



**Carlisle | Wortman**  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

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Date: October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Rezoning Review  
For  
White Lake Township, Michigan**

<b>Applicant:</b>	ELR Development, LLC c/o Ronald Reynolds
<b>Project Name:</b>	Highland Road / Elizabeth Lake Road Rezoning
<b>Location:</b>	Southwest corner of Highland Road (M-59) and Elizabeth Lake Road.
<b>Parcel ID:</b>	12-21-426-007
<b>Parcel Size:</b>	8.6 gross acres
<b>Application Date:</b>	July 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024
<b>Current Zoning:</b>	AG, Agricultural District
<b>Action Requested:</b>	Rezone to GB, General Business district

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Applicant is requesting a zoning change for the parcel located at the southwest corner of Highland Road (M-59) and Elizabeth Lake Road to convert the permissible uses of the site as commercial instead of low-density residential. The rezoning statement states *“Petitioner respectfully requests rezoning of the subject property for the reason that its current zoning is uneconomic, and the requested rezoning is consistent with the Township’s Master Plan.”*. The applicant has provided a concept plan showing a varied array of single and multi-tenant retail buildings as well as drive thru uses. Buildings would front both Highland Road (M-59) and Elizabeth Lake Road. We note these are concept plans. No formal site plan has been submitted.

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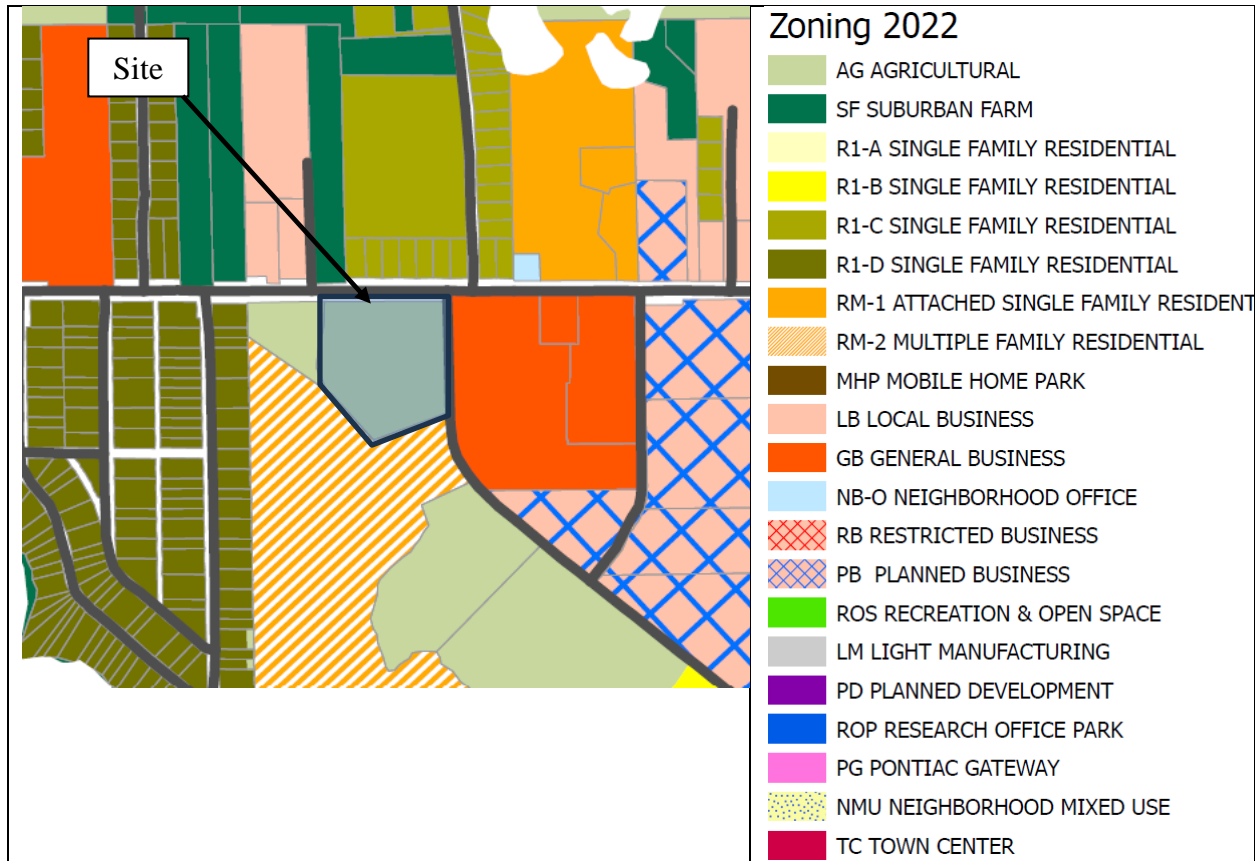
**Aerial Photograph**



Source: NearMap June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**NEIGHBORING ZONING AND LAND USE**

**Zoning**



The zoning and existing land uses for the subject site and surrounding parcels are identified in the following table:

Direction	Zoning	Existing Use
North	R1-C – Single Family Residential / SF – Suburban Farm	Single Family Homes
South	RM-2 – Multiple Family Residential	Vacant
East	GB – General Business	Large Format Retail
West	AG – Agricultural	Vacant

If approved, the parcel would conform to the lot size and dimension standards for GB. Permitted and Special Land uses in the GB zone are shown below. We note the concept plan indicates drive thru services which are special land uses in the GB district.

<b>GB Zoning District</b>	
<b>Permitted Land Uses</b>	<b>Special Land Uses</b>
Household and office furniture stores.	Automobile wash establishments
Kitchen, bath, lighting, flooring and similar home improvement uses	Automobile service centers
Personal services	Automobile service stations
Business support services	Animal care facilities, kennels and veterinary clinics and hospitals
Retail commercial uses	Drive-in or drive-thru window service, banks
Department stores	Drive-in or drive-thru window service, convenience market and pharmacy
Motels and hotels	Drive-in or drive-thru window service, dry cleaners
Bed and breakfast inns	Drive-in or drive-thru window service, restaurant
Government (Township only) offices, buildings and uses without service or storage yards	Entertainment and/or outdoor dining associated with a restaurant
Local utility structures, stations and substations	Hospitals and other health care facilities
Adult entertainment uses	New and used automobile sales
Restaurants, with and without alcoholic beverages	Home centers, lumber yards, and similar large-scale retail uses
Restaurants, fast-food or carry-out	Outdoor Storage of Fleet Vehicles
Funeral home	Open air business
Theaters, concert hall, or similar places of assembly	
Radio or television studios	
Nursery school, group adult and child care centers	
Administrative, professional, medical or dental offices	
Office buildings over 20,000 square feet	
Places of worship	

Photography or artists' studios	Utility transmission systems
Banks, credit unions, savings and loan institutions and other financial office buildings	Wireless communication antennas

**Items to be addressed:** None.

**NATURAL FEATURES**

The site is undeveloped and cleared of vegetation along the northern portion of the site. Woodland clusters exist to the south and west. No natural feature information was provided in the application. Below is our observed condition of the site. It should be noted that the proposed district will allow for a higher intensity of uses than the current zone. The development under the permitted uses for the zone could potentially have a greater effect on natural features than a development under the current zoning.

**Topography:** The site appears relatively flat.

**Wetlands:** The Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy indicate wetlands located along western border of the parcel.

**Woodland:** Several woodland clusters are onsite along the western lot line and southern third of the site.

**Soils:** Predominant soils are Brookston and Colwood Loam and Fox Sandy Loam.

**Water:** A body of water exists in the southern portion of the site.

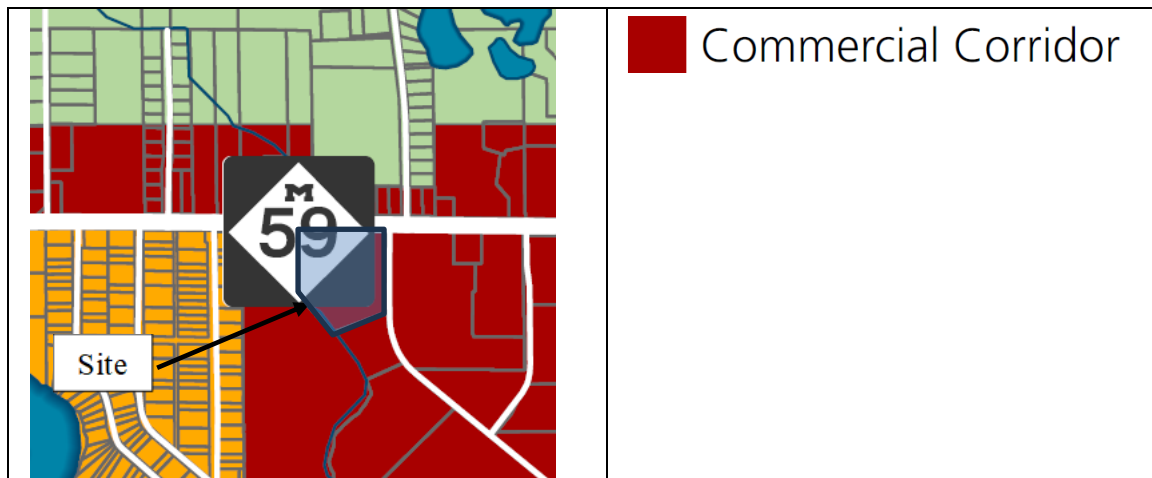
**Items to be addressed:** None.

## MASTER PLAN

The Township’s Master Plan is a comprehensive document that includes many elements that should be considered when determining rezoning requests. Pertinent sections to review include future land uses, as well as goals, objectives and strategies of the site(s) proposed for rezoning.

### Future Land Use

Under the current Master Plan, the site is located in the Agricultural / Rural Residential district which is shown below:



The description and example of uses (not an exhaustive list) for the Commercial Corridor District is:

Description: *“Provides regional goods and services to residents and non-residents. Includes large box stores and drive thrus.”*

Example of Uses: *“Large grocery, outlet, mixed-use, restaurants”*

Lot sizes are not prescribed in the Master Plan for future land use designations however the corresponding zoning districts associated with the Commercial Corridor district are PB, GB, LB, PD, TC, and NMU.

No conflict exists with the Master Plan in the consideration of this parcel being rezoned to General Business.

**Items to be addressed:** *None.*

## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

If rezoned, the lot will allow for commercial/retail developments as noted earlier in this report regarding permitted and special land uses. Other standards related to the GB district are outlined in Section 3.1.14 of the Zoning Ordinance. Accounting for current market conditions and infrastructure, the concept plan provided in the application, or similar plans indicating retail development, is the likely use for the lot.

## REZONING STANDARDS

Section 7.9 of the White Lake Township Zoning Ordinance states that all proposed amendments to the provisions of the Ordinance or the Official Zoning Map shall be referred to the Planning Commission for public hearing and recommendation to the Township Board, prior to consideration thereof by the Township Board.

Section 7.13 of the White Lake Township Zoning Ordinance outlines the criteria the Planning Commission and Township Board are to utilize when assessing any petition for an amendment to the Official Zoning Map. Below is a review of the materials provided by the applicant as they relate to the proposed rezoning:

- A. *Consistency with the goals, policies and future land use map of the White Lake Township Master Plan, including any subarea or corridor studies. If conditions have changed since the Master Plan was adopted, the consistency with recent development trends in the area.*

**Applicant Response:** The Future Land Use Map from the 2024 Master Plan designates the subject site in the Commercial Corridor category, which aligns with the proposed GB zoning district.

**CWA Comment:** The Future Land Use Map from the Master Plan designates the subject site in the Commercial Corridor category, which is conducive with the proposed GB zoning district and uses.

- B. *Compatibility of the site's physical, geological, hydrological and other environmental features with the host of uses permitted in the proposed zoning district.*

**Applicant Response:** If the property is rezoned to GB, it would not directly or indirectly have a substantial adverse impact on the natural resources of the Township.

**CWA Comment:** As noted earlier in this review, the GB designation is compatible with the surrounding uses however permitted and special land uses will be more intense and potentially impact the nature features of the site more than the current zoning allows.

- C. *Evidence the applicant cannot receive a reasonable return on investment through developing the property with one (1) of the uses permitted under the current zoning.*

**Applicant Response:** The current zoning, AG, is outdated and does not allow for economic use of the property. The property is in an intense commercial corridor on Highland Road (M-59) with access to municipal water and sanitary sewer. Rezoning to GB would allow for economic use of the property. The property is suitable for, and it is reasonable to request, commercial zoning, as called for in the Master Plan. The property is currently being assessed by the Township as a commercial parcel.

**CWA Comment:** AG is the lowest density single family housing zone for the Township and is more appropriate for outlying, large parcel areas without access to water or sewer services. Single Family residences are still present along the corridor, economic trends along the Highland Road (M-59) corridor support dense housing and/or commercial uses.

- D. *The compatibility of all the potential uses allowed in the proposed zoning district with surrounding uses and zoning in terms of land suitability, impacts on the environment, density, nature of use, traffic impacts, aesthetics, infrastructure and potential influence on property values.*

**Applicant Response:** The permitted and special land uses in the GB district are compatible with the surrounding uses and the nature of the uses anticipated in the Township Master Plan. The property is currently vacant, and its agricultural zoning is outdated and uneconomic. Commercial development would enhance property values over the current zoning. The property is currently being assessed by the Township as a commercial parcel.

**CWA Comment:** The uses permitted under GB are compatible with location of the lot.

- E. *The capacity of Township utilities and services sufficient to accommodate the uses permitted in the requested district without compromising the "health, safety and welfare" of the Township.*

**Applicant Response:** The property has adequate access to utilities and commercial use would not overburden existing utilities.

**CWA Comment:** Utilities are present for the site. Township public safety services are within a mile of the site. We cite no concerns with Township services but note that Public Safety and Engineering will be consulted on any proposed development for the site.

- F. *The capability of the street system to safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by uses permitted in the requested zoning district.*

**Applicant Response:** See Fleis & Vanderbrink Traffic Analysis enclosed.



**CWA Comment:** General traffic analysis information was provided by the applicant. It is estimated that the a retail center developed on the site could generate an average daily traffic count of approx. 1,600 vehicles. Per this information, it is likely the site will require a traffic impact assessment at the time of site plan submission however Highland Road (M-59) and Elizabeth Lake Roads are major thoroughfares and designed to accommodate high levels of traffic.

- G. *The apparent demand for the types of uses permitted in the requested zoning district in relation to the amount of land in the township currently zoned and available to accommodate the demand.*

**Applicant Response:** The location is appropriate for property zoned GB, given the traffic, residential units, and general density in the area. See enclosed Void Analysis demonstrating commercial uses that are not in the area currently.

**CWA Comment:** The void analysis provided by the tenant does outline several retailers and restaurants that would meet demand in the area. Daily traffic along Highland Road (M-59) would provide access to both residents and visitors of the Township.

- H. *The boundaries of the requested rezoning district are reasonable in relationship to its surroundings, and construction on the site will be able to meet the dimensional regulations for the zoning district listed in the Schedule of Regulations.*

**Applicant Response:** The subject site is in an intense commercial corridor on Highland Road (M-59) that included neighboring uses consistent with the requested rezoning. The property is master planned for commercial use. The property is of adequate size to meet the Township's Schedule of Regulations.

**CWA Comment:** The lot is 8.6 gross acres. Net acreage will be used to assess developable areas however the site does not appear to contain any major natural features that would impede development.

- I. *The requested zoning district is considered to be more appropriate from the township's perspective than another zoning district.*

**Applicant Response:** The uses allowed in the GB district are appropriate for the site, as indicated in the Master Plan.

**CWA Comment:** Considering development and economic trends for both zones, GB is the more appropriate district for the site.

- J. *If the request is for a specific use, is rezoning the land more appropriate than amending the list of permitted or special land uses in the current zoning district to allow the use?*

**Applicant Response:** Rezoning would be the most appropriate way to allow for the proposed use.

**CWA Comment:** Rezoning is more appropriate than amending the uses in AG.

*K. The requested rezoning will not create an isolated and unplanned spot zone.*

**Applicant Response:** The site is adjacent to dense multi-family, across Elizabeth Lake Road from high intensity commercial, and is buffered to the south by wetlands. The property across Highland Road is likewise master planned for commercial.

**CWA Comment:** No spot zoning is proposed. The surrounding and nearby areas are zoned dense residential and commercial. Adjacent future land use designations from the Master Plan are Commercial Corridor.

*L. The request has not previously been submitted within the past one (1) year, unless conditions have changed or new information has been provided.*

**Applicant Response:** This request (to rezone the property to GB) is a new application.

**CWA Comment:** This request is a new application.

*M. An offer of conditions submitted as part of a conditional rezoning request shall bear a reasonable and rational relationship to the property for which rezoning is requested.*

**Applicant Response:** Not Applicable

**CWA Comment:** No conditions were offered in the application.

*N. Other factors deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission and Township Board.*

**Applicant Response:** Not Applicable

**CWA Comment:** The Planning Commission and Township Board may also consider other factors which may be relevant to the rezoning request.

**Items to be addressed:** None

**RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed rezoning is compatible with both the existing and future land uses/zoning, consistent with the Master Plan, and is supported by the current and anticipated demand for uses along Highland Road (M-59). Pending any items needing clarification or resolution by the Township Engineer and Public Service departments, we recommend the proposed rezoning.

Respectfully,



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**CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.**  
Matteo Passalacqua  
Community Planner