



Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the foundation of Berkley. Single-family residential is the largest land use in the City, accounting for 73% of the City's area. Berkley neighborhoods embody a classic neighborhood design. The streets are lined with trees and sidewalks. Generally, a park or place where the public gathers - a school, community center or place of worship - is within a ten to fifteen minute walk of all homes. In addition, retail and services, particularly for daily needs, are often a short walk for most residents, with multi-use corridors on the edges of most neighborhoods. Finally, in the survey completed in the beginning of the Master Plan process, many respondents listed their neighbors or neighborhood as the attribute they liked best about Berkley.

The Master Plan looks holistically at single-family residential areas as neighborhoods, recognizing houses as the main land use while other land uses (parks, places of worship and schools) and infrastructure (sidewalks, streets, water and sewer systems) contribute to the vibrancy and values of homes. This chapter contains principles for neighborhoods, appropriate land uses and how the values of Berkley apply to neighborhoods.

It also has recommendations on infill housing, buffers between neighborhoods and commercial corridors, neighborhood maintenance, and aging in place.

Principles

Principles from the Future Land Use Chapter that apply to neighborhoods are:

- Preserve neighborhoods and community assets.
- Blend new housing using good design to complement existing character.

Land Uses

The following future land use categories, described in more detail in the Future Land Use chapter, are appropriate in neighborhoods:

- Single Family Neighborhood
- Institutional
- Parks and Cemetery

NEIGHBORHOOD BUFFERS

Due to its early 20th century design, Berkley neighborhoods directly abut commercial corridors, often with little in the way of fencing or landscaping in between. Adjacent commercial uses can place strain on nearby residents in terms of parking on residential streets, noise, odor and litter drifting into yards. Equally important to planning for commercial corridor expansion, more fully addressed in the Corridors chapter, is protecting existing residential properties with buffers that provide sufficient separation of uses and screening.

In community surveys and deliberations during the Master Plan process, design ideas for buffers were shared and discussed. A buffer with a masonry wall and landscaping was considered the best option, which is required under current zoning. That type of buffer is usually 10 to 15 feet in width, a quarter to a third of the width of a typical Berkley residential lot and for shallow commercial lots, necessitates expansion into adjoining neighborhoods (see Corridors Chapter for more detail).

Infill Housing

Berkley has a variety of single family homes, ranging from bungalows to larger two-story homes. Within neighborhoods, new or infill houses have been built on existing lots, sometimes replacing older homes, with increasing frequency in the past decade. The size, bulk and design of these new homes can influence the character of neighborhoods and have increasingly become a concern of the community. However, newer single-family homes bring re-investment, keeping neighborhoods vibrant, and bolstering the City's financial sustainability.

The challenge faced by Berkley policy makers is how to maintain the existing character of neighborhoods while encouraging redevelopment within them. A number of zoning tools have been used by communities to lessen the impact of infill houses – decreasing maximum heights, requiring roof pitches more in keeping with the area, limiting the bulk of home through floor to area ratios or maximum impervious surface ratios.

Why Infill Houses are Bigger than a Bungalow?

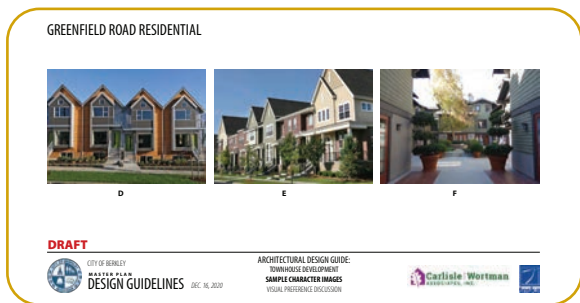
1. Basements of new homes are generally taller, to create livable basement space and to mitigate basement flooding.
2. First floor heights are often higher than older Berkley homes since modern construction has a minimum of 9 foot ceilings, sometimes higher, whereas when most of original homes in Berkley were built, industry standard was 8 foot ceilings.
3. Floor joists, the material that the floor is laid over, are now thicker, 14 inches compared to 10 or 12 inches previously, due to longer spans.
4. People want larger living spaces, resulting in larger footprints.
5. A two-story house is more cost-effective to build than the classic Berkley bungalow and infill housing construction does not offer the economies of scale available to original developers of Berkley.



Example of an infill house next door to an older 1-story house. Source: City of Berkley

Example of a Visual Preference Survey

Teska Associates used the visual preference survey below with the Steering Committee to determine housing styles appropriate for Greenfield.



Source: Teska

When looking at policy tools, Berkley decision makers should consider the following:

Discern the problem

In the Master Plan process, residents expressed concern about the size of infill homes. To continue the conversation started in the Master Plan process, the City should use public engagement tools, like a visual preference survey, to discern the elements of change in infill housing that is affecting neighborhood character.

Consult with builders and developers as well as the community

While community members should be heard, residential builders and developers should be included in discussions, in order to avoid unintended consequences. At times, over restrictive zoning tools can sometimes halt redevelopment. Builders and developers can share market and financing aspects of real estate, bring real world experience, and identify unknown issues.

Choose the appropriate policies, programs and/or tools

The solution to preserving neighborhood character while still encouraging redevelopment within neighborhoods is likely more than a simple zoning change. Zoning amendments may need to be bolstered with other policy changes, perhaps around stormwater, and programs to preserve neighborhoods, further explored in the next section of this chapter.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAINTENANCE

The majority of Berkley's neighborhoods were built between 1940 and 1970. While Berkley neighborhoods have remained attractive, as evidenced by increasing home values, continued investment and maintenance is essential to sustain the vibrancy of the community. Home improvement, code enforcement, continuous City communication, quality city services and infrastructure are components of neighborhood maintenance.

Home Improvement and Rehabilitation

Each neighborhood is the sum of its houses. The City should continue to assist homeowners to rehabilitate existing dwellings, make housing repairs, undertake emergency repairs and continue basic maintenance. The City can connect Berkley residents to Oakland County's Home Improvement Program for repair and improvement grants and Housing Counseling Services, which includes foreclosure prevention and home buying advice. Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency (OLHSA) offers similar services. The City can also partner with local and national businesses to offer free or discounted supplies, ranging from smoke alarms to paint.

Energy Efficiency

To achieve the City's Energy Plan vision of becoming a sustainable, efficient city powered increasingly by renewable energy, the City should become a clearinghouse for information and connections to energy efficiency programs for Berkley residents. Opportunities could range from weatherization programs offered by OLHSA to home energy checkups and rebates on home improvements and appliance replacement from DTE Energy. The City should also encourage improvements within houses to increase sustainability, such as 240-Volt electric hook ups for electric vehicle charging.

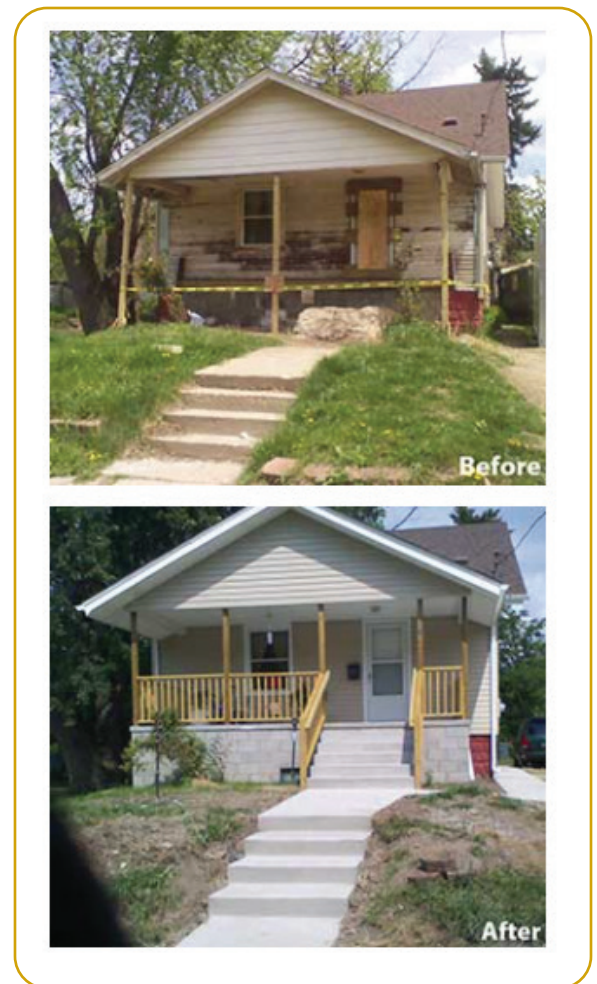
City Services

Residents continually praised the quality of City services in interviews, focus groups and the 2020 Community Survey. The City is committed to maintaining quality code enforcement, excellent public safety, and reliable trash-pick up.

In addition to traditional services, Berkley sees its communications with residents as an essential service, especially to neighborhoods. The City uses a variety of platforms, from paper to digital, to continually engage residents. Building relationships and social capital is as vital to vibrant neighborhoods as is well-maintained homes and streets.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure knits neighborhoods together and with the rest of the City. Berkley is dedicated to continuous maintenance and improvement to its municipal water and sewer systems, in coordination



Oakland County offers a Home Improvement Program. Above are before and after photographs of a house that participated in their program. Source: <https://www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland/communities/Pages/Home-Improvement-Program-and-Contractor-Opportunities-.aspx>



Sidewalks, trees and community facilities are valuable infrastructure that add to the quality of neighborhoods. Source: CWA



An example of an accessory dwelling unit in a detached building in a rear yard.

Source: Carlisle Wortman Associates



Example of attached single-family housing.

Source: Teska Associates



Example of stacked flats. This type of housing would be most appropriate on corridors in Berkley.

Source: PocketNeighborhoods.net

with regional partners. Moreover, the City recognizes the role that well-maintained streets, sidewalks and street trees play in creating the walkable neighborhoods of Berkley. The Sidewalk Replacement and Fall Tree Replacement programs maintain and beautify neighborhoods and provide needed green infrastructure to mitigate increased stormwater. Sidewalks and walkability are further explored in the Systems Chapter of this Master Plan.

HOUSING CHOICES

The following types of housing are planned for Berkley, within or nearby neighborhoods, to give more choice to residents:

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's): An accessory dwelling unit or ADU is an apartment attached to or within a single-family home. Also known as mother-in-law suites and granny flats, these dwellings are sometimes attached to the house, above the garage or in a detached structure in the back yard. While the dwelling unit may be rented, ADU's provide a living arrangement for a young adult or an aging relative to live in close proximity to family with a greater degree of privacy than together in the primary residence. ADU's will be considered in the future as a potential accessory use in all Berkley single-family neighborhoods, contingent upon the site's ability to accommodate additional parking and lot coverage within the City's regulations.

Attached Single-Family Housing: Including duplexes, townhouses and multi-plexes, attached single-family housing is two or more dwelling units attached horizontally to each other. Maintenance of common areas are typically the responsibility of a condominium association or building owner, easing resident responsibilities. These types of units are often more affordable than single-family homes as well. Attached single-family housing is planned for corridors. In the Corridors Chapter, the type of attached single-family appropriate for each section of the City's corridors are described. Further study of whether and, if so, how duplexes may be considered in the single-family neighborhoods is needed.

Stacked Flats: Stacked flats consist of two or more stacked dwelling units, one on top of the other. Typically, these units share a single entry. Barrier free access to upper floors can be achieved with elevators. This housing type lessens the burden of

yard and home maintenance. As a form of multiple-family housing, stacked flats are planned in low-density multiple-family areas, residential corridors and mixed use corridors.

Bungalow Court: Bungalow courts are smaller, one story houses where multiple homes surround a shared court, typically perpendicular to the street. The shared court takes the place of a private rear yard. The single story design offers those with mobility challenges safer living conditions. As with attached single-family housing, outdoor areas are typically maintained by a condominium association or the court’s owner, reducing burdens of property maintenance. A bungalow court would be appropriate in the low-density multiple-family areas or residential corridors. The site shown in the Greenfield concept plan, shown in the Corridors Chapter, could accommodate a bungalow court development.

Co-Housing: Co-housing is an intentional community of homes clustered around shared space, both indoor and outdoor. In the United States, co-housing is typically attached single-family units with common building with a shared kitchen and dining. While a resident will have responsibility for some outdoor space, most is communally maintained by the community members. Seniors are also embedded within a community, providing a sense of belonging. Co-housing would fit within the low-density multiple-family areas and residential corridors. The Greenfield concept plan in the Corridors Chapter could be modified as a co-housing development.

AGING IN PLACE

Berkley has an aging population, with the number of residents 65 years or older expected to double by 2045. To accommodate, Berkley wants to help residents as they age to live in the home and community of their choice, often referred to as “Aging in Place”. Aging in Place approaches use regulations, programs and designs to allow people, as they become older, to retain a sense of belonging, have a sense of purpose and maintain a sense of well-being. The City of Berkley can increase residents’ ability to age in place by expanding housing choices as described in the previous section, embracing universal design and improving places and programs.

Housing Choices and Seniors

While many seniors do remain in single-family homes,



Example of a bungalow court, which would be appropriate on residential corridors or low-density multiple-family future land use categories.
Source: www.city-data.com



Co-Housing in Scio Township, near Ann Arbor. A larger site would likely be needed to develop the housing and community facilities in a co-housing community.
Source: CWA



Opportunities for seniors to have a sense of purpose, such as this gardening club, are part of an Aging in Place strategy.
Source: City of Berkley

Universal Design Principals

Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Simple and Intuitive Use

The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with minimum fatigue.

Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

often the challenges of home maintenance, yard upkeep and even climbing stairs can become too much. Without specific financing and regulations, none of the housing types described previously are guaranteed to be occupied by seniors and/or persons with disabilities. If the City desires designated housing for seniors, financing and programs will need to be utilized, in addition to zoning and policy changes. In addition, any housing type is more conducive to aging in place when Universal Design, is employed.

Universal Design

Any dwelling unit in Berkley, even those housing types described previously, will not facilitate aging in place, unless the home itself is designed for people of all abilities. Through education and policy changes, municipalities have promoted Universal Design, defined by the National Association of Home Building as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design". Principles and strategies of Universal Design, as well as methods for promoting Universal Design are described on this and the following page.

The City should undertake the following to promote Universal Design in Berkley:

Resident Universal Design Education: The City should consider educating residents on Universal Design. The program should cover Universal Design principles, strategies to incorporate Universal Design, associated costs, and additional resources. Several education methods may be used, such as handouts at City Hall and material on the City's website to educate residents in understanding Universal Design, an information session with a Universal Design expert, an expert available at City Hall to advise and answer questions, as well as provide examples of return on investment analysis for Universal Design modifications on a typical Berkley home.

Building Universal Design Education: The City can also share Universal Design resources with builders during the project design phase and include Universal Design literature with building permit applications and on the City website.

Zoning Changes: Outdoor ramps, lifts, or no-step entrances are sometimes not allowed due to setback requirements and lot coverage zoning regulations. These and other Universal Design alterations may not meet variance standards considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Zoning Ordinance could be amended to add a provision that permits latitude from the setbacks and lot coverage requirements to allow for an accessibility improvement.

Setting an Example: The City can set a good example by incorporating Universal Design principles into any future City building and retrofit where feasible.

PLACES AND PROGRAMS

The City provides places and programs for residents, within and nearby neighborhoods, to interact with each other, exercise and enjoy experiences. Recreation and social interaction are essential for a sense of belonging and a sense of well-being, fundamentals of aging in place. The City can facilitate aging in place by creating great places and programs as described below:

Walkability: Berkley is a walkable place, with a walk score of 77 out of 100. In the 2020 Parks and Recreation Plan, priority is placed on the development of trails connecting the parks to form a continuous park system tying community facilities, schools, neighborhoods, downtown Berkley, and regional recreation facilities together.

Park Design: Parks should be designed for people of all ages and abilities, with fitness equipment and passive recreation areas for all persons to relax, talk or observe nature. The “Inclusive Playground” design approach addresses the needs of all people including those who have autism, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, spina bifida

Universal Design Strategies

Access into the home

- No-step front door entrance or a no-step entrance to another location provides access to the main living space.
- Access Ramp creates a no-step entrance.
- Exterior doorway with a 32-inch clear opening, and exterior lighting controlled from inside the residence or automatic or continuously on.
- An exterior or interior elevator, lift, or stair glide unit.

Interior of home

- Interior doorway with a 32-inch clear opening to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers.
- Open single floor living: Eliminate need to navigate stairs and doors by increasing mobility in homes with at least 5 foot diameter turnarounds, and powered door operators. If home is multi-story, incorporate one accessible bathroom on main floor.
- Reachable switches and outlets: Switches should be placed at 44 - 48” high, while outlets should be at least 18” high.
- Friendly floors: Flooring should be a matte slip-resistant surface or low pile carpeting to reduce potential for slips or falls, and ease operation of wheelchair or walker.
- Accessible countertops, cabinets and storage: Countertops can be at varying heights of 28-42”, with at least 50% of all storage less than 54” high.

Accommodations for individuals with sensory disabilities

- Alarm, appliance, and control structurally integrated to assist with a sensory disability.

Accessible bathroom features

- Maneuverable bathroom or kitchen.
- Walls around a toilet, tub, or shower reinforced and properly installed grab bars.
- Accessibility-enhanced bathroom, including a walk-in-or roll-in shower or tub.



The dentist's office above is an example of a medical facility within walking distance of homes.
Source: CWA



The playground shown above in Gallup Park in Ann Arbor is an example of an inclusive design.
Source: A2gov.org

and other disabilities. The 2020 Parks and Recreation Plan includes action items to “upgrade playground equipment at all city parks and add structures which appeal to a variety of ages and abilities” and “provide accessible routes to all park amenities.”

Accessible Medical Facilities: To allow access by residents of all abilities, medical facilities should be allowed close to neighborhoods, required to be universally accessible and able to be reached safely by pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders and vehicle passengers alike. Medical facilities should be located near where neighborhoods meet the commercial corridors, as appropriate.

Social and Cultural: The City can enhance the social and cultural lives of its residents by improving places and continuing programs that bring residents together for social and cultural events. Parks, City facilities, and commercial corridors, particularly those in the Downtown, should be inviting and engaging public spaces. The Parks and Recreation Plan, the Downtown Plan and the Corridors Chapter of this Master Plan include recommendations for physical improvements and policy changes to improve the sense of place in these areas.



Events like the Art Bash provide Berkley seniors and the community opportunities to come together as a community.
Source: City of Berkley