



Birchwood Mall Vision Plan

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Introduction

This Practicum Project is a collaboration between the MSU URP Program, Fort Gratiot Township, and St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission. The purpose of this project is to outline strategies to repurpose the Birchwood Mall, located in Fort Gratiot Township, Michigan.

Existing Conditions

The Birchwood Mall is one of the largest malls in the Blue Water region, occupying approximately 800,000 square feet and sitting on nearly 80 acres of land. The mall has the capacity for five retail anchors, two of which are currently vacant. It is located in a primarily commercial corridor approximately five miles north of downtown Port Huron.



Source: Google Earth

Methodology

Multiple data sources were utilized to understand the needs of the Fort Gratiot Township community and provide the best recommendations for the Birchwood Mall repurposing. Information collected included a socio-economic profile, retail marketplace reports, stakeholder outreach, case study research, a literature review, and existing conditions survey.

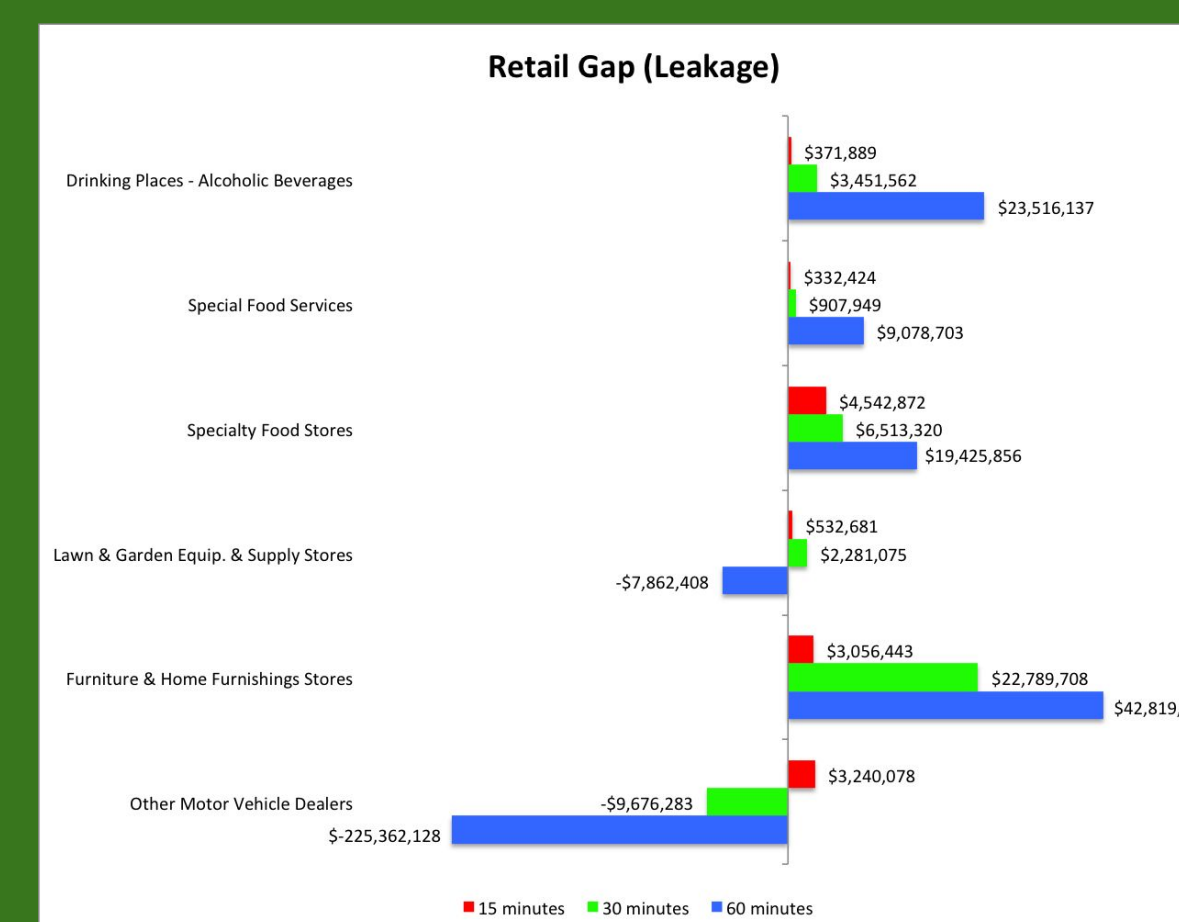


Source: Google Images

Data

Retail MarketPlace Analysis

Retail gap is the difference between retail demand and actual retail sales. Positive values represent lost retail opportunity, or leakage of retail sales transacted outside the trade area. Negative values represent a surplus of retail sales; surpluses represent the capturing of customers from outside of the trade area (ESRI Business Analyst, 2018). In the first portion of the trade area, the combined total retail gap (amount of leakage) for the six specified industry groups is \$12,076,387. This presents an opportunity for capturing substantial and untapped demand in the immediate trade boundary alone.



ESRI Tapestry Life Modes

Tapestry neighborhood data is generated by ESRI to provide demographic information about certain market segments within an area. The purpose of this study is to analyze the lifestyle choices of these segments, as well as how they spend their income and free time.

L6: Cozy Country

Empty-nesters residing in rural single-family homes; usually more financially and fiscally conservative, spending their time maintaining their homes and hunting, camping, and fishing.

L4: Family Landscapes

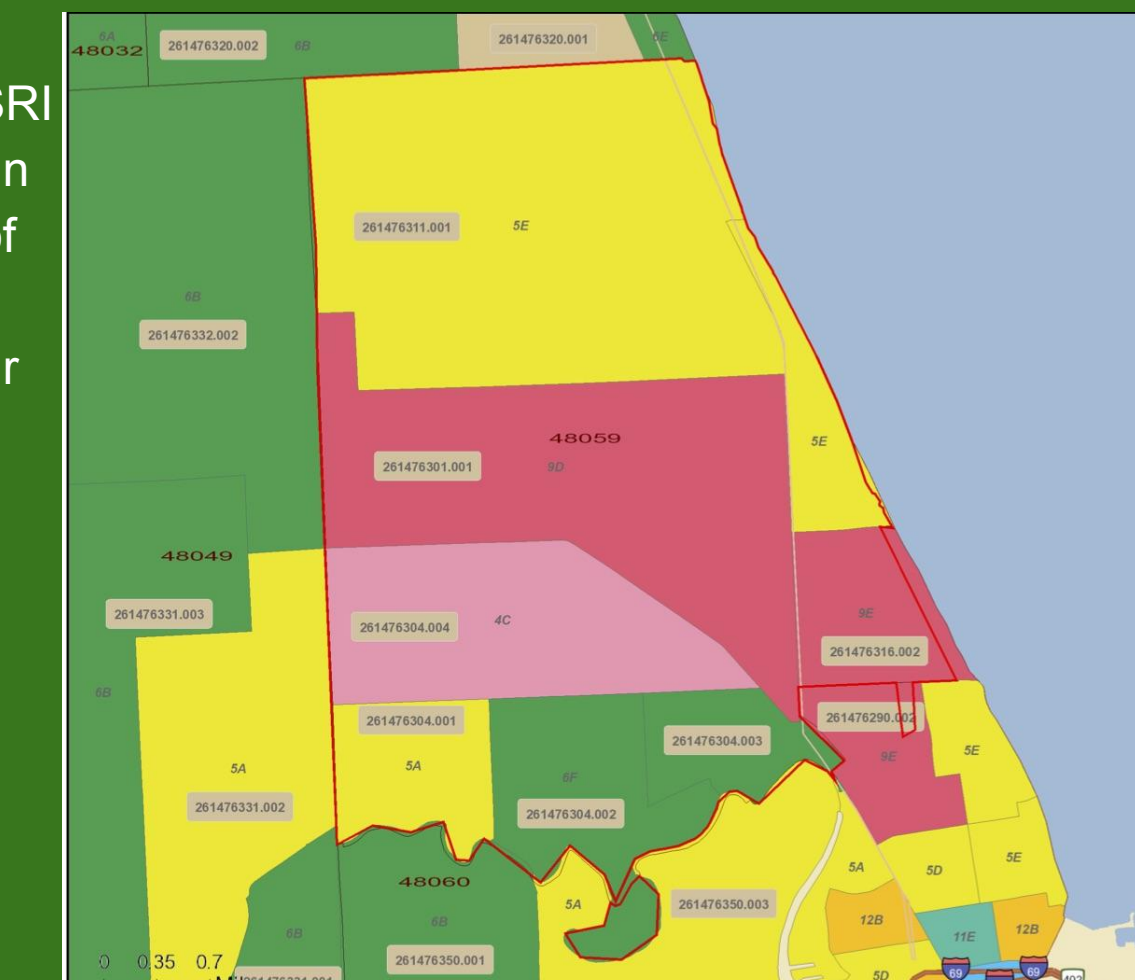
Younger families residing in semi rural areas. They enjoy working on home improvement projects and tend to eat out frequently. This group enjoys bowling, golf, and trips to the zoo or theme park.

L9: Senior Styles

Married empty-nesters living in single-family homes; usually conservative, older, and predominantly white communities. They enjoy golfing, fishing, movie-going, and dining out.

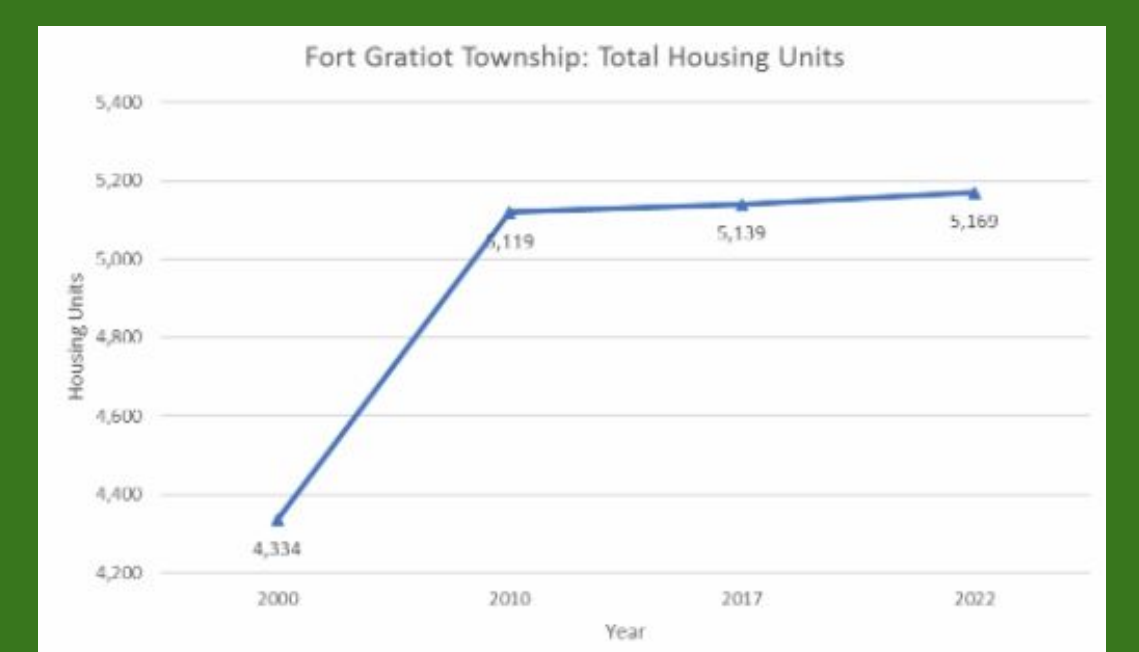
L5: GenXurban

Middle-aged, married couples at or nearing retirement that tend to have a higher proportion of disposable income. They enjoy reading, recreating, dining out, and enjoying cultural activities such as concerts and museums.



Socioeconomic Profile

Demographic data, gathered from the socioeconomic profile, such as the population, age distribution, education, economy, and housing was analyzed to assist in recommendations for Birchwood Mall's future. The socioeconomic profile found that the demand for housing has increased and 65 new housing units are required by 2022. The housing data is specifically used in Phase III with the recommendation of apartment style housing.



Recommendations

Phase I

1-3 years

Objective 1.1: Attract additional retail tenants and entertainment providers

Objective 1.2: Modernize mall appearance

Phase II

4-5 years

Objective 2.1: Addition of mix of affordable, unique, and high-end restaurants and drinking places

Objective 2.2: Addition of office space
Objective 2.3: Develop green and open spaces at various locations on Birchwood Mall property

Objective 2.4: Addition of recreation space

Phase III

6-10 years

Objective 3.1: Addition of second story

Objective 3.2: Improve road and streetscape infrastructure surrounding the Birchwood Mall Property

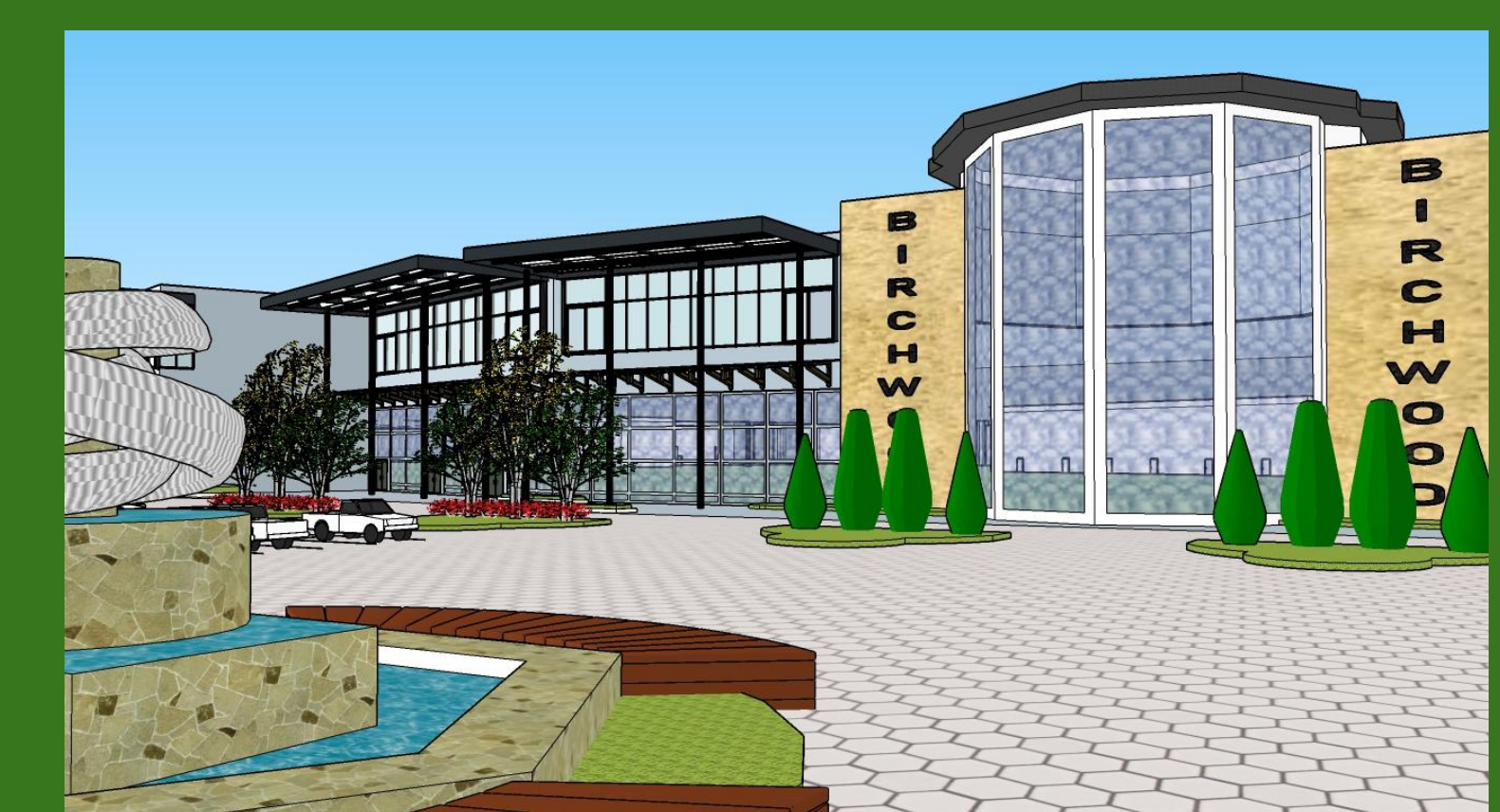
Objective 3.3: Encourage multi-modal access to Birchwood Mall



Conceptual rendering of the mall with an updated exterior facade and the addition of landscaping.



Conceptual rendering of second story rooftop dining space overlooking Lake Huron.



Conceptual rendering of Birchwood Mall featuring the addition of a second story.