



LAKE CENTER SUBAREA

The Lake Center subarea covers an approximately 2.5-mile length of Portage Road from the East Centre Avenue intersection to East Osterhout Avenue and includes a range of commercial and residential developments. The Lake Center subarea was identified as a commercial revitalization corridor in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan to help identify a vision for the area with guidance for improvements in the corridor. Based on the goals of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Portage undertook a planning and land use study for the entire Lake Center Corridor. A variety of stakeholders were engaged to help shape the plan recommendations. A Lake Center District Steering Committee comprised of area business owners, developers and residents was engaged by the city and consultants through the planning process. The Lake Center Corridor & Placemaking Plan (Lake Center Plan) was adopted on July 13, 2021. The key findings of the 2021 Lake Center Plan are incorporated into this Master Plan. The Lake Center subarea's character is different from other commercial corridors in Portage, marked by many locally-owned businesses and two lakefronts which present unique opportunities and challenges. The isthmus between Austin Lake and West Lake features important anchors for the district and provides a center focal area for the identity of the Lake Center District. However, the inadequate pedestrian or bike infrastructure and automobile-oriented development hinder the district's potential. A pedestrian conditions analysis shows that 70% of the corridor is perceived to be unsafe and unrewarding. The pattern of development throughout the Lake Center district is inconsistent but offers the opportunity for reinvestment with a coordinated approach.

Key Policies and Initiatives


- ▶ Establish a walkable mixed-use lakefront center between Forest Drive and Lakeview Park.
- ▶ Promote redesign of Portage Road and key intersections to improve overall safety and connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle access, and sense of place.
- ▶ Incorporate place-making features such as banners, landscaping, wayfinding signage, art, and other characteristics of lakefront environment.
- ▶ Update land use standard.
- ▶ Encourage lakefront visibility by preserving key view sheds, utilizing contextual building and design, and maintaining public water access.

Lake Center Subarea








PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK

-  **Intersection Improvements:** Roundabout improvements, signalized pedestrian crossing, and traffic signal installation and replacement should be considered for four primary intersections to enhance safety, operations, and functionality.
-  **Pedestrian Improvements:** Pedestrian improvements should consist of filling sidewalk gap, improving pedestrian conditions, widening sidewalks, creating pedestrian and bike route alternatives, and improving pedestrian connectivity by installing crosswalks with refuge islands.
-  **Trail Improvements:** Trail improvements should be used to connect new bike paths to existing and planned trails. These improvements include a new 3' wide bike lane/shoulder and a new 10' wide paved multi-use path.
-  **Gateways:** Identifying gateway features should be coordinated and created for the Lake Center District corridor, including decorative lighting with banners holders, gateway treatments, sidewalk benches, and façade improvements.
-  **Wayfinding:** Wayfinding should include light pole banners to create a sense of place and enhanced signage to give direction to parks, municipal buildings, relevant landmarks, and other amenities. Wayfinding should indicate route distances on foot or by bike. For example, "It's a 10-minute walk to Lakeview Park".
-  **Relocation and Underground Utilities:** Utilities should be relocated underground from East Centre Avenue to Lakeview Drive.

Map Features

-  Opportunity Sites
-  Flood Zone

Future Land Use

-  Single Family Residential
-  Mixed Residential
-  Local Commercial
-  Mixed-Use
-  Parks / Open Space
-  Public / Institutional
-  Transportation / Utilities





Opportunity Sites

These sites were chosen based on their underutilization and potential to better contribute to the fabric and character of the Lake Center District. If redeveloped, these opportunity sites would positively impact the subarea.

01 Stormwater basin at McDonald's

8050 Portage Road for improving the aesthetics of the stormwater basin at McDonald's property.

02 Gateway Mixed-Use

Southeast corner of Portage Road and East Centre Avenue for a potential mixed-use development at the gateway location to the Lake Center district.

03 Mixed-Use Development

8509 Portage Road for potential mixed-use development.

04 Waterfront Overlook

9138 Portage Road for waterfront overlook opportunity space: Opportunities for passive recreation such as picnic tables and benches should be prioritized to help draw more people into the district could accommodate a social gathering place for public to enjoy waterfront view. The former drive-in property provides a panoramic viewshed of West Lake from Portage Road. This lakefront area has the potential to become a social gathering place, a destination along Portage Road with safe and accessible pedestrian connections.

05 Mixed-Use Development

9125 Portage Road for potential mixed-use development.