



PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 6:00PM

Saugatuck Township Hall, 3461 Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck, Michigan 49453

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88459789039?pwd=bVKwQ9XLgTu15oykWVmAfzFCIOHYC2.1>

Meeting ID: 884 5978 9039

Passcode: 2021

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1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Approval of Minutes:** February 11, 2025
5. **Public Comment.** The Planning Commission requests that speakers respect the three-minute time limit for individual comments and the five-minute time limit for an individual speaking on behalf of a group. This is not a question and answer session, it is an opportunity to voice your thoughts with the Planning Commission.
6. **New Business**
 - A. Public hearing and consideration of a zoning ordinance text amendment and zoning ordinance map change to include the Lakeside Overlay and associated zoning standards in Section 5.20, 7.120, 11.90, 22.10, and Table 2.20 B.
 - B. Preliminary Site Plan Discussion, Blue Star Bend, LLC, 5500 sf. office building, parcel 20-003-039-00 on a 2.19 acre lot in the C-1 district. Applicant: Andrew Murch, Agent: Nederveld
7. **Old Business**
8. **Communications**
 - A. Correspondence
 - B. Planning Commissioner Comments
 - C. Township Board Report
 - D. Staff/Project Updates
 - No updates on Blue Star Brewery (approved October 15, 2024), Best Buds (extended to May 20, 2025), AutoCamp (permit for hotel demo issued)
 - First building permit issued for Barno (Warner Drive)
9. **Second Public Comment**
10. **Adjourn**

****Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services can contact Saugatuck Township for reasonable accommodations. If you require accommodations, please contact Township Manager at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting in writing or by calling the Township Hall at (269) 857-7721.**

**Planning Commission
Rescheduled Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
Meeting held in person & via Zoom
Saugatuck Township Hall**

Call to Order: Chair Ihle called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Roll Call:

Present: Dave Ihle, Jackie Ground, Steve McFadden, Gordon Stannis

Absent: Denise Webster, Ken Butler, Cindy Osman

Also Present: Planning and Zoning Administrator Lynee Wells, Recording Secretary Morgan Coulston, Andrew Milauckas, Nancy VonIns, Jan VonIns, Nick VonIns, Lynn Kirkaldy, Char Manning, Doug Manning, Gregg Rzepczynski, Brian Gudith, Dick Waskins.

Approval of Agenda

Ihle introduced the agenda.

A **Motion** was made by Ground to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by McFadden. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the November 26, 2024 were reviewed.

A **Motion** was made by Ground to approve the minutes from the November 26, 2024 meeting as amended. Supported by Stannis. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Ihle opened the floor for Public Comment.

- Brian Gudith requested additional information on how the proposed Lakeshore Overlay ordinance would impact his family's property.

Ihle closed Public Comment.

New Business:

1. Public hearing and consideration of a special land use for an existing building, Unit 15 of Just barns, located at 6764 Just Barns Drive, for a Class B Cannabis Grow Facility. Applicant is 420 Satori Wells provided an overview of the project, detailing the site's history as a formerly approved cannabis grow facility, and reviewed her memo along with recommended conditions.

Chair Ihle opened the public hearing.

- Gregg Rzepczynski, a project co-owner, expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity, appreciation for the community, and a commitment to complying with all conditions while addressing any questions from the Planning Commission.
- Dick Waskins, whose business is adjacent to the applicant's existing operation, spoke in support, noting their professionalism and wishing them success.

Following public comment, Ihle closed the hearing. The Planning Commission found the project straightforward, with Ihle inquiring about potential odor concerns. Rzepczynski confirmed they would comply with all Township requirements.

A **Motion** was made by Stannis to approve a special land use for an existing building, Unit 15 of Just barns, located at 6764 Just Barns Drive, for a Class B Cannabis Grow Facility. Applicant is 420 Satori, subject to the recommended conditions outlined in the planner's memo. Supported by McFadden.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Ihle, Ground, McFadden, Stannis

No:

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

2. Public hearing and consideration of a Planned Unit Development for a proposed 35 unit development comprised of 10 duplex buildings (20 units total), 2 townhome buildings (12 units total), and 3 accessory dwelling units on parcel: 20-003-028-00

Wells gave an overview of the project, she also reviewed her memo, highlighting the missing items needed from the applicant.

Jon Male from Excel Engineering, the engineering firm for the project, stated that they are open to a discussion and want feedback from the Planning Commission as well as the public in order to make the project better. He answered from the concerns that Wells had regarding missing items.

Chair Ihle opened the public hearing.

- Jon Helmrigh gave his history on the property and his feelings on the project regarding its close distance to the creek, tree preservation, the storm water basin. He stated that he is in favor of new home projects but wants it done right.
- Jan VonIns stated tat she loves the nature and serenity that the property currently provides as she sees it from her backyard, but is opposed to the magnitude of the housing project. She stated that she was not in favor of looping the water main for the project as it would cut through her property.
- Lisa Bekken shared that she is directly affected by the share boundary line and is worried about pedestrians, safety, noise, vacation rentals, and increased crime.
- Eric Nequist was speaking for himself and his friend who lives near the project, they think that the development is excessive and agreed with Helmrigh's comments.
- Maria Miller shared that this will greatly affect the area and thinks the location is wrong for this type of project. She wants growth but in the right way.

Following public comment, Ihle closed the hearing. Ihle offered a Planning Commissioner to make a motion and then the Commission discuss the project.

A **Motion** was made by Ground to table the consideration of a Planned Unit Development for a proposed 35 unit development comprised of 10 duplex buildings (20 units total), 2 townhome buildings (12 units total), and 3 accessory dwelling units on parcel: 20-003-028-00. Supported by Stannis.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Ihle, Ground, McFadden, Stannis

No:

Discussion:

McFadden raised concerns about the ADUs, the extensive parking for a private residential project, the reduction in setbacks from 66 to 60 feet, the density bonus amount, and the lack of cohesion between the two architectural styles.

Ground agreed, noting the absence of dimensions on the plans made them difficult to interpret. She also highlighted concerns about the open space classification and the blending of modern and traditional styles.

Stannis summarized public comments on housing density and echoed the concerns raised by McFadden and Ground.

Ihle expressed concerns about the intersection at Blue Star Hwy, 135th Ave, and 65th St., acknowledging it as a broader issue beyond the development but emphasizing its significance. He also questioned the looping of the water main, the ADUs, the use of private amenities for the density bonus, sewer and water capacity, and the suitability of the stormwater basin's low-lying location.

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

3. Lakeshore Overlay ordinance discussion

Wells provided an overview of the proposed Lakeshore Overlay ordinance, including the draft language and map. She emphasized that this was a discussion, not a voting matter, and suggested scheduling a Public Hearing in March or April. She then read the draft ordinance for review by the Planning Commission and the public.

The Planning Commission generally found the draft to be well-prepared but requested additional information on excavation permits, mechanical room locations, and potential non-conforming properties.

The public was invited to participate, with attendees asking questions and providing input. After discussion, the Planning Commission agreed to hold the Public Hearing during its March regular meeting, given the impending expiration of the moratorium.

Old Business: None.

Communications

- A. Correspondence: Wells shared a letter from the City of the Village of Douglas regarding their work on their Master Plan.
- B. Commission Comments: None.
- C. Township Board Report: None
- D. Staff Updates: None

Public Comments:

Ihle opened the floor for Public Comment. There was none. Ihle closed Public Comment.

Adjourn:

A **Motion** was made by McFadden to adjourn at 8:16 PM. Supported by Ground. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Ground to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by McFadden. Motion carried unanimously.
2. A **Motion** was made by Ground to approve the minutes from the November 26, 2024 meeting as amended. Supported by Stannis. Motion carried unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Stannis to approve a special land use for an existing building, Unit 15 of Just barns, located at 6764 Just Barns Drive, for a Class B Cannabis Grow Facility. Applicant is 420 Satori, subject to the recommended conditions outlined in the planner's memo. Supported by McFadden.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Ihle, Ground, McFadden, Stannis

No:

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

4. A **Motion** was made by Ground to table the consideration of a Planned Unit Development for a proposed 35 unit development comprised of 10 duplex buildings (20 units total), 2 townhome buildings (12 units total), and 3 accessory dwelling units on parcel: 20-003-028-00. Supported by Stannis.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Ihle, Ground, McFadden, Stannis

No:

Discussion:

McFadden raised concerns about the ADUs, the extensive parking for a private residential project, the reduction in setbacks from 66 to 60 feet, the density bonus amount, and the lack of cohesion between the two architectural styles.

Ground agreed, noting the absence of dimensions on the plans made them difficult to interpret. She also highlighted concerns about the open space classification and the blending of modern and traditional styles.

Stannis summarized public comments on housing density and echoed the concerns raised by McFadden and Ground.

Ihle expressed concerns about the intersection at Blue Star Hwy, 135th Ave, and 65th St., acknowledging it as a broader issue beyond the development but emphasizing its significance. He also questioned the looping of the water main, the ADUs, the use of private amenities for the density bonus, sewer and water capacity, and the suitability of the stormwater basin's low-lying location.

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

5. A **Motion** was made by McFadden to adjourn at 8:16 PM. Supported by Ground. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully,

Morgan Coulston, Recording Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Saugatuck Township Planning Commission

FROM: Lynée Wells, AICP Township Planner

DATE: March 11, 2025

RE: **Lakeshore Overlay**

The proposed ordinance creates a new Lakeside Overlay (LO) District for all land west of Lakeshore Drive in Saugatuck Township. This amendment aims to protect the Lake Michigan shoreline by establishing thoughtful development regulations in environmentally sensitive areas, preserving natural features, and maintaining the ecological integrity of the shoreline and adjacent bottomlands.

Key provisions include:

- Clear guidelines for sustainable development with up to 40% lot coverage, promoting designs that harmonize with the natural shoreline environment
- Flexible construction options utilizing crawl spaces or piling construction, which enhance structural resilience in shoreline areas
- Preservation of property through environmental stewardship, with opportunities to incorporate native vegetation and permeable surfaces that enhance the resilience of the lakeshore ecosystem

The ordinance was created with input from EGLE, lakeshore property owners, review of lakeshore ordinances and best practices including Chickaming and South Haven Township, and the cities of Douglas, Saugatuck, South Haven and Grand Haven. The Township Attorney has also reviewed the draft and prepared the public hearing notice.

Enclosed in the packet are several written comments from residents. Please take time to review these.

At the last meeting, the Planning Commission discussed adding an allowance for a maintenance room below ground, which was added to the ordinance at 100 sf. maximum. Note there is a comment related to increasing this to 200/250 sf.

At this time, the Planning Commission should hold the public hearing, consider any comments, and determine if the Commission is prepared to recommend the ordinance to the Township Board. Should the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the Township Board, the Commission can include suggested changes. One change that should be made is the reference to TMZ in Section 4. This should be TPZ, Tree Preservation Zone.

**TOWNSHIP OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP ZONING
MAP, SECTIONS 5.20, 7.120, 11.90, 22.10, AND TABLE 2.20 B OF THE
TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE TO CREATE A NEW LAKESIDE
OVERLAY (LO) DISTRICT, AND TO REZONE ALL LAND WITHIN THE
TOWNSHIP THAT LIES TO THE WEST OF LAKESHORE DRIVE TO BE
WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT**

The Township of Saugatuck Ordains:

Section 1. Map Amendment; Rezoning. The Zoning Map is hereby amended as shown in the attached Exhibit A. All land within the Township that lies to the west of Lakeshore Drive is hereby rezoned to be within the boundaries of the Lakeside Overlay District.

Section 2. Text Amendment. Sections 5.20 is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

Sec. 5.20. Lakeside Overlay District

- A. *Intent and Purpose*. The Lakeside Overlay District is established to minimize the adverse effects of development on lands adjacent to Lake Michigan on sandy soils to protect the public health, safety and welfare within sensitive, shifting, and environmentally protected areas, and its purpose is in recognition that:
1. The economic and environmental well-being and health, safety, and general welfare of the Township is dependent on, and connected with the preservation of its Lake Michigan shoreline areas;
 2. The shoreline zone has unique physical, biological, economic, and social attributes;
 3. Future land development and redevelopment should not be conducted at the expense of these attributes;
 4. Property values will be enhanced when the natural features of the shoreline zone are preserved; and
 5. Pollution, impairment or destruction of the shoreline area and the adjacent bottomlands and waters of Lake Michigan should be prevented or minimized.
- B. *Location*: The Lakeside Overlay District is the area included along Lake Michigan, west of Lakeshore Drive, from the north Township Boundary line (north of Wiley Road) south to the southern Township Boundary line at 124th Street.
- C. *Uses*: The uses permitted in the Lakeside Overlay District are the same as those permitted in the underlying zoning district, except that:
1. Basements are prohibited.
 2. Crawl spaces or piling construction shall be required.

3. A mechanical room, not exceeding 100 square feet, may be excavated within the footprint of the dwelling. The mechanical room shall be located in a place that would not increase the allowable 10' perimeter of the building allowed for excavation in Section F.1.

D. *Lot Coverage:* Due to the sensitive nature of the high-risk erosion lands, lot coverage shall be limited to 40% and calculated as follows:

1. Lot coverage shall be calculated using the buildable area of a parcel only.
2. For the purposes of this section, buildable area is that area located outside of the required front, waterfront, and side setbacks, and excludes the area from the toe of the bluff to the erosion hazard line.
3. For parcels that are bisected by Lakeshore Drive, the 40% coverage for the purposes of this overlay, shall be calculated based on the lot area west of Lakeshore Drive.
4. The Overlay shall not be construed to diminish the lot area that includes the parcel area east of Lakeshore Drive.
5. Lot coverage shall include any impervious surface, including building or structure, driveway, patio, porch, and any hard surface with or without a roof, or deck area.

E. *Site Development:*

1. Setbacks shall be as follows:
 - a. Front: 40'
 - b. Side: 15'
 - c. Rear: (none as there is a waterfront setback)
 - d. Waterfront Front: Shall be the 60 year recession distance on the EGLE high risk erosion map measured from the erosion hazard line as defined by the Township. For the purposes of this Overlay, Waterfront Setbacks shall apply to all buildings and structures, regardless of whether they have a roof or not.
 - e. From a County Drain: 40'
2. Setbacks for the waterfront yard (yard facing Lake Michigan), shall be measured from the top of the bluff at the erosion hazard line landward toward Lakeshore Drive.
3. Fences and walls shall be prohibited within the Waterfront Yard. Fencing for the purposes of enclosing play spaces, gardens, or pet areas may be permitted not exceeding 4' in height provided construction does not require removal of trees or vegetation.
4. Driveways shall be located entirely outside of required side yard setbacks and shall be constructed of permeable surfaces to encourage runoff infiltration. Driveway materials shall be grass, gravel, or permeable pavement (either porous asphalt pavement, permeable concrete, or modular pavement.)

5. A grading plan signed and sealed by an engineer licensed in the State of Michigan shall accompany any building permit. Sites shall be graded to flow towards Lake Michigan utilizing best management practices for high-risk erosion areas and the soil types in the Township.
6. Allowable projections into side yards shall not apply to any lot or parcel within the Overlay.
7. Underground pools shall be prohibited.
8. Underground irrigation shall be prohibited.
9. Beach grass (*ammophila breviligulata*) or other suitable or similar vegetation material as described in the Sand Dune Stabilization rules of the State of Michigan shall be utilized for groundcover. Combinations of native grass, forb, shrub, and tree species are recommended.
10. Private roads shall be prohibited within the Lakeside Overlay District.
11. Minimum lot depth for any new land division within the Lakeside Overlay District shall be 300'.

F. *Excavation, Earth Moving, Land Contouring:*

1. It shall be unlawful to excavate, move earth, amend or contour land within the Lakeside Overlay District except within 10' of the building footprint and except for the purposes of construction of a permitted building or structure.
2. Filling of earth or removal of earth or other materials of a parcel of land to an elevation above or below the established grade of adjacent development land is prohibited without the expressed written approval of the Township Engineer and Zoning Administrator, and provided the request includes a grading and drainage plan signed and sealed by a licensed engineer in the State of Michigan to be reviewed by the Township.
3. Natural watercourses which provide drainage from or through a proposed site shall be maintained in a natural state, or as an open grass swale, unless design flow clearly warrants the enlargement of the watercourse or deepening of the drain. The installation of underground pipes or tile drains is discouraged except when necessary for the purpose of public safety.
4. In no instance shall any excavation, contouring, or earth moving occur within a required setback area.
5. Any excavated or modified areas shall require slope stabilization and no residual slopes shall be less than 1:6 grade.

G. *Tree Removal*:

1. Removal of trees in excess of 8 inches in diameter, located outside of the area of a permitted building or structure, or the allowable 10' perimeter grading area, shall be prohibited except in the case of diseases, dead or dying species.
2. Any removal shall retain the stump and root system to ensure stabilization of the dune area.

H. *Permits*: All construction activities, including placement of stairs, decks, funiculars, driveways, accessory buildings and structures, and retaining walls, as well as revetments and stabilization activities on any parcel within the Lakeside Overlay District shall require a zoning permit. No zoning permit shall be issued until any required permit from other reviewing agencies is secured, such as but not limited to, the State of Michigan, Army Corps of Engineers, Allegan County Drain Commission, Allegan County Health Department, and the Allegan County Road Commission.

Section 3. Text Amendment. Subsection B.1, within Section 7.120, is hereby amended to read:

1. Private streets shall be reviewed per Article 54, Site Plan Review, and plan requirements as included in Section 53.60. Private streets meeting Section 54.60 (F) and approved by the Planning Commission shall qualify for review and approval by the Planning Commission. Regardless of the number of lots served, any private street within the Lakeside Overlay District must be approved by the Planning Commission.

Section 4. Text Amendment. Subsection D.2, within Section 11.90, is hereby amended to read:

2. Lakeside Area. All land in the Lakeside Overlay District or within 40 feet to the east of Lakeshore Drive is within the TMZ.

Section 5. Text Amendment. Section 22.10 is hereby amended to add the following definitions:

Erosion Hazard Line. The top of the bluff at the edge where the land begins erosion towards Lake Michigan.

Toe of the Bluff. The lowest point where there is a distinct change in grade between the beach and the bluff face, generally marked by a transition from a steeper to a more gradual slope. Where wave action has eroded the base of the bluff creating an overhang or irregular slope, the toe shall be determined as the point where the eroded bluff face intersects with the beach at a roughly 45-degree angle.

Section 6. Table Amendment. Table 2.20 B is hereby amended to read as follows:

Table 2.20 B: Overlay Zoning Districts		
District	Abbreviation	Section
Lakeside Overlay District	LO	5.20
Interstate Transportation Overlay District	IT	5.30
Natural River Protection Overlay District	NR	5.40
Wellhead Protection Overlay District	WP	5.50
100-Year Flood Plain Overlay District	FP	5.60

Section 6. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective seven days after its publication unless otherwise provided by law.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

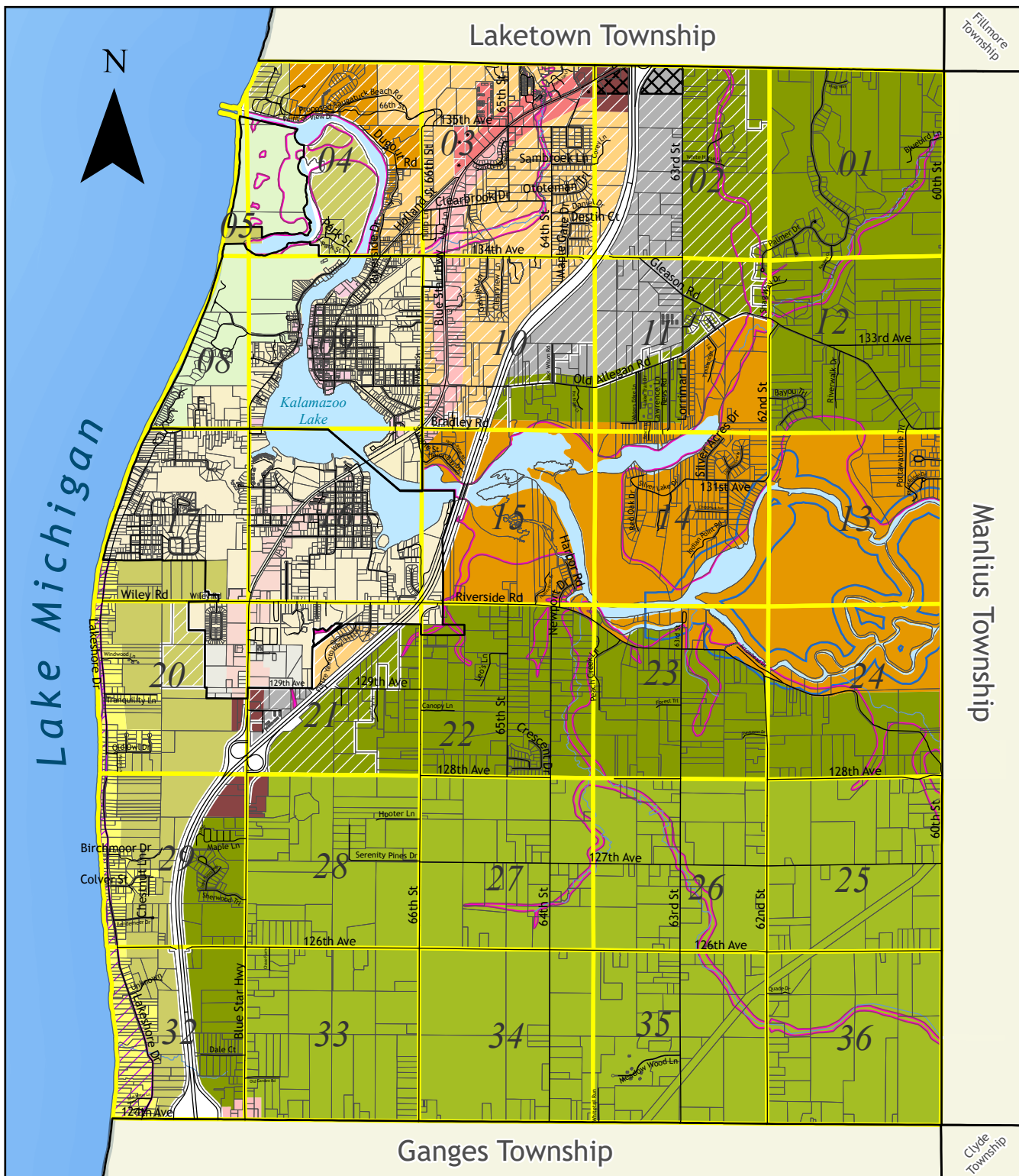
ABSENT: _____

CERTIFICATION

This is a true and complete copy of Ordinance No. ____ adopted at a regular meeting of the Township of Saugatuck Board held on _____, 2025.

Abby Bigford, Township Supervisor

Cindy Osman, Township Clerk



****DRAFT****
Zoning Map of
Saugatuck Township
Allegan County, MI
As amended through 01/08/25

Saugatuck Township Overlay Zoning

- IT, INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
- NR, NATURAL RIVER BOUNDARY (300' Buffer)
- LO, LAKESIDE OVERLAY
- FP, 100 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN (FEMA Approx)
- WP, WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREA

Saugatuck Township Zoning

- A-1, AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT
- A-2, RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- C-1, LOCAL COMMERCIAL

- C-2, GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- C-3, INTERCHANGE COMMERCIAL
- R-1, RESIDENTIAL
- R-2, RIVERSIDE RESIDENTIAL
- R-3, LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL
- R-4, LAKESHORE TRANSITION RESIDENTIAL
- W, WATER
- I-1, INDUSTRIAL
- Conditional

City of Saugatuck & City of Douglas Zoning

- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- OPEN SPACE
- RESIDENTIAL
- WATER



Certified by: _____
 Saugatuck Township Clerk

Summary of Comments on Proposed Lakeside Overlay District C

as of 3.12.25

Based on the submitted documents, here are the key comments from residents regarding the proposed ordinance:

Technical/Engineering Concerns

	RESPONSE
1 Using Lakeshore Drive as the boundary is problematic; some properties without lake frontage would be affected unnecessarily	The roadway is a clear demarcation to include as a boundary.
2 Prohibition of basements seems excessive; restricting excavation within a waterfront setback would address the concern	The goal is to reduce excavation and the removal of bluff material.
3 The 100 sq ft mechanical room size is impractically small; 250 sq ft would be more realistic	Recommend to change to 250; however, a variance could be sought.
4 The requirement for crawl spaces or piling is too restrictive; other options like slab on grade with foundation walls could work	Slab on grade is not permitted by EGLE
5 The 40% lot coverage limit may be inadequate for properties in the southern part of the township	40% coverage is the amount in the zoning ordinance now, and is consistent with all residential districts
6 Confusion between "Front" and "Waterfront Front" setbacks needs clarification	These terms are defined in the zoning ordinance definitions chapter
7 Requiring sites to be "graded to flow towards Lake Michigan" may be impractical for deeper lots	This was a recommendation from EGLE
8 Security fencing should be allowed to keep people from the bluff edge for safety	Need to discuss where this may occur
9 Prohibition of underground irrigation seems unnecessary since properties use private wells	The point is not the well; it is the burying of the water lines and the watering itself
10 Restriction on vegetation requiring beach grass everywhere is unclear in scope	The list of plant materials is from EGLE
11 The slope stabilization requirement of "no residual slopes less than 1:6 grade" needs clarification	The desire is to have a gentle slope, not steep
12 The ordinance lacks a grandfather clause for existing structures	The zoning ordinance addresses this in the non-conforming chapter.
13 TMZ in Section 4 should be TPZ	Correct, modification to TPZ is recommended

Additional Community Comments

13 The toe of bluff should be determined by soil makeup (33° angle from horizontal for sand)	The toe is where the bluff meets the beach; this can be clarified in the definitions
14 Inconsistency between lot coverage definition and driveway requirements	Stormwater calculations treat pervious pavement and asphalt/concrete with the same run-off coefficient; therefore it is part of lot coverage. However, the Planning Commission could consider removing this from the percentage.
15 No prohibition of seawalls, which have contributed to erosion	Hard armoring might be a potential next matter to be considered with the Township Board and Planning Commission
16 EGLE's 60-year erosion model may be insufficient given historical patterns	The setbacks reference the 60 year setback
17 The ordinance speaks of a "shifting" environment but seeks to freeze conditions	The ordinance is working with the assumption that change will happen
18 "Trash trees" (invasive species) should be excluded from the no-cut rule	Trees can be cut but stumps remain

19 Need for additional basement space for washers/dryers

See comment above that additional space can be considered; or a variance process is also available

20 The Planning Commission should use ELGE standards and not depart from what is already regulated

The Township is considering the overlay due to the many items and regulations that EGLE does not regulate in the high risk erosion areas

Supporting Resident Comments

20 Multiple long-time residents strongly support the ordinance

21 Residents report seeing environmental destruction from tree removal (41+ mature trees cut in one case)

22 Concerns about developers building too close to bluffs with no regard for environmental impact

23 Documentation of severe property damage from extensive excavation (estimated 13,000 cubic yards at one property)

24 Photos showing environmental degradation from 2019-2025 at properties along Lakeshore Drive

25 Reports of high water levels and poor revetment practices causing beach loss and property damage

26 Concern about property values decreasing from environmental degradation

General Observations

27 Most residents express appreciation for the township's efforts to protect the lake environment

28 There is strong consensus on the need for regulation, with differences mainly on specific implementation details

29 Several residents have multi-generational connections to the area (dating back to 1890s in some cases)



March 10, 2025

Ms. Lynee Wells
Planner/Zoning Administrator
Saugatuck Township
3461 Blue Star Highway
P.O. Box 100
Saugatuck, MI 49453

RE: Blue Star Bend, LLC – New Office
Site Plans – Revised Layout
Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck Township, Allegan County Michigan

Dear Ms. Wells:

Enclosed, please find supplemental site plans (revised) to support the Site Plan Review Application request submitted previously for the proposed new office for Blue Star Bend, LLC on Blue Star Highway.

1. Prelim. Site Plans – 3 pages (1 copy 24"x36"; 9 copies 11"x17" & digital files via email)
2. Architectural Plans- 2 pages (1 copy 24"x36"; 9 copies 11"x17" & digital files via email)

The applicant is requesting to remain on the March 18, 2025 Planning Commission meeting agenda for consideration of the site plan.

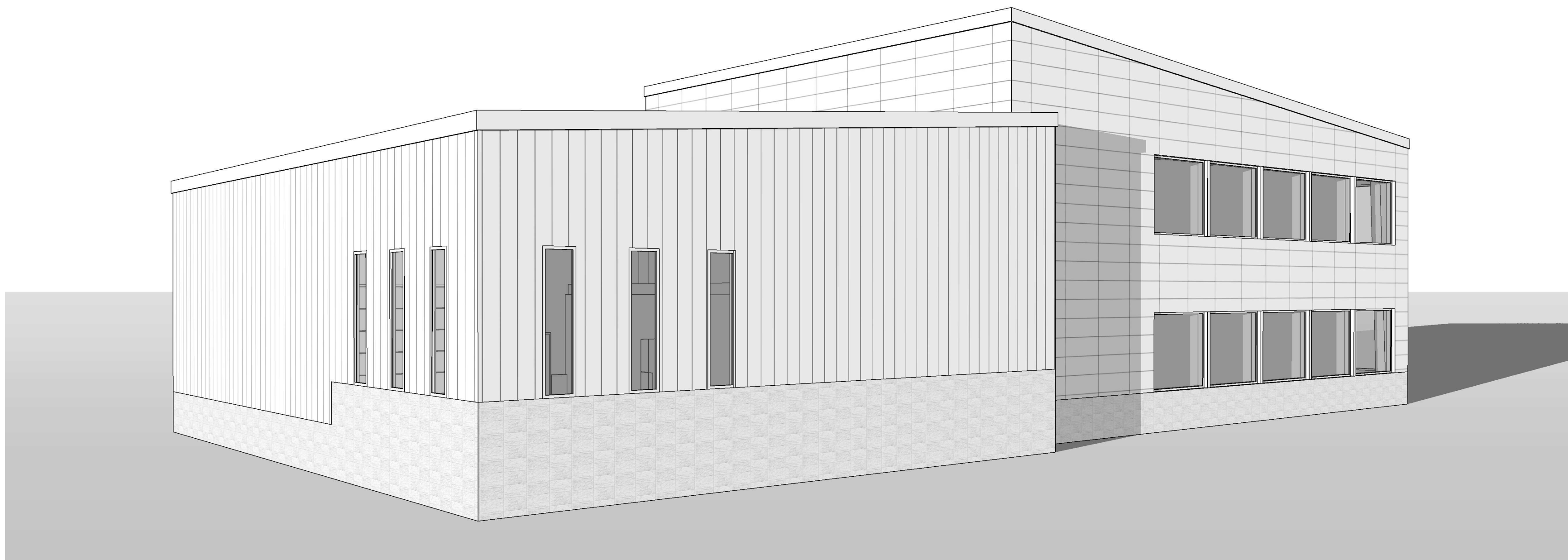
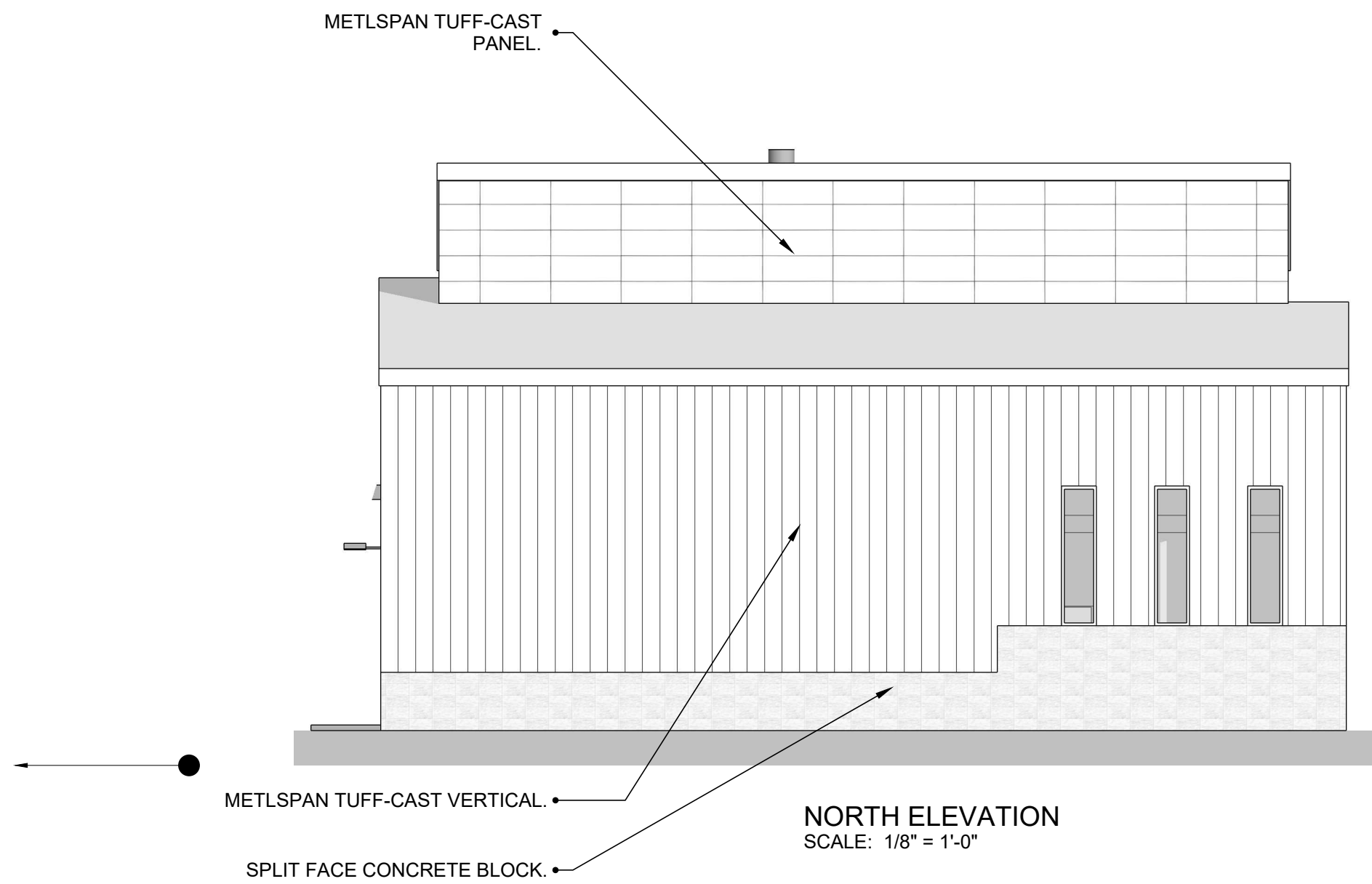
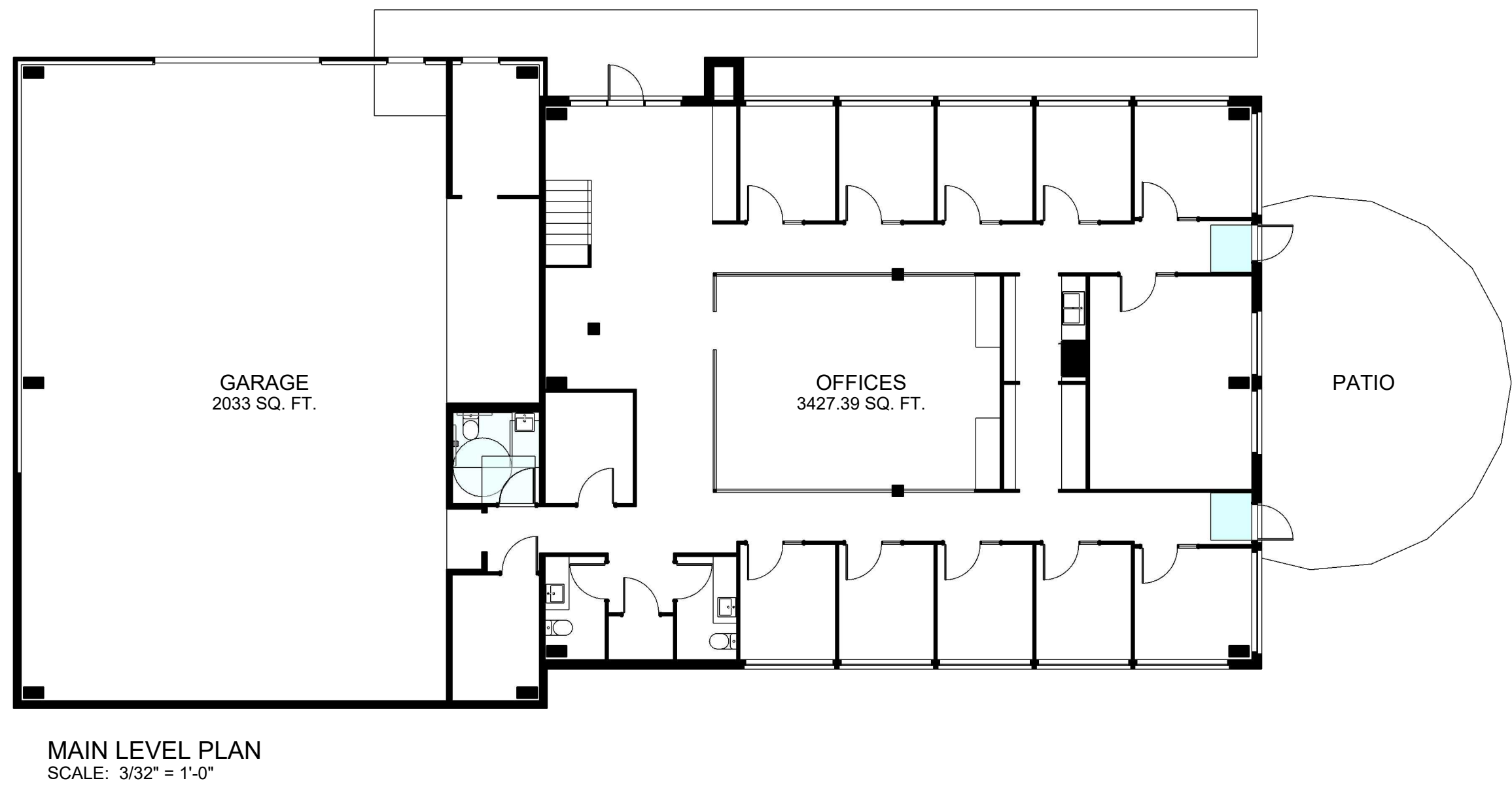
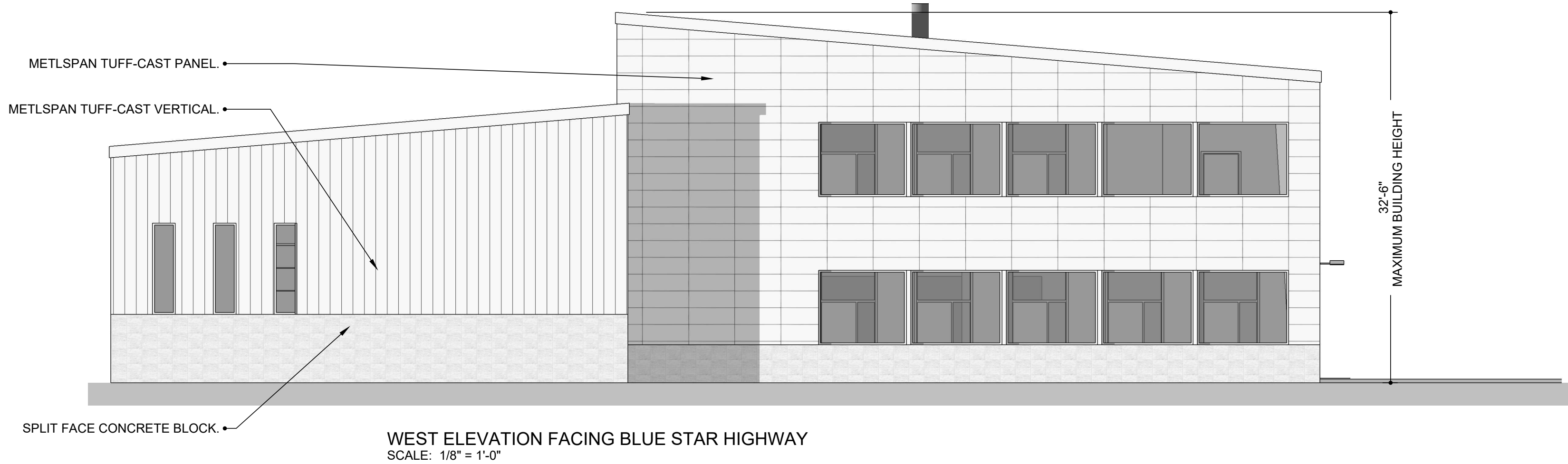
Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (616) 667-3438 or mbaker@nederveld.com.

Sincerely,

Michael Baker, P.E.

Cc Chris Mantels, Saugatuck Township Fire District -via email
Andrew Murch, Blue Star Bend, LLC -via email

Enclosures



NORTHWEST PERSPECTIVE FACING BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
SCALE: N/A

PROPERTY INFORMATION

PARCEL NUMBER 03-20-003-039-00
STREET ADDRESS TO BE DETERMINED
BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

BUILDING DETAILS

BUILDING FOOTPRINT 5516.44 SQUARE FEET
TOTAL BUILDING 8445.78 SQUARE FEET
OFFICE SPACE 6412.28 SQUARE FEET
GARAGE SPACE 2033.50 SQUARE FEET
MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT 32'-6"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

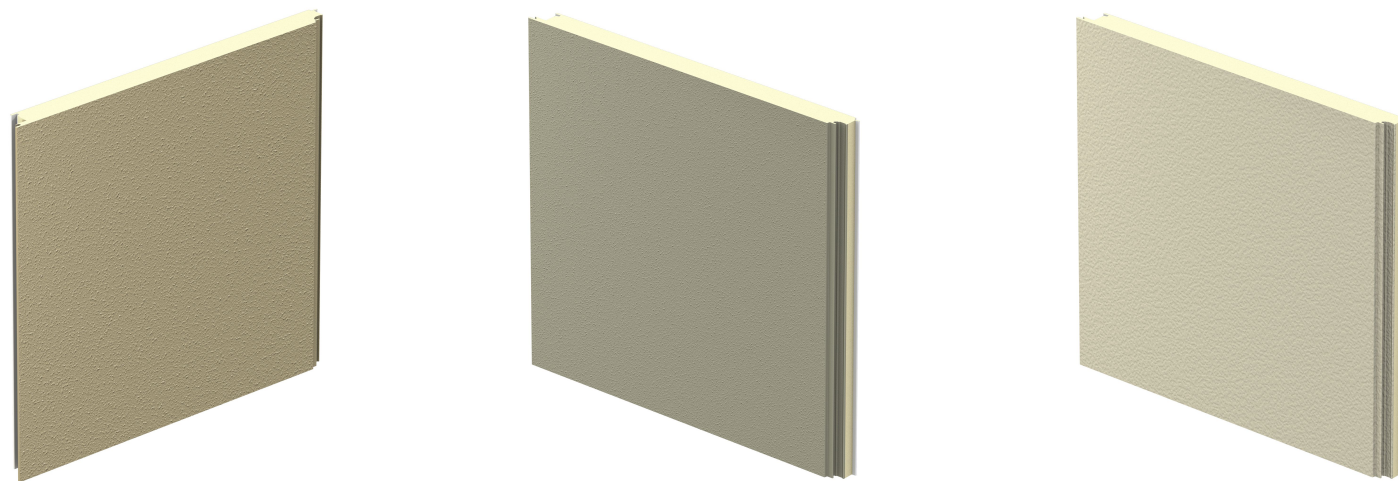
CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-STORY STEEL FRAME OFFICE BUILDING. THE MAIN LEVEL WILL HAVE 3427 SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE SPACE AND A 2034 SQUARE FOOT GARAGE. THE SECOND LEVEL WILL HAVE 2985 SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE SPACE.

THE TOTAL BUILDING FOOTPRINT WILL BE 5516 SQUARE FEET. MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT WILL BE 32'-6".

ACCESS TO THE SITE VIA A ONE-WAY PAVED DRIVEWAY WITH 23 PARKING SPACES, REFUSE CORRAL, DELIVERY AREA, AND ACCESS TO A FUTURE ACCESSORY BUILDING.

LAND DEVELOPMENT WILL BE MINIMAL, KEEPING AS MUCH OF THE NATURAL WOODLAND CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PROPERTY AS POSSIBLE. VEGETATION WILL BE REMOVED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DRIVEWAY/PARKING, RETENTION BASINS, AND BUILDING FOOTPRINT, AND PATIO. ALL REMAINING AREAS WILL BE LEFT UNDISTURBED.

BUILDING EXTERIOR FINISH



METL-SPAN TUFF-CAST PANELS (VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL)
COLORS TO BE DETERMINED.

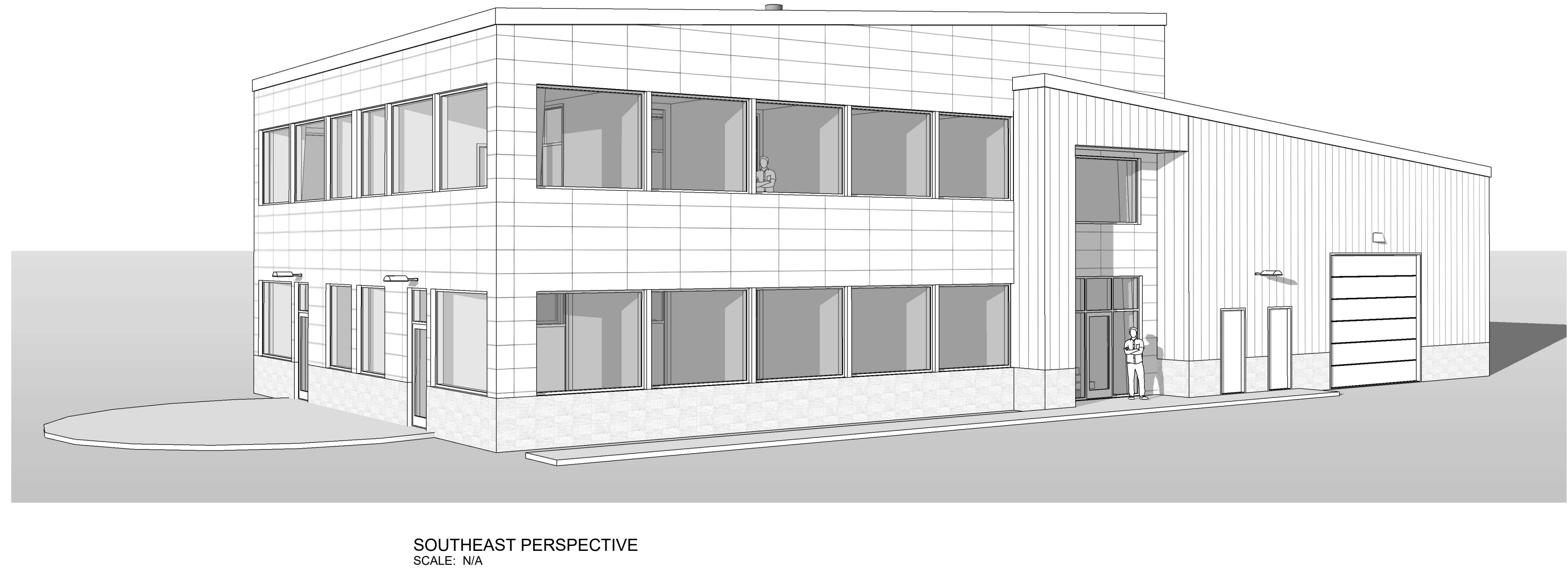
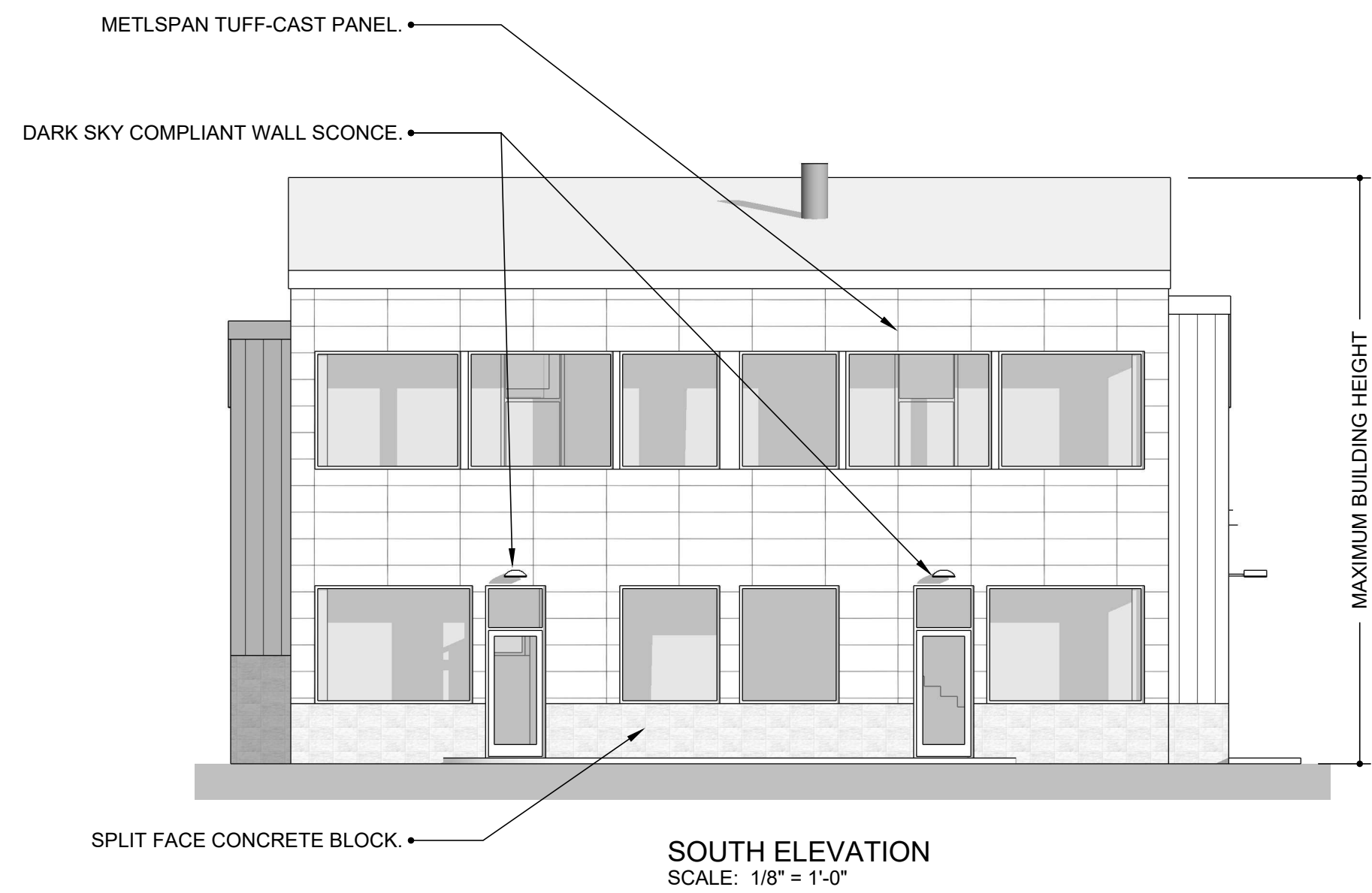
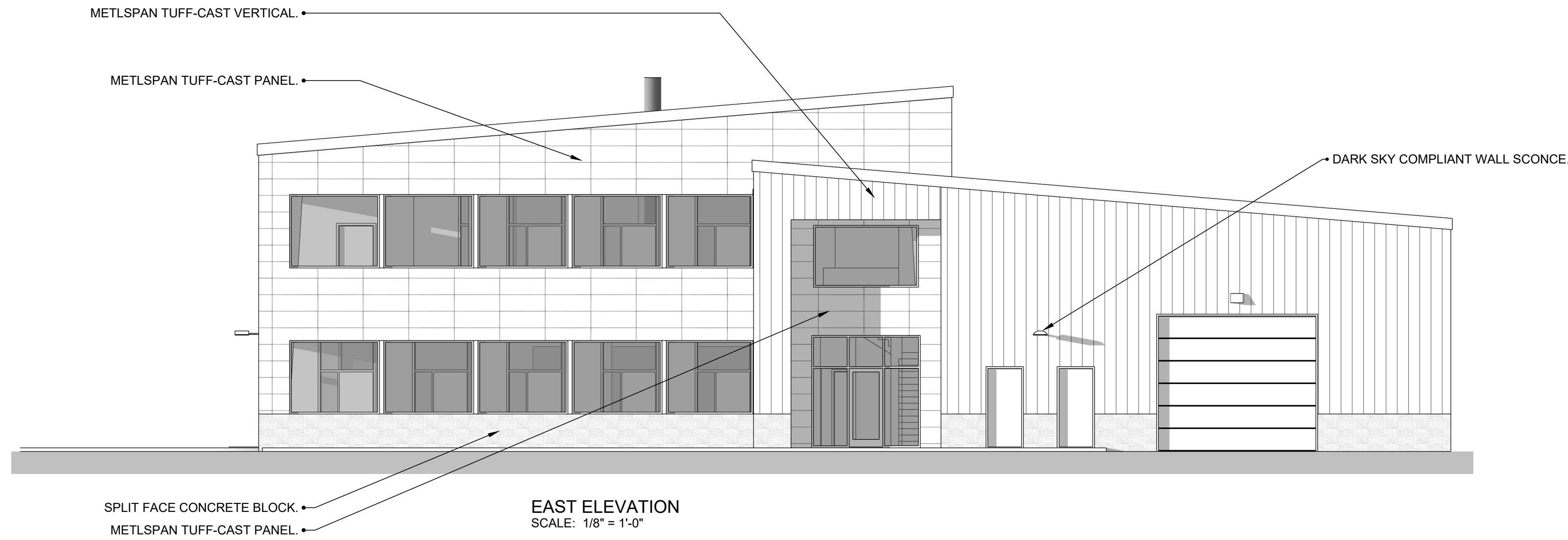


SPLIT FACE BLOCK
COLOR TO BE DETERMINED

DARK SKY COMPLIANT WALL SCONCE

SCALE: N/A





PO Box 5
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Phone: 269.620.7025

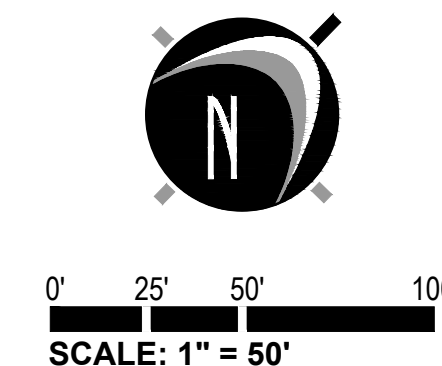
Title: Site Plan Review		
Drawn: LL/WS	Checked: MJB	Date: 02/18/202
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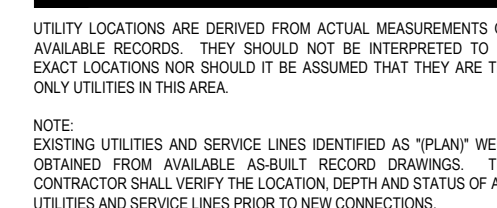
Blue Star Hwy., Saugatuck, MI 49453
PART OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 3, T3N, R16W,
SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

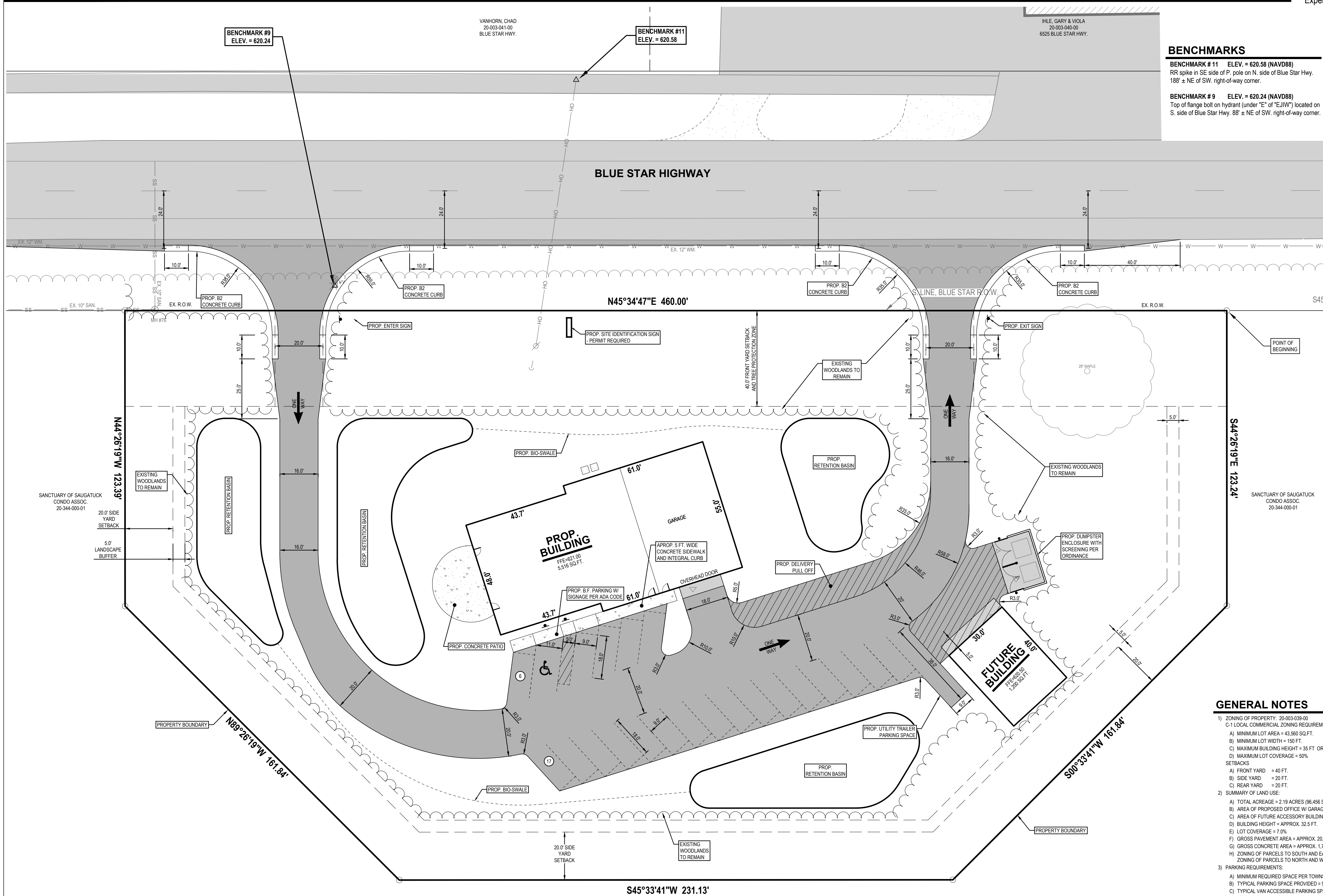
STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHAEL JAMES BAKER
License No. 6201045117
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

SHEET NO:
C-202



LOCATION MAP
NOT TO SCALE

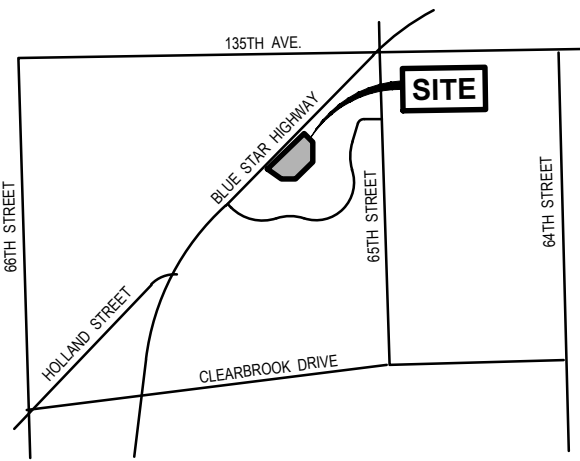




BENCHMARKS

BENCHMARK # 11 ELEV. = 620.58 (NAVD88)
RR spike in SE side of P. pole on N. side of Blue Star Hwy.
188' ± NE of SW. right-of-way corner.

BENCHMARK # 9 ELEV. = 620.24 (NAVD88)
Top of flange bolt on hydrant (under "E" of "EJW") located on
S. side of Blue Star Hwy. 88' ± NE of SW. right-of-way corner.



LOCATION MAP

NOT TO SCALE



0' 10' 20' 40'
SCALE: 1" = 20'

LEGEND

	EXISTING BITUMINOUS
	EXISTING CONCRETE
	PROPOSED BITUMINOUS (STANDARD DUTY)
	PROPOSED BITUMINOUS (HEAVY DUTY)
	PROPOSED CONCRETE (STANDARD DUTY)
	PROPOSED CONCRETE (HEAVY DUTY)

GENERAL NOTES

- ZONING OF PROPERTY: 20-003-039-00
C-1 LOCAL COMMERCIAL ZONING REQUIREMENTS
 - MINIMUM LOT AREA = 43,560 SQ. FT.
 - MINIMUM LOT WIDTH = 150 FT.
 - MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT = 35 FT. OR 3 STORIES
 - MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE = 50%SETBACKS
 - FRONT YARD = 40 FT.
 - SIDE YARD = 20 FT.
 - REAR YARD = 20 FT.
- SUMMARY OF LAND USE:
 - TOTAL ACREAGE = 2.19 ACRES (96,456 SQ. FT.) (EXCLUDING R.O.W.)
 - AREA OF PROPOSED OFFICE W/ GARAGE = 5,516 SQ. FT.
 - AREA OF FUTURE ACCESSORY BUILDING = 1,200 SQ. FT.
 - BUILDING HEIGHT = APPROX. 32.5 FT.
 - LOT COVERAGE = 7.0%
 - GROSS PAVEMENT AREA = APPROX. 20,607 SQ. FT.
 - GROSS CONCRETE AREA = APPROX. 1,797 SQ. FT.
 - ZONING OF PARCELS TO SOUTH AND EAST = C-1 LOCAL COMMERCIAL
 - ZONING OF PARCELS TO NORTH AND WEST = C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- PARKING REQUIREMENTS:
 - MINIMUM REQUIRED SPACE PER TOWNSHIP = 9'x18' (24' AISLE)
 - TYPICAL PARKING SPACE PROVIDED = 9'x18' (20' AISLE)
 - TYPICAL VAN ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACE = 11'x18' WITH 5' AISLE
 - TYPICAL CAR ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACE = 8'x18' WITH 5' AISLE
 - NUMBER OF SPACES REQUIRED = 23 (BASED ON SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP REQUIREMENTS OF 3 SPACES PLUS 1 FOR EACH EMPLOYEE ON THE MAX SHIFT OR PEAK EMPLOYMENT PERIOD; 20 EMPLOYEES)
 - NUMBER OF SPACES PROVIDED = 23
- THIS PROJECT IS NOT LOCATED IN THE 100 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN, BASED ON THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM RATE MAPS
- BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WILL BE UTILIZED DURING AND AFTER CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROJECT. MEASURES WILL INCLUDE THE USE OF SEEDING AND MULCHING, SEDIMENT INLET FILTERS, COMPACTION AND PAVING. THE OWNER OF THE SUBJECT PARCEL SHALL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN THE PERMANENT SOIL EROSION PROTECTION MEASURES.
- UTILITIES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS DERIVED FROM ACTUAL MEASUREMENTS OR AVAILABLE RECORDS. THEY SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO BE EXACT LOCATIONS NOR SHOULD IT BE ASSUMED THAT THEY ARE THE ONLY UTILITIES IN THIS AREA.
- CONTRACTOR TO FIELD VERIFY ALL INVERTS.
- ALL LIGHTING SHALL BE SHIELDED FROM ALL ADJACENT PROPERTIES. PROPOSED LIGHTING SHALL CONSIST OF WALL MOUNTED LIGHTS AND LIGHT POLES, BOTH FITTED WITH DOWN CAST TYPE FIXTURES TO BE SPECIFIED BY LIGHTING CONSULTANT.
- THE PERMANENT PARCEL NUMBER FOR THE SITE IS 20-003-039-00. THE ADDRESS OF THE PROPERTY IS 0 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY.
- NO FENCES OR WALLS OTHER THAN WHAT IS SHOWN ON THE SITE PLAN ARE PROPOSED AT THIS TIME.
- CONTRACTOR SHALL PRESERVE TREES ALONG BLUE STAR HIGHWAY AND WITHIN THE PROPERTY PER SECTION 11.90 & 11.100 OF THE SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE. TREE REMOVAL REQUIRES A TREE/WOODLAND REMOVAL PERMIT.
- PROPOSED ROAD SURFACE SHALL BE CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING 80,000 POUND IMPOSED LOAD (FINAL ROAD SURFACE DESIGN TO BE VERIFIED BY GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION). (IFC 503.2.3)
- MINIMUM CLEAR HEIGHT SHALL BE 13'-6" ACROSS THE ENTIRE 16 FT. WIDTH OF DRIVEWAY. (IFC 503.2.1)
- PROPOSED DRIVEWAY SHALL NOT EXCEED THE MAXIMUM 10% GRADE.
- FIRE ROUTES TO BE MAINTAINED FREE OF SNOW AND ICE TO PROVIDE ALL WEATHER DRIVING CAPABILITY.



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NEDERVELD
www.nederveld.com
800.222.1868

HOLLAND
730 Chicago Dr.
Holland, MI 49423
Phone: 616.393.0449

GRAND RAPIDS
217 Grandville Ave., Suite 302
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: 616.575.5190

ANN ARBOR
3037 Miller Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734.929.6963

PREPARED FOR:

Blue Star Bend, LLC
Attention: Andrew Murch

PO Box 5
Douglas, MI 49406
Phone: 269.620.7025

REVISIONS:

Title: Site Plan Review
Drawn: LLWS Checked: MJB Date: 02/18/2025
Title: Schematic Layout Revisions
Drawn: LLWS Checked: MJB Date: 03/05/2025

BLUE STAR BEND, LLC NEW OFFICE

Site Layout Plan

Blue Star Hwy., Saugatuck, MI 49453
PART OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 3, T3N, R16W,
SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

STAMP:



PROJECT NO:
25200053

SHEET NO:
C-205

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PREPARED FOR:

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Title: Site Plan Review

Drawn: LLWS

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NOT TO SCALE

0' 10' 20' 40'
SCALE: 1" = 20'

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- EX. CONCRETE
- PROPOSED BITUMINOUS (STANDARD DUTY)
- PROPOSED BITUMINOUS (HEAVY DUTY)
- PROPOSED CONCRETE (STANDARD DUTY)
- PROPOSED CONCRETE (HEAVY DUTY)
- PROP. STORM SEWER
- PROP. SANITARY SEWER
- PROP. WATERMAIN

STRUCTURE INFORMATION

SANITARY MH #76
Rim Elev. = 618.88
10" PVC (SW) Inv. = 611.33
10" PVC (NW) Inv. = 611.45

811

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CALL before you dig.

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BLUE STAR BEND, LLC
NEW OFFICE

Utility Plan
Blue Star Hwy., Saugatuck, MI 49453
PART OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 3, T3N, R16W,
SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

STAMP:

PROJECT NO:
25200053

SHEET NO:
C-400

Land Planning — Landscape Architecture — Civil Engineering — Land Surveying — High Definition Scanning — Forensic Engineering — Fire Investigation

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Saugatuck Township Planning Commission

FROM: Lynée Wells, AICP Township Planner

DATE: March 11, 2025

RE: Blue Star Bend Site Plan Review UPDATED

Blue Star Bend is a proposed office building on parcel 03-20-003-039-00 located in front of The Sanctuary residential community. The parcel is owned by Andy Murch, and is zoned C-1 commercial. The proposed office building is 2-stories, and includes a total of 3427 sf. of office space on the ground floor and 2985 sf. of space on the 2nd floor. The operator is EST Companies. The owner met with the Planner and described an office use.

At this time, the applicant would like to have a preliminary discussion with the Planning Commission before moving forward with detailed design plans. A few items of note for discussion.

USE: After review of EST Operations, it appears there is some question about whether this is a commercial-office use or Light Industrial. Given the garage and storage building, we question the use of chemicals and whether cleaning of vehicles will occur at the site. We also note that the location in the City of Douglas is zoned Light Industrial. Vehicle wash is not permitted in C-1.

PARKING: There are 23 parking spaces, which is 1 for each employee on the largest shift and an additional 3 spaces per the zoning ordinance. There is another calculation for office space which would equate to 32 spaces. The Planning Commission can provide a reduction in parking, should the applicant demonstrate that the total required amount would not be necessary. Could there be fewer than 23 spaces? Additionally, headlights would shine into adjacent residential homes, could a low wall or hedge be provided?

ACCESSORY BUILDING: The use of the accessory building has not been shared, and the neighbors are curious. The Planning Commission may also wish to discuss the building architecture.

TREE PRESERVATION: The site includes several retention basins which will require clear cutting. Are there ways to minimize stormwater or the quantity of basins?

SIGNAGE: Given the one way in, one way out circulation, moving the sign closer to the drive entry would result in less tree clearing and provide more intuitive guidance for visitors.

ENGINEERING/DRIVEWAYS: Please see comments from the Township Engineer. Additionally, there is email correspondence from the Road Commission.

May 11, 2025
2250466

Ms. Lynee Wells
Saugatuck Township Planner
3461 Blue Star Hwy
Saugatuck, MI 49453

RE: Blue Star Bend Preliminary Review
Saugatuck Township – Section 3

Dear Lynee:

Our office has reviewed the information provided in the February 17, 2025 submittal from Nederveld and submitted to our office via email February 18, 2025 for the referenced project. We have also reviewed the revised information provided in the March 5, 2025 resubmittal from Nederveld and submitted to our office via email March 5, 2025 for the referenced project.

Information received includes:

- Cover Letter – dated February 17, 2025
- Site Plan Review Application – dated February 14, 2025
- Narrative Project Description – dated February 18, 2025
- Civil Site Plans – dated February 18, 2025
- Architectural Plans – dated February 18, 2025
- Stormwater Management Calculations – dated February 19, 2025
- Blue Star Bend Response Memo – dated March 5, 2025
- Updated Site Plan Sheets – dated March 5, 2025
 - C202 Vicinity
 - C205 Layout
 - C400 Utility

Our comments are as follows:

1. Wastewater Collection

- a. This site is proposed to be serviced by a 6-inch sanitary sewer lateral tapped off an existing 10-inch sanitary sewer gravity main on Blue Star Highway.
- b. Based on the site plan, it appears Saugatuck Township has existing sanitary sewer along the property line near the southwest corner of the property. It is recommended that the Township require a 15-foot-wide public sanitary sewer easement along the property line to allow for future maintenance and replacement.
- c. The private sanitary sewer lateral must not be located parallel to Blue Star Highway within the public right-of-way. It is recommended to instead have the lateral tapped near the location shown in the Civil Site Plans submitted February 18, 2025 and

installed perpendicular to the existing sewer (SE) to minimize disturbance to the tree preservation area. However, this will require over 40 feet of tree removal (~15-20 feet wide) within the tree preservation area. Alternatively, to preserve trees, the sanitary sewer lateral could be tapped perpendicular to the building connection across Blue Star Highway and trenchlessly installed under Blue Star Highway. Both alternatives are shown in the attached utility sheet markups.

- d. The sanitary lateral alignment as shown in the revised plans on March 5 is shown at 43 feet off the right-of-way. Depending on depth of the sanitary lateral and assuming open-cut installation method, this may require additional tree removal within the 40-foot-wide tree preservation zone. The alignment should be shifted southeast such that installation of the lateral will avoid tree removal within the zone.
- e. Manhole rim and sewer invert elevations for the existing sanitary sewer main should be shown on the utility plan.

2. Drinking Water

- a. The site is proposed to be serviced by a 2-inch domestic water service tapped off the existing 12-inch water main on Blue Star Highway.
- b. The water service curb stop must be shown at the property line.

3. Site Drainage and Storm Water Management

- a. Storm water management must be reviewed and approved by the Allegan County Drain Commissioner's office for this development. The development appears to be designed with bioswales for stormwater conveyance and four retention ponds for flood control.
- b. A Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit is required by the Allegan County Health Department.
- c. If site conditions and stormwater calculations allow, it is recommended that the retention basins outside of the driveway loop (southwest and southeast basins) be eliminated if possible or reduced in size to the extent practicable. This would reduce the area of tree clearing and provide more of a tree buffer to the residential neighborhood on Sanctuary Way.

4. The Saugatuck Township Fire District will conduct a separate review of this site.
5. The development is responsible for obtaining all permits for construction.
6. Review fees for this project are to be paid by the applicant based on the actual costs of the fees charged. These fees shall be paid to Saugatuck Township prior to accepting the project.

Ms. Lynee Wells
May 11, 2025
Page 3 of 3

In summary, we recommend the Township does not approve the site plan at this time.

If you have any questions or comments, please call our office at 616-394-0200.

Sincerely,

Prein&Newhof



Tyler DeNooyer, P.E.

Enclosed: Utility Sheet Markups – March 11, 2025

cc: VIA EMAIL
Daniel DeFranco, Saugatuck Township Manager
Leon Lawrence, Saugatuck Township
Craig Atwood, Allegan County Road Commission
Chris Mantels, Saugatuck Township Fire District
Brent Scholten, Allegan County Drain Commission
Mike Baker, Nederveld
Andrew Murch, Blue Star Bend, LLC
Ken Bosma, Prein&Newhof

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Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734.929.6963

PREPARED FOR:
Blue Star Bend, LLC
Attention: Andrew Murch

2384 Lakeshore Drive
Fennville, MI 49408
Phone: 269.543.4117

REVISIONS:

Title: Site Plan Review	Drawn: LLWS	Checked: MJB	Date: 02/18/2025
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**BLUE STAR BEND, LLC
NEW OFFICE**

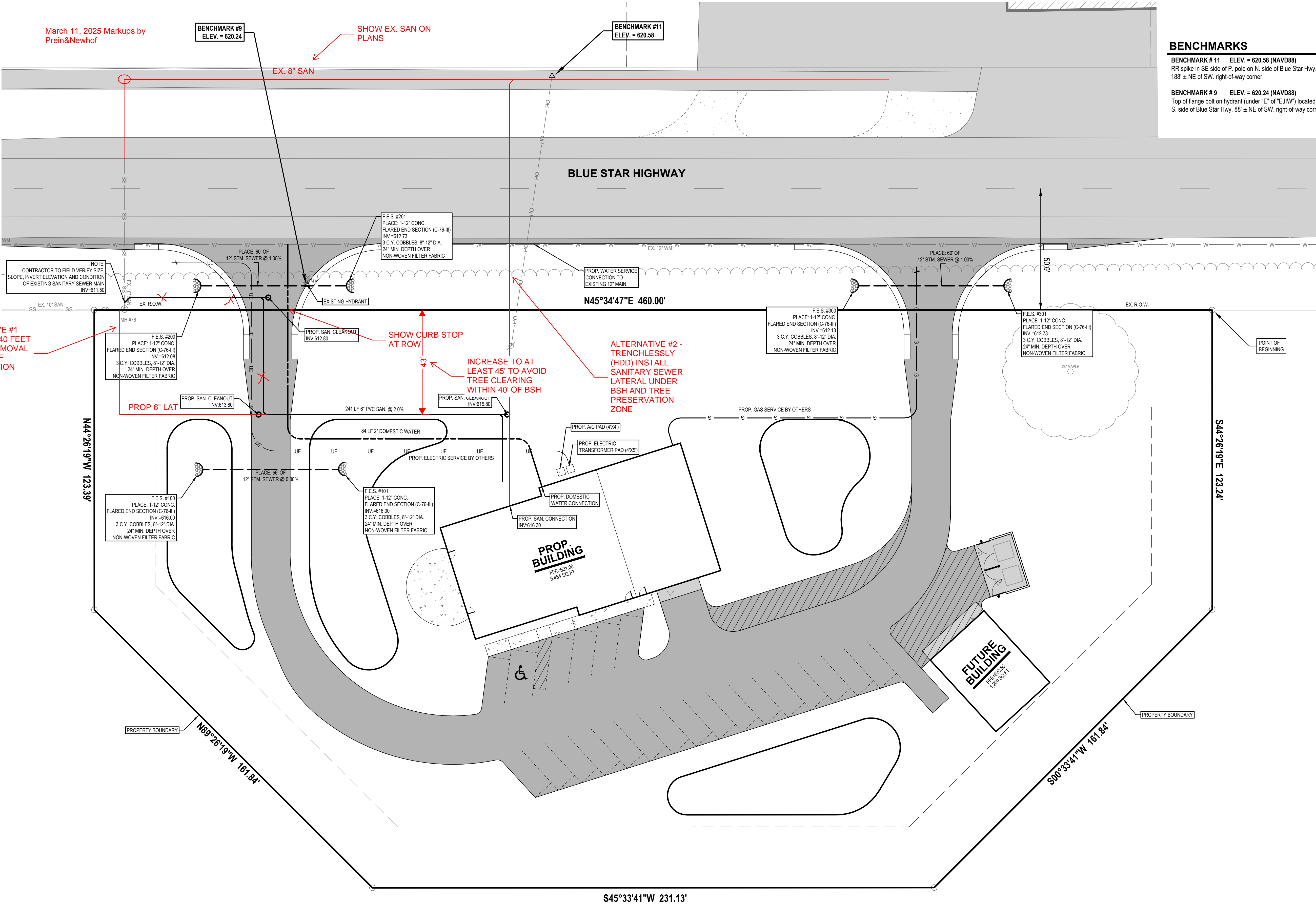
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STAMP:

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHAEL JAMES BAKER
License No. 6201045117
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

PROJECT NO:
25200053

SHEET NO:
C-400



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From: [Lynee Wells](#)
To: [Craig Atwood](#); [Tyler DeNooyer](#)
Cc: [ddefranco](#)
Subject: RE: [External] Blue Star permitting
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:32:00 PM

It would be ideal to have a desired cross section, also we might want to include the sidewalk and a separation from back f curb so folks don't feel like they are walking on the roadway.

From: Craig Atwood <catwood@alleganroads.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:30 PM
To: Tyler DeNooyer <tdenooyer@preinnewhof.com>
Cc: Lynee Wells <lwells@Saugatucktownshipmi.gov>; ddefranco <ddefranco@saugatucktownshipmi.gov>
Subject: RE: [External] Blue Star permitting

I'm fine with the 12' center turn lane. I think a 5' shoulder would be ideal for avid bikers. That's the AASHTO recommended width I believe.

Craig Atwood, P.E.
Managing Director
Allegan County Road Commission
1308 Lincoln Road
Allegan, MI 49010
Ph. 269-673-2184
Fx. 269-673-5922

From: Tyler DeNooyer <tdenooyer@preinnewhof.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:14 PM
To: Craig Atwood <catwood@alleganroads.org>
Cc: lwells@saugatucktownshipmi.gov; ddefranco <ddefranco@saugatucktownshipmi.gov>
Subject: RE: [External] Blue Star permitting

Criag,

I was thinking the same thing when reviewing the Blue Star Bend Plans. I didn't include a mention of it in my preliminary review because we don't yet have a consensus on the proposed future cross section of BSH. But if we did, it would be ideal to line up and match the curb style we'd like to see in the future.

I know we discussed 3 – 11 foot lanes at our meeting last week. I think 12' driving lanes may feel more comfortable for drivers, but the 11' lanes would provide more of a narrowing effect in an effort to calm traffic. I'm wondering if we want to consider increasing the width of the center turn lane to provide a safer refuge. We could look at

12-14'? The other consideration is whether we want to provide enough of a "shoulder" to allow for bike lanes. While we do have a shared use path on one side, the avid bikers may prefer to use the roadway.

If we can come to a consensus on the preferred cross section we can begin implementing it for developments and any future improvements.

Tyler DeNooyer, P.E.

Prein&Newhof

t. 616-364-8491

f. 616-364-6955 c. 616-481-0693

[Website](#) | [Blog](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: Craig Atwood <catwood@alleganroads.org>

Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 11:45 AM

To: ddefranco <ddefranco@saugatucktownshipmi.gov>

Cc: Tyler DeNooyer <tdenooyer@preinnewhof.com>; lwells@saugatucktownshipmi.gov

Subject: [External] Blue Star permitting

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. When in doubt, contact your IT Department.

Good Morning,

John Sharpe and I were looking over the plans for the Blue Star Bend new office and discussing where to tell them to offset the curb and gutter for the entrance/exit. If we all agree that the future improvements for Blue Star will include construction of a center left turn lane with/without curb and gutter we need to make sure driveway approaches are designed to accommodate that cross section. With more development anticipated this could start adding significant cost to the road project by having to relocate additional drive entrances which could include acceleration/deceleration flares, concrete curb and gutter, etc. If we can determine the cross section we should be able to have a set offset for drive approaches so they line up with the new road.

Thoughts?

Craig Atwood, P.E.

Managing Director

Allegan County Road Commission

1308 Lincoln Road

Allegan, MI 49010

Ph. 269-673-2184

Fx. 269-673-5922

To: Saugatuck Township Zoning Commission,
From: Full-time Saugatuck Township Residents

We were very pleased to see that you are addressing some of the issues that apply to building in high risk erosion areas along Lakeshore Drive to ensure that future development elsewhere does not destroy the environment and instead secures the landscape, bluff lines, and property values for residents.

We have lived here since June of 2012 and due to the high water level of the lake coupled with unsound revetment practices, we were totally without an accessible beach for 8 of those years, although our tax rate did not reflect that. Seeing the coastline from the water, the devastation and poor planning are so evident. A complete recovery has still not happened.

We have to preserve all our natural assets that make this bit of paradise unique, revising the zoning ordinances is a step in the right direction.

Please have your community's interests at heart because the developers certainly do not.

Sincerely,
Ray & Joyce Horath
2554 Lakeshore Dr
Fennville, MI 49408

March 9, 2025

Saugatuck Township Zoning Commission

We have lived at 2566 Lakeshore Drive for more than 34 years.

We fully support the Township's work to revise zoning ordinances in the Lakeshore Area Overlay. We commend the thorough research including discussions with other shoreline communities, officials at EGLE, and other experts to develop sensible, reasonable regulations.

Our experience is a good example why the proposed ordinance is absolutely necessary to ensure the destruction of the environment, which has taken place next to our property, is not allowed to happen elsewhere along the shoreline in our Township.

We now understand that since 2012 in High Risk Erosion areas EGLE has limited authority and essentially just regulates the immediate shoreline at the high water mark and setbacks from the bluff for home construction. It is up to each community to enact ordinances that regulate what excavation and development can and cannot be done on lakefront property.

When we bought our home here, the neighboring property - like ours - was a beautiful wooded parcel.





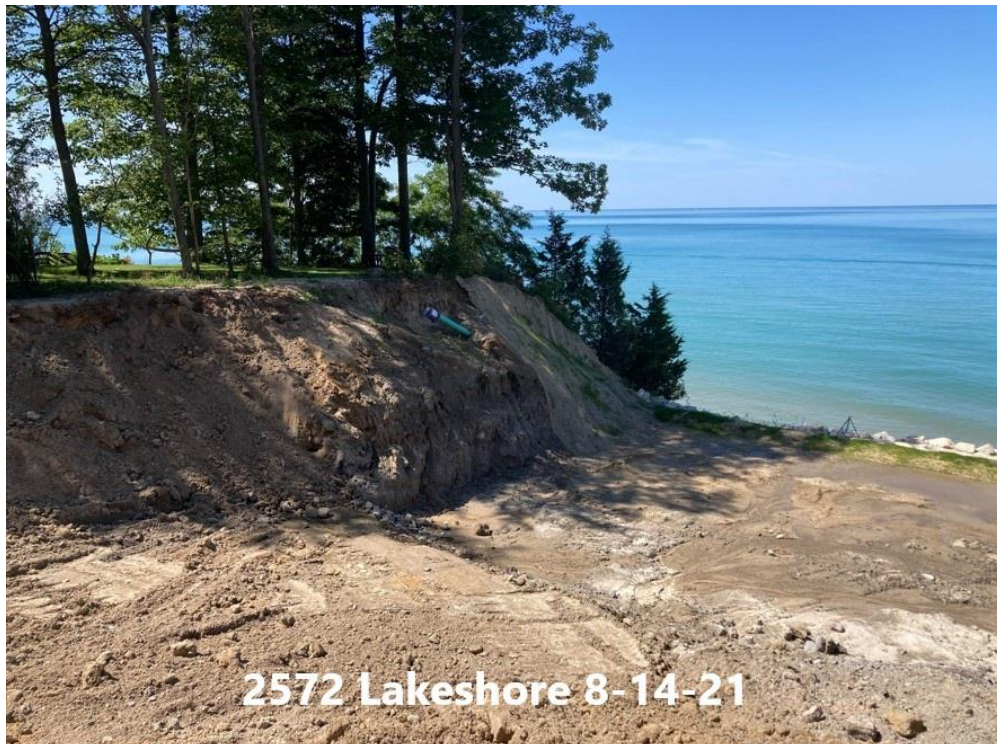
In 2021, the new neighbors began a severe revetment - clear cutting the trees leaving the land barren



Their revetment dug down 25 to 30 feet going back about 100 feet from the previous bluff line, and removing an estimated 13-thousand cubic yards of soil and clay.



This radical excavation - with very steep side embankments - is just 5 feet from our property line and the adjacent property on the north side – and is now eroding.





This now threatens our property with erosion, has decreased our property value, and irrevocably destroyed the beautiful environment where we live.



While all the damage to the property at 2572 Lakeshore cannot be fully restored, we want to ensure that ordinances that cover excavation, clear cutting of trees and site development prevent this from happening anywhere else in our beautiful Township



We thank you for your work to improve zoning ordinances and your dedication to our community.

Doug & Char Manning
2566 Lakeshore Drive
Doug 312-543-2700
Char 312-543-2701

Good Morning Ms. Wells & Mr. DeFranco

My name is Greg Tharp, my family owns the property at 2442 Lakeshore Drive. My Great Grandfather homesteaded this property back in 1893. It was an active fruit farm for many years. My family continues to own and occupy these many acres of property to this day.

My family and I are very much in support of the Lakeshore Overlay District.

We have unfortunately witnessed horrifying acts of destruction to the lakeshore within Saugatuck Township. We have very frequently wondered how it was possible for these travesties to take place, knowing all too well how vulnerable our precious lakeshore truly is. I have made several calls regarding what I have seen, and was told that as the owners of the properties that they can pretty much do as they please.

Most recently the property to our north side cut down 41 mature Oak and Maple trees, basically clear cutting 400' feet of the lakefront. They also dug into the bluff a large width (approximately 75' in order to in order to install a basic set of aluminum steps. This was completely unnecessary and has compromised the bluff tremendously, making it even more susceptible to erosion. This has been happening up and down our treasured Lakeshore Drive for years. Much of this destruction has been done by developers and investors that have no interest in our lakeshore, but rather making big dollars building spec homes and homes to be used as Vacation Rentals. Others doing this kind of destruction are the very wealthy that know nothing about our fragile ecosystem and are only interested in building as close as possible to the lake for the view, and with no regard for what they do to the bluff, thinking that they must protect their multimillion dollar summer home.

We applaud your efforts to establish some basic rules that will curtail the unnecessary environmental destruction and impacts to our precious and extremely vulnerable lakeshore!

Thank You for Listening,

Greg Tharp & Family

From: Mary Voss <rjmvoss@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 10:07:47 PM
To: Lynee Wells <lwells@Saugatucktownshipmi.gov>
Subject: Zoning ordinance

As a resident of Saugatuck Township 2438 Lakeshore Dr. I am in total support of the proposed new zoning ordinance That would protect our lakeshore from the damaging effects that have been man made in the last few years. When we moved to the lake in 1998 we enjoyed the beautiful natural shoreline which had been in existence since creation. Now instead we are seeing a degradation of our bluffs, ugly rocks and pilings. I understand people wanting to save their homes but why are they allowed to build so close to the bluff edge in the first place?

Also, I am very concerned that 40 plus mature oak trees were cut down in our neighborhood just to make the property more attractive to prospective buyers.

Hopefully the ordinance will bring reason to this sad situation.

I also want to express my appreciation for all the work that was put into making this possible by you and your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Mary Voss

Rjmvoss@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

I agree with the intent behind this ordinance. It is important that we protect the lake and adjacent lands from inappropriate development. I also appreciate and respect the work that went into developing the proposed ordinance. I have some concerns identified in notes and on the attachments at the end of this document.

By way of background, I am a civil engineer with over 35 years of experience and property owner. Our family has been on our land since the 1890s.

Hugh Tozer

**TOWNSHIP OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

ORDINANCE NO. ____

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP ZONING MAP, SECTIONS 5.20, 7.120, 11.90, 22.10, AND TABLE 2.20 B OF THE TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE TO CREATE A NEW LAKESIDE OVERLAY (LO) DISTRICT, AND TO REZONE ALL LAND WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP THAT LIES TO THE WEST OF LAKESHORE DRIVE TO BE WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT

The Township of Saugatuck Ordains:

Section 1. Map Amendment; Rezoning. The **Zoning Map** is hereby amended as shown in the attached **Exhibit A**. All land within the Township that lies to the west of Lakeshore Drive is hereby rezoned to be within the boundaries of the Lakeside Overlay District.

Section 2. Text Amendment. Sections 5.20 is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

Sec. 5.20. Lakeside Overlay District

A. *Intent and Purpose*. The Lakeside Overlay District is established to minimize the adverse effects of development on lands adjacent to Lake Michigan on sandy soils to protect the public health, safety and welfare within sensitive, shifting, and environmentally protected areas, and its purpose is in recognition that:

1. The economic and environmental well-being and health, safety, and general welfare of the Township is dependent on, and connected with the preservation of its Lake Michigan shoreline areas;
2. The shoreline zone has unique physical, biological, economic, and social attributes;
3. Future land development and redevelopment should not be conducted at the expense of these attributes;
4. Property values will be enhanced when the natural features of the shoreline zone are preserved; and
5. Pollution, impairment or destruction of the shoreline area and the adjacent bottomlands and waters of Lake Michigan should be prevented or minimized.

- B. *Location*: The Lakeside Overlay District is the area included along Lake Michigan, west of Lakeshore Drive, from the north Township Boundary line (north of Wiley Road) south to the southern Township Boundary line at 124th Street.
- C. *Uses*: The uses permitted in the Lakeside Overlay District are the same as those permitted in the underlying zoning district, except that:
1. Basements are prohibited.
 2. Crawl spaces or piling construction shall be required.
 3. A mechanical room, not exceeding 100 square feet, may be excavated within the footprint of the dwelling. The mechanical room shall be located in a place that would not increase the allowable 10' perimeter of the building allowed for excavation in Section F.1.
- D. *Lot Coverage*: Due to the sensitive nature of the high-risk erosion lands, lot coverage shall be limited to 40% and calculated as follows:
1. Lot coverage shall be calculated using the buildable area of a parcel only.
 2. For the purposes of this section, buildable area is that area located outside of the required front, waterfront, and side setbacks, and excludes the area from the toe of the bluff to the erosion hazard line.
 3. For parcels that are bisected by Lakeshore Drive, the 40% coverage for the purposes of this overlay, shall be calculated based on the lot area west of Lakeshore Drive.
 4. The Overlay shall not be construed to diminish the lot area that includes the parcel area east of Lakeshore Drive.
 5. Lot coverage shall include any impervious surface, including building or structure, driveway, patio, porch, and any hard surface with or without a roof, or deck area.
- E. *Site Development*:
1. Setbacks shall be as follows:
 - a. Front: 40'
 - b. Side: 15'
 - c. Rear: (none as there is a waterfront setback)
 - d. Waterfront Front: Shall be the 60 year recession distance on the EGLE high risk erosion map measured from the erosion hazard line as defined by the Township. For the purposes of this Overlay, Waterfront Setbacks shall apply to all buildings and structures, regardless of whether they have a roof or not.
 - e. From a County Drain: 40'
 2. Setbacks for the waterfront yard (yard facing Lake Michigan), shall be measured from the top of the bluff at the erosion hazard line landward toward Lakeshore Drive.

3. Fences and walls shall be prohibited within the Waterfront Yard. Fencing for the purposes of enclosing play spaces, gardens, or pet areas may be permitted not exceeding 4' in height provided construction does not require removal of trees or vegetation.
4. Driveways shall be located entirely outside of required side yard setbacks and shall be constructed of permeable surfaces to encourage runoff infiltration. Driveway materials shall be grass, gravel, or permeable pavement (either porous asphalt pavement, permeable concrete, or modular pavement.)
5. A grading plan signed and sealed by an engineer licensed in the State of Michigan shall accompany any building permit. Sites shall be graded to flow towards Lake Michigan utilizing best management practices for high risk erosion areas and the soil types in the Township.
6. Allowable projections into side yards shall not apply to any lot or parcel within the Overlay.
7. Underground pools shall be prohibited.
8. Underground irrigation shall be prohibited.
9. Beach grass (*ammophila breviligulata*) or other suitable or similar vegetation material as described in the Sand Dune Stabilization rules of the State of Michigan shall be utilized for groundcover. Combinations of native grass, forb, shrub, and tree species are recommended.
10. Private roads shall be prohibited within the Lakeside Overlay District.
11. Minimum lot depth for any new land division within the Lakeside Overlay District shall be 300'.

F. *Excavation, Earth Moving, Land Contouring:*

1. It shall be unlawful to excavate, move earth, amend or contour land within the Lakeside Overlay District except within 10' of the building footprint and except for the purposes of construction of a permitted building or structure.
2. Filling of earth or removal of earth or other materials of a parcel of land to an elevation above or below the established grade of adjacent development land is prohibited without the expressed written approval of the Township Engineer and Zoning Administrator, and provided the request includes a grading and drainage plan signed and sealed by a licensed engineer in the State of Michigan to be reviewed by the Township.
3. Natural watercourses which provide drainage from or through a proposed site shall be maintained in a natural state, or as an open grass swale, unless design flow clearly warrants the enlargement of the watercourse or deepening of the drain. The installation of underground pipes or tile drains is discouraged except when necessary for the purpose of public safety.

4. In no instance shall any excavation, contouring, or earth moving occur within a required setback area.
5. Any excavated or modified areas shall require slope stabilization and no residual slopes shall be less than 1:6 grade.

G. *Tree Removal:*

1. Removal of trees in excess of 8 inches in diameter, located outside of the area of a permitted building or structure, or the allowable 10' perimeter grading area, shall be prohibited except in the case of diseases, dead or dying species.
2. Any removal shall retain the stump and root system to ensure stabilization of the dune area.

H. *Permits:* All construction activities, including placement of stairs, decks, funiculars, driveways, accessory buildings and structures, and retaining walls, as well as revetments and stabilization activities on any parcel within the Lakeside Overlay District shall require a zoning permit. No zoning permit shall be issued until any required permit from other reviewing agencies is secured, such as but not limited to, the State of Michigan, Army Corps of Engineers, Allegan County Drain Commission, Allegan County Health Department, and the Allegan County Road Commission.

Section 3. Text Amendment. Subsection B.1, within Section 7.120, is hereby amended to read:

1. Private streets shall be reviewed per Article 54, Site Plan Review, and plan requirements as included in Section 53.60. Private streets meeting Section 54.60 (F) and approved by the Planning Commission shall qualify for review and approval by the Planning Commission. Regardless of the number of lots served, any private street within the Lakeside Overlay District must be approved by the Planning Commission.

Section 4. Text Amendment. Subsection D.2, within Section 11.90, is hereby amended to read:

2. Lakeside Area. All land in the Lakeside Overlay District or within 40 feet to the east of Lakeshore Drive is within the TMZ.

Section 5. Text Amendment. Section 22.10 is hereby amended to add the following definitions:

Erosion Hazard Line. The top of the bluff at the edge where the land begins erosion towards Lake Michigan.

Toe of the Bluff. The lowest point where there is a distinct change in grade between the beach and the bluff face, generally marked by a transition from a steeper to a more gradual slope. Where wave action has eroded the base of the bluff creating an overhang or irregular slope, the toe shall be determined as the point where the eroded bluff face intersects with the beach at a roughly 45-degree angle.

Section 6. Table Amendment. Table 2.20 B is hereby amended to read as follows:

Table 2.20 B: Overlay Zoning Districts		
District	Abbreviation	Section
Lakeside Overlay District	LO	5.20
Interstate Transportation Overlay District	IT	5.30
Natural River Protection Overlay District	NR	5.40
Wellhead Protection Overlay District	WP	5.50
100-Year Flood Plain Overlay District	FP	5.60

Section 6. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective seven days after its publication unless otherwise provided by law.

Section 7. Grandfather Clause.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

ABSENT: _____

CERTIFICATION

This is a true and complete copy of Ordinance No. ____ adopted at a regular meeting of the Township of Saugatuck Board held on _____, 2025.

Abby Bigford, Township Supervisor

Cindy Osman, Township Clerk

The red line is the shore line set back a consistent distance from the shore. By using Lakeshore Drive as the boundary of the proposed zone, it imposes more restrictive conditions on homeowners in the southern end of the Township than those in the north.

Some properties that do not even have lake frontage would be affected by this ordinance. It seems they should be excluded from the zone.

In addition, there is no reason why the road is necessarily a good boundary for management of stormwater. Many properties north of Colver St are built to the east of Lakeshore Drive. They would be exempt from the ordinance, but their construction could equally affect the lake and the environment.

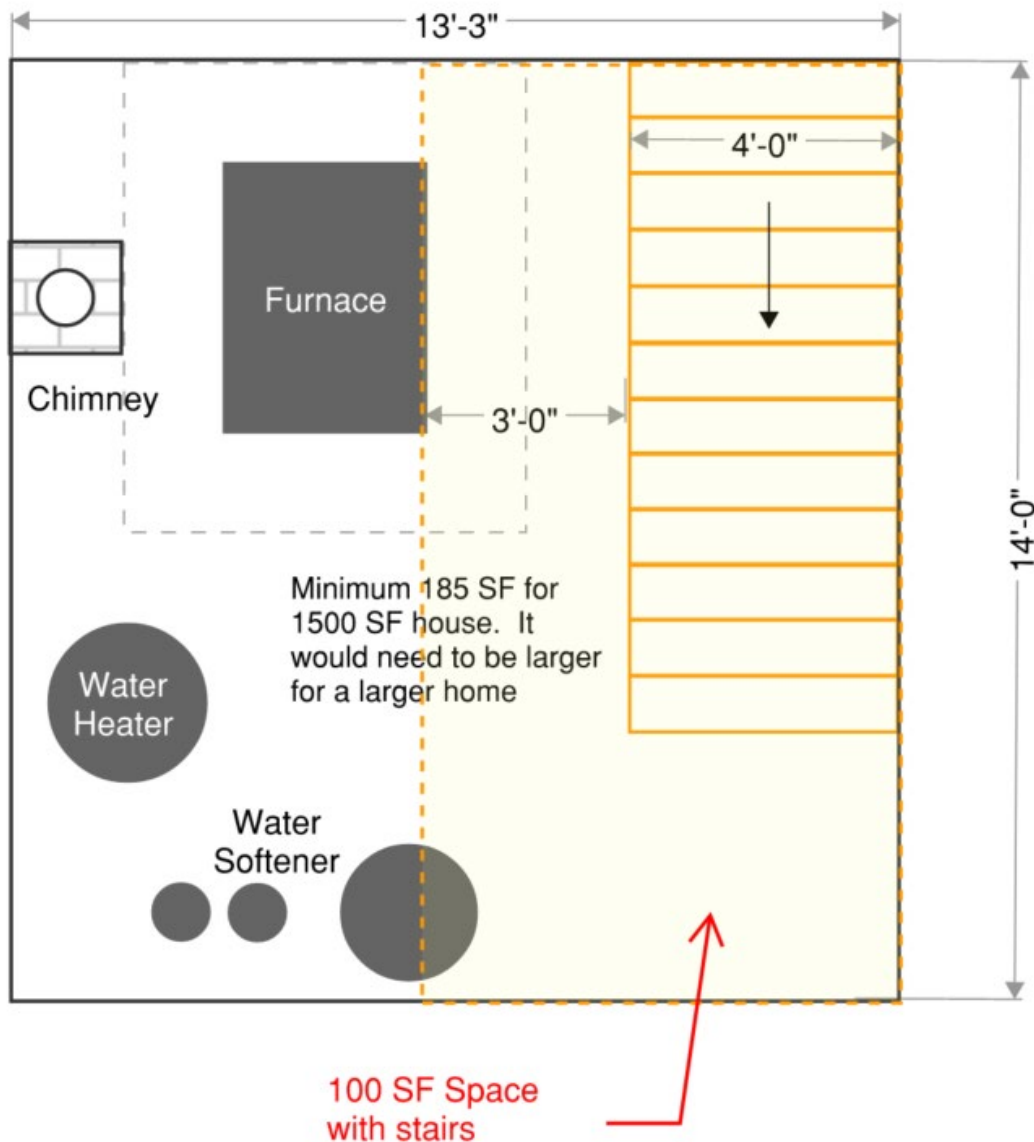
Lakeshore Dr. is a convenient landmark, but it would be better to use a setback from the bluff, (based on its current location), and to stipulate the property must be on the bluff. The distance could be based on the EGLE 60-year value, which would apply differently depending on the location of the property.



A 100 SF mechanical room does not provide adequate space for a furnace, water heater, and a water softener. The sketch below shows a mechanical room with these items and standard stairs (10" tread, 7" rise). The layout provides space for maintenance and installation/removal of the equipment.

The furnace shown is suitable for a 1500 SF house, or perhaps a larger home if the house also has heat pumps. The area shown is 185 SF while the yellow-shaded area is 100 SF. A 250 SF area limit would allow for larger homes and greater flexibility.

The need for a chimney means the room is likely on an exterior wall with the associated excavation.



From: Stan Tozer <stan.tozer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 4:17:49 AM
To: Lynee Wells <lwells@Saugatucktownshipmi.gov>
Cc: Hugh Tozer <htozer@woodardcurran.com>; ddefranco <ddefranco@saugatucktownshipmi.gov>; ruthtozer1102@yahoo.com <ruthtozer1102@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: Comments on proposed Ordinance amend Zoning Map

Dear Lynee,

I echo my brother's thanks and sentiments regarding the effort y'all have put into this. I also agree with his suggestions, but have a few more. Please excuse the brevity. In no particular order:

-Shouldn't the extrapolation of the toe be determined by the makeup of the soil, in this case, sand and thus be 33° from horizontal. In that regard, the top of the bluff (erosion hazard line) should be extrapolated from the slope of the bluff through the lip/drop at the bluff's top edge.

-Lot coverage definition includes "all impervious surfaces", but further on states that all drives should be an open structure. In addition to the inconsistency between the definition and examples, all of the open structures pass water at different percolation rates. That should be taken into account.

-There is no prohibition of seawalls, yet their existence has led to serious erosion along our shores. Some of the permitted walls that extend well out into the lake make it clear that anything goes even though the law clearly states that they may not extend past the high tide mark.

-The doc asks to use EGLE's 60-year model for erosion for the ordinance, but no entity has come close to predicting the erosion since the 1960s and there is still no consensus on why the lake level rises and falls, but water dumps from Lake Superior appears to be a major issue and that is out of our control.

-The doc speaks of a "shifting" environment, but asks that, going forward, things be frozen in time.

-It is not clear to me how safety is improved by codifying this doc and believe it should be removed as it does not speak to the intent.

-It is not clear how land value will increase if the doc is accepted. It might also decrease when those, who want to build McMansions, won't be able to do so. That said, I am happy if they don't join us.

-Trash and nvasive trees (sassafras and Norwegian maples) should not be included in the no-cut rule. Their canopy impedes the growth of more desirable tress such as dogwoods and hardwoods. Perhaps allowing the trash trees to be cut and the area replanted with more desirable trees would help here.

-I would think some folks would like to put their washer and dryer in the basement as well as the items Hugh listed.

Dear Zoning Board

We are 100% in favor of changing the zoning ordinance to prevent clearing of trees and excessive moving of soil on the west side of Lakeshore Drive.

As residents at 2556 Lakeshore Drive we are very aware of just how important it is for the entire community to defend the shoreline to prevent soil erosion. The clear cut at the lot just 200 yards up the road is a vivid example of how removing trees sets off a chain reaction of land slides.

Erosion in one lot absolutely affects the neighbor's yard and could, if left unchecked, cause massive landslides to the lake. Please help protect Michigan's most valuable resource.

Steve and Emily Bellock

2556 Lakeshore Drive

Fennville, MI.

March 12, 2025

Saugatuck Township Zoning Commission
3461 Blue Star Highway
Saugatuck, MI [ZIP Code]

Dear Members of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Commission,

We are writing to express our strong support for the proposed revisions to the zoning ordinances for development along the west side of Lakeshore Drive, and to voice our concerns about the negative impacts of the recent development activities in our community.

As a resident who deeply values the natural beauty of our area, we are alarmed by the actions of developers who have been clear-cutting trees, excavating large amounts of soil, and creating destructive revetments that jeopardize the integrity of our bluffs.

This kind of development not only disrupts the environment but also poses a direct risk to neighboring properties due to increased erosion. The destruction of these natural features threatens not only the landscape but also our property values and the safety of our homes.

We are particularly encouraged by the proposed revisions to the zoning rules, which we believe are critical in preserving the unique character of this area. Specifically, we fully support the following key revisions:

1. **Restricting excessive excavation** that changes the natural land contours – This is crucial to maintaining the integrity of the bluffs and preventing further erosion.
2. **Prohibiting clear-cutting of trees**, except around the immediate construction site – Protecting our tree canopy is essential for maintaining the scenic beauty and environmental health of the area.
3. **Restoring setbacks to 15 feet from property lines** – This historical standard ensures a balanced approach to development that respects the land and the needs of neighboring properties.

These proposed rules will not only protect our environment but also preserve the beauty and value of our properties, ensuring that future development enhances rather than harms our community.

We assume that there will be opposition from developers who may be concerned about these reasonable restrictions. However, we strongly believe that these changes are in the best interest of all residents who wish to preserve the natural environment, the scenic views of the lake, and the integrity of our community for future generations.

Unfortunately, we are unable to attend the public hearing on Tuesday, March 18 at 6:00 PM to show our support for these proposed ordinances.

However we hope that the Saugatuck Township Zoning Commission accepts our letter of support for these necessary changes to ensure the preservation of our neighborhood.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to seeing these zoning revisions move forward and are grateful for your commitment to safeguarding the future of our community.

Sincerely,

Bill & Sue Mack
2628 Lakeshore Dr.
Fennville, MI 49408

billm@wmack.com

248-709-8792