

Committee of the Whole Work Session of April 27, 2021.

Public Phone Line: (844) 854-2222 Access Code 529853# (To voice a question or comment, press *6 to enter the queue.)

4:00 p.m. Call to Order.

Roll Call.

- A. Review of the Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study.
 - 1. Discussion and Question/Answer Session on the Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study
- B. Petitions and Statements of Citizens:
- C. Summary of Discussion on Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study.

Adjournment.

LAKE CENTER DISTRICT CORRIDOR AND PLACEMAKING STUDY

PORTAGE, MI



DRAFT

APRIL 2021

FARR ASSOCIATES

STEERING COMMITTEE LETTER OF SUPPORT

April 2021

Dear Lake Center District Stakeholders,

We are pleased to present the Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study. The Lake Center District's unique characteristics, environmental resources, and diversity of stakeholders make it a special place in the City of Portage. As with many growing areas, the District is currently experiencing friction between becoming a walkable, accessible destination, and the constraints of infrastructure and policy decisions made in years past that limit today's uses of the public right-of-way. This plan provides a clear path to achieving a **vibrant, beautiful and safe** Lake Center District.

The Draft Final Study identifies key challenges and opportunities, recommends strategic investments, and outlines a phased implementation—beginning with a 1 Year Action Plan. We are proud to be a part of this effort to address the Lake Center District's challenges through placemaking initiatives and rebalancing the public right of way. We are confident this plan provides a framework for improving the Lake Center District's social, economic and environmental resilience for years to come.

Together our Steering Committee members represent a variety of business, community and resident interests. We have provided study input through the lens of our local knowledge, shared insight from our experiences, and offered guidance on the direction of the plan to address the most pressing challenges facing the Lake Center District. The committee met throughout the life of the study and served as the collective community leadership commitment to this project and its success. From the earliest conversations with Lake Center District residents expressing their needs, to the latter stages of identifying recommendations to meet these needs, we believe the final plan presents an opportunity to strengthen the corridor on several critical fronts.

This letter serves to publicly express the Steering Committee's unanimous support of the plan. Specifically, we endorse rebalancing the right-of-way on Portage Road. Through the study process and scenarios explored, we believe this best takes shape through a public right-of-way that serves all users – walkers, cyclists, drivers, businesses, and riparians – and creates a vibrant, beautiful and safe destination. Rebalancing the right-of-way to three vehicles lanes in the isthmus area enables our community to gain significant benefits including sidewalks, a multi-use trailway, street trees, landscaping, lighting, and placemaking along Portage Road. As members of the Steering Committee, we strongly recommend that the City Council and City Administration advance implementation of this recommendation and the plan.

The Steering Committee members are committed to ensuring the plan's successful implementation by sharing its vision, continuing conversations, and engaging businesses and community members. We encourage you to read, and review the plan, and consider supporting this vision – which will provide valuable benefits for the Lake Center District and beyond.

We invite you to join us in creating a **vibrant, beautiful, and safe** Lake Center District!

Respectfully,
Lake Center District Steering Committee Members

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lake Center District study area covers a nearly 2.5 mile length of Portage Road and adjacent businesses, communities, and development between Centre Ave and Osterhout Ave. The rarity of not one, but two lakefronts, present unique opportunities and challenges. The current look and feel of the Lake Center District corridor is that of a place to drive through at, or above, the posted 45mph speed limit. Virtually all of the development along Portage Road is automobile-oriented sprawl, characterized by simple buildings sited behind parking lots and accessed by individual driveways. Due to a series of street widenings, sidewalks are located directly adjacent to the road, or are nonexistent along many stretches. Because the corridor lacks consistent sidewalk infrastructure, walkers and runners are often forced into the roadway. A pedestrian conditions analysis shows that 70% of the corridor is perceived to be unsafe and unrewarding, while only 23% is perceived to be safe and rewarding. This is the result of decades of unplanned development, a trend this plan aims to reverse.

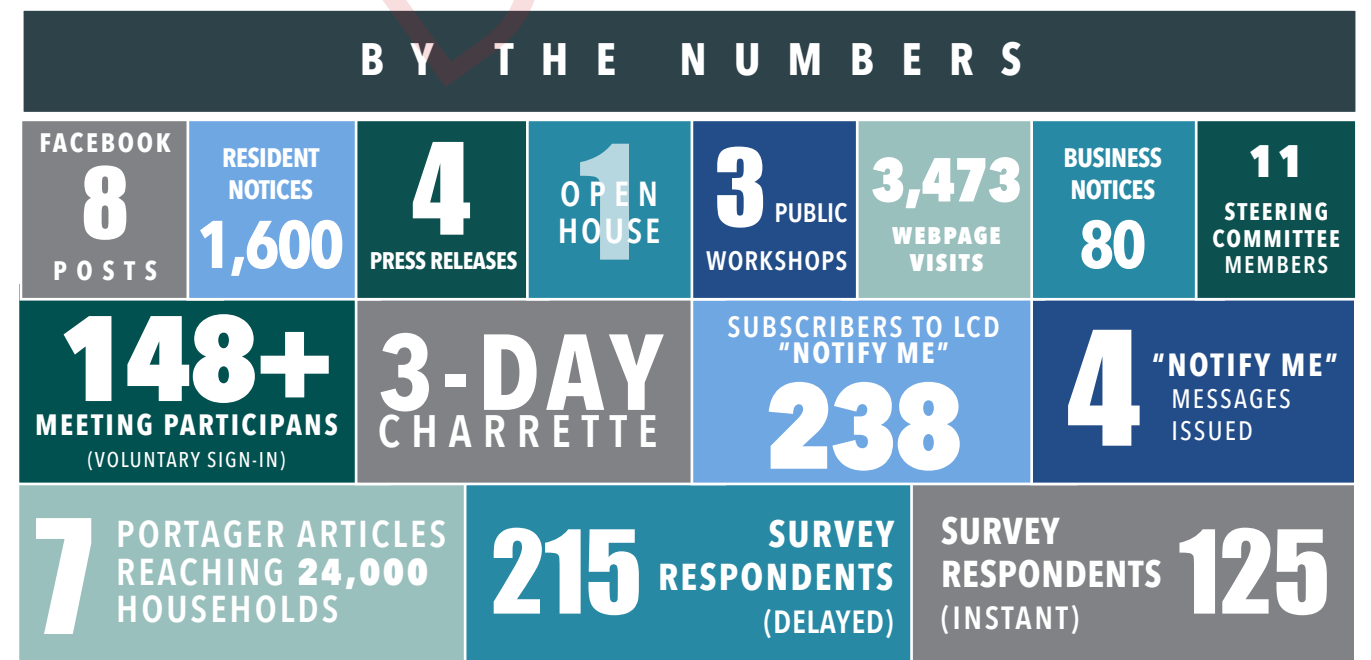
This plan tackles Portage Road's challenges, opportunity and illustrates the trade-offs that occur within the public right-of-way as we consider a variety of uses – and users. It shows what can be gained by rebalancing the right-of-way. It also shows how designing a corridor around people will best respond to stakeholder feedback, spur economic development and create a memorable place.

The vision of a more attractive, multimodal Portage Road anchored by a vibrant Lake Center District for residents, businesses and visitors, is made clear in this plan, and provides the "why" for why the City should act to rebalance and re-envision Portage Road.

With this in mind, the plans seeks to connect and expand this new special place with placemaking activities, physical improvements, gateways, crosswalks, bike routes, boat docks, a lake-to-lake canal walk, and improved accessibility to, from, and throughout the District. A phased implementation plan for achieving these recommendations provides a blueprint for achieving these recommendations, and kicks off implementation with a 1-Year Action Plan.

A variety of stakeholders were engaged to help shape the plan recommendations. A Lake Center District Steering Committee comprised of area business owners, developers and residents was engaged by the city and consultant through the planning process, meeting several times in 2020 and 2021 to provide feedback and guidance on the study proposals.

Multiple public engagement activities were undertaken during the study process from January 2020 - December 2020. The graphic below illustrates the outreach efforts "by the numbers."



DRAFT

DRAFT

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND

1.1 THE STUDY AREA

Portage

Portage is located within Kalamazoo County with the City of Kalamazoo to the north; Schoolcraft and Vicksburg to the south; Pavilion Township to the east; and Texas Charter Township to the west. It is almost exactly equidistant between Chicago and Detroit (~145 miles from each) and is connected to these large Midwest hubs via Amtrak commuter lines that run through the Amtrak station in Kalamazoo. Interstate 94 runs east/west and U.S. 131 runs north/south through or adjacent to Portage. Kalamazoo, as well as Stryker and Pfizer facilities in the northeast corner of Portage, provide an economic draw to people who commute from within Portage, but also from communities to the south.

The Study Area

Portage Road serves as a main thoroughfare and connector between Kalamazoo and surrounding bedroom communities.

The Study Area extends along Portage Road, the major north/south arterial, from Centre Avenue to the north to Osterhout Avenue to the south. It is approximately 2.5 miles long and contains the Lake Center District and adjacent properties to the east and west.

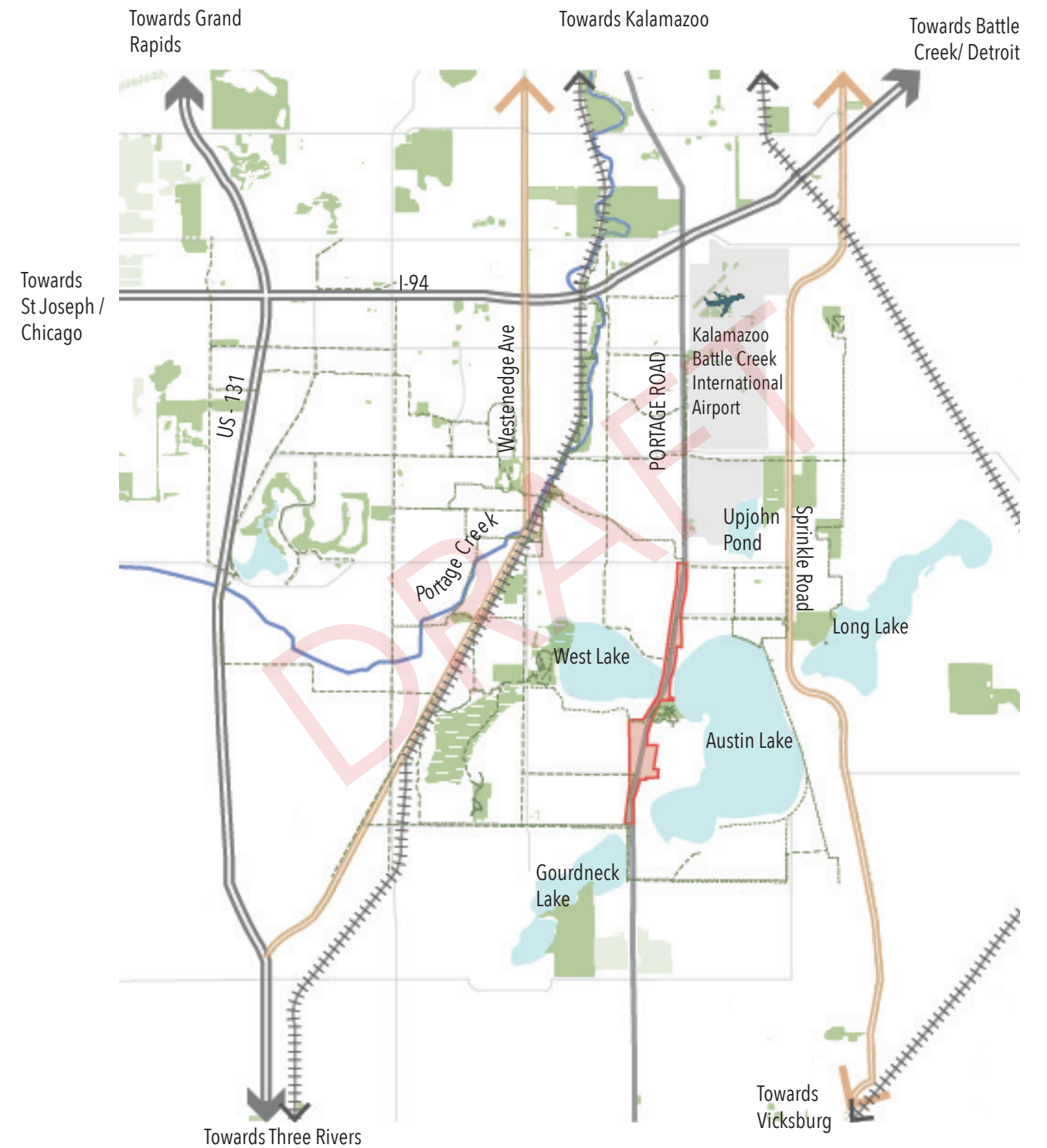


Map of study area
Source: Google Earth



VICINITY MAP

The study area in context



Map of Wider Vicinity of Study Area

Source: Farr Associates



1.2 STUDY PROCESS

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The initial phase of the project included a detailed review of the study area, existing documents and zoning, and previous planning efforts. The analysis of existing conditions is recorded through a series of analytical maps and diagrams, along with text and charts, to help inform later planning decisions. Please see Chapter 3 for a summary of key findings.

The analysis covered the following topics:

- Existing land uses
- Existing buildings
- Parks, open spaces, and amenities
- Construction trends
- Community character
- Transportation network
- Infrastructure capacity
- Market trend analysis

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee of area business owners, developers and residents was formed to help guide the design process between community engagement opportunities. Their insight helped to identify potential concerns. The feedback and direction provided was critical to the creation of the plan.

SCHEDULE

The project was originally scheduled for January-June 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine orders in effect in both Illinois and Michigan during Spring 2020, the project was put on hold from March-June, resulting in a longer project duration.

The overall schedule included several public meetings and Steering Committee meetings in order to exchange ideas and input from the community.

PROJECT FOCUS

The initial components of the project included:

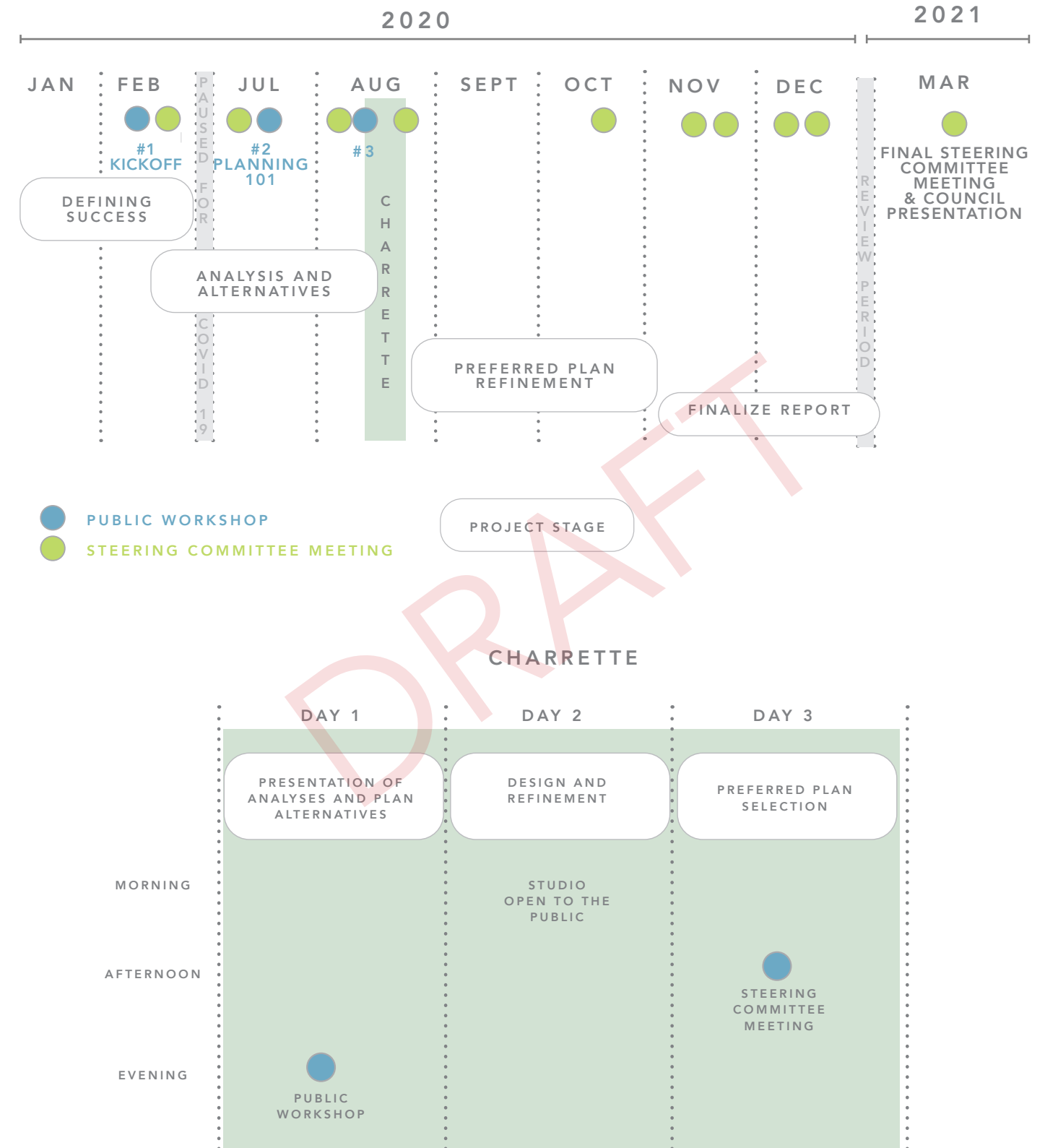
- Portage Road right-of-way and urban design analysis
- Placemaking and development opportunities for Lake Center District
- Multimodal connectivity to, from, and within the Lake Center District

The planning of this study inherently starts with the "heart" of the community: the isthmus area. The design team started with ideas for this area, since it is the most naturally constrained and physically important from a placemaking perspective. Plan alternatives then took into account the rest of the corridor north and south of the isthmus.

Farr Associates adjusted and re-focused efforts as the project progressed, taking into account a variety of public comments and reactions to the ideas presented.

Using expertise in urban design and placemaking, as well as public and city administration the team created several alternatives that were then refined and adjusted into the preferred plan. The next few pages detail the public process and plan alternatives that were developed. The majority of the remainder of the document outlines the preferred plan.

Each step of the way, Farr Associates kept the end in mind: a guide for the City to use in making the types of improvements to the study area that would result in an improved Lake Center District.



Overall Project Timeline (top) and Charrette Schedule (bottom)

1.3 PUBLIC MEETINGS

PUBLIC MEETING 1 - PROJECT KICKOFF

The team held two well attended meetings in February 2020 – one for businesses and one for the general public – to introduce the project, team, approach, and initial ideas for the project. Importantly, these meetings were information-gathering sessions for the team. Engagement activities included a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) exercise, as well as a visioning exercise where participants individually prioritized the SWOT elements that were collectively generated. Summary graphics of the SWOT exercise are shown below.

PUBLIC MEETING 2 - PLANNING 101

In July, the team resumed the project with a Planning 101 meeting. At this meeting, the team summarized the results of the kickoff meeting and confirmed the vision and goals of the project as generated by the community during the kickoff meeting. Additionally, the team introduced some planning and urban design principles that the community could expect to see in preliminary plan concepts to be presented at future meetings. These principles were considered important and/or necessary in order to meet the project goals.

This meeting was conducted at City Hall and televised on a local news channel and Facebook Live for people to watch. Public comments were received digitally.



What strengths does the Portage Study Area have?

What weaknesses are currently hindering the Portage Study Area?



What opportunities can the Portage Study Area pursue to reach its full potential?

What threats are preventing the Portage Study Area from reaching its full potential?



SWOT Results (clockwise from top left)- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats

Photos from Kickoff Meetings, February 2020

Source: Farr Associates

1.4 CHARRETTE

THREE ORGANIZING CONCEPTS

The consultant team conducted a 3-day Charrette to advance 3 preliminary conceptual plans for the Study Area. The National Charrette Institute (NCI) Charrette model is the national standard for a structuring multiple feedback loop interactive process that helps arrive at critical decisions quickly and efficiently. This intense 3-day workshop was based out of City Hall and included interviews with important stakeholders and regular check-ins with the Steering Committee. Based on the analysis of existing conditions, input from the steering committee, and interviews with key stakeholders, the team prepared three conceptual approaches illustrating different redevelopment strategies for the study area.

A survey of four questions- noted in this section - was posed to residents and stakeholders during two periods:

- First, during the August 5, 2020 virtual community meeting (Instant Survey)
- Second, immediately following the virtual community meeting from August 6-20, 2020 (Delayed Survey)

The project team notes that the survey responses to the Instant Survey from people attending the August 5 community meeting (which leaned toward changes to Portage Road) were drastically different from those responses received to the Delayed Survey from people who may not have attended the virtual community meeting (which leaned heavily toward no change on Portage Road). It is believed that this is a consequence of many non-local stakeholders participating during the second survey period. This should be taken into consideration when reviewing the survey results.

Photo of Charrette Workshop

Source: Farr Associates



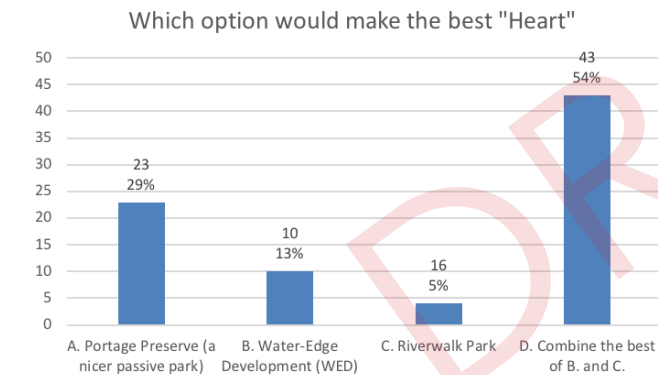
1. THE HEART OF THE DISTRICT

The first approach proposed at the charrette was the creation of a "heart" for the LCD. Where can the community come to gather? Given that the name of the City means "transport between two bodies of water," the design team chose to focus on the canal and current waterfront park at the center of the isthmus/district. These options included:

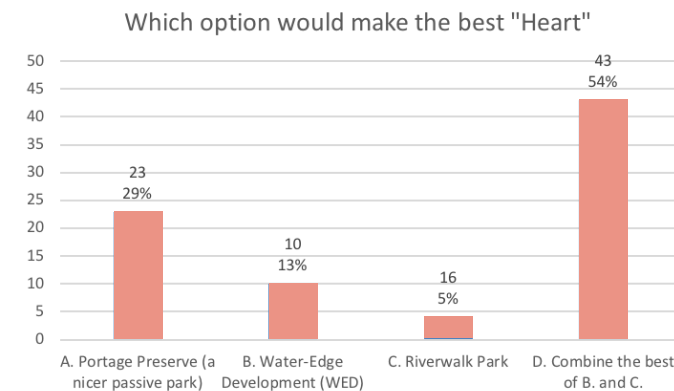
- A. Portage Preserve
- B. Water-Edge Development
- C. Riverwalk Park
- D. Combine the best of B and C



Results from respondents to the Instant Survey (80 respondents).



Results from respondents to the Delayed Survey (215 respondents).



Source: Farr Associates

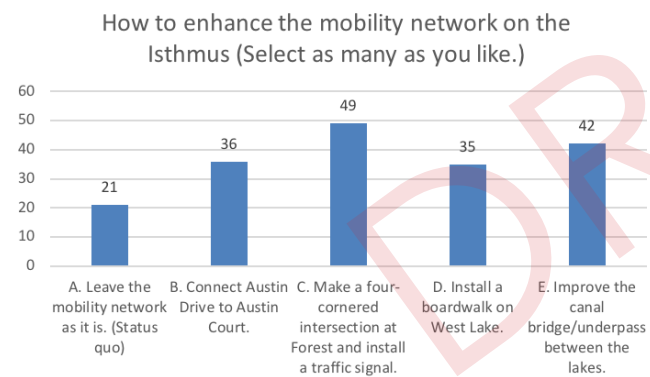
2. ENHANCING NETWORK SAFETY & CONNECTIVITY

The second approach proposed at the charrette examined ways to improve the mobility network on the Isthmus. These options addressed unsafe intersections/limited traffic movements; minimized traffic on Portage by promoting alternate routes; and optimized the complete mobility network (walk/bike). These options included:

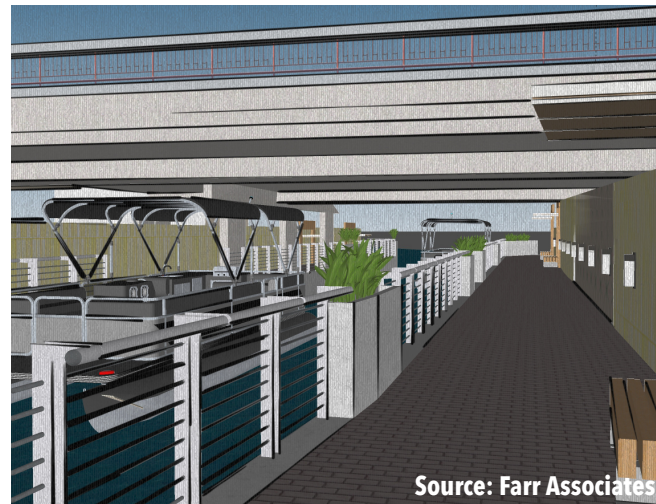
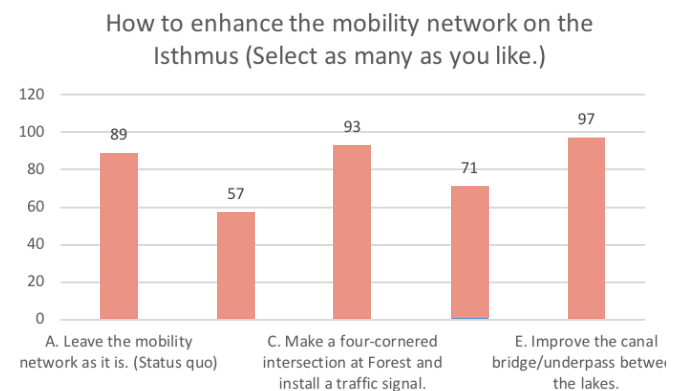
- A. Leave the mobility network as is. (Status quo)
- B. Connect Austin Drive from Austin Court on the south
- C. Make a four-cornered intersection at Forest and install a traffic signal
- D. Install a Boardwalk on West Lake
- E. Improve canal bridge/underpass between lakes



Results from respondents to the Instant Survey (82 respondents).



Results from respondents to the Delayed Survey (215 respondents).



3. A BEAUTIFUL & SAFE PORTAGE ROAD

The third approach proposed at the charrette looked at options for transforming Portage Road into a Complete Street. Those included street section options as well as changes to the posted and actual speed limit along Portage Road.

Importantly, the team asked the public two questions: "What is the best way to make Portage Road a complete street?" with the following options:

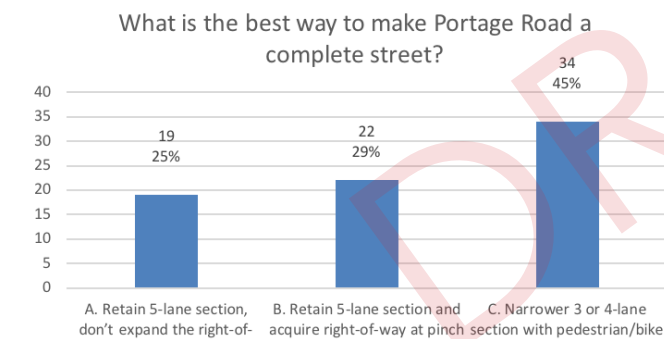
- A. Retain 5-lane section and don't expand the ROW and accept current compromises at pinch points
- B. Retain 5-lane section and acquire ROW at pinch points for ped/bike facilities
- C. 3 or 4-lane section w/ ped/bike facilities in current ROW

The other question was: "What should the design speed be along Portage Road?" These options included:

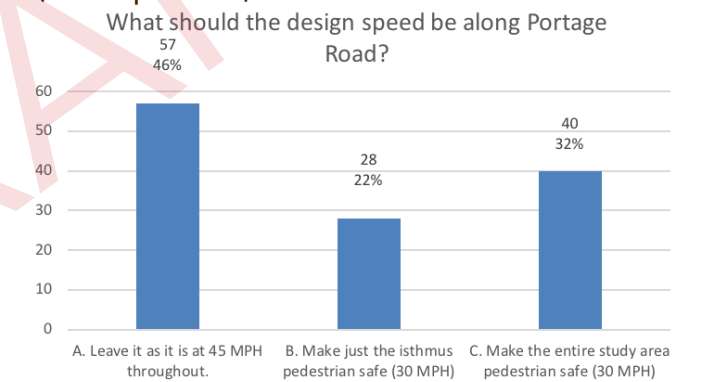
- A. Leave corridor speed limit as is throughout (45 MPH)
- B. Make just the isthmus ped safe (30 MPH)
- C. Make the entire study area ped safe (30 MPH)

While all three approaches represented viable scenarios for walkable, bikeable, sustainable, urban development, with a focus on the canal that connects Austin and West Lakes, the schemes tested variations of the following planning elements: street grids, allocations of open space, allocation of land use, development density, urban design, parking typologies (surface or decked), and the inclusion or exclusion of key development parcels. The charrette concluded with a public presentation to the Steering Committee.

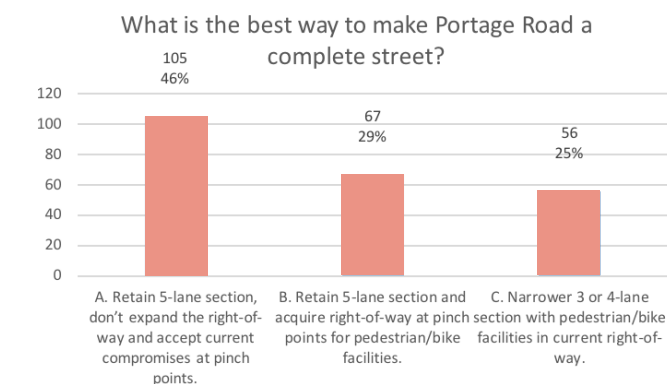
Results from respondents to the Instant Survey (75 respondents).



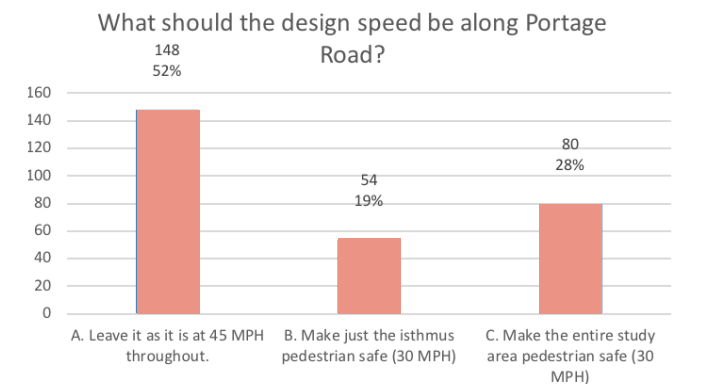
Results from respondents to the Instant Survey (125 respondents).



Results from respondents to the Delayed Survey (215 respondents).



Results from respondents to the Delayed Survey (215 respondents).



DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

CHAPTER 2
PLANNING
CONTEXT

2.1 PRIOR STUDIES

This plan builds on previous planning studies, both citywide and specific to the Lake Center District, which are summarized here and show significant alignment and continuity of recommendations. Specifically, many key recommendations from this plan were recommended and/or mandated by prior studies. Policy and planning continuity serves to provide clear direction and reassurance to residents, the Steering Committee, and the City Council that the plan recommendations in this document reflect, reinforce, and amplify long-standing community consensus.

DRAFT

CITY OF PORTAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

June 2014

LSL Planning

Lake Center Subarea

The goal for the Lake Center subarea is described as: “a vibrant commercial corridor with a unified, attractive visual character that builds upon the history of the Lake Center District.”

Key Conclusions

Strengths of the Lake Center Subarea:

- 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

Issues and Opportunities in the Lake Center Subarea:

- 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 for non-vehicular users
- Multiple owners make large-scale redevelopment challenging
- Nonconformities related to building setbacks, off-street parking, billboards, sign setbacks, green strip, site access and older single-family homes.

Market Strategies for the Lake Center Subarea:

- 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 complementary businesses and by enhancing Portage Road’s unique commercial flavor
- Reinforce key market niches of locally owned-restaurants, family recreation and entertainment, adventures and sport-themed businesses, nautical/marine theme and businesses.



Master Plan for Lake Center Subarea

Source: Farr Associates

CITY OF PORTAGE RESIDENTIAL MARKET ANALYSIS

September 2020

LandUse USA/ Farr Associates

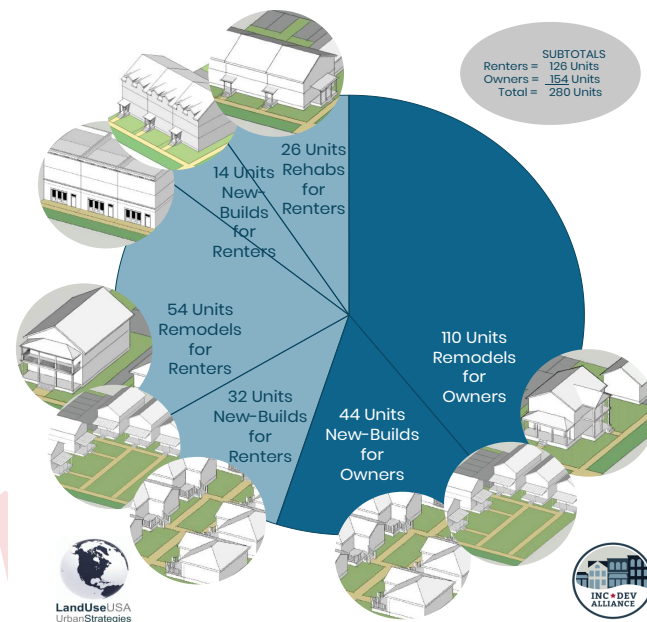
Key Conclusions - Citywide

This residential market analysis was conducted with a cautious, conservative, and pragmatic view of the City of Portage, the Lake Center Subarea, and each of city's other four submarkets (Northwest, Westnedge, Northeast, and Southwest). We have carefully weighed the evidence and concluded that there is solid and good merit in developing a significant number of new attached housing formats for renters.

There is also a smaller market potential for new-builds among for-sale detached houses. However, the market potential among for-lease units is nearly four times larger than that of for-sale units. This is partly defined by the moderate incomes of households moving into the city and seeking units to rent; and an abundance of existing houses available for sale. Even so, the quality of available houses do not always meet the wants, needs, expectations, or preferences of migrating owners seeking modern choices to buy. In general, existing and new households can afford rents and home values that are higher than current market conditions. This can be partly attributed to outdated housing stock that needs to be remodeled.

As new units with values of \$200,000+ and rents of \$900+ become available, some of the city's existing households will trade up, leaving vacancies behind that can be rehabbed or remodeled. The (report) focuses on for-sale owner-occupied units, with an annual market potential of at least 232 new-build houses, plus 565 rehabbed houses (for a total of 797 for-sale houses each year). These are ideal infill opportunities that could be added throughout the city's established neighborhoods and the five subareas. This is followed by additional narrative on for-lease renter-occupied units, with a much larger annual market potential of at least 1,094 new-build units annually, plus 1,875 rehabbed units (for a total of 2,969 for-lease units). These represent excellent opportunities for adding a variety of attached and missing housing formats throughout the city and the five subareas."

Annual Market Potential Remodels & New-Builds | Lake Center

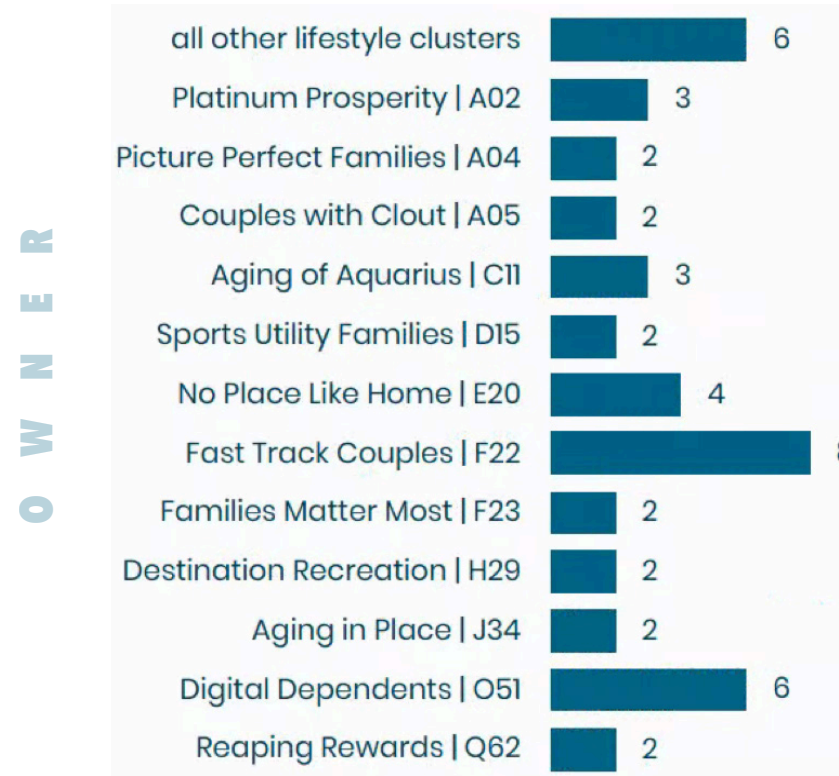


Estimated Property Assessment Values for Key Properties

Underlying target market analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUSE USA | Urban Strategies for the City of Portage, May 2020. Building types provided with permission from the Incremental Development Alliance.

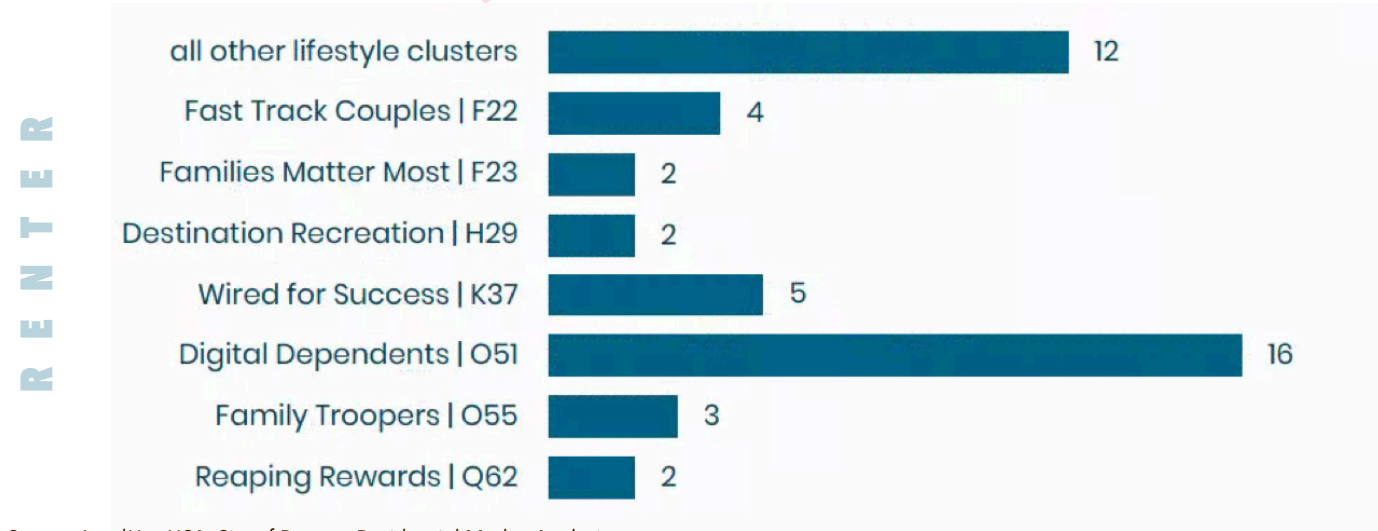
Key Conclusions - Lake Center District

Annual Market Potential for New-Builds OWNER-Occupied Detached Houses by Target Market



Total = 44 new owner households are migrating into the Lake Center District each year. The vast majority of these households will prefer to buy a new detached house, "condo", patio home, or cottage. Relatively few will be inclined to purchase an attached townhouse or loft.

Annual Market Potential for New-Builds RENTER-Occupied Detached Houses by Target Market



Source: LandUse USA, City of Portage Residential Market Analysis

CITY OF PORTAGE RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

April 2020

Gibbs Planning Group

Key Conclusions

This study found that the City of Portage can presently support up to 85,000 additional square feet (sf) of retail and restaurant development, generating as much as \$35.7 million in new sales by 2025. This new commercial development could include 20 to 25 new retail stores totaling 70,000sf and 5 to 8 new restaurants totaling 15,000 sf. The supportable new development includes businesses offering apparel, furniture, gifts, jewelry and electronics, as well as full-service and fast-casual restaurants.

Primary Trade Area - Overall, residents, visitors and workers located in Portage's primary trade area spent \$1.5 billion in combined restaurant and retail goods and services during the past year. Over 13 percent of this spending occurred via the internet or in shopping destinations outside of Portage. GPG estimates that retail stores and restaurants within Portage captured \$1.3 billion in total sales over the past year. Portage's primary trade area is home to roughly 370,000 year-round residents and 145,000 households with an average income of \$78,700 per year. Many trade area residents are gainfully employed, and the median age is 37.5 years - 2.9 years lower than the state average. Over 33 percent of the trade area's residents have a four-year college degree and 37.4 percent of households earn over \$75,000 per year.

General Retail Market Conditions - According to CoStar, the City of Portage has a total of 5.9 million sf of retail space. The current retail vacancy rate is 4.3 percent, which

has increased by 2.1 percent over the past year but is still below the city's 10-year historical average of 5.5 percent. The average retail market rent in Portage remains stable around \$14.44/sf. No new retail space has been delivered in Portage over the last year, nor is any currently under construction. However, during the past year there was significant retail investment sales activity in Portage, and properties sold at an average cap rate of 8.6 percent (which was \$99/sf).

Access - Regional linkage is strong in Portage. US 131, which runs north-south through the west side of Portage, connects the city to Grand Rapids to the north. Also, I-94, which runs east-west through the north portion of Portage, connects the city to Battle Creek and Ann Arbor to the east. (In addition to) the main commuting routes of I-94, South Westnedge Avenue and U.S. 131... there is a dense network of local roads surrounding Portage that makes it easily accessible. In particular, significant traffic enters Portage from the north via South Westnedge Avenue and Oakland Drive, from the south via South Sprinkle Road, Oakland Drive and Portage Road, from the west via Texas Drive and West Q Avenue, and from the east via East N Avenue.

Future Retail and Restaurant Demand - This study estimated that existing or new commercial businesses located in the City of Portage can realistically expand by up to \$34.0 million in additional sales in 2020, potentially growing to as much as \$35.7 million by 2025. If achieved, this growth would support 71,600 sf of new retailers and 14,700 sf of new restaurants, for a total of 86,300 square

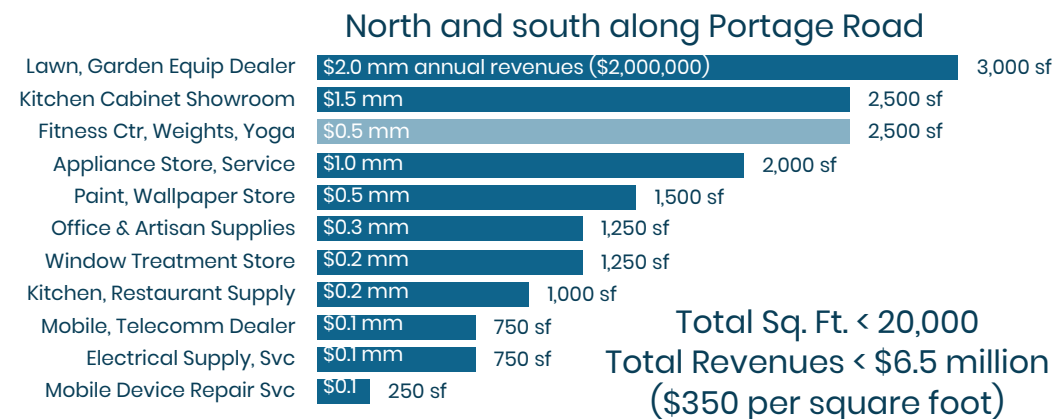
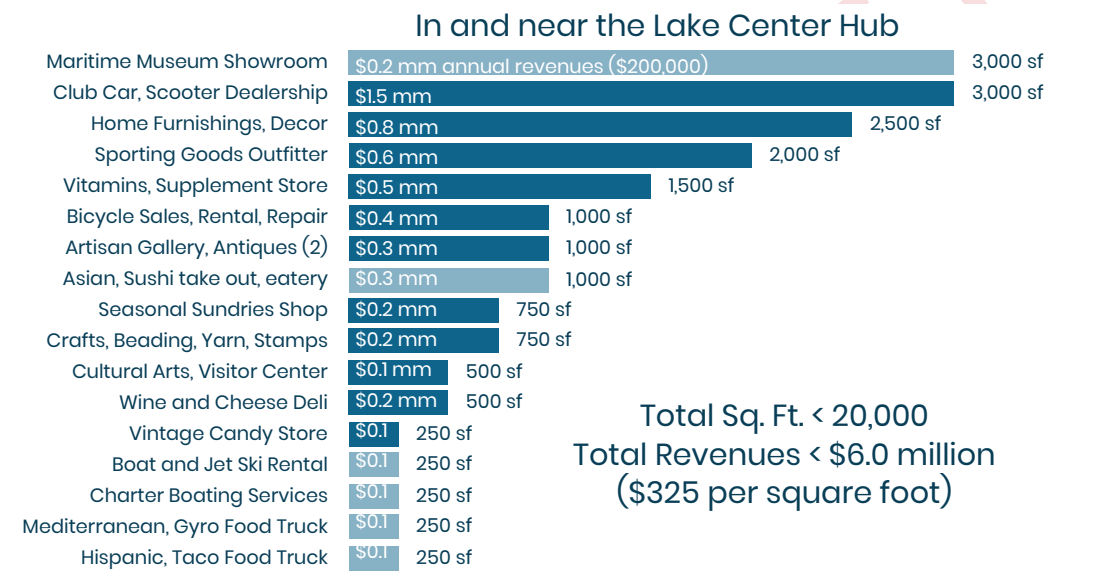
feet. This growth could be absorbed with the opening of 25 - 35 new businesses or by existing stores through expanded operations and marketing. If managed per industry best practices, these new stores could generate sales of \$378 per square foot per year.

Economic Impacts - The City's primary trade area is estimated to have 203,000 employees; roughly 45,000

of them are office employees who are known to expend at much higher rates, often eating out for lunch and shopping on the way to and from work. The annual impact of 45,500 workers within a 10-minute drive time of the center of Portage is \$215.7 million. This expenditure breaks down to include \$73.4 million in prepared food and beverage establishments, \$36.7 million in grocery purchases, \$23.0 million in convenience items and \$82.6 million in other retail goods.

Retail Strategy - Lake Center District

Based on transacted retail sales compared to resident expenditure potential.



Category	Weekly Expenditure	Annual Expenditure	Office Worker Expenditure	Non-Office Worker Expenditure	Total Expenditure
Prepared Food & Beverage					
Limited & Full-Service Restaurants	\$40	\$2,300	\$23,000,000	\$29,785,000	\$52,785,000
Drinking Places	\$20	\$900	\$9,000,000	\$11,655,000	\$20,655,000
Retail Goods					
General Merchandise, Apparel, Home Furnishings, Electronics	\$70	\$3,600	\$36,000,000	\$46,620,000	\$82,620,000
Grocery	\$30	\$1,600	\$16,000,000	\$20,720,000	\$36,720,000
Convenience Items	\$20	\$1,000	\$10,000,000	\$12,950,000	\$22,950,000
Total	\$180	\$9,400	\$94,000,000	\$121,730,000	\$215,730,000

Source: City of Portage Retail Market Analysis, Figure 13.

Source: The Lake Center District - The City of Portage, Michigan Retail Market Analysis. LandUse USA / Farr Associates.

TRAFFIC STUDY

Portage Road (Forest Drive to Lakeview Drive)
April 2015, CESO, Inc.

The City of Portage engaged transportation consultant CESO in 2015 to analyze a road rebalancing in the heart of the Lake Center District along the isthmus. The recommendations from this study show a proposed rebalancing of the right-of-way in this section of the Portage Road corridor “could improve (conditions) for all users...by providing space for pedestrians and bicycles, and reducing pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. Analyses show that there is a change in the level of service along Portage Road and mitigation measures would be needed at both Lakeview Drive and Forest Drive.” The report suggested that the rebalancing of the road may adjust the functional classification of Portage Road from minor arterial to major collector.

The study reviewed two scenarios:

Scenario 1 – Public Right of Way Distribution

- Three Travel Lanes (Ames Drive south to Lakeview Dr)
- On-Street Parking (west side)
- Sidewalks (west side)

Scenario 2 – Public Right of Way Distribution

- Three Travel Lanes (Ames Dr to Lakeview)
- Two way on-street bike lanes (east and west sides)
- Sidewalks (west side)

PORTAGE ROAD FEASIBILITY STUDY

Forest Drive to E. Centre Ave
February 2020, Abonmarche

Transportation consultant Abonmarche was hired to perform this study in an effort to analyze the proposed rebalancing of the Portage Road right-of-way from Forest Drive to East Centre Avenue from five travel lanes to three travel lanes for vehicular traffic. This study included analysis of traffic, operational, and safety impacts for existing automobile traffic volumes, as well as three future scenarios related to automobile traffic volumes.

The three future scenarios for automobile traffic volumes included 1) adding a traffic signal at Forest Drive while maintaining the existing five travel lanes, 2) converting to a three travel lane section with existing automobile traffic volumes and 3) converting to a three lane section with future automobile traffic volumes (1% growth). The vehicular traffic counts used to conduct this study were from 2015 and 2018. The data was extrapolated to 2019 by using a 1% growth factor consistent with a 2019 FHWA growth factor and ten years of historical traffic data on the corridor which confirmed the 1% growth factor applied.

Based on this vehicular traffic analysis, the study conclusions regarding the impacts to vehicles were as follows: 1) Significant existing delays for eastbound left turning movement on Forest Drive can be mitigated by installing a traffic signal at the intersection; 2) Rebalancing the right-of-way on this segment from five travel lanes to three travel lanes was determined to have detrimental effects on southbound vehicular traffic at Forest Drive and Zylman Avenue intersections during the PM peak period (5-6pm); 3) Queuing that will form for southbound vehicular traffic during PM peak period will have impacts on driveway access along the corridor; 4) There were no discernible safety concerns on the corridor for vehicular traffic that would be impacted by the rebalancing of the right-of-way.

To mitigate potential vehicular delays at Forest Drive, this study recommended the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Portage Road and Forest Drive to better manage eastbound left turning movements on Forest Drive. The City is currently advancing this traffic signal recommendation.

2.2 GUIDING TOOLS

2.2.1 Complete Streets

In 2015, the Portage City Council unanimously supported a Complete Streets Policy, wherein Complete Streets are defined as "a design framework that enables safe and convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers of all ages and abilities."

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

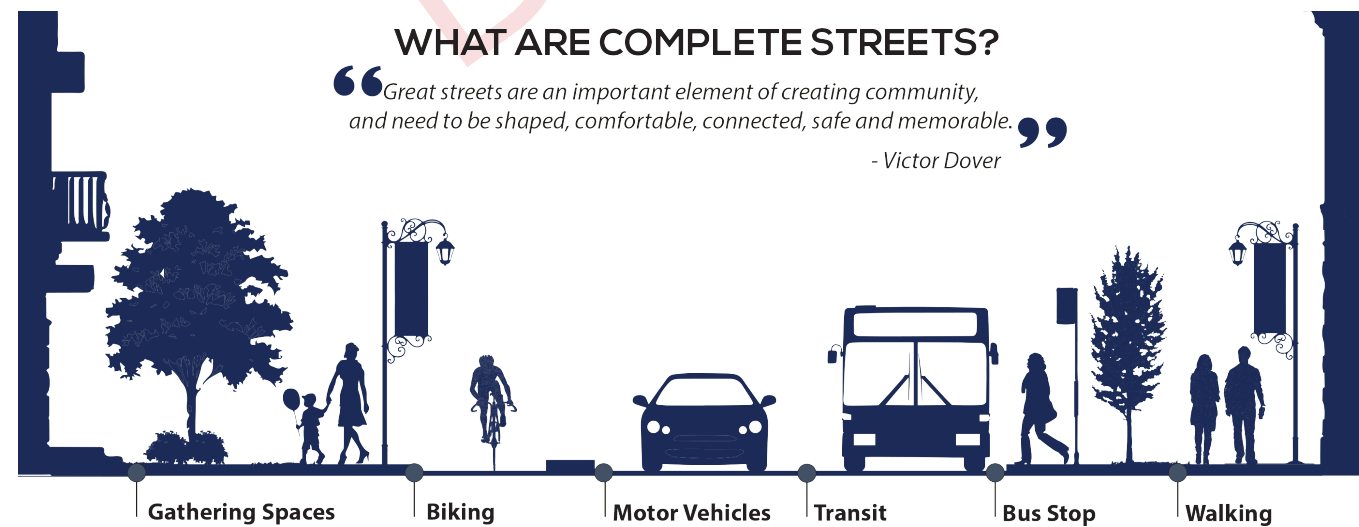
"Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for all people who use the street. By adopting a Complete Streets policy and approach, communities integrate people and place into the planning, design, construction, and operation of our transportation network, and encourages the right of way to prioritize safer slower speeds for all people using the road, over high speeds for motor vehicles." - Smart Growth America

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- **Inclusive Mobility** - Older residents, children, and mobility-challenged persons are all better served with complete street design to ensure they can travel safely at any age or ability.
- **Public Health** - Complete streets provide improved accessibility for pedestrian, cycling, and outdoor activities promoting exercise and health

- **Environmental Health** - Air quality can improve as people elect to walk or bike rather than drive for short, neighborhood trips.
- **Economic Vitality** - Complete Streets improve walkability, and promotes shopping and supporting businesses, for locals and those visiting the area.
- **Safety** - Designing for people and place, Complete Streets encourage more dedicated spaces for people, lighting improvements and more frequent and visible crosswalks to ensure all users in the right-of-way can travel safely.

The 2020 Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan highlights additional economic benefits for property owners: "The economic vitality of a community can be greatly improved with non-motorized travel options. Shared use paths can positively impact property values. Realtors indicated that homes along the Paint Creek Trail in Michigan were selling for 10 percent more than comparable homes not located along the path. In a 2015 study by the National Association of Realtors, 85 percent of survey respondents thought sidewalks were very or somewhat important and 57 percent thought bike lanes and paths being nearby were very or somewhat important in deciding where to live. Further, a connected non-motorized network offers numerous health and safety benefits."



Source: City of Boulder CO Complete Streets

HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES

- Reduces air pollution
- Encourages physical fitness
- Helps prevent obesity-related chronic diseases
- Creates safer neighborhoods
- Provides safe alternative transportation options
- Helps connect people, neighborhoods & communities

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES

- Increases real estate values
- Increases tax revenue
- Retains and attracts businesses
- Retains and attracts residents
- Attracts tourism spending

Source: 2020 Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:

- "Safety should always be highest on the list, so most of the funds and emphasis needs to be on pedestrians. This usually means slower road speeds, better sidewalks, pedestrian crossing, etc. (No matter what method is used to do it.)"
- "With new housing developments and new jobs coming to Portage, so will new, young families. We need to make speed limits slower, sidewalks on both sides of the streets, and bike lanes."
- "It's every other car it seems is speeding. We don't need more traffic lights. We need roundabouts and slower speed limits. 25mph would be ideal."
- "Reducing road width will slow down development and cause more problems getting in and out of current businesses."
- "It is inevitable traffic will continue to increase. I hope the focus of this effort stays on managing the traffic efficiently with the well-being of the current residents in mind. Please consider slowing the speed limit and adding sidewalks in neighborhoods."

2.2.2 Placemaking

"Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution." - Project for Public Spaces

Successful places are dynamic, constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of demographics, climates, and seasons. Public spaces that are flexible, intergenerational, and meet diverse needs require intelligent design and also build on existing assets. Programming activities help create a shared community vision, and should respond to the unique conditions and history of the area.

At the front door of two lakes, the Lake Center District presents opportunities for high impact public spaces, establishing new multimodal connections, serving as a bridge between nearby communities and connect destinations. Placemaking in the Lake Center District should be considered as a "live" canvas, providing public spaces that encourage social interaction and expression through adaptable amenities. Placemaking should engage and balance the desires of a variety of stakeholders - residents, businesses, visitors, and all those invested in the District.

These efforts should also integrate and be founded in resilient design approaches that consider sustainability and resiliency so the District is equipped to respond to future environmental challenges.



Source: Placemaking Chattanooga



Source: Placemaking Chattanooga



Source: Brookings Institution, Photo credit: Selavie Photography



Source: Project for Public Spaces

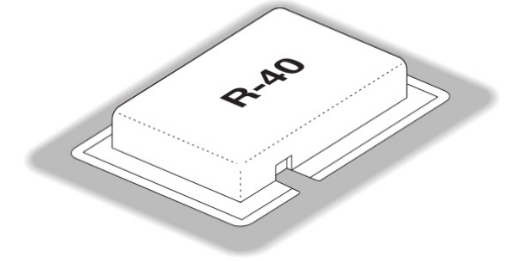
2.2.3 Zoning and Form-Based Code

"A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.... Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks." - Smart Growth America

Recognizing the need to encourage uses, building types, and connectivity with the public realm, that meet the vision for the Lake Center District, a new zoning district is proposed. This district is proposed to reflect the pedestrian-oriented, mixed use character of the isthmus area and may include residential, office, retail, entertainment and public uses. Form-based code elements will shape the character of development, and its relationship to the public realm, while also helping make a more consistent and predictable development review process. With time, and as the community grows, it is envisioned that the corridor segment from Forest Drive to E. Centre Avenue will be incorporated into the zoning district established for the isthmus.

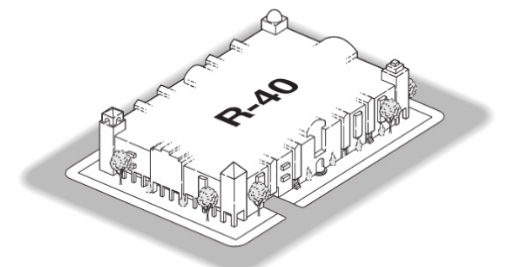
DEFINING FORM-BASED CODE

- Based on a sufficiently detailed physical plan and/or other clear community vision that directs development and aids implementation.
- Focused primarily on regulating urban form and less focused on land use.
- Regulatory rather than advisory.
- Emphasizes standards and parameters for form with predictable physical outcomes (build-to lines, frontage type requirements, etc.), rather than relying on numerical parameters (FAR, density, etc.) whose outcomes are often difficult to predict.
- Requires private buildings to shape public space through the use of building form standards with specific requirements for building placement and building frontages.
- Promotes and/or conserves an interconnected street network and pedestrian-scaled blocks.
- Keys regulations and standards to specific locations on a regulating plan.
- Incorporates diagrams that are unambiguous, clearly labeled, and accurate in their presentation of spatial configurations.



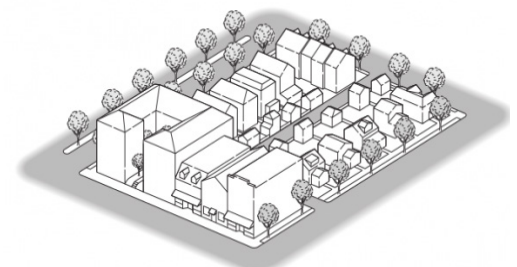
Conventional Zoning

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



Zoning Design Guidelines

Conventional zoning requirements, plus frequency of openings and surface articulation specified



Form-Based Codes

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.

Source: Form Based Code Institute

DRAFT

DRAFT

CHAPTER 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Site Analysis Overview

This section identifies existing conditions throughout the study area with regard to:

- Land uses and zoning
- Neighborhood retail and amenities
- Open space and lake access
- Safety & speed

In the midst of a year, when our community and world is in the midst of a global pandemic, there have been significant changes to how we live, work, eat, shop, recreate and travel. It's not possible to predict which of these changes will be lasting and which will prove temporary. However, this planning effort has unfolded with significant public input, is built on many prior studies that support the study recommendations, and this plan reflects the best near- and long-term strategies for improving Portage Road.

Presenting the Analysis

The analyses are presented in two parts:

- Importance (a brief statement on why this analysis matters),
- Assessment (conclusions from the analysis).



Map of Study Area

Source: Farr Associates

LAND USE



Importance
Ideally, neighborhoods should have commercial and civic nodes, gateways, parks within a 5 minute walking distance, and a diverse range of housing and building types. A diverse range of activities and land uses adds to the vibrancy of the Portage Road corridor in the Lake Center District.

Assessment
The north end of the study area is predominantly commercial uses, while the south end has a greater mix of activities, uses and green spaces for recreation. Notably, 20% of properties in the study area are considered underdeveloped and present unique opportunities to grow the area, provide more uses and activities for nearby neighborhoods, and increase walkability to a diverse variety of destinations.

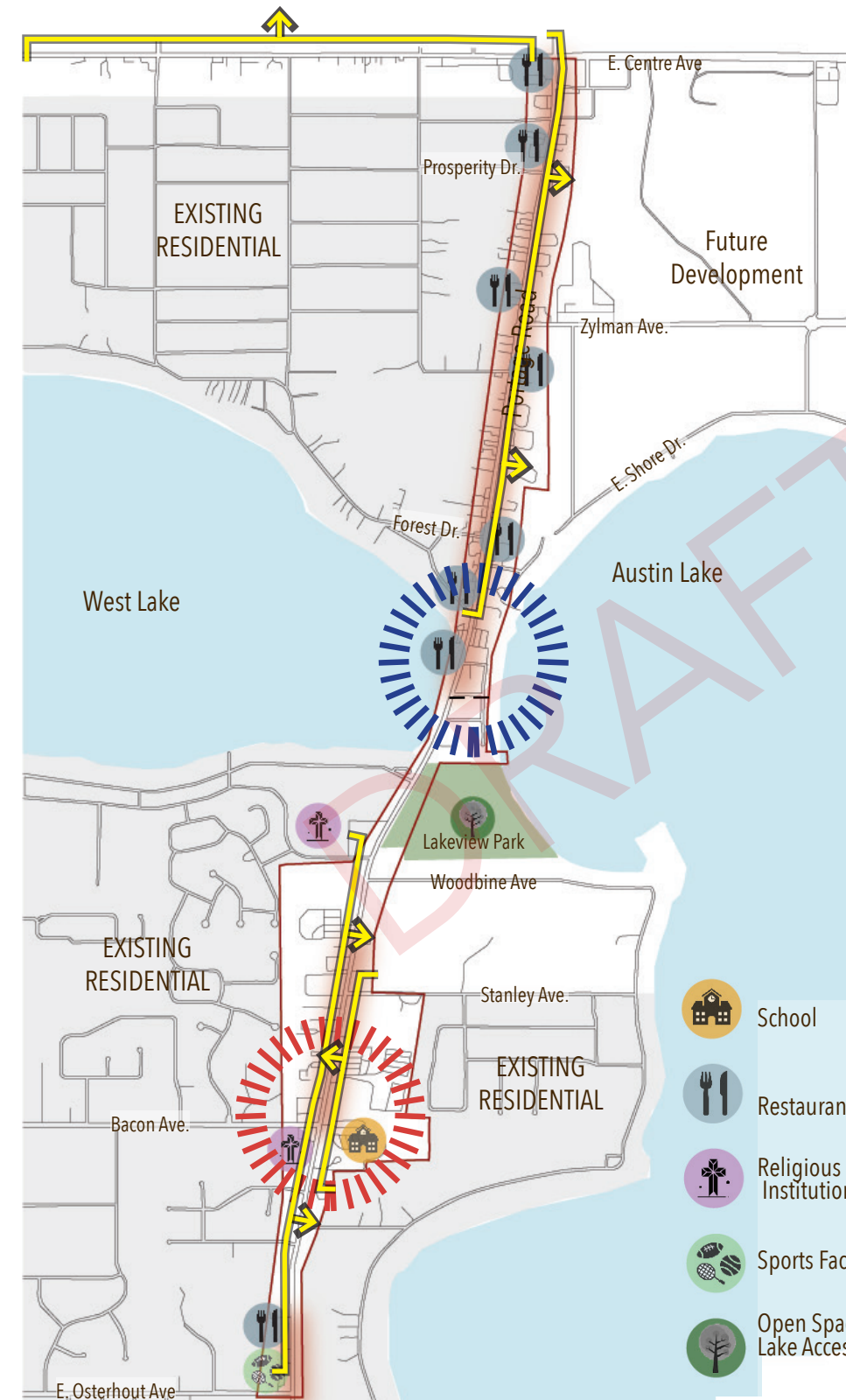
- Key**
- Study Area
 - Residential (21%)
 - Vacant Property (20%)
 - Church/School/Non-profit (10%)
 - Commercial/Retail (34%)
 - Manufacturing (3%)
 - City/County Owned (Open Space/Parks) (12%)



Map of land uses within the study area.

Source: Farr Associates

NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL & AMENITIES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA



Importance
Neighborhoods are walkable places with a variety of commercial and housing types, mobility networks, and an identifiable center. They provide a physical backdrop for identity, health and happiness. Neighborhood retail and amenities provide both uses and institutions that serve the public and add quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Assessment
The north and central areas of the study area currently feature eight diverse dining establishments, however they are not within walking distance of each other and are situated on a retail corridor that is characterized by a pedestrian environment that is primarily unwelcoming and often unsafe. The south end of the study area comprises a cluster of civic and institutional amenities that would benefit from safety improvements, walkability and a multi-modal accessibility.

- Key**
- Study Area
 - Retail & Services
 - Future civic node
 - Potential future civic node
 - Commercial frontages direction
 - School
 - Restaurant/Cafe
 - Religious Institution
 - Sports Facilities
 - Open Space/Lake Access



Map of neighborhoods & amenities within the study area.

Source: Farr Associates

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & LAKE ACCESS

Importance

Creating excellent access to public parks and open spaces has long been a priority for the City of Portage – and continues to make it a “Natural Place to Move.” These amenities improve property values, public health, and quality of life for residents. Public open spaces and lake access provide a common space for enjoyment, recreation, and community building.

Assessment

Lakeview Park serves as a valuable anchor as the bottom of the isthmus and is a well-utilized and popular park that is within a 5-minute walk radius of the south end of the commercial corridor of the Lake Center District. Additional water access points, such as new lakefront access, canal access and public docks, would provide additional enjoyment and opportunities for recreation, placemaking and programming.

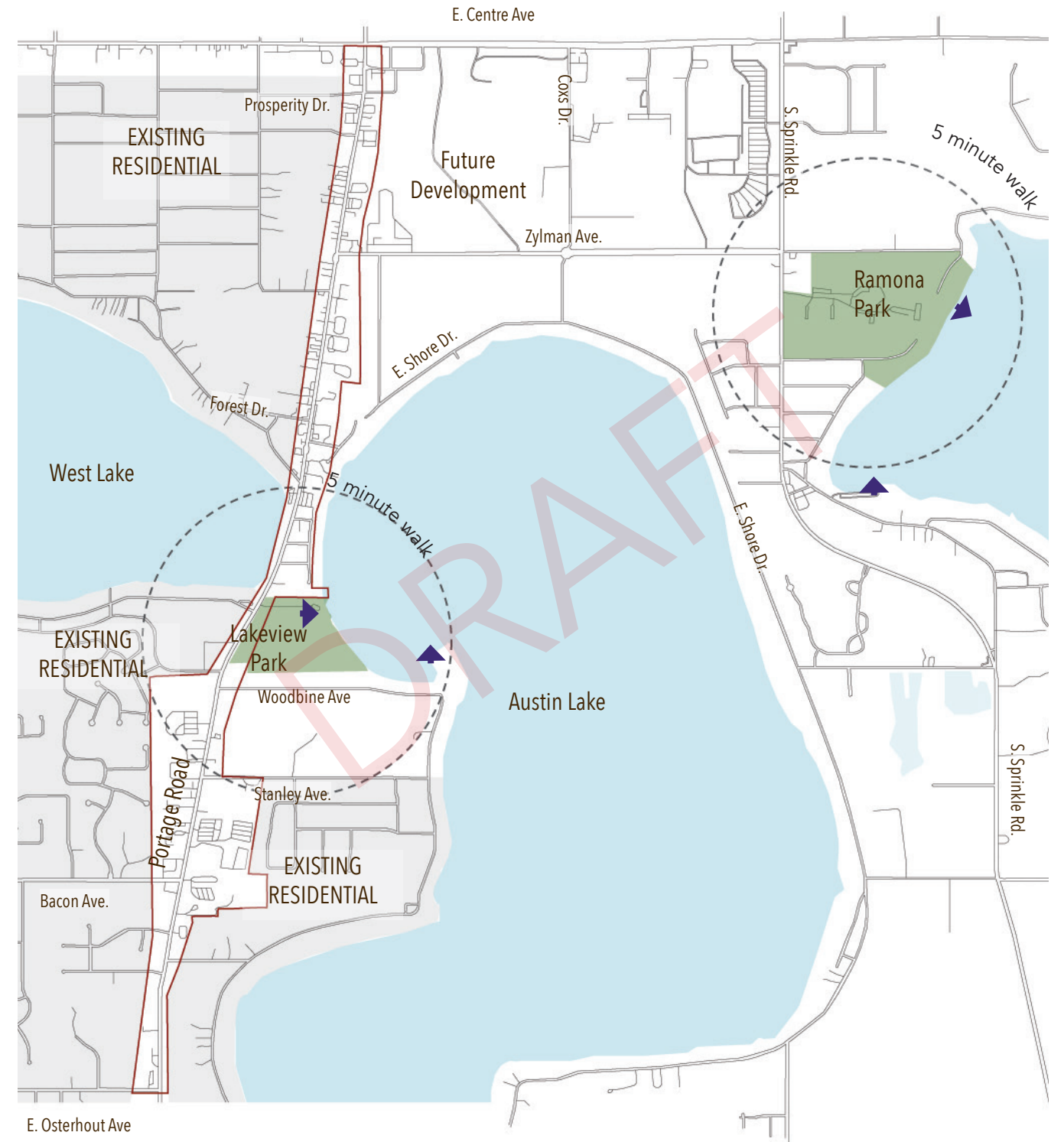
- Key
- Site Boundary
 - Paved Shoulder Bikeway
 - - - Multi-Use Trail
 - - - Proposed Trail
 - Public Green Spaces
 - 5 minute walk radius
 - ▶ Public lake access



LAKEVIEW PARK
Source: Google Photos_Jason Forbush



RAMONA PARK
Source: Google Photos_Lauana Santos



Map of public green spaces and 5 minutes walk perimeter.
Source: Farr Associates



SAFETY & SPEED

Importance

Safety for all users is a key priority of this study. As we identify the type of environment can support all users – young to old, mobile to mobility-challenged, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers – it is critical to consider the safety of each of these users equally in the public right-of-way. Excessive speeds are a deterrent to walkable neighborhoods and retail destinations, by creating unsafe conditions. A mix of uses in the Lake Center District means a mix of users, and a mix of needs should be met within the right-of-way to ensure the safety for everyone.

Assessment

It is approximately a 2.5 mile trip down Portage Road from Centre Ave to Osterhout. While the roadway has been designed today for vehicle throughput, the area can benefit from focusing on “people throughput” – which means we design for a wider variety of users to ensure safety. To ensure that we design successfully, a reduction in posted speeds can literally save lives as shown in the adjacent diagram. A matter of seconds can determine fatality or survival when a vehicle crashes into a pedestrian or cyclist. Reducing speeds increases survival rates, and can ensure we are building streets that are comfortable for our young residents, our aging residents, and everyone in between.

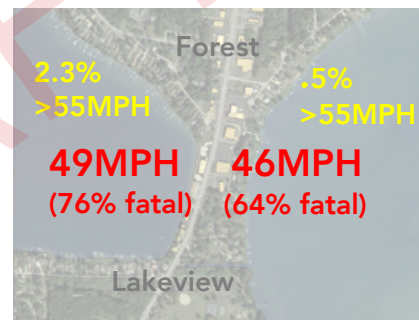
Posted Speeds



The corridor has a posted speed of 45 MPH

Travel Speeds

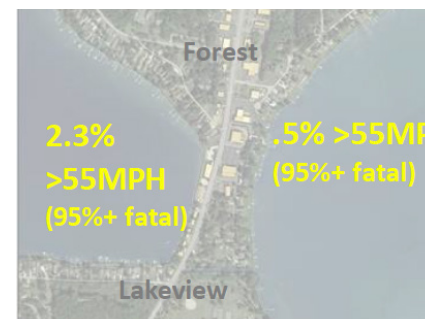
(2015 Traffic Study 85% percentile driver)



At typical vehicular speeds a pedestrian/car crash has a 70% chance of being fatal.

Travel Speeds

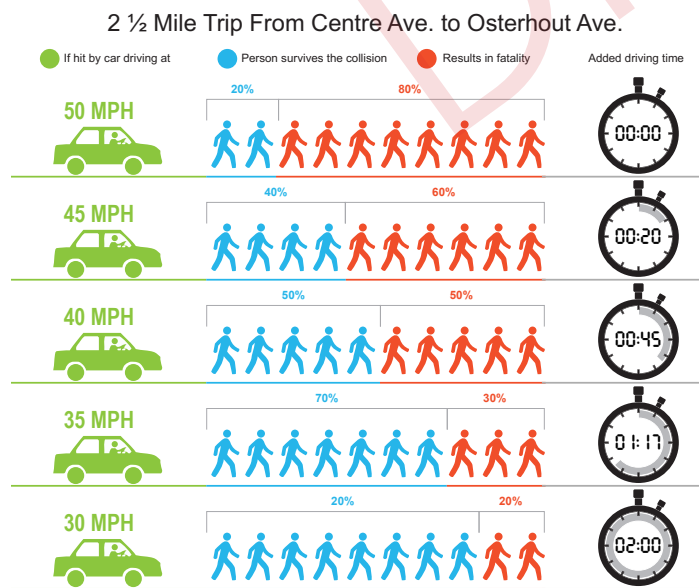
(2015 Traffic Study %>55MPH)



At the fastest travel speeds (1.5% of drivers) pedestrian/car crash has a 95% chance of being fatal.

DRAFT

PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK



Relationship Between Speed & Fatality Along Portage Road. Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers

3.2 THE SITE TODAY - SEGMENTS

The study corridor is 2.5 miles long, and its character varies significantly. This section divides the corridor into six segments in order to present challenges and opportunities at a finer-grained scale. Each segment is approximately 1/3 of a mile. The following spreads present an assessment for each study segment and includes the following elements:

- Location Key Plan
- Segment Map
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Key Themes (see key below)
- Pedestrian Conditions Analysis (see key below)

Key Themes

Challenges and opportunities outlined in this chapter, as well as recommendations presented later in the report, have been organized into the following themes and color-coded icons. Multiple icons can be assigned to each, where multiple goals can be achieved. These help identify the key themes for each segment that the study recommendations seek to address.



- Speed
- Signals
- Right-of-Way Design
- Infrastructure/Utilities



- Sidewalks
- Trails
- Roadway
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure
- Crosswalks



- Public Parks
- Public Lake Access
- Canal Connection



- Area identity
- Gateways
- Landscaping
- Signage and Facades
- Retail enhancements
- Programming
- Seasonality



- Planned Development
- Potential Development Sites
- Zoning
- Potential Land Acquisition

Pedestrian Environment Analysis

Each segment analysis classifies the pedestrian facilities and environment into four categories, which also illustrate the overall pedestrian infrastructure needs for the full corridor.

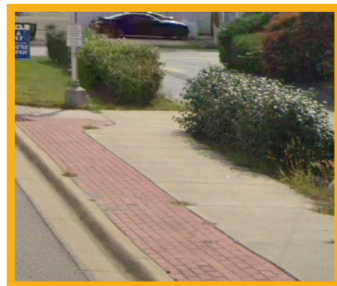
Safe & Rewarding



Source: Google Street View

Sidewalks are smooth, wide, feel safe, have appropriate buffers from the street, easy to walk or use a stroller or wheelchair on.

Safe & Unrewarding



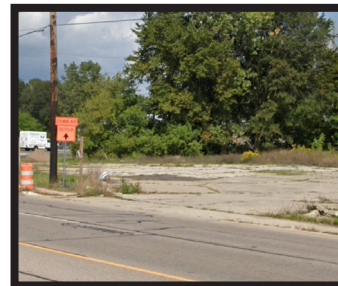
Sidewalks are smooth, wide, and consistent, but may be lacking a pleasant environment or missing a green strip of landscaping.

Unsafe & Unrewarding

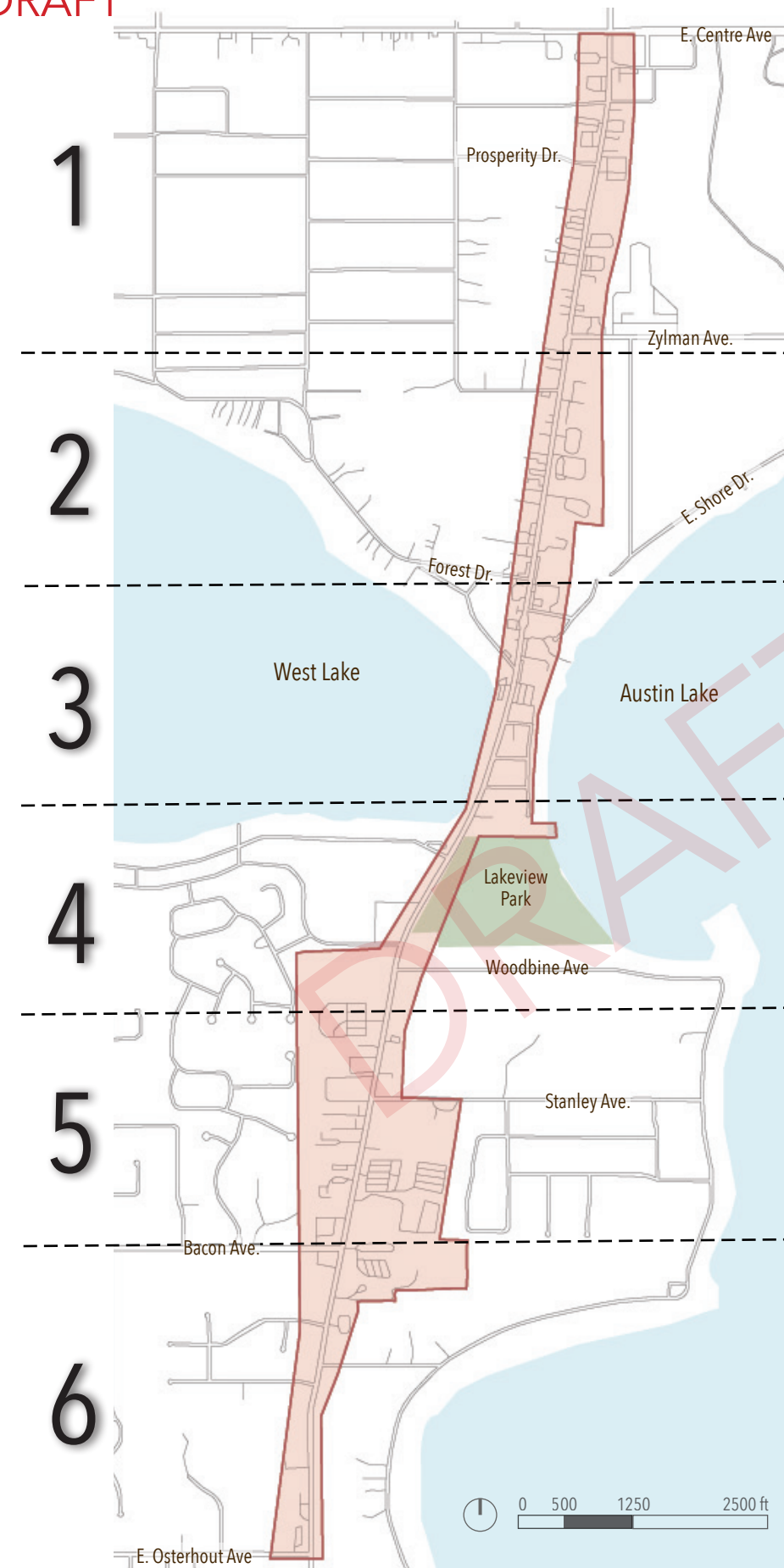


Sidewalks that discourage walking due to maintenance or repair, or may directly abut the curb, and have no barrier between pedestrians and vehicle traffic.

Curb cuts/No sidewalk



Multiple curb cuts break up a continuous and desirable pedestrian environment, and segments without a sidewalk create significant obstacles for connectivity and mobility.



Overall Location Plan

Source: Farr Associates

This map shows how the site has been divided into segments over the next two chapters.

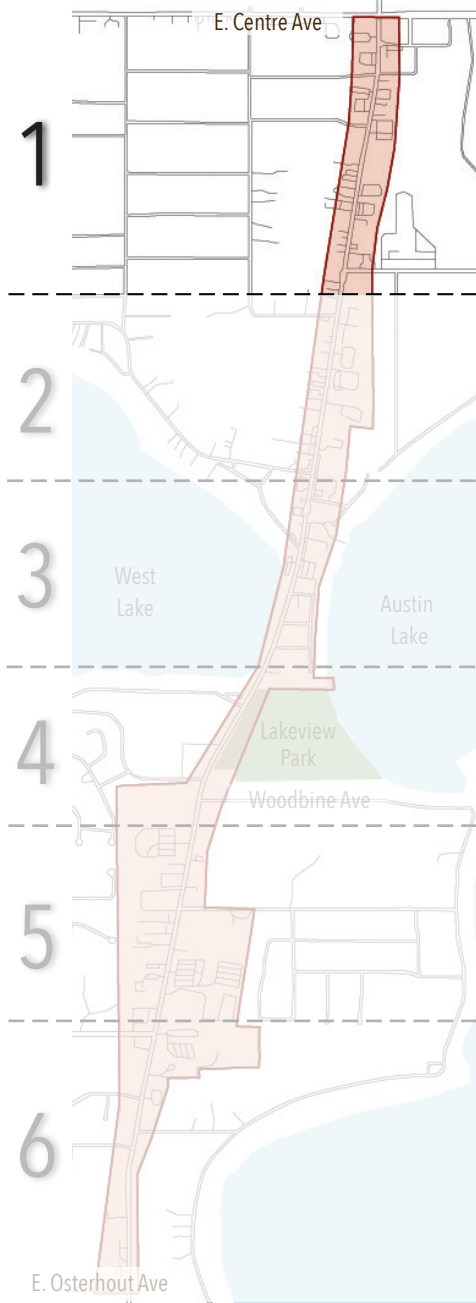
Key

- Vacant Parcels
- Pedestrian Analysis
- Safe & Rewarding
- Safe & Unrewarding
- Unsafe & Unrewarding
- Curb Cuts/No Sidewalk

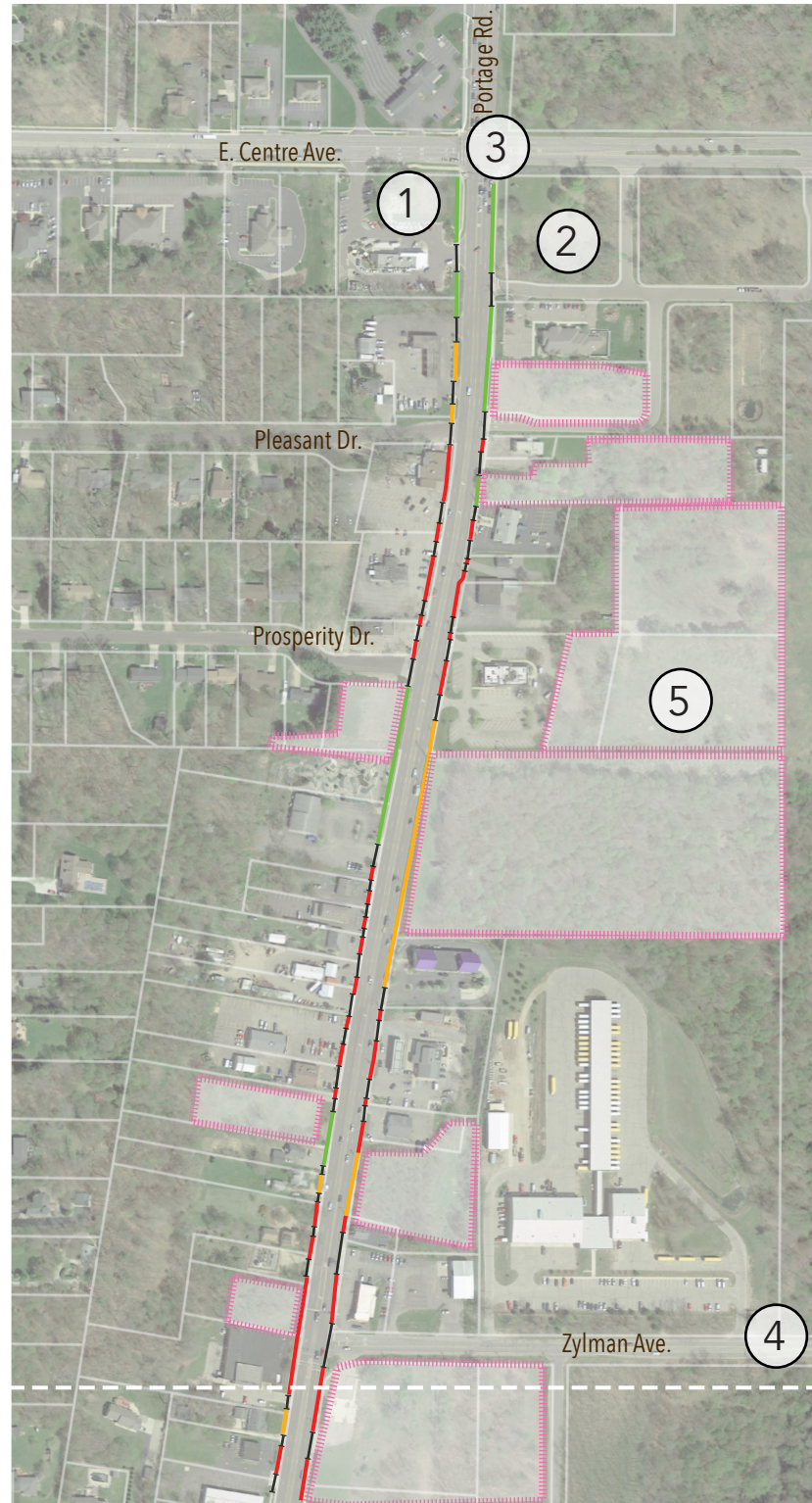
This key applies to the diagrams over the following pages, analysis of opportunities and challenges.

SEGMENT 1: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

1 E. Centre Ave. to Zylman Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 1

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 1: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities



Opportunity to improve the Stormwater detention basin at McDonald's property.



A new commercial development has been proposed at the southeast corner of Portage Road and Centre Ave. Preliminary site plans appear to generally conform to what could be expected from a future form based code.



Continue building a rewarding and attractive pedestrian environment including gateway features at the corner of Portage Road and E. Centre Ave.



Planned multi-use trail along the north side of East Shore Drive connecting to Zylman Ave and Sprinkle Road utilizing easements acquired from Pfizer in 2018.



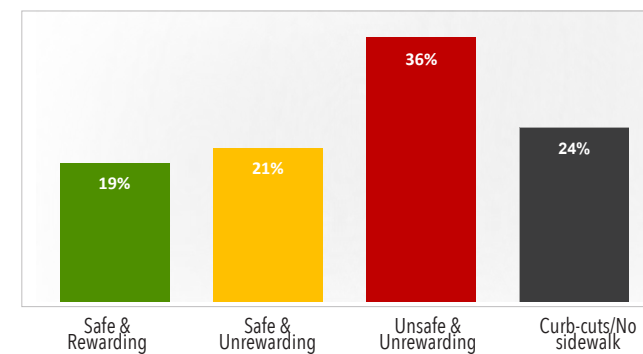
Proposal sketch of Centre Port extension

Challenges



Highest number of vacant properties in the study area in this segment.

Pedestrian Conditions

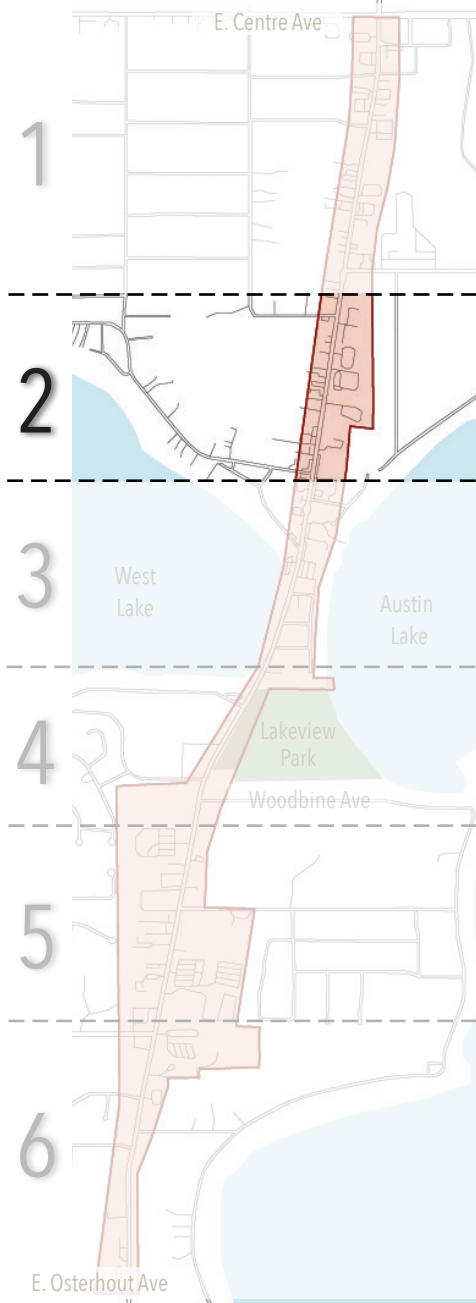


Key Segment Issues

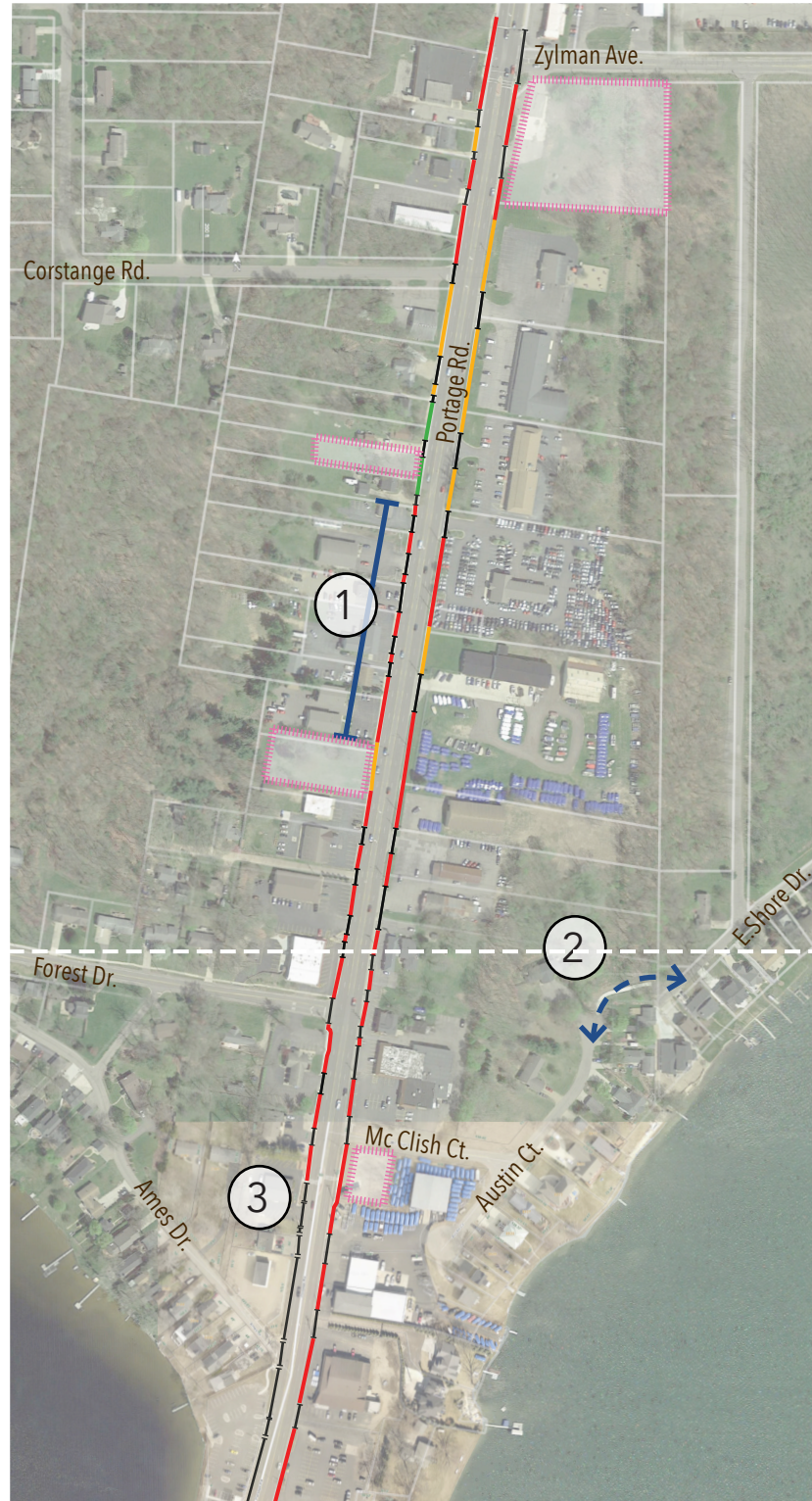


SEGMENT 2: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

2 Zylman Ave. to Forest Dr.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 2


Source: Google Maps

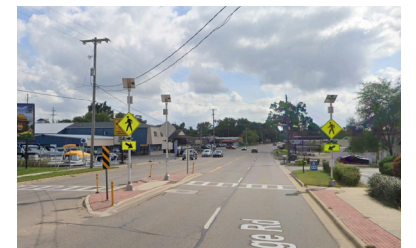
SEGMENT 2: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities

- ①  Opportunity for "access management" improvement i.e. coordination of driveways and potential rear service alley.
- ②  Opportunity to strengthen connection between Austin Ct. and E. Shore Dr.
- ③   Opportunity to continue currently dead-end sidewalk along the western side of Portage Road.

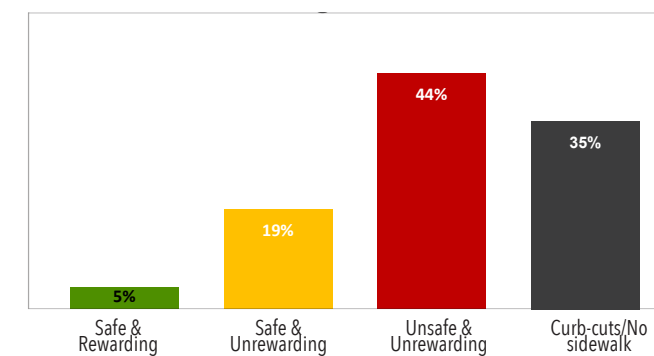
Challenges

- ④   Five percent of pedestrian conditions in this segment are considered to be both "safe and rewarding" (Not shown)



Source: Google Street-View

Pedestrian Conditions

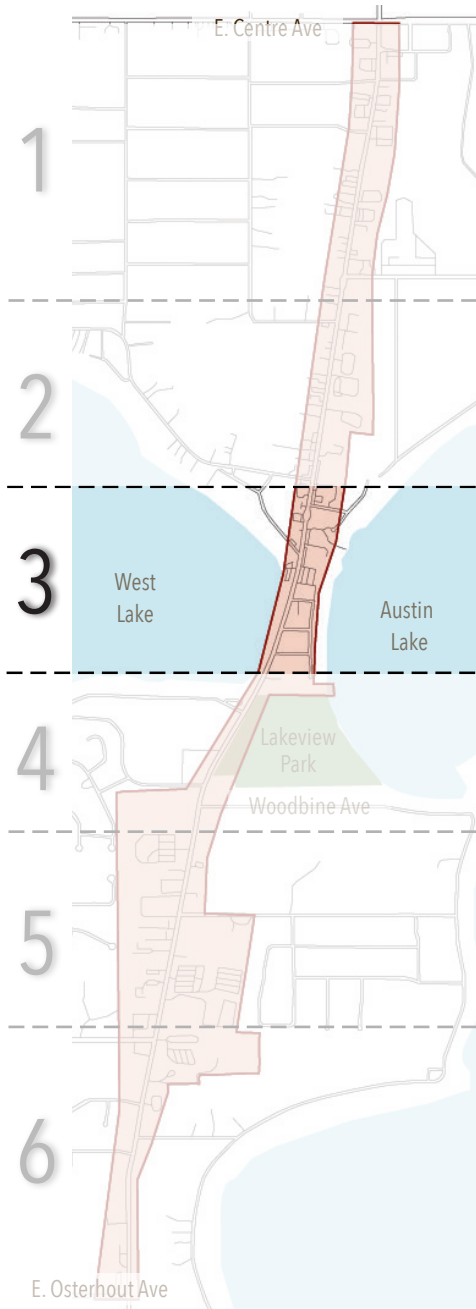


Key Segment Issues



SEGMENT 3: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

3 Forest Dr. to Lakeview Dr.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 3

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 3: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities

- ① Opportunity to improve parking and to provide curb-appeal along Portage Road.
- ② The Drive-in property provides a rare opportunity to see West Lake from Portage Road. This Lakefront area also has the potential to become a "Social District", a destination for socializing and recreation along Portage Road with safe and accessible pedestrian connections.
- ③ This corridor segment presents multiple opportunities to encourage businesses to enhance entrances, landscaping, signage, windows, and consolidate curb cuts to improve area character.
- ④ Geometry alignment of Ames Dr. intersection.

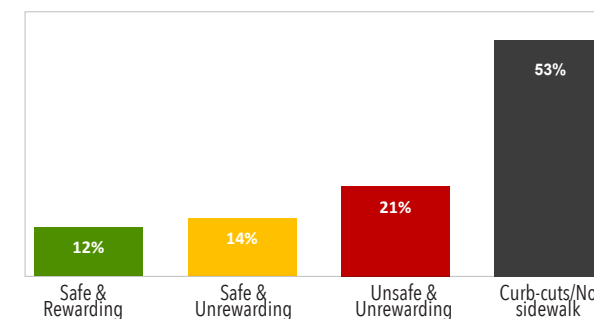
Challenges

- ⑤ A major pinch-point exists at the Cove restaurant where, due to the expansion of Portage Road over the years, only 8 feet of space is left between the curb and the building.



Source: Google Street-View

Pedestrian Conditions

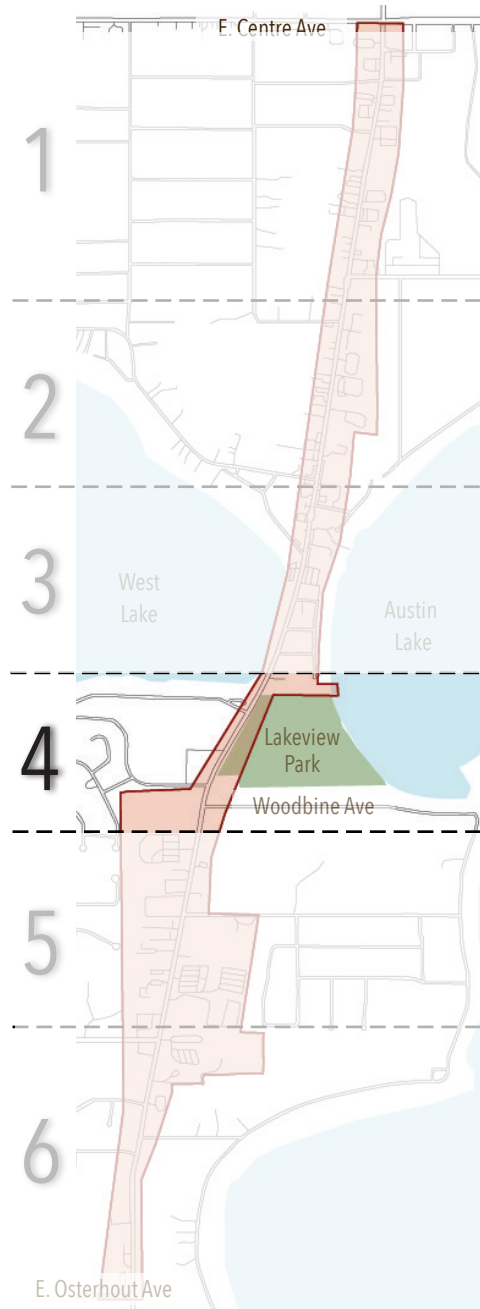


Key Segment Issues

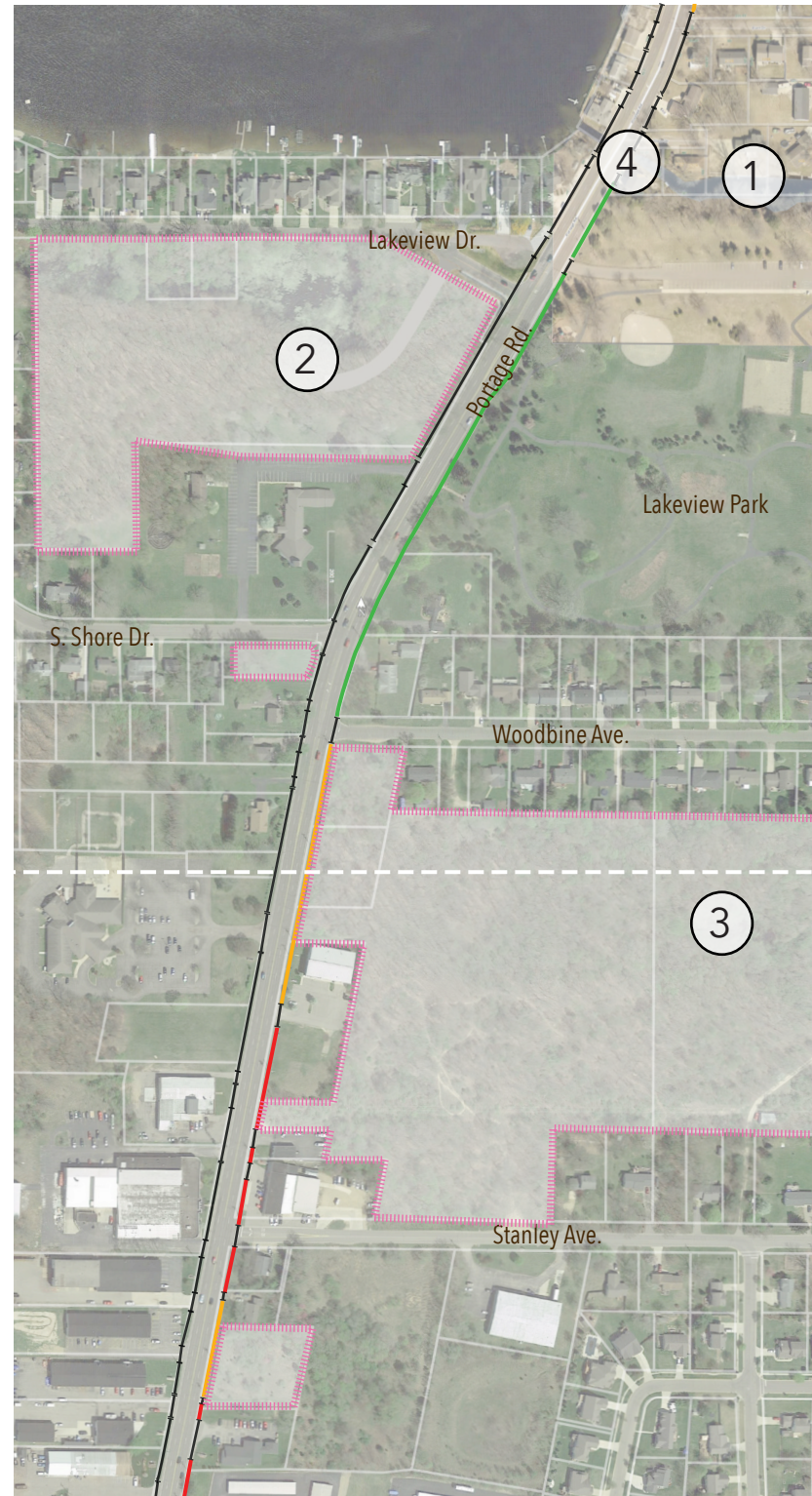


SEGMENT 4: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

4 Lakeview Dr. to Stanley Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 4

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 4: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities

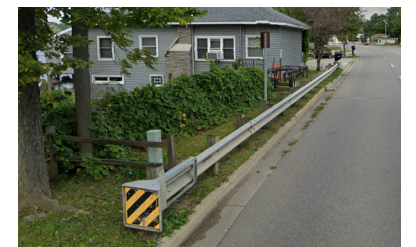
- ① Opportunity to enhance the canal and provide public access.
-
- ② New West Lake Estates subdivision between Lakeview and S. Shore Dr. is under construction.
- ③ Opportunity for further development

Challenges

- ④ The bridge over the lake to lake culvert is a challenging pinch point for pedestrians and bicyclists and makes for dangerous access conditions.

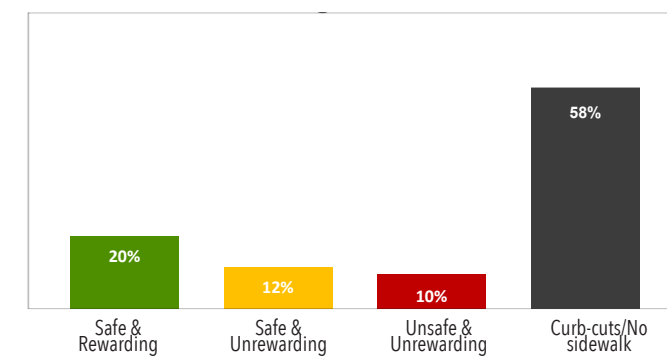


Source: Google Street-View



Source: Google Street-View

Pedestrian Conditions

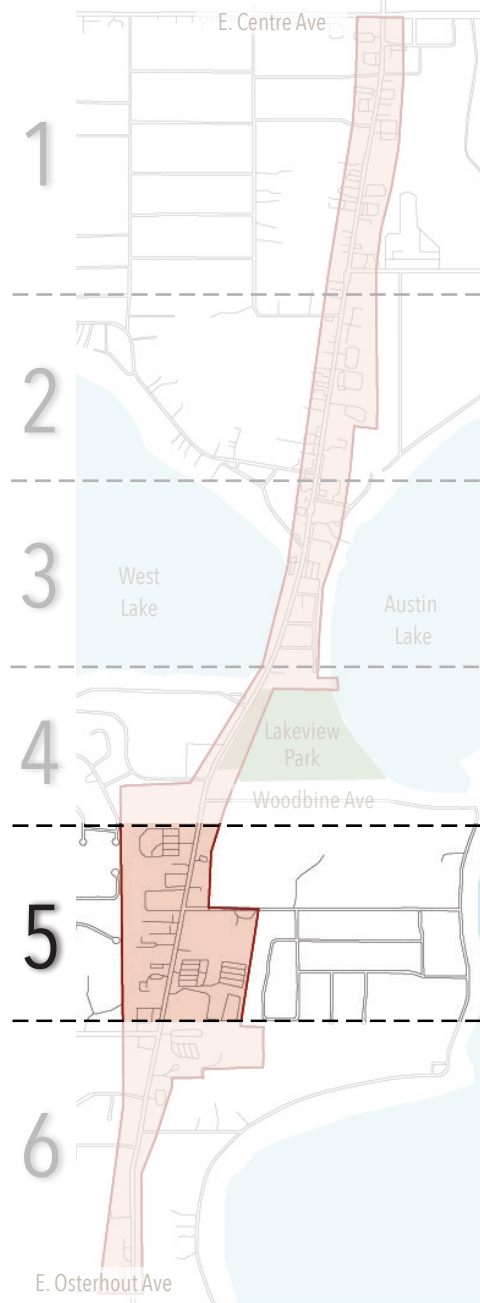


Key Segment Issues

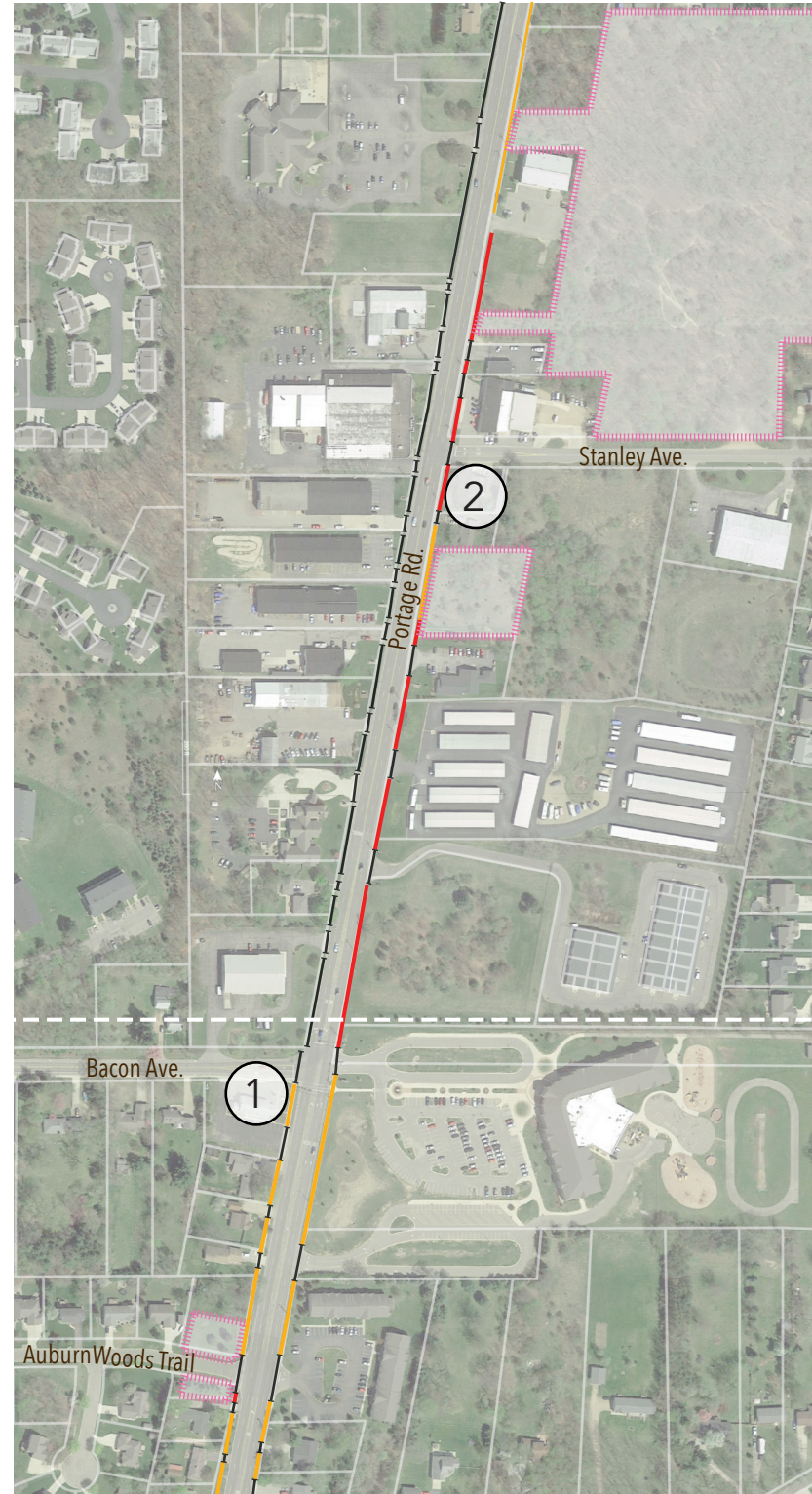


SEGMENT 5: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

5 Stanley Ave. to Bacon Ave.



Location Key Plan




Map of Segment 5

Source: Google Maps



SEGMENT 5: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

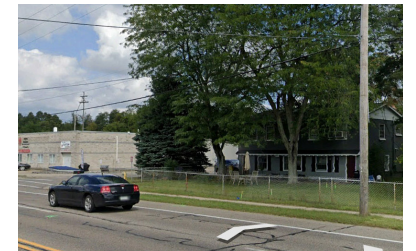
Opportunities

①   Opportunity to continue sidewalk on the west side of Portage Road, which currently ends at Bacon Ave.

②  Opportunity to improve fence guidelines: Low fences can add aesthetic value, but should be regulated; for example, chain link fences should be discouraged.

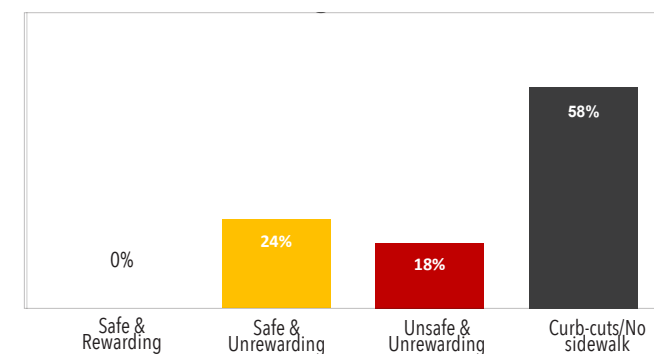
Challenges

③   Zero percent of pedestrian conditions in this corridor segment are considered to be both "safe & rewarding". (Not shown)



Source: Google Street-View

Pedestrian Conditions

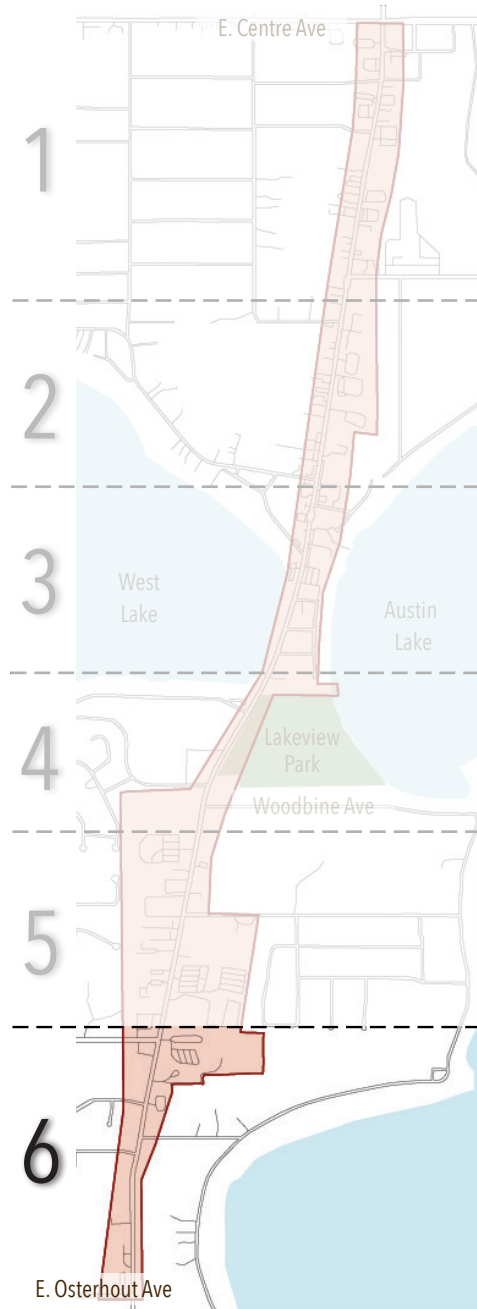


Key Segment Issues



SEGMENT 6: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

6 Bacon Ave. to Osterhout Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 6



Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 6: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities

①   Opportunity to improve existing traffic signal /crosswalk at Bacon Ave.





②   Opportunity to extend sidewalk on the west side of Portage Road ends at Lancelot.

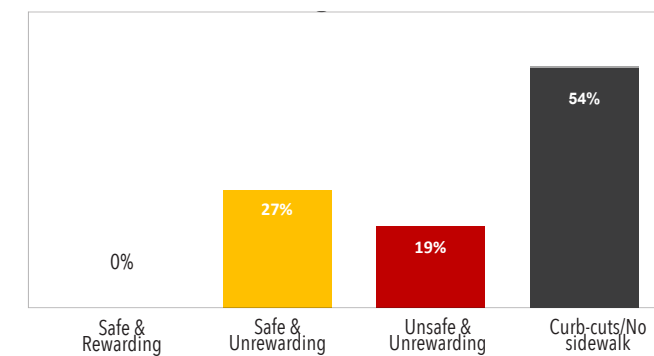


Source: Google Street-View

Challenges

③   Zero percent of pedestrian conditions in this corridor segment are considered to be both "safe & rewarding". (Not shown)

Pedestrian Conditions



Key Segment Issues



1.5 THE FUTURE OF PORTAGE ROAD

DEVELOPMENT OF SCENARIOS

The scenarios presented in this section were drawn by the consultant team to illustrate the potential design scenarios and trade-offs for how the public right-of-way could serve community along Portage Road in the Lake Center District. These also present images of existing challenges and opportunities that this study seeks to address, and consider public feedback from the study process.

The planning and public engagement process narrowed the selections to these scenarios for a right-of-way that features either three or five lanes, based on the varying uses of the public right of way envisioned for the future. Proposals for a four-lane scenario were explored but not deemed viable due to the lack of a dedicated turning lane and stacking which can cause unnecessary roadway hazards at speed.

FINDING THE RIGHT-OF-WAY BALANCE

As communities grow in popularity and size there is often a friction between place and flow. The more space dedicated to flows through the community, the more difficult it is to create high-quality public spaces. Conversely, the more space we dedicate to high-quality public spaces, movement through the area becomes less efficient.

The demand for right-of-way is increasing. Many communities are heavily dependent on the automobile for everyday travel. The infrastructure to support this reliance on cars is extensive and frequently overwhelms the space available for people walking, biking, running, shopping, and recreating. Rebalanced streets are intended to make people feel safe, and is an opportunity to make our streets

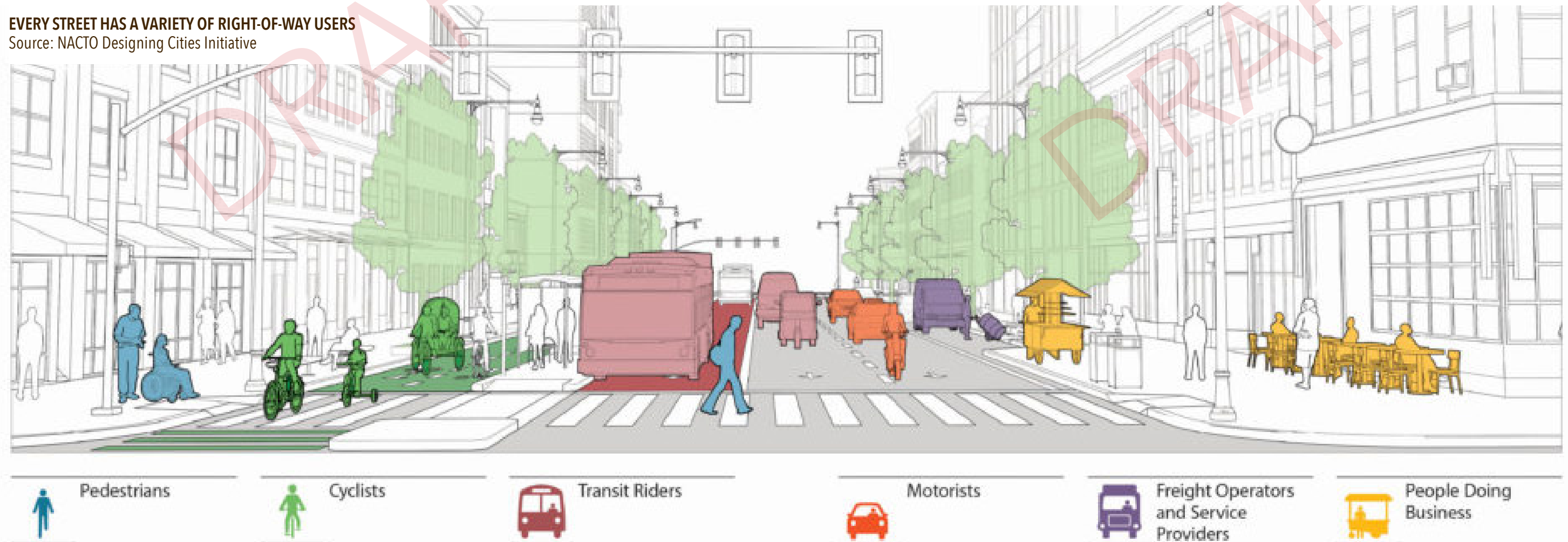
more vibrant and multimodal.

The way we travel is evolving. There have been significant shifts in travel patterns over the past year during the pandemic, due to an increased number of people working from home. More local trips are being made, including increased trail use, biking and walking, and traditional peak hour commute trips have decreased. We have yet to see if these changes become permanent, but they offer us an opportunity to rethink how, when, and by what means we travel today, and in the future.

Potential co-benefits of rebalancing the public right of-way include opportunities for landscaping, lighting, and stormwater management, which can also serve as a buffer from traffic for pedestrians and cyclists, act as traffic calming

measure, and reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians at curb extensions and crosswalks. In addition, it helps fill gaps in the non-motorized transportation network (sidewalks, bikeways, off-street trails) and promotes prosperity for local businesses as well as designing for people of all ages and abilities. Rebalancing the public right-of-way provide greater opportunities to walk, roll, scoot, stroll in an environment that promotes healthy, active travel to, from and between neighborhoods.

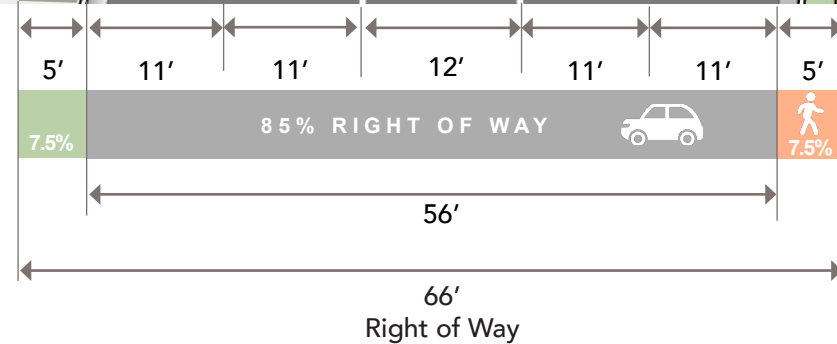
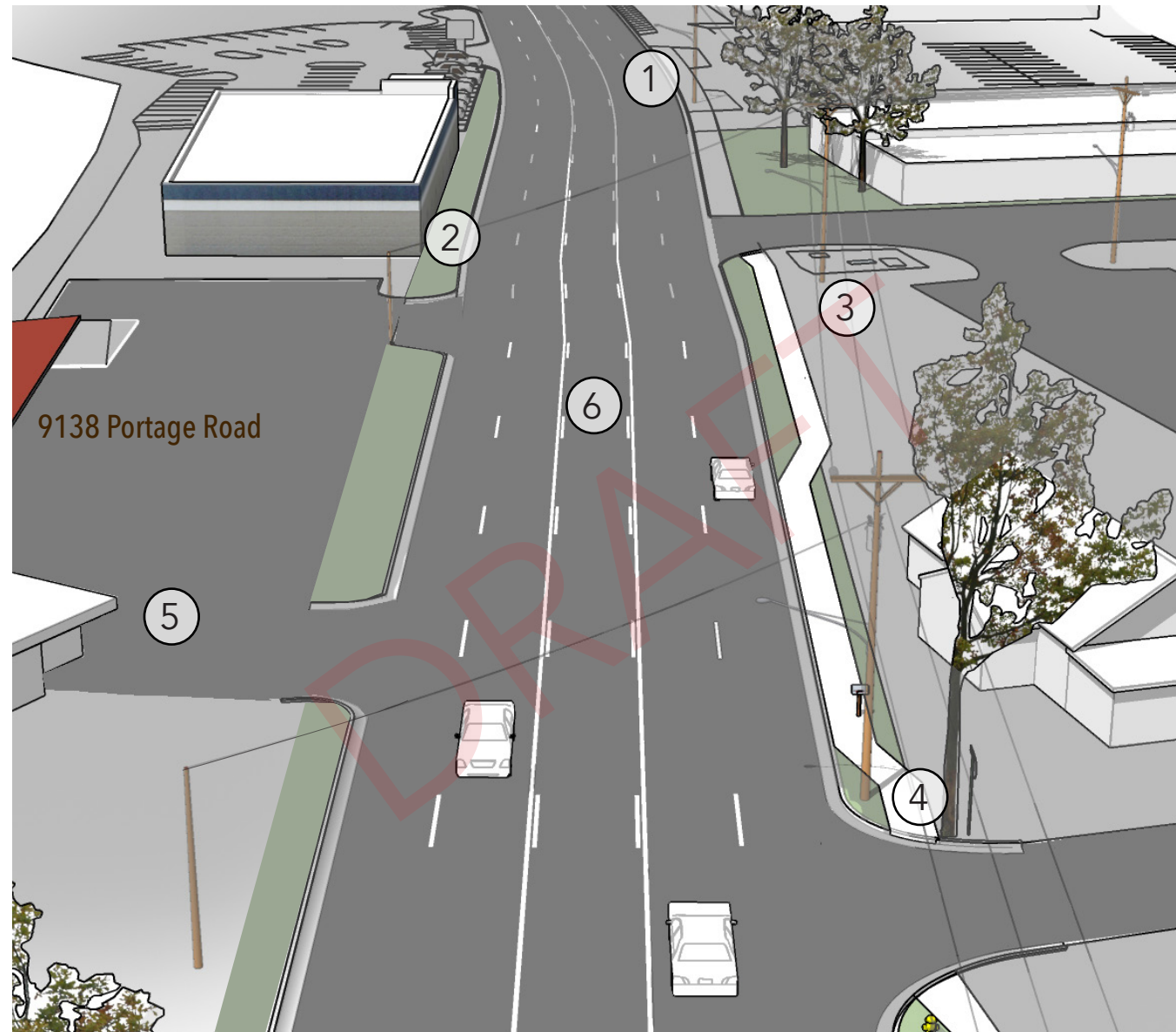
EVERY STREET HAS A VARIETY OF RIGHT-OF-WAY USERS
Source: NACTO Designing Cities Initiative



EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY CONDITIONS (66')

Five-lane street section consistent with 50-55+ MPH vehicle speeds.
View looking North from the junction of Portage Road and Clarence Drive

Source: Farr Associates



1



Where sidewalks exist, they are typically along the curb, not buffered from traffic and frequently interrupted by driveways and curb cuts.

2



A major pinch-point exists at the Cove restaurant where, due to the expansion of Portage Road over the years, only 8 feet of space is left between the curb and the building.

3



An existing lift station at the corner of Portage Road and Emily Drive represents critical infrastructure, but also presents a physical barrier.

4



Where sidewalks exist, they are substandard width, forced to negotiate with existing elements like trees, utility poles, and buildings for extremely limited space.

5



The Drive-in property provides a rare opportunity to see West lake from Portage Road.

6



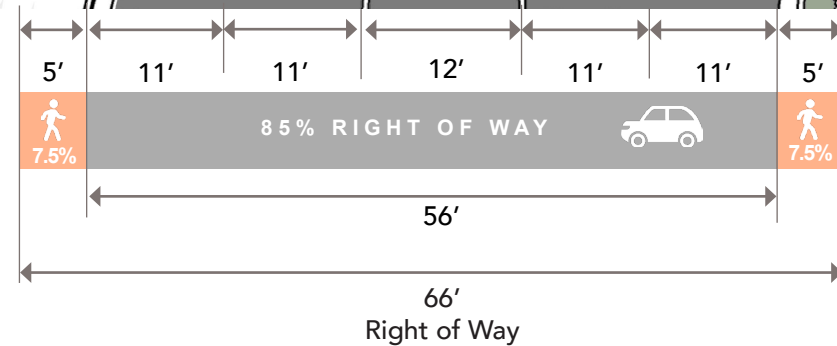
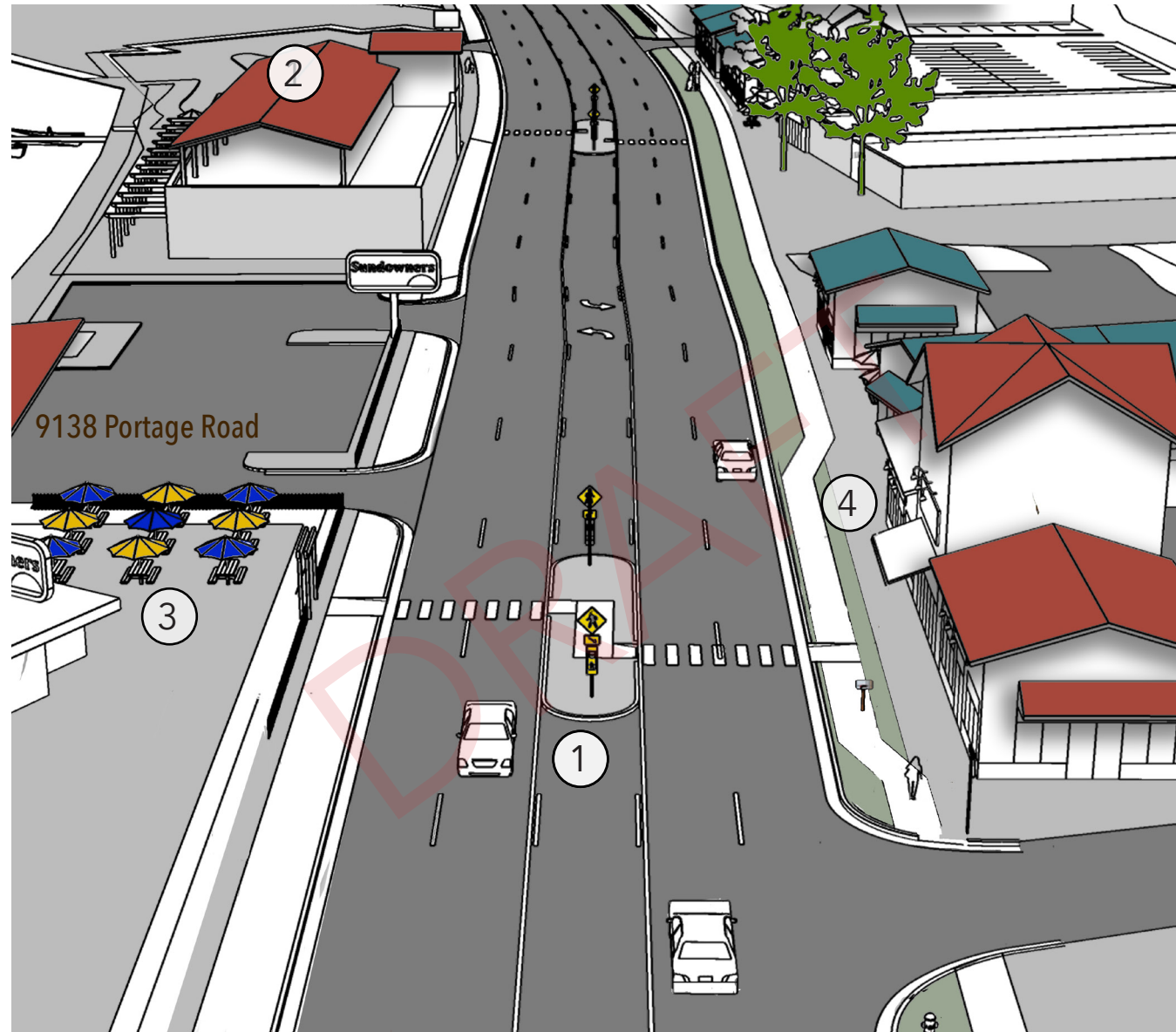
The absence of crosswalks in the isthmus area, across five lanes of high-speed traffic, presents a difficult environment for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

Source: Google Street-View

SCENARIO 1: IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN EXISTING 66' RIGHT-OF-WAY (5-Vehicle Lanes, Additional Sidewalk and Medians)

Proposed Street Section consistent with 40-45MPH vehicle speeds.
View looking North from the junction of Portage Road and Clarence Drive

Source: Farr Associates



1



Source: Mid-Block Crosswalk Ramsey, County

This scenario improves visibility of pedestrians and reduces crossing distances within the isthmus, making a more connected and walkable environment across Portage Road.

2



Source: Sand Bar, Nashville. NashvilleGuru.com

Opportunities to add architectural details and structures that express the waterfront character and identity should be considered at existing and new businesses.

3



Source: Sundowners, Florida. USArestaurants.info

The Drive-In property might be retained, and enhanced with landscaping and placemaking enabling public waterfront access to West Lake and opportunities to gather, dine, and recreate.

4



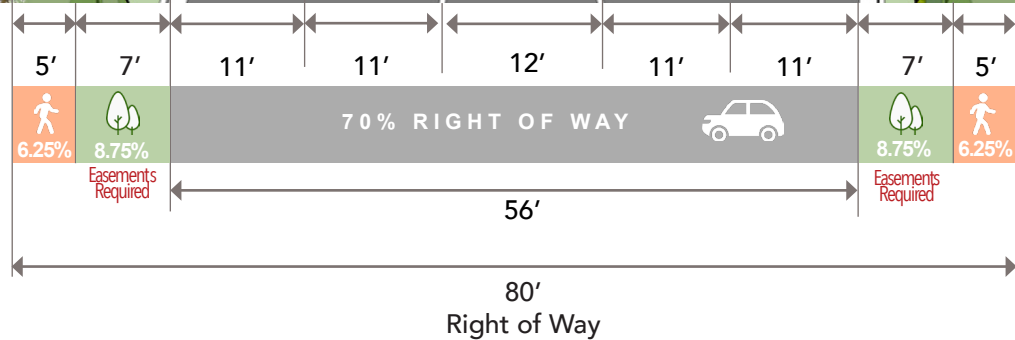
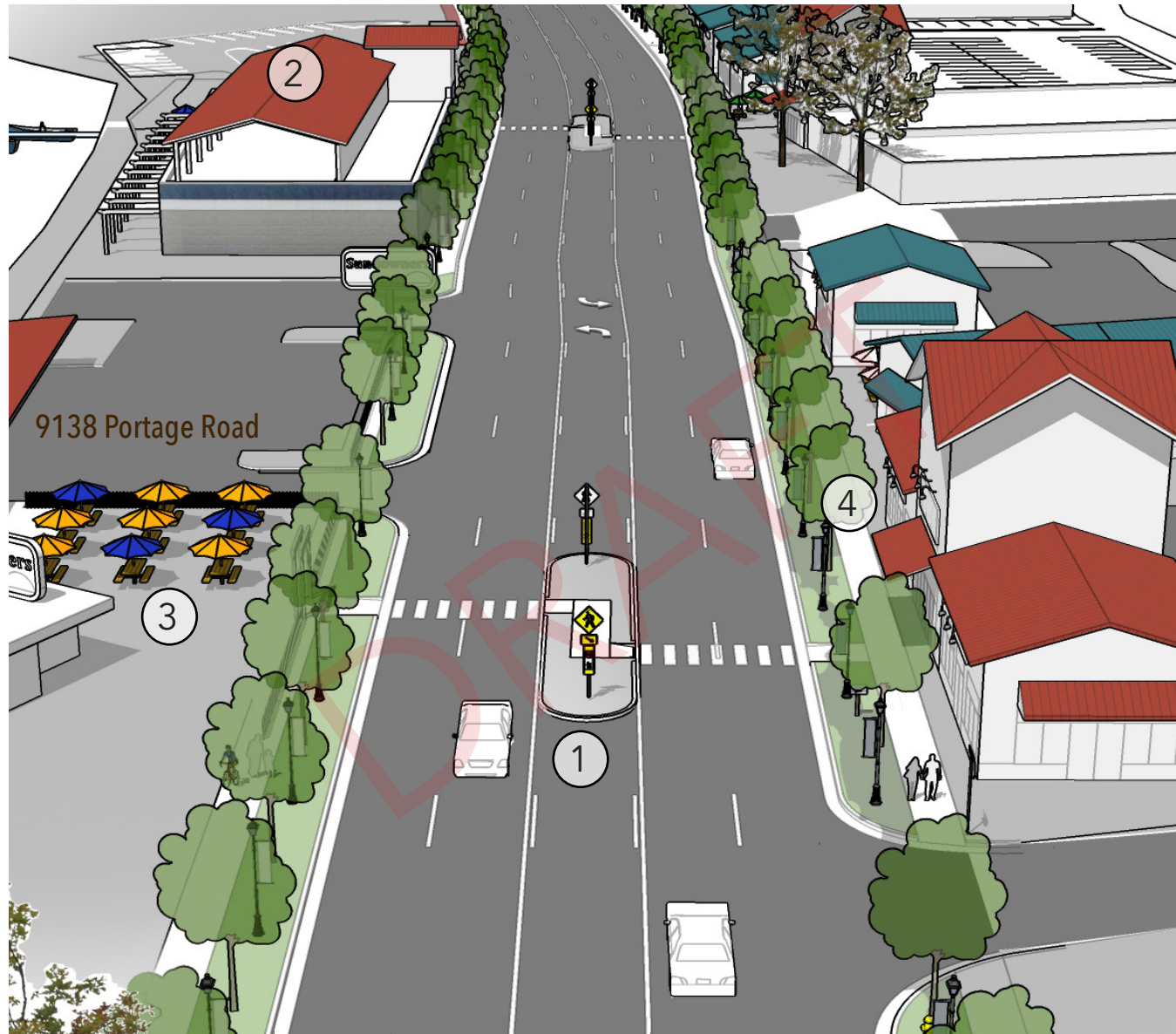
Source: Pop-up Shop, Muskegon, MI. StrongTowns.com

New "liner" retail can enhance the pedestrian environment and screen parking. Temporary "pop-up" structures can also be encouraged, like this example above from Muskegon, MI.

SCENARIO 2: IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN EXPANDED 80' RIGHT-OF-WAY (5-Vehicle Lanes, Sidewalks, Landscaping Requires Multiple Easements)

Proposed Street Section consistent with 40-45MPH vehicle speeds.
View looking North from the junction of Portage Road and Clarence Drive

Source: Farr Associates



1



Source: Mid-Block Crosswalk Ramsey, County

This scenario improves visibility of pedestrians and reduces crossing distances within the isthmus, making a more connected and walkable environment across Portage Road.

2



Source: Sand Bar, Nashville. NashvilleGuru.com

Opportunities to add architectural details and structures that express the waterfront character and identity should be considered at existing and new businesses.

3



Source: Sundowners, Florida. USArestaurants.info

The Drive-In property might be retained, and enhanced with landscaping and placemaking enabling public waterfront access to West Lake and opportunities to gather, dine, and recreate.

4



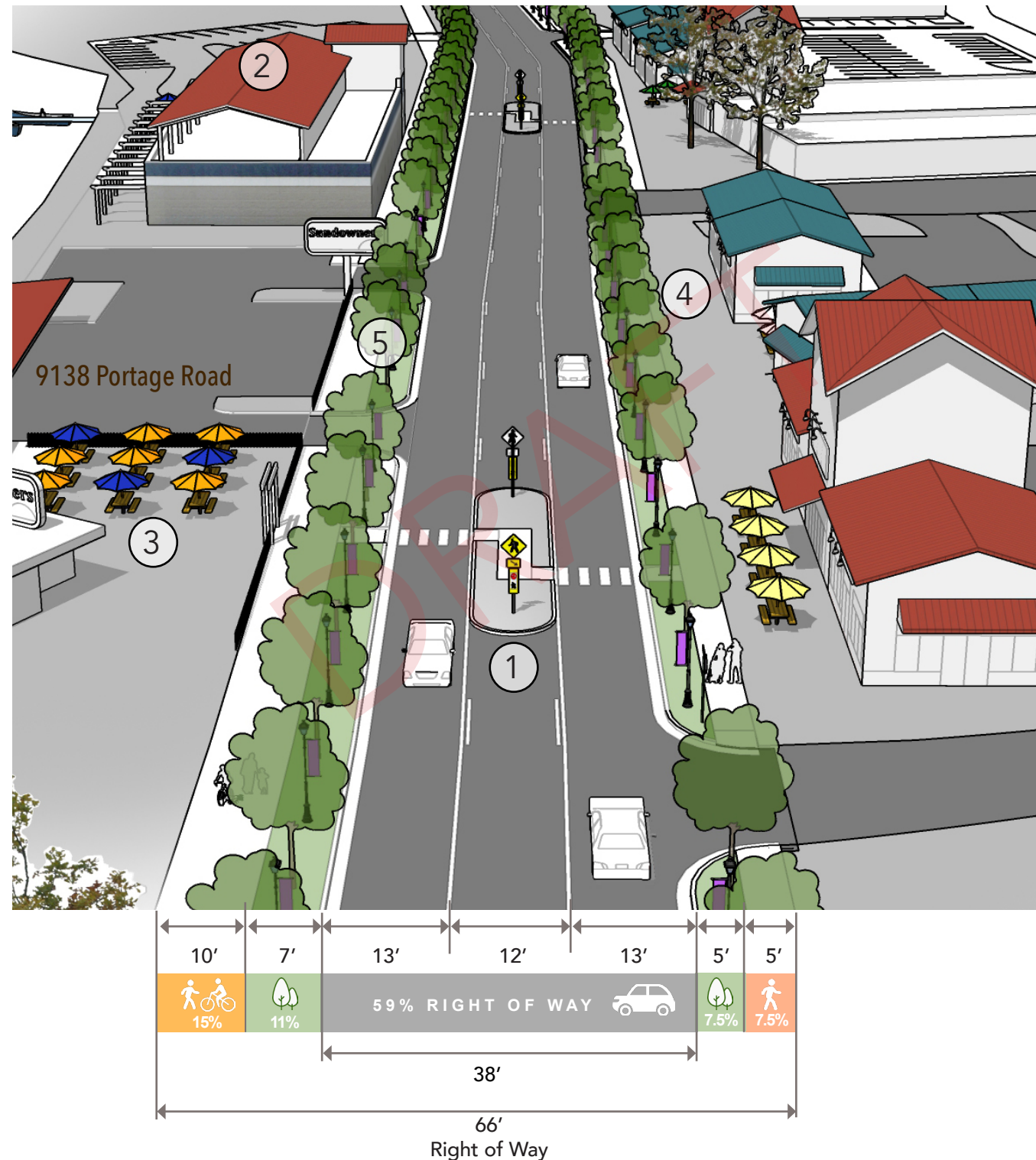
Source: Pop-up Shop, Muskegon, MI. StrongTowns.com

New "liner" retail can enhance the pedestrian environment and screen parking. Temporary "pop-up" structures can also be encouraged, like this example above from Muskegon, MI.

SCENARIO 3: IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN EXISTING 66' RIGHT-OF-WAY (3 Vehicle Lanes, Sidewalks, Landscaping, Multi-Use Path)

Proposed Street Section consistent with 30-35 MPH vehicle speeds.
View looking North from the junction of Portage Road and Clarence Drive

Source: Farr Associates



1



Source: Mid-Block Crosswalk Ramsey, County

This scenario improves visibility of pedestrians and reduces crossing distances within the isthmus, making a more connected and walkable environment across Portage Road.

2



Source: Sand Bar, Nashville. NashvilleGuru.com

Opportunities to add architectural details and structures that express the waterfront character and identity should be considered at existing and new businesses.

3



Source: Sundowners, Florida. USArestaurants.info

The Drive-In property might be retained, and enhanced with landscaping and placemaking enabling public waterfront access to West Lake and opportunities to gather, dine, and recreate.

4



Source: Pop-up Shop, Muskegon, MI. StrongTowns.com

New "liner" retail can enhance the pedestrian environment and screen parking. Temporary "pop-up" structures can also be encouraged, like this example above from Muskegon, MI.

5



Source: Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail. Ryan Gravel.

A proposed 10' wide multi-use path on the west side of Portage Road, buffered by landscaping and trees, provides pedestrians and cyclist of all ages a dedicated space to safely and comfortably explore the area.

6



Source: Stack House, Seattle, WA. Berger Partnership.

Additional space for people, activities, landscaping, streetlights and banners all offer opportunities for placemaking and enhancing the identity of the Lake Center District.

DRAFT

DRAFT

CHAPTER 4 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

4.1 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed Master Plan Overview

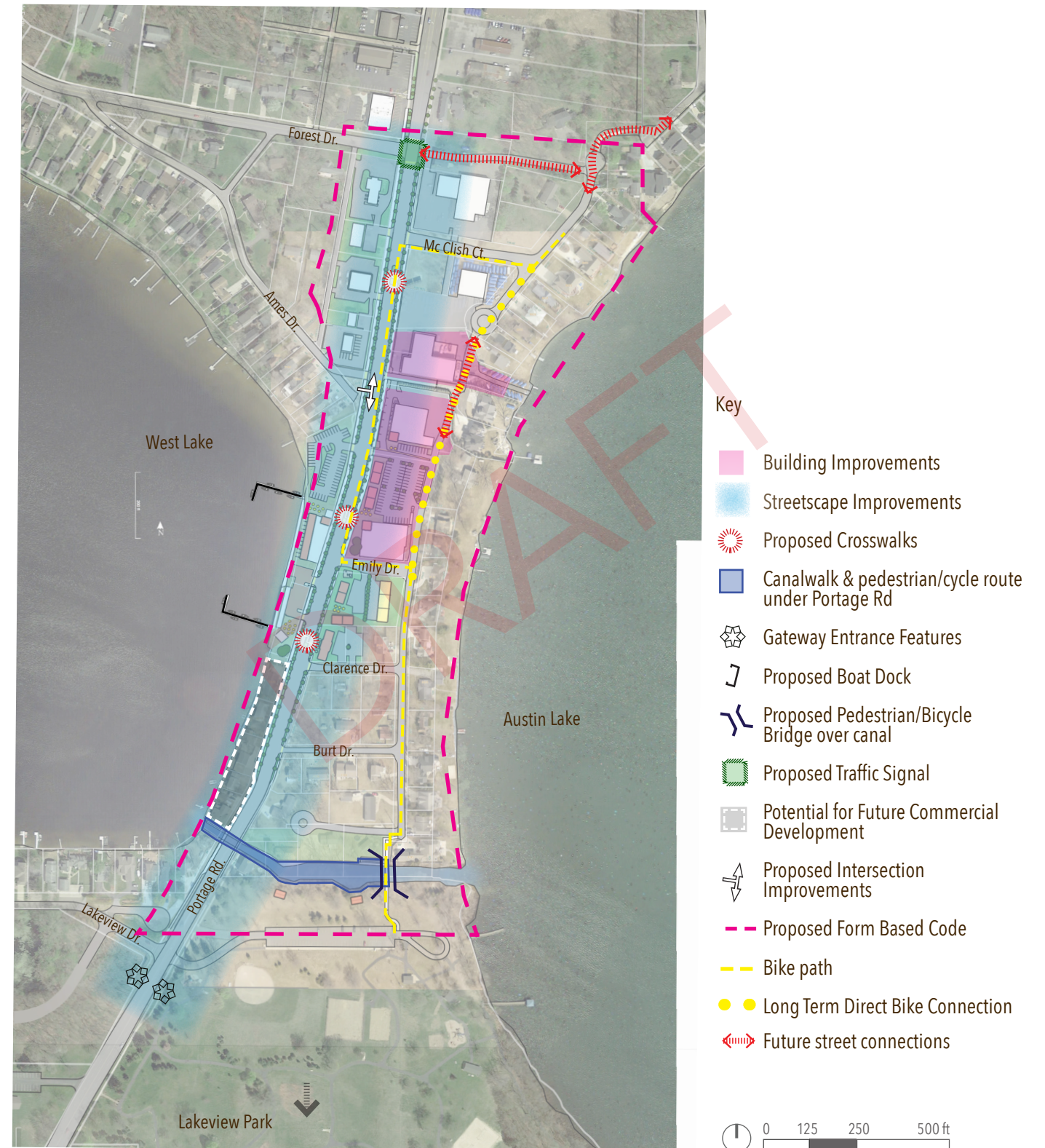
This chapter provides an overview and detailed segments of the proposed improvements of the study. These were developed from the public outreach process, public feedback, collaboration with the Steering Committee, and the expertise of the consultant team and city administration. The proposed master plan for the Isthmus segment of Portage Road is shown to the right.

Following that is an outline of the proposed residential development master plan for the full study area, highlighting the types, quantities and location for residential development that will generate new residents in the Lake Center District. This data-driven residential plan for the Lake Center District derives from a larger citywide Residential Market Analysis (2020) and illustrates how the District can best support residential development.

Proposed improvements are then detailed for each study segment, identifying the key themes each recommendation is helping to achieve. Additionally, some segments note planned city investments that will enhance the Lake Center District and contribute additional improvements.

The implementation toolkit and plan for these recommendations is outlined in Chapter 5 Realizing the Plan.

PROPOSED MASTER PLAN - ISTHMUS

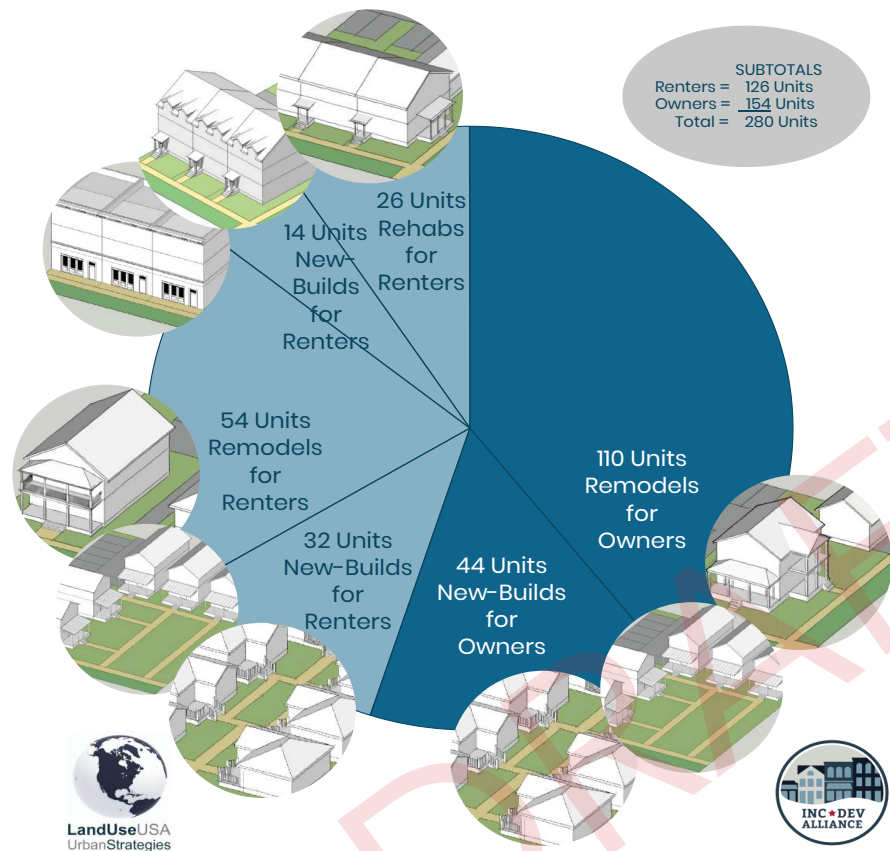


Lake Center District Master Plan

Source: Google Maps

RECOMMENDED RESIDENTIAL MASTER PLAN

Annual Market Potential Remodels & New-Builds | Lake Center



In September 2020, consultant LandUse USA completed a Residential Market Analysis for the City of Portage, with support from Farr Associates. The report focuses on housing for the entire City of Portage and each of five subareas: Northwest, Westnedge, Northeast, Southwest, and Lake Center. This housing study has involved quantitative data analysis and the application of empirical models to measure the annual market potential for new housing units.

The Lake Center specific analysis is shown below, illustrating potential sites for development and the number of units and housing typologies that could potentially be supported

Estimated Property Assessment Values for Key Properties

Underlying target market analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUSE USA | Urban Strategies for the City of Portage, May 2020. Building types provided with permission from the Incremental Development Alliance.

Parcel / Area number	Acres	Units	Housing Type
1a/b	13	70	duplex/triplex/fourplex
2	1	5	mixed-use
3	1.25	10	mixed-use
4	1.25	10	mixed-use
5	0.5	10	mixed-use - more density
6	12	70	duplex/triplex/fourplex
7a/b (West)	64	800	duplex/triplex/fourplex
7a/b (East)	34	100	NE corner is single-family/cottage courtyard, NW corner is duplex/triplex/fourplex

Number of units is conceptual possibility

The table provides indications of the number of units that could be provided on each identified parcel.

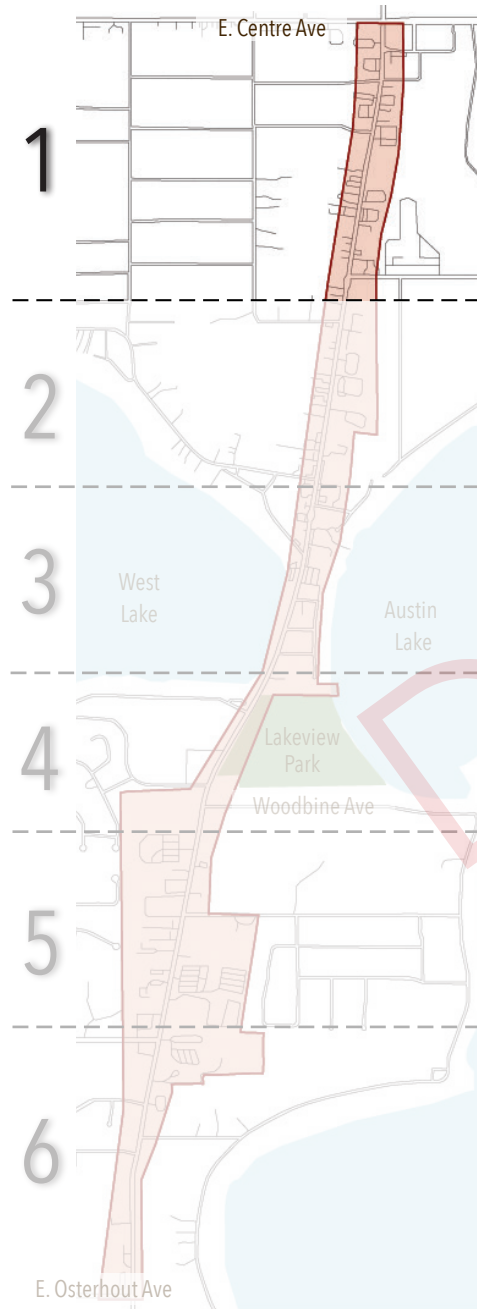


Master Plan.

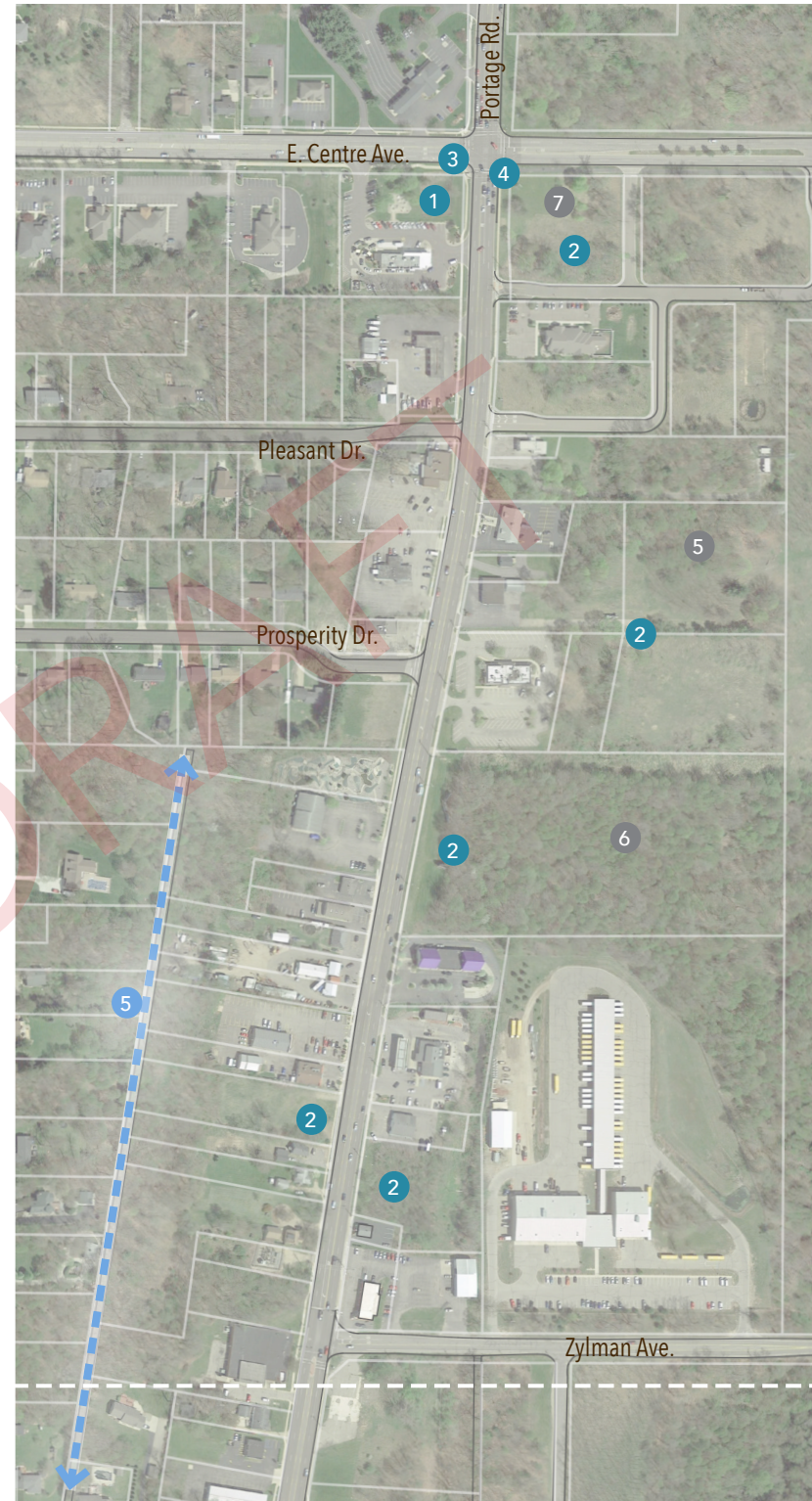
Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 1: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

1 E. Centre Ave. to Zylman Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 1

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 1: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

- ① Ensure that improvements to stormwater retention facility at corner of Centre & Portage are properly landscaped in conformance with future design guidelines for the District.
- ② Ensure that future developments conform to future form based code regulations and design guidelines for the District.
- ③ Implement a Lake Center District gateway feature at E. Centre Ave and Portage Road.
- ④ Create a rewarding and attractive pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment at Portage Road and E. Centre Ave, continuing to expand multimodal infrastructure to connect with destinations, trails, and future developments.

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

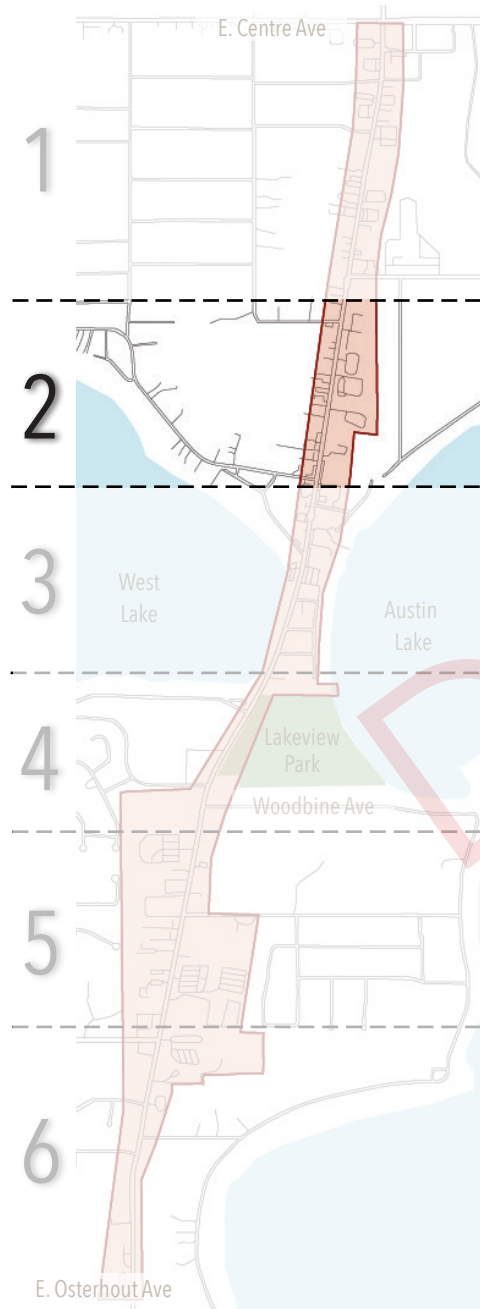
- ⑤ Connect properties with new service alley / bicycle trail connection along rear property lines.

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

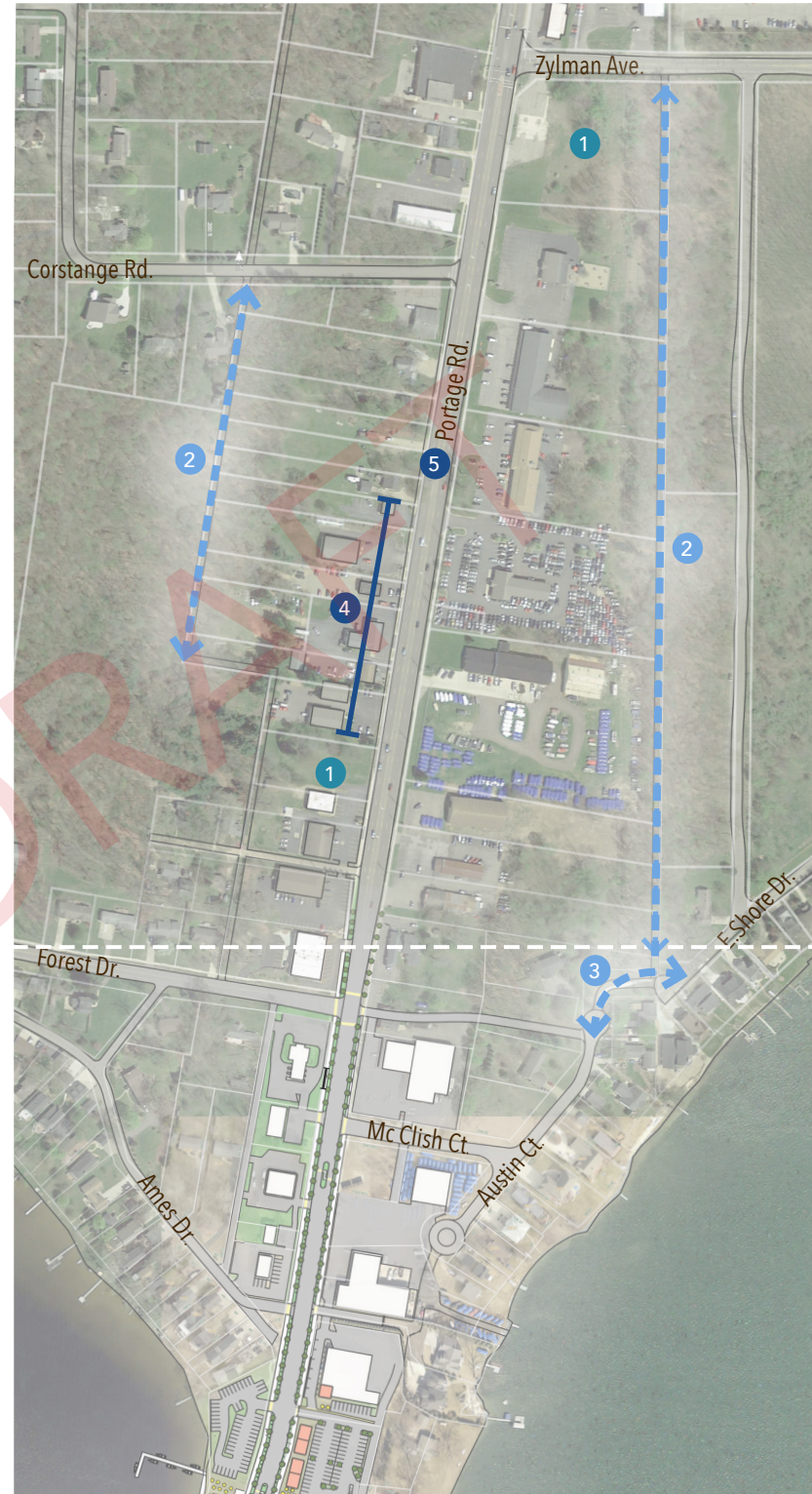
- ⑥ Identify attractive development projects for existing vacant parcels.
- ⑦ Centre Port Commons development.

SEGMENT 2: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

2 Zylman Ave. to Forest Dr.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 2

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 2: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

- 1 Ensure that future developments conform to future form based code regulations and design guidelines for the District.

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

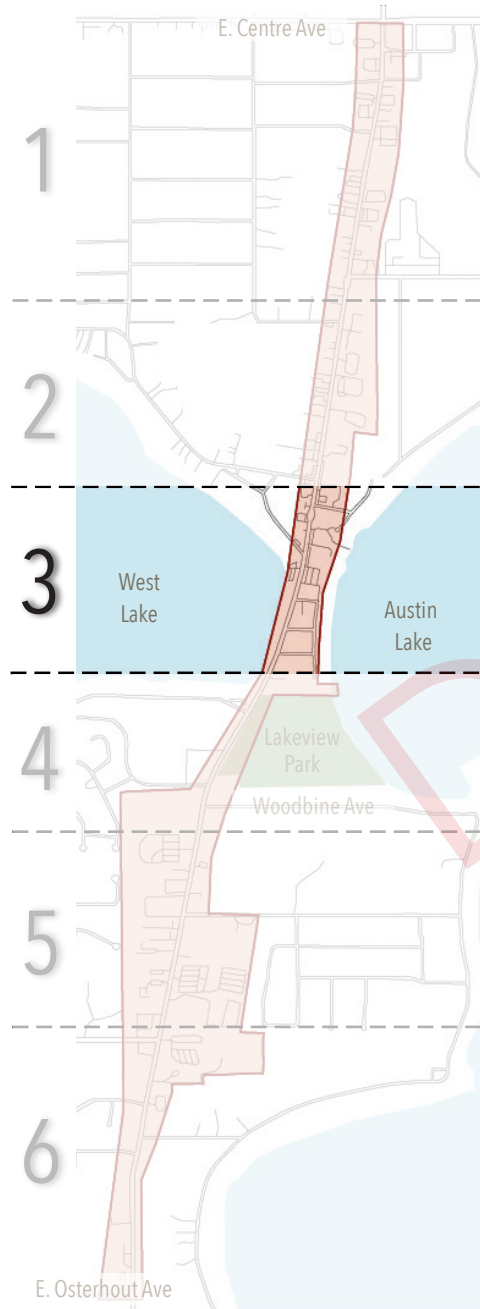
- 2 Connect properties with new service alley / bicycle trail connection along rear property lines.
- 3 Strengthen multimodal connection between Austin Court and E.Shore Drive.

SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

- 4 Encourage driveway consolidation / shared-access easements
- 5 Prioritize upgrades to the sidewalk network and pedestrian infrastructure in this segment to create more "safe and rewarding" experiences for multimodal users.

SEGMENT 3: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

3 Forest Dr. to Lakeview Dr.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 3

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 3: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

- ① New LCD entry gateway north of traffic signal at Forest.
- ② Continuous landscape buffer with street trees on both sides of Portage Rd.
- ③ Coordinated improvements of grocery and hardware store properties, including new entry elements at corners and "liner" commercial buildings to screen the parking lot.
- ④ Retain open vista at Drive-in property and make landscape improvements to allow for outdoor dining and entertainment.

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

- ⑤ New service alley connecting properties & access-management via driveway consolidation.
- ⑥ New 10' wide multi-use path along west side and parts of east side of Portage Rd.
- ⑦ New mid-block crosswalks connect commercial properties on east side of Portage with new piers on west side.

SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

- ⑧ New traffic signal at Forest.
- ⑨ Retain existing crosswalk within the vicinity. Retrofit it to correct the directionality of pedestrian island.
- ⑩ Update geometry of Ames Drive intersection to improve safety, alignment and sight lines.
- ⑪ Re-balance right-of-way between Forest and Lakeview to accommodate all uses. (Not shown)

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- ⑫ Potential property swap between condo development property owner and City, relocate proposed 4-unit condominium development to City-owned property.

OPEN SPACES & LAKE ACCESS

- ⑬ New piers and boardwalk at Cove and Drive-in properties.
- ⑭ Consider a second boat dock on Austin Lake.

Planned City Investments:

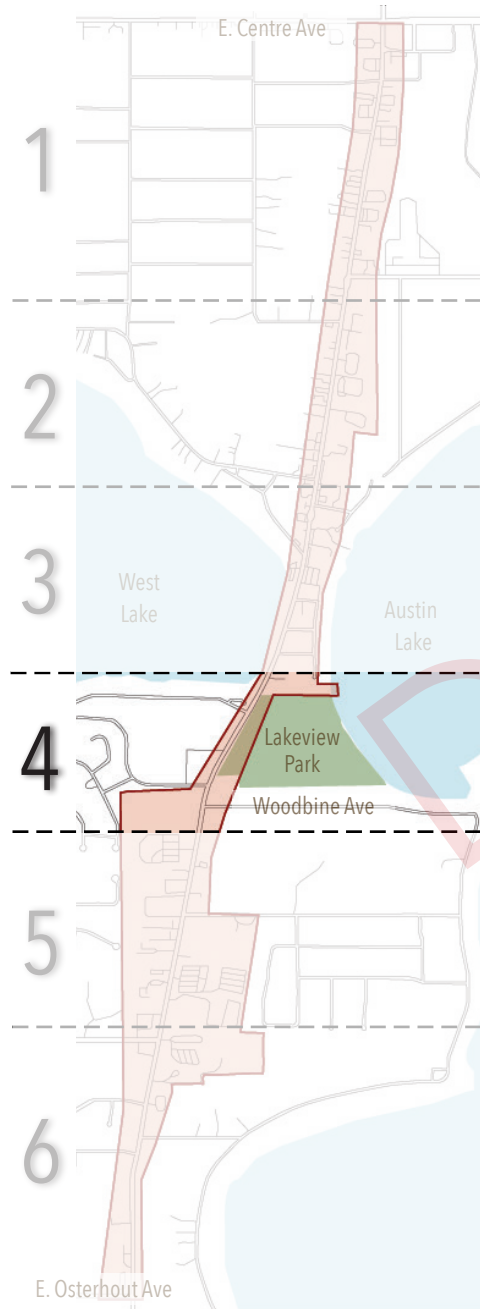
Portage Road/ Emily Drive Lift Station Force Main Replacement (FY24-25)



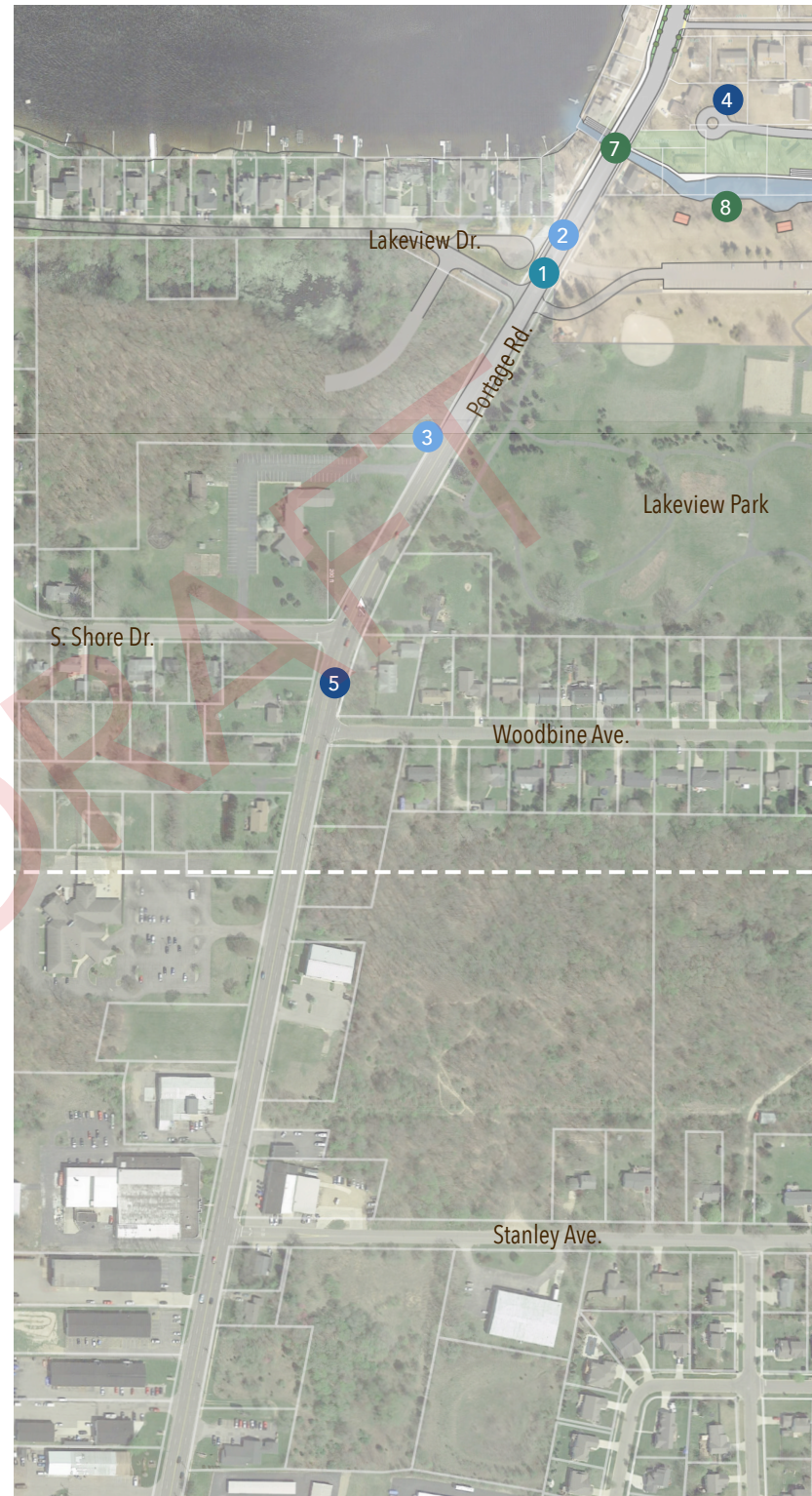
Source: Google Street-View

SEGMENT 4: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

4 Lakeview Dr. to Stanley Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 4

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 4: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

- DESIGN & PLACEMAKING**
 - ① Update geometry of Ames Drive intersection to improve safety, alignment and sight lines.
- MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY**
 - ② New mid-block crosswalks at Lakeview Drive to coincide with LCD gateway.
 - ③ Continue sidewalk on west side of Portage Road from Lakeview Drive to Woodbine Ave.
- SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY**
 - ④ Close Dixie Dr. intersection to accommodate required slope of Portage Road bridge.
 - ⑤ Align South Shore and Woodbine and install stop signs.
 - ⑥ Re-balance right-of-way between Lakeview Drive and Woodbine Ave to accommodate all uses. (Not shown)
- OPEN SPACES & LAKE ACCESS**
 - ⑦ Raise Portage Road as required to accommodate water / trail connection underneath. Install bollards in the waterway to maintain water quality and restrict large boats entering West Lake.
 - ⑧ New "canalwalk" boardwalk improvements.

Planned City Investments:

Lakeview Park Improvements (FY22-23)



NEW PARK ENTRY

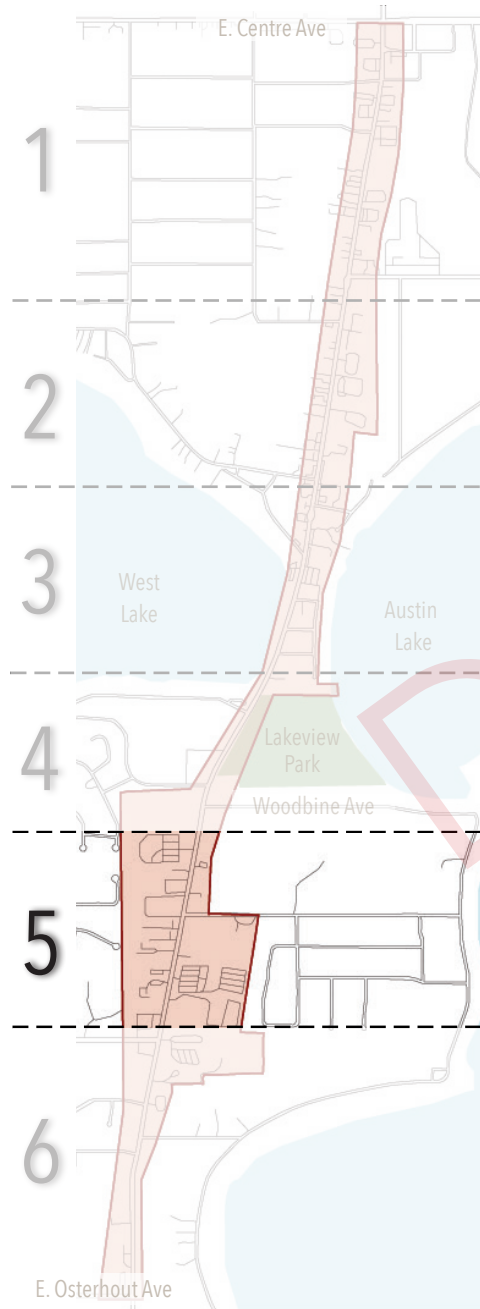


NEW PAVILION AND PARKING

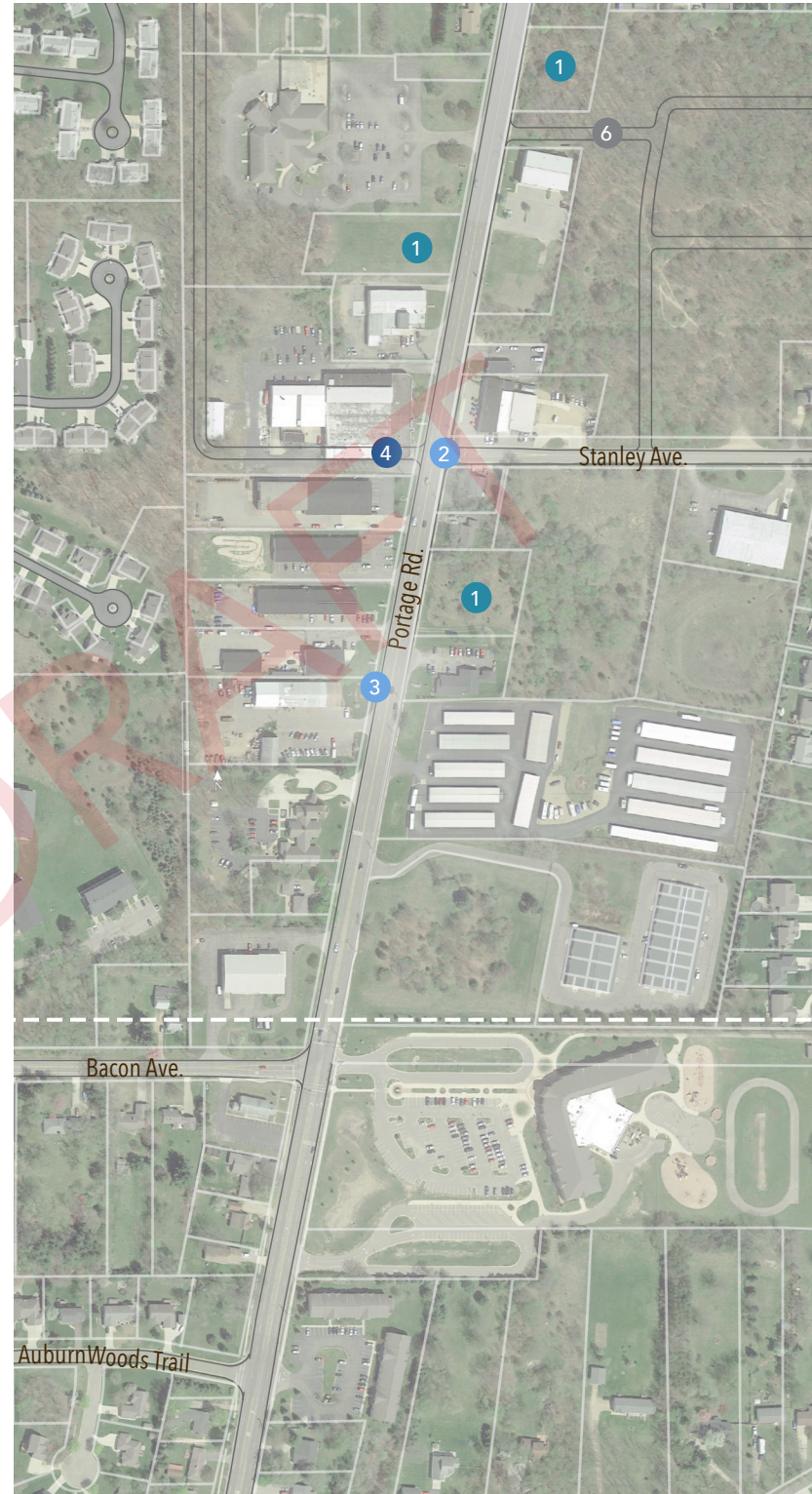
Source: Portage Parks & Recreation Department

SEGMENT 5: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

5 Stanley Ave. to Bacon Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 5

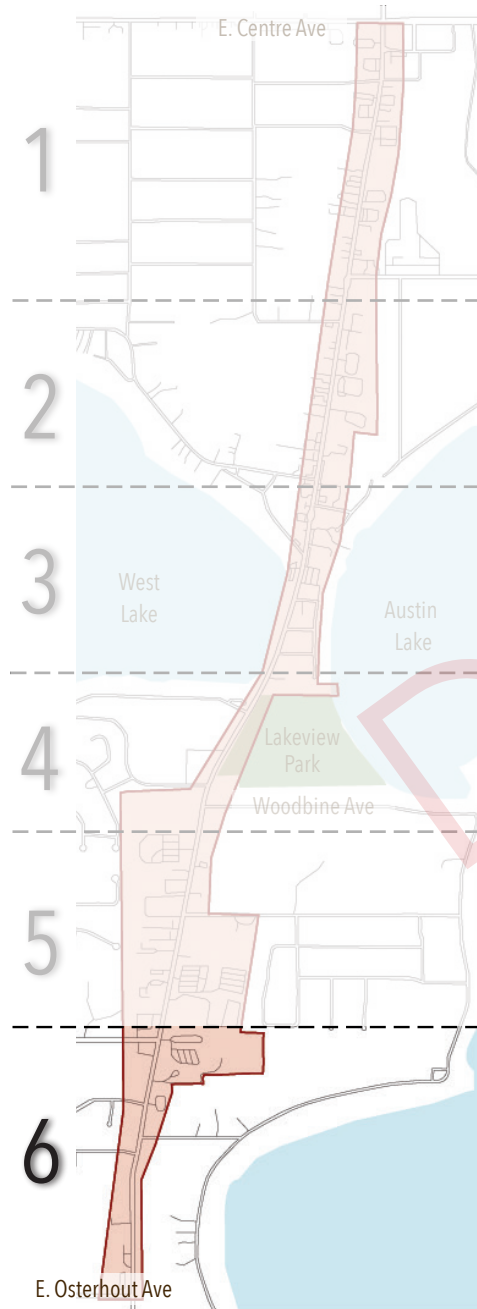
Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 5: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

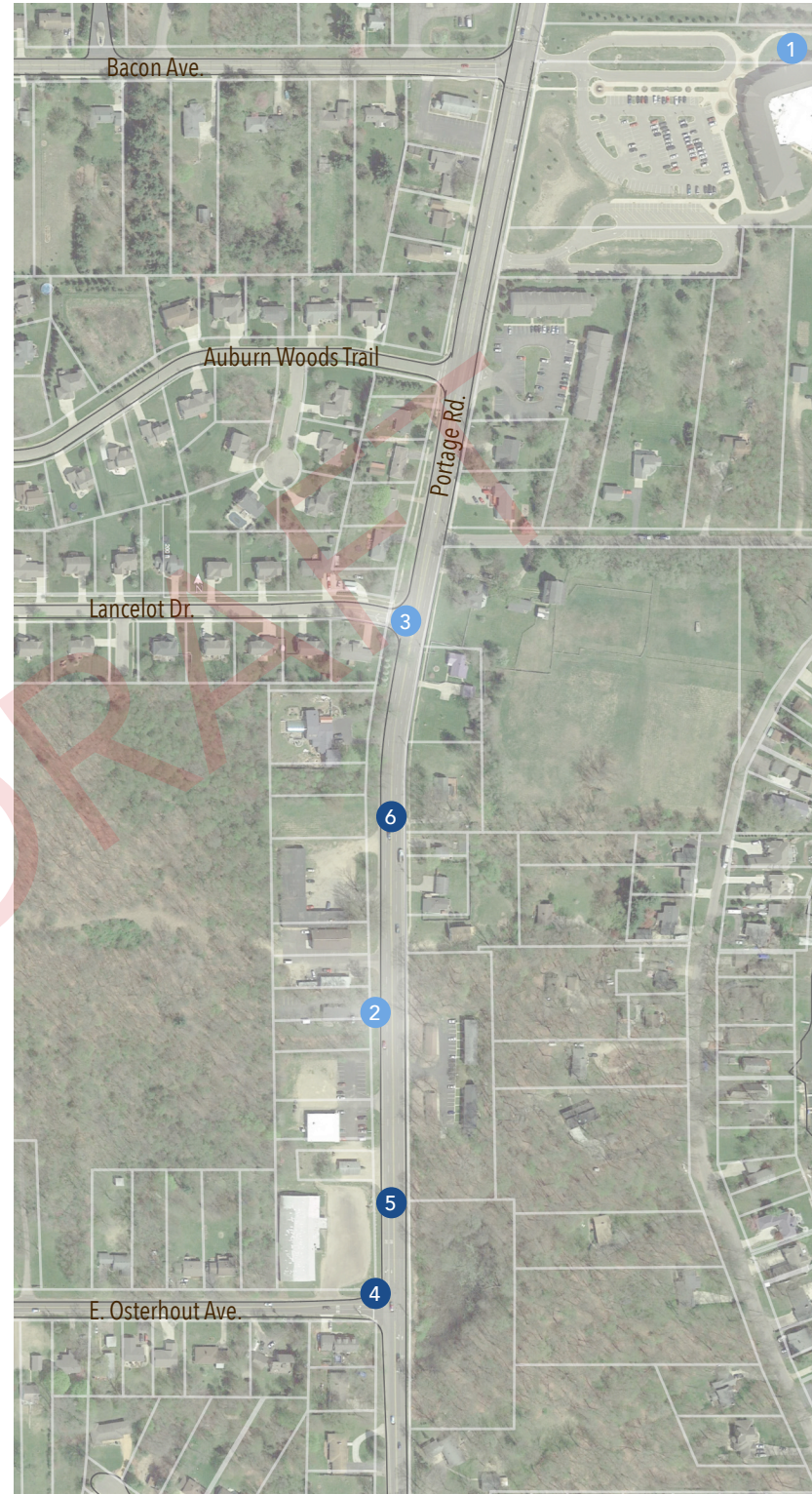
	DESIGN & PLACEMAKING
①	Ensure that future developments conform to future form based code regulations and design guidelines for the District.
	MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY
②	New signalized crosswalk at Stanley Ave, if traffic signal is installed.
③	Extend sidewalk on west side of Portage Road from Stanley Ave. to Bacon Ave.
	SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY
④	Future street connection aligns with Stanley Ave. .
⑤	Re-balance right-of-way between Woodbine Ave. and Bacon Ave. to accommodate all uses. (Not shown)
	CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT
⑥	Future development connected to Portage Rd.

SEGMENT 6: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

6 Bacon Ave. to Osterhout Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 6.

Source: Google Maps

SEGMENT 6: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

- ① Connect bike path from Austin Shores Ave to Lake Center Elementary School.
- ② Existing sidewalk from Bacon Ave to Lancelot Court to be extended to Osterhout Ave.
- ③ Install a crosswalk at Lancelot Dr. (The bike path on east side of Portage Road ends here and continues on the west side of Portage Road).



SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

- ④ Intersection reconstruction and improvements at Portage Road and Osterhout Ave to enhance safety, operations, and functionality.
- ⑤ Improvements to the right-of-way design and infrastructure.
- ⑥ Enhance on-street bicycle facilities northbound and southbound on Portage Road that tie into bike lanes south of Weatherbee Ave.

DRAFT

CURRENT CONCEPT: Condominium Project under consideration for Drive-in Property



A proposed 4-unit condo development on the site of the Drive-in would obstruct much of the remaining view of West Lake from Portage Road.

Source: Farr Associates

PROPOSED CONCEPT: Condominium Project on City-owned Property, Public Lakefront Access



Preserve Views to West Lake

Relocate Condo Development to City Property

Swapping the "Drive-In" site for City-owned land across Portage Road could preserve views to West Lake and increase the number of units a developer could build.

Source: Farr Associates

DRAFT

DRAFT

CHAPTER 5
REALIZING
THE PLAN

5.1 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

This plan provides a blueprint for how the Lake Center District might achieve its full potential as a community and destination within the City of Portage. There are a variety of tools that can be utilized to achieve the vision for the District. The following sections outline the implementation toolkit that will provide the strategic, financial, regulatory tools that can help make this plan a reality.

It also outlines the recommended implementation phasing, ranging from a 1-Year Action Plan to mid- and long-term improvements, including investments for the right-of-way that necessitate decisions by the Steering Committee and City Council, and also require engineering, design, and funding resources.

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

One of the key implementation steps for the Lake Center District is the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). This will allow for the capture of new increment to re-invest in the district. Recognizing that the cost of mixed-use, traditional development is higher than it is for undeveloped sites, the City may, at its own discretion, commit project-specific future tax increment capture back to private projects for a specified period of time. The goal is to provide funding to close the “gap” that prevents the project from becoming a reality due to financial feasibility. This funding is aimed at projects that will improve the district to residents and visitors, thereby providing a public purpose. These projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Building Façade and Sign Improvement Program
- Property Acquisitions
- Demolition
- Public and Private Infrastructure Improvements
- Environmental Activities, such as wildlife habitat restoration
- Development of public spaces and facilities
- Marketing and promotional activities

ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR THE LAKE CENTER DISTRICT

A new zoning district is proposed to encourage different uses, building types, and connectivity with the public realm. This district is proposed to reflect the pedestrian-oriented, mixed use character of the isthmus area including residential, office, retail, entertainment and public uses. Form-based code elements will shape the character of development, and its relationship to the public realm, while helping make a more consistent and predictable development review process. With time, and as the community grows, it is envisioned that the corridor segment from Forest Drive to E. Centre Avenue will be incorporated into the district established for the isthmus. Until that time, permitted uses will focus on office, retail and entertainment uses with enhanced site design and improved pedestrian connectivity. Existing buildings and sites will continue to be improved using enhanced design standards, until such time that the private market can facilitate redevelopment opportunities.

PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES AND DEPLOYMENT

Placemaking is a people-centered approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. The intention is to improve the quality and vitality of a place with many programs, programs and/or activities. Successful placemaking in the Lake Center District will highlight unique community characteristics, builds connections between people and places, connect local history with the present, and activates public spaces. Placemaking can be used as an approach to economic development and community revitalization, and aims to strengthen the sense of pride and connectivity among community members. Placemaking may be deployed in a variety of ways, by different groups including the Lake Center District community, the city, existing business owners, and future developers.

DESIGNING COMPLETE STREETS

The Complete Streets approach shifts the paradigm from “moving cars quickly” to “providing safe mobility for all modes.” Complete Streets policies understand and complement the community’s context and focus on practical, affordable, measurable, and flexible solutions. The best Complete Streets policies continuously update to reflect changes in their communities – and have codified rules and guides clearly into their code. The intent of the City’s 2015 Complete Streets policy is to view all mobility improvements as opportunities to create safer, more accessible streets for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Prepared annually, the City Administration considers citizen input, the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, the 2018-2022 Recreation and Open Space Plan, and the 2015 Complete Streets Policy, and related community planning initiatives. The CIP identifies and justifies capital projects and purchases, over a ten-year period, and identifies options for financing the plan. It serves as a critical blueprint linking city departments, the comprehensive plan, and the city’s annual budget, and provides a systematic way of evaluating and prioritizing potential projects and financial commitments. The CIP is submitted by the Administration each year for review, input, and approval by the Planning Commission and the City Council. Capital improvements can include, but are not limited to: Parks, Streets and Sidewalks, Bikeways and Trails, Water and Sewer Infrastructure and Land Acquisitions.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The Lake Center District has an active business community, lakefront community, and residents committed to this area. These stakeholders are critical in helping support an active, vibrant area, and can be partners in programming and placemaking, both landside and lakeside, and are attuned to the seasonal patterns of this area. Existing stakeholder groups, such as the Lake Boards, also help address water quality concerns in Austin and West Lakes in partnership with residents and the city. Advancing this project will require coordination and collaboration with the community and businesses, and continued communication order to ensure the vision for the Lake Center District is shaped and implemented in a collaborative way.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

According to the American Planning Association’s Commercial Corridor Redevelopment Strategies Report, “Successful redevelopment efforts require public financial commitment that proactively positions properties for private investment. Public catalysts must be geared toward creating an amenity-rich environment. The two main examples are public streetscape improvements and the removal of regulatory barriers. But though public investment is important, private investment is key. A good starting point for private-to-public investment ratios could be 2:1, with a 3:1 ratio being a more ideal target.”

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

This section has been organized into the following sections to establish a realistic implementation phasing plan that outlines near-term opportunities and long-term capital planning for infrastructure projects. It also distinguishes between the implementation of placemaking or programming activities, and infrastructure improvements which are contingent on critical decisions, design development, and funding commitments.

One-Year Action Plan

Comprises planned and budgeted activities for FY21-22 and low-hanging fruit opportunities to immediately activate and improve specific areas of the corridor.

Mid-Term Implementation (2-5 years)

Reflects projects and programming that can be planned, designed and implemented across a 2-5 year timeline. These may include placemaking and policy initiatives, and initial planning for infrastructure improvements.

Long-Term Implementation (5-10 years)

Reflects projects and design development that can be planned, engineered and implemented across a 5-10 year timeline. Planning and design development for these projects can occur in earlier years, but coordination, funding sources and prioritization may necessitate longer implementation timelines.

Future Moves

Ideas broached in this study that represent significant investments that will require standalone engineering analysis and cost estimate studies with funding commitments to reflect.

IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

The following diagram maps out the projects identified for implementation. Where the project has not been located on the map it is implied the project is applicable to the entire length of the corridor. The subsequent pages provide more detail for each project and the key issues they address.



Map of Implementation Projects. Source: Farr Associates

ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

- 1 Design and Install Traffic Signal at Forest Drive/Portage Road
- 2 Gateways & Landscaping Improvements
- 3 Propose New Zoning Amendment for Lake Center District (not shown)
- 4 Negotiate Priority Land Acquisitions (not shown)
- 5 Portage Road Right-of-Way Decisions from Steering Committee and Council (not shown)

MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (2-5 YEARS)

- 6 Intersection Improvements at Ames/Portage Road
- 7 Facade improvements along Portage Road
- 8 Improve Pedestrian Connectivity Across Portage Road
- 9 Feasibility analysis for public dock on West Lake

LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (5-10 YEARS)

- 10 Create pedestrian/bike route alternative parallel to Portage Road
- 11 Underground utilities (not shown)
- 12 Create a canalwalk
- 13 Create a bike connection between Austin Court & Austin Drive

FUTURE MOVES

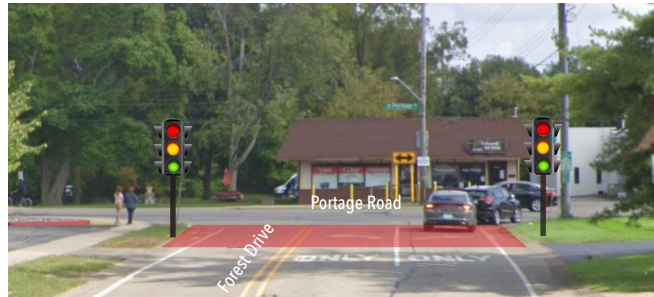
- 14 Establish full pedestrian & trailway connections under Portage Road along the Canal

5.2.1 1-YEAR ACTION PLAN (FY21-22)

There are five key implementation actions proposed in the 1-Year Action Plan. These include:

1 DESIGN AND INSTALL TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT FOREST DRIVE/PORTAGE ROAD

- Install a traffic signal and crosswalk at the Forest Drive intersection.

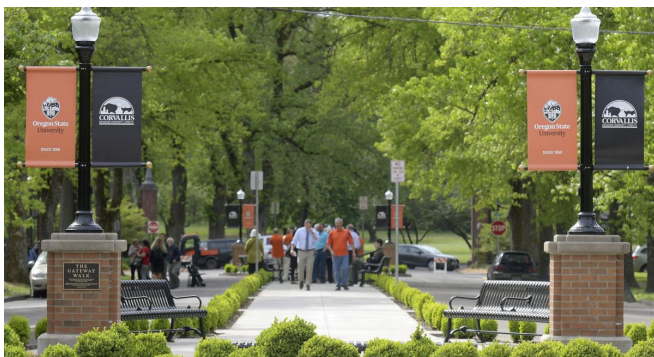


Conceptual sketch indicating proposed traffic signal and crosswalk. Source: Google Street-View



2 GATEWAYS & LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS

- Coordinate and create identifying gateway features on either end of the Lake Center District corridor.
- NW Corner of Portage Road and Zylman – landscaping improvements and potential gateway feature location.
- Introduce landscaping along Portage Road.



Example of Gateway Feature. Source: Gateway Walk, Oregon. Gazettetimes.com

3 PROPOSE NEW ZONING AMENDMENT FOR LAKE CENTER DISTRICT

- Form based code drafted and submitted for Isthmus area



4 EXPLORE PRIORITY LAND ACQUISITIONS

- Negotiation discussions for land acquisitions proposed in the study.



5 PORTAGE ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY DECISIONS FROM STEERING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL

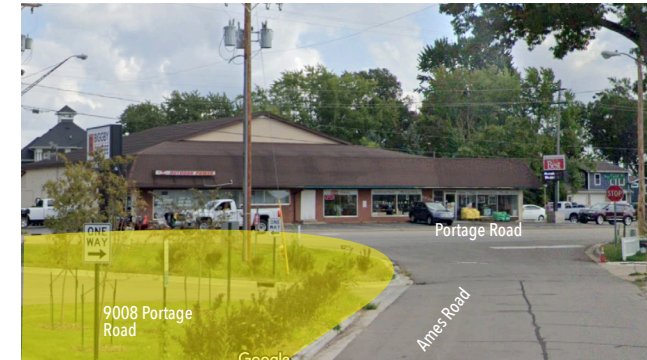
- Review, discussion and decisions from the Lake Center District Steering Committee and City Council regarding the future right-of-way for Portage Road are critical to implementing these study recommendations. As Chapter 03 outlines, there are significant tradeoffs among the various right-of-way configurations, which users are prioritized, and what type of environment the Lake Center District aspires to offer in the future. Prior to design development or engineering for the right-of-way, or for coordinated efforts such as undergrounding utilities, a decision about the preferred right-of-way configuration will need to be made.



5.2.2 MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (2-5 YEARS)

6 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT AMES/PORTAGE ROAD

- Image highlighting 9008 Portage Road. This right-of-way would need to be acquired in order to create a 90 degree intersection at Ames/Portage Road.



Junction of Ames & Portage Road. Source: Google Street-View



7 FACADE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG PORTAGE ROAD

- Coordinate facade improvements with business owners along Portage Road



Source: Stack House, Seattle, WA. Berger Partnership.

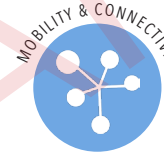


8 IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY ACROSS PORTAGE ROAD

- Install crosswalks across Portage Road with refuge islands at Clarence Drive, Emily Drive, Ames Drive, and McLish Court.



Crosswalks with refuge islands reduce crossing distances for pedestrians on wide streets. Source: Ramsey, County, Future Road Project.



9 FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR PUBLIC DOCK ON WEST LAKE

- Feasibility Study
- Install boat dock on West Lake
- Identify a vendor to operate a seasonal business at 9138 Portage



Rendering of proposed boat dock on West Lake. Source: Farr Associates



5.2.3 LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (5-10 YEARS)

The following is a list of Long-Term Implementation projects:

10 CREATE PEDESTRIAN/BIKE ROUTE ALTERNATIVE PARALLEL TO PORTAGE ROAD

- Stripe bike trail around marine store
- Construct Trail Bridge over Canal
- Create multi-purpose trail along utility easement between the canal and Woodbine Ave.
- Recommendation will necessitate property acquisition.



Source: San Antonio
<https://www.visitsanantonio.com/river-walk/>



11 UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

- Underground utilities from Forest Drive to Lakeview Drive



12 CREATE A CANAL RIVERWALK

- Build a Riverwalk on the north side of the canal
- Change zoning to allow commercial uses
- Extend the Michigan Social District designation to this area
- Recommendation will necessitate property acquisition.



Rendering of canal riverwalk. Source: Farr Associates



13 MAKE A BIKE CONNECTION BETWEEN AUSTIN COURT & AUSTIN DRIVE

1. **Create a Bike Connection Between Austin Court and Austin Drive**
 - Negotiate an access easement across the existing business land between the building and Austin Lake
 - Proposed acquisition of adjacent driveway
 - Reconfigure driveway area to assure access and privacy
2. **Create a Vehicular Route Parallel to Portage**
 - Create a street connecting East Shore Drive to Austin Court
3. **Connect Portage Road to East Shore Drive Austin Court**
 - Proposed acquisitions of land to the east to extend Forest Drive to Austin Court

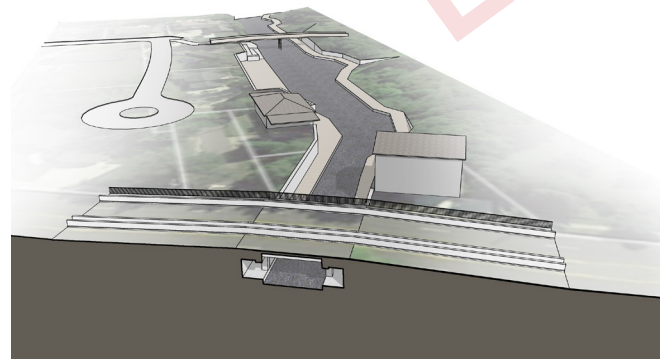


5.2.4 FUTURE MOVES

This section outlines ideas and proposals from the study process that require additional consideration and significant engineering and design development not encompassed in this study scope.

14 ESTABLISH FULL PEDESTRIAN & TRAILWAY CONNECTIONS UNDER PORTAGE ROAD ALONG THE CANAL

- Engineer a new bridge that provides head clearance for pedestrians and cyclists
- Recommendation will necessitate property acquisition.



Rendering of new bridge with clearance for pedestrians and bikes.
Source: Farr Associates








5.3 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

This section provides a matrix of the projects recommend within this report. The aim of the matrix is to summarize which projects solve the issues identified in the conditions analysis and the degree to which they do this.

Please note the cost estimates included in this report were developed for planning purposes only. They are based on 2020 inputs provided by local realtors, city administration staff, and consultants. Actual cost estimates can only be determined when all scopes of work are finalized, and are subject to contingencies and inflation.

5.3.1 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX TABLE

PROJECTS	PLANNING COST ESTIMATE RANGE (COST ESTIMATE - COST ESTIMATE + 20% CONTINGENCY)	 SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY	 MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY	 OPEN SPACE & LAKE ACCESS	 DESIGN & PLACEMAKING	 CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT
		SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY	MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY	OPEN SPACE & LAKE ACCESS	DESIGN & PLACEMAKING	CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT
ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN						
1 Design and Install Traffic Signal at Forest Drive/Portage Road	\$450,000 - \$540,000	●	●			
2 Gateways & Landscaping Improvements	\$1,468,750 - \$1,762,500				●	
3 Propose New Zoning Amendment for Lake Center District	\$70,000 - \$84,000				●	●
4 Negotiate Priority Land Acquisitions	TBD			●	●	●
5 Portage Road Right-of-Way Decisions from Steering Committee and Council	N/A	●			●	
MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (2-5 YEARS)						
6 Intersection Improvements at Ames/Portage Road	\$390,000 - \$468,000	●	●			
7 Facade improvements along Portage Road	\$430,000 - \$486,000				●	●
8 Improve Pedestrian Connectivity Across Portage Road	\$400,000 - \$480,000		●			
9 Feasibility analysis for public dock on West Lake	\$150,000 - \$180,000			●	●	
LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (5-10 YEARS)						
10 Create pedestrian/bike route alternative parallel to Portage Road	\$530,000 - \$636,000		●			
11 Underground utilities	\$1,480,000 - \$1,776,000				●	
12 Create a canal riverwalk	\$2,612,333 - \$3,134,799			●	●	
13 Create a bike connection between Austin Court & Austin Drive	TBD		●			
FUTURE MOVES						
14 Establish full pedestrian & trailway connections under Portage Road along the Canal	\$3,646,075 - \$4,375,290		●	●		

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

APPENDIX

APPENDIX: CITY MILLAGE RATES

One of the Lowest Tax Rates Around

One of the main concerns from members of the community is regarding Portage taxes. Many people feel that the City overtaxes, and also creates unnecessary burdens and does not provide enough support to businesses.

However, the City actually has a comparably lower tax burden than neighboring Michigan communities.

APPENDIX: RECENT LAKE CENTER DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS

Prior to the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study, the following action items and improvements were completed through partnerships between residents, businesses, developers and the City.

2018:

- In April 2018, green strip variances were approved along the right-of-way and north property line for the property owner of 9008 Portage Road, which is now home to Biggy Coffee.
- The plat of West Lake Estates was approved involving the construction of 20 single-family residential lots near the intersection of Lakeview and Portage Road.

2015:

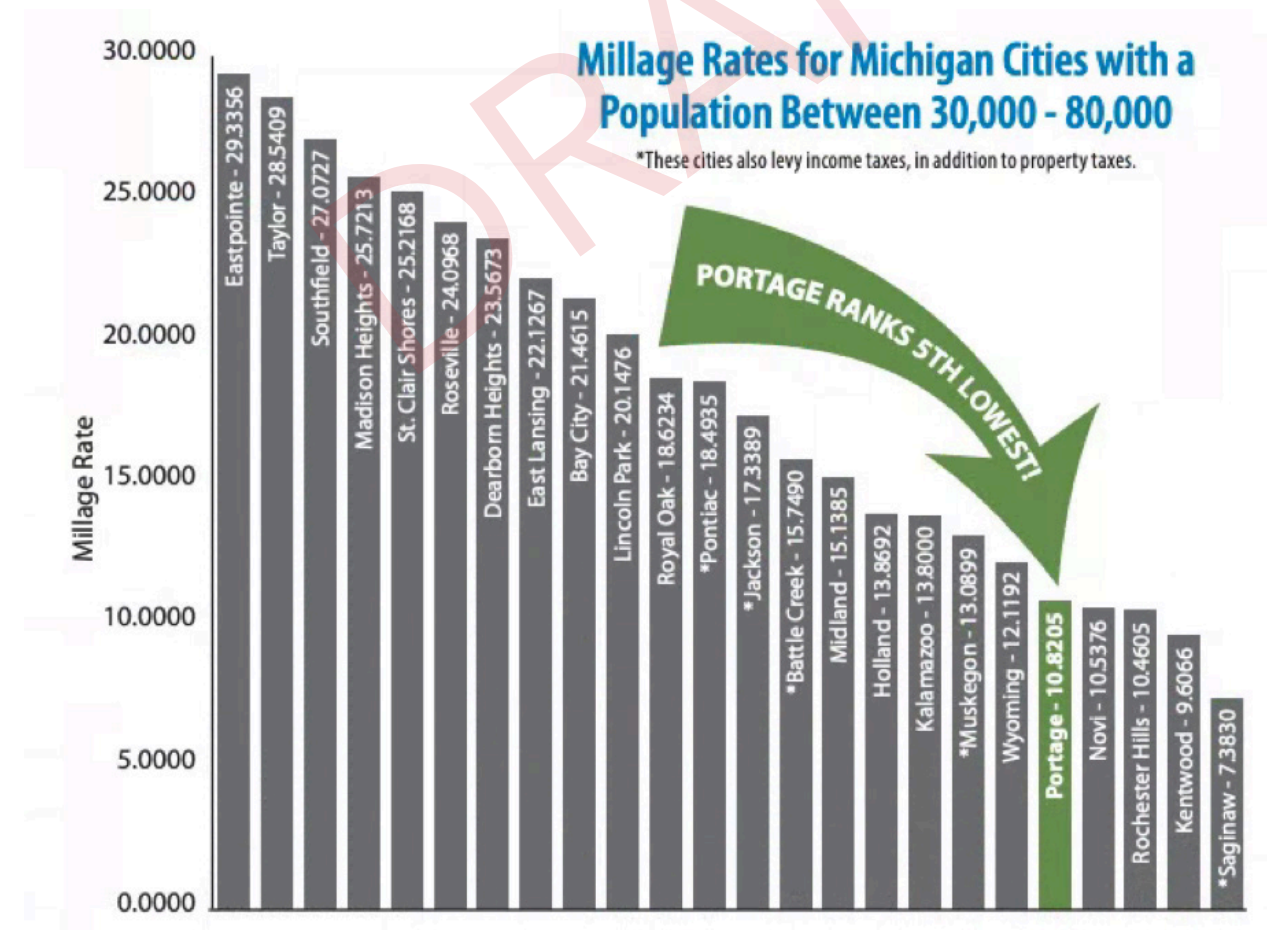
- Portage Road between East Centre Avenue and Lakeview Drive was reconstructed. To improve pedestrian circulation within the corridor, the project included the construction of two pedestrian refuge islands at Zylman Avenue and McClish Court. In addition, a sidewalk was constructed on the west side of Portage Road from Forest to the refuge island.
- In November 2015, variances were provided to the Lake Center Business Association to install banners identifying the Lake Center District along Portage Road.

2016:

- The city acquired land and extended a trail connection from the end of Austin Court to East Shore Drive, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle amenities for the Lake Center subarea and lake residents.
- In March 2016, variances were approved for the property owner of 9110 Portage Road to establish the Cove restaurant on West Lake. The restaurant proposed to construct a boardwalk and docks to enhance the use of the waterfront.

2017:

- Portage Road, from Mandigo Avenue to East Osterhout Avenue was reconstructed with storm sewer, sidewalk and bicycle facility improvements.
- Concurrent with the reconstruction of Prosperity Drive and Pleasant Drive, restoration of the right-of-way near Portage Road was accomplished to enhance the entrance into the residential neighborhood on the west side of Portage Road.
- Portage Road, from East Osterhout Avenue north to Bacon Avenue, was reconfigured from a four-lane to three lane roadway.



DRAFT