

# Lakeshore Neighborhood Plan



*Town of Somers*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Theme for the Plan

When we think about places we have visited or lived, some stand out as models of natural beauty, architectural interest and human comfort. The most satisfying places to live and raise families are neighborhoods that provide safe and diverse housing, outdoor space where people can enjoy the natural environment, and safe places to walk in the shade of a tree canopy.

Great neighborhoods do not grow by accident or without public debate and agreed-upon guidelines. Collaborative planning processes and neighborhood plans are the building blocks of such great communities. Planning helps maintain and promote livable, vital communities.

The Lakeshore Neighborhood is a great place to live. Lake Michigan and the Pike River are beautiful natural amenities that help define the neighborhood, housing is relatively affordable and there is a variety of housing options, and the neighborhood is in close proximity to Kenosha, Racine, and the greater Milwaukee and Chicago areas. Many residents have lived in the Lakeshore Neighborhood for 20 years or more, and some are lifetime residents. Newcomers are also moving into the neighborhood to take advantage of lakeside living and the proximity to jobs in the greater metropolitan areas. The Neighborhood is well loved by long-time residents and newcomers alike; their passion was evident throughout the planning process. This Neighborhood Plan outlines how to maintain what we like about our neighborhood, and identifies key improvements to make our neighborhood even better.

This Plan is intended to capture a shared vision for the Neighborhood. It is a statement reflecting neighborhood pride, and indicates how residents want

the Town and County to manage growth and development in the future. This Plan will help elected officials make decisions that reflect the short- and long-term wishes of the neighborhood. It will help prioritize the Town's human and financial resources to provide the necessary public infrastructure and amenities needed to maintain a high quality of life. In doing so, the Plan also seeks to foster sustainable development that is in keeping with its small-town residential character.

## Why Plan?

- Identify what the neighborhood wants.
- Be proactive rather than reactive: tell developers what you want rather than reacting to their plans.
- Identify and prioritize actions.
- Identify potential funding sources.
- Can lead to better regulations (use, landscaping, quality, design, etc).

This plan is a blueprint for neighborhood action over the next 20 years. Action must come from all segments of the community – business owners, residents, and visitors - not just from Town Government. Everyone must be involved and dedicated to making needed improvements and to continuing those efforts that have already had a positive influence.

## Past Planning Efforts

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There is a long history of community, regional and state planning efforts that relate to the Town of Somers and Lakeshore Neighborhood. These past planning efforts and key findings are summarized below.

The *Master Plan* for the Kenosha Planning District was originally completed in 1967 and later revised in 1995. This planning district covers Kenosha, Somers and Pleasant Prairie. This plan identified the Lakeshore Neighborhood's majority land use as "lower-medium density residential" (2.3 to 3.6 persons per net acre), or single-family housing. The plan also proposed a neighborhood retail/service center on west side of Highway 32 (across from the motor cycle shop), as well as at the intersection of Hwy 32 and County A and a proposed site for governmental/institutional use on a small parcel west of Hwy 32 near County A. The plan also identifies, on the Recommended Land Use Map, a lakefront trail entering the neighborhood from Carthage College and traveling along the railroad corridor north.

The City of Kenosha and the Town of Somers approved the *City of Kenosha/Town of Somers Cooperative Plan* in August 2005. The *Cooperative Plan* was created to provide clear direction for growth management at the city's edge, while making arrangements within the Town Growth Areas (includes the entire Town with the exception of those areas in the City Growth Area) for municipal services. The two municipalities created boundary agreements indicating that property within the City Growth Area may attach to the City of Kenosha without opposition from the Town, while the property within the Town Growth Area may not be annexed or attached to the City. The city growth area currently does not include any part of the Lakeshore Neighborhood but does identify a large parcel at the corner of County Highway E and the Union Pacific Railroad—abutting a southern-central borderline of the neighborhood.

The Kenosha County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan is currently under way and once the Lakeshore Neighborhood plan is complete, it will be included in this plan. The Regional Transportation Systems Plan, within the draft comprehensive plan, also identifies proposed new arterial facilities, bicycle accommodations and road resurfacing. Within the Lakeshore Neighborhood, the following recommendations have been proposed:

- Highway 32, County Road KR and E as a surface arterial streets where bicycle accommodation should be considered when facilities are resurfaced or reconstructed.
- County Road E is recommended to have the right-of-way reserved to accommodate future improvements (additional lanes or new facilities).

## Commuter Rail

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There are also strong efforts to establish commuter rail from Kenosha to Milwaukee. The Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail has a proposed station located in Somers, at one of three proposed sites. The rail line would run along the existing Union Pacific Railroad line. This Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan Section B: Somers December 2006 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each site location. The Lakeshore Committee expressed the following preference:

- Preferred: The SW intersection/corner of Highway 32 and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, west of the railroad tracks.
- Not Preferred: Land west of Fire Station II on 12th Street. (This was the location recommended by the KRM study).

One of the major advantages described for all station areas is the large amount of undeveloped land on the west side of the railroad, which provides an opportunity for transit-supportive land uses, as well as the open space potential provided by the Pike Creek watershed. On the other hand, all stations would

potentially impact the existing single-family neighborhoods east of the railroad due to future development pressures and market demand.

### A Community Process

The planning process set out to celebrate and protect the diversity of lifestyles and interests within our neighborhood, build on the strengths of our community in achieving our goals, and guide the future of the neighborhood.

In order to fulfill this charge, the Town hired Crispell-Snyder, Inc. to help facilitate a public planning process and prepare a plan that truly reflects the desires and goals of the neighborhood residents. Crispell-Snyder took seriously the charge to engage as many residents as possible in the planning process. Their job was not merely to produce a report, but to reach out and collaborate with the community, to educate residents about neighborhood planning, and to involve them in developing the plan. These goals stem from the fundamental aim of the planning process: to engage residents in building community consensus for a vision for the Lakeshore Neighborhood.

Throughout the process, Crispell-Snyder was available for general communication through e-mail messages and phone calls to help coordinate the project. The Town's website was also updated to inform citizens of the planning process. This ensured that everyone in the town had an opportunity to stay updated on the process, even if they weren't able to attend specific planning meetings.

### Kick-off and Visioning Workshop

The planning process began with a neighborhood-visioning workshop and ice cream social held on May 29, 2008. The workshop was designed to create excitement about the project, to provide information about the planning process and background information for the neighborhood. To help conduct the planning process the neighborhood was divided

into three sub-areas and the boundaries were discussed and determined during the workshop. Participants of the workshop were then divided into groups based on these sub-areas and encouraged to brainstorm what they would like their neighborhood to look like in 20 years. These ideas were used to construct a vision statement for the neighborhood. Participants of the workshop were also encouraged to fill out applications for the Steering Committee. Notes from this meeting, including individual responses to the discussion questions/answers, can be found in Appendix A.



*About 60 people attended the visioning workshop and ice cream social held at the end of May.*

### Steering Committee Meetings

The Plan Commission Chair and Town Administrator were given the task of selecting individuals to

participate in the Steering Committee. Out of the 15 people who submitted applications for the Steering Committee, nine members were selected. To ensure a good mix of people from each part of the neighborhood, three Steering Committee members were selected from each of the three Neighborhood Sub Areas. The Steering Committee was involved in reviewing work throughout the process, offering guidance for engaging the public, and identifying key people in the neighborhood for the Stakeholder Interviews.

Crispell-Snyder conducted four steering committee meetings during the summer and early fall of 2008.

#### Neighborhood Sub-Area Work Sessions

Separate work sessions for each of the three neighborhood sub-areas were held on June 25th, 26th and 30th. The work sessions began out in the neighborhood at a specified site to discuss and visualize what the neighborhood might look like in 20 years. The sessions moved inside where the groups were provided opportunities for discussion of sub-area issues, visions, plan priorities, and what types of commercial development might fit best into the neighborhood.

#### Stakeholder Interviews

In August Crispell-Snyder conducted interviews with key stakeholders identified by Town Staff. These interviews covered a wide range of topics and were designed to solicit additional insight into key issues. The individuals were a mix of home owners and business owners in the neighborhood. See Appendix B for interview results.

#### Market Understanding

Crispell-Snyder, in conjunction with the Taurean Group, conducted a market and trade area analysis to investigate demographics, spending patterns and retail trade potential in the neighborhood. A redevelopment suitability analysis was also conducted to test the market potential for uses as they relate to the goals and priorities discussed in the work sessions.

#### Open House and Plan Adoption

Based on input from the public and extensive data and analysis provided by the planning consultants, the Plan Commission worked to identify specific goals, objectives, and actions for the plan. A draft plan was completed in October and an open house was held to again seek public input. The plan was then revised based on comments received at the open house, and a final plan was presented to the Town's Plan Commission at their meeting of December 8, 2008, and a recommendation of adoption was sent to the Town Board. The Town Board at their meeting of December 9, 2008 tabled the document and sent it back to staff for revisions and a follow-up second Public Hearing.

#### Relationship to Other Planning Efforts

As part of the state's 1999-2000 biennial budget, Governor Thompson signed into law what is referred to as the "Smart Growth" legislation (1999 Wisconsin Act 9). Smart Growth legislation significantly changed the stature of comprehensive planning in the state and placed it very high on the "to do" list. Although state statutes do not require local governmental units to adopt comprehensive plans consistent with the requirements, it provides that if a local governmental unit does not do so by January 1, 2010 it may not enforce existing ordinances or adopt new ordinances, plans or regulations that in anyway affect land use.

In March 2006, Kenosha County was awarded a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Administration to develop a comprehensive plan for Kenosha County and nine participating local governments, including the Town of Somers. Kenosha County will work with local governments, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and Kenosha County UW-Extension to develop a Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan.

In order to complete the requirements of the comprehensive plan for the Town of Somers, the Town decided to conduct a number of neighborhood plans. Once completed, the Lakeshore Neighborhood Plan, along with the other neighborhood plans, will be incorporated into the Kenosha County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan.

## Vision Statement

In 2035, we envision a diverse, vibrant, and walkable Lakeshore Neighborhood with a strong sense of identity. Houses and apartment buildings are well-maintained and people take pride in their homes and neighborhood. A mix of single-family homes, condos, duplexes, and apartments allows residents to choose a home tailored to their specific life-style choice and housing need. All new homes, regardless of type, are high quality and designed to fit into the single-family character of the neighborhood. Multi-family homes are scattered in appropriate locations throughout the neighborhood, rather than clustered together. Homes are unique and there are no “cookie cutter” subdivisions or housing complexes. New homes have private yards or access to shared open space. Most homes along Sheridan Road have deep front yards to help maintain the small-town character of the road and reduce the intrusion of traffic noise into people's living space.

In this future vision, the Lakeshore Neighborhood is home to a centralized area of small commercial businesses. The “neighborhood commercial center” is focused on a new area at HWY "E" and Sheridan Road. The committee felt it could support this transition with down zoning of other commercial properties to multi-family to encourage redevelopment. Shops and services meet the daily needs of neighborhood residents. A cozy coffee shop and small locally-owned café overlook the lake. A convenience store offers a limited selection of groceries and other daily necessities for neighborhood residents. These attractive one- and two-story commercial buildings contribute to the aesthetics and residential character of the neighborhood. Traditional architectural styles, natural building materials, and attractive landscaping create an inviting commercial center that is compatible with surrounding residential properties. Home-based businesses and live-work opportunities contribute to a vibrant neighborhood-oriented economy.



The Lake is a defining feature of the neighborhood. Lake views are preserved by limiting building heights along the east side of Sheridan Road. On the west side, a few three-story condominium buildings provide amazing lake views. Publicly accessible lookouts ensure that all residents and visitors can enjoy the beauty of Lake Michigan. Pike River also contributes to the “water theme” of the neighborhood, but no public access is proposed.

Antique-style streetlights line Sheridan Road and the neighborhood commercial center, which offer a soft glow of light that does not intrude into residential areas. Trees line Sheridan Road, providing shade in the summer and helping to “enclose” the roadway. Sidewalk/pedestrian paths line the road on both sides, and Sheridan Road has been painted and signed for bicycles to improve access and safety. The overall effect is an attractive neighborhood streetscape that encourages drivers to slow down. A 35 MPH speed limit and crosswalks at key intersections further create a safe street that is pedestrian friendly and neighborhood oriented. A potential bus route from Kenosha to Racine could further enhance transportation options for neighborhood residents.



# Housing

## Overview - Motels vs Multi Family

The Lakeshore Neighborhood is predominantly a single-family neighborhood with several scattered pockets of multi-family development. Residents strongly support maintaining the single-family character of the neighborhood, while recognizing that allowing some multi-family development will help to spark redevelopment of key properties. Down zoning of existing scattered commercial properties to multi-family would be encouraged. Existing and future multi-family residential development could help to provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of long-time residents and newcomers.



*The Lakeshore Neighborhood is predominantly single-family, with many older homes. More recent additions to the neighborhood include a number of multi-family units.*

The Lakeshore Neighborhood has a number of older single-family homes, which are full of character but also in need of rehabilitation. Roughly 40 percent of housing units in The Lakeshore Neighborhood were constructed prior to 1960. Many of these older homes are beautiful, but would benefit from renovation. Other older homes are former vacation cottages that are generally very small and in some cases falling into disrepair. Renovating, or in some cases tearing down and rebuilding, these older homes will improve the quality of housing in the neighborhood as well as improve the physical appearance of the neighborhood. The more recent additions to the housing stock have included a number of multi-family units, as well as several new single family homes along the lake.

Future housing demand will be influenced by changes in household size, consumer preferences, and increasing development pressure from Chicago. Projections for the area indicate that there are expected to be 1,592 households in The Lakeshore Neighborhood by 2035, suggesting a demand for about 1,640 total housing units (based on Taurean Group projections).

There are currently about 1,075 housing units in the Lakeshore Neighborhood, suggesting a need for about 25 new housing units per year. These projections are obviously out of line with what the neighborhood has called for. Accommodating this number of new housing units in the neighborhood would require a level of density that is not in keeping with the existing character of the neighborhood. It's important to understand, however, that this demand for new housing exists. These projections are based on Scan US numbers, a common source of demographic projections used by developers. Developers see the

potential for a growing housing market in the neighborhood and are likely to push for higher density housing unless appropriate regulations are in place to protect the neighborhood.

This chapter highlights the types of housing currently found in the Lakeshore Neighborhood and describes opportunities for new housing development in the neighborhood. Specific goals, objectives, and policies for appropriate housing development are identified.

<b>Table 1. Lakeshore Neighborhood Housing Facts (2000)</b>	
Total households	852
Average household size	2.19
Average household size (owner occupied)	2.40
Average household size (renter occupied)	1.98
Total housing units	900
Percent owner-occupied units	51%
Percent rental-occupied units	49%
Median value of owner occupied units	\$114,000
Median rent	\$643

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

**Table 2. Year of Construction**

Year Constructed	Lakeshore Neighborhood		Town of Somers	Kenosha County
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
1999 to 2000	0	0.0	2.2	1.9
1995 to 1998	86	9.8	8.5	7.5
1990 to 1994	73	8.3	11.7	9.1
1980 to 1989	76	8.7	9.8	8.9
1970 to 1979	151	17.2	17.5	14.7
1960 to 1969	142	16.2	16.6	13.3
1940 to 1959	217	24.7	20.9	22.9
Prior to 1940	132	15.1	12.7	21.6
Total	877	100.0	100	100.0

Source: US Census of Population and Housing

## Existing Housing Stock

### Age of Homes

The Lakeshore Neighborhood has a high percentage of older homes, with 15 percent of homes in the community having been constructed prior to 1940 and a total of 40 percent constructed before 1960. Table 2 shows construction years for the Lakeshore Neighborhood, Town of Somers and Kenosha County as of March 2000.

Older homes require more maintenance. If homeowners are not able to afford costly maintenance projects, homes can show signs of disrepair and property values may go down. Participants at the public workshop identified the rehabilitation of decaying homes as a top priority for the community. Rehabilitating the existing housing stock can revitalize the neighborhood and improve overall housing quality.

### Types of Housing Units

A little over half of the housing units in the Lakeshore Neighborhood are single family homes, and 51 percent of all housing units are owner-occupied (down about 9 percent from 1990). Multi-family units make up 37 percent of all housing units, with duplexes and manufactured homes making up the remainder of the housing stock. Table D-1 shows that the Lakeshore Neighborhood has a higher percentage of multi-family units than the Town of Somers and Kenosha County as of 2000.

The amount of multi-family housing is increasing. The amount of new multi-family construction has raised concerns among neighborhood residents. In general, people at the public visioning workshop felt that there was too much multi-family housing.

**Table 3. Types of Housing Units, 2000**

Housing Type	Lakeshore Neighborhood		Town of Somers	Kenosha County
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Single-Family	450	51.3	63.6	66.7
Duplex	52	5.9	3.5	10.9
Multi-Family	326	37.1	24.9	19.0
Manufactured Homes	49	5.6	8.1	3.4
Other	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	877	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: US Census of Population and Housing

Despite the general desire to increase single-family housing in the neighborhood, multi-family housing will likely play a role in meeting future housing demand and sparking reinvestment in the neighborhood. One reason is that property values are generally high in the neighborhood, making single family housing development on a large scale unlikely.

Lake front properties, lake views, and proximity to Chicago and Milwaukee make land very expensive in the neighborhood when compared to surrounding areas. Property values are likely to increase with population growth in the greater metro areas. Higher-density housing allows developers to make a profit when land is expensive, which spurs redevelopment of land that might otherwise sit vacant or underutilized.

Demographic data and trends indicate that there is demand for higher-density housing in the neighborhood. There is money to be made in these types of projects, which is why developers are building them. Single-family homes, on the other hand, generally have a lower profit margin, which means that developers are unlikely to build single-family homes when land values are very high. New single-family homes in the

neighborhood will likely be built one at a time by individual property owners. This means that single-family housing is unlikely to result in large scale changes in the neighborhood.

This is not to say that new single-family homes won't be built in the neighborhood, or that the neighborhood will or should become predominantly multi-family. The intent of this plan is to promote single-family residential development to the greatest extent practical, while still recognizing the role that multi-family development will likely play in sparking necessary redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, and/or blighted properties.

Location and context sensitive design are the keys to successful higher-density housing developments that fit into the character of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. At the vision workshop and sub-area workshops, residents expressed a strong desire for designing new multi-family housing to look more like single family housing. Residents also feel that housing should not be more than two stories on the east (lakeshore) side of Sheridan Road, except potentially within the neighborhood commercial center, and no more than three stories on the west side of Sheridan Road.

## Housing Demand

*The intent of this plan is to promote single-family residential development to the greatest extent practical, while still recognizing the role that multi-family development will likely play in sparking necessary redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, and/or blighted properties.*

## Vacancy Rates

Vacancy rates reflect housing supply and demand. It's a difficult balance between too high and too low a vacancy rate. If the housing supply is insufficient it is likely that housing costs will increase, making it more difficult to find affordable housing. If there is too much housing, vacant homes and apartments can create blight problems and undermine the viability of the housing market. A vacancy rate of 3 percent (1.5 percent for owned units

and 4.5 percent for rentals) is considered healthy and able to support housing needs. In the Lakeshore Neighborhood the vacancy rate in 2000 was 5.5 percent, which is higher than the rate for the Town of Somers at 4.2 percent, and lower than the rate for Kenosha County at 6.6 percent (US Census).

### **Future Housing Demand**

The Town of Somers is located in the high-growth corridor between Milwaukee and Chicago. With lakefront and lake view properties, the Lakeshore Neighborhood will likely experience much greater development pressure than the rest of the Town. This creates both a significant challenge and an important opportunity.

On the one hand, residents of the Lakeshore Neighborhood genuinely like where they live. While there are some changes they would like to see, generally speaking, people would like to keep the existing character of the neighborhood. Because of this, increasing development pressure can feel threatening and has the potential to undermine what people value most about the neighborhood.

On the other hand, high development pressure means that developers will be willing to go the extra mile to get development proposals approved. With the right plan and regulations, this can translate into high-quality housing with nice amenities (like sidewalks, attractive street lights, landscaping, and open space). New development can also bring about change in the neighborhood where it *is* needed. Throughout the process, residents discussed the need to redevelop some of the under-performing uses in the neighborhood.

It is projected that there will be demand in the Lakeshore Neighborhood for approximately 1,640 total housing units by 2035. This is about 50 percent (565 units) more housing units than there are today! This amount of growth would undermine the character of the neighborhood and is not in keeping with the recommendations of this plan. The

projections do, however, indicate a strong demand for more housing in the neighborhood.

### **Affordable Housing**

By its very nature, lakefront/lake view living is generally *not* affordable for low- to moderate-income households. The Lakeshore Neighborhood, however, has a history of being affordable and many lower income people live in the neighborhood. Many of the lower income families in the neighborhood are long-time residents that are very invested in the community. Ensuring that these residents can continue to afford quality housing in the neighborhood is an important component of this plan. Balancing the affordable housing needs of residents with the desire to improve the aesthetic appeal and amenities of the neighborhood is critical.

The generally accepted definition of “affordable” is that a household should pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. According to the US Census, 30 percent of renters and 17 percent of homeowners in The Lakeshore Neighborhood have affordability problems. When households spend more than they can afford on housing, they may not have enough left over for other necessities such as food, clothing, and transportation.

Owner-occupied housing is generally more affordable for neighborhood residents than rental housing. Single-family homes have been more affordable in the neighborhood than in the Town of Somers and Kenosha County as a whole. According to the 2000 US Census, the average home value in The Lakeshore Neighborhood was \$114,000, whereas the average home value in the Town of Somers was \$151,700 and in Kenosha County was \$120,900. Recent sales data suggests that home prices have risen substantially since 2000 in the neighborhood, the town, and the county.

According to the Wisconsin Realtors Association, the median home sale price between 2000 and 2007 in the Town of Somers was \$179,798. According to local sales records for the Lakeshore Neighborhood, the median home price in the Lakeshore Neighborhood between 2000 and 2007 was \$145,000.

The quality of both rental and owner-occupied housing is also a major issue facing the community. Many apartments and single family homes in the Lakeshore Neighborhood are falling into disrepair, devaluing them and making them more attractive as rental/non occupied owner housing. Run down homes and apartments may be cheap, but they don't meet the need for affordable quality housing. Helping property owners to fix up their homes and apartments is one way to improve the quality of housing stock without significantly increasing the cost of housing.

### **Senior Housing**

The special housing needs of the elderly must be an important part of a community's commitment to provide appropriate housing options for all of its residents. The availability of special facilities is especially important to residents who want to stay in the community and remain near family and friends. As more baby boomers age we can expect to see a significant increase in retirees in the coming years. This population will place demands on government, service systems, and the community-at-large in a multitude of ways.

Most seniors want to stay in their homes, or "age in place," as long as they can. Many seniors may also wish to move into smaller homes to reduce costs and regular upkeep. Providing a variety of housing options in the neighborhood allows older residents to transition to more suitable senior-oriented housing without having to leave the neighborhood.

There also may be opportunities to tap into the demand for senior housing as a redevelopment option for the neighborhood. Lakefront property could be redeveloped as housing and/or assisted living for seniors who have family and friends in the greater metropolitan areas.

**Table 4. Home Values in The Lakeshore Neighborhood**

Value	Lakeshore Neighborhood		Town of Somers	Kenosha County
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
\$49,999 or less	26	7.4%	1.9%	1.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	124	35.4%	15.5%	30.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	90	25.7%	31.5%	38.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	64	18.3%	22.5%	18.7%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	46	13.1%	23.1%	9.0%
\$300,000 or more	0	0.0%	5.5%	2.5%
Total	350	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Median Value		\$114,000	\$151,700	\$120,900

*Source: US Census of Population and Housing (Summary Tape File 1A)*

## Housing Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a comprehensive approach for achieving the neighborhood's future vision for housing. The order in which these goals, objectives, and policies are listed does not necessarily denote their priority.

### Goals

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*Goals are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Neighborhood should approach housing issues.*

- G1.1** Provide safe, affordable, appealing housing for all residents of the Lakeshore Neighborhood, regardless of their income or whether they rent or own their homes.
- G1.2** Provide a variety of architectural styles and housing densities.
- G1.3** Maintain the single-family residential character of the neighborhood.
- G1.4** Create safe and accessible housing on the upper floors of buildings in the neighborhood commercial center.
- G1.5** Establish attractive multi-family housing that provides adequate green space and fits with the surrounding single-family character of the neighborhood.
- G1.6** Maintain an adequate supply of high quality housing options for seniors in close proximity to neighborhood shops, restaurants, and services.
- G1.7** Encourage new single-family housing development in the neighborhood by redeveloping and down zoning existing commercial properties.

### Objectives

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*Objectives suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishments of an objective contribute to the fulfillment of a goal.*

- O1.1** Conserve and improve the quality of the existing owner-occupied and rental housing stock.
- O1.2** Increase the supply of independent and assisted-living facilities for seniors, with particular emphasis on building senior housing that is close to shops, restaurants, and services.
- O1.3** Encourage private housing rehabilitation efforts and reinvestment in neighborhoods.
- O1.4** Scatter new multi-family residential development in strategic locations throughout the neighborhood, rather than clustering it all together.
- O1.5** Discourage “cookie cutter” development, where the houses or apartment buildings all look alike.
- O1.6** Establish new housing that is built to last, fits in with the character of the neighborhood, and is aesthetically pleasing.
- O1.7** Encourage new homes along Sheridan Road to be built with adequate front yards to limit the impact of Sheridan Road on these residences.

## Policies

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*Policies are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives.*

- P1.1** Provide better enforcement of existing property maintenance ordinance, which governs such things as garbage and refuse, excessive weeds, conditions that harbor rodents, and graffiti.
- P1.2** Encourage/require diversity of building styles and color for new residential development.
- P1.3** Develop design guidelines for residential development that encourages/requires high quality building materials, diversity in design, and single-family style.
- P1.4** Modify existing zoning regulations to appropriately locate different types of housing in the neighborhood. This would be through Kenosha County as the Town is under County Zoning.

# Neighborhood Commercial Center

The purpose of neighborhood commercial center is to provide a location for the development of planned retail shopping and service facilities which are located and designed expressly to serve the needs of the adjacent residential neighborhood. The center is intended for retail commercial uses that have a neighborhood orientation and that supplies daily necessities. Such a facility should not be so large or so broad in scope of services as to attract substantial amounts of trade from outside the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Vision Statement describes small shops and businesses located in a specific “neighborhood commercial center” (see Map 2). The idea behind this neighborhood commercial center is to cluster commercial development to a specific location along Sheridan Road, rather than perpetuating scattered patterns of development. The neighborhood commercial center is intended to result from redevelopment of existing commercial properties.

This chapter provides a conceptual description of what this redevelopment might look like (also see Figure 1). It’s important to note that these descriptions are not intended to dictate specific designs or uses, but rather convey the type of redevelopment that residents would like to see in their neighborhood. Actual redevelopment of these properties is dependent on market conditions and the interests of private property owners. When and if these properties are redeveloped, however, these descriptions should be used to guide the site design and uses.

*The “neighborhood commercial center” consists of an existing commercial area in the neighborhood that could be redeveloped in the future with small-scale shops and neighborhood-oriented businesses. Actual redevelopment of these properties is dependent on market conditions and the interests of private property owners.*

## Central Neighborhood Commercial Center

The central portion of the neighborhood (around County Highway E) offers the greatest potential for creating a true neighborhood commercial center providing services to the entire neighborhood. Uses in this area would be oriented specifically towards providing services to local residents (e.g. friendly neighborhood business). There are several underperforming and vacant properties in this area. They are best described as primary redevelopment sites. The sites include existing commercial uses on both sides of Sheridan Road, beginning roughly at the intersection of CTH E and Sheridan Road. Development in this area should be oriented towards Sheridan Road, with commercial buildings set close to the road on both sides and parking in rear. On the west side of the road, redevelopment could include condominium and/or apartments, as well as perhaps dining opportunities or retail

shopping, and services. Redevelopment sites extend back some distance from the road, allowing for multiple options for site design. One option would be to orient new commercial uses around a commons, with parking along the edge of a landscaped public square.



*The Neighborhood Commercial Center should feature small-scale buildings that do not detract from the residential character of the neighborhood. Buildings set close to the street edge, landscaping, and pedestrian-scale are all important design components.*

### Potentially Viable Businesses in the Lakeshore Neighborhood Area

The types of business that could thrive in the Lakeshore Neighborhood will be influenced by a variety of factors. Population growth in the neighborhood and surrounding areas will expand existing business opportunities simply by providing more customers. We also expect, however, that there will be some changes in the types of businesses found in the neighborhood. Residents have expressed a strong interest in having businesses that are more oriented towards providing services for the neighborhood.

Based on the population size, location, and general characteristics of the Lakeshore Neighborhood and surrounding areas, you would expect to see certain types of businesses located here. Currently, some of these businesses are found in smaller numbers than you would typically expect. These underserved markets represent excellent opportunities for redeveloping commercial properties in the Lakeshore Neighborhood. By comparing the types of businesses found in the Lakeshore Neighborhood to the types of businesses expected in similar communities and

throughout the state, we can better understand and assess the specific opportunities for growth. This analysis, combined with the expected business opportunities associated with project population growth, suggests that the commercial uses listed below would be particularly viable in the Lakeshore Neighborhood. Obviously, not all of these uses are necessarily appropriate for the Lakeshore Neighborhood. At the sub area workshops, residents “voted” on what types of uses they think would work best in the neighborhood. The results of this voting exercise are noted for each “economically viable” use listed below.

- *Food markets* - mixed reaction from neighborhood residents
- *Electronics/computers* - not included in voting exercise
- *Restaurants* - residents generally would like restaurants in their neighborhood, as long as they're not fast food restaurants (although people felt that an ice cream shop would be great). Some people expressed concerns about noise from restaurants, particularly those with outdoor seating.
- *Small Banks Branch/finance* – residents would like this in their neighborhood
- *Real estate* – not specifically included in the voting exercise, although some residents expressed support from small business offices.
- *Other business service* – not specifically included in the voting exercise, although residents discussed that small service businesses would generally be appropriate for the neighborhood.
- *Entertainment/recreation* – residents would generally like indoor recreation facilities in their neighborhood.
- *Medical/health services* – mixed reaction from neighborhood residents.
- *Other business and professional services*.

Figure 1. Neighborhood Commercial Center Redevelopment Concept



## Neighborhood Commercial Center Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a comprehensive approach for achieving the neighborhood's future vision for the neighborhood commercial center. The order in which these goals, objectives, and policies are listed does not necessarily denote their priority.**

### Goals

*Goals are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach preservation and development issues.*

- G2.1** Create an appealing and safe commercial and service environment, with a comfortable pedestrian orientation.
- G2.2** Diversify, revitalize and promote the neighborhood economy.

### Objectives

*Objectives suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishments of an objective contribute to the fulfillment of a goal.*

- O2.1** Provide continuity between the old and the new in the built environment. Retain the scale and the unique character of the neighborhood.
- O2.2** Strengthen the neighborhood's identity, image and sense of place.
- O2.3** Improve the visual and environmental quality of the neighborhood, with an emphasis on the pedestrian environment.

### Policies

*Policies are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives.*

- P2.1** Develop the appropriate zoning district and regulatory framework to implement the neighborhood commercial center recommendation of this plan.
- P2.2** Retain the older, historically valuable buildings in and around the neighborhood. Encourage adaptive re-use of older buildings by promoting rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures that contribute to the overall design character of the neighborhood.
- P2.3** Maintain the existing scale of the neighborhood. New construction should fit into the context of the existing built environment and complement the character of the neighborhood. Encourage infill development that is compatible with existing uses and improves the pedestrian environment and the streetscape. Permit taller buildings only if they are in scale with other structures in the area.
- P2.4** Establish specific design review criteria and regulations that express the need for projects to respect and preserve the character of the neighborhood.
- P2.5** Develop a detailed streetscape plan. Create urban spaces, sidewalks, and other amenities to enhance the pedestrian environment and increase the number of people who will use the neighborhood commercial center.

- P2.6** As part of private and public development and renovation projects, attempt to maximize green spaces, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping in the development plans.
- P2.7** Support entrance and facade remodeling on existing buildings that will contribute to the pedestrian environment and the character of the neighborhood center.
- P2.8** Develop Town programs to improve the pedestrian and aesthetic nature of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. Encourage cooperation between the business community and the town in the establishment of an attractive, functional, meaningful, and successful commercial center.
- P2.9** Adopt development guidelines that promote linkages and better connections between the neighborhood and its commercial center.
- P2.10** Provide opportunities for small businesses.
- P2.11** Enhance the safety and security of people in the neighborhood.
- P2.12** Provide safe, conveniently spaced and weather protected bus stops which attract potential transit riders with connections to adjacent colleges, Kenosha, and Racine.

# Land Use and Neighborhood Character

## Overview

Land use is one of the most important factors in determining the character and livability of a neighborhood. Underutilized land and incompatible mixes of land use can detract from neighborhood character and livability. On the other hand, a well-thought out land use plan can help to transform and revitalize a neighborhood.

The Lakeshore Neighborhood is at a pivotal point for land use. A long history of land use conflicts and unplanned growth have left the neighborhood with a mixture of uses that are not always compatible. While the neighborhood has many stable and desirable residential areas, other portions of the neighborhood would benefit from redevelopment. Determining the type of land use most appropriate for these sites, as well as defining the quality and character of new development, will help ensure that the neighborhood character is preserved and enhanced.

This chapter discusses patterns of land use, land supply and demand, redevelopment opportunities, and future goals, objectives, and policies for future land use.

## Existing Land Use

Single-family residential development is the predominant land use in the Lakeshore Neighborhood. However, a variety of other uses is mixed in (see map 1). Within the past 10 to 20 years, new development has included a number of multi-family residential projects. Older commercial land uses are also scattered throughout the neighborhood, with most of these clustered around County Highway E and KR. Industrial uses are limited in the neighborhood, and

are located on the west side of Sheridan Road just south of KR. This mixture of land uses defines the neighborhood character, and presents several opportunities and challenges for neighborhood's future.

**Table 5. Existing and Future Land Use**

Land Use	Current (2007)		Future (2035)	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Commercial	27	5	14	3
Industrial	10	2	3	1
Institutional, Gov, and Rec	5	1	5	1
Single Family Residential	238	44	268	50
Multi-Family Residential	39	7	83	15
Mobile Home	5	1	0	0
Transportation	105	19	100	18
Surface Water	5	1	5	1
Forested Lands	48	9	48	9
Wetlands	13	2	13	2
Outdoor Recreation	0	0	2	0
Unused Lands	46	9	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>100</b>

## Vacant and Underutilized Land

Although the Lakeshore Neighborhood is mostly already developed, there are several parcels of land that have either never been developed, are currently occupied by vacant buildings, or are generally underutilized. Focusing efforts on redeveloping vacant or underutilized parcels will help to reinvigorate the neighborhood.

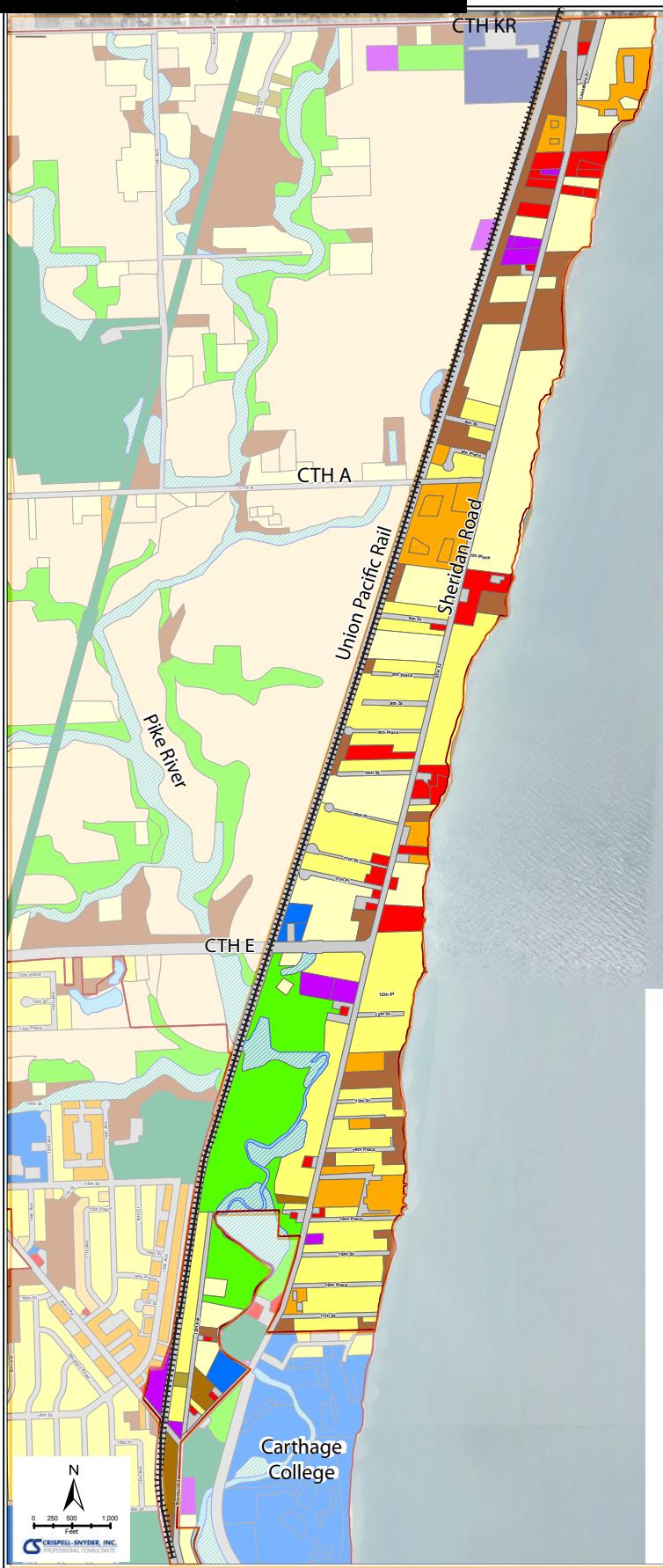
*Focusing efforts on  
redeveloping vacant or  
underutilized parcel will  
help to reinvigorate the  
neighborhood.*

# MAP 1: Existing Land Use

## Lakeshore Neighborhood

### Town of Somers

Kenosha County, Wisconsin



#### Agriculture / Low Density Residential

Agricultural operations or single-family detached homes on large lots.



#### Single Family

Single-family detached homes on a single lot



#### Multi-Family

Any building containing three or more dwelling units regardless of ownership status



#### Commercial

Retail stores, offices, restaurants, services, and repair shops.



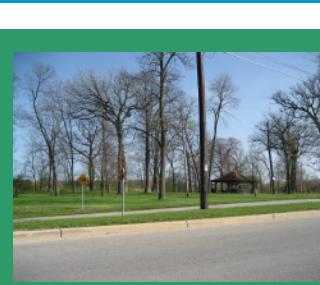
#### Institutional

Schools both public and private, municipal buildings, fire stations, community centers, libraries and post offices, hospitals, medical clinics, nursing homes, churches, auditoriums and sports assembly.



#### Unused Land

Vacant land or other open space.



#### Outdoor Recreation

Public recreational areas, dedicated open space areas and golf courses, whether public or private.



#### Industrial

Manufacturing / processing plants of all types, quarries and gravel/sand pits

#### Forest Land

Forested land without buildings.

## MAP 2: Future Land Use

### Lakeshore Neighborhood

Town of Somers

Kenosha County, Wisconsin



#### Single Family Residential

Single family detached homes on single lots.



#### Neighborhood Commercial Center - Mixed Use Redevelopment

Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses and multi-family residential development. See Figure 1 for detailed redevelopment concept plan.



#### Multi-Family

Any building containing three or more dwelling units regardless of ownership status. This includes areas of existing commercial development that will be down-zoned for future multi-family development.



#### Commercial

Retail stores, restaurants, services, and repair shops.



#### Institutional

Schools, both public and private, municipal buildings, fire stations, community centers, libraries and post offices, hospitals, medical clinics, nursing homes, churches, auditoriums, and sports assemblies.



#### Outdoor Recreation

Public Recreation areas, dedicated open space areas and golf courses, whether public or private.

#### Industrial

Manufacturing/processing facilities of all types, quarries, and gravel pits



#### Forest Land

Forested land without buildings.

#### Agriculture

Land used for farming and other food production.

## Land Use Conflicts

Land use conflicts can arise when different types of land uses are located, or potentially located, in close proximity to one another. People, individually or collectively, may view one of them as incompatible. The nature of a conflict depends on localized circumstances and the affected individuals. Conflicts can also develop or subside as demographic characteristics of an area or community change over time.

Regardless of the cause or nature of land use conflicts, they can have significant implications for residents' quality of life and localized real estate market forces. In addition, the presence of land use conflicts in a community can affect options for future land development patterns. It is therefore appropriate to assess the nature or extent of existing land use conflicts within the community.

Given the variety of uses and past unplanned growth in the Lakeshore Neighborhood, it is not surprising that there are a number of land use problem areas throughout the neighborhood. The most common conflict found in the neighborhood is between residential and commercial properties, with the most notable conflict being between older motels and nearby residential properties. This extreme case aside, neighborhood residents have repeatedly expressed the feeling that the commercial and industrial properties currently found along Sheridan Road are generally not compatible with the single family residential character of the neighborhood. Specific complaints include noise, lighting, traffic, and general unsightliness.

If done right, redevelopment of key properties in the neighborhood should help to alleviate land use conflicts. The success of this depends on implementing design guidelines and zoning restrictions that help commercial properties mesh better with the residential character of the neighborhood.

## Future Land Use

Residents and decision-makers in the community have expressed a strong interest in encouraging single-family development and home-ownership while discouraging additional multi-family and commercial development. This desire is reflected in the future land use map. Still, there is a place for multi-family rental housing, duplexes, condominiums, and commercial property in the Lakeshore Neighborhood's future. The proposed future land use provides for a mixture of uses, supports higher density development in specific locations to promote redevelopment, provides shopping, dining, and services, and maintains the single-family character of the neighborhood. Future Land Use is illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (see Map 2) and is described below.

### Single-Family Residential

Single-family detached homes on single lots are, and will continue to be, the dominant land use in the neighborhood. Lots are relatively small in the neighborhood, and the plan envisions that this level of density will likely continue. New homes along Sheridan Road, however, should have larger lots to accommodate a greater setback from the road. Height of single family residential buildings should be limited to two stories on the east side of Sheridan Road and three stories on the west side of Sheridan Road.

The future land use map identifies 36 acres of new single family residential development. The majority of this land is currently vacant.

### Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family housing includes apartments and condominiums. The future land use map does not distinguish between these two ownership types, as zoning is not legally permitted to regulate ownership.

Although many neighborhood residents are concerned about the potential negative impact of multi-family on the neighborhood's character, new multi-family housing can have a positive impact on the future of

the neighborhood if the buildings are designed and sited appropriately. Design guidelines for multi-family development are discussed below under "Neighborhood Character and Design".



Density of new multi-family residential development should allow for adequate parking, landscaping, and green space. Based on site conditions, a maximum density of 8 units/acre is appropriate for new multi-family development in the neighborhood. New multi-family development should be limited to two stories on the east side of Sheridan Road and three stories on the west side of Sheridan Road, except as discussed below under Neighborhood Commercial Center.

The future land use map identifies 44 acres of new multi-family residential development. The majority of this land is currently underutilized or inappropriately sited commercial property. The idea behind converting these properties to multi-family residential over time is to eliminate existing land use conflicts while still making redevelopment of these properties financially viable.

## Neighborhood Commercial Center

The proposed Neighborhood Commercial Center is a mix of multi-family housing and commercial uses. Generally speaking, commercial uses should be located on the ground floor with one or potentially two stories of residential above. The goal is to create neighborhood-oriented shopping destinations that fit into the residential character of the neighborhood and are compatible with surrounding single-family properties.

The Lakeshore Neighborhood Planning Steering Committee debated at great length what the maximum building height should be for the neighborhood commercial center on the east side of Sheridan Road. No consensus was reached. On the one hand, some Steering Committee members felt that allowing three story buildings within the neighborhood commercial center would undermine the character of the neighborhood. Other Steering Committee members, however, felt that allowing a three-story building would encourage redevelopment of these properties by providing design flexibility and allowing for greater density. Were these properties restricted to two stories on the east side of the road, redevelopment may not occur because the cost of land and the cost of demolition would make new construction or major renovation financially not feasible.

Were three story buildings permitted, great care should be given to ensuring that three story buildings fit into the character of the neighborhood and allow for views of the lake. In fact, some members of the Steering Committee pointed out that permitting three story buildings on these sites may enable better views of the lake to be created or preserved. Building up

rather than sideways along the road would allow open areas with views to be created/preserved. In order to facilitate this, regulations could be established that allow three-story development on the east side of the road within the neighborhood commercial center only when the footprint of the building is reduced to help preserve views.

Given that no consensus was reached on this issue by the Steering Committee, the height of buildings on the east side of the road within the neighborhood commercial center—should be determined by the Plan Commission on a case by case basis or as part of further discussion for rezoning.

Specific design guidelines for the neighborhood commercial center are discussed below under “Neighborhood Character and Design”.

There is one proposed neighborhood commercial center, which is discussed in detail in the Neighborhood Commercial Center Chapter. Specific uses that should be encouraged or permitted in this area are also discussed in the Neighborhood Commercial Center Chapter. In general, however, uses should be limited to shops, restaurants, and offices that are small-scale and cater to the neighborhood. Some residents and business owners in the neighborhood have also expressed a desire to have some small-scale tourism-oriented use such as high-quality waterfront restaurants.

#### **Industrial**

Industrial/manufacturing lands in the neighborhood are primarily located just south of KR. This plan calls for the eventual conversion of these industrial lands to multi-family residential.

#### **Neighborhood Character & Design**

Participants in the kick-off event and the “sub-area” workshops cited preserving and enhancing the

neighborhood’s unique character and heritage as one the key objectives for the Plan to accomplish. To ensure that the Lakeshore Neighborhood’s unique characteristics are maintained over the planning period, this section of the Plan provides the basis for a comprehensive approach to community character planning. The section addresses in more detail the nature of preferred development outlined in the Future Land Use Map.

The neighborhood has experienced relatively modest increases in population and development over the past 30 years. However, some projects enhanced the neighborhood’s image, while others did not. This uneven track record has resulted from lack of use or development standards and procedures that ensure that new development reflects the *character* of the neighborhood desired by residents. Specifically, critical aesthetic components of development such as development scale and architecture, green space, connectivity, or the creation of neighborhood identity and entry experiences have gone unrecognized in the past.

This Plan’s community character recommendations were developed after reviewing a visual preference survey completed by the steering committee and input of workshop participants during the planning process.

A wide variety of elements contribute to the creation of community character. These elements should be considered with all development proposals and government actions associated with implementation of this *Plan*. The Town (with assistance from the County) has some measure of control over nearly all of these elements through zoning, subdivision, and building regulations and public investments. These elements are discussed below.

***Participants in the kick-off event and the “sub-area” workshops cited preserving and enhancing the neighborhood’s unique character and heritage as one the key objectives for the Plan to accomplish.***

## Geographic Context

A key element defining the Lakeshore Neighborhood is its setting along Lake Michigan, between Racine and Kenosha. The Town recognizes that a clean and scenic lake is an important asset to the community. Moreover, the Town recognizes that its physical location between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> largest cities in Wisconsin, and along the growth corridor between Milwaukee and Chicago will result in unparalleled growth and development demands.

## Density and Intensity

The most visually successful transitions of land use occur where residential densities (as defined by the number of dwelling units per acre) and nonresidential intensities (as defined by floor area ratios and the percentage of land left in green areas and open space) remain relatively consistent, even though dwelling unit types or land uses may vary significantly. Zoning districts that encourage similar density or intensity make for better transitions between different land uses.

## Building Scale and Placement

The consistency of building scale and location is comparable to density and intensity issues. With the exception of carefully designed and properly sited institutional uses, differences in building scale and placement are disruptive to the neighborhood fabric.

Multi-family residential structures should be set back from the street and sidewalk, incorporate front porches, and have driveways located between units. Along with having single-family character and architecture, “country, homey, and old-fashion looking” character was also favored over more industrial or row house styles.

Commercial and multi-family development should incorporate design elements which create an appearance of several smaller structures rather than a single large structure—focusing on human scale with open/green space and residential elements. There is

significant support for mixed-use developments by incorporating businesses into the street level units.

Select areas should be developed to create a neighborhood commercial center (as illustrated on Figure 1). Downtown-type setbacks are essential in the neighborhood commercial area to create and maintain a “sense of place” at the commercial center. Also, community participants agree that locating the vehicle parking behind or to the side of buildings is preferred.

Overall, four story structures are considered “too high.” Structure heights should generally be limited to two stories on the east side of Sheridan Road, except potentially within the Neighborhood Commercial Center. The west side of Sheridan Road is more appropriate for three story developments.

## Architecture

Architectural styles can provide a challenge in a redeveloping neighborhood. This can be an opportunity to reinvent the appearance of the neighborhood or, similarly, to improve upon the existing architectural style. Residents have overwhelmingly agreed that new development or redevelopment should be complementary to the residential character of the neighborhood; maintaining a similar “rustic” or “country” architectural style. Where a wider variety of styles exist—such as the Lakeshore Neighborhood—common architectural themes or elements (such as materials, colors, roof pitches or stylistic appurtenances) should be reflected. Developments that incorporated industrial style elements or developments which were considered “over done” did not appeal to neighborhood participants. Themed developments offered great appeal to the majority of the participants. Residents also felt, especially regarding multi-family developments, that incorporating contrasting building materials can offer interesting style and create a unique built environment.

## **Signage**

The Town under Chapter 18 and the Kenosha County zoning ordinance currently regulates signs.

## **Public Furnishings and Spaces**

The obvious use of public furnishings conveys a sense of public investment and pride in a community or neighborhood that cannot be replicated through any other means. Particularly in areas with visitors, such investments create a festive or civilized character which encourages repeat visits, as the public spectacle is constantly changing and is a strong complement to the variety of goods and services offered. The use of public furnishings, particularly in public spaces relating to waterfronts, plazas, busy pedestrian streets, and institutional uses, should be encouraged. In all instances, these furnishings should be of high aesthetic quality and proven durability.

The creation of small gathering spaces with benches and perhaps tables is an emerging trend in private commercial developments. Such features tend to humanize environments that are otherwise dominated by buildings, cars, and parking lots. Increased pedestrian and bicycle activity along a corridor will typically result in reduced vehicle travel speeds. The Town should encourage creation of such spaces in commercial developments within the neighborhood.

## **Urban Form**

The Lakeshore Neighborhood's urban form is derived from its historic development as seasonal homes along the lake edge and its convenience between two larger urban areas. The urban form of the neighborhood is a complete departure from the rural/agrarian form dominating the remainder of the town. Unfortunately, commercial and service relocation and property disinvestment over the years, combined with commuter role of Sheridan Road, have resulted in many structures looking tired or outdated. There are few "destination" spots in the neighborhood (restaurants, services, etc.), and the

quaint charm associated with seasonal cottages is gone. Despite a few architecturally significant residential homes and the presence of Carthage College just outside of the neighborhood, the lack of significant reinvestment in many residential and commercial properties has fostered a steady aesthetic decline.

## **Land Use Transitions**

This Plan encourages the use of natural features (topography, environmental corridors) combined with high-quality site design to define the edges between land uses. However, in many instances, man-made features—roadways and existing developments—will define the edges of land uses. This Plan again encourages the creation of buffers in the form of landscaping and berms to guide the transition of land uses.

## **Landscaping**

Significant amounts of landscaping should be required of all forms of development, except single-family residential uses, which virtually always provide adequate amounts of landscaping without need for public regulation. For all other uses, landscaping should be encouraged around building foundations, in and around paved areas, and along streets with required supplemental plantings in "yard" areas.

Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness. Non-native, invasive plant species, low-durability species (such as box elders, silver maples, and certain willows and poplars) should be avoided, as should dangerous or toxic plants such as certain hawthorns or poison sumac. Either required landscaping should be installed before building occupancy, or, alternatively, performance guarantees should be required in the absence of installation.

## Views

Views are the most difficult aspect of community character to address, yet in the Town and the Lakeshore Neighborhood lake and natural feature “views” may be the single-most important aesthetic to preserve and promote. The protection of important views is particularly challenging because the desire of private parties to capture and protect the view often requires the erection of visual barriers (buildings, fences, landscaping) to the general public. It is impossible for a community to protect all aesthetically pleasing views.

However, in a neighborhood like Lakeshore, certain views are essential defining elements of the neighborhood. These critical lake and natural feature views should be protected at all reasonable costs through view mapping, and/or responsive site design techniques. The neighborhood and the Town will need to cooperate and work diligently to provide Lake overlook views and to provide views and access to natural features as redevelopment occurs.

## Neighborhood Entryways/Gateways

Entryways, or gateways as they are sometimes referred, are the first impression a community or neighborhood makes on visitors and residents alike. The entryway and related features go beyond marking the edge of the neighborhood, but also act as the “front door” to the neighborhood; setting the tone at the edges and leading to the heart of the neighborhood. A neighborhood is provided with an ever-present opportunity to make a favorable impression on visitors, and help to establish and reinforce the neighborhood’s character and sense of place.

Entryways into the Lakeshore Neighborhood are unique and highly valuable assets. This Plan seeks to establish a complimentary “sense of entry” and to protect and enhance aesthetic qualities through the use of zoning standards requiring high-quality

landscaping, building design, signage, lighting and public furnishings.

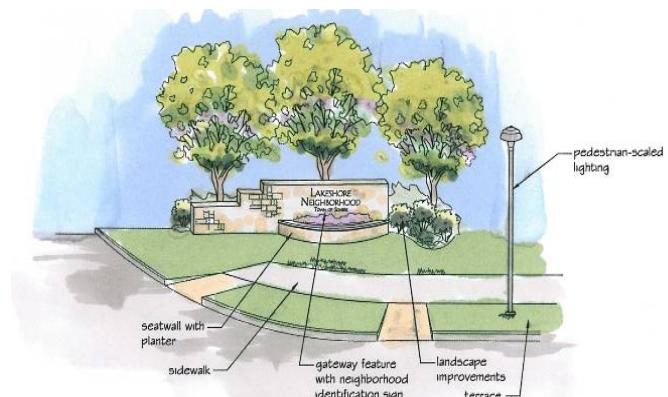
## Primary Entryways

The primary entryways into the Lakeside Neighborhood are its visual “front doors”, and wherever possible, should be protected and enhanced. High quality public entry signs and/or public art may be used to formally announce entry.

These entrances include:

*Sheridan Road/STH 32:* Sheridan is the most important entryway into the Lakeshore Neighborhood (and perhaps the Town). Alford Park provides an incredible southern terminus and entry/exit to the neighborhood. Unfortunately after that, much of the existing development encountered on both sides of Sheridan Road is of moderate quality, pedestrian and hardscaping amenities are non-existent, and there is nothing that identifies entry into Somers or the neighborhood. The northern entry contains some ecological feature, but is again earmarked by moderate quality development.

The Town (with County assistance) should create a visually pleasing entry feature announcing the arrival into Somers and the Lakeshore Neighborhood. The following graphic illustrates an appropriate entryway sign detail with pedestrian amenities.



EXAMPLE OF NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAY FEATURE AT MAJOR INTERSECTIONS

The restriction of future billboard development along this corridor is also paramount in preserving the character and appearance of this entryway. The Town, with County assistance, should direct how private development should be designed, and how individual projects should relate to each other and surrounding parcels to better the entryway experience through improved building and site design, extensive landscaping, signage and controlled access.

### **Secondary Entryways**

The Lakeshore Neighborhood has two secondary gateways, located on well-used roads, at their intersection with the rail line. The secondary entryways into the neighborhood are no less subtle than the primary entries, but they are generally experienced by local residents. The KRM Commuter Rail Study has indicated the potential for a future rail stop to be located at one of these two gateways. Along these entries the preservation of environmental features and character preservation are of equal importance. The use of formal entry markers such as signs should be very low key. Specifically:

**CTH A:** This roadway is a secondary connector between the Town and the neighborhood. The lands immediately west of the rail line have significant environmental corridors that have begun developing. The Town must ensure that the environmental features are preserved to maintain character changes between the two neighborhoods. It is doubtful that this corridor will emerge as a primary entryway; however, it will remain a consistently traveled corridor due to its connection to UW-Parkside and the Interstate. Low-key gateway features are appropriate, and the Town (with County help) must employ careful site planning to encourage high-quality, long-term aesthetics in this area.

**CTH E:** This roadway is the primary connector between the Town and the neighborhood. Much of the current commercial development in this area appears to have initially developed in the past 30 – 40 years, and have begun to exhibit signs of age. The properties are

typified by large expanses of pavement, minimal landscaping and green space, large pylon signs, lesser-quality building materials, and extensive outdoor storage or operations. The intersection of CTH E and STH 32 is intended to accommodate neighborhood commercial development. The Town must ensure that future development at this entry includes careful site planning to ensure high-quality, long-term aesthetics, and complies with the recommendations of this Plan.

### **Community Character Corridors**

In addition to the community gateways, the neighborhood's main transportation corridors influence the opinions of visitors and residents regarding the character of the community. For this reason, these primary corridors are also important to protect from unsightly development. Primary community character corridors include STH 32/Sheridan Road, CTH E, CTH A, and CTH KR. Development along these corridors should be of high quality, marked by substantial landscaping, modest signage, good site design, high-quality building materials and design, and pedestrian/bicycle connections with the remainder of the community. Once again, billboards should be restricted to preserve the character and aesthetics along these corridors.

## Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a comprehensive approach for achieving the neighborhood's future vision for the neighborhood commercial center. The order in which these goals, objectives, and policies are listed does not necessarily denote their priority.**

### Goals

---

*Goals are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Neighborhood should approach land use issues.*

- G3.1** Encourage reuse, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and new development of vacant, blighted, and underutilized land.
- G3.2** Creation of a commercial center that enhance the neighborhoods character and access to goods, services, and entertainment.
- G3.3** Encourage neighborhood design that promotes walkability and supports a range of transportation choices.
- G3.4** Encourage design elements and land uses that are in keeping with the neighborhood's character.
- G3.5** Create a strong sense of place and neighborhood identity.

### Objectives

---

*Objectives suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishments of an objective contribute to the fulfillment of a goal.*

- O3.1** Promote new housing development that is in harmony with the existing neighborhood, incorporates historical design elements, and provides sidewalks and street trees.

- O3.2** Encourage construction of a variety of housing types in appropriate locations in the neighborhood, with particular emphasis on promoting single-family development where feasible.
- O3.3** Promote building design that is “country, homey, and old-fashioned looking” and that fits into the single family character of the neighborhood.
- O3.4** Encourage new residential development to be built at densities similar to existing densities in the neighborhood.
- O3.5** Promote attractive, neighborhood-scale commercial development in the neighborhood commercial center.
- O3.6** Encourage attractive, appropriately sized signs that are in keeping with the design and character of the neighborhood commercial center.

### Policies

---

*Policies are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives.*

- P3.1** Work within the county's zoning ordinance or the Town's Chapter 18 ordinance to encourage appropriate densities, uses, and site design in accordance with the recommendations of this plan.
- P3.2** Establish design guidelines for the neighborhood commercial center that encourage/require attractive mixed-use buildings set close to the street, design elements that create an appearance of several smaller structure, pedestrian scale, parking in

rear or to the side, inviting streetscapes, and “rustic” or “country” architectural styles.

- P3.3** Establish multi-family housing design standards that encourages/require structures to be set back from the street, incorporate front porches, proper driveway location, incorporate open space, protect views, and have a single family character and attractive building design that reduces the visual scale and impact of multi-family buildings.
- P3.5** Encourage commercial development to incorporate small gathering spaces with benches, tables, and landscaping.
- P3.6** Encourage the creation of buffers in the form of landscaping and berms to help transition between different land uses.
- P3.7** Encourage a significant amount of landscaping for all new development.
- P3.8** Protect key views of the lake and other natural features through view mapping, and appropriate site design.
- P3.9** Enhance primary entrances into the neighborhood by installing high quality public entry signs and/or public art.
- P3.10** Enhance and protect secondary entryways into the neighborhood by preserving environmental features and installing small entry markers.

# Lake, River, and Open Space

## Overview

Natural, recreational, and scenic resources help to define a neighborhood's character and quality of life. Lake Michigan shaped the neighborhood's past, and continues to be a central feature of the landscape. The River and associated wetlands run quietly through the southern portion of the neighborhood providing important habitat and water quality protection. Nearby parks which are in the neighborhood and in the city provide quiet places to relax and fun places for play. As the Lakeshore Neighborhood continues to grow and change we must plan for the continued presence and enhancement of these resources in and around the neighborhood.

## Water Resources

Lakeshore Neighborhood is sandwiched between the Pike River and Lake Michigan. Pike River has several rapids and is canoeable, although not within the neighborhood. Lake Michigan is perhaps one of the most important resources in the region and indeed in the United States. From a scenic, recreational, and ecological standpoint, the lake is truly a gem worth protecting and enhancing. Additional water resources in the neighborhood include a large wetland complex and associated floodplains in the southern portion of the neighborhood (see map 3).



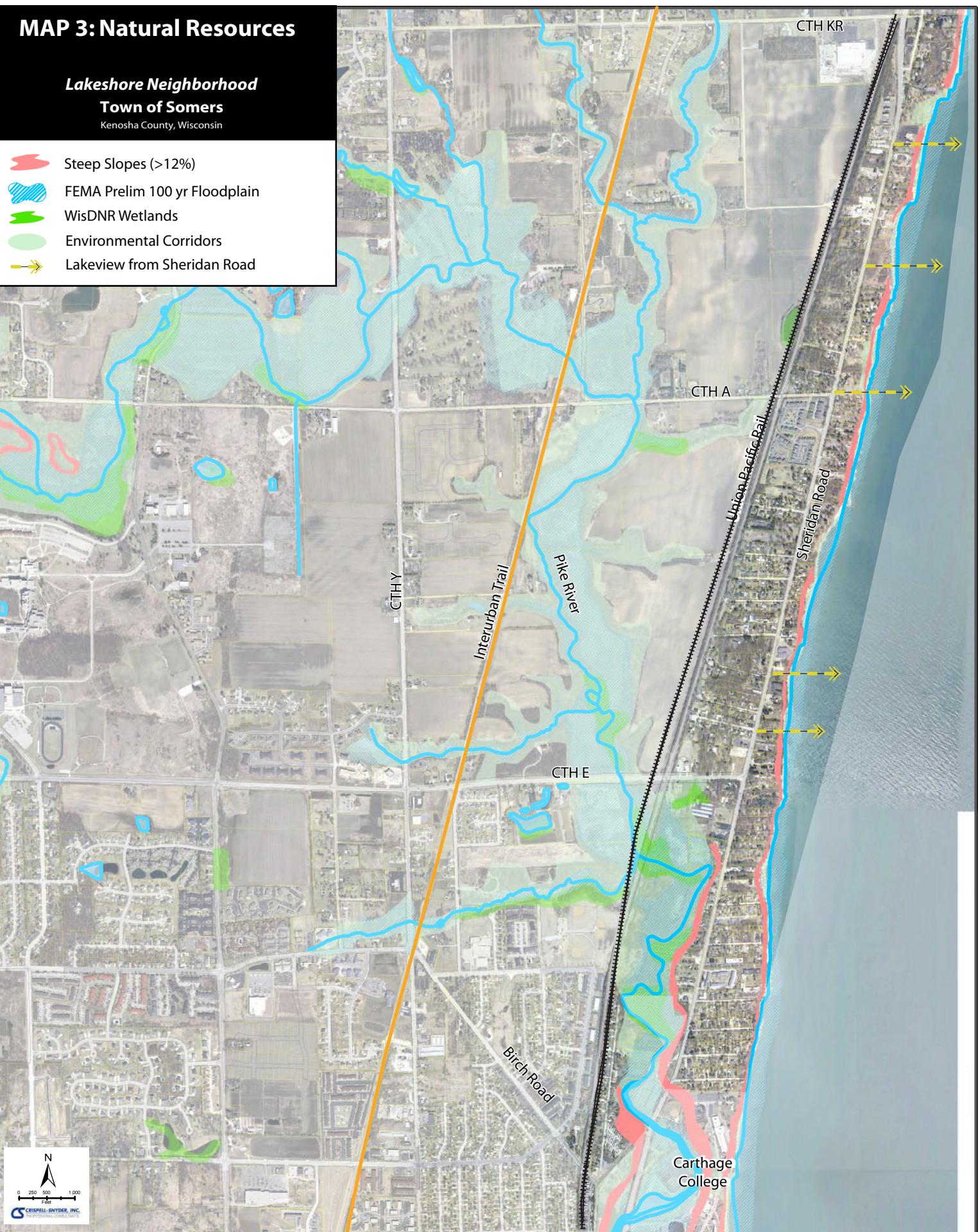
*Pike River and Lake Michigan are defining features of the Lakeshore Neighborhood.*

## MAP 3: Natural Resources

### Lakeshore Neighborhood

#### Town of Somers

Kenosha County, Wisconsin



## Pike River Watershed

The Pike River Watershed covers portions of both Racine and Kenosha Counties, and consists of three sub-basins; the Upper Pike, Pike Creek, and the Pike River. The municipalities include the City of Kenosha, and the Village of Sturtevant and Mount Pleasant, and the Town of Somers. Land cover is primarily rural, with agriculture dominant (52%). Urban land uses account for 19 percent of the land area, while grasslands (14%) and forests (8%) represent the other major rural uses. Wetlands cover less than two percent of the land area. (DNR State of the Basin Report, 2002).

Department of Natural Resources Recommendations for the Pike River Watershed include:

- Encourage implementation of urban non-point source best management practices.
- Conduct baseline surveys on streams within the watershed.
- Assess sediment delivery, sediment transport, and stream bank erosion within the watershed.
- Monitor and evaluate the Pike River Improvement Project's impacts.
- Evaluate and implement aquatic habitat restoration and water quality improvement practices where practicable.
- Evaluate and implement wetland restoration projects where practicable.

In the southern portion of the neighborhood, the Pike River winds through the landscape, creating a lush environment. Much of the river is lined with floodplains and there are several wetlands. These wetlands and floodplains are critical for storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants from surface waters, controlling erosion and sediment, supplying surface water flow and recharging groundwater supplies, and providing habitat for wildlife. This land is partially owned by Carthage College. These wetlands are regulated by the WisDNR Shoreland Wetland Regulations, which restrict filling and degradation of wetlands adjacent to (or within 300 feet) of a river.

## Shoreland Erosion and Bluff Stability

Beautiful lake bluffs are one of the defining features of the neighborhood. Bluff conditions can change over time in response to changes in climate, water level, the geometry of the near shore areas, the extent and conditions of shore protection measures, the type and extent of vegetation, and the type of land uses in shoreland areas. In 1995 the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission (SEWRPC) completed a study of shoreline erosion and bluff stability conditions along Lake Michigan. While certainly conditions have changed along the shore since 1995, this study provides some understanding of the challenges faced by property owners along the lakeshore. The study looks at bluff stability (i.e. how likely it is to shear away), beach width, and bluff recession.

**Bluff stability.** In general, the entire length of lake bluff found in Kenosha County is considered to be stable. The one exception to this is found in the northern portion of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. This roughly quarter mile stretch of lake shore located between County Roads KR and A is listed as being unstable.

**Beach width.** The Lakeshore neighborhood has the narrowest width of the entire lakeshore in Kenosha County. Nearly half of the Lakeshore Neighborhood beach is less than 20 feet.

**Bluff recession.** Perhaps the most alarming finding of this report is the rate at which the bluff is receding. Neighborhood residents have certainly noted the gradual (or not so gradual) loss of the bluff into Lake Michigan. The SEWRPC study indicates that the Lakeshore Neighborhood bluff is receding at a greater rate than anywhere else in Kenosha County. In the rest of Kenosha County, about half of the bluffs are receding at a rate of less than 0.5 feet per year and a little less than half are receding at 1.1 to 2 feet per year. The remainder of the bluffs are receding at 0.5 to 1 foot per year. In the Lakeshore Neighborhood, however, ¼ of the bluffs are receding at more than 2

feet per year,  $\frac{1}{2}$  are receding at 1 to 2 feet per year, and a quarter are receding at .5 to 1 foot per year.

### **Shoreland Protection**

The state shoreland zoning ordinances are set out to accomplish two minimum standards:

- Control the intensity of development around water, and
- Create a buffer around water

If properly designed and maintained, a buffer can help protect shorelands and adjacent lakes and rivers from physical, chemical, hydrological, and visual impacts. One major source of concern is phosphorus runoff from fertilizers and herbicides, which are both commonly found in urban areas. According to the WI-DNR, one pound of phosphorus in runoff can result in 500 pounds of algae growth.

The State DNR regulates lot setback to implement their buffer and development shoreland standards. The minimum setback for Wisconsin communities is 75-feet from the original high-water mark (ohwm) of navigable waters. County regulation also states that if a waterway has been determined to be navigable (as defined by the DNR) then all structures (ie. decks, non-open type fences, patios, residences, accessory buildings - sheds & garages...) except navigational aids, piers, retaining walls, open rail type fences, stairs necessary for shoreline access, and boat launching facilities (one boathouse) shall be setback 75 feet from the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM).

The County regulates the cutting of trees and shrubbery to protect natural beauty, control erosion and reduce the flow of effluents, sediments and nutrients from the shoreland area. In the strip of land 35 feet wide inland from the ordinary high water mark, no more than 30 feet in any 100 feet (30%) shall be clear-cut. In shoreland areas more than 35 feet inland, trees and shrubbery cutting shall be governed by the consideration of the effect on water quality and consideration of sound forestry practices and soil conservation practices. These regulations required do

not apply to the removal of dead, diseased or dying trees or shrubbery. Paths and trails are limited to a maximum of 10 feet in width and shall be designed and constructed as to result in the least removal and disruption of shoreland cover and the minimum impairment of natural beauty.

### **10 Things Residents Can Do about Stormwater**

Residents play an important role in helping to manage and control stormwater runoff and associated pollution. Here are some ideas for what residents can do:

1. Be a watershed watchdog. If you see a potential stormwater problem contact the Town.
2. Pick up after your pets. Dog waste is a major source of water contamination.
3. Properly Apply Lawn and Garden Fertilizer to avoid over-fertilizing.
4. Properly dispose of yard waste
5. Properly dispose of household chemicals.
6. Regularly maintain your car and fix any oil, radiator or transmission leak as soon as you see them.
7. Maximize infiltration in your yard by directing rainwater away from paved areas.
8. Use a proper container for trash and recyclables.
9. Keep soil in your yard, and out of waterways.
10. Join a local watershed association.

### **Stormwater Management**

The management of stormwater is a matter of health, safety, and welfare for a community. Surface water runoff increases erosion, sedimentation, water

pollution, damage to business and residences, and infiltration of water into the sanitary sewer system.

### State and County Regulations

State regulation NR 151 (Subchapter III), addresses the standards for non-agricultural performance standards for construction erosion control and stormwater management. A written storm water management plan must be developed and implemented for each site and must incorporate the state performance standards. Specifically, stormwater management plans for new development and major construction must control total suspended solids and promote on-site infiltration of stormwater.

To reduce runoff, the DNR is in the process of updating the shoreland zoning ordinance to include a cap on impervious surfaces within 300 feet from the ordinary high water mark of a lake, river, stream, wetland or flowage.

Under NR 216, municipalities, including the Town of Somers, must have obtained a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) stormwater Discharge Permit, which is intended to reduce the discharge of pollutant carried by stormwater. Since the town needs to have a WPDES it is also required, under NR 151, to reduce the amount of total suspended solids in stormwater runoff by 40 percent by 2013 as well as obtain a WPDES Stormwater discharge Permit. The county is also required, based on the parameter, to obtain a permit for the urbanized areas of the Town of Somers.

### Alternative Best Management Practices

In addition to the regulations imposed by the State and County, there are a number of things that private property owners, developers, and communities can do to address stormwater. Green infrastructure and Low Impact Development are both alternative best management practices (BMPs) that control runoff and manage stormwater in an environmentally responsible way. They work closely with the natural hydrological systems, can effectively be incorporated

into public spaces, and provide a better water quality, lower municipal costs, and a better quality of life for residents overall.

Green infrastructure is the term used for the interconnected networks of open spaces and natural areas that naturally manage stormwater, reduce the risk of floods, capture pollution, improves water quality—greenways, wetlands, parks, forest preserves and native plant vegetation. This infrastructure is comprised of sustainable stormwater management techniques. Included in these techniques are: rain gardens, green roofs, tree planting, permeable pavements, and other landscape-based drainage features. Municipal green infrastructure practices have been expanding throughout communities around the U.S.

Green infrastructure intercepts rainfall before it reaches sewers and usually costs less to install and maintain compared to “grey” forms of water infrastructure that are typically used (concrete gutters, sewers, and end-of-pipe treatment).

Low Impact Development (LID) is another innovative stormwater management strategy that has been adopted in many communities across the country. It is an approach and a set of practices used to reduce runoff and pollutant loadings by managing the runoff as close to its sources as possible. For example, in lieu of a treatment pond serving a new subdivision, a bioretention area in each yard might be incorporated, disconnect downspouts should be disconnected from driveway surfaces, curbs removed, and grassed swales installed in common areas. Cost savings are typically seen in reduced infrastructure because the total volume of runoff to be managed is minimized through infiltration and evapotranspiration.

### Lake Views

Residents of a community have thoughts and ideas about what makes their surroundings and community visually important and attractive. They generally enjoy

views of open fields, farm settings, water views and tree shaded streets—qualities that make people feel positive about their environment. The challenge is to preserve these visual attributes while working them into our future development.

The Lakeshore Neighborhood has been and will continue to be defined by Lake Michigan. However, views of the lake from Sheridan Road are relatively few; it only takes a single story building to block the view of the lake. Maintaining and enhancing these views will help to ensure that residents and visitors alike can continue to enjoy this scenic resource. The small side streets that dead end at Lake Michigan also provide opportunities for quiet spots to view the Lake. Map 3 identifies several existing views of the lake found along Sheridan Road and the locations of additional lake vantage point.

As redevelopment occurs along Sheridan Road, it is important for the Town to demand high-quality site design while being vigilant and cognizant of a person's private property rights.

The best method for preserving lake views is by controlling density on select portions of property along the lake in specific, high-priority areas. The Town could also permit a reduction in side yard and set back requirements, when the reduction would result in maintaining or providing a better view from the roadway or adjoining property, without impairing the view from other nearby properties. However, it cannot be over-emphasized that residents are vehemently opposed to high densities and tall structures in their neighborhood.

When protecting eye level or ground level views such as a lake view or an overlook, it is important to control building bulk and spacing, as well as the placement of fences, shrubs, and trees. In such settings, buildings should be placed in such a manner that they do not obstruct the view to be preserved. Buildings along a

shoreline, placed so as to create a solid wall effect, not only obstruct views of the lake but also adversely affect the shoreline's visual quality from the lake. To ensure that this will not happen, the Town could require the developer to stake out the outline of all proposed buildings and landscaping for on-site inspection, so that the view blockage will be made clear before the plan is approved or a building permit issued.

Preservation and protection of scenic areas through regulatory techniques may be more realistic than outright purchase of land, which is rarely possible because of the lack of sufficient funding. Never the less, acquisition of land to protect open space, special views, aesthetic or natural resource lands may be the most positive method of view protection. While Town acquisition of lake properties may seem to directly

benefit the Lakeshore Neighborhood, all residents are actually benefited by the perpetual preservation and access to the lake shore.

***Views of the lake from Sheridan Road are relatively few; it only takes a single story building to block the view of the lake. Maintaining and enhancing these views will help to ensure that residents and visitors alike can continue to enjoy this scenic resource.***

## Parks and Open Space

There are several City of Kenosha parks and publicly-accessible open space areas outside of the Lakeshore Neighborhood, the only Town park is a small pocket park located adjacent to the fire station on County Road E.

Surrounding parks and publicly accessible open spaces within two miles of the neighborhood include:

- Alford Park and John F. Kennedy Memorial Park in the City of Kenosha.
- Carthage College.
- Poerio Park along Pike River, just over the railroad tracks from the neighborhood; and
- The Kenosha Country Club located on County Highway "A", just west of the neighborhood, which is in private ownership not open to the general public.

Throughout the planning process, neighborhood residents debated whether or not a lake and/or riverfront park would be desirable within the neighborhood. At the visioning workshop and sub area workshops, many residents noted the need and expressed the desire for additional parks within the neighborhood. Other residents expressed strong concerns and objections about having a park near their property, such as safety, theft, vandalism, and trespassing issues. Other concerns voiced by residents include potentially opening up land below the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) to the public.

### **Lakefront Park**

A major concern expressed by several lakefront property owners was that a lakefront park would provide public access to shorelands in front of private property. This concern stems, in part, from a misunderstanding about the state laws governing public access to lakes. Under Wisconsin's Constitution, lakes and rivers belong to everyone and DNR manages them for the benefit of all citizens; however, adjacent property owners have exclusive use of dry or exposed land. Such areas may be posted, but not fenced. The general public must obtain the landowner's permission to enter, or gain access to the water via a public right-of-way or boat landing. Someone walking along the lake must keep his/her feet wet unless portaging a physical obstruction by the shortest possible route. With no municipal police force, enforcement would be impractical.

At this time there is no improved public access to the lake within the Town of Somers. Town officials have discussed the issue of providing park and/or lake access points along the Lake, should the opportunity arise, but there has been no decision.

There are significant hurdles to overcome in order to make the vision of a lakefront park a reality. First among these challenges is the cost of purchasing lakefront land. Willingness of landowners to sell land is also a potential challenge, although there are always

lakefront properties for sale in the neighborhood which could be used or combined as possible recreational park area.

The location of a Town owned park is also contentious. Some residents believe it should be located on the West side of Sheridan Road where existing land area is more abundant. Others defend the East side as the proper location, offering the lake as an asset.

During the entire meeting process of the Lakeshore Committee, no consensus was obtained when it came to the Public Park and recreation space. Even the idea of the transfer by the State of the drainage areas to offer vistas was only partially received with comments that they are too small to be of any benefit.

Still it is important to recognize that the Town Board has adopted the Parks Commission Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

In general, the appreciation for park and recreation space may be premature, and the implementation would be very difficult for the Town at this time. The opportunity exists over the life of this plan for current or future residents to approach the Town Board with ideas or request for parkland acquisition and improvements. The creation of a public park along the Lake Michigan shoreline is a worthy goal that the township pursues when a practical opportunity arises. No property should be acquired for this purpose except from willing sellers, or from private donations. Hence, no recommendation is included within the plan to start a Lakeshore Neighborhood Park at this time.

# Transportation and Streetscape Improvement

## Overview

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In many ways, the challenges faced by the Lakeshore Neighborhood can be boiled down to the presence of a major highway running through the center of it. Highway 32 (Sheridan Road), with its relatively high speed limits, four plus lanes of traffic, and lack of pedestrian amenities, is anything but a neighborhood-oriented street.

Sheridan Road lacks even basic pedestrian and bicycle facilities. With no shoulder, no sidewalks, and relatively high speed limits and traffic volumes, walking along Sheridan Road is not only unpleasant, but downright dangerous. Biking is little better. In addition, despite being a fairly major thoroughfare, Sheridan Road does not have public transportation. The result is that almost every trip made to, from, or within the Neighborhood is in a car.

The car-oriented nature of the neighborhood impacts land use patterns, neighborhood livability, and the neighborhood's sense of place and community. Commercial land uses in the neighborhood are exclusively oriented towards people arriving by car. Large expanses of parking lots, multiple driveways, and lack of pedestrian-scale design and amenities are the norm. Sheridan Road also divides the neighborhood into two halves, and limits neighbor interactions up and down the corridor.

There are a number of opportunities for improving transportation options in the neighborhood, and thereby positively influencing land use patterns and neighborhood character. The major improvements that are proposed as part of this neighborhood plan include:

- Installing sidewalks on both sides of Sheridan Road as development or redevelopment

occurs, with the cost incurred by the development.

- Installing “share the road” bicycle signs and painting shared bike travel lanes on both sides of Sheridan Road.
- Evaluating the feasibility of and demand for public bus service along Sheridan Road. This would only happen if an R.T.A. were created.
- Supporting the new commuter rail line with a stop in the Lakeshore Neighborhood (Note: this is being proposed by the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission, with mixed reactions from the neighborhood as discussed below).
- Coordinating future driveways and access roads to improve traffic flow along Sheridan Road.
- Working with the State DOT to Reduce the speed limit on Sheridan Road to 35 mph.

This chapter provides information about the existing transportation system in and around the Lakeshore Neighborhood, and outlines specific recommendations for improvements to make the transportation system more neighborhood-friendly.

## Existing Transportation Network

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### Roads

The Lakeshore Neighborhood is located along State Highway 32 (Sheridan Road), a fairly heavily traveled highway that connects Kenosha to the south and Racine to the north. Three county highways (KR, A,

and E) run perpendicular to Highway 32 and terminate in the neighborhood. Numerous short side-streets run east-west off of Sheridan Road, dead-ending at either Lake Michigan to the west or the rail line to the east.

The Lakeshore Neighborhood has experienced construction along Sheridan Road with the road widened and repaved. Sheridan Road is a four lane road with a 45 mile per hour speed limit. Attempts to have the speed limit reduced to 35 miles per hour are ongoing with the Wisconsin D.O.T.

Many residents of the Lakeshore Neighborhood would like to see the speed limit lowered along Sheridan Road. A number of people at the public visioning workshop expressed the desire to see Sheridan Road turned back into a slow, curving neighborhood street rather than a high speed thoroughfare for commuters. Unfortunately, state highway designation, along with the current high volume of traffic on the road, limits opportunities for major reconfiguration of the road. Reducing the speed limit on the road is, however, a viable strategy for making the road safer and more neighborhood-friendly.

### **Truck Routes**

State Highway 32 (Sheridan Road) is listed as 75' Restricted Long Truck Route by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. State Highway 31 to the west of the neighborhood is also designated as a Long Truck Route.

### **Rail**

The rail line along the western edge of the neighborhood is currently used exclusively for freight. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), however, has proposed a commuter rail along these tracks with a rail stop in the Lakeshore Neighborhood. The proposed 33-mile route would connect Milwaukee and Racine to the existing Chicago-Kenosha commuter rail, and would use existing Union Pacific Railroad and Canadian Pacific

Railway freight lines. SEWRPC recently conducted a study to determine the possible impacts of the future commuter rail. Plans for the commuter rail, including the specific location of the proposed stop in the Lakeshore Neighborhood, have not been finalized. The alternatives analysis conducted in 2006, however, indicates that the Town favored 7<sup>th</sup> Street as discussed earlier in this report for the station. Neighborhood residents have expressed a preference for locating the station on the west side of the railroad tracks.

Reaction to this proposal among neighborhood residents has been strong and mixed. Some residents have indicated that they would benefit significantly from having commuter rail service. Generally these residents either work in Milwaukee or Chicago and/or frequently visit these cities. For obvious reasons, these residents have been very supportive of the proposed commuter rail.

On the other hand, many residents of the neighborhood are concerned about the increased traffic along the rail line, potential nuisances and public safety concerns at the rail stop, and the potential for increased development pressure.

### **Bus**

The Town of Somers and the Lakeshore Neighborhood have limited public transportation options as the area does not have a bus system. Both Racine, to the north, and Kenosha, to the south, have bus systems. Milwaukee County also has a county-wide transit system.

***Many residents have expressed a desire for improving bicycle and pedestrian access along Sheridan Road, and for decreasing the speed limit to 35 MPH from Carthage College to CTH KR.***

Some residents in the neighborhood have expressed support for a bus line running down Sheridan Road. For residents that do not have a personal vehicle or would prefer not to drive, public transportation would greatly improve access to shopping, education, and employment opportunities in the nearby population centers.

## Bridges

There is one bridge in the neighborhood, where Sheridan Road crosses the Pike River. A sidewalk on the west side of the Road crosses the bridge and connects Carthage College's main campus to their tennis courts and nature trail. On the east side of the road, however, there is no shoulder and no sidewalk, creating a major safety concern for pedestrians.

## Bicycle / Walking Paths

It is important to recognize that people have different needs and capabilities and a community's transportation system should include a variety of transportation choices. Bicycle and pedestrian facility planning is an important component of community and neighborhood planning.

Currently Sheridan Road has high volumes of traffic and is considered to be generally unsafe for bicycles and pedestrians. Throughout the planning process, many residents of the neighborhood expressed interest in improving pedestrian and bike access along Sheridan Road.

There are many challenges associated with developing sidewalks, bike lanes, or paths along Sheridan Road. Many homes and businesses are set close to Sheridan Road, limiting the amount of space available for pedestrian and bike facilities. Given the limited space, sidewalks on both sides of Sheridan Road and "share the road" markings for bicycles is probably the most viable option for improving bike and pedestrian access along the road.

There are also existing bike paths and trails that run to the west and south of the neighborhood. The North Shore Bike Trail is a north-south trail to the west of the neighborhood and provides access from Racine to Lake Bluff, Illinois. The Kenosha Lakefront Trail contains a recent addition that crosses Sheridan Road and connects the North Shore Trail to trails south of the Lakeshore Neighborhood.

## Streetscape Concept Plan Overview

Residents of the Lakeshore Neighborhood have expressed an interest in installing sidewalks and/or a bike path along Sheridan Road. Due to the lack of space in the area, sidewalks and "share the road" markings would help to achieve the neighborhood's goal (see Figure 1). The streetscape concept plan would include:

- Crosswalks, street trees, lighting and landscaping at entrances to the Neighborhood and at future Neighborhood Commercial Center.
- A pedestrian path along both sides of Sheridan Road.
- A five-foot wide strip of lawn with trees that separates the sidewalk from the road.
- At the entrances to the neighborhood there could be signage and landmarks to help give the Lakeshore Neighborhood a sense of identity.

Figure 2. Streetscape Concept Plan



## Transportation Patterns and Traffic Conditions

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) monitors traffic flow at selected locations on a three-year cycle. Map 4 shows the locations of these counts taken in and around the Lakeshore Neighborhood during 2005. The area with the highest traffic levels was around County A and Sheridan Road. Other areas of high volume were the intersections of County KR and County E at Sheridan Road.

With relatively high traffic volumes, multiple driveways, and numerous unsigned intersections, Sheridan Road has had its fair share of traffic incidents. A review of recent traffic related incident reports from the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department (November 2007 through March 2008) indicates that there are several key areas in the neighborhood that have repeat problems with speeding and reckless driving. In particular, the area around County Highway E seems prone to traffic incidents (map 5).



*Sheridan Road has relatively high traffic volumes, multiple driveways, and numerous unsigned intersections.*

## New Roads and Driveways

New roads and driveways must be carefully planned and coordinated in the Lakeshore Neighborhood to avoid exacerbating existing transportation issues. Sheridan Road is the only north south road in the Neighborhood. Consequently, all traffic in, out, or within the Neighborhood must use Sheridan Road. In addition, the multiple side streets and driveways mean that people are constantly turning onto and off of Sheridan Road. The result is what we see today: a large, somewhat congested, multi-lane road with high traffic volumes. This problem will only get worse with any new development, unless efforts are made to coordinate and share driveways and roads.

New development should be required to share driveways wherever feasible. In addition, local access roads that serve multiple houses and/or business should be constructed where possible.

## MAP 4: Traffic and Walkability

### Lakeshore Neighborhood

#### Town of Somers

Kenosha County, Wisconsin



Pedestrian Shed (1/4 mile)



Traffic counts are parallel to the road  
(2005 Annual Average Daily Traffic)



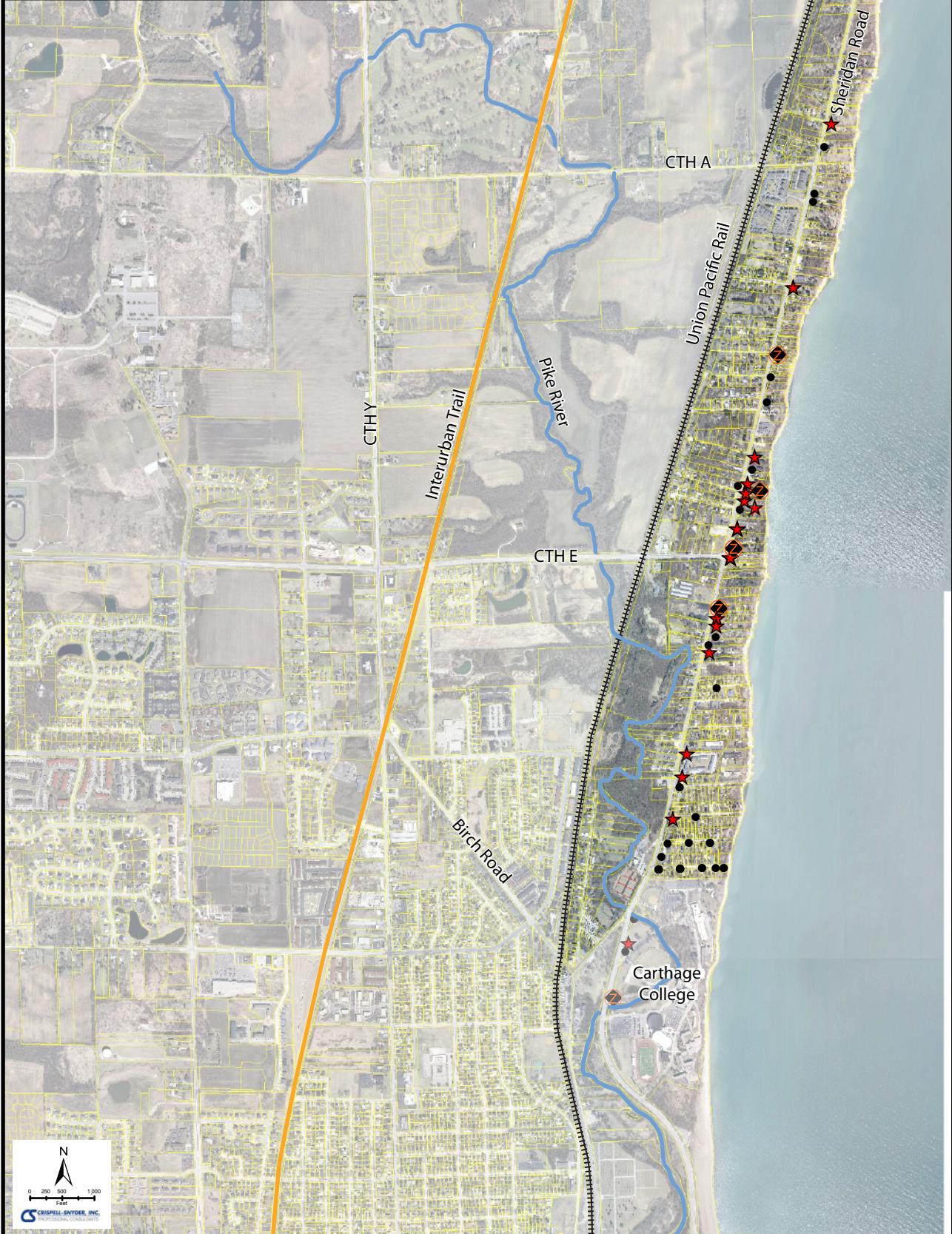
## MAP 5: Traffic Incidents

### Lakeshore Neighborhood

#### Town of Somers

Kenosha County, Wisconsin

- ★ Speeding/Vehicle Law (40)
- Abandoned Vehicle/Parking Complaints (40)
- Reckless Driving (10)



## Transportation and Streetscape Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a comprehensive approach for achieving this vision. The order in which these goals, objectives, and policies are listed does not necessarily denote their priority.

### **Goals**

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*Goals are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach transportation issues.*

- G5.1** Improve the design, function, and safety of the existing road network.
- G5.2** Coordinate land use and transportation planning to meet the needs of neighborhood residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors and commuters.
- G5.3** Enhance and promote the use of bicycles and walking as viable forms of transportation by supporting the provision of safe public facilities, including multi-use trails, bicycle routes, bicycles lanes, and sidewalks.
- G5.4** Maintain and enhance road connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods where practical.
- G5.5** Encourage economic development and support local business success by providing a comprehensive transportation network that meets the needs of commerce.

### **Objectives**

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*Objectives suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishments of an objective contribute to the fulfillment of a goal.*

- O5.1** Encourage connectivity between blocks that support bicycle and pedestrian activity and overall transportation efficiency.
- O5.2** Provide sidewalks and safe bike access along Sheridan Road, CTH A, CTH E, and CTH KR.
- O5.3** Establish an interconnected network of on-street bike lanes and off-street bike paths.
- O5.4** Develop traffic calming measures that increase safety along Sheridan Road and at select intersections.

### **Policies**

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*Policies are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives.*

- P5.1** Establish and adopt an official map for the Town that designates adequate land for public rights-of-way for future roads in the Lakeshore Neighborhood.
- P5.2** Establish official bike routes in the Town, and install bike lanes and bike signs where appropriate and feasible, such as along Sheridan Road, CTH A, CTH E, and CTH KR.
- P5.3** Solicit the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit on Sheridan Road to 35 mph from Carthage College to CTH KR and to consider potential traffic calming options for the road.
- P5.4** Work with WisDNR and Kenosha County to implement proposed trails and bike routes in and around Somers and the Lakeshore Neighborhood.

- P5.5** Encourage all new non-residential development to provide pedestrian amenities, on-site bike racks, and connections to bike paths/routes.
- P5.6** Implement Town policy to require new sidewalks and bicycle lanes to serve all development and redevelopment along arterial routes.
- P5.7** Encourage shared driveways and connected access roads for new development along arterial routes.
- P5.8** Work with Kenosha and Racine Counties to evaluate and potentially implement public transit along Sheridan Road.
- P5.9** Support the development of a transit stop for the proposed KRM Commuter Rail.
- P5.10** Require adequate rights-of-way for existing and future roads as a condition of land division or site plan approval.
- P5.11** Modify the subdivision ordinance to allow land dedicated for trails/paths to count towards green space requirements.

# Implementation

## Plan Adoption

Section 66.1001(4) of the Wisconsin Statutes dictates the specific procedures that are required for the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. Although the Lakeshore Neighborhood Plan is not technically a Comprehensive Plan, the same procedures for adoption should be followed. Adoption is a critical step in implementation and sets the stage for meaningful use of the Plan for achieving the community's future vision. Once completed, the Lakeshore Neighborhood Plan, along with the other neighborhood plans, will be incorporated into the Kenosha County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan.

## Implementation Framework

The Neighborhood Plan identifies 13 priority actions to be initiated within the next ten to twenty years. These are organized below based on whether they are short-term (within the next 5 years) or medium-term (five to ten years). Long-term programs and actions should be identified as part of the ten-year update of the plan, as discussed below. Suggested dates for implementation are also provided, although these should be considered as a guide rather than an absolute. The order in which items are listed does not necessarily denote their priority for implementation.

To ensure consistency across the plan, and to facilitate straightforward implementation, programs and actions outlined below provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the policies and objectives of the various chapters of this Plan. The specific Plan policies addressed under each program or action is listed, to assist with cross referencing the appropriate chapters.

Successful implementation of the plan will require public-private partnerships, inter-municipal efforts, and/or inter-agency coordination and cooperation. A cooperative, collaborative approach is essential for the Plan to be successful.

## Plan Consistency and Use

The intent is for this Plan to serve as a guide for all actions by the Town and County on behalf of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. The Plan outlines not only specific programs and actions, but also broader vision, goals, and objectives for the future of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. It is critical that the Plan be actively used by elected officials, appointed committees, and staff members as a decision making tool.

Once the Neighborhood Plan is incorporated into the Kenosha County Multijurisdictional Comprehensive Plan, State law mandating consistency between municipal regulations and a Comprehensive Plan will take effect. At a minimum, State Law dictates that beginning on January 1, 2010, the following Town and County actions must be consistent with the Multijurisdictional Comprehensive Plan:

- Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6).
- Local subdivision regulation under s. 236.45 or 236.46.
- Zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.69, 60.61, or 60.62
- Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under s. 59.692, 61.351 or 62.231.

Zoning maps do not necessarily need to be the same as the future land use map, since the future projects are 20 to 30 years out while the zoning map should be current. Instead, zoning maps should be consistent with the vision and goals of the plan, while generally working towards the long-term future land use plan. However, the State is clear that the other zoning

regulations and specifications need to be made in accordance with the comprehensive plan.

Subdivisions can be rejected based on their inconsistency with an element of the master plan, although it doesn't necessarily have to (the legal language is still unclear).

### **Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan**

Within five years following adoption of the Plan, the Town will review and evaluate the success of implementing the plan. This evaluation will include not only tracking what actions have been initiated, but also assessing whether these actions have been effective in furthering the goals and objectives of the Plan. It is expected that this evaluation will result in some actions and/or policies being dropped or others added as necessary. This five-year review does not necessarily need to include extensive public participation.

The Plan's time horizon is intended to be twenty-five years to 2035; however, after ten-years the plan should be completely reviewed and updated. At this time, extensive public involvement and detailed analysis should be conducted.

### **Plan Amendment Procedures**

Any amendments to the Plan must undergo a formal review process, be adopted by the Town in the same manner as the original plan, and coordinated with the Kenosha County Multijurisdictional Plan.

## **Recommended Programs and Actions**

### **Regulations and Ordinances**

#### **A1. Improve enforcement of existing property maintenance ordinance.**

Associated Policies:

- P1.1 Provide better enforcement of existing property maintenance ordinance, which governs such things as garbage and refuse, excessive weeds, conditions that harbor rodents, and graffiti.
- P2.11 Enhance the safety and security of people in the neighborhood.

Detailed Recommendations:

The Town's existing property maintenance ordinance governs a variety of property maintenance issues, including weeds, paint, garbage and refuse, rodents, graffiti, and unsafe buildings. Many neighborhood residents indicated that there is currently little enforcement of this ordinance in the neighborhood. Increased enforcement would help to improve the visual character of the neighborhood, as well as health and safety conditions.

#### **A2. Develop design guidelines for multi-family residential development.**

Associated Policies:

- P1.2 Encourage/require diversity of building styles and color for new residential development.
- P1.3 Develop design guidelines for residential development that encourages/requires high quality building materials, diversity in design, and single-family style.
- P2.3 Maintain the existing scale of the neighborhood. New construction should fit into the context of the existing built environment and complement the character of the neighborhood. Encourage infill development that is compatible with existing uses and improves the pedestrian environment and the streetscape. Permit taller buildings only if they are in scale with other structures in the area.
- P2.4 Establish specific design review criteria and regulations that express the need for projects to respect and preserve the character of the neighborhood.

- P2.6 As part of private and public development and renovation projects, attempt to maximize green spaces, pedestrian paths, lake views, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping in the development plans.
- P3.3 Establish multi-family housing design standards that encourages/require structures to be set back from the street, incorporate front porches, proper driveway location, incorporate open space, protect views, and have a single family character and attractive building design that reduces the visual scale and impact of multi-family buildings.
- P3.6 Encourage the creation of buffers in the form of landscaping and berms to help transition between different land uses.
- P3.7 Encourage a significant amount of landscaping for all new development.
- P3.8 Protect key views of the lake and other natural features through view mapping, and appropriate site design.
- P4.1 Install rain gardens and other retention and filtering features in public parks, open space, and drainage ways, and require the use of these features in new developments where appropriate and feasible.
- P4.2 Establish regulations to require any new development or major renovations/expansions in waterfront areas to incorporate native plants along the shoreline.
- P4.3 Reduce the overall amount of impervious cover associated with new development.
- P4.6 Consider adopting development regulations to preserve or enhance lake views and overlooks.
- P5.7 Encourage shared driveways and connected access roads for new development along arterial routes.

#### Detailed Recommendations:

Multiple family housing provides options for the elderly, younger residents, and people looking for more affordable housing options. However, such projects often cause community opposition. In some cases, this is because such projects have been poorly and cheaply designed. The County should enhance its zoning ordinance with detailed design guidelines for all new or expanded multi-family residential developments and enforce them during development review processes. The following guidelines provide a foundation, and may be used on development projects whether or not new standards are included in the Zoning Ordinance:

- Incorporate architectural design that fits the context of the surrounding neighborhood. To help multi-family housing fit in, the county and town

should encourage layouts where buildings appear as a grouping of smaller residences.

- Promote building materials, designs, scale, and setbacks that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character.
- Use brick and other quality materials on building facades. Avoid monotonous facades and box-like buildings. Incorporate balconies, porches, garden walls, varied building and facade setbacks, varied roof designs, and bay windows.
- Orient buildings to the street with adequate front yard setbacks.
- Locate parking, dumpsters, and other unattractive uses behind buildings. In-building or underground parking is highly encouraged.
- For parking lots and garages, (a) locate garage doors and parking lots so they are not the dominant visual element; (b) screen parking areas from public view; (c) break up large parking lots with landscaped islands and similar features; (d) provide direct links to building entrances by pedestrian walkways physically separated from vehicular movement areas; (e) large parking garages are undesirable, but where necessary, break up facades with foundation landscaping, varied facade setbacks, and recessed garage doors; and (f) In-building or underground parking is generally preferred.
- Provide generous landscaping of sufficient size at time of planting. Emphasize landscaping (a) along all public and private street frontages; (b) along the perimeter of all paved areas and in islands in larger parking lots; (c) along all building foundations; (d) along yards separating land uses which differ in intensity, density, or character; (e) around all outdoor storage areas such as trash receptacles and recycling bins (also include screening walls in these areas); and (f) around all

utility structures or mechanical structures visible from public streets or less intensive land uses.

- Provide on-site recreational and open space areas to serve the needs of residents.

### **A3. Develop design guidelines for commercial development.**

#### Associated Policies:

- P2.3 Maintain the existing scale of the neighborhood. New construction should fit into the context of the existing built environment and complement the character of the neighborhood. Encourage infill development that is compatible with existing uses and improves the pedestrian environment and the streetscape. Permit taller buildings only if they are in scale with other structures in the area
- P2.4 Establish specific design review criteria and regulations that express the need for projects to respect and preserve the character of the neighborhood.
- P2.6 As part of private and public development and renovation projects, attempt to maximize green spaces, pedestrian paths, lake views, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping in the development plans.
- P2.8 Develop Town programs to improve the pedestrian and aesthetic nature of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. Encourage cooperation between the business community and the town in the establishment of an attractive, functional, meaningful, and successful commercial center.
- P2.9 Adopt development guidelines that promote linkages and better connections between the neighborhood and its commercial center.
- P3.2 Establish design guidelines for the neighborhood commercial center that encourage/require attractive mixed-use buildings set close to the street, design elements that create an appearance of several smaller structures, pedestrian scale, parking in rear or to the side, inviting streetscapes, and “rustic” or “country” architectural styles.
- P3.5 Encourage commercial development to incorporate small gathering spaces with benches, tables, and landscaping.
- P3.6 Encourage the creation of buffers in the form of landscaping and berms to help transition between different land uses.
- P3.7 Encourage a significant amount of landscaping for all new development.
- P4.1 Install rain gardens and other retention and filtering features in public parks, open space, and drainage ways,

and require the use of these features in new developments where appropriate and feasible.

- P4.2 Establish regulations to require any new development or major renovations/expansions in waterfront areas to incorporate native plants along the shoreline.
- P4.3 Reduce the overall amount of impervious cover associated with new development.
- P4.6 Consider adopting development regulations to preserve or enhance lake views and overlooks.
- P5.5 Encourage all new non-residential development to provide pedestrian amenities, on-site bike racks, and connections to bike paths/routes.
- P5.7 Encourage shared driveways and connected access roads for new development along arterial routes.

#### Detailed Recommendations:

The Town of Somers should strengthen and enforce design standards for commercial projects to ensure high-quality, lasting projects that are compatible with the desired character. These standards should apply to all new development and redevelopment projects in the Lakeshore Neighborhood. Outdoor storage and unscreened loading docks should be discouraged in high visibility yards, in order to maintain a high-quality appearance of development sites from Sheridan Road. Materials, colors, design of building facades, screening walls, and/or fences in such areas should be compatible with the predominant materials, colors, and design of the “front” of the principal building.

**Commercial Design Standards.** Overall, the following principles should be incorporated into site and building designs for new and expanded commercial uses, regardless of type:

- New driveways with adequate throat depths to allow for proper vehicle stacking.
- Limited number of access drives along Sheridan Road.
- Common driveways serving more than one commercial use, wherever possible.
- High quality landscaping of buffer yards, street frontages, paved areas and building foundations.
- Street trees along all public street frontages.
- Intensive activity areas such as building entrances, service and loading areas, parking

- lots, and trash receptacle storage areas oriented away from less intensive land uses.
- Parking lots heavily landscaped with perimeter landscaping and/or landscaped islands, along with screening to block views from streets and residential uses.
  - Parking to the sides and rear of buildings, rather than having all parking in the front.
  - Signage that is high quality and not excessive in height or total square footage.
  - Location of loading docks, dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas behind buildings and away from less intensive land uses.
  - Complete screening of loading docks, dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas through use of landscaping, walls, and architectural features.
  - Safe, convenient, and separated pedestrian and bicycle access to the site from the parking areas to the buildings, and to adjacent commercial developments.
  - Site design features that allow pedestrians to walk parallel to moving cars.
  - Illumination from lighting kept on site through use of attractive cut-off fixtures.
  - High quality building materials, such as brick, wood, stone, and tinted masonry.
  - Canopies, awnings, trellises, bays, and windows to add visual interest to facades.
  - Variations in building height and roof lines, including parapets, multi-planed, and pitched roofs and staggered building facades (variations in wall depth and/or direction).
  - Façades that contain architectural details of similar quality as the front façade.
  - Central features that add to community character, such as patios and benches.
  - Avoidance of linear, “strip commercial” development patterns within multi-occupant projects. Arrange/group buildings so their orientation complements adjacent development, frames streets/intersections

and parking lots; features pedestrian and/or vehicle access ways, and considers the arrangement of parking lots, gathering spaces, and other site amenities.

- Design of parking and circulation areas so that vehicles are able to move from one area of the site to another (and from one site to the adjacent site) without re-entering a street.

#### **A4. *Modify existing county zoning regulations or establish town zoning regulations.***

Associated Policies:

- P1.4 Modify existing zoning regulations to appropriately locate different types of housing in the neighborhood.
- P2.1 Develop the appropriate zoning district and regulatory framework to implement neighborhood commercial center.
- P2.3 Maintain the existing scale of the neighborhood. New construction should fit into the context of the existing built environment and complement the character of the neighborhood. Encourage infill development that is compatible with existing uses and improves the pedestrian environment and the streetscape. Permit taller buildings only if they are in scale with other structures in the area.
- P2.10 Provide opportunities for small businesses.
- P3.1 Work within the County's zoning ordinance or the Town's Chapter 18 ordinance to encourage appropriate densities, uses, and site design in accordance with the recommendations of this plan.

Detailed Recommendations:

The zoning ordinance should be modified to implement the land use recommendations of this plan. The future land use map, descriptions of future land uses, descriptions of the neighborhood commercial center, and community character discussed in the Land Use and Neighborhood Commercial Center Chapters should be used as a guide for zoning code revisions. These modifications should include:

- Zone the neighborhood commercial center properties for small-scale, neighborhood-oriented uses. Buildings should be set close to

the road. A maximum height of 2 stories (potentially 3) on the east side and 3 stories on the west side should be specified. The zoning revision should also consider requiring a minimum of two stories to discourage “strip mall” development. Second story residential and mixed use development should be encouraged.

- Revise the zone designations to restrict commercial development outside of the designated neighborhood commercial center. Existing commercial properties outside of this area should be rezoned for multi-family development.
- Multi-family housing should be a maximum of 8 units per acre, and should be limited to two stories on the east side of Sheridan Road and three stories on the west side.

## **A5. Update the Town’s Subdivision Regulations.**

### Associated Policies:

- P1.2 Encourage/require diversity of building styles and color for new residential development.
- P1.3 Develop design guidelines for residential development that encourages/requires high quality building materials, diversity in design, and single-family style.
- P2.6 As part of private and public development and renovation projects, attempt to maximize green spaces, pedestrian paths, lake views, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping in the development plans.
- P3.8 Protect key views of the lake and other natural features through view mapping, and appropriate site design.
- P4.1 Install rain gardens and other retention and filtering features in public parks, open space, and drainage ways, and require the use of these features in new developments where appropriate and feasible.
- P4.2 Establish regulations to require any new development or major renovations/expansions in waterfront areas to incorporate native plants along the shoreline.
- P4.3 Reduce the overall amount of impervious cover associated with new development.
- P4.5 Require that adequate park land and/or park improvement fees are dedicated in conjunction with new residential subdivisions.

- P4.6 Consider adopting development regulations to preserve or enhance lake views and overlooks.
- P5.7 Encourage shared driveways and connected access roads for new development along arterial routes.
- P5.10 Require adequate rights-of-way for existing and future roads as a condition of land division or site plan approval.
- P5.11 Modify the subdivision ordinance to allow land dedicated for trails/paths to count towards green space requirements.

### Detailed Recommendations:

Subdivision regulations govern the way in which new subdivisions are plotted and what amenities are provided. Subdivision regulations provide an important tool for shaping the future of the Lakeshore Neighborhood. To take full advantage of this tool, the town’s current subdivision ordinance needs to be modified to incorporate the recommendations of the Plan. Specifically, the following modifications should be made:

- Encourage/ require additional tree planting and preservation. Existing trees over 10 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) should be maintained whenever possible. New trees along the street edge should be mandatory. The subdivision regulations should specify the type and height of new trees.
- Encourage/ require native plants along the shoreline for any new subdivisions. The regulations should specify the minimum amount of native shoreline vegetation. A 100 foot vegetated buffer is recommended. Existing native plants along the shore should be maintained. An approved stewardship plan for these riparian buffers should be required as part of the approval process.
- Encourage/require on-site stormwater strategies, such as rain gardens and infiltration areas, into new development. “Green infrastructure” strategies for stormwater management are generally more cost effective than traditional stormwater

infrastructure and do a much better job of protecting water quality.

- Reduce the overall amount of impervious cover associated with new development. This could be done by restricting driveway length and size and reducing the maximum road width permitted.
- Require new sidewalks in all new residential developments where feasible.
- Require adequate right-of-way for existing and future roads as a condition of subdivision approval.
- Allow land dedicated for trails/paths to count towards green space requirements.
- Designate ‘buildable areas’ as part of subdivision review process, particularly on sites where future residential development might obstruct key views of the lake.
- Include covenants and deed restriction that govern architecture and site design.

#### **A6. Establish Site Plan Review regulations.**

Associated Policies:

- P2.6 As part of private and public development and renovation projects, attempt to maximize green spaces, pedestrian paths, lake views, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping in the development plans.
- P3.7 Encourage a significant amount of landscaping for all new development.
- P3.8 Protect key views of the lake and other natural features through view mapping, and appropriate site design.
- P4.1 Install rain gardens and other retention and filtering features in public parks, open space, and drainage ways, and require the use of these features in new developments where appropriate and feasible.
- P4.2 Establish regulations to require any new development or major renovations/expansions in waterfront areas to incorporate native plants along the shoreline.
- P4.3 Reduce the overall amount of impervious cover associated with new development.

- P5.10 Require adequate rights-of-way for existing and future roads as a condition of land division or site plan approval.

#### Detailed Recommendations:

Site plan regulations dictate that all development activity (including building permits, zoning certificates, occupancy permits for a change of use of an existing lot or structure where there is contemplated a site plan revision, clear cutting, grading or filling) require the review and approval of a Town Committee and Staff. In the end, such standards will assist in fostering sound, functional, attractive and quality development according to the Neighborhood’s goals, objectives, and policies for its physical growth and change, as expressed in this Plan.

The Town should require by code/ordinance the following submittal requirements:

- Written description of the building, site, and operation plan for the project.
- Site plan illustrating the proposed layout of the proposed development and all site logistics.
- Tree survey plan to ensure mature or specimen trees are not harmed or removed without replacement during the construction process.
- Landscape plan illustrating all existing plantings and all proposed new landscape plantings for the site.
- Grading, erosion control, and stormwater plans to ensure compliance with all applicable Town, county, and state requirements.
- Building elevations depicting and describing the dimensions, colors, and materials proposed for all exterior building sides and roofs.
- Sign plan outlining the location, height, dimensions, color, materials, lighting and sign copy area of all proposed exterior signage.
- Exterior Lighting Plan illustrating the location, height, type, design, orientation, anchorage, and wattage of all proposed outdoor lighting, and including a photometric plan. Lighting

proposals should comply with the recommendations of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).

#### **A7. Adopt an official map for the town.**

##### Associated Policies:

- P5.1 Update the Town's official map to designate adequate land for public rights-of-way for future roads in the Lakeshore Neighborhood.

##### Detailed Recommendations:

The Town should consider adopting an Official Map immediately following the adoption of this Plan. Under Wisconsin Statutes, the Town's Official Map reserves right-of-way for future streets, pedestrian/bicycle paths, parks, drainageways, and other municipal facilities. The Town should adopt and administer an Official Map to protect roadway corridors, obtain sufficient right-of-way for roads, and plan for community and neighborhood parks when they are needed.

Before the Town approves any certified survey map, preliminary plat, final plat, site plan, conditional use permit or planned unit development within the Town Limits, it should make sure that the proposed development is consistent with the recommendations of the Official Map. Actual construction or expansion of any road may not occur for many years, even after new or additional right-of-way is acquired or reserved. However, the Town should work to acquire corridors, through dedication or purchase of additional right-of-way, well in advance of actual need at all available opportunities.

#### **Neighborhood Character and Streetscape Improvements**

##### **A8. Develop a detailed streetscape plan.**

##### Associated Policies:

- P2.5 Develop a detailed streetscape plan. Create urban spaces, sidewalks, and other amenities to enhance the pedestrian environment and increase the number of people who will use the neighborhood commercial center.

##### Detailed Recommendations:

The Neighborhood Plan provides general recommendations for streetscape improvements. Before implementing these recommendations, a detailed plan for streetscape improvements along Sheridan Road should be developed. This will give residents an opportunity to weigh in on what they want the neighborhood to look like, and will provide a detailed budget and timeline for implementation of streetscape improvements.

##### Potential Funding Sources:

Transportation Enhancement Program

#### **A9. Install high quality public entry signs and/or public art.**

##### Associated Policies:

- P3.9 Enhance primary entrances into the neighborhood by installing high quality public entry signs and/or public art.
- P3.10 Enhance and protect secondary entryways into the neighborhood by preserving environmental features and installing small entry markers.

##### Detailed Recommendations:

Improving the entryways into the neighborhood will help to solidify the neighborhood's identity. Entry signs are also an important way to let drivers know that they are entering a residential area.

The process of designing and installing neighborhood welcome signs can help to bring together the neighborhood. Residents of the neighborhood should be involved in the design and fundraising process.

**A10. Establish a revolving loan fund for building renovations in the Lakeshore Neighborhood.**

Associated Policies:

- P2.2 Retain the older, historically valuable buildings in the and around the neighborhood. Encourage adaptive re-use of older buildings by promoting rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures that contribute to the overall design character of the neighborhood.
- P2.7 Support entrance and facade remodeling on existing buildings that will contribute to the pedestrian environment and the character of the neighborhood commercial center.

Detailed Recommendations:

The purpose of the revolving loan fund is to assist private property owners with renovating buildings. Through this program the Town would provide below-market rate financing to property owners interested in fixing up their building. The focus should be on exterior renovations that would help to improve the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Projects that transform underutilized or vacant space into usable occupied space should also be considered. Applicants must demonstrate that they have a viable renovation project and clearly identify the proposed uses of the loan proceeds. Loans should generally be small, with a maximum of \$25,000 per project. These should be short-term loans (e.g. 3-5 years) to ensure that the funds are available for additional projects in the future.

Potential Funding Sources:

- Community Development Block Grant
- Hope VI Main Street Program
- Neighborhood Business Realization Guarantee

**Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements**

**A11. Incorporate “green infrastructure” into future town street repaving/reconstruction projects.**

Associated Policies:

- P4.4 Incorporate “green infrastructure” (e.g. vegetated drainage areas) improvements into street repaving/reconstruction projects where feasible.

Detailed Recommendations:

Green infrastructure systems, such as vegetated drainage areas, control runoff and manage stormwater in an environmental responsible way. These systems work closely with natural hydrology, can effectively be incorporated into public spaces, and provide for better water quality management, lower municipal costs, and a better quality of life for residents overall. Green infrastructure intercepts rainfall before it reaches sewers and usually cost less to install and maintain compared to “grey” forms of water infrastructure that are typically used (concrete gutters, sewers, and end-of-pipe treatment).

Municipal green infrastructure practices have been expanding throughout communities around the U.S. By incorporating these green infrastructure improvements into street repaving and reconstruction projects, the cost of these improvements is minimal. In many cases, the cost is less than other forms of stormwater management.

It should be the policy of the Department of Public Works to incorporate green infrastructure into planned projects wherever feasible. Training for DPW staff and/or hiring an outside consultant to assist with green infrastructure design would help ensure that this technique is appropriate implemented.

Potential Funding Source:

River Protection Grant Program

**A12. Work with the DOT to make Sheridan Road more neighborhood-friendly and pedestrian-oriented.**

Associated Policies:

- P5.2 Establish official bike routes in the Town, and install bike lanes and bike signs where appropriate and feasible, such as along Sheridan Road, CTH A, CTH E, and CTH KR.
- P5.3 Solicit the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit on Sheridan Road to 35 mph from Carthage College to CTH KR and to consider potential traffic calming options for the road.
- P5.4 Work with WisDNR and Kenosha County to implement proposed trails and bike routes in and around Somers and the Lakeshore Neighborhood.

Detailed Recommendations:

Reducing the speed limit on Sheridan Road, installing sidewalks, and “share the road” markings are critical for improving the neighborhood character and safety for bicycles and pedestrians. The Town should work with the Wisconsin DOT to implement these changes. A speed limit reduction and markings/signs for sharing the road with bikes are low cost steps that should be implemented immediately. Funding options and timing for sidewalk installation should be further evaluated.

Given the individual concerns expressed by some neighborhood residents about sidewalks, it is critical that the sidewalk implementation effort include a door-to-door survey of property owners. This will help to better assess the types of concerns that people have and identify specific measures that will be needed to successfully work with individual property owners.

One way to ensure that new development projects include sidewalks is to adopt a sidewalk policy. The policy should require that new sidewalks and bicycle lanes serve all development and redevelopment where feasible. Sidewalk regulations should also specify maintenance requirements and responsibility, sidewalk widths, and sidewalk material.

Potential Funding Sources:

Surface Discretionary Grant Program (STP-D)

**A14. Work with Kenosha and Racine Counties to evaluate and potentially implement public transit along Sheridan Road.**

Associated Policies:

- P2.12 Provide safe, conveniently spaced and weather protected bus stops which attract potential transit riders with connections to adjacent colleges, Kenosha, and Racine.
- P5.8 Work with Kenosha and Racine Counties to evaluate and potentially implement public transit along Sheridan Road.

Detailed Recommendation:

Some residents in the neighborhood have expressed support for a bus line running down Sheridan Road. The Town does not currently have a bus system, and should therefore work with Kenosha and Racine Counties to evaluate and potentially implement public transit along Sheridan Road. This should be evaluated in conjunction with the proposed KRM commuter rail.

Potential Funding Sources:

Section 5309

Surface Discretionary Grant Program (STP-D)

**A13. Establish/Modify Town Sidewalk Policy.**

Associated Policies:

- P5.6 Implement Town policy to require new sidewalks and bicycle lanes to serve all development and redevelopment along arterial routes.

Detailed Recommendations:

## Recommended Programs and Actions

### Regulations and Ordinances

- A1. Improve enforcement of existing property maintenance ordinance.
- A2. Develop design guidelines for multi-family residential development.
- A3. Develop design guidelines for commercial development.
- A4. Modify existing county zoning regulations or establish town zoning regulations.
- A5. Update the Town's Subdivision Regulations.
- A6. Establish Site Plan Review regulations.
- A7. Update the Town's official map.

### Neighborhood Character and Streetscape Improvements

- A8. Develop a detailed streetscape plan.
- A9. Install high quality public entry signs and/or public art.
- A10. Establish a revolving loan fund for building renovations in the Lakeshore Neighborhood.

### Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

- A11. Work with the DOT to make Sheridan Road more neighborhood-friendly and pedestrian-oriented.
- A12. Establish/Modify Town Sidewalk Policy.
- A13. Work with Kenosha and Racine Counties to evaluate and potentially implement public transit along Sheridan Road.

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