

Chapter 2: Land Use and Zoning Strategy

Land Use and Zoning Key Findings

- Master Plan amendments to incorporate the study recommendations are needed.
- Zoning amendments to both the map and written ordinance are recommended.

Existing Land Use

A wide variety of land uses are found throughout the Cross Street Neighborhood (see Map 2 – Existing Land Use), but the predominant land use is residential. Due to the proximity of the neighborhood to the EMU campus and the need for student housing, most of the single family and two-family housing have been converted to accommodate additional dwelling units. There are also several low-rise multiple family apartment buildings, primarily located along Washtenaw and Washington. An excellent example of adaptive reuse is the former Ypsilanti High School, which has been renovated as a senior housing community, Cross Street Village.

Commercial uses are located along the length of Cross Street. These are comprised of small, student oriented businesses such as bookstores, restaurants, a drug store and variety stores. Most of the businesses rely on rear lots, on-street parking on Normal and Perrin or the Ballard Street municipal parking lot to serve their parking needs. Several retail buildings also have apartments located on the upper stories of the buildings – designated as Mixed Use on Map 2.

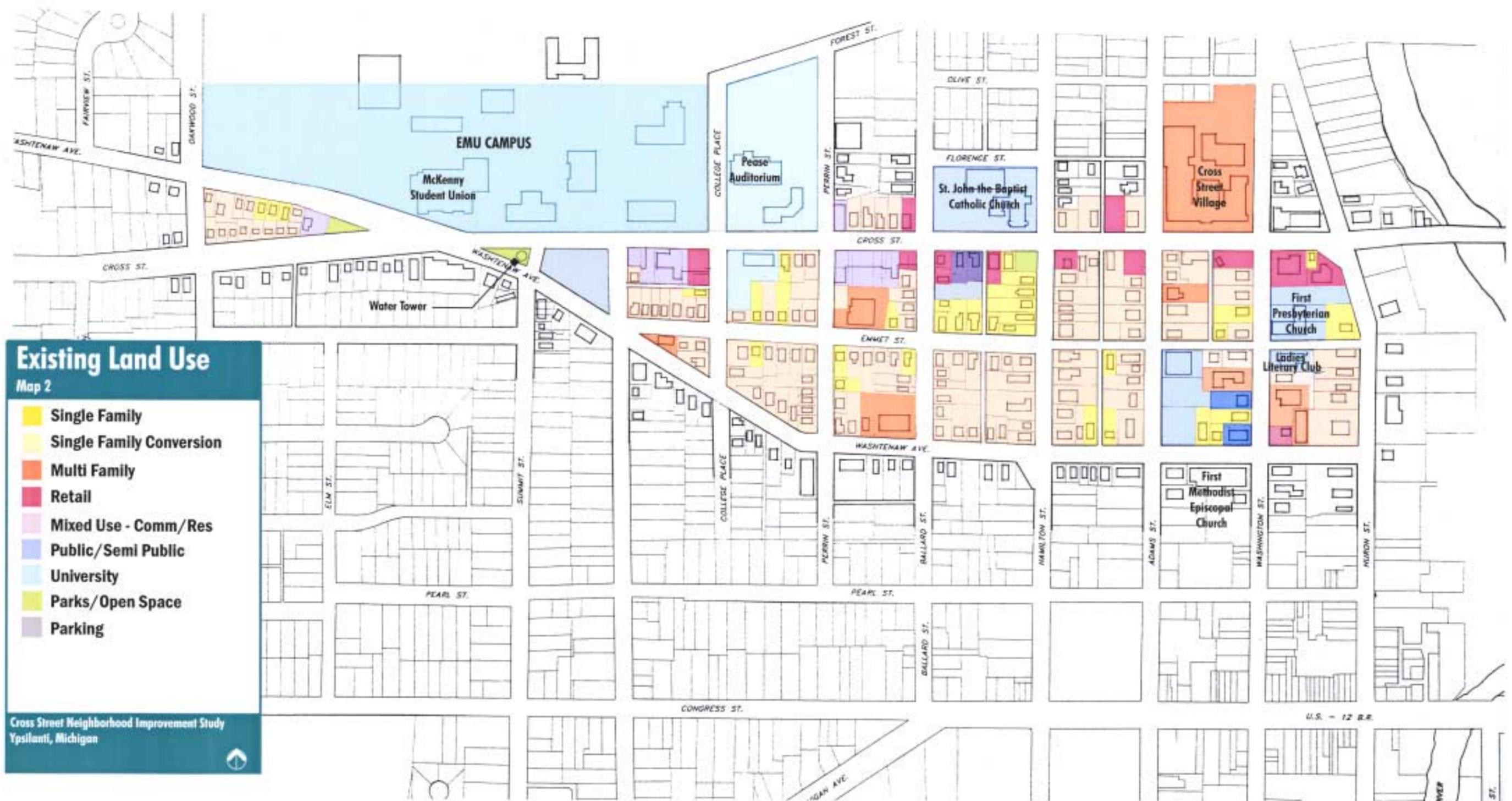
A large portion of the Cross Street Neighborhood is dedicated to institutional uses, the most predominant being the Eastern Michigan University campus. The EMU campus is located along the north side of Cross Street, between Oakwood and Perrin. The EMU School of Business is located just south of the study area on Michigan, between Hamilton and Adams and the University has also acquired the former Credit Union at College Place and Cross. The William Davis House (formerly the Ladies' Literary Club Building), located at the corner of Washington and Emmet, is a State (1965) and National (1972) Registered Historic Building. Four prominent churches are located within the district, two of which are Historic Registered Buildings – the First Methodist Episcopal Church (State, 1996), located on the southwest corner of Washington and Washtenaw and the First Presbyterian Church (State, 1989), located at Emmet and Washington. The former Fire House at Huron and Cross has been adaptively reused as a Fire Museum and residential housing complex.

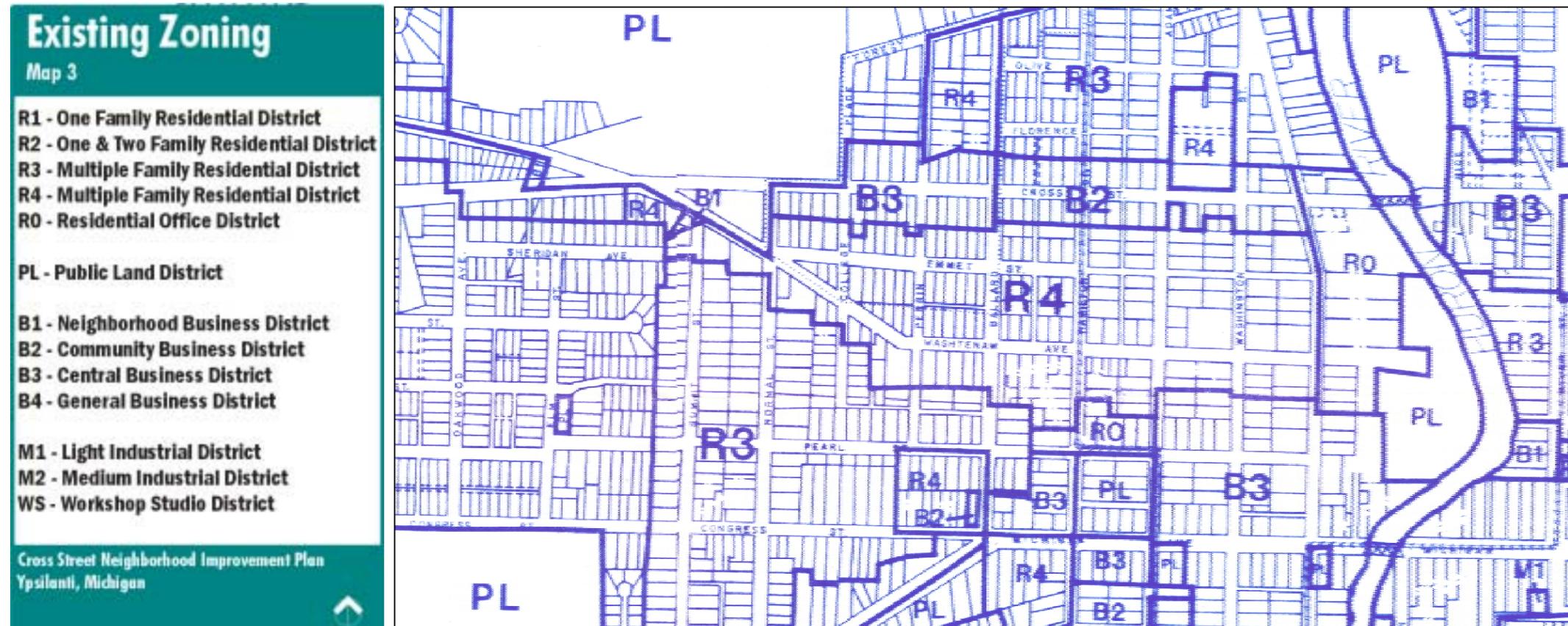


There are a wide variety of land uses within the Cross Street neighborhood. Clockwise from top left: Eastern Michigan University Campus; commercial use on Cross Street; multiple family apartment building; residential use on Cross Street; single-family home conversions; commercial use on Cross Street.

Although park and recreational uses are not located in the Cross Street Neighborhood, the neighborhood is adjacent to several major parks. The Huron River, Riverside Park and Frog Island Park are located to the east. The EMU campus also provides passive recreation areas for students.

Chapter 2





Existing Zoning

R3 – Multiple Family Residential District

This district is designed to allow medium density residential development such as four-plexes, or single-family dwellings in clusters or groups. It is intended to serve as a zone of transition between lower density residential districts and downtown high-density residential and business uses. As such, multiple-family housing in this district should be designed to be compatible with nearby single- or two-family housing. Within the Cross Street Neighborhood, only the Oakwood Triangle falls under this designation.

R4 – Multiple Family Residential District

The R4 District is designed to allow a higher density residential development designed specifically for apartments, condominiums and townhouses. The intention of this zoning district is to provide a transition buffer between nonresidential districts and lower density residential uses. Within the Cross Street neighborhood boundaries, almost the entire residential neighborhood is zoned R4.

RO – Residential-Office District

The RO District is intended to be a transition zone between strictly residential areas to strictly business areas, protecting the city’s residential neighborhood while promoting the expansion of compatible businesses. It is further intended

to aid in the preservation and stabilization of property values. Properties located between North Huron Street and Riverside Park are zoned RO.

B1 – Neighborhood Business District

The B1 District is designed to provide areas local services and convenience shopping establishments that meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. The intent of the district is to encourage the concentration of local business, to take advantage of both the consumers and the merchants. Within the Cross Street Neighborhood, the only B1 District is located at the southwest corner of Summit and Washtenaw.

B2 – Community Business District

This district is intended to provide commercial development that offers a broader range of goods and services than offered in the B1 district, but less intensive than those permitted in the B3 District. The B2 District occurs on Cross, between Huron and Ballard.

B3 – Central Business District

The B3 District is designed to promote the orderly development, redevelopment and maintenance of Ypsilanti's Downtown and Depot Town commercial areas. This district serves the economic needs, such as comparison-shopping, convenience, service and cultural needs, of Ypsilanti as well as those beyond the city limits. It is the intent of the District to promote the development of a pedestrian mixed-use district, consisting of a variety of retail, office and service uses. Properties on Cross Street, between Normal and Ballard are zoned B3.

PL – Public Land District

The PL District is designed to classify publicly owned uses. The intent of the district is to encourage the development of attractive public spaces that are conducive to community interaction. The EMU campus falls within this designation.

Proposed Development Pattern

This portion of the chapter generally explains the proposed development pattern. More detail is provided within subsequent chapters.

Residential uses within the Cross Street Neighborhood are targeted for one of two actions: (1) Rehabilitation and Renovation or (2) Redevelopment. The rehabilitation and renovation designation recommends that the home in question require ongoing maintenance and/or small improvements. Most of the residential neighborhood falls within this category. New residential construction is recommended for the redevelopment target areas. This is targeted for Emmet between Perrin and Ballard.

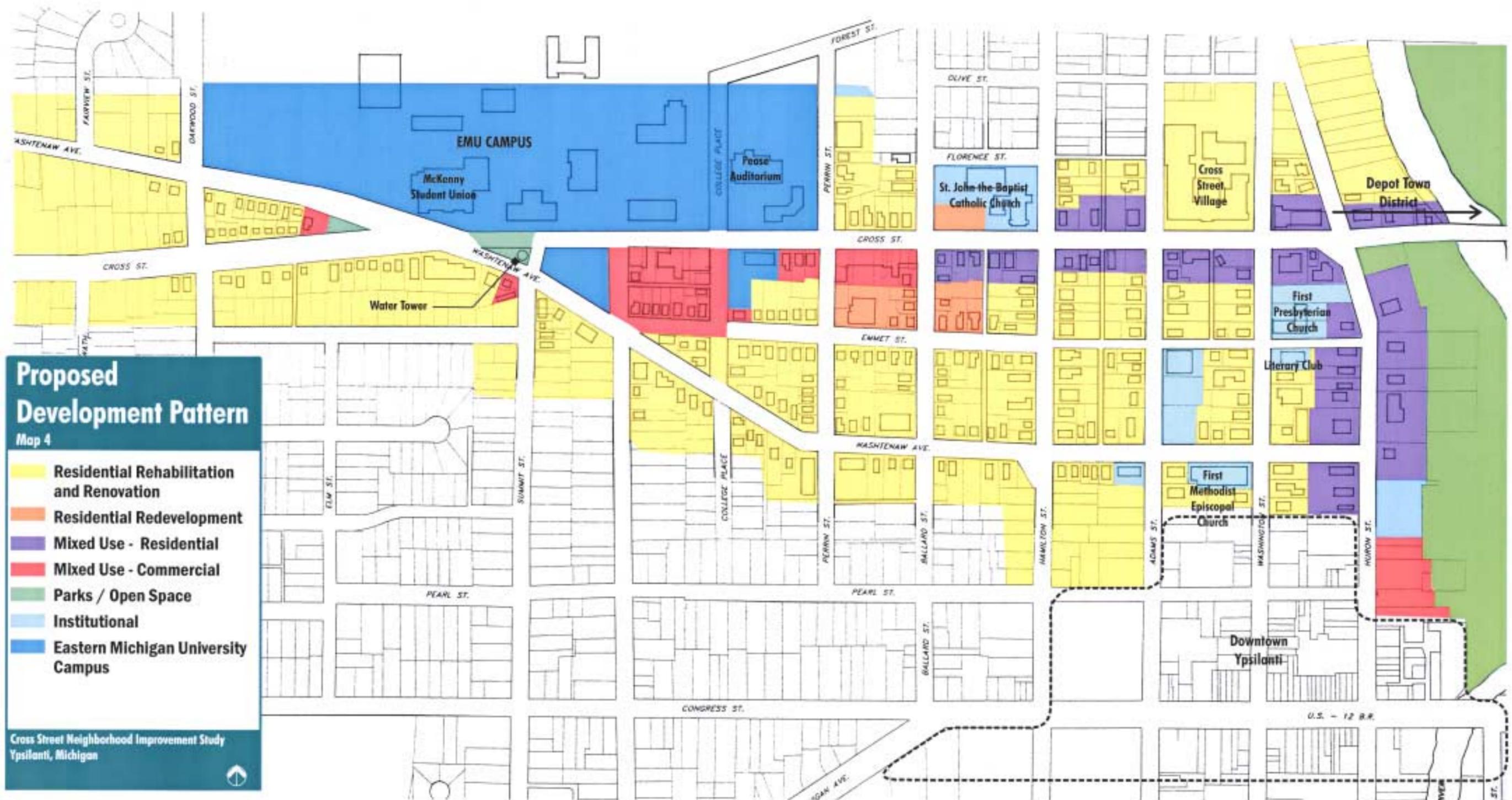
The proposed development pattern emphasizes compatible mixed-use developments along the length of Cross Street. Recognizing that Cross Street, between Ballard and Summit is the heart of the student business district, commercial use is the focus. Further east on Cross, the proposed development pattern focuses on residential uses and is reflective of the less-intensive context that exists.

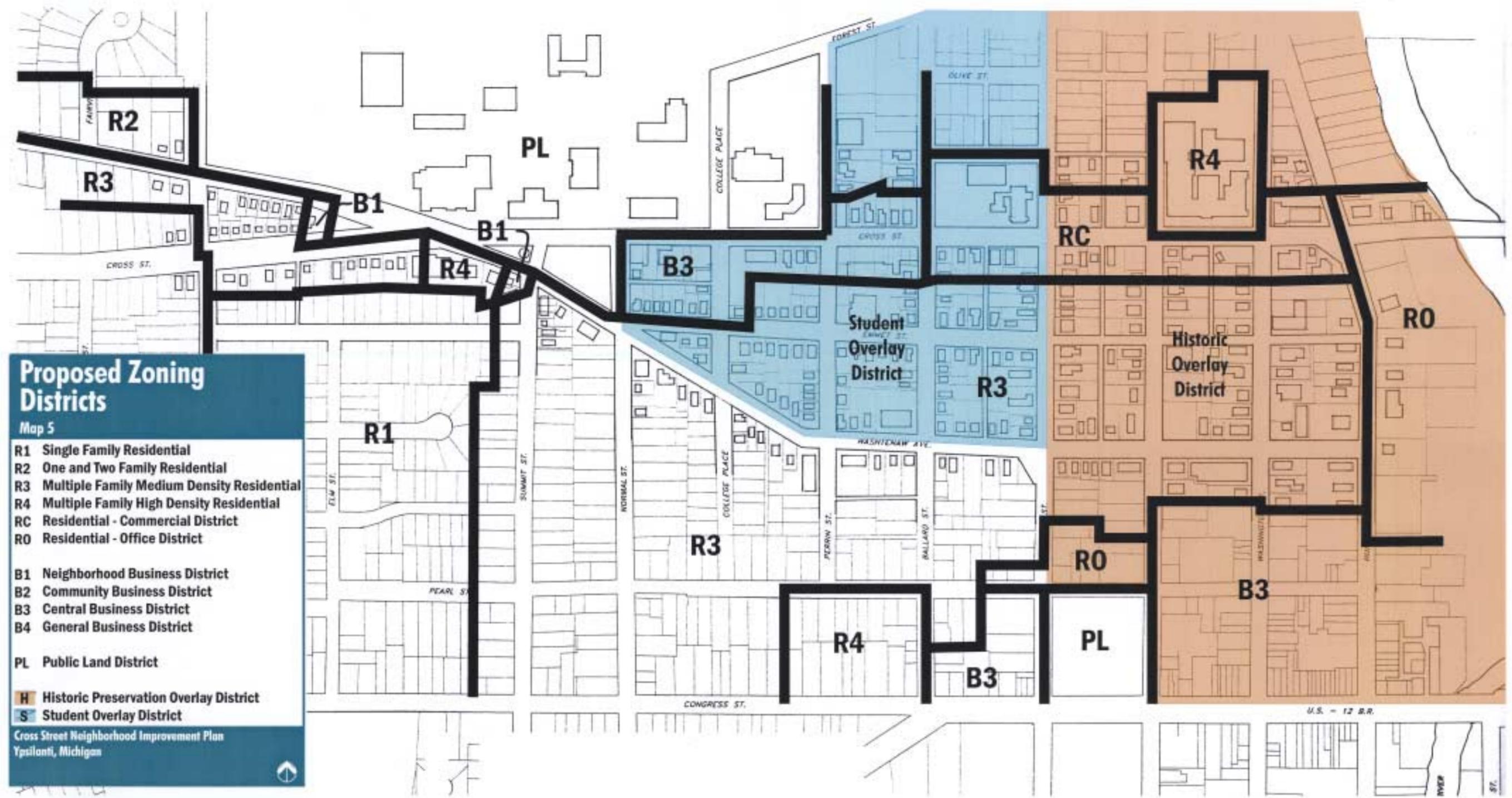
Although no land use changes to institutions, parks, open space and the EMU Campus are recommended, recommended property and building improvements are detailed in subsequent chapters.

Zoning Strategies

Generally, existing zoning designations in the Cross Street Neighborhood promote a more intense development pattern than envisioned.

Recommendations intend to lessen both commercial intensity and residential density. Amending the zoning designations on the Cross Street frontage to B2 Community Business and RC Residential Commercial Mixed-Use from the more intense B3 Central Business promotes Cross Street Neighborhood as a student





business district. The uses allowed in B2, as suggested, will meet the needs of residents, complement the market study conclusions and will not dilute the critical mass needed for the Cross Street Neighborhood.

Amending the zoning designation of the residential areas from the most intense R4 Multiple-Family district to R3 Multiple-Family Residential can assist in minimizing many of blight concerns. Through lessening allowable density, excessive parking demand can be better controlled. However, supportive measures such as site design guidelines for residential off-street parking and eliminating commuter student parking must be implemented.

Review of the zoning map shows that neighborhoods north and south of the Cross Street Neighborhood contain large tracts of R3 zoning. Logically, the pattern should be continued within this neighborhood. Nonconforming developments are inevitable when establishing any new designation over a previously existing area in the scope and complexity of this plan. A strategy should be determined whether to allow all or a portion of such properties to remain R4 and therefore not be considered nonconforming.

Revised zoning standards in tandem with general design guidelines is a viable method of encouraging upgrade. The guidelines will assist in improving the area's visual identity and community perception. They will also help protect and often increase property valuation if implemented. The guidelines envisioned are general and intended to create a functionally and visually well-maintained district. Many of the design regulations are currently followed and do not constitute functional hardship while discouraging low-quality "bare bones" modifications to buildings.

Zoning provides one of several legal foundations for implementing the Cross Street Neighborhood's vision. However, it must be supported by strict enforcement, other land use strategies such as reduction in temporary on-street parking, streetscape programs, and political backing to be effective. It is a short-range and cost effective component of the overall long-range strategy.

Land Use and Zoning Improvement Policies, Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives in this section refer to recommended actions the City must take with respect to policy and legal documents. Development and rehabilitation strategies are detailed in subsequent chapters.

Goal 1:

Ensure the master plan, zoning ordinance and all other public documents reflect the intended vision for the Cross Street Neighborhood.

Short Term Actions:

- Amend the current master plan to include the Cross Street Neighborhood as a target area. The issues and land use recommendations within this study should be incorporated.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to reflect the following text changes:
 - Include general design guidelines for home conversion in the student overlay district. Include existing single-family homes that are converted to apartments in the guidelines as only fraternities and sororities are currently regulated.
 - Reduce density standards of home conversions and garden/walk-up multiple-family apartments.
 - Provide density increase incentives for exceeding design guidelines.
 - Institute minimum lot size and usable open space criteria to control overbuilding of a site.
 - Change “strongly encouraged” in the final sentence of the intent to “is required”.
 - Demarcate unpaved parking areas with continuous curbing or other type of solid edge to stop gravel or loose material from spilling onto landscape and walk areas.
 - Properly locate off-street parking areas to permit future shared parking with abutting properties.
 - Include general design guidelines to guide architectural scale and character for renovation and new construction that respect the surrounding context. These requirements do not need to be

excessively stringent but should permit similar rooflines, window proportions, grade-level front porches with public walks, and similar architectural/site features.

- Explore the use of an overlay district to regulate design and specific use of land on the B2 zone. As exists, a wide array of permitted and special uses is allowed. Many of these uses, if located in the district, will compromise the physical design integrity.
- Amend the zoning map:
 - Replace B3 Central Business District. Extend PL Public Land District on the north side of Cross Street from College Place to Perrin Streets. Finally, place RC Residential-Commercial District on the balance of the frontage except for the senior housing community on the north side of Cross Street between Adams and Washington. R4 Multiple-Family Residential District should remain in this area
 - Extend the B2 Community Business District south to Emmet between College Place and Normal to accommodate existing conditions.
 - Generally replace the R4 Multiple-Family District with R-3 Multiple-Family to lessen the density and subsequently lessen parking demand and use of individual sites. However, existing apartment complexes that would potentially become nonconforming should be identified. A strategy should be developed to decide which of these developments should remain R4, if any.
 - The boundaries of the Student Overlay District should be repositioned. The area between Cross, College Place, Forest and Perrin Streets is part of the Eastern Michigan University campus and should be rezoned to PL Public Lands, similar to the balance of the campus. The overlay designation would not be required for this area.
 - Expand the Student Overlay District south to Washtenaw Avenue and east to Hamilton Street is recommended to implement development standards plus a general level of design control. This area is not currently regulated within the Student or Historic Districts.

Policy Statement:
Promote the revitalization of the Cross Street Neighborhood with a master plan and zoning ordinance that incorporates the vision of this plan.

