



# Memorandum

To: Planning Commission Members  
From: Elizabeth J Corwin, PE, AIPC; Planning Director  
Date: November 20, 2025  
Re: SPR 25-04  
Applicant/Owner: Charles Burt; B&B Construction  
Vacant Harvey Lake Road  
PIN 11-14-100-054

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The proposal under consideration is for a Residential Open Space Planned Unit Development (RPUD). This meeting is to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the sketch plan. The sketch plan is the document that sets the basic parameters of the development—street layout, number and arrangement of lots, lot sizes and setbacks, concepts for physical improvements like sidewalks and pathways. Your review will result in a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, whose approval would grant the applicant assurances that the plan would be approved if acceptable engineering details are provided and all agency permitting activities are completed.

In a fashion similar to use requiring special approval, Section 7.02.B lists factors that make a parcel eligible for consideration of an RPUD. As you review the plan, you will find the following features of the proposal come together to satisfy the eligibility requirements:

- 51 percent of the site set aside in open space, some of which includes woodlands and rolling topography
- Provision of a pedestrian trail system and connected open space which preserves wild animal corridors and provides an internal connection to Spring Mills elementary school
- A looped roadway system with a single entrance from Harvey Lake Road, set across from an existing intersection to minimize traffic conflicts.
- One hundred foot buffer between the proposed units and nearby residential lots in Axford Acres and South Bay Shores
- Consistency with the Highland Township Master Plan (designation of Medium Lot Residential)
- Proposal for individual septic systems and probable extension of the community water system (subject to engineering feasibility)

The applicant has submitted the required parallel plan which shows that 36 units would be possible utilizing the minimum lot size, lot width, and other design parameters for a residential subdivision in the R1.5 Zoning District. From this baseline, the allowable density is established by rewarding bonus density for use of “exemplary design” principles. These factors are outline in Section 7.02.C.3. A

maximum of 30 percent may be awarded. The applicant has only requested consideration of half of the allowable bonus density.

- a). *51 percent open space*—applicant has requested a 5.3 percent bonus whereas the Planning Commission may award 6.5 percent bonus based on the sliding scale published in the regulation.
- b). *Perimeter landscape bonus for buffer exceeding 100 feet on Harvey Lake Road*. Applicant has requested 5 percent bonus. Planning Commission may award 5 percent bonus.
- c). *Central water system*. The applicant has requested 5 percent bonus. The intent is to provide the central water system through connection to the Highland Township Water System. Sanitary sewer service is not available anywhere in the Township at present. The Planning Commission may award up to 10 percent bonus but since only central water is supplied, a 5 percent bonus is appropriate.
- d). *Discretionary bonus for other benefits*. The applicant has requested a bonus of 4.7 percent for direct access to open space for 100 percent of the proposed housing units. The Planning Commission may award up to 10 percent for such design strategies.

The total density award requested by the applicant is 20 percent or 7.2 lots. The applicant’s sketch plan is based on 42 units or 6 bonus lots. The Planning Commission may evaluate the quality and nature of the open space under Section 7.02.C.6 to evaluate whether the density bonus requested should be awarded. The Planning Commission could require naturalized berms or supplemental plantings if there were any question as to the adequacy of the vegetated buffer as a condition of the density award. There is an area planned for a stormwater retention system between lots 23 and 24 that would have to be cleared, but other swaths of woodlands will be left untouched, such as the “dogleg” strip of land that runs roughly parallel with South Bay Shores west boundary.

Another issue that should be addressed as part of the sketch plan review are the lot sizes and setbacks. The applicant has proposed a typical lot of 120 feet wide by 200 feet deep. Most of the corner lots are wider to provide a better building envelope, although lots 26 and 32 are slightly limited. The proposed setbacks are 50 foot front and rear yards, and 10 foot side yards. This compares reasonably well with other modern subdivisions.

Subdivision	Lot width	Lot depth	Front/Rear Setback	Side Setback
Timberridge	110-120	200	45	15
Highland Valley	100-115	190-225	40	15
Huntwood Place	100	225-240	40	15
South Bay Shores	90-150	150-325	60/40	15

A review of an aerial photograph of the Township will show that these lots sizes are not atypical of other subdivisions you are familiar with. There may be room to consider reducing the rear yard setback, or allowing an exception for accessory structures. This could be done as an element of the Master Deed that will be developed later to support this proposal.

Another discussion point should be sidewalks and pathways. The Planning Commission in the past has allowed pathways in lieu of streetside sidewalk system, a sidewalk system on both sides of the street in the subdivision or a sidewalk on one side of the subdivision. Southbay Shores, for instance

has sidewalk only on the west side of Vero Drive. Axford Acres has no sidewalks. Cobblestone/Timber Ridge/Pine Bluffs has internal trail systems through the open spaces. Huntwood Place has sidewalks on both sides of the street. In other words, there is a wide variety of options, depending upon the character of the subdivision you wish to promote.

A separate issue is whether it is appropriate to require a sidewalk along the east side of Harvey Lake Road. There are topographic considerations, as there is 26 feet of elevation change from the northwest corner of the site at Spring Mills Elementary to the subdivision entrance, about 800 feet away. This is the likely route for a watermain extension, so requiring a path does bear some discussion. This is a part of a pathway identified on the Highland Township Recreation Plan as a route under consideration in the County Pathway Plan. It might be prudent to request dedication of an easement along the right-of-way even if it is deemed inappropriate to require the pathway along Harvey Lake Road at this time.

The Planning Commission should note that the level of engineering detail is appropriate for this phase of the site planning process. Detailed designs for grading and drainage, proof of feasibility of the proposed septic systems and permitting for watermain will follow. The Road Commission for Oakland County will determine whether the entrance requires acceleration and deceleration lanes or other design considerations.

I have attached some reference materials you have requested such as old minutes, links to pertinent ordinances and the pathway and recreation plans.

Municode Highland Township Zoning Ordinance:

Zoning Ordinance, Section 7.02 [Click here](#)

Zoning Ordinance, Section 7.04 [Click here](#)

General Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10, Articles IV and V [Click here](#)

General Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23, Section 23.31. [Click here](#)

Highland Township Parks and Recreation Plan--

Part of Parcel #11-29-100-025, lying 580 feet south of a line parallel with the M-59 south ROW, encompassing approximately 5.9 acres, addressed as 3151 W. Highland Road.

Zoning: R1.5, Single Family Residential  
File #: Ordinance Z-012  
Applicant: PC Initiated  
Request: Rezoning from R1.5, Single Family Residential to C-3, Low Impact Commercial

Mr. Gostek opened the Public Hearing at 7:58 p.m.

Mark Hoye – 2781 Katie Lane expressed his opinion that the property owners should take appropriate measures to clean up the land so it can be sold.

Mr. Beach stipulated that the Planning Commission will consider all the previous comments from Agenda item #1 in their decision of the rezoning.

For the record numerous letters, emails and phone calls have also been received and will be given consideration by the Planning Commission when reaching a decision. The audience was thanked for their input and informed that they can submit additional comments over the next 2 weeks if they think of anything else they would like to share.

Mr. Gostek closed the Public Hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Beach moved to table the discussion on Parcel #'s and Addresses until the February 7, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Green supported and the motion carried with the following vote: Gostek – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Green – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Temple – yes (7 yes votes).

Agenda Item #3:

Parcel #: 11-14-100-054  
Zoning: ARR, Agricultural & Rural Residential  
Address: Vacant Harvey Lake Road  
File #: RZ 19-01  
Applicant: Charles Burt  
Owner: Huron Valley School District  
Request: Rezoning from ARR, Agricultural & Rural Residential to R-1.5, Single Family Residential

Mr. Gostek opened the Public Hearing at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Green introduced the rezoning request for Parcel #11-14-100-054, a 63 acre parcel just south of Spring Mills Elementary School. The applicant, Charles Burt was

introduced. The audience was told that many written comments have already been received, but this was now an opportunity to give live feedback.

Charles Burt introduced himself and his company, Better Built Homes. He is currently the builder in White Eagle subdivision and invited people to visit the subdivision and see the 71 homes he is building on 125 acres. White Eagle subdivision is a rural neighborhood setting that was previously a corn field. Mr. Burt has planted over 300 trees to improve the setting. That subdivision was bought out of foreclosure, so may not be exactly the model of what would be planned on this site.

Mr. Burt explained his plan is to build a cluster neighborhood with a lot of buffers around home sites and with plenty of shared green space. He is asking at this time for rezoning to establish the density and does not have concept plans. These will be dependent on the rezoning and on engineering constraints such as soils conditions. If he decides to purchase the property, he will be required to seek approval from both the School Board and the Township. Mr. Burt ensured the audience that he is a local builder and will build a subdivision that fits Highland's rural atmosphere.

John Smith – 1794 Apollo has a home 30 to 40 feet from the property line and enjoys the existing trees; he expressed that he does not want to see the trees removed and have to look into a neighbor's yard.

Melissa West – 2400 Harvey Lake is hopeful that a buffer of trees will be left so that her family can continue to enjoy their quiet and peaceful property. She also asked if the parcel being discussed has been surveyed yet.

Tammy Ware – 1608 Juno purchased her home because of the surrounding woods. She asked about some existing fencing, and is concerned that a new subdivision will have kids walking through her yard since the fence ends there. Also she said she was aware that parts of the proposed property did not perk.

Grant Charlick – 349 McPherson noted that Huron Valley Schools put this property up for sale and intends to sell the property. He thought it was fortunate that the property might be bought by a local builder who is also conscientious and will design a nice subdivision. The school district needs to sell this excess property, the school system needs to add more students, and here is a good mindful local builder interested in the property. Mr. Charlick pointed out that this will be good for everybody.

Mike Schmidt – 2901 Vero is strongly against the rezoning request because it will decrease property values, wreck his view, and might add to the existing sink hole and ice sheet problem in South Bay Shores. He said that the rezoning could mean up to 42 additional homes in the area.

Victoria Brown – 2424 Harvey Lake concerned about increased traffic and accidents in the area. Exit and entrance locations are a concern, as well as disrupting the current

wildlife. During the development phase there will be a lot of noise. Ms. Brown also shared that Spring Mills is currently full so this may not be the best location for a new subdivision.

Kara Bretzlaff – 3143 Harvey Lake fears that there will be more fatal accidents, traffic, noise, speed, loss of nature and wildlife. She does not want to see clear cutting to create a subdivision.

Joel Bretzlaff – 3143 Harvey Lake urged the Planning Commission to save the trees and not flatten the land.

Christian Deasy – 3457 Lakeview does not want to see loss of habitat and trees. Mr. Deasy asked if this fits in with the Master Plan (Mr. Beach commented that the Master Plan does allow for 1.5 acre lots in a clustering design as proposed by Charles Burt – builder)

Vicki Mills – wanted the builder and Planning Commission to be aware that endangered trees are on this property and the trees are protected and cannot be cut down. These trees are only found in this area and therefore cannot be removed. The Planning Commission suggested she present such documentation for their consideration.

Bill Boettger – 1397 Genoa is a business owner and would have appreciated a visual representation of the proposed subdivision.

Tony Territo – 1447 Anchor Lane is not for the rezoning and fears a new road will run by his house.

Andy Busch – 2935 Vero stated his wife also sent a letter but he wanted to reiterate how much he and his family have enjoyed this wooded area. He also stated that Highland promotes rural living and 1.5 acre lots in this area would be too small and does not fit the footprint of Highland.

Ed Hallowell – 2653 Harvey Lake inquired if there is a minimum number of access roads in and out of a subdivision.

Scott Laramie – 1685 E. Wardlow pointed out that there are many accidents on Wardlow Road and another entry will make this road even more dangerous.

Christy Gow – 1624 Juno inquired if the property is currently zoned residential. The property is zoned for 5 acre lots, but the request is to increase density with 1.5 acre lots.

Rachel Armstrong – 2351 W. Highland reminded everyone in the audience that the current property is zoned 5 acres and a builder could purchase the parcel right now

and clear cut the trees. She cautioned residents that if a subdivision goes in they need to watch for water drainage and other negative effects from building.

Mr. Gostek closed the Public Hearing at 8:55 p.m.

Mr. Green moved to table the discussion on Parcel # 11-14-100-054 for Rezoning from ARR, Agricultural & Rural Residential to R-1.5, Single Family Residential until the February 7, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Temple supported and the motion carried with the following vote: Gostek – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Green – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Temple – yes (7 yes votes).

Agenda Item #4:

Text Amendment Ordinance Z-014 to revise definitions related to elderly housing, add a new use of “Community Living Facility” and establish regulations regarding said uses, including maximum building height of 36 feet in certain conditions.

Mr. Beach moved to table Text Amendment Ordinance Z-014 until the February 7, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. Mrs. Chynoweth supported and the motion carried with the following vote: Gostek – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Green – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Temple – yes (7 yes votes).

Work Session:

Agenda Item #5:

Committee Updates  
Zoning Board of Appeals:  
Township Board:  
Highland Downtown Development Authority:  
Pathways:  
Planning Director’s Update:

Updates were given by Committee liaisons.

Agenda Item #6: Minutes: December 6, 2018

Mr. Green moved to approve the minutes from December 6, 2018. Mrs. Lewis supported and the motion carried with the following voice vote: Gostek – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Green – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Temple – yes (7 yes votes).

Zoning: R1.5, Single Family Residential  
File #: Ordinance Z-012  
Applicant: PC Initiated  
Request: Rezoning from R1.5, Single Family Residential to  
C-3, Low Impact Commercial

Mr. Beach moved to table the discussion on Parcel #'s and Addresses to the February 21, 2019 Planning Commission at which time it is expected that Ordinance Z-013 language would be finalized. Mr. Gostek supported and the motion carried with the following vote: Green – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Gostek – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Stander – yes, Temple – yes (8 yes votes).

Agenda Item #4:

Parcel #: 11-14-100-054  
Zoning: ARR, Agricultural & Rural Residential  
Address: Vacant Harvey Lake Road  
File #: RZ 19-01  
Applicant: Charles Burt  
Owner: Huron Valley School District  
Request: Rezoning from ARR, Agricultural & Rural Residential to  
R-1.5, Single Family Residential

Mr. Green introduced the rezoning request for Parcel #11-14-100-054, a 63 acre parcel just south of Spring Mills Elementary School. This is a request to change the density from 1 home per 5 acres under current zoning to 1 home per 1.5 acres under proposed zoning.

Mr. Beach and Mr. Smith shared some history of zoning and planning in this area. In 1982, this area was designated in the Master Plan for medium to small residential lots of around 40,000 sq. feet, although zoned for municipal use. The Township made a conscious policy decision to zone all public land for 10 acre agricultural use parcels since there was always a risk that municipal property could be sold and turned to undesirable or inappropriate use such as a prison if the zoning allowed only municipal uses. This strategic move was to protect neighbors and the Township by requiring a future owner to come before the Planning Commission with a rezoning request and site plan. This current request to rezone to R-1.5 Zoning District is consistent with the original Master Plan and current Master Plan. The density is considerably less than envisioned in 1982.

The expectation is that 30 to 40 single family homes would be built on parcel #11-14-100-054 and these homes would tap into the existing water system. Mr. Temple sympathized with concerns for the traffic traveling on Harvey Lake Road and the safety and speed issues that might result with development, but believed that the

impact of these additional homes could be mitigated. Mr. Beach reminded the Planning Commission and audience that the Road Commission for Oakland County will review road access and require improvements as necessary.

Mr. Beach moved to recommend the request that Parcel # 11-14-100-054 be Rezoned from ARR, Agricultural & Rural Residential to R-1.5, Single Family Residential. Mrs. Lewis supported and the motion carried with the following vote: Green – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Gostek – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Stander – yes, Temple – yes (8 yes votes).

Agenda Item #5:

Text Amendment Ordinance Z-014 to revise definitions related to elderly housing, add a new use of “Community Living Facility” and establish regulations regarding said uses, including maximum building height of 36 feet in certain conditions.

Mr. Temple moved to table Text Amendment Ordinance Z-014 until the February 21, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Stander supported and the motion carried with the following vote: Green – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Gostek – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Stander – yes, Temple – yes (8 yes votes).

Agenda Item #6:

Committee Updates  
Zoning Board of Appeals:  
Township Board:  
Highland Downtown Development Authority:  
Planning Director’s Update:

Updates were given by Committee liaisons.

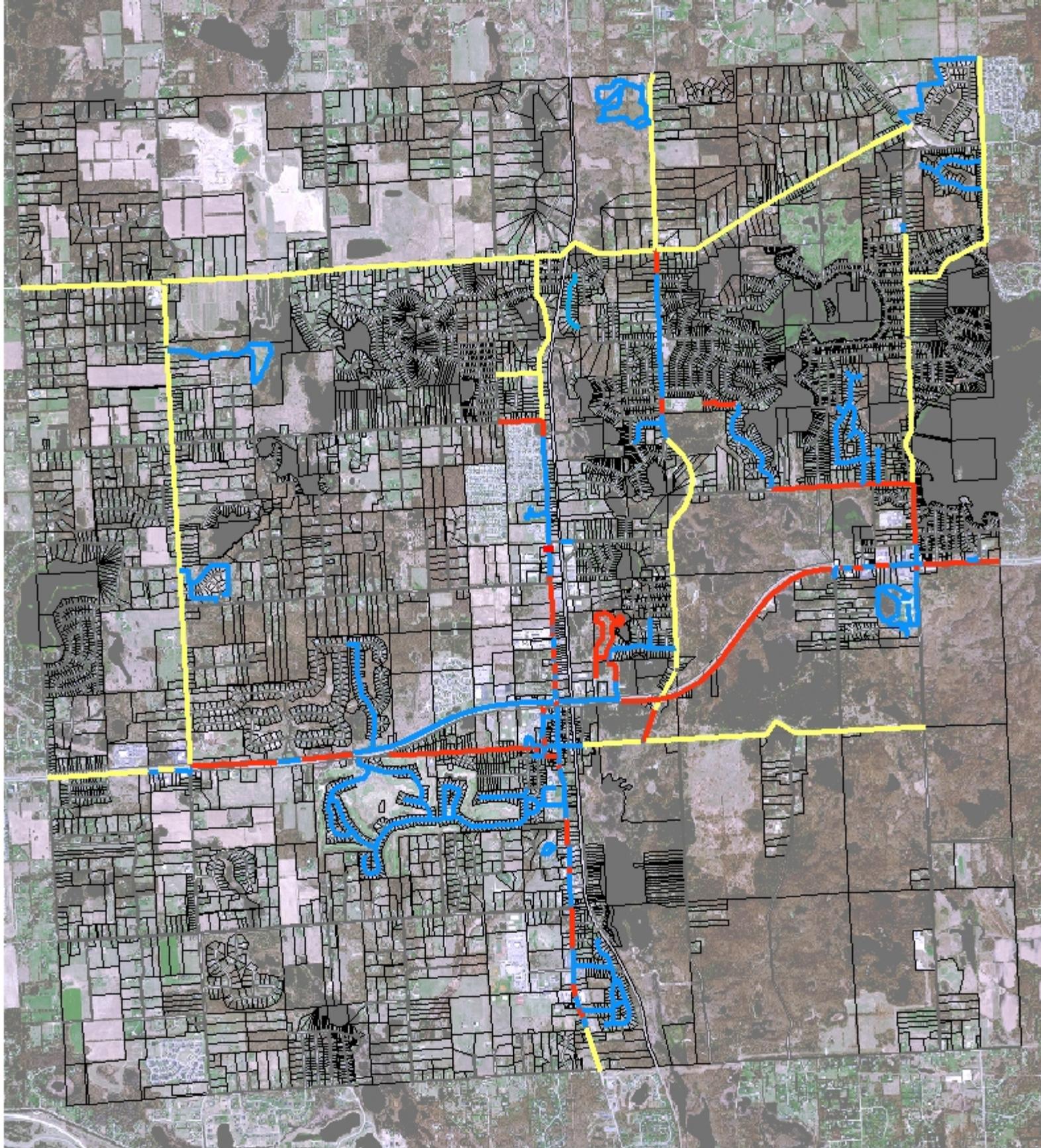
Agenda Item #7: Minutes: January 17, 2019

Mr. Beach moved to approve the minutes as presented from January 17, 2019. Mrs. Chynoweth supported and the motion carried with the following voice vote: Green – yes, Beach – yes, Chynoweth – yes, Gostek – yes, Lewis – yes, Smith – yes, Stander – yes, Temple – yes (8 yes votes).

Discussion:

Ms. Corwin requested that the Planning Commissioners consider allowing Mr. Hatmaker to replace the current approved site plan with a revised site plan (dated January 28, 2019.) This modified site plan increases the building addition 10’ to the

Pages from Highland Township Nonmotorized Pathway Plan



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND  
NON-MOTORIZED PATHWAY  
MASTER PLAN



- 1-5 YEARS PRIORITY
- 5-10 YEARS
- EXISTING

PROPOSED PATHWAYS

	1-5 YEARS	5-10 YEARS	TOTAL MILES	
<b>Milford Rd</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	
<i>(Clyde Rd- Rowe Rd)</i>				
<b>Duck Lk Rd</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2</b>	
<i>(Cherry- M59)</i>				
<b>Harvey Lk/ N. Milford</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	
<i>(Highland Oaks- Livingston Rd)</i>				
<b>N. Hickory Ridge Rd</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	
<i>(Clyde - M59)</i>				
<b>M-59/Highalnd Rd</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	
<i>(Tipsico Lk Rd - Duck Lk Rd)</i>				
<b>Livingston Rd.</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>3</b>	
<i>(M59-Duck Lake Rd)</i>				
<b>E. Wardlow Rd.</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	
<i>(Duck Lk Rd- Vero Dr)</i>				
<b>Clyde/White Lk Rd</b>		<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	
<i>(Tipsico Lk Rd- Rose Center Rd)</i>				
<b>Downey Lk Park</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	
	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>	

## NON-MOTORIZED PATHWAY TYPES

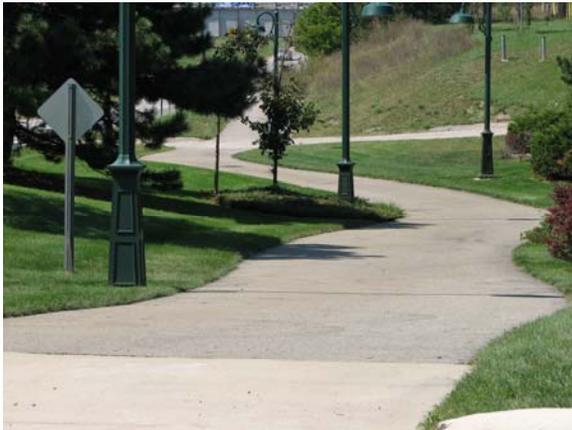
Highland Township's non-motorized system is comprised of a variety of path types as defined in the Oakland County Trails Master Plan. Each type of path will have a unique purpose and design. Each non-motorized pathway type is described here in greater detail.

### TRAIL

Multi-use or shared use trails that are generally separate from roadways and range from 10' – 14' wide. Many times trails are located in former railroad corridors, along streams and rivers or within utility easements.

### SAFETY/SIDE PATH

Typically wider than sidewalks, on average 8'-10'. They include multi-use pathways which are generally located within a road right-of-way but separate from the roadway surface.



*Safety/Side Path on M-59 at Town Center Dr.*

### REFUGE LANE

Lanes that are wider than sidewalks, on average 6'-8'. Located within a road right-of-way, but only separated from the roadway surface by a six inch mountable curb. Often utilized by pedestrian and bikers, but designed to provide a safe area for disabled vehicles.



### SIDEWALK

Pedestrian pathways generally located within a road right-of-way, but separate from the roadway surface. Sidewalks are typically 6' wide. Multi-use is not recommended on sidewalks.



### BIKE LANE

An on street bike lane is a portion of a roadway which has been designated by

striping, signing and pavement markings for the use of bicyclists.

### **BIKE ROUTE**

Bike routes are designated routes that have particular advantages to cyclists compared to alternative roadways or paths. A bike route can include roads with or without specific non-motorized treatment, side paths and trails. Bike routes are usually identified by a “Bicycle Route” sign which names the route, provides way-finding signage to nearby facilities, and may include mile markers.

### **PARK PATH**

Pathways within an existing Township, County, or State recreation area are referred to as Park Paths. These pathways may be designed and designated for specific user groups or seasonal activity.



*Duck Lake Pines Park Trail.*

## GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

**Goal #1:** Charter Township of Highland will provide a framework for creating a connected system of trails and greenways throughout Highland Township, to connect with adjacent communities, Oakland County's linked path and trail system, and be a part of a regional pathway and greenway system throughout S. E. Michigan. Highland Township's non-motorized pathway system is intended to serve a wide range of users, provide and maintain a safe connection to natural, cultural and civic destinations within Highland Township and outside the municipal boundaries.

Action #1: Charter Township of Highland will adopt a Non-Motorized Master Pathway Plan and maintenance and repair Ordinance.

Action #2: Charter Township of Highland Board of Trustees, by resolution, will adopt a commitment to move towards complete streets. Highland will cooperate with MDOT and the RCOC in planning, designing and developing streets according to complete street standards.

Action #3: Charter Township of Highland Board of Trustees will appropriate funds for the Priority and Future Pathway improvements.

Action #4: Charter Township of Highland will survey all existing pathways, pedestrian crossings and entrance ways to public buildings to check for compliance with the American Disabilities Act and develop a priority plan to make the necessary updates.

Action #5: Charter Township of Highland will re-evaluate The Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan ever five years along with the Recreation Plan and update accordingly.

**Goal #2:** Every student living within one mile of a public school has the opportunity to safely walk, bike or skate to school.

Action #6: Charter Township of Highland will work with Huron Valley School District to move forward with Safe Routes to School program.

Action #7: Charter Township of Highland will evaluate the need for a planned bike route.

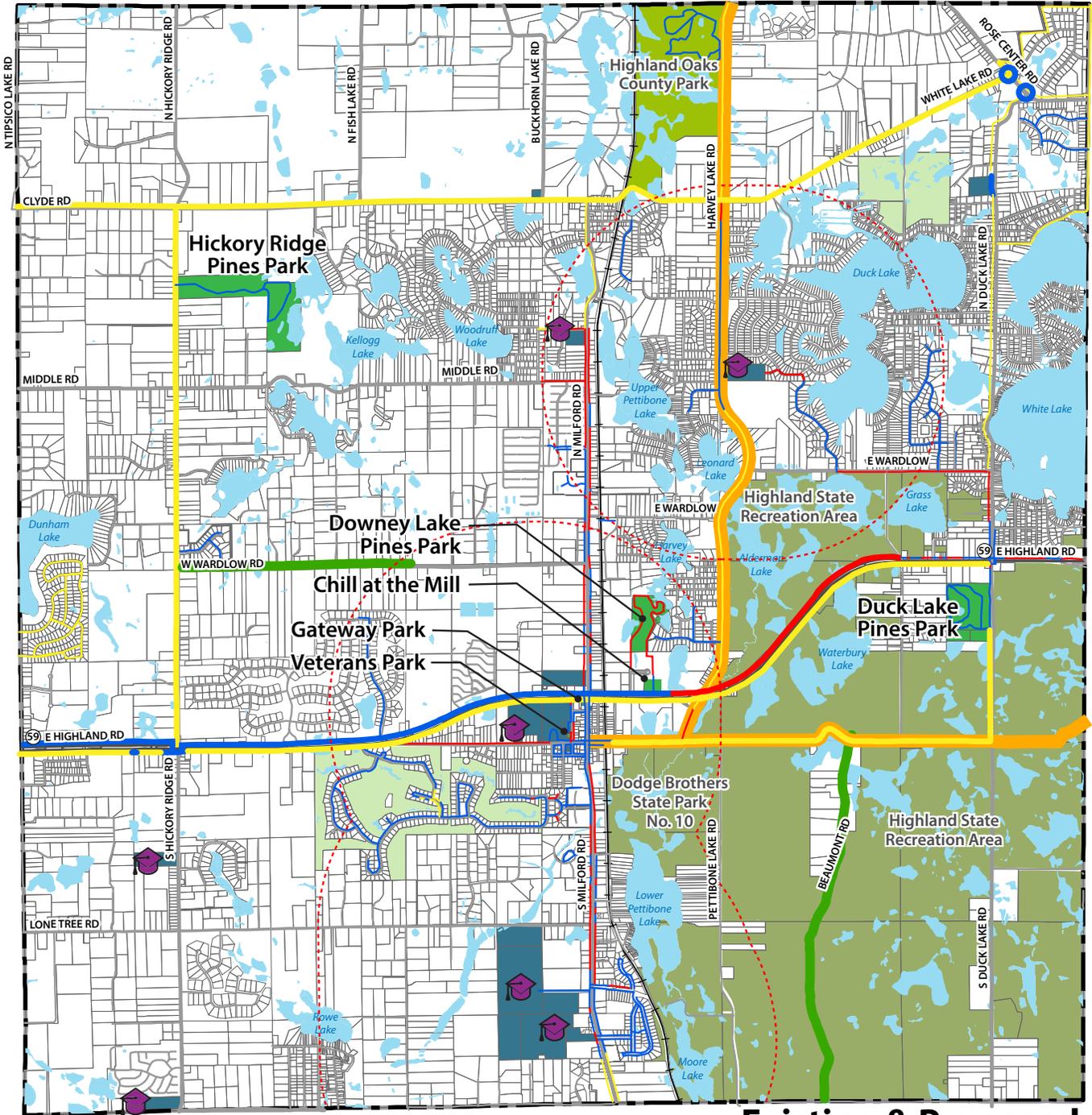
Action #8: Charter Township of Highland will continually prioritize and install pathways.

**Goal #3:** Improve Highland Township resident's non-motorized transportation opportunities by connecting the population centers to existing parkland.

Action #9: Charter Township of Highland will continually prioritize and install pathways.

Map 3 from Highland Township Recreation Master Plan 2021-2025

Map 3. Existing and Proposed Non-Motorized Facilities



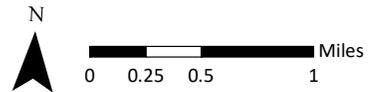
**Township Non-motorized Facilities**

- Blue = Existing
- Red = Planned (1 - 5 year priority)
- Yellow = Planned (5 - 10 year priority)
- Green = Natural Beauty Road
- Orange - Oakland County Trail Concept Under Consideration
- Solid/thin = Sidewalk
- Solid/thick = Multi-use Trail

- Township-owned Parks
- Oakland County Parks
- State of Michigan Parks
- Private Recreation Facilities
- Schools & Institutional Facilities
- Safe Route to School Grant Eligible

**Existing & Proposed Non-motorized Facilities**

Highland Township  
Oakland County



Carlisle/Wortman Associates  
October 2020  
Source: Oakland County GIS

