

# OAK PARK

## STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

City of Oak Park, MI // 2014



# CONTENTS

## 5 Purpose of the Plan

## 6 Vision

## 7 Oak Park: Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow

- 7 The Place
- 7 The People
- 8 Infrastructure
- 8 History of Development
- 8 Planning Work to Date
- 9 Capacity for Growth
- 10 A Call for the Urban Environment
- 10 Complete Communities

## 11 Community Engagement

## 18 Existing Conditions Analysis

## 22 Recommendations

- 25 Public Image and Experience
- 29 Community Development
- 33 Policy in Action
- 37 Transportation
- 42 Public Spaces
- 46 Housing
- 50 Commercial Sub-Districts

## 65 Implementation

- 66 Implementation Matrix

## A Appendix

- A *Oak Park Retail Market Study*, Gibbs Planning Group, 2012 (document under separate cover)

## Acknowledgments

### City Council

Marian McClellan, Mayor  
Paul Levine, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Carolyn Burns, Council Member  
Michael M. Seligson, Council Member  
Kiesha Speech, Council Member

### City Administration

Erik Tungate, City Manager  
Ebony Duff, City Attorney  
Ed Norris, City Clerk

### Oak Park Planning Commission

### Planning Team

Hamilton Anderson Associates  
Gibbs Planning Group

Thank you to the many community members who offered their time and input at meetings. Your feedback and participation has greatly contributed to the Oak Park Strategic Economic Development Plan.

July 2014

# PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

## Purpose

Named “America’s fastest growing city” in the late 1950s, Oak Park has reached a development plateau and is seeking ways to spur interest, guide investment, and renew the image of the city. Oak Park is located heart of Metro Detroit and is an “inner ring” suburban city containing over 300 businesses with a potential customer base of approximately 29,500 residents - almost all of which are within two miles of the city center - and tens of thousands of commuters driving every day on M-10 and I-696. Disinvestment in the city has decreased growth but Oak Park remains an enticing place to live and do business. Oak Park is bursting with potential and requires a fresh strategy to re-energize economic activity.

The purpose of this Plan is to:

1. Build upon existing assets with specific recommendations for new planning, investment, and infrastructure strategies that lead to a redeveloped Oak Park in five to ten years; and
2. Serve as a tool to promote private sector development and investment and guide public sector initiatives.

The plan will also engage various community groups, honor the heritage of Oak Park, and set a clear agenda for change and action.

## Need

Changing suburban markets make a Strategic Economic Development Plan critical for Oak Park’s future. The City of Oak Park has many plans, each designed to specifically address a different aspect of community life. The Strategic Economic Development Plan complements the existing plans by offering a detailed approach to economic development. This project in particular is a great opportunity to step back, analyze conditions, explore solutions with community stakeholders, fill in the holes, and create strategies that build a detailed road map for implementation. The process inevitably compels people and businesses to look at the community’s commercial areas with a new perspective.

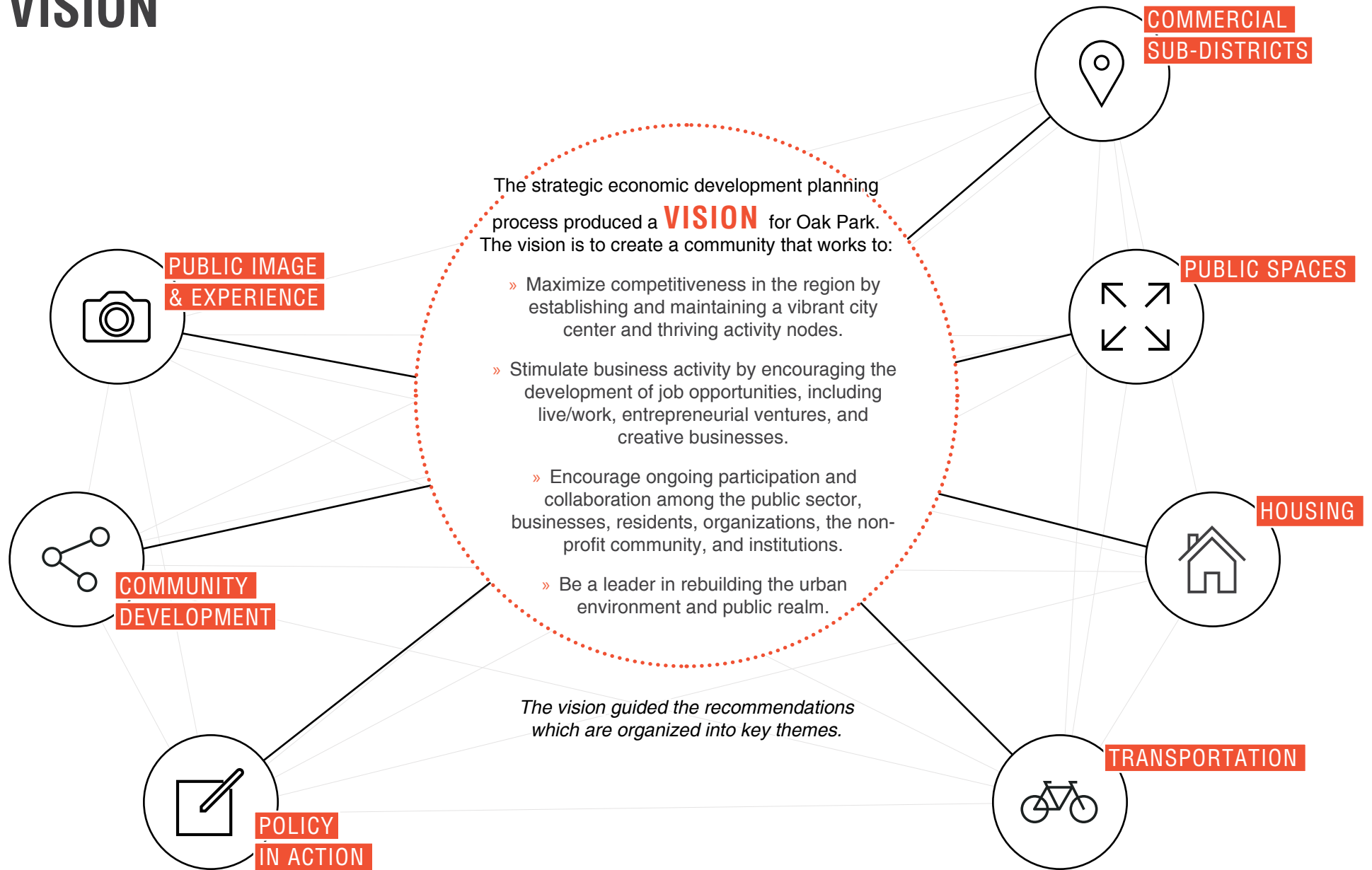
## Process

The planning process included many steps and input from a variety of stakeholders to gain the greatest understanding of the community and the people who belong to it. The process involved compiling market data, census data, mapping, field observations, experiential input from community members and stakeholders, and best practices based on projects in similar contexts. The final Plan is specific to the people and physical characteristics of the commercial study areas and the Oak Park community.

The major components of the process were:

- Project Initiation: Physical Analysis and Best Practices
- Market Feasibility Study: Retail and Office Market Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder Summary, Community Visioning, Public Workshops
- Creation of Economic Development Plan: Visual Concept Plans, Public Comment Session, Implementation Strategy, Executive Summary

# VISION



# OAK PARK: YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

## The Place

Oak Park is centrally located within Metro Detroit and benefits from convenient freeway access. The city encompasses 5.7 square miles and is predominantly comprised of single-family residences. Almost all of Oak Park's residents are within two miles of the city center. Oak Park is known for its tight-knit neighborhoods, tree-lined streets, and parks. The large, centrally located Shepherd Park hosts the city's major events like the annual Fourth of July festivities. Nine smaller neighborhood parks serve the neighborhoods.

## The People

The American Community Survey estimates Oak Park's population is approximately 29,500 people. According to the 2013 Oak Park Retail Market Study, the primary trade area population is expected to drop by 2% between 2013 and 2018.<sup>1</sup> The average number of persons per household is 2.50 and is expected to decrease to 2.48 over the next five years. Although Oak Park is called a "family city", the number of households with children under 18 years is less than 30%.

The median household income of \$40,200 in the primary trade area is modest compared to regional and state levels; however, it is estimated to increase at an annual rate of 3.98% to \$48,900 in 2018. The largest employment sectors in the primary trade area are service (52.7%), retail trade (14.1%), and manufacturing (6%). An economic boost from new retail could create positive demographic changes.

The Retail Market Study discovered the most prominent lifestyle groups in Oak Park's primary trade area portray a cluster of aging residents and established, community-oriented families. Lifestyle tendencies of Oak Park residents include being active in the community, attending church, helping with fundraising projects, and participating in civic activities.

The diversity in Oak Park's population makes it an interesting place to live and visit. The strong Jewish, African-American, Chaldean, and Arab populations provide an eclectic mix of race, culture, and religion in a relatively small land area. This diversity is exciting and provides a strong marketing base.



Oak Park is centrally located within metro Detroit and benefits from convenient freeway access.



People in Oak Park tend to be active in the community, attend religious services, help with fundraising projects, and participate in civic activities.

<sup>1</sup> The Oak Park Retail Market Study (Gibbs Planning Group) defines the primary trade area as the consumer market where the study area has a significant competitive advantage because of access, design, lack of competition, and traffic and commute patterns. Photo credit: facebook.com/CityofOakPark

## Infrastructure

Oak Park has a solid foundation upon which to build. It has a strong tradition of affordable homes, stable neighborhoods, recreational amenities, good local schools, and a central location. The missing piece is retail, which involves a lot more than just stores. Ensuring the pieces are in place to create a viable, vibrant, and attractive place for economic activity involves looking at the city's physical infrastructure - specifically, streets - and the degree to which the physical environment facilitates economic activity.

Most major roads in Oak Park have been repaired or replaced within the last ten years; however, their ability to connect people to goods and services offered in the community is questionable. Traffic flows, parking arrangements, and non-motorized transit play a huge role in economic activity, and when planned carefully, their benefits can also improve the health of residents and the environment.

## History of Development

The city was incorporated in 1945, and by the late 1950s, it was known as "America's fastest growing city."<sup>1</sup> Oak Park was an appealing location due to its affordable new homes, strip malls and the nearby Northland Mall (the world's largest shopping center when it opened in 1954<sup>2</sup>), and many automobile conveniences including ample free parking and freeway access.

While Oak Park is still attractive for those reasons, it has failed to innovate its urban environment as new preferences have emerged in the last 50 years. With the exception of I-696 opening in 1989, Oak Park looks very much today as it did in 1945.

## Planning Work to Date

The City of Oak Park recognizes the need to create a unified vision for its commercial environment. Previous planning efforts included engaging corridor stakeholders in the process of assessment, visioning, and discussing initiatives that support economically viable, sustainable, and harmonious corridor environments. That work set the stage for this plan - the Oak Park Strategic Economic Development Plan. This Plan draws on data and observations from existing planning initiatives to set a course for the future of Oak Park by incorporating ongoing initiatives and available information. These include:

- 2013 Oak Park Retail Market Study (Gibbs Planning Group)
- 2013 Community Visioning
- 2012 Citizen Engagement & Priority Assessment (Cobalt Community Research)
- 2012 Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (Buxton)
- 1996 City of Oak Park Master Plan



*The retail strip center at Coolidge Highway and Lincoln Avenue gets a newly paved parking lot [year unknown].  
Photo credit: Oak Park: Images From America*



*The same retail strip is still home to Lincoln Drugs today. Photo credit: Google Earth, 2013*

<sup>1</sup> "A Trio of Jewish Boom Towns in Michigan" from thejewishpress.com

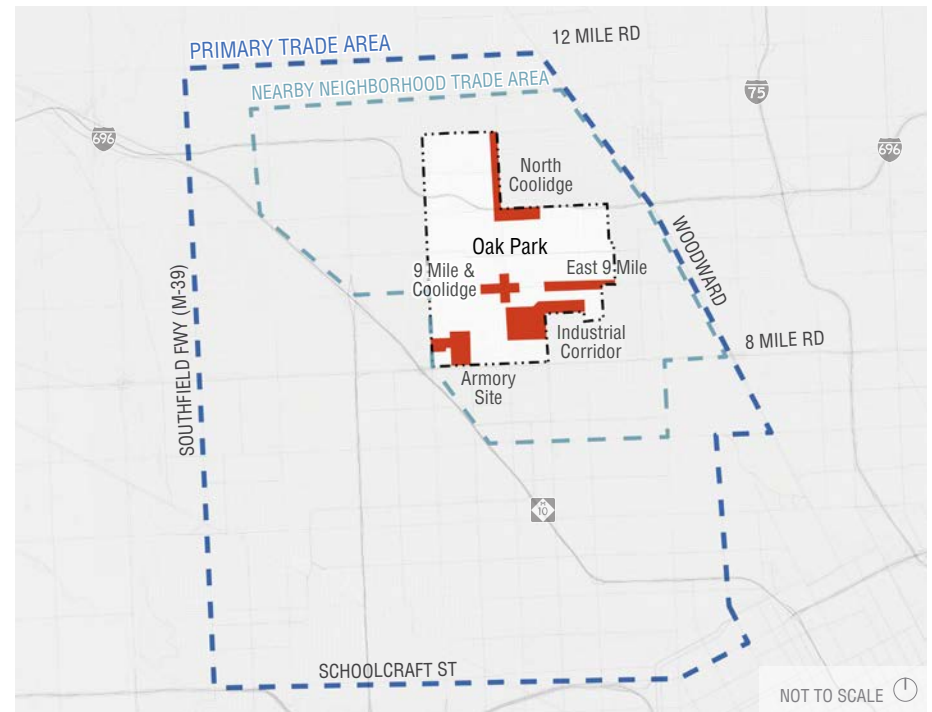
### Capacity for Growth

The 2013 Oak Park Retail Market Study is a retail feasibility analysis conducted to inform the Strategic Economic Development Plan. The Study addressed conditions in five targeted study areas and the 'primary trade area'. The Study produced analyses on the existing and planned retail market; existing and projected population, demographic, and lifestyle characteristics; current and projected growth for retail expenditures; and how much and what type of additional retail square footage is supportable in the five study areas.

The Retail Market Study found that consumers inside the primary trade area will account for 70% to 80% of the total sales captured by retailers in the five study areas. The primary trade area is the area considered to have an advantage of capturing the most consumers based on topography, vehicular access, strength of retail competition, traffic and commute patterns, and residential growth patterns instead of standardized "drive times." The potential of large development at the Armory Site presents broadens the primary trade area to the west and south. Due to the strong retail gravitational pull east and north of the site in Ferndale, Royal Oak, and along Telegraph Road north of I-696, the primary trade area is limited by Woodward Avenue and 12 Mile Road.

Daytime employment plays a large role in supporting retail. Consumer expenditure from daytime employment compliments that captured in the evenings and on weekends by households in the trade area. The primary trade area is estimated to have over 96,650 employees, and nearly 134,530 are within a ten-minute drive time from the Armory Site. The Retail Market Study estimates that employees within ten minutes of the Armory Site expend over \$319.1 million dollars annually in the surrounding area. New retail development and filled vacancies in the five study areas could potentially capture as much \$51.4 million in annual sales from ten-minute drive time employees in 2013, growing to \$55.3 million by 2018; this share of employee expenditure captured by Oak Park businesses could increase over time with new development. Furthermore, given the advantageous location along I-696 and near M-10 and the Southfield Freeway as well as connectivity through the mile roads, it is plausible that daytime workers from outside of the ten-minute drive-time zone may regularly pass by Oak Park retailers.

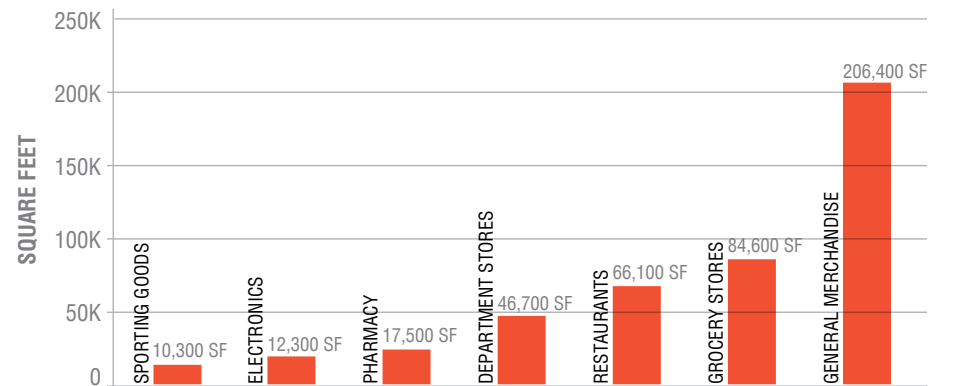
An examination of the top supportable retail types is detailed below. The full detailed table including demand and estimated sales for all retail types can be found in the full Oak Park Market Retail Study in the appendix.



Oak Park's five study areas (or "commercial sub-districts") and the primary trade area. Consumers in the primary trade area will account for 70-80% of total sales captured by retailers in the five study areas.

### ESTIMATED SUPPORTABLE RETAIL TYPES

Source: Oak Park Retail Market Study (Gibbs Planning Group, 2013)



## A Call for the Urban Environment

Oak Park is similar to suburban communities throughout the country, with a development pattern that expanded for 50 years only to result in declining properties, lifeless business parks, and empty storefronts. Many communities are responding to the changing suburban markets and consumer preferences by transforming their auto-dependent landscapes into more sustainable, urban places - a trend coined “retrofitting suburbia”. Today, Oak Park lacks the urban qualities other communities, such as Royal Oak and Ferndale, are leveraging to attract young people. While finding new uses for old structures is one strategy, the most effective redevelopments are considered those that retrofit the streets, blocks, and lots to provide environments designed for pedestrians, density, and a mix of uses.

Research shows that “walkable urban development has pent up market demand that will take most of the next generation to satisfy.”<sup>1</sup> Oak Park must recognize the economic and social forces shaping where people choose to live and work and how these forces are redefining cities. With less interest in owning homes and cars and more preference for dense landscapes of amenities and opportunities for social interaction, people are choosing to locate in walkable urban environments.

## Complete Communities

“Complete Communities” are districts or neighborhoods that are self-sufficient by virtue of interconnected transit and commercial environments, and are surrounded by a diversity of housing types, services, and amenities. While reestablishing a balance between residential and commercial uses is part of creating a complete community, it also requires a connected, pedestrian-oriented street network to create vibrant and walkable districts and neighborhoods.



*Complete communities are self-sufficient by virtue of interconnected transit and commercial environments, and are surrounded by a diversity of housing types, services, and amenities.*

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Leinberger, Brookings Institute  
Photo credits (top to bottom, left to right): Denver (walkdenver.org); Montreal (spacingmontreal.ca); Boston (intelligenttravel.nationalgeographic.com); Leawood Park Place, KS (pitchengine.com)



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Approach to Community Outreach

Stakeholders viewpoints are essential to fully grasping the economic, social, and political forces actively operating in a community. Community outreach sessions are intended to provide a structured yet open forum where participants can gather and share information, speak with experts, provide comments, express concerns, and ask questions. In the process of working together with the consultant team, stakeholders develop an informed point of view.

Continued public participation is critical to implementing the Plan. Much of the Plan relies on residents and business owners taking ownership and responsibility of the places they want to grow in the neighborhood: shopping districts, recreation opportunities, and bike paths. New developments, especially the city center at 9 Mile Road and Coolidge Highway and the large-scale Armory Site, require constant programming and community support to be successful.

## Public Workshops

After initial findings and before developing recommendations, two all-day public workshops were held in January 2014 where community members provided important insight and ideas. People were encouraged to share their ideas through conversations, hands-on mapping and drawing, written recommendations, and surveys. Nothing was held back in describing the strengths and weaknesses of the community.

The public workshops were in an open house format from 12-6 PM each day. People were encouraged to drop-in, hear about current activity, provide input, and ask questions. Each workshop finished with a short presentation by the consultant team who shared their initial findings and then opened the floor to conversations on how to make Oak Park's commercial areas stronger.



*Flyers distributed to community members advertising the public workshops.*

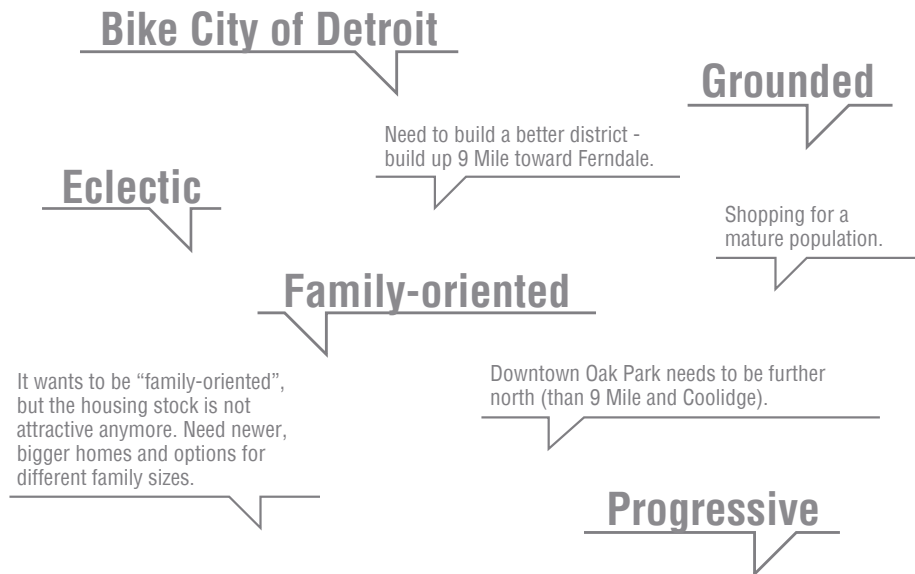


*Participants at the public workshops.*

One of the main goals of the public workshops was to discover Oak Park's identity. When a place is known for something specific, it opens up new economic opportunities for a clustering of similarly-oriented businesses. In previous decades, communities were often defined by their industry, but as they lose core industries and enter the "new", knowledge-based economy, communities must now find and promote a new niche. In many communities, including others in metro Detroit, identity is tied to certain small business and retail.

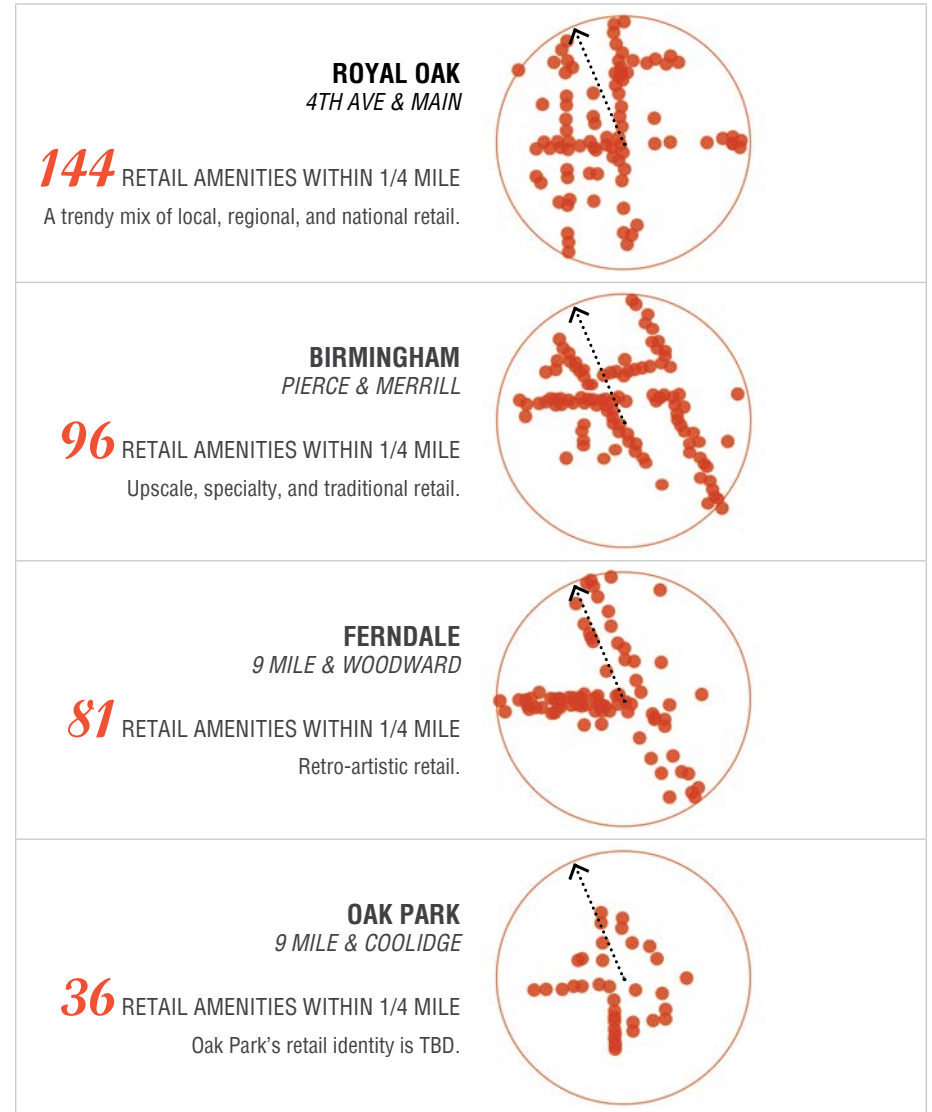
The retail density study to the right compares the density of retail amenities within a 1/4-mile of the center of a community's downtown or major intersection. Currently, Oak Park only has 36 retail amenities at what is considered the "city center". Oak Park must improve to be competitive with other shopping destinations such as downtown Royal Oak, Birmingham, and Ferndale that have 144, 96, and 81 retail amenities, respectively. A good target for is eight retail establishments per acre, which would help Oak Park achieve a retail density comparable to competitive suburban downtowns.

Below are responses from public workshop participants when asked what they would consider to be Oak Park's identity.



Responses to "What is Oak Park's identity?" from public workshops.

**DENSITY OF AMENITIES IN DOWNTOWN AREAS**



A comparison study on the density of retail amenities within a 1/4-mile of the center of competitive communities' major retail intersections. A good target for Oak Park is eight retail establishments per acre, which would achieve a retail density comparable to competitive suburban downtowns.

# WHERE DO YOU LIVE AND WORK?

**84%** OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS LIVE IN OAK PARK.

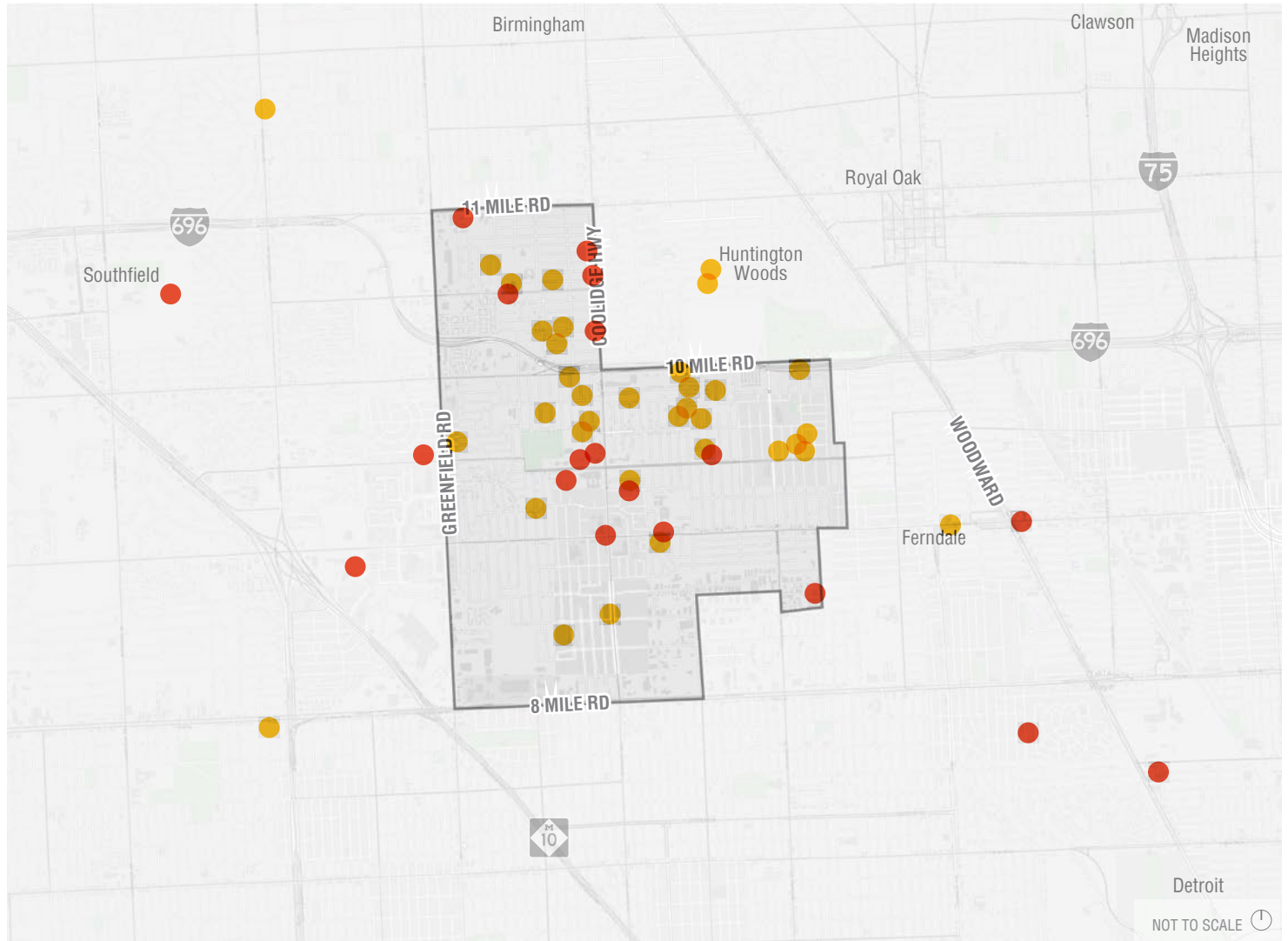
**15%** OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS LIVE OUTSIDE OF OAK PARK.  
*38 participants*

**58%** OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS WORK IN OAK PARK.

**15%** OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS WORK OUTSIDE OF OAK PARK.  
*24 participants*

NOT SHOWN ON MAP:  
• Live in Grosse Pointe.  
• Work in Rochester Hills.

LEGEND  
● = Live  
● = Work



# WHERE DO YOU GO FOR FUN?

("Fun" could mean leisurely shopping, food and drinks, entertainment, recreation, or just hanging out.)

**23%** GO OUT FOR FUN IN OAK PARK.

**77%** GO OUTSIDE OAK PARK TO PLACES LIKE MOVIE THEATERS AND RESTAURANTS IN ROYAL OAK AND FERNDALE.

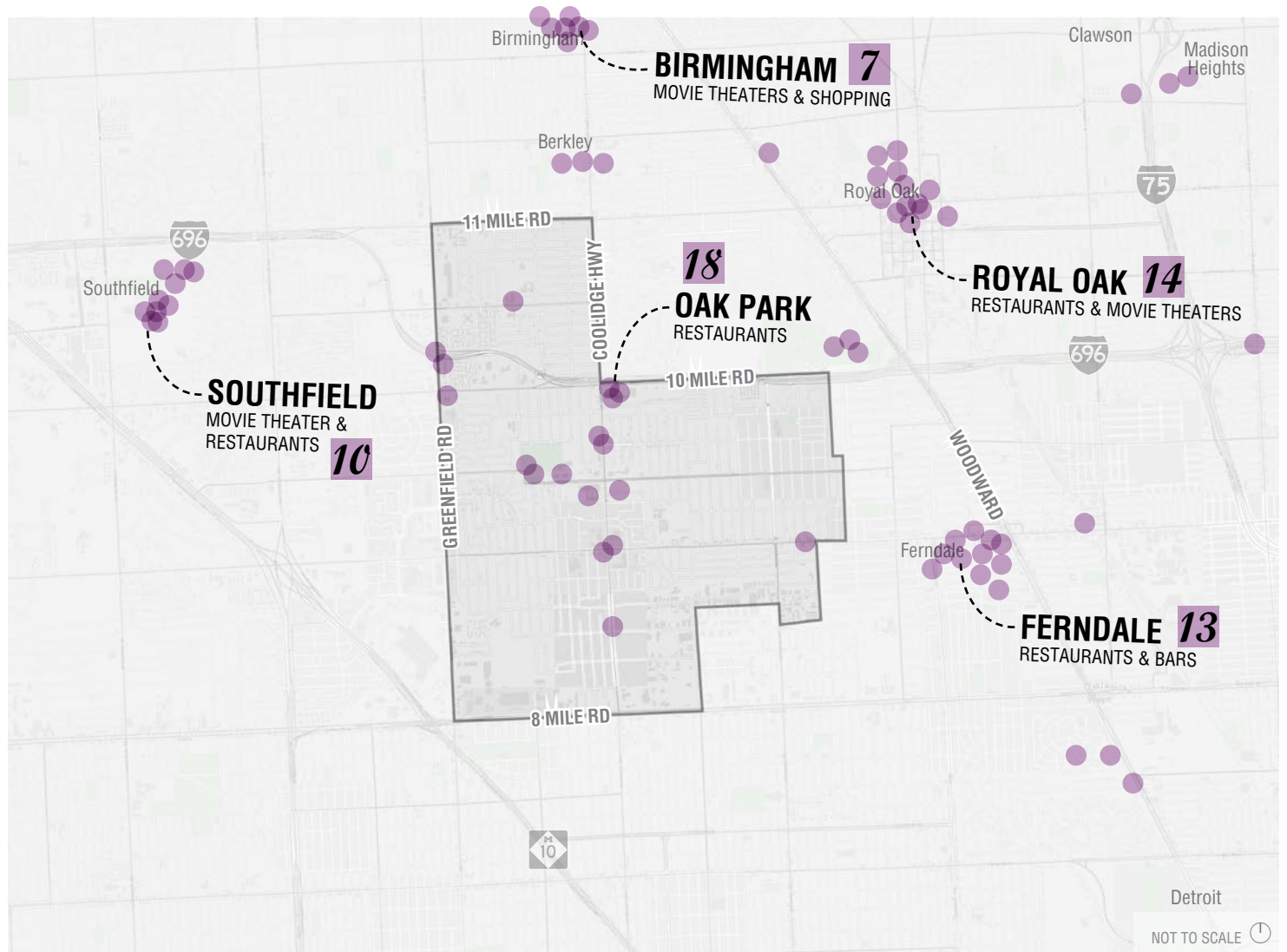
72 participants

COMMENTS:

- I like restaurants that serve beer and wine.
- There is no where to go in Oak Park for fun.
- Need more foreign restaurants.
- I'm always looking for Oak Park's "downtown" - where is it?

NOT SHOWN ON MAP:

- Movie theaters in Royal Oak, Southfield, Birmingham.
- Restaurants around Metro Detroit.
- Family restaurants in Royal Oak.
- Livonia.
- Shelby Township.



# WHERE DO YOU SHOP REGULARLY?

("Regularly" could mean grocery shopping or shopping for necessities/staples.)

**24%** SHOP REGULARLY AT STORES IN OAK PARK.

**76%** GO OUTSIDE OAK PARK TO PLACES LIKE TRADER JOES, MEIJER, AND HOLIDAY MARKET IN ROYAL OAK.

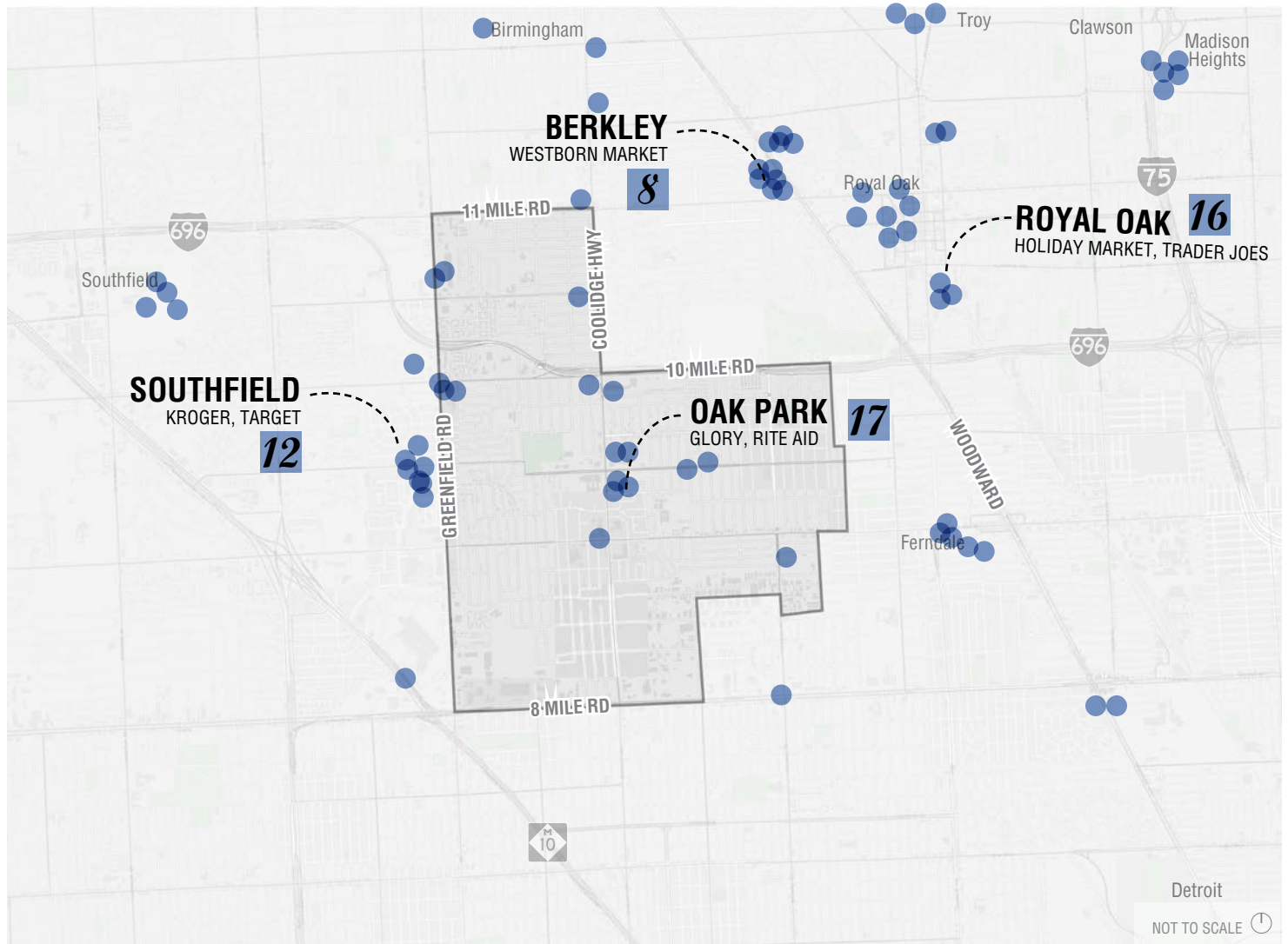
72 participants

**COMMENTS:**

- Glory - no need to go anywhere outside of Oak Park.
- Could use a fabric store.
- Need easy trips during the workday - Kroger, Target, Panera, Jimmy Johns.

**NOT SHOWN ON MAP:**

- 14 Mile & Coolidge - that area has everything.
- Any Kroger - I rotate between Birmingham, Royal Oak, and Southfield.
- Whole Foods
- Target

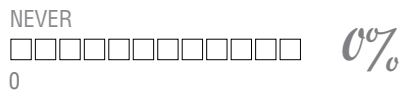
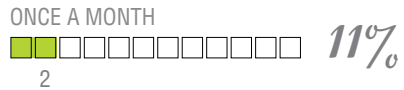


# WHICH PARK DO YOU USE?

**58%** OF PARTICIPANTS USE SHEPHERD PARK AS THEIR PRIMARY PARK.

45 participants

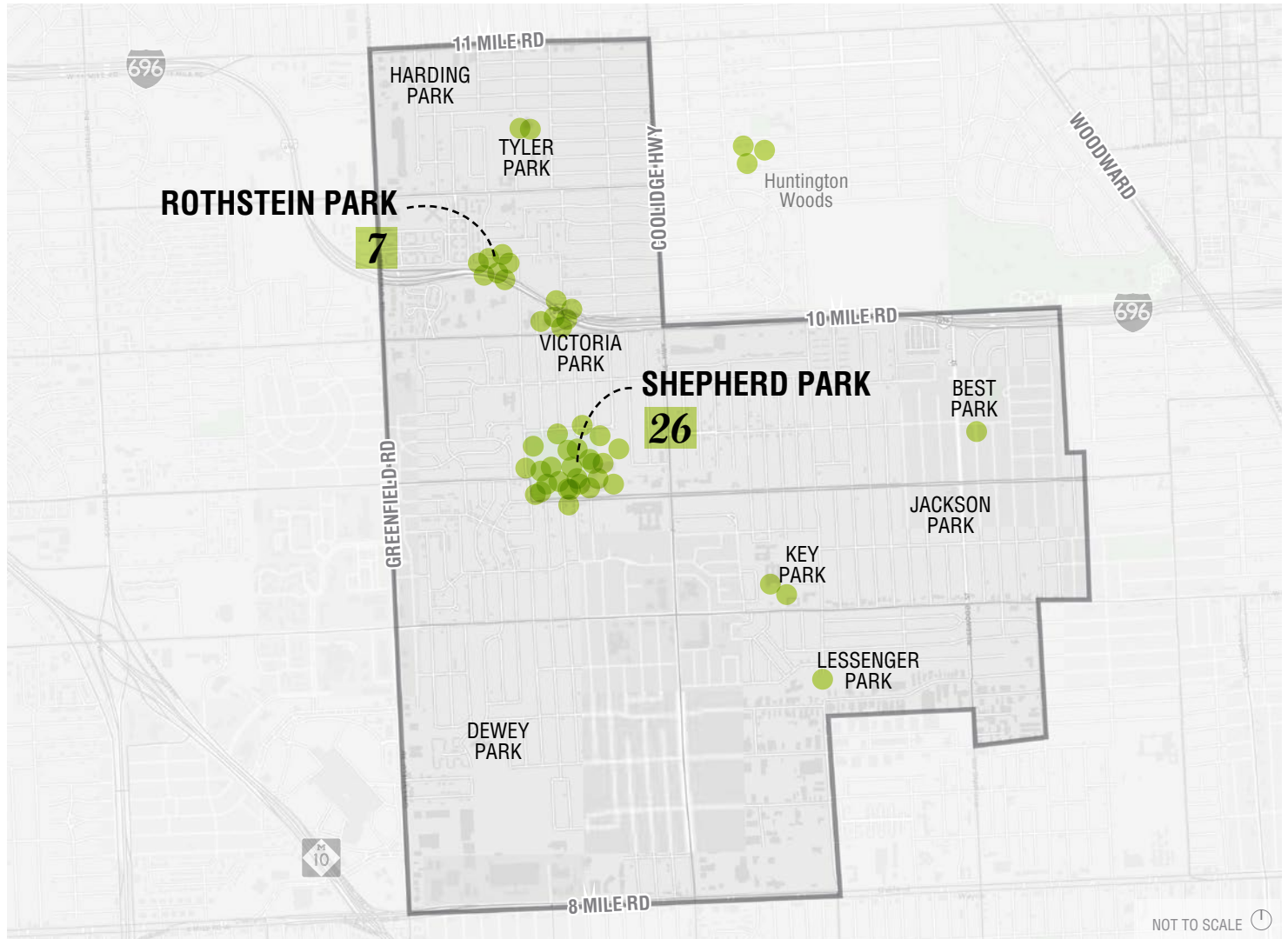
## HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT ONE OF THE CITY'S PARKS?



18 participants

### COMMENTS:

- Need a “bark park”.
- Need to improve surfaces to be safe for kids - some are too muddy or hard.
- Checkers and chess tables and league at parks.
- Outdoor concerts at Rothstein.



A visual preference survey was conducted to understand the community's physical design preferences. Participants used dots to mark images they "Like" and "Dislike" and were encouraged to provide written descriptions of their choices or specific ideas. The results are summarized in a table below. In general, images with pedestrian-oriented design such as outdoor dining, comfortable sidewalk widths, high-quality open spaces, and non-motorized paths received all positive marks and comments.

Participants were also asked to rank their top most desired retail types. In three categories, the top ranked types of retail that workshop participants said they wanted could be supported in Oak Park's current and projected retail market - General Merchandise, Grocery Stores, and Restaurants - according to the Retail Market Study. The category 'Other' incorporates commercial types that were requested by participants - a movie theater, a fitness center, and activities for kids - that were not included in the retail study.

Some comments included what participants do not want to see: five participants said "No Walmart", two said "No more McDonald's".

**WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS' TOP RANKED RETAIL TYPES**

*Based on 83 participants/total suggestions*

**1. RESTAURANTS**

"Patio and sidewalk cafes!  
Especially healthy eateries."

**2. GROCERY STORES**

"A nice grocery store with prepared food and high quality produce."

**3. OTHER**

"A movie theater, fitness center, and activities for kids."

**4. GENERAL MERCHANDISE**






"Walmart or Costco!"

**5. APPAREL & SHOE STORES**

"DSW and clothing boutiques."

- 6. Department Stores (5)
- 6. Miscellaneous Store Retailers (5)
- 8. Pharmacy (4)
- 9. Office Supplies & Gift Stores (3)
- 10. Bars & Pubs (2)
- 11. Electronics & Appliances (1)
- 11. Furniture & Home Furnishings (1)
- 11. Food Services & Specialty Food (1)

**VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS**

	LIKE A LOT	MOSTLY LIKE	MIXED REVIEWS	MOSTLY DISLIKE	DISLIKE A LOT
					
<b>COMMON THEMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor dining</li> <li>• Streetscape amenities (e.g., flowers, benches, wide sidewalks, bike racks)</li> <li>• Green open spaces with recreation or commercial amenity</li> <li>• Pedestrian bridges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic street furniture</li> <li>• Small, local retailers creating a walkable cluster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed-use multi-family residential with ground floor retail</li> <li>• Big box stores</li> <li>• Strip malls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike paths mixed with auto traffic, lacking a buffer, and/or not clearly marked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space without grass (primarily concrete)</li> <li>• Drive-thrus</li> <li>• Mega developments (e.g., outlet mall, major lifestyle center)</li> </ul>

# EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Oak Park has several key physical and demographic assets that should prove beneficial to the implementation of the Strategic Economic Development Plan.

## Land Use

The predominant land use in Oak Park is single family residential. Commercial and Institutional uses are scattered throughout the city, and a commercial cluster at 9 Mile Road and Coolidge Highway exists; however, the community would benefit from an increase in services and amenities for their daily needs. The existing industrial operations provide some employment opportunities, but the existing Zoning Code does not allow any opportunities to mix in residential or retail uses.

## Zoning

The Oak Park Zoning Ordinance was last updated in 1998. It includes eleven zoning districts primarily designed for single use. Districts are generally underutilized because of the strict segregation of land uses, prohibiting desirable activities from taking place (for example, residential is not allowed in business zones). Other communities are establishing Mixed Use districts to be more responsive to current development trends and incorporate more flexibility than traditional zoning allows.

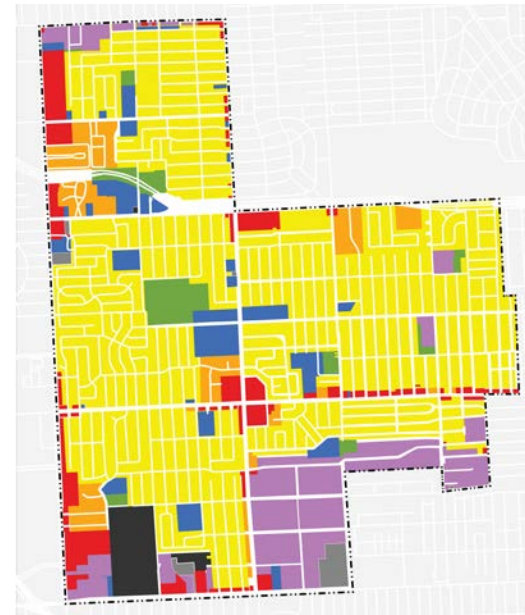


*Oak Park's predominant land use is single family residential.*



*Most houses in Oak Park were built between 1950 and 1965.*

Photo credits: HAA

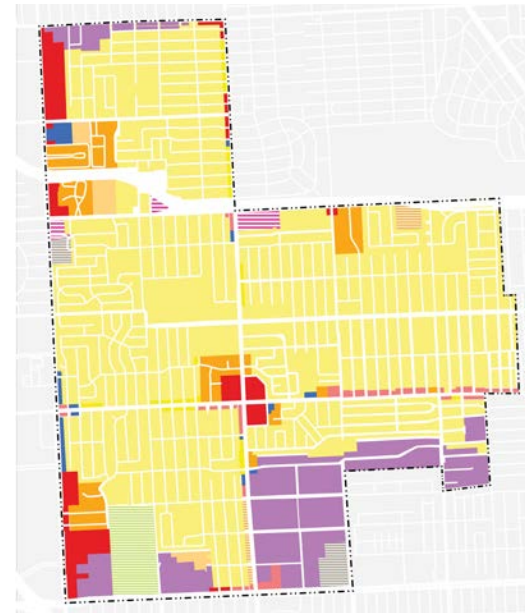


## EXISTING LAND USE

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Recreation
- TCU
- Vacant

Source: City of Oak Park, 2012

Not To Scale



## EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-1 One Family Residential
- R-2 Two Family Residential
- RM-1 Multi-Family Residential
- RM-2 Multi-Family Residential
- B-1 Neighborhood Business
- B-2 General Business
- LI Light Industrial
- O Office
- PTRED Planned Tech, Research, Edu
- PCD Planned Corridor Dev't
- PMF Planned Multi-Family
- Planned Unit Development

Source: City of Oak Park, 2008

Not To Scale



### Parks & Open Space

There are ten parks located within Oak Park, nine of which are schoolyards that also function as small neighborhood parks outside regular school hours. Expanding the public space network to include more informal spaces, such as seating areas with nearby retail, and actively programming these spaces with existing and new activities will be more meaningful to the community.

### Proximity to Services and Amenities

Walkable services and amenities are important to a community's quality of life, especially to transit-dependent populations including zero-car households, elderly persons, and handicapped persons. A good measure is the density of services and amenities within a quarter-mile radius, which is considered a comfortable five-minute walking distance. Currently, concentrations of services and amenities (e.g., public spaces, commercial areas) are scattered throughout the city, leaving much of the city under-served. It is likely that people will walk even further, usually up to a half-mile, for certain services, such as transit, or when the route is more pleasant. Increasing the concentration of quality services and amenities will better serve Oak Park neighborhoods.



Shepherd Park hosts the city's annual events.



Parks are separated from other uses.

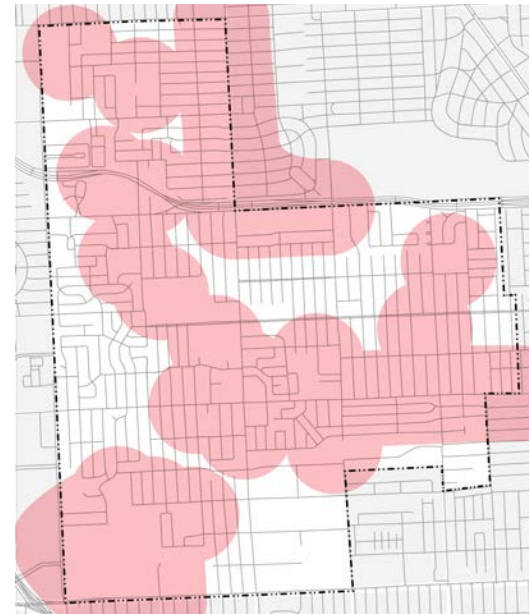
Photo credits: HAA



### EXISTING OPEN SPACE

1. Harding Park
2. Tyler Park
3. Rothstein Park
4. Victoria Park
5. Shepherd Park
6. Best Park
7. Jackson Park
8. Key Park
9. Lessenger Park
10. Dewey Park

Source: City of Oak Park  
Not To Scale



### PROXIMITY TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

- Areas Within a 1/4-Mile Radius of a Park or Commercial Sub-District

Not To Scale

### Vehicular Circulation

Oak Park is easily accessible to the region by its proximity to I-696 and M-10/Lodge Freeway. The city is also connected to its neighboring communities by major and minor arterials - primary and secondary roads. The primary roads include the major north-south connectors - Coolidge and Greenfield - and east-west mile roads - 8 Mile, 9 Mile, 10 Mile, and 11 Mile. Several less traveled but important connectors are the secondary roads - Lincoln, Oak Park Boulevard, and Scotia. Tertiary/neighborhood roads comprise the majority of the road network and serve residential areas. Except in a few segments, SMART bus routes run along the primary roads. There is a major SMART hub including a Park & Ride lot located at Northland Shopping Center.

Ensuring primary and secondary roads are comfortable for all users - vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit riders - is essential for future economic development to survive and flourish.

Not including freeways, the major roads that see the most daily traffic are Greenfield and 8 Mile, especially the segments near 10 Mile and near Greenfield and M-10, respectively. Coolidge also experiences a lot of vehicular traffic south of 10 Mile/I-696. For businesses, high vehicular traffic passing by can be good for visibility but harmful to pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Oak Park Boulevard experiences the lowest vehicular traffic of all the major roads in the city, suggesting it may be a good candidate for bike lanes or sharrows (shared lanes).

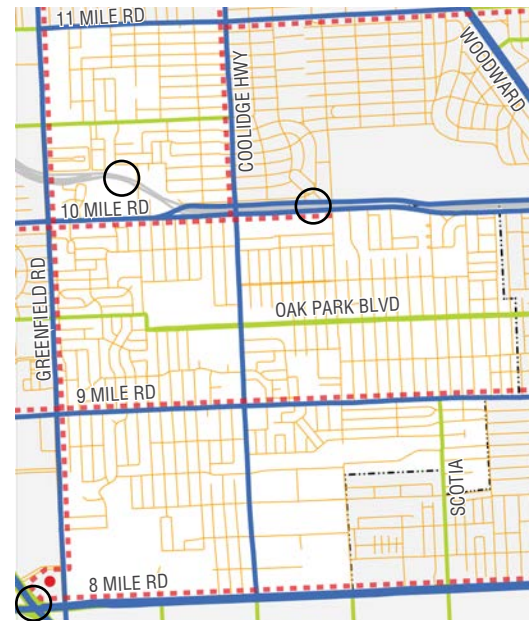
With so many businesses located along Oak Park's busy roads, it is important these roadways are not channels *through* the city but connectors *to* destinations, goods, and services. On-street, curb parking in front of businesses provides opportunities for people to park conveniently and directly access a storefront. On-street parking and busy streets are not mutually exclusive; in fact, other downtown areas in nearby communities demonstrate how the two can occur together successfully and how this environment contributes to a vibrant, mixed use shopping district.

### TRAFFIC COUNT IN DOWNTOWN AREAS WITH ON-STREET PARKING

Source: SEMCOG, 2012

DOWNTOWN AREA (STREET)	AVERAGE CARS PER DAY
Birmingham (Old Woodward)	7,200 - 9,200
Ferndale (9 Mile)	11,200
Royal Oak (Main Street)	17,400 - 19,700

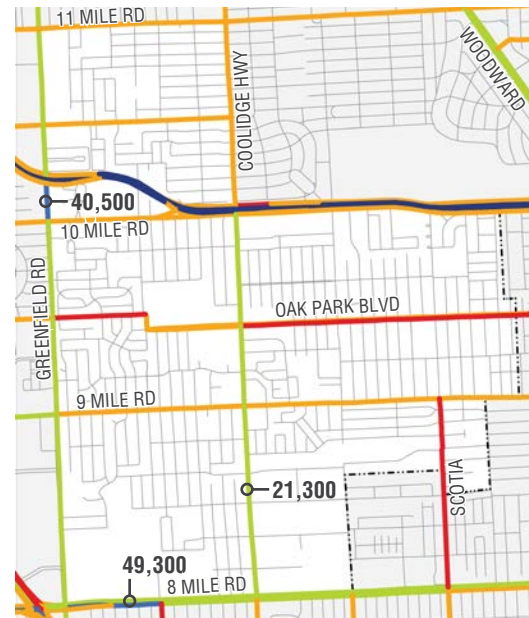
Coolidge Highway will continue to be an important corridor for the city in the future, not only as a major north/south collector, but as a unique multi-modal and mixed-use street. Unlike Greenfield Road where the right of way and commercial developments are not scaled for the pedestrian, Coolidge has the potential to be the heart of Oak Park. To realize this potential, much work needs to be done to retrofit the suburban auto-oriented streetscape. Many of the recommendations such as road diets, façade renovations, consolidated parking facilities, and zoning amendments that allow for mixed-use development are found in this document. A common tool to finance such improvements is a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), which is detailed in the Transportation section on page 41.



### EXISTING VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Tertiary/Neighborhood Roads
- SMART Bus Routes
- Freeway Access

Source: SMART  
Not To Scale



### EXISTING TRAFFIC COUNTS

- Average Cars Per Day
- 1,500 - 5,000
  - 5,001 - 20,000
  - 20,001 - 40,000
  - 40,001 - 60,000
  - 60,001 - 93,000

Source: SEMCOG, 2012  
Not To Scale

## Neighborhood Character

Several areas within the city have distinct character and concentrations of similar activities. By maximizing development impact and building on these existing assets, Oak Park can revitalize and strengthen the city as a whole. Areas that are undeveloped or will undergo significant redevelopment - City Center, Industrial District, and Armory Park - are ideal for new mixed-use development as it creates the conditions for living and working in a dense, walkable environment.



### City Center

This area physically and psychologically represents the Oak Park's gathering places, including civic buildings, Shepherd Park, Oak Park High School, and the 9 Mile & Coolidge shopping cluster. This area already generates much activity between daily uses and special programs, and it has the potential to be a connected, walkable district activated by a revitalized mixed-use retail center.



### Industrial District

This district is physically characterized by large storage yards but also a finer grain building stock with potential for adaptive reuse. The undeveloped and unpolished aesthetic of the buildings and streetscape may be appealing to artists and entrepreneurs who want unique spaces for their creative businesses.



### Interesting Edges

These corridors are typically at the city borders and consist of a mix of uses but lack a distinct identity. Non-motorized paths and improved urban design features could transform these edges from confusing border streets to inviting gateways to Oak Park.



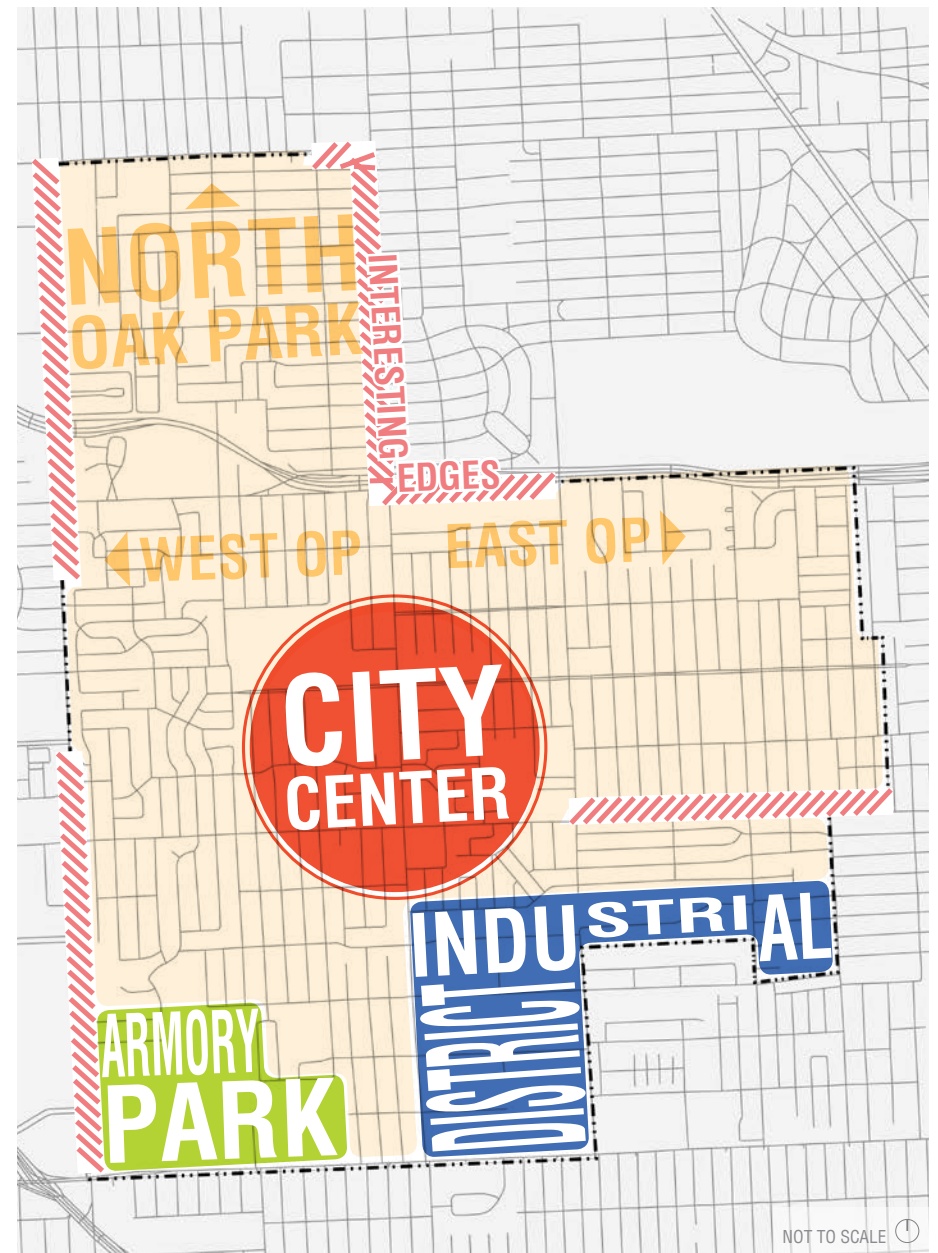
### The Neighborhoods

Separated by major roadways, the North, West, and East Oak Park neighborhoods have similar form with single-family houses and tree-lined streets.



### Armory Park

Once a destination for drive-in movies and then a military depot, the former Armory site is the largest potential development site in Oak Park.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

# RECOMMENDATIONS

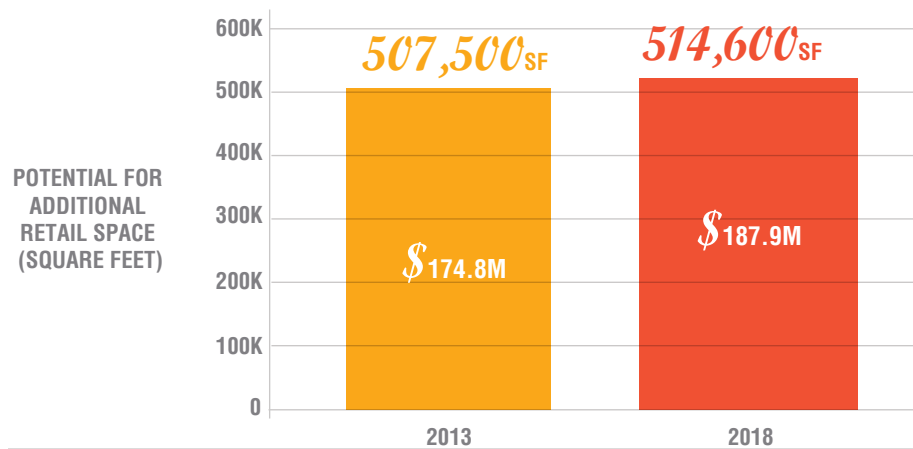
## What We Know

The recommendations link and align what we know about Oak Park with trends and best practices from what is working in similar communities. While we know Oak Park is a diverse community with tree-lined streets, affordable homes, and good schools nearby, we also know from national studies that residents of suburban communities still want the amenities of urban areas<sup>1</sup>: walkable neighborhoods, recreation opportunities, transit options, and retail destinations. Oak Park residents echoed this statement in the series of public workshops when asked “Where do you go for fun?”: 77% of participants said they go outside Oak Park for entertainment (e.g., dining, shopping, and movies) to the downtown areas of Royal Oak, Ferndale, and Birmingham.

While communities around the country are increasingly adapting to create walkable, compact, mixed-use districts, every community is unique. Incorporating Oak Park’s unique lifestyle preferences into new development will ensure it is authentic and attractive to the people who belong to the community. The 2012 Oak Park Market Study studied specific demographics, family types, and what these groups spend money on to inform the composition of future retail development. The study found the top “tapestry lifestyle groups” portray a cluster of aging residents and established, community-oriented families.<sup>2</sup> Together, these groups make up almost 75% of Oak Park residents.

### ESTIMATED SUPPORTABLE RETAIL, 2013 & 2018

Source: Oak Park Retail Market Study (Gibbs Planning Group, 2013)



<sup>1</sup> Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers  
<sup>2</sup> Oak Park Retail Market Study, Gibbs Planning  
<sup>3</sup> “Young, Underemployed and Optimistic”, Pew Research Center  
<sup>4</sup> ITE Journal

## Trends and Best Practices

For Oak Park, attracting and retaining residents and businesses is and will be strongly tied to quality of place. Two-thirds of college educated 24 to 35 year-olds choose where they want to live first and then look for a job.<sup>3</sup> 72% of baby boomers (ages 48-66) would prefer a smaller home with a shorter commute over a larger home with a longer commute.<sup>4</sup> So regardless of age, there is an increasing trend of people wanting to be in dynamic mixed-use urban settings where they can meet people, have multiple destinations to eat or shop, and live nearby.

“Tactical urbanism” is a term to describe small-scale, low cost efforts to initiate action toward long-term change. This approach allows local stakeholders to test new ideas before making substantial political and financial commitments.

## Incremental Strides

**Small-scale, short-term, low-risk projects to instigate change.**






**Retrofit**

Modify or adapt Oak Park’s physical environment to fit the new needs of this century.

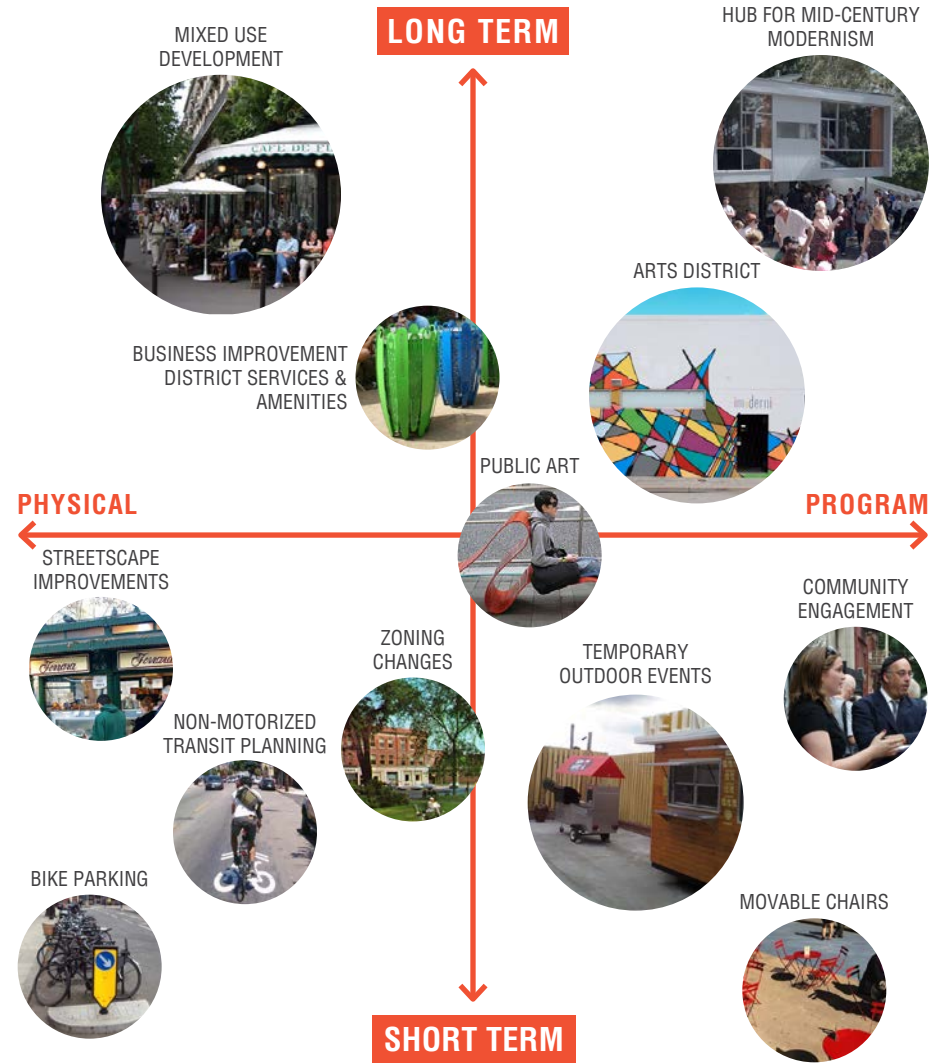
“Tactical urbanism” focuses on short-term actions working towards long-term change.

### Recommendations

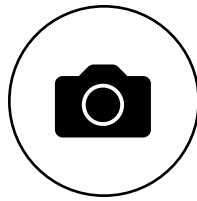
The following recommendations listed below are transformative ideas for change based on analysis, community input, and planning principles with a focus on realistic and implementable actions.

1. Public Image and Experience
2. Community Development
3. Policy in Action
4. Transportation
5. Public Spaces
6. Housing
7. Commercial Sub-Districts
  - 9 Mile & Coolidge
  - The Armory Site
  - Industrial District
  - Strip Retail Centers
  - Parkwoods Plaza

Each recommendation presents key focus areas and a range of strategies - both short and long term - to build on Oak Park's strengths and improve weaknesses. Some strategies can be implemented right away, such as movable chairs and initiating community engagement, but others need more time for planning, raising funds, generating community interest, and to physically develop. While larger-scale projects do have their place, quality places do not need major renovations to be an economic stimulus for the community. Incremental efforts and small-scale improvements are great opportunities to initiate change and test new ideas without waiting for the perfect conditions (funding, investors, property ownership) to fall into place.



A range of short- and long-term interventions for economic development in Oak Park.



**PUBLIC IMAGE AND EXPERIENCE**

# 1. PUBLIC IMAGE AND EXPERIENCE

From streets and signage to events and identity, Oak Park's public image and people's experiences in the public realm affect residents' and visitors' perception of the city. Currently, Oak Park's physical environment does not reflect the community's values in local businesses, recreation opportunities, and social experiences. Meanwhile, neighboring communities such as Royal Oak and Ferndale are using their physical environments - buildings, signs, streets - to communicate their distinct identities and using them to attract shoppers, new businesses, and new residents.

Commercial facades, signage, and streets are the face of Oak Park. They provide people with first impressions of the businesses that are associated with them regardless of the quality of goods and services being offered. Improving these will promote a higher quality shopping environment and invite people to experience it.

Events and festivals also shape experiences. While Oak Park has many annual events and ongoing programs, they are not strong regional destinations and many take place indoors, hiding the activity from the larger community. Promoting events and festivals regionally and even nationally can bring name recognition to Oak Park and help establish the city's identity.

Together, brand, events, commercial facades and signage, and a welcoming streetscape are the tools that can communicate Oak Park's unique identity and create a sense of place for residents and visitors to enjoy.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS:



### Promotion

Refine the larger Oak Park brand to reflect the city's assets and communicate opportunities to potential investors and residents. Build local pride and tourism with exciting events and festivals that capture regional participation.



### Commercial Facades and Signage

Promote a high quality commercial environment framed by attractive and welcoming signage and facades.



### Streetscape Identity

Redesign and rebrand priority streets as the arteries that anchor Oak Park's commercial sub-districts.



## 1.1 Promotion

Developing a strategic brand identity is the first step to successfully promoting Oak Park. A brand identity is a place's claim of distinction; it incorporates unique attributes and can be backed up with evidence. Oak Park's brand identity should be developed by the people who live and work there, not by outsiders who are unlikely to understand what really makes the community unique. Discovering Oak Park's brand identity through a process of internal information gathering is the first and most important step to establishing a comprehensive brand strategy - the brand identity will guide the visual brand (logo, taglines, website, brochures, signage) and decision-making and is essential to creating value for investors and residents.

A successful brand should build on Oak Park's assets. There is an abundant supply of mid-century houses that could be leveraged as a major asset by building on the Michigan Modern movement. Michigan Modern is an organization whose goal is to create a new image for the state by leveraging Michigan's impressive 20th century design history. Their mission - "We want people to think 'Modern design' when they hear 'Michigan'"<sup>1</sup> - could be taken one step further for Oak Park: *We want people to think "mid-century modern" when they hear 'Oak Park'*. Building a brand around mid-century modernism in Oak Park could create opportunities for home tours, events, and a renewed interest in the city as a place to live.

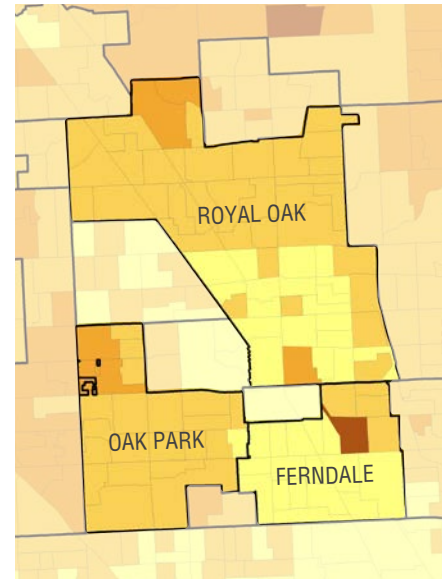
Successful events and festivals with regional participation can promote Oak Park as a destination, bring name recognition to the city, and give visitors a sense of why Oak Park is special. Festivals can take their theme from almost anything: sporting events, historical dates, agricultural products, local traditions, music, and even weather patterns. An authentic idea for Oak Park might be to revive "Art Over the Interstate". Oak Park could also capitalize on the popularity of sports tourism and food and drink events that are generally low cost, have opportunities to add unique twists, and can be turned into annual events. For example, 5K races, the Color Run, the Warrior Dash, and the Michigan Brewers Festival are events in Michigan that attract hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people for a day or an entire weekend from long distances. Regardless of the event, it is important to market it using a variety of mediums, with high-level design, and to audiences beyond Oak Park to capture regional participation.

### Strategies

- 1 Engage the community in a brand development process to create a long-term, comprehensive Brand Strategy - the first step is a stakeholder engagement process to discover the Brand Identity.
- 2 Identify opportunities for festivals or events that will promote Oak Park as a destination (e.g., food/drink, music, sports, art (revive "Art over the Interstate" event)).
- 3 Emphasize the mid-century history of the city and housing stock ("Mid-Century Modern"); create and promote initiatives and events.
- 4 Create and promote heritage tours (walking, biking, and bus).
- 5 Market events using a combination of techniques (traditional, grassroots, social media) with high-level design and to a regional audience; ensure there is significant consumer engagement following events.
- 6 Utilize social media to promote events and track participant experiences; use GPS for large events.

<sup>1</sup> MichiganModern.org. (Michigan Modern is a project of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a division of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)).

<sup>2</sup> "5 Smart Steps to Building Your Brand the Right Way", Fast Company



"[Brand] is not a logo, a tagline, or an advertising campaign... It represents both a rational and emotional connection to your various stakeholders..."<sup>2</sup>

### MEDIAN YEAR BUILT

- 1939 - 1949
- 1950 - 1965
- 1966 - 1979
- 1980 - 1995
- 1996 - 2005

Source: 2010 Census

Not To Scale 🕒

*Leverage Oak Park's supply of mid-century housing to build an authentic brand.*



*A fashion event held at a mid-century modern home.*

## 1.2 Commercial Facades and Signage

A high-quality commercial environment is framed by attractive and inviting commercial facades and signage. Good facades and signage give pedestrians a feeling of order and interest as they walk and lure customers into their stores. As the first things potential customers see, facades and signage need to make a good impression.

Oak Park can accelerate storefront revitalization through a facade improvement program by incentivizing business owners to improve the exterior of the buildings. Facade improvement programs are proven to have numerous economic benefits:

- Businesses experience an increase in sales.
- Sales improvements can be sustained for several years and often exceed increases in local taxes.
- Improvements attract new businesses and shoppers to the area.
- Participants are often motivated to make additional improvements.
- Owners/tenants of other properties and businesses are motivated to make improvements.

The signage ordinance, enforcement, and community education are also important to creating an attractive commercial environment. Providing a concise, understandable guide about signage standards can help business owners understand requirements and expectations, avoid fines, and communicate their businesses effectively to potential customers.

### Strategies

- 1 Educate the public, especially business owners, about code requirements and expectations from the City; make information available and easy to understand.
- 2 Increase code enforcement on non-complying signage and facades.
- 3 Host a hands-on community-wide event (e.g., Better Block) to generate ideas for streetscape amenities and creative urban edges.
- 4 Consider potential events, festivals, and programming that would bring name recognition to Oak Park.
- 5 Initiate a Facade Improvement Program with design guidelines.
- 6 Revise signage ordinance.

#### PUBLIC INPUT:

“Signage and enforcement in Oak Park are other issues that need to be addressed before businesses decide to locate here.”

## 1.3 Streetscape Identity

Oak Park’s commercial corridors should be designed to foster walkable retail destinations. Streetscape elements can reinforce the pedestrian environment by defining the street right-of-way as public space that combines a cohesive street wall (buildings, urban edges), street trees, coordinated street furniture and lighting, comfortable sidewalks, and bike lanes and storage. Streetscape investment is also a catalyze for economic development - every \$1 of public funds invested within a business district spurs \$18 of private sector investment.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, many of the commercial corridors waver between highway and neighborhood connector and have more space than required to meet current and projected traffic volumes. Furthermore, the mix of new and aging streetscape elements does not communicate a clear identity or sense of place.

Creating a streetscape plan will establish a vision to redesign, rebrand, and guide investment in Oak Park’s commercial corridors. The plan should include a consistent portfolio of streetscape elements that are pedestrian-oriented and reflects Oak Park’s character.

### Strategies

- 1 Identify funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD), or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- 2 Create design guidelines for streetscape elements (e.g., trees, lighting, street furniture, bus shelters, signage) that reflect the character of the community.
- 3 Create a streetscape plan for commercial corridors to foster walkable commercial sub-districts.
- 4 Incorporate multi-modal transit facilities (e.g., bus shelters, bike parking) where transit is supported in locations with a good mix of retail shops, residential units, and civic uses together.



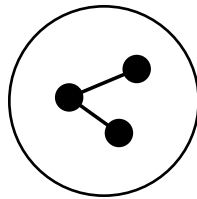
Consistent signage give pedestrians a feeling of order and interest.



A unique streetscape identity provides a sense of place.

<sup>1</sup> National Main Street Center

Photo credits (left to right): Short North, Columbus, OH (HAA), Easton Town Center, Columbus, OH (HAA)



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

## 2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

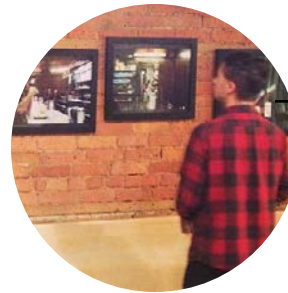
Oak Park's diverse population and community groups provide opportunities for more engagement and collaboration. Oak Park has approximately 300 businesses, more than 40 faith-based institutions, an active Arts and Culture Commission, neighborhood block groups, and individuals looking for others who share similar interests. Currently, many of these groups feel isolated from one another and unaware of what others are doing. Becoming more engaged can lead to less resistance of ideas and initiatives, more active involvement, and more resource sharing. Providing the platforms for people to connect, share resources and ideas, and collaborate on projects can increase their capacity to realize good ideas and inspire new ones.

### KEY FOCUS AREAS:



#### **Business Development**

Create platforms for existing and potential small businesses to connect and share resources, ideas, and insights.



#### **Arts Community**

Engage the Arts and Culture Commission to lead pilot projects to enact short-term actions toward long-term changes.

#### **Faith-Based Organization**

Promote a faith-based coalition to bring organization leaders together to address and improve shared topics of concern and interest.



#### **Emerging Workforce**

Promote workforce readiness among youth, recent high school and college graduates, underemployed, and those seeking new career paths.



## 2.1 Business Development

Local businesses are critical to economic recovery and strength. More than half of Americans either own or work for a small business.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, two-thirds of new jobs are created by small businesses.<sup>1</sup> Local businesses have been a prominent part of Oak Park's past, and Oak Park should ensure they have the support to play a strong role in the city's future.

Oak Park should focus on creating platforms for existing and potential businesses to connect and share resources, ideas, and insights. Regular meetings such as a monthly networking event hosted by and for business owners provides a place and time to exchange ideas and benefit from the products and services provided by other businesses in the community. An annual event can bring together business owners, foundations, and community members on a regional scale to learn and celebrate current programs, initiatives, and leaders in Oak Park.

Identifying potential funding sources can help Oak Park define the range of improvements possible for improving businesses and their physical environments. One of the most powerful funding tools is an entity that manages the business community's interests. Whether it is a business improvement area (BIA), principal shopping district (PSD), or corridor improvement authority (CIA), creating the entity requires legislation and majority consensus among business owners. Once legally permitted, the entity allows for the provision of additional services to improve the business environment such as supplemental maintenance, marketing, streetscape enhancement, public space improvements, event coordination, and capital improvements.

### Strategies

- 1 Hold regular (e.g., monthly, annual, semi-annual) events to network and learn about and celebrate programs, initiatives, and leaders.
- 2 Work with other Chambers to learn common processes, benefits, and challenges and how they might apply to Oak Park.
- 3 Create an Oak Park Chamber of Commerce.
- 4 Create a business committee or council of stakeholders (business leaders, entrepreneurs, institutional leaders, elected officials) that focuses on creating an environment for businesses and jobs by providing a sounding board for local policy decisions and ongoing feedback to City staff.
- 5 Identify funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD), or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- 7 Promote the cultural diversity of Oak Park's businesses by supporting minority businesses.

#### PUBLIC INPUT:

"We want to make improvements but need financial resources."

## 2.2 Faith-Based Organization

With approximately 40 religious institutions in the city, each with strong leaders and members, the capacity and vibrancy of Oak Park's religious institutions should be recognized as integral part of the city's civic infrastructure. Supporting faith-based organizations will enable Oak Park to make ongoing, continual progress on long-term community issues by bringing more voices into the conversation of community development.

A faith-based coalition can create common ground for organizations to address and improve shared topics of concern and interest. It also creates opportunities that are not possible by working separately, such as pooling resources to host a large event that attracts regional participation.

### Strategies

- 1 Create a faith-based coalition to develop strategies and solutions to issues that arise, such as a strategy for adjacency to housing and a strategy to cluster retail.



A series of regular meetings allows business owners to network, exchange ideas, and benefit from the products and services provided by other businesses.



Funding strategies such as the creation of a business improvement area (BIA) can provide additional services to improve the business environment.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Small Business Administration

Photo credits (left to right): Economics Breakfast Series (southwestdetroit.com); Crystal City BID, VA (park-bench-blog.blogspot.com)

## 2.3 Arts Community

The activities of arts, culture, and creative sectors are significantly connected to the vitality of the local economy. They have the ability to make visual impacts in the environment, draw crowds from within and around the community, create and attract jobs, and enhance social networks. Furthermore, places with culturally-oriented businesses, workers, and residents tend to attract other innovators and entrepreneurs. As an established and active organization, the Oak Park Arts and Culture Commission (OPAACC) has the potential to be a powerful economic development asset.

The OPAACC dedicates itself to enriching the lives of people in the community through activities, workshops, discussions, and art. The organization is constantly looking for ways to expand city-wide cultural programs and promote performing and creative arts, and it holds several well-attended events throughout the year. The recognition and support of Oak Park's arts and culture is critical as Oak Park looks for ways to create more public spaces and opportunities for public engagement.

The arts and culture community should be involved in planning on a range of scales, from a single building to a streetscape or district. The OPAACC could play a role in many of the strategies recommended for improving economic vitality: promotion of assets, branding, creation of an arts district, live-work projects, events and festivals, urban design and reuse, and public art. 'Tactical urbanism' techniques also benefit from creative people who can enact short-term, innovative actions that create momentum toward long-term changes.

### Strategies

- 1 Identify a target area to cluster investment to make a visual and experiential impact.
- 2 Work with the Arts & Culture Commission (OPAACC) to identify pilot projects for placemaking (e.g., activating vacant storefronts and buildings, activating blank walls, chair bombing).
- 3 Work with the Arts & Culture Commission (OPAACC) to identify long-term exhibit space.
- 4 Identify funding strategies such as ArtPlace grants for projects.

## 2.4 Emerging Workforce

As Oak Park works to plan and design a productive, sustainable, and livable community it must invest in its future workforce: youth, recent high school and college graduates, underemployed, and those seeking new career paths. These groups represent a significant proportion of the city's population, tend to be actively looking for ways to engage, and have the potential ideas and skills that are missing from existing workplaces.

Steadily falling employment levels among young workers (16-25) are a growing problem in metro Detroit,<sup>1</sup> stressing the attention needed toward reinvigorating youth engagement, stimulating interest, and offering internship and employment opportunities. Developing workforce readiness programs to combat this trend will ensure these groups participate in Oak Park's present and future economy.

A study found that 70% of companies offer full-time positions to interns, underscoring the role of the internship as an alternative form of interview.<sup>2</sup> Oak Park should encourage businesses to participate in internships, job shadowing, mentoring, networking, and other activities that provide exposure and entice interest. While the emerging workforce benefits from the employment opportunities, businesses also benefit from the ability to draw fresh ideas and opportunities for collaboration.

### Strategies

- 1 Gauge interest of existing business owners in internship programs.
- 2 Create internship programs with the high school; encourage businesses to participate in internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other activities that provide exposure and entice interest.
- 3 Encourage partnerships between Oak Park High School and local businesses and organizations to collaborate on real projects to provide students with practical experience.



The arts community can engage the community and build interest in initiatives, such as marketing vacant storefronts.

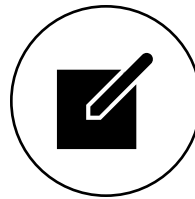


Arts and cultural exhibits are visual elements that can communicate a community's character.

<sup>1</sup> Crain's Business Detroit, Internships.com

<sup>2</sup> Crain's Business Detroit, Brookings Institute

Photo credits (left to right): Pop-up shop (urbscapelog.wordpress.com); Philadelphia public plaza (PlanPhilly via Flickr)



**POLICY IN ACTION**

# 3. POLICY IN ACTION

An important goal for Oak Park’s economic development is creating simple, easy to understand guidelines and streamlined processes. The Oak Park Zoning Code, last updated in 1998, focuses on continuing development the way it has always been done in the city: auto-oriented, separation of uses, and preservation of the City’s single-family residential neighborhoods. Over the past several decades, the economic realities and design goals of cities have evolved, and the current Code is no longer able to move Oak Park forward.

Oak Park’s ability to address economic development challenges is impeded by its own restrictive regulations. The current Code has become both outdated and overly complex, with a multitude of prohibited uses and unnecessary requirements on developers and business owners. Understanding and working within these complexities can be time-consuming, discouraging, and unpredictable.

A shift from raising barriers to lowering them can set the stage for economic growth. The City should provide existing and potential businesses with customer service that allows businesses to start, build, and grow in Oak Park. In making public policy decisions, the purpose should be to ensure that every measure is in place to create a dense, walkable, and sustainable community.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS:



### Development Readiness

Attract new business development by focusing on self-evaluation, information sharing, and customer service.



### Off-Street Parking

Change off-street parking requirements toward standards of a more walkable community.

### More Flexible Use Categories (Zoning)

Revise zoning categories to be more general, allowing the code to stay relevant as new uses evolve.



### Blue and Green Infrastructure

Introduce blue and green infrastructure pilot projects and standards to improve public and private landscapes.





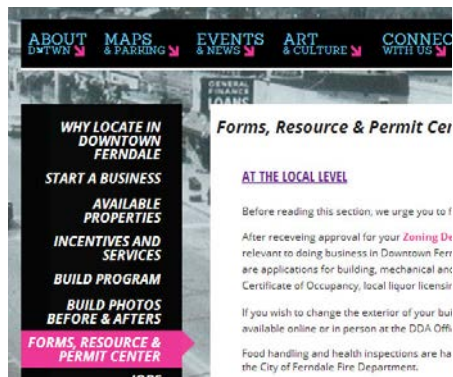
### 3.1 Development Readiness

Oak Park can attract new business development by leveraging opportunities that are created internally and available externally. The City should focus on creating a business-friendly culture ready to respond to ideas and opportunities and collaborate with community stakeholders. Being committed to customer service at City Hall and on the City’s website will provide businesses with efficient and reliable resources for their needs.

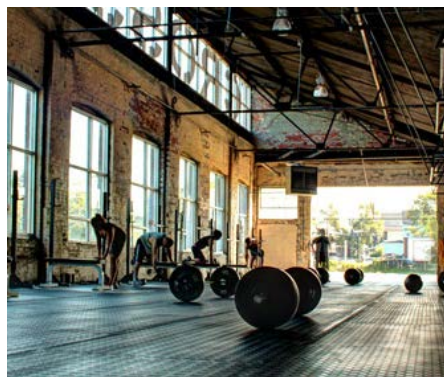
A community-focused economic development program such as Oakland County’s “One Stop Ready” program is a constructive tool for leading communities through the course of refining their economic development processes and then promoting their development readiness. These programs encourage community leaders to review their policies, share information among their departments and other communities, and provide customer service to guide projects at all stages of development.

#### Strategies

- 1 Use a community-focused economic development program such as Oakland County’s “One Stop Ready” to strengthen and promote Oak Park’s development readiness.
- 2 Use best practices such as those from “One Stop Ready”<sup>1</sup> as a tool to guiding development readiness: pre-application meetings between City staff and developer, increase internet accessibility, track projects from application through occupancy, provide a mechanism to gather input from the business community, and provide clear permitting processes and efficient time frames.
- 3 Use the Internet and social media to actively market and promote business in Oak Park, ensuring information is kept current such as resources (forms, permitting processes, programs) for starting and growing businesses, plans and regulatory information (master plan, zoning, ordinances), incentives and services, and networking and training events.



Downtown Ferndale’s website provides all the information and resources a business owner needs to start and grow.



Industrial buildings tend to have attractive features such as open layouts, tall ceilings, and natural light that are advantageous for other uses like galleries and gyms.

### 3.2 More Flexible Use Categories (Zoning)

The Zoning Code should be a tool that supports and guides city investments. To that end, the Code should be revised to include zoning categories and uses aligned with today’s economy. New zoning categories and uses in the Code can promote pedestrian-oriented development, encourage a mix of uses, and allow for the creative and flexible reuse of buildings. More general use categories will also allow the code to stay relevant as new uses evolve. As a complement to new zoning categories, design standards in the Code are another tool to improve the quality of the built environment.

Older, obsolete buildings would particularly benefit from revised zoning standards. Industrial buildings are popular for adaptive reuse because of the unique space. In other communities, clusters of industrial buildings have become districts for arts and entrepreneurial businesses.

An alternative to standard zoning that Oak Park may want to consider is a form-based code. Rather than controlling types of land uses, a form-based code focuses on shaping the physical form of the community such as building types, relationship of buildings to public spaces, types of streets, placement of parking, and the size of blocks. These design standards can provide unity and efficient organization and foster social vitality and walkability.

#### Strategies

- 1 Create a committee to reexamine the Zoning Ordinance and consider including more general use categories (rather than individually listing all permitted and prohibited uses); alternatively, consider form-based code.
- 2 Create a new Mixed Use category.
- 3 Reconsider allowable uses in Light Industrial districts to allow for the creative reuse of older buildings. This will allow light industrial uses to exist adjacent to non-industrial uses such as live-work, gallery spaces, and other entrepreneurial activities and jobs to be located closer to residential areas without negative impacts.
- 4 Consider a new transit-oriented development (TOD) district to promote pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development near existing and planned transit hubs.
- 5 Pursue resources that will provide more economic opportunities such as an outdoor dining (or sidewalk cafe ordinance) and on-premise liquor licenses.

#### PUBLIC INPUT:

“We need wider sidewalks, boutiques, cafes, outdoor seating for a true walking district.”

<sup>1</sup> advantageoakland.com

Photo credits (left to right): downtownferndale.com; Warehouse gym (ozzerka.com)

### 3.3 Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking requirements should be aligned with standards for a walkable community that aims to create active building frontage on streets, prioritize pedestrians, screen surface lots from street view, and reduce the burden on developers and business owners.

Currently, Oak Park's commercial areas are dominated by surface parking that consume vital land, reduce perceptions of safety, and are unattractive. These surface lots and other parking configurations that prioritize automobiles severely limit opportunities for pedestrian-oriented retail development.

Mechanisms for pursuing off-street parking standards for a walkable community include reducing or altogether eliminating parking minimums, replacing parking minimums with maximums, and implementing shared parking, which reduces the amount of land needed for parking and maximizes existing parking capacity. Parking placement is also important to creating a walkable environment. Wherever possible, surface lots should be located to the rear of buildings or screened from street view to ensure active street frontage and a contiguous street wall.

#### Strategies

- 1 Revise off-street parking requirements using best practices of peer cities as a guide (strategies include reducing minimum parking requirements, eliminate parking minimums and instituting parking maximums, eliminating both minimums and maximums.)
- 2 Prohibit new surface parking lots as primary uses adjacent to pedestrian-oriented commercial corridors.
- 3 Where existing surface parking lots abut the right-of-way, require landscaping and/or low walls to screen the parking from street view and separate the area from pedestrian traffic.
- 4 Increase regulations and enforcement of landscaping requirements in off-street parking lots.
- 5 Identify potential shared parking locations.
- 6 Allow and encourage shared parking as a preferred and readily achievable option for fulfilling parking requirements.
- 7 Create a payment in lieu of parking program, where developers have the option to reduce their on-site parking requirement by paying an in-lieu fee into a shared parking facilities fund.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS

USE	OAK PARK REQUIREMENTS	PEER CITIES REQ'S
Planned Commercial or Shopping Center	1 space per 200 SF	1 space per 300 SF
Restaurant (Carry Out)	1 space per 100 SF	1 space per 200 SF
Restaurant (Sit Down)	1 space per 75 SF	1 space per 65 SF
Multi-Family Residential	2 spaces per unit	1.5 spaces per unit

<sup>1</sup> ASLA, WEF, and EcoNorthwest, 2012  
 Photo credits (left to right): parking (HAA), bioswale/green street furniture (kylekingma.wordpress.com)

### 3.4 Blue and Green Infrastructure

Although replacing and maintaining conventional infrastructure will remain important to Oak Park's future, blue and green infrastructure can alleviate burdens on conventional systems and can be less expensive to implement and maintain.

Blue infrastructures are water-based landscapes (retention ponds, rain barrels, lakes) that capture and clean stormwater and help reduce the burden on the existing sewer systems. Green infrastructures are forest landscapes (trees and plants) that improve air quality by capturing or reducing air-borne pollutants from industry and vehicular exhaust. Blue and green infrastructures can act alone or combined to create systems using both water and plants (bioswales, rain gardens).

Blue and green infrastructures have environmental, economic, and social benefits that should be communicated to residents and business owners. The addition of these systems in Oak Park's commercial areas can increase property values, encourage shoppers to spend more time and money and travel longer distances, and provide an eco-regional identity.<sup>1</sup>

#### Strategies

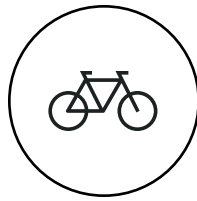
- 1 Create communication effort to educate residents, property owners, and developers on benefits of blue and green infrastructure.
- 2 Plan pilot projects to create prototypes for green alleys, permeable paving, bioswales, effective rain gardens, and homeowner tools (e.g., rain barrels, discharge downspouts into rain gardens).
- 3 Identify funding sources and partnerships for implementation of blue and green infrastructure and educational programs.
- 4 Consider innovative ways to reduce and control stormwater runoff to reduce burden on existing sewer system.



Surface parking lots should be located behind buildings or screened from street view to allow more productive uses on the street front.



Blue and green infrastructures can be part of a productive and attractive streetscape.



**TRANSPORTATION**

## 4. TRANSPORTATION

Transforming Oak Park into a healthier, safer, more vibrant and prosperous city requires a new understanding of streets as public places and a willingness to abandon traditional approaches to transportation. Developed as an auto-oriented community, Oak Park's existing road network has more space than required to meet current and projected traffic volumes. There is a shortage of non-motorized transit networks, and the city is only weakly connected to the region's transit system.

Street design is just as important for placemaking and livability as compact, mixed-use development patterns. The strong market for urban place has incentivized developers to create place-based developments; unfortunately, transportation planners and engineers feel no such pressure.

A few states have been making great progress in this arena: the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recently officially adopted the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Street Design Guide<sup>1</sup> in the Spring of 2014. California is the third state to adopt this Design Guide after Washington and Massachusetts. While the State of Michigan may not have officially adopted these practices, the 2013 NACTO Street Design Guide represents best practices for walkable, urban streets. The Street Design Guide can serve as a tool for the City of Oak Park to plan for future walkable streets and interim design strategies.

Good transportation networks are an important factor in a community's quality of life as they enhance access to work, services, education, business, and shopping opportunities. By prioritizing pedestrians and providing alternative forms of transportation, Oak Park can foster healthy places and vibrant streets. As mentioned previously, Coolidge Highway will continue to be an important corridor for the city in the future with the potential to be a multi-modal, mixed-use street if the right improvements are made.

A common tool to finance such improvements is a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). Once created, a CIA can appoint a director, establish a tax increment financing plan, levy special assessments, and issue revenue bonds. Once the authority is established, design guidelines and an overarching brand for Coolidge Highway that includes street lights and signage should also be developed. CIAs have the ability to create tremendous economic development including façade improvements, retail incubators, business loans, retrofitting outdated infrastructure, and other tools that can change the entire functionality and image of the corridor.

The eligibility requirements of the Michigan CIA Act state that the corridor must have at least 51% of existing first floor space classified as commercial and be zoned to allow for mixed-use and high density residential. Preliminary calculations show that the Coolidge Highway frontage in Oak Park is currently less than 50% and further investigation is required. Mixed-use zoning amendments are recommended as part of this plan and should be considered as soon as feasible.

Oak Park should begin the conversation with nearby Huntington Woods, Berkley, and Royal Oak to consider a multi-jurisdictional CIA. By joining forces, the potential for Coolidge Highway is even stronger by connecting Woodward Avenue and a major job center (Beaumont Hospital) to the north through Oak Park south to 8 Mile Road. Berkley's primarily commercial frontage along Coolidge will potentially aggregate the corridor's total commercial frontage over the 51% necessary for CIA eligibility.

<sup>1</sup> NACTO Urban Street Design Guide ([nacto.org/usdg](http://nacto.org/usdg))

### KEY FOCUS AREAS:



#### Complete Streets

Transform Oak Park's auto-oriented streets into streets that accommodate users of all transit modes, ages, and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, and automobiles.

#### On-Street Parking

Use metered on-street parking to provide an efficient and convenient option for customers and an attractive environment for businesses.



#### Non-Motorized Transit Planning

Create plans and legislation to increase non-motorized transit facilities, improve regional connectivity, and prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders over automobiles.

#### Mass Transit Planning

Improve connectivity between Oak Park and the regional transit system to meet the changing demographics and preferences of residents and businesses.



## 4.1 Complete Streets

As the needs of communities evolve over time (people are driving less and owning fewer cars), street designs should evolve also. Currently, Oak Park's roadways are oversized for the population they serve, meaning there is excess space and potential for other uses. Oak Park should join communities across the country who are realizing their streets are no longer serving their communities and putting their streets on "road diets" (removing travel lanes) or "rightsizing" them in other ways (reconfiguring the layout of streets to better serve the people who use them).

Oak Park has the opportunity to rethink and repurpose its commercial corridors as spaces that combine functions and services and accommodate all types of transportation including walking, biking, and public and private transit vehicles. Doing this will create a network of "complete streets" that offer a range of mobility options and are safe for everyone regardless of age and ability. Complete Streets also address the need for public spaces and high-quality street design in making streets sustainable and attractive.

It will be important that the first phase of constructed Complete Streets infrastructure actually connect pedestrians and bicyclists to activity nodes for it to be embraced by the community. Simply connecting lines on a map will not entice more walkers and bikers if, for example, a non-motorized pathway begins at a highway intersection and ends in a single-family neighborhood. For the first phase of construction, pick a location where destinations are already in place - for example, a successful commercial node with outdoor dining and retail stores.

### Strategies

- 1 Create a communication plan for the City and developers about the benefits and common guidelines of Complete Streets.
- 2 Reconsider standards for streets, ensuring adequate space for pedestrians, bikes, on-street parking, public transit, and cars; use the NACTO Street Design Guide ([nacto.org/usdg](http://nacto.org/usdg)).
- 3 Encourage residents and businesses to participate in Park(ing) Day, an annual worldwide event where people transform parking spots into temporary parks ([parkingday.org](http://parkingday.org)).
- 4 Host a community-wide event such as "Build a Better Block" ([betterblock.org](http://betterblock.org)) to generate ideas for redesigning the right-of-way along commercial corridors in creative ways.
- 5 Identify funding sources for streetscape improvements such as a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). Consider a multi-jurisdictional CIA for Coolidge Highway by initiating conversations with Huntington Woods, Berkley, and Royal Oak.
- 6 Create and adopt a Complete Streets policy.
- 7 Create streetscape plans consistent with Complete Streets policy for commercial corridors.
- 8 Improve safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicycles at key intersections and others where traffic incidents occur most frequently.
- 9 Improve safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicycles on I-696 highway overpasses.
- 10 Incorporate blue and green infrastructures into street improvements where feasible (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, curb extensions, stormwater planters, street trees/plantings).
- 11 Maximize mobility for transit-dependent populations (e.g., seniors, children, zero-car households) by integrating residential, commercial, and transit uses where feasible.

<sup>1</sup> National Main Street Program

<sup>2</sup> "The Importance of On-Street Parking", Better Cities & Towns (Steve Mouzon, 2011)

Photo credits (left to right): Santa Barbara, CA ([nacto.org](http://nacto.org)); Seattle, WA ([nacto.org](http://nacto.org))

## 4.2 On-Street Parking

Metered on-street parking provides an efficient and convenient option for customers and an attractive environment for businesses. Currently, few of Oak Park's commercial corridors provide on-street parking.

On-street parking in prime commercial areas will contribute to a more walkable environment and generate economic activity. It is estimated that each on-street parking spot is worth \$10,000 a year in sales to adjacent businesses.<sup>1</sup> Other advantages of on-street parking over surface lots and garages include:

- *Higher Efficiency:* Most used parking type (versus off-street lots and garages) and the highest turnover.
- *Better Land Use:* Saves considerable amounts of land from being used as an off-street surface parking lot.
- *Increased Safety:* Drivers tend to travel at significantly slower speeds in the presence of on-street parking and small building setbacks, providing pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers more time to react.

Studies also show that people will walk much further along an interesting retail street to get from their on-street parking space to the store than from a parking lot,<sup>2</sup> meaning they spend more time and pass more stores in the shopping district.

### Strategies

- 1 Identify and test potential areas for metered parking in prime commercial areas before implementing a full system.
- 2 Utilize the DPW Streets Division to assume on-street parking management and operation responsibilities.



The NACTO Street Design Guide can serve as a tool for Oak Park to plan for walkable streets ([NACTO.org/usdg](http://NACTO.org/usdg)).



On-street parking may act as a buffer by separating pedestrians from moving vehicles on the road.

### 4.3 Non-Motorized Transit Planning

Non-motorized transit is an integral part of a complete community, where walkable streets and bike lanes not only offer mobility options but also contribute to vibrant streets and healthy lifestyles. Oak Park needs a non-motorized transit system that responds to the needs of the metropolitan region while actively contributing to the planned growth of commercial centers and residents needs within the city.

Having a non-motorized plan in place will be an important step for the City of Oak Park to qualify for funds and grants that may not be currently available. In the meantime, work can be done before a plan is written, namely education and advocacy. Begin educating the community through the Public Works and Recreation departments, communicating best practices and statistics about the benefits from both from a personal health and an economic development standpoint. This will be especially important for groups such as retailers to understand the ways non-motorized facilities can increase business. Next, seek political allies such as biking and walking advocacy groups in the community who will be the champions of a non-motorized approach to transportation planning. By the time the non-motorized plan is complete, Oak Park will have built-in advocates who take ownership of the plan's implementation.

#### Strategies

- 1 Review non-motorized plans of surrounding communities and Oakland County, and identify priority streets for bike lanes and sharrows according to local needs and regional connectivity (see page 41, Proposed Non-Motorized Transit Network).
- 2 Create a communication plan on the benefits of non-motorized transit and active transportation.
- 3 Encourage community participation in bike-to-work and bike-to-school days.
- 4 Seek political allies such as biking and walking advocacy groups.
- 5 Host quarterly public input sessions where community members, advocacy groups, City staff, and other stakeholders are present.
- 6 Identify funding sources for non-motorized facilities.
- 7 Create and adopt an Oak Park Non-Motorized Plan.
- 8 Create an implementation initiative for bike facilities (e.g., implement 200 stalls of bicycle parking by 2020).
- 9 Invite community members to propose locations for bicycle racks, corrals, and other storage to spark interest in non-motorized culture.
- 10 Facilitate active transportation by establishing safe, marked walking and biking routes near key activity nodes such as schools, recreation centers, and commercial areas.

### 4.4 Mass Transit Planning

A connected city and regional transit system will help meet today's needs and preferences of residents and businesses. Oak Park has the opportunity and imperative to join current transit planning efforts and ensure the city is connected to future systems (rapid transit on Woodward) and better connected to existing systems (local bus service).

Oak Park needs to invest different in its transportation. As stated before, Americans are driving less and owning fewer cars. Furthermore, mass transit a smarter choice over the private automobile for individuals wanting to save time and money, and it makes economic sense for businesses and cities. Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$4 in economic returns.<sup>1</sup>

Mass transit planning in Oak Park will ensure people are connected to jobs and services within the city and to employment centers beyond the city limits.

#### Strategies

- 1 Improve transit stops and stations to increase the attractiveness and experience of mass transit options.
- 2 Require that bicycle parking be included at transit facilities.
- 3 Identify sites for future transit-oriented development (TOD).
- 4 Gain representation for Oak Park within the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), such as a position on the Citizens' Advisory Committee.
- 5 Coordinate transit-oriented development (TOD) efforts with local transit providers.
- 6 Work with transit providers to improve real time information and wayfinding.



*Bike parking offers businesses an opportunity to increase the amount of parking available to customers. Twelve bikes can park in the space that parks only one car.*



*Children who walk or bike to school get an average increase of 16 minutes of physical activity.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> "Public Transportation Benefits", American Public Transportation Association

<sup>2</sup> Active Living Research

Photo credits (left to right): Bike corral, Portland, OR (boyonabike.wordpress.com); Bike To School Day (activetrans.org)

# NON-MOTORIZED TRANSIT NETWORK

## PLANNED BIKE FACILITIES IN EXISTING COUNTY AND/OR MUNICIPALITY PLANS

- Planned Bike Lanes
- - - Planned Shared Lanes
- - - Planned Undefined Non-Motorized Facilities

## PROPOSED ADDITIONAL BIKE NETWORK

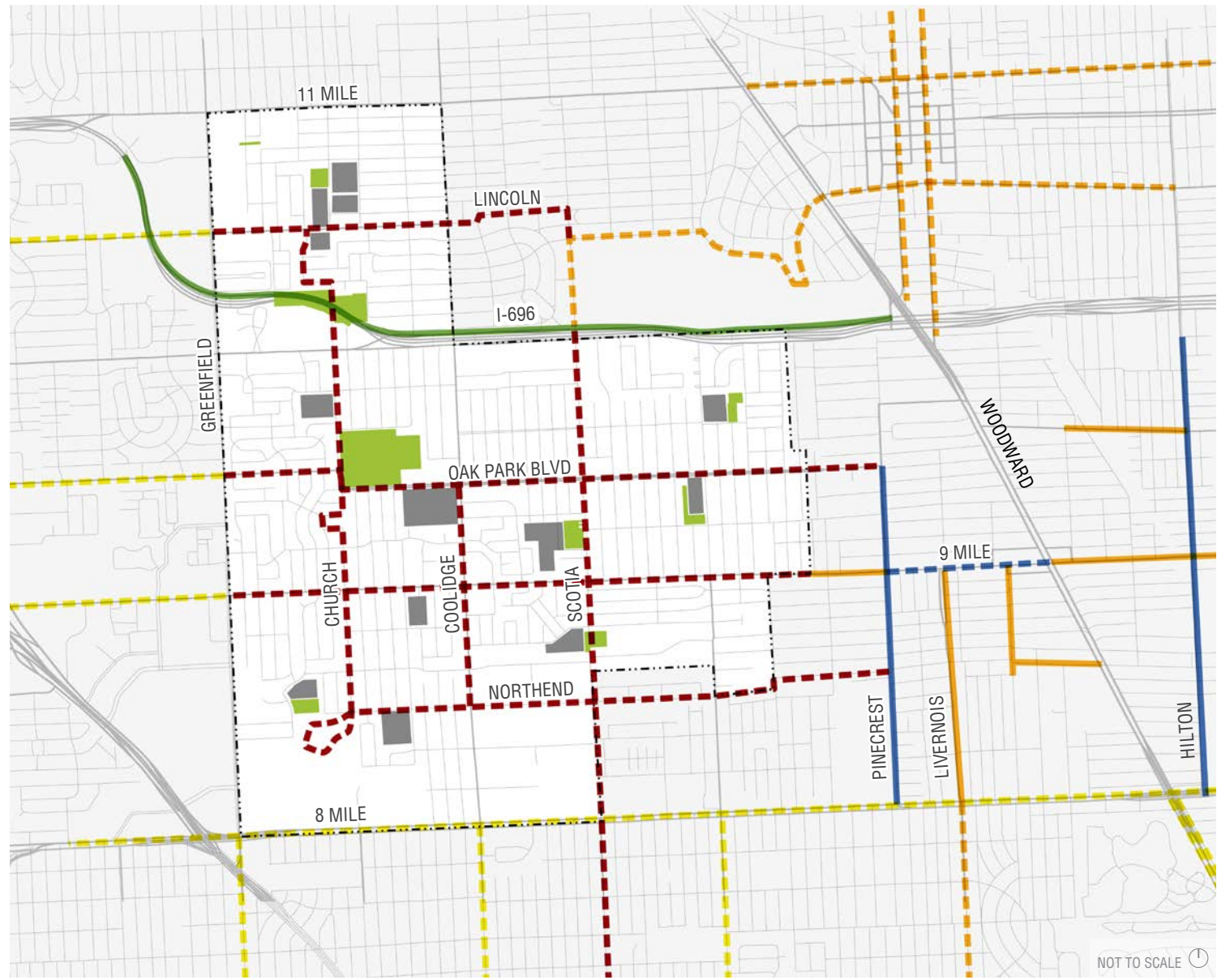
- - - Proposed Bike Lanes or Shared Lanes

## EXISTING FACILITIES

- Existing Bike Lanes
- - - Existing Shared Lanes
- Existing Sidepaths
- Existing Parks
- Existing Schools

Sources: SEMCOG 2013, Ferndale Moves! (Multi-Modal Plan, 2012), Royal Oak Non-Motorized Transportation Bicycle Network 2012, Southfield Non-Motorized Pathway & Public Transit Plan 2012

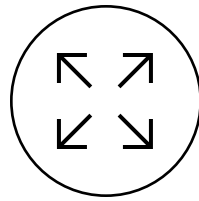
Trails are the #1 amenity that potential homeowners city when asked what they would like to see in a new community.<sup>1</sup>



NOT TO SCALE ⓘ

A successful non-motorized transit system in Oak Park will connect to existing and proposed paths set forth in plans created by Oakland County and neighboring communities.

<sup>1</sup> National Association of Home Builders



**PUBLIC SPACES**



# 5. PUBLIC SPACES

Successful public spaces reflect a community's identity, attract a diversity of users at different times of the day, and raise the quality of life and property values for residents. Although Oak Park has ten parks, these public spaces are missing critical factors that generate activity and catalyze economic development: density (of people), diversity (of users and nearby uses), and social opportunities. Recreation departments no longer need to serve the community in isolated parks and community centers funded solely by taxpayers. Instead, public spaces can take on more informal roles, integrated among the places people regularly shop, work, and reside to provide more accessible and attractive places for respite and gathering. Spaces with tables and chairs, nearby retail amenities, and public art are some of the most active public spaces.

"Tactical urbanism" refers to small-scale interventions to improve the urban environment. These short-term, low-cost, resident-driven techniques can get the Oak Park community thinking about public spaces differently and start transforming the City into a model for public spaces, from traditional grass parks into more sustainable, amenity-rich places for people.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS:



### Innovative Public Space Planning

Use "tactical urbanism" (short-term, low cost, high impact) to get people thinking about public spaces differently. Encourage the Recreation Department to take a more active approach in providing vibrant public spaces beyond its traditional roles in isolated parks and community centers.



### Privately-Owned Public Spaces

Encourage development of public space as part of new commercial development.



### Public Art

Encourage public art in visible locations.

## 5.1 Innovative Public Space Planning

Public spaces are critical to a successful community. People need places beyond the realms of home and work where they can be alone or in the company of others in a safe, pleasing environment. Oak Park's public spaces were planned and developed as isolated parks and community centers managed and programmed by the Recreation Department; however, there are so many more interesting opportunities to offer landscape and seating than sports fields and schoolyards, primarily those that include a connection to surrounding retail and other people that make users feel welcome and comfortable.

While a public space can be almost anywhere - along streets, on street corners, between buildings, - programming is the key to generating activity and increasing positive use in a space. Depending on the location, size, and features of the public space, programming can include a range of activity to engage users, from movable chairs to large events.

Oak Park could relocate some of its recreation programs from inside the community center to more visible public spaces, such as exercise classes in the park. Additionally, the support of private sponsors could help provide regular programming in the park.

New public spaces can be created by working with local businesses to host events in locations that attract new users and stimulate adjacent businesses, such as cafes and vacant stores.

### Strategies

- 1 Host community-wide events such as PARK(ing) Day ([parkingday.org](http://parkingday.org)) and Better Block ([betterblock.org](http://betterblock.org)) to generate ideas for new public spaces in commercial areas.
- 2 Create a goal for ratio of public space to residents (the National Recreation & Parks Association recommends 10 acres per 1,000 residents).
- 3 Expand recreation program locations to visible public spaces (e.g., yoga in the park).
- 4 Solicit private sponsors for traditional park programming.
- 5 Identify performing arts opportunities in unique venues.
- 6 Ensure schoolyards and recreation centers act as true public parks by making them accessible outside of school hours and scheduled programs.
- 7 Create a new, innovative public space plan (i.e., replace current Parks and Recreation Plan) that focuses a full range of possible components of vibrant and sustainable public spaces including recreation, open spaces, trails and bikeways, stormwater management, renewable energy, and vacant land management.

“When (a park) is an asset, it takes on the neighborhood’s identity, becoming its star attraction and raising the quality of life and property values for residents.”<sup>1</sup>

## 5.2 Privately-Owned Public Spaces

Good civic spaces can be publicly or privately owned, but the best places are often a combination. Privately-owned public spaces are amenities provided and maintained by a developer for public use, such as a small plaza owned by a nearby business yet open to anyone. Like purely public parks, privately-owned public spaces can provide light, air, and green space, but the involvement of a private entity can also ensure a level of maintenance and operation that would otherwise not be possible by public agencies.

Oak Park should work to get businesses and institutions involved in providing vibrant, public spaces and being part of growing the community. Adopting standards for outdoor spaces can ensure these spaces are truly public, high quality, inviting, open, accessible, and safe.

### Strategies

- 1 Create and adopt privately-owned public spaces ordinance (or “incentive zoning”) to incentivize developers.
- 2 Adopt standards for outdoor spaces to ensure they are truly public, high quality, inviting, open, accessible, and safe. Regulations should be guided by a set of design principles such as: open and inviting at the sidewalk, accessible, provides sense of safety and security, and provides places to sit.



Privately-owned public spaces often take the form of plazas, atria, and seating areas. While their type, size, and activities can vary significantly, their quality and relationship to the public are the most essential factors in creating a vibrant space.

<sup>1</sup> Project for Public Spaces

Photo credits (left to right): Herald Square, NYC ([streetsblog.org](http://streetsblog.org)); Wind sculpture, Farmington, CT ([saltycurrent.blogspot.com](http://saltycurrent.blogspot.com))

### 5.3 Public Art

Public art is a highly accessible form of art that provides residents and visitors with a sense of place. Public art ranks ranking as one of the most important factors when making a connection to a place. It also has economic benefits. For every \$1 invested in arts and culture, \$51 is pumped back into the Michigan economy.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, public art can be a catalyst for redeveloping and marketing vacancies such as activating blank walls and vacant storefronts with murals and other installations.

Participants at the public workshops indicated interest in making art a larger part of the community by making it more visible to the public, having more galleries, and hosting art contests similar to other Michigan communities. To support these interests and increase the potential for art to catalyze economic development, Oak Park and the Arts and Culture Commission (OPAACC) should work together to enhance public art opportunities throughout the city.

#### Strategies

- 1 Utilize public art to enhance public spaces throughout the city.
- 2 Identify vacant lots and storefronts and blank walls for public art projects.
- 3 Create a public art ordinance to encourage public art in visible locations, ensure maintenance, and protect pieces.
- 4 Host an annual arts competition such as reviving “Art Over the Interstate”; encourage popular installations to become permanent fixtures of the streetscape.

#### PUBLIC INPUT:

“I wish Oak Park had an art competition like other cities in Michigan do. It would be something people look forward to every year.”



*Public art pieces can create active destinations for visitors, add character to an area, serve as landmarks, and enhance a sense of community. Furthermore, public art created by local artists provides authenticity to areas of new development.*

<sup>1</sup> ArtServe Michigan  
Photo credit: Interactive play sculpture (playdesigner.se)



**HOUSING**

# 6. HOUSING

While Oak Park has an excellent supply of small lot residential units, diversifying the housing stock with multi-family types will increase the attractiveness of the city to a broader range of prospective residents. Apartments and townhomes are particularly desirable options for Millennials and Baby Boomers - the two largest demographic groups in the country - because they do not require the maintenance of a large house and lawn. Additionally, young, college-educated adults show preference toward multi-family housing types because, in general, they enjoy living in walkable neighborhoods, are not having as many children, and do not want the burden of a mortgage. A variety of housing options, especially those that increase the residential density, will also improve the efficiency of city services and infrastructure.

Currently, approximately 80% of Oak Park's housing stock are single family units, and less than 30% of households in the city have children.<sup>1</sup> To achieve a better balance between this supply and demand, Oak Park must work to increase the diversity in its housing stock by introducing more multi-family housing options to the market. Conducting a housing market study would uncover even more specific housing needs and preferences of Oak Park that can guide development.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS:



### Multi-Family Residential

Introduce new multi-family housing typologies to the market to meet consumer demands and trends for townhomes, apartments, and senior housing.



### Live-Work

Create a Live-Work brand and cluster investment in a targeted area.



### Adaptive Reuse

Convert older, underutilized buildings for new uses.

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, 2012

## 6.1 Multi-Family Residential

A diverse housing stock will increase the attractiveness of Oak Park to a broader range of prospective residents, especially a greater mix of multi-family options that appeal to the two largest demographic groups in the country: Millennials and the aging Baby Boomers. Multi-family housing provides options and opportunities for households of different incomes and size to live practically. It also encourages long-term investment in the city by providing the opportunity to transition into housing that matches their life-stage without having to leave the community.

Currently, Oak Park's single-family neighborhoods separated from amenities and services are not conducive to people who do not drive - namely, seniors. Older non-drivers are likely to make 15% fewer trips to the doctor, 59% fewer trips to stores or restaurants, and 65% fewer trips to social, family, or religious gatherings. With the number of senior citizens expected to double by 2030,<sup>1</sup> Oak Park must improve the livability of its neighborhoods for seniors. Senior living options that are integrated within the community - instead of isolated - will allow seniors to be mobile, interdependent, have access to services and amenities, and have more social and educational opportunities.

Oak Park should work to understand its current and future population, ensure the Zoning Code allows for desirable multi-family options, and promote multi-family housing through new and converted building development.

### Strategies

- 1 Conduct a housing market study to assess future needs.
- 2 Revise Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow and promote multi-family housing (townhomes, apartments, senior living, live-work) in appropriate areas such as the commercial sub-districts.
- 3 Revise Zoning Ordinance to allow conversion of old, unused structures for residential uses.
- 4 Encourage multi-family housing (townhomes, apartments above retail) as a key component to new development in mixed-use commercial sub-districts.
- 5 Provide a wider variety of programs and housing options for the aging population such as new senior housing options within walking distance of commercial areas.

<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Aging, AARP

Photo credits (left to right): Merrit Crossing Senior Apartments (sahahomes.org); Live-work loft (live-work.com)

## 6.2 Live-Work

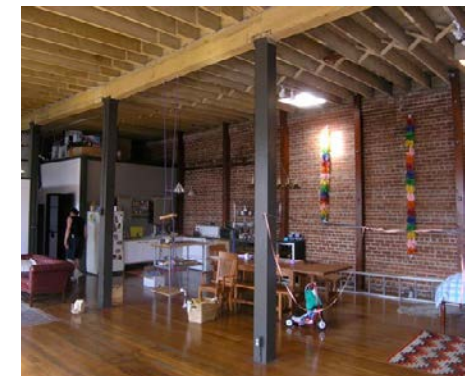
Live-work units combine workspace with living quarters and are popular with entrepreneurs, small businesses, and professionals. Types of Live-work units can vary significantly, from stand-alone buildings to townhomes. Oak Park should create a live-work brand and target areas to cluster investment, ensuring this new opportunity is supported by a community of other creative professionals.

### Strategies

- 1 Revise Zoning Ordinance to allow live-work use.
- 2 Create a live-work brand and a target investment area that is mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented.
- 3 Communicate vacancies for rentals and homes for sale to employers and entrepreneurs.



Senior housing design can improve the lives of seniors when connected to nearby services and amenities.



Live-work units are a good solution for entrepreneurs looking for affordable office space.

## 6.3 Adaptive Reuse

Vacant and underutilized buildings should be repurposed when their original use is no longer in demand. Older buildings have the potential advantage of having unique architecture and historic interest, and their reuse provides economic benefits. On average, building reuse tends to generate less construction waste than demolition or new construction, and building rehabilitation generates slightly more jobs than new construction.

By encouraging and facilitating adaptive reuse, Oak Park can increase the possibility for places where interesting, independent, and locally focused residents and businesses can incubate and grow.

### Strategies

- 1 Create a communication tool to educate property owners, developers, and investors on the economic, environmental, and social benefits of adaptive reuse.
- 2 Create an inventory of vacant, obsolete buildings to market for new uses; promote adaptation for creative new development.
- 3 Identify and ensure the preservation of historic architecture.
- 4 Work to offer financial incentives through foundations.
- 5 Change building and zoning codes and/or provide incentives to encourage energy efficiency in rehabilitation.

### PUBLIC INPUT:

“Oak Park is family-oriented but the housing stock is not attractive. It needs newer homes and options for different family sizes.”



*Repurposed buildings are natural incubators of small businesses given their relative affordability and architectural character.*



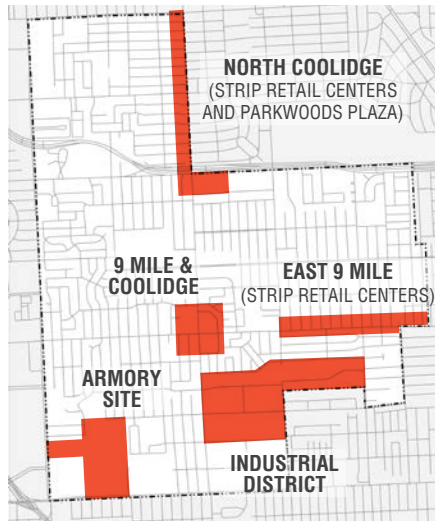
**COMMERCIAL SUB-DISTRICTS**



# 7. COMMERCIAL SUB-DISTRICTS

The Oak Park Retail Market Study identified five commercial sub-districts, or clusters of viable retail, with potential for new or revitalized retail development. Together, the areas have the potential to support an additional 507,000 square feet of retail and restaurant development with the ability to generate over \$174.8 million in new sales. By 2018, growing retail demand will be able to support 514,600 square feet of new commercial growth, generating up to \$187.9 million in sales. This retail demand could be absorbed by the opening of 45 to 70 new restaurants and retailers.

An approach to revitalizing auto-oriented landscapes like Oak Park is described as “retrofitting suburbia”, where existing suburban developments are redesigned into more urban and more sustainable places. Suburban communities tend to have large amounts of underutilized space that can be used to absorb new growth and evolve in relation to changed demographic and economic conditions. The three main strategies for retrofitting are re-inhabitation (various forms of adaptive reuse), re-development (urbanization by increasing density, walkability, use mix), and re-greening, from small parks and plazas, to restoring wetlands ecologies.<sup>1</sup>



Oak Park's five commercial sub-districts. NTS

### ESTIMATED SUPPORTABLE RETAIL IN COMMERCIAL SUB-DISTRICTS

Source: Oak Park Retail Market Study (2013)

STUDY AREA	SUPPORTABLE RETAIL SF	# OF STORES
9 Mile & Coolidge	30,000 - 40,000	8 - 12
Armory Site	350,000 - 420,000	26 - 33
Industrial District	10,000	2 - 4
North Coolidge	20,000 - 30,000	5 - 10
9 Mile East	20,000 - 30,000	5 - 10

## KEY FOCUS AREAS:



### 9 Mile & Coolidge

Create a vibrant, mixed-use, walkable city center.



### The Armory Site

Ensure the largest potential development site in Oak Park includes pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development with high quality public spaces.



### Industrial District

Provide the framework and opportunities for people to reimagine and reinvent this industrial district with creative uses.



### Parkwoods Plaza

Redevelop the shopping center with smaller blocks and active infill development fronting the streets.



### Strip Retail Centers

Enhance these commercial areas by redesigning the right-of-ways and site layouts to provide more space for pedestrians and site amenities.

<sup>1</sup> "11 Urban Design Tactics for Suburban Retrofitting" (Williamson) from buildabetterburb.org

## 7.1 9 Mile & Coolidge



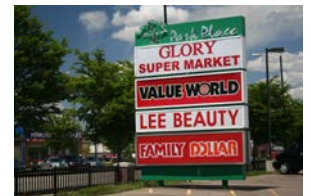
Bird's eye model of existing conditions at 9 Mile & Coolidge, viewing northeast.



Existing: Lack of building frontage



Existing: Excess parking



Existing: Auto-oriented signage

### Existing Conditions

The 9 Mile Road and Coolidge Highway intersection is considered Oak Park's main shopping cluster. Although the area has seen recent streetscape enhancements, the auto-oriented design (drive-thrus, gas stations, parking lots at street corners) has prevented this area from becoming an attractive retail destination because it is not walkable. Overall, there is a lack of street frontage, especially at the intersection's corners where it is most desirable. Places like these - low-rise shopping centers that are setback from the street and surrounded by parking lots - are auto-oriented, not pedestrian friendly, and not successful layouts for retailers, as exemplified by the vacant retail spaces in all four quadrants.

9 Mile and Coolidge has potential for both new development and redevelopment with 30,000 to 40,000 SF estimated supportable retail, or 10 to 12 stores. Long-term strategies focus on creating a walkable, mixed-use retail destination by encouraging development that fronts the street, high-quality public spaces that catalyze new development, and multi-family housing connected to retail by comfortable non-motorized paths.

In the short-term, low cost, high impact projects can be implemented to get the community thinking about this area differently, such as activating underutilized parking spaces with movable chairs, food trucks, and Wi-Fi hot-spots.

## 7.1 9 Mile & Coolidge (cont.)



Bird's eye model of potential development concept at 9 Mile & Coolidge, viewing northeast.



Precedent: Programmed public space



Precedent: Active retail at street level



Precedent: Townhomes

### Strategies

- 1 Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this site.
- 2 Identify opportunities for small-scale pop-up stores or events that begin to change the perception of the shopping center.
- 3 Identify space for placemaking in underutilized parking spaces.
- 4 Identify ideal funding strategies such as the creation of a Principal Shopping District (PSD) or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- 5 Change zoning to Mixed Use.
- 6 Encourage the extension of the street grid through superblocks and large parcels.
- 7 Encourage walkable, mid-rise, mixed-use development.
- 8 Maximize multi-modal access by incorporating pedestrian connections, bike racks, and bus stops.

### Key Design Concepts

- A** Activate the four corners: mid-rise, retail at street level with residential and/or office above, outdoor dining.
- B** Incorporate programmed public space fronted by multi-family residential and retail on 9 Mile.
- C** Reconfigure strip retail centers: on-street parking, landscaping, wide sidewalks, outdoor dining.
- D** Renovate existing buildings where possible to be mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented.
- E** Locate surface parking behind buildings.
- F** Connect neighborhoods with new streets lined with multi-family housing (e.g., townhomes).
- G** Incorporate multi-family housing: townhomes or stacked flats.
- H** Incorporate multi-family housing: senior living.

*Note: The visualization is intended to illustrate the key design concepts; it is just one of many potential development scenarios for this area.*

Photo credits (top to bottom): Leawood Park Place, KS (pitchengine.com); Annapolis, MD (greatstreets.org); HAA

## 7.2 The Armory Site



Bird's eye model of existing conditions at the Armory Site, viewing northwest from 8 Mile Road.



Existing: Vacant lot on 8 Mile Rd.



Existing: Parking adjacent to Greenfield



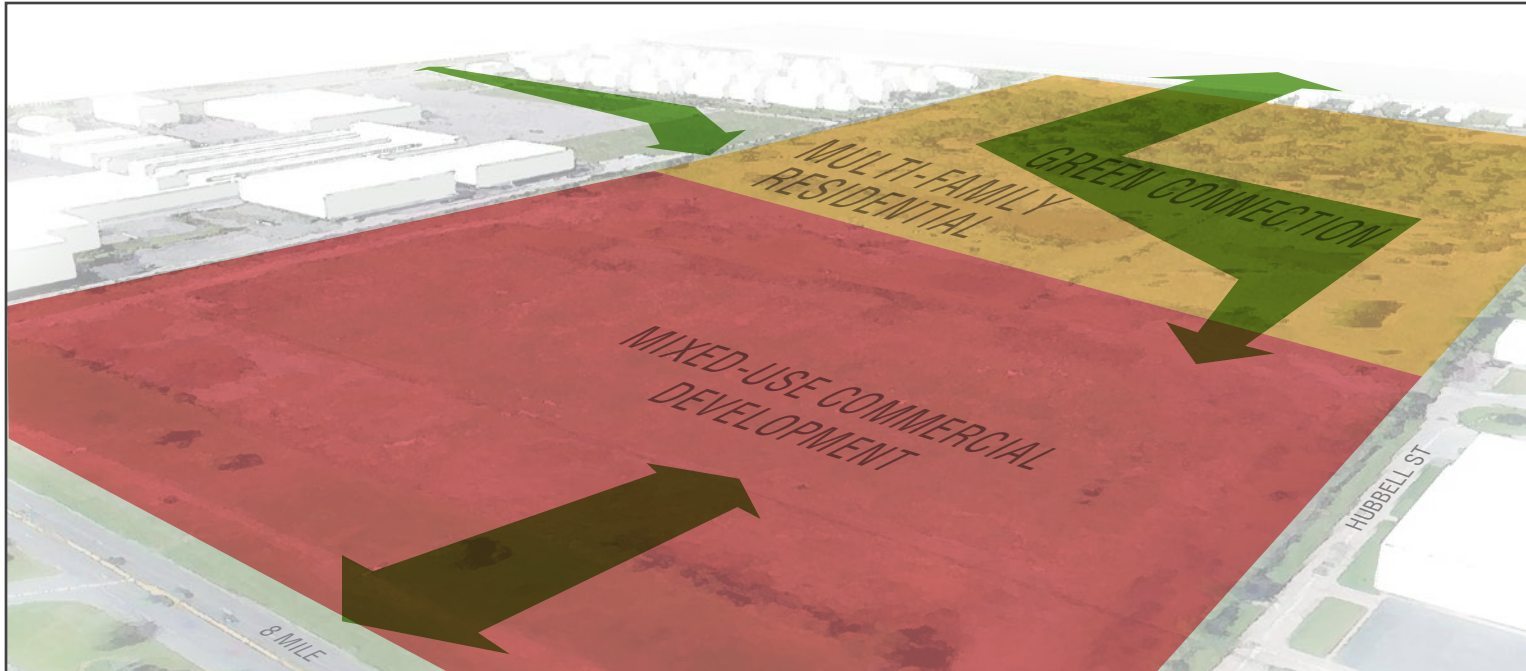
Existing: Big box retail on Greenfield

### Existing Conditions

The Armory Site is the most promising location available within the city for new, large-scale retail development that could attract consumers from throughout the region. M-39 (Southfield Freeway) and M-10 (The Lodge Freeway) provide regional connectivity to the site, with local access from 8 Mile Road and Greenfield Road. 110,000 vehicles per day pass through the 8 Mile and Greenfield intersection. The large site has the potential for critical mass development, but existing conditions should be studied to determine how vehicular access and visibility could be improved around the site. This area can support an estimated 350,000 to 420,000 SF of retail, or 26 to 33 stores.

Until development occurs, initial strategies should focus on activating the empty site with events such as movie screenings, outdoor concerts, food and drink festivals, and sporting events that offer entertainment options to the community. Community events may also encourage people to walk or bike to the location and connect with neighbors. Additionally, recruiting a big name event could bring name recognition and tourism dollars to Oak Park, such as a national racing series (e.g., Warrior Dash, Color Run).

## 7.2 The Armory Site (cont.)



Bird's eye perspective of potential development concept at the Armory Site, viewing northwest from 8 Mile Road.



Precedent: Mixed-use commercial fronting a park



Precedent: Townhomes



Precedent: Annual food/drink festival

### Strategies

- 1 Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this site.
- 2 Identify opportunities for festivals and events that will promote Oak Park as a destination such as reviving the West Side and 8 Mile Drive-Ins.
- 3 Identify areas for high-quality public spaces to act as gathering spaces and catalyze new development.
- 4 Identify ideal funding strategies such as using the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA).
- 5 Change zoning to align with community vision.
- 6 Encourage walkable, mid-rise, mixed-use development.
- 7 Maximize multi-modal access by incorporating pedestrian connections, bike racks, and bus stops.
- 8 Solicit private developers who agree with the community vision and/or work with future developers to maximize the market potential of the site as described in the Retail Market Analysis (350,000 to 420,000 SF of retail, equivalent to 26 to 33 stores).

Photo credits (top to bottom): The Greene, Beavercreek, OH (wikipedia.org); Roswell, GA (northatlantahometeamblog.com); Michigan Beer Festival (thingstodointheup.com)

### Key Design Concepts

- Front the streets with active buildings: mid-rise, mixed use (retail at street level with residential and/or office above), plazas, outdoor dining.
- Enhance the public realm with pedestrian-oriented streets.
- Incorporate programmed public space fronted by retail and/or residential.
- Incorporate a mix of small, mid-box, and big-box retail.
- Incorporate multi-family housing: townhomes and stacked flats.
- Locate surface parking to the rear of buildings.
- Incorporate open space for recreation, events, and festivals.
- Provide a non-motorized connection between the site and surrounding neighborhoods.

Note: The perspective is intended to illustrate the key design concepts; it is just one of many potential development scenarios for this area.

## 7.3 Industrial District



Bird's eye model of existing conditions in the Industrial District, viewing west down Capital Street.



Existing: Viewing east toward Capital Ave. from Coolidge Hwy.



Existing: Viewing east on Capital Ave.

### Existing Conditions

The Industrial District is characterized by light industrial uses that provide jobs for area residents during normal business hours, but leave the area feeling desolate and abandoned during the evenings. Streets have little landscaping and few pedestrian-scale amenities. Few, if any, retailers are in this area, but the success of a convenience market just outside the district suggests there may be a market for convenience items and limited-service restaurants for nearby employees and residents. This area can support an estimated 10,000 SF more retail, or 2 to 4 stores.

The current Zoning Ordinance is highly restrictive of activities allowed in the Industrial zoning district, preventing vacancies from being filled and new businesses from taking root. Currently, residential uses are not allowed in this area. While much of the district is occupied, there are vacant and functionally obsolete industrial buildings that present an opportunity for adaptive reuse if the zoning code is revised.

Participants at the public workshops had a lot of ideas for new uses in the Industrial District that centered around creative industries. Some of the suggestions heard were “Renewable energy company”, “Recreation choices like rock climbing”, “Tech businesses”, “Media incubator”, and “Artist lofts”.

Strategies for improving the Industrial District focus on providing the opportunities for people to reimagine and reinvent its physical and social places. Regulatory frameworks should be put in place to allow a wide range of uses such as live-work, artist lofts, galleries, gyms, and creative industries while still protecting public health, safety, and well-being. In the short-term, pop-ups and “site activation” brainstorming events in vacant lots and structures can initiate interest and activity. Once regulatory changes are in place, public infrastructure improvements to streets, sidewalks, and lighting will promote safety and walkability of the district. Public spaces should be actively programmed to establish the district's identity.

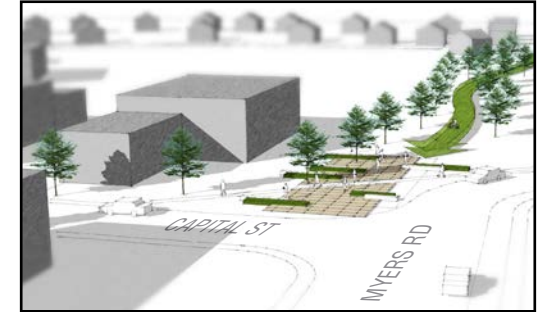
### 7.3 Industrial District (cont.)



Bird's eye model of potential development concept in the Industrial District, viewing west down Capital Street.



Pedestrian plaza at Capital St. and Coolidge serves as a gateway.



Greenway connection links neighborhoods.

#### Strategies

- 1 Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this area.
- 2 Revise the Zoning Code to allow adaptive reuse of obsolete or underutilized buildings for entrepreneurial activities, residential dwelling, and live-work.
- 3 Create inventory of industrial buildings to market for new uses.
- 4 Encourage artists, entrepreneurs, and creative industry live-work use through incentives (e.g., support networks, start-up funding).
- 5 Identify opportunities for pop-ups, small-scale events, and public art.
- 6 Define and program public spaces to establish district identity.
- 7 Cluster investment in a targeted area.
- 8 Improve safety and walkability with public infrastructure improvements to streets, sidewalks, and lighting.

#### Key Design Concepts

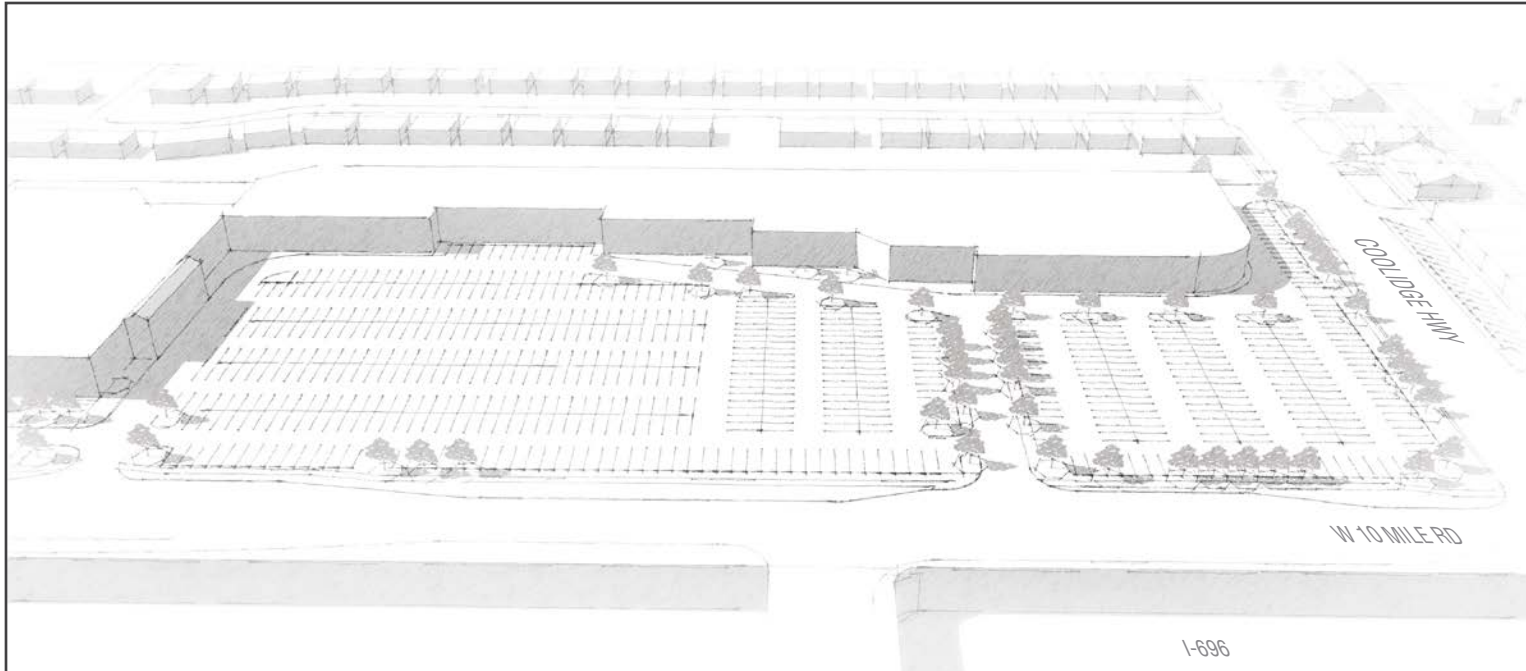
- A** [Not illustrated] Ensure zoning provides the opportunity to repurpose existing building for new uses (live-work, art galleries).
- B** Create a gateway to the Industrial District such as a pedestrian plaza with special paving, seating, and public art.
- C** Provide a non-motorized connection between neighborhoods.
- D** Create a public space for gathering and small community events.
- E** Identify voids/vacant land for future infill development.
- F** Make minor streetscape improvements to streets, sidewalks, and lighting.

*Note: The visualization is intended to illustrate the key design concepts; it is just one of many potential development scenarios for this area.*



Photo credits (left to right, top to bottom): Las Vegas Arts District (lvartsandculture.blogspot.com); Minneapolis Greenway (hollock.info); Loft in Benton Harbor Arts District (michigan.org); Dallas Arts District (thedallasartsdistrict.org)

## 7.4 Parkwoods Plaza



*Bird's eye model of existing conditions at Parkwoods Plaza, viewing south from I-696 overpass.*



*Existing: Excess parking*



*Existing: Auto-oriented design*



*Existing: Vacant storefronts*

### Existing Conditions

Parkwoods Plaza faces a number of challenges, primarily difficult vehicular access and a one-way congested roadway (10 Mile Road). Furthermore, the current access drive along Coolidge (the two-way road) requires vehicles to enter the site after they have driven past it or before they have seen it. This gives the impression that you are entering from the back entrance, despite this being the main entrance. Visually, the shopping center is dominated by a vacant anchor store and an abundance of underutilized surface parking.

In the short-term, better signage for vehicles driving along Coolidge would improve access given the existing driveway location. It would be advantageous to move the driveway closer to I-696, but this may depend on Oakland County's discretion. Additionally, appropriately placed advertising could improve the success of the retailers in the center.

In the future, moving the anchor space either in the middle of the shopping center or ideally along Coolidge would help the smaller retailers. New development in the underutilized parking lot will increase visibility and may attract new tenants and more consumers, especially if it is located at the corner of Coolidge and 10 Mile Road. Ultimately, the site could be suitable as a mixed-use commercial development with a mix of restaurants and small shops. Breaking up the superblock will be critical to walkability and providing more opportunities for retail to front the streets.



## 7.4 Parkwoods Plaza (cont.)



Bird's eye model of potential development concept at Parkwoods Plaza, viewing south from I-696 overpass.



Precedent: Outdoor dining



Precedent: New street fronted by retail



Precedent: Pedestrian-oriented retail

### Strategies

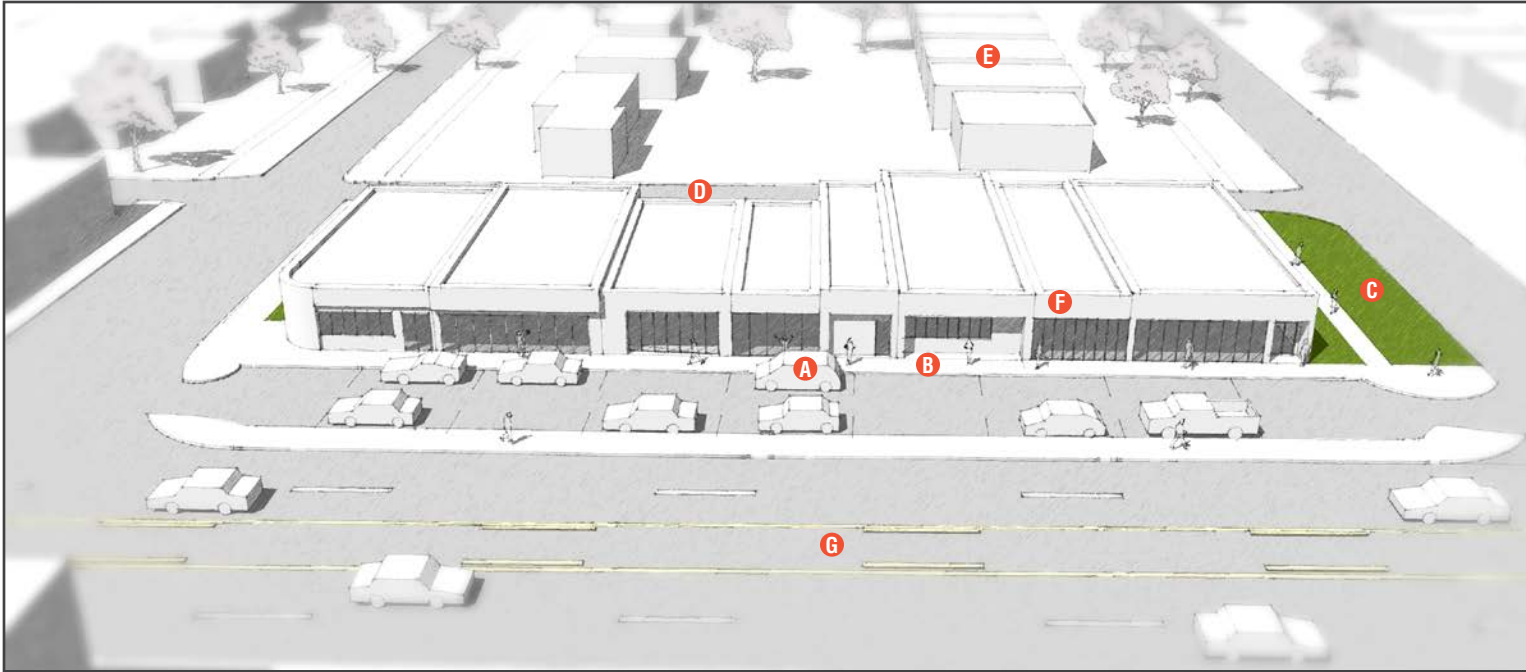
- 1 Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this site.
- 2 Identify ideal funding strategies such as the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) or Commercial Rehabilitation Act for redevelopment.
- 3 Reconfigure parcel to consist of smaller blocks and pedestrian connections throughout the site and to adjacent uses.
- 4 Solicit private developers who agree with the community vision.
- 5 Change zoning to Mixed Use.

### Key Design Concepts

- A** Activate the street and improve visibility with infill development at the corner: mid-rise, retail at street level.
- B** Create a street wall with infill development fronting the street (10 Mile Road).
- C** Break up superblock and connect to neighborhood with a new street fronted by retail and pedestrian space.
- D** Renovate existing buildings where possible to be pedestrian-oriented.
- E** Locate surface parking located behind buildings where possible.
- F** Fill vacancy of an undesirable retail space with a new use such as civic, institutional, or healthcare.

*Note: The visualization is intended to illustrate the key design concepts; it is just one of many potential development scenarios for this area.*

## 7.5 Strip Retail Centers



Bird's eye model of existing conditions at a prototypical strip retail center.



Existing: Dated facades and vacancies



Existing: Small buffer between parking and traffic



Existing: Roadway prioritizes cars

### Existing Conditions

Strip retail centers are located along commercial roadways, primarily North Coolidge (between 10 Mile and 11 Mile) and East 9 Mile (between Coolidge and Scotia). They are typically older, single-story, multi-tenant buildings in linear strips. The retail mix is one of both new and old, many of them family-owned and long-time businesses in Oak Park. Historically, customers have visited these businesses by car, so parking is prominently located in front of the buildings; however, this parking arrangement often reduces visibility of storefronts from the street and makes pedestrian and bicycle access a secondary priority.

While these auto-oriented strip retail centers were once the preferred way to shop, both customers and businesses are leaving them in favor of walkable commercial areas. Walkable retailers benefit from a wide range of access options (foot, bicycle, car, transit) and site amenities that reinforce the pedestrian environment (comfortable sidewalk widths, shade trees, street furniture, pedestrian-scaled lighting, outdoor dining). While there are some thriving businesses in Oak Park's retail centers, they are often neighbored by vacant storefronts and dated facades and lack the physical conditions that would support a more vibrant shopping environment.

### Prototypical Characteristics

- A** Parking in front, adjacent to storefronts
- B** Small sidewalks
- C** Underutilized spaces (e.g., sides of buildings)
- D** Disorganized, underutilized alleys
- E** Residential located behind
- F** Dated facades
- G** Existing right-of-way is primarily dedicated to automobile traffic

*Note: The illustration represents a prototypical strip retail center in Oak Park with the given characteristics above. The recommendations on the following pages are a "tool kit" of potential solutions that could be applied to any strip retail center with similar challenges.*

## 7.5 Strip Retail Centers (cont.)



Bird's eye model of potential redevelopment concept at a prototypical strip retail center.

### Strategies - Moderate Interventions

Moderate interventions focus on improving the pedestrian environment by adapting existing right-of-ways at strip retail centers. The use of low cost, high impact techniques that redefine the storefronts as public spaces (such as pop-ups, facade improvements, outdoor seating) will be critical to establishing attractive shopping centers.

The North Coolidge and East 9 Mile study areas each have an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 SF, or 5 to 10 stores, of additional supportable retail. This can be absorbed by filling vacancies and expanding existing businesses.

### Key Design Concepts

- A** Implement metered parking where appropriate.
- B** Create more space for pedestrians at storefronts by reconfiguring the parking layout.
- C** Transform unused spaces at sides of buildings to additional parking.
- D** Convert alley to one-way with parking.
- E** Residential road narrowing provides physical and perceptual transition from commercial to residential neighborhood environment.
- F** Accommodate bicycles in reconfigured right-of-way.

*Note: The illustration represents a prototypical strip retail center in Oak Park with a "tool kit" of potential solutions that could be applied to any strip retail center with similar challenges.*



Precedent: Outdoor dining



Precedent: Cohesive facades



Precedent: "Chair bombing" - short-term site activation technique

## 7.5 Strip Retail Centers (cont.)



Bird's eye model of potential redevelopment concept at a prototypical strip retail center.

### Strategies - Major Interventions

Major interventions are more significant changes that will truly transform the identity of strip retail centers into pedestrian-oriented, walkable shopping destinations. Identifying funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD), or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize financial tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) should be a priority so that strip retail centers can make strategic investments towards the long-term vision of these areas. Working with local business owners may also identify opportunities for facade renovation matching grants.

The North Coolidge and East 9 Mile study areas each have an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 SF, or 5 to 10 stores, of additional supportable retail. This can be absorbed by filling vacancies and expanding existing businesses.

Photo credits (top to bottom): Annapolis, MD (greatstreets.org); Leawood Park Place, KS (pitchengine.com); PPS.org



Precedent: Sidewalks with site amenities



Precedent: Outdoor dining



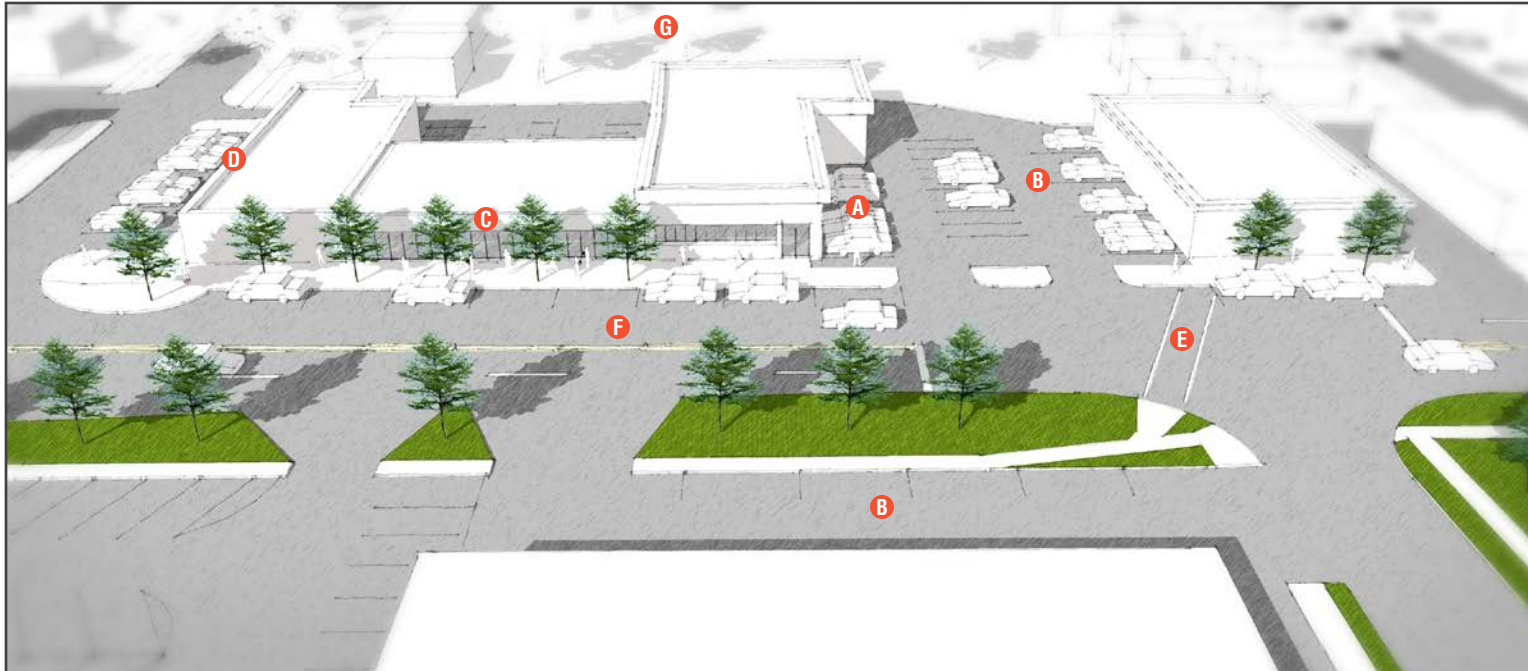
Precedent: Pedestrian-oriented storefronts

### Key Design Concepts

- A** Enhance the pedestrian experience at storefronts with comfortable sidewalk widths and site amenities.
- B** Create space for outdoor dining and sale items.
- C** Implement metered, on-street parking where appropriate.
- D** Locate shared parking lots behind buildings.
- E** Convert alley to one-way with parking.
- F** Residential road narrowing provides physical and perceptual transition from commercial to residential neighborhood environment.
- G** Accommodate bicycles in reconfigured right-of-way.

Note: The illustration represents a prototypical strip retail center in Oak Park with a "tool kit" of potential solutions that could be applied to any strip retail center with similar challenges.

## 7.5 Strip Retail Centers (cont.)



Bird's eye model of existing conditions at a prototypical strip retail center.

### Existing Conditions

Similar to prototype 1 described on page 60, this prototypical strip retail center is single-story, auto-oriented, and lacking the physical conditions that would support more vibrant shopping environments. This illustration also highlights the challenges and opportunities of underutilized areas immediately adjacent to retail buildings. Currently, the unused spaces and parking areas adjacent to and between buildings are missed opportunities for outdoor dining, outdoor sale items, bike racks, parklets, and public art.

### Prototypical Characteristics

- A** Areas adjacent to buildings are dedicated to accommodating cars, with minimal space for pedestrians
- B** Disorganized, inefficient parking configurations
- C** Dated facades
- D** Blank walls are missed opportunities for creating a sense of place
- E** Indirect pedestrian crossings
- F** Existing right-of-way is primarily dedicated to automobile traffic
- G** Residential located behind

*Note: The illustration represents a prototypical strip retail center in Oak Park with the given characteristics above. The recommendations on the following page are a "tool kit" of potential solutions that could be applied to any strip retail center with similar challenges.*



Existing: Opportunity for site amenities, outdoor dining



Existing: Auto-oriented storefronts



Existing: Blank walls

## 7.5 Strip Retail Centers (cont.)



Bird's eye model of potential redevelopment concept at a prototypical strip retail center.

### Strategies

To attract more customers and high-quality businesses, improvements to the strip retail centers should focus on the transition from auto-oriented to pedestrian-oriented design. Short-term efforts can focus on activating storefronts and sidewalks with techniques such as movable tables and chairs, small-scale pop-ups and events, and public arts. Identifying funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD), or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize financial tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) should be a priority so that strip retail centers can make strategic investments towards the long-term vision of these areas.

The North Coolidge and East 9 Mile study areas each have an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 SF, or 5 to 10 stores, of additional supportable retail. This can be absorbed by filling vacancies and expanding existing businesses.

Photo credits (top to bottom): Main Street, Vancouver, BC (phxrailfood.com); Northern Liberties, Philadelphia, PA (panoramio.com); Wooster Collective, NYC (woostercollective.com)



Precedent: Site amenities adjacent to storefronts



Precedent: Outdoor dining between buildings



Precedent: Mural activates building wall

### Key Design Concepts

- A** Maximize space adjacent to buildings to create opportunities for outdoor dining, parklets, sale items, and site amenities.
- B** Activate blank walls with public art.
- C** Increase pedestrian safety by reducing number of curb cuts.
- D** Align crosswalks for safer, more direct pedestrian crossings .
- E** Implement metered, on-street parking where appropriate.
- F** Improve safety and aesthetics in parking areas with landscaping buffer.

Note: The illustration represents a prototypical strip retail center in Oak Park with a "tool kit" of potential solutions that could be applied to any strip retail center with similar challenges.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)	
PUBLIC IMAGE & EXPERIENCE	<b>PROMOTION</b>			
	1.1	Engage the community in a brand development process to create a long-term, comprehensive Brand Strategy (the first step is a stakeholder engagement process to discover the Brand Identity; the visual brand (logo, taglines, website, wayfinding, brochures) follows).	S-M	DCED, CPID
	1.2	Identify opportunities for festivals or events that will promote Oak Park as a destination (e.g., food/drink, music, sports, art (revive “Art over the Interstate” event)).	S	DCED
	1.3	Emphasize the mid-century history of the city and housing stock (“Mid-Century Modern”); create and promote initiatives and events through coordination with the Michigan Modern organization (michiganmodern.org).	M	DCED, CPID, Michigan Modern
	1.4	Create and promote heritage tours (walking, biking, and bus) - see Hamtramck Historical Commission for a low-cost model that focuses on maximizing existing assets and resources (hamtramckhistory.org, 313-893-5027).	M	DCED, CPID
	1.5	Market events using a combination of techniques (traditional, grassroots, social media) with high-level design and to a regional audience; ensure there is significant consumer engagement following events.	O	DCED, CPID
	1.6	Utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, future apps) to promote events and track participant experiences; use GPS for large events.	O	CPID
	<b>COMMERCIAL FACADES AND SIGNAGE</b>			
	1.7	Educate the public, especially business owners, about code requirements and expectations from the City; make information available and easy to understand.	S	DCED, CPID
	1.8	Increase code enforcement on non-complying signage and facades.	S	DTPS
	1.9	Host a hands-on community-wide event such as Better Block (betterblock.org) to generate ideas for streetscape amenities and creative urban edges.	S	DCED, CPID
	1.10	Consider potential events, festivals, and programming that would bring name recognition to Oak Park.	M	DCED, CPID
	1.11	Initiate a Facade Improvement Program with design guidelines.	M	DCED
	1.12	Revise signage ordinance.	S	DCED, Planning Commission, DTPS
	<b>STREETSCAPE IDENTITY</b>			
	1.13	Identify funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD), or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF).	S	DCED
1.14	Create design guidelines for streetscape elements (trees, lighting, street furniture, bus shelters, signage) that reflect the character of the community.	M	DCED, DPW	
1.15	Create a streetscape plan for commercial corridors to foster walkable commercial sub-districts.	M	DCED, DPW	
1.16	Incorporate multi-modal transit facilities (bus shelters, bike parking) where transit is supported in locations with a good mix of retail shops, residential units, and civic uses together.	S	DCED, DPW	

S = Short Term (Next 18 Months)  
M = Medium Term (18 Months - 3 Years)  
L = Long Term (3+ Years)  
O = Ongoing

DCED = Department of Community and Economic Development  
DPW = Department of Public Works  
DTPS = Department of Technical and Planning Services

CPID = Communications & Public Information Department  
OPACC = Oak Park Arts and Culture Commission  
RD = Recreation Department



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)	
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	<b>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b>			
	2.1	Hold regular (e.g., monthly, annual, semi-annual) events to network and learn about and celebrate programs, initiatives, and leaders.	S	DCED
	2.2	Work with other chambers (Ferndale, Southfield, Detroit) to learn common processes, benefits, and challenges and how they might apply to Oak Park.	S	DCED
	2.3	Create an Oak Park Chamber of Commerce.	S	DCED
	2.4	Create a business committee or council of stakeholders (business leaders, entrepreneurs, institutional leaders, elected officials) that focuses on creating an environment for businesses and jobs by providing a sounding board for local policy decisions and ongoing feedback to City staff.	S	DCED, business owners, City Council
	2.5	Identify funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD), or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF).	S	DCED
	2.6	Promote the cultural diversity of Oak Park's businesses by supporting minority businesses.	O	DCED, Ethnic Advisory Commission
	<b>FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION</b>			
	2.7	Create a faith-based coalition to develop strategies and solutions to issues that arise (e.g., a strategy for adjacency to housing, a strategy to cluster retail).	M	Faith-based institutions and organizations
	<b>ARTS COMMUNITY</b>			
	2.8	Identify a target area to cluster investment to make a visual and experiential impact.	S	DCED, OPAACC
	2.9	Work with the Arts & Culture Commission (OPAACC) to identify pilot projects for placemaking (e.g., activating vacant storefronts and buildings, activating blank walls, chair bombing).	S	DCED, OPAACC
	2.10	Work with the Arts & Culture Commission (OPAACC) to identify long-term exhibit space.	S	DCED, OPAACC
	2.11	Identify funding strategies such as ArtPlace grants for projects.	S	DCED, OPAACC
<b>EMERGING WORKFORCE</b>				
2.12	Gauge interest of existing business owners in internship programs.	M	DCED, business owners	
2.13	Encourage businesses to provide pathways to employment such as internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other activities that provide exposure and entice interest for youth, recent high school and college graduates, and those seeking new career paths.	M	DCED, business owners, Oak Park HS, MI Works	
2.14	Encourage partnerships between Oak Park High School and local businesses and organizations to collaborate on real projects to provide students with practical experience.	M	DCED, Oak Park HS, local businesses and organizations	

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)	
POLICY IN ACTION	<b>DEVELOPMENT READINESS</b>			
	3.1	Use a community-focused economic development program such as Oakland County's "One Stop Ready" to strengthen and promote Oak Park's development readiness.	S	DCED, DTPS, and other relevant City staff; City Council; Planning Commission
	3.2	Use best practices such as those from "One Stop Ready" as a tool to guiding development readiness: pre-application meetings between City staff and developer, increase internet accessibility, track projects from application through occupancy, provide a mechanism to gather input from the business community, and provide clear permitting processes and efficient time frames.	O	DCED, DTPS, and other relevant City staff; City Council; Planning Commission
	3.3	Use the Internet and social media to actively market and promote business in Oak Park, ensuring information is kept current such as resources (forms, permitting processes, programs) for starting and growing businesses, plans and regulatory information (master plan, zoning, ordinances), incentives and services, and networking and training events.	O	DCED, DTPS, CPID
	<b>MORE FLEXIBLE USE CATEGORIES (ZONING)</b>			
	3.4	Create a committee to reexamine the Zoning Ordinance and consider including more general use categories (rather than listing all permitted and prohibited individual uses) to stay relevant as new uses evolve using best practices; alternatively, consider form-based code.	S	DCED, DTPS, Planning Commission
	3.5	Create a Mixed Use zoning district.	S	DCED, DTPS, Planning Commission
	3.6	Permit mixed-use development where appropriate (e.g., commercial and light industrial areas) to encourage new development to be mixed-use and allow for the creative and flexible reuse of older buildings. Especially consider allowing more uses (residential, commercial, mixed-use) in Light Industrial districts, allowing light industrial uses to exist adjacent to non-industrial uses, including live-work, galleries, and other entrepreneurial activities.	S	DCED, DTPS, Planning Commission
	3.7	Consider a new transit-oriented development (TOD) district to promote pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development near existing and planned transit hubs.	S-M	DCED, Planning Commission, DPW
	3.8	Pursue resources that will provide more economic opportunities such as an outdoor dining (or sidewalk cafe) ordinance and on-premise liquor licenses.	O	DCED, Planning Commission
	<b>OFF-STREET PARKING</b>			
	3.9	Revise off-street parking requirements using best practices of peer cities as a guide (strategies include reducing minimum parking requirements, eliminate parking minimums and instituting parking maximums, eliminating both minimums and maximums.)	S	Planning Commission
	3.10	Prohibit new surface parking lots as primary uses adjacent to pedestrian-oriented commercial corridors.	S	Planning Commission
	3.11	Where existing surface parking lots abut the right-of-way, require landscaping and/or low walls to screen the parking from street view and separate the area from pedestrian traffic.	S	Planning Commission
	3.12	Increase regulations and enforcement on landscaping requirements in off-street parking lots.	S	Planning Commission
	3.13	Identify potential shared parking locations.	S	DCED, Planning Commission
	3.14	Allow and encourage shared parking as a preferred and readily achievable option for fulfilling parking requirements.	M	DCED, Planning Commission
	3.15	Create a payment in lieu of parking program, where developers have the option to reduce their on-site parking requirement by paying an in-lieu fee into a shared parking facilities fund.	M	Planning Commission
	<b>BLUE-GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b>			
3.16	Create communication effort to educate residents, property owners, and developers on benefits of blue-green infrastructure.	M	DCED, CPID	
3.17	Plan pilot projects to create prototypes for green alleys, permeable paving, bioswales, effective rain gardens, and homeowner tools (e.g., rain barrels, discharge downspouts into rain gardens).	O	DCED, DPW, Recycling & Environmental Conservation Commission	
3.18	Identify funding sources and partnerships for implementation of blue-green infrastructure and educational programs.	M	DCED	
3.19	Consider innovative ways to reduce and control stormwater runoff to reduce burden on existing sewer system.	O	DPW	

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)	
TRANSPORTATION	<b>COMPLETE STREETS</b>			
	4.1	Create a communication plan for the City and developers on the benefits and common guidelines of Complete Streets.	M	DCED, DPW, CPID
	4.2	Reconsider standards for streets, ensuring adequate space for pedestrians, bikes, on-street parking, and car traffic; use the NACTO Street Design Guide ( <a href="http://nacto.org/usdg">nacto.org/usdg</a> ).	S	DCED, DPW
	4.3	Encourage residents and businesses to participate in Park(ing) Day, an annual worldwide event where people transform parking spots into temporary parks ( <a href="http://parkingday.org">parkingday.org</a> ).	S	DCED, CPID
	4.4	Host a community-wide event such as “Build a Better Block” ( <a href="http://betterblock.org">betterblock.org</a> ) to generate ideas for redesigning the right-of-way along commercial corridors in creative ways.	S	DCED, CPID
	4.5	Identify funding sources for streetscape improvements such as a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). Consider a multi-jurisdictional CIA for Coolidge Highway by initiating conversations with Huntington Woods, Berkley, and Royal Oak.	S	DCED, DPW
	4.6	Create and adopt a Complete Streets policy.	M	DPW, City Council
	4.7	Create streetscape plans for commercial corridors that are consistent with the Complete Streets policy.	M	DCED, DPW
	4.8	Improve safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicycles at key intersections and others where traffic incidents occur most frequently.	M	DPW
	4.9	Improve safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicycles on I-696 highway overpasses.	M	DPW
	4.10	Incorporate blue and green infrastructures into street improvements where feasible (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, curb extensions, stormwater planters, street trees/plantings).	O	DPW
	4.11	Maximize mobility for transit-dependent populations (e.g., seniors, children, zero-car households) by integrating residential, commercial, and transit uses where feasible.	O	DCED, DPW
	<b>ON-STREET PARKING</b>			
	4.12	Identify and test potential areas for metered parking in prime commercial areas before implementing a full system.	M	DPW
	4.13	Utilize the DPW Streets Division to assume on-street parking management and operation responsibilities.	M	DPW
	<b>NON-MOTORIZED TRANSIT PLANNING</b>			
	4.14	Review non-motorized plans of surrounding communities and Oakland County, and identify priority streets for bike lanes and/or sharrows according to local needs and regional connectivity (see page 41: Proposed Non-Motorized Transit Network).	M	SEMOG, neighboring communities, Oakland County
	4.15	Create a communication plan on the benefits of non-motorized transit and active transportation.	M	DCED, DPW, CPID
	4.16	Encourage community participation in bike-to-work and bike-to-school days.	M	DCED, CPID
	4.17	Seek political allies such as biking and walking advocacy groups.	M	DCED, DPW
	4.18	Host quarterly public input sessions where community members, advocacy groups, City staff, and other stakeholders are present.	O	DCED, DPW, advocacy groups, City staff
	4.19	Identify funding sources for non-motorized facilities.	M	DCED
	4.20	Create and adopt an Oak Park Non-Motorized Plan.	M	DPW
4.21	Create an implementation initiative for bike facilities (e.g., implement 200 stalls of bicycle parking by 2020).	L	DCED	
4.22	Invite community members to propose locations for bicycle racks, corrals, and other storage to spark interest in non-motorized culture.	M	DCED, CPID	
4.23	Facilitate active transportation by establishing safe, marked walking and biking routes near key activity nodes such as schools, recreation centers, and commercial areas.	O	DPW	

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)
TRANS. (CONT.)	<b>MASS TRANSIT PLANNING</b>		
	4.24	Improve transit stops and stations to increase the attractiveness and experience of mass transit options.	S DPW
	4.25	Require that bicycle parking be included at transit facilities.	S Planning Commission
	4.26	Identify sites for future transit-oriented development (TOD).	M DCED, Planning Commission
	4.27	Gain representation for Oak Park within the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), such as a position on the Citizens' Advisory Committee.	S DCED, business owners, organization leaders
	4.28	Coordinate transit-oriented development (TOD) efforts with local transit providers.	M SMART
	4.29	Work with transit providers to improve real time information and wayfinding.	M DCED, SMART, DPW
PUBLIC SPACES	<b>INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING</b>		
	5.1	Host community-wide events such as PARK(ing) Day (parkingday.org) and Better Block (betterblock.org) to generate ideas for new public spaces in commercial areas.	S DCED, OPACC, businesses, Beautification Advisory Commission, CPID
	5.2	Create a goal for ratio of public space to residents (the National Recreation & Parks Association recommends 10 acres per 1,000 residents).	S DCED, RD
	5.3	Expand recreation program locations to visible public spaces (e.g., yoga in the park).	S RD
	5.4	Solicit private sponsors for traditional park programming.	S DCED, RD
	5.5	Identify performing arts opportunities in unique venues.	S DCED, RD, OPAACC
	5.6	Create a new, innovative public space plan (i.e., replace current Parks and Recreation Plan) that approaches public spaces beyond that of a typical parks and recreation plan. The new plan should focus on achieving vibrant and sustainable public places and may include a diversity of elements including recreation, open spaces, trails and bikeways, stormwater management, renewable energy, and vacant land management.	M DCED, RD, DPW
	<b>PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC SPACES</b>		
	5.7	Create a privately-owned public space policy program such as "incentive zoning" (developers receive a bonus in exchange for the provision of a public amenity) or special permits.	S RD, Planning Commission
	5.8	Adopt standards for outdoor spaces to ensure they are truly public, high quality, inviting, open, accessible, and safe. Regulations should be guided by a set of design principles such as: open and inviting at the sidewalk, accessible, provides sense of safety and security, and provides places to sit.	S RD, Planning Commission
	<b>PUBLIC ART</b>		
	5.9	Utilize public art to enhance public spaces throughout the city.	O DCED, OPAACC, RD
	5.10	Identify vacant lots for public art projects and neighborhood gateways.	M DCED, OPAACC
5.11	Create a public art policy program to encourage public art in visible locations, ensure maintenance, and protect pieces - see MSHDA's resource "Art in Public Places", which provides best practices of programs in Michigan and around the country (michigan.gov/mshda).	S DCED, Planning Commission, City Council	
5.12	Host an annual arts competition such as reviving "Art Over the Interstate"; encourage popular installations to become permanent fixtures of the streetscape.	S DCED, OPAACC	

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)	
HOUSING	<b>MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL</b>			
	6.1	Conduct a housing market study to assess future needs.	M	DCED
	6.2	Revise Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow and promote multi-family housing (townhomes, apartments, senior living, live-work) in appropriate areas such as the commercial sub-districts.	S	Planning Commission
	6.3	Revise Zoning Ordinance to allow conversion of old, unused structures for residential uses.	S	Planning Commission
	6.4	Encourage multi-family housing (townhomes, apartments above retail) as a key component to new development in the mixed-use commercial sub-districts.	M	DCED, private developers
	6.5	Provide a wider variety of housing options for the aging population such as new senior housing options within walking distance of commercial areas.	L	DCED, private developers
	<b>LIVE-WORK</b>			
	6.6	Revise Zoning Ordinance to allow live-work use.	S	DCED, Planning Commission
	6.7	Create a live-work brand and a target investment area that is mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented.	M	DCED, private developers
	6.8	Communicate vacancies for rentals and homes for sale to employers and entrepreneurs.	M	DCED, CIP
	<b>ADAPTIVE REUSE</b>			
	6.9	Create a communication tool to educate property owners, developers, and investors on the economic, environmental, and social benefits of adaptive reuse.	S	DCED, CIP
	6.10	Create an inventory of vacant, obsolete buildings to market for new uses; promote adaptation for creative new development.	M	DCED
6.11	Identify and ensure the preservation of historic architecture.	O	Planning Commission	
6.12	Work to offer financial incentives through foundations.	M	DCED, foundations	
6.13	Change building and zoning codes and/or provide incentives to encourage energy efficiency in rehabilitation.	S	DCED, Planning Commission	
COMMERCIAL SUB-DISTRICTS	<b>GENERAL</b>			
	7.1	Consider partnerships with neighboring communities for development of commercial corridors (Coolidge Hwy. - Berkley, Huntington Woods, Royal Oak; 9 Mile Road - Ferndale; 8 Mile Road - Detroit).	L	DCED
	7.2	Join the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) to gain access to events/programs, industry data and research, networking opportunities, and advocacy opportunities.	S	DCED
	7.3	Reuse and redevelop existing building stock when possible.	O	DCED, private developers
	<b>9 MILE &amp; COOLIDGE</b>			
	7.4	Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this site.	S	DCED
	7.5	Identify opportunities for small-scale pop-up stores or events that begin to change the perception of the shopping center.	S	DCED, business owners, OPACC
	7.6	Identify space for placemaking in underutilized parking spaces.	S	DCED, OPACC
	7.7	Identify ideal funding strategies such as the creation of a Principal Shopping District (PSD) or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF).	S	DCED, business owners
	7.8	Change zoning to Mixed Use.	S	Planning Commission
	7.9	Encourage the extension of the street grid through superblocks and large parcels.	O	DCED
7.10	Encourage walkable, mid-rise, mixed-use development.	O	DCED	
7.11	Maximize multi-modal access by incorporating pedestrian connections, bike racks, and bus stops.	O	DPW, private developers, SMART	

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES		TIME FRAME	TASK LEADER(S)
COMMERCIAL SUB-DISTRICTS (CONT.)	<b>THE ARMORY SITE</b>		
	7.12	Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this site.	S DCED
	7.13	Identify opportunities for festivals and events that will promote Oak Park as a destination (e.g., reviving the West Side and 8 Mile Drive-Ins could be a program that activates the site in the short term before development occurs).	S DCED
	7.14	Identify areas for high-quality public spaces to act as gathering spaces and catalyze new development.	M-L DCED, RD
	7.15	Identify ideal funding strategies such as using the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) to utilize tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA).	S DCED, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
	7.16	Change zoning to align with community vision.	S Planning Commission
	7.17	Encourage walkable, mid-rise, mixed-use development.	O DCED
	7.18	Maximize multi-modal access by incorporating pedestrian connections, bike racks, and bus stops.	O DPW, private developers, SMART
	7.19	Solicit private developers who agree with the community vision and/or work with future developers to maximize the market potential of the site as described in the Retail Market Analysis (350,000 to 420,000 SF of retail, equivalent to 26 to 33 stores).	M DCED
	<b>INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT</b>		
	7.20	Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this area.	M DCED
	7.21	Revise the Zoning Code to allow adaptive reuse of obsolete or underutilized buildings for entrepreneurial activities, residential dwelling, and live-work.	S Planning Commission
	7.22	Create an inventory of industrial buildings to market for new uses.	S DCED, CIP
	7.23	Encourage artists, entrepreneurs, and creative industry live-work use through incentives (e.g., support networks, start-up funding).	M DCED, OPAACC
	7.24	Identify opportunities for pop-ups, small-scale events, and public art.	S DCED, OPAACC
	7.25	Define and program public spaces to establish district identity.	M DCED, RD, OPAACC
	7.26	Cluster investment in a targeted area.	O DCED
	7.27	Improve safety and walkability with public infrastructure improvements to streets, sidewalks, and lighting.	S-M DPW
	<b>PARKWOODS PLAZA</b>		
	7.28	Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for this site.	S DCED
	7.29	Identify ideal funding strategies such as the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) or Commercial Rehabilitation Act for redevelopment.	S DCED
	7.30	Reconfigure parcel to consist of smaller blocks and pedestrian connections throughout the site and to adjacent uses.	M Planning Commission
	7.31	Solicit private developers who agree with the community vision.	M DCED
	7.32	Change zoning to Mixed Use.	S Planning Commission
	<b>STRIP RETAIL CENTERS</b>		
	7.33	Work to create a community vision and set of guiding principles for these areas.	S DCED, property owners
	7.34	Identify opportunities for small scale pop-up stores or events that begin to change the perception of the shopping centers.	S DCED, OPAACC
	7.35	Identify space for placemaking in underutilized parking spaces.	S DCED, OPAACC
7.36	Identify ideal funding strategies such as the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), a Principal Shopping District (PSD) or a Business Improvement District (BID) to utilize tools such as Tax increment Financing (TIF).	S DCED	
7.37	Work with local business owners to identify opportunities for facade renovation matching grants.	S DCED, business owners	
7.38	Change zoning to Mixed Use.	S Planning Commission	