

Community Character

Proposed Modifications

What Do We Want?

An authentic positive identity for the city that is reflected in our neighborhoods, commercial corridors, city center, and public parks and facilities; and an emphasis on local placemaking to make Madison Heights an inviting place to be.

Why?

- A positive identity for the city provides a sense of community and belonging for residents and businesses.
- A positive image and identity for the city helps support local businesses and attract new residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors.

Potential obstacles/related considerations?

- Physical improvements to the appearance of the city require public and private investment.
- Outside perception of the city takes time to change.
- Internal perception of the city can vary between people, groups, and neighborhoods.

Community Character Planning Objectives:

1. Enhance the city's commercial corridors with streetscaping and physical design changes that support walkability and bikeability, encourage retail and dining activity, and improve community identity.
2. Improve communication between city staff, residents, businesses, and visitors. Continue to work with the Communications team to ensure consistent messaging and marketing across all departments.
3. Create and implement a wayfinding plan that identifies key destinations in the city. Continue to promote unique destinations in the City, such as Red Oaks Park and Waterpark, Red Oaks Nature Center, and unique retail and commercial centers.
4. Improve and maintain entryway features, such as the new gateway signage and associated landscaping, to announce arrival into the City.
5. Pursue funding to undertake public realm improvements, especially in and around the City Center and DDA district and mixed-use districts, including the creation of small pocket parks.

6. Preserve, maintain, and expand the existing tree canopy along public streets and create planting guidelines that recommend biodiverse tree species and plants.
7. Promote the use of quality building design and materials to enhance the appearance and long-term maintenance of new development.
8. Protect established neighborhoods and business districts from the potentially negative impacts of development, including noise, traffic, waste, odor and other nuisances through effective and thoughtful site and building design.
9. Explore the creation of a public food-vendor marketplace (e.g. food truck park or farmers' market) to promote local businesses and highlight the city's character.
10. Develop local artist partnerships with artists and schools to showcase murals and other public-facing art on public facilities.

Housing

Proposed Modifications

What do we want?

Attractive, safe, and well-maintained neighborhoods; a diversified range of housing types and sizes for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels; a blend of new housing and reinvestment in the exiting housing stock; and active, walkable neighborhoods that promote community cohesiveness.

Why?

- Safe and attractive housing in walkable environments allows residents to live close to day-to-day amenities and destinations. These environments appeal both to younger people, families and residents who wish to “age in place.”
- Due to severe housing shortages, there are not enough homes available to serve the broad range of people and households that wish to live in Madison Heights. A wide housing spectrum with different housing types, size, and costs ensures that our housing supply provides for the diverse needs of existing and future residents.
- Older homes are more prone to maintenance issues and tend to be smaller in size. Well-maintained homes lead to safer living environments and more attractive residential areas. Further, reinvestment into the existing housing stock will allow current residents to remain in their homes for a longer period of time, repurpose them into smaller units, or retrofit them their current needs.

Potential obstacles/related considerations?

- Housing maintenance and reinvestment requires funding, which can be hard to come by and varies based upon market conditions.
- Overly-strict zoning regulations can restrict the types and sizes of homes built within the city and make it difficult to expand existing homes. Conversely, large, unregulated infill housing can overpower existing residential character.
- Code enforcement, while effective, cannot address every and all types of maintenance, blight, and signs of disinvestment at once.

Housing Objectives

1. Encourage maintenance of, and reinvestment in, existing housing stock to improve the safety and the attractiveness of existing neighborhoods

2. Encourage opportunities to repurpose or reconfigure existing homes to further diversify Madison Heights' housing stock and encourage aging in place.
3. Ensure that infill and redeveloped residential properties are compatible with the surrounding residential areas and adjacent homes.
4. Encourage a diverse range of housing options at a range of price points that meet the affordability, maintenance, and lifestyle needs of current and future residents.
5. Improve the walkability and bikeability of neighborhoods to improve access to goods and services such as high-quality childcare, and recreational amenities.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Proposed Modifications

What do we want?

Thriving local businesses and an employed workforce; a convenient selection of goods and services within attractive commercial corridors, neighborhood nodes, and vibrant, walkable City Center and mixed-use areas; a diverse tax base with a resilient economy; and opportunities for building expansion, repurposing, and redevelopment.

Why?

- Attractive and well-maintained commercial and industrial areas encourage business retention and expansion and encourage new businesses to set up shop in Madison Heights.
- A healthy mix of business types provide meaningful, well-paying jobs for a variety of Madison Heights residents – from entry-level jobs to more senior positions.
- Goods and services located in walkable and bikeable areas help to establish a sense of place and ensure that they are easily accessible from nearby neighborhoods.
- Larger commercial centers provide an opportunity to promote Madison Heights as a regional draw. Attractive, well-maintained, and repurposed commercial centers and mixed-use areas that are connected to regional transit improve Madison Heights' positive image throughout the Metro Detroit region.
- An increased tax base helps fund and improve city services.
- Reinvestment within the City's industrial areas and corridors provides opportunities for local and regional employment, high-quality tenants, and an overall positive image throughout the region.

Potential obstacles/related considerations?

- Outdated commercial and industrial buildings may not meet the needs of current and future businesses. Repurposing, redeveloping, or bringing older buildings and sites into compliance may require a significant amount of funding.
- Existing auto-oriented building placement design and high-speed, multi-lane streets create a significant hurdle in transitioning commercial corridors into walkable, bikeable, and locally accessible neighborhood nodes.
- Limited transportation options negatively impact the ability of residents and employees to reach businesses.

- Residents and neighbors understandably have concerns about the impact of commercial and industrial development, especially as it relates to noise, traffic, lights, upkeep, and other property management issues.
- A lack of childcare options, especially near places of employment, negatively impacts employees as they may have to travel further to obtain adequate childcare.

Commercial & Industrial Development Objectives:

1. Encourage reinvestment within older commercial areas with high vacancy rates by examining permitted uses, while ensuring that such uses are compatible with adjacent residential areas.
2. Encourage neighborhood-oriented businesses such as personal service, childcare, and cafes close to neighborhoods.
3. Ensure that zoning standards require outdated buildings and sites to be brought into code compliance, when possible, to further the City's economic and industrial development goals, improve aesthetics, and ensure that negative impacts to adjacent neighborhoods are reduced.
4. Provide incentives and flexible zoning mechanisms for commercial and industrial property owners and tenants to upgrade, expand, and repurpose existing commercial and industrial sites, especially sites with large amounts of underutilized parking areas and large amounts of impervious surface.
5. Promote the mix of commercial, office, multi-family residential, and light industrial uses in a way that fosters collaboration and business growth, while creating a desirable environment for the local workforce.
6. Ensure that zoning and design standards promote walkability and bikeability, non-motorized access, and connectivity to adjacent residential areas while maintaining safe vehicle circulation patterns.
7. Continue developing and promoting a vibrant, mixed-use City Center along 11 Mile Road and John R Road south of Gardenia through form-based zoning standards, economic incentives, streetscaping, and regional partners.
8. Encourage entrepreneurship and local business development and retention through partnerships with local stakeholders and serving as "one-stop-shop" for regional contacts and resources.
9. Explore the development of sub-area land use, economic development, and transportation plans for commercial and industrial nodes and corridors, such as the City Center, Stephenson Industrial Corridor, and regional commercial centers along 12 Mile Road, 14 Mile Road, Dequindre Road, and John R. Road.

Transportation

Proposed Modifications

What do we want?

An efficient and safe multi-modal transportation network that offers mobility options to residents of all ages, incomes and abilities and lays the foundation for neighborhood connectivity, economic development, and a high quality of life.

Why?

- Street design that supports all users (e.g. people in personal vehicles, people in buses, people walking, people on bikes, etc.) is inherently safer for everyone.
- A greater variety of transportation options can encourage people to get out of their vehicles and walk or bike, reducing traffic congestion and improving community health.
- Residential areas with safe and attractive streets are more walkable and bikeable and lead to a better quality of life and more vibrant neighborhoods.
- Walkable neighborhoods can help attract neighborhood-oriented development and redevelopment on adjacent commercial corridors, increasing job, housing, and business opportunities.

Potential Obstacles/Related Considerations:

- Current land use patterns prioritize motorized travel over non-motorized forms of transportation.
- The current design and layout of streets prioritize motorized travel and de-emphasizes transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized transportation.

Transportation Objectives:

1. Promote the use of accepted traffic-calming and access management techniques that make all travel safe and efficient. Explore the development of a traffic calming guidebook and policy that can be applied throughout the city's neighborhoods and corridors.
2. Provide a safe, efficient non-motorized pathway system that provides links to various land uses throughout the city that gives residents choices about their modes of travel.
3. Promote public education about roadway planning and decision making to help residents and property owners understand the short-and long-term goals of transportation projects.

4. Require transportation infrastructure decisions that support and are coordinated with the land use recommendations of the Master Land Use Plan.
5. Explore the development of sub-area and/or corridor plans that outline more detailed, place-specific transportation goals and objectives and streetscape design considerations.
6. Monitor and plan for future technological trends in terms of autonomous/connected vehicles, ridesharing, and EV charging.
7. Create better connections through – and between – neighborhoods, parks, and community destinations by installing safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements and wayfinding signs.
8. Coordinate with adjacent communities to line up transportation objectives and street projects/timelines.
9. Improve bus access and bus stop amenities along regional transit routes and participate with SMART and RTA in planning for regional transit connectivity.
10. Coordinate transportation projects and policies with the recommendations of the Southeast Oakland County Safety Action (Safe Streets for All) Plan.
11. Coordinate with the Downtown Development Authority and Department of Public Services to improve the streetscape and landscaping within public rights-of-way.
12. Ensure that the Capital Improvements Plan is up to date, and coordinate transportation goals with the timing of capital improvement projects.

Public Services and Facilities

Proposed Modifications

What Do We Want?

Recreational and community facilities and programming that meet the needs of, and are accessible to, all residents; excellent public services that meet the health, safety, and welfare needs of the community; and community spaces that can be used for the leisure of all residents.

Why?

- Providing access to recreation facilities, community spaces, and community programming is essential to build a socially and physically healthy community.
- To provide a high level of services to city residents, including responsive, well-equipped administrative staff, public service teams, and emergency services.

Potential Obstacles/ related considerations?

- Additional resources will be needed to maintain aging parks and recreation and community facilities, while potentially adding and/or expanding facilities, amenities, and programs.

Community Facilities & Services Objectives:

1. Expand the range of recreational opportunities, facilities, and programming in Madison Heights in accordance with residents' needs and abilities.
2. Coordinate land use plans with the goals and objectives of the Madison Heights Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
3. Continue to seek opportunities to share facilities with other public and quasi-public agencies such as the school districts, Oakland County, and non-profit organizations and institutions.
4. Evaluate public facilities, including police, fire, city hall, and community centers on a regular basis to determine whether modifications or additions are needed to serve the existing population and new development.
5. Continue to cooperate with surrounding communities and the County to provide public services and ensure that services are not duplicated.

6. Annually review the City's internal policies to ensure that all city departments provide timely, friendly, and efficient services to the public.
7. Revise development-related applications, guidelines, and handouts, as needed, to ensure that they are user-friendly; work with local ethnic community groups to translate these documents into several languages so that they are accessible to all (e.g. Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, etc.).
8. Research a potential greenway between the City's parks to increase access for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation.
9. Keep Parks and Recreation and Capital Improvement Plans up to date, and review annually.

Infrastructure and Sustainability [NEW SECTION]

Proposed Modifications

What Do We Want?

Well-maintained and modern infrastructure that meets the needs of current residents, businesses, and visitors and is prepared for growth; and sustainable development practices and policies that prioritize environmental responsibility, reduce the short-term impacts of severe storms, and promote long-term resilience and hazard mitigation.

Why?

- We must plan for and budget resources for infrastructure expenditures that are likely to grow over time as neighborhoods age.
- The City must address the reality that storm events are becoming more severe and more frequent as a result of climate change, which in turn cause flooding, power outages, and property damage. Increased energy costs are also becoming a financial burden to many people.

Potential Obstacles/ related considerations?

- Increasing costs of repair and replacement of infrastructure.
- High costs of green infrastructure.

Infrastructure & Sustainability Objectives:

1. Replace aging infrastructure, as necessary, with modern, sustainable technology and materials, and explore undergrounding electric utilities where possible.
2. Update development regulations and engineering specifications to encourage and provide guidance on green infrastructure, renewable energy, and low-impact design practices.
3. Improve stormwater management and water quality by integrating low-impact techniques into public street projects, community building upgrades, and park facilities.
4. Ensure that the Parks and Recreation and Capital Improvement Plans are kept up to date.
5. Coordinate and align infrastructure improvements (water, sanitary, stormwater) with street, streetscaping, and non-motorized improvement projects to maximize City resources, time, and labor.

6. Coordinate public projects with outside agencies, such as MDOT, RCOC, and SMART as well as adjacent municipalities.
7. Conduct a survey on the implementation of EV infrastructure and transitioning city fleet vehicles to EVs.
8. Encourage the adaptive reuse of older, unused buildings and promote circular building design and architecture so that buildings may be repurposed instead of demolished.
9. Explore the development of a stormwater management design guidebook, similar to the [2023 EPA bioretention handbook](#), to have set standards for potential methods of stormwater mediation.
10. Address resiliency and hazard mitigation as a proactive measure through hazard mitigation planning, and pursue grant funding opportunities for public hazard mitigation projects such as flood proofing, alternative power sources, warning systems, etc.