

CITY OF SOUTHGATE PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

MONDAY, February 10th, 2025

6:30 pm – Informal Planning Commission/Work Study Meeting
7:00 pm – Regular Planning Commission Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Anderson, Clark, Codrington, Crawford, Godbout, Moul, Nemeth, Orman, Yoos

III. MINUTES

1. Minutes of regular Planning Commission Meeting date January 13th, 2025

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS / NEW BUSINESS

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Master Plan update

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

City of Southgate

Planning Commission Meeting

January 13, 2025

This meeting of the Planning Commission was held in the Municipal Council Chambers, 14400 Dix-Toledo Highway, Southgate, Michigan on Monday, January 13, 2025 and called to order by Chairman James Yoos, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: James Yoos, Mark Nemeth, Andrew Moul, Jerry Orman, Linda Clark, Leticia Wilson, Chad Godbout

ABSENT: Eric Codrington, Patricia Anderson (all excused)

ALSO PRESENT: City Planner Joe Pezzotti, City Administrator, Dan Marsh, Building Inspections Director Tim Leach, City Attorney, Amelia Zelenak, Council Member Priscilla Ayres-Reiss

Minutes:

Moved by Nemeth, supported by Godbout, that the minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting dated November 18, 2024 be approved. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrative Reports:

City Administrator Marsh stated they went on a tour of the Southgate Towers Project, everything is on track. Expected occupancy of some residency in the summer.

The Aquinas property project has been cancelled.

Public Hearing/New Business:

1. Site Plan Application, Ahmad Ibrahim, 12554 Fort Street, for a proposed coffee shop. PC 02-2025

An application was received to rehabilitate an existing auto detail shop located on the corner of Fort Street and Ward Street. The applicant is requesting to renovate the existing building into a public coffee shop establishment. The property is approximately 0.25 acres in size. The parcel is currently zoned C-1, Community Business where coffee shops are a permitted use within the district, subject to special conditions that require approval by the Planning Commission via a public hearing.

A PUBLIC HEARING WAS HELD FOR SITE PLAN APPLICATION AHMAD IBRAHIM, 12554 FORT STREET, FOR A PROPOSED COFFEE SHOP.

Notices were sent out.

Moved by Clark, supported by Orman, to open the Public Hearing.

No public comments were received.

Moved by Yoos, supported by Clark, to close the Public Hearing.

Moved by Clark, supported by Nemeth, to approve the site plan application from Ahmad Ibrahim, 12554 Fort Street, Southgate, MI, for a proposed coffee shop, subject to all requirements by the Building Department and other government agencies and with the following conditions:

1. Building Department review and approval of proposed parking layout
2. Submit plans to Fire Department for review and approval
3. Provide utility plan for City Engineer approval if changes are proposed
4. Provide lighting plan to Building Department for review and approval.
5. Obtain Building Department approval for proposed signage.
6. Building Department approval of proposed building materials

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Master Plan Update.

Review the previous Master Plan, any comments can be sent to the City Planner. Will discuss further at the next meeting.

3. Election of Officers.

Election of Chairperson for 2025

Moved by Nemeth, supported by Orman, to nominate James Yoos to serve as Chairperson of the Planning Commission for the year 2025, and having no other nominations for Chairperson, James Yoos is hereby elected to serve as Chairperson of the Planning Commission for the year 2025.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Election of Vice Chairperson for 2025

Moved by Wilson, supported by Clark, to nominate Mark Nemeth to serve as Vice Chairperson of the Planning Commission for the year 2025, and having no other nominations for Vice Chairperson, Mark Nemeth is hereby elected to serve as Vice Chairperson of the Planning Commission for the year 2025. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Election of Secretary for 2025

Moved by Orman, supported by Clark, to nominate Linda Clark to serve as Secretary of the Planning Commission for the year 2025, and having no other nominations for Secretary, Linda Clark is hereby elected to serve as Secretary of the Planning Commission for the year 2025. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Old Business:

None.

Announcements:

Building Inspections Director Tim Leach gave an update on the proposed Atwell Suites hotel project on Reeck Road-they have opted out moving along with the project, could possibly find a new location.

The Oasis Senior Living project on Allen Road should start in the Spring.

Adjournment:

Moved by Nemeth, supported by Clark, that this meeting of the Planning Commission be adjourned at 7:31 p.m. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

James Yoos
Chairman, Planning Commission
as



southgate



City of Southgate

Master Plan | Adopted MONTH 2025

CELEBRATE THE DREAM

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Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the following individuals who contributed to the development of this Master Plan:

City Council

Mayor Joseph G. Kuspa
Council President Zoey Kuspa
Councilman Christian Graziani
Councilwoman Karen George
Councilman Phillip Rauch
Councilwoman Priscilla Ayres-Reiss
Councilman Ed Gawlik Jr.
Councilwoman Victoria Araj

Planning Commission

James Yoos, Chairperson
Linda Clark
Patricia Anderson
Leticia Crawford
Mark Nemeth
Jerry Orman
Chad Godbout
Eric Codrington
Andrew Moul

City Staff

Dan Marsh, City Administrator
Tim Leach, Building Director

ADD ANY ADDITIONAL NAMES

The hundreds of members of the public who contributed their time and voices.





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Executive Summary

The 2025 City of Southgate Master Plan is the result of over a years worth of community engagement, data collection, and collaborative decision-making. The role of the plan is to guide the future growth, development, and redevelopment of the City of Southgate, ensuring the health, safety, welfare, and convenience of its residents and workforce are preserved.

The plan offers a realistic evaluation of current conditions while articulating the City's future goals and vision, shaping the desired form and character of the community. The plan provides direction to both public and private sectors on topics such as land use, economic development, residential growth, overall redevelopment, and much more. Additionally, it acknowledges the dynamic nature of land development and emphasizes the need for flexibility to adapt to changes while continuing to uphold the community's goals and aspirations.

The Master Plan focuses on the City's Vision, Mission, and Values.

Vision - EXAMPLE, HAVE PC CREATE NEW AT LATER DATE

Southgate will be a thriving 21st Century municipality, rooted in strong neighborhoods and a walkable design, supported by a caring community that helps every resident, business, and visitor to flourish.

Mission

Southgate will strive to enhance economic vitality, preserve residential neighborhoods, and foster progress to implement the City's vision and values.

Values

- Southgate is caring
- Southgate is innovative
- Southgate is welcoming
- Southgate is active

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The master plan is organized as follows:

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the purpose of the Master Plan, the process behind its development, and its intended use.

2. Community Profile

This chapter explores the key elements that shape the City's identity and the factors that influence it. It examines Southgate's role as a regional hub, its annual events, public spaces, historic character, natural features, and community perceptions.

3. Vision, Mission, and Values

This brief chapter establishes the foundation of the Master Plan by defining a vision for the City, outlining values and a mission statement that reflect the community's aspirations. It serves as a guiding framework that shapes all aspects of the plan.

4. Development Strategies

The development strategies chapter highlights opportunities for growth within the City and outlines specific strategies that can be implemented to achieve the desired future development for the community. This chapter also provides strategies for the redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties throughout the City in order to provide additional housing and services to the community.

5. Housing

This chapter outlines the current housing conditions and existing zoning classifications for various housing types throughout the City in order to create actionable strategies to address future housing needs.

6. Corridor Improvements

This chapter evaluates the existing conditions of the City's main roadways, or corridors, which contain the majority of commercial, dining, and entertainment establishments within the City, and provides strategies to further enhance the overall entertainment experience for both residents and visitors, with special emphasis given to the Eureka Road Corridor.

7. Future Land Use

This chapter establishes the future land use map, which applies land use designations to all parcels within the City, serving as a guide for future development or preservation.

8. City Framework

This chapter outlines the framework for future growth, redevelopment, preservation, and sustainability. It identifies key policies from the Master Plan and applies specific strategies to different areas of the City, tailored to their unique characteristics.

9. Implementation

This chapter summarizes the strategies to achieve the City's future vision, breaking down actions by each framework element. It also highlights potential partners and funding sources, concluding with a detailed implementation table.



Community Profile

In the fall of 2024, the City of Southgate began a major update of the City’s Master Plan, where the most recent update occurred in 2011. Based on the amount of time passed, a major goal of the update process was to reach as much of the Southgate community as possible in order to create a community-based vision and plan. This document is the result of over a year of intensive community engagement, data analysis and collaborative decision-making to create a vision for the City of Southgate with an actionable, realistic policy road map for implementation.

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

The Master Plan plays several roles:

Vision: The Master Plan outlines Southgate’s future vision, along with a roadmap that includes goals, policies, strategies, and actions to help achieve that vision.

Aid in daily decision-making: The Master Plan serves as a guide for the Planning Commission, City Council, and other City bodies in their discussions on zoning, subdivision, capital improvements, land use, and development issues. It offers a solid, long-term foundation for decision-making.

Statutory Basis: The Master Plan provides the statutory basis upon which zoning decisions are made. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) requires that the zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare. The Master Plan and accompanying maps do not replace other City Ordinances, specifically the Zoning Ordinance and Map.

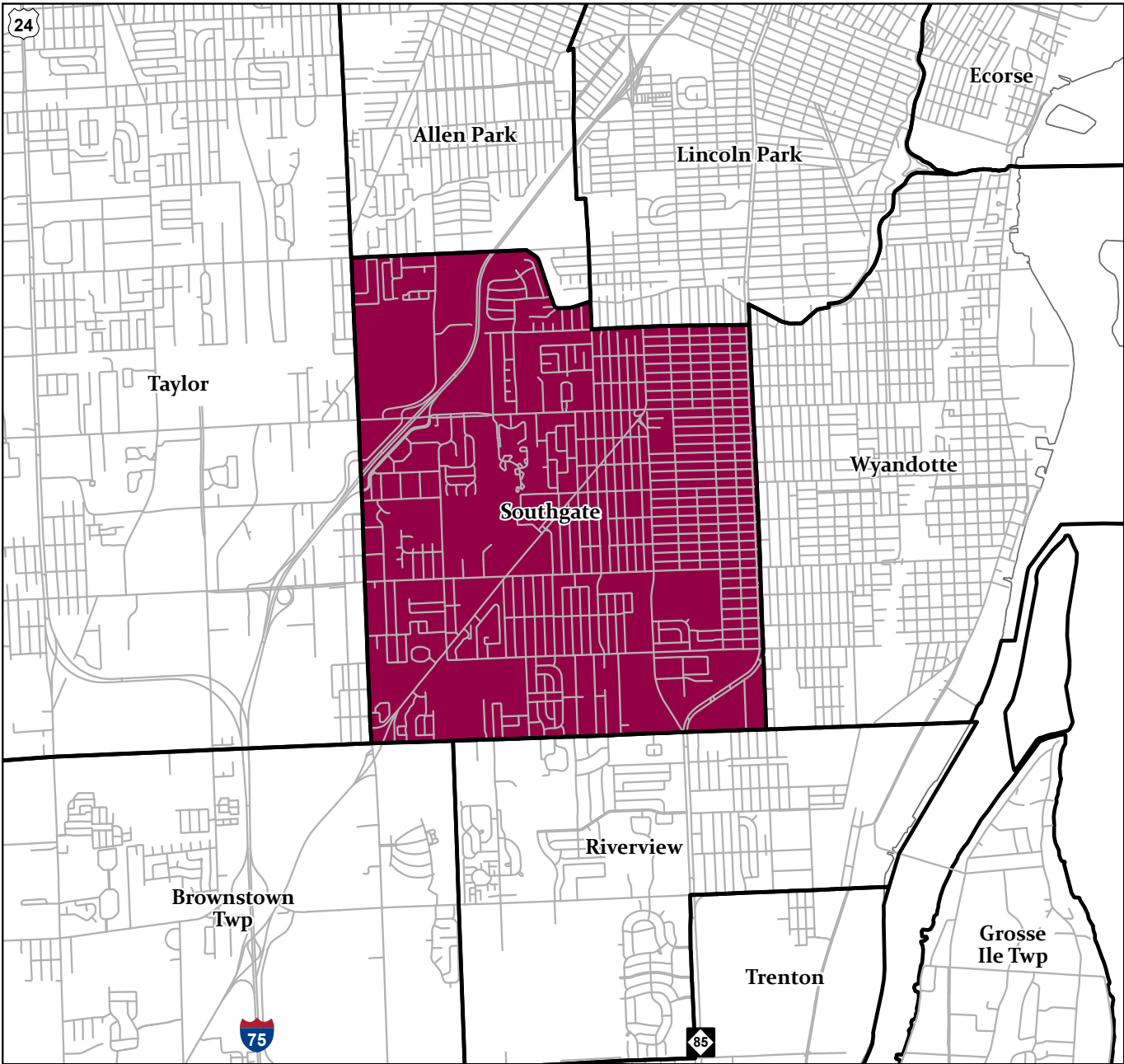
Public/Private Coordination: The Master Plan aims to align public improvements with private developments that are supported by the City budget. For instance, public investments like road or sewer and water upgrades should be directed toward areas identified in the Plan as offering the greatest benefit to the City and its residents.

Education Tool: The Master Plan serves as an educational tool and gives citizens, property owners, developers and adjacent communities a clear indication of the City’s direction for the future.

Location: Southgate is ideally situated in southeastern Michigan, just a half-hour drive from downtown Detroit and other key job centers and

cultural amenities in the region. In a 2025 survey conducted as part of this process, 73% of respondents highlighted the City’s proximity to leisure and entertainment options as one of the things they appreciate most about Southgate.

City of Southgate Location Map



City of Southgate Master Plan Process



PHASE 1 Vision & Outreach

Community Survey
Distributed

Data & Analysis



PHASE 2 Plan Design & Drafting

Draft Goals
& Objectives

Draft Future Land
Use

Planning Commission
Meetings

Plan Drafting



PHASE 3 Final Plan Adoption

Public Hearing Held

Plan Adoption

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The City of Southgate values public engagement as a vital aspect of the Master Planning process. Not only is it mandated by the Planning Enabling Act, but it also plays a crucial role in shaping the plan. Developing a community's master plan requires input from elected and appointed officials, as well as community leaders and residents. Active public participation throughout the process helps build support for the plan's policies and ensures that it reflects the diverse perspectives and priorities of the community.

Pop Up Exercises

Throughout 2025, City staff and consultants went to various City and community meetings asking what people liked, would improve, would change or what is missing in Southgate. These activities provided valuable input into all chapters of the plan.

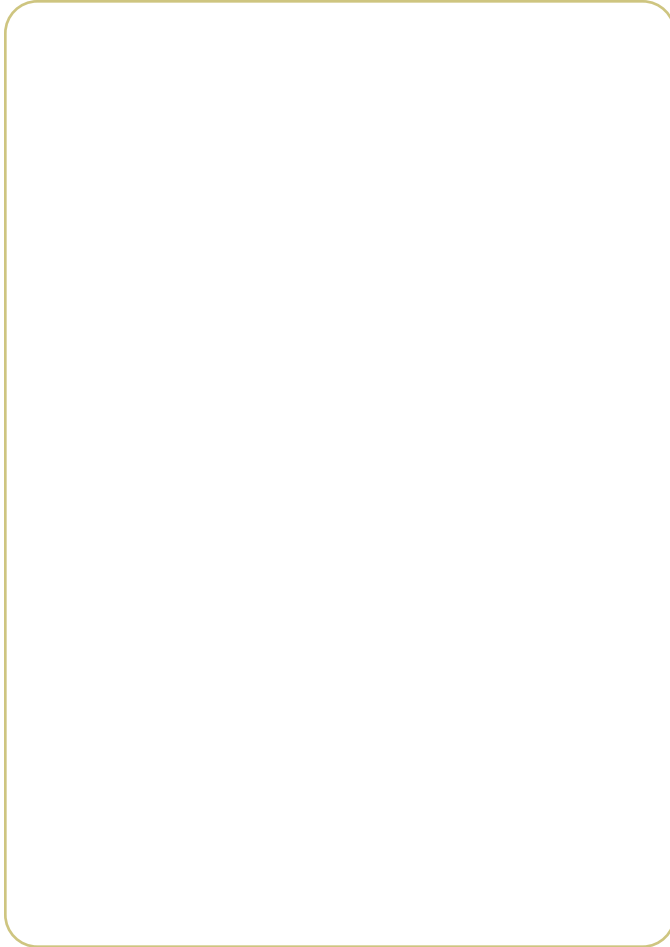
2025 Community Survey

Over XXXX people, including XXXX Southgate residents, responded to the survey conducted in the winter of 2025. Survey results are in the appendix and referred to throughout the Master Plan.

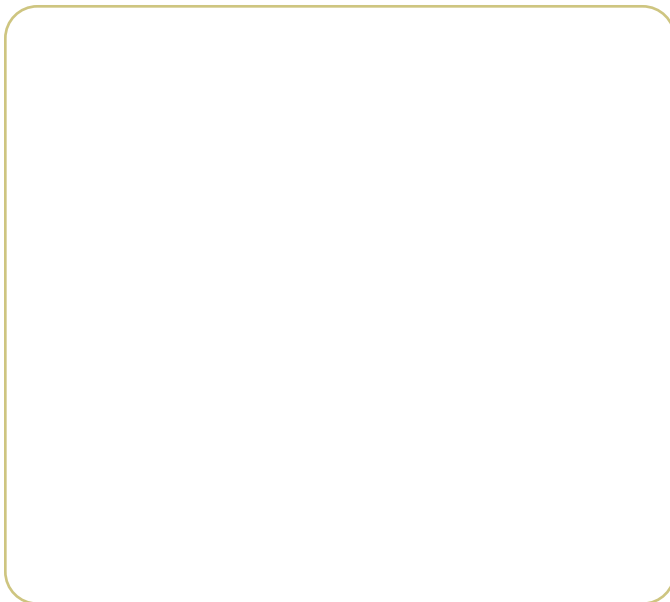
Planning Commission Meetings

The Plan Design and Drafting occurred during monthly Planning Commission meetings throughout 2025.

Insert Historical Photo



Insert Historical Photo



Source: Southgate Historical Museum

HISTORY

Southgate is located the heart of the downriver section of southeastern Wayne County. Southgate's name was chosen, in part, as a reflection of its status as the southern gateway to Detroit; the City is less than three miles south of the southernmost tip of Detroit. The Detroit River, forming the boundary between the United States and Canada and acting as a major shipping route, is located approximately two miles east.

Early History

Formerly a part of the old Township of Ecorse, the 6.85 square miles south of Detroit has grown into what is now a true "symbol of progress." Ten years before Michigan became a state in 1837, Ecorse Township was the largest township (in area) in the new territory, measuring more than 54 square miles at its inception. The area's earliest history boasts of the great Potawatomie and Wyandot Indian Tribes, who held sole rights to the region until the arrival of French explorers, traders, and missionaries, beginning with Rene Robert Cavalier LaSalle in 1679. The first white settler of record was Pierre Michael Campau in 1795, who was soon followed by other French and English settlers along the Detroit and Rouge Rivers. Expansion in the area accelerated following the completion of the Erie Canal in 1830, which improved western migration from the east.

Founding of Southgate & Population Boom

The history of Southgate itself begins with Street grids being platted as early as the 1920s, but development did not begin in earnest until shortly after World War II. A petition to incorporate filed with the Wayne County Board of Supervisors in November 1955. This was followed by a favorable referendum on incorporation in October 1956. After one unsuccessful attempt at adopting a City Charter in December 1957, a second Charter was drafted and successfully presented to the electors in September 1958, with official incorporation coming on October 8, 1958.

The growth of Southgate is not measured solely in numbers. Southgate is a great community to live, work and raise a family. Beginning with a collection of only 64 farm families over 100 years ago, the real population surge became a reality shortly after World War II. With less than 2,000 citizens in 1940, the City grew to a population of 10,000 in 1950; and the population continued to rise for the next 20 years to 29,404 in 1960 and 33,723 in 1970.

1950's to Today

A Police Department was inaugurated in 1950, and in 1953 the first Full-Time Firemen were employed to assist the five-year-old Volunteer Fire Department. It was in 1953, also, that the Recreation Department was formed, along with the first Planning Commission, and the progress in municipal services has been continuous since. A highlight of the City's involvement with its residents is the well-organized public recreation facilities. The park system, which began in 1949 with a single 36-acre park, has slowly expanded through gifts and acquisitions, to its present compliment of 74.7 acres, which include 9 neighborhood parks and playfields, 2 community parks and a major softball and Little League Baseball playing site, which has been host of the major tournaments in recent years. Joining the baseball diamonds, the City's impressive community ice and hockey rinks, and the 18-hole municipal golf course with

clubhouse. In 1976 the existing Police, Fire, Court and Civic Center were built and the staff was moved from the Northline facilities. In 1979 the City Hall was moved to its current location. In 1995 the Library building was doubled to offer expanded services and hours thanks to a 1-mil vote of the residents.

Insert Historical Photo



Source: Southgate Historical Museum

SOUTHGATE’S HISTORY: ASSETS & CHALLENGES

Southgate’s history has created assets and challenges for the City today. In terms of assets, the City’s walkable design and range of single-family lot sizes make the City a great place to live. The City’s grid road system, small blocks and tree lined streets lend themselves to walking. The variety of lot sizes, ranging from 40 feet to 100 feet in width, has allowed for a diversity of professions and incomes to live in Southgate.

However, the City’s history presents a number of challenges. The size and shape of lots make construction of 21st Century buildings other than single-family challenging, and space is scarce for additional nonresidential development as a majority of land within the City is built.

As a result, many new developments and business in the City consist of redevelopment efforts rather than new construction. The built-out urban form makes it difficult for the City to have a dedicated traditional downtown. over 50% of the survey respondents chose “more shopping options” as a change they would like to see in Southgate.

Assets

CREATE WITH PC

Challenges

CREATE WITH PC

LAND USE

Classifying land use changes can be complex due to incomplete data, evolving use definitions, and differing perspectives on land use categories. For this plan update, existing land use data from the City’s most recent comprehensive plan update (2011) will be used. However, this data is outdated, and some discrepancies may exist between current conditions and those reflected in the plan. To supplement this, we are also incorporating SEMCOG land use data. While SEMCOG’s categories differ from those in the City’s plan, making direct comparisons difficult, their data allows for an analysis of land use changes between 2015 and 2020.

Land Coverage

Southgate is about 70% developed, with the bulk of undeveloped parcels located in the City’s northwestern corner. Most of the open space in that area is zoned for light industrial use. Additionally, a small undeveloped section in west-central Southgate, which is zoned for single-family residential development, is designated as wetland according to MIRIS and NWI maps. There are also several small vacant commercial parcels situated along the City’s major thoroughfares.

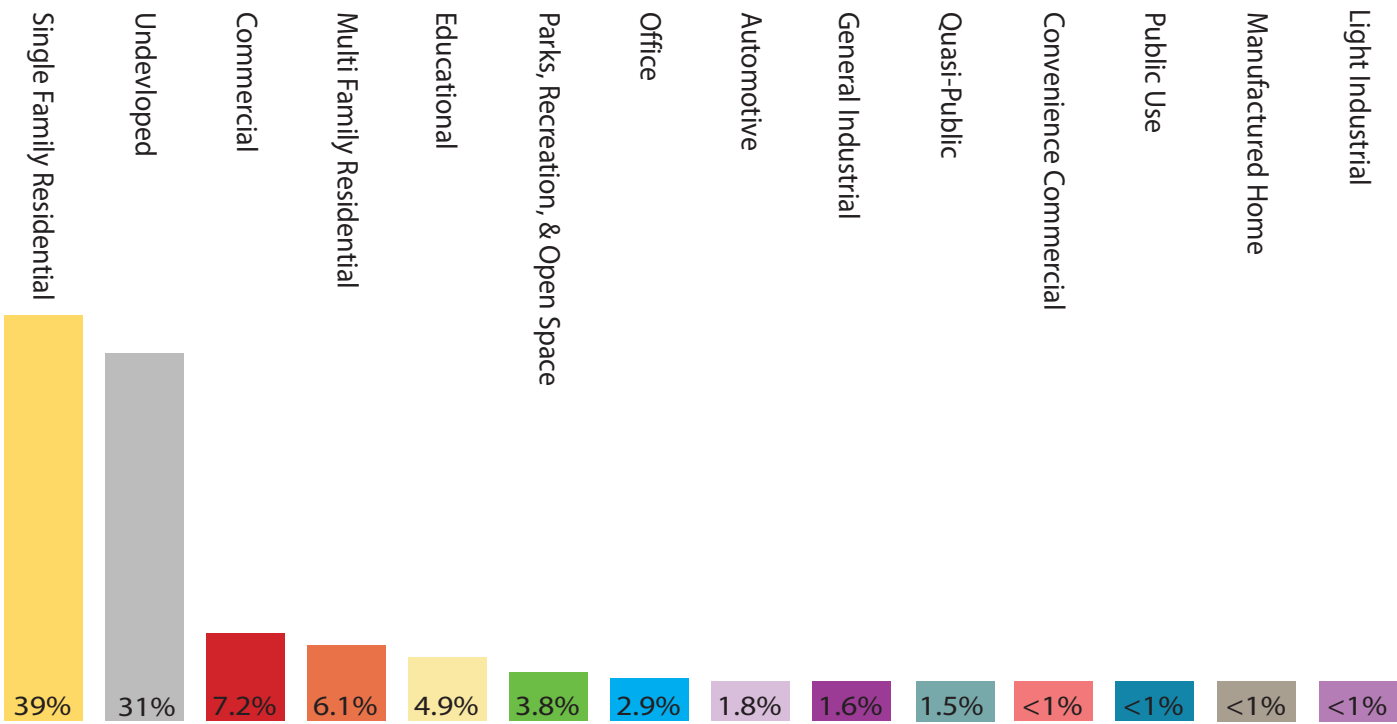
Residential Land

Residential land use accounts for 45% of the City’s total acreage, with single-family detached homes making up the majority at 39%. The housing market is primarily composed of 1940s and 1950s-era bungalows arranged in a traditional grid pattern, with newer developments scattered throughout the northern, north-central, and southern areas of the City. The Old Homestead district, bordered by Superior, Trenton, Eureka, and Fort Street, features a mix of one-and-a-half-story bungalows and two-story colonial homes. SEMCOG data indicates that multi-family housing has expanded in recent years, with total acreage increasing by nearly 21% since 2015.

Commercial Land

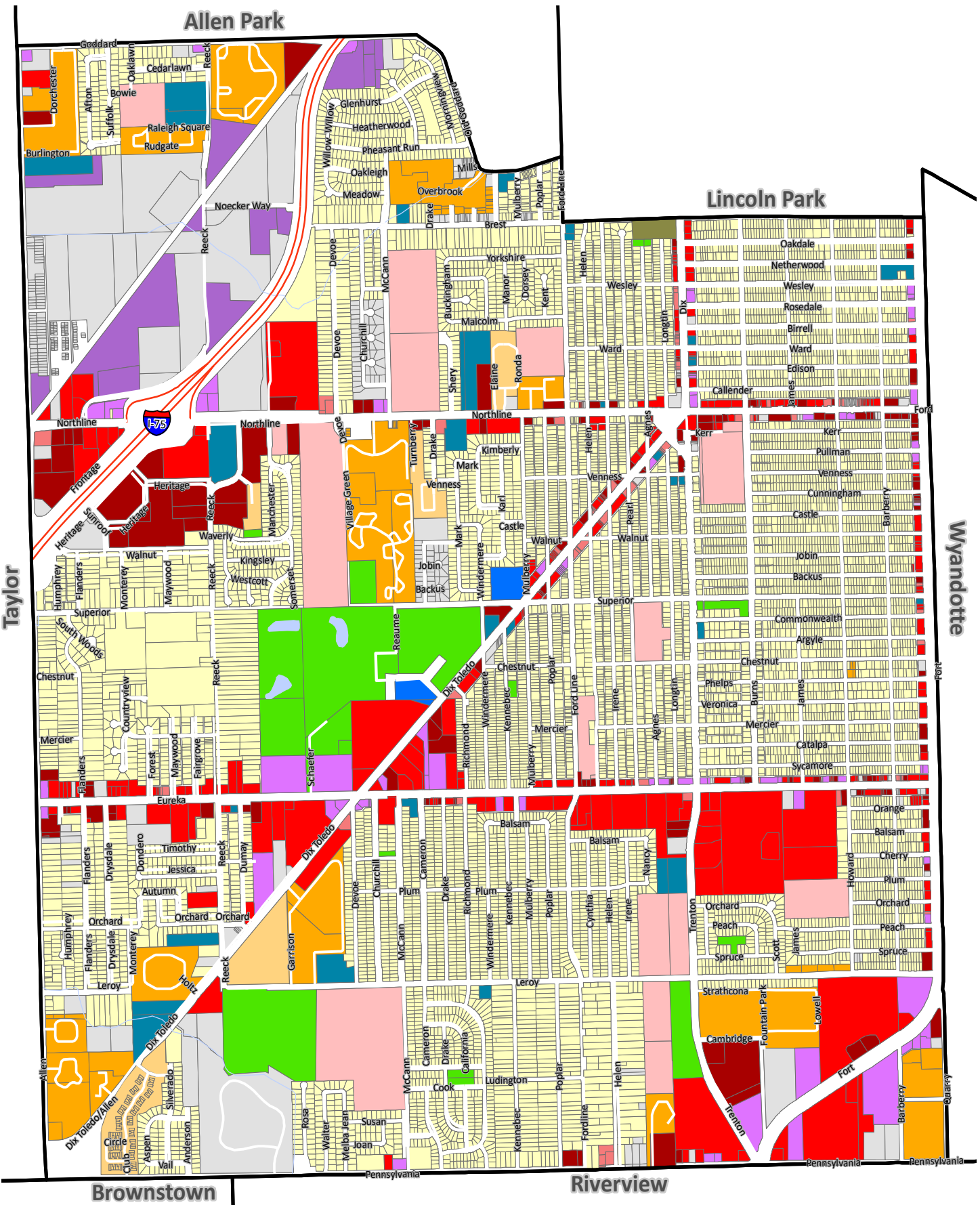
Commercial land use accounts for approximately 10% of the City’s total land area, with Eureka Road serving as the primary commercial corridor. The Southgate Shopping Center, one of Metro Detroit’s earliest major strip malls, opened in 1958 at the intersection of Eureka and Trenton Roads.

Existing Land Use Percentages



Source: SEMCOG Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use Map



The rest of the City’s commercial activity includes big-box retailers in the northwest and southeast, along with a mix of locally owned businesses along Dix Toledo Road.

Industrial Land

Industrial facilities are concentrated in the northwestern corner of the City, primarily focused on packaging and research. Office zones with restrictions are situated along the western portion of Northline Road, with a few additional areas near the southern edge of the City. Automotive-related uses are categorized under the broader industrial group in the City’s data, bringing the total industrial land use to 3.4%.

Open Space

Open space and recreational land uses make up just 3.8% of the City’s total land area, amounting to nearly 168 acres. The largest park in Southgate is the Homer Howard complex, located centrally within the City. This park is part of the Southgate municipal complex, which also houses the ice arena, City Hall, police and fire departments, the 28th District Courthouse, Downriver Animal Control, the Southgate Veteran’s Memorial Library, the Southgate Senior Center, and the park’s recreational facilities.

Land Use Key

- Residential - Single Family Detached
- Residential - Single Family Attached
- Residential - Multi-Family
- Manufactured Homes
- Commercial
- Office
- Convenience Commercial
- Schools / Education
- Institutional / Public
- Quasi-Public Institutions
- Automotive
- Light Industrial
- General Industrial
- Recreation & Open Space
- Vacant



Traditional Single Family Homes



Southwinds Golf Course, located in the Homer Howard Park complex.



ADDITIONAL PHOTO NEEDED

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

The demographic shifts below impact the Master Plan:

Population Stable

Compared to the rest of the county, Southgate's population has remained relatively stable. After experiencing rapid growth following World War II, the City reached its peak population of 33,909 in the 1970s. Since then, Southgate has seen a gradual decline, losing an average of just under 3% per decade, including an 8.3% decrease between 2010 and 2024. As of 2024, the population stands at 27,505, down from 29,333 in 2016. However, SEMCOG projects slow but steady growth through 2050, with an estimated population of 30,464.

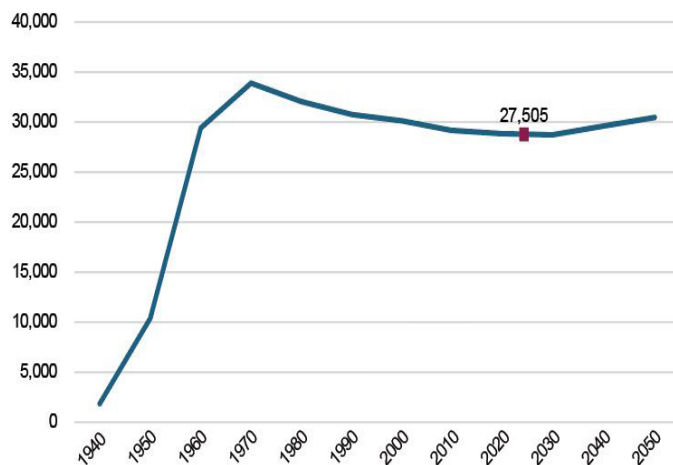
While Detroit and the communities within Wayne County have suffered from these losses in recent years, southeast Michigan as a whole has remained relatively stable. The region has seen modest growth overall, with more significant population gains typically seen in rural areas. Brownstown Township, Southgate's southwestern neighbor, is typical of this trend, experiencing an 8.8% increase between 2010 and 2023.

Population Becoming More Diverse, with Younger New Residents

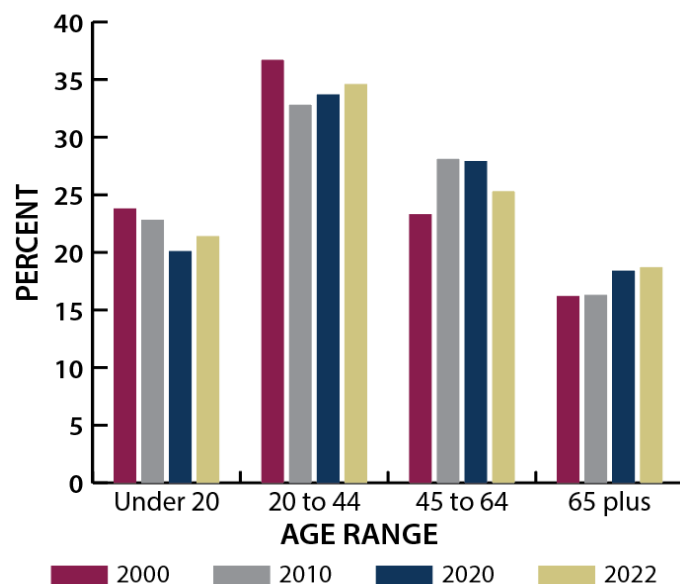
Based on estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), the most prominent age group in Southgate is young adults aged 20 to 44. Children under 19 represent 21.4% of the community, while seniors aged 65 and older account for 18.7%. Similar to other parts of Michigan, Southgate is experiencing a gradual increase in its senior population. However, recent data indicates a shift toward a younger demographic overall. Since 2020, the growth rates for young adults (5.5%) and children under 19 (9.6%) have exceeded the increase in seniors (4.8%), with the older adult segment even declining by 6.7%. This trend is also evident in the City's median age, which has steadily decreased since 2017.

Other data points present a more mixed picture. Between 2010 and 2021, households with seniors grew by 4.8%, whereas households with children declined by 9.5%. Overall, while the trends mentioned above offer promising signs of growth, there remains substantial evidence that the City is aging, mirroring the broader trend seen throughout Michigan.

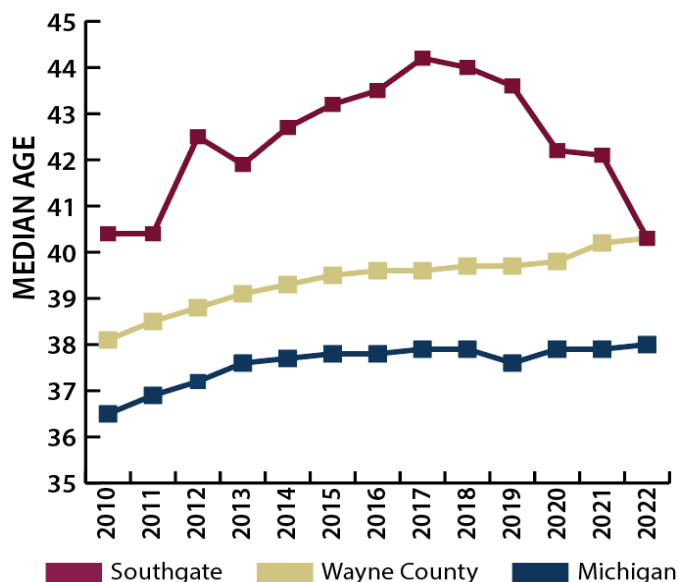
Southgate Population Trends 1940-2050



Southgate Age Distribution 2000-2022



Southgate Median Age 2010-2022



Single Family Houses Regaining Their Value

Data from the 2021 ACS showed continued house appreciation, approximately 80% since rebounding from a low of \$84,900 in 2015 to \$152,400 in 2022, surpassing pre-recession values.

PREFERENCE SHIFTS

The preference shifts highlighted below will likely influence land use and future planning in Southgate:

Desire to Live in a Walkable Community

More Interest to Live in “Green” Communities

More Desire for Restaurants but Less for Chain Retail

Decrease in Demand for Office Space

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER PLANS SHOWN, WILL REVISE BASED ON PC INPUT AND SURVEY DATA

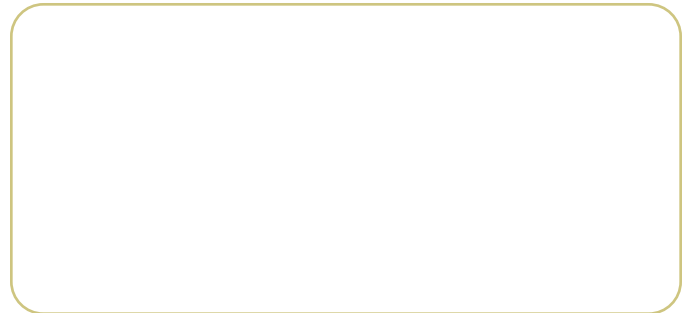
Increased Demand for Housing Other than Single-Family Homes

As Baby Boomers age and Millennials delay home purchases, single-family housing often no longer fits the needs of newly minted senior citizens or is not affordable for debt-carrying younger adults. Also, single-family houses, especially older homes, are not accessible for the disabled. Almost XX% of the respondents to the 2020 Community Survey felt it was important or very important to plan for additional types of housing.

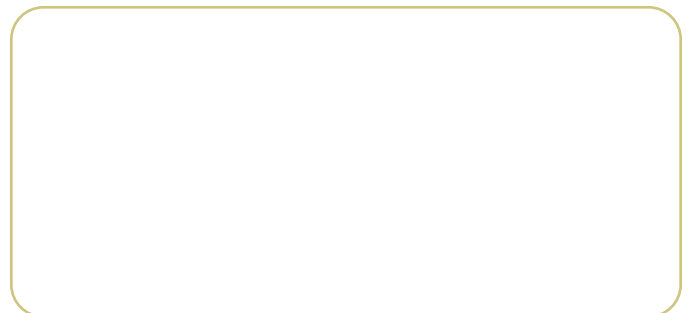
On a national and regional level, households are looking for options other than the single-family home. According to a study by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 43 million families and individuals lived in rental housing in mid-2015, up nearly 9 million from 2005, the largest gain in any 10-year period on record. All age groups, income brackets and household types were part of the increase.



Insert Housing photo



Insert Housing photo



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