

Input for this subarea plan was obtained through a focus group meeting with business owner/operators and residents on April 23, a public open house on October 2, and a focus group meeting on December 12, 2013 which included a presentation of draft recommendations and discussion of next steps to implement this plan.

6 LAKE CENTER SUBAREA

A. Introduction

The previous chapters of this plan outline a variety of opportunities and concepts that are pulled together in this subarea plan. This Lake Center District subarea plan demonstrates how those land use, quality of life, and transportation recommendations can be applied together.

Preparation of this subarea plan included public input, a review of market opportunities, urban design evaluation, land use analysis, and transportation evaluation resulting in the development of a vision for the corridor. Careful attention was given to evaluate existing conditions and future opportunities in the context of current City and business association efforts, including the upcoming Portage Road reconstruction from East Centre Avenue to Lakeview Drive scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Why Portage Road?

The Lake Center business district runs along Portage Road from East Centre Avenue to Clarence Drive, with additional commercial nodes between Lakeview Park and Bacon and north of Osterhout. Many businesses are locally-owned and have been in existence for more than 50 years. The area between Centre and Lakeview is the primary business district, identified as a commercial revitalization corridor in prior plans. This subarea plan was created to provide more detailed guidance for improvements along the corridor.

The corridor's character is different from other commercial corridors in Portage, such as South Westledge which has higher traffic volumes, larger stores, and many "chain" retail and restaurants. Lake Center has a smaller scale, locally-owned business character that can be enhanced to promote existing businesses and to recruit complementary ones.

The Lake Center Business Association was reestablished in the spring of 2013 after an initial Lake Center Informational Planning meeting was hosted by the City of Portage. Efforts to date include the following:

- Formed an LLC;
- Began grass roots place making with boats along corridor;
- Developed a concept for district banners along the roadway;
- Organized a "garage sale" event in summer 2013;
- Submitted formal input regarding sub-area priorities to the city in January 2014.

As the result of public input and feedback from the business association, many ideas have been generated, and this plan seeks to prioritize efforts to provide the most impact for future collaboration and action.

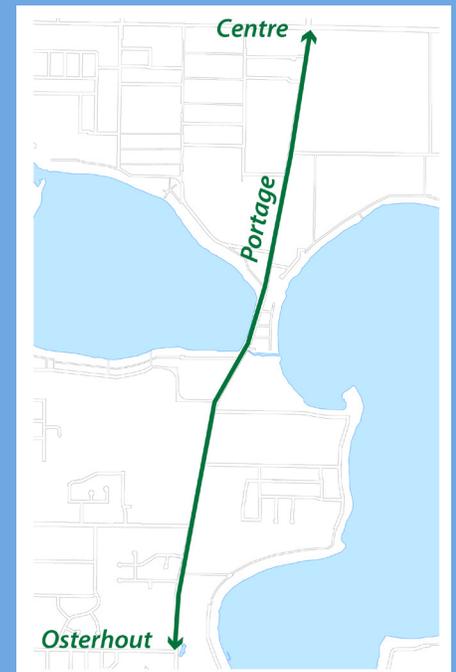
Based on the public input and consultant and city staff evaluation, the following strengths, issues, and opportunities were identified for the Lake Center district:

Strengths

- Many locally owned and operated businesses
- Interest of business owners to improve character
- Proximity to lakes and Lakeview Park
- Several eclectic mid-20th century buildings
- Unique commercial corridor in Portage

Issues and Opportunities

- Lack of architectural and site cohesion
- Inconsistent streetscape, sidewalks, and landscape buffers
- Lack of consistent identity
- Lakefront commercial properties are underutilized
- Brownfield redevelopment sites
- Narrow lot sizes
- Narrow right-of-way
- Multiple owners makes larger-scale redevelopment difficult
- Nonconformities related to front yard building setbacks, off-street parking, billboards, sign setbacks, green strip, site access, and older single-family homes



Goal: A vibrant commercial corridor with a unified attractive visual character that builds upon the history of the Lake Center District

Objectives:

- Promote consistent building placement and character for existing building/site improvements and redevelopment sites
- Refine zoning to achieve a more cohesive built environment different from other commercial corridors in Portage
- Promote local business atmosphere through strengthened business organization efforts
- Create and implement a Lake Center “brand” to attract future complementary businesses and patrons
- Identify key sites for catalytic redevelopment to spur future, long-term redevelopment
- Provide balanced and safe means of travel for bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles

The complete Market Strategy and Analysis are included in the separately published appendix.

Key Market Strategies:

- Create a destination development that leverages current strengths at the West Lake waterfront area and views of West and Austin Lakes
- Bolster the small business atmosphere through complimentary businesses, enhancing Portage Road's unique commercial flavor
- Reinforce key market niches of locally-owned restaurants, family recreation and entertainment, adventure and sport themed businesses, nautical/marine theme and businesses

B. Market Strategy Summary

The following retail recommendations reflect considerable retail competition in the City that pivots around the Crossroads Mall and big-box clusters along South Westnedge Avenue and Shaver Road. Retailers and businesses in the Lake Center District should focus on differentiating from national chain stores with: 1) unique merchandise; 2) convenience; 3) high levels of customer service; and 4) an enjoyable shopping environment enhanced by placemaking amenities.

The strategy reflects the district's economic benefits from proximity to the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, and the campuses of major employers like the Stryker and Pfizer corporations.

The strategy also gives positive consideration for the city's diverse recreational choices and ways that they match with the lifestyle clusters (population segments with characteristic retail habits). Amenities include sports facilities; open space and trails; and public lake access.

Area Amenities

Complementary attractions exist along the Portage and Sprinkle Road Corridors, including restaurants and eating establishments and family fun centers. Dining out has grown into favorite pastime and primary source of entertainment for many households. Locally-owned restaurants offering themes, entertainment, and unique settings – like waterfront views on a boardwalk – may be most able to compete against the redundancy of national chains.

Family Adventure Sports – The AirZoo is a significant regional attraction that helps attract visiting families seeking entertainment, recreation, and adventure. The regional draw of this facility is being leveraged by other establishments like Airway Lanes and Jungle Joes, and they collectively help generate a critical mass and variety of venues needed to generate repeat visitors.

Retail establishments like Hobby Sports, Racewear, Kalamazoo Choppers, and L & J Hobbies are leveraging and help reinforce the theme of attractions focused on adventure and sports. In the marine category, Boat City Marine, The Edge, and Docks Unlimited are important anchors that bridge the theme of adventure sports over to watersports.

Incubated Small Businesses

A number of home-based businesses in Portage are currently occupying space in residential neighborhoods. These businesses have already been incubated in the local market by proprietors that seem interested in operating a business, but have not chosen conventional commercial space. Outreach to home-based businesses and helping them find better locations with exposure to commercial traffic may assist with growth and redevelopment within the Lake Center business area by helping small business grow and prosper, while filling commercial vacancies.

Such outreach efforts may be an appropriate activity of the Lake Center Business Association. In particular, small business marketing efforts may include promoting live/work opportunities as a viable re-use of non conforming houses, outreach to home-based businesses, and outreach to complimentary businesses such as restaurants, family adventure/fun, hobby shops, motor sports, and marine-focused businesses as noted in the market study.

Leveraging the Lakefront - Lake Center Core Node

Based on public input sessions a clear theme has emerged as most likely for the Portage Road corridor and Lake Center District that focuses on West and Austin Lakes. Lakes and other water bodies are valuable resources that are absent from the vast majority of business districts. In the Lake Center District, West and Austin Lakes converge between Forest and Lakeview drives.

This isthmus area includes long-established stores that serve as important anchors for the district, including Nelson Hardware (Do-It Center) and H & B Market grocery store. The West Lake shoreline along the west side of Portage Road includes two significant lakefront properties that appear to be available for sale and/or are ripe for redevelopment. Existing uses on the West Lake waterfront include the Mavcon facility, which could be redeveloped as a restaurant or other active complementary uses, and also include the vintage West Lake Drive In, which is a seasonable business. Reinforced by the hardware and grocery store anchors, this area represents the district's center of gravity, and is the focus of the strategy recommendations of the subarea plan.

The optimal market strategy calls for leveraging the West Lake waterfront and views of both West and Austin lakes, which would most likely occur concurrent with redevelopment projects in the Lake Center Core Node. Depending on project proposals and related planning considerations, future uses could be passive or have some higher level of intensity. In addition, adjacent uses suggest that it could be feasible to add docks extending into the water to take advantage of the waterfront.

There are several additional opportunities to leverage the lakeshore and expand redevelopment activity to include nearby properties. For example, the parking area between Nelson Hardware and the H & B Grocery store could be redeveloped to create a more compact district with mixed uses. Additional planning strategies could also involve improving and creating new pedestrian linkages with the Lakeview Park on Austin Lake; and integrating other adjacent properties into a larger redevelopment project. Concepts for these strategies are noted on the Lake Center Core Node map.

Secondary Opportunities:

Several other commercial nodes have also been identified as secondary redevelopment project areas. Redevelopment of these secondary areas will be more feasible and viable after redevelopment within the Lake Center Core Node is successfully underway and/or accomplished.

- Development of district gateways:
 - » North Gateway - Continue to facilitate development of Centre Port Commons, a brownfield redevelopment site at Portage Road and East Centre Avenue;
 - » South Gateway – Encourage renovation of the Great Skate and Chicago Style Pizza buildings to reinforce the mid-century revival theme.
- Other under-utilized/vacant sites:
 - » Facilitate redevelopment of the vacant Burger King and former impound lot to east
 - » Former mini-golf site
 - » Renovating the Nickles Bakery and CNT's Racing and Production Screen Printing to reinforce the cluster with West Michigan TV Repair.



The for-sale Mavcon building is a prime opportunity to capitalize on the lakefront.



Docks could provide lake residents convenient access to a redeveloped Lake Center core business district.



A renovated Nickles Bakery could be combined with the nearby West Michigan TV repair to create a secondary commercial cluster.

Right-of-Way Design Approach

- Safely accommodate motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists of all abilities (complete streets)
- Maximize efficiency of right-of-way
- Identify key locations to prioritize walkability
- Street design to meet traffic needs, but at speeds and design that complement the character of the area
- As roadways are redesigned, bury or relocate power lines, as resources permit

For specific locations of roadway recommendations, see the Lake Center map on page 27.



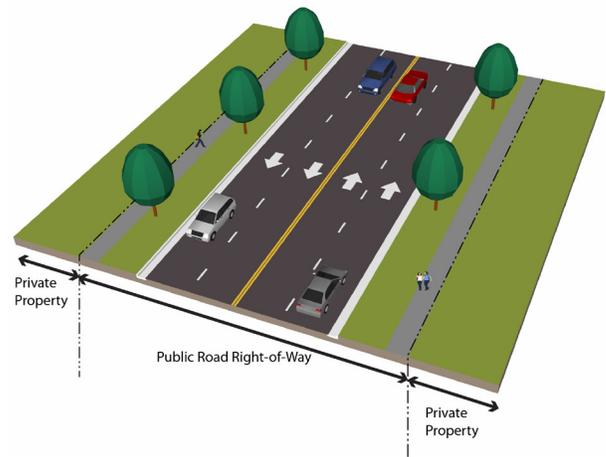
C. Design Guidelines

Based on the feedback obtained through public involvement, these design guidelines were developed to outline specific changes that can be made along Portage Road to strengthen its visual character and potential for redevelopment. These are intended as recommendations to solidify the Lake Center District as a unique, cohesive commercial district that has a distinct sense of place. These guidelines, when applied throughout the corridor, will help the district achieve the goal and objectives identified above.

Current zoning standards provide a minimum amount of regulation that can be strengthened and are described in the Implementation section of this chapter. These design guidelines seek to compliment zoning by providing a set of recommended practices that the city can take in the right-of-way and that property owners can apply to their individual sites, contributing to the overall character of the district.

Right-of-Way Design

As the primary means of experiencing the corridor, Portage Road's design within the right-of-way influences the perception, character, and vitality of the district.



Portage Road today:

- 4-5 lanes typical
- Some wide shoulders that can accommodate bicycles
- Lack of sidewalks, primarily on west side of road, few crossings of Portage Road
- Limited street right-of-way
- Limited or no landscaping and streetscape elements to soften the environment and visually buffer pedestrians from cars; combined with high speeds, this can combine to make pedestrians feel exposed and unsafe

Walkability

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable travelers on Portage Road, and their needs are quite basic: comfortable, safe and interesting places to walk, and destinations within walking distance. A pedestrian-friendly corridor includes a range of ingredients – places to walk to (destinations), comfortable places to walk, and ease of crossing Portage Road. There are some blocks that are fairly walkable, but need some enhancement. Much of the lack of sidewalks is due to the narrow right-of-way. Most of the blocks need a transformative change to be an inviting and safe place to walk. Some of the features that can improve the environment for pedestrians, include the following:

- A land use pattern that is compatible with walking. Trips are short, and can be made on foot. This can be accomplished with buildings close to the street and businesses in close proximity to encourage walking between them.
- Continuous sidewalks of appropriate width
- Safe crossings

- Buffering from traffic with landscaping or just separation
- Interesting and inviting streetscape and buildings which address the street with doors and windows
- Comfortable places to sit
- Streetscape of trees and lighting that provide shade, security and help define the pedestrian realm.

Traffic calming

One goal is to design the street and private sites so that traffic speeds are appropriate for the area. A five-lane road often can lead to fairly high speeds. To help mitigate high speeds, traffic calming techniques can include narrowing the lane widths, special pavement colors or raised pavement for pedestrian crossings. Traffic calming at intersections can also include use of narrower curb radii and curb bump outs to reduce the width that pedestrians must cross. This can actually benefit vehicular traffic too, since shorter crossing paths require less time for pedestrians to cross the roadway. Another option is a roundabout as a gateway feature, welcoming travelers to the district. Roundabouts also can move more traffic with less delay than a traditional signalized intersection with much lower crash rates. A single-lane roundabout may be an option at the Osterhout Avenue/Portage Road intersections.

Reclaim right-of-way for Complete Street improvements

Given the traffic volumes, segments of Portage Road's four- and five-lane sections could be reduced to provide one travel lane in each direction and a center left turn lane. This would free up space in the existing pavement width for on-street bicycle lanes, widened sidewalks or landscaped areas, and other streetscape enhancements.

This would not only provide room for pedestrians and bicyclists, but can improve safety too. Studies show that for streets with daily traffic volumes of 15,000 or less, a change from four lanes to three lanes can reduce crashes on average by 30% and injuries associated with crashes by almost 70%. Reducing the number of lanes tends to reduce speeds slightly, but most of the benefit is due to reduction in the number of rear-end collisions.

A reduction from four lanes to three should be explored, particularly for segments with daily volumes of 15,000 vehicles or less. Portage Road south

4 Lanes to 3 Lanes

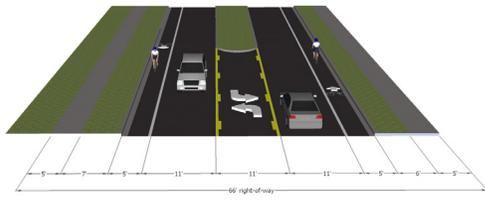
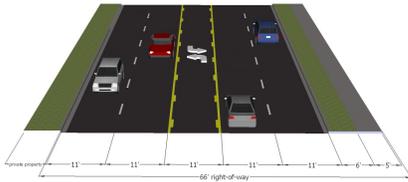


- Only slightly more capacity than 3 lanes because inner lanes are used for left turns
- Typically more crashes than 3 or 5 lanes due to conflicts with left turns



- Slight drop in capacity compared to 4 lanes
- Fewer crashes
- Usually lowers speed 3-5 mph
- Additional room for bicycles, pedestrians, landscaping





Reducing 5 lanes at the Lake Center core node to 3 lanes could allow sidewalks to be constructed on the west side and the addition of some short median segments or pedestrian refuge islands and bike lanes. This area needs more study to develop the feasibility of the reduction and impact on roadway capacity.



Overhead crossing signals and speed radar signs can help improve visibility and safety of pedestrian crossings.



Refuge islands help signal drivers to slow down and give pedestrians and bicyclists a safe place to cross.

of Lakeview Drive should be converted from four to three lanes (except for the Bacon intersection near Lake Center Elementary School). For segments with daily traffic volumes of 15,000-20,000 a detailed evaluation is needed to determine if three lanes will provide sufficient capacity, particularly at intersections. Additional traffic counts should be taken along Portage Road prior to the summer 2014 reconstruction, particularly from Forest south. Speeds should be recorded before and after reconstruction to continue to assess possibilities for future reconfiguration from Forest to Lakeview Drives.

Median and Pedestrian Refuge Islands

Installing and maintaining a short median in the center of the roadway at key locations can have a number of benefits including calming traffic (reduced speeds), increasing green space, and providing a mid-street refuge for crossing pedestrians and bicyclists. Medians also can restrict left turns into and from driveways or side streets. That, combined with the separation of opposing traffic flow, results in a significant reduction in crashes when comparing a median to a non-median roadway. Refuge islands are recommended at Zylman and in the vicinity of Forest and Ames intersections among other future locations as shown on page 27.

Guidelines for pedestrian crossings include design and visual cues to slow motorists down, whether physically changing the roadway itself or adding signs or beacons indicating crossings and bold pavement markings. Crossings are preferable where convenient for pedestrians and where close to signalized intersections.

Intersections

When intersection improvements are made, the focus should be on improving the level of service for all users (i.e. pedestrians and bicyclists, not just cars and trucks) or reducing vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian/bicyclist crashes. The following are key considerations in designing a new or reconfigured intersection:

- Need for additional vehicle lanes
- Sight distance limitations
- Provision for bicycles
- Signal coordination and spacing
- Pedestrian crossings and related curb radii

In some cases, there may be a desire for a pedestrian crossing but at an unsignalized intersection. Pedestrian-activated warning beacons at pedestrian crossings allow a pedestrian to activate a warning beacon in mid-block locations.

Connections to existing bicycle routes

Parts of Portage Road currently have wide shoulders to accommodate bicyclists. Should segments of Portage Road be reconfigured to fewer lanes, portions of the right-of-way could be converted to bike lanes. Current and planned routes are identified on the map on page 27 and a few particular connections are detailed below:

- Formalize right-of-way connection at Austin Court near Highland, creating a non-motorized connection to East Shore. Work with business owners to informally reconnect Austin and Austin Court with a non-motorized connection at the rear of these properties.

- Explore possibility of a non-motorized easement to cross the channel from Lakeview Park to Austin Court to complete the non-motorized “loop” around Austin Lake. Alternatively, the pedestrian crossing parallel to Portage Road could be improved along with a safer sidewalk route between the park and Burt Drive.
- Connect future bike route at South Shore Drive across Portage Road to Lakeview Park and provide a pedestrian crossing with refuge island.

Building and Site Design

Depending on the context, the form and character of buildings can have a significant impact on the function and activity within an area. Furthermore, the quality of buildings impact the local economy, as declining commercial districts with dilapidated buildings can have a compounding negative effect on the perceptions of safety and property value. By encouraging high-quality buildings that contribute to local character, each building that is built or improved can begin to reverse those trends and positively impact local markets.

Today, the building patterns along Portage Road are not cohesive and do not contribute to a distinct sense of “place.” As described above in the Market Strategy Summary, a number of 20th century retro buildings exist along the corridor, but not in enough of a critical mass to apply that style corridor-wide. Instead, where those pockets of nostalgia exist, they can be retained and strengthened. Other areas of the corridor are recommended to embrace the Lake Center character: welcoming design with a nod to the nautical. The design goal is to embrace the history and uniqueness of the corridor as a local, inviting shopping destination.

Implementing these Guidelines

The design standards below are a set of guiding principles for development that act as a suggested best practice for (re)development. While some of the guidelines can be incorporated into the zoning ordinance, the goal is to allow an eclectic business district and not overly regulate architecture and creativity, but create a cohesive, attractive district.

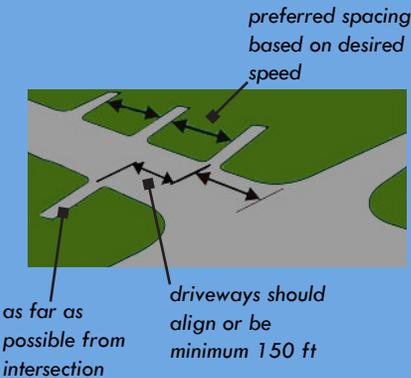
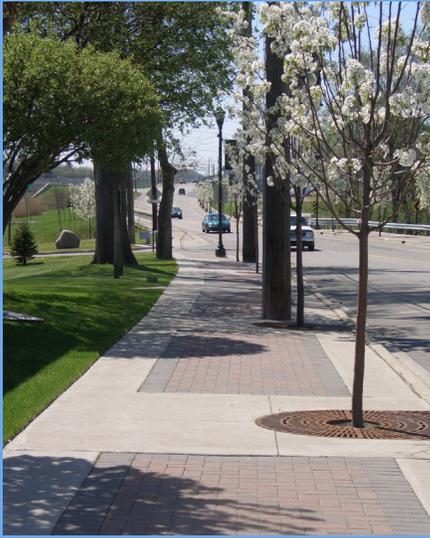
Façade Improvements

- Buildings should be welcoming to pedestrians, with clear entrances, outdoor furniture and landscaping.
- Long or expansive building walls should include variations in the building wall, varied roof lines, archways or other architectural features.
- Rear elevations visible from roadways (both public and internal drives) and/or residential areas should have a finished quality compatible with the front elevation of the building.
- Durable building materials which provide an attractive, quality appearance should be chosen. Earth-toned brick, masonry block or other building materials typical in the area are appropriate.
- Building colors should consider and blend with local surroundings. Bright, colors should be used strategically, not as the primary color of the building but as accents to an eclectic nautical area vibe.
- Walls near building entrances should include windows, canopies and awnings to attract customers and contribute to a sense of place.

Site Design Approach

- Improve attractiveness of buildings and sites
- Make it more comfortable for people to walk along and between businesses
- Strengthen Lake Center character and branding
- Better delineate parking areas
- Improve visibility of existing businesses
- Promote uses that will be successful to fit the character of the area
- Successful uncluttered signs





Access Management improves flow and reduces crash potential by placing driveways to minimize conflicts.



Streetscape & Site Design

- Streetscape treatment should be used to signify an entrance and contribute to a sense of place.
- Community amenities such as patio/seating areas, water features, art work or sculpture, pedestrian plazas with park benches or other features located adjacent to the primary entrance to the building(s) are highly encouraged and as an incentive, such areas should be calculated as part of the landscaping requirement.
- Include amenities for bicyclists and pedestrians, including wider sidewalks, bike storage facilities, lighting and landscaping in the standards for site plan review.

Parking and Access

- Off-street parking should typically be located in the side and rear yards. This will contribute to the appearance of a walkable streetscape with a “front door” for pedestrians with an additional entrance oriented to the parking lot. There should be a maximum of one row of front-yard parking with an appropriate buffer from the sidewalk.
- Parking lots adjacent to the roadway should provide a setback and landscape greenbelt. A knee-wall or hedge may also be appropriate where there is not sufficient room for a significant greenbelt.
- Driveways should be designed and located according to the Access Management standards in Chapter 66 of the Portage Code of Ordinances. Driveways closest to intersections or poorly offset from driveways across the street are the greatest problem. By reducing the number and width of driveways, traffic operations and safety will be improved, pedestrian crossings eased, and greenspace opportunities increased.
- Parking lot landscaping is especially important in minimizing negative views associated with large or often empty parking lots. Parking lot islands that incorporate pedestrian access to storefronts may be appropriate for larger lots or high traffic sites (for example the anchor uses in the Core Node). Landscaping is especially important to help delineate the driveways and sidewalks from the parking areas and can be used to help treat stormwater runoff (see Low-impact design below).
- Internal pedestrian walkways should be included for persons who need access to the building(s) from internal parking areas. Walkways shall be designed to separate people from moving vehicles as much as possible, vehicle drive aisles or parking spaces should not be used for this purpose.
- Crosswalks should be distinguished from the parking and driving areas by use of any of the following materials: special pavers, bricks, raised elevation or scored concrete.
- The amount of available parking can be maximized through shared parking agreements. Different uses have different peak hours throughout the day, which require varying amounts of parking. Offices, retail, services, and restaurants are encouraged to examine their parking needs throughout the day and look for ways to share parking with other users.

Landscaping, Buffers & Screening

- Development abutting residential should be screened with a mixture of treatment such as landscaping, walls, and fences.

- Low-impact design: Bioretention (Rain Gardens) & Bioswales manages stormwater runoff locally, providing natural filtration to protect lake water quality. Low-impact design can be applied on private sites and in the right-of-way and should be considered in areas between the new or existing sidewalk where driveways are removed and in areas where the road median is installed. Plant species should be salt tolerant, provide aesthetic benefits and be low maintenance. Sidewalks should be designed to direct runoff into these areas, and maintenance agreements should be included as part of any approval.

Lighting

- Site lighting should be regulated so it does not spill into non-commercial areas or the public road, except where needed to illuminate driveways.
- Fixtures should be chosen that shield light from projecting upward, thereby reducing light pollution into the night sky.
- Light poles should be located so they do not obstruct pedestrian movement.
- Fixtures may be outfitted with decorative banners that, in some cases highlight civic events and activities of community-wide appeal.
- Wall mounted lights should be used to the greatest extent possible to minimize the total number of freestanding light fixtures.
- Lighting fixtures should be attractively designed to complement the architecture of the corridor, signify building entry locations, and improve visual identification of residences and businesses.

Signs

- Lower-level ground signs or projecting wall signs are preferred over taller pole signs.
- Signs should include a durable base constructed of materials compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Sign locations should respect clear-vision areas and traffic safety.
- Signs should be proportional and consistent in character with the material, color and detail of the building.
- Pedestrian-oriented signs enhance the pedestrian experience and lower vehicle speeds.

D. Lake Center Implementation

Implementation of this subarea plan will be accomplished gradually and through a variety of means. Some will be private sector initiatives such as redevelopment or forming a business organization. Some of the changes are city initiatives such as improvements in the street right-of-way. Many of these recommendations can be more easily accomplished through public/private partnerships as redevelopment of the district occurs.

Right-of-way Improvements

Improvements in the right-of-way (the streets and area along them) are usually completed by the city as part of its Capital Improvement Plan. The city can use transportation or other funds for right-of-way projects. In some cases, property owners may participate through special assessments or programs that direct a portion of taxes to public improvements with a special district (see “CIP” and “BID” below). In addition, there are frequently special funds



Concept banners prepared by the business association

available from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for safety or certain types of projects.

- At the time this plan was prepared, there was a new MDOT program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). TAP is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as non-motorized paths, streetscapes, low impact development, and stormwater improvements that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options.
- Continue sidewalk installation/repair/replacement program funded through the Capital Improvement Program.
- When improvements are made to Portage Road, changes in the right-of-way design could be incorporated, including bike lanes, enhanced crossings, medians, improved buffers, and sidewalks

Branding/Business Association

Key to implementing these recommendations will be public/private partnerships, which may be assisted through state funding available through MDOT, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and other sources related to place making, brownfield redevelopment, and/or the creation of an official business improvement district, such as a Corridor Improvement Authority or Business Improvement District. Efforts of the business association should include the following:

- Embrace Lake Center identity through development of gateway features, banners, wayfinding signs, gathering spaces with lake access and views.
- Build a district-wide brand including businesses, the park, residences, churches, and Lake Center Elementary.
- Preserve mid-century character where it exists but avoid reproductions and incorporate nautical elements. These character elements should be tasteful and complement existing mass and scale.
- Strengthen Lake Center brand through promotional events, public art installations, common retail hours, shared beautification efforts.
- Support neighborly site maintenance and upkeep.

Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)

One mechanism for implementing this plan could be to form a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). The Corridor Improvement Authority Act (P.A. 280 of 2005) allows the City to develop a plan and financing strategies with the objective of stimulating and encouraging economic development activities within the established corridor. CIAs promote improvements within a designated district, both on private property or within the public road right-of-way or lands owned by the public or other authorities. A CIA has the capability to capture tax increment financing (TIF) from private development projects, utilize public funding opportunities, and collect fees for rent, or other allowed charges. The success of a CIA and funding mechanisms such as TIF is contingent on private sector investment.

Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID, like a CIA, is a program that ties a plan to funding. A BID is a special assessment wherein the property owners assess themselves to create a sustainable funding source for beautification, streetscape maintenance, and



marketing/branding efforts. The primary revenue source for a BID is by annual special assessment of participating properties in a predetermined formula. Whereas TIF is limited to an increase or decrease in property values, a BID allows greater flexibility and control.

When the business association and City determine the best means for implementing a CIA or a BID, City Council may initiate the process to officially form the district.

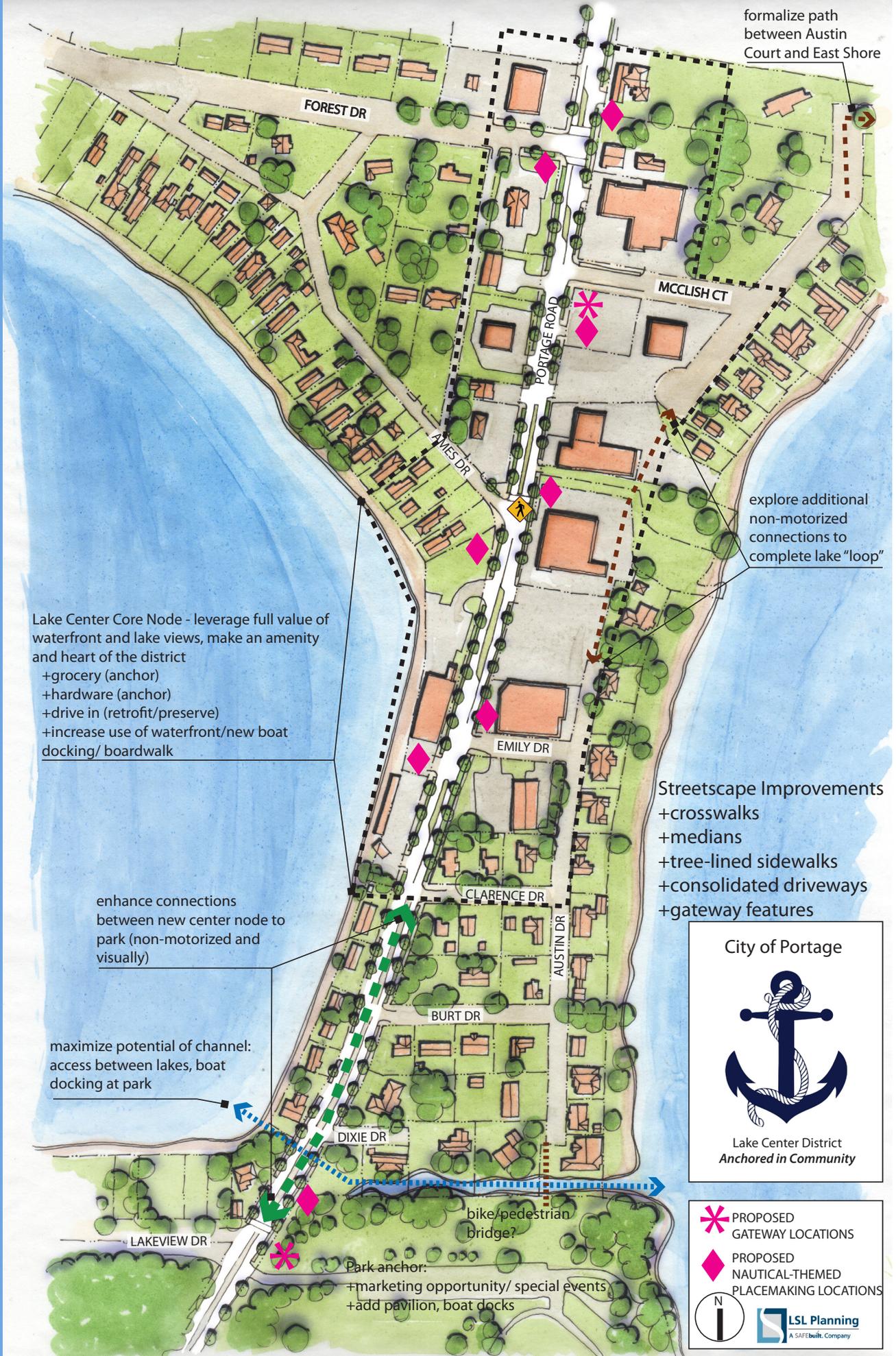
Zoning Recommendations

To implement the land use and design recommendations in this subarea plan, creating a new overlay district in the zoning ordinance for the corridor could allow more flexibility in uses and updated site design standards to reflect the desired corridor. Recommended components of the overlay district include, but are not limited to the following:

- Promote uses that fit the corridor based on different target areas:
 - » Lake Center Core Node (Forest to Clarence): mixed-use buildings (i.e. retail, restaurants, residential, boutique hotel, senior living) to optimize views of the lakes but no more than two stories at the lakefront to preserve views
 - » Commercial connector retrofit district (between Centre and the Lake Center Core Node): promote and target smaller-scale, lower intensity uses than currently allowed in General Business zoning with improved site design and reduced front-yard parking
 - » Light Industrial node (north of Bacon): promote and target lower-intensity, consumer-oriented uses than currently allowed in the Light Industrial zoning district with improved front-yard site design and increased provisions for neighborhood protection.
- Reduced front yard setbacks throughout the subarea to encourage buildings fronting the street and minimal front yard parking
- Revised parking standards for uses in the subarea in recognition of smaller-scale uses, where appropriate
- Reduced parking lot greenstrip width requirements where alternative treatments such as a low-profile wall and/or dense hedge are provided.
- Incentivize driveway access consolidation:
 - » Reduced parking requirements where shared access results in shared parking arrangements. In such circumstances, the city could provide technical assistance on development of shared access and parking agreements
 - » Driveway consolidation and redesign could be incorporated into repaving or reconstruction projects completed by the city through the Capital Improvement Program.

Several of the above implementation strategies are also illustrated on the Lake Center Corridor Recommendations map on page page 27.





Lake Center Core Node - leverage full value of waterfront and lake views, make an amenity and heart of the district
 +grocery (anchor)
 +hardware (anchor)
 +drive in (retrofit/preserve)
 +increase use of waterfront/new boat docking/ boardwalk

enhance connections between new center node to park (non-motorized and visually)

maximize potential of channel: access between lakes, boat docking at park

Park anchor:
 +marketing opportunity/ special events
 +add pavilion, boat docks

formalize path between Austin Court and East Shore

explore additional non-motorized connections to complete lake "loop"

Streetscape Improvements
 +crosswalks
 +medians
 +tree-lined sidewalks
 +consolidated driveways
 +gateway features

City of Portage

Lake Center District
 Anchored in Community

PROPOSED GATEWAY LOCATIONS
 PROPOSED NAUTICAL-THEMED PLACEMAKING LOCATIONS

