

COMMUNITY FORUM

Summary



May 3, 2018

Cadillac Sands Resort

Cadillac, MI

Prepared by:



**Networks
Northwest**

Talent / Business / Community

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INTRODUCTION

On the evening of Thursday, May 3, 2018, Networks Northwest and the Alliance for Economic Success (AES) hosted a public forum at the Cadillac Sands Resort, 6319 M-115, Cadillac, Michigan to address the M-115/M-55 corridor from US-131 interchange west to Mitchell State Park. The meeting was an opportunity for the community to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the corridor and identify initial action steps for improving the corridor. The meeting was the second step of a larger planning process being facilitated by Networks Northwest and AES to create a redevelopment plan for the corridor. Identified as a SWOT Assessment, the meeting intended to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the corridor along with a preliminary vision and the next steps needed to be taken by the community. The meeting was facilitated by Networks Northwest Community Planners John Sych, AICP, and Michael Woods, AICP.



PROCESS

AES and Networks Northwest coordinated their resources to provide the following process for the community to assess the corridor and develop an action plan:

- 1) Existing Conditions Report. Inventory and map existing conditions of the corridor.
- 2) SWOT Assessment. Public identification of the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the corridor and prepare summary.**
- 3) Field Assessment. Field assessment to determine underutilized properties, properties that could be transformed or repurposed.
- 4) Physical Design Framework. Physical design framework focused on linking the assets and opportunities along the corridor together to create a unified theme.
- 5) Site Plan Preparation. Preparation of a conceptual site plan for two properties that are positioned for near-term redevelopment.
- 6) Institutional Review. Review of achievable institutional arrangements that accelerate redevelopment along the corridor.
- 7) Action Plan. Preparation of an Action Plan that can be used by local officials, businesses, residents and other partners to promote implementation.



ALLIANCE FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS (AES) and NETWORKS NORTHWEST

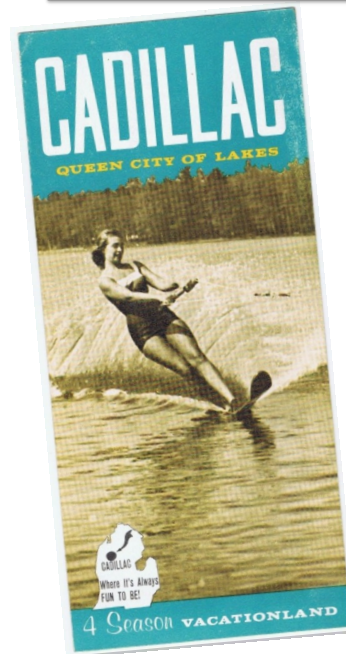
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Cadillac West area and the M-115 and M-55 corridors that lead to it have long been known as a Northern Michigan tourist destination. More recent times, the attraction of the area has waned as other areas in the region have become more popular. While still a destination with many amenities, it has lost its luster and appears tired as many vacationers travel on through the area. The opportunity to improve the area through public and private investment is considerable as the natural amenities offer a unique quality and character to the area while being easily accessible.

Land Use

The eastern end of the corridor provides a southern gateway to the Cadillac area with the US-131 and M-115/M-55 interchange. Traversing across four miles to the west, the corridor moves from a low density commercial interchange area to an area of rural residential and agricultural uses. In approaching the Lake Cadillac area, various businesses are located along the highway. The Cadillac West area is situated on an isthmus between Lake Cadillac and Lake Mitchell. Centered at the intersection of M-115 and M-55, this area hosts a variety of uses including hotels and motels, tourist cabins, gas service stations, retail stores, a variety of eateries ranging from fast-food to sit-down restaurants and Mitchell State Park. As a four-season location, outdoor recreation is abundant from water sports to snow activities.

The zoning along the corridor is reflective of the existing uses with commercial and tourism services zoning located at both ends of the corridor and residential in between these two areas. Future land use designations also follow many of the existing uses and zoning classifications on the corridor. Maps of the zoning and future land use are provided in this report.



Transportation



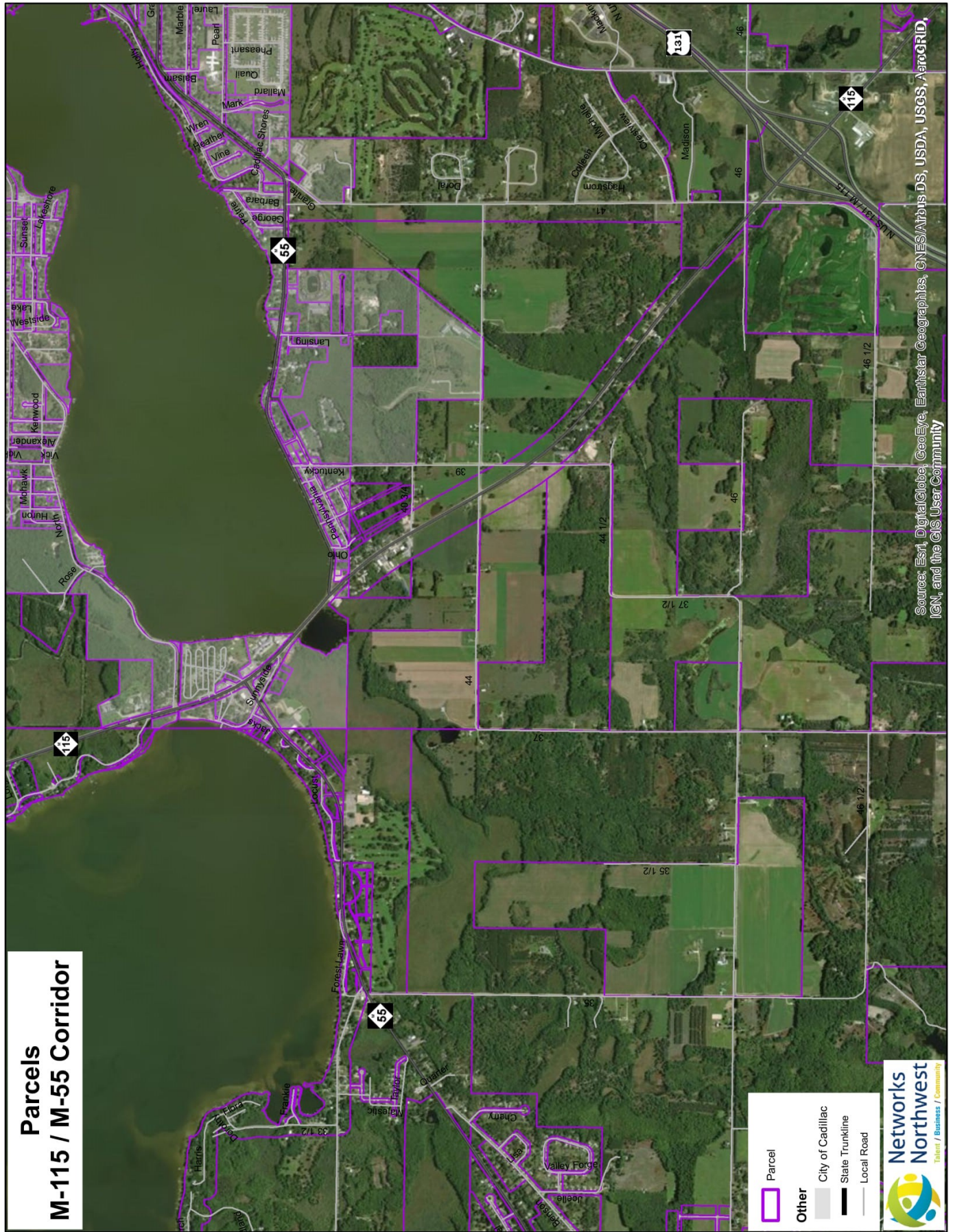
M-115 is a state trunkline highway in the northwestern part of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The highway takes a generally southeast-to-northwest direction between Clare in the central part of the state to Frankfort on Lake Michigan. M-55 is a state trunkline highway in the northern part of the US state of Michigan. M-55 is one of only three state highways that extend across the Lower Peninsula from Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. Both highways run concurrently along the south shore of Lake Cadillac and through the south side of Cadillac to the US-131 interchange.

The Michigan Department of Transportation provides traffic counts for various locations on state highways. The 2016 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for M-115/M-55, between Sunnyside Drive and M-55 West, was 13,507 while for M-115/M-55, immediately west of Exit 176/US-131, was 10,332. In comparison, traffic at the heart of Cadillac West is only less than 1,000 car trips less than downtown Cadillac where the AADT for Mitchell Street was 14,581. A map of the traffic counts is provided in this report.

Walk Score (walkscore.com) measures the walkability of any address using a patented system. For each address, analyzes hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities. Points are 1 to 100 awarded based on the distance to amenities in each category. 1 is a very car-dependent environment while 100 is a very walkable environment. Amenities within a 5 minute walk (.25 miles) are given maximum points. A decay function is used to give points to more distant amenities, with no points given after a 30 minute walk. Walk Score also measures pedestrian friendliness by analyzing population density and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. The following random locations were chosen to illustrate the walkability of corridor and a comparison with a high walkability location in downtown Cadillac:

- Cadillac Sands Resort, 6319 M-115, is scored a “32 Car-Dependent” meaning most errands require a car.
- Blue Heron Café, 304 North Mitchell Street, is scored “81 Very Walkable” meaning most errands can be accomplished on foot.
- Beacon & Bridge Gas Station and Market, 8485 M-115, is scored “1 Car-Dependent” meaning almost all errands require a car.

Parcels M-115 / M-55 Corridor



- Parcel
- Other**
- City of Cadillac
- State Trunkline
- Local Road



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Parcels M-115 / M-55 Corridor



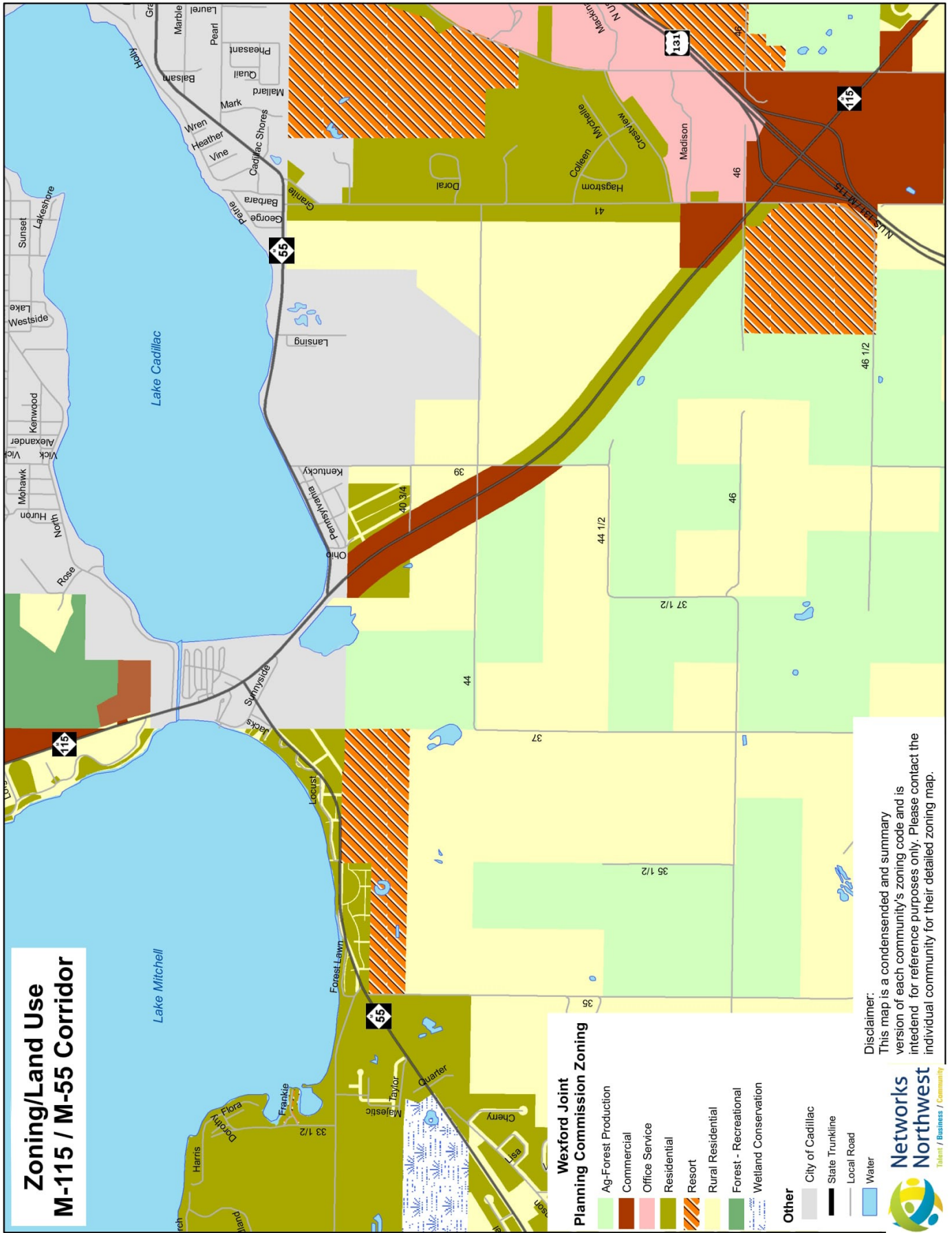
- Parcel
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- Local Road



Disclaimer:
This map is a condensed and summary version of each community's zoning code and is intended for reference purposes only. Please contact the individual community for their detailed zoning map.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Zoning/Land Use M-115 / M-55 Corridor



Wexford Joint Planning Commission Zoning

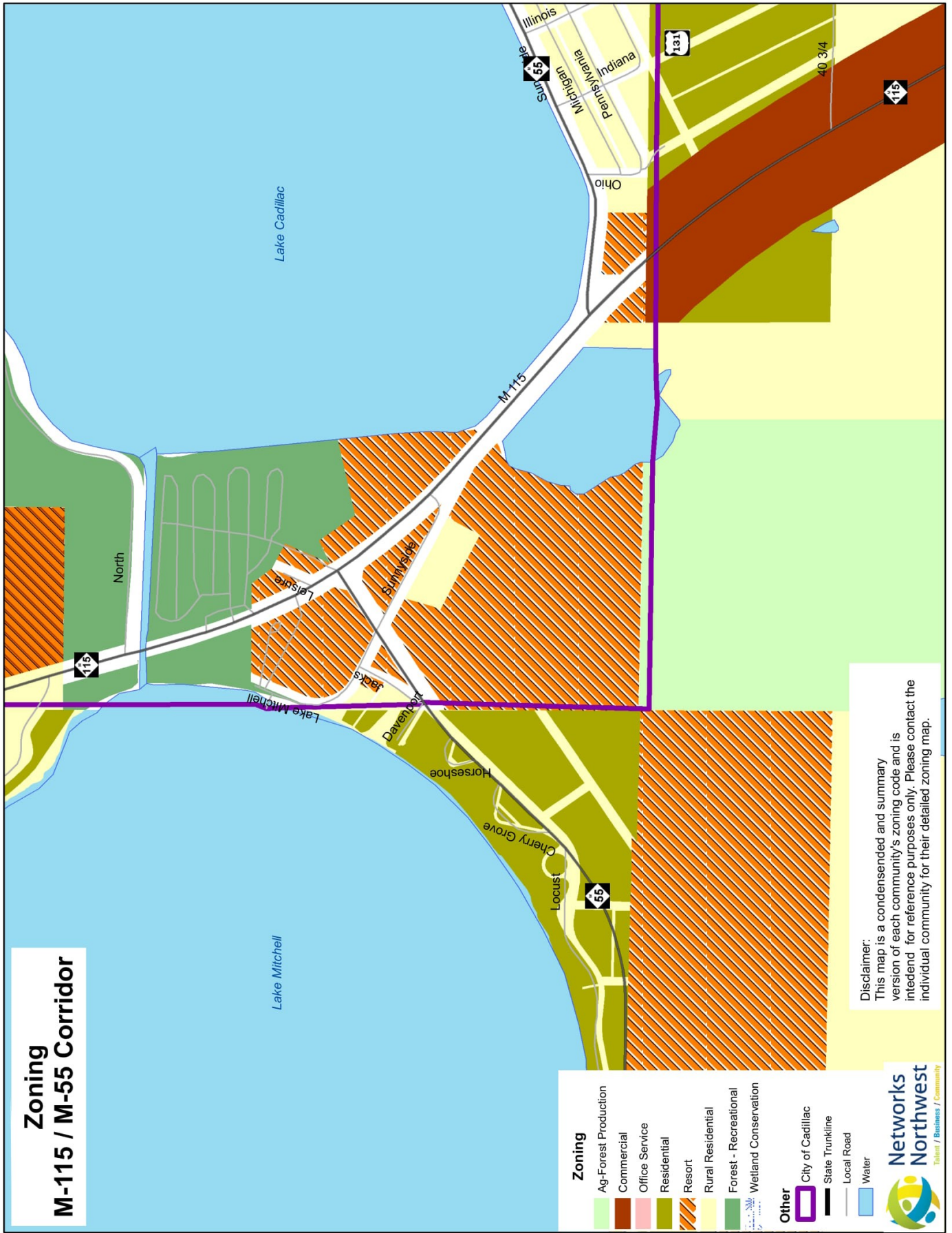
- Ag-Forest Production
- Commercial
- Office Service
- Residential
- Resort
- Rural Residential
- Forest - Recreational
- Wetland Conservation

- Other**
- City of Cadillac
 - State Trunkline
 - Local Road
 - Water

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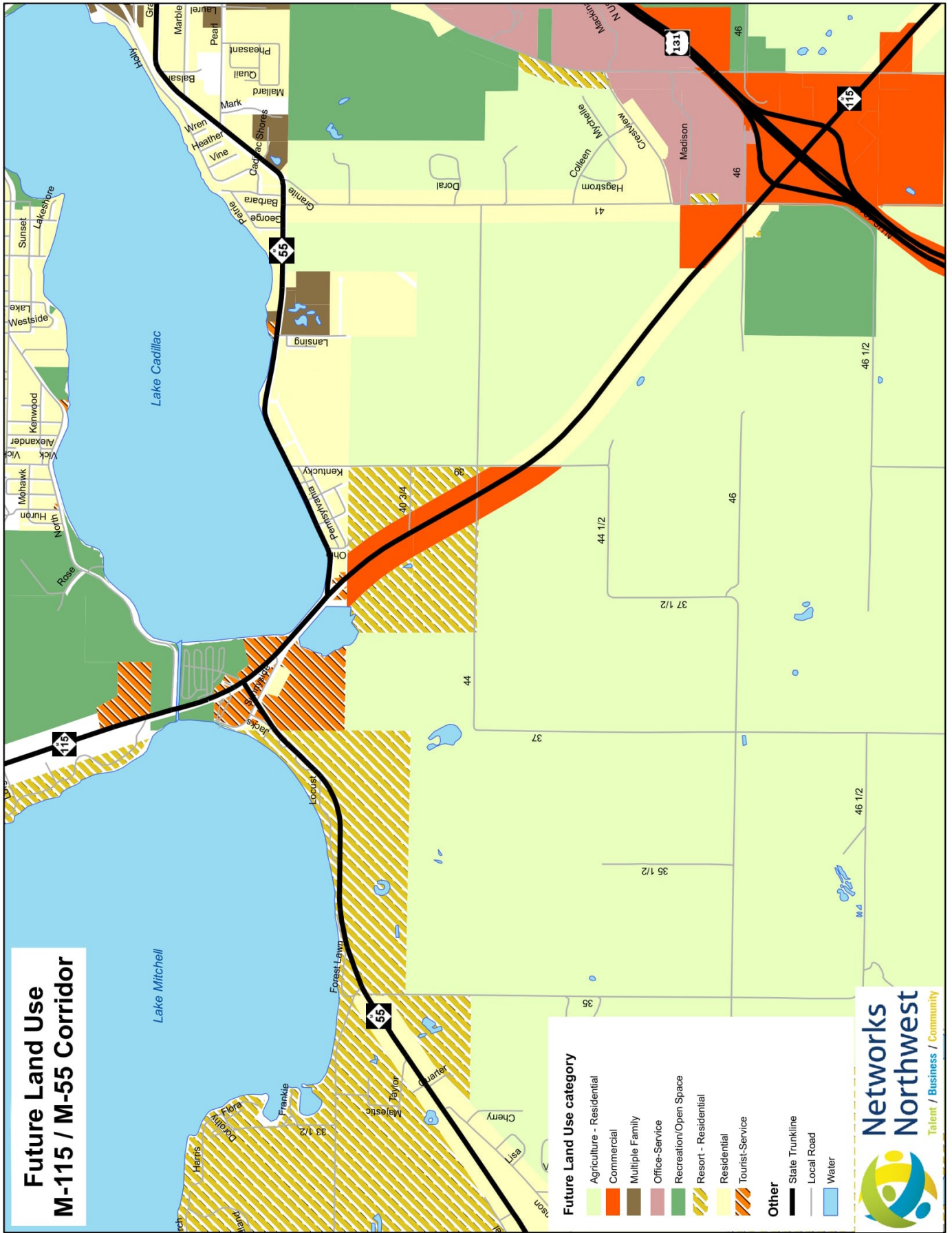
Zoning M-115 / M-55 Corridor

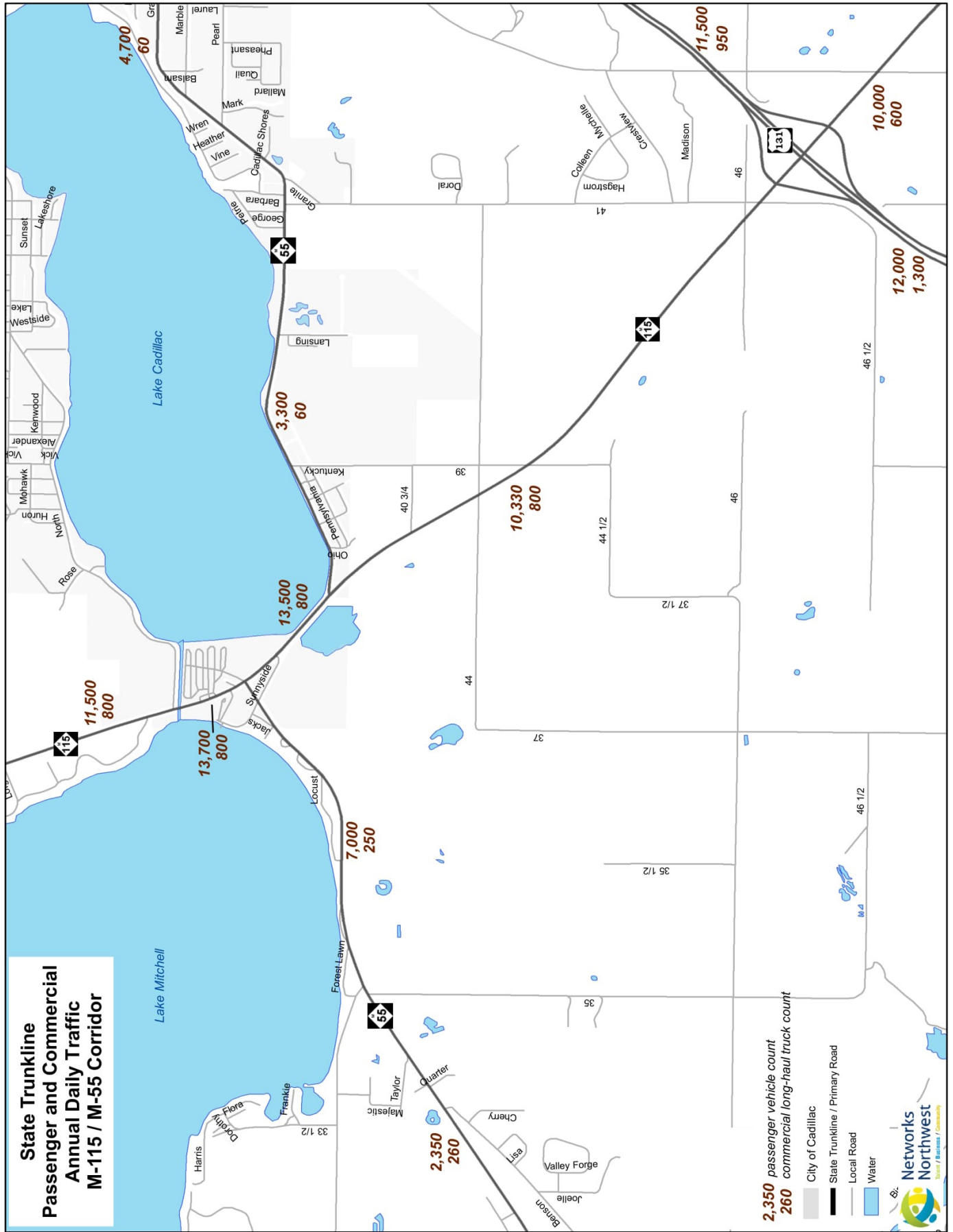


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SWOT ANALYSIS

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threat (SWOT) analysis is a planning tool that was conducted at the meeting to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the corridor. Meeting attendees were asked a series of questions and their responses were recorded by each of the following categories:

- **Strengths** are the existing assets of the corridor. They are the physical, human, and commercial mix elements that make the corridor attractive. Examples include water views or easy access from the freeway.
- **Weaknesses** are elements of the corridor which detract from visitor interest and merchant success. Examples include high speed traffic and lack of new real estate investments.
- **Opportunities** are internal or external conditions which make it possible to successfully undertake a project or plan. Examples include planned public infrastructure upgrades or the availability of affordable real estate.
- **Threats** are also internal or external conditions, but those which will potentially impede progress towards a thriving commercial district. Examples include absentee property owners or poor image.

A summary of the responses from attendees is provided on the following pages. The raw responses are noted in the Appendix of this report.



What are the **strengths** that should be leveraged?

- Lake Cadillac and Lake Mitchell offer scenic views of natural beauty and an abundant of water activities. Abundant wildlife is located in the area and the active natural water cycle of the lakes results in high water quality.
- With its long, rich tourism history combined with the name recognition of “Cadillac”, the area is strong in drawing visitors. Visitor and tourism marketing for this area is strong and beneficial.
- A wide variety of four season recreation facilities in the area include ski areas, golf courses, boat launches, snowmobile trails, the canal and walkway underneath the highway bridge that connect Lake Cadillac and Lake Mitchell, and bicycle pathways including the White Pine Trail.
- High traffic counts mean great visibility and viability for the area. The residential base in the area also creates a strong customer and user base for businesses, recreation facilities, and community events.
- The area supports a variety of restaurants and lodging choices which have easy access to amenities.
- Noted facilities in the area include Mitchell State Park, Cherry Grove Event Center, and Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center.
- The area is in close proximity to downtown Cadillac and the activities offered there. Points beyond are easily accessed via US-131, M115, and M-55.
- Gas Stations and fast food restaurants provide convenient service.

What are its **weaknesses** that need to be eliminated?

- The area is fractured and lacks a true identity. Travelers think this area is the Cadillac Central Business District as they pass through. Lack of public events with Cadillac identity.
- The area needs upgraded and expanded public infrastructure, including walkways, wayfinding signage for amenities, and lighting. The area also lacks placemaking strategies that could bolster the use of amenities and ensure the infrastructure is built.
- Some properties look old and tired. Signage is outdated. There is a lack of new investment in facilities and businesses.
- Overall connectivity for pedestrians and vehicle operators is a challenge, including:
 - High speed traffic on the highway compromises vehicular and pedestrian movement and safety in the area.
 - Overall walkability in the area is poor and compromises pedestrian safety, including lack of safe access between the State Park and the White Pine Trail for pedestrians, bicyclists.
- A lack of access management for driveways makes it difficult drivers and pedestrians alike.
- A single entryway at the State Park makes ingress and egress difficult and congested.
- Improved off-road vehicle (ORV) access is needed for all seasons.
- Lack of docks in the waterway reduces connectivity.
- Use of the State Park is limited as there is a narrow window of activity when the Park is open. There is no activity in winter at the Park.
- Poor intergovernmental cooperation prevents from proactive action taking place.
- The weather can negatively impact area tourism whether its low water levels or lack of snowfall. Some felt there is too much dependency on the weather for tourism and the local economy may need to diversify.
- More people that need to “do it well” whether its improving their properties and working to cultivate the overall area.
- Lack of a market study or assessment makes it hard to know what the potential for new investment. Some felt that store options are needed including a grocery store or a convenience store. A market study could help in determining the sustainability of a new grocery store.



What **opportunities** to seize?

- Under-utilized real estate properties are available. There are developers and investors interested in the area.
- Harness high traffic counts and all of the people passing through. In addition, while many residents in the area venture into the downtown Cadillac, there is an opportunity to pull and draw residents and visitors into the Cadillac West area. This can be a great resource for business growth and increased activity in the area.
- An effort to improve the overall area could be a great opportunity for intergovernmental cooperation.
- Branding and wayfinding could help to create identity and improve overall quality of the area.
- Re-route the pathway along Lake Cadillac and extension the bike trail network to other locations such as the White Pine Trail.
- Its hub location and easy connection to highways and other options for travel such as boats and bicycles can be built upon leveraged in accessing places like downtown Cadillac and Interlochen.
- Numerous affordable options for tourists with lodging and amenities can appeal to a wide variety of tourists.
- Establishing form-based code could be used to build quality development and streamline the approval process for new development. Enforcement of codes was supported to ensure
- Upgrading public and private facilities can increase new interest and investment in the corridor as well as supporting the development in a more orderly fashion.
- There is a unique opportunity create a collective vision for the corridor and develop in a smart manner. The natural resource amenities could be a major asset in demonstrating a green-focused community.

What are the **threats** to avoid/manage?

- Insufficient public utilities and infrastructure to serve development and redevelopment, including the inability to access capital and resources (such as tax increment financing).
- Climate change and the unpredictability it creates for the tourism industry.
- Lack of cohesive identity for the area and no plan of action that fits a vision of the area, including no formal outreach for vision. Lack of intergovernmental cooperation, open communication and support by public agencies for redevelopment efforts.
- Lack of safe pedestrian access and infrastructure for walkability.
- Time constraints and not taking action within a reasonable time. The community ends up being reactive when it needs to be proactive instead.
- Lack of cohesive zoning for the area that results in confusion, inconsistent ordinances, and inability to address grandfathered properties and related issues.

VISION

What is your **vision** for the corridor in the next 20 years?

- A tourist village that is connected, synergized and has a strong identity
- A destination location
- A place that caters to a wide variety of tourism activities - upscale, downtown feel, nightlife, vibrancy
- Easily available and accessible parking and transportation choices
- An area with strong local roots and community pride
- Maximization of building upon unique water assets
- Full service area for residents, businesses, and visitors
- Incorporating density that reflects the desired design by the community



NEXT STEPS

What are the **next steps** to move forward on these issues?

The planning process was finalized by attendees identifying some of the key next steps to taking action on these issues and making effective impact and improvement on the corridor:

- Develop and finalize the corridor plan
- Determine how to advertise, promote and commercialize the plan for corridor
- Identify the ways to delivery the corridor plan
- Need strong commitment and involvement from the entire community
- Layout clear step-by-step instructions for implementing the plan



APPENDIX

Media

Print Coverage:

A2 CADILLAC NEWS | TRUSTED. LOCAL. CONNECTED

775-NEWS (6397)

www.cadillacnews.com | FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2018

Community members share vision of future Cadillac West

Flow of traffic, intergovernmental cooperation, lack of identity among issues discussed

BY BEN GLICK
CADILLAC NEWS

CADILLAC — Exploring a “new theme” for Cadillac West, residents, business owners, developers and local government officials gathered Thursday night to discuss the future of the area.

Leading the discussion at the Sands Resort were representatives from the Alliance of Economic Success and the Traverse City-based economic development consulting firm Networks Northwest.

John Sych and Michael Woods, both planners for Networks Northwest, began the discussion by having the packed room of around 80 people

identify and list the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that would be important to the future development of the area.

The most common responses from the crowd tended to focus on the flow of traffic, intergovernmental cooperation and developing an identity.

The strengths Cadillac West should integrate into future



BEN GLICK | CADILLAC NEWS

Networks Northwest Regional Planner Michael Woods lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the redevelopment of Cadillac West corridor.

plans, attendees said, included the views of both lakes Cadillac and Mitchell, nearby snowmobile trails, restaurants and amenities access.

Another opportunity for the area is the rising average daily cost for lodging in places like

Traverse City, which are driving tourists to accommodation in Cadillac West.

Sych and Woods also asked attendees what weaknesses the area faces that should be corrected. The weaknesses they identified were a fractured

identity, lack of public infrastructure, limited seasonal use, the water quality in both lakes Mitchell and Cadillac, poor traffic flow and little reason for local residents to visit.

Locals, including business owners, also complained about

the “tired” appearance of the area and a desire and willingness to improve the area cosmetically.

Lastly, Sych and Woods asked residents how they envisioned Cadillac West in 20 years.

Respondents described the future Cadillac West as a pedestrian-centric district of the city distinct from downtown Cadillac that caters to both locals and tourists, with public parking, nightlife and a uniform building code to evoke a vibrant “downtown feel” within an idyllic, natural setting. Or as one resident put it, “Norman Rockwell meets Thomas Kinkadee.”

To get there, Woods said, it will take a lot of commitment.

“This isn’t a marathon, it’s an Iron Man,” he said.

Considering that future development of Cadillac West relies on the cooperation of neighboring Cherry Grove and Clam Lake, Cadillac City Manager Marcus Peccia said any plan would require collaboration among local and state governments.

“If not, we’ll grow together or we’ll die together,” Peccia said.

Moving forward, Networks Northwest will take the public’s comments and compile them into a report that will be released in the next few weeks and will be available on its website.

ben.glick@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)

Television Coverage:

<http://www.9and10news.com/2018/05/03/community-discusses-ideas-better-cadillac-west-area/>

<http://upnorthlive.com/news/local/community-members-discuss-ways-to-improve-m-115-m-55-corridor>

Raw SWOT Responses

STRENGTHS

Use and scenic views of Lake Cadillac and Lake Mitchell
“Cadillac” name recognition
Snowmobile trails
Bike pathways
Residential base equals customer base
Cherry Grove Event Center
Variety of restaurants
Golf courses in close proximity
Mitchell State Park
Proximity to Cadillac Central Business District
Easily accessible location; close to US-131, M115, M-55
Access to amenities from hotels and trailheads
Destination District
Natural water recycling
Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center
Four season recreation facilities including ski areas, snow, water
Visitor and tourism marketing
Canal and walkway underneath bridge connect Lake Cadillac and Lake Mitchell
White Pine Trail crosses the corridor
Gas Stations and fast food restaurants provide convenient service
Abundant wildlife in the area
Boat launches are available
A long, rich tourism history
Lodging is available
High traffic counts provide visibility

WEAKNESSES

Lack of public infrastructure, lack of placemaking strategies
More store options are needed including a grocery store or a convenience store
Lacking true identity, the area is fractured
People think this area is the Cadillac Central Business District
High speed of traffic
Narrow window that the State Park is actually open - there is no activity in winter
Poor inter-government cooperation - controlling watershed
Lack of safe access from State Park to White Pine Trail for pedestrians, bicyclists
Water appearance of lakes and low water levels negatively impact tourism
Access management is needed
Lack of docks in the waterway connectivity
Too dependent on weather for tourism, lack of variety
Overall walkability is poor
More people that “do it well”
Market study/assessment
Improved off-road vehicle (ORV) access during all seasons
Some properties look old and tired
Lack of/outdated signage
Lack of investment in facilities/businesses

M-115 pedestrian safety
Single ingress and egress from State Park
Lack of public events with Cadillac identity

OPPORTUNITIES

Under-utilized property
Inter-government cooperation
Branding and wayfinding
Interested developers and investors
Re-Route Cadillac pathway to lakeside
Proximity to major population help, Interlochen
Road network, options for travel
Channel
Affordable options for tourists with lodging and amenities
Pull/draw visitors and residents from downtown Cadillac
Establish form-based code to build quality development
Enforcement of codes
Harness high traffic counts, people passing through
Upgrade public and private facilities
Water access, Natural resources, Green Activities
Extension of bike trail network
Create a smart growth and collective vision of corridor

THREATS

Insufficient utilities to serve development and redevelopment
Climate change and the unpredictability it creates
Lack of cohesive identity
No plan of action that fits a vision of the area
Lack of intergovernmental cooperation and support by public agencies
Lack of safe pedestrian access, walkability areas, and infrastructure
Time constraints
Inability to access capital and staffing resources (such as tax increment financing)
Lack of cohesive Zoning Ordinance
Confusion/inconsistent ordinances – unable to address grandfathered properties
No formal outreach for vision
End up being reactive – need to be proactive instead

VISION

Tourist village that is connected, synergized and has a strong identity
A destination location vs. a place people go through
A place that caters to a wide variety of tourism activities - upscale, downtown feel, nightlife, vibrancy
Easily available parking
An area that has strong local roots, common pride
Maximization of building on water assets
Full service area
Incorporating density