



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

LOCATION: TOWNSHIP ANNEX, 7527 HIGHLAND ROAD, WHITE LAKE, MI 48383
THURSDAY, JUNE 01, 2023 – 7:00 PM

White Lake Township | 7525 Highland Rd | White Lake, MI 48383 | Phone: (248) 698-3300 | www.whitelaketwp.com

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. [May 4, 2023](#)
6. CALL TO THE PUBLIC (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)
7. PUBLIC HEARING
8. CONTINUING BUSINESS
 - A. [Master Plan Update](#)
9. NEW BUSINESS
10. LIAISON'S REPORT
11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
12. COMMUNICATIONS
13. NEXT MEETING DATE: July 6, 2023
14. ADJOURNMENT

Procedures for accommodations for persons with disabilities: The Township will follow its normal procedures for individuals with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in this meeting. **Please contact the Township Clerk's office at (248) 698-3300 X-164 at least two days in advance of the meeting.** An attempt will be made to make reasonable accommodations.

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 4, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Seward called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

T. Joseph Seward, Chairperson
Debby Dehart
Merrie Carlock
Matt Slicker
Pete Meagher

Absent:

Scott Ruggles, Board Liaison
Rob Seeley
Steve Anderson, Vice Chairperson
Mark Fine

Others:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Dave Hieber, WLT Assessor
Rowan Brady, Beckett & Raeder
Hannah Micallef, Recording Secretary

2 members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Meagher said the Approval of the Minutes should read "April 6, 2023."

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, supported by Commissioner Dehart to approve the agenda as amended. The motion CARRIED with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 6, 2023

Commissioner Meagher wanted to clarify on page 3 that the call to the public should read "closed to the public at 7:07 P.M."

MOTION by Meagher, seconded by Slicker to approve the minutes as amended. The motion CARRIED with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairperson Seward opened the call to the public at 7:02 P.M. Seeing none, he closed the call to the public at 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. PA 116 Request for parcel 12-05-200-034

Assessor Hieber stated that the Ruggles family made a PA 116 application. He stated the property met the requirements, and the parcel was eligible for the program. Property owners were able to put their property into this agreement and dedicate the use of the property as a strictly farmland, and in return, the property owner would receive income credit taxes for entering in the program.

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Carlock to recommend approval to the Township Board of the PA 116 Request for parcel 12-05-200-034 for a 10-year period. The motion CARRIED with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).

CONTINUING BUSINESS

A. Master Plan Update

Mr. Brady presented the Natural Features and Open Spaces chapters of the Master Plan. The Planning Commission discussed the feasibility of time of sale/transfer ordinance in regards to septic systems within the Township. He then went over a brief history of White Lake Township.

The next meeting would cover the Transportation chapter, and the meeting after would cover Future Land Use. Redevelopment sites would be discussed as well. A public open house would tentatively be scheduled for the end of the summer to engage the community.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

LIAISON'S REPORT

The ZBA heard 5 cases last month. Two cases were approved, two cases were denied, and one case was tabled. 9 cases were placed on the agenda for this month, and the meeting would begin at 5:00 P.M.

The May Parks & Recreation meeting was canceled. There was hope that construction on Stanley Park would begin going into 2024.

The Sephora sign on Kohl's was approved by the Township Board. The property maintenance order was to be amended in regards to lawns that violated the ordinance. The notice would be posted in the paper, and would bypass the need for noticing the property owners and waiting on them to comply. The Township would be able to cut the grass on violating properties and charge the property owners more easily with the proposed amendment. The CIA amendment was headed to the Board for its second reading. The Planning Commissioners and Zoning Board of Appeals members received a pay increase to \$95.00 a meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Oakland Harvesters submitted their final site plans. West Valley and Lakepointe resubmitted their final site plans for review as well. The porkchop between McDonald's and Taco Bell would be installed next week. The CIA will meet again June 1st to review the draft TIF plan. The legal reviews of the contracts with McCarthy and Smith for the Civic Center district were underway this week.

COMMUNICATIONS

The May 18 meeting would most likely be canceled

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Slicker, seconded by Commissioner Meagher, to adjourn at 9:03 P.M. The motion CARRIED with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).

DRAFT

Memo

To: T. Joe Seward, Chairperson

Planning Commissioners

From: Hannah Micallef

Date: May 25, 2023

Re: Master Plan Draft Chapters

Please find the following draft chapters for review: Transportation & Mobility and Land Use.

7. LAND USE

Land use is the most foundational piece of community planning because of the substantial impact on residents’ daily lives. The identity of a community is also often tied to the land use patterns; White Lake Township is unique in offering a mix of rural and urban lifestyles as demonstrated through the land use patterns. On one hand, the Township carries forward its rich agrarian history through a combination of agricultural and rural residential land uses. But, on the other hand, regional population growth and the Township’s proximity to several urbanized municipalities in the metro Detroit region attract denser residential and commercial land uses. In addition to the challenge of balancing the rural and urban land uses, ensuring that development does not infringe on the Township’s abundant natural resources and recreational land uses is a priority for the community. This chapter inventories the existing land use patterns in the Township to identify areas for preservation and areas suitable for development. This chapter combined with community input lays the foundation for establishing a robust future land use strategy in White Lake Township.

EXISTING LAND USE

White Lake Township’s current pattern of land use is represented in the map titled “Existing Land Use”. Land use in the Township has been determined to a large degree by the M-59 thoroughfare which runs east to west and divides the Township in half. The northern half of the Township exhibits a rural setting with agricultural and large-lot-residential land uses, whereas denser residential land uses—ranging from single-family dwellings on smaller lots to multiple-family dwellings—are the dominant land use in the southern half. Barring a few parcels, almost all commercial development in the Township is concentrated along the M-59. Additionally, lands reserved for recreation or conservation purposes account for a large percentage of the Township through the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area in the northeast and Highland State Recreation Area in the southwest quadrants of the Township. Utilizing data from Oakland County, land parcels in White Lake Township are divided into the following categories:

- » Agricultural
- » Commercial/Office
- » Industrial
- » Public/Institutional
- » Recreation/Conservation
- » Residential
- » Transportation/Utility/Communication
- » Vacant

The table titled “Existing Land Use” charts the acreage and the total percentage of the Township area under each land use classification.

Table xx: Existing Land Use

Land Use Classification	Area (Acres)	Percentage of Township
Residential	8,989.9	46.2%
Single Family, 14,000 to 43,559 Sq.Ft.	2,365.1	12.2%
Single Family, 1 to 2.5 Acres	2,137.8	11.0%

Single Family, 5 to 10 acres	1,197.8	6.2%
Single Family, 2.5 to 5 acres	984.3	5.1%
Single Family, greater than 10 acres	962.7	4.9%
Single Family, 8,000 to 13,999 Sq.Ft.	657.7	3.4%
Mobile Home Park	338.9	1.7%
Multiple Family	185.2	1.0%
Single Family, less than 8,000 Sq.Ft.	143.1	0.7%
Single Family, more than 1 unit / parcel	17.3	0.1%
Recreation/Conservation	6,131.5	31.5%
Vacant	2,455.7	12.6%
Agricultural	791.4	4.1%
Commercial/Office	392.8	2.0%
Public/Institutional	366.3	1.9%
Industrial	165.0	0.8%
Transportation/Utility/Communication	157.4	0.8%
Total	19450.0	100%

Source: Oakland County

Residential Land Use

Residential use is the largest land use category in White Lake Township and accounts for roughly 8,990 acres, 46.2% of the Township area. The lot sizes and density vary throughout the Township; rural residential uses with larger lots (2.5 acres and above) are predominant north of M-59 while denser residential development with smaller lots (less than 2.5 acres) and multiple family units are common south of M-59. Due to the geography around the lakes, land use around the lakes tends to be concentrated with smaller lots as shown in the map titled “Existing Land Use”.

Land use along the boundaries, especially in the southeast quadrant bordering Waterford Township and Commerce Township, exhibits intense residential development. It is likely that the connectivity offered via M-59 to the other major cities and employment centers in the metro Detroit region, and regional population growth from the rapidly urbanizing municipalities of Waterford and Commerce Township, increases the demand for development in the southeast quadrant of the Township. **Managing development in tandem with available (and future) infrastructure will be crucial to ensure sustainable growth in this part of the Township.** The majority of larger residential parcels in the Township are concentrated in the center, north of M-59, shielded from development pressure from the neighboring municipalities. Given that these parcels are in proximity to agrarian uses, and roughly 45% of survey respondents indicated a rural atmosphere with plenty of open space was the main characteristic that attracted them to move to their current area of residence, **preserving the existing lot sizes and density will be a priority for the Township.** Future residential development in the Township should be strategized in **selected areas of the Township with access to water and sewer infrastructure, preferably south of M-59,** while development north of M-59 should be strictly regulated to preserve agricultural land and the rural character of the Township.

Recreation/Conservation Land Use

Parcels under the recreation / conservation land use account for 6,131.5 acres, 31.5% of the Township area. Most of the land under this classification falls under the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area in the northeast or the Highland State Recreation Area in the southwest quadrants of the Township. The White Lake Oaks Golf Course occupies a small area, immediately south of M-59, under this classification. Other parcels in this land use are scattered around the Township including neighborhood parks and open spaces. The southeast quadrant of the Township, which has the highest density of residential development in the Township, has a lower percentage of recreation / conservation land use compared to other areas of the Township. While the residents in this area can access other recreation facilities in the Township, encouraging the development of neighborhood parks amidst the dense residential areas will be critical to ensuring the community's recreation and open space needs are met, ensuring equitable access to such facilities, and protecting existing lakes and natural features.

Agricultural Land Use

The identity of White Lake Township is intertwined with its agricultural history and its rural character. However, only roughly 790 acres, or 4.1% of the total Township land is currently used for agriculture. Almost all agricultural land is located in the central parts of the Township, with the majority situated north of M-59. Only a few parcels of agricultural land are located in the southeast quadrant of the Township. Since 2009, the agricultural land in the Township has increased from 2.9% to 4.1% of the total Township area.¹

Though the agricultural land use in the Township has increased, protecting existing farmland from development is crucial. Agricultural land is primarily protected through zoning. In addition to the "Agricultural" zoning district, many parcels in the Township fall under the "Suburban Farm" zoning district which allows for a combination of specific agrarian and residential uses of land.^{2,3} While this may prove effective to encourage agrarian uses and preserve the rural character of the Township with large lot sizes, it limits the area available for smaller single-family homes, duplexes, and other such housing typologies increasing the demand for housing. This leads to pressure for increasing residential development risking infringement of farmland. One potential strategy to balance farmland preservation and residential development is to continue to strictly regulate uses in the agricultural and suburban districts but reduce the percentage of land under the suburban zoning district classification. Strategically converting parcels from the suburban district to the residential districts, based on the availability of infrastructure and amenities, will relieve residential development pressure while preserving existing farmland. Another strategy for preserving farmland is the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116) which is a voluntary

¹ White Lake Township, White Lake Township Master Plan for Land Use 2010–2011, 2011, https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3681/complete_wl_mp_update_document_2012.pdf

² White Lake Township Zoning Map, https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/23353/wlt_zoning_map_update_20221010_updated_again_5.4.2023.pdf

³ White Lake Township Zoning Ordinance, https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/2311/2022_01_27_white_lake_clearzoning_ordinance_security_on.pdf

agreement between a landowner and the state of Michigan in which the landowners receive tax benefits and exemptions in exchange for preserving their land for agriculture or open space.⁴

Commercial/Office Land Use

Commercial land uses in White Lake Township are concentrated in the center of the Township along the M-59 thoroughfare. Some commercial parcels in the Township are scattered between residential land uses south of M-59, and a few are situated in the southeast corner adjoining Commerce and Waterford Townships. While restricting commercial development along the Township's major thoroughfare helps retain the rural and residential character of the Township, residents are likely dependent on the automobile to go to work, run errands, or visit businesses. While the Township can regulate larger commercial/office uses and big box stores along the M-59, residents may benefit from additional neighborhood-scale stores such as small grocers or produce stores, especially in the denser residential neighborhoods southeast of the Township. Creating commercial pockets/nodes also encourages foot traffic for local businesses and reclaims the streets from catering solely to automobiles.

Public/Institutional Land Use

Parcels under the public/institutional land use classification typically serve public interest such as schools, religious buildings, institutional buildings, Township offices, etc. This land use accounts for roughly 366 acres and 2% of the Township area and these parcels are usually exempt from property taxation. Most of this land use is situated south of M-59 including the Lakeland High School, Dublin Elementary School, and Houghton Elementary School properties.

Industrial Land Use

Industrial land uses are predominately used for manufacturing or processing materials or articles and include accessory uses such as storage areas and warehousing. Only 165 acres amounting to 0.8% of the total Township area fall under the industrial land use classification. Some industrial parcels are located north of M-59 and east of Teggerdine Road mostly comprised of automobile services and related uses. Two larger parcels are located in the northeast corner of the Township and one parcel is situated north of Gale Road. An important consideration for industrial land use is the proximity to natural features; given that most industrial parcels are located either near lakes or recreation/conservation land, it is crucial to implement stringent development standards through the zoning code to ensure adequate setbacks and buffers are provided from the natural features.

Transportation/Utility/Communication Land Use

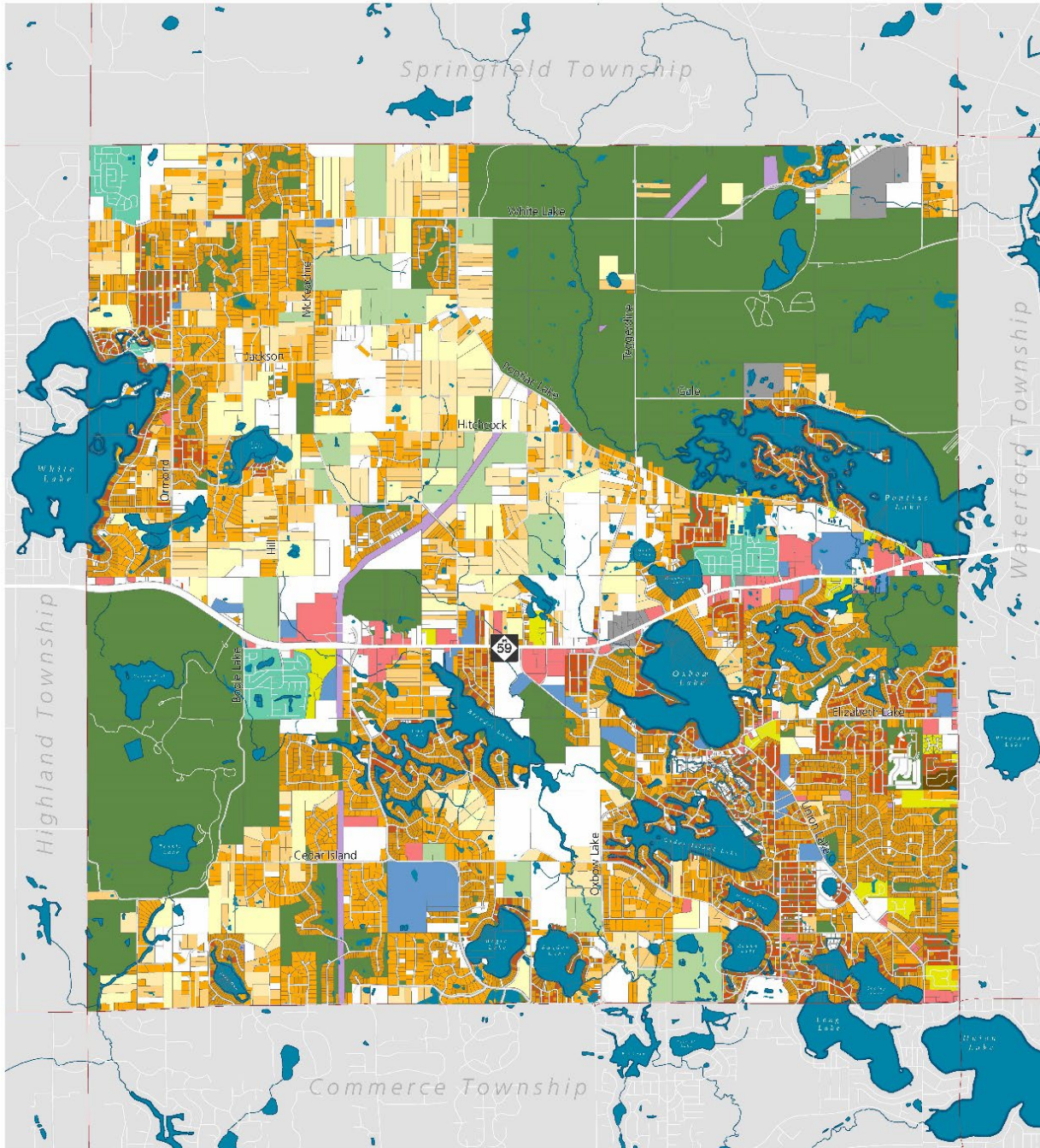
Areas predominately used for vehicular transportation, public utilities, or establishing communication towers and other related public infrastructure fall under this land use category and account for 150 acres and 0.8% of the total Township area.

⁴ "Farmland Preservation", Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599_2558---,00.html

Vacant

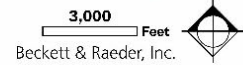
Vacant parcels are unimproved areas that do not have a specific land use classification. Roughly 2,456 acres or 12.6% of the Township area is vacant. These parcels offer the opportunity to expand land uses to cater to the needs of the community.

Map XX: Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township



 Agriculture	 Multiple-Family Residential	 2.5 - 5 acres
 Recreation/Conservation	 Mobile Home Park	 1 - 2.5 acres
 Public/Institutional	 Vacant	 14,000 - 43,559 sq. ft.
 Transportation/Utility	Single-Family Residential	 8,000 - 13,999 sq. ft.
 Commercial/Office	 >10 acres	 <8,000 sq. ft.
 Industrial	 5 - 10 acres	 Multiple units per parcel

5. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Transportation networks are the physical links that define mobility and connectivity in a community. Roads, public transit, sidewalks, and other nonmotorized paths allow residents to move between home, work, places to socialize, and other everyday destinations. Transportation infrastructure also enables regional connectivity, facilitating the exchange of products and services with other economic markets. Typically, housing, businesses, and amenities tend to concentrate along well-connected road networks thereby establishing transportation infrastructure as a fundamental element of land use planning.

The Township's 2012 Master Plan recognized the importance of broadening the transportation choices, improving pedestrian connectivity to public and commercial areas, and promoting a public transportation system to increase the mobility of the elderly and physically disabled as important priorities to advance transportation equity and sustainability in White Lake Township. However, transportation and the supporting infrastructure in the Township continues to be auto-oriented. This section inventories the transportation systems in the White Lake Township and identifies how existing infrastructure can be adapted to support diverse mobility options. The findings from the analyses and community input session guide the Township on major transportation infrastructure advancements and policy decisions.

ROAD NETWORK

White Lake Township has 231.5 miles of roads within its boundary.¹ The Township is bisected by the State Highway M-59 running east-west through the Township. The M-59 thoroughfare continues west to connect the Township with the US-23, which runs north to Flint and south to Brighton and Ann Arbor and continues west through metro Detroit to find a terminus at Chesterfield & Harrison Townships. Interstate 75 (I-75), which runs north to Flint and south to Detroit, can be accessed about three miles northeast. Collectively, the M-59 thoroughfare and the proximity to freeway interchanges and highways offer convenient regional connectivity, making White Lake Township an accessible residential community with most residents commuting outside the Township for employment.²

Road Classification and Traffic Volumes

The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a hierarchical system developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and used by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to determine federal funding allocation for different roads. Roads are categorized based on mobility, trip distance, speed limit, and traffic volume. The higher the road classification hierarchy, the greater the funding. Roads in White Lake Township fall into one of the following classifications: Major Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, and Local Roads. The map "National Functional Classification" represents the Township's Road network based on the NFC hierarchy. MDOT also calculates the average number of vehicles that travel on roadways daily throughout the year, a metric termed "Average Annual Daily Traffic" or AADT. The numbers on the NFC map represent the estimated 2019 AADT counts in White Lake Township, MDOT is recommending the continued use of 2019 AADT numbers as the most recent data was skewed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

¹ State of Michigan Open Data Portal, AllRoadsv17a, <https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/all-roads-v17a/explore>

² United States Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

National Functional Classification

Major Arterials: Carry long-distance high-speed traffic and offer connectivity to other interstate highways. *White Lake Township has 11.5 miles of major arterials.*

Minor Arterials: Provide service for trips of moderate length, serve smaller geographic areas, and offer connectivity to other major arterials. *White Lake Township has 18.1 miles of minor arterials.*

Major Collector: Gather and funnel traffic from local roads to the Arterial network; These provide access to property but tend to be longer in length, have lower connecting driveway densities, have higher speed limits, are spaced at greater intervals, and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors. *White Lake Township has 16.4 miles of major collectors.*

Local Roads: Provide access to properties. *White Lake Township has 115.1 miles of local roads.*

Source: Federal Highway Administration (U.S. Department of Transportation)

Major Arterials

The east-west connector in the Township, M-59—locally referred to as Highland Road, and the east-southeast peripheral road—Williams Lake Road are the two major arterial roads. M-59 continues west to merge with the US-23 freeway, connecting the Township to the major cities and employment hubs in the region—Flint to the North and Ann Arbor to the South, making the western segment of M-59 the busiest road in the Township with an AADT of nearly 30,980. With an AADT of 27,920, the eastern segment of M-59 is equally busy offering connections to the Oakland County International Airport and Metro Detroit. Williams Lake Road is the western boundary of the Township, which meets Cooley Lake Road in the south, which in turn connects the Township to the “Four Towns” area with Commerce, Waterford, and West Bloomfield Townships. Williams Lake Road extends northeast to merge with the Dixie Highway (M-24). A small segment of Cooley Road, west of Union Lake Road, generates a high volume of traffic (AADT of 29,189) in the southwest corner of the Township, due to the connectivity it offers to the cities and employment centers south of the Township.

M-59 is under the jurisdiction of MDOT, and the Township has limited control over any infrastructure decisions. Since the Highland Recreation Area is accessed off M-59 and many of the commercial uses in the Township are concentrated along M-59, any decisions made by MDOT regarding speed limits or road developments will directly impact pedestrian safety, walkability, and the overall character along the corridor. As of March 2023, there are no MDOT projects underway or proposed along M-59.³

Minor Arterials and Major Collectors

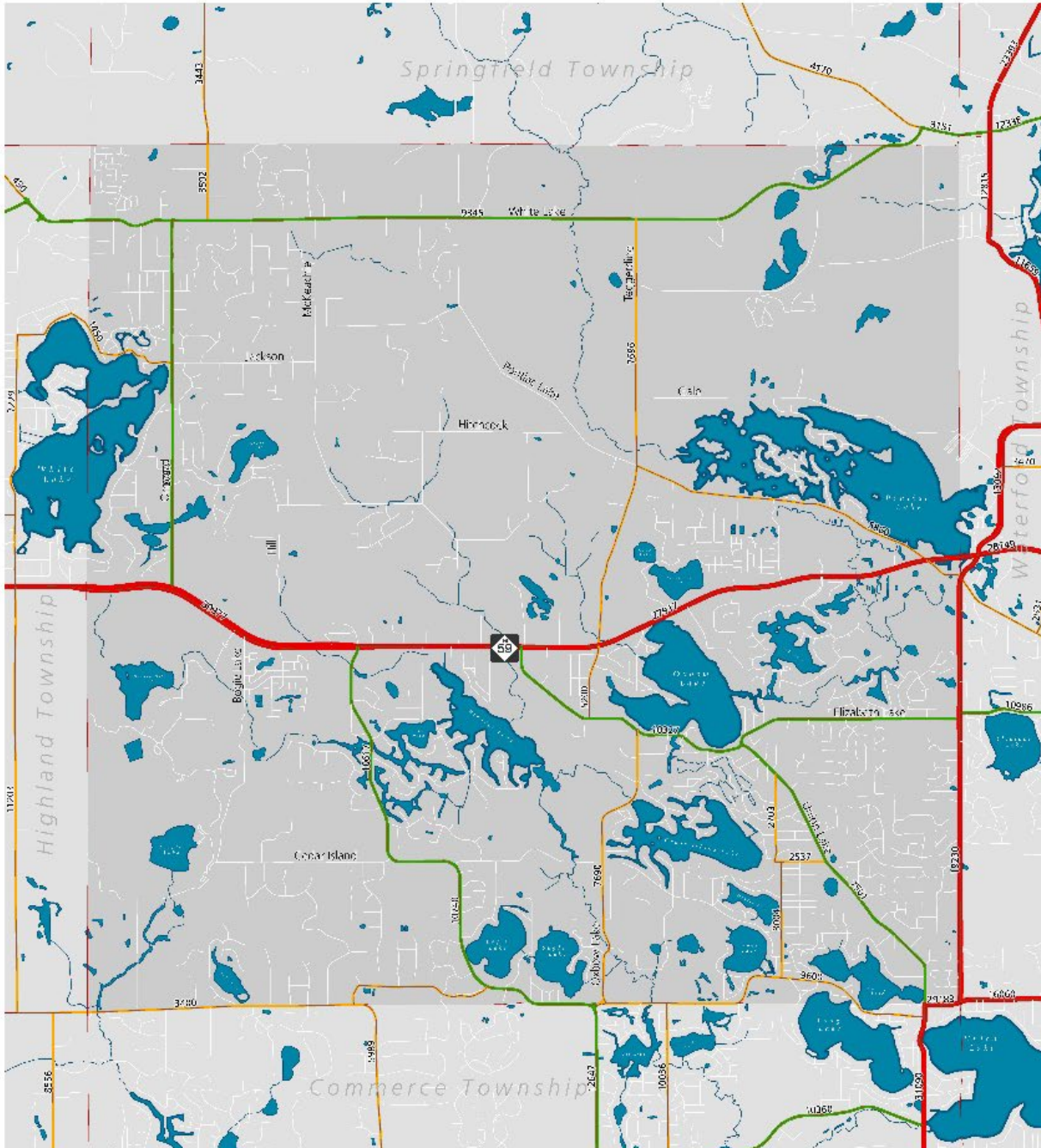
There are five minor arterial roads in White Lake Township. Elizabeth Lake Road, Union Lake Road, and Bogie Lake Road branch south from M-59 / Highland Road while Ormond Road branches north to meet another minor arterial, White Lake Road. The vehicle counts on Bogie Lake Road range from approximately

³ Michigan Department of Transportation, Projects & Studies, <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/projects-studies>

10,620 to 10,740; the volume of traffic is higher closer to the public schools (Lakeland High School and White Lake Middle School). Elizabeth like Road and Union Lake Road are widely used (AADT of about 10,330 and 7,560 respectively) as the connectors between the M-59 and the denser residential developments in the northeast quadrant of the Township. With an AADT of 9345, White Lake Road is another major east-west connector in the Township, which runs parallel to M-59, and continues northeast to merge with Dixie Highway.

White Lake Township has several major collector roads including Teggerdine Road, Pontiac Lake Road, Oxbow Lake Road, and a segment of Cooley Lake Road. The segment of Colley Road, west of Union Lake Road, receives an AADT of 9,600, making it the busiest major collector in the Township. Teggerdine Road and Oxbow Lake are the primary north-south connectors in the Township with an annual daily average of about 7,700 vehicles. Pontiac Lake Road, leading to M-59, is crucial as it connects the northern portion of the Township to the Oakland County International Airport situated in the neighboring Waterford Township. The Minor arterials and the major collectors are maintained by Oakland County and any infrastructure improvements along these roads will require coordination with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC).

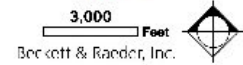
Map XX: National Functional Classification



National Functional Classification

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township, MDOT

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Local Roads
- ## 2019 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)



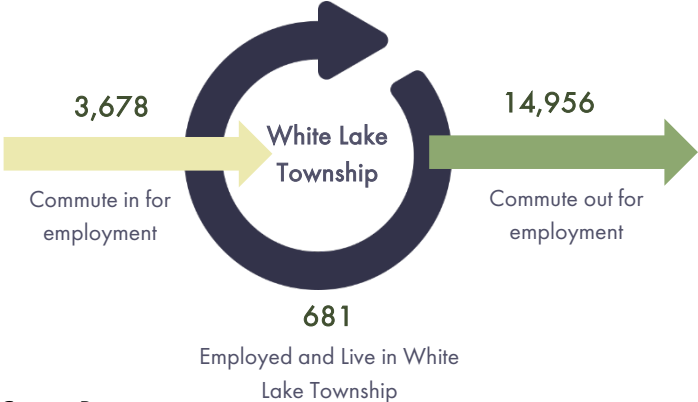
Local Roads

Local Roads offer connectivity to residential neighborhoods and other public spaces in the Township. Local roads cover the largest area compared to the other roads but are not eligible for any federal funding.

Commuter Traffic

White Lake Township is primarily residential in character, with almost 96% of its residents commuting outside of the Township to their place of employment.⁴ About 61% of Township residents are employed within Oakland County and 17% commute to Wayne County for employment.⁵ At the local level, most residents commute either south or southeast to the employment hubs of Detroit (4.7%), Farmington Hills (4.5%), Troy (4.3%) or Southfield (4.2%).⁶ All four cities can be accessed via the segment of M-59 east of Teggerdine Road, likely causing congestion along this major throughfare during peak hours in the morning and evening, which can impact the quality of daily commute and safety. Those commuting to the Township for employment also primarily access the Township via the M-59 on the west, establishing this stretch of the state highway as an important corridor.⁷ The segment of Cooley Road, west of Union Lake Road receives high traffic counts (AADT 9,600), as it contains a strip mall, and offers direct connectivity to the cities of Farmington Hills, Novi, and Livonia, making it a bottleneck for traffic.

Figure XX: Commute Patterns, White Lake Township, 2019



Source: OnTheMap, United States Census Bureau

Road Quality

The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) conducts a visual survey called the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) to evaluate the conditions of roads. This survey uses a scale of 1-10 to rate roads and categorizes them as good, fair, or poor, as represented in the map titled "PASER Ratings 2022". The map depicts that a vast majority of the major roads in the Township are documented to be in fair (indicated in yellow) or poor (indicated in red) condition; only a handful of road segments are in good condition (indicated in green). While Michigan’s extreme weather exacerbates the regular wear and tear, deteriorating road conditions can impede daily commutes and safety.

⁴ United States Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
⁵ United States Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
⁶ United States Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
⁷ United States Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

The major arterials M-59 and William Lake Road are in “average” condition. Given that both roads are gateways into the Township, and receive high volumes of daily commuters, improving the quality of these roads is imperative. As noted in the previous section, improvements and maintenance along M-59 are managed by MDOT. While there are no projects underway or proposed along the M-59 through MDOT, SEMCOG, has proposed \$53.8 million in pavement improvements along M-59 between Milford Road and Pontiac Lake Road in 2026, under the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which includes projects recommended by the MDOT for state-owned transportation assets in the SEMCOG region.⁸

The quality of pavements along the minor arterial roads—Elizabeth Lake Road, Union Lake Road, Bogie Lake Road, Ormond Road, and White Lake Road—varies from good to poor; Only Union Lake Road, and short segments of Elizabeth Lake Road, and White Lake Road are in good condition. Particularly concerning is the western segment of Elizabeth Lake Road that connects with M-59; this intersection is the direct access to the residential development on the southeast portion of the Township. The Township and RCOC have jointly funded a \$2.3 Million project, scheduled to be completed in September 2023, to address concerns regarding road quality and safety along Elizabeth Road. The proposed improvements include:

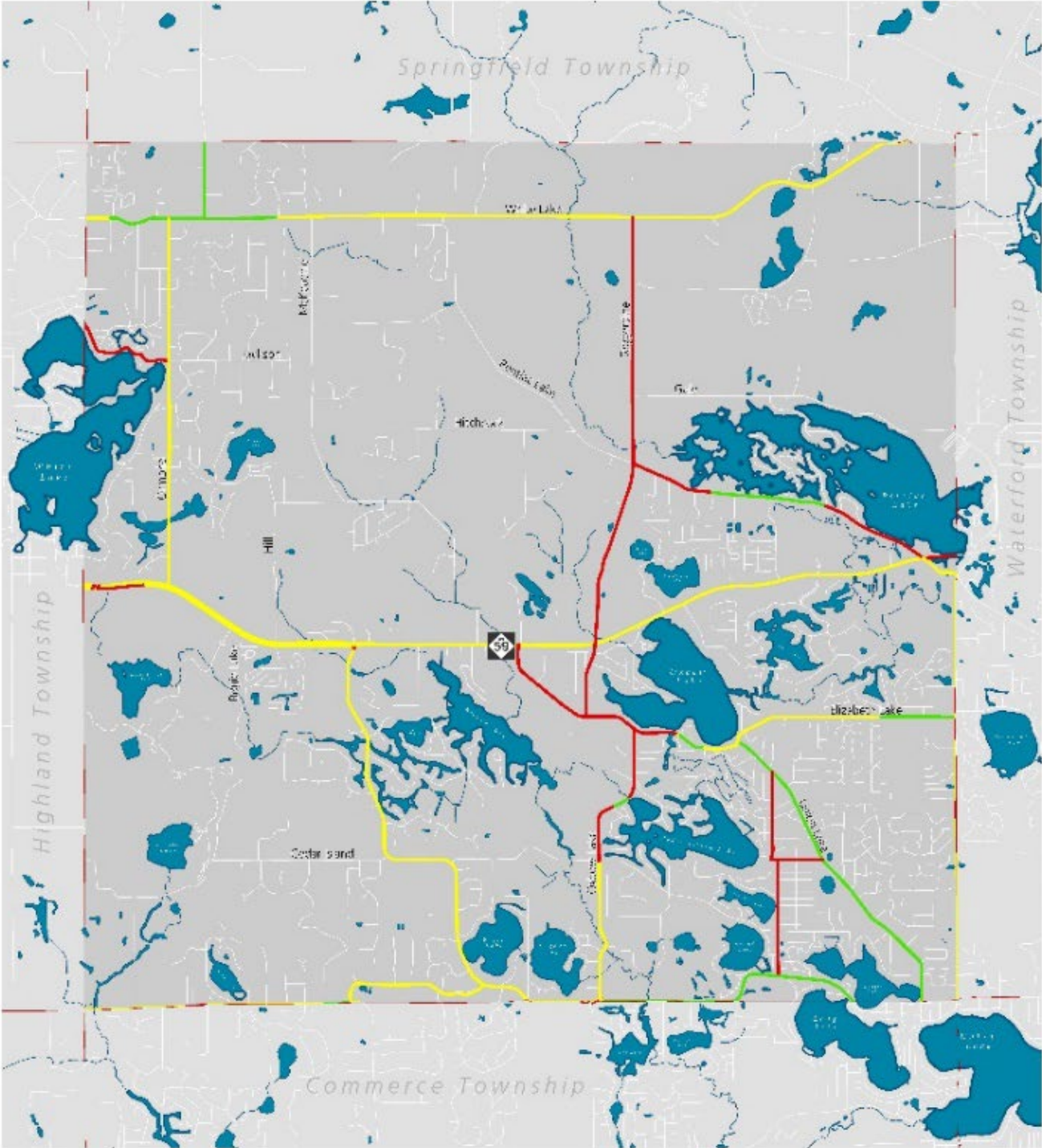
- » Conversion of the three-way Elizabeth Lake Road/Teggerdine Road intersection, controlled by stop signs, to a single-lane roundabout.
- » Conversion of the three-way Elizabeth Lake Road/Oxbow Lake Road intersection, controlled by stop signs, to a compact roundabout.
- » Repaving of roads in the vicinity of the roundabouts with asphalt.
- » Installation of curbs and gutters, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant pedestrian crosswalks, and street lighting at the roundabouts.
- » Improvements to storm sewers and drainage.
- » Milling and paving Elizabeth Lake Road between the roundabouts with the addition of four-foot road shoulders.
- » Utility relocation.⁹

Many of the major collector roads in the Township are in “poor” condition. The quality of pavement along the entire stretch of road along the major north-south connectors in the Township, Teggerdine Road and Oxbow Lake Road via Elizabeth Lake Road, are in poor condition. In addition, to offering north-south connectivity, the Oxbow Elementary School is accessed via Oxbow Lake Road, furthering the urgency to invest in infrastructure improvements along this stretch. Segments of Pontiac Lake Road leading to Teggerdine Road, and M-59 are also of poor quality. The ongoing road improvement project along Elizabeth Lake Road includes repaving parts of Teggerdine Road and Oxbow Lake Road, which will improve the quality of these major collectors.

⁸ Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, TIP and RTP Projects in Southeast Michigan, <https://maps.semco.org/tip/>

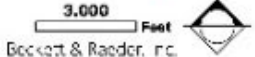
⁹ Road Commission for Oakland County, Road Projects, Elizabeth Lake Road Roundabouts-White Lake Township, <https://www.rcocweb.org/619/Elizabeth-Lake-Road-Roundabouts-White-La>

Map XX: the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER)



PASER Ratings 2022

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township



- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Road Safety

Safety is undoubtedly the most essential element of road infrastructure which focuses on reducing the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities. The existing road infrastructure in White Lake Township is greatly impacted by the geography of the lakes; The road system is not organized into rectilinear grids, but rather large swooping stretches with disjointed intersections and connections in response to the existing lakes and wetlands. While accidents can occur at any segment of a road, 31% of Michigan’s fatal crashes in 2021 occurred at intersections, emphasizing the importance of designing safe road intersections.¹⁰ Additionally, as highlighted in the Road Quality section above, poor quality of pavement along some of the Township’s major thoroughfares further exacerbates the safety of commuters. The map titled “Crashes, 2021” uses 2021 crash data from the Michigan Traffic Crash Facts (MTCF) website to identify unsafe intersections and road segments in White Lake Township.

A total of 568 crashes occurred in the Township in 2021, of which a majority occurred along the M-59, especially at intersections with north-south arterials or collector roads. The “Crashes, 2021” shows several crashes along White Lake Road on the northern half of the Township, but the southern half witnessed a significantly higher number of crashes along Williams Lake Road and all major collectors (Bogie Lake Road, Elizabeth Lake Road, Union Lake Road, and Oxbow Lake Road) likely due to the blind spots created by the curvilinear geography of the roads in response to the several lakes and natural features. The highest concentration of crashes occurred at the following intersections:

- » M-59 and Ormond Road
- » M-59 and Bogie Lake Road
- » M-59 and Teggerdine Road
- » M-59 and Fisk Road
- » M-59 and Pontiac Lake Road

While there were no fatalities caused by the crashes in 2021, the table titled “Injury Caused by Crashes” shows that of the 568 total crashes in the Township, 9.7% may have involved injuries, 8.1% may have resulted in minor injuries, and 1.6% may have caused serious injuries. Two accidents involving pedestrians were categorized as “Suspected Serious Injury” while two involving bicyclists were categorized as “Suspected Minor Injury”.

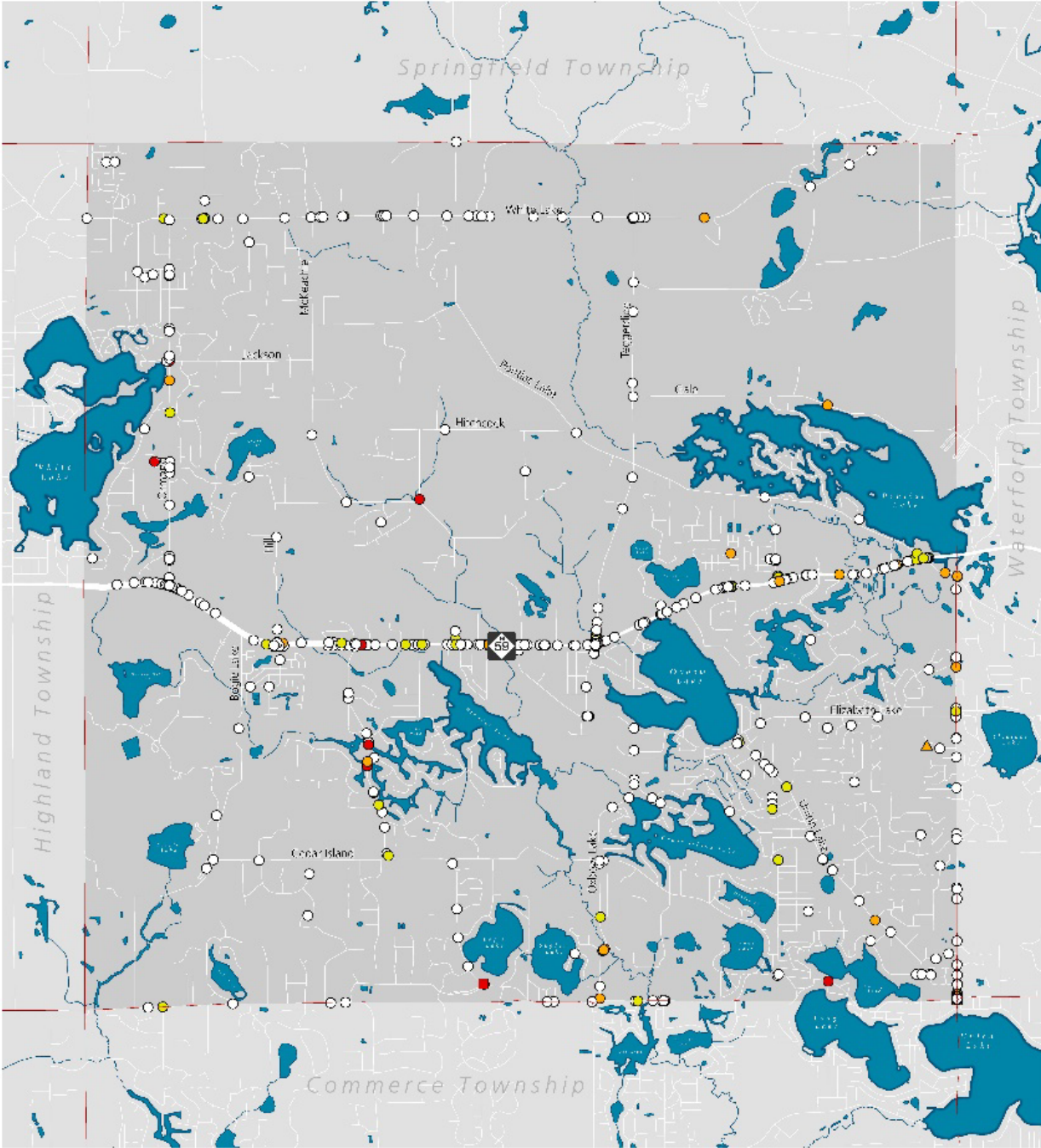
Table xx: Injury Caused by Crashes

Injury Type	Number of Crashes	Percentage of Total
Fatal Injury	0	0.0%
No Injury	458	80.6%
Possible Injury	55	9.7%
Suspected Minor Injury	46	8.1%
Suspected Serious Injury	9	1.6%
Totals	568	100%

Source: Michigan Traffic Crash Facts

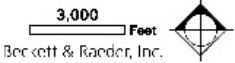
¹⁰ Michigan Traffic Crash Facts. Statewide 2021. 2021. https://www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/doc/state-wide/full_document

Map XX: Crashes 2021



Crashes 2021

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Oakland County, White Lake Township, MTCF



Type of Crash

- ▲ Pedestrian Involved
- Cyclist Involved
- No Pedestrian or Cyclist

Severity

- No Injury
- Possible Injury
- Minor Injury
- Major Injury

Given the volume and intensity of crashes in 2021, improving road safety measures and addressing problematic intersections should be important priorities for the Township. The SEMCOG proposed improvements along M-59, between Milford Road and Pontiac Lake Road, may address some of the safety concerns along M-59. The ongoing construction of roundabouts at the intersections of Elizabeth Lake Road and Teggerdine Road and Elizabeth Lake Road and Oxbow Lake Road intersections will significantly improve safety south of the Township.¹¹

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPLETE STREETS

Transportation advocates have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. Alternatively, to single-use roads, advocates have pushed for “Complete Streets,” a movement rooted in equity and inclusivity that calls for multimodal transportation by designing streets for automobile users, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users of all ages and abilities. From simple additions or modifications to full-fledged infrastructure revamps complete street elements may be scaled based on the needs and budget of each individual community.

Nonmotorized Pathways

The existing pedestrian system is as expected in an area that relies heavily on the automobile as the primary source of transportation, with several disconnected sidewalks / pathways. Though about 91% of Township residents primarily use automobiles (car, truck, or van) to commute to work, integrating and increasing non-motorized trails and pathways was recognized as a “high priority” by 32% of survey respondents.¹² To this end, the Township partnered with Parks and Recreations Department and MDOT to develop a Township-wide system of pathways; the renovation of the M-59 pathway is an essential element of this plan as it will connect future north-south pathways towards residential land use in the Township. The 2023–2028 CIP budgets \$1.3 Million for the renovation of the pathway along M-59, spread over three phases, as a combination of funds from the Township and partner organizations.¹³ The CIP also includes \$2 Million worth of pathway rehabilitation along Union Lake Road and Bogie Lake Road.¹⁴ In addition to pathways along the major thoroughfares, the Township has also initiated the development of the “ITC Corridor Four Seasons Trail” which will provide a critical link between Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area and Highland Lake State Recreation Area, via the M-59 trailway.¹⁵ This route is included in the Oakland County Greenways Plan and includes state and regional financial participation. Construction of the trailway is expected to occur over three phases.

¹¹ Road Commission for Oakland County, Road Projects, Elizabeth Lake Road Roundabouts-White Lake Township, <https://www.rcocweb.org/619/Elizabeth-Lake-Road-Roundabouts-White-La>

¹² United States Census Bureau, DP03 Selected Economic Characteristics, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2020.

¹³ White Lake Township, 2023-2028 White Lake Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), 2022, <https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/archives/White%20Lake/Board/2019/august/Draft%202020-25CIP%20edited.pdf>

¹⁴ White Lake Township, 2023-2028 White Lake Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), 2022, <https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/archives/White%20Lake/Board/2019/august/Draft%202020-25CIP%20edited.pdf>

¹⁵ White Lake Township, 2023-2028 White Lake Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), 2022, <https://www.whitelaketwp.com/sites/default/files/archives/White%20Lake/Board/2019/august/Draft%202020-25CIP%20edited.pdf>

Complete Streets

Complete street elements the Township can focus on include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, safe crossings, street lighting, and street landscaping.



Sidewalks



Bicycle Routes



Safe crossing



Street Landscaping



Street Lighting

Signed Bicycle Route¹⁶

A signed bicycle route is a low-volume roadway designated for cyclist use, which typically connects dense residential areas to municipal facilities (Township Hall, library, etc.), schools, churches, retail uses, and the like. There is not a dedicated lane within the roadway for bicycle use. Rather, bicyclists share the road with vehicles and are guided to their destination by “bicycle route” signs along the shoulder.

In White Lake, roads that are expected to have a signed bicycle route include Jackson, Porter-Grass Lake McKeachie (between Township offices and Bloomer Park), Cooley Beach, Cedar Island Road, the road through Highland Recreation Area connecting to the Oakland County Trail System, and the unpaved portions of Pontiac Lake Road and Fisk Road (prior to the development of a separate pathway).

Bicycle Lane¹⁷

Bicycle lanes are dedicated portions of the roadway that are designed, stripped, and signed to accommodate bicyclists. There are several thoroughfares in White Lake that could be designed to

¹⁶ White Lake Township, 2018-2022 White Lake Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, https://www.whitelaketwp.com/system/files/deleted/fileattachments/parks_and_recreation/page/117/approved_2018-2022_parks_and_recreation_plan_website_version.pdf

¹⁷ White Lake Township, 2018-2022 White Lake Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, https://www.whitelaketwp.com/system/files/deleted/fileattachments/parks_and_recreation/page/117/approved_2018-2022_parks_and_recreation_plan_website_version.pdf

accommodate bicycle lanes, including Bogie Lake Road, Elizabeth Lake Road, Teggerdine, Union Lake Road, Ormond Road, White Lake Road, and the paved portions of Pontiac Lake Road and Fisk Road.

Shared Use Path¹⁸

Shared-use paths are routes that accommodate two-way “traffic” of non-motorized and pedestrian uses within a single right-of-way, separated from the roadway. Frequently, these trails are developed within an easement that is part of a utility corridor or within an abandoned railroad corridor. Shared-use paths can accommodate a wider variety of users (walkers, runners, in-line skaters, bicyclists, equestrians) than either signed bicycle routes or bicycle lanes, due to their greater width and separation from roads. Often these trails are used during the winter months for cross-country skiing. Therefore, the design of this trail system (width, materials, grade, etc.) is critical in order to accommodate all potential, desirable users. In White Lake Township, proposed pathways along M-59 and the ITC corridor would be classified as shared-use paths.

The Township should continually aim to integrate trails, sidewalks, and bicycle routes that connect significant parks and open spaces, recreational facilities, residential neighborhoods, schools, and commercial uses to achieve improved multi-modal access and useability in the community. In addition to the improvements identified in the “Multi-Use Pathways Plan”, the Township can also explore the adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance, requiring all new roads or improvements to existing roads to consider the inclusion of Complete Street elements.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Access to quality public transportation at affordable rates and regular frequency enables mobility for people of all age groups and income levels and has proven to be an effective solution to reduce a community’s carbon footprint. Oakland County coordinates with various regional transportation organizations to provide public transportation in White Lake Township and other cities in the county. In November 2022, Oakland County residents approved the Oakland County Public Transportation millage; This voter-approved 10-year, 0.95 millage is dedicated to maintaining and expanding public transit services throughout Oakland County.¹⁹ The following are the public transportation options available to White Lake Township residents:

Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)²⁰

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) is Southeast Michigan's regional bus system which provides a variety of transit services in Oakland County. White Lake Township is currently not serviced by SMART; however, in 2023 SMART will endeavor to create a new fixed route service from Auburn Hills through Pontiac and continue west through Waterford Township and a portion of White Lake Township.

¹⁸ White Lake Township, 2018-2022 White Lake Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, https://www.whitelaketwp.com/system/files/deleted/fileattachments/parks_and_recreation/page/117/approved_2018-2022_parks_and_recreation_plan_website_version.pdf

¹⁹ Oakland County, Oakland Transit, <https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-transit>

²⁰ Oakland County, Oakland Transit, <https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-transit>

Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA)²¹

The Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA) has been providing paratransit (dial-a-ride) transportation services since 2020 to qualifying residents of Highland, Walled Lake, Waterford, and White Lake. WOTA accommodates trips to work, medical appointments, shopping, banking, civic events, entertainment venues, and social activities within the driving boundary. Eligible riders include seniors over 55, adults with disabilities, and veterans along with companion riders. In 2023, WOTA will undertake efforts to extend the hours of service, reduce the cost per stop, include low-income residents as eligible riders, purchase (8-12) additional ADA-compliant minivans, and expand the geography of the service area.

²¹ Oakland County, Oakland Transit, <https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-transit>