

An aerial photograph of a waterfront area. In the foreground, a dark green lake meets a rocky shoreline. A dense line of green trees runs along the shore. Behind the trees, there are several large industrial buildings. One prominent building has a dark, flat roof and a light-colored facade. To its right, there are several other buildings with white roofs. Further back, there are more green fields and some smaller structures. The overall scene depicts a mix of natural and developed land.

# Lakefront Redevelopment Action Plan

City of Oak Creek, Wisconsin

October 11, 2011



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The City of Oak Creek Common Council  
adopted this plan on February 20, 2012 by  
Resolution 11120.

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# Introduction

## Background

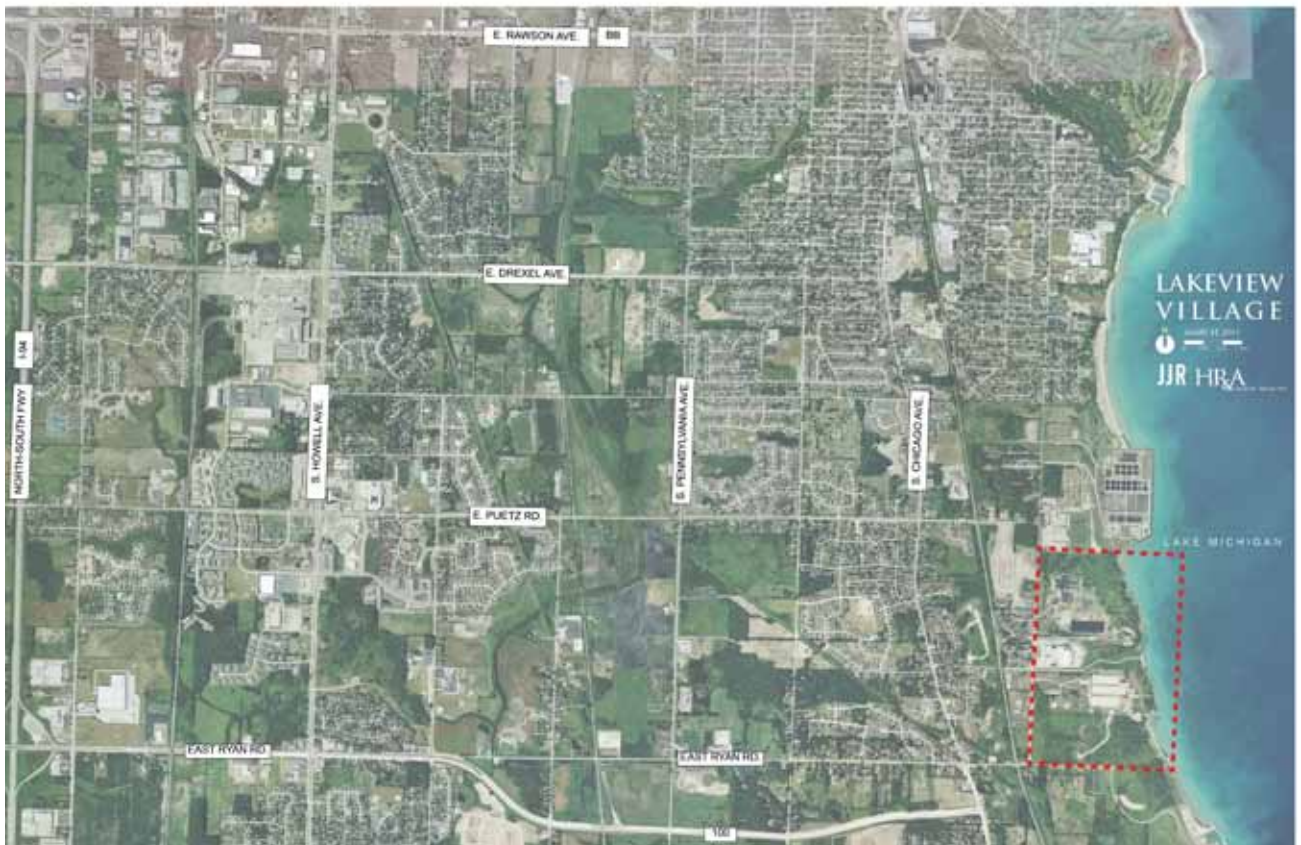
The City of Oak Creek has an unprecedented opportunity to revitalize a 250-acre former industrial waterfront site along the shore of Lake Michigan. The site, bounded by Milwaukee County's Bender Park on the south and the MMSD South Shore Water Reclamation Facility on the north and located east of South 5th Avenue, has been the scene of industrial activity for over 100 years. Just to the west of the site, Carrollville, an original settlement area in Oak Creek, provided worker housing and commercial uses for the many workers employed by

the industries over the years. All industrial activity on the site has ceased, and remediation efforts are underway.

The City hired JJR to engage citizens and stakeholders to help craft a redevelopment vision for the site. The purpose of this project is to create an overall development framework for the site identifying general land uses, main vehicular and pedestrian connections within and adjacent to the site, and ways to provide public access to the waterfront. In addition, the potential design character for public places within the site was outlined. Understanding that this plan is just the initial step in an

ongoing process of implementation, the plan contains numerous phased action items identifying significant development steps as well as potential funding opportunities. In addition, a separate development market analysis prepared by HR&A, identified critical development conditions and factors which informed the site conceptualization process.

The planning effort follows in the footsteps of other studies concerning this site that have been conducted recently. In May of 2009 students from the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee generated a development concept for the site



Study Area



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that consisted of a transit-oriented development anchored by a proposed rail mass transit stop directly adjacent to the waterfront site. Later that year, an Urban Land Institute Advisory Panel visited the site and prepared a report outlining a redevelopment strategy which included a business park use on the northern half of the site, a mixed-use transit oriented development for the southern half, a lakefront extension of parkland along the east edge of the site, and redevelopment along 5th Avenue to help build upon and revitalize the Carrollville area. This plan began with the ULI framework as a foundation, tested and refined the market assumptions, and then expanded upon and refined the framework to create the development concept that will be described in this document.

## Input

### Site Condition Summary

While offering many redevelopment opportunities, the site also has challenges to overcome if the property is to reach its full potential as an asset to the community of Oak Creek. The site has a long history of industrial use as early businesses were drawn to the area's access to both the railroad line and the adjacent lakefront. The site has seen a succession of industrial activities and property owners over its history which has left a legacy of environmental cleanup issues. These issues are currently being addressed and steady progress on this front has set the stage for a comprehensive redevelopment of the property. Over time, waves of suburban-style development moving westward from the lakefront created the base pattern of settlement that eventually became the City of Oak Creek. In context of the greater region, the lakefront site has now become isolated from the predominant major road and access

corridors, as well as other commercial areas within Oak Creek and other adjacent communities. In addition to these issues, outlined below are descriptions of several other pertinent considerations regarding existing conditions that have impacted the redevelopment plan.

### Site Topography, Vegetation, and Natural Features

The most significant physical feature of the site is the expansive lake views and bluffs leading down to the water. This is a precious resource which constitutes the most significant asset for the site in attracting redevelopment uses and for providing open space amenities for the community as a whole. In general the site is relatively level in terms of topography, with a rise in height on the south portion of the site as it meets Bender Park. An east/west ravine cuts through the site just east of the terminus of East American Avenue and leads down to the waterfront. Bluff stabilization has been performed along the lakefront



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on the EPEC property. Pockets of mixed vegetation exist on the property, with a higher concentration of tree groupings on the south portion of the site as it meets Bender Park. Approximately 5.75 acres of the site are mapped wetlands. The site is along a major bird migration flyway route.

### **Site Clean-Up/Environmental Issues**

Ongoing site investigations and remediation efforts are occurring on most portions of the site. Certain portions of the lakefront site have stipulations limiting future development and construction activities. These considerations were reflected in the layout of uses and other features of the plan. It is possible that further considerations may need to be addressed as the plan moves into implementation and as environmental investigatory and remediation efforts progress. The City is committed to full environmental disclosure and protecting public health.

### **Property Ownership**

There are seven major property owners of the lakefront site, as of the Summer of 2011: Oak Creek Storage and Handling (80 acres), Fifth Property L.L.C (8.1 acres), Connell Limited Partnership (22.5 acres), The City of Oak Creek (10.9 acres), E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co (56.8 acres), EPEC Polymers Inc. (57.6 acres), and Edison M. Boerke Family Trust (21.6 acres). The City is pursuing a strategy of acquisition of certain properties and cooperative partnerships with other property owners.

### **Adjoining Uses**

The site is located at the southern edge of the Milwaukee urbanized area, with a mixed context of residential, institutional, and open space uses in the immediate vicinity. Bender Park, a major regional park within the Milwaukee County Park system, lies to the south of the lakefront site, with its major entrance at the eastern terminus of East Ryan Road. The park's main feature is a waterfront boat launch facility, with access provided by a roadway which leads down to the lake from the top of the bluff. A small beach is located north of the boat launch, at the point where the Bender Park property meets the property line of the lakefront site. There is a potential to link these features with future park amenities along the lake edge and bluff top of the lakefront site. Much of the remainder of Bender Park is undeveloped; Milwaukee County has created long term master plans for the site and future expansion of park

facilities would help redevelopment efforts at the lakefront site.

To the north of the site, the MMSD South Shore Water Reclamation Facility treats wastewater for a sizable portion of the region. Proper buffering between the facility and uses on the north side of the lakefront site are necessary. Yet the presence of the treatment facility offers potential partnership opportunities between MMSD, which is pursuing numerous best practices in water treatment and sustainability, with potential business park users on the lakefront site who would have a focus on "green" technology in their research, products, services or operations.

Across South 5th Avenue, a mix of mostly residential uses with a few commercial establishments constitutes Carrollville, the company town founded in the early industrial history of the area. Carrollville is laid out on a traditional grid pattern featuring a collection of small single family homes. Further to the west are





several residential subdivisions and the roadway mixed-use corridor of Highway 32. Also along South 5th Avenue to the south of East American Avenue near the intersection with East Ryan Road is the proposed location of the KRM rail stop for the City of Oak Creek. The KRM is a proposed commuter rail line that would extend the Chicago-area Metra train service to Milwaukee. Although the KRM proposal is not proceeding at this time, the idea of transit oriented development is a concept that should be embraced, should alternative modes prove viable in this corridor.

#### **Access**

Current major roadway access to the lakefront site is problematic. While the lakefront location and presence of an adjacent rail corridor was a major locational advantage in the early days of industry, the site is remote from the I-94 corridor and the major arterials which serve other competing business centers in the region. Highway 100 is a major arterial leading to I-94 yet it does not connect directly with the lakefront site, terminating to the south and east at Highway 32. South 5th Avenue connects northward to Puetz Road and the communities of South Milwaukee and Cudahy yet is relatively lightly trafficked, and has what can be characterized as a rural cross section along the lakefront site frontage. Mitchell International Airport is located several miles away.

## **Market Assessment**

This is a summary of the full market assessment report. For more detailed analysis and recommendations, see the full report, contained in a separate document.

### **Overall**

Residential use is the most valuable long-term use of the site. Commercial and industrial uses are challenging without a significant subsidy or a large interested tenant.

Success of the site requires strong anchor attraction to change current perception/brand and to draw new users. Such a use will likely require public subsidy. Every redevelopment scenario will be long-term given limited market-driven uses, the size of the site and the expected absorption pace.

The long-term nature of redevelopment means that phasing is critical. The first phase should build off the assets of site (the lakefront and Bender Park) and should minimize

obstacles (road access, contamination, proximity to MMSD) to create a new place and to catalyze future development. As permitted by initial market and phasing needs, the highest value lakefront property should be developed and disposed of in a later phase(s) to capture the value created by placemaking. Infrastructure phasing should be aligned with development phasing to achieve financial feasibility. Infrastructure investment should be minimized according to the development phasing, but still be appropriate to meet the community's expectations.

### **Commercial & Industrial Uses**

There is a small market for commercial office in the Oak Creek area. The South Milwaukee Metropolitan submarket, containing Oak Creek, is a minor player in the region's commercial office market. The total inventory in the South submarket is 640,000 square feet; roughly 2% of the metro area market.



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The South submarket has a higher rate of vacant square feet than other markets. High vacancy and little demand for office uses in the area has resulted in lower than average asking rents, \$17 per square foot compared to an \$18.50 per square foot average. Asking rents for Class A office space have been trending downward since 2005.

The South submarket has a major concentration of industrial properties; it has remained relatively constant at 25% of overall regional inventory. While vacancy was above average during the nadir of the recession, likely due to continued development, it appears to be recovering faster. Within the South submarket, industrial activity is clustered around General Mitchell International Airport, the Oak Creek campus of the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and near combined interstate access and rail lines.

For both commercial and industrial tenants, access is a critical consideration both in terms of reducing transportation costs and attracting and retaining the workforce. Tenants consider the proximity of retail amenities and services to serve employees. In addition to existing vacant commercial and industrial facilities, Oak Creek and the South submarket have available vacant land for companies looking for personalized new construction.

The lakefront site location holds no premium for the majority of commercial and industrial users. It is competing with a large supply of

better located and unconstrained land in the South submarket that offers more services and amenities. Site remediation and public subsidy could help attract a commercial office or industrial user but it will likely be a single tenant for whom the lakefront location and/or campus opportunity would be valued.

### Residential

Oak Creek has experienced significant recent residential development. Nearly 20% of the residential building activity from 1998 through 2009 in Milwaukee County occurred in Oak Creek. Recent building trends indicate a slowing absorption timeline for residential units.

As overall residential building activity as decreased, multifamily housing building activity has become an increasingly smaller percentage of total activity. From 1998-2002, multi-family building activity in Oak Creek averaged 60% of total. Multifamily housing has been only 25% of building activity from 2003-2009.

Lakefront location adds a value premium for residential uses, both through lake access and views.

Absorption on the Oak Creek lakefront site is likely long-term as multiple factors reduce potential market size. The Oak Creek residential market has lower pricing than some northern and western Milwaukee suburbs, and the property values tend to be lower than comparable properties in similarly situated suburban lakefront neighborhoods. In early phases, the

site would need to attract market pioneers willing to redefine the current site perception. Multi-family units and townhomes will optimize site value and have the most significant impact on placemaking, but there is a smaller market for multi-family dwellings within Oak Creek and similar communities

### Retail

There is limited potential for large-scale retail development on the lakefront redevelopment site. The Southeast Milwaukee submarket, which includes Oak Creek, has a higher retail vacancy than other submarkets with similar inventory.

The Southeast submarkets retail lease rates are the lowest in the region – nearly \$4 less per square foot than the region's average.

Inclusion of neighborhood-serving retail will be essential to the first phase of development to attract residents and workers since the area lacks basic amenities. Neighborhood-serving retail will likely require a subsidy in initial years. Additional neighborhood-serving retail opportunities on the site will be created by bringing new residents and workers to the site.

## Community Input

The City understands that community input is essential to achieving a successful lakefront redevelopment. The planning process was open and transparent, with frequent public meetings and coordination with the Lakefront Advisory Group. The City widely advertised all public meetings and attendance at each was excellent. All public meetings occurred in the Oak Creek Community Center.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Through small group and one-on-one interviews in person and over the phone, JJR and HR&A spoke with direct stakeholders to understand their concerns, vision, and dreams for lakefront redevelopment. The many stakeholders included Fifth Property LLC, DuPont & EPEC, Boerke Family Trust, Oak Creek-Franklin School District, Milwaukee County Parks, MMSD, Gateway to Milwaukee, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource, EPA, WisPark, Mandel Group, Vetter Denk Architects, Liberty Property Trust, New England Builders, Inland Real Estate, CBRE, Dickman Real Estate, MLG Group, Milwaukee 7, Airport Gateway Business Association, and former Carrollville residents.

### Lakefront Advisory Group

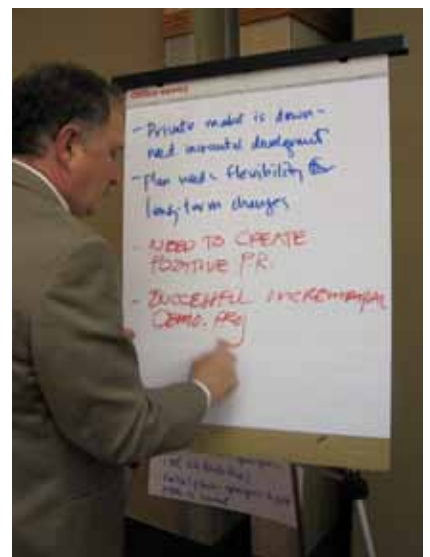
JJR and HR&A met with the Oak Creek Lakefront Advisory Group throughout the planning process. JJR and HR&A discussed preliminary analysis and recommendations with the group before sharing them with the community.

## Community Open House, March 3, 2011

JJR and HR&A introduced the redevelopment planning effort at a public open house that attracted hundreds of Oak Creek residents. After an introductory presentation, meeting participants broke into small groups to brainstorm on the issues, concerns, and dreams for the lakefront. Residents shared their personal perspectives of the unique history of the Carrollville neighborhood, and their ideas about the future of the lakefront.

A sampling of the submitted comments and suggestions indicated a number of different visions for the lakefront, ranging from a strong level of support for public open spaces and recreational opportunities to attracting new businesses and high end residential development to the area. Some of those comments and suggestions include:

- A marina and fishing pier north of Bender Park
- A boardwalk, including boat and skate rentals
- An area for kite flying
- A sand beach
- An indoor community recreation complex
- A nice business center to attract new businesses
- Improved access to the lake, with ample rest room facilities
- The lakefront should be a focal point for the community
- There should be boat tours and connections to Racine trails
- Accessible hiking trails
- Amphitheater or band shell
- Playgrounds



- Tennis courts
- Water park or aquatic center
- Maintain open and green space
- Ball fields, horse trail, archery
- Preserve a natural park-like setting
- Children's area
- Veteran's area-sunken garden
- Incorporate history of the area
- Luxury condos
- Golf course-Whistling Straits
- Restaurants and hotel
- Dog friendly
- ATV park with trails and camping
- Spot for Delco observatory
- RV park
- Shopping & entertainment hub
- Water technology businesses
- Unique businesses (crafts and artisans) like Third Ward
- High end residential
- Improved transportation and parking
- Traditional architecture
- Important migratory bird flyway
- Casino and hotel events
- Microbrewery

### Community Meeting, July 7, 2011

JJR presented the detailed development plans. They narrated a PowerPoint and then took questions and concerns. Approximately 70-90 people attended this presentation.



### Community Meeting, May 5, 2011

JJR and HR&A presented the redevelopment concept. After an introduction from Mayor Dick Bolender, the JJR team described the Site Framework Concept Plan, including the market analysis that supports the design. The presentation was videotaped and posted on the City's website. After the presentation, JJR, HR&A, consultant John Antamarian, and City Administrator Gerald Peterson answered questions and concerns in a large group and discussion continued in small groups.



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# Plan Recommendations

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The lakefront redevelopment was based on core planning strategies:

- Provide public access to lakefront
- Define a series of entrance points to the site
- Activate and integrate 5th Ave.
- Establish an interconnected open space network
- Tie-in with Bender Park
- Create regional traffic and transit connections
- Incorporate land uses that capitalize on site capabilities

The intent of the plan is to create a vibrant lakefront community which maximizes the potential of this precious lakefront location. The key feature of the plan is a new lakefront park system that provides the entire community of Oak Creek with access to the lakefront and a wide variety of public activities. The park also becomes a focal point and catalyst for the future redevelopment of the site. The site is organized around four basic components: the public lake edge, a southern residential neighborhood, a central “Carrollville Green,” and a northern neighborhood which is a combination of medium density residential uses and potential commercial or business park uses adjacent to the MMSD facility.

The southern neighborhood contains medium density multifamily residential development with a small amount of retail/commercial uses called “Station Square” at the southern terminus to 5th Avenue, in the vicinity of the proposed KRM station. While the near term implementation of the KRM is unlikely, the plan reserves the

capability for future incorporation of this facility, which would be a major development catalyst for the entire lakefront site.

Improving vehicular access to this area is accomplished by extending Highway 100 eastward to tie in to the lakefront in the form of a parkway called Lakefront Drive. The design character of the two lane drive recalls that of classic park and pleasure drives built in waterfront locations throughout the Midwest in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. The drive incorporates the entrance to Bender Park and curves northward to become a blufftop park drive ultimately looping back to 5th Avenue and terminating at Carrollville Green. A second park edge street extends north from Lakefront Drive and continues along the western edge of the new city park and recreation fields. This street would also become a premier address for the residential properties fronting the west side of the street due to the expansive park and green space views. Fifth Avenue is renovated and enhanced into a boulevard with additional landscape and streetscape improvements including bike lanes or paths. Consideration should be given to eventually extend this “bicycle boulevard” northward from the lakefront site all the way to Grant Park, tying the lakefront site to the other county lakefront parks.

In order to help brand the development and create a destination, a cluster of facilities is proposed at the confluence of Bender Park and the new Oak Creek Lakefront Park incorporating an environmental, gathering and entertainment theme.

A county nature interpretive center in Bender Park, a corporate office site and conference center developed with a low impact “eco” theme, and a lakefront pavilion featuring community gathering spaces and potentially a restaurant and outdoor eating terrace offer a way to create a mix of memorable lakefront activities and establish a new identity for the former industrial site.

Situated in the middle of the lakefront site, Carrollville Green provides a focal point for the development while simultaneously acknowledging the historic origins of the area. The green acts as the community’s gateway to the lakefront and features a multi-purpose open lawn space and a public outdoor amphitheater. Public pathways lead from Carrollville Green down to the lakefront while connecting with other blufftop trails.

The northern portion of the site contains a mix of residential and business park uses. It is suggested that some flexibility be maintained for this area as the exact market for uses may change over time and as the theme and character of development for the rest of the lakefront site evolves. Potential lakefront improvements may make the blufftop a viable location for residential development or a commercial use for which the lakefront views are a premium. Public access along the lakefront consists of a path along the lake edge, a blufftop linear green space and pathway, and potential pedestrian connections down the bluff linking the two path systems which could be incorporated during bluff stabilization work. A

# LAKEFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

City of Oak Creek  
Site Framework Concept  
July 22, 2011

JJR  
HRA

0 100 200 300

1. Proposed KRM Station
2. Station Square Plaza
3. Station Square Mixed-use Development
4. Potential Public Building Site
5. Corporate Conference Center
6. Nature Interpretive Center
7. Public Park Pavilion(s)
8. Lakeshore Terrace
9. Pathway to Lake
10. Bluff Top Pathway
11. Lake Bluff Pathway
12. Pathway continuation to Bender Park
13. Observation Point
14. City Park Recreation Fields
15. Park Activity Area (Potential Playground/Splash Fountain, etc.)
16. Amphitheater
17. Carrollville Green
18. Public Parking Lots
19. Neighborhood Greens
20. Park Ravine
21. Lakefront Shoreline Opportunities
22. Ravine Pathway to Lake Edge
23. Sunrise Point
24. 5th Avenue Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements
25. Bike Path connection to Oak Creek Parkway/Grant Park
26. Lakefront Drive Parkway
27. Hwy 100 Extension



- Medium Density Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial/Business Park
- Neighborhood Retail
- Public Building/Use

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strip of parkland would be set aside just south of the MMSD facility to allow the blufftop path to connect westward to 5th Avenue.

Along the lakefront itself, bluff stabilization efforts may be enacted in certain locations. Depending on stabilization methods utilized, opportunities for additional lakefront parkland may be realized.

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## Description of Plan Features

1. Proposed KRM Station: potential commuter rail stop, the location could also be utilized for bus service on an interim basis.
2. Station Square: small plaza or green flanking each side of 5th Avenue, these small spaces provide a focus and gathering places to anchor the mixed-use station area development.
3. Station Square Mixed-use Development: serving the needs of commuters and nearby residents this development includes small scale retail on the ground floor and possibly second floor activities such as office or residential uses. Limited surface parking is provided. The development extends south to take advantage of frontage along the extended Highway 100 (Lakefront Drive.) If the KRM station is not built, a smaller development focused at the intersection of 5th Avenue and Lakefront Drive may be feasible, with expansion north when the station is constructed and demand arises.
4. Potential Public Building Site: this site, within the new city park, could serve as a location for a future public building to house functions and activities that would benefit from the adjacent recreational and community uses.
5. Corporate Conference Center: taking advantage of the improved roadway access and lakefront location this facility, envisioned

- as being similar in concept to The Clearing in Door County or the Wingspread facility in Racine, is a low impact development offering meeting facilities and lodging in cabin-like structures connected by a trail system. The development would be a great opportunity to showcase best practices in sustainability. In addition to the conference center, the site could also be the location of a corporate office facility which could act as a keystone for other development on the site and help establish the area as a destination.
6. Nature Interpretive Center: a potential Milwaukee County facility in partnership with other organizations, the center would offer environmental education programs and activities including nature walks throughout the park. The center could also tell the broader story of the lakefront site clean-up, remediation, and renewal efforts.
  7. Public Park Pavilion: a small structure(s) containing multi-purpose spaces for use by the community and possibly a restaurant with an outdoor terrace overlooking the lake. The facility could also contain rest rooms and other park support services. It is anticipated that the pavilion would be publicly owned but be operated by private concessionaire. The pavilion in Milwaukee's Lake Park is a good example of this type of amenity.
  8. Lakeshore Terrace: a series of terraces beginning at the public pavilion, connected by stairs, and stepping down the bluff to the



- lake, allowing pedestrian access to the water's edge while becoming a gathering place itself.
9. Pathway to Lake: a ramping pedestrian path following the route of the existing service lane offering an alternative way of reaching the lake edge.
  10. Bluff Pathway: extending along the entire length of the blufftop, the pathway provides users with commanding views and access to various park amenities including observation points, terraces, and connections to other park trails.
  11. Lake Edge Pathway: this pedestrian path along or near the lake edge on the lower reaches of the bluff offers users closer views of the water and access to "touch the water" points.
  12. Pathway Continuation to Bender Park: both the bluff pathway and the lake edge pathway would continue into Bender Park and connect with other existing or planned trails with a goal of providing an integrated system of trail loops.
  13. Observation Points: located at key spots along the bluff pathway, a series of lookout points offer commanding views out to the lake. These points could be simple plaza-like spaces or could feature a small structure, gazebo, or perhaps even a lookout tower.
  14. City Park Recreation Fields: on the site of the former DuPont slabs, this area is a space for a variety of recreation fields and group activities.
  15. Park Family Activity Area: located along the lakefront blufftop, this space houses a number of family-oriented activities such as a splash fountain, a Robert Leathers Community Built Playground, or other active uses.
  16. Amphitheater: this centrally located public facility becomes both an anchor for the Carrollville Green area and a gateway to the lakefront. It is anticipated that the amphitheater would be utilized for a variety of small to larger-scale events.
  17. Carrollville Green: a public gathering place for activities such as festivals, art fairs, fireworks-watching, etc. The portion immediately east of 5th Avenue is a hardscape plaza with the remaining portion consisting of a "great lawn." Two small pavilions flanking the western edge of the green along 5th Avenue provide small amounts of park-related retail space (restaurant, shops, bike/kite rental, etc.).
  18. Public Parking Lots: two surface parking lots provide parking for the amphitheater, Carrollville Green events, and for adjacent retail and other businesses.
  19. Neighborhood Greens: small parks or plazas that act as a focus for the both the north and south neighborhoods. The southern green serves residential needs while the north green anchors the business park perhaps serving as a state of the art "green infrastructure" project showcasing innovative stormwater practices utilized in the business park.
  20. Park Ravine: provides service and pedestrian access down to the lakefront. The ravine landscape is enhanced to have a "parkway" character effectively linking the community to the lakefront.
  21. Lakefront Shoreline Opportunities: potential bluff stabilization work along a portion of the lakefront may result in additional lakefront land which could be utilized for new public parkland. Potential amenities and activities along the lake shore could include features such as a small shelter structure, fishing areas, gathering spaces, a public pier, and a beach. A small marina facility could also be considered based upon sufficient demand.
  22. Ravine Pathway to Lake Edge: a pedestrian path through the ravine to link the lakefront to the amphitheater and Carrollville Green.
  23. "Sunrise Point": a pedestrian space located at the end of the Ravine Pathway, this small gathering area allows park users to access the water's edge.
  24. 5th Avenue Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements: streetscape improvements convert 5th Avenue into a landscaped "bicycle boulevard" including bike lanes or a pathway incorporated into the street right-of-way. Additional improvements include street trees, landscape areas, special paving at significant crosswalks, and pedestrian amenities at focal points.
  25. Bike Path Connection to the Oak Creek Parkway/Grant Park: the bike lanes or path associated with the 5th Avenue Boulevard should eventually be extended from the lakefront site northward through the City of South Milwaukee to

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eventually connect to the Oak Creek Parkway trail and Grant Park. This would be a longer term effort and require integrated planning with the City of South Milwaukee.

as create a less “highway-like” character for the roadway, and ease the transition into the scenic drive.

26. Lakefront Drive Parkway:

providing direct vehicular access along the top of the bluff, this new scenic drive begins at the southern terminus of 5th Avenue, continues along the current Ryan Road right-of-way, curves northward and continues along the bluff, eventually turning west to end at the intersection of 5th Avenue and East American Avenue. The drive features landscape and street design elements to give it a “parkway” character. Parking is provided along the drive in landscaped pull-offs designed to be integrated into the parkway character rather than in large surface parking lots. The bluff pathway runs parallel to Lakefront Drive along its length.

27. Lakefront Drive: Lakefront

Drive would be a new road extension from the current terminus of Highway 100 at Highway 32. It would extend east to directly connect with 5th Avenue, and then proceed easterly and northerly through the lakefront redevelopment site. When the extension is designed, consideration should be given to make the extension two lanes rather than the four lane cross section utilized for the existing Highway 100. A narrower cross section could facilitate corridor and road layout issues as well

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## Detailed Area Development Plans

As part of the process of crafting the redevelopment plan, several sub-areas of the site were studied in more detail for the purpose of further defining the potential character of these primarily public places. The following images depict a range of possibilities for how these places might look and be experienced. The actual detailed design of each element will take place as part of future park and infrastructure design plans.

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## Lakefront Drive Parkway: 5th Avenue Gateway



A gateway effect created by pedestrian-scaled and active use building frontages.



A gateway experience created by a roadway feature such as a median, roundabout, or focal element.



A gateway can be suggested by a special landscape feature or greenspace at the entrance to a neighborhood or business district.

Flanking streetscape elements along a roadway create effective gateways.

Lakefront Drive Parkway: Arrival at the Lakefront



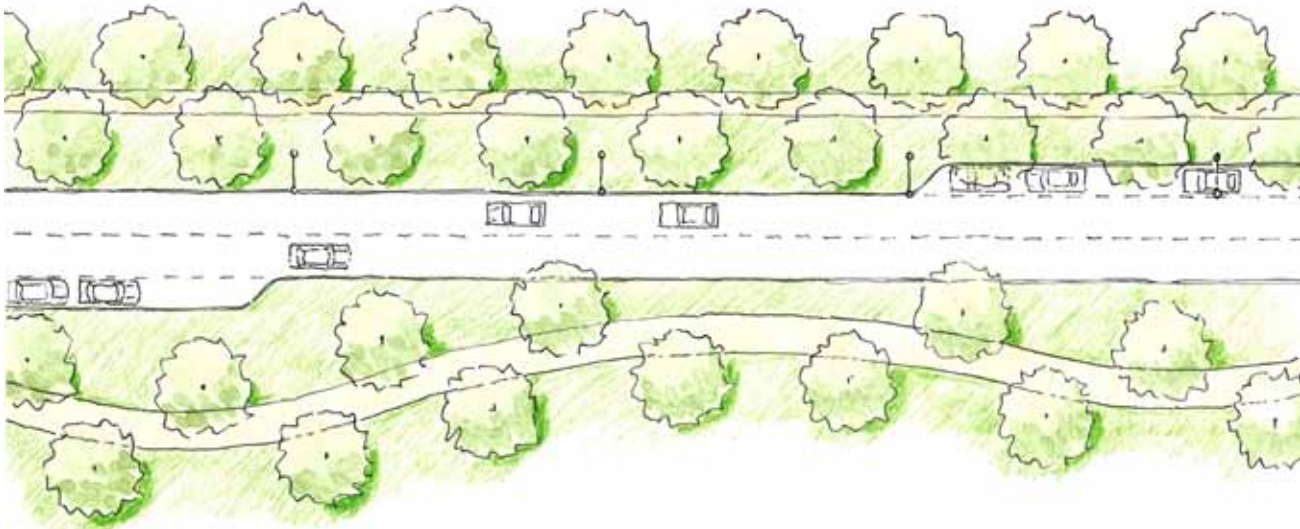
Heading east along the parkway and arriving at the lakefront, views open up toward the water, while a new

entrance feature and potential environmental education facility for Bender Park are on view toward the right.



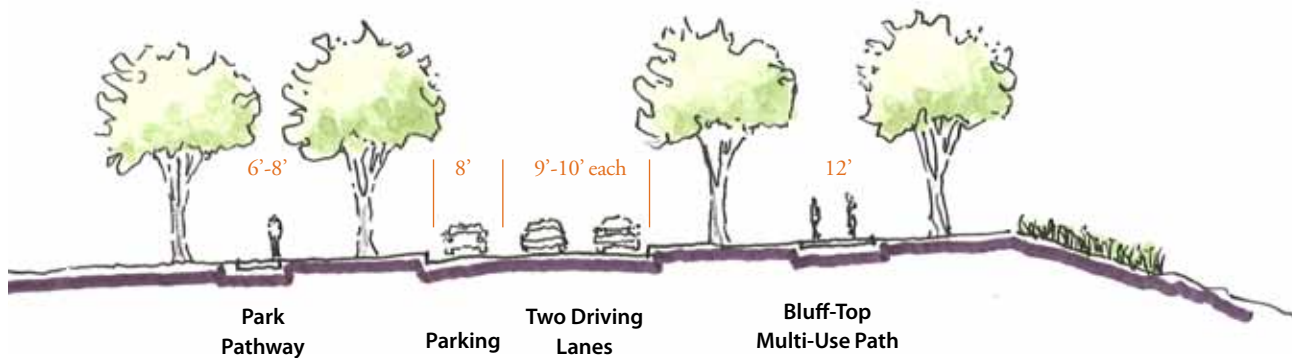
Continuing along the parkway as it bends northward, the lake comes more fully into view, as well as the proposed lakefront pavilion structure.

## Lakefront Drive Parkway: Typical Cross Section



The proposed plan of a typical portion of the Lakefront Parkway consists of a two-way roadway with occasional on-street parallel parking where necessitated by adjoining uses or activities. The lakeside would feature a multi-use

trail to the east of the roadway while the west side would include a sidewalk. Parkway street lighting should be provided in a manner that meets security needs yet is in character with a parklike, informal setting.



The proposed cross-section of a typical portion of the Lakefront Parkway indicating dimensions for the roadway and pathways. Intermittent medians may be appropriate along the roadway, especially where the pathways cross the road. The distances between the road edge and the pathways will vary according to conditions along the

corridor. The lakeside road edge is envisioned as having an informal character, as the pathway meanders to connect assorted features along the bluff top including the lakefront pavilion, terrace, observation points, and other landscape features.

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## Public Park Pavilion

The park pavilion is envisioned as a major destination to help draw people to the lakefront and provide amenities that complement other park uses. The design style of the building could range from the traditional to the more contemporary. It should have an open character, with

generous window openings or glass areas, porches, patios, pergolas, portals, or other expressive architectural elements that engage the building with the landscape and take advantage of the views and access to the lakefront site.



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Park Pavilion, continued



The publicly-owned facility would feature either a single or multiple private concessionaires providing services such as a restaurant, rentals (bike, ski, rollerblades, fishing gear etc.), or a coffee house. Facilities for weddings, family events, and other gatherings should be considered, as well as more informal and intimate activities.

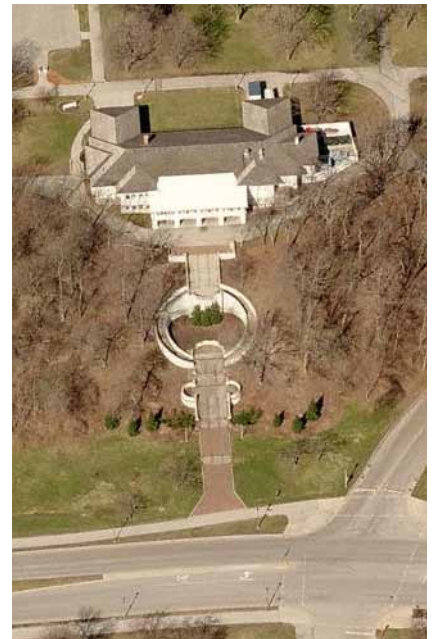




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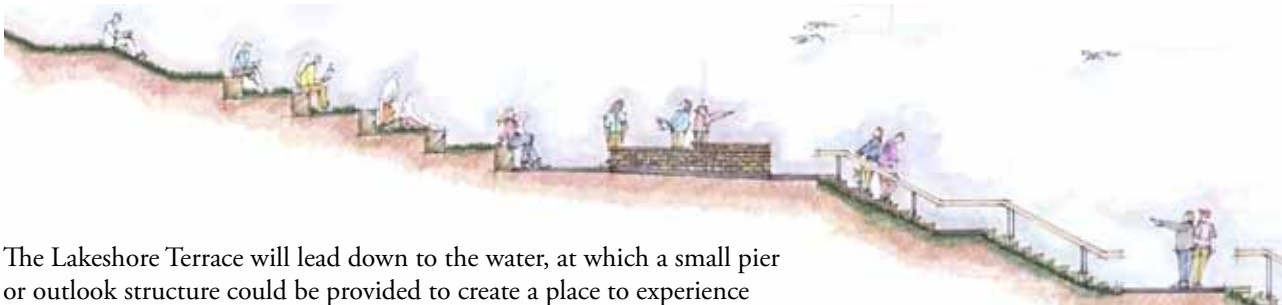
## Lakeshore Terrace

The Lakeshore Terrace will not only provide a means of pedestrian access from the bluff top to the lake edge, but will become a significant gathering place and landscape element on its own. The terrace can be designed as either a formal series of tiered platforms and stairs (similar to Milwaukee's Villa Terrace or Lakefront Park Pavilion) or a more informal meandering ramp/stair combination gently integrated into the landscape.

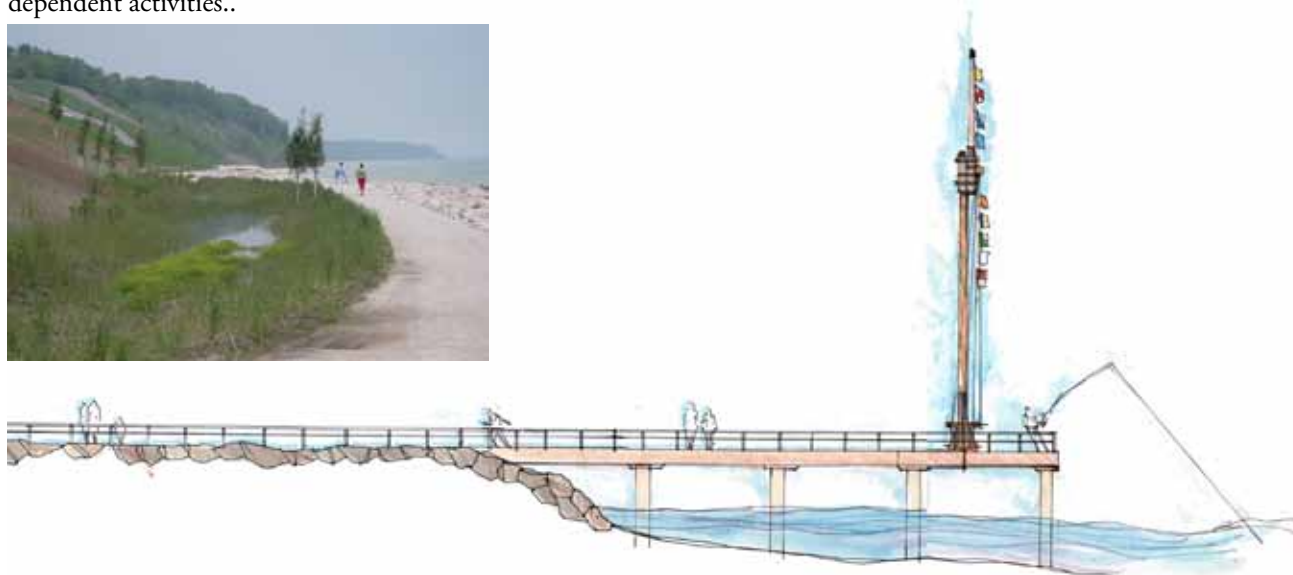


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Lakeshore Terrace, continued



The Lakeshore Terrace will lead down to the water, at which a small pier or outlook structure could be provided to create a place to experience the water's edge, such as through kayaking, fishing, and other water-dependent activities..



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## Bluff Top Pathway

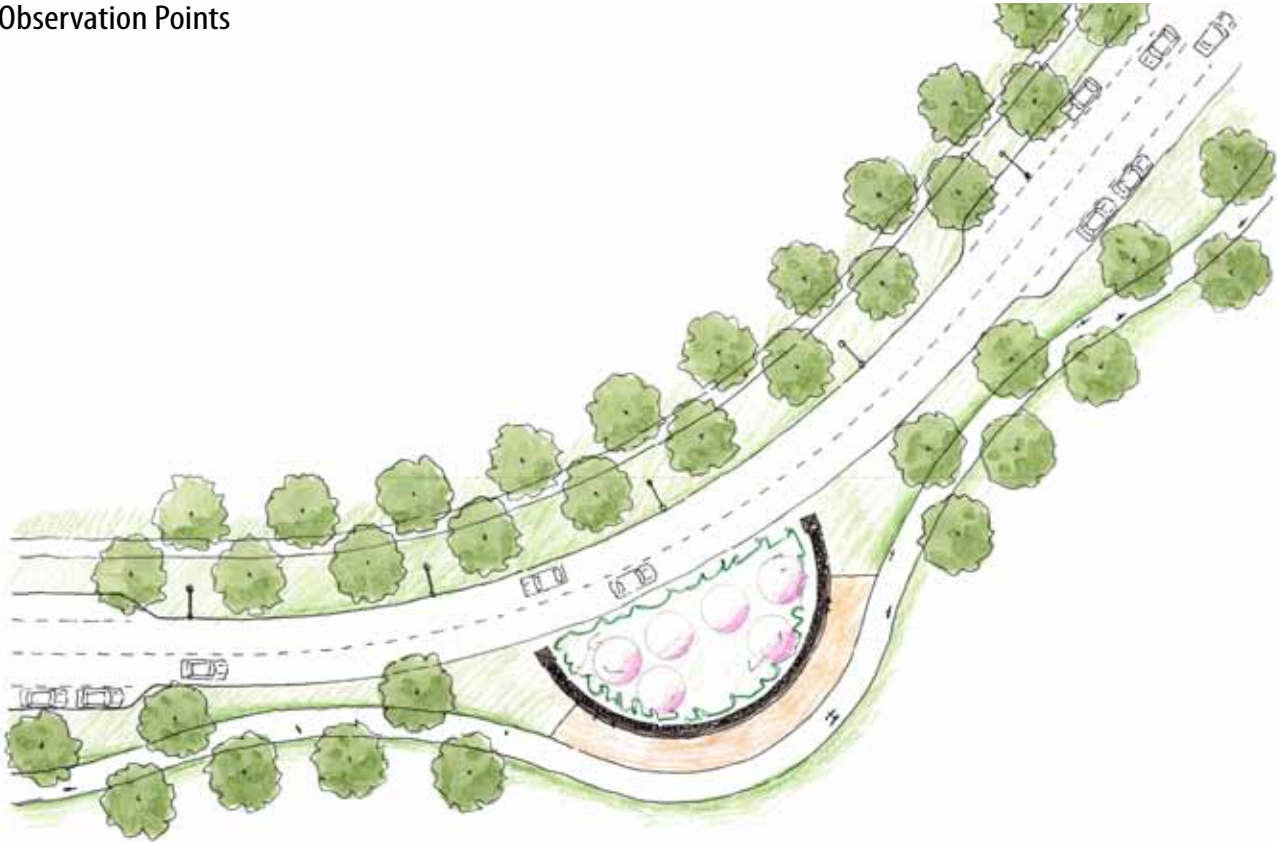


The Bluff Top Pathway will provide expansive lake views and connect park features such as the pavilion, observation points, and access points down to the lake edge.



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## Observation Points



Several Observation Points are proposed along the bluff top. These features provide focal points along the path and can be as simple as a stone seating wall or could include overhead structures such as a pergola or roof

elements, which could provide a degree of shelter in case of inclement weather, reminiscent of “storm watching” pavilions elsewhere on the Great Lakes.





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## Robert Leathers Community Built Playground



Robert Leathers Community Built Playgrounds are community building endeavors in which a team of community members (including children) help design and build a one-of-a-kind playground structure that not only helps build a sense of pride and ownership among the community, but also offers substantial cost savings over more traditional playground procurement methods.

A playground of this type is proposed on a prominent lakefront location, which could become a memorable setting as children enjoy the play structure while parents enjoy the lakefront views.



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## Playfields



A large level portion of the park is proposed for housing a variety of playfields including baseball, softball, soccer, and other field events in both structured and unstructured formats.



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## Carrollville Green

Carrollville Green is seen as the community's window to the lakefront, consisting of a plaza and green lawn space to serve as a gathering place for special events. Adjacent parking lots provide parking for events. The Green leads eastward to the proposed amphitheater and pedestrian connections to other park pathways and features.

The Lakefront Amphitheater will become a public gathering place along the lake capable of hosting a variety of event types and sizes. The amphitheater can be a traditional stepped and tiered form or perhaps a more sculpted landform that blends into the ravine and parkland with a more natural flowing form. The amphitheater should be designed as an integrated element with the Carrollville Green and connected to the lakefront pathway systems.

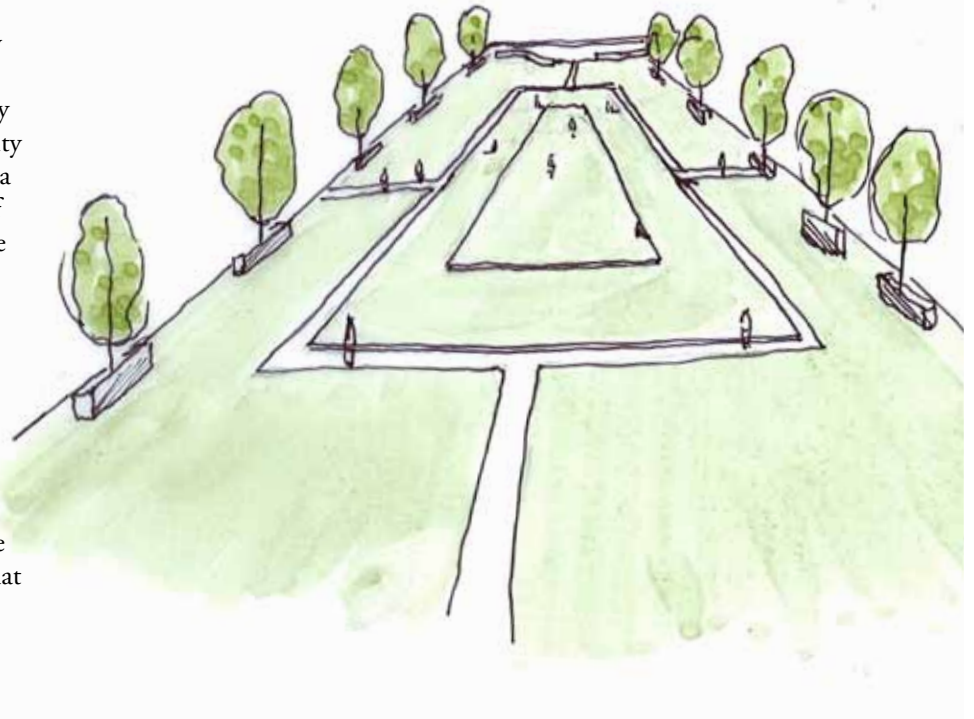




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## Carrollville Green, continued

The central lawn space not only provides a place for gatherings such as art and craft fairs, family gatherings, and other community group events but is also seen as a place to highlight the history of Carrollville through interpretive elements such as a special signage, landscape features, or other artifacts from the history of the area. Possible artifacts to locate in this area include the old Cooper plant guard shack (currently located at the end of High Street), the boy scout picnic table, and a replica of the old mail post from the depot that was once located along Depot Road.



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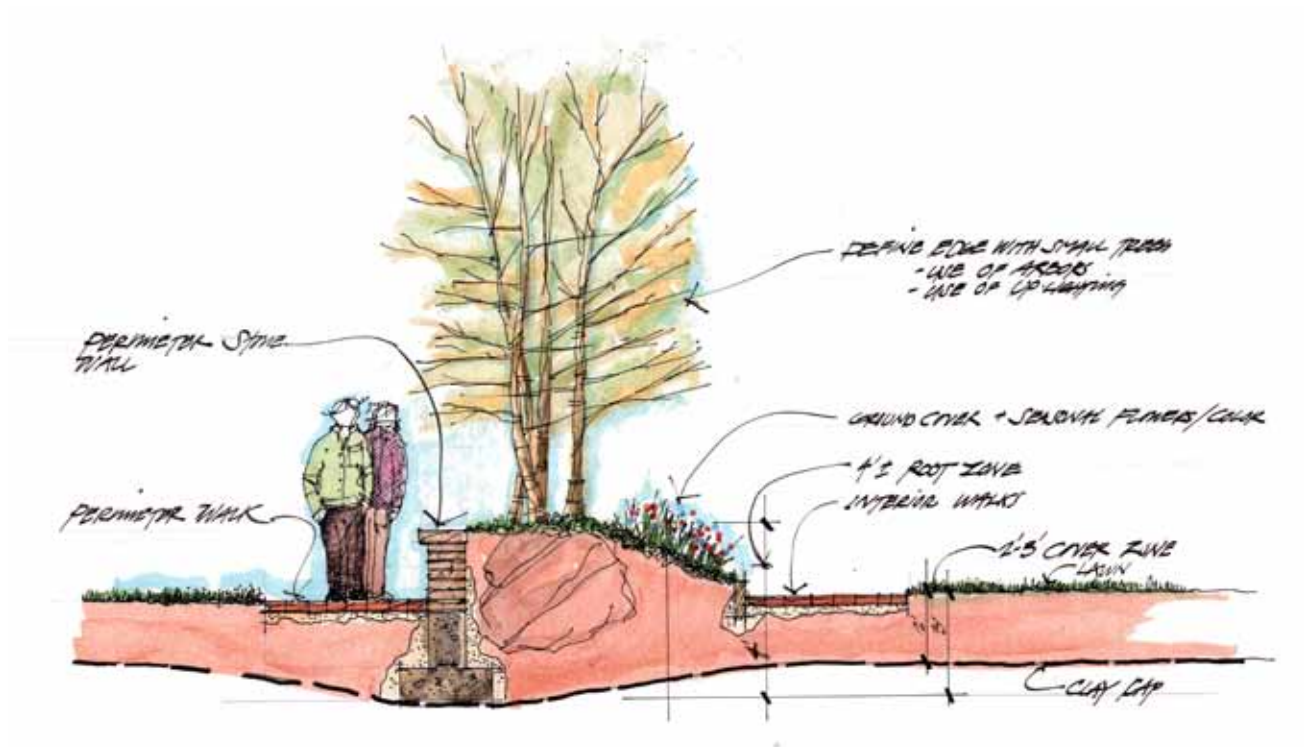
Carrollville Green, continued



## Carrollville Green, continued

Because of environmental issues and the resultant remediation strategies associated with the site where the Carrollville Green is proposed, the planting of large shade trees will not be possible. Instead, a sense of landscape enhancement and place can be established with a strategy that includes earthen mounds. These formations can

provide clearance for a four foot root zone, a low “garden wall” enclosure, and plantings of small trees on top of the mound alternating with arbors, pergolas, or other garden structures. These features combine to create a sense of scale and enclosure at the edges of the open lawn.



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# Implementation

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The recommended projects described in the previous section represent a long-term vision for the Oak Creek lakefront. Due to market conditions, contamination cleanup, infrastructure investments, and market competition from elsewhere in the City, this redevelopment vision will necessarily be a long-term investment.

These initiatives should not all be led by the City of Oak Creek, but the City should play the key role in promoting, supporting and coordinating the efforts of its implementation partners.

## Roles of the City of Oak Creek

The lakefront is an important resource for the community and the site of significant economic redevelopment potential. In order to maintain the value and vitality of this important asset, the City should work with the County, WisPark, WisDOT, state regulatory agencies, existing property owners and the development community to advance these recommendations.

The Common Council and its committees should review and adopt this plan. Formal adoption by the City will accomplish several important objectives:

- Provide a clear road map to public sector agencies that offers guidance on how public investments should be made along the lakefront.
- Provide vision and certainty to private sector landowners regarding likely future conditions along the lakefront.
- Strengthen the standing of the plan's recommendations and thereby improve the ability to attract outside financial resources.

The City should continue to communicate with its residential and corporate citizens, seeking further input as each project is planned, designed, and constructed. The City should promote the lakefront redevelopment vision to bolster support and lay the groundwork for future financial support.

The City's roles in implementing recommendations of the plan include:

- Constructing improvements within publicly-owned land along the lakefront and in public street right-of-ways.
- Regulating the type and quality of development through design guidelines and regulations.
- Developing public destinations along the lakefront.
- Applying to state and federal agencies for grants and loans to implement projects.
- Providing financial assistance on key redevelopment sites to stimulate private sector investment.

The City's lakefront redevelopment efforts should continue to be led by the lakefront technical resource committee. This multi-disciplinary team of City staff and consulting experts understand the many challenges and opportunities inherent in this redevelopment opportunity. The membership of the technical resource committee should evolve as the project moves incrementally from clean up to economic positioning to reconstruction.

The role of City staff will vary depending on the nature of each individual project, availability of a project partners, and funding source.

The City should be the primary point for coordination and promotion. Beyond coordinating with county, state, and federal agencies, the City should communicate and coordinate with the area's private organizations, connecting the municipal efforts with the South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, recreational groups, environmental groups, and other private community organizations.

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## Roles of Project Partners

Coordinated by the City, a mix of public and private agencies and organizations, business and property owners, and neighborhood residents will implement many of the recommendations of this plan over a period of many years.

### Milwaukee County

Milwaukee County is a necessary supporter, and this plan should be incorporated into the County's land use, transportation, parks and recreation, and economic development planning and capital improvements planning. Connection to and supporting the continued development of Bender Park is a critical component of the plan.

Milwaukee County is considering new ideas for activities and the future development of Bender Park. Planning for the Oak Creek park site and Bender Park should be performed in a manner that integrates the two public facilities and considers supportive and complementary uses. Connections between the new Oak Creek park and the existing boat launch at Bender Park along the lake edge and bluff top are especially important.

The City (and its consultants) should work actively with County staff and officials to coordinate planning for future lakefront parkland development.

### Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District

Redevelopment of the northern portion of the site should be designed

in collaboration with MMSD to optimize opportunities for sustainable energy initiatives such as reuse of waste energy from the MMSD plant.

MMSD has many initiatives underway regarding best practices for water treatment, stormwater management, and sustainability. Potential businesses that locate to the northern part of the lakefront site could partner with MMSD on some of these programs, allowing the business park to become a showcase of innovative "green" practices.

### State of Wisconsin and Federal Government

The lakefront is a local and regional asset, and state and federal agencies will continue to be a resource and potential partner.

State and federal agencies are far more than controlling regulators. They can support funding requests for the majority of recommended public improvements. Equally critical is the role the state and federal governments

can play in providing incentives for private investment. Various agencies have multiple funding sources that will support recommended projects.

- EPA Brownfields programs.
- Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program: Provides 50% cost share for acquisition and development of lands for public recreational use under a number of sub-programs including urban, urban green space, acquisition and development of local parks, etc.
- Community Block Grants for public facilities.
- Recreational Trails: Provides cost-share on projects to develop and rehabilitate recreational trails for motorized, non-motorized and diversified uses.
- Transportation and transit enhancements.
- University classroom research.

Continuous public sector coordination among the municipal, county, state, and federal governments is critical for



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plan implementation. The City of Oak Creek staff will be the primary conduit for public sector coordination.

### **Economic Development Organizations**

The City and its lakefront technical resource committee should partner with South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, M7, Aerotropolis -Gateway to Milwaukee, WisPark, and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to support promote and recruit private investment. These partnerships should be marketing the region as a whole from the collective resources, geography and the lakefront.

### **Non-Profit Sector Involvement**

Non-profit sector involvement includes participation of private donors, which can include individuals, local service clubs, and foundations. In times of declining governmental budgets, service clubs and other non-profits can lead the efforts to help fund special public improvement projects. Oak Creek and Milwaukee County service clubs, or other non-profits can lead projects such as open space amenities, biking and walking path construction and maintenance, habitat enhancement, and interpretive and environmental education. Non-profits can also partner with Chambers of Commerce and local area Corporations to program lakefront-oriented events. A recent example of this is the Rock the Green Event at Veterans Park held in conjunction with the M7 Water Council Water Summit.

A volunteer non-profit organization, such as a “Friends of the Oak Creek Lakefront,” could focus on public fundraising and volunteer development to help in the coordination and implementation of projects and programs outlined in this plan. A foundation can assist in private fundraising and cultivate corporate partnerships.

The already existing Oak Creek Lakefront Advisory Group might be a possible candidate for this role. This group in conjunction/collaboration with other existing groups could expand to cover the entire Milwaukee County Lakefront including Bender Park. Examples vary in structure and operation across the country. Some examples are the Mississippi River Bluff Association, River Action in the Quad Cities’ region, Friends of High Line Park in New York City, and Friends of Wisconsin State Parks. These organizations have full time staff, a board of directors, and organizes a wide range of activities, help organize and fund the operational/management of the various facilities.

### **Private Sector Developers**

The key to full implementation of the plan with respect to the priority redevelopment sites is new investment by the private sector.

One of the major purposes of public sector investment in the lakefront is to stimulate private sector investment in both new commercial and new residential development. Continued public investments in improvements along the lakefront are expected to

yield increased private investment in sites along Oak Creek’s Lakefront.

The development assistance programs of the municipal, county, state, and federal governments should aim to increase private sector investment on key redevelopment sites. The public sector should continue to ensure that use of development assistance requires private capital investment that results in an expanded tax base to support the assistance.

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## Potential Funding Sources for Public Improvements

This section provides a general overview of potential applicable funding opportunities that have the strong potential for use by the City and its partners to implement portions of the Lakefront Redevelopment Action Plan. However, these programs are not meant to be inclusive of all potential opportunities. The City and its technical resource committee should develop a detailed strategy to identify and secure funding, establish project priorities, and define project cost budgets as needed for funding requests.

### Federal and State Grants and Loans

State and federal grants have funded much of the ongoing clean-up and planning that has occurred thus far. Public funding sources will continue to play a key role.

#### Lakefront Improvements

Several federal and state grant programs may support the development of the public recreational and natural conservation proposed areas. These funds include:

##### WisDNR Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON)

These are federal funds administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The grants are used by local governments to acquire land for recreation areas, trails, urban green space, river and stream corridors, flowages and lakeshores, and develop and improve visitor

amenities at parks and recreation areas.

The City should consider applying to this fund for property acquisition and/or easements and amenities for the lakefront open space system. Applicants must have a DNR-approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or a master plan approved by resolution by the local governing unit. The City's approval of the Lakefront Redevelopment Action Plan will likely satisfy this requirement. Applications are due in May, and awards may cover up to 50% of eligible project costs. Past projects have received between \$5,000 and \$600,000 in funding.

For more information: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/Grants/LWCF/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/Grants/LWCF/)

##### WisDNR Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grants

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers Stewardship Grants to support land acquisition, development, and renovation projects

for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes.

The City should consider applying to this fund for any restoration or recreation projects along the lakefront. Applicants must have a DNR-approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or a master plan approved by resolution by the local governing unit. The City's approval of the Lakefront Redevelopment Action Plan will likely satisfy this requirement. Applications are due in May, and awards may cover up to 50% of eligible project costs. Past projects have received between \$20,000 and \$1,000,000 in funding.

For more information: [dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/stewardship.html#grants](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/stewardship.html#grants)

##### WisDOA Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

Managed through the Wisconsin Department of Administration, this program provides funds specifically allocated towards waterfronts. Funds



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can be used for projects in the following priority areas:

- Public access
- Waterfront redevelopment;
- Wetland protection
- Cumulative and secondary impacts of development and land use planning.

Brownfield redevelopment is an eligible activity when it involves a project in one of these priority areas.

For more information: <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/section.asp?linkid=65&locid=9>

### **Brownfields**

The US Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offer numerous programs for the assessment and clean-up for contaminated sites. Some programs also exist to support the economic development and workforce training programs associated with brownfields redevelopment. The City is currently working with property owners and should continue to comprehensively address this concern with private property owners throughout the project area. Clean-up and redevelopment funding opportunities are available where contamination exists.

#### **U.S. EPA Assessment Grants**

The US Environmental Protection Agency offers assessment grants to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfields sites. Local governments may apply for community-wide or site-specific funds.

The City should continue applying for assessment grants to assess properties with possible contamination along the lakefront should the property owners be willing to participate in the assessment. Community-wide funds are limited to \$400,000 and site-specific funds are limited to \$350,000. The next proposal for funding deadline is November 28, 2011.

For more information: [epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm#pg](http://epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm#pg)

#### **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Brownfield Site Assessment Grants**

WEDC provides funding to reimburse eligible local governmental for the costs associated with assessing environmental contamination at brownfields sites. The applicant must be a local government unit and cannot have caused the environmental contamination at the site. The party responsible for the contamination must be unknown, unable to be located or financially unable to pay for grant activities.

While no funding cycle is currently open, the City should consider this grant program in the future to assess the environmental contamination on some of the lakefront properties. Funding in the past has been limited to 80% of project costs up to \$100,000.

For more information: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/financial/sag/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/financial/sag/index.htm)

#### **WEDC Blight Elimination and Brownfield Redevelopment Program**

The Blight Elimination and Brownfield Redevelopment Program

(BEBR) provides grant funds to assist local governments, businesses and individuals with assessing and remediating the environmental contamination of an abandoned, idle or underused industrial or commercial facility or site. This program typically receives about \$7.5 million in a combination of state and federal funds each fiscal year. The maximum grant award is \$1.25 million. Grants require a 20 to 50 percent match depending on the size of the grant awarded. This program is in transition with the re-purposed WEDC. See the WEDC website for more details.

### **Infrastructure**

The Lakefront Redevelopment Action Plan recommends the construction of a new roadway through the study area in addition to the lakefront path. Public works improvements, such as sewer and water, will also be required to support the new development. The following state-administered programs are available to support these public infrastructure costs.

#### **WEDC Community Development Block Grant – Public Facilities**

WEDC offers this financing tool for municipalities in need of funds to undertake needed infrastructure and public building projects (excluding buildings for the conduct of government). This program is designed to enhance the vitality of a community by undertaking public investment that contributes to its overall community and economic development.

The City should consider applying to this competitive fund for infrastructure costs associated with



the lakefront development (roads, sewer, water). The application cycle is on-going for this program. The grant materials indicate a \$750,000 maximum, but projects are typically awarded less than \$500,000. Local funds are expected to account for at least 50% project costs. This program is in transition with the re-purposed WEDC. See the WEDC website for more details.

**WisDNR Recreational Trails Program**  
Cities and other municipalities are eligible to receive reimbursement through Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses.

Eligible projects include acquisition of easement or property for trails, construction of new trails, and development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages. Reimbursement of up to 50 percent of the total project costs, with a maximum funding limit of \$45,000. The application deadline is in June.

**WisDOT Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement**

The primary purpose of the CMAQ program is to fund projects and programs in areas with air quality programs which reduce transportation-related emissions. It supports programs that promote alternative forms of transportation. Milwaukee County is a non-attainment area and thus eligible for funding. Examples of CMAQ projects include: bicycle and pedestrian facilities primarily

for commuter use, transit projects, and congestion reduction and traffic flow improvements (e.g. construction of roundabouts, traffic signal installation). The local match is 20%. The next application cycle is anticipated to occur early in 2012.

For more information: [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/cmaq.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/cmaq.htm).

**WisDOT Local Transportation Enhancements Program (TE) and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program (BPPF)**  
WisDOT funds projects that increase multi-modal transportation alternatives and enhance communities and the environment. A bike and pedestrian path along the lakefront would qualify for the use of these funds as would any enhancements (walkway, streetscaping elements) along the proposed roadway through the redevelopment area.

The City should consider applying to these programs for these project elements. Applications cycles are open in even numbered years

typically in January with applications due in April. Construction projects with costs greater than \$200,000 have been eligible for up to 80% funding in past funding cycles.

For more information: [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/te.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/te.htm)

**WisDOT Transportation Economic Assistance**

WisDOT offers this program to attract and retain business firms in Wisconsin and thus create or retain jobs. Grants are available for transportation improvements that are essential for an economic development project. It must begin within three years, have the local government's endorsement, and benefit the public. The businesses cannot be speculative and local communities must assure that the number of jobs anticipated from the proposed project will materialize within three years from the date of the project agreement and remain after another four years.



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Should proposed development within the lakefront redevelopment project area contribute to the significant creation of jobs, the City should consider this funding source to assist with the roadway construction through the development. The application cycle is on-going and up to \$1 million of funding may be awarded. A 50% local match is required and can come from any combination of local, federal, or private funds or in-kind services.

For more information: [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/tea.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/tea.htm)

### **Tourism**

While the lakefront area may serve as an amenity to Oak Creek residents, it could also draw in tourists from throughout the region. Promotion will be necessary to change the image and brand of the site. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism offers programs, technical assistance, and funding for local campaigns.

### **Joint Effort Marketing Group**

Administered through the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, this grant program funds tourism campaigns led by non-profit organizations. The funds may be used for email marketing, print and broadcast ads, direct mail, publicity, and billboards. The grant may fund up to 75% of a project's first year promotional costs. For some grant categories, support is available during subsequent years – up to 50% for the second year and 25% for the third year. Applications are reviewed in August, November, February and April. The Chamber of Commerce or another local non-profit organization should consider applying for this funding.

For more information: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/Grants/Joint+Effort+Marketing.aspx>

### **Ready, Set, Go!**

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism recognizes the growth potential of the sports marketing niche as an economic driver in the state. The grants assist destinations in securing competitive sport events that require an upfront cash or financial commitment. The goal of the fund is to generate visitor spending from sports tourism in Wisconsin. The fund has \$110,000 available for matching grants. Amount available per destination/per request is 50% of a Bid Fee or 50% of other allowable site/venue/municipal fees, up to a maximum \$20,000 during our fiscal year. This competitive grant program may assist in the programming of sport fields constructed on the lakefront.

For more information: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/Grants/Ready+Set+Go.aspx>

### **Meetings Mean Business! Grants**

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism recognizes meetings and conventions as a niche tourism market with significant growth potential. To help make Wisconsin destinations competitive in their efforts to attract regional and national meetings or conventions, they offer a grant program designed to assist Wisconsin destinations with financial assistance for facility costs or host destination expenses. This competitive grant program may assist in the programming of the recommended corporate meeting facility.

For more information: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/Grants/Meetings+Mean+Business+Grant.aspx>

### **Developer and Business Financing and Incentives**

Developers and businesses may benefit from several tax credit and grant programs available for investment within the Lakefront Redevelopment Action Plan. Depending on the type and ownership of the business, there are numerous federal, state, local, and private funds available for technical assistance and start-up/expansion. The list of funding sources is varied depending on the type of business. Business owners should contact the organizations below for more information on potential programs.

- Small Business Administration ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov))
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)
- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority ([www.wheda.com](http://www.wheda.com))
- Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network ([www.wenportal.org](http://www.wenportal.org))
- Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation ([www.wwbic.com](http://www.wwbic.com))

### **Local Funding Tools**

In general, the level of public assistance given to redevelopment is characterized as “gap financing,” which is defined as the minimum level of financial assistance needed to make a project feasible in the market place.

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### **Tax Incremental Financing**

The primary tool used by municipalities to finance redevelopment is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF is a financing tool that allows municipalities to invest in infrastructure and other public improvements, and pay for these investments by capturing property tax revenue from the newly developed property. An area is identified (the tax incremental district, or TID) as appropriate for a certain type of development, and projects are identified to encourage and facilitate the desired development. Then as property values rise, the property tax paid on that private development is used by the municipality to repay debt service. The tax paid to the schools, county and technical college district (the overlying taxing jurisdictions) is also sent to the municipality to pay for the improvements. After the costs of the projects are paid off, the TID is closed and the value of all the new development is shared by the municipality, schools, and county as it does for other property. (Section 66.46 of the Wisconsin Statutes Regulates Tax Incremental Financing). Potential TIF projects need to yield sufficient tax revenues to the City to finance the public assistance and retire any borrowing done to support the project.

### **Impact Fees**

Wisconsin municipalities have the ability to charge developers Impact Fees to offset the capital costs for public facilities needed as a result of new development, including roads and other transportation facilities;

water, sewage, and stormwater infrastructure; parks and recreational facilities; solid waste and recycling facilities; fire protection, emergency medical, and law enforcement facilities; and libraries. (Section 66.55 of the Wisconsin Statutes regulates Impact Fees)

The City currently only charges impact fees to new residential development for park land dedication requirements. While charging impact fees for infrastructure improvements in the lakefront area may offset some public cost, it may also deter development in the initial stages of plan implementation. Development costs in the lakefront area will likely be more expensive on a per square foot or per unit basis compared to similar developments in the surrounding rural areas due to increased land, infrastructure, and environmental clean-up costs. The City may want to pursue the other funding opportunities to fund infrastructure costs prior to charging impact fees to developers.

### **Attracting Private Investment**

Successful redevelopment of the lakefront redevelopment site requires leveraging the minimum amount of public resources in order to attract the maximum amount of private investment. Beyond creation of a strong and market supportable plan, the implementation strategy defined for the site can bolster the ability to attract private investment by providing certainty of timing, funding, and public commitment wherever possible for brownfield cleanup, public infrastructure investments, and the master development process. This certainty will in turn create value for private investors by making it possible to generate reliable projections of financial returns.



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## Environmental Remediation

The City has made tremendous strides in moving forward with agreements for remediation of the environmental conditions prevalent cross the site. Once the City is ready to start marketing the lakefront sites to private developers, it will be critical to spell out who is taking responsibility for funding and completing remediation; the amount and availability of associated funding; and the timeframe associated with each parcel.

## Infrastructure Investment

Clear commitment to public investment for the range of infrastructure improvements associated with the plan is important. This will require identification of infrastructure improvements to be publicly financed as opposed to paid for by future developers, and the sources of public funds. It also will call for appropriate prioritization and phasing of infrastructure to align with revenue generating private investments. Priority public investments will likely need to include those that are required to allow development to proceed, and improvements designed to grow the market by attracting Oak Creek residents and visitors to the waterfront in the near term through access improvements and place defining public realm enhancements. Clear communication about funding sources for implementation of early phase infrastructure improvements and the timeframe for completion can demonstrate to private investors

the value of investing in Oak Creek's lakefront redevelopment site.

## Development Strategy

Finally, the City will need to make a public commitment to its approach to development of the site. The scale of the site, and the extended timeframe likely for full development, lends itself to the involvement of multiple developers. However construction of below and above-grade infrastructure that builds value over time through a welcoming and coherent public realm calls for one or more entities to take on the role of master developer – for the entire site or for parcels associated with different phases of development. The City can play this role, WisPark can play this role, or one or more third parties can play this role. As the City seeks to attract private investors for the first phases of development, communicating a strategy for the later phases will be important, as will documenting or encoding the City's commitment to future implementation.

Oak Creek's lakefront redevelopment represents a significant undertaking in both time, public and private funds, and commitment to the project. Redevelopment need not wait until concrete answers to the above questions – brownfields remediation, infrastructure investment, and developer strategy – are identified for the entire site. Rather, communicating as clear a long-term vision as possible should be a goal in working to attract investors for the site's initial phases, providing them with the confidence that there

is sufficient clarity of funding, timing and implementation commitment for later phases for their investment to achieve desired returns.

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## Project Priorities

Redevelopment of the lakefront will be a long-term process. Some public realm elements could occur as early as next year, while some recommended private redevelopments, especially on the northern portion of the project area, are not likely for more than a decade. In an era of constrained public budgets at all levels and depressed private real estate markets, public improvements and private investments will be a slow but steady process.

This action plan focuses on the public realm improvements that will be necessary to create the market conditions that will support private investment.

This plan does not include a strict phasing schedule for projects. In challenging economic times and competitive granting environments, project phasing is directed by the availability of funding and implementation partners. At worst, a strict phasing schedule means that implementation partners will miss opportunistic funding sources for projects that are listed as “long term.”

Due to existing infrastructure investments, property ownership, environmental issues, and site access, redevelopment activities are expected to begin at the southwest and southeast corners, extend along the lakefront, and then proceed to the west and north.

Vehicle and pedestrian/bicycle access must first be improved through an extension of Highway 100 and connection to 5th Avenue. Initial

demonstration programs like the lakefront community playground will change the community’s perception of this “forgotten” section of lakefront, garnering additional public support for continued investment in infrastructure.

Project phasing should follow the existing pattern. Create close working relationships with granting agencies and potential partners, and then watch closely. As opportunities arise for any portion of any priority project, the opportunity should be pursued.



<b>Project</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<b>Implementation Partners</b>
Bluff Stabilization	Coastal Management Grant	Parcel owners, WisDNR
Contamination Clean Up	EPA Assessment Grants, Brownfield Site Assessment Grants, BEBR	Parcel owners, WisDNR
1./2. KRM Station, Station Square	CMAQ	Regional transit providers, AMTRAK
6. Nature interpretive center	Recreational Trails Program	Milwaukee County Parks and Recreation, WisDNR, local environmental groups
7. Public Park Pavilion – public structure for gathering and vendors	CDBG-Public Facilities	Private operators
8. Lakeshore Terrace – formal staircase to lakeshore	LAWCON, CDBG-Public Facilities	WisDNR
9. Pathway to Lake – ADA accessible path from bluff to lake	Stewardship, CDBG-Public Facilities	WisDNR
10. Bluff Pathway along lake	Recreational Trails Program, WisDOT	Milwaukee County Parks and Recreation
11. Lake Edge Pathway, Connection to Bender Park – multi-purpose path parallel to lakeshore	LAWCON, Stewardship, Coastal Management	Milwaukee County Parks and Recreation
12. Pathway Continuation to Bender Park – multi-purpose path connecting recreational area to Bender Park	CMAQ, LAWCON	
13. Observation Points – sitting and gathering	LAWCON, CDBG-Public Facilities	
14. City Park Recreation Fields	Stewardship, CDBG-Public Facilities	Local athletic and recreation groups
15. Park Family Activity Area – lakefront family playground	LAWCON, CDBG-Public Facilities, Ready Set Go!	
17. Carrollville Green – public square between East Depot and East American Avenue	CDBG-Public Facilities	
18. Carrollville Green Public Parking Lots	Transportation Economic Assistance, WisDOT	
24. 5th Avenue Boulevard	Transportation Economic Assistance, Transportation Enhancements Program, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program	

<b>Project</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<b>Implementation Partners</b>
25. Bike Connections	Recreational Trails Program, CMAQ, LAWCON, Transportation Enhancements Program, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program	Local bicycling groups
26. Lakefront Drive Parkway – site access across to lakefront and recreational facilities	Transportation Enhancements Program, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program, CDBG-Public Facilities	WisDOT, Milwaukee County
27. Highway 100 extension	WisDOT, CMAQ, CDBG-Public Facilities	WisDOT, Milwaukee County

