

June 3, 2016

Planning Commission  
 Northfield Township  
 8350 Main Street  
 Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

**Subject: Review of Biltmore Land LLC Application to Amend the Northfield Township Master Plan**

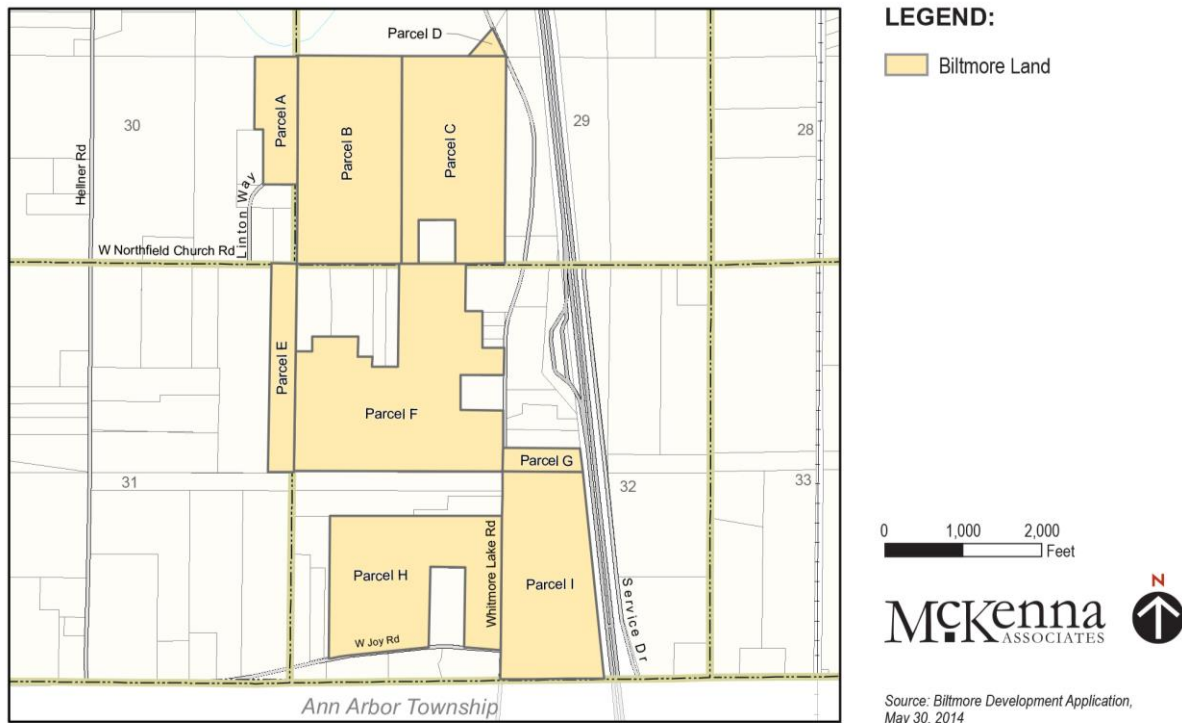
Dear Commissioners:

At your request, we have reviewed the application by Biltmore Land LLC to amend the Future Land Use Map of the 2012 Northfield Township Master Plan, amended 2014 ("Master Plan" or "Northfield Township Master Plan") for parcels mostly located in Sections 29 and 32, west of US-23, from AG, Agriculture (1 unit per 5 acres) to MDR, Medium Density Residential (1 unit to 4 units per acre; or 5 to 20 units per 5 acres). Our comments on and analysis of this request follows.

**I. DESCRIPTION OF THE REQUEST**

In May 2014, Biltmore Land LLC applied to Township for an amendment of the Northfield Master Plan Map. The request is to change the future land use designation on nine parcels, totaling 460.87 acres (Biltmore Land), mostly in Sections 29 and 32 and west of US-23, from AG Agricultural (1 unit per 5 acres) to MDR Medium Density Residential (¼ to 1 unit per acre) (See Map 1).

*Map 1: Land Subject to Options by Biltmore Land LLC ("Biltmore Land")*



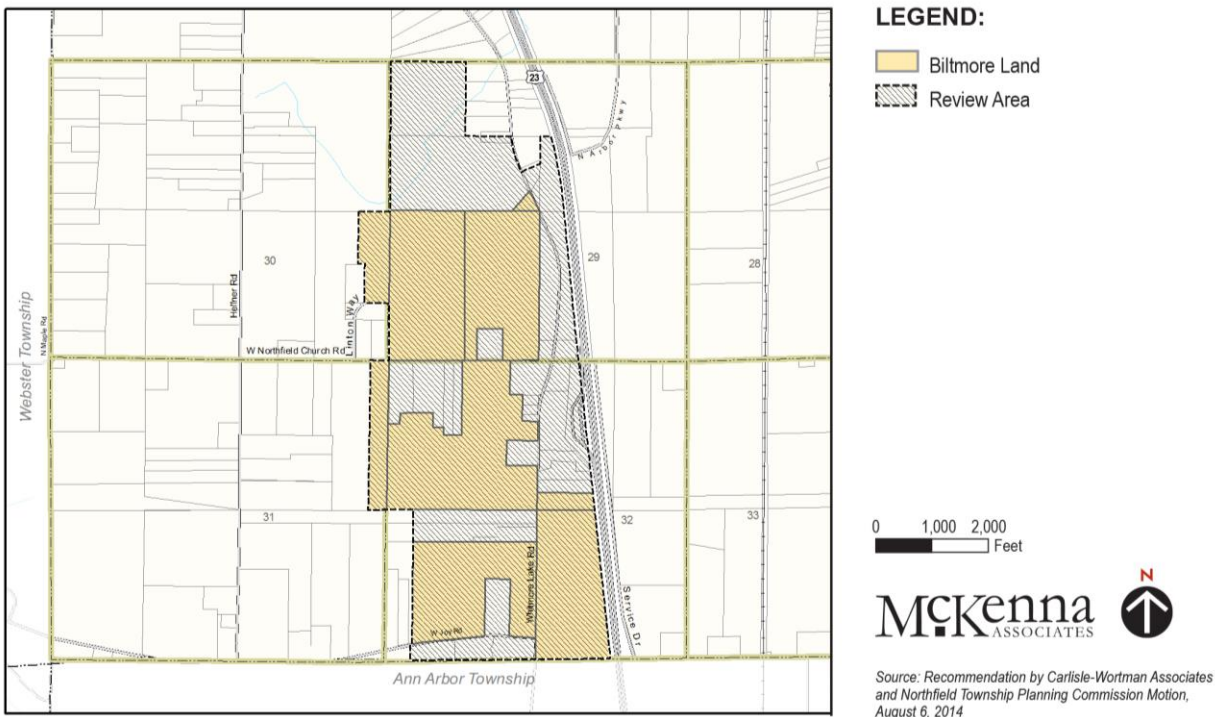
**A. Background.** After the Master Plan amendment application was submitted, the Planning Commission asked the applicant to provide additional information on the anticipated impacts of the requested plan change in regard to traffic, sanitary sewer and fiscal impacts. The applicant did not submit that information, and the Planning Commission later withdrew its request for the traffic and fiscal impact analyses. The Township undertook a study of the sanitary sewer system to identify the capacity and limitations system-wide. The results of the sanitary sewer system analysis are reflected in the comments described later in this report, from the Township’s sanitary sewer engineers, Tetra Tech.

**B. Review Area.** At its August 6, 2014 meeting, the Planning Commission defined a Master Plan “Review Area” surrounding the Biltmore Land. The Review Area generally includes land from US-23 west, halfway to Hellner Rd., extending north to include parcels abutting the Master Plan’s Mixed Use South classification and south to the Township boundary (See Map 2).

The Review Area extends beyond the land controlled by Biltmore, to include the “in-holdings” (parcels surrounded or partially surrounded by Biltmore Land), and other land that abuts the freeway or land currently planned for higher intensity uses. The Review Area encompasses additional land that would be considered similarly situated with the Biltmore land, and that consistent with sound planning principles, would need to be planned MDR or another non-agricultural or higher intensity category if the classification on the Biltmore were to be changed as requested. The impacts of Biltmore’s amendment would extend beyond the site, and absent any special circumstances, it would be difficult for the Township to deny similar rezoning of those parcels.

For the purposes of this review, we have assumed that any amendment to the Master Plan would ultimately re-classify the entire Review Area as Medium Density Residential on the Township’s Future Land Use Map.

Map 2: Review Area



## II. BASIS OF REVIEW

Planning and zoning law provides that government has a legitimate interest in maintaining compatibility of surrounding areas, protecting and preserving natural resources, and ensuring adequate infrastructure such as roads, water supply and sanitary sewage disposal. Adoption of a master plan and imposition of zoning restrictions to accomplish those interests, as well as to avoid overcrowding, preserve open space, and protect the aesthetics of an area of land are consistent with the Michigan Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts (P.A. 33 of 2008 and P.A. 110 of 2006).

Our review is based on consideration of accepted planning principles provided in State law regarding community master plans, the Township's adopted Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance, observation of the site and vicinity, recommendations of the Township's sanitary sewer engineer, review of other documents, plans and information. To change a community's adopted master plan, our review determines whether conditions or Township priorities have changed to the extent that amendment of the Master Plan is necessary, appropriate and reasonable. Further, how would the amendment affect the reasonableness of the Plan?

**A. Consistent with General Purposes of State Planning Act.** At the time of its adoption, the Plan met all four of the general purposes of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("the Act"), "Purpose" section, i.e. Section 7.(2), to guide and accomplish within the Township development that satisfies all the following criteria:

1. *It is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient and economical;*
2. *It considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development;*
3. *It will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare; and*
4. *It includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:*
  - a) *a system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets and provide for safe, efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users;*
  - b) *safety from fire and other dangers;*
  - c) *light and air;*
  - d) *healthful and convenient distribution of population;*
  - e) *good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds;*
  - f) *public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements;*
  - g) *recreation;*
  - h) *the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.*

**B. State Planning Act Procedures.** The State Act also provides procedures for preparing a master plan. The Plan was adopted by the Township in accordance with the process and procedures identified in Sections 39, 41 and 43 of the Act. It was reviewed at a public hearing, and was based in part upon a comprehensive community survey, two public workshops, and after considerable input from community stakeholders and the public. Further, the Master Plan includes those elements required under Section 33 (1) and (2) of the Act.

**C. Basic Tenets of the Master Plan.** The Township Master Plan lists several goals, each with policies as a framework for action. However, in considering Biltmore's specific request and the Township's Future Land Use map, the applicable Master Plan goals and policies can be summarized into the following basic tenets:

1. Encourage and guide concentration of residential development in the north part of the Township in and around Whitmore Lake which is near existing investment in public utilities and transportation, and to be in accordance with the character of that area which is generally in excess of 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre.

2. Limit residential growth in, and guide residential growth away from, those parts of the Township which do not have existing investment in public utilities (including sewage disposal) and transportation as would be necessary to accommodate development at 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre, and to be in accordance with the existing character of those areas which are more rural, less than 1 dwelling unit per acre.

These tenets describe the Township's Plan and the guiding principles which the applicant is asking to have modified.

### III. IMPACTS OF THE AMENDMENT ON THE MASTER PLAN

This portion of our review describes the Review Area, an area that would be expected to change if the Plan were amended as requested. Have any of the factors such as demographics, traffic, land uses, density character of the area, natural features, public utilities, etc., considered in the Master Plan changed since the Township Plan was adopted? Are these changes contrary to the basic tenets? Do any changes support amending the Plan? What would be the impacts if the Master Plan were amended as requested?

- A. **PROJECTED POPULATION, HOUSING UNITS AND VEHICLE TRIPS.** The defined Review Area is 787.75 acres in area, 164.5 acres of which are wetlands according to Washtenaw County 2016 GIS.
  1. **MDR Scenarios.** Removing wetlands from the total acreage leaves 623.25 acres developable under MDR. Of the non-wetland acres, approximately 20% will typically be used for infrastructure (roads, stormwater management, etc.) and/or common open space, leaving an estimated 500 acres that can be developed.
  2. **AG Scenario.** For a comparable AG scenario, 50% of the wetland area will be included as part of the residential lots, which is more feasible on the 5-acre minimum lot area envisioned by AG. In this case, only 10% would be set aside for roads, making the developable acreage an estimated 635 acres.
  3. **AG to MDR.** If the Master Plan is amended from AG to MDR, the following scenarios are projected:
    - a. If public sanitary sewer is not available, then the maximum permitted density is one dwelling unit per acre, permitting 500 units. The U.S. Census estimates report Northfield Township's average household size is 2.54 persons. Assuming that the new households are the same size as the rest of the Township, approximately 1,270 new residents can be expected.
    - b. If public sanitary sewer is made available for the Review Area, then the maximum permitted density would be four dwelling units per acre, or nearly 2,000 units. Those 2,000 units, at 2.54 persons per unit, would generate about 5,000 new residents.
    - c. Under a potential PUD with public sanitary sewer, the Planning Commission would have discretion to increase the density by up to 25%, allowing 5 units per acre, or nearly 2,500 units, around 6,300 new residents.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) estimates that single family homes in rural/suburban communities average 9.57 automobile trips per day, meaning that the potential new development would generate an estimated 4,600 to 25,000 new cars on the roads.

*Table 1: Density Scenarios (MDR vs. AG)\**

Density Scenario	Maximum Housing Units Per Acre	Potential Housing Units	Potential Population	Potential Additional Auto Trips Per Day
a. No Public Sanitary Sewer	1	400 - 500	1,100 – 1,300	4,600 – 4,800
b. Public Sanitary Sewer	4	1,800 – 2,000	4,900 – 5,100	18,000 – 20,000
c. Public Sanitary Sewer Plus PUD Density Bonus	5	2,300 – 2,500	6,200 – 6,400	23,000 – 25,000
a. Existing AG per Master Plan	0.20	115 - 140	310 - 340	1,200 – 1,400

*\* All projections are given as ranges with rounding to reflect they are based on averages and estimates*

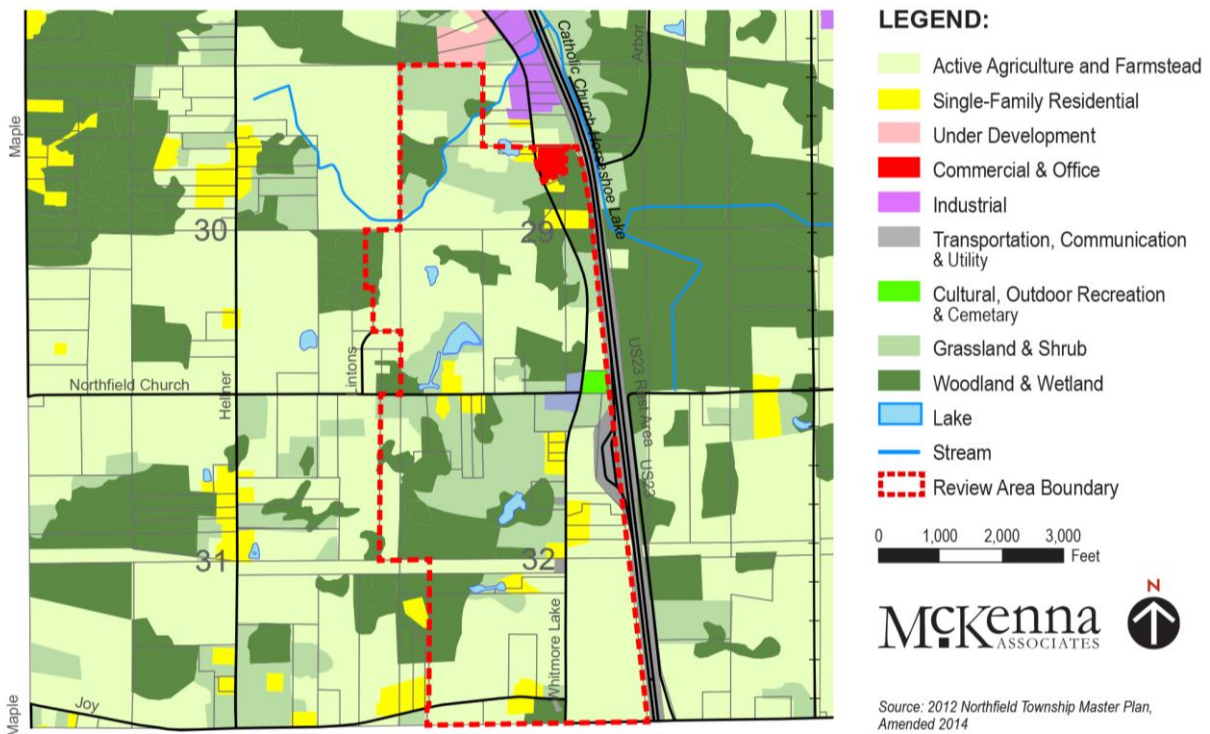
**Impacts: MDR Density vs. AG Density Conclusions**

- The requested MDR Master Plan amendment, because of its higher density, could result in approximately 3 times to more than 15 times as many housing units, residents, and vehicle trips per day than are planned under the existing AG land use category. The impacts of such a dramatic change would not be harmonious. The change would generate densities extremely inconsistent with the guiding principles and basic tenets of the adopted Master Plan.

**B. CHARACTER OF THE AREA**

- Existing Land Use.** The Master Plan’s Existing Land Use Map describes the Review Area as primarily grassland and scrub, woodland and wetland, active agriculture and farmsteads, with some scattered single family dwellings.

*Map 3: Existing Land Use, 2012 Master Plan*



\* Single family homes on Linton Way existed but are not shown on 2012 Existing Land Use Map.



To determine the character of the Review Area, McKenna Associates conducted a land use survey of existing uses in March, 2016 and reviewed aerials taken in 2013 and in 2015. The current distribution of land uses remains essentially the same as reported on the 2012 Existing Land Use map. Development is typically single family residential on lots ranging from 1 to 5 acres and larger, open space, and agricultural uses (crops, raising of animals, etc.), or a combination.

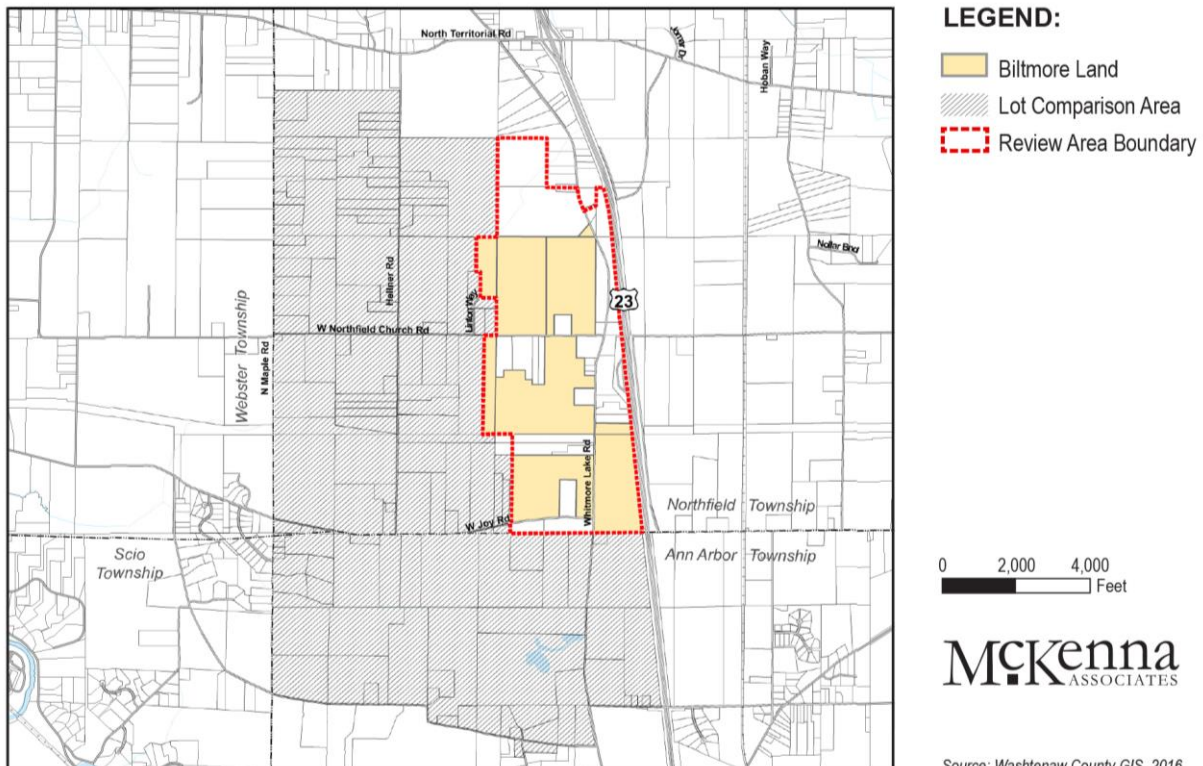
Natural features within the area are predominantly wetlands, scrub/brush wetlands, forested land or wooded wetlands, some with mature trees. St. Patrick's Church and associated uses near the corner of Whitmore Lake Rd. and Northfield Church Rd. are notable non-residential uses. Since 2012 a school has been built along Whitmore Lake Rd., south of Northfield Church Rd.

**Existing Land Use Conclusions**

- The Review Area's character remains rural residential with agriculture and open space, and has not changed.
- The requested Master Plan amendment would permit development that significantly changes the character of the Review Area by encouraging and allowing single family dwelling subdivisions at 4 - 5 d.u. per acre. As an aside, the impacts of farming (dust, noise, odors, chemicals, etc.) tend to conflict with higher density residential neighborhoods. The amendment would be incompatible with the existing land uses which establish the rural character, and further would be contrary to the basic tenets.

**2. Existing Character - Lot Area Analysis.** To gain additional insights into the development character of the Review Area, we used County GIS to compare existing lot sizes in the Review Area to surrounding areas within and outside of Northfield Township.

Map 4: Lot Comparison Area



Of the 39 parcels in the Review Area, more than 2/3 are 5 acres or larger. The surrounding Lot Comparison Area (not including the Review Area) with 142 lots, has an even higher proportion of large lots – approximately 82% are 5 acres or larger.

Of the 181 total lots in the Review Area and Lot Comparison Area, 4 (approximately 2%) are less than one acre, which is the largest lot area envisioned under the requested Medium Density Residential category. It is clear the existing character of the Review Area and beyond is incompatible with amendment to MDR, as shown in the table below.

*Table 2: Lot Area Comparison*

Lot Area	Review Area		Lot Comparison Area* (Not Including Review Area)	
	Number of Parcels	Percentage of Parcels	Number of Parcels	Percentage of Parcels
Less than 1 Acre	1	2.6%	3	2.11%
1 - 2 Acres	4	10.3%	13	9.15%
2 - 5 Acres	7	17.9%	10	7.04%
5 - 10 Acres	8	20.5%	42	29.58%
10-20 Acres	10	25.6%	33	23.24%
Over 20 Acres	9	23.1%	41	28.87%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Includes abutting portions of Ann Arbor Township

The analysis of lot areas above, shows that lots proximate to the Review Area are similar in size and compatible with the density of lots to the south in Ann Arbor Township. If the proposed amendment results from trying to capitalize on the Ann Arbor School District, the area’s character is not exclusive to Northfield Township, rather it is larger and continues in Ann Arbor Township to the south. Both Ann Arbor Township and Northfield Township have zoned areas of similar character and plans to keep that character. A logical progression of density to avoid leap-frogging would have development first in Ann Arbor Township, closer to the City of Ann Arbor.

**Existing Character Conclusions**

- The Review Area’s AG density is consistent with the surrounding character in Northfield Township and areas beyond, and are a logical progression of decreasing density north from the City of Ann Arbor urban area. MDR would unreasonably change that character. To amend the Plan for MDR density would encourage sprawl, leap-frogging similar areas to the south.
- The lot areas envisioned by the Northfield Township’s AG Future Land Use classification are more consistent with the neighboring land in Ann Arbor Township than the lot areas envisioned by Northfield’s MDR Future Land Use classification.

**3. Natural Features.** McKenna’s land use survey confirmed the presence of large wetland areas throughout the Review Area. Other natural feature characteristics are described below.

- Bio-Reserves.** The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) Bio-Reserve Project has assessed the woodlands, wetlands and open spaces in the Township, including the Review Area, and identified several “Bio-Reserves”. Bio-Reserves are woodlands, wetlands, or open fields that are important to the health of groundwater and the Huron River. The Review Area contains most of a 212.58-acre Medium Rank Bio-Reserve natural feature area and other Bio-Reserve natural features are also present within the Review Area.

Map 5: Natural Features



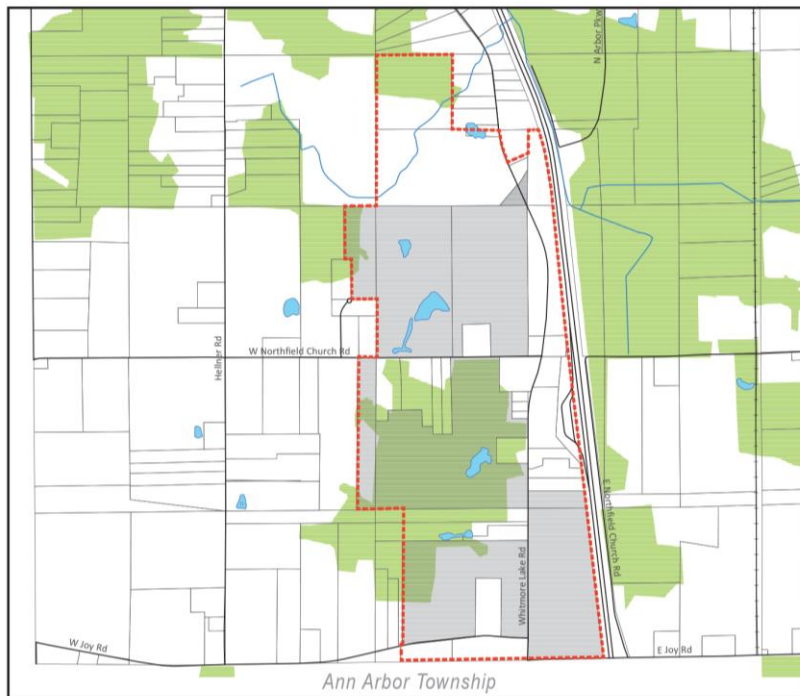
- LEGEND:**
- Emergent Wetland
  - Scrub-Shrub Wetland
  - Forested Wetland
  - Woodland
  - Review Area Boundary

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Source: 2012 Northfield Township Master Plan, Amended 2014

Map 6: HRWC Bio-Reserve Areas



- LEGEND:**
- Low Rank Bioreserves
  - Medium Rank Bioreserves
  - High Rank Bioreserves
  - Biltmore Land
  - Review Area Boundary

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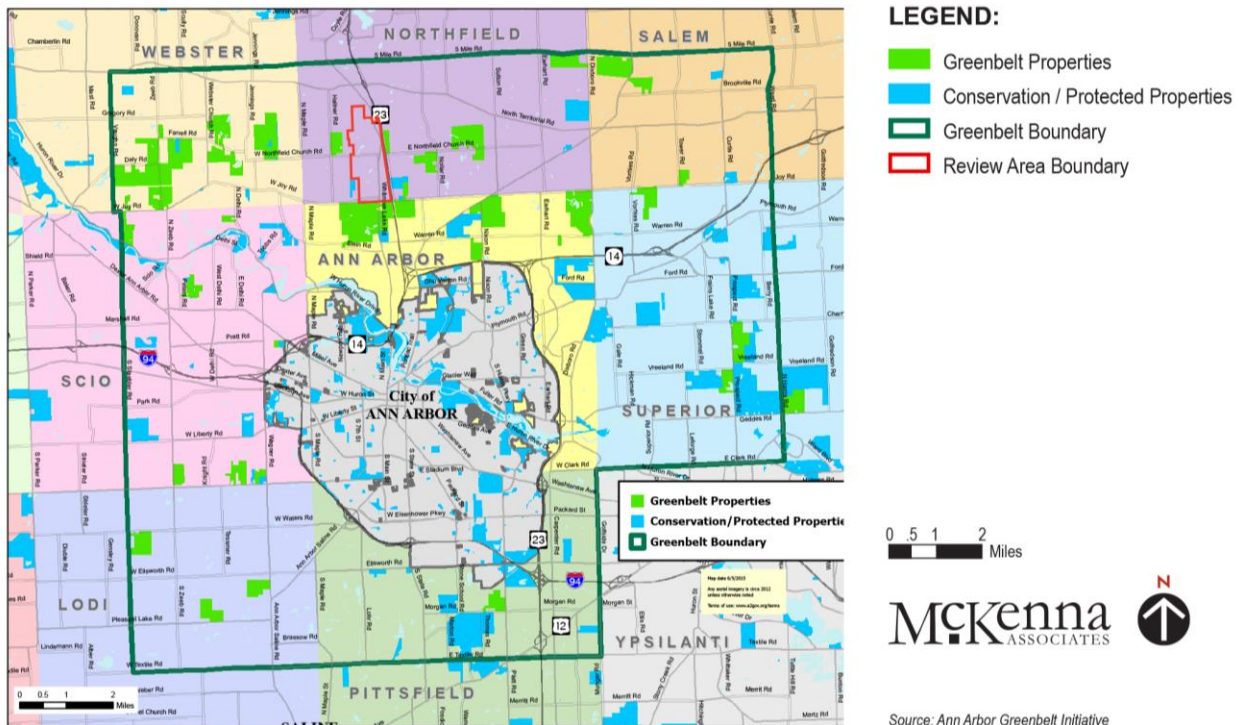
Source: Carlisle-Wortman Associates Report to Northfield Township, July 23, 2014. Information presented confirmed by maps from Huron River Watershed Council.



- b. Greenbelt.** In November 2003, residents of Ann Arbor approved the Greenbelt Program for the purpose of protecting farmland, open spaces, natural areas and the City’s source waters within portions of eight townships surrounding Ann Arbor, as well as to add parkland and recreational opportunities within the City limits. The program has focused on forming large blocks (1,000 acres or greater) of protected farmland and open space through the acquisition of easements, protecting land within the Huron River Watershed, and capitalizing on partnership opportunities.

More than 1,500 acres are protected in Northfield and Ann Arbor Townships, most notably more than 600 acres just south of the Review Area in Ann Arbor Township. Several parcels in Northfield Township west of the Review Area are also protected. The Review Area is entirely located within the Ann Arbor Greenbelt target area for open space preservation.

Map 7: Ann Arbor Greenbelt



**Natural Features Conclusions**

- The Review Area is characterized by an interconnected system of wetlands and woodlands, including marshy areas and forested wetlands. To build at MDR densities would likely negatively impact natural features, contrary to the basic tenets of the Plan.
- Nearly one quarter of the land in the Review Area, including Biltmore Land, is Bio-Reserve. Higher density development would be inconsistent with the preservation of these natural features.
- The large lots, woodlands, wetlands and open spaces in the Review Area are compatible with the Ann Arbor Greenbelt’s goals and objectives. Encouraging retention of these features, whether as part of the program or not, is consistent with the surroundings, character of the area and basic tenets of the Master Plan. Higher density MDR development would be inconsistent with the preservation of these important natural features and contrary to the Master Plan’s guiding principles.

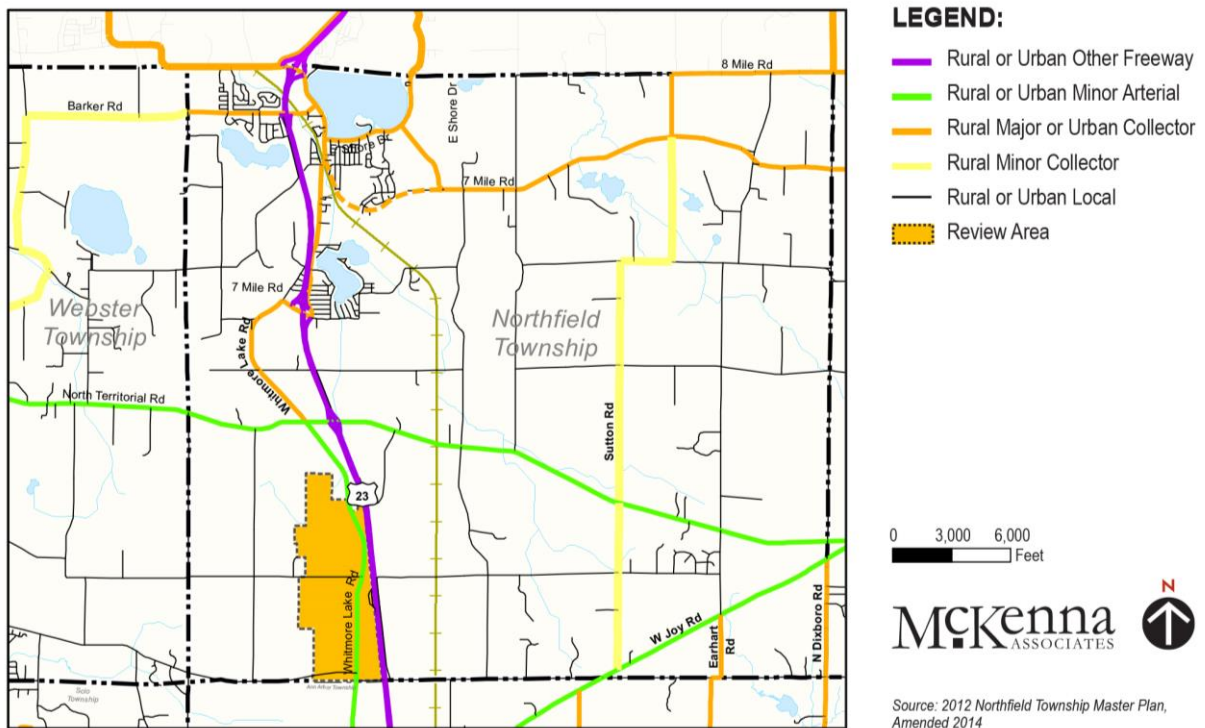
**C. TRANSPORTATION**

**1. Roads and Traffic.** The following is an overview of the potential impacts of a plan change in the Review Area on the road system in the Township and affected communities; it is not a substitute for a traffic impact study.

Map 8 below, from the Northfield Township Master Plan, presents the functional classification of roads in and around the Review Area. Whitmore Lake Rd. in the Review Area, is a Rural Minor Arterial. Rural Minor Arterials provide a higher level of service than Rural Collectors and Local Roads and ensure that developed areas are within a reasonable distance of an arterial. All other roads in the Review Area are classified as Rural Local Roads. No capacity improvements are in evidence around the Review Area since the Master Plan was adopted.

- a. Projected Traffic.** Development of the Review Area under MDR density would generate new daily vehicle trip estimates in the range of 4,600 (in a non-public-sewer scenario) to an estimated 25,000 (25,000 assumes the maximum discretionary density bonus).
  
- b. Impact on Internal Roads.** SEMCOG traffic counts report Whitmore Lake Rd. carries approximately 3,700 cars per day (total in both directions, as counted in 2014) between North Territorial Rd. and Joy Rd. If the Review Area were to develop at MDR density, Whitmore Lake Rd. would likely be the main thoroughfare for that additional traffic and traffic on it would increase by 30% to more than 500%.

*Map 8: Functional Road Classifications, 2012 Master Plan*



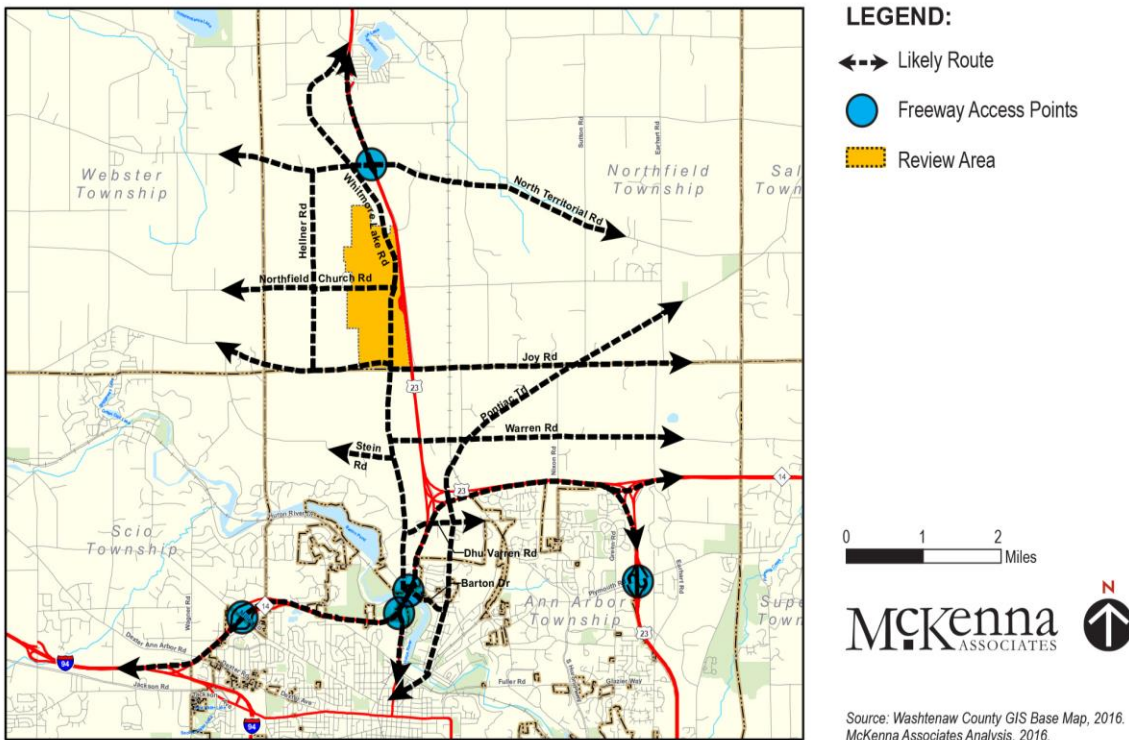
We believe increases in projected traffic on Whitmore Lake Rd. would likely require improvements to the road, such as additional lanes and traffic control devices. MDOT standards change with approximately every 5,000 cars of additional daily traffic, so the projected increase would almost certainly trigger needed improvements. The exact nature of the improvements would depend on the design of the new development, as well as the actual traffic patterns that result.

Traffic counts are not available for the other roads around the Review Area (Northfield Church, Joy, Hellner, etc.). Those roads are not currently paved, so paving and intersection improvements are expected to be necessary in the event of development in the Review Area.

- c. **Impact on Road Network.** US-23 is immediately east of the Review Area. The closest interchange is North Territorial Rd., roughly 2 miles from the center of the Review Area, and is expected to be the major route for new traffic to access the interstate system. US-23 is a barrier for east-west traffic from the Review Area because there are no bridges over the freeway between North Territorial Rd. and Joy Rd.

Outside of the immediate Review Area, the additional traffic would use existing roads, as illustrated on the map below.

Map 9: Likely Travel Patterns for Traffic from the Review Area



### **Roads and Traffic Conclusions**

- No changes are apparent in the area's road network since 2012 that would support the level of traffic anticipated from MDR density development.
- The road network in and around the Review Area is unchanged and remains consistent with the current AG planned density. This network is not sufficient to serve the projected number of cars from development under the proposed category. Upgrades would very likely be needed, including paving roads, design improvements to Whitmore Lake Rd., intersection upgrades, and potentially bridge(s) over US-23.

## **D. PUBLIC UTILITIES**

- 1. Sanitary Sewer.** Public sanitary sewer service is not currently available in the Review Area, nor are there plans to extend and expand public sanitary sewer infrastructure to the Review Area. None of the Review Area or the applicant's site is included in the Township sewer boundary. Also, public sanitary sewer capacity sufficient to support MDR density is not available in the Review Area. According to Tetra Tech, the Township sanitary sewer engineer, in a letter to the Township Manager dated May 13, 2016, the system's wastewater treatment plant does not have the capacity in wet weather conditions to support any of the MDR density range in the Review Area. The sewer system will also be a restricting factor for the higher densities possible under the MDR classification, although some capacity may be available to support the lowest densities envisioned.

The Master Plan specifically discourages the extension of sewer to the Review Area: *"In order to promote orderly growth within the Township, only areas adjacent to and contiguous to the current municipal service boundary should be considered as the preferred area for expansion of services. The "leapfrogging" of Township areas to provide municipal services which create an island of services in the Township should be strongly disfavored. The idea of contiguous development requires that municipal services expand from one fully-developed area to the next adjacent area."* (page 20, emphasis added).

Also, the Master Plan's development strategies for the Southwest Sub-Area (of which the Review Area is part) specify *"Discourage extension of public sewer or water service into rural areas of the Township ideally situated and conditioned for open space and natural features preservation and agriculture."*

Without public sanitary sewer, development would be limited to a density that can be supported by on-site septic systems. According to the Washtenaw County Sanitarian, typically a minimum of a one-acre lot is required to support a private septic system in this area (email dated 5/24/16).

### **Sanitary Sewer Conclusions**

- The applicant's site is outside the sewer boundary and does not have access to public sanitary sewer.
- There are no plans to extend sanitary sewer infrastructure to the Review Area. There have been no changes to the sanitary sewer access of the Review Area since the Master Plan was adopted.
- Public sanitary sewer capacity is not available to support MDR density in the Review Area.
- The Master Plan discourages extension of public sewer to the area, thus amendment to MDR is contrary to the Plan. If private or on-site community sewer were approved, MDR density still would not be consistent with the Plan.



- Water.** The Review Area is served by individual private wells. There is no public water service in the Township. Further, the Master Plan does not support the extension of public water to the Review Area. See Sanitary Sewer, above.

According to the Washtenaw County Sanitarian, the typical minimum lot size for a private well in this area is one half acre, with the actual requirement depending on the individual site conditions. Given that the minimum lot area for a septic system is one acre, it is likely that lots in the Review Area would have to be larger than one acre if public water and sewer are not available.

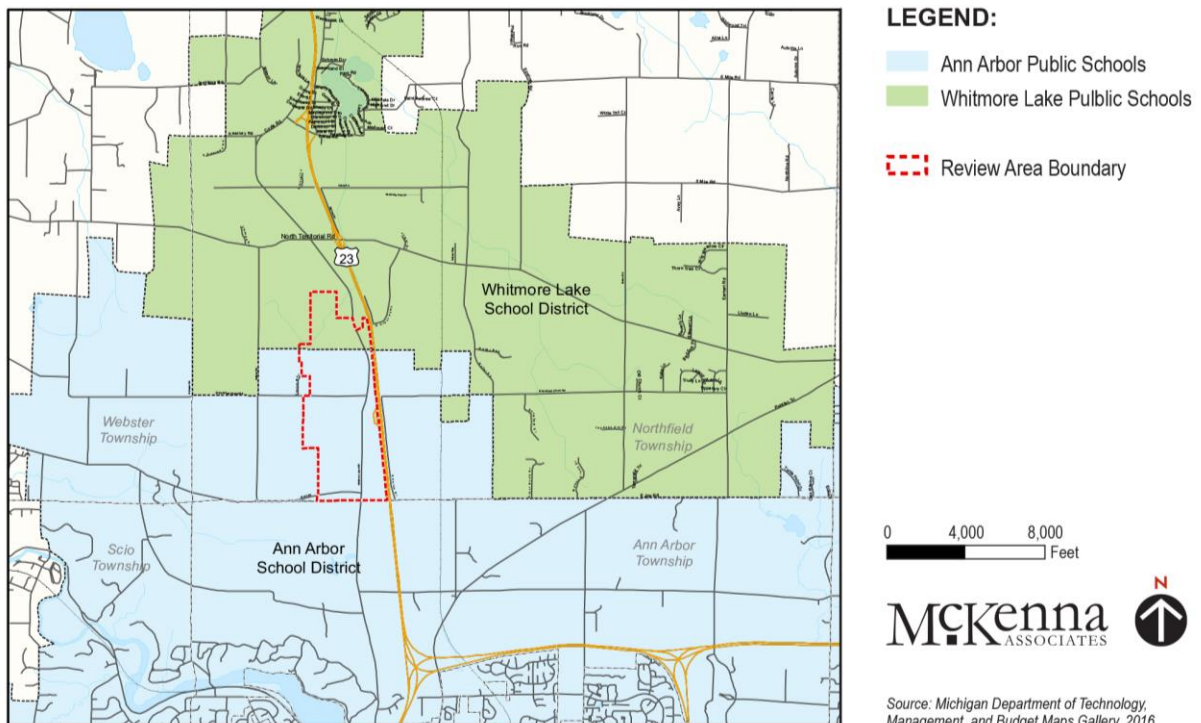
#### Water Conclusions

- There are no plans to provide public water infrastructure to the Review Area, and the Master Plan discourages such an extension. Further, there have been no changes to water service in the Review Area since the Master Plan was adopted.

### E. PUBLIC SERVICES IMPACTS

- School Districts.** The Review Area is in two different school districts, Whitmore Lake Public Schools and Ann Arbor Public Schools; the majority of the land is within the Ann Arbor Public School District. The map below shows school district boundaries in the wider region. Both districts include a variety of urban, suburban and rural areas, and both have a variety of lot areas, housing types and sizes.

*Map 10: School Districts*





- 2. Public Safety.** The Township's Public Safety building (including general government, police and fire services) is located at 8350 Main Street, near Horseshoe Lake. Northfield Township also has a second fire station at 2727 North Territorial Rd., between Spencer and Sutton Roads. Because both facilities are east of US-23, public safety responders have to cross the freeway at overpasses to access the Review Area. The North Territorial Rd. bridge, the closest freeway crossing to the Review Area is antiquated, only two lanes in width and frequently congested.

#### **Public Services Conclusions**

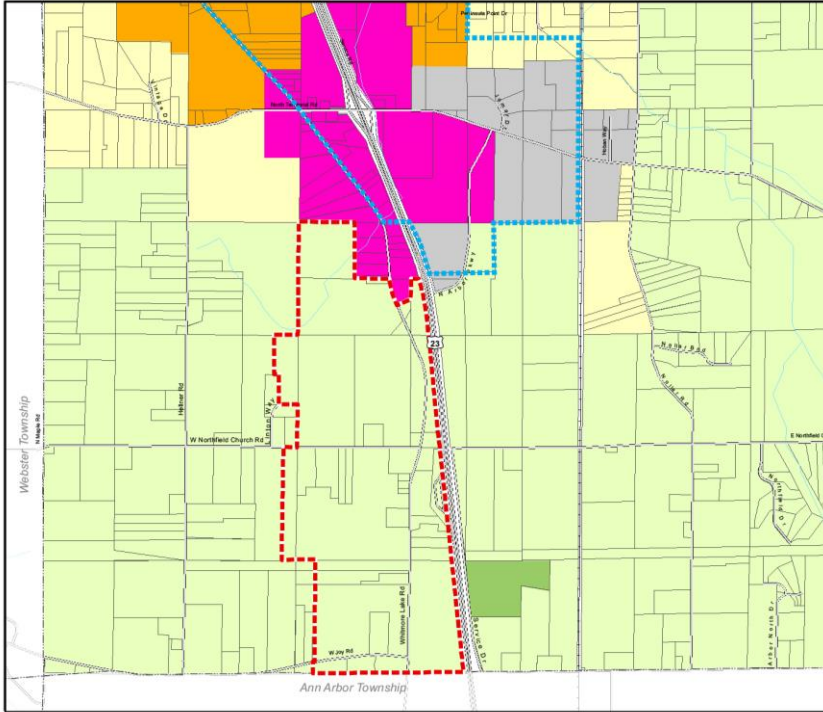
- The Review Area lies mostly within the Ann Arbor School District, with the north portion in the Whitmore Lake District. No impacts on the schools were determined.
- The Township's public safety facilities are located east of US-23, limiting the number of routes available to the Review Area for emergencies. The separation of public safety facilities from the Review Area may negatively impact the ability of public safety responders to protect the requested higher density of residents from fire and other dangers, contrary to the Master Plan.
- Should Review Area MDR development build-out at its maximum (a 75% increase in Township population), a case could be made for added public safety facilities and service west of US-23.

- F. TOWNSHIP AND COUNTY LAND USE PLANS.** We have reviewed 1) the Township's 2012 Master Plan which is less than 5 years old, and the Land Use plans for 2) adjacent Ann Arbor Township and 3) Washtenaw County. Each of them supports keeping the Review Area at its current planned density. The more recent 2014 amendment to Northfield Township's Plan also left the Review Area unchanged. Each of these plans is supported by public input and established principles of planning and design, and cause us to form the following conclusions:

#### **Township and County Land Use Plan Conclusions**

- There are no Master Plan goals that support designating additional land for MDR residential development in the southern, rural, open space and agricultural planned portion of the Township, or reclassifying the Review Area to MDR.
- The Master Plan includes 1,487.86 acres classified as MDR in the northern part of the Township, but does not include any of the applicant's site. Although the area has typical wetland limits, MDR land is available.
- If additional land is needed for MDR, it should be in the north part of the Township, close to existing density and services, not in rural areas planned for protection.
- The 2012 Northfield Township Master Plan, amended in 2014, specifically designates northern portions of the Township for denser development. The Master Plan's goals and objectives support this.
- No changes are evident since the 2012 Plan that would make the Review Area a more appropriate place for MDR than the parts of the Township already planned for that type of development.
- The Ann Arbor Township Master Plan also envisions the land around the Review Area as agricultural and preserved open space, and in its 2015 Master Plan update, renewed its commitment to preserving the rural character in its northwest corner.
- The Washtenaw County Comprehensive Plan (prepared in 2004) is consistent with the Northfield Township Master Plan. The County Plan designates part of the Review Area for more intense uses, but not the applicant's site. The Township's 2014 Master Plan amendment considered the County Plan and refined the boundaries for more intense uses to be closer to the North Territorial Rd. interchange.
- The Washtenaw County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2004 and has not changed since the Northfield Township Master Plan was adopted.

Map 11: Northfield Master Plan Future Land Use Map



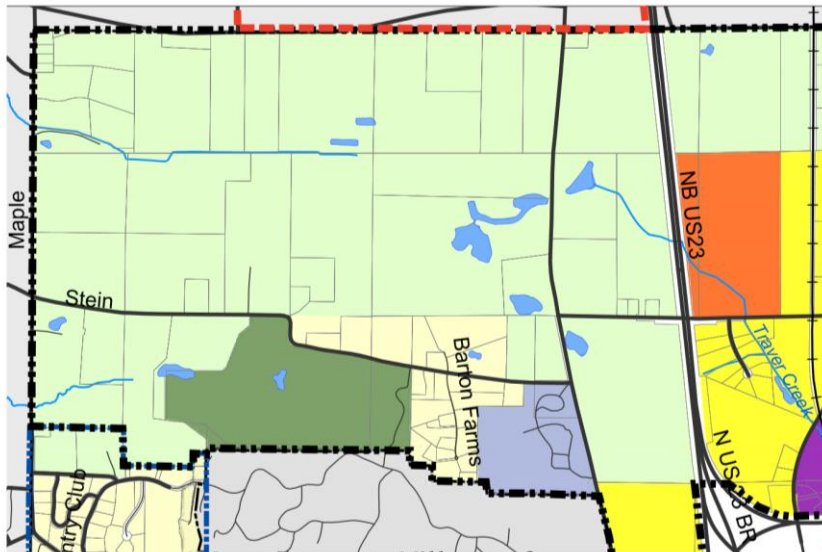
**LEGEND:**

- AG - Agricultural (5 acres)
- LDR - Low Density Residential (2 acres)
- MDR - Medium Density Residential (1/4 - 1 acre)
- HDR - High Density Residential (6 to 14 Units / Acre and Sewer)
- MHP - Manufactured Home
- VC - Village Center - Mixed Use
- MU - Mixed Use
- HC - Highway Commercial
- I - Industrial
- RC - Recreation / Conservation
- Sewer Boundary
- Review Area Boundary



Source: 2012 Northfield Township Master Plan, Amended 2014

Map 12: Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Future Land Use Map



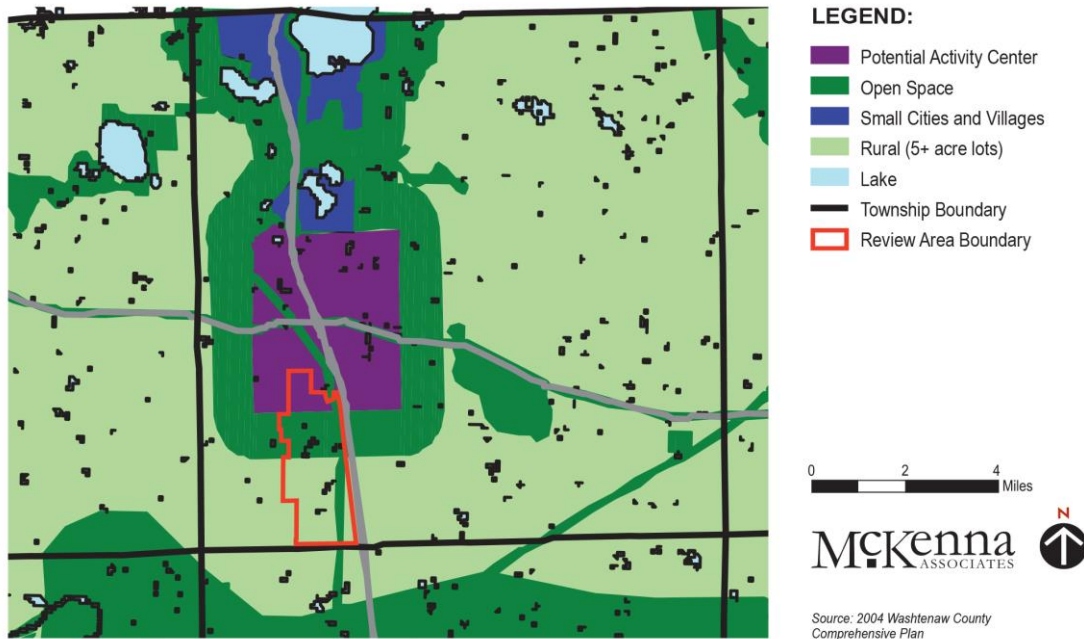
**LEGEND:**

- Agricultural Production
- Residential (0.2-0.5 D.U./acre)
- Residential (0.5-1.0 D.U./acre)
- Residential (4-6 D.U./acre)
- Recreation
- Public Institutions
- Industry
- Agricultural Preservation Overlay
- Review Area Boundary



Source: 2015 Ann Arbor Township Master Plan

Map 13: Washtenaw County Comprehensive Plan Recommended Potential Future Landscapes



Section 45.(2) of the Act provides that *at least every 5 years after adoption of a master plan, a planning commission shall review the master plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the master plan or adopt a new master plan.* The next statutorily required 5-year review is in 2017.

**G. ZONING**

The table below summarizes the existing land use, zoning, and master plan designations in and around the Review Area, according to the Northfield and Ann Arbor Township Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances.

Table 3: Existing Land Use, Zoning and Master Plan

	Review Area	North	South	East	West
<b>Land Use</b>	Agriculture/ Large Lot Single Family Residential	Agriculture/ Large Lot Single Family Residential	Agriculture/ Large Lot Single-Family Residential  <b>Ann Arbor Township:</b> Agriculture	Agriculture/ Large Lot Single Family Residential	Agriculture/ Large Lot Single- Family Residential
<b>Zoning</b>	AR Agriculture (min. 5 acre lots)	AR Agriculture (min. 5 acre lots); LC Local Commercial (1 parcel)	AR Agriculture (min. 5 acre lots)  <b>Ann Arbor Township:</b> A-1 General Agriculture (min. 10 acre lots)	AR Agriculture (min. 5 acre lots)	AR Agriculture (min. 5 acre lots)
<b>Master Plan</b>	AG Agriculture (1 unit per 5 acres)	AG Agriculture (1 unit per 5 acres)	AG Agriculture (1 unit per 5 acres)  <b>Ann Arbor Township:</b> Agricultural Production/Agricultural Preservation Overlay	AG Agriculture (1 unit per 5 acres)	AG Agriculture (1 unit per 5 acres)

### **Zoning Conclusions**

- In the event of a Master Plan amendment re-classifying the Review Area to MDR, the Master Plan would support a rezoning to SR-1 Single Family Residential, which permits up to 4 dwelling units per acre. The Master Plan could also support a Planned Unit Development or Open Space Preservation development, under either AR or SR-1 zoning, further increasing the permitted density. Such an amendment is also incompatible with the A-1 General Agricultural zoning in Ann Arbor Township, immediately south.
- The current AR-Agriculture zoning is consistent with the Master Plan, both its Future Land Use designation of AG (1 unit per 5 acres) and goals and objectives.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

We recommend that the Planning Commission deny the application to amend the Master Plan by re-classifying the Biltmore Land to MDR, Medium Density Residential, for the reasons given in this report, including but not limited to:

1. The applicant has provided no new information that suggests that re-classifying the Review Area as MDR is necessary or appropriate.
2. The land use survey shows there have been no major changes in the Township or in adjacent Ann Arbor Township that affect the Master Plan's underlying principles, strategies, or land use needs in the Review Area. The Master Plan remains current.
3. Residential development at MDR density is addressed in the Plan, is provided for elsewhere and is highly discouraged in the Review Area and other AG-planned parts of the Township. Amendment would be contrary to the basic tenets of the Master Plan.
4. The plan change for the Biltmore Land will establish the policy for higher density in comparable areas in the Township to the detriment of the Plan's basic principles and tenets.
5. The amendment would be contrary to one of the basic tenets of the Plan – that higher densities should be located in and around Whitmore Lake and existing higher density development. If additional land is needed for MDR, it should be located in the north part of the Township, close to established existing density and services, not in rural areas planned for protection.
6. The Master Plan shows land planned for MDR elsewhere in Northfield Township that has yet to be developed. Applicants are not precluded from development at the MDR density.
7. According to the Township's engineer, sanitary sewer service and capacity is not adequate to accommodate MDR density. The impacts of the Master Plan amendment would require major changes to the infrastructure, contrary to the Master Plan goals to limit extensions and expansion to the existing sewer service district and the village area. There is no sewer plan in place to support such a change.
8. Our road analysis has shown that the impacts of the Master Plan amendment would require major changes to the infrastructure, and there is no plan in place to support those changes.
9. The Northfield Township Master Plan is compatible and coordinated with the plans of Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County. The requested change to the Plan would be contrary to sound planning principles, because it would leap-frog 100's of acres, creating a hodge-podge of development, contrary to an orderly and efficient plan as expressed in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008.

10. The requested amendment would be a betrayal of the Plan's major goals and objectives, which were developed based on extensive and substantial public input, based on our review of the planning process.
11. As shown in the natural features analysis, the current Master Plan density in the Review Area is consistent with the environmental features of the area.
12. There is evidence of investment throughout the Review Area at the planned density.

Respectfully Submitted,

**McKENNA ASSOCIATES**



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