

*Micro-Area Analysis of Land Use  
M-59 Corridor centered at Hickory Ridge Road  
Adopted 9/6/2018*



# Charter Township of Highland Planning Commission

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## *Micro-Area Analysis of Land Use M-59 Corridor centered at Hickory Ridge Road*

### **Introduction**

A visitor's impression of Highland Township is largely influenced by their experience of the M-59 (Highland Road) corridor. Through a combination of good fortune and sound planning practices, Highland Township has preserved a natural setting of woodlands and farm fields along much of its frontage, providing a unique respite for the traveler between more intensely developed commercial zones in neighboring communities.

Highland Township has developed three specific commercial nodes along M-59: the west Highland sub-area, centered on Hickory Ridge Road, the Highland Station node; located primarily south of M-59 on Milford Road; and the east Highland sub-area, centered on Duck Lake Road. Each of these nodes has a distinct character, with the West Highland sub-area focused largely on automobile-oriented businesses and the Highland Station node acting as a gateway to the historic downtown. The East Highland sub-area is perhaps hardest to define, providing a wide variety of goods and services, restaurants and automobile dealerships.

The Recession of 2007 had a dampening effect on development pressures throughout the region, and particularly in the commercially zoned and planned areas of Highland Township. As confidence in the economy rises and as vacant housing stock and commercial spaces have filled, property owners have begun to re-evaluate their own vision for their holdings, and have approached the Township to discuss uses other than those allowable under current zoning.

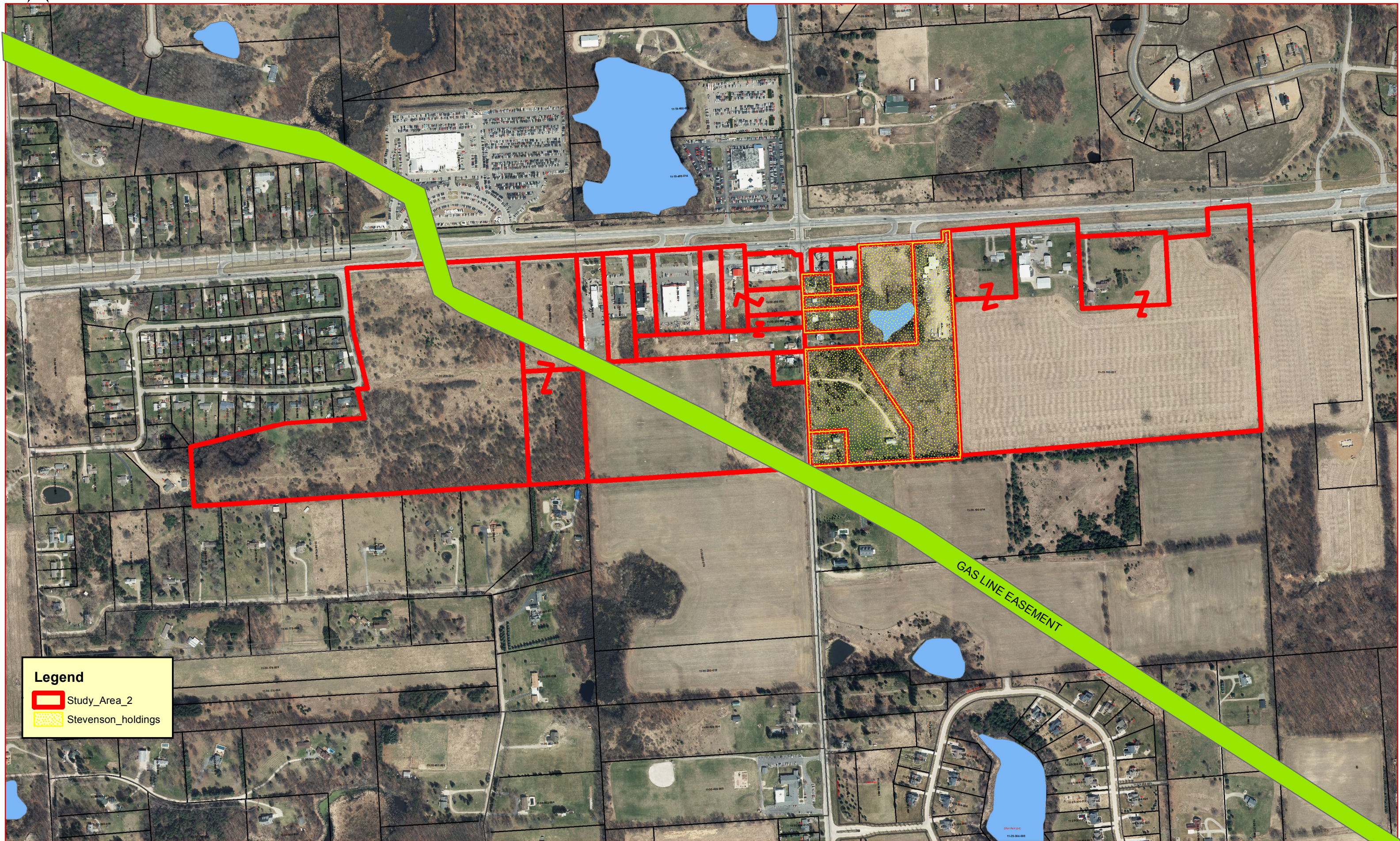
The purpose of this micro-area analysis is to consider the unique challenges presented in this corridor from environmental, traffic and existing land use patterns, and to consider what amendments, if any, are appropriate to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and/or the Zoning District Map or land use lists in the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Description of the Study Area**



The Planning Commission has defined a study area along M-59 spanning approximately one mile, centered on Hickory Ridge Road. The study area falls primarily south of M-59, except at the actual intersection, where properties that front North Hickory Ridge Road have been included. See Figure 1, Study Area Limits.



# West Highland Micro Area Analysis Study Limits



**Legend**

-  Study\_Area\_2
-  Stevenson\_holdings

**TABLE 1: Properties within the Study Area**

	Parcels
Number	36 parcels
Max	43.5 acres
Min	0.2 acres
Total	237.5 acres

A number of adjacent parcels fall under common ownership, allowing for easy aggregation of larger parcels for planning purposes. These jointly owned parcels are identified with a symbol on the study limits map.

The study area includes one automotive dealership, although a second automotive dealership is located just north of the study area on the west end. An automotive parts store and a repair facility are located in the study area. Other significant land uses include a horse farm in the Northeast quadrant of the intersection, the Armstrong Millworks and family farm on the east end of the study area. 67 acres are currently vacant. 98 acres are in active agricultural use. There are 13 single family homes in the study area, which includes rental properties as well as the farming homesteads.

There is no municipal sewer or water service to the area, although watermain is available just east and just north of the study area in the Pine Bluffs subdivision.

The current Master Land Use designations are indicated in Figure 2. Zoning is generally consistent with the Master Land Use Plan as indicated in Figure 3.

**TABLE 2: Current Master Land Use Designations within Study Area**

Master Plan Designation	# of parcels*	Acreage
OLIC, Office and Low Intensity Commercial	3	10
GC, General Commercial	20	83.9
OS, Open Space Residential	15	197.7

\*some parcels have split Master Land Use Designations

## Significance of Study Area in relation to Adjacent Communities

Hartland Township is the neighboring community to the west. Its commercial land uses are centered at the intersection of US-23 and M-59, approximately 3 miles west of the study area. Hartland Township's commercial center has a transportation advantage over the study area, being at the intersection of the expressway and a state trunkline, and is also served by sanitary sewer service and water supply. But even so, Hartland is left with a dark store of 176,000 square feet on 23 acres at the former WalMart site. After many years of recession, Ramco-Gershenson has finally attracted a

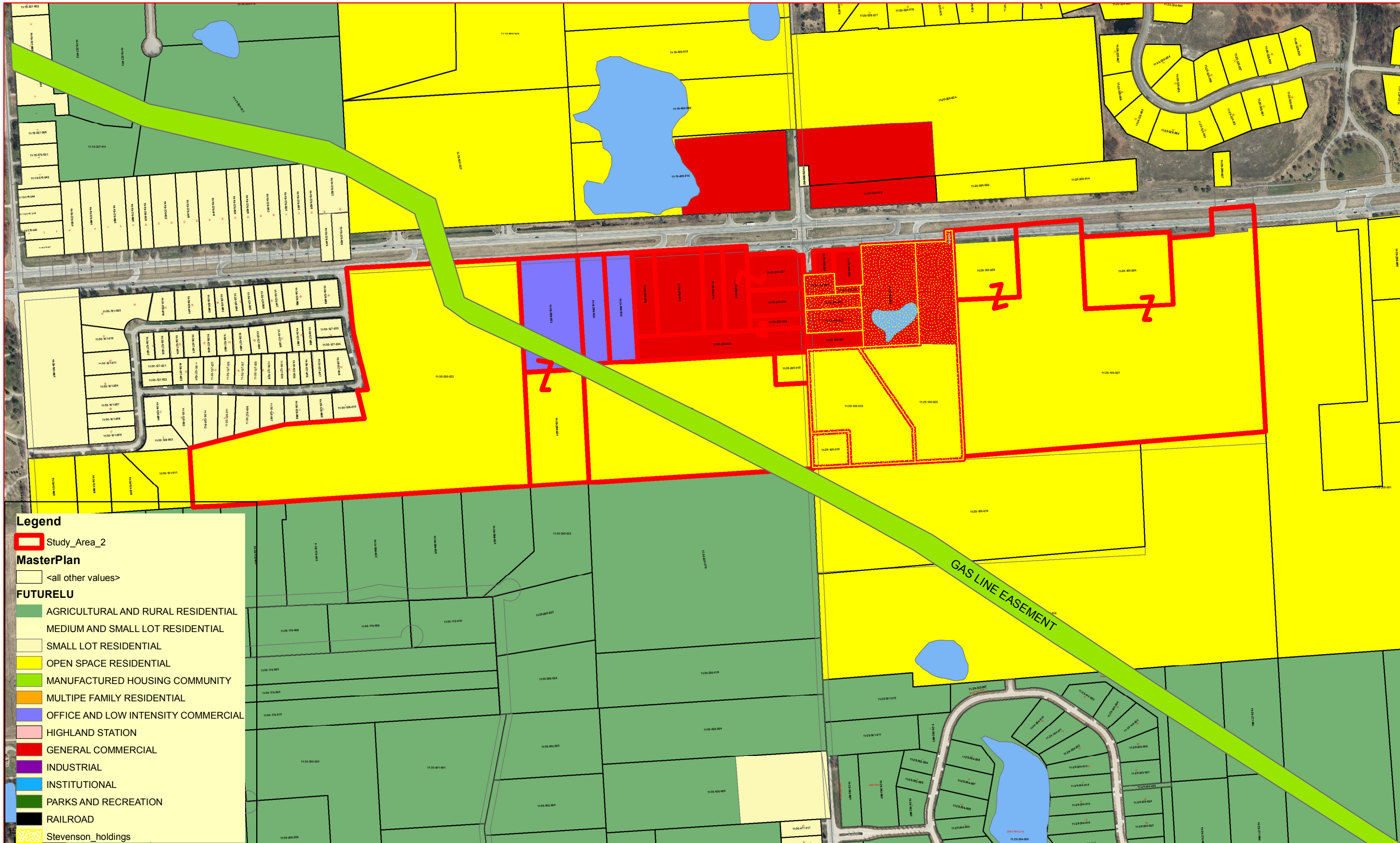
significant anchor to the north side of M-59 with a proposed Emagine Cinema, a 55,000 square foot building on 7.5 acres south of Meijer. This still leaves nearly half of the original 80 acre re-development project available for new building sites.

To the east, in White Lake Township, numerous chain stores have been developed over the last 10 years, such as Kohl's, Lowes, etc. Recently, a former big-box store (the defunct K-Mart complex) was redeveloped to include a concept "department store" for Kroger, with other national retailers expected to fill the remaining space in that complex. White Lake Township, like Hartland Township, has capacity to serve the sanitary sewer and water system needs of its commercial properties.

Development patterns in the study area reflect the reality of the limitations imposed by onsite sewage disposal. Given the Oakland County Health Division requirements for dining and entertainment venues, such land uses are not easily sited within the study area, but are found clustered around the commercial centers in the adjacent communities.



# West Highland Micro Area Analysis Current Master Plan Designations

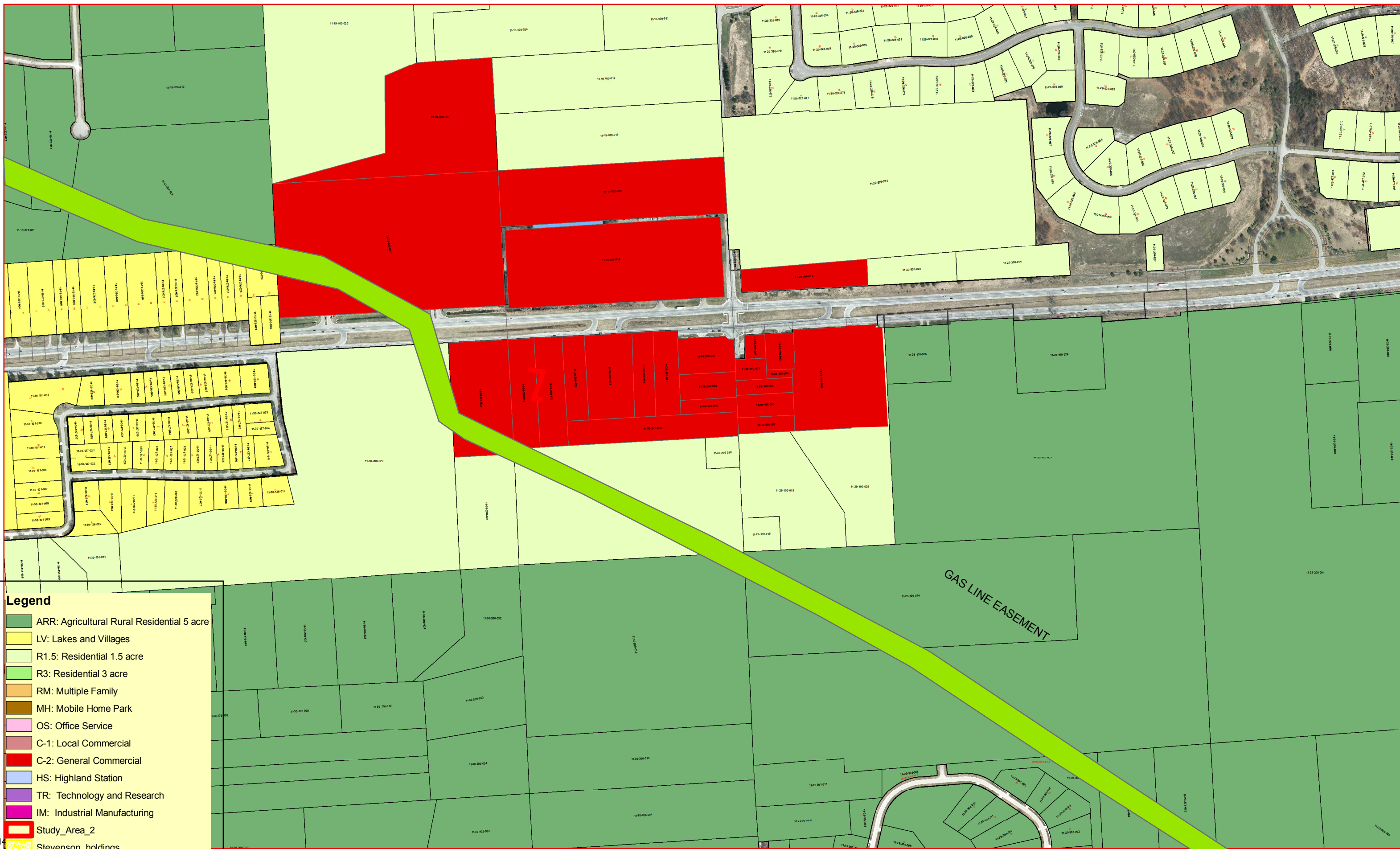


**Legend**

- Study Area 2
- MasterPlan**
- <all other values>
- FUTURELU**
- AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM AND SMALL LOT RESIDENTIAL
- SMALL LOT RESIDENTIAL
- OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL
- MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY
- MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- OFFICE AND LOW INTENSITY COMMERCIAL
- HIGHLAND STATION
- GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- PARKS AND RECREATION
- RAILROAD
- Stevenson\_holdings



# West Highland Micro Area Analysis Current Zoning



**Legend**

- ARR: Agricultural Rural Residential 5 acre
- LV: Lakes and Villages
- R1.5: Residential 1.5 acre
- R3: Residential 3 acre
- RM: Multiple Family
- MH: Mobile Home Park
- OS: Office Service
- C-1: Local Commercial
- C-2: General Commercial
- HS: Highland Station
- TR: Technology and Research
- IM: Industrial Manufacturing
- Study\_Area\_2
- Stevenson\_holdings

## Traffic Considerations

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) maintains a database of traffic counts collected by various agencies throughout the region.

The average annual daily traffic for M-59 in the study area has changed moderately over the years, averaging 1.6% annual increase overall between 1992 and 2014 .

**TABLE 3: Highland Road (M-59)Traffic Counts in Study Area**

YEAR	EB Traffic	WB Traffic	Total 2-way	Average annual increase
1992			22,000	
2000	12,860	13,020	25,880	2.2%
2006	13,060	10,820	23,880	-1.3%
2010	14,140	13,350	27,490	3.8%
2014	14,937	14,065	29,816	2.1%

The Hickory Ridge Road traffic has not changed appreciably over the years. The MS2 system logs counts from 1997 through 2012

**TABLE 4: Hickory Ridge Road Traffic Counts in Study Area**

YEAR	2 way traffic	Average annual Increase
1997	6430	
1998	6180	
2003	6970	
2006	6920	
2008	6220	
2010	7510	
2012	6625	0.2%

These numbers seem consistent with the stable population in the Township.



The database does not contain specific information about peak hour traffic volumes, directions of travel during peak hour, or the heavy truck traffic percentage. One would observe that the traffic patterns at the Highland Road/Hickory Ridge Road intersection is heavily influenced by the turning movements heading south in the a.m. towards the General Motors Proving Grounds in Milford, and moving northbound in the p.m. Traffic utilizing the westbound to eastbound crossover just west of Hickory Ridge Road routinely experiences significant delays in the a.m. rush hour.

A second observation is that traffic is affected by the prevalence of gravel trains using the Hickory Ridge Road truck route to and from the American Aggregates site at Clyde Road. Traffic utilizing the eastbound to westbound crossover just east of Hickory Ridge Road is particularly impacted by the presence of the heavy trucks.

In general, traffic flows through the study area without significant delays. The observed median travel speed is 55 to 65 mph with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed at 62 mph. Highland Road is posted for 55 mph.

Within the study area, Highland Road is slated for reconstruction in the Spring of 2019. The project will include reconstruction of east bound lanes, traffic signal upgrades and drainage improvements. The locations of directional cross-overs will not be changed significantly. The project will also include addition of a bikepath along the north edge of the right-of-way.

The transportation system does not impose any significant constraints on development of the study area. Policies should favor access management between properties without creating undue burdens of dealing with cut-through traffic.

## Site Specific Concerns for Land Use

### Stevenson Properties

The Planning Commission was approached by Robert Stevenson in July, 2016 to discuss the difficulties he faces in marketing his properties, which are comprised of nine separate parcels fronting Highland Road and/or South Hickory Ridge Road, totaling 22.7 acres. The property is currently zoned and designated for multiple uses including general commercial, and single family residential. (see Appendix A for correspondence relative to these parcels).

Historically, parcels 11-19-100-017, -020 and a portion of -008 were utilized for an auto salvage yard from the 1970's through early 2000's under a Light Industrial Zoning District classification. As might be expected given practices of the day, there are issues concerning groundwater contamination, which limit the range of suitable uses today. Mr. Stevenson has provided a copy of the Phase II Environmental Assessment for the properties, which is on file at the Township Planning Department.

Currently, parcel -017 is leased to a landscaping contractor, as a legal non-conforming use. The tenant has expressed interest in expanding operations on the site. Mr. Stevenson is also concerned about split zoning on his holdings, with parcel 11-29-100-025 zoned R-1.5, Single-Family Residential, even though the most logical access to the property is through the commercially zoned property on West Highland Road, and the parcel carries the burden of prior association with the auto

salvage yard and may be impacted by environmental contamination. Mr. Stevenson would prefer to see a mix of industrial and commercial zoning on all of his properties.

### **Armstrong Properties**

The Armstrong family has operated an active farm on their holdings since 1948. Members of the family own 5 parcels, totaling 110 acres. The Millworks, on the 43 acre parcel fronting East Highland Road (PIN 11-29-100-027) began as an accessory business to the farm, and has become nationally recognized for its work supplying trims, moldings and other custom work in a variety of domestic and exotic woods. This enterprise is considered a legal, non-conforming use in the ARR, Agricultural and Rural Residential Zoning District.

The Armstrongs have expressed interest in protecting their right to continue the operations, and gain the flexibility to expand beyond the current footprint if or when such a move proves strategic to their business plans. Under current zoning regulations, a non-conforming use may not expand or be significantly improved, and the use may not be re-established if the structures are destroyed.

### **Fiegley Properties**

Dale Fiegley owns two contiguous 5 acre parcels, approximately ½ mile west of the intersection of West Highland Road and Hickory Ridge, on the south side of Highland Road. (PINs 11-30-200-023 and -024). These properties have proven to be a challenge to develop since the natural gas pipeline crosses diagonally through the northernmost parcel, and the only access to the southern parcel is through the northern parcel. The zoning is also split, with the northern parcel zoned C-2, General Commercial, and the southern parcel zoned R-1.5, Single Family Residential.

Mr. Feigley is concerned that the presence of the gas pipeline constrains the property in such a way as its possible uses are limited, and the southern parcel is not attractive as homesites. He would like to a simpler zoning scheme, such as both parcels being zoned C-2, or at least moving the south parcel from Single Family Residential to a non-residential use.

### **Land Use Options**

Through a series of survey instruments and informal discussions on social media platforms, the community has reaffirmed its desire to preserve open space and the “rural feel” of the Township. This desire must be balanced against a property owner’s expectation that his property may be put to a productive use. The Township has a further goal of providing space for every reasonable use, without creating a “glut” of properties designated for uses the community cannot support.

When the Zoning Ordinance was recodified in 2010, the number of zoning districts were collapsed from 22 Districts to the current 12 Districts. A number of zoning tools have been put in place to allow the Planning Commission to deal with difficult uses or sites on a case by case basis, including site specific relief, conditional rezoning, and broader use lists. In many districts, any use in a “lesser” intensity district may be established in the “higher” intensity district, such as office or retail being allowed in IM, Industrial Manufacturing.

The Master Land Use map, provides only 11 classifications, including “Institutional Land Use” and “Parks and Recreation Land Use”. For many properties, there is no difference between current land use, zoning classification and master land use plan designation. But for properties that are mapped for future residential use, but which are burdened with characteristics such as heavy passing traffic, environmental concerns or utility conflicts, the feasibility of developing the property in accordance with the master land use plan is unlikely.

Under the current regulatory scheme, virtually any non-residential property can be utilized as an office site. But another class of uses, not truly retail but whose impacts do not rise to the level of manufacturing, are forced to compete with space in industrially zoned and master planned properties. These include a variety of uses that properly executed, can serve as a transition between high intensity retail activity and residential/agricultural uses. These uses were formerly accommodated in the A-3, Agricultural Recreational, CB-4, General Service District and I-1, Light Industrial Zoning Districts, were designated with a variety of land use designations on the Master Land Use map but were typically mapped in the transitional areas between Master Land Use Designations.

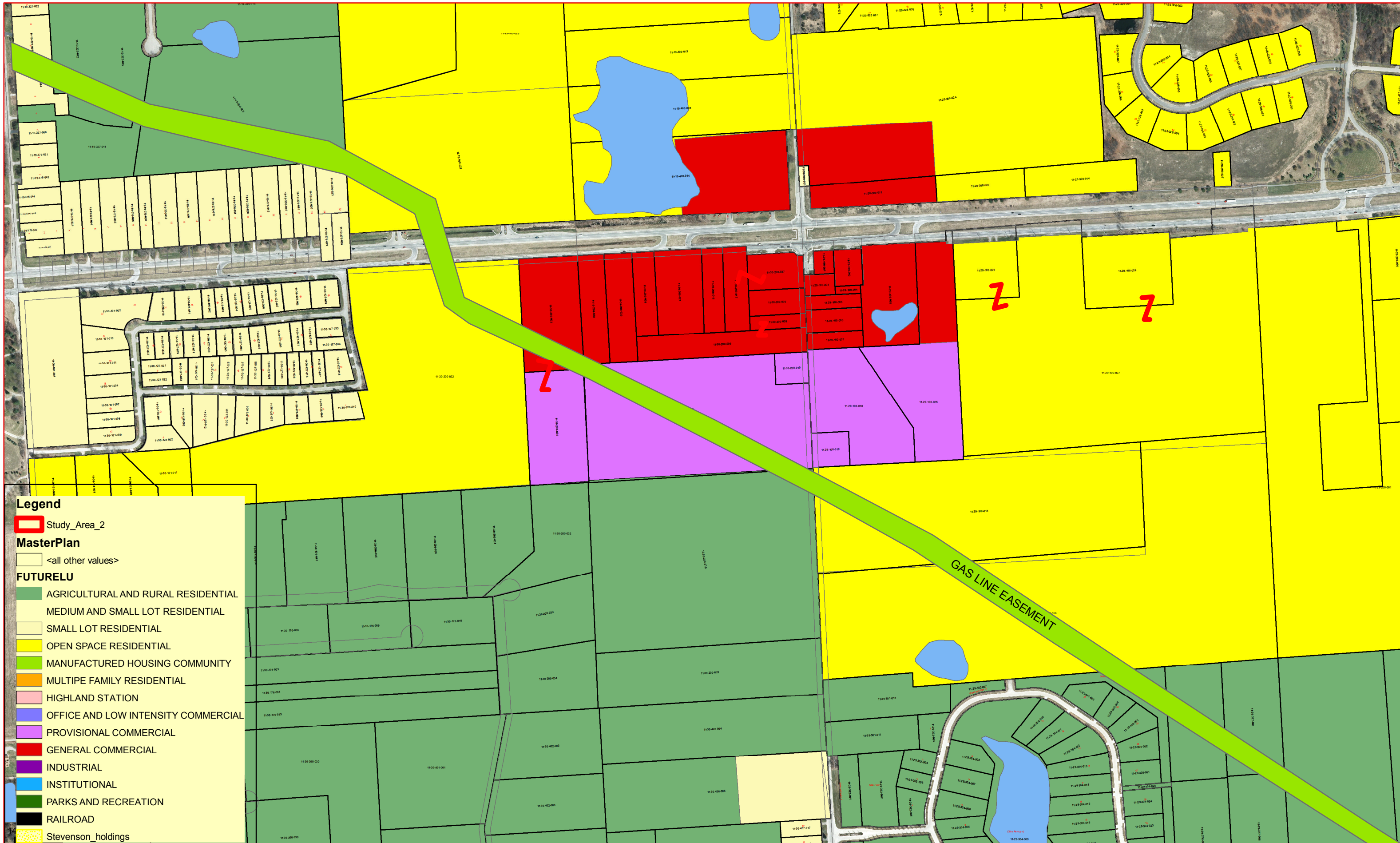
These transitional areas could be formalized on the Master Land Use Map with a new designation, TCLI—Transitional Commercial/Low Impact. Properties eligible for such designation would lie at the edge of existing and planned residential areas, but might be burdened with site design constraints that render the properties as less than desirable for single family residential development. These properties would not have access to municipal sewer and water services. These areas should be developed with minimal investments in infrastructure and hardscape such as paved parking areas, and would be limited to uses that are by nature limited in intensity through seasonal constraints (recreational uses or agricultural activities such as landscaping yards), or that generate significantly less traffic than comparison retail. The uses could include outdoor storage or inventory, provided appropriate landscape buffers and screening techniques are used in areas adjacent to residential or planned residential areas.

See Figure 4 for proposed changes to the Master Land Use Map.

See Appendix A for a draft ordinance for C-3, Transitional Low-Impact Zoning District



# West Highland Micro Area Analysis Proposed Master Plan Changes



**Legend**

- Study\_Area\_2
- MasterPlan**
- <all other values>
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**APPENDIX A**  
**PROPOSED C-3, TRANSITIONAL COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT**

## **Sec. 4-11.b Low-Impact Commercial District (C-3)**

*A. Intent.* The intent of the C-3, Low-Impact Commercial District is to provide suitable locations for businesses that rely on outdoor space to support their services or sales. These low-impact properties could transition to higher density or higher intensity uses in the future, should utility services become available.

*B. Permitted Uses.*

1. Recreational facilities, such as golf driving ranges, batting cages, sports fields.
2. Campgrounds.
3. Greenhouses, retail nurseries and landscaping contractors subject to Section 10.xx
4. Appliance, electrical, plumbing, hvac, carpentry and similar sales and service contractors provided heavy equipment (such as, but not limited to earthmoving equipment exceeding 5000 lbs GVW or dumptrucks larger than 8 CY) is not stored onsite.
5. Self-storage facilities, including 1 (one) accessory dwelling for a caretaker.
6. Inventory lots for automobile, boat, tractor and recreational vehicle dealerships.
7. Crematoriums.
8. Accessory structures and uses customarily incidental to the permitted uses listed and subject to Article 8.03, Accessory Structures and Uses.

**APPENDIX B**  
**PUBLIC COMMENT**

## Beth Corwin

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**From:** David Campbell [dcampbell@commercetwp.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2018 8:59 AM  
**To:** Beth Corwin  
**Cc:** Bill McKeever; Brian Parel; Brian Winkler; Deborah Watson; George Weber; Lawrence Haber; Paula Lankford; Russ Schinzing; Tom Jones  
**Subject:** Highland Twp Master Plan update - Commerce Twp comments

Good morning Ms. Corwin,

On behalf of the Commerce Township Planning Commission, the Planning Department thanks you for giving Commerce Township the opportunity to review Highland Township's proposed Master Plan amendment. The amendments you propose are centered around the intersection of M-59 and Hickory Ridge Road, which is a fair distance from our two communities' shared corner near Duck Lake and Cooley Lake Roads. As such, the proposed changes would seemingly have minimal impact on Commerce Township. We have no concerns and support Highland Township in their efforts.

On a personal note, my wife and I both travel through that intersection twice a day along our respective commutes between Hartland Township and Oakland County, so we will both be interested to see how that area evolves.

Thank you again for giving Commerce Township the opportunity to review & comment. Good luck in your efforts.

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*David Campbell, AICP*  
Planning Director  
Charter Township of Commerce  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, MI 48390  
Ph (248)960-7050





## Beth Corwin

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**From:** Dave Plewes [zoningadm@rosetownship.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 02, 2018 10:12 AM  
**To:** Beth Corwin  
**Subject:** Rose Township , Highland Master Plan

Rose Township

Rose Township Planning Commission has received your request and each member is reviewing your proposed amendments to your Master Plan

I have only received the following comments so far.

Comments for Highland Township:

The suggested designation of a Transitional Low-Impact Commercial District and the uses this would support does not seem unreasonable based on the site location, other existing commercial sub-areas within Highland, as well as considering businesses located in Hartland and White Lake. It seems the suggested uses for a transitional low-impact commercial district could be economically supported by the community.

As development pressure increases in the township over time, it will be important that Highland Township keep in consideration the desires of the community to retain a "rural" feel as well as to be careful not to stray from its long-term master plan vision. Considering how land gets developed such as by leaving greenways can assist with this. Another consideration for retaining the rural feel would be to continue to permit into the future non-conforming businesses which appeal to the rural feel such as Armstrong's Millwork and the horse farm.

Crematoriums are a listed potential use in the Transitional Low-Impact Commercial District. It will be important to require an after-burner to reduce the escape of odors and chemicals for this type of business as to not conflict with nearby businesses and residential areas. Perhaps solar farms could also be a potential use for this district.

David Plewes  
Zoning Administrator

July 13, 2018

Commissioner Wade Fleming, Chairperson  
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee  
1200 North Telegraph Road  
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 18-07, Planning & Economic Development Services' review of the draft Highland Township Master Plan Amendment.

Dear Chairperson Fleming and Committee Members:

On June 22, 2018, Oakland County received a copy of the draft **Highland Charter Township Master Plan Amendment (County Code Master Plan No. 18-07)**. The following is a review and analysis of the draft plan.

Under the amendments to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, which took effect September 1, 2008, the Charter Township of Highland is required to send a copy of the draft amendment to Oakland County and neighboring communities for comment prior to adoption. Oakland County has 42 days to submit comments on the draft plan. The Township has been notified about the July 31, 2018 Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) meeting date. Neighboring communities have 42 days to submit comments directly to Highland Township and have been asked to send a copy of any comments to the County as well. Once the comment period has expired, the Planning Commission can hold a public hearing and take final action to adopt the plan.

Highland Charter Township, under the direction of Township Planner Elizabeth Corwin, has sent copies of the proposed Master Plan Amendment to the surrounding Oakland County Townships of Commerce, Milford, Rose, Springfield and White Lake. Other adjacent Townships such as Brighton, Hartland, and Tyrone in Livingston County were also sent a copy of the Master Plan Amendment. Additional entities such as the Road Commission for Oakland County, Michigan Department of Transportation, Oakland County CSX Transportation, Vector Pipeline, DTE Energy, and Consumers Energy have also been sent a copy of the master plan. All of these communities and agencies have received notice of the CZC meeting.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Based on the review of the surrounding communities' Master Plans, in reference to the subarea that focuses on a portion of the M-59 corridor and Hickory Ridge Road intersection known as West Highland, the Highland Charter Township Master Plan amendment is not inconsistent with the Master Plan of any Township that received notice of the draft plan. The location of the micro-area analysis is located well within Highland Township and the proposed changes do not physically touch any adjacent communities. Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, so there is no countywide plan with which to compare the draft amendment. The following review is a detailed analysis and summary of the proposed draft amendment.

#### **Summary Analysis**

Over the years Highland Charter Township has kept their Master Plan current by amending various sections and areas of the plan to better forecast the needs of the Township as well as the property owners. The proposed amendment deals with the future of land uses, zoning issues and the possible relief of hardships in this study area. As with their past "micro-area analysis" driven proposals, this proposed amendment is very much community-oriented and neighborhood driven.

Highland Township has had a handful of amendments over the past 18 years. Their current Master Plan, which is referenced as the "Comprehensive Land Use Plan" and was adopted in 2000, will expire in 2020 at which time all the past amendments will be combined and further updates to the overall plan will be proposed. Oakland County has the following information on the amendments that have occurred over this period of time; they are as follows:

- Highland Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Master Plan) – adopted in 2000
- West Highland Mrico-Area Anaysis Master Land Use Plan Amendment – adopted in 2001
- Micro-Area Anaysis East Highland Commercial District M-59 & Duck Lake Road Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update – adopted in 2002
- South Milford Road Corridor Micro-Area Analysis – adopted in 2005
- Hickory Ridge Micro Area Anaysis – adpoted in 2006
- Historic Highland Station Master Plan – adopted in 2008

### Future Land Use Map

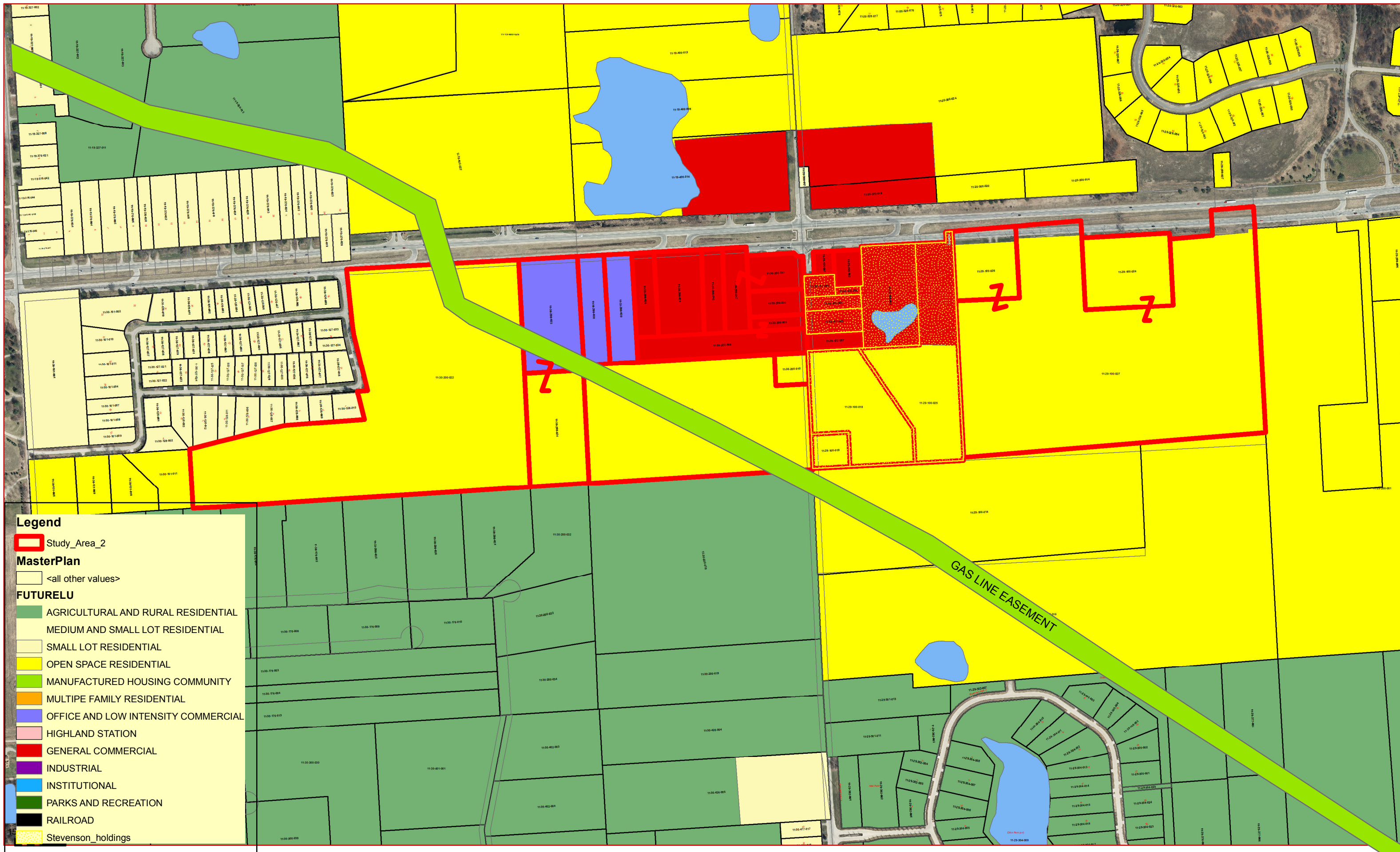
The visual representation of the Township's policies is shown through the Future Land Use Plan which is part of the Master Plan. In the Township's study of the subject area, which gives reasoning to the proposed amendment, three different owner's properties were analyzed: the Stevenson properties, the Armstrong properties, and the Fiegley properties. Below is a map showing the study area and the location of the properties that were analyzed.



The current Future Land Use (FLU) Map shows a majority of the study area, in reference to properties that are in close proximity to the Hickory Ridge Road and Highland Road (M-59), has a future zoning designation of "Open Space Residential". This designation promotes residential development with common areas used to preserve existing, natural environmental features. The existing FUL map is located on the next page.



# West Highland Micro Area Analysis Current Master Plan Designations



This proposal is written to allow for growth and development of the properties as well as to have a strategy for existing hardships on some of the properties in this area. The following information was found to be basis for amending the existing Master Plan:




- Traffic counts show that automobile travel along Highland Road has noticeably increased and traffic along Hickory Ridge has seen a minor increase over a 20+ year period. Higher traffic areas close to major intersections are not seen as desirable for residential development.
- Many properties are small in size and some are inaccessible without an easement through a piece of property that has significant frontage along a road. It is expected that many of these properties will need to be combined for any development to occur that would fulfil the demands of this area. These are issues that affect both the Stevenson and Fiegley properties.
- A major pipe line utility runs through Highland Township and in this area, creates a hardship on some of the properties. Setbacks and access easements need to be upheld and included in any future development for this area. This hardship is best shown on the Fiegley Property.
- Being a controlled intersection of a major MDOT Road (M-59) and a well-traveled County Road (Hickory Ridge) this area is expected to grow. Certain factors such as growth in the southern Holly/Fenton, Rose Township and Milford areas within the county; increased employment at the General Motors Proving Grounds; and large scale developments in Hartland Township in Livingston County will likely add to volume of traffic and development in this area. Residential forecasting at this intersection is becoming less relevant and therefore all the case study properties could pursue rezoning in the near future given their existing uses and the development needs for this area.

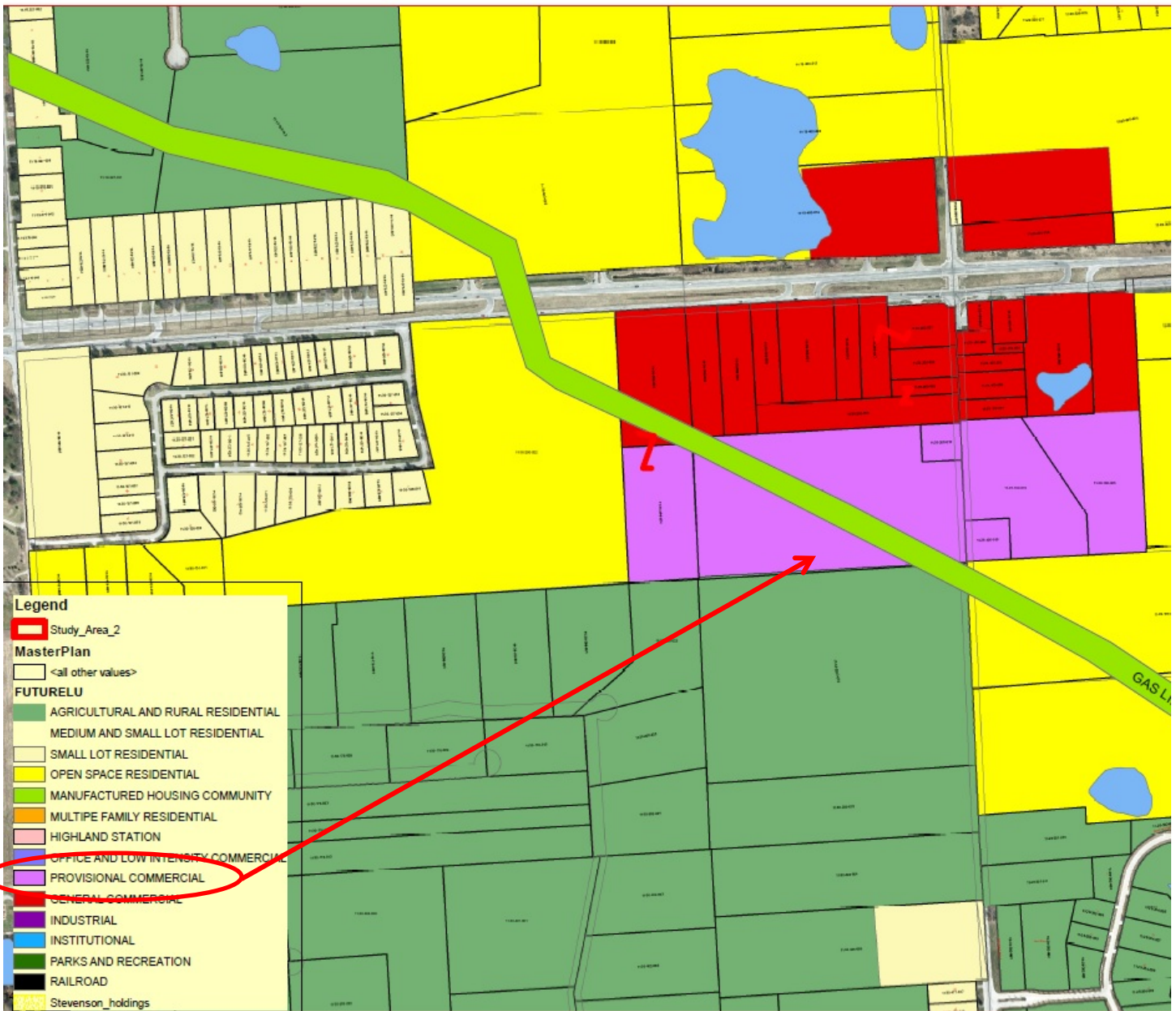
This information has shown that the future growing trends of the study area will be geared toward retail, office and other commercial type uses. Due to many of the properties in the study area being under common ownerships, future combinations of property and rezoning for a higher intensity of use that may not be residential seems very possible. However, the current FLU and zoning does not support a change of use or intensity in this area. Highland Township, in an effort to recognize these issues and possibilities, has proposed some changes in the study area that will affect the FLU plan. The changes include the following:

1. Adding a new future land use category of "Provisional Office" to create a transitional buffer between the current "General Commercial" along M-59, "Agricultural & Rural Residential" to the south, and other "Open Space Residential" properties within the area. This classification will allow for low density and low impact office and commercial as well as lesser intense uses if desired.
2. This new classification will allow for easier rezoning requests to proceed while still maintaining the community's vision for this area.
3. As a result of this proposed Master Plan amendment, a proposed zoning classification is being pursued to include a *Transitional Low-Impact Zoning District* which will be classified as "C-3" in the zoning ordinance. A description of this proposed language is included in Appendix A of Highland Township's

analysis of the study area. The Highland Township Zoning Ordinance is expected to be amended in the near future following adoption of this Master Plan Amendment.

A majority of the properties in the study area are proposing to have the new designation of *Provisional Office* in the FLU map. However, the Armstrong property, while part of the analysis, is not proposing any changes to the FLU map at this time. This proposed classification on the FLU map will allow for properties to have the opportunity to rezone appropriately to a zoning classification less intense than C1 or C2. This allows an applicant/property owner/developer to still propose development of the property with a higher intensity use and to have a correlation to commercial type properties fronting M-59 and Hickory Ridge in which some may have to merge with in order to be developed or accessed.

 West Highland Micro Area Analysis Proposed Master Plan Changes



### **Coordination with Surrounding Community Boundaries**

As part of our services to Oakland County communities, the EDCA Planning staff prepares and annually updates a Composite Master Plan for the entirety of the County. The Oakland County Composite Master Plan represents generalized future land use based on each community's master plan and is available on the [Composite Master Plans page](#) of the County's website. The Composite Master Plan for Oakland County can be found on following page 6 of this review. The map will be updated to reflect the Future Land Use map changes once adopted by the Township.

Under state law, the County's review is required to include a statement indicating whether the proposed plan is "inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township" that received notice of the draft plan. Each of the adjacent communities has been encouraged to provide the Charter Township of Highland with comments if they have any concerns.

The amendment proposes a change to the FLU map, the addition of a future use classification, and a zoning ordinance amendment to follow. These changes have been determined to be very compatible as the changes do not affect adjacent communities in this proposal. The **new map changes are internal to the Charter Township of Highland** and do not have any impact on the surrounding communities.

As of July 12, 2018 the Oakland County Department of Economic Development and Community Affairs, Planning Office has received a couple correspondents regarding the Highland Charter Township Master Plan amendment. The Township of Commerce sent an email indicating their support for the proposed master plan amendment. The Road Commission for Oakland County sent a letters indicating their requirement of permitting and review for any proposed work or changes concerning Hickory Ridge Road. The correspondents have been included as part of this review and attached.

### **Recommendations**

Due to the nature of the Township's Master Plan format, the following recommendations may be considered at a later date and others may be incorporated digitally as reference information:

- The addition of the *Provisional Commercial* Future Land Use category should include a well-defined description as an amendment to the "PART I: Future Land Use" section of the Master Plan.
- According to our records the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was amended in 2014. Recommend updating and/or including this information to the Master Plan in the future.
- In 2017, Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) prepared an update to the county-wide Potential Conservation/Natural Areas Report originally prepared in 2004. Recommend incorporating this important natural resource information (data and maps) into the current Master Plan or as a subsequent amendment. County Planning staff is available to provide support and guidance as needed.

### **Hazard Mitigation Planning**

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services team is making a deliberate effort to encourage communities to integrate their hazard mitigation priorities and strategies into their comprehensive master plans, when applicable. This is particularly relevant for hazard mitigation related to infrastructure, utilities, natural features, major assets and historic districts/structures that may be added to the Township's Capital Improvement Program or may represent FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) eligible projects. Through FEMA, communities are eligible for nationally competitive, annually awarded Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grants for planning and project work. Communities responding to and recovering from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President are also eligible for Public Assistance (PA) Funds for emergency work and permanent infrastructure projects. The Oakland County Hazard Mitigation Plan (updated December 2017) is available online on the County's Homeland Security webpage. The County will continue to review the Plan annually.

### **Oakland County Technical Assistance**

A summary of programs offered by the EDCA Department that are relevant to the Highland Township Master Land Use Plan have been included on the following page.

### **Oakland County Technical Resources**

Oakland County compiles existing and future land use statistics for the county as a whole and for each community using generalized land use definitions. These documents are included as reference and to provide a snapshot of the Township's existing land use and development patterns. Also included as reference are the 2017 Michigan Natural Feature Inventory (MNFI) map and 2004 Green Infrastructure Vision map.

### **Conclusion**

This concludes our review and recommendations for the Highland Township Master Plan Amendment. A copy of Highland Township's proposed analysis has been attached to this report. Please contact me at (248) 858-0389 or by email at [krees@oakgov.com](mailto:krees@oakgov.com) if you should have any questions or comments about the information within this document.

Sincerely,



Scott E. Kree  
Associate Planner



## Oakland County Planning Technical Assistance and Resources

The Oakland County Department of Economic Development & Community Affairs (EDCA) offers a variety of programs to support Oakland County communities with innovative programming and assistance to create attractive destinations in which to live, work, and find community. The chart below details those programs offered by the Planning Division (a division of the EDCA). Current participation in Planning Division programs and opportunities for future involvement are noted on the right of the chart. Additional information on all EDCA programs can be found at [www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland](http://www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland).

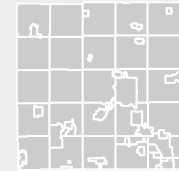
Program	Mission	Charter Township of Highland Opportunities and Current Participation
Environmental Stewardship	Provide information, plans and options to promote conservation of the natural environment while supporting sustainable economic growth, development and redevelopment.	Highland Township supports redevelopment that is cognizant of natural resource protection and management. County staff members are able to act in a supporting capacity with grant application identification, open space protection, and sustainable development practices.
Historic Preservation Assistance	Support local efforts to maintain and enhance architectural and heritage resources through sustainable practices to enrich the quality of life for all.	Highland Township recognizes the significance of their historic resources. County staff is able to assist with potential design concepts for adaptive reuse of any historic structures within the community.
Land Use & Zoning Services	Prepare and provide land use, zoning and master plan reviews for communities to enhance coordination of land use decision-making.	Highland Township submits Master Plan updates and amendments for County review and boundary coordination as they are prepared. County-wide land use maps and statistics are also available.
Main Street Oakland County (MSOC)	Help local governments develop their downtowns as vibrant, successful districts that serve as the heart of their community.	Highland Township is a Select Level community. DDA staff, board members, and community leadership are welcomed and encouraged to attend quarterly workshops and trainings facilitated by MSOC.
One Stop Ready (OSR)	Encourage communities to capitalize on their strengths and refine their economic development processes to implement their community vision.	Highland Township is an active participant in the OSR Program. Township staff, as well as elected and appointed officials, attend OSR Academy Sessions and participate in the Community Showcase.
Trail, Water & Land Alliance (TWLA)	Become an informed, coordinated, collaborative body that supports initiatives related to the County's Green Infrastructure Network	Participation in TWLA connects Townships and Cities with like-minded communities and transportation planners. The County fully supports the starting or expansion of any non-motorized facilities and can aid the Township in non-motorized planning efforts through education and the identification of potential funding sources.



Economic Development & Community Affairs

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Executive Office Building  
2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Bldg. 41W  
Waterford, MI 48328-0412  
248.858.0720  
www.oakgov.com/peds



## Composite Master Plan Oakland County

### Legend

- Single Family, 10 acres or greater
- Single Family, 5 to 9.9 acres
- Single Family, 2.5 to 4.9 acres
- Single Family, 1 to 2.4 acres
- Single Family, 14,000 to 43,559 sq. ft.
- Single Family, 8,000 to 13,999 sq. ft.
- Single Family, Less than 8,000 sq. ft.
- Multiple Family Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Recreation/Conservation
- Mixed Use
- Reclamation Plan

This map represents a generalized future land use based on each community's master plan.



1 inch = 4.3 miles

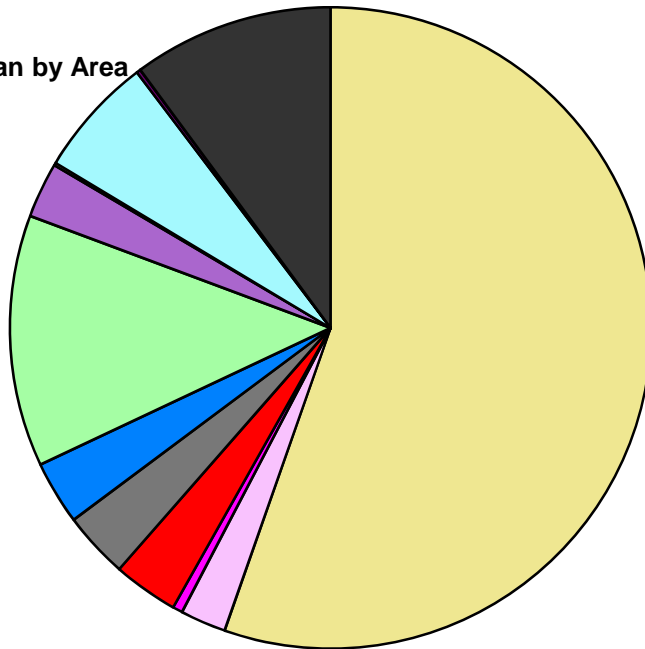
Map created on June 1, 2016

Land Use	Area (ac.)	Area (%)
Single Family Residential	321,406.1	55.4%
Multiple Family	13,384.9	2.3%
Mobile Home Park	2,880.6	0.5%
Commercial/Office	19,056.9	3.3%
Industrial	19,408.5	3.3%
Public/Institutional	18,591.3	3.2%
Recreation/Conservation	73,642.5	12.7%
Mixed Use	16,203.1	2.8%
Reclamation Plan	817.2	0.1%
Water	35,248.0	6.1%
Railroad Right-of-Way	1,210.4	0.2%
Road Right-of-Way	58,699.9	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>580,549.3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Single Family by Lot Size	Area (ac.)	Area (%)
10 acres or greater	26,350.3	8.2%
5 to 9.9 acres	37,209.0	11.6%
2.5 to 4.9 acres	56,125.7	17.5%
1 to 2.4 acres	55,530.0	17.3%
14,000 to 43,559 sq. ft.	83,302.6	25.9%
8,000 to 13,999 sq. ft.	42,694.0	13.3%
Less than 8,000 sq. ft.	20,194.4	6.3%
<b>Single Family Sub-total</b>	<b>321,406.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

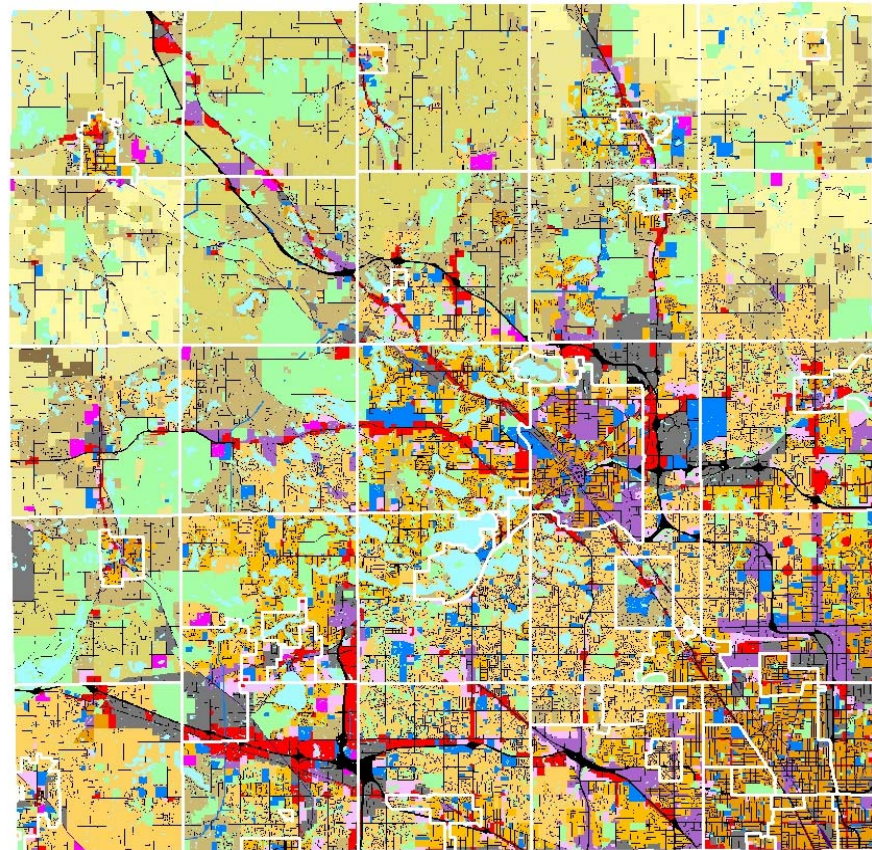
### Composite Master Plan by Area

- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family
- Mobile Home Park
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Recreation/Conservation
- Mixed Use
- Reclamation Plan
- Water
- Railroad Right-of-Way
- Road Right-of-Way



For more information, maps, or questions about this data, please contact the Oakland County One Stop Shop at (248) 858-0720.

These statistics represent a generalized future land use based on each community's master plan. Right-of-way and water figures are based on existing conditions.



**From:** David Campbell  
**To:** [Kree, Scott E](#)  
**Cc:** [Beth Corwin](#)  
**Subject:** 7/26 CZC mtg - Highland Twp Master Plan update  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 10, 2018 8:42:07 AM

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Good morning Scott,

We received your letter about the 7/26 CZC meeting. On behalf of the Commerce Twp Planning Commission, the Planning Department has reviewed Highland Twp's proposed Master Plan amendment and we have no concerns. I sent an email to Beth Corwin last week saying the same and wishing her luck in their efforts. Thanks.

--

*David Campbell, AICP*



Planning Director

Charter Township of Commerce

2009 Township Drive

Commerce Township, MI 48390

Ph (248)960-7050

## Beth Corwin

---

**From:** David Campbell [dcampbell@commercetwp.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2018 8:59 AM  
**To:** Beth Corwin  
**Cc:** Bill McKeever; Brian Parel; Brian Winkler; Deborah Watson; George Weber; Lawrence Haber; Paula Lankford; Russ Schinzing; Tom Jones  
**Subject:** Highland Twp Master Plan update - Commerce Twp comments

Good morning Ms. Corwin,

On behalf of the Commerce Township Planning Commission, the Planning Department thanks you for giving Commerce Township the opportunity to review Highland Township's proposed Master Plan amendment. The amendments you propose are centered around the intersection of M-59 and Hickory Ridge Road, which is a fair distance from our two communities' shared corner near Duck Lake and Cooley Lake Roads. As such, the proposed changes would seemingly have minimal impact on Commerce Township. We have no concerns and support Highland Township in their efforts.

On a personal note, my wife and I both travel through that intersection twice a day along our respective commutes between Hartland Township and Oakland County, so we will both be interested to see how that area evolves.

Thank you again for giving Commerce Township the opportunity to review & comment. Good luck in your efforts.

--

*David Campbell, AICP*  
Planning Director  
Charter Township of Commerce  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, MI 48390  
Ph (248)960-7050





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ROAD COMMISSION FOR OAKLAND COUNTY  
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**Board of Road Commissioners**

**Ronald J. Fowkes**  
Commissioner

**Gregory C. Jamian**  
Commissioner

**Eric S. Wilson**  
Commissioner

**Dennis G. Kolar, P.E.**  
Managing Director

**Gary Piotrowicz, P.E., P.T.O.E.**  
Deputy Managing Director  
County Highway Engineer

**Planning and  
Environmental Concerns  
Department**

31001 Lahser Road  
Beverly Hills, MI  
48025

248-645-2000

FAX  
248-645-1349

TDD  
248-645-9923

[www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org)

July 9, 2018

Elizabeth J. Corwin, PE, AICP  
Planning Director  
Charter Township of Highland  
205 N. John Street  
Highland, MI 48357

Re: Highland Township Master Plan Proposed Amendment

Dear Ms. Corwin:

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) reviewed the Charter Township of Highland proposed amendment, "Micro-Area Analysis of Land Use M-59 Corridor centered at Hickory Ridge Road". We have analyzed this proposed amendment as it relates to transportation and Hickory Ridge Road, which is under our jurisdiction.

It should be noted that any proposed modifications or enhancements concerning Hickory Ridge Road would require RCOC review. All work proposed within the right-of-way of roads under RCOC jurisdiction, including facilities associated with complete streets policies, will require a permit.

We look forward to working with the Charter Township of Highland to create a vibrant community with a safe and efficient transportation network

Sincerely,

David A. Evancoe, AICP/ASLA  
Director  
Planning and Environmental Concerns

CC: Scott E. Kree  
Associate Planner  
Oakland County  
2100 Pontiac Lake Rd., Bldg. 41W  
Waterford, MI 48328

## Beth Corwin

---

**From:** Dave Plewes [zoningadm@rosetownship.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 02, 2018 10:12 AM  
**To:** Beth Corwin  
**Subject:** Rose Township , Highland Master Plan

Rose Township

Rose Township Planning Commission has received your request and each member is reviewing your proposed amendments to your Master Plan

I have only received the following comments so far.

Comments for Highland Township:

The suggested designation of a Transitional Low-Impact Commercial District and the uses this would support does not seem unreasonable based on the site location, other existing commercial sub-areas within Highland, as well as considering businesses located in Hartland and White Lake. It seems the suggested uses for a transitional low-impact commercial district could be economically supported by the community.

As development pressure increases in the township over time, it will be important that Highland Township keep in consideration the desires of the community to retain a "rural" feel as well as to be careful not to stray from its long-term master plan vision. Considering how land gets developed such as by leaving greenways can assist with this. Another consideration for retaining the rural feel would be to continue to permit into the future non-conforming businesses which appeal to the rural feel such as Armstrong's Millwork and the horse farm.

Crematoriums are a listed potential use in the Transitional Low-Impact Commercial District. It will be important to require an after-burner to reduce the escape of odors and chemicals for this type of business as to not conflict with nearby businesses and residential areas. Perhaps solar farms could also be a potential use for this district.

David Plewes  
Zoning Administrator