



# Memorandum

To: Planning Commission Members  
From: Elizabeth J Corwin, PE, AICP; Planning Director  
Date: February 7, 2024  
Re: Master Plan Map Discussion

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Megan Masson-Minnock has completed a new draft of the Master Land Use Plan based on our previous discussions. I think we are nearly there, with just some minor tweaks.

Please take some time reviewing the descriptions of the new Classification Scheme. This represents a vital part of the message we'll be communicating about our goals and objectives for the future.



## Future Land Use Descriptions

### AGRICULTURAL

This land classification category prioritizes the preservation of agricultural activities and supports small-scale agriculture. This classification is designed to offer residents the opportunity to live in a low-density environment, promoting rural lifestyle while maintaining the agricultural character of the area.

### LARGE LOT SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This land classification category places a strong emphasis on preserving natural features and maintaining a balance between urbanization and environmental sensitivity. This classification allows for spacious living while safeguarding wetland, woodland, slopes, and other environmentally and visually sensitive areas. These residential areas have been strategically located to facilitate the preservation of these features with an aim to utilize common open space area to preserve the environment.

### MEDIUM LOT SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (1.5 to 3 acre min. lot size)

This land classification category is located strategically in the central core of the township. This core is purposefully surrounded by lower-density land use categories, including the Agricultural and Large Lot Residential category. This concentration of Medium Lot Residential areas in the central core of the Township is a deliberate planning approach meant to accommodate anticipated future households.

### SMALL LOT SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The Small Lot Residential classification category is comprised of historical small lot settlements around the lakes and other developments within the Township. The associated zoning regulations are designed to preserve the long-established development patterns in the Township. This land use category is restricted to what is currently allowed, meaning no additional parcels can be added, unless through land division and combination. The Township is committed to maintaining the character of historical settlements and promoting controlled growth within this residential district.

### MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This land classification category is intended to provide for multiple dwelling units, single-family attached dwellings (townhouses and row houses) and duplexes at a density consistent with available infrastructure and land capacities, while providing a variety of housing options other than a detached single-family home. This district is located primarily in areas with optimal amenities and accessibility, ensuring they become valuable assets to the community. By strategically planning these developments adjacent to major thoroughfares, residents have convenient access to the Highland Recreation Area and are in close proximity to major commercial centers.

### MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY

This land classification category is thoughtfully located within the township in a manner that promotes harmonious integration of housing types that differ from the predominant single-family homes. This category allows more options to meet the housing needs of the community while positively contributing to the overall character.

## OFFICE AND LOW INTENSITY COMMERCIAL

This land classification category 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. The goal is to create suitable environments for uses that align with the community's vision. The community's goal is to locate these zones in areas that promote access to essential services while also minimizing the impact on surrounding areas. Integrating a balance of professional and commercial spaces that contribute positively to the Township's economic landscape without compromising the low-intensity character is the primary goal.

## HIGHLAND STATION

This land classification category highlights the quaint hamlet that boasts historic charm including residential dwellings that date back over a century. Highland Station's character is intricately woven into its landscape, architecture, walkability, and close-knit neighborhoods, creating a cherished community with a timeless appeal. Influenced by its railroad origins, newer commercial developments align with major thoroughfares, yet the area maintains a distinctive character defined by natural surroundings and a commitment to simplicity and environmental stewardship. Future designs should preserve and build upon these defining features to uphold the essence of Highland Station.

## GENERAL COMMERCIAL

This land use category serves several primary objectives including stimulating the Township's commercial sector and enhancing its tax base while simultaneously offering convenient access to a variety of commercial services in close proximity to population concentrations within the township. In order to promote an organized and cohesive commercial landscape, the zoning in this area intends to curb the spread of scattered strip commercial development. In doing this, the goal is to enhance traffic safety and to elevate the overall visual appeal of existing commercial development. As General Commercial areas cover 255 acres in the Township, they are a large contributor to the overall economic vitality and visual aesthetics of the community. -

## TRANSITION FROM COMMERCIAL

This land classification category is designated to properties that 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 desirable for single family residential development. Due to the inaccessibility of 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 or that generate significantly less traffic than comparison retail. Suitable uses for this category include outdoor storage or inventory, provided appropriate landscape buffers and screening techniques are used in areas adjacent to residential or planned residential areas.

## INDUSTRIAL

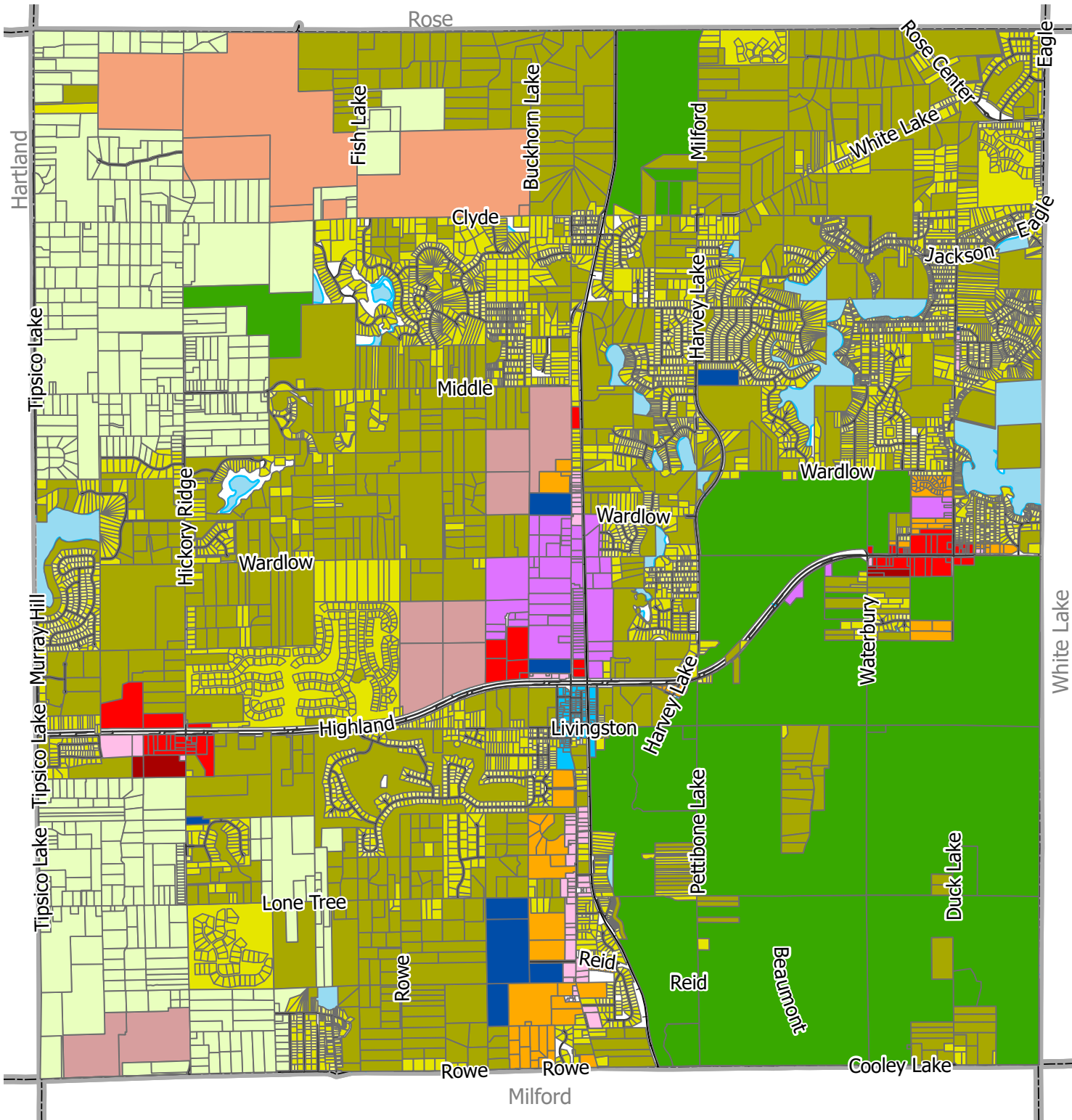
This land use classification is planned to bolster the existing centralized industrial development pattern, fostering economic diversification, and expanding both the tax and employment base. The district is able to accommodate a wide spectrum of industrial activities, from light to heavy manufacturing, utilizing the requirements of a special land use approval for operations with external effects that are felt by surrounding areas. To successfully meet the future economic needs of the Township, a balanced and forward-looking approach to industrial development is essential.

## INSTITUTIONAL

This land use classification includes public institutions and other related facilities that are located adjacent to major thoroughfares. To ensure compatibility with the bordering residential properties, these uses are subject to specific regulations, such as screening guidelines. The establishment of Institutional uses requires a Traffic Management Plan, and all activities should predominantly take place within fully enclosed buildings to minimize external impacts. For large-scale institutions, stringent conditions are imposed to mitigate potential negative effects on single-family residential areas, including specific frontage and setback requirements, traffic control measures, and limitations on outside noise. These regulations collectively aim to strike a balance between accommodating Institutional uses and preserving the residential character of the community in accordance with the Township's Mater Plan.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

This land use category prioritizes significant open space and recreation areas, which include 17.1 percent of the township. Nearly 16 percent of this dedicated space is part of the expansive Highland Recreation Area. Notable additions, including the expansion of Highland Charter Township Community Park, underscore the township's commitment to providing ample green spaces and recreational assets for the community's enjoyment and well-being.



- Small Lot Single Family Residential
- Medium Lot Single Family Residential
- Large Lot Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Manufactured Housing Community
- Agricultural
- Office and Low Intensity Commercial
- General Commercial
- Transition from Commercial
- Highland Station
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Parks and Recreation
- Consent Judgement
- Roads
- Railroad
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Creeks
- Township Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries

# Future Land Use

## Highland Township Oakland County, Michigan

