



# White Lake Township

## 2024 Master Plan



Draft: November 2023

Insert Resolution



# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction & Background

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## INTRODUCTION

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

### What is a Master Plan?

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) enables municipalities to write a Master Plan that broadly guides development to meet current and future needs and promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents. A Master Plan is a long-range, comprehensive document that guides decisions about future development based on existing and forecasted conditions and trends, community needs and preferences, and plans best practices. The Plan is intended to represent the community's consensus and serve as a guide for decision-making regarding the Township's future. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) also requires all municipalities to review its Master Plan every five years to determine if an update is needed. Since the adoption of White Lake Township's Master Plan for Land Use 2010-2011, changes in Township

demographics and socio-economic compositions have warranted a reevaluation of the Township's policies with respect to growth, development, and land use. To this end, White Lake Township's 2024 Master Plan update aims to chart a path for a desirable future with a strong emphasis on short- and long-term goals and action strategies.

### Relationship to Zoning Ordinance

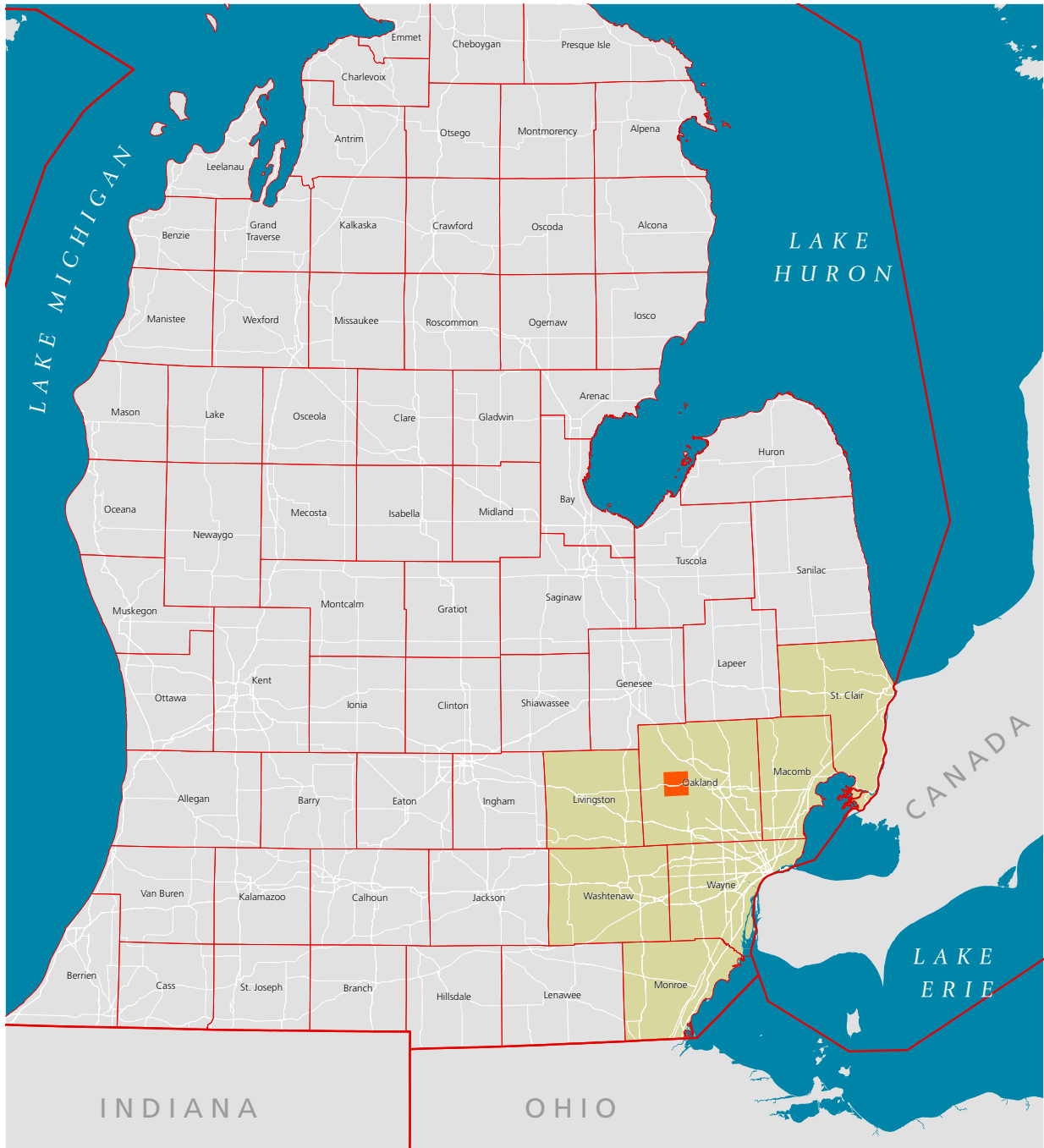
The Master Plan is not a binding agreement but rather a planning framework. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is local land use law. The Zoning Ordinance is a set of regulations that provide the details for how and where development can locate to exacting specifications. Thus, the Zoning Ordinance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

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

White Lake Township is located in central Oakland County in the Western Lakes area and is a suburban community within the Detroit metropolitan area, with the southeasternmost area of the Township located 19 miles northwest of the Detroit city limits. The Township is spread over 37.1 square miles with a population of 30,950 in 2020.<sup>1</sup> The development pattern in the Township is determined by the availability of public utilities and is a mix of both urban and rural character.



Map 01: Regional Location



# Regional Location

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

- White Lake Township
- SEMCOG



White Lake Township is a part of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region that consists of Oakland, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties. The Township is bordered by Springfield Township to the north, Waterford Township to the east, Commerce Township to the south, and Highland Township to the west. West Bloomfield Township meets White Lake Township at its southeast corner, forming the “Four Towns” area along Union Lake and Cooley Lake Roads, with Commerce and Waterford Townships.

The Township is bisected by State Highway M-59 running east-west through the Township. The M-59 thoroughfare continues about 10 miles west to connect the Township with US-23, which runs north to Flint and south to Brighton and Ann Arbor, and continues east through metro Detroit to find a terminus at Chesterfield & Harrison Townships. Interstate 75 (I-75), which runs north to Flint and south to southeast to Detroit, can be accessed about three miles northeast.

With an abundance of greenspace and year-round recreation opportunities (25% of the land use in the Township), the Township’s slogan “Four Season’s Playground” is well suited. The Township is also part of the region around the Huron River that has been established as the “Huron River Valley” by Oakland County, which expands recreational access regionally.

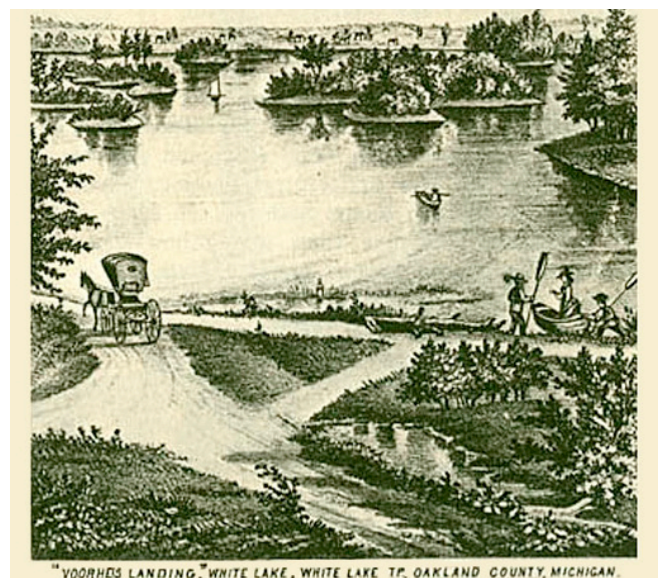
## BRIEF HISTORY OF WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

White Lake Township was organized as a Township in Oakland County in 1836; prior to that, there were two villages: White Lake Settlement and Oxbow Lake Village.<sup>2</sup> The White Lake Settlement was located in the area of White Lake and Ormond Roads. The first settlers arrived around the White Lake area in the 1820s. During that time, and for several years to follow, an indigenous encampment was located on the shores of White Lake Road; that is when Lake Road began as a well-used trail of the Native Americans.<sup>3</sup> Harley Olmsted, came to the White Lake Settlement from Monroe County, New York, in 1830, and built the first house in 1832.<sup>4</sup> Oxbow Lake Village, located on what is now Elizabeth Lake Road near Oxbow Lake, was started by Erastus Hopkins, who bought 320 acres in 1833 when he came to Michigan from New York.<sup>5</sup> Harley Olmsted, Erastus Hopkins, and other early settlers established churches, schools, post offices, and other business operations.

Agriculture was the early predominant land use and economic driver in the White Lake Settlement and Oxbow Lake Village areas. However, arrival of a stagecoach line as early as 1836 routed through White Lake Road to run between Grand Rapids and Detroit, with a stop at the White Lake Settlement beginning in 1837, opened new opportunities for regional trade.<sup>6</sup> One of the area’s most significant achievements was the lumbering era, the impetus for the settlement of the White Lake community.<sup>7</sup> Building on the longstanding history of lumber trade around White Lake and Duck Lake, the Hopkins Mills (grist mill and sawmill) was established in Oxbow Village.<sup>8</sup>

The turn of the 20th century and the Industrial Revolution proved Detroit as an industrial and manufacturing base, and the suburbs around White Lake were beneficiaries of the population and economic growth. During this period, the population in White Lake Township exponentially grew from 1,114 (1930) to 22,608 (1990) and so, seemingly, residential development in the Township also increased.<sup>9</sup> In addition to being a sought-after residential suburb of Detroit, the Township’s popularity in the region was furthered by the abundance of recreational opportunities offered around its 21 named lakes.<sup>10</sup> Progressing into the 21st century, White Lake carried forward its rich agricultural history in the rural parts of the Township while exhibiting its industrial character in the more urbanized areas while continuing its legacy as a recreational destination in Southeast Michigan.

Figure 01: Voorheis’ Landing



Source: White Lake Citizens League

Figure 02: The White Lake Inn



Source: The White Lake Inn

## PLANNING EFFORTS IN WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

White Lake Township has engaged in multiple planning efforts in the past and the following section is a description of these efforts.

### 2011 | 2010-2011 White Lake Township Master Plan for Land Use<sup>11</sup>

This 2024 Master Plan update intends to be the next iteration of the White Lake Township Master Plan for Land Use adopted in 2011. It is, therefore, important to evaluate the 2011 Plan to determine which goals have been achieved, which goals are still relevant, and which goals haven't been achieved. For the goals that haven't been achieved, this Master Plan update presents an opportunity to evaluate potential barriers and rethink the actions required to achieve the goal(s) in the future. The 2011 Master Plan contained seven goals themed around natural features, infrastructure, residential neighborhoods, land use, services, and recreation. The associated strategies for each goal were divided into tasks in which the Planning Commission took the lead and those that required discussion and partnership with other Township boards and/or groups outside the Township.

### 2023 | 2024-2029 White Lake Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)<sup>12</sup>

The 2024-2029 White Lake Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) serves as a tool to assist

White Lake Township in turning long-range policy planning into real improvements on the ground. It provides a schedule of expenditures for constructing, maintaining, upgrading, and/or replacing a community's physical inventory. The Township has several facilities in the pipeline including a new Public Safety headquarters, Township Civic Building, and a Maintenance Building totaling \$35 million. The CIP has also budgeted for several of the improvements outlined in the Township's Park and Recreation Master Plan, including \$1.75 million of Township funds for the construction of Stanley Park. Other major expenses include \$2.2 million towards Western Outlet Sanitary Extension, \$4 million towards the construction of a satellite fire station, and \$5.5 million towards a new iron filtration and sewer connection at the Aspen Meadows well site.

### 2023 | 2023-2027 White Lake Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan<sup>13</sup>

White Lake Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to guide future Parks and Recreation programs, services, operations, and maintenance for the five-year term. In addition, the plan is intended to form the basis for future applications for recreation grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and other granting agencies and foundations. White Lake operates six Township parks: Stanley Park, Ferdinand C. Vetter Park, Judy Hawley Park, Hidden Pines Park, Bloomer Park, and Fisk Farm. In addition to the Township-owned parks, the public and parochial schools in White Lake provide recreation opportunities. The plan pursues long-range recreational goals and objectives through specific short-range actions on the part of the Township, County, and State as well as private entities.

### 2017 | Civic District Development Study<sup>14</sup>

The intent of the Civic District (CiDi) Development Study was to leverage the design and planning of the proposed Civic Campus with the surrounding region to create momentum that spurred development with an emphasis on creating a walkable, active small-town center that is sustainable and attractive for residents and business. The design and planning process utilized research, analysis, and community input to develop a planning approach that was uniquely targeted to White Lake Township through a series of strategies that addressed infrastructure,



stormwater management, environment and ecology, recreation, land use, neighborhood connectivity, and development density. The recommendations were as follows:

- » Implementing a focused downtown master plan integrated with the shopping center at Town Center Boulevard and adjacent to Brendel Lake could propel the region as an economic engine for the Township and create a unique destination that would epitomize the identity of the community.
- » Create a higher density of development at the intersection of Elizabeth Lake Road and Town Center Boulevard that would be characterized as a walkable district.

## REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Regional and County-wide demographic and socio-economic trends and changes influence growth and development patterns in the Township. To capture these larger regional planning trends, this section reviews the surrounding communities and their Master Plans, Oakland County's planning efforts, and SEMCOG's regional plans to determine how land use planning in neighboring jurisdictions and the region may impact White Lake Township.

### Master Plans of Neighboring Municipalities

The Township is bordered by Springfield Township to the north, Waterford Township to the east, Commerce Township to the south, and Highland Township to the west. The Future Land Uses (FLUs) and the Future Land Use Maps (FLUMs) of these four municipalities are summarized in the table titled: "Master Plans of Neighboring Municipalities" with the purpose of ensuring compatible land usage along Township boundaries. An important consideration while reviewing the table is the Master Plans of all four surrounding Townships are either past or approaching the end of the designated adoption period. In the event the municipalities adopt a new Master Plan, the future land use along the periphery may change, warranting a reevaluation of land use

compatibility along the jurisdictional boundaries.

### 2020 | Oakland County Economic Development Strategic Plan<sup>15</sup>

The purpose of this plan is to provide the Economic Development (ED) Department with the structure, programs, and resources necessary to foster sustainable economic vitality. The plan aims to catalyze innovation, investment, and growth in Oakland County through business vitality and diversification, community development and planning, and talent development and attraction. Oakland County aims to leverage its assets to build a more robust and comprehensive program that will generate long-term prosperity. The plan consists of several strategies including collaboration with the business community and local authorities.

### 2021 | Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan<sup>16</sup>

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan (CEDS) serves as a required vehicle through which the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) evaluates grants and resource requests for the seven-county SEMCOG region, including Oakland County. The CEDS outlines the following economic development strategies:

- » Creating and marketing quality places
- » Anticipating demands for land use
- » Investing in critical infrastructure
- » Fostering a competitive business climate
- » Advancing technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- » Preparing and connecting talent with jobs.

The Township can coordinate with the County and SEMCOG to determine the current status of the CEDS and tap into potential grants and resource requests through the U.S. EDA.

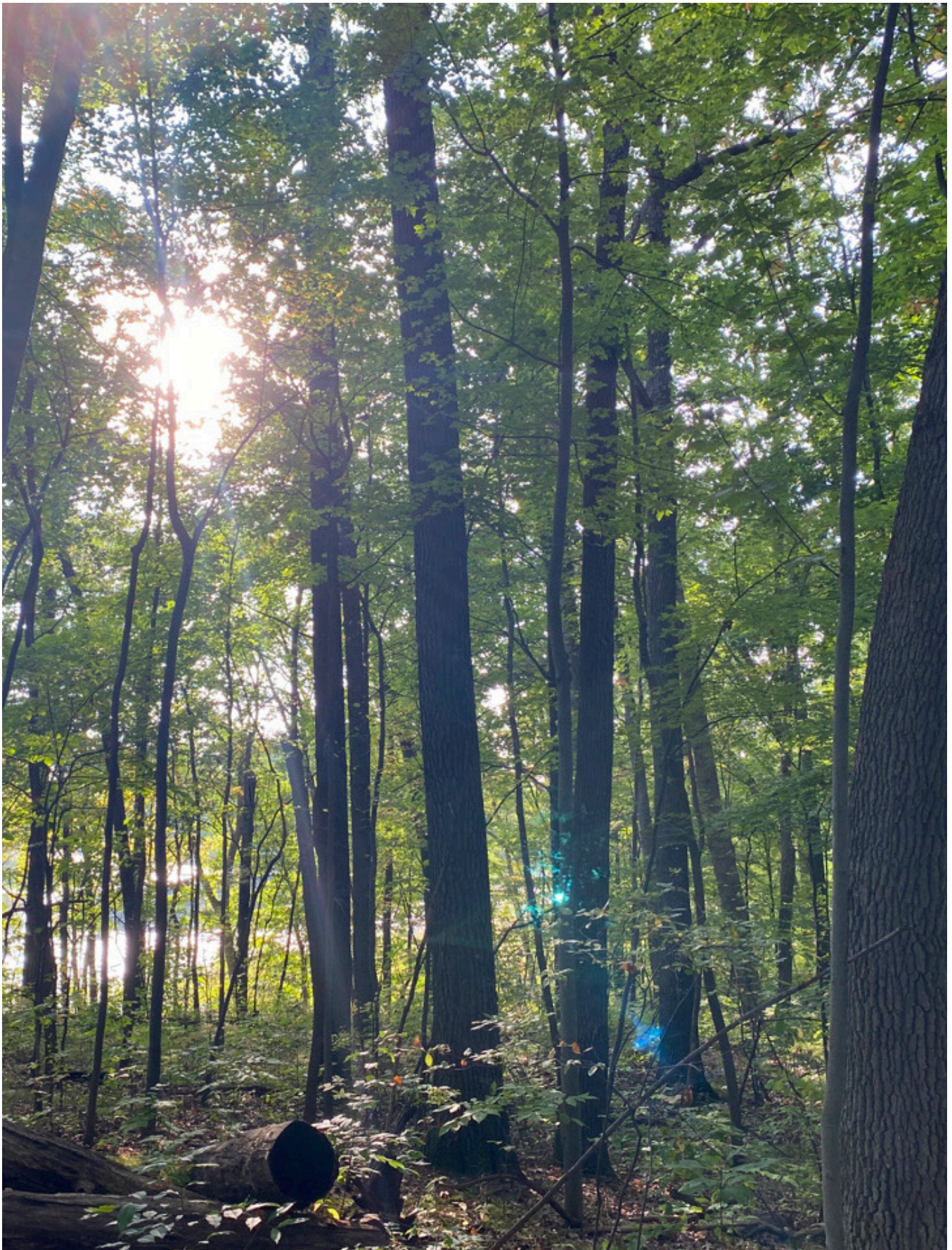
**Table 01: Master Plans of Neighboring Municipalities**

	Springfield Township <sup>17</sup>	Waterford Township <sup>18</sup>	Commerce Township <sup>19</sup>	Highland Township <sup>20</sup>
<b>Location</b>	North of White Lake Township	East of White Lake Township	South of White Lake Township	West of White Lake Township
<b>Document Title</b>	Springfield Township Master Plan	Waterford Township Master Plan 2003–2023	Commerce Township Master Plan	Highland Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2000-2020
<b>Year Adopted</b>	2009 (Amended: 2016)	2003	2015	2000
<b>Future Land Uses Along Shared Boundary with White Lake Township</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Low Density Residential</li> <li>» Recreation-Conservation</li> <li>» Limited Industrial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Residential</li> <li>» Public &amp; Open Space</li> <li>» Regional Commerce/Community Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Single-Family Residential</li> <li>» Multiple-Family Residential</li> <li>» Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Parks and Recreation</li> <li>» Agricultural &amp; Rural Residential</li> <li>» Low Density Residential</li> </ul>
<b>Comparison of Land Use Along Jurisdictional Boundary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The residential land use in White Lake Township along the northern boundary is also low-density residential barring the Meadow Lake manufactured housing community in the northwest corner.</li> <li>» The recreation land use spills over the boundary with the Indian Springs Metropark &amp; Golf course.</li> <li>» The northeast corner of White Lake Township is largely occupied by Mack Industries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The residential land use in White Lake Township along the eastern boundary is predominantly residential with large areas of recreational land within the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area and White Lake Oaks Golf Course.</li> <li>» The residential development along this periphery is denser than other areas of White Lake Township.</li> <li>» The commercial land use along Cooley Lake Road extends across the boundary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The land use in White Lake Township along the southern boundary is also predominantly residential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Highland State Recreation Area occupies a large portion of the Township south of M-59 along the western boundary of White Lake Township.</li> <li>» There are several recreational/campgrounds and supporting commercial uses around White Lake.</li> </ul>
<b>Considerations for White Lake Township's FLUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Future residential land uses along the periphery must be planned carefully depending on the availability of public utilities.</li> <li>» Recreation/Conservation Areas should be buffered from industrial uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Future residential land uses along the periphery must be planned carefully depending on the availability of public utilities.</li> <li>» Integrate neighborhood scale commercial land uses along its periphery to support the dense residential land uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» There are several lakes and natural features scattered along the southern boundary making more intense land uses unsuitable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Commercial land uses along this boundary can be consolidated to control development around White Lake.</li> </ul>

## Sources

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Bloomer Park



# Demographics

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A demographic analysis provides insights into a community's socio-economic characteristics, growth, and development patterns, and changing needs and preferences. An understanding of demographic trends is a precursor to determining future goals and planning strategies for White Lake Township. It is equally important to recognize demographic trends and growth patterns in a community are not isolated events, but tend to be responses to broader regional socioeconomic shifts. Collectively, an awareness of local and regional trends can enable the Township to make the most of its assets while addressing any challenges. To this end, this section examines data and trends relating to the Township's population, households, and economy in comparison to other surrounding communities in Oakland County to provide regional context.

## DATA SOURCES

The demographic data in this chapter is derived from the following sources, in this preferred order:

### 2020, 2010, 2000, and 1990 U.S. Decennial Censuses

Mandated by the United States Constitution, the decennial census is the most accurate source of information recorded by the U.S. Census Bureau as it aims to count 100% of the population. The decennial census is valuable because it provides comparable data points at regular 10-year intervals since 1790. This data is also the basis for congressional apportionment and redistricting which determines funding and resource allocation for a community over the next decade. However, it is important to note the data provided by the decennial census is limited, as the intention is to count 100% of the U.S. population. The survey is intentionally short and covers limited information about household composition, sex, race, and occupancy type (own v. rent). Additionally, the 10-year gap between surveys

means demographic and housing patterns between the decades are not captured in this census.

### American Community Survey (ACS)

The American Community Survey (ACS) was initiated in 2000 and collects more detailed information on social, economic, and housing characteristics compared to the decennial census. Instead of collecting data every 10 years, this survey collects data on an ongoing basis and releases data periodically. However, the long-form format of the ACS makes it logistically difficult to administer the survey for 100% of the population. Instead of surveying the complete population, the ACS samples a percentage of the population to determine estimates for the overall population; therefore, the accuracy of the ACS depends on the population size of the sampling area. To maintain statistical validity, the Census Bureau collects sample data over two different time frames, a one-year or five-year frame, depending on the size of a community. In communities where the population is less than 65,000, data is collected over 60 months (five years) to achieve a valid sample size and generate estimates for the overall population. Since White Lake Township and the surrounding communities (for regional comparison) have a population less than 65,000, this plan uses the ACS five-year estimates.

### Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

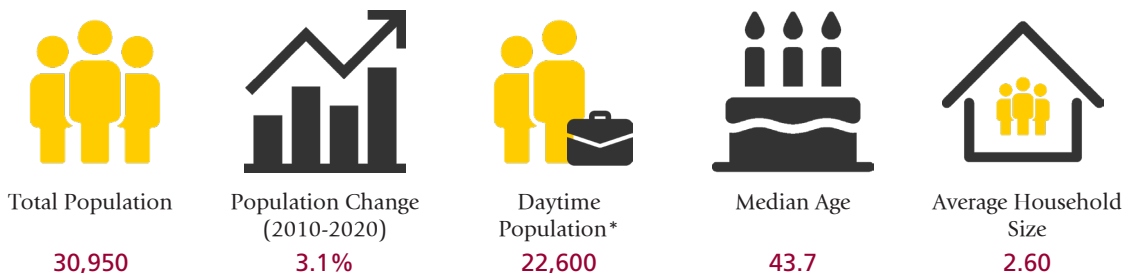
SEMCOG is a regional planning partnership of governmental units serving the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan including Oakland County. SEMCOG's Regional Forecast provides a long-range and comprehensive view of future demographic and economic changes in Southeast Michigan. This plan uses the 2045 regional forecasts.

Figure 03: Summary of Key Community Indicators

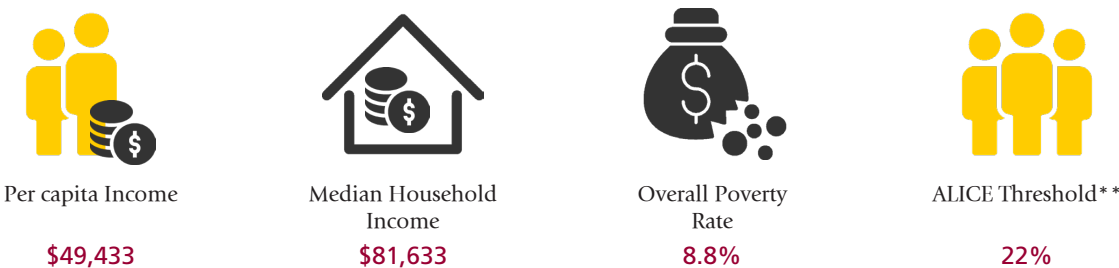
# SUMMARY OF KEY COMMUNITY INDICATORS

White Lake Township, MI  
Geography: County Subdivision

## Population



## Income



## Economy & Market



\* Daytime population, refers to the number of people who are present in an area during normal business hours, including workers. This is in contrast to the resident population who are typically present during the evening and nighttime hours.

\*\* Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) is a measure that captures individuals who may be above the federal poverty level but still struggle with regular expenses and costs.

\*\*\* Tapestry segmentation profiles are select consumer groups developed by ESRI, defined by shared traits such as demographics, socioeconomic status, and behavior.

This infographic contains data provided by the Decennial Census, American Community Survey (ACS), United Force – ALICE, ESRI, ESRI and Data Axle, ESRI and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Beckett&Raeder

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### Population

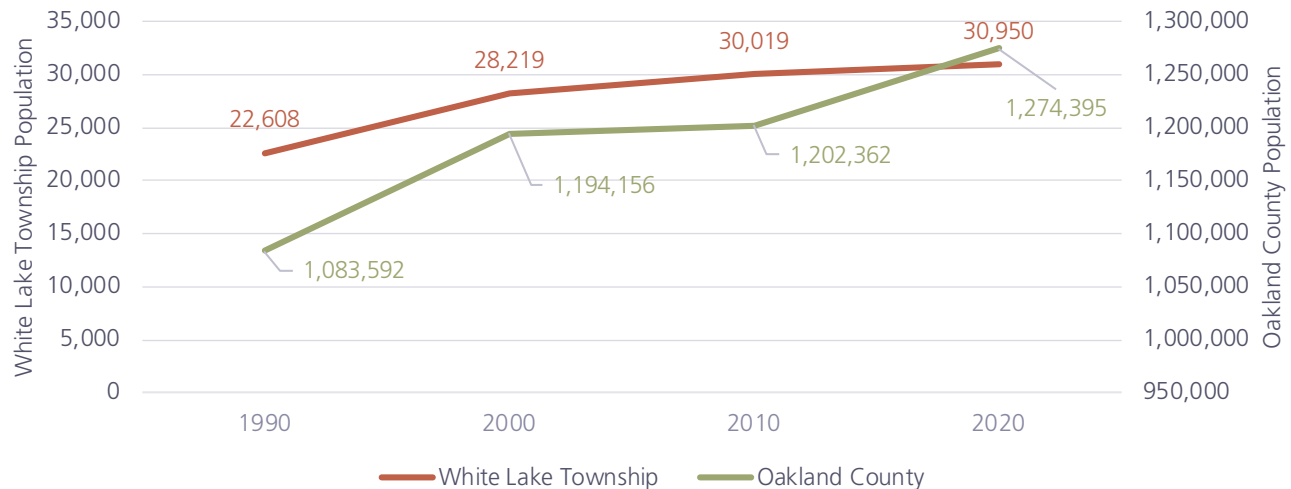
The population of White Lake Township has continually grown in the last three decades to 30,950 in 2020. With the highest growth rate of 25% occurring between 1990–2000, the rate of population growth gradually slowed down to 3.1% between 2010–2020. Even though the Township's population grew in the last decade, the pace has been slower than the County (6% growth rate) and most surrounding communities, barring Highland Township and Waterford Township where the population declined. The surrounding communities of Commerce Township, Lyon Township, and Orion

Township witnessed a higher growth rate than White Lake Township likely due to their proximity to urban centers such as Novi and Auburn Hills. These Townships are likely growing as a result of the out-migration from the densely populated cities, where housing opportunities are scarce, and the cost of living is high.

### Population Forecast

SEMCOG's 2045 Regional Forecast provides an overview of future population trends in Southeast Michigan. The table titled "Population Forecast" outlines the population forecasts from SEMCOG for the Township and Oakland County over the next 25 years. SEMCOG anticipates a slow growth to occur

Figure 04: Population: White Lake Township & Oakland County (1990-2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census (1990, 2000, 2010, 2020)

Table 02: Population: White Lake Township & Other Communities (1990-2020)

	1990	2000		2010		2020	
	Count	Count	Change	Count	Change	Count	Change
White Lake Twp	22,608	28,219	24.8%	30,019	6.4%	30,950	3.1%
Commerce Twp	26,955	34,764	29.0%	40,186	15.6%	43,058	7.1%
Highland Twp	17,941	19,169	6.8%	19,202	0.2%	19,172	-0.2%
Lyon Twp	9,450	11,041	16.8%	14,545	31.7%	23,271	60.0%
Orion Twp	24,076	33,463	39.0%	35,394	5.8%	38,206	7.9%
Springfield Twp	9,927	13,338	34.4%	13,940	4.5%	14,703	5.5%
Waterford Twp	66,692	73,150	9.7%	71,707	-2.0%	70,565	-1.6%
Oakland County	1,083,592	1,194,156	10.2%	1,202,362	0.7%	1,274,395	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census (1990, 2000, 2010, 2020)

**Table 03: Population Forecast: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2020–2045)**

	Census	SEMCOG Regional Forecast					
	2020	2030		2040		2045	
	Count	Count	Change	Count	Change	Count	Change
<b>White Lake Twp</b>	30,950	31,578	2.0%	32,236	2.1%	32,194	-0.1%
<b>Oakland County</b>	1,274,395	1,286,750	1.0%	1,314,016	2.1%	1,319,089	0.4%

Source: United States Census Bureau Decennial Census (2020); Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

within both White Lake Township and Oakland County until 2040. The growth is expected to plateau for Oakland County and marginally decline in the Township by 2045.

### Households

Consistent with the population growth in the Township, the total number of households also increased from 10,985 to 11,991 from 2010–2020. However, while the population grew by only 3.1%, the number of households increased by 9.2%. In comparison, Oakland County's population growth rate (6%) was proportionate to the increase in households (5.9%). This pace of growth in the total households in the Township is likely an outcome of changing household dynamics. On one hand, the number of seniors (65 years and above) living alone increased to 10.6% in 2020 from 6.4% in 2010, and the households with at least one senior leaped to 33% from 20%. Additionally, the households with children (under 18 years) slumped to 30% from 37% in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the average household size decreased from 2.68 in 2010 to 2.60 in 2020, indicating the population spread out into a greater number of households. The average household size remains larger than the County (2.44) which is typical of townships due to the presence of housing typologies with larger footprints suited for bigger households. In summary, households in White Lake Township are getting smaller but the population is

### Components of Population Change

**Natural Change = Total number of Births - Total number of Deaths**

If the number of births is higher than deaths, then the population has undergone a natural increase.

**Net Migration = Inward Migration - Outward Migration**

**Population Change = Natural Change + / - Net Migration**

continuing to increase. The changing household structure will create a demand for more housing units and infrastructure, which will impact land use in the Township.

### Age

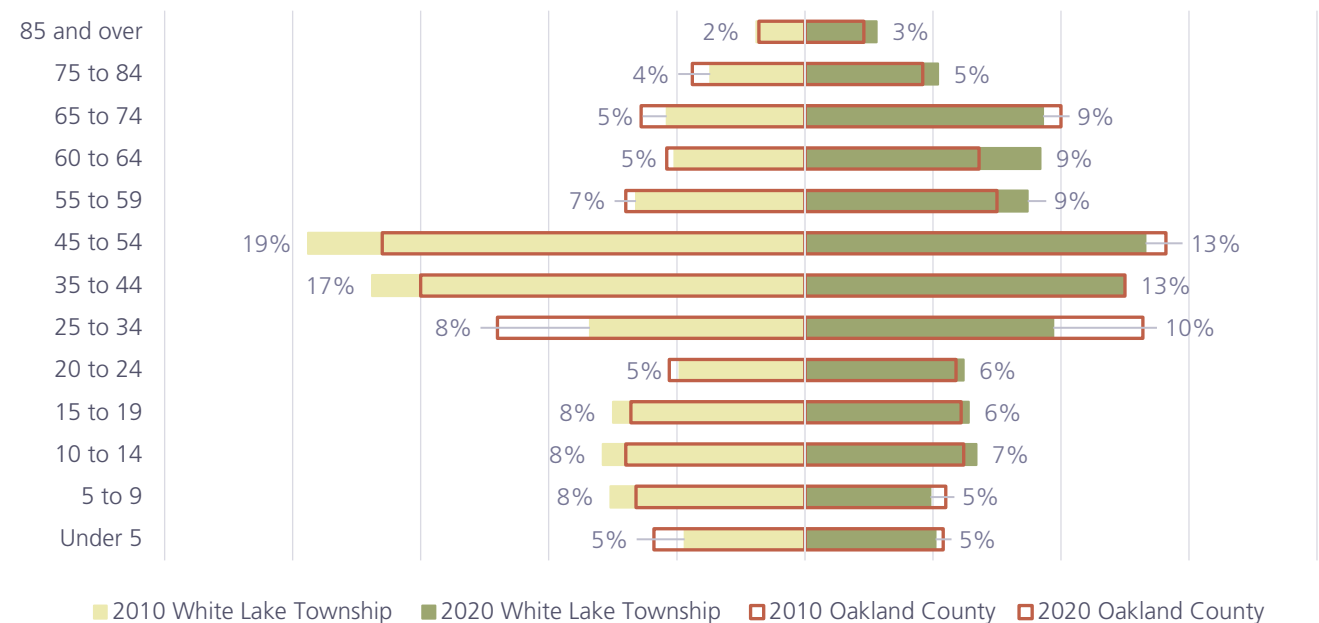
The population of White Lake Township is aging. In 2020, the median age of White Lake Township residents increased to 43.7 years from 41.3 years in 2010. Though the population is also aging in Oakland County (41.0 years median age) and the State of Michigan (39.8 years median age), the median age of the Township is higher.

**Table 04: Households: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2010-2020)**

	Total Households			Average Household Size		Average Family Size	
	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	2010	2020
<b>White Lake Twp</b>	10,985	11,991	9.2%	2.68	2.60	3.05	3.00
<b>Oakland County</b>	481,040	509,589	5.9%	2.47	2.44	3.08	3.10

Source: United States Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2010, 2020)

Figure 05: Age Distribution: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2010–2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2010, 2020)

The figure titled “Age Distribution: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2010–2020)” illustrates how the age distribution of the Township’s population compares to Oakland County from 2010 to 2020. The 35-44 years (13%) and 45-54 years (13%) cohorts are the largest in the Township. Children and young adults aged 19 years and below represent almost a quarter of the population.

The Township has a lower percentage of younger households in the 25-34 years cohort compared to the County and a relatively low overall concentration of adults in the 20-24 years age group (6%). This depressed number of younger residents may be a consequence of two factors. First, young adults are likely to move out of the Township after graduating high school to pursue higher education or employment opportunities. Second, this cohort may be migrating out in pursuit of wider housing opportunities (smaller units, lesser price points, more rental units, etc.) or quality of life opportunities (vibrant downtowns, better programming for youngsters, etc.). Since the 20-34 years group represents the age at which most people begin to start families, providing diverse housing opportunities and adequate leisure and recreation opportunities tailored to this age group is key to attracting and retaining new and young families.

The term “empty nesters” generally refers to

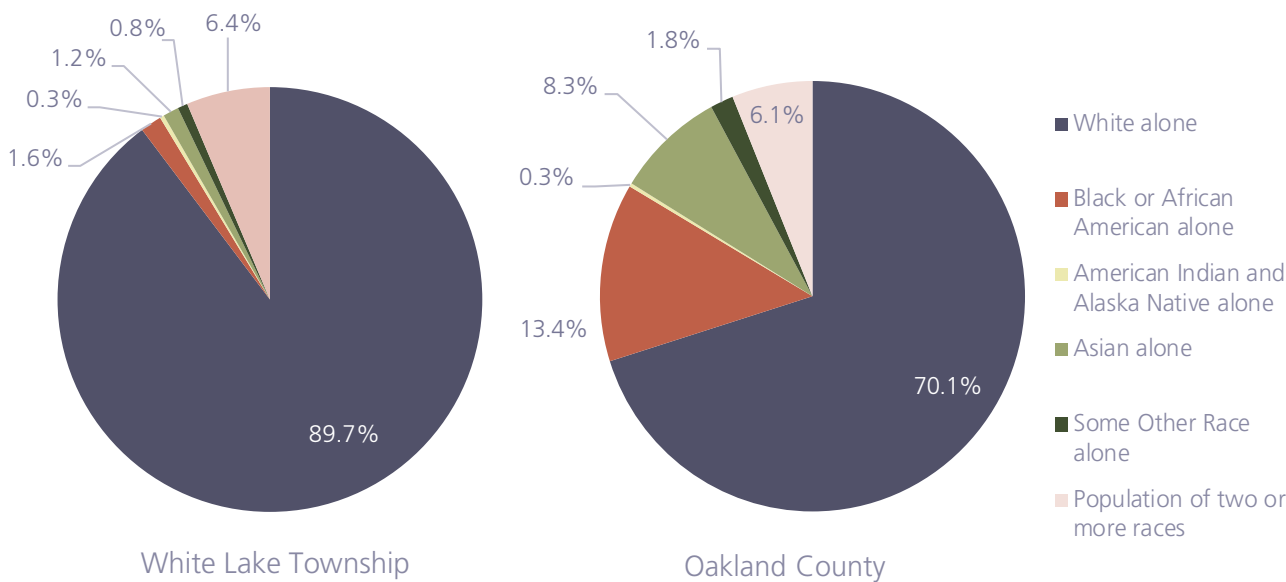
households that no longer have children living at home. Typically aged 55-64 years, this age cohort grew from 12% to 18% between 2010–2020 to surpass the County percentages (14%).<sup>2</sup> Indicative of an aging population, the senior population (65 years and above) in the Township grew from 11% to 17%.<sup>3</sup> SEMCOG’s 2045 Regional Forecast predicts between 2015 and 2045 the senior age cohort will add 3,834 residents while the distribution of population in all other cohorts will decrease.<sup>4</sup> The aging population will result in an increased demand for specific housing options (assisted living, nursing homes, etc.), healthcare facilities, and leisure options so residents can age in place. Land use patterns will also have to be planned for proximity of services for the elderly to address concerns of limited mobility. Altogether, the age dynamics in the Township present challenges to retain (and potentially attract) young households while ensuring mature households and seniors have resources to transition through life and age in the Township.

### Racial and Ethnic Composition

White Lake Township’s racial and ethnic composition has undergone marginal change over the last decade. In 2020, nearly 90% of the Township’s population identified as solely White compared to 94% in 2010.<sup>5</sup> This change is a result of 6.4% of the residents identifying as biracial or multiracial in 2020



Figure 06: Racial Composition: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2020)



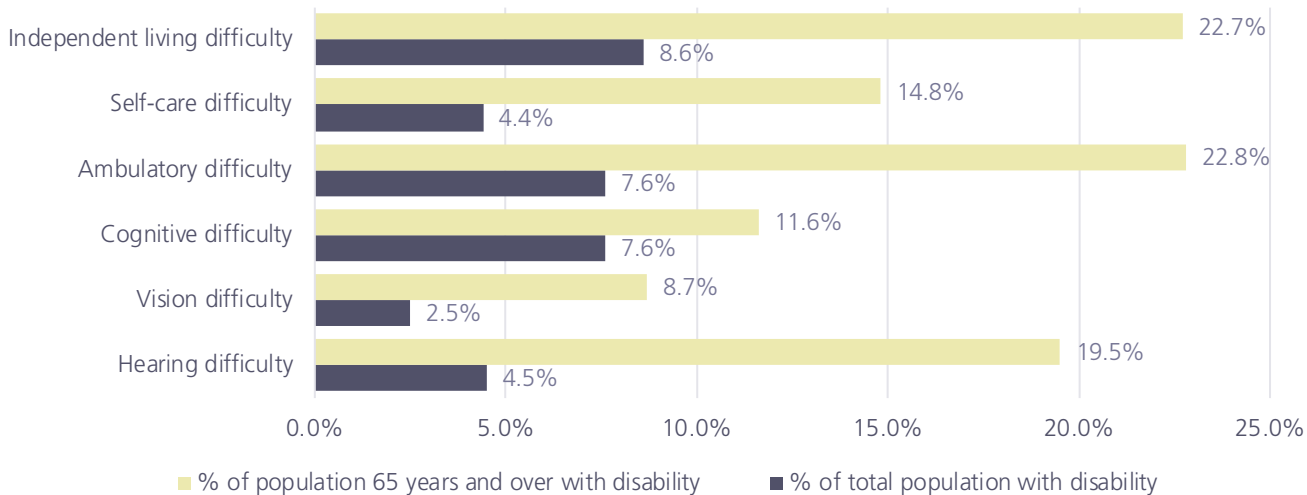
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census (2010, 2020)

compared to only 1.3% in 2010. African Americans and Asians account for 1.6% and 1.2% of the population, respectively. All other races together only account for 1% of the population. The percentage of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino (considered an ethnicity and not a race in the U.S. Census as of 2020) in the Township increased from 3.0% to 3.6% between 2010 to 2020.<sup>6</sup> The Township’s population is racially homogeneous compared to Oakland County’s population wherein only 70% of the population identify as solely White.

Disability

Land use patterns impact the lives of people with disabilities, especially in aging communities accommodating needs and requirements of the disabled population. Approximately 15% of White Lake Township’s population and almost 40% of seniors have a disability.<sup>7</sup> Independent living difficulty affects 8.6% of the population followed by cognitive difficulty (7.6%) and ambulatory difficulty (movement difficulty, 7.6%). Amongst the elderly population (65 years and above), ambulatory

Figure 07: Disability Characteristics (2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

difficulty (22.8%) and independent living difficulty (22.7%) are most prevalent. Much of the Township's aging population will require support facilities including mobility assistance, accessible living facilities, or other specialized healthcare services. The needs of this population also have implications for the design of housing and public services and spaces.

SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

Education

Educational attainment is a key indicator of socio-economic status as it influences employment opportunities for residents, and relatedly, the companies located in a community. In 2020, roughly 93% of White Lake Township adults over the age of 25 possess at least a high school diploma and 32% have at least a bachelor's degree.<sup>8</sup> The age of 25 is used as the benchmark for educational attainment because it is assumed most people will have completed their education by the age of 25. In addition to the 32% of residents that have a bachelor's degree, 27% of residents above the age of 25 years have at least some college education, indicating a presence of an educated and skilled workforce.<sup>9</sup> However, in comparison to other nearby communities and the County as shown in the figure titled "Education Attainment: White Lake Township & Other Communities (2020)," the Township ranks next to last in the percentage of

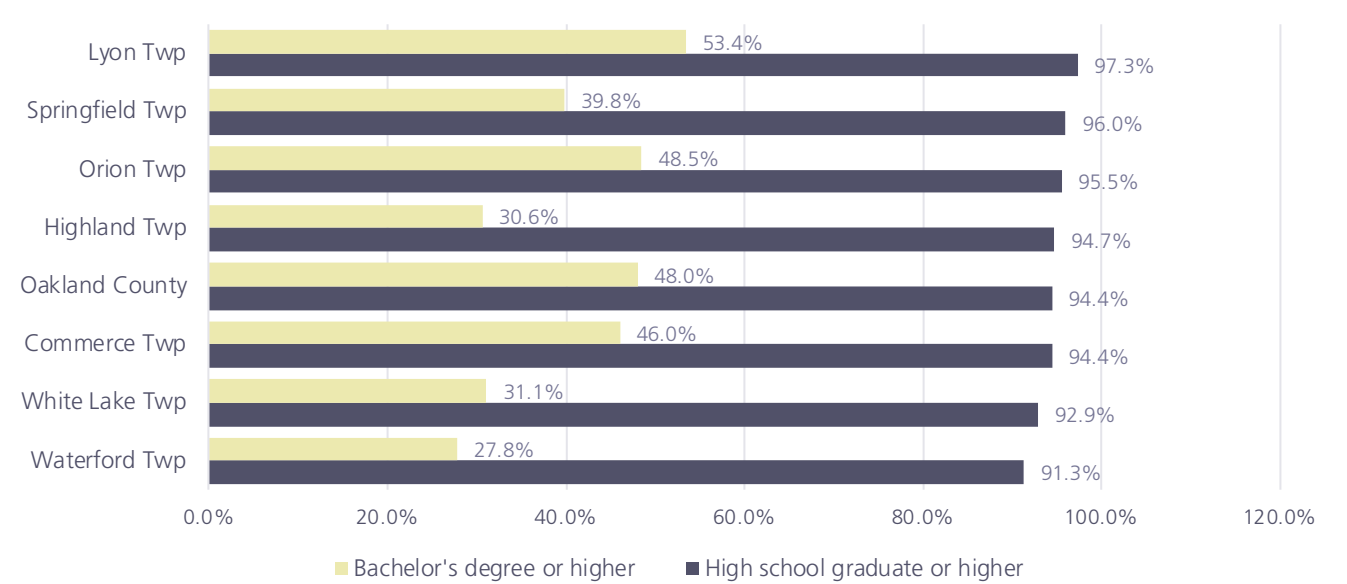
residents with a high school degree and third to last in percentage of residents that have a bachelor's degree. The highly qualified regional population represents a competitive yet economically strong region presenting diverse employment and business opportunities to the Township residents.

Income & Poverty

Median household income is a metric used to measure the economic strength of a region, and higher educational attainment levels generally correlate with higher income potential and lower poverty rates. The 2020 median household income (inflation-adjusted dollars) in White Lake Township was \$81,633, which is only \$46 higher than the County (\$81,587) but higher than the State of Michigan (\$59,234). Over the last decade, the median income in the Township has risen continually and remained higher than the County, but followed a trajectory similar to the County. However, in comparison to the other communities (listed in Figure XX), only Waterford Township has a median income (\$62,893) lower than White Lake Township.<sup>10</sup>

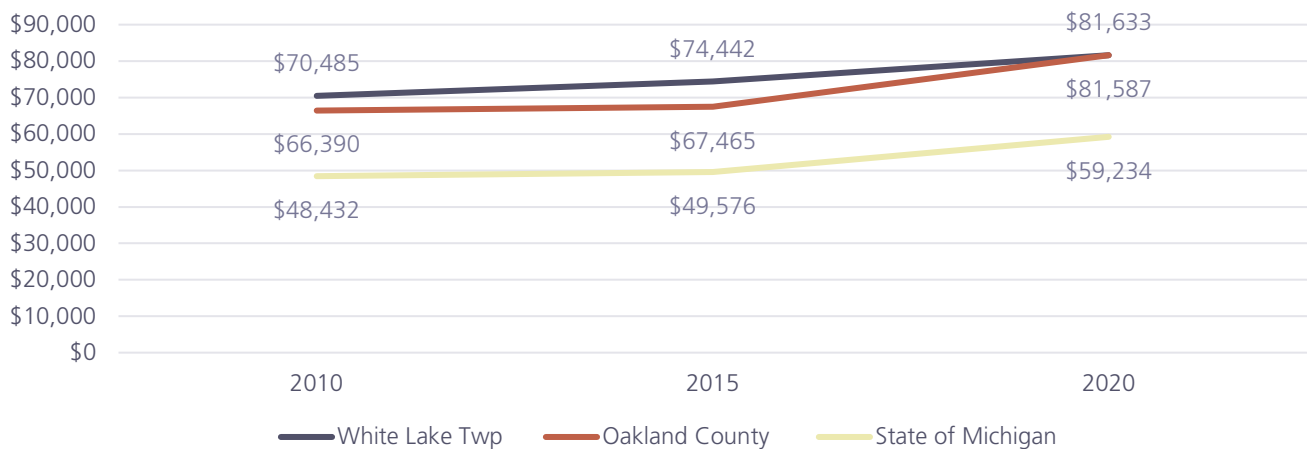
The figure titled "Household Incomes: White Lake Township and Oakland County (2020)" charts the distribution of household incomes in the Township against the County. At the higher end of the income spectrum, roughly 40% of Township households earn more than \$100,000. At the lower end of the spectrum, around 13% of Township households

Figure 08: Educational Attainment: White Lake Township & Other Communities (2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

**Figure 09: Median Income: White Lake Township, Oakland County, and State of Michigan (2010-2020)**



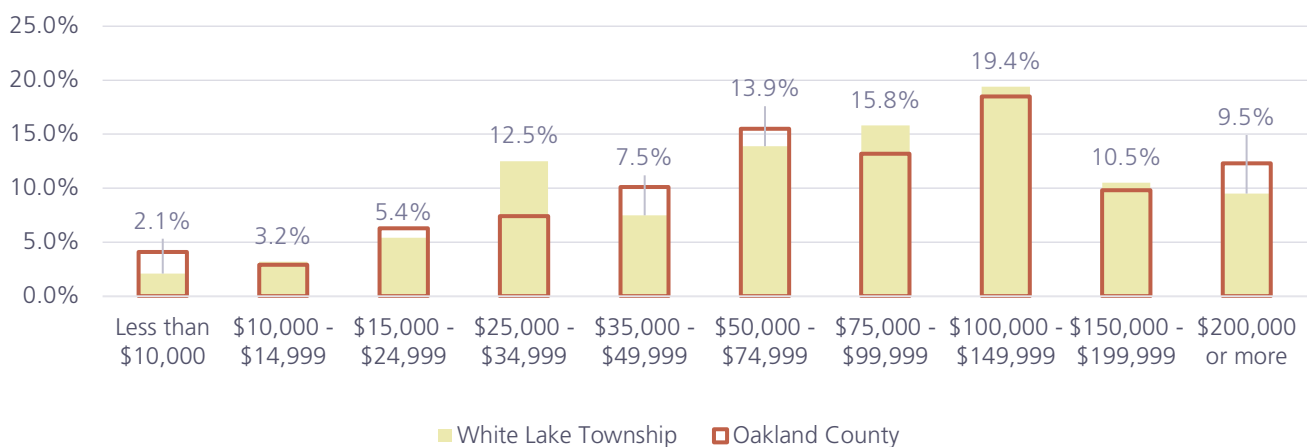
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

**Table 05: Median Income: White Lake Township & Other Communities (2020)**

	Median Income (Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)
Lyon Township	\$115,600
Orion Township	\$99,063
Commerce Township	\$97,886
Springfield Township	\$91,266
Highland Township	\$88,061
White Lake Township	\$81,633
Waterford Township	\$62,893
Oakland County	\$81,587
State of Michigan	\$59,234

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

**Figure 10: Household Incomes: White Lake Township and Oakland County (2020)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

earn below \$25,000. The Township has a higher percentage of households in the \$25,000-\$34,999 income range than the County which likely includes some of the Township's retirees living on a fixed income.<sup>11</sup>

The U.S. Census Bureau determines poverty by comparing household annual income with the number of individuals in the household. In 2020, 8.8% of all residents were under the poverty line, slightly higher than the County (7.8%). More importantly, the 8.8% poverty rate in 2020 was an increase from 6.4% in 2010. This increase in poverty rate is partially a result of the economic downturn triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic where earning potential fell nationwide. Single-mother households

with children have the highest poverty rate at 30%.

While poverty is a helpful measure for determining the percentage of people experiencing high levels of financial hardship, it does not capture those who are one accident or large financial cost from falling below the poverty line. ALICE, which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed, is a measure that captures individuals who may be above the federal poverty level but still struggle with regular expenses and costs. This metric is calculated by totaling minimum basic expenses for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, etc.<sup>12</sup> In White Lake Township, an estimated 28% of households fall under the ALICE threshold, slightly higher than the County (22%).<sup>13</sup>

### Figure 11: Demographics: Key Takeaways

White Lake Township's population has continually grown until 2020; however, the pace of growth is slowing down and SEMCOG's 2045 Regional Forecast anticipates a marginal decline (-0.1%) by 2045.

The number of people within households in White Lake Township is becoming smaller, so as a result, the total households in the Township increased by 9% between 2010 and 2020. Land use patterns and housing opportunities in the Township will have to cater to the shifting household compositions in the Township.

White Lake Township's population is aging. Mature households (35-54 years) continue to remain the largest age cohort (26%), while the percentage of empty nesters and seniors in the Township increased to roughly 18% in 2020. The Township is presented with a challenge to retain younger (20-34 years) households while ensuring mature households and seniors can age in place.

Roughly 15% of the Township's population and almost 40% of seniors have a disability and will require support facilities including mobility assistance, accessible living facilities, or other specialized healthcare services.

The percentage of individuals in poverty has increased to 8.8% in 2020, and an estimated 28% of households fall under the ALICE threshold. Providing affordable housing and economic opportunities will be key in ensuring these households can navigate their way out of poverty.

## Sources

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- 3 United States Census Bureau, DP05 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 & 2020.
- 4 SEMCOG, White Lake Township Community Profiles, <https://semcog.org/data-and-maps/community-profiles/communities=2290>.
- 5 United States Census Bureau, DP05 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 & 2020.
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- 12 United Way. Alice in Michigan: A Financial Hardship Study. 2019 Michigan Report. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52fbd39ce4b060243dd722d8/t/5c902a7e971a186c0a29dff2/1552951937149/HR19ALICE\\_Report\\_MI\\_Refresh\\_02.26.19b\\_Final\\_Hires+%283%29.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52fbd39ce4b060243dd722d8/t/5c902a7e971a186c0a29dff2/1552951937149/HR19ALICE_Report_MI_Refresh_02.26.19b_Final_Hires+%283%29.pdf).
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Carolling in White Lake Township



# Natural Features & Open Space

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Originating around White Lake, the Township was founded amidst treasures of lakes and natural features. The Township boasts a wealth of natural resources, including 21 named lakes and sprawling acres of woodland and farms. The Township's proximity to the growing metro-Detroit region attracts development, fueling the built environment at the cost of the natural environment. However, recognizing management of natural resources is essential to the well-being of residents and the local economy, the Township has strived to create a balance between development and preserving and protecting natural assets. This section of the Master Plan inventories White Lake Township's natural features and open spaces and discusses strategies to coordinate the natural environment, the built environment, and future land uses.

## LAND

### Soils<sup>1</sup>

Of the eight soil associations found in Oakland County, three can be found in White Lake Township. The majority of the eastern half and a small area in the northwest corner of the Township is characterized by the "Urban land-Spinks-Oshtemo" soil association. This association is composed of well-drained sandy soil, located on nearly level to rolling topography. Urban land consists of soils that have been so altered by development that it is no longer possible to determine the original soil type. The "Oshtemo-Spinks-Houghton" soil association is located in a band running from the southwest corner to the northeast corner of the Township. It is found on nearly level to hilly terrain and is composed of well-drained to very poorly-drained loamy, sandy, and mucky soil. The northern border of the Township and a small area in the southwest corner are made up of the "Fox-Oshtemo-Houghton" association. It is an area of nearly level to steep topography. This soil association is also well-drained to very poorly drained sandy, mucky soil.

### Limitations for Septic Fields<sup>2</sup>

Septic system development in the Township is limited by its extensive network of water bodies. The wetland, lake, and river areas are identified as unsuitable for septic uses. Most of the Township, in fact, is not considered suitable for septic uses, although there are small areas scattered around the Township designated as marginally suitable. It is therefore vital to regulate septic systems to ensure proper function. Regular inspection and maintenance of septic systems are essential for preserving water quality, as failing systems can pollute groundwater and nearby surface waters with human waste. The Oakland County Health Division regulates private wells and septic fields in the Township. Currently, septic inspections have to be initiated by the property owner or more commonly are requested during a home inspection during the home buying process.

### Soil Erosion Control<sup>3</sup>

Soil erosion and sedimentation is the greatest pollutant by volume entering lakes and streams. Increased flooding causes damage to plant and animal life while also causing structural damage to buildings and roads. The Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office regulates soil erosion control in the Township and grants soil erosion permits to development within the Township.

### Woodlands and Tree Canopy

Despite White Lake Township's residential and commercial growth and development during the last several decades, there are still many woodland areas scattered throughout the Township. The vast majority of the trees are upland hardwoods. The Highland State Recreation Area and the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area both have large stands of protected upland hardwoods. White Lake also has a few small areas of upland conifers dispersed throughout the Township. These wooded areas are a resource to both the residents and the wildlife in

the Township. Existing trees can also be “credited” to a development’s landscaping requirements to encourage tree preservation, which includes the practice of replacing any damaged trees during the development process.

## WATER

### Lakes

The abundance of lakes and easy access to them is one of the biggest attractions in the Township. The Township has a total of 21 named lakes accounting for 3.7 square miles or 9.9% of the Township’s area which are used for both passive and active recreational purposes. The lakes and surrounding recreation areas draw a large seasonal population into the Township year-round and also creates a competitive market for lakefront homes in southeast Michigan.

### Floodplains

A floodplain is the land surrounding a river, stream, lake, or drain that becomes regularly inundated by the overflow of water. Inundation or flooding typically takes place after rain or snow, and floodplains retain the excess floodwaters. For this reason, keeping floodplains as natural as possible helps to prevent flooding in adjacent low-lying areas.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated floodways in White Lake Township to follow existing lakes, portions of the Huron River, and its tributaries which are largely present only south of M-59. The blue floodplain on the map below represents a 1% chance of annual flooding, also known as the 100-year flood area, and the

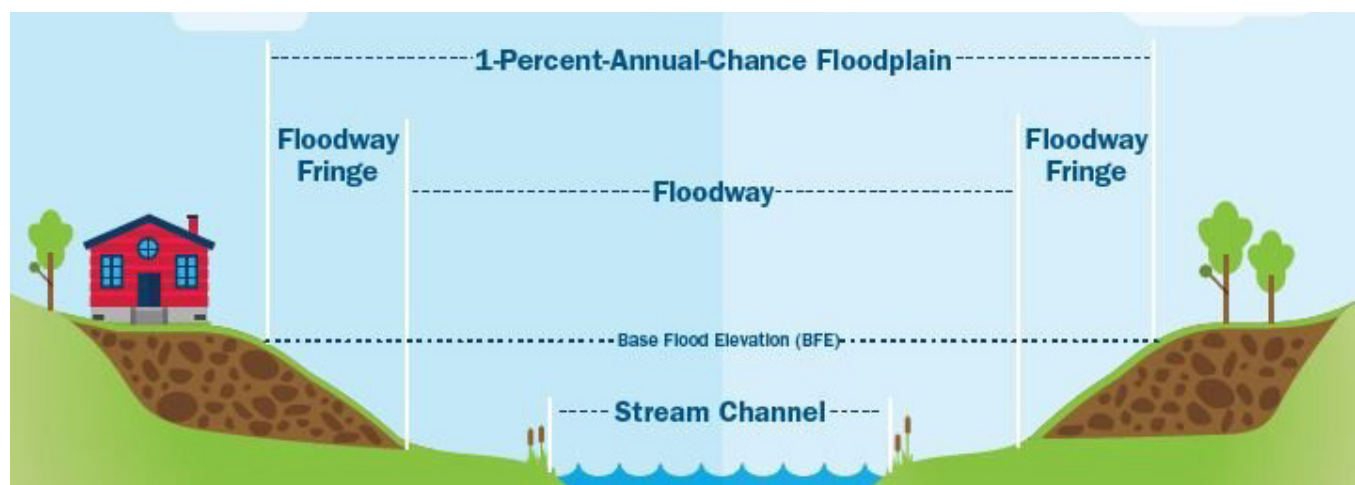
yellow floodplain represents a 0.2% chance of annual flooding, known as the 500-year flood area. However, these definitions are becoming more inaccurate as severe precipitation and flooding become more common. The floodway is the channel directly adjacent to a body of water that is above water during periods of normal water elevation. As seen on the map titled “FEMA Flood Hazard Zones” (p. 28), only small tracts of land around Brendel Lake, Cedar Island Lake, Oxbow Lake, and Tull Lake are susceptible to flooding.

It is worth noting properties outside of the floodplains are still subject to flooding. In fact, due to more frequent and intense storms, instances of flooding are expected to increase in the region. Development around the flood hazard areas must be carefully reviewed to mitigate the effects of flooding in the Township. As of March 2023, most of the land around the flood zones appears to be undeveloped. The Township should encourage the protection of wetlands and the installation of green infrastructure measures along the FEMA flood zones to mitigate the harm caused by flooding. Additionally, the Township can designate the areas around the flood plain as conservation areas to limit development and impervious surfaces. Furthermore, the Township can regulate lakefront development by mandating greenbelts with native vegetation in a buffer zone between the setback and the water’s edge to reduce flooding impacts.

### Watersheds

A watershed is an area of land in which all surface waters drain to a common outlet such as a creek,

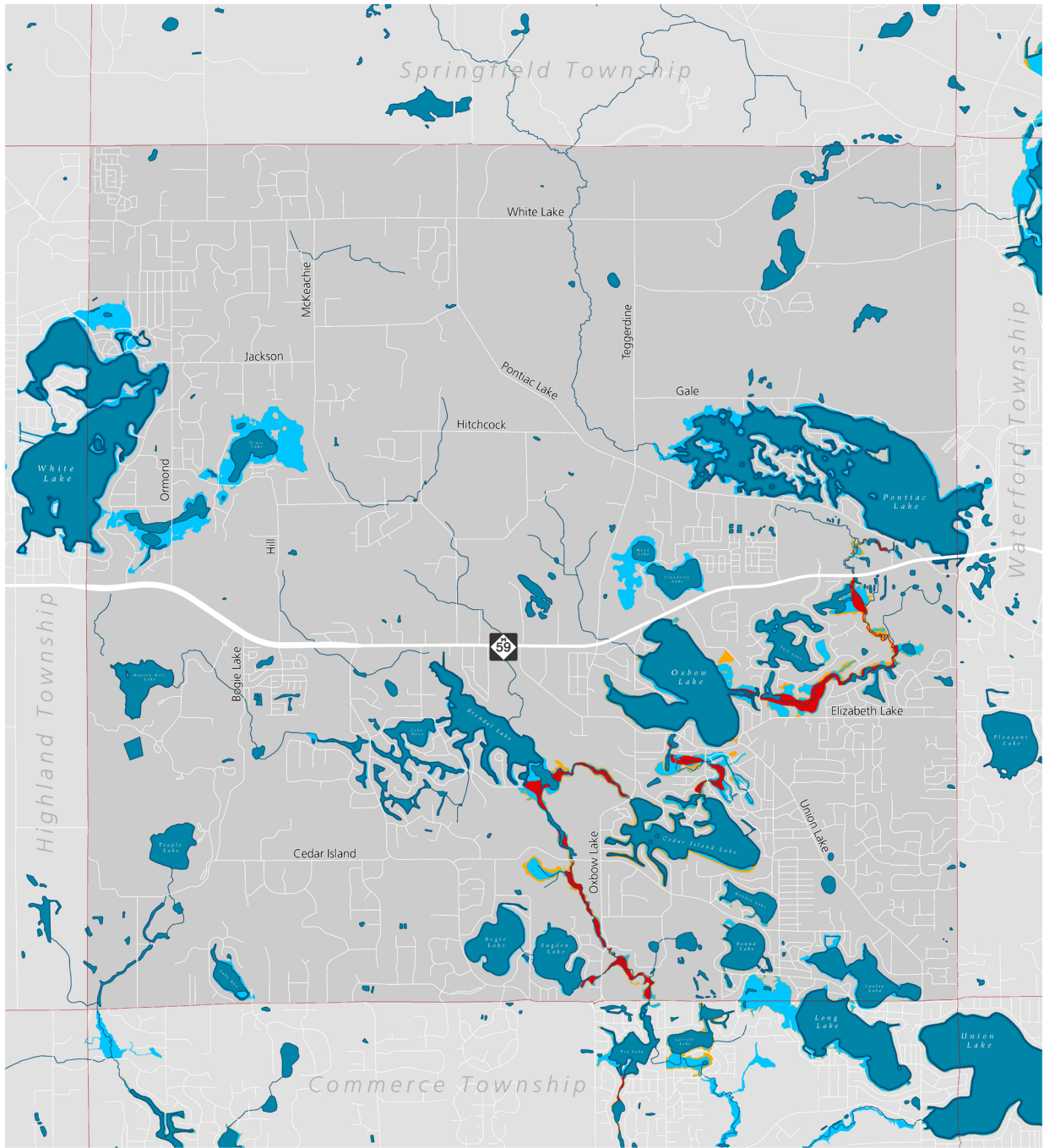
Figure 12: Floodplain Vs. Floodway



Source: Tulsa Engineering & Planning



Map 02: FEMA Flood Hazard Zones



# FEMA Flood Hazard Zones

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

- Floodway
- 1% Annual Flood Hazard
- 0.2% Annual Flood Hazard



river, or lake. Since water and topography do not follow jurisdictional boundaries, jurisdictions are often in more than one watershed. The majority of the Township lies in the Huron River Watershed and small portions of the Township in the northeast corner and southeast edge lie in the Clinton River Watershed.

Within the Huron River Watershed, there are three sub-watersheds (sub-watersheds and sub-basins function like watersheds but on a much smaller scale). Runoff from the northwest corner of the Township flows into Pettibone Creek, then into the Huron River; water from the southeast corner of the Township flows into Hayes Creek, then into the Huron River; and water from the central portion of the Township flows directly into the Huron River.

The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) produces Watershed Management Plans (WMP) outlining best practices and resources to address problems in the watershed.<sup>4</sup> White Lake Township falls in the portion of the Huron River Watershed known as the Upper Huron, associated with the Kent Lake/Upper Huron River Watershed Management Plan developed in 2006.<sup>5</sup> For the sub-watersheds, the HRWC provides sub-watershed reports to guide and educate communities on sub-watershed management. Some key takeaways from the WMP and sub-watershed reports are presented in the table titled “Watershed and Sub-watershed Management Plans.” Part of the Township falls in the Upper Clinton sub-watershed, managed by the Clinton River Watershed Council, associated with the Upper Clinton Subwatershed Management Plan developed in 2005.<sup>6</sup>

## Groundwater Recharge Areas

White Lake Township has a mix of public and private water and wastewater systems. There are 11 community wells in the Township that provide for municipal or communal use, and at last count there were approximately 6,185 individual domestic wells.<sup>7</sup> The map titled “Annual Groundwater Recharge” (p. 32) shows the groundwater recharge capacity throughout the Township, which are highly permeable areas that readily permits water to move into an aquifer underground. The northeast quadrant of the Township has the highest groundwater permeability, 10-12 inches of groundwater recharge per acre, due to the presence of large open spaces under the Pontiac Lake Recreation Area. Similarly, land under the Highland Recreation Area provides high groundwater permeability in the southwest

section of the Township. The central area of the Township south of M-59, around Brendel Lake, has large areas of wetlands with 10 inches per acre annual recharge capacity.

Since 100% of the Township’s drinking water comes from groundwater, maintaining the quality of groundwater is extremely important. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) assists communities in protecting their groundwater through the Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP).<sup>8</sup> Wellhead protection areas are defined as a 10-year travel distance for contaminants around the wellhead. In other words, if a contaminant were spilled at the edge of the wellhead protection area it would take 10 years for the contamination to reach the wellhead.<sup>9</sup> White Lake Township has developed a joint Wellhead Protection Program with neighboring communities along with County and State agencies to protect drinking water in identified protection areas through cooperative management strategies and public education.<sup>10</sup> It is important to plan with these wellhead protection areas in mind so no potential pollutant sources, like heavy industry, are not located within the wellhead protection area.

The 2021 Consumer Confidence Report recorded there were no known significant sources of contamination in the Township’s water supply.<sup>11</sup> The Township has undertaken rigorous efforts to protect the water sources by participating in the Wellhead Protection Program, signage, fencing, site plan reviews, periodic water analysis, and other water management programs.<sup>12</sup>

## Wetlands

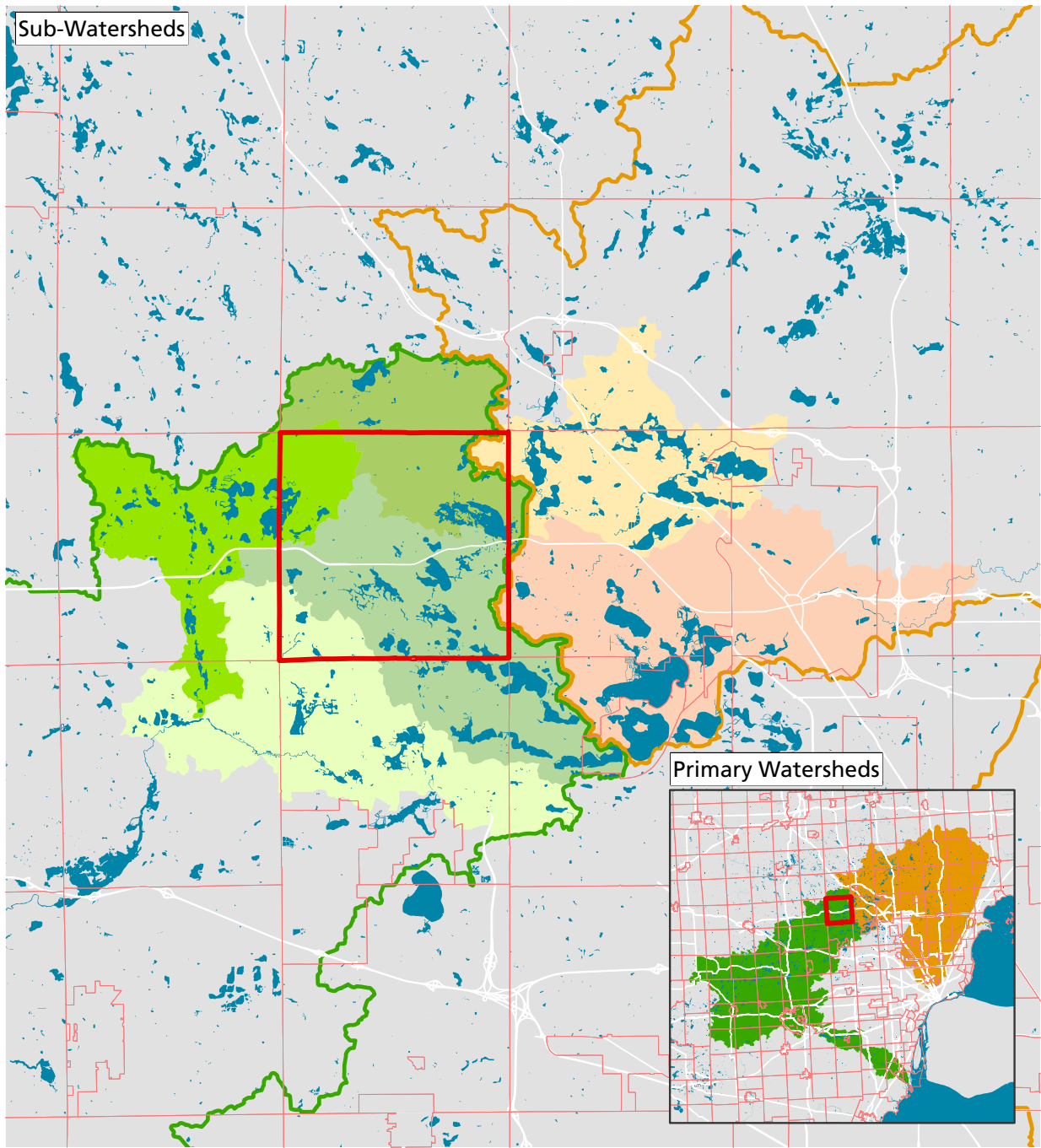
Wetlands are one of the most valuable and sensitive natural features in Michigan due to the unique ecosystem services they provide. Wetlands absorb excess water and act as a filtration device by capturing surface water runoff and slowly infiltrating it into the groundwater. Wetlands also nurture wildlife and biodiversity, purify water, and provide recreational benefits.

Due to the numerous benefits wetlands provide, it is essential the Township preserve both the quantity and quality of its wetlands. While wetland areas are found throughout the Township, the map titled “Wetlands” (p. 35) shows the greatest concentration is south of M-59 and adjacent to the Huron River. Roughly 20% (7.5 square miles) of White Lake Township is covered by wetlands.

**Table 06: Watershed and Subwatershed Management Plans**

<b>Kent Lake/Upper Huron River Watershed Management Plan (2006)<sup>13</sup></b>	
<b>Concerns</b>	Nutrient and bacterial loading, decreased water quality, erosion and sedimentation, flooding, trash and litter on roadways and within stream corridors.
<b>Best Management Practices and Community Action Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards: including such issues as local fertilizer ordinances, onsite sewage disposal system, native landscaping, natural features setbacks, and soil erosion and sedimentation control improvements.</li> <li>» Coordinated Planning Activities: including such opportunities as recreation plans and integrating natural resources protection into land use planning practice.</li> <li>» Public Education and Stewardship Opportunities: include programs designed to address specific stewardship messages.</li> <li>» Municipal/Organization Housekeeping Practices: includes programs such as training and education for employees and decision-makers, identifying and eliminating illicit discharges, and improved management of other public facilities.</li> <li>» Structural Improvements: includes specific construction, maintenance or repair projects associated with stormwater management and similar projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Pettibone Creekshed Report<sup>14</sup></b>	
<b>Concerns</b>	Loss of biodiversity, nutrient and bacterial loading, decreased water quality, pollution from recreational uses such as duck hunting, and loss of natural features.
<b>Best Management Practices and Community Action Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Inspect septic systems regularly to avoid leakage into water bodies.</li> <li>» Work with a land conservancy to establish an easement to protect natural areas from future development.</li> <li>» Establish and maintain a riparian buffer to minimize erosion and nutrient runoff.</li> </ul>
<b>Hay Creekshed Report<sup>15</sup></b>	
<b>Concerns</b>	Loss of biodiversity, nutrient and bacterial loading, decreased water quality, and loss of natural features.
<b>Best Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Inspect septic systems regularly to avoid leakage into water bodies.</li> <li>» Work with a land conservancy to establish an easement to protect natural areas from future development.</li> <li>» Maintain a 25-foot vegetated buffer, ideally made of native plants, from all waterways: ditches, creeks, lakes, and wetlands.</li> </ul>
<b>Upper Clinton Sub-watershed Management Plan<sup>16</sup></b>	
<b>Concerns</b>	Nutrient and bacterial loading, decreased water quality, and sedimentation.
<b>Best Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Inspect septic systems regularly to avoid leakage into water bodies.</li> <li>» Work with a land conservancy to establish an easement to protect natural areas from future development.</li> <li>» Establish and maintain a riparian buffer to minimize erosion and nutrient runoff.</li> </ul>

Map 03: Watersheds











# Watersheds

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

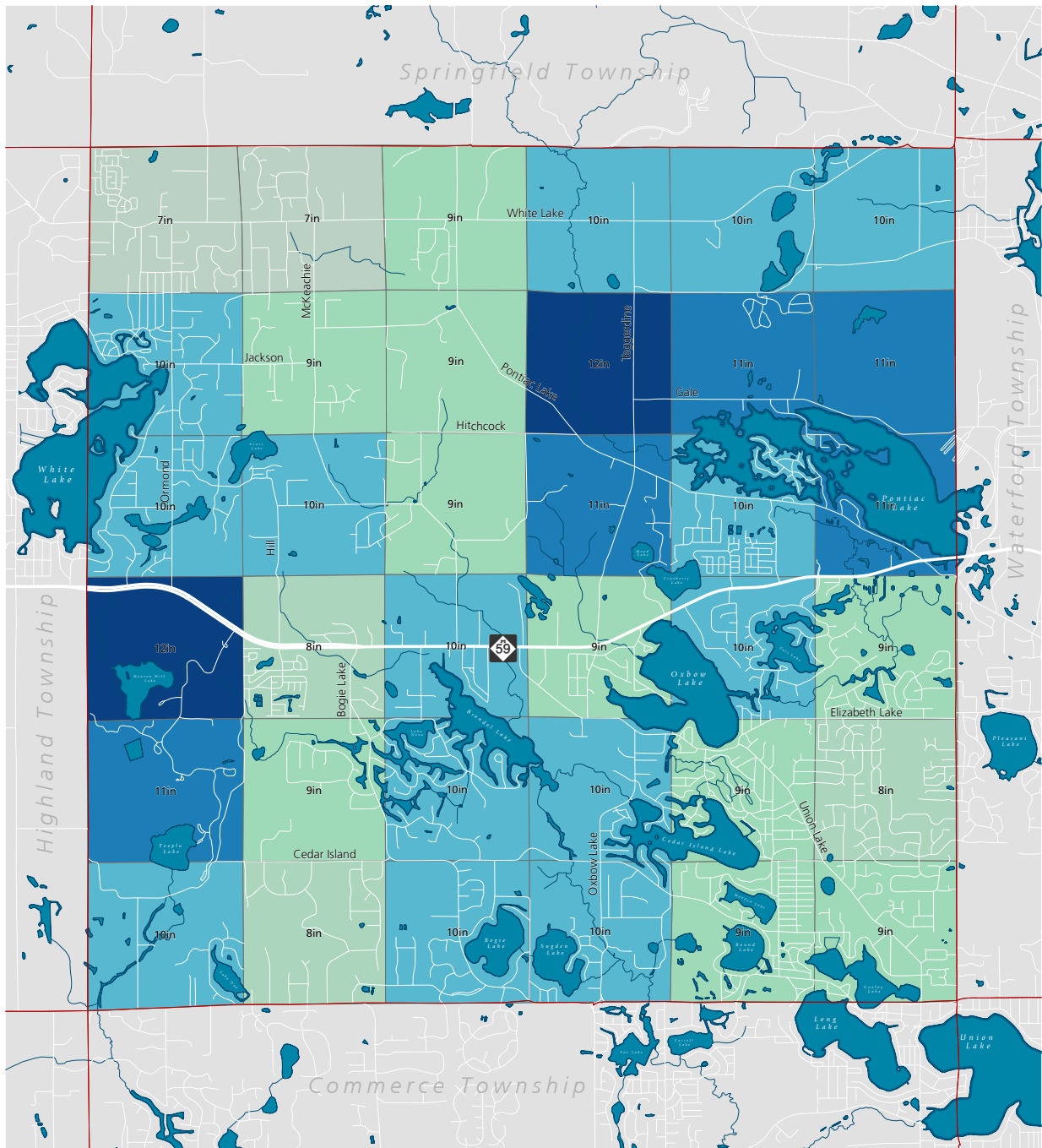
 White Lake Township

**Primary Watersheds**   **Sub-Watersheds**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Huron River   |  Pontiac Creek |  Sherwood Creek  |
|  Clinton River |  Loon Lake     |  Pettibone Creek |
|   |  Pontiac Lake  |  Hayes Creek     |

10,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc. 

Map 04: Annual Groundwater Recharge



# Annual Groundwater Recharge

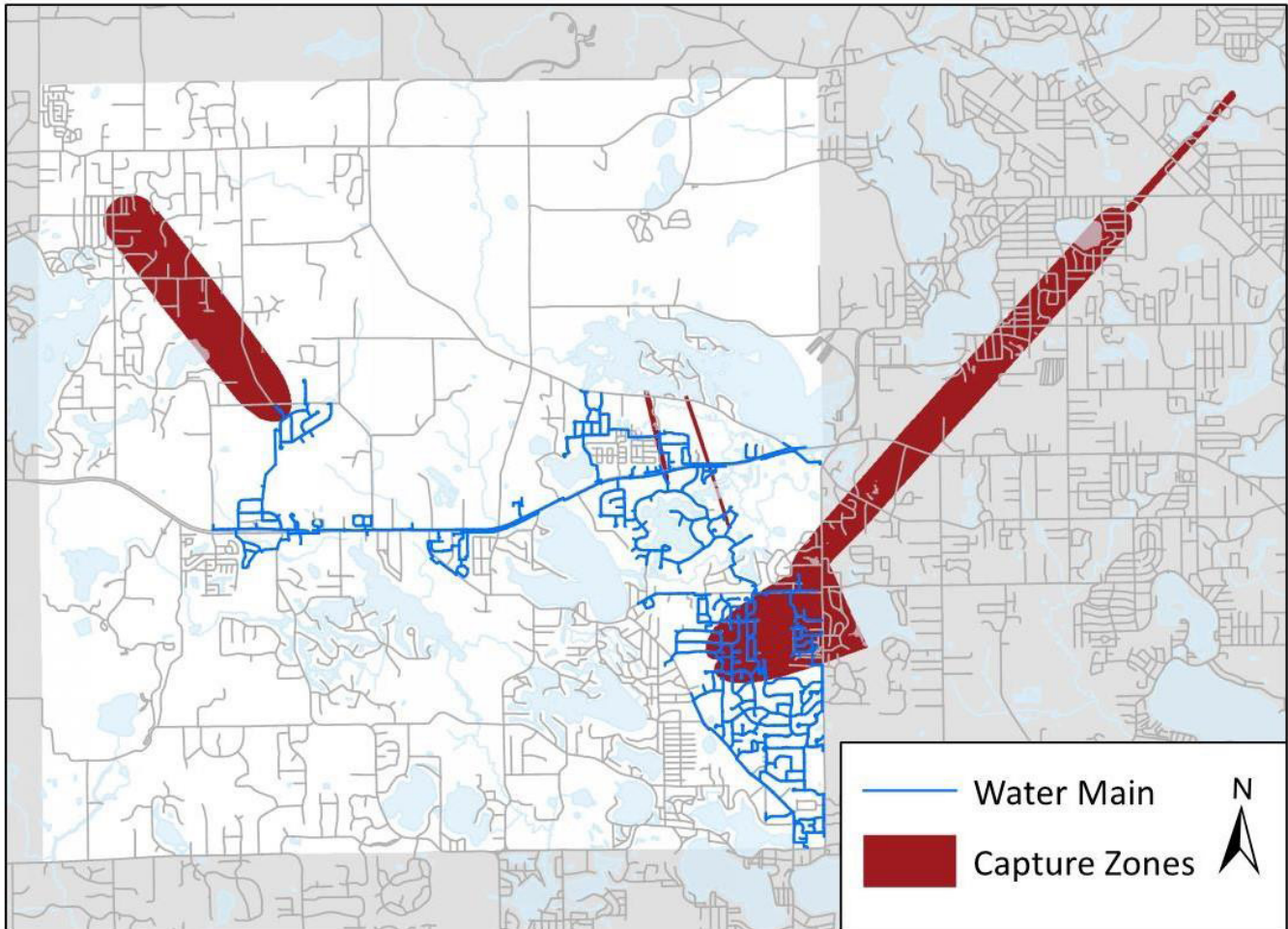
Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township

- 7" per acre
- 8"
- 9"
- 10"
- 11"
- 12"

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



## Map 05: White Lake Township Wellhead Protection Area Map-Wellhead Capture Zones



Source: White Lake Township Wellhead Protection Program

Among the Township's wetlands, 14% of all wetlands are emergent wetlands and nearly 55% are forested wetlands. Restorative wetlands, wetlands that were historically present and are absent or need intervention to become fully operational again, constitute about 32% of all wetlands.

To protect these fragile areas, wetlands of five acres or more, or smaller wetlands hydrologically connected to large wetlands, are strictly controlled by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Any development that deposits, fills, dredges, removes, drains, or constructs on a wetland must receive a permit.<sup>17</sup>

### CONSERVATION AREAS<sup>18</sup>

Oakland County and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) coordinated efforts to inventory the County's potential high-quality lands to propel efforts in prioritizing conservation efforts to improve

### Types of Wetlands

**Emergent:** Characterized by rooted herbaceous hydrophytes, like moss and lichen.

**Forested:** Characterized by woody plants taller than six feet and are usually farther away from water than emergent wetlands.

**Restorative:** Areas where wetlands can be fully, or as closely, as possible restored to their pre-existing conditions.

Source: Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

Table 07: Type of Wetlands

Wetland Type	Acres	Percent of Wetlands
Emergent	653	20%
Forested	2,649	80%
Existing Wetland Total	3,302	100%
Restorative	1,532	-

natural resource-based decision-making. The information is used to help find opportunities to establish an open space system of linked natural areas throughout Oakland County. The Map titled “Potential Conservation Areas” (p. 36) displays the conservation areas identified within White Lake Township. The yellow circles, depicting the existing Existing Conservation Easement layer, represents land protected from development by a Conservation Easement recorded with the State of Michigan. The potential natural areas (PNAs) are defined as places on the landscape dominated by native vegetation that have various levels of potential for harboring high-quality natural areas and unique natural features. These areas may provide critical ecological services such as maintaining water quality and quantity, soil development and stabilization, pollination, wildlife corridors, migratory bird stopover sites, sources of genetic diversity, and floodwater retention. The High-Quality Habitat, represented on the map in green, is a spatial representation of specific patches of natural vegetation within larger intact landscapes that have the potential to harbor high-quality natural communities and/or for harboring rare/sensitive plants and animals. The location of these high-quality natural lands should be considered whenever development takes place within the community. Additionally, White Lake Township can provide information about voluntary conservation

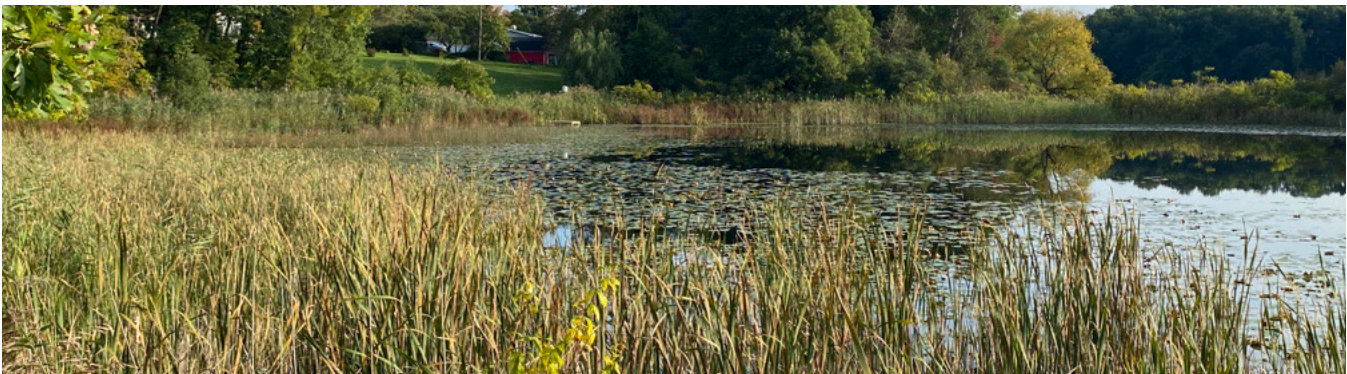
easements to residents, especially those living in the designated areas on the map.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure planning focuses on developing a connected network of natural land, open spaces, and waterways. Green infrastructure is both a network of green space and natural areas, along with man-made techniques such as rain gardens and bioswales that preserve the function of the natural ecosystem. It is a system that protects water quality, functions as a filtration and drainage network at little or no cost, and provides recreational benefits for residents.

### Green Infrastructure Methods

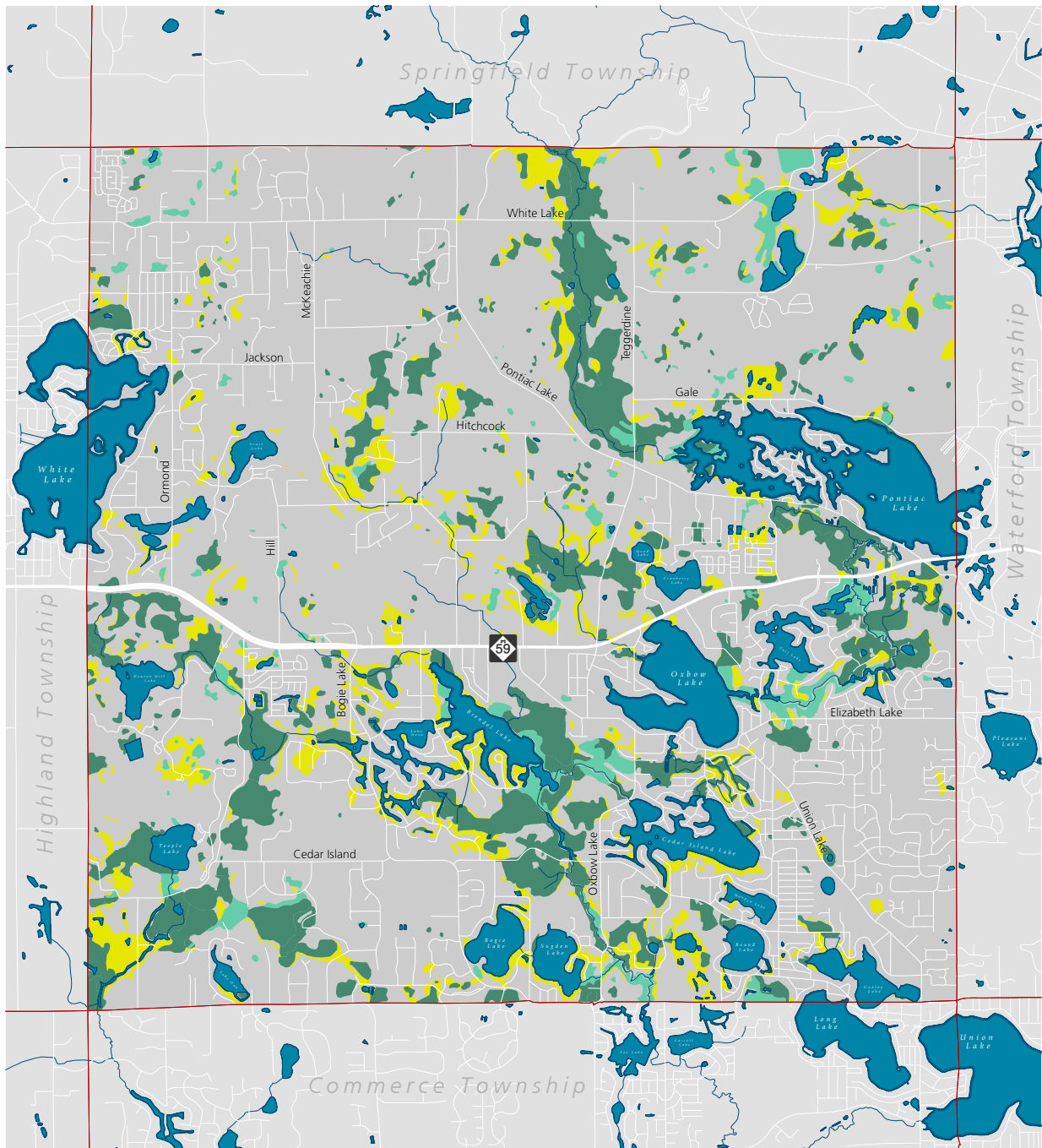
Low impact development (LID) is a broad term for a set of practices that imitate natural processes to allow stormwater to infiltrate the ground as opposed to channeling it toward water bodies. The table titled “Green Infrastructure Methods” (p. 37) shows several examples of landscaping and low impact development practices that can be encouraged in White Lake Township. The Township should encourage green infrastructure placement during the site plan review process and/or planned development process.



Bloomer Park



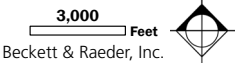
Map 06: Wetlands



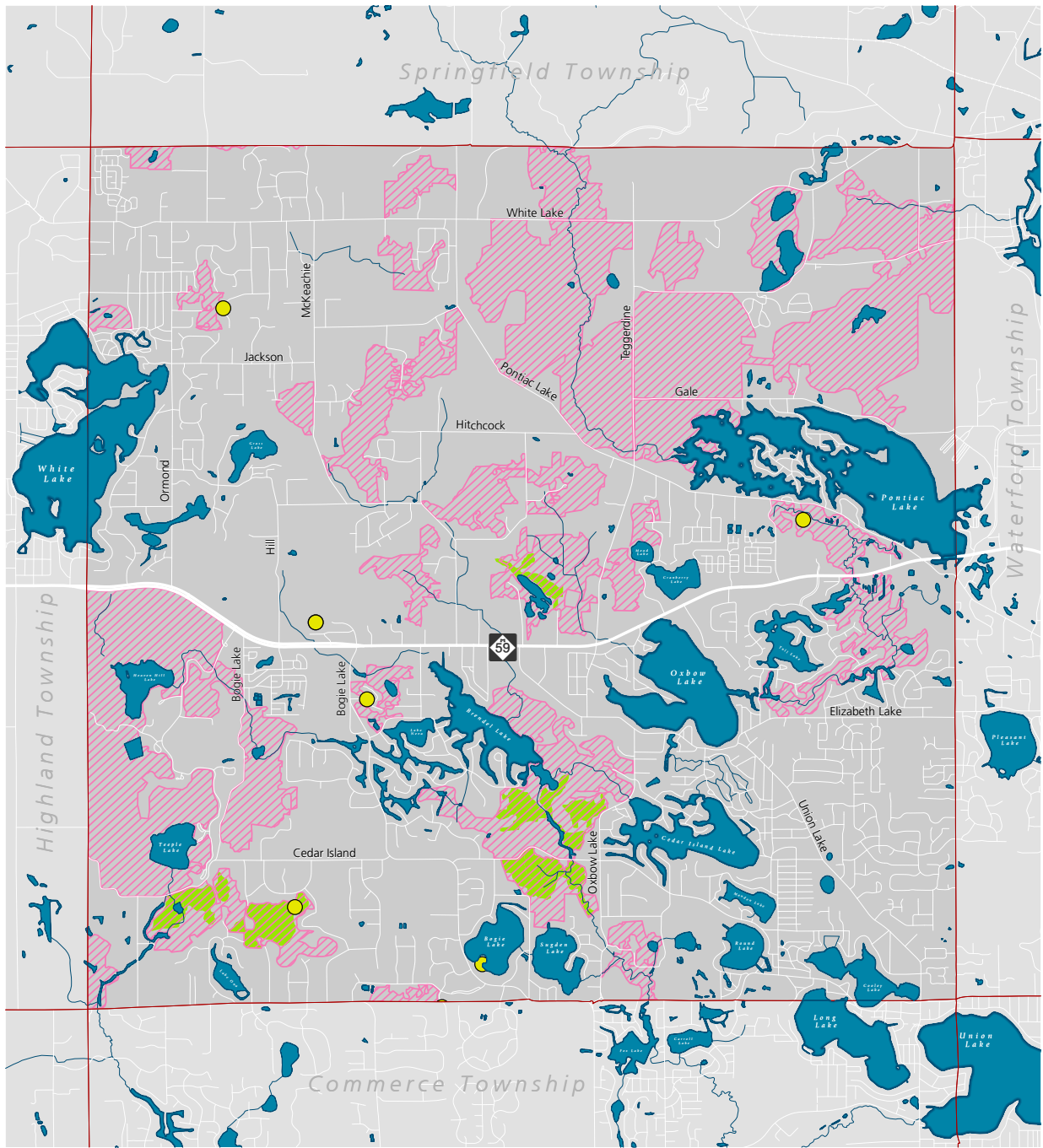
# Wetlands

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

- Emergent Wetland
- Forested Wetland
- Restorative Wetland



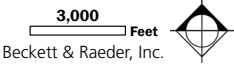
Map 07: Potential Conservation Areas






# Potential Natural Areas

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

- Existing Conservation Easement
- ▨ Potential Natural Area
- ▨ High Quality Habitat



**Table 08: Green Infrastructure Methods**

Method	Description	Example
<b>Rainwater Harvesting</b>	Systems that collect and store rainwater for later use.	
<b>Rain Gardens</b>	Shallow, vegetated gardens that collect and absorb runoff from streets, sidewalks, and roofs.	
<b>Planter Boxes</b>	Boxes along sidewalks, streets, or parking lots that collect and absorb rainwater; they can be designed with a notch to allow additional stormwater to flow in, as with rain gardens. These also serve as streetscaping elements.	
<b>Bioswales</b>	Linear and vegetated channels, typically adjacent to a road or parking lot, that slow, retain, and filter stormwater.	
<b>Permeable Pavement</b>	Pavement that absorbs, filters, and stores rainwater, like these pavers.	
<b>Green Roofs</b>	Vegetated roofs that absorb and filter rainwater.	
<b>Tree Canopy</b>	Trees reduce and slow stormwater flow.	

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency



Figure 13: Natural Features & Open Space: Key Takeaways and Recommendations

**Woodlands & Tree Canopy should be protected.**

- » Existing trees can be “credited” to a development’s landscaping requirements to encourage tree preservation and must be replaced if damaged during the process.

**Development around Water Features (Floodplains, Wetlands, Groundwater Recharge Areas) should be regulated.**

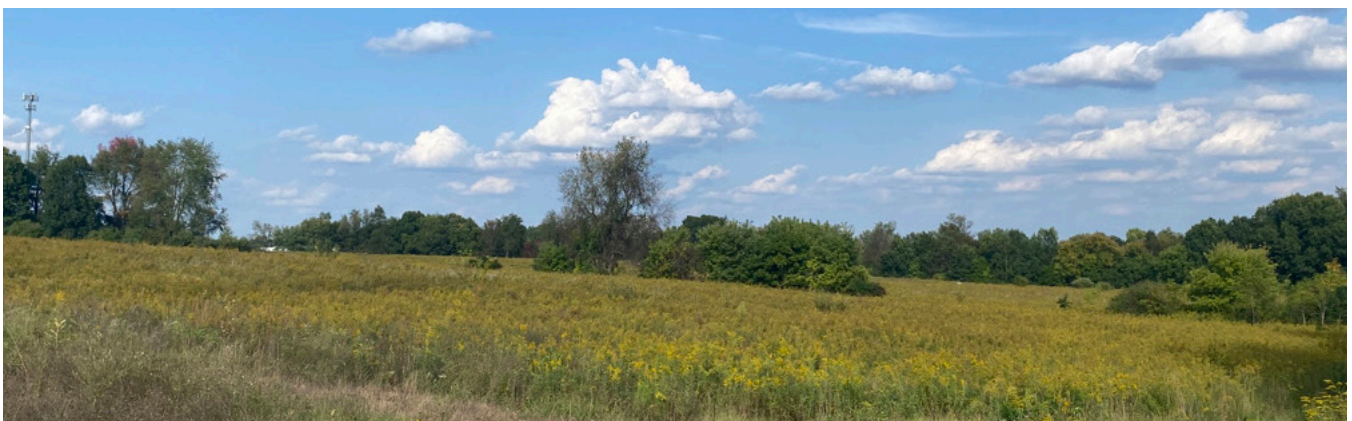
- » The Township should encourage the protection of wetlands and the installation of green infrastructure measures along the FEMA flood zones.
- » The Township can designate the areas around the floodplain as conservation areas to limit development and impervious surfaces.
- » The Township can also regulate lakefront development by mandating greenbelts with native vegetation as a buffer zone between the setback and the water’s edge to reduce flooding impacts.
- » Development should be regulated such that no potential pollutant sources, like heavy industry, are located within the wellhead protection area.
- » Development that deposits, fills, dredges, removes, drains, or constructs on a wetland must receive a permit from EGLE.

**Conservation Areas should be protected.**

- » The location of these high-quality natural lands should be considered whenever development takes place within the community.
- » The Township can provide information about voluntary conservation easements to residents, especially those living in the designated areas on the map.

**Green Infrastructure Measures should be promoted.**

- » The Township should encourage green infrastructure placement during the site plan review process and/or planned development process.



Meadow along Cedar Island Road

## Sources

- 1 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in White Lake Township Master Plan for Land Use 2010–2011, 2011, [https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3681/complete\\_wl\\_mp\\_update\\_document\\_2012.pdf](https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3681/complete_wl_mp_update_document_2012.pdf).
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- 8 Wellhead Protection, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, [https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313\\_3675\\_3695---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313_3675_3695---,00.html).
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- 13 Huron River Watershed Council, Kent Lake/Upper Huron River Watershed Management Plan, 2006, <https://www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/KENTLAKE-WMP-v2.pdf>.
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# Housing

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Providing quality housing opportunities that cater to the needs and preferences of residents across demographic and income groups is vital to building thriving communities. According to the MI New Economy plan, Michigan faces an acute housing shortage—worse than the national average for both owners and renters.<sup>1</sup> Home construction has not returned to pre-Great Recession levels compounding the effects of a housing shortage. In Michigan, it is predicted by 2045 there will be a shortage of 150,000 units.<sup>2</sup> On top of that, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the economy, pushing the Michigan housing market into a state of precarity as labor and materials became increasingly expensive.

The undersupply of housing benefits existing homeowners and disadvantages newcomers to the market. For existing homeowners, there is increased demand and competition for their homes, which drives up the prices. Homeowners can leverage equity gained from rising home prices to purchase their next home. However, because so few new units have been built, many homeowners are facing difficulties finding new units. For newcomers to the market, skyrocketing housing prices are out of reach for moderate- and low-income earners, such as young professionals or single-income households. As a result, these households stay in their rentals longer or have to pay more for older homes that were once attainable to lower-income households. The bottleneck caused by a lack of available homes for purchase leaves more people in the rental market, and rents increase as a result of increased competition, leaving renters less opportunity to save for a down payment on a home. Many households are in less-than-ideal housing situations when it comes to finding the price, type, and location that fits their lifestyle.

In response to this housing crisis, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) Statewide Housing Plan set a calculated target of

adding 75,000+ new or rehabilitated units over the next five years.<sup>3</sup> This target can only be realized if every community in Michigan proactively expands its housing stock and housing diversity. To this end, this section of the Plan summarizes the housing characteristics in the Township, presents community preferences, and outlines housing strategies.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Housing supply is a regional issue as it is part of a larger ecosystem of people, land use, natural and built environments, transportation networks, and economic markets. Housing trends constantly change and evolve in response to local and regional socioeconomic shifts. Therefore, where relevant, the existing condition of housing in White Lake Township is compared to nearby Oakland County communities to guide housing goals and recommendations in this Plan.

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IMPACTING HOUSING

Demographic trends influence housing; therefore, it is essential to monitor the population and the community's preferences to predict future trends in housing and strategize housing supply appropriately. The Township's local and regional demographic trends are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, titled "Demographics," but trends impacting the housing market are listed below:

- » Households in White Lake Township are becoming smaller (average household size of 2.68 in 2010 to 2.6 in 2020) and as a result, the total households in the Township grew by 9% between 2010 and 2020.
- » White Lake Township's population is aging. Mature households (35-54 years) continue to remain the largest age cohort (26%) while the percentage of empty nesters and seniors, with niche housing requirements, increased to



roughly 18% in 2020.

- » Roughly 15% of the Township’s population and almost 40% of seniors have a disability and will require support facilities including mobility assistance, accessible living facilities, and specialized healthcare services.
- » The percentage of individuals in poverty has increased to 8.8% in 2020, and an estimated 28% of households fall under the ALICE threshold. Providing affordable housing and economic opportunities will be key in ensuring these households can navigate their way out of poverty.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSING IN WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

### Housing Units

The total housing units in White Lake Township increased by roughly 4% to an estimated 12,519 in 2020. Given households increased by 9% in the same period, the growth of housing units has been relatively slow, indicating a mismatch between the changing household structure and the existing housing stock in the Township. The pace of growth is comparable to the County (2.9%); however, almost all surrounding communities, except Waterford Township, witnessed a greater increase in housing units than the Township. Given the population in these communities also grew faster than the Township, the higher growth rate of housing units is expected.

Of the 12,519 housing units, 95.8% are occupied units and the remaining 4.2% are vacant; the

vacancy rate dropped from the estimated 8.8% in 2010 and is lower than the County (6%). While low vacancy rates are desirable, rates as low as 4% are one indication of a housing shortage. The term vacancy includes units for sale, seasonal housing units, and migrant-worker housing. Therefore, while the unit may be “vacant,” it may not be available for a household to purchase or occupy. About 175 units are vacant, seasonal, recreational, or are occasionally used.<sup>4</sup>

### Age of Housing Stock

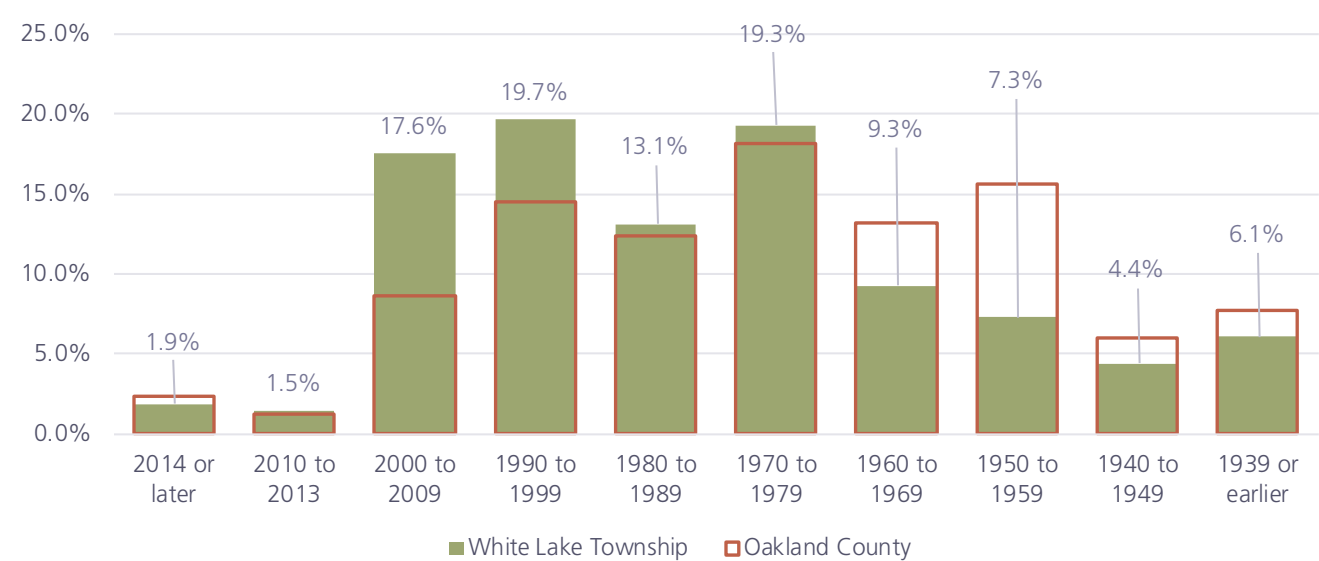
The housing stock in White Lake Township is aging. Over a quarter of the housing stock is close to 50 years old, and only 4% of units have been built in the last decade. A large proportion of existing units were built between 1990-1999 which corresponds to the population boom the Township witnessed during that period (25%). The slow rate of new builds in the Township is consistent with the trend in Oakland County and most surrounding cities and is a contributing factor to the housing shortage in the region.<sup>5</sup> The market is still recovering from the aftermath of the Great Recession which halted development for several years, but in many places, including White Lake Township, it has not caught up fast enough. Without an influx of new units, the average age of homes will increase. Older homes, depending on their level of maintenance or architectural charm, can either add to the Township’s appeal or detract from it. When kept up, they are historic assets. On the other hand, families might find them harder to maintain and feel that they lack modern, convenient amenities.

**Table 09: Total Housing Units: White Lake Township & Other Communities (2010–2020)**

	2010	2020	Change
White Lake Twp	12,045	12,519	3.9%
Commerce Twp	15,292	17,096	11.8%
Highland Twp	7,677	8,048	4.8%
Lyon Twp	5,197	7,537	45.0%
Orion Twp	13,648	15,896	16.5%
Springfield Twp	5,264	5,620	6.8%
Waterford Twp	31,766	32,564	2.5%
Oakland County	526,693	542,094	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2010, 2020)

Figure 14: Age of Housing Stock: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2010-2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

Table 10: Housing Sale Inventory, White Lake Township (May 2022-May 2023)

Housing Typology	Units Sold
Detached Single-family Residential	430
Attached Single-family Residential	55
Multi-family Residential	1
Total Residential	486
Undeveloped Parcels	30

Source: Debby DeHart, Real Estate One.

### Homeownership in White Lake Township

A high percentage of owner-occupied units is generally perceived as a healthy market characteristic. In 2020, owner-occupied units accounted for 85.9% of the occupied households in White Lake Township, slightly lower than the homeownership rate in 2010 (89.5%), but higher than the County (71.2%).<sup>6</sup> The Township has a very low homeowner vacancy rate of 0.9%, indicative of a competitive homeownership market where demand outpaces supply.<sup>7</sup>

#### Housing Sale Inventory

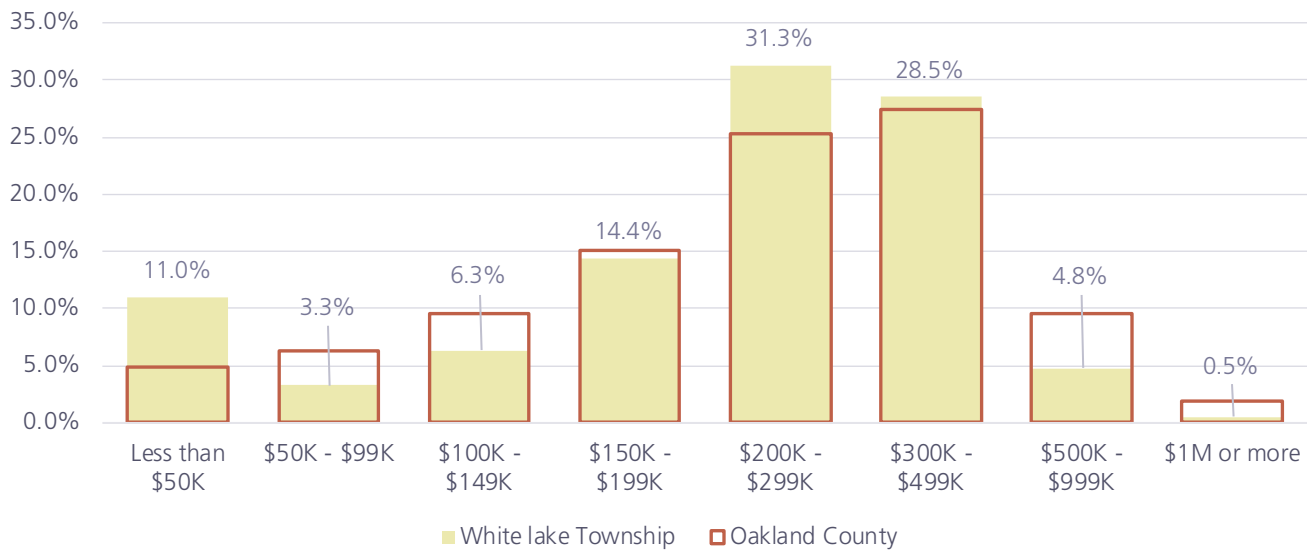
The table titled “Housing Sale Inventory, White Lake Township (May 2022–May 2023)” lists data on the number of residential units sold in White Lake Township between May 2022–May 2023. Of the 486 total residential units sold in the Township,

430 were detached single-family units and 55 were attached single-family units; one multi-family unit was sold during the same period. In addition, 30 undeveloped parcels of land were sold, which may be used towards new residential developments.

#### Home Value

The shortage of units available for sale is likely why median home values increased to \$247,200 in 2020 from \$210,700 in 2010. The median home value in the Township is lower than the County (\$252,800) but higher than the State of Michigan (\$154,900).<sup>8</sup> Since demand drives home value; the higher the demand the more homes are valued. In a tight market, when a housing unit becomes available, the bidding process can inflate the home’s value, resulting in people paying above-average price for the home. While this benefits existing residents because it increases the price of their homes, it

**Figure 15: Housing Value (2020)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

makes it challenging for households attempting to enter the market.

The figure “Housing Value (2020)” illustrates the majority of homes (31.3%) in the Township are valued between \$200,000-\$299,999 and 28.5% are valued between \$300,000-\$499,999. Housing sales data indicated a total of 430 homes were sold in the Township between May 2022 and May 2023, and the average sale price was \$357,089.<sup>9</sup> Only about 5% of homes have price points between \$500K and \$1M. The Township also has a relatively smaller percentage of homes in the lower price range (\$50K–\$150K) creating a challenge for households seeking to buy “starter homes” and enter the market. Around 11% of the homes are priced at less than \$50,000. Given that 14% of vacant homes are sold but not occupied, these homes are likely blighted and uninhabitable.<sup>10</sup>

### *Housing Costs & Affordability*

Homeowner costs are measured using the “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” (SMOC) metric, which includes a mortgage payment as well as insurance and other housing-related expenses. The median SMOC in White Lake Township in 2020 was estimated at \$1,666, slightly lower than the County (\$1,676). Among homeowners, roughly 82% live in an affordable unit and 16% live in an unaffordable unit. Given the rising poverty rates in the Township, producing affordable housing will be a key step in assisting these households to navigate their way out of financial distress.

### **Defining Housing Affordability**

**Affordable:** Households spend <30% of income on housing costs.

**Unaffordable:** Households spend 30% - 50% of income on housing costs.

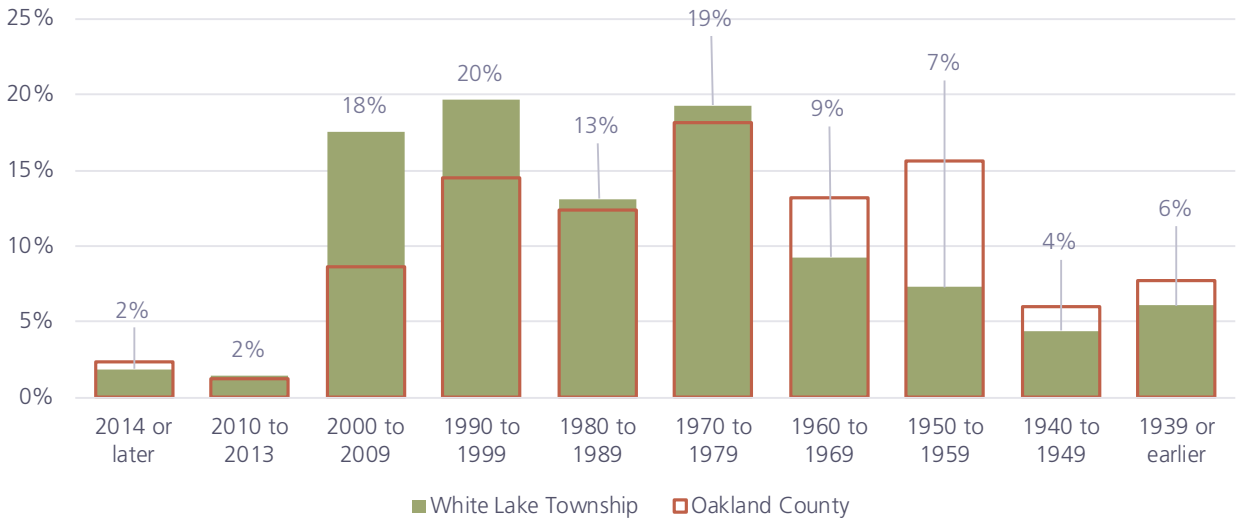
**Severely Unaffordable:** Households spend >50% of income on housing costs.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

### **Renting in White Lake Township**

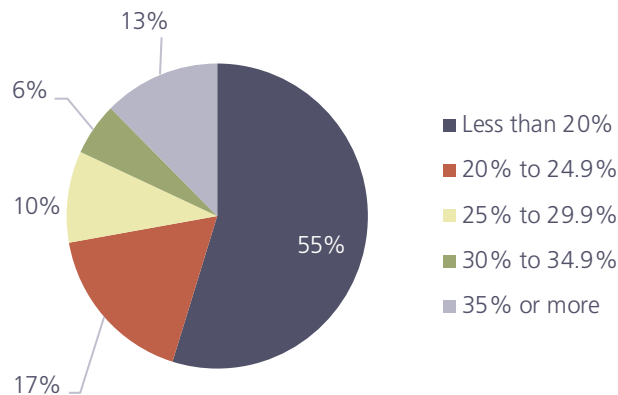
Renting is becoming an increasingly popular option among young households, empty nesters, and seniors. Considering an overall scarcity of units available for sale in White Lake Township, especially in the lower price range (\$50K–\$150K), home ownership is out of reach for low- and moderate-income households, and as a result, they must rent. In 2020, renter-occupied units account for 14.1% of the occupied households in White Lake Township, higher than in 2010 (10.5%), but lower than the County (28.8%).<sup>11</sup> The rental vacancy rate in the Township is 2.5%. The average household size of rental households is 2.05, lower than that of homeowners (2.69).

Figure 16: Age of Housing Stock: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2010–2020)



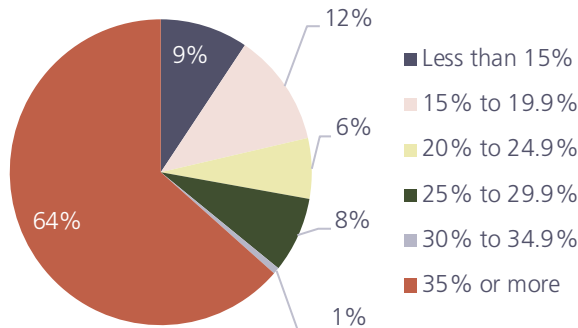
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

Figure 17: Homeowner Affordability (2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

Figure 18: Renter Affordability (2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

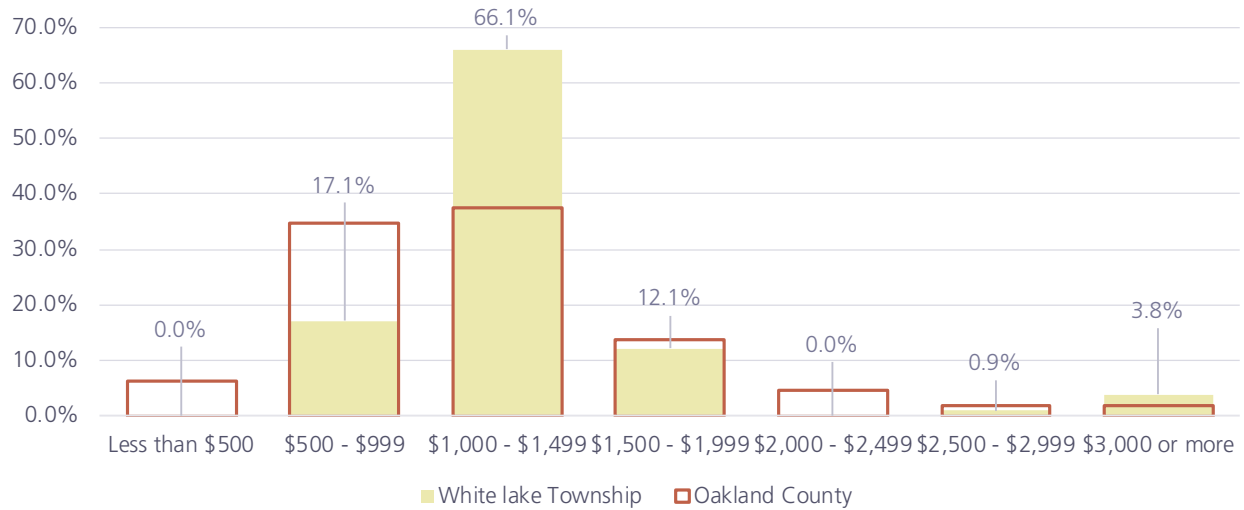
### Gross Rent

Between 2010–2020 the median gross rent in the Township jumped to \$1,192 from \$884. The gross rent in the Township is slightly higher than the County (\$1,100) but substantially higher than the State of Michigan (\$871).<sup>12</sup> The figure titled “Monthly Rent (2020)” (p. 45) illustrates roughly two-thirds of the renters in the Township pay a gross rent between \$1,000–\$1,499 monthly. About 17% pay less than \$1,000 and 12% pay gross rents between \$1,500–\$1,999. The County has a greater availability of units (34.6%) with rents in the \$500–\$999 than the Township (17.1%).

The table titled “Household Income in The Past 12 Months by Monthly Gross Rent (2020)” presents

the ratio of household income by gross monthly rent. The table shows that some of the lowest rents (less than \$600) in the Township are borne by households with an income between \$10,000 and \$49,999. However, the table also shows the highest percentage of renters (81%) paying the highest rents in the Township (\$2,000 or more) are households with an income between \$35,000–\$49,999, suggesting many renter households may be housing cost burdened. The ratio of renter households paying the median rent range in the Township (\$1,000–\$1,499) is also concentrated among households earning \$10,000–\$34,999, reiterating that many households are paying rents considered unaffordable based on the affordability standards defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Figure 19: Monthly Rent: White Lake Township & Oakland County (2020)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

**Table 11: Household Income in the Past 12 Months by Monthly Gross Rent (2020)**

	Less than \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$19,999	\$20,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
\$500 to \$599	0%	32%	32%	36%	0%	0%	0%
\$600 to \$699	0%	0%	0%	37%	37%	0%	26%
\$700 to \$799	0%	9%	16%	0%	75%	0%	0%
\$800 to \$899	0%	16%	58%	5%	20%	0%	0%
\$900 to \$999	0%	32%	24%	8%	19%	17%	0%
\$1,000 to \$1,249	6%	9%	55%	2%	10%	11%	6%
\$1,250 to \$1,499	0%	46%	18%	2%	23%	6%	4%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	9%	9%	32%	0%	0%	6%	45%
\$2,000 or more	0%	0%	0%	81%	10%	3%	6%
No cash rent	18%	22%	9%	22%	0%	20%	9%

Note: The table above is read horizontally, all rows add up to 100%, showing the ratio of household income by gross monthly rent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

### Housing Costs & Affordability

As noted above, the table titled “Household Income in The Past 12 Months by Monthly Gross Rent (2020)” highlights affordability concerns among the renter households in the Township. A sizable 64% of renters live in units unaffordable for their household income, while only 36% live in affordable units. The low- and moderate-income households in White Lake Township are disproportionately disadvantaged when considering rental affordability. These renters are in a challenging situation because they are priced

out of homeownership and are living in rental units and still paying unaffordable rents.

### Housing Diversity

Housing diversity is an important tool to address the housing shortage and affordability in White Lake Township. The changing demographics of the Township require a variety of housing typologies at different price points to ensure housing access. Consistent with the County and regional trends, the existing housing stock in the Township is



homogeneous with 77.1% detached single-family dwelling units. Of the remaining units, 3.2% were attached single-family dwelling units, 0.6% were duplexes, 7.6% were multi-dwelling units, and 12% were mobile homes. Additionally, nearly a quarter of housing units have four or more bedrooms; with the average household sizes decreasing the demand for large-footprint homes will likely decrease in the Township.<sup>13</sup> However, of the 76 new builds authorized in the Township in 2022, 85% were detached single-family dwelling units, signifying recent home construction is not aligned with the shifting housing preferences of demographic trends.<sup>14</sup> Concentration in the Township's housing stock of predominantly one housing typology is a major factor driving up unaffordability levels in the Township. For instance, empty nesters who wish to downsize, working households with limited discretionary income, couples without children, or young adults moving out of their parent's homes, may prefer smaller but affordable units. A shortage of such options will push residents, and potential future residents, to seek desired housing outside of the Township or drive demand for those units in the Township. Furthermore, because the neighboring townships have less to offer in terms of housing diversity, it could push them out of the region.

## COMMUNITY HOUSING PREFERENCES

The takeaways from the responses in the housing section of the Master Plan community survey are summarized below and represent consensus on

housing preferences and challenges in the Township, and are instrumental in tailoring housing solutions and recommendation to meet the needs of the White Lake Township community.

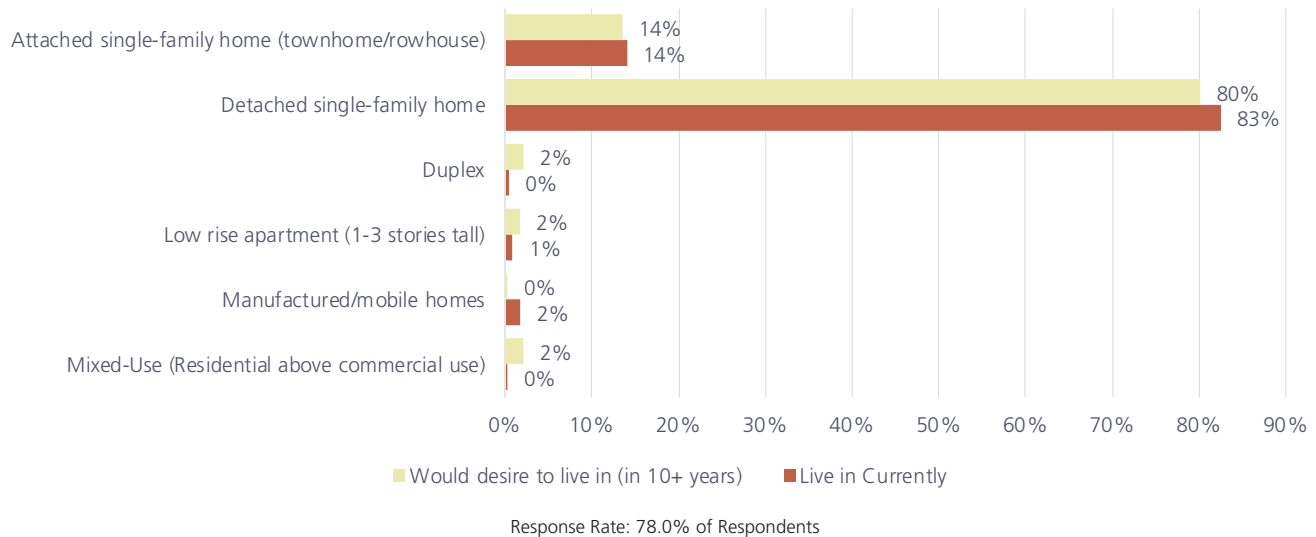
*What type of housing do you LIVE IN CURRENTLY and what type would you like to LIVE IN 10 YEARS FROM NOW? (Please select all options that apply)*

The majority of respondents currently live in either detached single-family homes (83%) or attached single-family homes (14%); only 3% of all respondents live in other multi-family housing units. Future preferences of respondents are also concentrated only between the two typologies of single-family homes, attached (80%) and detached (14%), indicating most respondents are not seeking diverse housing typologies in the Township. It is important to ensure housing needs are met in the community. A small percentage of respondents (6%) indicate a desire to live in multi-family housing units such as duplexes (2%), low-rise apartments (2%) and mixed uses units (2%) 10 years from now. A more detailed analysis of housing preferences by age indicated additional trends. First, of the 2% of respondents who wish to live in duplexes, over 50% are seniors (65 years and above). Second, the desire to live in low-rise apartments was most prominent for young professionals and families (25-34 years), empty nesters (55-64 years), and seniors. And third, among those who wish to live in mixed-use residential units in the future (2% of the total), 36% are young professionals and families, while the remaining vary in age from 35-seniors.



Single-family home

Figure 20: Current Housing Type and Future Preferences



*What is the size of your current housing unit, and what size of housing unit do you require to fulfill your housing needs in the future? (Please select one for each column)*

Almost one half of the respondents (46%) live in mid-size homes between 1,000-2,000 square feet and over a third of respondents (38%) live in homes with an area between 2,000-3,000 square feet. About 10% live in larger homes with an area of 3,000 to 4,000 square feet or above while only 5% of respondents live in smaller units ranging between 500-1,000 square feet. Reviewing the future housing needs of respondents, a higher percentage of respondents indicate a desire to live in homes with an area of 1,000-2,000 square feet in the future than where they currently live. One possibility for this demand may be a lack of availability of sufficient units of 1,000-2,000 square feet in area, suggesting that the current housing needs of some respondents are not being met. Alternatively, as housing composition changes, it is likely that the future housing needs will change, creating a future demand for homes in the 1,000-2,000 square feet category. Irrespective of the reason, respondents indicate a need to increase the housing stock of homes 1,000-2,000 square feet in the Township. Similarly, respondents also indicate a demand for smaller homes, 500-1,000 square feet in the Township.

The table titled "Current Housing Size and Future Preferences by Age" (p. 48) filters the current housing size and future needs by age of the respondent. The table demonstrates that a larger percentage

of seniors who currently live in larger homes will be interested in downsizing to smaller homes 500-1,000 or 1,000-2,000 square feet in the area. As the population of the Township is aging, the Township can expect the demand for small to mid-size homes to grow. However, those aged 25-34 years indicate a desire for the larger footprint (3,000-5,000 square feet) likely to house their growing families.

*What is your housing tenure status?*

About 95% of respondents are homeowners, 2% are renters, and 2% are not financially responsible for their housing costs. The majority of respondents who are not responsible for their housing costs are young adults and professionals aged 18-34 years, and the largest percentage of renters (29%) belong to the 25-34 years cohort hinting a housing affordability concern for specifically the low- and moderate-income households in the Township.

*How strongly do you agree with the following statement: "With my household income, I feel the housing options in White Lake Township are financially attainable."*

Respondents demonstrated varied levels of agreement on housing attainability in the Township indicating a need to diversify housing to reach the various income cohorts in the Township. While across age groups, over half the respondents are able to access housing catered to their household income, many either disagree or strongly disagreed to the above statement, suggesting they are housing-cost burdened. Those aged 18-24 years, potentially

Figure 21: Current Housing Size and Future Preferences

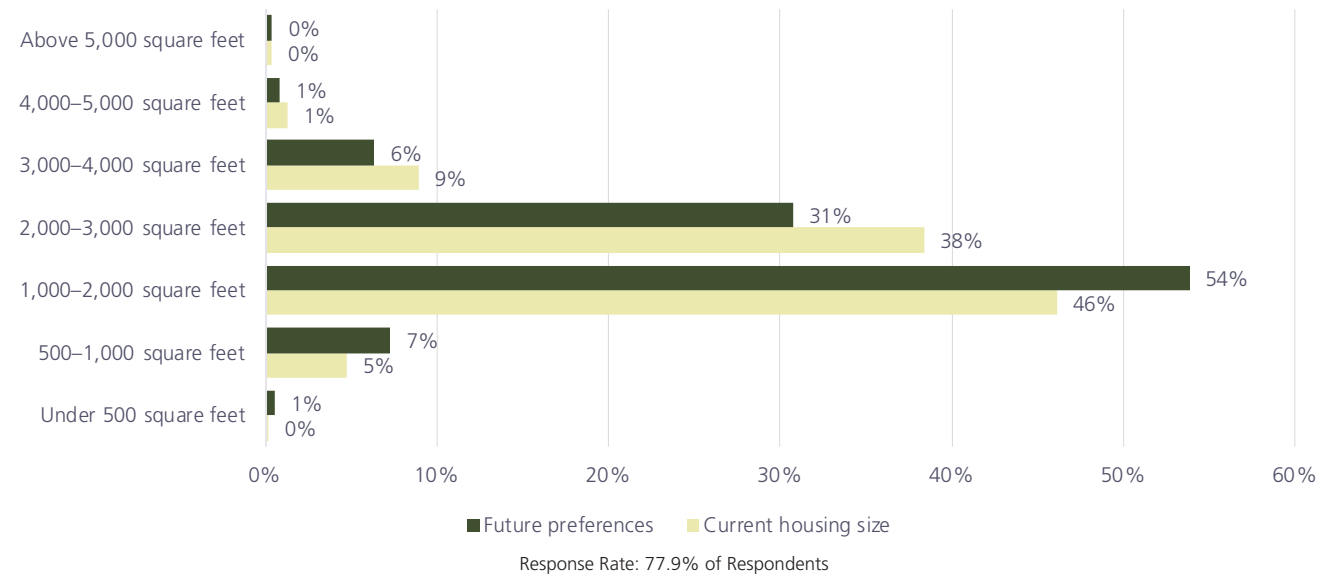


Table 12: Current Housing Size and Future Preferences by Age

Size of Unit	Current Housing Size							Future Needs					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Under 500 Sq.Ft.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%		0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
500–1,000 Sq.Ft.	25%	9%	6%	2%	5%	1%		9%	7%	2%	5%	9%	12%
1,000–2,000 Sq.Ft.	42%	52%	42%	46%	44%	50%		73%	34%	43%	59%	59%	62%
2,000–3,000 Sq.Ft.	8%	31%	41%	39%	38%	41%		18%	43%	46%	25%	24%	23%
3,000–4,000 Sq.Ft.	25%	6%	7%	11%	11%	6%		0%	14%	9%	9%	5%	2%
4,000–5,000 Sq.Ft.	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	1%		0%	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Above 5,000 Sq.Ft.	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%		0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%

Note: The table above is read vertically, all columns add up to 100% showing the distribution of housing needs within each age cohort.

including those still in school or beginning their careers, indicated strongest disagreement, likely due to a lack of smaller starter or low- to mid-end rental units.

*How much longer do you anticipate living in your current home?*

The percentage of respondents aged 25-34 years indicate varied timelines in their current homes, indicating they will move out as they transition

through various stages of life. Among those aged 35-44 years, the majority (34%) anticipate living in their current homes over the next twenty years, likely homeowners who have children in a nearby school district. Preferences vary among those aged 45 years and above. This is likely due to some anticipating they will downsize after their children leave the nest or for retirement while others are already in the housing of their choice and intend to age in place.

Figure 22: Housing Tenure Status by Age of Respondents

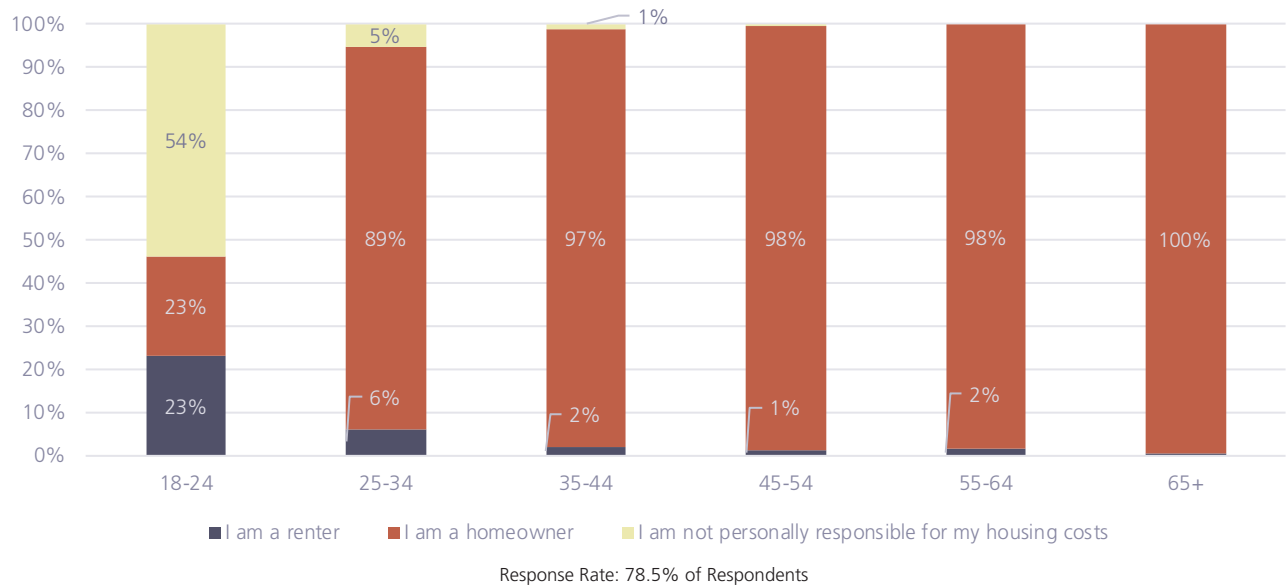
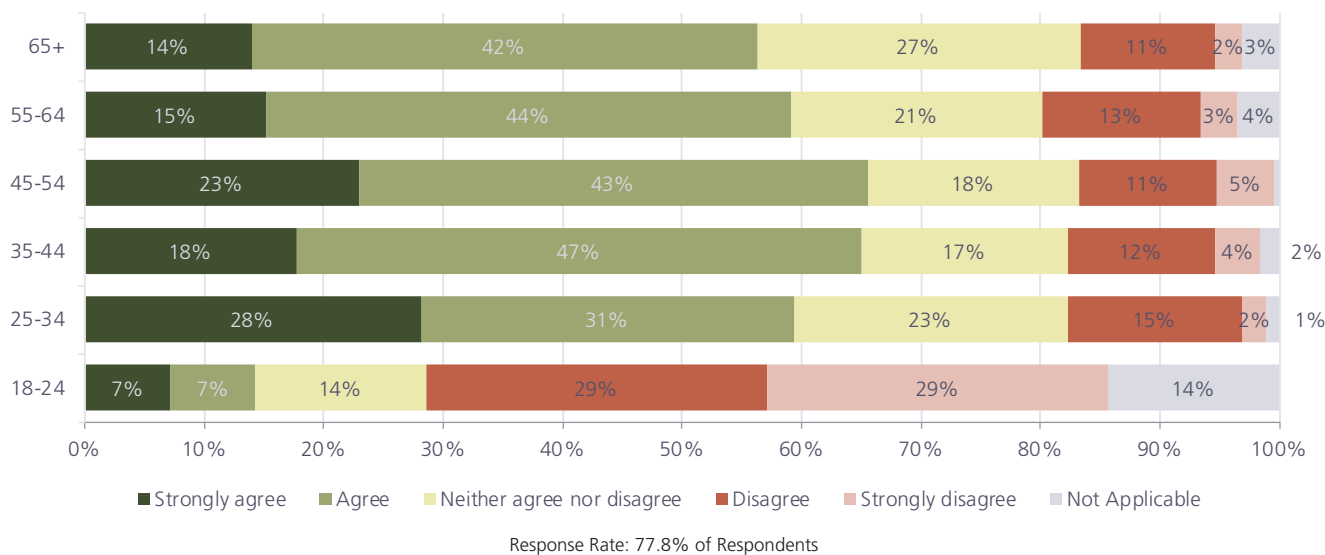


Figure 23: Housing Attainability by Age of Respondent



## HOUSING STRATEGIES

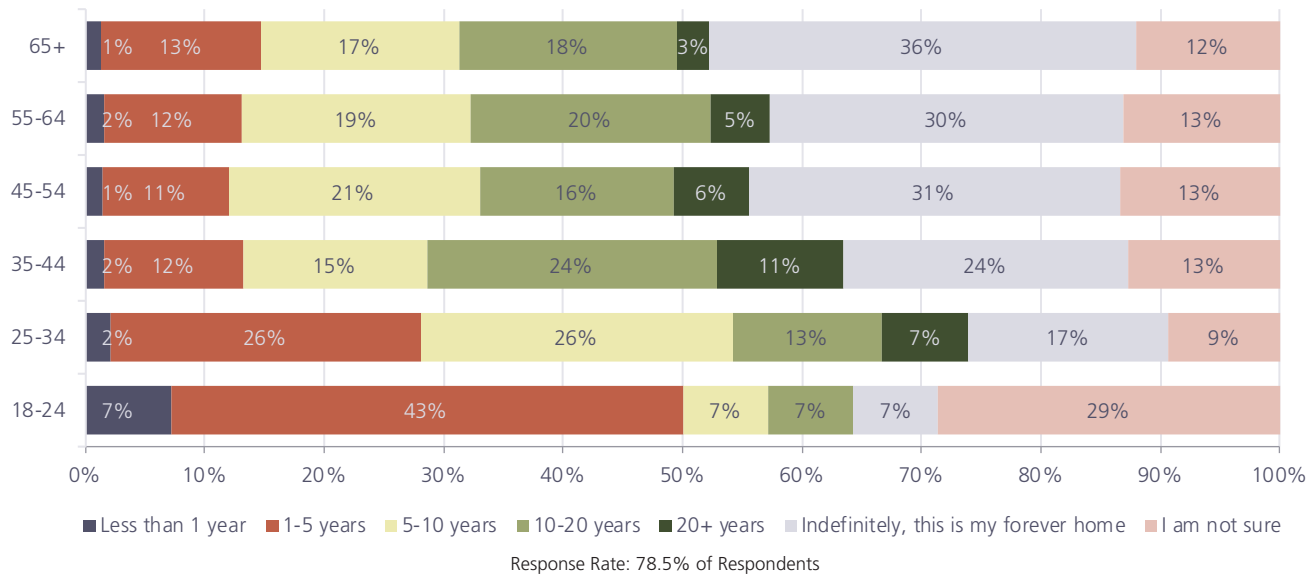
### Missing Middle

There is still a wide range of housing options between single-family dwelling units and multi-dwelling unit apartment complexes that remain unexplored in White Lake Township. In housing terms, the Township needs to expand “Missing Middle” housing, a term that refers to housing similar in size to single-family structures, but instead are either clustered or have multiple units.<sup>15</sup> Missing Middle housing typologies: Duplex, Triplex, Quadplex, Bungalow Courts, Multiplex, Live/Work units, weave density and diversity into the fabric of

traditional single-family residential neighborhoods. Typically, when smaller units are built on reduced lot areas, they generally have lower purchasing prices and maintenance costs.

Among the different missing middle typologies, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are an effective way to diversify the existing housing stock and offer low impact increases to density. Colloquially referred to as “in-law units” or “granny flats,” they are smaller units located in the rear areas of a residential parcel, subordinate to the principal structure, that can be used to house family members or to be rented to a nonfamily member. ADUs add new units compatible with the existing neighborhood composition that

Figure 24: Duration in Current Home



are not supplied by the private housing development market. The lower costs may be passed on to the tenants to provide more affordable housing options for young adults, the elderly, or residents in transition to homeownership, all of which are important goals for the Township. Attached ADUs are currently permitted in the Township; however, limitations with septic fields and connecting to septic system limits their widespread applicability in the Township.

### Build To Rent

Housing markets often tend to focus heavily on ownership, and while ownership tenure is vital for overall economic well-being, renting is becoming a preferred option due to high housing costs and inventory shortage associated with homeownership. Additionally, many demographic groups such as

young adults, empty nesters, seniors, and immigrants may prefer to rent due to the convenience and flexibility it offers. With this growing demand for rental units, many developers are building to rent in Southeast Michigan, spread over an array of housing typologies, and they are typically more spacious than apartments and include shared amenities.<sup>16</sup>

### Rehabilitate Blighted Properties

As of 2020, 77 units under ownership tenure are unoccupied and are valued below \$50,000.<sup>17</sup> These units are likely blighted and uninhabitable, and a potential threat to deteriorating the quality of the neighborhood and lowering property values. Rehabilitating or retrofitting such properties will not only funnel more units into the housing market to address the supply issues, but will also produce

Figure 25: Missing Middle Housing





units at lower prices than new builds to cater to the low- and middle-income groups pursuing homeownership. Oakland County provides federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funding to communities for revitalization projects. The program strengthens neighborhoods by supporting local revitalization, home improvement and public services for senior citizens, low-income persons and families, disadvantaged youth, and disabled residents throughout most of Oakland County.<sup>18</sup> The map titled “CDBG Area-Wide Benefits: White Lake Township” (p. 52) denotes areas of the Township eligible for the CDBG funding from Oakland County. Detailed information can be found on [Oakland County's Community & Home Improvement Division website](#).

### Zoning Reform<sup>19</sup>

Zoning determines where housing will be built, what types of units are allowed, how the housing might look, and when it might be approved. As the Township's legally binding document, the language can be removed or added to allow a range of housing types. Provisions can be modified to make conversions, infill, and redevelopment possible.

### *Rezone for Mixed-Use/Multi-Family in Commercial Districts*

Existing commercial districts and corridors can be great locations to accommodate more housing. Zoning for mixed-use districts along commercial corridors, is one of the easiest ways to support higher-density residential uses adjacent to, but outside of, less compact neighborhoods. The majority of the M-59 corridor is zoned planned business which does not permit any residential development. There are opportunities for residential development behind many of the commercial frontages on the corridor.

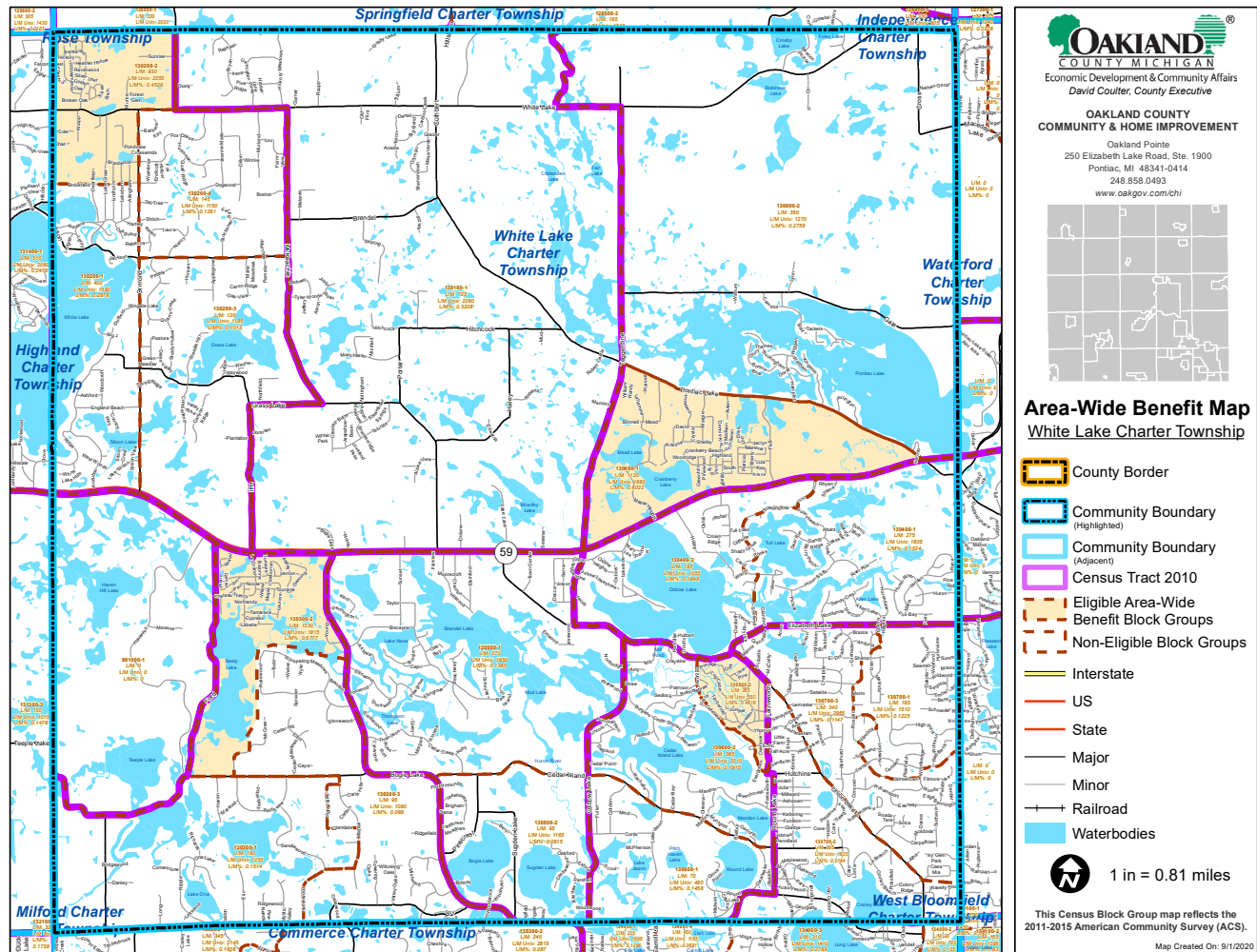
### *Minimum Lot Width, Area, and Setback Requirements*

Lot width and area requirements set the minimum standard for the size of the property. These two standards combined with setback requirements are often the primary criteria that establish whether a lot is buildable and impose restrictions on choice and cost of development. White Lake Township's lot width, area, and setbacks are well written to permit a range of residential housing sizes and styles and are well scaled to the intent of each residential zoning district.



Single-family residence

## Map 08: CDBG Area-Wide Benefits: White Lake Township



Source: Oakland County's Community & Home Improvement Division



Small lot single-family



Figure 26: Key Housing Strategies

### Missing Middle Housing

Missing Middle housing typologies: Duplex, Triplex, Quadplex, Bungalow Courts, Multiplex, Live/Work units, weave density and diversity into the fabric of traditional single-family residential neighborhoods.

### Rehabilitate Blighted Properties

Rehabilitating or retrofitting blighted properties will not only funnel more units into the housing market to address the supply issues but will also produce units at lower prices than new builds to cater to the low- and middle-income groups pursuing homeownership.

### Zoning Reform

As the Township's legally binding document, the language in the Zoning Ordinance can be removed or added to allow a range of housing types.

- » Rezone for Mixed-Use/Multi-Family in Commercial Districts.
- » Minimum Lot Width, Area, and Setback Requirements.



Large lot single-family

## Sources

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- 2 Michigan Association of Planning, "Zoning Reform in Michigan: What Can You Do Now?," Spring Institute, 2022.
- 3 Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Michigan's Statewide Housing Plan, 2022.
- 4 United States Census Bureau, B25004 Vacancy Status, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2020.
- 5 United States Census Bureau, DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2020.
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- 9 Inventory Counts Report from Debby DeHart, [www.debbydehart.com](http://www.debbydehart.com)
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- 16 Alexandra Ciuntu. Built-to-Rent Homes Expected to Hit All-Time High in 2022, Fueled by Need for Space and Privacy. Rent Café, 2022. <https://www.rentcafe.com/blog/rental-market/market-snapshots/built-to-rent-single-family-homes-double-in-2022/#:~:text=Built%2Dto%2Drent%20communities%20are,have%20a%20direct%2Daccess%20garage.>
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- 19 Michigan Association of Planning, Zoning Reform Toolkit, [https://www.planningmi.org/assets/images/ZoningReformToolkit/MAP\\_ZoningReformToolkit\\_2022%2008%2002\\_Gradient.pdf](https://www.planningmi.org/assets/images/ZoningReformToolkit/MAP_ZoningReformToolkit_2022%2008%2002_Gradient.pdf)





Lakefront home

# Transportation & Mobility

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Transportation networks are the physical links that define mobility and connectivity in a community. Roads, public transit, sidewalks, and other non-motorized paths allow residents to move between home, work, places to socialize, and other everyday destinations. Transportation infrastructure also enables regional connectivity, facilitating the exchange of products and services with other economic markets. Typically, housing, businesses, and amenities tend to concentrate along well-connected road networks, thereby establishing transportation infrastructure as a fundamental element of land use planning.

The Township's 2012 Master Plan recognized the importance of broadening transportation choices, improving pedestrian connectivity to public and commercial areas, and promoting a public transportation system to increase the mobility of the elderly and physically disabled. However, transportation and the supporting infrastructure in the Township continues to be auto-oriented. This section inventories the transportation systems in White Lake Township and identifies how existing infrastructure can be adapted to support diverse mobility options. The findings from the analyses and community input session will help guide the Township on major transportation infrastructure advancements and policy decisions.

## ROAD NETWORK

White Lake Township has 231.5 miles of roads within its boundary.<sup>1</sup> The Township is bisected by State Highway M-59 that runs east-west through the Township. The M-59 thoroughfare continues west to connect the Township with US-23, which runs north to Flint and south to Brighton and Ann Arbor, and continues east through metro Detroit to find a terminus at Chesterfield and Harrison Townships. Interstate 75 (I-75), which runs north to Flint and south to Detroit, can be accessed about three miles northeast. Collectively, the M-59 thoroughfare and

the proximity to freeway interchanges and highways offer convenient regional connectivity, making White Lake Township an accessible residential community.

## Road Classification and Traffic Volumes

The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a hierarchical system developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and used by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to determine federal funding allocation for roads. Roads are categorized based on mobility, trip distance, speed limit, and traffic volume. The higher the road classification, the greater the funding. Roads in White Lake Township fall into one of the following classifications: Major Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, and Local Roads. The map titled "National Functional Classification" (p. 58) represents the Township's road network based the NFC system. MDOT also calculates the average daily number of vehicles that travel on roadways throughout the year, a metric termed "Average Annual Daily Traffic" or AADT. The numbers on the NFC map represent the estimated 2019 AADT counts in White Lake Township. MDOT recommends the continued use of 2019 AADT numbers since the most recent data was skewed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Major Arterials*

The east-west connector in the Township, M-59 (locally referred to as Highland Road) and the east-southeast peripheral road, Williams Lake Road, are the two major arterial roads. M-59 continues west to merge with US-23, connecting the Township to the major cities and employment hubs in the region: Flint to the north and Ann Arbor to the south, making the western segment of M-59 the busiest road in the Township with an AADT of nearly 30,980. With an AADT of 27,920, the eastern segment of M-59 is equally busy as it offers connections to the Oakland County International Airport and Metro Detroit. Williams Lake Road is the eastern boundary



## National Functional Classification

**Major Arterials:** Carry long-distance high-speed traffic and offer connectivity to other interstate highways. White Lake Township has 11.5 miles of major arterials.

**Minor Arterials:** Provide service for trips of moderate length, serve smaller geographic areas, and offer connectivity to other major arterials. White Lake Township has 18.1 miles of minor arterials.

**Major Collectors:** Gather and funnel traffic from local roads to the arterial network; these provide access to properties but tend to be longer in length, have lower connecting driveway densities, have higher speed limits, are spaced at greater intervals, and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors. White Lake Township has 16.4 miles of major collectors.

**Local Roads:** Provide access to properties. White Lake Township has 185.6 miles of local roads.

Source: Federal Highway Administration (U.S. Department of Transportation)

of the Township, which meets Cooley Lake Road to the south and, in turn, connects the Township to the “Four Towns” area with Commerce, Waterford, and West Bloomfield Townships. Williams Lake Road extends northeast to merge with Dixie Highway (M-24). A small segment of Cooley Lake Road, east of Union Lake Road, generates a high volume of traffic (AADT of 29,189) in the southeast corner of the Township, due to the connectivity it offers to the cities and employment centers south of the Township.

M-59 is under jurisdiction of MDOT, and the Township has limited control over any infrastructure decisions. Since Highland Recreation Area is accessed off M-59 and many commercial uses in the Township are concentrated along M-59, any decisions made by MDOT regarding road improvements will directly impact pedestrian safety, walkability, and the overall character along the corridor. MDOT’S Five-Year Transportation Program for 2023 to 2027 includes plans to rehabilitate M-59, or Highland Road, for the segment between Milford Road to US-24 and Pontiac Lake Road. Construction and physical improvements

are planned to begin in 2026. In addition to the rehabilitations planned for this stretch, six other segments of M-59 within the bounds of Oakland County will receive repairs and be reconstructed beginning in 2027.<sup>2</sup>

### *Minor Arterials and Major Collectors*

There are five minor arterial roads in White Lake Township: Elizabeth Lake Road, Union Lake Road, and Bogie Lake Road branch south from M-59/ Highland Road while Ormond Road branches north to meet another minor arterial, White Lake Road. The vehicle counts on Bogie Lake Road range from approximately 10,620 to 10,740; the volume of traffic is higher closer to the Huron Valley Schools campus. Elizabeth Lake Road and Union Lake Road are widely used (AADT of about 10,330 and 7,560, respectively) as the connectors between M-59 and the denser residential developments in the southeast quadrant of the Township. With an AADT of 9,345, White Lake Road is another major east-west connector in the Township, which runs parallel to M-59 and continues northeast to merge with Dixie Highway.

White Lake Township has several major collector roads including Teggerdine Road, Pontiac Lake Road, Oxbow Lake Road, and a segment of Cooley Lake Road. The segment of Cooley Lake Road, west of Union Lake Road, receives an AADT of 9,600, making it the busiest major collector in the Township. Teggerdine Road and Oxbow Lake Road are the primary north-south connectors in the Township with an annual daily average of about 7,700 vehicles. Pontiac Lake Road, leading to M-59, connects the northern portion of the Township to Waterford Township. The minor arterials and the major collectors are maintained by Oakland County and any infrastructure improvements along these roads require coordination with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC).

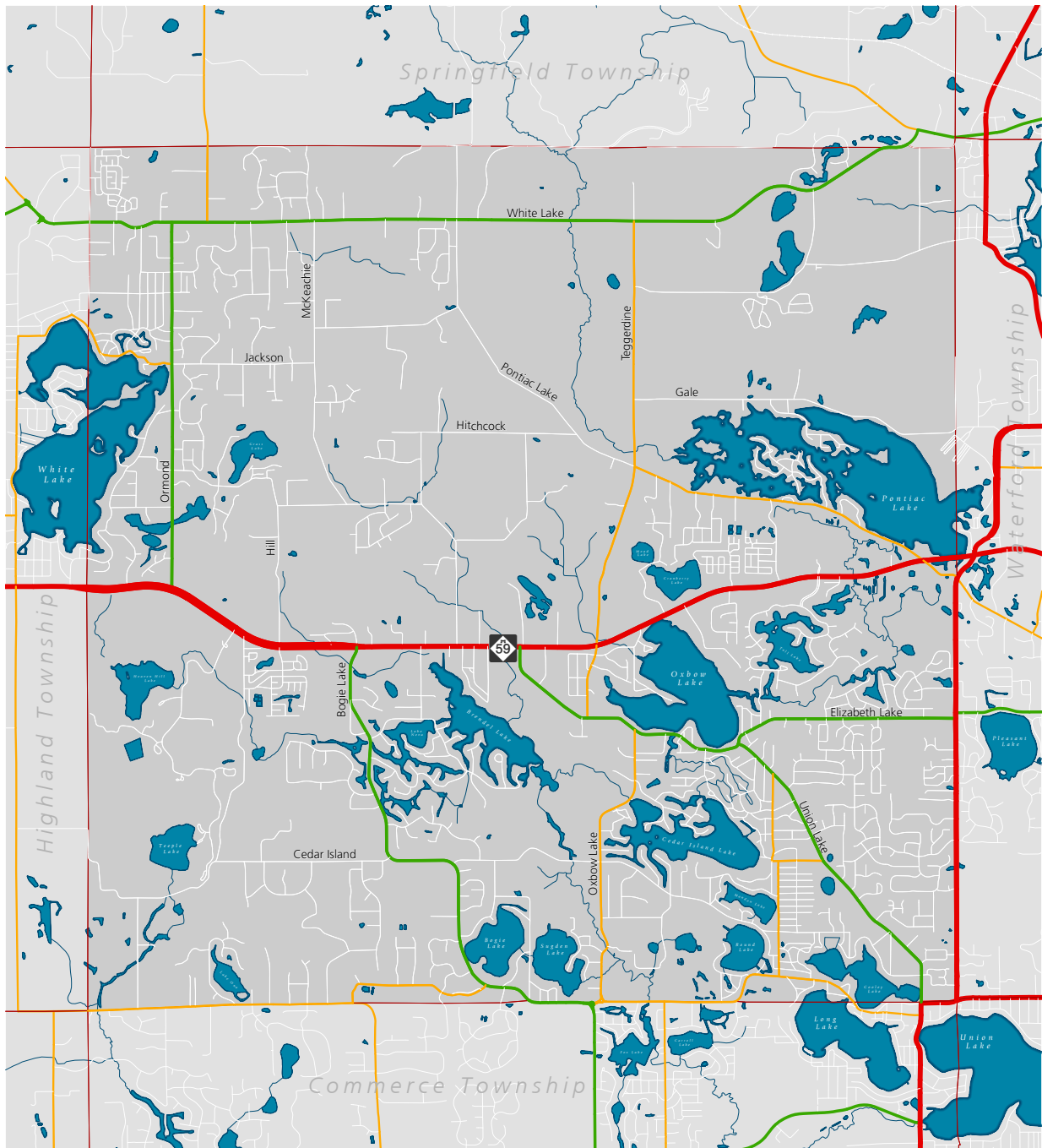
### *Local Roads*

Local roads offer connectivity to residential neighborhoods and other public spaces in the Township. Local roads cover the largest area compared to the other roads but are not eligible for any federal funding.

## Commuter Traffic

White Lake Township is primarily residential in character, with almost 96% of its residents

Map 09: National Functional Classification

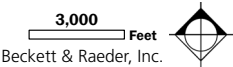


# National Functional Classification

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

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Local Roads

## 2019 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)



Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

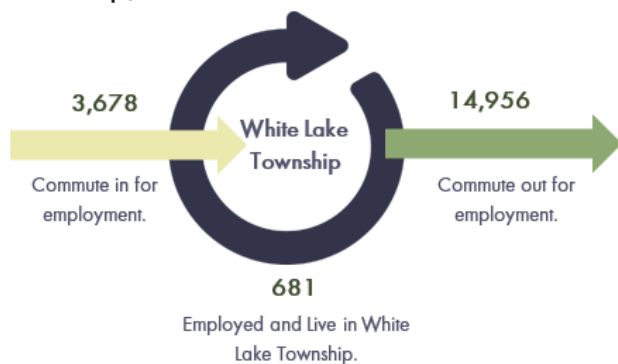


commuting outside of the Township to their place of employment.<sup>3</sup> About 61% of Township residents are employed within Oakland County and 17% commute to Wayne County for employment.<sup>4</sup> Most residents commute either south or southeast to the employment hubs of Detroit (4.7%), Farmington Hills (4.5%), Troy (4.3%), or Southfield (4.2%).<sup>5</sup> All four cities can be accessed via the segment of M-59 east of Teggerdine Road, likely causing congestion along this major throughfare during peak hours in the morning and evening, which can impact the length of daily commutes and safety. Those commuting to the Township for employment also primarily access the Township via M-59 from the west, establishing this stretch of the state highway as an important corridor.<sup>6</sup> The segment of Cooley Lake Road west of Union Lake Road receives high traffic counts (AADT 9,600) as it contains a strip mall and offers connectivity to the cities of Farmington Hills, Novi, and Livonia, making it a bottleneck for traffic.

## Road Quality

The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) conducts a visual survey called the

**Figure 27: Commute Patterns, White Lake Township, 2019**



Source: OnTheMap, United States Census Bureau

Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) to evaluate conditions of roads. This survey uses a scale of 1-10 to rate roads and categorize them as good, fair, or poor, as represented in the map titled "PASER Ratings 2022" (p. 60). The map depicts a vast majority of the major roads in the Township are in fair (indicated in yellow) or poor (indicated in red) condition; only a handful of road segments are in good condition (indicated in green). While Michigan's extreme weather exacerbates regular wear and tear, deteriorating road conditions can impede daily commutes and safety.

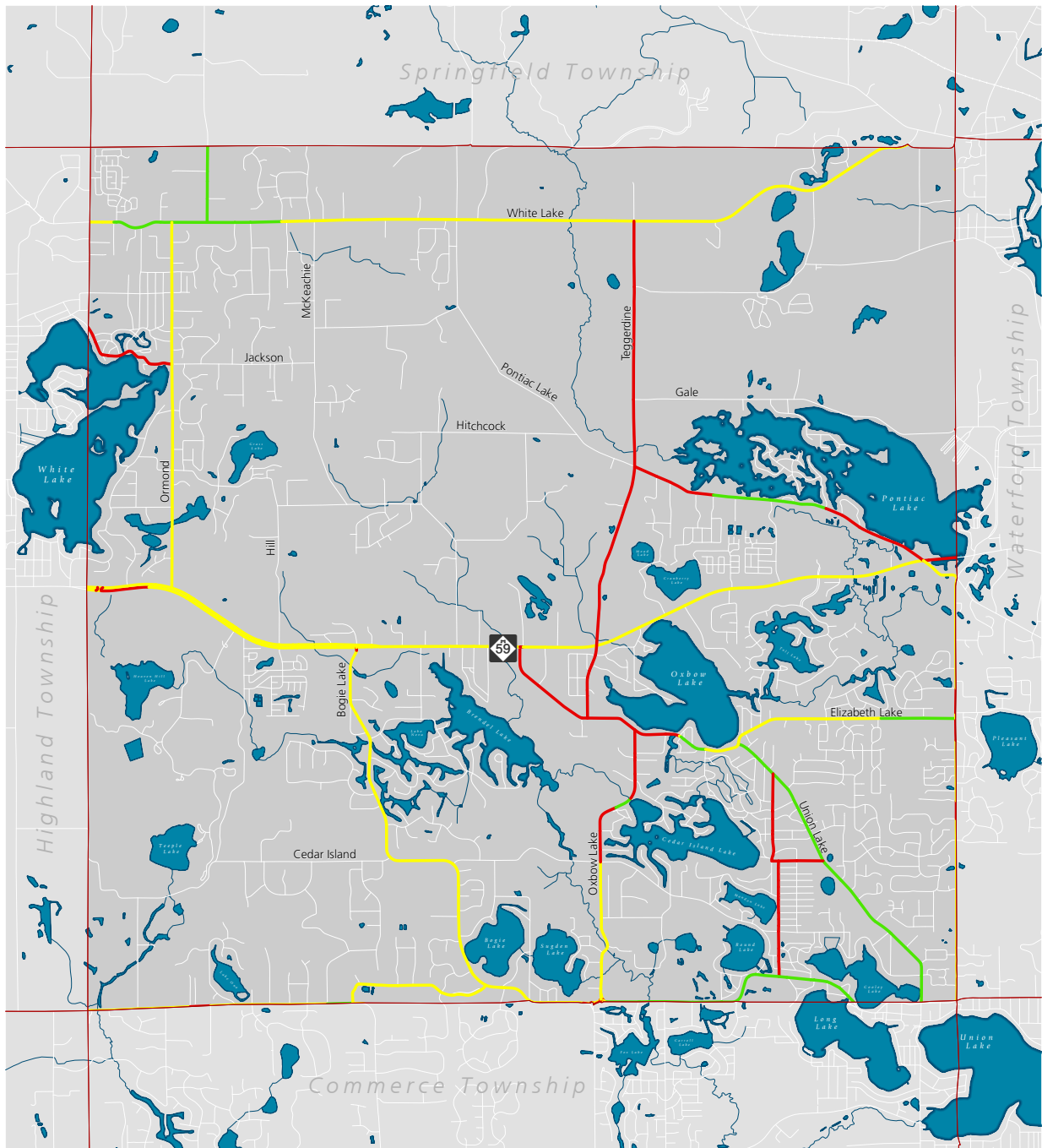
The Township's major arterials, M-59 and Williams Lake Road, are in "fair" condition. Given both roads are gateways into the Township and receive high volumes of daily commuters, improving the quality of these roads is imperative. As noted in the previous section, improvements and maintenance along M-59 are managed by MDOT. In addition to the rehabilitation projects MDOT has planned for 2026 and 2027 along M-59, SEMCOG has proposed \$53.8 million in pavement improvements along M-59 between Milford Road and Pontiac Lake Road in 2026 under the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes projects recommended by MDOT for state-owned transportation assets in the SEMCOG region.<sup>7</sup>

The quality of pavements along the minor arterial roads, Elizabeth Lake Road, Union Lake Road, Bogie Lake Road, Ormond Road, and White Lake Road, varies from good to poor; only Union Lake Road, short segments of Elizabeth Lake Road, and White Lake Road are in "good" condition. Particularly concerning is the western segment of Elizabeth Lake Road that connects with M-59. This intersection provides direct access to the residential development in the southeast portion of the Township. The RCOC completed a \$2.3 million project, to address concerns regarding road quality and safety along Elizabeth Lake Road. The proposed improvements include:<sup>8</sup>

- » Conversion of the three-way Elizabeth Lake Road/Teggerdine Road intersection, controlled by stop signs, to a single-lane roundabout.
- » Conversion of the three-way Elizabeth Lake Road/Oxbow Lake Road intersection, controlled by stop signs, to a compact roundabout.
- » Repaving of roads in the vicinity of the roundabouts with asphalt.
- » Installation of curbs and gutters, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant pedestrian crosswalks, and street lighting at the roundabouts.
- » Improvements to storm sewers and drainage.
- » Utility relocation.
- » Milling and paving Elizabeth Lake Road between the roundabouts with the addition of four-foot road shoulders.

Many of the major collector roads in the Township are in "poor" condition. The quality of pavement

Map 10: The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER)



# PASER Ratings 2022

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

- Good
- Fair
- Poor

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

that covers the entire stretch of road along the major north-south connectors in the Township, Teggerdine Road and Oxbow Lake Road via Elizabeth Lake Road, are in poor condition. In addition to offering north-south connectivity, Oxbow Lake Road provides access to Oxbow Elementary School, furthering the urgency to invest in infrastructure improvements along this stretch. Segments of Pontiac Lake Road leading to Teggerdine Road and M-59 are also of poor quality.

Road Safety

The existing road infrastructure in White Lake Township is impacted by the geography of the lakes as the road system is not organized into rectilinear grids, but rather large swooping stretches with disjointed intersections and connections in response to the existing lakes and wetlands. While accidents can occur at any segment of a road, 31% of Michigan’s fatal crashes in 2021 occurred at intersections, emphasizing the importance of designing safe road intersections.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, as highlighted in the Road Quality section above, the poor quality of pavement along some of the Township’s major thoroughfares further exacerbates the safety of commuters. The map titled “Crashes, 2021” (p. 62) uses 2021 crash data from the Michigan Traffic Crash Facts (MTCF) website to identify unsafe intersections and road segments in White Lake Township.

A total of 568 crashes occurred in the Township in 2021, of which a majority occurred along M-59, especially at intersections with north-south arterials or collector roads. The “Crashes, 2021” map (p. 62) shows several crashes along White Lake Road in the northern half of the Township, but the southern half witnessed a significantly higher number of crashes along Williams Lake Road, Bogie Lake Road,

Elizabeth Lake Road, Union Lake Road, and Oxbow Lake Road likely due to blind spots created by curvilinear geography of roads in response to several lakes and natural features. The highest concentration of crashes occurred at the following intersections:

- » M-59 and Ormond Road
- » M-59 and Bogie Lake Road
- » M-59 and Teggerdine Road
- » M-59 and Fisk Road
- » M-59 and Pontiac Lake Road

While there were no fatalities caused by crashes in 2021, the table below titled “Injury Caused by Crashes” shows of the 568 total crashes in the Township, 9.7% may have involved injuries, 8.1% may have resulted in minor injuries, and 1.6% may have caused serious injuries. Two accidents involving pedestrians were categorized as “Suspected Serious Injury” while two involving bicyclists were categorized as “Suspected Minor Injury.”

Given the volume and intensity of crashes in 2021, improving road safety measures and addressing problematic intersections should be important priorities for the Township. Proposed improvements along M-59 and between Milford Road and Pontiac Lake Road may address some safety concerns. The ongoing construction of roundabouts at the intersections of Elizabeth Lake Road and Teggerdine Road, and Elizabeth Lake Road and Oxbow Lake Road, will significantly improve safety in the southern portion of the Township.<sup>10</sup>

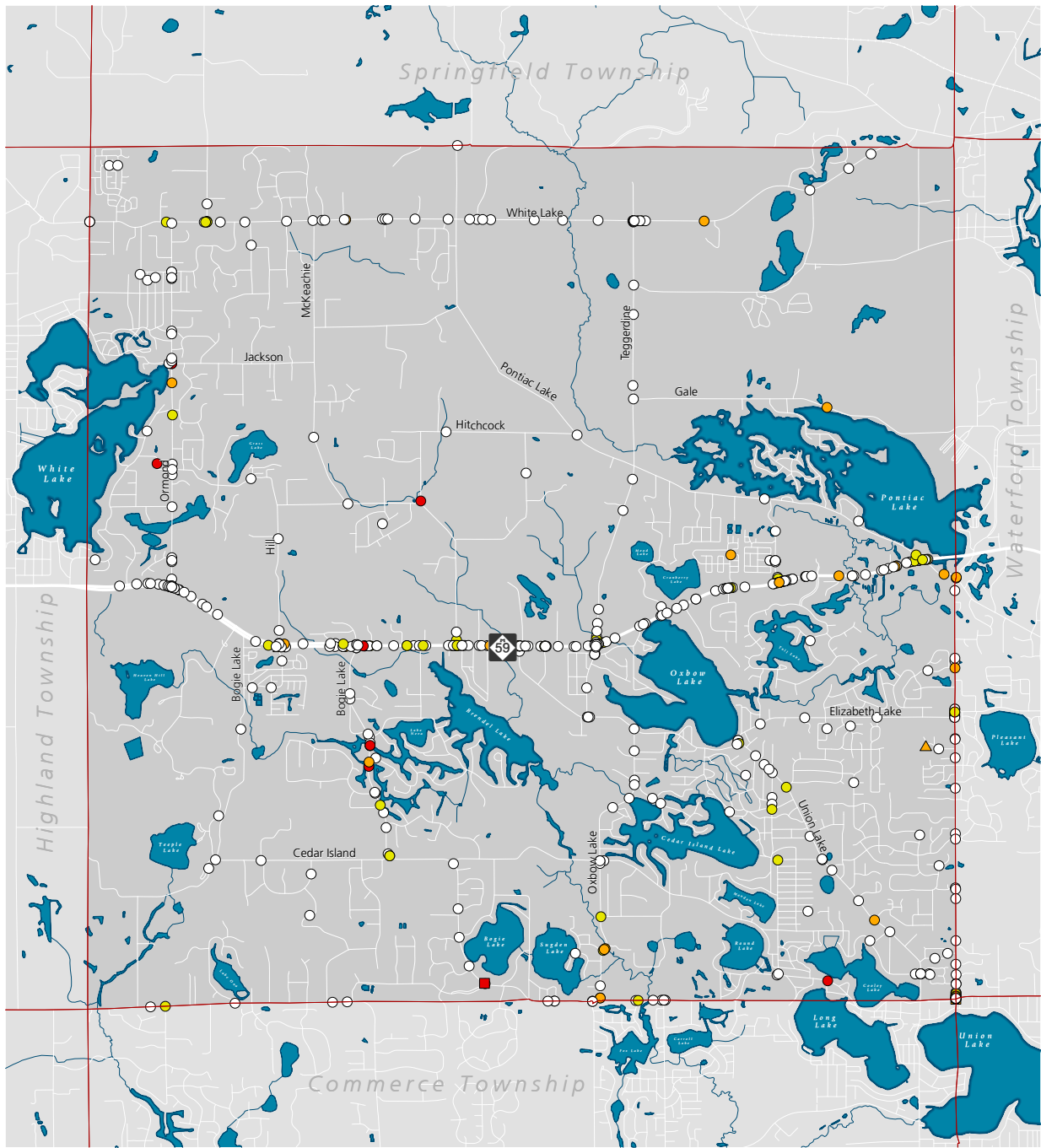
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPLETE STREETS

Table 13: Injury Caused by Crashes in 2021

Injury Type	Number of Crashes	Percentage of Total
Fatal Injury	0	0.0%
No Injury	458	80.6%
Possible Injury	55	9.7%
Suspected Minor Injury	46	8.1%
Suspected Serious Injury	9	1.6%
Totals	568	100%

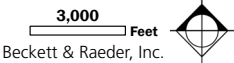
Source: Michigan Traffic Crash Facts

Map 11: Crashes 2021



# Crashes 2021

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



## Type of Crash

- ▲ Pedestrian Involved
- Cyclist Involved
- No Pedestrian or Cyclist

## Severity

- No Injury
- Possible Injury
- Minor Injury
- Major Injury



Transportation advocates have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. As an alternative to single-use roads, advocates have pushed for “Complete Streets,” a movement that calls for multimodal transportation by designing streets for automobiles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users of all ages and abilities. From simple additions or modifications to full-fledged infrastructure revamps, complete street elements may be scaled based on the needs and budget of individual communities.

## Non-Motorized Pathways

The existing pedestrian system is as expected in an area that relies heavily on the automobile as the primary source of transportation: currently, it contains several disconnected sidewalks/pathways. Though about 91% of Township residents primarily use automobiles (cars, trucks, or vans) to commute to work, integrating and increasing non-motorized trails and pathways was recognized as a “high priority” by 32% of survey respondents.<sup>11</sup> To this end, the Parks and Recreation Committee developed

a plan for Township-wide system of pathways; the renovation of the M-59 pathway is an essential element of this plan as it will connect future north-south pathways to residential land use in the Township. The 2024–2029 CIP shows \$6 million for the renovation of the pathway along M-59, spread over three phases, as a combination of funds from the Township and partner organizations.<sup>12</sup> The CIP also includes \$7 million worth of pathway construction along Union Lake Road and Bogie Lake Road.<sup>13</sup> In addition to pathways along the major thoroughfares, the Township has also planned for the development of the “ITC Corridor Four Seasons Trail” which would provide a link between Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area and Highland State Recreation Area, via the M-59 railway.<sup>14</sup> This route is included in the Oakland County Greenways Plan and includes state and regional financial participation. Construction of the railway is expected to occur over three phases.

## Signed Bicycle Route<sup>15</sup>

A signed bicycle route is a low-volume roadway designated for cyclist use, which typically connects

### Complete Streets

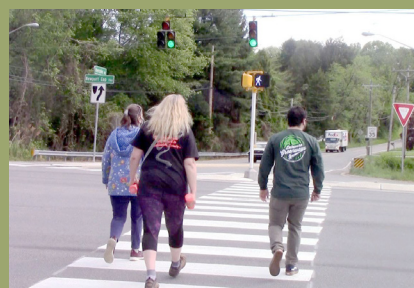
Complete street elements the Township can focus on include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, safe crossings, street lighting, and street landscaping.



Sidewalks



Bicycle Routes



Safe Crossings



Street Landscaping



Street Lighting

dense residential areas to municipal facilities such as the Township Hall, library, schools, churches, retail uses, and the like. There is not a dedicated lane within the roadway for bicycle use. Rather, bicyclists share the road with vehicles and are guided to their destination by “bicycle route” signs along the shoulder.

### Bicycle Lane<sup>16</sup>

Bicycle lanes are dedicated portions of the roadway designed, striped, and signed to accommodate bicyclists. There are several thoroughfares in White Lake Township that could be designed to accommodate bicycle lanes, including Bogie Lake Road, Elizabeth Lake Road, Teggerdine Road, Union Lake Road, Ormond Road, White Lake Road, and paved portions of Pontiac Lake Road and Fisk Road.

### Shared-Use Path<sup>17</sup>

Shared-use paths are routes that accommodate two-way “traffic” of non-motorized and pedestrian uses within a single right-of-way separated from the roadway. Frequently, these trails are developed within an easement part of a utility corridor or within an abandoned railroad corridor. Shared-use paths can accommodate a wider spectrum of users than either the signed bicycle routes or bicycle lanes. Shared-use paths are typically wider and separated from motorized traffic, making it safer for walkers, runners, in-line skaters, and bicyclists. Often these trails are used during the winter months for cross-country skiing and snow shoeing. Therefore, the design of this trail system (width, materials, grade, etc.) is critical to accommodate all potential users. In White Lake Township, proposed pathways along M-59 and the ITC corridor are classified as shared-use paths.

The Township should continually aim to integrate trails, sidewalks, and bicycle routes that connect parks and open spaces, recreational facilities, residential neighborhoods, schools, and commercial uses to achieve improved multi-modal access and usability in the community. In addition to the complete street elements identified previously, the Township should be mindful of the following goals as it works to integrate shared-use pathways among existing roads and transportation infrastructure:

- » GOAL 1: Maintain and improve existing pathway segments.
- » GOAL 2: Construct new pathway segments

and establish connections between existing segments.

- » GOAL 3: Plan connections to Oakland County Trail System.
- » GOAL 4: Non-motorized access to parks.
- » GOAL 5: Non-motorized access to a future central gathering place.
- » GOAL 6: Individual connectors between neighborhoods and Township parks.

The Township can also explore the adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance, requiring all new roads or improvements to existing roads to consider the inclusion of Complete Street elements.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Access to quality public transportation at affordable rates and regular frequency enables mobility for people of all age groups and income. Oakland County coordinates with various regional transportation organizations to provide public transportation in White Lake Township and other communities across the County. In November 2022, Oakland County residents approved the Oakland County Public Transportation millage. This voter-approved 10-year, 0.95 millage is dedicated to maintaining and expanding public transit services throughout Oakland County.<sup>18</sup> Following are the public transportation options available to White Lake Township residents.

### Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)<sup>19</sup>

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) is southeast Michigan’s regional bus system which provides a variety of transit services in Oakland County. White Lake Township is currently not serviced by SMART; however, in 2023, SMART will endeavor to create a new fixed route service from Auburn Hills through Pontiac that continues west through Waterford Township and a portion of White Lake Township.

### Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA)<sup>20</sup>

The Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA) has been providing paratransit (dial-a-ride) transportation services since 2020 to qualifying residents of Highland Township, Walled Lake,

Waterford Township, and White Lake Township. WOTA accommodates trips to work, medical appointments, shopping, banking, civic events, entertainment venues, and social activities within the driving boundary. Eligible riders include seniors over 55, adults with disabilities, and veterans, along with

companion riders. In 2023, WOTA will undertake efforts to extend the hours of service, reduce the cost per stop, include low-income residents as eligible riders, purchase additional ADA-compliant minivans, and expand the geography of the service area.

**Figure 28: Transportation & Mobility: Ongoing & Proposed Transportation Improvements**

### **Major Arterials**

- » MDOT'S Five-Year Transportation Program for 2023 to 2027 includes plans to rehabilitate M-59, or Highland Road, for the segment that stretches between Milford Road and Pontiac Lake Road; construction and physical improvements are planned to begin in 2026.
- » Six other segments of M-59 within the bounds of Oakland County will receive repairs and be reconstructed beginning in 2027.

### **Road Quality**

- » SEMCOG has proposed \$53.8 million in pavement improvements along M-59 between Milford Road and Pontiac Lake Road in 2026, under the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which includes projects recommended by MDOT for state-owned transportation assets in the SEMCOG region.
- » The RCOC completed a \$2.3 million project to address concerns regarding road quality and safety along Elizabeth Lake Road.

### **Road Safety**

- » The construction of roundabouts at the intersections of Elizabeth Lake Road and Teggerdine Road and Elizabeth Lake Road and Oxbow Lake Road will improve safety in the southern portion of the Township

### **Complete Streets**

- » In addition to the several non-motorized and multi-modal infrastructure measures, the Township can also explore the adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance, requiring all new roads or improvements to existing roads to consider the inclusion of Complete Street elements.

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Sidewalk in commercial development



# Community Facilities

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A primary function of local government is to provide services and amenities like public safety, infrastructure, and recreational opportunities to its residents. In many cases, the provision and quality of these services and amenities are a draw to the municipality and may also be cited as the reason current residents chose to live in the area.

These sentiments ring true for many residents of White Lake Township. Results from the community survey indicate 56% of respondents consider the Township's recreation options to be one of White Lake Township's best characteristics. Another 39% held the same perspective about the quality of schools that serve the Township, 11% about the quality of municipal services, and 4% about access to healthcare services, all of which comprise essential municipal facilities and services that impact residents on a daily basis. On the other hand, when asked about the largest challenges to face White Lake Township within the next 10 years, 18% of respondents expressed concern about the maintenance of public infrastructure, representing the 6th most commonly held concern in the coming decade. These sentiments may be indicative of the need to service these systems in the coming years.

This chapter inventories the facilities and services available to residents of White Lake Township, including public utilities and services, municipal facilities, public safety services, parks and recreation spaces and facilities, educational services and facilities, and healthcare facilities to support medical needs.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES & SERVICES

### Water and Sewer

#### *Water System*

The water system includes about 55 miles of water main lines that range in size from 4 to 16 inches in diameter; 15 pressure control valves; approximately 1,000 gate valves; nearly 700 fire hydrants and hydrant valves; 2 elevated water storage tanks that each hold

1 million gallons of water; 5 water treatment plants; and 9 water supply wells. Major improvements to the Township's water system took place in 2019 and 2020 at the Twin Lakes II and Hillview well houses. While the condition of the system varies, it is primarily assessed as being in "good to excellent" condition and typically experiences moderate to heavy use on a regular basis.<sup>1</sup>

The Township's Department of Public Services (DPS) is managed by the DPS Director and seeks to provide safe drinking water and fire protection to all citizens of the Township. The Department has provided water to Township residents since 1980; currently, more than 2,100 water accounts are in use.<sup>2</sup> The Department offers numerous services that include, but are not limited to, the following:<sup>3</sup>

- » Repairing and maintaining water mains and related structures, such as towers, pumps, treatment facilities, fire hydrants, water shut-off valves, and generators.
- » Flushing fire hydrants in the Spring and Fall.
- » Replacing water meters and updating them to work in an automated billing system.
- » Marking underground water utility locations.
- » Managing subdivision irrigation meters.
- » Investigating water service line leaks.
- » Answering customer inquiries regarding rusty or cloudy water, low water pressure, water location, billing, and fees.
- » Complying with public health standards and guidance.

#### *Sanitary Sewer System*

The sanitary sewer system serves approximately 4,500 residents. The sewer mains of this system were primarily constructed in 1999 with additional

improvements and extensions taking place later, including the most recent update in 2012. The Sanitary Sewer System contains approximately 20 miles of gravity sewer mains, 22 miles of pressured mains, and 10 pumping stations. The wastewater flow of the Township is discharged into Commerce Township's collection system and conveyed to the Commerce Township Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment. Currently, the Sanitary Sewer System is in "good to excellent" condition and experiences light to moderate use on a regular basis.<sup>4</sup>

The Township's sanitary sewer system is managed by the DPS. This Department holds numerous responsibilities that advance its mission to provide quality and efficient services to all users while simultaneously protecting and enhancing the Huron and Clinton River Watersheds. The Department's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:<sup>5</sup>

- » Managing and sharing storm and sanitary sewer locations and easement information.
- » Continually developing, maintaining, and reviewing the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan.
- » Calculating and sharing sewer connection, extension, and capacity estimates.
- » Developing Special Assessment Districts (SADs) for sewer and water systems.
- » Performing program, project, and asset management, design assistance, and systemic fiscal responsibility.
- » Overseeing invasive species management programs, including the West Nile Virus (Mosquito) Control Program.
- » Hosting public education and outreach efforts.
- » Assessing the quality of surface and groundwater.

In the event of an emergency, the Department of Public Services provides around-the-clock maintenance of the Township's sewer system through an agreement with the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office.

White Lake Township utilizes two types of infrastructure to transport wastewater through the municipal pipe system to appropriate treatment facilities: the conventional gravity sewer system and the pressure sewer system. Gravitational methods

of wastewater transport use underground, sloping pipe systems that enable gravitational movement toward treatment facilities while pressure sewers break down waste in a pumping station before transporting it through smaller, airtight pipes toward treatment centers.<sup>6</sup> Though pressure sewers require energy to break down wastewater, the construction of pressure system pipelines is less intensive and can be placed closer to the ground level. Because gravity sewer systems are reliant on sloping pipelines, their placement is often much deeper underground.

The map titled "Sanitary Sewer Master Plan" (p. 70) illustrates upcoming plans to maintain, adjust, and expand the Township's sewer system. The current pressure system primarily runs east-west through the center of the Township and around Pontiac, Oxbow, Bogie, and Sugden Lakes. Plans for the pressure system's expansion would extend pressure mains and sanitary pressure structures to the land surrounding Cedar Island Lake, Brendel Lake, and Grass Lake to cover more of the Township's southern and northwest areas. The Township's existing gravity system covers less area than the pressure system. Notably further from the Township's bodies of water than the pressure systems, expansion plans for the gravity system would cover much of White Lake Township's southeast corner and also provide greater connection to the northwest area with additional gravity main lines and sanitary structures that follow Highland Road and Hill Road. Plans for expansion of the system should be carefully considered and done in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan. Water and sewer systems allow for higher-density development and can be used as a tool to control and direct growth and density. Areas designated as higher density on the Future Land Use Plan should be prioritized for water and sewer expansion (if they are not already served). Areas designated as low density on the Future Land Use plan should not be candidates for the expansion of the system.

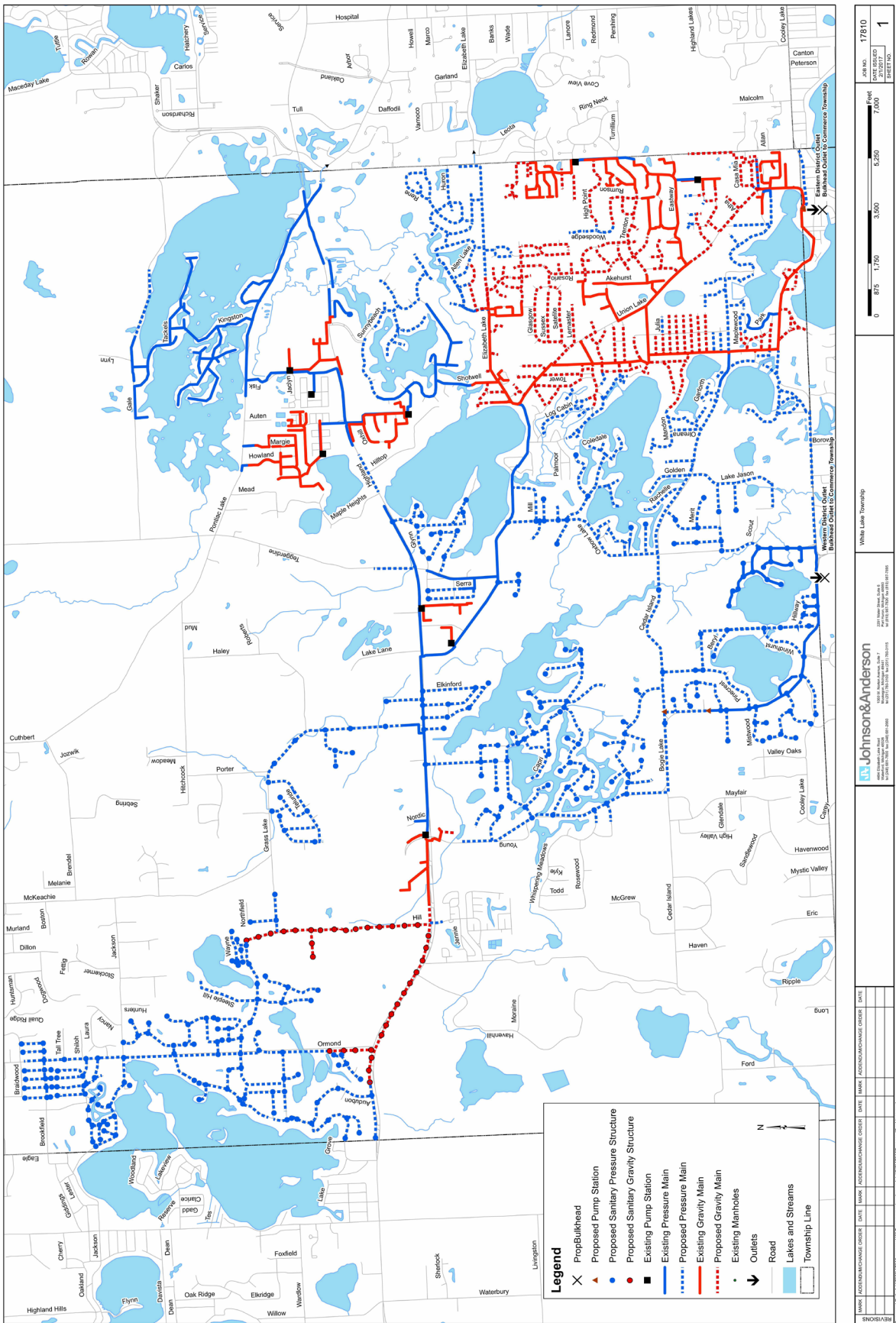
## Electric and Gas Utilities

Electricity in White Lake Township is provided by DTE, while natural gas is provided by Consumers Energy. A transmission line passes through White Lake Township, and there is a gas/oil well located in the western-central portion of the Township.<sup>7</sup>

## Broadband and Cell Service

Residents of White Lake Township can access home internet services through numerous providers.

Map 12: Sanitary Sewer Master Plan



Source: White Lake Township Community Development Department



Though T-Mobile 5G Home and Xfinity Cable are the most common, Frontier, Mercury Broadband, HughesNet, and Viasat round out the options available to Township residents, with download speeds that range from 25 Mbps to 120 Mbps. Cellular internet service is offered through Verizon, AT&T, Xfinity Mobile, T-Mobile, Mint Mobile, and Visible. AT&T provides 5G connection while the other five providers offer 4G LTE.<sup>8</sup>

In 2022, Oakland County and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) helped secure funding for a project enacted by Connected Michigan to assess and better understand uneven internet access and coverage as it pertains to rural communities in Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties. This project ultimately intends to increase broadband access based on findings uncovered through various phases of the study, including a survey distributed to update coverage maps for the state. With evidence backed by data, Connected Michigan has plans to use their findings to apply for federal funding to improve broadband access by investing in infrastructure that benefits homes, businesses, and public spaces alike.<sup>9</sup>

## Road Maintenance

In White Lake Township, road maintenance responsibilities are split between the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). A road's classification determines which entity is responsible for maintenance and improvements; for example, M-59 falls under the jurisdiction of MDOT because it is a state highway and classified as one of the Township's major arterials.

## MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

### White Lake Township Hall

White Lake Township Hall was built in 1949 and received its last major improvement in 1996. The Hall houses the offices and operations of the Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer, all elected officials of the Township. It also houses the offices of the Assessing, Building, and Planning departments for the Township. The Hall has been assessed as being in "fair" condition, and it is used heavily by both employees and community members as the site of numerous meetings.<sup>10</sup> All board and commission meetings are held in the Township Annex.

In 2020, the White Lake Township Board of Trustees passed a motion to move forward with plans to construct a new Township Civic Center that will include a new township hall and public safety building for the Township's police station and Fire Station #1.<sup>11</sup> Informed by resident input, the Board envisions this new construction to creatively incorporate and connect municipal, recreational, and commercial uses in one place. The Township's purchase of the 57-acre former Brendel Lake Campground will be incorporated into the Civic Center's creation as the land is developed into Stanley Park. The park will include an expanded trail system, pavilion for community events, picnic areas, and a variety of other amenities to be enjoyed throughout the year.<sup>12</sup> The Township's 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan includes plans to construct a new Township Civic Center in lieu of conducting renovations to the existing Township Hall. Construction will be financed through grant funds, the Improvement Revolving Fund, and the issuance of bonds to complete the project.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### Police

The White Lake Township Police Department provides police services to the Township. In addition to responding to calls, the Department offers community resources and services to the Township to bolster civic responsibility, involvement, and safety. These community-based services include the following:

- » **Neurodiverse Citizen Program:** This program provides an opportunity for the Township's Police Department to connect and interact with neurodiverse citizens on an individualized, appropriate, and helpful basis. Residents have the opportunity to provide voluntary information to the Department about special circumstances and the best way to approach neurodiverse individuals when responders are notified of a situation. This information and guidance are used to assess unique circumstances from a mental health perspective with the individual's best interests in mind.<sup>13</sup>
- » **Senior Welfare Contact Program:** This program was implemented with the intent to reduce the criminal victimization of the elderly by creating channels of communication between senior citizens and the Township's Police Department. Individuals enrolled in this

program will be contacted by a representative from the Department on a monthly basis to address concerns or problems within the community, generally check on their well-being, and connect them to senior services available at the local and national levels.<sup>14</sup>

- » **T.E.A.M. (Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring):** In 2018, the T.E.A.M. curriculum replaced DARE and is taught to all 5th and 7th grade students in the Township over the course of 10 weeks. Topics include vaping, alcohol, drugs, gun safety, school violence, bullying, the court system, and internet safety. Additionally, T.E.A.M. program officials coordinate with the White Lake Police Foundation to offer events to participating students, including an annual golf outing, Youth Police Academy, a 5k Run event, and more.<sup>15</sup>
- » **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):** The program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness through training sessions focused on basic disaster response skills in the event of fires, small-scale search and rescue, team organization, and medical operations. To complete the program, CERT volunteers must complete seven core training classes.<sup>16</sup>
- » **Citizens Academy:** The Citizens Academy is a 30-hour block of instruction designed to give the public a knowledge of the Police Department, Fire Department and Township personnel and policies. It consists of a series of classes, held once each week for two to three hours. The instruction is comprehensive, covering a different area of the Police Department, Fire Department and Township each week. Officers, Firefighters, and Township Board members assigned to that particular division conduct each instructional block.<sup>17</sup>

## Fire Department

The White Lake Township Fire Department (WLTFD) seeks to protect life and property through fire rescue and emergency medical services. Since its founding in 1948, the Department has transitioned from a volunteer department to a department of career and part-time firefighters. White Lake Township is covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by career fire department personnel with emergency assistance from part-time staff members as needed.<sup>18</sup> In addition to fire suppression and rescue needs, the WLTFD may also respond to the following: utility problems (including downed or arching power

lines and natural gas leaks), smoke and odor investigations, motor vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, mutual aid, and citizen assists.

Beyond its primary responsibilities, the White Lake Township Fire Department stays involved with the community through numerous events and public education opportunities. The Citizens Academy and Youth Fire Academy are both intended to provide participants with hands-on experience by exposing them to some elements of the Department's responsibilities and work. The Citizens Academy offers one class a week over the course of 11 weeks and is open to any individual over the age of 21 who works or lives in the Township. The Youth Fire Academy is a week-long program that takes place in the summer months and is open to 7th and 8th-grade students. In addition to each academy experience, the Fire Department educates the public with classes on CPR and basic first aid and through appointments with families to ensure their car seat setup is proper and safe.

## Emergency Medical Services

Star EMS provides emergency and non-emergency services to communities throughout Oakland County, including White Lake Township. The dispatch center is staffed 24 hours a day with Emergency Medical Dispatchers who have been trained to give first aid assistance to each 911 caller and, when necessary, to provide a prompt ambulance response to emergencies requiring medical assistance and transportation. Star EMS also provides trusted non-emergency ambulance services to transport individuals to area hospitals, extended care facilities, nursing homes, dialysis clinics, doctor offices, and private residences.<sup>19</sup>

## PARKS & RECREATION

Parks, recreation spaces, nature preserves, and subsequent programming opportunities are important to provide in White Lake Township. In addition to the six parks managed and operated by the Township, recreation facilities are located on school properties, properties managed by the State, Metropark system, Oakland County, and private properties with activities like skiing and golf.<sup>20</sup>

The park and recreation facilities under the purview of the Township include a wide variety of offerings to ensure patrons of all ages and abilities can participate in recreational opportunities. In White Lake Township,

these facilities include neighborhood parks that offer play areas for children near their homes with fields that fulfill the needs of sports teams for both children and adults. Community-wide parks provide a destination for the broader community by offering a variety of activities and facilities, including trails, sports fields, and playground equipment.<sup>21</sup> In White Lake Township, recreation planning is intended to be participatory and to elicit insights from a large portion of the Township's population. The Parks and Recreation Committee, Planning Commission, and Township Board are collectively responsible for planning through the master planning and parks and recreation planning processes. As the legislative body, the Township Board retains the utmost authority for recreation planning and budgeting.<sup>22</sup> The White Lake Township 2023-2027 Parks & Recreation Plan can be accessed on the Township's website.

## EDUCATION

### Schools

Within the boundaries of White Lake Township, students are served by one of five school districts:

- » Clarkston Community Schools.
- » Holly Area Schools.
- » Huron Valley Schools.
- » Walled Lake Community School District.
- » Waterford Community Schools.

St. Patrick, a parochial school, is also located in the Township and serves students in Pre-K through 8th grade. Each of the Township's districts and schools boast opportunities for early childhood learning prior to beginning elementary school as well as numerous programs and facilities dedicated to enrichment, recreation, and extracurricular activities.

### Museums and Libraries

#### Museum

The White Lake Historical Society provides an outlet for Township residents to participate in a mutual appreciation of White Lake's history. The Society seeks to "preserve, advance, and disseminate" information about the Township's history through the collection, arrangement, preservation, and restoration of numerous historic materials, including

physical sites, as well as various written documents.

The White Lake Historical Society operates a museum to further its mission and educate visitors of all ages. The museum consists of the 1855 Kelley-Fisk Farm state historic site, the Greek Revival farmhouse and outbuildings, including barn, pig, and hen houses, two corn cribs, a garage, and a privy.<sup>23</sup> The site also includes the 1876 Thompson One-Room School which was dismantled in 1995, moved from its original location on the Thompson Farm in 2004 and rebuilt.<sup>24</sup> Currently, the museum is available for visitation during special events or by appointment.

#### The White Lake Library

Since its establishment in 1975, the White Lake Library has had four different locations. First in the White Lake Community Hall, second Brooks Elementary, third to a building on Highland Road, and fourth, as of 2019, to a 28,000-square foot facility on Elizabeth Lake Road.<sup>25</sup> The demand for additional space corresponded with an increase in the Township's population and, along with voter approval of a new space, speaks to the importance of the Library as a community asset for both long-term residents and newcomers to the community. In 2022 there were a total of 47,608 visits to the library. While the Library's 87,618 items in its collection are certainly a point of attraction for visitors, it also offers a robust variety of online resources: eBooks; audiobooks; special collections; seeds that are free to plant and grow; numerous programs for kids, teens, and adults; and various events throughout the year. Program offerings range from musical events, movie nights, reading circles, arts and craft opportunities, book clubs, and yoga.

The White Lake Library is primarily funded through Township property taxes. In August 2022, Township voters approved a renewed millage rate of 0.5 mill to support library operations for the next 8 years.<sup>26</sup> The Library's non-property tax revenue comes from state aid, penal fines, donations, and interest accrued from investments.

## HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL RESOURCES

### Healthcare Services

A range of healthcare services through numerous facilities are located within the boundaries of the Township. White Lake Family Medicine provides services for several separate areas of focus: family

medicine, including pediatric services for infants, toddlers, children, and teens; urgent care; addiction treatment; behavioral and mental health treatments and services; COVID-19 testing; allergy testing; medical weight loss and nutritional services; sports physicals; personalized treatment for substance abuse; and women's health services.<sup>27</sup>

For individuals who seek and would benefit from assisted living facilities, the Neighborhoods of White Lake, Independence Village, and New Hope are located within the Township.

Springfield Urgent Care provides flexibility in meeting the healthcare needs of White Lake residents of

all ages. Open from 9am to 9pm every day of the week, including weekends, Springfield Urgent Care bridges the gap between primary physician care and emergency room treatment by offering services that fulfill urgent, non-emergency medical needs.<sup>28</sup>

## Hospitals

While there is not a hospital located within the boundaries of White Lake Township, there are seven hospitals located within 15 miles. Of these seven hospitals, the Detroit Medical Center Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital is less than five miles from White Lake Township.<sup>29</sup>

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The White Lake Library

# Economic Development

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## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Economies are a web of relationships that span local, national, and global geographies. While municipalities have influence over economic development, they are beholden to laws, policies, and trends outside of their control that can have a negative or positive impact on local success. Due to its dependence on a larger system, economic development strategies are best conceived of and implemented with partners to strengthen the network and opportunities in which they operate.

Southeast Michigan is comprised of seven counties, including Oakland County. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, or SEMCOG, created a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region to reach economic success through strategies that emphasize collaboration, current conditions, and opportunities for growth and development.<sup>1</sup> By focusing on the three pillars of economic development (place, business, and talent), SEMCOG and the region endeavor to meet a vision of economic prosperity by ensuring communities have access to the following:

- » Unique places that offer various housing choices for a large and diverse population.
- » An educated and trained workforce that supports a multi-sector economy and provides opportunities for all.
- » Healthy and clean lakes, streams, and air, as well as connected systems of trails, parks, and natural areas that support recreational and cultural amenities.
- » Safe, efficient, and coordinated infrastructure systems that embrace advances in technology and focus on access for all.
- » Effective local government and engaged citizenry.

In local government, economic development is correlated to developing land to accommodate its “highest and best use.” When land is used according to the analysis conducted in this Master Plan, the region’s need for housing, commercial, recreational, or industrial uses can be optimized for job creation, housing that is affordable for the workforce, or creating tourist destinations. This section will explore the region’s major employment sectors, partnerships, and opportunities for development/redevelopment.

## EMPLOYMENT INVENTORY

White Lake Township’s rate of labor participation is reflective of employment patterns. Of the Township’s population aged 16 years and older, 64.7% participate in the labor force. While Oakland County’s rate of labor force participation is slightly higher at 66.2%, White Lake exceeds workforce participation not only in Michigan but the United States as well. As seen in the table (p.77) titled “Labor Force Participation (2020),” White Lake Township has experienced a lower unemployment rate than Oakland County, State of Michigan, and the United States; conversely, the Township has the highest percentage of households collecting social security income (39.3%) compared to other scales of observation. White Lake Township also has the highest rate of self-employment when compared to Oakland County and the State.

For residents of White Lake that are employed, the U.S. Census records the sectors of employment that residents participate in, regardless of where Township residents go to work. With the rise of remote work options, it is possible for residents of White Lake to work in sectors headquartered outside of the region; it is also possible for residents of White Lake to commute to places of work located outside of the Township or County on a hybrid or daily basis.

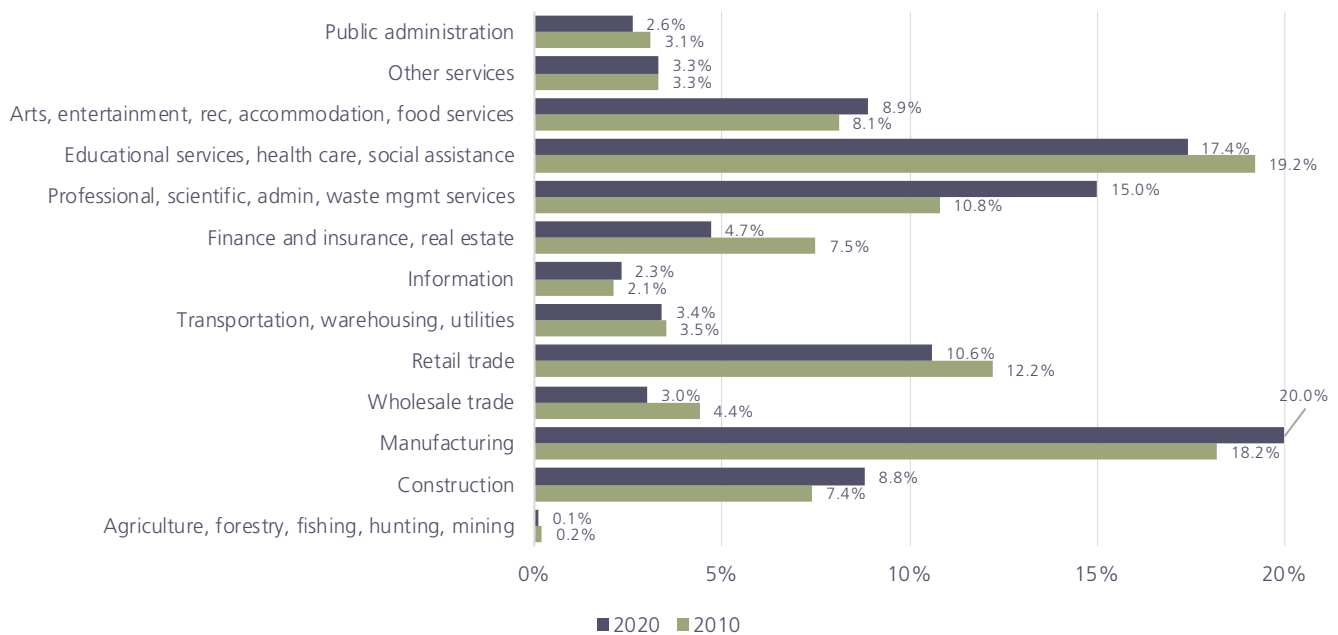
The most prominent sectors of employment for White Lake residents in 2020 (not necessarily

**Table 14: Labor Force Participation (2020)**

	White Lake Township	Oakland County	Michigan	United States
Labor Force Participation	64.7%	66.2%	61.5%	63.4%
Self-Employment Rate	5.6%	4.8%	5.0%	5.9%
Social Security Income	39.3%	30.9%	34.9%	31.4%
Unemployment Rate	4.6%	4.7%	6.0%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2020)

**Figure 29: Industry Employment Over Time (2010-2020)**



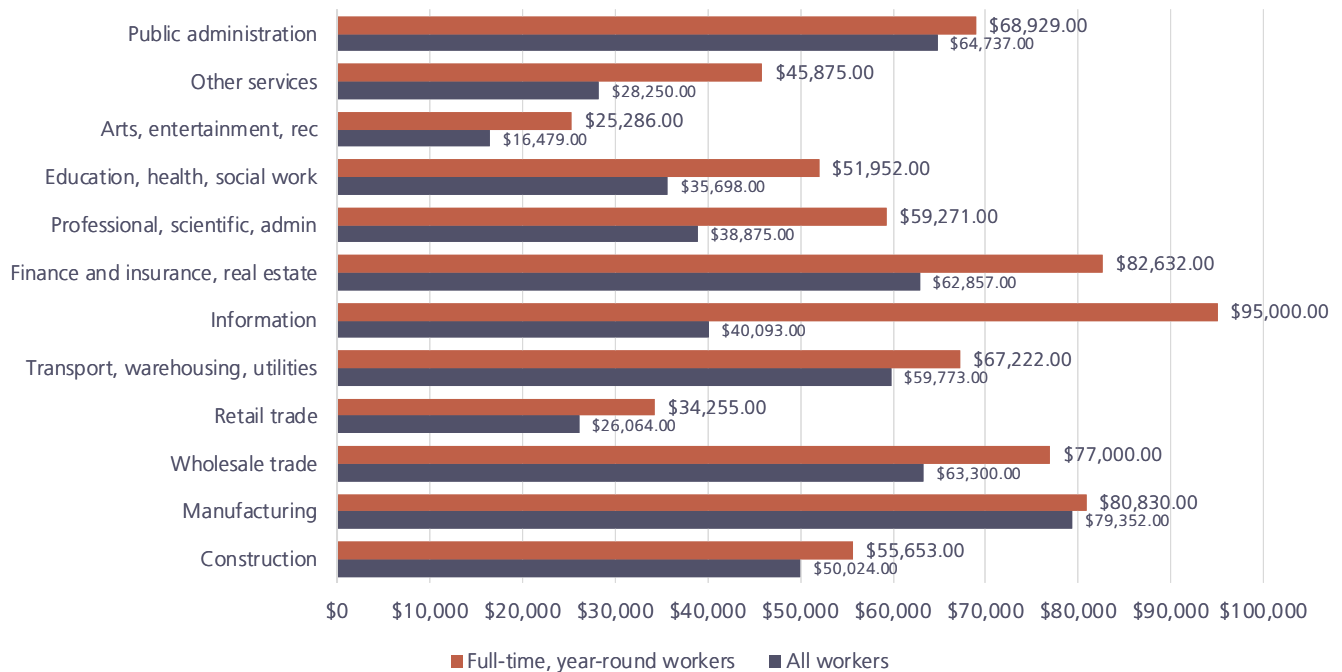
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS Five-Year Estimates (2010, 2020)

located within the Township) include: manufacturing (20%); educational services, health care, and social assistance (17.4%); and professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management services (15%). These sectors represent a little over half of all employers for residents of the Township. From 2010 to 2020, these three sectors have largely maintained the same prominence within White Lake Township. In 2010, retail trade included 12.2% of all White Lake workers, surpassing past levels of employment for those working in professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management services which was 10.8% that year. In 2020, workforce participation in retail services dropped slightly to 10.6% of the Township's working population, representing the fourth most prominent sector of employment.

Median annual earnings vary across industries of employment, especially when distinguishing between all workers, whether seasonal part-time or year-round full-time participation in the workforce. In 2020, the median annual income for all workers in the Township was \$42,948, nearly \$20,000 less than the median income of full-time workers who are employed on a year-round basis and earn an average of \$60,794 annually.

Median incomes in the manufacturing sector did not vary greatly between different types of employment, likely indicating most employees in the industry work on a full-time basis. Additionally, manufacturing income is approximately \$80,000 annually, the highest for all workers and the third greatest for full-time, year-round workers, which bodes well for the Township as the greatest portion of residents

Figure 30: Median Annual Earnings by Industry (2020)



Source: United States Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2020)

are employed in this sector. The two other most prevalent sectors of employment have median annual incomes notably less than manufacturing. Full-time, year-round employees of: educational services, health care, and social assistance; and professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management services earn \$51,952 and \$59,271, respectively.

SECTOR ANALYSIS

Products often go through multiple stages of manufacturing, processing, distribution, and sales before they get to the consumer. All of these stages are important economic links and form the broader economy. IMPLAN, an input-output economic modeling tool, was used to illustrate interdependence between industries and sectors in White Lake Township. IMPLAN data is sourced from various governmental agencies including the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Census Bureau, and Internal Revenue Service. IMPLAN models upstream economic activity, or the activities and labor that take place on the supply side of production. This includes the resources, supply, and manufacturing of goods and services. IMPLAN does not model sales, use, and disposal activity, also known as downstream economic activity. IMPLAN models several elements

of economic output, including labor income, intermediate output, and value added. The elements discussed in this section are described below.

- » “Value Added” represents the contribution to the gross domestic product.
- » “Total Economic Output” is the combined value of labor income, value added, and intermediate outputs.

While nearly 96% of Township residents commute to places of employment located outside of White Lake and these patterns of commuter and employment can render the Township a “bedroom community”, the following analyses will investigate employment opportunities within the Township. Prominent economic trends and the Township’s more prevalent industries impact the experience of living in and being a patron of businesses across the Township. Later analyses will focus on the economic impacts of COVID-19, which are place-based and felt by all residents of the Township, regardless of their place of employment.

Of the 546 industries modeled by IMPLAN, 181 are active in White Lake Township. By looking at each industry’s change in economic output, amount of economic output, and concentration in the



**Table 15: Economic Base**

Industry Categorization	Description	Location Quotient	2018-2019 Economic Output
Growth Industry	Industries that have a strong presence in the region and are expanding.	LQ > 1	Positive Change
Emerging Industry	Industries that are expanding but have yet to establish a strong presence.	LQ < 1	Positive Change
Mature Industry	Industries that have been a specialty for the region but are declining.	LQ > 1	Negative Change
Declining Industry	Industries with a small presence and declining economic activity.	LQ < 1	Negative Change

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

Township between 2018 and 2019, the industries are each categorized as mature, growing, emerging, or declining. These categorizations are determined by the industry's location quotient, a statistical metric that measures a region's industrial specialization compared to a larger geography, typically the state or nation. Location quotients (or LQs) greater than one indicate that industry contributes to a greater share of that community's economic activity. The table titled "Economic Base" shows how industries are categorized based on their location quotient and change in economic output.

The table titled "Growth and Decline Spectrum" (p. 80) provides an overview of the Township's economy based on trends in industry presence and growth. In White Lake, negative economic changes

have slightly exceeded positive gains. While the employment and total economic output of declining industries have the smallest presence of any of the four economic base categorizations, the Township's mature industries have the highest amount of economic output and employ the greatest number of workers. These trends indicate declining industries are likely to continue to diminish, but the prevalence of mature industries reduces the likelihood they will lose their stronghold in the Township. It is worth noting mature industries can easily become categorized as growth industries if and/or when their economic output increases over the course of observed years. Despite the presence of declining industries, emerging and growth industries illustrate economic promise; the greatest number of Township industries are categorized as emerging, and growth industries rival mature industries in the number of workers that are employed in the sector.

### Industry Categorization

**Declining:** industries that have a small presence and declining economic activity; negative change.

**Emerging:** industries that are expanding but have yet to establish a strong presence; trending towards positive change.

**Growth:** industries with a strong regional presence that are expanding; positive change.

**Mature:** industries that have been a specialty for the region but are now declining; trending towards negative change.

Source: IMPLAN

- » 49.0% of workers in White Lake Township are employed in growth or emerging industries.
- » Growth and emerging industries produce about 45.6% of the Township's total economic output while mature industries alone produce 42.9% of all economic output.
- » 51.4% of all businesses saw a positive change in economic output between 2018 and 2019.

Regardless of an industry's classification as growth, emerging, mature, or declining, economic contributions take place at all stages of development. The table titled "Top Industry Trends" compiles the top five industries under each stage based on their

Table 16: Growth and Decline Spectrum

Stage	Industry Count	Economic Output, 2019		Employment, 2019	
		Dollars	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Declining	63	\$95,492,419.08	11.50%	692	11.31%
Emerging	74	\$158,237,389.13	19.06%	863	14.11%
Growth	19	\$220,425,192.58	26.55%	2,122	34.86%
Mature	25	\$356,035,977.88	42.89%	2,441	39.90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>\$830,190,978.67</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,118</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

Table 17: Top Industry Trends

Top Industries	Growth Industries	Emerging Industries	Mature Industries	Declining Industries
#1	Retail – building material and garden equipment and supplies store \$57.73 M	Other real estate \$36.36 M	Tenant-occupied housing \$130.66 M	Insurance agencies, brokerages, and related activities \$15.51 M
#2	Construction of other new residential structures \$29.38 M	Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation \$17.08 M	Retail – general merchandise stores \$61.67 M	Full-service restaurants \$12.91 M
#3	Retail – motor vehicle and parts dealers \$22.98 M	Insurance carriers (except direct life) \$14.68 M	Limited-service restaurants \$29.63 M	Legal services \$9.89 M
#4	Retail – food and beverage stores \$16.65 M	Architectural, engineering, and related services \$12.12 M	Construction of new single-family residential structures \$29.51 M	Wholesale – motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and supplies \$6.30 M
#5	Nursing and community care facilities \$14.75 M	Retail – non-store retailers \$10.66 M	Drilling oil and gas wells \$13.31 M	Religious organizations \$6.18 M

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

economic output for 2019. The Township's highest producing growth industries follow themes of various retail spaces, construction and building, and nursing and community care. As is expected from the preliminary base sector analysis, the top five mature industries exhibit high totals of economic activity. As these areas are regional specialties that

have exhibited evidence of decline between 2018 and 2019, investing in these industries may increase the likelihood they will observe economic growth in the present and shift to the growth categorization.

The emerging industries with the highest economic outputs echo trends present across Oakland County and complement the Township's most profitable

growth and mature industries. Other real estate and architectural, engineering, and related services are both necessary for construction and development services as well as housing and residences at large. Investing in this area is likely to benefit growth, emerging, and mature industries alike and further bolster economic growth and regional specialization for each.

### LARGEST SECTORS

This section analyzes industries by their regional advantage, economic output, and number of employees to inventory the Township’s strengths and areas for improvement.

#### Regional Advantage

A base sector analysis was performed to identify industries in White Lake Township that are the largest exporters of goods and services as well as the industries that typically import goods and services. Exporting industries are important to identify because they inform the base of a municipality’s economy. Exporting sectors draw money into the region across a broad geographical area, indicating which industries provide a competitive advantage for the region. The location quotient is used to pinpoint the Township’s major exporters in comparison to the presence of each industry in a broader geographic setting; location quotients greater than one indicate the presence of an exporting industry. The greater the location quotient, the more that industry exports and/or specializes in goods and services compared to a broader, national context.

As shown in the table titled “Top Five Export Industries in White Lake Township (2019),” manufacturing, drilling, and mining industries are a specialty for the Township. White Lake Township’s top 20 export industries predominantly reflect sectors that serve permanent residents with a focus on residential construction, housing, general retail, recreation and amusement, and a variety of child and healthcare services. Further, the Township’s top 20 export industries account for about 47% of its total economic activity, indicating these regional specialties are making productive contributions to the entire economy. Of the top five export industries, three exhibited positive growth between 2018 and 2019. The two mature industries of “drilling oil and gas wells” and “jewelry and silverware manufacturing” exhibited declines of 31% and 8%, respectively, between both years.

#### Biggest Employers

The biggest employers in White Lake Township are determined by the number of employees in each industry. In 2019, four of the Township’s five most prominent sectors of employment were categorized as mature industries. These industries also broadly fell into two primary categories: retail/restaurant service or housing/housing construction. The table titled “Top Five Employers in White Lake Township (2019)” details the most prevalent employers of the Township. These employers comprise 36.1% of the Township’s total employment.

In 2019, the average employee compensation for all of the top five industries by employment was less than

Table 18: Top Five Export Industries in White Lake Township (2019)

Export Industry	Location Quotient	Total Economic Output (millions)	Employment	Stage
Concrete pipe manufacturing	45.59	\$6.51 M	18	Growth
Drilling oil and gas wells	41.59	\$13.31 M	61	Mature
Jewelry and silverware manufacturing	12.24	\$4.71 M	22	Mature
Iron ore mining	8.01	\$3.71 M	17	Growth
Retail-building material and garden equipment and supplies stores	7.05	\$57.73 M	433	Growth

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

**Table 19: Top Five Employers in White Lake Township (2019)**

Industry	Employment	Economic Output (millions)	Average Employee Compensation	Stage
Retail-general merchandise stores	784	\$61.67 M	\$33,412.89	Mature
Retail-building material and garden equipment and supplies stores	433	\$57.73 M	\$52,252.49	Growth
Limited-service restaurants	405	\$29.63 M	\$21,248.69	Mature
Tenant-occupied housing	355	\$130.66 M	\$59,133.77	Mature
Construction of new single-family residential structures	229	\$29.51 M	\$75,706.81	Mature

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

the Township's average annual income (\$85,384) for the same year. Beyond the Township's average annual income, the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed (ALICE) suggested survival and stability budgets provide greater context for whether these compensation figures are appropriate for employees in these sectors. A "survival budget" accounts for all necessary expenditures related to housing, food, transportation, childcare, etc. A "stability budget" estimates expenditures in these same essential categories while also incorporating a savings category and accounting for higher costs that contribute to greater financial stability over time.

Three of the Township's five largest employers provide average employee compensation that fulfills suggested survival budgets for single- and two-adult households. However, only one industry meets the survival budget threshold for a family of four. The stability budget suggestions are further out of reach as three industries are near or surpass the budget for a single adult, and only one industry offers stability for a household of two adults. Limited-service restaurant employee compensation does not satisfy any suggested budgeting parameters; while

a greater portion of employees in this industry may be employed on a seasonal and/or part-time basis, compensation in this industry is not sufficient to support even a single adult. Moreover, positions with predominantly part-time or seasonal employers are unlikely to include benefits, putting employees in a precarious situation should they have an accident and are not covered by an employer's insurance plan.

### Greatest Economic Output

The table titled "Top Five Largest Industries in White Lake Township by Economic Output (2019)" highlights the five industries that had the largest economic output in 2019. Tenant-occupied housing had the highest economic output in the Township, totaling over \$130 million. Notably, both retail-based industries, tenant-occupied housing, and limited-service restaurants also made up four of the Township's top five employers, illustrating the relationship between the prevalence of each industry in terms of employment and total output. The output of tenant-occupied housing and other real estate (which include leasing, appraisal services, and financing) contribute to the strength of the

**Table 20: ALICE Budget**

	Single Adult	Two Adults	Two Adults, Two Children
ALICE Survival Budget	\$31,344	\$45,588	\$66,252
ALICE Stability Budget	\$54,792	\$76,836	\$133,872

Source: ALICE United, 2021



**Table 21: Top Five Largest Industries in White Lake Township by Economic Output (2019)**

Industry	Total Economic Output (millions)	Intermediate Outputs (millions)	Value Added (millions)	Labor Income (millions)	Employment
Tenant-occupied housing	\$130.66M	\$15.91M	\$114.75M	\$15.21M	355
Retail – general merchandise stores	\$61.67M	\$23.01M	\$38.66M	\$26.08M	784
Retail – building material and garden equipment and supplies stores	\$57.73M	\$16.30M	\$41.43M	\$22.91M	433
Other real estate	\$36.36M	\$18.51M	\$17.85M	\$7.27M	158
Limited-service restaurants	\$29.63M	\$16.58M	\$13.05M	\$8.64M	405

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

housing and real estate industry in Oakland County as a whole. One third of Michigan's total economic output from the real estate industry originates from Oakland County.

## COVID IMPACTS

While White Lake Township has shown signs of bouncing back from the economic impacts of COVID-19, the pandemic has had a lasting effect on the Township's overall economy. Using a similar economic base analysis for the years 2019 and 2021, the IMPLAN model helps explain the recovery

process for the Township's industries in comparison to industry activity across all of Michigan. In 2021, the Township's economic output was about \$22 million dollars less than its output prior to the pandemic (\$808,486,039.84 in 2021 vs. \$830,190,978.67 in 2019).

The table titled "COVID Impacts" (p. 83) details the distribution of industry growth between 2019 and 2021, stating how industries have grown or declined over this period of time and to what extent these changes have taken place in comparison to

**Table 22: COVID Impacts**

Industry Status	Description	No. of Industries	% of Total	Example Sector
Decline and Underperform	Industry declined after COVID to a greater extent than it did across Michigan	73	40%	Broadwoven fabric mills; concrete pipe manufacturing; household laundry equipment manufacturing; lawn and garden equipment manufacturing.
Decline but Outperform	Industry declined after COVID but to a lesser extent than it did across Michigan	11	6%	Air transportation; computer related services, including facilities management; metal mining services; paperboard mills.
Increase and Outperform	Industry increased after COVID to a greater extent than it did across Michigan	61	34%	Local government passenger transit; maintenance and repair construction of nonresidential structures; retail-nonstore retailers; wholesale-grocery and related product wholesalers.
Increase but Underperform	Industry increased after COVID but to a lesser extent than it did across Michigan	36	20%	Environmental and other technical consulting services; home health care services; iron ore mining; retail-gasoline stores.

Source: IMPLAN, 2019

Michigan. A total of 97 industries of the Township increased their economic activity over these two years, exceeding the number of industries that exhibited an economic decrease in activity (84 industries). However, the greatest portion of industries (40%) fall in the category of “decline and underperform,” meaning the economic activity of these industries in White Lake declined over these two years and to a greater extent than they did across the rest of the State. The second most prominent category of industries are those in the category of “increase and outperform,” meaning economic activity for 34% of the Township’s businesses increased between 2019 and 2021 to a greater extent than the State.

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

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

discussion of additional commercial development.

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

## Redevelopment Sites

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

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

## Pontiac Lake Gateway

The Pontiac Lake Gateway concept plan was developed during the 2012 update to the Master Plan. Pontiac Lake Gateway offers an opportunity to showcase White Lake Township as its only major entry from the east by enhancing lake views, removing blighted structures, and improving connectivity for pedestrians. The 2012 concept proposed retail and service uses, multi-family residential, plazas and spaces for public art, a hotel and/or conference center, and a pedestrian walkway. Workshop participants resoundingly rejected the 2012 concept;

66% said it did not fit with their vision of the area.

Comments, suggestions, and concerns about this concept were provided by attendees on sticky notes and are summarized below. While just 6% of all comments suggested this concept should be rethought in its entirety, all other suggestions coalesce around a few themes that should be the focus of any revisions to the existing concept to align with the vision of the community.

- » **Support for the concept:** As a way to utilize the lake setting, create a community space, and remove deteriorating structures.
- » **Support for the pedestrian walkway:** Respondents shared they would support a biking/walking path around Pontiac Lake.
- » **Support for the development of restaurants/bars along the waterfront:** Attendees specified they would like to see a nice, affordable restaurant in the area and also suggested boat docks be provided.
- » **Opposition to multi-family residences:** This was the most common takeaway from the concept with about 37% of all comments sharing this sentiment.
- » **Opposition to the hotel and conference center:** While there is evidence of some support for this development, attendees expressed they would prefer uses specific to the wellbeing and use of permanent residents rather than visitors.
- » **Some opposition to retail:** While some respondents expressed their support for retail and shopping as a complement to restaurants, bars, and other dining areas, others shared concerns about M-59 traffic as a challenge to utilizing these retail spaces, as well as a preference to keep the Township's retail in the M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road area.

The following concept envisions the area as a key and welcoming gateway into the community. At the northern intersection of Pontiac Lake Road and Highland Road/M-59 is a two-story mixed-use concept with frontage along the roads and the lake, with parking located in the middle. The mixed-use concept includes restaurants, retail, and residential on the second floor. This area is intended to be walkable and integrated into the shoreline of Pontiac Lake. People can access this area via foot, bike, car, or boat. Boaters can dock along the boardwalk

and walk to restaurants or shops. Along Highland Road/M-59 is traditional commercial development but an emphasis is placed on fronting buildings on M-59 and locating parking in the rear. There are limited curb cuts and the properties are served by access roads at the rear. At the western edge of the gateway is a cluster of townhomes. The southern end of the gateway is maintained as undeveloped open space. This area is not intended to be initially used for recreation but could be developed with walking trails in the future. However, as this is intended to be privately owned open space, doing so would require easements or other dedications.

For the Pontiac Lake Gateway redevelopment, as well as other areas of mixed-use development, the following architectural standards are suggested.

- » **Building Height:** No more than two stories, or 30 feet above grade.

A third story and maximum building height of 45 feet may be allowed where there is a minimum of a 10-foot setback for such third story from the predominant first-floor façade elevation.
- » **Exterior Building Materials:** Primarily high-quality, durable, low-maintenance material, such as masonry, stone, brick, glass, or equivalent materials. All buildings should be completed on all sides with acceptable finishing materials.

Materials such as vinyl, aluminum, and other metal siding should be avoided.

Metal and portable buildings should be prohibited.
- » **Architectural design** should be consistent with pedestrian-oriented development with a minimum of 10-foot-wide sidewalks to allow for outdoor dining and seating.
- » Buildings greater than 50 feet in width should be divided into increments of no more than 50 feet through articulation of the facade.
- » Windows should cover no less than 50% of nonresidential street level facades, and awnings should be provided over all street level windows.
- » **Screening:** All mechanical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC), and like systems should be screened from street level view on



all sides by an opaque structure or landscape material selected to complement the building.

- » Accessory items such as railings, benches, trash receptacles, outdoor seating (tables and chairs), sidewalk planters, or bicycle racks, if provided, should be of commercial quality and complement the building design and style.
- » Parking Lots: Only permitted in a side or rear yard. In no case should a parking lot extend beyond the front facade of a building.

### Cedar Island and Bogie Lake Road

This redevelopment site is located in the southern part of the Township and is in close proximity to three primary/secondary schools (Lakewood Elementary School, White Lake Middle School, and Lakeland High School) as well as the Brentwood Golf Club and Banquet Center. This site's location on Bogie Lake Road provides a direct connection to M-59, making it accessible from across the Township.

The two most common responses supporting

the development of single-family homes and a community gathering space/pavilion complement each other and provide a vision for development that aligns with the area's current landscape of schools and neighborhoods. Developing homes near the schools presents a wise pattern of development that enables access for families with school aged children. This, alongside a community space, park, and/or outdoor pavilion presents an opportunity for utilization by a wide range of users, such as students, families, and nearby residents. While less aligned with the two most popular choices, the support for mixed-use development in this area also provides a complementary use to nearby schools as the activity in the area is likely to support new businesses.

The redevelopment concept envisions this area as a community anchor in the southwest section of the Township. The main entrance to the site is along Cedar Island Road, near the intersection of Bogie Lake Road. This entrance is flanked by two-story mixed-use development which leads to the central greenspace at the heart of the site. The greenspace

Figure 31: Rendering of Proposed Redevelopment at Pontiac Lake Gateway





is envisioned as a place for active recreation (soccer, pickleball, etc.) with nearby shops and restaurants. Parking is located between roads and mixed-use developments. Traditional single-family residential units are located at the rear of the site.

### Lakes Town Center

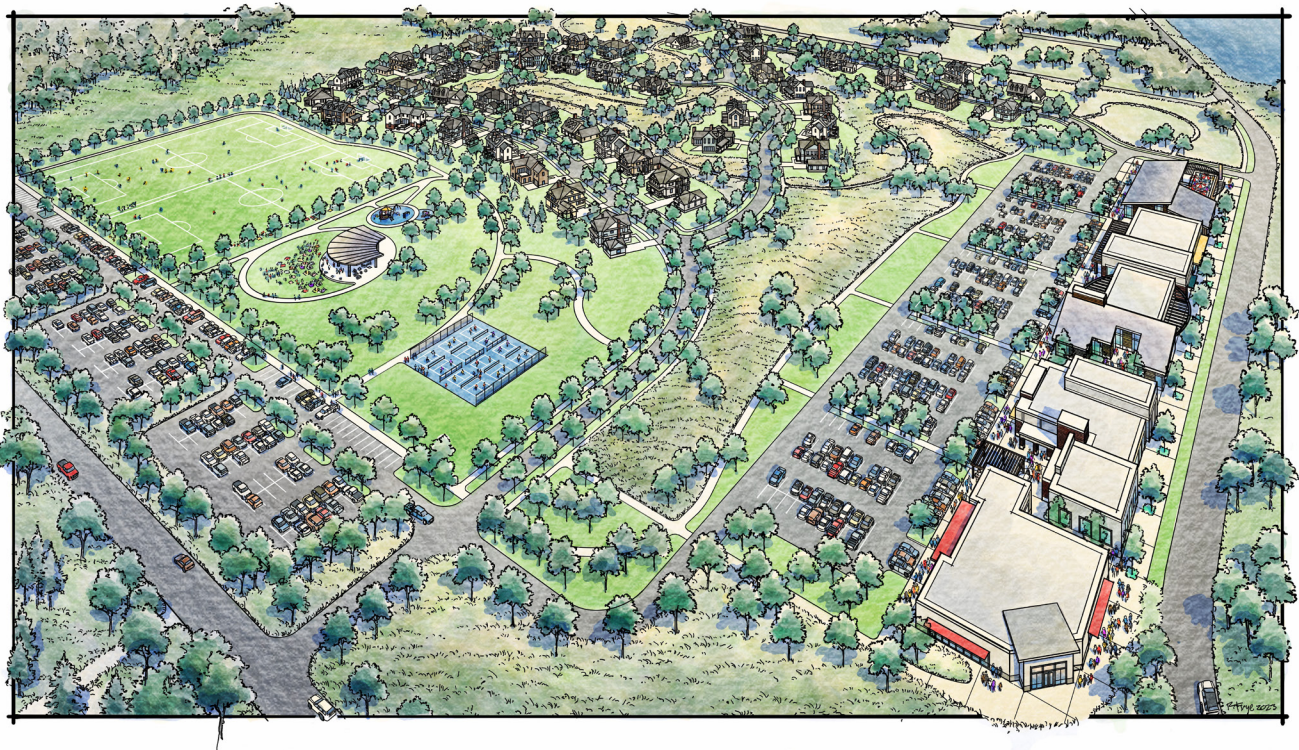
This redevelopment site is located in the center of the Township at the southwest corner of Highland Road (M-59) and Elizabeth Lake Road, which contributes to its accessibility from across White Lake. The lot is just yards away from the proposed Civic Center and across Elizabeth Lake Road from Village Lakes. Amid this access to public institutions, shopping, and dining, recreational spaces like Hawley Park and Stanley Park are in close proximity.

The two most popular uses for this site (restaurant/shopping district and mixed-use) complement each other well. Developing a restaurant and shopping district to support community entertainment and commercial interests is compatible with mixed-use

developments that incorporate residential units in commercial buildings. The site's location across from Village Lakes provides a natural expansion with similar uses that emphasize leisure and entertainment.

This redevelopment concept envisions a mixed-use/commercial district that focuses on entertainment with restaurants, retail, and other destination venues. The district is intended to build on the Civic Center and connect that development to M-59. This mixed-use development is fronted on both an internal street and greenspace. The courtyard created around the greenspace creates a social environment where people can patronize an individual business but be in a collective space. The concept envisions the businesses in the mixed-use development using the greenspace for outdoor dining and entertainment.

Figure 32: Rendering of Proposed Redevelopment at Cedar Island and Bogie Lake Roads





## Placemaking

Building a sense of place starts with defining borders, a core, hubs of activity, and landmarks in the public realm so that passers-by understand where the district begins and ends. Place, by definition, should be distinct enough for people to immediately distinguish it from other neighborhoods or districts.

Placemaking's main charge is to create desirable places with a focus on physical improvements. As so much of the economy is impacted by activity that takes place outside of the Township, the focus on investing in beauty through landscaping, amenities, art, and events helps to create a distinguishable place that entices residents and tourists to visit. Public investment signals to developers the Township is ready and willing to support business establishments, simultaneously setting the tone for how they should fit in the community. It takes the coordination of

public and private dollars to create a place that people want to be. Placemaking's connection to economic development is straightforward. One study found that people are 50% more likely to spend time in spaces with creative placemaking.<sup>2</sup> Related to this, people will also be more likely to recommend this place and spend more money there.

Within White Lake Township, the majority of placemaking efforts prioritize natural features, parks, and recreational spaces as a testament to the Township's commitment to natural space preservation.

### *Stanley Park*

Located on Elizabeth Lake Road just southeast of the Civic Center, Stanley Park provides beach access to Brendel Lake as well as a system of trails. Stanley Park and its placemaking efforts are unique in that the Township's 5-Year Recreation Plan for 2023-

Figure 33: Rendering of Proposed Redevelopment at Lakes Town Center



2027 focused on redevelopment plans for the park to improve facilities while also maintaining and preserving its natural features.

*Corridor Improvement Authority*

The White Lake Township Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) aims to promote private development and redevelopment, highlighting the Township’s position as a “Four Seasons Playground” and offering world-class recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The Authority’s focus is on the Highland Road corridor with the intention to promote the area’s natural amenities, non-motorized connectivity, and nodes of retail, dining, entertainment, and lodging to round out the corridor

experience.

In 2023, the CIA recommended the Township Board adopt a development plan and tax increment financing (TIF) plan. The plan outlines a TIF funding mechanism which captures increases in tax revenue from properties in the CIA which are not taxed at a higher rate; the TIF diverts a portion of future revenues to the CIA. Between 2024 and 2043, the TIF is estimated to capture \$12,273,133.

For CIA programs and projects, redevelopment encompasses the physical, economic, and social elements of place. Projects the CIA has proposed include branding and marketing efforts, wayfinding signage, streetscape improvements (including

**Table 23: Proposed Corridor Improvement Authority Projects**

Project	Description	Timeline
Branding	A branding process creates a distinct identity to be established for the district and the Township. The CIA will promote the area as a community center and area of regional appeal and business attraction. Branding the district will also set the themes of other visual improvements, gateway signage, marketing, and wayfinding.	2024 – 2025
Entryway and wayfinding signage	Include wayfinding that would direct visitors within the district to the Town Center, Gateway District, parks, community buildings, and other points of interest.	2027 – 2029
Streetscape improvements	Includes enhancements to the streetscaping, landscaping, public art, seasonal displays, and other design elements. Provide a visual connection between M-59 and other corridors.	2030 – 2032
Pathway extensions and improvements	Improve non-motorized transportation throughout the district. Connect M-59 with residential, commercial, and recreational areas. Complete the Township Triangle Trail to connect the Town Center and Library to M-59 and Teggerdine Road.	2028 – 2035
Traffic safety improvements	Build intersection capacity and additional safety improvements throughout the district. Add safe pedestrian and non-motorized crossings.	2025 – 2035
Enhanced transit stops and transit-oriented development	In conjunction with the expansion of WOTA along M-59, enhance transit stops with cover and seating. Promote transit-oriented development.	2028 – 2035
Sewer extensions	Expand sanitary sewer to underserved and unserved areas of the district.	2028 – 2034
Water extension/system improvements	Expand water service to underserved and unserved areas of the district.	2028 – 2034
Property/easement acquisition	Potentially acquire property through fee simple or by easement.	2025 – 2035

Source:



beautification efforts and area branding), along with various improvements to traffic flow, non-motorized connections, and transit-oriented development.<sup>3</sup>

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

As forces both inside and outside of White Lake play a role in the Township’s overall economic health, the Township itself is not solely responsible for its continued development and economic prosperity. As

part of a network, White Lake will have to cooperate with agencies and organizations that have a larger scope of operation and connections to resources such as funding, expertise, talent, and program management. Economic partnerships could include cross promotion, regularly scheduled meetings, joint projects, and other opportunities for mutual support as needed. Below is an inventory of local and regional partners to support the Township’s economic development.

Table 24: Economic Development Partners

Project	Description
Advantage Oakland	Oakland County’s economic development department, connecting jurisdictions across the County to resources to support businesses with capital acquisition, workforce development, entrepreneurial endeavors, and more. <sup>4</sup>
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan-New Economy Initiative	The New Economy Initiative is a special project of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan committed to regional economic development to encourage further investment. The initiative focuses on supporting service providers by providing technical assistance through business planning, providing capital to new and growing businesses, and connecting businesses to each other and their community. <sup>5</sup>
Oakland Chamber Network	Oakland Chamber Network seeks to cultivate a collaborative business environment across the region where member chambers can access resources that support each individual chamber’s mission.
Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce	The regional chamber for western Oakland County that serves the communities of Commerce, Walled Lake, Waterford, White Lake, Wixom, Wolverine Lake, and the Union Lake Business District has been serving them since 1950. With approximately 400 members, the Chamber represents a diversified group of businesses, drives economic progress, and facilitates valuable connections through networking and other initiatives. <sup>6</sup>
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments	The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) supports local planning by providing technical services, data analysis, and intergovernmental resources. SEMCOG’s technical assistance in the region’s economic development covers many facets, including a recently published report titled Increasing Shared Prosperity for a Resilient Economy (semcog.org).



Commercial Development



## Figure 34: Economic Development: Key Takeaways

In 2020, 20% of all White Lake Township residents worked in manufacturing industries. Manufacturing and educational services, health care, and social assistance industries have been the most common employers for Township residents from 2010 to 2020 – 37.4% of all Township residents were employed in either sector in both 2010 and 2020.

In 2019, the Township's "mature" industries (regional specialties with decreasing economic output) dominated White Lake's economic output and portion of workers employed. On the other hand, "growth" industries (regional specialties with increasing economic output) have the second greatest presence in the Township.

Retail, real estate, construction, housing, and service restaurants are among the Township's most prominent industries in terms of exports, economic output, and employment.

Though the Township's economic output in 2021 was about \$22 million less than outputs before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, trends of economic recovery across the Township are promising as 54% of all industries have increased their economic output since the pandemic began; however, 74% of all industries are underperforming economically in comparison to industry trends across the State, regardless of whether they have experienced financial growth or decline.

## Sources

- 1 SEMCOG, Increasing Shared Prosperity for a Resilient Economy, <https://maps.semco.org/sharedprosperity/>.
- 2 Real Estate News, New Research Reveals the Impact of Creative Placemaking, 2016, <https://storeys.com/new-research-reveals-the-impact-of-creative-placemaking/>.
- 3 White Lake Township Corridor Improvement Authority Board, Agenda, <https://mccmeetings.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/whitelakmi-pubu/MEET-Packet-197320c748a24e679194674cc23a15f8.pdf>.
- 4 Oakland County, Business Development, <https://www.oakgov.com/business/business-development>.
- 5 Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, New Economy Initiative, <https://cfsem.org/initiative/new-economy-initiative/>.
- 6 Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, <https://lakesareachamber.com/>.



Agri-business

# Land Use

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Land use is a foundational piece of community planning as the land area of any community is fixed in size, planning and designating zones of land for predetermined uses is imperative to ensuring all community needs and desires are met. The identity of a community is also often tied to its land use patterns. White Lake Township is unique in offering a mix of rural and suburban lifestyles as demonstrated through land use patterns. On one hand, the Township carries forward its rich agrarian history through a combination of agricultural and rural residential land uses. But, on the other hand, regional population growth and the Township's proximity to several urbanized municipalities in the metro Detroit area attract denser residential and commercial land uses. Ensuring development does not infringe on the Township's abundant natural resources and recreational land uses is a priority for the community. This chapter inventories existing land use patterns in the Township to identify areas for preservation and areas suitable for development. This chapter combined with community input lays the foundation for establishing a robust future land use strategy in White Lake Township.

## EXISTING LAND USE

White Lake Township's current pattern of land use is represented in the map (p. 93) titled "Existing Land Use." Land use in the Township has been determined, to a large degree, by the M-59 thoroughfare which runs east to west and divides the Township in half. The northern half of the Township exhibits a rural setting with agricultural and large-lot-residential land uses, whereas denser residential land uses (that range from single-family dwellings on smaller lots to multiple-family dwellings) are the dominant land use in the southern half. Barring a few parcels, almost all commercial development in the Township is concentrated along M-59. Additionally, land reserved for recreation or conservation purposes account for a large percentage of the Township,

through the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area in the northeast, and Highland State Recreation Area in the southwest quadrants of the Township. Utilizing data from Oakland County, land parcels in White Lake Township are divided into the following categories:

- » Agricultural.
- » Commercial/Office.
- » Industrial.
- » Public/Institutional.
- » Recreation/Conservation.
- » Residential.
- » Transportation/Utility/Communication.
- » Vacant.

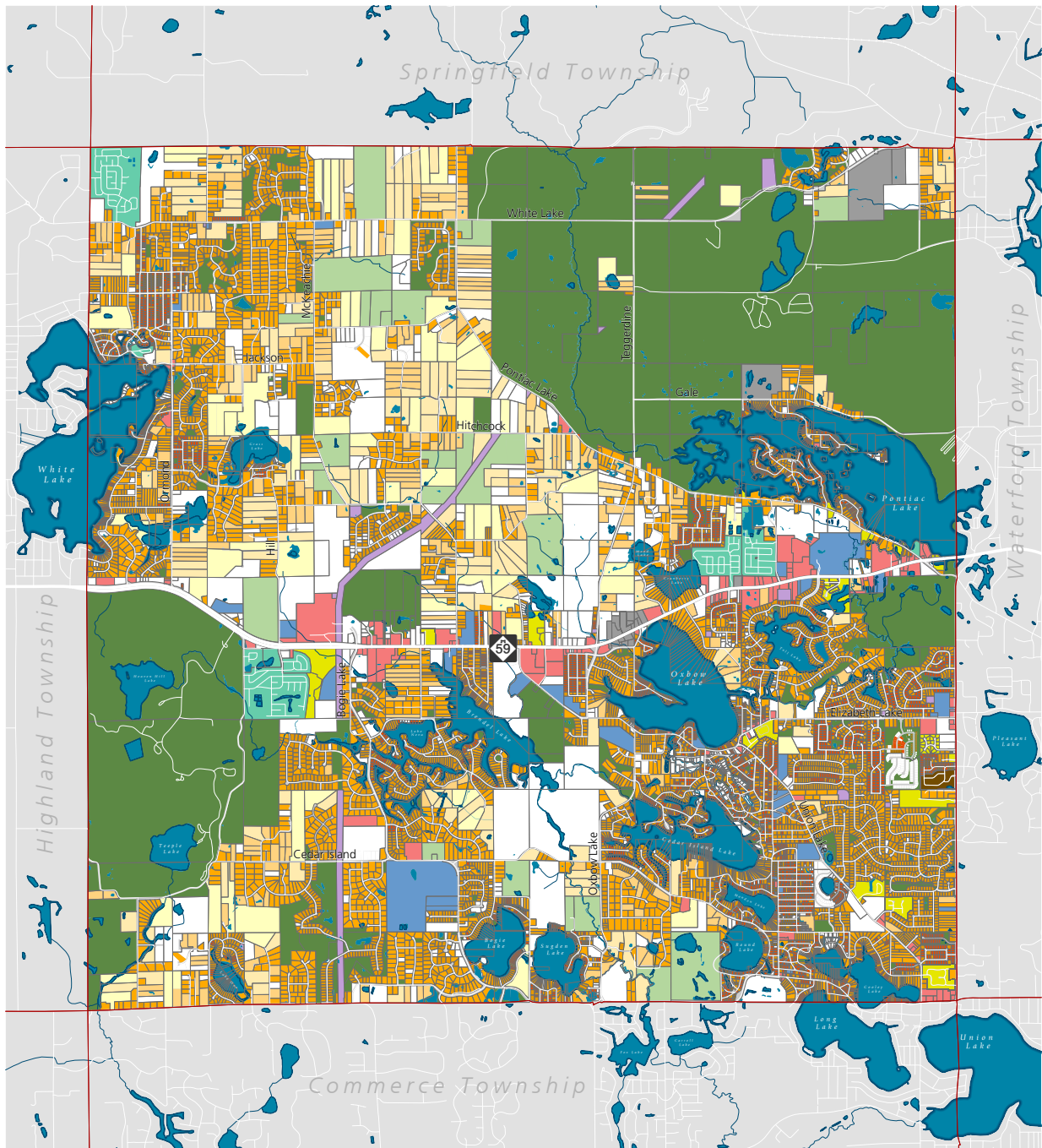
The table titled "Existing Land Use" (p. 94) charts the acreage and the total percentage of the Township area under each land use classification.

## Residential Land Use

Residential use is the largest land use category in White Lake Township and accounts for roughly 8,990 acres, or 46.3% of the Township area. Lot sizes and density vary throughout the Township; rural residential uses with larger lots (2.5 acres and above) are predominant north of M-59 while denser residential development with smaller lots (less than 2.5 acres) and multifamily units are common south of M-59. Due to the geography around the lakes, land use around the lakes tends to be concentrated with smaller lots as shown in the map (p. 93) titled "Existing Land Use."

Land use along the boundaries, especially in the southeast quadrant bordering Waterford Township and Commerce Township, exhibits intense residential development. It is likely the connectivity

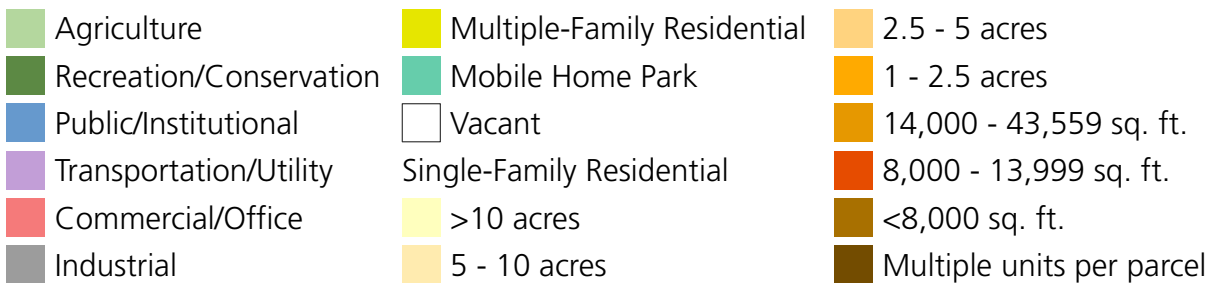
Map 13: Existing Land Use



## Existing Land Use, 2020

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

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



**Table 25: Existing Land Use**

Existing Land Use	Number of Acres	Percentage of Total
<b>Residential</b>	<b>8,989.9</b>	<b>46.3%</b>
Single Family, 14,000 to 43,559 Sq.Ft.	2,365.1	12.2%
Single Family, 1 to 2.5 Acres	2,137.8	11.0%
Single Family, 5 to 10 acres	1,197.8	6.2%
Single Family, 2.5 to 5 acres	984.3	5.1%
Single Family, greater than 10 acres	962.7	4.9%
Single Family, 8,000 to 13,999 Sq.Ft.	657.7	3.4%
Mobile Home Park	338.9	1.7%
Multiple Family	185.2	1.0%
Single Family, less than 8,000 Sq.Ft.	143.1	0.7%
Single Family, more than 1 unit / parcel	17.3	0.1%
<b>Recreation/Conservation</b>	<b>6,131.5</b>	<b>31.5%</b>
<b>Vacant</b>	<b>2,455.7</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>Agricultural</b>	<b>791.4</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>Commercial/Office</b>	<b>392.8</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	<b>366.3</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>165.0</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Transportation/Utility/Communication</b>	<b>157.4</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,450.0</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Oakland County

offered via M-59 to the other major cities and employment centers in the metro Detroit area, as well as regional trends of population growth from the rapidly urbanizing municipalities of Waterford and Commerce Townships, increase the demand for development in the southeast quadrant of the Township. As urbanizing municipalities begin to encounter unmet demand for housing, utilities, services, and so on, the tendency to seek residence in nearby localities (and accept longer commutes) increases. Managing development in tandem with available (and future) infrastructure will be crucial to ensure sustainable growth in this part of the Township. The majority of larger residential parcels in the Township are concentrated in the center, north of M-59, shielded from development pressure from the neighboring municipalities. Given these parcels are in proximity to agrarian uses, and roughly 45% of survey respondents indicated a rural atmosphere with plenty of open space was the main characteristic that attracted them to move to their current area

of residence, preserving the existing lot sizes and density will be a priority for the Township. Future residential development in the Township should be targeted in select areas of the Township with access to water and sewer infrastructure, preferably south of M-59, while development north of M-59 should be strictly regulated to preserve agricultural land and the rural character of the Township.

### Recreation/Conservation Land Use

Parcels under the recreation/conservation land use account for 6,131.5 acres, or 31.5% of the Township area. Most of the land under this classification is within the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area in the northeast and Highland State Recreation Area in the southwest quadrant of the Township. Other areas under this classification include areas like Indian Springs Metropark, which is included in the metropark system and operated by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. Additionally,



White Lake Oaks Golf Course occupies a small area immediately south of M-59 and also falls under this classification. Other parcels in this land use classification are scattered around the Township, including neighborhood parks and open spaces. The southeast quadrant of the Township which has the highest density of residential development in the Township contains a lower percentage of recreation/conservation land use compared to other areas of the Township. While residents in this area can access other recreation facilities in the Township, encouraging development of neighborhood parks amidst dense residential areas will be critical to ensuring the community's recreation and open space needs are met, further ensuring access to such facilities while protecting existing lakes and natural features.

As the Township plans for and begins to develop additional parks and outdoor recreational spaces, designing the space to incorporate green infrastructure features provides an opportunity to address the infrastructural needs of White Lake alongside recreational outlets. Promoting minimal development to any extent possible can ensure both access to, and preservation of, natural resources. Green infrastructure, such as rain gardens and bioswales, can further mitigate the impacts of any paved surfaces on stormwater by slowing, cleaning, and cooling it before entering green spaces or preservation areas. Recreation- and conservation-oriented land uses are themselves considered green infrastructure that can justify the highest and best use of land in such a way that it is enjoyed, yet largely undisturbed, by residents and visitors.<sup>1</sup>

## Agricultural Land Use

The identity of White Lake Township is influenced by its agricultural history and its rural character. However, only about 790 acres or 4.1% of the Township's total land area is currently used for agriculture. Almost all agricultural land is located in the central parts of the Township, with the majority situated north of M-59. Only a few parcels of agricultural land are located in the southeast quadrant of the Township. Since 2009, agricultural land in the Township has increased from 2.9% to 4.1% of the total Township area.<sup>2</sup>

Though agricultural land use in the Township has increased, protecting existing farmland from development is crucial. Agricultural land is primarily protected through zoning. In addition to the "Agricultural" zoning district, many parcels in the Township fall under the "Suburban Farm" district

which allows for a combination of specific agrarian and residential uses of land.<sup>3,4</sup> While this may prove effective to encourage agrarian uses and preserve the rural character of the Township with large lot sizes, it limits the area available for smaller single-family homes, duplexes, and other such housing typologies. This leads to pressure for increasing residential development, and, subsequently, risks eventual infringement of farmland. One potential strategy to balance farmland preservation and the increasing demand for residential development is to continue to strictly regulate uses in the Agricultural and Suburban Farm districts. By focusing residential development to existing residential areas and adjacent vacant land it alleviates development pressure on suburban and farmland. Essentially, the strategy encourages higher density development in a smaller area rather than lower density development over a broad area. Another strategy for preserving farmland is the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116), a voluntary agreement between a landowner and the State of Michigan in which the landowners receive tax benefits and exemptions in exchange for preserving their land for agriculture or open space.<sup>5</sup>

## Commercial/Office Land Use

Commercial land uses in White Lake Township are concentrated in the center of the Township along the M-59 thoroughfare. Some commercial parcels in the Township are scattered between residential land uses south of M-59, and a few are situated in the southeast corner adjoining Commerce and Waterford Townships. While restricting commercial development to the Township's major thoroughfare helps retain the rural and residential character of the Township, residents are likely dependent on the automobile to go to work, run errands, or visit businesses. Although the Township can regulate larger commercial/office uses and big-box stores along M-59, residents may benefit from additional neighborhood-scale stores such as small grocers or produce stores, especially in the denser residential neighborhoods in the southeast quadrant of the Township. Creating commercial pockets/nodes also encourages foot traffic for local businesses and reclaims the streets from catering solely to automobiles.

## Public/Institutional Land Use

Parcels under the public/institutional land use classification typically serve public interest by

permitting uses such as schools, religious buildings, institutional buildings, Township offices, and so on. This land use accounts for roughly 366 acres or 2% of the Township area, and these parcels are usually exempt from property taxation. Most of this land use is situated south of M-59 including the Huron Valley Schools campus, Dublin Elementary School, and Houghton Elementary School properties.

### Industrial Land Use

Industrial land is predominately used for manufacturing or processing materials or articles and includes accessory uses such as storage areas and warehousing. Only 165 acres amounting to 0.8% of the total Township area fall under the industrial land use classification. Some industrial parcels are located north of M-59 and east of Teggerdine Road, mostly comprised of automobile services and related uses. Two larger parcels are located in the northeast corner of the Township. An important consideration for industrial land use is the proximity to natural features; given most industrial parcels are located near lakes or recreation/conservation land, it is crucial to implement stringent development standards through the zoning ordinance to ensure adequate setbacks and buffers are provided from natural features.

### Transportation/Utility/Communication Land Use

Areas predominately used for vehicular transportation, public utilities, or establishing

communication towers and other related public infrastructure fall under this land use category and account for 150 acres and 0.8% of the total Township area.

### Vacant

Vacant parcels are unimproved areas that do not have a specific land use classification. Roughly 2,456 acres, or 12.6% of the Township area is vacant. While vacant parcels are distributed across White Lake, most are found in the central and western portions of the Township, often adjacent to residential uses. These parcels offer the opportunity to expand land uses to cater to the needs of the community. While vacant land areas may not have a committed use, their presence may contribute to the agrarian nature of the Township. However, unlike the land designated for Agricultural or Suburban Farm uses, these areas may provide an avenue to meet the increasing demand for housing and subsequent residential uses to prevent the conversion of traditionally agricultural uses. As shown in the table titled "Zoning of Vacant Land" (p. 97), the majority of the land classified as vacant is zoned agriculture (Agricultural or Suburban Farm). Following agriculture, land zoned for residential accounts for roughly 22% of all vacant land. Finally, commercially zoned vacant land accounts for roughly 18% all of vacant land in the Township. Industrially zoned vacant land is less than 1% of the total vacant land.

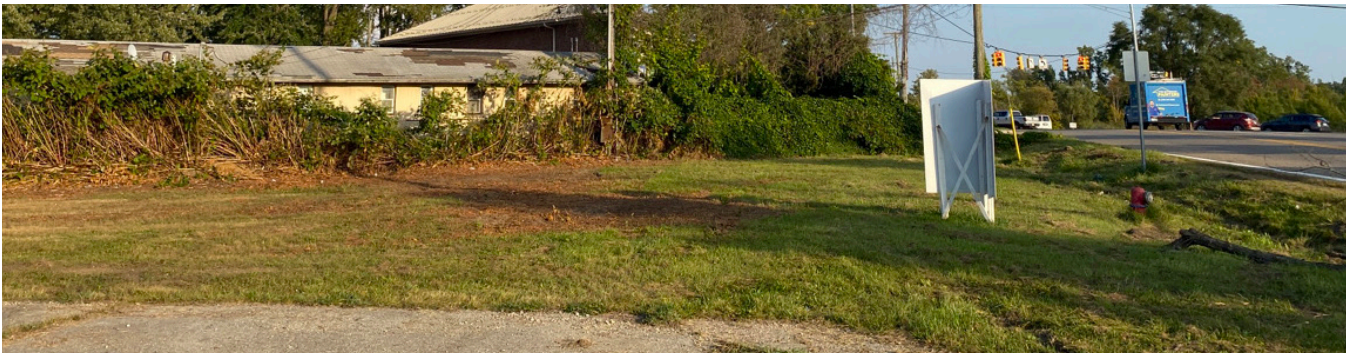


Agricultural land

Table 26: Zoning of Vacant Land, 2023

Zoning	Percent of Vacant Land
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>59.60%</b>
AG: Agricultural	36.39%
SF: Suburban Farm	23.21%
<b>Residential</b>	<b>21.75%</b>
R1-A: Single Family	4.99%
R1-B: Single Family	0.96%
R1-C: Single Family	5.75%
R1-D: Single Family	6.31%
RM-1: Attached Single Family	1.03%
RM-2: Multiple Family	2.71%
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>17.75%</b>
LB: Local Business	1.49%
GB: General Business	3.01%
NBO: Neighborhood Office	0.17%
ROP: Research Office Park	0.11%
PD: Planned Development	9.79%
PB: Planned Business	3.18%
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>0.77%</b>
LM: Light Manufacturing	0.77%

Source: Oakland County & White Lake Township



Vacant land

Figure 35: Key Land Use Strategies

### Residential Land Use

- » Preserving the existing lot sizes and density will be a priority for the Township.
- » Future residential development should be targeted in select areas of the Township with access to water and sewer infrastructure, preferably south of M-59, while development north of M-59 should be strictly regulated to preserve agricultural land and the rural character of the Township.

### Recreation/Conservation Land Use

- » Encouraging development of neighborhood parks amidst dense residential areas will be critical to ensuring the community's recreation and open space needs are met.

### Agricultural Land Use

- » The Township should continue to strictly regulate uses in the Agricultural and Suburban Farm districts.
- » Another strategy for preserving farmland is the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116), a voluntary agreement between a landowner and the State of Michigan in which the landowners receive tax benefits and exemptions in exchange for preserving their land for agriculture or open space.

### Industrial Land Use

- » It is crucial to implement stringent development standards for industrial land through the zoning ordinance to ensure adequate setbacks and buffers are provided from natural features.

## Sources

- 1 SEMCOG, Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan, 2014, <https://www.semcog.org/desktopmodules/SEMCOG.Publications/GetFile.ashx?filename=GreenInfrastructureVisionForSoutheastMichiganMarch2014.pdf>.
- 2 White Lake Township, White Lake Township Master Plan for Land Use 2010–2011, 2011, [https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3681/complete\\_wl\\_mp\\_update\\_document\\_2012.pdf](https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3681/complete_wl_mp_update_document_2012.pdf).
- 3 White Lake Township Zoning Map, [https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/23353/wlt\\_zoning\\_map\\_update\\_20221010\\_updated\\_again\\_5.4.2023.pdf](https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/23353/wlt_zoning_map_update_20221010_updated_again_5.4.2023.pdf).
- 4 White Lake Township Zoning Ordinance, [https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/2311/2022\\_01\\_27\\_white\\_lake\\_clearzoning\\_ordinance\\_security\\_on.pdf](https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/2311/2022_01_27_white_lake_clearzoning_ordinance_security_on.pdf).
- 5 “Farmland Preservation”, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, [https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599\\_2558---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599_2558---,00.html).





Commercial development

# Goals & Implementation

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

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

**“Strive for a sustainable White Lake Township that balances the community’s economic, environmental, and social needs. Promote the identity of White Lake Township as a small country town with big city**

**amenities by protecting and preserving natural features, encouraging redevelopment of obsolete properties, and directing growth and development to a central community core.”**

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

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

**Table 27: Goal Survey Results**

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

A. Invest in infrastructure and implement appropriate regulations and policy measures to preserve and protect natural features, including wetlands, floodplains, lakes, woodlands, and other natural features.

B. Enhance the quality of life and make the community more appealing by providing a variety of recreational facilities.

C. Maintain the small-town rural character of existing single-family residential areas while pursuing opportunities to meet the Township's housing needs.

D. Address the community's needs for efficient and safe multi-modal transportation (walking, biking, automobile, etc).

E. Support businesses providing goods and services, and implement infrastructural upgrades to meet current and future needs of Township residents.

F. Improve the Township's tax base and provide job opportunities by encouraging beneficial development/redevelopment projects.

**Table 28: Action Plan**

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

Action Item	Applicable Goal(s)	Timeframe
Address increasing housing costs and the limited availability of starter homes valued between \$150k and \$250k by increasing the Township's supply of housing to match the demand.	C	Medium term
Accommodate future community housing preferences by matching the size and types of housing construction to needs. For example, while single-family homes remain the most prominent preference for Township residents, support attached single-family structures (such as duplexes).	C	Short term
Pursue CDBG funds to support the revitalization of housing units that are deteriorating and/or uninhabitable in order to put them back into the housing market.	C, E	Ongoing
Rezone commercial districts and corridors to allow for mixed-use developments.	C, F	Ongoing
Support commercial development by revitalizing buildings that have become vacant and/or retrofitting strip malls to support new commercial activities.	F	Medium term
Ensure redevelopment plans align with community-guided ideas at Pontiac Lake Gateway, Cedar Island and Bogie Lake Roads, and around Lakes Town Center.	F	Long term
Support efforts of the Corridor Improvement Authority to promote a sense of place, connectivity, and various activities in commercial corridors across the Township.	E, F	Ongoing
Implement traffic calming techniques along Cooley Lake Road and M-59 (east of Teggerdine Road) to ease commuter congestion en route to outside communities.	D	Ongoing
Address the volume of crashes that take place at intersections along M-59 by improving road safety measures and implementing biking and pedestrian infrastructure.	D	Ongoing
Educate and share information with Township residents about implementation plans for non-motorized infrastructure that includes a signed bicycle route, bicycle lanes, and shared-use paths.	D	Ongoing
Educate and share information with Township residents about public transportation options, including upcoming changes in operation.	D, E	Ongoing

## FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) (p. 104) identifies preferred future land uses in the Township. It is a general framework, a land-use visualization of intended future uses, that guide land use and policy decisions within the Township over the next 10-20

years. It should drive changes to the Zoning Ordinance and inform development review decisions. In the FLUM, preferred locations for future development types are displayed, allowing the community to identify where certain land uses should expand or contract without committing to it by law.

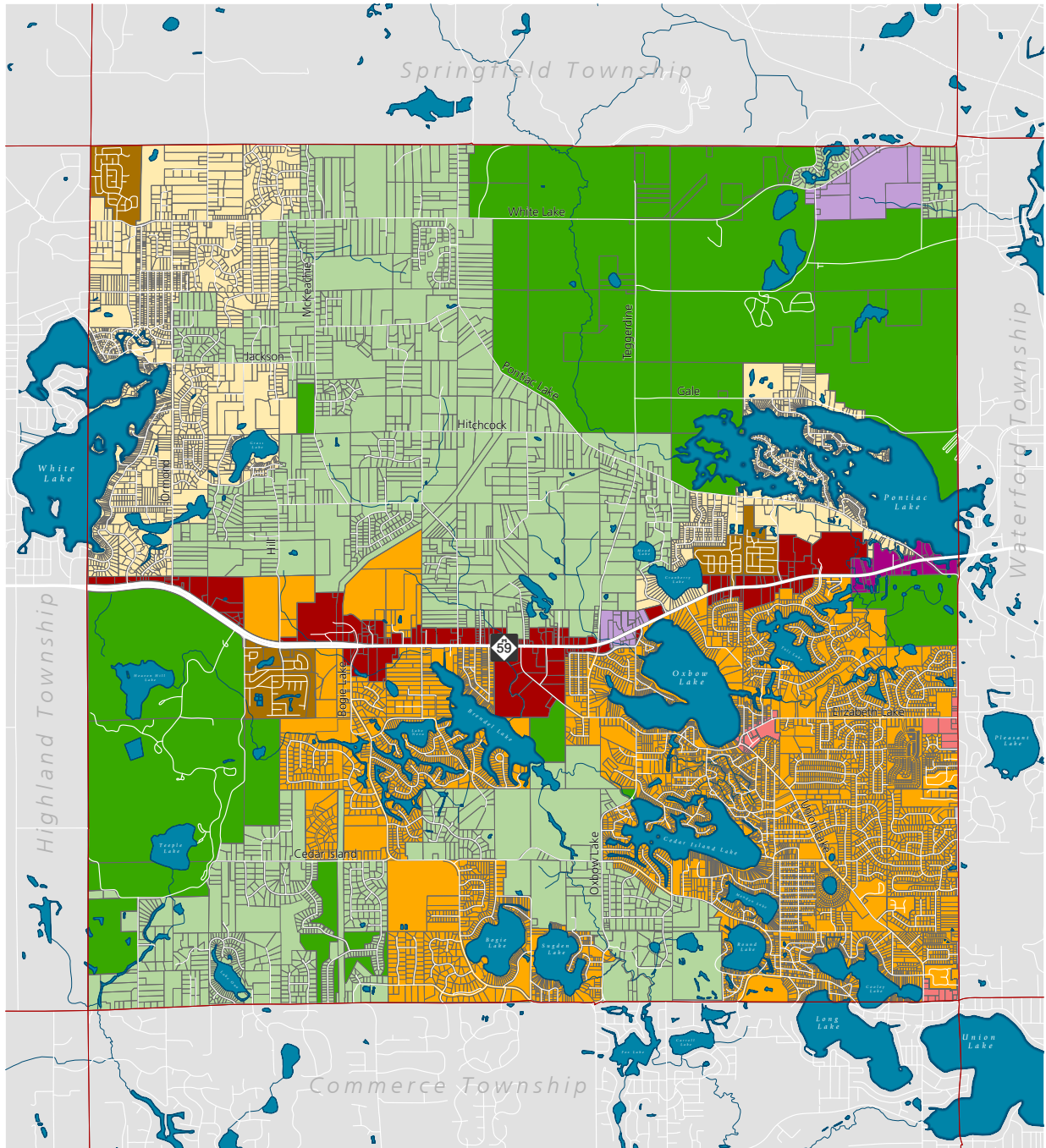


Table 29: Future Land Use and Zoning

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










\* Not an exhaustive list of uses.

Map 14: Future Land Use Map



## Future Land Use Framework

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

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

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.





Agri-business

# Appendix

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Appendix A: Survey Results Summary  
Appendix B: Redevelopment Workshop Summary

# SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

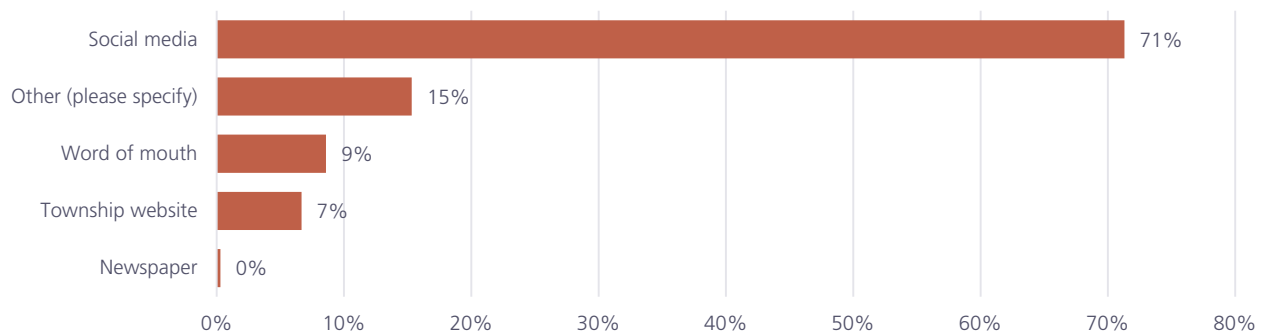
The White Lake Township Master Plan Survey was designed to garner the community’s vision for the future of the Township and gauge current perspectives and future preferences and priorities regarding the quality of life, housing, local economy, recreation, and natural features. The survey was hosted on an online platform–SurveyMonkey–and extensively promoted through postcards and flyers, social media platforms, local newspapers, newsletters, email, a poster at the White Lake Township Hall, and the Township’s website. Paper copies of the survey were available at the Township Hall for those who could not access the online platform. A total of 1,411 people participated in the survey between February and March 2023 with a completion rate of 70%.

## INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Question 1. How did you hear about the survey? (Please select all options that apply)

Social media was the most common way the survey reached people; about 71% respondents indicated they heard about the survey on social media. Word of mouth and the Township website reached 9% and 7% of the respondents respectively. The remaining 15% of respondents heard about the survey through other mediums including email, neighborhood / subdivision newsletters, and Homeowners Associations (HOAs).

### Survey Outreach

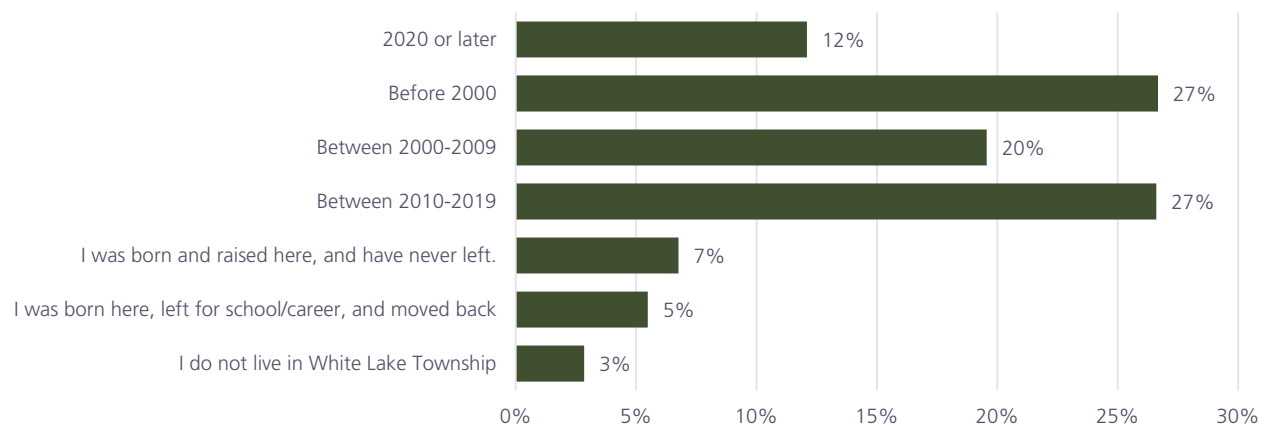


[Response Rate: 99.0% of Respondents]

Question 2. What year did you move to White Lake Township?

Respondents lived in the Township over a range of years, indicating the survey captured preferences of both recent and long-term residents. Roughly a third of respondents (34%) have lived in the Township for over 20 years and 5% of residents were born in the Township and returned after pursuing higher education / a career. About 20% of survey takers moved to the Township between 2000–2009, 27% between 2010–2019, and more recently 12% moved to the Township in or after 2020. The remaining 3% of respondents were not Township residents.

## Year Respondents Moved to the Township



[Response Rate: 99.6% of Respondents; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors]

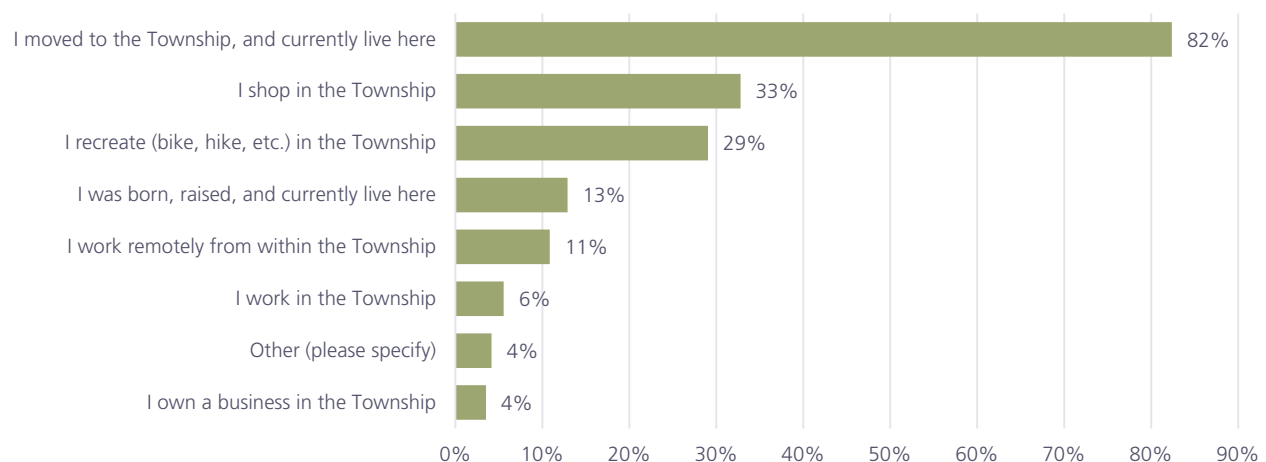
## QUALITY OF LIFE

The responses in this section help comprehend the community's perception regarding the quality of life in the Township and identify aspects of the Township they believe need to be improved.

### Question 3. What is your connection to White Lake Township? (Please select all options that apply)

A vast majority of respondents (82%) were residents who moved into the Township, while 13% were residents who were born and raised in the Township. Around one-third of respondents (33%) shopped in the Township and nearly 30% used recreational opportunities in the Township such as biking / hiking. In regard to employment, 11% worked remotely within the Township, 6% worked in the Township, and 4% of respondents were local business owners. Among the remaining 4% who chose the "other" option, respondents commonly owned seasonal lakeside properties, had children attending the local schools, or had family in the Township.

## Respondents' Connection to the Township



[Response Rate: 86.9% of Respondents]

Question 4. In one word or phrase, what is a defining characteristic of White Lake Township?

The most common words used to describe White Lake Township were “Beautiful”, “Community”, “Friendly”, “Home”, “Lake”, “Nature”, “Peaceful”, and “Rural”.

#### Defining Characteristics of the Township



[Response Rate: 64.4% of Respondents]

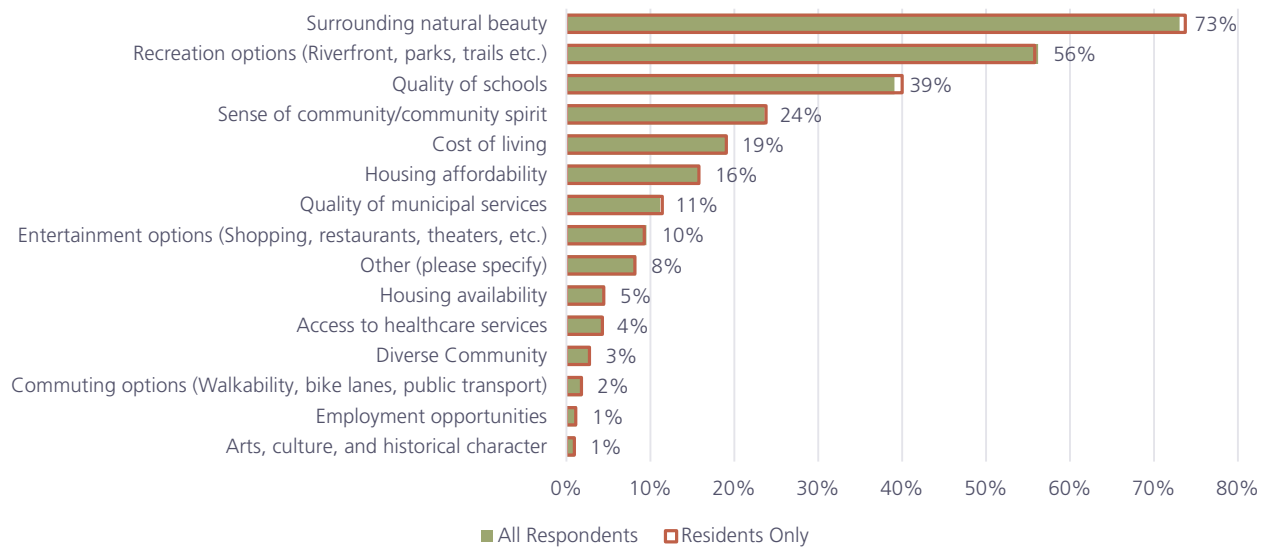
Question 5. What are the THREE best characteristics of the Township? (Please select at most three options)

True to the Township’s motto as the “Four Seasons Playground,” a majority of respondents (73%) indicated surrounding natural beauty was the best characteristic of the Township. Recreation options and quality of schools were identified as the second and third best characteristics by 56% and 39% of respondents, respectively.

To understand what residents’ valued most in the Township, the responses to this question were filtered based on respondents who selected either “I moved to the Township, and currently live here” or “I was born, raised, and currently live here” as a response to their connection to the Township in question 3. Among those who responded to this question (87% of total respondents), 95% identified as residents. Residents also identified surrounding natural beauty (74%), recreation options (56%), and quality of schools (40%) as the best characteristics of the Township. Commuting options (2%), employment opportunities (1%), and arts, culture, and historic character (1%) were the characteristics rated the lowest by all respondents and residents alike.



## Best characteristics of the Township

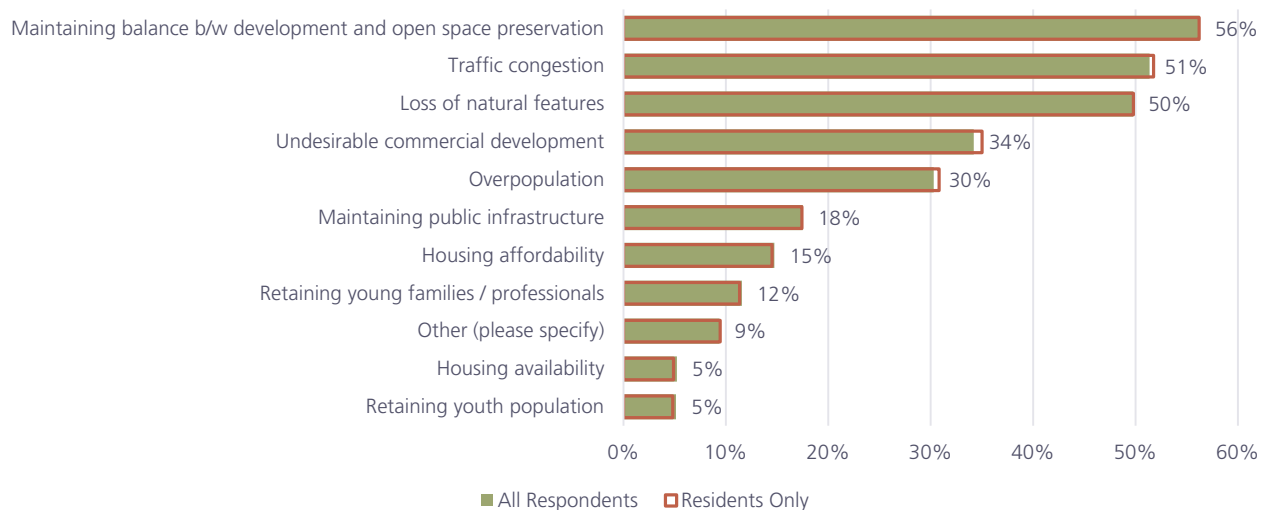


[Response Rate: 87.0% of Respondents, % labels above are all respondents]

**Question 6. What are the THREE biggest challenges the Township faces over the next 10 years? (Please select at most three options)**

The coexistence of both rural and urban characteristics may be a challenge in White Lake Township. Therefore, over half of all respondents (56%) indicated maintaining a balance between development and open space preservation would be the biggest challenge for the Township over the next 10 years. Traffic congestion and loss of natural features were other major challenges identified by roughly half of the respondents.

## Biggest challenges the Township faces over the next 10 years.



[Response Rate: 87.0% of Respondents, % labels above are all respondents]

Filtering responses, residents also identified maintaining a balance between development and open space preservation (56%), traffic congestion (52%), and loss of natural features (50%) as the three biggest challenges for the Township over the next decade. Some other common challenges identified by 9% of respondents included poor quality of roads and public infrastructure, lack of pedestrian connectivity and bike lanes, and lack of destinations / downtown.

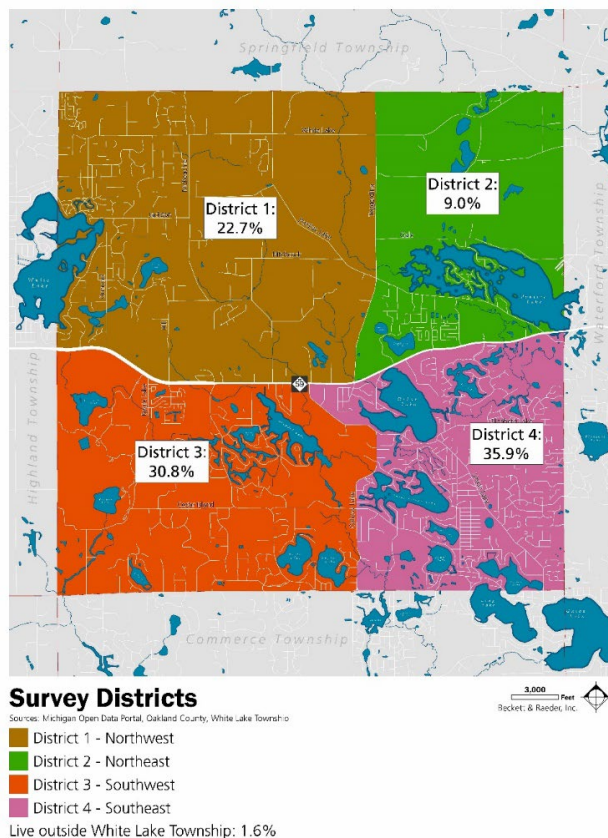
## HOUSING

The responses in this section of the questionnaire help perceive the respondents' current and future preferences and needs regarding housing and residential land use in the Township.

**Question 7. Which area of the Township do you live in? (Please use the map below as a reference or use this link to lookup your address)**

Most of the respondents (35.9%) lived in District 4, followed by 30.8% who lived in District 3; combined, two-thirds of respondents live south of M-59. Roughly 22% of respondents live in District 1, 9% live in District 2, and the remaining 1.6% were not Township residents. Roughly 22% of respondents did not answer this question. In subsequent questions, where this question was used as a filter to categorize responses by district, it is important to acknowledge the lower response rate to this question may skew the analysis.

### Percentage of Respondents by Survey District



[Response Rate: 78.2% of Respondents, % labels above are all respondents]

Question 8. What characteristics of the area that you live in attracted you to move there? (Please select all options that apply)

Most respondents (44%) indicated a rural atmosphere with plenty of open space was the main characteristic that attracted them to move to their current area of residence. Many (40%) also noted the lot sizes as a reason and almost a third of respondents (31%) valued the amenities such as parks and common spaces in their neighborhood / subdivisions. When residents noted the rural aesthetic as a valuable characteristic, it appears to be limited to the open space that accompanies rural residential land use; the rural roads or the agriculture lifestyle were not aspects of the rural character respondents found attractive. Among some other responses, a vast majority of respondents also noted the lakes and access to the lakes as important characteristics of their neighborhood.

### Characteristics that Attracted Respondents to their Area of Residence



[Response Rate: 77.7% of Respondents, % labels above are all respondents]

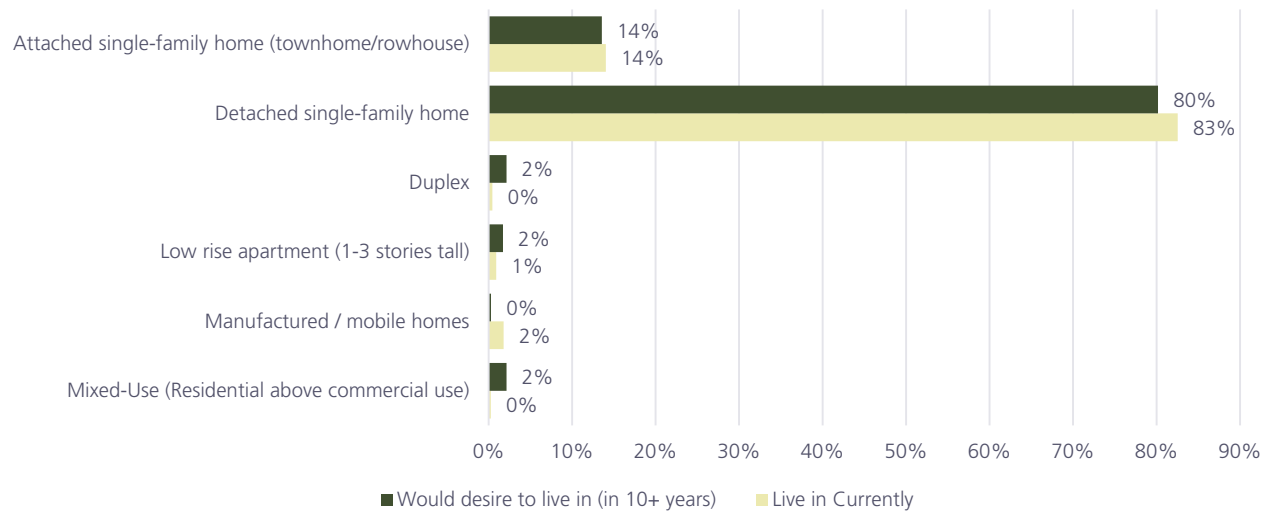
Question 9. What type of housing do you LIVE IN CURRENTLY and what type would you like to LIVE IN 10 YEARS FROM NOW? (Please select all options that apply)

The majority of respondents currently lived in either detached single-family homes (83%) or attached single-family homes house (14%); only 3% of all respondents lived in other multi-family housing units. Future preferences of respondents were also concentrated only between the two typologies of single-family homes, attached (80%) and detached (14%), indicating most respondents were not seeking different housing typologies in the Township. A small percentage of respondents (6%) indicate a desire to live in duplexes (2%), and other multi-family housing units such as low-rise apartments (2%) and mixed uses units (2%) ten years from now. A more detailed analysis of housing preferences by age, indicated the following:

- » Of the 2% respondents who wish to live in duplexes, over 50% seniors (65 years and above)
- » Young professionals and families (25-34 years), empty nesters (55-64 years), and seniors indicated a desire to live in low-rise apartments.

- » Among those who wish to live in mixed use residential units in the future (2% of the total), 36% are young professionals and families, while the remaining vary in age from 35-year-olds to seniors.

### Current Housing Type and Future Preferences



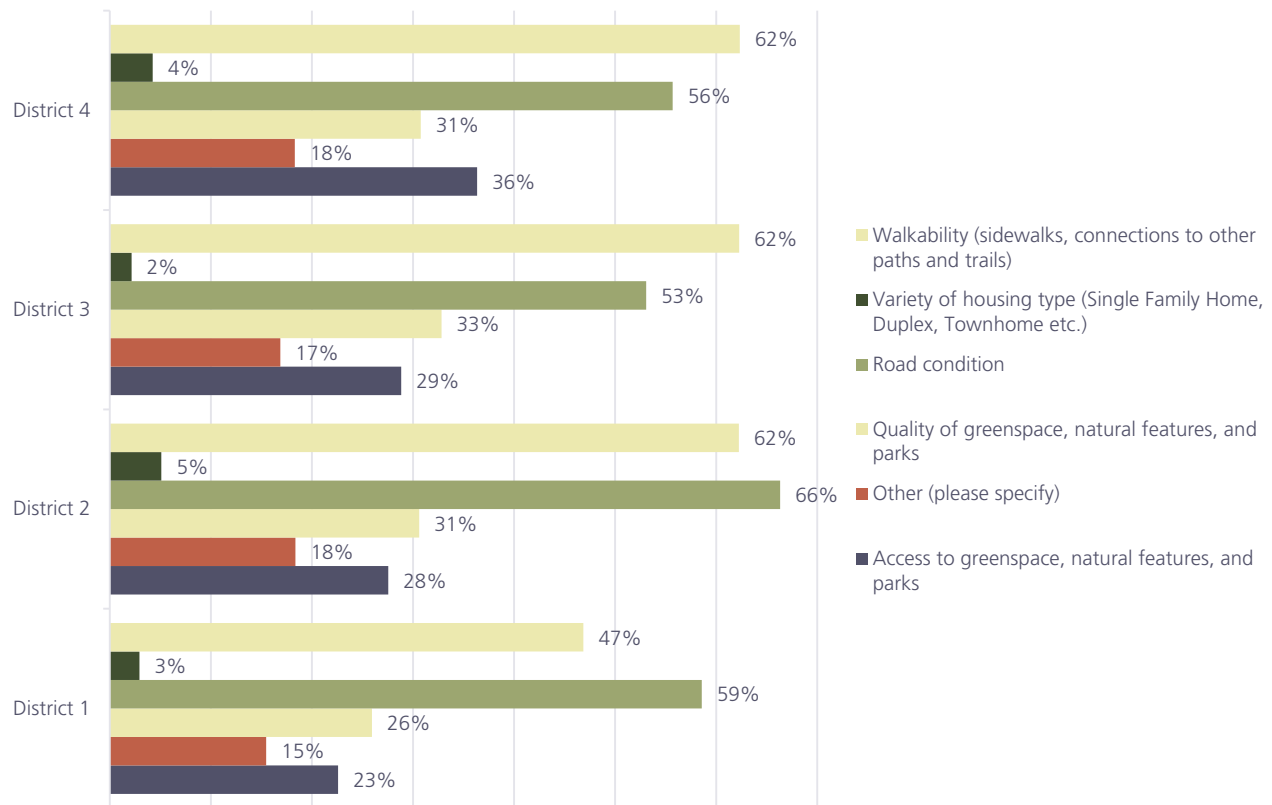
[Response Rate: 78.0% of Respondents]

Question 10. What are the characteristics of the area that you live in that could be used for improvement?  
(Please select all options that apply)

Walkability—the quality of sidewalks, connectivity of sidewalks and trails—was identified by roughly 60% of respondents from all four districts as a major characteristic that needs to be improved. Following walkability, over one half of respondents in Districts 1, 3, and 4, and two-thirds (66%) in District 2, noted roads required improvements. Respondents from Districts 1, 2, and 3 rated improvements related to the **quality** of greenspace, natural features, and parks slightly higher than **access** to greenspace, natural features, and parks. Conversely, in District 4, respondents rated access higher than quality. About 5% and 4% of respondents in Districts 2 and 4 suggested improving housing diversity. Among the various “other” responses, some common characteristics included improving/expanding sewer and water infrastructure, reducing traffic congestion, and increasing restaurants/destinations.



## Improvement Priorities by District



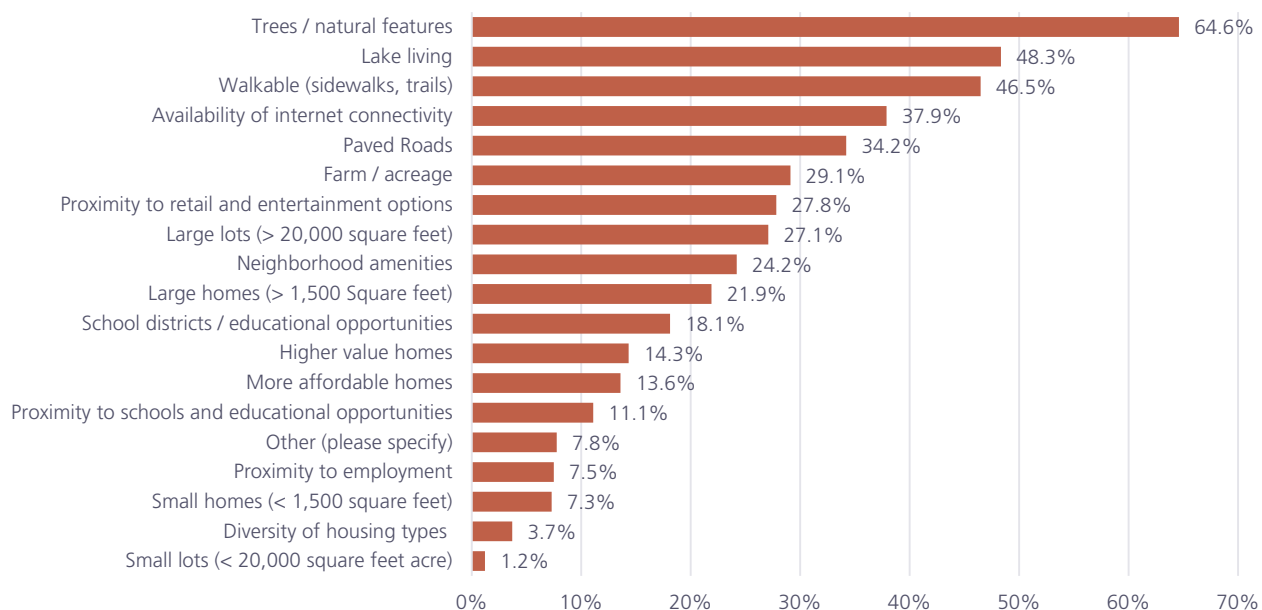
[Response Rate: 75.1% of Respondents, % labels above are all respondents]

**Question 11. What are the characteristics of an area you would like to live in, in the future? (Please select all options that apply)**

Overall, respondents chose trees and natural features (65%), lake living (48%), and walkability (46%) as the top three characteristics of an area they would like to live in, in the future.

Filtering responses by age of respondents, the top three priorities for all cohorts aged 25 years and above mirrored that of the entire group, in the same order. Young adults (18-24 years) also identified trees and natural features (86%) as the top characteristic of an area they would live in the future; however, deviating from the rest of the cohorts, they preferred an area with affordable homes (71%) and availability of internet connectivity (64%) over other characteristics.

## Characteristics of an Area Respondents' Would Live in, in the Future.

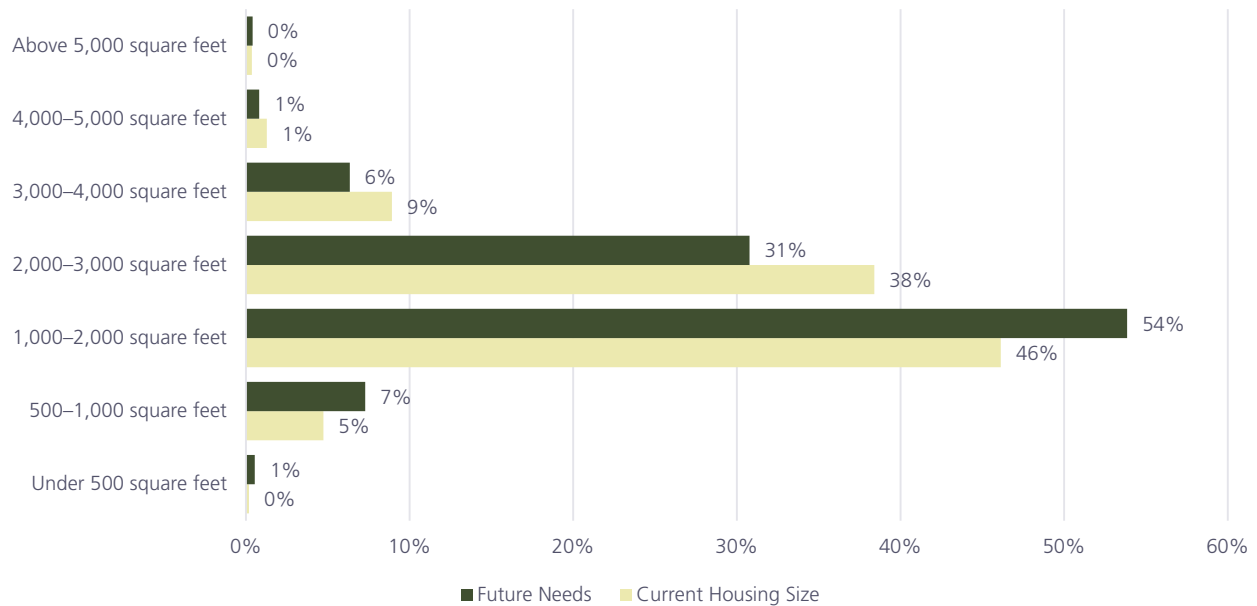


[Response Rate: 76.7% of Respondents]

**Question 12. What is the size of your current housing unit, and what size of housing unit do you require to fulfill your housing needs in the future? (Please select one for each column)**

Almost one-half of the respondents (46%) lived in homes between 1,000–2,000 square feet and over a third of respondents (38%) lived in homes with an area between 2,000–3,000 square feet. About 10% lived in larger homes with an area of 3,000 to 4,000 square feet or above while only 5% of respondents lived in units 500-1,000 square feet in size. Reviewing the future housing needs of respondents, a higher percentage of respondents indicate a desire to live in homes with an area of 1,000–2,000 square feet in the future than those housed presently. One possibility for this demand may be a lack of units 1,000–2,000 square feet in area, suggesting the current housing needs of some respondents were not being met. Alternatively, as housing composition changes, it is likely the future housing needs will change, creating a future demand for homes in the 1,000–2,000 square feet category. Irrespective of the reason, respondents indicated a need to increase the housing stock of homes 1,000–2,000 square feet in the Township. Similarly, respondents also indicated a demand for smaller homes, 500-1,000 square feet in the Township.

## Current Housing Size and Future Preferences



[Response Rate: 77.9% of Respondents]

The table titled “Current Housing Size and Future Preferences by Age” filtered the current housing size and future needs by age of the respondent. The table demonstrates a larger percentage of seniors who currently lived in larger homes will be interested in downsizing to smaller homes 500-1,000 or 1,000–2,000 square feet in the area. As the population of the Township ages, the Township can expect the demand for small to mid-size homes to grow. Those aged 25-34 years indicated a desire for the larger format of homes (3,000–5,000) likely a future need to house growing families.

### Current Housing Size and Future Preferences by Age

Size of Unit	Current Housing Size							Future Needs					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Under 500 Sq.Ft.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%		0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
500–1,000 Sq.Ft.	25%	9%	6%	2%	5%	1%		9%	7%	2%	5%	9%	12%
1,000–2,000 Sq.Ft.	42%	52%	42%	46%	44%	50%		73%	34%	43%	59%	59%	62%
2,000–3,000 Sq.Ft.	8%	31%	41%	39%	38%	41%		18%	43%	46%	25%	24%	23%
3,000–4,000 Sq.Ft.	25%	6%	7%	11%	11%	6%		0%	14%	9%	9%	5%	2%
4,000–5,000 Sq.Ft.	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	1%		0%	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Above 5,000 Sq.Ft.	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%		0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%

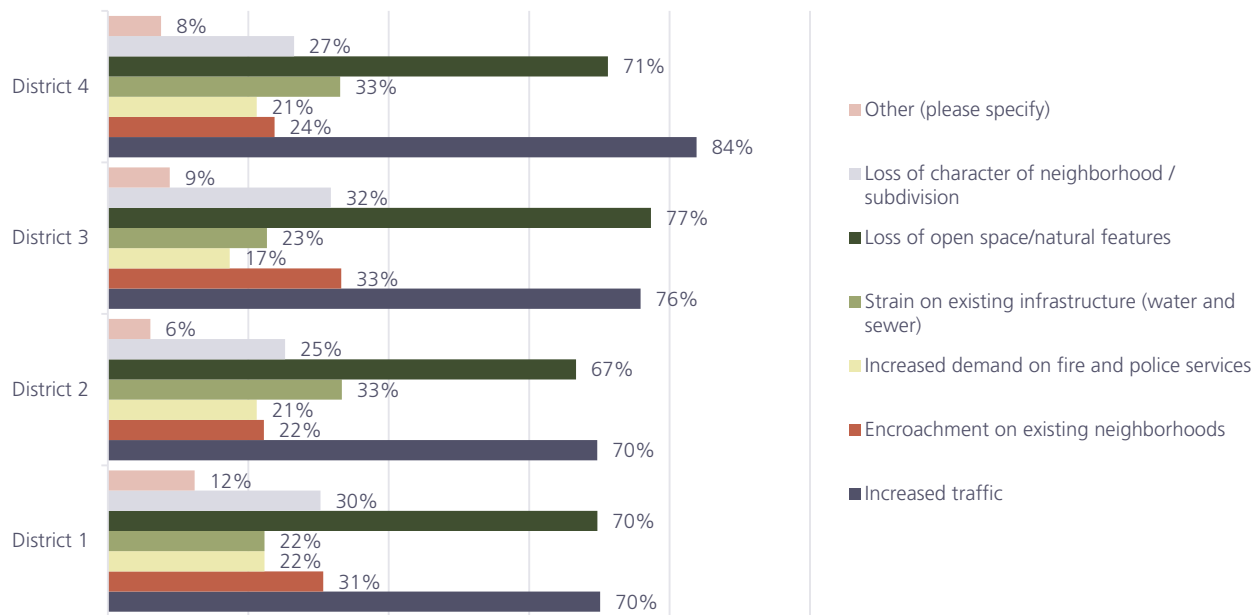
Note: The table above is read vertically, all columns add up to 100% showing the distribution of housing needs within each age cohort.

Question 13. What are your top THREE biggest concerns about increased residential development in the Township? (Please select at most three options)

Traffic congestion as a result of increased residential development was the biggest overall concern for over 70% of respondents from all districts. Almost 70% of respondents were also concerned about the loss of open space and natural features resulting from increasing residential development in the Township, but those from District 3 rated this as their biggest concern.



## Concerns about Increased Residential Development by District



[Response Rate: 78.5% of Respondents]

Respondents from Districts 1 and 3 rated the encroachment on existing neighborhoods as the third biggest concern while those from Districts 2 and 4 expressed concerns about the loss of the character of their neighborhood / subdivision due to new development.

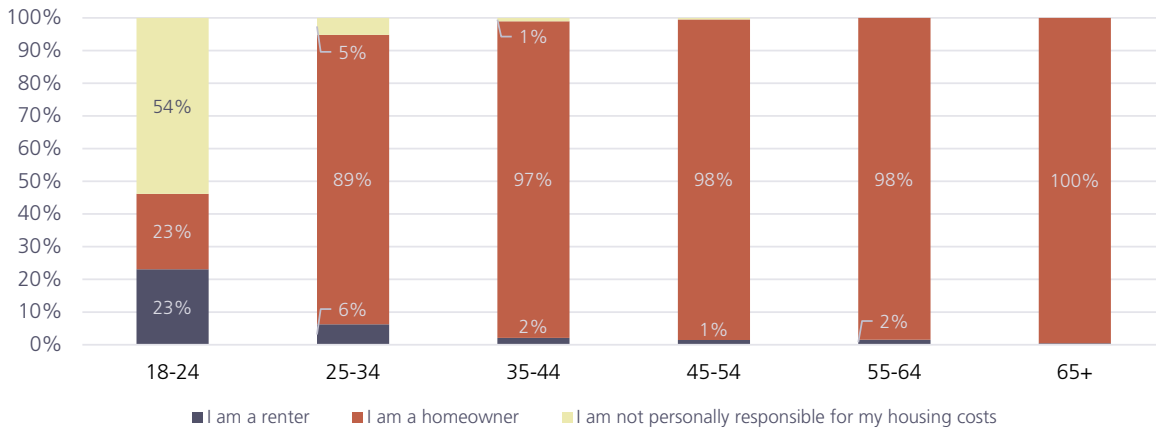
**Question 14.** Of the two options below, which is your preferred approach to directing new residential development?

Of the 73.8% who responded to this question, a majority of respondents (57%) supported low density development anywhere in the Township with minimal loss of open space and natural features; the remaining 43% support slightly higher density development south of M-59 while prioritizing preservation of open space and natural features north of M-59.

**Question 15.** What is your housing tenure status?

About 95% of respondents were homeowners, 2% were renters, and 2% were not financially responsible for their housing costs. The majority of respondents who were not responsible for their housing costs were young adults and professionals aged 18–34 years, and the largest percentage of renters (29%) also belong to the 25–34 years cohort.

## Housing Tenure Status by Age of Respondents

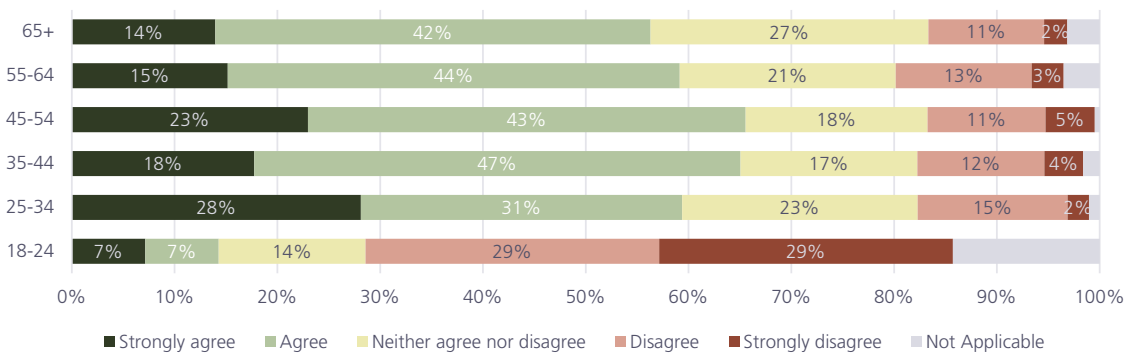


[Response Rate: 78.5% of Respondents]

Question 16. How strongly do you agree with the following statement "With my household income, I feel the housing options in White Lake Township are financially attainable."?

Respondents demonstrated varied levels of agreement on housing attainability in the Township indicating a need to diversify housing to reach the various income cohorts in the Township. While across age groups, over half the respondents were able to access housing catered to their housing income, a minority either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the above statement. Those aged 18–24 years, potentially including those still in school or beginning their careers, indicated strongest disagreement.

## Housing Attainability by Age of Respondents

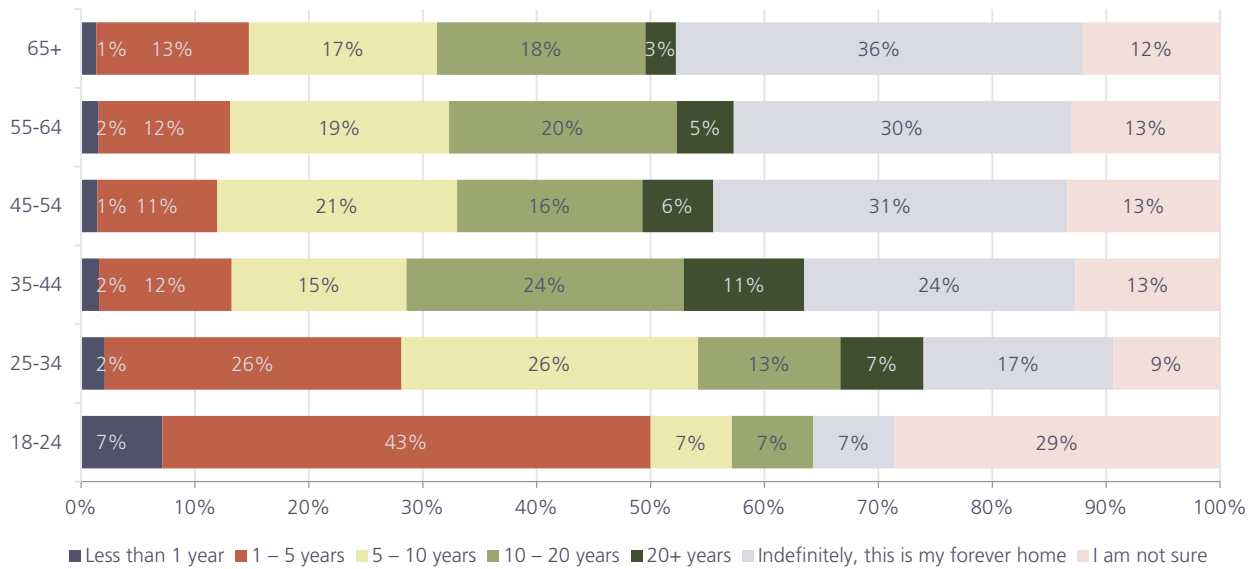


[Response Rate: 77.8% of Respondents]

Question 17. How much longer do you anticipate living in your current home?

The percentage of respondents aged 25–34 years indicated varied intentions of residing in their current homes, suggesting they would move as they transitioned through various stages of life. Among those aged 35–44 years, the majority (34%) anticipated living in their current homes over the next twenty years, likely homeowners with children in school. Preferences varied among those aged 45 years and above.

## Duration in Current Home



[Response Rate: 78.5% of Respondents; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors]

## FUTURE HOUSING PLANS

### Question 18. Why are you planning on moving?

Responses varied depending on the age and income level of respondents as identified in the prior questions. Younger renters were interested in pursuing homeownership; middle-aged respondents planned to move to accommodate growing families; and most empty nesters and seniors planned to downsize from their current homes into smaller homes that were easier to maintain both, financially and physically.

## LOCAL ECONOMY

The responses in this section of the questionnaire help perceive the respondents' current and future preferences and needs concerning the local economy and commercial land use in the Township.

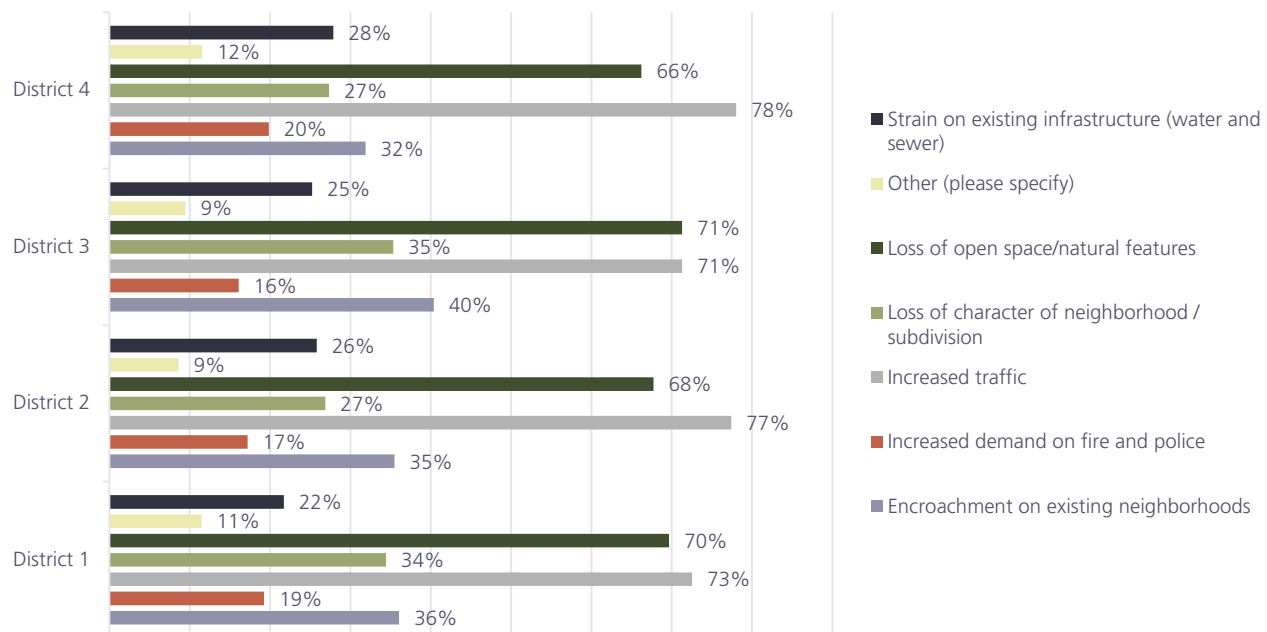
**Question 19.** Of the two options below, which is your preferred approach to directing new commercial development?

Of the 72.7% who responded to this question, 92% favored reuse of former commercial buildings now vacant or retrofitting of strip malls both of which will preserve existing open space and natural features; only 8% of respondents favored encouraging new low-density development along M-59 on vacant undeveloped land even with minimal threat to open space and natural features.

**Question 20.** What are your top THREE biggest concerns about increased commercial development in the Township? (Please select at most three options)

Increased traffic as a result of increased commercial development was the biggest overall concern for roughly 75% of respondents from all districts. Approximately 70% of respondents from all districts were also concerned about the loss of open space and natural features resulting from increasing commercial development in the Township. Around a third of respondents from all four districts showed consensus that encroachment on existing neighborhoods was the third biggest concern.

### Concerns about Increased Commercial Development by District



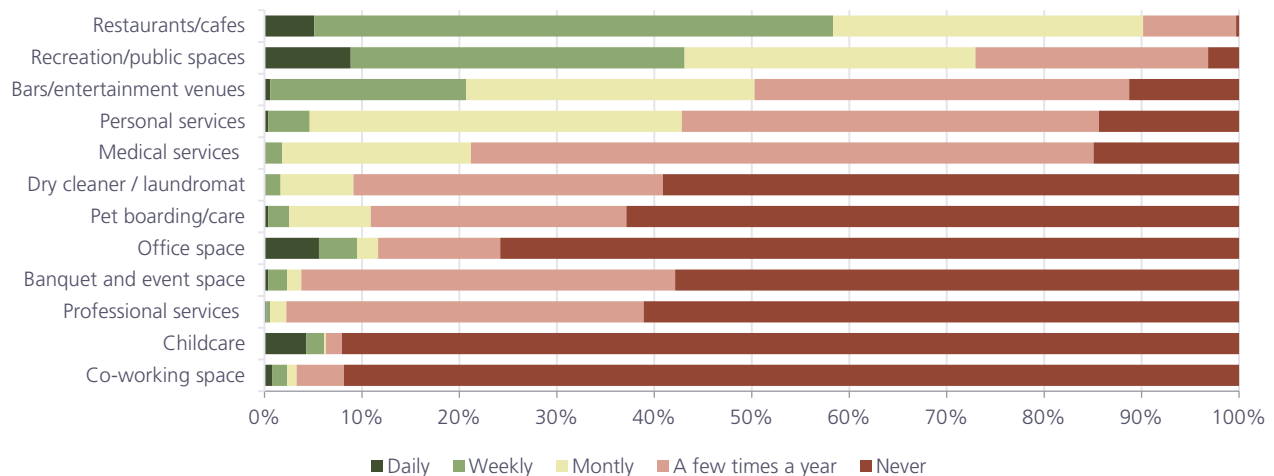
[Response Rate: 74.1% of Respondents]



### Question 21. How often do you frequent the following types of businesses/locations on average?

The majority of daily visits to businesses or locations by respondents included recreation spaces (9%), followed by office spaces (6%), restaurants or café (5%), and childcare (4%). On a weekly basis, respondents frequented restaurants and cafes (53%), recreation and public spaces (34%), and bars and entertainment venues (20%). Many respondents visited bars and entertainment venues (30%) and personal services such as saloons and spas (38%), in addition to restaurants and recreation facilities monthly. Overall, coworking spaces (92%) and childcare (92%) were least visited locations overall.

#### Visits to Businesses / Locations

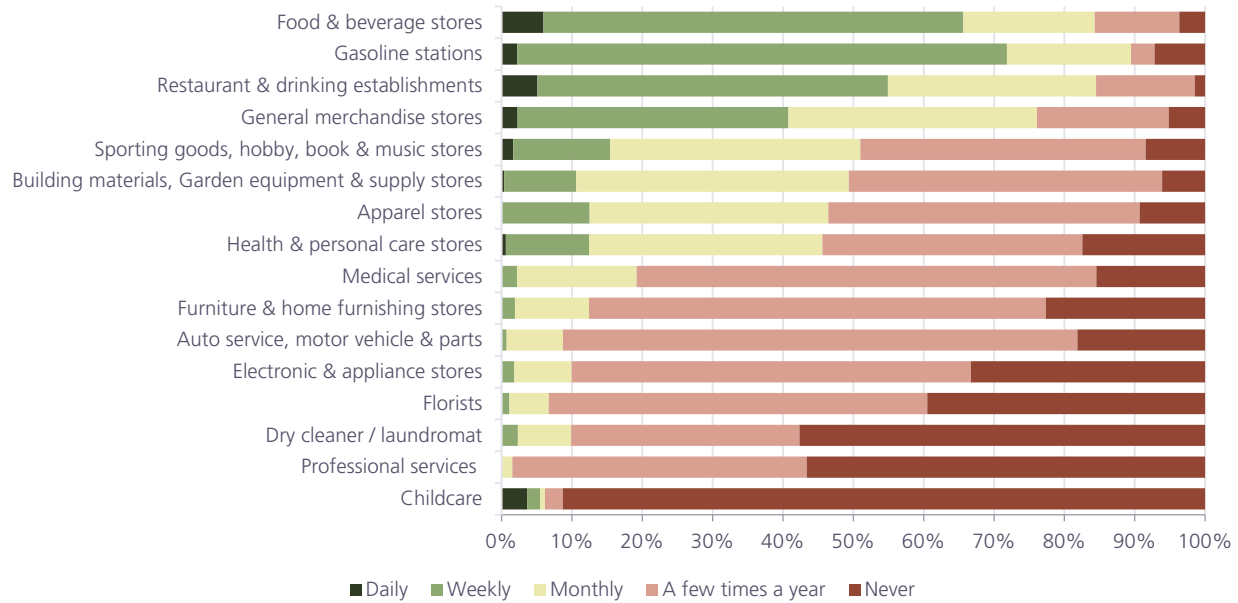


[Response Rate: 73.9% of Respondents]

### Question 22. What type of retail would you like to see in the Township and how often would you frequent each storefront on average?

Many respondents indicated a high demand to frequent gasoline stations (70%), food and beverage stores (60%), restaurants and drinking establishments (50%), and general merchandise stores (38%) on a weekly basis. Respondents also showed interest in visiting apparel stores (34%), building materials and garden equipment stores (39%), and health and personal care stores (33%) every month. Close to three-quarters (73%) indicated a demand for automotive service establishments and 65% would visit furniture and home furnishing stores and medical services a few times a year. Many respondents expressed a lack of interest / need for childcare and professional services space in the Township.

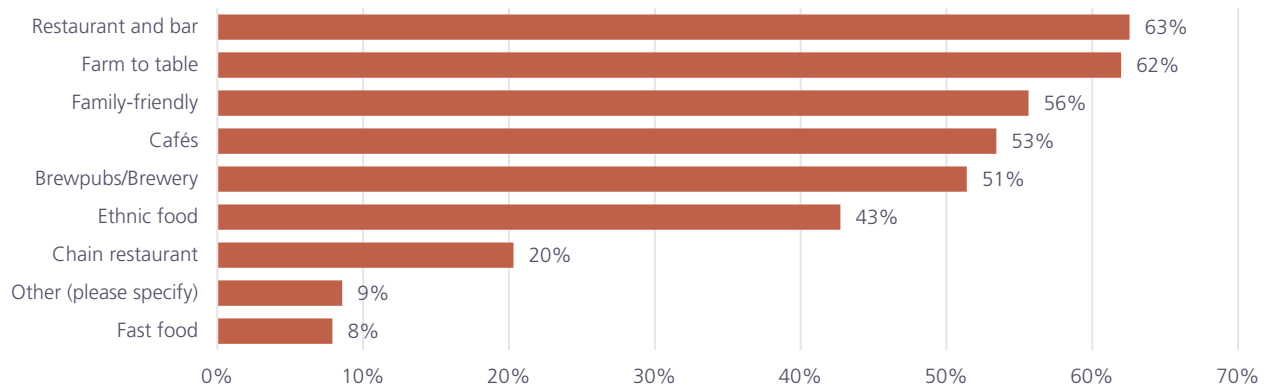
## Visits to Retail Establishments



**Question 23. What type of eating and drinking establishments would you like to see in the Township?**  
(Please select all options that apply)

A majority of respondents (63%) reiterated a strong desire to see more restaurants and bars in the Township. Considering the past or present ties many respondents had/have with farming and agriculture in the Township, and parts of the Township continues to preserve farmlands, many respondents expressed interest in supporting farm to table establishments. Roughly half the respondents also wish to encourage family-friendly eating and drinking establishments (56%), cafes (53%), and breweries (51%). Survey takers were least interested in encouraging fast-food or chain restaurants in the Township.

## Eating and Drinking Establishments Preferences

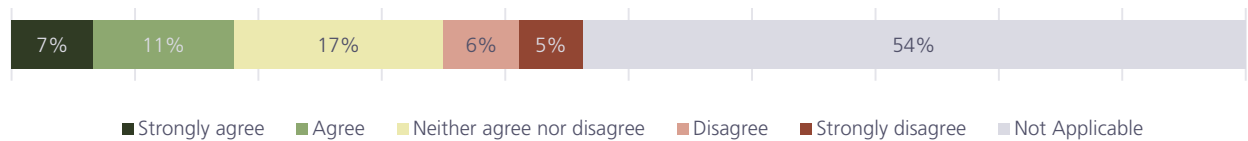


[Response Rate: 73.6% of Respondents]

Question 24. To what extent do you agree with the following statement, "I would like to start or expand a business in the Township, but I'm unaware of resources that could help me do that."

Only one-half of respondents were interested to start or expand a business the Township; 17% either strongly agree or agreed they were aware of resources to help establish/expand businesses; another 17% were neutral; while 11% were unaware of the resources.

### Business Resources Outreach Satisfaction Scale



[Response Rate: 73.5% of Respondents]

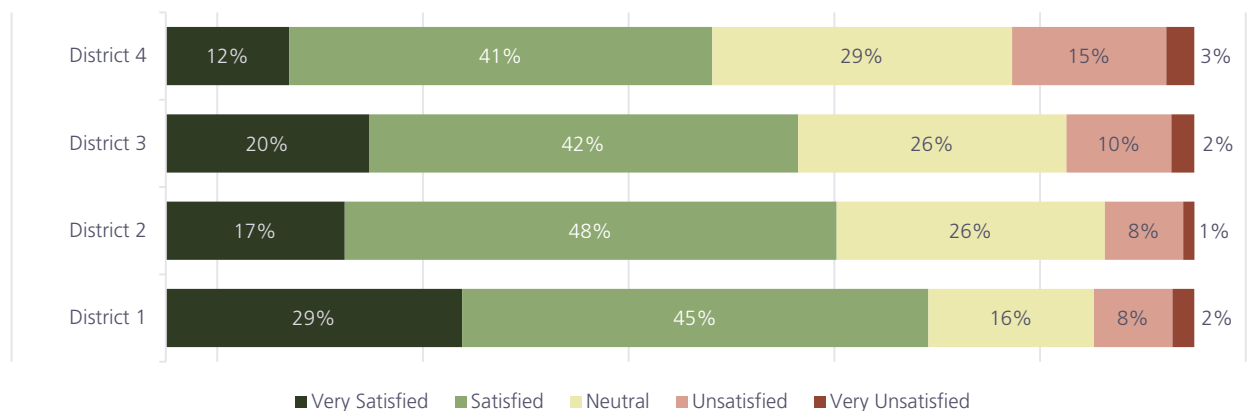
## RECREATION

The responses in this section of the questionnaire help perceive the respondents' perception of recreational opportunities in the Township.

Question 25. How satisfied are you with the parks and other recreation offerings in the Township?

As the "Four Seasons Playground," a majority of respondents in all four districts were either very satisfied or satisfied with the parks and recreational opportunities offered in the Township. Many respondents reported a neutral perception, while respondents from Districts 3 and 4 indicated the highest level of dissatisfaction. As noted in Question 7, given only 78% of respondents noted their survey district, a district-wise analysis may slightly skew the results.

### Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Offerings



[Response Rate: 73.5% of Respondents]

## NATURAL FEATURES

The responses in this section of the questionnaire help comprehend the importance of natural features to the survey respondents.

Question 26. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Natural features are an asset to White Lake Township."?

Throughout the survey, most of the respondents demonstrated a strong motivation to preserve the open space and natural features in the Township; consistently, 77% "strongly agree" and 19% "agree" natural features were an asset to White Lake Township.

### Level of Agreement that Natural Features are Assets to the Township

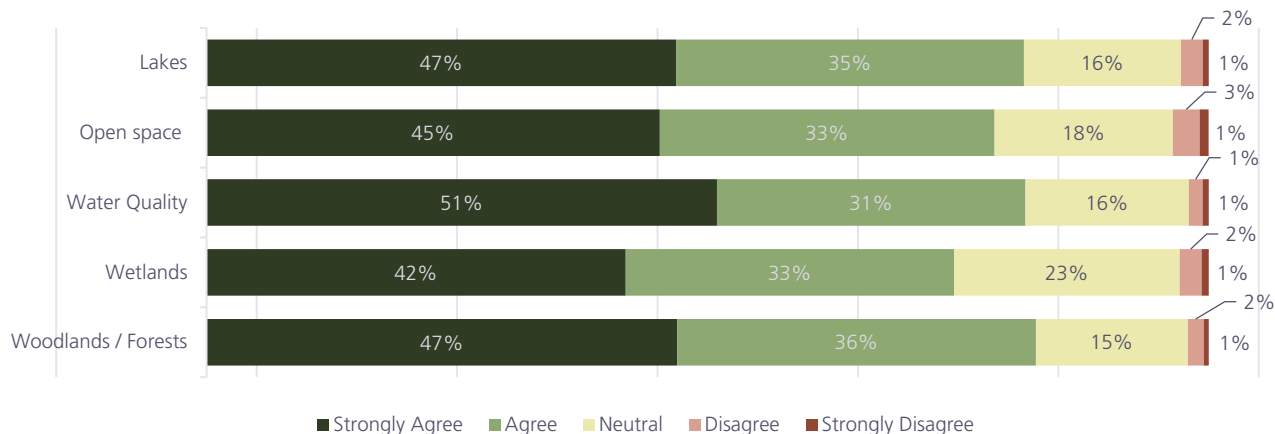


[Response Rate: 71.7% of Respondents]

Question 27. To what degree do you agree with the following statement: "The Township's natural features (listed below) could be better protected/preserved."?

Roughly 80 of respondents indicated the Township's natural features including lakes, open space, water quality, wetlands, and forests can be better preserved/protected. A majority (82%) of respondents indicated the water quality in the Township could be better preserved.

### Level of Agreement that Natural Features are Assets to the Township



[Response Rate: 71.8% of Respondents; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors]



## VISION FOR WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

This section uses community input to establish a vision for White Lake Township which is subsequently used to determine the priorities and goals in the implementation section of the Master Plan.

Question 28. Please select your top THREE goals for the future of White Lake Township. (Please select at most three options)

The majority of all respondents and residents alike (69%) identified preserving and protecting natural features as the top goal for the future of the Township. Subsequently, respondents ranked maintaining the small-town rural character of residential areas (49%) and providing adequate infrastructure while protecting natural features (46%) as the second and third priority goal; the preferences of residents align with that of all respondents.

### Rating of Goals

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

[Response Rate: 71.7% of Respondents]

Question 29. The 2012 Master Plan specified the following vision for White Lake Township: “Strive for a sustainable White Lake Township that balances the community’s economic, environmental, and social needs. Promote the identity of White Lake Township as a small country town with big city amenities by protecting and preserving natural features, encouraging redevelopment of obsolete properties, and directing growth and development to a central community core.” Does this vision align with your view of White Lake Township?

Majority of respondents (77%) either strongly agreed or agreed the vision statement of the 2012 Master Plan aligned with their view of White Lake Township; and 14% neither agree nor disagree. Roughly 10% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the specified vision statement. Filtering responses by residents, no difference was observed between responses of residents compared to that of all respondents.

Question 30. If you were neutral or disagreed with the 2012 statement, what is your vision for White Lake Township?

Some common themes identified by respondents as their vision for the Township included:

- » “Big city” amenities are not appropriate for the Township.
- » Preserve and protect natural features.
- » Protect the lakes and preserve water quality.
- » Maintain small-town / rural character.
- » Create walkable neighborhoods with pedestrian amenities.
- » Maintain quality of roads and infrastructure
- » Develop recreation programming for all ages.
- » Control development / growth
- » Add restaurants and destinations.
- » Address blighted properties.
- » Create a community!

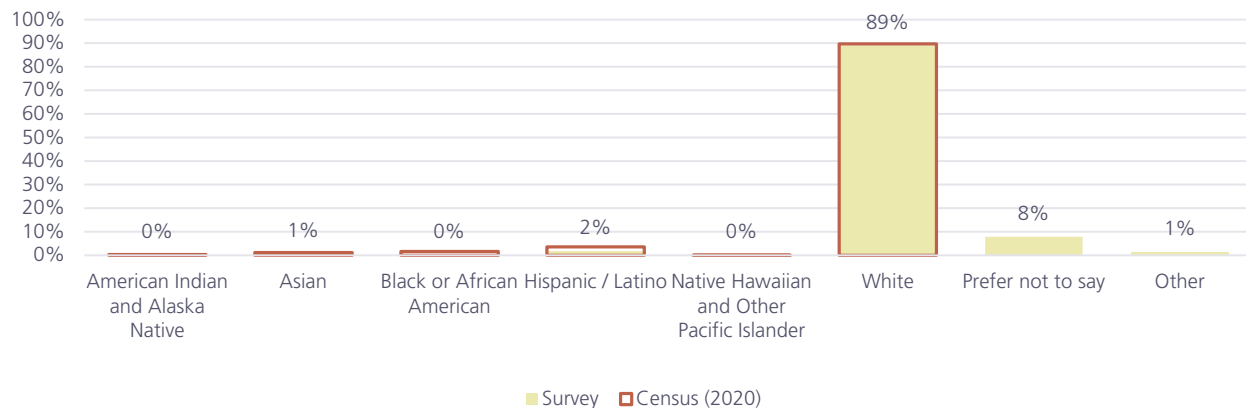
## DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographic questions in the survey were optional and included solely with the intent of ensuring the survey was representative of the community.

Question 31. How would you identify yourself? (Please select all options that apply)

The majority of respondents (89%) identified as White; given 90% of the Township population identified as White in the 2020 Census, the survey was fairly racially representative of the population.

### Racial / Ethnic Identity of Respondents

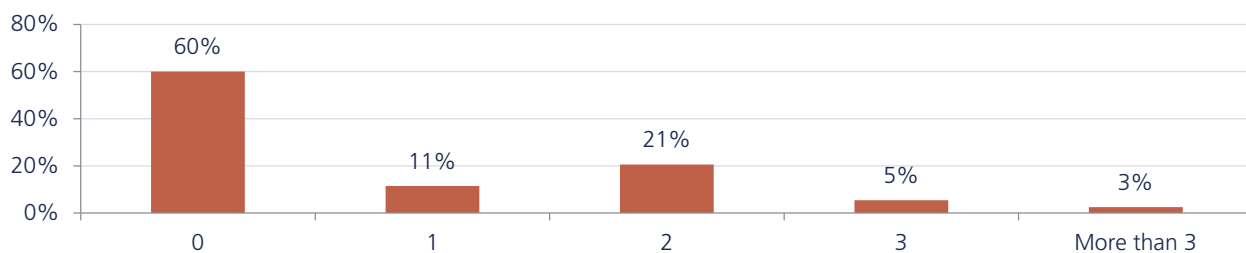


[Response Rate: 70.2% of Respondents; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors]

Question 32. How many members of your household are under the age of 18?

The majority of respondents (60%) had no members under the age of 18 years in their household and the remaining 40% had at least one member under the age of 18 years. The 2020 American Community Survey, indicated 30% of White Lake Township's population had at least one member under 18 years of age in a household, indicating respondents with children were slightly overrepresented in the survey.

### Number of Household Members Under 18 Years

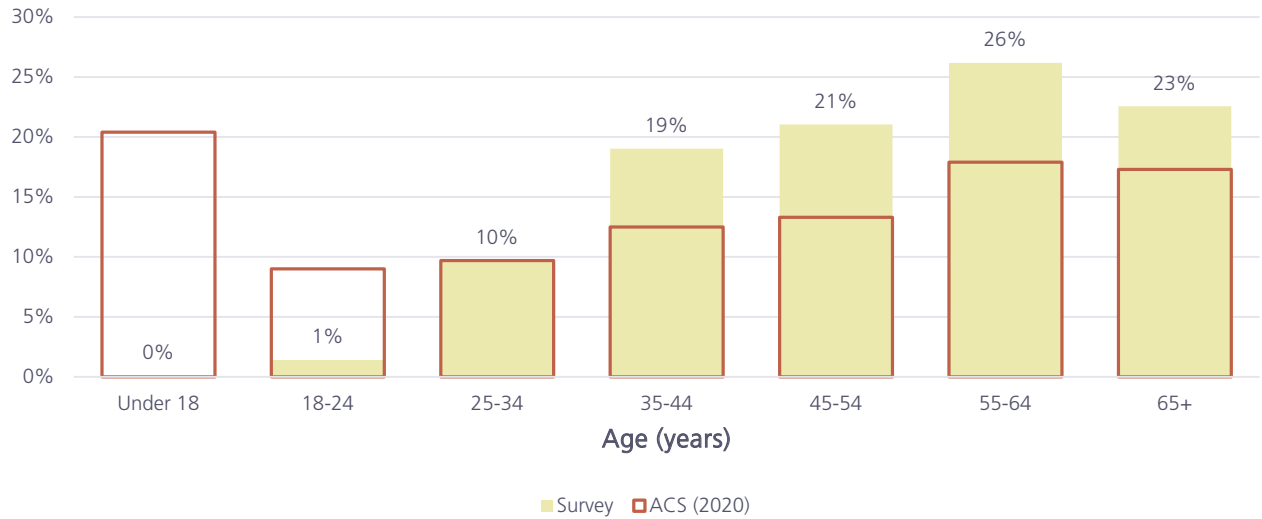


[Response Rate: 70.6% of Respondents]

### Question 33. What age group do you fall into?

Respondents from all age cohorts were represented in the survey, except those under 18 years. Given children and youth were not the target audience for this survey, the under representation is expected. Comparing the age of respondents to the 2020 American Community Survey estimates, young adults 18-24 years were underrepresented while all other cohorts were overrepresented.

#### Age of Respondents



[Response Rate: 70.4% of Respondents]



# REDEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP RESULTS

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

Results from the workshop provide a framework for future plans of redevelopment as they come to fruition. By providing the opportunity for residents to identify uses they would support at each site and to share feedback, suggestions, and concerns, all five sites are currently accompanied by a vision of use and development that will be the basis of any changes. This report details the results of community input provided for all five sites, analysis of trends, and preliminary recommendations for a more complete development concept to be explored in the future.

## REDEVELOPMENT SITES

The redevelopment workshop asked attendees to share their perspectives on five potential sites of redevelopment. These sites fell into one of two categories described below, and attendees engaged with each redevelopment site based on the category.

### Existing Redevelopment Concepts

The following two concepts were developed during the 2012 update to the Master Plan. At the workshop, attendees used sticky dots to indicate whether they supported the existing concept rendering. Attendees were also asked to write thoughts and suggestions on sticky notes to identify the specific components of the concept they supported as well as other components they felt were missing or were not appropriate for the site.

- » Pontiac Lake Gateway Concept Plan
- » Elizabeth Lake Road and Union Lake Road Concept Plan

## New Uses and Redevelopments

The following three sites represent vacant tracts of land that present the opportunity to be developed in ways that accommodate specific needs and desires as identified by the Township. These three sites were strategically chosen from across the southern half of the Township to ensure the predominantly agricultural uses north of M-59 are preserved. At the workshop, each site was accompanied by six to eight potential use options that attendees were asked to indicate their support of with sticky dots.

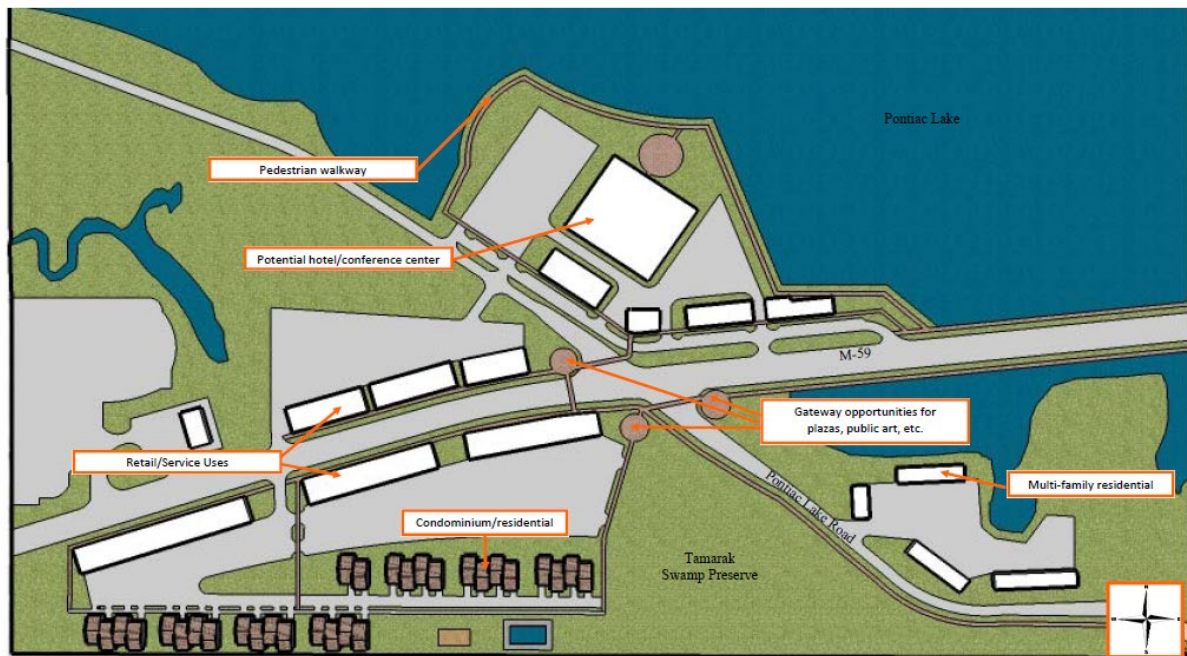
- » Round Lake Road and Cedar Island Road
- » Cedar Island Road and Bogie Lake Road
- » Civic Center/Lakes Town Center (M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road)

## WORKSHOP RESULTS

### Pontiac Lake Gateway Concept Plan

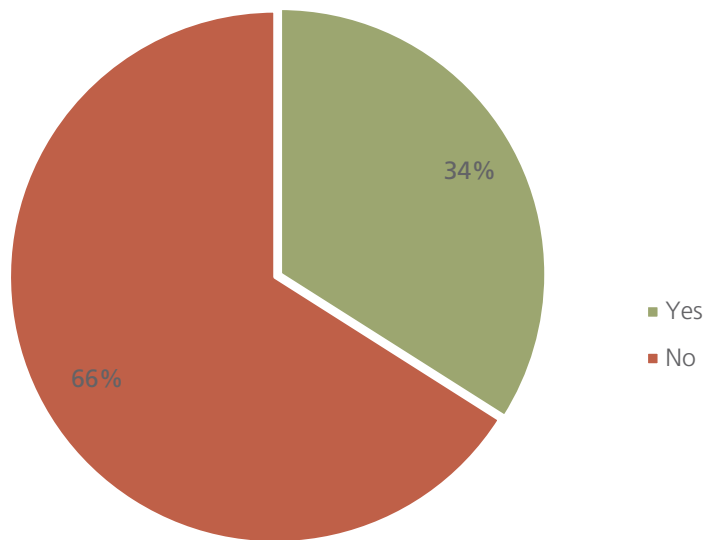
The Pontiac Lake Gateway concept plan was developed during the 2012 update to the Master Plan. Pontiac Lake Gateway offers an opportunity to showcase White Lake Township at its only major entry from the east by enhancing lake views, removing blighted structures, and improving connectivity for pedestrians. The 2012 concept proposed retail and service uses, multi-family residential, plazas and spaces for public art, a hotel and/or conference center, and a pedestrian walkway.

### Pontiac Lake Gateway Concept Plan



When asked to indicate whether the current redevelopment concept aligned with their vision, about two thirds of workshop attendees shared it did not (as seen in Figure 1):

Figure 1: “Does the Pontiac Lake Gateway concept plan align with your view of the future of this site?”



Comments, suggestions, and concerns about this concept were provided by attendees on sticky notes and are summarized below. While just 6% of all comments suggested this concept should be rethought in its entirety, all other suggestions coalesce around a few themes that should be the focus of any revisions to the existing concept to align with the vision of the community.

- » **Support for the concept** as a way to utilize the lake setting, create a community space, and remove deteriorating structures.
- » **Support for the pedestrian walkway.** Respondents shared they would support a biking/walking path around Pontiac Lake.
- » **Support for the development of restaurant/bars along the waterfront.** Attendees specified they would like to see a nice, affordable restaurant in the area and also suggested the area provide boat docks.
- » **Opposition to multi-family residences.** This was the most common takeaway from the concept with about 37% of all comments sharing this sentiment.
- » **Opposition to the hotel and conference center.** While there is evidence of some support for this development, attendees expressed they would prefer uses specific to the wellbeing and use of permanent residents rather than visitors.
- » **Some opposition to retail.** While some responses expressed their support for retail and shopping as a compliment to restaurants, bars, and other dining areas, others shared concerns about M-59 traffic as a challenge to utilizing these retail spaces, as well as a preference to keep the Township’s retail in the M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road area.

## Results

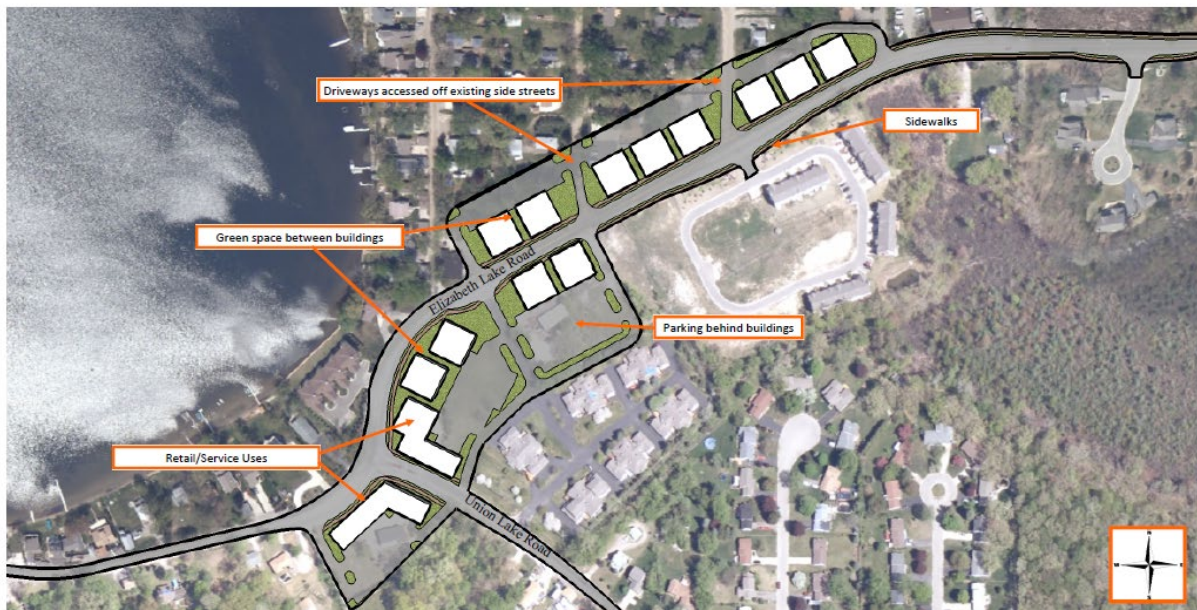
The Township should consider revising this concept in the following ways:

- » Prioritize the development of restaurants over the hotel and conference center.
- » Incorporate residential uses through mixed-use developments. While the proposed multi-family residential structures may not be the best fit for the site, there may be an opportunity to provide some residential units alongside retail with mixed-use development.

### Elizabeth Lake Road and Union Lake Road Concept Plan

The Elizabeth Lake Road and Union Lake Road concept plan was developed during the 2012 update to the Master Plan. The site would benefit from investment to rehabilitate existing buildings or facilitate new construction. Additionally, the existing residential uses would likely support neighborhood retail. Other benefits of revitalization include the removal of blighted buildings, an improved appearance, uses that align with the largely residential character of the area, improved views of Oxbow Lake, and the opportunity to link the commercial area with nearby residential neighborhoods. The 2012 concept proposed retail and services uses connected by sidewalks that incorporate green spaces between buildings.

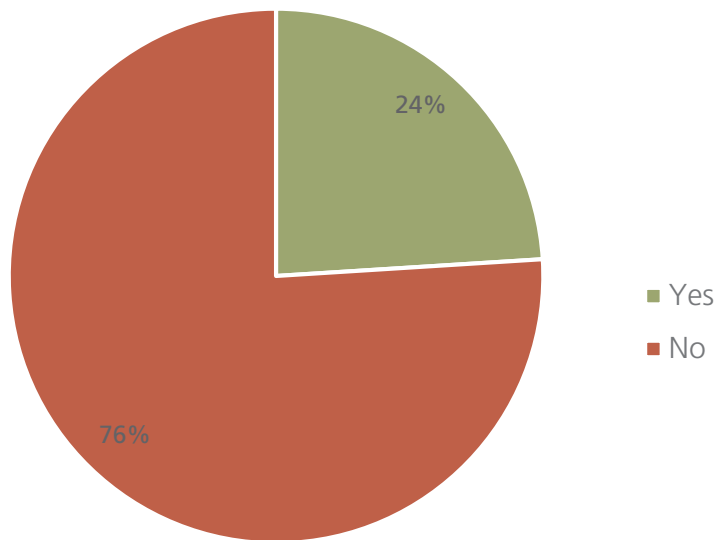
### Elizabeth Lake Road and Union Lake Road Concept Plan





When asked to indicate whether the current redevelopment concept aligned with their vision, just over three fourths of workshop attendees shared that it did not (as seen in Figure 2 below):

**Figure 2: “Does the Elizabeth Lake Road/Union Lake Road concept plan align with your view of the future of this site?”**



Comments, suggestions, and concerns about this concept were provided by attendees on sticky notes and are summarized below.

- » **Support for walkable design and incorporation of green spaces.** This concept plan was praised for the way it prioritized walkability, sidewalks, and green spaces in a retail-oriented area. Some suggestions included adding more sidewalks and ensuring green spaces comprise a large portion of the site.
- » **Support for mixed-use developments and uses that complement adjacent neighborhoods.** Though new residential developments are not currently proposed for this redevelopment concept, some attendees suggested incorporating residences among retail sites through mixed-use buildings.
- » **Concerns about locating retail uses in this area of the Township.** Some attendees shared current levels of traffic from surrounding neighborhoods may pose a challenge to successfully locating retail in this area. The residential nature of the site also poses a challenge to getting residents from other parts of the Township to the district.
- » **Opposition to developing this site.** About 30% of all comments did not support the development of this site and instead favored keeping and maintaining it as green space.

## Results

Revisions to this concept plan should center around scaling back the extent of proposed retail-oriented development. Proposed retail may support the needs of surrounding residents and can be catered to neighborhood-specific uses. Additionally, the greatest, most favorable assets of this site present an opportunity for adjusted development to expand green spaces and promote walkability as primary attractors to the area rather than secondary features.

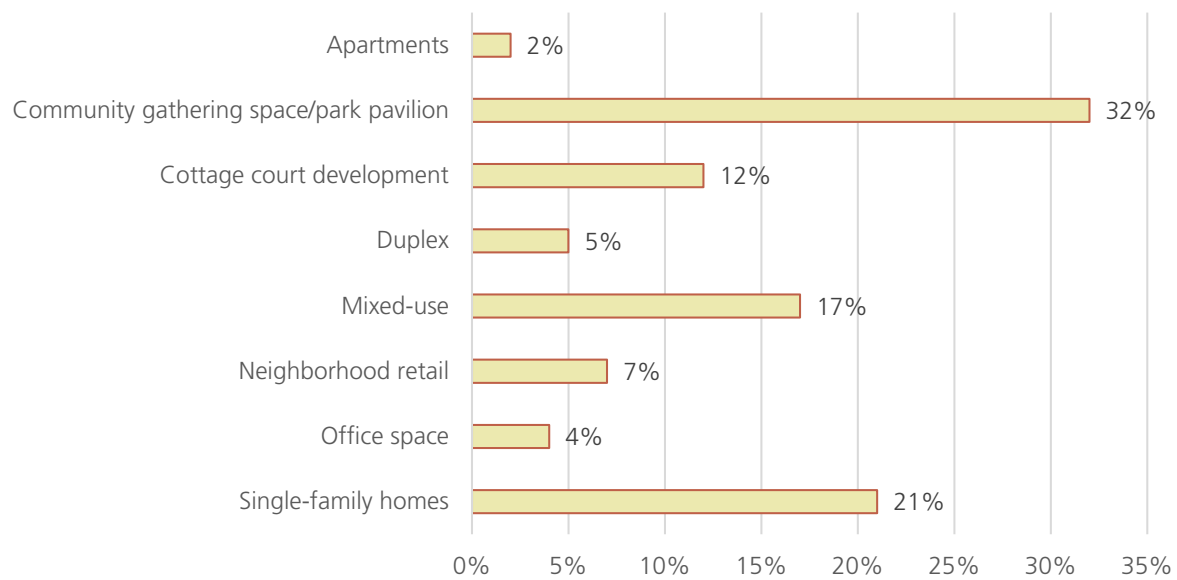
## Round Lake Road and Cedar Island Road

This redevelopment site is in the southeastern part of the Township. The surrounding area is primarily residential; apart from a few service agencies, there is no immediate access to any commercial area.



During the redevelopment workshop, attendees were asked to indicate which uses they would support should this site become developed. These thoughts are compiled in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Favorable Uses for Round Lake Road & Cedar Island Road**



Along with indicating the uses they would support at this site, a few attendees also left comments to provide context to their responses. Some comments expressed a general need for more affordable housing in the Township; others shared retail uses would not fit and contribute to traffic congestion because of the residential nature of the area; and others shared a preference to keep the Township's green areas to avoid overdevelopment.

### Results

The most common preferences for this site's redevelopment present an opportunity to develop additional dwellings compatible with an outdoor community gathering space or pavilion, the option that received the most support. A cottage court development naturally lends itself to community gathering spaces as the front and/or back yards of the development are typically shared, naturally creating community space. Mixed-use developments have the opportunity to incorporate much needed commercial uses in support of the largely residential character that currently exists in the area, while also providing additional residential units.



## Cedar Island Road and Bogie Lake Road

This redevelopment site is located in the southern part of the Township and is in close proximity to three primary/secondary schools (Lakewood Elementary School, White Lake Middle School, and Lakeland High School) as well as the Brentwood Golf Club and Banquet Center. This site's location on Bogie Lake Road provides a direct connection to M-59, making it largely accessible from across the Township.



### Redevelopment Site: Cedar Island Rd

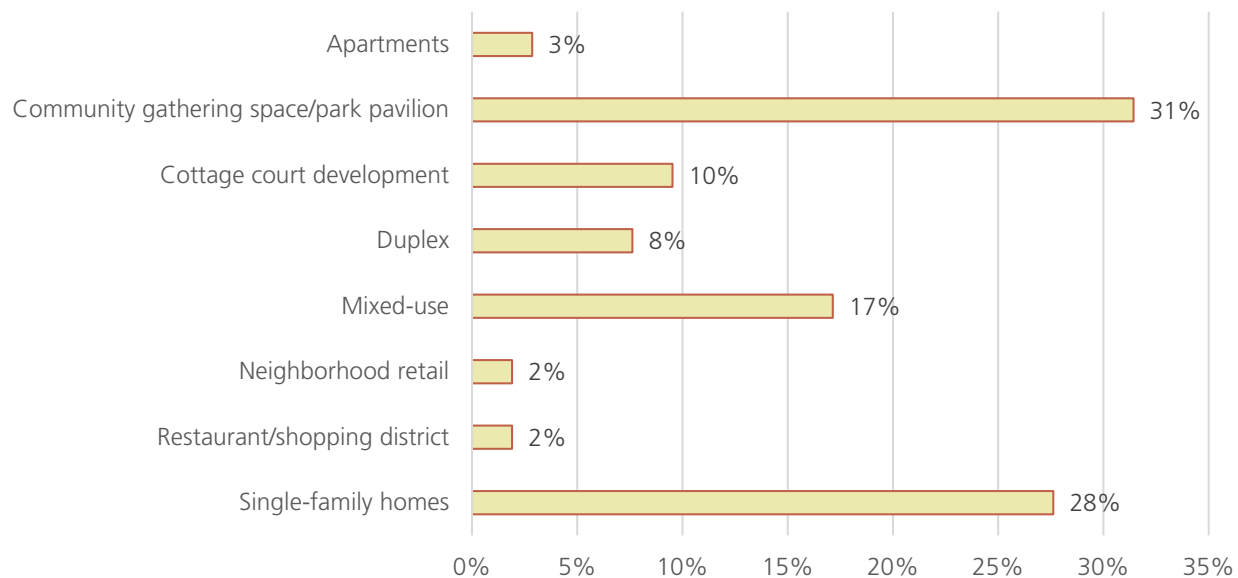
Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township

160 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



During the redevelopment workshop, attendees were asked to indicate which uses they would support should this site become developed. These ideas are compiled in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Favorable Uses for Cedar Island Road & Bogie Lake Road**



Along with indicating the uses they would support at this site, a few attendees also left comments to provide context to their responses or to offer additional suggestions. The most common sentiment from these insights was a hesitancy to develop this site at all. These commenters shared their affinity for existing green space, concerns about school-based traffic and the general danger of roads in the area, and general opposition to development. Soccer fields were proposed as a potential use which received the second most support from commenters.

## Results

The two most common responses that support the development of single-family homes and a community gathering space/pavilion complement each other and provide a feasible vision for development that aligns with the area's current landscape of schools and neighborhoods. Developing homes near the schools presents a wise pattern of development that enables much needed access for families with school aged children. This, alongside a formal community space, park, and/or outdoor pavilion, presents an opportunity for utilization by a wide range of users, such as students, families, and nearby residents. While less aligned with the two most popular choices, the support for mixed-used development in this area also provides a complementary use to nearby schools as the activity in the area is likely to support new businesses.

## Civic Center/Lakes Town Center (M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road)

This redevelopment site is located in the center of the Township at the southwest corner of Highland Road (M-59) and Elizabeth Lake Road, which contributes to its accessibility from across White Lake. The lot is just yards away from the proposed Civic Center and across Elizabeth Lake Road from Lakes Town Center. Amid this access to public institutions, shopping, and dining, recreational spaces like Hawley Park and Stanley Park are in close proximity as well.



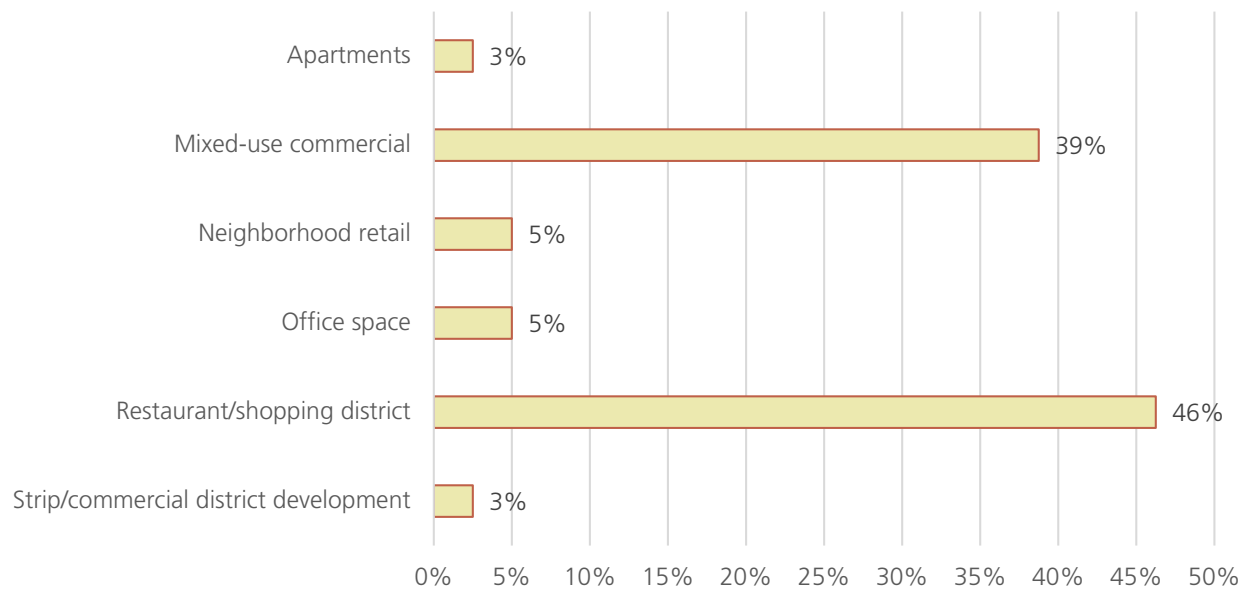
### Redevelopment Site: Civic Center

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

60 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

During the redevelopment workshop, attendees were asked to indicate which uses they would support should this site become developed. These thoughts are compiled in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Favorable Uses Adjacent to the Civic Center/Lakes Town Center**



Along with indicating the uses they would support at this site, a few attendees also left comments to provide context to their responses or to offer additional suggestions. The majority of commentors expressed their opposition to developing the site or adding more storefronts to the Township. Some respondents shared uses offering restaurants, dining opportunities, and/or shopping areas should have character and follow an appealing aesthetic form. Finally, a suggestion for a farmers' market with fresh fruit and vegetables received support, though not initially presented.

## Results

The two most popular uses for this site complement each other well. Developing a restaurant and shopping district to support community entertainment and commercial interests is compatible with mixed-use developments that incorporate residential units in commercial buildings. The site's location across from Lakes Town Center provides a natural expansion with similar uses that emphasize leisure and entertainment.

