

# THE GREATER LUDINGTON AREA WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN

Maritime Community Celebrating the Region's Heritage

Prepared by: Camiros, Ltd.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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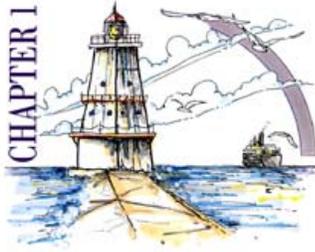
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## PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

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This document describes the efforts in generating a plan for the Greater Ludington Waterfront Area. The effort came about at the request of the Mason County Economic Development Alliance who anticipated the need for a comprehensive examination of the opportunities for growth of an important and visible, yet relatively undeveloped part of their community. The intent of this plan is to provide Ludington citizens, visitors, business persons and potential investors with a realistic vision for the future of the Greater Ludington Waterfront Area. It recognizes that good design economic development brought about through creative partnerships between the public and private sectors will be the driving force for enhancement and development of the waterfront and that a balance must be struck between local citizen needs and desires and positive economic development.

A community-based planning effort was used in generating and selecting the recommendations of the plan. A variety of techniques were used in soliciting input from members of the community including:

- Workshops and feedback sessions with a Planning Advisory Committee;
- Open houses where citizens of the community could inquire about the *efforts of program* and direction of the study;
- An intensive three-day planning Charrette wherein the community was invited to participate in the plan-making activities and to react to ideas, comment on the *conditions which resulted in the current conditions* in the community and offer their opinions on the future of the area.
- Public hearings by the two general units of government, Pere Marquette Township and the City of Ludington.

The importance of the Greater Ludington Waterfront Area is reflected by the interest shown by the individuals and groups who participated in the formulation of the plan. It is estimated that over 200 individuals participated in the activities and that over 96 hours of meetings were held with various interest group in the community. This effort succeeded in forging a strong consensus around the project concepts included in the plan.

This Waterfront Master Plan is not a typical land-use plan. This plan is strategic and visionary in character focusing on the core projects, image and actions that can be taken to enable the community to simultaneously conserve what is cherished about the waterfront, enhance the community's

maritime heritage and realize positive economic development. It is important to understand that waterfront development extends beyond shoreline areas, to the community infrastructure that surrounds it: access, roads, neighborhoods and streets.

Careful consideration has been given to including projects and actions in the plan that are practical given the timeframe that a master plan covers. Some ideas herein may not appear to be so today but may well become real opportunities as the future unfolds. The projects included may not ever be completely accomplished as presented in the plan. That is OK. A plan of this type is supposed to suggest some bold initiatives that present a challenge and set the community's sights high. The Planning Advisory Committee believes that this plan will do that and provide a basis for galvanizing energy and investment in the waterfront in a manner that will produce coordinated improvement economically and for the good of the people of the greater Ludington area.

Implementation of the plan will take place over time. It will require bold leadership from both governmental leaders and private business. It will take a long-term extension of the community mindedness that shone so brightly during the preparation of this plan. In sum, that is the real strength of the larger community. It is the strength that will provide the power to realize the vision for the waterfront that is presented in this plan.

The study area includes portions of the City of Ludington and Pere Marquette Township and extends from Lincoln Lake on the north to Consumers Power Pumped Storage Reservoir on the south and encompasses the shorelines of Lake Michigan and Pere Marquette Lake ([Figure 1-1](#)). One of the first planning activities was to subdivide the area into 24 districts ([Figure 1-2](#)). Many of the districts are well established residential, commercial and recreational sectors of the community and it became evident that there were little or no improvements required for these areas. However, a number of target areas were identified, within which a variety of development and design recommendations have been suggested.

#### **Highlights of the master plan actions include:**

- **Cartier Park** can accommodate both camping tourists destined for Ludington State Park, as well as local recreational needs. The park affords opportunities to improve long established hiking trails which connect to the adjacent residential community.
- **Stearns Park** has been recommended for a variety of design and development improvements including establishing a festival/arrival plaza at the terminus of Ludington Avenue; improvements to the public beach, parking area and the Loomis Street boat ramp; and a design theme which focuses on the maritime heritage of the community.
- The **Central Business District** represents opportunities for infill development which promotes and supplements the specialty retail businesses that are evolving in the area. New developments which (see [Figure 1-1](#) ) ([Figure 1-2](#)) emphasize pedestrian environments with benches, banners, street trees and signage should be considered.

- The **Waterfront** area is viewed as the key component in revitalization and redevelopment in the community. Of major importance is the recommendation that a multi-purpose community center be built. This center would accommodate community events, small conferences and sporting events and would draw residents and tourists into the downtown area. Additional suggestions are offered to support commercial development surrounding the new municipal marina, charter fishing, and tourist sailing ship displays at the new marina; a waterfront park; access and operational supporting functions for the Lake Michigan Carferry; and pedestrian improvements along South James Street.
- The **South Washington Avenue** area is viewed as being able to accommodate a variety of activities, including an improved charter fishing area, with boardwalks, retail stores and residential development; and improvements to Copeyon Park to include a boardwalk promenade and fishing pier.
- The **industrial activities** along the waterfront are essential to the economic diversity of the area and recommendations are to encourage buffering between the adjacent residential areas and activities associated with manufacturing operations.
- The **Dow Ridge** area, on the south side of Pere Marquette Lake, represents an opportunity to accommodate a variety of new uses: a wetlands area along a portion of the lakeshore should be conserved; a deep water port needs visual and functional improvements, and the ridge top affords opportunities for a variety of commercial recreation uses such as a golf course or equestrian center which could also incorporate residential uses. Of course, any changes or improvements in this area are subject to the approval of Dow Chemical, the property owner.
- **Buttersville Park** and the recreational facilities at **Consumers Power Pump Storage Reservoir** are seen as untapped resources which are primarily used by local residents. Suggestions for access, parking and site amenities (picnic tables/shelters) are described.

In addition to target area actions, a plan for connecting the attractions in the community via a system of **pedestrian and bicycle trails** is proposed. The trail system envisions primarily using existing streets and off-street paths such as those at Stearns Park and at the Coast Guard facilities. Expansion of the system is proposed to be built in association with redevelopment activities in the Downtown Waterfront area and the South Washington Street areas.

There is an opportunity to develop a regional bicycle trail system which would connect Ludington State Park on the north to the community of Pentwater on the south. Lakeshore Drive north of the City of Ludington and on the Buttersville Peninsula would be designated as the primary regional

route.

Unique to this routing would be the development of a water taxi link from the new marina/carferry area in the Central Business District to a new landing area on the Buttersville Peninsula. The water taxi idea also extends to other sites and connections on Pere Marquette Lake. For example, connections between Copeyon Park, Buttersville Peninsula, the charter fishing area at South Washington Park and Stearns Park could be developed.

The water taxi connection, coupled with a land based transportation system, could also provide access to the many attractions on Buttersville Peninsula such as White Pine Village and the sand beaches along Lake Michigan.

Image and a theme for the area were discussed throughout the process in order to establish a basis for community identity. The identity of the area can be used to boost tourism development and industrial growth and promote a "sense of place" for Ludington and Pere Marquette Township residents. The identity would then be incorporated into design solutions for public improvements such as those recommended for pedestrian plazas, facade treatment for buildings and signage in the community. The history of the community was very important in the discussions and a theme embodied by the phrase "**Maritime Community Celebrating the Region's Heritage**" was adopted. Essentially elements of the Ludington area history related to logging, shipping and agriculture need to be incorporated into private and public redevelopment efforts in the community. It is within the context of the image statement that the concept sketches of the recommended improvements are illustrated.

A historic theme attraction should be pursued to function as a major tourist attraction. A good location for a maritime theme waterpark would be the Downtown Waterfront. This feature would bring the maritime heritage to life in a way that supports downtown business and the Lake Michigan Carferry business.



## **DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS**

Planning for the challenges represented by the Greater Ludington Waterfront Area involved a process which focused on the perceptions and desires of area residents. Throughout the process, the community, through specially constituted committees and interest groups, shaped the recommendations and guided the development of the plan. This chapter describes the concepts and notions which formed the basis of the plan.

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Actively seeking and incorporating the community has been an integral part to the planning process for the project. A brief summary of the events and activities which were undertaken:

- An initial citizens advisory committee session was conducted far in advance of the development of any recommendations or planning studies. During the citizens advisory committee session, held in early June, 1996, participants were organized into groups and engaged in mapping exercises aimed at soliciting their perception of the issues affecting the community and the positive aspects in the area upon which to build. The results of the comments were recorded and used as a benchmark throughout the planning process to gauge recommendations of the plan with the community sentiment.
- During this initial meeting a community open house was also held to which the general public was invited. The open house format allowed interested citizens to view, at their convenience, some of the background maps that were prepared. Members of the consulting team provided a "one-on-one" escort to respond to questions and concern of those who attended.
- The "Waterfront Charrette" was held during a three day period in the latter part of July, 1996. A charrette is a process whereby plan making is conducted in an open environment at the site of the project. At the Waterfront Charrette a storefront in the Ludington Downtown was

converted into a planning studio. The consulting team set-up shop and developed ideas in the form of sketches and plan drawings. As ideas were put on paper they were field checked. Also businesses and residents in the area of the planning districts were contacted and asked to respond to the ideas. Throughout the three day period, various groups were invited into the



studio and given updates on the plan elements and progress. Also there were open house periods where members of the community could come in at their convenience.

- Planning Advisory Committee reviews were conducted as the plans were becoming finalized and the policies and strategic recommendations were formalized.

As the process of plan making unfolded, and the participants became more accustomed to thinking about their community, they found it easier to express their opinions and desires for the future. Following are a number of their impressions of the present and future of their community:

Things members of the community are **Proud of** and should be incorporated into a plan:

- Natural beauty and resources of the community must be preserved and become major players in the resulting master plan;
- Diverse history plays an important role, and this includes the "history" that is currently being made;
- Deep water working harbor is a major resource;
- Diversity of the economy is a key resource;
- State park is excellent;
- Spirit of the people is a tremendous asset;
- There is currently a broad range of attractions in the community; and
- There needs to be a balance within the community and in turn within the master plan.

Things members of the community are **"Sorry"** about:

- Automobiles and the width of streets take the community away from pedestrians;

- The Central Business District is deteriorating;
- The entrances into the city are of poor appearance and uninviting;
- The core city cannot expand;
- Jobs are important, and not just minimum wage summer jobs;
- Various environmental challenges must be met;
- Indoor/year round activities are needed; and
- Overall image needs to be identified and promoted.

Participants were asked to look into the future and describe what they would like to see in the next ten years:

- Winter activities;
- Opportunities for young people and quality jobs;
- "World Class" facilities and activities;
- Visitor destination appeal;
- Great place to live;
- Historic setting;
- Mix of old and new;
- Magnet for creative energy/destination (business and tourism);
- Economic balance;
- Linkages between waterfront and the rest of the community (not just physical linkages);
- Celebration of community's heritage;
- Pedestrian friendly;
- Connectivity at all levels;
- Natural resources still there and available; and
- Connected central business district and waterfront.

**THEME FOR THE GREATER WATERFRONT AREA**

As the process evolved it became evident that a theme upon which to build the plan was evolving. The brainstorming sessions at the public open houses, charrette and other advisory committee meetings served as a springboard for the development of a theme. A highlight of some of the key brainstorming issues that were repeated throughout the planning process include:

- The importance the natural resources and beauty of the community must be stressed
- The diverse history that shaped the area
- The active and dynamic residents & workers of the community
- The small town scale and feel (pedestrian friendly)
- The waterfront being a destination-for both local residents & tourists

The waterfront was repeatedly heralded as the crown jewel of the community. The consensus of the participants in the various planning sessions was that this was the heart of the greater Ludington community. When so many people can relate and feel proud of an asset to the community, then an identity can easily be established. Without question, the historical importance of the waterfront area is a strong starting point in developing a coherent design identity. Within that theme are several key features.

First, the historical importance that the waterfront and harbor have played in the development of the area should be emphasized. The lumbering, manufacturing, agricultural and railroad industries all helped establish this community. Second, the resounding natural beauty and unique micro-climate of the area are keys to understanding why settlers first established Ludington. Those forces are still at work today, underscoring the strong connection the city and its people have to their history. In relative terms, tourism is the new industry in Ludington, even though it must be 50 or 60 years old. It offers a prime area for further development on the waterfront, and for enhancing downtown business. Building tourism on a theme that is natural and has so much integrity for the people in Ludington is the most appropriate thing to do.

From the designers viewpoint, the image of the area includes not only the water and the maritime aspects, but also the natural resources and heritage of the region. Therefore a strong theme for this area would be "**Maritime Community Celebrating the Region's Heritage**". Because this is based on input from the residents of the community, a strong sense of pride about the area can be established because it relates directly to how people feel about their town. It is when the citizens of Ludington, Pere Marquette Township and Mason County can pull together under a common banner that is inclusive and has strong integrity with their history that exciting challenges will become reality.

How these changes are carried into the future is the important question. Without serious commitment and support, these proposed programs will never get off the drawing board. Programs such as the construction of a new marina, perhaps a community/civic center, implementation of a comprehensive streetscape enhancement and addition of new commercial, retail and aesthetic improvements all strive for the common goals of increasing business and the quality of life for the citizens of greater Ludington.

Another common value repeated throughout the public sessions held in Ludington was the suggestion that Ludington area people care about each other. This quality is as important to the community as the beauty of

the natural setting. It also has the potential of seeding the planning concepts that will form the Ludington Waterfront Plan. For example, the proposed community/civic center could provide a gathering place for locals to interact with each other in all kinds of community functions, from recreational activities to social outlets.

The addition of small-scale retail, historic museums and working artists shops will entice existing visitors to linger and attract new ones to the area and in the process open up new opportunities for area residents to start new businesses and showcase their talents. The installation of a new waterfront park and extending the boardwalk along the lake seeks to promote the beauty of the area but also to provide places for residents to experience their areas, the natural beauty of their hometown and each other as they share in these things they mutually value.

The guidelines set forth in this plan are based upon the idea that it is important to celebrate the community's heritage, strengthen the economy and provide additional opportunities to bring Ludington area people into positive contact with each other.

## **STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

The theme developed for the planning effort became the basis for recommending strategies to guide development of the master plan. The following strategies were used as guides in the recommendations in the plan:

### **1. Capture Existing Visitors**

Provide attractions on the waterfront that will capture the tourists who already visit Ludington due to the Lake Michigan Carferry and Ludington State Park. The attractions will entice ferry passengers to extend their stay in the waterfront/downtown area and draw beach visitors from the State Park. Attractions that can successfully achieve this objective will naturally attract new visitors as well.

### **2. Retain Working Waterfront**

It is important to retain the concept of a "working waterfront" for the Ludington area and Pere Marquette Township. Purifying the land-uses for the sake of tourism homogeneity is not necessary and perhaps even counterproductive. The working parts of the waterfront should not be polluting, of course, and should not be so developed as to eliminate the natural quality, viewsheds and shoreline of Pere Marquette Lake. There is a delicate and important balance to be struck which considers the interest and connections to Ludington's heritage that the working elements can provide. There is also the need to maintain, even create, new view corridors that are natural and celebrate the beauty of Lake Michigan and the Pere Marquette Lake waterfront and river waterscape, shorelines, dunes and sky. Both can co-exist with careful and consistent design followed by enlightened and disciplined regulation which is committed to the Master Plan for the long haul.

### **3. Maritime Heritage**

The design theme for Ludington should consistently follow the Maritime, lumbering, railroading, and agricultural heritage that reflects both the past and current character of the larger community and her people. (Steamboat Springs, Colorado is an example of a strong tourism destination that has kept its connection with its heritage and the other elements of its economy-in its case: mining, ranching and agriculture).

#### **4. Community Serving Facilities**

It is important to provide facilities for the community's enjoyment and use of, what is essentially, their waterfront and downtown. Facilities and attractions that are considered to enhance tourism should not be to the exclusion of local uses of the waterfront. Indeed, the facilities to be supported most strongly should be those that serve double duty-providing for the community while enhancing the quality-of-life for the people of Mason County and bolster the local economy. The primary action projects that support this important strategy are the conference/civic center and the redesign and enhancement of the Lake Michigan beach area at the foot of Ludington Avenue.

#### **5. Strengthen Downtown**

As improvements and/or additions are added to the framework of the community, the Central Business District must not be ignored. What is at the heart of this city is residents. They need places that will serve their daily needs, as well as enhance their cultural, recreational and social environments. It is necessary to promote business of local interest to occupy space within the CBD. In addition, the implementation of a unified streetscape program that not only addresses the main street (Ludington Ave.) but also connections to the Car ferry, conference/civic center, and waterfront will help to strengthen the entire downtown area. Critical to this strategy is making a strong connection between the Car ferry, marinas and the retail core of the downtown.

#### **6. Extend the Tourist Season**

There is a strong desire to extend the tourist season beyond the traditional Memorial Day to Labor Day period. Activities, events and facilities which can host and accommodate "shoulder season" tourists during the spring and fall times of the year contribute to and enhance the economy of the community. Events such as harvest festivals, fall color tours, and boat races are typical of activities to draw tourists throughout the year. A facility, like the previously mentioned conference/civic center would be able to host a variety of regional and statewide conferences and trade show meetings. There are literally thousands of organizations representing fraternal, educational and business interests who meet annually and are constantly searching for new and interesting places to host their meetings. Additional shoulder season events are sports based activities-basketball, volleyball and hockey tournaments and regional playoffs provide events which draw in people for extended periods of time.

The following chart (**Table 2-1**) summarizes the relationship between the six core strategies and projects that support these basic components.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of the plan describes the existing conditions in the study Waterfront. Existing conditions provide a basis for comparing the proposal and measuring the degree of change that may occur given successful plan implementation in the future of the plan.

### A Thumbnail Sketch of the Ludington and Pere Marquette Area



The City of Ludington and Pere Marquette Township are located on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan and at the mouth of Pere Marquette River in Mason County. The community is approximately 240 miles northwest of Detroit and 200 miles north of Chicago. The City of Ludington is the county seat of Mason County and is its largest community, with a current population of about 9,000. Pere Marquette Township, surrounds the City of Ludington, has a population of about 2,200 and these two areas represent just less than 50% of the population of Mason County.

There were a number of reasons for the attraction of the area to early settlers. The natural resources of the region were primary attractions. Initially the timber resources were a major attraction and soon after the first immigrants arrived in the 1840's there was a thriving industry. There were as many as 17 sawmills along Pere Marquette Lake. As the need to export products grew railroads were built and shipping expanded. The decline of the lumber industry was replaced by extraction of brine deposits in the region and this product, along with other extracted minerals continue as one of the primary industries in the region. Early settlers began an agricultural industry based on fruit trees which continues to be one of the major industries in the region.

The natural resources in the area are one of the reasons for the settlement in the area and continues to be a major factor in determining the future of the region. Substantial water resources are available in Ludington and Pere Marquette Township. Pere Marquette Township has about 5.0 miles of picturesque sand dunes along the Lake Michigan shoreline and the City of Ludington has 1.7 miles. Most of the shoreline is publicly accessible. Lincoln Lake and the Lincoln River serve as the boundary between Pere Marquette Township and Hamlin Township to the north. Pere Marquette Lake offers eight public and private marinas and has several dozen charter fishing operations. Lake Michigan Carferry Company, the DOW Chemical Corporation and Sand Products Corporation regularly use the commercial port facilities on Pere Marquette Lake. Pere Marquette River, which flows into Pere Marquette Lake also has a scenic river designation.

The climate of the area also has a impact on the ability of the community to accommodate tourism activities. The westerly winds across Lake Michigan provide for relatively moderate precipitation and temperature. However, the winters are long and the summers are short and warm. The difference between the average summer and winter temperature is approximately 40°. Rainfall averages just under 30 inches per year, with about 20 inches occurring from April to October. Snowfall average is about 70 inches per year.

The Greater Ludington Waterfront area is a diverse environment with assets capable of capturing a greater share of the growing regional tourism market and re-establishing its role as a primary regional commercial center serving the residents of Mason County trade area. The Greater Ludington area is a lightly-tapped recreational resource. Although the city is more than 100 years old, much of the prime waterfront and amenity-laden land remains undeveloped. The resort development occurring in the region, in places like Traverse City, Petoskey and Charlevoix, seems to have by-passed Ludington. However, there is some indication that the community does not want to become "just another resort town". The area has the unique history as a working port with an industrial base which is not wholly dependent on the tourist trade. This is a heritage worth protecting and building upon.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS IN THE WATERFRONT AREA**

The Greater Ludington Waterfront area consists of portions of the City of Ludington and Pere Marquette Township. The development patterns in the waterfront study area are depicted in Figure 3-1: Generalized Existing Land Use. Land uses in the City of Ludington portion of the study area reflect the historic growth of the community as a port city and regional trade center. Pere Marquette Lake and harbor have served as the center for industrial activity which began with logging, evolved into businesses which produced chemicals, and as a shipping port and charter fishing area. The Central Business District commercial uses which supported the industrial activities along the harbor are located adjacent to the waterfront area. (see Figure 3-1)

The residential areas which housed the owners and employees of the harbor industry's form a ring around the waterfront and central business district. The pattern and types of residential development reflect the industrial uses along the waterfront. For example, the housing adjacent to the DOW plant was developed for employees of the plant, the residential uses near the carferry were originally occupied by those employed in the shipping business and the owners and managers of area businesses lived adjacent to the central business district or near the lakeshore. Residential areas along and near Lake Michigan contain larger homes, some of which were used as summer homes or were occupied by the owners of the industrial properties in the community.

The land use activities in Pere Marquette Township tend to be more rural in nature. The area within the study area on the north is the Epworth Heights community which is a gated residential area of large homes. Pere Marquette Township rings the eastern and southern shoreline of Pere Marquette Lake. The eastern portion of the lakeshore is the site for industrial users including the Harbison-Walker Plant and the lime settling ponds of DOW Chemical. The southern shoreline contains a wetlands area formed by the outflow of the Pere Marquette River and a deep water port for a sand company.

The Buttersville Peninsula is a narrow strip of land separating Lake Michigan from Pere Marquette Lake. The peninsula is home to a township park, a shrine commemorating Father Marquette, an early

explorer of the area, White Pine Village-the Mason County Historical Society's recreation of early life in the region and its headquarters and numerous home-sites. The Crosswinds condominium development is located at the tip of peninsula and is actually within the corporate boundary of the City of Ludington. The southern end of the waterfront area contains orchards areas and the reservoir for the Consumer's Power Pumped Storage facility, which is used to generate hydroelectric power.

## **ATTRACTIONS IN THE WATERFRONT AREA**

The Greater Ludington Area Waterfront has many attractions-from the purely recreational opportunities available at the public beaches and other amenities in the community to the purely industrial activities associated with the businesses in the working harbor created by Pere Marquette Lake. The map on the following page (Figure 3-2) delineates the attractions and a description of the areas, along with comments received during the planning process:

- **Ludington State Park.** This is one of the premier parks in the State of Michigan system. The park is located eight (8) miles north of Ludington. The primary access to the park is through downtown Ludington and the traffic the park generates is viewed as an opportunity which needs to receive increased attention. The park contains 20 miles of foot and ski trails, three campgrounds and beaches which attract over 750,000 visits per year. In addition to the natural resource of the Lake Michigan shoreline, the park encompasses a portion of Hamlin Lake and the dunes, the Big Sauble Point lighthouse and the Lake Michigan beach house.
- **Cartier Park.** This city owned park is viewed as an opportunity for improved development. This park contains 68 acres including 2,500 feet of frontage along Lincoln Lake. The park contains rustic camping sites, a boat launch, a concession stand, restrooms, beach bathhouse with showers and hiking trails. The campground is located on the west side of the park off Lakeshore Drive and encompasses 24 acres and is managed by a private concessionaire. The remaining 44 acres covering the eastern part of the park is undeveloped except for some minor roads, and is suitable for hiking, cross country skiing, trails and other recreation activities. ( **see Figure 3-2** )
- **Oriole Field.** This is the community's largest competitive recreation complex. The 23 acre complex has two lighted and one unlighted ball diamond, one baseball diamond, one lighted football/soccer field/all weather track with field event pits, a field house with restrooms and parking for 200 vehicles. The facility serves all of Mason County and is the site for athletic activities serving school aged youths and adults. The facility operates through a cooperative agreement between the City of Ludington and the Ludington Area Schools.
- **Stearns Park.** This is the community's primary lakefront park. The 60 acres include 1/2 mile of lake frontage and serves as the site for some of the area's major events such as the July Freedom Festival, Gus Macker

basketball tournament and Lakestride event. The park has 450 parking spaces, two concession stands, children's playground, picnic tables, 20 grills, shuffleboards courts and horseshoe pits. The Jaycees operate a miniature golf course at the southern end of the park and a pathway from the beach leads out to the north breakwall providing access to fishing and providing for one of the community's favorite places for walking. There were some questions raised as to the adequacy and arrangement of the parking at the park and the increased pressure on the area from skateboarders and rollerbladers.

- **Loomis Street Park and Boat Launch.** This three acre site is located south of Stearns Park and north of the channel into Pere Marquette Lake. The area has 8 boat launching sites, parking for 120 vehicles and boat trailers, a rest room and fish-cleaning station. Also a picnic shelter was recently constructed. The boat launch area is one of the most prominent focal points in the community, yet it is dominated by the parking associated with the boat launch.
- **Coast Guard Station.** The Coast Guard facility is one of the many attractions of the working harbor. The manicured, well maintained building and grounds serve as prominent, highly valued attraction in the community for its character and public safety mission.

The Coast Guard has recently announced its desired plans to relocate to a smaller, more efficient facility, providing access to Pere Marquette Lake and Lake Michigan. A specific location and timeframe has yet to be determined.

- **City Park and Bandshell.** City Park is located at Lewis Street and Ludington Avenue. The park is used extensively throughout the year with activities such as the Annual Art Fair and weekly band concerts. The park, however, is in need of maintenance and repair. The bandshell is deteriorated, restroom facilities are inadequate and the sidewalks in and around the park are in need of repair. The park has high visibility along Ludington Avenue and is an inviting, attractive urban amenity in the community.
- **Ludington Municipal Marina.** The Ludington Municipal Marina is located on the north side of the channel that connects Lake Michigan to Pere Marquette Lake. It is within a few blocks of the central business district and adjacent to the administrative facilities of the city. The marina has a capacity of 150 slips, and contains a service building with fish cleaning facilities, gas docks, pumpout station, restrooms and showers, a picnic shelter and playground area. The facilities were constructed in 1979 and improvements completed in 1994.
- **New Marina/Watchcase Area.** The new marina, waterfront park and potential for development of the Watchcase property were viewed as issues of how best to integrate opportunities represented by this area. A related concern is the need to redirect traffic to the Carferry in light of construction of the marina and park. Also the presence of the Municipal Building and Public Works garage in close proximity to

the area and potential opportunity for redevelopment of a larger area were mentioned.

- **Carferry Yard.** The Lake Michigan Carferry is a passenger steamship which transports passengers and vehicles on a four hour cruise from Ludington to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The ferry, which can accommodate 620 passengers and 175 vehicles runs between mid-May and early October. The carferry dock and yard area are viewed as an important opportunity to focus the heritage of community as a transportation center and port. The removal of the rail lines, which carried rail cars across Lake Michigan, creates opportunities for expansion of the site as a visitor attraction. Also, the marina construction identified above will require rerouting of vehicular traffic to the ferry.
- **Charter Fishing Area-Washington Street.** This is the historic charter fishing area in the vicinity of the Washington Street bridge. The area has recently suffered a period of deterioration and is in need of improvement. There is no organization to the area which would direct persons desiring to charter a boat. There is no clearly identified parking area or a central information and reservation area. Additionally there are areas of deterioration, with docks in need of repair and paint and the appearance created by stagnant water which accumulates at the end of the bog along Madison Street.
- **Ludington Yacht Club and Copeyon Park.** Copeyon Park is located along the east side of Pere Marquette Lake in the southern part of the community. The park contains 4.2 acres and contains a picnic area, playground, grills, restroom, boat launch, pumpout station and fish cleaning facility. The park is located adjacent to the private Ludington Yacht Club. This area is viewed as another opportunity to build upon the historic fishing and more current charter boating industry in the community. Some comments mentioned the current reputation of the area as a party site for youth of the community.
- **Pere Marquette Scenic River.** The Pere Marquette Scenic River extends from the community of Baldwin on the east to Pere Marquette Lake on the west, a distance of about 30 miles. As the river flows into Pere Marquette Lake there is a large natural area consisting of wetlands which houses numerous varieties of fish and waterfowl. Old US 31 (now called Pere Marquette Highway) traverses the area and there were a number of concerns about the safety and image that this roadway provides to the tourist and visitor to the community. The road is narrow, with no shoulders in some areas, and there are two very narrow bridges which cross the Pere Marquette River. However, the roadway passes through an environmentally rich wetlands area and represents an opportunity for a unique gateway into the community.
- **DOW Ridge.** The area on the south side of Pere Marquette Lake and north of Iris Road was mentioned by a number of participants as being an opportunity for development, and possibly as a planned residential development. Questions were raised as to the need for this area for the manufacturing purpose of the DOW Chemical Company. If the land is

"excess" then there are unique topographic and land form conditions which would make this an attractive development site. At the time of this document preparation, DOW owns this property and ultimately controls any future development.

- **Buttersville Township Park.** This is viewed as a real gem-something only residents know about and many desired to keep it the community's secret. The park has access to both Lake Michigan and Pere Marquette Lake.
- **White Pine Village.** White Pine Village is a cluster of 20 historic buildings which include a blacksmith shop, clock museum, chapel, old fashioned ice cream parlor, trapper's cabin, lumbering exhibits, an 1880 restored farmhouse and other historic buildings. This attraction is open from mid-June through Labor Day. Participants in community workshops and open houses universally praise White Pine Village as a important community and visitor attraction. The challenge ahead for the community and White Pine Village is to find creative ways to get people over to the Village from the downtown area. Essentially, this will require aggressive marketing of the White Pine Village visitor experience. It is a remarkable and quality venue. Many visitors are not made aware of this fact to the degree necessary to induce them to make the decision to invest the time to take in this premier area attraction.
- **Father Marquette Shrine.** The shrine is a statue of one of the first explorers of the region after whom many of the natural features of the area are named. This is a "hidden" attraction which is identified by roadside signs directing the visitor to the site. This attraction is viewed by some as deserving more attention.
- **The Bluffs.** There is a vertical rise creating a cliff-like condition between Buttersville Township Park and the Pumped Storage Reservoir inlet. The bluffs are one of the unique amenities of the area and were mentioned by a number of participants in the workshops and open houses as one of the lesser-known amenities of the area.
- **Consumers Power Recreation Area.** The recreational facilities at the base of the Pumped Storage Reservoir were frequently mentioned as underutilized amenities of the region. The high quality facilities are apparently used by the community but are relatively unknown to the visitor.



## THE MASTER PLAN

This section describes the proposals and ideas for improvement for the waterfront area. A recommended theme for the area which was previously described is expanded upon and suggested design solutions are illustrated. The entire waterfront area is examined and divided up into 24 areas-not all of which are in need of improvement. In describing the planning concept an analogy with a piece of jewelry, a gemstone necklace, is used. The necklace consists of precious stones held together by string or a woven metal strand. The attractions in the community are viewed as the "gems" of the community-or the gemstones-and the strand which connects them together is a system of the pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes.

### GUIDING OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

A key element in the concept of connecting the amenities and attractions of the community in the proposed plan is to focus on a few major objectives. The following represent the most important of those objectives and how they would complement the existing attractions.

The following objectives were used in developing a program and theme for the community:

- Attractions should appeal to both Mason County visitors and residents .
- The attractions should expand the Mason County visitor market by attracting additional visitors, particularly during the shoulder seasons.
- Facilities built, as part of the attractions, should complement the region's character and should not represent a departure from the area's ambiance and charm.
- The natural resources of the area should be recognized and accounted for in the development of any attraction.
- A high level of aesthetic quality should be considered in the design of the major attractions.

### Sense of Place

One of the major elements in community design is the identification of arrival and entrance to a place. The notion of a sense of place is somewhat difficult to define, but the idea is to "announce" to the resident that they are home, to the tourist that they have arrived at their destination or that they are at a special place in a special community.

### Entrances to the City

There are two primary directions of approach to the city-from the east and south. Lake Michigan and

Ludington State Park limit access on the west and north. The southern entrance is along Old US 31 (Pere Marquette Highway) which is used by residents and the frequent visitor to the community. The roadway passes through the wetlands created by the Pere Marquette River and the areas where much of the industrial activities in the community are located.

With the exception of a few stray advertising signs, the wetlands area offers quite a stark contrast to the "industrial" skyline formed by the DOW Chemical and Harbison-Walker Plants. Viewing the manufacturing plants in the background announces the arrival into the community. The long range plan for roads in the community includes the replacement of Old US 31. No specific roadway plans have been developed, but the need for a larger right-of-way with adequate shoulders is evident, along with new bridges across the Pere Marquette River. Replacement bridges can be designed with ornamentation to reflect themes found in the Waterfront Area.

The approach from the east, along Ludington Avenue/US 10 reflects the highway strip commercial uses found in many communities. There are three environments the traveler experiences along this route. The first is the agricultural landscape of the area surrounding the US 31 interchange. Moving to the west the commercial uses build up with larger retail establishments such as K-Mart and franchise restaurants. This portion of the route is filled with parking lots, individual signs and overhead power lines. The Ludington city limit is a most noticeable change in that the street becomes primarily residential with flower plantings along the street right-of-way. As one continues along the roadway the residential character changes into the central business district and finally as one approaches Lake Michigan there is a "resort" environment with lodging and motel units.

The least desirable progression along the route is the strip commercial activities in Pere Marquette township. The numerous and competing signs bombard the traveler, there are unusual and hazardous intersections and the power lines seem to dominate the landscape. Possible visual improvements along this section of the roadway would include gradual changing of the individual signage to monument signs, which would advertise individual businesses on one sign per group of buildings, a limitation of access and curb cuts along the road and landscaping.

### **Ludington Avenue Terminus**

The terminus of Ludington Avenue is Lake Michigan. Currently the road dead ends into the parking lot for the Looms Street boat ramp. This is a focal point in the community which is worthy of more treatment than currently exists. The proposal is to celebrate the site with a commemorative plaza or sculpture and landscape improvements which bring more attention to the area.

### **Water Arrival**

Many visitors get their first exposure to the community from the water, either as a passenger on the Lake Michigan Carferry or by private boats touring the Great Lakes by water. Furthermore, the arrival of the Carferry and other shipping associated with the industrial activities in the harbor are an attraction. The proposal for improvements to the Waterfront area described later are viewed as an area which can be a focal point for those arriving into the community as well as those who desire to view the arrivals into the community.

## **Charter Fishing**

The activity associated with the charter fishing business in the community is another element of the waterfront which is an opportunity to provide for a tourist experience. Tourists can experience the arrival of charter fishing boats and the catches made by those fishing.

## **Sunset**

Viewing the setting sun over Lake Michigan has become a favorite pastime of locals and tourists. While there are many vantage points, the area most often used is Stearns Park which provides an unobstructed vista of the multiple colors and hues as the sun sets.

### **ACTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY AREAS**

In the process of involving the community and analyzing the variety of conditions in the study area, some conclusions were reached as to the level of actions, changes and improvements. The study area was divided into 24 analysis areas with some areas being recommended for no significant changes, while others being suggested for major changes. **Figure 4-1** defines the areas and the level of actions, and the following table ( **See Table 4-1** ) summarizes the actions to be taken.

### **COMMUNITY IMAGE**

In today's demanding marketplace, communities need to promote themselves to ensure a successful and bright future. Throughout the public meetings held in the waterfront planning process, a common concern among the participants was that Ludington lacked a strong community theme or image. It will be important to develop a strong community identity that is represented throughout the waterfront and downtown area. This identity can be used to boost tourism development and industrial growth, and promote the sense of place for Ludington and Mason County residents.

Currently, Ludington has a variety of image elements that can become part of a stronger community identity. The use of decorative street banners and the "petunia parade" are strong indicators of a desire to promote the city. However, these are just the starting points in the development of a new community image.

To add to those elements, the community's attributes that residents find unique and attractive can be added to the palette of images available for marketing and celebration purposes. The images can be used on streetlight banners, flags, brochures and the like. Consider some of the following elements for use as community images:

- Lake Michigan Carferry
- Boating and Fishing Harbors
- Breakwall & Lighthouse
- Pere Marquette River

- Pere Marquette Lake
- Orchards
- Petunias Parade
- White Pine Village
- Historic Downtown Architecture
- Maritime & Lumbering History

Certainly there are many others to add to this list. Together these images defines and describes Ludington and the surrounding areas of Mason County. A number of illustrative graphics or "icons" have been created to describe the potential for a system of consistent imagery. Should the community desire to pursue this approach, these icons would require refinement to customize them to Ludington/Mason County in a much more direct manner.

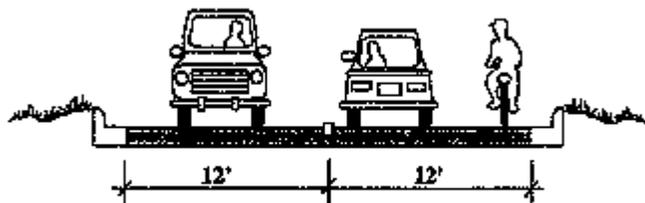
## THE GEMS-AREAS TARGETED FOR INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

The following sections contain specific planning and design suggestions/discussions for those areas defined as being suitable for moderate and major improvements.

### Cartier Park

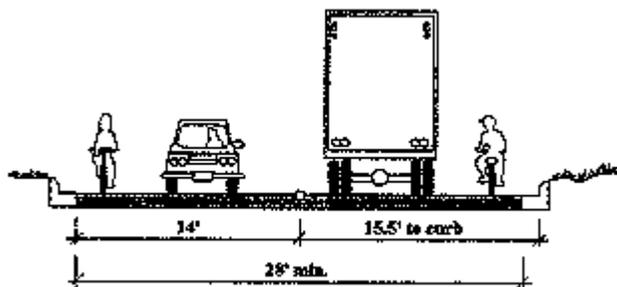
As of the time this plan is being published, the City of Ludington is anticipating an upswing in the recreational opportunities and potential of Cartier Park. The park's location appeals to a variety of users. Primarily it is seen as nature preserve, picnic area and passive recreation resource for community use. A pristine area, Cartier Park should remain low scale in its overall development and recreational improvement. Nature should not be overwhelmed in this beautiful forest. This is not to say that improvements are not needed; for they are indeed. The improvement policy however, should be sensitivity to the conservation of the area and the application of "low scale " improvements that fit unobtrusively within the natural forest setting. Trails for hiking and biking that connect to the city's neighborhoods are the kind of improvements that will fit the community's desire for this area. These can be combined with interpretive nature walks, rest and picnic facilities. The waterfront would blossom with an upgrade to the boat launch facilities.

#### Every Road is a Bicycling Road



*When Traffic volumes are low and vehicular speeds are slow (generally less than 2000 ADT and 30 mph) extra pavement width is typically not required for bicycle use*

The western portion of the park can be planned and developed in a manner which expands the number of camp sites from the present 200 spaces to 400 spaces. A feasibility study sponsored by the city indicates that the demand would support this expansion. Furthermore, the recent Michigan State Parks policy of taking reservations for camp sites at Ludington State Park, (and other state facilities) may further enhance the camping demand and usage of Cartier Park.



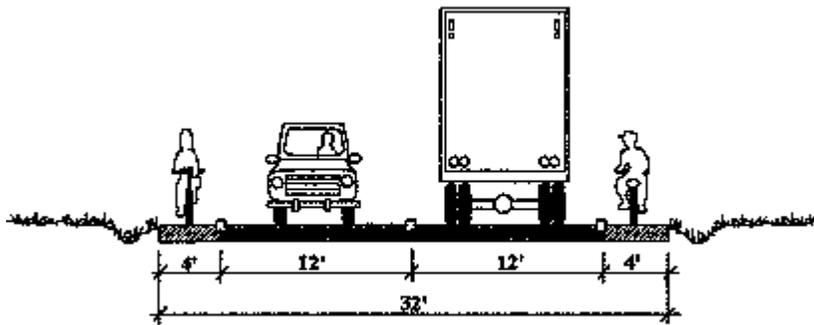
*Curb lanes that are 14 feet or wider provide extra operating room to all motorists and cyclists to share lane space*

The City's study also described the eastern portion of the park as being suitable for hiking-biking trails and winter sports activities such as cross-country skiing. This concept fits in very well with the concept of connecting the attractions in the community via a system of trails. The graphic at left illustrates conceptual ideas for Cartier Park.

## Stearns Park/Loomis Park

The concepts that are suggested below for the various areas in Stearns/Loomis park would help establish the area as a unified destination space. Both the function of the area and the visual quality of the parks will be improved and enhanced. In addition, the parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation will have a stronger organizational layout which will better complement the designed intentions of the area. The addition of pedestrian friendly elements, such as planters, vegetation and benches, will help to tie the entire region into a more cohesive package. This thematic package could then be extended to include all of the greater waterfront area. Larger connections will be made from the waterfront to the downtown, marina, state park and other off-site destination points. Targeted areas for improvement include:

- **Festival/Arrival Plaza**



*paved shoulders, a minimum of 4 feet wide, are the recommended method of accommodating bicycles on rural highways.*

The area at the terminus of Ludington Avenue needs to become a focal point or "postcard" for the city. The design of the plaza could include, but not be limited to, such elements as a playful fountain, whimsical sculpture, colorful banners, decorative seating and attractive plantings. This site could also set a theme for the lakefront that would then be continued throughout the

entire greater waterfront region. The design of the area should be festive, yet it should not dominate the view of the lighthouse or the lake scene.

- **Stearns Park Public Beach**



The beach is already the major draw to Stearns Park, and any improvements would only enhance the visitor's experience to the area. The strong relationship between the beach and picnic area should be maintained. Possible programmed activities, such as small concerts and art fairs, could be scheduled in the grassy lawn/picnic area of the park. The existing restrooms and concession stands are functional, yet not very user-friendly. A new structure should be erected immediately west of Stearns Park Drive for child safety. It might include: improved restrooms and changing facilities, lifeguard equipment storage,

expanded concessions and outdoor dining. The building should be of such architectural integrity that it is of human scale and in character with waterfront development.

- **Public Parking and Fishing Demand**

In order to open up the waterfront to pedestrians and better connect Stearns and Loomis parks, the existing parking lot needs to be redesigned to be set back from the waters edge. It is important to reposition the parking away from the lake shore in order to reserve the shore for strollers and people taking in the views and drama offered by the big lake. Parking is in high demand at times of peak fishing activity. Replacement parking can be designed around the water treatment settling pond located just to the northwest of the historic coast guard station.

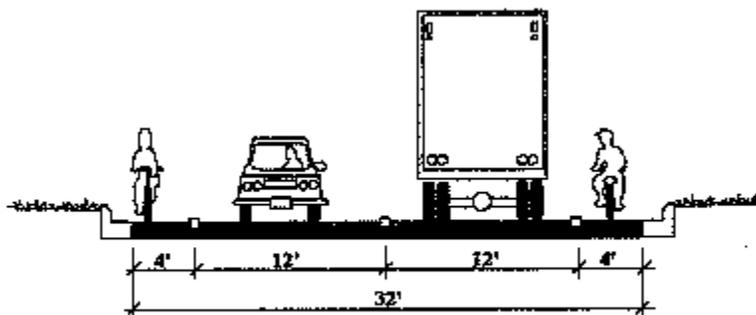
The reality is however, that the demand for fishing boat launch site parking is greater than the land available at this location. The community needs to have and use other launch sites as well. While these alternative sites will not be as close to open water, they are necessary to handle the substantial and growing demand for this important recreation use of the waterfront. Alternative launch sites should be sited and or improved in the Pere Marquette Township Marina/Copeyon Park area. The feasibility of locating such facilities in the general vicinity across and north of Buttersville Township Park beach might also be investigated. A third possibility worthy of investigation would be in the area of the Thompson Building where a marina /launch site could be designed into a mixed use complex. Major parking for cars and boat trailers could be developed north of the abandoned CSX railroad right-of-way as part of a redevelopment project undertaken by the city.

- **Coast Guard Station and Coast Guard Presence**

The old Coast Guard Station may come available for adaptive community use if the Coast Guard finds newer and more efficient quarters within the harbor. Should this occur, the road leading to the Coast Guard Station can be designed to add to the parking reserve for fishermen with access to the old station provided through the park. Community use of the station would offer many new opportunities for community enjoyment of the waterfront from sheltered storm watching to family gatherings and events of all types. The Coast Guard's presence is highly valued by the community and it is in the community's best interest to find an appropriate site for a new Coast Guard facility. Two possible locations appear promising; a site immediately behind the Carferry docks, and a site adjacent to the city dock near the Thompson Building.

- **Loomis Park-Fishing Pier**

A new fish cleaning station in Loomis Park would serve the individuals that will continue to use the existing boat launch for pleasure fishing. The facility should be screened with vegetation, and it should contain areas for trash, ice makers and large sinks. Expanded restroom facilities and additional picnic shelters should also be included in this area. The entrance onto the fishing pier could be



*Signed and striped bicycle lanes on arterial streets encourage people to make every day trips by bike instead of by car.*

enhanced with decorative banners that help to carry out the nautical theme of the waterfront. The existing boardwalk should extend from the pier and connect to the walk at the break wall. Some of the best views of the harbor and lighthouse are from this point. The added amenities will help to establish Loomis Park as a popular destination point and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The following graphics illustrate [conceptual plans and character sketches](#) for the Stearns Park area.

[See Stearns Park blow up here](#)

## **Central Business District**

In order to ensure further growth and a healthy economy, the Central Business District (CBD) must continue to promote itself as an important asset to the community. A healthy downtown area is essential to the vitality of the greater Ludington area waterfront. The implementation of future improvements in the waterfront district must be seen as complementary to the CBD. Areas around the downtown waterfront and James Street that are targeted for redevelopment will not compete with the CBD for direct business. The programmed activities in each area are different enough that they will balance and support each other, resulting in a stronger and healthier economic environment. Specific areas within the CBD that are currently vacant should be filled with establishments that promote what this area is about-serving the local citizens and tourists.

Downtown Ludington's historic character constitutes a resource that cannot be matched anywhere else in the community. It is a defining element of the downtown and indeed of the community. As such, it should be carefully conserved and made part of the overall Ludington marketing program. The City should consider taking steps to secure the historic resources of the downtown through an appropriate preservation strategy.

- **Main Street Model**

One proven strategy used throughout the country has been the Main Street Program sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Locally based programs can work in concert with the Main Street program and be designed to fit the specific economic and architectural needs of the downtown. Certainly, a downtown facade program that will enhance the character of the downtown streetscape in keeping with a historic maritime theme appears most natural. Under such a program, original facades would be restored when facade work is appropriate given the circumstances of individual owners and businesspersons. These kinds of programs are often publicly supported by low interest loans and at times outright grants.

- **Ludington Avenue Streetscape**

The Ludington Avenue streetscape project should be extended to include areas past William Street. The addition of brick accents at pedestrian crossings, benches, street trees and decorative planters would help to make the connection between the business district and the waterfront stronger. The boulevard treatment along west Ludington Avenue should also be extended to Lake Shore Drive. These combined efforts help to intensify the buildup to the lake. This progressive buildup of vegetation, boulevards and color (i.e. banners, annuals/perennials etc.) would then culminate in the festival arrival plaza.

A common palette of streetscape design and street furniture such as benches, waste receptacles, flower containers and the like should be determined as part of the design palette for the waterfront and used by both the public and private sector when making improvements, big and small to the downtown area.

- **Land Use Policy**

The CBD currently has a number of land uses that break the retail/tourism character of the downtown. These are for the most part very important establishments that provide critical jobs and economic activity in the community. These uses which are industrial and highway commercial in character have existed in the downtown for a very long time and indeed have grown and flourished in their present settings. Some have or are on the verge of outgrowing their locations and to continue to progress need different settings to better serve their customer base or expand to meet a healthy, growing market demand. Planning policy regarding these uses should be handled on a case by case basis with the needs of the individual establishment determining timing of zoning changes and assistance in relocating within the community to more appropriate locations.

- **South James Street Improvements**

At the time this plan is under preparation, the most critical need in the CBD area has to be the James Street commercial frontage running from Ludington Avenue to the Dowland. This stretch used to be the prime commercial street in the community. Changes first to the industrial economy and then more recently to the retail and commercial economy have left James Street a backwater economically. It is not too strong a statement to say that without a revitalization to James Street, the waterfront plan will never be complete. It is a most vital aspect of the overall enhancement plan for the CBD and indeed for the waterfront plan as a whole.

James Street has been scheduled to be designated as US Highway 10 from Ludington Avenue to the Car-ferry docks. This will help secure the commercial component of the ferry operations and contribute greatly to the growth in this segment of the ferry business. The designation will not hurt the revitalization efforts suggested for James Street and indeed may help by bringing more traffic to the street.

James Street can be visually improved with the US 10 routing and the addition of the large trucks that use the ferry to cross the lake. Different kinds of streetscape improvement will be necessary with the design and improvement emphasis put on sidewalk area, building facades, signage and window displays. This design concept can be very successful in enhancing the basic character of James Street while protecting the economic function of US 10.

The basic character and strength of James Street is the historic integrity of those blocks which still retain the turn of the century buildings that signal Ludington's lumbering heyday. Essentially, this condition exists between Ludington Avenue and Danaher Street. It is more pronounced in the northern two blocks of this segment nearest Ludington Avenue but has some very good examples of period buildings between Danaher and Foster. If combined with a five block segment of Ludington Avenue from William to Rowe Street, a compact "T" shape historic commercial district would emerge. This area would be a strong candidate for Main Street Program treatment.

Foster Street between James and William, would become a main pedestrian corridor under this plan. It offers the potential to link the new marina to James Street by creating a quiet lane with attractive little buildings, both new and old, filled with shops that will make an attractive strolling and shopping place in the downtown waterfront. It will function as a magnetic passageway to the James Street and downtown retail core.

Bringing retail and commercial life back to James, will require a long term commitment and steady vigilance. The community cannot expect James Street to contribute much in the form of tax revenue in the early or even mid-range time period. Indeed, the James Street district will need substantial investment by the community; both public and private before it will return full benefits. Ludington will have significant beneficial return in the meantime in the form of increased downtown retail and tourism strength. James Street is the major link between the Car-ferry docks and the core of the downtown. As it is upgraded and shows new vitality, it will draw together the key elements of the downtown waterfront strategy.

The south end of James Street generally from Danaher to the CSX property should be recycled for the most part. Productive uses do remain in this stretch and should stay as part of the overriding "working waterfront" concept. At the far end where James Street approaches Dowland Street, consideration should be given to joint surface parking use so designed to serve a historic theme attraction on the CSX property, Carferry customers and employees and the proposed viewing stands and gathering place overlooking Pere Marquette Lake. Remaining land areas might eventually support a market for new housing in the townhouse density range if the aggregate improvements to the street significantly change the character of the street and neighborhood enabling a market for such area to develop over time.

In effect, the waterfront plan is proposing a sweeping upgrade along the downtown waterfront between the shore of the CSX property on the south and Ludington Avenue on the north. This major revitalization area will extend from the breakwater on Pere Marquette Lake on the west to and including the eastern side of James Street. Mutually supportive functions will occur within this area designed to meet the needs of the residents of the Ludington community and the tourist who are critical, the downtown and area economy.

This downtown waterfront plan is not solely dependent upon redevelopment, although there are indeed redevelopment actions included in the strategy. It is equally dependent on rehabilitation of existing buildings, sensitive infill projects, highly refined landscaping and supporting visual treatments and a single common design concept built around the city's maritime history.

### **The Downtown Waterfront**

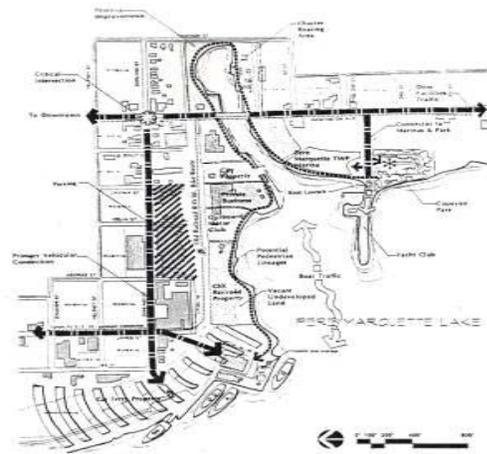
A key component in redeveloping the waterfront is an area that borders Pere Marquette Lake to the south and west, James Street to the east and Ludington Avenue to the north. There is great potential in this area to create a vibrant and festive downtown waterfront district. Targeted areas for conceptual design improvement include:

- **Community/Civic Center**



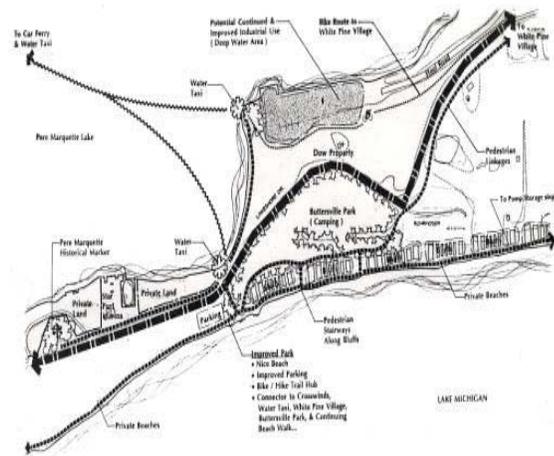
365 days a year. It should be seen as an engine bringing people downtown every day and every evening. Multiple events can occur simultaneously. Events can be scheduled one after another. This is the way successful Conference/Civic centers are run across the country. The idea is to keep the lights on at all times; that is to keep it active and spread its appeal to as many organizations, groups and families as is possible. The idea is not necessarily to make money on each use but to make it an active and useful community facility. As such, it will pay the community back handsomely in the health of the downtown, in service to residents and as a draw for new and expanding businesses and tourism.

- **Waterfront Development at the Marina**



Adjacent to the new marina is a wharf development that connects the community complex to the Lake Michigan Carferry. Programmed activities for this stretch of development include a mix of small scale retail/commercial shops as well as small trade and craft stores. The new marina and waterfront park combine to provide opportunities for social and recreational interaction that strives to connect both the visitor and the local citizen to the water. In addition, historic sailing ships perhaps a replica of a lumber freighter will be docked in and around the marina/park that will serve as a museum/visitor center to the region.

Landscaped parking lots and a improved vehicle Carferry loading area shall be included on this site.



[waterfront blow up plan here](#)

## Dowland

The area that is referred to as Dowland runs between Washington Street on the east and the Carferry property in the west. It extends from Dowland Street to the shore of Pere Marquette Lake. It contains a mix of industrial uses, some charter fishing and the abandoned CSX rail line. The abandoned rail line offers an exciting opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle trail connections to

Washington Street and other charter fishing areas. The vacant CSX railroad property at the west end of the rail corridor could be developed as a major tourist destination if improved as the historic theme attraction - discussed as a facility to further anchor the area's tourism business. The combination of a working museum and entertainment/recreation attraction (such as a waterpark that would be designed in such a manner that it celebrates the lumbering railroad/harbor environment that it is in) would be most suitable use for this vacant parcel. The following map is a general analysis of Dowland Street corridor and the surrounding waterfront business district.

- **City Docks**

The narrow city docks parcel currently used for bulk sand unloading and storage could be put to better use as an sports fishing center with launching facilities and parking for cars and trailers. This would further secure the area around South Washington as the sports fishing center of western Michigan and locate enough facilities in the area to spawn business and property redevelopment in related business categories such as restaurants and marina services. The activity that swirls around sports fishing docks is also an attraction for tourists who do not fish and will contribute to the interest and tactile character of the waterfront in a way that is directly connected to the community's maritime history.

- **CSX Corridor**



The city docks property has to be connected to new parking lots that could be established along the south side of Dowland Street between Washington Avenue and Lavina Street to the north of the old CSX rail corridor. Parking facilities, so located, could also serve the businesses in that area and provide a parking reservoir for tourists if the CSX corridor can in fact be turned into a pedestrian way connecting the sports fishing center at Washington with the historic theme attraction that would be best located on the CSX parcel that widens out just south of where Dowland Street intersects with James Street. Mid-block, the Thompson Building could

be adapted for use as an antique/art mall, or something similar to draw visitors along the way. Restaurants and outdoor verandas overlooking water activity would open the district further for tourists to utilize and enjoy.

**DOW**

One of the most important assets in any community is the commitment by industry to locate and remain in the area. The Dow Chemical Company has been active in the greater Ludington area, serving as a major player in the economic vitality of the region. Due to the nature of the industry, often it is hard to balance residential neighborhoods in close proximity to such a manufacturing center. The moderate recommendations for this area include adding vegetation and other attractive screening material to buffer the industrial plant from the surrounding neighborhood. As fast evolving technology and industrial processes cause changes in the activities at DOW, improvements to the environment will follow. A major long term goal in this regard is the phasing out of the lime settling ponds adjacent to the Pere Marquette River which are so highly visible from Old US31. Over time these can be removed and the land restored to its natural character. The community should seek ways to assist DOW in accomplishing this long term objective by partnering with them in forging solutions that will aid in establishing the prerequisites to removal of the settling basins.

### **DOW Ridge**

The area on the south side of Pere Marquette lake and north of Iris Road was seen by the community as an attractive area for potential development. If this land is deemed "excess" by the Dow Chemical Company, then potential long-term growth opportunities would indeed be welcome. Because of the unique topographical features of the site, spectacular views of the lake could be captured. The area could not only support carefully sited residential development, but also limited commercial/recreational attractions. These amenities could include a golf course, tennis courts and even equestrian facilities. The far western portion of the DOW Ridge is now used for shipping sand. That area, served by deep water docking should remain industrial in nature as long as non-polluting processes can be found for the area.

In addition to the aforementioned opportunities for development, a multi-use trail through the area would also be a great asset to the community. Because of the unique natural features, the design and construction of the trail, and any other development, needs to be sensitive to the wetland and environmental conditions.

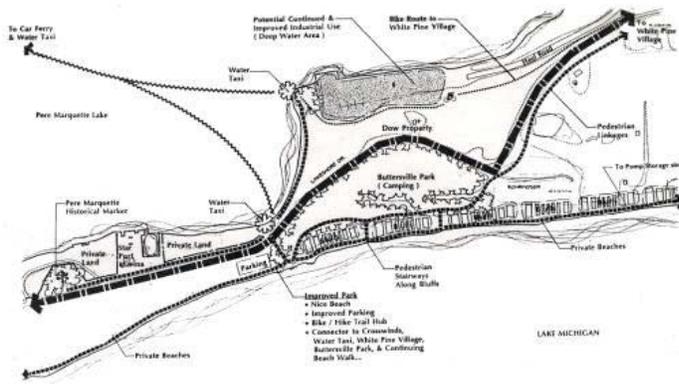
### **DOW Harbor Industrial**

One of the challenging components of developing a plan for this waterfront was to retain the industrial/working harbor aspects that currently exist. Not only are they essential to the overall livelihood of the region, but such a working harbor also serves as an attraction to the local residents and visitors alike. The region defined as "DOW Harbor Industrial" is located on the south and west sides of Pere Marquette Lake. The areas that are suitable for deep water ports offer great potential for commercial ship docks.

### **South Washington Avenue Fishing Village**

The area surrounding the Washington Avenue bridge has suffered and shown signs of deterioration during the last period of years. This district is seen as having great potential for recreational outlets, commercial establishments and residential development related to the sports fishing industry. Zones that are targeted for design recommendations include:

- **Charter Fishing**



In general, directional improvements and a stronger organizational layout would greatly enhance the charter fishing fleet that is located in this area. Additionally, the parking facility for the charter users will be enhanced and clearly identified as such. The modification of the structures around this inlet need to retain and capture the historic fisherman's village feel. A small restaurant and other related outlets to the fishing service industry will locate in this district.

- **Residential Development**

Across from the drive leading to Copeyon Park, is a waterfront parcel suited for townhome condominium development that would round out a healthy mixed use land-use scheme for the area. People with discretionary dollars to spend are essential to an area needing reinvestment and significant fix up. Using the waterfront access, close at hand docking options and spectacular views as attractions, new residential development on this parcel could be a key ingredient to finally seeing long sought revitalization.

- **Copeyon Park**

Copeyon Park, an area of land containing 4.2 acres, is also seen as unfulfilled potential. It is located adjacent to the private Ludington Yacht Club and near the charter fishing docks. The greatest need for this area is the addition of a public fishing boat launch area. The launch off Loomis Park is now overloaded on prime fishing days and expanded facilities are sorely needed. Copeyon Park offers PM lake access and land to accommodate parking of boat trailers and cars. It is near the marina services clustered along South Washington Avenue and accessible to US 10 from Washington north to Ludington Avenue as well as south via Sixth Street. The parking area can best be located around the electric transformer facility where it and the parking can be screened from view. When these improvements are combined with the existing boat launch, pump station and fish cleaning facility this park is poised to become an active and attractive sports fishing hub within the south Washington Avenue district.

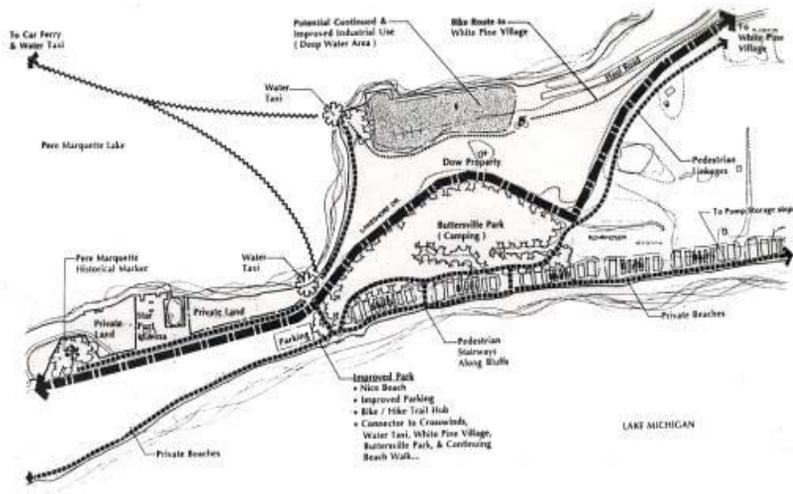
- **Washington Street Frontage**

Those buildings fronting on South Washington south of the bridge over Copeyon bayou and which overlook Copeyon Park warrant careful handling as historic resources which may not be architectural gems but are reflective of the real history of the neighborhood and the city. This set of structures should be analyzed for adaptive reuse potential and structural soundness. Once determined, a plan for their upgrade should be crafted so as to make them a positive element for the area.

The following graphics illustrates the design concepts for Copeyon Park the South Washington

Avenue Fishing Village district with its pedestrian way leading up the bayou. [south Washington Avenue bridge detail here](#)

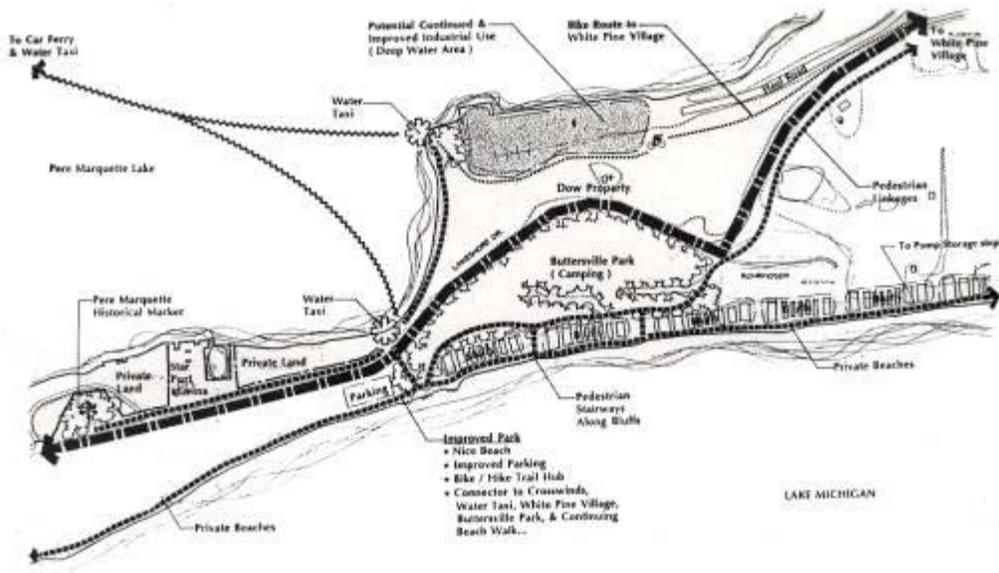
## Buttersville Township Park



Buttersville Township Park is widely regarded as a hidden treasure. Because of its somewhat difficult access routes, many visitors to the area are unaware of its existence. The park's location provides access to both Pere Marquette Lake and Lake Michigan. Interesting topography along the Lake Michigan shoreline provides an opportunity for

pedestrian paths along the bluffs. This park has the potential to serve as a hub for not only bike/hike trails, but also a water taxi route from the waterfront development at the new marina. From there, a hike/bike trail could connect with the historic White Pine Village.

Improvements to the park itself include better access routes for vehicular and pedestrian traffic along Lakeshore Drive. Other site improvements include enhancing and enlarging the parking facility and general addition of other site amenities (i.e. picnic tables/shelters, grills etc.)



## Consumer's Power

Consumers Power is similar to the Buttersville Township Park area in that they both contain moderate improvement recommendations to existing park layouts. This county park was frequently identified by the participating public as an underutilized recreational amenity. Suggested improvements around this region include:

- Revegetating the slopes of the Consumers Power Reservoir, which will help to soften the man-made or engineered look of the hill
- Providing stronger connections to campground and mini-airfield
- strengthening the vehicular road layout within the park (including adding a new park loop for campsites)
- extending trails from the park to a potential beachfront of both Lake Michigan and the lagoon
- Developing a central core for park that includes a multi-season shelter, new playground, trail head and improved parking
- Enhance park entry statement
- Provide areas for potential equestrian, mountain biking, cross-country skiing activities

### **THREADING THE GEMSTONES**

Connecting the attractions in the community is a major emphasis of the plan. Part of connecting the elements is having a sense of how the various pieces (the gems) relate, for they will need to be zoned properly and monitored by the area planning commissions. Most often the approach to accomplishing

this is the Land Use Plan. **Figure 4-2**, Land Use and Trails Plan, shows the recommended land use pattern and the connective potential offered by a linked system of trails through the waterfront area.

Currently the attractions are isolated individual parts and connectivity of the elements is proposed to utilize a variety of pedestrian and bicycle oriented trails and paths. The intent is to provide for a series of walking and biking experiences for residents and tourists alike which would include a variety of experiences for the user as well as provide for a unique Ludington experience.

The proposed trail system can become the vital element in making the Ludington area a major biking center in the Great Lakes region. Biking is one of the fastest growing and most desired leisure time activities for many families and biking enthusiasts. It is a recreational pursuit which has a natural appeal and is fit for the Ludington area. Country roads ideal for biking abound and links to a large regional biking system already are in place (for example, the Hart to Montague RailTrail) and have potential for further development. The Ludington area can take advantage of these resources and develop the area as a special destination for the serious bicyclist and the recreational biking family alike.

It is important to identify the type of trail connections that is proposed for each of the connecting trails. Some trails are suggested to be provided on the existing street fabric of the community, while other segments take unique forms such as use of a water born ferry to transport visitors. The primary focus of the connecting system is on bicycle connections which provide a family oriented experience throughout the community. Note that the potential for a fully integrated biking system and package for the enthusiast goes far beyond the waterfront study area. While the Plan focuses on the opportunities in the waterfront area, the larger system should be addressed to make this strategy work to its full potential.

### **Trial Definitions**

This section of the plan discusses various means for linking the amenities in the Waterfront Area. These include designated facilities such as bike lanes and multi-use trails, as well as general roadway improvements that benefit motorized and non-motorized users alike.

Existing streets and highways, often with relatively inexpensive improvements, must serve as the base system to provide for the travel needs of the resident and tourist. Pedestrian and bicycle paths can augment this existing system in scenic corridors or places where access is limited. Thus, pedestrian and bicycle planning is more than planning for bikeways and is an effort that should consider many alternatives to provide for safe and efficient non-motorized travel.

It is important for the community to realize that such a balanced approach is necessary to ensure that the needs of all users are being met in a resource-efficient and cost-effective manner.

Not all cyclists are alike-the needs of the experienced adult rider differ greatly from less-skilled, casual bicyclists and children. And since bicycle riding is comparable to driving a car, pedestrian needs must be addressed separately. This plan therefore focuses on providing a mix of facilities that will offer safe and enjoyable places for a variety of users to walk and bike. In-line skaters, wheelchair users, the elderly population, youth too young to drive, athletes in training, and families with small

children all benefit.

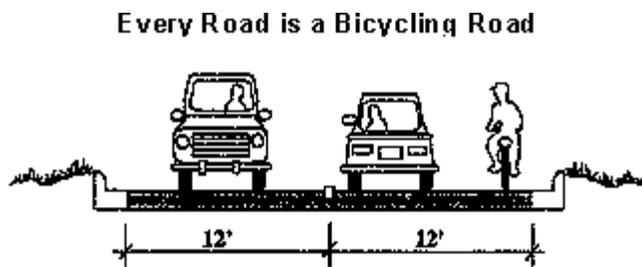
The strategies being recommended also balance the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians with those of automobile and truck traffic, and consider existing physical, environmental and fiscal constraints with the potential of new development. As such, the plan offers a vision for quality growth in the Waterfront Area.

Ultimately, this plan is about relinquishing some of our dependence on the automobile and making street and roadway corridors safer places for all users. Reclaiming streets is viewed as a first step in maintaining and enhancing the vitality of Ludington and the surrounding Pere Marquette Township area as safe and enjoyable places to live, work and play.

### Shared-Use City Streets

An underlying philosophy that should guide all bicycle planning is the understanding that bicycles are vehicles, and as such, bicyclists fare best when they act, and are treated, as drivers of vehicles. The first step in making the Waterfront Area a place that is friendly to bicyclists is to embrace the concept that every street is a bicycling street.

As the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) states, "to varying extents, bicycles will be ridden on all highways where they are permitted. All new highways, except those where bicyclists will be legally prohibited, should be designed and constructed under the assumption that they will be used by bicyclists.



*When Traffic volumes are low and vehicular speeds are slow (generally less than 2000 ADT and 30 mph) extra pavement width is typically not required for bicycle use*

Designing, constructing and retrofitting roadways to better accommodate bicycle use means eliminating basic hazards to bicycle travel. These include wheel-eating drainage grates, rough at grade railroad crossings, unresponsive traffic signals, rumble strips, pot holes, longitudinal seams in pavement, and a lack of maintenance attention focused on the right-hand edge of roadways. For the most part, the removal

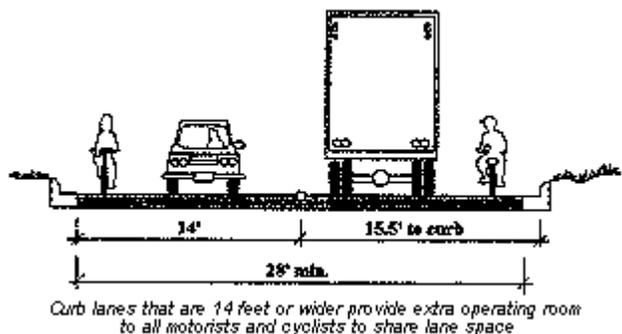
of hazards is inexpensive and can be accomplished within routine maintenance schedules and minor roadway improvement budgets.

As understood in this plan, shared-use facilities include all streets with no special provisions for bicycle travel, typically featuring 12-foot lane widths. They provide access, whether on a bike or in a car, to the many origins and destinations dispersed throughout the community. Most bicycle travel currently occurring within the Waterfront Area takes place on such shared roadway facilities.

### Wide Curb Lanes

On arterial and collector streets with heavier traffic volumes traveling at faster speeds, sharing

narrow travel lanes with motor vehicles becomes less attractive, especially to less experienced cyclists. Widening the right-hand or curb lane is a design solution that provides additional roadway space for a motorist and bicyclist to operate parallel to each other in the same lane without coming too close, and without a motorist having to change lanes to pass a bicycle.



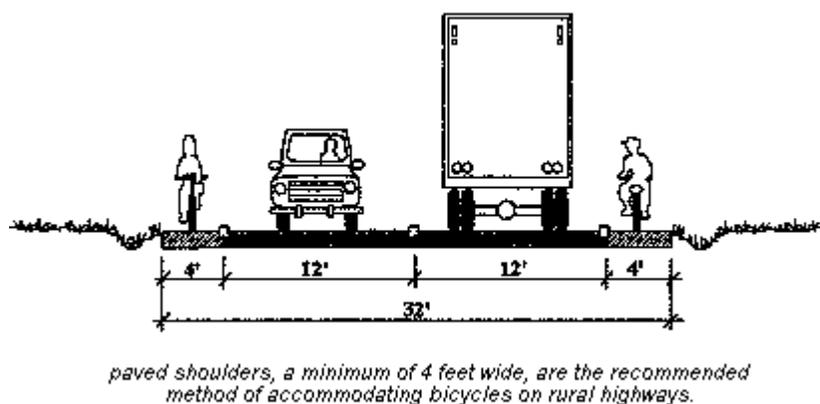
Wide curb lanes are defined as right-hand through traffic lanes that are 14 feet or wider. Where traffic speeds exceed 40 mph and when traffic volumes exceed 10,000 ADT, lanes 15 or 16 feet wide are considered desirable.

Wide curb lanes offer several advantages. They accommodate shared bicycle/motor vehicle use without reducing the roadway capacity for motor vehicle traffic, minimize both the real

and perceived operating conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles, and increase the roadway capacity by the number of bicyclists being accommodated. Wider curb lanes can also assist turning traffic, may better accommodate trucks and other large vehicles, and require little maintenance to maintain a good bicycling surface.

### Paved Shoulders

Unimproved rural roadways with low traffic volumes can effectively accommodate bicycle travel with no additional pavement width provided. However, to improve user safety in selected corridors with high vehicular traffic volumes and speeds, certain rural roadways should be widened through the addition of paved shoulders.



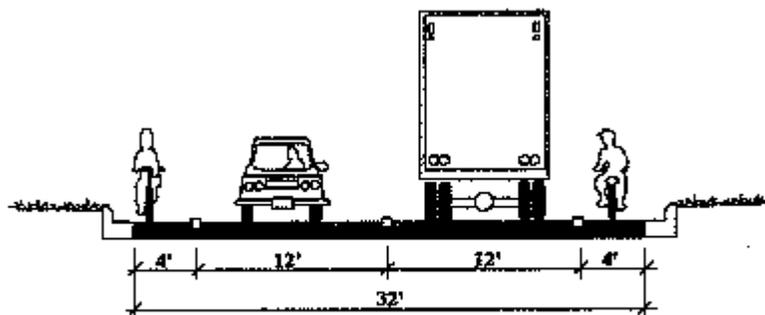
Shoulders are designed to provide structural support for a roadway and offer a break down and recovery area for motor vehicles. They cut down on the incidence of run-off-the-road accidents, eliminate rutting and drop-offs at the edge of pavement, improve drainage and reduce maintenance costs. Paved and maintained roadway shoulders also improve

conditions for bicycle travel on roads without curb and gutter by providing additional operating room.

Like wide curb lanes, paved shoulders may be referred to as a type of bicycle facility. However, current trends in bicycle planning treat these less as "facilities" and more as general conditions that exist within the transportation system and which offer definitive improvements to bicycle travel.

## Bicycle Lanes

The preferred bicycle accommodation on arterial and collector streets is the bicycle lane. While wide curb lanes may accommodate experienced cyclists, the presence of a signed and striped lane designated for bicycle use will serve cyclists of all abilities, and may even encourage more people to bike instead of drive.



*Signed and striped bicycle lanes on arterial streets encourage people to make every day trips by bike instead of by car.*

Motorists who drive on an extra wide street every day will probably not realize that this street has been improved for bicycling. Striping bicycle lanes, however, sends a message to cyclists, motorists and people who have never considered bicycling before. This type of "host" facility indicates to all users that bicycling is part of the transportation mix, and invites tourists and community residents to try biking to the store, to work or to school. Striping lanes also establishes a channeling effect which promotes an orderly traffic flow and provides for more predictable movements by cyclists and motorists alike.

Bicyclists typically select streets to ride on based upon a balance of route directness and safety. The additional operating space provided by bike lanes on arterial streets enhances safety on those routes that typically offer direct access to businesses, shopping and other destinations.

## Traffic Calming

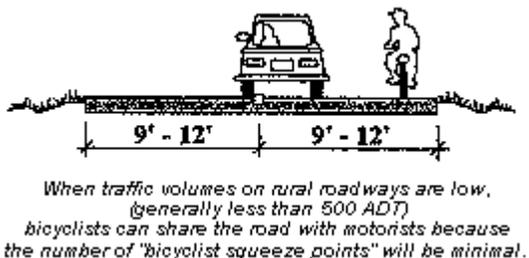
There are three basic factors that influence the suitability of a street for bicycle travel: the number of cars using a street, the speed at which those cars are traveling, and how much roadway space is available for shared use. Treatments such as wide curb lanes and striped bicycle lanes address the issue of lane width. An alternative way of improving street conditions is to focus on calming traffic.

Reducing vehicular travel to speeds that are compatible with bicycle travel lessens the need for wide lanes to accommodate safe passing situations. Slowing traffic through neighborhoods and business districts has the additional advantage of equally benefiting pedestrians. While it is important to move vehicles, it is also necessary to remember that streets are not just for cars, and residents have rights to the best quality of life a community can provide.

Several mechanisms exist to slow travel speeds. Most effective will be to reduce the speed at which trucks and automobiles travel by altering the roadway design, or by changing the psychological feel of the street. More passive measures may also be implemented, if supplemented with law enforcement.

## Shared-Use Rural Roadways

The concept that every street is a bicycling street applies to rural roadways as well as curb-and-gutter streets. This plan recognizes that while most of Waterfront Area roads and township highways are currently used by cyclists of various abilities, not every roadway can be designated as a preferred route for bicycle travel. The plan which extends into the rural areas therefore focuses on linking major origins and destinations together through the safest and most direct paths of travel.

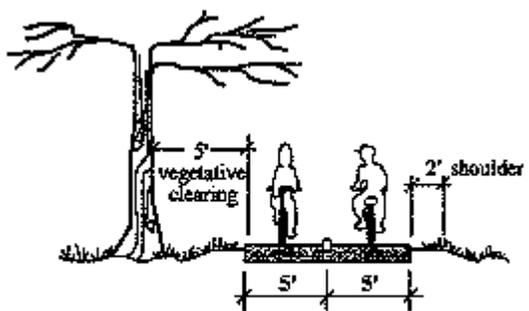


The speed differential between car/truck traffic and bicycle travel is much greater on rural roads than in urban environments, therefore additional safety concerns must be addressed when recommending unimproved rural roadways for bicycle use. When speeds exceed 45 mph, two-lane rural roadways are no longer suitable for shared use by motor vehicles and experienced adult cyclists. It is important to

note that rural roads are not being recommended to be used by young bicyclists; only by those riders 16 years and older who know and understand normal rules of the road.

**Bike Paths/Multi-Use Trails**

In transportation planning, bicycle facilities separated from the street and road system are referred to as bicycle paths. However, any path that is open for public use is likely to be popular with walkers, joggers, in-line skaters, pet owners, wheelchair users and others, as well as bicyclists. Hence the term multi-use trail has become synonymous with bicycle path. By either name, these facilities are typically paved trails a minimum of 10 feet wide that are separated from the roadway system and designed for the exclusive use of bicycles and other non-motorized users.



Paved trails that are 10 feet wide allow for two-way bicycle travel, and can also accommodate pedestrians and in-line skaters.

Bike paths serve as significant generators of bicycle use, especially for less skilled cyclists. They provide enjoyable recreational opportunities, as well as desirable commuter routes. Bike paths can be most effective when they provide system continuity and linkage in areas where no on-street facilities are available, such as along abandoned railroad rights-of-way or within linear parks or greenways.

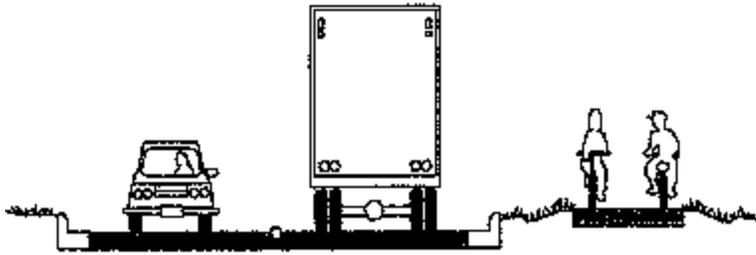
Short segments of bike path are also valuable as cut-throughs between buildings or connections

between cul-de-sacs and other breaks in the street network. Due to safety considerations, sidewalks and walkways located immediately adjacent to a roadway typically should not be designated as bicycle paths or similar multi-use facilities.

**Sidewalks and Sidepaths**

Sidewalks in Ludington and Pere Marquette Township are commonly used for bicycle travel, especially by young children. However, by state and national standards, sidewalks are not, and

should not be, designated as bicycle facilities. Sidewalk widths are typically only 4 to 6 feet, half that of the recommended national standard bicycle path width, and as such, do not allow sufficient room for joint use by cyclists and pedestrians.



*Wide sidewalks or paths located immediately adjacent to roadways are not recommended as bicycle facilities because of safety conflicts that occur at intersections and driveways.*

AASHTO defines a sidewalk as "the portion of a highway designed for preferential or exclusive use by pedestrians." Most of us recognize sidewalks as concrete facilities separated from the street by a curb-and-gutter and/or grass planting strip.

The term sidepath is commonly used to describe a two-way bicycle

path, often constructed of asphalt, placed immediately adjacent to one side of a street or roadway, similar to a sidewalk.

## **Pedestrian Needs**

Pedestrian travel needs are different than those of bicyclists, and may best be served through a network of sidewalks along public rights-of-way. Pedestrians are slower than bicyclists, prefer greater separation from traffic, are the least tolerant of out of direct paths of travel and, since they are often not visible to motorists, are the most vulnerable of roadway users.

To accommodate pedestrians, sidewalks should be provided along all streets and roadways. Whenever adequate right-of-way is present, a planting strip is also recommended to provide a buffer area between motor vehicle traffic and pedestrian movement. To further improve the quality of the pedestrian walking environment, overstory trees are desired to be planted within the buffer areas to canopy the sidewalk and provide both physical and visual separation from the vehicular travelway. Planting trees between the street and sidewalk also interrupts roadway sight lines, causing motorists to slow down.

All sidewalks and curb ramps must meet federal requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for public walkway widths, slopes and surface textures. Curb ramps should be installed perpendicular to the street, so as not to direct users into the flow of vehicular traffic, and should lead into a safe crosswalk area.

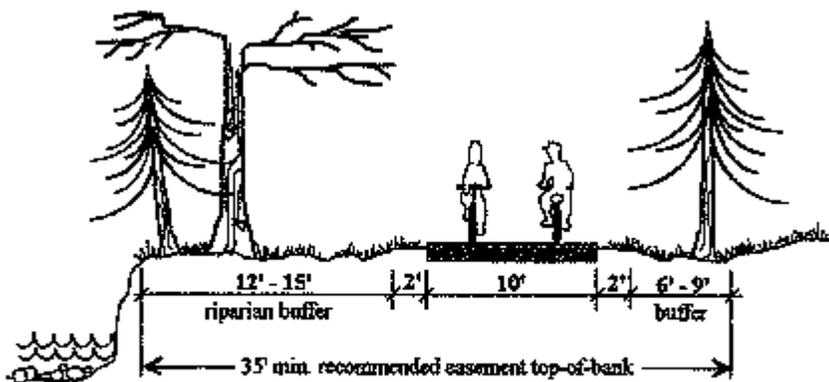
Zoning and development ordinances regulating sidewalk development can further impact pedestrian travel. Developers are required to build sidewalks at the time a tract of land is developed. Since it may be several years before development is continuous along a roadway corridor, a preferred practice is to construct sidewalks as part of the initial street construction project, and as applicable, assess these costs back to future site developers. In this manner, pedestrians will be assured to have continuous access to new development, just as motor vehicles do.

Pedestrian accessways, or short segments of sidewalk not located within street rights-of-way, should be constructed in areas where shorter and more direct paths of travel are desired to encourage and facilitate safe walking trips. Such locations include providing rear or side access to a shopping center from an adjacent residential neighborhood, and providing links between subdivisions, especially to shorten walking distances to schools and parks. Since facilities that shorten trip lengths will likely be popular with bicyclists, pedestrian accessways are recommended to be sidewalks or asphalt paths at least 8 feet wide.

To provide a change of scenery for pedestrians, longer multi-use trails make a nice addition to a community's sidewalk system. In most instances, such projects are most feasible along abandoned railway corridors, utility easements, rivers, streams and within linear parks. All trails constructed in these areas should be designed to meet minimum bicycle facility standards in order to facilitate multi-use, as previously described. Paved surfaces are also recommended for urban and suburban trails to ensure access by pedestrians of all abilities, including wheelchair users, and to accommodate in-line skaters.

### Environmental Corridors

Another opportunity exists in the community to develop a Bikeway/Pedestrian Path along the portions of the Pere Marquette River and Lincoln Lake riparian environments. Trails in these locations need to be designed and constructed to withstand potential flooding and minimize trail maintenance requirements, while protecting the sensitive riparian environments that make such facilities attractive.



*Preserving environmental corridors can provide open space for future bikeways and pedestrianways.*

Trail development along rivers and streams in Pere Marquette Township should be accomplished through the preservation of multi-objective greenway corridors. Such projects are designed to fulfill multiple purposes and thus have many benefits including flood control/stormwater management, water quality protection, wildlife habitat

protection and enhancement, economic development, increased property values, cost effective utility service, community awareness and education, alternative transportation, and recreation.

To fulfill multiple goals, riparian greenway corridors must preserve and protect the ecosystem of the river corridor. Introducing a paved, or even graded and naturally surfaced trail into the riparian environment is thereby offset by the benefits of corridor preservation. Plus Pere Marquette Township residents will gain access to, and an increased awareness of, the county's scenic and historic water resources.

Implementing proper planning, zoning and land use development guidelines is necessary to ensure feasibility of future trail development, especially on the edges of cities and villages. It is not advised that local agencies wait to address these issues until the time when a community is ready to begin project construction, or several trail connection opportunities may be lost.

### **Details of the Trails Plan**

Major segments or components of the Trails Plan are shown on [Figure 4-2](#) and described as follows:

- ***North Lakeshore Drive.*** This northern most segment of the system is intended to link Ludington State Park with the trails and paths available in the Waterfront Area. The recommendation is that bicycle travel would be provided from the bridge which crosses Lincoln Lake on paved shoulders on both sides of the roads all the way to the gated entrance into the state park. South of the Lincoln Lake bridge there are a variety of configurations that the route can take.
  1. Along the segment which parallels Cartier Park and Lakeview Cemetery there is an opportunity to construct a bicycle sidepath on the east side of North Lakeshore Drive.
  2. Between Bryant Road and Fitch Street a striped bicycle lane could be provided. A portion of the street currently has a bike lane and there is a possibility for expansion of the lane to the south.
  3. South of Fitch Street, which also is the entrance into Stearns Park it is very difficult to provide any type of bicycle designation. The roadway at this point is four lanes with a raised curb. Traffic volumes are the heaviest in this section and safety is of concern for the bicyclist. At this point the bicyclist should be directed to either take the Stearns Park route or go east three blocks to Gaylord Street.
- ***Cartier Park/Lakeview Cemetery.*** These two publicly owned tracts of land offer the opportunity to develop multi-use trails. As previously mentioned, Cartier Park is a 68 acre tract which is partially developed. There are opportunities to develop multi-use recreational trails which could loop internal to the site. The frontage along Lincoln Lake could be developed as an educational/environmental corridor.

Generally there has been much professional discussion over the past decade about the trail opportunities presented by cemeteries. Low traffic volumes on internal roadways are viewed as an opportunity to connect Cartier Park with the proposed Gaylord Avenue bike lane. One of the operational concerns of using the cemetery is the hours of operation, which restricts access to the cemetery and the concern with vandalism to grave sites.

As an alternative, a trail in Cartier Park could extend east to Rath Avenue and then south on Rath to Bryant Road, then west to Gaylord Avenue. Alternatively, the route could go directly

south, on Rath Avenue into the Central Business District and to the Carferry area.

- ***Gaylord Avenue.*** Gaylord Avenue has a variety of conditions along it which makes for a unique travel experience. The road north of Lowell Street is a "country lane" with a paved road and no shoulders. Low traffic volumes on in this section suggest that a shared use design is appropriate.

As the street parallels Oriole Field it also provides for diagonal parking for the athletic facilities at the park. In this section, a striped bike lane is appropriate, on the east side of the street to provide for safe bicycle travel in light of the parking movements on the east side of the street.

South of Tinkham Avenue the street turns into a boulevard, with a landscaped center median. Each lane has one moving and a wide parking lane and there appears to be sufficient room to accommodate bicycle traffic on both sides of the street. The character of the street, with well maintained homes, yards and mature landscaping is one of the most memorable in the community and would provide a most enjoyable experience for the touring and recreational cyclists.

The proposed Gaylord Avenue route connects Cartier Park, Oriole Field, City Park and terminates at the City Marina. Substantial cross street traffic occurs at Bryant Road, Tinkham Avenue and Ludington Avenue. Ludington Avenue carries the most cross traffic and currently is not signalized. There would need to be a warning signal for Ludington Avenue traffic to be cautious of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Gaylord Avenue also contains detached sidewalks separated by a parkway of between 10 and 15 feet. The sidewalks provide for a pleasant pedestrian experience in this unique part of the community.

- ***Stearns/Loomis/Marina Off Street.*** A majority of this segment of the system is completed with the sidewalk along Stearns Park, the walkway along the bulkhead at the Coast Guard Channel and the area around the city marina along Loomis Street. There are holes that need to be filled, especially through the redesign of the Loomis Boat Launch area. This portion of the system is more pedestrian oriented, with paths being of sidewalk width and the bicyclist as a secondary user.
- ***New Marina/Carferry/Railroad Spur.*** This is part of the redevelopment of the Waterfront area. The previously discussed opportunities associated with construction of a new marina, the redevelopment potential of the Watchcase property, the realignment of access to the Michigan Carferry Dock and the abandoned railroad spur all should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle access. Specific alignments should be included in the redevelopment plans for each area.
- ***James Street.*** The redevelopment opportunities along James Street

are envisioned to include an expanded sidewalk to incorporate a more pedestrian friendly environment and places for sitting and outdoor eating.

- **Washington Avenue.** This street is one of the more challenging routes to incorporate either a bicycle or pedestrian path. The route, however, does provide an important connection to Copeyon Park and the water based facilities at the eastern end of Pere Marquette Lake. On street-bicycle paths could be accommodated in the south-bound lane which has fewer businesses and where parking could be restricted or removed. Another opportunity to explore would be to construct a multi-use trail in the vacant property on the south side of the charter-fishing harbor and into Copeyon Park. The route could then rejoin Washington Avenue past the electric power sub-station.
- **Sixth Street.** This street provides one of the few opportunities for bicycle access east from the general waterfront area around Pere Marquette Lake and to the Buttersville Peninsula. It is a truck route, and is one of the locally known access routes into the central area. A striped bike lane is a possibility along the south side of the street where there are fewer curb cuts to adjacent residential and commercial properties.
- **Pere Marquette Road/Old US 31.** Until recently this was the main vehicular route bringing traffic into the community. The new US 31 Freeway now swings to the east and directs regional and tourist travel off this road. The road still carries a significant amount of traffic and continues to serve local and regional access needs. The roadway is in need of repair and widening. The pavement width is minimal, there are virtually no shoulders and the two bridges across the Pere Marquette are narrow and in need of repair. As improvements are made, bicycle paths should be incorporated into the design. A minimum would be 8 foot paved shoulders on both sides of the road, bridges with adequate width to accommodate bike lanes and, depending on the clearance available, an underpass for both bridges. The east side of the road is a preferable route from 6th Street south to the first northern bridge and then the west side is desirable from this bridge to the second bridge and a connection with a proposed multi-purpose trail on the DOW ridge property.
- **DOW Ridge.** The preferable alignment for a multi-use trail in this area would be near the shoreline of Pere Marquette Lake. This would avoid the elevation change along Iris Road. The design challenge in this area would be to locate a trail which would be sensitive to the wetland and environmental conditions. The result could be a unique environmental and educational experience for locals as well and visitors to the area.
- **South Lake Shore Drive.** This portion of the trail extends from the

Crosswinds development on the north to the southern end of the study area and potentially to Bass Lake and the community of Pentwater. The route is suggested as a shared-use roadway, which would have speed limits at 35 mph and signage alerting motorists to the presence of bicyclists. There are opportunities along the route for a parallel bicycle path. For example between Bradshaw Road and the Pump Storage Reservoir outfall, a 10 foot path could be constructed on the west side of the road, separated from the roadway by a distance of 10 to 15 feet.

- ***Pump Storage & Chauvez Road.*** A shared road bike route is possible for Chauvez Road from the township campground to South Lakeshore Drive. Also an off-road trail is proposed which follows the internal road at Pump Storage and loops back to South Lakeshore Drive to complete the trail proposal for the southern part of the study area.
- ***Waterborne Trail.*** As an alternative or supplement to the land based proposals for access to trails in Pere Marquette Township a pedestrian/bicycle ferry taxi is suggested. The water taxi could connect the Carferry Yard, with points such as the City of Ludington owned tract south of the Crosswind development, which would access the South Lakeshore Drive route; the Father Marquette Shrine; and Copeyon Park/the Ludington Yacht Club.



## IMPLEMENTATION

Plan implementation is a multifaceted function that occurs over a long period of time and is carried out by a multitude of actors. It consists of a wide range of activities, some of which are proactive while others are reactive. Proactive activities are those in which the community initiates actions. Reactive activities are those in which other parties (usually private sector parties) approach the community with a proposal and request that the community act by approval and/or support on the proposal.

Preparing for development, by updating the zoning ordinances that regulate private land in the Greater Ludington Area Waterfront is an example of reactive implementation while construction of a marina using public dollars is an example of proactive implementation. The most important implementation initiatives have been identified in the plan and are summarized below:

- **Waterfront Plan Adoption and Use**

This plan has been developed by a constituted Planning Advisory Committee of the Mason County Economic Development Alliance. It is desirable that the Ludington City Council, Pere Marquette Township Board and Mason County Board of Commissioners adopt the recommendations contained herein.

**Action:** The jurisdictions in the waterfront planning area, the City of Ludington, Pere Marquette Township and Mason County, should formally adopt the Waterfront Master Plan. Once adopted, the boards and planning commissions of each of the jurisdictions should amend each of their official maps and zone district designations to allow for the new types of development and locations specified in the plan.

Once adopted, the plan should be used as follows:

- By the city, township and county boards, planning commissions and staffs to determine annual work programs and budgets.
- As a guide to decision making on issues regarding community character, infrastructure improvements, land use and environmental quality.
- Reviewed annually and if conditions warrant amended. The intent of the review is to check if the action items identified have been met, completed on schedule, are no longer valid or if new ones need to be added.
- The official plans of the county, city and township should be adjusted so as to conform and fully reflect

the recommendations of this plan. Plans of other governments which control land or water areas within the waterfront planning zone or provide services on such land should also be urged to reflect the policies contained herein in their plans as much as is possible.

- The plan should be distributed to community service groups and local agencies or businesses to aid them in their community goal setting, their strategic planning and programming. It should be particularly useful in economic development activities as it provides a clear vision of how the community views its waterfront resource.
- The plan should prove useful to Ludington area residents, the real estate community, private individuals and the development community. The plan provides information, policies, and guidance on several community topics, including land use and growth, community character, design character, non-vehicular transportation, infrastructure and sustaining a healthy economic base.
- The plan should be made available to all prospective businesses, employers and residents. It will help them understand what the community wants and how it plans to get there.

- **Regulatory Actions**

The actions outlined below describe how to achieve the recommendations in the Greater Ludington Waterfront Area Master Plan through regulatory actions. The actions are, in essence, leadership initiatives that can only be put into effect by the public sector. Each action is highly dependent upon market conditions, the fiscal condition of the jurisdictions in the area and windows of opportunity that may present themselves during any particular time period. These actions should be reviewed and prioritized annually during the budgeting process of each of the jurisdictions.

**Action:** Update the City of Ludington, Pere Marquette Township and Mason County zoning ordinances to be consistent with this plan. In the Township, the major rezoning involves the redesignation of the Dow ridge property to a new recreation/conservation zone from its current industrial zoning . This rezoning would extend from the Dow settling ponds to the sectionline that demarcates the shallow water line in Pere Marquette Lake.

Such a zoning policy would leave the deep water southwestern corner of Pere Marquette Lake available for shipping and dockage use thereby accommodating the working waterfront. The city of Ludington has a mixed-use zone in place along its waterfront in selected places. This zone should allow those improvements that are suggested in the plan to take place while providing the necessary flexibility to accommodate new, as yet unforeseen projects and initiatives.

Zoning for the bluff lands north of the pump storage project should be zoned in as low a density category as is possible without placing the existing properties in that area in a non-conforming status. The bluffs, always a delicate and sensitive resource, are now particularly vulnerable due to the deleterious effect of the project on the bluff and beach in that area. The best position for those bluff lands is to keep them in private ownership at a very low level of use; low density single-family residential.

**Action:** Apply the goals, principles and policies described in the plan to all private

development approvals for new development or major change in land use that occurs within the waterfront planning area.

**Action:** The City of Ludington should designate a Waterfront District within its zoning ordinance perhaps in the form of an overlay zone district. This zone would be subject to design review of any and all improvements to all structures except single family homes. This design review would be carried out by the planning commission of a subcommittee working for and reporting to the planning commission. As a subcommittee, the design review body membership can be weighted with design professionals best positioned to apply and interpret the design principals and standards of the maritime heritage design theme.

- **Policy Actions**

**Action:** Acknowledge and foster the identity and image described in this plan. Governmental jurisdictions in the waterfront planning area shall endeavor to support and foster the historic maritime identity portrayed in this plan throughout the projects and development it supports. Options include developing the theme throughout the community, continued support of historic preservation which recognizes themes and participating in annual or special events or activities which celebrate the heritage of the community.

**Action:** Develop and adopt a long term Waterfront Capital Improvements Program component in both the City and the Township CIP oriented toward supporting the new development indicated in this plan.

**Action:** The City of Ludington should consider establishing a downtown historic district and seek to have it placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Such designation does not, as is often thought, limit the property rights of individual property owners. That can only be done by local ordinance and even then only to a very limited extent. In any case, that is not what is being proposed here. National designation on the Register is a educational strategy and a recognition of the unique and valued structures present in the community. The value is community support for owners to restore the character of the historic structures in a district.

**Action:** The Ludington community, led by the Township government, should continue to seek redress and mitigating measures for the beach and bluff erosion afflicting the district just north of the pump storage project. Beach restoration programs that are proven effective must be instituted to restore the lost resource that is both the private holdings of individual property owners but also a irreplaceable resource connected to the public trust.

- **Organizational Actions**

**Action:** Waterfront governmental jurisdictions should together form a Greater Ludington Waterfront Development Authority or corporation to enable the community

to galvanize financial and other resources to effectively partner with private sector parties in the redevelopment of key waterfront parcels. This authority needs to be able to buy and control land, take control of lands taken by eminent domain where such action is necessary and act as a full, development partner for critical parcels that would not happen without public support. Such an authority may need state legislative authorization and be given project specific bonding authority. One model used in other jurisdictions may be a port authority charged with an economic development mission aimed at tourism and continued commercial use of the Ludington area waterfront.

**Action:** The downtown community and city should work together to establish a Main Street Program for an area encompassing James Street and Ludington Avenue as described in Chapter 4. The Main Street Program will work to organize and clarify for the community the values and benefits of historic revitalization. The Main Street Program's success around the country is due to its conceptual underpinning which links economic development with historic preservation instead of maintaining the old adversarial relationship of the two values.

**Action:** The overall waterfront initiative would be advanced greatly if a private Waterfront Development Association—a "Friends of the Greater Ludington Area Waterfront", came into existence. Such an organization would be able to join people living in all two jurisdictions to provide leadership over the long haul and to offer support for worthy projects or opposition for contrary projects as necessary. Such a group would have no powers as such but rather act as a public interest group advancing waterfront development in accordance with the plan. The main function of the group will be to provide education and represent community values regarding the waterfront on a continuous basis.

- **Development Support Actions**

As in most places, it will be the private sector that ultimately must take risks and make the investments that will see the plan implemented. Initially, some of that risk may need to be underwritten by the public sector in order to "prime the pump" for investment in the waterfront. Early investors will be taking the highest risk as pioneers in an as yet unproven market. Such pioneers already exist in Ludington exemplified by those who have or are now taking strong positions in the waterfront.

Those who are now active and those who will follow their lead in the coming years need all the institutional support that the Ludington community can muster. That support must come from the corporate, financial institutions, other institutions and the philanthropic resources that call Ludington home.

**Action:** The City of Ludington will commit to continuing its positive and proactive position on taking the lead in redeveloping parcels of property on the waterfront as it has in the case of the Star Watchcase property. The city itself already owns a number of key parcels in the waterfront and can use these holdings to generate the kind of economic development in the plan by either withholding its land or adding its

holdings to larger development packages that hold promise to implement portions of the plan. The parcel where the present city offices are located along with the Department of Public Works and police facilities are such parcels. Another is the city docks on the Dowland/South Washington Street Bayou.

**Action:** The City will create a package of development incentive and be fully prepared to partner with private sector waterfront investors to support those key projects that are linchpins to the overall waterfront development strategy. These key projects include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: historic theme attraction, new marina, a hotel connected to the proposed conference/ civic center, Washington Street frontage and the CSX pedestrian way. The incentives will be available in combinations on a case-by-case basis for those projects that would not otherwise happen (the "but for" test), and only to the extent necessary to reduce the risk to the extent that will induce private sector parties to move forward.

**Action:** Enhance existing programs and establish new programs that support owners and business persons who have existing properties located in the CBD and waterfront neighborhoods. These supports may be in the form of low interest loans or grants to induce facade restoration building rehabilitation and infill development.

**Action:** In lieu of establishing an authority with the means and legal basis to buy and own land on behalf of the public agenda, the city should undertake to purchase or otherwise control key parcels of land where such presence will enable it to protect the possibility of realizing the critical development projects in the plan.

## **Future Planning Actions**

**Action:** The Mason County Economic development Alliance should undertake as its next planning project the preparation of a conference/civic center feasibility study. The feasibility study should include a comprehensive public involvement component as well as center programming design concept and capital and operating cost analysis. The public aspect of this study will test support for a facility that can be designed and programmed to meet the stated needs and desires of area residents and not some theoretical model. Community support is clearly crucial for such a project and the public must therefore be fully a party to the feasibility study if a true reading of community sentiment is to be garnered.

**Action:** Pere Marquette Township should undertake to design improvements for the main gateways into the Ludington area. Actual improvements could be put in on a shared cost basis with other jurisdictions. This could be another important Alliance sponsored project.

**Action:** The main arterial corridors leading to the waterfront, namely old US 31 and US 10 are in dire need of visual enhancement primarily in the segments under township jurisdiction. Corridor image enhancement plan should be carried out for both approaches to the waterfront. Comprehensive in nature corridor image

enhancement programs generally support long term changes that overtime will upgrade the visual and economic environment through the natural process of change as opposed to draconian measures. Some immediate changes can be affected so that immediate improvements will be noticeable. Zoning, sign control, redevelopment and landscaping all come into play in such programs.

*Action:* The Downtown Merchants Association together with the city planning commission should undertake to apply for Main Street Program status. To become a Main Street community requires establishing certain policies, guidelines and plans for the proposed Main Street area and to have in place certain resources that prepare the community to carry out its program. It does involve a commitment of resources and policy initiatives to gain Main Street status. These resources enable the community to achieve its goals for Ludington's historic downtown.