Drive to the Township border on the north side of Dixie Highway. Additionally, existing single-family uses should be maintained along portions of both sides of Dixie Highway (see map).

Other land use objectives for Northwest Dixie Highway are to ensure a logical transition of land use from Independence to Springfield Township, Springfield has Office, Commercial and Multiple-family land uses south of the interchange, and to capitalize on the proximity to I-75 with the multiple family and office service uses.

## Circulation

In order to facilitate the smooth and safe transportation network along Northwest Dixie Highway, it is recommended the following options be considered:

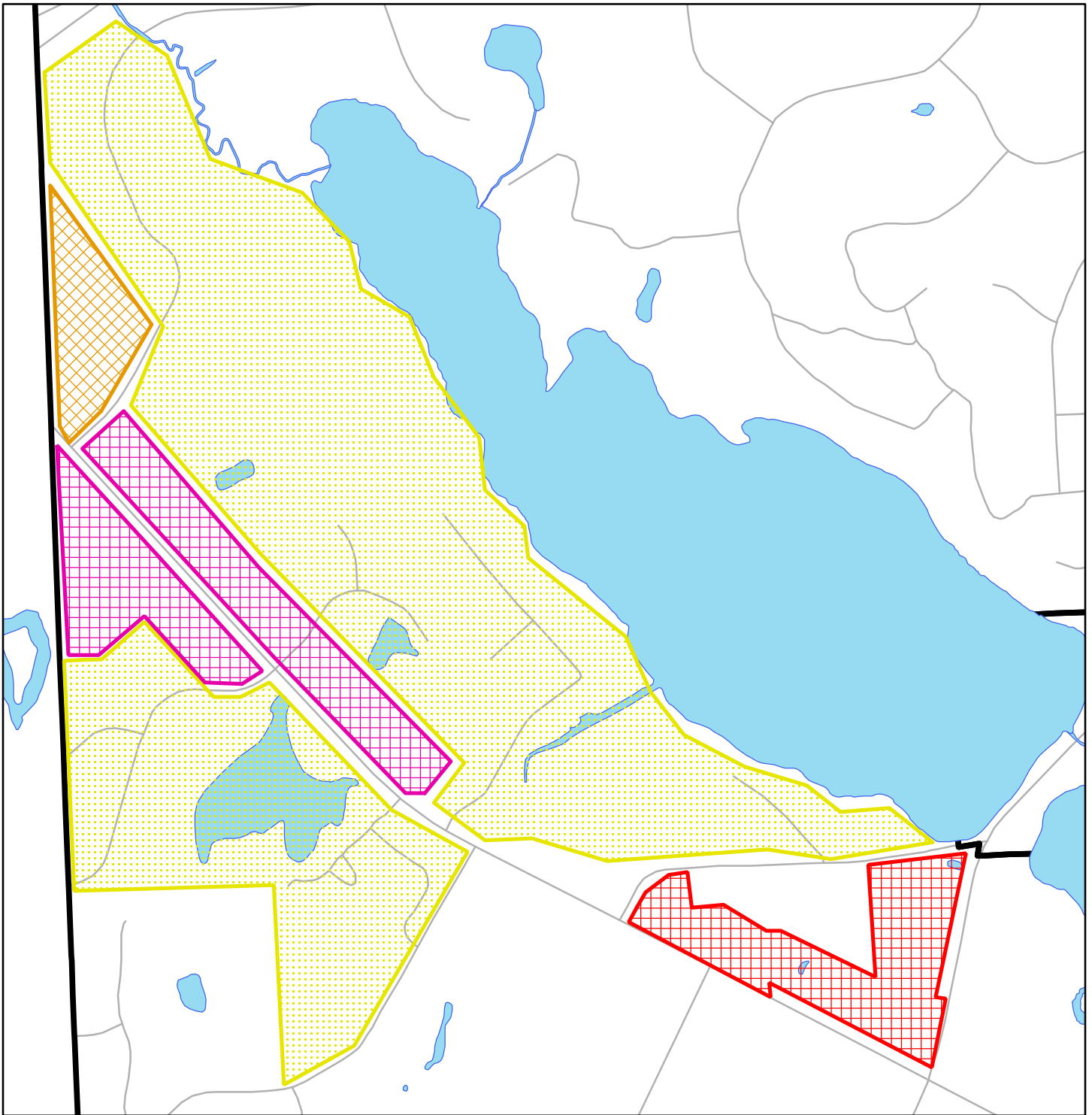
- Control access to individual properties.
- Consider shared access between parcels.
- Establish a pedestrian/bikeway linkage from the multiple family component extending southeast to connect to the White Lake Commons shopping center at Dixie Highway and White Lake Road. Currently, Dixie Highway has “paved shoulders.” These can be used by bicyclists and pedestrians but are not ideal due to their close proximity to the roadway edge.
- Explore the relocation of Big Lake Road to align with Deer Hill Drive.

Likely, the most challenging property to develop is the parcel north of Deer Hill Drive. This particular parcel extends into Springfield Township. The turn-off lane for the entrance ramp onto I-75 creates an obstacle to the design of an entrance onto Dixie Highway. Creative design will be necessary to accommodate safe vehicular access.





## Design and Layout

Because Northwest Dixie Highway serves as an entryway into the community from the west, it will be important to attempt to create an image which reflects well upon the community. The following steps are recommended in order to achieve this goal:

- Facilitate the upgrading of existing properties.
- Create an identifiable entrance point with a landmark.
- Encourage high quality design and architecture which is compatible with the residential character of the adjacent uses.



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
NORTHWEST DIXIE HIGHWAY**

- |   |   |   |                  |
|---|---|---|------------------|
|  | Residential - Single Family                   |  | Local Commercial |
|  | Residential - Single Family Attached/Detached |  | Office/Service   |





## *Transportation Plan*

Highways and roads are developed to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within a community. The provision of safe and efficient transportation facilities are essential to commerce and daily activities and are a major consideration in a community's development. In Independence Township, the private vehicle will continue to be the dominant mode of transportation due to land use patterns that favor low-density single-family development as well as personal preference. However, factors such as rising energy costs and aging of the baby boomer generation (Baby boomers are those people born in the post WWII era from 1946-1964) will make non-motorized forms of transportation more attractive and must be considered in future planning. Thus, the transportation element of the master plan will focus on providing a balanced transportation system, one that affords citizens with transportation choices to enhance quality of life while protecting the natural environment.

- The transportation element of this master plan serves a variety of purposes.
- It serves as a reference guide regarding the transportation system within the Township.
- It sets a vision for future motorized and non-motorized transportation needs within the Township.
- It promotes a better understanding of the relationship between transportation and land use, and how planning can be better integrated.
- It identifies opportunities for change, including: access management techniques, traffic calming, and creating corridor improvement authorities.

### **Roadway Classification and Responsibility**

Roadway classifications are often confusing because planning agencies use the classifications for different purposes. Administrative jurisdictions identify roads in terms of governmental responsibility for construction and maintenance. Roadway classifications are also used to determine eligibility for state funding and federal aid. Functional classifications are used to group streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the character of traffic service they are intended to provide.



## **Administrative Jurisdiction**

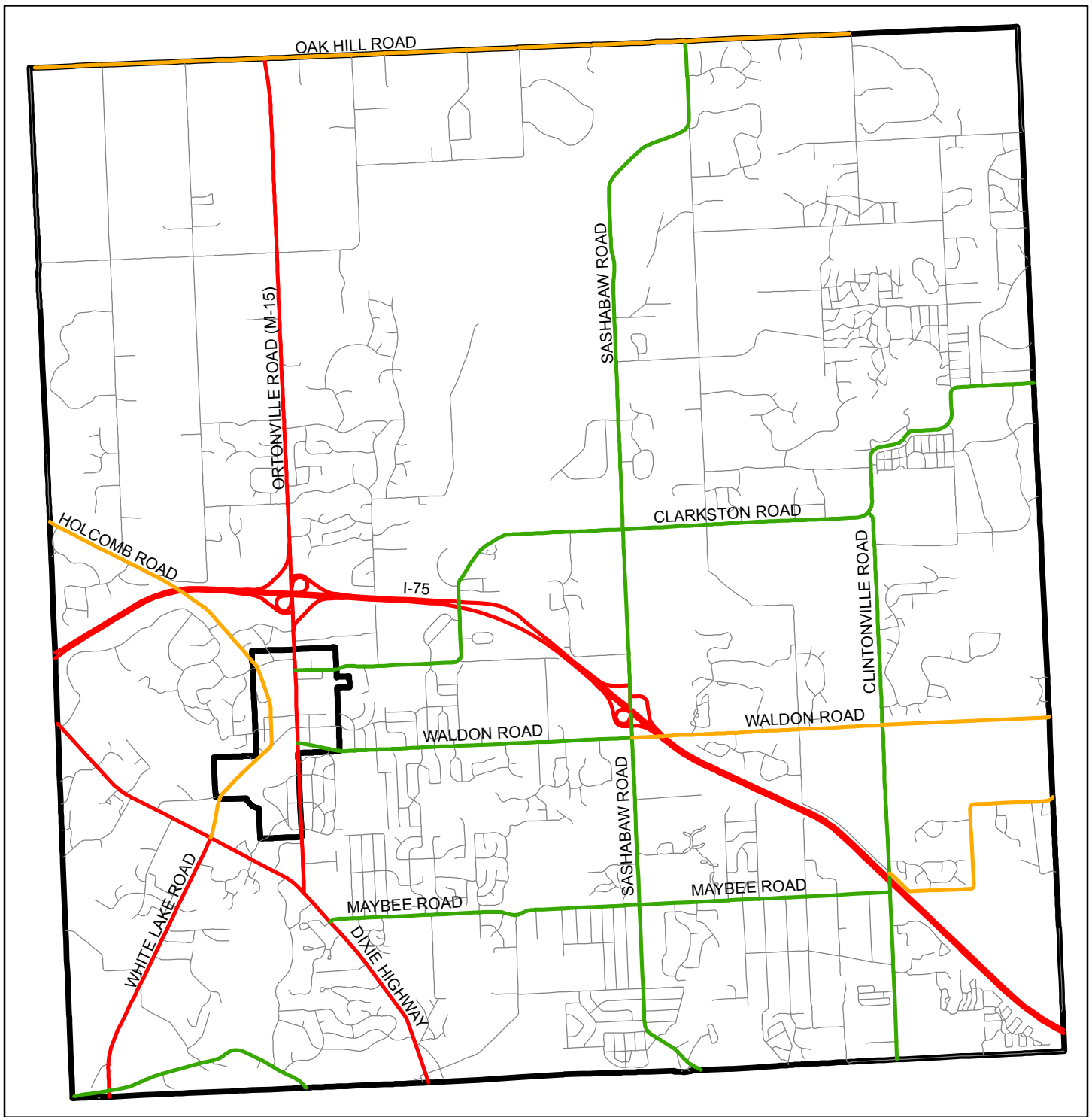
Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended, creates a fund into which specific transportation taxes are deposited, sets priorities for the use of transportation revenues, and charges county road commissions with the responsibility of classifying county primary and local roads. The classifications developed by the county road commissions are subject to Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) approval. Roads designated as primary roads must be of “the greatest importance”. This determination is based on traffic volumes, primary generators of traffic served and other factors.

MDOT and the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) share responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the road network within Independence Township. In Independence Township, MDOT is responsible for maintenance and improvement of I-75, US-24 and M-15.

The remainder of Independence Township’s roads falls under the jurisdiction of the RCOC. By designating a road as part of the County Primary System, State and Federal weight and gas tax revenues can be obtained for maintenance. All public roads not classified as interstate, state, or primary roads are local roads.

## **Functional Classification**

The Transportation Plan presented on the following page proposes the hierarchy of transportation routes based upon the National Functional Classification (NFC) System. NFC is a planning tool which has been used by federal, state and local transportation agencies since the late 1960’s. Functional classifications are used to group streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the character of traffic service they are intended to provide. The NFC designation also determines whether a road is eligible for federal funds, either as part of the National Highway System (usually limited to principal arterials) or through the Surface Transportation Program. Federal-aid roads include: all principal arterials, all minor arterials, all urban collectors, and all rural major collectors.



## INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP VISION 2020 UPDATE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### Legend

- Principal Arterials
- Minor Arterials
- Major Collectors
- Minor Collectors
- Local Roads





### *Principal Arterials*

These roadways are at the top of the classification hierarchy. The primary function of such roadways is to carry relatively long distance, through-travel movements. Examples include interstates and other freeways as well as state routes between larger cities. Principal Arterials within Independence Township include I-75, M-15, US-24 and White Lake Road.

### *Minor Arterials*

Minor arterials include roads connecting intra-urban land uses. These roads tend to accommodate slightly shorter trips than principal arterials. Minor arterials within Independence Township include Sashabaw, Clintonville and Clarkston Roads as well as a portions of Waldon and Maybee Roads.

### *Major Collectors*

Major collectors provide access and mobility within residential, commercial, or industrial use and connect local roads to arterials. Major collectors generally carry more traffic than minor collectors. Major collectors in Independence Township include Holcomb and Oakhill Roads and portions of Waldon and Maybee Roads.

### *Minor Collectors*

Minor collectors also provide access amongst varying land uses, but generally have less traffic than Major Collectors. There are no roadways classified as minor collectors within Independence Township.

### *Local Roads*

Local Roads provide access to individual properties and typically have moderate to low speeds. The improvement of local roads typically rates the lowest priority. The remainder of Township roads are classified as local roads, and are often located in subdivisions.

## Master Right-of-Way Plan

The Independence Township Master Right-of-Way Plan (refer to Map 12), prepared by the Road Commission for Oakland County, was adopted by the Township in 1994 and last updated in 2006. As mentioned previously, the RCOC is responsible for the majority of roadways in Independence Township.

The Master Right-of-Way Plan enables the Township to efficiently direct growth through appropriate designation of land use and density by basing its decisions upon the future improvements and the quality of the road network for the area. The Master Right-of-Way Plan also enables the coordination of efforts between various levels of government responsible for the building and improving of roads.

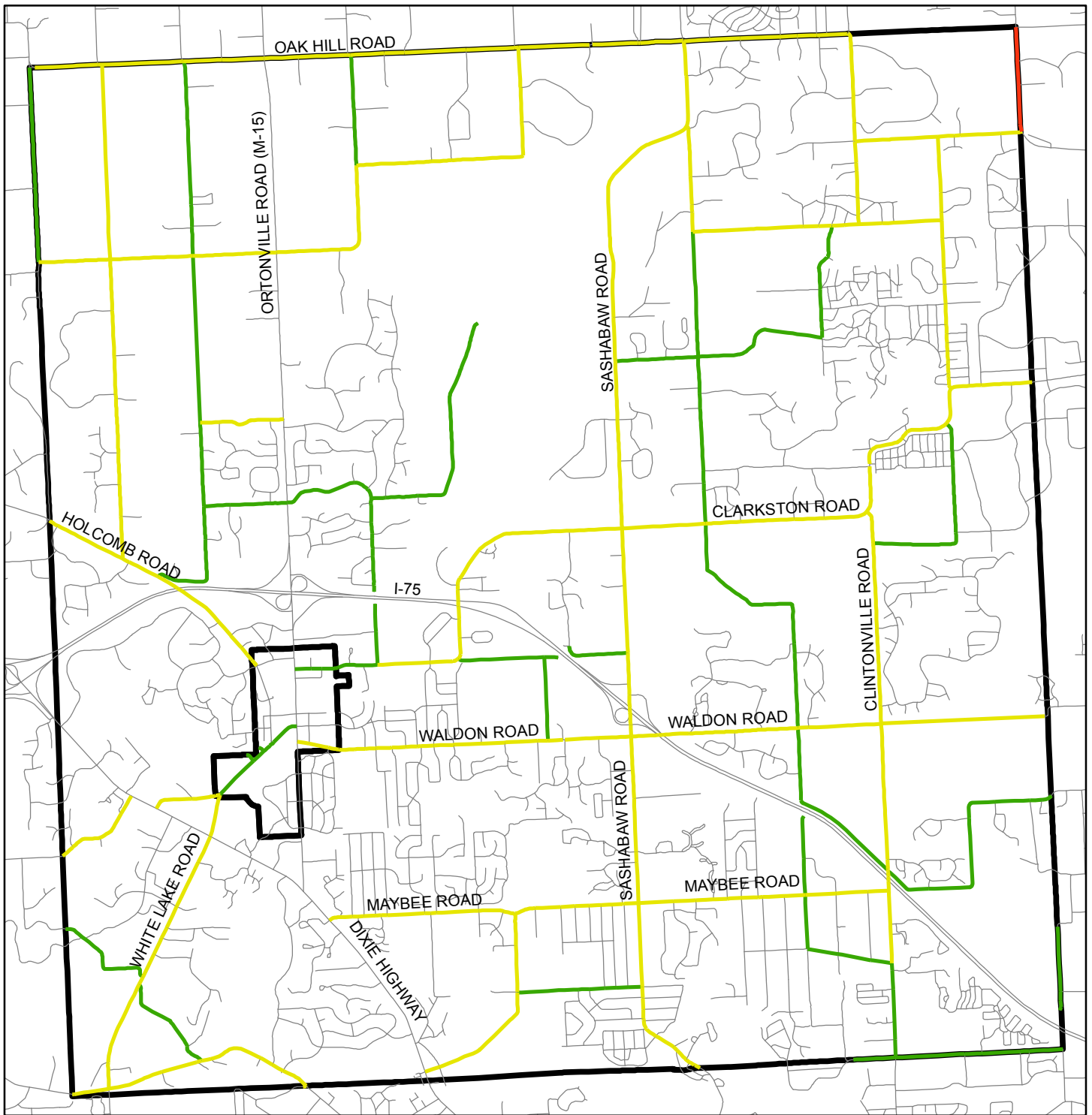
With the exception of Baldwin Road, all county roads within the Township are proposed for either 120 foot right-of-ways or 86 foot right-of-ways. These classifications are adequate to meet the needs of future development in Independence Township as they allow for a wide range of capacity expansion improvements to existing roadways.

## Transportation System Improvements

The Vision 2020 Strategic Plan, the previous master plan effort, identified several specific areas of roadway improvements where the circulation system could be expanded or modified. The goal of these improvements was to improve traffic flow, relieve congestion, and facilitate economic development in targeted areas of the Township.

The Roadway Improvements Map (refer to Map 13) highlights the following locations where improvements have occurred since the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan was first adopted in 1999:

- Clintonville Road—Paved surface from Waldon to Clarkston Road. In Summer 2006, the RCOC widened the two intersections of Clintonville Road and Maybee Road, on either side of I-75. The project involved widening all approaches to three lanes, adding a center left-turn lane for each direction, adding a right-turn lane for southbound Clintonville Road at the intersection south of I-75 and installation of traffic signals.
- Fleming Lake/Walters Roads—Paved surfaces to service Clarkston High School.



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
MASTER RIGHT-OF-WAY PLAN**

**Legend**



- 150' Right-of-Way
- 120' Right-of-Way
- 86' Right-of-Way

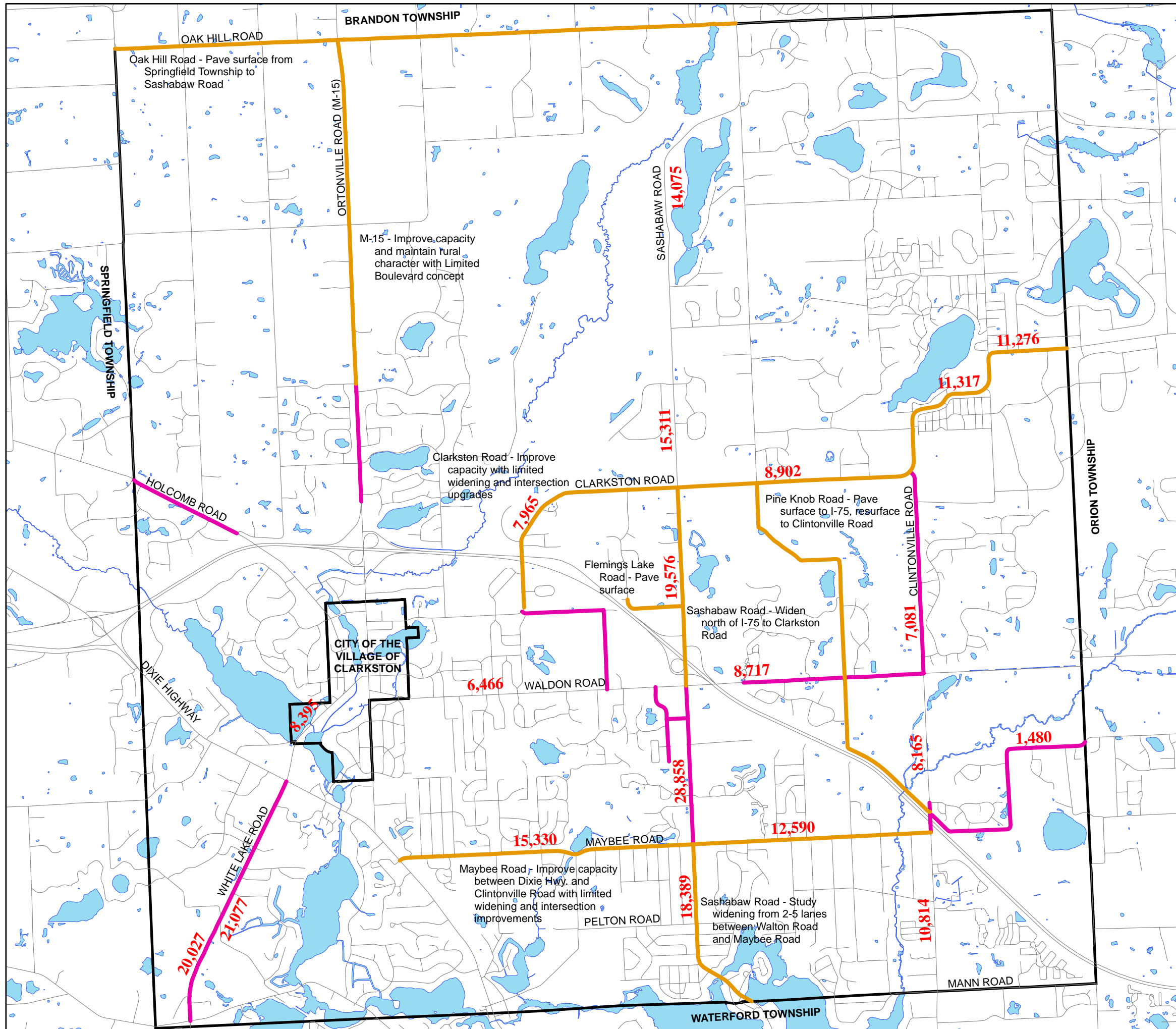




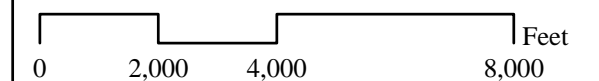
**CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
of  
INDEPENDENCE  
VISION 2020 UPDATE**

*Legend*

-  Completed Roadway Improvements
-  Proposed Roadway Improvements



**MAP 13  
TRANSPORTATION  
IMPROVEMENTS**







- Holcomb Road—Paved surface to Springfield Plains School in cooperation with Springfield Township.
- Maybee Road—Paved surface from Clintonville Road to Township line.
- M-15—Improved capacity south of Hubbard to I-75 interchange.
- Sashabaw Road— Improved capacity south of I-75 with boulevard.
- Waldon Road—Paved surface from Clintonville Road to Royal St. George Drive.
- Waldon Town Center—Completed internal service street linking development zones.
- White Lake Road—Widened to 3 lanes between Andersonville Road and Mustang Drive.

In addition to noting some of the recent roadway improvements within the Township, the Roadway Improvements Map highlights locations where improvements are planned or recommended in the future. These improvements are as follows:

- Clarkston Road— Improve capacity with limited widening and intersection upgrades.
- Fleming Lake Road—Pave surface.
- Maybee Road—Improve capacity between Dixie Highway and Clintonville Road with limited widening and intersection improvements.
- M-15— Improve capacity and maintain character with limited boulevard concept north of Hubbard.

Oakhill Road—Pave surface from Springfield Township to Sashabaw Road.

- Pine Knob Road—Pave surface to I-75 and resurface to Clintonville.
- Sashabaw Road—Improve capacity between Maybee and the Independence/Waterford boundary with limited widening and intersection improvements .

- Sashabaw Road—Widening from 2-5 lanes between Waldon and Clarkston, including the I-75 bridge and interchange improvements.

Two-way traffic volumes, collected by the Road Commission for Oakland County between 2003-2005, are indicated for major roadway segments on the Roadway Improvements Map.

## Safety Paths

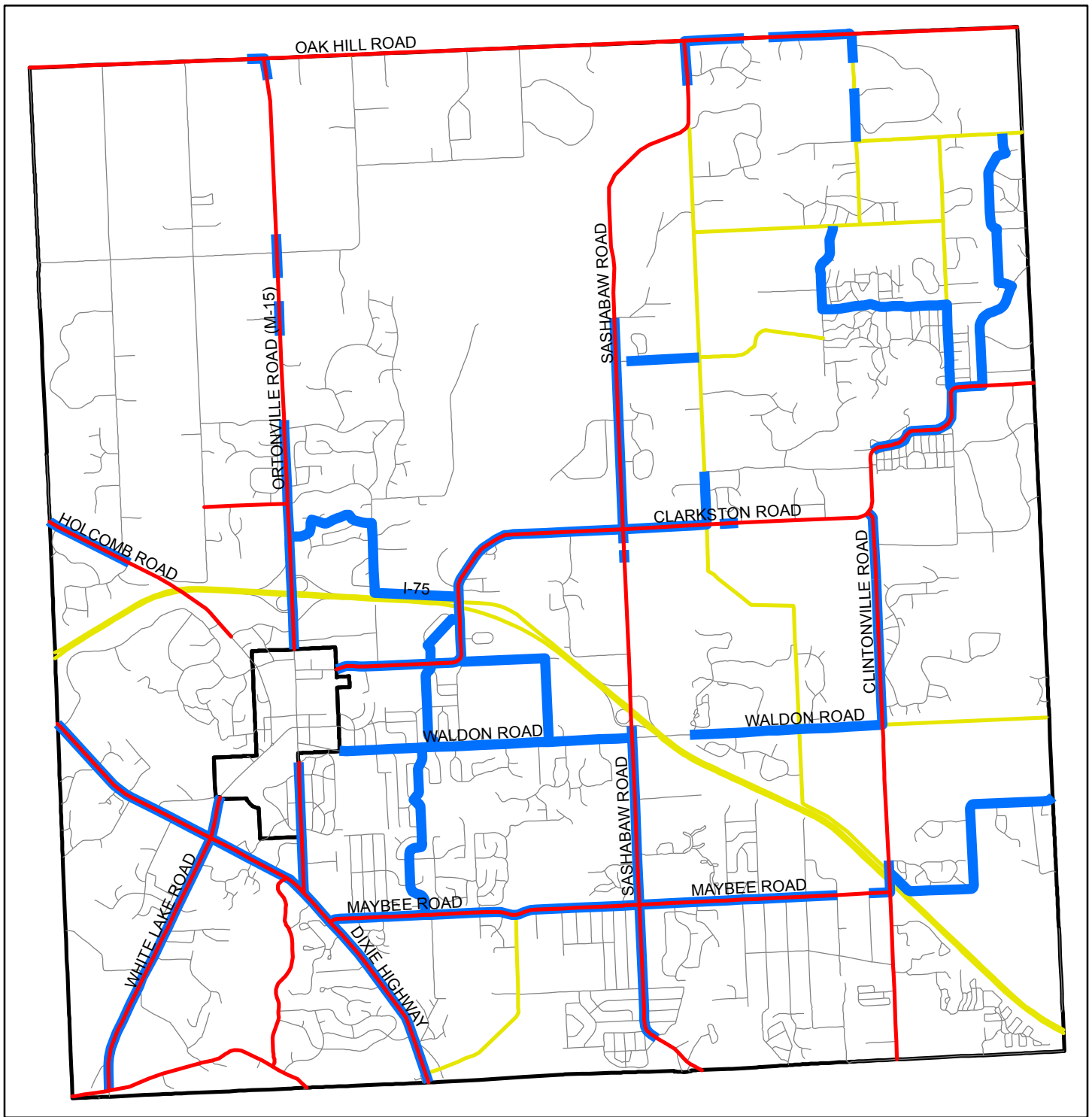
The Township safety path program was initially studied in 1978 and resulted in the formation of a Safety Path Committee. The main goal of the program has been to provide a safe and efficient means of non motorized travel between major activity centers. The Safety Path Committee, in formulating a recommended Safety Path Plan, has reviewed routes within the Township to determine the most feasible and efficient location of proposed paths. The current Safety Path Plan is illustrated on the following page. The basic criteria used to identify these routes were:

1. Location of major activities areas (i.e. schools, shopping, cultural, recreation, etc.)
2. Most heavily traveled routes
3. Safety

Safety paths have been constructed in accordance with the Safety Path Plan either by the Township or by private developers. The Township has used special millage funds to construct priority paths. In addition, Township development regulations require safety paths on designated routes to be constructed when property is developed.

A new type of path, called the Rural Pathway, has been considered. Although no specific routes have been designated, this type of pathway could be appropriate for rural, gravel roads in the Township. The path would be constructed at a width and with materials that are compatible with a rural atmosphere.

In addition to the local safety path system, Oakland County has been promoting a regional system. In response to demand for pathway linkage systems, Oakland County Planning prepared a study of regional recreational lands groupings. These areas are targeted as primary locations for local path networks and major points of interest for county and state linkage tie ins.



**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VISION 2020 UPDATE  
SAFETY PATH MASTER PLAN**

**Legend**

- Priority Safety Path Route
- Existing Safety Path Route/Bike Route
- Future Safety Path Route





## Opportunities for Change

This section highlights a number of ways the Township can influence the function and character of its roadways. The lack of jurisdictional responsibility over the roadway system does not mean the Township is unable to have influence over the function and character of its roadways. The Township is in the position to influence road agency policy and furthermore has authority over land use decisions, which are often inseparable from transportation.

Several areas in which the Township can influence transportation are described in the following subsections.

### Access Management

Access management is the process or development of a program intended to ensure that the major arterials, intersections and freeway systems serving a community or region will operate safely and efficiently while adequately meeting the access needs of the abutting land uses along the roadway (FHWA, ITE, 2004). Implementing access management techniques can help increase roadway capacity, manage congestion and reduce crashes. Examples of less obvious benefits, in the case of businesses, include: reduction in maintenance and other costs by utilizing shared driveways or eliminating entrance/exit points and increased road frontage and improved aesthetics as a result of eliminating driveways.

There are a number of physical design and policy-related tools and techniques that can be used to achieve access management. Some of the basic design principles that are used to achieve access management are described below:

1. Provide a specialized road system—It is important to design and manage roadways according to the function they are intended to provide.
2. Limit direct access to major roadways—Access control is needed to preserve the traffic function of higher volume roads serving regional thru traffic. Local and collector roadways require more frequent and direct property access.
3. Promote intersection hierarchy—A roadway network should transition from one classification of roadway to another and intersection types should also reflect roadway hierarchy. In concept, for example, two major arterials would form a junction as would a driveway and a local street.

4. Locate signals to favor through movements—Proper placement of signals allows for better coordination of signals, continuous movement of traffic at the desired speed and reduces delays.
5. Preserve the functional areas of intersections and interchanges—The “functional area” refers to the area where motorists respond to the intersection or interchange, decelerate, accelerate, or complete turns. This area is required for safety and efficiency. Access points too close to intersections or interchange ramps should be avoided since they can result in increased congestion and safety issues.
6. Limit the number of conflict points—More collisions and mistakes occur when the driving environment is complex. Simplifying the driving environment by limiting the number of conflict points among vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit helps improve safety.
7. Separate conflict areas—Traffic conflicts can also be reduced by separating conflict areas. Effective ways include minimum distances between intersections and driveways, corner clearance standards that separate driveways from critical approach areas of intersections and encouraging shared driveways. These types of techniques permit less cluttered sight distance for the motorist, thus allowing longer reaction time and improving safety.
8. Remove turning vehicles from through traffic lanes—Vehicles typically slow prior to turning. When turning vehicles are removed from through traffic lanes, better traffic flow and is maintained, roadway capacity is better preserved and safety is improved.
9. Use non-traversable medians to manage left-turn movements—Research shows the majority of access-related crashes involve left turns. The use of medians to channel turning movements to controlled locations is effective in improving safety.
10. Provide a supporting street system and circulation system—Well-planned communities with a supporting network of local and collector streets, unified property access and circulation systems are better able to accommodate development. Furthermore, interconnected street and circulation systems better support alternative forms of transportation. For example, a commercial strip development with separate driveways for each business forces short trips onto arterial roadways, thereby reducing safety and mobility. However,

unified property access with a well-developed circulation system for the same commercial strip development would help prevent unnecessary trips and improve access. (TRB Access Management Manual, 2003)

In order for access management to be successful, cooperation between property owners, local land use authorities, and local, county and state transportation agencies is essential. In 2001, The Michigan Department of Transportation developed an access management guidebook and since that time has pursued a number of statewide corridor access management plans. In December 2004, an Access Management Plan was completed for M-15, Michigan's first Recreational Heritage Route. Independence Township is the first community in the southern end of the M-15 corridor.

### Traffic Calming

Traffic calming techniques use physical and visual cues to encourage drivers to travel at slower speeds. Traffic calming is intended to be self-enforcing, with the design of the roadway providing the desired effect. When implemented correctly, traffic calming has been shown to reduce traffic speeds, reduce the number and severity of crashes and reduce noise levels. Other benefits of traffic calming are less measurable and can include aspects such as improving community livability. There are numerous devices and techniques that communities have successfully used for "traffic calming". In some cases a single device may be implemented, while in others, a combination of techniques achieves the desired outcome. Some typical traffic calming measures are as follows:

- Gateways / Entryways. A special entrance feature or gateway has the effect of narrowing a street at the entryway into a neighborhood. It helps create identity to a neighborhood and increases driver awareness of common neighborhood elements, like pedestrians and children crossing the street.
- Speed Bumps / Speed Tables. Speed bumps are mounds of paving material placed across a roadway for the purpose of causing drivers to reduce their speed. Speed tables are similar to bumps, but are constructed with a flat table in the center portion. Both speed bumps and tables reduce speed and may reduce traffic volume by discouraging cut-through traffic.
- Cul-de-sacs. Perhaps the most common form of traffic calming devices are cul-de-sacs which represents a complete closure of a street either at a location that might otherwise be an intersection, or at mid-block location. This technique has proven to be very effective at reducing traffic speed and volume, increasing the safety for all users of the right-of-way.



- **Alternative Pavement Surfaces.** Alternative pavement surfaces, such as pavers or cobblestone, have the effect of increasing driver perception of a change in driving environment. Alternative surfaces can be used for the entire street or just for sections of the street.
- **Curvilinear Roads.** Straight roads increase speed. Curves break up the driver's line of sight and require the driver to drive more alertly. This technique increases the potential for reduced traffic speed and volume, thereby increasing safety on the road.
- **Roundabouts / Traffic Circles.** A roundabout is a circular barrier placed in the middle of an intersection to restrict the movement of traffic through that intersection. This tool tends to reduce driver speed by interrupting the direct flow of traffic and requiring turning movements. Traffic circles can also discourage cut-through traffic. Circles can be landscaped to reduce road impervious surface.

### Corridor Improvement Authorities

On December 19, 2005, Governor Granholm signed Public Act 280 of 2005 (the Act), which provides a new community development tool designed specifically for the commercial corridors of Michigan. The Act allows communities to create "Corridor Improvement Authorities" (CIA) which function in a manner similar to a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), but with special powers, conditions, and criteria unique to commercial corridors.

The Act is intended to combat the deterioration of existing business districts and promote economic development efforts within these districts. Unlike DDAs, communities are permitted to create as many CIA districts as they wish, provided no single parcel is located within more than one CIA district. It stands to reason, therefore, that separate and distinct CIA bodies should be permitted to refine the appearance of and initiate improvements to these areas.

Another distinction of CIA districts is the ability for municipalities to develop a single CIA district for a corridor that is located in more than one community. Such benefits as continuity of appearance, uniformity of improvements and land use regulations, and cooperative traffic management are all potential benefits of multi-jurisdictional CIA districts.

Within Independence Township, recent efforts have been focused on establishing a Corridor Improvement Authority for Sashabaw Road. The specific goals of the Corridor Improvement Authority and proposed projects can be found in the Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan adopted the by the Township Board on May 16, 2007.

In the future, there may be other opportunities for Corridor Improvement Authorities within the township.



# *Greenways Plan*

## **Introduction**

Greenways are linear networks of open space. These conservation corridors connect communities' natural and cultural resources. Greenways may follow natural features, such as waterways and ridges, or built features, such as abandoned railroads, utility lines, and scenic roads. They can link homes to workplaces, schools, shops, and recreation areas. They conserve green space, protect natural resources, provide recreational opportunities, allow alternative modes of transportation, and allow for visual access of natural areas.

## **Purpose of the Greenways Plan**

Greenways serve an important environmental and aesthetic purpose. With increased development and urbanization, the Township's landscape has become progressively more fragmented. Large tracts of open space have been significantly reduced, as have connections between them. The repercussions of fragmentation are two fold: 1) humans do not have the visual access to large tracts of land, often referred to as viewsheds, and 2) size of wildlife habitats have been significantly reduced, resulting in less diversity, an important component of environmental health.

The Greenways Plan is designed to reduce this visual and habitat fragmentation within the landscape by encouraging connections between distinct tracts of open space so as to form a network. Greenways as conservation corridors of open space maximize the amount of diversity in a habitat, and allow for a design whose visual quality is optimized. They are also instrumental in preserving vital environmental resources and protecting groundwater and surface water resources.

The Greenways Plan presented on the following page identifies the Township's important natural and cultural resources. These features include the following:

- Waterway/wetland corridors and other natural resources
- Safety Path System
- Established tree canopied streets

- Parks and other preserved areas
- Cluster developments with private open space

By identifying these features, the plan illustrates the existing and potential networks of open space throughout the Township. In this way the Greenways Plan communicates how design, development, land use, and acquisition can be directed in a way which encourages those links.

### Oakland County's Green Infrastructure Visioning Project

Oakland County recently initiated a Green Infrastructure Visioning Project that “focuses on identifying an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, guides sustainable development, and provides associated economic and quality-of-life benefits to our communities”. As part of this project, communities within Oakland County (through four community representatives) have been asked to participate in a four phase process that involves mapping green infrastructure, determining best land management practices and community planning tools, establishing community conservation goals and tracking mechanisms and identifying funding for green infrastructure. This county-wide effort will help Independence Township build upon the Greenways Plan provided in this Master Plan and can help refine priority areas within the Township and identify additional funding opportunities.

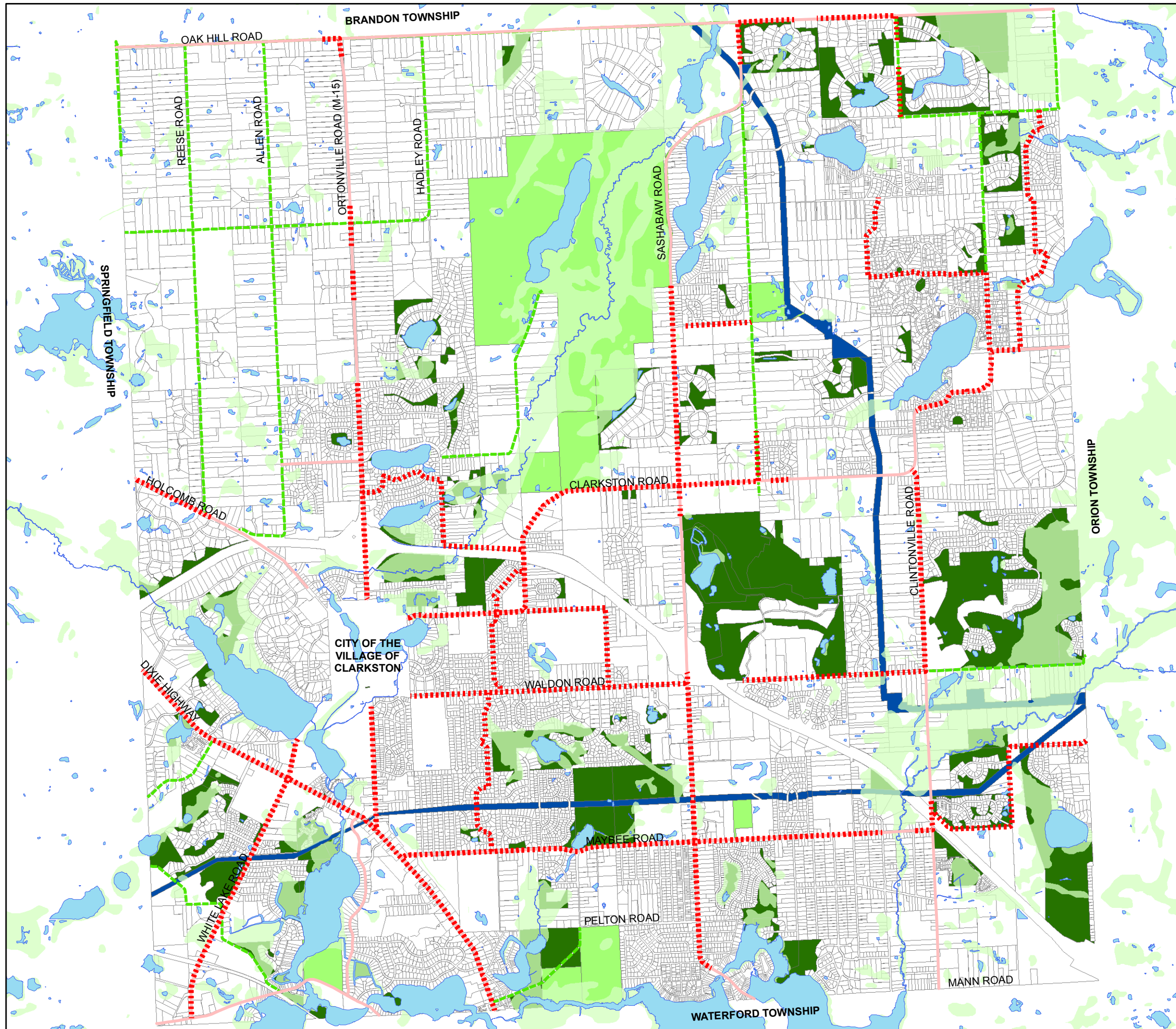
#### **Green Infrastructure**

*The concept of “green infrastructure” is a contemporary approach to the issue of community open space. It looks at open space as more than a mere amenity, but as a system that is every bit as necessary to the community's health and success as conventional, or “grey” infrastructure systems. By repositioning the issue of open space in this way, emphasis is placed on creating healthy and functional networks of open space that are based on ecological or other rational and scientific principles. This approach results in a system of open space that exhibits connectivity, rather than isolated parcels and preserves.*

### Opportunities for Linkage: Central Components of the Greenways Plan

The Greenways Plan is composed of several separate components which work together to form the greenway network. Each component requires distinct management techniques in order to optimize their respective contribution to the overall plan.

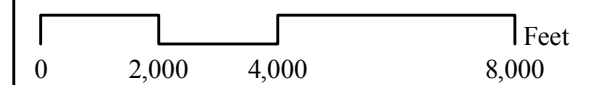
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VISION 2020 UPDATE**



**Legend**

-  Existing Safety Path Route
-  Priority Safety Path Route
-  Roadways With Rural Character
-  Utility Easements
-  Privately Dedicated Open Space
-  Publicly Dedicated Open Space
-  Wetlands (Outside of Dedicated Open Space)
-  Lakes & Rivers

**MAP 15  
GREENWAYS PLAN**



DATE: OCTOBER 2008



Below is a more detailed description of each component and the specific management techniques which can be used to build a system of visual and habitat open space.

### *Water/Wetland Corridors*

The Greenways Plan illustrates the five major waterway/wetland corridors which run through the Township. Large tracts of undeveloped land, relatively intact riparian corridors, and woodlands still exist in many of these areas. Given these characteristics, special consideration for the preservation of open space and natural habitat through fee simple purchase and/or conservation easements are particularly important in the management of the waterway/wetland corridors. Below is a description of each of these major waterway/wetland systems.

- Upper Clinton/Independence Oaks - Located in the north central area of the Township, this waterway/wetland corridor contains the headwaters of the Clinton River and connected wetlands and tributaries. Oakland County's Independence Oaks Park is also located in this area preserving large areas of wetlands and natural landscapes. Independence Oaks also provides recreational facilities such as bike paths and nature trails, and is an important facility to be connected for pedestrian usage.
- Lower Clinton/Deer Lake - The Lower Clinton/Deer Lake corridor encompasses that portion of the Clinton River which is south of I-75 and Deer Lake, whose water flow is connected to the Clinton River. The area through which this waterway/wetland corridor flows is significantly built-out; however, there are still small areas of open space remaining which offer protection to wildlife resources and recreational opportunities. Restoration of degraded habitat in this area is a central management technique in order to create connections in a fragmented landscape.
- Sashabaw Creek - The Sashabaw Creek waterway/wetland complex is located in the southeastern corner of the Township, and is composed of large tracts of undeveloped land and the significant riparian corridor of the Sashabaw Creek. Acquisition of open space either through direct purchase or conservation easement will protect these large tracts of undeveloped land. New development in this area designed in a cluster layout which minimizes impervious surfaces, protects natural features, and remains out of the floodplain will protect the integrity of the area.



- Upper Paint Creek - Located in the northeastern corner of the Township, this wetland complex connects with Round Lake which in turn connects to Paint Creek. Much of this smaller wetland system area is built-out; however, coordination of open space and maintenance of the tree-canopied street with its hedgerow-like wildlife habitat will maintain visual and wildlife connections.
- Waldon/Spring Lake - While being densely built-out, the Waldon/Spring Lake waterway/wetland complex has also maintained significant areas of privately and publicly dedicated open space which has been well coordinated. Excellent opportunities for pedestrian linkage exist in this area with the safety path system on the periphery and the Central Detroit Edison Utility Corridor bisecting the area. Additionally, visual coordination of open space in the area has been significant.

### *Roads with Rural Character*

Roads with rural character defined by mature street tree canopies are important aspects of the Greenways Plan both for visual and habitat reasons. The buffer at the side of the road provides limited shelter and habitat connection for wildlife. Additionally, these tree-canopied transportation corridors offer visual access to natural, seemingly expansive areas of open space. Roads with rural character are found in the northern portion of the Township as well as in the Pine Knob and Sashabaw Creek areas.

The Oakland County Road Commission has jurisdiction over all local and primary roads within the Township, and almost all tree-canopied streets come under this category. The Road Commission's design policies do not protect these roads with rural character. The image below shows typical existing roads, and how improvements made by the Road Commission significantly alter their character.

Additionally, utility companies have the right to maintain their lines, and again their design policies do not protect street tree-canopies. While the Township has no control over the Road Commission's and utility companies' actions, the following policies can address this issue:

1. Encourage private internal roads within new developments which retain a rural character by utilizing a planted buffer immediately adjacent to the paved road.
2. Limit the number of individual access drives, the number of frontage splits, and encourage clustered development with shared drives so that the continuity of the tree canopy is maintained.

3. Encourage pruning of trees to accommodate utilities in such a way as to maintain tree shape and integrity.

### *Pedestrian Linkage: Safety Path System and Utility Easements*

The Safety Path System is an integral component of the recreational and alternative modes of transportation linkage aspects of the Greenways Plan. Safety paths serve to connect several residential areas with schools, shopping areas, and other public facilities. The Greenways Plan illustrates existing and priority safety paths throughout the Township as documented in the Safety Path Master Plan. Additionally, the Central Detroit Edison Corridor utility easement, which runs east to west in the southern portion of the Township, and the Northcentral Detroit Edison Corridor utility easement, which runs north to south in the eastern end of the Township, are existing, uninterrupted corridors of open space which cross the length and breadth of the Township and traverse four of the waterway/wetland corridors. By utilizing these corridors, recreational opportunities for Greenways can be expanded, and pedestrian linkage among several of the water/wetland corridors can be established.

### *Coordination of Open Space Among Developments*

New development in the Township deserves special attention in the Greenways Plan. Independence Township has provisions in its Zoning Ordinance to permit cluster developments. Clustering can be a very useful tool in the preservation of open space at the site specific level; however, a cluster development cannot work on its own. To create a network of open space, coordination must be made among the clustered developments. The Greenways Plan identifies existing cluster developments with preserved open space by identifying the privately dedicated open space. The design of new developments can then be coordinated with the preserved open space design of other developments in order to create larger and better configured areas. Though the same amount of open space may be preserved, developments with coordinated open space design produce a less fragmented landscape, thereby offering a more connected wildlife habitat and providing visual access to larger areas of open space. This aspect of the Greenways Plan will be especially important in the northwestern and eastern portions of the Township where there are still large areas of undeveloped land and important natural resources.

Pine Knob Country Estates preserved a large area of open space along its northcentral border and the northern extension of the site. Later, when Avington Park was proposed

to be developed, the site's open space design was coordinated with that of Pine Knob Country Estates, thus creating a more rural atmosphere with larger open space views and increased area for wildlife habitat.

The Greenways Plan can be an important tool for developers, Planning Commissioners, designers, and all others involved with land use planning to guide development in such a way that visual and environmental fragmentation is reduced, and land is used most efficiently and effectively.

## *Implementation*

The Master Plan is essentially a statement of policies, objectives, and goals designed to accommodate future growth and redevelopment. The Plan forms the philosophical basis for the more technical and specific implementation measures. It must be recognized that development and change will occur either with or without planning, and that the Plan will have little effect upon future development unless adequate implementation programs are established. This section identifies actions and programs which will be useful if the plan is to be followed.

A variety of programs or administrative “tools” are available to help the plan succeed. These include:

### **Zoning Requirements**

Zoning is the development control that has been most closely associated with planning. Originally zoning was intended to inhibit nuisances and protect property values. However, zoning should also serve additional purposes which include:

1. To promote orderly growth in a manner consistent with land use policies and the Master Plan.
2. To promote attractiveness in the Township’s physical environment by providing variation in lot sizes, etc., and appropriate land uses.
3. To accommodate special, complex or unique uses through such mechanisms such as planned unit developments, overlay districts, or special use permits.
4. To guide development away from conflicting land uses (i.e. industrial uses adjacent to residential areas).
5. To preserve and protect existing land uses until such time as they may change in accordance with the Master Plan.
6. To promote the positive redevelopment of underutilized areas of the Township.

7. The Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Plan Map in themselves should not be considered as the major long range planning policy of the Township. Rather, the Master Plan should be regarded as a statement of planning policy, and zoning should be used to assist in implementing that policy.

## Zoning Plan

Certain areas of the Township have been designated for a land use classification in the Master Plan which conflicts with either existing zoning or existing land uses. These designations were developed in order to guide the desired development of these areas. Certain areas may benefit from a Township-initiated rezoning in order to provide more consistency. Additionally, other areas may continue with an existing zoning designation which, although may currently conflict with the Master Plan land use designation, may be rezoned in the future once the existing use terminates or conditions change. It is at this future time that the land use recommendations will provide guidance as to the proper zoning. The Township Planning Commission should further study and make decisions in regards to which areas warrant Township initiated rezoning. The following table indicates the comparable Zoning District for each Master Plan designation:

<u>Master Plan Designation</u>	<u>Comparable Zoning Category</u>
<u>Residential Cateogies</u>	
Rural	R-1R Rural Residential
Estate	R-1C Suburban Farm Residential
Suburban	R-1B Suburban Residential
Single Family	R-1A Single Family Residential
Traditional Lakefront	R-1A Single Family Residential
Single Family Attached / Detached	Planned Unit Development
Multiple Family	R-2 Multiple Family
Mobile Home Park	RMT Mobile Home Park, PUD, Planned Unit Development

Non-Residential and Mixed Use Categories

Office Service	OS-1 Office Service One / OS-2 Office Service Two
Planning Mixed Use	Planned Unit Development
Local Commercial	C-1 Local Business
General Commercial	C-1 Local Business, C-3 Highway Commercial
Planned Research Office	R-O Research Office
Industrial Office Park	IOP Industrial Office Park
General Industrial	ML Limited Industrial, MH Heavy Industrial
Recreational - Conservation	REC Recreation
Public, Semi-Public	Most districts

**Capital Improvements Program**

Capital improvements programs consider the funding and timing of all municipally related capital needs including such items as roadways, utilities, parks and recreation, Township Hall expansions/development, etc. In May 2007, the Township Board adopted the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), which outlined prioritization of capital projects for the future. Yearly review of the CIP will provide the opportunity to keep the plan up to date and add new projects. The Land Use Plan and Strategic Plan were used as key reference documents in the preparation of the Capital Improvements Plan. This ensures that public dollars are spent where the most benefit will be received.

**Plan Education**

Citizen involvement and support will be necessary as the Plan is implemented. Local officials should constantly strive to develop procedures which make citizens more aware of the planning process and the day-to-day decision making which affects implementation of the Plan. A dedicated Township webpage on planning issues in the Township is a way of providing citizens quick access to information. A continuous program of discussion, education, and participation will be extremely important as the Township moves toward realization of the goals and objectives contained within the Master Plan.

## Plan Updates

The Plan should not become a static document. The Michigan Planning Act requires the Planning Commission to review and, if needed, amend the Master Plan or adopt a new plan at least every five years. However, the Township Planning Commission should review the plan at least on an annual basis to determine if changes are needed. The Master Plan should also be coordinated with the Township's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Safety Path Plan, and other special purpose plans.

## *Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms*

- A -

**Access.** A way of approaching or entering a property. In zoning and subdivision regulations, lots usually are required to have direct access to a public street or to a private street meeting public standards. This is done not only to permit entry of residents and other uses but also to permit emergency vehicles to reach buildings.

**Aesthetics.** A subjective assessment of beauty.

**Aesthetic Resource.** Natural resources such as open vistas, woods and scenic view sheds, whose appearance is an important ingredient in the quality of life in a community.

**Amenities.** Anything that makes life more attractive. Outdoor amenities include open spaces, green belts, sites for recreation and play, areas of scenic beauty, etc.

**Aquifer.** A distinct band or layer of gravel, sand, or porous, fractured, or cavernous and vesicular rock capable of holding and/or conducting water. When fully charged, an aquifer is saturated with water.

**Aquifer Recharge.** The addition of water to an aquifer that occurs naturally from infiltration of rainfall and from water flowing over earth materials that allow water to infiltrate below the land surface.

- B -

**Base Map.** A map showing the essential natural or man-determined features of an area (e.g., lot lines). It is used as the starting point for many planning operations.

**Biodiversity.** The variety of life on earth and the ecosystems they form.

**Blight.** Physical and economic conditions within an area that cause a reduction of or lack of proper utilization of that area. A blighted area is one that has deteriorated or has been arrested in its development by physical, economic, or social forces.



**Brownfield.** Abandoned industrial site likely to have ground pollution that is a deterrent to redevelopment.

**Buffer Zone.** A strip of land designated to protect one type of land use from another with which it is incompatible. Where a commercial district abuts a residential district, for example, additional landscaping, use, yard, or height restrictions may be imposed to protect residential properties. The term may also be used to describe any zone that separates two unlike zones such as a multi-family housing zone between single-family housing and commercial uses.

- C -

**Carrying Capacity.** The estimated maximum number of persons or dwelling units that can be served by existing and planned infrastructure systems and natural capabilities of the land.

**Carrying Capacity (transportation).** The number of vehicles that can be accommodated on a roadway (usually a highway, turnpike or freeway).

**Census.** An official count each ten (10) years of the number of people in the nation, identifying and recording their conditions, their resources, and other data.

**Circulation System.** An organized system of transportation facilities to provide for the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.

**Citizen Participation.** The formal and informal means by which persons not in official positions can take part in or influence governmental decision-making.

**Clustered or Open Space Development.** Clustered development provides for closer grouping of homes through reduction of lot size on the most buildable portions of a site while, at the same time, preserving a large portion of the parcel (including environmentally sensitive areas) as undeveloped open space.

**Community Facilities.** Public or privately owned facilities used by the public, such as streets, schools, libraries, parks, and playgrounds; also facilities owned and operated by non-profit private agencies such as churches, settlement houses, and neighborhood associations.

**Community Water and Sewer System.** Water treatment and distribution systems and sewer collection, treatment, and disposal systems that serve multiple residential, commercial, industrial, and/or other uses, are usually operated by public agencies, where property owners served usually pay fees for the service.

**Compatibility.** Compatibility refers to the characteristics of different uses or activities or design which allow them to be located near or adjacent to each other in harmony. Some elements affecting compatibility including height, scale, mass, and bulk of structures. Other characteristics include pedestrian or vehicular traffic, and parking impacts. Other important characteristics that affect compatibility are landscaping and architecture. “Compatibility” does not mean “the same as”. Rather, compatibility refers to development proposals being sensitive to, and maintaining the character of, existing development.

**Condominium.** The legal arrangement in which a dwelling unit in an apartment building, residential development, commercial or industrial space is individually owned but in which the common areas are owned, controlled and maintained through an organization consisting of all the individual owners.

**Conservation.** The management or control of human use of resources and activities on the planet, in an attempt to restore, enhance, protect, and sustain the quality and quantity of a desired mix of species, and ecosystem conditions and processes for present and future generations.

**Conservation Easement.** A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a private landowner and a municipal agency or qualified not-for-profit corporation to restrict the development, management, or use of the land. That agency holds the interest and is empowered to enforce its restrictions against the current landowner and all subsequent owners of the land.

**Contour Lines.** Lines on a topographical map that indicate slope.

**Cul-De-Sac.** A street that terminates in a permanent turn around and which by design is not intended to continue beyond its terminal point.

**Curvilinear Street Pattern.** A street system that discourages through traffic in a subdivision by the use of a number of curved streets.

- D -

**Dedication.** A turning over of private land for a public use by a property owner, and its acceptance for such use by the governmental agency in charge of the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for streets, parks, school sites, or other public uses are often made conditions for the approval of a development by a planning commission.

**Demographics.** The descriptive statistics of a population income, age, sex, etc.).

**Density.** The average number of families, persons, or housing units per unit of land; usually density is expressed “per acre”. Gross density includes the area necessary for streets, and other supportive facilities. Net density typically does not include land area for streets and facilities.

**Density, control of.** A limitation on the occupancy of land. Density can be controlled through zoning by one or a combination of the following methods: use restrictions, e.g., single or multiple family dwellings; minimum lot size requirements; floor area ratios; land use intensity zoning; setback and yard requirements; minimum house-size requirements; establishing ratios between the number and types of housing units and land area; direct limitations on units per acre; requirements for lot area per dwelling unit; and other means. The major distinction between different residential districts typically is in their allowable density.

**Density Transfer.** Permitting unused allowable densities in one area to be used in another area. Where density transfer is permitted, the average density over an area would remain constant, but would allow internal variations. Within a single development, the result would normally be a clustering of buildings on smaller lots while retaining some land in open space.

**Development.** The physical alteration of land by humans. Development includes: subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities).

**District.** A district is a portion of a community identified on the locality’s zoning map within which one (1) or more principal land uses are permitted along with their accessory uses and any special land uses permitted by the zoning provisions for the district.

**Drainage.** (1) Surface water runoff; (2) The removal of surface water or groundwater from land by drains, grading or other means which include runoff controls to minimize erosion and sedimentation during the construction or development, the means for preserving the water supply and the prevention or alleviation of flooding.

**Drainage System.** Pipes, swales, natural features and man-made improvements designed to carry drainage.

**Drainage Way.** Any natural or artificial watercourse, trench, ditch, swale or similar depression into which surface water flows.

**Duplex.** A building designed or used exclusively for the occupancy of two (2) families living independently of each other and having separate kitchen and toilet facilities for each family.

**Dwelling Unit.** A house's room or apartment used as living quarters for a family or individual. A dwelling unit is a unit of housing with full housekeeping facilities for a family.

**Dwelling Unit (multiple).** A building composed of three (3) or more dwelling units, usually having common access, service system, and use of land.

- E -

**Easement.** A right given by the owner of land to another party for specific limited use of that land. For example, a property owner may give or sell an easement on his property to allow utility facilities like power lines or pipelines. An easement may be acquired by government through (requiring) dedication (as a condition of approval) when the purchase of an entire interest in the property may be too expensive or unnecessary.

**Ecosystem.** A community of plants and animals interacting with each other and their physical/chemical environment.

**Enabling Act.** An enabling act is legislation passed by the state legislature authorizing cities, towns, and villages to carry out functions in the public interest. The power to adopt comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and land use regulations is delegated to towns, villages, and cities.

**Environment.** The environment is defined broadly under the State Environmental Quality Review Act to include the physical conditions that will be affected by a proposed action, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, resources of agricultural, archeological, historic or aesthetic significance, existing patterns of population concentration, distribution, or growth, existing community or neighborhood character, and human health.

- *F* -

**Facade.** The face or elevation of building.

**Facade Easement.** An acquired right of use interest, or privilege a building(s) fronts owned by another; usually guards against incompatible alteration or destruction.

**Floodplain.** A floodplain is the area on the sides of a stream, river, or watercourse that is subject to periodic flooding. The extent of the floodplain is dependent on soil type, topography, and water flow characteristics.

**Forest.** In the narrow technical sense, a vegetation community dominated by trees and other woody shrubs, growing close enough together that the tree tops touch or overlap, creating various degrees of shade on the forest floor.

**Forested Upland.** Areas consisting of mesic forests dominated by beech and sugar maples as well as dry mesic oak hardwood forests on dryer sandy loams.

**Forested Wetlands.** Areas consisting of relict conifer swamps, and/or southern floodplain forests.

**Frontage.** Zoning laws typically require that developable lots front on a dedicated street, a private road of record, or a newly approved private road.

- *G* -

**GIS.** Geographic Information System – Computer mapping systems that produces multiple “layers” of graphic information about a community or region.

**Goals.** Goals are broad statements of ideal future conditions that are desired by the community and contained in the comprehensive plan. For example, a community may have a goal of “increasing the supply of affordable housing.”

**GPS.** “Global Positioning System”. A term which encompasses the entire field of computerized mapping. The system consists of a constellation of twenty-four (24) satellites orbiting the earth at a very high altitude. GPS satellites transmit signals that allow one (1) to determine, with great accuracy, the locations of GPS receivers. The receivers can be fixed on the Earth, in moving vehicles, aircraft, or in low-Earth orbiting satellites. GPS is used in air, land and sea navigation, mapping, surveying and other applications where precise positioning is necessary.

**Grade.** The rate of incline or decline in the land’s surface. (Expressed as a percent).

**Grade Crossing.** A crossing at grade, the point of crossing of a railroad with another railroad or highway at a given grade level.

**Grade Separation.** The separation at different levels of intersecting highways or railroads, by bridge, tunnel, or under-pass, so as to permit the roads to cross without obstructing free traffic movement on either. ,

**Gridiron Street Pattern.** A pattern of streets that from the air looks like a gridiron -- that is, based on right-angle intersections and parallel sets of roadways.

**Groundwater.** The supply of freshwater under the surface in an aquifer or soil that forms the natural reservoir for potable water.

**Growth Management.** The use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to permit it to determine its own amount, type, and rate of growth and to channel it into designated areas. Comprehensive plans often form the backbone of the system; devices used to execute growth management policy may include zoning, emphasizing flexibility, capital improvements, programming, adequate public facilities ordinances, urban limit lines, population caps or ceilings, moratoriums, transfer of development rights, and many others. Conceptually, growth management differs from conventional approaches in that it does not accept likely population growth and its rate as inevitable; these are open to question and are subject to determination by public policy and action.

- H -

**Habitat Fragmentation.** The alteration or breaking up of habitat into discrete or tenuously connected islands as a result of’ modification or conversion of the landscape by management activities.

**Highest and Best Use.** The most advantageous and profitable use to which the property is adaptable, considering the present and future business conditions and the uses authorized by applicable zoning and planning.

**Historic District.** An area or group of areas designated by a local unit as having aesthetic, architectural, historical, cultural or archeological significance that is worthy of protection and enhancement. Alterations and improvements of historic structures must be made with minimum interference with the historic features of the building. The local legislature establishes standards that a historic preservation commission or other designated review body, uses to permit, condition, or deny projects proposed in historic districts.

**Historic Landmark.** An individual site or structure that has met local, state and national criteria as having aesthetic, architectural, historic, cultural or archaeological significance and worthy of preservation.

**Historic Preservation.** The designation of historic districts allows for local control over development within these areas. For example, regulations may control where and in what style a new building may be constructed. Also includes maintenance or restoration of structures and districts of historic significance.

**Historic Registration.** An individual site or structure, or district that has met National Register of Historic Places criteria and is deemed worthy of preservation by its association with an event, person, architectural value or its potential to yield information important to history or prehistory.

**Holding Capacity.** The maximum number of people or dwelling units that a planning area would hold if fully developed.

**Hydrology.** The science of water, its properties, and movement (cycling) over and under land surfaces.

- I -

**Impact Fees.** This is a fee or tax imposed on developers to pay for the costs to the community of providing services to a new development. It is a means of providing a fund for financing new improvements without resorting to deficit financing.

**Implementation Program.** An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy. Implementation programs also specify primary responsibility for carrying out the action, a time frame for its accomplishment, and funding source(s), if applicable.

**Improved Land.** Raw land that has been provided with sidewalks, water, sewer, and other basic facilities in preparation for residential or industrial development.

**Industrial Park.** An area zoned and planned for varied industrial uses and developed and managed as a unit, usually with provision for common services for the users, and common requirements for landscaping and design.

**Infrastructure.** The basic installations and facilities, such as water and sewer lines, roads, utilities, transportation and, communication systems, etc. which are necessary.

**Intensity.** The degree to which land is used. While frequently used synonymously with density, intensity has a somewhat broader, though less clear meaning, referring to levels of concentration or activity in uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, recreation, or parking.

**Interchange.** A junction of two (2) or more highways by a system of separate levels that permit traffic to pass from one (1) to another without crossing of traffic streams.

**Inter Governmental Agreements.** Inter-governmental agreements are compacts among municipalities to perform functions together that they are authorized to perform independently.

**Intermittent Wetland.** An herb or herb-shrub wetland along lakeshores or in depressions, experiencing fluctuating water levels seasonally and from year to year.

- L -

**Land Assembly.** The process of acquiring various parcels of real estate to create a contiguous parcel of sufficient size to accommodate a real estate development project.

**Land Bank.** A stockpile of publicly owned land. The result of a program under which a government buys land and holds it for future use as needed.



**Land Trust.** Non-profit group that obtains land or development rights for preservation as open space, parks, farms, and other uses.

**Land Use Controls.** A term generally referring to the use of police power techniques to control and guide land use and development. In actual use, the term normally refers to zoning, subdivision regulations, and official maps.

**Land Development.** The improvement of land with utilities and services, making the land more suitable for resale and developable plots for housing or other purposes.

**Land Fragmentation.** The division of landholdings into parcels too small for economical or efficient use.

**Land Use.** A description of how land is occupied or utilized.

**Land Use Plan.** A basic element of the Master Plan, it designates the future use or reuse of the land within the community, and the policies and reasoning used in arriving at the decisions in the plan. The land use plan serves as a guide to official decisions in regard to the proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes.

**Land Use Regulation.** Local land use regulations are laws enacted by the local legislature for the regulation of any aspect of land use and community resource protection, including zoning, subdivision, special use permit or site plan regulation, or any other regulation that prescribes the appropriate use of property or the scale, location, or intensity of development.

**Land-Use Survey.** A survey of the uses to which land is put in a particular area, usually summarized both in map form and statistically, that shows developed and vacant land, streets, parkland, public buildings, etc.

**Land Trust.** A land trust is a not-for-profit organization, private in nature, organized to preserve and protect the natural and man-made environment by, among other techniques, creating conservation easements that restrict the use of real property.

**Landscaping.** Changing, rearranging, or adding to the original vegetation or scenery of a piece of land to produce an aesthetic effect appropriate for the use to which the land is put. It may include reshaping the land by moving the earth, as well as preserving

the original vegetation or adding vegetation. Landscaping requirements are included in ordinances for a number of reasons. They preserve natural features of a site for ecological and environmental reasons. They make land more attractive for residential and other uses. They can screen from view unattractive uses and they can act as buffers, visually separating different types of uses and screen undesirable features as.

**Leapfrog Development.** The development of relatively cheap land on the urban fringe by jumping over the more expensive land located immediately adjacent to existing development. The result may be serious problems for both the new residents and the public. Not only may there be inadequate access to transportation and utilities, but also other public services, shopping, and other support services may be lacking, and they may cost much more to provide.

**Lot.** The basic development unit, an area with fixed boundaries, used or intended to be used by one (1) building and its accessory building(s) and not divided by any public highway or alley. A “zoning lot” must meet the requirements of the zoning district in which it is located and must front on a public street or an approved private street.

**Lot Area.** Lot area is the total square footage of horizontal area included within the property lines. Zoning ordinances typically set a minimum required lot area for building in each zoning district.

- *M* -

**Market Value.** A hypothetical figure, used in appraisal, condemnation proceedings, and assessment for taxes, which a willing buyer presumably would pay to a willing seller in a free market.

**Master Plan.** A document or series of documents prepared by a planning commission or department setting forth policies for the future of a community. It is normally the result of considerable citizen participation, study and analysis of existing physical, economic, and social conditions, and a projection of future conditions. It serves as a guide for many public decisions, especially land-use changes and preparation of capital improvements programs, and the enactment of zoning and related growth management legislation.

**Median Island.** A strip running down the center of an arterial street which consists of a raised curb and may also include landscaping.

**Mixed Use Zoning.** Zoning which permits a combination of uses within a single development.

**Moratorium.** In planning, a freeze by a local government on all new development pending the completion and adoption of certain planning and/or zoning ordinance requirements, e.g., general plan, zoning ordinance amendment, sewer line installations, or growth management programs. They have also been voted into being by residents of communities whose schools and other public facilities have been overwhelmed by rapid growth.

**Multi-Family Housing.** Buildings with three (3) or more dwelling units are permitted to be constructed, such as garden apartments or multiple story apartment buildings.

- N -

**Natural Area.** A tract of land or water which has the following characteristics: has retained or reestablished its natural character, or has unusual flora and fauna or biotic, geologic, scenic, or other similar features of educational or scientific value, but it need not be undisturbed; has been identified and verified through research and study by qualified observers; may be coextensive with or part of a wilderness area or wild area; does not have any minimum or maximum area requirement.

**Neighborhood.** Residential area within a governmental unit that has some distinct identity to it's inhabit- ants and observers; may be designated by law for citizen participation purposes.

**Neighborhood Development.** Development of an area of a community with characteristics that distinguish it from other community areas and which may include distinct ethnic or economic characteristics, schools or social clubs, or boundaries defined by physical barriers such as major highways and railroads or natural features such as rivers.

**New Urbanism (or Traditional Neighborhood Development).** Design philosophy intended to create a strong sense of community by incorporating features of traditional small towns.

- O -

**Objectives.** Objectives are statements of attainable, quantifiable, intermediate-term achievements that help accomplish goals contained in the comprehensive plan. For example, an objective would be to achieve “the construction of fifty (50) units of affordable housing annually until the year

**One Hundred (100) Year Floodplain.** Area that has a one (1%) percent chance of being flooded in any given year. Over the long term, the area will be covered with floodwaters on an average of once every one hundred (100) years.

**Open Meetings Act.** The Open Meetings Act is a state statute that requires local legislative, administrative, and quasi-judicial bodies to open all of their meetings to members of the public. This law applies to all meetings where a majority of the commission, council or board members are present, except those meetings that are held as executive sessions.

**Open Space.** That part of the community which has not been developed and which is desirable for preservation in its natural state for ecological, historical, or recreational purposes, or in its cultivated state to preserve agricultural, forest, or urban greenbelt areas.

**Ordinance.** An ordinance is an act of a local legislature taken pursuant to authority specifically delegated to local governments by the state legislature.

**Overlay Zones.** A set of zoning requirements in addition to those of the underlying district. Developments within the overlay zone must conform to the requirements of both zones or the more restrictive of the two (2). It usually is employed to deal with special physical characteristics such as flood plains or historical areas.

- P -

**Parcel.** A lot, or contiguous group of lots in single ownership or under single control, and usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

**Performance Standards.** A minimum requirement or maximum allowable limit on the effects or characteristics of a use, usually written in the form of regulatory language. A building code, for example, might specify a performance standard referring to the fire resistance of a wall, rather than specifying its construction materials. Performance

standards in zoning might describe allowable uses with respect to smoke, odor, noise, heat, vibration, glare, traffic generation, visual impact, and so on, instead of the more traditional classifications of “light” or “heavy” lists of uses. It is a more precise way of defining compatibility and at the same time is intended to expand developer’s options. The performance standard approach is based on the technical ability to identify activities numerically (e.g., how much traffic) and to measure them to see if they meet ordinance requirements.

**Permitted Use.** A use by right that is specifically authorized in a particular zoning district. It is contrasted with conditional uses that are authorized only if certain requirements are met and after review and approval by the decision-making entity. Any use authorized in a particular zoning district, whether a permitted use, an as of right or conditional use, or special permit or special exception use.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD).** A form of development usually characterized by a unified site design for a number of housing units, clustering buildings and providing common open space, density increases, and a mix of building types and land uses. It permits the planning of a project and the calculation of densities over the entire development, rather than on an individual lot-by-lot basis. It also refers to a process, mainly revolving around site-plan review, in which public officials have considerable involvement in determining the nature of the development. It includes aspects of both subdivision and zoning regulation and usually is administered either through a special permit or a rezoning process. While PUD’s have most commonly been used for housing developments, they are also frequently applied to other forms of development such as shopping centers, industrial and office parks, and to mixed-use developments which may be any combination, depending on local ordinance. Planned unit development allows the unified, and hence potentially more desirable and attractive, development of an area, based on a comprehensive site plan. PUD can have a number of advantages over conventional lot-by-lot development including: mixing building types and uses to create more heterogeneous and “alive” communities; combining often unusable yard space on individual lots into larger common open spaces; offering greater opportunities for incentives to building lower-cost housing; lower street and utility costs resulting from reduced frontage; and the possibility of increasing the density of a development while keeping desired amenities.

**Planning Commission.** The administrative body, appointed by the legislative body, charged with the administration of the Master Plan, the Zoning Map and Ordinance, and review of other related plan applications. Planning Commission consists of seven (7) members. Planning Commission may be delegated reviewing board functions and a variety of advisory functions, including the preparation of the comprehensive

plan, drafting zoning provisions, or suggesting site plan and subdivision regulations, in addition to other functions. One (1) important purpose of the Planning Commission's advisory role is to provide an impartial and professional perspective on land use issues based on the long range needs of the community contained in the comprehensive plan or other local policy documents. Commissioners are composed of non-specialist citizens and/or elected officials who study the planning choices to be made by their local government and advise lawmakers on them.

**Plat.** A map, generally of a subdivision, showing the location, boundaries, and ownership of individual properties. A plat (sometimes called tracts) may simply be the device for officially recording ownership changes or lot divisions; in communities that have subdivision regulations, submission and approval of a plat is a prerequisite to building. Approval of a preliminary plat, usually by the Planning Commission, involves a determination that the subdivision conforms to the regulations and to the lot-size requirements of the zoning ordinance. To plat means to subdivide; where subdivision regulations are in effect this in turn may mean to obtain the necessary approvals without necessarily intending to improve or build, or, where they are not, to record. Property is frequently platted as a speculative venture; platted, but undeveloped property, may require public purchase or other action to bring it up to current regulatory standards.

**Plot.** An indefinite term usually referring to a piece of usable property, often used synonymously with parcel or site, and, mistakenly, to mean plat.

**Point and Non Point Pollutants** Point source pollutants are those coming out of a pipe into a body of water. Non-point sources are those relating to overland run-off of rainwater which enters the body of water at multiple, natural drainage points. Thus, these include both urban and agricultural run-off.

**Police Power.** The authority of government to exercise controls to protect the public's health, safety, morals, and general welfare. As distinct from eminent domain powers, in which government takes property, no compensation need be paid for the imposition of police power controls. The degree, to which such exercise becomes, in effect, a taking of property, is a question of long standing and has arisen in recent years in connection with the restrictive growth management controls and the requirement for development fees and exactions being imposed by many communities.

**Policy.** A statement of a public body that forms the basis for enacting legislation or making decisions. The policies under which zoning ordinances are enacted and administered should be found in a community's general plan.

**Population Projections.** Estimates of current population are actually a projection from the last census data to the current year, but the term “projection” is generally used for estimates of population in future years. In view of this similarity, it is not surprising that many projection methods are similar to those used for estimating current population.

**Preservation.** A land use designation that signifies little or no human activity or use within the designated area.

**Prime Soils.** High yield soils most suitable for agricultural production.

**Principal Use.** A principal use is the primary use of a lot that is permitted under the district regulations in a zoning law. These regulations may allow one (1) or more principal uses in any given district. Unless the district regulations allow mixed uses, only one (1) principal use may be made of a single lot, along with uses that are accessory to that principal use. The main use of land or structures as distinguished from a secondary or accessory use. A house is a principal use in a residential area; a garage or pool is an accessory use.

**Public Facilities.** Land designated for the location of public services and facilities that are necessary to the community. Typical uses include liquid and solid waste disposal sites, ponding basins, parks, civic centers, schools, airports, hospitals, and cemeteries.

**Public Hearing.** A properly legally announced meeting of an official or official body where the public is allowed to give opinions concerning the issue being considered. Public hearings afford citizens affected by a reviewing board’s decision an opportunity to have their views heard before decisions are made.

**Public Services.** Public services are those services provided by the municipal government for the benefit of the community, such as fire and police protection, education, solid waste disposal, street cleaning, and snow removal.

- Q -

**Quality of Life.** Those aspects of the environment that make a community a desirable place in which to live or do business. Quality of life factors include those such as climate and natural features, schools, housing, medical facilities, cultural and recreational amenities, and public services.

- R -

**Resolution.** A resolution is not ordinarily a legislative act but a means by which a local legislature or other board expresses its policy or position on a subject.

**Restoration.** A process of returning ecosystems or habitats to their original structure and species composition.

**Rezoning.** An amendment to or a change in the zoning ordinance. Typically, rezoning can take two (2) forms: (1) a comprehensive revision or modification of the zoning text and map; and (2) a change in the map; i.e., the zoning designation of a particular parcel or parcels. Re-zonings, like enactment of the original ordinance, are legislative acts that, cannot be delegated to administrative officials.

**Right-of-Way.** The right of passage over the property of another. More commonly, it refers to the land on which a road or railroad is located. The pathways over which utilities and drainage ways run are usually referred to as easements.

**Riparian.** Pertaining to anything connected with or immediately adjacent to the banks of a stream or other body of water.

**Riparian Habitat.** Riparian lands are comprised of the vegetative and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams. Riparian areas are delineated by the existence of plant species normally found near freshwater.

**Rural.** Areas generally characterized by agricultural, timberland, open space, and very low-density residential development (e.g., less than one (1) dwelling unit per acre). A rural community is a community which is not served by community water or sewer service or other urban services.

- S -

**Septic Tank.** A tank plus a leaching field or trenches in which the sewage is purified by bacterial action.

**Setback Regulations.** The requirements of building laws that a building be set back a certain distance from the street or lot line either on the street level or at a prescribed height. The planning goal is to allow more room for pedestrians or to reduce the obstruction to sunlight reaching the streets and lower stories of adjoining buildings



(basic light, air, and space). Setbacks also have a direct relationship to building and fire codes.

**Sign Regulation.** Local laws that regulate the erection and maintenance of signs and outdoor advertising with respect to their size, color, appearance, movement, illumination, and placement on structures or location on its ground.

**Site.** A plot of land intended or suitable for development; also the ground or area on which a building or town has been built.

**Site Plan.** A plan, to scale, showing uses and structures proposed for a parcel of land. It includes lot lines, streets, building-sites, public open space, buildings, major landscape features -- both natural and man-made -- and, depending on requirements, the locations of proposed utility lines.

**Site Plan Review.** The process whereby local officials usually the planning commission and staff, review the site plans and maps of a developer to assure that they meet the stated purposes and standards of the zone, provide for the necessary public facilities such as roads and schools, and protect and preserve topographical features and adjacent properties through appropriate siting of structures and landscaping. The process often allows considerable discretion to be exercised by local officials since it may deal with hard-to-define aesthetic and design considerations.

**Smart Growth.** A contemporary catch phrase related to encouraging development that better serves the economic, environmental and social needs of communities. Typically the principals of Smart Growth include:

1. Use of a mix land uses.
2. Taking advantage of compact building design.
3. Creating housing opportunities and choices.
4. Creating walk-able (pedestrian oriented) communities.
5. Fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
6. Preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

7. Strengthening and direct development toward existing communities.
8. Providing a variety of transportation choices.
9. Making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
10. Encouraging community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

**Sprawl.** The awkward spreading out of a community. Sprawl is partially the by-product of the highway and automobile, which enabled spread of development in all directions.

**Standards.** A specific, often-quantified guideline incorporated in a policy or implementation program. Standards often translate directly into regulatory controls. While often used loosely to refer to all requirements in a zoning ordinance, the term usually is used to mean site design regulations such as lot area, height limits, frontage, landscaping, yards, and floor area ratio—as distinguished from use restrictions.

**Strategic Planning.** Strategic planning is a systematic way to manage change and create the best future. It is a creative process for identifying and accomplishing the most important actions in view of strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT).

**Street System.** The classification of streets and highways by their diverse functions and design. The following is the commonly used hierarchy of streets and highways for planning purposes: local, collector, major, expressway, arterial, parkway, and freeway. (See below.)

1. **Expressway or Freeway** Highway for through traffic with full or partial control of access and generally with grade separations at intersections.
2. **Arterial** Street that provides through traffic movement on a continuous route joining major traffic generators, other arterials, expressways and freeways. The access to abutting properties may be controlled.
3. **Collector** Street that provides service for internal traffic movement within an area and connects local streets to arterial streets. Direct access to adjoining properties generally permitted.

4. Local Street that provides for traffic movement within an area. Primarily for the provision of direct access to abutting properties.

**Strip Development.** A mélange of development, usually commercial, extending along both sides of a major road. Usually a strip development is a mixture of auto-oriented enterprises (e.g., gas, motels, and food stands), truck-dependent wholesaling and light industrial enterprises, along with the once rural homes and farms overtaken by the haphazard leapfrogging of unplanned sprawl.

**Subdivision.** The process (and the result) of dividing a parcel of raw land into smaller buildable sites, blocks, streets, open space, and public areas, and the designation of the location of utilities and other improvements. Typically the subdivision of land involves the legal division of a parcel into a number of lots for the purpose of development and sale. The subdivision and development of individual parcels must conform to the provisions of local zoning which contain use and dimensional requirements for land development.

**Suburban.** Areas generally characterized by low-density residential development (e.g., one (1) to five (5) dwelling units per acre) and limited commercial uses.

**Surface Runoff.** The part of precipitation and snowmelt that reaches streams by flowing over the ground without penetrating the soils.

**Surface Water.** Water on the earth's surface, as distinguished from subterranean water; typically found flowing in natural or man-made water courses such as rivers, streams, or canals, or contained in lakes or storage reservoirs.

**Sustainability.** Sustainability, or sustainable development, is often defined as providing for current needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to provide for their needs.

- T -

**Telecommunications.** Any of a number of electronic communications innovations including internet, fiber optics, wireless phones, etc.

**Traffic Calming Measures.** The combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users. Examples include speed bumps and cul-de-sacs.

Transfer of Development Right (TDR). A method by which the development rights are separated from the land in an area in which a community (or state) wishes to limit development, and permits them to be sold for use in an area desirable for high-density development. It has been promoted as a way to retain farm land, preserve endangered natural environments, protect historic areas, stage development, promote low- and moderate-income housing, and achieve other land-use objectives.

Trip. The journey from a point of origin to a destination.

- *U* -

Use. The purpose or activity for which a piece of land or its buildings is designed, arranged, or intended, or for which it is occupied or maintained. Land-use planning and control through zoning and other devices is a primary concern of planners; with depletion of natural resources, degrading of environmental quality, shortages of energy, and widespread poverty, land use is increasingly being recognized as a major national issue.

- *W* -

Water Course. Any natural or artificial stream, river, creek, ditch, channel, canal, conduit, culvert, drain, waterway, gully, ravine or wash in which water flows in a definite direction or course, either continuously or intermittently, and has a definite channel, bed and banks, and includes any area adjacent thereto subject to inundation by reason of overflow or flood water.

Watershed. The area drained by a given stream, or other body of water.

Wetlands. Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water. Under a “unified” methodology now used by all federal agencies, wetlands are defined as “those areas meeting certain criteria for hydrology, vegetation, and soils.” Wetlands may be either freshwater or tidal. They are typically marked by waterlogged or submerged soils or support a range of vegetation peculiar to wetlands. They provide numerous benefits for human health and property as well as critical habitat for wildlife and are generally regulated by either federal, state, or local laws.

Wetland Complex. Two (2) or more individual wetlands in close proximity that are connected spatially and/or hydrologically.

- Z -

**Zoning.** An exercise of the police power, zoning is a widely used form of land use control. Zoning ordinances consist of a map indicating the various land use zones in the community, and text that sets down the rules (development standards and allowable uses) for development of land. Zoning ordinances must satisfy the fundamental prohibition of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution against deprivation of property without due process of law and taking of private property for public use without just compensation, as well as similar state constitutional provisions. To satisfy constitutional scrutiny, the terms of a zoning law must be reasonably related to the governmental interest in protecting public health, safety, morals, and general welfare. In its simplest form, zoning is defined as the regulation by zone districts of the height, use, and area of structures, the use of land, and the density of population and intensity of allowable uses.

**Zoning Districts.** A zoning district is a portion of the community designated by the local zoning ordinance for certain kinds of land uses, such as single-family homes on lots no smaller than one (1) acre in size or neighborhood commercial uses. Only these primary permitted land uses, their accessory uses, and any special uses permitted in the zoning district may be placed on the land in that portion of the community.

**Zoning Map.** The officially adopted zoning map of the city specifying the uses permitted within certain areas of the city of county. This map is approved at the time that the local legislature adopts a zoning ordinance. On this map, the zoning district lines are overlaid on a street map of the community. This map divides the community into districts. Each district will carry a designation that refers to the zoning code regulations for that district. By referring to this map, it is possible to identify the use district within which any parcel of land is located.

Then, by referring to the text of the zoning code, it is possible to discover the uses that are permitted within that district and the dimensional restrictions that apply to building on that land. The zoning map, implemented through the text of the ordinance, constitutes a blueprint for the development of the community over time.







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