

DISCUSSION OF M-179 Corridor

Mr. Fiala - The township has a Master Plan and a Zoning map and a Future Use Map. The PC is taking a broad look at the direction we want to go and put it in the Master Plan. New applications for zoning use can be evaluated with these maps.

Ms. Smith asks if there is a zoomed in version of the Overlay section?

Tyler Veneman - Yankee Springs Dental. Have we looked into any state funding for non-motorized access?

Ms. Bush answers that state wetlands and other things have hampered this.

Tyler Veneman: What is the general consensus on the Casino being in the proximity to the township? He is seeing a lot of casino patients at his practice. Is it possible to incorporate the casino into funding for a bike path or any kind of accessibility? It seems like we have an opportunity.

Ms. Bush - the casino was part of funding for our boat washes and have been in tune with some things. Definitely something we could tap into more.

Mr. McManus - At the early stages of the Casino, they came to the PC and said that if certain plans were developed they would be willing to support those plans. If something tangible (a plan) would be brought to them, he feels they would support it.

Mr. Fiala - Initially the M-179 corridor was a "Heritage Route". Now it is a by-way.

Craig Coburn - owner of several pole barns on M-179. He notes the increased traffic. He wonders if there is an opportunity for a larger business like a Meijer or something. He noted that with all of the big trucks going down 179, it's pretty scary. He would be supportive of some sort of path there. There is a 62' setback. He is not advocating for side roads, but asks how we can manage the traffic - is it right for gravel trucks going 60 mph when we want people using a path there? It's not just the speed but the amount of traffic.

Mr. Trygier - how supportive would the business owners be of a lower speed limit through there?

Mr. Coburn - they would be supportive if it was enforced.

Tyler Veneman: Has there been any interest from agri-tourism, hobby farms, etc? Do we get applications for those kinds of businesses?

Ms. Bush - We haven't received any recently.

Sandy Marcukaitis: In answer to the trail question - we have tried to get a trail going from behind Mr. Coburn's property to the State Park. This seems to be something everyone wants, but no one wants to give up their property, especially along Patterson.

Chuck Schira - He has tried very hard to work with the DNR and it has been a slow and difficult process. It might be more feasible to get something along 179. People seem to want it, but there are problems and it just dies. It can be done, but it will take a 'village' to get involved. If there was a usable trail, it would be used a lot.

Catherine Getty - The routing is really challenging. What side of the road (north or south)? Both sides present obstacles. In Wayland Township - they approved a solar project on the 700 acres kitty corner from the McDonald's on Patterson and 179 (going north on the west side of Patterson). There is a planned path within the solar project alongside the security fencing. This could provide some regional connectivity and makes this more relevant to pedestrian networking between both counties (Allegan/Barry).

Ryan Winchel - He purchased the old Put Put Golf. What if we started something smaller that started at McDonalds and went to the Township park? Maybe starting a smaller project could offer incentive to keep the path going later.

Tyler Veneman - Is funding a big part of the problem? Catherine Getty replies that it is a problem, but the planning and approval is a bigger problem right now. If we had a plan, we could ask for funding.

Chuck Schira - His son lived in Amsterdam, and they noticed all the paths/trails. His son said that they (Dutch) built the trails and everyone became active. If we did the same, the same result could happen.

Catherine Getty - We live in such an amazing township with access to the natural environment, but if you have a physical handicap, use a wheelchair or push a stroller, we have no access for that. In

terms of equitable access, we are missing an opportunity. In terms of economic development, we are missing everyone who visits the State Park with the profitability. If we could connect the corridors in a better way, we could increase the profitability of businesses year round.

Dick Hoving - We need some regulations. Let's go to the county and ask them to slow it down. It won't happen unless more people get involved. Between McDonald's and Briggs Rd, people are flying.

Tyler Veneman - Has anyone seen the bike path in Caledonia? It's not there anymore - they tore it up. Let's not do that. Let's set it up right. What would a good presentation for a bike path look like? What is the process?

Ms. Bush said that we have to come up with what we want and what it looks like - a solid plan. Then we can begin to get it approved by those involved - MDOT, township, DNR, etc.

Mr. Schira & Catherine Getty - They have worked on a design.

Mr. Fiala - He feels that a campaign can be effective with a small millage. He said the Casino had been interested in investing money. This takes a lot of work and a lot of effort, and he feels this is important and we shouldn't give up.

Craig Coburn - We have to get everyone on board.

Ms. Bush thanked all the attendees, business and property owners, for their input. She invited them to stop in at the township office with input or attend any of our meetings.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion and Input on the Master Plan (Chapter 4 & 5 attached):

The PC discussed adding a focus of the trail (non-motorized access) to the Master Plan. The suggestion was made to add a chapter on M-179 and have renderings on what the design would look like (including a trail). Mr. McManus can draw up several optional designs of the M-179 corridor for the PC to look at. It could create momentum if we have a vision and create a plan. We need to also ask business owners about their desires to expand their business.

Pg. 49 highlighted section - Change the wording as suggested by Jim McManus re high density development and capacity.

Pg. 47 - 50 - reference to M-179 corridor. Frank notes problems with the DNR with previous efforts for trail.

Discussion of starting smaller - a trail from Patterson to the Township park or Gillmore's, maybe in phases.

Jim McManus suggested phases: Phase 1 - from Patterson to the Township Park. When people see the benefits and use, we can look at expanding. Long term - (big dreams) - do a loop that would connect with Thornapple Trail up by the fairgrounds. Consider limiting the 179 corridor up to Payne Lake Rd, and treat the other commercial entities (Hungry Howies) as something different. Focus on design. Will need to allow for shared parking for uses that are compatible so you don't have to have multiple parking lots.

Ms. Bush suggests putting all the M-179 Corridor references and specifications in a separate chapter of the Master Plan.

Pg. 51 and 52 - Ms. Bush added this material and asked for input.

It was suggested to look at the 179 corridor and ask for input for the need for new businesses that are needed.

Ms. Bush encouraged the PC members to read through this document again and bring input to the next meeting. Section 6 Future Land Use and Section 7 will also be discussed next time. The township lake association officers will be invited to the next meeting for their input and Section 6 (Future Land Use) will be made available to them.

DRAFT MINUTES

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APPROVED: _____

Regular PC Mtg.

July 14, 2026

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC COMMENT: (3 minute limit) Sandy Marcukaitis noted that the parking lot will not be available on Thursday, July 16, due to repair of the parking lot. Parking will be available at the Bowens Mill Chapel. ADJOURNMENT: <i>Motion by Bush with support from Smith to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm.</i> <i>All AYES. MOTION CARRIED.</i> Approved by: _____ Frank Fiala, Planning Commission Secretary Date _____ Respectfully submitted by Diane Dykgraaf, Recording Secretary Next Master Plan meeting August 11, 2026.	DRAFT MINUTES Page 4 of 4 PC APPROVED: _____ Regular PC Mtg. July 14, 2026 PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING ADJOURNED
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