



VISION

for White Lake Township

April 2024 DRAFT

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A scenic view of a lake with reeds and a wooden deck with a metal railing in the foreground. The word "DRAFT" is overlaid in large red letters.

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Acknowledgments

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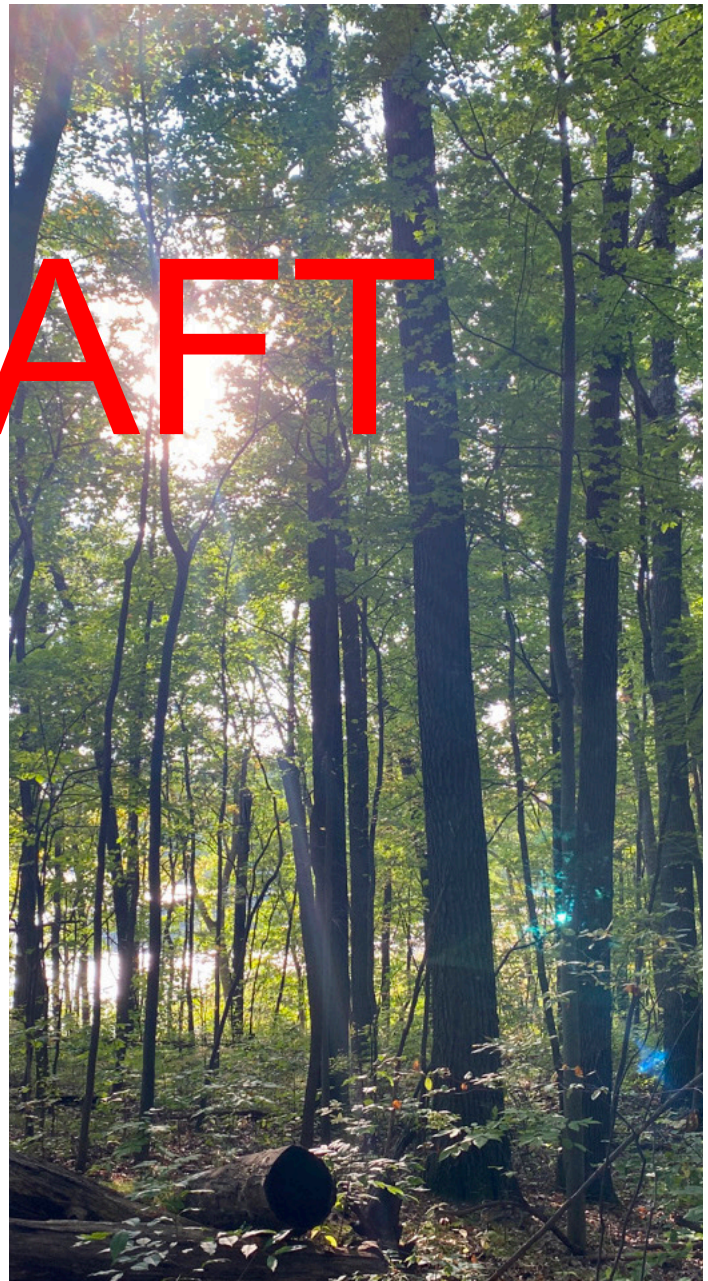
A landscape photograph showing a field of tall grasses and yellow wildflowers in the foreground. In the background, there is a line of trees and a utility pole. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The word "DRAFT" is overlaid in large, bold, red capital letters across the center of the image.

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for White Lake Township

INTRODUCTION

White Lake Township's Master Plan presents an opportunity to set the course for sustainable growth and development over the next decade. This 2024 Master Plan update occurs at a favorable time: following a decade of rapid growth, the pace of growth is slowing down, household compositions are changing, the population is aging, housing preferences are diversifying, value for natural features and open space is exponentially growing in this post COVID-19 pandemic era, and land use patterns are undergoing a transformation. To capture these shifting trends, this Plan is comprehensive in scope; it evaluates existing data, trends, and land use patterns to develop and coordinate strategies for managing natural features, housing, transportation, economic development, and future land use in the Township. Propelled by community input, this Master Plan establishes a vision of the future, defines community goals and objectives, and details actions and land use patterns consistent with the defined goals and visions of the Township.

What is a Master Plan?

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 13 of 2008) enables municipalities to write a Master Plan that broadly guides development to meet current and future needs and promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents. A Master Plan is a long-range, comprehensive document that guides decisions about future development based on existing and forecasted conditions and trends, community needs and preferences, and plans best practices. The Plan is intended to represent the community's consensus and serve as a guide for

decision-making regarding the Township's future. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) also requires all municipalities to review its Master Plan every five years to determine if an update is needed. Since the adoption of White Lake Township's Master Plan for Land Use 2010-2011, changes in Township demographics and socio-economic compositions have warranted a re-evaluation of the Township's policies with respect to growth, development, and land use. To this end, White Lake Township's 2024 Master Plan update aims to chart a path for a desirable future with a strong emphasis on short- and long-term goals and action strategies.

Relationship to Zoning Ordinance

The Master Plan is not a binding agreement but rather a planning framework. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is local land use law. The Zoning Ordinance is a set of regulations that provide the details for how and where development can locate to exacting specifications. Thus, the Zoning Ordinance implements the Master Plan; and, as outlined in the MPEA, a direct relationship between the two documents is required. For example, if it emerges through community engagement and research the housing types available do not adequately serve the population, then a vision statement in the Master Plan could read "to plan for housing types that meet all the preferences of all age groups, income levels, and disabilities." To ensure that this vision is implemented, a municipality would revisit the Zoning Ordinance to determine if the land use code is preventing a particular type of development through height restrictions or lot size requirements. Only when the two documents are in sync can they be effective planning tools.

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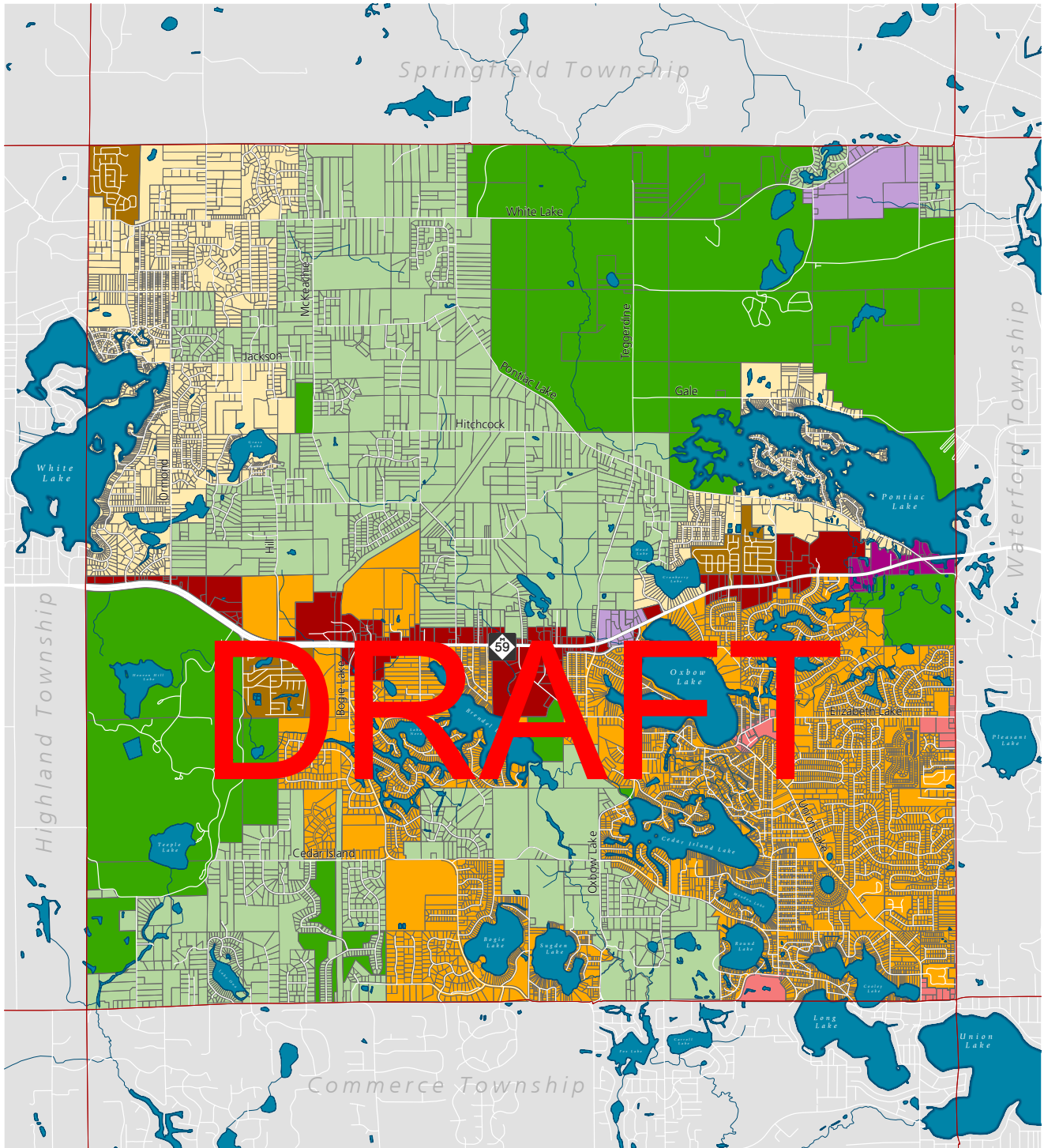


FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK DRAFT



The Future Land Use Framework Map (FLUM) identifies preferred future land uses in the Township. It is a general framework, a land-use visualization of intended future uses, that guide land use and policy decisions within the Township over the next 10-20 years. It should drive changes to the Zoning Ordinance and inform development review decisions. In the FLUM, preferred locations for future development types are displayed, allowing the community to identify where certain land uses should expand or contract without committing to it by law.





Future Land Use Framework

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township

3,000 Feet
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Recreation / Open Space | Neighborhood Commercial |
| Agriculture / Rural Residential | Commercial Corridor |
| Suburban Residential | Pontiac Lake Gateway |
| Neighborhood Residential | Production / Technology |
| Manufactured Residential | |

Future Land Use and Zoning

Future Land Use	Description	Examples of Use*	Residential Density (DU/Acre)	Corresponding Zoning District(s)
Recreation/ Open Space	Large recreation spaces including the Highland State Recreation Area, White Lakes Oaks Golf Course, Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area, and Township parks.	Parks, golf courses, ski resorts, conservation areas	N/A	ROS
Agriculture/ Rural Residential	Maintains agricultural land and rural living through large lots and limited residential development. Subdivision residential development is discouraged.	Large-lot single family, agriculture, farm-stands, cider mills	0.2	AG, SF
Suburban Residential	Provides large lot, low density residences with open space preservation in residential subdivisions. Residential lots tend to be smaller than those in the Agriculture/Rural Residential future land use classification.	Large-lot single family, parks, churches, public facilities or institutions (e.g., schools)	0.5 – 3.0	R1-A, R1-B
Neighborhood Residential	Maintains existing neighborhoods and provides for denser residential development in places where there is infrastructure to support the density and ensuring density within context of the surrounding neighborhood.	Small-lot single family, duplexes, townhomes, multi-family, parks, coalescent or rowing homes	2.0 – 8.0	R1-C, R1-D, RM-1, RM-2, PD
Manufactured Residential	Includes existing manufactured housing developments.	Manufactured housing	3.0 – 6.0	MHP
Neighborhood Commercial	Provides neighborhood scale commercial establishments that have daily goods and services for residents. Creates centers of neighborhood life, encouraging a mix of compatible retail, service, office, and residential uses in a walkable environment.	Professional services/office, personal care, restaurants, mixed-use	6.0 – 10.0; varies based on development	LB, RB, NB-O, NMU
Commercial Corridor	Provides regional goods and services to residents and non-residents. Includes large box stores and drive thrus.	Large grocery, outlet, mixed-use, restaurants	Varies based on development	PB, GB, LB, PD, TC, NMU
Pontiac Lake Gateway	Creates a welcoming gateway offering a mix of local and regional goods and services. Uniform development and design standards create a defined sense of place.	Professional services, multi-family, personal care, restaurants, entertainment	Varies based on development	PG, GB, RM-1, RM-2
Production/ Technology	Serves community's need for research facilities and light industrial opportunities.	Light manufacturing	N/A	LM, ROP

* Not an exhaustive list of uses.



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Analysis of the Township’s economic position, prominent industries, employment patterns, and barriers to growth can be considered alongside community engagement results to determine the “highest and best” use of available land. Determining the highest and best use of parcels prime for development or redevelopment matches these spaces with the land use and business in highest demand within the community. However, due to the size, shape, and surroundings of each parcel, sites may not be suitable for the most requested types of uses.

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Community Insights

The White Lake Township community survey assessed resident perceptions of the local economy, including their preferences regarding commercial developments and how their economic needs fit in with other Township goals and priorities such as the preservation of natural and open spaces. It is worth emphasizing “undesirable commercial development” ranked fourth out of 11 options for respondents to identify the top three challenges facing the Township over the next decade. To address the prospect of appropriate commercial development, respondents overwhelmingly supported approaching commercial development through the revitalization of former commercial buildings that have become vacant and/or retrofitting strip malls to support new commercial activities. The preference for these approaches aligns with respondent concerns about the potential loss of open and/or natural spaces as new commercial areas are developed. Furthermore, revitalizing vacant spaces presents the opportunity to utilize existing sites instead of developing new ones.

Increased traffic was also a prominent concern in the discussion of additional commercial development.

When asked about the types of retail establishments respondents would like to see in the Township, food and beverage stores and restaurant and drinking establishments received the greatest support as uses respondents would patronize on a daily or weekly basis. Respondents specifically expressed support for the Township’s development of additional restaurants and bars, farm-to-table eating establishments, family-friendly restaurants, cafes, and breweries, with each eating and drinking option receiving support from 50% or more of all survey takers.

Redevelopment Sites

On August 17, 2023 the Planning Commission hosted a workshop to gather public input on five sites of possible redevelopment. The workshop was held between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the Township Annex, and approximately 100 members of the public attended.

The central aim of the workshop was to begin a conversation among residents about the potential of five sites selected for consideration by the Planning Commission. Though some sites identified for this workshop are currently vacant, two sites were part of the Township’s Master Plan update in 2012. Concepts for future development and use at both sites were developed during the last planning process, and both concepts were presented again during the workshop. The other three sites provided blank slates for residents to share their ideas based on the site surroundings as well as general desires for development in the area. The Planning Commission picked three of the sites as prime redevelopment opportunities for evaluation in this Master Plan.

PONTIAC LAKE GATEWAY

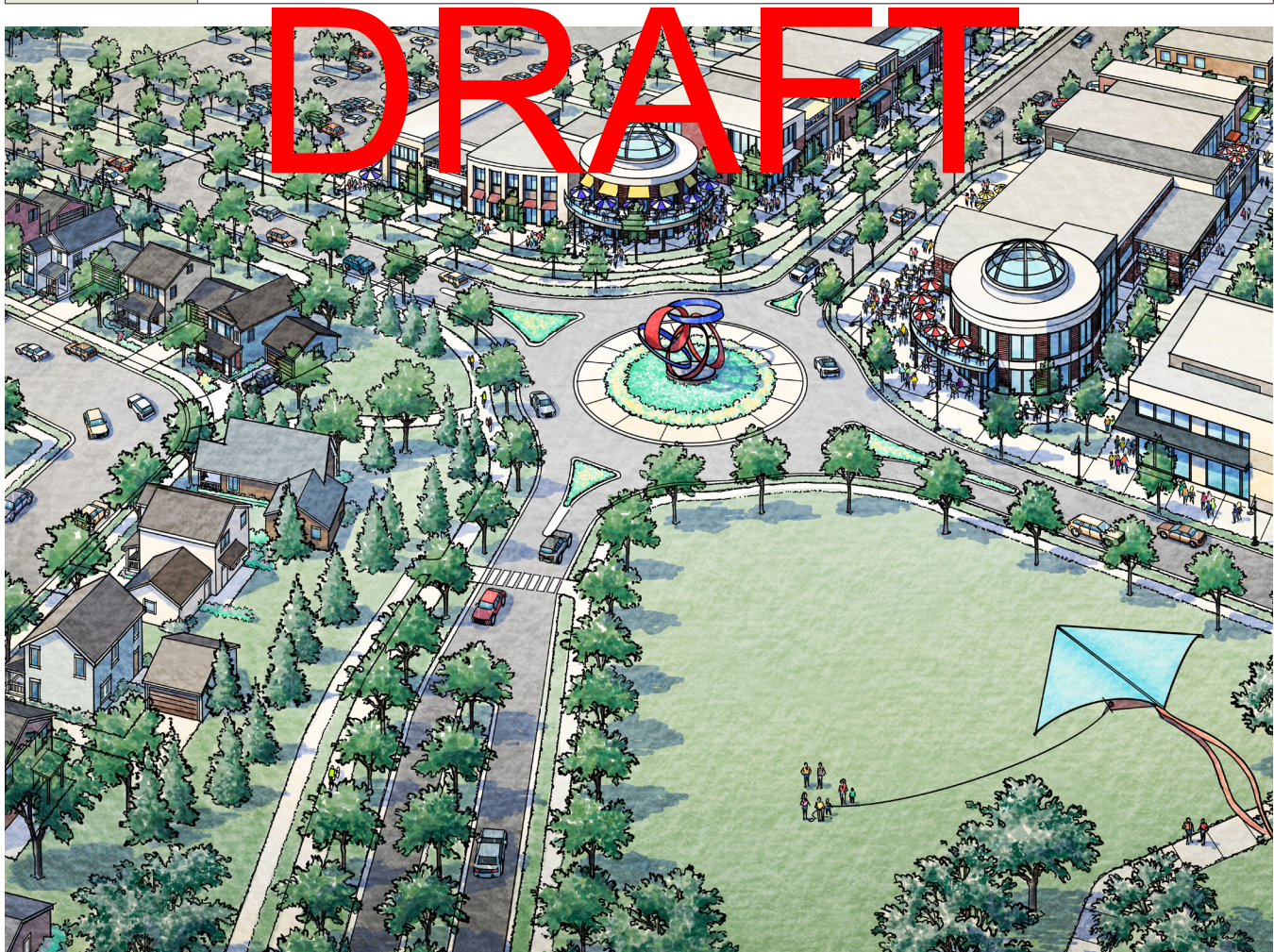
Purpose	<p>The redevelopment concept envisions the area as a key and welcoming gateway into the community. At the northern intersection of Pontiac Lake Road and Highland Road/M-59 is a two-story mixed-use concept with frontage along the roads and the lake, with parking located in the middle. The mixed-use concept includes restaurants, retail, and residential on the second floor. This area is intended to be walkable and integrated into the shoreline of Pontiac Lake. People can access this area via foot, bike, car, or boat. Boaters can dock along the boardwalk and walk to restaurants or shops. Along Highland Road/M-59 is traditional commercial development but an emphasis is placed on fronting buildings on M-59 and locating parking in the rear. There are limited curb cuts and the properties are served by access roads at the rear. At the western edge of the gateway is a cluster of townhomes. The northern end of the gateway is maintained as undeveloped open space.</p>	
Regulated Uses	Non-Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Low-scale local retail along M-59 » Restaurants, local dining with no drive-thru's » Office and professional services » Boat docks, no launches 	Residential / Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Townhomes, Owner Occupied » Upper Story Residential » Lakefront Open Space
Built Form	<p>Building Height: Residential - No more than two stories, or 30 feet above grade. Mixed-use buildings no more than three stories, or 42 feet above grade.</p> <p>Parking: In the rear of the buildings, minimal ingress-egress on M-59</p> <p>Road Frontage: Setback from ROW is 25 feet to allow for a landscape zone with street trees and an 8 to 10' pedestrian sidewalk</p> <p>Exterior Building Materials: Primarily high-quality, durable, low-maintenance material, such as masonry, stone, brick, glass, or equivalent materials. All buildings should be completed on all sides with acceptable finishing materials. Materials such as vinyl, aluminum, and other metal siding should be avoided. Metal and portable buildings should be prohibited.</p> <p>Design: Architectural design should be consistent with pedestrian-oriented development with a minimum of 10-foot-wide sidewalks to allow for outdoor dining and seating.</p>	

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LAKES TOWN CENTER

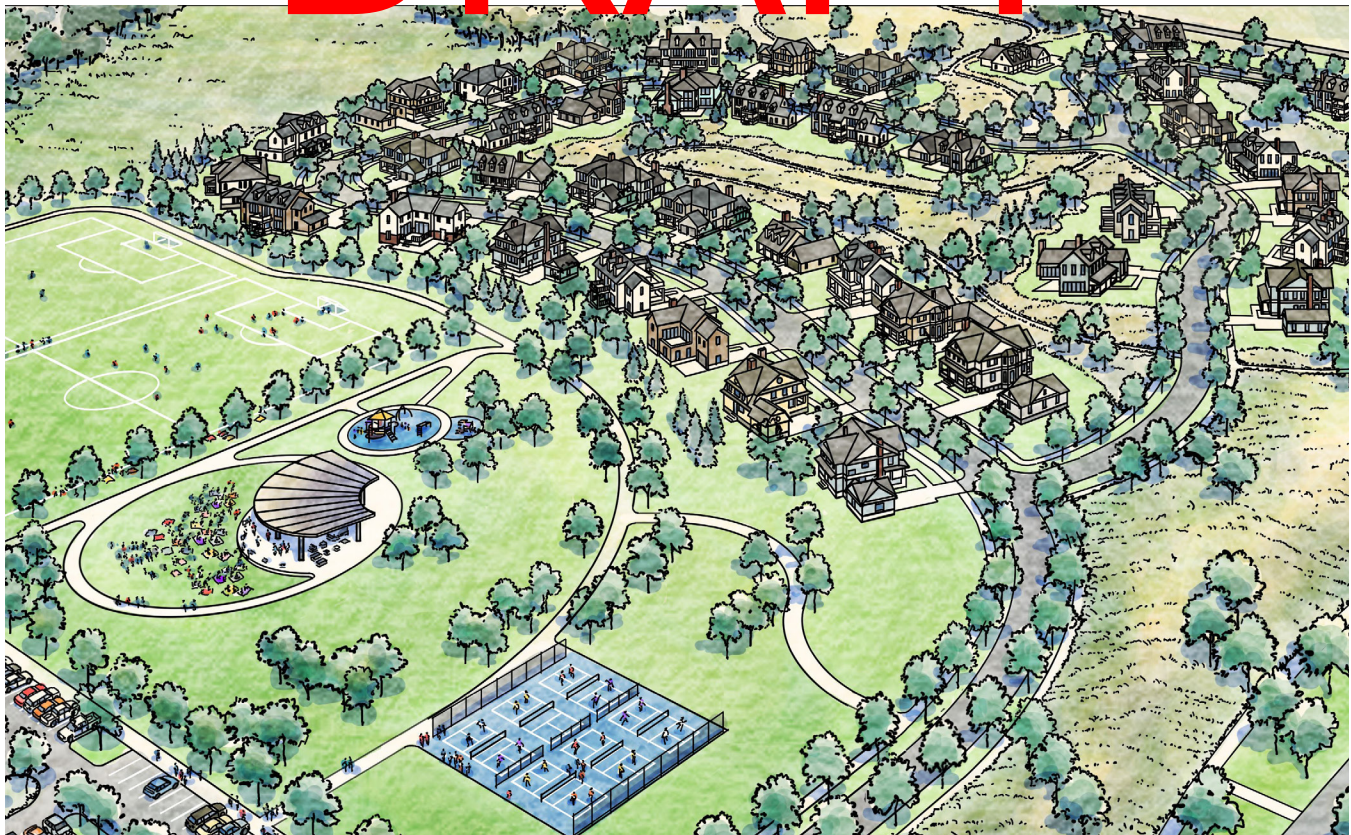
Purpose	Small scale mixed-use development that provides a transition between the regional shopping center east of Elizabeth Lake Road and the single-family development to the west along Elkinford Drive. Retail uses would be internalized within the development surrounded by single family residential.	
Regulated Uses	Non-Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Assisted Living Facilities » Local/Regional Retail; small scale » Child and Family Care Facilities » Independent and Congregate Care Facilities 	Residential / Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Single Family - Detached and Attached » Upper Story Residential » Duplexes » Home Occupations
Built Form	<p>Building Height: Residential -No more than two and one-half stories, or 35 feet above grade. Mixed-use Buildings - three stories, or 42 feet above grade.</p> <p>Road Frontage: Setback along Highland Road would be 40 feet with no ingress/egress. Ingress/egress would be from Elizabeth Lake Road.</p> <p>Building Type: Small scale, retail and restaurant clustered in a walkable Village concept that allows for outdoor dining, events, and possible farmers market. Traditional single family neighborhoods would surround the retail. Upper story residential would be encouraged.</p>	



CEDAR ISLAND ROAD AND BOGIE LAKE ROAD

Purpose	<p>This redevelopment site is located in the southern part of the Township and is in close proximity to three primary/secondary schools (Lakewood Elementary School, White Lake Middle School, and Lakeland High School) as well as the Brentwood Golf Club and Banquet Center. This site's location on Bogie Lake Road provides a direct connection to M-59, making it accessible from across the Township.</p> <p>The redevelopment concept envisions this area as a community anchor in the southwest section of the Township. The main entrance to the site is along Cedar Island Road, near the intersection of Bogie Lake Road. Development would include single-family detached and attached dwellings with adequate area reserved for outdoor recreation for both active and passive activities.</p>	
Regulated Uses	<p>Non-Residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Local Business with no drive-thru's focused only on the southeast corner 	<p>Residential / Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Single Family; Attached and Detached » Active and Passive Recreation Areas » Home Occupations
Built Form	<p>Building Height: No more than two and one-half stories, or 35 feet above grade.</p> <p>Road Frontage: Setbacks from Bogie Lake Road would allow for a landscape zone with street trees and a shared pathway. The setback line for residential single-family homes would be 35 feet from the ROW. Access points on Bogie Lake Road and Cedar Island Road would serve an internalized street network in order to reduce traffic.</p> <p>Building Type: Traditional single family neighborhoods. Residential densities along Bogie Lake Road would be low to medium. Interspersed residential development could be higher if developed adjacent to the recreation open space.</p>	

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GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

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Good planning uses data and community preferences to shape a preferred course of action. In this section, findings from previous chapters of the Master Plan and community engagements are used to build an Action Plan of strategies. This Action Plan is intended to advance White Lake Township toward its goals by providing guidance for future planning efforts.

The following vision from the 2012 Master Plan was shared through the community survey at the start of the master planning process:

“Strive for a sustainable White Lake Township that balances the community’s economic, environmental, and social needs. Promote the identity of White Lake Township as a small country town with big city amenities by protecting and preserving natural features, encouraging redevelopment of obsolete properties, and directing growth and development to a central community core.”

When asked if this vision still aligned with their vision of White Lake, 77% of respondents stated it did. The 2012 vision is carried forward with this Master Plan. In addition to the 2012 vision, the following 10 goals were identified and shared through the community survey at the start of the master planning process. The survey asked respondents to select their top three goals; the results are detailed in the table below.

Based on community feedback, the goals were revised to the following:

- A. Invest in infrastructure and implement appropriate regulations and policy measures to preserve and protect natural features, including wetlands, floodplains, lakes, woodlands, and other natural features.
- B. Enhance the quality of life and make the community more appealing by providing a variety of recreational facilities.
- C. Maintain the small-town rural character of existing single-family residential areas while pursuing opportunities to meet the Township’s housing needs.
- D. Address the community’s needs for efficient and safe multi-modal transportation (walking, biking, automobile, etc).
- E. Support businesses providing goods and services, and implement infrastructural upgrades to meet current and future needs of Township residents.
- F. Improve the Township’s tax base and provide job opportunities by encouraging beneficial development/redevelopment projects.

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Goal	All Survey Respondents	White Lake Residents
Preserve and protect natural features including wetlands, floodplains, lakes, woodlands, and other natural features.	69%	69%
Maintain the small-town rural character of existing single family residential areas.	49%	49%
Provide adequate infrastructure that preserves and protects White Lake Township’s natural features.	46%	46%
Address the community’s needs for efficient and safe multi-modal access (walking, biking, auto).	31%	32%
Enhance the quality of life and make the community more appealing by providing a variety of recreational facilities.	26%	26%
Provide goods and services that meet the current and future needs of Township residents.	22%	22%
Address the community’s needs for sewer and water systems.	20%	20%
Provide efficient public services that adequately and safely support the existing and future population of White Lake Township.	17%	17%
Encourage high tech, research, and light industrial developments to improve the tax base and provide job opportunities.	7%	7%
Provide a variety of housing opportunities.	3%	3%

Action Plan

Action Item	Applicable Goal(s)	Timeframe
Retain residents between the ages of 25 and 34 by responding to demand for more housing units, including affordable housing options.	C, E	Medium term
Support an increasing senior population by assessing and responding to the demand for additional assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and appropriate healthcare facilities.	C, E	Medium term
Accommodate the needs of the Township's disabled population by enforcing ADA compliant design.	E	Ongoing
Recognize the economic hardship that faces households earning below the ALICE threshold by encouraging affordable housing and economic opportunities.	E, F	Short term
Encourage protection of wetlands and installation of green infrastructure along FEMA zones to mitigate harm caused by flooding.	A	Short term
Designate areas around floodplain as conservation areas to limit development and impervious surfaces.	A, B	Short term
Regulate lakefront development by mandating greenbelts with native vegetation in a buffer zone between the setback and the water's edge to reduce flooding impacts.	A	Medium term
Provide information about voluntary conservation easements to residents, especially those living in environmentally-sensitive areas.	A	Short term
Encourage green infrastructure placement during the site plan review process and/or planned development process.	A	Ongoing
Preserve natural and open spaces by pursuing commercial development in vacant buildings and/or retrofitting strip malls to support new commercial activities.	A, B	Medium term
Increase housing supply to meet demand for residences in the Township.	C	Medium term
Ensure aging housing stock receives appropriate maintenance and renovation to promote its habitability to the greatest extent and to avoid deterioration and demolition.	C, E	Medium term
Address increasing housing costs and the limited availability of starter homes valued between \$150k and \$250k by increasing the Township's supply of housing to match the demand.	C	Medium term

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Action Item	Applicable Goal(s)	Timeframe
Accommodate future community housing preferences by matching the size and types of housing construction to needs. For example, while single-family homes remain the most prominent preference for Township residents, support attached single-family structures (such as duplexes).	C	Short term
Pursue CDBG funds to support the revitalization of housing units that are deteriorating and/or uninhabitable in order to put them back into the housing market.	C, E	Ongoing
Rezone commercial districts and corridors to allow for mixed-use developments.	C, F	Ongoing
Support commercial development by revitalizing buildings that have become vacant and/or retrofitting strip malls to support new commercial activities.	F	Medium term
Ensure redevelopment plans align with community-guided ideas at Pontiac Lake Gateway, Cedar Island and Bogie Lake Roads, and around Lakes Town Center.	F	Long term
Support efforts of the Corridor Improvement Authority to promote a sense of place, connectivity, and various activities in commercial corridors across the Township.	E,	Ongoing
Implement traffic calming techniques along Cooley Lake Road and M-59 (east of Teggerdine Road) to ease commuter congestion en route to outside communities.	D	Ongoing
Address the volume of crashes that take place at intersections along M-59 by improving road safety measures and implementing biking and pedestrian infrastructure.	D	Ongoing
Educate and share information with Township residents about implementation plans for non-motorized infrastructure that includes a signed bicycle route, bicycle lanes, and shared-use paths.	D	Ongoing
Educate and share information with Township residents about public transportation options, including upcoming changes in operation.	D, E	Ongoing

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