

**Planning Commission Meeting 3/10/2026**

**Subject: BARN 45 Church 2115 White Lake Rd Highland, Michigan**



On behalf of the Barn45 Church Jamie and Joy Lee are supplying supplemental information to Highland Township.

**Following review of the proposal and input from neighboring residents, Barn45 is providing additional information to address several aspects of the project.**

**Topics covered in this supplemental document:**

**Safety**

**Hours of operation**

**Occupancy Capacity**

**Lighting, Property Perimeter Screening & Natural Buffers**

**Parking, Future Expansion, and Event Capacity**

**Final Considerations**

## Safety

A formal **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** review was recently completed for the property located at **2115 White Lake Road**. The review confirmed that **no complaints or violations have been recorded related to the property since 2017**. This information is provided to demonstrate Barn45's continued commitment to responsible operations and positive community relations.

Barn45 remains committed to working collaboratively with **Highland Township officials, the Oakland County Road Commission, the Highland Fire Department, and neighboring residents** to ensure safe and respectful use of the property.

### Road Commission Safety Review

A recent **on-site visit and review of the property entrance and roadway access** was conducted by **Bob Zschering, Permit Supervisor – Department of Customer Services, Oakland County Road Commission (RCOC)**.

During the visit, the following items were reviewed and discussed:

- **Entrance Driveway:**  
Mr. Zschering confirmed that **the existing driveway entrance is adequate for the current and proposed level of use.**
- **Roadside Visibility Improvements:**  
The **Oakland County Road Commission will remove several trees located within the county roadway easement** to improve sight distance for vehicles exiting the property.

These improvements are expected to increase the **line of sight to approximately 500 feet to the east**, improving safety for vehicles entering and exiting White Lake Road.

- **Curb Adjustment Recommendation:**  
RCOC recommended that the **existing curb opening be extended approximately 10 feet to the east and 10 feet to the west** to further improve vehicle turning movements at the driveway entrance.

### Property Sign Placement:

The Road Commission also reviewed the proposed **Barn45 identification sign location** and indicated that **placement just west of the entrance and behind the existing easement marker stake is acceptable.**

## **Additional Safety Measures**

Several additional safety enhancements have been implemented on the property, including:

- Installation of **more than the required number of fire extinguishers** throughout the barn.
- **Clearly marked laminated exit signage** positioned at all exit points.
- **Security lighting** placed to illuminate exit pathways and improve nighttime visibility.

Barn45 has also coordinated directly with the **Highland Township Fire Department** to improve emergency response readiness. As part of this coordination:

- A **marked safety post has been installed along the driveway** identifying the location of the fire department hose drop point.
- The **Highland Fire Department has conducted a safety review and training run at the property.**

Additionally:

- An **AED (Automated External Defibrillator)** has been installed on-site.
- Members of the Barn45 community include **trained medical professionals present during gatherings and events.**

## **Site Access Control**

Operating hours for the property are clearly posted. In addition, **vehicle gates are already installed approximately 80 feet north of the driveway entrance** and can be closed when needed to secure the property outside of operating hours.

We believe these combined measures demonstrate Barn45's continued commitment to maintaining a **safe, responsible, and well-managed environment for both visitors and surrounding neighbors.**

## Hours of Operation:

Barn45 is open **seven (7) days per week** with general operating hours of **11:00 AM to 9:45 PM, Monday through Sunday**.

These hours were intentionally selected to remain within **respectful quiet hours consistent with Highland Township ordinances**, ensuring that all gatherings and activities conclude before late evening hours out of consideration for surrounding properties.

While the property is open daily, Barn45 is **not a high-volume or continuously active facility**. Activities vary throughout the week and typically consist of small faith-based gatherings, mentoring programs, and community engagement events.

Examples of typical weekly activity include:

- **Daily morning livestream Bible studies**, typically conducted with **one to three individuals on site**.
- Small group gatherings beginning around **11:00 AM and continuing periodically throughout the day**.
- **Monday evening men's Bible study**, which may bring **up to approximately 100 participants** from **8:00 PM to 9:00 PM**.
- **Sunday evening youth gatherings**, where young adults and adult volunteers participate in a **faith-based youth program and worship session** designed to provide a safe and positive environment for local youth.

These gatherings represent the typical rhythm of the property and are conducted within the established operating hours to maintain a **quiet and respectful environment for neighboring residents**.

Barn45 leadership remains committed to working with **Highland Township and surrounding neighbors** to ensure that operations remain **well-managed, community-oriented, and consistent with Township guidelines**.

## Occupancy Capacity

### Indoor Occupancy

The indoor occupancy of the barn is **136 individuals**, as established and recognized by the **Highland Township Fire Marshal**. Barn45 fully complies with this occupancy limit and does not exceed the maximum capacity established by the Fire Department.

### Outdoor / Total Site Capacity

Barn45 hosts **faith-based, educational, and community-oriented gatherings** throughout the year. The proposed **maximum total site capacity is approximately 300 individuals** when considering both indoor and outdoor spaces on the property.

This number represents the **total number of people that may be present on the property at one time**, not the number of people inside the barn.

Typical activities include:

- Faith-based gatherings
- Youth and young adult leadership programs
- Educational or mentoring events
- Small seasonal community gatherings (primarily **May through September**)

For example, **Sunday evening youth gatherings** are typically the largest weekly activity. During these evenings, attendees may be distributed between:

- the barn interior,
- the pavilion area, and
- outdoor gathering spaces.

Even during these larger gatherings, **indoor occupancy will remain within the Fire Marshal's approved limit of 136 people.**

Barn45 anticipates that **total attendance on the property during the largest weekly gatherings will remain at or below approximately 300 individuals.**

### Sound and Event Controls

Barn45 is **not requesting approval for regular use of outdoor amplified sound systems**, and outdoor sound amplification will **not be utilized** as part of regular operations.

Activities conducted outdoors are intended to remain **small-scale, community-focused, and consistent with the quiet character of the surrounding area.**

## Lighting, Property Perimeter Screening & Natural Buffers

Barn45 recognizes the importance of maintaining lighting and site activity that is **consistent with Highland Township standards while also protecting neighboring properties from light spill, vehicle headlights, and sound transmission**. The property incorporates both **existing natural landforms and additional screening measures** that create substantial buffering between the site and surrounding properties.

### Existing Natural Berm Screening

The Barn45 property benefits from **significant natural screening created by existing earthen berms** located along the **east, west, and south sides of the property**. Historical aerial imagery available through the **Oakland County Property Gateway (1974)** indicates these berms were originally part of a former track on the property.



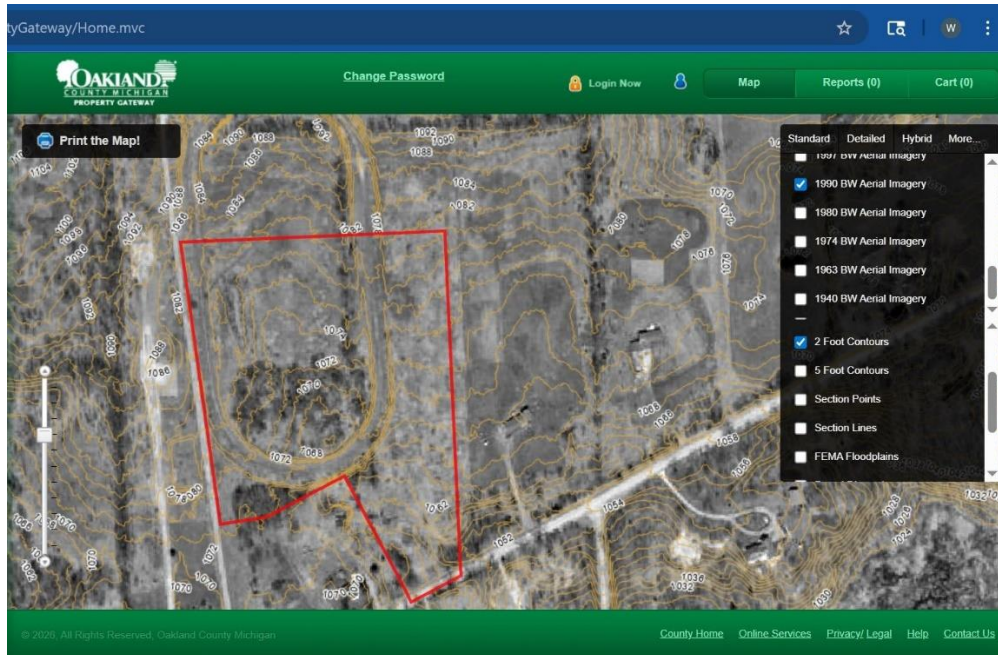
1974 Image from Gateway

These berms provide substantial visual, lighting, and sound buffering:

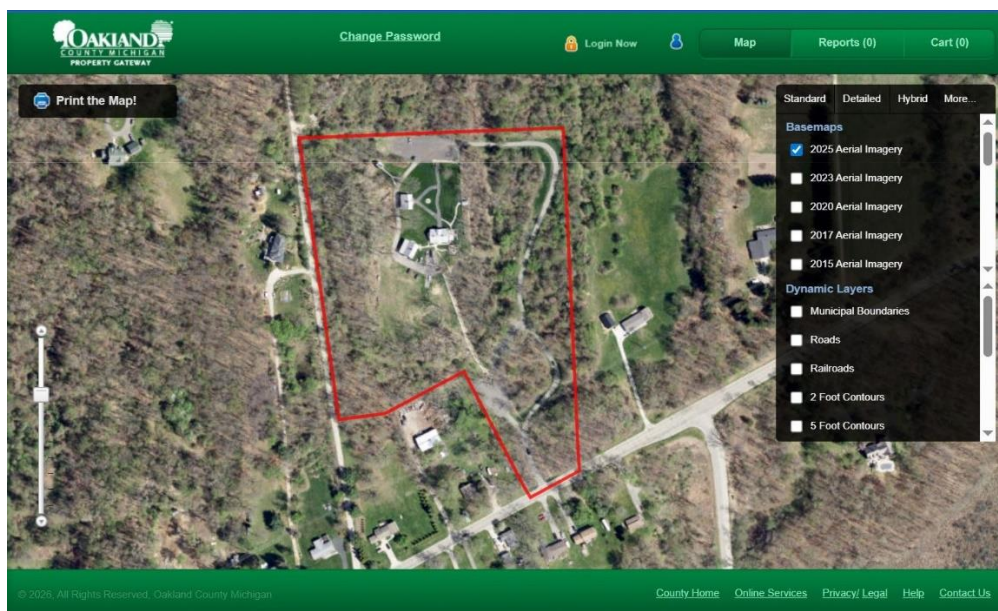
- The **southern berm rises approximately 10.5 feet above grade**, completely shielding the structures on the property from **White Lake Road**.

- Berms along the **east and west sides provide approximately 5–6 feet of elevation above surrounding grade**, helping shield activity areas from neighboring properties.
- These elevated landforms act as **natural barriers that limit the transmission of both light and sound from the property**.

Supporting **topographical maps from Oakland County Gateway** and **GPS imagery** are included to illustrate the elevation differences across the property.



### Dense Woods and Vegetative Buffer 2025 view



In addition to the berms, the **west, south, and east sides of the property are bordered by dense woods and natural brush growth.**

These wooded areas provide:

- **Additional visual screening**
- **Natural sound dampening**
- **Light diffusion from any interior site lighting**

The existing vegetation and tree coverage act as a **natural environmental buffer between the Barn45 property and adjacent properties**, further limiting the visibility and impact of site activity.

### **Additional Property Screening Improvements**

To further enhance buffering for neighboring properties, **additional earthen berms will be installed along the north property line and portions of the northeast side of the property.**



These berms will:

- Help **shield neighboring properties from vehicle headlights entering and exiting the parking area.**
- Reduce the potential for **light spill from vehicles and site lighting.**
- Provide additional **visual separation between the Barn45 property and surrounding homes.**

The berms will be **landscaped with low seasonal greenery and shrubs planted along the top**, creating a natural vegetative screening barrier.

### **Existing Lighting**

The structures on the property were originally constructed as a **residential-style property**, and the majority of exterior lighting reflects lighting typically found on residential homes in the surrounding area.

Existing lighting includes:

- **Downward-directed pathway lighting** along sidewalks, generally **under 10 feet in height**, designed to illuminate walking paths while minimizing outward light spill.
- Limited **barn-style lighting fixtures mounted on the structure**.

These fixtures provide **localized illumination only** and are not designed to project light outward across the property.

### **Lighting Adjustments**

One parking-area light has been identified that may exceed preferred lighting spread. Barn45 will be implementing the following adjustments:

- Installation of **fabricated shields or cones to direct light downward**.
- Adjustment of the fixture to reduce light spill toward neighboring properties.
- Additional shielding of a **traditional barn-style light fixture** to minimize 360-degree light spread.

These modifications will ensure lighting remains **contained within the property boundaries and compliant with Township lighting standards**.

### **Lighting Controls**

Barn45 is installing a **programmable lighting control system** for exterior and event lighting.

This system will:

- Automatically **turn exterior lighting off at designated evening hours**.
- Allow **remote monitoring and control** by Barn45 leadership.
- Maintain **cloud-based records of lighting on/off times**.

This system ensures lighting remains **limited to operational hours while preserving darker nighttime conditions for neighboring properties**.

### **Compliance Commitment**

Barn45 is committed to complying with **Highland Township lighting standards**, including applicable **foot-candle limits at the property boundary and lighting direction requirements**.

Through a combination of **existing berms, dense wooded buffers, additional landscaped screening, lighting shields, and programmable lighting controls**, Barn45 intends to ensure the property remains **well-buffered, respectful of neighboring homes, and fully consistent with Township regulations**.

### **Parking, Future Expansion, and Event Capacity**

The current site plan provides **111 parking spaces** located in **three separate parking areas across the property**, as illustrated on the submitted site plan. These parking areas have been intentionally distributed throughout the site to support normal event operations while maintaining safe internal vehicle circulation and minimizing congestion in any single location.

The distribution of parking areas allows vehicles to arrive and depart efficiently while preserving the rural character of the property and maintaining the natural landscape surrounding the venue.

The site plan also identifies a **potential future building expansion consisting of an approximately 30-foot by 40-foot addition (1,200 square feet)** to the existing barn structure. This potential addition would allow the facility to accommodate an **indoor occupancy of approximately 300 guests** for larger gatherings or special events.

To support this potential future expansion, the site plan designates an area shown in **dark pink for future parking expansion**. If necessary, this area has the capacity to accommodate **approximately 100 to 150 additional parking spaces**, ensuring that adequate parking could be provided to support larger events in the future.

It is important to note that the **existing 111 parking spaces adequately support the current intended use of the property**, and the future parking area is identified only to demonstrate that the property has the land area necessary to responsibly accommodate future parking needs if expansion occurs.

Additionally, typical events often include **carpooling and shared transportation among guests**, which naturally reduces the total number of vehicles arriving on site.

The parking areas are further supported by the **natural topography of the property, existing wooded areas, dense brush, and proposed earthen berm screening**, which help shield neighboring properties from vehicle headlights, lighting spill, and activity associated with parking areas. These natural and planned buffers help maintain privacy and minimize visual and light impacts to adjacent properties.

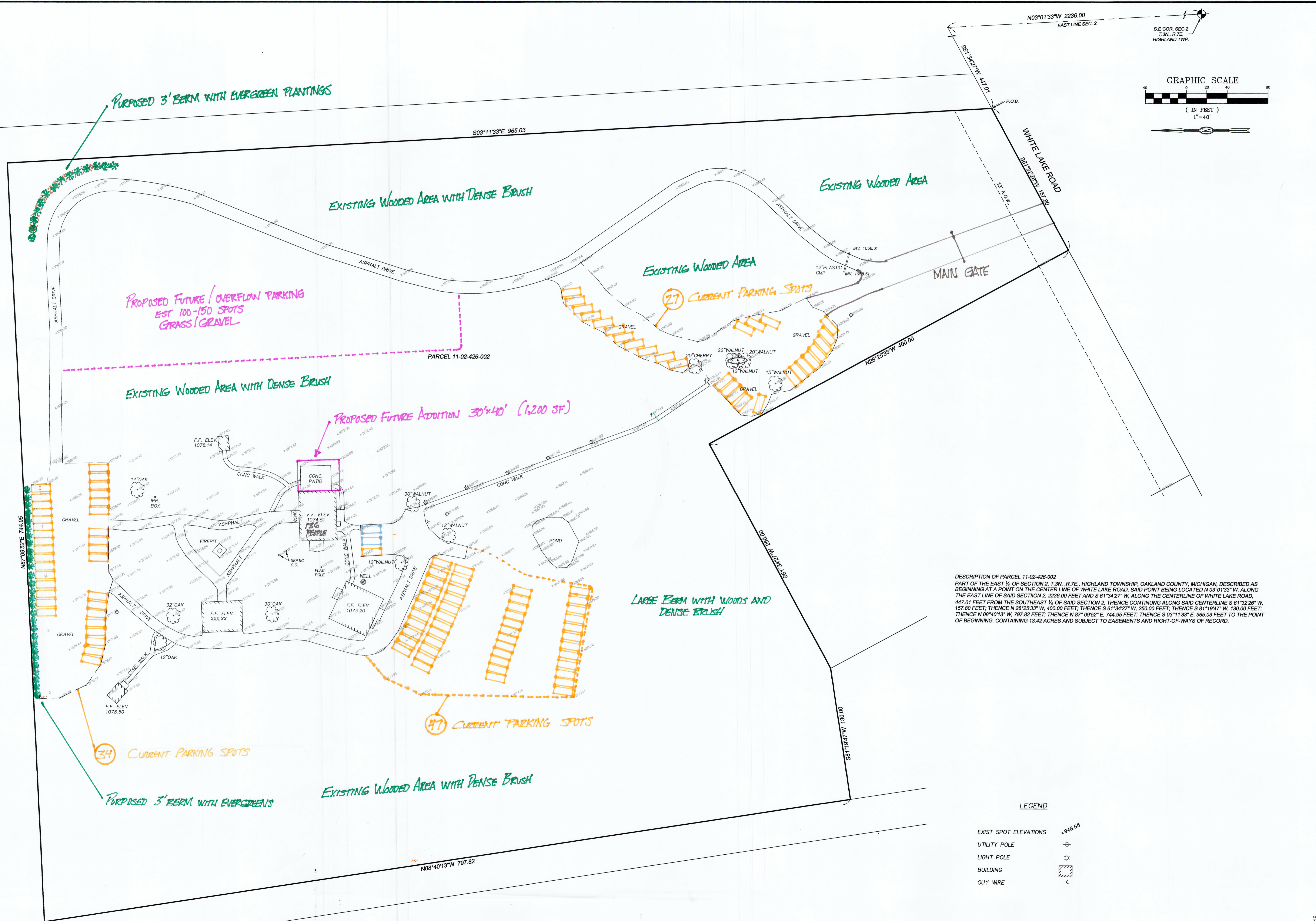
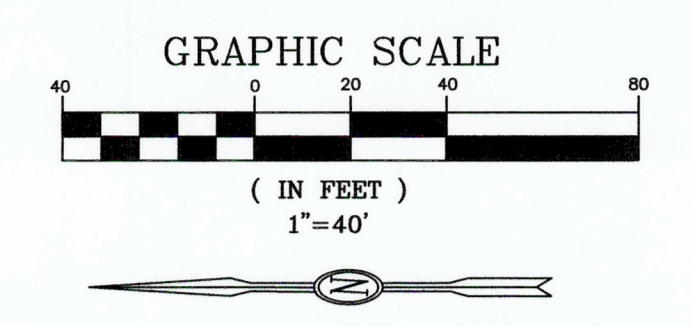
Access to the property is provided by a **long asphalt driveway connecting the parking areas to White Lake Road**. This extended paved access helps mitigate the potential for gravel or debris from parking areas to be carried onto the public roadway. Any loose material from parking areas naturally dislodges as vehicles travel along the length of the paved driveway before reaching White Lake Road, allowing debris to fall within the property rather than the roadway. This design helps maintain roadway cleanliness and minimizes the likelihood of debris entering the public right-of-way.

By combining **distributed parking areas, natural landscape buffering, thoughtful circulation design, and the ability to expand parking capacity if needed**, the property is able to support both current operations and potential future growth in a responsible and well-planned manner while minimizing impacts on neighboring properties and the surrounding roadway.

### **Final Considerations**

Barn45 is committed to operating the property in a responsible manner that respects neighboring properties, maintains the rural character of the area, and prioritizes safety for guests and the surrounding community. The site layout, distributed parking areas, natural landscape buffering, and coordination with the Oakland County Road Commission have all been carefully considered to minimize impacts while allowing the property to function appropriately.

The intent of this proposal is not only to address current needs, but also to demonstrate that the property has been thoughtfully planned to accommodate future growth in a responsible and well-managed manner.



DESCRIPTION OF PARCEL 11-02-426-002  
 PART OF THE EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 2, T.3N., R.7E., HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP, OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN, DESCRIBED AS BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE CENTER LINE OF WHITE LAKE ROAD, SAID POINT BEING LOCATED N 03°01'33" W, ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID SECTION 2, 2236.00 FEET AND S 61°34'27" W, ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF WHITE LAKE ROAD, 447.01 FEET FROM THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF SAID SECTION 2; THENCE CONTINUING ALONG SAID CENTERLINE S 61°32'28" W, 157.80 FEET; THENCE N 28°25'33" W, 400.00 FEET; THENCE S 61°34'27" W, 250.00 FEET; THENCE S 81°18'47" W, 130.00 FEET; THENCE N 08°40'13" W, 797.92 FEET; THENCE N 87°09'52" E, 744.95 FEET; THENCE S 03°11'33" E, 965.03 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, CONTAINING 13.42 ACRES AND SUBJECT TO EASEMENTS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS OF RECORD.

Drawn:	ISSUED FOR
Designed:	DATE
Checked:	

TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY

2115 WHITE LAKE ROAD  
 HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
 OAKLAND CO., MI.

Scale:	1"=40'
Date:	9/5/25
Job No.:	11206
Sht. No.:	1 of 1