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VILLAGE OF WINTHROP HARBOR Comprehensive Plan

August 2016





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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan outlines the vision of a community's desired physical environment as well as the process that will allow it to realize that vision. In addition to providing a well-defined framework for the community's development and investment goals, the plan seeks to explore and promote new opportunities and changing community trends.

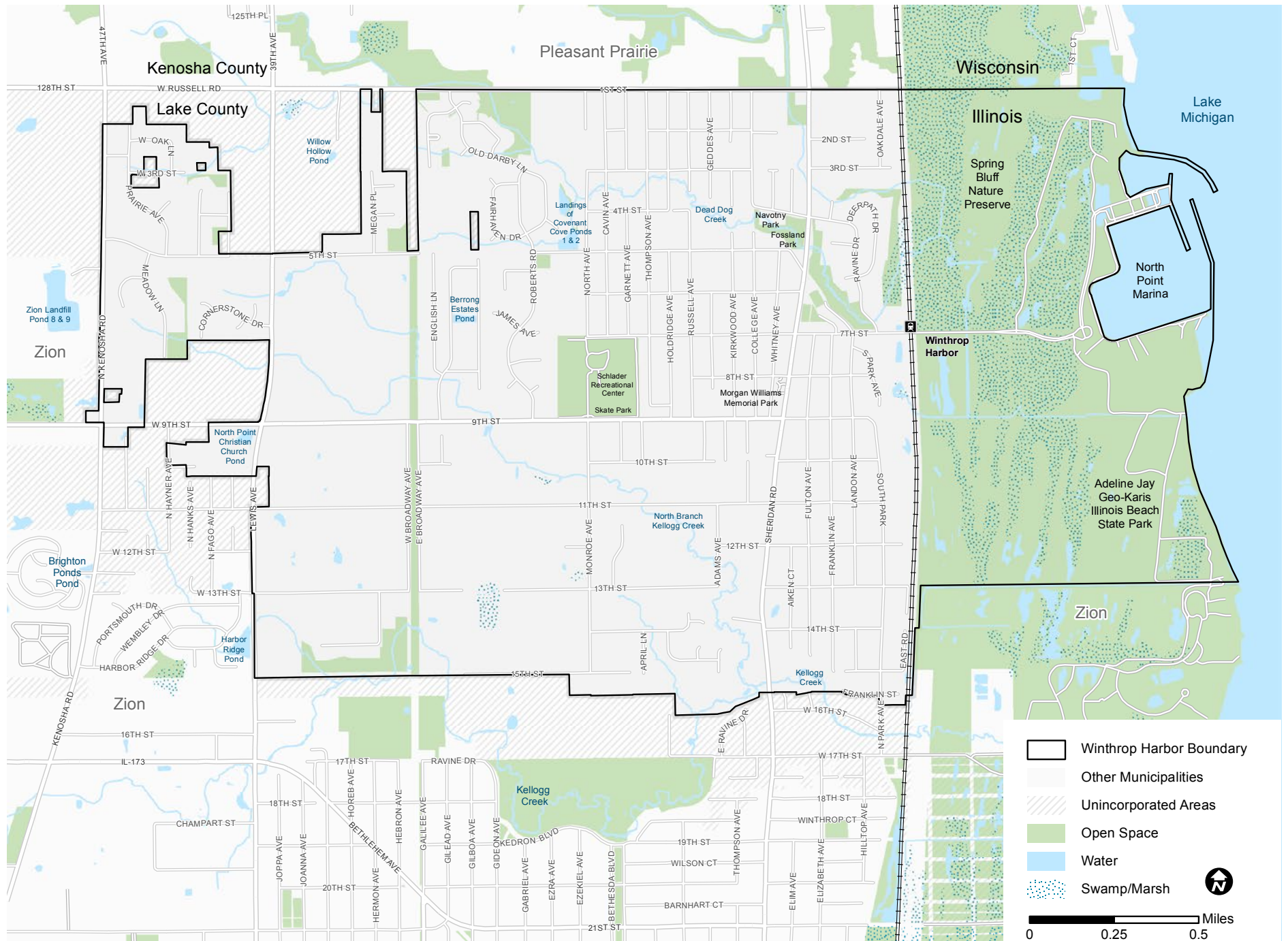
Typically a comprehensive plan is written to provide guidance for a community to work towards its vision over the next 15 to 20 years. Although the plan should be viewed as a long-term document, it should also be used daily by the community to assist in land use and development decisions. The plan serves as a guide for elected officials, municipal staff, community residents, business owners, and potential investors, allowing them to make informed administrative and implementation choices regarding land use, transportation, infrastructure, and capital improvements throughout the Village.

A comprehensive plan should also be considered flexible and one that can adapt with change. At any time the municipality can update its comprehensive plan to match local needs, interests, or opportunities. It is recommended that a municipality update its comprehensive plan every five years to keep it current.

A comprehensive plan is composed of a series of distinct yet interrelated elements defined within the Illinois Local Planning Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768). The key elements addressed in the Winthrop Harbor Comprehensive Plan are based upon those outlined in the State Statute and include land use, economic development, housing, natural resources, transportation, community facilities, image and identity, and implementation strategies.

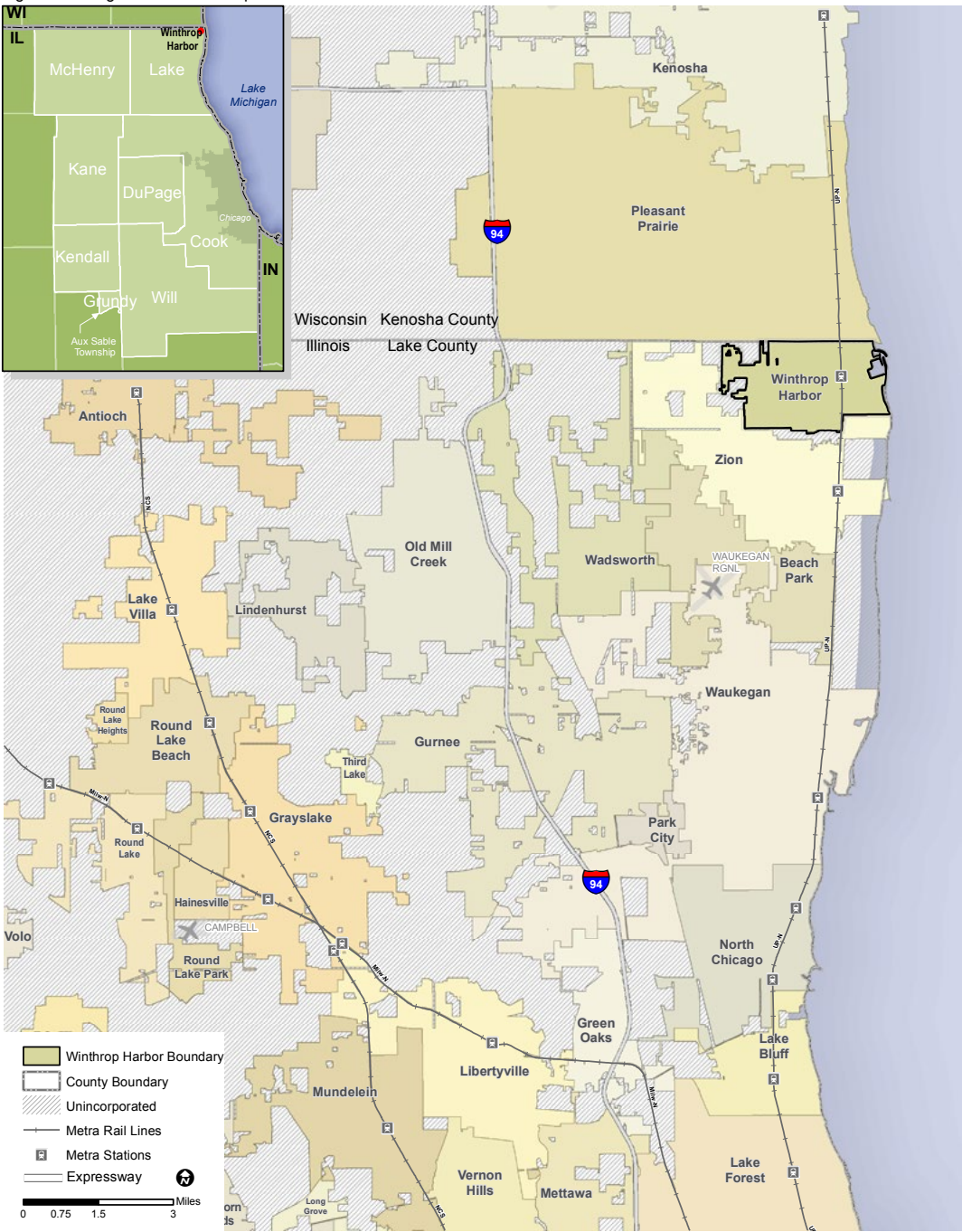
Under the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS) 5/11-12-5(1)), a municipal plan commission is responsible for preparing and recommending a “comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality.”

Map 1.1: Study Area Map



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

Map 1.2: Regional Location Map



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016

Why Does Winthrop Harbor Need a Comprehensive Plan?

The 1995 comprehensive plan projected a period of rapid economic and population growth for Lake County and Winthrop Harbor, and though the Village has grown in population since 1995, its growth has been modest. Over the past 20 years, Winthrop Harbor has experienced several challenges that have influenced its development character, economy, and social fabric. In light of these challenges, Winthrop Harbor needs a document that outlines methods to grow while retaining rural character; to capitalize on existing amenities such as diverse wildlife and an attractive natural environment, Lake Michigan, North Point Marina, Metra access, and good housing stock; to create a viable economic development strategy; and to re-engage State and County partners.

One of the key components of the plan is addressing the limited Village interaction with the lakefront and Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) recreational amenities. The Illinois Beach State Park draws an average of 1.7 million visitors annually and is adjacent to the largest recreational boating launch site in the Great Lakes, North Point Marina. However, the Marina and beaches are property of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and most of Village development is inland, separated by environmentally protected land. Another key plan component is to discuss shifting demographics. Formerly a community of families, Winthrop Harbor has experienced a decrease in average household size, greater representation from residents older than 50, and a smaller population of school-age children. Examining and projecting demographics into the coming decade will create an updated community vision. Finally, annexation of Benton Township properties by both Winthrop Harbor and Zion has landlocked the Village, and new development must now be focused within Village borders.

In response to these changes, the Village has demonstrated foresight in undertaking initiatives that look at short and long-term growth strategies. These include studies for North Point Marina, Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, the Metra station area, the Sheridan Road corridor, and

the 7th Street corridor. While these initiatives are in various stages of implementation, they address specific issues and are limited in their scope. The plan will help create a consensus-based, community-wide vision for the future of Winthrop Harbor, addressing issues that have thus far not been covered by other studies.

The comprehensive plan will specifically benefit the Village by:

- **Fostering more cooperation and communication** between local and regional stakeholders including the State of Illinois, IDNR, LCFPD, and neighboring Zion, Beach Park, and Pleasant Prairie.
- **Maintaining the character and economic development potential** of the Village
- **Promoting transportation investments** that would create a safer and more attractive physical environment for all demographics.
- **Encouraging in-fill development** within the Village's already developed areas while protecting environmentally sensitive and agriculturally productive lands. The Plan recommends the type, location, and intensity of future development, and provides assurance to property owners that they will not be adversely affected by unexpected development.
- **Prioritizing implementation actions** in the short, mid, and long term, allowing Village officials to focus their efforts on discreet and well-defined tasks.
- **Emphasizing fiscal sustainability** in future development.
- **Providing a foundation for rational decision-making** in land use regulations and municipal decisions.
- **Improving implementation** by setting realistic and achievable goals.

Organization and Process

The Winthrop Harbor Comprehensive Plan is organized into the following chapters.

Chapter 1 Introduction: describes the purpose of the comprehensive plan and the process utilized to create the Plan.

Chapter 2 Plan Overview: outlines the major concepts or ‘themes’ that run throughout the document and highlights how these are addressed in each of the plan chapters.

Chapter 3 Vision Statement and Future Land Use Plan: contains a series of community goals identified through the planning process. Also contains the future land use map, along with definitions of the various land use classifications proposed in the map. It translates the community’s vision into physical terms, providing a general pattern for the location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses.

Chapter 4 Residential Areas Plan: identifies recommendations to improve housing diversity, develop incomplete subdivisions, and promote sustainable residential growth.

Chapter 5 Commercial Areas Plan: identifies recommendations to enhance commercial activity in the Downtown District and along Sheridan Road, as well as multi-jurisdictional efforts to increase the region’s commercial competitiveness.

Chapter 6 Natural Areas and Recreation Plan: includes recommendations to expand recreational amenities, improve multi-jurisdictional collaboration, improve marketing, and reduce water loss.

Chapter 7 Transportation Investments: contains roadway, transit, and non-motorized transportation recommendations that would increase mobility options for all age groups, support economic growth, and improve the community’s image.

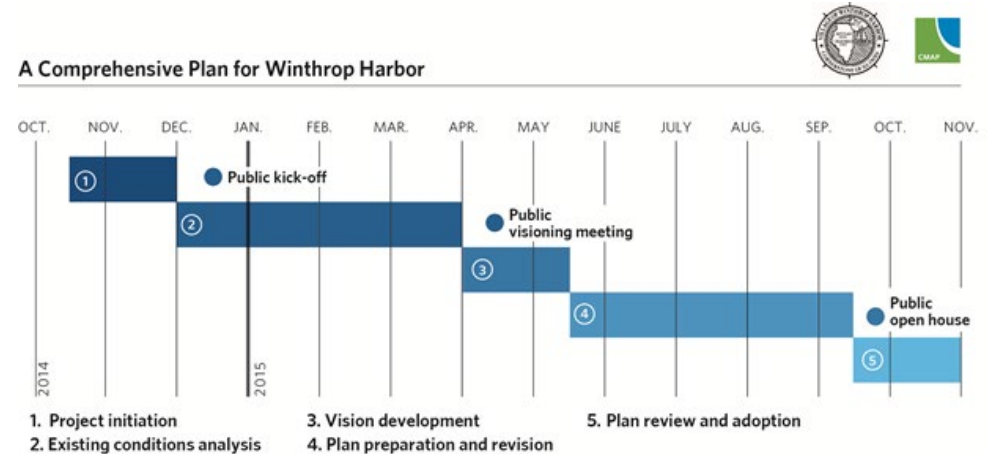
Chapter 8 Next Steps: includes a description of actions to be undertaken by the Village after Plan adoption.

Appendix A: includes the existing conditions report and community outreach summary for the project.

Process

The planning process to create the comprehensive plan includes multiple steps over a 15-18 month period. The process was crafted with assistance from Village staff and designed to include resident and business owner input.

The key steps in the planning process are illustrated in the following flow chart.



Chapter 2

PLAN OVERVIEW



Plan Overview

The comprehensive plan is organized into chapters that correspond with the Village's major land uses: residential areas, commercial areas, natural areas, and transportation infrastructure. While each chapter contains recommendations that are unique in terms of geography and implementation actions, there are a number of commonalities, or overarching 'themes,' that run throughout the document. This chapter provides a thematic summary of the plan and identifies the places in which these commonalities appear.

2.1: Overarching Themes

2.1.1: Sustainable development practices

The plan emphasizes the need to balance new investment with maintaining the Village's unique natural resources, important for attracting that investment. To this end, large-lot single-family subdivisions like those built in the past decade are discouraged in future sites in favor of better design for onsite natural resources and smaller environmental footprints.

Similarly, commercial development should be market driven in terms of the square footage and types, and strategically located to benefit the greatest number of stakeholders. Not doing so will negatively impact not only new development, but also affect existing landowners and businesses and influence future investments.

The following strategies are proposed at various points in the plan to promote economically and environmentally sustainable development:

- **Separate land use categories** for undeveloped residential and commercial parcels containing significant environmental features, and encouraging they remain undeveloped until existing areas have been substantially developed (see Vision Statement and Future Land Use Plan, Natural Areas and Recreation Plan).
- **Encourage conservation design** on parcels containing environmental features (see Residential Areas Plan and Natural Areas and Recreation Plan).
- **Focus near-term commercial development** in the downtown district and at key intersections along Sheridan Road, instead of undeveloped parcels (see Commercial Areas Plan).

2.1.2: Infrastructure investment

Improving and sustaining infrastructure is identified as a priority within the Comprehensive Plan. The major types of infrastructure improvements addressed in the Plan are related to transportation and open space. To allocate funding in a strategic manner, the Village will need to develop two plans: a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and a Capital Maintenance Plan (CMP). A CIP is a short-range plan, typically with a five-year span, that identifies capital projects to be implemented or planned for, provides a planning schedule, and identifies financing options. The plan is typically updated every year to add to or adjust the project list, projected expenses, and sources of revenue. Installing new infrastructure or substantially replacing or upgrading of old infrastructure are considered capital improvement projects. Foreseeable upgrades encompass water, sewer, stormwater, roadway network, intersection improvements, signage and wayfinding, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The CIP identifies needed expenditures to maintain existing infrastructure, and prevent premature failure and increased costs.

The Village should utilize the Comprehensive Plan as a reference guide to create the CIP. The strategies included in the following chapters have been divided into short-term, ongoing, and long-term timelines. The CIP should focus on implementing short-term actions, wherever applicable. Examples of projects to be included in the Village's CIP are:

- **Installing gateway features** at the main entry points to the downtown district that tie in with visual treatments around the station area.
- **Planting additional street trees** as needed to create a consistent canopy.
- **Repair and replace park equipment** in Schlader Recreation Center and expand the park to include a sandbox, a toddler area and additional picnic areas.

2.1.3: Regulatory changes

The comprehensive plan recognizes the importance of well-written regulations and effective enforcement in realizing the community's future vision, from the revitalization of commercial properties to the preservation of natural features. The regulatory documents recommended for revision throughout the plan are the zoning and subdivision ordinances, which regulate, among other things, permitted uses of land, site layouts, lot sizes, density, yard requirements, building heights, parking, accessory uses and buildings, and treatment of natural resources.

Updated ordinances will not only help Village officials in making smart development choices but also make it easier for private sector developers to understand the Village's needs and expectations, and be encouraged to work with a community where the administrative processes are streamlined.

Updated regulations will positively impact various aspects of the community's physical character by:

- **Creating high-density nodes** along Sheridan Road. (See Commercial Areas Plan.)
- **Incorporating design standards** for buildings, landscape, and signage in the commercial areas. (See Commercial Areas Plan)
- **Adding parks** in the southern portion of the community and **preserving areas with significant natural resources**. (See Natural Areas and Recreation Plan)
- Encouraging demonstration projects to **reduce stormwater runoff** and market its benefits. (See Natural Areas and Recreation Plan)

2.1.4: Multi-jurisdictional collaboration

The economic, environmental, and transportation challenges faced by Winthrop Harbor in many cases extend beyond its municipal boundaries. To address these issues, multi-jurisdictional collaboration is emphasized repeatedly in the comprehensive plan chapters. The plan contains recommendations related to economic development, natural resources protection, and transportation improvements calling for the Village to reach outside its political boundaries and work closely with neighboring Zion, Beach Park, Waukegan, Pleasant Prairie in Wisconsin, LCFPD, IDNR, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and other regional entities. These partnerships will be critical to the successful and sustainable growth of the Village and region.

More specifically, the comprehensive plan recommends the following partnerships to address a diversity of issues:

- Lake County and State of Illinois to work directly with homeowners to **help address the various housing constraints** faced by senior citizens. (See Residential Areas Plan)
- State Representative, IDNR, and LCFPD, and neighboring communities on efforts to **improve the lakefront and improve access** to Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, North Point Marina, and Illinois Beach State Park. (See Commercial Area Plan, Natural Areas and Recreation Plan, and Transportation Investments Plan)
- IDOT on **streetscape improvements** to Sheridan Road, **bicycle-pedestrian improvements**, and improved access to Spring Bluff Nature Preserve and lakefront. (See Natural Areas Plan and Transportation Investments Plan)
- Metra, Pace, Zion, and Waukegan, on **expanded Pace bus service** and **increased frequency of service** to Waukegan. (See Transportation Investments Plan)

Chapter 3 VISION STATEMENT AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



Vision Statement

The public visioning process yielded a series of desired outcomes that serve as the foundational basis for drafting the comprehensive plan recommendations.

- *The Village of Winthrop Harbor will enhance the existing high quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors through a diversity of land uses while respecting the high-quality natural resources within the community.*
- *The Village of Winthrop Harbor will preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods while supporting new development in strategic locations that result in a diversity of housing types and densities to accommodate future needs and complement community character.*
- *The Village of Winthrop Harbor will help create a sustainable and diverse municipal tax base that fulfills the retail needs of residents, the needs of visitors, and attracts an array of users from the region to its unique destinations.*
- *The Village of Winthrop Harbor will maximize recreational and open space opportunities available to its residents by:*
 - *Promoting the unique recreational and open space opportunities available to its residents given the extensive and impressive inventory of parks within its boundaries operated by the Village, Lake County and the State of Illinois;*
 - *Programming the use of all the open spaces within its boundaries regardless of jurisdictional control; and*
 - *Creating new neighborhood parks and open spaces when appropriate in underserved areas of the Village.*
- *The Village of Winthrop Harbor will create an efficient transportation network that removes barriers to local circulation for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians, while creating attractive and inviting gateways into the community for the region's visitors.*

Future Land Use Plan

Specific community desires for each type of land use are described in the following chapters. The future land use plan translates the aforementioned vision statements onto a physical map. The following definitions describe each land use category proposed in the future land use map.

Traditional Residential: These parcels contain single-family detached homes in a variety of lot sizes. Certain parcels within this District can accommodate neighborhood parks and recreational amenities that service the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Residential: These parcels accommodate a combination of detached single-family homes, attached single-family homes, and multi-family residential development. Certain parcels within this District can accommodate neighborhood parks and recreational amenities that service the neighborhood.

Environmentally Sensitive Residential: These undeveloped parcels contain wetlands, floodplains, marshes, ravines, and streams, and will be developed for residential use in a context-sensitive manner so as not to disrupt the natural ecosystem. Some of these parcels have been identified as priority green infrastructure areas in the Kellogg Creek Watershed Based Plan.

Downtown District: These parcels contain a mix of residential, retail, and institutional uses arranged in a compact and pedestrian-friendly development pattern. Buildings should preferably be configured as mixed-use with residential units above retail centers or as single-use buildings interconnected in a pedestrian-friendly manner. The intent of this district is to serve as the Village's cultural and economic hub.

Commercial Node: These parcels contain a mix of retail uses arranged in a compact and pedestrian-friendly development pattern around a major intersection. Residential uses above retail uses are strongly encouraged at these nodes.

Infill Commercial: These parcels are situated along Sheridan Road and contain a variety of retail, employment, and institutional uses arranged within single buildings or separate buildings. Density of development will typically be lower than in commercial nodes. Building and site layouts will be designed to create an attractive Sheridan Road corridor.

Local Commercial: These parcels contain retail, office, and service-oriented commercial uses that serve the needs of households within a walking or short-driving distance of residential neighborhoods.

Environmentally Sensitive Commercial: These undeveloped parcels contain wetlands, floodplains, marshes, ravines, and streams, and will be developed for commercial use in a context-sensitive manner so as not to disrupt the natural ecosystem. Some of these parcels have been identified as priority green infrastructure areas in the Kellogg Creek Watershed Based Plan.

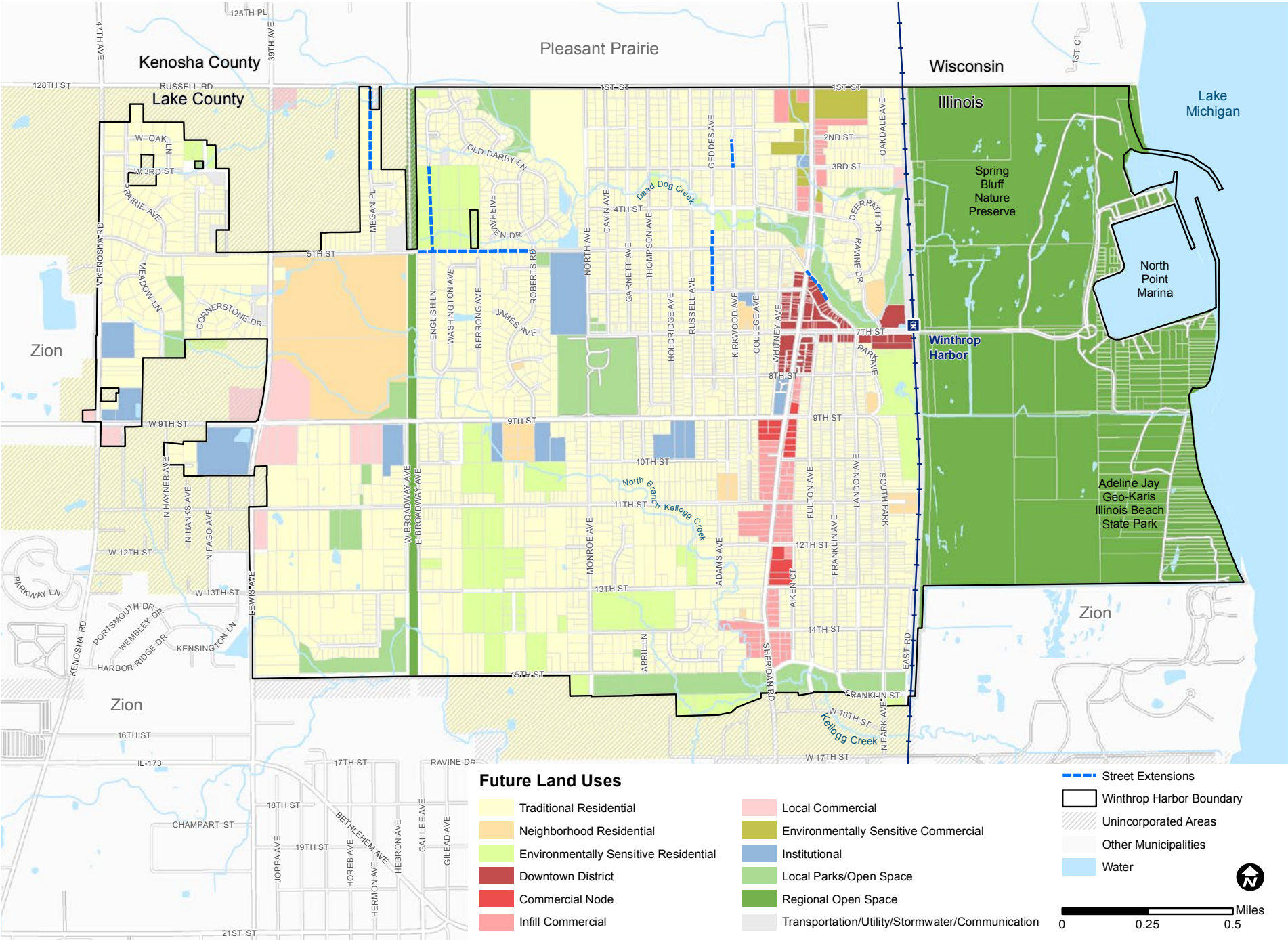
Institutional: These parcels include existing institutional uses (religious organizations, hospitals, schools, public facilities) in the Village.

Local Parks/Open Space: These parcels contain recreational areas under the ownership of the Village of Winthrop Harbor. Detention areas, private open spaces, and areas under Lake County and the State of Illinois jurisdiction are not included in this category.

Regional Open Space: These parcels include natural areas and open space under non-local jurisdiction. These include Spring Bluff Nature Preserve under LCFPD jurisdiction, the Robert McClory Bike Trail under Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT), the North Point Marina Complex, and the northern unit of Illinois Beach State Park under IDNR.

Transportation/Utility: This category of the map includes land dedicated to the operation of public infrastructure. The category includes roadways and rights-of-way, sanitation, water management, and energy distribution (electricity and gas).

Map 3.1: Future Land Use Plan



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

A scenic view of a residential area. In the foreground, a calm pond reflects the surrounding landscape. A large, mature weeping willow tree with long, drooping branches stands prominently on the grassy bank. To the left, a small fountain sprays water into the air. In the background, several houses are visible, including a two-story white house with a balcony and a brown house to the left. The sky is clear and blue. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the chapter title.

Chapter 4 RESIDENTIAL AREAS PLAN

Residential Areas Plan

The Village of Winthrop Harbor will preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods while supporting new development in strategic locations that result in a diversity of housing types and densities to accommodate future needs and complement community character.

4.1: Summary of Existing Conditions

The primary housing challenges identified through the existing conditions analysis include; a lack of housing diversity, specifically multifamily housing; and several incomplete single-family housing subdivisions where infrastructure has been partially or fully extended, but empty lots remain. This chapter identifies policies and actions to help Village officials address these concerns through local and multi-jurisdictional efforts. The recommendations have been divided into near-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-10 years) to help Village departments and elected officials prioritize limited staff and funding sources.

4.1.1: Lack of housing diversity

Forty-three percent of the Village's total acreage is residential. Out of this, single-family residential parcels account for 97.4 percent, or 1,158 acres. While multifamily development is more compact and takes fewer acres per unit in general, multifamily housing in the Village is limited. A majority of single-family homes are located on 10,000 to 20,000-square-foot

lots. Smaller lots laid out along a grid street pattern are found in the Village's original neighborhoods whereas larger-lot and newer subdivisions are concentrated in the western half of the Village. Multifamily units are dispersed throughout the Village.

The predominantly single-family housing stock has resulted in a higher rate of homeownership compared to the county and region. The Village's percent of owner occupancy (82.3 percent) is greater than the County (76.6 percent) and region (65.5 percent). Despite Winthrop Harbor's aging demographic, there are no senior housing developments in the community. Long-time residents have expressed the desire to stay in the community, and should they decide to downsize, the available housing options may not meet their needs. Median age has increased by almost 5 years over the past decade and the percent of residents older than 50 years climbed from approximately 25 percent to 37 percent in 2010. The Metra station and downtown district have been identified as potential areas for multifamily growth in previous studies.

Figure 4.1: Residential Acreage and Units by Type

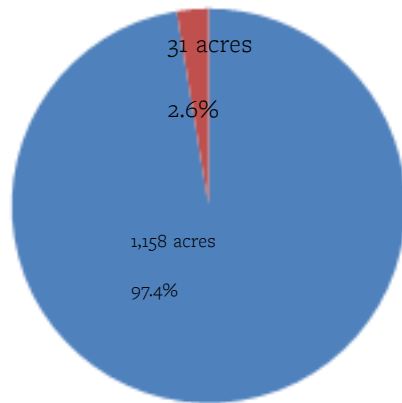
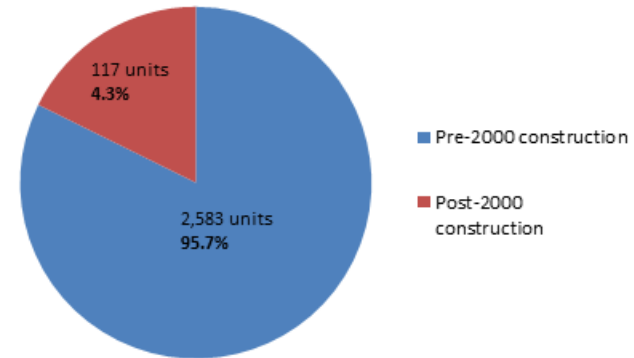
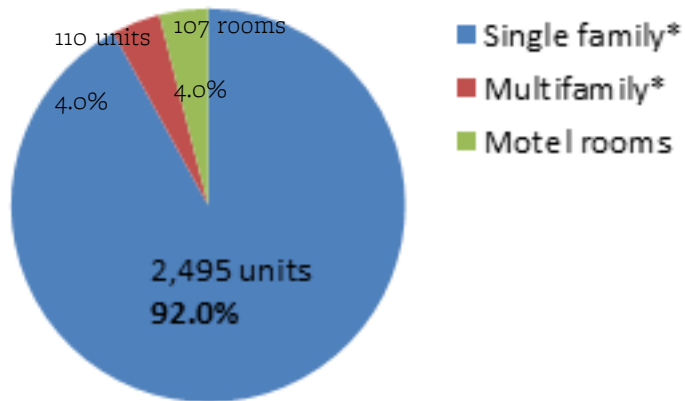


Figure 4.2: Age of Housing Retail market



Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey.



Sources: CMAP 2010 Land Use Inventory, 2008-2012 American Community Survey.
 Note: *Single family includes attached (townhomes and duplexes); multifamily includes mixed-use properties that contain housing. Hotels and motels are considered commercial land and are not included in the acreage calculation.

Table 4.1: Population and Households, 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Population	6,240	6,750	6,762
Housing Units	2,140	2,435	2,399
Change in Population from Previous	-	-3.2%	0.2%
Change in Units from Previous	-	13.8%	-1.4%
Source: 1990-2010 U.S. Census			

4.1.2: Incomplete subdivisions

Several housing subdivisions built after the year 2000 are in varying stages of completion. While the 2008 housing crisis played a significant role in the decreased demand for new single-family homes nationwide, an evaluation of Winthrop Harbor residential developments built post-2000 reveal several partially completed subdivisions. No new subdivisions have been approved since 2006.

4.2: Recommendations

The future land use plan in **Chapter 3** recommends four housing classifications: traditional residential, which would consist exclusively of single-family detached homes; neighborhood residential, which would support a mix of detached and attached single-family homes; environmentally sensitive residential, which would promote conservation design and compact housing designs; and the downtown district, which would contain multifamily housing in a walkable mixed-use environment. These classifications will help address the lack of housing diversity, specifically multifamily housing.

4.2.1: Prioritize residential development

To help Village officials determine the phasing of development that allows physical infrastructure and municipal services to accommodate future growth, the comprehensive plan proposes that parcels be distributed into near-term priority sites and future growth areas. These are shown in Appendix A Existing Conditions Report Figure 7.3. Priority sites include vacant parcels in existing subdivisions, parcels that have been recently planned or platted for residential development, and parcels that were part of a recent zoning change. The village should encourage development of these serviced lots before the development of new residential subdivisions. Additionally, the Village should amend the zoning ordinance to permit limited development of non-conforming lots that have adequate infrastructure, including direct access to a sufficient road.

Future growth areas are currently undeveloped parcels that will meet the community's long-term housing needs. It is strongly recommended that these areas continue to serve their existing function as long as priority sites are available. Future growth areas are shown on Appendix A Existing Conditions Report. Figure 7.3.

The following strategies are applicable to all residential areas in the Village, but intended to provide more direction for completion of priority sites.

4.2.2: Diversify housing stock

Focus multifamily housing in downtown district. (Near-term)

The introduction of multifamily housing in strategic locations will help retain older residents in the community, as well as attract new residents looking for smaller housing types. The downtown district should be the foremost site Village officials market to developers for multifamily housing. The 2005 TOD plan and subsequent zoning district have established this area for higher-density housing and should be referred to by Village officials as part of any development discussions. The site is also ideal for senior housing given its proximity to the Metra station. More specific strategies to market the downtown district to investors are detailed in **Chapter 5: Commercial Areas Plan**. The parcels east of Park Avenue/ Landon Avenue are not considered to be high priority given the ability of the downtown district to accommodate near-term multi-family housing demand and the presence of significant environmental features on the station area sites which would make development more challenging. However, if the Village does receive development interest in the near-term for these sites, the Village should engage with developers and state the environmental constraints upfront.

Support Lewis Avenue and 5th Street development as proposed in preliminary plan. (Near-term)

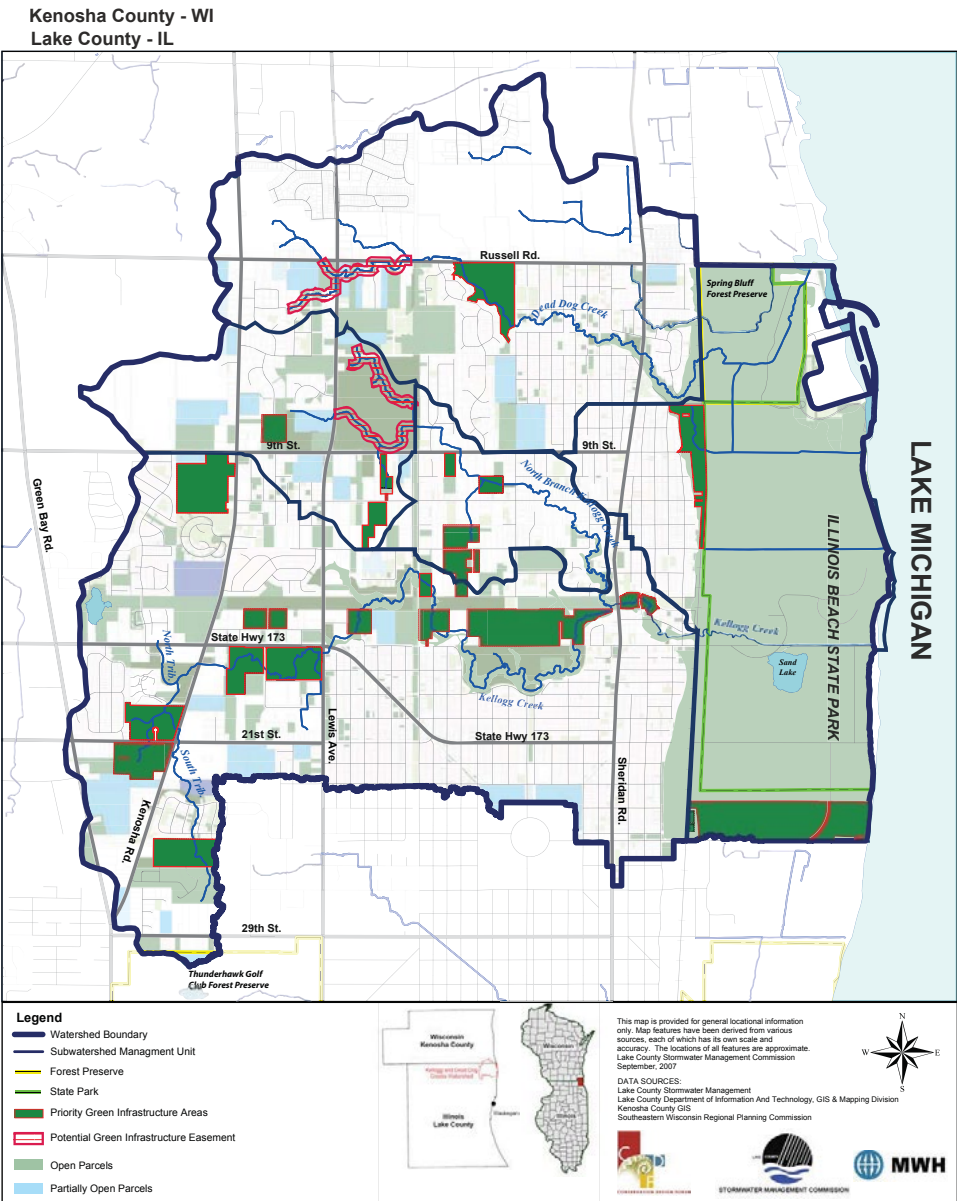
The 123-acre site was platted in 2004 for a mix of detached single-family homes, attached single-family homes, commercial development, and 44 acres of open space. This preliminary plat was recently renewed by the Village Board and provides another near-term opportunity to diversify the existing housing stock. Village officials should continue to work with the owner and developer of the site through the planned unit development (PUD) process to ensure that attached single-family housing and open space remain a central component of the final subdivision plat. The Kellogg Creek Watershed Plan recommends a green infrastructure easement along the creek running through the site in order to preserve environmental resources as well as protect the functioning of the connected green infrastructure network.

4.2.3: Complete existing subdivisions (Near-term)

The Village should support the completion of subdivisions. The following list provides information on the location, number of vacant parcels within each subdivision, and their ownership status. The Village should direct the attention of interested single-family home builders to these parcels prior to exploring new development areas. An online database containing information on vacant parcels would also help realtors, interested builders, and homeowners in their site selection process. Information on the completion status and ownership is from CMAP's New Development Database and Lake County GIS data.

- Walnut Hill, the extension of Pioneer (Pennsylvania Avenue cul-de-sac)
Completion status: 2 out of 10 single-family homes built
Ownership: Undeveloped parcels belong to original developer
- Oaks Addition 2 (April Lane)
Completion status: 8 out of 9 single-family homes built
Ownership: All parcels sold to individual homeowners
- Phase I of Country Manor (Megan Place and 5th Street)
Completion status: 20 out of 52 single-family homes built
Ownership: Undeveloped parcels belong to single owner
- Meadows of Kellogg Ravine (Creekside Court)
Completion status: 37 out of 39 single-family homes built
Ownership: Undeveloped parcels belong to single owner (bank)
- Covenant Courts (Chesapeake Bay and English Lane)
Completion status: 25 out of 29 single-family homes built
Ownership: Only one parcel belongs to developer and has not been sold to a private homeowner
- Pate's Subdivision
Completion status: 3 out of 10 single-family homes built
Ownership: varies as this was foreclosed.

Map 4.1: Prioritized Green Infrastructure Areas- Kellogg Creek Watershed Plan



PRIORITIZED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AREAS

4.2.4: Plan for future growth areas

Consider using conservation design as a tool to minimize impact on parcels with environmental features (Long-term)

In several instances, future growth areas will overlap with natural resources (Figure 4.2) such as streams, floodplains, and wetlands. These parcels are designated as environmentally sensitive residential parcels in the future land use map. While the Village does not currently face flooding and open space challenges, conservation design should be utilized as one of many tools to help tackle such issues in the future. Conservation design is an effective way to protect natural resources while still permitting development. It concentrates development on a smaller area of land in the interest of preserving open space and other natural features. An example of an effective implementation of conservation design in Lake County is [Prairie Crossing](#), located in Grayslake, Illinois.

Conservation design could be incorporated in the Village's regulatory documents, e.g. the zoning and subdivision ordinances in the future, as the need arises. Revising the codes would also help in implementing other objectives of the comprehensive plan related to transportation, land use, and the natural environment.

The following future growth areas are identified in Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report Figure 7.3:

- Transit-oriented housing next to Metra

Two parcels on either side of 7th street and west of the Metra tracks total to 22 acres and could be used for the development of multifamily units.

- Phase II of Country Manor

No infrastructure has been installed for this nine acre area, though the 5th Street connection recommended in Chapter 7: Transportation

Investments would form the southern border. This connection would make housing units in this area more accessible to North Prairie School, the Robert McClory Bike Trail, and Village Park.

- Megan Place and Russell Road, north of Phase I of Country Manor

Lined with homes in a similar style to Phase I of Country Manor, Megan Place could be extended to the north to connect to Russell Road. Lot sizes should be smaller than what exists in Country Manor to better align with conservation design. Total acreage is 27 acres.

- Unincorporated Parcels to the West and South

These are currently a combination of single-family residential and agricultural parcels that should be considered in the future for potential annexation and development.

4.2.5: Maintain and improve existing housing

Engage external agencies to assist in rehabilitation (Long-term)

The Village should engage elder interest groups to work directly with homeowners to help address the various housing constraints faced by senior citizens. Examples of partners are the Illinois Department on Aging and the Senior Service Coalition of Lake County. The [Illinois Department on Aging](#) provides information on senior services ranging from transportation services to healthcare to housing. The agency's website contains information for elderly residents looking to improve their existing homes. These include maintenance programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Illinois Home Weatherization Program, and Home Maintenance and Repair Programs, as well as funding mechanisms like the Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption and General Homestead Exemption. More information on these programs is available on the agency's website.

The [Senior Citizen Coalition of Lake County](#) represents a number of

organizations, senior facilities, care providers, and legislators who are working at the local, state and federal levels to improve services for senior citizens in northern Illinois. The Village should reach out to the organization and gain a better understanding of their support services. This information should be made available to residents via the website as well as through the Village newsletter and at community events.

Educate homeowners (Long-term)

The education of local homeowners on how to apply for and succeed in receiving grant assistance for remodeling and renovation is important. Though funding and applications are administered through external agencies, the Village can be an informational resource and first stop for residents who want to take advantage of government-supported assistance programs. Two such programs available to Winthrop Harbor residents are the 203(k) Rehab Mortgage Insurance Program and the Title I Property Improvement Loan Program. The 203(k) program, administered through the Federal Housing Administration and its approved lenders, allows homeowners to finance repairs of more than \$5,000 to their existing residences. The program also allows borrowers to finance up to \$35,000 into their existing mortgages. The Title I program is administered through the same agencies, but the list of lenders is different. Title I allows a homeowner to borrow up to \$25,000 for rehabilitating or remodeling their residence.

The Village should work with the Zion-Benton Library District to publicize information on grant programs offered to residents and homeowners in the District. Additionally, the Village website should be modified to contain a “resident services” section, containing all pertinent information and links for residents.

Incorporate universal design principles in building codes (Long-term)

As defined by the American Planning Association, universal design is a building code standard that promotes accessibility, safety, flexibility, functionality, simplicity, and comfort without compromising aesthetics of space. One of the key elements of universal design is visitability. As the term suggests, visitability specifically refers to the basic features of a home that would allow a person with a physical impairment access, such as through a door way, along hallways, and in/out of the bathroom. The Village’s Community Development Department should work with older residents who wish to make physical improvements to their homes, such as the installation of grab bars in bathrooms, widening of doors to allow wheelchairs to fit through, and other options to increase their accessibility. These improvements could be done through the provision of information to residents through home owners associations and property managers. The Village can refer to the [Village of Bolingbrook’s Visitability Ordinance](#) and the [City of Naperville’s Visitability Standards](#) for new homes as models from other communities in the region for such initiatives.

Chapter 5

COMMERCIAL AREAS PLAN



Commercial Areas Plan

The Village of Winthrop Harbor will help create a sustainable and diverse economic base that fulfills the retail needs of residents, the food and accommodation needs of visitors, and attracts an array of users from the region to its unique destinations.

5.1: Summary of Existing Conditions

The primary economic challenges identified through the existing conditions analysis include a limited food and accommodation sector for visitors, and the lack of a vibrant Sheridan Road corridor and downtown district. This chapter identifies policies and actions to help Village officials address these concerns through local and multi-jurisdictional efforts.

5.1.1. Underutilized regional assets

The key to the Village's economic success lies in reactivating the lakefront and providing a diversity of recreational opportunities that will be attractive to visitors and residents alike. The Village is home to several unique natural and recreational amenities including Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, the Illinois Beach State Park, public beaches, North Point Marina, and Robert McClory bike trail. While these assets would seem to be catalysts for tourism and resulting commercial activity, they have been unable to realize their true potential to date. The Marina is in need of upkeep and the Master Plan originally

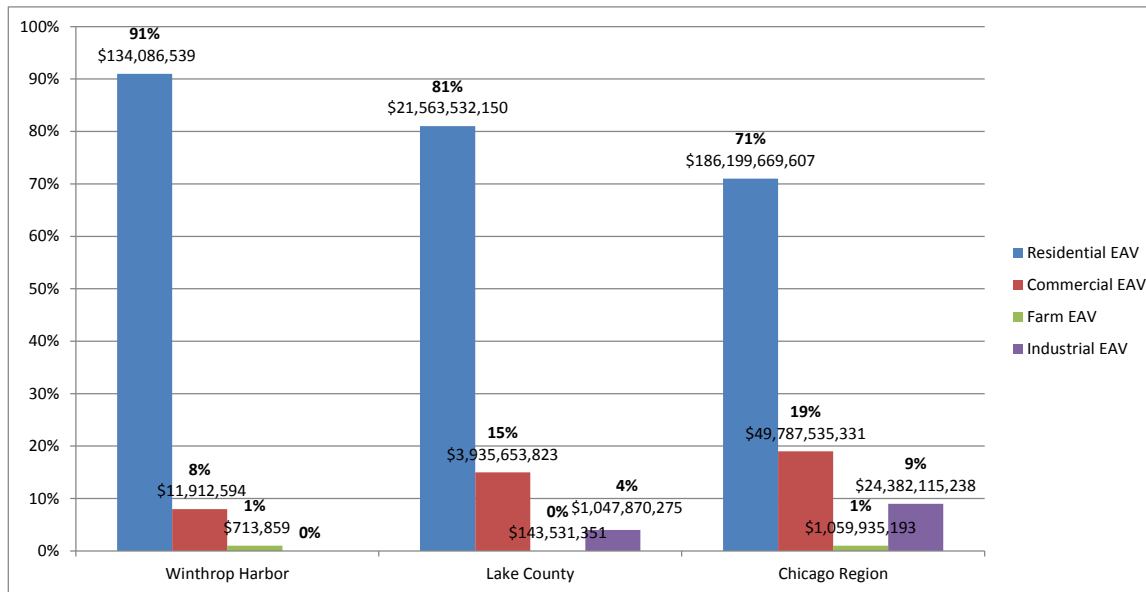
envisioned for the sites adjoining the Marina are yet to be implemented. Spring Bluff Nature Preserve is inaccessible to the general public and planned access improvements have been delayed due to budget constraints. The public beach and Illinois Beach State Park are lacking in terms of amenities and facilities for the general public, with the result that visitors choose to seek overnight accommodation in neighboring communities and frequent the State Park for limited hours during the day.

Capitalizing on the abovementioned assets to create a destination-based economy will be key in the upcoming years not only as it relates to revenue generation, but also creation of a vibrant downtown, Sheridan Road corridor, and overall image and identity of Winthrop Harbor.

5.1.2: Limited commercial sector

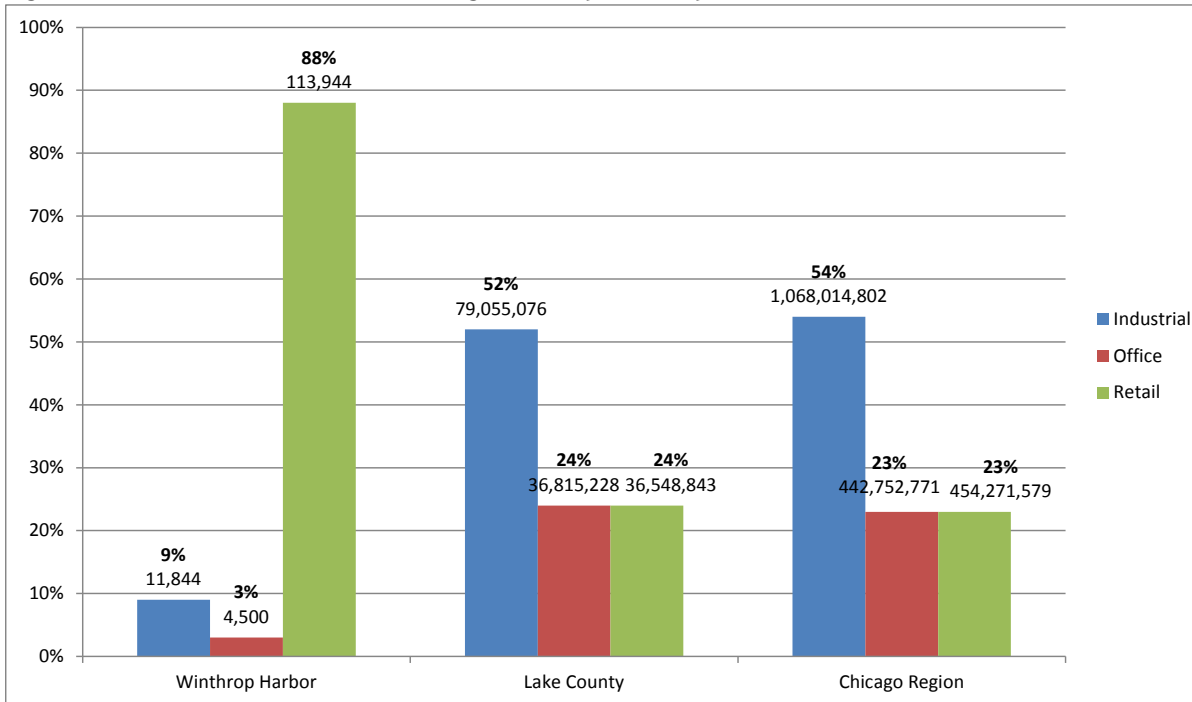
Winthrop Harbor is a largely residential community with a small employer base. Most businesses cater to local residents, with the largest employers serving governmental functions, North Point Marina, and the restaurant industry. The market potential to absorb new office and industrial businesses is relatively low as Winthrop Harbor competes with several established industrial hubs in Southeast Wisconsin and Lake County, and the office market is growing in other areas of the County including Deerfield and Northbrook. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 highlight the Village's residential character as well as the predominance of retailers amongst local businesses.

Figure 5.1: EAV Comparison, 2011



Source: Illinois Department of Revenue

Figure 5.2: Total Rentable Commercial Building Area Comparison (Square Feet), 2014



Source: CMAP Analysis of CoStar data

Winthrop Harbor's retail sector has continued to shrink over the past decade despite an increase in fishing charter businesses and visitors to the state park. Specifically within the accommodation and food services sector, employment has fallen significantly from 2002 to 2011, leading to the conclusion that visitors to the lakefront are not patronizing local businesses, choosing neighboring communities instead. Residents and stakeholders expressed the lack of good quality restaurants and chain-run hotels as primary reasons why yacht club members, recreational anglers, and Marina visitors chose to stay overnight and eat in neighboring communities such as Zion, Pleasant Prairie, and Kenosha.

5.1.3: Lack of vibrant corridors and downtown district

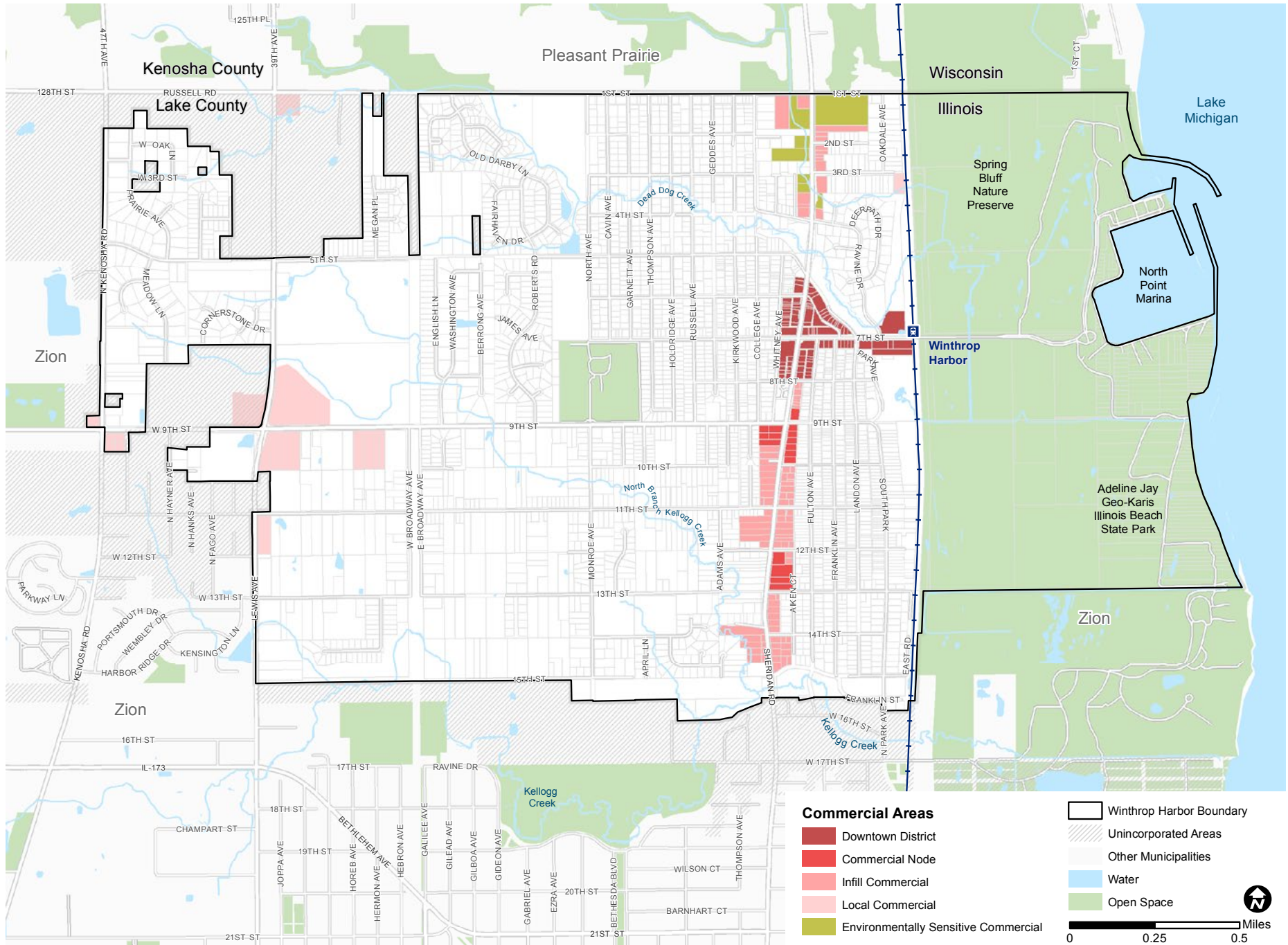
Sheridan Road serves as the gateway into Winthrop Harbor as well as its primary commercial corridor. A combination of poor building and streetscape conditions, fragmented retail uses, underutilized surface parking lots, and a lack of pedestrian-friendly environment make the corridor uninviting for customers. From 2006-2008, the Village operated a Façade Improvement Program through which the Village granted in total \$9,700 to businesses along Sheridan Road and 7th Street. The program was defunded in 2008 due to budget cuts. The Village also created a downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district in 2007 known as "The Triangle" in an effort to encourage redevelopment of key parcels and to create a walkable downtown district. Zoning for the district has been updated, streetscape improvements undertaken, and the Metra lot expanded to accommodate additional riders.

5.2: Recommendations

Commercial developments should be encouraged to consolidate at major nodes in the community to help create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly retail environment. This is shown in Map 5.1. The downtown district and the Sheridan Road corridor have been identified as two key sub-areas within Winthrop Harbor where future commercial development efforts should be focused. While additional opportunities for commerce will exist in other areas, the elected leadership and Community Development Department should focus personnel and funding resources in these two sub-areas. The recommended strategies in each sub-area may be applicable to other areas or throughout the community as well. The recommendations have been divided into near-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-10 years) to help Village departments and elected officials prioritize limited staff and funding sources.

While pursuing local efforts to boost economic activity, as outlined in this section, are important, the single most impactful activity that will ensure the Village's long-term economic prosperity will be leveraging the vibrant and regionally significant lakefront to create a tourism-based economy. The Village should continue to participate in the transformation of the marina, lakefront, natural preserves, and recreational areas in upcoming years. Immediate activities include coordination meetings with neighboring communities, IDNR, LCFPD, and the State Representative, monitoring the Request for Interest (RFI) issued by the IDNR, coordinating with LCFPD on improvements to Spring Bluff, and working with neighboring communities on beach clean-up efforts.

Map 5.1: Commercial Areas Plan



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

How to Create a Healthy Retail Market: Urban Land Institute (ULI) Workshop

On July 29, 2015, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) facilitated a panel discussion and workshop aimed at educating municipalities on how to determine their true economic potential. Participants included elected officials and department heads from the Village of Winthrop Harbor, City of Zion, and Village of Beach Park. Panelists comprised retail developer Todd Berlinghof (Partner, Hamilton Partners), civil engineer Pat Kennedy (Executive Vice President, V3 Companies), market analyst Bridget Lane (Director, Business Districts Inc.), and Cindy McSherry (Executive Director, ULI Chicago).

A few key thoughts on the retail market included:

- The Chicago region has experienced little retail sales growth over the past 10 years and the trend is likely to continue. There is an oversupply of retail in the region.
- Retail is shifting towards mixed-use districts instead of commercial corridors.
- Retail boundaries do not coincide with municipal boundaries; they often span multiple communities depending on population density, income levels, home values, and other characteristics.

Municipal actions to create a healthy retail environment include:

- Build positive relationships with neighboring communities.
- Market your trade area, not just your municipality.
- Seek and accept retailers that match your opportunity.
- Recognize that some sites are not (and will likely never be) retail sites.
- Choose developers who can deliver vs. those who are selling a dream.
- Identify opportunities to share costs and revenues with neighboring communities
- Don't forget your existing businesses.

5.2.1: Downtown district sub-area

In 2006, the Village created a station area and streetscape plan aimed at creating a walkable downtown district along 7th Street and along Sheridan Road between 6th Street and 8th Street. Since then, a portion of the area has been designated as a TIF district and a new zoning ordinance has been adopted to help stimulate reinvestment. To further implement the 2006 Plan, the Village should undertake the following actions.

Conduct developer discussion panel (Near-term)

As part of its plan implementation efforts, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) works with communities of recently completed Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plans to conduct developer discussion panels. This “ground-truthing” exercise examines key redevelopment parcels within the TOD area for their redevelopment potential and immediate steps required to make the site “ready” for development. The panel consists of a variety of real estate developers and is facilitated by the Urban Land Institute (ULI). A final report summarizes the panel’s recommendations and is meant to serve as an action plan for Village officials. The Community Development Department should reach out to RTA and apply for a Community Planning grant in 2016.

Pursue modifications to marketing approach (Near-term)

The Village has historically undertaken several efforts to market available sites through traditional methods. However, these have not yielded positive results. For the downtown district, which has generated a significant level of development interest, the Village should pursue an illustrative paper and web-based brochure that includes the following information:

- Site description
- Land use map
- Zoning map
- Site photos
- TIF district map
- List of nearby destinations
- Community demographics (e.g. population, households, median household income, median age, etc.)
- Daily traffic counts on Sheridan Road

Examples of marketing materials created by other municipalities include the [City of Brookfield, Wisconsin](#) and the [Village of East Dundee](#). The online version should be hosted on the Village and Chamber of Commerce website. Representatives from the Village should continue to attend regional and national events such as the International Convention of Shopping Centers (ICSC) national event, Midwest Deal Making Program, and ICSC Alliance Programs and use these materials during conversations with investors.

The Village should also explore alternative methods to get a more in-depth understanding of the retail market. Examples include psychographics, a methodology that attempts to show potential retailers that even though the overall population base may be fewer than they traditionally look for, there are a sufficient number within the lesser population that spend money on their product to support investment.

Host community events in downtown district to enhance public interest (Long-term)

In addition to generating greater interest from the development community, there is a need to establish the downtown district as the Village's central gathering place for residents and visitors. The Community Development Department should explore the possibility of hosting a Farmers Market and a seasonal street festival at the downtown district. These events would engage local civic groups, draw upon the assets of the community, and bring residents together. Additionally, the Village could partner with the Illinois Farmers Market Association in order to train a market manager and help vendors become licensed to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women Infant Children (WIC) benefits. This will allow the Winthrop Harbor Farmers Market to be more inclusive and draw in a wider demographic of people while helping low-income individuals and families to enjoy the benefits of locally-grown fresh produce. Lastly as the Harbor Days festival continues to grow annually, Winthrop Harbor Tourism and the Community Development Department should consider hosting some events in the downtown district.

Increase connectivity and access to the downtown district (Long-term)

The following improvements will help create safer access to the downtown district.

- Work with IDNR and LCFPD to extend existing sidewalk along 7th street to lakefront facilities. Currently, pedestrians must walk on the side of the road or in the bicycle lane, discouraging lakefront visitors from walking towards the downtown district.
- Construct a bicycle lane along 7th Street as recommended in the Transportation Chapter in Map 7.3.
- Collaborate with IDOT to install pedestrian and streetscape improvements at the intersection of 7th Street and Sheridan Road. While there is currently a painted crosswalk at the intersection, the narrow sidewalk and lack of streetscape make it uninviting. The Board of Trustees and the Public Works Department should work with IDOT to introduce traffic calming devices such as bump-outs at the crosswalks, install landscaping, and improve walkway connections, building upon recently completed improvements.

Undertake low-cost improvements (Near-term)

The Village should undertake low-cost physical improvements, either independently or in collaboration with private developers. The following are examples of potential improvements for Village officials and interested developers.

- Installing additional public art such as a mural or sculpture in the downtown district that relates to the community identity.
- Installing gateway features at the main entry points to the downtown district that tie in with the other visual treatments around the station area.
- Planting additional street trees as needed to create a consistent canopy. The Parks & Recreation Department can encourage local individuals and groups to plant and care for these trees as a part of Arbor Day celebrations in April.

5.2.2: The Sheridan Road corridor sub-area

The following strategies are meant to improve the visual and market conditions along Sheridan Road. When successfully implemented, these will lead to a vibrant and aesthetically appealing gateway into the Village for visitors and provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access for locals.

Modify zoning ordinance for Sheridan Road corridor (Near-term)

The future land use map identifies higher density development nodes along Sheridan Road. The following design standards for Sheridan Road should be considered during revision of the zoning ordinance.

- Create new zoning districts that align with the future land use map.
- Require dedicated pedestrian access from the main entrance of a private building to the abutting public sidewalk along Sheridan Road to enhance the walkability of the commercial corridor.
- Decrease setback requirements so commercial businesses along Sheridan Road can be closer to the street and more visible.
- Change the placement and quantity of parking along Sheridan Road. Off-street parking minimums for commercial businesses on Sheridan Road should be reduced and a limited number of on-street parking spaces should be created. Additionally, off-street parking should be moved behind buildings so patrons see the business rather than the parking lots. This will work in tandem with the zoning setback changes mentioned above.
- Minimum design standards as needed for building types, materials, location of mechanicals, etc.

5.2.3: Multi-jurisdictional collaboration

Multi-jurisdictional collaboration is emphasized throughout the comprehensive plan, and will play a key role in Winthrop Harbor's economic success. The Village should work closely with neighboring communities, LCFPD, IDOT, IDNR, and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), amongst others.

Undertake joint marketing of regional assets (Long-term)

It is important for Winthrop Harbor to establish working relationships with other local chambers of commerce in order to meet and engage with its neighboring communities, especially Pleasant Prairie in Wisconsin and lakefront communities in Illinois (Zion, Beach Park, and Waukegan). The Village leadership should proactively reach out to and collaborate with these communities to create a stronger and more competitive sub-region where communities are co-dependent for their economic success, rather than competing with each other for the same market.

Partner with the IDNR and LCFPD on improving amenities for visitors (Long-term)

Please refer to Chapter 6 for detailed information regarding this strategy.

Partner with Pace on transit improvements along Sheridan Road (Long-term)

Please refer to Chapter 7 for detailed information regarding this strategy.

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Chapter 6

NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION PLAN



Natural Areas and Recreation Plan

The Village of Winthrop Harbor will maximize recreational and open space opportunities available to its residents by; promoting the unique recreational and open space opportunities available to its residents given the extensive and impressive inventory of parks within its boundaries operated by the Village, Lake County and the State of Illinois; programming the use of all the open spaces within its boundaries regardless of jurisdictional control; and creating new neighborhood parks and open spaces when appropriate in underserviced areas of the Village.

6.1: Summary of Existing Conditions

The Village is faced with four key challenges in relationship to natural resources: a lack of connectivity to existing open space networks in the Village along with uneven distribution of open spaces; lack of Village control of major natural resource amenities; poor marketing within the region; and a high rate of water loss.

6.1.1: Gaps in open space network and connectivity

The Village has recreational amenities in the form of local parks. However, connectivity to all these

amenities by bike or pedestrian trails is disjointed and unclear. In addition, the distribution of open space in the Village is uneven, with most parks located north of 9th street.

6.1.2: Lack of municipal control of major amenities

Of the 898 acres of open space within municipal limits, 685 acres are managed by IDNR and LCFPD. These include; the platinum accredited Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, which also provides a critical link to Chiwaukee Prairie, the most-species-rich prairie in Wisconsin; North Point Marina, North Dunes Nature Preserve; Illinois Beach State Park; ravines; and, the Lake Michigan shoreline.

6.1.3: Lack of marketing amenities to region and locally

While the Village possesses a unique landscape that provides passive and recreational activities, there is limited awareness locally amongst residents as well as regionally. Long-time Village residents and Lake County and Village of Pleasant Prairie staff noted the lack of awareness of and need to better publicize municipal amenities.

6.1.4: Water use exceedance

While Winthrop Harbor's water allocation from Lake Michigan is 0.636 million gallons per day, it lost approximately 8.9 percent of its net annual pumpage. This exceeds the 8 percent state allocations for water loss in Illinois. Despite new allocation rules and higher water loss standards that have been recently approved

by IDNR, Winthrop Harbor still exceeds these limits. Additionally, the Village's current water allocation level can support approximately 500 additional housing units. With no assurance that the allocation will be increased to match future growth projections, it is important to practice water conservation.

6.2: Recommendations

The recommendations have been divided into near-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-10 years) to help Village departments and elected officials prioritize limited staff and funding sources.

6.2.1: Enhance local recreational amenities

There is a direct correlation between parkland and residents' quality of life. In addition to ecological functions, parks and cultural amenities can help to increase a community's marketability, improve public health, enhance aesthetic appeal, and therefore positively impact quality of life. The Parks and Recreation Department and other agencies should seek to enhance local amenities by strategically pursuing recommendations outlined in this section. Given limited resources, the Village should prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities followed by adding improvements to existing facilities followed by adding new facilities.

Pursue opportunities to create a local public library (Near-term)

Libraries serve as important cultural and social institutions by fostering reading skills in children, providing technology access to residents, and hosting community events and programs. The Village should work with the Zion-Benton Public Library District to open a satellite location in Winthrop Harbor. The library could be located along Sheridan Road adjacent to the existing municipal campus or near Schlader Recreation Center. A future library could feature educational displays and materials on natural resources found in the area and feature community gardens and green infrastructure projects in the Village. The Village should also encourage

the establishment of a Historical Society that could be housed in the new library facility.

At the very minimum, the Village should seek to re-establish the bookmobile service previously provided by the Library District and/or cooperative initiatives with the school district to provide library services to village residents through the existing school libraries.

Improve Schlader Recreation Center (Near-term)

Schlader Recreation Center is an important anchor and is the largest park under the Village's jurisdiction. Due to continuous use, the park and its facilities are in need of updates. The Parks and Recreation Department should seek to repair and replace any existing park equipment in need of updates and expand the park to include a sandbox, a toddler area and additional picnic areas. Improvements should be funded through a combination of external grant opportunities listed later in this section as well as through earmarking in the Village's budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Create Parks and Open Space Master Plan (Long-term)

In anticipation of future growth, the Parks and Recreation Department should create a long-term plan that would accommodate future demand in a phased and financially viable manner. The LCFPD and IDNR lakefront properties should be a part of the Plan. The Parks and Open Space Master Plan should contain the following, at a minimum:

- List and map existing properties and facilities.
- Identify underserved areas and gaps in service, as well as issues with existing facilities.
- Survey and list community needs and desires.
- Recommend improvements to existing operations, programming, administration, and communication practices.

- Identify future areas for expansion of parks, including locations for pocket parks both south of 13th Street and east of Sheridan Road.
- Recommend ways to improve connectivity with regional open spaces, e.g. Illinois Beach State Park, Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, and Chiwaukee Prairie.
- List funding sources, partners, and implementation priorities.

The Plan should be aligned, to the extent possible, with objectives of the recently approved [Lake County Forest Preserve 100-Year Vision and Strategic Plan](#).

Apply for grant funding for capital projects (Long-term)

The Village should explore a variety of ways to fund capital projects including government and non-government grant programs and corporate sponsorship of projects and/or special events. Examples of grant programs include:

- IDNR [Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development](#) (OSLAD) grant, which offers funding assistance to local governments to acquire and develop open space. This program is unavailable in 2016 but could become available in the future.
- IDNR [Park and Recreational Facility Construction](#) (PARC) grant, which provides grants to eligible local governments for park and recreation unit construction projects. This program is unavailable in 2016 but could become available in the future.
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant that offers funding assistance for open space projects.
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) [Section 319](#) grant to mitigate nonpoint source pollution and streambank stabilization.
- Funding from non-profit organizations including [KaBOOM](#), a national non-profit dedicated to developing the nation's recreational infrastructure for children.

The Village should also seek corporate sponsorships to fund capital projects. Possible opportunities include sponsoring special events or youth activities. Lastly, the Village should continue to support community groups that organize events similar to Harbor Days, which create awareness about local amenities and build local support.

Add parks in southern half of community (Long-term)

While a number of parks are available for resident use, a majority of these are located north of 9th Street. One way to address this spatial inequity is by adding parks to the southern portion of the Village in proximity to streams and wetlands. The Proposed Parks Map (Map 6.1) identifies new parks and open space that could serve the recreational needs of existing and future residents in that area. These include:

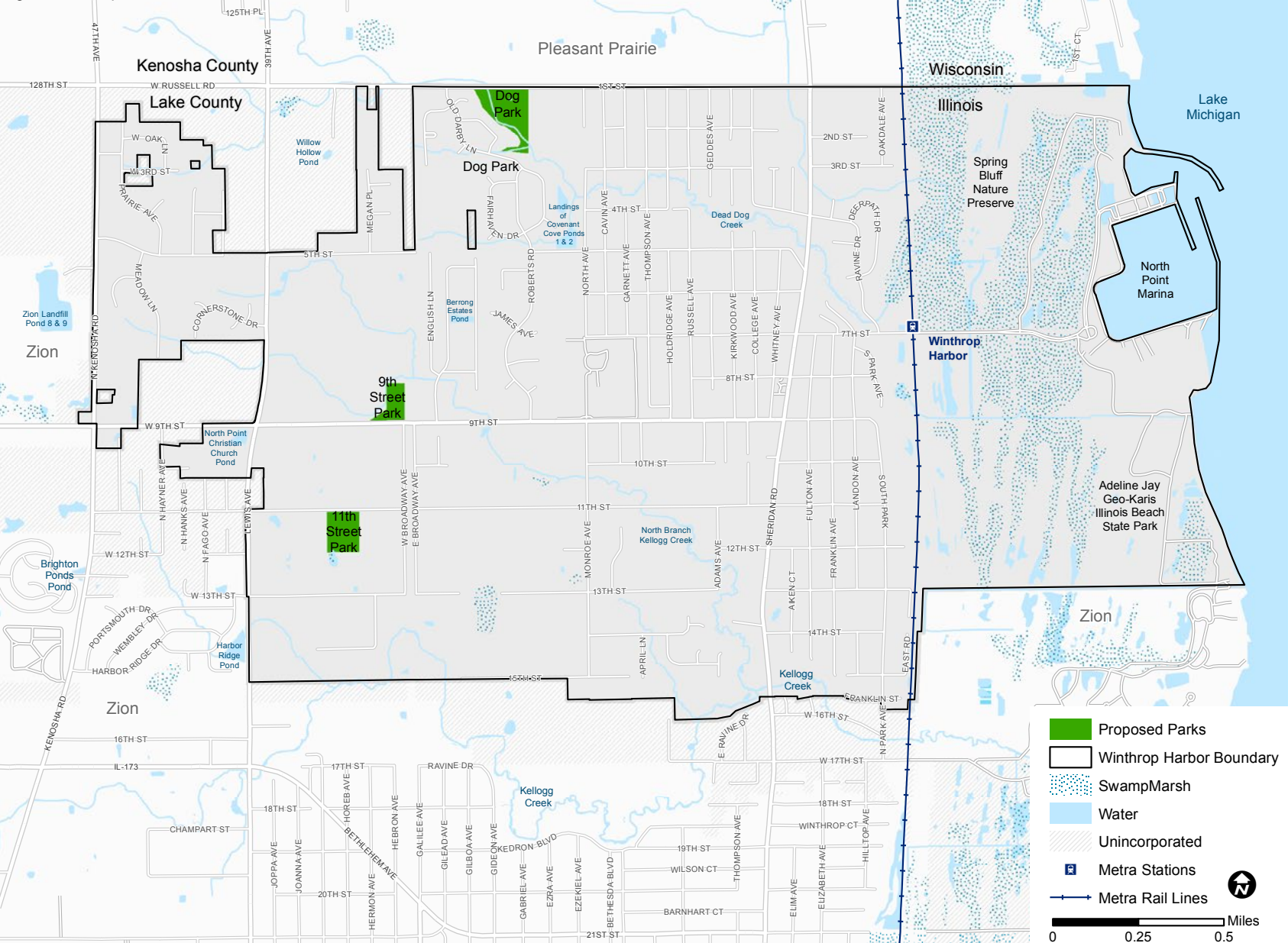
- Park at the northwest corner of the intersection of McClory bike path and 9th Street. This location would benefit residents and potentially serve as a rest stop for riders of the bike path.
- Park along 11th Street to serve south-western residents as the area grows.
- Dog park near Old Darby Lane and 1st Street.

The recommended parks listed above should also be discussed as part of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Connect residents to existing regional open space (Long-term)

The Village should work closely with IDNR and LCFPD to explore a regional bicycle-pedestrian network connecting the lakefront, Illinois Beach State Park, and Spring Bluff Nature Preserve to residential and commercial areas. For additional information on proposed regional connections, please refer to the bicycle-pedestrian network improvements recommended in Chapter 7.

Figure 6.1: Proposed Parks



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016

6.2.2: Improve marketing efforts

The following strategies should be pursued to highlight the Village's abundant, diverse, and unique natural resources. They are meant to both improve awareness among Village residents, and draw visitors with varying recreational interests to the Village in an effort to boost the local economy.

Undertake low-cost marketing efforts(Near-term)

In addition to taking a thorough review of marketing gaps and strategies as a longer-term initiative, there are steps the Village and its partners can take immediately after the comprehensive plan's adoption, including website enhancements, utilizing demographic data and partnering with existing groups like Visit Lake County. A few examples of each include:

Website enhancements

- Publicize unique national landmarks; Ramsar designation of the Chiwaukee Illinois Beach Lake Plain as a Wetland of International Importance, one of four in the entire state; Platinum accreditation of Spring Bluff Nature Preserve; largest marina on the Great Lakes for North Point Marina; and public beach. Also publicize activities offered such as charter fishing, biking, hiking, waterfront recreational activities, ecotourism, and birding.
- Add the Winthrop Harbor Tourism website to the Resource Links portion of the municipal website.
- Create a park location map along with a description of each park including park size, acreage and amenities offered.
- Update existing community calendar with a list and description of local and neighboring community events.

Utilizing demographic data

- Utilize community demographic information compiled as part of the existing conditions analysis (Appendix A) to increase marketing to seniors for cultural, fitness and wellness programs.
- Host multi-cultural community events and programs along with marketing material that would attract a diversity of residents from the sub-region.

Partnering with existing groups

- Expand presence in Lake County and southeast Wisconsin by becoming a member of Visit Lake County. This organization is highly visible and publicizes amenities found in Lake County through social media, radio, trade shows, billboards, etc. As an example, Visit Lake County is currently developing partnerships with the Chicago Boat Show which could potentially increase visibility at North Point Marina. Visit Lake County has expressed a willingness to set up a customized program for the Village to meet its needs.

Develop a community gardening program (Near-term)

Community gardens not only beautify a neighborhood, they also serve as a catalyst in conserving natural resources, assisting with stormwater management, supporting the preservation and management of open space, and increasing access to locally grown produce. They also create opportunities for education and recreation, enhance neighborhood character and sense of community, and decrease Village costs associated with maintenance.

The Village should develop a community garden program, either by itself or in conjunction with LCFPD, Library District, and School Districts. Such programs can also be implemented individually by businesses institutions or other organizations. As part of the program, community gardens would be instituted in appropriate locations throughout the Village including available portions of schoolyards. Examples of such programs in the Chicago region include the [Glencoe Community Garden](#) and the [Gail Borden Public Library District Community Garden](#) in the City of Elgin. The program should be publicized in the Village's Homeowner's Information Packet and on its website.

Collaborate with neighboring communities (Near-term)

Winthrop Harbor Tourism and the Village's Parks and Recreation Department should seek additional opportunities to publicize park activities to residents outside its boundaries. Specifically, the Village should collaborate with the Villages of Beach Park and Wadsworth and the City of Zion to promote the region's open spaces. Similar efforts should be extended to the Village of Pleasant Prairie in neighboring Wisconsin, who, when interviewed, expressed an interest in advertising Winthrop Harbor's open spaces and recreational opportunities on their website.

Develop a comprehensive marketing plan (Long-term)

The primary goal of creating a marketing plan would be to better market the Village's natural resources/recreational activities internally to residents and externally to visitors. These include: lake front access; unique ravine landforms overlooking Lake Michigan; fishing at North Point Marina; platinum accredited Spring Bluff Nature Preserve with several unique plant and bird species for observing bird species; Kenosha Dunes; an accredited and species rich Illinois Beach State Park; and North Dunes Nature Preserve which includes sedge meadows, marshes and sand prairies.

The new plan should build on existing marketing efforts and should be multi-jurisdictional involving neighbors, Zion, Beach Park and Wadsworth as well as other stakeholders such as Chambers of Commerce, Winthrop Harbor Tourism, Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau, LCFPD and IDNR.

The marketing plan should address the following key questions:

- What are the valuable assets within the community and in the region?
- Why do residents not utilize the existing assets?
- How does the Village market the lakefront, Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, Illinois Beach State Park, and McClory bike path to local residents?
- How does the Village market the above assets to a regional audience?
- What actions are needed to begin implementation of the marketing plan?

The planning process should engage the general public and key stakeholders.

6.2.3: Incorporate stormwater management practices

While flooding is not a widespread issue, the Village should be proactive in adopting stormwater management best practices. The [Kellogg Creek Subwatershed Plan](#) and [Lake Michigan Watershed Plan](#) form the basis of strategies contained in this section and should be utilized by the Village to further encourage sustainable landscape practices and manage stormwater and reduce runoff in the future.

Utilize sustainable landscape practices for municipal properties (Long-term)

Native plantings reduce the need for pesticides and irrigation, minimize mowing, and support wildlife habitat. The Public Works Department should consider a policy to utilize native and/or adapted plantings and sustainable land management strategies, starting with a pilot project at one of its existing facilities. Sustainable land management strategies could include planting a diversity of plant species, particularly those requiring reduced maintenance and watering, using natural and/or organic substitutes for chemical pesticides, and installing rain gardens. A number of these strategies may be found by visiting the [Lake County Stormwater Management Commission \(LCSMC\) website](#). The website contains information on how municipal sites can incorporate best management practices before, during, and after development of facilities.

Village officials should also encourage such practices on existing residential homes by promoting programs such as [Conservation@Home](#). Sponsored by the Conservation Foundation, Conservation@Home provides educational resources, certificates and on-site advice to homeowners engaged in using sustainable practices on their property. For additional details including guidance on promoting the program, please visit [www.ConserveLakeCounty.org](#). The Village should create a dedicated section for residents and business owners in the municipal website containing links to information and resources.



6.2.4: Improve Spring Bluff Nature Preserve and Illinois Beach State Park

Several of the recommended improvements in section 6.2.4 and 6.2.3 will need to be led by the State and Lake County, given their ownership of the properties. The Village should continue to reach out to both these entities, remain engaged, and monitor progress over time.

Support infrastructure improvements at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve (Near-term)

According to interviews with LCFPD staff, the [Forest Preserve District of Lake County's 2016 budget](#) consists of enhancements to Spring Bluff Nature Preserve. Although recent budget cuts have led to this project being shelved, the Village should continue to monitor the progress of proposed improvements by LCFPD. The Village should also work

cooperatively with the District to remove the existing gate from the site which discourages visitor usage.

Coordinate with State Representative, IDNR, and Lake County (Near-term)

The Village should continue to lead discussions with IDNR and LCFPD to better understand their needs while determining how these may be supported while pursuing its own desires. Finding common ground and pursuing like objectives collaboratively may be accomplished in the following ways:

- The Parks and Recreation Department, to the extent possible, should align objectives of its Parks and Open Space Master Plan with the recently adopted Lake County Forest Preserve 100-Year Vision and Strategic Plan.

As an example, a primary objective of this Vision is to provide safe access to open spaces for environmental education and outdoor recreation, while promoting accessibility through connectivity. Village support of this action could entail developing a network trail connecting parks within Winthrop Harbor to open spaces including the forest preserve and the lakefront. It may also entail installing wayfinding signage within the community. To achieve this, the Village will need to coordinate closely with LCFPD, IDNR and other partners. For additional information about connectivity, please refer to Chapter 7: Transportation Investments section.

- The Village recently participated in a multi-jurisdictional discussion in an effort to improve connectivity with the forest preserve and lakefront. The Village should continue to coordinate closely with its State Representative, LCFPD, IDNR, and neighboring Zion, Beach Park, and Wadsworth to support restoration, habitat restoration that leads to increased access, and connectivity for outdoor recreation within regional open spaces.

6.2.5: Improve North Point Marina and North Beach

Update gateway signage and landscaping at North Point Marina/North Beach (Long-term)

Pedestrians and vehicular traffic access the lakefront/beach and North Point Marina through 7th Street and Sheridan Road. Though gateway signage exists at North Point Marina, larger, more attractive, directional signage should be installed along Sheridan Road and 7th Street to guide users to the marina and beach. A sign consultant or graphic designer could be hired to create signage for the Village.

Support beach cleanup efforts (Near-term)

The Village should continue to work with the IDNR in the creation and implementation of a robust beach maintenance program that will enhance opportunities for pedestrian and swimming activities at the lakefront.



Support IDNR plans for North Point Marina (Near-term)

Based on feedback collected via a Request for Information process in fall 2015, IDNR is currently preparing a Request for Proposals to consider the privatization of the marina. The Village should actively engage in this process to the extent that it supports the completion of the original Master Development Plan. The Village supports the completion of the original plan as a means to ensure the long-term economic viability of the facility.

Support the Illinois Coastal Management Program to protect resources (Long-term)

Approved in 2012, the purpose of the [Coastal Management Program](#) is to initiate and continue effective coastal management and to support partnerships between organizations, local governments, and state agencies in the management of Illinois's Coastal Zone, which includes Winthrop Harbor. Key projects and initiatives in the program include the Clean Marina Program and the Non-Point Source Pollution Prevention Program. The final report also recommends the use of lakefront properties for recreation purposes. The Village was part of the Technical Advisory Group when the plan was created.

The Village should continue to work with IDNR and support the objectives outlined in the report related to greater public access, trail connectivity, and recreational improvements.

Work with State to explore sand management options and partnerships (Long-term)

[IDNR's Coastal Management Program Issue Paper](#) identified a number of sand management issues at North Point Marina and North Beach. These included: erosion; a deficit of sand along the shoreline; and, sand accumulation at North Beach. The paper identified a number of sand management opportunities including constructing an excavated area on the lake bottom immediately south of the state line to form a sand

trap to collect excessive sand. Others included dredging and developing partnerships with neighboring property owners in charge of sand management.

Focus improvements efforts on North Beach (Near-term)

A public lakefront presents the Village with an opportunity to attract non boaters to North Point Marina. The Village should work with the State to improve the condition of North Beach. The site could comprise of amenities including concession stands, a birding platform, bike rentals, pools, a beach house, bathrooms, etc. Initial steps should focus on clean up and restricting use to only humans and not pets. This would drastically improve physical conditions and enable the beach to be open for swimming.

6.2.6: Actively pursue water conservation efforts

Proactive management of water resources and infrastructure is vital to sustaining a vibrant community. Changing behavior related to water use can significantly impact water conservation in the Village. As such, the Village should seek opportunities to sustain this valuable resource. This section of the plan outlines recommendations in support of this goal.

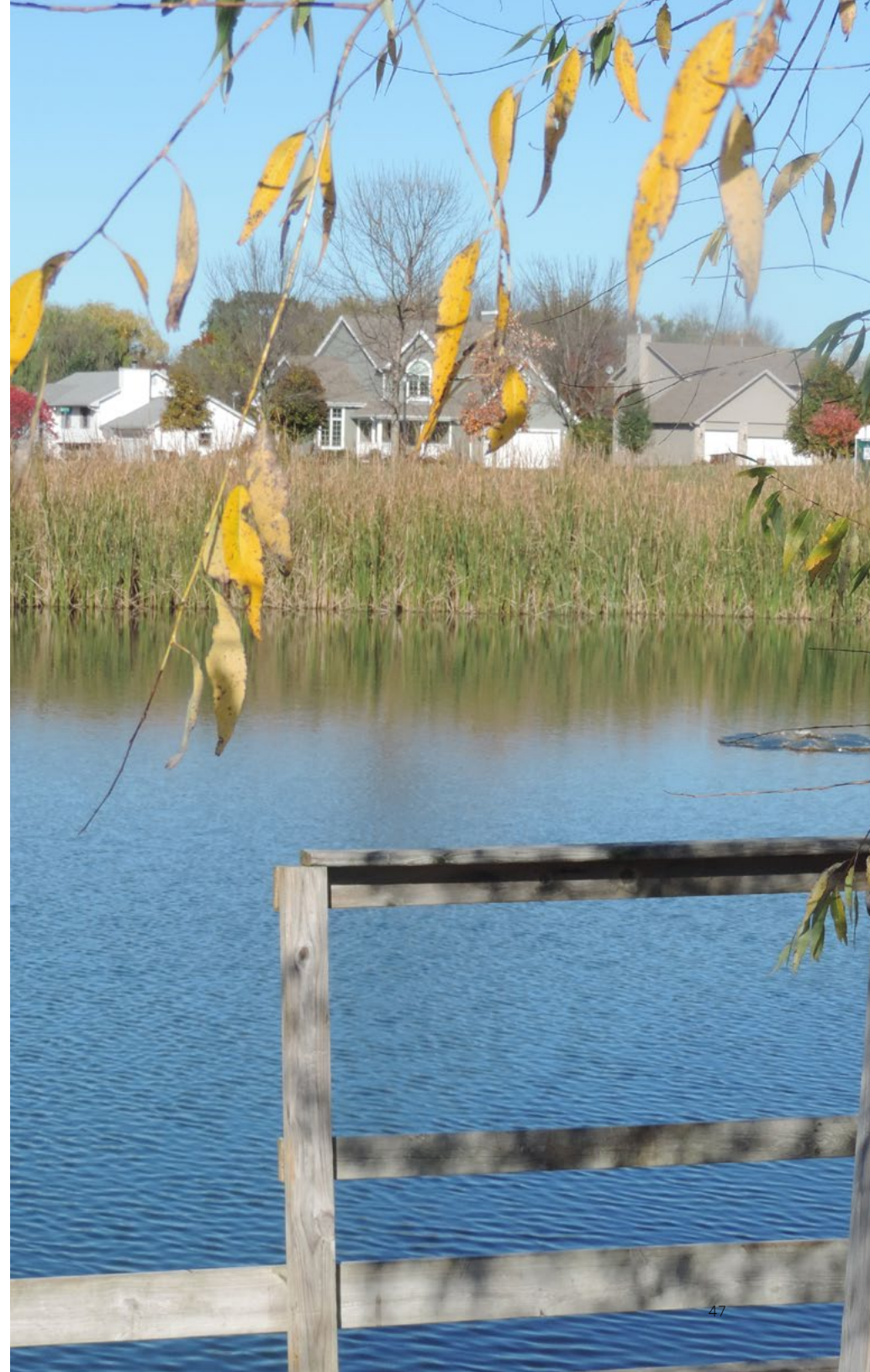
Complete a water audit (Near-term)

The Village should continue the ongoing practice of auditing the existing infrastructure to identify needed improvements. The Capital Improvement Planning process should be used to source funding to complete needed repairs identified through the audit process.

Promote water conservation through educational opportunities (Long-term)

The Village should launch an educational initiative to promote water conservation. Village staff should develop water conservation materials to include on its website, in new homeowner's informational packets, in monthly water bills, and other locations. The informational brochures could include tips on proper installation of water-using fixtures, fittings, and appliances. Brochures could also include marketing of related policies and programs that may be established by the Village (e.g. water audits; rain barrel distribution; and watering bans). CMAP has developed [template water bill inserts](#) on a variety of topics including: lawn watering for homeowners and municipalities, household leaks and other related topics. The Village may also use templates from U.S. EPA's WaterSense website upon becoming a member.

The Village may also post [U.S. EPA's Healthy Lawn Care Practices Video](#) on its website for homeowners, schools and interested parties. The video provides tips and information to homeowners to reduce pesticide and chemical use on their lawns.



Chapter 7

TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS



Transportation Investments

The Village of Winthrop Harbor will create a well-connected transportation network that removes barriers to local circulation for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians, while creating attractive and inviting gateways into the community for the region's visitors.

7.1: Summary of Existing Conditions

The primary transportation challenges identified through the existing conditions analysis are summarized under three categories: roadway, transit, and bicycle-pedestrian.

7.1.1: Roadway

- The Village's roadway network has several gaps that restrict vehicular circulation, as shown in Map 7.1. The Village has a combination of traditional grid street network in older residential areas to the east and south and incomplete streets and curvilinear, cul-de-sac roads in the newer subdivisions further west. Dead end streets inhibit pedestrian and bike circulation, as well.
- Topography often makes street extensions and connections infeasible and/or unreasonably costly.
- Sheridan Road is the main entrance into Winthrop Harbor and classified by IDOT as a principal arterial. However, its average annual daily traffic (AADT) has trended downward over the past decade as motorists and trucks increasingly opt for parallel alternatives such as the I-94, U.S. Route 41, and Green Bay Road.

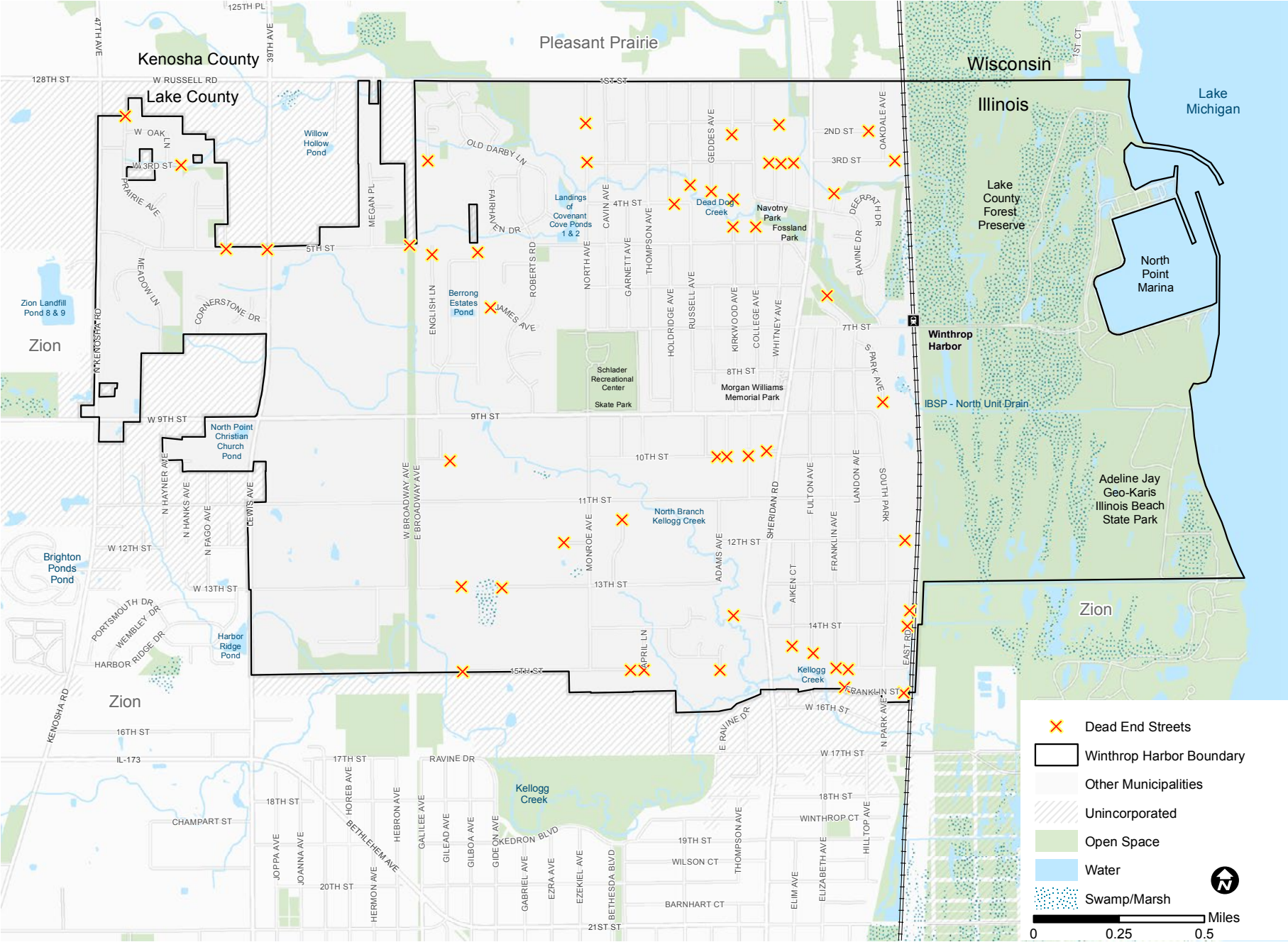
7.1.2: Transit

- Pace does not serve the Village with fixed-route bus service but it does provide Dial-a-Ride for residents to travel anywhere within Benton Township and Zion Township including Winthrop Harbor. The Dial-a-Ride also provides service twice a week to medical facilities in Gurnee and Waukegan. Pace also offers a similar service to residents on weekdays.
- Despite Winthrop Harbor's regional attractions and a fairly large residential base, its Metra station has low boardings and alightings. Metra's Union Pacific-North line runs between downtown Chicago and Kenosha, Wisconsin, traveling through and stopping at Winthrop Harbor. Ridership is low with approximately 70 boardings each day (2014). A majority of riders boarding or alighting at Winthrop Harbor do not live in Winthrop Harbor but live in nearby Illinois or Wisconsin communities.

7.1.3: Bicycle-Pedestrian

- Bicycle connectivity to and from lakefront areas is irregular. An on-street bike lane on 9th Street provides riders with a partial connection between the Robert McClory bike path and lakefront. Several cyclists access the state park campgrounds by the lakefront after passing through the Village. Bicycle and walking trails within Spring Bluff Nature Preserve and Illinois Beach State Park are not well maintained or easily visible, limiting their use for visitors.
- The sidewalk network is inconsistent in both its presence and quality. Although Sheridan Road was ranked by stakeholders as the foremost priority for pedestrian improvements, the elementary schools

Map 7.1: Existing Dead End Streets



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

are another critical area that lack sidewalks, making it unsafe for students walking to and from school. The school district does not provide busing. Narrow parkways, high vehicular speeds, and insufficient lighting make walking along Sheridan Road unsafe. Within residential areas, the sidewalk network is sporadic due to regulations that require sidewalk installation only on streets with curb and gutter, leaving out several areas.

7.2: Recommendations

The following actions along Sheridan Road will require active coordination with IDOT. The State Representative should also be invited to participate in these discussions that will benefit the district. The recommendations have been divided into near-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-10 years) to help Village departments and elected officials prioritize limited staff and funding sources.

7.2.1: Roadway improvements

Re-evaluate Sheridan Road Streetscape Plan and move forward with appropriate improvements (Long-term)

The Village should review the existing Sheridan Road Streetscape Plan to consider its appropriateness today. Amendments to the original plan should be made based on this review to meet the current needs and desires of the community and the availability of resources to undertake the project. The 2001 Streetscape Plan focused on streetscape and road design improvements to Sheridan Road and 7th Street. The recommended design changes took into account the decreasing AADT and need for a pedestrian-friendly corridor. The Village has successfully implemented streetscape improvements along 7th Street, which have enhanced that corridor's appeal. The Streetscape Plan recommended these improvements for Sheridan Road:

- Upgraded and additional lighting throughout the corridor
- Traffic lane removal and width reduction to calm traffic in select areas

- Curb extensions, on-street parking, and through lane removal at the following intersections:
 - At the southern boundary of the Village
 - 12th Street near Harbor Plaza
 - 11th Street
 - 9th Street
 - 8th Street
 - 7th Street
 - Russell Road
- On-street parking near commercial businesses

The Community Development and Public Works Departments should approach IDOT officials about the Sheridan Road Streetscape Plan and re-engage the agency in a discussion about how to move the project forward, after internal discussions. The Village should also reach out to the City of Zion, gain their support, and encourage them to participate in meetings with IDOT. Improvements to the corridor will benefit not just Winthrop Harbor but neighboring Zion and Beach Park by creating an attractive gateway into the state and region.

Improve safety (Long-term)

The Village should meet with IDOT officials and State Representative's office to present the following options:

- Survey speed patterns and consider reducing speed limit.

In line with the recommendation above to partially remove travel lanes to portions of the corridor, the speed limit may be reduced in the future from the current 35 miles per hour, perhaps for a portion of the corridor that contains the downtown district.
- Manage private property access with the goal of reducing the number of curb cuts.

Curb cuts compromise the safety of pedestrians and motorists by creating additional conflict points. Though businesses and residents along Sheridan need access to property, future development proposals should respect the need to be efficient in terms of roadway access.

Update gateway signage (Long-term)

For southbound motorists on Sheridan Road, Winthrop Harbor serves as the gateway into Illinois. There are two signs currently installed welcoming visitors into Illinois and Winthrop Harbor. The Illinois welcome sign blocks drivers' view of the Winthrop Harbor gateway sign, both signs are in poor physical condition, and their small size and placement makes them easy to miss for motorists. The Village should, as part of its branding and marketing effort, create gateway signage that is clearly visible. Village officials should also work with IDOT to change the placement and/or the type of welcome sign installed at the intersection of Russell Road and Sheridan Road.

Undertake road extensions to improve connectivity (Near-term)

The future land use map proposes a number of roadway extensions to reduce traffic congestion and improve roadway safety. The Plan has identified the following priority connections that should be part of the Village's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and future site or area plans:

Priority (Near Term)

- 5th Street from Broadway Avenue to Roberts Road

The right-of-way for this connection has already been cleared. The intersections with English Lane and Berrong Avenue should be completed in addition to grading and paving of 5th Street. Given the proximity to North Prairie School, sidewalks should be included. The street extension could coincide with new development in Berrong Estates, Country Manor, or Phase II of Country Manor (see Map 4.1: Residential Areas Plan).

- English Lane between its current terminus in Covenant Courts and 5th Street

Paired with the 5th Street connection, this extension will allow residents of the northwest side of the Village better access to North Prairie School, Village Park, and the residential areas to the north. In addition, it would provide a right-of-way from which Phase II Country Manor lots could be subdivided, creating a guide for the development of the neighborhood.

Future Growth (Long Term)

- Megan Place from its current terminus to Russell Road

This extension would complement future housing development in this area. A new roadway should not end in a cul-de-sac but connect to the existing south portion of the roadway and 5th Street.

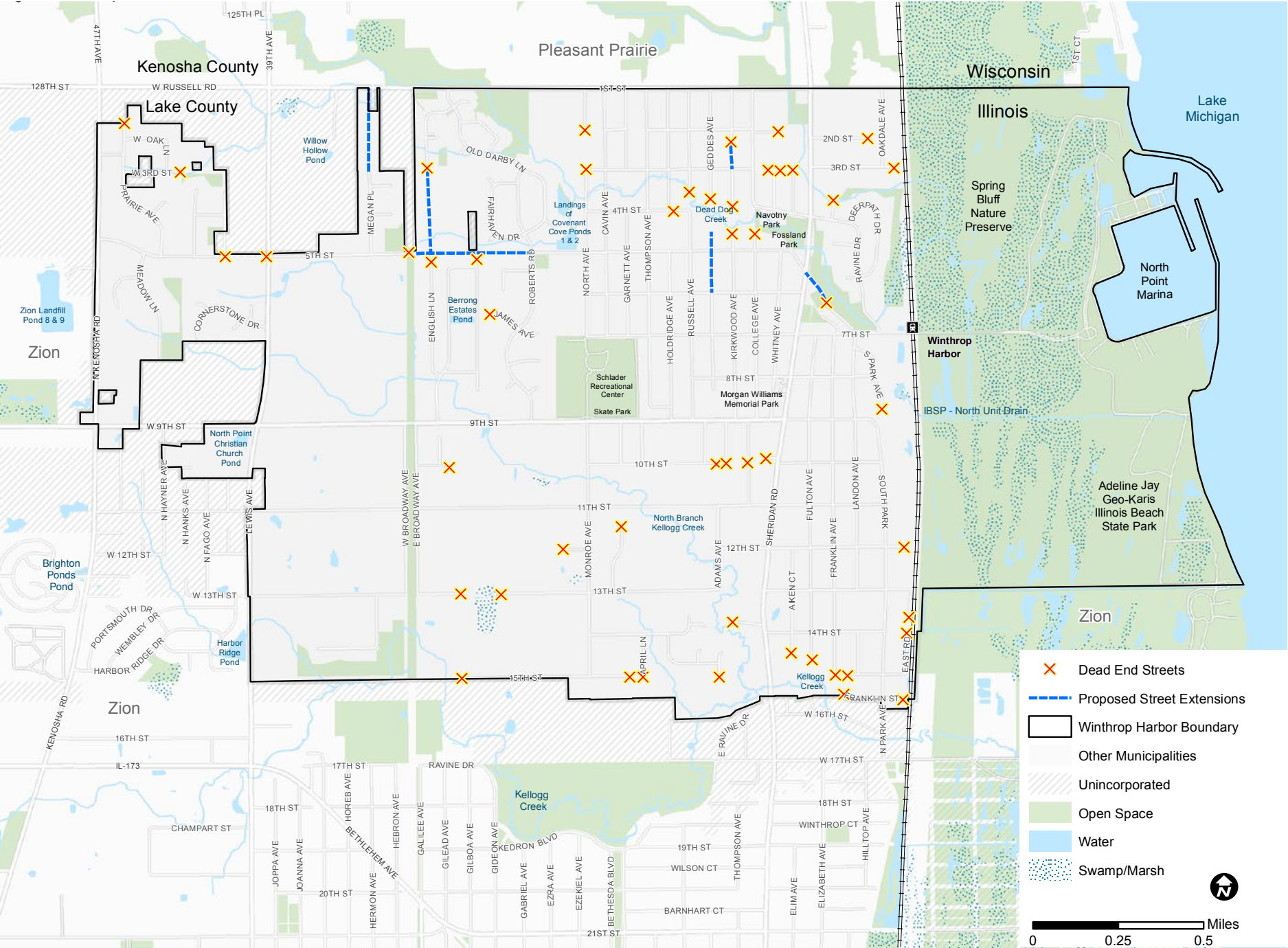
7.2.2: Transit Improvements

Village officials and residents are interested in improving the local transit network and having greater mobility options. The following recommendations address ways to improve Winthrop Harbor's public transit options.

Create community-wide transit survey (Near-term)

Surveying residents is the first step in exploring the expansion of public transit. To follow up on the previous Metra/Pace survey, Village officials should administer a customized community-wide survey to solicit feedback on community use of transit, barriers to transit use, desired type of service, and desired destinations. An example survey is included in the [Village of South Elgin's Transit Improvement Plan](#). Results of the survey should be summarized into a report and presented to the transit agencies.

Map 7.2: Proposed Street Extensions



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

Work with transit agencies and City of Zion to expand transit service (Near-term)

The Village should reach out to the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra, and Pace to identify ways to improve transit service in Winthrop Harbor. The following topics should be discussed:

- Long-range plans of transit agencies: The transit agencies should share their future plans for the area in terms of service expansion and improvements.
- Results of the community-wide survey should be shared at this joint meeting to give each agency a sense of community needs and priorities.
- Potential solutions to address the community's transit needs.
- Extension of Zion's existing Route 571 should be discussed. This extension has been identified as a priority within the recently adopted Zion Comprehensive Plan.

After the initial joint meeting, the Village should partner with the City of Zion and continue to follow up with each agency.

Coordinate with Metra, Pace, and local governments to expand the transit hub in Waukegan (Long-term)

The Village should partner with Zion, Waukegan, and Beach Park to examine ways to improve bus service and non-motorized access to the Metra station in Waukegan. The Waukegan Metra station has a rail yard, which makes it easier to begin and terminate Metra trips. This factor, along with ridership demand for that station, has led to more frequent service to and from Chicago than stations up north. Waukegan is also the top workplace destination for residents of Winthrop Harbor and Zion, according to Longitudinal Employment-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data provided by the U.S. Census.

Improve visibility and route of Winthrop Harbor shuttle service (Near-term)

A seasonal shuttle operates between the Sheridan Road corridor and the lakefront. The Village should encourage businesses in the community and in neighboring communities to market the shuttle service to visitors and residents. Permanent bus stop signs should be installed at pick-up and drop-off points, and the schedule of service should be available online. Local businesses such as restaurants, taverns, and hotels should become stops on the local shuttle service. The Chamber of Commerce, North Point Marina, and business community should work together to determine operational and funding responsibilities.

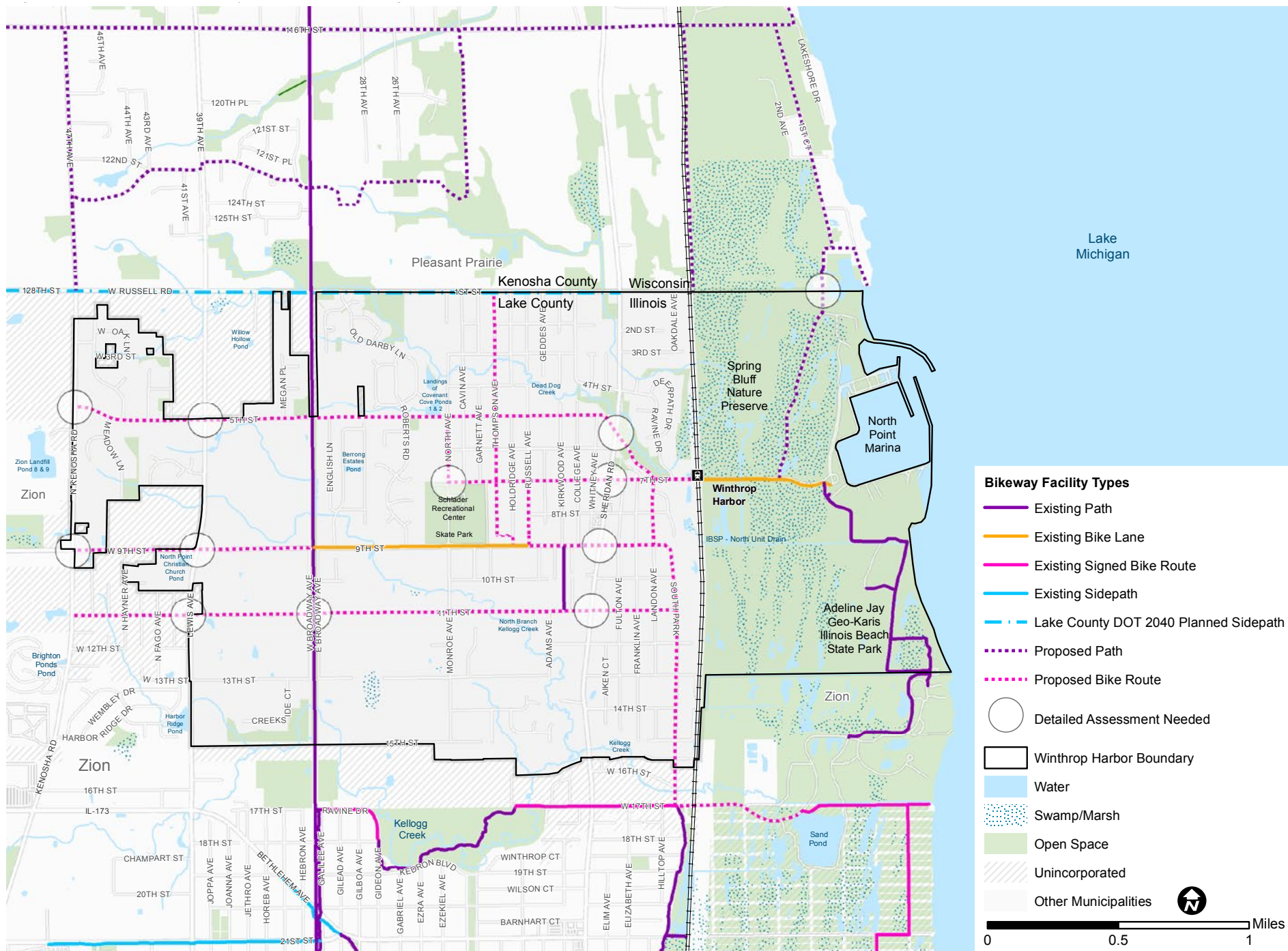
The Village should also explore sharing the shuttle service with the City of Zion, which is interested in its own trolley service as per its recently adopted comprehensive plan. A shared service would allow both communities to reduce costs and increase ridership.

Undertake and adopt a bicycle master plan and complete streets ordinance (Near-term)

The comprehensive plan proposes a Village-wide bicycle network that helps achieve the priorities below, which were set forth by the community. Some of these priorities could be achieved by designating existing roadways as bike routes with signs, others would require new infrastructure, and several would require Village participation with other jurisdictions. Key elements of the community-wide network include:

- Connect the McClory Regional Bike Trail to the lakefront. Bike lanes exist on portions of 9th Street and along 7th Street, with missing links in between. The Village will need to analyze various alternative routes to help determine the favored route to connect McClory Trail to 7th Street and the lakefront.
- Designate an on-street route to connect to Zion. The proposed bike lane along South Park Avenue would connect to the Zion bike trail at 17th Street, which is also an access point for Illinois Beach State Park. Village officials should work with the City of Zion to install signage to direct

Map 7.3: Proposed Bicycle Network



cyclists to and from the lakefront. 17th Street is identified as a future bike route in the City of Zion's Comprehensive Plan.

- Extend the 9th Street route to the west to Kenosha Road. This route would serve the residents of the neighborhoods west of Lewis Avenue and ultimately create better access to the downtown district, the Sheridan Road corridor, and the lakefront. The Village and Benton Township would want to cooperate on a way to designate this roadway for bikes and make it safe for cars and bikes to share the road.
- Plan for a route on 5th Street across the Village, after a connection is built between Broadway Avenue and Roberts Road. Residents of the northwest side of the Village expressed desire for a route that provides access to North Prairie School and the lakefront. In addition, this route would connect with a future segment of North Park Avenue just north of the downtown district. The Village has jurisdiction over 5th Street and would be responsible for implementation.
- Plan for a future route on 11th Street across the Village, including at-grade intersection with the McClory Trail. In addition to providing east-west access, this route would create another link to the McClory Trail, Winthrop Harbor's best regional bike amenity. Public Works and LCPD, which maintains the McClory Trail, would need to partner on the funding and construction of a new trail access point.
- Designate a route on North Avenue between North Prairie School and Village Park. As part of continual applications for Safe Routes to School assistance, Public Works and Administration can plan to mark this street as a bike route in concert with other safety measures that contribute to safe bike and pedestrian access to the park and school.
- Designate a route on Thompson Avenue, Ja Lor Court, and Holdridge Avenue between Russell Road and 9th Street. This north-south route consists of streets under jurisdiction of the Village. It provides a connection for residents of the north side of the Village with the existing 9th Street bike lane and key local destinations.

Map 7.3 is the proposed bike network that should serve as a foundation

for the Village to undertake a bicycle master plan and adopt a complete streets ordinance. The complete streets policy ordinance and bicycle master plan will provide policy and programming recommendations to help improve pedestrian and bike movement through the community. The master plan should use the community-wide network proposed herein to identify implementation priorities in the near-, mid-, and long-term. All Village departments should also ensure that near-term actions identified in the plan will be funded within the Village's annual budget or apply for grants and funding partners accordingly.

To consider safety and determine the best facilities (on-street dedicated lanes, on-street shared lanes, signed routes, off-street sidepaths) along segments and at intersections, the master plan should also provide a greater detail of engineering analysis and coordination with regional agencies and local businesses as part of the planning process. These include:

- A marked trail connection across the state line between IDNR property and Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin
- Sheridan Road and 7th Street
- Sheridan Road and 9th Street
- North Avenue, 7th Street, and the rear access to Village Park
- 11th Street and the McClory Trail (future connection)
- Lewis Avenue and 5th Street
- Lewis Avenue and 9th Street
- Lewis Avenue and 11th Street
- Kenosha Road and 5th Street
- Kenosha Road and 9th Street

Provide visible bike parking, especially near Sheridan Road destinations (Long-term)

The Village should coordinate with local businesses to provide additional bike parking. Important locations, based on public input, are the Metra station, Sheridan Road and 7th Street, Sheridan Road and 9th Street at Village Hall, and Sheridan Road between 11th and 12th Streets (Harbor Plaza shopping center).

Local and visiting cyclists will also benefit from a printed map that shows local routes. The Village should work with local businesses and North Point Marina to fund the creation and distribution of this map.

Support recommendations of the LCDOT 2040 Plan

The Public Works and Community Development Departments should work with and support County officials as they expand the regional bike network, which includes connections to and through Winthrop Harbor. The 2040 plan calls for the McClory Trail-to-Lakefront route, which is discussed above. At the time of this plan's adoption, all of the recommended routes are conceptual and will need partnership with the Village and IDOT for implementation.

Work with IDNR to improve trail access within Illinois Beach State Park (Long-term)

At public meetings, support was strong for two related ideas: creating a bike connection across the state line between IDNR property and the housing development in Wisconsin immediately across the state line, and improvements to the existing trails within Spring Bluff Nature Preserve and the Illinois Beach State Park area. For each of these goals, multijurisdictional cooperation will be necessary. Therefore, as part of a future active transportation planning process, IDNR should be invited to participate in studying the feasibility of a multistate bike trail connection that would connect the Winthrop Harbor lakefront area with Chiwaukee

Prairie in Wisconsin. Concurrently, the groups should work together to provide more directional signage along the current bike route through forest preserve and state park property. They should plan for grading work to make the trail surface amenable to all types of bikes, as well as joggers. Many portions of the current path are rugged and suitable only to mountain bikes.

7.2.4: Pedestrian improvements

Pedestrian infrastructure is fundamental to the local transportation network and is particularly important in Winthrop Harbor, where School District No. 1 serves the vast majority of the Village's K-8 students but does not provide busing. The following recommendations support a future transportation network that is more comprehensive and pedestrian-friendly.

Prioritize improvements along Sheridan Road and near schools (Long-term)

Over the past decade, the Village has invested and implemented sidewalk improvements, as well as crosswalk pavers at the intersection of 7th Street and Sheridan Road. However, as noted earlier in the chapter, many other proposed changes throughout the corridor have not been implemented.

The pedestrian-focused improvements include the following:

- Pedestrian curb extensions to shorten crossing distances: Priority intersections are 7th and 9th Streets; long-term intersections are 6th Street, 12th Street near Harbor Plaza, and Russell Road
- Create mid-block crossing area for pedestrians: Potential locations are 6th Street and Park Avenue to coincide with street completions and downtown development

It is important to prioritize street segments near North Prairie and Westfield Schools for the installation of sidewalks and crosswalks. For sidewalks, crosswalks, signs, flashing beacons, and other safety improvements, the Village should pursue the [Illinois Safe Routes to School](#) (SRTS) grant program. Though the State does not make Safe Routes to School funding available every year, Village officials should continually monitor the program's funding status and apply when available. In addition, the [Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program](#) (ITEP) is administered by IDOT. Grants go to projects designed to

promote and develop alternative transportation options, including bike and pedestrian travel, along with streetscape beautification. Pedestrian improvements that enhance corridors near the two school buildings would qualify and, therefore, ITEP is another funding avenue to monitor and pursue when funds are available.

Create sidewalk and curb replacement program (Long-term)

Public Works, Community Development, and Public Safety Departments should work together to inventory unsafe sidewalks and curbs within local rights-of-way. The initiative would provide Winthrop Harbor residents with an online, phone-based, or in person portal to enter requests for sidewalk and curb repair. Requests would then be evaluated by the Public Works Department and fixed accordingly.

The purpose of the Sidewalk and Curb Replacement program is to address areas of concern that need immediate attention, not improvements to entire blocks or large sections of a street. The program would address requests based on need, but funds available for this program through the CIP will also factor into the department's response time. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding administered through Lake County is another source for municipalities to pay for sidewalk improvements.

For longer segments, the Village should coordinate sidewalk replacement with roadway resurfacing projects and be included in a regular yearly schedule as opposed to repairs being done on an as-needed basis. Revenue for new sidewalks and sidewalk repairs should also be part of annexation agreements with private property owners and developers, along with a stricter enforcement of Village Code that requires property owners to keep their sidewalks, where present, "in good repair." CMAP provides further guidance for municipalities in implementing sidewalk improvements in the [Complete Streets Toolkit](#).

Work with Metra and IDNR on pedestrian access enhancements (Long-term)

The 7th Street connection between the Metra station and lakefront recreational areas currently has a bike lane on the shoulder but does not have a sidewalk or dedicated path for pedestrians, even though the distance between the two points is less than a 10-minute walk. Both Metra and IDNR should improve this corridor's walkability, as it is possible that Winthrop Harbor could become a train-based tourist destination for riders from Chicago and other communities to the south, similar to the Ravinia Festival in Highland Park.

Modify code and development review process (Near-term)

The subdivision codes (Subdivision and Rural) as well as any future approved planned developments should contain pedestrian infrastructure. Typically, this refers to traditional concrete sidewalks, but paths using a different surface such as crushed stone or another impervious surface may be appropriate in a conservation design neighborhood. As a default stance, the developer should be responsible for funding pedestrian facilities as part of developer's fees, though Village officials should be able to negotiate funding requirements and evaluate appropriate contributions on a project-by-project basis. Sidewalks and an adequate parkway should be created and extended at the same time that the rest of the right-of-way is constructed.

Chapter 8

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



Plan Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan should serve as the Village's policy guide for land use, development, and community improvements. Village staff should ensure residents, stakeholders, and community partners have access to the completed plan and subsequent updates, explain the plan and its priorities as they relate to new development in Winthrop Harbor, and ensure all elected officials understand the contents of the plan. Near- and long-term priorities and goals are formulated based on the recommendations of the plan to move forward with implementation. The elected and appointed officials and Village staff should collaborate on prioritizing the implementation of recommendations. Changing conditions and other factors that influence the relative importance of certain recommendations should be monitored over time.

Near-Term Implementation Actions

This section discusses short-term implementation priorities for the Village to begin working on immediately following plan adoption. In general, near term covers the next three years and calls for initiation by 2017.

Enable infrastructure investment by creating a CIP

Upon adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the Village should begin work on drafting its first CIP. Drafting and finalizing a CIP is approximately a 12-month project from initiation to adoption. The project could be completed by Village staff or by a consultant and should attempt to align with the beginning of a fiscal year. In subsequent years, CIP updates should occur at the same time that the annual budget is prepared.

Funding to support CIP projects generally comes from a variety of sources, such as competitive grants, state and federal funds, as well as Village funds including transfers from operating fund reserves. The Village

should consider a dedicated funding source for CIP projects as operating fund reserves are diminished or do not occur. Funding sources must be identified for projects before they are included in the CIP.

Table 8.1: Actions to Consider for CIP Inclusion

Recommendation	Resource and funding options	Comprehensive Plan chapter
Undertake downtown area improvements. (i.e. installing public art, additional gateway features, planting additional street trees)	TIF, Winthrop Harbor Tourism Corp., local revenue	5
Repair and replace park equipment in Schlader Recreation Center; expand the park to include a sandbox, a toddler area and additional picnic areas.	IDNR PARC (if available); local revenue, fundraising campaign/nonprofit community groups	6
Allocate resources to complete a water audit.	Local revenue/staff time, IEPA	6
Undertake road extensions to improve connectivity; English Lane between its current terminus in Covenant Courts and 5th Street; and 5th Street from Broadway Avenue to Roberts Road.	Developer fees	7

Near-Term Implementation Actions

Modify development regulations

The Village enacted new downtown zoning districts in 2014, but other facets of the zoning and subdivision ordinances should be adjusted to achieve desired development types and quality.

Table 8.2: Actions to Address in Revised Development Ordinances

Recommendation	Zoning (Z) Subdivision (S)	Comprehensive Plan chapter
Use bonuses and/or relief from bulk restrictions, or an expedited review and permitting process, to complete existing subdivisions.	Z,	4
Modify zoning ordinance for Sheridan Road corridor to create greater density. Incorporate design standards for buildings, landscape, and signage in the commercial areas.	Z	5
Modify code and development review process to consider non-motorized transportation, including requiring sidewalks and creating incentives for bike parking in future developments.	Z, S	7

Near-Term Implementation Actions

Engage private developers

To implement the vision expressed through the plan, the private sector development market must be continually engaged. The following recommendations can be achieved through the corresponding implementation approaches:

Table 8.3: Actions Involving Private Developers

Recommendation	Lead Implementers and Partners	First Steps	Comprehensive Plan Chapter
Conduct developer discussion panel.	Lead: Community Development Partners: RTA, ULI	Community Development should apply to RTA for a Community Planning grant in 2017.	5
Pursue modifications to economic development marketing approach.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Chamber of Commerce, Lake County Partners	Pursue an illustrative paper and web-based brochure to be hosted on the Village and Chamber of Commerce websites. Property details should be available on the Lake County Partners database and kept updated: (http://www.lakecountypartners.com/index.php/available-properties). In addition, the Village should periodically feature key sites on its website.	5
Support Lewis Avenue and 5th Street development as proposed in preliminary plan.	Lead: Community Development, Economic Development Commission Partners: Owner, broker/developer of the site; Lake County Stormwater Management	Continue to work with the owner and developer of the site through the PUD process	5

Near-Term Implementation Actions

Continue to strengthen multijurisdictional collaboration

Working with governmental partners is a key theme of the plan. Collaboration is especially important for the portions of the plan regarding tourism-based economic development on the lakefront, preservation of natural resources, and improving biking and transit.

Table 8.4: Actions Requiring Multijurisdictional Collaboration

Recommendation	Lead Implementers and Partners	First Steps	Comprehensive Plan Chapter
Support infrastructure improvements at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve.	Lead: LCFPD Partners: Village	Continue to monitor the progress of proposed improvements by LCFPD, as budget constraints have put project on hold.	6
Support North Beach cleanup efforts.	Lead: Village Partners: IDNR, Waukegan	Work with Waukegan in utilizing equipment to clean up beach.	6
Monitor IDNR initiative for North Point Marina.	Lead: IDNR/North Point Marina Partners: Village	Continue to engage via regular communication with IDNR about the Request for Proposals to improve the Marina facilities.	6
Coordinate with State Representative, IDNR, and LCFPD.	Lead: Village Partners: Rep. Sheri Jeisel (61st) and staff, IDNR, LCFPD	Plan and organize regular discussions.	6
Undertake low-cost parks and recreation marketing.	Lead: Parks and Recreation Partners: Visit Lake County, Winthrop Harbor Tourism	Enhance and update websites to include revised maps and information	6
Develop a community gardening program.	Lead: Parks and Recreation Partners: LCFPD, School Districts, Library District	Identify potential locations for gardens.	6
Work with transit agencies and City of Zion to explore transit options.	Lead: Community Development, Public Works, Pace Partners: City of Zion	Create community-wide transit survey with assistance from Pace.	7
Improve visibility and route of Winthrop Harbor shuttle service.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Winthrop Harbor Tourism, Chamber of Commerce, IDNR/North Point Marina, City of Zion	Make exploratory contact to partners about expanding service.	7
Undertake and adopt a bicycle master plan and complete streets ordinance	Lead: Public Works Partners: Community Development, LCDOT, Active Transportation Alliance/RidellIllinois	Pursue technical assistance opportunities from cycling advocacy and planning groups in the region (i.e. Active Transportation Alliance, RidellIllinois).	7

Long-Term Implementation Actions

Table 8.5: Long-term actions for Residential Areas

Recommendation	Lead implementers and partners	Potential sources of funding/resources
Promote conservation design in environmentally sensitive residential areas.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Public Works, LCSMC, Lake County Planning, Building, Development	Staff time; market investment
Engage external agencies to assist in rehabilitation.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Illinois Department on Aging, Senior Service Coalition of Lake County	Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Illinois Home Weatherization Program, Home Maintenance and Repair Programs, Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption, and General Homestead Exemption
Educate homeowners.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Library District	203(k) Rehab Mortgage Insurance Program; Title I Property Improvement Loan Program.
Incorporate universal design principles in building codes.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Homeowners' associations, property managers	Staff time

Long-Term Implementation Actions

Table 8.6: Long-term actions for Commercial Areas

Recommendation	Lead implementers and partners	Potential sources of funding/resources
Host community events in downtown district to enhance public interest.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Winthrop Harbor Tourism/Harbor Days; Illinois Farmers Market Association	Chamber of Commerce, farmers market groups
Increase connectivity and access to the downtown district.	Lead: IDNR, LCFPD, Public Works Partners: IDOT	IDOT Economic Development Program (EDP) grant, LCFPD budget for capital improvements
Reinstate façade improvement program.	Lead: Community Development and Administration Partners: Local lenders	TIF, special taxing area, donations, local business groups or community development corporations; can be structured as 50/50 match or rebate program, or as a low- or no-interest loan program, possibly with a lending partner
Undertake joint marketing of regional assets.	Lead: Community Development Partners: Lake County Partners, Visit Lake County, Village, neighboring lakefront communities (Pleasant Prairie, Zion, Beach Park, Waukegan)	Meeting space, staff time, shared budgeting
Partner with the IDNR and LCFPD on improving amenities for visitors.	Lead: IDNR, LCFPD Partners: Winthrop Harbor Tourism, Village, Chamber of Commerce	Land and Water Conservation Fund, IDNR and LCFPD revenue
Partner with Pace on route and transit improvements along Sheridan Road.	Lead: Pace Partners: IDOT, Community Development, Public Works, City of Zion	CMAQ, IDOT ITEP, developer fees and contributions, employer/private business sponsorship

Long-Term Implementation Actions

Table 8.7: Long-term actions for Natural Areas and Recreation

Recommendation	Lead Implementers and Partners	Potential sources of funding/resources
Create Parks and Open Space Master Plan.	Lead: Parks and Recreation Partners: LCFPD, IDNR	Local revenue
Apply for grant funding for capital projects.	Lead: Parks and Recreation Partners: Grant writers, funders	IDNR OSLAD, IDNR PARC, DCEO, IEPA/LCSMC Section 319, non-profits, such as KaBOOM corporate sponsorships
Add parks in southern half of community.	Lead: Parks & Recreation Partners: Neighborhood groups, property owners, local schools (District No. 1)	IDNR OSLAD, IDNR PARC, developer's fees
Connect residents to existing regional open space.	Lead: IDNR, LCFPD Partners: IDOT, LCDOT	IDNR Illinois Bicycle Path Program
Develop a comprehensive marketing plan	Lead: Parks and Recreation Partners: Neighboring municipalities (Zion, Beach Park, Wadsworth), Chambers of Commerce, Winthrop Harbor Tourism, Visit Lake County, LCFPD, IDNR	Local revenue
Install demonstration projects in parks and open spaces.	Lead: Parks and Recreation, Public Works Partners: District No. 1, LCSMC	LCSMC, CIP/local revenue, Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management
Update gateway signage and landscaping at North Point Marina/North Beach.	Lead: IDNR/North Point Marina Partners: Village	Privatization of marina, IDNR
Support the Illinois Coastal Management Program to protect resources.	Lead: IDNR Partners: Village	IDNR, Section 319/LCSMC
Work with State to explore sand management options and partnerships.	Lead: IDNR Partners: North Point Marina, Winthrop Harbor Tourism	IDNR, Section 319/LCSMC, neighboring property owners
Promote water conservation through educational opportunities.	Lead: Public Works Partners: Zion-Benton Library District	CMAA for templates

Long-Term Implementation Actions

Table 8.8: Long-term actions for Transportation Investments

Recommendation	Lead implementers and partners	Potential sources of funding/resources
Undertake road extensions to improve connectivity accompanying future development.	Lead: Public Works Partners:	Suggested project: Megan Place from its current terminus to Russell Road. This extension would complement future housing development in this area. Developer's fees
Provide visible bike parking, especially near Sheridan Road destinations.	Lead: Village Partners: Businesses and property owners, LCDOT, Metra, IDNR	TIF, local revenue
Support recommendations of the LCDOT 2040 Plan.	Lead: LCDOT Partners: Community Development	IDOT ITEP, STP, CMAQ, Lake County general revenue
Work with IDNR to improve trail access within Illinois Beach State Park.	Lead: IDNR Partners: Community Development, Public Works, City of Zion, Village of Beach Park	IDNR Illinois Bicycle Path Program
Prioritize improvements along Sheridan Road and near schools.	Lead: Public Works Partners: IDOT	IDOT Safe Routes to School, ITEP
Create sidewalk and curb replacement program.	Lead: Public Works Partners: Community Development	Local revenue/CIP, developer's fees or permit revenue set-aside
Work with Metra and IDNR on pedestrian access enhancements.	Lead: Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra Partners: Community Development, Public Works	TAP
Coordinate with Metra, Pace, and local governments to expand the transit hub in Waukegan.	Lead: Metra, Pace, City of Waukegan Partners: Community Development, Public Works	CMAQ
Re-evaluate Sheridan Road Streetscape Plan and move forward with appropriate improvements	Lead: Public Works Partners: IDOT, Community Development	STP, IDOT ITEP, TIF, Developer's fees
Update gateway signage.	Lead: Public Works Partners: IDOT, Community Development	IDOT ITEP

Funding Source Glossary

The following is a summary of key potential funding sources that the Village should explore. In addition to the sources identified in this section, the Village's CIP includes a listing of typical funding sources. In general, Village staff should continue to monitor and research possible funding sources to help fund recommended capital projects.

Economic Development

IDOT Economic Development Program

The purpose of the Economic Development Program (EDP) is to provide state assistance in improving highway access to new or expanding industrial, distribution, or tourism developments. The intent is to make available state matching funds that will be a positive contribution in the location-selection process and to target those projects which will expand the state's existing job base or create new employment opportunities. The focus of the program is on the retention and creation of permanent full-time jobs. Funding is made available on a rolling basis. Additional information is available at <http://www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/funding-opportunities/economic-development-program>

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) offers a number of grant programs that can assist with economic and workforce development projects. The programs fund a variety of uses and activities, such as public infrastructure for specific economic development projects, training programs, and land and building acquisition. Additional information is available at <https://www.illinois.gov/dceo/ExpandRelocate/Incentives/grants/Pages/default.aspx>.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a financial tool used to incentivize and attract desired development within a community. TIF dollars can be used for infrastructure, streetscaping, public improvements, land assemblage, pre-development costs, and offsetting the cost of development. The Village of Winthrop Harbor currently has one TIF district in the downtown sub-area. The Village should continue to monitor the progress of the TIFs as priority investment tools to implement recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Housing

Lake County Community Development Block Grant Program

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a federal program that provides communities with resources to address a multitude of infrastructure and development needs. The Village can receive allocations of CDBG funding from Lake County.

Funding Source Glossary

Natural Areas

Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management

The Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management is offered through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and provides funds to support green infrastructure stormwater best management practices. Possible funding projects relevant to Winthrop Harbor include stormwater retention and infiltration projects and green infrastructure small projects.

Section 319 Grants

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act was enacted in 1987 and established a national program to control nonpoint source pollution. IEPA is the designated Illinois state agency to receive 319 federal funds and administer the grant program. Projects must address water quality issues relating directly to nonpoint source pollution. Funds can be used for the implementation of IEPA approved watershed management plans including the development of information/education programs and for the installation of best management practices. These funds are administered through the LCSMC.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The funding opportunity may be an option in implementing recommendations for new open space.

Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development

The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program is a state-financed grant program that provides funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space. The program is managed by the IDNR. Projects vary

from small neighborhood parks or tot lots to large community and county parks and nature areas. Under the program funding assistance up to 50 percent (90 percent for distressed communities) of approved project costs can be obtained. Grant awards up to \$750,000 are available for acquisition projects, while development and/or renovation projects are limited to a \$400,000 grant maximum. Although funding is currently frozen for OSLAD projects, the Village should encourage the Winthrop Harbor Parks and Recreation Department to apply for an OSLAD grant or potentially collaborate with the Department to apply for an OSLAD grant together.

Park and Recreational Facility Construction

The Park and Recreational Facility Construction (PARC) Act was created by Public Act 096-0820 effective November 18, 2009, to provide grants to be disbursed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to eligible local governments for park and recreation unit construction projects. A park or recreation unit construction project means the acquisition, development, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvements, architectural planning, and installation of capital facilities including, but not limited to, buildings, structures, and land for park and recreation purposes and open spaces and natural areas. Units of local government that are authorized by Illinois law to expend public funds for the acquisition and development of land for public indoor/outdoor park, recreation or conservation purposes are eligible to apply for funding assistance. Similar to the recommendations for the OSLAD and LWCF grants, the Village should apply for a PARC grant project.

Funding Source Glossary

Transportation

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) is a federally funded program for surface transportation improvements designed to address air quality improvement and mitigate congestion. Winthrop Harbor can consider CMAQ funding for intersection improvements, bicycle facility projects, and bicycle encouragement projects.

Illinois Bicycle Path Program

The Illinois Bicycle Path Program is administered through the IDNR to assist in the acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of public, non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. The program provides financial assistance up to 50 percent of approved project costs.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program

The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) is administered by IDOT. ITEP provides funding for community based projects that expand travel choices and enhance transportation experiences in communities. ITEP is designed to promote bike and pedestrian travel and streetscape/beautification projects.

Surface Transportation Program

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides flexible funding that may be used for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road or pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as well as transit capital projects.

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Appendix A

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

ACRONYMS

LCFPD	Lake County Forest Preserve District
IDNR	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
LCDOT	Lake County Department of Transportation
PUD	Planned Unit Development
EAV	Equalized Assessed Value
TIF	Tax Increment Financing District
RFI	Request for Interest
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
TOD	Transit Oriented Development
ULI	Urban Land Institute
ICSC	International Convention of Shopping Centers
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program
WIC	Woman Infant and Children Benefits Program
IEPA	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
OSLAD	Open Space and Land Acquisition and Development
PARC	Park and Recreational Facility Construction
DCEO	Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
LCSMC	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic
LEHD	Longitudinal Employment Household Dynamics
SRTS	Safe Routes to School Program
ITEP	Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program
CDBG	Community Development Block Program

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is our region's official comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners are developing ON TO 2050, a new comprehensive regional plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.