

# MEMORANDUM

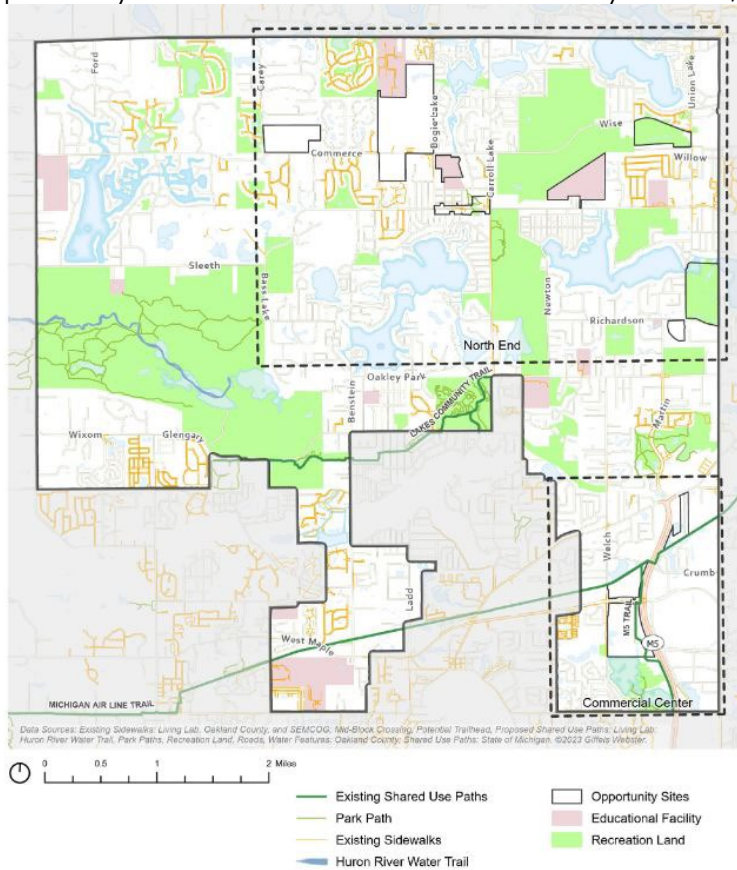


**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
**FROM:** JAMES HILL, PLANNER  
**THROUGH:** BARBARA MCBETH, AICP, CITY PLANNER  
**SUBJECT:** COMMERCE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN  
**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

Commerce Township has distributed its [draft Master Plan](#) for the required 63-day comment period from surrounding communities. Attached to this memo is the letter from the Township inviting comments from neighboring municipalities and other entities. This memo includes Planning staff's comments on the draft Master Plan.

## Land Use and Development – Area Plans

A select number of parcels are identified for their development potential due to their location and ownership, and these parcels are designated as “opportunity sites.” The opportunity sites are located in one of two areas within the Township, the first being the “North End,” located in the northeast corner of the municipality. The second area, in close proximity to the northeast corner of the City of Novi, is the “Commercial Center.”



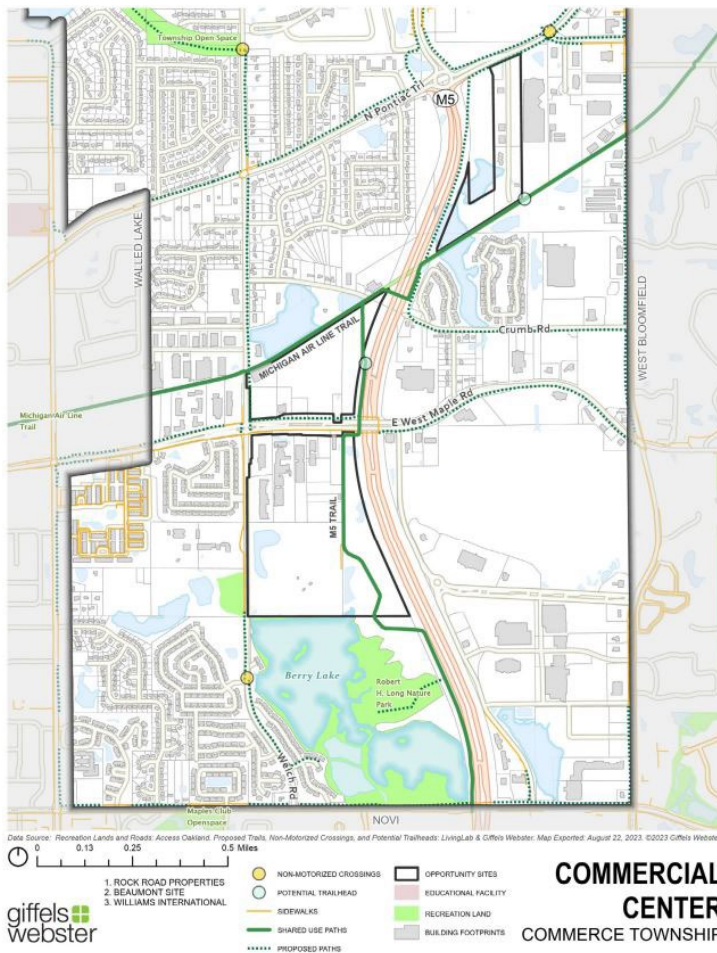
To the left is the map containing the Area Plans in Commerce Township, in addition to the non-motorized pathways. The Commercial Center is shown in the southeast corner of the map, with its southern end bordering the City of Novi at 14 Mile Road. As part of the City of Novi's Active Mobility Plan, regional connections such as the M-5 trail are an important part of the overall non-motorized infrastructure available to residents and visitors. It is promising to see that the proposed area plans take into consideration the importance of that non-motorized network.

## The Commercial Center Area Plan

The draft Master Plan dedicates several pages to the Commercial Center Area Plan, outlining redevelopment strategies and priorities for the opportunity sites. These priorities include encouraging “new campus style development with uses that create high-paying jobs,” fostering “enhancements to non-motorized transportation networks,” encouraging “development styles that take advantage of the Township's natural beauty and preserve[s] key natural features,” and avoiding “uses that require excessive parking areas, drive-thrus, front-facing lots, or other auto-centric characteristics.”

The Commercial Center is meant to complement the nearby municipalities and considers the growth potential of its neighbors:

*The opportunity sites may be able to take advantage of further existing strengths in the area, including high visibility and proximity to the neighboring communities of West Bloomfield, Novi, Walled Lake, and Wolverine Lake...The adjacent communities are also projected to grow in the next 20 to 30 years according to SEMCOG's Regional Forecast.” (page 58)*



To the left is the map focusing in on the Commercial Center. None of the opportunity sites about the City of Novi directly, but connection to the sites via M-5 or the M-5 metro trail is available. The three opportunity sites, from south to north, are:

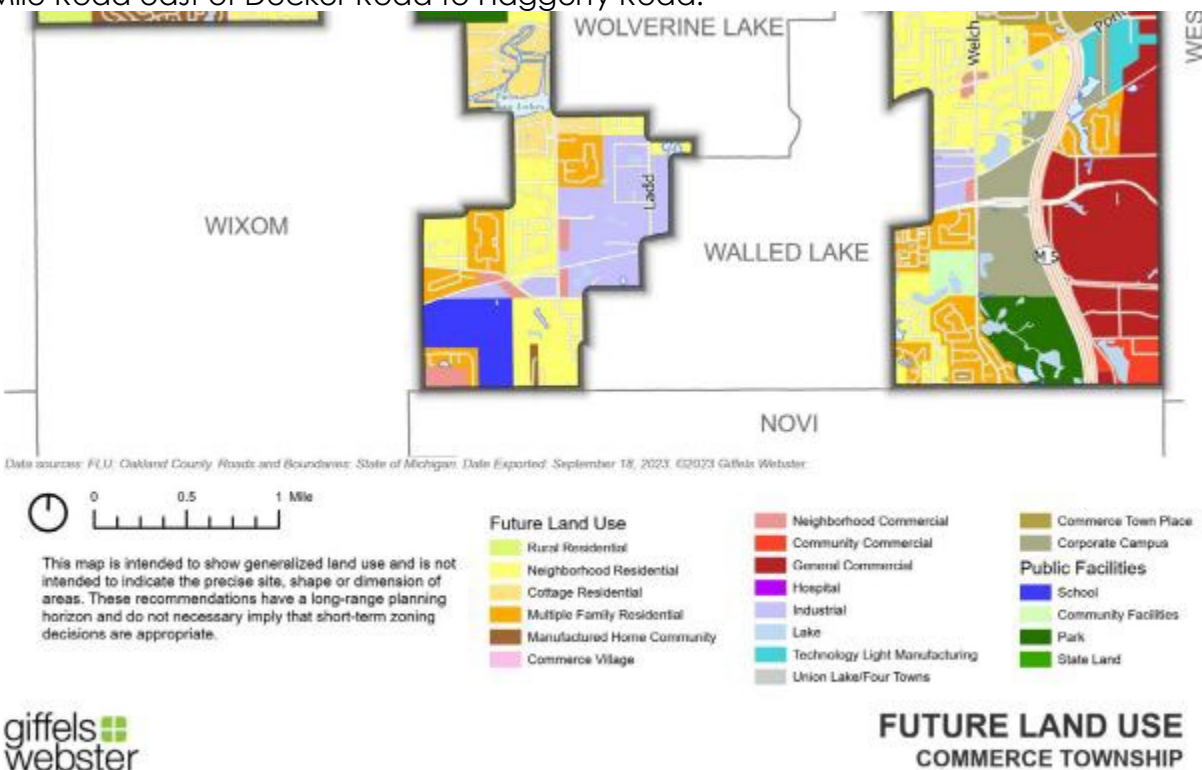
1. **Williams International** – where the suggested future use is a research and development campus or office headquarters-style development.
2. **The Beaumont Property** – where the same sort of office headquarters or R&D use is suggested.
3. **Rock Roads Properties** – where there are existing industrial uses and future developments may transition into uses more compatible with surrounding residential and retail uses.

## Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

The draft Master Plan designates an entire section to Commerce Township's non-motorized transportation infrastructure. This includes suggestions for implementing Complete Streets strategies, in addition to maintaining collaboration efforts with surrounding communities such as the City of Novi. Staff are encouraged by this emphasis on non-motorized transportation and plans to incorporate similar suggestions for collaboration in the Active Mobility Plan.

## Future Land Use Map

Commerce Township's Future Land Use Plan conveniently provides the changes that have been made since the 2015 Future Land Use Maps as part of the previous update to the Master Plan. Below is a part of the 2023 Future Land Use Map for the areas of Commerce Township that abut the City of Novi's municipal boundary. Those areas include the north side of Pontiac Trail east of Beck Road to Springlake Boulevard and the north side of 14 Mile Road east of Decker Road to Haggerty Road.



On the shared border along Pontiac Trail, the Future Land Use has one small change east of the existing manufactured housing development. This land is being recategorized as neighborhood residential to reflect current development and to be consistent with zoning. Other areas remain the same: neighborhood commercial (Kroger, etc.), multiple family residential (Addington Corners), School (Geisler Middle School), Neighborhood Residential, and Manufactured Housing (Commerce Ridge).

On the shared border along 14 Mile Road, the Future Land Use has one change at the northeast corner of M-5 and 14 Mile Road. An area that was previously Community Commercial is changing to General Commercial to reflect current development and be

consistent with zoning. Currently there is a Shell gas station and Wendy's within this district. Other future land use categories remain the same: Neighborhood Residential, Multiple Family Residential (Briarcliff Village, Waldon Pond, etc.), Park (Robert H. Long Nature Park), and Community Commercial (Kroger, etc.). The area to the north of Robert H. Long Park is being changed to Corporate Campus to reflect the intent of the Commercial Center Area Plan. This area was previously categorized as Industrial and Technology Light Manufacturing.

### Moving Forward

Overall, staff is encouraged by the draft Master Plan for Commerce Township and its use of Area Plans to identify the specific opportunity sites that require greater care in how they are developed in the future. In addition, the focus on non-motorized transportation throughout the entire report supported Novi's goals for active mobility. Staff recognizes the need for categorizing the select parcels near the border between the two municipalities, given the current development situations for the respective areas and the desire to conform to the Township's existing zoning. The exhaustive list of action items for each of the Plan's goals provides tangible next steps, in addition to the respective body in charge of taking those steps, which staff believes is an effective approach to implementation.

### **Recommendation**

It is the planning staff's recommendation that the Planning Commission authorize the Planning Commission Chair to sign and send a letter to the Commerce Township Planning Commission commending them on their proposed draft master Plan and state that their proposed Plan supports the City of Novi's Master Plan for Land Use.



October 11, 2023

Commerce Township  
Planning Commission Chair Brian Parel  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan  
48390

**CITY COUNCIL**

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RE: Commerce Township Master Plan 2023

Dear Mr. Parel:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Commerce Township Master Plan 2023. Novi's Community Development Department Planning Division has reviewed the proposed amendments and reported the findings to the City of Novi Planning Commission. A copy of this review is attached as the Planning Commission's report on the matter.

Based on this review, the City of Novi's Planning Commission commends Commerce Township on developing a well thought out Master Plan with a robust set of action items to accompany the Township's six goals. In addition, going into greater detail for the Area Plans and associated opportunity sites showcased the direction in which the Township wishes future development to go. The City of Novi also recognizes the importance of partnerships and coordination, especially on projects that have an impact on both communities. For example, regional trail connections such as the M-5 metro trail provide direct routes for residents of either municipality to explore the other via foot, bike, or other form of active mobility. Therefore, proposed non-motorized infrastructure near or around the metro trail can provide for greater access to and from both communities.

If any additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me or the Community Development Department.

Sincerely,

Mark Pehrson, Chair  
City of Novi Planning Commission

Attachments

C: Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee – via email  
David Campbell, Commerce Township Planning Director

**City of Novi**  
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Novi, Michigan 48375

cityofnovi.org