

DRAFT
**CHARACTER
TYPE
DESCRIPTIONS**

INTRODUCTION

The following definitions are intended to provide more detailed information regarding the character and land uses depicted in the Draft Character and Land Use Plan. They will be revised pending community input and final analysis for inclusion in the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update.

ABOUT THE DESCRIPTIONS

TITLE

The title for each character type is a descriptive name that should evoke the type's general nature, and in some cases also conveys where it should be found.

CHARACTER INTENSITY

Following the title is a number indicating the "Character Intensity" or CI. This value represents the relative intensity of development throughout the character type. The scale ranges from 1, land that is nearly completely natural such as a nature preserve, to 5, land that is intensely developed such as an urban downtown. The graduation of the Character Intensity also indicates the general compatibility of each character type with others. A type with a CI of 5 is often not outright compatible with one with a CI of 2, and so care should be taken to address possible incompatibility issues. A sixth Character Intensity, labelled Special Character (SC), is used for unique properties where the intensity should always be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

PHYSICAL CHARACTER, INTENT AND LAND USES

The expected use and physical character of the land for each character type is described, in text and images. Many of the character types have a development pattern envisioned of either a traditional or conventional nature. Traditional development is usually found in historic areas and is typically defined by reduced reliance on automobile transportation. Features often found in traditional development are smaller lots, greater lot coverage, sidewalks, mixed uses, and farms that are self-contained. Conventional development patterns depend more on automobile transportation for their success and have been the norm in development since the 1950s. Hallmarks of conventional development are moderate- to large-lots, wide streets, homogenous uses per development, and non-farm residences scattered through agricultural areas.

It should be noted that in most areas if an existing land use does not align with the indicated character type, one can assume that existing land uses may continue. It is expected that a progression toward the planned character will be made as opportunities become available.

TOWN CENTER CORE CI: 5

Typically, the historic, civic, and cultural center of an urbanized area. Buildings of a variety of sizes and forms are located close to one another and to the street; buildings are often adjoined. There is a tight mixture of residential, commercial, and institutional uses, while compatible industrial uses may also be integrated. Street pattern is grid-like with short blocks, frequent intersections, and usually alleys. Streets accommodate moderate traffic at slow speeds and should include on-street parking and feature amenities for pedestrians such as wide sidewalks, street trees and benches. Redevelopment of underutilized buildings is often necessary, and infill development on vacant sites is encouraged.



Example character pattern.

INTENT

- ▶ Infill vacant lots
- ▶ Adapt and reuse existing buildings
- ▶ Encourage vertical mixed-use development (residential or office above commercial)
- ▶ Reduce/consolidate surface parking
- ▶ Maintain and expand public realm features such as street trees, lighting and wayfinding signs

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Commercial / Retail
- ▶ Civic / Institutional

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Office
- ▶ Multi-family Residential
- ▶ Maker Space / Cottage Industry
- ▶ Parks and Open Spaces

COMMERCIAL CENTER

CI: 4-5

Commercial and retail development on or along major roadway corridors serving a regional market. Main buildings are usually a “big-box” architecture, and development may be anchored by a large commercial use or employer. Surface parking lots are predominant, often with existing buildings located behind the parking. There should be provision for landscape features and amenities that improve the aesthetics of the development. Existing development patterns should evolve to raise design quality, improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods, and become more walkable with sidewalks, shorter blocks, buildings near streets and shared parking.

INTENT

- ▶ Provide connectivity to nearby uses (paths, streets)
- ▶ Locate new buildings near street on at least one side and accommodate parking to the side or rear of buildings
- ▶ Improve/provide public realm features such as signs, sidewalks and landscaping
- ▶ Reduce the number of access points into development for pedestrian and vehicular safety
- ▶ Reduce and consolidate surface parking

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Regional Scale Commercial / Retail
- ▶ Mixed-use
- ▶ Office

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Civic / Institutional
- ▶ Multi-family Residential
- ▶ Commercial Recreation



Example character pattern.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT CI: 3.5-4.5

Traditional activity centers with a mix of smaller-scale commercial, residential, and institutional or public uses that form a cohesive area. These are usually the core of unincorporated towns, and in some cases may be the entire town. Commercial development should serve residents in surrounding neighborhoods and supply day-to-day goods and services, although specialty businesses and low-intensity manufacturing may also be compatible. Over time, areas can benefit from intensification more similar to the Town Center Core, provided that the overall scale and character of the area is respected.

INTENT

- ▶ Encourage investment in existing structures where possible
- ▶ Encourage infill development that is compatible with the existing scale and character
- ▶ Encourage streetscape improvements that knit the area together and provide an appealing, walkable environment

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Vertical mixed-use (commercial first floor, office or residential above)
- ▶ Office
- ▶ Commercial/Retail
- ▶ Single- and Two-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Multi-family residential
- ▶ Civic / Institutional
- ▶ Maker Space / Cottage Industry
- ▶ Parks and open space



Example character pattern.

EMPLOYMENT CENTER

CI: 3.5-4.5

Employment-oriented areas that are characterized by light-industrial and office uses typically located in a conventional “business park” setting. Commercial uses, both service and retail, and more intense industrial, including heavy industrial, can be appropriate in certain circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Large footprint structures should offer flexible space to accommodate market demand for various users over time. Buildings should be oriented to the street and be adapted to support different uses such as light manufacturing, high-tech industries, and research and development. New multi-family and other housing types can be appropriate as supporting uses when properly located. Plazas and pocket parks should serve as amenities for employees. When possible, restaurants and services should be integrated to create a multifunctional campus-like environment.



Example character pattern.

INTENT

- ▶ Promote opportunities for larger employers to locate and conduct business, and the clustering of businesses
- ▶ Ensure adequate utilities and transportation to support activities
- ▶ Encourage physical connections to adjacent areas

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Commercial (Office)
- ▶ Light Industrial

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Commercial (Retail)
- ▶ Intense Industrial
- ▶ Civic / Institutional
- ▶ Multi-family residential
- ▶ Parks and open space

INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

CI: SC

Academic, governmental, and medical (hospital) campuses, religious centers and retreats, including a range of building types and accessory uses that reflect their unique functions. The core of the campus area may cluster buildings in a walkable pattern with some limitations to vehicular access. Related facilities and parking areas are located at the edges. Many of these uses can be appropriate within other character types, so this character should apply when there is significant differentiation between these uses and the surrounding area.

INTENT

- ▶ Encourage better physical links between campus and other areas, including through multi modal transportation
- ▶ Promote development along the edges of campuses that is compatible with adjacent land uses and character
- ▶ Provide economic development opportunities through supporting commercial and retail

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Civic / Institutional

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Office
- ▶ Commercial / Retail
- ▶ Multi-family residential
- ▶ Parks and open space



Example character pattern.

SUBURBAN LIVING

CI: 3

Comprised of residential uses, the majority of which are single-family homes, arranged along wide, curvilinear streets with minimal intersections based on hierarchical road classification to ease vehicular movement. Developments typically contain some shared open spaces and common amenities for use by property owners. Lots may range in size and residences may vary in scale and value, but they tend to be relatively homogenous within any particular development. Supporting non-residential uses, such as small retail and service commercial, may be appropriate at certain location, but direct connectivity between residential areas and non-residential uses is not tightly integrated. New development should be served by public utilities, but some larger-lot neighborhoods may utilize on-site water and septic systems.



Example character pattern.

INTENT

- ▶ Provide better pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between residential developments
- ▶ Improve streetscape features such as consistent sidewalks, lighting and street trees

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Single-family detached residential (small to large lot)
- ▶ Attached residential (townhomes)

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Multifamily residential
- ▶ Local Scale Commercial (Retail)
- ▶ Civic / Institutional
- ▶ Two-family

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CI: 4

Primarily residential areas that feature a mix of residence types on smaller lots, generally with a consistent appearance that is largely single-family. These may be historic residential areas of towns or new neo-traditional developments. Traditional neighborhoods should have a street network of small blocks with alleys, a defined center and edges, and integration with surrounding development, even those of differing land uses. These neighborhoods can include integrated nodes of small-scale retail, service, and office uses, or mixed commercial-residential uses. Complementary uses like parks, schools, and community facilities should be within walking distance. New development should be served by public utilities, and historic traditional neighborhoods not currently served with sanitary sewers should be priorities for service extensions.



Example character pattern.

INTENT

- ▶ Provide streetscape features such as sidewalks, street trees, and lighting
- ▶ Allow neighborhood-scale commercial or mixed-use centers at key intersections within neighborhoods

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Single-family residential (small lot)
- ▶ Attached residential (townhomes)
- ▶ Two-family residential

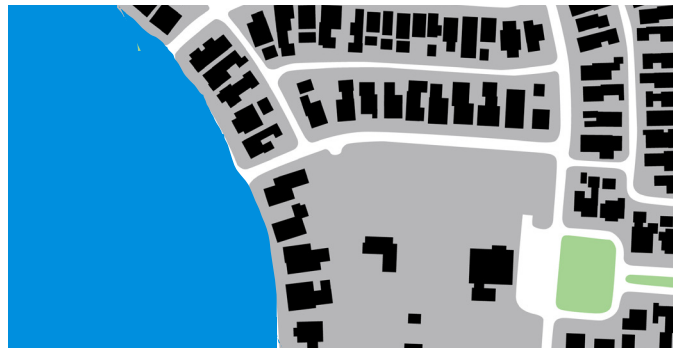
SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Local Scale Commercial (Retail)
- ▶ Accessory Dwelling Units
- ▶ Parks and Open Spaces

LAKE VILLAGE

CI: 3-4.5

Primarily residential areas consisting of small lots adjacent to and near the County's lakes. Many neighborhoods were historically developed as fishing or summer resorts with closely-spaced small cottages on narrow, often winding, access roads. Conversion of historic cottages to large floor area houses is occurring, resulting in large homes with small setbacks and high lot coverages. This type has similarities with both the Suburban Living and Traditional Neighborhood types but is distinct due to the unique conditions around the lakes. Environmentally sensitive land dictates the scale and pattern of development. Homes are focused on lakes and similar natural features. These areas should include appropriately located nodes of small-scale retail, office and/or institutional uses, feature a mix of housing types, and include complementary uses such as parks and amenities within walking distance.



Example character pattern.

INTENT

- ▶ Encourage redevelopment that is harmonious with the unique historic and environmental character
- ▶ Allow for residential and other supporting development / amenities
- ▶ Preserve the aesthetic quality of the lake, lakefront and surrounding areas
- ▶ Promote recreational opportunities on the public lake that are sensitive to the surrounding residential and natural areas

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Single-family residential (small lot)
- ▶ Attached residential
- ▶ Two-family residential

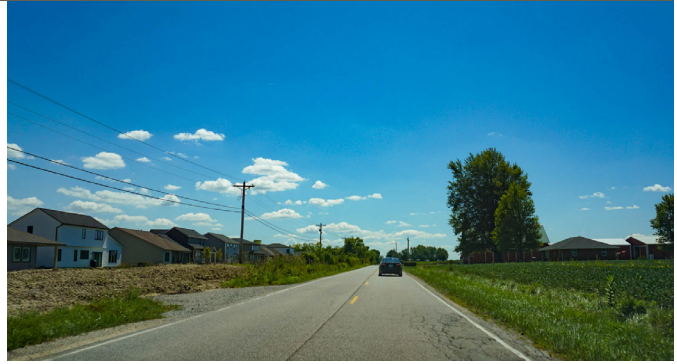
SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Local scale Commercial / Retail
- ▶ Parks and Open Spaces
- ▶ Institutional

MIXED RURAL

CI: 2.5-3

Areas that are primarily agricultural at present but already include single-family residential and will face residential growth pressure from nearby urban areas. The character in this area is expected to continue to be recognizably rural throughout the timeframe of the Plan, but over time, farms may be further blended with non-farm residential development. This type can also include appropriately-located small-scale commercial that meets the immediate local needs. Public sewer and water are not necessary, but where they are available, development should be anticipated. New buildings are closer to the roadway, eventually resulting in a more intense development pattern than the Rural characters below but still less intense overall than the Suburban Living character.



Example character pattern.

INTENT

- ▶ Expect existing agricultural operations will continue as residential development occurs
- ▶ Allow for contextually-sensitive new residential development
- ▶ Allow the division of land for subdivisions

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Agricultural
- ▶ Single- and Two-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Local scale Commercial / Retail
- ▶ Institutional / Civic

RURAL-CONVENTIONAL CI: 2

Areas that are primarily agricultural but also include non-farm single-family residential. The historic rural agricultural aesthetic is maintained over the planning timeframe, but this area can include larger scale farming or smaller scale supporting commercial operations, as well as scattered non-farm residences. Buildings are generally set far back from the roadway on large lots (over two acres). These areas are not typically served by municipal water and sewer utilities, and even where those may be available, new development should occur only where adjacent to existing development. New non-farm residences are generally discouraged.

INTENT

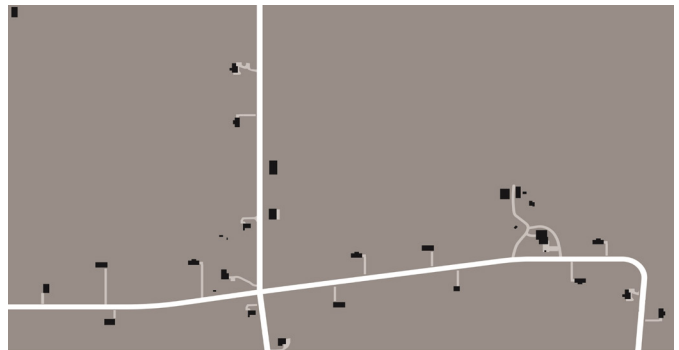
- ▶ Preserve existing agricultural land and limit development
- ▶ Protect and enhance natural scenic areas

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Agricultural, lower building intensity (including new small-sized CFOs)
- ▶ Single-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Agricultural, moderate building intensity (including new mid-sized CFOs)
- ▶ Commercial / Retail (small scale)
- ▶ Institutional
- ▶ Two-family residential



Example character pattern.

RURAL-TRADITIONAL CI: 2

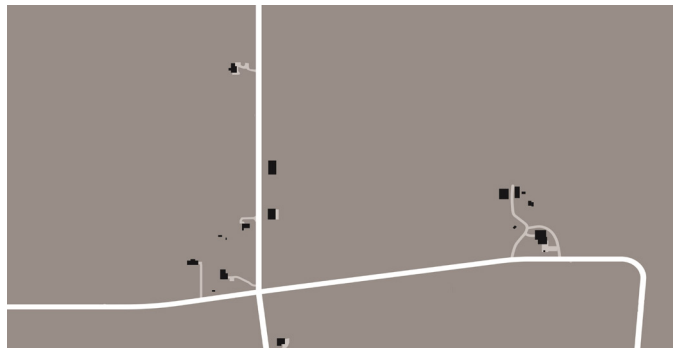
Areas that contain agricultural land and varying sizes of farms, with limited non-farm residences. Traditional agricultural aesthetic is required, and farming is the primary activity. Appropriately located larger-scale intense farming operations may be expected, and agricultural uses are to be continued well beyond the timeframe of this Plan. These areas are rarely served by municipal water and sewer utilities, and even where those may be available, new development should not occur. New residential development of any size is staunchly discouraged.

INTENT

- ▶ Maintain a rural / agricultural aesthetic that is generally in keeping with current character
- ▶ Support agricultural activities and minimize incompatible land uses
- ▶ Promote economic development in the county, while preserving its rural character
- ▶ Allow for local businesses to co-locate to provide opportunities for growth

PRIMARY USES SECONDARY

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Agricultural, moderate building intensity (including new mid-sized CFOs) | USES <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Agricultural, higher building intensity (including new larger-sized CFOs)▶ Commercial▶ Civic / Institutional▶ Single-family residential (existing) |
|--|---|



Example character pattern.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

CI: 1

These areas include large tracts of parks, open spaces, and undeveloped natural areas of enough significance that they are set apart from the other character types. They may serve recreational or conservation purposes and are unlikely to be subjected to extensive development. These areas may be improved with amenities and other enhancements based on community desire.



INTENT

- ▶ Preserve existing conservation areas
- ▶ Improve recreational assets to match community needs

PRIMARY USES

- ▶ Parks and Open Spaces

SECONDARY USES

- ▶ Institutional
- ▶ Commercial Recreation