

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

MICHIGAN

DOWNTOWN WHITMORE LAKE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND NORTH VILLAGE PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: HOW WILL DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN AND IN NORTH VILLAGE AFFECT THE TAX PAYER? WILL MY TAXES GO UP?

No. Nothing is proposed in the North Village Plan or the Downtown Strategic Plan that would require a tax increase for Northfield Township residents. Both plans consider using new private investments to increase the tax revenues and create new amenities in the Township.

Q2: WHO WILL PAY FOR DOWNTOWN AND NORTH VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS?

Private sector developers will pay for new development and a portion of the public amenities. In the DDA area, taxes generated from new development that would otherwise go outside of the Township can be captured to pay for new infrastructure through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Additionally, the plans will allow the Township to apply for Federal and State grant programs to establish and supplement public uses.

Q3: WILL THERE BE A PARK IN NORTH VILLAGE?

Yes, more than half of the land will be dedicated to public park uses. The parts of the site planned for housing and business uses are on the edges to buffer the park from US-23, provide accessible parking areas, and blend with the adjacent sites and Downtown.

Q4: DIDN'T RESIDENTS SAY THEY WANT A PARK ONLY AT NORTH VILLAGE?

This is partly true and partly untrue. Most residents did want a park but were also interested in seeing complementary uses as well. Looking strictly at the survey numbers, it is true that of the 480 people that took the survey, 303 or about 63% of respondents wanted the site to be a park only. However, when these 303 people were asked about desirable uses in addition to recreation, only 106 were clear in wanting no businesses on the site at all, while 197 were supportive of some type of businesses. Combining these responses with those who had said they wanted businesses only on the site, about 22% of people clearly do not want any other uses on the site besides a park, while 67% are supportive of some types of business or other uses in addition to a park.

Q5: WHAT FEATURES WILL THE PARK HAVE?

The many public features planned for North Village include a town green, a pavilion, a central lawn, community garden, a band shell, a fishing dock, a beach, a marina, and public parking.

Q6: HOW WILL WE ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES AND HOW WILL CURRENT BUSINESSES BE AFFECTED?

The downtown plan recommends building on the identity of downtown Whitmore Lake as a lakefront community with specialty retail, entertainment options, dining, and recreational services. The plan recommends giving downtown a "facelift" with new signs, benches, banners, lights and landscaping to produce a welcoming atmosphere and position downtown as a destination. The plan also recommends reviewing procedural and zoning requirements in downtown to remove barriers to

starting businesses that implement the goals of the downtown plan. These strategies are intended to benefit current business first but also help encourage entrepreneurship.

Q7: DOES THE PLAN INCLUDE BOTH DOWNTOWN AND NORTH VILLAGE?

The Township completed two plans in 2017. The “Downtown Strategic Action and Design Framework” and the “North Village Master Plan.” These two plans go hand-in-hand to inform future development in the downtown area, including the North Village site.

Q8: HOW DOES THE PLAN ADDRESS TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS?

The plans consider traffic circulation, bicycle circulation, and pedestrian safety. New pedestrian crossings locations, parking access locations, drives and alleys are planned for the North Village site and public parking areas to make sure that vehicles coming to and from downtown can access US-23 from all of the interchanges. Traffic impacts resulting from any new developments will continue to be evaluated when proposals are received.

Q9: WILL THERE BE ADEQUATE PARKING FOR DOWNTOWN AND THE LAKEFRONT?

Yes, the plans create new and improved public parking areas to access downtown, the North Village Park, and the lake.

Q10: WILL ZONING CHANGES BE NEEDED?

Yes and No. The development considered in the plans is currently permitted based on the existing Zoning Ordinance. The plans do recommend updating the Zoning Ordinance to encourage businesses and consistency with the design recommendations.

Q11: WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE WILL BE NEEDED?

The Township is exploring expansion of sewer capacity. Expansion would be paid for by new hook-ups and benefit the entire Township. Additionally, road improvements, public parking, and park amenities are also new infrastructure improvements needed.

Q12: HOW QUICKLY WILL THE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

The Township is considering issuing an RFP for the development of the North Village site. If a qualifying proposal is received, development could be implemented within a 1 to 2-year time frame. The plan for downtown is a long-range vision with a 20+ year horizon. The Township may update the vision for downtown at any time.

Q13: WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR MAINTENANCE?

The need to plan for ongoing maintenance of public features in downtown and North Village is one of the reasons why new development is recommended. Maintenance agreements can be made a part of a development agreement with prospective developers. Additionally, the DDA will capture tax revenues that would otherwise go outside of the Township, which can be used to pay for maintenance. The plans do not recommend a special assessment or a new tax to pay for the park, its maintenance, or amenities.