



LAKEVIEW DISTRICT

Reinvisioning Battle Creek's Premier Commercial Corridor



JANUARY 2025

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lakeview Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) is a true product of its time. After the passage of Public Act 197 of 1975, which enabled the creation of Downtown Development Authorities, city officials and business leaders coalesced around dual pressures for the City of Battle Creek to annex Battle Creek Township in order to boost population, and establish a new DDA district at I-94 and M-66 to capture new taxes from the proposed mall development at the site.

With the LDDA established, the township annexed, and the approvals set for Lakeview Square Mall, development spread across the previously rural community at an extremely fast pace. The area did not have a comprehensive land use plan when it first opened to development, and today’s city officials, business owners, and community members are currently grappling with the results of that approach. Private roads, sprawling acres of surface parking, low density apartment complexes, minimal infrastructure for people walking, biking, and taking public transport, and a patchwork stormwater management system currently combines to create disorganization within the district. Add to that aging infrastructure, changing retail market preferences, and a housing shortage, and the LDDA is ready to reimagine how the next generation of redevelopment takes place within its boundaries.



“Adding to that aging infrastructure, changing retail market preferences, and a housing shortage, and the LDDA is ready to reimagine how the next generation of redevelopment takes place within its boundaries.”



Top: Headline from Battle Creek Enquirer, 1980s
Above: Vacant parking lot in Minges Creek Mall

Demographics, user preferences, and environmental perspectives have changed significantly in the years following the initial mall development. While car-oriented commerce is still a significant driver of property values along Beckley Road, the interior of the Lakeview Square Mall is 70 percent vacant; population in the region is stagnant; and the general public and city officials recognize the need for smart growth that focuses on compact redevelopment, a variety of housing types, walkable neighborhoods, and leveraging natural features and amenities to create a more livable place.

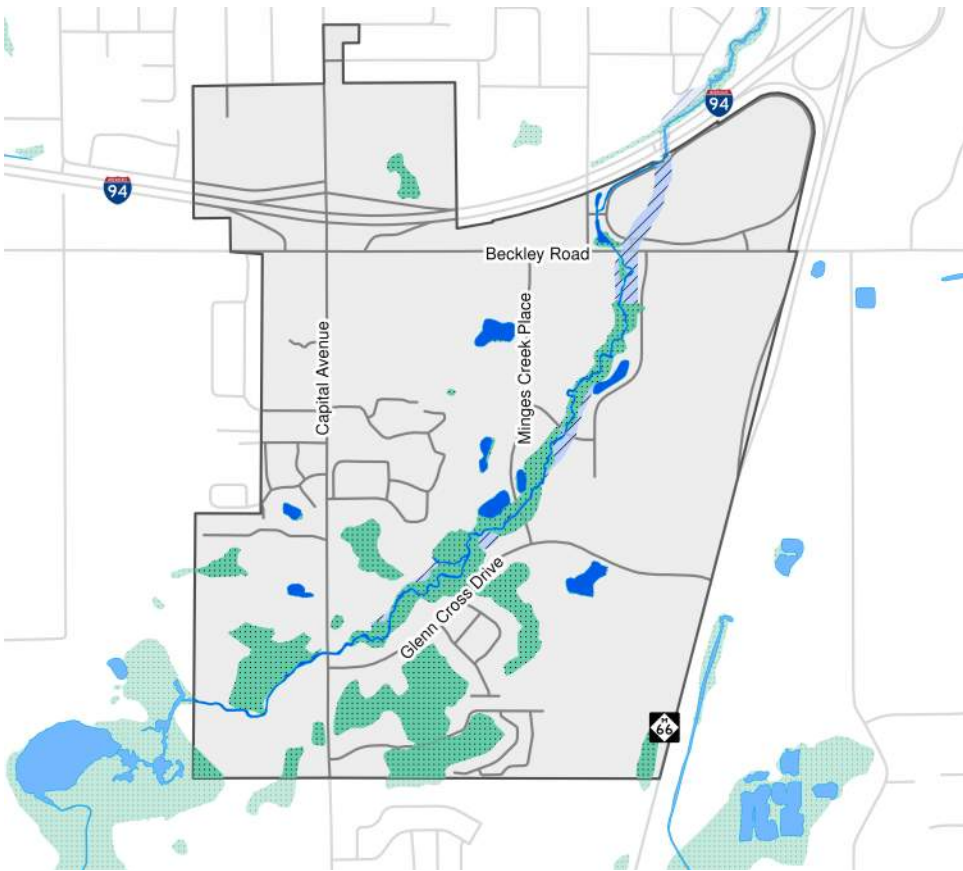
There are strengths to the LDDA, however. As one of the most densely populated areas in Battle Creek, it has the potential to evolve into what this plan calls the Lakeview District, a neighborhood district that compliments, rather than competes with, downtown. Its linear trail and natural features—once more prevalent—can be reclaimed, enhanced, and highlighted as a key placemaking attribute in the district. Its low commercial and residential vacancy rates demonstrate a demand for additional housing and possibly retail within its boundaries. And its acres of surface parking are already surrounded by the infrastructure necessary for compact, walkable redevelopment, there is an exciting opportunity to attract new residents to locate here by offering a new neighborhood format with diverse housing products that are different from almost every other option in the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in October, 2023, Progressive Companies, the City of Battle Creek, the LDDA, and the plan Steering Committee began the process of creating a vision for the next chapter in this corridor’s history. We started initially focusing on the Beckley Road corridor, but soon found the underpinnings of a strong and vibrant neighborhood across the LDDA boundaries. Through stakeholder discussions, land use and market analysis, and a robust community engagement plan, three main themes emerged relative to the strengths and weaknesses of the LDDA, including green infrastructure, placemaking, and reducing car dependency in the district.

Theme 1: Green Infrastructure

The LDDA’s “spine” is the low-trafficked Brickyard Creek Trail. Feedback from all sources consistently returned to the fact that the trail is one of the most important amenities of the district. Leveraging this asset is absolutely critical. Data gathering also showed that existing stormwater infrastructure was either inadequate or privately owned and maintained, raising concerns about long-term maintenance and viability for many of the retention/detention ponds in the area. The status of this infrastructure presents a significant potential threat to the creek, and the trail that runs alongside it.



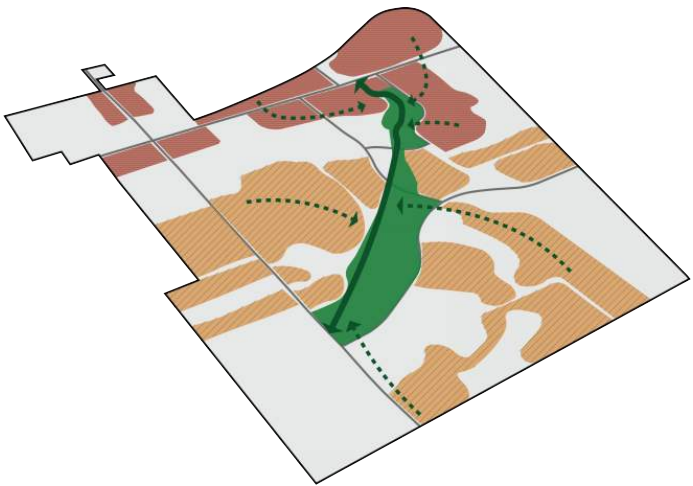
Finally, the oversupply of surface parking (currently three times what is required by zoning code) contributes to stormwater challenges, a lack of activity, and urban heat island effects. This can be counteracted by the replacement of surface parking with green infrastructure, which reduces stormwater, creates pleasant spaces for people, and provides shade and cools the landscape.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 2: Placemaking

The creation of this plan is the first step in placemaking for the Lakeview District, which is defined by the Project for Public Spaces as a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. Many participants in this planning process noted that the Lakeview District has minimal public spaces, which currently include the Brickyard Creek Trail, the library, and the Dubois Cemetery. The public spaces that are available are either seldomly used (the trail, the cemetery) or could be further leveraged to provide more activity (the library). There are no public parks. The LDDA's roads are almost entirely car-oriented, providing very few opportunities for shared use for people to walk, run, bike, and roll.

Great cities and neighborhoods are built around great public spaces, and the redevelopment of sites like the mall area and the parking lot adjacent to the trail present great opportunities for placemaking that can establish the LDDA as a premier regional neighborhood.



Theme 3: Reducing Car Dependence

To walk the ½ mile distance from Minges Creek Village apartments to the nearby Target, one must travel across 2,200 feet of surface parking, 200 feet of road, and 150 feet of grass, all without sidewalks or any other pedestrian infrastructure. What should be a pleasant experience is dangerous for able-bodied adults, and nearly impossible for someone with children, on a bike, or with mobility impairments. This epitomizes car dependency in the Lakeview District.

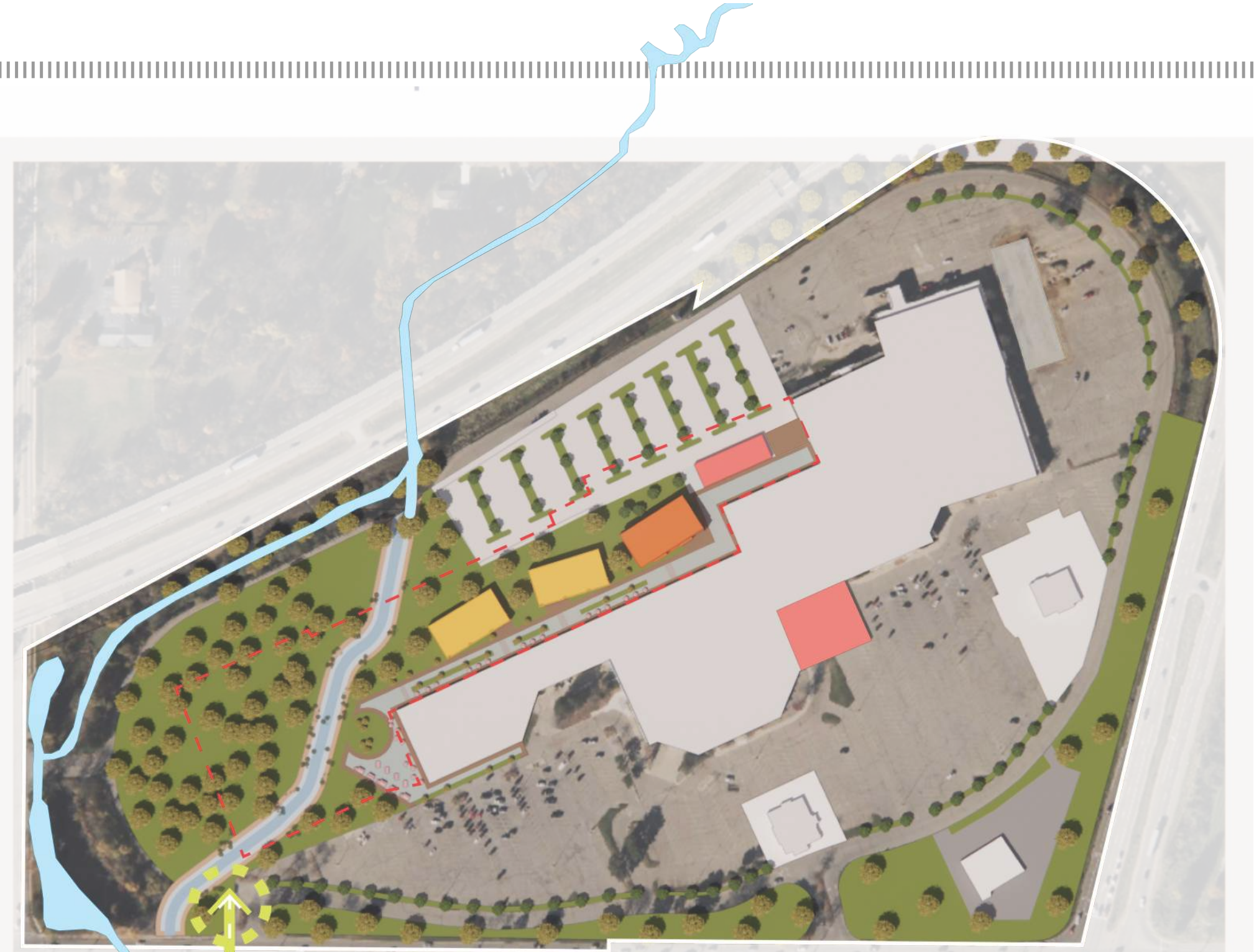


Most of the LDDA was built under the assumption that people do not walk, and that cars are preferred for even the shortest trips. Many of the roads are without sidewalks, commercial and residential uses are separated, and adjacent developments are not connected by paths or sidewalks, making traveling by means other than a car very cumbersome. The plan's approach for addressing car dependence is to increase connectivity among existing developments, to replace car lanes with non-motorized lanes on several of the LDDA roads excess capacity, and to develop compact, mixed-use areas that are safer and convenient for people to walk from one place to another.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implementation: Suburban Retrofitting

Battle Creek is not alone in seeking to retrofit a suburban commercial district to support continued growth and investment. The following plan builds on the work taking place across the United States to transform car-dependent, low-density, single-use developments, into financially productive, environmentally-friendly, and walkable communities that provide residents, businesses, and potential investors with choices regarding the type of housing, transportation, and lifestyle that support people throughout various stages of life. This plan provides a framework for redevelopment within the Lakeview District that creates opportunities for new residential and commercial uses, reuse of existing infrastructure, the addition of new public amenities, and initiatives to add vibrancy along this aging corridor.



Above: Potential redevelopment concept of Lakeview Square Mall





2

EXISTING CONDITIONS

LOCATION

The Lakeview District is a 727-acre area located in the far southeastern corner of Battle Creek, MI. The district is oriented around Beckley Road - an east-west corridor featuring the largest concentration of commercial and multi-family land uses within the region. Located 4 miles south of downtown Battle Creek, the Lakeview District features the only mall in Calhoun County. The district also features close access to regionally significant roadways, including I-94 and M-66.

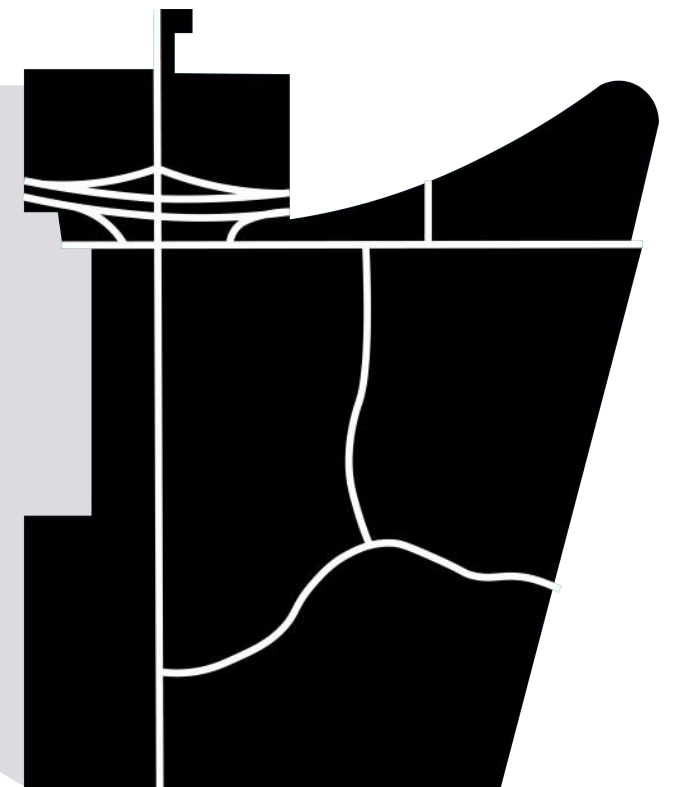
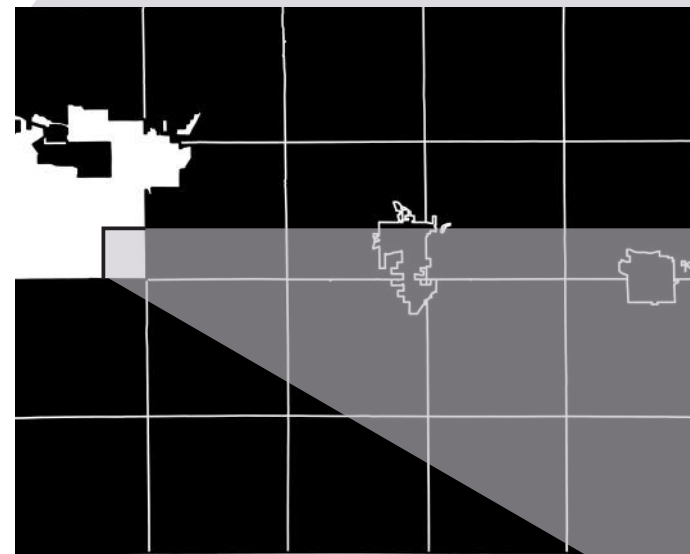
***The Lakeview District
is located...***

Calhoun County

Located in the South Central
Portion of Michigan's Lower
Peninsula

City of Battle Creek

Located in the Northwestern Portion
of Calhoun County



LAKEVIEW DISTRICT FROM ABOVE



HISTORY

From previous centuries of open woodland and prairie, the area within the LDDA has changed relatively quickly over the past 80 years. Changing from farmland to apartment complexes and prairies to parking lots, this area now features aging infrastructure and higher vacancy rates - representing the rise and fall of mall-oriented retail in the Battle Creek region.

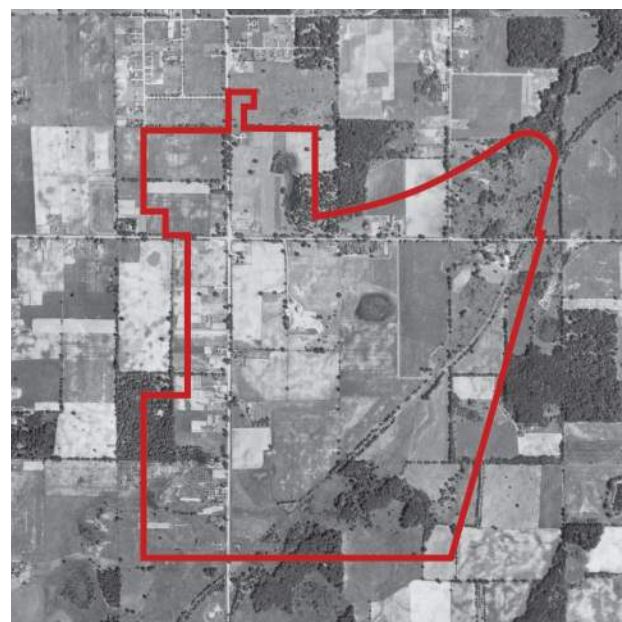
From Farmland to Battle Creek's Suburban Shopping Corridor

For more than 100 years, the area was farmed, with white settlers who began to arrive in the mid-1800s. After World War II, however, more intense development began to spread to the corridor, beginning with the construction of Interstate 94.

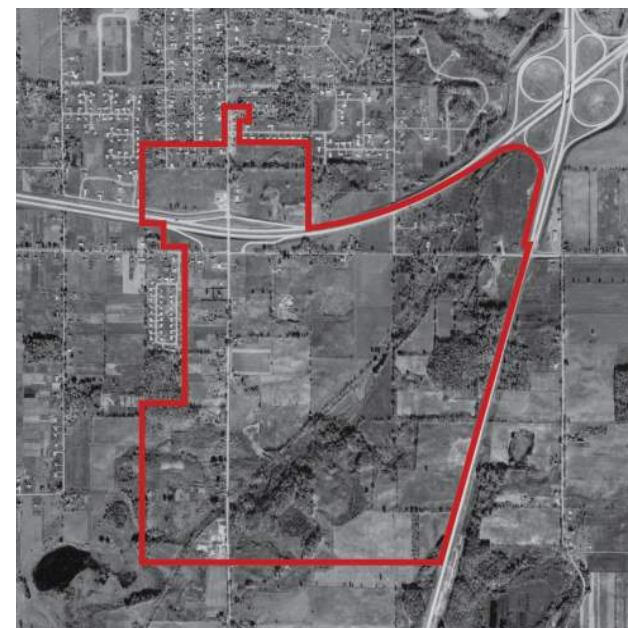


Right: Beckley Road Looking West, 1980s

1950



1961



1974



Development Brings Opposition

Development of the Lakeview Mall was the flashpoint of change along Beckley Road, and it was fraught with conflict between community members, the City of Battle Creek, the now annexed Battle Creek Township, the Department of Natural Resources, and developer Forbes-Cohen Properties.

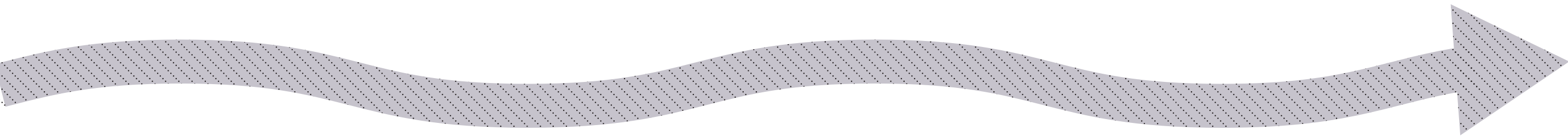
As early as 1978, 5 years before Lakeview Square Mall’s grand opening in August of 1983, Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources opposed the construction of the shopping center. At that time, the DNR oversaw environmental protection of the state’s natural features in the same way the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy does today.



Above: Lakeview Square Mall Atrium, 1980s

The DNR’s biological study of the development said, “Routing Minges (Brickyard) Creek through holding ponds, as one developer proposes, would degrade its current good water quality condition, without the possibility of returning to a cleanwater stream. This type of development ... should not be permitted.”

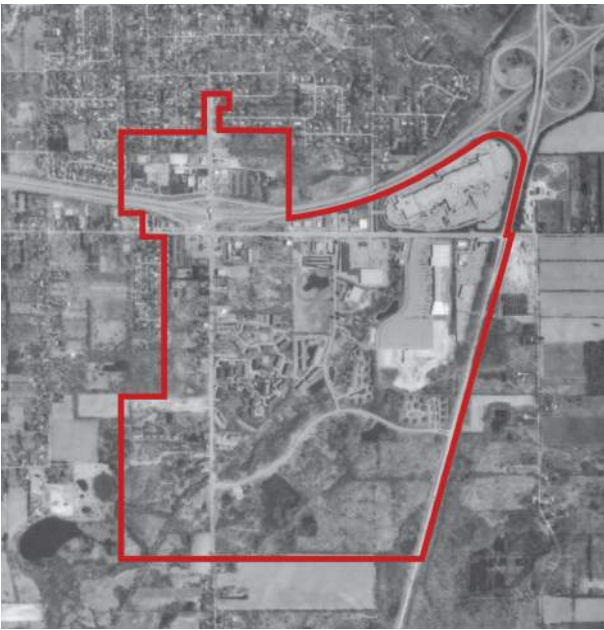
The primary arguments against the mall by residents of the area were threefold: that it would pollute the creeks, create traffic problems and destroy the residential nature of the township. A minority of residents spoke in favor of the mall during the project’s predevelopment phase. In 1983, the mall opened with great fanfare. Steering Committee members of this project remembered the mall being fully parked during the 1983 holidays. For the rest of the 1980s, the mall and the surrounding corridor was a highly trafficked, booming part of the city.



1981



1993



Below: Battle Creek Enquirer Headline, 1980s

Mall becoming shopping hub for region

98% of space is leased; new restaurant planned

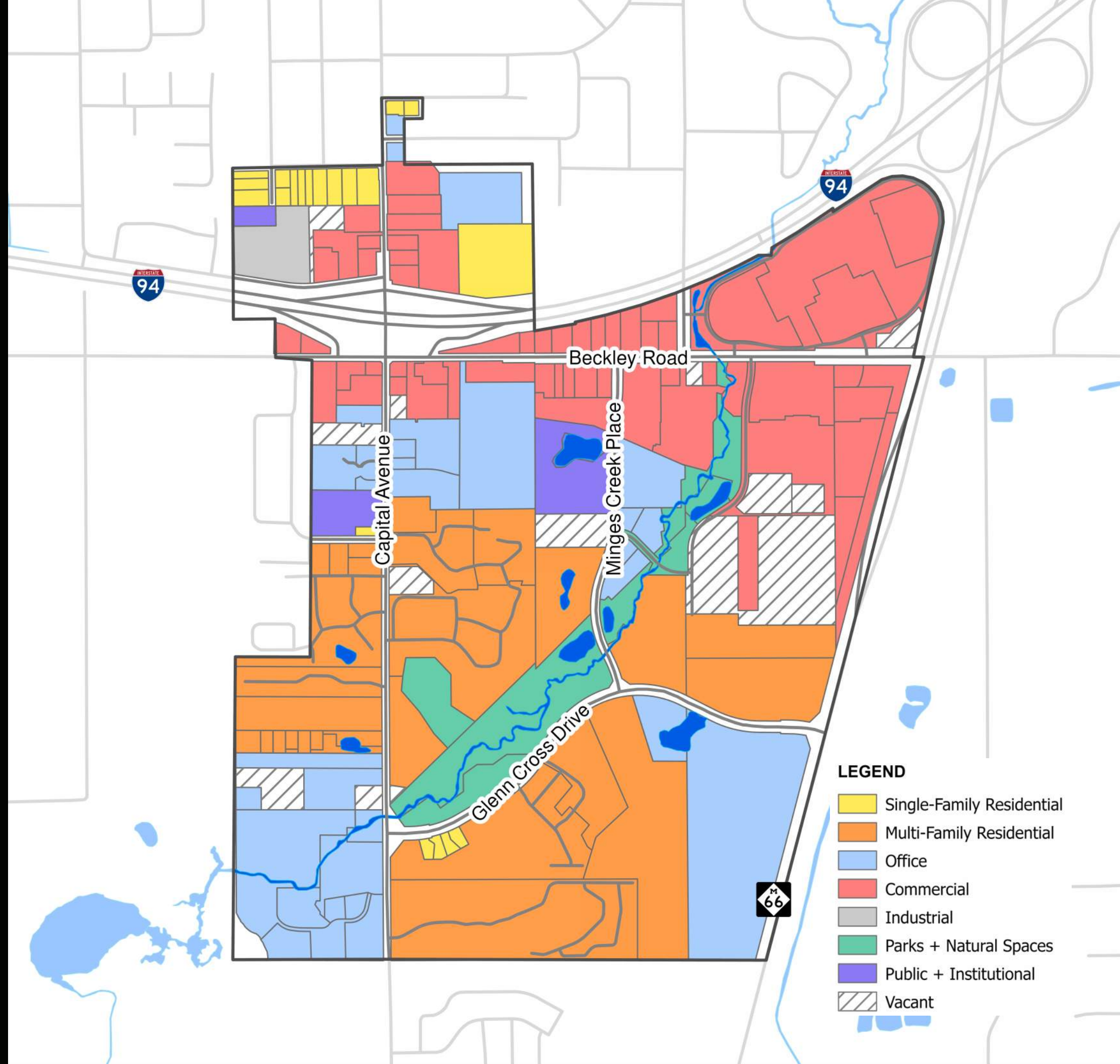
By ELAINE KULHANEK
Staff Writer
Lakeview Square is cloaked in an aura of success these days. The shopping mall, once opposed by some local citizens, is 98 percent leased at a time when its developers had hoped to be 80 percent leased. It has surpassed Kalamazoo's Crossroads in number of stores and is now being touted as a regional shopping facility for southern Michigan. The mall appears to be attracting cars off I-94 and a casual survey of shoppers on any given day will turn up many from out of town. The mall took another leap forward in January, when it signed Chi-Chi's, a national restaurant chain featuring Mexican cuisine, to open a 277-seat restaurant and lounge. The restaurant could make the mall more of a social gathering

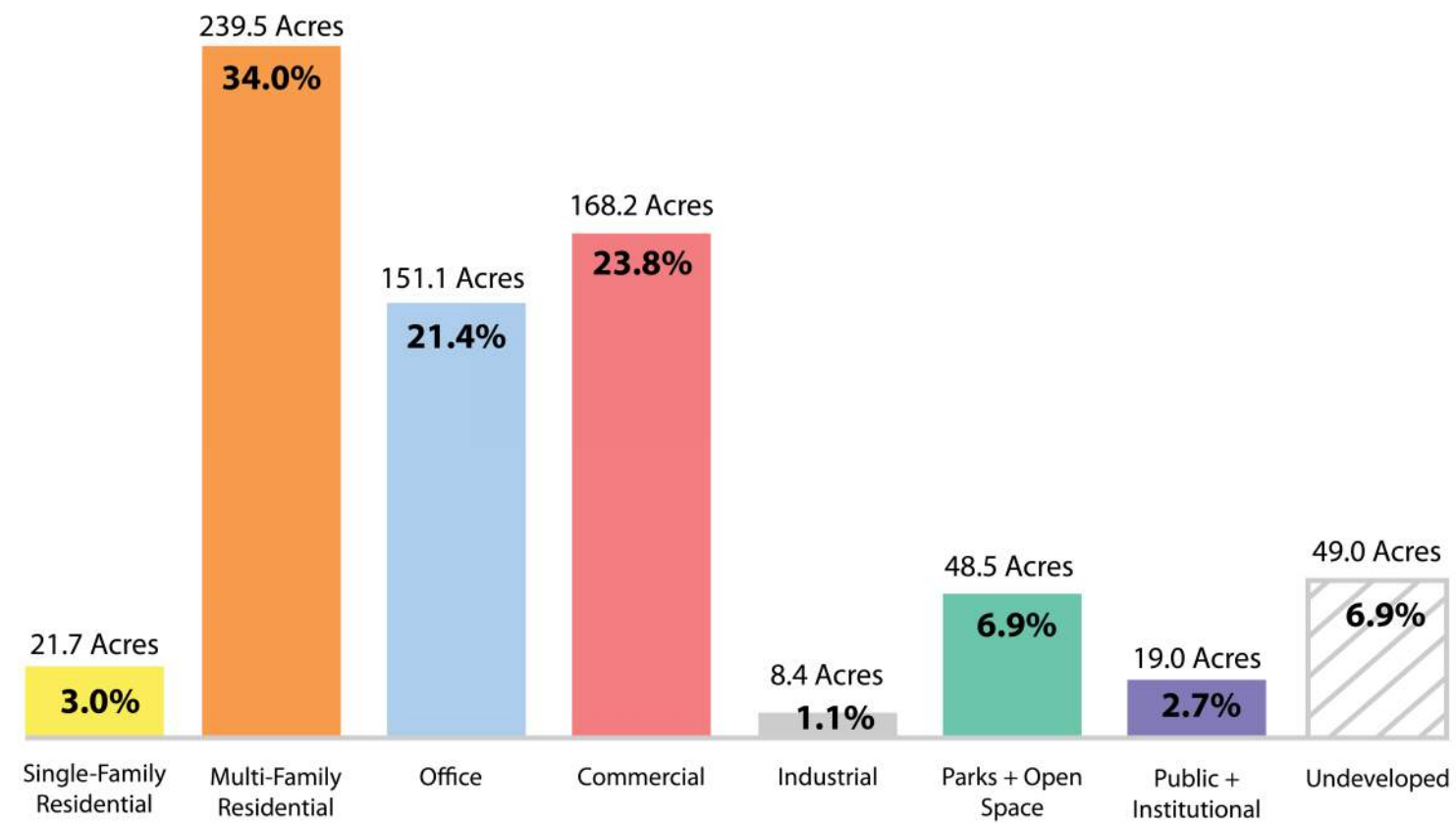
ture," said Cohen. "We're working on long-range plans for how to run and promote Lakeview Square." He said corporate officials are working closely with Dave Haysmer, mall manager, and Rich Hallabrin, marketing director, to develop and implement long-range plans. "We're meeting regularly and should be implementing the plans shortly," he said. Cohen said individual stores within the mall appear to be having sales success, but he said actual figures on 1984 sales would not be compiled until later this year. Hallabrin and Haysmer did say that first-year sales "far surpassed initial projections." Although Forbes-Cohen considers the facility successful, Cohen said it will take some time before the company begins to see returns. "It was a major investment and



EXISTING LAND USE

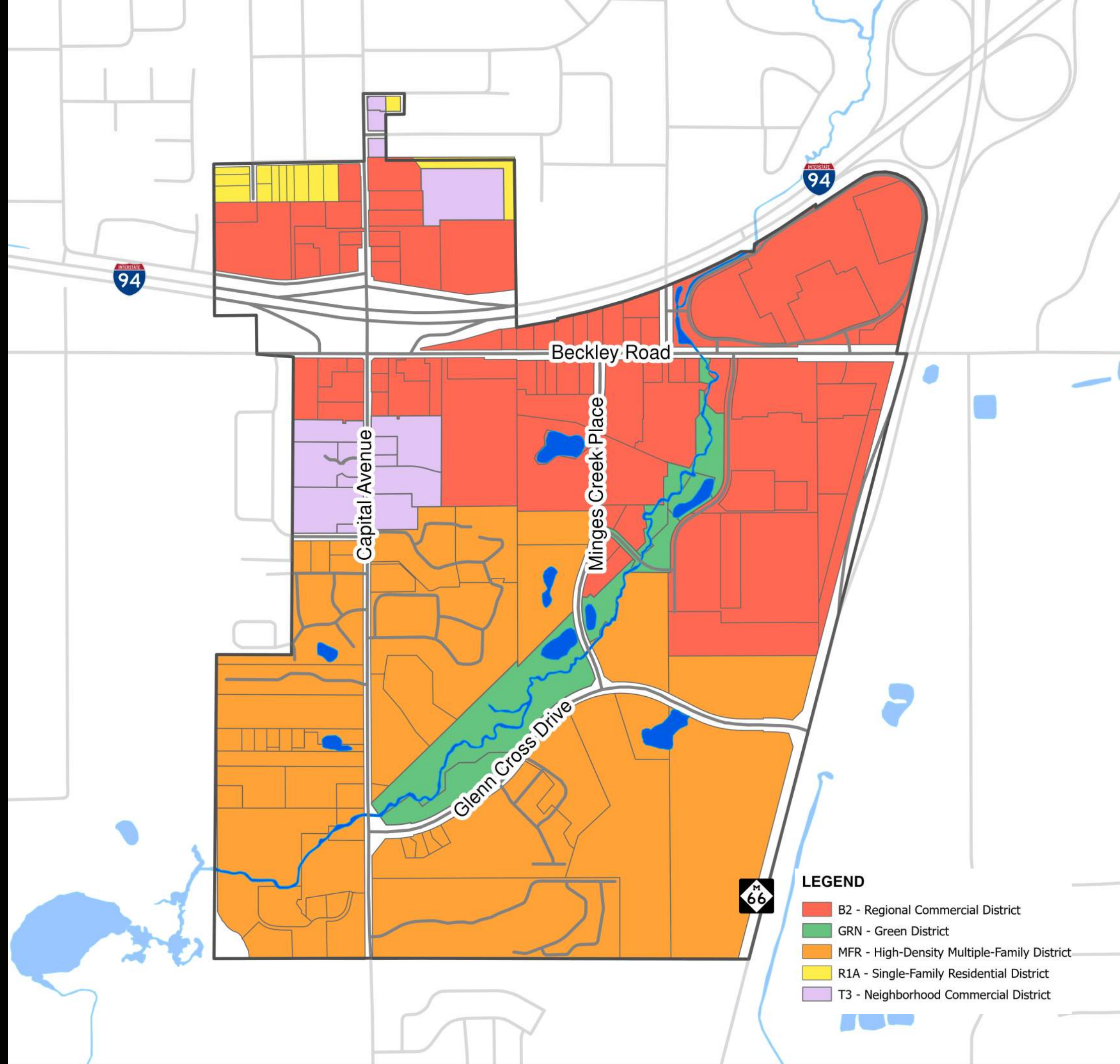
An existing land use analysis examines the way land in an area is utilized at a specific point in time. For this analysis, Progressive has utilized the City of Battle Creek's parcel records, along with in-person observations to create a map of the existing use of land in the corridor by parcel. As the chart and map demonstrate, the plurality of property within the study area is accounted for by multi-family residential uses (34.0%), followed by commercial uses (23.8%) and office uses (21.4%). Nearly seven percent of the area's properties are currently vacant, with no active use.

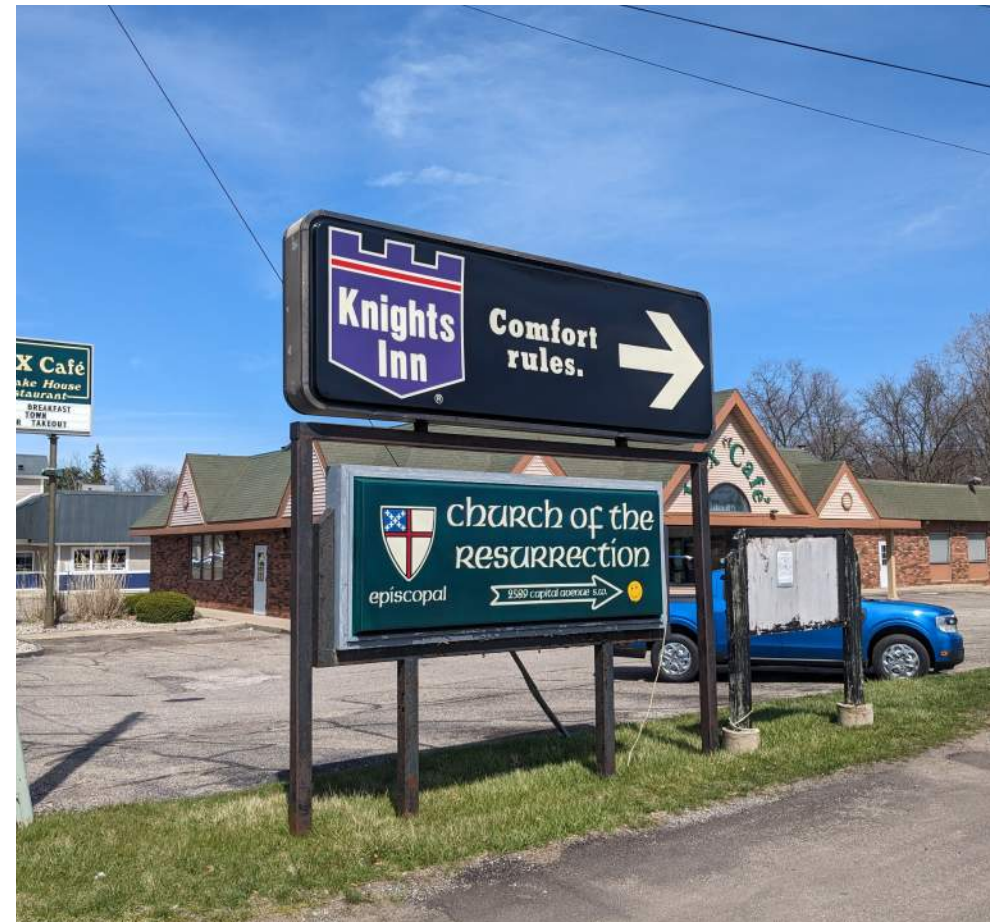
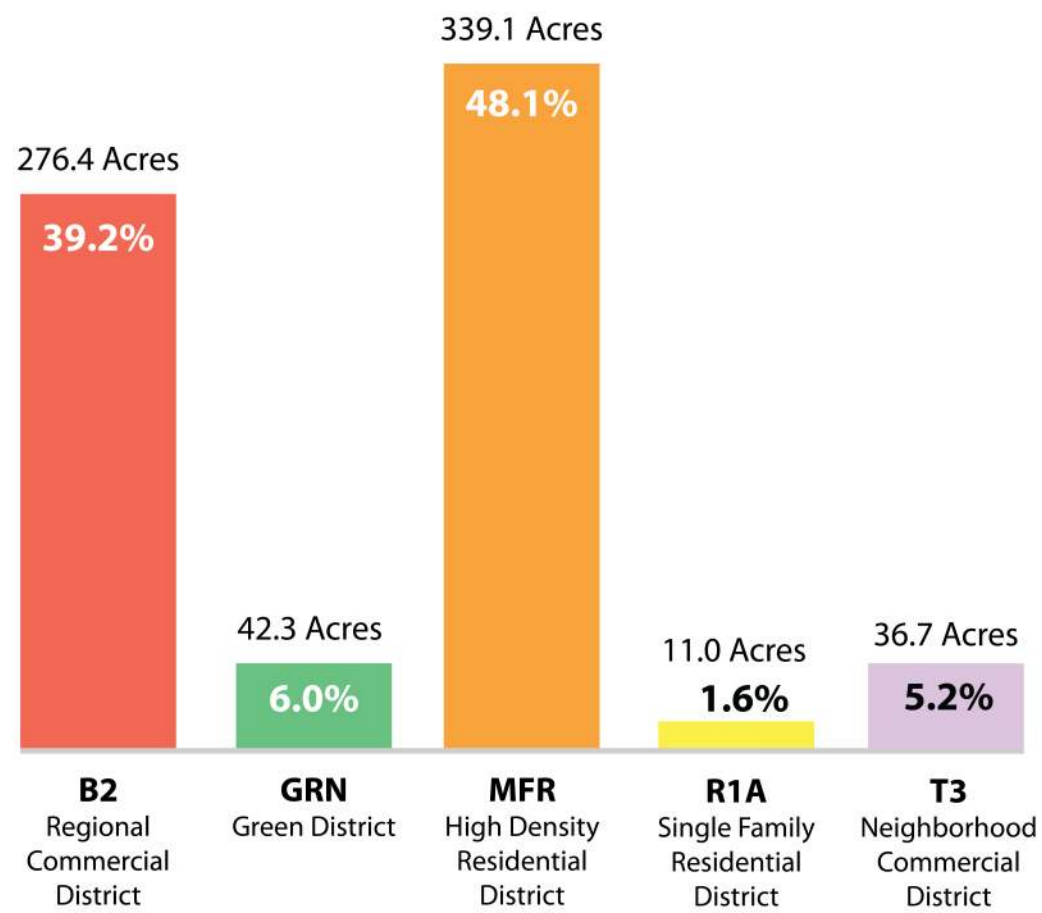




ZONING

While the 727-acre Lakeview District is currently divided into five zone districts, an overwhelming amount (over 610 acres) is zoned for high-density residential land uses and regional commercial land uses. The remaining land uses are zoned for professional office and less-intensive commercial land uses along Capital Avenue as well as single-family residential land uses north of I-94. Sensitive natural areas along Brickyard Creek are zoned for the “Green District” which seeks to preserve natural spaces.

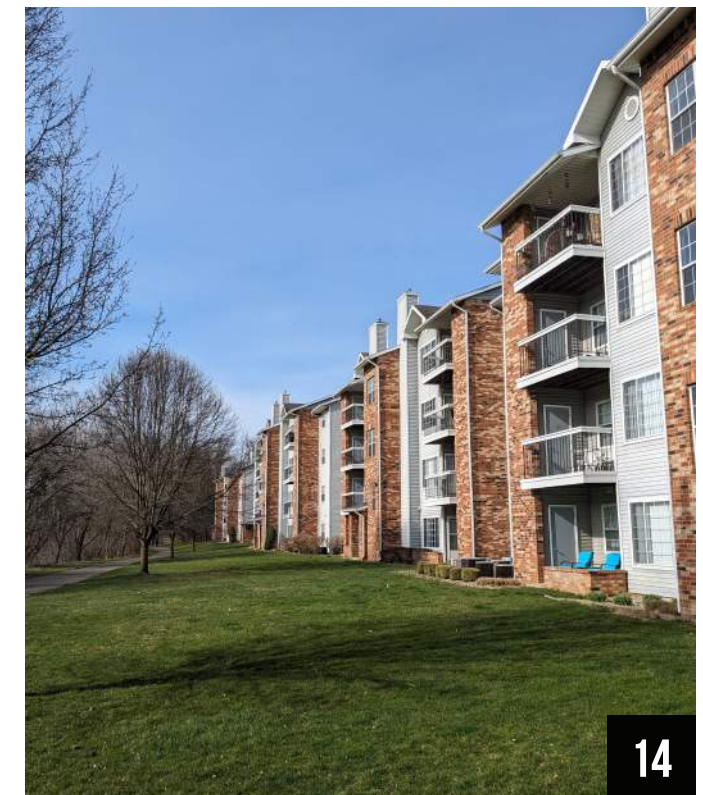




Over 87% of parcels within the Lakeview District are zoned:

B2 Regional Commercial District (39.2%)

MFR High Density Residential District (48.1%)



PARKING & UNUSED SPACE

Due to the area's auto-oriented nature of development along with the extensive infrastructure servicing these land uses, the area is largely occupied by empty spaces – vacant parking lots, large access drives, and unused space.

Much of this empty space is occupied by surface parking lots. Developed during an era when commercial retail was thriving, these parking lots have since become empty as businesses have closed and moved out of the Lakeview District. In many cases, these parking areas have gone without maintenance, leaving large expanses of asphalt cratered with potholes and weeds. As rainfall increases, these acres of impervious surfaces capture rainfall, increase stormwater temperature, collect pollutants, and channel them into nearby creeks and rivers.



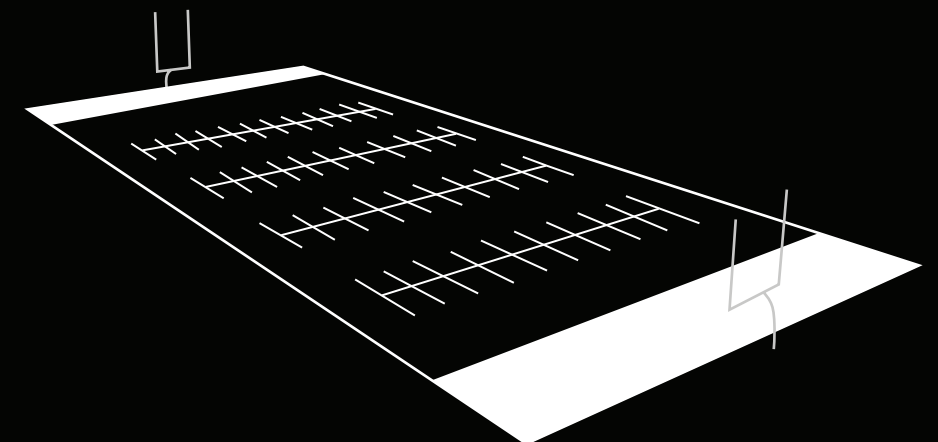
“The area is largely occupied by empty spaces”

Did You Know?

There are **three times** as many parking spaces than what is currently required by the City of Battle Creek Zoning Ordinance



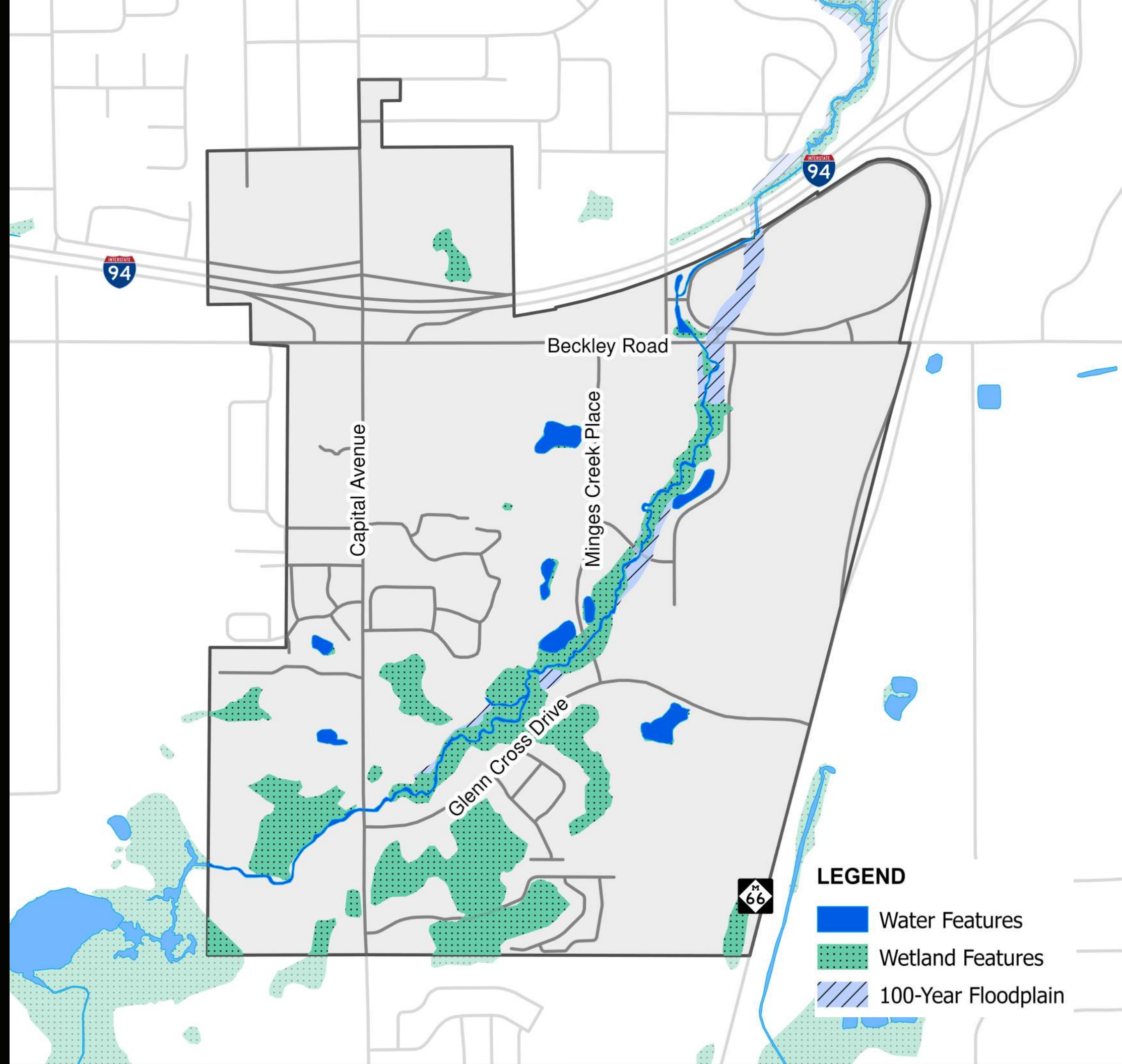
Resulting in **143.3 acres** of surface parking lots in the Lakeview District - the equivalent of over **108 football fields!**



“In many cases, these parking areas have gone without maintenance, leaving large expanses of asphalt cratered with potholes and weeds.”

WATER RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE

While much of the Lakeview District has been developed, sensitive environmental areas remain in the district. These largely include wetland areas along Brickyard Creek as well as areas south of Glenn Cross Road. Due to the historical path of Brickyard Creek being disrupted by the construction of Lakeview Square Mall in the 1980s, the FEMA-designated floodplain still runs underneath the current Sears site. The Lakeview District also features small retention ponds scattered throughout the area.





Brickyard Creek: A Disrupted Yet Defining Waterway

Running from southwest to northeast through the entire Lakeview District, Brickyard Creek is a small tributary that connects to Goguac Lake as well as the Kalamazoo River. As oak savannas and farm fields gave way to strip malls and parking lots, the creek has continued to be shaped by the district's development. As mentioned earlier on Page 10, rerouting the creek through a culvert beneath Lakeview Square Mall raised concerns about water quality and downstream flooding.



DNR opposes Forbes-Cohen shopping center

With the creek being channeled beneath the Sears site, large retention ponds were constructed nearby. Ownership of these ponds is uncertain however, as some of them are privately-owned while the City owns other ponds. The Brickyard Creek Trail was constructed along its banks in the 1990s and connects the entire Lakeview District together.

Current Stormwater Issues

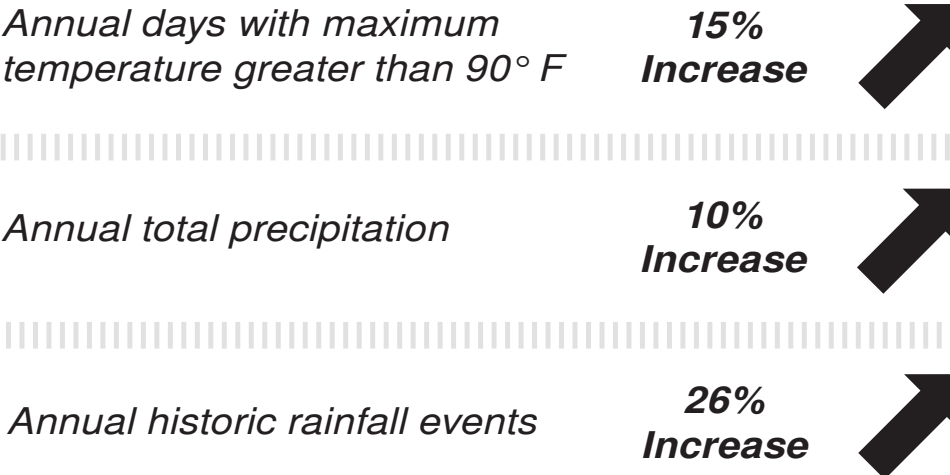
Street Flooding – Beckley at the western entrance to Lakeview Square Mall floods due to the Brickyard Creek (aka Minges Brook) crossing.

Ponds – Ponds in the Brickyard Creek watershed south of Beckley were designed to be dry detention ponds. High groundwater levels have made them wet ponds and decreased their capacity.

Retention Pond at Minges Brook Mall – The pond has no outlet or overflow structure. The pond seeps through and overflows its western bank. While the City has reinforced the bank and installed an underdrain with an outfall to Brickyard Creek/Minges Brook, the potential for bank sloughing and/or failure is a concern. The outfall also contributes to bank erosion on Brickyard Creek.

Over the next 20 years...

It's estimated there will be an increase in historical rainfall events, which are days when rainfall is substantially more than normal. This increases likelihood of flash flooding and property damage.



Source: National Climate Assessment

DEMOGRAPHICS

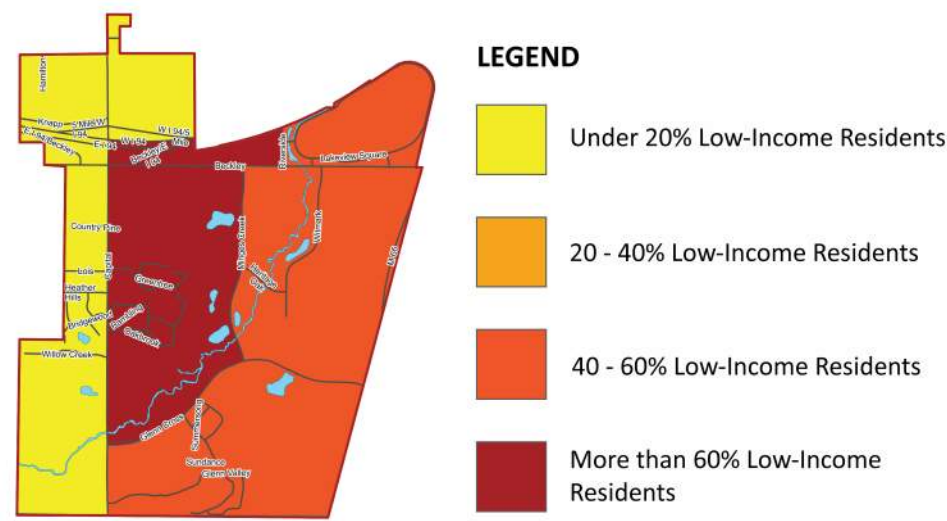
The Lakeview District features unique demographic characteristics when compared with Battle Creek as a whole. The area features a higher population density, a higher diversity index*, younger median age, lower average income, and smaller household size than the Battle Creek average. This is likely attributed to the area’s concentration of apartment complexes, with over 1,800 units in the area. In addition to these data points, housing data in the Lakeview District illustrates the low percentage of owner-occupied housing units along with the much lower average household size in contrast with the Battle Creek and State of Michigan average.

Some Key Demographics of the Lakeview District Include...

- *Higher population density than the rest of Battle Creek*
- *Median age in the Lakeview District (30.5 years old) is younger than the Battle Creek median age (38.4 years old)*
- *The Lakeview District features a more ethnically diverse population than the rest of Battle Creek*
- *Median household income in the Lakeview District (\$40,244) is much lower than Battle Creek’s median household income (\$49,428)*

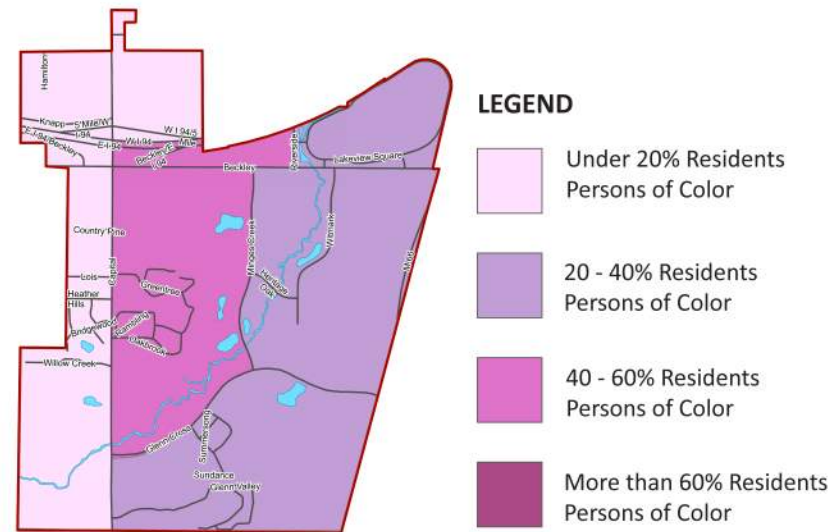
Location	Population Density (Persons/Acre)	Median Age (Years)	Median Household Income	Diversity Index*
Lakeview District	2,240.8	30.5	\$40,244	62.5
City of Battle Creek	1,228.9	38.4	\$49,428	61.8
Michigan	178.6	41.1	\$65,287	50.0

**Diversity Index = Probability of two individuals selected at random to be of a different race or ethnicity*



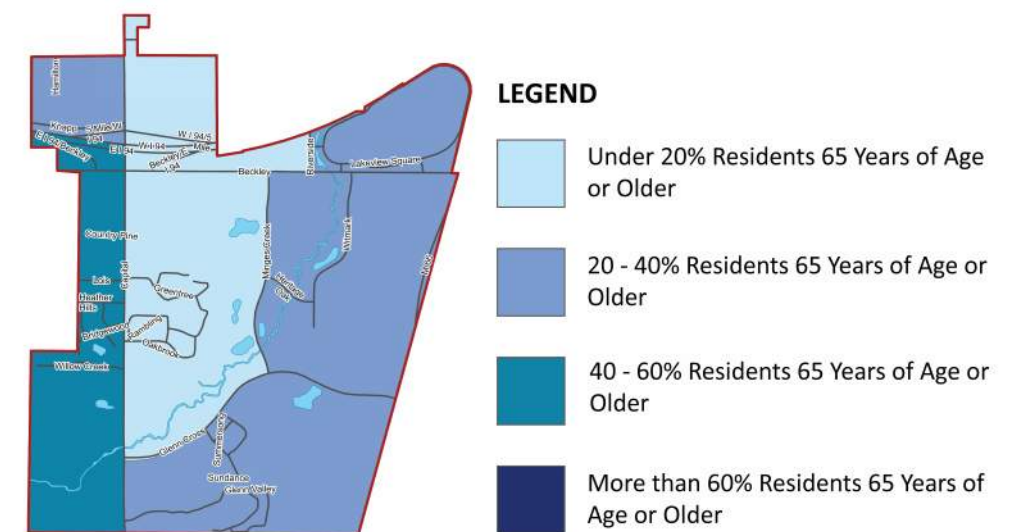
Low Income Households

This map indicates that low-income populations* are largely located east of Capital Avenue – with the greatest concentration of low-income residents centered around The Arbors of Battle Creek and The Landings at The Preserve apartment complexes. Although featuring a lower percentage of low-income residents, the census block group south of Glen Cross Road as well as east of Minges Creek Place still feature 41% of its population classified as low-income.



Minority Populations

Minority populations (not single-race white or hispanic) within the Lakeview District are primarily concentrated east of Capital Avenue - centered around The Arbors of Battle Creek and The Landings at The Preserve apartment complexes. This implies that nearly 50% of individuals in this area are members of a minority group, a much higher rate than the state as an average.



Senior Populations

An estimated 14% of residents within the LDDA area are over 65 years old. This is lower than both the state's percentage of senior residents (18.7%) as well as the nation's overall percentage of senior residents (17.3%). The above map illustrates the estimated percentage of senior citizens in each census block group within the Lakeview District.

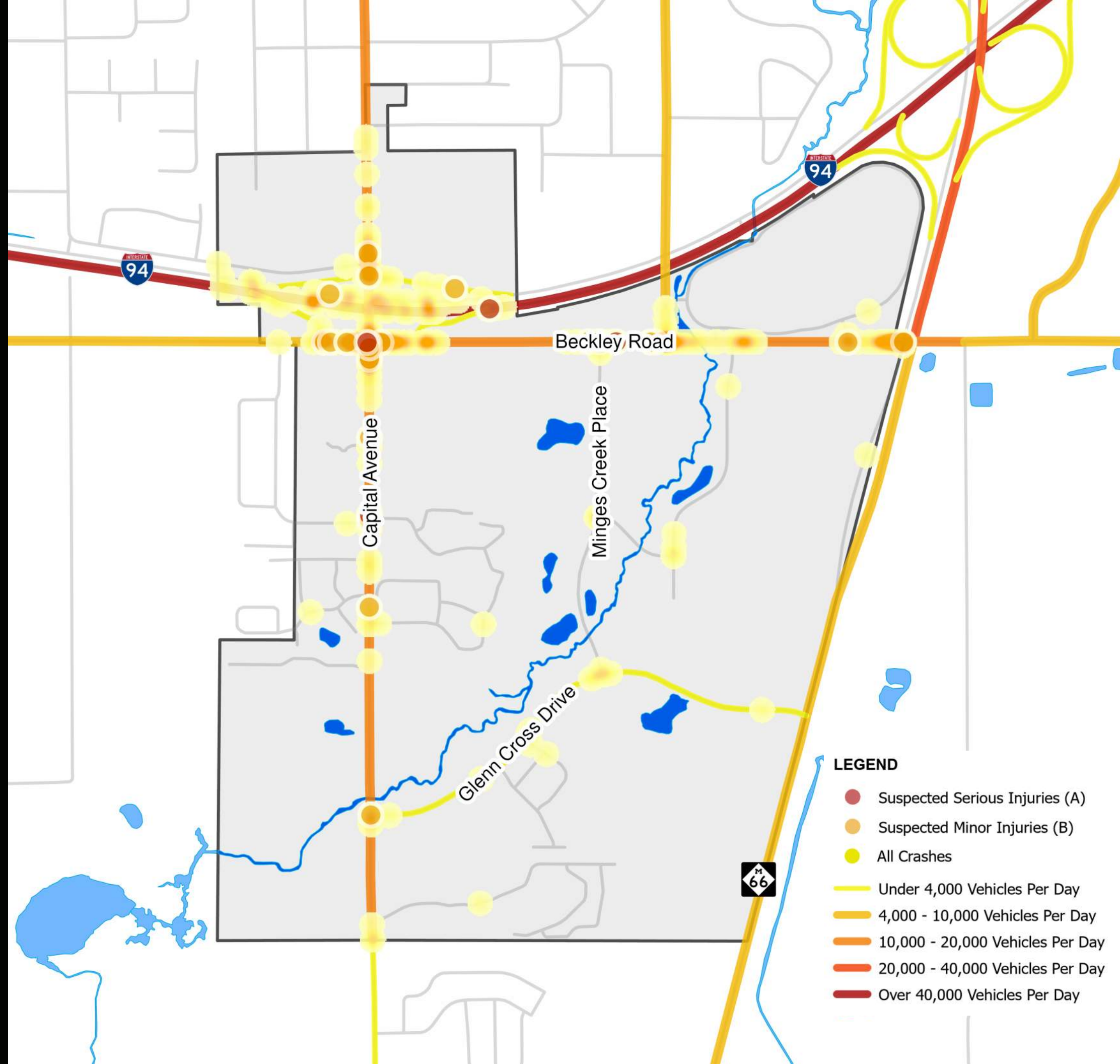
Location	2023 Median Home Value	2023 Owner Occupied Housing Units (% of All Housing Units)	2023 Average Household Size (Persons/Household)
Lakeview District	\$187,069	3.5%	1.95
City of Battle Creek	\$119,877	61.2%	2.39
Michigan	\$222,633	71.6%	2.42

*Low-Income Household = Household income is less than or equal to twice the federal "poverty line"

MOBILITY

Mobility in the Lakeview District is defined by its roadway infrastructure network. Largely an environment of wide roads and highways, traveling in the district is focused on vehicular travel instead of transit, walking, cycling, or other modes of transportation. Roads such as Capital Avenue and Beckley Road feature higher speeds and traffic volumes than others in the district such as Glenn Cross Drive or Minges Creek Place.

Map to Right: Traffic Volumes from 2021;
Traffic Crash Data from 2018-2022





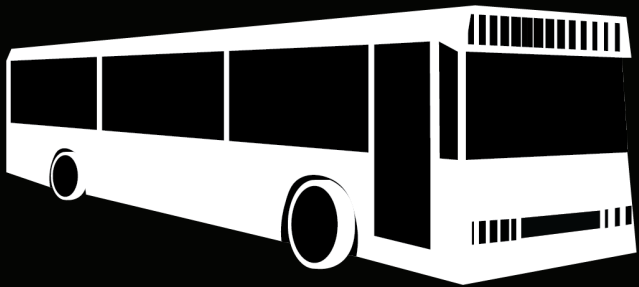
Beckley Road is the primary commercial corridor of the Battle Creek Region



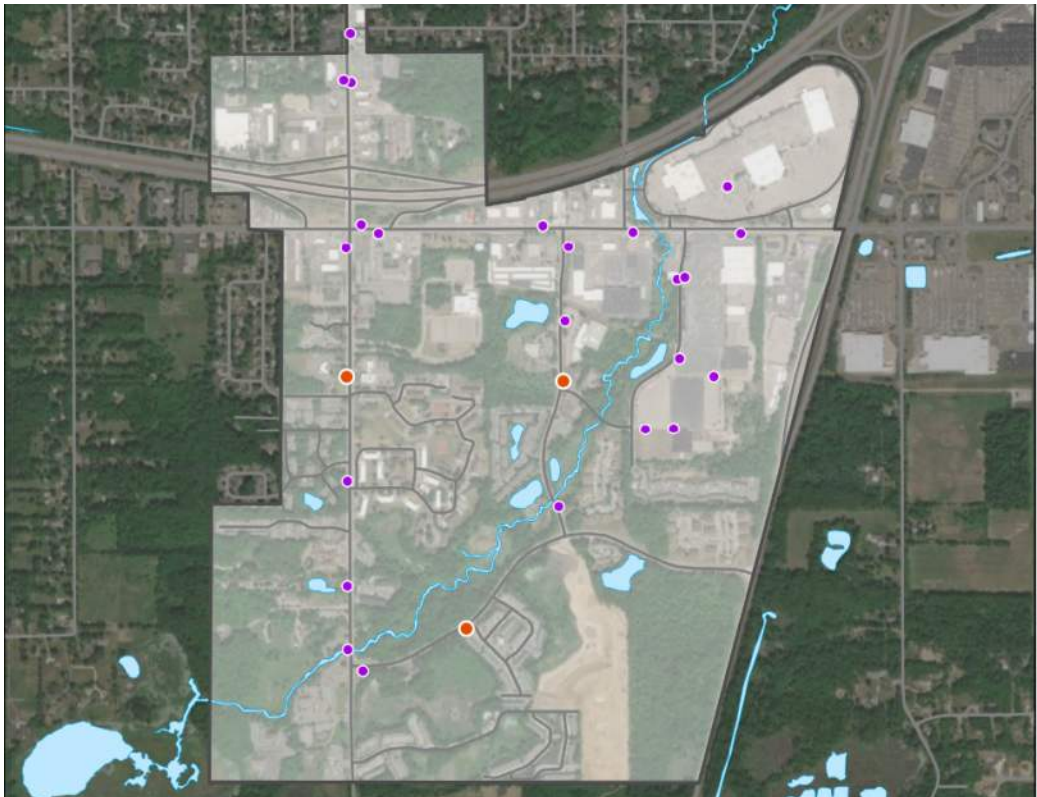
Due to its development during the late 20th century, Beckley Road is a five-lane, auto-oriented roadway that focuses on getting vehicle traffic through the Lakeview District as quickly as possible. There is an estimated 16,000 vehicles traveling through this corridor every day, providing vehicle access to regional retail and shopping locations.

Because of the high-speed character and roadway design of Beckley Road, there are limited crossing opportunities for pedestrians through the area, making pedestrian connectivity a challenge. This current configuration places vehicle travel at the top of the “mobility pyramid,” with all other modes of transportation weighed as far less important.

Did You Know?
The Capital Avenue & Beckley Road bus route is the most heavily-used route in the Battle Creek Transit system.



Nearly all bus stops in the region lack infrastructure (**below left**). Only three bus stops include shelters (**middle left**) even though there are numerous bus stops in the Lakeview District (**below right**).

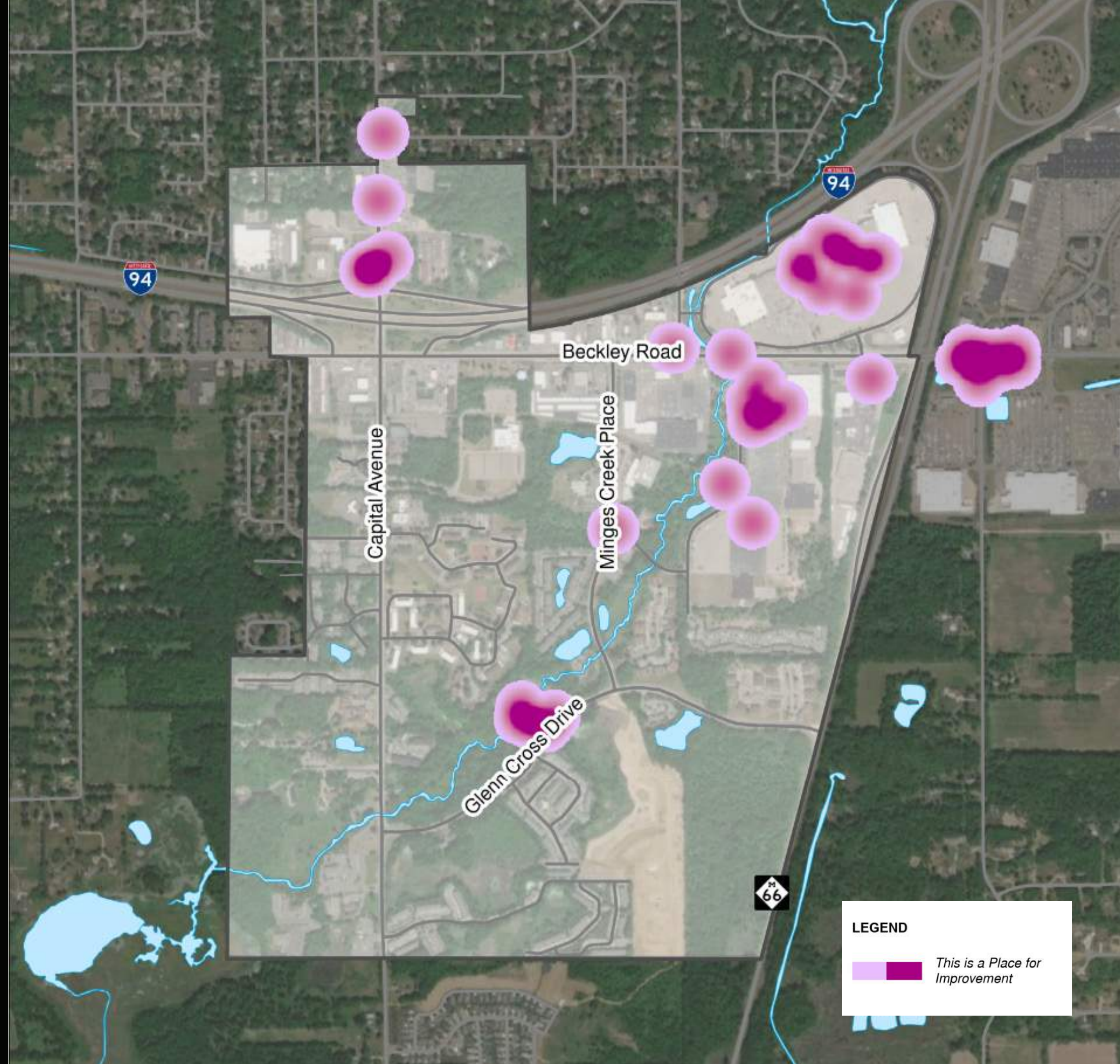


LEGEND
● Bus Stops
● Bus Stops with Shelters

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

Members of the community were encouraged to offer their thoughts and feedback through a variety of methods. This included two online community surveys, informal virtual forums, focus group sessions with business owners, representatives from local government agencies, housing developers, and mobility professionals, and three community open house events. Held at different points throughout the plan development process, these comments helped shape plan priorities and affirmed people's primary concerns of the Lakeview District.

Map to Right: Community Feedback Map
from Community Open House #1



Community Open House #1 (April 25, 2024)

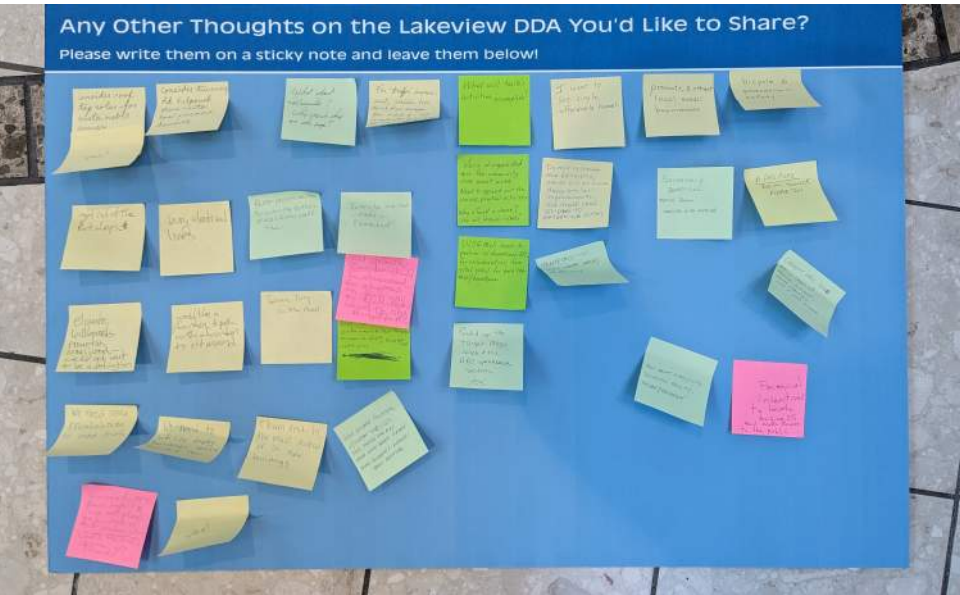
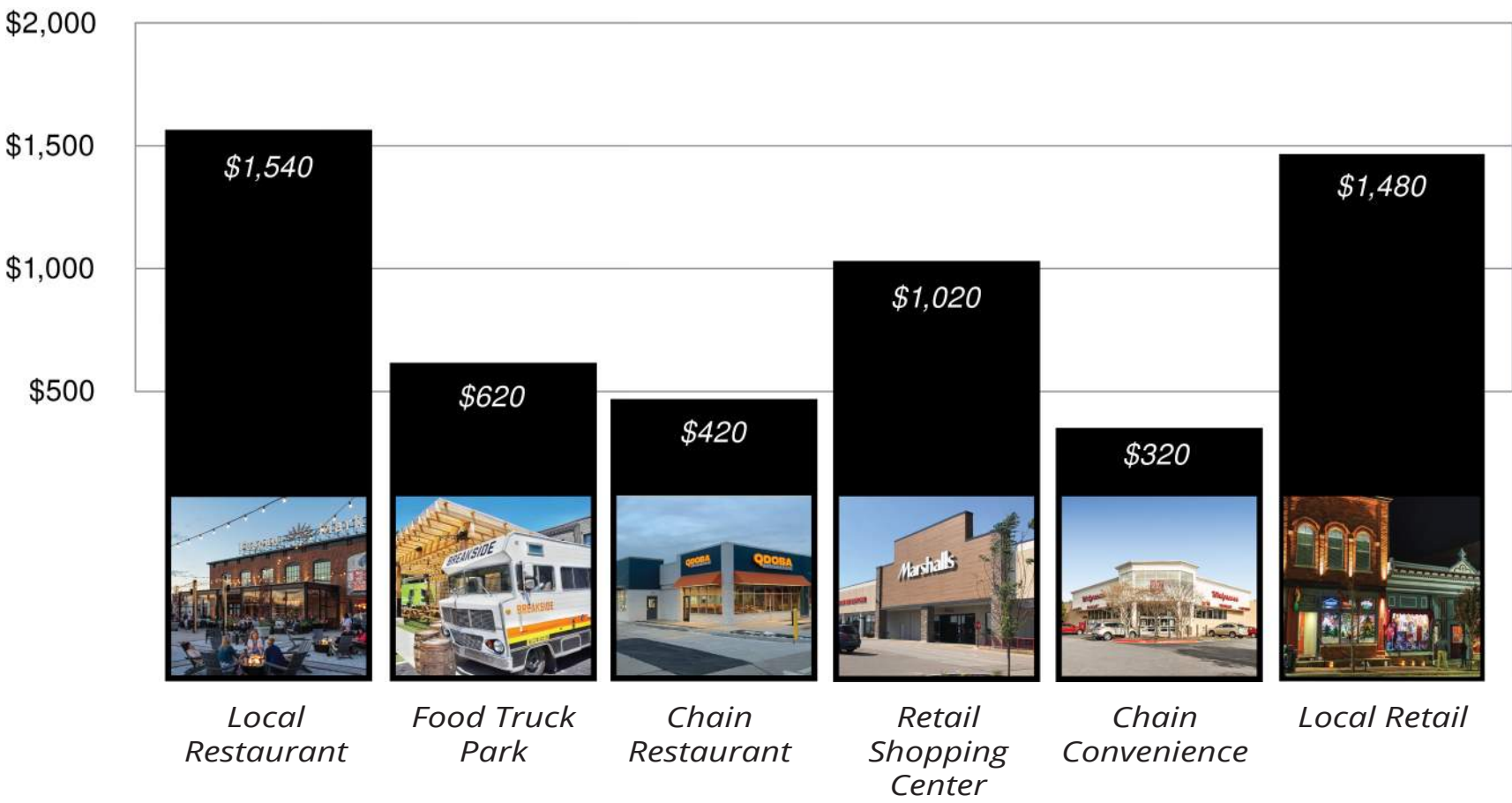
Held in the central atrium of Lakeview Square Mall, this event gathered attendee’s feedback on what type of housing and commercial development they wanted to see in the area, as well as general comments and locations for improvement on a large billboard map. General themes from the event were a desire to see Lakeview Mall redeveloped or improved, the importance of better traffic management along Beckley Road, improving pedestrian access and connectivity throughout the area, more local restaurant and shopping opportunities, and more residential development – particularly in the form of cottage courts and other traditional neighborhood forms.



Community Open House #2 (July 17, 2024)

Held in the Horrock’s beer garden at Lakeview Square Mall, this event showcased potential development scenarios in key areas, the proposed non-motorized network, and potential street improvements to major roadways within the area.

Exercise: Where Do You Want to Spend Money in the Lakeview District?



Above: Invitational Flyer for Community Open House #2; Feedback from Community Open House #1.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Because of the Lakeview District’s location and regional significance, many groups interact with the area differently. Focus Group sessions were held to hear from these groups and gather their perspectives on the area’s existing assets, current challenges, and vision for the Lakeview District’s future.

Housing Focus Group

Comprised of professionals in the housing development realm, this group discussed the area’s housing needs and how they related to the greater Battle Creek region. This group discussed some of the challenges around housing development, namely a perception of low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) being required to make projects feasible, a lack of strategic leadership in housing, and a lack of homeowner incentives that promote equity building. The group also noted positive changes, including zoning changes that enable mixed use development and overall shifting attitudes towards welcoming new development.

Key Insights

- Battle Creek faces challenges with affordable housing, including a limited developer pipeline and reliance on LIHTC funding.
- Successful examples, like the Redwood project, highlight the potential for targeted initiatives. Recommendations include homeowner incentives, strategic leadership for housing, and leveraging tools like brownfield tax increment financing.
- Zoning changes, including mixed-use allowances, are seen as positive but must overcome perceptions of the city being difficult to work with.

Lakeview Square Mall Focus Group

As the largest building and prominent destination along Beckley Road, the future of Lakeview Square Mall was integral to this planning process. Business owners, the mall manager, and others involved in the mall’s future discussed the mall’s history and current challenges. The group noted the Sears has been vacant and has been marketed in the past but has not attracted interest. The group discussed other successful mall redevelopment examples but noted there is no desire to demolish the mall at this point. The group concluded that the City and mall stakeholders should continue to work together closely – particularly to identify a solution for the vacant Sears site and other underutilized parts of Lakeview Square Mall.

Key Insights

- The Lakeview Square Mall and adjacent properties face redevelopment challenges, with limited interest in repurposing the former Sears site.
- Business successes like Horrocks and outlot development demonstrate some potential for revitalization.
- Retail restrictions among owners and leases, though partially resolved, continue to hinder development.
- Collaborative planning between stakeholders and the city is critical for future development, with suggestions for phased and destination-based uses.

Mobility Focus Group

Largely due to its development as a suburban commercial corridor, there are limited non-motorized connections throughout the Lakeview District. This group was comprised of public transit professionals, disability advocates, and other stakeholders invested in improving pedestrian and non-motorized connections throughout the area. This group discussed the challenges of crossing Beckley Road and other major roadways along with the need for improved public transit infrastructure throughout the area.

Key Insights

- Beckley Road is a critical commercial and transit corridor in the Battle Creek region, heavily used for shopping, employment, and services.
- Transit challenges include inadequate bus stops, poor ADA compliance, and a driver shortage despite high demand.
- Future considerations include regional transit millage efforts, EV charging stations, and MDOT’s boulevard conversion study for M-66
- Pedestrian access is hindered by the sprawling nature of the area, with key crossing points noted as safety concerns.

Intergovernmental Focus Group

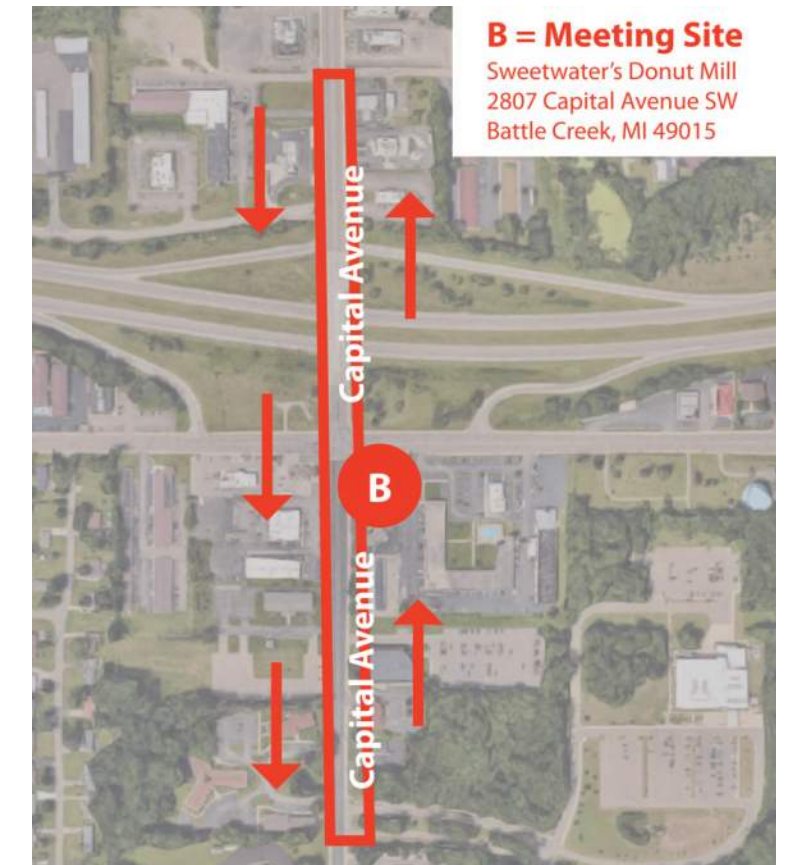
Since the Lakeview District is a key shopping center servicing many nearby communities, the planning team met with stakeholders from nearby local units of government and other public agencies. This group discussed the importance of housing for spurring regional economic development, the need for coordination on water and sewer infrastructure projects, and improving regional land use planning efforts to promote walkability, placemaking, and agricultural preservation.

Key Insights

- Preserving agricultural land and leveraging agri-tourism and agri-tainment opportunities were identified as priorities.
- Suggestions included restarting the subdivision committee and improving mechanisms for collaboration through town halls and quarterly meetings.
- Housing demand in Calhoun County will increase due to regional industrial development, requiring future infrastructure.
- The Transportation Authority of Calhoun County was highlighted as a successful model for implementation-focused collaboration.

WALKING AUDIT

About 15 city staff and steering committee members volunteered to conduct a walking audit of the LDDA on April 9, 2024. Utilizing the AARP walk audit tool kit worksheets, the group found difficulties related to walkability within the LDDA.



Key Insights

- Both Beckley Road and Capital Avenue lacked many pedestrian amenities, including marked crossings, signage, and bike lanes.
- Transit stops lacked basic amenities for accessibility. One salient example for walk auditors included a bus stop in front of a physical therapy office that was on grass and without a sidewalk, making access to the office difficult.
- There were some places to sit and shade trees, but minimal bus shelters, trash receptacles, and other amenities that could boost safety and appeal
- Overall, Beckley Road felt more comfortable to walk along than did Capital Avenue.

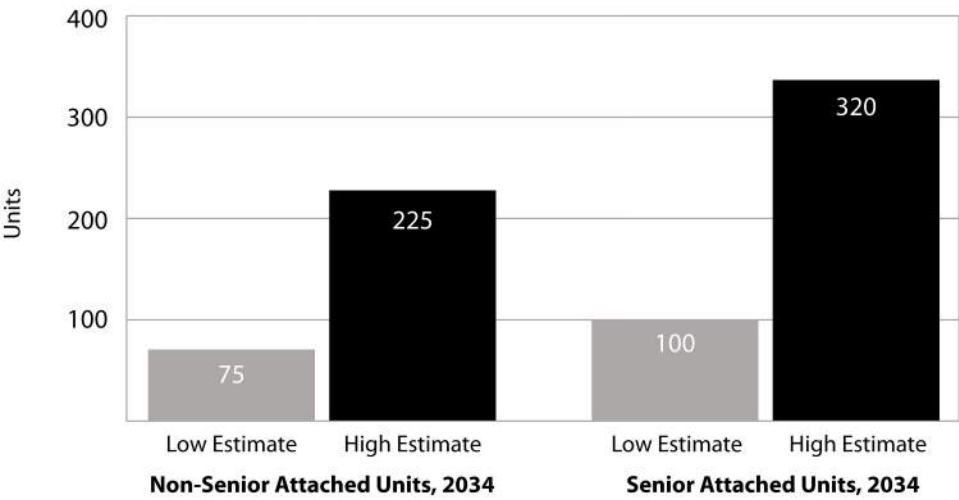


Over 1,300 people responded to the community survey. Key findings include:

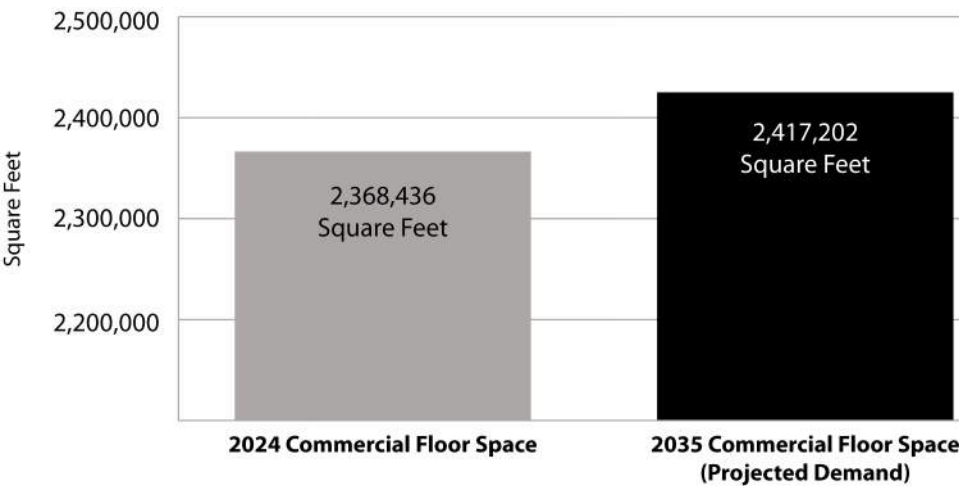
Key Feedback

- Over the next ten years, between 75 and 225 new attached housing units can be absorbed in the LDDA.
- In addition, there is potential for between 100 and 320 senior market rate units in the areas. Tenancy for these units is supported by households in the area that desire to move from detached, single-family housing into smaller units with walkability.
- Depending on housing stock increases, 47,000 square feet of new retail space will be supportable in the foreseeable future, which is just a 2% increase from current available space.
- The capture of exported market sales and space should focus on food services and general merchandise operations lost with mall changes. New general merchandise tenants will be smaller, scaled, and more focused than previous tenants.
- New office space in new development is likely negligible for other than medical or health care, such as outpatient centers, rehabilitation, etc. Medical space increases are dependent on major institution policies.

There is enough housing demand to support hundreds of new housing units within the Lakeview District...



Yet there is little demand for additional commercial floor space.



This implies that there is current unmet demand for additional housing while very little demand for additional retail or commercial uses.

MARKET ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY SURVEY

Throughout the plan development process, a community survey gathered feedback on how people interact with the Lakeview District. This gave insight on retail and housing demand and helped inform development of scenario plans.

VISION AND THEMES

“Battle Creek’s Lakeview District will be a vibrant, sustainable neighborhood through enhanced connectivity and walkability, diverse housing options, thriving commercial businesses, and expansive and resilient green spaces.”

What We’ve Heard

- The Lakeview District/Beckley Road Corridor is disconnected and difficult to get around, especially if you aren’t in a car.
- The Lakeview District/Beckley Road Corridor is home to a large low-moderate income population with lower rates of vehicle ownership than the general population. This population also includes a large portion of families and children.
- An exceptional proportion of the community is dedicated to cars/parking, and very little space is available for public gathering spaces or recreation. This creates a sense of isolation for people living/visiting the area, and all of the pavement causes flooding and stormwater issues.
- Despite some increasing vacancy, the area is home to major commercial stores and maintains interest from national retailers, with new buildings under construction.
- There are great assets in the district, that if better connected with public assets, could become even stronger community focal points.

Moving Forward

1

PLACEMAKING

Creating places where people want to be and spend time outside of their cars.

2

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

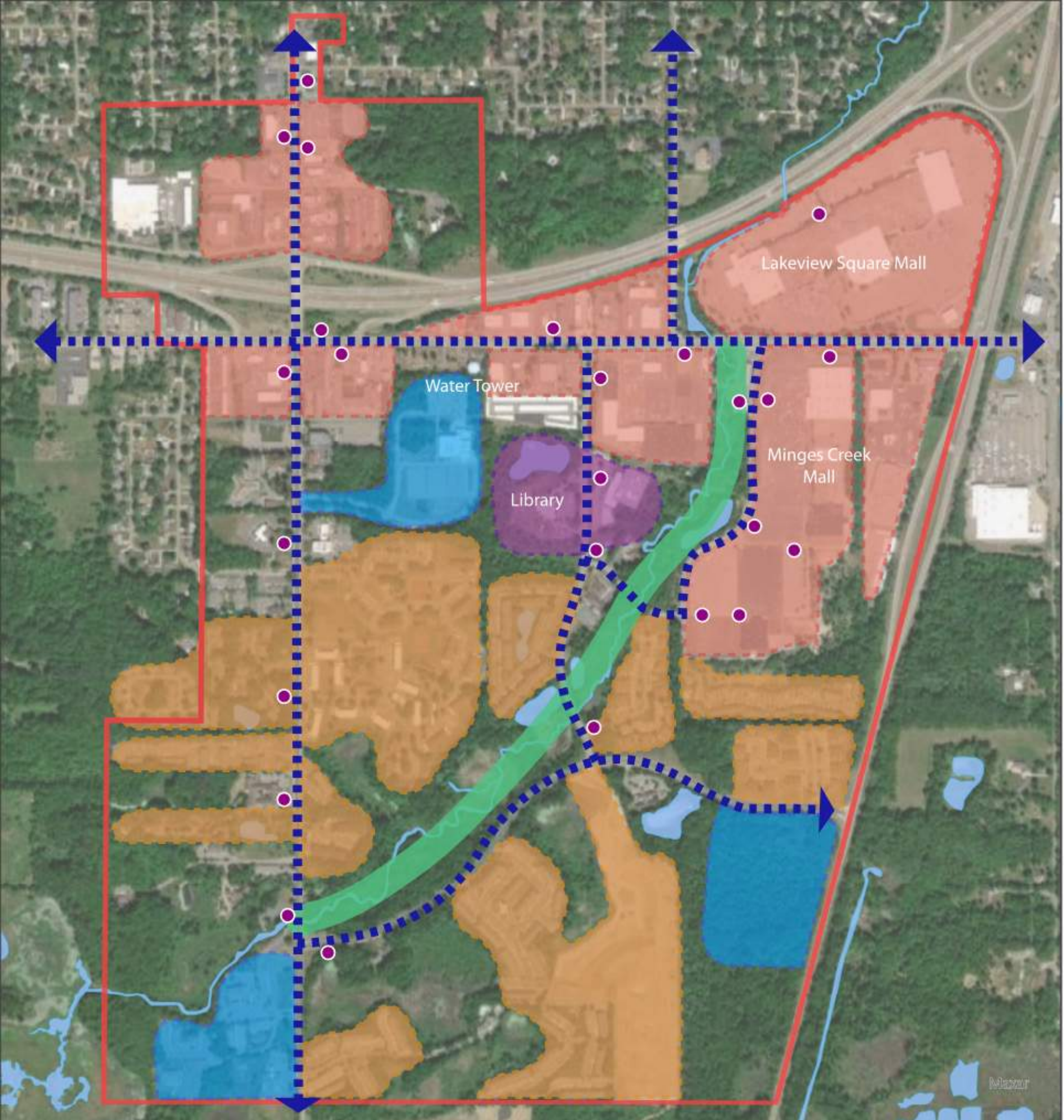
Transform large empty parking lots into green spaces and places for people, while further enhancing the Brickyard Creek Trail.

3

REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCE

Create transportation choices for people living and visiting the Lakeview District in how they get around and experience the place.

EXISTING FRAMEWORK MAP



LEGEND

- Legacy Suburban Commercial
- Medical Office Park
- Residential Complexes (Apartment Islands)
- Civic + Recreational
- Street Network
- Brickyard Creek Linear Trail
- Bus Stop





|||||

3 REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

SUBURBAN RETROFIT EXAMPLES

Suburban retrofitting is a redevelopment process aimed at revitalizing aging suburban areas, pivoting away from auto-oriented land use, and repurposing underutilized shopping malls. This involves redesigning spaces to make them more walkable, mixed-use, and sustainable.

Mall redevelopments often entail converting traditional malls into mixed-use developments with residential units, entertainment venues, coworking spaces, and dining options. These changes adapt to evolving consumer preferences and contribute to the economic and social vibrancy of suburban areas. There are several suburban retrofits completed both in Michigan and nationally that may offer insights into future directions for the Beckley Road corridor.



Above: Former Highland Mall, Austin, TX

Meriden Green - Meriden, CT

Meriden Green is a vibrant public park located in downtown Meriden, Connecticut. It serves as a focal point for community gatherings, events, and recreational activities. Following the daylighting of Harbor Brook, the park now features a spacious green area with well-maintained lawns, trees, and walking paths, providing a relaxing environment for visitors.



The Shops at Westshore - Holland, MI

The Shops at Westshore in Holland, Michigan, is a retail center that offers a diverse range of shopping, dining, and entertainment options. The shopping complex features a mix of well-known national retailers, boutique shops, specialty stores, and eateries. The site still leans auto dependent, with large surface lots. However, it has a low retail vacancy rate, and future housing is planned. Additionally, The Shops at Westshore often host community events, promotions, and seasonal activities to engage customers and create a lively atmosphere. This makes it a popular destination for shopping excursions and leisure outings in the Holland area.



***Maplewood Mall Retrofit,
Maplewood, MN***

Maplewood Mall, encompassing 35 acres of asphalt and concrete surfaces, previously posed a significant phosphorous runoff threat to Kohlman Lake. Over a 4-year period, the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District undertook a multi-phase construction initiative. This project introduced diverse features that now capture and filter 67% of rainwater, a substantial increase from the initial 3%. Noteworthy additions include tree trenches employing angular granite layers for water filtration, rain gardens, permeable pavers, and a 5,700-gallon cistern for rooftop runoff. Educational elements like interpretive signage, a conservation-themed mural, and a watershed map further highlight the mall's water management and its impact on the Mississippi River.



WHERE WE WANT TO GO

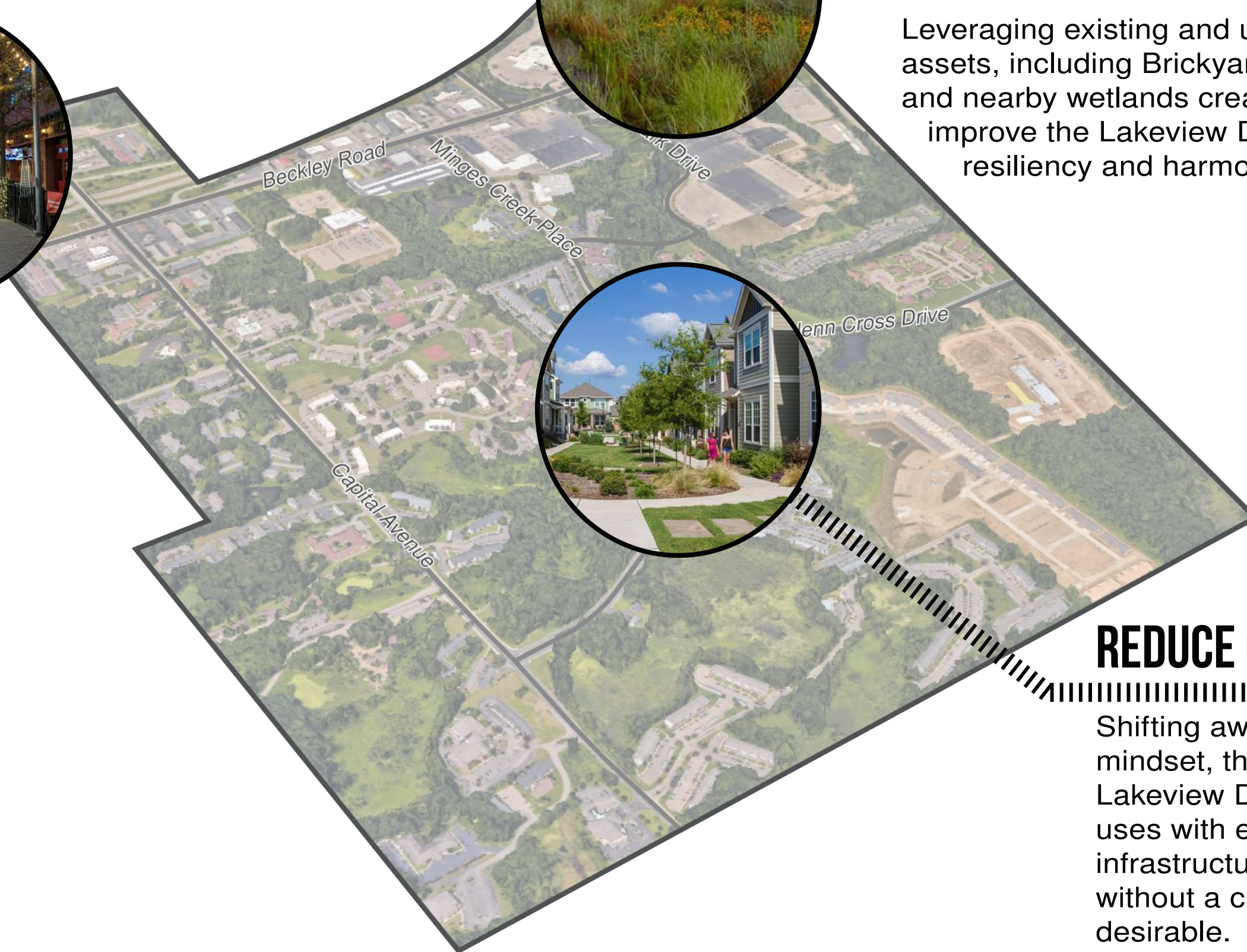
Throughout the planning process, three themes became apparent as foundational items to build implementation strategies on. These include:

- **PLACEMAKING**
- **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCE**

PLACEMAKING

As a largely suburban commercial area, strategies to mix, connect, and enhance land uses along with creating pleasant and comfortable environments can transform the Lakeview District from a place to drive through to a place people go to.





GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Leveraging existing and underutilized water assets, including Brickyard Creek, ponds, and nearby wetlands creates an opportunity to improve the Lakeview District's long-term resiliency and harmony with natural areas.

REDUCE CAR DEPENDENCE

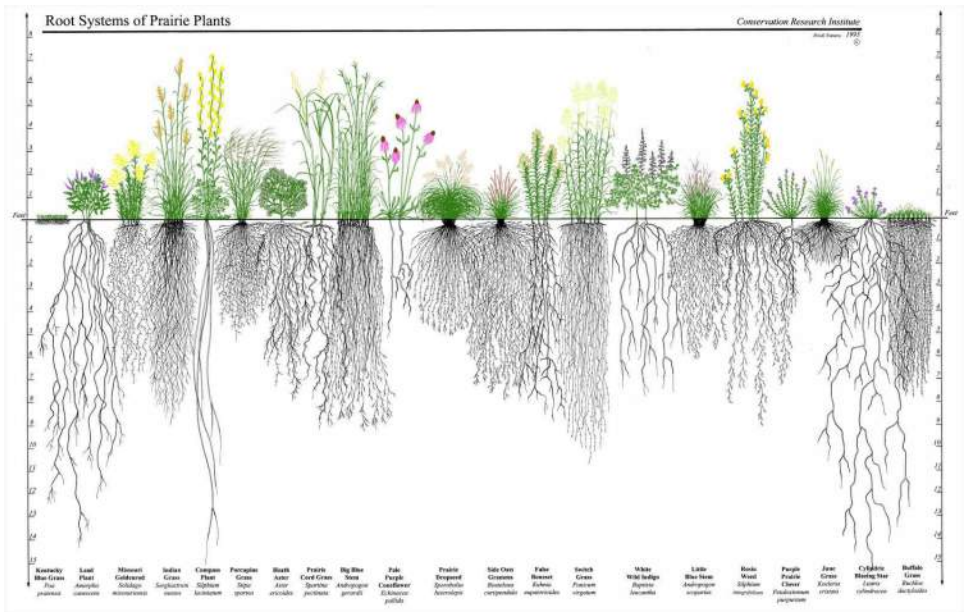
Shifting away from an auto-oriented mindset, the next life cycle of the Lakeview District will pair mixed land uses with enhanced mobility infrastructure, making traveling without a car more convenient and desirable.

IMPROVING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

With the Lakeview District’s large amount of paved surfaces, introducing green infrastructure through rain gardens, improved retention ponds, and native planting areas can reduce flooding risks, increase climate resiliency, and make the area more attractive.

Incentivizing Native Landscaping

As shown in the graphic, native plants have much longer root systems than turf grass (far left in graphic). The deep roots means that they can go longer between watering and they will have greater water uptake when it rains. Native plantings/ naturalized landscapes can go from grasses and flowering plants that are typically found in rain gardens to low mow grasses, such as buffalo grass (far right in graphic).



The United States Geological Survey soil classification data for the LDDA lists it as “Urban Land.” This indicates that fill was placed in the area when development occurred and that the actual soil types are unknown. As such, soils that are less optimal for infiltration (Type C) were utilized in the example below of changing from turf grass to naturalized landscaping. This gives us a conservative estimate of a 20% reduction in runoff if naturalized landscaping replaced turf grass in an area. If sand has actually been used as fill at a site, as city staff indicated has happened at the Target site, that reduction would be even greater.

Stormwater Storage & Filtration

This area was indicated by City staff to have highly permeable sand beneath it. As such, it is recommended that infiltration ponds be incorporated at the site to reduce the runoff going to Brickyard Creek. Depending on placement, this could also reduce the runoff going to their existing detention pond.

As noted above, when the existing pond is filled above the elevation of the bike path, water leaches through the banks. While the City has installed an underdrain and reinforced the bank with geogrid to protect their bike path and Brickyard Creek beyond the path, this is not a permanent solution. It is recommended that an overflow be installed in the pond below the elevation of the bike path to protect the western creek bank.



1

Lakeview Square Mall

Relocating Brickyard Creek

- Green Infrastructure Priorities
- Straighten and open up crossing at Beckley Road (reducing flooding at road crossing)
 - Replace Sears site with open park space
 - Improve water quality & flood storage capacity
 - Expand linear greenway park

2

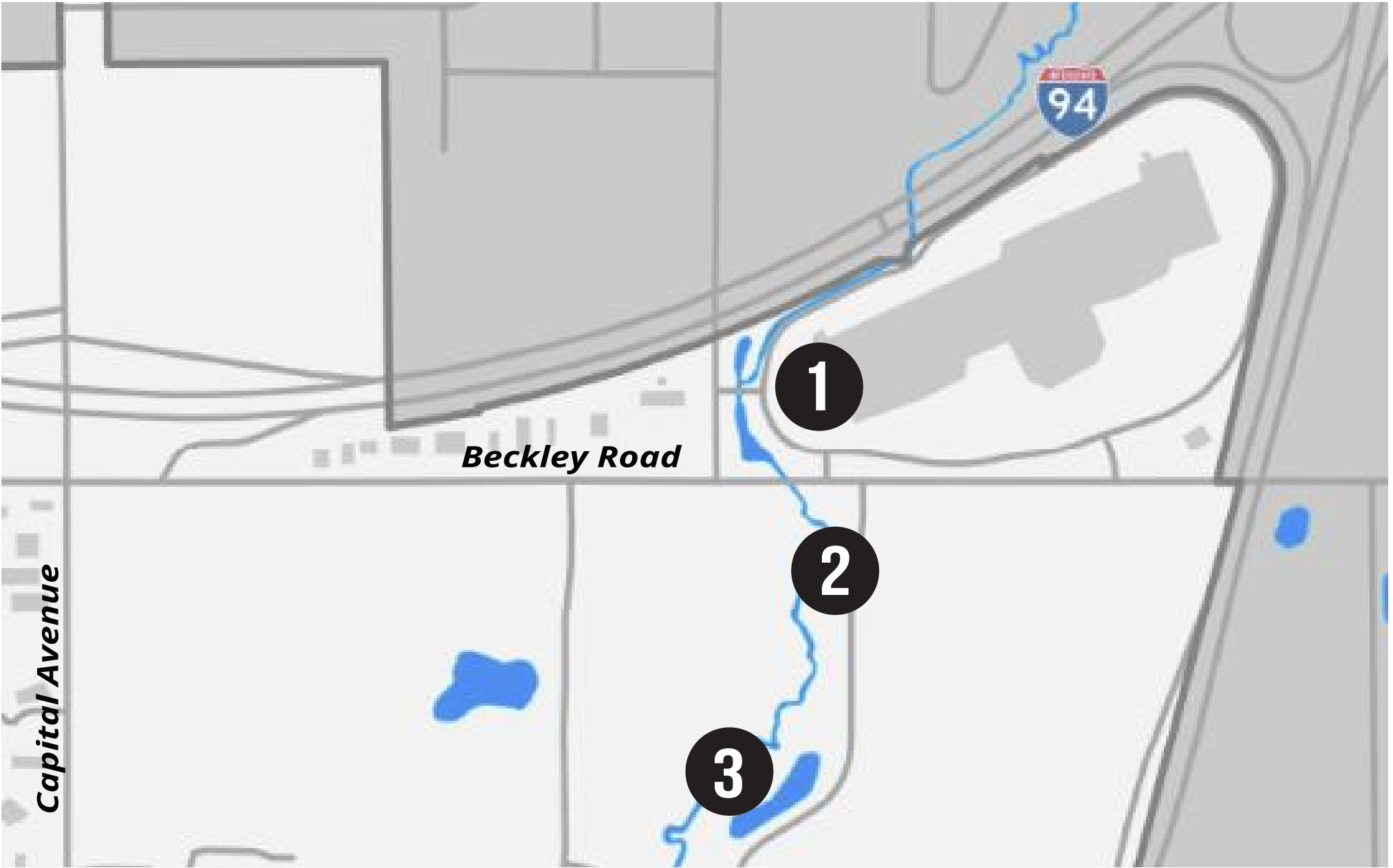
Minges Brook Mall

- Green Infrastructure Priorities
- Additional ponds in high infiltration areas
 - Add overflow to existing pond
 - Removal and replace pavement with native plantings

3

Improving Area Retention Ponds

- Green Infrastructure Priorities
- General maintenance of retention ponds
 - Conduct a regional capacity analysis
 - Create regional ponds similar to the Columbia Avenue Business Improvement District





Converting
This...

Into This...

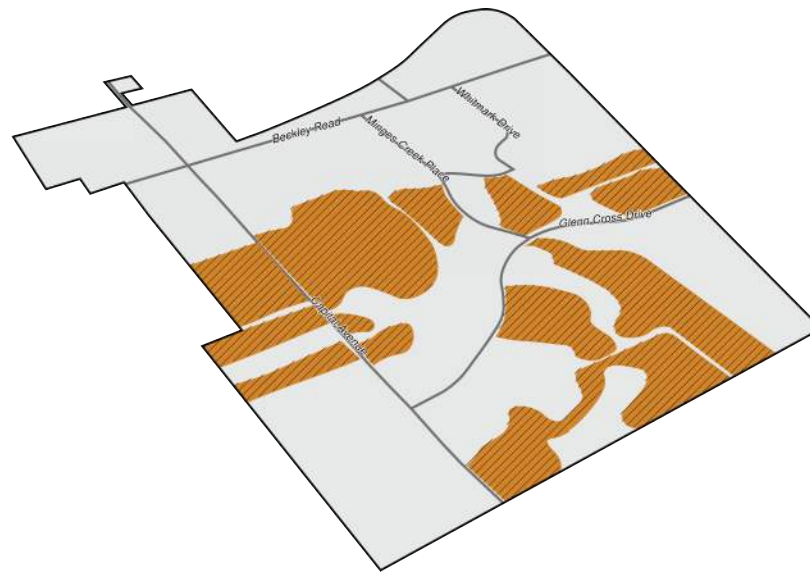


Would
reduce
flooding
an estimated **26%**
in the Lakeview District

IMPROVING MOBILITY

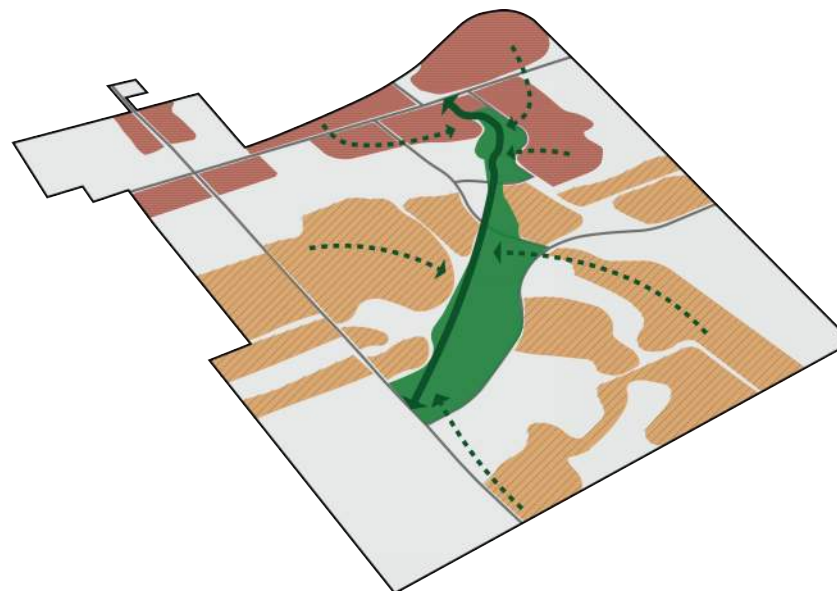
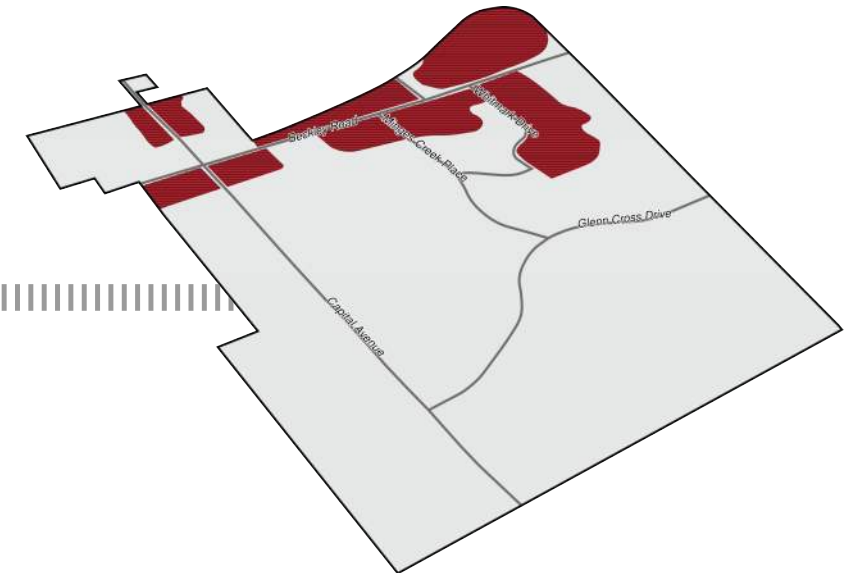
The Lakeview District is home to the highest density of residential units in Battle Creek. How can pedestrian and non-motorized improvements better connect these residents to nearby amenities, shopping locations, and employment centers?

Lakeview District: A Tale of Two Areas...



There are over **1,800** residential units within the Lakeview District

But they are separated from the numerous retail and shopping amenities along Beckley Road and Capital Avenue



In this way, the Brickyard Creek trail can be enhanced into a linear park or “greenway,” knitting the Lakeview District’s residential and commercial areas closer together without needing a car

With a Greenway Park Running Through It

The Brickyard Creek Greenway can connect the Lakeview District's natural areas and open space together, creating one large continuous park space.



1 Lakeview Square Mall Greenspace



Revitalizing the western portion of Lakeview Square Mall can add much-needed greenspace to the district. This can include daylighting Brickyard Creek that currently passes beneath the Sears building.

2 Dubois Cemetery & Water Tower Park

The City is considering decommissioning of the water tower along Beckley Road. This can add park space or be incorporated into Dubois Cemetery.

3 Helen Warner Branch - Willard Library

The public library features a pond and wetland area directly to the north, offering a natural asset that can be better taken advantage of and utilized as a place for public nature access.



4 Brickyard Creek Greenway Trail

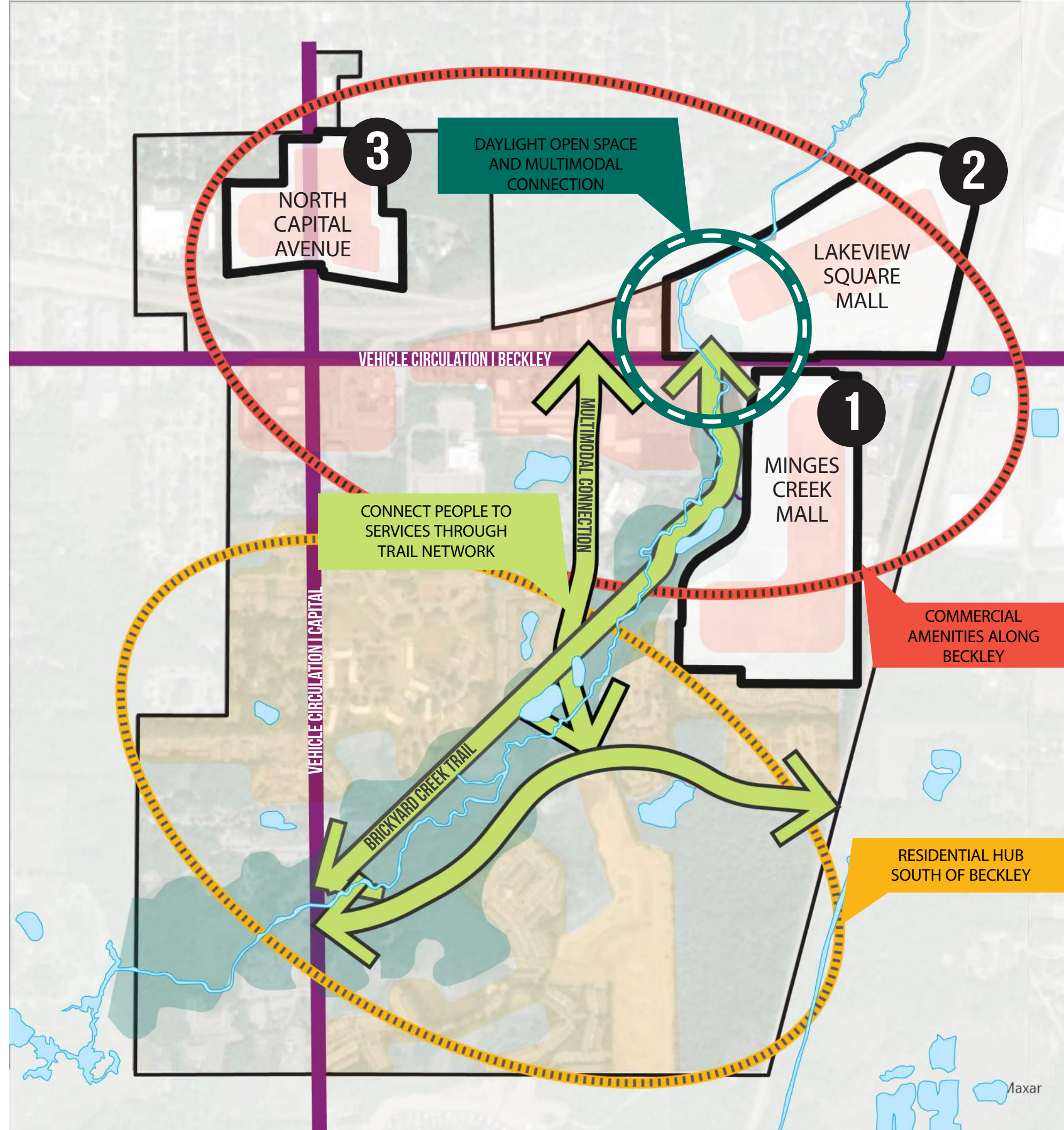
Running parallel to Brickyard Creek, the existing trail can be enhanced with safety lighting as well as art and playground amenities to create an inviting park-like environment.



3 CONCEPT AREAS: A BOLD VISION FOR THE LAKEVIEW DISTRICT

The three concept areas—North Capital Avenue, Lakeview Square Mall, and Minges Creek Mall—aim to reimagine future land use in ways that align with both the community’s vision and the interests of landowners. Each area is strategically located along key vehicle corridors and is adjacent to the Brickyard Creek Trail.

The study of these three areas focused on how their proximity to existing assets could guide and influence optimal future land use, fostering stronger connections within the community and enhancing the area’s overall potential.



1 Lakeview Square Mall

Located north of Beckley Road and south of the I-94/ M-66 interchange, the Lakeview Square Mall site encompasses about 58 acres of the original mall building, parking lots, and various outlot buildings fronting the Beckley Road corridor.



2 Minges Creek Mall

Located south of Beckley Road and fronting Whitmark Drive, this nearly 52 acre area of big box retail and expansive parking lots presents an opportunity to focus new development near Brickyard Creek.

3 North Capital Avenue

Located north of the I-94/Capital Avenue interchange, this area features auto-oriented restaurants, motels, and strip shopping centers and can be made more appealing through streetscape and green infrastructure enhancements.



1. LAKEVIEW SQUARE MALL

The redevelopment concept of Lakeview Square Mall aims to enhance both environmental and economic outcomes for the site.

Currently, the mall features a mix of successful, thriving tenants alongside vacant spaces. The plan is to create individual “front doors” for the active tenants while demolishing the interior corridors, the former Sears space, and the northern section of the mall.

Parking on the south side will be preserved to accommodate future outbuilding developments. The additional space on the north side offers potential for a pedestrian walkway, as well as the possibility of multifamily housing and a hotel.

To address flooding issues on the west side of the site, Brickyard Creek will be daylighted, transforming the area into an outdoor natural amenity that will serve both residents and pedestrians.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS OF LAKEVIEW SQUARE

- Strategic partial demolition of the mall to preserve anchor tenants and provide “front doors”
- Align residential program adjacent to Brickyard Creek and green space
- Locate multi-family and hotel to create placemaking opportunities and a pedestrian walk as a social gathering place for residents and visitors
- Preserve parking lot adjacent to Beckley for future outbuilding development

BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

- Residential
- Hotel
- Retail
- Existing Area of Mall



IMAGE ABOVE
CONCEPTUAL AERIAL
FOR LAKEVIEW SQUARE MALL

2. MINGES CREEK MALL

The redevelopment concepts of Minges Creek Mall aims to transform its underutilized parking lots into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly community.

This housing development will capitalize on existing assets, such as Brickyard Creek and Trail, nearby established neighborhoods, and surrounding commercial amenities, fostering seamless integration with the area's infrastructure.

In conjunction with the Lake View Mall development, these projects are expected to add approximately 250 new housing units to Battle Creek.

Two development scenarios—Option A and Option B—were evaluated to explore various opportunities and optimize the project’s potential.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS OF OPTION A

- Promote lower density multifamily typologies, including townhomes, fourplexes and cottage courts - providing alternate housing choices for the local market at a variety of price points
- Maintain all existing retail on the parcels
- Utilize Whitmark as the primary N/S vehicle drive, add a secondary drive along the retail parking
- Connect to existing multifamily on the South edge of the parcels

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

-  Townhouses
 Fourplex
 Cottage Courts

IMAGE RIGHT
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
FOR OPTION A





IMAGE ABOVE
CONCEPTUAL AERIAL
FOR MINGES CREEK MALL OPTION A

2. MINGES CREEK MALL

The redevelopment concepts of Minges Creek Mall aims to transform its underutilized parking lots into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly community.

This housing development will capitalize on existing assets, such as Brickyard Creek and Trail, nearby established neighborhoods, and surrounding commercial amenities, fostering seamless integration with the area's infrastructure.

In conjunction with the Lake View Mall development, these projects are expected to add approximately 250 new housing units to Battle Creek.

Two development scenarios—Option A and Option B—were evaluated to explore various opportunities and optimize the project's potential.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS OF OPTION B

- Relocated Whitmark to allow for townhouses to look over Brickyard Creek Trail
- Demolish existing ABC Warehouse
- Provide square footage for an neighborhood amenity (Ex: daycare facility, community center, outdoor sports courts)
- Connect to existing multifamily on the South edge of the parcels

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

- Townhouses
- Fourplex
- Cottage Courts
- Neighborhood Amenity

IMAGE RIGHT
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
FOR OPTION A





EXISTING
RETAIL

NEIGHBORHOOD
AMENITY

COMMUNITY
PARK

STREET
PARKING

PORCHES
FACING BRICKYARD

IMAGE ABOVE
CONCEPTUAL AERIAL
FOR MINGES CREEK MALL OPTION B

3. NORTH CAPITAL AVENUE

North Capital Avenue would benefit from stabilizing the existing commercial buildings, coupled with the advantages offered by the proposed street design improvements.

An opportunity for development could involve transforming the existing Country Inn and Suites into multi-family housing, enhancing the area’s residential options while contributing to the revitalization of the corridor.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

- Targeted development to include apartment buildings, with accompanying site improvements, open spaces, and retail spaces integrated along North Capital Avenue.
- Where feasible, new developments should be oriented to face the street, with parking located behind the buildings to enhance pedestrian access and street-level activity.

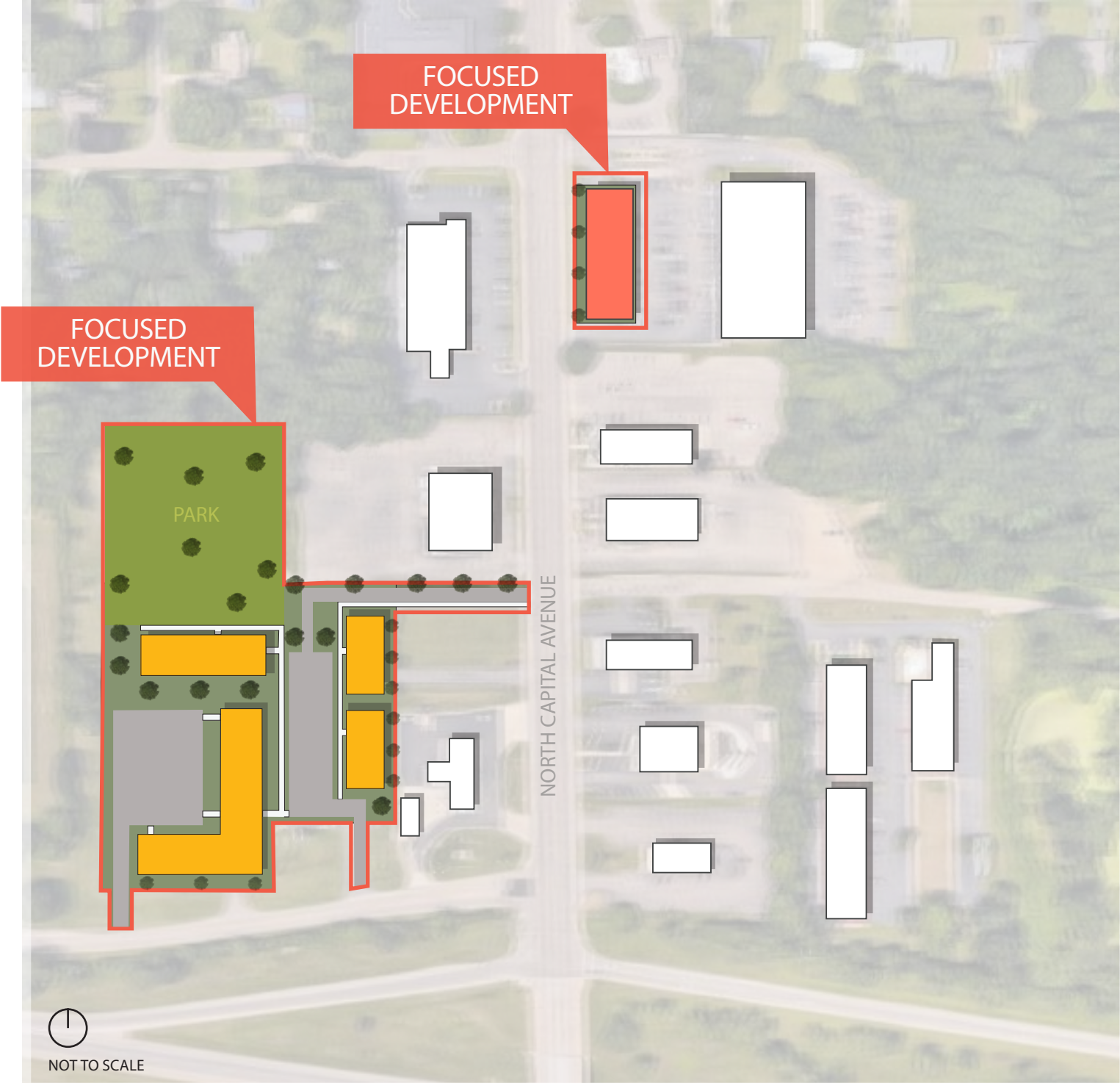


IMAGE ABOVE
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
OF NORTH CAPITAL AVENUE

BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

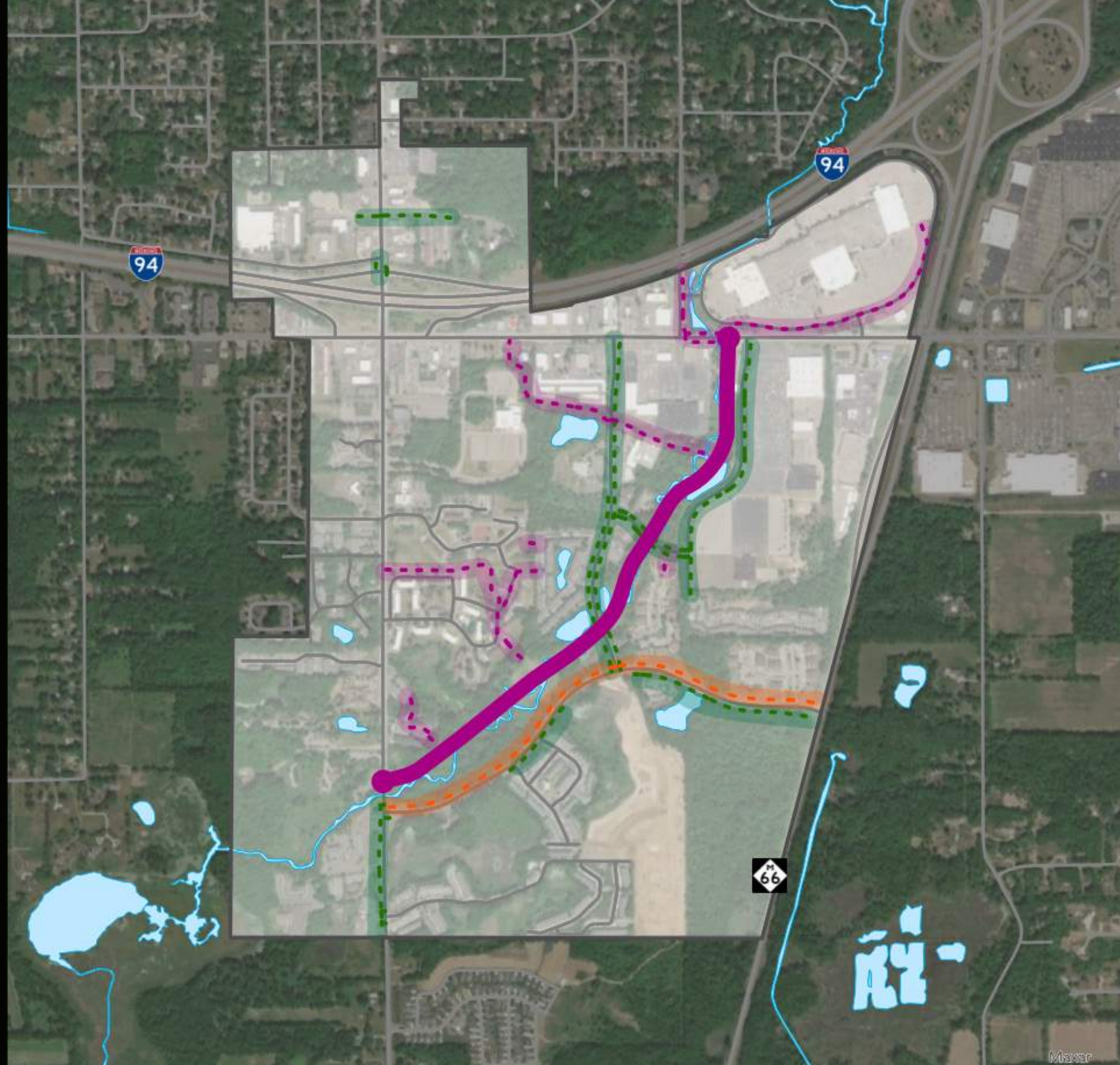
- Residential
- Retail



IMAGE ABOVE
PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF
NORTH CAPITAL AVENUE LOOKING NORTH

PROPOSED NON-MOTORIZED NETWORK

Using the Brickyard Creek Trail as a spine, the Lakeview District can be connected through a mixture of sidewalks, bike lanes, and non-motorized trails. Coupled with investments in transit infrastructure, this non-motorized network can create alternatives to driving within the Lakeview District.



Sidewalks



On-Street Bicycle Facilities



Non-Motorized Trails



Brickyard Creek Greenway



The proposed non-motorized network seeks to improve pedestrian and cycling mobility through the Lakeview District by utilizing appropriate infrastructure solutions in appropriate locations.

Sidewalks - Sidewalks are proposed in areas where existing pedestrian demand likely exists and are oriented around improving connections along larger roadways such as Capital Avenue, Minges Creek Place, or Heritage Oak Lane.

On-Street Bicycle Facilities - These are mostly focused on streets where existing capacity far exceeds the roadway’s traffic volumes, making on-street bicycling infrastructure feasible. Glenn Cross Drive is the primary example of an ideal location for these facilities.

Non-Motorized Trails - These are largely 10-12-foot shared use pathways that are used as off-street pedestrian connectors. These can link the Lakeview Square Mall, separate apartment complexes, and other areas to the Brickyard Creek Trail.

Brickyard Creek Greenway - Currently the Brickyard Creek Linear Trail, this trail can be enhanced with better lighting, improved crossing infrastructure, playgrounds, and other amenities. This elevates the trail into the “Lakeview District’s backyard” and connects the district together.

Consistent with Battle Creek’s 2023 Non-Motorized Plan

Proposed Paths	
Path Type	
	Bike Lane
	Buffered Bike Lanes
	Multi-use Path
	Paved Shoulder
	Protected Bike Lanes
	Shared Use Trail
	Sidewalk
	Wide Paved Shoulder
	Widen Sidewalk

Right: Lakeview District Area Map in 2023 Battle Creek Non-Motorized Plan

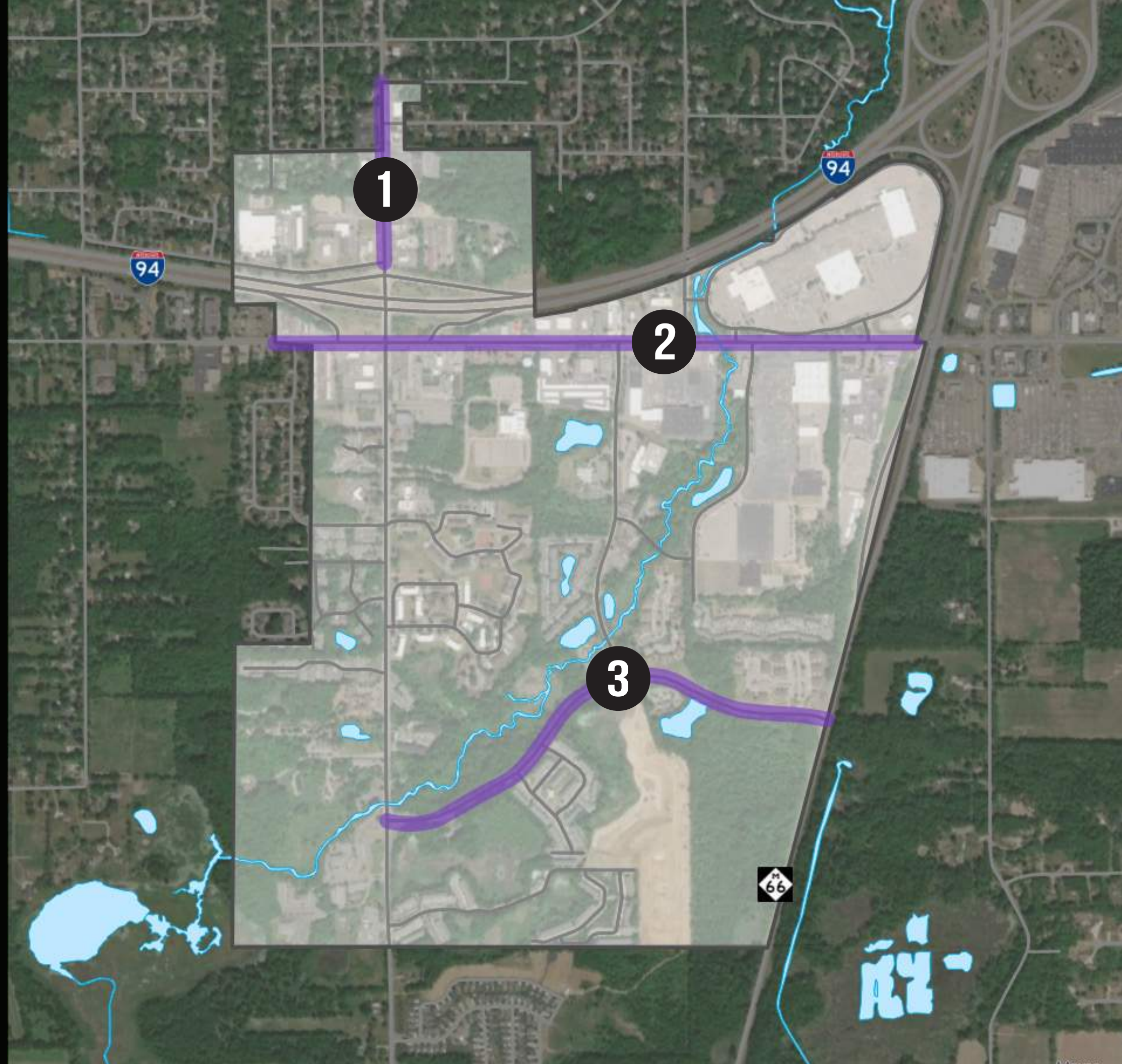
Transit Facilities

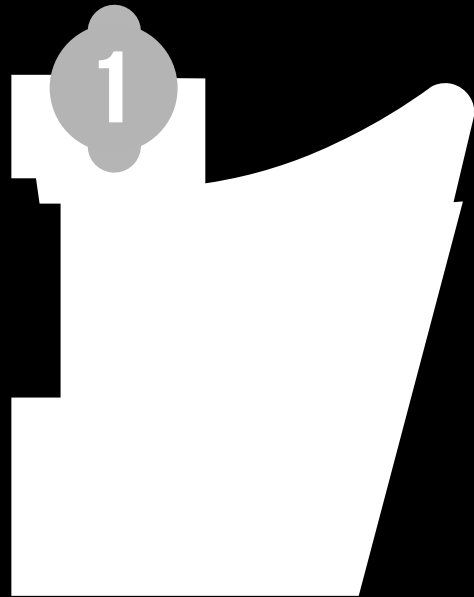
As was mentioned on page 22, the Capital Avenue - Beckley Road bus route is the busiest in the Battle Creek Transit system. To make riding transit more comfortable and appealing, the Lakeview District can partner with Battle Creek Transit on improving transit stops within the area - particularly at key destinations such as along Capital Avenue, Lakeview Square Mall, and Minges Creek Mall. These can include better signage and shelters to protect those waiting for buses as well as shield them from the elements.



PROPOSED STREET DESIGN

As the district's roadway infrastructure ages and requires replacement, opportunities to "right size" roadways abound. This contributes to making these environments more appealing and safer for pedestrians while maintaining traffic flows through these major corridors.





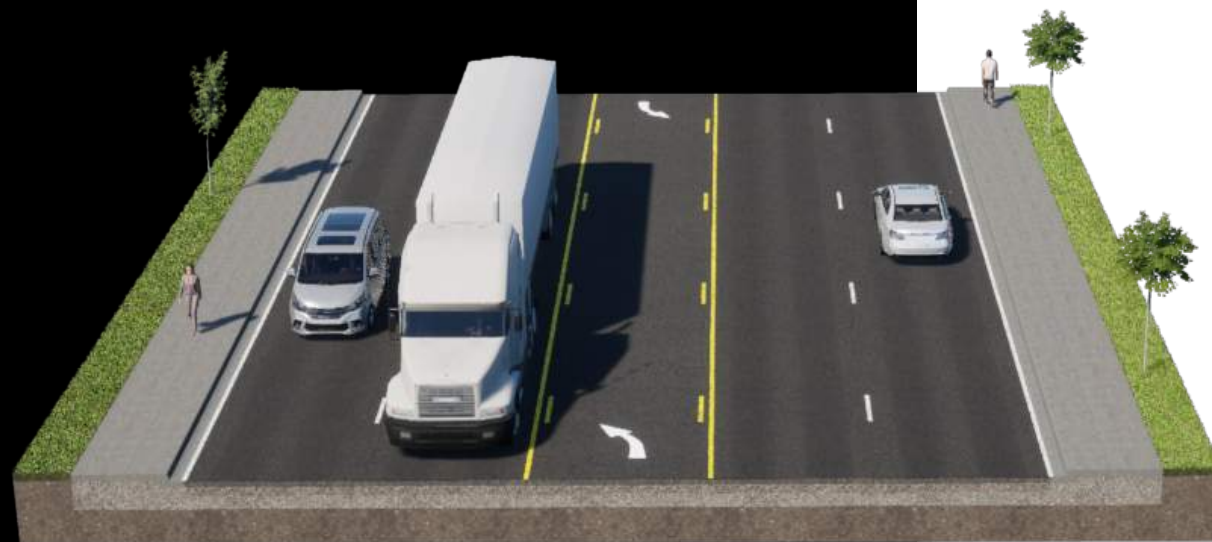
CAPITAL AVENUE

Capital Avenue provides north-south connectivity for trips to and from residential areas in Battle Creek to commercial destinations along Beckley Road. Parallel to Riverside Drive and I-194, Capital Avenue carries approximately 12,000 vehicles per day and widens from three lanes to five between Rebecca Road and Beckley Road. Although there are continuous sidewalk facilities on both sides of the road, the pedestrian experience is significantly impacted by the width of the road and limited available right-of-way. Sidewalks are located immediately adjacent to the road and are frequently interrupted by utility poles, signage, and other infrastructure, making walking or biking along Capital Avenue uncomfortable and potentially dangerous for those with mobility impairments. Crossings are provided at signalized intersections, although the crossing at the I-94 interchange is uncomfortable due to high-speed traffic, while the nearest controlled crossing is almost a mile away.

Traffic volumes along Capital Avenue are not sufficiently high to justify the capacity afforded by a five lane cross-section, and the excessive space and high traffic speeds it encourages do not fit within the local context of low-density development flanked by landscaping and other natural features.



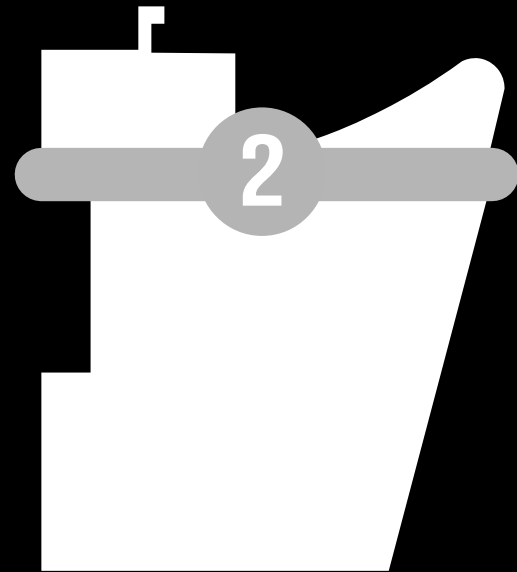
Capital Avenue: Existing vs. Proposed Cross-Sections



Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



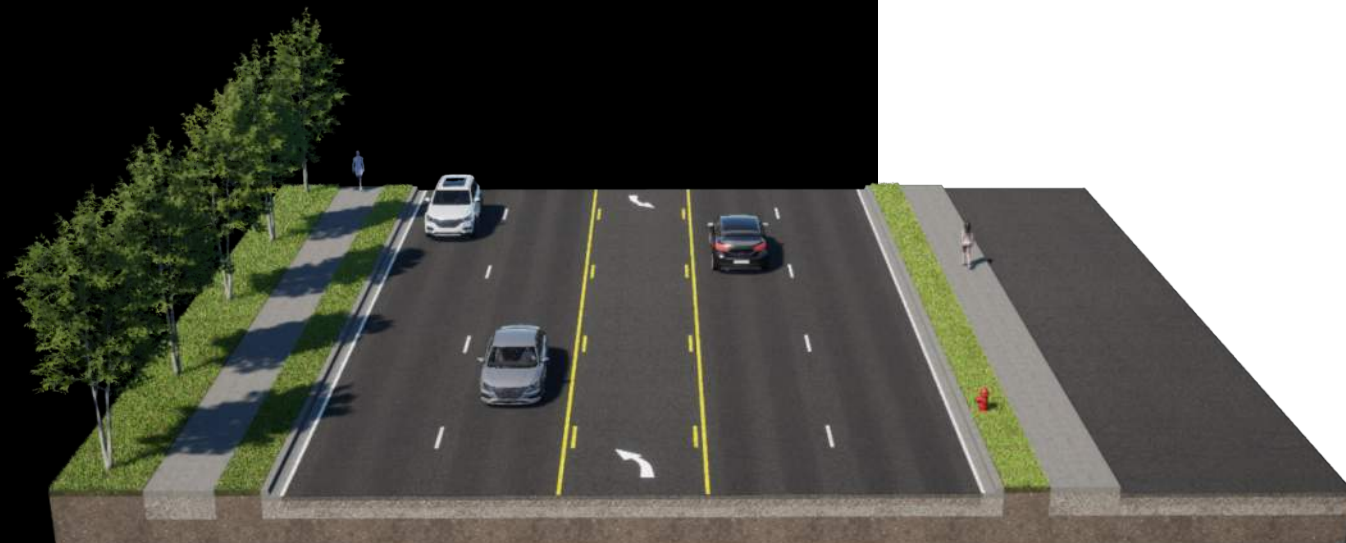
BECKLEY ROAD

Beckley Road is the primary east-west route for trips within the southern Battle Creek region. Connecting low-density residential development to the east and west to auto-centric commercial destinations near the M-66 intersection, Beckley Road carries approximately 17,000 vehicles per day with two lanes of through traffic in each direction and a center turn lane. The corridor features sidewalks of varying condition, with opportunities for crossing provided at signalized intersections. Controlled intersections are often spaced up to a half mile apart. Due to the relatively high traffic volumes and speeds, pedestrian and bicyclist activity, and driveway density, the corridor experiences a high frequency of traffic collisions, with over 500 crashes occurring in the last five years. Several crashes resulted in serious injuries, with one involving a pedestrian who was struck while attempting to cross the street.

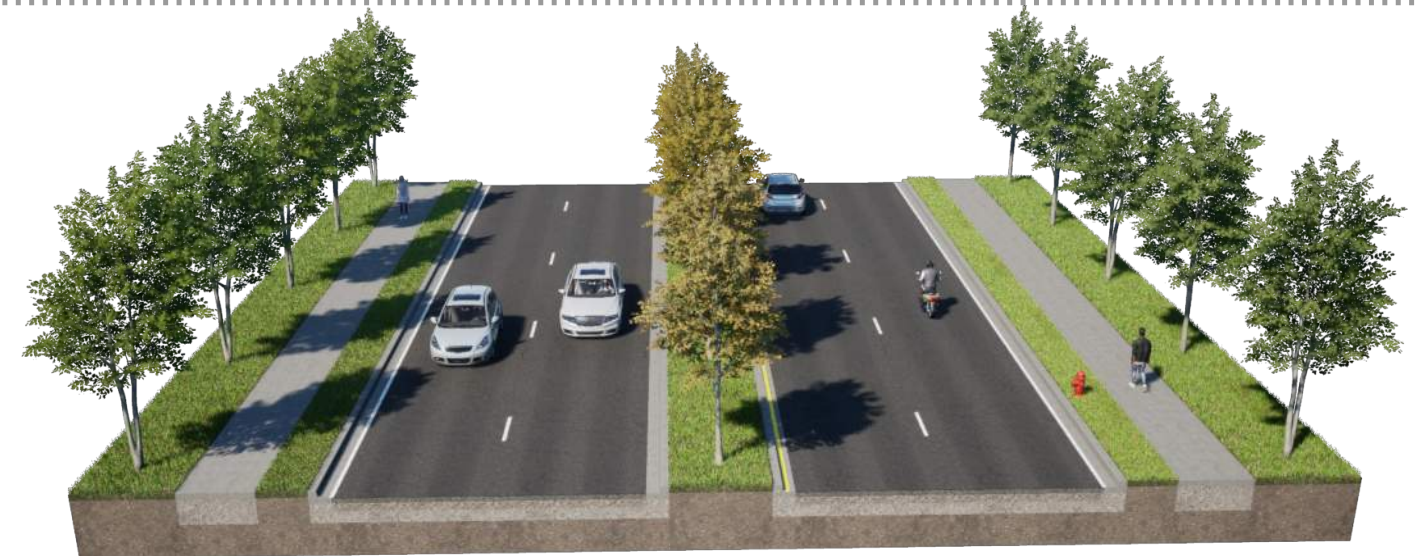
Because of the lack of connectivity in the southern Battle Creek region, most trips to and through the subarea are completed along Beckley Road. This reliance on the corridor for local connectivity, as well as operations at the major intersection of Beckley Road and M-66, has created a perception of significant congestion within the local community. Although existing and future traffic volumes are within the feasible range of a lane reduction, recommended improvements to the corridor are instead intended to address community concerns and safety outcomes by making traffic flow more smoothly and efficiently.



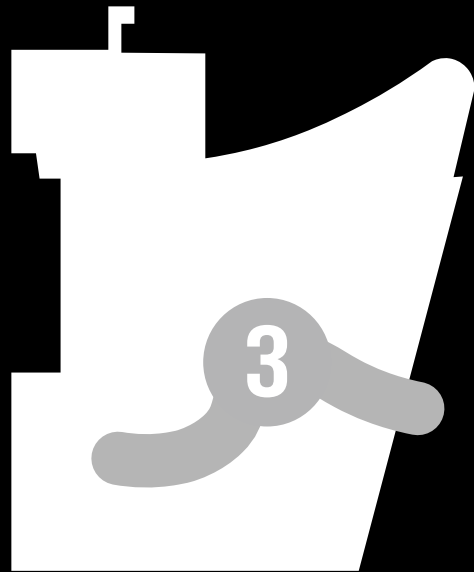
Beckley Road: Existing vs. Proposed Cross-Sections



Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions

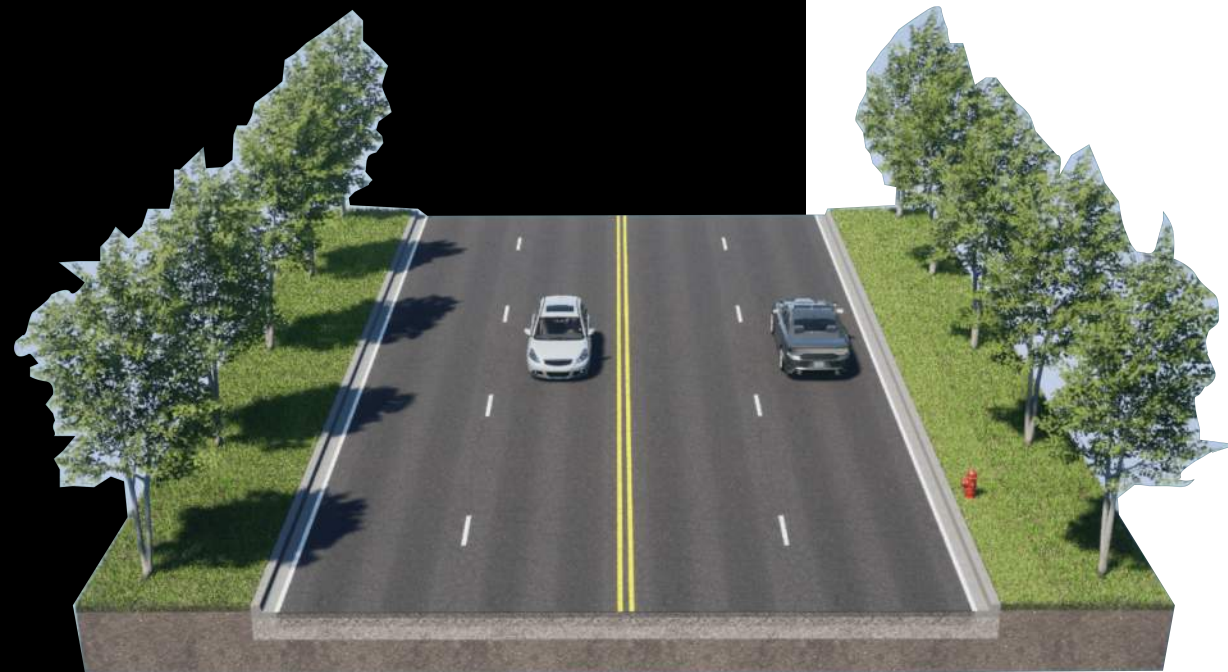


GLENN CROSS DRIVE

Glenn Cross Road serves as an alternate east-west route for trips between M-66 and Capital Avenue. Conversations regarding the extension of Glenn Cross Drive to the west of Capital Avenue are ongoing, which would enhance its ability to accommodate east-west trips to the subarea, rather than through. Glenn Cross Drive features four through lanes for vehicles, with an incomplete sidewalk network to the south of the roadway. Designated opportunities for crossing are not provided at any location along Glenn Cross Road. Glenn Cross Road carries approximately 3,200 vehicles per day, despite featuring a vehicular capacity of approximately 20,000 vehicles per day.



Glenn Cross Drive: Existing vs. Proposed Cross-Sections

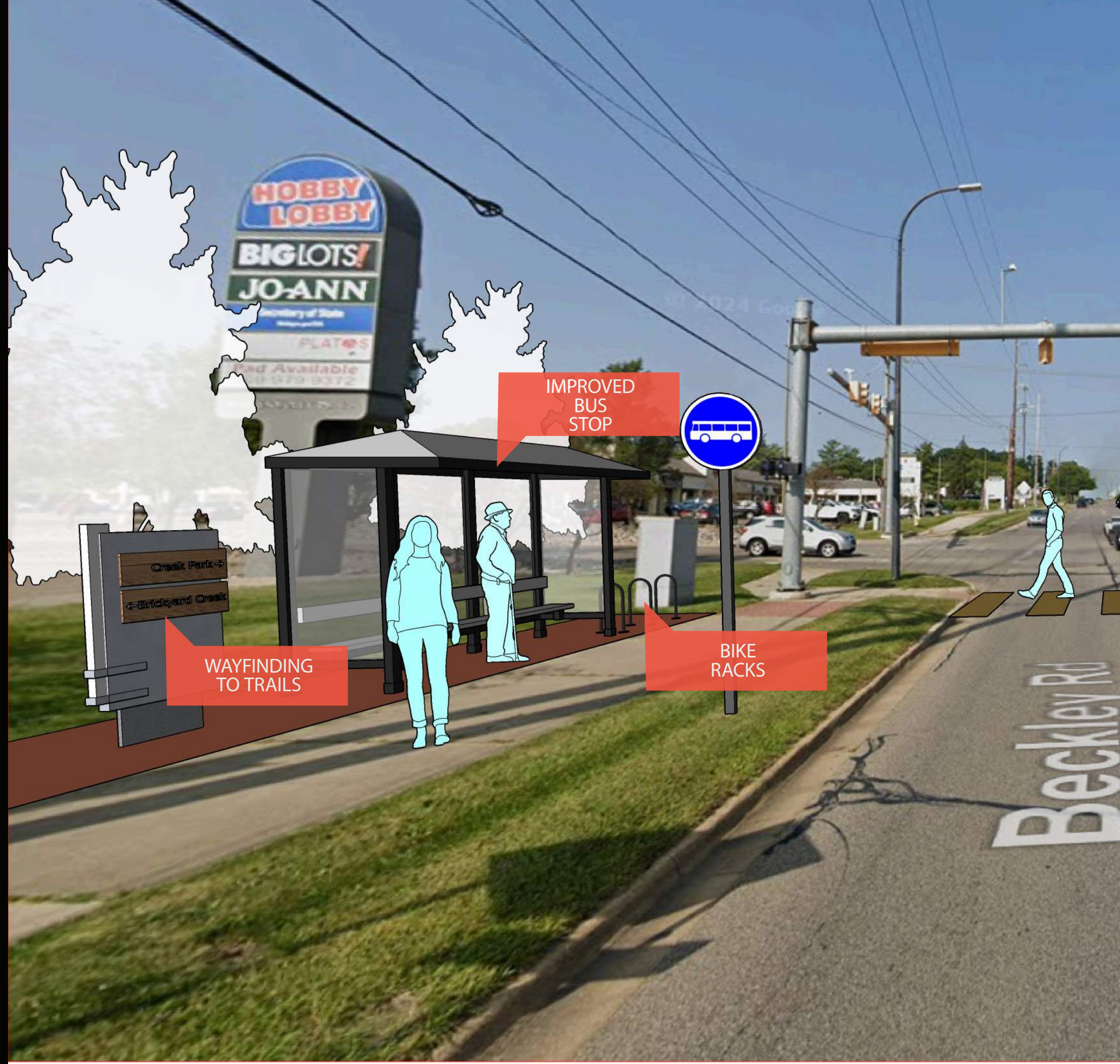


Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions

EXAMPLE OF IMPROVED RIVERSIDE DRIVE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING





MEDIAN
WITH
PLANTINGS

CROSSWALK
TO PARK

Google



4 IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

In the first sections of this plan, we’ve identified the challenges of the district’s existing conditions and created visionary yet attainable plans for what the future of the district might look like. In this section, we focus on how to make the vision a reality.

The implementation strategy for the Lakeview District integrates green infrastructure, placemaking, and the alleviation of car dependence using a structured approach that prioritizes tangible actions. This strategy leverages the Lakeview Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) as a primary driver for districtwide improvements while targeting environmental sustainability, community vibrancy, and increased opportunities for people to get around by means other than the car.

Strategies Are Created With the Plan’s Three Themes in Mind...



PLACEMAKING

Foster vibrant, attractive, and functional public spaces. Focus on compact redevelopment.



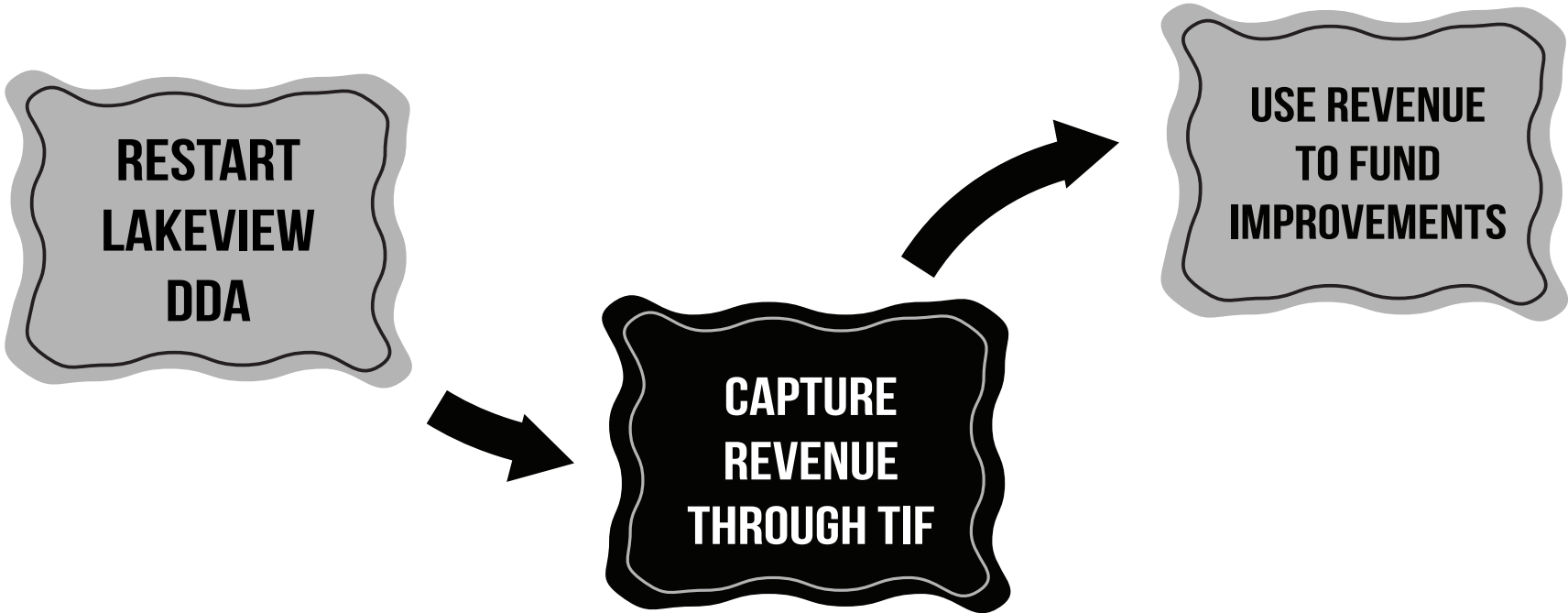
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Enhance environmental sustainability through water management, green spaces, and environmental restoration.



REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCE

Transition from car-centric infrastructure to multimodal transportation systems that prioritize walking, biking, and transit.

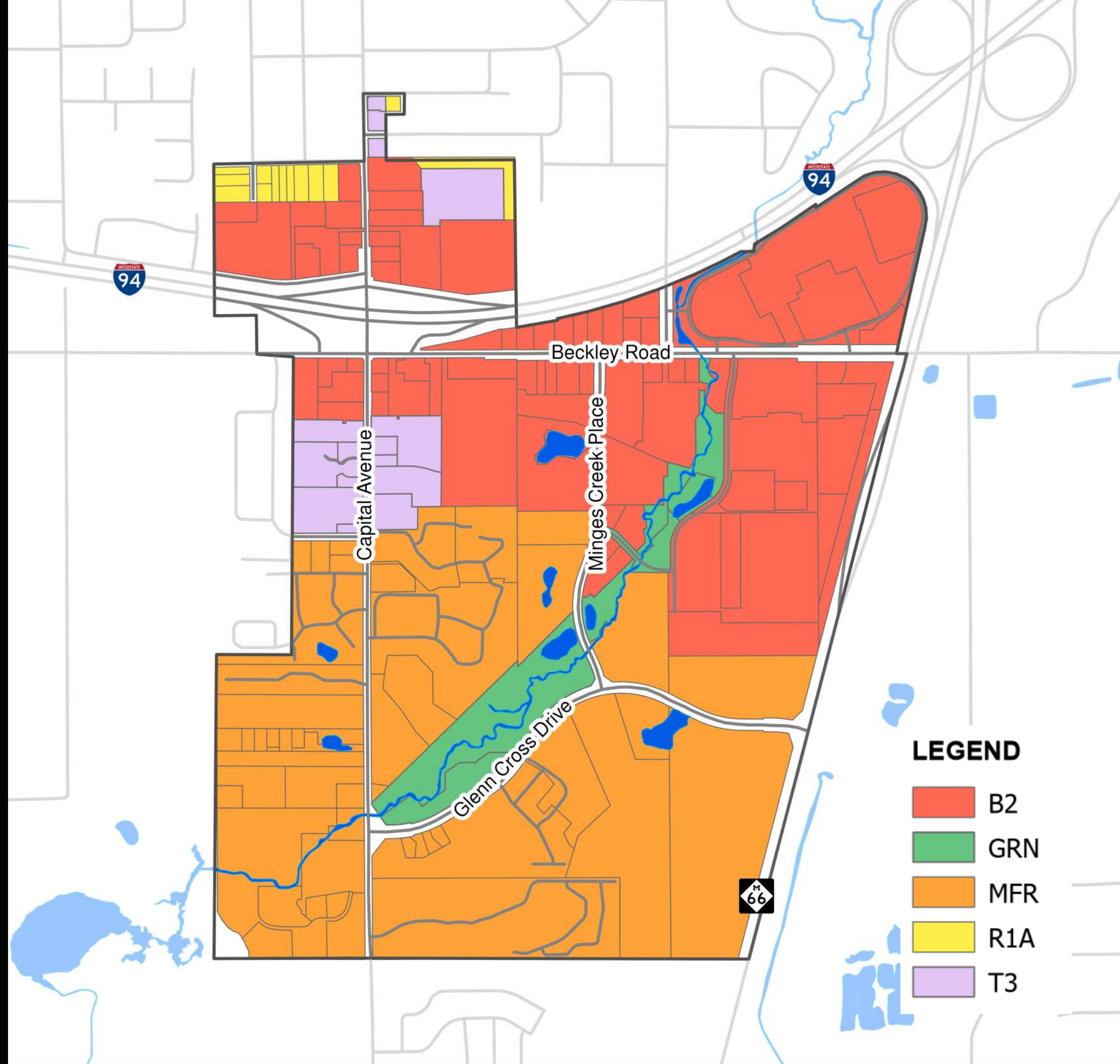


First Steps: Implementation Matrix

Project	Description	Lead	Funding Sources	Next Steps
LDDA Tax Increment Financing	Amend the LDDA development and TIF Plan to restart tax increment captures from City, County, and Kellogg Community College	City staff liaison to LDDA	General Fund	1) Create new DDA Plan and go through approval process 2) Confirm capture amount with taxing jurisdictions
Zoning Reform	Amend City zoning code to support this Plan's strategies	City staff	General Fund; Grant Funding	See following section
Development Incentive Materials	Create an incentive sheet that explains available incentives for redevelopment within the LDDA	City staff	General Fund	See following section
Reinhabitation	Utilize quick, pop-up style events to activate and test out redevelopment in the LDDA	LDDA consultants + City Staff	LDDA Tax Capture	1) Work with property owners to pick a site for activation 2) Celebrate a "parking day" or similar event that brings entertainment, games, and/or food vendors for the day
Tactical Road Design	Utilize quick, pop-up style road redesign materials to test out road improvements	LDDA consultants + City Staff	LDDA Tax Capture	1) Measure current road use for all users 2) Work with City to determine location for tactical road changes 3) Set out road changes for period of time to measure traffic flow, pedestrian use, and other changes
Submit Prioritized Road and Pedestrian Upgrades to BCATS	Use funding from BCATS to support suburban retrofitting, calming traffic, and creating infrastructure for people walking, biking, and rolling.	City Staff + BCATS Staff	BCATS; Grant Funding	1) Coordinate with BCATS on developing budget request 2) Prioritize road redesign and pedestrian improvements

ZONING REFORM

- Re-purpose B2 zoning district to provide for creative re-use and reinvestment in suburban commercial corridors.
- Enhance the B2 zoning district to align with plan goals and retitle the district T6 Regional Commercial District.
- Allow Special Land Use (SLU) requests to be heard and approved only by the Planning Commission. A SLU approval is an administrative function, not a legislative one and therefore City Commission involvement is not necessary. Due to the political nature of being in front of an elected body, decisions tend to be less predictable for applicants. This creates a sense of increased risk and therefore serves as a deterrent to development.
- Incorporate the T-6 district into form-based standards in Section 1250.04. Review the relevant form standards to determine applicability to the district.
- Extend the Proposed T-6 district over the remainder of the Beckley Road Corridor area. See technical memo for additional changes.
- Add Flexibility to the Ordinance to reduce parking requirements, or utilize waivers and other bonuses to reduce parking through shared parking agreements and proximity to transit.
- Relax standards for non-conformities to encourage the use of underutilized properties that may not comply with all zone district requirements.



Development Policies and Incentives

Due to the current housing and construction markets, suburban retrofitting requires intensive subsidies in the State of Michigan, and Battle Creek’s Lakeview District is no exception. In general, these incentives work to support mixed-income housing development, redevelopment of underutilized lots, and the support of traditional downtowns or major corridors, all of which are present here. The following briefly describes incentives that can currently be used for redeveloping the targeted sites within the Lakeview District.

Tax Increment Financing

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program facilitates housing development by enabling communities to capture local and state property tax revenue increases generated by new housing projects. This program provides a financing tool for affordable and market-rate housing, supporting mixed-income developments and addressing local housing needs. Eligible projects include rental and owner-occupied housing, with a focus on promoting equity and long-term affordability. The City’s Brownfield Redevelopment Authority would partner with MSHDA to approve TIF plans, fostering collaboration in urban revitalization and neighborhood improvement.

Brownfield Redevelopment Program

The state’s traditional Brownfield Program leverages Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund redevelopment of contaminated, obsolete, or blighted properties. Administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, it supports activities like demolition, site preparation, and infrastructure improvements. Local Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities manage projects, facilitating urban revitalization and economic development statewide.

The Transformational Brownfield Plan Program works similarly, however tax captures are different, as they can also include construction period tax capture; property tax capture; income tax capture; withholding tax capture; and sales and use tax capture. Because the City of Battle Creek’s population is above 50,000, these projects require a minimum of \$50 million in investments to be eligible.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Other common incentives from the state include a variety of grants and low interest loans from MSHDA and the MEDC. These programs fill the gap for housing developments that otherwise do not work financially for the developer based on the housing market and the cost to develop the project, and typically require a mix of incomes. Many of these grants, especially from the MEDC, prioritize urban revitalization, for which the targeted redevelopments within the LDDA would be eligible.

MSHDA and MEDC Grants

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Other Long-Term Strategic Actions

Theme #1: Green Infrastructure

Strategy 1.1: Reclaim and Revitalize Brickyard Creek at the former Sears site to improve water quality and create public green space.

Implementation: The first step will be to acquire the Sears. To do this, leverage state and federal brownfield funds, collaborate with the County Drain Commission, and explore state and federal grant programs. Brownfield redevelopment funds can reimburse demolition while the City can partner with a developer to increase possible tax capture from a new development.

Benchmark: Meriden Green, Meriden, CT.

Strategy 1.2: Modernize Stormwater Infrastructure by acquiring private retention and detention pond systems and upgrading them for public management.

Implementation: Incentivize owners to transfer infrastructure ownership by integrating it into broader redevelopment programs.

Implementation: Pursue partnerships with local organizations and apply for grants to fund improvements.

Strategy 1.3: Create a regional stormwater district to plan for and manage stormwater infrastructure projects within the Lakeview District.

Implementation: Develop a regional stormwater plan.

Implementation: Consider implementing a stormwater credit system that allows development to defer on-site stormwater management in favor of larger regional stormwater improvements.

Strategy 1.4: Pursue state and federal grant opportunities.

Implementation: Collaborate with the Calhoun County Drain Commissioner on regional stormwater improvement initiatives.

Implementation: Explore grant opportunities for stormwater improvement initiatives.





Other Long-Term Strategic Actions (Continued)

Theme #2: Placemaking

Strategy 2.1: Activate Brickyard Trail by transforming it into a vibrant community centerpiece with lighting, signage, trailheads, and amenities.

Implementation: Partner with local businesses (e.g., Taco Bell sponsorship) and seek funding through the LDDA and grants. Consider establishment of a “friends of” organization to support maintenance and ongoing improvements.

Benchmark: Ascension Hospital trail network, Novi, MI.



Strategy 2.2: Incentivize private investment by establishing an LDDA incentive program for redevelopment, leveraging tools like MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities and local tax credits.

Implementation: Create clear policies and educate property owners about available resources.

Benchmark: Mt. Pleasant, MI Mission/Pickard DDA programs.

Strategy 2.3: Expand public green spaces by enhancing public amenities at sites like Helen Warner Library and Dubois Cemetery and repurposing the Beckley Road water tower site if decommissioned.

Strategy 2.4: Support the installation of EV charging stations.

Implementation: Review city policies and zoning ordinances to ensure that EV stations are easily accessible and fit within the context of the LDDA.

Strategy 2.5: Rebrand the Lakeview District including logo, wayfinding signage, and other marketing materials to support local businesses and residents.



Other Long-Term Strategic Actions (Continued)

Theme #3: Reducing Car Dependence

Strategy 3.1: Redevelop Streetscapes by redesigning roadways (e.g., Capital Avenue, Beckley Road, Glen Cross Road) to include bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and pedestrian amenities.

Implementation: Collaborate with Battle Creek Transportation Study (BCATS) to secure funding and develop designs that align with multimodal goals.

Strategy 3.2: Integrate housing with non-motorized infrastructure by connecting residential areas like the Arbors of Battle Creek to key destinations via easements and non-motorized pathways.

Implementation: Utilize DDA funding and negotiate easements with property owners.

Strategy 3.3: Reduce surface parking by converting underutilized surface parking into development-ready parcels or green space.

Implementation: Work with private property owners to facilitate redevelopment.



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