NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD AGENDA

JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING COMMISSION

October 24, 2017 - 7:00 PM
8350 Main Street, 2nd Floor

CALL TO ORDER
INVOCATION / PLEDGE
ROLL CALL
ADOPT BALANCE OF AGENDA
CALL TO THE PUBLIC
BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING COMMISSION

1. Presentation: McKenna Associates– RFP Process for the North Village
2. Consider Authorizing McKenna Associates to issue RFP for the North Village
3. Presentation: McKenna Associates – Downtown Strategic Plan
4. Consider the Downtown Strategic Action Plan as a development strategy for Whitmore Lake
5. Presentation: McKenna Associates – Zoning Administration Process
6. Discussion of Zoning issues for Planning Commission consideration

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA ITEMS

1. Interim Code Enforcement Officer

2nd CALL TO THE PUBLIC
BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
ADJOURNMENT

DOWNTOWN WHITMORE LAKE
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND NORTH VILLAGE PLAN
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: HOW WILL DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN AND IN NORTH VILLAGE AFFECT THE TAX PAYER? WILL MY TAXES GO UP?

No. Nothing is proposed in the North Village Plan or the Downtown Strategic Plan that would require a tax increase for Northfield Township residents. Both plans consider using new private investments to increase the tax revenues and create new amenities in the Township.

Q2: WHO WILL PAY FOR DOWNTOWN AND NORTH VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS?

Private sector developers will pay for new development and a portion of the public amenities. In the DDA area, taxes generated from new development that would otherwise go outside of the Township can be captured to pay for new infrastructure through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Additionally, the plans will allow the Township to apply for Federal and State grant programs to establish and supplement public uses.

Q3: WILL THERE BE A PARK IN NORTH VILLAGE?

Yes, more than half of the land will be dedicated to public park uses. The parts of the site planned for housing and business uses are on the edges to buffer the park from US-23, provide accessible parking areas, and blend with the adjacent sites and Downtown.

Q4: DIDN'T RESIDENTS SAY THEY WANT A PARK ONLY AT NORTH VILLAGE?

This is partly true and partly untrue. Most residents did want a park but were also interested in seeing complementary uses as well. Looking strictly at the survey numbers, it is true that of the 480 people that took the survey, 303 or about 63% of respondents wanted the site to be a park only. However, when these 303 people were asked about desirable uses in addition to recreation, only 106 were clear in wanting no businesses on the site at all, while 197 were supportive of some type of businesses. Combining these responses with those who had said they wanted businesses only on the site, about 22% of people clearly do not want any other uses on the site besides a park, while 67% are supportive of some types of business or other uses in addition to a park.

Q5: WHAT FEATURES WILL THE PARK HAVE?

The many public features planned for North Village include a town green, a pavilion, a central lawn, community garden, a band shell, a fishing dock, a beach, a marina, and public parking.

Q6: HOW WILL WE ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES AND HOW WILL CURRENT BUSINNESES BE AFFECTED?

The downtown plan recommends building on the identity of downtown Whitmore Lake as a lakefront community with specialty retail, entertainment options, dining, and recreational services. The plan recommends giving downtown a "facelift" with new signs, benches, banners, lights and landscaping to produce a welcoming atmosphere and position downtown as a destination. The plan also recommends reviewing procedural and zoning requirements in downtown to remove barriers to

starting businesses that implement the goals of the downtown plan. These strategies are intended to benefit current business first but also help encourage entrepreneurship.

Q7: DOES THE PLAN INCLUDE BOTH DOWNTOWN AND NORTH VILLAGE?

The Township completed two plans in 2017. The "Downtown Strategic Action and Design Framework" and the "North Village Master Plan." These two plans go hand-in-hand to inform future development in the downtown area, including the North Village site.

Q8: HOW DOES THE PLAN ADDRESS TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS?

The plans consider traffic circulation, bicycle circulation, and pedestrian safety. New pedestrian crossings locations, parking access locations, drives and alleys are planned for the North Village site and public parking areas to make sure that vehicles coming to and from downtown can access US-23 from all of the interchanges. Traffic impacts resulting from any new developments will continue to be evaluated when proposals are received.

Q9: WILL THERE BE ADEQUATE PARKING FOR DOWNTOWN AND THE LAKEFRONT?

Yes, the plans create new and improved public parking areas to access downtown, the North Village Park, and the lake.

Q10: WILL ZONING CHANGES BE NEEDED?

Yes and No. The development considered in the plans is currently permitted based on the existing Zoning Ordinance. The plans do recommend updating the Zoning Ordinance to encourage businesses and consistency with the design recommendations.

Q11: WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE WILL BE NEEDED?

The Township is exploring expansion of sewer capacity. Expansion would be paid for by new hook-ups and benefit the entire Township. Additionally, road improvements, public parking, and park amenities are also new infrastructure improvements needed.

Q12: HOW QUICKLY WILL THE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

The Township is considering issuing and RFP for the development of the North Village site. If a qualifying proposal is received, development could be implemented within a 1 to 2-year time frame. The plan for downtown is a long-range vision with a 20+ year horizon. The Township may update the vision for downtown at any time.

Q13: WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR MAINTENANCE?

The need to plan for ongoing maintenance of public features in downtown and North Village is one of the reasons why new development is recommended. Maintenance agreements can be made a part of a development agreement with prospective developers. Additionally, the DDA will capture tax revenues that would otherwise go outside of the Township, which can be used to pay for maintenance. The plans do not recommend a special assessment or a new tax to pay for the park, its maintenance, or amenities.

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
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NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A QUALIFIED DEVELOPMENT PARTNER FOR THE NORTH VILLAGE SITE AND PARK PROPERTY IN DOWNTOWN WHITMORE LAKE

Invitation

Northfield Township, Michigan (Township) issues this "REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A QUALIFIED DEVELOPMENT PARTNER FOR THE NORTH VILLAGE SITE AND PARK PROPERTY IN DOWNTOWN WHITMORE LAKE" packet for the Township-owned North Village redevelopment site and ark property. The North Village site consists of approximately 23 acres, approximately 10,000 square feet of which is planned for a public space/town green fronting the lake and Main Street. The site is located next to Post Office in Whitmore Lake and is located within the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority and the Downtown Planning Group. This project and corresponding development is intended to complement the surrounding neighborhoods, historic architecture, and traditional character of Downtown Whitmore Lake while also addressing public amenities, lake views and natural features, desirable connections to Downtown, parking, site access, and community vitality.

The Township has planned the uses at North Village site to be complementary to Downtown Whitmore Lake and envisions mixed-use buildings with restaurants, retail, and second floor residential along Main Street. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in achieving the goals outlined later in this document. Successful development proposals will reflect an innovative approach to the development of the site and structure(s), will be submitted by a qualified developer with qualified team members and will adequately implement the goals outlined in this application packet.

Attachments

The following documents are available to provide planning guidance to respondents to this RFP:

- North Village Master Plan, March 2017.
- Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework, September 2017.
- 2012 Master Plan, Northfield Township, Michigan. Revised July 2014.
- Northfield Township Zoning Ordinance.
  - https://library.municode.com/mi/northfield_township,_(washtenaw_co.)/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH36ZO

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Introduction

Northfield Township is seeking development proposals from qualified developers to purchase Township-owned property and commit to develop all or a portion of a 23-acre mixed-use North Village. It is expected that the response to this application packet will serve as the initial project business plan and as a basis for the Township's negotiations with one or more development teams. As such, it is in the best interests of all parties to be as clear as possible in all areas for which information has been requested.

It is the Township's objective to have a high-quality, cost-effective project delivered as soon as possible with as little risk as possible borne by the Township. While this seems obvious, the Project Team is wholly committed to the success of this project and recognizes that there may be areas in which both parties are asked to participate.

As owner of the land, the Township anticipates assisting in the provision of infrastructure, either through direct investment or by assisting the qualified developer in obtaining grants or loans from other public entities. The Township also anticipates having to subsidize the project in the form of a land write-down.

Selected developer(s) will be identified at the culmination of a selection process that evaluates the:

- Qualifications of the development team, including experience developing projects similar to that which they're proposing for the North Village.
- Purchase price offered for the land.
- Conceptual proposals for development of the site.
- Financial ability to implement the plan.

Selected developer(s) will also be financially nimble and capable of arranging the necessary financing for purchase of the land from the Township (if feasible).

Notices / Disclaimers

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all information included in this packet describing requirements for development proposal, or which will be provided to the applicant, the Township makes no representation, warranty or guarantee as to the completeness and/or accuracy of information provided to the extent prepared by any third party. All such information provided by the Township is made available for the sole convenience of the applicants. Each respondent shall rely upon its own inspection, investigation and analysis of the site and resources available, and/or deemed necessary or prudent in the evaluation of the site and corresponding proposal. Additionally, respondents are required to comply with all of the notices provided below:

- Potential submitters are required to submit an executed copy of the Letter of Interest provided in Attachment A to this document as initial evidence of seriousness.

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- This application packet is not a legally binding document, but merely an invitation to the development community to submit proposals based on the guidelines and terms provided in this packet. The Township shall not be under any obligation to any party unless and until the Township and a selected developer enter into a legally binding Development Agreement, as has been approved and executed by the Township pursuant to all required approvals by the Township Board of Trustees and Downtown Development Authority.
- In no event shall the Township be responsible for any cost, expenses, and/or fees or otherwise liable for any costs incurred by or on behalf of any respondent in connection with this application packet, a respondent's investigation of the project or the negotiation of a Development Agreement, regardless whether such Development Agreement is executed. The respondent developer shall be solely and wholly responsible for all such costs, expenses and fees.
- The Township reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals for any or no reason and to not engage any developer or to not sell property. If the Township elects to proceed, it shall select the proposal that meets the requirements and goals of the Township, as solely determined by the Township. The selection and/or rejection of proposals shall be based on all factors, and accordingly, land purchase and costs alone shall not determine the Township's interest in a proposal.
- The Township reserves the right to waive requirements, amend, modify or withdraw its interest in a public-private partnership at any time prior to the execution of a Development Agreement with a selected developer.
- The Township will make every effort, but provides no guarantee, to provide notice of amendments or modifications to this application packet to all parties who submit the required letter of interest. In the event that such notice is not provided, or not received, no additional rights shall be granted to any respondent regarding the project.
- The Township may request additional information from any and/or all of the interested developers and each Developer agrees to submit such requested items in a timely fashion. The Township may seek additional information, and engage in negotiations, with one or more developers.
- If a proposal or part of a proposal contains a misrepresentation of any information, whether by omission or directly, either willful or inadvertent, it may be cause for immediate elimination of the Developer from further consideration.
- No fees or commission will be paid by the Township to parties acting as agents, brokers, consultant or contractors as part of this transaction.
- All proposals and supplemental materials shall become the property of the Township after submission. The Township shall retain the right to share concepts and terms submitted by one developer with other developers.
- After submission, no proposals or supplemental materials will be returned.
- No news or press releases regarding this project and the selection of a development proposal by the Township shall be released to the general public by the applicant without the express written consent of the Township prior to the execution of a development

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agreement by all parties. Any violation of this guideline may be considered grounds for termination.

- The Township encourages the utilization of qualified local businesses and workers where feasible.

Background

Northfield Township is located in northeastern Washtenaw County, approximately one (1) mile north of the City of Ann Arbor, 47 miles west of Detroit, and covers about 36 square miles in area. Northfield Township is bordered by Salem Township to the east, Ann Arbor Township to the south, Webster Township to the west, and Green Oak Township in Livingston County to the north.

Washtenaw County is the sixth largest county in the State of Michigan. It is located in the west area of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region. SEMCOG is the regional planning agency that conducts planning studies and maintains a comprehensive database of information about the following seven counties: St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, Wayne, and Monroe.

A number of existing and anticipated circumstances will affect Northfield Township's future. The Township is home to downtown, a beautiful all seasons lake, farms, woodlands and exceptional school district. These factors, together with the attraction of the Ann Arbor area as a place to live and work will provide development opportunities and pressure on Northfield Township for many years to come.

The Township has responded to these challenges in a variety of ways including a continued commitment to community planning goals and policies geared to preserving important natural features, while planning for growth in those areas most suitable for development.

Project History

In the summer of 2015, the Northfield Township Board of Trustees identified the need to create a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of Downtown Whitmore Lake. To lead the effort, the Board authorized the creation of the Downtown Planning Group (DPG) on October 13, 2015 by a unanimous vote. Community volunteers representing many different interests and skills were recruited to serve on the DPG. They spent several months exploring what makes for thriving downtowns and researching the unique opportunities presented by Whitmore Lake's proximity to the water.

In September of 2016, Northfield Township realized a dream of the community for many years; a public park and access to Whitmore Lake. The Northfield Township Board of Trustees purchased 23

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acres formerly referred to as the "Van Curler Property" - the vacant land next to the Whitmore Lake Post Office now known as North Village.

Since the 2015 formation of the DPG and the 2016 acquisition of the North Village Site, the Township has been actively planning for the revitalization of Downtown Whitmore Lake:

- **October 2016 - March 2017 (North Village Master Plan):** The North Village Plan proposes a central lawn enhanced by a new community garden, band shell, and non-motorized paths. Residential owner-occupied Townhomes and loft buildings are proposed along the edges of the site and next to US 23. On the west side of Main Street, a community green would be surrounded by a modest number of residential units atop small retail shops or eateries. Across Main Street, a lakefront public access area with a small marina, fishing pier, and sand beach play area is envisioned.
- **April 2017 – present (Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework)** The Plan outlines a community vision, strategies, and a design framework for Downtown Whitmore Lake.

The DPG hopes to bring together the community's ideas and take advantage of the exciting opportunity for private partnership to revitalize Whitmore Lake's downtown starting with the redevelopment of the North Village site.

Development Site

Site Overview

The North Village site is approximately 23 acres in area and is bounded by Main Street and Whitmore Lake on its east, Beaker Road to the South, and US 23 to the north and west. The site is prominently located in Downtown Whitmore Lake and is within walking distance to a number of restaurants, retail, recreation amenities, and residential areas. The site is also within close proximity to one of the County's largest employers, the University of Michigan (11.5 miles).

The zoning for the North Village site (north village subdistrict) supports a unified vision for transforming the historic commercial core of the Whitmore Lake community focused on mixed-use development, increased land use intensity, and improved public amenities oriented as much to the needs of the pedestrian as to those of the automobile. The zoning provides prescriptive physical development regulations, with the intent to develop a master-planned, walkable environment that creates new opportunities for investment while protecting quality attributes of the existing area.

Design Objectives

Throughout the North Village Master Plan process, several required and encouraged design objectives where identified by community members. The Township will accept proposals that meet all the provided design objects or some (based on a phased approach). All proposals should at minimum address which of the design objectives are fully and/or partially addressed in the proposed development plan.

Required Design Objectives:

- A small public space / town green (10,000 s. f. or less) fronting the lake and Main Street and framed by retail or mixed use buildings.
- A two to three story mixed use building (foot print of 10,000 to 15, 000 s. f.) fronting on Main Street with site access to a public parking area on the southeast access point north of the Barker Road intersection.
- A public stage / amphitheater on the north end of the site facing US 23 and sited to complement views of the lake.
- A central passive recreation area / field, corresponding to the existing glen with a pavilion structure and restroom.
- The circulation system should be restricted to the perimeters of the central open space and provide site access to Barker Road on the south, Main Street in two locations on the east and Main Street on the north through the existing US 23 exit ramp.
- The four established woodland clusters shall be substantially preserved in the locating of site features and amenities.
- A multimodal path on the western edge of the site tying into a circulation system that accesses the town green and central passive recreation area.
- The multimodal path should connect to the planned path on the south side of Barker, the athletic fields, and potentially follow the rail right-of-way under US 23.
- The passive recreation area should be usable for special event parking.

Encouraged Design Objectives:

- Housing, of up to four stories, is encouraged to fill gaps between woodlands on the west edge of the site adjacent to US 23 to help create a sound barrier.
- If additional housing is incorporated it should be of a character compatible with nearby single family homes with front porches, pitched roofs, and limited to 2.5 stories in height.
- A new sand beach stabilized by design with dock, fishing, and swimming area to accommodate public access to the waterfront.
- A community garden and farmers market event spaces should be integrated into the site design.

Site Vision

Sample renderings and a site plan has been developed (Figures 1, 2 and 3) to provide a general vision for the type of development that is desired by the Township and community members. These images are for illustrative purposes only. The Township is open to alternative approaches.

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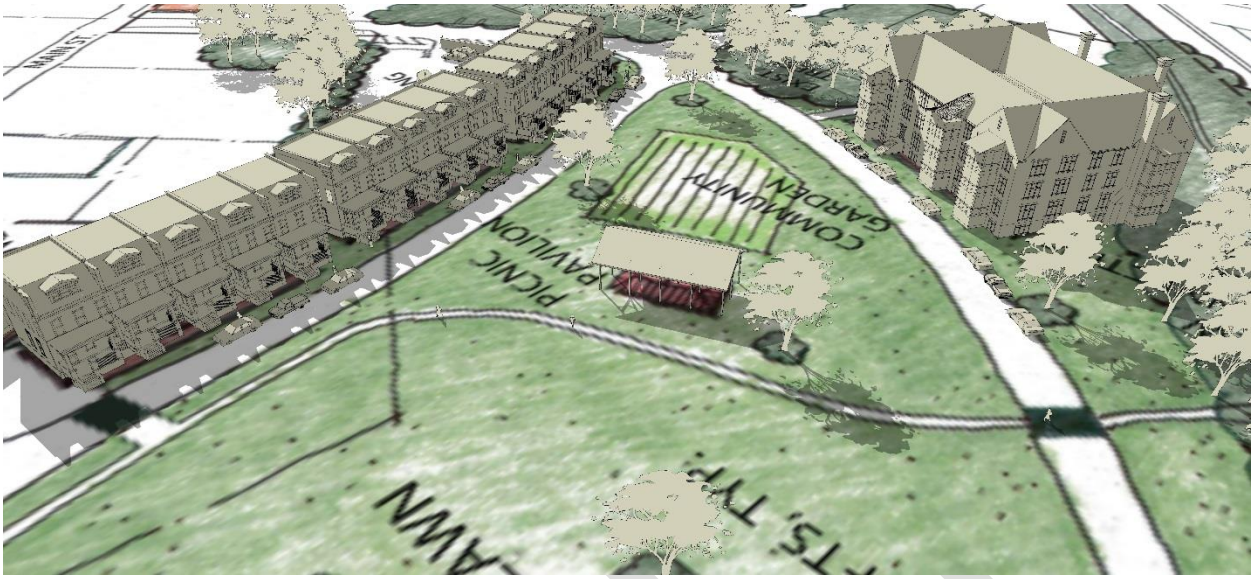

Figure 1: Central Lawn Rendering with Pavilion

Figure 2: Town Green Rendering with Lake View

Figure 3: Park with Mixed Use - Moderate Development Intensity

Phasing

In an effort to encourage development of the property and expedite the construction, the Township has developed a Phasing Plan and Map with associated cost estimates (described in detail in the attached North Village Master Plan). The Township will accept proposals that address multiple phases, a select phase, part of a phase, or specific buildings. For each phase of the proposed development, the developer must indicate which of the following features or alternative features are addressed:

- **Phase I.** Included in Phase I are all the public features to create North Village, including the recreation amenities, roadways and associated utilities for all three phases:
    - Sewer / Utilities
    - Roads / Circulation / Street Parking
    - Parking Areas with Landscaping
    - Central Lawn - Grading / Seeding / Planting
    - Central Lawn - Pathways
    - Central Lawn - Market Roadway
    - Central Lawn - Market Roadway Bollards
    - Central Lawn - Bandshell
    - Central Lawn - Pavilion / Restrooms
    - Green - Grading / Seeding / Planting
    - Green - Sidewalks
    - Green - Flagpole / Sculpture
    - Marina - Docks
    - Marina - Beach / Sand System
    - Mixed Use Buildings - Main Street
    - Mixed Use Buildings - On Green
    - Connecting Trail System

- **Phase II.** The first of the residential units and associated parking are included in Phase II.
    - Rowhouses
    - Loft Buildings
    - Parking Areas with Landscaping
    - Parking Areas with Preserved Trees
- **Phase III.** The remainder of the residential units and associated parking are included in Phase III.
    - Rowhouses
    - Loft Buildings
    - Parking Areas with Landscaping

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Figure 4: Phasing Plan: Park with Mixed Use – Moderate Development Intensity

Selection Process and Criteria

Submission Requirements

Interested developers are encouraged to submit a proposal in accord with this application packet. Proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelope or other package that is clearly labeled "North Village Development Proposal." Those firms that fail to submit all required information may be eliminated from consideration at the Township's sole discretion. Proposals should include, at a minimum:

1. **Cover Letter.** Summarizing the proposal and signed by an authorized representative of the developer.
2. **Development Team**. Developer should provide a list of organizations and individuals that make up the development team.
    a. Master Developer – Project Manager
        i. Resumes of project manager, senior executives and other key personnel.
        ii. Major projects currently under development.
        iii. Pending projects awaiting approval.
        iv. Description of any in-house areas of expertise.
        v. Minimum of three references from staff or elected officials in communities or public school districts with completed or ongoing projects.
        vi. How developer will organize / manage team to complete project.
    b. Proposed Design Firm(s)
        i. Resumes of key personnel.
        ii. Examples of work in writing and graphically.
        iii. Examples of work in context of established urban or suburban commercial districts (i.e. not greenfield development).
    c. Proposed Legal Team Members
        i. Prospective role in project.
        ii. Resumes of key personnel.
        iii. Examples of involvement in similar projects, including role in project.
3. **Developer's Record of Similar Project Accomplishments.** List and description of similar buildings and projects. For each project, provide:
    a. Age of project.
    b. Location.
    c. Developer's role.
    d. Project cost.
    e. Contact information for reference.
    f. Project architect, engineer and current owner / lessee.
4. **Developer Proposed Concept Plan.** Describe program proposed for development of North Village. The description should, at a minimum, include the following:
    a. Land use program:
        i. Proposed public uses.
        ii. Proposed ownership and maintenance agreement for public uses.

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iii. Proposed development mode (Planned Unit Development, Site Condominium, Land Split).
iv. Proposed phasing plan.

b. Conceptual site plan:
   i. Site planning program, including under-ground infrastructure elements.
   ii. Landscaping program.
   iii. Right-of-way program.
   iv. Conceptual architectural elevations that demonstrate understanding of project design goals.
   v. Any proposed phasing plans or approaches.

c. Cost of project:
   i. Purchase price for the property for consideration by the Township.
   ii. Copies of economic modeling such as financial projections, pro-forma income / expense schedule. Include detailed assumptions utilized in creating pro-forma.
   iii. List all public financial resources and/or programs that are assumed to be critical to successfully financing this project.
   iv. Estimated hard and soft costs.

d. Proposed project investment:
   i. Estimated taxable value
      1. Include projected schedule of investment by year.
      2. Include guaranteed amount and schedule of taxable value, if any.
   ii. Estimated jobs created, if any.

e. List of additional financial resources anticipated for use.

f. Estimated schedule:
   i. Anticipated final site plan / engineering development.
   ii. Anticipated submission and approval of necessary permits.
   iii. Anticipated schedule of construction.

g. Developer should list and describe the commitments it is willing to make to initiate the project, including:
   i. The amount, nature and status of short- and long-term financing contemplated.
   ii. Institutions expected to provide financing and statement by those institutions expressing such interest.
   iii. The anticipated source of equity funding anticipated for the project.
   iv. Detailed source and use plan, including contingency budget.

5. Other Required Information.

a. Development proposals shall be accompanied by all reports, investigations, correspondence and/or written documentation prepared by the applicant or third parties utilized in the preparation and submission of proposal. This information may be used by the Township in any manner.

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b. If the proposal does not comply with any measurable requirement of this application packet, the proposal shall clearly highlight the deviation and include the rationale.

Evaluation Criteria

All responses to this request in proper form evaluated by the Project Team. Evaluation of proposals will consider the following criteria, among others:

- Demonstrated development experience by the applicant in completing mixed-use projects and/or projects of a similar nature to that which is proposed.
- Compatibility and appropriateness of the proposed project scope and design in relation to the Township's stated goals.
- Experience in developing projects with creative and innovative approaches.
- Experience of principals and team members. Changes in key personnel prior to the execution of the Development Agreement may result in termination of any negotiations with a prospective developer and the Township.
- Evidence of financial capability and ability to finance project. Examples of similar project financing experience strongly encouraged.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver high quality projects on an established timeline.
- Demonstrated ability to enter into a public / private partnership.
- References – include up to three public agency references from communities or school districts where developer has successfully completed projects.
- Other criteria deemed important by the Township as important to evaluation of proposals.

Selection Process

The Township may appoint a selection committee to carefully review all proposals and will schedule various sessions (i.e. interviews, project visits, etc.) with qualified developer candidates. This selection committee may include representatives of the Township Board of Trustees, Administration and/or DDA. The selection committee may recommend one or more developers to the Township DDA, who will make final selection

Proposed Schedule

Northfield Township and its partners will review and evaluate all responses to this RFP. Staff may seek additional information upon receipt of a development proposal.

The schedule for solicitation, receipt, and evaluation of proposals is anticipated to be as follows:

- Pre-proposal meeting: TO BE DETERMINED
- Deadline for written questions, requests for additional information: TO BE DETERMINED

- Proposals Submitted: TO BE DETERMINED
- Evaluation Period: TO BE DETERMINED
- Selection of Development Proposals: TO BE DETERMINED

Additional Information

For proposal submission:

- Submitters shall submit 10 copies of the complete proposal package in addition to an electronic version of the proposal package (to the extent feasible) on CD.

  Submit to:

  Steve Aynes
  Township Manager
  Northfield Township
  8350 Main St.
  Whitmore Lake, Michigan 48189

Anonymous Feedback

The Township will accept anonymous feedback regarding the Request for Proposal.

Submit to:

Steve Aynes
Township Manager
Northfield Township
8350 Main St.
Whitmore Lake, Michigan 48189

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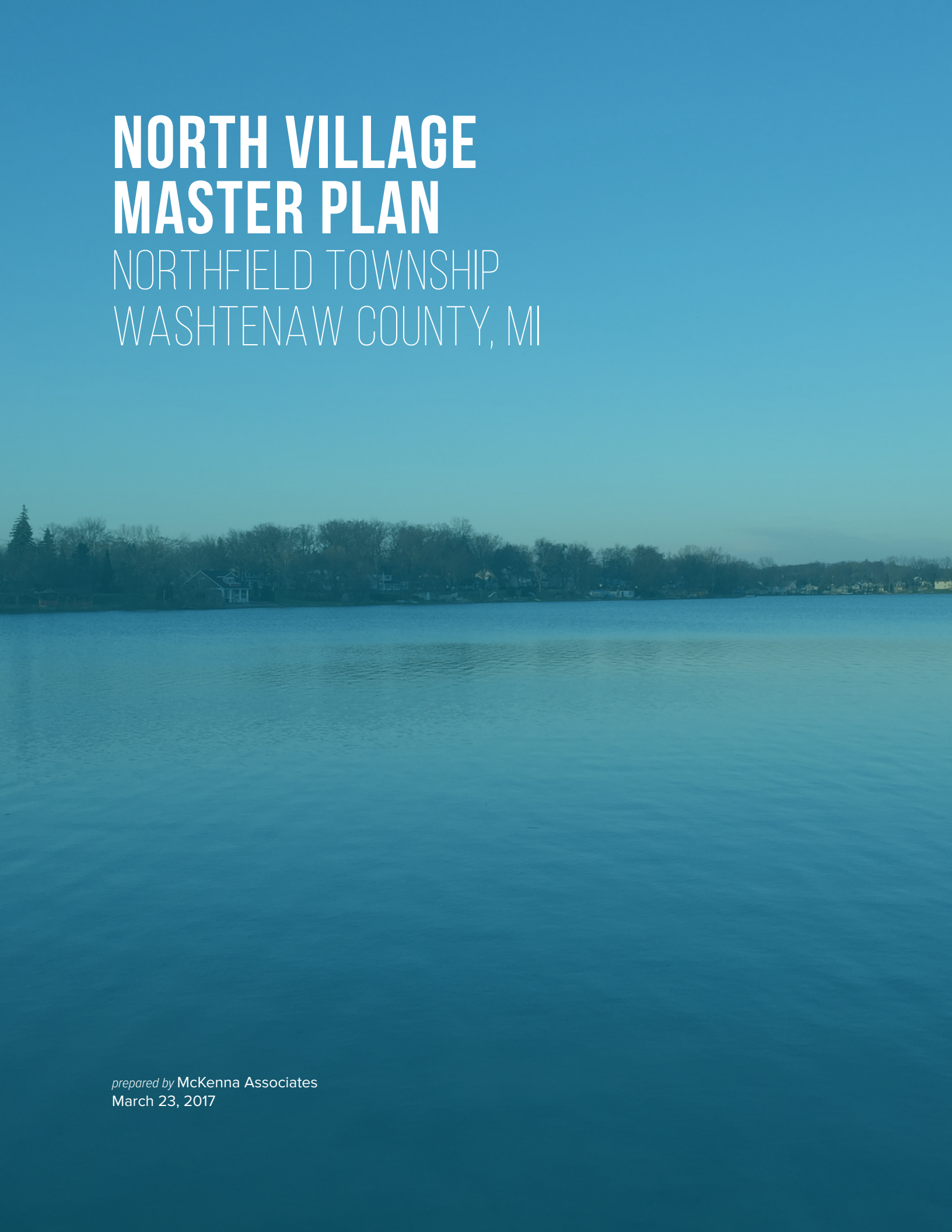
NORTH VILLAGE MASTER PLAN

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI



prepared by McKenna Associates
March 23, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Township Board of Trustees

Marlene Chockley, Supervisor
Kathy Manley, Clerk
Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer
Tawn Beliger
Janet Chick
Wayne Dockett
Jacki Otto

Downtown Planning Group

Barb Griffith, Chair, DDA Chair
Jeni Olney,
Suzanne Bellore
Tom DeKeyser
Denise Kabisch
Linda Lupi
Tamren Menzel
Tim Saville
Cyndi Secrist
Jack Secrist
Doug Wilbur

Consultants – McKenna Associates

Paul Lippens, AICP — Project Manager
Patrick Sloan, AICP — Township Planner
John Jackson, AICP — President
Steve Hannon — Project Planner
Michael Campbell, AIA — Urban Design
Carrie Leitner — Graphic Design

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2015, the Northfield Township Board of Trustees identified the need to create a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of Downtown Whitmore Lake. To lead the effort, the Board authorized the creation of the Downtown Planning Group on October 13, 2015 by unanimous vote. Barb Griffith was named chair person for the Downtown Planning Group. The Downtown Planning Group (DPG) members are all community volunteers. The DPG hopes to bring together ideas and help give Whitmore Lake's downtown a much needed boost.

In September of 2016, Northfield Township realized a dream of the community for many years; a public park and access to Whitmore Lake. The Northfield Township Board of Trustees purchased 23 acres formerly referred to as the "Van Curler Property" - the vacant land next to the Whitmore Lake Post Office. The Board of Trustees authorized the DPG to create a Master Plan for the North Village area. This Plan will be used as an informational tool to seek potential developers for the site. The DPG will work with the Township Board to incorporate this vision into a Strategic Plan for Downtown Whitmore Lake.

Figure 1: Site Location

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The North Village development shall complement the surrounding neighborhoods, historic architecture, and traditional character of Downtown Whitmore Lake. Development shall be phased to address public amenities, lake views and natural features, desirable connections to Downtown, parking, site access, and community vitality.

Uses shall be complementary to Downtown Whitmore Lake and mixed use buildings with restaurants, retail, and second floor residential along Main Street are desirable. The site shall be developed to minimize the fiscal impact on taxpayers and new private development, include housing and mixed use buildings, shall be considered if the development will subsidize public amenities.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Required Design Objectives:

- A small public space / town green (10,000 s. f. or less) fronting the lake and Main Street and framed by retail or mixed use buildings.
- A two to three story mixed use building (foot print of 10,000 to 15, 000 s. f.) fronting on Main Street with site access to a public parking area on the southeast access point north of the Barker Road intersection.
- A public stage / amphitheater on the north end of the site facing US 23 and sited to complement views of the lake.
- A central passive recreation area / field, corresponding to the existing glen with a pavilion structure and restroom.
- The circulation system should be restricted to the perimeters of the central open space and provide site access to Barker Road on the south, Main Street in two locations on the east and Main Street on the north through the existing US 23 exit ramp.
- The four established woodland clusters shall be substantially preserved in the locating of site features and amenities.
- A multimodal path on the western edge of the site tying into a circulation system that accesses the town green and central passive recreation area.
- The multimodal path should connect to the planned path on the south side of Barker, the athletic fields, and potentially follow the rail right-of-way under US 23.
- The passive recreation area should be usable for special event parking.

Encouraged Design Objectives:

- Housing, of up to four stories, is encouraged to fill gaps between woodlands on the west edge of the site adjacent to US 23 to help create a sound barrier.
- If additional housing is incorporated it should be of a character compatible with nearby single family homes with front porches, pitched roofs, and limited to 2.5 stories in height.
- A new sand beach stabilized by design with dock, fishing, and swimming area to accommodate public access to the waterfront.
- A community garden and farmers market event spaces should be integrated into the site design.

DESIGN WORKSHOP

At the workshop, residents discussed the relationship of the North Village site to the surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, and Downtown.

Northfield Township held a public visioning workshop on Tuesday January 17, 2017 to gather ideas for the Community Park site. The workshop was attended by approximately 50 people including residents as well as elected and appointed officials. The Downtown Planning Group provided an overview and background information about the project, and described each of the three activities taking place at the workshop. One activity asked people to describe how they wanted to connect the site to the rest of the Township and what opportunities there are to tie the site into the entire community. Another activity asked for ideas on what uses people wanted to see on the site including recreation, housing, and retail. People were also asked to choose among three different intensities of development on the site, with the high intensity options having several different uses and the low intensity uses having fewer total uses. The final activity asked people for site design ideas, with each group providing ideas for a different level of development intensity. Many people went into the activities thinking that they wanted only recreational elements; however, opinions tended to evolve as people discussed issues, opportunities and site configuration. Opportunities for non-recreational features were especially popular located at site edges.

Figure 2: Connectivity Diagrams

1 ACTIVITY #1: CONNECTIVITY WITH OTHER COMMUNITY SITES

This activity focused on how the North Village site relates to other areas in the Township and what people see as opportunities for connecting this site to the entire community. The site is next to the downtown area of Whitmore Lake, and many participants want the park to help bring in more people and more activity downtown. The site also includes some portions with waterfront on Whitmore Lake and the attendees thought this was a great opportunity to provide public access to the lake. Having several different types of activities near each other was seen as a great way to make the area a destination and draw more people to the downtown area.

The site may potentially be a focal point of activity with several major destinations nearby. To the west is Whitmore Lake Elementary School and to the south is the school district's Jennings Athletic Complex and Early Childhood Center. If the North Village site includes passive recreation and trail uses, school properties would be very desirable to connect to a trail network. There is a large site next to the freeway interchange on the opposite side of US 23 that is prime for redevelopment, as is another site to the north on 8 Mile Road in Green Oak Township. Both of these sites could be connected to the North Village site in some capacity. People also described the importance of connecting to the existing commercial and residential development along Main Street to the south and East Shore Drive and 7 Mile Road to the east of the North Village site.

ACTIVITY #2: TRADE-OFF DISCUSSION

2

This activity asked people to choose from the different potential uses for the site including recreational uses, housing, and retail. The activity presented three scenarios for the intensity of development on the site: park only, park with housing, and park with retail and housing. The participants were then asked to choose one use they wanted to see in the park only scenario, two uses they wanted to see in the park with housing scenario, and three uses they wanted to see in the park with retail and housing scenario. The exercise was intended to show the trade-off between leaving parts of the site as undeveloped park space and the revenue generating potential of developing parts of the site. Each use was also shown with its potential to generate long-term revenues or costs. Participants were asked to reach a consensus within their group on a preferred design scenario and priority uses. Based on the short amount of time available for the exercise, the conversations tended to focus more on priority uses for the site and the trade-off discussions did not result in consensus recommendations. People recognized that there were many potential ways to arrange uses on the site.

The discussion among participants within the first group seemingly led to a preferred scenario of a park with retail only and a band shell as the most important use. The second group voted on their preferences which included: a picnic pavilion with restrooms, passive recreation, and restrooms in the park only scenario; beach access, canoe launch, and playground in the park with housing scenario; and restaurants, a town green, band shell, farmers market, and fishing pier in the park with retail and housing scenario. The third group also voted on preferences which included: a picnic pavilion in the park only scenario; beach access with swimming area, canoe launch, mixed use condos and townhouses, and a public dock or marina in the park with housing scenario; and a band shell, fishing pier, town green, and farmers market in the park with retail and housing scenario.

3

ACTIVITY #3: SITE DESIGN AND CHARACTER

This activity asked people to envision potential design options for the site, with each group producing a sketch of the site. One group sketched the park only option, one group sketched the park with housing option, and one group sketched the park with retail and housing option. The activity was structured in this way to allow for a complete sketch of one scenario in the time limits. The scenario depicted in the site sketch did not necessarily correlate with the group's preferred scenario.

The sketch of the park only scenario included several different recreational elements. The frontage on Main Street would have a dock and waterfront access on the lake side, and a community ice rink on the west side. Most of the site would be a large open space behind the buildings on Barker and Main, with only a few structures around its perimeter. A skate park would be included at the south end of the site, and a community garden at the north end. The site would also preserve most of the existing groups of trees. A common parking lot for downtown businesses is included in the southeast corner of the site.

In the sketch of the park with housing scenario, the waterfront access includes a public beach. On the west side of Main Street there is a large open space with a stage near the back facing towards the lake. Their idea is to keep the site open towards the lake and use the stage as part of a buffer from highway noise. Behind the stage is a road going through the entire site from Barker to 8 Mile, using part of the freeway ramp that may be removed with the reconfiguration of this interchange. Other internal roads provide two connections to Main Street. Housing units are located along the roads, including between the highway and the site to act as a further buffer from highway noise.

The park with retail and housing drawing showed the most amount of development on the site. There are more than 20 structures with housing units, mostly located on the southern half of the site. These structures face a network of internal roads with parking located behind the buildings. There are three main recreational components: a public waterfront access with dock, a "town green" with public picnic area, and a large open space at the center of the site with band shell facing the lake. This scenario includes four loft buildings along the freeway side, to act as both a buffer from freeway noise and as landmarks for people traveling on the highway. The scenario also preserves trees along the edge of the site to provide a landscape buffer, but the trees on the southern part of the site would be removed. On the northeast corner of the site along Main Street, a restaurant would be included as the primary retail use, which would take advantage of the picnic area in the park right next to it.

OUTREACH

TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT AND SURVEY

The Downtown Planning Group promoted the plan for North Village at the Trunk or Treat event on Sunday October 23, 2016 from 2-5 PM. This was a community Halloween celebration for the kids with activities and other entertainment including the Whitmore Lake High School band. Anybody interested in learning more was encouraged to come to our table for an overview of the project and the planning process. People were also invited to give feedback either by taking the Downtown Planning Group survey or by submitting an idea through the "Big Idea" brainstorming activity.

Survey

There were a total of 92 responses to the survey from attendees to the event. About 61% of the people surveyed said this property should be used for a community park or recreational purposes only, 28% said it should be used for a combination of recreation, retail and/or housing, and 11% of respondents wrote another response along these lines. Nobody preferred retail purposes only or housing only for the use of this property.

For the recreational features that people would like to see (people could choose their top 3), the top choices were sandy beach/swim area (58%), children's play area with playground equipment (55%), pavilion/picnic area (54%), and pathways and trails (44%). A band shell (34%), fishing pier (30%), and canoe/kayak launch (24%) also received several votes. For potential business uses on this site, a bakery/deli (42%), restaurant/bar (35%), food market (31%), and a brewery (30%) were the most preferred. Several people in the comments to this question reiterated that they did not want any business uses on this site.

Big Idea Board

The big idea board gave people an opportunity to brainstorm and write down any idea they had to use the site. Some people also wrote smiley faces to support ideas already on the board. The ideas are listed on the following page.

- Splash pad (3 support)
- Just some tables
- Good, gentle lighting
- 24-hour video surveillance
- Community events (3 support)
- Connect community with paths (1 support)
- Music
- Gym
- Park
- Swim at your own risk (child/toddler proof gate to beach)
- Playground by Great Lakes Recreation Company
- Band shell, open mic nights (1 support)
- Picnic pavilion for rent (1 support)
- Food trucks
- Stand up paddle boards
- Public beach
- Farmer's market area
- Walking trails with restroom and drinking fountain

BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

The Downtown Planning Group conducted interviews with six business owners in the downtown area and two from other communities in the surrounding metro area. The interviews were conducted to get local entrepreneur input on the assets, opportunities, and deficiencies for the future development of downtown Whitmore Lake.

Business owners from Whitmore Lake generally said that it is a great community with great people, but the downtown has a lot of potential that has yet to be realized. More commercial or service activity is needed, and there needs to be a draw to get people downtown. Suggestions for potential businesses downtown include a credit union, hardware store, restaurant on the lake, and other small retail shops. Business owners from outside the Whitmore Lake area said restaurants, coffeehouses, a community theatre or similar use, and an active/outdoor sports retail store would do well there. The Township should work to incubate new businesses in the downtown area.

Whitmore Lake business owners said there is generally not an overabundance of one business type besides pizza places. Most were not interested in opening a branch of their business in another community, but all would like to increase business at their current location by drawing more people downtown and expanding their offerings. The business owners from other communities were not interested in opening a new branch in Whitmore Lake, but this was mostly based on their own business models.

People in Whitmore Lake have several different ideas on what would make it more attractive. Some people mentioned the need to improve the business climate, saying that property taxes are too high and there are too many hurdles in the regulatory process. For people who thought housing would be a good addition, the most common suggestions were medium-to-high income subdivisions and homes throughout the Township, as well as condos with a view of the lake for downtown housing. One of the outside business owners stated that a positive business ecosystem, where businesses and public officials support each other, was crucial to the success of their business.

Park and recreational amenities that people want to see include a family picnic area, amphitheater or band shell, fishing pier, place to swim, outdoor grills, and many other ideas. A common parking lot for the entire downtown area was also cited as a need. People from outside the community described the importance of having unique events to bring people and families to the community, and said the lake is a major asset that the community can better leverage with the park.

For advertising, one person stated how social media has been beneficial for them. Another suggested that advertising near the freeway exits would be helpful.

Overall, there are a lot of strengths for Whitmore Lake to build upon. The lake being next to downtown is a tremendous asset that is currently underused. Residents support the existing events that occur downtown. Marketing ideas included doing a Groupon-style deal for downtown businesses and similar campaigns, and focus the marketing efforts on trying to attract more businesses to the area as a first step before marketing to attract more customers.

TOWNSHIP TAX MAILING SURVEY

A total of 390 responses were obtained from the survey mailed out with property taxes and from surveys returned to the Township offices. About 64% of people surveyed said this property should be used for a community park or recreational purposes only, 26% said it should be used for a combination of recreation, retail, and/or housing, 5% preferred retail purposes only, and 6% respondents gave their own response. Nobody preferred housing only for the use of this property.

For recreational features people want to see (people could choose their top 3), the top choices were a sandy beach/swim area (63%), pathways and trails (46%), a pavilion/picnic area (46%), and a children's play area with playground equipment (38%). A canoe/kayak launch (34%), fishing pier (30%), and band shell/amphitheater (19%) also received several votes. For potential businesses on the site, a restaurant or bar (44%), bakery/deli (41%), food truck (25%), and food market (23%) were the most popular of the given options. Several people in the comments reiterated that they did not want any business uses on the site.

CONCEPT PLANS

The Downtown Planning Group worked with residents and business owners at the design workshop held on January 17, 2017 to develop schematic design for site development. Three scenarios, representing a low, medium, and high development intensity, were explored in the process of developing a synthesis plan. The synthesis plan attempts to achieve the best of all three scenarios and limit perceived impacts to park development.

DESIGN SCENARIO 1: PARK ONLY

The first design scenario explored was a low-intensity development scenario that focused on maintaining natural features, providing some desirable public amenities, and limiting housing, commercial, or mixed use development. This design scenario was perceived as potentially resulting in a maintenance burden and a high public development cost for the desired amenities. Many Township residents prefer a park only option.

Figure 3: Design Scenario 1a:
Park Only – Low Development Intensity - Pre-Charrette Schematic

Figure 4: Design Scenario 1b:
Park Only – Low Development Intensity Design Workshop Sketch

DESIGN SCENARIO 2

The second design scenario explored was a middle-intensity development scenario that focused on maintaining most of the site's natural features and a minimum of 50% of land for public uses. Design workshop participants were not attracted to the traditional grid pattern presented in the pre-development charrette schematic. Instead, a curvilinear pattern that accentuated the park as the prominent site feature was suggested, which led to the structures being moved to the site edges. This design provides many desirable public amenities, while including some private development to potentially offset public construction costs and contribute to Township tax revenues. Design workshop participants expressed some concerns with providing housing, but most were supportive of some mixed use along the front of the site. Based on the outreach conducted, a middle-intensity scenario may fit with the preferences of Township residents if impacts are minimal and development helps to finance public amenities on the site.

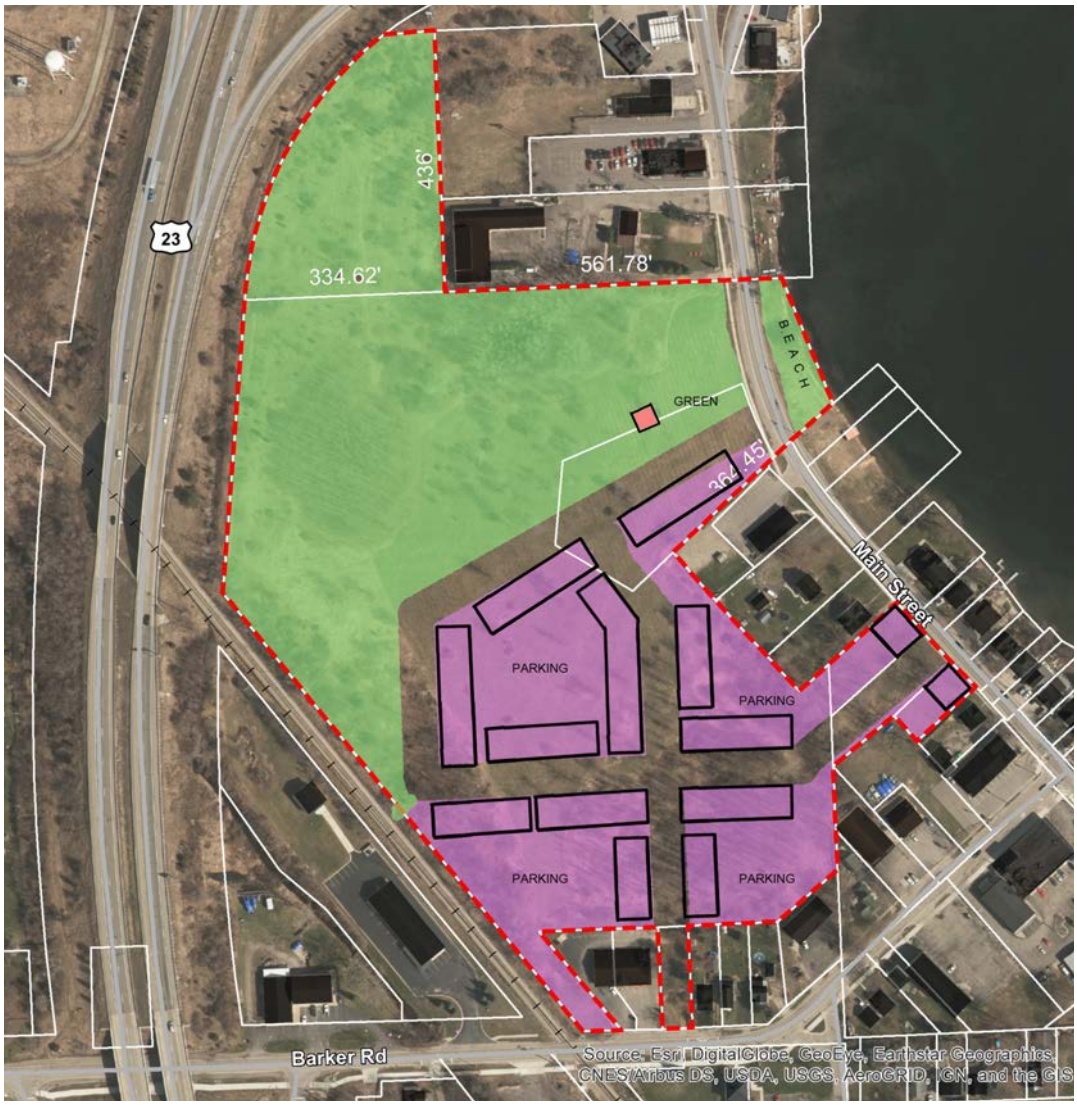


Figure 5: Design Scenario 2a:
Park with Housing – Medium Development Intensity - Pre-Charrette Schematic

Figure 6: Design Scenario 2b:
Park with Housing – Medium Development Intensity - Charrette Sketch

DESIGN SCENARIO 3

The third design scenario explored was a high-intensity development scenario that gave priority to using the site for private development and provided more limited public amenities like lake access, public parking, and a town green. Design workshop participants again were not attracted to the traditional grid pattern presented in the pre-development charrette schematic and were critical of the development density shown. Instead, the sketch design again features a curvilinear pattern. The sketch shows that the important public amenities can be provided and private development can be considered at a high building density, if desired. However, based on the outreach conducted, the high-intensity scenario would not fit with the preferences of many Township residents.

Figure 7: Design Scenario 3a:
Park With Mixed Use – High Development Intensity - Pre-Charrette Schematic

Figure 8: Design Scenario 3b:
Park With Mixed Use – High Development Intensity -Charrette Sketch

SYNTHESIS PLAN

The synthesis plan is based on the ideas from the Downtown Planning Group, Township officials, business owners, and community members. The synthesis plan meets the design objectives for the site while minimizing the perceived negative impacts of private development. The plan enhances some of the neighborhood and downtown connections that were articulated during the outreach process. The plan includes:

- Walking and biking enhancements that make neighborhood connections, improve Main Street access, and link school facilities and regional bike routes via a potential rail trail
- New parking areas for downtown and special events
- Waterfront access and site design for visual and acoustic considerations
- Preservation of natural features and existing tree stands
- Vehicle access to and through the site to Downtown and special event parking provide additional travel routes in the Downtown area

The synthesis plan is first and foremost a park. The plan includes mixed use and moderate development intensity around the site edges and with complementary form to the adjacent land uses. The plan includes the most commonly desired features and recreational amenities. New residential lofts, row houses, and mixed used buildings can be incorporated into the design to help supplement the cost of public features and provide tax revenues to assist with future maintenance.

There are several recreational opportunities included in the synthesis plan. Public access to the lake was a major priority of residents. The plan incorporates a fishing pier, beach, and marina. The town green, located across Main Street from the public lake access, is the most visible park feature on the site. A central lawn is located behind the town green providing people with opportunities for passive recreation, viewing entertainment at the band shell, or

special events. A community garden area is provided on the south end of the lawn by the pavilion and restroom structure. The band shell is sited so that people can simultaneously enjoy the lake and the performances, with the sound directed toward the highway so that it does not carry across the water. A new trail system is proposed with links to major off-site destinations. The existing stands of trees on the site are proposed to be preserved in site design. There is a possibility to integrate Downtown parking into the tree stands on the south end of the site. A tree survey will be required to evaluate these features and create a parking area that limits impacts.

Mixed-use buildings with retail are proposed at key points on Main Street, which would be designed to create a more walkable area. Smaller liner buildings are proposed to frame the edges around the town green space, with parking lots located behind these buildings. There are two sets of row houses on the site: one facing the central lawn on the east side with parking behind the buildings, and another on the northern part of the site. Finally, residential lofts are proposed along the western portion of the site to provide a buffer between the site and the highway. Parking for the lofts is located on the highway side.

Vehicular circulation is designed to access the site at four locations. The northernmost entry point would connect to the intersection of North Main at Main (8 Mile), creating a new four-way intersection. This new road would continue along the west side of the central lawn, and curve around, eventually heading south to link to Barker Road. A driveway access would also be provided to parking areas north of the Main Street and Barker Road intersection. A pair of one way streets border the town green and connect to Main and a drive that follows the east side of the central lawn. In front of the band shell, the drive access could be limited access and primarily used for a farmers market, or similar events.

Figure 9: Synthesis Plan: Park with Mixed Use – Moderate Development Intensity

Figure 10: Central Lawn Rendering with Pavilion.

Figure 11: Town Green Rendering with Lake View

VALUE AND PHASING

The value of the proposed improvements for North Village can be estimated at roughly equivalent to the cost of construction. This construction cost estimate provides rough values to build the Synthesis Plan for the North Village. It is presented in three phases, where construction costs are projected at $9,032,671 for Phase I, $10,802,200 for Phase II, and $27,354,560 for Phase III, with Phase III delivering the vast majority of leasable floor area (see Table 1). The total increased value for the site is estimated at $47,189,431.

The vast majority of the value will be taxable, estimated at $44,180,000 for buildings. Based on the 2016 Township Millage rate of 40.93, the construction value yields an annual taxable value of $1,808,287. The average unit cost will be $279,620 for the 158 proposed units. The construction cost measure of $250 per sq. ft. for mixed use and loft buildings and $175 per sq. ft. for row houses is high to accommodate durable and attractive materials and fixtures, as well as unforeseen construction costs, which may include sewer line and lift station improvements.

Included in Phase I are all the public features to create North Village, including the roadways and associated utilities for all three phases. Phase I also includes all work associated with the entirety of the marina, dock, beach, town green, central lawn, band shell, and connecting trail system. The residential units, and their associated parking facilities, are split into Phases I, II, and III:

- Phase I includes the lakefront access and amenities, mixed use and liner buildings, three parking lots, the town green, the amphitheater, the central lawn and community garden, and the trail system. There are 23 combined commercial and residential units, at average unit size of 1,200 square feet each, for a total of 27,600 square feet of leasable floor area. Rowhouse units include indoor parking for vehicles. Phase I also has 27,460 square feet of paved and landscaped parking area, accommodating roughly 78 cars.
- Phase II includes the three southernmost row houses and the southernmost residential lofts. There are 20 rowhouses and 20 residential loft units, each at average size of 1,200 square feet, for a total of 48,000 square feet of leasable floor area. Rowhouse units include indoor parking for vehicles. Phase II also has 46,600 square feet of paved and landscaped parking area, accommodating roughly 133 cars.
- Phase III includes the two remaining row houses and the three remaining residential lofts. There are 15 rowhouses and 80 loft units, at average unit size of 1,200 square feet each, for a total of 113,600 square feet of leasable floor area. Rowhouse units include indoor parking for vehicles. Phase III also has 38,400 square feet of exterior paved and landscaped parking area, accommodating roughly 110 cars.
- North Access Road: Public roadway access from the north end of the site is required. This will require working with MDOT and/or adjacent property owners to negotiate right-of-way access.

Unit estimates and building square footage totals are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Public and Private Construction Estimate

Phase 1				
Feature	**Analysis Units**	**Measure**	**Cost Per Unit**	**Cost Estimate**
Sewer / Utilities	3,600	l. ft.	$ 136.00	$ 489,600
Roads / Circulation / Street Parking	3,600	l. ft.	$ 50.00	$ 180,000
Parking Areas with Landscaping	27,460	sq. ft.	$ 7.15	$ 196,339
Central Lawn – Grading / Seeding / Planting	118,800	sq. ft.	$ 0.94	$ 111,672
Central Lawn – Pathways	480	l. ft.	$ 12.00	$ 5,760
Central Lawn – Market Roadway	6,450	sq. ft.	$ 18.00	$ 116,100
Central Lawn – Market Roadway Bollards	6	per	$ 600.00	$ 3,600
Central Lawn – Band Shell	1	per	$ 375,000.00	$ 375,000
Central Lawn – Pavilion / Restrooms	1	per	$ 155,000.00	$ 155,000
Green – Grading / Seeding / Planting	14,000	sq. ft.	$ 0.94	$ 13,160
Green – Sidewalks	8,800	l. ft.	$ 9.00	$ 79,200
Green – Flagpole / Sculpture	1	per	$ 7,000.00	$ 7,000
Marina – Docks	385	l. ft.	$ 400.00	$ 154,000
Marina – Beach / Sand System	1	per	$ 228,000.00	$ 228,000
Mixed Use Buildings – Main Street	20,400	sq. ft.	$ 250.00	$ 5,100,000
Mixed Use Buildings – On Green	7200	sq. ft.	$ 250.00	$ 1,800,000
Connecting Trail System	1520	l. ft.	$ 12.00	$ 18,240
Phase 1 Total				$ 9,032,671
Phase 2				
Feature	**Analysis Units**	**Measure**	**Cost Per Unit**	**Cost Estimate**
Rowhouses	24,000	sq. ft.	$ 175.00	$ 4,200,000
Loft Buildings	24,000	sq. ft.	$ 250.00	$ 6,000,000
Parking Areas with Landscaping	10,000	sq. ft.	$ 7.15	$ 71,500
Parking Areas with Preserved Trees	36,600	sq. ft.	$ 14.50	$ 530,700
Phase 2 Total				$ 10,802,200
Phase 3				
Feature	**Analysis Units**	**Measure**	**Cost Per Unit**	**Cost Estimate**
Rowhouses	17,600	sq. ft.	$ 175.00	$ 3,080,000
Loft Buildings	96,000	sq. ft.	$ 250.00	$ 24,000,000
Parking Areas with Landscaping	38,400	sq. ft.	$ 7.15	$ 274,560
Phase 3 Total				$ 27,354,560
Phase 1, 2, 3, Total				**$ 47,189,431**

Table 2: Building and Unit Calculations

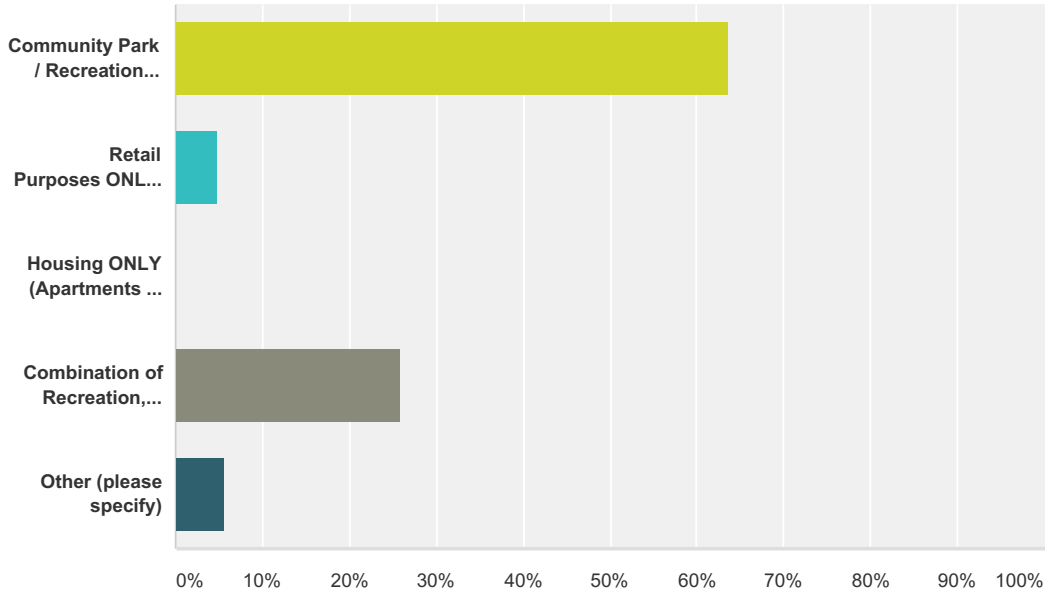
Building Type	Average Footprint (sf)	Stories (#)	Buildings (#)	Total Square Feet	Average Unit Size	Housing / Retail Units (#)
Mixed Use Buildings - Main Street	3,400	2	3	20,400	1,200	17
Mixed Use Buildings - On Green	1,200	2	3	7,200	1,200	6
Rowhouses - Phase 2	4,000	2	3	24,000	1,200	20
Rowhouses - Phase 3	4,400	2	2	17,600	1,200	15
Loft Buildings - Phase 2	6,000	4	1	24,000	1,200	20
Loft Buildings - Phase 3	8,000	4	3	96,000	1,200	80
Building Totals			**15**	**189,200**		**158**

Figure 12: Phasing Plan: Park With Mixed Use – Moderate Development Intensity

APPENDIX: PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

Q1 What do you think this property should be used for? (All of the options would include ample parking!)

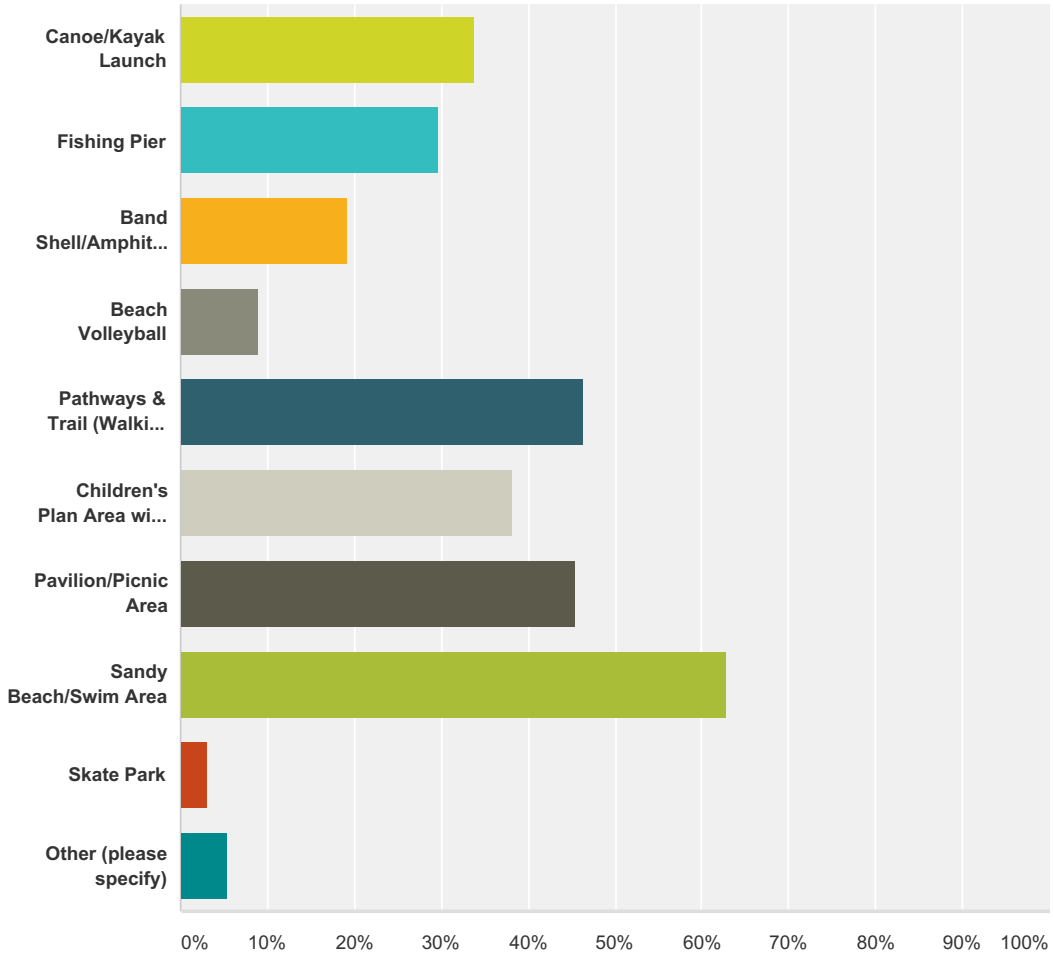
Answered: 390 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Community Park / Recreational Purposes ONLY	**63.59%**	248
Retail Purposes ONLY (small businesses, restaurants, etc.)	**4.87%**	19
Housing ONLY (Apartments or condos)	**0.00%**	0
Combination of Recreation, Retail, and/or Housing	**25.90%**	101
Other (please specify)	**5.64%**	22
Total		**390**

Q2 If this area (or part of this area) were to be used as a recreation area, which recreational features you would most like to see? (Please select your top (THREE (3) ONLY

Answered: 387 Skipped: 7

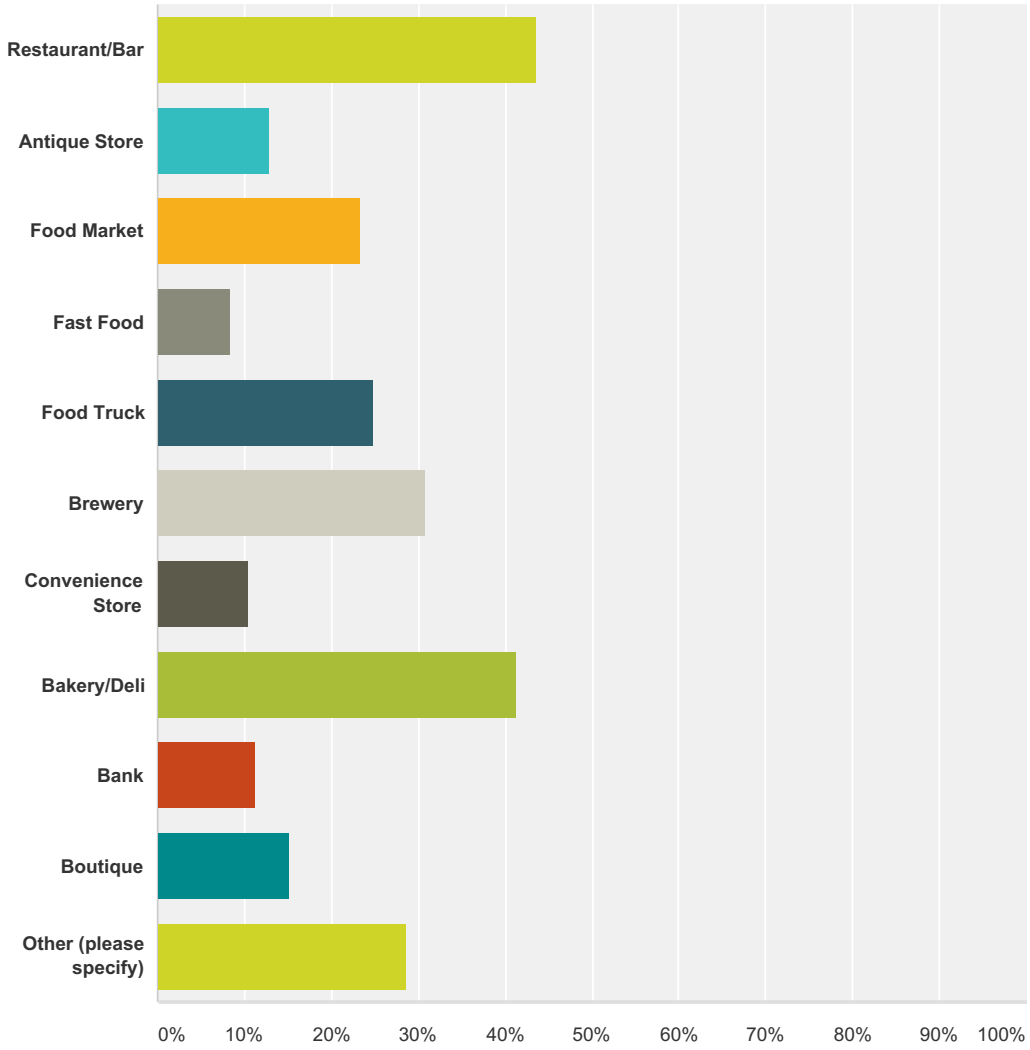


Answer Choices	Responses	
Canoe/Kayak Launch	**33.85%**	131
Fishing Pier	**29.72%**	115
Band Shell/Amphitheatre	**19.12%**	74
Beach Volleyball	**9.04%**	35
Pathways & Trail (Walking Paths, Bike Trails, Fitness Trails, etc.)	**46.25%**	179
Children's Plan Area with Playground Equipment	**38.24%**	148
Pavilion/Picnic Area	**45.48%**	176
Sandy Beach/Swim Area	**62.79%**	243

Skate Park	**3.10%**	12
Other (please specify)	**5.43%**	21
Total Respondents: 387		

Q3 If this area (or part of this area) were to be utilized for business use, what types of businesses would you like to see? Please select all that apply

Answered: 326 Skipped: 68



Answer Choices	Responses	
Restaurant/Bar	**43.56%**	142
Antique Store	**12.88%**	42
Food Market	**23.31%**	76
Fast Food	**8.28%**	27
Food Truck	**24.85%**	81
Brewery	**30.98%**	101
Convenience Store	**10.43%**	34

Bakery/Deli	**41.41%**	135
Bank	**11.35%**	37
Boutique	**15.34%**	50
Other (please specify)	**28.53%**	93
Total Respondents: 326		

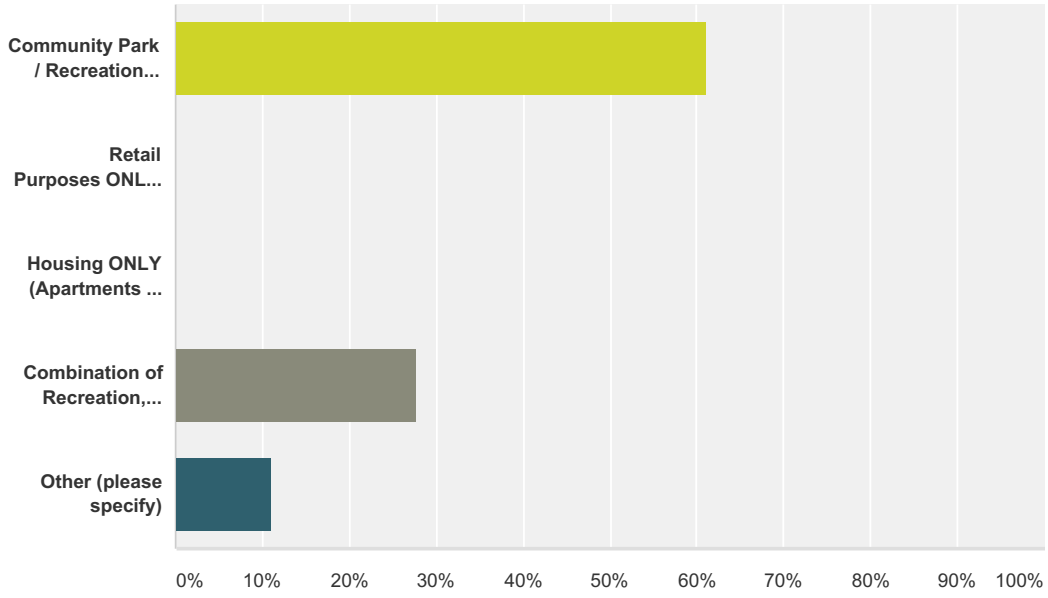
Q4 Please list your age and the ages of your children, if applicable. (for demographic purposes ONLY)

Answered: 370 Skipped: 24

Answer Choices	Responses	
Your Age	99.46%	368
Child(ren)'s Age (please list all)	46.76%	173

Q1 What do you think this property should be used for? (All of the options would include ample parking!)

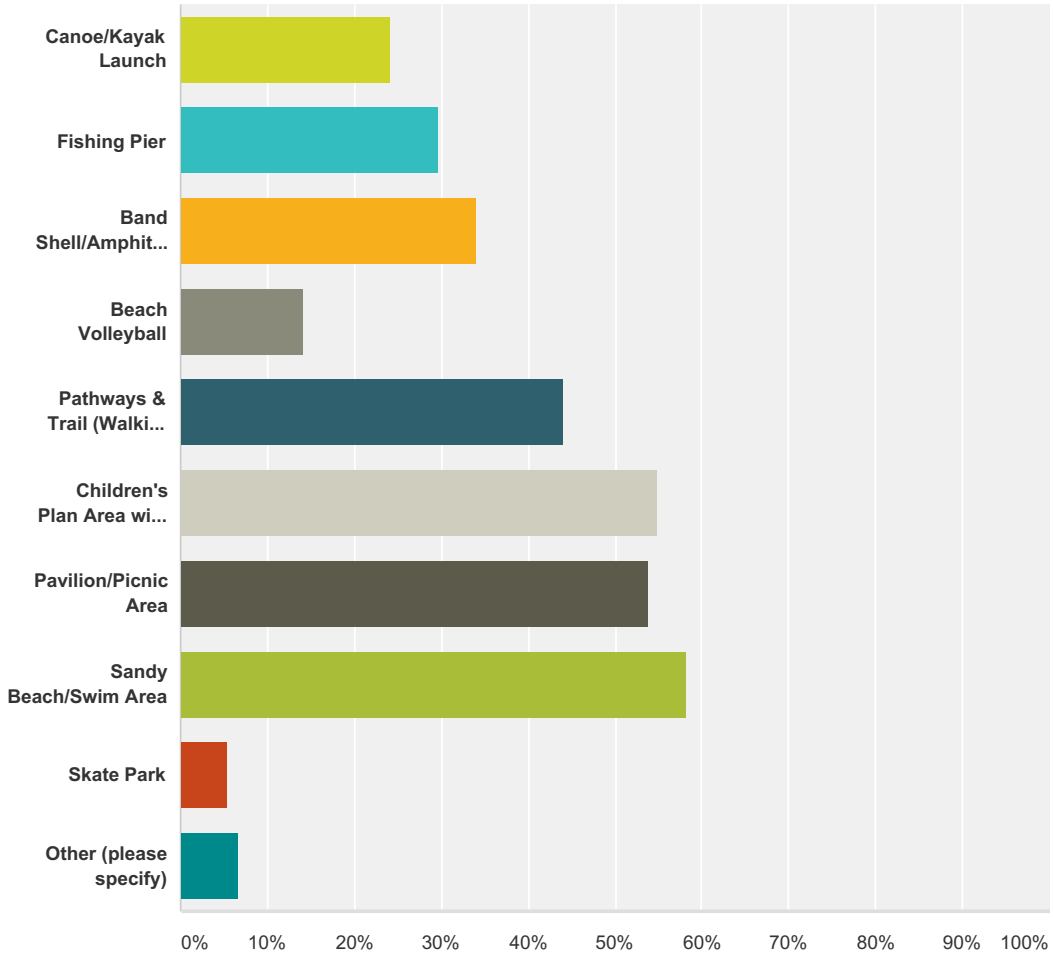
Answered: 90 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
Community Park / Recreational Purposes ONLY	**61.11%**	55
Retail Purposes ONLY (small businesses, restaurants, etc.)	**0.00%**	0
Housing ONLY (Apartments or condos)	**0.00%**	0
Combination of Recreation, Retail, and/or Housing	**27.78%**	25
Other (please specify)	**11.11%**	10
Total		**90**

Q2 If this area (or part of this area) were to be used as a recreation area, which recreational features you would most like to see? (Please select your top (THREE (3) ONLY

Answered: 91 Skipped: 1

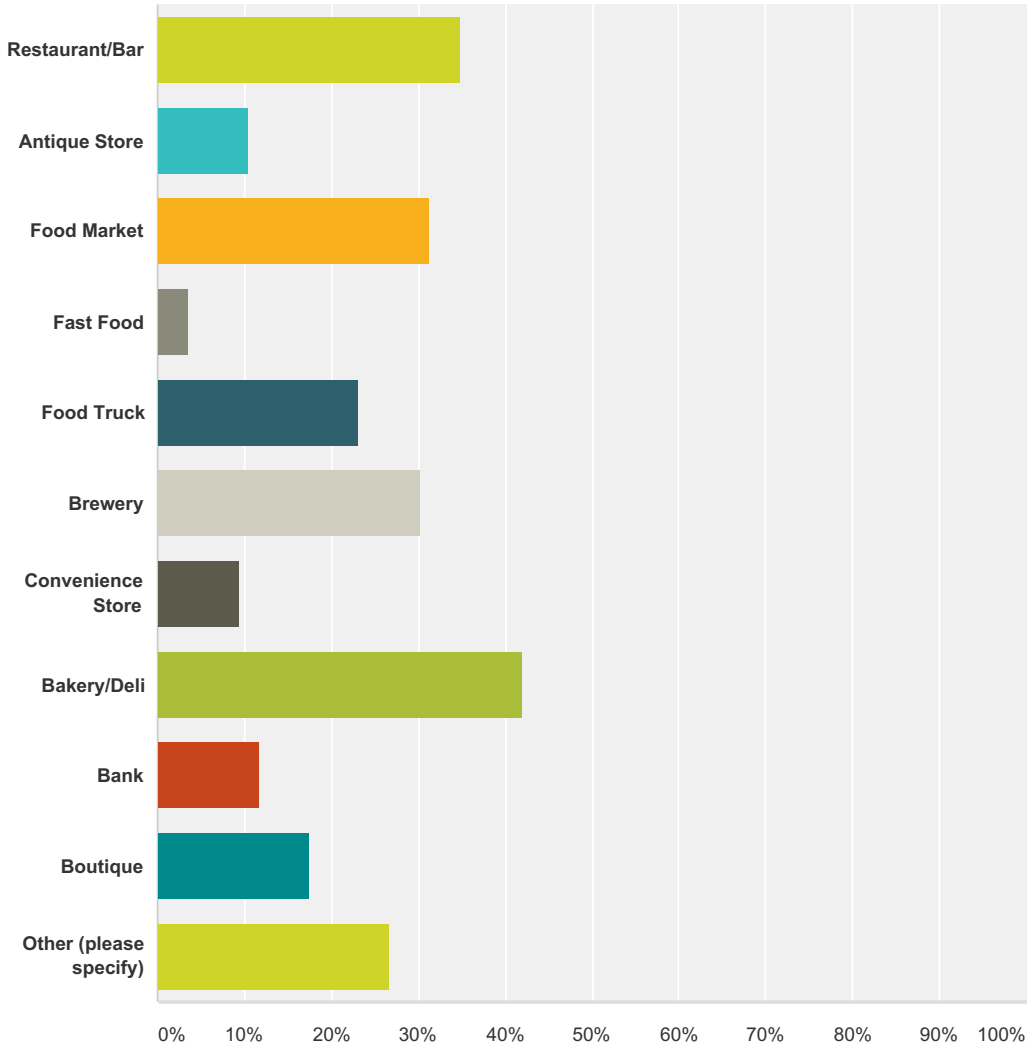


Answer Choices	Responses	
Canoe/Kayak Launch	**24.18%**	22
Fishing Pier	**29.67%**	27
Band Shell/Amphitheatre	**34.07%**	31
Beach Volleyball	**14.29%**	13
Pathways & Trail (Walking Paths, Bike Trails, Fitness Trails, etc.)	**43.96%**	40
Children's Plan Area with Playground Equipment	**54.95%**	50
Pavilion/Picnic Area	**53.85%**	49
Sandy Beach/Swim Area	**58.24%**	53

Skate Park	**5.49%**	5
Other (please specify)	**6.59%**	6
Total Respondents: 91		

Q3 If this area (or part of this area) were to be utilized for business use, what types of businesses would you like to see? Please select all that apply

Answered: 86 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	
Restaurant/Bar	**34.88%**	30
Antique Store	**10.47%**	9
Food Market	**31.40%**	27
Fast Food	**3.49%**	3
Food Truck	**23.26%**	20
Brewery	**30.23%**	26
Convenience Store	**9.30%**	8

Bakery/Deli	**41.86%**	36
Bank	**11.63%**	10
Boutique	**17.44%**	15
Other (please specify)	**26.74%**	23
Total Respondents: 86		

Q4 Please list your age and the ages of your children, if applicable. (for demographic purposes ONLY)

Answered: 88 Skipped: 4

Answer Choices	Responses	
Your Age	**97.73%**	86
Child(ren)'s Age (please list all)	**62.50%**	55

A NORTH VILLAGE SYNTHESIS PLAN

Central Lawn Rendering with Pavilion.

Town Green Rendering with Lake View

Synthesis Plan: Park with Mixed Use – Moderate Development Intensity.

Phasing Plan: Park With Mixed Use – Moderate Development Intensity.

B DOWNTOWN SYTHENSIS PLAN

Birdseye view of downtown facing northeast from 75 Barker.v

Birdseye view of downtown facing west from the Lake.

Downtown Identiry Features.

DOWNTOWN WHITMORE LAKE SYNTHESIS PLAN KEY

1. Barker Road
2. Main Street
3. Margaret Street
4. Infill Building, typical
5. Existing Building, typical
6. Existing Trees
7. Connection to North Village
8. Whitmore Lake
9. Parking Lot
10. Existing Ped. / Bike Trail
11. Trail Connection
12. Proposed On-Street Parking (w/ new sidewalk)
13. New Boulevard Median with Public Art
14. New Restaurant
15. Existing Marina
16. Proposed Alley Easement

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

WHITMORE LAKE, NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI

prepared by McKenna Associates
September 25, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

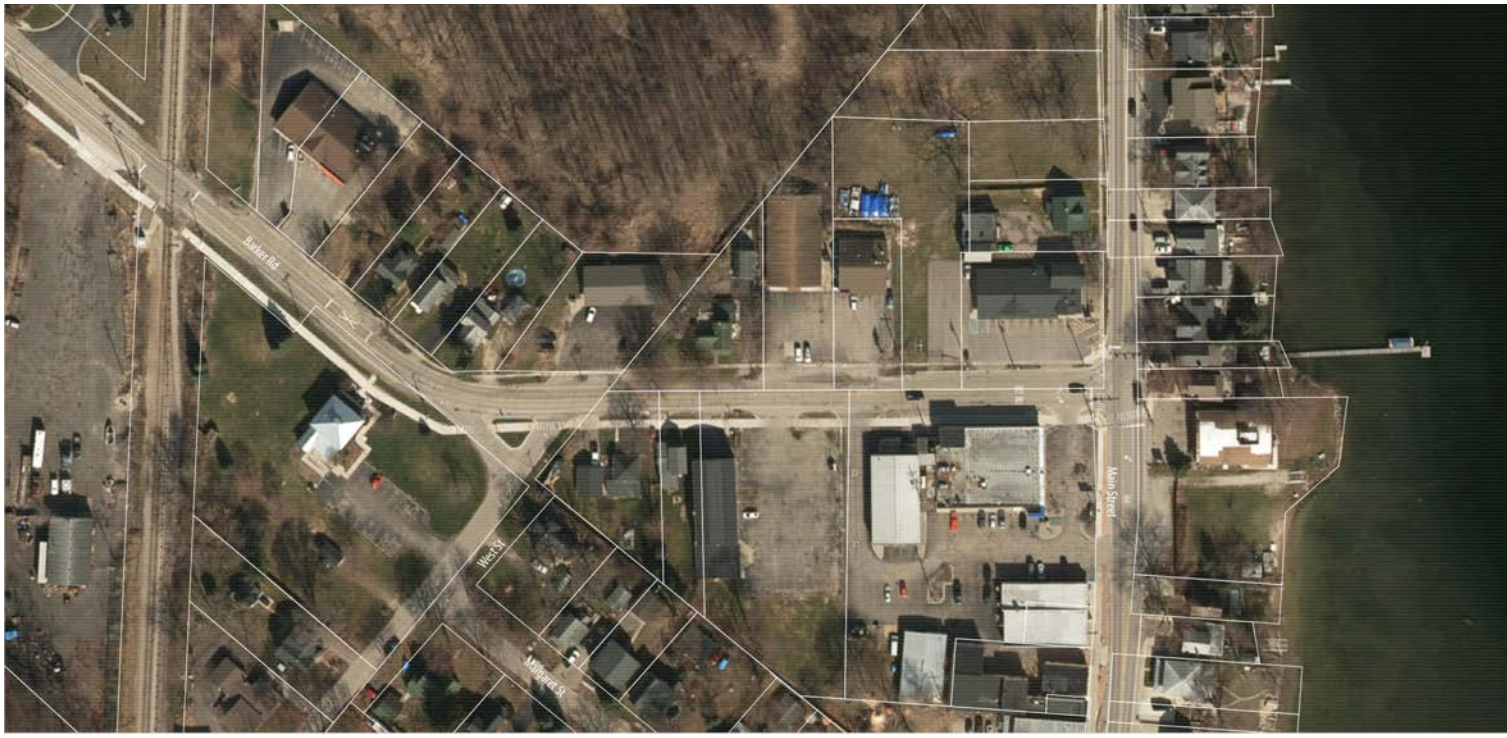


Figure 1: Aerial of Downtown at Barker Road and Main Street

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2015, the Northfield Township Board of Trustees identified the need to create a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of Downtown Whitmore Lake. To lead the effort, the Board authorized the creation of the Downtown Planning Group (DPG) on October 13, 2015 by a unanimous vote. Barb Griffith was named as DPG chairperson. Community volunteers representing many different interests and skills were recruited to serve on the DPG. They spent several months exploring what makes for thriving downtowns and researching the unique opportunities presented by Whitmore Lake's proximity to the water. They hope to bring together the community's ideas and take advantage of the many exciting opportunities to revitalize Whitmore Lake's downtown.

The first plan developed for the downtown area was for the North Village site, also known as the "Van Curler" property after the Township purchased this 23-acre property in September 2016. Planning for the North Village began in October 2016 and the resulting plan was presented to the Township Board and Planning Commission at the joint meeting on March 28, 2017.

The North Village Plan proposes a central lawn enhanced by a new community garden, band shell, and non-motorized paths. Residential owner-occupied Townhomes and loft buildings are proposed along the edges of the site and next to US 23. On the west side of Main Street, a community green would be surrounded by a modest number of residential units atop small retail shops or eateries. Across Main Street, a lakefront public access area with a small marina, fishing pier, and sand beach play area is envisioned.

This plan, the Northfield Downtown Plan, which started in April 2017 after completion of the North Village Plan, focuses on the entire Downtown Whitmore Lake area, especially the blocks surrounding the intersection of Main Street and Barker Road. The Plan outlines a community vision, strategies, and a design framework for Downtown Whitmore Lake.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The project purpose statement for the Downtown Plan outlines the major themes throughout the plan and how they all relate to a common vision for the community. For example, the North Village Plan included a project purpose statement, which was as follows:

"The North Village development shall complement the surrounding neighborhoods, historic architecture, and traditional character of Downtown Whitmore Lake. Development shall be phased to address public amenities, lake views and natural features, desirable connections to Downtown, parking, site access, and community vitality.

Uses shall be complementary to Downtown Whitmore Lake and mixed use buildings with restaurants, retail, and second floor residential along Main Street are desirable. The site shall be developed to minimize the fiscal impact on taxpayers and new private development, include housing and mixed use buildings, shall be considered if the development will subsidize public amenities."

Using input from Township staff, the Downtown Planning Group, and residents, the major themes for the Downtown Plan were identified and the following purpose statement was developed:

"Downtown Whitmore Lake is recognized as a major community hub that will be enhanced by targeted investments and improvements in order to better serve residents and visitors. The Downtown Plan shall guide the development of the downtown area and encourage attractive architecture and design elements. The downtown area shall highlight promote the high quality of life and a positive image of the community, and new projects shall be pursued with the broad support of the community. New projects and developments shall be attainable and focused on existing assets in Downtown Whitmore Lake. The Downtown Plan shall be implemented in phases, starting with short-term "quick wins" before moving on to larger and more complicated projects.

The downtown area shall be included in the assets that reflect general positive image of the community and shall support other community assets such as Whitmore Lake schools. New projects shall provide opportunities for community discussion, recognizing that different people in the community will bring a wide variety of perspectives and that not every development or project will appeal to everyone."

Ice Cream Social
July 8, 2017

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A key element of a successful downtown revitalization plan is the identification of themes or niches. For downtown Whitmore Lake to thrive, the district needs to become a destination that capitalizes on its proximity to the lake and attracts a critical mass of visitors. The creation of niche markets is a key component of the national main street model for revitalizing downtowns. The Urban Land Institute and many other organizations that promote downtown redevelopment strategies have a similar focus.

The improvement and success of Downtown Whitmore Lake is dependent on the quality and aesthetics of the streetscape, buildings, and landscaping. The Downtown experience should relate to and enhance the waterfront. Local identity and design enhancements should be established to attract visitors from around the region. With the lake as a backdrop, Whitmore Lake is a great location for entertainment, recreation, eateries and businesses focused on an entertainment market.

This Plan has organized strategies for Downtown Whitmore Lake around six goal areas:

Beautification

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall encourage high-quality aesthetics, local identity, and architectural elements that evoke an attractive image of the community.

- Enhance the visual appeal of downtown with a strong focus on a well-kept and inviting appearance..
- Create architectural guidelines or a pattern book for new development and redevelopment.
- Install streetscape elements that complement the architecture and character of downtown.
- Include well-designed landscaping and street trees along Main Street and Barker Road.
- Encourage off-street parking lots to be located behind buildings with access through alleys.

Recreation

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall promote active lifestyles and be developed to support access to the North Village area and the Lake.

- Support businesses and entertainment options that enhance the waterfront and draw visitors to the waterfront.
- Implement the North Village Master Plan to develop the park component as a community focal point.
- Capitalize on the lake as a key asset and potential catalyst for downtown activities.
- Strive to enhance community health by promoting recreation assets during all seasons.
- Attract retail and service businesses that cater to recreation on the lake and in the rural areas.

Businesses and Entertainment

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall be an entertainment destination for activities and businesses that serve the residents of the community and visitors from around the region.

- Encourage new community-focused retail uses, including shops and restaurants.
- Promote cultural activities and venues that draw individuals from outside the community.
- Focus on promoting existing businesses and take an active role in supporting their successes.
- Engage local entrepreneurs and support opportunities for entrepreneurship downtown.
- Review and remove or alter existing regulations that are burdensome and create regulations that are conducive to small business development.
- Seek development ideas that are implementable and align with realistic conditions.

Celebration

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall promote the positive self-image and quality of life for the residents of the entire community.

- Support existing downtown celebrations and events.
- Enhance community involvement and encourage as many citizens to get involved as possible.
- Create opportunities for networking and conversation throughout the community.
- Boost the uniqueness and positive perception of “Whitmore Lake.”
- Highlight the quality of education in Whitmore Lake Public Schools.
- Promote sustainability in the development and maintenance of the downtown area.

Connectivity

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall encourage the safe and effective use of its transportation network by all modes including motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

- Design Main Street and Barker Road to calm traffic and effectively reduce speeding traffic.
- Connect surrounding neighborhoods to downtown by expanding the sidewalk network.
- Install bicycle infrastructure, including bicycle parking, to encourage biking to downtown.
- Improve wayfinding signage and the streetscape to make a more user friendly space.
- Encourage off-street parking lots to be located behind buildings with access through alleys.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Public Open House
June 20, 2017

Northfield Downtown Plan Focus Groups Summary

As part of the public engagement process for the plan, three focus groups were conducted early in the planning process to gather ideas from specific groups of people with unique perspectives. These three groups were seniors, residents of surrounding neighborhoods, and business owners. The senior focus group had 21 attendees, the resident group had 12 attendees, and the business group had nine attendees. Attendees at all focus groups were asked what small city or town they would like for Whitmore Lake to emulate, and what their "big idea" was for the downtown area. This kicked off a discussion regarding several topics. Key themes throughout the discussion included the following:

- People wanted to see Whitmore Lake emulate several different small towns including Dexter, South Lyon, Pinckney, Plymouth, Saline, Dundee, Chelsea, Charlevoix, and Milford.
- People generated a wide variety of big ideas including affordable senior housing, programming for youth, renovation ideas for 75 Barker Road, and having a nautical "theme" for downtown.
- People most often go to Polly's, the Library, the Post Office, the Community Center, and to the various restaurants along Main Street and Barker Road.
- Downtown needs more consistently available parking to be more accessible, although several people thought there was enough parking available already.
- More people would bike downtown if it were safer and more convenient to do so.
- For lake access, people mostly wanted to see a contained public beach or a pier/dock.
- People had a variety of ideas for specific changes they wanted to see in downtown including a consistent landscaping design with flowers, a museum, establishing a historic preservation commission, cleaning up blight and unkept buildings, and getting students involved in the community.
- The whole downtown was deemed a priority for reinvestment, but especially Driftwood Marina and 75 Barker Road, along with the yard across the railroad tracks from the library.
- People wanted to see a variety of different events take place including concerts in the park and other music events, pond hockey, craft fair, and events for kids.

Public Open House
June 20, 2017

Northfield Downtown Plan Public Engagement Open Houses

Northfield Township held two open houses to gather input and ideas from the public on the Downtown Plan. The first open house was held at the Township offices in the evening on Tuesday June 20, 2017. The second was held on Saturday July 8, 2017 in the old Township Fire Station, as part of a combined open house and ice cream social. About 10 people attended the first open house and about 40 people attended the open house and ice cream social.

At each event, McKenna Associates gave an overview and provided background information about the project, and described the four types of feedback that participants could give:

- **Events and Stores.** This activity provided background information regarding the retail market gap analysis for Downtown Whitmore Lake showing what retail use types may be successful in the downtown area. People were shown a list of retail types and a list of potential downtown events and were asked to place one dot each next to the retail use and downtown event they most wanted to see.
- **Visual Preference Survey.** This activity presented a series of images in different categories and asked people to place a dot on their top choice in each category for images that depicted their preferred design elements and styles for Downtown Whitmore Lake. Categories included bike and pedestrian amenities, architectural styles, streetscape elements, and public art.
- **Design Alternatives.** This activity showed three design alternatives for the downtown area and asked people to choose a preferred alternative, indicating their choice on a comment card with any comments they had. People were encouraged to describe the reasons behind their choice and to comment on which elements they would combine from different designs, if any.
- **Big Idea.** This activity simply asked people to write down any “big idea” they had for improving Downtown Whitmore Lake, which created a space for any ideas to be contributed.

Events and Stores

This exercise included a display board presenting the retail market gap analysis research for Downtown Whitmore Lake, as described in the next section. Using some of these retail categories along with additional retail uses and potential downtown events, people were asked to place a dot next to one event and one store they wanted to see in the downtown area. People were also invited to add their own ideas.

Table 1: What Events Do You Want to See Downtown?

Event	Open House (June 20)	Ice Cream Social (July 8)	Total
Concerts / Music in the Park	5	24	**29**
Weekly Events (Farmers Markets, Movies in the Park)	0.5	11	**11.5**
More Seasonal Events (Fireworks, Pond Hockey, Trunk or Treat)	0.5	10	**10.5**
Craft / Art Fair	5	5	**10**
Kid / Youth Events	0	10	**10**
Boat Parade	0	2	2

Table 2: What Stores Do You Want to See Downtown?

Store	Open House (June 20)	Ice Cream Social (July 8)	Total
Grocer / Specialty Food Services	1	16	**17**
Hardware / Building Materials / Supplies Stores	1	14	**15**
Bars / Breweries / Entertainment	1	12	**13**
Boutique Retail / Specialty Shops	3	9	**12**
Café / Bakery	3	8	**11**
Other - Bank or Credit Union	0	11	**11**
Full Service Restaurants	0	6	**6**
Clothing / Shoe / Apparel Stores	0	5	**5**
Other - White Castle	0	0	**0**
Other - Music Shop	0	0	0

The most popular event that people wanted to see was concerts or music in the park. This finding was consistent with the public engagement for the North Village Community Park. There was also a strong level of support for weekly events, seasonal events, craft or art fairs, and events for kids. The new park will create additional formalized space to hold events, allowing the possibility for many of these events to take place. In any case, there seems to be strong support for more downtown events overall.

There was strong support for several new types of stores such as grocery stores, hardware stores, bars, boutique shops, and cafés or bakeries. One of the resident-submitted choices was bank or credit union, which also got a high level of support indicating a strong preference among participants to have a bank in Whitmore Lake. Clothing or shoe stores and full-service restaurants also received some support.

Visual Preference Survey

The visual preference survey asked people to identify a preferred image in several categories depicting the design elements and styles they wanted to see in Downtown Whitmore Lake.

TRANSPORTATION

RESULTS: The preferred images show a bike lane and a marked crosswalk with median. Bike lanes were preferred to shared lane markings, or sharrows, which indicate shared bicycle and vehicle lanes. Most people wanted to see the downtown area become more bicycle friendly. The marked crosswalk highlighted pedestrian safety concerns, and the median with warning/ safety signs were preferred to a light-activated crosswalk.

MAIN STREET BUILDINGS

RESULTS: The two main street building types with the most votes keep building facades at the sidewalk edge. This establishes the building line of a typical downtown. Both buildings also have a classic / traditional architecture type and avoid modern architecture styles.

INFILL HOUSING

RESULTS: There were three housing types with a high level of support, and they all have several common characteristics. All these buildings have classic or traditional architecture styles, with pitched roofs and porches. Each of the buildings also has enough room on its site to accommodate landscaping and street trees. The only building type that did not get any votes had a modern architecture style and most likely would not fit in to the character desired for downtown Whitmore Lake.

SEATING

RESULTS: The most well-liked bench type was the solid black bench. Many people expressed a desire for streetscape elements that were easy to maintain. Many people liked the anchor benches, but as an artistic element instead of an everyday bench.

WASTE RECEPTACLE

RESULTS: The most well-liked trash can type was the solid black trash can. Many people wanted streetscape elements that were easy to maintain.

BICYCLE RACK

RESULTS: The most well-liked bike rack type was the solid black bike rack. Many people wanted streetscape elements that were easy to maintain.

HARDSCAPE

RESULTS: The most popular hardscape element was the public square image from Northville. This is consistent with the development of North Village Community Park, where some of the space may be designed as a small community green with outdoor seating.

IDENTITY ELEMENTS

RESULTS: The two most well-liked identity elements were the entry archway and the clock. Both elements evoked a classic look but also had practical uses, making for a strong gateway feature for the downtown area. While an entry archway is not practical, given downtown's proximity to US-23, this choice does indicate a strong desire to have a prominent gateway or urban design feature.

VEGETATION

RESULTS: Both images for potential vegetation in the downtown received strong support. This supports adding landscaping along with the streetscape elements as part of downtown revitalization.

LIGHTING

RESULTS: The light fixture among landscaping was the only one to receive votes, indicating that the residents of the Township want a modern lighting fixture with classic appeal.

Design Alternatives

Three design alternatives were generated for this exercise, and people were asked for their feedback on which alternative was their favorite, and what elements of each alternative they liked.

- **Alternative A.** In this scenario, new buildings were added to downtown without removing any existing buildings. These buildings would be built up to the street. Common parking lots were proposed behind the buildings. A restaurant with a deck on the lakeside was included.
- **Alternative B.** In this scenario, several new buildings would be built but were proposed to keep the existing building line intact. The Barker Road right-of-way would be widened to take up the space between buildings and a new center median would be installed with landscaping. Barker Road would have on-street parking on both sides and parking lots would be located behind the buildings. A new building would be built at the site of the existing marina with a parking lot on the lakefront side.
- **Alternative C.** This scenario is similar to Alternative A in that buildings are built up to the road, which would keep its existing configuration. However, this scenario includes the demolition of existing buildings on some sites and promotes total redevelopment. Parking is still proposed to be located behind the buildings and accessed by alleys off of Barker and Main.

People were asked to indicate which alternative they liked the best on a comment card, and also leave comments as to why they liked that alternative or which elements of each alternative they liked.

Table 3: Summary of Comment Cards for Design Alternatives

Design Alternative	Votes	Most Common Comments
A	10	• Restaurant on the lake (several concurring comments) • Best long-term approach • Room for more dining options • Being able to bike and walk from end to end
B	13	• Pedestrian access • Boulevard on Barker Street (several concurring comments) • Parking improvements, although lakefront parking was negative • Many people wanted to add lakefront restaurant to this design • Bringing a more modern touch without losing hometown feel • Leaves the most flexibility to change as we grow • Pedestrian friendly and welcoming
C	0	• No comments from open house attendees

Big Idea

Several ideas were generated from the “Big Idea” board, as listed in the following table

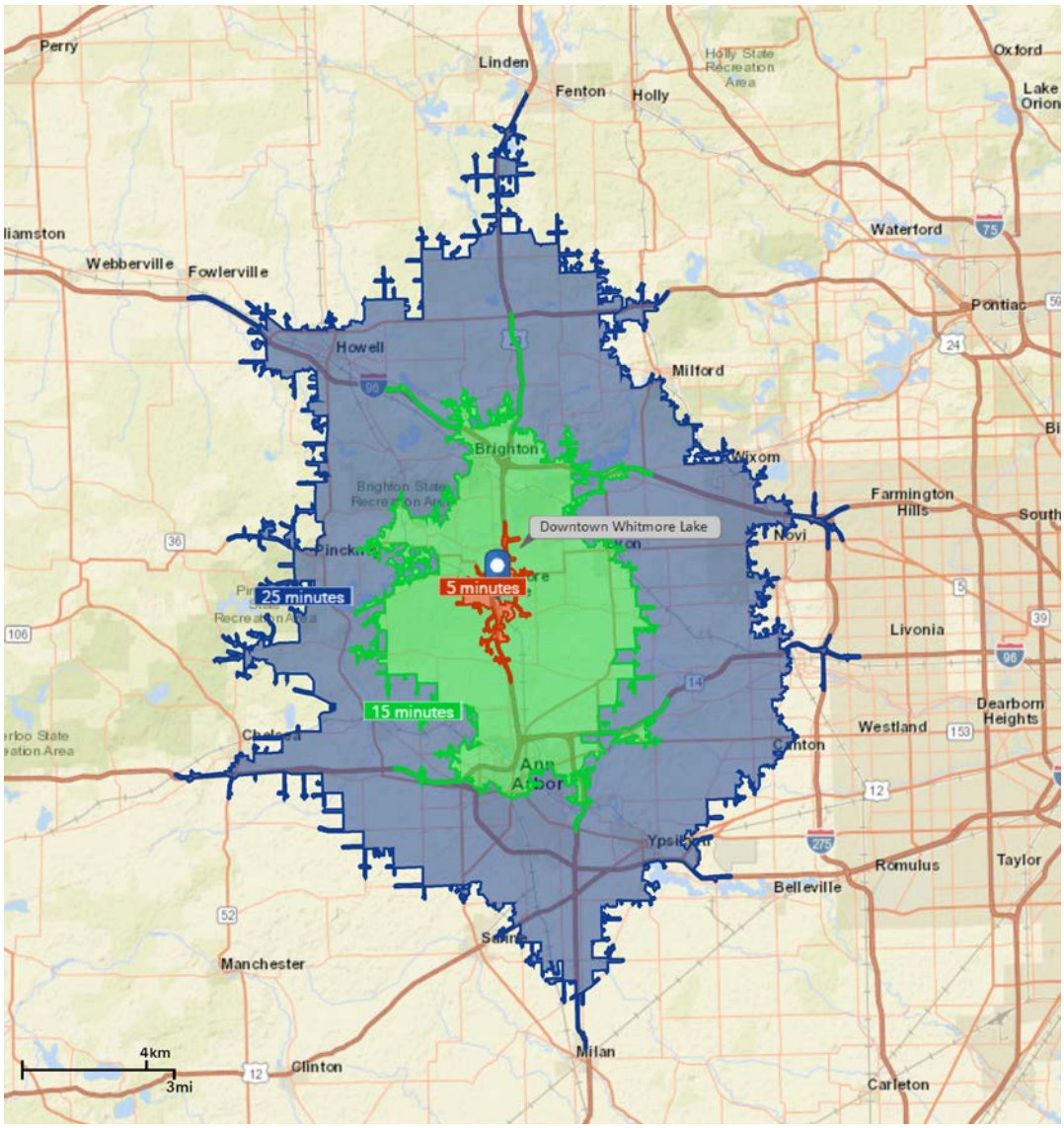
Big Ideas from Both Open Houses
Pocket park!
New grocer
Allow housing developments - new residents to support our schools & the downtown
Brewery
Waterway into old Van Curler property
Housing developments - need more quality homes to draw in people to our great town!
Live music venue
Bar
Café
Record store
Restaurant on the lake for boats too
Bakery
Used book and record store
Antique store
Candle shop
Organic groceries
Public beach
New grocery store
More restaurants
Beach
Athletic fields
Bike and walk from end to end
More restaurants (other than typical American food :))
Small stores
Public beach!
UM Credit Union
Stakeholders
Restaurant or bar with outdoor seating with view of lake and access for boats
Office building / small tech company / other offices who will employ people. Incentive for people to move here.
A boat dock at Van Curler property so people can walk downtown from the lake
Form based codes much like the look of Downtown Chelsea and Northville
Shops
Restaurants
Community activities
Being able to walk or bike from end to end
Storefronts filled with boutique shops
Bank
Unique shops - walking distance from each other like Dixboro General Store
A theme for downtown (i.e. nautical)
Facade improvements and permanent landscaping; mixed use (first floor commercial, second floor residential)
Move the post office to the old bank
Pave and combine Polly's and Barker Road parking lots

RETAIL MARKET GAP ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes market potential of different retail uses for their viability in Downtown Whitmore Lake by conducting a gap analysis. A gap analysis is performed by defining a specific "trade area" for a community and identifying supply and demand for different types of retail uses. The supply consists of the total amount of a good or service of a particular type sold by businesses within that trade area. The demand consists of the total amount of a particular type good or service purchased by residents of the trade area. If supply exceeds demand, then people are entering the trade area to purchase a particular good or service, but it could also indicate an oversupply. If the demand exceeds supply, then people are leaving the trade area or shopping online for that good or service, but it could also indicate the potential for a new retail location within the trade area.

Demand is subtracted from supply to calculate a market gap for each retail type. Using an estimate of average sales per square foot, and an estimate of average square feet per store, the market gap is then converted to an estimated number of new stores demanded in the trade area. The following section is the retail market gap analysis for the trade area as defined by the map below:

Figure 2: Retail Market Trade Area - Downtown Whitmore Lake



Source: 2015 ESRI

The trade area is defined by the drive time from Downtown Whitmore Lake at regular intervals of 5, 15, and 25 minutes. The 5-minute drive time represents people living generally within the immediate area around downtown and the lake, or anybody who lives close enough that Downtown Whitmore Lake is a regular shopping destination. The 15-minute drive time represents people who live in the surrounding communities that may conduct shopping in Whitmore Lake but who also may primarily choose to go to other places to shop. This area includes commuters to Ann Arbor from Brighton. The 25-minute drive time represents a large area of people within reach of Whitmore Lake, but who may choose to shop in other regional retail centers such as Ann Arbor, Howell, and Novi. This trade area includes commuters to Ann Arbor from Howell and from US 23 north of I-96. The following charts show the retail gap, as a percentage, and the number of new stores demanded in the Downtown Whitmore Lake 5 minute, 15-minute, and 25-minute trade areas bused on the buying power and square footage requirements for each store-type.

Table 4: Percentage of Unmet Retail Demand

Category	5-Minute Drive	15-Minute Drive	25-Minute Drive
Furniture Stores	100.0%	-17.1%	-27.8%
Home Furnishings Stores	100.0%	14.5%	-12.2%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	95.1%	-40.2%	-51.6%
Building Materials and Supplies Dealers	49.0%	42.8%	21.0%
Lawn and Garden Equipment Stores	-10.9%	-14.2%	23.6%
Grocery Stores	91.5%	15.3%	12.1%
Specialty Food Stores	100.0%	49.5%	49.0%
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	-409.8%	0.5%	29.1%
Health and Personal Care Stores	37.6%	5.6%	-8.5%
Clothing Stores	100.0%	6.4%	-39.4%
Shoe Stores	100.0%	36.8%	17.4%
Jewelry or Luggage Stores	100.0%	-17.9%	18.0%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, and Music Stores	35.1%	-65.7%	-46.7%
Book Stores	100.0%	-21.3%	5.8%
Department Stores	100.0%	75.5%	4.9%
General Merchandise Stores	100.0%	-88.6%	-65.6%
Florists	100.0%	14.2%	39.0%
Office Supplies Stores	-108.3%	13.4%	-19.0%
Used Merchandise Stores	-3.5%	-3.2%	-4.1%
Special Food Services	100.0%	-11.3%	14.6%
Bars	100.0%	-21.3%	39.6%
Restaurants / Other Eating Places	27.7%	-38.3%	-9.3%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017

NOTE: A 100% gap in the 5-minute area does not mean there is enough buying power to support a new store. A 100% gap means there is demand but there is no existing store to meet the demand.

Table 5: Demand for New Stores in Downtown Whitmore Lake Trade Area

Category	5-Minute Drive	15-Minute Drive	25-Minute Drive
Furniture Stores	0	0	0
Home Furnishings Stores	0	0-1	0
Electronics and Appliance Stores	0-1	0	0
Building Materials and Supplies Dealers	0	2-3	7-8
Lawn and Garden Equipment Stores	0	0	0-1
Grocery Stores	0-1	2-3	10-11
Specialty Food Stores	0-1	5-6	27-28
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	0	0	6-7
Health and Personal Care Stores	0	0-1	0
Clothing Stores	0-1	0-1	0
Shoe Stores	0	0-1	2-3
Jewelry or Luggage Stores	0	0	1-2
Sporting Goods, Hobby, and Music Stores	0	0	0
Book Stores	0	0	0-1
Department Stores	0-1	17-18	4-5
General Merchandise Stores	0-1	0	0
Florists	0	0	4-5
Office Supplies Stores	0	0-1	0
Used Merchandise Stores	0	0	0
Special Food Services	0	0	0-1
Bars	0	0	4-5
Restaurants / Other Eating Places	0-1	0	0

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017

NOTE: A gap within one trade area may be met in another trade area. For instance, looking at department stores, within a 15-minute radius there is buying power to support 17-18 additional department stores. However, the 25-minute radius picks up Briarwood Mall in Ann Arbor and Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi. While the buying power of the larger trade area is significantly higher, much of the supply is met and only 4-5 additional department stores would be supported. The success of downtown Whitmore Lake to meet regional and local needs depends on pulling successfully from multiple trade areas and creating a local retail niche.

Main Street

The data for the 5-minute drive time shows several categories with unmet demand, and a few of these categories have enough unmet demand that a new store could be viable This implies that the market power of the people living close to the downtown area will support new retail uses. New local businesses should consider the unique location of downtown and access to Whitmore Lake as a strength to develop a local niche and a destination based entertainment experience for customers.

The data for the 15-minute drive time area shows several retail categories that are saturated, but there are several others with a significant amount of unmet demand. In particular, shoe stores and clothing stores, building materials (hardware), grocers, and specialty food stores have enough demand to support nine to 14 new stores. The scale and size of these types of businesses are appropriate for the downtown area and could be accommodated in existing or new buildings. Since the 15-minute area includes the north side of Ann Arbor and all of Brighton, which generate a large amount of demand, a niche market or destination based strategy will help to attract these customers into downtown. The Township would likely benefit from businesses that have a unique character and may be successful marketing to commuters traveling between Ann Arbor and Brighton. Department stores show a gap of 17 to 18 stores. Department stores are probably not appropriate for downtown but the high unmet demand for department stores further supports creating a destination-based market strategy within this trade area.

The data for the 25-minute drive time area reveals a potential unmet need for several retail categories across the region. This area includes a larger population by adding Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Howell, South Lyon, and other heavily populated areas, and these areas generate additional demand. However, this area includes major regional retail centers including Briarwood Mall, the outlet mall in Howell, and the downtowns of other cities. Businesses with a unique character or identity would likely succeed and be competitive in the area. In particular, grocery stores, specialty food stores, and building materials and supplies dealers show a strong demand in the 15-minute and 25-minute areas, meaning that there is a need not currently being met across the entire region.

It is important to understand that the above data describe existing conditions. Additional demand can be created using aggressive marketing, community events, attracting new residents or other strategies. Any strategies should build on the strengths of the community and may come from the existing events and resources in the Township. The development of the North Village Community Park allows for new possibilities for events and has generated excitement around the Township. If the Township wanted to attract new residents, it benefits substantially from an ideal location. Another potential strategy is the concept of “economic gardening,” which focuses on fostering the long-term and sustainable growth of small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Township.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan outlines the goals, objectives, and actions for the Township and others to pursue in order to implement this Plan. Each goal and subsequent set of objectives and actions corresponds with a chapter of this Plan. The abbreviations in the following goals charts for the Action Plan are identified below:

ABBREV	PARTNERS
TWP	Northfield Township
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
BO	Business Owners
WCRC	Washtenaw County Road Commission
WATS	Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
CM	Community Members
PC	Planning Commission
PR	Parks and Recreation Board
UC	Utility Companies
NTCC	Northfield Township Community Center
WLPS	Whitmore Lake Public Schools

ABBREV	PRIORITY
A	Top Priority
B	Near-Term Priority
C	Long-Term Priority

Driftwood Marina

Goal #1: Beautification

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall encourage high-quality aesthetics, local identity, and architectural elements that evoke an attractive image of the community.

OBJECTIVE 1.1:
Enhance the visual appeal of downtown with a strong focus a well-kept and inviting appearance

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Continue the high frequency of code enforcement activities to address any blight issues such as yards, vehicles, buildings, and junk	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP	TWP
Encourage blight complaint forms to be submitted by residents and quickly addressed by code enforcement officers	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP	TWP

OBJECTIVE 1.2:
Create architectural guidelines or a pattern book for new development and redevelopment.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Enforce the downtown architecture / building design guidelines by amending the Township Zoning Ordinance	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA	N/A

OBJECTIVE 1.3:
Install streetscape elements that complement the architecture and character of downtown.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Install benches, lighting, and waste receptacles elements according to the furnishing palette	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO
Create opportunities for public art to enhance other streetscape elements	C	5+ years	TWP, DDA, BO, DPG, CM	TWP, DDA, BO, state / fed grants

OBJECTIVE 1.4:
Include well-designed landscaping and street trees along Main Street and Barker Road.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Install landscaping, shrubbery, and new street trees in the streetscape and tree lawn areas according to the furnishing palette	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO,	TWP, DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 1.5:
Encourage off-street parking lots to be located behind buildings with access through alleys.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Amend Zoning Ordinance to update parking and design standards Downtown Whitmore Lake area	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA	N/A
Develop alleys to Main Street and Barker Road to serve as access between the downtown and North Village to access rear parking lots	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO,	TWP, DDA, BO

Goal #2: Recreation

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall promote active lifestyles and be developed to support access to the North Village area and the Lake.

OBJECTIVE 2.1:
Support businesses and entertainment options that enhance the waterfront and draw visitors to the waterfront.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Develop Driftwood Marina site at intersection of Main Street and Barker Road and seek developers who will invest in the site	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA, DPG, BO	TWP, DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 2.2:
Implement the North Village Master Plan to develop the park component as a community focal point.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Use the Value and Phasing section of the North Village Master Plan to guide improvements on the North Village site	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 2.3:
Capitalize on the lake as a key asset and potential catalyst for downtown activities.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Install a fishing pier and/or public beach access point to draw additional people downtown	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO, grants

OBJECTIVE 2.4:
Strive to enhance community health by promoting recreation assets during all seasons.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Partner with the Northfield Township Community Center on any recreational programming or promotional opportunities as needed	Ongoing	Ongoing	DDA, NTCC	NTCC
Partner with Whitmore Lake Public Schools on any recreational programming or promotional opportunities as needed	Ongoing	Ongoing	DDA, WLPS	WLPS

OBJECTIVE 2.5:
Attract retail and service businesses that cater to recreation on the lake and in the rural areas.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Market the downtown as an outdoor recreation hub and recruit potential new businesses such as bike shops or outdoor retailers or equipment rentals	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO	BO

Goal #3: Business and Entertainment

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall be an entertainment destination for activities and businesses that serve the residents of the community and visitors from around the region.

OBJECTIVE 3.1:
Encourage new community-focused retail uses, shops, restaurants, and event spaces.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Target marketing efforts based on needs among community focused retail uses	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO	DDA, BO
Encourage the conversions of available spaces to recreational venues, such as whirlyball, art studios, a concert hall or civic theater, etc	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO	DDA, BO
Enlist local groups and businesses to champion events at the North Village Park and downtown	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO	DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 3.2:
Promote cultural activities and venues that draw individuals from outside the community.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Target marketing efforts based on potential niche as discovered through target market analysis and research	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO, DPG	DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 3.3:
Focus on promoting existing businesses and take an active role in supporting their successes.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Create a downtown branding and marketing initiative and use to publicize and promote downtown businesses	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO	DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 3.4:
Engage local entrepreneurs and support opportunities for entrepreneurship downtown.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Seek space for a business incubator / maker space in downtown, potentially at the old firehouse (75 Barker)	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA, BO	BO
Develop incentives for business attraction and retention in the downtown	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA, BO	BO

OBJECTIVE 3.5:
Review and remove or alter existing regulations that are burdensome and create regulations that are conducive to small business development.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Review current Zoning Ordinance standards on a regular basis and revise as needed	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, PC	N/A
Adopt lean zoning practices that remove barriers to investment as the Ordinance is continually reviewed and updated	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, PC	N/A
Consider expedited site plan review processes for new business development downtown, especially in vacant buildings	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, PC	N/A

OBJECTIVE 3.6
Seek development ideas that are implementable and align with realistic conditions.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Target marketing efforts to support a lake front and boutique retail niche for the Downtown Whitmore Lake area	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO, DPG	DDA, BO

Goal #4: Celebration

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall promote the positive self-image and quality of life for the residents of the entire community.

OBJECTIVE 4.1:
Support existing downtown celebrations and events and encourage new events.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Include calendar of existing celebrations and events in any new marketing materials for Downtown Whitmore Lake	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, DDA, BO	DDA, BO
Support ideas for new community events such as concerts, music, and movies in the park, farmers markets, pond hockey, fireworks, trunk or treat, craft/air fairs, events for kids/youth, or other creative ideas	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, DDA, BO, CM	DDA, BO, CM

OBJECTIVE 4.2:
Enhance community involvement and encourage as many citizens to get involved as possible.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Gather public feedback at the existing celebrations and events to take advantage of a captive audience	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, PC, DDA, DPG	DDA
Ensure that information and news about downtown is updated and distributed widely, include through online and print resources	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, PC, DDA, DPG	DDA
Encourage and facilitate community donations and commissions to help implement design improvements in downtown	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, PC, DDA, CM	DDA

OBJECTIVE 4.3:
Create opportunities for networking and conversation throughout the community.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Invite key community groups to spread the word about news and information about downtown, especially public meetings	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, DDA, BO, CM	CM
Utilize existing popular social media platforms to allow for the community to network, form new relationships, and have dialogue	Ongoing	Ongoing	TWP, DDA, BO, CM	CM

OBJECTIVE 4.4:
Boost the uniqueness and positive perception of “Whitmore Lake.”

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Develop positive marketing campaign highlighting the positive aspects of Downtown Whitmore Lake and the overall community	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, BO, CM	DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 4.5:
Strengthen the reputation and quality of education in Whitmore Lake Public Schools.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Provide promotional and partnership opportunities with the Whitmore Lake Public Schools as needed	Ongoing	Ongoing	DDA, WLPS	WLPS

OBJECTIVE 4.6:
Highlight the quality of education in Whitmore Lake Public Schools.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Promote bicycling and walking in the downtown area by adding bicycle racks and completing sidewalks, among other improvements	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO
Use low impact design practices in landscaping materials and other features of the downtown streetscape	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO

Goal #5: Connectivity

Downtown Whitmore Lake shall encourage the safe and effective use of its transportation network by all modes including motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

OBJECTIVE 5.1:
Design Main Street and Barker Road to calm traffic and effectively reduce speeding traffic.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Work with the Washtenaw County Road Commission on design solutions for each street improvement included in the synthesis plan for downtown	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, WCRC	TWP, WCRC
Apply for TAP grant to assist in development of pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the Downtown and North Village areas	A	1-2 years	TWP, DDA, WCRC, DPG	TWP, WCRC

OBJECTIVE 5.2:
Connect surrounding neighborhoods to downtown by expanding the sidewalk network and pedestrian crossings.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Incorporate sidewalks into the Capital Improvements Program of the Township to ensure completion	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA	TWP, DDA

OBJECTIVE 5.3:
Install bicycle infrastructure, including bicycle parking, to encourage biking to downtown.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Work with business owners to determine potential locations for bike racks along Main Street and Barker Road	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO, CM	TWP, DDA, BO
Work with the Washtenaw County Road Commission on new biking and walking infrastructure on Main Street	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, WCRC	TWP, WCRC
Pursue a connection to the Lakeland Trail and create a bike route trailhead downtown.	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, WCRC	TWP, WCRC

OBJECTIVE 5.4:
Improve wayfinding signage and the streetscape to make a more user friendly space.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Install business oriented identity and wayfinding ground signs at major activity nodes and near key intersections	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO
Install gateway entrance signs at the entrances to downtown	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO, V	TWP, DDA, BO
Use other identity elements including banners according to the identity palette	C	5+ years	TWP, DDA, BO, CM	TWP, DDA, BO

OBJECTIVE 5.5:
Encourage off-street parking lots to be located behind buildings with access through alleys.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING
Amend Zoning Ordinance to require parking behind buildings in the Downtown Whitmore Lake area	A	1-2 years	TWP, PC, DDA	N/A
Develop alley parallel to Main Street to serve as access between the downtown and North Village, with access to rear parking lots	B	3-5 years	TWP, DDA, BO	TWP, DDA, BO

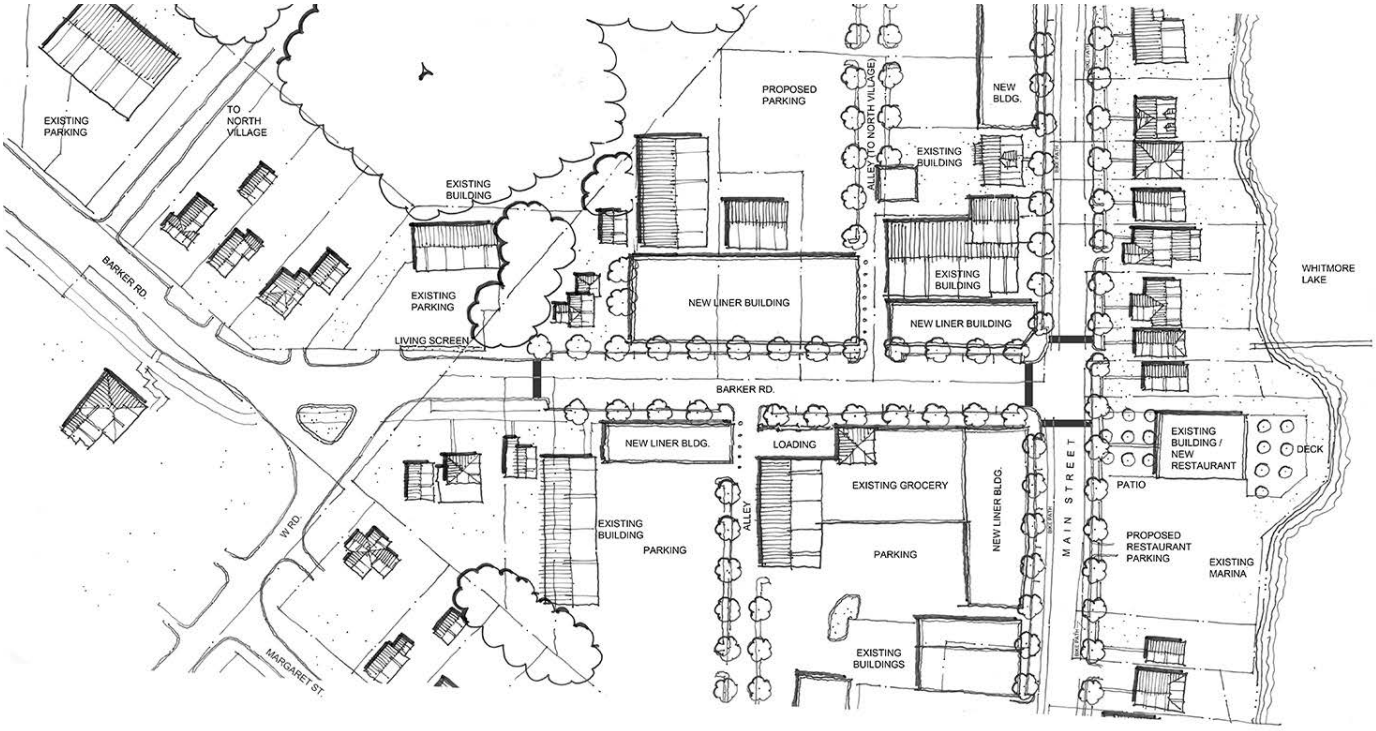
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

PRIORITY SITES

The public engagement process was used to identify the key development outcomes desired through the implementation of this Plan. This includes the identification of priority development sites. These are sites that are currently vacant or underutilized but may be a catalyst for reinvestment downtown. There are four total priority sites, which are described as follows:

- **75 Barker / Old Firehouse** – This building once housed the main fire station for the Northfield Township Fire Department. The building has large garage doors that open up to an undivided main floor, which has been suggested for a farmers market or similar community event space. The second floor has been suggested to be rented out as private event space.
- **Driftwood Marina / Barker and Main** – This site is located at the intersection of Barker Road and Main Street in one of the most highly visible places downtown. The other side of the site offers excellent views of the lake. The site has been suggested for a restaurant with lakeside patio seating or another similar use taking advantage of the lakefront space.
- **North Village** – The Township recently purchased the North Village site and adopted a North Village Master Plan specifically for guiding the development of this land. Key ideas for the site include a large open space in the center, an amphitheater, housing units along the west edge near US 23, and a smaller green space surrounded by buildings as a public square.
- **Township Library: Adjacent Yard** – This property is immediately west of the Township Library building on Barker Road. Of all the priority sites, this parcel is located closest to the US 23 exit and would act as a gateway to the downtown area. The site is also next to the railroad tracks. Several different redevelopment options are potentially feasible at this location.

Old Firehouse



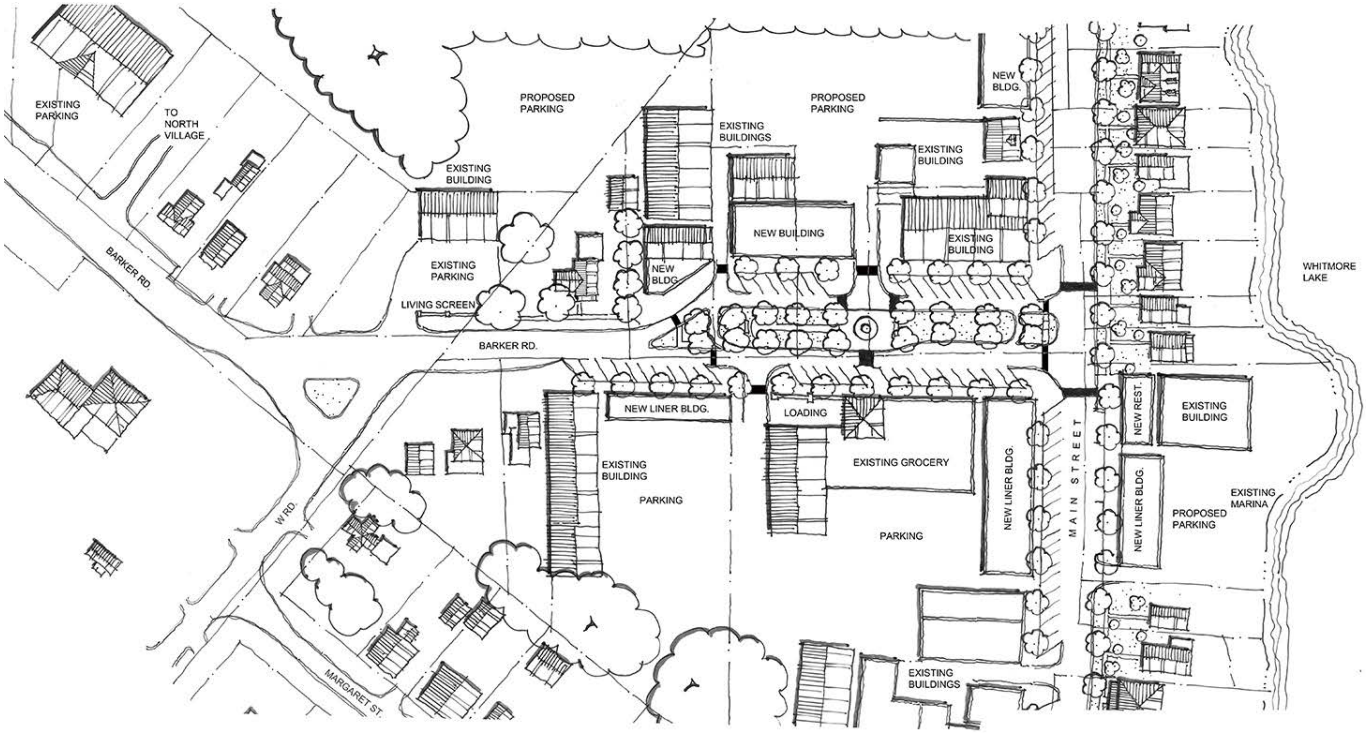
OPTION A: THE INFILL APPROACH:

Downtown has great "bones." A few strategic buildings with managed public and private parking areas are all that's needed.

Option A builds upon the existing fabric of Downtown Whitmore Lake. Existing buildings have been maintained for future use but the plan includes a substantial amount of new buildings to fill in gaps along existing frontages. The plan proposes no changes to existing road rights-of-way or streetscape. The construction of new buildings at the existing right-of-way lines has been further emphasized.

In the interest of creating a vibrant pedestrian environment, most of the required parking has been concealed behind buildings and within blocks. Some on-street parking has also been provided, however, to ensure the viability of the retail, which is so important to the success of any pedestrian-oriented downtown district.

Rear alleys have been delineated behind the buildings along Main Street in order to improve circulation within blocks and provide for general deliveries (and for the storage and removal of trash). Additionally, a direct pedestrian and vehicular connection to North Village has been accommodated by one of the new alleys.



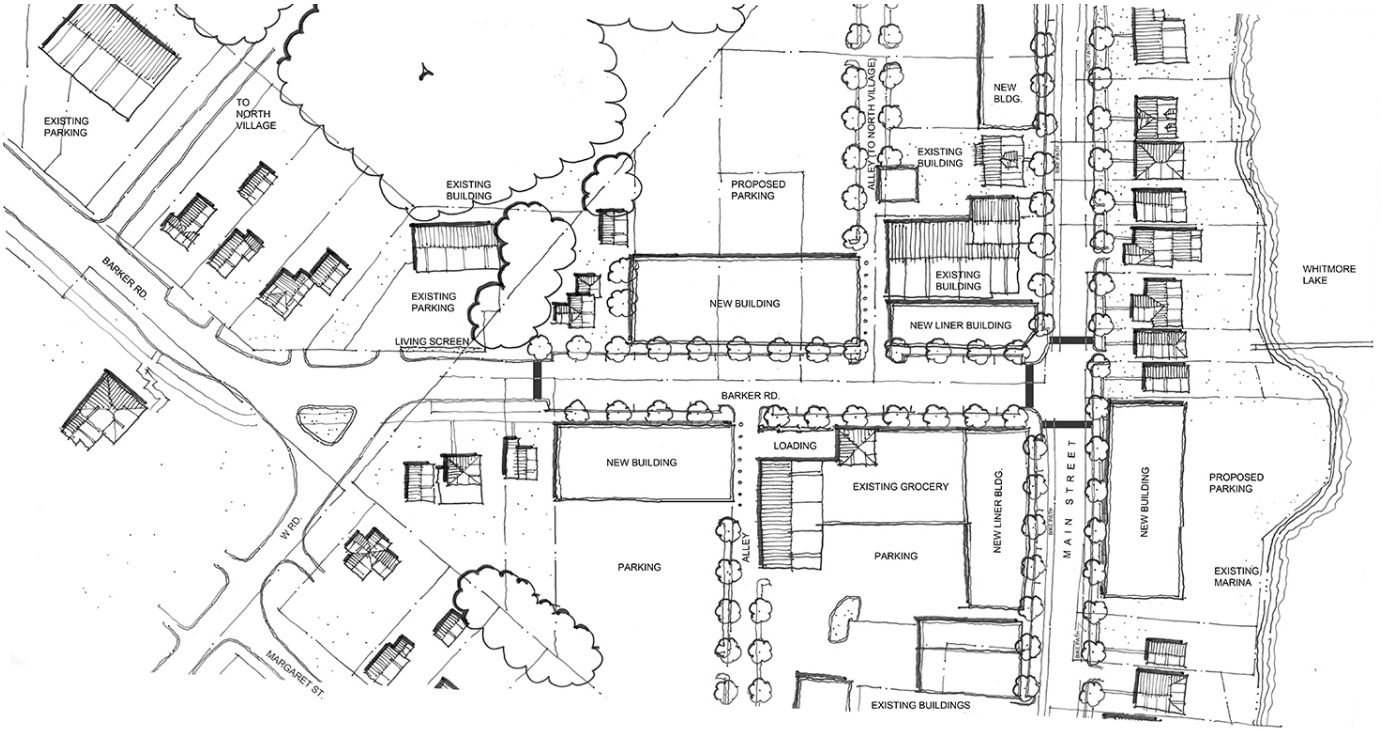
OPTION B:
THE INFILL WITH INFRASTRUCTURE APPROACH:

A few strategic buildings with managed public & private parking areas are necessary. Downtown also needs to improved circulation, pedestrian access, and identity features to truly realize its potential.

Of the three alternative plans considered, Option B presents the most significant public investment in transportation, public spaces, and streetscape. This approach encourages private investment through a directed effort to improve public amenities in the Downtown area. It is an attempt to build existing structures, while making better use of the spaces in-between.

Additionally, a build-to line has been established along the northwestern side of Barker Road, corresponding to the existing facade of Family Video (which is the closest to the street along this edge). Maintenance of a disciplined build-to line along this trajectory will support pedestrian activity at building frontages.

Some new buildings have been indicated where needed to further define and shape the public spaces, as they have been envisioned, and on-street angle parking has been provided throughout the downtown to support retail activity. Most of the anticipated public and shared retail parking areas have been concealed behind existing buildings.



OPTION C: THE REDEVELOPMENT APPROACH:

Downtown has a few opportunity sites that would benefit from complete redevelopment. Supporting mixed uses on these sites could bring new people to downtown and help support other businesses.

Option C explores full urbanization of Whitmore Lake's downtown area. All of the retail buildings that are not currently positioned up to their respective right-of-way lines are shown to have been replaced by relatively large-scale retail buildings that are so located and, with the demolition of the corresponding existing buildings on their respective sites, the maximum quantity of parking behind buildings is also achieved.

This plan could otherwise be considered full build-out, or what the town could look like 20 to 40 years from now with planned densification and favorable market conditions. While a somewhat quaint, small town character could be maintained with this level of development intensity (if developed in conjunction with strict development and architectural codes), Whitmore Lake's existing character as a village or hamlet would most surely be compromised.

However, as in Plan B, rear alleys have been delineated behind the Main Street buildings and a connection to North Village has been similarly accommodated.

As in both of the other alternatives, on-street parking has been included throughout to support retail activity.

SYNTHESIS PLAN

Ice Cream Social
July 8 , 2017l

The Downtown Synthesis plan was created based on the feedback received from participants on three design scenarios presented at the public workshop on June 20, 2017 and the ice cream social on July 8, 2017. The feedback and results were further considered by the DDA and DPG at the regular meeting on July 24, 2017.

The consensus expressed by the DDA and DPG in considering the public feedback received was to encourage redevelopment at a higher intensity, most similar to Option C - the Redevelopment Approach, with a focus on infrastructure investment through streetscape, median, and identity enhancements, and public parking most similar to Option B - The Infill with Infrastructure Approach. These two options accounted for 70% of online respondents feedback and 57% of ice cream social feedback, which combined account for 68% of all responses.

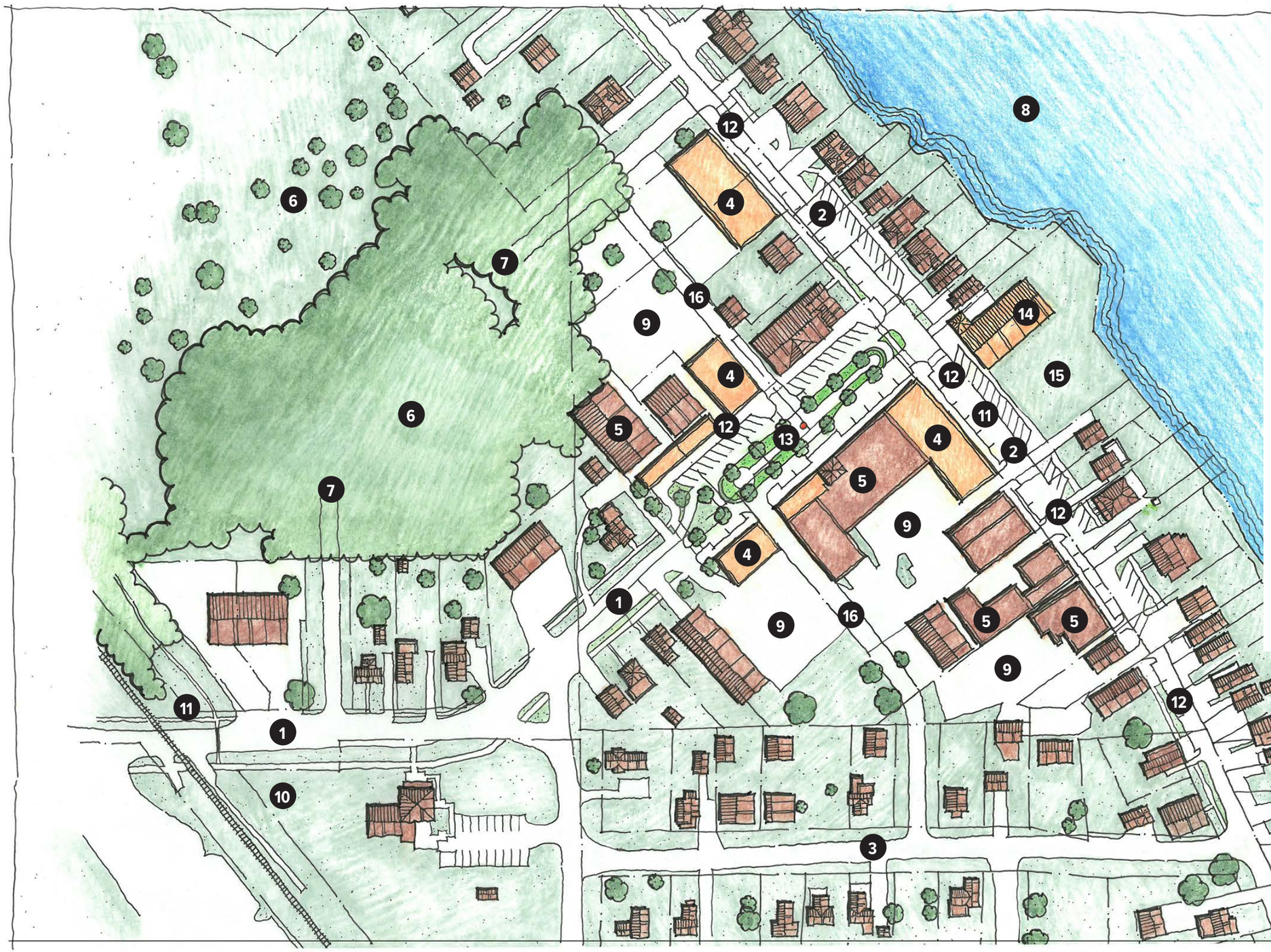
Consistent with these preferences, the synthesis plan emphasizes increasing prominence of the lake front in downtown with visual and physical access, as well as protecting the character and form of lake fronting structures. Enhancements to pedestrian crossings, lighting, furnishings, and landscaping are also incorporated into the design concept.

The overarching goal of the synthesis plan for Downtown Whitmore Lake promotes pedestrian safety, accessibility and a unified design treatment. The design treatments include modified widths of vehicular travel lanes to provide room for on-street parking, which may require right-of-way acquisition and reconfiguring the available right-of-way. The design also features a median on Barker that will include public art, people spaces, and identity features to enhance downtown. Finally, marked-shared lanes to reinforce the Township's commitment to introducing traffic calming in downtown and safe biking to the lake.

The streetscape enhancements will be focused around the core intersection of Main and Barker. The development of the streetscape in this area will be an opportunity to implement the design palette for furnishings and identity elements.

Figure 3: Birdseye view of downtown facing northeast from 75 Barker..

Figure 4: Birdseye view of downtown facing west from the Lake.



DOWNTOWN WHITMORE LAKE SYNTHESIS PLAN KEY

1. Barker Road
2. Main Street
3. Margaret Street
4. Infill Building, typical
5. Existing Building, typical
6. Existing Trees
7. Connection to North Village
8. Whitmore Lake
9. Parking Lot
10. Existing Ped. / Bike Trail
11. Trail Connection
12. Proposed On-Street Parking (w/ new sidewalk)
13. New Boulevard Median with Public Art
14. New Restaurant
15. Existing Marina
16. Proposed Alley Easement

FAÇADE / BUILDING GUIDELINES

The singular outstanding feature of traditional downtown buildings and facades, including the best of those in Downtown Whitmore Lake, is their tendency to position immediately against the sidewalk along primary and secondary frontages and to present a shaded and transparent glass storefront along the right-of-way in such locations. This allows these types of buildings to define the public realm by creating an effective street wall and lets them serve to accommodate a welcoming, convenient, and pedestrian-oriented shopping experience by displaying merchandise within view of passersby. These guidelines, in part, are intended to regulate the construction and renovation of commercial buildings within Downtown Whitmore Lake to achieve this particular character.

A less common but equally attractive condition, sometimes referred to as “cottage retail”, comes about as retail uses migrate into areas already occupied by houses and other residential building types. Here, robust and vibrant retail frontages can develop while leaving a record of their residential past. This record lives on in the form of residential roofs still visible behind full commercial facades, houses physically modified for retail use, houses remaining largely intact but behind and attached to newer storefronts located at the sidewalk, and houses accommodating a retail or office use with little or no change in building form or character. In downtown Whitmore Lake, several houses exist currently in the downtown along the lake side of Main Street and retail uses are already in existence immediately across Main Street from those residential properties. Therefore, this plan supports permitting a transition of residential parcels to retail and similar uses without degrading the residential and “cottage” character of Whitmore Lake. In part, these guidelines are intended to regulate the corresponding physical transformation of the existing buildings on those parcels.

The collection of mixed-use guidelines provided have been designed to accommodate future development of a variety of uses within all areas of Downtown Whitmore Lake while protecting and enhancing the existing downtown character.

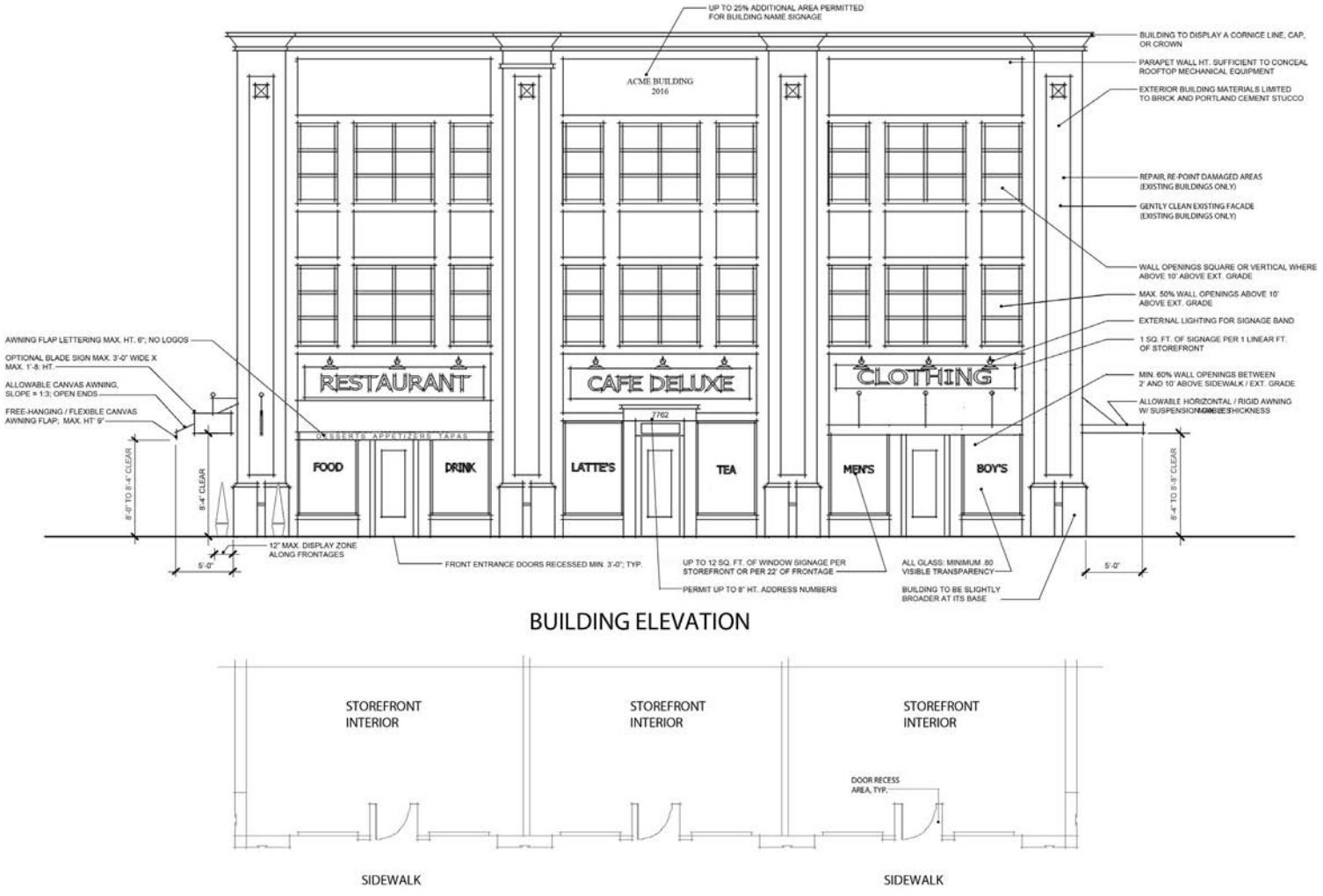
Village Center – Mixed-Use Design Guidelines

The commercial portion of Downtown Whitmore Lake is charming and consistent with that of well-defined hamlets in the center or rural areas. Many areas with buildings constructed in similar historic time periods, like Ann Arbor and Adrian, were developed into larger cities. Others like Dixboro and Dexter, for example, did not grow dramatically but have examples of historic architecture and quality of place.

Whitmore Lake's beginnings were not humble. Its early retail buildings were constructed of solid brick and according to the highest of design standards and they were placed at the right-of-way line, just as they were in downtown Ann Arbor and Adrian. This quality of design provides an opportunity for future growth within Downtown Whitmore Lake that sustains a similar brand of ambition. Further, by emphasizing the importance of design in downtown, the Township's rural character is also preserved. The best examples of Michigan rural hamlets are seldom muddled with suburban development patterns.

Accordingly, the design guidelines for new construction and renovation along both sides of Barker Road and for the side opposite the lake along Main Street in Downtown Whitmore Lake are intended to be developed at the right-of-way. They will occupy their rightful place along the public sidewalk the way they always have in this and similar downtowns across the state. Quality downtown development will help preserve rural character (see figure below).

Figure 5: Village Center – Mixed Use Design Standards



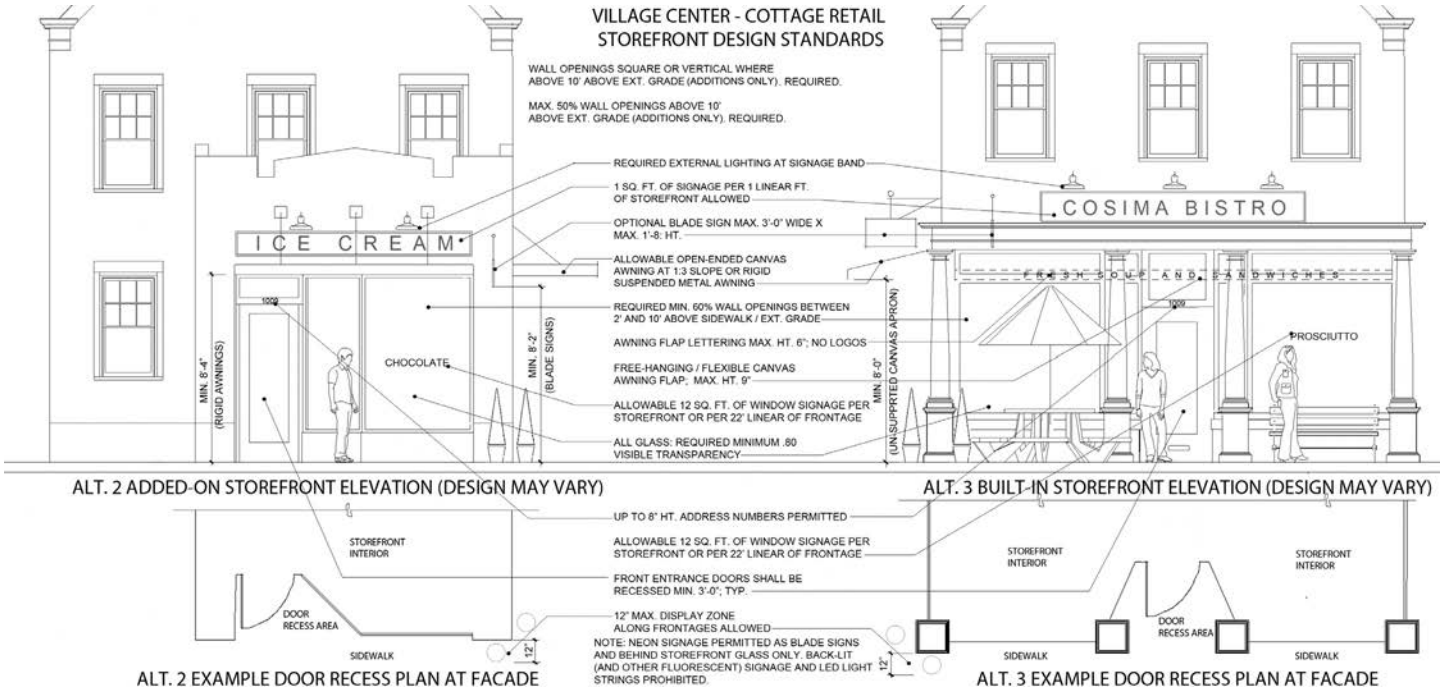
Village Center - Cottage Retail Design Guidelines

Regarding the currently residential parcels along the lake side of Main Street, an alternative but complementary vision is appropriate. Therefore, the corresponding guidelines for the development of these properties seek to achieve a “cottage retail” interface, whereby the existing residential scale and configuration of building form is preserved while retail uses may be accommodated in a variety of ways (see figure below). These alternative approaches to fitting retail uses into a residential character streetscape are anticipated to be employed in combination with one another and are so intended to achieve a more relaxed, informal result:

1. **Alternative 1.** The existing house is simply re-purposed for retail use in its existing form. This may be accomplished by placing a small, attractive, painted, wooden sign on the lawn that identifies the business within and by displaying merchandise or announcing services (with additional signage) through existing windows.
2. **Alternative 2.** An addition is constructed to the house. A new storefront is added-on to the street side of the existing building, extending the building out to the sidewalk.
3. **Alternative 3.** The house is modified. A new storefront is inserted into the existing building and the sidewalk is extended back to the building line.

The specific design guidelines for Cottage Retail are outlined in the figure below.

Figure 6: Village Center – Cottage Retail Storefront Design Standards



FUTURE LAND USE

Village Center – Mixed Use

Intent: The intent of the Village Center – Mixed Use designation is to encourage and permit mixed uses in and around the Downtown Whitmore Lake area. This designation is intended to allow for buildings to be slightly taller than those in the surrounding districts, up to three or four stories. The design pattern of the Village Center – Mixed Use area should promote walking and foster community interaction. The future land uses within the Village Center – Mixed Use area are intended to be flexible, but shall meet specific form and mixed-use design guidelines.

Description: The Village Center – Mixed Use designation is focused on the core of the downtown area near Main and Barker, the North Village area, and potential development areas bordering US 23.

Relationship to Physical and Natural Features: This area is the most urbanized within the Township; however, it is also environmentally sensitive due to the location of the Township's water bodies and the desire of people to reside near bodies of water.

Most Compatible Uses:

- Mixed-use development / 3-4 story buildings
- Upper-floor dwelling units
- Townhomes
- Senior housing
- Neighborhood commercial uses
- Restaurants / Bakeries / Cafés
- Food production / Breweries
- Marinas / Lake-oriented businesses
- Personal service establishments
- Hardware stores
- Banks / Credit unions
- Offices
- Farm and artisan markets / Specialty grocers
- Community Center
- Recreational services / Gyms / Sporting goods
- Entertainment and event spaces
- Public square
- Community support facilities such as churches, schools, and public buildings

Village Center – Cottage Retail

Intent: The intent of the Village Center – Cottage Retail designation is to connect the downtown to the rest of the Township by acting as a kind of transition between different intensities of uses. Buildings in this district will not be as tall as those in the Village Center – Mixed Use area, but may be at a relatively high density to signify a transition from surrounding neighborhoods to downtown. The design pattern of the downtown area should promote walking and foster community interaction. Future land uses in the Village Center – Cottage Retail area are intended to be flexible and shall promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Projects shall follow Cottage Retail design guidelines.

Description: The Village Center – Cottage Retail designation is focused on the edges of the downtown area along Barker and Main from all three directions leading into the core.

Relationship to Physical and Natural Features: This area is not as densely developed as the designated Village Center – Mixed Use areas, so there are generally greater opportunities for yard space or other pervious surfaces. However, the area is more urbanized than the other parts of the Township. It is also environmentally sensitive due to the location of the Township's water bodies and the desire of people to reside near bodies of water.

Most Compatible Uses:

- Adaptive mixed-use development
- Boutique and specialty retail uses
- Single-family residences
- Two-family residences
- Multiple-family residences
- Innovative housing projects
- Personal service establishments
- Offices
- Parks, open spaces, and conservation areas
- Community support facilities such as churches, schools, and public buildings

DRAFT

Future Land Use Map

Downtown Whitmore Lake,
Northfield Township,
Washtenaw County, Michigan

August 23, 2017

- Village Center Boundary
- Village Buildings
- Cottage Retail
- Mixed Use

8 Mile Rd
Eight Mile Rd
S US 23
N US 23
Main St
Jade Ln
Pearl Dr
Ruby Ln
Emerald Cir
Emerald Cir E
Diamond Cir
Emerald Cir S
Barker Rd
West St
Margaret St
Harbor Cove Cir
Lakewood Dr
Wildwood Lake DR
North Point Dr
Summerland Dr
Jennings Rd
Sandlewood Dr
Timbercrest Ln
Sand Point Dr
Holiday Dr
E Shore Dr

0 250 500 FEET

N

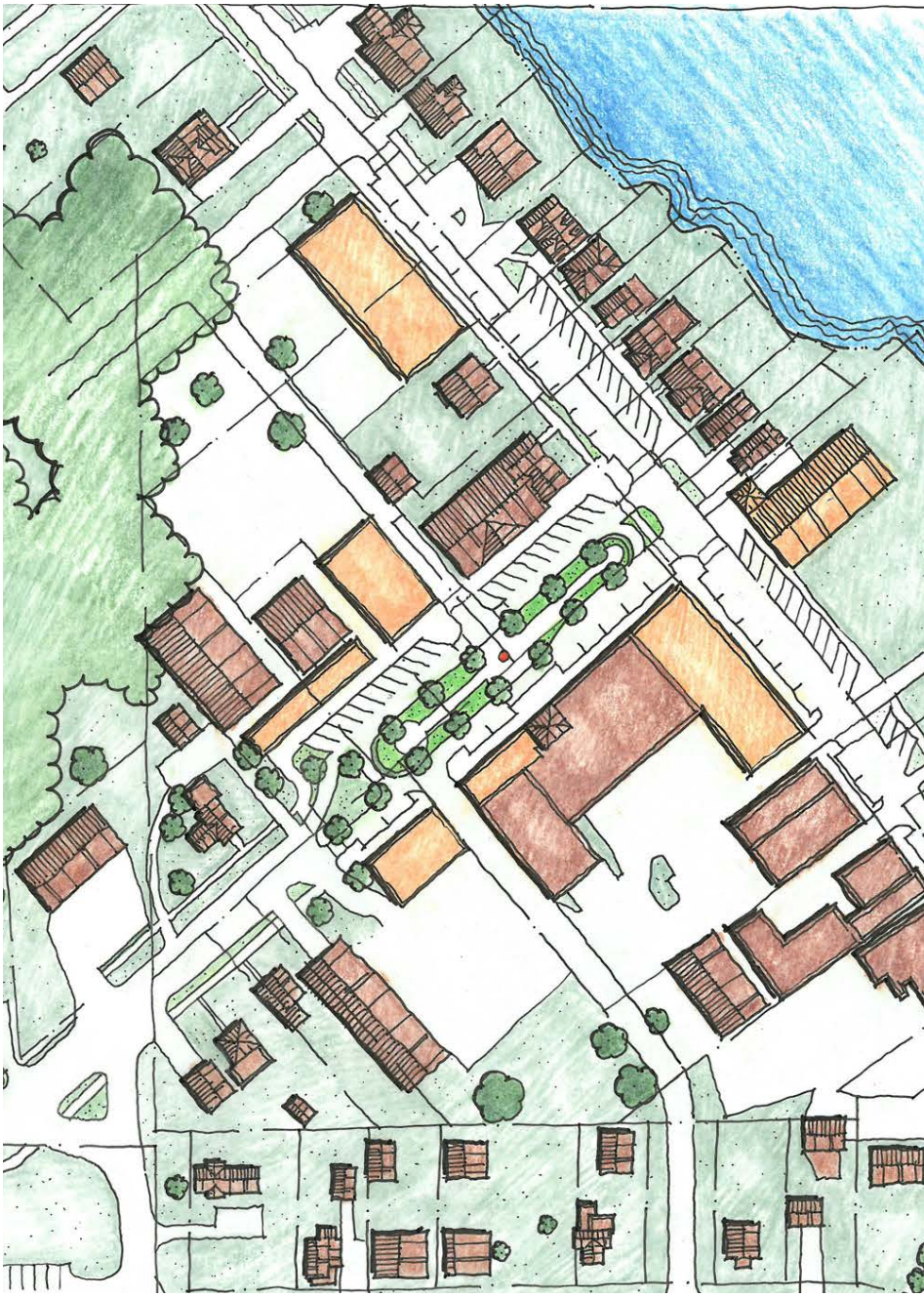
McKenna ASSOCIATES

Map Feature Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, Washtenaw County GIS

CONNECTIVITY FRAMEWORK

The Connectivity Framework provides recommendations for the development of the public right-of-way in Downtown Whitmore Lake a manner consistent with and supportive of recommendations for Future Land Use. The Future Transportation Map shows the detailed physical recommendations contained in the following narrative.

The Future Transportation recommendations focus on pathways, crossing improvements, gateway creation, and creating complete streets with pedestrian crossings, streetscape enhancements, and bicycle facilities. The network is designed to establish easy to navigate connections for people to walk, bike, and drive from their neighborhoods around the Township to Downtown Whitmore Lake.



Example of a pedestrian crossing

TRANSITION ELEMENTS

Transition elements are recommended to be installed at changes in the street typologies. These locations are important places to provide visual cues to denote the change in roadway context. These locations are noted on the Street Typology Map as Nodes, Gateways and Transitions.

- **Core Intersection:** Barker and Main Street is the heart of Downtown. Improvements of the identity and public system are recommended to be centered on this focal point. Pedestrian priority at this intersection should be established through traffic calming and crossing improvements. A prominent boulevard with a sculpture, public art, or clock is recommended to be included in the median.
- **Gateways:** Located at the entrances to downtown Whitmore Lake from the south, north and west. Prominent gateway features include gateway signs, public art, lane narrowing and wayfinding signs.
- **Transitions:** Located at the where bike facilities are recommended to transition to an on-street marked shared lane. Landscaping, signs, identity features and public art are appropriate design treatments.

The design palettes contain guidelines for installing traffic calming, landscaping, street furnishing, wayfinding, and identity features in these locations to enhance the user experience and operations in downtown.

GRID RETROFITS

Future Transportation Plan calls for new streets, alleys, and trails.

Currently, there are some limitations in the intersection density of the street grid in Downtown Whitmore Lake that can be improved by new alleys, pathways, and streets in the North Village Area. A desirable standard block length for walkability and vehicle circulation in a downtown area is 300 feet to 600 feet.

With new development, it may be possible to retrofit the street grid to create more pedestrian scale block lengths and improve network connections. The Future Transportation Map shows a few key retrofits to the network to eliminate the mega-blocks and create walkable urban centers.

- **North Village Area:**
  - » New public street system to link the Central Lawn and Green planned for the North Village into the downtown Whitmore Lake Street system.
- **Downtown Area:**
  - » New public alleys to link Barker Road north into the North Village site and new proposed public parking and south to Margaret Street.
- **Trails:**
  - » New trail connection from the bicycle path into the North Village area that currently passes by the Library to Main Street with a preferred connection along the railroad corridor under US-23.

New street connections in the North Village should be two-way shared streets with bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles sharing the roadway. The new streets should have target vehicle speeds of 15 mph to 20 mph and 16 to 22 feet total travel way. On-street parking, shared biking and pedestrian access should be required. Curbs are not required as the systems should maintain a rural character consistent with Township neighborhoods. Alleys should be 16 to 20 feet with shared bike and pedestrian access as well.

Currently, every site in downtown manages their own parking, with limited on-street parking, shared parking, or cross site access. Adding new streets will provide circulation and access to new on-street parking, shared private parking, and new public parking areas so customers can park once and walk to multiple destinations in downtown

MODE ACCOMMODATION

Improvements to the bicycle network in Downtown Whitmore Lake are desirable to increase access to downtown and support the Township's desire to improve recreation opportunities and lake access. Connections to the Downtown shopping destinations and Lake access will support residents' health and wellness. With bicycle network improvements more Township residents will be able to make safe, short trips to parks, schools, and even downtown entertainment and shopping, all without getting in the car. Bicycle network improvements are recommended based on the need for separation from vehicle traffic, existing signal locations to cross major roadways, and alignment with desirable community destinations like schools, parks, public facilities, and commercial areas.

Shared Use Paths and Trails

Shared use paths and trails are paved concrete or asphalt paths wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. They are typically a minimum of 10 feet wide with 2 feet of clearance on either side of the path. Shared use paths offer cyclists a safe place to bike off-street when there is no space for a bike lane, or it is unsafe to bike on the street.

Conventional Bike Lanes and Paved Shoulders

Bike lanes create a dedicated space for cyclists on a roadway. They are appropriate on streets with moderate to heavy traffic. Bike lanes are indicated by on-street markings, which can be supplemented with signage. Bike lanes reinforce proper roadway etiquette, raise the visibility of bicyclists, and help both bicyclists and drivers behave predictably when sharing road space. For safe cycling, bike lanes should be 4 feet to 6 feet wide.

Marked Shared Lanes or Sharrows

Marked shared lanes use a double chevron and bicycle marking, or "sharrow," in a lane intended for the joint use of motorized and bicycle traffic. Chevron symbols direct bicyclists to ride in the safest location within the lane, outside of the door zone of parked cars and areas where debris is likely to collect. Generally, marked shared lanes are a low-cost treatment suitable for lightly traveled collector and arterial roads.

Improved Pedestrian Crossings

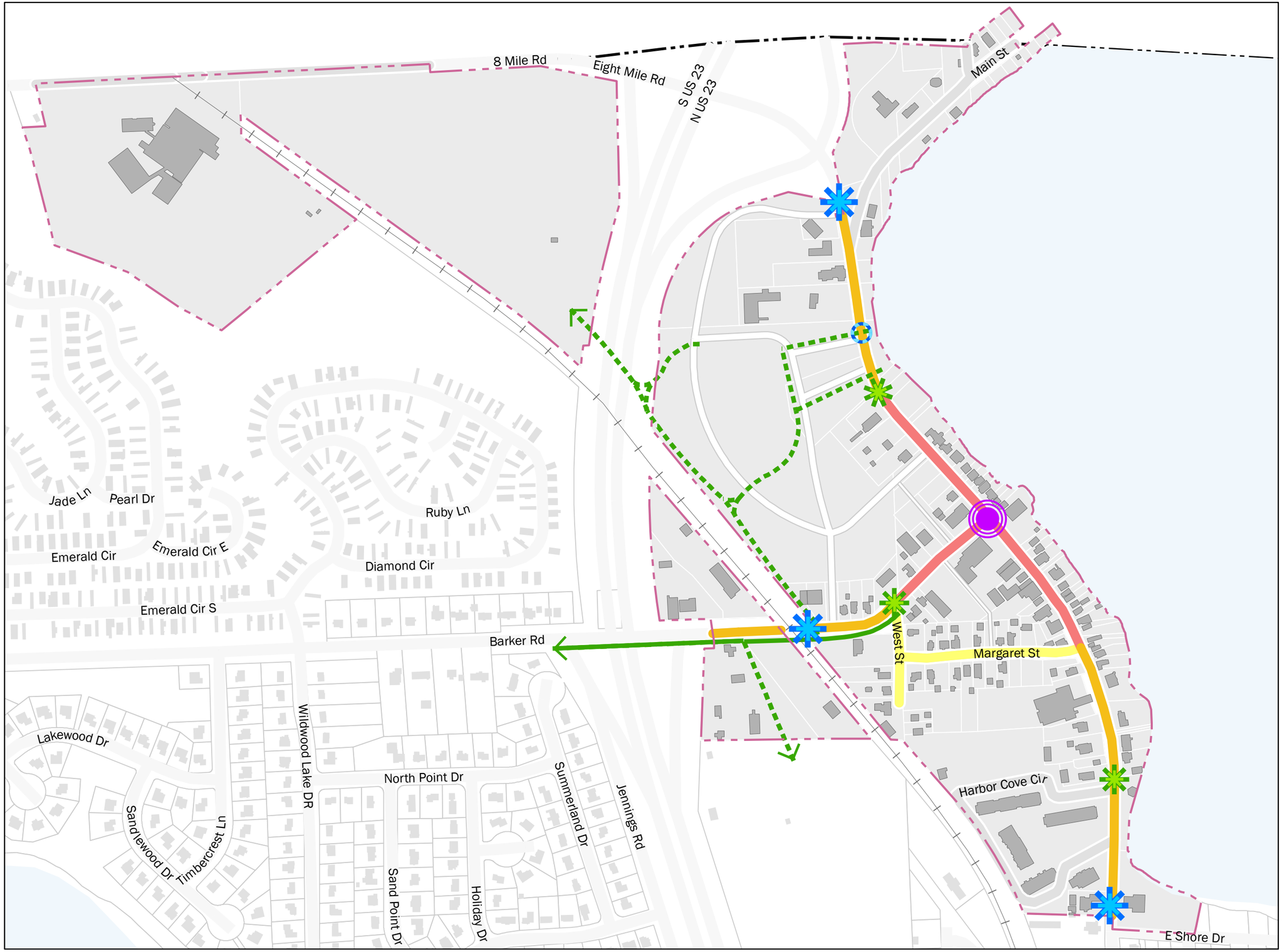
Improved and frequent pedestrian crossings are recommended to support safety, comfort, speed, and convenience of walking trips. Pedestrian crossings also serve bicyclists.

DRAFT

Future Transportation Map

Downtown Whitmore Lake,
Northfield Township,
Washtenaw County, Michigan

September 20, 2017



- Village Center Boundary
- Village Buildings
- Proposed Road
- Proposed Alley
- Paved Shoulder / Bike Lane
- Marked Shared Lane
- Bike Route
- Existing Pathway
- Proposed Pathway
- Core Intersection
- Gateway
- Transition
- Pedestrian Crossing

0 250 500 FEET

McKenna ASSOCIATES

Map Feature Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, Washtenaw County GIS

DESIGN PALETTES

An improved identity for Downtown Whitmore Lake will be created by enhancing the qualities of the streetscape through a high-quality built environment boasting safe accessible pedestrian circulation, traffic calming measures, marked shared bike lanes, on street parking, streetscape furniture, and plantings. The rhythmic placement of the streetscape elements establishes a cohesive streetscape setting.

The overarching goal of the proposed *Design Palette* for downtown promotes pedestrian safety, accessibility and a unified design treatment.

The streetscape enhancements will be focused in the downtown area, predominantly between the noted transitions into the urbanized downtown. The enhancement of the streetscape environment in downtown using the following finishing and identity palettes, as well as public art, will support the Township's objectives to give downtown a new life and identity to residents and people in the region.

FURNISHING PALETTE

Streetscape Furniture

Site furnishings provide important amenities for pedestrians by adding functionality and vitality to the pedestrian realm. Site furnishings include the images to the right.

These streetscape palette elements will complement the existing elements and can be implemented in the near-term, potentially with the help of donations or commissioning. These furnishings are available for purchase from Michigan based *Landscape Forms, Inc.*

Landscape Forms Inc.
Contact Information:
431 Lawndale Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Tel: 800.430.6209
www.landscapeforms.com

a Scarborough Litter Receptacle
b Scarborough Bench
c Ashbury Pedestrian Light
d Ring Bike Rack
e Plaza Planter

HARDSCAPE MATERIALS

Exposed Aggregate and Concrete Paving

The mixture of exposed aggregate and concrete paving reinforces the area as the downtown and central hub of activity, distinguishing it from other areas.

Detectable Warning Strips

Detectable warning surfaces are applied to ramps to indicate interference with the street.

f Exposed Aggregate
g Concrete Paving
h Detectable Warning Strip

IDENTITY PALETTE

Identity elements are recommended for Downtown Whitmore Lake to enhance identity and promote interaction and engagement between people and the streetscape environment. Interpretive signs can identify a district's name and entrances, announce important events, or display environmental information. Some identity features include gateways, signs, historical markers, installations, and banners.

Gateways

The Whitmore Lake gateway sign will identify entrances to the downtown district and mark the beginning of the area recommended for downtown identity features. The gateway design is a simple stone masonry base, the logo is designed to highlight the "more lake" slogan that reinforces residents desires to enhance Lake access and market the Lake as the significant defining element of downtown. The sign is intended to be cut from 3/8 inch steel panel with the "more lake" section powder coated in a branded Whitmore Lake red. The lettering should be placed to be prominently viewed from the direction entering downtown. Landscape screens or buildings can be used as a back drop. The lettering can also be back-lit for night visibility.

- Kiosks and informational signs can be used proximate to gateway signs, can be attractive, useful street features. Kiosks can be used to display maps, bulletin boards, community announcements, and other important information.
- Installations of public art can be considered to enhance the gateway elements or placed at transition elements or near the core intersection of Barker and Main.

The Townships existing "Northfield Township" gateway signs should remain in place. The Whitmore Lake signs will signify the entrance to downtown and complement rather than replace them.

Signs

Signs are an effective way to welcome, alert, inform and direct users, especially at transition points. The Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) contains guidelines for sign use in the transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle signs.

Sign branding for downtown Whitmore Lake should be used to enhance the character of the downtown and its regional recognition. Distinctive directional signs, monument signs and banners will provide user information and convey a sense of local identity.

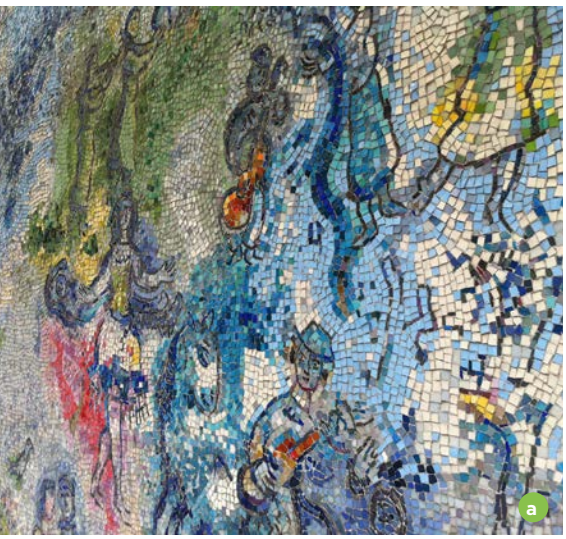
- Sign stands can be used for temporary purposes or in permanent installations, such as district maps and informative displays.
- Whitmore Lake Banners can be displayed on new poles or hang from existing lighting and utilities. Banners can be permanent district markers or rotated to note seasons or significant events.

Downtown Whitmore Lake Logo/Brand

The Whitmore Lake logo is recommended to be an established brand for the downtown. The use of this logo by local organizations, businesses, and residents is encouraged.

PUBLIC ART

Art installations in downtown Whitmore Lake are encouraged. Sculptures and murals, can greatly accentuate the transportation network and improve the value of a place. Art can be effective traffic calming and can be substituted for gateway signs and wayfinding signs to reduce sign clutter. These features should be carefully placed so that they improve the walkability and bikability of the roadway without creating hazardous obstacles or distracting drivers.



a **Wall Mosaic**
Chicago, IL

b **Wall Art**
Chicago, IL

c **Sculpture**
Evanston, IL

d **Median Sculpture**
Detroit, MI

April 4, 2017

Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission
Northfield Township
8350 Main Street
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

Subject: **Zoning Administrator Quarterly Report 1/1/17 – 3/31/17**

Dear Trustees and Commissioners:

Section 36-971(6) of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Zoning Administrator to submit to the Township Board and Planning Commission, a quarterly report in which a summary of the activities of the office is presented. Following is a concise summary of the activities of note in the first quarter of 2017 (January 1 through March 31).

Zoning Compliance applications:

1. Approved four (4) new dwellings and additions to one (1) other existing dwelling.
2. Approved six (6) new accessory structures such as garages and pole barns.
3. Approved one (1) swimming pool.
4. Approved one (1) solar panel array.
5. Approved wireless equipment upgrades at two (2) existing wireless communication facilities with no addition equipment cabinets or changes to site.
6. Denied two (2) garage requests – one for non-compliance to setbacks, the other for being located on a parcel with no principal structure.
7. Approved sign permit for one (1) commercial use.

- *Some other requests are pending submission of required and/or adequate information/documentation from applicants.*

Commercial Uses:

1. ***6350 Whitmore Lake Road*** - provided a zoning verification letter to allow applicant to determine which uses are permitted under the zoning regulations. Letter dated 2/5/17.
2. ***8475 Main Street/Bobber Downs*** – Approved proposed restaurant expansion subject to site plan approval by Planning Commission. Dated 3/20/17.

Zoning Board of Appeals Cases:

1. ***6410 and 6404 Whitmore Lake Road*** – Zoning Administrator ruled that a proposed cement contractor use was not permitted on the AG district/Whitmore Lake Overlay district zoned parcels. Applicant appealed against the administrative decision, and asked for the ZBA to rule that a cement paving contractor use is similar to an electrician, plumber or similar trade, and therefore allowable. ZBA upheld the Administrative decision and denied the applicants appeal. The applicant was directed to approach the Planning Commission with a request to rezone the parcel if they should so choose. Letter dated 2/27/17.

Meetings:

1. Conference call meeting with Township Supervisor and Staff re: issues with proposed use of 6404 and 6410 Whitmore Lake Road and to discuss uses allowable on the WLNT overlay zoned parcels on 2/3/17.
2. Met with representative of 8475 Main Street/Bobber Downs to discuss potential expansion plans, requirements and the approval process on 2/17/17.

Other Issues:

1. Responded to enquiries for installing fruit stands and cultivating hobby beehives.
2. Responded to query regarding validity of a variance.
3. Working with homeowner to determine setbacks required for construction of access steps into basement area.
4. Provided clarification regarding non-conforming single family dwellings and the rights with regard to rebuilding and expanding.

Administrative:

1. Conducted a training session on all aspects of Planning & Zoning for the members of Township Board of Trustees, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals on 3/30/17.

As the Zoning Administrator, I strive to be prompt and attentive to the needs of the applicants while ensuring that they understand the process and also comply with the rules and regulations set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,
McKenna Associates

Vidya Krishnan
Senior Planner

To: Larry Roman, Planning Commission Chair

From: Amy Steffens

Date: April 5, 2017

RE: March 20, 2017 Zoning Board of Appeals report

On March 20, 2017, the Zoning Board of Appeals considered an appeal to the Northfield Township's Zoning Administrator's decision to deny a zoning compliance application to permit the operation of a commercial concrete contractor company on a parcel zoned in the AR (agriculture) and the WLNT (Whitmore Lake/North Territorial overlay) districts. The applicant contended that the use is similar to the "contractor wholesale supply" and "open air display" uses which are conditional land uses in the WLNT district. The Zoning Administrator denied the zoning compliance application on the grounds that the proposed outdoor storage is not consistent with the uses in the WLNT district, the use is not similar to the permitted and conditional uses listed in the WLNT district, and the use does not comply with the intent and purpose of the WLNT overlay district.

The applicant was not seeking a variance of use but rather for the ZBA to interpret the zoning ordinance and find that the proposed commercial concrete contractor was a use similar to uses specifically permitted in the WLNT overlay district.

After hearing testimony by the Zoning Administrator and the applicant, and much discussion among the board members, the ZBA voted four to zero to uphold the Zoning Adminstrator's decision that the proposed commercial concrete contractor would not be a use consistent with the AR or WLNT overlay districts. It was suggested to the applicant that she could apply to have her parcel rezoned to a district that would permit the proposed use.

October 10, 2017

Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission
Northfield Township
8350 Main Street
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

Subject: **Zoning Administrator Quarterly Report 7/1/17 – 9/30/17**

Dear Trustees and Commissioners:

Section 36-971(6) of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Zoning Administrator to submit to the Township Board and Planning Commission, a quarterly report in which a summary of the activities of the office is presented. Following is a concise summary of the activities of note in the THIRD quarter of 2017 (July 1 through September 30).

Zoning Compliance Applications: A total of 30 applications were APPROVED

1. Approved six (6) new dwellings and additions to one (1) other existing dwelling.
2. Approved four (4) new accessory structures such sheds and pole barns.
3. Approved five (5) new decks.
4. Approved two (2) home occupations.
5. Approved four (4) new fence permits.
6. Approved soil permit for one (1) residential use parcel.

Non-residential Uses:

1. Approved sign permit for three (3) commercial uses (Arvin Sango; O'Donnell Electric; Bigtex Trailers).

2. Approved one request for temporary fireworks sales from Yellow Box fireworks; use required site plan and conditional use approval; however, applicant conducted the use without any approvals due to timeline issues.

3. ***Fiber Optics Business/175 Barker –*** Approved as an equipment services facility with outdoor storage, requiring site plan approval from the Planning Commission for change of use and site improvements beyond the scope of authority of the Zoning Administrator.

4. ***Dog Grooming/102 Barker –*** Approved proposed dog grooming business as being similar to a personal service establishment such as a beauty parlor or salon; administrative site plan approval required. Applicant was provided guidance for most basic requirements to be shown under ordinance provisions.

5. ***People's Express/9859 N. Main –*** Partly approved/partly denied. The use includes a transportation hub with an office and extensive service vehicle parking and facilities for service/repair and maintenance of fleet vehicles, in the WLD-W district. The transport service use is permitted as a conditional use in the district and requires site plan approval from Planning Commission and recommendation for conditional use approval from the Planning Commission with final approval by the Township Board of Trustees. The proposal to construct a garage/structure to allow for repair and maintenance of fleet vehicles is not permitted in the WLD-W district. Such use is classified as

vehicle repair and permissible only in the General Commercial (GC) and Light Industrial (LI) district. Therefore, that portion of the use was denied.

NO applications were DENIED. Four (4) applications were received, that were incorrectly drawn or showed non-compliance with ordinance standards and were initially turned down. We were able to direct the applicant to submit revisions and guide them to alter the plans to achieve compliance resulting in subsequent approval.

Zoning Board of Appeals Cases:

1. **Bobber Down/8475 N. Main** – Request for variance from side yard setback for proposed addition on the north side; recommended approval of variance – variance was granted by ZBA.

2. **3375 Five Mile Road** – Request for variance to exceed maximum permitted driveway length of 1000 feet; recommended approval of variance – variance was granted by ZBA.

3. **Ann Arbor Dog Training Club/1575 E. North territorial Road** – Request for variance from side yard setback for new building on site; recommended approval of variance – On ZBA agenda for consideration on 10/16/17.

Final Site Inspections: The Township has several sites that have been through site plan approval but have never been inspected for compliance to the approved plans which is very important to maintain the integrity of the Ordinance and ensure enforcement. The authority for such inspection lies with the Zoning Administrator per Sec. 36-87. Inspection of the Zoning Ordinance which states:

(a) All subgrade improvements, such as utilities subbase and base installations for drives and parking lots, and similar improvements, shall be inspected by the building inspector and approved prior to covering. The zoning administrator shall be responsible for the inspection of all improvements for conformance to the approved site plan. The zoning administrator is authorized to employ the township planner, township engineer, or other township departments or experts to assist in the inspection of all site improvements required by the approved site plan.

1. **O'Donnell Electric/8505 N. Main** – A letter was issued granting final site plan approval subject to installation of landscaping as shown on the approved site plan.

2. **RheTech/1500 E. North territorial Road** – A letter was issued granting final site plan approval subject to replacement of two (2) light fixtures on the north façade with shielded fixtures as shown on the approved site plan.

3. **Arvin Sango/955 E. North territorial Road** – Applicant requested intermediate site inspection to determine if they are complaint. Minor issues were found with regard to parking placement that are being resolved administratively.

Site/Code/Zoning Violations: Section 36-974 (a) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

It shall be unlawful to use or occupy or to permit the use or occupancy of any structure or premises, or both, or part thereof, hereafter created, erected, changed, converted, or wholly or partly altered or enlarged in its use or structure until a certificate of occupancy shall have been issued by the building inspector. A certificate of occupancy shall not be issued until it has been signed by the zoning

administrator, said signature signifying compliance with all provisions of this chapter. A certificate of occupancy shall not be issued for any building or structure or a part thereof, or for the use of land, which does not comply with all provisions of this chapter. The certificate shall state that the building, structure, and lot and use thereof, conform to the requirements of this chapter, and shall list each legal nonconformity existing on the premises. Failure to obtain a certificate of occupancy when required shall be a violation of this chapter and punishable under section 36-979.

The Township brought to our attention two (2) properties which appeared to be in violation of the ordinance, and asked for an inspection report. I visited the sites with the Code Enforcement Officer and made the following observations, which were presented with details to the Township in written reports:

1. **Broadscape/6350 Whitmore Lake Road** - The site is zoned AR (Agriculture) District and is located within the Whitmore Lake North Territorial Overlay District. Landscape Supply companies are permitted in the AR district as a conditional use per Section 36-157 (16) of the Zoning Ordinance. A landscape supply use on the site, therefore, would be permitted, but only with approval from the Planning Commission and Township Board of Trustees. Broadscape Landscape Supply has no record of site plan approval or even a Zoning Compliance application on file.

2. **Regal Recycling/6270 Whitmore Lake Road -** The site is zoned AR (Agriculture) District and is located within the Whitmore Lake North Territorial Overlay District. Scrap recycling and junk yards are not permitted in the AR district or the overlay district; however, the use received approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals on November 26, 2012 as an existing legal non-conforming use. The business received site plan approval from the Planning Commission in August 2013 for a 7,200 square foot accessory structure, which was built without any permits. The site plan application/approval was an 'after the fact' request/action. As part of the site plan approval, the applicant was required to bring several items up to code. The Township records indicate that since site plan approval, the applicant has not made the necessary changes to meet the conditions of approval. Per records, the Township has reminded the applicant numerous times to comply with the planning and engineering requirements, to no avail. A site visit indicated numerous violations on the site and non-compliance with the approved site plan.

Meetings:

1. Met on 8/9/17 with new Township Manager, Supervisor, Zoning Coordinator and Code enforcement official on updates to various issues and cases within the Township.

Other Issues:

1. Identified need for revising WLD-W district use profile. The district currently permits uses that are typically allowable only in industrial and heavy commercial districts.
2. Discussed with Zoning Coordinator interpretation on measurement of waterfront yard setbacks, living space above garage, ordinance requirements of professional site plan drawings, soil permit requirements etc.

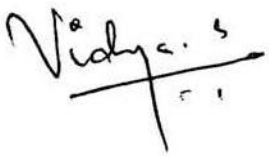
I have continued to work in the past few months to facilitate a smooth Zoning Compliance application process. In working with the Zoning Coordinator, we have tried our best to guide applicants into turning in proper drawings. Having accurately measured drawings is a must in order to safeguard the Township and the property owners' interests. Approval of a structure that may have been incorrectly shown resulting in the construction

of a non-conforming new structure will have implications for property insurance and liability in the event of a fire or other disaster, and can create issues between neighbors.

I am aware that the Planning Commission and Township Board of Trustees have heard from residents and property owners about our being "rigid" with rules. The Zoning Ordinance is a legal binding document adopted under a State law. It is not within the scope of my authority to waive or modify rules arbitrarily. We have suggested that the Ordinance be amended in some cases where the regulations seem excessively burdensome; however, until such time the ordinance is amended, we are bound by the rules on the book and by a code of ethics. Exempting some property owners from complying with the Ordinance would be unfair to those who follow the rules and eventually will be a detriment to the quality of life factors for the Township as a whole.

Well written and impartially administrated Zoning Regulations are not a detriment to a community's growth. In fact, developers welcome the opportunity to build in a community that has clear-cut guidelines and rules that enable the construction of well-designed sites with consideration to long term growth. As the Zoning Administrator, I strive to be prompt and attentive to the needs of the applicants while ensuring that they understand the process and also comply with the rules and regulations set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,
McKenna Associates



Vidya Krishnan
Senior Planner

July 11, 2017

Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission
Northfield Township
8350 Main Street
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

Subject: **Zoning Administrator Quarterly Report 3/1/17 – 6/30/17**

Dear Trustees and Commissioners:

Section 36-971(6) of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Zoning Administrator to submit to the Township Board and Planning Commission, a quarterly report in which a summary of the activities of the office is presented. Following is a concise summary of the activities of note in the SECOND quarter of 2017 (March 1 through June 30).

Zoning Compliance Applications: A total of 38 applications were APPROVED

1. Approved eight (8) new dwellings and additions to six (6) other existing dwelling.
2. Approved seven (7) new accessory structures such as garages and pole barns.
3. Approved two (2) swimming pools.
4. Approved seven (7) new/replacement fences.
5. Approved one (1) solar panel array.
6. Approved one (1) new driveway which requires ZBA approval for length.
7. Approved soil permit for one (1) residential use parcel.

Non-residential Uses:

1. Approved wireless equipment upgrades at one (1) existing wireless communication facility with no addition equipment cabinets or changes to site.
2. Approved sign permit for one (1) commercial use (Advance Auto Parts).
3. ***Spiritus Sanctus Church/4101 E. Joy Road –*** Administratively approved a 1,688 square feet addition on the southeast corner of the building to accommodate teacher/staff area. The proposed addition qualified for administrative site plan approval and issues related to parking, sidewalk, landscaping and building were reviewed and approved.
4. ***Fun Time Dog Shop LLC/100 & 102 Barker –*** Approved proposed retail dog shop use with limited dog training classes to differentiate it from any kennel or dog club use; site plan approval required.
5. ***SLM/Big Tex Trailers/6480 Whitmore Lake Road –*** Approved proposed change of ownership after removal of sign installed with no permits and unauthorized expansion of trailer storage area. The trailer storage area on site did not comply with the original site plan or expansion authorized by the Planning Commission. Approval was granted after site was brought into compliance.

Some other requests are pending submission of required and/or adequate information/documentation from applicants.

A total of 5 applications were DENIED as follows:

1. ***Vacant lot on Main Street/New Dwelling*** – Existing non-conforming lot of record. Applicant was advised that the SR-1 zoned lot was still buildable but the drawing submitted was non-compliant with all Ordinance requirements. Applicant was advised to submit revised drawings for approval.
2. ***9205 N. Main/Massage Parlor*** - The subject site is zoned Residential-Office district. Massage therapy offices/parlors are considered as personal service establishments and included in the same category as a beauty parlor, spa, barber shop etc., which provide personal service to customers. The R-O District does not allow personal service establishments as principal permitted or conditional land uses. The Master Plan does not support the use either.
3. ***175 Barker/Asphalt Paving Company Vehicle Storage and Use*** – Site is zoned GC General Commercial. Existing towing company use is also not permitted in the district but is a non-conforming existing use. The proposed asphalt paving company use and vehicle storage is not allowed in the GC district. Attempted to help owner understand the uses allowable in the district.
4. ***Vacant Parcel on Main/Fireworks Sales*** – Proposed temporary sales of fireworks or any other retail use is not permitted in the SR-2 Single Family Residential District.
5. ***Quality Aire Systems/6880 Earhart Road*** – The applicant has a commercial HVAC business on a parcel zoned AR (Agriculture) district. The use is not permitted or similar to any other use allowable in the district. Further, the business is not an existing legal non-conforming use since the Assessor's office has no record of a business being conducted on this site, which is registered as a homestead.

Zoning Board of Appeals Cases:
No requests this quarter.

Meetings:

1. Met with representative of 238 Jennings on 4/7/17 to discuss if a billboard would be allowed on the site.
2. Met with prospective owners of land in US-23/8 Mile area on 4/7/17 for potential retail development. Discussed process, timeline, and support the Township can offer.

Other Issues:

1. Identified need for including temporary uses and standards in the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Identified need to clarify discrepancy in SR-1 and SR-2 districts regarding setbacks for detached accessory structures. Specifically, Section 36-218 and 36-248 footnote (4), and Section 36-98(d)(2)(b).
3. Identified need to amend Zoning Map to reflect the Whitmore Lake/Horseshoe Lake Overlay district.

Administrative:

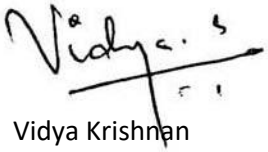
1. Discussed with Township Supervisor, Zoning Coordinator, Building Official, and Planner process or system for checking site plan compliance and ensure code compliance.

2. Created a basic checklist of requirements based on the Ordinance for Zoning Compliance applications to streamline process and ensure proper drawings are submitted.
3. Letter for municipal approval for Big Tex trailers to meet State Licensing requirements.

I am aware that the Board and PC have heard from property owners regarding Zoning Compliance denials that have been issued. The approvals or denials are not arbitrary, and they are based completely on the Zoning Ordinance adopted by the Township. As the Zoning Administrator, it is my role to apply the letter of the Ordinance. While the Zoning Administrator can interpret provisions of the Zoning Ordinance when required, I do not have the authority to modify regulations or alter them to accommodate applications. At times when I perceive a requirement in the Zoning Ordinance as being unreasonable, I convey the same to the planner to bring to the attention of the Planning Commission to initiate a possible change in the Ordinance language. I try my best to help applicants through the process by communicating via email and phone conversations through the Township and directly in an attempt to resolve any issues. However, if the Ordinance does not allow a use, I am not at a liberty to make exceptions or grant approvals that are against the Township's regulations. Appeals of a Zoning Administrator's decision or applications for a non-use variance from the Zoning Ordinance can be taken to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

As the Zoning Administrator, I strive to be prompt and attentive to the needs of the applicants while ensuring that they understand the process and also comply with the rules and regulations set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,
McKenna Associates



Vidya Krishnan
Senior Planner