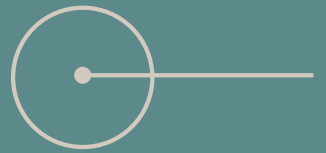




# HISTORIC COMMUNITY PLAN IDLEWILD, MICHIGAN



## FINAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2023



# IDLEWILD

## HISTORIC COMMUNITY PLAN

Prepared in 2022 – 2023 for  
**Idlewild, Yates Township, Michigan &  
The Right Place, Inc.**

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With Support from  
**The Fremont Area Community Foundation  
The Right Place, Inc.**

**MSU Extension**

**(Cover)**

Historic postcard of Williams Island from an aerial view, c. 1922 (Source: <https://flic.kr/p/b3Z9RD>); Historic photograph of vacationers at the Idlewild Club House (Source: Robert Abbott / Getty Images.)

## Acknowledgments

This historic community planning process and the emerging directions to advance local stewardship would not have been possible without the following stakeholders:

- The local work group members and their continued guidance and involvement throughout the process.
- The Idlewild community who participated in the summer outreach -- both online and in-person -- and provided their feedback.
- The various Idlewild champions and connectors who helped to get the word out, shared their expert insights, and contributed their energy and personal collections.

We are grateful for you.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seasonal Idlewild resident from Chicago who grew up in the area

"I remember being with my grandfather in Idlewild. As I got older, I remember bringing my sons to Idlewild. Now I enjoy sharing Idlewild with my grandchildren. I'm not alone I share the same experience with others in my family."

Idlewild was known nationally as a preeminent African American lake resort and entertainment community after its development took off in the Jim Crow era (1920s to the 1960s). After the end of racial accommodation restrictions in 1964, its historic significance was recognized in 1979 when it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its historic district boundaries were later expanded in 2010 to encompass a greater extent of the community and its spaces.

In 2022, the Fremont Area Community Foundation provided a grant through The Right Place, Inc., to support a historic community planning initiative for the two nearby and related resorts of Woodland Park and Idlewild.

Between October 2022 and September 2023, the consulting team together with the Idlewild Workgroup, Julie Burrell and Jodi Nichols (The Right Place, Inc.), and Ryan Coffey (MSU Extension), undertook an inclusive and comprehensive approach to:

- i. gather community feedback;
- ii. identify potential properties for additional historic markers;
- iii. identify areas for preservation, adaptive reuse, and potential future development in keeping with the historic and local character of Idlewild;
- iv. synthesize and recommend available tools, resources, and strategies which could support Idlewild's historic community planning and implementation efforts going forward.

This report is a culmination of the collaborative process. The goals are to:

- Highlight the stories, beauty, distinctiveness, and significance of Woodland Park and Idlewild as historic African American places.
- Stimulate revitalization and foster interest in the two communities by developing a preservation-based vision for equitable growth that respects the local histories.
- Foster broader participation and build momentum towards investing in and restoring more assets, while remaining accessible to diverse communities.

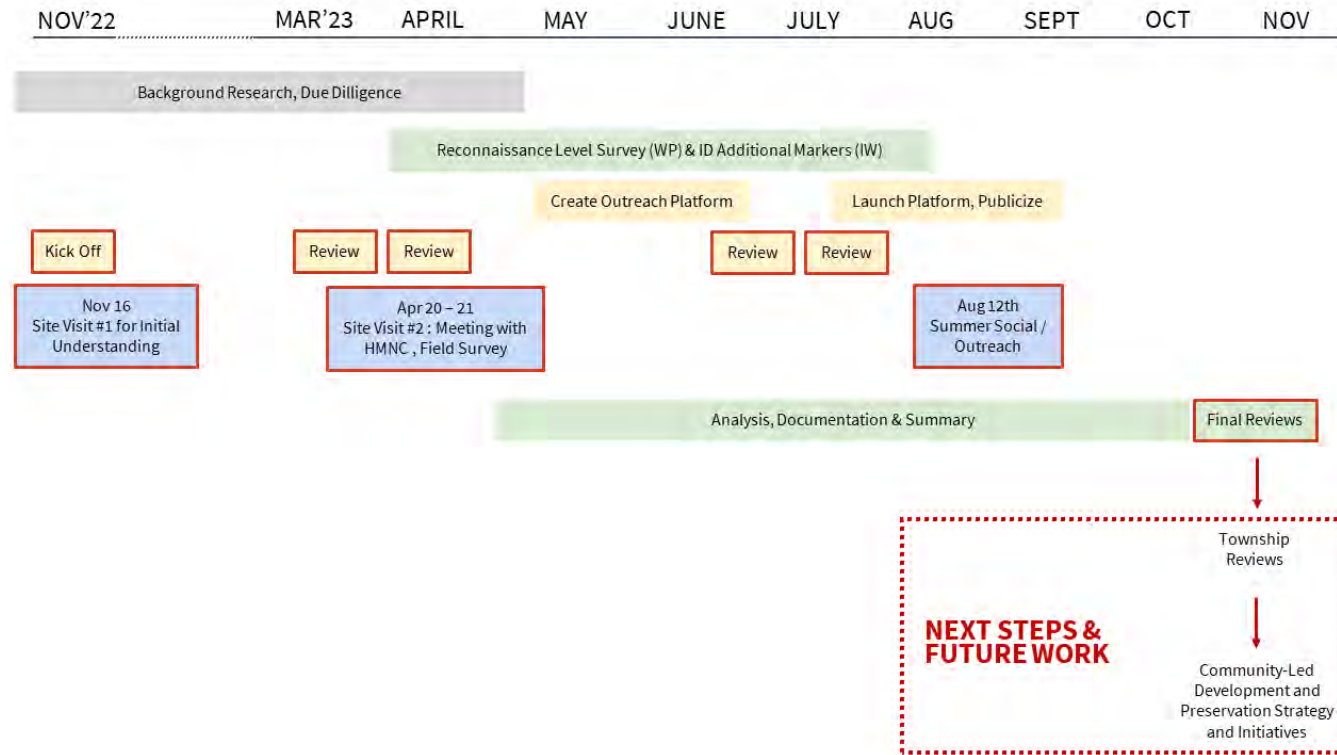
The efforts of this process also builds upon earlier and concurrent planning initiatives, including the Idlewild CED Readiness Initiatives (2006), the Idlewild Economic Development Action Strategy (2008), Idlewild Cultural Resource Management Plan (2009), Yates Township Master Plan (2010), Flamingo Club Feasibility Study (2011), the Yates Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2012), and the Yates Township Strategic Plan (2022).

Today, Idlewild continues to maintain a high level of historic significance and physical integrity, and its essence as an early resort community is palpable in the woodlands and lake settings of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. It has a high **potential to be considered as a National Historic Landmark** and is energized by various interest groups in stewarding the tangible and intangible heritage of Idlewild.

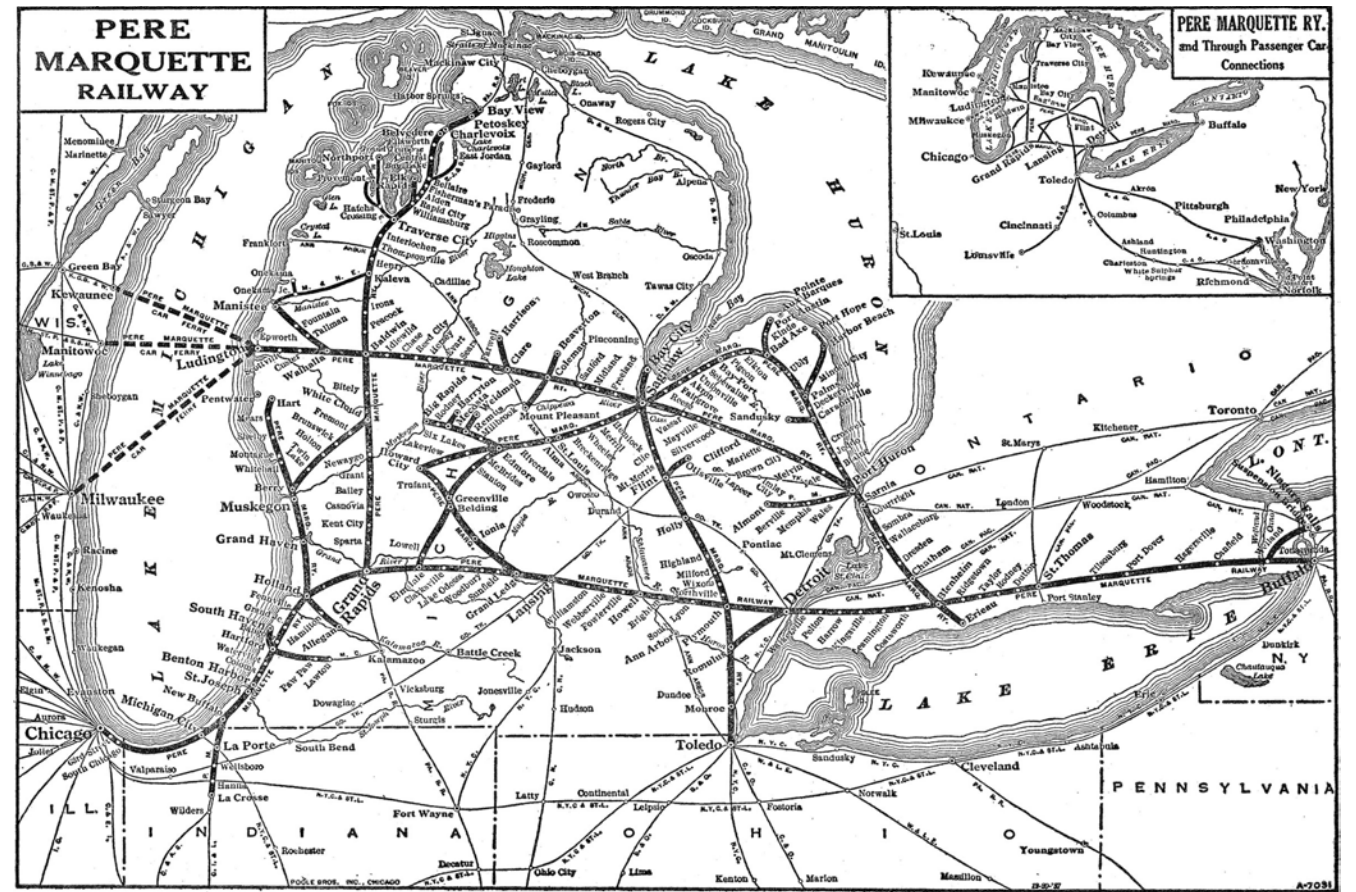
**A coordinated, well-paced endeavor between publicly supported initiatives and privately pursued activities will be vital in realizing the near-term regeneration within a coherent, longer-term vision for Idlewild.** More importantly, it is central to ensuring that future generations can experience a place which tells a fuller history of America.



# PREPARATIONS & PROCESS



(Above)  
Overall process and timeline for the Historic Community Planning initiatives in Woodland Park & Idlewild.



(Above)  
1937 Map of the Pere Marquette Railway showing Idlewild and Bitley (Woodland Park) (Source: <http://www.american-rails.com/pm.html>)

A collection of vintage advertisements and a business directory from the Idlewild Chamber of Commerce. The directory lists various services including:

- Hotels:** Circle Inn Motel, Letman's Variety 5 & 10.
- Restaurants:** Jagger's Restaurant, Hyde Park Villa.
- Shops:** Letman's Variety 5 & 10, Owen's & Wilson Guest House.
- Services:** Peterson's Standard Service (tire and battery), Paul Hoskins (gravel and fill dirt), Lake-Osceola State Bank.
- Recreation:** Children's Recreation (skating, baseball, beach).

(Above)  
Business directory and advertisements from the Idlewild Chamber of Commerce showing the vibrant commercial and resort life at Idlewild (Courtesy of Bill Owsley).

1

C H A P T E R O N E

**COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
& FUTURE  
DIRECTIONS**

*IDLEWILD LAKE, IDLEWILD, MICH., 2-11-2014*





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### OVERVIEW

As part of the historic community planning process, a multi-prong engagement approach was developed to reach out to the Idlewild community members. This included:

- 2 in-person site visits in November 2022 and April 2023 for meetings and field surveys with the Work Group to better understand the people and the place;
- 3 online Zoom meetings with the Work Group to prepare for the Summer 2023 engagement efforts;
- 1 dedicated project website to share about the history of Idlewild, why the community is embarking on this historic community planning effort, and ways in which residents (year-round and seasonal) and visitors can provide their feedback;
- 1 online community questionnaire shared via the website;
- 1 in-person summer pop-up outreach at the Idlewild Week Community Pop-Up event on August 12, 2023. The event was publicized through word-of-mouth by the Work Group, the community's Facebook group, local press releases, and event posters in prominent locations such as the Senior Center and the Yates Township Hall.

The purpose of the outreach was to understand the historic preservation values, aspirations, and interests of the Idlewild's residents, visitors, and friends. Community feedback enabled the Work Group to:

- (i) Identify areas for preservation, adaptive reuse, and potential future development in keeping with the historic, local, and landscape character of Idlewild; and
- (ii) Set the table for future stewardship, including ways to honor the community's values, stories, and its natural and historic resources.

- A total of 45 questionnaire responses were completed (37 online and 8 paper responses).
- Approximately 40+ community members and neighbors participated at the Williams Island Community Pop-Up event. There, community members were asked to provide their feedback on (i) potential sites for additional historical markers; (ii) potential areas for preservation and re-use; (iii) three words to describe their aspired future for Idlewild.
- Vendors, local groups, and lively music by the Flamingo and near the public beach created a festive atmosphere at the Community Pop-Up event. Other booths included a pop-up exhibit on Idlewild's history, Idlewild memorabilia, the Walker Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnic Relations from the Western Michigan University, and local entrepreneurs.

*(Previous spread)*  
Historic postcard showing the vibrant Idlewild lake life and vacationers amidst the Manistee National Forest setting. (Source: Detroit Public Library Digital Collections.)

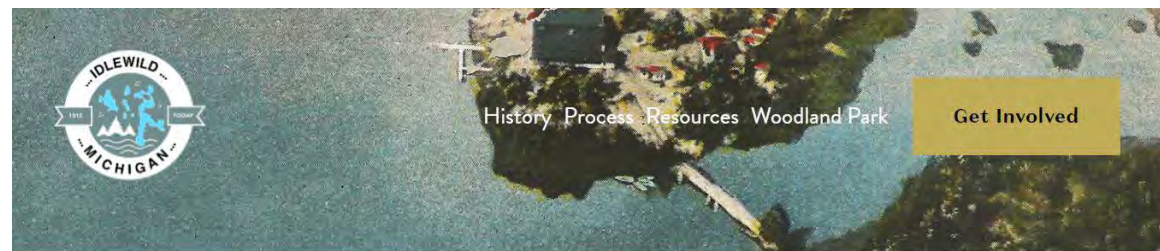
*(Opposite page)*  
Community outreach at Williams Island with the Pop-Up Events on Aug 12, 2023



- A booth was set up to interface with residents and visitors, distribute and collect questionnaires, and elicit feedback on mapping. This area featured a table and several easels to display visual materials. Fliers and swag were also distributed to participants.
- Work group members took turns engaging community members and visitors. The location on Williams Island provided a prominent, high-traffic public space for the interested community to stop and share their thoughts.

Idlewild has year-round residents and is most active in the summer. The opportunity to meet the residents and visitors where they are in the summer enabled a broader awareness. At the same time, because of the various interest groups and many events that were spread across the summer and even in the Idlewild week itself, the turnout could have been more robust.

Nonetheless, there was a significant engagement of local residents, leaders, and property owners with key interests in preservation and revitalization. These included the Tabernacle AME Church, the Idlewild African American Chamber of Commerce, the Mid-Michigan Idlewilders, Mortons' Motel, Casa Blanca, McKnight Convalescent Home, Lindsey's Park, Meeks Park, Former Idlewild Public School & Library, the Parks & Recreation Commission Chair, Experience Idlewild, Idlewild Arts & Entertainment, C40-Leasing, Birch Haven Sorority, WMU's Walker Institute of Race & Ethnic Relations, Betty Foote, and Dr. Ronald Stephens.



Idlewild, Michigan



**“A national meeting place where the leading spirits from the various sections of the Country may gather and discuss problems of national and race importance... And Idlewild being located as it is in the heart of the great resort sections of Michigan**

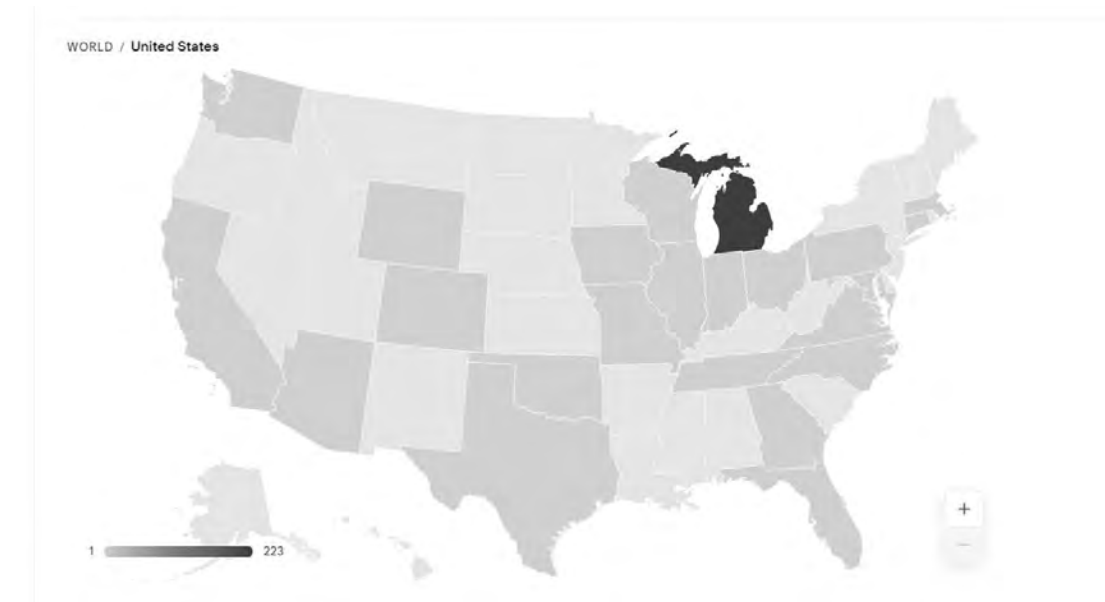
**Our History**

(Above) Idlewild Historic Community Planning project website for various outreach and to build broader awareness.

# OUTREACH OUTCOMES

Summer Outreach Window: July 24 - September 8, 2023

## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



## LOCAL ENGAGEMENT



# QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

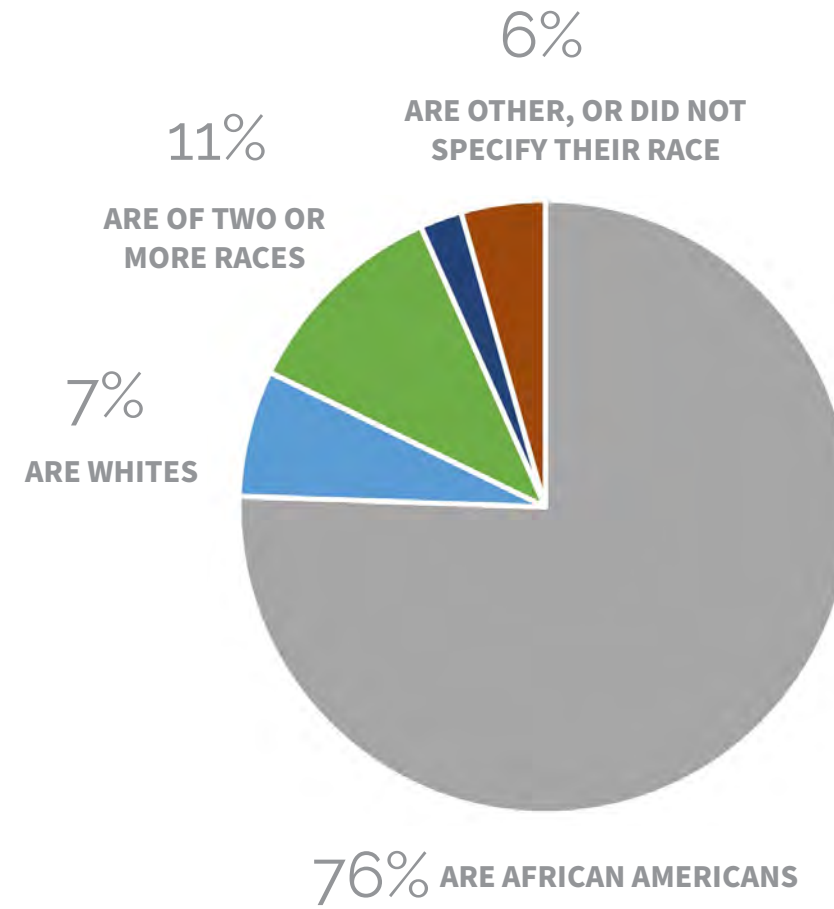
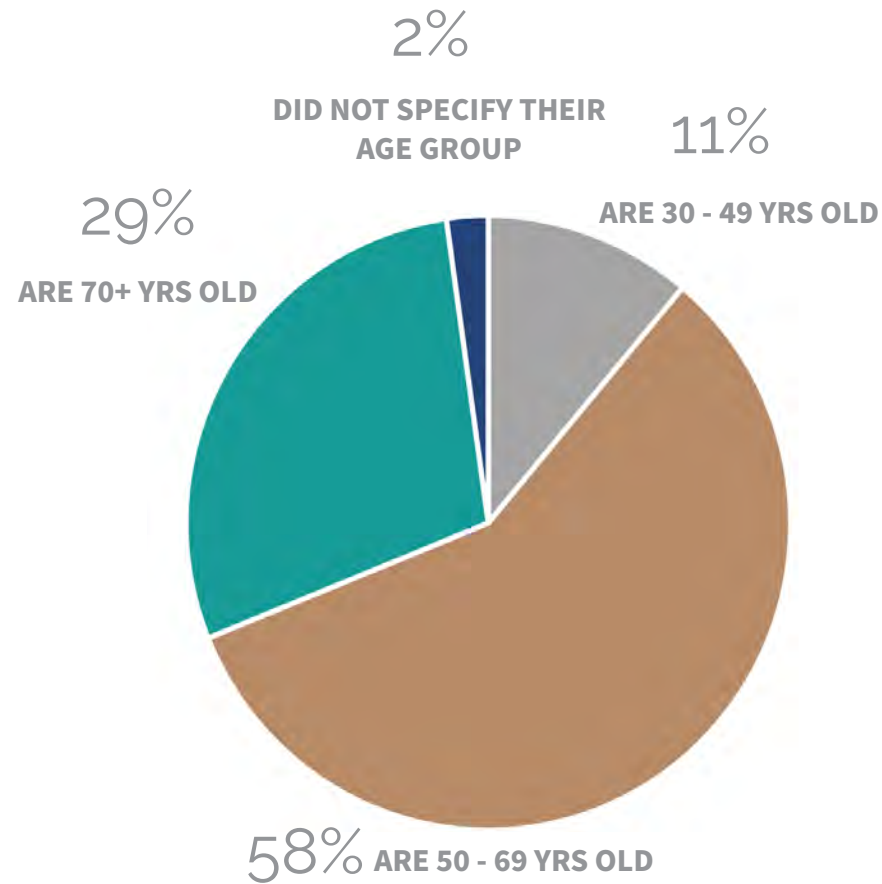
Summer Outreach Window: July 24 - September 8, 2023

**73%** KNEW OF IDLEWILD THROUGH FAMILIAL / PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

**80%** ARE REGULAR RESIDENTS / VISITORS

**73%** LIVED IN / VISITED IDLEWILD FOR > 20 YEARS

**38%** GREW UP IN THE AREA / VISITED AS A YOUNG CHILD



*\*\* Note: While Idlewild is often referred to as an African-American resort and a historically Black community, it was and continues to be a place with a predominant African-American population that was open to other races, including whites, and households and individuals of more than one race.*



# Community Planning Effort Launched For Woodland Park, Idlewild

A community planning initiative is getting underway for Woodland Park and Idlewild, two historic African American resorts that continue to serve as retreats for residents, and year-round vacationers.

With help from the Fremont Area Community Foundation, The Right Place, and MSU Extension, a small community workgroup and third-party consultants (Broad Studio and HYK Consulting) are starting on a historic community planning initiative for Woodland Park and Idlewild.

Goals of the process include highlighting the stories, beauty, distinctiveness, and significance of Woodland Park and Idlewild as historic African American resort communities; stimulate revitalization and interest in both communities, by developing a preservation-based vision for equitable growth, that respects the local histories; and promote broader participation and build momentum towards investing in and restoring more assets, while remaining accessible to diverse communities.

All community residents, neighbors, visitors, and friends are welcome to visit

and share their thoughts anytime during the outreach events.

Online questionnaires are also available until August 31, to gather community feedback at the websites built for the project, at [www.woodlandparkmi.org](http://www.woodlandparkmi.org), and [www.idlewild-michigan.org](http://www.idlewild-michigan.org).

The main work in Woodland Park has focused on surveying and documenting key sites, structures, and landscape elements of historical significance. This is intended to support an application for Woodland Park to be considered as a historic place for preservation.

"This project is not just about preserving our rich history, it is also about maintaining and building on the dream of Woodland Park's extraordinary and insightful founders. Our permanent and seasonal residents, as well as our visitors, are encouraged to share in this exciting endeavor as we move forward," noted Ziyadah Shakir and Debbie Jones, members of the Woodland Park work group.

In Idlewild, the work has included the identification of potential properties for additional historical markers, areas for potential preservation and reuse/revitalization, and ways in which the historic

and natural character of the community can continue to be protected.

Idlewild Work Group members CJ Grier and Larry Lewis reflected: "Idlewild was and is a place like no other. It is home to many for many different reasons. We encourage those who love Idlewild and want to be part of its future to take the short online survey, or to connect with us at Williams Island on August 12."

### About Woodland Park and Idlewild

Woodland Park is a historic African American resort, in northwest Newaygo County, just west of the M-37 and 11 Mile Avenue intersection, north of Brohman. Founded in 1921, the community offered a place of rest and recreation, and had

close interactions with Idlewild during the era of Jim Crow segregation.

Known as the "Black Eden", Idlewild is located just east of Baldwin, in Lake County, Michigan. Established earlier in 1912, this premier African American resort community hosted a vibrant mix of black intellectuals, religious and political leaders, entrepreneurs, and entertainers. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a nationally significant historic site.

Woodland Park and Idlewild still serve as retreats for residents and year-round vacationers. Both communities remain committed to preserving their histories, while supporting their current and future potential.

**BENTON HARBOR RIVER FEST**  
 AUGUST 4TH: MICHAEL BROCK  
 AUGUST 5TH: ANGELA WINBUSH  
 AUGUST 6TH: KEVION MORSE  
 LIVE PERFORMANCE BY ANGELA WINBUSH  
 AUGUST 4TH 5TH AND 6TH | 4PM - 10PM  
 CHARLES YARBROUGH PARK  
 BENTON SPIRIT NEWSPAPER CELEBRATES 21 YEARS SERVING THE COMMUNITY!

**HISTORIC COMMUNITY PLANNING SUMMER OUTREACH**  
 Join us at the Woodland Park Founders' Day Social! Learn more about the process as we connect with family, friends, and new visitors.  
 12 AUG 2023 (SAT) 11AM - 4PM  
 KELSONIA INN  
 www.woodlandparkmi.org

- Most Popular**
1. County and Township coordinate on ORV park
  2. SHERIFF'S CORNER: Clarifying laws on shooting firearms
  3. Baldwin's football team has ended season
  4. SHERIFF'S CORNER: Addressing Budget Questions and Grant
  5. Motorcycle rider strikes deer, transported to hospital Wednesday
  6. SHERIFF'S CORNER: Reviewing laws

## NEWS Woodland Park and Idlewild launches historic community preservation project

Seek community engagement during Aug. 12 events

Cathie Crew, Staff writer  
Aug. 10, 2023



1 of 3  
Williams Island in Idlewild in Lake County, is one of many historically significant sites the Community Work Group initiative hopes to preserve and revitalize.  
Photo courtesy of Idlewild Historical Society

LAKE, NEWAYGO COUNTIES — A small community workgroup, along with third-party consultants Broad Studio and HYK Consulting, are embarking on a historic community planning initiative for Idlewild in Lake County and Woodland Park in Newaygo County, according to a news release from The Right Place, Inc. and the Lake County Economic Development Alliance.

(Above & Left) News media coverage on the Idlewild & Woodland Park Summer Outreach by the *Benton-Michiana Spirit* and *The Lake County Star*



## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK & KEY DIRECTIONS

### PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES

An overwhelming majority of respondents believe that preservation of natural and historic resources in Idlewild is a worthwhile goal.

- The **priority objectives reflect a clear coalescence around the African-American heritage and identity** as a lens to protect and educate about Idlewild's historic significance. As a community with multigenerational families and friends, there is a strong sense of enabling local stewardship. This could have been shaped by a rootedness to the culture, an awareness of relational dynamics, and a desire to have a direct impact on the local economy, employment, and community.

Other objectives and suggestions shared by respondents include:

- Providing **broadband internet access**;
- Involving **the Idlewild African-American Chamber of Commerce** in the historic preservation and business activities;
- Exploring **legal mechanisms** to ensure that the land is "not purchased just to flip for profit", and to keep the "historically Black areas" within long-term ownership structures.

### PRESERVATION ELEMENTS

The interests in preservation elements reflect the blend of the natural and built environment which distinguishes Idlewild's resort community character. The **centrality of Williams' Island as a place of identity, community, entertainment, and recreation provides an opportunity to focus near-term economic development and historic preservation/reuse efforts within a tractable area.** This builds on the public stewardship of Idlewild Beach and encourages private / philanthropic development support for the Flamingo Club. More importantly, an early, successful revitalization of Williams Island can catalyze additional entrepreneurial interests in the Red Rooster, Idlewild African-American Chamber of Commerce, and the Idlewild Party Store in close proximity to this community centerpiece.

Besides Williams' Island and the Flamingo Club, the **Hotel Casablanca, the Idlewild Library / Former Yates Township Hall, and the Robert Riffe Youth Center** were identified as priority properties for historic rehabilitation and reuse.

# 5 TOP OBJECTIVES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

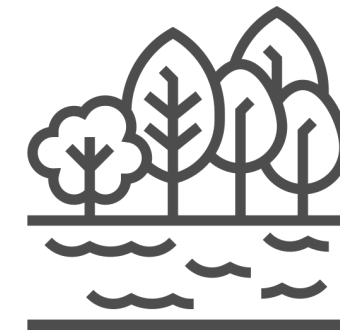
- **Promote the African-American history and culture.**
- **Promote and educate residents and visitors on the history of Idlewild.**
- **Establish and indicate historic buildings, sites, and districts, including key landscape features, as visitor destinations.**
- **Protect and maintain historic buildings and areas within Idlewild.**
- **Support locally-owned / operated businesses and development.**

## KEY ELEMENTS TO PRESERVE



### BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

(Historic buildings / structures of any type and style)



### LAKES

(Woodland Lake, East Lake, West Lake)



### WILLIAMS ISLAND



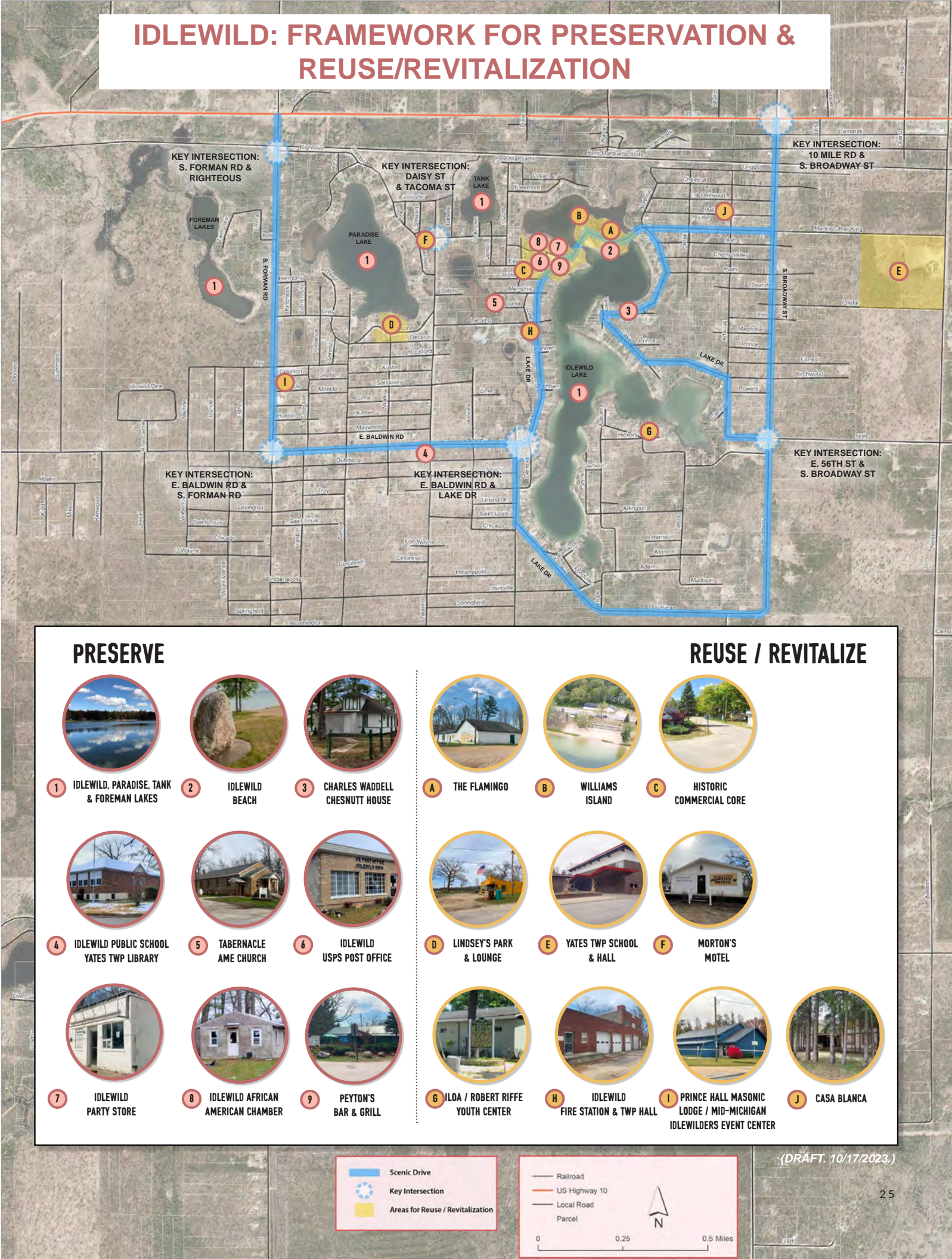
# IDLEWILD: FRAMEWORK FOR PRESERVATION & REUSE/REVITALIZATION

The Idlewild Work Group first identified potential areas for preservation and revitalization through a mapping exercise facilitated by the consulting team. Key terms and definitions for differentiating these potential areas and guiding the exercise are listed below:

	PRESERVE	REVITALIZE	DEVELOP
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b> To keep a building, structure, or site/environment from destruction and to see to it that the object is not irredeemably altered or changed.  Changes to the original are often closely guided by the Secretary of Interior's Standards, especially when local district regulations are operative, or when eligibility for programs such as the National Register of Historic Places and/or Historic Tax Credits (HCTs) should be maintained.	To maintain and steward the physical attributes and distinctive character of a place, while also permitting a range of sensitive adaptations for contemporary life, and permitting parameters to be tailored to the needs of the place.  A balanced mix of conservation, regeneration, and innovation.	To build or create a new building, structure, or landscape.  Former structures and features, including landscapes, can be demolished.
	<b>HISTORIC INTEGRITY &amp; CHARACTER</b> Maintain historic integrity and character.  Strict requirements from the Office of the Secretary of the Interior.	Additions, repairs, and any new builds / landscapes honor historic integrity and character.	Does not necessarily have to maintain historic integrity and character.
*These terms reside on a spectrum, and often projects can fall between these clean definitions.			

A draft map of these areas and connections, including scenic routes / drives, were then shared with the community for feedback via the Community Pop-Up Engagement Event at Williams Island and the online questionnaire.

The map on the next page shows the preservation and revitalization framework based on areas identified by the Idlewild community. These are consistent with the three top elements which emerged from the questionnaire: (including lakes and intersections), sites and structures, and key scenic routes which are marked in blue.



<b>PRESERVE</b>			<b>REUSE / REVITALIZE</b>		
1		IDLEWILD, PARADISE, TANK & FOREMAN LAKES	A		THE FLAMINGO
2		IDLEWILD BEACH	B		WILLIAMS ISLAND
3		CHARLES WADDELL CHESNUTT HOUSE	C		HISTORIC COMMERCIAL CORE
4		IDLEWILD PUBLIC SCHOOL YATES TWP LIBRARY	D		LINDSEY'S PARK & LOUNGE
5		TABERNACLE AME CHURCH	E		YATES TWP SCHOOL & HALL
6		IDLEWILD USPS POST OFFICE	F		MORTON'S MOTEL
7		IDLEWILD PARTY STORE	G		ILOA / ROBERT RIFFE YOUTH CENTER
8		IDLEWILD AFRICAN AMERICAN CHAMBER	H		IDLEWILD FIRE STATION & TWP HALL
9		PEYTON'S BAR & GRILL	I		PRINCE HALL MASONIC LODGE / MID-MICHIGAN IDLEWILDERS EVENT CENTER
			J		CASA BLANCA

- Scenic Drive
- Key Intersection
- Areas for Reuse / Revitalization

- Railroad
- US Highway 10
- Local Road
- Parcel

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

(DRAFT, 10/17/2023.)



The key intersections reinforce the historic significance of the scenic drives, community gateways, and gathering places. The "Idlewild" stone marker and gateway sign at 10 Mile Rd and E. Broadway Street was a result of Gov. Jennifer Granholm's Idlewild Michigan Transformation Initiative from 2007 to 2009. **Future efforts could build on this notable wayfinding and identity defining element, and extend it through the scenic routes, more highly-trafficked arteries, and other major intersections as identified on the map. Key routes/arteries include:**

- E. Broadway Street
- Lake Drive
- M. L. K. Drive
- S. Forman Road
- E. Baldwin Road

**Major areas for reuse/revitalization to be further explored for community and economic development** (beyond just individual properties) include:

- Williams Island, including the Flamingo and the public beach;
- The historic commercial core at the triangular intersection, including Peyton's Bar & Grill, the Idlewild African American chamber, the Idlewild Party Store, the Idlewild USPS Post Office, and Meeks' Park.
- The intersection between Lindsey's Park and the Herman & Lela Wilson House, including Lindsey's Park & the Historic Wilson Grocery Store;
- The Yates Township Hall property on the former school grounds, which has served as a major outdoor events and gathering space.

The natural assets and resources in Idlewild are just as important as these built areas for continued stewardship. The Work Group and community affirmed the need to protect the lakes, the public beach, and Williams Island. Given the concentration of activities in a small area, future development efforts should also consider potential environmental sensitivity and impacts. Potential governance approaches are listed in Chapter 2.



(Left) Historic photograph showing vacation season in Idlewild at the commercial core at the triangular intersection, including the Glass House, the Red Rooster, and the Idlewild Party Store. (Source: Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.)

## POTENTIAL HISTORICAL MARKERS

Idlewild currently has five historical markers and one interpretive sign:

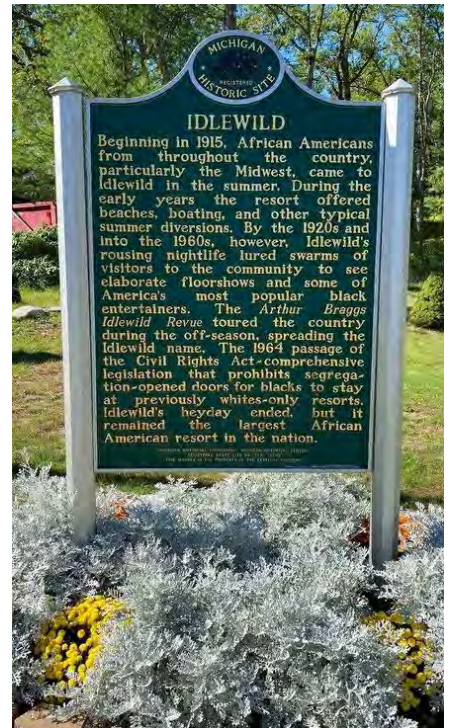
- Idlewild Historical Marker (2009)
- The Island & The Flamingo Club (2008)
- Dr. Daniel Hale Williams & The Williams House (2008)
- Herman & Lela Wilson & The Wilson House (2008)
- Idlewild Lot Owners' Association & The Robert Riffe Youth Center (2008)
- Idlewild Historical & Cultural Center (interpretive sign).

The five historical markers were dedicated by the Michigan Historical Commission as part of Gov. Jennifer Granholm's Idlewild Michigan Transformation Initiative. When first installed, the official state historical markers were intended to express a powerful message about the value and importance of Idlewild, and to generate greater awareness and appreciation of the revitalization of what the State of Michigan identified as one of its most "treasured cultural assets" (Ludington Daily News 2009).

In the 15 years or so since then, the Idlewild community has not added any new markers in commemoration of other notable historic properties. Recognizing this gap, the Idlewild Work Group collectively identified an initial long list of 40+ potential properties for consideration, and whittled it down to a shorter list of a dozen or so. A draft map of the short list was then shared with the community for feedback via the Community Pop-Up Engagement Event at Williams Island and the online questionnaire. Additional suggestions were provided by Dr. Ronald Stephens.

The **map on the next page shows the final list of properties identified by the Idlewild community as potential sites for additional historical markers.** Brief descriptions for each proposed property as well as the long list of 40+ potential properties are included after the map for reference.

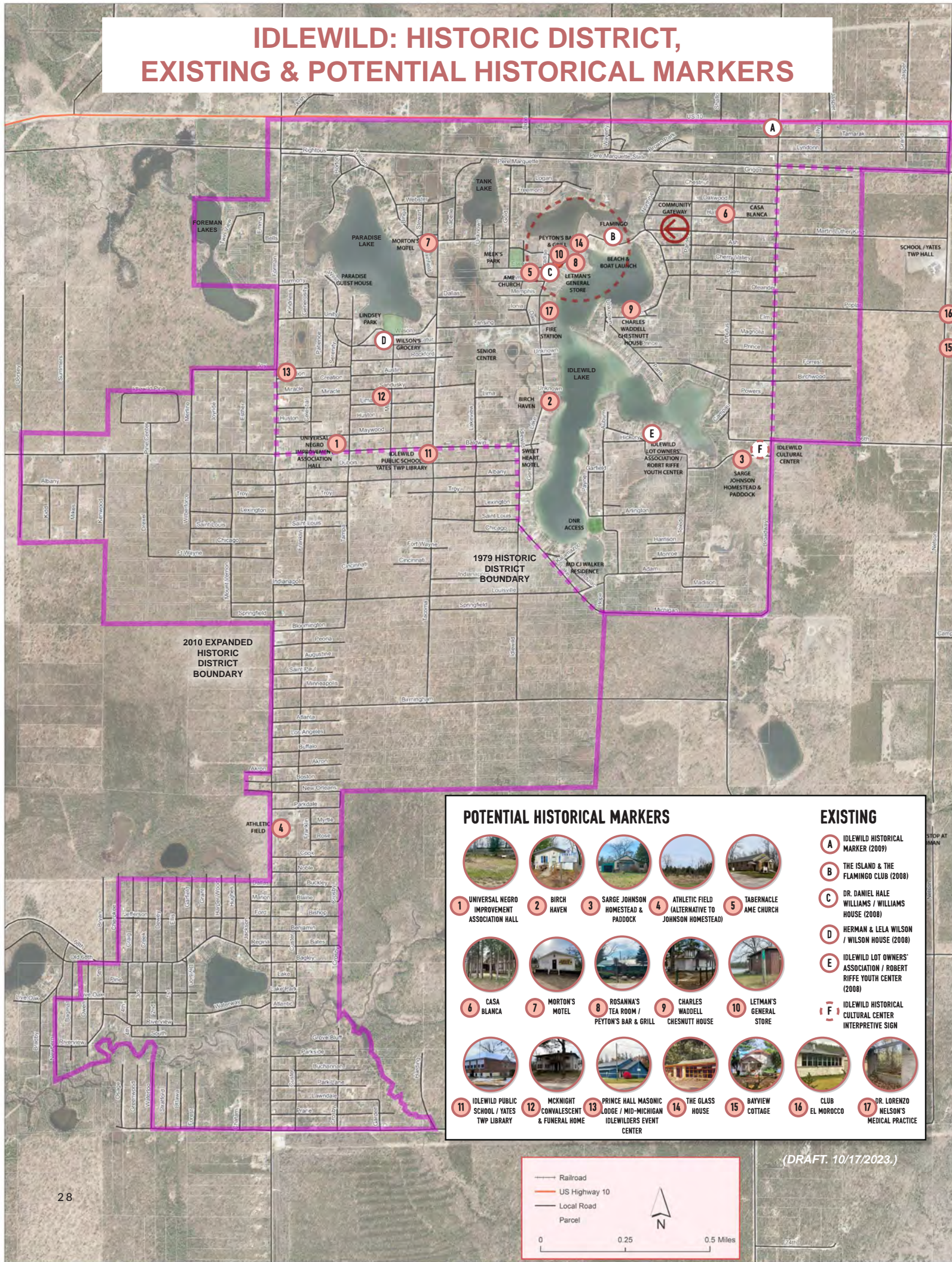
Surveys of most of these properties have already been completed by SHPO as part of the nomination for a historic district boundary expansion approved by the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. The two exceptions are the Club El Morocco (6668 S. Nelson Rd) and Dr. Lorenzo Nelson's Medical Practice (6612 S. Nelson Rd), which are located outside of the historic district boundaries.



(Above) Existing historical marker for Idlewild at the 10 Mile Rd and E. Broadway St gateway to the community.



# IDLEWILD: HISTORIC DISTRICT, EXISTING & POTENTIAL HISTORICAL MARKERS



POTENTIAL HISTORICAL MARKERS					EXISTING	

## DESCRIPTIONS FOR POTENTIAL HISTORICAL MARKERS

### 1. Site of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) Hall – North Side Baldwin Road.

The UNIA is an international organization founded by Mr. Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican-born activist. In the late 1920s or early 1930s, the organization constructed a hall on Baldwin Road, just east of the corner of Tacoma Street in Yates Township. Although no longer extant, the large hall was once known as a gathering place for after-church dinners, lectures, and dances.

### 2. Birch Haven – 16766 Lake Drive.

Birch Haven was the summer residence of Ms. Violette Neatly Johnson Anderson and her family. Ms. Anderson worked in her early career as a court reporter before becoming a lawyer. She was the first African American woman to practice law in the U.S. District Court Eastern Division, served as the first female Chicago prosecutor in 1922-1923, and became the first African American woman admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States. Upon her death, Ms. Anderson willed her Idlewild residence to the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, which continues to own and occupy their "National Monument" residence.

### 3. Athletic Field or Sarge Johnson Homestead & Paddock – 7075 S. Broadway.

Spanish American War veteran & Buffalo Soldier Sgt. Albert Johnson and his wife owned 21 saddle-broken horses and the Clover Leaf Ranch. The horses were trained to go only on trails around the lakes, and Mrs. Johnson ensured that the child riders obeyed this rule by driving slowly behind in her Oldsmobile. Robert B. Steptoe wrote in his book, *Blue as the Lake*, "Two honks from her [car horn] and the horses commenced to trot; one honk later and they fell back into a walk, much to the relief of the tourist folk who didn't know how to post and usually got jostled up pretty bad."

### 4. Athletic Field or Sarge Johnson Homestead & Paddock – East Side of Forman Road, between Parkdale and Cook Streets.

In addition to all the activities that centered on the lakes within the resort, other summertime activities such as baseball and tennis were popular pastimes. Beginning in the late 1920s, Idlewild boasted an organized baseball team, the Idlewild Colts. The team was followed by resorters and area residents with the games covered by local newspapers into the 1950s. Along with sporting events at the Athletic Park (as the field was also known), the park hosted picnics and other community gatherings. In 1929, a granite monument to "Our Heros of All Wars" was dedicated in the park. This monument was relocated to Oaklawn Cemetery.



(Above) Photograph of the former site of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Courtesy of Chris Kingdom-Grier)



(Above) Photograph of Birch Haven today as observed during the field survey.



(Above) Photograph of the Sarge Johnson Homestead & Paddock today as observed during the field survey.



(Above) Historic photograph of the Idlewild Athletic Field (Source: Idlewild Historic & Cultural Center)





(Above)  
Historic photograph of the Tabernacle AME Church (Source: <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/namedplacetail.aspx?id=2627&type=12>)



(Above)  
Historic photograph of the Casa Blanca Hotel (Source: Mike Sonnenberg. <https://lostinmichigan.net/an-idlewild-ystery-solved/>)



(Above)  
Historic photograph of the Morton's Motel (Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/upnor-thmemories/9094757999>)



(Above)  
Photograph of the Red Rooster today as observed during the field survey.

#### 5. Community Tabernacle AME Church- 6466 Idlewild Blvd. (formerly 765 E Essex Street.)

The first church service held in Idlewild was led by Mr. H. Franklin Bray on the steps of the Island Clubhouse. Inspired by the success of the service, the Brays (H. Franklin and his wife Virginia) established the People's Community Tabernacle. The Tabernacle AME Church, was a rustic structure topped by a canvas roof completed in 1923. In the winter of 1928-1929, the church roof collapsed under the weight of heavy snow. A new edifice was completed by August 1929, when Michigan's governor, Fred W. Green, presented the dedication speech. In 1963, the Tabernacle Church was reoriented to its present configuration fronting on Idlewild Boulevard. The relocation project was considered the largest ever in the county. Tabernacle celebrated its 100th year August 2023.

#### 6. Casa Blanca- - 1396 E. Hall Road.

Mr. Woolsey Coombs, an architect and builder, completed the Casa Blanca Hotel in 1949. The highly successful hotel operated by Mr. Coombs' wife, Mrs. Iva Lee Coombs, included the Casbah Cocktail Lounge, which offered "delectable meals and exquisite dining," in addition to guest rooms. The Chicago Defender newspaper called the Spanish Revival building "one of the finest in the state."

#### 7. Morton's Motel- 6389 S. Tacoma.

One of the early motels in Idlewild, Morton's Motel advertised in the Idlewild Yearbook for 1959 that it had "20 units, private baths, tennis court, miniature golf course, picnic space, Bar-B-Q pit and rustic benches and tables, indoor dancing, large parking area." Yates County Deputy Sheriff William Morton and his "charming wife", Belle "Bellzora" Morton, owned the motel. She was well known for her hospitality and wonderful meals. In the late 1980s, under the ownership of Mr. John Meeks, the original motel was remodeled to its present configuration. Historic Idlewild Preservation Society currently owns Morton's.

#### 8. Rosana's Tea Room/Tavern/ B & S Bar, Red Rooster, Peyton's Place - 15655 Lake Drive.

Originally constructed as the Rosana Tea Room in the early 1920s, Ms. Lottie Roxborough and her son, Mr. Charles A. III (Sonny) Roxborough, purchased the property and converted it into a popular "standing room only" bar. In 1949, the Roxboroughs added a new facility adjacent to the original building. The bar has changed hands and been remodeled several times since Mr. Roxborough sold the tavern in the 1970s. This is the longest continuous running business in Idlewild.

#### 9. Charles Waddell Chesnutt House - 14240 Lake Drive.

A Cleveland-based lawyer, founder of Cleveland's leading stenography firm, and a dedicated leader, Mr. Charles Waddell Chesnutt was the most widely read African American author of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among his works were *Conjure Woman*, *The Wife of His Youth*, and *The House Behind the Cedars*. During his visits to Idlewild, Mr. Chesnutt regularly spoke at the Clubhouse Sunday Forums. The house is reputed to have been constructed when Mr. Chesnutt's grandson was born, remaining in the family until 2009 when it was sold by the grandson to Colleen Carrington-Atkins.

#### 10. Letman's General Store- 961 E. M. L. King Drive.

Strategically located at the edge of Island Park on the shores of Lake Idlewild, it was opened in 1939 by Archie & Minnie Letman of Detroit Michigan. This is the only store on both the smaller and larger Idlewild lake. It started as a log cabin store on little Idlewild Lake. The latter and larger store across the road had everything from food, beer & wine, fishing tackle, and was the "5 & 10" store of the town. Additionally, Letman's store offered boat and bicycle rentals, hunting and fishing licenses, and, of course, tackle and live bait.

#### 11. Idlewild Public School/Yates Township Hall and Library - 473 E. Baldwin Road.

Originally erected as a school, the building included a rear wing that housed the kindergarten through Grade 4 classrooms (no longer standing). The main floor of the brick building housed Grades 5 and 6 in the east room while Grades 7 and 8 occupied the west room. During the 1970's-80's, Librarian Julia Thomas provided cultural empowerment programming for local youth. In the late 1990's-2014, the Township operated out of the west room after leaving the old fire station on E. Lansing and before taking up residence in the former Yates Middle school and current Office.

#### 12. M. McKnight Convalescent & Funeral Home - 6835 S. Paradise Path

The McKnight Convalescent & Funeral Home was reputed to have been constructed as a large, single-family residence. It was later converted into a convalescent home with healthcare professionals for the Idlewild community, including Dr. Lorenzo Nelson. Built c. 1925, the large building has a formal appearance with a pair of Tuscan columns flanking the front entry. Other architectural elements include Craftsman features such as a low-pitched roof with projecting overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, triangular knee braces supporting the half-hipped front entry porch roof, and double-hung windows featuring multiple upper sashes over a single-light lower sash.



(Above)  
Historic photograph of Mr. Charles Waddell Chesnutt, African American author from the 19th and 20th centuries (Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-W-Chesnutt>)



(Above)  
Photograph of the former Idlewild Public School/ Yates Twp Hall and Library today as observed during the field survey.



(Above)  
Photograph of the McKnight Convalescent & Funeral Home today as observed during the field survey.





(Above)  
Photograph of the former Prince Hall Masonic Lodge (present-day Mid-Michigan Idlewilders Event Center) (Source: <https://midmichiganidlewilders.com/>)

### 13. Prince Hall Masonic Lodge (Mid-Michigan Idlewilders Event Center) – 19 E. Joy Boulevard.

The Prince Hall Freemasons are a predominantly African American organization separate from the mainstream Masons, with roots dating back to 1784 where the first Masonic Lodge for African Americans was established in the United States (African Lodge No. 459) and the first Grand Lodge of Prince Hall Masons in Massachusetts. The Idlewild Prince Hall Masonic Temple was constructed in 1960 and housed Andrew W. Dungey Lodge No. 52 and Evergreen Chapter No. 51 O. E. S. (order of the Eastern Star). Today, the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge is home to the Mid-Michigan Idlewilders Event Center after the group purchased the property and began to rehabilitate the building.



(Above)  
Historic photograph of the Glass House restaurant (Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/upnorthmemories/2685551812>)

### 14. The Glass House – Approximately at 894 E. MLK Drive

The Glass House was one of the earliest restaurants established in Idlewild on Williams Island and earned its namesake from the many glass windows along its façade. Unlike other structures, the low, horizontal profile, distinctive awning windows, and stone veneer set the Glass House apart with a more modern construction amidst the wooded setting. It was located between Holmes (and later Dan Ware) Grocery Store and Letmans original store. Today, the property is vacant but the community continues to have fond memories of the Glass House and its architectural features.



(Above)  
Contemporary photograph of the Bayview Cottage (Courtesy of Colleen Carrington-Atkins)

### 15. Bayview Cottage – 14180 Lake Drive

Built around 1925, Bayview Cottage is one of the oldest, longest standing historic residences in Idlewild. It is prominently located across the publicly accessible Idlewild Beach on Williams Island and is often featured on historic photographs and postcards of Idlewild. Designed like a Native American long house, the yellow-burgundy cottage has remained in the Hawkins family for multiple generations and was one of the first constructed alongside the Charles Waddle Chesnutt residence.

### 16. Club El Morocco – 6668 S. Nelson Rd

Constructed c. 1930, the El Morocco was an after-hours entertainment venue originally known as Indian Inn. It was developed by Joveddah De Rajah and his wife, Princess Alga, who was reportedly from Hindustan, India. The couple were one of the most interesting residents of Idlewild, who made part of their living locally as the original owners and operators of this night club, and as fortune tellers with “miraculous powers to see into the future”. Located outside the Idlewild resort, the El Morocco made its mark on the entertainment scene after jazz musicians Larry Wrice and Lewis Ray Fleeks became the new owners in 1959. Under their ownership, this late-night club catered to the largely African American crowd and opened between 2:00AM and 6:00AM.



(Above)  
Historic photograph of Club El Morocco (Source: Detroit Public Library Digital Collections)

### 17. Dr. Lorenzo Nelson’s Medical Practice – 6612 S. Nelson Rd

Dr. Lorenzo Nelson was medical doctor associated with the Civilian Conservation Corps encamped on S. Nelson Road in 1930s which was responsible for replanting much of Michigan’s forests and enhancing America’s natural resources. After his service with the CCC during the Great Depression, Dr. Nelson returned to Idlewild and was, for several years, the only physician in the region. Besides working at the McKnight Convalescent Home, Dr. Nelson operated a medical practice just outside Idlewild resort, north of the El-Morocco. His patients included both African American and white residents of Lake County. Remnants of the building’s foundations are visible on the site.



(Above)  
Photograph of the Club El Morocco (Courtesy of Chris Kingdom-Grier)



(Above)  
Photograph of the former site of Dr. Lorenzo Nelson's Medical Practice (Courtesy of Chris Kingdom-Grier)

# IDLEWILD

## POTENTIAL HISTORICAL MARKERS

POSSIBLE HISTORICAL MARKERS		MARKER STATUS	
		EXISTING	RECOMMENDED
Sports and Recreation Facilities or Grounds	Polk's Roller Arena - William's Island		
	Idlewild Lot Owners Association (ILOA) Riffe Center - 11330 Lake Drive	X	
	Athletic Field - East side of Forman Road, between Parkdale and Cook Streets		X
	Good Shepherd's Camp*		
	Sarge Johnson Homestead & Paddock - 7075 S. Broadway		X
Entertainment, Culture, and Arts Facilities or Grounds	Idlewild Club House - William's Island		
	Flamingo Club - 1002 E. M. L. King Drive	X	
	Purple Palace Nightclub - William's Island		
	Paradise Club - 332 E. Wilson Drive		
	Club El-Morocco - 6668 S. Nelson Road		X
	Detroit Idlewilders' Clubhouse - 13174 Lake Drive.		
	Idlewild Historical Museum*		
	Idlewild Historic and Cultural Center - 7025 S. Broadway		
Faith and Worship Facilities or Grounds	Tabernacle AME / Community Tabernacle - 765 E. Essex Street		X
	Historic First Baptist Church of Idlewild - 7552 S. Forman Road		
Lodging	Casa Blanca - 1396 E. Hall Road		X
	Hotel Giles - William's Island		
	Heartbreak Motel - 332 E. Wilson Drive		
	Vogue Motel 363 E. Fremont		
	Morton's Motel - 6389 S. Tacoma		X
	Old Hickory Inn		
	Sweetheart Motel - 730 E. Troy		
	Paradise Lake Motel - 6534 S. Tampa		
Government, Civic, and Infrastructure	Pere Marquette Railroad Stop		
	Prince Hall Freemasonic Lodge (Mid-Michigan Idlewilders Event Center) - 19 E Joy Blvd.		X
	Idlewild Historic Marker - US10 and Broadway	X	
	Paradise Path Historic Streets with two brick piers*		
	Idlewild African American Chamber of Commerce (formerly East Meets West)*		
	Oaklawn Cemetary - 7971 E. Forman Road		
	Site of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) Hall		X
	Yates Fire Station and Township Hall - 16211 Lake Drive		
	Idlewild Public School/Yates Twp. Hall and Library - 473 E. Baldwin Road		X
	Civilian Conservation Corps #1691 Camp Baldwin - Nelson Road*		

\*Additions to list from materials by Dr. Ronald J. Stephens.

POSSIBLE HISTORICAL MARKERS		MARKER STATUS	
		EXISTING	RECOMMENDED
Residences of Prominent Leaders, Families, and Individuals	Hattie "Ma" Buckles Properties - 1264 & 1294 E. M. L. King Drive		
	Rollins and Hudson House - 14712 Lake Drive		
	Bayview Cottage - 14180 Lake Drive		X
	Charles Waddell Chesnutt House - 14240 Lake Drive		X
	Herman and Lela Wilson Home - 6583 S. Paradise Path	X	
	Madam CJ Walker Property - 848 E. Fond Dulac		
	Cleage Home - 11292 Lake Drive		
	Birch Haven - 16766 Lake Drive		X
	Dr. Robert L Bradby Residence - 16800 Lake Drive		
	Lilian Harden Armstrong House		
	The Cottage of Ann Hawkins*		
	The Cottage of Harry Solomon*		
	The Cottage of Carrie Warner*		
	The Cottage of Attorney Joe Craigen*		
	The Cottage of Susie Stinson*		
	The Cottage of Harry Branch*		
	H. Franklin and Virginia Bray's cottage (Bra-Haven)*		
	The Robert & Mabel Williams Cottage*		
	The Cottage of Helen Buckles*		
	The Cottages of the Jones Brothers*		
Dr. Daniel H. Williams Home (Oakmere) - 15712 Lake Drive	X		
Retail, Restaurants, and other Businesses	Wilson's Grocery Store - 332 E. Wilson Drive		
	Lydia Inn, Castalante Restaurant - 7036 S. Geneva		
	Winburn Funeral Home - Idlewild Terrace*		
	McKnight Convalescent & Funeral Home		X
	Gibson & Son's Market - 6389 W. Baldwin Road		
	Rosanna Tea Room, Peyton's Place, Red Rooster -15655 Lake Drive		X
	Holmes & Ware Grocery		
	The Glass House - 894 E. M. L. King Drive		X
	LeeJon's and Idlewild Party Store - 880 E. M. L. King Drive		
	Letman's Variety 5 & 10 Cent Store - 961 E. M. L. King Drive		X
	Dotson's Station - 12 E. Baldwin Road		
Dr. Lorenzo Nelson's Medical Practice - 6612 S. Nelson Rd		X	

\*Additions to list from materials by Dr. Ronald J. Stephens.





(Above) Existing historical marker at the Idlewild Lot Owners' Association (later the Robert Riffe Youth Center).

#### POTENTIAL EDUCATION & COMMEMORATIVE APPROACHES

Potential education and commemorative approaches to tell the Idlewild story leaned towards **more programmatic activation and partnership:**

- Host educational programs on Idlewild in collaboration with schools, institutions, museums etc;
- Host community events to celebrate the history of Idlewild;
- Conduct walking tours of Idlewild focusing on the local history, nature, and culture.

A couple of these programmatic efforts are already in place, including a busy summer events calendar with various interest groups, and Dr. Ronald Stephens' walking tours which have been offered through the Idlewild History & Cultural Center on the summer Saturdays. **Creating alignment/synergies with existing events and offerings would ensure complementary outcomes. Spearheading collaborative efforts with schools, institutions, and museums would be a vital area for more immediate action steps** and to foster a greater awareness of Idlewild, particularly for engaging the younger and future generations.

#### ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

Besides finding ways to energize the Idlewild economy, it appears that the **most pressing priority would be to ensure that future generations are aware of Idlewild, why and how it came to be, and why it is important to support its long-term vitality.** This is especially telling based on the survey respondents' profile:

- There were no responses from Idlewild residents, visitors, neighbors, or friends aged 30 and below.
- Almost 87% of the respondents were 50 years or older, many of whom had lived in or visited Idlewild for at least 11 years or more. Several have spent 30 - 70+ years coming to or living in Idlewild.

The older generation of Idlewilders and friends of Idlewild with vivid memories of the community in its heyday will gradually shrink. The importance of sharing their stories will only grow with time to remember the historic significance of Idlewild, the realities of the Jim Crow era, as well as the strides and vulnerabilities of the Civil Rights movement in the present/future

#### FUTURE ENGAGEMENT & APPENDICES

The community engagement was made possible because of the commitment and efforts of the Work Group to rally their family, friends, and neighbors. Continued local involvement going forward will be key.

Please refer to the Appendices for aggregated questionnaire results.

# 47%

**OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE THE NEXT GENERATION IN IDLEWILD'S PRESERVATION, DEVELOPMENT & STEWARDSHIP.**

**THIS COULD EXPAND ON EXISTING EFFORTS AT IDLEWILD BY CREATING A YOUTH COUNCIL, AS WELL AS FOSTERING NEW OR STRONGER COLLABORATIONS WITH BALDWIN SCHOOLS, MUSEUMS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.**

## 5 TOP GOALS TO BALANCE PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

- Engaging the next generation.
- Supporting local investment and local impact.
- Supporting economic development.
- Preserving the natural character of Idlewild (and) Supporting redevelopment.
- Preserving the historic character of Idlewild.

# WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN IDLEWILD IN THE FUTURE, WHILE IT CONTINUES TO HONOR ITS HISTORIC AND NATURAL CHARACTER?

# HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IDLEWILD TO FEEL IN THE FUTURE? PLEASE SHARE 3 WORDS / ADJECTIVES.

DESIRED USES & AMENITIES	DESIRED PROGRAMMING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Full service) restaurant</li> <li>Cafe</li> <li>Grocery store</li> <li>Gas Station</li> <li>Internet</li> <li>Hotel</li> <li>Restore the Flamingo Club and other historic buildings to benefit community / visitors</li> <li>Amphitheater for outdoor entertainment</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Community garden</li> <li>Park for the kids</li> <li>Walking / Biking Trails</li> <li>Boat and lake rentals, water sports</li> <li>Skating rentals, Skating Rink</li> <li>Horseback riding</li> <li>Vending machine at the beach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with youth organizations for more youth programming and activities for 20+ and younger</li> <li>Activities for the kids</li> <li>More regular historic tours, including home tours</li> <li>Expand arts and culture, e.g. music and cultural festivals, dance</li> <li>Artist in residence at the library</li> <li>Study / Learning projects available to local schools and homeschooling groups at the historic library</li> <li>Classes on natural resources in the area / Awareness of biodiversity and ecology of Lake Idlewild</li> <li>Clear poison ivy and weeds at DNR</li> <li>Winter programs</li> <li>Incorporate photographs of Idlewild at Township building</li> <li>Community programming at the Township building: exercise, dance, yoga, sewing, knitting, book clubs</li> <li>Active Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<b>OTHERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idlewild governance independent of Yates Township</li> </ul>	





C H A P T E R T W O

# NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION



H. D. WILSON Residence - J. D. Wilson



## NEXT STEPS & FUTURE WORK

Resident from a neighboring community

"I grew up south of the city in Newaygo and always had a fascination with the area, but didn't know much about it until recently. What a rich heritage that we need to restore, preserve, and respect.."

"My favorite memories.... Roller skating at lake association, water skiing and boating on Idlewild lake, walking in woods, going to get candy at Lee Jon's with my grandfather, watching sunsets on the lake, having neighbors drop by."

Seasonal Idlewild resident from Washington, D.C. who has been visiting for more than 20 years



(Above) Example of a historical interpretive sign in Saugatuck-Douglas commissioned by the local community through the Saugatuck-Douglas Museum incorporating historic maps, photographs, and descriptions.

(Previous spread) Historic postcard showing the Wilson House. (Source: Lake County Historical Society.)

Several avenues for future work have arisen from the historic community planning process in Idlewild. Through the local engagement and ongoing Work Group input, **a coordinated effort aligning various initiatives and interest groups** in Idlewild will be key moving forward.

**Educational initiatives** will lead the way for future preservation, revitalization, and economic development. A major priority identified by the community is a need to **engage future generations**. Idlewild is a community deeply connected to its roots, and fostering this reverence and understanding of the past is vital to continued stewardship in the path ahead.

Seventeen sites of historical significance have been identified as part of this planning process. As identified in the earlier chapter on "Community Engagement & Future Directions", they shall serve as **future historic marker locations**. Markers can take the form of honorable declarations, short statements on the past, or deeper explorations into context and history. Currently, five markers dedicated as part of the Michigan Historical Markers Program stand in the community. These could be augmented by the additional properties identified.

The community could also commemorate these places, and others of historic significance, using interpretive signs. Unlike the Michigan historical marker, these can be commissioned and installed by the community for storytelling and placemaking purposes. A coherent series of interpretive signs at key locations and places can begin to shape the overall sense of identity and landscape at Idlewild.

National Park Service, "African American Outdoor Recreation: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study" Sites in Michigan (Kahrl et al 2022, 210-211)		
NAME	PROPERTY TYPE	YEARS IN OPERATION
Double J Ranch (also Pink Mansion), Constantine Township	Resort, Ranch	1940s
Evergreen Resort, South Haven	Resort, Lake	1950s
Green Pastures Camp, Jackson County	Campground	1931 - 1960s
Holy Family Resort, Benton Harbor	Resort, Lake	1962 - Unknown
<b>Idlewild, Idlewild</b>	<b>Resort, Lake</b>	<b>1912 - Present</b>
Johnson's Shady Nook Farm	Resort, Lake	1930s - 1960s
Medicine Acres, Rose Center	Resort, Lake	1940s - 1955
Paradise Lake, Cass County	Resort, Lake	1920s
Pitchford's La Maison, Covert	Resort, Lake	1930s - 1960s
Sugar Island, Detroit	Amusement Park	1944 - 1948
Thornton's Resort, South Haven	Resort, Lake	1932 - 1940s
<b>Val Du Lakes Farm Resort, Oceana County</b>	<b>Resort, Rural</b>	<b>1920s - Present</b>
West Michigan Resort, Benton Harbor	Resort, Lake	1908 - 1915
<b>Woodland Park Resort, Merrill Township</b>	<b>Resort, Lake</b>	<b>1921 - Present</b>

By acknowledging these sites on the landscape, a broader, more representative, history of Idlewild will be present in the community. Through the installation of more markers and wayfinding signs based on the preservation and reuse/revitalization framework, comes the opportunity for additional educational initiatives. A variety of tours, lectures, presentations, and publications could accompany them. Heritage tourism will continue to be an asset in Idlewild's economic development.

**Further national designations, such as a National Historic Landmark status, could also be pursued or followed through in close consultation with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).** In a 2022 National Park Service's "African American Outdoor Recreation: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study", Idlewild was identified as one of three outdoor recreation sites in Michigan which is still physically present. More importantly, the report evaluated Idlewild along with 34 other properties across the United States for their potential to be a National Historic Landmark. **It noted that "Idlewild has a high potential to be considered as a National Historic Landmark" (Kahrl et al 2022, 189).**



(Above) Example of a historical interpretive sign in Saugatuck-Douglas commissioned by the local community through the Saugatuck-Douglas Museum incorporating historic maps, photographs, and descriptions.





(Above) Example of a simple, more economical historical interpretive sign using an alu board (aluminum composite panels) in Saugatuck-Douglas commissioned by the local community through the Saugatuck-Douglas Museum.

The need for **additional regulatory procedures to protect historic and natural resources** also emerged during the process. This included the contemplation of what could be more **appropriate governance mechanisms** in safeguarding the built, natural, and intangible cultural heritage elements which have distinguished Idlewild. Options for potential mechanisms are listed in the table, "Guidance for Creating and Stewarding a Rural Historic District", on Pg 48.

Further investigation into and deliberation by the Idlewild community and Yates Township of the potential options will elicit a better understanding of what is the most appropriate intervention that supports preservation of the natural and built environment, and keeps the door open for future economic development.

**Additional avenues for funding** were also identified to help support this future work. The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, granted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is one such opportunity. \$3.8 million was distributed in 2023 to forty individual sites working to advance preservation activities that represent African American cultural heritage nationwide.

There remains **broad local, regional, and national interest in Idlewild**. Its historic impact and influence continues to extend informally through personal relationships within and beyond the African American community over generations. Besides the local and seasonal residents, this historic community planning process also saw the participation of first time visitors, recently acquainted friends of Idlewild, and seasonal visitors from places near and far. As noted by the participants' demographics, Idlewild and all that it represents historically matters not only to African Americans, but also to people of all colors and creeds.

As originally proven by its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, and again supported in 2010 - Idlewild is nationally significant in the history of Black Americans, and future work will continue to strengthen these bonds.

(Opposite page) Historic postcards showing the Idlewild community in various settings, including a vacation cottage, at a dock, and at the beach in front of the Idlewild Club House, c. 1950. (Source: Detroit Public Library Digital Collections.)



# IDLEWILD

## POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

	NEXT STEPS	TIMEFRAME**	POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS & COLLABORATORS	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Federal & State Designation	Add Cultural Landscape elements to National Register of Historic Places nomination	Near to Mid Term	The Right Place, Inc., MSU Extension	Grants & Local Community Support
	Explore the expansion of the historic district boundaries that would take into account the historically significant properties along S. Nelson Rd	Near to Mid Term	The Right Place, Inc., MSU Extension	Grants & Local Community Support
	Pursue / Follow up on a potential National Historic Landmark nomination in close consultation with SHPO	Near to Mid Term	The Right Place, Inc., SHPO, Yates Twp	Grants & Local Community Support
Protection & Governance	Consider and implement appropriate forms of governance to protect the historic, cultural, and landscape resources in Idlewild	Mid and Long Term	Work Group, Yates Twp Staff & Elected Leaders	Yates Twp
	Strengthen local enforcement and resources for monitoring and abatement in parallel with zoning ordinance updates	Near to Mid Term	Work Group, Yates Twp Staff & Elected Leaders	Yates Twp
	Work with property owners of identified properties for historic preservation and reuse to develop appropriate rehabilitation approaches which are financially viable, and support future uses aligned with the community's desired improvements	Near to Mid Term	Work Group, Private Property Owners, The Right Place, Inc., MSU Extension	Grants & Local Community Support (e.g. US Park Service and the National Forest for the Baldwin Ranger Station, USDA Community Facilities Grant, EPA Grants)
Signage and Markers	Apply for and install additional historical markers for significant properties (e.g. from potential short list)	Near to Mid Term	Historic Idlewild Preservation Society	Grants & Local Community Support
	Install a coordinated series of interpretive signs around Idlewild, such as trails and historic area to a self-guided walking tour	Near to Mid Term	Historic Idlewild Preservation Society	Grants & Local Community Support

	NEXT STEPS	TIMEFRAME**	POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS & COLLABORATORS	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Advocacy & Perspectives	Host educational programs on Idlewild in collaboration with schools and institutions to engage the next generation	Near to Mid Term	Baldwin Schools, Baldwin Schools Alumni Association, MSU Extension, Ferris State University Jim Crow Museum, Lake County Historical Museum	Institutional Budgets for Teaching and Programming, Grants
	Conduct walking and/or boat tours of Idlewild, focusing on the local history, nature, and culture	Near to Mid Term	CJ Kingdom-Grier, Dr. Ronald Stephens, Experience Idlewild, Idlewild Historic & Cultural Center	Grassroots, Museum and other Institutional Partner Budgets and/or Grants
Revitalization	Develop a coordinated and feasible economic development strategy and preservation plan based on the Community's values, identified priorities, and aspired improvements	Mid Term	Work Group, Yates Twp, The Right Place, Inc., MSU Extension, Idlewild African American Chamber of Commerce	Grants & Local Community Support
	Develop a coordinated and feasible business development plan based on the economic development strategy and preservation plan	Mid Term	Work Group, Yates Twp, The Right Place, Inc., MSU Extension, Idlewild African American Chamber of Commerce	Grants & Local Community Support
	Develop a unified streetscape improvement plan to strengthen the sense of arrival and identity, as informed by the community's framework of: -gateways, -key scenic drives, -intersections, -views, -trails, -series of historical markers / interpretive signs	Near to Mid Term	Work Group, Private Property Owners, The Right Place, Inc., MSU Extension	Yates Twp, Grants from Public and Philanthropic Sources

\*\*Timeframe: Near Term (1 to 3 years), Mid-Term (3 to 8 years), Long-Term (8 years +)



# IDLEWILD

## GUIDANCE FOR CREATING & STEWARDING A RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

	POTENTIAL TOOLS & APPROACHES	RECOMMENDED	FOR ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION
Federal & State Designations	National Register of Historic Places	Individual Resource	X
		District (already established)	X
		Cultural Landscape	X
	National Historic Landmarks Program (NHL)	X	
	National Heritage Area (NHA)		
	National Monument		
	National Conservation Area (NCA)		
	The Michigan Historical Marker Program	X	
Protection & Governance	Local District + Commission (conventional SHPO model per PA 169 of 1970)		X
	Design Guidelines accompanying Local District (aligned with PA 169 of 1970)		X
	Limited Local Historic District + Commission (benchmarking De Pere, Wisconsin Neighborhood Preservation Plan, 2010)		X
	Architectural Design Voluntary Recommendations		X
	Conservation Overlay District (possibly coordinated with Yates Township zoning policy)		X
	Campstead Easement (benchmarking tools developed for Squam Lake, New Hampshire)		X
	Land / Lake Conservancy		X
	Lake Association (already established)	X	
	Local zoning and enforcement to address blight and related issues	X	
Heritage-Focused Resources	Save America's Treasures Grants	X	
	African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund	X	
	Robert F. Smith Internship Program (or similar), carrying possible local museum affiliations such as: (i) Jim Crow Museum (Ferris State), (ii) Charles H. Wright Museum, (iii) Holland Museum, (iv) others	X	
Signage and Markers	A community-driven extension of commemorative and informational markers, or a series of interpretive signs + trails with self-guided tours	X	
	A community-driven wayfinding package to guide visitors and reinforce an established sense of place	X	
Advocacy & Perspectives	The Cultural Landscape Foundation - Maintain awareness of tools, methods, and related resources		X
	Reference the African American Outdoor Recreation National Historic Landmark Theme Study (2022) to maintain awareness of evolving national understandings around NR eligibility, best practices, etc.	X	
	Reference UNESCO and ICOMOS verbiage specific to Intangible Heritage Conservation, and apply to strategy	X	
	Local Conservation and/or Preservation Society, Local Historians, Historical Society, etc.	X	
	Community Events, Education, and Collections Facilitation	X	
Documentation	Comprehensive Cultural Landscape documentation, including maps (benchmarking the Cultural Landscape Report for Glen Haven Village Historic District)	X	
	Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS)		

*\*\*Note: This table lists a broad range of potential tools and approaches available within preservation and adjacent arenas. Based on community input and the consulting team's professional assessment of each item's current applicability for Idlewild, a tailored combination of tools and approaches has been selected as a recommended strategy. Certain tools and approaches which are not currently included in the overall recommended strategy may still have applicability, and should be reconsidered on a routine basis. Such items may serve as strong contingency options, while others may emerge as applicable as circumstances evolve over time.*

# GLOSSARY

## ACCOMPANYING THE GUIDANCE FOR CREATING & STEWARDING A RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

### FEDERAL & STATE DESIGNATIONS

#### **National Register of Historic Places**

“The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.”

–National Park Service

Nomination to the National Register can be carried out using different forms which are design for different nomination types. These forms include: Individual Resource, District, and Cultural Landscape.

#### **National Historic Landmarks Program (NHL)**

“National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are historic properties that illustrate the heritage of the United States. The over 2,600 NHLs found in the U.S. today come in many forms: historic buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. Each NHL represents an outstanding aspect of American history and culture.”

–National Park Service

#### **National Heritage Area (NHA)**

“National Heritage Areas are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Unlike national parks, National Heritage Areas are large lived-in landscapes. Consequently, National Heritage Area entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

In 1984, the first National Heritage Area, Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Area, was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. In his dedication speech, Reagan referred to National Heritage Areas "a new kind of national park" that married heritage conservation, recreation, and economic development. As of 2023, 62 National Heritage Areas are designated.”

–National Park Service



### **National Monument**

"National monuments are nationally significant lands and waters set aside for permanent protection. These public lands are similar to national parks in many ways, with some key differences."

–National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)

National Monuments must be designated by the President under the Antiquities Act of 1906.

### **National Conservation Area**

"Congress designates National Conservation Areas (NCAs) and similarly designated lands to conserve, protect, enhance, and manage the public lands for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

–U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

This tool is used for Public Lands.

### **The Michigan Historic Marker Program**

"The Michigan Historical Marker Program was established by the legislature and governor in 1955. Since then, more than 1,700 historical markers have been placed across the state - and in several other states and Europe - making Michigan's one of the premier marker programs in the nation.

Each marker reflects an important story of a place, an event or a person. It powerfully shows the importance a community places on its heritage and serves as a signpost of historical significance. A marker dedication ceremony is an event of commemoration and even celebration that introduces a lasting resource for tourism, education and community heritage."

–Michigan History Center

## **PROTECTION & GOVERNANCE**

### **Local District + Commission**

"A local historic district is a historically significant area that is protected by a historic district ordinance. The local unit of government appoints a historic district commission to review proposed work to the exterior of resources in the district to determine if the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. Designating an area as a local historic district is one of the few ways a community can provide legal protection for its historic resources."

–Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

In this case, a new Township Ordinance would enable a Local District (per PA 169 of 1970).

### **Design Guidelines Accompanying a Local District**

Tailored guidelines invite property owners to consider solutions which calibrate their projects with the design traditions of the place, and allow for new work to harmoniously contribute to the existing context through regeneration.

The guidelines are distinctly graphical in their approach and invitational in tone to maximize accessibility and use.

### **Limited Local Historic District + Commission**

The Limited Local Historic District and Commission would operate similarly to a Local District, but would only evaluate proposed work for select, prioritized design items (ex. garage door placement in relation to the main façade, etc.). This idea is benchmarked off of an approach explored in the De Pere, Wisconsin Neighborhood Preservation Plan (2010), and thus may require further adjustment for Michigan's legal frameworks.

### **Architectural Design Voluntary Recommendations**

Similar to Design Guidelines Accompanying a Local District (discussed above), these guidelines would be offered by a municipality or nonprofit organization for voluntary use, and without coordination with other regulatory frameworks such as a Historic District Commission, etc.

### Conservation Overlay District

“Neighborhood conservation districts are areas located in residential neighborhoods with a distinct physical character that have preservation or conservation as the primary goal. Although these neighborhoods tend not to merit designation as a historic district, they warrant special land use attention due to their distinctive character and importance as viable, contributing areas to the community at large. Accomplished through the adoption of a zoning overlay or independent zoning district, neighborhood conservation districts provide a means to protect character-defining streetscapes in older areas threatened by new development or governmental policies that undermine rather than encourage neighborhood preservation. Specific objectives often include protecting a viable neighborhood against outside development pressures, whether mansionization, as in Dallas, waterfront condominiums, as in Annapolis, or demand for parking lots and commercial encroachment, as in Boise. Conservation district programs have been established to stabilize existing neighborhoods, as in Nashville, to increase or preserve the supply of affordable housing, as in Phoenix, and to revitalize close-in neighborhoods, as in Davis, California.

While individual conservation district programs vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and a number of programs, indeed, constitute a hybrid of these two approaches, conservation district programs generally can be placed into one of two categories: the “historic preservation model” or the “neighborhood planning model.” Both types of programs seek to preserve an area’s special character. The difference lies in the methods and kinds of protection available and the level of neighborhood involvement.”

- "Protecting Older Neighborhoods Through Conservation District Programs", by Rebecca Lubens and Julia Miller published in *Preservation Law Reporter* (2003).

### Campstead Easement

A benchmarked tool “pioneered” by Historic Preservationists and Landscape Conservationists, which was tailored for the natural and recreational area of Squam Lake, New Hampshire:

“[The Campstead Easement’s] legal framework is that of a typical conservation or preservation easement, but its objectives relate more closely to planning goals. Conservation Society staff work with the owners of each prospective property to identify character-defining features and long-term property objectives. These stake-holders craft a legal agreement that promotes preservation of the camp or cottages; requires use of natural materials for repair or replacement; and restricts future alterations to building height, footprint, and materials.”

-Elizabeth Durfee Hengen and Jennifer Goodman, "Meshing Conservation and Preservation Goals with the National Register", *Forum Journal* Vol. 32, No. 3 (2019)

### Land Conservancy

“A land trust or land conservancy is a community-based, nonprofit organization that actively works to permanently conserve land. In some cases, land trusts acquire land outright. They also partner to conserve land that remains the property of willing landowners using a tool called a conservation easement. Land trusts also manage or restore land once it has been conserved.

Land trusts can be local, state or regional in scope, working directly with private landowners and community partners to protect land that has natural, recreational, scenic, historical or agricultural values. Land trusts work in 93 percent of U.S. counties — serving urban, suburban and rural communities.

Land trusts can be all-volunteer or made up of a volunteer board of directors and paid staff that represent a diversity of skills and experience in conservation and carry out the day-to-day activities of running a land trust.

Every land trust is as unique as the community it serves.”

-Land Trust Alliance



### **Local Zoning and Enforcement**

This could include: i. A revisit and update of zoning ordinance(s), where needed, to monitor and manage activities or dilapidation which may compromise the overall character of the place (e.g. Ordinances for foreclosed, vacant, and abandoned property registry, Jackson MI); ii. Strengthen local enforcement and resources for monitoring and abatement in parallel with zoning ordinance updates.

### **Lake Association**

Typically a local, registered nonprofit established to educate, advocate, and organize efforts for the protection of specific waterways, and to promote conservation practices within the watershed. Lake management activities which could be undertaken include water quality monitoring, invasive species management, land acquisition to protect sensitive areas, wetland restoration, erosion control, and long-range lake management plans. As a nonprofit entity, the Lake Association can be eligible for grant funding opportunities.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Save America's Treasures Grants**

"The Save America's Treasures grant program was established in 1998 to celebrate America's premier cultural resources in the new millennium. After more than 20 years, this grant program has awarded more than 1,300 grants totalling more than \$300 million to projects across the United States. Funded projects, selected from 4,000-plus applications requesting \$1.5 billion, represent nationally significant historic properties and collections that convey our nation's rich heritage to future generations. The National Park Service administers Save America's Treasures grants in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services."

-National Park Service

### **African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund**

"The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund works to advance the broader preservation movement towards a more diverse and equitable representation of American history. Grants showcase the beauty and complexity of Black history and culture in America, while underscoring the urgent need to protect, preserve and interpret these invaluable American assets."

-National Trust for Historic Preservation

**Robert F. Smith Internship (or similar), carrying possible local museum affiliations** such as: (i) Jim Crow Museum (Ferris State), (ii) Charles H. Wright Museum, (iii) Holland Museum, (iv) others

"Internships provide guided learning experiences consisting of hands-on training, mentoring, attendance at educational events, and cultivation of contacts for the next generation of researchers, scholars, curators, and other museum, library, preservation, and heritage professionals – individuals who will assume the mantle of identifying, documenting, curating, and digitizing treasured artifacts that reflect African American history and culture."

-National Museum of African American History and Culture

In previous years, Offsite Internships have been offered in collaboration with Host Organizations. If a local museum were to become a Host Organization, it might be possible to design and offer a nationally-prestigious field-immersion internship at Idlewild and/or Woodland Park to continue heritage conservation and related work on behalf of the community(s).

## SIGNAGE & MARKERS

### Commemorative and Informational Markers

Interpretive signage that can serve multiple purposes, including: recognizing important events, people and places; sharing relevant historical information, photographs, and resources; and creating a place on the landscape to capture the tangible and intangible history of a place.

### Wayfinding

Directions on the landscape, typically in the form of signs, that point residents and visitors to sites of note, including: historic markers, historic sites, business districts, recreation areas, community hubs, and civic centers. Additional supplements, such as maps, brochures, and flyers, and even important architectural or natural features can supplement wayfinding.

## ADVOCACY & PERSPECTIVES

### The Cultural Landscape Foundation

“A non-profit established in 1998, The Cultural Landscape Foundation® (TCLF) connects people to places. TCLF educates and engages the public to make our shared landscape heritage more visible, identify its value, and empower its stewards.”

-The Cultural Landscape Foundation® (TCLF)

Specifically, TCLF has facilitated a program called “Landslide”, which is “an ongoing collection of important landscapes and landscape features that are threatened”. In 2021, this program’s theme was “Race and Space: Hidden Histories Revealed” and presented “thirteen sites across eleven states and spanning almost a millennium of history. These cultural landscapes broaden our awareness about the origins of our nation and illustrate the dramatic social and geographic changes of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Examined together, these sites represent local stories and global themes, shedding light on how settlement and removal, slavery and Jim Crow, urban renewal, and environmental injustice have shaped our national landscape and continue to impact communities, families, individuals, and cultural and natural resources.”

Although the Race and Space project has concluded, the TCLF remains as an important resource to consider as both communities of Idlewild and Woodland Park pursue strategies involving National Register nomination work, local commemoration efforts, and documentation as Cultural Landscapes.

### African American Outdoor Recreation National Historic Landmark Theme Study (2022)

“The African American Outdoor Recreation National Historic Landmark Theme Study analyzes how race impacted African Americans’ experiences and access to outdoor recreation and leisure resources from the emancipation period in 1865 through the early 21st century. The study focuses on recreational activities, moments in the history of recreation and the places African Americans created for themselves to relax and recharge, as well as those for which they fought for access. The research provides important context in understanding Black recreation history and how it is interconnected with the history of national parks, including the NPS’s own patterns of exclusion.

National Historic Landmark theme studies examine national historic context on specific American history or prehistory topics for possible historic property designation. This theme study identifies the associated spaces and places and provides a contextual framework to evaluate whether properties might meet National Historic Landmark criteria.”

-National Park Service

### UNESCO & ICOMOS Principles on Tangible & Intangible Heritage

Through intentional calibration with perspectives established by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), preservation, planning, economic development, and other strategies in both Idlewild and Woodland Park may be able to robustly consider important project aspects such as intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding, and specific threats including “decontextualization, commodification and misrepresentation”, as well as external development pressures arising through the growth of tourism.

-6. Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2018), Valletta Principles (ICOMOS, 2011)



### **Local Historian / Historical Societies**

Community-focused individuals and groups whose goal is to collect, protect, and advocate for the history of the area. They can be formal or informal, have public facing elements, such as exhibitions and programming, or not. Local historians and archivists, the Woodland Park Historical Society, the Historic Idlewild Preservation Society, and the Idlewild Historic & Cultural Center are champions of the past, and stewards of the future.

### **Community Events, Education, and Collections Facilitation**

Intentional community programming including events, educational outreach, and collection of historic items, stories, and practices would be vital in ensuring both the tangible and intangible heritage are sustained for the future. Efforts for such programming are best initiated and led by the community. These could also involve collaboration with other communities organizations such as local schools, higher education institutions, museums, foundations, and public agencies. The spirit of co-creation and co-production with multiple stakeholders is key.

Examples include the WildWood event between Idlewild and Woodland Park, exhibition and education efforts with the Heritage Museum of Newaygo County and the Holland Museum.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

### **Comprehensive Cultural Landscape Documentation**

Benchmarked from the Cultural Landscape Report for Glen Haven Village Historic District completed by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, this approach allows for a detailed qualitative and graphical analysis of key landscape features, spatial frameworks, and place-related attributes, both natural and man-made.

### **Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS)**

“The Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) mission is to record historic landscapes in the United States and its territories through measured drawings and interpretive drawings, written histories, and large-format black and white photographs and color photographs. The National Park Service oversees the daily operation of HALS and formulates policies, sets standards, and drafts procedural guidelines in consultation with the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA).”

-National Park Service Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP)



# APPENDICES

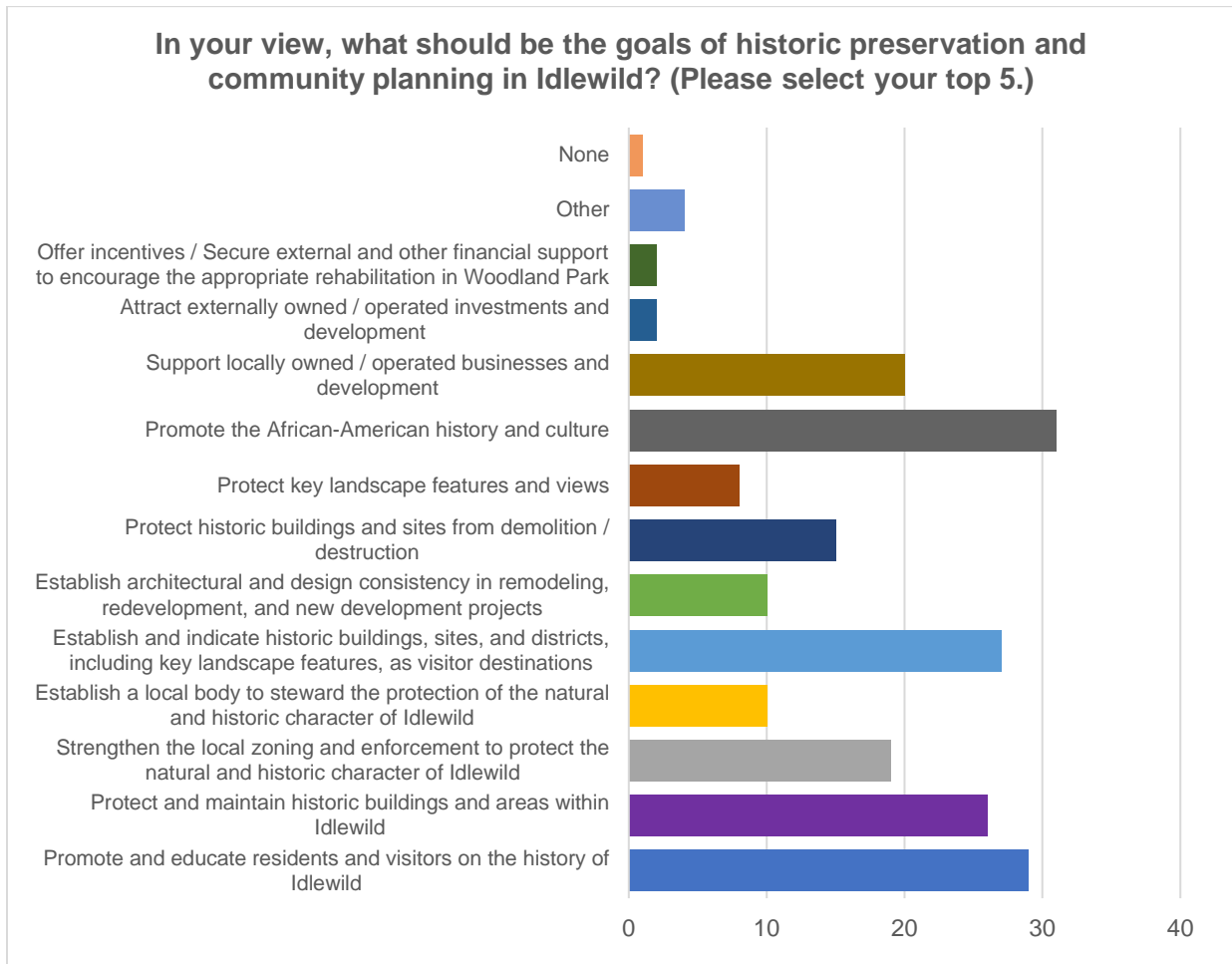
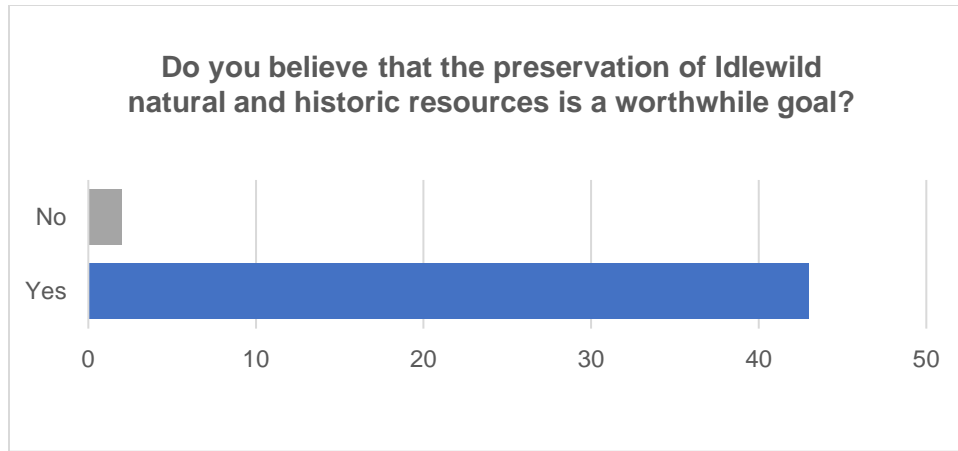


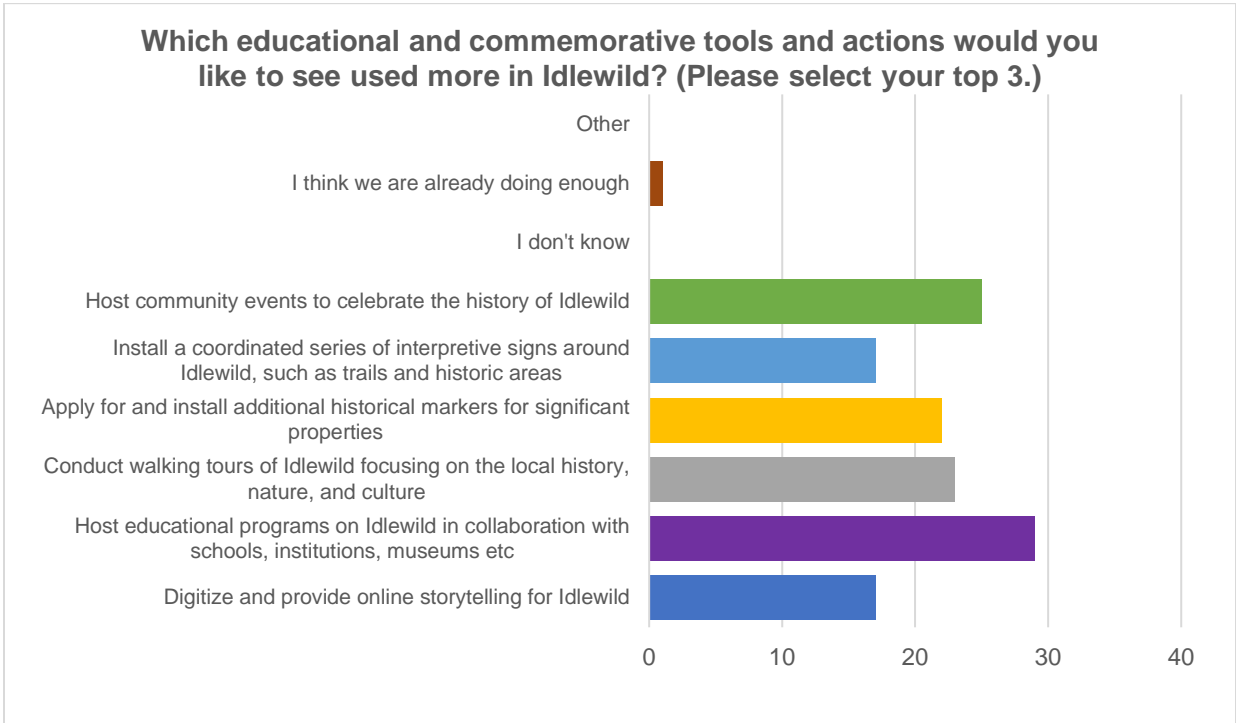
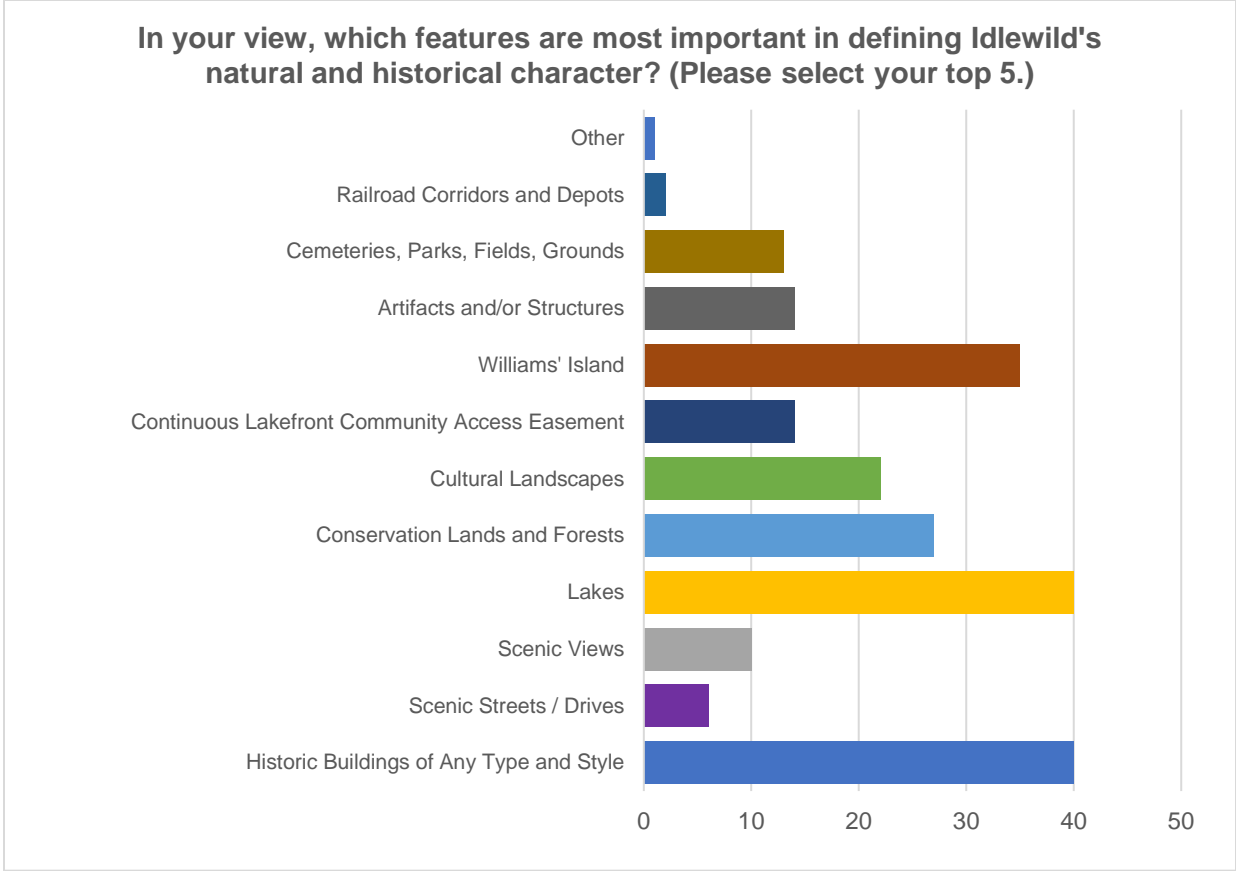
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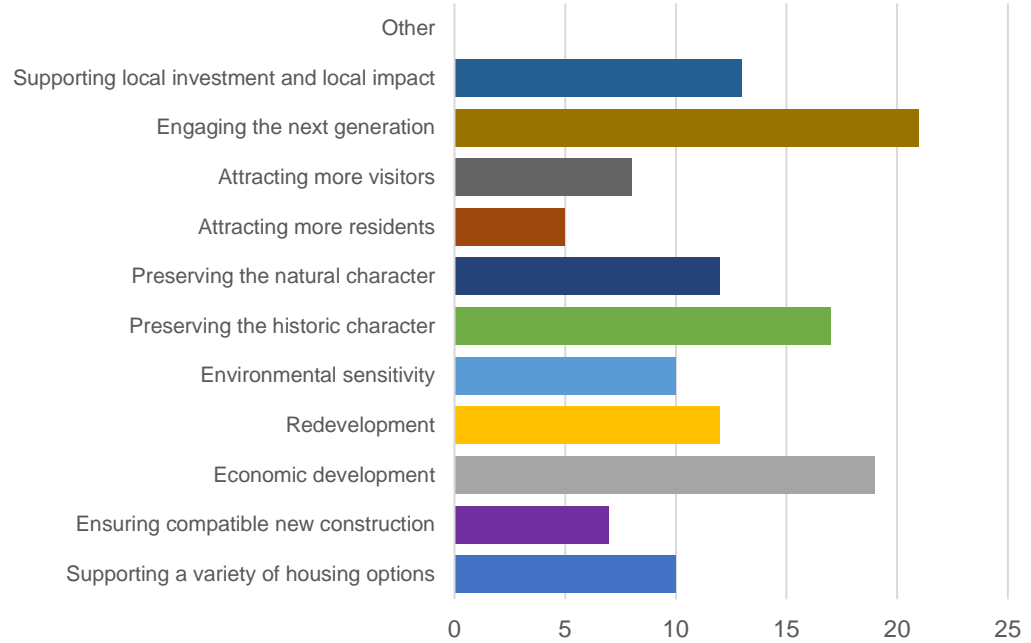








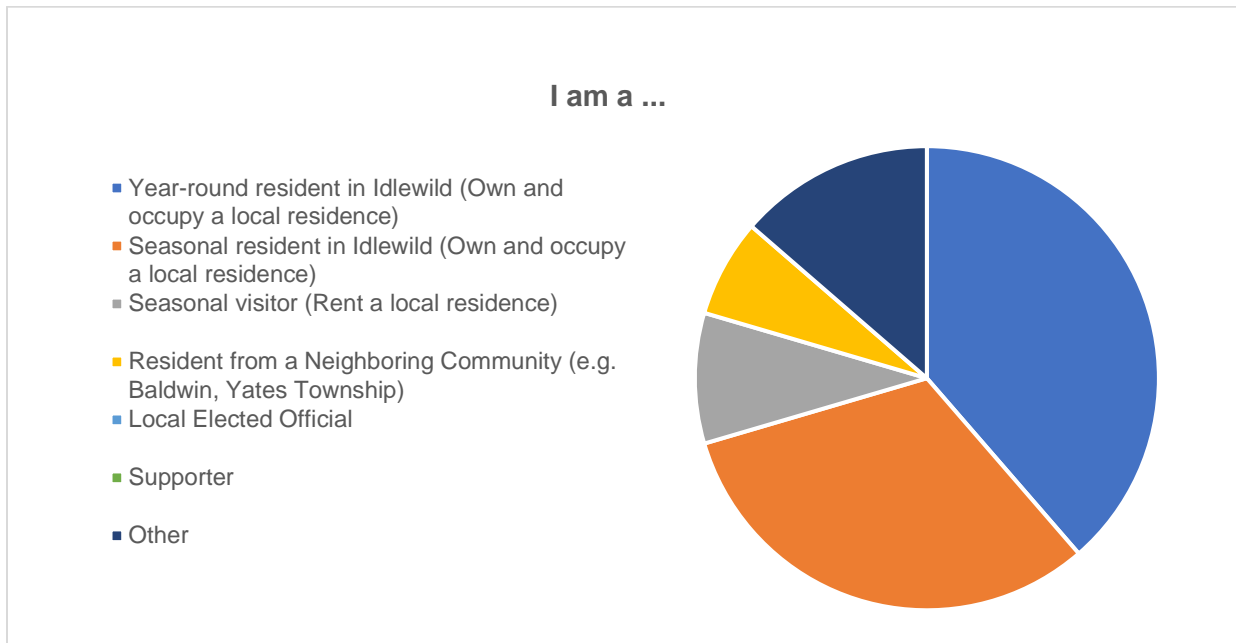
**Historic community planning involves the careful balancing of preservation and development goals. Which of the following development goals should be balanced with preservation? (Please select your top 3.)**



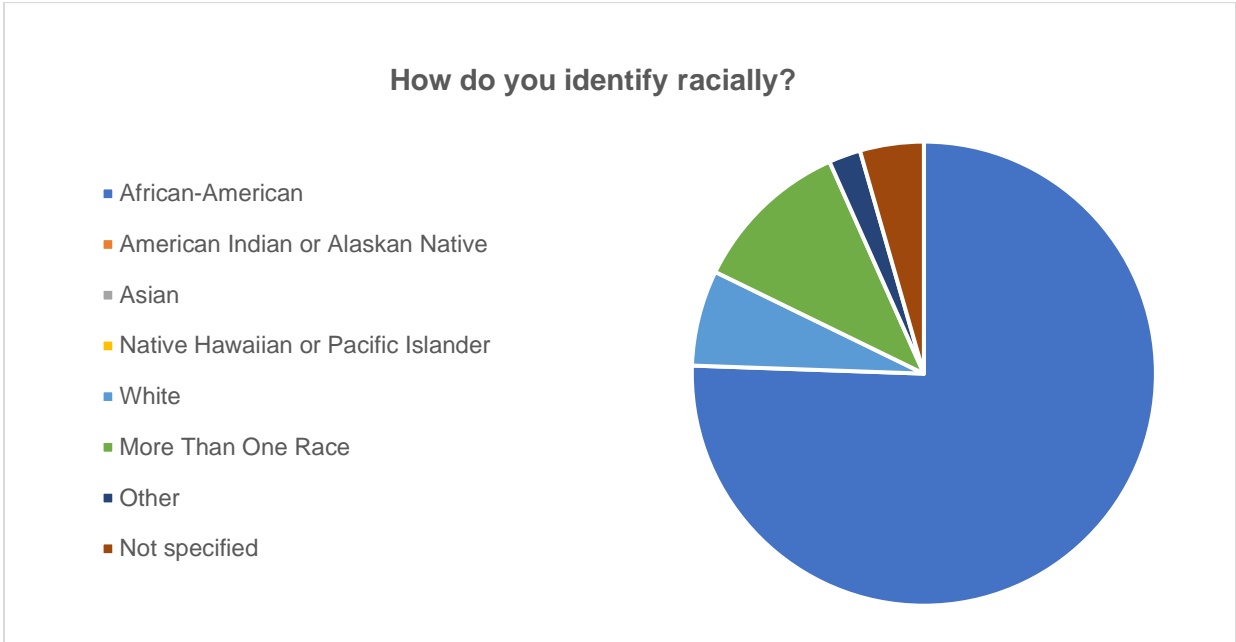
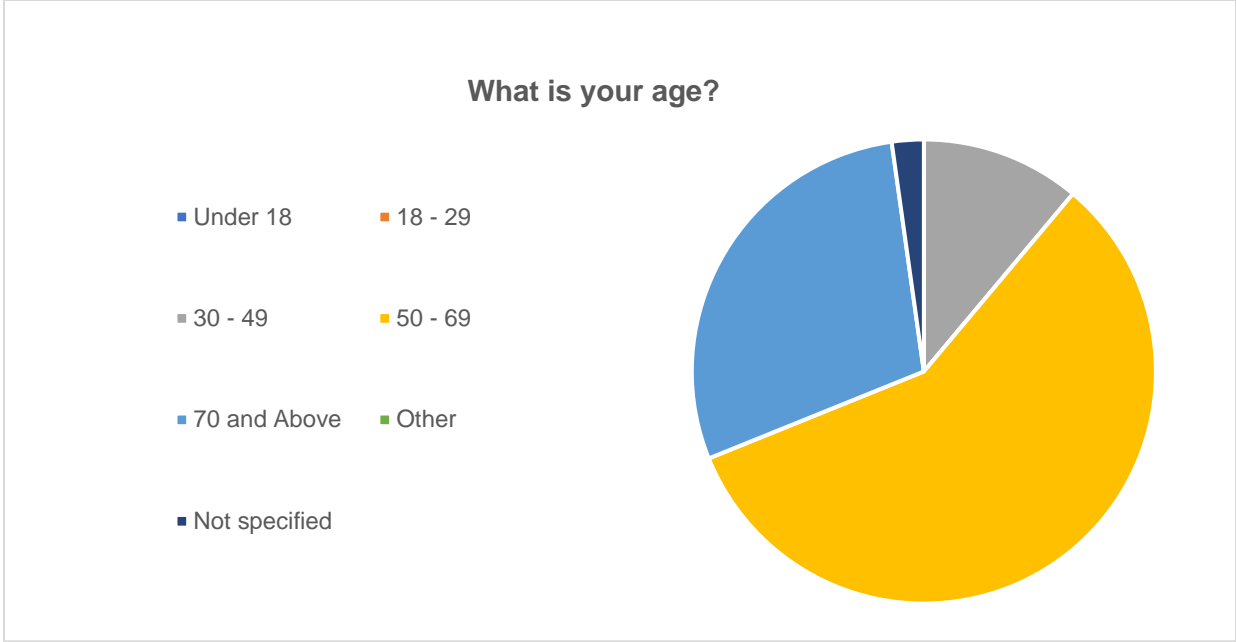
Desired Uses & Amenities	Desired Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Full service) restaurant</li> <li>• Cafe</li> <li>• Grocery store</li> <li>• Gas Station</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Hotel</li> <li>• Restore the Flamingo Club and other historic buildings to benefit community / visitors</li> <li>• Amphitheater for outdoor entertainment</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Community garden</li> <li>• Park for the kids</li> <li>• Walking / Biking Trails</li> <li>• Boat and lake rentals, water sports</li> <li>• Skating rentals, Skating Rink</li> <li>• Horseback riding</li> <li>• Vending machine at the beach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with youth organizations for more youth programming and activities for 20+ and younger</li> <li>• Activities for the kids</li> <li>• More regular historic tours, including home tours</li> <li>• Expand arts and culture, e.g. music and cultural festivals, dance</li> <li>• Artist in residence at the library</li> <li>• Study / Learning projects available to local schools and homeschooling groups at the historic library</li> <li>• Classes on natural resources in the area / Awareness of biodiversity and ecology of Lake Idlewild</li> <li>• Clear poison ivy and weeds at DNR</li> <li>• Winter programs</li> <li>• Incorporate photographs of Idlewild at Township building</li> <li>• Community programming at the Township building: exercise, dance, yoga, sewing, knitting, book clubs</li> <li>• Active Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p>Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idlewild governance independent of Yates Township</li> </ul>	



## RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

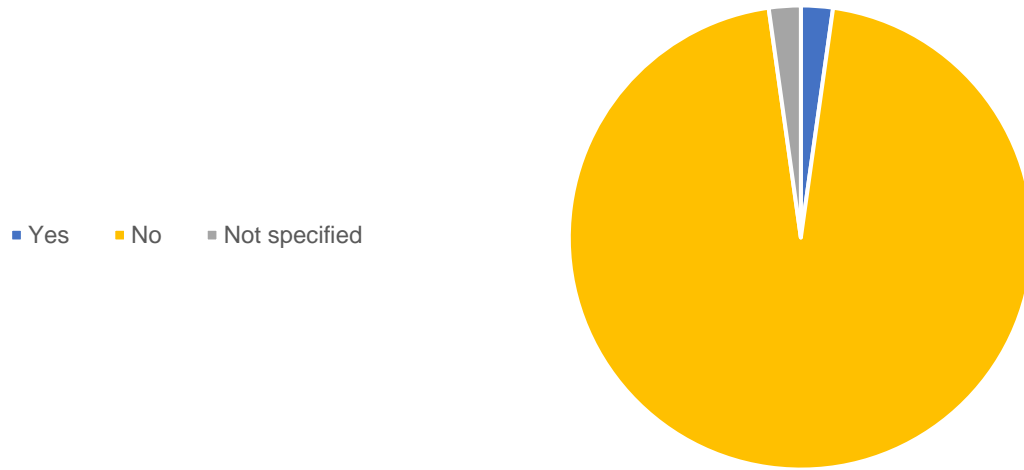


- Seasonal residents and visitors came from various parts of the United States, including:
  - Michigan (Grand Rapids, Northville, Holland, Detroit, Flint, Ann Arbor)
  - Illinois (Chicago)
  - Wisconsin (Milwaukee)
  - Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Paoli)

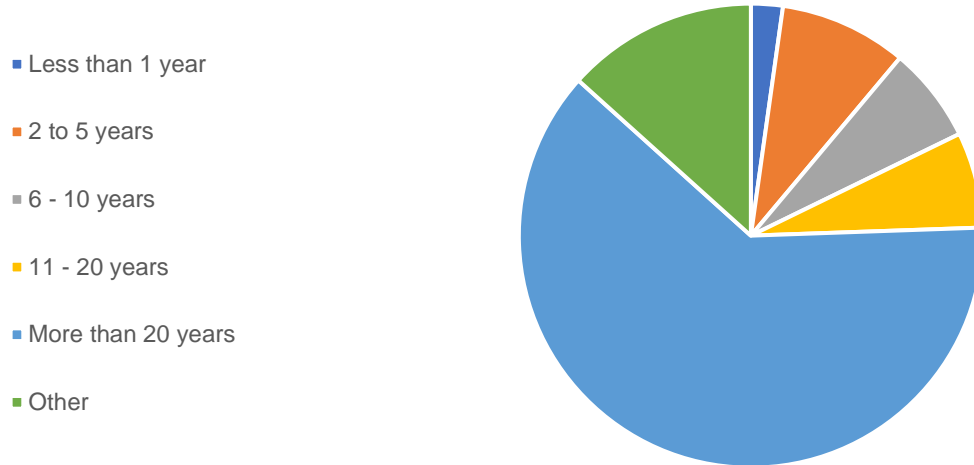




### Do you identify as Hispanic?

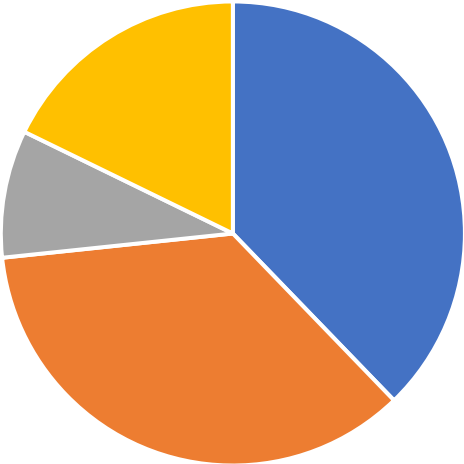


### How long have you visited / lived in Idlewild?



**How did you get to know about Idlewild?**

- I grew up in the area / I visited the area as a child
- Through family / friends
- Through news features and other media
- Other



***In a few sentences, please share with us any distinctive or favorite memories you have of Idlewild.***

Roller skating at lake association, water skiing and boating on Idlewild lake, walking in woods, going to get candy at Lee Jon's with my grandfather, watching sunsets on the lake, having neighbors drop by

John Meeks

Being able to stay at the historic Morton's Hotel is a must for every visitor. The accommodations are similar to what the ancestors may have had many years ago. The energy of Idlewild is unmatched.

Simply the beach

I used to work at that AFC HOME that sits by the blinking light and that's when I discovered Idlewild in 2010

I'm Vice-President of the Idle .African Am Chamber founded by my Dad: John Meeks

fairly new to the Idlewild, have introduced my sons and husband to the area, coming from the city. My sons and I were able to kayak on the Pere Marquette. And loved being able to enjoy a campfire and the peacefulness. Everyone has been very welcoming.

A place of serenity and relaxation

I remember skating every day at Pole skating rink and swimming in Williams Island Beach

Meeting John Meeks and having him share his restorative vision for the redevelopment of Idlewild.

I remember being with my grandfather in Idlewild. As I got older I remember bringing my sons to idlewild. Now enjoy sharing idlewild with my grandchildren. I'm not alone I share the same experience with others in my family.

I will always have fond memories of the beach and I love the look and feel of Idlewild Lake.

Learning to swim, skate, playing games with family

None at this time

Horse back riding past my house each summer. Endless stars in the dark night sky. Light pollution was not a thing. The sounds of the forest seemed so loud yet so beautiful. I remember playing name that sound as a four year old on my porch. I'm 66 and I play it now on the same porch, heavenly.

Seeing the Paradise Club and Flamingo Club and people wanting to see them because they were a part of history. Also, the excitement to have the skating rink brought alot of visitors and excitement.

Skating and yelling out the large windows of the rink at my brother.

Family gatherings & music drifting across lake & the serenity of quiet lake mornings & the beauty of the evening sunsets on the water across the last 40 years.

I grew up south of the city in Newaygo and always had a fascination with the area, but didn't know much about it until recently. What a rich heritage that we need to restore, preserve, and respect.

A clean outdoor calming space

The Polk skating rink, shrimp shack and hotel all on Williams Island beach.

Live music on Williams Island

REFLECTING ON THE CULTURAL HISTORY BEFORE THE MUSIC OF THE FIFTY'S AND SIXTIES, THE FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES, SUNDAY AFTERNOON DISCUSSIONS WITH AUTHOR, PORTS, WRITERS

I grew up in Idlewild every summer all summer. Swimming, boating, skating. I had a chance to make friends from all over, some I keep in touch to this day.

I enjoyed summertime in the 60's and seeing and meeting people from around the country.



My great grandmother moved to Idlewild in 1935. In the early 40's my maternal grandfather built his cottage and my aunt's cottage across the street from him in Idlewild. He, my grandmother, and mother lived there for many years.

My mother attended elementary, junior high, and high school. My mother moved to Detroit. I spent time in Idlewild as an infant and throughout my childhood. I enjoyed roller skating, the party store, and Lake Idlewild.

As an adult, my husband, who has deep roots in Idlewild brought, our children as infants, small children, and teens to Idlewild each summer, staying the entire summer. We enjoyed walking around the lake, visiting aunts, uncles, and grandparents who were full-time Idlewild residents. In addition, we visited Idlewild summer friends.

Our children enjoyed playing, boating, and swimming across Idlewild Lake. The most favorite memory is spending time with my husband's grandmother, Rita Collins, who we affectionately called "Nanny." She made blueberry, peach, and apple cobblers. She always had peach Hi-C and Squirt in her refrigerator. She always had a table set with food for anyone who entered her home. We would enjoy her beautiful flower gardens and lakefront view.

#### Skating and Boating

Williams Island in the Summer time and Polks and Lot Owners Skating Rink

I really enjoyed the festivities' in Idlewild like Mid-Michigan, cookouts at Mr. Lindsay's Park, Parades, the activities on the beach, etc.

I loved the fashion show at the Lot Owners Club and the old Red Rooster Bar where you can meet and greet with fellow Idlewilder's, most of all the Churches of Idlewild.

PAST FOLKS THAT HAVE GONE ON' A YEAR WHEN U COULD NOT COUNT THE FAMILLIES ON THE BEACH &THE FIRST GATHERING AT OUR PARK WHERE DUVERNA SITS NOW HOSTED BY NELLIE BLUE

My 50th birthday party at the Lot Owners.

I have been spending every summer here for 84 years

The history of Blacks and how they did this for blacks if this makes sense

Birch Haven. Sorority cottage of Zeta Phi Beta since the 1930s

Idlewild lake, the tents and the atmosphere

Flamingo Club when it was actually last used

It was fantastic. I was able to visit several homes / structures in the area. I saw lots of things that took me back to the time when It was flourishing.

**What potential uses, amenities, programming, or developments would you like to see in Idlewild in the future, while continuing to honor its historic and natural character?**

Boat and lake rentals, music cultural festivals, senior support
Conservation, black owned homes and business, biodiversity
None
Retail spaces, Walking tours
A stage so they can have concerts
Continue to expand the cultural arts in the community, music, dance, art. Expand classes to learn about the natural resources in the area. Provide a scheduled historic tour on a monthly basis.
Workshops
I would like to see a restaurant, a grocery store, and possibly a community garden
historical tours, small conference center return to resort for all families mor outdoor and beyond season activities develop lakes and parks. More general public appeal.
Home tour/. Connect with established youth organizations and provide access to Idlewild for young people.. investigate creation of a community credit union.
Activities/parties for 20-somethings, store, vending machines at beach, restaurant
Idlewild governance independent of Yates Township
Give the kids something to do. More festivals
Use the old library as a historic library with media options and study/learning projects available to local schools and homeschooling groups. Artist needing a short term study could rent space there and inspire the young while Idlewilds beauty inspires the artist.
Hotel, skating, water sports
Bring the Flamingo Club back to historic past
Posts at lake for info-DNR type w/ pictures of wildlife/water life/ etc. indicative of Lake Idlewild. Natural road service clean up & up keep-lots of poison Ivy & weeds growing around guard rails making them virtually invisible around lake and roadsides.
housing, vacation lodging, restaurants, cafes, outdoor entertainment,
develop the beach, open the Flamingo, provide more recreational opportunities
Mom and Pop grocery store, co-op gardens, rebuilt beach.
A FULL SERVICE RESTAURANT.
AMPHITHEATER, YEAR ROUND MUSEUM, MORE WINTER PROGRAMS
Walk/bike lane around the Lake Idlewild.
Library, grocery store, drive-in
I would like to see the township building with walls of photographs throughout the building. The building would offer activities, classes and workshops on the following: exercise, dance, yoga, sewing, knitting, book clubs, bingo, gardening, recycling, etc. I would like to see the old public library offer computer use, photocopying, book clubs, etc.
Skating, Walking/Biking paths, Horse Back Riding
Historical sites restored
Gas station, few local stores and Skating rink.
build a tourist center to educate Idlewild's next generation and tourists
GOOD WORKING INTERNET MORE BENCHES AS WE STROLL ON HISTORIC WALKS AND BLDGS.
nice gas station, nice hotel/motel
An active chamber of commerce, more restaurants and hotels, Grocery stores
Having m ore information and what potential plan. Mapping prejudice project, see Dade County WI Planning Department Website
Educational learning

Revamping old buildings that benefit the community and visitors. Revitalize for vacationers, revitalize for community usage, Community usage, Open year round for winter usage and visitors, Park for the kids, Open workout gym

Internet, WIFI



**The Idlewild work group has identified the following as potential areas for:**

**(i) Historic Preservation,**

**(ii) Revitalization & Adaptive Reuse.**

**Please share your thoughts on these potential areas and how they could be refined.**

Mixed feelings about reuse flamingo - would that include tear down?
I think the new historic outline is better as it captures a limited area that has most of the property/buildings. Historic district could always be expanded, if needed. People need to realize with a historic district there may be limits on what is allowed when building or renovating.
I would like to see the Flamingo Club be a community center for kids and a place to get food
Hotel Casa Blanca should be removed from preserve listing to reuse and regeneration list. The Hotel Casa Blanca currently has plans and made progress toward rehabilitation and reuse. An outstanding historic property that supports the economic redevelopment for Idlewild.
I'm not sure at this time
This question would need to be re-addressed after more education of each site.
It's a start.
Housing
Library, Casablanca
Great ideas on the map. However, nothing is mentioned about Robert and Margaret Riffe and their contributions to Idlewild/Lot Owner's Youth Center and lakefront property they owned.
The library and Williams Island should be the top priorities



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