

Local Economy and Marketplace

Every community seeks to provide a strong economic base so that the community and its residents can prosper. Bloomfield Township wants to encourage and facilitate a healthy and prosperous economy by promoting an array of businesses that will capitalize on the Township's unique economic character.

Existing Economic Character

Less than four percent of Bloomfield Township's land area is currently dedicated to commercial and industrial uses – about half the acreage found in nearby Troy. The Township's business areas are found in several locations across the community.



The largest area is along Telegraph Road north of Square Lake Road. It consists of office and retail, along with the only business park location in the Township. This is followed by a narrow strip of office and retail along Woodward Avenue extending north and south of its intersection with Square Lake Road. Extending south along the east side of the Woodward/Big Beaver intersection is a narrow corridor of office development containing a small, eclectic mix of retail. Other significant concentrations of office and retail uses are centered on the intersections of Telegraph Road with Long Lake and Maple.

Away from Telegraph Road are smaller commercial areas found at the Maple/Lahser, Opdyke/South and Squirrel/South intersections. These locations contain retailers with appeal focused mostly on nearby residential neighborhoods.

In general, these locations have few vacant properties available for new development. Taking advantage of opportunities for redevelopment of underperforming and less attractive sites, especially those in highly visible areas, will enhance the Township's identity, make residential neighborhoods more attractive and contribute to the overall vision for a diverse and upscale business community.

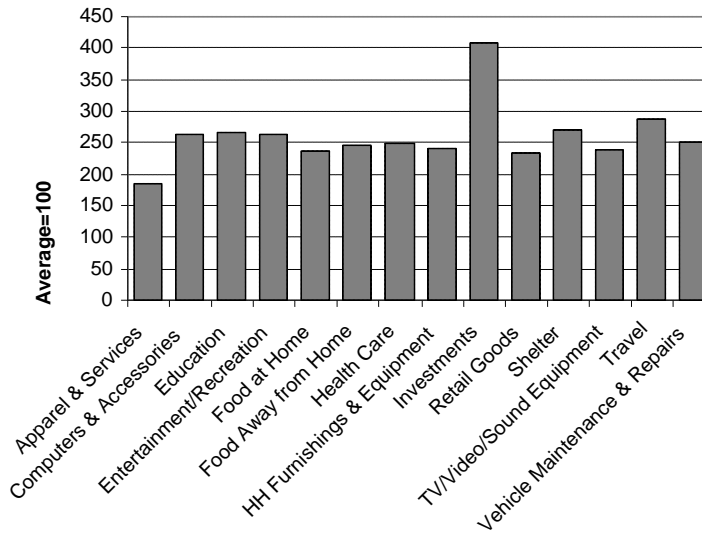
Most of the Township's vacant commercial and industrial land is available north of Square Lake Road, along Telegraph Road and Franklin Road. Proximity to major regional roadways and an affluent market area combine to create tremendous opportunities in this location. The Township's focus on bringing clean industry and new medical facilities to the business park – based on market analyses commissioned by the

Township – combine with adherence to superior design standards to make this a competitive and highly attractive location. Destination-oriented, large-format retail is already locating along Telegraph Road, with room for more. The Township will readily consider proposals to combine properties to achieve appropriate and highly attractive commercial and industrial uses in this critical area.

Consumer Expenditures

Figure 1 provides the Consumer Spending Index for Bloomfield Township residents. It provides a comparison of spending by residents of the Township compared with spending nationwide. Average spending in each category is represented by an Index value equal to 100 – where the

Figure 1 - Township Consumer Spending Index



index exceeds 100, spending is higher. With the exception of Apparel and Apparel-related Services, Township consumer expenditures are more than twice the national average. While a portion of this difference is explained by a higher than average cost of living in the greater Detroit area, most is the result of local interests, needs and capabilities.

Due to the strength of the demand and the relatively small amount of retail and services available within the Township, much spending occurs outside of the Township. In part, this suggests strong opportunity for certain retail and service providers considering location or expansion in the Township.

Business Sectors

In 2000, the Township had a lower than average unemployment rate of 3.4% (based on population 16 years and older in the civilian workforce). While unemployment had increased to 4.5% by July 2006, the rate remained well below the statewide average. In fact, Bloomfield Township typically experiences higher rates of employment than the rest of Michigan. This is in part attributable to the local dominance of a diverse,

service-oriented business base (See Figure 2), along with more professional and management occupations among residents (Figure 3).

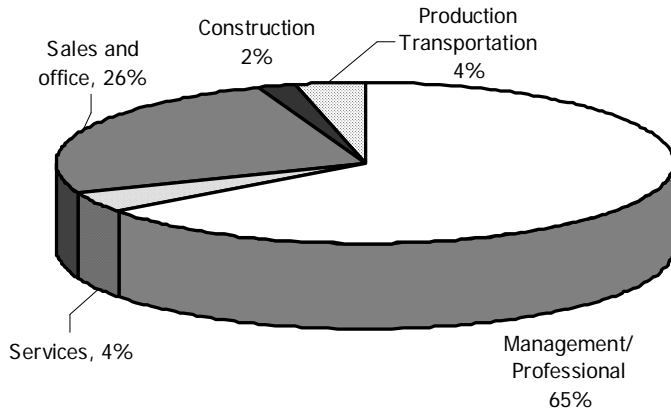
The top three business sectors in the Township are within the service, retail and professional trade. The Township’s strongest business sectors relative to Oakland County are within the professional, scientific and tech services, as well as health care. These strengths should be built upon.

Figure 2 - Top 3 Business Sectors in the Township	
1. Service Industry -Legal Services, Health Services	55.1%
2. Retail Trade Eating and Drinking, Groceries	23.5%
3. Finance, Insurance & Real Estate Real Estate, Banks, Insurance	8.9%
Source: ESRI, 2006 Market Profile	

The Township’s retail properties are characterized as having lower than average vacancies and higher than average rents. The office and industrial markets tell a similar story (CoStar Group, 2006). On the surface, this looks positive. However, the ability for a successful business to grow in-place may be a challenge, except in northwest Bloomfield Township. Other areas will require significant redevelopment over time before expansions may occur. The Township should have policies in place that encourage appropriate redevelopment of these areas as they age.

**Figure 3: Occupation:
Bloomfield Township 2000**

Source: US Census



Special Locations

Telegraph Road at Long Lake Road. Many consider the area surrounding this intersection the Township’s heart. It contains local government offices for the Township and a school district. Development is mixed in quality and age, and it is somewhat loosely organized along the east side of Telegraph Road. The area has the potential to offer a true Town Center character with the civic campus serving as an “anchor” on weekdays. Redevelopment of older properties is encouraged. The potential for mixed use should be explored – new residents would enliven



the area days and evenings all week. Mixed use can also serve as a land use “transition” between more intense commercial uses and lower intensity single family areas. To succeed, an attractive, safe and linked system of sidewalks and pathways is essential. The potential to link into nearby neighborhoods and Andover High School would add value to the commercial

areas and ease access during days of good weather for nearby residents. Along with nonmotorized options, transit-friendly design standards could increase the use of buses to and from this location for an aging residential population and employees.

Telegraph at Square Lake Road. Mixed use may be explored at the southwest corner of Telegraph Road and Square Lake Road. Here, it could serve a transitional land use role and provide a home for neighborhood commercial in an area to the north that may, with time, evolve into one with a more regional focus.

Telegraph Road, north of Square Lake Road. This area, with its large-sized lots and excellent arterial road access, is best suited for new commercial development and redevelopment types that depend on a regional market draw. Large-format retail with significant parking requirements, along with the kinds of restaurants and retail/service outlots common in suburban retail settings should be directed here.



While transit does have a role, the corridor will be largely auto-oriented. Sidewalks, a potential pedestrian overpass and other pedestrian amenities are more likely to serve transit users and those shopping from one outlot building to another because of expanses of parking are seen as somewhat intimidating to most pedestrians. Also, the Township discourages traditional “big box” development and desires architectural designs that are more attractive and unique. They also help define a sense of identity for Bloomfield Township along this important entryway corridor.

Woodward Avenue at Big Beaver. The office and retail mix on the east side of Woodward Avenue is located in the Township. To the west

lies the City of Birmingham. The Township recognizes that coordination with the City and MDOT will be critical to making any redevelopment succeed in this area. Traffic levels are very high and current nonmotorized options are poor and need improvement. While transit is available, transit-friendly design enhancements could make bus use a more attractive option and should be explored. Access management tools should play an important role here, such as requiring shared access points and parking lot cross access. The Township recognizes that any redevelopment along this corridor represents a major “entryway” into the community. As such, building layout and design should represent the highest standards. Buildings should have a “build-to” line to establish the feel of a sophisticated, organized and attractive corridor. There may be potential for mixed use, especially at the southeast corner of the Woodward/Big Beaver intersection given the space available at that location. Multi-use retail and office remains feasible throughout the corridor.



Woodward Avenue at Square Lake. The area consists largely of a retail, service and restaurant mix. The northwest corner would benefit from improved organization and cross access. It includes a multiple-family structure that is out of scale with its surroundings and should be replaced with retail or office. The intersection serves as one of the Township’s most visible entry points and the Township should work to assure that the impression given is a strong one. Buildings should

possess the highest design elements and contain well-known, elite retail tenants.

Franklin Road Business Park. Given its excellent access and based on positive market study results, this location is targeted for renewed focus on high-tech and medical uses. It is less suitable for warehousing and manufacturing, due to the levels of trucking associated with these sectors and its proximity to residential areas.

Business Development Regulations

Bloomfield Township desires a sustainable business environment that takes into consideration the costs and constraints of development. Some changes to the regulatory environment may help achieve this goal, along with other goals of the Township.

Parking Regulations. The Township may consider adjusting parking requirements based on recent studies. In addition, a deferred parking policy will be examined, that would set aside parking space for green space if the developer can establish convincingly that the parking

requirements may be too strict. This has the added benefit of reducing potential stormwater demand. Shared parking, where uses have peak hours that do not conflict, is another option to reduce the amount of parking space that goes unused.

Building Height. Current business district requirements limit the maximum height of buildings to 24 feet, and general business districts are limited to 32 feet. These requirements may prohibit opportunities for redevelopment in the form of mixed-use buildings, which offer residences above shopping and/or office environments within a single structure. The Township will evaluate its height requirements, perhaps in the form of an overlay district where mixed use will be encouraged.

Conflicting Land Use Buffering. Where residential areas exist side-by-side with active commercial and industrial land uses, the Township should continue to insist upon the provision of buffers, which may include landscaping offering 100% screening, attractive fences and walls, and landscaped berms. Especially as the business park develops north of Square Lake road and other commercial areas within the Township are redeveloped and grow busier, new development should provide significant buffering to protect residents. Increasing setbacks where conflicting land uses may exist may also be part of the solution.

Signage and Landscape Treatment. The advantages of a well maintained streetscape go beyond “curb appeal” and have a direct impact on the community’s identity and the local economy. A well-designed landscape, that includes green plants, consistent signage and a well identified streetscape provides a positive impression to residents and patrons and contributes to a vibrant, livable environment.

A coordinated sign system that includes way finding, directional signs, street signs, stop signs, and other markers in the Township, should also be incorporated into the streetscape. This is an attractive way to capture the image of Bloomfield Township while clearly conveying it is a comfortable place to shop and dine. Text and directional arrows should be at a size appropriate for visibility in moving traffic and should be compatible with the existing Township signs and logos.

Strong and consistently applied design standards will help make business areas more attractive. Potential shoppers have shown a preference for businesses with a lot of window space. Streetscaping that includes lights, street furniture and landscaping will contribute to making the downtown inviting for passers-through and pedestrians. There is published evidence that suggest landscaping can improve sales. A wayfinding system will help visitors find businesses and parking areas.

Pursuing New Business

The more proactive a community, the greater chance it has for success in attracting a desired company or company type. Combining the established strengths of the Township with a basic market gap analysis and the expressed desires of the community, the following list was generated. It points out the strengths upon which to build the near term economic future of the Township. The list includes the following:

- Financial, Insurance and Real Estate Services
- Health Services
- Legal Services
- Retail Trade
- Eating Establishments
- Specialized Grocery Stores
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

The list includes many elements consistent with the findings of a previous market study prepared for the Township, which targeted on areas near Telegraph Road, north of Square Lake.

Incentives and Enhancement Programs

The State of Michigan offers several incentives which could be considered. See Figure 4 for several examples

Figure 4 – State of Michigan Economic Development Programs

Economic Development Programs	Program Details	Supporting Statute
Industrial Property Tax Abatements	Local tax abatements for industrial and high technology developments, expansions or rehabilitation efforts. Property tax reductions	1974 P.A. 198, 1999 P.A. 140, 2000 P.A. 247
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	Brownfield Tax Increment Financing used to assist with clean up activities and public infrastructure improvements. Brownfield Single Business Tax credit up to 10% of eligible investment.	1996 P.A. 198, 2000 P.A. 145
Obsolete Property and Rehabilitation Tax Credits	Provides commercial and commercial housing property tax exemptions	2000 P.A. 146
Corridor Improvement Authority	Can use tax increment financing to fund public improvements	2005 P.A. 280
Local Development Financing Authority	Only to be used if a new business locates in the Commerce Park. Can collect tax increment from business classified as manufacturing of high technology	1986 P.A. 281

Implementation

The table below summarizes the list of action items for use in implementing the Local Economy and Marketplace portion of the Master Plan.

Actions	Priority	Responsibility
<p>Changes to Zoning Ordinance: Create Overlay Districts to manage new mixed use and multi-use land uses, modify parking and building height requirements, allow for shared parking, promote better building design and landscape standards, provide pedestrian and bicycle-friendly pathways, require pedestrian-friendly elements like benches and pedestrian-scale signage, encourage transit-friendly design, and improve signage design. Focus on Telegraph/Long Lake and Telegraph/Square Lake areas. Update parking requirements. Consider enhancing buffering requirements between conflicting uses.</p>	Short term	PC, PBD
<p>Maximize use of Incentives: Seek out and take advantage of all applicable state/federal funding programs such as tax credit programs and tax abatement programs</p>	Ongoing	PBD
<p>Establish new action agents: Where appropriate, create or participate in agencies that have greater freedom to spearhead development and redevelopment opportunities such as a Redevelopment Authority, Corridor Improvement Authority, Brownfield Authority and Local Development Financing Authority. Empower key staff to be proactive and identify desirable businesses for the Township and to make contact/inquiries on behalf of the Township. Provide informational materials that specify available properties and potential incentives. Work with local developers to understand their needs and markets. Expand authority of existing design review board to assure the highest quality of design in commercial core areas to help unify building materials, provide for effective ground signs and landscaping.</p>	Mid Term	PBD
<p>Miscellaneous: Consider fast-tracking the review process and permitting for targeted areas consisting of desirable development and redevelopment. Reinforce the Township’s identity by creating unified entryway and corridor treatments consisting of signage and landscaping.</p>	Short term	PC, PBD
<p>PBD= Planning & Building Department, PC=Planning Commission *To a greater or less extent the Township Board may be involved in all of the above implementation.</p>		