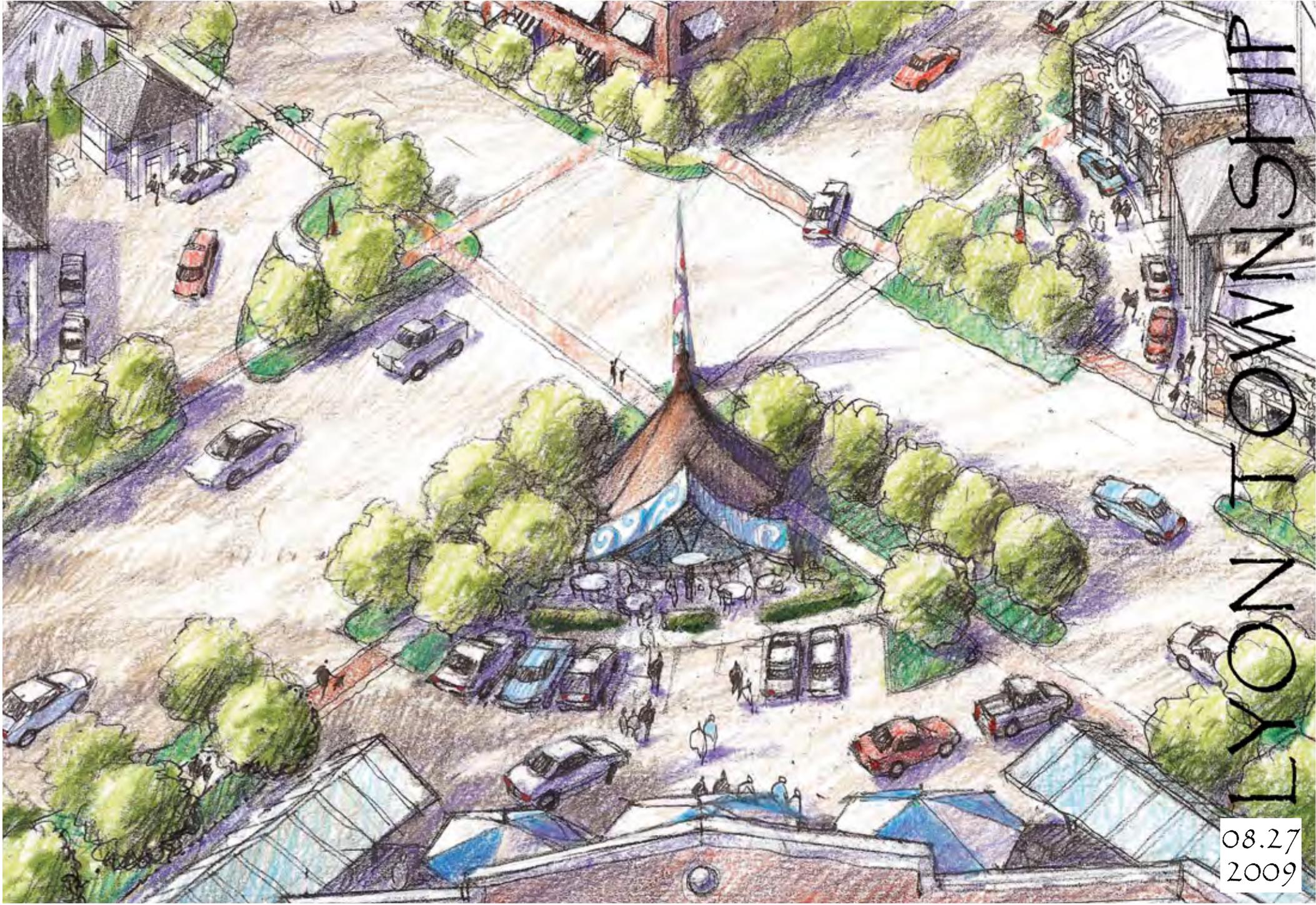


LYON CENTER VISION PLAN



LYON TOWNSHIP

08.27
2009

LYON CENTER VISION PLAN

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Executive Summary

Guiding Principles

The visioning process identified a core group of guiding principles that shaped the vision and lead to the policies to implement. These principles were identified as key to creating a vibrant, successful community at Lyon Center:

- The Hamlet: Our Community Center
- Balanced Development
- Image and Identity
- Quality Architecture
- Public Spaces and Places
- Walkability
- Sustainability

1. Introduction

New Hudson's History

Historic New Hudson was settled in 1831 when a 40-acre tract that was obtained from the government was platted and developed. The village prospered because of its location at the crossroads of Pontiac Trail, a state territorial road, and Grand River Avenue, a stagecoach trail. New Hudson contains some of the oldest buildings in Oakland County, including the New Hudson Inn, built in 1831.¹



Figure 1. A historic image of the New Hudson Inn. Note the second story balcony which no longer exists.

¹ For a more complete history on New Hudson, the reader is directed to the Lyon Township Master Plan or the resources of the Lyon Township Library



Figure 2. Looking east along Grand River at Milford Road near the turn of the 20th century. Notice the New Hudson Inn on the left and the commercial block building on the right. Both still exist today.

Over the years, the buildings and infrastructure in New Hudson have not been well cared for. There are a few gems, but overall there has been a lack of investment in the downtown. Fortunately, the Township now has the leadership with the vision, willingness and ability to tackle the problems of New Hudson and the Lyon Center area.



Figure 3. An undated view of a gas station building near the corner of Grand River Avenue and Milford Road east of the New Hudson Inn.

Creating a New Vision for New Hudson

The Lyon Center area itself has seen significant growth over the past decade due to the success of the highway commercial developments along I-96. The big-box, mid-box and outlot retail establishments commonly referred to as Lyon Towne Center have replaced New Hudson as the defining feature in the area. Lyon Towne Center is oriented towards the highway, which necessitates vehicular-oriented design and a large-scale development model that is in practice unwalkable. While this was an economic development win for the Township judged from a purely financial standpoint, it came at the expense of the character of the downtown. The traditional downtown was dying, residential density in the historic New Hudson district was low and any sign of a walkable, ‘hometown’ community was disappearing.

Lyon Township has a long tradition of sound planning. Consistent with this planning tradition, the Township’s DDA realized the need to comprehensively plan for the future of the downtown district, which

is commonly known as Lyon Center². The DDA knew that the success of this vision needed community and stakeholder feedback and support in order to stand the test of time and that an innovative approach to planning was necessary. Three main goals were identified for the visioning process:

- Planning must involve stakeholders in a non-threatening, inclusionary process;
- The process must be designed to be information rich, in which decisions are based on a foundation of research and analysis; and
- The future of Lyon Center must be collaboratively defined and designed by both the public and private sectors.

The DDA, together with McKenna, proposed using a charrette as the main means of obtaining input, developing ideas, and reaching consensus on the future of Lyon Center. A charrette is a collaborative, intense multi-day planning workshop that includes affected stakeholders at critical decision making points. It is a democratic process in which all voices and viewpoints are aired and considered. When stakeholders participate and understand each other’s issues they are likely to grant their consent to a set of solutions that best fits the needs of all involved parties. This was critical for Lyon Township and the DDA.

The decisions made during the charrette had to be supported by science. A decision was made to complete a comprehensive market analysis and capture a glimpse of how Lyon Center could compete in the global market. Basing design and decision-making on market data and a global market snapshot provides a background critical for successful visioning.

² There is an ongoing debate about what the study area should be called. In this plan it is referred to as Lyon Center, but other references may be used, such as ‘New Hudson’.

The Lyon Center Development Vision

The Vision Plan and charrette process enjoyed widespread participation and support from Township leaders and citizens, and resulted in a land use plan that calls for creation of a compact, walkable downtown, with a hamlet at its center, and high density residential adjacent to the hamlet on the south. The hamlet, consisting of individual buildings on individual lots, mimics the way New Hudson historically developed and provides a way to seamlessly integrate the new and old structures. The scale and amenities envisioned for the hamlet area will make it perfectly suited for pedestrian use.

Looking beyond the hamlet, to the southwest quadrant of downtown, but within the ring road, the long-range plan calls for high density residential, with a combination of multiple family at 12 to 14 units per acre and single family at 7 to 8 units per acre. The presence of high density housing in the downtown promotes pedestrian activity and provides a market for the businesses in the hamlet.

On the east side of the downtown a substantial amount of land is set aside for civic use on the land use plan. This land is intended to accommodate the existing Dolsen Elementary School, an expanded Post Office, a new Township library, and a community center. The northeast ring road would provide access to the civic uses on the north side of Grand River Avenue.

At the entrances to the downtown, the plan proposes Gateway Corridor land use, which is intended to consist of low impact office and service uses in redeveloped single family homes.

One of the unique features of the plan is the way in which highway commercial uses are juxtaposed adjacent to downtown Lyon Center. Visually, because of the location of the highway commercial uses, they do not overpower the smaller downtown uses. Consequently, residents realize the benefits of a small town atmosphere in the

hamlet and large scale shopping opportunities north of the downtown.

The plan described above is compactly designed within the boundaries of the ring road. The ring road is essential for the land use plan to work.



2. Market Evaluation

Trade Area

The demand for retail goods and services is generated by the consumer spending of the population that lives in a particular area. With a few exceptions, households will shop for goods and services at stores and businesses that are located within a reasonable distance from their place of residence. The phrase “rooftops drive retail” is a summarization of the fact that the amount of retail space that is in demand in a particular area will depend on the buying power of the people who live in that area.

Therefore, defining an appropriate trade area is the first and most fundamental task in conducting a retail market analysis. In most cases there will be two trade areas that are appropriate - a local trade area and a regional trade area. The trade areas recognize that there are different types of goods and services –convenience (or commodity) goods and comparison (or durable) goods.

Convenience goods are non-durable goods that are purchased often and are easily available to the consumer. Examples of convenience goods include staples such as groceries; consumable items such as fast food, snacks, drinks, etc; and disposable items such as paper products, cleaning products, etc; and gasoline. Typically, most items that a convenience store or a supermarket sells will be a convenience good.

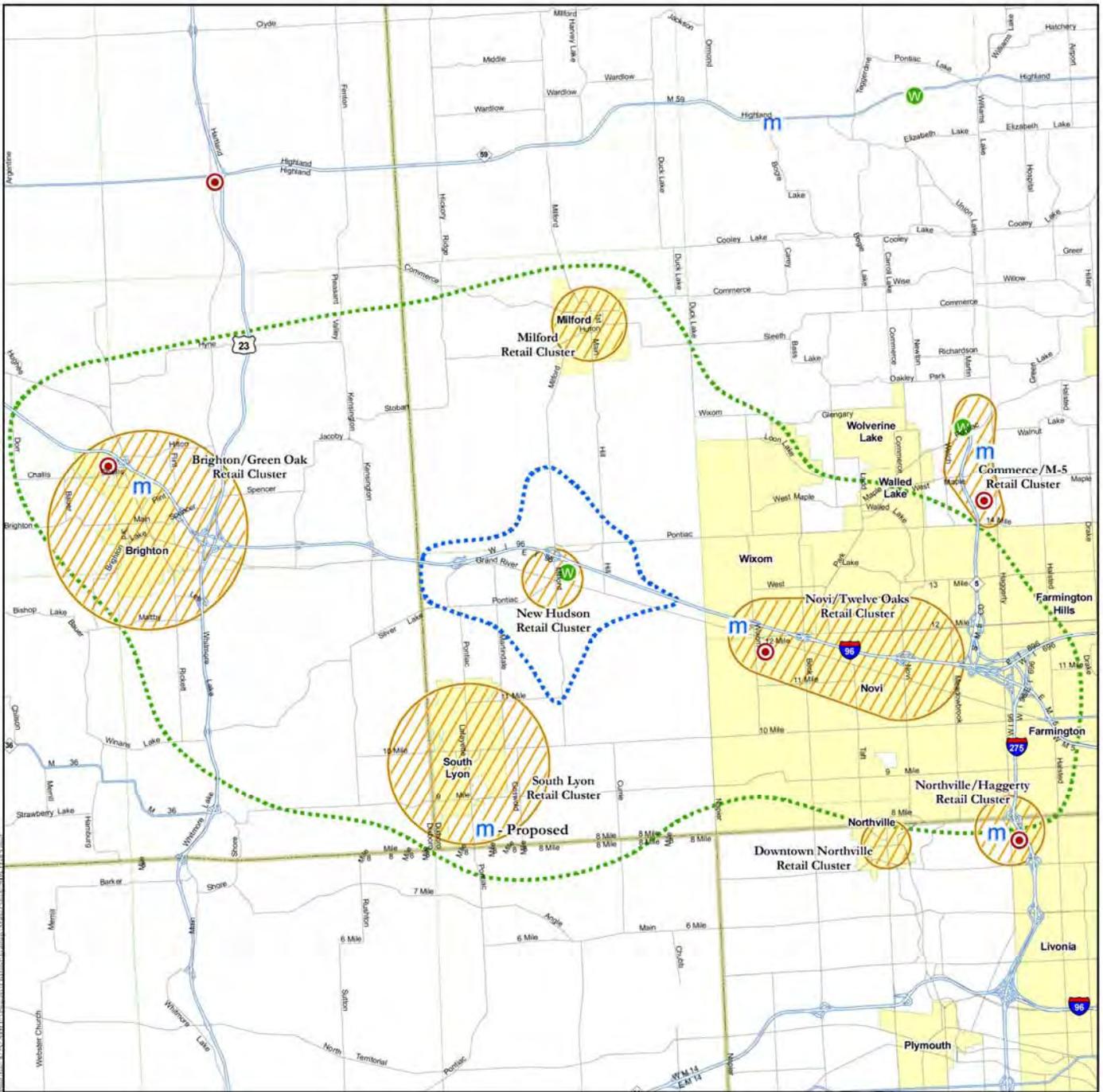
Consumer behavior at a local trade area level is based on the presumption that most retail demand at this level of analysis is for convenience goods that are easily substituted and widely available (for instance, items such as groceries, toothpaste and paper towels), and that, all things being equal, shoppers will choose to shop at the most convenient location.

Comparison goods are costlier than convenience goods and are durable in nature. Consumers will usually do a lot of selection and comparison based on various parameters such as cost, brand, style, comfort, etc. before buying a durable or comparison good. Comparison goods retailers place a great deal of importance on creating an attractive shopping environment and do a great deal of marketing and advertising to draw customers to their stores. Examples of comparison goods include clothing and footwear, home furnishings, jewelry, automobiles, electronics, etc.

We have defined our trade areas by analyzing drive times from the 5-points intersection in Lyon Center. The local trade area boundaries are based on a 5 minute drive, while the regional trade area boundaries are based on a 15-minute drive time.

Competitive Retail Clusters

An important factor in analyzing the retail potential for Lyon Center is the location, size, and character of competitive retail and mixed-use centers in the area. The map on the following page shows the location of competitive retail areas, while Figure 4 on page 7 shows the total annual sales for each area:

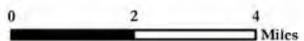


Lyon Center Competitive Facilities

Charter Township of Lyon, Oakland County, Michigan

- Major Retailers**
- Target
 - Meijer
 - Wal-Mart
 - Retail Clusters
 - 5 Minute Drive
 - 15 Minute Drive
 - Cities and Villages

Data Source: MCGI v8a; McKenna Associates, 2009

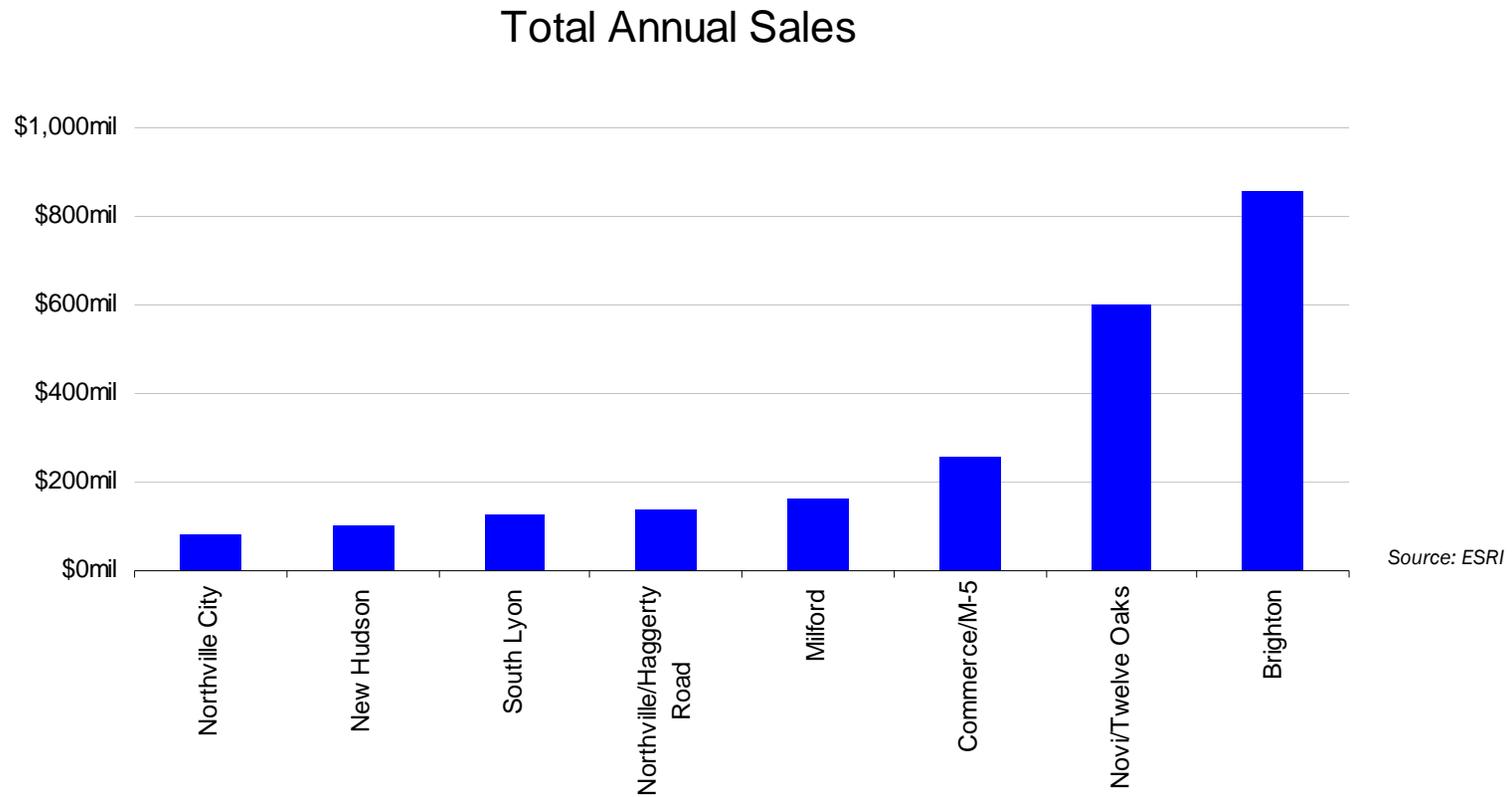


Regional Retail Centers

The Brighton and Novi/Twelve Oaks clusters are the largest retail centers in the area. Brighton accounts for over \$800 million in annual sales, while Novi/Twelve Oaks accounts for \$600 million in annual sales. The Brighton cluster is characterized by numerous “power centers” that contain one or more big box stores and Green Oak, while the Novi/Twelve Oaks cluster is a mall-centered retail area.

These are also the two of the largest regional retail centers in Southeast Michigan. The Lyon Center area (New Hudson) is located geographically halfway in between these two existing centers, which will likely limit the potential for additional regional commercial uses.

Figure 4. Total Annual Sales at Competitive Retail Clusters, 2008



Big Boxes. We have also mapped the location of WalMart, Meijer, and Target stores as a way of identifying major retail centers. It is useful to note that other than Northville and Milford, each major retail center contains (or in the case of the South Lyon cluster will contain) a major big box retailer.

A major big box retailer such as WalMart or Meijer can expect to achieve annual sales of \$70-\$100 million per store. This means that the South Lyon cluster will likely approach \$200 million in annual retail sales once the Meijer is constructed and operating.

Food and Drink Sales. A quick method of determining the character of a retail area is to examine food and drink sales as a percentage of total sales. Areas where food and drink is a higher percentage of overall sales function more as entertainment and gathering places. Figure 5 at right highlights this fact, as food and drink is a larger proportion of overall sales in Northville City, South Lyon, Milford, Northville Haggerty Road, and New Hudson (Lyon Center). Commerce/M-5, Novi/Twelve Oaks, and Brighton are dominated by retail sales establishments.

Figure 5. Food and Drink Sales, 2008

Food and Drink Sales as a % of Total Sales

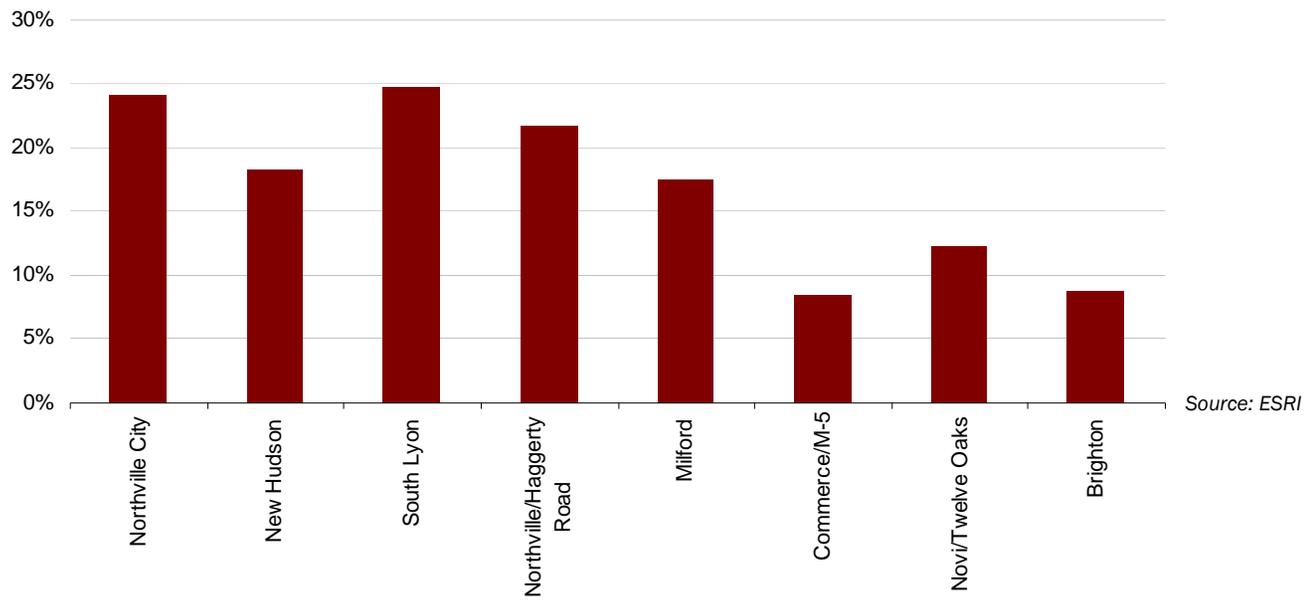


Figure 6. Retail Gap, 2008

Opportunity Gap

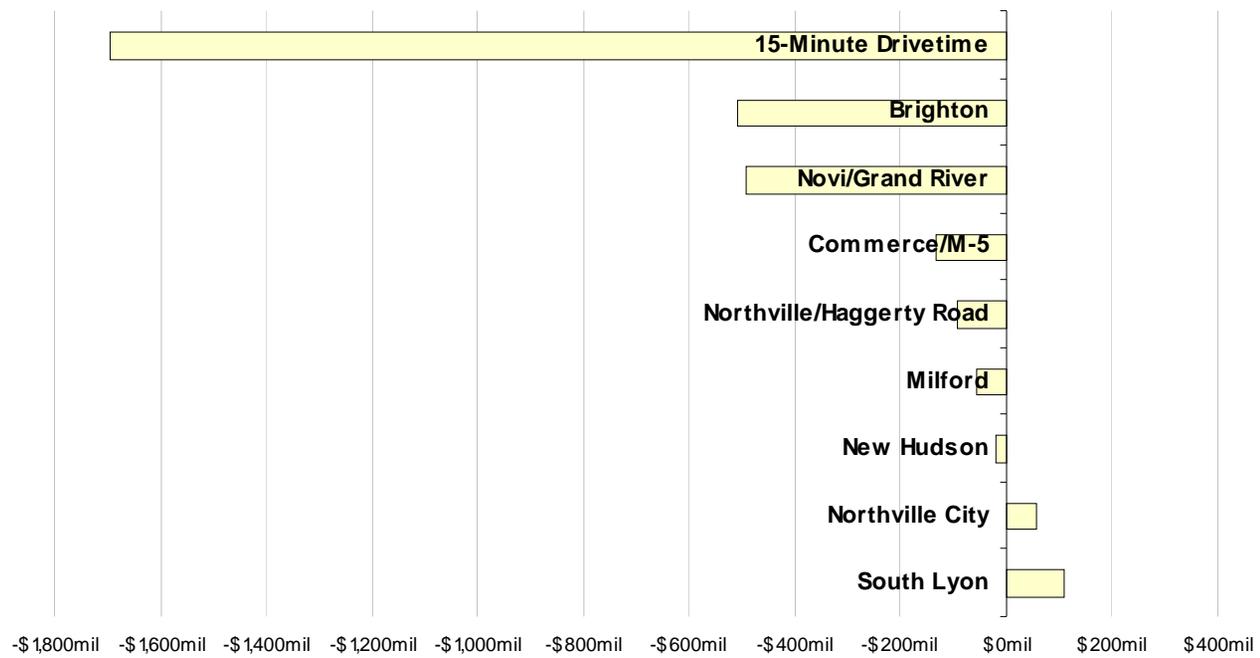
An opportunity gap is determined by comparing the demand for goods and services that is generated by the population living within a trade area against existing sales at businesses located in the trade area.

A negative number indicates that businesses in the area are making sales in excess of the retail demand generated by the residents of the trade area, so there are shoppers traveling to businesses from outside of the trade area. In this kind of situation it will be difficult for a new business to compete in an already-saturated market place. A new business will have to compete by providing better value to customers through quality of service, quality of shopping experience, selection of goods, or price.

A positive number in the gap analysis indicates that the residents of the trade area are spending more on a type of good or service than is being sold at businesses located in the trade area. In this case there is leakage of dollars to businesses outside of the trade area, and there is an opportunity for an undifferentiated business to be successful in the trade area.

The gap analysis in Figure 6 indicates that there is a vast oversupply of retail space relative to the demand generated by the residents of

Retail Gap



Source: ESRI

the 15-minute drive time market area. This simply reflects the fact that Brighton and Novi serve as regional commercial centers for a very large area that extends well beyond the boundaries of the 15-minute drive time area. The South Lyon cluster currently has a large retail gap...but the new Meijer store will soon fill that void.

On the other hand, the relationship between supply and demand in the Lyon Center local (5-minute drive time) trade area is much closer to equilibrium. This is despite the fact that the WalMart store is certainly drawing customers from outside of the 5-minute trade area

boundary. If the WalMart were excluded from the supply side of the equation, there would likely be strong demand for new retail goods and services in Lyon Center.

This means that there should be opportunities for locally-oriented businesses that serve the convenience and entertainment needs of nearby residences. However, any new business will likely have to compete against WalMart and the other national franchise operations. This is always a tall task for a local retailer or a local business.

What Should Lyon Center Be?

The above data indicates that Lyon Center may be more appropriately designed and positioned as a mixed-use village center. There will likely be little demand for additional large-scale retail floor space within the 15-minute drivetime area. The well-established Brighton and Novi clusters enjoy regional prominence and will be difficult to compete against, and the existing WalMart store in Lyon Center will meet the area's demand for big-box goods and services now and in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the Lyon Center area has a scale that is similar in size to Milford, Northville, or South Lyon. Lyon Center can reassert itself as the downtown for northern Lyon Township.

Retail Market Potential

The total retail market potential is determined by conducting the same gap analysis that was done for the retail gap figure on the preceding page for the local and regional trade areas.

Demographic Profile

The following Table 1 is a basic demographic profile for the population and households residing in the local and regional trade areas. This demographic information is the basis for the demand estimates, as disposable household income is the foundation of consumer demand.

Table 1. Demographic Profile, 2009

	Local Trade Area	Regional Trade Area
Population	5,531	188,315
Households	2,045	75,683
Median Disposable Income	\$59,671	\$61,616
Per Capita Income	\$33,303	\$45,753

Source: ESRI

Overall Supply/Demand Balance

The first step in assessing market demand is to examine the supply/demand balance by comparing market potential (demand) against retail sales (supply) for each trade area.

Table 2. Overall Supply/Demand Balance, 2009

	Local Trade Area	Regional Trade Area
Demand (Retail Potential)	\$72,787,626	\$3,327,309,708
Supply (Retail Sales)	\$100,487,413	\$5,001,384,615
Retail Gap	(\$27,699,787)	(\$1,674,074,907)

Source: ESRI

The above Table 2 indicates that there is an oversupply of total retail space in both the local and regional trade areas. This means we will have to search for niche opportunities in locally underserved economic areas to identify areas of potential growth in Lyon Center.

Leakage/Surplus Analysis

The next step in the analysis is to identify areas where there may be opportunities for new businesses in Lyon Center. Table 3 lists the leakage/surplus factor for the local and regional trade areas. The leakage/surplus factor presents a snapshot of retail opportunity. This is a measure of the relationship between supply and demand that ranges from +100 (total leakage) to -100 (total surplus).

- A positive (green) value in the following Table 3 represents 'leakage' of dollars spent by trade area residents at retail establishments outside of the trade area.
- A negative (red) value represents a surplus of retail sales, a market where businesses located in the trade area are drawing customer spending in from outside the trade area.

In short, a positive number in the following table represents an opportunity for new retail establishments, while a negative number indicates that the market is already well served by that type of store. The strength of the leakage/surplus factor indicates how strong the retail gap is. For example, a value of 100 means that all of the consumer demand for a particular good or service is being spent at stores outside of that particular trade area.

Table 3. Leakage/Surplus by Business Category, 2009

Category	Local Trade Area	Regional Trade Area
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers (441)	-24.4	-49.5
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores (442)	-65.3	-4.6
Electronics & Appliance Stores (4431)	72.0	-39.3
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores (444)	-68.0	44.5
Food & Beverage Stores (445)	63.9	2.1
Health & Personal Care Stores (446)	27.4	-16.9
Gasoline Stations (447)	45.6	27.8
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores (448)	100.0	-24.6
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores (451)	14.8	-12.1
General Merchandise Stores (452)	-31.2	-12.3
Miscellaneous Store Retailers (453)	75.2	12.6
Nonstore Retailers (454)	23.6	16.5
Food Services & Drinking Places (722)	-27.3	2.4

Source: ESRI

Reporting of Sales at Superstores. Each business receives a NAICS code for the purposes of sales tax reporting. This can skew the overall results of the analysis because superstores like Meijer, Target, and WalMart fall into the General Merchandise Store category (NAICS code 452), but sell product lines that compete against nearly every other category. The local and regional trade areas have overall surpluses of \$27 million and \$1.67 billion dollars, so even though the above table indicates that some retail categories are underserved, it is likely that mega-box superstores are already meeting at least some of that demand.

Nonetheless, the gap analysis is useful because it indicates that there is room in the marketplace for new businesses. The demand

for some goods and services, such as food services and drinking places, are difficult or impossible for superstores to meet because consumers are usually not looking to enjoy a meal away from home at the Purple Cow in the Meijer store or the Pizza Hut in Target. Other consumers will prefer to shop at a local business that specializes in its particular product line and offers a greater selection and quality of service rather than shopping based on price alone at the superstore.

quality, service, uniqueness, or another characteristic that the superstores cannot match. It is likely that a local business will not be able to compete with a big box store on the basis of convenience or price.

Note that the categories of retail store in Table 3 are from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The NAICS classification code for the retail groups in the above table is listed in parenthesis after the category title.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above Table:

- The best chance of finding success will be where there is an undersupply in both the local and regional trade areas. The most likely candidates are food and beverage stores and gas stations. However, the impending construction of a Meijer store near South Lyon will reduce demand for food and beverage stores.
- It is questionable how much of a demand for food and beverage stores exist, given that the WalMart supercenter sells groceries. Any demand that may exist for food and beverage stores will not be for a supermarket or grocery store that competes against WalMart, however, there may be a demand for smaller, specialty food stores such as a local market or meat shop. In any case, it will be difficult for new businesses to compete against WalMart and Meijer on convenience or price.
- Gas stations are not compatible with the vision for Lyon Center, although they may be appropriate at the outer edges of the Ring Road.
- There are opportunities for niche businesses such as electronics stores, health and personal care stores, clothing stores, or sporting goods, books, hobby, and music stores. However, to be successful, such businesses will have to differentiate themselves from big box stores located in the market area. The differentiation can be on the basis of

Retail Opportunity. Every retail business is classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) based on the characteristics of the business. By comparing consumer expenditure data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics we can estimate how much demand there is in the trade area for different kinds of goods and services. By comparing this demand against the supply of goods and services at businesses based on their NAICS code we calculate the opportunity gap for different kinds of goods and services.

This section examines in detail the opportunities for new retail businesses in Lyon Center, including the size of the retail gap and the projected size of the store in square feet that can be supported by consumer spending. The subset data can provide clues about which specific type of stores may be tenable in the study area.

The following Table 4 presents detailed information about supportable floor space for stores in each of the major retail categories. In the following table entries in bold are summary entries for the retail category, while entries in italic are subsets of the retail category. The bold summary entries are the sum of the subsets.

Table 4. Supportable Floor Area in Square Feet, Local and Regional Trade Areas, 2009

INDUSTRY GROUP	SUPPORTABLE FLOOR AREA (in square feet)	
	LOCAL TRADE AREA	REGIONAL TRADE AREA
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores (NAICS 442)	4,381	9,874
<i>Furniture Stores (NAICS 4421)</i>	4,381	9,874
<i>Home Furnishings Stores (NAICS 4422)</i>	0	0
Electronics & Appliance Stores (NAICS 443/NAICS 4431)	6,399	0
Food & Beverage Stores (NAICS 445)	14,709	47,194
<i>Grocery Stores (NAICS 4451)</i>	12,384	22,626
<i>Specialty Food Stores (NAICS 4452)</i>	1,381	24,568
<i>Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores (NAICS 4453)</i>	943	0
Health & Personal Care Stores (NAICS 446/NAICS 4461)	3,002	0
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores (NAICS 448)	9,855	6,419
<i>Clothing Stores (NAICS 4481)</i>	8,151	0
<i>Shoe Stores (NAICS 4482)</i>	1,165	4,415
<i>Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores (NAICS 4483)</i>	539	2,003
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores (NAICS 451)	2,440	19,140
<i>Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores (NAICS 4511)</i>	0	0
<i>Book, Periodical, and Music Stores (NAICS 4512)</i>	2,440	19,140
Miscellaneous Store Retailers (NAICS 453)	3,833	47,667
<i>Florists (NAICS 4531)</i>	532	6,947
<i>Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores (NAICS 4532)</i>	1,945	5,428
<i>Used Merchandise Stores (NAICS 4533)</i>	119	0
<i>Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (NAICS 4539)</i>	1,238	35,293
Food Services & Drinking Places (NAICS 722)	3,606	74,619
<i>Full-Service Restaurants (NAICS 7221)</i>	767	38,201
<i>Limited-Service Eating Places (NAICS 7222)</i>	0	0
<i>Special Food Services (NAICS 7223)</i>	1,367	15,098
<i>Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages (NAICS 7224)</i>	1,471	21,321

Source: McKenna Associates with data provided by ESRI

3. Design Charrette

The Charrette Process

In preparation for the charrette the DDA coordinated a sophisticated public participation plan which included the development of press releases, stakeholder invitations, flyers, posters, a half-page newspaper advertisement and word-of-mouth promotion.

From setting the height of downtown buildings to establishing a look for street signs to determining the proper mix of retail and open space, Lyon Township invited members of the public to help design the new and developing town center during a two-day community event in which participants would see the downtown take shape before their eyes.

It was determined that stakeholders in the Lyon Center area were key to the success of this interactive event and therefore great effort was put forth to develop a comprehensive stakeholder list. The list included the following groups of key stakeholders:

- Elected Officials
- Planning Commissioners
- Department Heads and Staff
- Zoning Board Members
- Township Representatives
- County Commissioners and Staff
- Local School Representatives
- Design Professionals and Consultants
- Chamber of Commerce
- Businesses located in Lyon Center
- Entrepreneurs
- Developers
- Surrounding Community Officials
- Homeowners Associations
- Library Board Members
- Vocal Residents
- Real Estate Brokers
- Churches

The event was held Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7, 2009 at the Township Hall in Lyon Township from 8am-8pm each day.

The two-day charrette included visioning exercises, preference surveys and live-time drawings by graphic artists and architects to capture the vision of participants. Township planners presented background on planning in the Township and regional trends likely to influence development in Lyon Township.



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CHARETTE SCHEDULE				
Lyon DDA Vision Plan				
Lyon Township, Michigan				
Friday February 6		Saturday February 7		
Planners		Designers	Planners	Designers
8am-9am	Tour Site Area with Team		Team Meeting	
9am-10am	Stakeholder Meetings	Opportunity & Constraints Review	Stakeholder Reviews	Preferred Plan Synthesis
10am-11am				
11am-noon				
noon-1pm	Lunch with Key Stakeholders		Lunch with Key Stakeholders and Pin-Up Session	
1pm-2pm	Stakeholder Meetings	Alternatives Concept Development	Preferred Plan Development	Preferred Plan Development
2pm-3pm				
3pm-4pm	Alternative Concepts Development			
4pm-5pm				
5pm-6pm				
6pm-7pm	Pin-Up Session, Dinner & Meeting Set-up		Dinner & Meeting Set-up	
7pm-8pm	Public Meeting (7-8:30)	Alternatives Concept Development	Public Open House and Celebration (7-8:30)	
8pm-9pm				



Public and Private Sector Support

At the end of the charrette there was support of all the major concepts developed during the weekend: maintaining the highway commercial district to the north, adding higher density residential in the southwest residential district, creation of a hamlet in the core, locating a civic campus adjacent to the hamlet and utilizing gateway corridor office/mixed-use buildings to transition into the hamlet. Creation of “green” pathways linking into the hamlet and designing future streets to accept bike lanes and sidewalks received kudos from the group. Building on the good work the DDA has done on the Grand River streetscape the design team developed ideas for public realm design standards. Architecturally the focus was on “good design” rather than a specific theme—the idea that a well designed building will stand the test of time.

The success of Lyon Center is well supported in the fact that a place has been created for all types of businesses: Big Box, Mid Box, strip commercial, outlots, small office and ‘hamlet’ business each have a place to call home. This is a unique “welcome mat” that many other communities simply do not provide.



4. Guiding Principles

The Hamlet: Our Community Center

A collaborative “aha!” took place during the charrette where all participants collectively supported the idea that the New Hudson area of Lyon Center should develop as a Hamlet. Much of the early discussion during the charrette centered on what character New Hudson should have. The character of a place is defined in large part by its physical layout, its population, and its relationship with other places in the region. Generally speaking, places fall somewhere along a continuum which ranges from very dense cities to uninhabited natural areas (see the illustration at right).

The Hamlet Concept

The Hamlet model will allow Lyon Township to build upon the existing free-standing architecture of the historic New Hudson area, create infill and expansion opportunity in the downtown, and to revive a historic development model that characterized early development in Southeastern Michigan. Conceiving of historic New Hudson as a Hamlet also serves a useful conceptual purpose, as it positions the area in a proper place within the region. There are well-established small town/large village centers nearby in South Lyon, Milford, Brighton, Northville, and Plymouth. To try and establish historic New Hudson as another small town would mean that it would have to compete against these established small towns – a tall task in today’s economy.

Instead, by defining New Hudson as a hamlet we can avoid trying to directly compete with established town centers. The New Hudson Hamlet can develop to its potential without carrying the burden of expectations people associate with a town center. The New Hudson Hamlet does not have to try to offer all of the goods and serves that

a town center does, it can instead concentrate on being a small, locally-oriented center that serves as a focal point in the community.

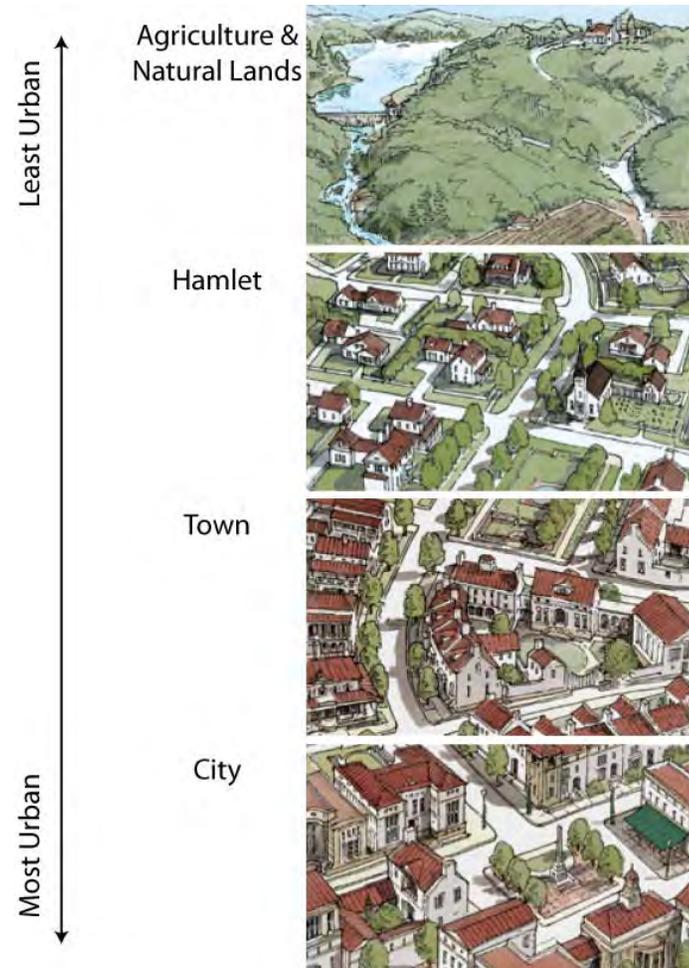


Figure 7. The Place Continuum – sometimes referred to as a transect, organizes places by their physical characteristics.

Physical Characteristics of Hamlets

Hamlets consist of independent buildings instead of the more formally disposed in-line “main street” architecture that is found in towns. Hamlets are smaller than villages or towns, but hamlets are also distinct places, unlike most new suburban communities.

A hamlet is unincorporated and depends upon the township in which it is located for municipal services and government. A hamlet could be described as the rural or suburban equivalent of a neighborhood in a city or village. The area of a hamlet may not be exactly defined and may simply be contained within the ZIP code of its post office, or may be defined by a landmark institution such as a school, civic building, business, or gathering place.



Figure 8. Hamlets are defined by informal, vernacular architecture and varied building disposition.



Figure 9. Hamlets can have residential scale-detailing. Notice the small sidewalk width in the above picture.



Figure 10. Details such as these landscape planters help establish an identity for an area.

Balanced Development

If stakeholders agreed that the success of Lyon Center can only be guaranteed if we create a place for all types of businesses: Big Box, Mid Box, strip commercial, outlots, small office and downtown business alike. Each requires a place to call home. Creating a location that allows for each of these unique developments creates a “welcome mat” that many other communities simply do not provide.

Most of the pieces of this balanced development picture are already in place in the Lyon Center area. The remaining task is to establish New Hudson as a hamlet.

Image and Identity

Many of the participants in the charrette, along with the DDA, stressed the importance of a community image and identity. It is widely understood that Lyon Township needs to brand itself and create a name for itself within Oakland County, Southeast Michigan and in many senses globally. The DDA has begun this process by working together with a marketing and communications firm to solidify a media image and message for Lyon Township to market, but this is only the start. The physical image also needs to be identified.

The appearance of Lyon Center is important to both livability and the community’s physical and economic development. Residents, visitors, businesses and property owners are more committed to the betterment of a community when they recognize it as a unique and special place.

A community’s physical image is composed of both natural and man-made features. Distinct or unique features such as the elaborate design of a landmark building, maintenance of civic spaces, or magnificent annual flower displays are all elements that play a part in defining community image. These are elements that the community can regulate, enhance and modify to direct development and redevelopment toward a defined vision.

Many of the elements that make up the community’s physical image have to be accepted as givens or out of the control of the local government. The natural features which make up the physical environment of Lyon Township such as the suburban surrounds and the dominance of farmland are elements which cannot be easily changed and must be considered permanent. Also, many of the region’s economic and man-made structures and features, such as the landfill/park and I-96 are the result of forces beyond the local control and need to be accepted or accommodated. Some of these larger forces include the following: dominance of the automobile, new technologies and changing market trends.

Quality Architecture

Placing emphasis on quality architecture and ‘good design’ in general was critically important to the stakeholders and charrette participants. They understand that design tastes and styles change over time and that authentic communities are not a snapshot of a period in architecture; but rather reflect the changes over time and endure into the future.

What is good design?

- Good Is Sustainable
- Good Is Accessible
- Good Is Functional
- Good Is Well Made
- Good Is Emotionally Resonant
- Good Is Enduring
- Good Is Socially Beneficial
- Good Is Beautiful

Use natural, high quality building materials to reflect the historical character of Historic New Hudson and apply those materials

responsibly to highway commercial and office architecture. Key principles were identified as:

- Require unique, authentic and diverse design that conveys innovation and creativity.
- Discourage architectural monotony.

Focus on Comfortable Building Height, Mass, and Scale to encourage buildings that respond to their environment. The ideas supported were:

- Building height, massing and scale shall compliment neighboring land uses and preserve views to open and public spaces.
- Maintain scenic public views and view corridors that visually connect community to surroundings.
- Each district, although different in character, should respond to the adjacent district by transitioning between Building Height, Mass, and Scale thoughtfully.

Public Spaces and Places

The Lyon Township DDA and stakeholders agreed that the Township must play a lead role in the development of the downtown area. They unanimously agreed that opportunities for developing a lively community began with creating:

- Streets that increase pedestrian activity, economic development and community livability goals;
- Parks, plazas and squares that become focal points for a community; and
- Libraries, civic centers and other public buildings that can serve as centers of community life and activity.

The understanding that community gathering spaces and places create social energy that fuels the community; both socially and

economically resonated from the participants at the charrette and appears to be supported by the community.

Walkability

Compact, walkable communities—the opposite of poorly planned sprawl—are the solution to some of our country’s biggest challenges, from childhood obesity to social isolation, from crash deaths to disappearing farmland, from the high price of gas to the architectural blight of strip development.

But the main reason people love walkable neighborhoods is their human energy: they're fun, lively, memorable... not boring. They're the kinds of places where you might bump into a long-lost friend; stumble across creative inspiration; or meet the love of your life. That's why walkable communities are becoming the most sought-after addresses in Michigan.

Cities such as Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Royal Oak and Ferndale capture the educated, young adults, growing families and retirees because of the availability of cultural and social environments alongside everyday goods and services. These are the growing communities of today.

What Makes a Neighborhood Walkable?

The following elements make a neighborhood walkable:

- **A Center:** Walkable neighborhoods have a discernable center, whether it's a shopping district, a main street, or a public space.
- **Density:** The neighborhood is compact enough for local businesses to flourish.
- **Mixed Use:** Housing is provided for everyone who works in the neighborhood: young and old, singles and families, rich and poor. Businesses and residences are located near each other.

- **Parks and Public Space:** There are plenty of public places to gather and play.
- **Pedestrian-centric Design:** Buildings are placed close to the street to cater to foot traffic, with parking lots relegated to the back. Sidewalks are located on both sides of the street.
- **Nearby Schools and Workplaces:** Schools and workplaces are close enough that most residents can walk from their homes.

In a walkable community streets are designed for everyone. *Complete Streets* are roads designed for everyone who uses them, including bicyclists, pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and people getting on and off transit vehicles. Complete Streets are:

- **Accessible:** There are wheelchair ramps, plenty of benches with shade, sidewalks on all streets, etc.
- **Well-Connected:** Streets form a connected grid that improves traffic by providing many routes to any destination.
- **Built for a Proper Design Speed:** Either lanes are narrow or traffic calming measures are used to control speed.
- **Comfortable:** Pedestrian medians at intersections, count-down crosswalk timers, bicycle lanes, protected bus shelters, etc. make the street work better for those outside of a car.

Sustainability

A majority of the principles above support the idea of smart growth. Spurring the smart growth movement are demographic shifts, a strong environmental ethic, increased fiscal concerns, and more nuanced views of growth. The result is both a new demand and a new opportunity for smart growth.

The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary from place to place. In general, smart growth invests time, attention, and resources in restoring community and vitality to cities. New smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented,

and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities.

The Smart Growth principles and issues below describe in detail the various aspects of planning and development that make up smart growth and were supported by a majority of the stakeholders:

- Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices.
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods.
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration.
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place.
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective.
- Mix Land Uses.
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas.
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices.
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities.
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design.

5. Design Plan

Development Vision

We have become conditioned to think primarily in terms of land use when doing planning and zoning. The advent of zoning schemes based on identifying appropriate land uses in the early decades of the 20th century has created a regulatory and planning framework that assumes that land uses of different types (single-family residential, multiple-family residential, office, commercial, and industrial) must be separated from each other. Most early use-based zoning ordinances segregated industrial land uses from residential land uses, but in later years most types of land uses gained their own zoning districts.

The benefit of this kind of system is that it simplifies land development. Developing areas of single-purpose buildings is easy to do, and the development industry has created a series of standardized building types that it can replicate nearly anywhere in the country. While this kind of system is economical, it has rationalized land development along the lines of producing a product in a factory. This is unsurprising given our zoning system's roots in late 19th century German modernism, a movement that sought to apply rational industrial principles to all facets of life, including how we develop where we live. Finally, there is an underlying assumption beneath our conventional development scheme that people will go from place to place in a car.

The drawback of this development paradigm is that it neglects the simple fact that creating great places where people like to be involves mixing land uses in close proximity and designing buildings with a scale that is accessible and traversable by people on foot. This kind of development is harder to achieve for a number of reasons, mostly relating to the fact that this kind of place has been

outlawed by most zoning regulations and that the development industry is no longer conditioned to build walkable, urbane places.

During the charrette, we defined a vision for the Lyon Center area that capitalizes on its historic character and the historic development patterns that are still visible along Grand River near Milford Road. This vision has historic New Hudson once again becoming a walkable place, and not just an extension of typical suburban strip commercial development. Realizing this vision requires a set of specific actions and regulatory measures to ensure that new development in the Lyon Center area is not just “anywhere U.S.A.” development.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that developing Lyon Center and the New Hudson Hamlet area will not be a fast process. By nature hamlet areas develop incrementally, one building at a time over an extended period of time. Given today's economic and development environment, it is uncertain when economic conditions will again support the development of new buildings and uses in the Lyon Center area, but the key principles that the implementers of the Lyon Center Vision must bear in mind are:

- **Be patient.** Time is an ally in creating great places. Things that seem impossible during the development of this plan will become possible over time.
- **Don't be afraid to stay the course.** Accept development that fits within the vision, even if that means working hand-in-hand with developers to achieve the vision and meet all interests.
- **Stay true to the vision.** Creating great places requires attention to detail, and small compromises can have large impacts.

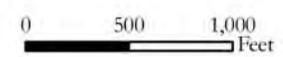
Lyon Center Development Vision

Charter Township of Lyon, Oakland County, Michigan

Legend

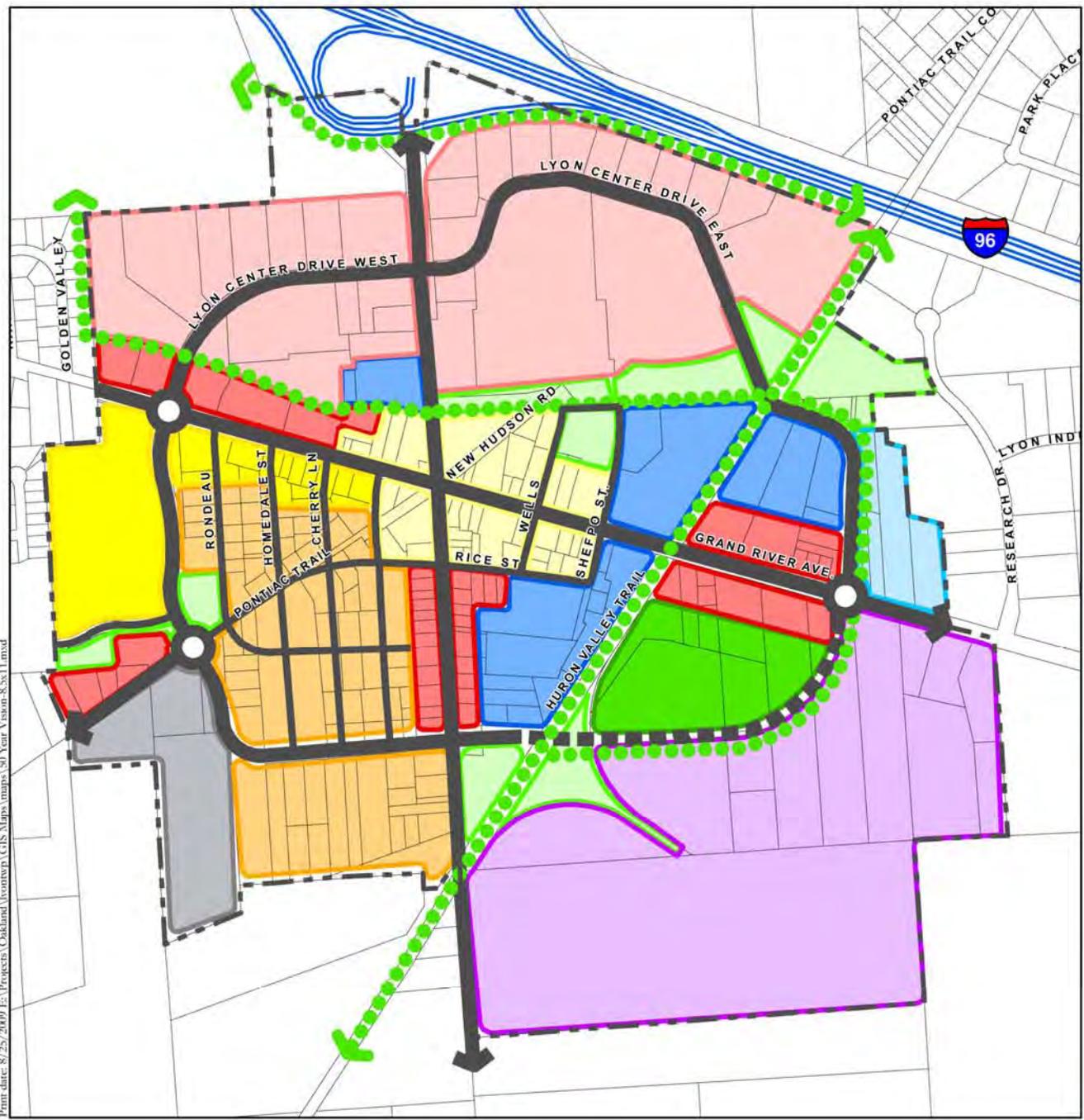
-  The Hamlet
-  Moderate Multiple Family (12-14 U/D)
-  High Density Residential (7-8 U/A)
-  Highway Commercial
-  Gateway Corridor
-  Office
-  Research/Office
-  Airport
-  Civic
-  Open Space
-  Recreation
-  Greenways
-  Conceptual Ring Road Location
-  Lyon Center Boundary

Parcel Data Source: Oakland County GIS, December 2006.
 Aerial Data Source: Oakland County GIS, 2005





8/27/09



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The development vision for the Lyon Center area consists of a series of character areas that compliment each other in terms of both land use and design. The Development Vision Map looks like a traditional land use map, but our concerns go well beyond land use and incorporate design and character elements.

Following is a description of each of the character areas shown on the Development Vision Map.

The Hamlet

The Hamlet is the center of Lyon Center. This area includes the historic fabric of what is known as New Hudson, and will be the focus on the identity of the area in the future. The Hamlet will include varied uses, centered on retail, food, and entertainment businesses. Office, service, and residential uses are also appropriate in the Hamlet area.

Uses. Street level uses that generate activity such as retail or restaurant uses are preferred. Office and residential uses may be located at the rear of buildings, on upper stories or, if designed appropriately, may be located at the street.

Building Location. Buildings should be located close to the street, generally set back 5-10 feet from the front property line.

Building Height. Buildings should be 2-3 stories, although one story buildings are acceptable.

Building Design. Pitched roof or flat roof commercial block buildings are appropriate. However, pitched roof buildings should have high eave lines.

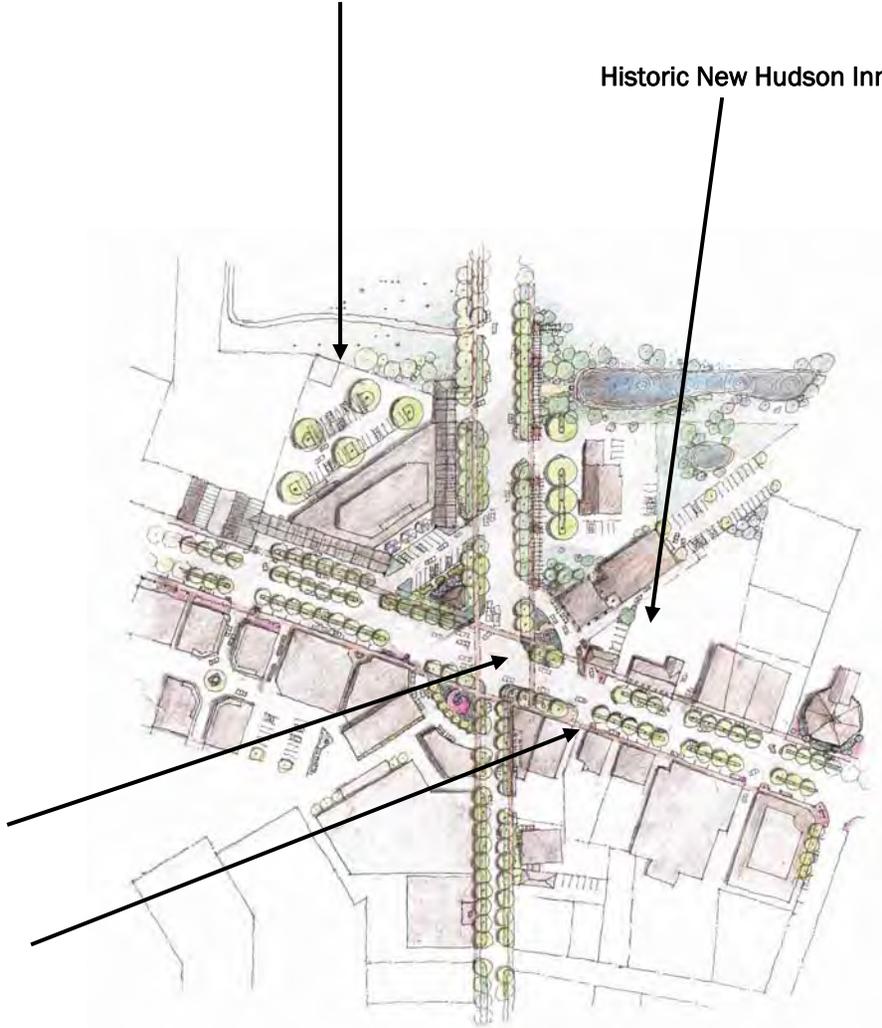
Parking. Parking should be accommodated behind or on the side of buildings, in public lots, and on the street.

New development frames the corner of Grand River and Milford.

Create a building pattern of closely-knit, stand alone buildings located next to the street

Create public parking lots behind buildings

Historic New Hudson Inn



Moderate Multiple-Family (12-14 Units per Acre)

Uses. Attached multiple-family uses are appropriate.

Building Location. Buildings should be located close to the street, generally set back 10-15 feet from the front property line.

Building Height. Buildings should be 2-3 stories, although one story buildings are acceptable.

Building Design. Pitched roof townhouse-style buildings are appropriate. First floors should be raised a minimum of 36 inches above the front sidewalk grade.

Parking. Parking should be accommodated behind or on the side of buildings and on the street. If units have garages, the garage doors should be located on the side or rear of the building. In no case should garages be located on the front of the building.

High-Density Residential (7-8 Units per Acre)

Uses. Detached single-family houses and mansion-style apartment houses that have a single-family character and include 2-4 units are appropriate.

Building Location. Buildings should have moderate front setbacks, generally set back 15-25 feet from the front property line.

Building Height. 1-2 story buildings are appropriate.

Building Design. Buildings should have a single-family residential character. Apartment houses should have one entrance facing the street to retain a single family character, with individual units being accessed via interior doorways or from the side or rear façade.

Parking. Parking should be accommodated behind or on the side of buildings and on the street. If units have garages, the garage doors should be set back at least 15 feet behind the front door of the building. In no case should garages protrude in front of the building.

Highway Commercial

Uses. Large scale automobile oriented commercial uses.

Building Location. Buildings are set back to accommodate front yard parking.

Building Height. Buildings are typically one story, although building height may be up to 25 or 30 feet.

Building Design. Large scale buildings should incorporate quality design and materials, including detailing to break up large expanses of blank wall.

Parking. Parking is accommodated in on-site lots.

Note: Lyon Towne Center and Lyon Crossing standards have been established under PD agreements.

Gateway Corridor

Uses. Multit-family residential, commercial or office use conducted entirely within a building and that does not generate large traffic volumes or rely upon high traffic counts.

Building Location. Buildings should be set back 15-25 feet from the street with a landscape area between the property line and the building.

Building Height. Buildings may be 1-3 stories in height.

Building Design. Converted homes should retain their residential character. New construction should respect the scale of adjacent development.

Parking. Parking is accommodated in on-site lots located in side or rear yards. Parking may also be accommodated on the street or in nearby public parking lots, if available.

Office

Uses. Professional and service office uses with complimentary retail.

Building Location. Buildings should be set back 15-25 feet from Grand River, but may be set back from the ring road to accommodate front yard parking.

Building Height. Buildings are typically one story, although building height may be up to 25 or 30 feet.

Building Design. No particular building design is recommended.

Parking. Parking is accommodated in on-site lots. On-site lots should be set back at least 50 feet from Grand River, but may be located between the building and the ring road. Parking may also be accommodated on the street or in nearby public parking lots, if available.

Research/Office

Uses. Workplace land uses, possibly including an outdoor element if approved as a special land use.

Building Location. Buildings should be located close enough to have a presence on the Ring Road, generally within 40 feet of the street.

Building Height. Buildings may be 1-3 stories in height.

Building Design. No particular building design is recommended, although building facades facing the Ring Road should include design detailing and use high quality building materials.

Parking. Parking is accommodated on-site. Parking should not be located between the building and the Ring Road.

Airport

The airport category corresponds with the existing airport use, and is not expected to change.

Civic

Civic areas are appropriate for public or semi-public uses. In the context of the Development Vision, civic uses include the Post Office and activity-generating uses including, but not limited to libraries, community centers, bandshells, etc. These uses provide another reason for Township residents to visit the Hamlet, and can start to create synergy between the different uses in the Hamlet area as people who come to visit a civic use may stay and patronize area businesses.

Open Space

Open space areas include natural features, open lands which cannot be built upon, and stormwater management infrastructure.

Recreation

Recreation uses can include commercial recreation or public recreation opportunities such as a trailhead.



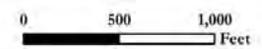
Lyon Center Public Road Circulation Plan

Charter Township of Lyon,
Oakland County, Michigan

Legend

- Greenways
- Lyon Center Boundary
- Passenger Vehicles
- Complete Streets
- Truck Routes

Parcel Data Source: Oakland County GIS, December 2006.
 Aerial Data Source: Oakland County GIS, 2005



McKenna
ASSOCIATES
INCORPORATED

8/27/09

Circulation Plan

The Lyon Center district is planned to provide vehicular, transit, bikeway, and pedestrian circulation linkages through the Township and to I-96, as well as provide access to retail fronting Grand River Avenue, Milford Road and the north portions of the Ring Road.

Key recommendations of the Circulation Plan include:

- Through traffic will be accommodated by the new Ring Road. In order for the Ring Road to maintain its primary function as a major traffic route, land uses along the ring road must be carefully considered. Major traffic-generating land uses such as retail commercial development should be permitted along the Ring Road.
- The streets within the Ring Road are planned to be complete streets that place the needs of pedestrians and non-motorized traffic on equal footing with motorized traffic. These roads will be designed with design speeds of 25 miles per hour, which will de-emphasize through traffic and emphasize both the visual and the pedestrian experience.
- The intersection of Grand River Avenue and Milford Road is the 100% corner of the New Hudson Hamlet area. In order to maintain a pedestrian scale at this intersection the previously considered roundabout has been eliminated from the Circulation Plan. Instead, this intersection is planned to remain signalized.

Sustainable Streets

All new and redeveloped streets are to be planned with the principles of Complete Streets in mind and include facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and people getting on and off transit vehicles.

Additionally, the opportunity exists to incorporate SEMCOG, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments best practices for Low

Impact Design (LID) into new and redevelopment streets. These practices include techniques for controlling runoff, bioretention and the reduction of impervious surfaces among others. Other opportunities exist to require permeable pavers and other runoff reducing techniques as a standard within the Lyon Center District.

Greenways

Trails and greenways should link schools, parks, commercial areas and neighborhoods, allowing trail users to traverse the Lyon Center district solely and safely on trails. The trail network should also form a more cohesive transportation system by linking to regional trails, allowing people to travel to other communities or to work and to combine trail use with other forms of transit.

Trails and greenways positively impact individuals, improve the community by providing recreation and transportation opportunities, and encourage economic and community development. Trails and greenways bring many benefits to the communities they traverse:

- **Multiple Recreation Opportunities.** Rail corridors are flat or have gentle grades, making them perfect for multiple users, including walkers, inline skaters, bicyclists and people with disabilities. Trails are multimodal and versatile passageways.
- **Economic Renewal and Growth.** Trail users spend money on products and services related to recreational activities. Bicycle and inline skate shops, food stores, hotels and tourist locations report an increase in business as a result of trails. Trail-related businesses spring up in communities with trails, spurring economic growth in the area.
- **Increased Property Values.** Studies have shown that properties on land adjacent to trails and greenways often increase in value. People are willing to pay more to have a multi-use trail in their neighborhood. Trails have become an important amenity that many look for when choosing where to live.
- **Healthy Living.** The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that 60 percent of American adults are not regularly active and 25

percent are not active at all. In communities across the country, people do not have access to trails, parks or other recreation areas close to their homes. Trails and greenways provide safe, inexpensive avenues for regular exercise.

- **Environmental Protection.** Trails and greenways help improve air and water quality. Communities with trails provide enjoyable and safe options for clean transportation, which reduces air pollution. By protecting land along rivers and streams, greenways prevent soil erosion and filter pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff.
- **Connecting People and Communities.** Trails serve as utilitarian transportation corridors between neighborhoods and workplaces. They connect congested urban areas with open space. By bringing people to greenways for their daily commutes, trails unite people and their natural surroundings.
- **Regional Systems.** As trails begin to interconnect, regional systems emerge creating threads of green linkages within and between communities. Trails serve as the backbone for these systems, increasing the value of the whole by connecting the parts. Regional trail systems cross political, social and economic barriers, allowing trail users to form new connections with neighboring communities.

Source: Rails-to-trails Conservancy for the Greenways Initiative

Street Design

There are four kinds of rural streets shown on the Circulation Plan Map on page 32: Grand River, South Milford Road, Collector Street, and Residential Street. Each kind of street is intended to have a distinct character, which is created through street design and street context:

- **Street design** includes the physical layout and design of the roadway and pedestrian areas within the right-of-way area.

- **Street context** is created by what kind of buildings and uses are built on private property along the street.

The key is to remember that great places require excellent street design and proper street context. If a street is designed to be a pedestrian friendly, walkable street but adjacent buildings have large setbacks with parking lots between the building and the street, the area will look nicer, but it will not be walkable. If buildings are located close to the road and could support a walkable environment, but the street is designed solely to move cars at a very high speed, the area will again not be walkable and will simply feel crowded.

The street design standards in this section relate to how the street and improvements within the right-of-way are designed. Street context is addressed in the character areas and architecture guidelines elsewhere in this Design Plan chapter.

Grand River Avenue Street Design

Refer to the street cross-section sketch on the facing page for an illustration of the Grand River street design guidelines.

The Grand River Avenue street design is based on a 100-foot total right-of-way width, and incorporates slip-roads with parallel parking on either side of the street. Through traffic will remain in the three traffic lands in the middle of the street, while the slip-roads will accommodate on-street parking in front of businesses without creating conflicts between the parking lanes and the travel lanes.

The 8-foot wide zone at both edges of the right-of-way will be the pedestrian area. This area accommodates the sidewalk and other pedestrian elements such as outdoor café areas and streetscape elements such as benches, planters, lighting, and landscaping. Because an appropriate sidewalk width in a hamlet environment is 12-16 feet, all buildings along Grand River should be set back not less than 5 feet but not more than 10 feet to provide an additional 5-8 feet of sidewalk area on private property. This private supplemental sidewalk will increase the 8 feet of public sidewalk in the right-of-way to a comfortable 12-16 foot walkway with planting areas and also define the area with a consistent streetwall.

Grand River Avenue Street Design

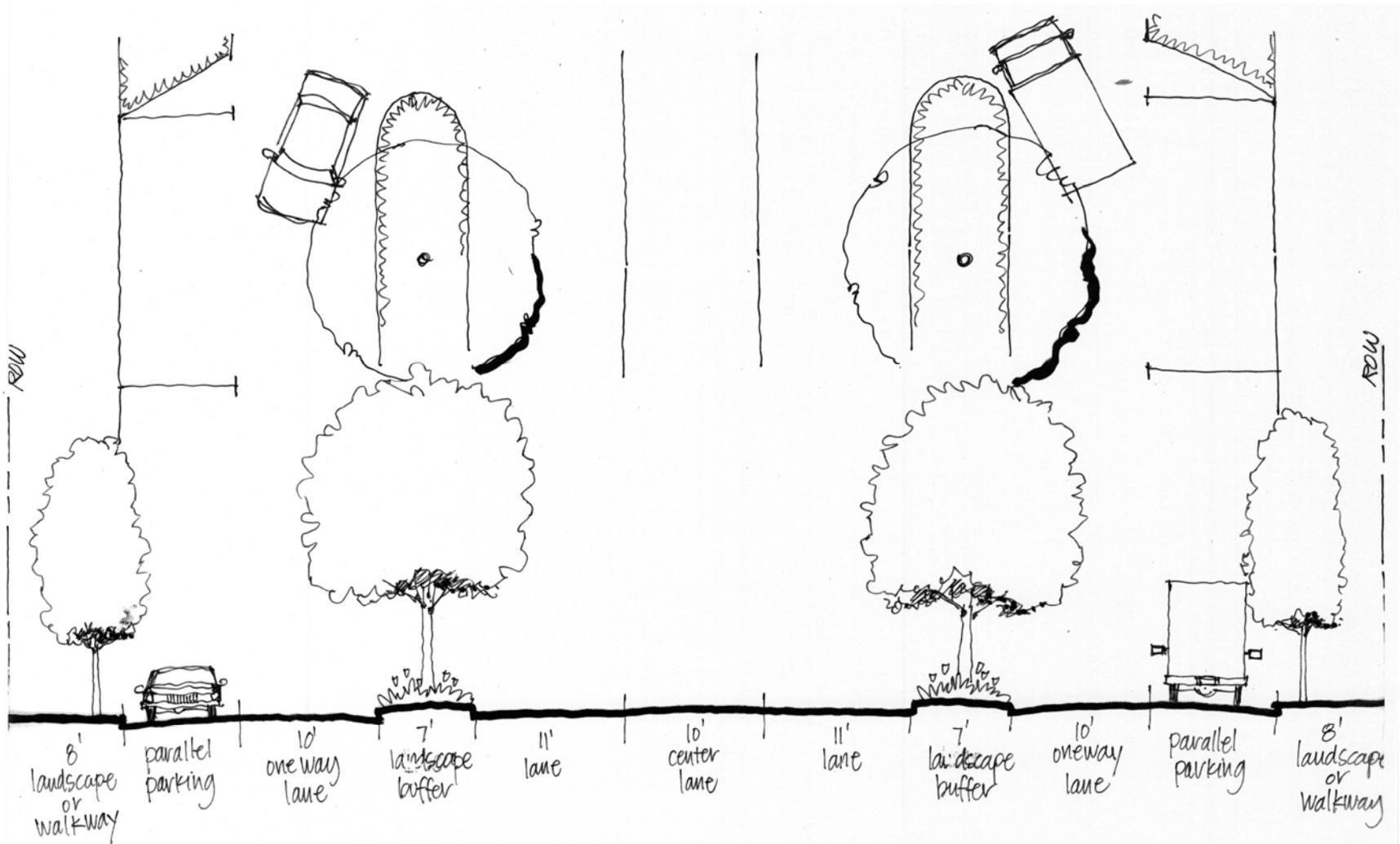


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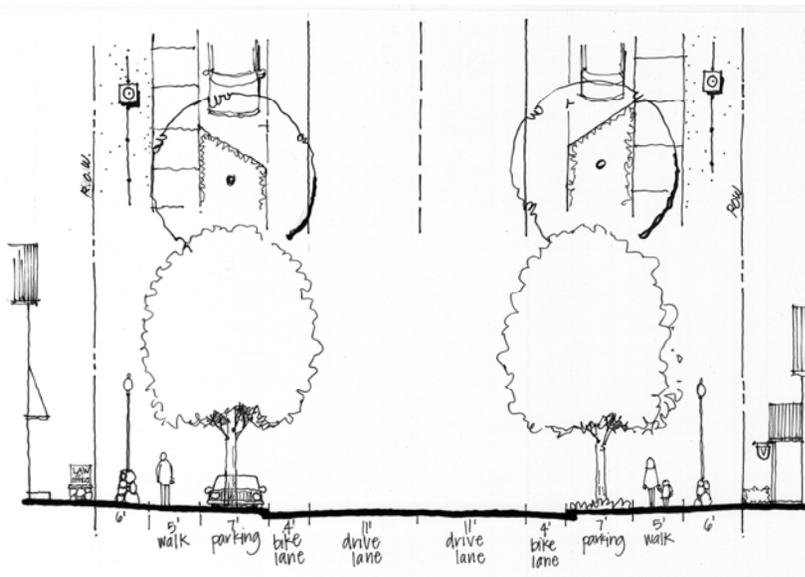
Design Plan

Implementation

South Milford Road Streetscape

South Milford Road is intended to become a Gateway Corridor with land use transitioning to office and service. This creates opportunity to develop on-street parking, sidewalks and streetscape along the corridor. Right-of-way should be acquired where necessary as homes transition to businesses in order to expand the streetscape.

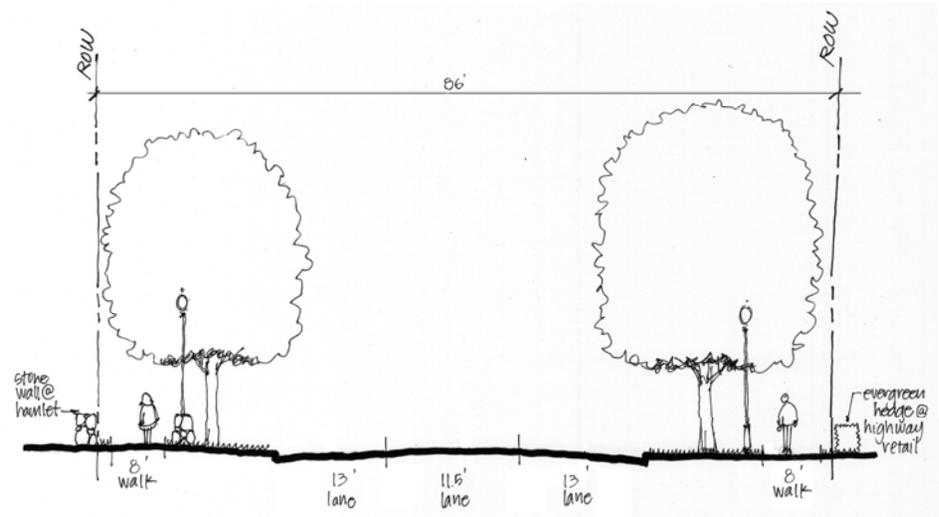
- South Milford Road should include two travel lanes and on-street parking on both sides of the street.
- A 4-foot wide bike lane should be incorporated between the travel lane and the parking lane.
- Street trees are located in planters periodically located in the on-street parking lane, and also may be planted in tree grates in the sidewalk area.
- The sidewalk area should have a minimum width of 8 feet and may be paved from the right-of-way line to the back of curb, or may incorporate a planting area. Streetscape improvements may be provided in the sidewalk area.



Ring Road Streetscape Standards

The primary purpose of the Ring Road is to move vehicular traffic, although limited access to adjacent parcels of land is provided.

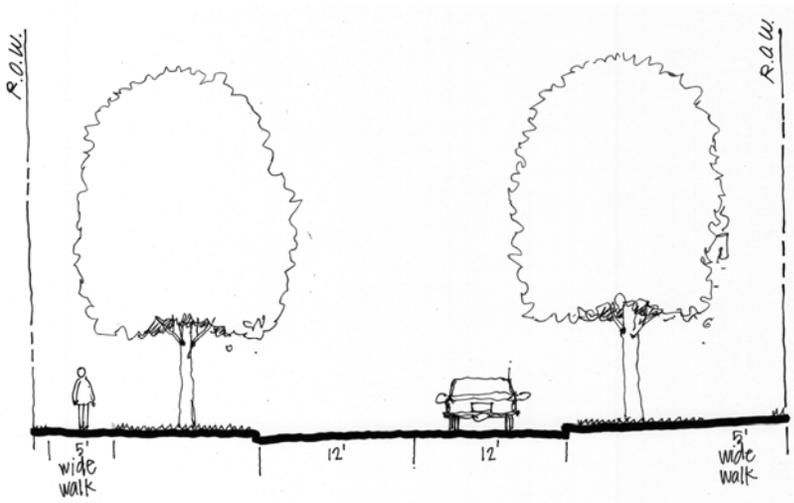
- The Ring Road typically contains a left turn lane, although a left turn lane may be omitted where necessary.
- No on-street parking is provided on the Ring Road.
- A tree lawn should be provided between the back of curb and the sidewalk, with street trees planted approximately 40-feet on center.



Residential Street Streetscape Standards

A new extensively landscaped streetscape for the public rights-of-way is planned to be the major unifying element for the Hamlet Area, improving the visual quality and the pedestrian environment.

- Residential streets have a 60 foot wide right of way
- Residential streets should incorporate on-street parking on at least one side of the street.
- An 8-10 foot wide tree lawn is located behind the curb, with 5-foot wide sidewalks being provided on both sides of the street.



Building Design

Buildings have a determinative impact on the physical quality of a community. Poorly designed buildings with bad architecture can last as long as well-proportioned buildings with good architecture. Each and every new building that is built in Lyon Center must respect and improve the existing environment, and the Township must be vigilant and conscientious to prevent inappropriate buildings from being constructed in the Hamlet area.

The key premise is that buildings should be a long-term commitment, not a disposable commodity. Allowing standardized prototype buildings, such as franchise buildings or strip mall buildings, will prevent New Hudson from becoming the Hamlet envisioned by this plan. Prototype or franchise buildings are commodity buildings, replicated by the real estate industry following a standard format in the same way that Ford or GM produce cars. These buildings will not add to the character of Lyon Center. Instead, buildings should be rooted in the history and potential of the Hamlet, and should conspire to produce the kind of unique, imageable, walkable place that Township residents desire in their community.

This section sets forth recommended design guidelines for the Lyon Center Hamlet area. These guidelines are intended to communicate a set of building design parameters that are appropriate for the character and scale of a traditional small Midwestern community.

Building Scale and Character

Building lots in the Hamlet Area are typically small in terms of both size and width. This has traditionally led to smaller scale buildings being constructed. New construction in the Hamlet area should continue this tradition of small-scale buildings, even if land assembly creates larger parcels.

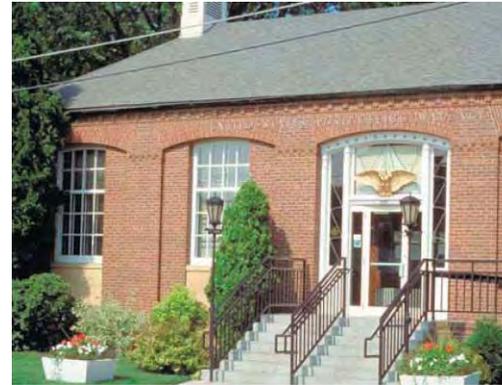


Figure 11. This building is modest in size, but contains good detailing in the brick and windows. The detailing provides interest in what would otherwise be a very simple building.

Building Height should generally not exceed three stories in the Hamlet, Multiple Family, and Office areas, and two stories in the Residential and Gateway Corridor areas. The Research/Office area is more flexible, and could accommodate buildings up to 4 stories in height.

Two story buildings are encouraged, one story buildings are acceptable in the Hamlet area.

Special architectural features such as towers, cupolas, chimneys, steeples, etc. should be allowed to exceed the 2-3 story height limits.

First Story Clear Height. An important construction detail is ensuring that first stories have sufficient clear height. Taller first stories allow for more flexible use and reuse of building space for different purposes. In general, any building that will contain office, commercial, or retail uses on the first floor should encourage a minimum first story clear height of 14 feet, measured from the interior floor to the ceiling in the first floor.

Roof Design is an important building detail item that helps establish building character. Buildings with both pitched roofs and flat roofs are appropriate in the Hamlet area – in fact, both kinds of building already exist.



Figure 13. Note how the building with a pitched roof comfortably co-exists with the flat-roofed building next to it.

Relationship to the Street

Buildings must be disposed towards the street. The front entrance of any building constructed in the Hamlet area should face the street to create the sense of enclosure and scale along streets. This is necessary to establish street areas as public spaces that are hospitable to people.

Of course, if a building is located close to a street that is improperly designed, it will feel out of context. The New Hudson Inn is a great example of a building that addresses a poorly designed street. Grand River is designed solely for vehicular use, and does not offer any benefit or amenity to the New Hudson Inn. In such a situation, the building will feel uncomfortable and out of place.



Figure 12. The New Hudson Inn has a good relationship to the street. The street, however, is not properly designed and does not create the kind of character envisioned for the Hamlet area.

Transparency

Buildings should also have a minimum level of transparency on the first floor façade facing any street. Building transparency is the percentage of the first floor façade area that passers-by can see through. When first floor facades have a high level of transparency, it allows persons inside of the buildings to feel like they are connected to the public space on the street, and it also makes passers-by on the street feel more secure because the street space is monitored by people inside of buildings. Simply stated, first floor facades must have a minimum transparency level if the Hamlet area is to be a walkable, inviting, and interesting place.

The minimum recommended transparency on first floor facades that face a street varies by character area in the Hamlet:

- Hamlet area – 70%
- Gateway corridor area – 50%
- Office – 50%
- Research/Office – 40%
- Multiple Family area – 35%

There is no minimum transparency recommendation for the High Density Residential, Highway Commercial, Airport, or Civic character areas.

All first-floor glass must be transparent, non-reflective glass.



Figure 14. These buildings have good first floor transparency that allows for high visibility into and out of the building. The top picture is an art gallery with interesting displays in the window, while the bottom picture is a restaurant where the visibility into and out of the building makes the restaurant use in the building an extension of the public space on the street. The street café tables in front of the building enhance this effect.



Ground Floor Detailing

The first story of the building determines the character of the building and the street for pedestrians and motorists.

First floor details can include recesses or projections in the façade such as entrance door recesses, bay windows, or projecting balconies or awnings. Other details can be architectural, for instance, using a different building material to highlight a detail.

First floors should incorporate architectural detailing such as the following:

- A intermediate cornice line (sometimes referred to as a beltline). This detail is essential in multi-story buildings.
- The use of different building materials for detail elements
- An offset in the façade
- Awnings, trellises, or arcades to enhance the pedestrian experience
- Window lintels
- Brick or stone corbels

Refer to the images on this page for illustrations of the above details.



Figure 15. This building incorporates stone lintels over the windows, small awnings, and rusticated piers incorporating a differing building material to highlight the building entrance.



Figure 17. This one-story building features an offset façade and a beltline that creates a very human-scale building.



Figure 16. An example of a corbel, which is a detail built into or affixed to a wall to support an architectural element. In this instance, the corbel is supporting an upper story balcony.

Building Materials & Details

Recommended Materials. Buildings should primarily use durable materials that will weather handsomely over time. Generally, natural building materials such as brick and stone are preferred.

In keeping with the existing character of the Hamlet, and the desire to continue the vernacular architecture of small Midwestern settlements, wood plank siding is also an acceptable material. Wood plank siding was traditionally used in buildings, but it requires continuous maintenance and upkeep. This has led to many buildings which were originally wood plank being converted to vinyl siding over the years. While vinyl siding is more durable than wood plank, it often does not have the same aesthetic quality or character. If vinyl siding is to be used to create a wood plank appearance, proper detailing must be provided in buildings. However, the chances of “getting it wrong” with vinyl siding are high, so it is discouraged as a building material.

Instead of vinyl siding, fiber cement siding materials (often referred to as Hardiplank) are encouraged. These materials are durable and better replicate the look of traditional wood plank siding.

The use of metal panels may be appropriate as an architectural detail element, but prefabricated metal panels are not appropriate primary building materials. A common design element of modern and contemporary architecture is the interplay between the cool texture of metals against the warm character of wood and other natural materials. These design guidelines encourage metal when used properly to enhance the architecture of a building, but strongly discourage the use of metal as a cheap and expedient building material with no architectural quality.

Non-Recommended Materials. The use of aluminum or vinyl siding, mirrored glass and plastic is strongly discouraged.

Imitation stucco (Dry-Vit, Sto-Wall, E.I.F.S. and other brands) should only be used as a detailing material, and should not be allowed below 11’ height. Imitation stucco type products may be allowed

above 11’ in height with special approval by the Planning Commission provided the architecture is in character with the district.

Awnings should be traditional in design and made from fabric or similar material. Metal awnings may be appropriate if they represent an architectural element, but metal awnings that replicate a traditional canvas awning shape and form are not appropriate.

Plastic or rigid fiberglass awnings are always discouraged. Awnings should not be made of high gloss, shiny or translucent materials, and should not be internally-illuminated.

Windows. Front facing windows must be clear glass, not reflective or tinted glass or plexi-glass. Side and rear facing windows may be faux, to break up long building facades if appropriate, after review and approval by the Planning Commission.

Curtains or blinds are permissible for second story windows or where a first floor residential use exists. Curtains or shades are discouraged for first-floor offices, as these features eliminate the “eyes on the street” purpose of the first floor transparency recommendations.

Side and Rear Façade Design

Whenever a side or rear façade is visible from a public street, or if parking is located at the side or rear of the building, the façade should be designed to create a pleasing appearance, in accordance with the following design criteria:

Design. Rear and side storefronts shall be similarly designed as the front facade.

Materials. Materials and architectural features similar to those present on the front of the building shall be used on the side or rear façade. Acceptable materials include brick, stone and precast limestone. Decorative CMU (concrete masonry unit) or stucco may be permitted with permission by the Planning Commission. The buildings are to be constructed from permanent materials that will weather handsomely over time, such as brick, stone, masonry, or other natural materials. The use of aluminum or vinyl siding, mirrored glass and plastic shall not be allowed. Imitation stucco (Dry-Vit, Sto-Wall, E.I.F.S. and other brands) shall not be allowed below 11’ height. Imitation stucco type products may be allowed above 11’ height with special approval provided the architecture is in character with the historic nature of the district. The use of metal panels, wood siding, and cement board siding are generally discouraged but may be allowed if the architecture is in keeping with the nature of the district.



Service Areas. Trash receptacle and service areas shall be completely screened with landscaping, a fence, a wall, or a combination thereof.

Figure 18. A well detailed and landscaped walkway between buildings.

Signage

Signs shall be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building, and with other signs on nearby buildings. Signs shall be an integral part of the building and site design.

A sign program shall be developed for buildings which house more than one business. Signs need not match, but shall be compatible with one another. Franchise or national chains must comply with these standards to create signs sensitive to its context.

Sign Location. Wall Signs on a storefront-type building shall generally be placed within a “sign band” immediately above the storefront. Wall or Roof Signs on other buildings shall be placed where they do not obscure architectural features.

Sign Materials. Sign materials shall be consistent or compatible with the original construction materials and architectural style of the building facade on which they are to be displayed. Natural materials such as wood and metal are appropriate. Neon signs may be appropriate for windows.

Sign Types. The type of signs used should reflect the character of the district they are in. The following are sign types appropriate for each district.

Hamlet

- Awning, Canopy or Marquee Signs
- Low profile Ground or Monument Signs
- Wall Signs
- Blade Signs

Gateway corridor

- Awning, Canopy or Marquee Signs
- Low profile Ground or Monument Signs
- Wall Signs

Office

- Awning, Canopy or Marquee Signs
- Low profile Ground or monument signs
- Wall Signs

Research/Office

- Free standing signs
- Low profile Ground or Monument Signs
- Wall Signs

Multiple Family

- Awning, Canopy or Marquee Signs
- Low profile Ground or Monument Signs

Low-profile Ground Signs or Monument Signs are encouraged in the highway commercial district for uses such as restaurants and gas stations. Sign materials, colors and architectural detailing shall be similar to those of the principal building.

Parking Lot and Building Lighting

In order to reduce glare through appropriate lighting design, parking lot lighting shall be in scale with its surroundings.

- Cutoff fixtures shall be located below the mature height of trees located in parking lot island. This will prevent ambient “glow” or light pollution from large developments.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, not exceeding 17’ 1” in height, shall be located on walkways and adjacent to store entrances. (Township light standard to be used on all public streets.)
- Lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Lights attached to buildings shall be screened by the building’s architectural features to eliminate glare to adjacent properties.
- All lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the Zoning Ordinance as it relates to glare.

Walkways

Continuous sidewalks meeting the width standards specified previously under Street Design are required within Lyon Center.

Lighted sidewalks shall extend between rear or side parking areas and building entrances. Approved boulevard trees, planted in sidewalk areas, shall be located at a minimum distance of 40’ on center.

Buildings with street frontage exceeding fifty feet shall have at least one bench.

The sidewalk surfaces of proposed building should match the public walkway in materials and design.



Figure 19. This example of a public walkway along a private parking lot shows how the pedestrian experience can be maintained even while passing along a parking zone.

Landscaping

The use of window boxes, hanging flower baskets, vines and/or other seasonal landscaping is required on all buildings within the Hamlet. Window boxes, hanging baskets and planters shall be used around entries. Vines shall be used to cover expansive blank walls.

Streetscaping shall include the following: boulevard species trees, concrete sidewalks with brick accents, street lights, benches and flowers.

A landscaped buffer strip at least 6 feet wide shall be provided between all parking areas and the sidewalk or street. The buffer strip shall consist of shade trees at maximum intervals of 30 feet and a decorative fence, masonry wall or hedge. A solid wall or dense hedge shall be no less than thirty inches and no higher than three feet.



Figure 20. Colorful flower plantings bring life to an otherwise simple entry.

Parking

Within all districts, with the exception of Highway Commercial and Office, the following parking standards shall apply. Off-street parking shall be located to the rear of buildings whenever possible. The exception is when parking is located in a side yard adjacent to the building and fronting the street, a landscaped buffer must be provided.

Within the Hamlet the street frontage occupied by parking shall not exceed 66 feet per property. Side-by-side parking lots created by two separate property owners and/or buildings creating a parking area longer than 66 feet are prohibited, except where a heavily landscaped buffer of at least 20 feet wide completely separates both lots. Front yard parking is prohibited. On corner lots, buildings shall be located at corners. There will be no corner parking within the Hamlet.



Figure 21. Rear yard parking may be accessed from behind the building or through an access drive from the main street.



Figure 22. Side Yard Parking leading to a rear lot allows visibility from the main street while limiting exposure to the main mass of parking.

The Design Vision



Figure 23. The New Hudson Inn serves as the inspiration for new building design in the blocks north of Grand River Avenue and east of Milford Road. The second-story porch has been restored to the New Hudson Inn in this rendering. The New Hudson Inn is an important landmark in the area, and it must be preserved regardless of current perceptions of the building or the use.



Figure 24. Historic buildings and new buildings built with historical details lend character to the Hamlet.



Figure 25. The northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Milford Road could be developed as a food market, with a multi-purpose area in front of the building that can accommodate events, parking, or outdoor sales. A coffee kiosk could be located in this area.



Figure 26. Looking south along Milford Road from a point about 200 feet north of Grand River Avenue. Notice the covered arcade along the sidewalk on the right side of the image and the stone streetscape pier on the left side of the image.



Figure 27. Looking southeast from the current Putters site into the Milford Road and Grand River Avenue intersection. This vision for a lively, well-detailed and architecturally significant core to the Hamlet begins to create a sense of place for growth in the Downtown.



Figure 28. The above Hamlet build out analysis shows the possible future square footage available in the Downtown area assuming that many of the existing building are rehabilitated and the DDA works together with private developers to create central parking lots to allow for greater density and decreased development costs for investors.

Public Spaces and Places

Parks and public spaces are economic catalysts. They signal to the public sector that the community is invested in the future growth and sustainability. They provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our communities. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees.

When the public sector invests in its public spaces and places:

- Real property values are positively affected.
- Municipal revenues are increased.
- Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.
- Knowledge workers and talent are attracted to live and work.
- Homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes.

Source: American Planning Association

At the bottom line, parks are a good financial investment for Lyon Township.

In addition to the public facilities located in the Civic District such as an amphitheater, plazas and parks, the Township should expand the current Huron Valley Trail system in to the Hamlet and encourage pedestrian connections throughout. Restaurants, cafes and businesses should be encouraged to create semi-public spaces outside of their businesses. Outdoor seating, entry courtyards and side yards can become great spaces too.

Some of the keys design and planning elements that help create great public spaces are:

Image and Identity

Historically, squares were the center of communities, and they traditionally helped shape the identity of entire cities. Sometimes a fountain or large statuary was used to give the square or park a strong image: Think of the majestic Trevi Fountain in Rome or the Swann Fountain in Philadelphia's Logan Circle. The image of many

squares was closely tied to the great civic buildings located nearby, such as cathedrals, city halls, or libraries. Today, creating a square that becomes the most significant place in a city—that gives identity to whole communities—is as important as ever.

Attractions and Destinations

Any great public space has a variety of smaller "places" within it to appeal to various people. These can include outdoor cafés, fountains, sculpture, or a bandshell for performances. These attractions don't need to be big to be successful. In fact, some of the best civic squares have numerous small attractions such as a vendor cart or playground that, when put together, draw people throughout the day.

Amenities

Public parks, squares and plazas should feature amenities that make it comfortable for people to use. A bench or waste receptacle in just the right location can make a big difference in how people choose to use a place. Lighting can strengthen a square's identity while highlighting specific activities, entrances, or pathways. Public art can be a great magnet for children of all ages to come together. Whether temporary or permanent, a good amenity will help establish a convivial setting for social interaction.

Flexible Design

The use of a public space changes during the course of the day, week, and year. To respond to these natural fluctuations, flexibility needs to be built in. Instead of a permanent stage, for example, a retractable or temporary stage could be used. Likewise, it is important to have on-site storage for movable chairs, tables, umbrellas, and games so they can be used at a moment's notice.

Seasonal Strategy

A successful public space can't flourish with just one design or management strategy. Great squares such as Bryant Park, the plazas of Rockefeller Center, and Detroit's Campus Martius change with the seasons. Skating rinks, outdoor cafés, markets, horticulture displays, art and sculpture help adapt our use of the space from one season to the next.

Access

To be successful, public spaces needs to be easy to get to. The best downtown spaces are always easily accessible by foot: Surrounding streets are narrow; crosswalks are well marked; lights are timed for pedestrians, not vehicles; traffic moves slowly; and transit stops are located nearby. A square surrounded by lanes of fast-moving traffic will be cut off from pedestrians and deprived of its most essential element: people.

Inner Space & the Outer Space

Visionary park planner Frederick Law Olmsted's idea of the "inner park" and the "outer park" is just as relevant today as it was over 100 years ago. The streets and sidewalks around a public gathering place greatly affect its accessibility and use, as do the buildings that surround it. Imagine a square fronted on each side by 15-foot blank walls – that is the worst-case scenario for the outer square. Then imagine that same square situated next to a public library: the library doors open right onto the square; people sit outside and read on the steps; maybe the children's reading room has an outdoor space right on the square, or even a bookstore and cafe. An active, welcoming outer square is essential to the well-being of all public spaces.

Reaching Out Like an Octopus

Just as important as the edge of a downtown public space is the way that streets, sidewalks and ground floors of adjacent buildings lead into it. Like the tentacles of an octopus extending into the surrounding neighborhood, the influence of a good public space (such as Union Square in New York) starts at least a block away. Vehicles slow down, walking becomes more enjoyable, and pedestrian traffic increases. Elements within the space are visible from a distance, and the ground floor activity of buildings entices pedestrians to move toward the destination.

The Central Role of Management

The best places are ones that people return to time and time again. The only way to achieve this is through a management plan that understands and promotes ways of keeping the public spaces safe and lively. For example, a good manager understands existing and

potential users and gears events to both types of people. Good managers become so familiar with the patterns of how people use the park that waste receptacles get emptied at just the right time and refreshment stands are open when people most want them. Good managers create a feeling of comfort and safety, fixing and maintaining it so that people feel assured that someone is in charge.

Diverse Funding Sources

A well-managed square is generally beyond the scope of the average city parks or public works department, which is why partnerships have been established to operate most of the best public spaces in the United States. These partnerships seek to supplement what the city can provide with funding from diverse sources, including—but not limited to—rent from cafés, markets or other small commercial uses on the site; taxes on adjacent properties; film shoots; and benefit fundraisers.

Source: Project for Public Spaces, Inc.

6. Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan

The Vision Plan represents the future of Lyon Center – a vision to preserve and enhance the best characteristics of the Lyon Center area while making the most of opportunities that come with new development. The Plan in itself is a vision and provides goals and objectives that should be considered in daily decision-making. Successful implementation of the Plan will be the result of actions taken by elected and appointed officials, Township staff, public sector agencies, and private citizens and organizations.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter identifies and describes actions and tools available to implement the vision created in this Plan. Broadly stated, the Plan will be implemented through:

Planning and Zoning: Evaluation of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance and amendments to Township regulations will be necessary to implement the recommendations of this Plan. Continuous evaluation of the recommendations of this Plan must occur at regular intervals to ensure that the overall vision for the future development of Lyon Center remains relevant.

Civic Improvements: Improvements such as parks, public spaces, and utility systems fall into this category. Civic improvements are generally funded through public funds and are tangible “bricks and mortar” projects.

Circulation Improvements: Improvements to the Township’s motorized and non-motorized circulation system fall into this category.

Economic Development: This category includes the economic and physical development of the Lyon Center area. These improvements include a wide range of activities from physical development activity to promotion and marketing, and may be completed by public or private entities, or some combination thereof.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The chart on the following page presents a detailed summary of all of the recommended implementation activities, who is responsible for completing the activity, and available funding resources for each activity.

CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS								
PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			Township	Other Gov't	Private	Public	Private	DDA
Complete sanitary sewer connection along Grand River Avenue	A	1	TE TB	DDA		●		●
Implement streetscape improvements along Grand River Avenue (street trees, street lights, sidewalks, benches, etc.)	A	1	TE TB	DDA		●		●
Explore and implement storm water improvements to support development	A	2	TB TE	DDA				●
Acquire property necessary to construct DDA parking lots.	A	3	TA	DDA				●
Acquire properties necessary for development of the civic campus	B	3	TA	DDA				●
Work with the Library Board to plan Hamlet area Library Site	B	3	TS	DDA LB		●		
Identify opportunity areas within the Hamlet for small civic spaces (e.g., pocket parks, town square)	B	4	TS TP	DDA		●		
Develop DDA parking lots within the Hamlet	B	4	TE	DDA				●
Explore feasibility of expanded post office within the civic campus with key leaders	B	5	TS TP	FG		●		
Develop consistent streetscape improvements along Milford Road	B	3	TB TP			●		●

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			Township	Other Gov't	Private	Public	Private	DDA
Create a façade program to fund building façade improvements to existing Hamlet buildings	A	1	PC TP	DDA	PO	●	●	●
Encourage infill development and redevelopment in the Hamlet	A	2	PC	DDA	PO		●	●
Create a parking plan to ensure appropriate quantity and location of parking in the Hamlet area	A	2	PC TP	DDA		●		●
Create a business recruitment, retention and relocation strategy to attract new businesses to locate within the Lyon Center area	B	5	TP	DDA				●
Develop and promote activities such as a Farmers' Market and festivals within the Hamlet area	B	5	TP	DDA CC				●

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CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS								
PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			Township	Other Gov't	Private	Public	Private	DDA
Reconstruct Grand River Avenue and the Milford Road Intersection (curb, gutter, surfacing, etc.)	A	1	TB TE	DDA RCOC		●		●
Develop a community non-motorized pathway plan to connect all parts of Lyon Center	A	1	PC TB TP TE		OCP GI	●		
Ensure that all road improvement projects are designed consistent with the recommendations of this Plan	A	1	TS TE	RCOC		●		
Construct sidewalks on all streets	A	2	TS TE	DDA	PO			●
Connect the Hamlet to the Oakland County Linked Path and Trail System	B	3	TB TP		GI OCP	●		●
Create new street connections in the southwest residential area of Lyon Center	C	4	TB TE TP	DDA		●		●
Create new street connections in the Hamlet	C	4	TB TE TP	DDA	PO	●		●

PLANNING and ZONING								
PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			Township	Other Gov't	Private	Public	Private	DDA
Revise the Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with this Plan and rezone properties according to the Vision Plan and updated Zoning Ordinance	A	1	PC TB TP			●		●
Update the Township Land Use Plan to reflect this Plan.	A	1	PC TB TP			●		●
Update the DDA and TIF Plan and obtain approval from the County	A	1	TP TB	DDA		●		●
Create architectural design standards for the Hamlet	A	2	PC TP	DDA	PO	●		●
Create an ongoing blight enforcement strategy	A	5	TS	DDA		●		●
Create architectural design standards for the commercial area	B	2	PC TP	DDA		●		●
Update and adopt Parks and Recreation Plan that includes the parks and recreation facilities in this Plan.	B	2	TB PR TP			●		
Review this Vision Plan every 5 years	C	3	TP	DDA				●
Raise awareness of the benefits of green building standards	C	5	PC TP			●		
Encourage LEED/Energy Star certification for new or renovated buildings	C	5	PC TP			●		

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KEY

Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility (Color)
A	1	Project Lead
B	2	Key Participant
C	3	Contributor
	4	
	5	

Responsibility (Abbreviation)

DDA	Downtown Development Authority www.lvontwp.org	OCP	Oakland County PEDS www.oakgov.com/peds/
CC	Chamber of Commerce www.southlyonchamber.com	PC	Lyon Township Planning Commission
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation www.michigan.gov/mdot	PO	Property Owners
GI	GreenWays Initiative greenways.sfsem.org	RCOC	Road Commission for Oakland County www.rcocweb.org
TS	Township Supervisor/Administration	TB	Lyon Township Board
TP	Township Planner	TE	Township Engineer
TE	Township Attorney	PR	Parks and Recreation Committee
FG	Federal Government	LB	Library Board

Funding

Public	Includes public funds from the Township, County, and State.
Private	Includes funds from private sources such as grant monies, corporate funding, or property owners
DDA	Tax increment financing provided by the Downtown Development Authority

NOTES:

NOTES: