



**Chapter 7**

**Business  
Areas Plan**

**The Business Areas Plan** provides guidance for the commercial districts and employment centers located throughout the Town. The Plan strives to designate the appropriate commercial types and activity levels needed to provide a range of commercial goods and services to New Carlisle residents and surrounding areas, improve the overall character of the Town and its commercial areas, diversify and expand the Town’s tax base, and strengthen the local employment base.

## **COMMERCIAL AREAS PLAN AND POLICIES**

A wide range of commercial uses exist in the Town, providing a variety of goods and services, and contributing significantly to the overall character, image and appearance of the Town. Generally speaking, some commercial areas are newer, well maintained and well occupied, providing for an attractive shopping environment and desirable mix of uses. Other commercial areas and shopping centers are older and dated in appearance, suffer from deferred maintenance and obsolescence, and offer a less desirable mix of uses accompanied by higher vacancy rates.

An overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to improve the appearance and function of the existing commercial areas and attract new commercial development to under-performing or under-utilized “opportunity” sites. The Plan also identifies areas where new commercial development will be appropriate in the future. These opportunity areas represent high-profile properties that are capable of attracting visitors to the area, and therefore, could play a significant role in defining the image of the community. Each new commercial development should be considered an opportunity to incrementally improve upon the appearance and character of the community, ensuring that new development provides an overall high-quality design and appearance. New commercial development should incorporate quality building materials and provide attractive architecture as viewed from all sides, and should be well landscaped and integrate appropriate pedestrian amenities.

The Land Use and Development Plan designates three commercial land use categories: Neighborhood Commercial, Corridor Commercial, and Mixed-Use Downtown.

The following policies will assist the Town in future decision making regarding commercial land use areas throughout the Town:

- Promote the appropriate mix and intensity of commercial uses in the various districts throughout the Town.
- Strengthen the role, function, and “uniqueness” of each commercial district to maximize its competitive edge and market viability.
- Utilize a commercial “node” approach to locating commercial uses within the Town and its growth areas, rather than simply maintaining or creating linear commercial development along the major corridors.
- Connect commercial areas to surrounding residential neighborhoods via adequate roadway linkages, pedestrian circulation, and sufficient and conveniently located parking.
- Work with existing property owners and businesses to improve the appearance of their building façades and sites.
- Strive to create safe and attractive pedestrian environments on all commercial sites.
- Encourage mixed-use commercial developments in the Downtown mixed-use area.
- Leverage the potential South Shore Rail Station as a regional attraction and anchor for tourism and commercial development in New Carlisle.
- Include landscaped islands, trees, pedestrian walkways, and perimeter landscaping and screening in all commercial parking areas.
- Encourage the use of cross-access and development of shared parking areas between adjacent commercial uses.
- Buffer and screen commercial uses from adjacent residential areas.
- Encourage larger commercial developments to incorporate “green building” techniques and the use of best management practices.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL**

Neighborhood commercial uses should be located along major corridors and at key intersections, along the edges of residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood commercial uses are limited within the Town and the Land Use and Development Plan designates new neighborhood commercial nodes within areas currently underserved by retail as well as future growth area commercial nodes. Because neighborhood commercial areas are typically located adjacent to residential areas, buffering, screening, and setbacks should be used to protect nearby residential neighborhoods. Hours of operation and intensity of use may also become an important issue in some neighborhood commercial areas.

Neighborhood commercial areas are intended for smaller-scale retail and service commercial areas geared toward meeting the daily shopping, service, and convenience needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

While they may attract customers from outside the Town, they are intended to provide residents with convenient access to goods and services. Appropriate uses for neighborhood commercial nodes include gasoline service stations, pharmacies, branch banks, small office uses, small restaurants and other convenience uses. A larger neighborhood commercial node could develop more intensely, with a grocery store, other specialty retailers, and more intense office uses, but should still be cognizant of its impact on nearby residences.

Commercial service uses can also have an appropriate place in this land use designation by providing necessary services for nearby residents. Commercial service uses within the neighborhood commercial areas must be compatible with adjacent and nearby residential areas and be located so as not to occupy prime retail locations. Any outdoor activity or outdoor storage associated with commercial service uses must be appropriately screened and buffered, so as to provide an attractive site and mitigate any negative impact on surrounding uses.

## **CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL**

With the exception of the downtown commercial segment, corridor commercial areas within New Carlisle are characterized by a mix of standalone development and community-scale retail centers that are typically auto-oriented with limited pedestrian amenities and uncoordinated access. Corridor commercial properties also often have relatively shallow lots that back up to residential or other uses and present challenges for redevelopment with regard to layout and intensity. Within existing corridor commercial areas, adjacent smaller commercial properties should be considered for consolidation and comprehensive redevelopment, given the appropriate opportunity. Shared parking, unified/coordinated ingress and egress, and internal cross-access of adjacent properties is recommended.

The majority of New Carlisle's corridor commercial properties are located along the Michigan Street corridor (western end of Town and on the north side of the viaduct on the eastern edge of Town) which has several vacant or under-utilized properties. Chapter 13: Key Focus Areas of the Comprehensive Plan discusses the Michigan Street corridor in greater detail and provides recommendations for better access control and management, site improvements and beautification, and redevelopment scenarios.

It is important that the Town maintain flexibility when considering redevelopment proposals for the western portion of the Michigan Street, and into the downtown. Although designated as Corridor Commercial, its compatibility with adjacent uses is important. There are different land uses and development types that could be considered appropriate and complementary to surrounding development such as retail, office, commercial service, multi-family or attached single-family residential. The importance should be placed on built form and not necessarily land-use. Ideally, redevelopment in this part of the corridor will be compatible, coordinated, high-quality.

**INSERT COMMERCIAL VISUAL PREFERENCE GRAPHIC – SAMPLE BELOW**



## **MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL**

The Town should encourage and support mixed-use developments with commercial uses on the ground floor in the Downtown area. Locating commercial uses within mixed-use developments in the Downtown area is an important goal of redeveloping the area and establishing a sense of activity within the district. Mixed-use developments in the Downtown area should be located at, or near, the front property lines fronting the street to create a “street wall” that encourages walkability, helps to establish a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. More detailed recommendations for commercial components of desired mixed-use development are provided in the Downtown Key Focus Area Plan (**Chapter 13: Key Focus Area Plans**).

### **INSERT DOWNTOWN VISUAL PREFERENCE GRAPHIC**

## **OFFICE**

Office uses can be a complementary component of any neighborhood or corridor commercial area. When office uses are incorporated within a larger development such as a retail center, the character and scale of office development should mimic that of the surrounding commercial district. Conversely, within the downtown, office uses should occupy the upper floors of mixed-use buildings or single-story structures with limited setback.

## **INDUSTRIAL/ EMPLOYMENT AREAS PLAN**

The Industrial Areas Plan strives to ensure a variety of light industrial and business park uses within the Town that can provide employment opportunities and needed goods and services. These areas are not intended to accommodate heavy manufacturing or intense, “dirty” industrial users. Rather, these areas within the Town are intended to accommodate research and office uses, light assembly and “tech” industries, distribution and storage businesses, commercial service uses, and other “employment use” opportunities in the Town. An overall goal is to support existing industrial/employment areas while locating additional areas in strategic locations.

### **GREATER DETAIL WILL BE ADDED IN THIS CHAPTER WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS AND STRATEGIES OF THE SURROUNDING AREA AND THE INDIANA ENTERPRISE CENTER.**

These areas should be developed as a mix of light industrial, business, commercial service, and office uses. The following are the policies of the Industrial Areas Plan:

- Strengthen and promote light industrial, business park, and other employment generating uses in designated areas.
- Relocate existing industrial uses from key opportunity sites in commercial areas into designated industrial/employment areas elsewhere in the community when opportunities arise.
- To the extent possible, mitigate the negative effects of industrial uses on adjacent and nearby residential properties through use of setbacks, screening, buffers, orientation of activity, roadway and circulation improvements, and more.
- Improve infrastructure, such as water, electric, and telecommunications services, in designated industrial/employment areas to attract further private investment and ensure adequate capacity.

- Utilize development and improvement opportunities within the industrial/employment areas to strengthen and better establish a positive corporate/business image and identity for the Town. Attractive and prominent business park gateway signage and identification is encouraged.

**INSERT BUSINESS AREAS PLAN MAP**

## **MANUFACTURING**

The Industrial/Employment Areas Plan designates new areas for manufacturing uses in the areas within the Indiana Enterprise Center along with the existing manufacturing uses and industrial uses. Manufacturing areas are major, regional employment areas of intense, concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses which cannot be easily mixed with other types of uses. Areas identified as Industrial should be reserved for manufacturing, industry and related uses. Light industrial, business parks, offices, retail uses should be discouraged within these areas, however neighborhood commercial uses providing convenient uses to employment centers may be appropriate in some locations.

The provision of adequate services and proximity and access to regional routes, such as US 20 and St. Rd 2, is a significant asset to potential industrial users, but visibility from these routes is not necessary for most industrial uses. More land intensive uses, including larger logistics and warehousing, may be more appropriately located farther removed from major roadways, but still within easy drive of these routes. The Town should be cautious in keeping the industrial uses from occupying highly visible and accessible sites in prime commercial areas adjacent to major roadways, reserving these areas for uses that need or require access; can contribute positively to the community's appearance; and/or generate sales tax and revenue for the Town.

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