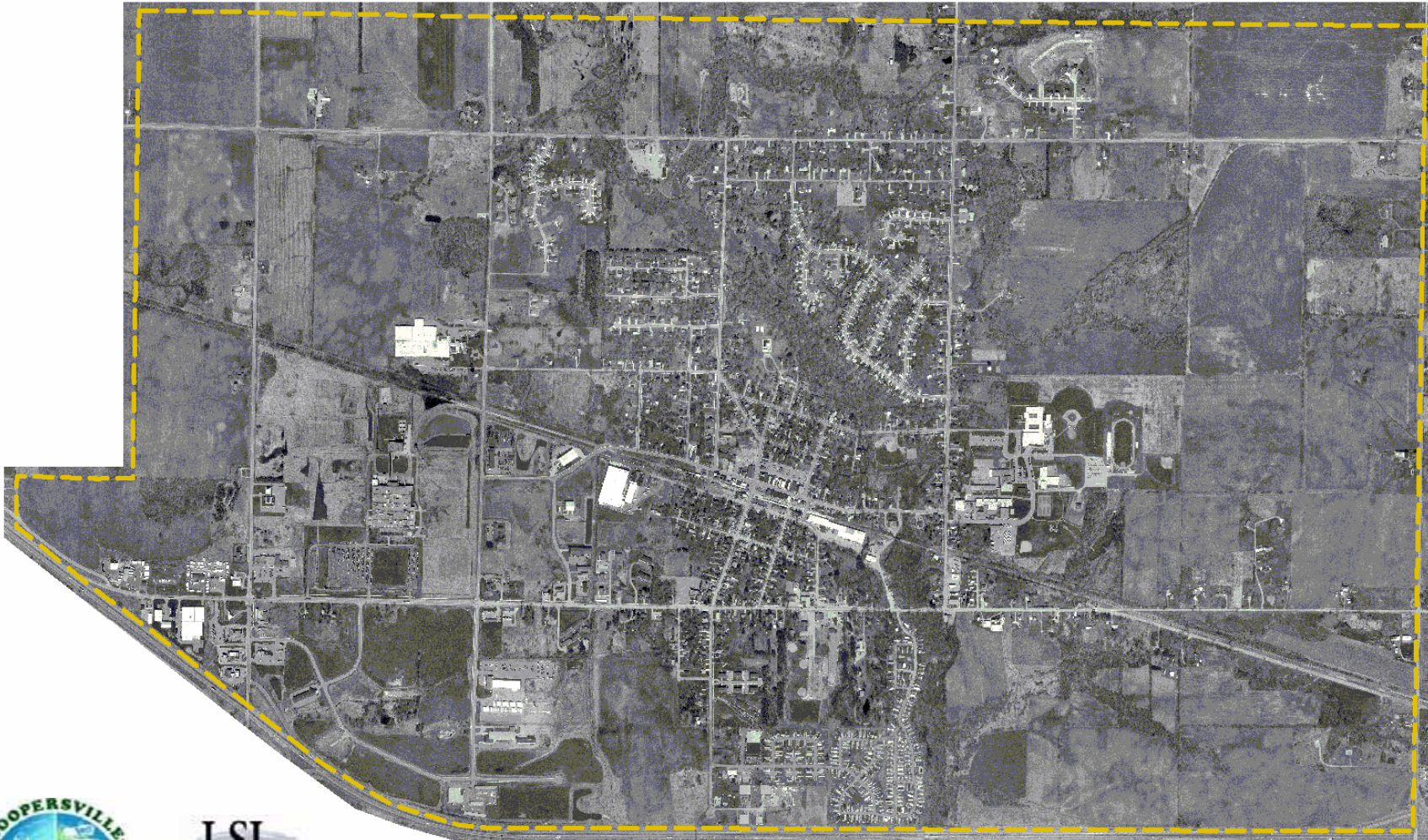




Vacant Lands Study

City of Coopersville
Comprehensive Plan



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CITY OF COOPERSVILLE TABLE OF CONTENTS



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CITY OF COOPERSVILLE VACANT LANDS STUDY



INTRODUCTION

The following statement is taken from the 1996 Comprehensive Plan of the City of Coopersville:

“Coopersville has an encouragingly small number of critical land use problems. The Comprehensive Community Plan will not be a panacea for the problems of the city and its surrounding areas; however, it offers the possibility of making the community a more desirable place to live and work.”

This statement remains as true today as it was then. However, as a growing, maturing community, the city leaders of Coopersville continue to deal with a wide range of land use issues. These issues, over time will begin to shift from those dealing with new development on vacant land, to issues related to changes to existing development, or redevelopment of outdated uses.

It is a given in real estate that the most attractive, easiest to develop land is the first to be taken up with new land uses. The lands left behind may have development complications, such as a lack of public utilities, difficult terrain or other natural conditions that impede efficient development. In some cases, development problems may revolve around other, more specific reasons, such as the disposition of family estates. In addition, the properties furthest from the center of the city may also be slower to develop. Whatever the reason, as time goes on, the vacant lands left behind from the initial waves of development also tend to become the most sensitive, particularly as neighboring lands begin to develop.

It is for this reason that the Planning Commission elected to review the largest contiguous parcels of land to determine if changes to their planned uses were warranted.

Population Changes

The City of Coopersville has experienced population growth in the double digits since the middle of the 20th Century. Like many small towns across the country, and in the western Michigan area, urban residents continue to find the “small town” atmosphere a desirable location. Coopersville is even more unique in that it is surrounded by townships that have significant agricultural preservation policies that tend to limit larger scale residential development. As a result, people seeking to live in the portion of the county can find more housing opportunities in the city.

POPULATION COMPARISONS					Source: United States Census Bureau		
Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	% Change 1980–1990	2000	% Change 1990–2000
Coopersville	1,564	2,129	2,889	3,421	15.55%	3,910	12.51%
Ferrysburg	NA	2,196	2,440	2,919	16.41%	3,040	3.98%
Fruitport	1,037	1,409	1,143	1,090	-4.86%	1,124	3.02%
Hudsonville	2,549	3,523	3,833	6,170	37.88%	7,160	13.83%
Spring Lake	2,063	3,034	2,731	2,537	-7.65%	2,514	-0.91%
Average					8.19%		4.63%

Adding to this is are the two interchanges with I-96 which provide easy and quick access to the Muskegon, Grand Rapids, and Grand Haven areas. In addition to the attraction for commercial uses, convenient highway access also allows commuters to live further from their jobs, using the highway system to extend the distance, but keep commuting time the same. With relatively cheap operating costs for individual vehicles, residential development can easily extend well beyond the job site. The city itself has generated a number of employment opportunities which also attracts new residents. As stated by the Coopersville Chamber of Commerce:



“Small town friendliness and service, free parking, lots of stuff for kids to do . . . Coopersville is nearby and yet worlds away from the hassles of big cities and shopping malls (see map). Plenty of services for personal and business needs, plus many excellent manufacturing companies call Coopersville home. Come check us out!”

BACKGROUND

Vacant Land Study Areas

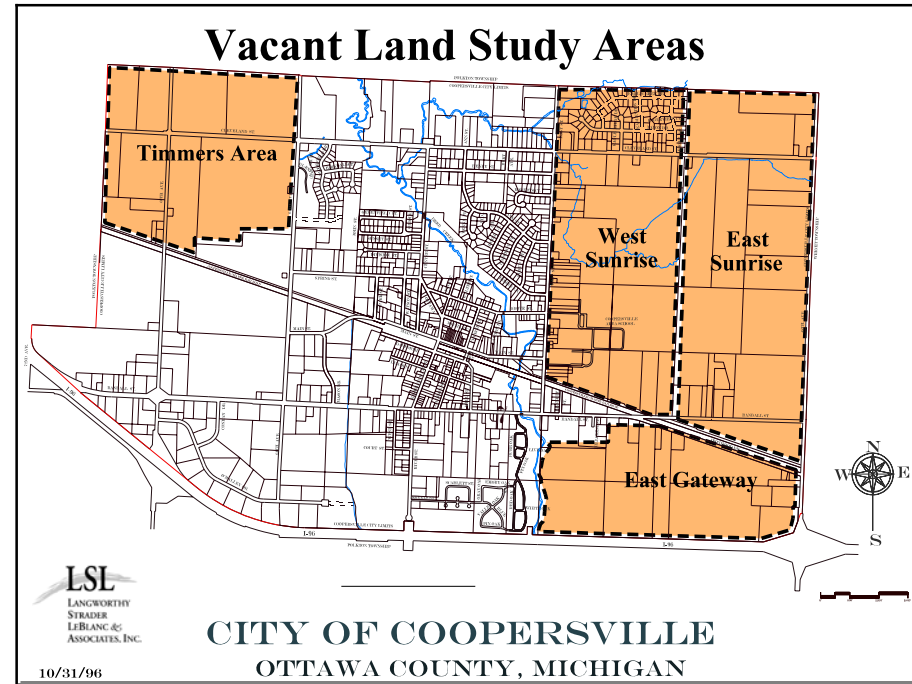
The Vacant Land Study covered four major land areas within the city boundaries, all of which generally lie on the periphery of the city. Each area was assigned a name to allow easier identification. These areas are described below.

Timmers' Area

This far northwestern portion of the city, encompassing approximately 320 acres, currently contains substantial agricultural lands under active cultivation. Some scattered residential uses are also present. Some of the key elements of the Area include a high point at the northwest corner which provides a significant vista to the east. Another significant feature is a substantial woodlot located across from an adjacent residential area east of 64th Avenue. Other natural features include a lowland/creek area at Cleveland and 64th and a lowland/wetland at the southwest corner of Area.

East Gateway

Located at the opposite end of the city from Timmers' Area, the East Gateway is perhaps the most significant piece of vacant land in the city, primarily because of its access to the 48th Avenue interchange with I-96. Adding to its critical location is the regional influence of 48th Avenue, which, like 68th Avenue at the western interchange, is an important Ottawa County roadway. The Gateway totals about 250 acres, with some scattered residential uses, primarily along 48th and Ironwood Drive. Two cellular towers and their associated equipment are also located on the site.



Natural conditions affecting the site include a creek and a large ravine that separates the plateau that makes up the bulk of the area from Ironwood Drive. This ravine/creek system continues to the southwest corner of the site.

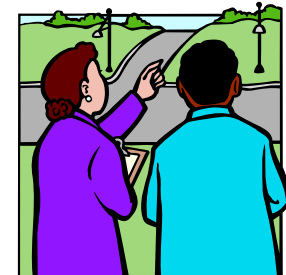
East Sunrise

This area is bounded by 48th Avenue on the east, Ironwood Drive on the south, the city boundary on the north and a quarter section line (which is a common line with Sunrise West). The bulk of the area consists of farmed and vacant fields. Some large lot residential development is located at the southwest corner of the area. Another significant feature is an access road from 48th Avenue to the Coopersville Schools (which is located in Sunrise West). The 360 acre area contains a significant woodlot west of 48th Avenue, some low lying ground at the southern portion of the area and a significant line of wetlands at the center of the site that connects to Sunrise West.

West Sunrise

Immediately west of Sunrise East lies Sunrise West. Land use within the 315 acres in this area is dominated by the school on the south and a large residential subdivision north of Cleveland Street. The west boundary, formed by East Street is lined by primarily single family homes, particularly between the school property and Cleveland Street. A small commercial area is located at the southwest corner.

This area was added to the Study principally because of its location around the school and the sensitive environmental areas north of the school, including a significant floodplain and wetland system looping through the north central portion of the area.



Study Process

Following the initial identification of the vacant lands to be evaluated, the Planning Commission and members of the City Council participated in a "land use charette." The highlight of the charette was a visit to each site during which ideas, opinions and general land use concepts were discussed. Following the site visits, each site was discussed, in turn, highlighting past goals and objectives, examining conditions that might affect proposed and surrounding land uses, and outlining broad land use concepts.



These concepts were narrowed down to specific alternative land use arrangements which were discussed by the Planning Commission. Specific alternatives were selected and a public meeting held. The public meeting was used to present the Land use concepts for comments from property owners, neighbors, developers, and other interested parties. These comments were incorporated into the final land use concepts, where feasible, and adopted by the Planning Commission as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

VACANT LANDS STUDY GOALS

Although no specific Goals were developed for this Study, there are a number of Goals and Objectives in the Comprehensive Plan that were considered as part of the determination of land uses within the various areas. Some of the more relevant statements are repeated here from the 1996 Plan.

Community Goal

THE IMAGE OF COOPERSVILLE WILL BE A SMALL TOWN WITH QUALITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND AN ATTRACTIVE, DIVERSE, INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ECONOMY.

Objective

- Plan for a balance of residential, commercial and industrial development which is appropriate for a small town.

Residential Development Goal

IDENTIFY SELECTED AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO EXTEND CITY UTILITIES TO SERVICE THOSE AREAS.

Objectives

- Encourage residential development in locations where future public utilities and services can be most economically and efficiently provided.
- Encourage multi-family residential development in locations where they are compatible with surrounding land uses, have access to major roadways, and are near shopping and other services.
- Areas for new residential development of various types will be established through the Land Use Plan, taking into account available utilities, transportation networks, and community services.



Commercial Development Goal

TO PROVIDE ATTRACTIVE AND WELL DESIGNED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUFFICIENT QUANTITY TO MEET THE BASIC RETAIL NEEDS OF THE CITY'S RESIDENTS.

Objectives

- Insure safe and convenient access with adequate parking in all commercial districts.
- Encourage the coordinated development of commercial businesses, including shared parking and access, consistent landscape improvements, and coordinated signs.
- Ensure that all new commercial development includes adequate landscaping.

Industrial Development Goal

PLAN FOR AN ATTRACTIVE, DIVERSE, INDUSTRIAL BASE WITH LIGHT AND HEAVY INDUSTRY IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS.

Objectives

- Plan industrial development in locations that do not create adverse effects for adjacent land uses.
- Provide reasonable regulations that will improve the appearance of industrial projects that will allow for the attraction of quality industrial development.
- Insure that new development does not place a burden on city services.
- Insure safe and convenient access for truck and employee traffic that does not unduly affect other development.



Public Utilities Goals

- PROVIDE PUBLIC SEWER AND WATER SERVICE, ADEQUATE IN QUANTITY, TO MEET DEMAND.
- SERVICES SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE.

Objectives

- Consider the capacity of the water and sewer system in evaluating new development proposals.
- Conduct necessary studies and improve storm drainage throughout the city.



Natural Features Goal

TO INSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSISTENT AND SOUND MANNER, THAT POTENTIAL FOR FLOOD HAZARD, SOIL EROSION, DISTURBANCES TO THE NATURAL DRAINAGE NETWORK AND SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION ARE MINIMIZED; TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES AND PRESERVING SCENIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY; AS WELL AS MINIMIZE PUBLIC BURDEN.

Objectives

- Through zoning and site plan review, encourage approaches to land development that take natural features such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation into account in the process of site design.

- Through zoning and site plan review, limit development within the 100-year flood plain zones and other flood-prone areas.
- Give consideration to natural features' preservation through acquisition of property for recreation uses.

Transportation Goal

TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENCY, SAFETY AND EASE OF MAINTENANCE OF THE ROAD SYSTEM. MAKE PROVISIONS FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE PLANNED LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT.



Objectives

- Divert heavy traffic around existing residential areas by directing traffic from development to the major arterials outlined in the Transportation element of this Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE

As growth within Coopersville continues, the City's leaders will have to address difficult zoning issues brought on by the pace and increasing complexity of development plans by residents and property owners. The need to provide flexibility, coupled with a desire to maintain some degree of control, may create the need for innovative zoning solutions, such as clustering provisions, planned unit development regulations, and other regulatory techniques that preserve development potentials but maximize the City's desire to grow in a coordinated and orderly fashion.

Future Land Use Classifications

The Future Land Use classifications used for the Vacant Lands Study generally follow those used in the 1996 Plan. The exceptions are the Mixed Use and High Density Residential designations, primarily needed for the Gateway East area. The full descriptions of the other classifications may be found in the Plan; the following are summarized versions as well as descriptions of the new classifications.

Agricultural

The Agricultural designation includes the farmed areas on the east and northwest fringes of the city. Continued use of this land for agricultural purposes is not expected past the time frame of this Plan. However, sufficient buildable land for other land uses exists to allow the City time to evaluation the long term use of these lands. In the meantime, continue agricultural and very low density use of the land will be encouraged.

Low Density Residential

Densities within these areas may vary, but generally will not exceed a normal subdivision density of approximately 2-3 units per acre. The residential neighborhoods in this classification should have certain characteristics.

- Encourage residential interaction; maintain buildings and uses of a scale and nature consistent with the qualities of a small town.
- Provide useable open spaces and preserve natural features.
- Link residential areas with shopping, open spaces, and other similar areas.
- Promote walking.

- Encourage formation of neighborhoods.
- Preserve natural features and scenic views.
- Provide a sense of safety and security.

Medium Density Residential

This classification should primarily be used in the Vacant Lands areas for moderate densities (smaller lot) single family uses. However, the same general characteristics desired for Low Density Residential areas should be maintained in this classification as well.

High Density Residential

High Density Residential areas are intended to provide additional housing opportunities for new residents, especially as new employment opportunities are created and to accommodate those who may wish to live in home settings other than a traditional detached single family dwelling. The HDR areas will generally require public water and sanitary sewer, be served by adequate roadways, and designed to limit any negative effects on surrounding lower density residential areas. Densities will range as high as eight units per acre, where proper facilities are in place.

Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial

This new classification was created to create a development pattern similar to that which has occurred at the I-96 and 68th Street interchange; a unique mixture of commercial, industrial, highway service, and office uses. While a mixture of uses is planned, care must be taken to ensure that development is coordinated to ensure that any one use does not unduly affect the ability of other uses to operate efficiently and in an attractive setting. The "Development Considerations" of the 1996 Plan should be

taken into account when reviewing development in this area.

Industrial

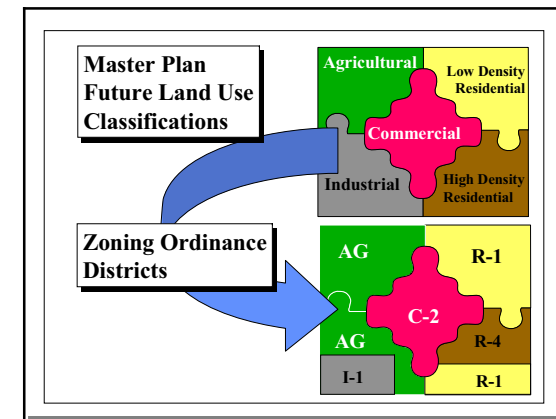
The Industrial area planned for the Timmers' Area is a logical extension of that which exists already. However, a degree of sensitivity to surrounding residential uses will be necessary to ensure that development remains compatible.

Open Space

Rather than a land use classification, certain areas have been labeled as Open Space to account for sensitive natural features and to delineate locations that require separation between land uses of different intensities and character.

Land Use and Zoning

The relationship of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance is often misunderstood. Stated concisely, the Master Plan is a *guide* for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present. And while the Master Plan is not a binding, legal document, the Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the City and its residents. Adopting or changing a Master Plan does not directly affect zoning for any property. However, recommended or requested changes to the zoning map are intended to reflect the planned uses shown by the Plan. The following table describes the relationship between the various Future Land Use classifications of



the Plan and the districts of the Zoning Ordinance.

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND ZONING EQUIVALENTS				
Land Use/Zoning District		Zoning Requirements		Intent
		Lot Area/ Density	Lot Width	
Agricultural (AG)		5 acres	330	Large tracts of land used for general farming and other specialized rural uses
Low Density Residential (LDR)	R-1	2.5 acres	150	Low density single-family homes and recreational, religious and educational facilities on large lots.
	R-2	15,000 sq. ft.	80	
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	R-2	15,000 sq. ft.	80	Single-family homes
	R-3	12,000 sq. ft.	60	Single-and two-family homes
High Density Residential (HDR)	R-3	12,000 sq. ft.	60	High density multiple-family housing
	R-4	8 u/a (approx)	200	
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)		C-1 Business District		Less intensive commercial uses; compatible with neighboring residential uses

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND ZONING EQUIVALENTS			
Land Use/Zoning District	Zoning Requirements		Intent
	Lot Area/ Density	Lot Width	
Mixed Use (Commercial/Industrial)	Motorist Service District		Planned mix of uses with emphasis as noted.
	I-1 Light Industrial District		
Industrial	I-1 Light Industrial I-2 Heavy Industrial		

Coordinated Infrastructure Development

As part of this effort, coordinated utility and transportation planning will continue to be important. To make the most efficient use of public infrastructure land use approvals should encourage extensions of utilities and necessary road improvements that accommodate development as it occurs, while forwarding the City’s land use goals, such as preserving sensitive lands from development pressures.

As development intensifies, new industry, homes, offices, and commercial services create traffic demands on the road system. This is particularly true where new development occurs in the outlying areas covered by the Vacant Lands Study. Residents in these areas are particularly sensitive to traffic increases; even small jumps in traffic volumes become noticeable. Residents will voice concerns about the "heavy traffic" on their road, even though the roadway is easily capable of handling the added traffic.

Community planning for infrastructure can have positive effects on land use. Failure to plan may be expensive and frustrating for all involved; a good plan can provide many economic and financial advantages; help retain community character; and reduce public safety concerns related to transportation and environmental contamination.

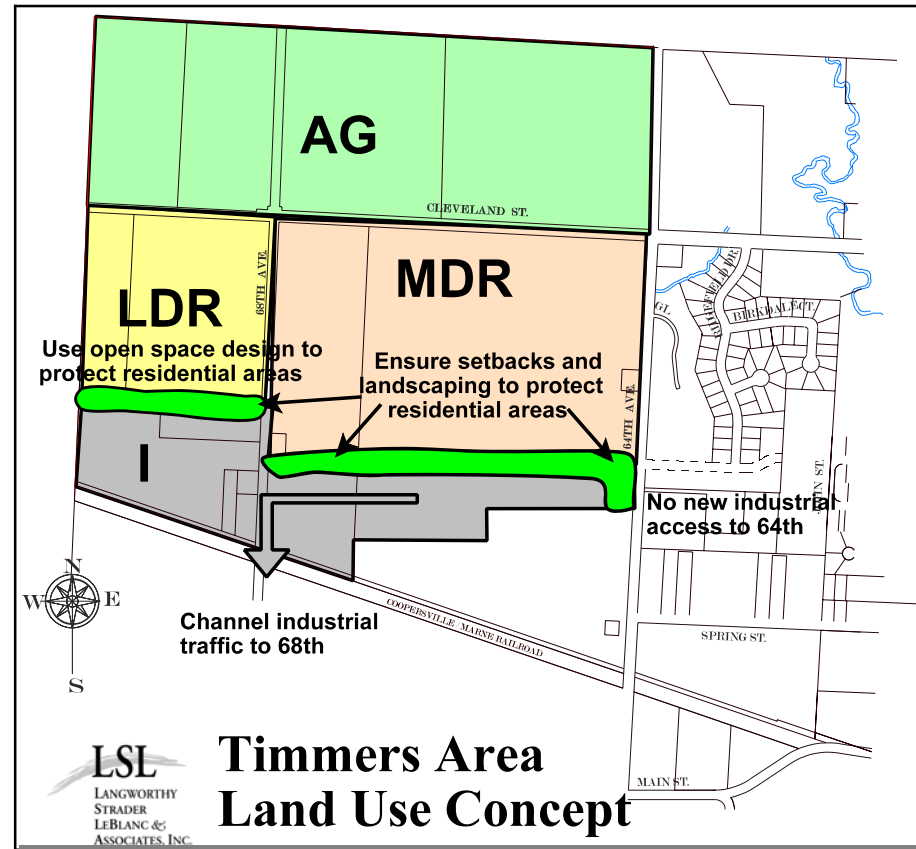
FUTURE LAND USE

The following is a description of the planned uses for each Study Area. Also included are "Development Principles" that apply to each of the Area's, as noted. The Development Principles will be considered by the City when reviewing land use proposals.

Timmers' Area

The Timmers' Area contains one of the last remaining planned Agricultural land uses in the City, dominating the north half of this Area. Over time, it is likely that these active farm fields will be converted to another use. However, the intent is to maintain this use through this planning period. Subsequent updates may reveal the need to change the future land use classification to another use. One factor that should be considered is whether Polkton Township maintains the adjoining lands in agricultural use.

A Low Density Residential area has been established to provide for a residential transition from the adjacent agricultural areas to the anticipated greater densities provided to the east. This designation was also selected to take into account the natural features present on the site.



The Medium Density Residential designation is used to allow a firm boundary to be formed for the industrial areas to the south. The intent was to prevent industrial uses to encroach too far to the north. A number of significant natural features are also present on the site which need to be taken into account during development, including a substantial wooded area across from the existing residential development on 64th Avenue and a creek with its associated low lying areas.

The Industrial classification was attached to lands that were either already being used industrially, or could be in the future without significantly disrupting other planned development. Two specific concerns are noted for the Industrial sites in this Area.

- A possible wetland is present on the western edges of the Industrial area west of 68th Avenue. This area should be investigated prior to development to determine if a regulated wetland is present and to determine the boundaries of that area.
- Traffic from the industrial uses, particularly truck traffic, must be diverted away from 64th Avenue and directed to 68th Avenue. The bulk of this traffic is likely to be attracted to 68th Avenue since it provides the route to the I-96 interchange.

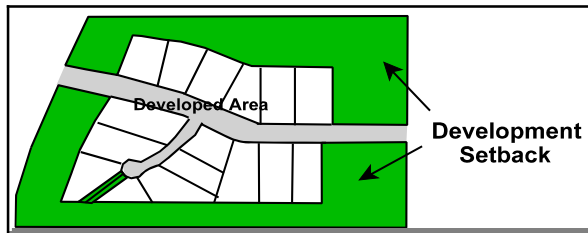
Development Principles

View Protection

Preserving scenic resources can be difficult, particularly since the definition of what views may be worth saving can vary widely from person to person. In addition, the scenic resource can be very large. These difficulties necessarily limit the extent to which scenic resource preservation can be effective. As a result, the best method to address preservation is to discover the view vantage points, those locations where the

most favorable views can be observed.

A significant view of a large area of the city is available along Cleveland Street, west of 68th Avenue. Views are normally difficult to adequately protect using traditional zoning techniques. In addition, the view itself becomes part of the attractiveness of the building site; development allows the few home owners the benefit of the view, while sacrificing the overall benefits that could be provided for other residents and visitors.



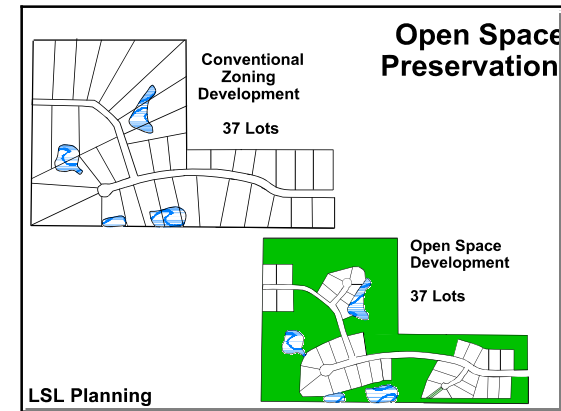
One technique that may be effective in this instance, and perhaps strike a balance between the view available for a few and that available to all. In the LDR area, which borders this view point, a development technique known as "Open Space Preservation" (see next Development Principle) can be implemented with a required

"development setback" from the roadway. In this case, if the setback were placed along Cleveland Street, an area would be provided where homes and garages would not block the view from the roadway.

Open Space Preservation

In 2002 the Michigan Legislature passed a law requiring "qualified communities" to include provisions that would allow residential development on a site that would preserve at least 20 percent of the project area as permanently preserved open space. The underlying principle of Open Space Preservation is that it allows the same overall density of development that is permitted under existing zoning, but concentrates the building sites inside pockets of land so that the remainder can be preserved as usable open space.

The density of an Open Space Preservation development is based on the existing residential district. To compute the permitted density the applicant may be required to submit a “parallel plan” which provides the City with a feasible development plan showing the number of homes that could reasonably be placed on the site using conventional development regulations. This establishes the “base density” for the site. This density may only be increased through an optional process that provides incentives for additional features such as recreational amenities or increased areas of open space.



As a qualified community, the City’s Zoning Ordinance will include open space provisions to comply with the law. These regulations will be required to be available in the Agricultural and LDR (R-1) areas, and may be made available in the other residential zones.

This method may be particularly useful to help preserve a significant tree stand in the MDR area along 64th Avenue.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Planned Unit Development is a zoning technique which can be used to permit flexibility in the application of zoning standards to allow significant land areas to be set aside for preservation. PUDs can be used for residential, commercial, or industrial uses... or any combination of uses. PUDs are commonly used for areas of special concern, including natural areas. For residential development, PUDs can be used to allow for smaller lot sizes in exchange for providing open space within the site.

PUDs can be implemented in a variety of ways:

- An PUD Overlay District attaches a separate set of regulations to those already in effect for that district.
- A PUD as a Special Land Use is incorporated in the zoning ordinance in the appropriate districts.
- A PUD Zoning District can be created with its own set of development requirements and approval standards for site plans.

Buffering Dissimilar Land Uses

Traditional zoning techniques used a “step down” approach that used land uses to buffer each other. Generally the step down hierarchy treated an Industrial classification as the most intense, stepping down to the Single Family use as the least.

As zoning matured, different methods were developed to shield the negative effects of one land use on another. One of the most common and frequently used is a “performance zoning” method of simply providing a landscaped buffer, sometimes supplemented by fences, walls, or berms, to separate dissimilar land uses. The use of this technique provided much more flexibility in developing land use relationships.

In the Timmers Area the combination of landscape buffers, PUDs, and Open Space Preservation development can be used to ensure that the Industrial areas along the south end of the Area are properly buffered from the residential uses.

Preservation of Natural Features (See also discussion of Environmental Sensitivity in the discussion on West Sunrise.)



ZONING HIERARCHY

Environmentally sensitive natural features can either enhance or restrict development projects, depending on the type and extent of the feature. For example, the crest of a hill may provide a view which adds appeal to a site. Mitigating erosion and stabilizing the hillside during and after construction can dramatically increase development costs. However, the cost to the community could be the loss of a natural view.

Generally, the value of natural features are either recognized as needed *preservation*, or they may simply be folded into the community and *integrated* into the cultural (man-made) landscape.

Preservation measures apply to those features which are so sensitive or valued that any alteration has negative impacts on aesthetics, property, or environmental quality. Development should either be prohibited or restricted to those projects which have only a slight effect on these features. Wetland areas is one example of lands requiring preservation techniques.

In areas where the natural features are an integral part of the community's character, but where minor changes only slightly impact the quality of life, *integration* may provide adequate protection. Integration allows natural features to remain undisturbed, yet exist in concert with development.

The Timmers' Area (along with West Sunrise) contains some areas where natural features can contribute greatly to the quality of development. Some may require preservation, others may be able to be integrated into proposed development.

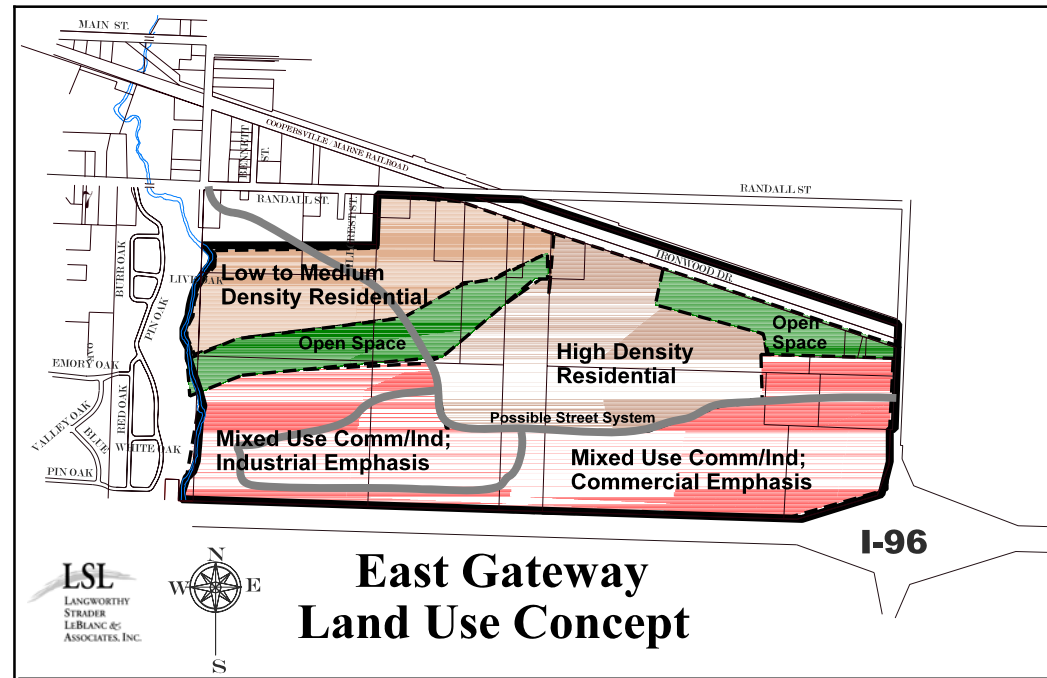
East Gateway

This site is the most significant vacant, large site in the City because of the presence of the interchange of 48th Avenue and I-96. As the easternmost interchange providing access to the city, this site presents an opportunity to take advantage of the lessons learned with development at the 68th Avenue interchange.

While the City is generally pleased with the development at 68th Avenue, there are a number of development traits that can be avoided at 48th Avenue.

Land uses along the border with I-96 are planned as a suitable mix of commercial and light industrial uses. While market conditions and the timing of development proposals will influence the precise locations and mixture, the overall intent is to concentrate those uses that demand greater visibility nearest the I-96 right-of-way. It will also be necessary to ensure that there are some logical groupings of industrial and commercial uses to avoid traffic complications and ensure easy access to commercial operations depending on highway traffic.

The High Density Residential lands are necessary in order to provide a more suitable housing mix in an



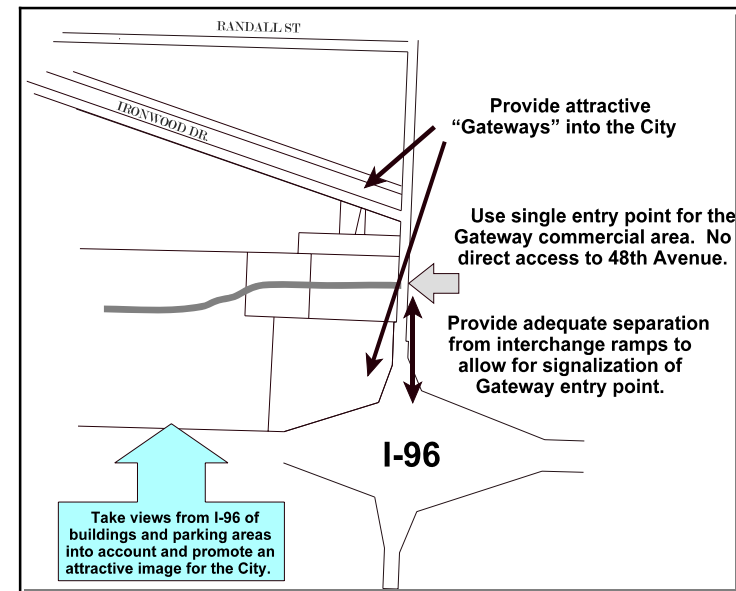
appropriate location. Easy access to I-96, nearby commercial services, and an attractive natural setting provide a desirable location for higher density housing. This also takes into account the fact that the city has a limited number of locations where more of this style of housing may be placed.

The Low/Medium Density Residential area located northwest of a large ravine and wetland area is placed to take into account some existing development along Randall Street and provide compatible land uses for that development.

Development Principles

View Protection

In the past, many communities along interstate highways “turned their backs” to the road, caring little about the view of passing drivers. The highway side was treated as the back yard, used for storage, loading areas, and unkempt open spaces. Over time, however, it is clear that the perception of the community by the traveling public is often gained by the appearance of the development along these highways. As a result, more attention must be paid to these views.



EAST GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

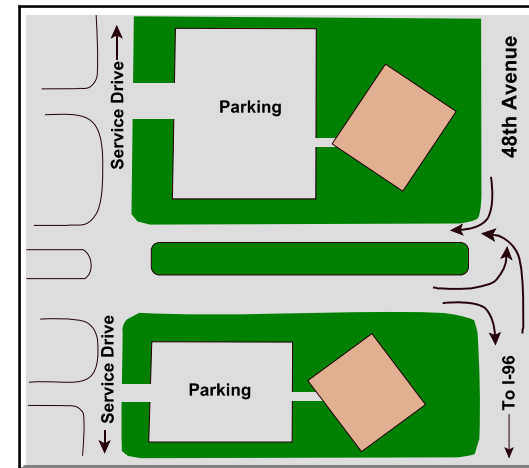
Coopersville desires to treat the properties bordering I-96 not as a “back door” but as a *Gateway*, providing the area of first impression of visitors to the city.

The attention paid to the *Gateway* has more than aesthetic benefits. Prospective residents, business owners, and visitor can gain a more favorable impression of the community as a place to live, recreate, and promote business opportunities. Most businesses, for example, don’t wish to have their own customers and visitors drive past loading docks, storage yards, and trash bins to reach their businesses.

Accordingly, development proposals along I-96 will be evaluated on the “face” they present to the highway, including landscaping, building design, parking areas, and other development characteristics. The intent is that these areas present the best possible impression of the city as a whole, and of the *Gateway* in particular.

Access and Traffic Circulation

The Gateway Area will generate significant traffic. For the most part, this traffic will be focused toward the I-96 interchange. The Gateway plan includes a conceptual roadway that may serve as a central collector roadway channeling traffic through the site. The northwest terminus is shown as a intersection with East Street. This would require some expense to obtain and clear existing buildings and to provide a crossing of the ravine/wetland that runs from the southwest corner northeast through the Area.



The preferred roadway would be a boulevard cross section with well placed openings for turning traffic. Development bordering the roadway would also follow access management requirements (see next Development Principle). The roadway would also provide the primary entrance from 48th Avenue in order to avoid any other curb cuts along 48th.

Another factor to consider is the need to keep the interchange area as free from conflicting traffic as possible (see Interchange Planning box). Ultimately the bridge over I-96 will need to be improved along with the 48th Avenue approaches. Signalization will be important and having a primary entrance at one point to the Gateway Area will facilitate that possibility.

Finally, cooperation with Wright Township will be critical; improvements done in Coopersville can be easily offset by a lack of coordination with the Township.

Interchange Planning

While access to I-96 presents a number of growth opportunities, careful traffic planning and land use management is necessary to make sure that the interchange remains an asset, rather than a traffic and land use liability. Perhaps the most important planning consideration of interchange planning is the preservation of the function of the interchange.

- **Interchanges provide access to adjacent communities and lands.** In order to ensure this function remains intact it is important that roadways leading to the interchanges be relatively easy routes on which to travel. This permits a relatively free flow of traffic to the interchanges and permits safe ingress and egress between the interstate highway and the local road.
- **Interchanges also provide an area for highway services to the traveling public.**

Access Management

Preserving the traffic carrying capacity of a roadway is essential in order to avoid costly improvements and safety problems. Transportation studies have consistently shown that the number, design, and location of driveways can have a great affect on the ability of a road to safely move traffic and provide access for adjacent land uses. The number, design, and location of driveways along major roadways will affect traffic flow, ease of driving, and accident potential. Every effort should be made to limit the number of driveways and encourage access from side streets, service drives, frontage roads, and shared driveways.

Access management will be essential to ensure that 48th Avenue and the conceptual collector roadway are able to maintain their traffic carrying functions and operate in a safe manner.

The spacing of access for commercial driveways and streets is an important element in the planning, design, and operation of roadways. Since access points are often the main location of crashes and congestion, their location and spacing directly affect the safety and function of streets. However, business owners view the highways as a means to attract business and provide access for customers to their establishments. The large volumes of traffic attracted to the designated roadways become a lure for businesses whose owners view each vehicle as a potential customer. Therefore there is need to balance mobility and access when planning for commercial corridors. Overall, the goal of access management is to achieve a safe and efficient flow of traffic along a roadway while preserving reasonable access to abutting properties.



The most effective means of ensuring proper access management is the site plan review process, enforced through the zoning ordinance. The ordinance may also contain provisions that consider shared drives, provide setbacks for front service drives, and other similar requirements.

Driveway spacing and location: Each driveway along an arterial roadway presents a potential conflict point. Vehicles pulling in or out, or slowing to turn, disrupt the smooth flow of traffic. Poor access management and too many driveways contribute to the functional deterioration of a road. The number, spacing, and design of driveways, therefore are important factors to consider in order to maintain a desirable level of capacity and movement on the roadway.

- Minimum and desirable driveway spacing requirements should be determined based on speed limits along the parcel frontage. For example, at 50 miles per hour or greater driveways should 455 feet apart, based on average acceleration and deceleration considered adequate to maintain good traffic operations. These guidelines have been developed by MDOT to adequately plan for driveway spacing.
- Driveways should be directly opposite other drives or be offset from opposing property by a distance sufficient to prevent conflicts with turning vehicles, or what is commonly known as a “left-turn lockup.” A minimum desirable driveway offset distance should be 150 feet.
- Access to individual parcels should consist of either a single two-way driveway or a pair of one-way driveways. While certain developments may generate enough traffic to consider allowing more than one driveway along a major street, a second access point should be located on a side street or shared with adjacent uses whenever possible.

Shared Driveways, frontage Roads, and Service Drives: The greatest benefit of access management is preserving the functional integrity of high speed, high capacity roads. This benefit is achieved by limiting direct access to these roads. Michigan law requires reasonable access to abutting property, but does not require direct access.

- Shared driveways by two or more property owners should be required where feasible to reduce the overall number of access points.
- Shared access requires a written easement from all affected property owners during the site plan approval process.
- Where shared drives are not practical, service drives or frontage roads may serve as an alternative. A frontage road/service drive can be delineated through a parking lot by raised islands separating parking from the traffic lane. There is a great potential, particularly for a rear service drive, west of 48th Avenue. This would provide easy and safe access to businesses along 48th Avenue while preventing the need for individual driveways that can increase congestion and decrease safety.

Parking and Circulation: The design of on-site parking lots has a direct relationship to the safety and efficiency of the adjoining road and to the public's perception of the traveling experience.

- Parking lots should be buffered by perimeter landscape, particularly for parking areas abutting a roadway.
- Large parking areas (i.e., in excess of fifty spaces) should be broken up with internal landscaped areas. These may be in the form of plant clusters, plant islands, etc.
- Greenbelts (plant islands) should be used to assist in directing traffic by separating access and primary circulation drives from the actual parking areas.

Landscaping & Signs

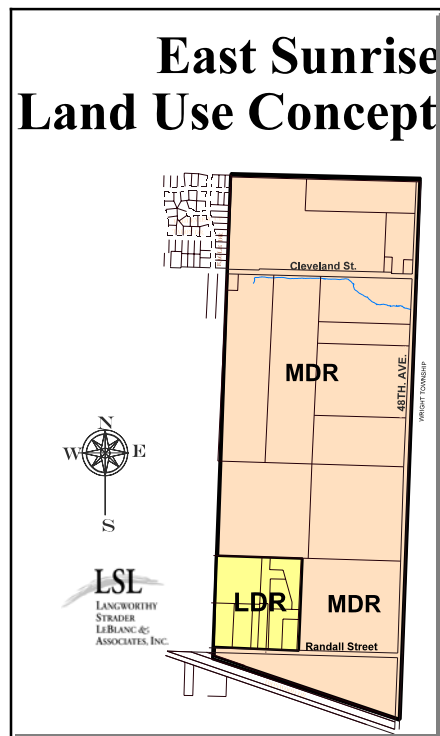
Unlike downtown businesses which often share public parking for employees and customers, commercial corridors predominately offer off-street parking for each individual site. These individual off-street parking areas consume large portions of land and collectively have a significant impact on the overall appearance of the corridor. Although parking areas are essential to nearly all businesses, their negative visual impact can be softened through application of proper screening and buffering techniques. Landscaping can provide a visual buffer between surrounding uses and the roadway. In addition, landscaping and screening techniques can also create a sense of identity to a site and minimize confusing parking arrangements. The same is also true for signs, which often dominate the visual landscape. Without proper regulation, signs can begin to compete with one another rather than simply as a clear means for identifying the use of particular site.



- All parcels should possess a fully landscaped, frontage greenbelt using applicable design standards.
- The size and shape of signs should be properly managed in the Gateway's commercial areas, such as limiting one sign per premise with a maximum square footage requirement.
- Landscaping should also be provided to protect adjacent land uses of lesser intensity, such as the High Density Residential uses planned as part of the overall development.
- Wherever possible, ground signs, rather than higher pole signs should be encouraged or required. These signs reduce the overall visual clutter and provide a safer means of identification by permitting drivers to maintain their vision at street level.

East Sunrise

East Sunrise is planned entirely for residential uses. A Low Density Residential classification has been placed on properties at the southwest corner, primarily to account for an existing, larger lot development accessed by a private street, on the east side of the designated area.



A significant portion of the south central part of East Sunrise is owned and/or occupied by the Coopersville Schools. An private access road (Campus Drive) has been constructed from 48th Avenue to the school grounds.

Development Principles

Access

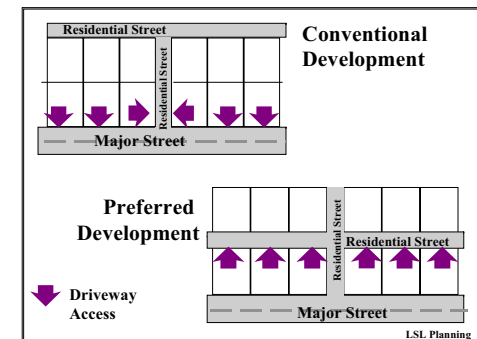
One of the most important factors in planning for access in residential neighborhoods is to ensure that several means of ingress and egress are provided, and that a continuous street system is retained between separate, but adjoining, residential developments. This helps ensure that safety vehicles have more than one means of reaching an emergency in the event that a primary route is blocked. It also permits more convenient and less confusing access for residents, visitors, and others, such as delivery and service vehicles.

In addition, the frontage along major roadways should not be permitted to be developed with direct access to those roads. Subdivision and other

residential development along major streets deserves careful review to ensure traffic safety. Lots which face major streets often have no other access but through those streets, particularly if the interior lands are not part of the development. As such, a large number of individual driveways along major streets, often carrying high speed traffic, can create a hazard.

Two solutions are possible. The first is to direct access to interior streets, placed one lot depth into the property. Homes should back up to the major street. Additional landscaping or fencing may be provided for the back yard areas facing the street.

The second solution can be used if interior development is not taking place. Rather than each lot having its own driveway, two or more lots can share a common driveway for the first several feet of the lot, then split into individual driveways to reach the building sites of each lot. If neither of these solutions prove useful, each lot fronting on a major street should be required to construct a turn-around area to allow vehicles to enter the street facing forward.



As new subdivisions, site condominium, or other residential projects are considered it is important to implement a street network to ensure that adequate circulation is provided between abutting development projects. Rather than having each development provide singular access to the major public street, project approvals should include provisions for stub streets to vacant properties that may be available for future development.

These street networks improve overall traffic flow by allowing residents to access nearby residential areas without traveling on the main streets. In addition, circulation between projects improves access for emergency vehicles. Finally, maintenance and snow removal costs are reduced and efficiency of public

services improved. Safety is enhanced when there are multiple means of access to residential areas in the event of an emergency.

Open Space

Strong residential neighborhoods also benefit from having reasonably accessible common open spaces, either in the form of a public park, private open space, or other similar area, for recreation purposes and to provide open space views. To a limited degree, the clustering provisions noted under Low Density Residential might be used to help provide open spaces, as well as preserve natural features.

Any open space provided within a development should follow some minimum guidelines.

- Open space areas should be large enough and of proper dimensions to form a useable area, with adequate access, through easements or other similar arrangements, so that as many properties as possible can use it.
- Arrangements should be made for the property owners or association to maintain the open spaces to make sure the City is not required to take over maintenance.
- Open space can be used where significant natural features may be preserved and/or be used for passive or active recreation.

The easiest solution to ensuring the open space remains that way is to set aside the open space through deed restrictions, or have it protected by a conservation easement, or other similar permanent restriction.

Creating Neighborhoods



The existing residential areas of Coopersville help make the city a desirable place in which to live. One of the important roles of the Master Plan is to ensure that these areas continue to develop and redevelop in ways that ensure their survival and continued stability. In the same way, the new residential areas planned in the Study Area must also strive for these objectives.

A “neighborhood” is most often defined by the perceptions of those people living in some (often loosely defined) area. Some neighborhoods, such as isolated subdivisions, residential condominium projects, or apartment projects will have a clearer identity, especially where homeowner associations or other similar groups have been formed. To help form strong neighborhoods the Plan must identify specific characteristics to help form stable and vital neighborhoods. The following outlines major characteristics that help form and maintain residential neighborhoods.

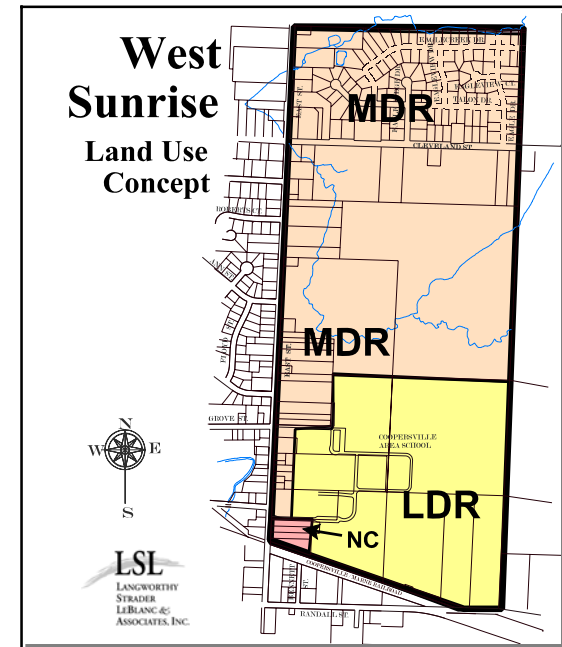
- **Type of Homes**
The types of housing found in most neighborhoods are often relatively uniform in design and age, even where there is a variety of housing styles and prices.
- **“Village” Character**
The strongest sense of neighborhoods are found in areas where people interact, either in informal meeting spaces, such as parks , sidewalks, and other places, or in more formal methods, such as schools and churches.
- **Street Network**
The streets serving the neighborhood will normally permit comfortable movement. Neighborhood

streets generally have reasonably direct access to abutting arterial or collector streets at safe and convenient points. Major intersections may have traffic signals.

- **Open Space**
Neighborhood open spaces need to be usable and accessible. Open space may also separate different land uses and neighborhoods.
- **Walkability**
Well planned neighborhoods allow access to nearby shopping areas, open spaces, and other features. Well planned neighborhoods promote walking by ensuring proper security, separation from the street, and attractiveness.
- **Related Services**
Although the “mom and pop” shops are less common today, existing commercial areas should be accessible. Other uses may be provided to meet the daily needs of residents, such as day care, schools, medical facilities, and other similar uses.
- **Neighborhood Interaction**
Some of the strongest neighborhoods rely on frequent interaction and cooperation. At times this takes places through a formal or informal association of residents which looks after the common interests of the neighborhood, including social as well as service functions.
- **Cultural and Historical Images**
Some neighborhoods are unique because of their variety of cultural and historical elements. Ethnic and historic architecture, neighborhood recreation centers, and other features keep neighborhoods

distinct and interesting. Where available, identifying and preserving these elements should be a high priority. Creating them, through well planned parks, can also be effective.

- **Natural Features**
Some neighborhoods have the advantage of valuable, irreplaceable natural features that have been integrated into the area as open space or common areas. The key to creating a strong identity for these features is making them available to as many residents as possible.
- **Security**
Neighborhoods need a sense of safety and security which may be achieved through physical measures, such as ensuring adequate lighting in public areas, as well as community methods, such as Neighborhood Watch and community safety programs. Experience has shown that security depends as much on the interaction of residents as it does on reliance on public safety officials.
- **Infrastructure**
Every neighborhood should have access to utilities that are adequate for the density provided and in reasonably good condition.



West Sunrise

Three major elements influence land use the this Area;

- The Coopersville Schools own a majority of the land within the Low Density Residential properties.
- Development along East Street must be carefully considered when new development is planned.
- The existing Eagle Ridge subdivision dominates the northern part of the Area.
- Natural features also play a strong role. A significant tributary of Deer Creek crosses through the central portions of this Area. Much of the land surrounding it is subject to flooding and significant wooded and wetland areas also line its banks.

Also present is a small Neighborhood Commercial area to accommodate some existing development and provide a limited area for expansion or new development for services needed in the immediate area. The northern boundary of the NC area should be firmly held in order to prevent the extension of commercial uses farther north on East Street.

Development Principles

The Development Principles of East Sunrise are also applicable to this area. However, given the natural characteristics that are present on this property, some additional emphasis will be needed on the effects of development on environmental features.

Environmental Sensitivity

While sensitivity to natural conditions is needed within all Study areas, there are certain aspects of West Sunrise that require additional consideration.

Overlay Zoning

The Deer Creek tributary affords a unique opportunity to provide some of the most attractive residential development opportunities within the City of Coopersville. Tree lined banks and flowing waters can be a strong attraction for high quality, single family homes.

At the same time, the tributary performs some basic water quality functions that must also be respected. Land use activities directly affect the surface waters of the Creek. In general terms, undeveloped areas such as forested lands and wetlands absorb and promote the natural infiltration of storm waters, thereby protecting water resources. Improper or poorly planned development can greatly increase the quantity and decrease the quality of runoff waters which, in turn, can harm water resources. Planning can help ensure the proper mix of development types and natural areas are maintained to protect water resources.

On the other hand, individual property owners are rarely aware of the complexity of water resources, or of the effect their actions may have on them. This lack of awareness, coupled with the economic and cultural value of water resources, creates a need for action by the City.

One protection method is the use of Overlay Zoning. An overlay zone is the application of an additional set of regulations to an established zoning district. Areas commonly targeted by overlay zones include: floodplains, watersheds, river and creek corridors, environmentally sensitive areas, high risk erosion areas, and others. Overlay zoning can be used to help ensure uniform regulations are in place across several zoning districts or political jurisdictions.

The benefits of using an overlay zone include:

- The preservation of natural features (e.g. a greenbelt along a river);
- Response to land use issues that affect multiple zoning districts; and
- The enhancement of public awareness of a valuable resource; and

A regulation commonly included in overlay districts along water courses is the use of vegetated buffers. People are drawn to live by water resources for aesthetics or recreation. A view to the water course is often gained by the clearing of vegetation along streambanks. This activity however contributes to reduced water quality and may lead to the eventual loss of aesthetic value. A vegetative buffer includes a strip of land, usually between 20-50 feet wide, along the watercourse from which the clearing of natural vegetation is limited, or prohibited.

Another regulation common to overlay zoning for streams is to enforce a setback for all main and accessory buildings. Not only does this protect the view to the watercourse for neighboring properties, it also restricts the clearing of land near the watercourse.

Tree Protection

Trees have been shown to have a number of significant, positive environmental effects. For example, trees can be used to reduce runoff from a property by not only reducing the amount of impervious surface, but slowing drainage from a site by providing a location where water may be absorbed.

A tree preservation ordinance can be implemented to reduce the number of trees removed from a new development site. Tree ordinances can be general or more specific. A general tree ordinance can refer simply to the natural features of a site. If a more general ordinance is preferred by a community, then a natural features inventory and a site design that incorporates natural integrity are usual requirements.

If a more specific ordinance is desired, regulations can be incorporated that restrict the number and size of trees that are removed from a site or require the planting of additional trees or vegetation to mitigate trees that were removed during site development.

Wetland Protection

Part 303 of the State of Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act defines a wetland as:

"land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh.."

"Wetland" is the collective term for marshes, swamps, bogs, and similar areas often found between open water and upland areas. Wet areas and hydric soils exist in virtually every part of the Four Township's area.

Benefits of wetlands include:

- Reducing flooding by absorbing runoff from rain and melting snow and slowly releasing excess water into rivers and lakes. (One-acre, flooded to a depth of one foot, contains 325,851 gallons of water.)
- Filtering pollutants from surface runoff, trapping fertilizers, pesticides, sediments, nutrients and other potential contaminants and breaking them down into less harmful substances, improving water clarity and quality.

- Recharging groundwater supplies when connected to underground aquifers.
- Contributing to natural nutrient and water cycles, and producing vital atmospheric gases, including oxygen.
- Providing commercial and recreational values to the economy, by producing plants, game birds (ducks, geese) and fur-bearing mammals. Survival of certain varieties of fish directly depend on wetlands, requiring shallow water areas for breeding, feeding and escape from predators.

State Regulation

Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act seeks to protect wetland resources through regulating land which meets the statutory definition of a wetland, based on vegetation, the occurrence of water, and soil type. Certain activities require a permit from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) while others are exempt.

The MDEQ will not issue a wetland permit unless an applicant can demonstrate that 1) the proposed activity is primarily dependent upon being located in a wetland and 2) that a feasible and prudent alternative does not exist. Part 303 requires the MDEQ to send copies of permit applications to local units of government where the wetland is located. Communities then have an opportunity to recommend approval, modification, or denial of a permit.

Wetland areas subject to regulation by the MDEQ include wetlands, regardless of size, which are contiguous to, or are within 500 feet of the ordinary high water mark of, any lake, stream, or pond; wetlands which are larger than five acres and not contiguous to any lake, stream, or pond; and those

wetlands which are not contiguous to any lake, stream or pond, but are essential to the preservation of natural resources.

Local Regulation

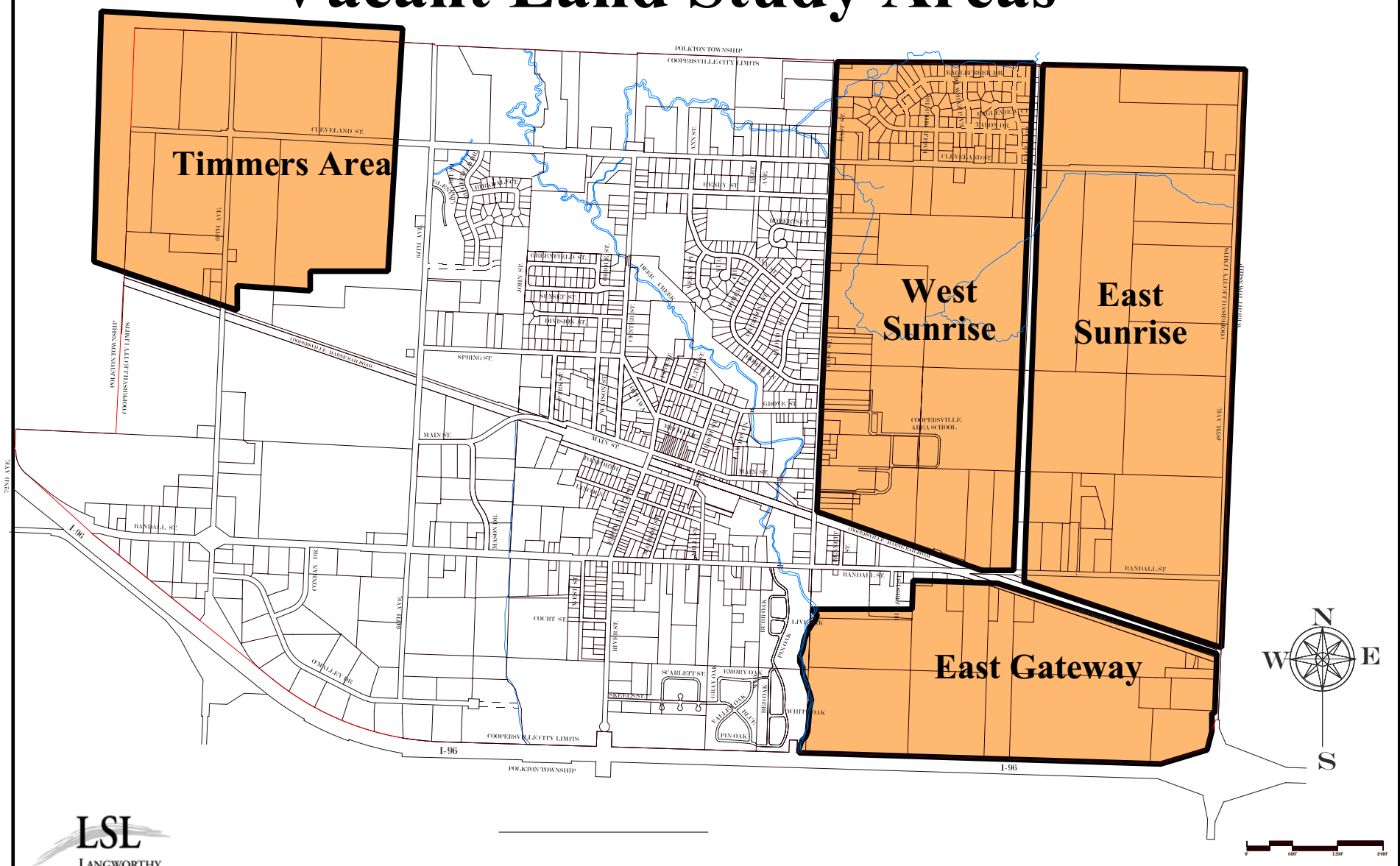
Local communities may adopt regulations for wetlands not included under the jurisdiction of the state. However, there are requirements that must be included as part of such regulations. First, the state definition of a wetland must be used, rather than a local definition. Second, the community must complete a local wetland inventory and make it available to the public at a reasonable cost.

Also, if a community with a wetland regulation denies a wetland permit, it must allow a landowner to request a revaluation of the affected property for assessment purposes to determine its fair market value under the use restriction imposed by the permit denial. Finally, if a community desires to regulate wetlands less than two acres in size, the community must provide a formal finding that the wetland is essential to the preservation of the natural resources of the community.

Development Principles		Applicable Study Areas			
		Timmers' Area	East Gateway	East Sunrise	West Sunrise
View Protection		P	P		
Open Space Preservation		P		P	P
Planned Unit Development		P	P	S	S
Buffering Dissimilar Land Uses		P	P		
Preservation of Natural Features		P	P	P	P
Access and Traffic Circulation		S	P		
Access Management			P		
Landscaping & Signs			P		
Access		P	P	P	
Creating Neighborhoods		P	S	P	P
Environmental Sensitivity	Overlay Zoning	S	P	S	P
	Tree Protection	P	S	P	P
	Wetland Protection	S	S	P	P

P Development Principle of Primary Importance
 S Development Principle of Secondary Importance

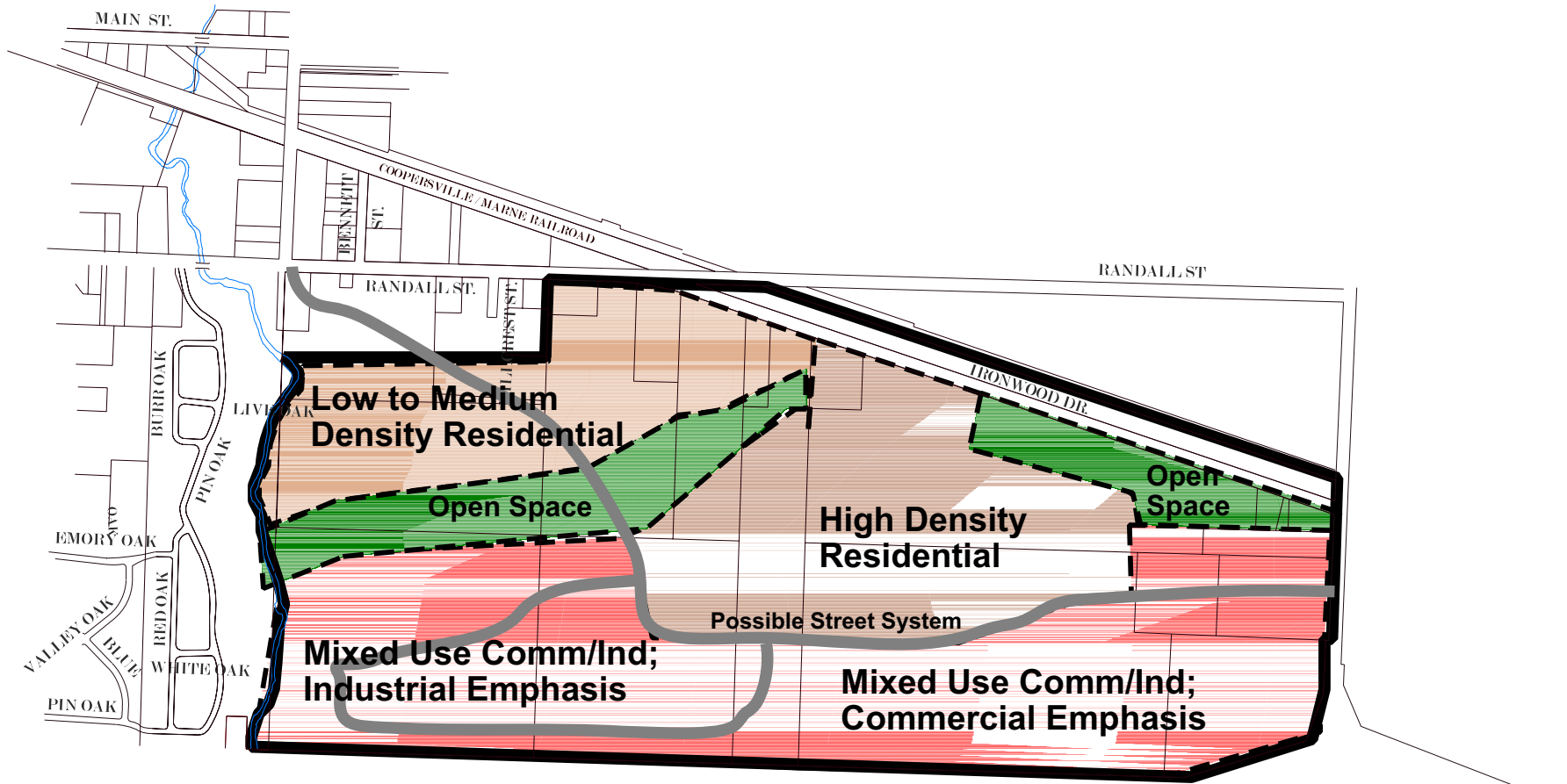
Vacant Land Study Areas



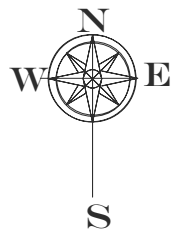
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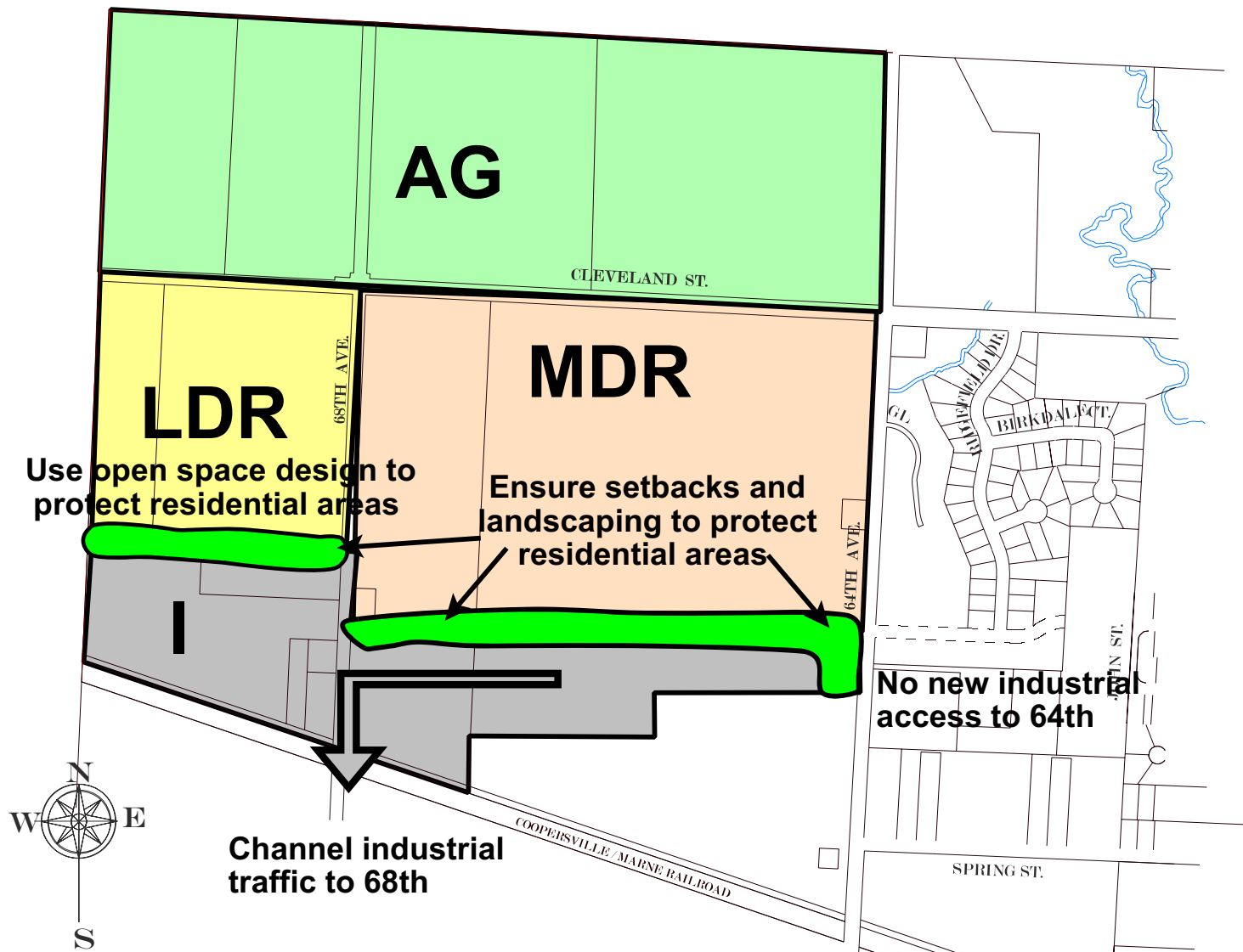


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East Gateway Land Use Concept

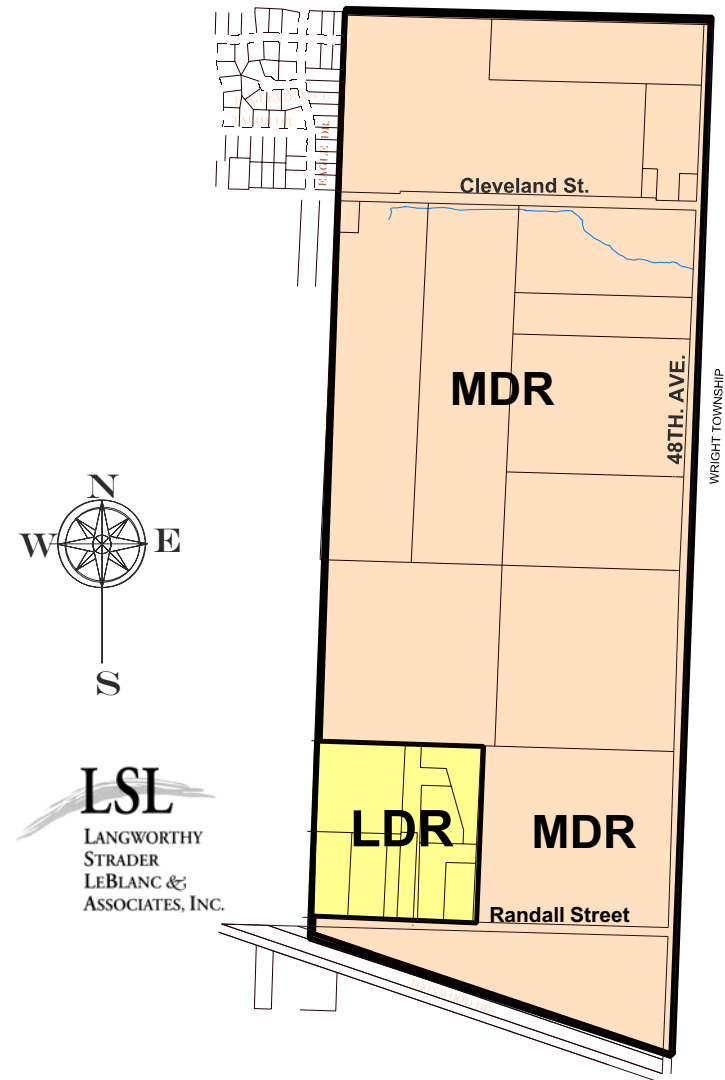
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Timmers Area Land Use Concept

East Sunrise Land Use Concept



West Sunrise Land Use Concept



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