



Commercial Character Plan

SECTION

A Changing Commercial and Industrial Environment

Increasing telecommuting.

According to the U.S. Census and other sources, telecommuting has been increasing, a total of 3.4% of workers telecommuted in 2005. This trend is expected to continue and will likely increase based on the federal workforce, where promotion of telecommuting is mandated by law and by the fact that the large corporate world which has its workforce across the country and the world.

Increasing number of home-based businesses and occupations.

Based on data from the U.S. Census, it appears that employment in home-based businesses and occupations has been increasing as a percentage of the workforce. This will likely have implications for residential areas of any municipality as well as a potential secondary effect for commercial and office land uses, as well as transportation systems, and property tax revenues.

Decreasing demand for conventional industrial/manufacturing space.

The demand for traditional industrial and manufacturing space is expected to continue to decline in Michigan due to improved efficiencies from technology and product standardization, global changes to the auto and numerous other industries, the decline of product manufacturing in general, and the movement of manufacturing jobs to areas of lower labor costs.

Increasing demand for flexible space that accommodates a variety of uses.

Wholesale and retail enterprises that conduct all, or a majority, of their business via e-commerce including their offices/IT department, a retail outlet/showroom, as well as warehousing and distribution area may be more compatible with light industrial, non-prime commercial, and/or office complex uses rather than the traditional highly visible commercial sites.

Increasing demand for broadband access.

Access to broadband or other similar forms of high speed internet is becoming a required infrastructure for businesses and residences alike. In many cases, density of development or overall Township population is one of the main driving factors in the provider's decision to offer broadband services in a specific area. In some rural communities, this effectively prohibits broadband service and potentially constrains alternative work options such as telecommuting and home based businesses.

Increasing importance of education.

In response to the decline in high-paying manufacturing jobs (which has been very prevalent in Michigan over the last several years), and the increase in high-paying, knowledge-based service jobs in a new economy, post-secondary education has become almost a necessity to the pursuit of a good standard of living. The availability of a knowledge-based, flexible talent pool is typically seen as a necessity in attracting, retaining, and growing knowledge-based businesses.

Increasing importance of community amenities and quality of life.

As the Township wishes to attract and retain knowledge-based workers and knowledge-based businesses, it will find itself in a national, and even worldwide, competition. These workers and/or businesses are typically more mobile than those of the past, and can theoretically locate anywhere they wish provided high speed internet accessibility is available. To attract and hold on to these workers and ultimately businesses, the unique features of the Township and its quality of life become increasingly important as a competitive advantage and need to be protected, nurtured, and promoted.

Land Use Trends

According to a September 27, 2006 news release from the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly half (8 million) of all businesses in the United States are home occupations.

- Professional, scientific, and technical services – 19%;
- Construction – 16%;
- Retail trade – 11%;
- Other services except public administration – 10%;
- Administrative, and support and waste management and remediation services – 8%;
- Health care and social assistance – 7%;
- Real estate and rental and leasing – 7%;
- All other kinds of businesses – 22%.

(U.S. Census Bureau).



SECTION

KEY OLD ECONOMY FEATURES

KEY NEW ECONOMY FEATURES

Cheap place to do business was key.

Attracting companies, any large company

Industrial sector (manufacturing) focus

Fossil fuel dependent manufacturing

A high quality physical environment was a luxury that stood in the way of attracting cost-conscious business

Success = fixed competitive advantage in some resource or skill. The labor force was skills dependent.

People followed jobs.

Economic development was government-led. Large government meant good services

Connection to global opportunities not essential.

Being rich in talent and ideas is key.

Attracting talented and educated people

Sector diversity is desired, and clustering or related sectors is preferred.

Communications dependent but energy smart

Physical and cultural amenities are key in attracting knowledge workers

Success = organizations and individuals with ability to learn and adapt.

Talented, well educated people choose location first, then look for a job.

Bold partnerships with business, government and nonprofit sector lead change

Connection to emerging global opportunities is critical

NONRESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS

Office

Office Uses – Those uses typically found within the office designation are lawyers, doctors, insurance agents, dentists, architects and surveyors, amongst others.

Commercial

Commercial Uses – Commercial uses range from those office uses noted above to general retail sales of clothing to eating and drinking establishments including fast food drive thrus (with special approval).

Industrial

Industrial Uses – Industrial uses include those uses such as car repair, manufacturing and processing as well as assembly. The key to the industrial use category is that most industrial uses are foreseen without outdoor storage. If such outdoor storage is necessary special approval may be necessary.

Nonresidential Uses

The Master Plan recognizes three nonresidential use designations. These include office, commercial and industrial. These three land uses are found primarily along Imlay City Road and M-24. The plan utilizes much of the existing and planned commercial land use within the City to service the residents of the Township, including downtown, the southern portion of M-24 between downtown and I-69 as well as the planned uses at the I-69 / M-24 interchange. These designations, especially the commercial designations can then be further refined and defined as a part of the Township's zoning schemes which have several districts of commercial land use.

The Plan further recognizes the potential reuse of those properties along M-24 for some minor office and commercial purposes as the need is proven for additional commercial use as well as the majority of the Township's residential areas for approved home occupations to accommodate new workforce trends that suggest working from a home office is becoming more and more prevalent.

The key to the plan is to provide flexibility to the nonresidential designations and ultimately the Township's Zoning Districts to reflect the ever changing requirements of the new economy.

As a part of the Master Plan, the plan suggests several architectural and design details for any new development which may occur within the Township. These details would be applied only to new or renovated nonresidential uses and are not intended to be applied to home occupations. The details are shown on the following pages. The commercial uses at the intersection of Wilder Road and Imlay City Road are intended to be designed in a manner which pushes the buildings closer to the roadway, similar to the buildings which already exist in the area. Separate provisions or an overlay district may be appropriate to accommodate this.

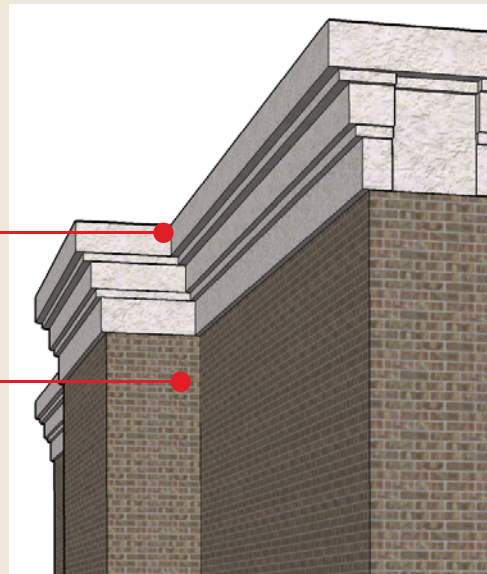
ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Diversity of Building Materials - Including use of Decorative Face Brick, Cultured Stone, EIFS Accents etc..



Architectural detail along roof line - Proper use of EIFS or similar material

Facade breaks provided along all facades to provide visual interest



DESIGN ELEMENTS

Provide substantial pedestrian areas for both walking as well as congregating along buildings

Provide dedicated pedestrian crossing areas across all vehicle maneuvering lanes. Dedicated areas may be striped, a change in material, etc., and should be barrier free.



Frontage landscaping should be provided to help frame the architecture of the building and enhance building details.

