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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public input is an essential element of the master planning process, and often, the value of a Master Plan can be traced back to the amount of meaningful, substantial, and collaborative public engagement. There should be little doubt that accumulated public attitudes and perceptions are the foundation for a Master Plan and its key principles.

### Recent Public Engagement

Public engagement is not new to Whitewater Township. Looking back several years, a history of reaching out to residents to learn about public attitudes and perceptions is evident. Recent efforts have included the following:

- General Public Survey (2009)
- Medical Marihuana Survey (2017)
- Event Barn Survey (2019)
- Park and Recreation Survey (2020)
- ARPA Fund Survey (2022)

While readers are encouraged to review the full reports from each survey, a summary of each is provided below.

#### General Public Survey (2009)

In 2009, a general community input survey was conducted to support plans to update the Master Plan. While the subsequent Master Plan was not completed until 2015, the data generated in 2009 provided useful information. Surveys were mailed to 1,425 property owners in Whitewater Township. These included full-time and seasonal residents and those who do not live in the



Township but own property. A total of 564 completed surveys were received. Some general takeaways from this survey included:

- People think of Whitewater Township as “Rural,” “Agricultural,” and “Quiet.” (Q1)
- In the future, people wanted to continue to be “Rural,” “Agricultural,” and “Safe.” (Q2)
- Residents wanted the Township to develop or improve, shorelines and waterways, fire protection/EMS, farmland/open space. (Q4)
- Residents supported growth – but they want to plan for it. (Q5)
- Primary types of development people wanted included small-scale commercial (flower shop, bakery), agricultural tourism, residential. (Q6)
- Residents were not sure about redevelopment in Williamsburg – but they are supportive of the following uses- Small-scale commercial (flower shop, bakery), single-family residential, restaurants / Cafés (Q7, Q8)

- Residents did not support higher-density residential (multi-family, apartments, etc.) (Q9)
- Residents supported residential development “scattered throughout the township,” in “areas of existing development,” and “on acreage.” (Q10)
- In terms of commercial and office uses, residents most wanted to see small-scale commercial (flower shop, bakery), sit-down restaurants, and café/coffee shops. (Q11)
- New commercial development should occur along M-72 and in the Village of Williamsburg (Q12).
- This new commercial development should include agricultural tourism, service commercial, and clustered commercial with open spaces (Q14)
- There was strong support for agricultural-based tourism. (Q13)
- Residents wanted to see M-72 with natural open spaces and more or less the same as today (2009) (Q 15)
- Residents were split on the idea that accessory buildings (pole barns, garages) should be allowed on a lot without a home (Q16). They were similarly split on the notion that residential accessory buildings should be limited in size. (Q17)
- Residents generally supported home-based businesses. (Q18)
- Priority zoning issues included junk/trash, noise, odors, and signs. (Q19)

- Residents supported 5-acre minimum lot sizes in the southern parts of Whitewater Township (Q20)
- Residents supported new smaller lot sizes in Williamsburg and subdivisions (Q21)
- Residents supported more stringent septic tank regulations for property along shorelines and waterways (Q21)

## Medical Marihuana Survey (2017)

In late 2017, the Medical Marihuana Facilities Licensing Act (Public Act 281) took effect in Michigan. It allowed for ways to make the growing, processing, testing, transportation, and sale of medical marihuana a commercial business opportunity. It allowed local governments to decide if a business of this type was locally appropriate. Whitewater Township residents were surveyed and largely responded with comments that did not favor local growers, processors, transporters, sales, and safety compliance facilities.

## Event Barn Survey (2019)

In 2019, there was significant discussion on the topic of event barns. Event barns were defined as agricultural bars/structures transformed to provide a new venue for weddings, parties, or similar events. Because of the potential impacts of such facilities, the township reached out to residents to learn how to balance the rights of barn owners and general community interests and neighbors. A total of 390 surveys were returned, and highlights of key findings included the following:

- Zoning District most suitable for Event Barns: Commercial (29%), Agricultural (27%), Recreational (16%), Industrial (13%)

- Minimum acreage appropriate for Event Barns: 20+ Acres (26%), 6-10 Acres (20%), 11-15 Acres (15%), 16-20 Acres (14%).
- The appropriate number of events to be held during each calendar year: 0-10 (24%), Opposed (22%), 11-20 (18%), and 30+ (11%).
- Potential Benefits of Event Barns: Flexible Use of Barns/Structures (29%), Revenue Source for Owners (27%), Preserve Rural Character (15%), Increased Tourism (13%), No Benefits (13%).
- Types of Activities That Should Be Allowed: Weddings/Receptions (30%), Parties (29%), Picnics (24%).
- Have you attended an event at one of these facilities? Yes (51%), No (48%).

### Park and Recreation Survey (2020)

To support the development of the Whitewater Township Recreation Plan 2021-2025, a survey was conducted to define interest levels in a wide-ranging list of potential improvements at township parks. A total of 213 surveys were tabulated, and those opinions helped shape the goals and priorities in the 2021 Recreation Plan (See Page 12).

### ARPA Survey (2022)

To help define priorities concerning how to use available ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds, Whitewater Township undertook a survey. About 1,500 surveys were mailed out, and 194 surveys were returned. Residents preferred to spend ARPA funds on road infrastructure, expansion of broadband internet for all, fire truck repair or replacement, recreation and park facilities, and public safety/enforcement.

### Master Plan Update Public Engagement Efforts

Building on the local tradition of public engagement, and placing a high value on citizen input to drive the Master Plan update, the Planning Commission created a subcommittee to help determine how best to reach out to residents. This subcommittee, known as the Resident Outreach Subcommittee (ROS), was formed in early 2023, and it included Planning Commission members and citizens at large who graciously volunteered their time at meetings.

Ultimately, the subcommittee recommended a three-phased community outreach effort, including an updated community survey, an open house-type community planning event, and a planning workshop. The consensus among ROS and Planning Commission members was that while the 2009 community survey (and more recent surveys

#### Master Plan Update Public Engagement Efforts

COMMUNITY  
SURVEY

OPEN HOUSE

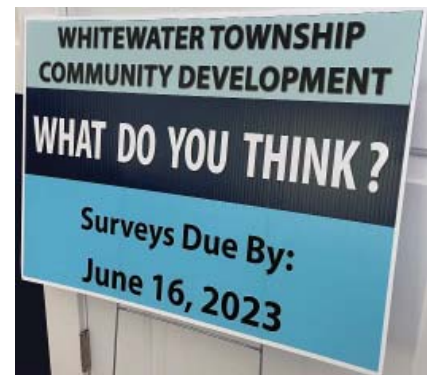
PLANNING  
WORKSHOP

focused on certain topics) were helpful information, more current and focused survey data was needed. There was also the belief that while a community survey reaches most residents with questions, it lacks opportunities for dialog, learning, and collaboration. Consequently, it was decided that two in-person events were needed to provide more substantial opportunities for actual dialogue. These events occurred in September and November 2023, and positive feedback was received about all three efforts to reach out to residents for input. It should also be noted that to help maintain impartiality, Networks Northwest was hired to assist with the 2023 survey and the Land Information Access Association (LIAA) was hired to assist with the open house and workshop.

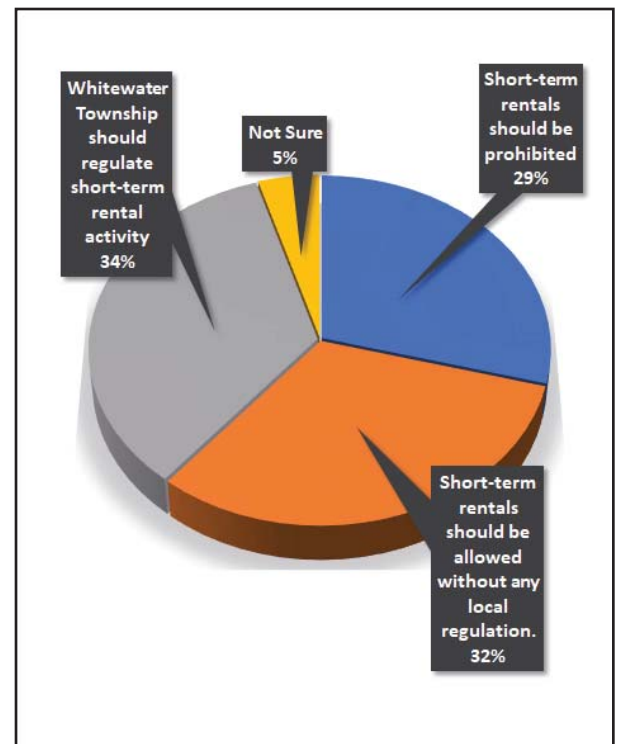
## Community Survey

About 620 surveys were returned by mail and electronically. Survey questions included a mix of multiple-choice questions and areas of open-ended comments. The number of responses varied slightly by each question. The survey was well publicized with email blasts, distributed flyers, website postings, and signs placed at strategic locations around the township. A complete report with all survey results was created and posted on the Whitewater Township website. In summary, the following can be said about the results:

- Reflecting that Whitewater Township has an older population, about **three out of four survey respondents were 55 or older.**
- **Nearly eighty percent were full-time residents**, and most were **from east of Elk Lake Road and north of M-72.**
- **When asked whether Whitewater Township has changed for the better or worse over the last ten years, the most common responses were neutral.** This was in terms of the development quality, the rate or pace of development occurring, the kinds of development happening, and the adequacy of infrastructure to support growth.
- When asked about the existing pattern of township development and areas respondents think Whitewater Township should address to improve the quality of life, popular answers included the need to **address traffic congestion/dangerous intersections, developing convenient bike trails and walking paths, affordable housing or local housing options and property maintenance.**
- On the subject of what **features contribute to rural character, the most popular responses were the presence of orchards, farm stands, and other agricultural land, woodlots and forests, and extended views of undeveloped land across the landscape.**
- Residents were asked to identify the most scenic view from a public road in Whitewater Township. Most commonly, views of Elk Lake, Lake Skegemog, Elk Lake Road, Williamsburg Road, Supply Road, Palaestrum Hill, M-72, and Angel Rd were mentioned.
- On the topic of a required minimum lot size in the Agricultural Zoning District, **residents narrowly indicated that the existing minimum lot size of about an acre is too small.**



- Respondents support the requirements that lots in the RC-1 Zoning District should be at least 5 acres.
- **There is strong support for agricultural tourism as a broad category of activities that includes roadside stands, u-pick operations, and other activities incidental to the operation of a farm** that brings members of the public to the farm for educational, recreational, or retail purposes.
- Generally speaking, **residents want to see commercial development along M-72 have smaller building footprints (75,000 square feet or less), mixed uses (potentially retail, services, office, residential, etc.), controlled signage, limited numbers of driveways, and extensive landscaping.**
- **There is support (three out of four residents) for encouraging redevelopment of Williamsburg, north of M-72, into a downtown-type setting** with small-scale retail, commercial services, restaurants, and upper-floor housing.
- **The community is divided on the issue of short-term rentals.** About one-third want to prohibit, about one-third want to allow without any regulation, and about one-third want to enable with some form of regulation (such as a licensing mechanism, limits for how many short-term rentals a property owner could operate, limits on how many short-term rentals can be approved in a community, etc.)
- **Residents generally support large solar or wind facilities**, but with basic approval conditions to minimize impacts on the rural landscape.



### Scenic Views

Residents were asked to identify the most scenic view from a public road in Whitewater Township. The purpose of this question went beyond general interest. When people identify scenic views that come to mind, they express a special connection to a place and indicate what they value and appreciate. These considerations have land use planning implications since identified areas deserve closer attention regarding how they might change with future development. Extra consideration and attention are warranted when considering future land uses and possible preservation initiatives.



By far, the **Elk Lake Road** corridor was identified as the most scenic view from a public road in Whitewater Township. About 70 respondents identified Elk Lake Road as offering the most scenic views, mentioning views of the agricultural fields, orchards, and glimpses of Elk Lake to the east. Additionally, as noted below, roads that connect to Elk Lake Road were also popular choices.

**Elk Lake Rd. North of Township Park**



Photo Credit - Horizon Drone Services

Approximately 35 people drew attention to the **M-72 corridor**. Some drew attention to locations outside Whitewater Township (such as the scenic overlook about 1.75 miles east of Baggs Road) but identified the view looking west into Whitewater Township, including Lake Skegemog. Others noted views of places further west toward Williamsburg.

**M-72 Looking East from Williamsburg Rd./Elk Lake Rd. Intersection**



Photo Credit - Horizon Drone Services

Approximately 18 people identified **Williamsburg Road** as offering scenic views from M-72 to Supply Road. Comments included the trees and rolling beautiful landscape. Most of the land on either side of this corridor is under state ownership.

**Williamsburg Rd. Looking South from Crisp Rd.**



Photo Credit - Horizon Drone Services

## Master Plan

Approximately 14 people said **Palaestrum Road** was the most scenic. Generally, comments included an appreciation of views of Elk Lake to the east.

Approximately six people chose **Baggs Road** because of its views of water.

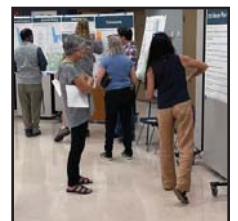
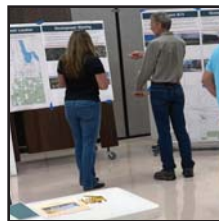
Approximately 13 chose **Angell Road** as the most scenic, primarily looking east toward Elk Lake.

Approximately five people mentioned **Carnes Road**, which affords a view of Elk Lake.

Approximately six people chose **Broomhead Road** for its views, primarily toward the north. Again, views of Elk Lake were mentioned.

## Open House

An Open House was held on September 28, 2023, at Mill Creek Elementary School. Between 80 and 100 people attended (not all participants signed in, so an exact number is unavailable). This event was well publicized with email blasts, distributed flyers, website postings, and signs at strategic locations around the township before the event. This session was a walk-through style open house where participants could attend at their convenience anytime between 4-7 pm. Five stations were set up throughout the room, each focusing on a specific topic. Each station had multiple poster boards containing information, with opportunities to vote on certain questions and leave open-ended feedback. A complete report with all Open House results was created and posted on the Whitewater



Township website. This includes photos of all boards taken at the end of the Open House to preserve a record of comments and feedback. Readers are encouraged to review the whole report. However, in summary, the following offers key results.

### 2015 Master Plan Revisit

One of the first boards open house participants encountered addressed the existing 2015 Master Plan. This exercise aimed to help identify the continued relevance of existing community goals. Specifically, the goals identified in that document were listed, and participants were asked to “vote” to keep (green dots), not to keep (red dots), or indicate that they were unsure (orange dots). Participants were supportive of the goals from the 2015 Master Plan. As shown, the most significant area of disagreement pertained to streamlining the application process for development. Similarly, there was softer support for “encouraging new development in areas with infrastructure that is available or attainable.”

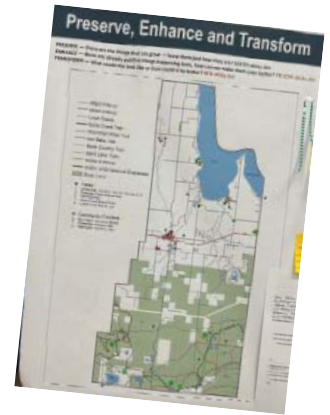


<b>Respect the Rights of the Township Residents and Property Owners</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Orange</b>	<b>Red</b>
Respect private property rights as guaranteed by the State of Michigan and United States Constitutions.	35	0	0
Encourage new development in areas with infrastructure that is available or attainable.	12	10	6
Encourage land uses that are compatible with adjacent land uses.	17	2	0
Encourage the clean-up or containment of blighted and/or contaminated sites.	31	0	0
Increase awareness of land use issues and the techniques available to address land use issues.	15	0	0
<b>Preserve Whitewater Township's Rural Character</b>			
Encourage development that retains or mimics natural features.	7	1	2
Encourage guidelines that preserve the environmental integrity of the Township floodplains, wetlands, watersheds and water bodies.	29	0	2
Encourage community sewer and water systems in areas of the greatest environmental need.	12	1	0
Encourage the continuation of hunting, fishing, trapping, and other outdoor recreational opportunities.	24	0	0
<b>Build a Sense of Community</b>			
Encourage social and cultural activities for year-round and seasonal residents.	26	0	0
Recognize and preserve the scale and compact nature of the commercial district.	16	4	1
Support and encourage the development and implementation of a recreation plan.	19	0	0
Encourage preservation of historically significant features within the Township.	15	0	0
<b>Encourage Economic Opportunities</b>			
Support property owners who engage in home occupation activities which are in character with the area/neighborhood.	19	6	0
Support business, agricultural production and agri-tourism.	22	2	0
Streamline the application process for development.	5	3	10
Encourage municipal infrastructure for the benefit of the Township and areas of the greatest need.	12	1	1



### Preserve, Enhance, and Transform

Participants were provided with a map of Whitewater Township and asked to identify what areas they would like to preserve (keep as is) and areas they would like to enhance (make even better) or transform (change in some way). People identified areas around Williamsburg, Petobego Creek Natural Area, Battle Creek Natural Area, and Whitewater Township Park as areas that could be made better. Also identified were traffic issues near the corner of Crisp and Moore and concerns over the proposed development near M-72 and Baggs Road.



### Alternative Energy

Information was provided about alternative energy, with questions about how people feel about the potential for such developments in Whitewater Township. There was a mix of comments on this topic. However, in November 2023, the State of Michigan took action to preempt local regulation of alternative energy facilities by local governments in favor of state-level approval and control over regulating such facilities. Governor Whitmer signed House Bill 5120 and House Bill 5121, which amended the Clean and Renewable Energy and Energy Waste Reduction Act and Zoning Enabling Act. The general intent is to streamline permitting for renewable energy projects to make them easier to build in Michigan. House Bill 5121 amends the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act to make zoning ordinances subject to House Bill 5120. Implementing regulations are expected to be promulgated in 2024.

### Rural Character

As noted, residents could weigh in on what landscape elements contribute to the rural character in the community survey. Popular responses were “orchards, farm stands, and other agricultural land,” “woodlots and forests,” and “extended views of undeveloped land across the landscape.” Other similar popular answers were “roadways with limited development on either side” and “open fields.” These survey choices were validated when visuals were provided on boards at the open house. Images of various landscape features were provided, and open-house participants were asked to show support for images provided on boards with green or red dots. Popular images included those shown below.



## Housing Development

Given the premise of projected growth in Whitewater Township, residents were asked to show support for housing development designs and preferred locations. Support for higher-density residential development was found along M-72 and near the Elk Lake Road/M-72 intersection.

In terms of development design, higher density subdivisions were rejected. What did gather support were rural homes located along existing roads and subdivisions with low-density single-family housing units that might also be clustered to allow for common open spaces.

Regarding non-single family housing units, residents are less supportive of high-density residential development. When presented with images of townhouses and multi-family housing complexes, several red dots appeared, indicating a level of disapproval of these types of building formats. Generally, more red dots were associated with larger density three-story multi-family complexes (such as townhouses and apartment complexes) compared to housing developments with less density and building mass (such as duplexes, zero lot line units, and villas), which were viewed more favorably.



*Support for Rural Large Lot Subdivisions Indicated*



*Support for Rural Large Lot Development Along Existing Roads*



*Preferences for duplexes, zero lot line, villa type housing formats*



*Less Support for Higher Density Multi-family Housing Complexes*



*No Support for Smaller Lot "Cookie Cutter" Subdivisions*



### Commercial Development

Broadly speaking, the M-72 corridor was identified as the only area considered for commercial development in Whitewater Township. When asked about desired types of development, residents were clearly in favor of rural architectural building designs and less enthusiastic about typical commercial buildings frequently found along major commercial corridors (i.e., those with a distinct corporate or franchise identity). These results are generally consistent with resident survey data wherein the most popular features of desired future commercial development were smaller building footprints, mixed uses, and limited signage.



### Downtown

Like the survey data, workshop results supported developing (redeveloping) a more traditional downtown area in Williamsburg. While the exact locations were not defined, people generally favored creating (or recreating) a downtown with new or renovated buildings. Using the term "recreating" is accurate, given the historical development patterns described in Chapter 2. Such a downtown area would have features that consist of two or three-story buildings, little or no setback between the right-of-way and the building façade, walkable spaces, and pedestrian orientation. Substantial window glazing at the street level, with pedestrian-scale street lighting, were also features that residents support in terms of new development or redevelopment.



### Infrastructure

Infrastructure is divided into the subtopics of trails, roads, and public facilities. Workshop participants consider trails to be a positive attribute of Whitewater Township but also want to see better signage and some separation of bike and walking trails. Regarding roads, residents focus on M-72 and want to see access managed as development occurs. Efforts to reduce or combine curb cuts to enhance vehicular safety on M-72 with new development (or redevelopment) is supported.

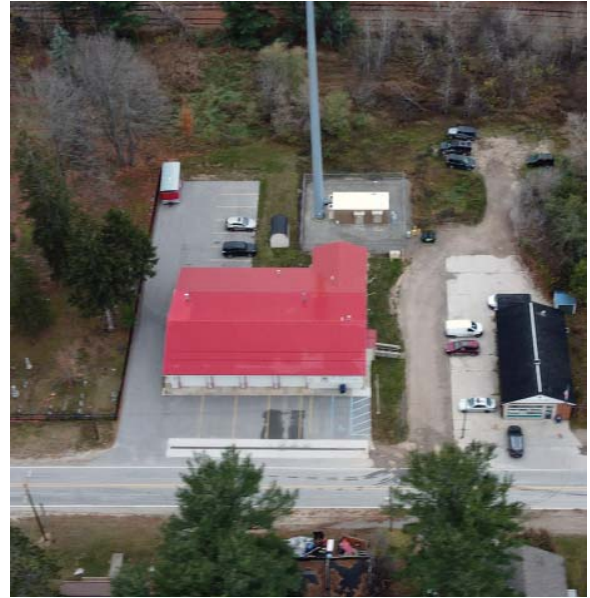


Regarding facilities, workshop participants identified the need for improvement in EMS/Fire facilities. They also noted the potential to construct a new EMS/Fire/Town Hall facility to utilize shared spaces and activity adjacencies. Most agreed that a new Township Hall (as a stand-alone building) was not needed at this time.

Water and sewer infrastructure did not receive considerable attention, except that the topic of septic field inspections along lakefront property was raised as a general comment. This comment received eleven yes votes and four no votes.

### General Feedback

General open house feedback included topics related to short-term rentals and the need for more ordinance enforcement. As with the survey data, opinions are divided on short term rentals in terms of allowing them, regulating them and prohibiting them.



### Master Plan Workshop – Goals and Strategies

On November 7, 2023, a workshop was held at Mill Creek Elementary School. This event was advertised in much the same way as the prior survey and open house, with email blasts, web postings, signs, and flyers. The turnout was very good, with about 60 people in attendance. This session differed from the prior open house as it was intentionally more structured. It began with a brief presentation that recapped the recent survey and open house results. One important highlight during this presentation was the strong evidence of continued support for the goals and general direction set in the 2015 Master Plan (See Page 64). However, it was also explained that the 2015 Master Plan lacked clear information on the steps necessary to achieve community goals. Given this context, the workshop was oriented toward discovering possible steps forward that align with the goals that residents support. Workshop participants were organized into four groups and tasked with discussing possible policies and initiatives for Whitewater Township. Possible policies and initiatives were provided to represent starting points for conversation and organized under the goal headings found in the 2015 Master Plan. Participants were placed into groups to facilitate conversations, and each group was free to agree, disagree, edit draft policies and initiatives, or suggest new ones. They were also asked to provide thoughts on priorities.





## Master Plan



**Workshop Results and Planning Terminology:** A summary of workshop results is provided in the following pages. Before presenting this, however, clarifying the terminology used from this point forward is helpful. Master plans define **what should be done** to make a community more livable and then describe **how to** make progress toward a more desirable future. The term “what should be done” relates to community goals or principles that paint a picture of what a community should be like in the future. The term “how to” relates to initiatives to be taken to support those goals and principles. Planning policies are also a means to achieve community goals.

**Planning Principles:** Planning Principles define the overarching desired future of community development in Whitewater Township. They are intentionally general and broad.

**Planning Goals:** Planning goals more specifically define what we want to achieve as a community. Goals can often be categorized. To be most useful, planning goals should be “Smart Goals.”

**Smart Goals:** Smart goals are a framework for goal-setting that utilizes the acronym “SMART” to make matters clearer and more actionable. **SMART** stands for:

<b>Specific:</b>	The goal should be well-defined and clear.
<b>Measurable:</b>	The goal should have criteria for measuring progress and success.
<b>Achievable:</b>	The goal should be attainable and not impossible.
<b>Realistic:</b>	The goal should be within reach and relevant.
<b>Time-bound:</b>	The goal should have a clear start and end date.

**Planning Initiative:** Steps to make progress toward a community goal may be a specific initiative to be undertaken. Initiatives are action items or tasks to be completed to achieve something. This might include developing new zoning standards, procedures, or similar actions to address an issue. Defined initiatives should be associated with a sense of priority and timeframe.

**Planning Policy:** Planning policies help define courses of action given future circumstances. For example, a planning policy may guide how to respond to future rezoning requests, or may provide direction for action when opportunities present themselves (i.e., possible property acquisitions, funding opportunities, etc.).

## Master Plan Workshop – Results

Workshop participants were given 45 minutes in group conversations to consider proposed goals, policies, and initiatives. Each group then made presentations toward the end of the evening to share areas of consensus. While a detailed report of the findings is available on the Township website, highlights included the following:

1

### Planning Principle: Respect the Rights of the Township Residents and Property Owners.

Topics of conversation included the need to balance land use regulation with private property rights and the need for guardrails to help ensure that how one person uses and enjoys their property does not substantially impact another. More specifically, workshop participants indicated support for these potential goals, policies, and initiatives....

- Continuing to clarify and improve the organization of the existing Zoning Ordinance.
- A review of areas zoned R-1 in the township. This includes considering more areas to be zoned R-1 and taking a close look at the appropriateness of R-1 zoning areas along the streams in northern parts of the township.
- Addressing blight with the ability to enforce an existing or updated ordinance.
- Review the uses permitted in each zoning district and eliminate the “cumulative” nature of the existing zoning ordinance.
- Improve landscaping and buffering regulations in the zoning ordinance to help minimize off-site impacts resulting from noise or lighting.
- Reviewing and updating regulations concerning high-density residential development.
- Creating practical regulations concerning alternative energy facilities in Whitewater Township.

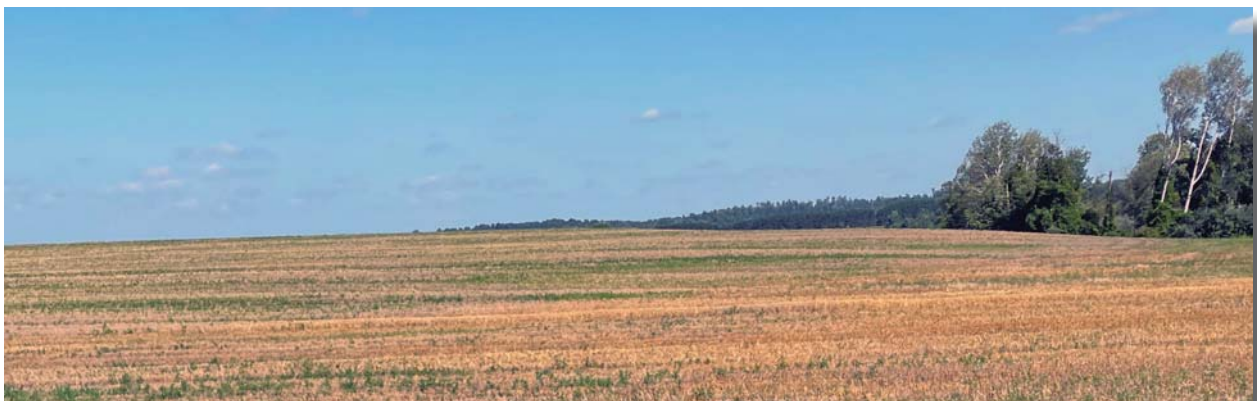


### 2

#### **Planning Principle: Preserve Whitewater Township's Rural Character**

As indicated in the past surveys and the open house, preserving Whitewater Township's rural character is important to most residents. Workshop participants indicated support for the following potential goals, policies, and initiatives:

- To create and/or update regulatory tools that preserve and maintain rural character. This happens at several levels.
  - Additional study of the appropriate minimum lot size in the A-1 district. While some support for increasing the required minimum lot size so that more land would be needed for new homes is evident, there are also important concerns. These concerns include the fact that larger minimum lot sizes convert more farmland to non-farm purposes and place a burden on farm owners who want to sell off a few parcels.
  - Maintaining the 4 to 1 width-to-depth ratio.
  - Elimination of the R-1 Zoning District along tributaries
  - Reevaluate the elimination of zoning requirements previously in the repealed Article 27: Regulations for Environmentally Sensitive Areas.
  - Create an improved PUD Zoning District that developers are inclined to use
  - Review and update zoning requirements to further support agricultural tourism
  - Develop more consensus about the desirability of voluntary or mandatory architectural design guidelines.
- Land east of Cook Road on M-72 is zoned Agricultural. To maintain the rural qualities of this area, land should remain zoned Agricultural.
- There is a road plan for Whitewater Township that should be updated.



## 3

**Planning Principle: Build a Sense of Community**

Building a sense of community is aided by having places where people can socially interact. Like most rural townships, Whitewater Township does not have a large urban center. It does however have parks, public buildings, and Mill Creek School, where people see their neighbors and attend events. Years ago, Williamsburg was more of a place to do business and socially interact (See Chapter 2). Recreating a community center in Williamsburg as a social and business hub is an idea people are drawn to, but there are challenges. Workshop participants indicated support for the following potential goals, policies, and initiatives....

- Attract and encourage redevelopment in the “V” Village Zoning District (North of M-72 and west of Elk Lake Road).
- Evaluate permitted uses and development standards in the “V” Village Zoning District (North of M-72 and west of Elk Lake Road) to ensure they align with the development concept of a downtown-type setting with small-scale retail, commercial services, restaurants, and upper floor housing. The “V” Zoning District should allow for a mix of residential and commercial uses and could include townhomes.
- Encourage discovering feasible central water and sewer options to support more intensive development in Williamsburg. Sewer and water would be costly without a partnership with the tribe/casino and/or grant funding sources.
- Blight also needs to be addressed in Williamsburg.
- Development of a M-72 corridor plan with the new Metropolitan Planning Association should be pursued.
- Development of a non-motorized plan for Whitewater Township supports building a sense of community to the extent that it promotes travel options such as bikes and walking, where social interaction is much more likely.
- Create a local community development foundation (CDF) or establish partnerships with existing CDF’s.
- Maintain and develop partnerships with the Elk Rapids School District



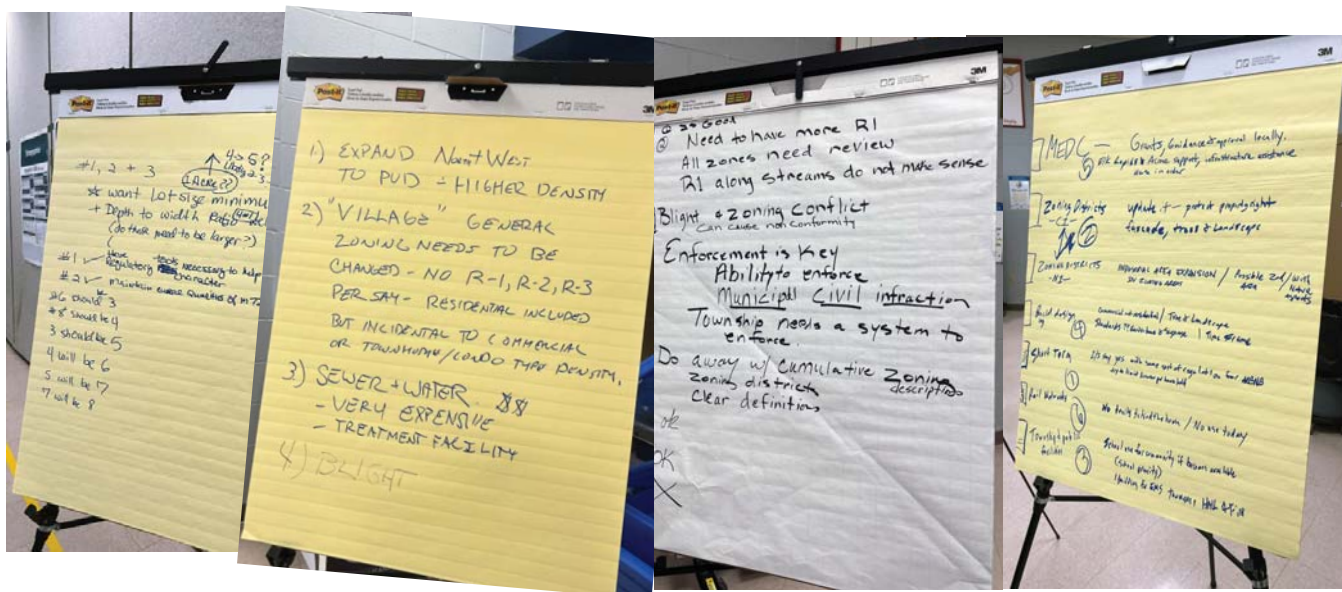


## 4

### Planning Principle: Encourage Economic Opportunities

There is clear support for the idea that Whitewater Township should be a place that cultivates economic opportunities of all types. From a land development perspective, the township can support this ideal with clear zoning regulations and a predictable and efficient development review process. Workshop participants indicated support for the following potential goals, policies, and initiatives....

- Pursue designation as a “Redevelopment Ready Community” through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Grants and other assistance can be a key to redevelopment in Williamsburg and possibly infrastructure funding.
- To create and/or update regulatory tools that cultivates economic opportunities. This happens at several levels.
  - Update the C-1 (Commercial) Zoning District regarding permitted/special uses, development standards and landscaping requirements.
  - Update the N-1 (Industrial) Zoning District regarding permitted/special uses and development standards. Possibly expand the N-1 Zoning District.
  - Develop greater consensus about voluntary or mandatory architectural design guidelines in C-1 (Commercial).
  - Develop greater consensus on the issue of Short-term Rentals (STR) in Whitewater Township. About 2/3 of residents say yes to allowing short-term rentals with or without regulation.
  - Explore ways better to utilize the rail track west of the post office.
  - Invest in township facilities as development catalysts and work with the School District to find ways to partner in meeting community needs.



*See separate report for high resolution images of these flip charts on the township website*