

Housing Analysis

In many communities, young adults and the elderly have limited housing options due to a combination of their lower income levels along with the pricing and availability of housing. This kind of financial challenge can impact people of all ages.

The general rule of thumb based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is to spend a maximum of 30% of a household's income on housing costs, yet many people find themselves spending more on housing, leaving less of their income available for other household expenses. Finding attainable housing can be challenge and it can stress family finances.

The chart below demonstrates that nearly half of all renter households and about a quarter of owner households are cost burdened. Cost burdened is defined as households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing. In 2001, only slightly more than 40 percent of renters were cost burdened. The supply of multifamily for-sale housing is decreasing. Multifamily for-sale housing has historically represented about 20 to 25 percent of total multifamily permits. This type of housing is often more attainable because of its lower cost. In the past 8 years, multifamily for-sale housing has represented 6 to 7 percent of total permits, reflecting a significant post-Great Recession decline.

REVIEW OF HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

WHAT DO WE WANT?

Attractive, safe, quiet and well-maintained neighborhoods; a diversified range of housing for people of all ages and abilities; and active neighborhoods that promote community connectedness.

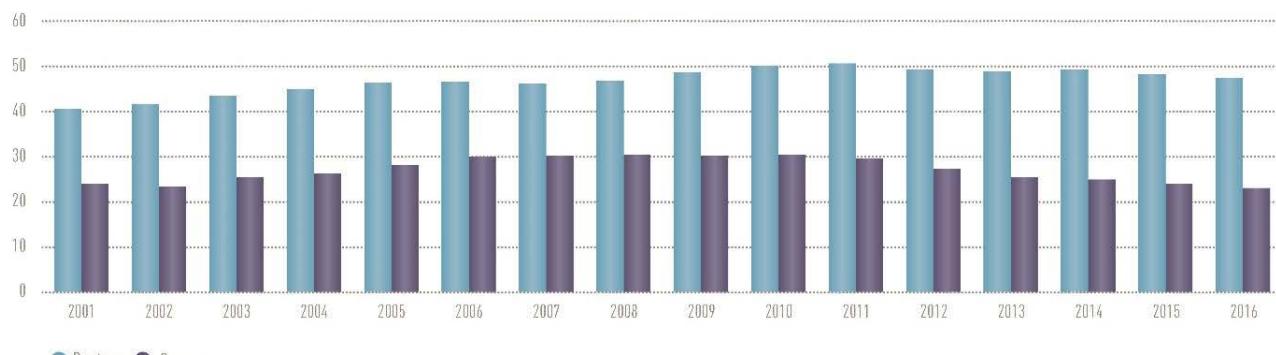
HOUSING OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage maintenance of and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods.
2. Ensure that infill and redeveloped residential properties are compatible with the surrounding area and adjacent parcels.
3. Provide a diverse range of housing options that meet the affordability, maintenance, and lifestyle needs of current and future residents.
4. Support neighborhoods by improving walkability and access to goods and services.

CHART 9: COST-BURDENED US HOUSEHOLDS BY OWNER/RENTER

Nearly Half of Renter Households and a Quarter of Owner Households Are Cost Burdened

Share of Households with Cost Burdens (Percent)



Notes: Cost-burdened households pay more than 30% of income for housing. Households with zero or negative income are assumed to have no burdens, while households paying no cash rent are assumed to be without burdens.

Source: JCHS tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Benchmark: Thriving communities provide a wide spectrum of housing options to support all residents. The availability of “attainable” housing helps accommodate everyone from young adults who are just beginning to live on their own, to older residents looking to downsize while staying in the community. While there is no universal definition of “attainable housing,” The term was recently defined by the Urban Land Institute as “non-subsidized, for-sale housing that is affordable to households with incomes between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income (AMI).”

New construction has delivered larger homes with more bedrooms even though household size was dropping. “Although one- or two-person households make up more than 60 percent of total households, nearly 50 percent of the homes delivered are four bedrooms or more. Less than 10 percent of the homes offer fewer bedroom options like one and two bedrooms,” as noted by ULI.

The same ULI report notes that small housing, under 1,400 square feet, has historically represented about 16 percent of new construction, but in the last cycle, it has averaged closer to 7 percent. When combined with the next size category, 1,400 to 1,800 square feet, the overall distribution of “small homes” has declined from just under 40 percent to 22 percent. Homes over 2,400 square feet have increased from 32 percent to 50 percent of new construction since 1999, according to the ULI .

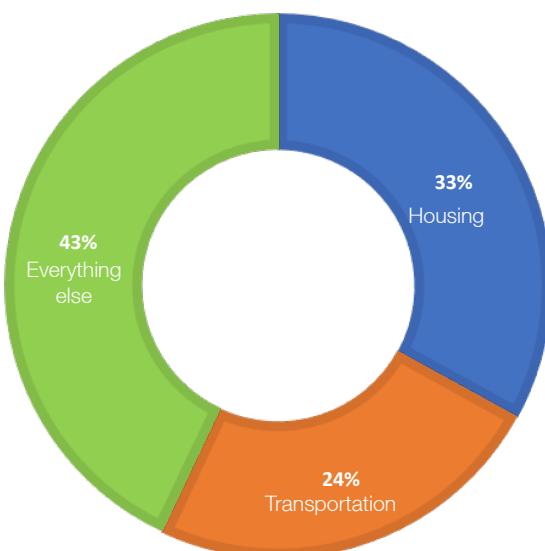
What does this mean for Lathrup Village?

As noted above, attainable housing has been defined as non-subsidized, for-sale housing that is affordable to households with incomes between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income (AMI). ”

In terms of affordability, in general, housing costs should not exceed 30% of income. In consideration of the outflow of residents for jobs outside the city, transportation costs should also be included in the consideration of affordability, as they generally are the second biggest household expense (after housing).

The Center for Neighborhood Technology compiles data based on a variety of sources to create a “Housing + Transportation Affordability Index.” Their analysis typically shows that residents living in areas considered “affordable” in terms of housing costs less than 30% of median household income may often incur higher transportation costs. They suggest that housing and transportation costs combined should not exceed 45% of median household income. In Lathrup Village, the average housing costs are about 33% of income, while transportation costs are about 24% of income. Together, these two expenses consume about 54% of the household income for Lathrup Village residents.

CHART 10: ANNUAL EXPENDITURES FOR HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

Housing in Lathrup Village

The City's residential neighborhoods, by and large, are what defines the character of Lathrup Village. Most of the City's neighborhoods are included in the Historic District as described earlier. Maintaining this character has been a continuing goal of the City for many years. Key considerations include encouraging ongoing home and yard maintenance, blight enforcement, and tree maintenance and preservation.

As noted earlier, the demographics of the City is changing; the population is getting older. Given that the vast majority of housing units in the City are single family detached homes, the Comprehensive Plan should consider how to address the housing needs of its residents in the future. Older adults should be able to "age in place" in their existing homes. However, new trends in population shifts suggest that younger and older adults alike are interested in vibrant, more urban-style communities. Through public input and previous planning efforts, the community has expressed a need to both retain existing residents as well as attract younger people to the City.

The current composition of the city's housing stock is well-suited for young families with its selection of single family residential homes, the majority of which has three or more bedrooms. However, there are few opportunities for young adults or empty nesters looking to get started or downsize into a smaller home with low maintenance. To offer options to its current and future residents, Lathrup Village has made zoning changes to accommodate this housing style as a part of envisioned redevelopment in the Village Center and Southfield Road Corridor. Providing alternatives to single family detached housing is a key component of a future Village Center, and also can give older adults the opportunity to "age in community."

It should be noted that needs of older adults go beyond housing, and include access to transportation, opportunities for socialization, and access to services.

Aging in Place

Issues related to aging in place include home design and maintenance. The home must be safe and accessible for older residents. Improvements can range from the simple, such as replacing light switches and faucets, to more significant improvements, such as kitchen and bath remodeling. The City should explore ways to educate the community on the elements of Universal Design, which is intended to make spaces that are accessible to all, not only aging adults, but also families with small children.

Another issue for older adults staying in their homes is the ability, often physical, to maintain their homes as they have in the past. There are several actions that can be taken that can help to mitigate the burden. One option would be to identify qualified, quality "handymen" entities that would agree to provide services to local residents at a reduced or fixed cost basis. Utility companies often have maintenance contracts on significant appliances as well. The entities involved would benefit through increased promotion at no cost to them and potentially stable and consistent business.

A second option would be to establish a small local company to furnish services on a fixed price or a variety of services for one monthly price. This would operate much like a condominium association and some homeowners associations around the country; but could cover not just exterior but interior minor maintenance elements as well.

Reaching out to aging adults in the community can sometimes be challenging. Strong neighborhood groups can help bridge the gaps in information from service providers, the city and older residents. The neighborhood concept is discussed further in the next section.

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks of a community. More than just the area in which people live, neighborhoods also include shops, restaurants, parks, places of worship and schools. They tend to be the places where we can attend to at least some of our daily needs within close proximity of where we live.

Often, neighborhoods draw together people of similar ethnicities, incomes and life circumstances. Sometimes they have defined boundaries based on streets or natural features. Regardless of their shape or composition, neighborhoods can serve as a needed link between the individual and the overall community.

Neighborhoods are connected by physical elements like streets and sidewalks as well as by loose or formal social connections, like a neighborhood watch program, neighborhood association, time bank or phone chain. Well-connected neighborhoods are better able to share information about the community at large, encourage civic participation in events and activities, and raise awareness of resources that may be available for people when they're needed. In disconnected neighborhoods, people may be less likely to feel they're part of the overall community and may miss out on opportunities to participate in civic life. This presents challenges for local governments as well as schools, businesses and service organizations. Strengthening neighborhood connections helps tie the community together and improve quality of life for all.

Planning at the neighborhood level can provide an opportunity to engage more people because the topics have more immediacy and relevance. It can take advantage of some built-in neighborhood networks, where they exist, that provide another avenue for communication and outreach. While often neighborhood groups get active when faced with a controversial development project (as evidenced by the common term NIMBY – Not in My Back Yard), proactive neighborhood engagement might better prepare a community for new development/redevelopment.

Neighborhood planning looks at issues specific to an area within a larger community. Some of the issues that could prompt long-range planning include:

- Preservation and Conservation. Conserving the built and natural heritage of an area
- Sustainability. Developing sustainability policies and initiatives
- Access and Civic Engagement. Improving access to local democracy, social services, and government institutions
- Housing and Community Development. Addressing sector-specific issues such as housing or economic development
- Transportation and Connectivity. Enhancing opportunities for active transportation by changing the physical treatment of neighborhood streets and public spaces¹

The American Planning Association developed a Policy Guide on Neighborhood Collaborative Planning in 1998. It finds that “neighborhoods are the strategic building blocks of overall community development. Neighborhood collaborative planning requires understanding of the economic, social and physical characteristics in order to maintain both the sense of place and the sense of community.”² The APA recommends seven general policies about neighborhood planning:

- Comprehensive plans provide the framework for neighborhood planning and should be done within the context of a community-wide plan.
- Where there are identifiable neighborhoods, a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan should reflect neighborhood plans and neighborhood plans should support the broader needs of the community and region.
- Planning decisions should be directed to the most

¹ Neighborhood Planning for Resilient and Livable Cities, Part 1 of 3: Why Do Neighborhoods Matter and Where Are We Going Wrong? Jayne Engle, Montreal. Nik Luka, Montreal and Uppsala. September 2014

² American Planning Association Policy Guide on Neighborhood Collaborative Planning, 1998.



appropriate level. Planning decisions that have limited impact on the community as a whole should be made by, or on the basis of advice given by, those neighborhood groups primarily affected. On the other hand, planning decisions that affect the community as a whole should not be overly influenced by a single neighborhood's needs or interests.

- Neighborhoods should be encouraged to seek the best organizational structure that is suited to achieve their goals and objectives such as, but not limited to neighborhood associations, co-ops, development corporations.
- Neighborhood-based coalitions that assist in the development of individual neighborhood organizations, articulate neighborhood views on community wide issues, and facilitate coordination in the planning process should be encouraged and supported by local government.
- Advocacy planning for neighborhoods should be accepted as a legitimate role for professional planners, both publicly and privately employed.
- To be effective in many cases, neighborhood planning needs to go beyond addressing the physical conditions of the area and also examine issues of social equity. To that end, the APA at the national,

chapter and division levels should work with social service, housing, economic development, public health, educational, recreational, judicial and other organizations to ensure that the issues social equity, children and families receive attention through the efforts of planners.

Communities of all sizes may find thinking at the neighborhood level to be more meaningful for residents and businesses. For example, in Los Angeles, their long-range plans recognize that “many residents do not identify with the City as a whole, but, instead, with their own neighborhood.” By planning at the neighborhood level, the city notes, “planning measures can reinforce those neighborhoods and connect them to one another and to larger districts, thereby defining a citywide structure.”³ The city’s strategies for overall growth include focusing on neighborhoods by: improving the appearance of commercial corridors, creating open space and adding visual and recreational amenities; re-purposing rights-of-ways to open space corridors that link neighborhoods to parks; concentrating development in transit-served areas and corridors; allowing streets to function as open space, with design and functional improvements.

³ The General Plan Framework, City of Los Angeles, CA.

The challenge for communities is not letting the hyperlocal focus of neighborhood planning and involvement result in competition between neighborhoods or let the voice of the neighborhoods drown out strategies that are good for the overall community. Keeping a “glocal” perspective means that it is important to plan and act locally in neighborhoods while nurturing the relationships between neighborhoods and the community at large, highlighting neighborhood action strategies that result in resilient and livable communities.

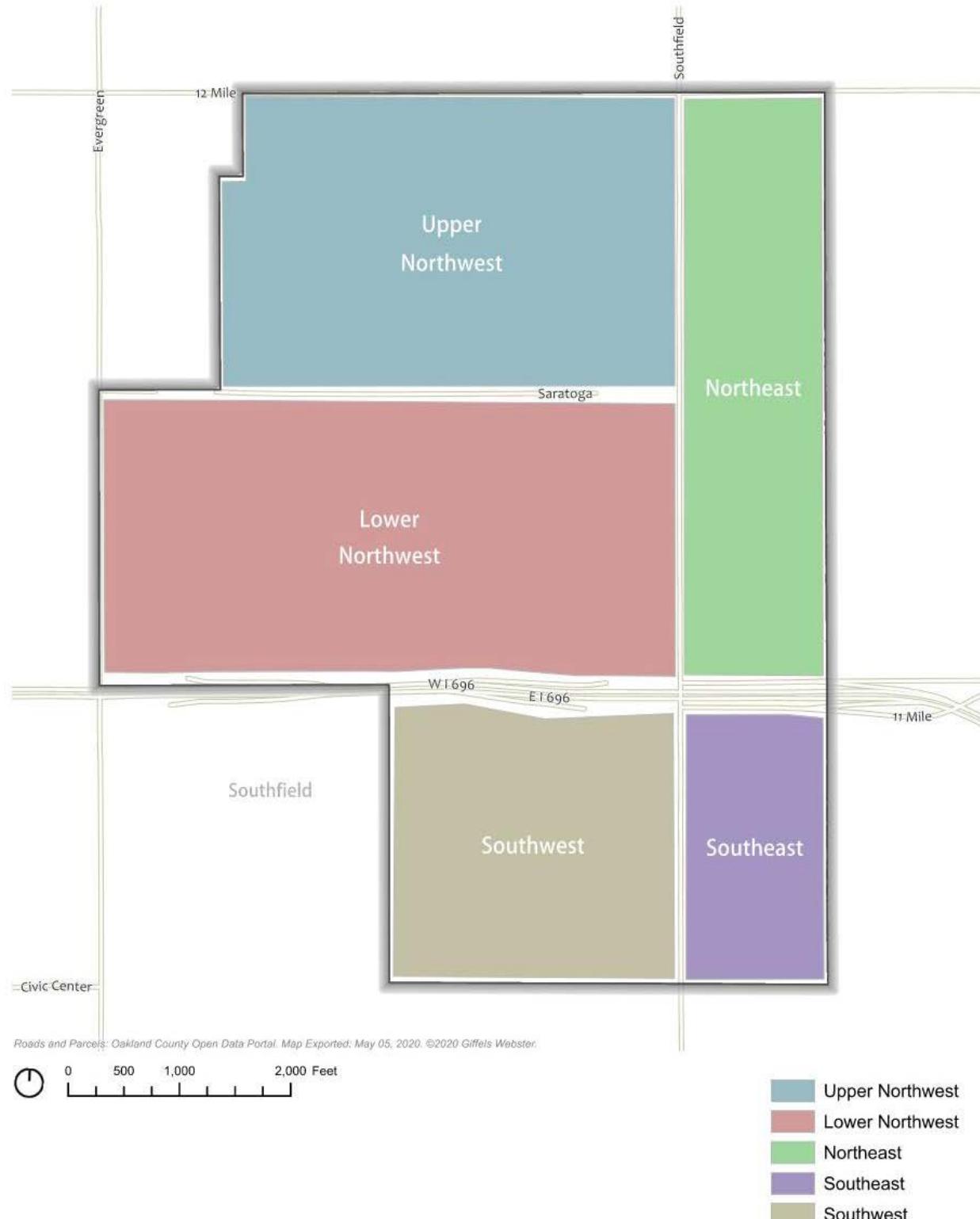
What are the essential elements of neighborhood planning? Planning at the neighborhood level requires an understanding of the following:

- **Geographic boundaries.** Think of neighborhoods in terms of walkability – a ten- to 15-minute walk radius – generally one half to one mile. Are there physical boundaries such as busy streets, highways, rail lines, large facilities or other barriers that serve as limits to one's walkability in a neighborhood or otherwise serve as an edge to a clear district?
- **Demographics.** What are the characteristics of the neighborhood? Understanding the income, race, age and household makeup of a neighborhood can help shed light on where issues of equity may need to be addressed.
- **Land uses.** To be walkable and serve some of the daily needs of its local population, a neighborhood needs more than just homes. Are there a mix of uses – perhaps not within the neighborhood, but at its edges, that provide destinations for neighborhood residents? Is there a school, library, park or other community facility that helps define the neighborhood?
- **Transportation networks.** How do people travel within and out of the neighborhood? Are there non-motorized transportation facilities like sidewalks and/or shared-use paths?
- **Historic Assets.** Are there any significant structures that are only found in a specific neighborhood? Historic structures like homes and schools can contribute to the character of a neighborhood – depending on their condition.
- **Natural Resources and Environment.** Are there any natural resources in the neighborhood? How do those resources connect to other neighborhoods or even beyond the community's borders?
- **Public realm.** Are there public spaces like parks, plazas or civic spaces that give the neighborhood the opportunity to engage? Sidewalks and streets should be considered as part of the public realm. How do homes and other land uses in the neighborhood interact with the public realm – particularly its streets and sidewalks?
- **Social network.** Is there an existing social network in the neighborhood for the facilitation and delivery of news and information? How does the neighborhood access community resources offered locally and regionally?
- **Context.** Where is the neighborhood within the context of the community as a whole? What boundaries – physical or social – separate neighborhoods from each other or important community assets? How can individual neighborhoods better interact with other neighborhoods as well as contribute to an improved overall community?

As shown on the map on the following page, the city somewhat naturally can be divided into five neighborhoods, using physical boundaries of Southfield Road and I-696. An additional road boundary of Saratoga provides an easy dividing point between the north and south for the northwest neighborhoods.

While city residents are largely plugged in to community events and activities, efforts to reinforce community and neighborhood identity can help residents communicate with each other as well as help the city more effectively communicate with residents.

MAP 9: LATHRUP VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOODS



Commercial Corridors/Downtown Plan

Background

Public Act 197 of 1975 is an economic development tool that provides the authority for communities in the State of Michigan to create a Downtown Development Authority. This act was amended and replaced by PA 57 of 2018, which consolidates the state's redevelopment tools that utilize tax increment financing (TIF).

The Lathrup Village Downtown Development Authority was created by the City Council on January 12, 1998 because the city experienced notable property value deterioration and loss along Southfield Road. The DDA district is generally described as incorporating all public and private real estate along 11 Mile Road, 12 Mile Road, and Southfield Road including public rights-of-way and alleys. See Map 11.

The future success of Lathrup Village's current effort to revitalize its commercial area will depend, in large measure, on the readiness and ability to initiate public improvements that strengthen the commercial area and when feasible to participate in the development of new private uses that clearly demonstrate the creation of new jobs, the attraction of new business, and the generation of additional tax revenues.

The DDA leverages public investment, in the form of Tax Increment Financing revenues and a 1.9 mil tax on Southfield Road properties, to attract private investment in the city. The DDA works with state, regional, and county officials to strengthen the economic position of our existing businesses.

The benefit of using tax increment financing as a method to finance district improvements is that all local units of government levying taxes within the City of Lathrup Village contribute to the revitalization of the business district. These include:

- City of Lathrup Village (All Millages)
- Oakland County
- Oakland County Parks
- Huron Clinton Metroparks
- Oakland County Community College

Benefits to the DDA are broad and include:

- Business owners from increased traffic
- Property owners from increased property values
- Area residents from increased dining, shopping, and cultural opportunities and, often, increased property values
- Lathrup Village from increased property values and reputation as a destination

The DDA is a strong supporter of community events that reinforce the positive image of a thriving city. These year-round activities attract people to the heart of the city, and raise awareness within the region of the city's strengths.

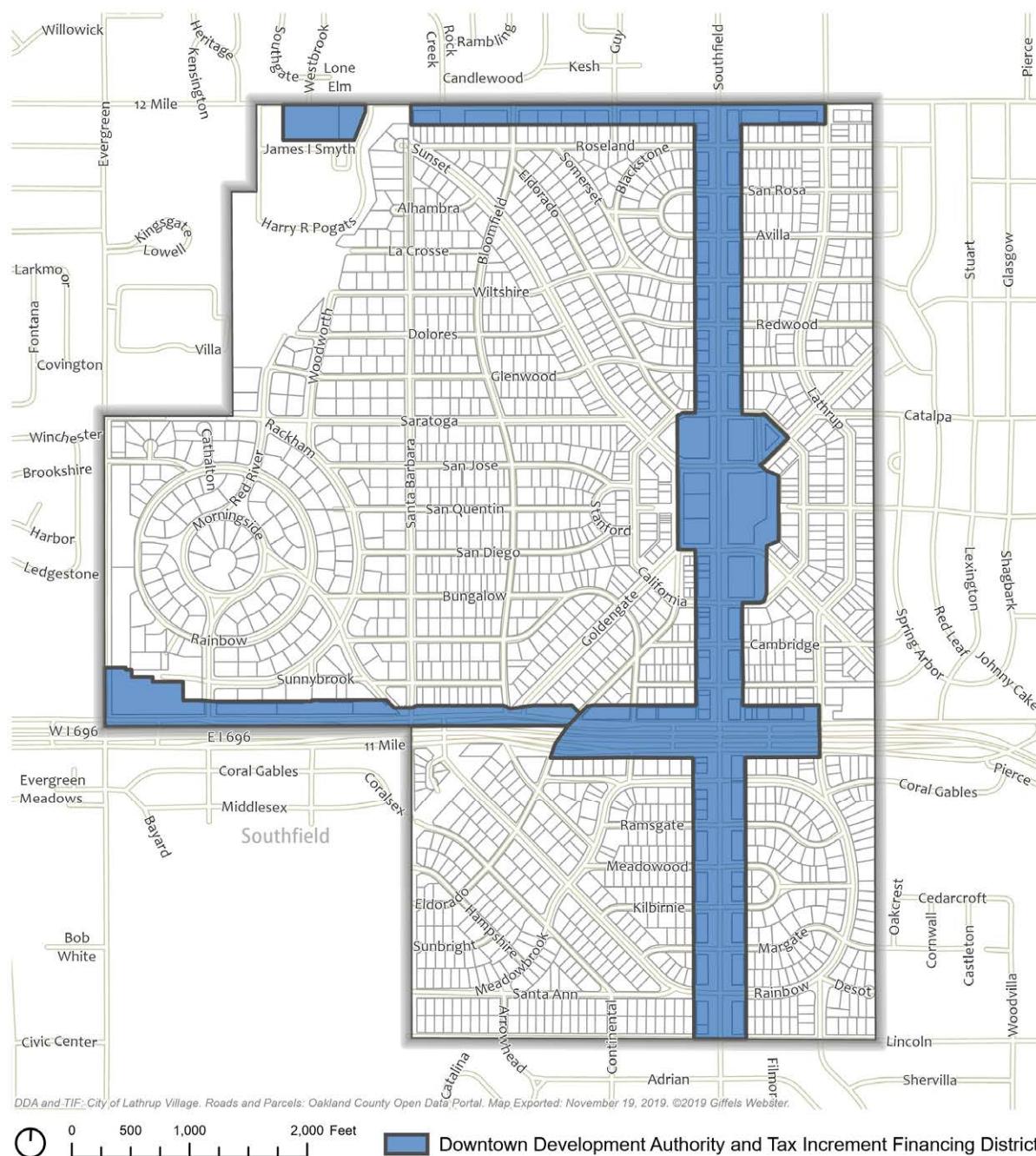
Market Study

In late 2019 and early 2020, a market study was prepared, in conjunction with this Comprehensive Plan. The market study is framed by changing demographics and trends in residential, retail, office and industrial uses. It should be noted that the market study was conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic. Pandemic-related changes to gatherings of all kinds began in March 2020 and continue into 2021. In the short-term, people have worked and attended school remotely when possible and have stopped traveling, dining out, going to sporting events and other activities that involve large gatherings of people. The long-term impacts of the pandemic are unknown, but communities are looking for ways to offer flexible land-use regulations to be prepared for future needs.

The 2020 market study included a survey of residents (about 90 residents responded). With respect to shopping, residents responded that:

- Typical households spend \$122 per week on average on groceries and related products.
- The three primary areas for grocery shopping, which is a surrogate for convenience shopping in general, are Southfield at Twelve Mile and Evergreen and Royal Oak.
- Most households purchase groceries at Kroger, Aldi, Market Fresh, Meijer, and Trader Joes.

MAP 10: LATHRUP VILLAGE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA) DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



- Less than one-third of the households have members that purchase grocery items at non-supermarket, non-box operations, like independent bakeries, farmers' markets, and health food stores, at least twice per month. Many of the products purchased are available throughout the entire year.
- Online purchases are significant and symbolize the exportation of dollars from the community. About one-half of the households purchase merchandise online at least once per week. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the homes have someone that buys merchandise online at least twice per month, indicating further exportation of dollars. It should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic likely increased the number and frequency of online purchases significantly.
- At least 64% have one or more members purchasing either or both lunch and dinner outside of the home at food preparation establishments at least once per week.
- A substantial number of households have at least one person who eats lunch outside the home at least once per week. (This implies there is a lunch trade market from residents of the area as well as potential employees and others who live outside the area).
- The preferred food service establishment for lunch and dinner is "local non-chain full-service restaurants."

In terms of housing, nearly all of the respondents own their homes and most reside there all year. Almost half have lived in their current home at least 10 years. Other housing-related findings include:

- About one-half of all households say they may be or are likely to move from their current home in the next five years. Those residents say that lifestyle changes and medical conditions are the two primary reasons for likely moves.
- For those that may or are likely to move, the majority will seek the same size or smaller units than that which they currently occupy.

Walkability continues to be important for Lathrup Village residents. Of those who may or are likely to move, "walkability" is a significant issue.

- About three-fourths (74%) of all households that will potentially move defined being near work, recreational opportunities, and walking areas as being either "extremely important" or "very important." No responding household defined walkability as "not being important at all," and only six percent identified it as being "not so important."

Market Study Findings

Housing

- The market could support 77 additional non-senior-oriented housing units and 130 market-rate senior-related housing in Lathrup Village by 2030. With redevelopment efforts, the city could see up to 150 new senior-related housing units by 2030.
- These could be in the form of single-family structures or non-single -family structures such as duplexes, townhomes, mid-rise three to four-story structures, and other attached structures.
- Many of the residents of the new housing would likely result from the relocation of existing residents, freeing existing housing for households headed by other active adults or younger.

Related Goods & Related Services

New rooftops (additional housing units) result in increased spending and demand for retail goods and related supportable space. Spending will occur in many places, including operations near home and work. Online purchases, vacation spending, and other activity will continue to diminish local sales. On the other hand, people working within the area, employed nearby, and those coming to Lathrup Village for a range of purposes will spend money in the city. Particularly during midday, people who work nearby come to the city for food services and other retail.



The Jagged Fork is a popular restaurant for breakfast and lunch in Lathrup Village.

While there does not seem to be a demand for additional retail goods and related service space, there is the potential to capture exported space in "Food," "General Merchandise," and "Miscellaneous" retail that includes operations such as Barber/Beauty salons, Book Stores, Florist/ Nurseries, Paper/Paper Products, and Gifts and Novelties. The catalytic activity and focus could be on specialty food activity.

Office Space

The office market continues to change with the increased emphasis on flexible work arrangements, co-working space, and in-home live/work activity. Added rooftops increase demand for professional services and related space derived from the new households. Rooftop growth and the identified desire of people to work near home also provides the opportunity for office space growth.

New demand generates about 137,000 square feet of office space by 2030. However, about forty-five percent of the space will be "in homes." There is a potential unmet niche for co-working space in Lathrup Village. Personal and professional service space should be viewed as likely uses to fill vacant spaces. Again, post-pandemic changes could result in lower demand for office space - or increased use of in-home offices.



Most of the Southfield Road corridor is occupied by one story commercial buildings, filled with office, retail and personal service uses.



Office buildings in the corridor are dated; many have different uses than the office uses originally intended.

Market Study Recommendations

- Enhance walkability within neighborhoods.
- Create or enhance spaces for activity for meetings, small family events, etc.
- Expand specialty food opportunities beyond a traditional farmers' market.
- Continue supporting the enhancements of building façades through grants
- Work with property owners to address the former school buildings and property and contiguous properties. Recruit a developer or developer partner to buy, lease, or pursue partnership options with current owners. Explore mixed-use of activity on the site and buildings that include active adult and the gamut of senior living arrangements
- Utilize space on first floors for year-around and seasonal pop-up retail activities
- Explore reuse for the above in combination with co-working space.
- Expand community activity space for arts, culture, educational training.

The following is also suggested:

- If needed to increase development density options, explore the transitioning of alleys in the rear of the key parcels to private use or consideration in density requirements.
- Consider and explore funding for potential five-year tax abatement, an equity financing fund, public-private investment funding entity for a stake in redevelopment, or other mechanisms to diminish short-term redevelopment risk and increase the probability of property redevelopment.

The complete Market Study is found in the Appendix.



Enhancing walkability will support residents' desires and needs to walk and bicycle in and around Lathrup Village.



Village Center

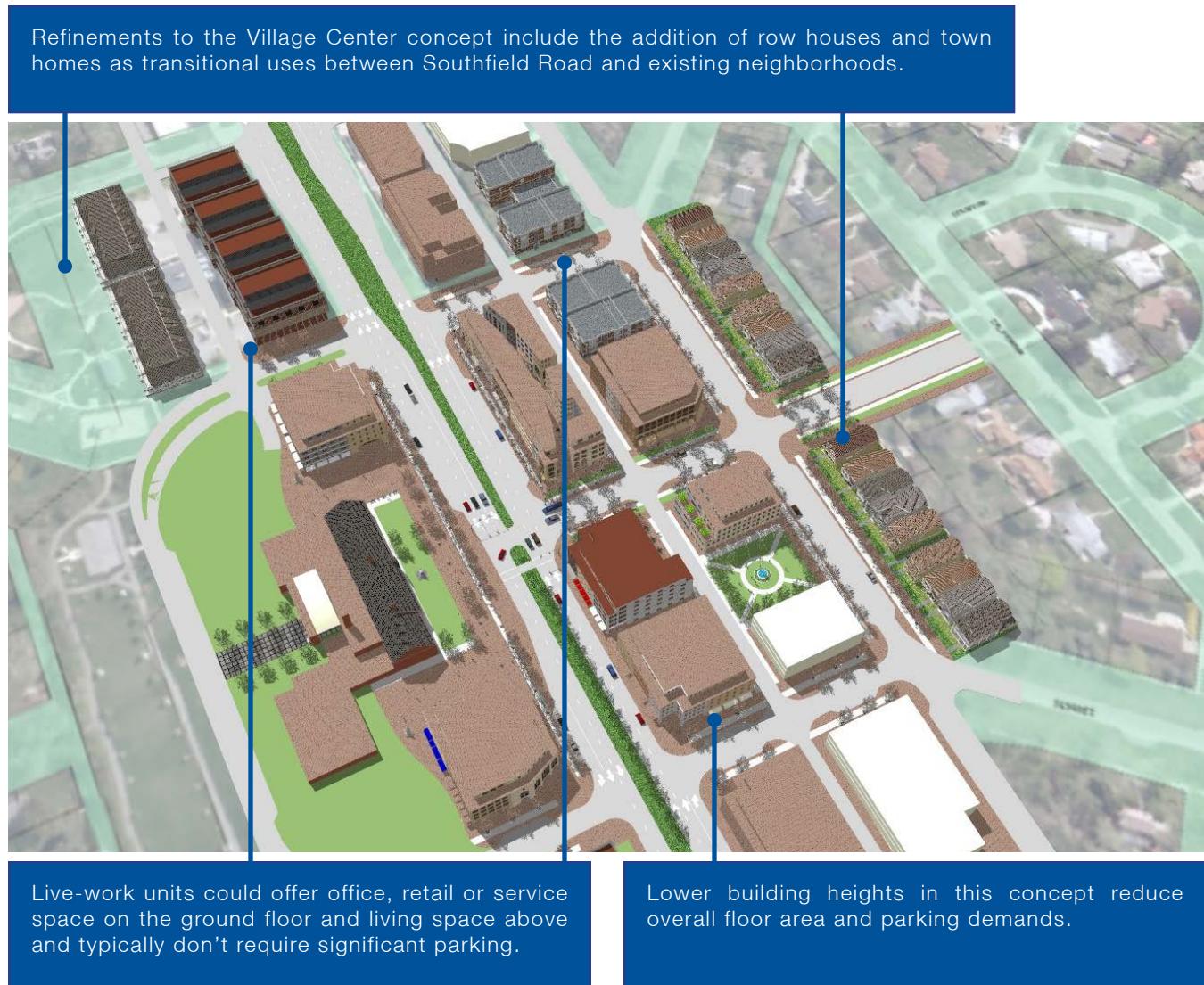
The concept for the Village Center was first established in the 2009 Master Plan. It was further fleshed out and illustrated to include a conceptual development layout and precedent images from developments across the US, intended to help the community, property owners and developers understand what the Village Center could become.

Prior to this Comprehensive Plan process, some city officials, property owners and residents expressed concern that, after 12 years of envisioning redevelopment, nothing has been realized. And yet, it remains clear that the corridor remains in need of redevelopment to improve the city's tax base.

Other goals of the city - providing destinations to which residents can walk, a variety of housing opportunities and improving walkability - all are reflected in the Village Center concept. While the conversations tend to revolve around the redevelopment of the school property (see Redevelopment Sites in the pages that follow), there may be other opportunities to spur redevelopment in the corridor.

Housing is one of the strongest elements of the current real estate market. In the refined development concept, opportunities to add row houses, town homes and stacked flats in the transition areas could add the needed rooftops to draw additional retail and restaurant uses the city desires.

FIGURE 1: VILLAGE CENTER REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT





Attached townhomes in Royal Oak (above) and Dearborn (below).



Examples of live-work buildings in Birmingham, MI

Roanoke Commons in Roanoke, TX is a 15,000 sf two-story development with commercial uses on the ground floor, active outdoor space and residential dwellings on the upper floor. Source: Newstream Commercial

Redevelopment Sites

To implement the goals of this Comprehensive Plan, three specific redevelopment sites have been identified by the City that are currently vacant or under-utilized, given their location, unique features, and size. Concepts for redevelopment of these suggest key components that are envisioned and approaches to facilitate redevelopment.

26026 Southfield Road

This site is currently undeveloped and zoned MX - Mixed Use. Permitted uses include general retail business, personal service establishments, office uses, second-floor residential, and restaurants. Surrounding parcels to the north and south on the east side of Southfield Road, as well as across Southfield Road to the west are zoned MX. Property to the east is zoned single-family residential. Generally, the parcels along Southfield Road are developed with a mix of office and strip commercial. The site also has high accessibility to the major thoroughfare of I-696 via Southfield Road.

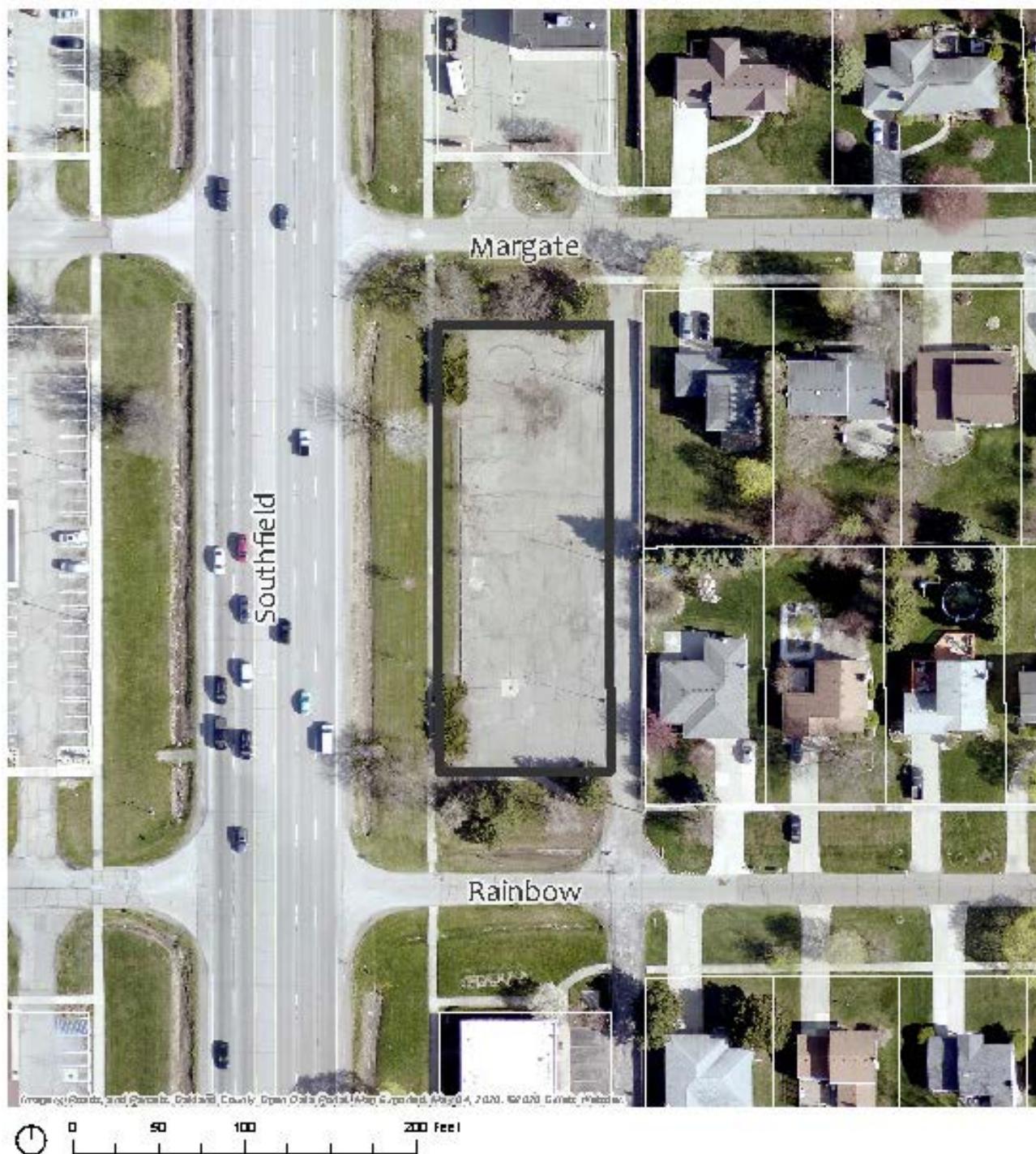


Above: 26026 Southfield Road abuts single family homes and is separated by an existing masonry wall.

Below: The site is currently an undeveloped parking lot with expansive frontage on Southfield Road.



MAP 11: LATHRUP VILLAGE SOUTHFIELD ROAD REDEVELOPMENT SITE



Components of the Redevelopment

Land Use

This parcel located on the east side of Southfield Road, south of I-696 in the southeast neighborhood. It has been vacant for at least ten years. Properties to the north, south and west along Southfield Road are developed with one-story buildings that are used for a mix of retail, office and personal service uses. Buildings in this portion of the corridor are setback considerably from Southfield Road, due to the large right-of-way in this area.

Building Form

Most of the buildings in the corridor occupy the width of their lots and have parking in the front. However, it is envisioned that moving buildings to the front lot line with minimal setbacks would narrow the built environment along the corridor, creating a greater sense of place. This type of enclosure would encourage walkability by creating more of a human scale for the corridor. Parking would be provided behind the building and “tuck under” parking could also be provided as the two-story concept model illustrates.

Transportation

Southfield Road is a heavily traveled roadway that serves many communities. However, not everyone can or wants to drive their own vehicle. The site has a bus stop that is essentially a small patch of built-up ground that spans a drainage culvert along Southfield Road. The connection to the sidewalk should be enhanced and the stop could also be improved with a bench and/or other shelter structure.

In addition, all parts of the site should be served by non-motorized transportation facilities that connect to adjacent sidewalks, roadways and sites as identified in the city's Complete Streets plan. Connections and wayfinding signage should be provided to the existing sidewalk network. It is anticipated that vehicular access will tap into the existing street network.

Sustainability

Development on this site should be based on a framework of sustainable building and site design practices that offers a model for development and redevelopment elsewhere in the city. The use of low-impact design, pervious paving materials, and native landscape materials should be prioritized. Redevelopment of the site should include native, low-maintenance landscape with trees, shrubbery and other plantings with seasonal color.

Development of the District

Zoning for the parcel is currently MX Mixed Use, which supports the development concept illustrated below. Design guidelines, similar to those the city has for the Village Center district, should be developed to further illustrate the important elements of building design that support pedestrian activity.

FIGURE 2: SOUTHFIELD ROAD REDEVELOPMENT SITE



House in the Woods

The “House in the Woods” site is somewhat renowned in the city, as it was originally developed in 1927 with a home for Louise Lathrup Kelley, original developer of Lathrup Village. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, along with that portion of the city built through 1953. In 2009, the house was struck by lightning and burned to the point it was no longer salvageable. The structure was removed and site was acquired by the city. Since the acquisition, the city allowed interested residents the opportunity to convert the property into a nature preserve. Unfortunately, the volunteer effort was not sustainable.

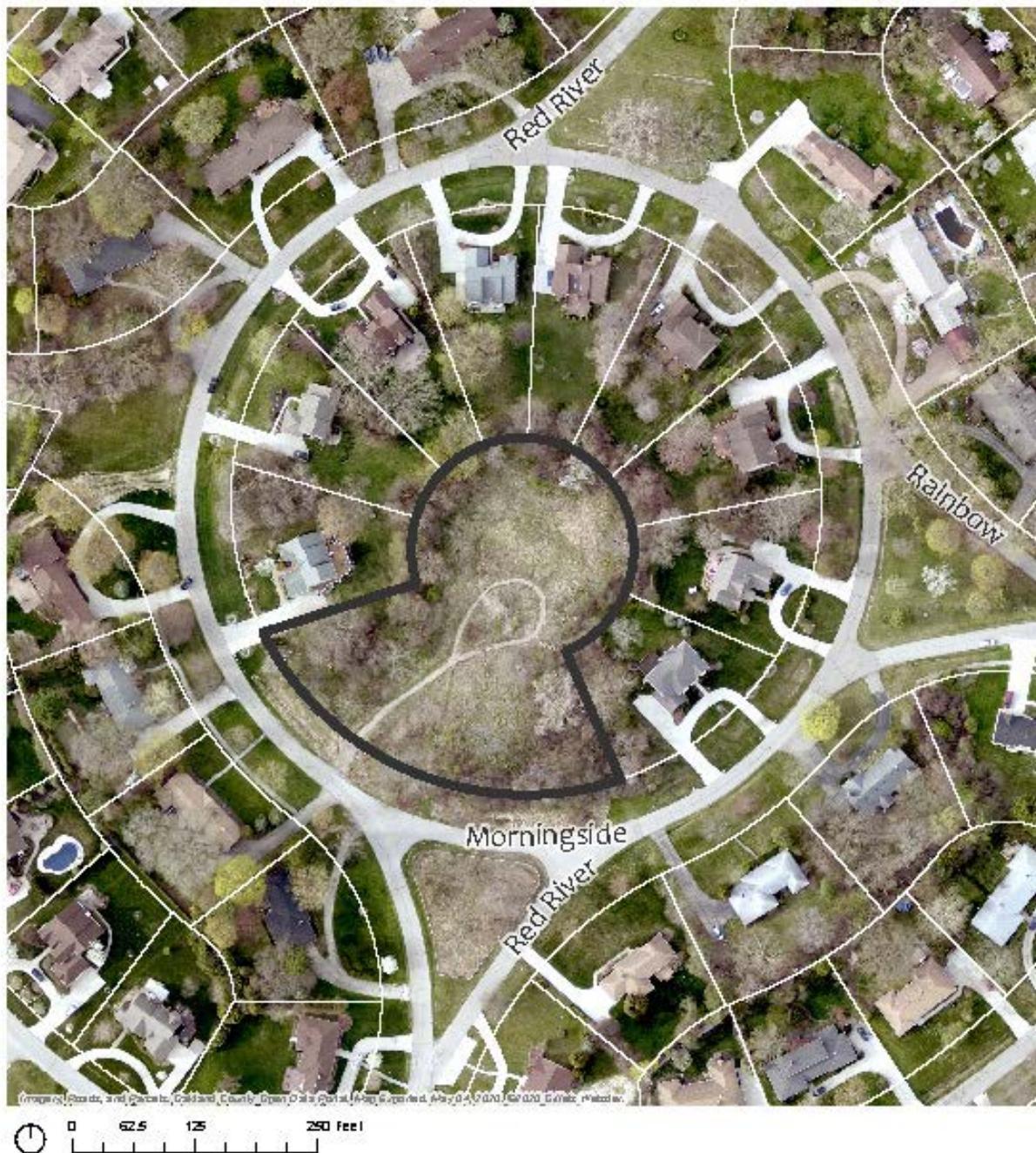


Above: Historic photo of the house (source: Detroit Public Library Digital Images)

Below: The site is currently undeveloped and heavily wooded.



MAP 12: LATHRUP VILLAGE HOUSE IN THE WOODS REDEVELOPMENT SITE



House in the Woods
CITY OF LATHRUP VILLAGE

Components of the Redevelopment

Land Use

Given its location in the middle of the neighborhood, residential uses are preferred by the city, who has considered developing the site as a park. However, the cost of development in addition to ongoing maintenance and operation of a park require resources that would be taken away from other city parks and the city prefers to see the site developed with homes, which also returns the site to the tax rolls.

Building Form

Replicating the building form of the adjacent homes would result in two, possibly three, new homes. However, arranged in a more compact fashion, eight to ten smaller homes could be developed on this site. These homes may be desirable by older residents looking for smaller homes (especially if built as ranches or laid out for first floor living), and more manageable yards as well as by younger professionals looking to move into the city. In creating a compact site layout, a small common space to be enjoyed by all of the neighborhood residents is another benefit.

Transportation

It is anticipated that pedestrian and vehicular access will tap into the existing street network. There are no sidewalks in this portion of the city, but the area is covered by a bike route.

Sustainability

Sustainable building and site design practices can offer a model for development and redevelopment elsewhere in the city. The compact site design allows new homes to be built while minimizing the amount of land needed. Other low-impact design techniques, including the use of native landscape materials should be prioritized.

Development of the District

Zoning for the parcel is currently zoned R3 Single Family Cluster Housing, which allows single-family dwelling units to be developed with varied yard setback requirements to (a) facilitate development of parcels that are difficult to develop under the usual standards, (b) allow for a single-family detached residential development without

increasing the permitted density, and/or (c) enhance useful open space and preserve significant trees and other natural features through the proper utilization of density transfer techniques.

Currently, this type of development would require council approval under the variance provisions of the zoning ordinance. Specific standards relating to building form, placement and architectural standards should be developed for this district to allow the type of compact development noted here.



Annie Lathrup School

The Annie Lathrup School is the last remaining historic structure on Southfield Road. This building is currently vacant. The structure is significant because it tells the story of Lathrup Village as well as provides an example of a different architectural character and building form than is seen elsewhere in the corridor. The school is designated as a local historic district, which means that the alteration of the boundaries of the district or modification of the structure require review and approval by the Historic District Commission.

The former Annie Lathrup School has been vacant for several years and is deteriorating. The school sits on a large parcel on Southfield Road, and is adjacent to City Hall and the community park. The parcel is at the heart of the Village Center district, which encompasses all of the segments of the California Drive octagon.



Above: The Annie Lathrup School site is vacant with large adjacent parking lots.

Below: The site is one of the only historical buildings in the city and features ornate brick work and stone details.



MAP 13: LATHRUP VILLAGE ANNIE LATHRUP SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT SITE



Components of the Redevelopment

Land Use

The vision for a “village center” was first expressed in the city’s 2009 Master Plan, which illustrated a plan for the revitalization of the Southfield Road corridor that centered on the “hub of the wheel” where several of the city’s streets converge. Since then, that vision has been refined, Zoning Ordinance standards created, and design guidelines adopted that set up a framework for redevelopment in the Village Center. The Annie Lathrup School is a highly visible redevelopment parcel that could begin to provide the type of mixed use the City envisions for the Village Center. It is envisioned that this site will retain the historic structure and allow for additional buildings that could incorporate a mix of public and private property, including residential, office, retail, restaurant, entertainment, gathering spaces, and recreation areas.

Building Form

While it is envisioned that the existing structure will be rehabilitated, new buildings are also expected and should be placed in a way that complements the school. Building walls and spaces between buildings will give pedestrians a protected feeling while providing space for pocket parks, plazas, courtyards or linkages and passageways to the rear of buildings. Off-street parking lots in front of buildings detract from the pedestrian-focused site layout that is desired. Roads should support the built environment and accommodate pedestrian and vehicular access. Buildings are envisioned to be at least two stories in height, and may be a maximum of five stories on Southfield Road, when the top floor is set back ten (10) feet from all building sides. Other buildings will be a maximum of three stories on other roads. Public spaces should include the following:

- Opportunities for people to gather formally, such as for art fairs, concerts, or other events, as well as informally, for a rest, a chance meeting, or to people-watch.
- Courtyards and Arcades—Spaces created by buildings that foster a feeling of intimacy and create a sense of connection from people to place

- The current civic facilities are intended to remain in the Village Center area, but may be leveraged or reconfigured to accommodate the redevelopment as envisioned for a vibrant, compact, pedestrian-oriented downtown area.

Transportation

The basic building blocks of the transportation network are the preservation of the existing historic building (Annie Lathrup School) and two main roadways that accommodate vehicular traffic with a pedestrian-friendly focus that includes on-street parking, wide sidewalks and abundant landscaping. Key elements in the concept include:

- Southfield Road: The existing 160 ft ROW includes double rows of street trees create a sense of place and makes corridor greener. It could be narrowed to 120 ft of ROW, depending upon the ultimate future road cross-section, which would provide more area for adjacent land development.
- A new Street, “Park Street Promenade”: Features a 100 ft ROW. Again, double rows of street trees create a sense of place and makes corridor greener—more “park-like.” This street will connect the Annie Lathrup School Plaza to the western end of the downtown area.

Sustainability

Development on this site should be based on a framework of sustainable building and site design practices that offers a model for development and redevelopment elsewhere in the city. The use of low-impact design, pervious paving materials, and native landscape materials should be prioritized. Redevelopment of the site should seek to rehabilitate the existing structure to the greatest extent possible.

Development of the District

Zoning for the parcel is currently VC Village Center. Future amendments to this district may be needed to refine building and site standards and also to provide additional graphics that help illustrate building regulations. In addition, the city should explore other properties in the Village Center district for catalyst development potential.



These images illustrate the preservation of the Annie Lathrup School structure and its enhancement by adjacent development, outdoor spaces and plazas.