200 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY VISIONING

Community Engagement Report

Prepared by Williams & Works

January 2024

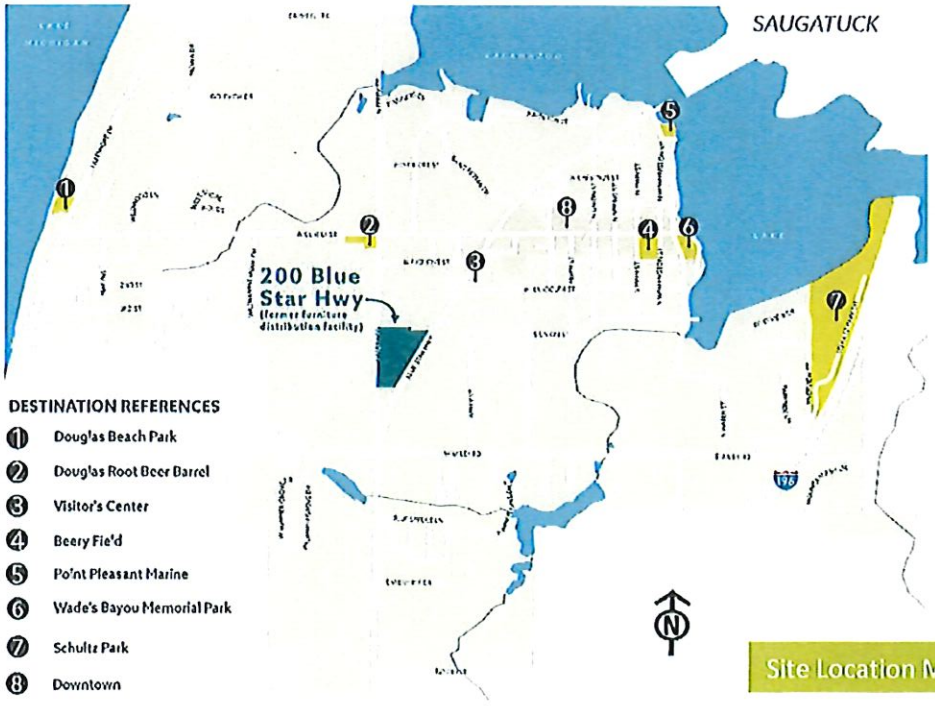
INTRODUCTION

The 200 Blue Star Highway site has been vacant since 2014. In 2019, the City acquired the site through a donation agreement. Environmental site assessments conducted at the property identified several contaminants of concern, including PCBs. The former 150,300-square-foot factory building was razed in 2022, leaving a blank slate for redevelopment. To assist with site remediation, the City was awarded a $500,000 clean-up grant that addresses the areas on the property that are most impacted by PCBs. Preferred site uses need to be identified to facilitate the preparation of a cleanup work plan.

The City is exploring land use and redevelopment alternatives for this property. As part of this exploration phase, draft concepts were generated to help guide the site clean-up process. The City is going above and beyond the EPA's Community Relations Plan requirements to involve the public, taking a collaborative approach to determine the highest and best use for the site. An online survey and community open house gave both virtual and in-person opportunities for the residents of Douglas to provide input.

Prior to promoting engagement opportunities, the City created a contact form that was shared publicly. This allowed the City to develop an email list of interested participants who would receive direct notifications about upcoming events regarding the 200 Blue Star Highway site. The survey and open house were publicized through online methods such as email and social media announcements. A printed flyer advertisement was posted at City Hall and other public facilities. The online survey also provided information about the open house prior to the event.

This report outlines the results and analysis of these efforts to inform the development of a final conceptual site plan.



Site Location Map

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Overview

From December 1, 2023 to December 24, 2023, the City of the Village of Douglas had a survey open to gather public input on redevelopment alternatives for 200 Blue Star Highway, the former furniture distribution facility.

The survey questions were crafted in collaboration with the consulting team. A comprehensive set of 11 questions were presented using the online survey tool, Survey Monkey. 662 responses were gathered by the deadline, constituting a 70% completion rate. A portion of respondents opted to only provide answers to the demographic questions and not to answer fundamental survey questions (Q4-Q11) related to the preliminary concepts. To maintain the integrity of the overall results, these responses were excluded, ensuring that these incomplete surveys didn't disproportionately influence the outcomes. A total of 467 responses were analyzed, of which there was a higher percentage of people who live inside the City of the Village of Douglas.

Methodology

The online survey tool, Survey Monkey, presented respondents with some basic background information about the 200 Blue Star Highway planning and cleanup efforts, and a standardized set of questions and responses. Some questions only permitted one answer while others permitted multiple-choice answers along with space for open-ended comments. This method restricted acceptable entries to those required by the survey form, providing a standardized method by which analysis could be conducted.

Two scoring scales were used to report the data received: Nominal and Ordinal Scales. A nominal scale merely counts responses by a defined set of classifications (e.g. number of permanent residents or seasonal residents). This scale is useful to separate responses into working groups or to evaluate the overall sample to determine whether it represents the larger population. Questions 1-4 and 11 were designed on a nominal scale. Questions 6, 8, and 10 were a combination of a nominal scale that allowed for open-ended responses. The participants were given a choice to write their responses in a text box regarding each concept.

An ordinal scale is more useful in gaining insight into respondent beliefs because it includes the characteristic of rank order. One item is greater or lesser than another item or it has more or less of a particular quality, based on a commonly understood standard. An ordinal scale enables some greater judgement about the relative strength or weakness of a particular response. Questions 5, 7, and 9 were designed on an ordinal scale where the participants were asked to rate the concepts on a 1-100 scoring scale.

Q1. Where do you live?

Answer Choice	*Responses*	*Percentage*
City of the Village of Douglas	186	40%
Saugatuck Township	135	29%
Other community in Allegan County	60	13%
City of Saugatuck	47	10%
Other community outside of Allegan County	37	8%
Skipped	2	
Total	467	

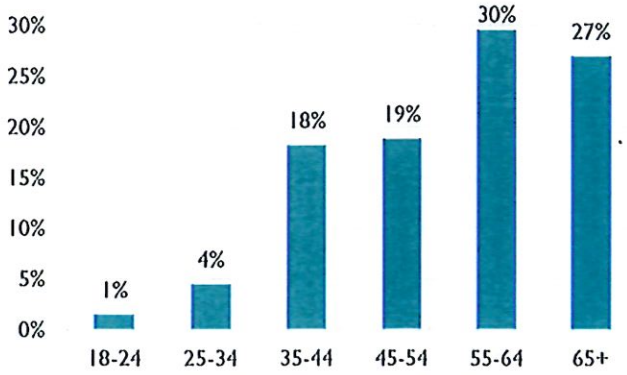
Other responses predominantly focused on West Michigan communities like Holland, Grand Rapids, and the City of Fennville.

Q2. Are you a resident in the Saugatuck-Douglas area? (select the most applicable option)

Answer Choice	*Responses*	*%*
Yes, I live in the area year-round	338	72%
I live in the area for at least 6 months of the year	40	9%
I am not an area resident, but I own property or a business in the area	35	7%
I am not an area resident and do not own property or a business in the area	17	4%
No, I live in the area for less than two months of the year	17	4%
I live in the area for at least 9 months of the year	16	3%
Skipped	4	
Total	467	

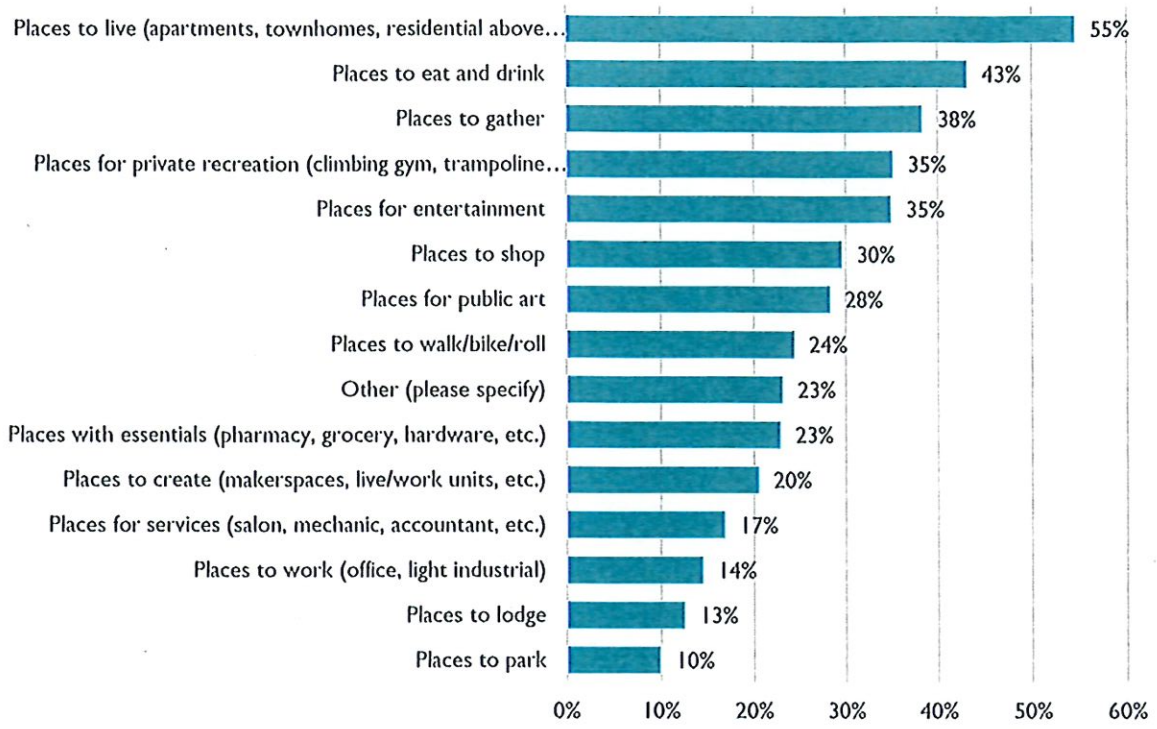
Q3. What is your age?

The largest group of respondents identified as 55-64 (30%) years of age, followed by 65+ (27%) This is expected, as the largest age demographic in Douglas falls between ages 55 and 74.



Answer Choice	*Responses*	*%*
18-24	7	1%
25-34	21	4%
35-44	85	18%
45-54	88	19%
55-64	138	30%
65+	126	27%
Skipped	2	
Total	467	

Q4. Once the environmental clean-up has been completed, what uses do you think would be the best fit for this site? (Select all that apply)



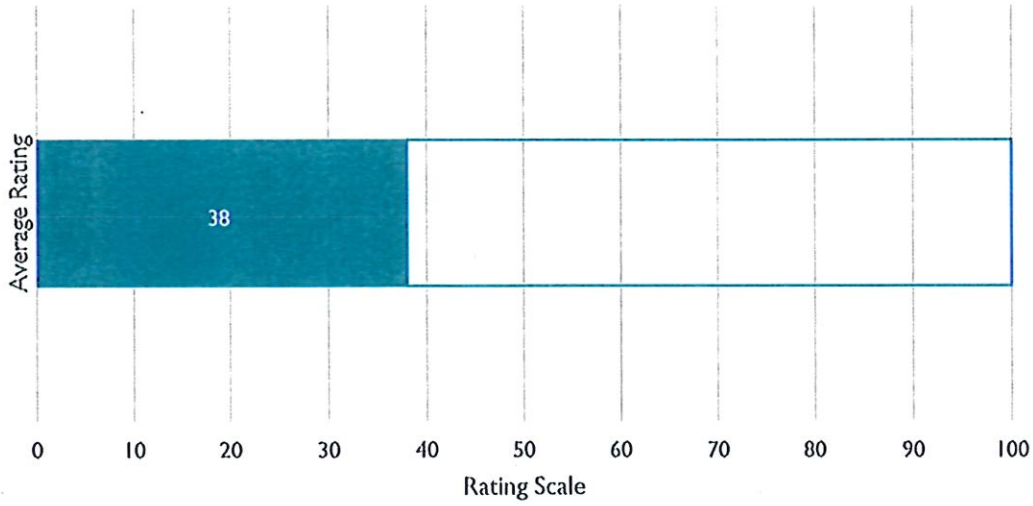
Answer Choices	*Responses*	*Percentage*
Places to live (apartments, townhomes, residential above retail, etc.)	253	55%
Places to eat and drink	200	43%
Places to gather	178	38%
Places for private recreation (climbing gym, trampoline park, indoor dog park, etc.)	163	35%
Places for entertainment	162	35%
Places to shop	137	30%
Places for public art	131	28%
Places to walk/bike/roll	113	24%
Other (please specify)	107	23%
Places with essentials (pharmacy, grocery, hardware, etc.)	106	23%
Places to create (makerspaces, live/work units, etc.)	95	20%
Places for services (salon, mechanic, accountant, etc.)	78	17%
Places to work (office, light industrial)	67	14%
Places to lodge	58	13%
Places to park	46	10%
Answered	464	

Questions 5 through 10 asked respondents to evaluate three (3) conceptual site designs for 200 Blue Star Highway. An image and description of each concept were provided in the survey to inform participant decision-making. These concepts were guided by local planning documents, market studies, and preliminary feedback from members of the community, City Council, and the Brownfield Authority. The conceptual designs were created to illustrate the art of the possible so the public had something visual to critique. Respondents were asked to share their thoughts about what they liked, what could be improved upon, or what uses may be missing.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT #1

(Hotel/conference center, mixed use, townhomes)

Q5. Use the slider to rate how well you think Preliminary Concept #1 meets the needs and character of the community. (0 = lowest score, 100=highest score)



Q6. Tell us what you think about Preliminary Concept #1. Please type your answers in the corresponding categories below.

Answer Choices	*Responses*	*Percentage*
What do you like?	284	84%
What do you dislike?	298	88%
Other thoughts?	141	42%
Answered	338	

Responses to the open-ended question "What do you like?" have been categorized into common themes in the following table. These specific aspects were mentioned most frequently and garnered positive feedback from respondents, indicating key strengths of Preliminary Concept #1. The breakdown provides insights into the themes that resonated most positively with the survey participants, with summary explanations provided as bullet points below.

Preliminary Concept #1: Liked Topics	*Topic Frequency*
Housing Options	45
• Respondents appreciated the allowance of three stories for more housing.	
• Positive comments about the mix of residential options, including townhomes and residential over retail.	
• Recognition of the need for additional housing and options for local workers.	
Hotel and Conference Center	39
• Positive sentiments towards the inclusion of a hotel and conference center.	
• Recognition of the potential economic impact on local businesses and the community.	
• Support for the idea of a hotel attracting visitors and providing lodging options.	
Green Space and Parks	37
• Positive feedback on the presence of green spaces and parks.	
• Appreciation for open green buffers, communal green space, and overall landscaping.	
• Recognition of the value of green spaces for public use and outdoor gathering.	
Mixed-Use Design	35
• Positive response to the concept's mixed-use nature, combining residential, commercial, and recreational elements.	
• Support for the master-planned development approach.	
• Acknowledgment of the variety and mix of uses among buildings.	
Layout and Aesthetics	30
• Positive comments about the overall design and layout of the concept.	
• Appreciation for the visual appeal and the well-planned use of space.	
• Recognition of the separation of housing and retail spaces.	
Parking	18
• Positive feedback regarding the availability of parking, especially for special events.	
• Recognition of the practicality and convenience of parking options.	
Commercial and Retail Space	16
• Support for commercial and retail spaces, including restaurants and businesses.	
• Recognition of the addition of services that are needed in the area.	
Affordability	14
• Positive comments expressing the importance of affordable housing, especially townhomes.	
• Suggestions to attract younger families with affordable housing options.	
Variety and Diversity	13
• Recognition of the variety and diversity offered by the mixed-use development.	
• Positive sentiments towards having a multi-purpose area with multiple living arrangements.	
Conference and Event Space	12
• Positive feedback on the inclusion of conference and meeting spaces.	
• Recognition of the potential for hosting corporate events, weddings, and larger gatherings.	

Responses to the open-ended question "What do you dislike?" have been categorized into common themes in the following table. These specific aspects were mentioned most frequently and garnered negative feedback from respondents, indicating key weaknesses of Preliminary Concept #1. The breakdown provides insights into the themes that were most negatively perceived by the survey participants, with summary explanations provided as bullet points below.

Preliminary Concept #1: Disliked Topics	*Topic Frequency*
Economic Feasibility of Hotel/Conference Center	33
• Doubts about the economic feasibility of a hotel/conference center due to the seasonality of Douglas.	
• Concerns about the ability of a hotel to survive in the non-tourist season.	
Lack of Open Space and Parking	29
• Dislike for the perceived lack of open space.	
• Concerns about insufficient parking for planned venues and residences.	
• Mention of overcrowding and congestion issues.	
• Concerns about increased traffic and the impact on walkability.	
• Opposition to the density of property and concerns about a lack of public green space.	
Affordability and Housing Types	23
• Concerns about the lack of affordable housing and small housing units.	
• Opposition to the exclusivity of townhomes and the preference for apartments.	
• Desire for housing to be affordable and controlled for lower incomes.	
Hotel and Conference Center	23
• Doubts about the necessity and success of a hotel and conference center.	
• Opposition to a hotel or conference center, with some mentioning it doesn't benefit the community.	
Traffic Impact and Intersection	11
• Concerns about the traffic impact on the Blue Star and Ferry St./Center St. intersection.	
• Opposition to the potential traffic congestion.	
Commercial and Retail Spaces	10
• Resistance to new commercial businesses, retail spaces, and dining options.	
• Dislike for additional retail space, especially if it includes big brands or chains.	
Scale and Appearance	10
• Opposition to the scale of the proposed three-story hotel.	
• Concerns about the appearance and lack of character in the development.	
• Resistance to the idea of a large hotel as it may not fit the character of the community.	
Overdevelopment	8
• Concerns about overdevelopment and the commercialization of the area.	
• Opposition to what is perceived as too much housing planned at once.	

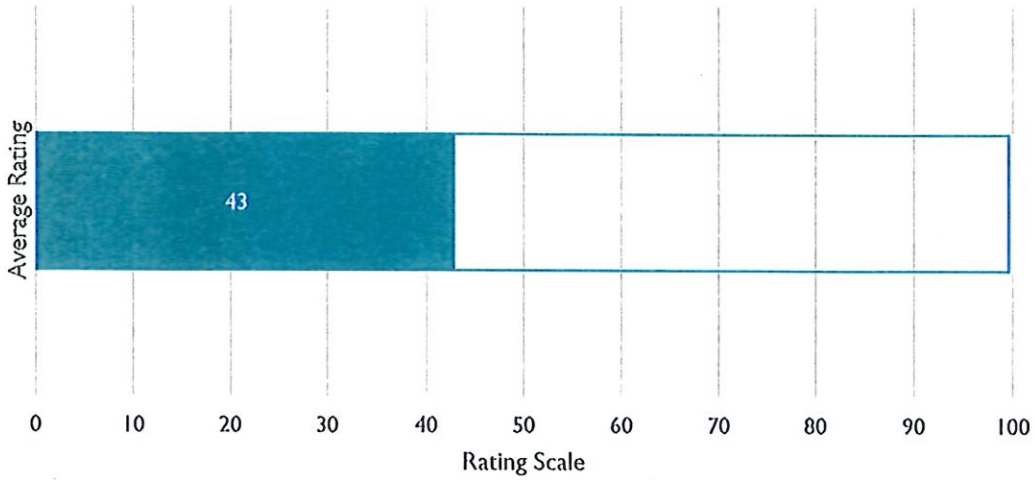
Preliminary Concept #1: Disliked Topics (cont.)	*Topic Frequency*
Specific Dislikes About Components	7
• Dislike for specific components like the conference center building, private parks, and gazebos.	
• Resistance to the idea of a convention center.	
• Opposition to a three-story hotel.	
Short-Term Rentals	7
• Opposition to more short-term lodging options like hotels and vacation rentals.	
• Concerns about the potential for overpriced condos and the impact on existing rentals.	
Character of the Community	7
• Opposition to elements that may alter the small-town feel and charm of the community.	
• Desire to maintain a quaint and independent vibe.	
Affordable Housing and Community Benefits	7
• Desire for more affordable housing for families.	
• Questions about how the concept benefits the community and addresses its needs.	
Seasonal Dependency	6
• Doubts about the economic viability of a hotel in the off-season and concerns about seasonal dependency.	
• Opposition to developments that cater primarily to tourists.	

Preliminary Concept #1: Other Thoughts Summary
Respondents raised several infrastructure and traffic concerns, pointing out issues such as drainage problems, poor street conditions, and worries about traffic congestion at critical intersections like Ferry Street and Blue Star Highway. Seasonal business viability emerged as a recurring theme, with doubts expressed about the sustainability of retail establishments during winter months. Ambiguity regarding public and private spaces in the proposed concepts was a common question, with multiple respondents expressing confusion about the distinction between these areas. Affordability of housing was a central theme, with a consistent emphasis on the need for more affordable options and concerns about housing being rented out. Respondents expressed a strong desire for community benefit and green space, requesting parks, recreational areas, and amenities. Some had concerns about overdevelopment, feeling the proposed plans might be too dense. There was skepticism about the necessity for additional lodging and retail spaces, with preferences for prioritizing affordable housing over commercial developments. Suggestions for specific amenities were made, including an indoor-outdoor music venue and an aquatic center. Maintaining the small, quaint, and unique character of the community was a common sentiment. Environmental considerations, a disklike for short-term rentals, and calls for a focus on year-round residents were prevalent. Some suggested more community engagement, research, and creative, unique designs aligned with the community's character.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT #2

(Large-scale entertainment user, makerspace, townhome or live work units)

Q7. Use the slider to rate how well you think Preliminary Concept #2 meets the needs and character of the community. (0=lowest score, 100=highest score)



Q8. Tell us what you think about Preliminary Concept #2. Please type your answers in the corresponding categories below.

Answer Choices	*Responses*	*Percentage*
What do you like?	271	86%
What do you dislike?	262	83%
Other thoughts?	122	39%
Answered	314	

Responses to the open-ended question "What do you like?" have been categorized into common themes in the following table. These specific aspects were mentioned most frequently and garnered positive feedback from respondents, indicating key strengths of Preliminary Concept #2. The breakdown provides insights into the themes that resonated most positively with the survey participants, with summary explanations provided as bullet points below.

Preliminary Concept #2: Liked Topics	*Topic Frequency*
Entertainment Venue (Movie Theater)	30
• Liked the idea of having a movie theater or entertainment venue.	
Gathering Spaces	25
• Appreciation for large outdoor gathering spaces, green spaces, and community-focused areas.	
Mixed-Use (Residential and Commercial)	20
• Appreciation for the mix of residential and commercial spaces, including townhomes and live/work units.	
Art and Sculpture Park	15
• Liked the concept of art installations, sculpture parks, and art spaces.	
Community Impact	15
• Positive impact on the community, drawing people together, and enhancing the local atmosphere.	
Positive Comparisons to Saugatuck	10
• Some respondents positively compared the proposed concepts to existing facilities in Saugatuck, such as the Saugatuck Center for the Arts (SCA).	
Year-Round Viability	10
• Acknowledgment of the importance of providing year-round activities and facilities.	
Diverse Offerings	10
• Suggestions for a mix of retail, entertainment, and community spaces to cater to a diverse range of interests.	
Community Engagement	10
• Support for concepts that engage the community, attract visitors, and contribute to the economic goals of the area.	
Green Spaces	10
• Positive comments about the inclusion of green spaces and outdoor areas.	

Responses to the open-ended question "What do you dislike?" have been categorized into common themes in the following table. These specific aspects were mentioned most frequently and garnered negative feedback from respondents, indicating key weaknesses of Preliminary Concept #2. The breakdown provides insights into the themes that were most negatively perceived by the survey participants, with summary explanations provided as bullet points below.

Preliminary Concept #2: Disliked Topics	*Topic Frequency*
Movie Theater and Large Entertainment Complex	40
• Viability, commercial sustainability, and potential for empty spaces. Comparison with existing facilities like SCA and The Ivy.	
Townhomes	20
• Overabundance, potential lack of affordability, and competition with existing projects.	
Commercial Elements	15
• Commercial buildings, strip mall feel, and excessive retail space.	
Lack of Green Space	15
• Insufficient open green space, too much asphalt/parking, and a desire for more separation from highway noise.	

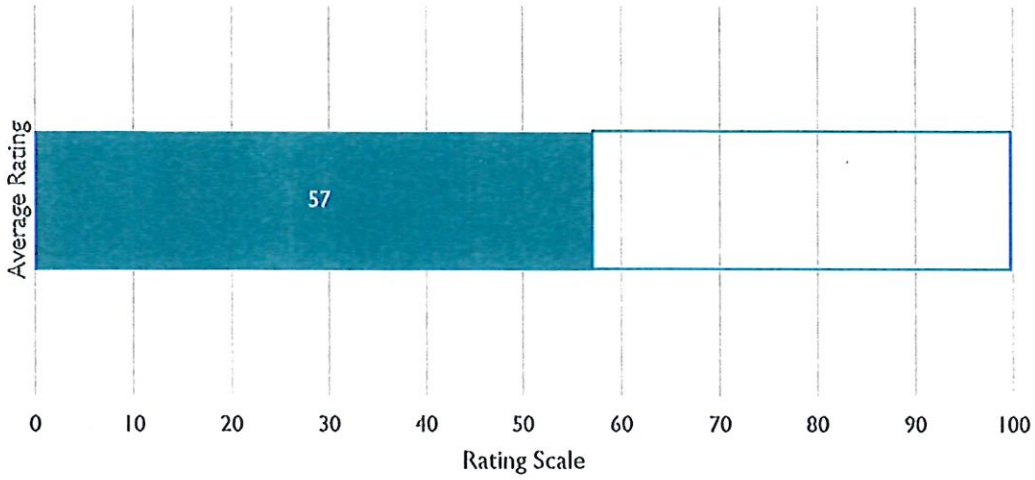
Preliminary Concept #2: Disliked Topics (cont.)	*Topic Frequency*
Affordability and Housing	15
• Lack of affordable housing, potential for expensive townhomes, and insufficient housing for year-round workers.	
Traffic and Parking	10
• Traffic flow issues, excessive parking, and worries about traffic surges for entertainment venues.	
Art Installations and Sculpture Park	10
• Private sculpture park, duplication of art installations, and unclear purpose of certain features.	
Uninspired Design/Layout	10
• Uninspired or boxy design, lack of vision, and concerns about the overall layout.	
Community Needs and Preferences	10
• Not addressing community needs, lack of excitement, and perceived disconnect with the town's vibe.	
Specific Elements	10
• Vagueness of makerspaces/commercial buildings, uncertainty over the use of specific spaces, and lack of clarity on certain features.	

Preliminary Concept #2: Other Thoughts Summary
Concerns related to traffic and parking were prominent in respondent feedback, with worries about increased traffic on Ferry Street, especially at the Ferry and Blue Star intersection. Some respondents emphasized the need for better traffic control and expressed concerns about parking availability. On the topic of community amenities, the desire for a community center or recreational space was a recurring theme. Suggestions included creating covered outdoor spaces for entertainment events, incorporating facilities like indoor gyms and basketball/volleyball courts, and even proposing an ice rink. Affordable housing emerged as a key concern for many respondents, who emphasized the need for options that are within the price range of locals and capable of accommodating year-round workers. Preserving green space was another common theme, with respondents expressing a desire to provide as much natural greenery as possible. Suggestions included incorporating more park areas, trees, and even a pond with outdoor ice skating. Respondents advocated for mixed-use developments catering to community needs, emphasizing originality, and avoiding competition with existing facilities. Doubts about the viability of a large-scale entertainment venue, particularly a movie theater, were voiced, with some suggesting alternative uses for the space. Creative and unique development ideas were encouraged, with calls for features like an RV park, a walkable outdoor market, and family-friendly options. Respondents also questioned the marked "private" status of the sculpture garden, suggesting it should be public, and expressed concerns about short-term rentals, advocating for long-term, affordable housing options. Requests for specific features such as a designated area for dogs, a covered outdoor market, and a walkable outdoor market were also mentioned.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT #3

(Specialized commercial, mixed use, small scale apartments)

Q9. Use the slider to rate how well you think Preliminary Concept #3 meets the needs and character of the community. (1=lowest score, 100=highest score)



Q10. Tell us what you think about Preliminary Concept #3. Please type your answers in the corresponding categories below.

Answer Choices	*Responses*	*Percentage*
What do you like?	280	89%
What do you dislike?	222	71%
Other thoughts?	150	48%
Answered	314	

Responses to the open-ended question "What do you like?" have been categorized into common themes in the following table. These specific aspects were mentioned most frequently and garnered positive feedback from respondents, indicating key strengths of Preliminary Concept #3. The breakdown provides insights into the themes that resonated most positively with the survey participants, with summary explanations provided as bullet points below.

Preliminary Concept #3: Liked Topics	*Topic Frequency*
Mixed Use and Variety	31
• Appreciation for the combination of residential and commercial spaces.	
• Positive remarks about the diverse uses proposed for the site.	
• Positive comments about the balance between residential and commercial uses.	
Restaurant	28
• Support for the idea of a large anchor restaurant with outdoor seating.	
• Desire for an established restaurant group to ensure sustainability.	
• Consistent feedback about the need for more restaurants in the area.	
Housing Solutions	19
• Recognition of the need for apartments in the area.	
• Positive comments about the inclusion of small-scale apartments, especially if affordable and long-term.	
Recreation and Gathering Spaces	18
• Positive feedback on the inclusion of indoor recreation spaces.	
• Enthusiasm for a central gathering area for small events and green spaces.	
• Support for specialized commercial businesses like a climbing gym or trampoline park.	
Community Enrichment	15
• Perception that the concept enhances the community, making it more desirable.	
• Potential to attract young people to the area with apartments and a restaurant.	
Affordable Housing	12
• Recognition that the concept could provide affordable housing solutions.	
• Specific support for deed/lease restrictions to prevent short-term rentals.	
Outdoor Spaces	11
• Positive feedback on the inclusion of outdoor spaces and rooftop aspects.	
• Desire for a pool and other outdoor amenities.	
Year-Round Attraction	10
• Desire for year-round attractions and entertainment, especially for families.	
Parking	8
• Positive comments about ample parking space in the concept.	
Community-Centered Focus	7
• Appreciation for the concept's focus on local residences and businesses.	

Responses to the open-ended question "What do you dislike?" have been categorized into common themes in the following table. These specific aspects were mentioned most frequently and garnered negative feedback from respondents, indicating key weaknesses of Preliminary Concept #3. The breakdown provides insights into the themes that were most negatively perceived by the survey participants, with summary explanations provided as bullet points below.

Preliminary Concept #3: Disliked Topics	*Topic Frequency*
Retail and Restaurant Concerns	25
• Resistance to more apartments, retail spaces, and restaurants.	
• Concerns about the impact on existing downtown businesses and the potential for more competition.	

Preliminary Concept #3: Disliked Topics (cont.)	*Topic Frequency*
Affordable Housing Concerns	19
• Criticism of unclear or insufficient affordable housing options.	
• Concerns about the potential for residential units to become vacation rentals.	
Specific Dislike for Large Restaurant	17
• Dislike for the idea of a sizable restaurant, especially with rooftop access.	
• Concerns about the viability of a large restaurant in the area.	
Indoor Recreation Criticisms	17
• Criticisms of specific indoor recreation elements like trampoline parks, climbing gyms, and dog parks.	
• Doubts about the usefulness or appeal of indoor recreation spaces.	
Concerns about Housing Density	12
• Dislike for the density of apartments and residential units proposed.	
• Concerns about the impact on the small-town feel.	
Concerns about Existing Restaurants and Staffing	10
• Concerns about the potential impact on existing restaurants, especially in terms of competition and staffing challenges.	
• Doubts about the need for more restaurants in the area.	
Green Space and Outdoor Use	10
• Desire for more public green space or outdoor recreational areas.	
• Criticisms of the proposed placement of outdoor areas, such as a rooftop restaurant overlooking the highway.	
Parking Issues	10
• Concerns about inadequate parking or too much asphalt in the proposed development.	
• Specific mention of the need for enclosed parking for apartment buildings.	
Detracts from Downtown	8
• Perception that retail and restaurants in the proposed development would detract from the existing downtown area.	
• Concerns about the impact on the character of Douglas.	
Doubts about Financial Sustainability	7
• Doubts about the financial sustainability of certain elements, such as an anchor restaurant or trampoline park.	
• Concerns about the success of specific businesses in the proposed development.	
Lack of Public Park Space	7
• Dissatisfaction with the absence of significant public green space or park areas in the concept.	
• Desire for more outdoor recreational areas.	
Traffic and Ingress/Egress Issues	7
• Worries about traffic congestion and safety issues related to the proposed development.	
• Specific mention of concerns about ingress/egress points and potential traffic problems.	

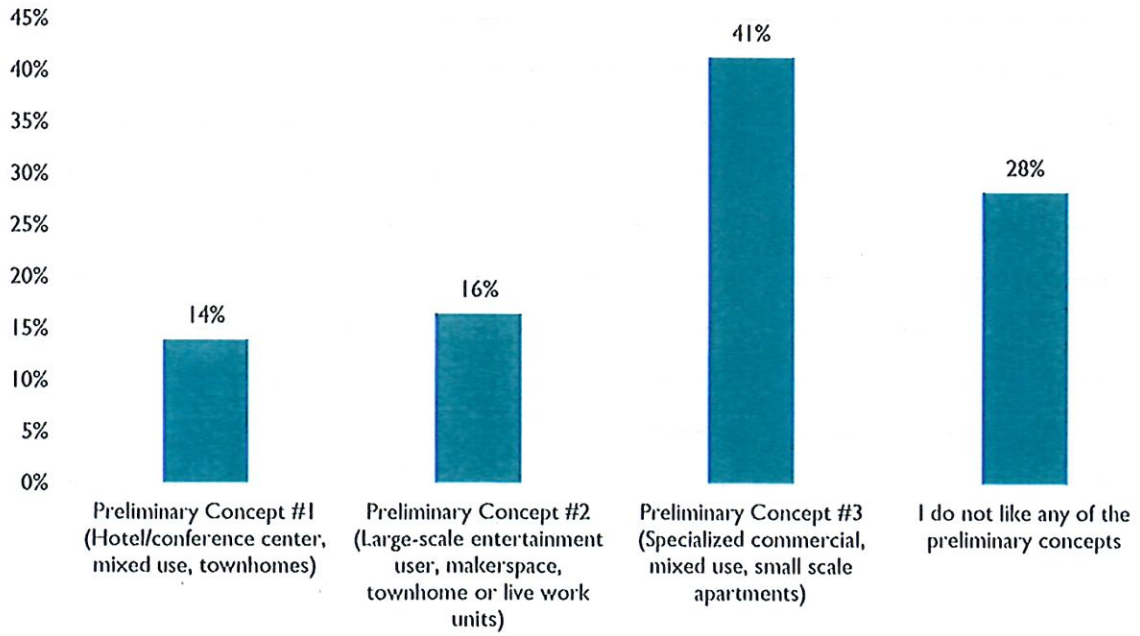
Less frequently mentioned themes in the dislike category included the dislike of the suburban feel in the site layout, lack of direction in the design concept, lack of a community-centric focus (like a community center), lack of public appeal for indoor recreation or an indoor dog park, and concerns about overcrowding/noise.

Preliminary Concept #3: Other Thoughts Summary

Respondents consistently underscored the crucial need for affordable housing, with repeated emphasis on catering to local service workers and expressing concerns about short-term rentals. Parking was another prevalent theme, with numerous mentions of the necessity for adequate parking spaces, along with suggestions for innovative solutions like parking garages to preserve green spaces. Participants expressed concerns about the difficulty of filling commercial spaces and advocated for a focus on residential development over commercial ventures.

There was a notable call for community-oriented amenities, including community centers, recreational facilities, and diverse business concepts such as food truck lots or themed cafes. The desire for green space and outdoor recreational options, along with concerns about the potential overcrowding of the area, were also recurring themes. Participants emphasized the importance of prioritizing the needs of year-round residents and workers, fostering creativity and imagination in design concepts, and ensuring the viability of businesses in the proposed development. Additionally, there were mixed opinions on specific elements, such as dog parks, indoor recreation spaces, and the potential for large restaurants, reflecting diverse preferences within the community. There were considerations for environmental sustainability, including the use of native plants in landscaping. Some participants used this space to acknowledge their favorite concept.

Q11. What is your favorite Preliminary Concept?



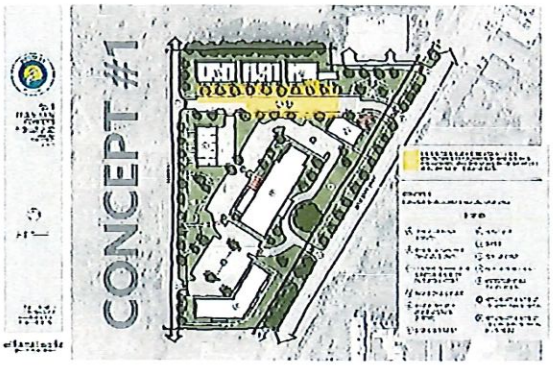
Survey Results Summary

- A majority of the participants reported living in the City of the Village of Douglas or Saugatuck Township, were primarily year-round residents, and largely fell into the age groups of 55-64 or over 65 years of age.

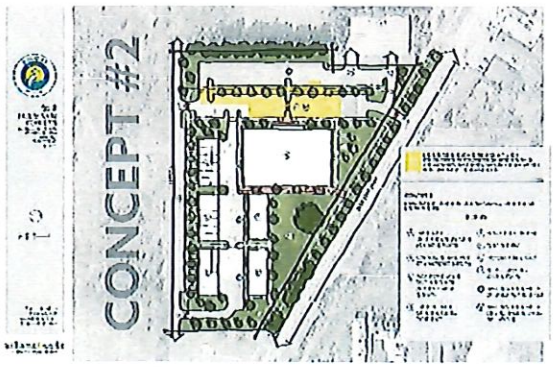
- The following were the top three uses that the participants believed best fit the project site:
  - Places to live (apartments, townhomes, residential above retail, etc.)
  - Places to eat and drink
  - Places to gather

- When asked to rate how well the concepts meet the needs and character of the community, Preliminary Concept #3 secured the highest rating, followed by Concept #2, with Concept #1 receiving the lowest rating. This is consistent with the overall ranking of the concepts when participants were asked what was their favorite concept.

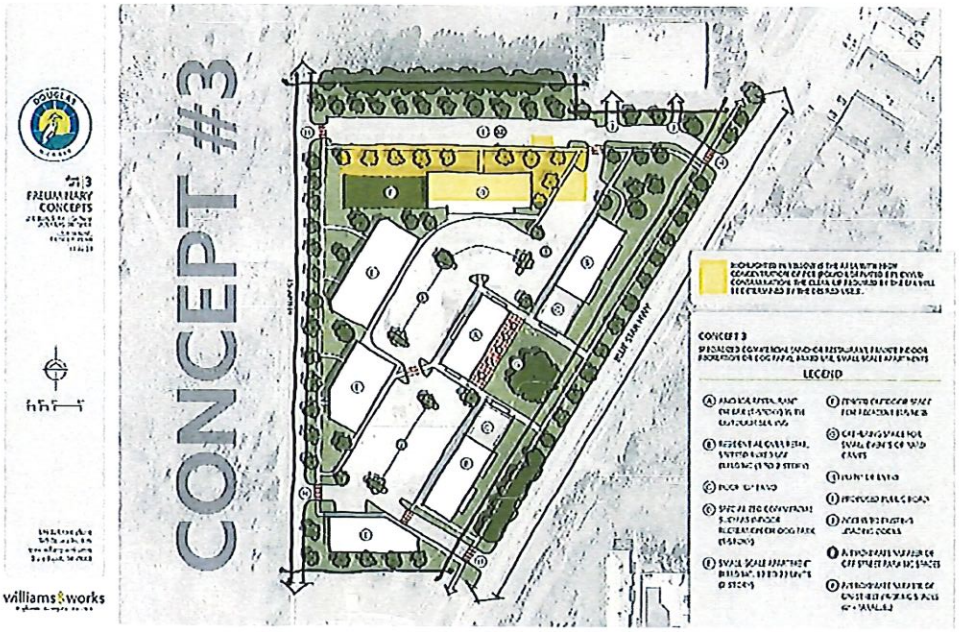
- Preliminary Concept #1 (Hotel/conference center, mixed use, townhomes)
  - Positive aspects mentioned by respondents include the idea of a hotel, conference center, residences, and potential amenities like restaurants and green spaces. On the other hand, negative aspects included concerns about the inclusion of a hotel and its size, doubts about the need for additional lodging, worries about traffic congestion, and a desire for more affordable housing. This concept received more "dislike" comments (n=298) than "like" comments (n=284).



- Preliminary Concept #2 (Large-scale entertainment user, makerspace, townhome or live work units)
  - While some respondents expressed positive aspects of the concept, such as the potential for large-scale entertainment and certain features, there were also notable concerns and dislikes. Common points of contention included doubts about the viability of a movie theater, competition with existing venues, traffic and parking concerns, the need for more affordable housing, and a desire for more community-focused developments. This concept received slightly more "like" comments (n=271) than "dislike" comments (n=262).



- Preliminary Concept # 3 (Specialized commercial, mixed use, small scale apartments)
  - Based on the provided comments, Preliminary Concept #3 received mixed feedback from respondents, although there were more comments indicating their preference for this concept overall. Positive opinions about certain aspects of the concept included the gathering space, rooftop patios, and specific features like an indoor recreation area. Dislikes included the size and inclusion of the anchor restaurant, specialized commercial examples like an indoor dog park or trampoline park, and the overall design feeling too much like a suburban commercial area. Some participants expressed concern over the amount of housing while many respondents appreciated the inclusion of apartments, indicating a potential interest in residential options. This concept received more "like" comments (n=280) than "dislike" comments (n=222), and overall received more "like" comments and fewer "dislike" comments than the two other concepts.



- While Preliminary Concept 3 received the highest favorability vote from participants at 41%, it is worth noting that 28% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with any of the preliminary concepts. Based on the assessment of the comments, several elements of all the concepts missed the mark for many participants, including the general lack of well-defined public space, such as a park or community center, a heavy focus on the commercial potential of the site, the overabundance of pavement versus greenspace, and the feeling that the designs catered to tourists over residents. While differing housing typologies (townhomes, apartment buildings, live/work units, and mixed-use apartments) were provided on all designs, the lack of specified affordable or workforce housing was a big concern among many participants.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The public open house was held on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at the Douglas City Hall from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The open house featured educational components and several interactive stations designed to solicit input from the community through engaging activities. The general purpose of each activity was to prompt the public regarding topics related to the potential redevelopment of the 200 Blue Star Highway site.

The public was tasked with providing feedback regarding future site uses to inform the clean-up process. Attendees were given the opportunity to engage in any of the activities as they pleased and further discuss specific items of personal importance with city officials and the planning consultants. The open house received around 25 to 30 attendees. Results from each of the activities are presented in the following sections, along with conclusions and next steps.

Education

Educational components were provided during the event in the form of intermittent presentations and an informational poster. The presentation provided background about the site, the grant process, the design concepts, and next steps. This intermittent presentation was given twice during the event, once at 6:10 p.m. and again at 7:10 p.m. Additionally, an informational poster was displayed throughout the event that attendees could view at their leisure. The educational poster shared a brief background about the site, clean-up efforts, information about PCBs, and highlights from the site inventory. Following the presentations, participants were encouraged to talk with the environmental and planning consultants to ask questions, learn about the project, share their ideas, and participate in the provided activities.

Use Typologies

One of the stations provided activities addressing specific potential uses for the site. These uses were divided into two areas of focus: Housing and Businesses. Participants were asked to place color coded stickers on the boards to show what type of housing or businesses they supported for the 200 Blue Star Highway site. Participants were given one set of three stickers for each activity board, including one green, one yellow, and one red sticker. They could use up to one of each color, but didn't have to use them all. The stickers represented the following three opinions: I would like to see only this type of housing/business on the property, (2) I would like to see a mix of housing/businesses, including this housing/business type, and (3) I don't want to see this type of housing/business on the property.

Applying a weight factor to the color coded stickers, each housing or business type received a score. Negative scores indicate a stronger preference to exclude that housing or business type. Scores near zero (-0.5 to 0.5) indicate a more neutral stance on the inclusion of that housing or business type or a preference for a mix that would include that typology. A positive score indicates a stronger preference to include that housing or business type.

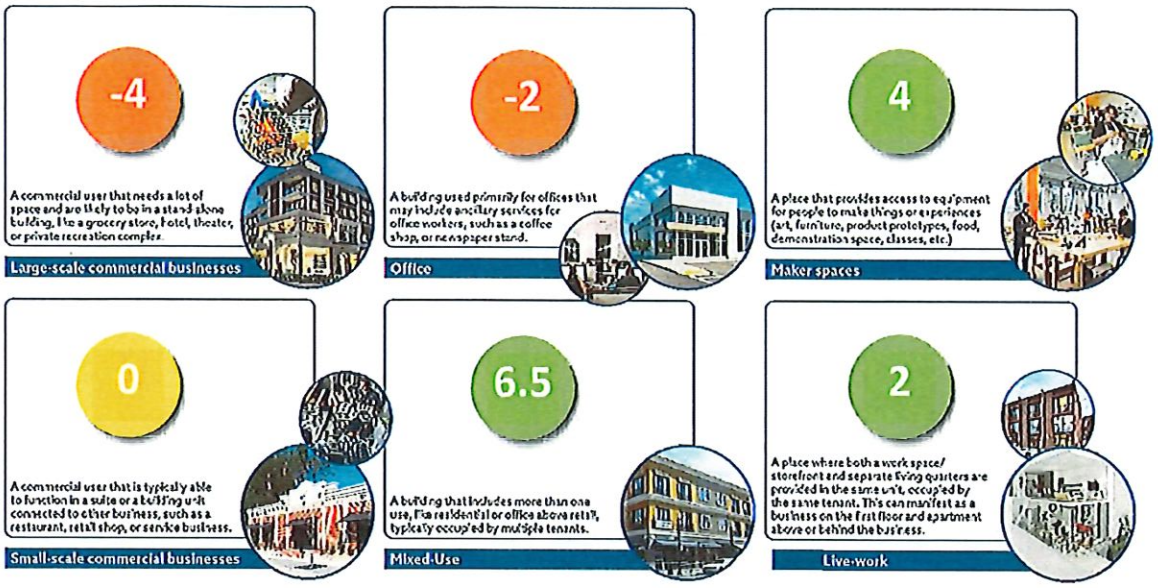
Housing

Since preliminary observation of the ongoing community survey signified a substantial interest in housing, specifically affordable housing, varying housing typologies were presented during the open house to try and evaluate what types of housing would be most well received. The weighted averages for the housing types evaluated are illustrated in the graphic below. Senior/group housing and mixed-use or live-work type housing had the highest score. Rowhouses and low-rise apartments had all three types of coded stickers represented, providing a more neutral overall score. Cottage court and townhomes received a definitive negative score and should not be considered for inclusion in the future redevelopment of the site.

Business

Different types of businesses require differing building and site needs, such as square footage, points of access, and parking. To better assess what business users should be included in future developments, multiple business types were presented for evaluation.

The weighted averages for the business types evaluated are illustrated in the graphic below. Mixed-use, maker spaces, and live-work business types had the highest score. Small-scale commercial businesses received a neutral score. Large-scale commercial and office business types averaged a negative score and should not be considered for inclusion in the future redevelopment of the site.



Concept Evaluation

The three preliminary conceptual designs were printed on large posters and discussed with participants during the event. Common conversation topics focused around questions of the viability of the commercial businesses, specifically as it related to the idea of a movie theater or an overabundance of commercial space, the desire for more community benefits, like parks, community centers outdoor movies, food trucks, winter activation (ice skating and fire pits), and the integration of the Blue Star Highway bike trail into the site.

Participants noted that the reasoning for the exclusion of public facilities, like parks or community centers, was unclear. Many understood the concepts better after discussing the need for uses with taxable values to help establish a brownfield TIF district that could be used for future site clean-up. As this project moves forward, this messaging needs to be clear and consistent when discussing the site cleanup and redevelopment.

Evaluation cards were available for those who wanted to provide written feedback. Only nine evaluation cards were completed, as about half (anecdotally) of the participants who spoke with the planning consultants noted that they completed the online survey prior to the open house. The evaluation cards asked attendees to select their favorite concept and provide written feedback on how this concept could be further improved. Concept #3 received the highest number of votes by a small margin, with Concept #1, Concept #2, and dislike for any of the concepts tying for second place.

Below are the comments expressing ways to improve the concepts:

- I'd like to see the development focused on the needs of the community, rather than commercial potential. With an aging population, having an indoor fitness/recreation center would provide important benefits that the community doesn't have cozy access to (including facilities such as a swimming pool).
- Hotel will bring more year round economic benefit to the city. Would love a roof top feature. Would love an open air amphitheater w/ music or festival opportunity & ice rink or county skiing in winter.
- Need to have consideration for affordable housing (apartments) for service related employees w/ the incorporation of outdoor playscape for children. Integrate the Blue Star bike trail into property. Perhaps add at simple tool station for bike repair. Foster ad-hoc activities such as an outdoor performance space that could be used for impromptu music, movies, dance, etc.
- Affordable housing - tiny homes/apartments or senior living with lots of open spaces. Like recreation use in concept #3. What about mixed use like outdoor movies in summer / ice skating area in winter? All walkable spaces through out property.
- Would like to see housing that accommodates seniors. Would love to see G [the gathering space] include a fire pit like in Holland.
- Consider outdoor space use in winter: fireplace/pit? Abundant electrical outlets for holiday lights. Music venue - draw people from outside the immediate area?
- What about a Douglas recreational center: indoor paddle ball courts, basketball, kids pool. No Conference Center.
- I would like to see facilities that offer physical fitness options for the community and also open to tourist to take advantage of - fitness center/gym, also with indoor pool. The area has a vibrant aging population with relatively limited opportunities for indoor fitness near. Thanks for this opportunity to give feedback!

The backside of the evaluation card provided space for additional written comments. One participant indicated a preference for housing to encourage long-term rentals, concern about the local water/sewer system having the capacity to support the development, and a request to provide attention to accessibility, aging in place, and parking availability.

NEXT STEPS

The findings of this report will be used to inform the creation of a new conceptual site design. This concept will be shared during a joint meeting of the City Council and Brownfield Authority for review and comment. Revisions will be made to the concept, as needed. The final design will be used to inform clean-up efforts and to facilitate dialog between the City and the development community.

Community Engagement Report

200 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY

DRAFT

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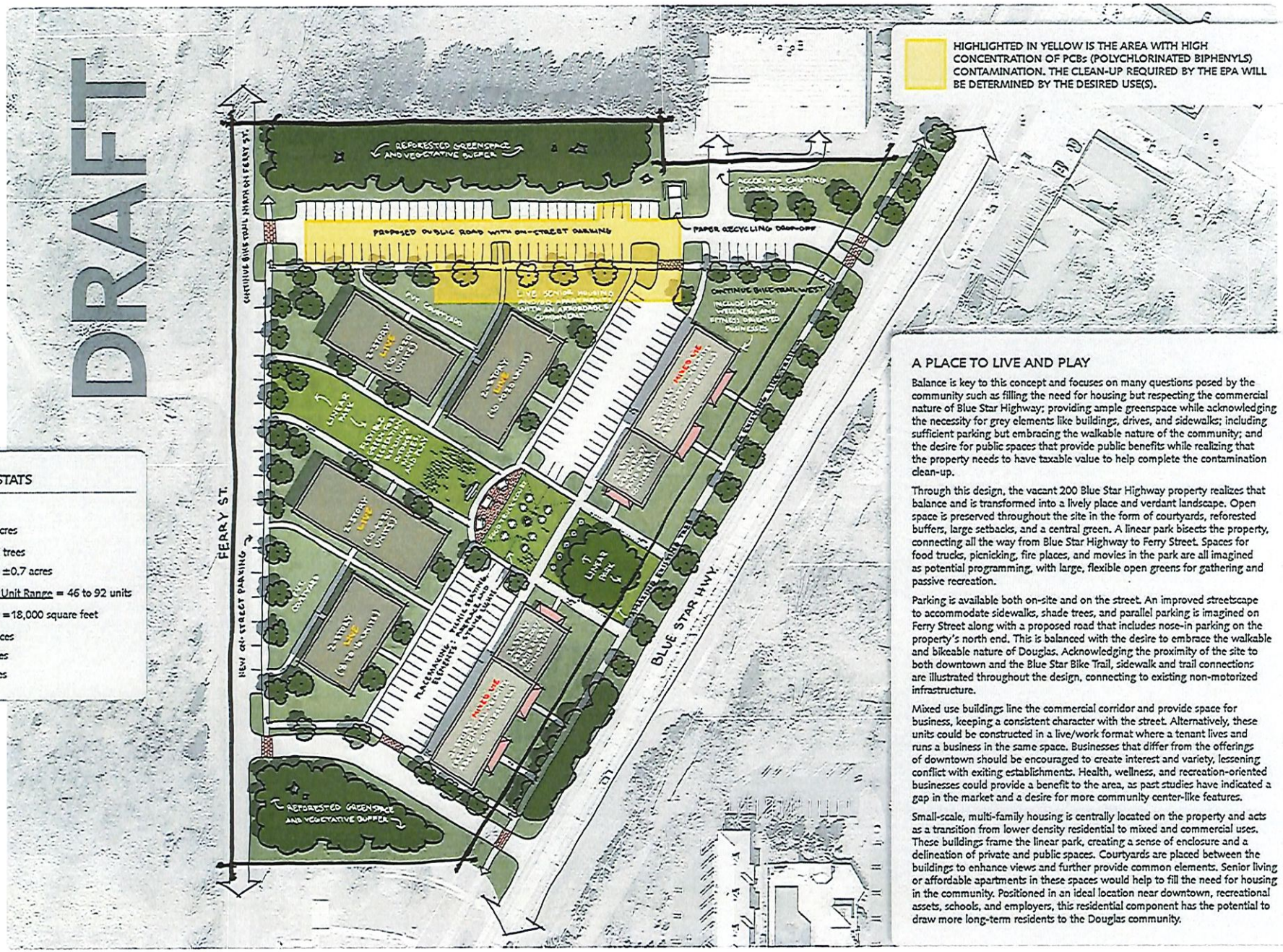
REVISED CONCEPT

200 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
DOUGLAS, MI 49406

ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLAN

01.12.24



HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW IS THE AREA WITH HIGH CONCENTRATION OF PCBs (POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS) CONTAMINATION. THE CLEAN-UP REQUIRED BY THE EPA WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE DESIRED USE(S).

QUICK CONCEPT STATS

Parcel Size = 7.2 acres

Linear Park Size = 0.5 acres

Proposed Trees = +142 trees

- Reforested Buffers = ±0.7 acres

Potential Total Dwelling Unit Range = 46 to 92 units

Total Commercial Space =18,000 square feet

Total Parking = 184 spaces

- Off-street = 88 spaces
- On-street = 96 spaces

A PLACE TO LIVE AND PLAY

Balance is key to this concept and focuses on many questions posed by the community such as filling the need for housing but respecting the commercial nature of Blue Star Highway; providing ample greenspace while acknowledging the necessity for grey elements like buildings, drives, and sidewalks; including sufficient parking but embracing the walkable nature of the community; and the desire for public spaces that provide public benefits while realizing that the property needs to have taxable value to help complete the contamination clean-up.

Through this design, the vacant 200 Blue Star Highway property realizes that balance and is transformed into a lively place and verdant landscape. Open space is preserved throughout the site in the form of courtyards, reforested buffers, large setbacks, and a central green. A linear park bisects the property, connecting all the way from Blue Star Highway to Ferry Street. Spaces for food trucks, picnicking, fire places, and movies in the park are all imagined as potential programming, with large, flexible open greens for gathering and passive recreation.

Parking is available both on-site and on the street. An improved streetscape to accommodate sidewalks, shade trees, and parallel parking is imagined on Ferry Street along with a proposed road that includes nose-in parking on the property's north end. This is balanced with the desire to embrace the walkable and bikeable nature of Douglas. Acknowledging the proximity of the site to both downtown and the Blue Star Bike Trail, sidewalk and trail connections are illustrated throughout the design, connecting to existing non-motorized infrastructure.

Mixed use buildings line the commercial corridor and provide space for business, keeping a consistent character with the street. Alternatively, these units could be constructed in a live/work format where a tenant lives and runs a business in the same space. Businesses that differ from the offerings of downtown should be encouraged to create interest and variety, lessening conflict with exiting establishments. Health, wellness, and recreation-oriented businesses could provide a benefit to the area, as past studies have indicated a gap in the market and a desire for more community center-like features.

Small-scale, multi-family housing is centrally located on the property and acts as a transition from lower density residential to mixed and commercial uses. These buildings frame the linear park, creating a sense of enclosure and a delineation of private and public spaces. Courtyards are placed between the buildings to enhance views and further provide common elements. Senior living or affordable apartments in these spaces would help to fill the need for housing in the community. Positioned in an ideal location near downtown, recreational assets, schools, and employers, this residential component has the potential to draw more long-term residents to the Douglas community.

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