

RUSSELL ROAD SUBAREA PLAN

CITY OF TECUMSEH, MICHIGAN

prepared by McKenna
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgments | i |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Statement of Purpose | 2 |
| PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | 3 |
| Activity #1: Desired Land Uses | 4 |
| Activity #2: Visual Preference Survey | 5 |
| Activity #3: Assets, Barriers, and Opportunities | 6 |
| FUTURE LAND USE | 7 |
| Purpose | 9 |
| DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS | 9 |
| Buildings | 10 |
| Landscaping and Sidewalks | 12 |
| Public Amenities and Signs | 13 |
| Parking and Sustainability | 14 |
| IMPLEMENTATION | 15 |
| Re-Zone Parcels to I-C | 15 |
| Update I-C Zoning to Permit Additional Uses | 15 |
| Other Considerations | 16 |

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INTRODUCTION

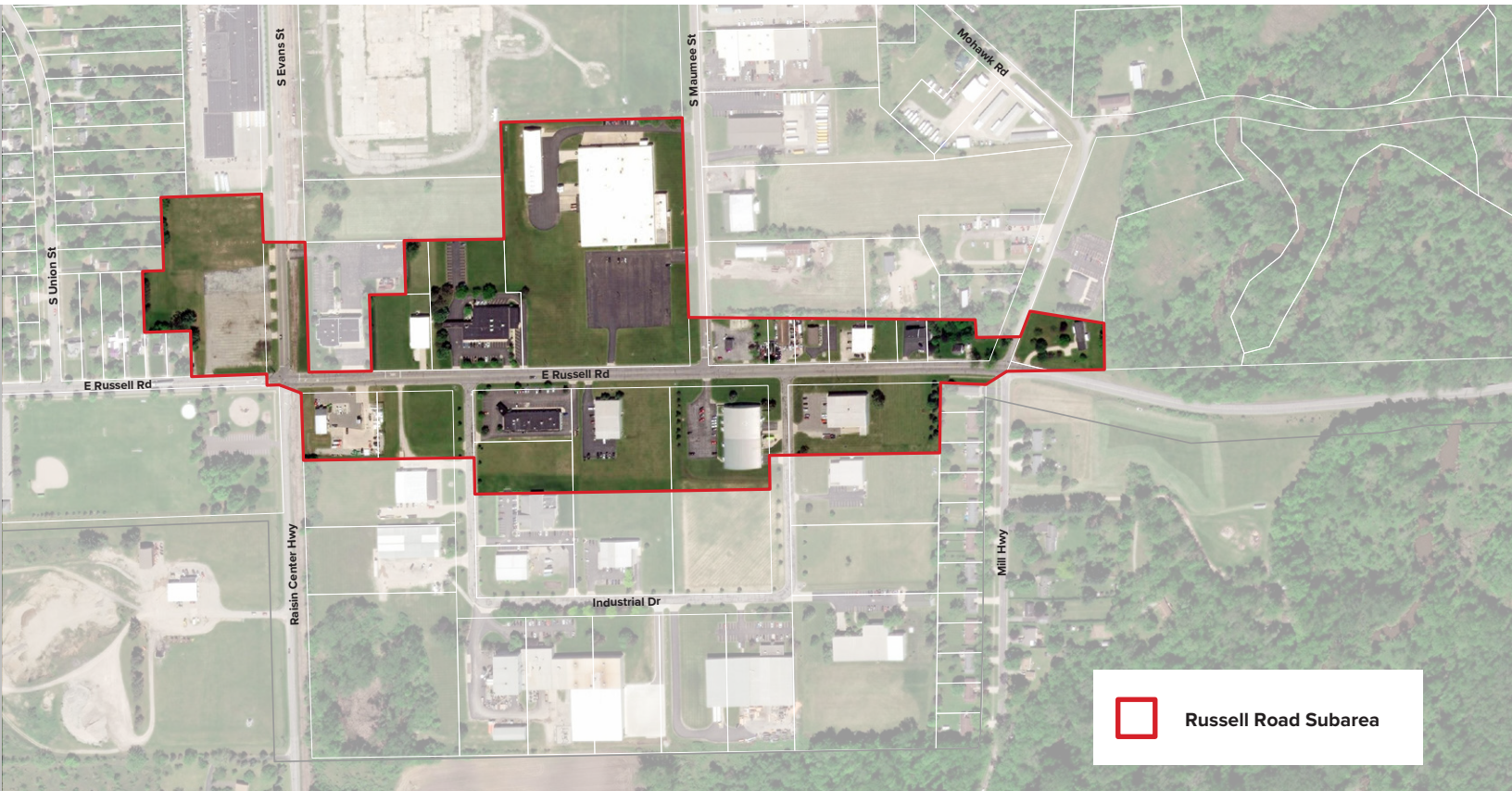


Figure 1. Aerial View of Russell Road Subarea

The Russell Road Subarea, located on Russell Road between Evans Street and Rogers Highway is a cluster of industrial uses just south of the Tecumseh Products site and Downtown Tecumseh. In recent years, the City became interested in exploring ways to allow for additional flexibility in this area, to encourage the re-purposing of industrial spaces and other non-conforming uses. The existing zoning does not permit a mix of industrial and commercial businesses now common in what are often referred to as flexible industrial districts. Flexible industrial districts allow for a greater mix of uses, including commercial, service, retail, and food and beverage uses. This additional flexibility provides greater opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to operate in industrial districts, and can encourage unique adaptive reuse strategies. The purpose of this Subarea Plan was to identify a vision and set of future land use principles that could transition the Russell Road Subarea from a traditional industrial to a flexible industrial district.

This Subarea plan consists of a public engagement summary, future land use plan, and future land use map. Its incorporation into the Tecumseh Master Plan will lay the legal foundation for zoning changes that can advance the vision and goals identified in this plan.

The Russell Road Subarea and surrounding context. The Tecumseh Products site and Downtown are to the north, and the west, south, and east consist of mostly single-family uses and open space.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Russell Road Subarea shall complement the adjacent neighborhoods, historic architecture, and traditional character of Downtown Tecumseh to the north and west of the subarea, while transitioning to the manufacturing, industrial, and business uses to the south and east of the subarea. Development shall emphasize walkability by encouraging connections between Subarea uses, recreational resources, and Downtown.

Uses shall be complementary to Downtown Tecumseh, with housing, restaurants, retail, office, maker-spaces, and light manufacturing being highly desirable. The design should incorporate qualities of the City's B-2 Core District with flexibility to include industrial and office buildings and uses. To encourage flexible site design, a Planned Unit Development could be considered to encourage the site development consistent with this Subarea Plan. Construction materials shall be durable and buildings shall be constructed to serve multiple purposes over the life of the structures.

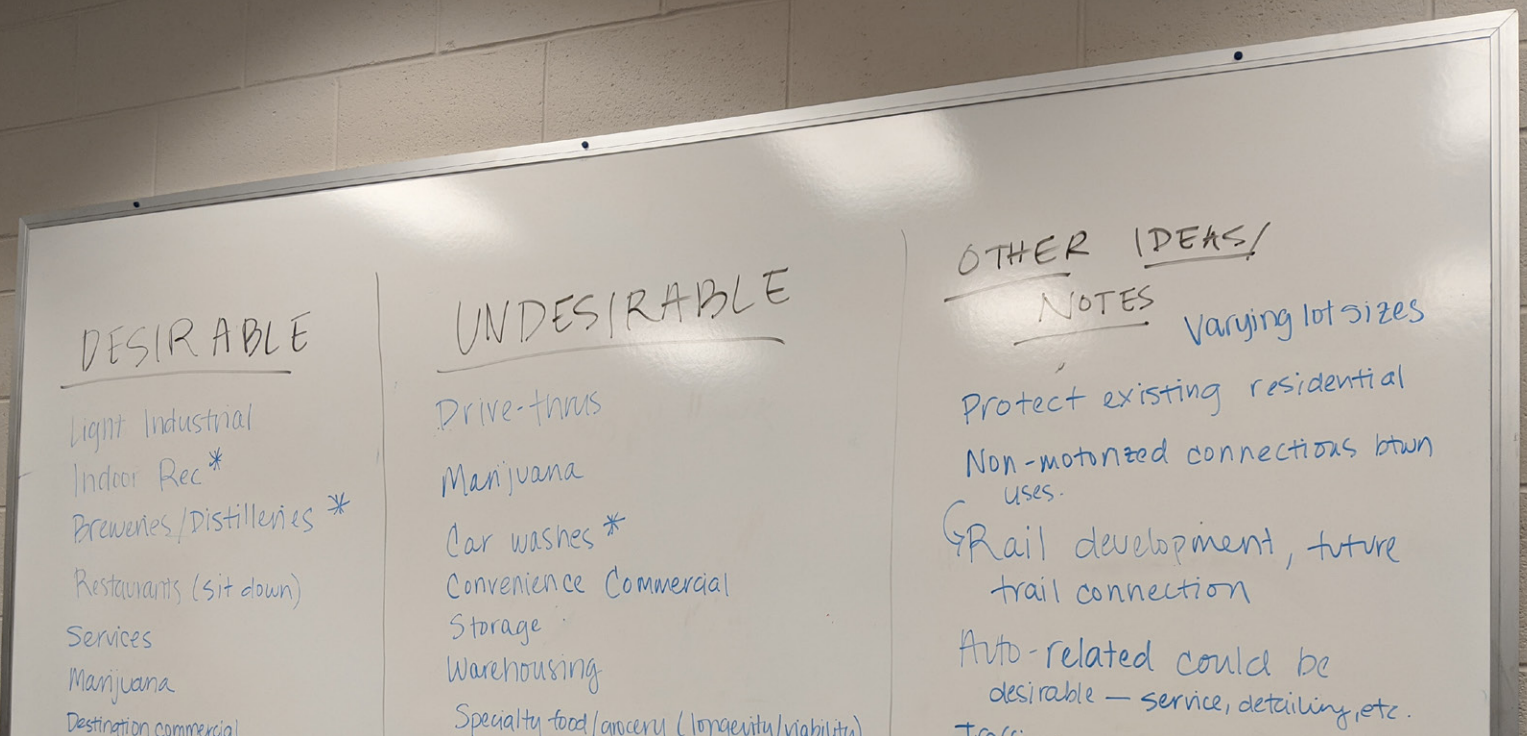
The Russell Road Subarea Plan is the official Master Plan for this portion of the City and was developed to comply with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and is an addendum to the City of Tecumseh Comprehensive Plan, Adopted by City Council on January 4, 2005.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



The City of Tecumseh held a public visioning workshop on Thursday March 5, 2020 to gather the public's ideas and input for the future of the Russell Road Subarea. The workshop was attended by approximately 20 people. McKenna and City Administration gave a brief introduction to the project and then the attendees were divided into small groups to participate in three different activities. At the end of each activities, groups reported out their findings with the larger group, with the discussion facilitated by McKenna. The three activities were designed to solicit public feedback on potential uses, design features, and areas that represented barriers or opportunities.

At the workshop, residents discussed the relationship of the Russell Road Subarea to neighborhoods, businesses, and Downtown.



1

ACTIVITY #1: DESIRED LAND USES

Activity #1 focused on what land uses people wanted to see on the site. People were asked to choose from a list of uses which they considered to be desirable uses for the Russell Road Subarea, and which uses they considered undesirable for the area. They were also given the option to come up with other uses or ideas not listed on their handouts. Participants were asked to mark up their sheets individually, before discussing with their small group.

For desirable uses, indoor recreational uses (gyms, trampoline parks, ice skating rinks, etc.), breweries/distilleries, and restaurants were mentioned by the most groups and broadly supported. Participants felt that those uses were the types of “destination” uses that would draw people to the area and also things that do not already exist elsewhere in the City. Maker spaces, general commercial, clothing stores, and light industrial uses were also mentioned as desirable uses.

Undesirable uses included more auto-oriented uses, with drive-thrus and car washes mentioned frequently as least desirable. However, there was some discussion about whether all auto-related uses are undesirable, because there are some that currently existing within the Russell Road Subarea. Other undesirable uses included convenience commercial, storage, warehousing, offices, and specialty food. The reasoning for these varied, but many people cited that these were already available in other areas, did not seem viable in a remote area away from similar uses, or were unattractive in general.

There were several other issues raised that were discussed at length. First, there was disagreement about whether marijuana-related uses were a desirable or undesirable use. Second was the discussion about traffic impacts and potential challenges with regulating alcohol-related uses in remote locations. A suggestion to address the traffic concern was the creation of non-motorized connections between uses, and the



ACTIVITY #2: VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

2

Activity #2 focused on what design elements and styles appealed most to participants, in the context of a flexible industrial district. Participants were shown four images for each of four categories: buildings, landscaping, lighting, and parking lots. They were asked to rank each on a scale from one to five, with a score of five being the highest. After they ranked each image individually, groups were encouraged to talk about their favorite and least favorite images as a group before sharing with the larger group.

Participants were most drawn to buildings that showed how traditional warehouse/industrial buildings might be transformed into more attractive, people-friendly places (such as the image at top left). In terms of landscaping, participants were most attracted to images that showed a wide planted buffer in front of buildings with trees and pathways for walking, with the most participants drawn to the top right image that depicted a more organic mix of ground cover, trees, and pathways. The more contemporary and distinctive styles of lighting drew the most support (the image bottom right received the highest overall scores), with an image showing glowing light post receiving a close second highest votes. Participants noted that these were interesting, exciting, and fun—something that could make this area stand apart from other parts of the City. Finally, participants gravitated most toward parking lot solutions that included green infrastructure strategies, such as a planted bioswale median (bottom left), pervious pavers, and densely planted screening beds. Overall, this exercise showed a preference for encouraging contemporary, distinctive, fun, and green design elements that could give this area a unique character.

(Above): Some of the highest rated images from the Visual Preference Survey in each category: buildings, landscaping, parking lots, and lighting.



3

ACTIVITY #3: ASSETS, BARRIERS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Activity #3 focused on how Tecumseh residents view the site in relation to other key assets within the community, as well as what the potential opportunities for or barriers to successful redevelopment exist in the Russell Road Subarea.

Overall, participants saw a lot of potential in the Subarea. In terms of assets, many people mentioned recreational amenities that are nearby, including Cal Zorn Park to the west, potential for trail connections along the rail line north to Downtown, and the open space areas to the east. Attendees expressed a desire to connect to these recreational assets with bike and pedestrian connections, but also recognized them as a potential catalyst that would attract other recreational uses to the Subarea. The existing Industrial Park was also recognized as an asset, as it currently drives a lot of traffic and business to the area.

The number of available, developable vacant lots was the most mentioned opportunity in the area. Building off the asset discussion, many saw opportunities to improve non-motorized connections to recreational assets, existing uses, and Downtown as a potential spin-off benefit of new development. Street improvements were also seen as a big opportunity, including landscaping and the aforementioned non-motorized infrastructure.

Finally, the attendees identified several barriers to redevelopment in this area. First, lot sizes vary significantly in the area, and some have environmental restrictions. This is something that could be addressed through flexible zoning that allows for a variety of uses and creative solutions. Participants also felt that issues with truck traffic, road and signalization improvements, and the need to accommodate public parking were also things that should be addressed when thinking about the types of uses that should be permitted here.

FUTURE LAND USE

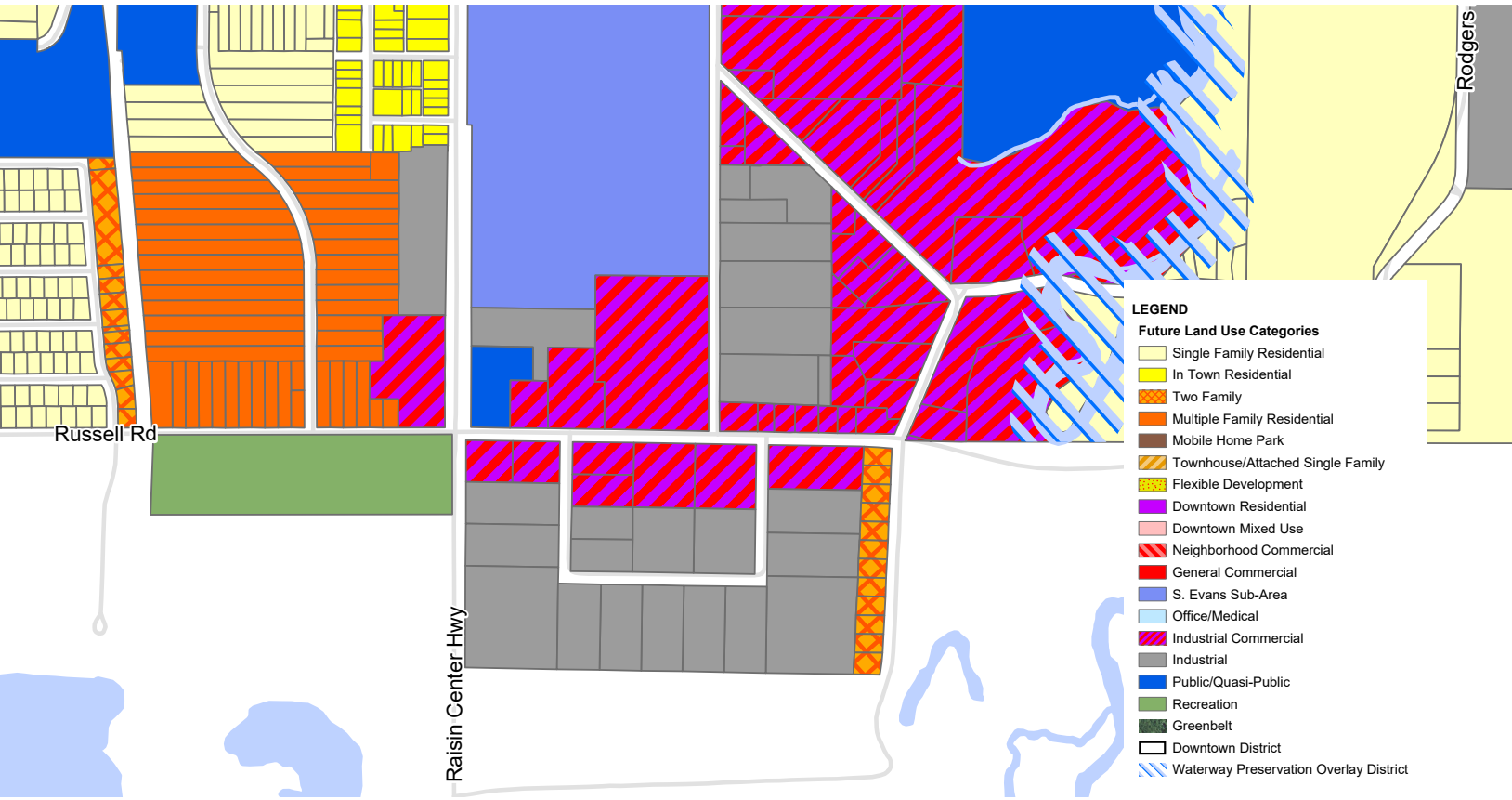


Figure 2. Future Land Use Map

This plan offers two, complimentary components to guide the transformation of the Russell Road Subarea. The first is to update the Future Land Use designation. Based on the feedback from the public workshop and the overall vision for the Russell Road Subarea, a change from Industrial to Industrial Commercial is recommended. Several adjacent parcels currently share this designation. According to the City’s Master Plan, the Industrial Commercial land uses is intended to: “include light industrial enterprises that conduct some wholesale or custom retail business on the premises. All operations should be enclosed within a building, an outdoor storage would not be permitted.”

The Industrial Commercial Future Land Use designation corresponds to an existing Industrial Commercial (I-C) zoning district. While this zoning is largely appropriate, additional flexibility in uses is likely needed. For a further discussion of how the City could implement these suggested changes, see **“Implementation” on pg. 15.**

The second component of this plan is a set of **additional development standards are provided in the next section** to guide site, building, parking, and amenities design. These standards will help facilitate the type of development envisioned in this Subarea plan.

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DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



PURPOSE

The following development guidelines should be used for industrial development in the Russell Road Subarea. Industrial development is typically characterized by large sites with perimeter fencing, outdoor storage, deep setbacks, and large expanses of parking. New development or redevelopment of industrial properties in the Russell Road Subarea should steer away from this traditional industrial form and maximize the use of sites through high-quality building design, appropriately-sized parking areas, an improved presence along primary streets, and a more pedestrian-friendly public realm. These standards are meant to promote good design principles that are appropriate for a wider range of uses, such as breweries, restaurants, maker spaces, retail, and light industrial. Such standards open up possibilities for future development and adaptive reuse in this flexible industrial district.

Development Standards that advance this purpose are provided in this section for each of the following:

- Buildings
- Landscaping and Sidewalks
- Public Amenities and Lighting
- Parking and Sustainability

(Above) This new development illustrates several flexible industrial development standards:

- (1) building is close to the street
- (2) attractive street frontage
- (3) pedestrian-oriented entrances and outdoor spaces
- (4) modern building design using traditional industrial materials
- (5) parking behind building



BUILDINGS

(Left): Row of small industrial buildings have consistent front-yard setbacks.

(Top Right): At Aslin brewery, glass is incorporated into the primary facade and a bright blue railing marks the pedestrian entrance.

(Bottom Right): Shipping containers with outdoor seating occupy vacant space.

Development standards for buildings are meant to promote redevelopment and adaptive reuse that are more human-scaled than traditional industrial uses, while still encouraging building form, scale, and materials that are characteristic of industrial uses. Where referenced below, the “primary” street frontage or façade shall mean the one directly abutting or facing Russell Road.

Recommended Development Principles

- Principle #1:** Buildings should relate to the street and to one another to create a cohesive and defined street frontage. Buildings on corner lots should define the corner by addressing both the primary and secondary street. For outdoor parking or seating areas, a low wall, fence, or other similar architectural feature may be used to maintain a consistent street wall.
- Principle #2:** Building entrances should be clearly recognizable and identified through the use of glass, overhangs, or other defining architectural features. Entrances should be provided on both the street side and parking side of the building. Buildings on corner lots may be chamfered to form a corner entry.
- Principle #3:** If the building does not directly abut a public sidewalk, a pedestrian path should connect the principal entrance to the sidewalk.
- Principle #4:** The primary façade is encouraged to have at least 15% clear glass per story to create a façade with visual interest, provide abundant light and air, and encourage natural surveillance.



Principle #5: Building materials should be high-quality, structurally durable, and reflective of local industrial materials. Encouraged building materials include, but are not limited to: brick, stone, stucco, wood, fiber cement board, stainless or weathered steel, corrugated plastic, standing seam metal cladding, and expanded metal mesh.

Principle #6: Outdoor seating permitted and encouraged for uses that include food or beverage consumption on-site.

Principle #7: In keeping with the area's industrial character, pre-fabricated buildings, storage containers or vehicles could be used to animate private sites. This building type can augment and contribute to new high-quality buildings while also responding to the existing context of industrial built fabric.

(Above): The use of glass on the corner for entryways, integration of a shade structure, and outdoor seating converts this warehouse into a fun, attractive space for people to eat and drink.



LANDSCAPING AND SIDEWALKS

(Left): Landscaping that has a native plantings, lawn, and trees. Pathways, benches, and other features are integrated into the landscape design.

(Top Right): Crosswalks in a parking lot are clearly marked to connect sidewalks across parking spots and drive aisles.

(Bottom Right): In certain locations, planters can be used to add greenery.

Increase walkability and attractiveness of the, by including selected pedestrian-oriented design principles. Standards for landscaping and sidewalks are intended to increase the safety and quality of the public realm within the Russell Road Subarea.

Recommended Development Principles

- Principle #1:** Landscaping should be provided in required setbacks/buffers, parking lots, and areas around buildings. Landscaping may be integrated with other functional site design elements, such as recreational facilities, paths and walkways, fences, planters, and street furniture.
- Principle #2:** High-maintenance lawn areas that do not support active or passive recreation should be discouraged wherever possible. Drought-tolerate, native ground covers and grasses are encouraged substitutes. Landscape elements could also include gravel and stone, or similar elements.
- Principle #3:** Sidewalks should connect the street frontage to all building entrances, parking areas and drives, usable open spaces, neighboring buildings and any other destination that generates pedestrian traffic.
- Principle #4:** On-site pedestrian circulation systems should be provided, at minimum to connect buildings to parking areas. Where appropriate, connections should be made between on-site and off-site circulation (sidewalks, trails, etc.).
- Principle #5:** Pedestrian crossings on roads, drive aisles, and parking areas should use material differences or markings that distinguish them from the surrounding road surface.



PUBLIC AMENITIES AND SIGNS

Pedestrian amenities, public art, and lighting are key elements that should improve the pedestrian-friendliness and attractiveness of the public realm in the Russell Road Subarea. Public realm standards are also meant to encourage creativity to distinguish this area from other parts of the City.

Recommended Development Principles

- Principle #1:** Lighting and amenities should be pedestrian scaled in parking areas and near building entrances. Along road frontages, taller lighting fixtures may be more appropriate and should be permitted.
- Principle #2:** Colors, fixtures, and style of lighting and pedestrian amenities are encouraged to incorporate industrial materials. Lighting and other pedestrian amenities should be uniform within a site, and coordinated within the overall Subarea.
- Principle #3:** Unique and innovative design elements (lights, street furniture, public art, signage, etc.) are encouraged.
- Principle #4:** Industrially-inspired visual design elements such as murals or hyper-graphic signage is encouraged.
- Principle #5:** Bike parking should be required near building entrances for employees or visitors.

(Top Left): Unique lighting can help create a distinct character

(Bottom Left): Public art made from industrial materials

(Right): Pedestrian-scaled amenities (lighting, planters, bollards, and awnings) and hyper-graphic elements (sign and mural) create an interesting and inviting design.



PARKING AND SUSTAINABILITY

(Left): A large green divider median between parking bays reduces runoff and provides room to plant shade trees. This median also operates as a bioswale.

(Top Right): Where side yard parking is necessary, a low wall and/or landscaping should be provided as a screen.

(Bottom Right): Parking lot surfaced with pervious pavers.

Parking lots should be subordinate to the principal building and comfortable for users. To achieve these characteristics, thoughtful consideration should be given to parking area placement, access, landscaping, green infrastructure, and parking demand. The following guidelines are applicable to all development types.

Recommended Development Principles

- Principle #1:** Parking should be located in the side or rear yards whenever possible. Side yard parking should be screened from the street by a low wall, fence, or landscape buffer. This wall should essentially extend the primary façade of the principal building to maintain a cohesive streetscape.
- Principle #2:** Access should be provided from a secondary street where possible. If access is provided from the primary street, the number and width of curb cuts should be kept to the minimum necessary. Developments should also consider sharing access to parking areas and connectivity between parcels.
- Principle #3:** Shared parking between adjacent uses should be permitted and encouraged. A reduction of the total number of required spaces may be permitted for uses that have different peak-usage times.
- Principle #4:** Landscaped islands planted with shade trees help reduce the heat island effect and stormwater runoff created by large expanses of pavement.
- Principle #5:** Environmentally sustainable features should be permitted and encouraged in any part of the site, building, or parking lot design including, but not limited to: solar panels, green or vegetative roofs, greywater systems, native plantings, open grid pavers, porous pavement, and bioswales/rain gardens.

IMPLEMENTATION

This section includes recommended actions that will allow for the purpose and vision of this Russell Road Subarea Plan to be realized and evolve as needed over time.

RE-ZONE PARCELS TO I-C

The parcels identified as part of the Russell Road Subarea that have a new Future Land Use designation of I-C should be rezoned to the corresponding Industrial-Commercial zoning classification. The I-C permits a mix of light industrial and commercial uses, many of which were mentioned during the public workshop as appropriate uses in the Russell Road Subarea, including: professional offices, large-scale indoor recreation, printing, publishing, and allied industries, and vocational schools.

UPDATE I-C ZONING TO PERMIT ADDITIONAL USES

However, there are still a number of other uses permitted in other districts that may be appropriate to permit in the I-C district as well. Uses such as retail and restaurants should be permitted as special uses, accessory to permitted use and subject to other standards as appropriate. The I-C district is limited to parcels in or adjacent to the Russell Road Subarea.

| Additional Uses to Add to I-C | Permitted Use | Special Use |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| Bakeries and confectionaries | X | |
| Community center | X | |
| Commercial recreation—small scale indoor | X | |
| Commercial recreation—outdoor | X | |
| Gallery—art, photography, etc. | X | |
| Maker spaces* | X | |
| Micro brewery / winery / distillery* | X | |
| Restaurant—carry out, sit down, or sidewalk café | | X |
| Retail Sales—less than 20,000 sq. ft. floorplate | | X |
| Retail Sales—greater than 20,000 sq. ft. floorplate | | X |
| Studio—dance, martial arts, music, etc. | X | |
| Theatre—live performance or movie | X | |

*New use that will need a definition added to Section 98-782.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

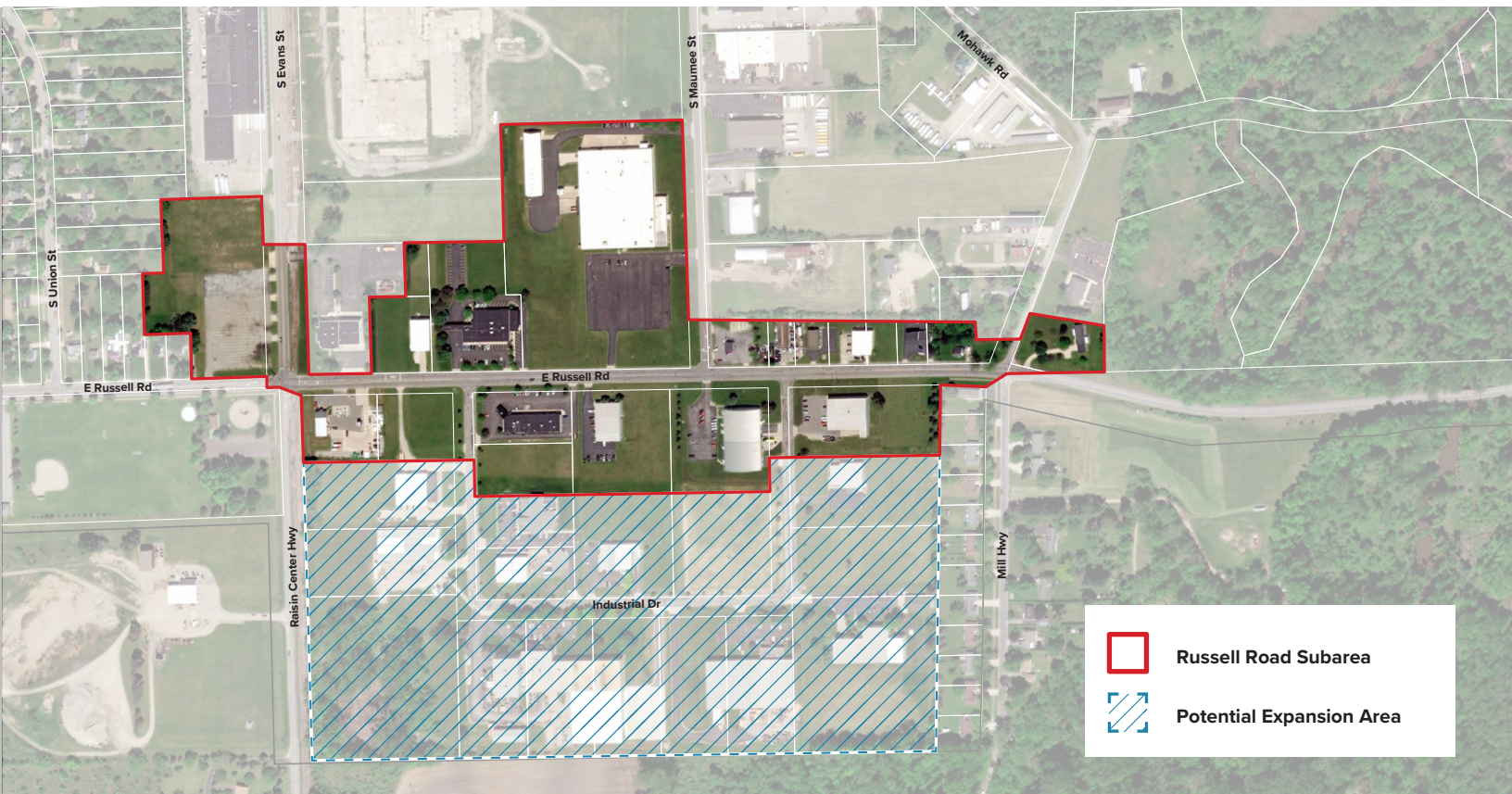
Expansion of I-C Zoning and/or Subarea Design Guidelines

There are a number of properties that are part of the Subarea that should remain zoned Industrial and not be subject to the Russell Road Subarea Development Standards contained in this plan at this time. However, the City should be open to allowing that to change over time, as opportunities arise (See Figure 3 below). The overall goal for the Russell Road Subarea is to encourage gradual transformation of the district from a traditional industrial district to a more flexible, industrial/commercial district. This strategy allows for that.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

There are also several parcels within the Russell Road Subarea that could be well-suited for PUD zoning. The proximity to existing residential areas and the South Evans Subarea (former Tecumseh Products site) make this a natural fit. The PUD process is also one that allows for creativity and flexibility, two things that are encouraged in the Russell Road Subarea. This plan recommends that PUD zoning be allowed within the Russell Road Subarea.

Figure 3. Russell Road Subarea and Potential Expansion Area



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CITY OF TECUMSEH, MICHIGAN