



Fresh Coast Planning

950 Taylor Avenue, Ste 200
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240
greg@freshcoastplanning.com

Emma M. Posillico, AICP
616-490-9955
emma@freshcoastplanning.com

Lindsay R. Mohr, MPA
248-990-3525
lindsay@freshcoastplanning.com

Brian Werschem
231-206-4821
bwerschem@gmail.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Allendale Charter Township Planning Commission
From: Lindsay R. Mohr, MPA 
Date: June 29, 2020
Re: Draft Master Plan – Commercial Uses & Industrial Uses Chapters

In accordance with our updated Master Plan Framework, attached for your review is the draft of the Commercial Uses chapter and Industrial Uses chapter to update the Allendale Charter Township Master Plan. As you know, the chapters have been designed to streamline the existing content, incorporate public contributions, eliminate unnecessary information, and revamp the format of the Plan into a denser and more useful document that is easy to reference.

Please note as you review our recommended revisions that the proposed additions are shown in bold text, proposed deletions are shown in strikethrough text, and parentheses are used for references to the existing Master Plan language. Additionally, a clean copy of the language is attached for your convenience.

As you will note within the proposed Commercial Uses chapter and Industrial Uses chapter, there have been significant changes to the existing Master Plan document, to ensure consistency with the other Master Plan chapters which have been reviewed thus far. In addition, please note that the Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies were based on both the feedback we received from the SWOT public workshop and also the commercial and industrial goals and strategies identified in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the existing Plan.

Planning Commission Considerations

As the Planning Commission deliberates regarding the workshop results and the proposed Master Plan chapters, and while we understand this is your first examination and reaction to the materials, we believe the following warrant your review and consideration. They are listed in no particular order:

- Chapter Four - Commercial Uses
 - Bullet point seven of the Goals section notes “Encourage a building scale and design that softens the physical appearance of large commercial spaces and promotes a welcoming pedestrian relationship.” We drafted this language based on the feedback received from the SWOT workshop. As you recall, attendance was relatively low at this workshop, and we seek your direction if you agree with this goal.
 - Whether any of the Strategies have been achieved and are no longer needed. Until you complete your review in this regard, we have revised the related Strategy language with “strengthen, as necessary.”
- Chapter Five – Industrial Uses
 - Whether all industrial land uses should be required to be serviced by public water and sanitary sewer or whether this applies to only intensive land uses.
 - On pages 47 to 49 of the 2013 Master Plan, the language references a large area of vacant Planned Industrial Development zoned land in Section 36 of the Township, and it is noted that this land may be better suited for less intensive uses. We did not feel this was necessary to include in the new Master Plan language, as this language conflicts with the Future Land Use Map

- and the Planned Industrial Zoning District was recently eliminated from the Zoning Ordinance.
- Whether any of the Strategies have been achieved and are no longer needed. Until you complete your review in this regard, we have revised the related Strategy language with “strengthen, as necessary.”

We will be prepared to discuss these items further at your July 6, 2020 meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

LRM
Planner

Attachments

cc: Adam Elenbaas, Supervisor

Chapter Three Commercial Uses

Introduction

The growth of the ~~Grand Valley State University~~ and accessibility to ~~the City of Grand Rapids via M-45 Lake Michigan Drive~~ has resulted in ~~continues to foster extensive major commercial growth expansion~~ along the eastern portions of ~~the M-45 Lake Michigan Drive corridor within the Township~~ well as development of ~~significant apartment projects and large neighborhoods of single family homes~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 41). **Coupled with this access, the Allendale community is also supported by a significant public water and sanitary sewer system, which has been advantageous for development. While the commercial growth along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor has been significant, participants in the 2019 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats workshop, identified the character of that commercial growth as a core opportunity for improvement. Participants supported neighborhood commercial amenities such as small markets and pop-up shops in the alternative to current trends. As the Township evaluates its commercial areas, with particular regard to Lake Michigan Drive, physical character as well as** ~~Other factors will need to be considered such as the location, abutting land uses, traffic patterns and volumes, availability of utilities, and projected population growth and Township goals.~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 47).

In an effort to continue a healthy, controlled growth of commercial development to serve the local and regional needs of the community, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount in our commercial pursuits. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Promote the development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of ~~industrial and commercial areas~~ to provide attractive sites, **and to encourage a variety diversity** of enterprises which will strengthen the tax base and **increase employment opportunities** ~~provide a place of employment for area residents~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- Development along ~~M-45 Lake Michigan Drive~~ should be designed to **achieve enhance** traffic safety, **establish** walkable access from adjacent neighborhoods, and **be compatible** with existing and future land uses in these neighborhoods (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 53)
- ~~The rural character and views of agricultural and wooded lands in the Township are important elements in the quality of life of all Township residents and need to be preserved and enhanced~~ **Concentrate the density of commercial land uses to protect open spaces and rural character** (Reworded and Referenced from 2013 Master Plan, page 53)
- Protect and preserve, **to the extent practicable**, those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, **wildlife habitats**, farms ~~and farmlands~~, pastures, fields, open ~~spaces views, the dark night sky, architectural styles~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 36) **and other natural areas, particularly those that are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value**
- Create a walkable community (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 35)

- Preserve the natural resources and **groundwater quality of Allendale Charter Township** and ~~water quality of Allendale Township~~ (Reworded Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- **Encourage a building scale and design that softens the physical appearance of large commercial spaces and promotes a welcoming pedestrian relationship**

Recommendations

- Intensive **commercial** land uses should **have the resources to support such development, and** be located within the boundaries of the water and sanitary sewer service areas, **accessible from adequate roads, and other available infrastructure** (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 53)
- Continue to require development to provide for the construction of sidewalks along major arterial streets; incorporate the design concepts of “Complete Streets” into existing and future streets (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 73)
- Provide safe trails and sidewalks between destination land uses and along roadways for pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, and all non-motorized users **in order to create a walkable and connected community** ~~an environment for social interaction, provide a physical link between Township land uses and the campus of GVSU, provide recreational and physical fitness opportunities, reduce vehicle trips and simply improve the quality of life for Allendale Township Residents~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 35)
- **Require that future** ~~C~~ commercial development ~~of this area must be done in a manner which does not intrude upon the residents in abutting single family neighborhoods. Property access management techniques should be followed such as connecting parking lots and the sharing of driveways in order to reduce traffic problems on M-45~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 62)
- Encourage, where practicable, the preservation of farmhouses, barns, fence styles, and other architectural and landscaping forms, which symbolize the agricultural heritage of the Township
- Require the preservation of existing trees along the rights-of-way
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Accommodate wildlife corridors within development **Improve and expand upon existing business areas that will provide functional, safe, convenient, and attractive shopping and service opportunities**
- Require that development layouts blend with the natural features and existing physical attributes

Strategies

- ~~Current~~ **Strengthen, as necessary, the commercial** site development standards in the Zoning Ordinance ~~can be updated~~ to ensure that the operational characteristics of commercial uses (parking lot lights, vehicle noise, lighting, emptying of dumpsters, etcetera) do not disrupt the residential uses which exist or are planned **behind in close proximity to** the commercial uses on ~~M-45~~ **Lake Michigan Drive** (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 63)
- ~~Review and~~ Revise Zoning Ordinance regulations, as necessary, to preserve or enhance rural character, especially in regard to Planned Unit Developments (~~PUDs~~) (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 36) ~~to put into place development requirements which will contribute to keeping rural character~~

- Adopt a Low Impact Development Ordinance which ~~gives~~ **provides** incentives for site design that incorporates green storm water management techniques (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- Review existing regulations regarding the development of commercial and industrial properties to ensure they address contemporary uses and development practices and that they balance the need for public safety and good site design with the economic considerations of the business community (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 40)
- ~~In order to simplify zoning administration consideration should be given to rezoning those PUD's whose development requirements and permitted uses are the same or almost the same as a similar non-PUD zone. For instance a PUD zone which contains only commercial uses with commercial development regulations could be rezoned to the C-2 district~~ **Consider rezoning Planned Unit Developments which contain only commercial uses to the General Commercial District** (Reworded Reference from 2013 Master Plan, page 72)
- Review existing land uses along ~~M-45 Lake Michigan Drive~~ especially between 56th and 64th ~~M-45~~ and **potential commercial development locations, to evaluate if additional buffering should be required to minimize** ~~determine appropriate locations for commercial development taking into consideration~~ the impact on adjoining residential uses (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- **Annually evaluate whether there is a need for more commercial zoned land in the Township** (Reference to data from 2013 Master Plan, page 47)
- **Provide for the conversion of existing residential structures for office and retail use where applicable**
- **Strengthen, as necessary, language to improve the aesthetics of building facades and streetscapes**
- **Ensure adequate on and off-street parking in a manner that compliments the compactness in local commercial areas**
- **Ensure that commercial land uses are separated from non-commercial uses with landscaping, buffered thoroughfares, or transitional land uses**
- **Consider adoption of regulations which require Wildlife Corridors within development**
- **Utilize the Planned Unit Development concept as an incentive tool for development, as a means of preserving the natural character of sites, and to encourage the provision of structured, usable open spaces**

Chapter Three Commercial Uses

Introduction

The growth of Grand Valley State University and accessibility to the City of Grand Rapids via Lake Michigan Drive continues to foster extensive commercial expansion along the eastern portion of the Lake Michigan Drive corridor within the Township. Coupled with this access, the Allendale community is also supported by a significant public water and sanitary sewer system, which has been advantageous for development. While the commercial growth along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor has been significant, participants in the 2019 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats workshop, identified the character of that commercial growth as a core opportunity for improvement. Participants supported neighborhood commercial amenities such as small markets and pop-up shops in the alternative to current trends. As the Township evaluates its commercial areas, with particular regard to Lake Michigan Drive, physical character as well as other factors will need to be considered such as the location, abutting land uses, traffic patterns and volumes, availability of utilities, and projected population growth.

In an effort to continue a healthy, controlled growth of commercial development to serve the local and regional needs of the community, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount in our commercial pursuits. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Promote the development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of commercial areas to provide attractive sites, and to encourage a diversity of enterprises which will strengthen the tax base and increase employment opportunities
- Development along Lake Michigan Drive should be designed to enhance traffic safety, establish walkable access from adjacent neighborhoods, and be compatible with existing and future land uses in these neighborhoods
- Concentrate the density of commercial land uses to protect open spaces and rural character
- Protect and preserve, to the extent practicable, those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, wildlife habitats, farms, pastures, fields, open spaces, and other natural areas, particularly those that are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Create a walkable community
- Preserve the natural resources and groundwater quality of Allendale Charter Township
- Encourage a building scale and design that softens the physical appearance of large commercial spaces and promotes a welcoming pedestrian relationship

Recommendations

- Intensive commercial land uses should have the resources to support such development, and be located within the boundaries of the water and sanitary sewer service areas, accessible from adequate roads, and other available infrastructure

- Continue to require development to provide for the construction of sidewalks along major arterial streets; incorporate the design concepts of “Complete Streets” into existing and future streets
- Provide safe trails and sidewalks between destination land uses and along roadways for pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, and all non-motorized users to create a walkable and connected community
- Require that future commercial development does not intrude upon the residents in abutting single family neighborhoods
- Encourage, where practicable, the preservation of farmhouses, barns, fence styles, and other architectural and landscaping forms, which symbolize the agricultural heritage of the Township
- Require the preservation of existing trees along the rights-of-way
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Accommodate wildlife corridors within development
- Improve and expand upon existing business areas that will provide functional, safe, convenient, and attractive shopping and service opportunities
- Require that development layouts blend with the natural features and existing physical attributes

Strategies

- Strengthen, as necessary, the commercial site development standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that the operational characteristics of commercial uses (parking lot lights, vehicle noise, lighting, emptying of dumpsters, etcetera) do not disrupt the residential uses which exist or are planned in close proximity to the commercial uses on Lake Michigan Drive
- Revise Zoning Ordinance regulations, as necessary, to preserve or enhance rural character, especially in regard to Planned Unit Developments
- Adopt a Low Impact Development Ordinance which provides incentives for site design that incorporates green storm water management techniques
- Review existing regulations regarding the development of commercial properties to ensure they address contemporary uses and development practices and that they balance the need for public safety and good site design with the economic considerations of the business community
- Consider rezoning Planned Unit Developments which contain only commercial uses to the General Commercial District
- Review existing land uses along Lake Michigan Drive and potential commercial development locations, to evaluate if additional buffering should be required to minimize the impact on adjoining residential uses
- Annually evaluate whether there is a need for more commercial zoned land in the Township
- Provide for the conversion of existing residential structures for office and retail use, where applicable
- Strengthen, as necessary, language to improve the aesthetics of building facades and streetscapes
- Ensure adequate on and off-street parking in a manner that compliments the compactness in local commercial areas
- Ensure that commercial land uses are separated from non-commercial uses with landscaping, buffered thoroughfares, or transitional land uses
- Consider adoption of regulations which require Wildlife Corridors within development
- Utilize the Planned Unit Development concept as an incentive tool for development, as a means of preserving the natural character of sites, and to encourage the provision of structured, usable open spaces

Chapter Four Industrial Uses

Introduction

An analysis of vacant land zoned in 2012 PIC found 231 vacant acres most of which (133 acres) is located in Sections 19 and 24. **A majority of the industrial land within Allendale Charter Township is located east of 56th Avenue and north of Lake Michigan Drive.** These parcels are served by public water and sanitary sewer, have good access to ~~M-45 Lake Michigan Drive,~~ and are relatively flat, and can be easily developed (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 48). **Given this, Allendale Charter Township has a number of attributes to foster industrial development.**

According to ~~the Ottawa County Economic Development Office, Inc. (OCEDO),~~ **Lakeshore Advantage**, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide professional economic development services to Ottawa County and its local governmental units, Grand Valley State University serves to attract businesses, as the University provides a ready source of educated employees. ~~The OCEDO Lakeshore Advantage also sees a~~ **finds** a strong market for agricultural food processing facilities in Ottawa County, **which could be advantageous for industrial growth within Allendale Charter Township** such as ~~Leprino Foods~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 48). **As a result of collaboration between Grand Valley State University and agricultural businesses, there may be opportunities to increase industrial uses within the Township.**

In an effort to continue a healthy, controlled growth of industrial development, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount in our industrial pursuits. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Create a walkable community (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 35)
- Development along ~~M-45~~ Lake Michigan Drive should be designed to ~~achieve~~ **enhance** traffic safety, **establish** walkable access from adjacent neighborhoods, and ~~compatibility~~ **be compatible** with existing and future land uses in these neighborhoods (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 53)
- Protect and preserve, **to the extent practicable**, those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, **wildlife habitats**, farms ~~and farmlands~~, pastures, fields, open ~~spaces~~ **views**, ~~the dark night sky, agricultural styles~~ (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 36) **and other natural areas, particularly those that are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and have important aesthetic and scenic value**
- Preserve the natural resources and **groundwater** quality of Allendale **Charter** Township (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- Promote the development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of industrial ~~and commercial~~ areas to provide attractive sites to a variety of enterprises which will strengthen the tax base and provide a place of employment for area residents (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)

- Accommodate industrial development in areas that are easily accessible by major transportation facilities, are adequately served by public utilities and services, and are well positioned to avoid conflicts with emerging residential areas

Recommendations

- Intensive **industrial** land uses ~~should~~ **shall** be located within the boundaries of the **public** water and sanitary sewer service areas (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 53)
- Continue to require development to provide for the construction of sidewalks along major arterial streets; incorporate the design concepts of “Complete Streets” into existing and future streets (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 73)
- **Encourage, where practicable, the preservation of farmhouses, barns, fence styles, and other architectural landscaping forms, which symbolize the agricultural heritage of the Township**
- **Require that development layouts blend with natural features and existing physical attributes**
- **Require the preservation of existing trees along the rights-of-way for future development**
- **Promote high quality industrial development through controlled access, service areas within the side or rear of buildings, screening of outdoor storage and equipment, as well as an emphasis on main building entry and landscaping**
- **Industrial nuances such as air pollution, water pollution, vibration, and outdoor storage of materials should be controlled by adequate site improvements**
- **Industrial sites should transition to adjacent uses with site design elements that are low impact**
- **Encourage groundwater preservation regulations for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative**
- **Accommodate wildlife corridors within development**

Strategies

- Adopt a Low Impact Development Ordinance that ~~gives~~ **provides** incentives for site design that incorporates green storm water management techniques (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- ~~Incorporate~~ **Strengthen, as necessary,** preservation of natural features into site development design as a function of site plan review (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- Consider adoption of regulations which require preservation of a natural vegetation filtration strip along lakes, rivers, and streams (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 39)
- Review existing regulations and development of ~~commercial and~~ industrial properties to ensure they address contemporary uses and development practices and that they balance the need for public safety and good site design with the economic considerations of the business community (Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 40)
- Plan for ~~sufficient industrial~~ **suitable** land which is accessible by all season roads and public facilities **for future industrial development** (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 40)
- Industrial land uses ~~should~~ **shall** be located so they are served by public water and sanitary sewer ~~and as well as~~ paved roads (Reworded and Relocated from 2013 Master Plan, page 67)
- **Annually evaluate whether there is a need for additional industrial zoned land in the Township** (Reference from 2013 Master Plan, page 48)
- **Consider adoption of regulations which require Wildlife Corridors within development**

Chapter Four Industrial Uses

Introduction

A majority of the industrial land within Allendale Charter Township is located east of 56th Avenue and north of Lake Michigan Drive. These parcels are served by public water and sanitary sewer, have good access to Lake Michigan Drive, are relatively flat, and can be easily developed. Given this, Allendale Charter Township has a number of attributes to foster industrial development.

According to Lakeshore Advantage, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide professional economic development services to Ottawa County and its local governmental units, Grand Valley State University serves to attract businesses, as the University provides a ready source of educated employees. Lakeshore Advantage also finds a strong market for agricultural food processing facilities in Ottawa County, which could be advantageous for industrial growth within Allendale Charter Township. As a result of collaboration between Grand Valley State University and agricultural businesses, there may be opportunities to increase industrial uses within the Township.

In an effort to continue a healthy, controlled growth of industrial development, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount in our industrial pursuits. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Create a walkable community
- Development along Lake Michigan Drive should be designed to enhance traffic safety, establish walkable access from adjacent neighborhoods, and be compatible with existing and future land uses in these neighborhoods
- Protect and preserve, to the extent practicable, those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, wildlife habitats, farms, pastures, fields, open spaces and other natural areas, particularly those that are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Preserve the natural resources and groundwater quality of Allendale Charter Township
- Promote the development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of industrial areas to provide attractive sites to a variety of enterprises which will strengthen the tax base and provide a place of employment for area residents
- Accommodate industrial development in areas that are easily accessible by major transportation facilities, are adequately served by public utilities and services, and are well positioned to avoid conflicts with emerging residential areas

Recommendations

- Intensive industrial land uses shall be located within the boundaries of the public water and sanitary sewer service areas
- Continue to require development to provide for the construction of sidewalks along major arterial streets; incorporate the design concepts of “Complete Streets” into existing and future streets
- Encourage, where practicable, the preservation of farmhouses, barns, fence styles, and other architectural landscaping forms, which symbolize the agricultural heritage of the Township
- Require that development layouts blend with natural features and existing physical attributes
- Require the preservation of existing trees along the rights-of-way for future development
- Promote high quality industrial development through controlled access, service areas within the side or rear of buildings, screening of outdoor storage and equipment, as well as an emphasis on main building entry and landscaping
- Industrial nuances such as air pollution, water pollution, vibration, and outdoor storage of materials should be controlled by adequate site improvements
- Industrial sites should transition to adjacent uses with site design elements that are low impact
- Encourage groundwater preservation regulations for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Accommodate wildlife corridors within development

Strategies

- Adopt a Low Impact Development Ordinance that provides incentives for site design that incorporates green storm water management techniques
- Strengthen, as necessary, preservation of natural features into site development design as a function of site plan review
- Consider adoption of regulations which require preservation of a natural vegetation filtration strip along lakes, rivers, and streams
- Review existing regulations and development of industrial properties to ensure they address contemporary uses and development practices and that they balance the need for public safety and good site design with the economic considerations of the business community
- Plan for suitable land which is accessible by all season roads and public facilities for future industrial development
- Industrial land uses shall be located so they are served by public water and sanitary sewer as well as paved roads
- Annually evaluate whether there is a need for additional industrial zoned land in the Township
- Consider adoption of regulations which require Wildlife Corridors within development